

EB 157



Rettendon

a Village Design Statement

October 2011

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1. An introduction to the Village Design Statement

1.1 What is a Village Design Statement ?

The Village Design Statement is a document that is used to express the desires and intentions of individual communities so these can be taken into account as part of future planning decisions that might affect them. Based on information gathered in a series of public consultation events this is an opportunity for the residents of the Parish of Rettendon to state what they want to change and what they value and wish to preserve. It is our chance to have a say in how Rettendon evolves in the future.

1.2 What does it cover ?

The Village Design Statement covers the entire Parish of Rettendon incorporating Rettendon Common which includes the Chalk Street and South and East Hanningfield Road areas, Rettendon Place which includes the Meadow Road area and Battlesbridge which includes the Woodham Road.

Consideration has been given to the full range of areas directly affected or impacted by planning decisions such as Housing, Transport, Public Services and the Environment.

1.3 How was the VDS developed ?

Development of the Village Design Statement has been sponsored by the Rettendon Parish Council following the successful completion of the Village Survey in 2003. It has been developed through a number of stages of public consultation and through advice and guidance supplied by peer groups in other communities as well as from our local authority. The public consultations steps taken so far are listed in Appendix 1. It is intended that the document should be adopted first by the Rettendon Parish Council and subsequently by the local planning authority as a reflection of the community wishes of the Parish residents. The adopted document will be distributed to all households in the Parish.

1.4 Current status

Rettendon VDS was approved by Chelmsford Borough Council at its meeting on October 11th 2011 as planning guidance. The VDS carries weight in the determination of planning applications by the local authority, although it is not a statutory planning document.

The VDS is also for reference by the local community when considering making physical changes to their properties which might not actually require planning permission. The VDS is a tool that can influence the people who live and work in Rettendon, increase local pride, encourage care and help to improve the overall quality of physical change.

1.5 Planning Context

The Government has introduced a new plan making regime which has led to the Borough Council creating the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF sets out policies and proposals for dealing with new development. It identifies sites where new housing and other development can take place and sets out the policies of the Council in relation to the use of land and buildings. The LDF is itself governed by regional policies which result from central government policies. Every planning application is considered against the LDF. The Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (adopted Feb 2008) is the overarching policy document in the LDF. Key policies relating to Rettendon are:

- ❑ Rettendon Common and Rettendon Place are Defined Settlements in the Local Development Framework. The Site Allocations Document, part of the LDF, continues to support this.
- ❑ The outer boundary of the Metropolitan Green Belt exists to the west of both settlements and also to the south of Rettendon Place along the southern edge of the Parish. LDF policies (including DC1) and PPG2 seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development. Policy DC2 seeks to protect the countryside from undesirable development.
- ❑ Land to the east of Goose's Farm is a Special Protection Area and a Ramsar site, internationally important for waterfowl and other species. The River Crouch inter-tidal habitat (those areas between low and high water) is part of the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (the marine equivalent of a National Park). This is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the salt marsh and grazing marsh habitat, its geological formation and floral species. There are also other sites of bio-diversity and geological value which Policy DC13 protects and also encourages bio-diversity across the borough.
- ❑ The boundary to the south is included in the Coastal Protection Belt policy DC10 a countywide designation where there are stringent restrictions on development with the purpose of seeking to protect the coast as a special resource in its own right.
- ❑ Battlesbridge Conservation Area is statutorily protected backed up by Policy DC17. The Parish of Rettendon has 16 listed buildings which have statutory protection backed up by Policy DC18.
- ❑ The Industrial Estate at Battlesbridge is a rural Employment Area. Policy DC52 on industrial and warehouse development seeks to protect this type of employment land to ensure supply and meet the needs of existing companies.
- ❑ The design of development is covered by core policies CP20 and CP21 and development control policies DC42 and DC45.
- ❑ Core Policy CP14 provides a direct link between VDS and local planning policy. The policy also sets the scene for the visual impact of all development proposals on the landscape.

The VDS also complements the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Documents; including Sustainable Development SPD and Making Places SPD; and the residential design guidance on roof and side extensions. It is important to take these into account during the planning process.

1.6 Document Structure

The document starts with two sections with Section 1 first introducing and Section 2 then describing the important features of the Parish, both good and bad, as identified in consultation with the community. To indicate the positive and negative aspects the following symbols have been used :-



This symbol is used to indicate where the consultation results have shown a positive feature worthy of preservation.



This symbol is used to indicate where the consultation results show issues that need to be addressed.

It is anticipated that the Village Design Statement will be used as guidance material when future planning decisions affecting Rettendon Parish are being considered. To simplify access to this guidance all identified guidelines have been collated in section 3 with cross-references where relevant to any supporting reasons in the previous sections.

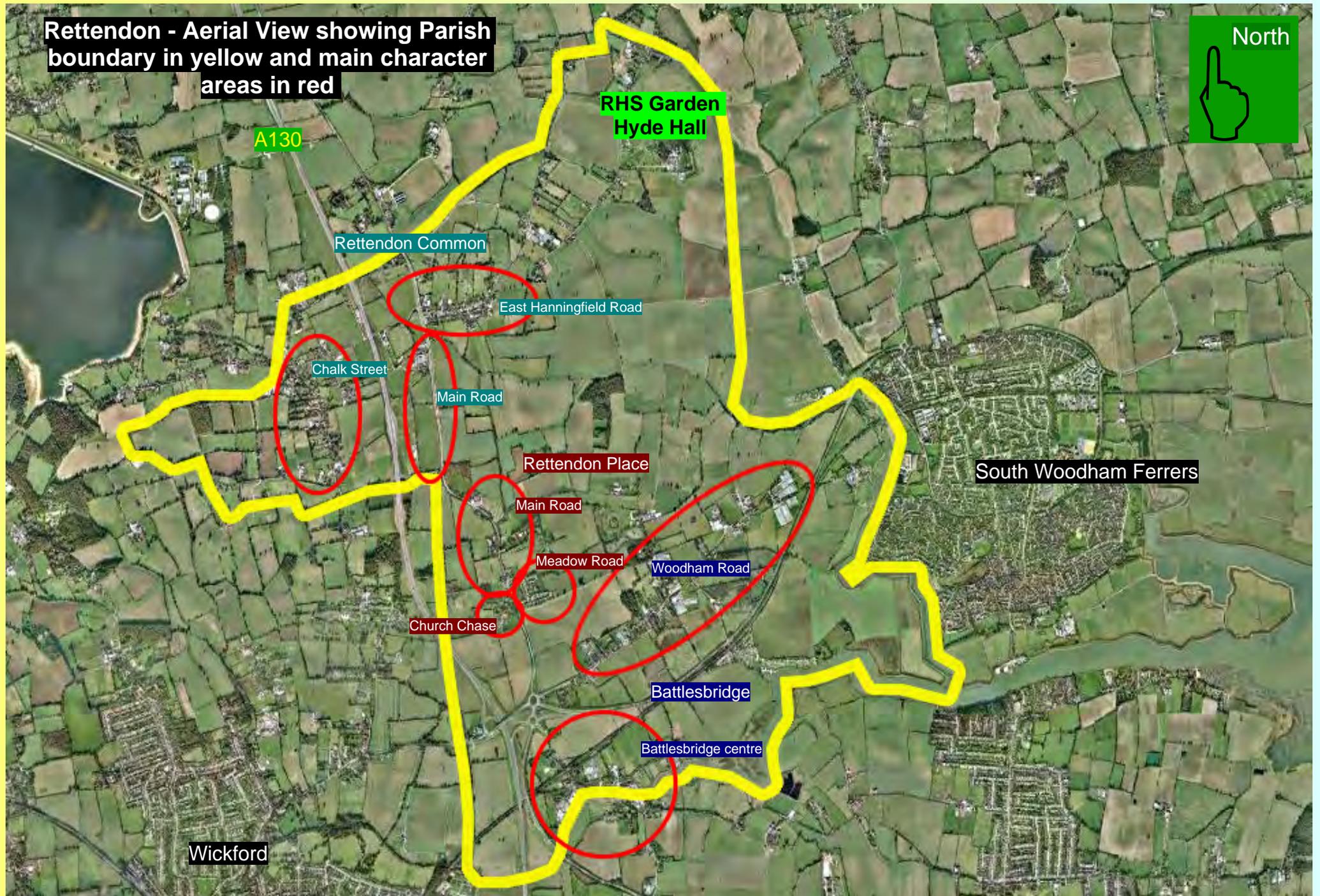


2. Our Parish



The Parish of Rettendon is a rural community situated on the northern bank of the River Crouch. The Parish encompasses the three principle village communities of Rettendon Common in the north, Battlesbridge in the south and Rettendon Place which is located between them and forms the centre of the Parish. While physically quite dislocated the closure of the old A130 has benefited residents not only in the obvious reduction of noise and improved safety but with noticeably increased contact between neighbours and an enhanced spirit of combined community These communities are described in more detail in the following sections.

Rettendon - Aerial View showing Parish boundary in yellow and main character areas in red



2.1 Character of the Parish

Rettendon is a rural Parish with three major settlements at Rettendon Common, Rettendon Place and Battlesbridge. Historically there has been significant commercial activity around Battlesbridge with the River Crouch barge trade, cereal milling, grain storage and road stone haulage. The southern part of the Parish has also seen the confluence of major road, rail and river crossings which has encouraged industrial and commercial uses, notably plastic manufacture and a flourishing antiques trade.

The development and enlargement of Hyde Hall gardens under the management of the Royal Horticultural Society has placed the Parish under a national spotlight. Significant inputs from residents resulted in an improved design for road access to the site which will help offset the local impacts of a facility which is destined to generate much more traffic in the future. A projected 200,000 visitors per annum will find their way to and from this attraction via the local road network.

Most of the development in the Parish pre-dates the Planning Acts and mainly comprises intermittent farms and country housing with more intense development to Salford Close and the Meadow Road housing estate at Rettendon Place which is managed by Chelmer Housing Partnership.

The original Runwell Hospital which lies between Rettendon Parish and nearby Wickford has now been replaced by a new medium secure hospital with 97 beds known as Brockfield House. A large residential development of 624 houses had also been approved for this site but this has been somewhat delayed by a subsequent and now rejected planning application from the Ministry of Justice for a category B prison of some 1,500 inmates. When completed the presence of this number of new homes is certain to generate significant additional loads on local infrastructure.

2.2 Geological Survey

Soils underlying the Parish are mainly London Clay and Head Materials with Claygate Beds to the elevated sections of the Parish. The edges of the River Crouch and Fenn Creek to the eastern boundary are underlain with Estuarine Alluvium. There are patches of Second Terrace Gravel in the vicinity of Hayes Farm, Gosses Farm and to the south west of Battlesbridge station. A diagram showing these deposits can be found at Appendix 2.

2.3 Classification of character areas

For descriptive purposes each of the main settlements has been sub-divided into character areas. Each character area is also given a classification in terms of housing diversity and density. These terms should be treated as being relative within the Parish rather than absolute. Appendix 0 gives detailed definitions for these classifications.

2.4 Rettendon Place

Rettendon Place represents the main area of habitation within the Parish with its hilltop location making it the highest part of the Parish. There is no established business sector within this part of the village and only limited indigenous farming activity. Fields surround and enhance the area. Rettendon Place is split into three main character areas.

2.4.1 Meadow Road

To the East of the old A130 (Main Road) lies the Meadow Road development which is the only part of the Parish where houses form an estate and is the area of highest housing density. This post war development was originally council housing some of which are now in private ownership while the remainder are owned and managed by Chelmer Housing Partnership. This area has a completely different 'feel' to any other part of the Parish as houses are relatively modern with the vast majority enjoying both front and rear gardens.



Estate road and on-street parking

However, the street scene in this area is dominated by the need for on-street parking which restricts the already narrow estate roads still further.



Retirement bungalows

There are a number of bungalows designed for the elderly.

This area can be classified as a Low diversity, High density residential area which lies within the current settlement boundary which can be seen at Appendix 3.



Estate road and on-street parking

2.4.2 Church Chase

The Church of All Saints which dates back to the 10th century stands on commanding high ground close to the western edge of the Parish and is a widely identifiable landmark to the now vast traffic which plies the new A130 bypass between the A12 and the A127.

Housing in this area consists of large old detached properties set amongst mature tree stands forming a pleasant and traditional backdrop to the church and churchyard. 

This area can be characterised as a High diversity, Low density residential area which lies outside of the settlement boundary.



All Saints Church

2.4.3 Main Road

The remainder of the houses on Main Road consist of a diverse mix of timber framed and brick houses which pre-date the Meadow Road development by, in some cases, many hundreds of years.

There is a true sense of community focused around the Meeson Bungalows, Rettendon Primary School and Rettendon Memorial Hall all of which are located within this part of the village. To the rear of the Memorial Hall lies the cricket ground which further emphasises the traditional village feel of this area. 

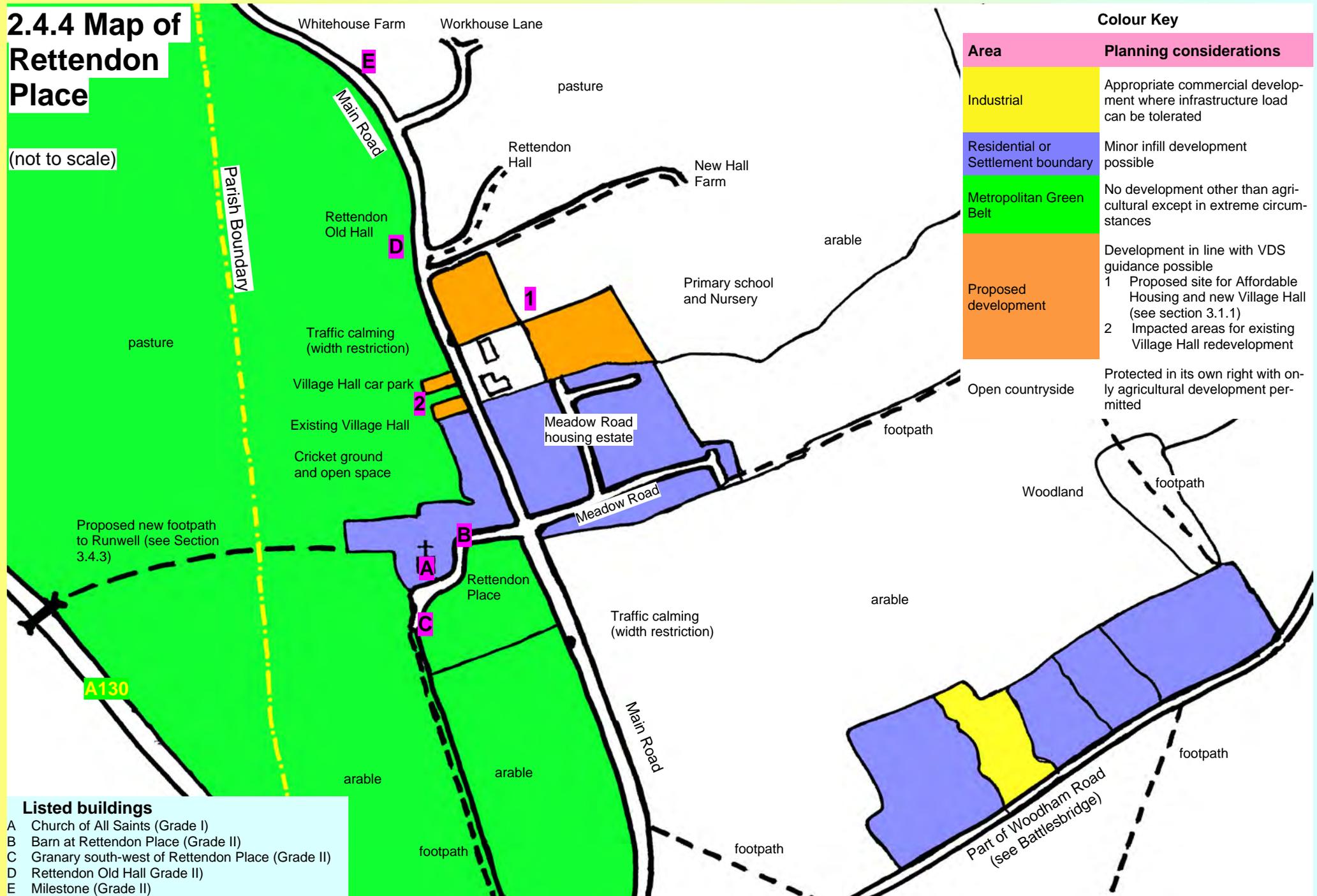


Rettendon Primary School

This area can be characterised as a Medium diversity, Medium density residential which lies outside of the settlement boundary.

2.4.4 Map of Rettendon Place

(not to scale)



Colour Key	
Area	Planning considerations
Industrial	Appropriate commercial development where infrastructure load can be tolerated
Residential or Settlement boundary	Minor infill development possible
Metropolitan Green Belt	No development other than agricultural except in extreme circumstances
Proposed development	Development in line with VDS guidance possible 1 Proposed site for Affordable Housing and new Village Hall (see section 3.1.1) 2 Impacted areas for existing Village Hall redevelopment
Open countryside	Protected in its own right with only agricultural development permitted

- Listed buildings**
- A Church of All Saints (Grade I)
 - B Barn at Rettendon Place (Grade II)
 - C Granary south-west of Rettendon Place (Grade II)
 - D Rettendon Old Hall Grade II)
 - E Milestone (Grade II)

2.5 Rettendon Common

Rettendon Common has no large estates, the dwellings within the area having been built up piece-meal along the South and East Hanningfield roads and Chalk Street. The houses are themselves a delightful mixture of styles and designs ranging from early timber framed red brick houses to more modern infill developments. Few working farms have survived within Rettendon Common and the land surrounding the Common area is farmed by owners outside the Parish. This however does not inhibit the enjoyment of the countryside although it has affected agricultural employment within the village.

Rettendon Common residents can also enjoy public open space provided in the form of a football pitch. There are also numerous bridleways and footpaths linking Rettendon Common to other parts of the Parish and beyond. 

There are three main character areas.

2.5.1 Chalk Street

Incorporating Coal Hill and a short section of the South Hanningfield Road this area consists of delightful rural roads with mature trees and hedging forming an almost continuous screen partially obscuring many of the dwellings from the road. The style of the dwellings themselves range from small thatched cottages to modern substantial houses.

There is a total mixture of architectural age and style which combined with the proliferation of mature trees and hedging creates a special rural street scene which should be enhanced and maintained. 

Care should be taken to preserve the character of this area which can be characterised as one of High diversity and Low density residential lying outside of the settlement boundary.

2.5.2 East Hanningfield Road

A somewhat crowded residential street with mainly twentieth century properties of all styles. The majority of dwellings are single storey and almost all have well tended front gardens which add much to the character of the road. The majority of properties have off road parking facilities allowing for the overall appearance of the road itself to be uncluttered - a typical semi-rural street scene.

Situated on high ground in the north eastern corner of the Parish, Hyde Hall was a working farm for centuries and now enjoys an international reputation as one of the top three RHS gardens in the UK.

This area is characterised as one of High diversity and Medium density residential lying within the existing settlement boundary which can be seen at Appendix 4.

2.5.3 Main Road

Main road is typified by occasional large period properties standing within their own grounds interspersed with occasional farm houses and buildings. In the main such farm buildings have been converted to industrial use.

The overall impression is one of a rural open landscape where the road itself is bordered for much of the time by mixed hedging. The road also is home to two public houses and the treatment of their forecourts does much to fix the visual impression when travelling along the former A130. Particular care should be given in this area to protect the existing visual openness.



This area is characterised as one of High diversity and Low density residential lying outside the existing settlement boundary.



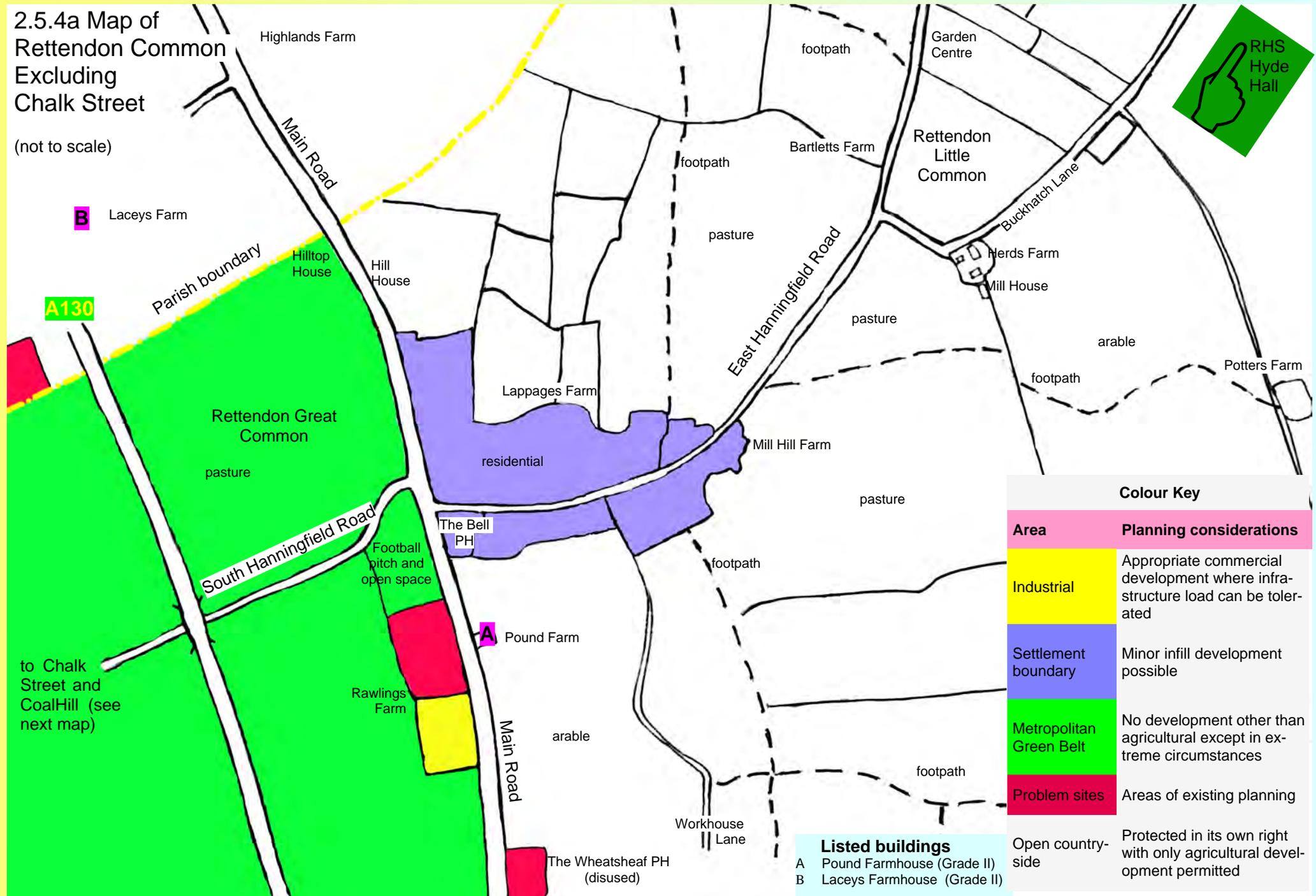
Diverse designs and off-street parking



Open, green frontages

2.5.4a Map of Rettendon Common Excluding Chalk Street

(not to scale)

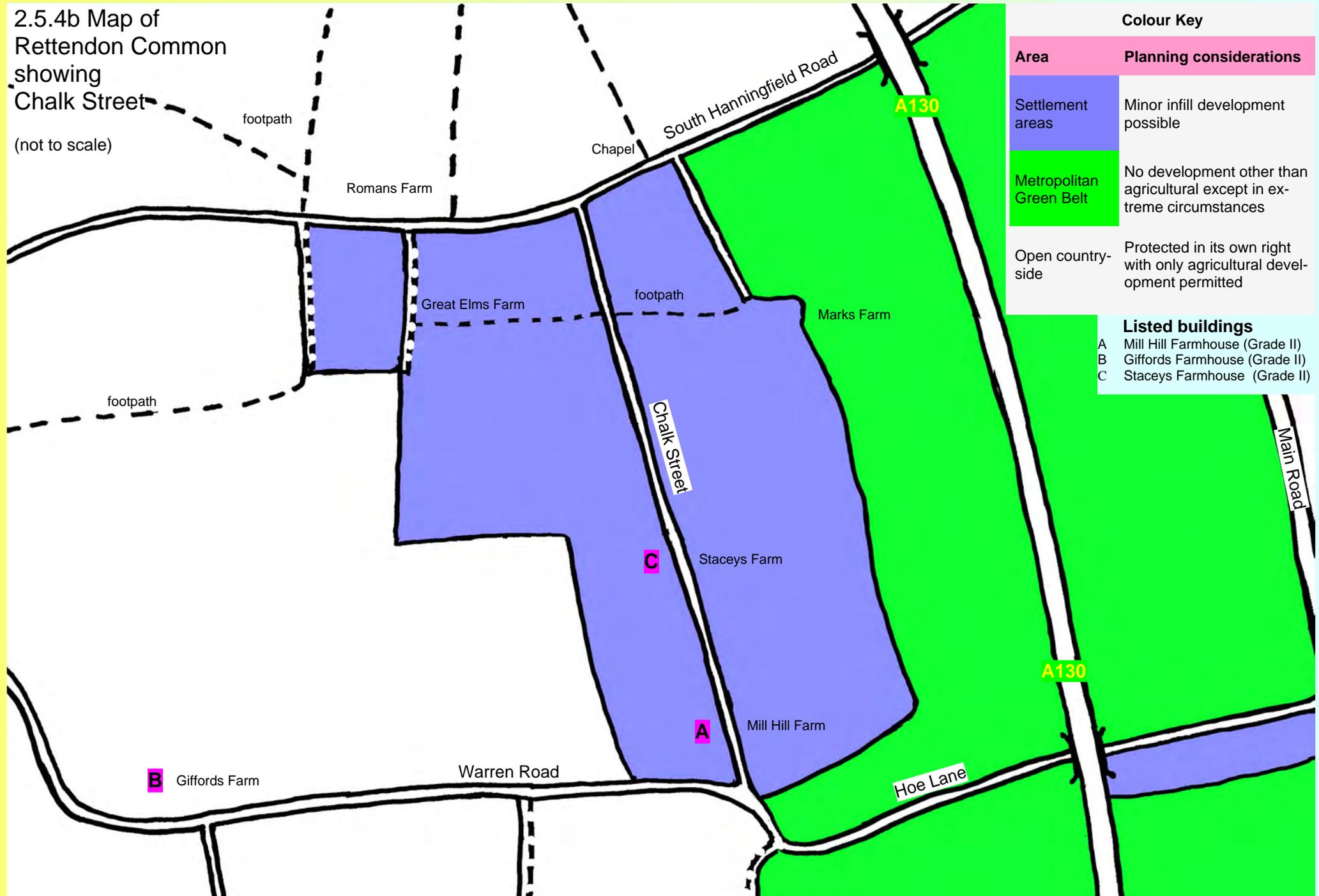


Colour Key	
Area	Planning considerations
Industrial	Appropriate commercial development where infrastructure load can be tolerated
Settlement boundary	Minor infill development possible
Metropolitan Green Belt	No development other than agricultural except in extreme circumstances
Problem sites	Areas of existing planning
Open countryside	Protected in its own right with only agricultural development permitted

- Listed buildings**
- A Pound Farmhouse (Grade II)
 - B Laceys Farmhouse (Grade II)

2.5.4b Map of Rettendon Common showing Chalk Street

(not to scale)



Colour Key

Area	Planning considerations
Settlement areas	Minor infill development possible
Metropolitan Green Belt	No development other than agricultural except in extreme circumstances
Open countryside	Protected in its own right with only agricultural development permitted

Listed buildings

- A Mill Hill Farmhouse (Grade II)
- B Giffords Farmhouse (Grade II)
- C Staceys Farmhouse (Grade II)

2.6 Battlesbridge

This part of the Parish is situated on the north bank and forms the head of navigation of the River Crouch. It has two main character areas.



2.6.1 Battlesbridge centre

The character of the area is a rich mix of industrial, retail and residential buildings of various ages with the tall structure of the granary building dominating the small settlement adjacent to the river.

At the centre of the settlement is a Conservation Area embedded within the surrounding Metropolitan Green Belt. See Appendix 5. Parts of the Conservation Area fall within the Essex Coastal Protection Belt and a Special Landscape Area.

Virtually the whole of Battlesbridge is low lying and has been designated as a flood risk zone though this is mitigated by well maintained and recently enhanced tidal defence embankments.

Traffic passing over the bridge at Battlesbridge is one way with yielding points and with very poor visibility of oncoming traffic. This causes traffic conflicts and congestion in the heart of Battlesbridge spoiling its unique atmosphere.



Antiques centre

There is a direct rail service to London from Battlesbridge station.

This area can be characterised as High diversity, Medium density mixed residential / industrial lying within the settlement boundary which can be seen at Appendix 5.

2.6.2 Woodham Road

This is an area characterised by 1940's ribbon development following the road with a variety of dwelling styles mixed in with several quite diverse commercial establishments. These include second hand car sales, a small trading estate, a market trader in plants, a hand car wash, a tyre service centre and a fancy dress outfitter. There are two public garden centres, four commercial nurseries using glasshouses and a vegetable wholesalers yard.

The area also contains a field used by Woodham Athletic as a football ground for training and matches with a marked pitch. A local farm also provides 98 individual and rabbit proofed allotments. These are serviced by the landowner who provides mechanical soil preparation, wheelbarrows, farmyard manure and water for the plot holders.

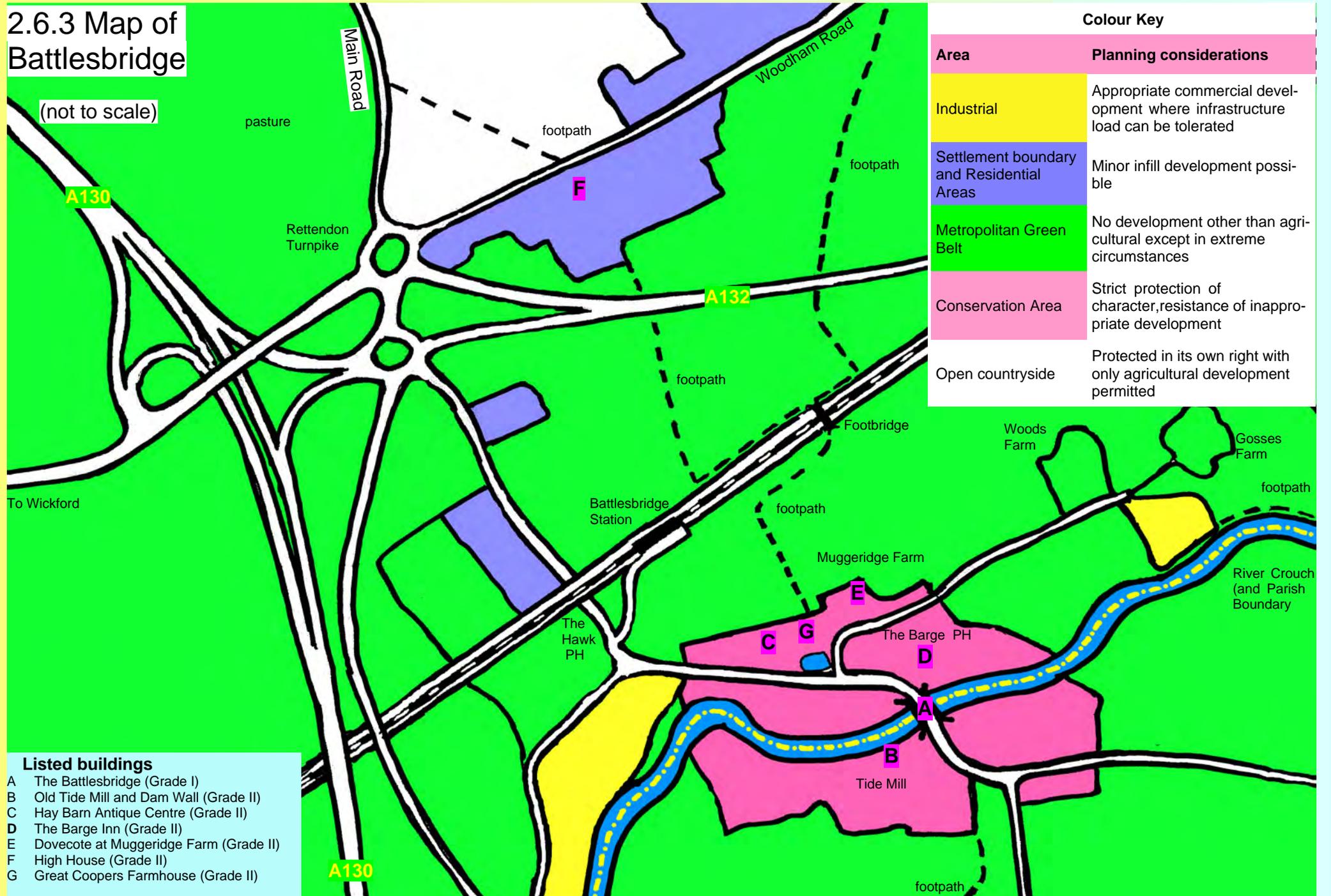
This area can be characterised as High diversity, Low density with mixed residential / industrial uses lying outside of the settlement boundary.



Woodham Road scene

2.6.3 Map of Battlesbridge

(not to scale)



Colour Key

Area	Planning considerations
Industrial	Appropriate commercial development where infrastructure load can be tolerated
Settlement boundary and Residential Areas	Minor infill development possible
Metropolitan Green Belt	No development other than agricultural except in extreme circumstances
Conservation Area	Strict protection of character, resistance of inappropriate development
Open countryside	Protected in its own right with only agricultural development permitted

Listed buildings

- A The Battlesbridge (Grade I)
- B Old Tide Mill and Dam Wall (Grade II)
- C Hay Barn Antique Centre (Grade II)
- D The Barge Inn (Grade II)
- E Dovecote at Muggeridge Farm (Grade II)
- F High House (Grade II)
- G Great Coopers Farmhouse (Grade II)

2.7 Housing

The Parish boasts a wide range of residential buildings ranging from listed hall houses to modern estate dwellings. Many of the more modern houses originated as council houses and are built on an estate basis. The architecture of the older properties is traditionally Essex in nature many of these houses having been created originally as small farmhouses. As a result of this the prevailing development densities are low on average and variable.

It is this combination of traditional buildings and open spaces that defines the desirable nature of the Parish and these characteristics should be maintained and enhanced. 

In common with many rural areas there is a scarcity of low-cost and starter homes in the Parish. This has some undesirable impacts :-

- Residents at both end of the age spectrum are forced to seek accommodation outside the Parish.
- It generates additional demand for extensions to existing houses.



Chalk Street skyline



Main road frontages



Rettendon Old Hall



Local traditional features



Typical housing diversity

2.8 Transport

As a rural community Rettendon Parish has a number of transport challenges. The lack of local shops, healthcare, secondary and further education and social services leads to a high dependence on both private and public transport services as residents seek these amenities outside of the Parish.

2.8.1 Private vehicle transport

Rettendon Parish sits alongside the A130 which forms the major North / South link for Essex. providing residents with good access to the wider trunk road and motorway networks.

Traffic along the old A130 (Main Road), old Woodham Road and Battlesbridge while acceptable in terms of volume is susceptible to peak loads e.g.. when there are problems on the A130, A132 or when local car boot sales are running. This can lead to jams particularly around the traffic calming measures and other pinch points such as the bridge in Battlesbridge. Residents have recent bitter experience of the impacts of a saturated road network as demonstrated by the old A130 and the present pressure on the Rettendon Turnpike.



Main Road congestion

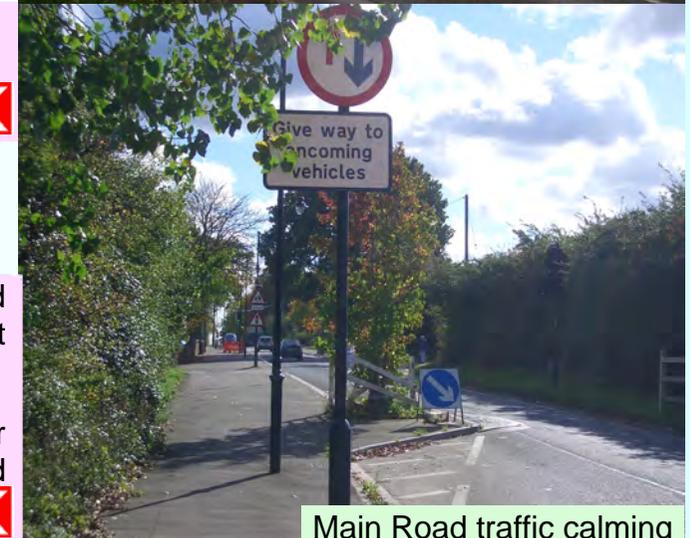
Over the years the village has acquired a plethora of traffic signs which detract significantly from its rural nature.



Woodham Road

Speeding is a persistent issue across the Parish despite the police carrying out regular speed checks. Current traffic calming measures have proved to be ineffective and different approaches need to be investigated including driver education for residents.

Because it contains long straight sections, speeding along the Woodham Road is a particular and urgent issue. Enforcement of the present 40 mph limit and other measures are required to provide an effective solution to this problem



Main Road traffic calming

2.8.2 Public transport - buses

The bus route between Rayleigh and Chelmsford provides an hourly service for local residents to get to their nearest major shopping centres. The general trend over recent years however has been towards decreasing service frequency and increasing fares.



2.8.3 Public transport - rail

Many Rettendon residents live within walking distance of Battlesbridge station with train services into London Liverpool Street though complaints have been received regarding personal and vehicle security at this somewhat isolated unmanned station.

However, for many residents and particularly those with mobility problems, a short car journey is the only way to get to a station either at Battlesbridge or in nearby Wickford with its more frequent services to London. London rail links from the area for commuters are congested at peak times.



The overall opinion expressed by residents is one of congested transport infrastructure, inadequate public transport services and enforced high dependency on the private motor car. These limitations must be taken into account in future planning.



Shelter in Woodham Road



Rettendon turnpike



Battlesbridge Station

2.9 Public utilities

A number of challenges arise from the current rather patchy supply of utility services within the Parish.

2.9.1 Electricity

The area is served with a reliable electricity service. However, much of this is provided by overhead cables that are unsightly. The electricity and telecommunications services should be delivered underground to prevent the proliferation of overhead cables where practicable. 

2.9.2 Water

There is a mains water supply and most properties are served by mains. However, the area is one of low rainfall and water use restrictions e.g. hosepipe bans have become a more frequent event which seems likely to become more common in the future.

2.9.3 Gas

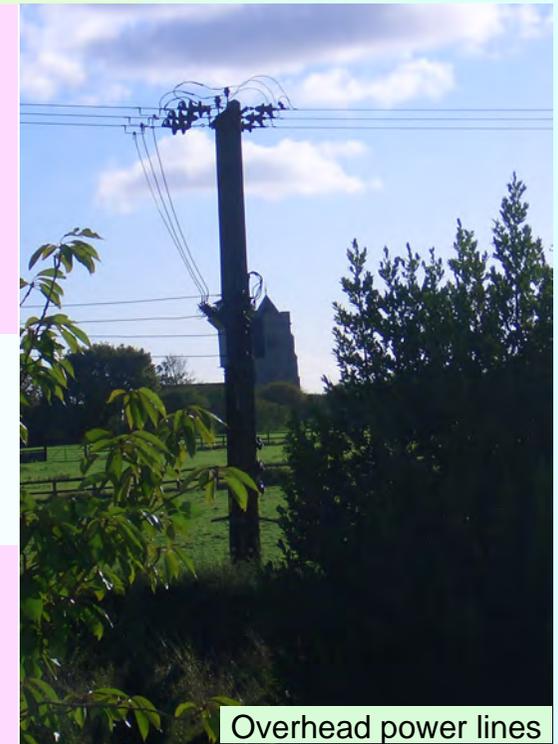
There is as yet no gas supply to the majority of the Parish and suppliers demand prohibitive per household costs to provide gas main connections. The provision of gas to existing residences would have advantages in terms of consumer / energy efficiency choice and this should be addressed for all future developments. 

2.9.4 Telecommunications

Telephone lines are still largely overhead and problems are occasionally experienced due to line damage. Broadband telephone and data connections are available in the Parish via the telephone infrastructure but these vary significantly in terms of quality and bandwidth. Fibre-optic cable was laid along the old A130 route some years ago but connectivity is not available to residents.

2.9.5 Mains drainage

Some properties still use private drainage facilities and as housing densities increase this will risk public health problems. Any development proposal should be assessed in relation to drainage capacity and public health risk. 



Overhead power lines



Main Road

2.10 Leisure

Consultation has indicated that the Parish has leisure facilities in keeping with its rural nature although some specific issues have been raised.

2.10.1 Public open spaces

Football takes place on the pitch opposite the Rettendon Bell Public House and along the Woodham Road while Cricket is played on the ground behind the Memorial Hall. It is important that these spaces are preserved and enhanced. 

2.10.2 Footpaths, bridleways and cycle tracks

There are excellent walks around the village and nearby at the Hanningfield Nature Reserve. However some footpaths were severed by previous road constructions and this loss of connectivity should be addressed by the Parish Council and the Highways Authority. 



2.10.3 The village hall

The village memorial hall is used for a number of leisure activities by local groups. The hall itself is nearing the end of its economic life and its replacement will become an issue in the near future. 

2.10.4 Youth Facilities

While the village offers many leisure facilities lack of voluntary support leads to very little opportunity for social activity amongst its teenage population. 

2.11 Business environment and Employment

Around 40% of residents surveyed work within the Parish while the majority commute to nearby towns with a small percentage travelling to London. The preservation of local employment opportunities is therefore of vital importance to residents.

The Parish is an important national centre of Horticulture which provides an increasing source of local employment. Farming activity continues while at Battlesbridge, a large antiques centre has built up over the years bringing with it welcome employment. Tourism to Battlesbridge and its local conservation area is also on the increase. There is likely to be a significant increase in tourism associated with the upgrading of the Hyde Hall gardens to National RHS status. There are several popular pubs and restaurants within the Parish.

Local industry is mixed being based on small businesses and being concentrated in 5 main locations :-

- Maltings Road industrial estate
- The Antiques centre Battlesbridge
- Hawk Lane industrial area
- Ivanhoe industrial park, old Woodham road
- Whitehouse Farm, Rettendon
- Rawlings Farm, Rettendon

The Parish no longer has a shop, post office or garage all of these businesses having proved to be unviable in the past.



The Rettendon Bell



Hyde Hall

There is a history of unauthorised commercial and industrial development within the Parish particularly in the reuse of redundant farm sites.

The enforcement of planning legislation in this area has been perceived to be ineffective leading to unnecessary conflicts between residents and proprietors.



Signage in Battlesbridge



Antiques centre Battlesbridge

2.12 The natural environment

Public consultations revealed that interaction with the natural environment was an important factor in the decision to live in Rettendon.

The vast majority of the Parish is laid to fields with small pockets of woodland. Agriculture is a diverse mix of arable and livestock and is based on small fields with abundant hedgerows. When added to the significant number of large and mature gardens this leads to a thriving diversity of flora and fauna across the entire food chain.

There are fishing ponds near Rettendon Common which have created ideal habitats for swans and both indigenous and migratory wildfowl to visit and colonise.

Private conservation work in Battlesbridge around the Crouch has encouraged Samphire in the brackish waters and water voles in the river bank. Swans, Kingfishers, Teal and Heron are all a regular sight.

Rettendon Place has a cluster of mature horse chestnut trees adjacent to the church which supports birds and insects. There is a bat roost in the church tower and badger sets close to the church yard.



3. Planning Guidance

This section contains the planning guidelines arising from the previous narrative. The first sections contain guidelines that are specific to each defined character area followed by more general guidance applicable to the entire Parish. Where appropriate recommendations are cross-referenced to the relevant part of section 2.

In addition references to Chelmsford Borough planning policies are highlighted.



3.1 Guidelines for Rettendon Place

3.1.1 Meadow Road

Street Scene

No special restrictions should apply to the built scene on the estate. However to offset the impact of on road parking sympathetic views should be taken of applications to harden front gardens for parking providing porous surfaces are employed. The estate which is at the centre of village life was constructed in the post second world war period of prefabricated housing construction but the estate has an inadequate road width and parking facilities. The original houses are being progressively faced with external brick skins which improve the street scene. It would be helpful if a site could be found close to the estate to provide a car park for residents. To assist with the parking issue it is also recommended that an area be allocated for shared parking with natural screening situated to the east of the estate. See section 2.4.2. and also Appendix 7 for a map of this location. **DC7**

New development

A small amount of new development is tolerable in this character area provided it consists largely of affordable housing. This should be a low volume development designed to meet the needs of the Rettendon community only. See section 2.7. The preferred site for this development is to the east of the village school. In addition this area should be considered as the site for a new village hall or community centre. See section 2.10.3. This should be designed with the following objectives :- **DC31, DC32**

- Provision of a hall space to cover existing Village Hall activities **CP16, CP17, CP18, DC1/2, DC38, DC39**
- Room to accommodate visiting medical and other care services
- Sports facilities of sufficient quality to attract commercial interest in operations. Provision of youth leadership by the operator would be a part of this arrangement. See section 2.10.4
- Small scale retail outlet preferably to include a Post Office.
- Part of the site should be used to provide allotments for the use of local residents

Funding for the project could be generated in part at least by the sale of the existing Village Hall site if planning permission is possible for residential redevelopment. The existing car park should however be preserved.

Appendix 7 contains a diagram of these locations.

Extensions

A flexible approach to planning applications by the local planning authority would enable home owners to achieve house extensions suitable for the houses in this character area.

Open spaces

The existing recreation ground to the east of the estate should be preserved for its current use and the existing playground facilities significantly upgraded to provide safe play activities for children of all ages. **DC1/2**

3.1.2 Church Chase

Street Scene

It is important that no changes should be made in this area as its proximity to the church and churchyard warrant this. **DC1/2, DC18**

New development

No new development should be permitted in the vicinity of the church. It is important that no new building or alterations to an existing building impinges on :- **DC1/2, DC4, DC15**

- Any view of the church
- Views of the churchyard
- The Church Chase street scene
- Distant views across open countryside

Extensions

No extensions visible from the street should be permitted in the vicinity of the church. **DC1/2**

3.1.3 Main Road

Street Scene

Reduction in use of traffic signage to remove 'urban clutter' from Main Road. See section 2.8.1.

Undergrounding of overhead cabling should be included as planning gain where possible. See section 2.9.

New development

Applications for small scale infill development could be considered provided they maintain the current diverse and open feel of the area. **CP17, DC4, DC12**

Extensions

No extensions visible from the street should be permitted unless exceptionally sensitively designed. **DC7**

Transport

Small throughput and safety gains could be achieved on the old A130 route by the replacement of the existing traffic calming chicanes with more effective measures. See section 2.8.1. These measures should be aimed at :-

- Managing excessive speed **CP19, CP26, DC41**
- Discouraging unnecessary through journeys by non-local traffic
- Maximising the effective throughput of the road to minimise the impacts of peaks in traffic volume.

Open spaces

The existing cricket ground and facilities must be preserved.

3.2 Guidelines for Rettendon Common

3.2.1 Chalk Street

Street Scene

Frontage should be greened as far as possible and rural nature maintained.

DC13, DC15

New development

Infill development only should be considered here. Developments should be in keeping with surrounding buildings and should not alter or dominate the existing street scene.

DC12

Applications for development or extension should only be approved when they will not lead to increased on-street parking.

Extensions

Sympathetic designs appropriate to the location should be considered.

Transport

Strong need for speed controls and traffic calming.

DC41

3.2.2 East Hanningfield Road

Street scene

Frontage should be greened as far as possible. **DC15**

New developments

Infill development only should be considered here. Developments should be in keeping with surrounding buildings and should not alter or dominate the existing street scene. Adequate provision for off-street parking should be required for all new development.

DC1/2, DC4, DC12

Extensions

A tolerant attitude should be adopted towards applications for extensions and re builds.

Transport

Need for speed control by means such as radar controlled traffic signs and other visual indicators. Particular area of concern extends as far east as Buckhatch Lane. **CP19, CP26, DC41**

Open Spaces

The football pitch should be upgraded to provide improved facilities such as :- **CP17**

- All weather surface
- Floodlighting
- Modernised changing accommodation
- Spectator seating

3.2.3 Main Road

Street scene

Frontages and highways should be greened as far as possible. Proposed greening of the Bell intersection should be pursued as planned. **DC13, DC15**

New development

Infill only in area covered by village envelope. Green belt areas should be preserved to retain open character. Developments should be in keeping with surrounding buildings and should not alter or dominate the existing street scene. **DC1/2, DC4, DC12**

All developments should include sufficient off-road parking to avoid the use of the main road and access to all developments onto Main Road should be designed to maintain road safety.

Extensions

Only to be allowed when they enhance the character of the existing street scene. **DC1/2, DC4**

Open spaces

Improvements to the facilities of the Bell playing field and possible other uses should be encouraged.

Problem sites

There are four sites which give concern :- **CP26**

- Redundant Garage.** This is a possible site for a residential development for the elderly such as the Meeson bungalows. All development however should be contained within the current brown field site.
- Rawlings Farm.** This site should be subjected to continued monitoring and enforcement to prevent expansion and to control its impact on the street scene. A long term solution might be to redevelop this site also to residential use.
- Former Wheatsheaf public house.** Support should be given to projects that will benefit the community e.g. additional sports and leisure facilities, protected accommodation for the elderly etc.. Protect the historic building and seek Local and Statutory listing.
- Whitehouse Farm.** This site should be subjected to continued monitoring and enforcement to prevent expansion and to control its impact on the street scene and local transport infrastructure.

3.3 Guidelines for Battlesbridge

3.3.1 Battlesbridge centre

Street scene

The current street scene should be preserved. The signs at the end of Maltings Road should be simplified and a public notice board erected to list local businesses and events. A standard layout and colour scheme should be identified for the Chelmsford Borough Council area so that a discreet standardisation can be achieved throughout the area. **CP9, DC1**

New development

There should be no new development in this character area unless under exceptional circumstances.

CP5, CP10, CP13, CP14, DC1/2, DC4, DC10, DC12, DC17, DC18, DC22

Extensions

These should only be approved in exceptional circumstances. **CP5**

Transport

The flow of traffic across the single carriageway bridge at Battlesbridge should be assisted by the installation of improved traffic signalling to provide drivers with information about oncoming traffic at the blind corners at both sides of the bridge. To this end a discreet automatic or censored traffic light system should be installed to the bridge to aid visibility available to motorists travelling from north to south. See section 2.6.1. **CP8, CP19, CP26, DC41**

Open spaces

The green and pond areas must be maintained in their current state. **DC13, DC15**

Problem sites

The Hawk Lane industrial estate has insufficient road access to support heavy commercial use. Change of use should be considered for this site to one more appropriate to the location and access. **CP26**

3.3.2 Woodham Road

Street scene

The existing green frontages should be maintained and enhanced wherever possible. **DC13, DC15**

New development

Infill development only should be allowed. Where houses are to be replaced this should be strictly on a one-for-one basis. **DC1/2, DC4, DC12**

Extensions

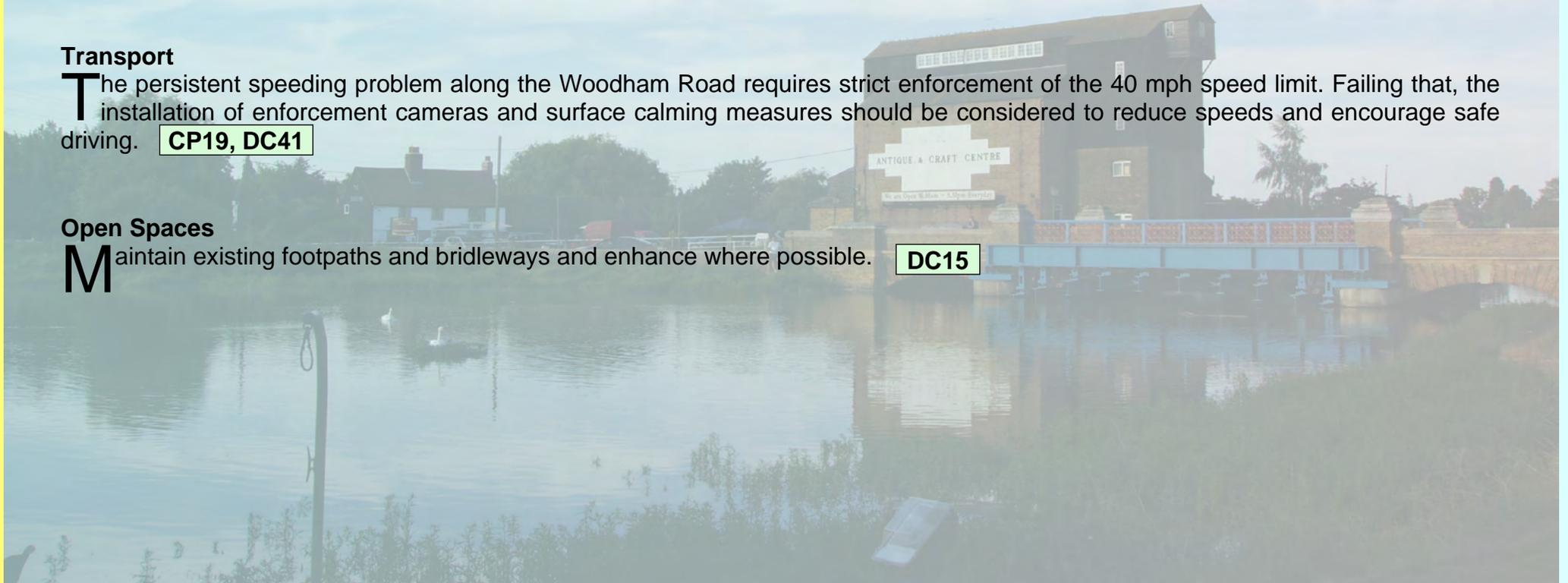
A tolerant attitude should be adopted towards applications for extensions and re builds. **DC1/2**

Transport

The persistent speeding problem along the Woodham Road requires strict enforcement of the 40 mph speed limit. Failing that, the installation of enforcement cameras and surface calming measures should be considered to reduce speeds and encourage safe driving. **CP19, DC41**

Open Spaces

Maintain existing footpaths and bridleways and enhance where possible. **DC15**



3.4 General guidelines

This section contain more general guidelines applicable to all character areas in the Parish.

3.4.1 Diversity

In terms of housing, the character of the Parish is predominantly mixed and diverse. This diversity is a function of development over several hundred years and has been determined by unregulated or time-variable design objectives. These are characteristics that the village would like to retain and encourage in the future. Diversity is also reflected in the wide range of housing densities across the different character areas of the Parish. Care should be taken to avoid loss of this diversity when considering planning applications for infill development.

CP14, DC1/2, DC12, DC31

The Granary building, Muggeridge Farm and the old tide mill buildings at Battlesbridge have all found new uses and this type of regeneration is typical of local enterprise which should be encouraged and facilitated by the Planning Policy.

CP22, DC1/2, DC18

The horticultural industry along the Crouch Valley is also typical of several successful enterprises which enrich our community and offer opportunities for employment and investment in the local area. These are appropriate uses for the rural area and complement and strengthen the retention of Metropolitan Green belt policies.

3.4.2 Street Scenes

Much of the minor road network is fronted with hedgerows and tree planting. This sylvan appearance is precious to the village and should be retained and improved as much as possible. When development does take place the village would like to see the attachment of planning conditions to planning permissions that will protect existing vegetation or require the planting of new growth in keeping with the character area.

CP14, DC1, DC12, DC13, DC15

We commend the tree planting along the new A130 route and the sowing of wild flowers to the greensward of the old A130 which has now been improved with enlarged greenswards, a protected cycle track and footpath and traffic calming measures.

DC13

3.4.3 Footpaths and cycle paths

The Parish is generally well served with footpaths but parishioners are concerned that the north / south and east / west cycle tracks and footpaths have been severed by the new A130 and the Battlesbridge bypass projects. New underpasses, bridges or traffic lights need to be established to reconnect routes lost during construction. The establishment, of an east / west permissive footpath/cycle track link from Rettendon Place to the Runwell Hospital site over the Curry Hill footbridge would also be a tremendous asset and link us once again to the Essex network. . It is therefore important if the Core Policy is to be implemented in Rettendon for improvements to be carried out. See section 2.10.2. It is suggest that the following would significantly improve the situation.

CP19, DC15, DC41

1. Construct a bridge/tunnel across the Battlesbridge by-pass at grid reference 953779 to link the footpath from Battlesbridge conservation area to the Woodham Road. Calming measures along the Woodham Road would also reduce complaints of speeding and facilitate safety at the crossing point in the footpath network.
2. Establish a footpath and cycle path, if possible, (probably a permissive grant by the local landowners) from Rettendon Place to the Curry Hill footbridge and thereon through the Runwell Hospital development to provide a footpath link with the Wickford network.
3. The cycle tracks and footpaths are effectively terminated or severed at Rettendon Turnpike. It is therefore necessary for the Chelmsford Borough Council/Essex County Council to investigate this as a matter of urgency. The works necessary to provide safe routes for vulnerable persons should then be designed for local consultation before commissioning the work to cross the A132 Burnham Road in safety and link the A130/Turnpike to the new roundabout on the Wickford Road that will serve the Runwell Hospital development.
4. The fragments of bridlepath / cycle tracks that exist along the stretch of the old A130 between the Rettendon Turnpike and Howe Green should be fully connected.

See Appendix 6 for a map showing these proposals.

Clear guidelines are also required to ensure that the needs of both the equestrian and off-roading communities are met without conflicts.

The new roads have effectively created circumstances where pedestrians and cyclists have been forced back into their cars at the expense of the environment and contrary to national planning policy

3.4.4 Transport

The availability of spare transport infrastructure capacity is a limiting factor in the consideration of new residential or commercial developments. **CP19**

At the present time the ability of both road and rail infrastructures to absorb additional load is limited as is evidenced by the road gridlock that arises from the slightest issue on the A130 or from exceptional loads from car boot sales etc. and from the minimal and overcrowded rail services offered at Battlesbridge station. **CP19, DC41**

What little spare capacity exists will be further reduced by developments already approved such as :-

- The Runwell Hospital redevelopment projects
- The expansion in Hyde Hall visitor numbers
- The conversion of the Moorlands site to residential use

No further residential or commercial development, including the above, should take place without transport capacity studies and provision of new transport capacity if necessary.

Future residential developments should recognise the high levels of car dependency in such rural settlements and plan for realistic garaging and parking facilities.

Single carriageway country roads in the Parish should have speed limits of 20 mph.

3.4.5 Extensions to residential and commercial buildings

In countryside areas and Metropolitan Green Belt, planning policy strictly controls extensions to buildings.

The village favours a more permissive interpretation of the Core Policy with regard to extensions to buildings for residential or appropriate commercial use. **CP21, DC1/2, DC36, DC45, DC47**

Sustainability is more possible in rural areas if residents can provide an additional bedroom for growing family, an office or factory extension to an existing but expanding business or an extension to a key workers bungalow on an horticultural holding. Whilst the village agrees with the general presumption against inappropriate development in the countryside, a more practical approach should be exercised when dealing with minor development which will enhance and sustain the existing rural activities. **CP22**

In our view greater credibility should be given to local and Parish council opinions in respect of planning applications and the general views which are expressed in the guidance contained within the Village Design Statement.

Sustainability is often enhanced by permitting extensions into a redundant roof void either at first or second floor level. This should be encouraged subject to the problem of overlooking being addressed.

Rooms in the roof conversions will inevitable require dormer windows/extensions with a resultant impact on the street scene. Planners reviewing applications for such extensions should give value to the functional and internal impacts of the proposal consistent with the age and style of the building. Small tiled roof cottage style dormers are thought to be more attractive but the result is smaller, darker accommodation with limited head room that permanently restricts the utility of the extra space. The policy should provide a sensible balance between functional and aesthetic objectives appropriate to the style of the original building.

3.4.6 Energy saving technology

The Parish wishes to see more widespread use of energy saving technology such as solar panels and wind power and planners are encouraged to act favourably towards applications for such improvements. Re-cycling is to be encouraged.

3.4.7 Enforcement

There is considerable local concern with regard to the growth of unauthorised and inappropriate development within the Parish of which there are many examples. See section 2.11. Examples include unauthorised industrial development, the accumulation of waste materials and material changes of use or development and these sites have become established over time causing blight to the rural areas which Core Policy is intended to protect.

Residents are advised to report any unauthorised uses and the Parish requests the Borough Council to be more collaborative and pro-active in enforcing the relevant policies.



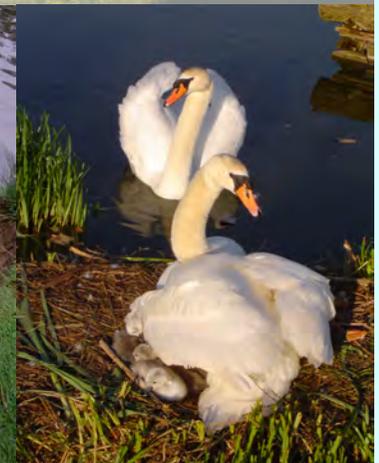
3.4.8 The natural environment

Additional sites for wild life should be identified to protect and strengthen the rural characteristics of the Parish. Projects such as the formation of new ponds, deciduous tree planting and new hedgerows are to be commended. The planning process should utilise every opportunity to apply reasonable planning conditions and planning gains as part of planning agreements

It is proposed that to encourage and protect the wildlife in Rettendon the following should be done :-

- Tree count is carried out and any notable specimens scheduled and where appropriate preservation orders applied.
- Protection offered to ancient hedgerows, containing trees such as spindle berries.
- Encouragement of conservation work such as providing ponds, copses and new hedgerows.
- Pollution in all its various forms should be limited and controlled. **DC15**

When considering planning applications that might impact on the natural environment Appendix 8 should be referred to. This defines green corridors across the Parish that exist to a large extent at the present time. This network should be preserved and enhanced to ensure wildlife can continue to thrive.



3.12 Future Development

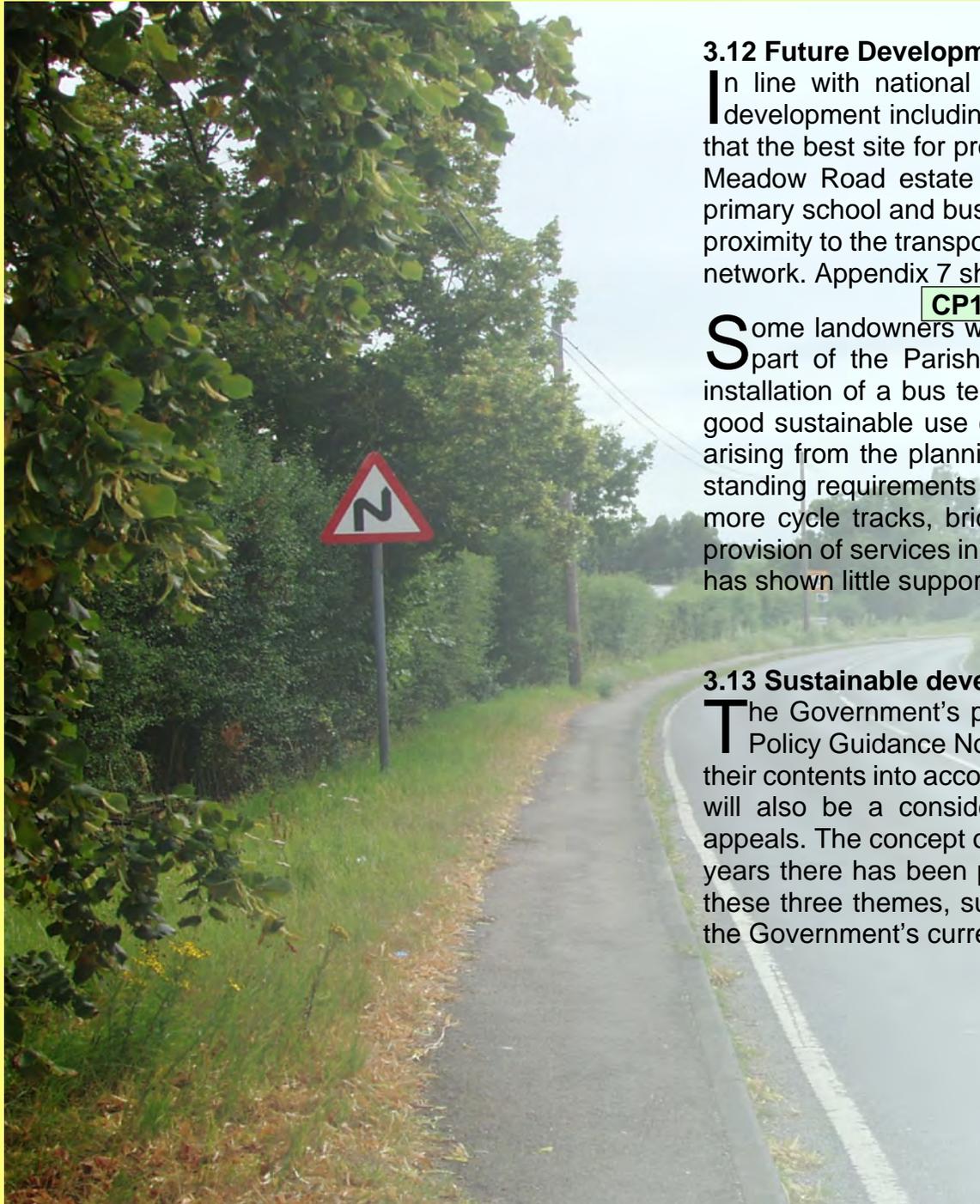
In line with national demographics there is demand within the Parish for further development including infilling development and affordable housing. It is considered that the best site for providing affordable housing would be to the north and east of the Meadow Road estate being close to village amenities including the Memorial Hall, primary school and bus routes. This area lies to the southern end of the Parish in close proximity to the transport infrastructure, Battlesbridge railway station and the A130 road network. Appendix 7 shows this site.

CP15, DC31, DC36

Some landowners would like to see a comprehensive development in the southern part of the Parish to include housing, improvement of the railway station, the installation of a bus terminal, shopping and the employment uses which would make good sustainable use of the existing infrastructure. It is expected that planning gains arising from the planning agreements and permissions will address some of the outstanding requirements for gas supply, mains drainage, street lighting, the provision of more cycle tracks, bridle paths and footpaths as well as other gains relating to the provision of services in the Parish. See section 2.9. Public consultation to date however has shown little support for large scale development of this nature.

3.13 Sustainable development

The Government's policies on different aspects of planning are shown in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) and circulars. Local Planning Authorities must take their contents into account when preparing their own development plans. The Guidance will also be a consideration for decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. The concept of sustainable development has a strong emphasis and in recent years there has been particular focus on mixed-used developments and design. It is these three themes, sustainable development, mixed use and design which underpin the Government's current approach to the planning system.



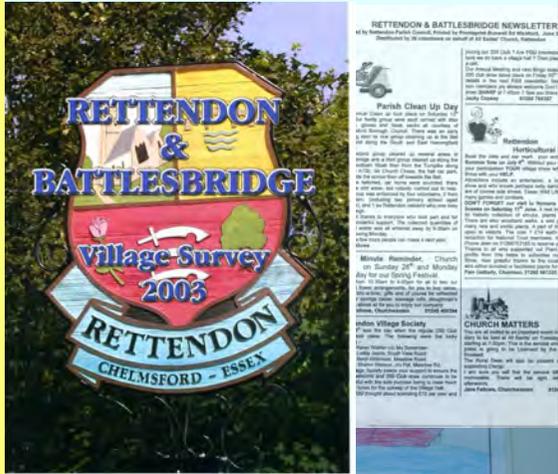
Appendix 0 - Housing Diversity and Density Rating definitions

This section defines the rating used to describe housing Diversity and Density ratings included in this Village Design Statement. Note that these ratings are not intended to be quantitative but are used only to compare and contrast between different character areas within the Parish

Factor	Explanation	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Diversity	<p>A rating based around the variability of the :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original design Use of construction materials Construction age Size based on the number of rooms Usage to which the building is put e.g. family housing, single occupancy, retirement etc. 	<p>More than 80% of houses in the character area are :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built to a common / repetitive design (estate housing) or in compliance to a common set of design rules Based on an original construction age spanning only 1 or 2 decades Of similar size in terms of room numbers having 3 to 4 bedrooms Aimed at similar housing markets 	<p>The character area contains an approximate balance exhibiting :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of building designs but with the presence of pockets of design repetition e.g. infill development A range of construction ages with 50% of buildings having been constructed within the last 100 years A range of building sizes spanning 1 to 4 bedrooms A significant similarity of usage 	<p>More than 80% of houses in the character area are :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built to a completely individual design unique for that character area or with recognisable regional design features Have an original construction age spanning centuries Have a dissimilar size with 1 to 10+ bedrooms Aimed at all housing markets
Factor	Explanation	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Density	<p>A rating based on living density including factors such as :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The basic type of house in terms of detached, semi-detached, terrace or link etc. The average street frontage of the plots The number of stories The availability of off-street parking The proximity between housing and industrial / commercial activities 	<p>More than 80% of houses in the character area are :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached properties On plots with an average street frontage of greater than 50 metres Either 1 or 2 stories high Provisioned with off-street parking Separated from commercial activity by more than 100 metres 	<p>The character area contains an approximate balance with up to 50% of the houses being :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached, linked or terrace buildings On plots with an average street frontage less than 15 metres Between 1 and 3 stories high Reliant upon on-street parking Separated from commercial activity by less than 100 metres 	<p>More than 80% of houses in the character area are :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached, linked or terrace buildings On plots with an average street frontage less than 15 metres Between 1 and 3+ stories high Highly reliant upon on-street parking Separated from commercial activity by less than 100 metres

Appendix 1 - Public Consultation Process

The following consultations have taken place and the results included in this Village Design Statement



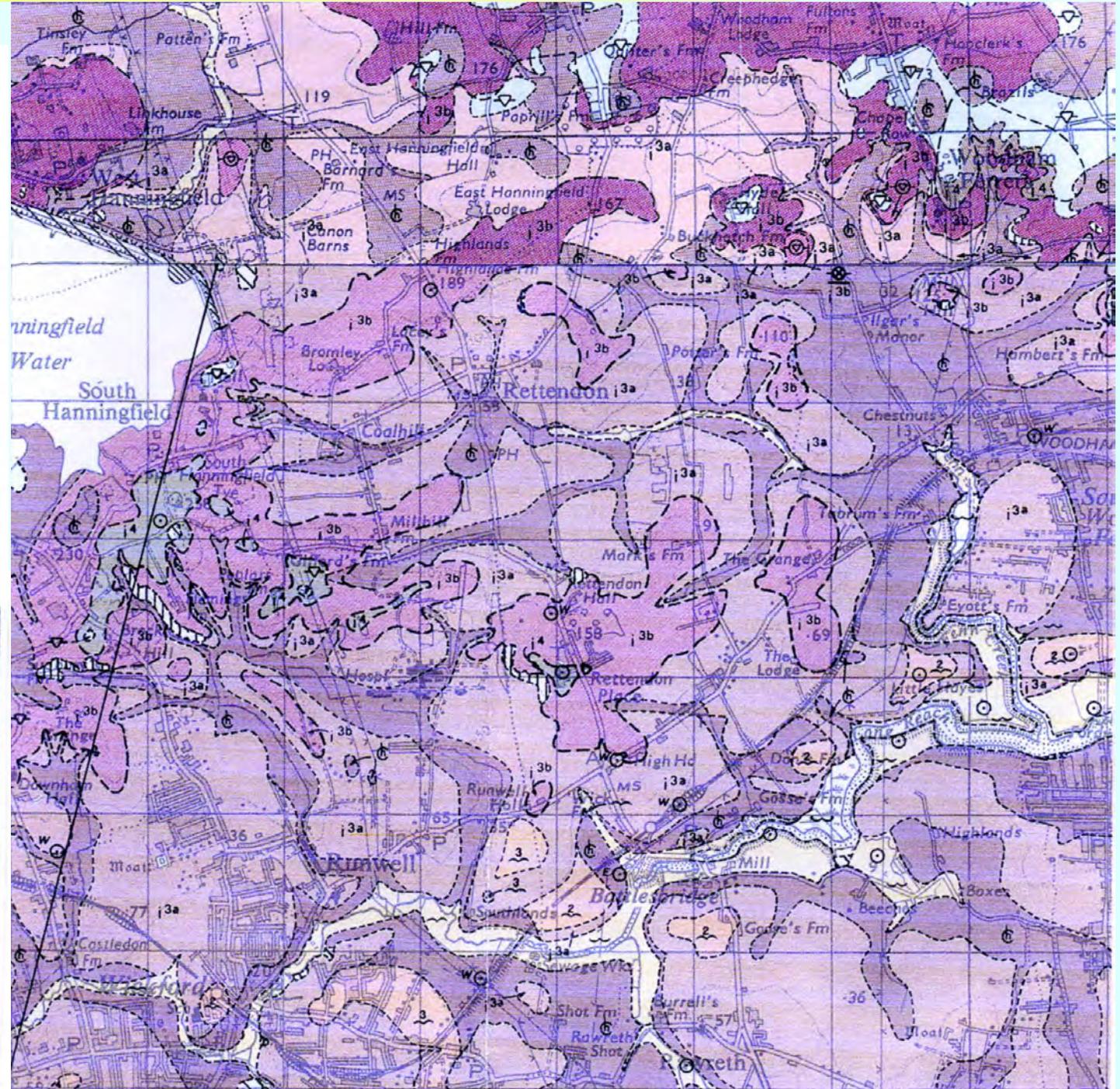
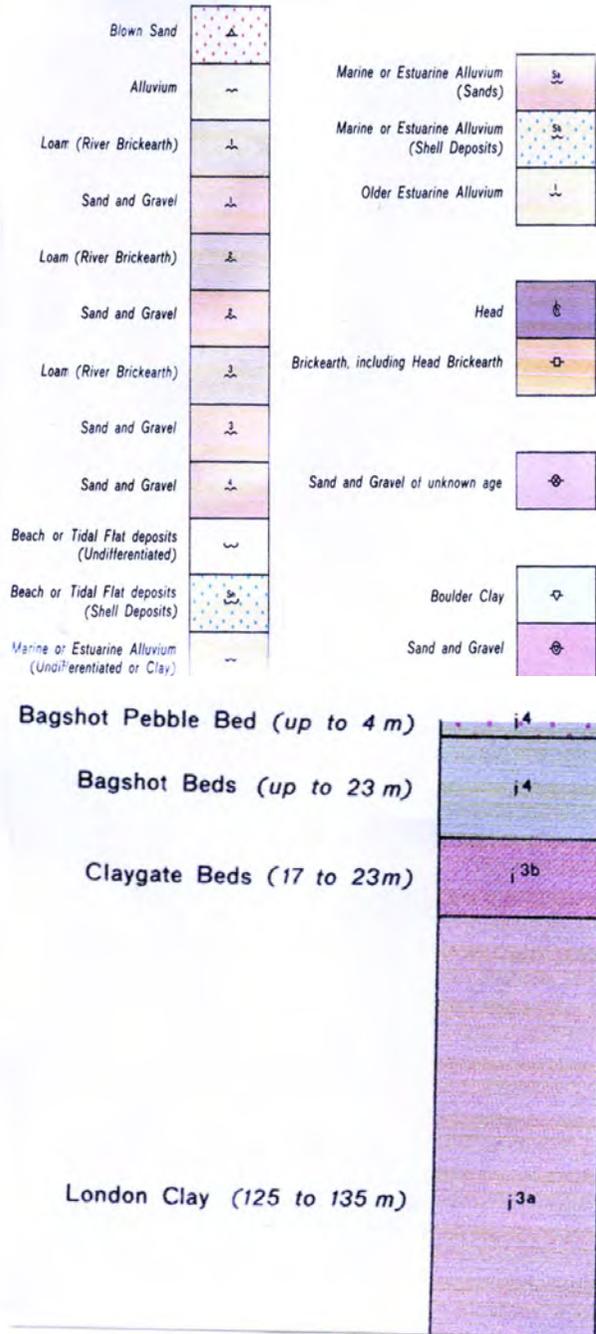
Date	Consultation Event
2003	Rettendon Parish Council surveyed residents by questionnaire for views on community life and issues. Survey results were published and distributed to all households.
Sep 2004	Rettendon Parish Council announce in Rettendon and Battlesbridge Newsletter their intention to set up Steering Group to produce a Village Plan and/or a Village Design Statement.
Nov 2004	Announcement in Rettendon and Battlesbridge Newsletter inviting parishioners to a meeting in the Village Hall to set up a Project team. Following this the first full meeting of the Steering Committee was held to elect officers and brainstorm the approach. Both events were supported by members of Chelmsford Borough Council and Rural Community Council of Essex.
Apr 2005	Announcement in Rettendon and Battlesbridge Newsletter communicating the outcomes of the inaugural Steering Committee meeting, the election of officers and the adoption of a constitution.
Jun 2005	Members of the Steering Committee visit Rettendon Primary School and encourage children in Years 5 and 6 to talk about their likes and dislikes of living in the village. The children also produced a series of pictures as illustrations of their views.
Jul 2005	A stall was set up at the Rettendon Horticultural Society Summer Show to illustrate the work of the VDS group. Attendees were invited to complete questionnaires and offer opinions on issues affecting village and its environment. (33 questionnaires returned). Feedback was analysed and the results published as VDS version 0.1.
Nov 2005	An article appeared in Rettendon and Battlesbridge newsletter inviting residents to submit photographs for a public display to illustrate opinions on local issues.
Jan 2006	Reminder in Rettendon and Battlesbridge Newsletter inviting residents to participate in the VDS consultation process, with attached green information sheet and an entry form for submission of photographic feedback.
Feb 2006	Article in Rettendon and Battlesbridge newsletter thanking residents who submitted photos.
Jul 2006	Invitation in Rettendon and Battlesbridge Newsletter to attend VDS display at Summer Show. At the Rettendon and Battlesbridge Horticultural Summer Show, the VDS Group had a stall to communicate the draft document and present results of the photographic and school visit feedback. Further opinion was invited using a questionnaire. Some 60 responses were analysed and the resulting data consolidated into VDS version 0.25.

Date	Consultation Event
Nov 2006	Members of VDS Committee attend RCCE exhibition and information event held at Feering.
Oct 2007	VDS version 0.25 was sent to Chelmsford Borough Council Planning Department for comment.
Nov 2007	Chelmsford Borough Council Planning response received by VDS Committee and feedback incorporated into VDS as version 1.0.
Aug 2008	VDS Committee submit VDS version 3.03 updated with further content derived from public consultation to the Planning Department at Chelmsford Borough Council for further comment.
Sep 2008	Chelmsford Borough Council Planning response received by VDS Committee and subsequently discussed in a conference call between VDS Editors and a Planning representative. Major document updates agreed at the meeting were incorporated into the VDS resulting in version 4.0.
Apr 2009	VDS Committee meet with Councillor Ray Ride to receive his feedback on VDS version 4.0. His feedback was used to make further significant revisions resulting in VDS version 4.5.
Jun 2009	Electronic copy of document published on village web site and residents invited to submit comments and feedback via a notice in the Rettendon and Battlesbridge Newsletter.
Jul 2009	Rettendon Horticultural Society Summer Show. The VDS version 4.5 document was set out on display boards on a stall. Residents were invited to give further feedback on the latest document by questionnaire (37 questionnaires returned). These comments were analysed and incorporated in VDS version 5.0.
Sep 2009	VDS Committee submit VDS version 5.0 document to the Planning Department at Chelmsford Borough Council for further comment.
Oct 2009	Chelmsford Borough Council Planning responses received by VDS Committee. Further changes arising from these comments included to form VDS version 5.5.
Nov 2009	Final comments were received from Councillors Ray Ride and Lance Millane and the document updated resulting in VDS version 6.0.
Jan 2010	VDS version 6.0 was adopted by Rettendon Parish Council on 25th January 2010 and subsequently to Chelmsford Borough Council. More feedback was received and discussed.
Dec 2010	A final set of changes required for Chelmsford Borough Council adoption were provided
Jul 2011	VDS version 6.5 was subsequently produced to include this feedback and re-presented to Rettendon Parish Council for adoption
Other contacts	The Village Design Statement Steering Committee met a total of 39 times since November 2005. After each meeting a progress report was communicated to the Rettendon Parish Council.



Full details of the individual survey results are available through the Parish Council.

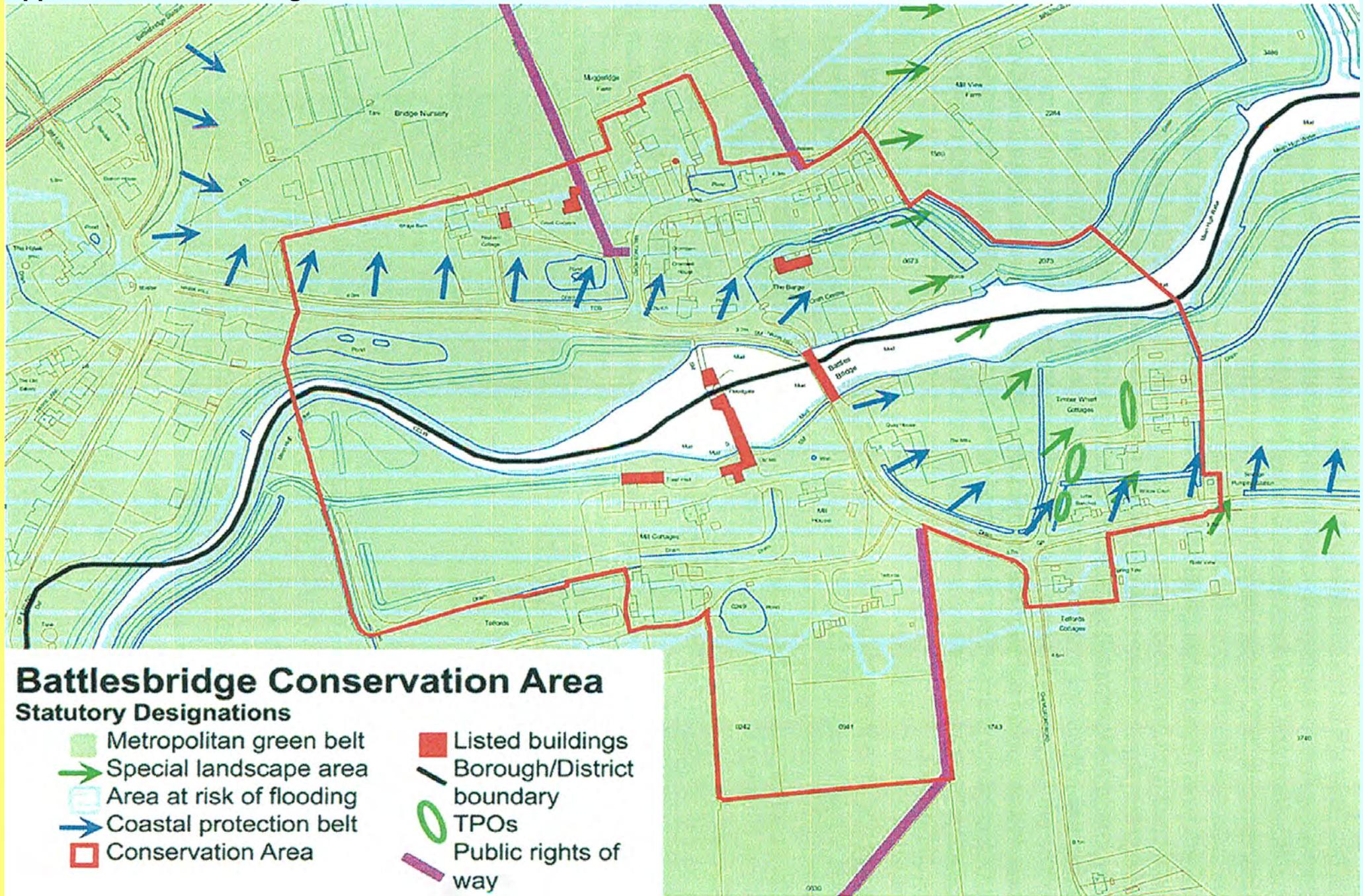
Appendix 2 - Geological Survey



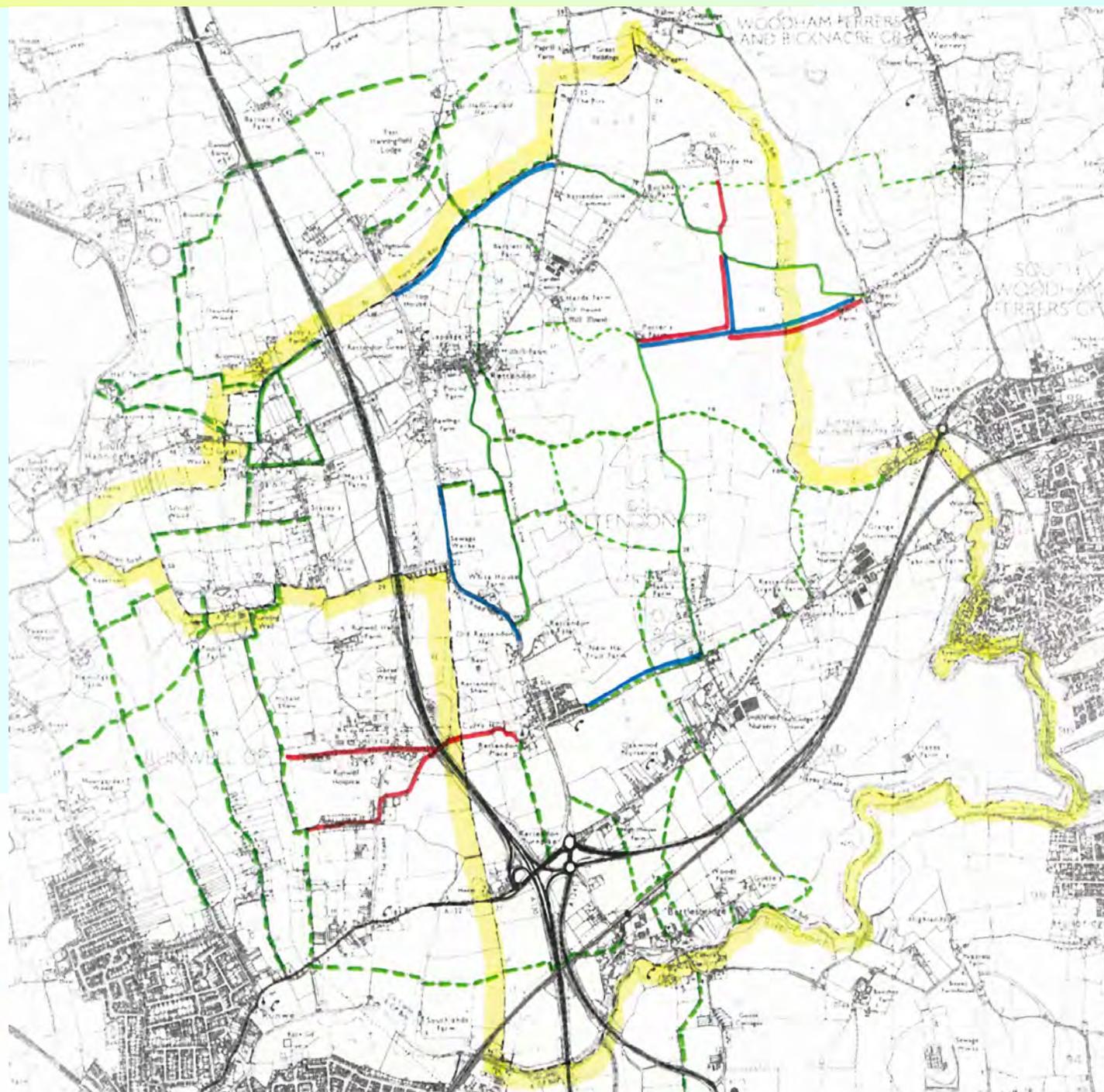
Appendix 4 - East Hanningfield Road settlement



Appendix 5 - Battlesbridge Conservation area



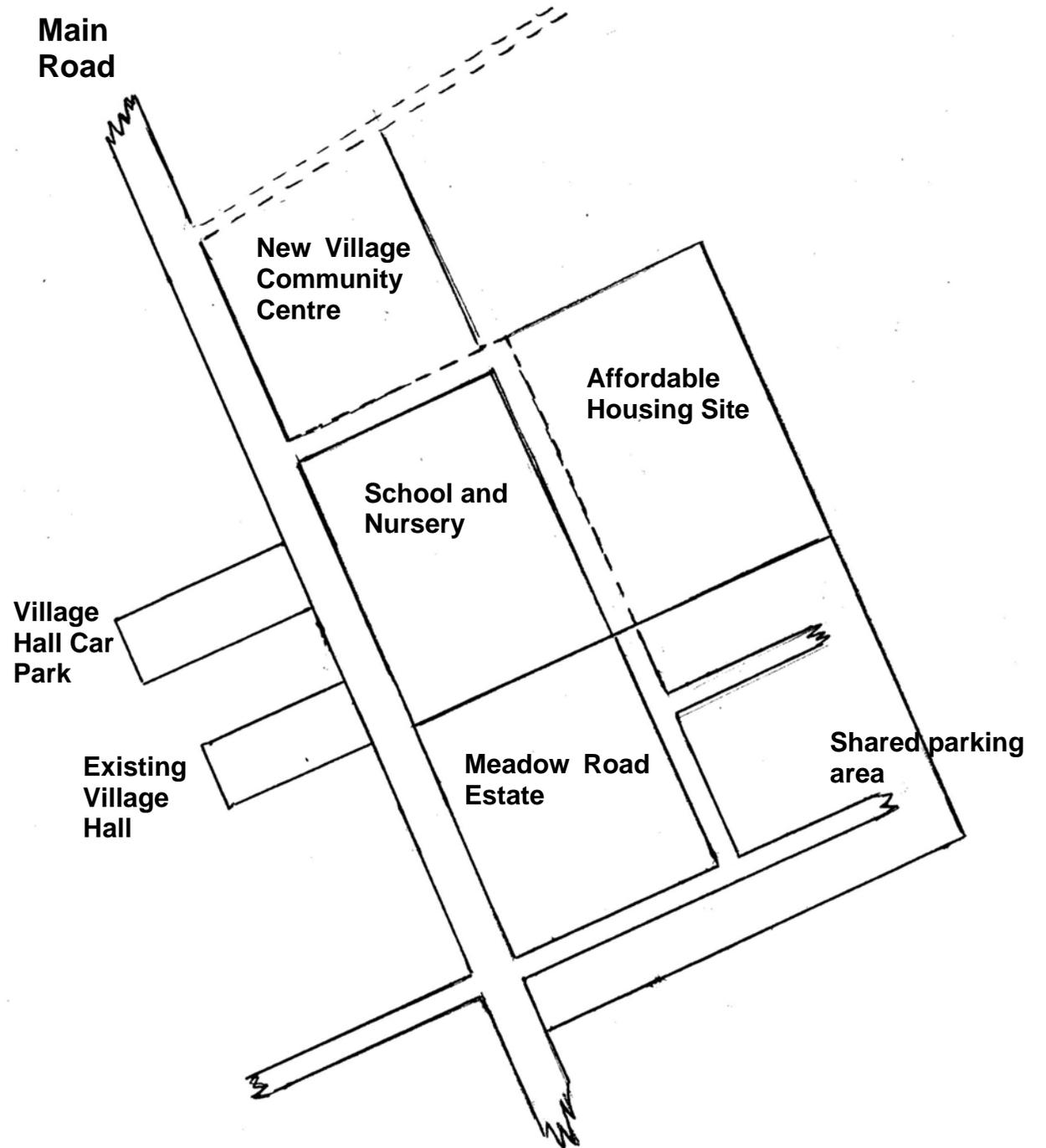
Appendix 6
Parish map showing exist-
ing and proposed new foot-
paths



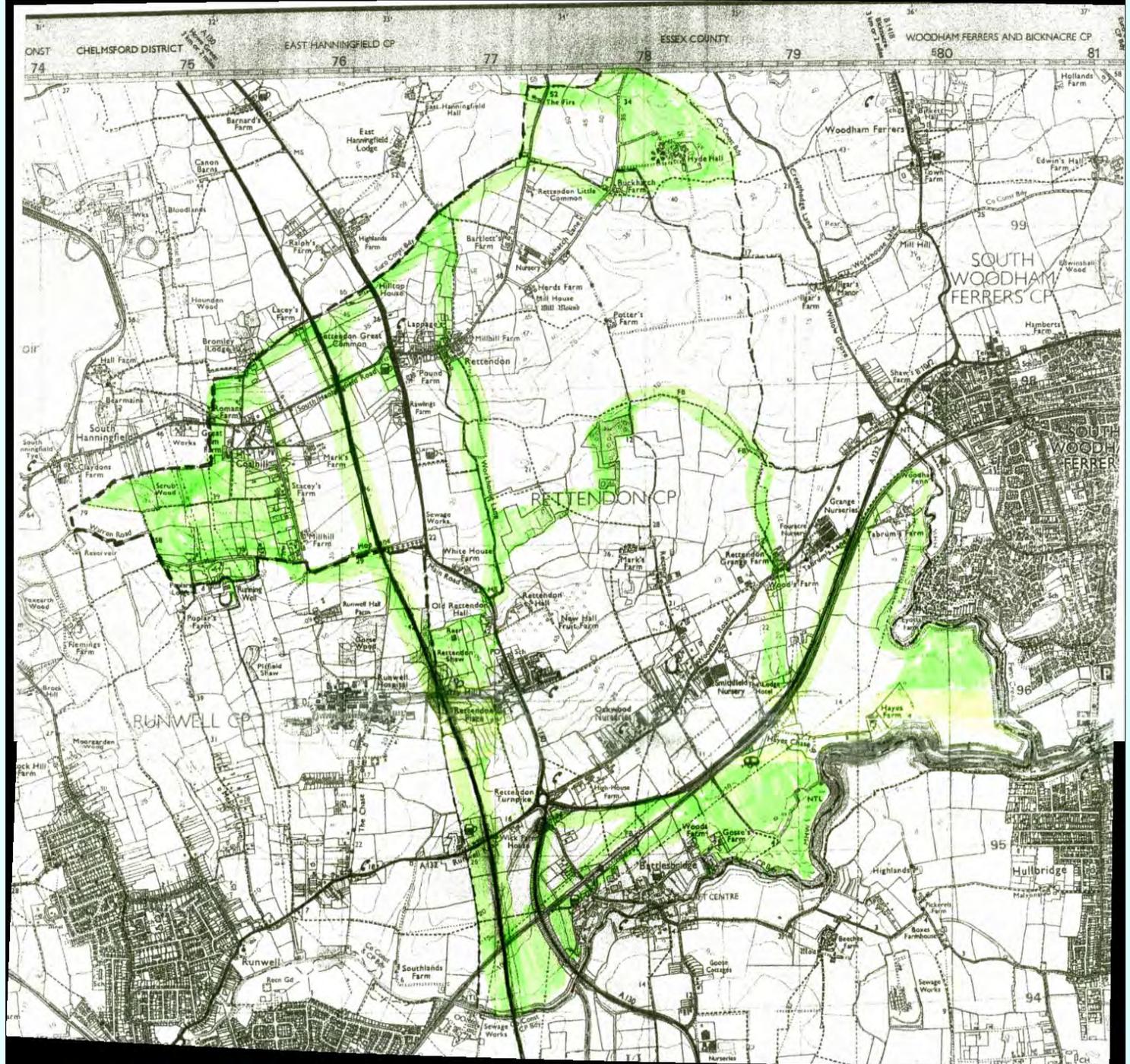
Legend

- Existing public footpaths
- Existing bridleways
- Proposed bridleways
- Proposed footpaths

**Appendix 7 - proposed new amenities
around Meadow Road estate**



Appendix 8 - proposed 'green corridors'



Acknowledgements

Firstly, thanks must go to all those Parish residents who gave their time to participate in the many public consultation events. In addition the following contributions to the preparation of this document are gratefully acknowledged :-

Rettendon Parish Council for their support and funding.

The hard work of the VDS Steering Committee members :-

- Pat Prebble - Chairman
- Roy Hart - Vice Chairman
- Martin Hendra – Treasurer and Editor
- Kay Miles - Secretary
- Jane Godfrey-Ryle - Editor

- Dudley Anderson
- David Bishop
- Mike Bunney
- Isobel Greenshields

With special thanks to Michelle Gardiner for her guidance and advice during the initial process and to Jamie Cole and Roger Estop of Chelmsford Borough Council for their invaluable reviews and feedback on draft documents along the way.

This document is also dedicated to our fond memories of working alongside Dudley Anderson (1924 to 2008). Dudley was an unsung World War II hero who sadly passed away during our labours on the VDS.

