



**Land at Highfields Farm
A94**

Legend
[Red rectangle] Site Boundary

▲ Crown Copyright Reserved Licence No 100019602 2023

<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>
A94	Land at Highfields Farm	Braintree	Agricultural	34.69	0.75

The Site is promoted as a new Site at land at Highfields Farm, Highfields Lane, Kelvedon. The Site area is approximately 34.69 ha and is proposed for 0.75 million tonnes of materials for sand and gravel extraction which will be transported to a processing plant on site where it will be washed, graded, and stocked before being exported off site. Additional infrastructure needed on site includes a processing plant with ancillary facilities, site management infrastructure, and a network of haul roads across the Site. The adjoining uses include agricultural fields, woodland, Highfield Solar Farm, the A12, and residential, commercial and farm buildings. The village of Kelvedon is located to the north of the Site. The Site is promoted as accessible via a new site access off the Inworth Road (B1023). 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 & Amenities	Green Belt	Airport Safeguarding Zones
Amber	Amber	Red	Red/Amber	Amber	Red/Amber	Red	Red/Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Green	Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses a number of features of the Tiptree Ridge (D4) Landscape Character Area (LCA), including its location on the ridge providing views north-west across the Blackwater valley, the tall, dense hedgerows, and the medium scale field pattern. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly concerning views of the Site from across the River Blackwater.
- Site A94 is within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) minerals Impact Risk Zone for Tiptree Heath SSSI (c.2.7km to the southeast). It is considered that the likelihood of impacting Tiptree Heath SSSI is likely to be low, using professional opinion.
- Kelvedon Hall Wood Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) is 240m to the southwest and is Ancient Woodland. Brockwell Meadows LoWS is c.365m to the north/ north-

west adjacent to the River Blackwater. Part of Brockwell Meadows is also designated as Local Nature Reserve (LNR). An additional 5 LoWS are within 1km of the Site. Two of these – i.e. Inworth Wood (Co6) and Perry's Wood (Co5)- are also both ancient woodland and are located 430m and 460m from the Site, respectively.

- The Site comprises a number of arable fields; bounded by Hedgerows and lines of mature trees which are Priority habitat and a number of other ditches. A Hedgerow (Priority habitat)/ line of mature trees and associated watercourse runs across the centre of the western area, the water heading towards the River Blackwater. There is a Hedgerow (Priority habitat)/ line of mature trees and associated ditch (dry at the time of survey) crossing through the eastern part of the Site. These would potentially require removal to accommodate the development. Additional sections of Hedgerow Priority habitat may require removal to accommodate visibility splays and access routes. The River Blackwater is c.260 metres from the Site at its closest point; there is hydrological connectivity to the River via the watercourses.
- There is a veteran Ash tree on the southern boundary of the Site, in the western part. Veteran trees are irreplaceable habitat.
- The Site is graded Amber because ecological impacts could be moderate and are likely to require medium levels of mitigation to make the Site acceptable. The Site could have moderate impacts upon irreplaceable habitats, i.e. the veteran tree and ancient woodlands. The Site could have a major impact upon the natural environment including loss of, and indirect impacts to Hedgerow Priority habitat, mature trees, watercourses. This includes impacts to water quantity and quality of the watercourse which could, in turn, affect the River Blackwater and associated habitat, some of which is designated as LoWS and LNR.
- Any application would require demonstration that the operations would not affect the hydrology of the veteran tree, nearby ancient woodlands, hedgerows, mature tree lines, ditches and other boundary and nearby habitats. Mitigation may include - but not be limited to - an adequate and appropriate buffer between the Site and these habitats, particularly the veteran trees, and prevention of deterioration of water quality to the watercourses. Water run-off from the Site should not be allowed to enter directly into watercourses. Compensatory habitat for the loss of Hedgerows (Priority habitat)/ lines of mature trees and ditches, and Priority farmland species may be required.
- The allocation of the Site would result in a high level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Highfields Farmhouse and attached cottage (List UID: 1337626).
- It would also result in a low level of less than substantial harm Grade I Listed Parish Church of All Saints (List UID: 1224592).

- It would further result in the lowest level of less than substantial harm to the Grade II Listed Inworth Hall (List UID: 1224616).
- The scheme would result in the lowest level of less than substantial harm to the Grade II Listed Harborough Cottage (List UID: 1224587).
- Mitigation in the form of planting and open landscape areas is unlikely to effectively reduce the levels of harm.
- The undeveloped, agrarian landscape of the Site makes a positive contribution to the setting of these assets and enhances their significance. The fundamental change in land use, land character and environmental impacts from noise, dust and vehicle movements would undermine the ability to understand and appreciate their significance.
- The Site lies within an area of archaeological features as identified through aerial photographic evidence.
- The Site contains evidence for possible prehistoric ritual activity, settlement, and Roman industrial activity and the nationally important site of an Iron Age warrior may lie within the Site.
- The Site has potential to contain Palaeolithic archaeological remains and Pleistocene palaeoenvironmental remains.
- The Site is assessed as having a 'high' 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 from Windmill Hill which is a local road that connects to the B1029 which is a Secondary Distributor in Essex County Council's Development Management Route Hierarchy. This corresponds to (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.

- From a highway viewpoint Windmill Hill, the B1023 and connections to the Main/Strategic Road Network via the A12 Trunk Road are not suitable in their current form.

- Any access taken from Windmill Hill (which lies within the Colchester district) would not be supported by the Highway Authority due to the unsuitability of Windmill Hill and the local road network.
- The applicant may wish to consider a haul road across the B1023, for which details would need to be submitted before any comments could be made.
- The Highway Authority note the presence of Public Rights of Way within the Site. All details relating to the PROW should be agreed with the Highway Authority, this may include a package of measures to protect and enhance the PROW network.
- Crossing of Highfield Road required. No detail provided.
- 5 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 has unproductive/low/medium to low groundwater vulnerability. The Site is within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (Surface Water) and is within Drinking Water Protection Areas (Surface Water). A water course is within 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 electricity lines within the Site boundary. Virgin media power lines are within the Site boundary. The Site contains high pressure gas mains (Cadent Gas) 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.
- Two farm buildings are adjacent to the boundary of the Site (0m). Two residential buildings are outside the Site boundary less than or equal to 20m from the Site. One residential building is more than 20m but less than or equal to 50m from the Site. Two residential buildings, and three farm buildings are more than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site. Two residential buildings, and three farm buildings are more than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site access connecting the two sections of the Site. Twelve residential buildings and one community facility (place of worship) are more

than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site access. 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.

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