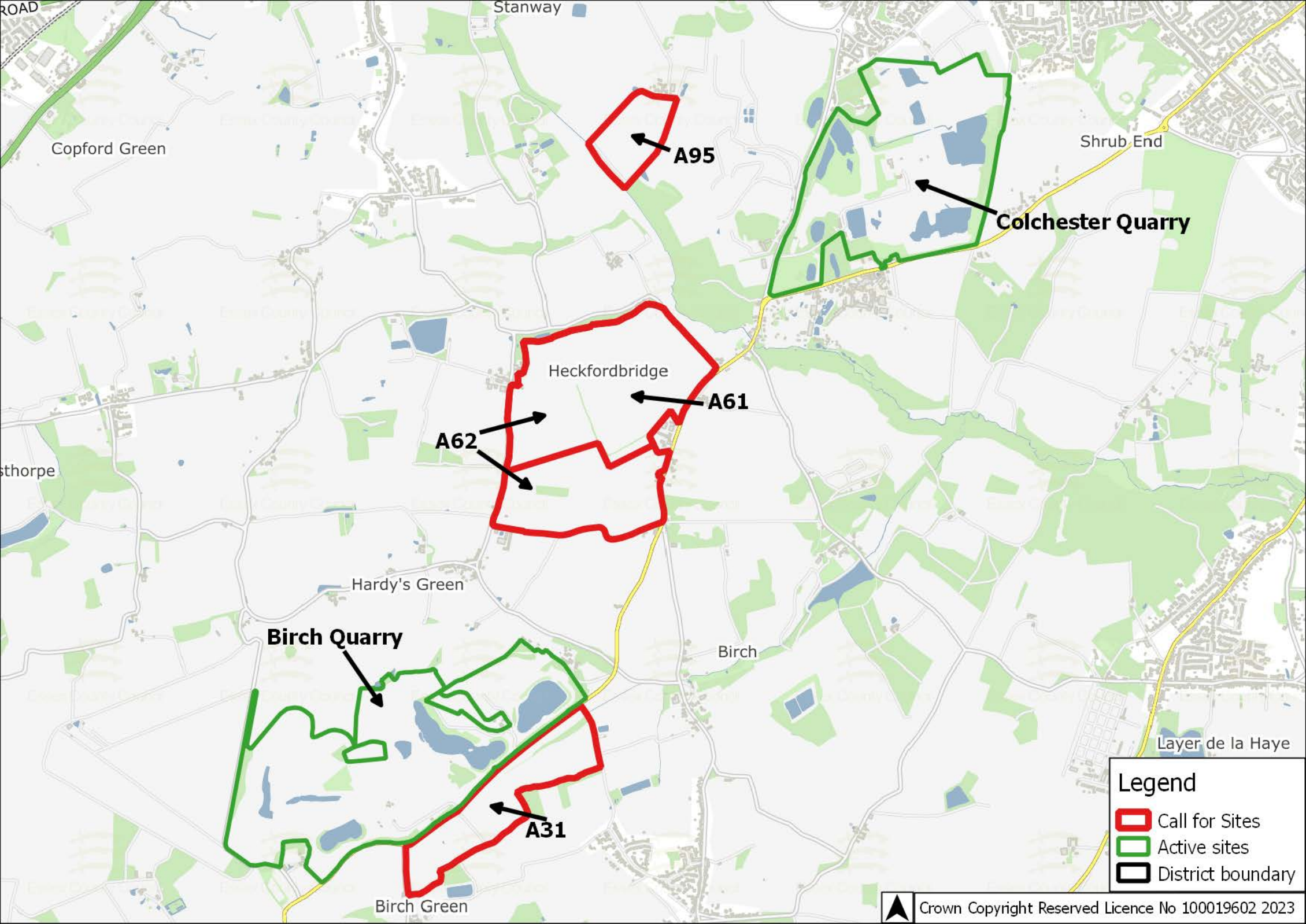




**Heckfordbridge
A62**

Legend
■ Site Boundary

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A62

A95

A61

Colchester Quarry

Birch Quarry

A31

Legend

-  Call for Sites
-  Active sites
-  District boundary

<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>
A62	Heckford Bridge - Site 2	Colchester	Agricultural	94.44	8.2

The Site is promoted as an extension to an existing mineral Site (Colchester Quarry) and is located south of Colchester Quarry. Colchester Quarry is split into two areas (Stanway Quarry and Bellhouse Quarry). The Site is approximately 94.44 hectares and is proposed for 8.2 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction. The Site operations would be in sequence to Colchester Quarry. Infrastructure needed on site includes a conveyer to convey material to Stanway Quarry and the existing processing plant. The adjoining uses include woodland, agricultural fields, residential and farm buildings. The village of Birch is located south of the Site. Access is proposed to be via the existing Colchester Quarry. The primary route for export of mineral is via Warren Lane to the A12 Eight Ash Green Junction, utilising the newly constructed Western Bypass. 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
Red/Amber	Amber	Red/Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red/Amber	Red/Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Green	Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is within an attractive undulating landscape with landscape and historic features in view. It is perceived as a rural landscape with some sense of tranquillity although these qualities are affected and reduced by the presence of Colchester Quarry. Consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the characteristics of the landscape character area for the Site.
- There are significant oak trees and hedgerow field boundaries with some historic value. Their retention, protection, and strengthening should be considered as part of mitigation and appropriate distance buffer areas will be required.
- There are attractive panoramic views of the surrounding landscape from the public footpath crossing the Site. There will be an adverse effect on the public

rights of way users and other receptors with regards visual impact, as well as long distance view of St Peters Church to the south. It will be difficult to mitigate for the loss of this view and existing panoramic views from this public footpath.

- The Site's parcel to the south is exposed along its west south and eastern boundaries. A bund could help with this, but would, in itself, be intrusive. Advance planting along this boundary could help to provide mitigation more in keeping with the existing character.
- Site A62 is c.3km northwest of Abberton Reservoir Special Protection Area, Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); it is just outside of the minerals SSSI Impact Risk Zone. The nearby Roman River is a tributary of the River Colne, which contains the Colne Estuary SSSI, Special Protection Area and Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation. The Site is also upstream of the Roman River SSSI and Upper Colne Marshes SSSI and the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach, and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone. Although these are some distance from the Site, the River creates a potential pollution pathway between A61 and these statutory sites, with respect to water quality and water quantity. The potential pollution pathway between the proposed mineral Site and international wildlife sites would need to be considered further through the plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment and any subsequent planning application.
- The closest Local Wildlife Site is the adjacent Beckingham Hall Road Verge (Co53) which is also a Special Roadside Verge (Hardy's Green SV-COL1). Gol Grove and Hanging Wood Local Wildlife Site (Co58) is c.50 m north-east of the main extraction Site and would be an estimated 25 metres from the conveyor. This LoWS comprises the ancient woodlands (irreplaceable habitat).
- The Site comprises sloping arable and agriculturally improved grass fields partly bounded by Hedgerows (Priority habitat). There are several internal Hedgerows which are priority habitat, and some mature trees in the centre of the field which would require removal but could not be accessed and a small plantation woodland. The northern boundary is mostly bordered with Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority habitat and broadly plantation woodland, which contain a pond and a watercourse. There is another watercourse on the southern boundary as well as a Special Roadside Verge which is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site. The Site is evaluated as having a 'County' level of importance for Wintering Birds by the Site proposer's ecologist.
- There are at least two Notable mature Oak trees and a number of other large mature Oak trees which are significant boundary features, including one on the southern boundary of the small internal woodland. One of the Notable trees on the eastern boundary is a prominent feature in its locality.
- The Site is graded Amber because ecological impacts are likely to be moderate and it is likely to require medium levels of mitigation to make it acceptable. ,The Site could have major impacts upon the internal Hedgerows

which are Priority habitat, the loss of a small number of trees of unknown quality in the field. Other Priority habitat Hedgerows could be dissected through the creation of the conveyor. The Site could have moderate impacts upon irreplaceable habitats (ancient woodlands) and upon the local designations and Priority habitats and species e.g. the Roman River, and Gol Grove and Hanging Wood Local Wildlife Site and direct loss of sections of hedgerows to accommodate the conveyor and the adjacent Priority habitat woodland. Impacts may include changes to the water quantity and quality of the River, severance of the habitat network and Priority Hedgerow habitats . It could result in disturbance and loss of habitat for Priority farmland species.

- Any application would require demonstration that the operations would not affect the hydrology of the adjacent ancient woodland, the Roman River and other boundary habitats. Appropriate mitigation and compensatory habitat should be provided for loss of the hedgerows and habitat for Priority farmland species. Water run-off from the Site should not be allowed to enter directly into watercourses.
- The allocation of the Site would likely result in 'less than substantial' harm at a mid-level to the significance of three Grade II listed buildings through a change within their settings: *Beckingham Hall (List UID: 1238478)*; *Lodge To East of Beckingham Hall (List UID: 1274178)*; and *Post Office Cottages (List UID: 1387257)*.
- The allocation of the Site would likely result in 'less than substantial' harm at the lowest end of the spectrum to four Grade II listed buildings. These being: Walnut Tree Farmhouse (List UID: 1306202); Barn to South West of Walnut Tree Farmhouse (List UID: 1110901); Bockingham Hall (List UID: 1306200); and Barn to South of Bockingham Hall (List UID: 1337417).
- The undeveloped, agrarian landscape of the Site contributes to the setting and significance of these assets and the fundamental change in land use and land character would undermine the ability to understand and appreciate their significance. The proximity of the Site to the heritage assets also presents challenges.
- The Site lies within an area known to contain areas of archaeological features visible as cropmarks from the air. These include at least one enclosure and a trackway within the Site.
- A sequence of crop marks is visible immediately to the south of the Site indicating a complex site with multiple enclosures. The cropmarks indicate a dispersed settlement pattern of probable multi-period date.
- Metal detecting finds include items of prehistoric, early medieval, and medieval date.
- Historic farm complexes are located just outside the north-western side of the Site, comprising the historic Bockingham Hall and Walnuttree Farm, and to the south-west at Beckingham Hall.

- There is potential for Palaeolithic or Pleistocene deposits within the gravels.
- The Site is assessed as having a 'low' potential for surface water flood risk as identified within the SFRA.
- The Site has been identified as having a 'medium' groundwater flood risk.
- The Site is entirely within Flood Risk Zone 1 and therefore is not at risk from fluvial flooding.
- Access is proposed via an existing access serving Stanway Quarry onto Warren Lane which is classified as a Secondary Distributor in Essex County Council's Development Management Route Hierarchy. This accords with (iii) in the methodology (see Appendix G Transport for full methodology):

Where access to the main road network in accordance with (i) and (ii) above is not feasible, road access via a suitable existing road prior to gaining access onto the main road network will exceptionally be permitted, having regard to the scale of the development, the capacity and form of the road and an assessment of the impact on road safety.

- Access is proposed via an existing access serving Stanway quarry onto Warren Lane which includes a ghost island right turn lane. This is acceptable and unlikely to require mitigation for use by HGVs.
- To export minerals by HGV via the existing access it is proposed that the mineral will be transported to the existing quarry by conveyor. This will need to cross the local road network (Fountains Lane). No detail provided.
- 2 Public Rights of Way cross the Site. 4 Public Rights of Way are within 100m of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be needed to mitigate potential impacts on these Public Rights of Way and high levels of mitigation may be required which is likely to include diversion especially with regard to those Public Rights of Way crossing the Site.
- The Site within a Zone III - Total Catchment Groundwater SPZ and has unproductive/medium to low groundwater vulnerability. A watercourse (Roman River) is 50m north east of the Site. A drainage ditch runs along the Site boundary. 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) and Grade 3 quality soil (good to moderate quality 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.
- The Site contains 11kV overhead and underground electricity cables within the Site boundary. The Site contains a high pressure gas mains (Cadent Gas) within the Site boundary. Local Essex and Suffolk Water mains are

present within the Site boundary. Further investigation and consultation would be needed to determine appropriate mitigation measures to make the Site acceptable which would likely include diversion and/or protection. Diversion/protection may not be possible and/or may be cost prohibitive.

- Seven residential buildings are within the Site. Two residential buildings and ten commercial buildings (Birch Business Centre) adjacent to the boundary of the Site (0m). Twelve residential buildings are outside the Site boundary less than or equal to 20m from the Site. Eight residential buildings and, one farm building (Bockingham Hall Farm) are more than 20m but less than or equal to 50m from the Site. Twenty two residential buildings are more than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site. Given the proximity of sensitive receptors, mitigation would be required, however, the levels of mitigation required to ensure that there are no serious impacts on health and amenity would likely be difficult to achieve.

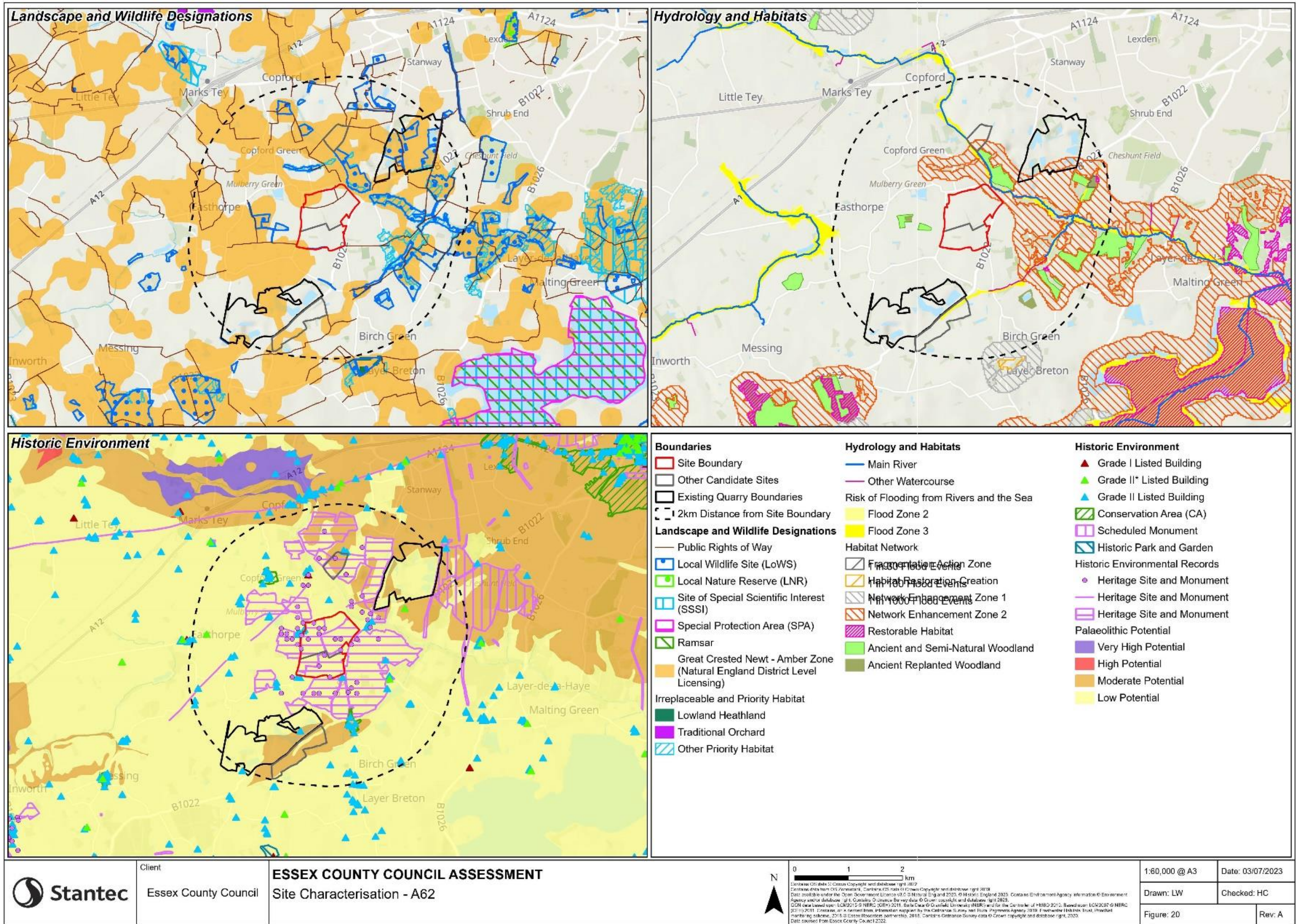


Figure 3.20: A62 - Heckford Bridge – Site 2

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