

<i>Candidate Site Reference</i>	<i>Candidate Site Name</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Existing use</i>	<i>Site Area (ha)</i>	<i>Potential Yield (million tonnes)</i>
A56	Sheepcotes - Western	Chelmsford	Agricultural	9.88	1.06

The Site is promoted as an extension to an existing mineral Site (Sheepcotes Quarry) and is located adjacent to the western boundary of Sheepcotes Quarry. This Site area is approximately 9.88 ha and is proposed for 1.06 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction with processing and distribution at the adjacent Sheepcotes processing plant. Operations at the Site will commence following the completion of the currently consented agricultural reservoir. The adjoining uses include woodland, agricultural fields, residential and farm buildings. The village of Little Waltham is located to the south west of the Site. This Site would be accessible from the A131 via the existing processing area and access road. The practicality of the internal haul route from the public highway would need to be explored further especially with regard to the existing reservoir. See Appendix J for a detailed map of the Site.

Summary of RAG Assessment

The results of the technical and desktop RAG assessment are detailed below.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity	Biodiversity	Historic Buildings	Archaeology	Flooding	Transport	Access	Public Rights of Way	Geo-Environmental	Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Drainage	Air Quality	Soil Quality	Services & Utilities	Health & Amenity	Green Belt	Airport Safeguarding Zones
Amber /Green	Red/ Amber	Green	Amber /Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber /Green	Green	Amber	Green	Red/ Amber	Green	Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1). The Site possesses few characteristic features of the LCA, only a single arable field with hedgerow boundaries, reducing the sensitivity of the landscape. Appropriate consideration is required to protect and/or enhance the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Sheepcotes Wood located immediately on the northern boundary is a designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and Ancient Woodland, demonstrating a moderate contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity. Impacts on Sheepcotes Wood must be mitigated through a substantial buffer.
- While there are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the Site, there is a footpath following Sheepcotes lane adjacent to the Site to the south. Due to

the elevated nature of the Site, the mineral extraction works will be difficult to screen from the PRow.

- Site A56 is within the Impact Risk Zone for the River Ter Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located approximately 2.2 km north-east of the Site. This is a geological SSSI and therefore potential ecological impacts are not considered further.
- The Site is an arable field bounded by hedgerows which are Priority habitat. Sheepcotes Wood is situated immediately to the northern boundary. This designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It is an ancient woodland which is therefore irreplaceable habitat. The only existing gap in the Hedgerow between A56 and the adjacent Sheepcotes processing plant is immediately adjacent to the which could cause additional dust, disturbance, and potential damage to the soil adjacent to the woodland.
- The Site is graded Red-Amber because it could have major impacts upon the adjacent ancient woodland, which is irreplaceable habitat, and could have a serious impact upon the LoWS and Priority habitats and species. Impacts may include changes to the hydrology of the ancient woodland, smothering of leaves by dust, disturbance e.g. by noise and lighting. It could result in loss of habitat for Priority farmland species. Any extraction would require demonstration that it would not affect the hydrology of the ancient woodland to the north and it is likely that mitigation would require a substantial buffer from the ancient woodland. Activities which have the highest potential to generate dust, such as haul roads and mineral stockpiles, should be located away from Sheepcotes Wood and the other existing habitats, and should be regularly dampened to minimise dust emissions.
- The Site lies within an area known to contain areas of multi-period archaeology from the Late Bronze Age to the medieval period.
- Archaeological evaluation and excavation on the adjacent quarry to the east of the Site identified a late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age cremation as well as other features and Late Iron Age/Roman features indicative of settlement activity in the area.
- Aerial photographic evidence shows the presence of two large irregular enclosures to the south-east of the Site within Site A55. These have been tentatively interpreted as being of late prehistoric date, based on their shape and comparison to other settlement sites of a similar shape and size which have been excavated.
- Immediately to the south of the Site aerial photographic evidence has identified two irregular pond or quarry features.
- The Site has low groundwater vulnerability. The Site is within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (Surface Water). The Site is likely to have a minor impact on hydrology, hydrogeology, and drainage. Appropriate consideration

would be required to mitigate potential impacts on hydrology, hydrogeology, and drainage.

- The Site contains Grade 2 quality soil (very good quality agricultural land) which is BMV land. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on soil quality and agricultural land– this is likely to include removal of soils for stockpiling prior to reuse, potentially in site restoration.
- One residential building is more than 20m but less than or equal to 50m from the Site. One farm building and one residential building are more than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site. Given the proximity of sensitive receptors, high levels of mitigation are likely to be required to make the Site acceptable in terms of impacts on health and amenity e.g. high level noise screening and extensive dust suppression measures.

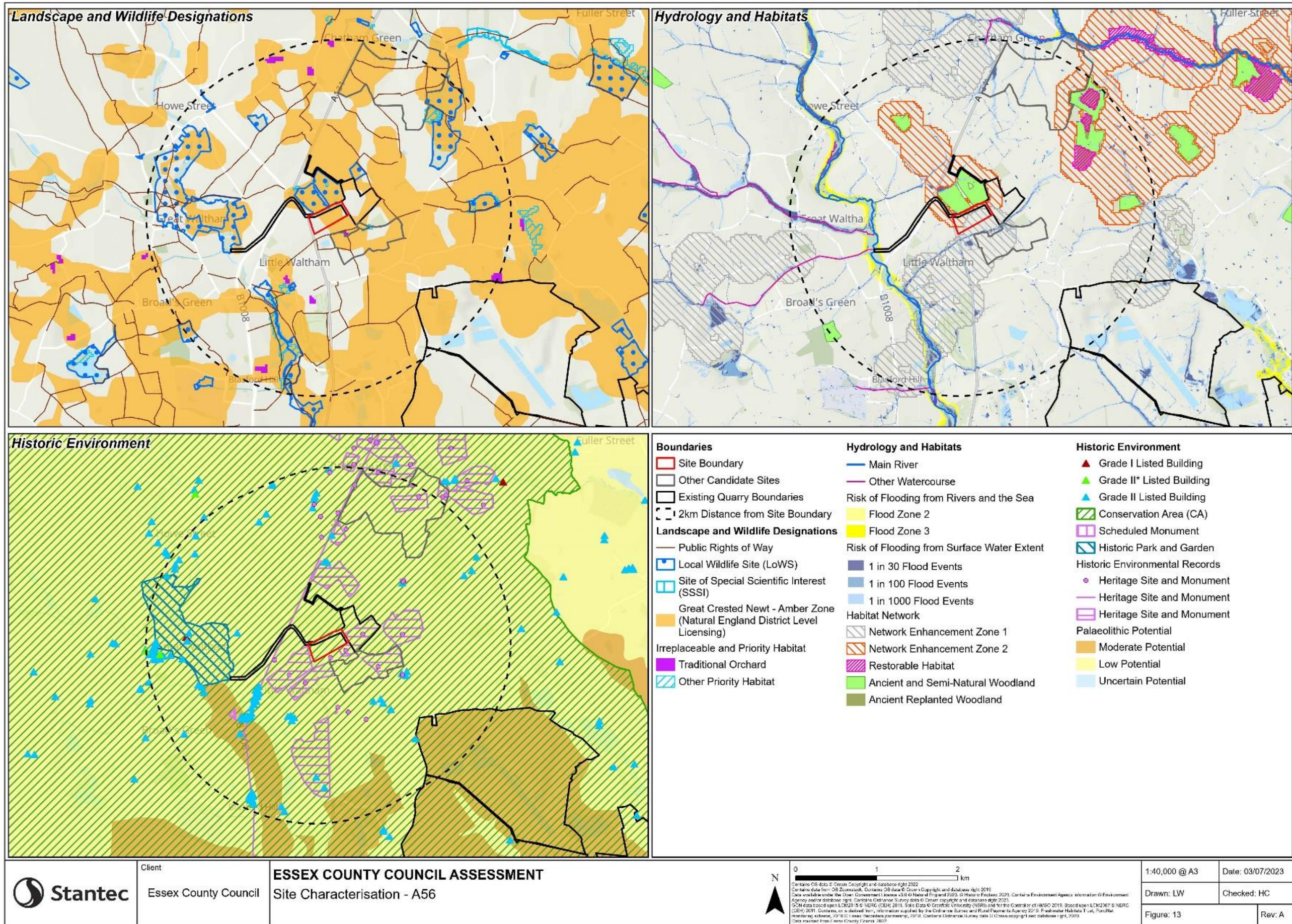


Figure 3.13: A56 - Sheepcotes - Western

The information and maps above represent a summary of the site assessment. You are encouraged to view the methodology and more detailed assessment for each site within appendices B-I. These can be found on the Candidate Sites Assessment webpage on our consultation pages:

www.essex.gov.uk/minerals-review

Appendix B - Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

Appendix C - Biodiversity

Appendix D - Historic Buildings

Appendix E - Archaeology

Appendix F - Flooding

Appendix G - Transport

Appendix H – Access

Appendix I - Public Rights of Way, Geo-Environmental, Hydrology, Hydrogeology & Drainage, Air Quality, Soil Quality, Services & Utilities, Health & Amenity, Green Belt, and Airport Safeguarding Zones