

Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

An assessment of the landscape sensitivity of the main settlement edges within Swale Borough

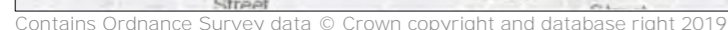
Report prepared by LUC for Swale Borough Council
May 2019



Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Residential Development

Sensitivity to Residential Development

High



Source: SBC, LUC

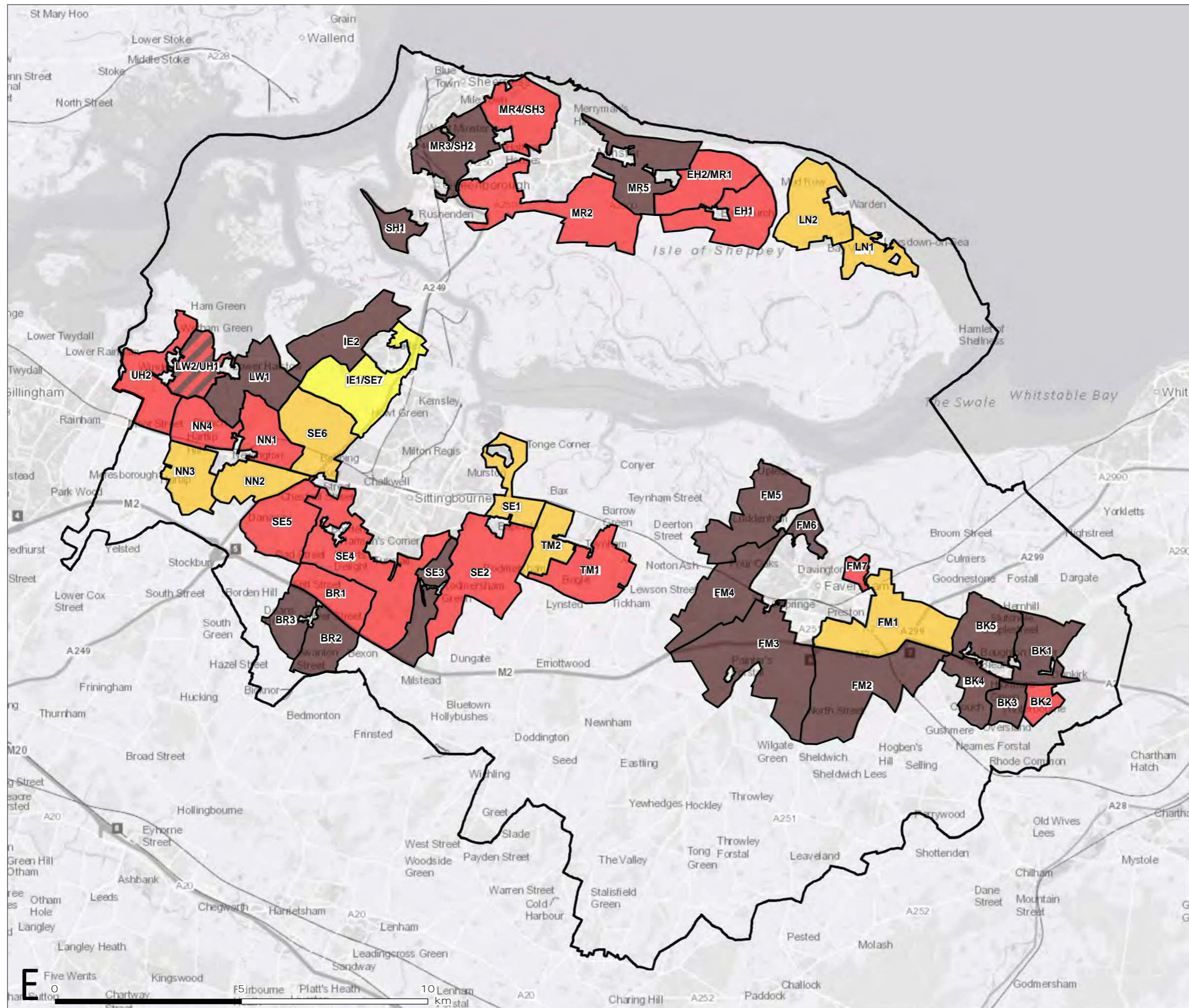
Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Employment Development

Swale Borough Boundary

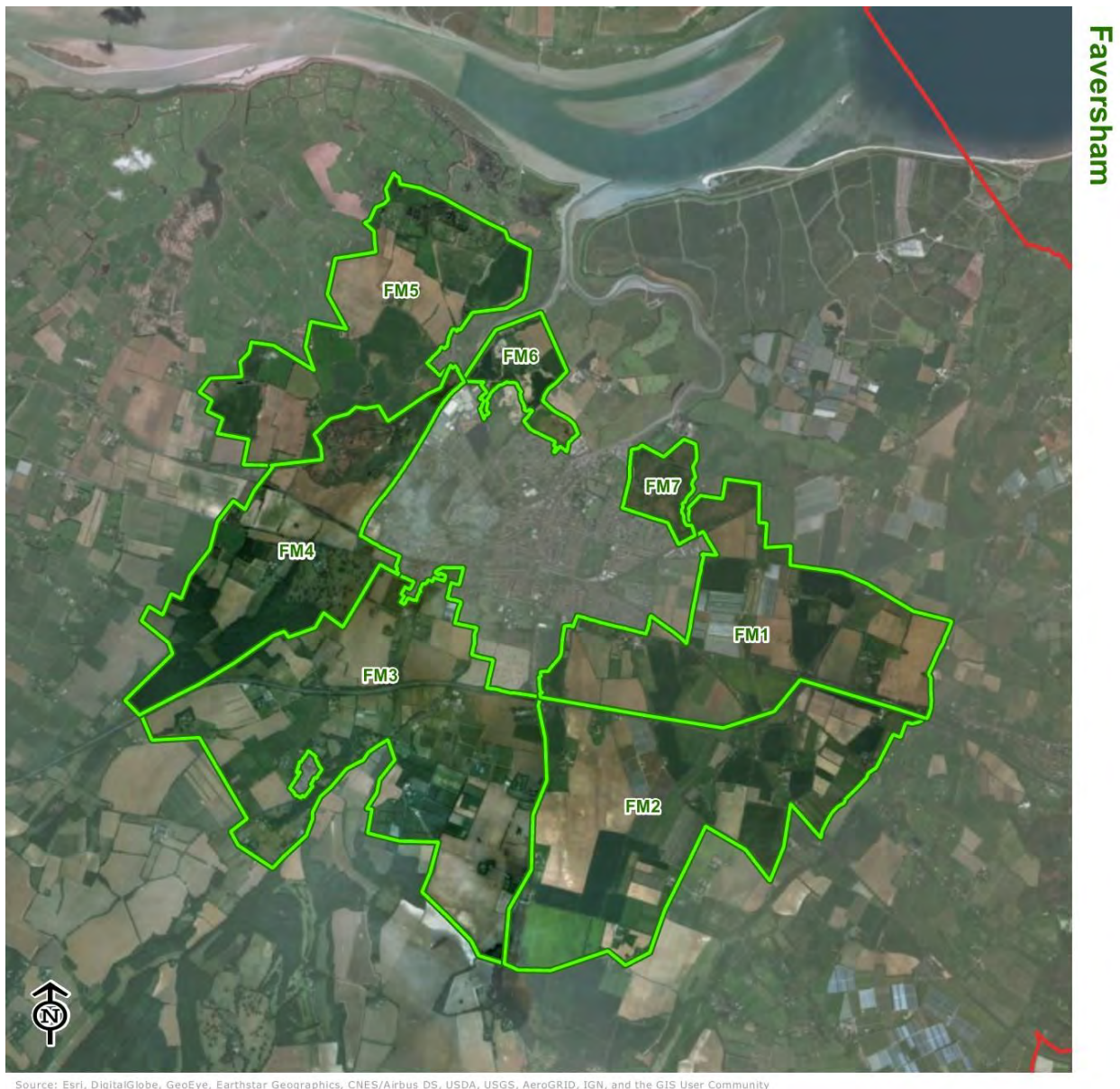
Sensitivity to Employment Development

- Low
- Low-moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate-high
- High



Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000





Location and Description

Faversham is an historic small market town located in the east of Swale Borough, at the head of two tidal creeks and surrounded by areas of highly productive agricultural land. With a population of circa 20,000 it is one of the three largest settlements within the Borough, and has pre-Roman origins, with a rich built heritage.

The settlement edge is divided into seven areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas, together with physical boundaries such as roads, and comprise:

FM1 – 3 - the gently undulating fruit belt and arable farmlands to the south and east.

FM4 – the wooded dry valley at Syndale with mixed farmlands and parkland to the west and south west.

FM5 – the rolling arable farmlands to the north west.

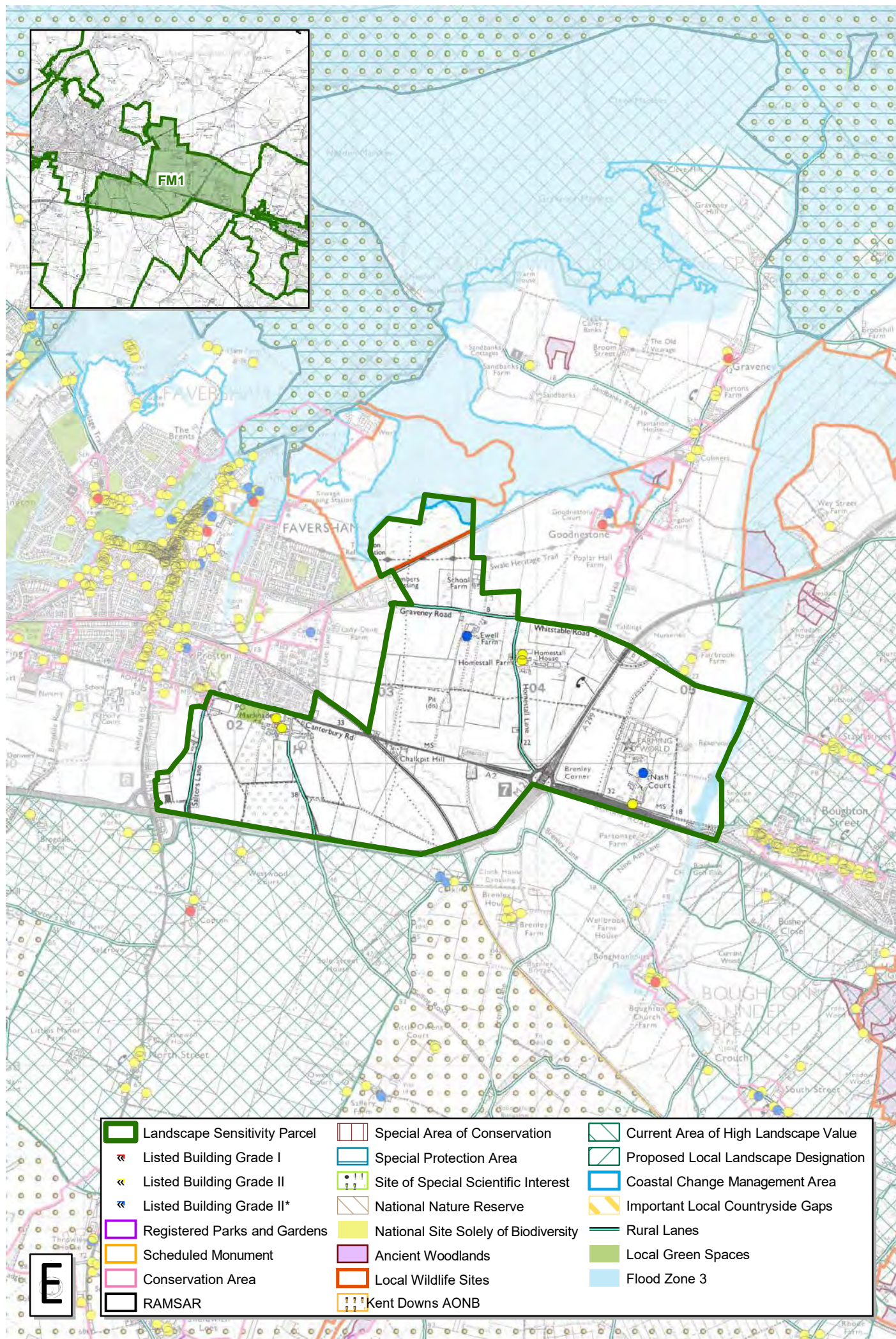
FM6 – an area of flat arable farmland and gravel works bordering the marshlands to the north.

FM7 – a small area of flat arable farmland and sewage works bordering the marshlands to the north.

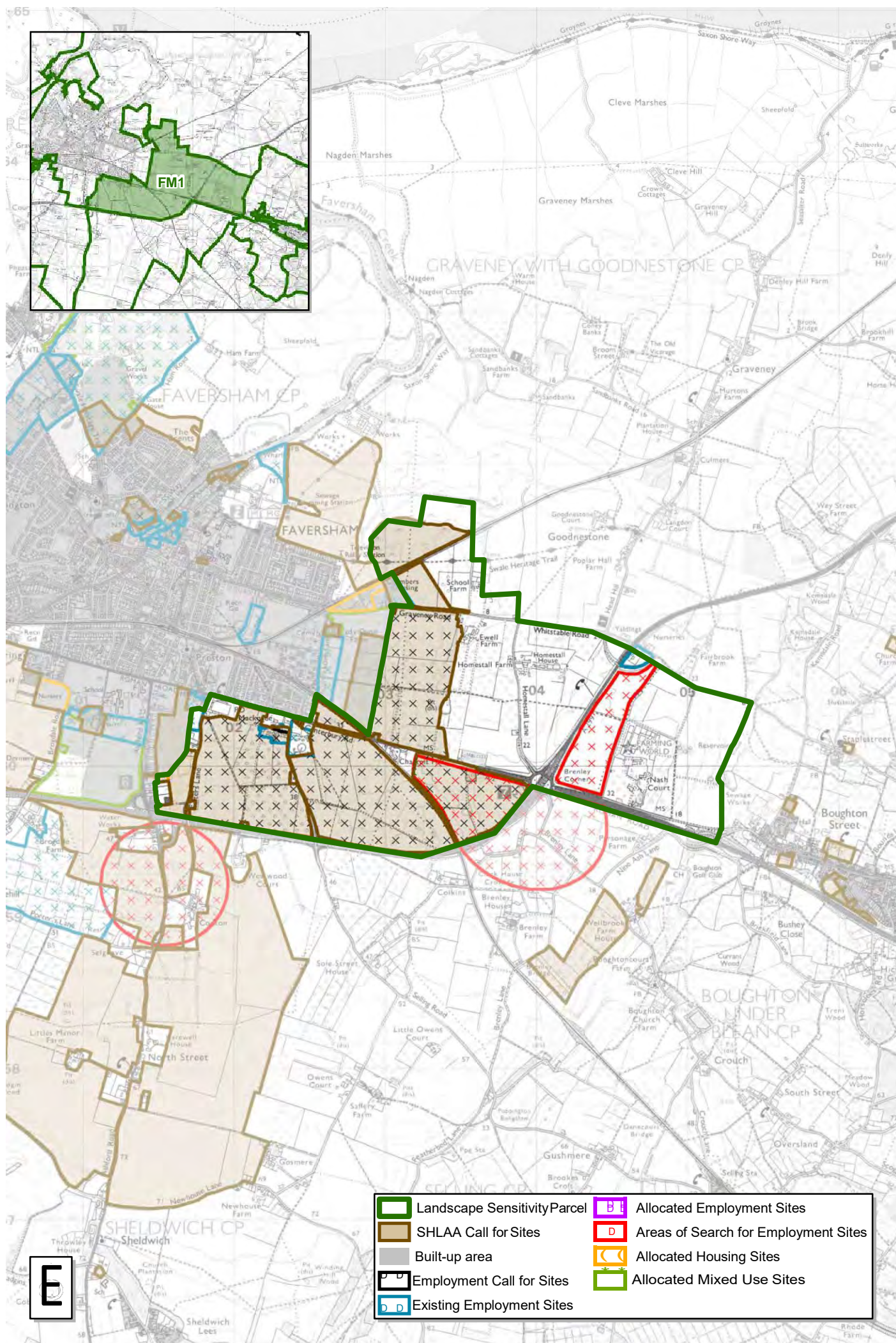
Faversham

Areas up to the 2km buffer to the north of the settlement edge have been largely scoped out of the assessment due to flood and coastal change risk (Environment Agency/Swale Flood Zone 3 and Coastal Change Management Area) and nature conservation constraints (e.g. SSSI and SAC).

Faversham Area FM1: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View east over large arable field towards the Blean



View north over currant field towards Faversham

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the south and east of Faversham lies within the Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.20). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields and areas of commercial fruit cultivation and horticulture.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). An AHLV – Kent Level (North Street Dip Slope) lies adjacent to this area, to the south beyond the M2, and the Blean Edge Fruit Belt AHLV – Swale Level lies **adjacent to the area's** easternmost boundary. These areas are recommended in the 2018 study for designation as Kent Downs – North Street Dip Slope LLD and Blean Edge Fruit Belt LLD respectively.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landscape has a gently undulating topography, with a slight incline in the south away from the marshlands and towards the Kent Downs dip slope. Fields are predominantly medium scale with regular boundaries, although there are some large to very large arable fields in the east on either side of the M2 / A299. The presence of some commercial orchards and an associated network of shelterbelts and hedgerows throughout the area provides enclosure and helps contain the apparent scale of the landscape.
Natural character	<p>There is a relatively limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. This includes small, isolated blocks of deciduous woodland, e.g. east of Chalkpit Hill, and traditional orchards including a relatively large example at School Farm, Graveney Road. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which do not exhibit a natural character.</p> <p>Salter's Lane, Selling Road, Homestalls Lane, Graveney Road and Staple Street are locally designated Rural Lanes.</p> <p>There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is dominated by a combination of orchards and prairie fields (19 th century enclosure, with extensive boundary loss occurring post-WW2 and into the 21 st century). In addition, there is an area of medium regular parliamentary type enclosure in the north, post 1801 settlement around the edge of Faversham, and scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent) in the east around the junction of the A299 and Staple Street.

	<p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic farmsteads, with occasional pasture and traditional orchards. Some areas of orchard have been lost in recent decades, together with field boundaries, resulting in more open, larger arable fields, particularly in the north and east of the area. Built heritage features comprise a number of listed farmhouses, including Nash Court (Grade II*), Ewell House (Grade II*), Homestall House and barn (Grade II), Macknade and related oasts (Grade II). There are also unlisted oasts at School Farm, off Whitstable Road.</p>
Visual character	<p>There are some long views across the larger scale fields to the north across the Swale to the Isle of Sheppey, which include wind turbines; and to the east to the wooded high ground of the Blean. Views are occasionally curtailed by established shelterbelts of tall poplars, although given the scale of some fields this does not diminish the sense of this being a relatively open landscape area.</p> <p>The visual prominence and openness of parts of the area, notably the north and east, appears to have increased recently with an enlargement of arable fields and loss of some shelterbelts, hedgerows and orchards. Large scale polytunnels north of the A2 are also quite prominent features which reflect sunlight.</p> <p>The skyline character is generally undeveloped and non-prominent, given the subtlety of landform; occasionally this is punctuated by modern features such as telecoms masts, low-level electricity transmission lines (on poles) and gantries / signage along the M2 corridor; although none of these features are particularly intrusive.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The presence of major road infrastructure and heavy traffic levels within the area significantly impacts on the sense of rurality and tranquillity, although away from these routes the rural character increases, for example along the minor lanes (Selling Road and Homestall Lane), with some relatively intact stretches of hedgerow.</p> <p>Public access comprises a number of PROWs, including the promoted Swale Heritage Trail Recreational Route, which crosses the far north of the area.</p> <p>Faversham Cricket Club ground is a designated local green space.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>Besides the scattered farmsteads, there is little settlement within the landscape area itself. The settlement edge of Faversham adjoins the north west of the area, beyond the A2 and the B2040 Love Lane. This settlement edge is characterised by a combination of historic features within the Preston-next-Faversham and Faversham Conservation Areas, such as Faversham Cemetery, together with 19th and 20th century housing, and is well-contained by these roads, of a low rise character and relatively well-screened by established roadside hedgerows. As such, there is not a strong visual relationship with the landscape area. Nevertheless, there is some intervisibility between the two, with the local landmark of the spire of St. Mary of Charity Church, Faversham visible on the skyline from some parts of the area, and the open recreational spaces of Faversham Cricket Club and Faversham Town Football Club grounds are located within the landscape area, immediately south of the A2, imparting a transitional character between the settlement and the agricultural land beyond. The area forms a strong agricultural setting for the market town.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Despite the proximity to Faversham, the area retains a strongly agricultural character, albeit with limited tranquillity and a recent trend towards some enlarged arable fields and a loss of structural features such as shelterbelts, hedgerows and orchards, imparting a greater openness to the landscape, accentuated by the flat to gently undulating landform. Heritage assets such as farmsteads, together with natural features such as woodland and remnant traditional orchards, have the impression of being quite isolated within the modern agricultural landscape and road network. These attributes, in combination with the visual exposure of the area and the absence of landscape designations, indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

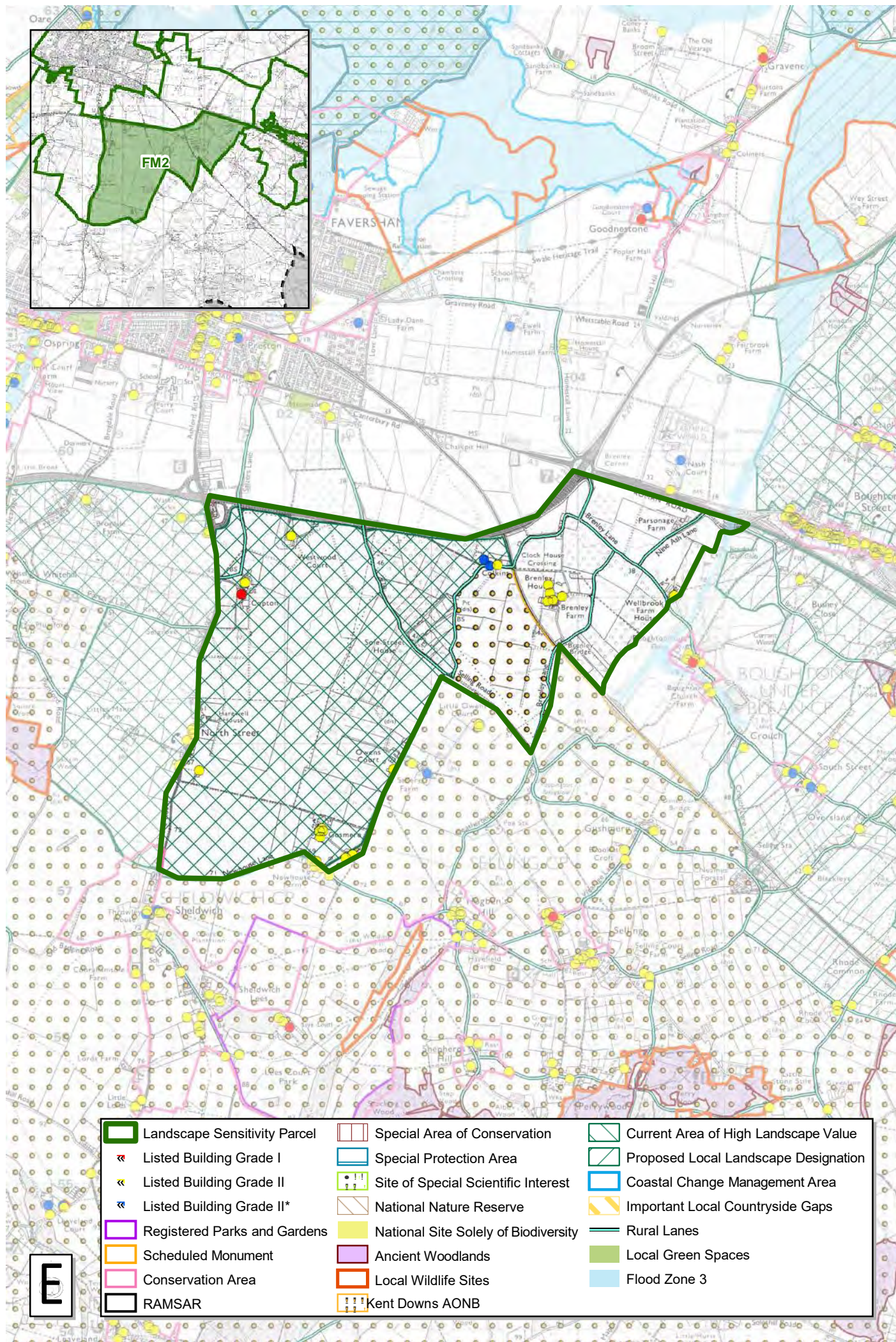
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The area around Nash Court, north-east of the A2/A299 is considered more sensitive than the remainder of the landscape area, as it forms the open rural backdrop to views from Boughton and the surrounding AHLV – Swale Level.

Guidance

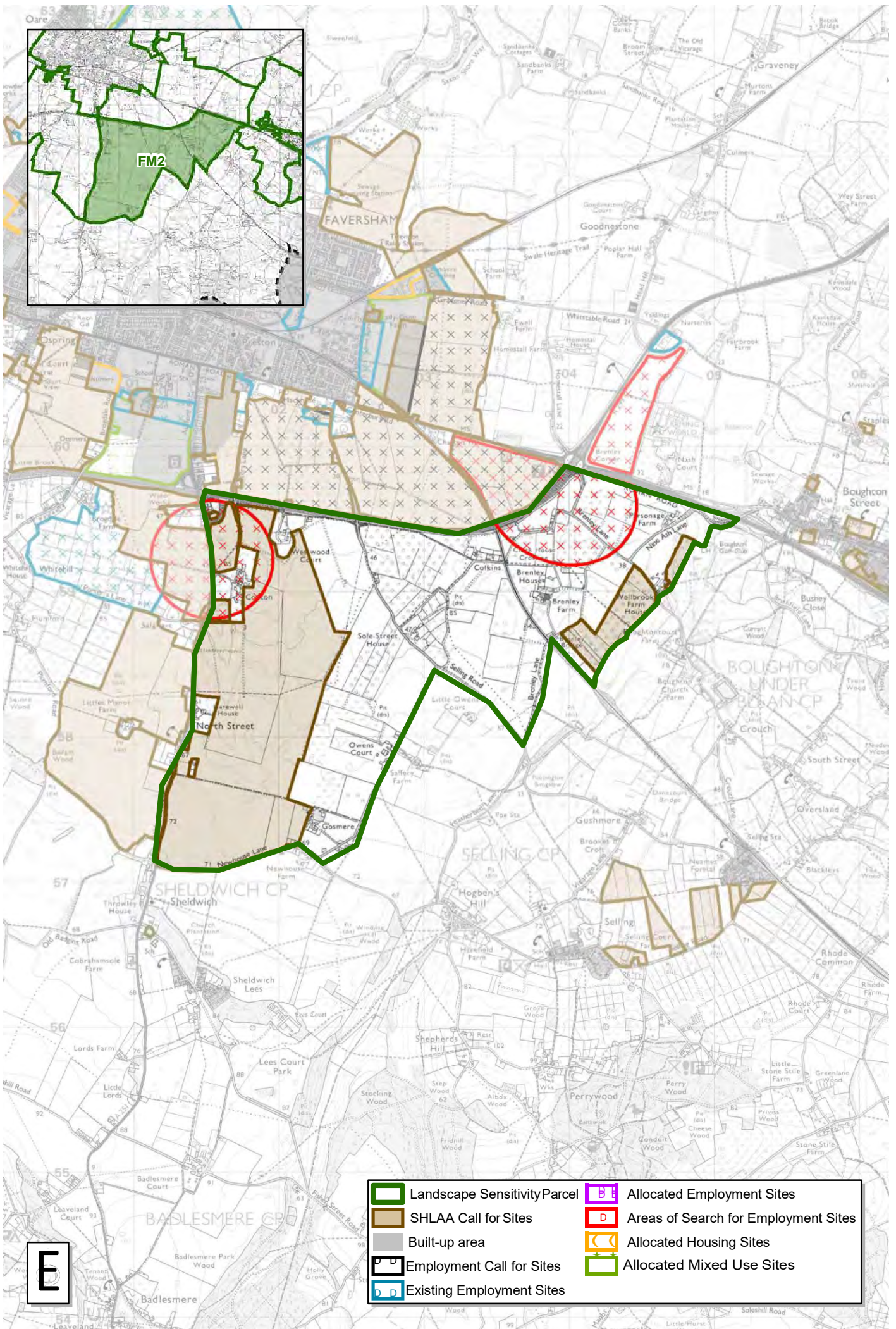
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the setting of neighbouring locally and nationally designated landscapes (AHLV and AONB).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening, such as those to the south of the A2. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, such as in the north of the landscape area beyond the A2. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the open views to the Blean wooded ridgeline to the east, and to the Isle of Sheppey to the north; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Mary of Charity, Faversham.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.
- New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Salters Lane, Selling Road, Homestalls Lane, Graveney Road and Staple Street.
- Maintain the rural approach to Faversham along the A2.

Faversham Area FM2: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View north-west towards North Street/A251



View north from Salters Lane towards M2

Location and landscape character

The landscape area to the south of the M2 and the east of the A251 lies within the Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.20). It comprises a combination of medium and large-scale arable fields and extensive areas of commercial orchards, with some pasture and parkland around farmsteads and other properties.

Landscape value

A large proportion of the area is within the AHLV – Kent Level, and a wedge of land defined by Clockhouse Lane, Selling Road, Brenley Lane and the railway line is within the Kent Downs AONB. The smaller area east of the railway line is not subject to any landscape designations.

The same area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the Kent Downs – North Street Dip Slope LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	Gently undulating landscape, comprising the lower dip slope of the Kent Downs, with a steady incline from around 30m AOD in the north rising to 72m AOD in the south at Newhouse Lane. The landscape scale is variable, with some large, open arable fields which have never been enclosed, in the west of the area bordering the A251, and much smaller scale orchards and hop fields further east, enclosed by a shelterbelt network.
Natural character	<p>There are very few identified areas of priority habitats within the landscape area; these being restricted to small blocks of deciduous woodland and remnant traditional orchards, usually associated with farmsteads. The network of established shelterbelts and hedgerows within and around the commercial orchards, and along the roads and lanes, represents the most extensive semi-natural feature within the area.</p> <p>There are a number of locally designated Rural Lanes within this area, including Salters Lane, Selling Road, Clockhouse Lane, Brenley Lane, South Street and Nine Ash Lane.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a combination of large prairie fields in the west (there is historical evidence that this area has never been enclosed), orchards, small and medium parliamentary type enclosures (regular boundaries), together with scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent) associated with historic farmsteads in the south (Gosmere) and east (Wellbrook Farm House).

	<p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture, fruit and hop cultivation within the area, together with the presence of many scattered historic houses, farmsteads and associated barns, oasts, stables and granaries in the Kentish vernacular styles (including timber framed, weather boarded and red brick), some with parkland containing notable mature trees, pasture and traditional orchards. Many of these buildings and structures are statutorily listed, including the Grade I Copton Manor (of Medieval origins) and the Grade II* Colkins and Saffery Farmhouse. Some areas of traditionally managed orchards have been lost in recent years, together with field boundaries, resulting in more open, larger fields.</p>
Visual character	<p>A number of important views are present, including the long views north to the Isle of Sheppey and Thames Estuary, east and south-east to the wooded ridgeline of the Blean and Perrywood from the more elevated south of the area.</p> <p>The predominantly open and exposed areas of large scale arable fields are less sensitive in terms of land cover and scale but also have high visibility within the surrounding landscape and local settlements at North Street and Sheldwich and the AONB.</p> <p>There is inter-visibility between the AONB and the surrounding area outside the AONB, which also displays some of its special identified qualities, including the long views.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Away from the M2 and A251 corridors the landscape becomes increasingly tranquil, with a strong sense of rural character and few modern built features and human influences.</p> <p>The railway line is not a particularly intrusive feature within this landscape, as it runs mostly in a well-screened shallow cutting through the area.</p> <p>Several PROWs traverse this area, although the majority are concentrated to the east of Selling Road.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>Settlement within this landscape area is restricted to the historic properties, typically farmsteads, scattered throughout the area, which have a longstanding and integral visual relationship with the surrounding land; plus the linear 19th and 20th century housing along North Street (A251) forming the western boundary of the area, which is visible from the open fields further east. The surrounding area provides a rural setting and backdrop to this settlement.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a gently undulating landform, with many open and exposed areas that are either within or have a visual relationship with the AONB. The generally strong sense of rural character is reinforced by the absence of modern larger scale built form and other human influences, and the presence of many listed farmsteads and rural lanes, which provide human scale features and time depth to the landscape. These attributes, in combination with the extent of local and national landscape designations, indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area. Whilst areas in close proximity to the M2 have a lower tranquillity than is typical for the remainder of</p>				

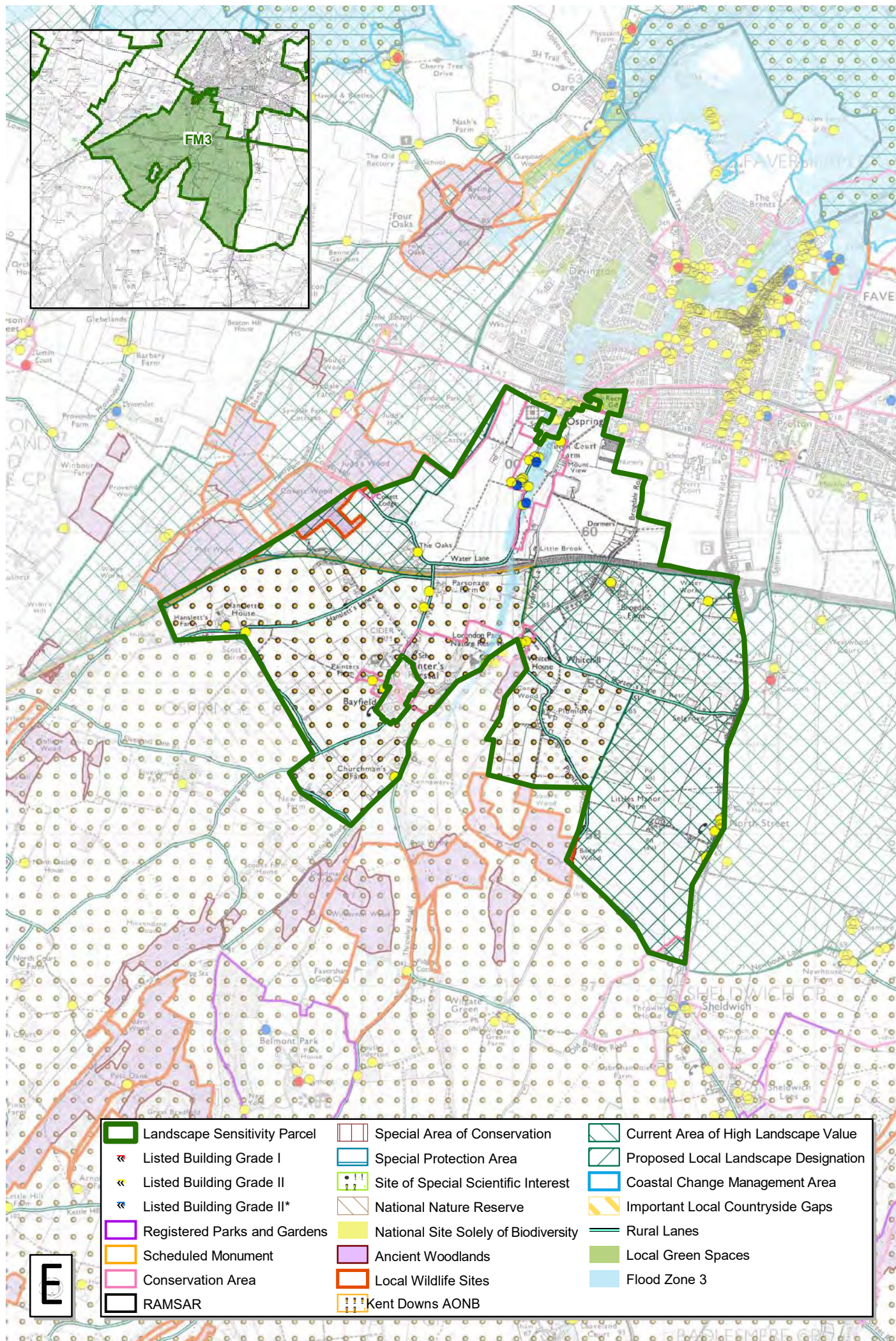
the area, the visual influence of the motorway within this area is limited.

Guidance

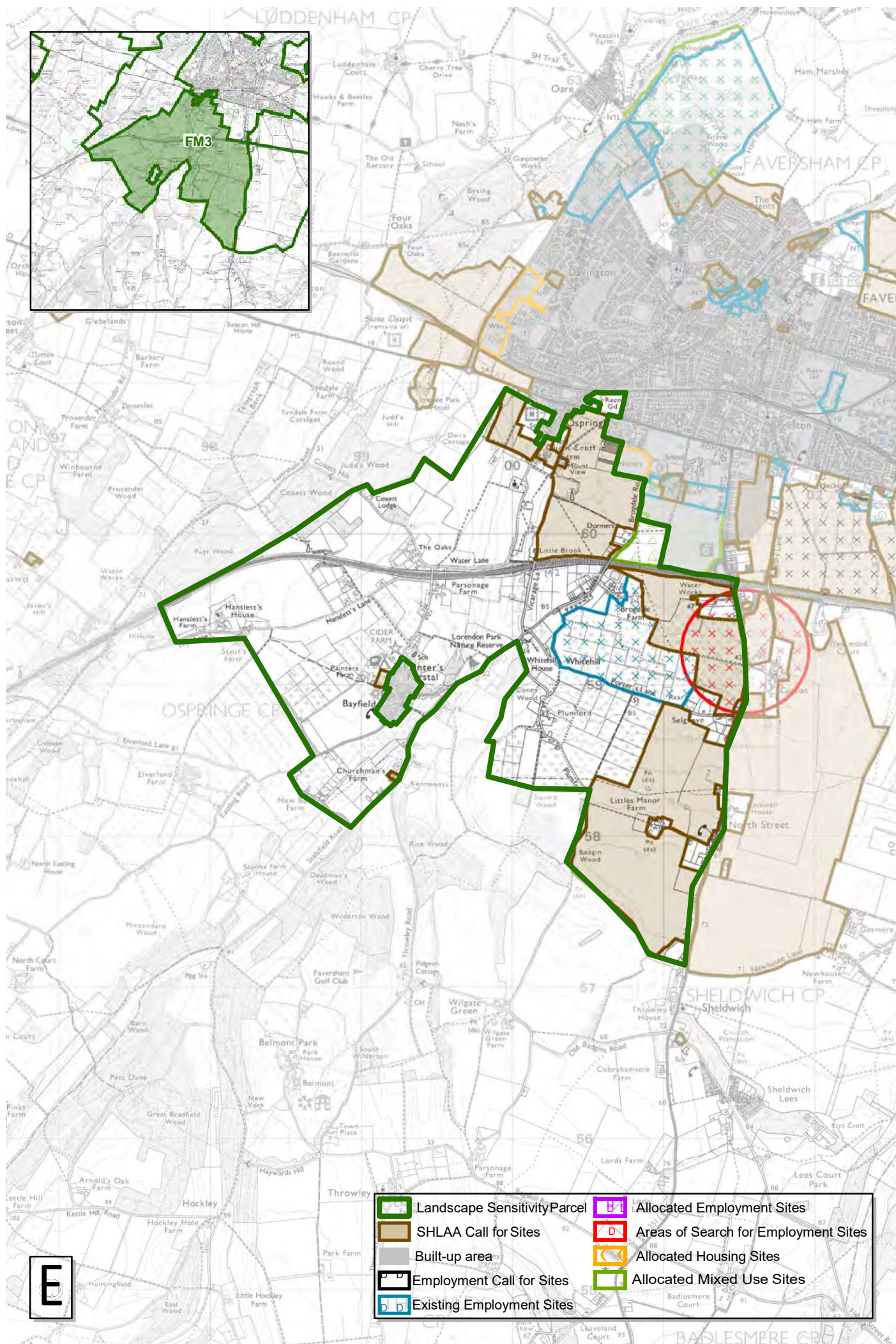
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character, setting and special qualities of the AHLV and the AONB.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north to the Thames Estuary and Isle of Sheppey, and east / south-east to the wooded high ground of the Blean and Perrywood.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Salters Lane, Selling Road, Clockhouse Lane, Brenley Lane, South Street and Nine Ash Lane.
- Maintain the rural approach to Faversham along the A251.

Faversham Area FM3: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View east from Plumford Road towards Painters Forstal and the Blean beyond



View west of orchard near Plumford

Location and landscape character

Landscape Area FM3 extends from Ospringe, just beyond the south western edge of Faversham, south beyond the M2 into the Kent Downs AONB. It lies within the Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.20), and is characterised by a combination of small to large-scale arable fields, extensive areas of commercial orchards and some pasture and woodland around Ospringe and Painters Forstal.

Landscape value

South of the M2 the landscape area is nationally designated as the Kent Downs AONB (in the west) and locally designated as the AHLV- Kent Level (in the east). North of the M2 there is a wedge of land within the AHLV- Kent Level in the west around Abbots Hill.

The locally designated landscapes were recommended in the 2018 study for designation as the Kent Downs – North Street Dip Slope LLD and Kent Downs – Syndale Valley LLD respectively.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>The topography within the area is relatively diverse, combining the Kent Downs dip slope in the east (characterised by a gentle incline upwards to the south to c.70m AOD) with a more pronounced valley landform in the centre and west of the area, running south-west to north-east, which ranges from c.15m AOD up to c.65m AOD.</p> <p>Scale also varies, with many small scale intimate areas within the valley and around the orchards, pasture fields and rural lanes, with enclosure provided by landform, woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows. This is contrasted by areas of much larger, open arable fields, particularly around Ospringe and further south alongside the route of the A251.</p>
Natural character	<p>Valued natural features within this area primarily relate to the extensive network of hedgerows, shelterbelts and orchards (predominantly commercial, but including some traditionally managed orchards around settlement and farmsteads). In addition, there are areas of Priority Habitat deciduous woodland along the valley sides at Painters Forstal, and the separate Syndale valley ridge to the north, which is also ancient woodland.</p> <p>There are a number of locally designated Rural Lanes throughout the area, including Plumford Road, Porter's Lane, Hanslett's Lane, Well Lane, Scotts Lane, Eastling Road, Painter's Forstal Road, Water Lane, Box Lane and Stalisfield Lane.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a diverse mixture of

<p>character</p>	<p>landscape types, including: small, medium, large and prairie fields (regular parliamentary type enclosures, and some areas which have never been enclosed); fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way; rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (late Medieval to 17th / 18th century enclosures); orchards; scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent); and post 1810 settlement.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, including some historic field patterns, together with a concentration of listed buildings within several Conservation Areas (Ospringe, Painters Forstal, Whitehill and the edges of Sheldwich and Syndale), and scattered listed historic houses, farmsteads and cottages across the wider landscape, many in the Kentish vernacular styles (many of which are timber framed). Ospringe has a number of Grade II* listed buildings, including the Church of St Peter and St Paul and its vicarage. The National Fruit Collection, based at Brogdale Farm just south of the M2, is a promoted visitor attraction and research centre, reinforcing the historical and ongoing importance of this area for fruit cultivation.</p> <p>The presence of the AONB south of the M2 (with its special identified qualities including the traditionally farmed landscape and rich historic and cultural heritage), also indicates a strong time depth to this part of the landscape.</p>
<p>Visual character</p>	<p>The visual character of this area is variable, with both intimate and open parts, largely influenced by the degree of enclosure provided by landform and vegetation. There are long views north, east and south from some of the larger, more elevated open fields, e.g. along Plumford Road, towards the Isle of Sheppey and the high ground of the Blean and Perrywood. Elsewhere, the valley and sunken lanes strongly limit and contain views.</p> <p>The skyline is generally undeveloped, and in some views south is characterised by the wooded higher ground beyond, further within the Kent Downs AONB.</p> <p>The M2, which cuts across the landscape east to west, is generally well screened by vegetation, limiting its visual influence.</p>
<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>Despite the presence of the M2, the landscape has a strong sense of traditional rural character and tranquillity in most parts, and a sense of remoteness along the quieter lanes in the south.</p> <p>The National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm is a notable visitor attraction that contributes to public interpretation of the history and value of fruit cultivation within this landscape.</p> <p>A network of PROWs provides reasonably extensive public access through the area.</p>
<p>Character and setting of settlement</p>	<p>Settlement within the area is focussed within the villages of Ospringe and Painters Forstal, linear housing along North Street and Brogdale Road, and elsewhere as scattered farmsteads and houses integrated within the landscape.</p> <p>Ospringe has partly developed along the A2 (Watling Street), and is strongly related to the edge of Faversham. Despite the presence of the busy A2 and proximity to Faversham, the landscape area around Ospringe has largely retained its rural character, including orchards and an intimacy of scale in parts, and provides a scenic backdrop and setting to the village and the edge of Faversham.</p> <p>Painters Forstal is a nucleated village with a small historic core and extensive post WW2 housing beyond this. It is wholly within the AONB and has a strongly rural setting, with surrounding orchards and a steep wooded valley leading east out of the village along Eastling Road.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The majority of this landscape area is within the AONB or AHLV or their settings. The combination of this landscape value at a national and local level, its strongly rural and scenic character, including a range of historic features that contribute to landscape character and time depth, its visual openness in many parts contrasted by small scale intimate areas of pasture and orchards, and winding rural lanes, indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

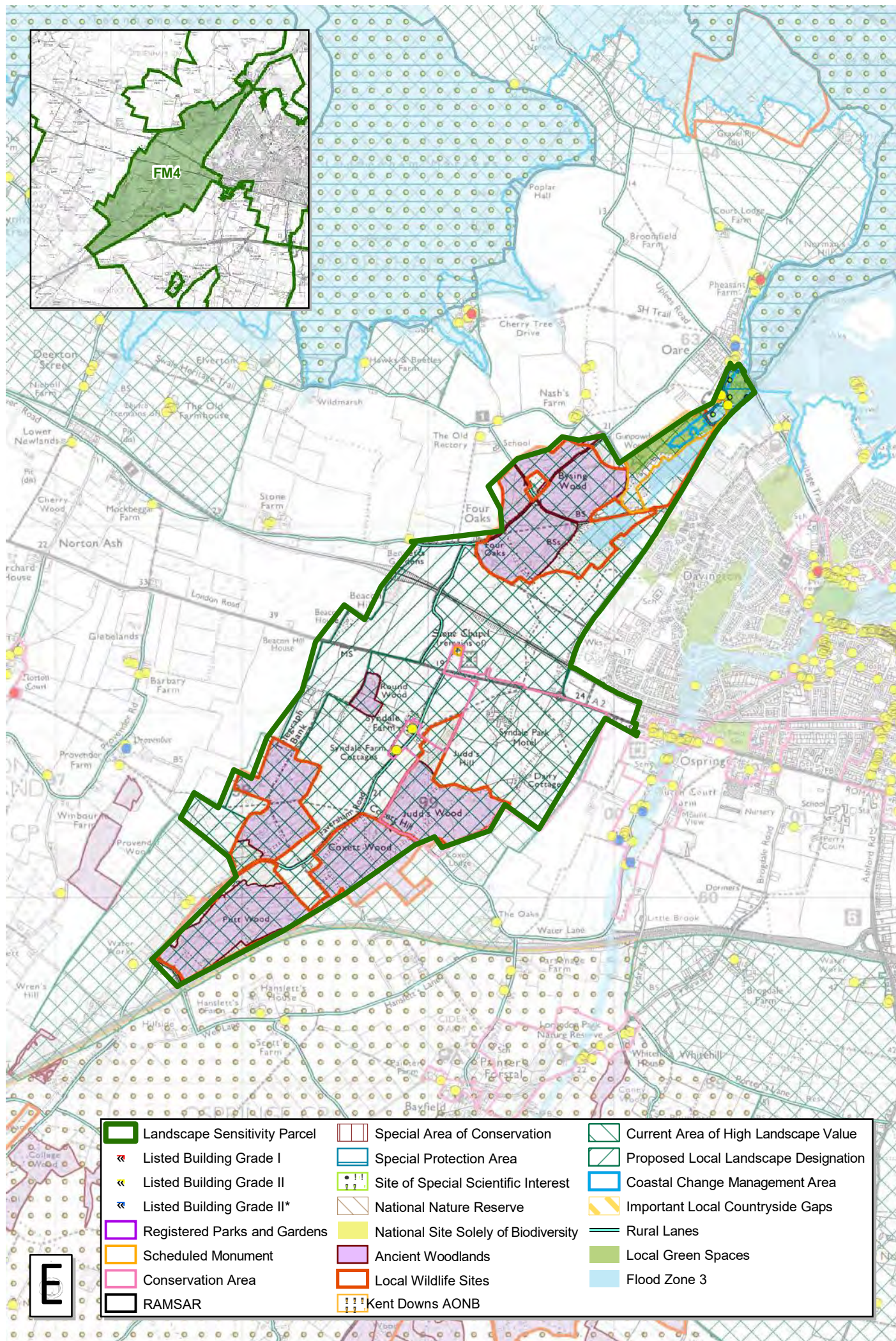
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are some smaller areas of relatively large and flat arable fields around Brogdale Road north of the M2 which have a less scenic and tranquil character than is typical for the remainder of the area, indicating lower sensitivity.

Guidance

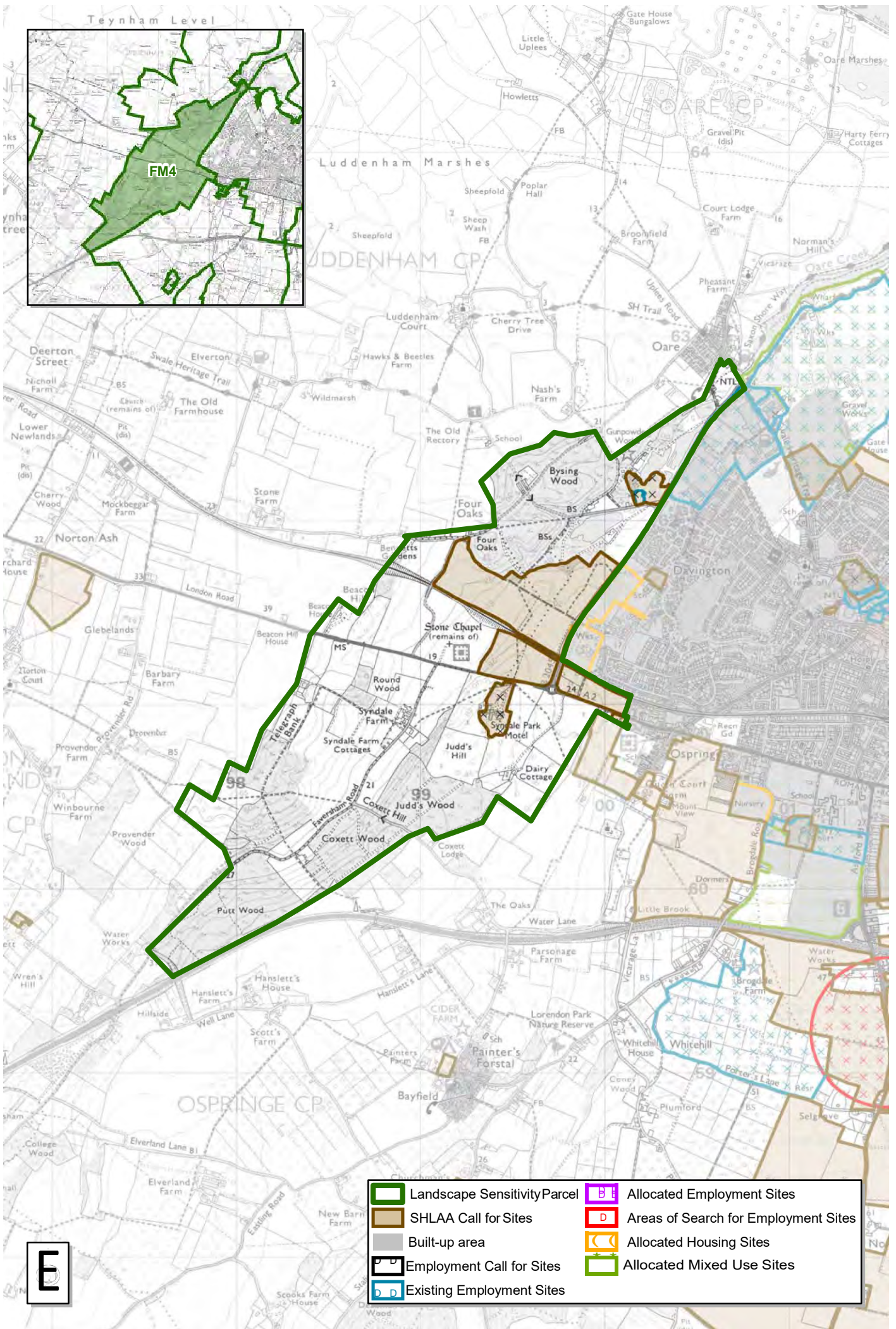
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character, setting and special qualities of the AHLV and the AONB.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views east / south-east to the wooded high ground of the Blean and Perrywood; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Ospringe.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: **Plumford Road, Porter's Lane, Hanslett's Lane, Well Lane, Scotts Lane, Eastling Road, Painter's Forstal Road, Water Lane, Box Lane and Stalisfield Lane.**
- Maintain the rural approach to Ospringe along Water Lane and Vicarage Lane, and to Faversham along the A251.

Faversham Area FM4: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM4: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View of valley landform with pasture and woodland along Faversham Road



View of sunken lane at Bysing Wood

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape to the west and south west of Faversham lies within the Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys landscape character area (No.36). It is known by its local name of the Syndale Valley and is characterised by a distinctive dry chalk valley landscape, with mixed land cover of grazed pasture, arable and hop fields on the valley sides, with extensive areas of woodland which extend up onto the valley crests.</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>The majority of the area is within an AHLV – Kent Level.</p> <p>The whole area, with the exception of the land east of the B2045 and north of the A2, is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the Kent Downs – Syndale Valley LLD.</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>Distinctive, relatively steep sided dry valley landform with rounded crests. The landscape scale varies, with some large arable fields, but in general the significant enclosure provided by the valley landform and frequent woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows limits openness and views, except those of a linear nature along the valley bottom, resulting in a typically small to medium scale.</p>
Natural character	<p>The valley is characterised by frequent intact blocks of designated ancient woodland, which are also Local Wildlife Sites. There are also isolated areas of Priority Habitat traditional orchards and lowland calcareous grassland, and a relatively extensive area of historic parkland with notable mature trees at Syndale Park, to the immediate south of the A2.</p> <p>The extent and frequency of valued semi-natural woodland and other natural features indicates higher sensitivity to development.</p> <p>Locally designated Rural Lanes within the area include Faversham Road, Well Lane, Coxett Hill, Four Oaks Road, Bysing Wood Road and Lower Road.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by pre-19th century coppices and other pre-1810 woodland (corresponding with the ancient woodland); small and medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures); rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (late medieval to 17th/18th century enclosures); 19th century and later parkland (corresponding with Syndale Park); and abandoned industry (including gunpowder works – now the Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park).</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of semi-natural woodland cover, historic parkland and agriculture, including hop farming,</p>

	<p>extensive pasture and orchards, together with built heritage features. These include the extensive Syndale Conservation Area, incorporating the elevated parkland (un-registered) surrounding the site of Syndale House, destroyed by fire in 1961. This is one of the best-preserved designed landscapes within the Borough, with many notable mature trees, and is also of archaeological interest, with the remains of a Roman fort. The Conservation Area also includes Judd's Wood, and Syndale Farm and Cottages (Grade II listed) along the valley bottom, together with the remains of a parish church and a Romano-British mausoleum (a Scheduled Monument). The Oare Gunpowder Works, an important part of Faversham's industrial heritage and in continuous use from the early 18th century to 1934, are also an extensive Scheduled Monument in the far north of the area.</p>
Visual character	<p>The enclosing steep landform and frequent mature woodlands tend to limit and focus views along the valley bottom, with little inter-visibility with surrounding areas. The prevailing visual character is of an enclosed, strongly rural landscape with an undeveloped skyline and few modern intrusive elements. However, there are locations, such as open parts of the Bysing Wood ridgeline, where longer range views of modern infrastructure are possible, including wind turbines, pylon routes and industry to the north around the Isle of Sheppey. Close range views of larger scale warehouses on the western edge of Faversham are also possible along the Western Link.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Despite its proximity to Faversham, much of the landscape has a strongly rural and tranquil character, and a sense of isolation or remoteness, influenced by the enclosing valley landform and woodland. Bysing Wood Road is a particularly characterful deeply sunken lane with enclosing mature woodland, and the prominent mature parkland at Syndale Park also imparts a distinct time depth to the landscape.</p> <p>The busy A2 adversely affects these landscape qualities to some extent within its sphere of visual and aural influence.</p> <p>A number of PRowS provide public access through the landscape, and the country park is a promoted visitor attraction and area for recreation.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The landscape area forms the immediate setting for the western and south western settlement edge of Faversham, largely formed of modern housing and commercial development, of little or no historic character. There are limited longer views out of these areas which incorporate the surrounding countryside, including the wooded ridgeline of Bysing Wood, but there is also enclosure provided by intervening vegetation.</p> <p>The far north of the landscape area, where the wooded country park gives way to open, traditionally grazed marshy land, also provides an important part of the setting of the village of Oare, situated on a tidal creek leading out to the Swale.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape exhibits a cohesive and scenic landform, combined with a strong sense of rurality, time depth, areas of tranquillity and remoteness and important woodland, parkland and historic features which all positively influence landscape character. These attributes, in combination with the identified recreational value and local landscape value (AHLV – Kent Level) indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

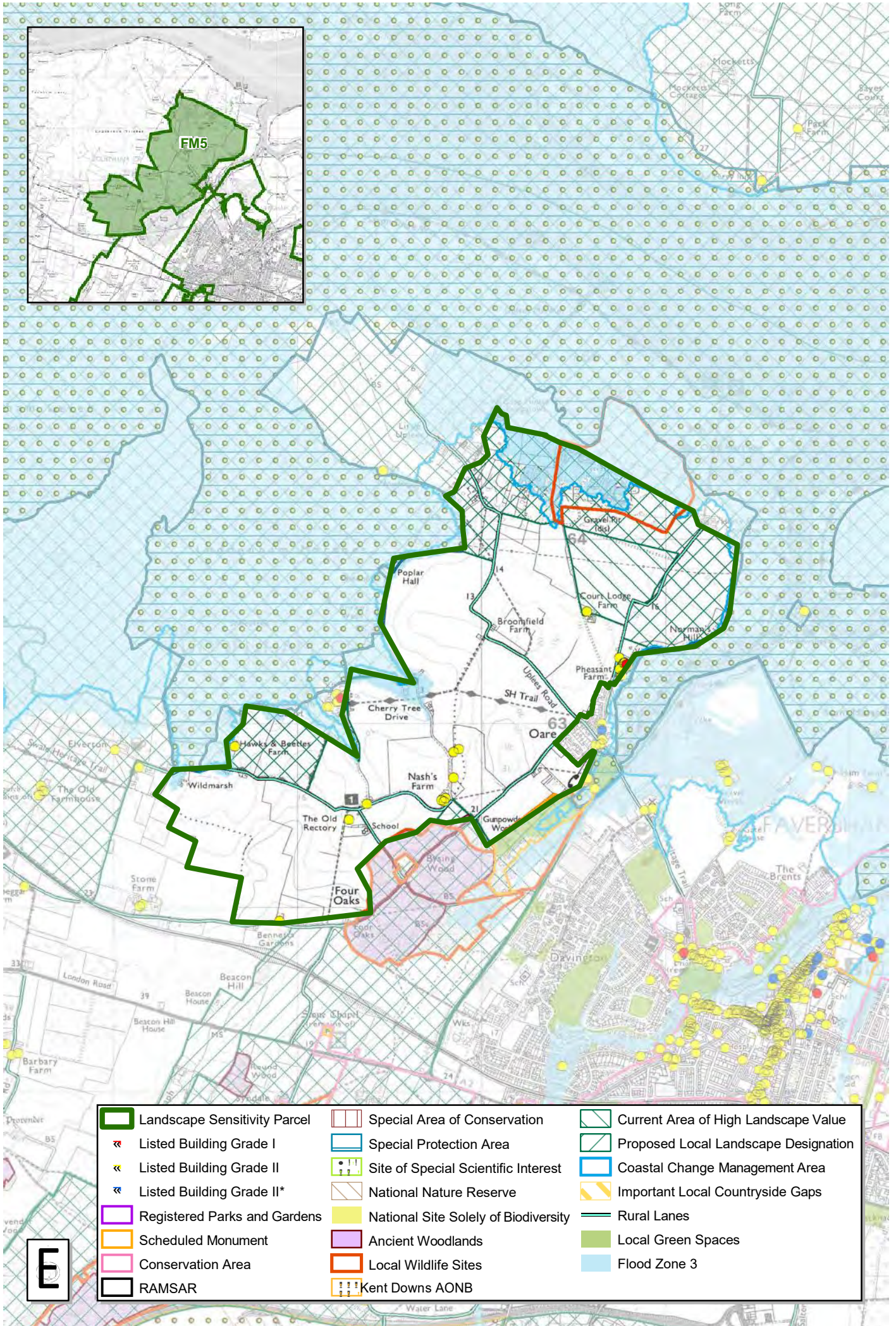
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area.

Guidance

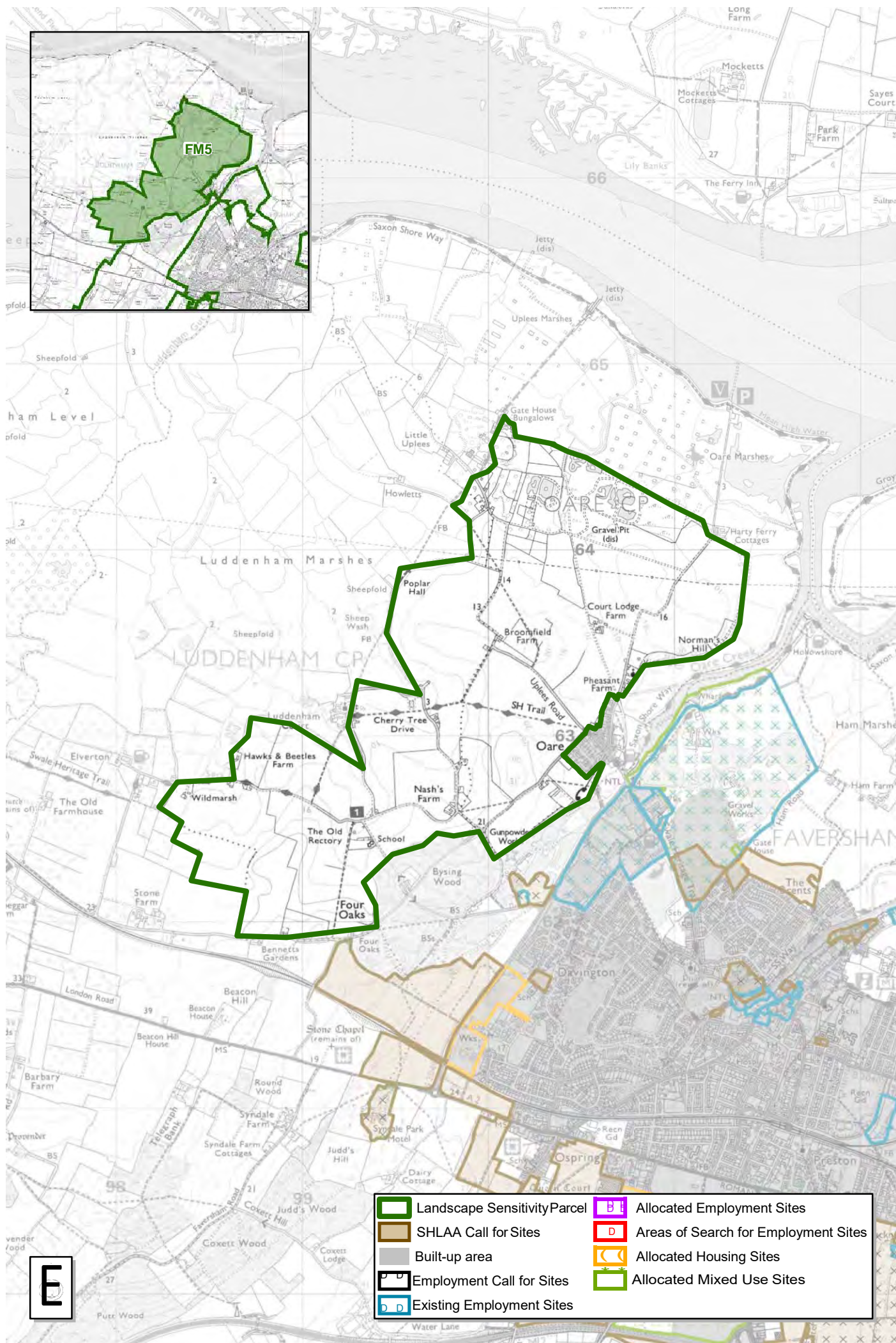
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character, setting and special qualities of the AHLV and the AONB.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses, orchards and traditionally managed woodlands, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north and west to the Isle of Sheppey, and south to Syndale Park from the high ground around Bysing Wood.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Faversham Road, Well Lane, Coxett Hill, Four Oaks Road, Bysing Wood Road and Lower Road.

Faversham Area FM5: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM5: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View north-west from Uplees Road towards the Swale



View north-west over Nash's Farm from Colegates Road

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the north-west of Faversham lies within the Stone Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.17). It comprises medium and large scale rolling arable farmland.

Landscape value

The north of the area adjoining the marshes incorporates part of the AHLV – Kent Level, and a small area at Hawkes and Beetles Farm is part of the AHLV – Swale Level.

The 2018 study recommends small changes to the boundaries in the north, but the majority of the area, including at Hawkes and Beetles Farm in the west, is recommended for designation as part of the North Kent Marshes - South Swale LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

This is a predominantly rolling landform which rises slightly to the south, away from the marshland edge. Although the elevation only reaches c.30m AOD, the wider landscape is broadly low and flat, giving the impression of higher elevation, with some far reaching views over medium to large scale, expansive arable fields with limited enclosure. Some historic farmsteads are located within the dips between the higher ground, and these areas are characterised by a smaller scale, more enclosed feel.

Natural character

There is a concentration of identified Priority Habitats and valued natural features in the far north of this area around the hamlet of Little Uplees and the former gravel pits (disused), which includes deciduous woodland, traditional orchards and coastal / floodplain grazing marsh. The gravel pits are within the Uplees Lake and Marsh Local Wildlife Site, and the landscape area also adjoins the Oare Marshes Local Nature Reserve. The nationally and internationally designated Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site also adjoins parts of this landscape area.

Elsewhere, the area contains limited valued natural features or semi-natural habitats, comprising grassland and trees around farmsteads and a gappy, managed hedgerow network along some lanes and field boundaries. It is evident that some orchards and hedgerows were removed in the 20th century to open up the fields for intensive arable farming practices.

The south of the area adjoins ancient woodland and a Local Wildlife Site at Bysing Wood (within landscape area FM4).

Locally designated Rural Lanes within the area include Bysing Wood Road, Uplees

	<p>Road, Church Road and an unnamed lane in Luddenham.</p> <p>The absence of significant valued natural features from the majority of the area indicates lower sensitivity to development, although this is counterbalanced by the proximity of much of the landscape to the sensitive ecological designations of the Swale.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small and medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures); rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (late medieval to 17th/18th century enclosures); village/hamlet (1810 extent); post 1801 settlement; active and disused gravel and clay workings.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic farmsteads containing Grade II listed buildings in the local vernacular styles, some with pasture and traditionally managed orchards.</p> <p>There is an important concentration of historic buildings around the Grade I listed Church of St Peter, along Church Road north of Oare. There is also a complex of listed buildings around the Grade I listed Church of St Mary, Luddenham, situated just outside the landscape area, on the edge of Luddenham marshes.</p>
Visual character	<p>Long views are available from the higher ground across the large open fields to the marshes, incorporating small-scale historic buildings and local landmarks such as St. Mary's Church, Luddenham and Nash's Farm, together with larger modern features such as wind turbines.</p> <p>Overhead power lines and pylons are dominant features across much of this landscape, often appearing out of scale with the small historic farmsteads.</p> <p>There is a contrasting visual character immediately around some of the settlement, such as at Little Uplees and Church Road, Oare, where the many human scale features result in a more intimate, enclosed character, although this quickly diminishes when passing back out into the arable farmland.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Again, this is a landscape of contrasting qualities, with a prevailing rural, tranquil and relatively remote character accentuated by the absence of major roads. The pylon routes and longer views towards surrounding infrastructure are frequent reminders of the presence of modern development, which somewhat limits the sense of traditional rural character and scenic qualities of the landscape.</p> <p>The Swale Heritage Trail promoted recreational route runs through the centre and south of the landscape area. In addition, some further PROWs provide public access through the area.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The area provides a rural setting to the western settlement edge of Oare, which is well-contained and characterised by linear 19th and 20th century low-rise housing along Colegates Road and Church Road.</p> <p>Little Uplees is situated at the interface between the marshes and the rolling arable farmland within FM5, both of which provide a rural setting of contrasting character.</p> <p>The area has no direct relationship with the edge of Faversham, as this is across Oare Creek and valley.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The rolling landform and predominantly large scale, open character results in areas of visually prominent slopes and skylines. The landscape is only crossed by minor lanes and retains an isolated, rural character and strong tranquillity, but this has been eroded to an extent by the intrusive pylon routes and field enlargements. The historic farmsteads and remnant orchards and pasture fields, which typically occupy the lower ground, lend a strong time depth and more scenic, intimate character to the landscape. Valued natural features are concentrated in the north of the area along the marshland edge, which is also with the AHLV – Kent Level. These attributes indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

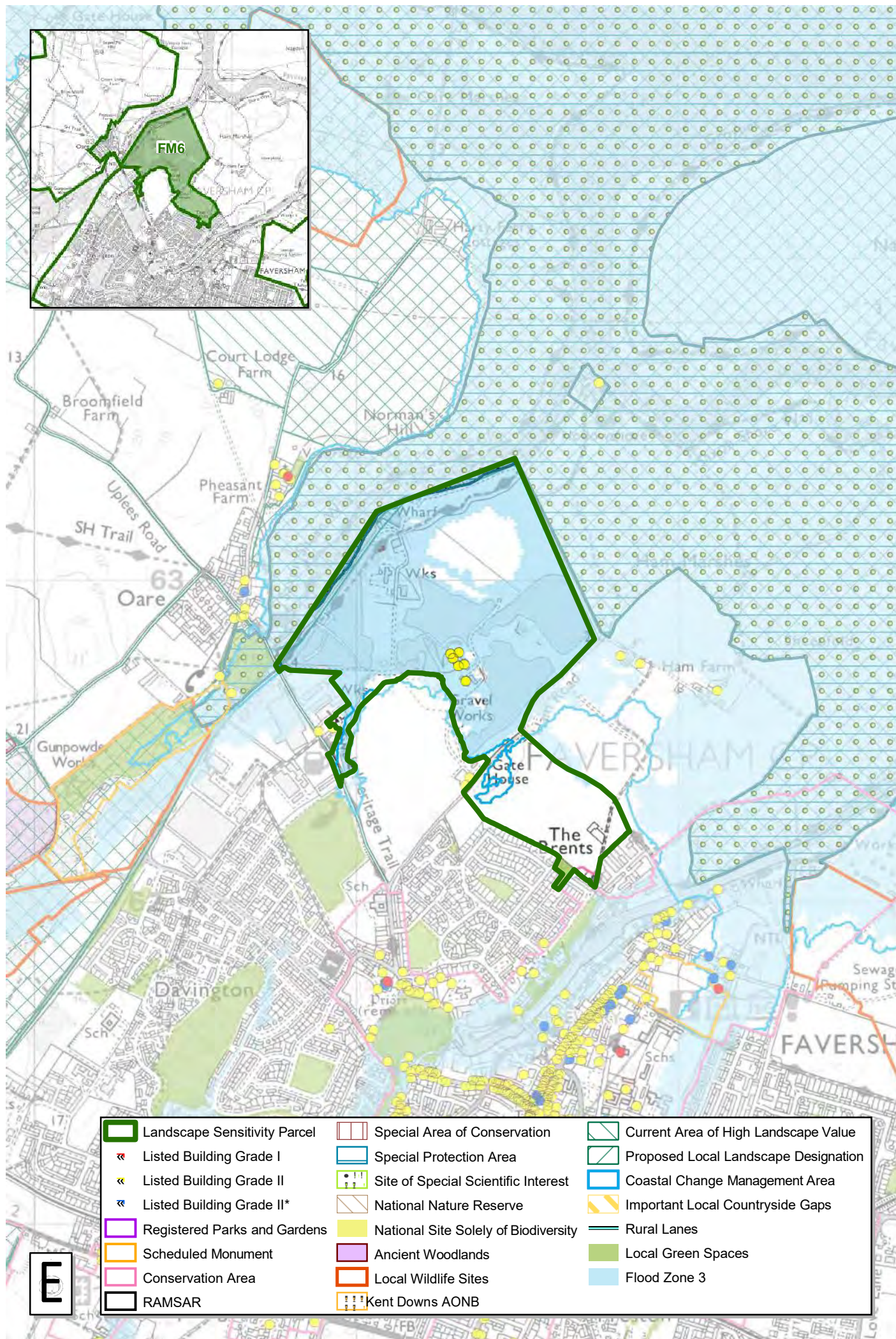
There are no spatial variations in sensitivity within the area.

Guidance

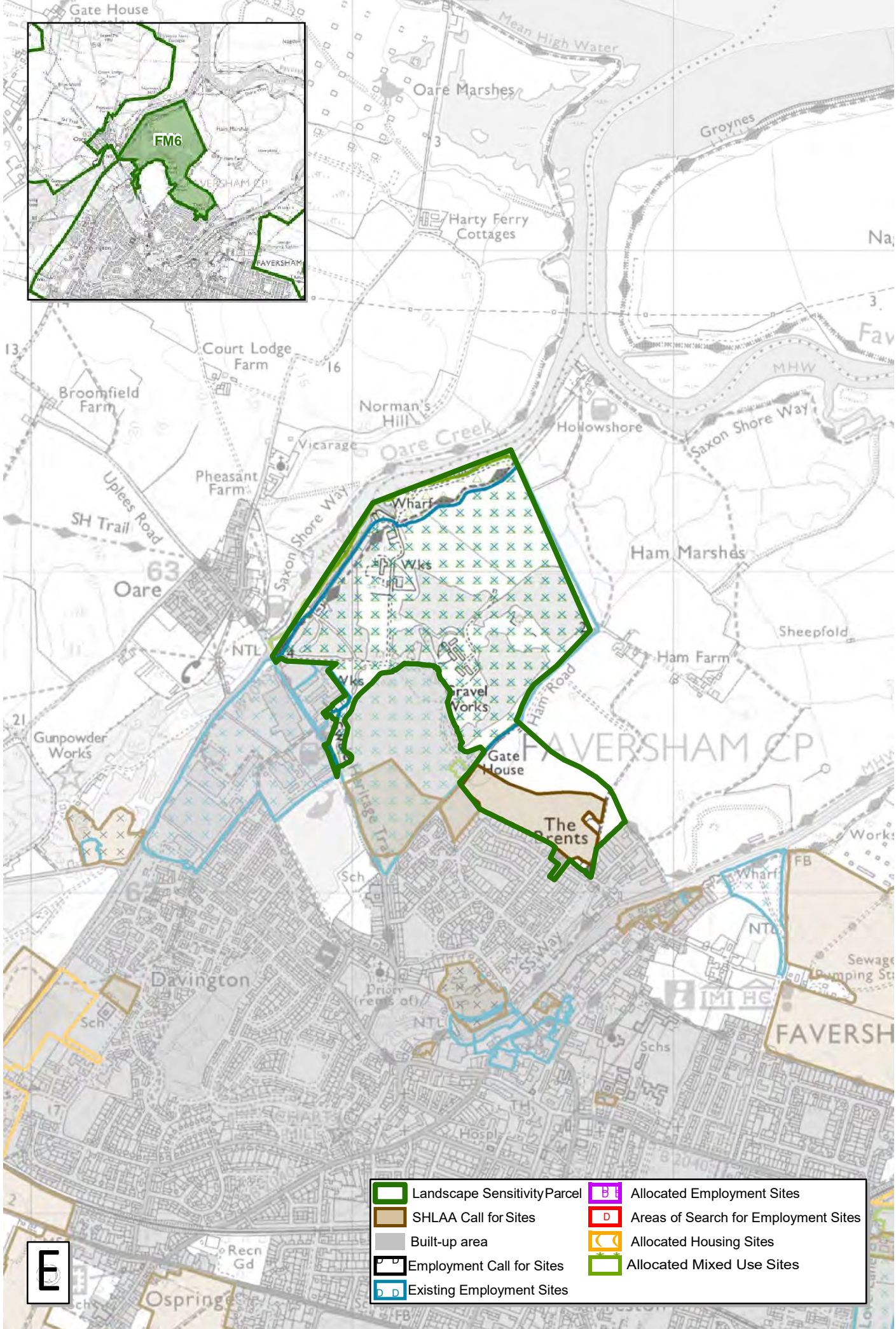
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and setting of the AHLV.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long, panoramic views over the marshes from the high ground; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Peter, Oare, and the Church of St Mary, Luddenham.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Byssing Wood Road, Uplees Road, Church Road and an unnamed lane in Luddenham.

Faversham Area FM6: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM6: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View south-east from Ham Road across the lake at Oare Gravel Works.



View looking south from the Saxon Shore Way in the north.

Location and landscape character

The landscape area to the north of Faversham lies within the Stone Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.17). It is related to an area of former gravel workings north-west of Ham Road, and arable farmland south-east of Ham Road.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local), although the north of the gravel workings adjoins Oare Creek and Ham Marshes which are within the AHLV - Kent Level.

The north of the gravel workings are recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the North Kent Marshes – South Swale LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landform is uniformly flat, rising to little more than 5m AOD. The landscape scale is relatively large, with little enclosure, and is accentuated by the open expanses of the adjoining marshes.
Natural character	<p>Within the gravel workings site there are identified discrete areas of Priority Habitat coastal grazing marsh and deciduous woodland. There are also a number of lakes and pools created from the former gravel pits which have a biodiversity value, as well as stretches of hedgerow along the Ham Road boundary.</p> <p>There are no statutory ecological designations within the area, although it does adjoin the internationally and nationally designated Swale SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site to the north.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by active and disused gravel workings north-west of Ham Road, and prairie fields (19th century enclosure with extensive boundary loss) south-east of Ham Road. There is a minor ribbon of small irregular enclosures in the far north, bordering Oare Creek.</p> <p>The gravel workings were formerly used as the Marsh Gunpowder Works, part of the Royal Gunpowder Work established on this site in 1786. There is an important surviving cluster of late 18th and early 19th century Grade II listed buildings relating to the gunpowder works, in the centre of the area, along with a Grade II gate house and proof house at the site entrance on Ham Road. As such, the site has historical importance and time depth in relation to Faversham's industrial heritage.</p> <p>The south-eastern corner of the site adjoins the Faversham Conservation Area at</p>

	Upper Brents, although there is not a strong visual relationship between the two areas at this point.
Visual character	<p>Long views over the open lakes and fields to the surrounding marshes and creeks beyond.</p> <p>Overhead power lines and pylons are visible on the skyline to the north. The Oare Windmill, situated just outside the site off Oare Road, is also a Grade II listed local landmark and skyline feature.</p> <p>Given its degree of visual exposure, the area has strong intervisibility with surrounding areas, including the marshes and creeks within the AHLV and the settlement edges of Faversham and Oare.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Despite the ongoing gravel works within part of the area, proximity to Faversham and adjacent commercial development along Oare Road, the area has some sense of tranquillity and remoteness; particularly further north along Ham Road. The visual relationship with the neighbouring creeks and marshes, including views of boat masts along Oare Creek, imparts a degree of maritime character to the area.</p> <p>Further south towards the settlement edge, the area has more of an urban fringe character.</p> <p>There is very limited public access within the area, although Ham Road runs through its centre and the Saxon Shore Way promoted recreational route runs along the northern edge of the site, adjacent to Oare Creek. There are also two footpaths along the south-eastern boundary of the area which provide access from Faversham out onto the marshlands.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>There is no settlement within the landscape area, although it adjoins low-rise 20th century housing along Springhead Road and Upper Brents, Faversham, and commercial/industrial warehouse premises on Waterside Close and Oare Road, Faversham.</p> <p>The arable fields south-east of Ham Road provide an undeveloped setting, of limited scenic character, to this area of adjacent housing.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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This flat, visually exposed area on the edge of the marshes forms part of the wider setting to Faversham and Oare, and has a strong relationship with the adjoining AHLV. These attributes indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

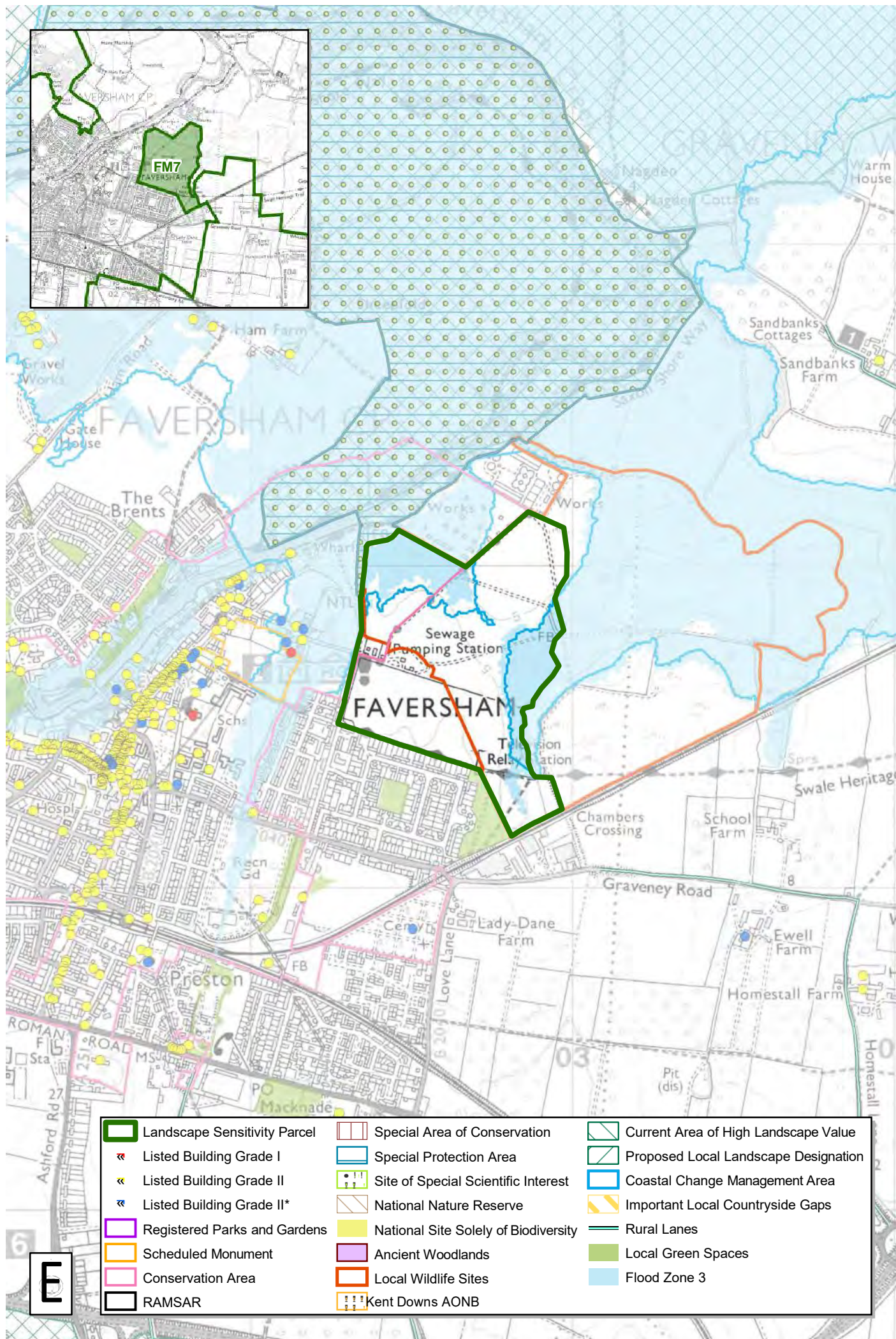
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The part of the landscape area to the south-east of Ham Road is considered slightly less sensitive, as it has a weaker visual relationship with Oare Creek and the adjacent marshlands within the AHLV.

Guidance

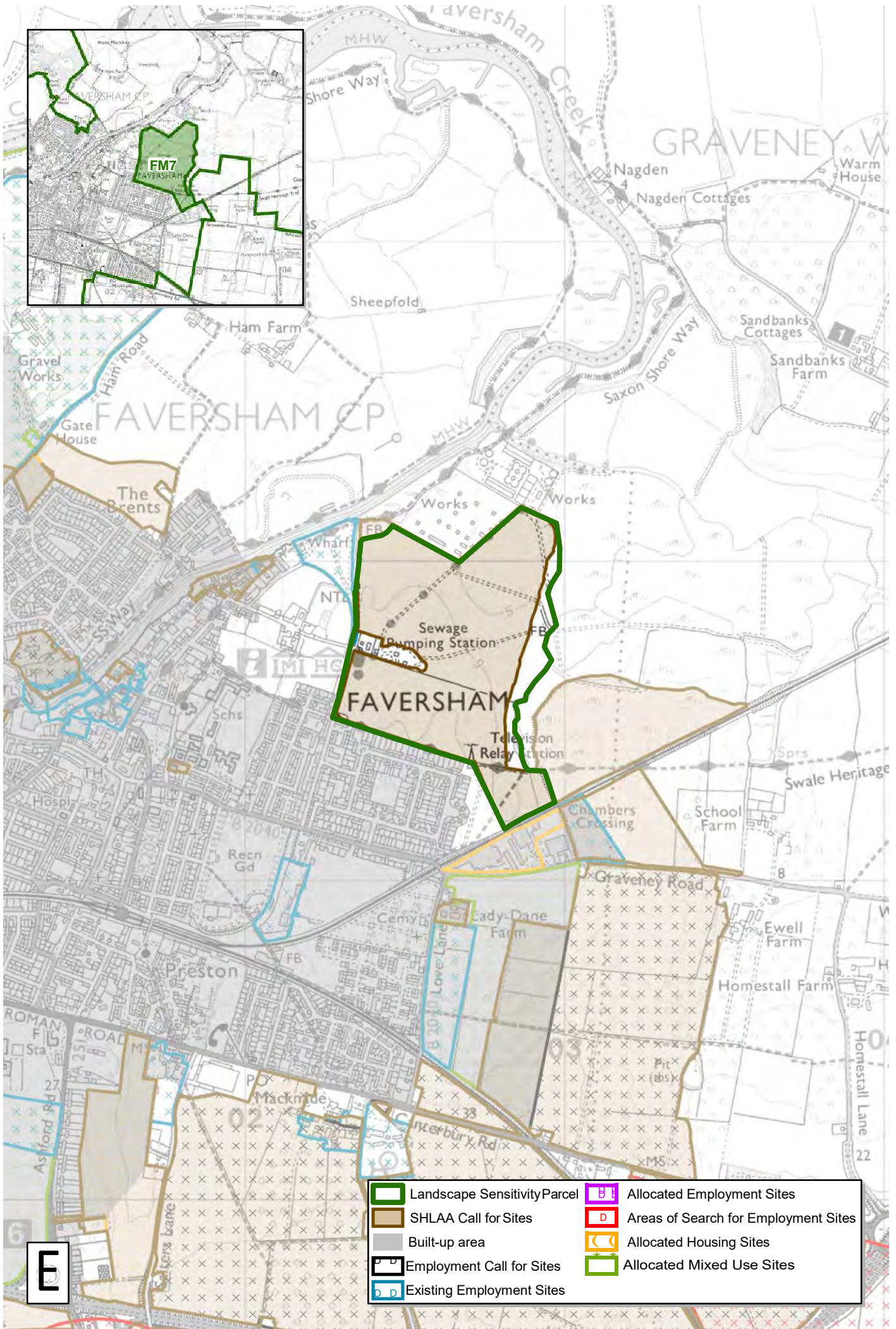
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and setting of the AHLV.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach; with the land north-west of Ham Road used as open space and managed for wildlife, including creating and restoring a network of lakes, pools and other wetland habitats such as grazing marsh. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north over the marshes towards the Isle of Sheppey.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.
- Maintain the undeveloped backdrop to Oare Creek and its scenic character and setting.

Faversham Area FM7: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM7: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View north-west from footpath behind Abbots Road



View south-east from Abbey Fields towards the wooded high ground of the Blean

Location and landscape character	
The landscape area to the north-east of Faversham lies within the Goodnestone Grasslands landscape character area (No.3). It is a small area characterised by flat, arable fields and a solar farm on drained former marshland.	
Landscape value	
This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local); however, it lies adjacent to the AHLV – Kent Level within the Swale and surrounding marshes.	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>The landform is broadly flat, being in close proximity to the marshland and tidal creek leading from Faversham out to the Swale.</p> <p>This is a generally medium scale landscape, with open medium arable fields bounded by ditches, scrub and hedgerows. There is a feeling of expansiveness within this flat landform, with little enclosure and some panoramic views; however the sense of scale is contained by the presence of housing and some small historic industrial buildings and boat masts around the tidal creek area.</p>
Natural character	<p>Priority Habitat coastal and floodplain grazing marsh is identified within this area, although it is evident that some of this has been lost in recent years to arable, and a solar farm has also been constructed in the east of the area. Elsewhere, natural features are limited to some remnant hedgerows, species rich ditches and pools, and areas of scrub.</p> <p>Part of the area is within the locally designated Abbey Fields Local Wildlife Site, which extends further east beyond FM7 to incorporate a more intact area of grazing marsh. The adjacent tidal creek area is part of the Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the entirety of the area is characterised by medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures).</p> <p>There is limited historic character and time-depth within this discrete landscape area; although the north-western edge (comprising an arable field) lies within the much more extensive Faversham Conservation Area, which incorporates the whole of the historic town core and tidal creek area further to the west.</p> <p>The wider views and visual relationship with the surrounding marshland and tidal creek (including a boat yard) and the local landmark of St. Mary's Church,</p>

	Faversham on the skyline provide a relatively strong sense of place. The disused 19 th century sewage pumping station and brick works buildings also have some historic and visual interest, the small surviving chimney of which forms a local landmark and contributes to the sense of past industry around the tidal creek area.
Visual character	<p>This is a predominantly flat, open area allowing for long uninterrupted views (and intervisibility) north over the AHLV and east towards the Blean, including pylon routes on the skyline further north, although these are sufficiently distant to not be intrusive. The recently constructed solar farm, with immature boundary screening, is prominent in some views.</p> <p>The settlement edge of Faversham is a prominent but not intrusive element in views within this area.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	Despite its proximity to Faversham, this is a tranquil area undisturbed by significant vehicular traffic due to very limited access. It has an urban fringe character and some recreational value, being crossed by a national cycle route and bounded by two promoted recreational routes (the Saxon Shore Way which follows Faversham Creek in the north, and the Swale Heritage Trail in the south).
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The adjacent settlement edge of Faversham comprises modern 20th century housing around Abbots Road and Abbey Fields, with mature rear gardens. The landscape area provides a setting to these properties.</p> <p>To the west of Abbey Fields, beyond the landscape area is a more historic part of Faversham, which includes some surviving buildings of Faversham Abbey (Grade II*) and historic buildings further away along the main creek. The landscape area is not considered to form a prominent part of the backdrop to this area, due to the flat landform and presence of some intervening vegetation screening.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Whilst the inherent sensitivity of these flat, open arable fields is relatively low, they are visually prominent in views from the edge of Faversham as well as from the wider landscape beyond, including the marshland and creeks within the AHLV. Part of the area also falls within the Faversham Conservation Area and consequently is of importance to the historic character and setting of the town. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The part of the landscape area within/adjoining the Faversham Conservation Area, which also adjoins Faversham Creek and the Swale ecological designations and AHLV, is of higher sensitivity than the remainder of the area.

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and setting of the AHLV.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach; including creating and restoring wetland and species rich grassland habitats within the site and improving connectivity to adjacent habitats. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north over the marshes towards the Isle of Sheppey; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Mary of Charity.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.