# Assessment of sites for Amenity Value 2017



**Published June 2017** 

#### **Ethos Environmental Planning**

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## **Guildford Amenity Assessment**

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#### 1.0 Introduction

The NPPF at paragraph 74 states that open space should not be built on except in specified circumstances. Open space is defined in the NPPF glossary as "open space of public value... which offer[s] important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as visual amenity."

The proposed submission Local Plan Strategy and Sites proposes to inset several settlements and other land from the Green Belt. If enacted, this land may gain development potential. Guildford Borough Council asked Ethos to assess the land in and around settlements that are proposed to be inset in order to assess whether it has visual amenity and should therefore be protected from development. The village of Ash Green is not currently designated as Green Belt but is proposed to become an inset village surrounded by Green Belt and has also been assessed. The potential development sites at Mount Browne and the University of Law have also been assessed.

This report sets out the methodology and results for the assessment of sites of 'amenity value' as described above. A further study, the Open Space Sports and Recreation Study, will identify land that has public value for sports and recreation and amenity across the whole borough This report forms part of the evidence base that informs the emerging Local Plan.

The sites included within the assessment have been identified through the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) 2016, and 'other open space' identified through aerial photography.

### 2.0 Defining 'amenity value'

#### 2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF Glossary defines Open space as: 'All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity'.

Other references within the NPPF to open space and amenity are made at:

**Para 81 (Protecting Green Belt land).** Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, <u>visual amenity</u> and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land'.

**Para 110 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment).** 'In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or <u>amenity value</u>, where consistent with other policies in this Framework'.

#### 2.2 Other definitions

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'amenity' as:

'A desirable or useful feature or facility of a building or place';

'The pleasantness or attractiveness of a place.'

## 3.0 Methodology

#### 3.1 General

There is no standardised methodology or guidance for undertaking assessments of sites for their amenity value, therefore a bespoke methodology was developed, as outlined in this section. The assessment was undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning on behalf of Guildford Borough Council (GBC). Ethos has extensive experience of environmental assessment of land assets, including open space assessments, ecological assessment and habitat and countryside management.

#### 3.2 Assessment Criteria

#### 3.2.1 Scope of the study

NPPF, paragraph 86, states:

'If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt'.

This study was commissioned in response to considerable concern raised through the draft Local Plan consultation (2014) that the removal of Green Belt would lead to inappropriate development and that normal Development Management policies, advocated by the NPPF, would not offer strong enough protection of land that has public value. The study therefore identifies open land of public value for visual amenity value.

Figure 1, shows the land included within the scope of the study, which includes:

- Land within villages that are proposed to be inset from the Green Belt due to the limited contribution they have to the openness of the Green Belt (this insetting is required by the NPPF).

- The village of Ash Green. Ash Green is not currently in the Green Belt but is surrounded by Green Belt to the South and East. The plan proposes an extension to the Green Belt to the North and West of the village which would mean it would become a village inset from Green Belt.
- Mount Browne and the University of Law. These are brownfield sites within the Green Belt that are proposed to be inset in the same manner as the villages, based on the limited contribution they have to the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst the Local Plan allocates both these sites for residential accommodation (student accommodation at the University of law) on the basis of what we understand to be the aspirations of the current landowners, we wish to understand whether there are any areas of public amenity value that should be retained as part of the redevelopment.

#### The scope of the study did not include:

- Land on the edge of villages which is allocated for development and for which the inset boundary has been purposely extended in order to include this land to facilitate delivery. The Local Plan has considered whether there are exceptional circumstances that justify amending the Green Belt boundaries and has found that these exist, due to the need to allocate sufficient land for market and affordable housing (including traveller accommodation) and employment development.
- Major previously developed sites in the Green Belt that are proposed to be inset because of the limited contribution they have to the openness of the Green Belt, except Mount Browne and the University of Law for the reasons given above. Whilst these sites may be subject to some intensification and/or development, they are expected to remain within the same use class and are not considered to have amenity value
- Any land proposed to remain in the Green Belt as new development is already strictly controlled and there is therefore no need for further protection
- Existing allocated open spaces as these are protected by national policy and do not need to be identified for further protection

#### 3.2.2 Identifying sites

- The starting point for identifying sites to be included in the assessment was the Land Availability Assessment (2016), which included 41 sites provided as a layer by GBC;
- Additional space within the proposed inset boundaries (Local Plan regulation 19, 2016) was then identified using aerial photography, and each space mapped as a polygon using Geographic Information System (GIS) software (Fig. 1). Excluded land includes land already

developed, existing allocated open spaces and spaces with no obvious access (e.g. groups of back gardens). This process identified an additional 65 sites.

#### 3.2.2 Assessment Criteria

The assessment of the identified sites was undertaken in two stages:

- Stage 1: A site visit was undertaken to determine if the site was accessible and if it had amenity/aesthetic value or potential. If the site was found to have any aesthetic/amenity value or potential, it was then assessed further at stage 2;
- During the site visit, photographs were taken of the site and its immediate environs where feasible. This data was recorded as point data on a GIS database;
- Stage 2: A desktop assessment of the sites against the criteria as outlined in table 1 below. Each site was scored against the criteria and an overall score given as follows:
  - $\circ$  0 3 Nil value
  - $\circ$  4 7 Low Value
  - 8 11 Medium Value
  - 12 16 High Value

Figure 1 Land Availability assessment sites with the study areas (proposed inset boundary sites) overlaid

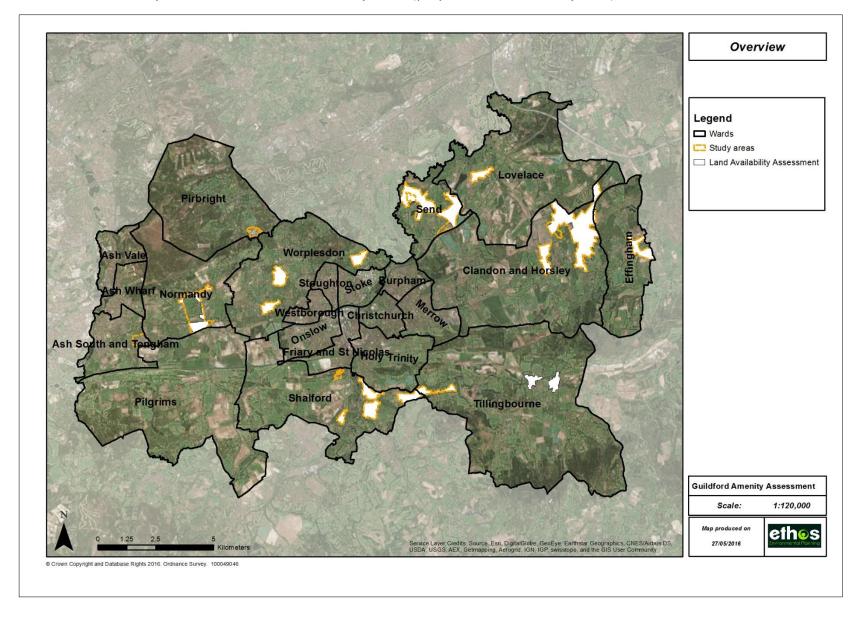


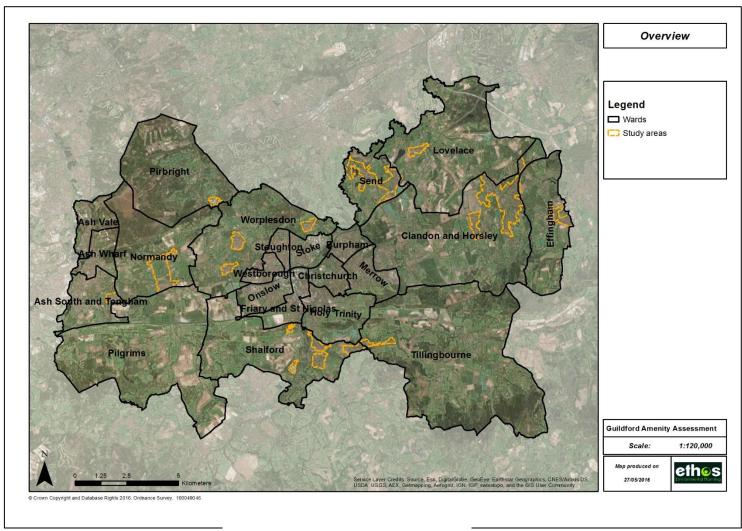
Table 1 Assessment criteria for amenity assessment

Criteria	Description	Scoring	
Stage 1			
Aesthetic Value	Overall assessment of the attractiveness of the site in the context of its immediate surroundings. Consideration given to factors such as natural features, views into the site, tranquility.	<ul><li>No value</li><li>Low Value</li><li>Moderate Value</li><li>High Value</li></ul>	0 1 2 3
Access to the site	Can the site be easily accessed from an existing publicly accessible route i.e. public footpath, adopted highway	No     Yes	<u> </u>
Stage 2			
Access to community facilities	How far is the site from existing community facilities. A community facility defined as a school, village hall/community centre or shop.	> 10 minute walk (xx m) 5-10 minutes walk (xx m) < 5 minutes walk (xx m)	0 1 2
Access within the site	An assessment of current access within the site i.e. can the public access the site at the moment.	No Partially Yes	0 1 2
Biodiversity	Presence of features and habitat with value for biodiversity such as trees, hedgerows, water bodies, grassland. Assessment undertaken by 'suitably qualified ecologist'.	No features Low value Medium value High value	0 1 2 3
Links to other GI	How far is the site from other accessible open space or green infrastructure	> 10 minute walk (>480m) 5-10 minutes walk (240-480 m < 5 minutes walk (240 m)	0 n) 1 2
Improving derelict or damaged land	Is the land damaged or derelict, and if so, is there potential for it to be improved for amenity value.	No Yes	0 1
Overall amenity value	An overall judgement made by the surveyor as to the overall current amenity value of the site, based on professional opinion, consideration of factors listed above and references to 'amenity' within the NPPF.	<ul><li>No value</li><li>Low Value</li><li>Moderate Value</li><li>High Value</li></ul>	0 1 2 3

#### 4.0 Assessment Results

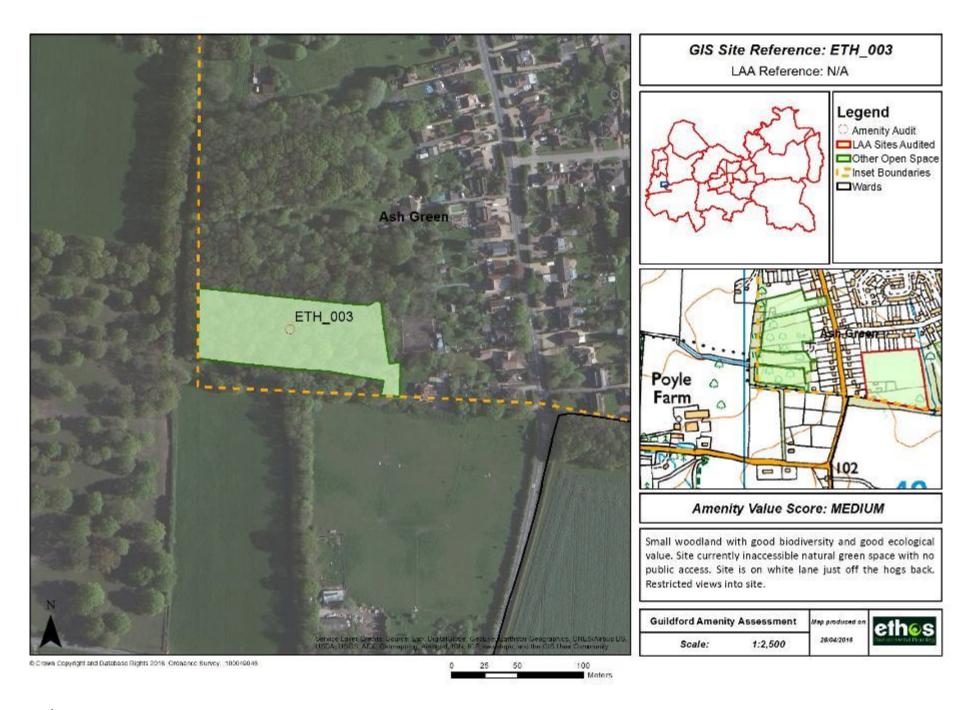
The survey results are presented as a series of maps by area showing the inset boundary (Fig. 2) and each site. The results are displayed in a table at the end of the section.

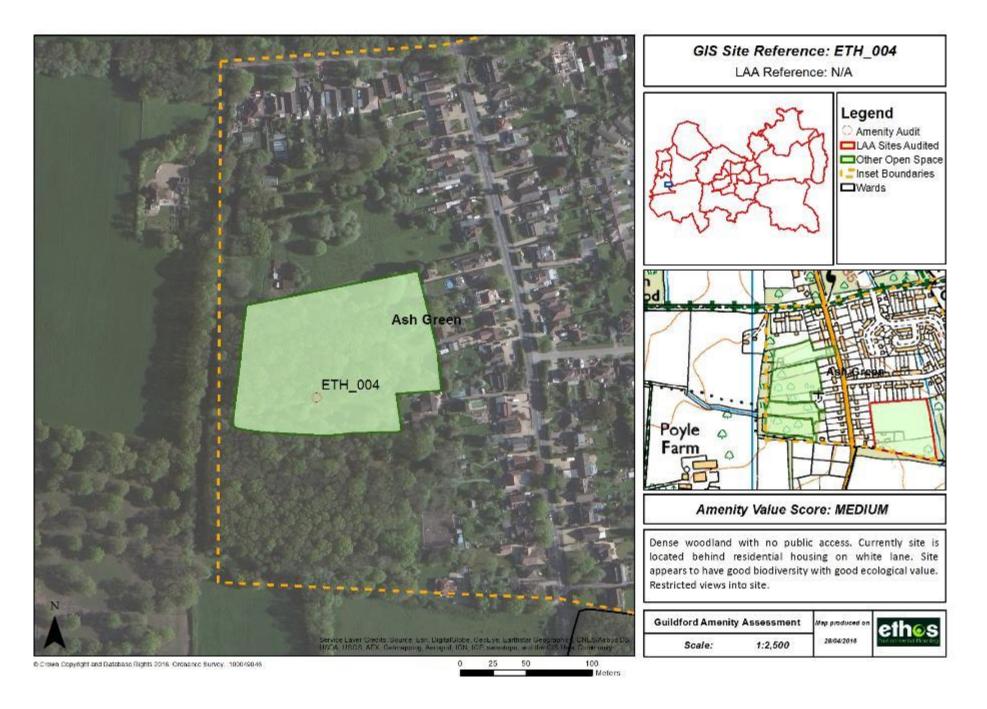
Figure 2 Overview of study areas (inset boundaries) within wards

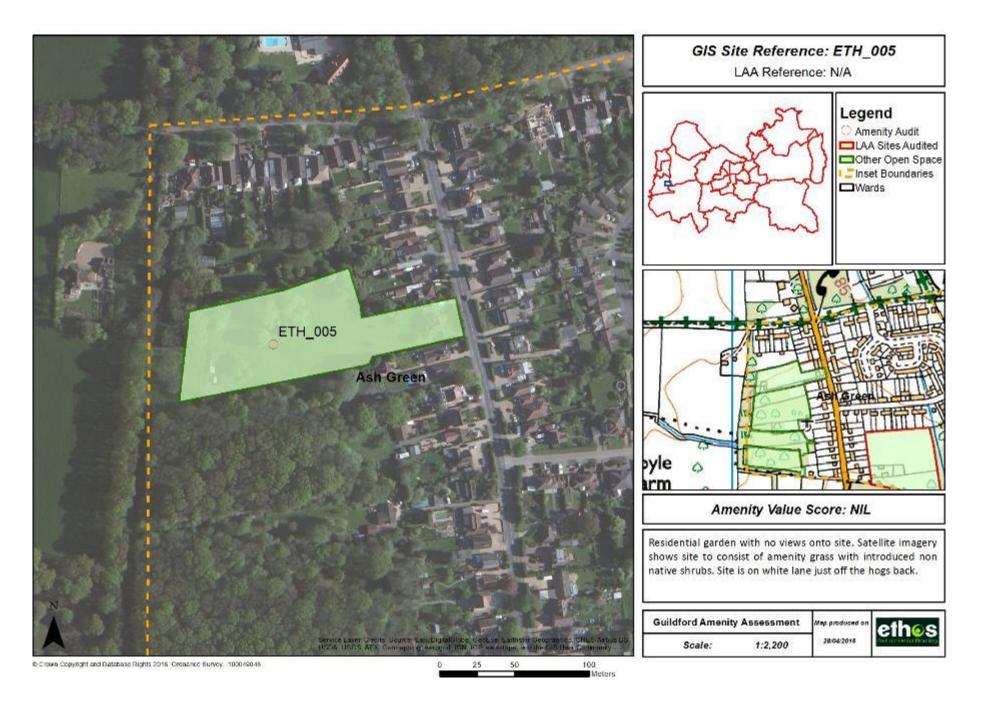


# Ash Green



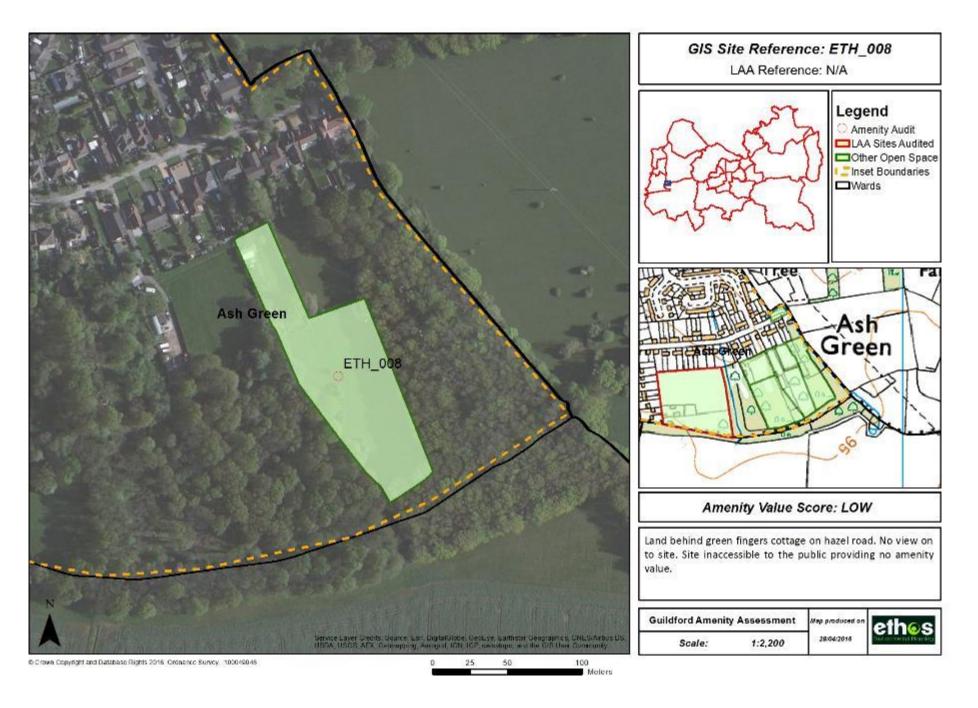


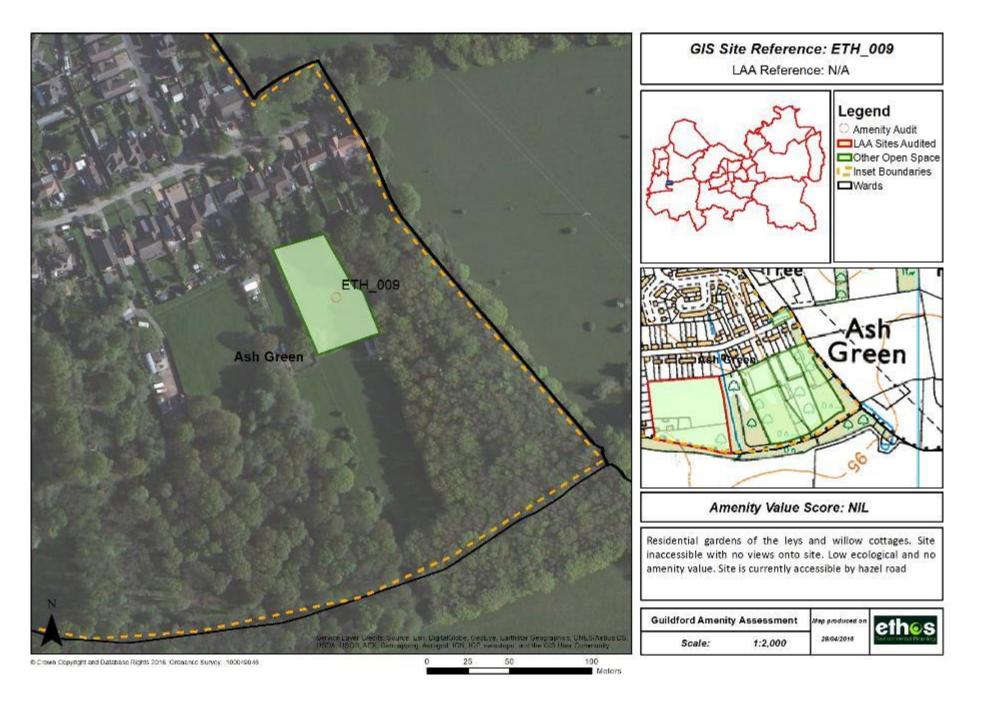




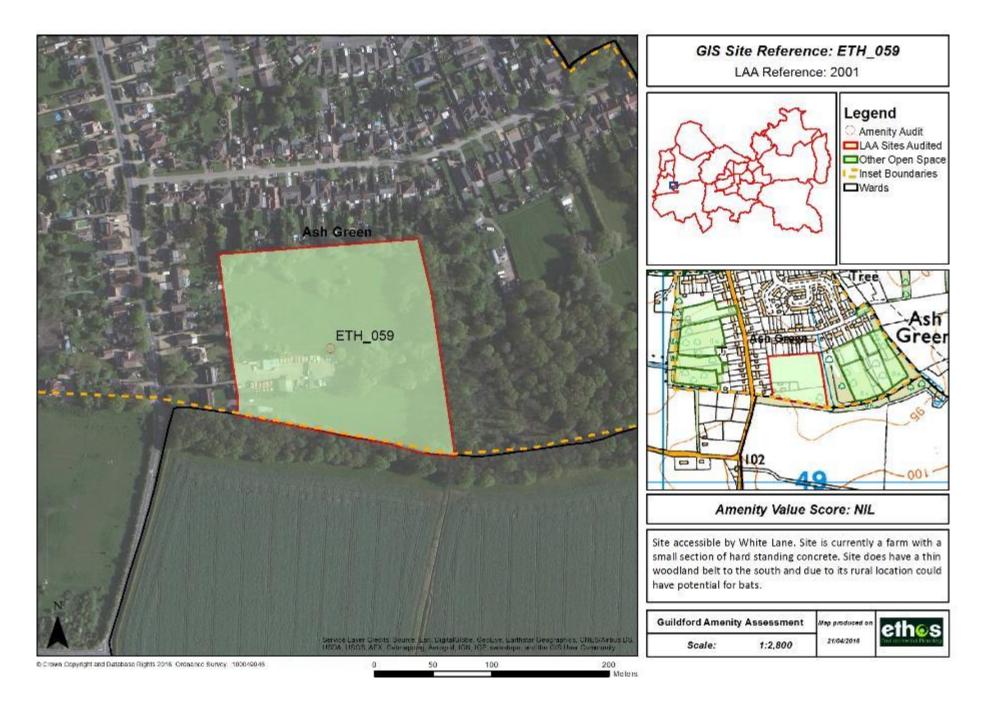


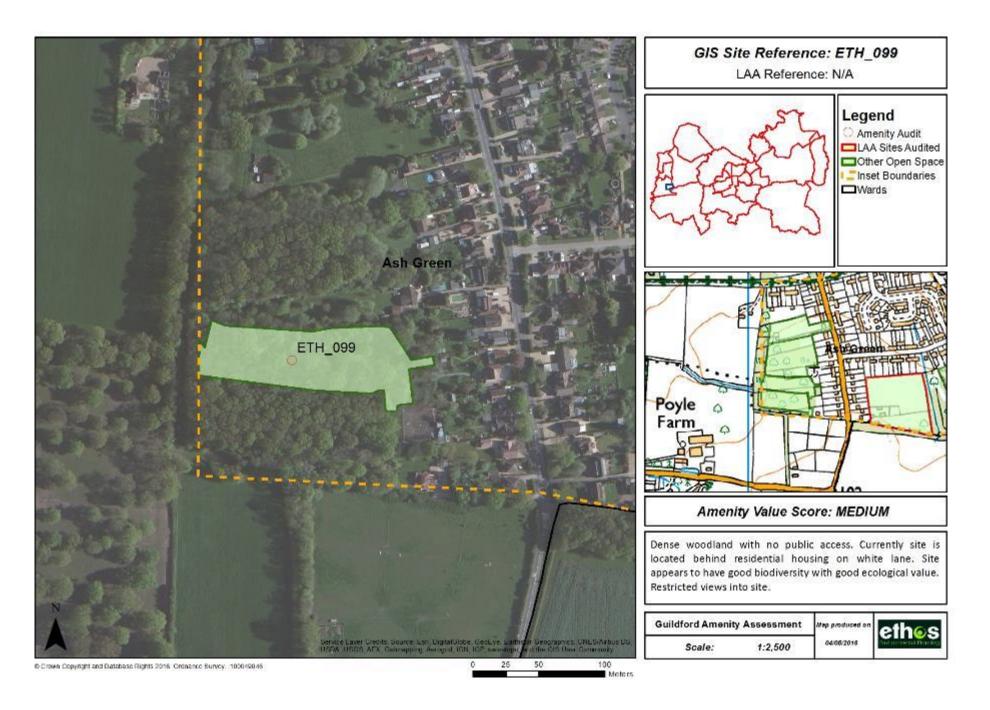


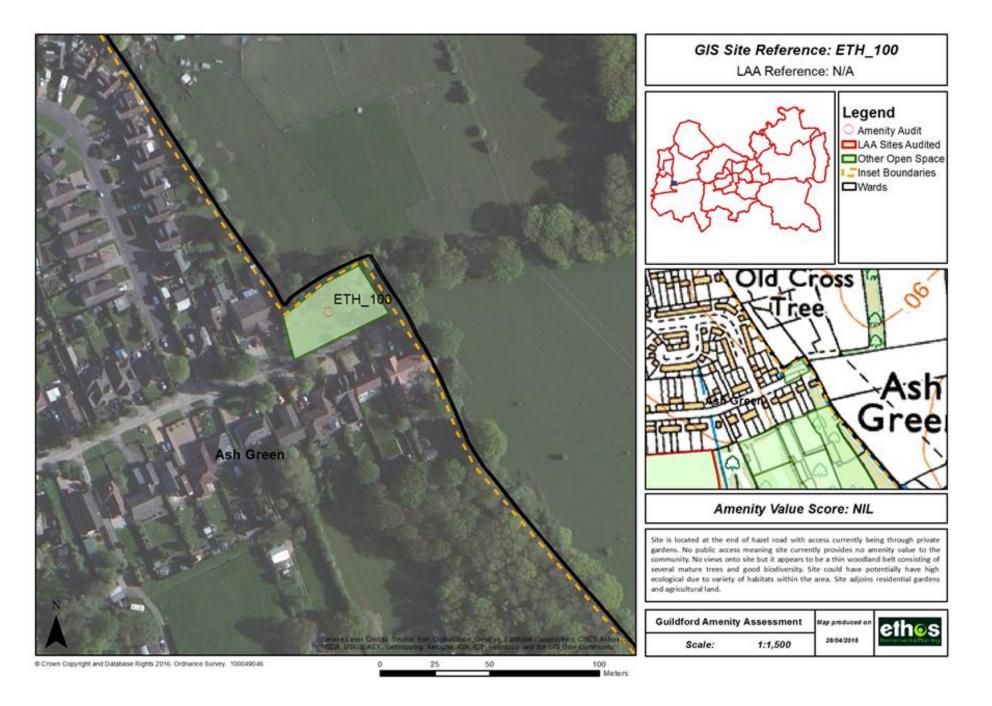




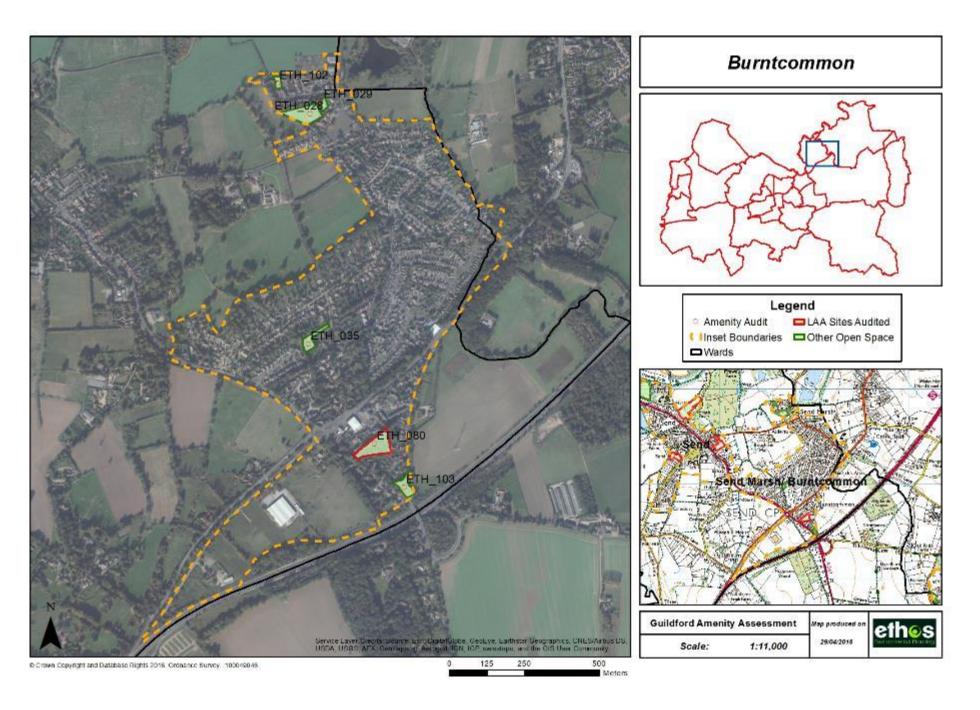


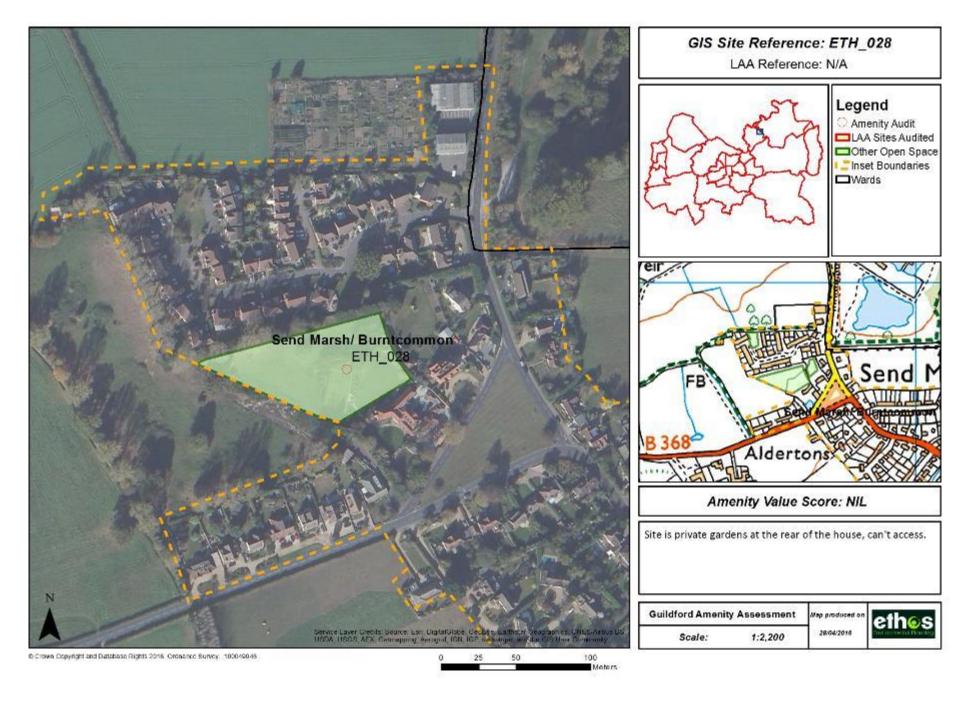




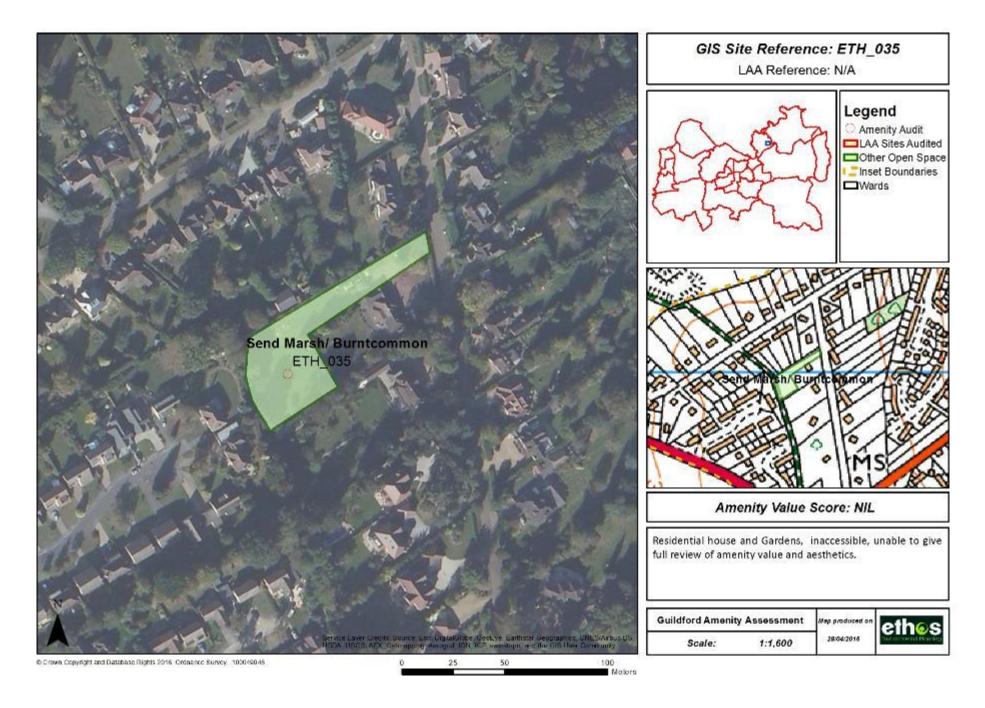


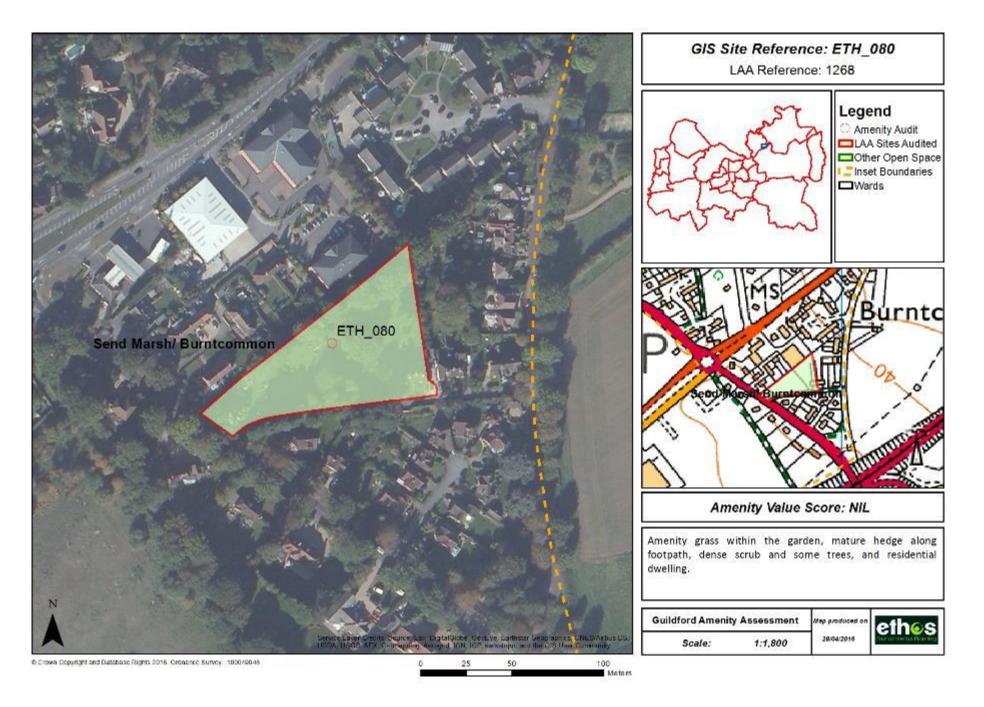
Burntcommon/Send Marsh



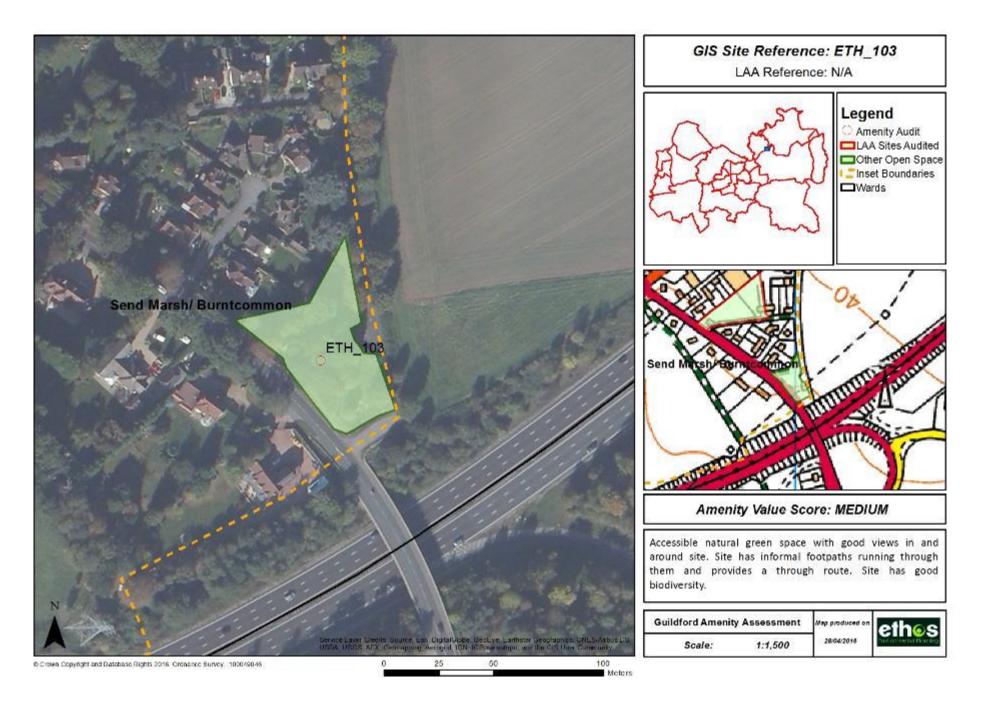




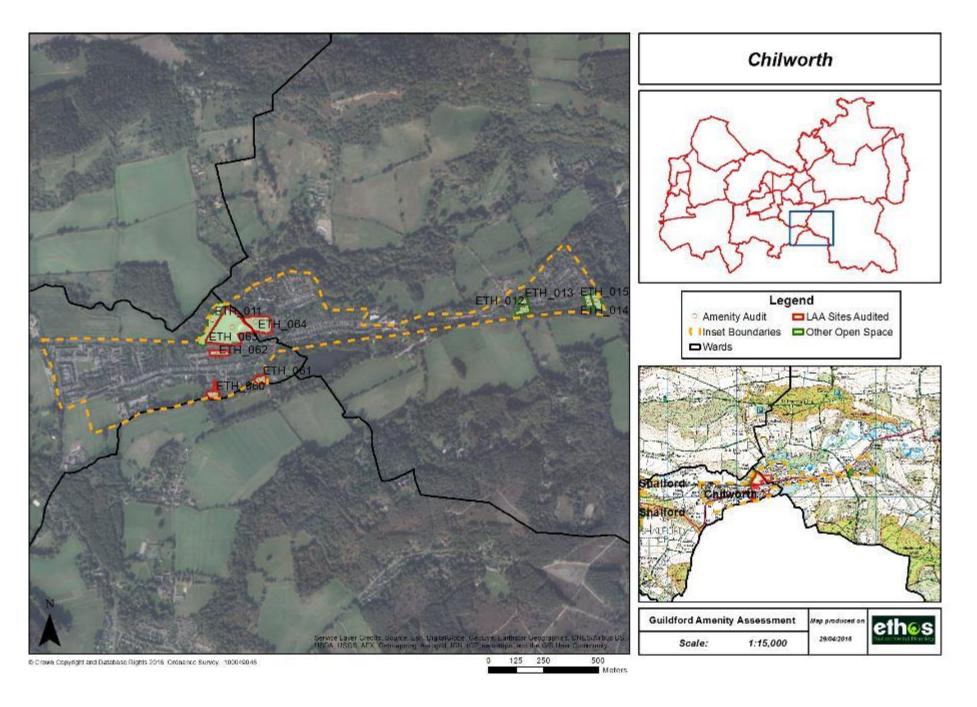


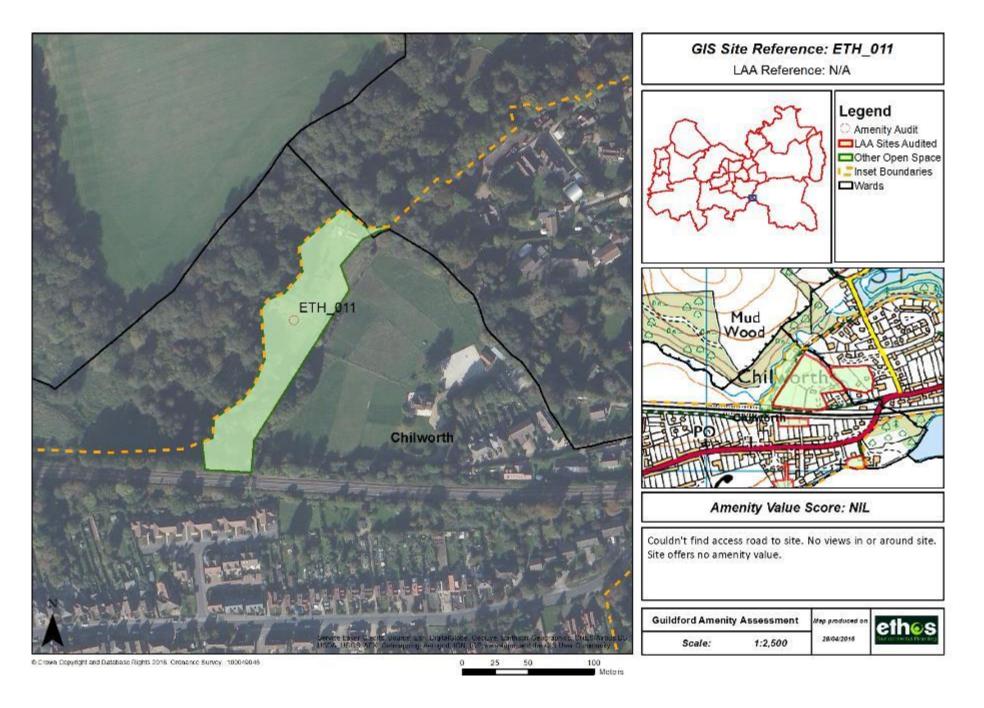




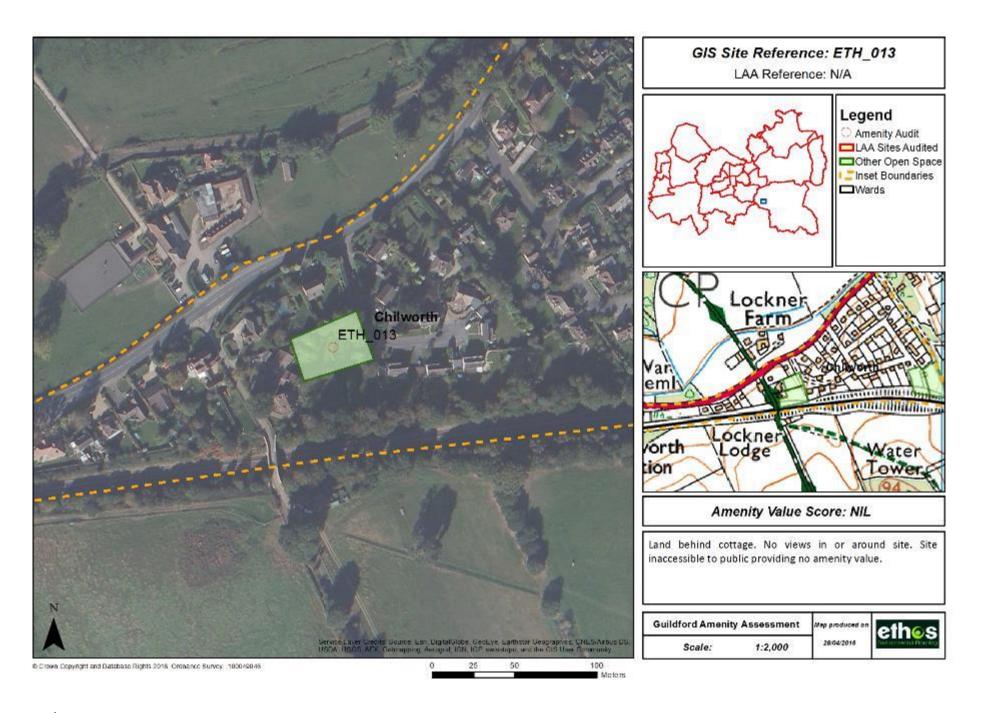


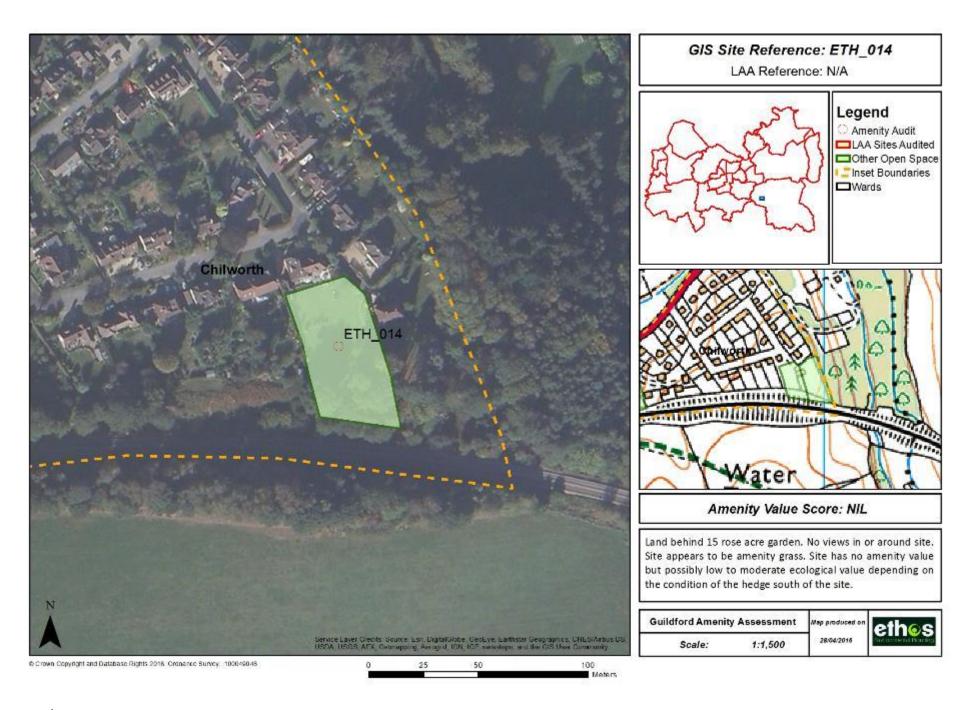
# Chilworth

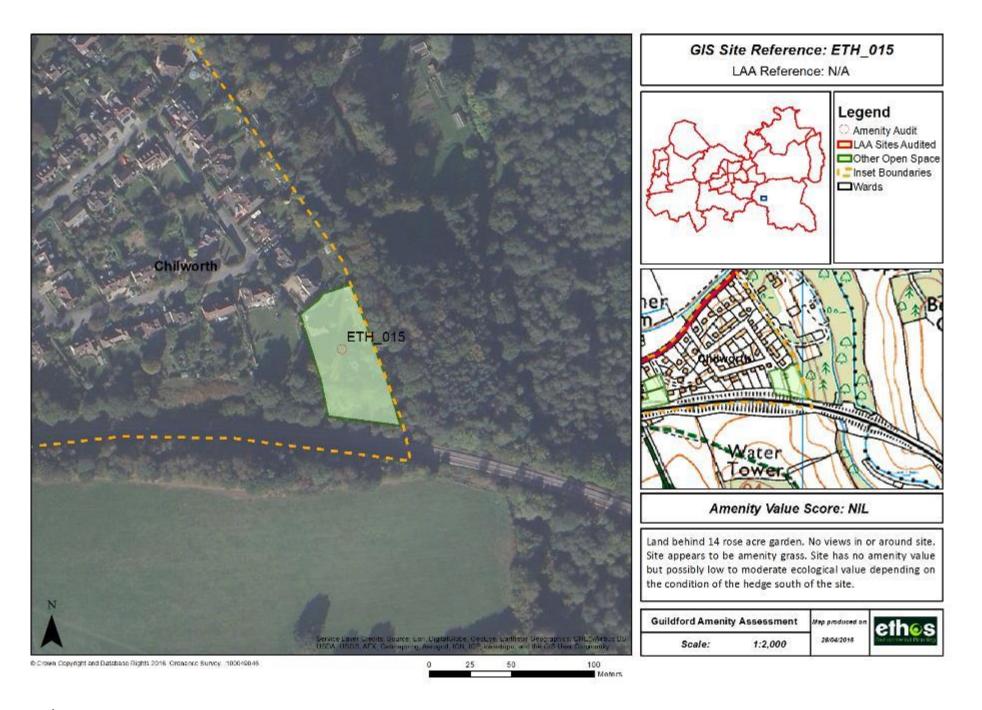




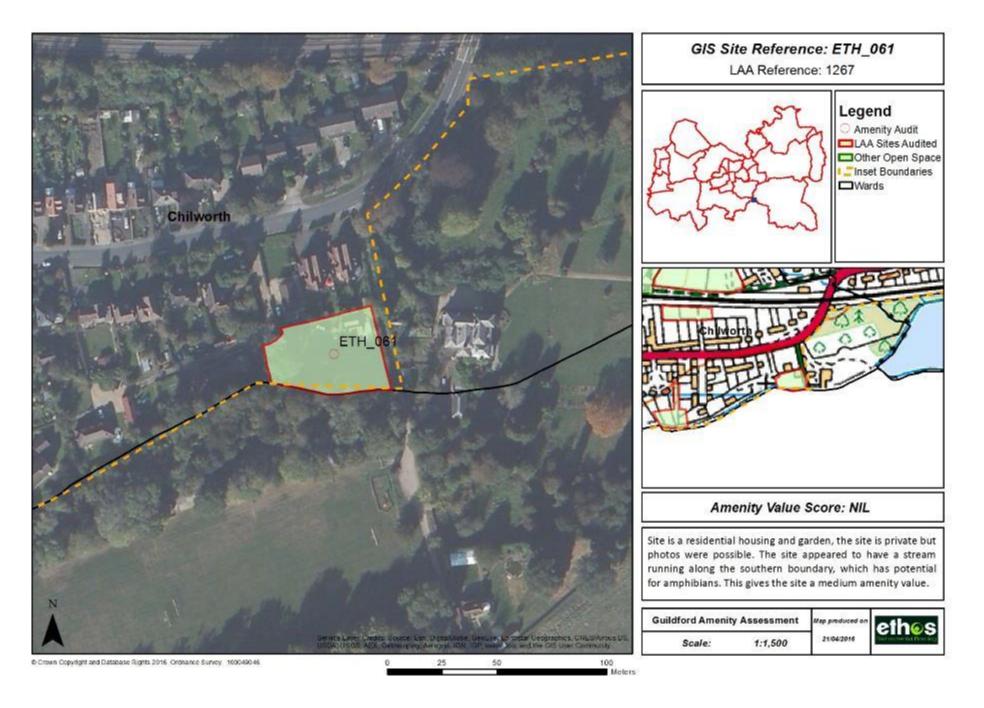




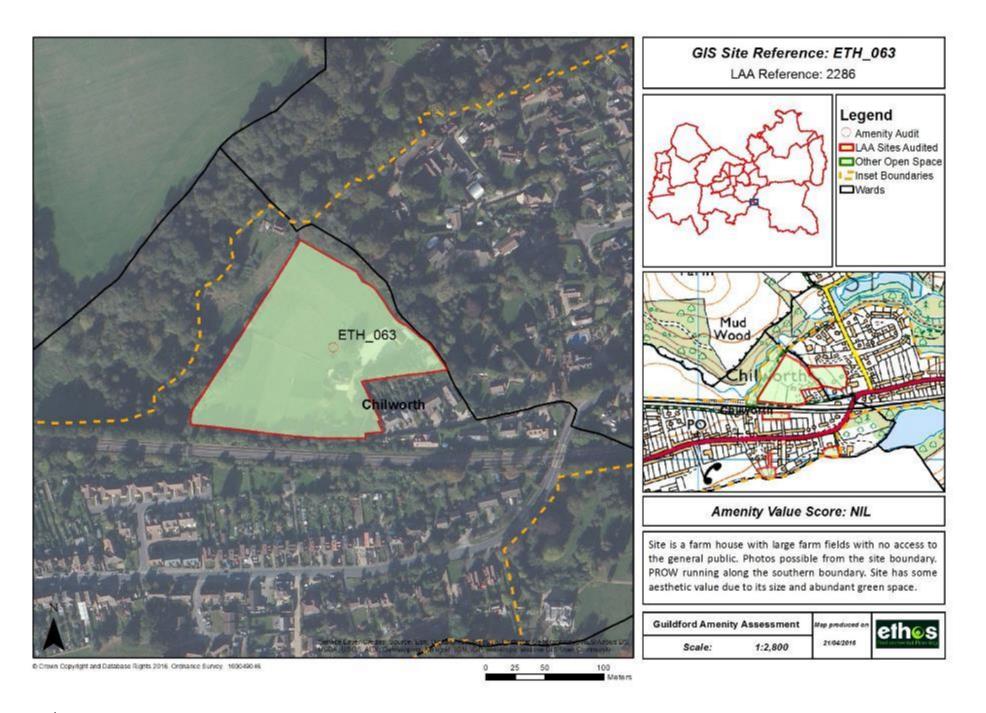


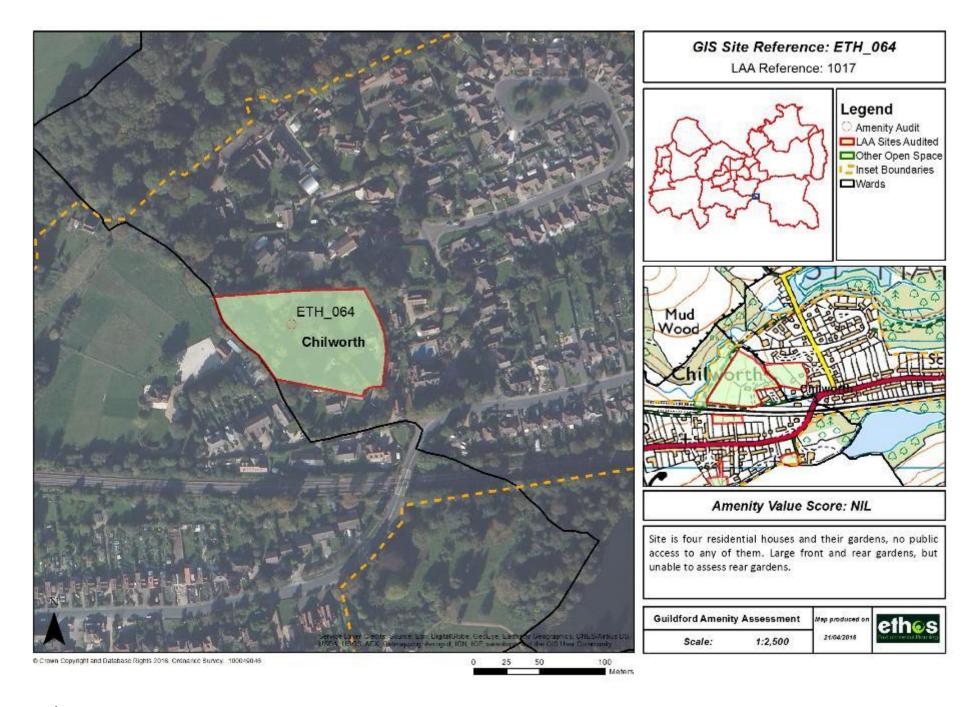




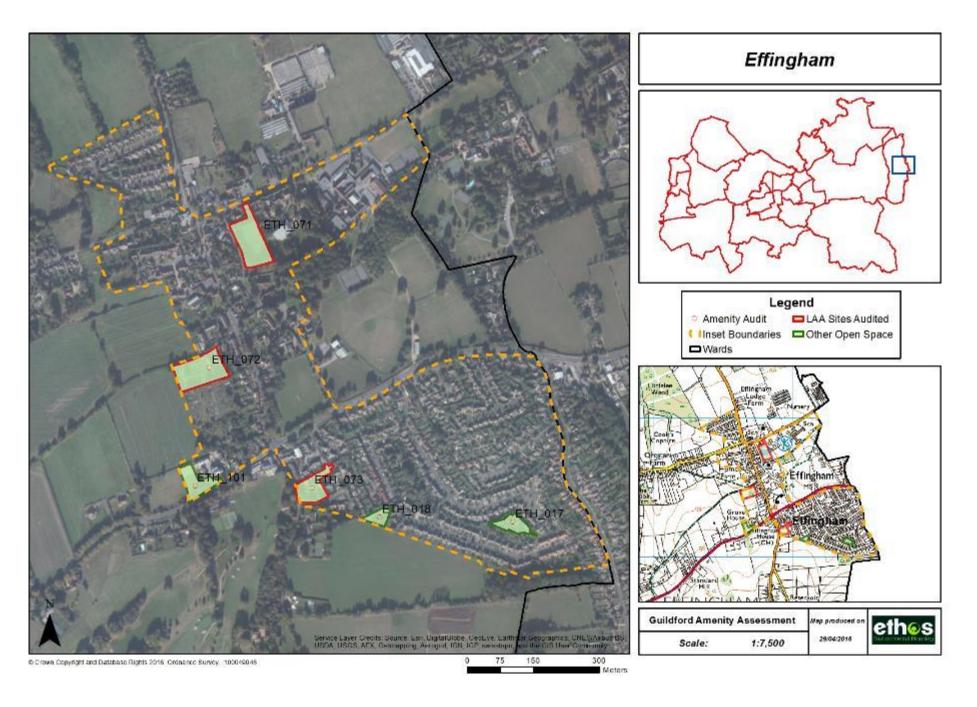






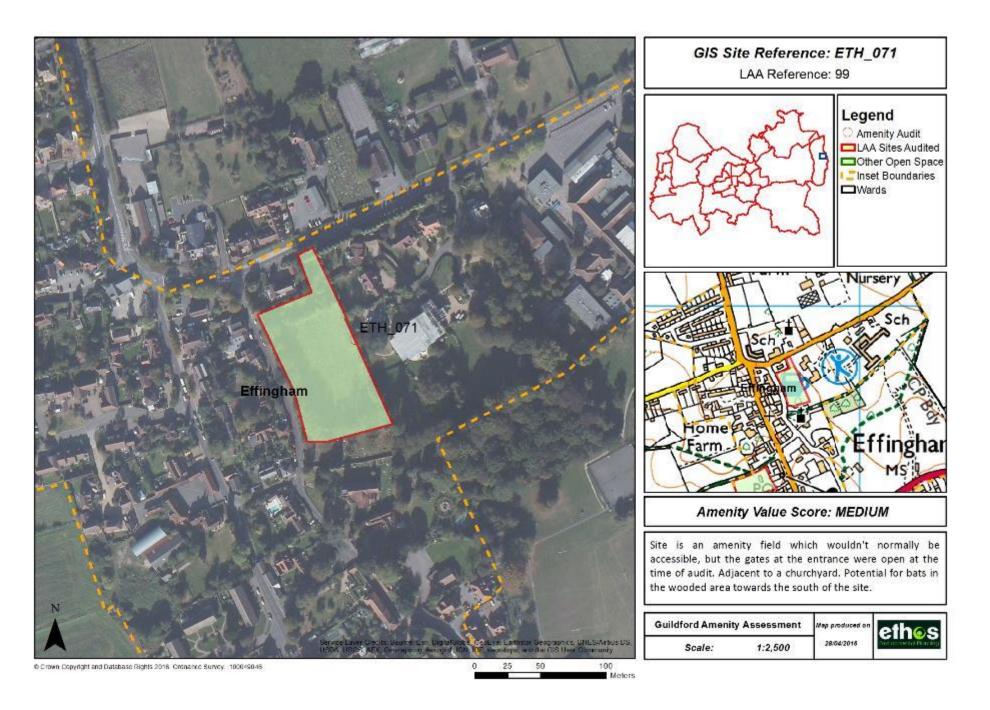


Effingham

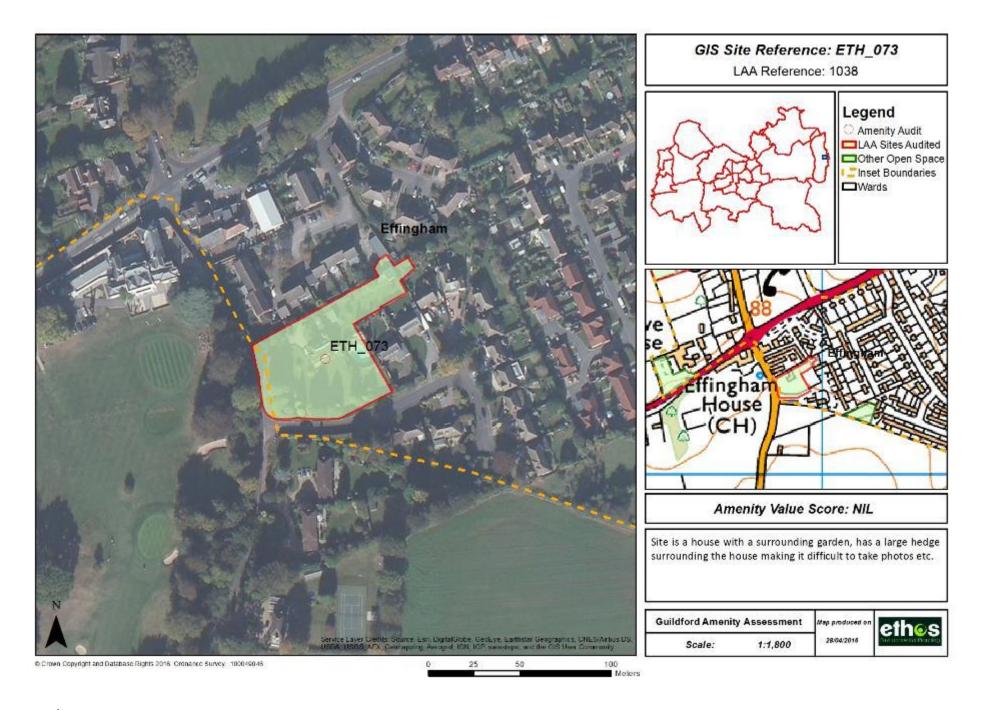


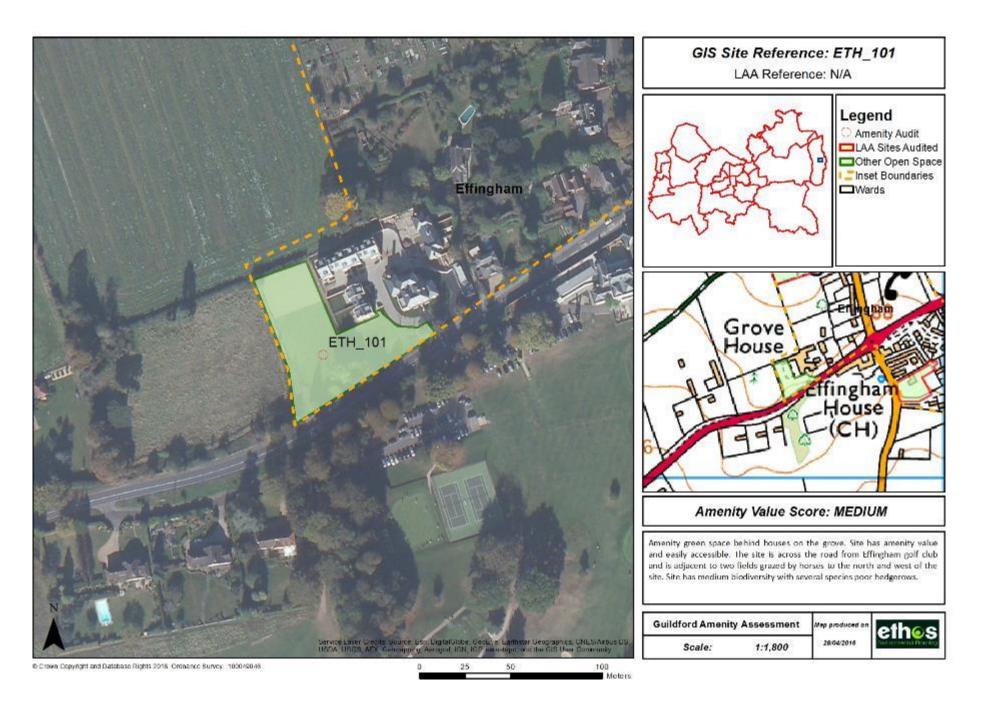




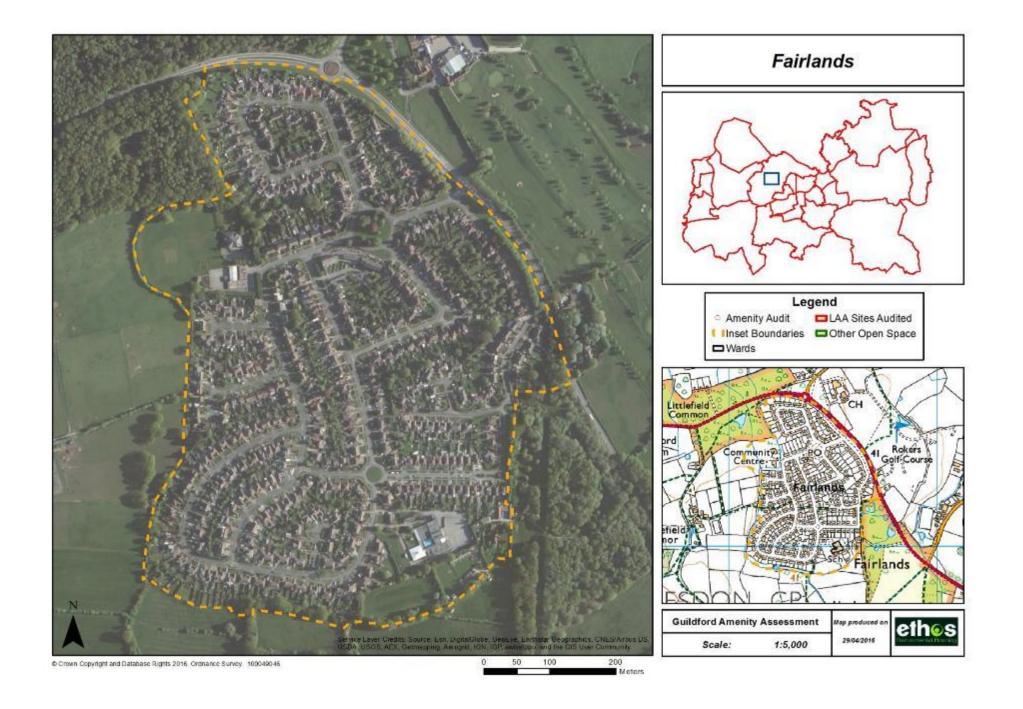




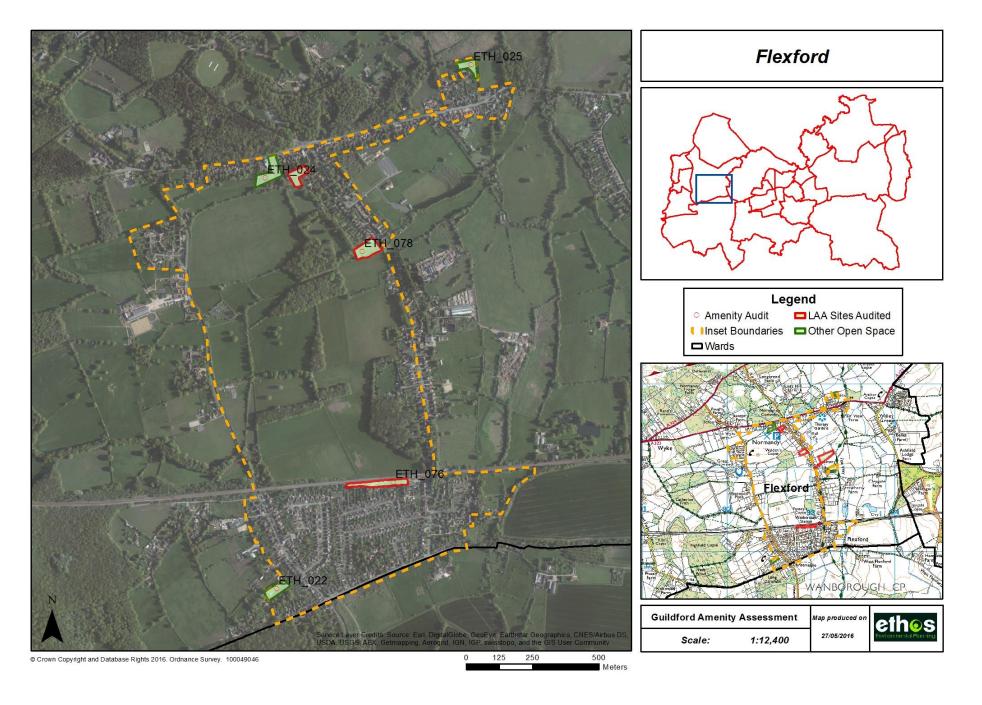




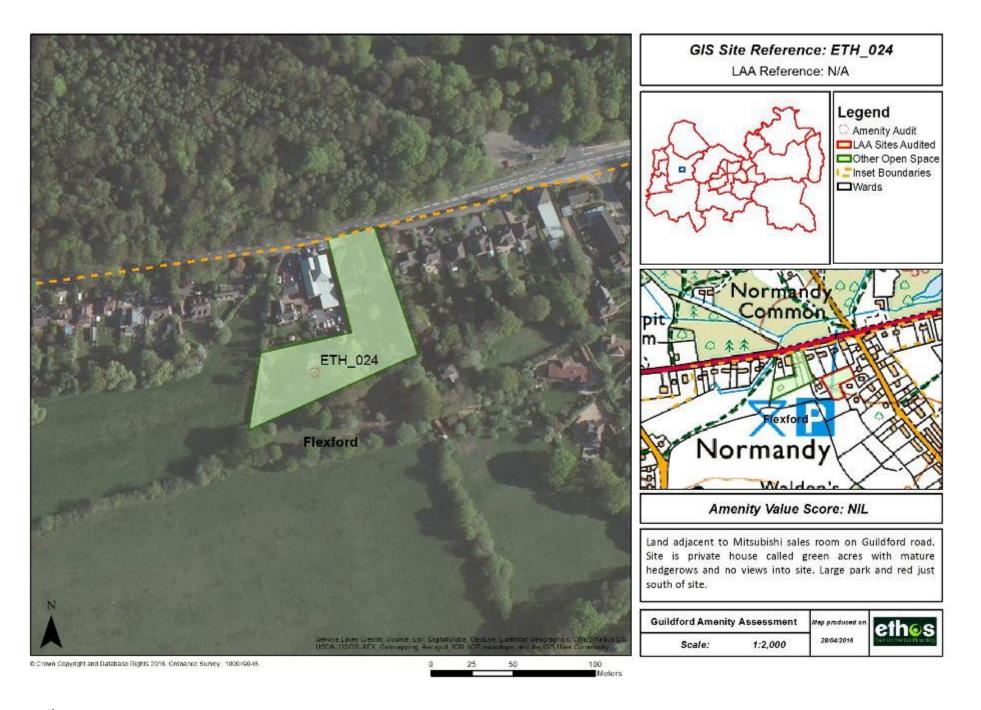
## **Fairlands**

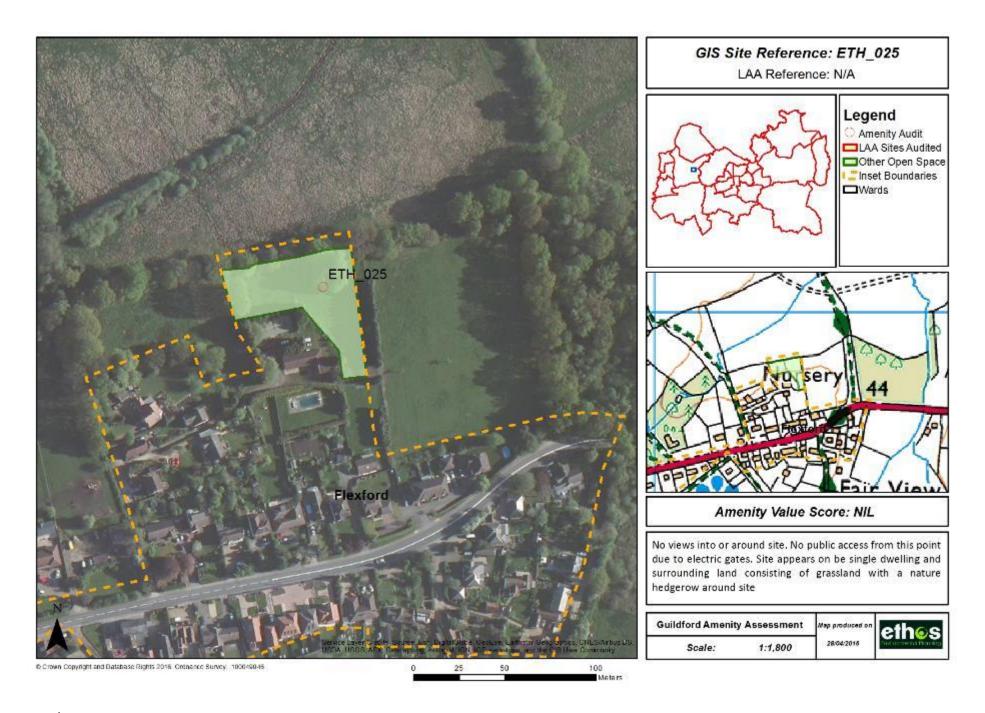


## Flexford

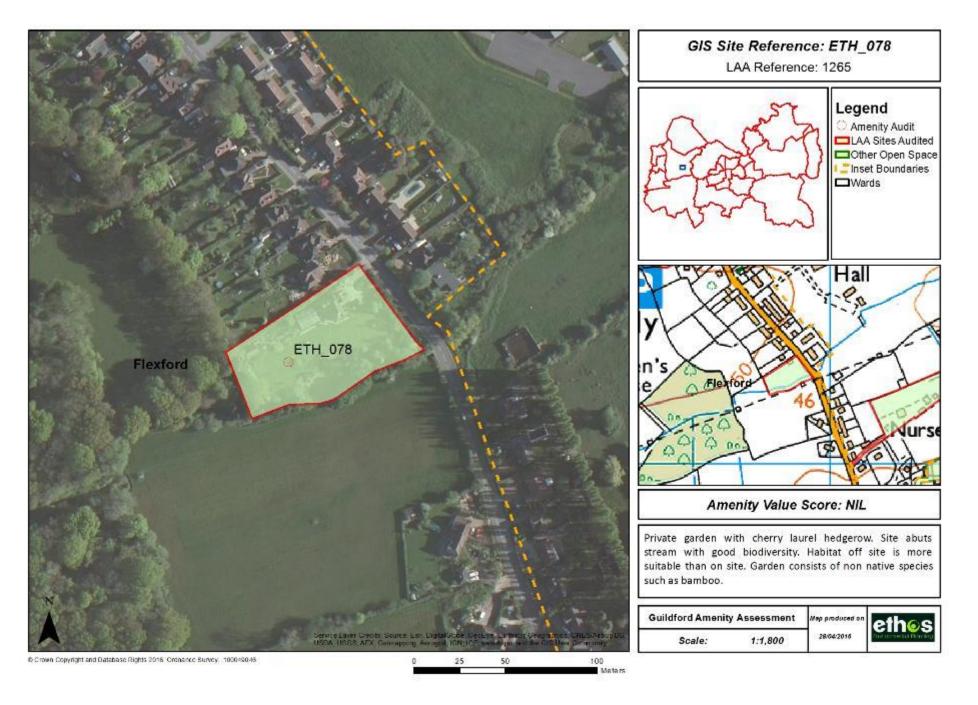






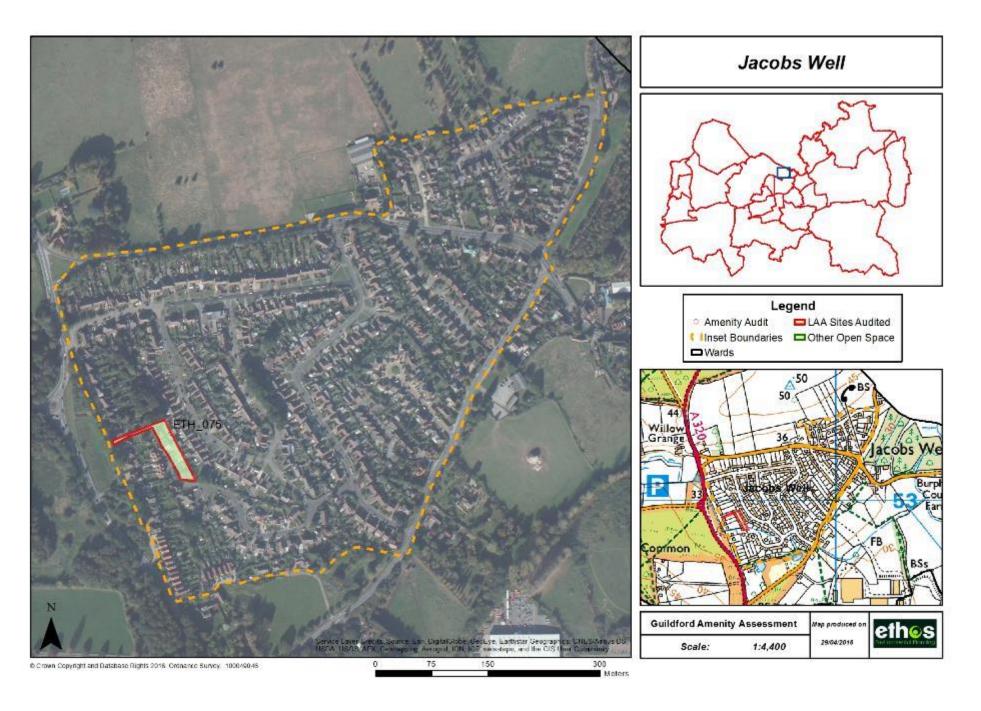


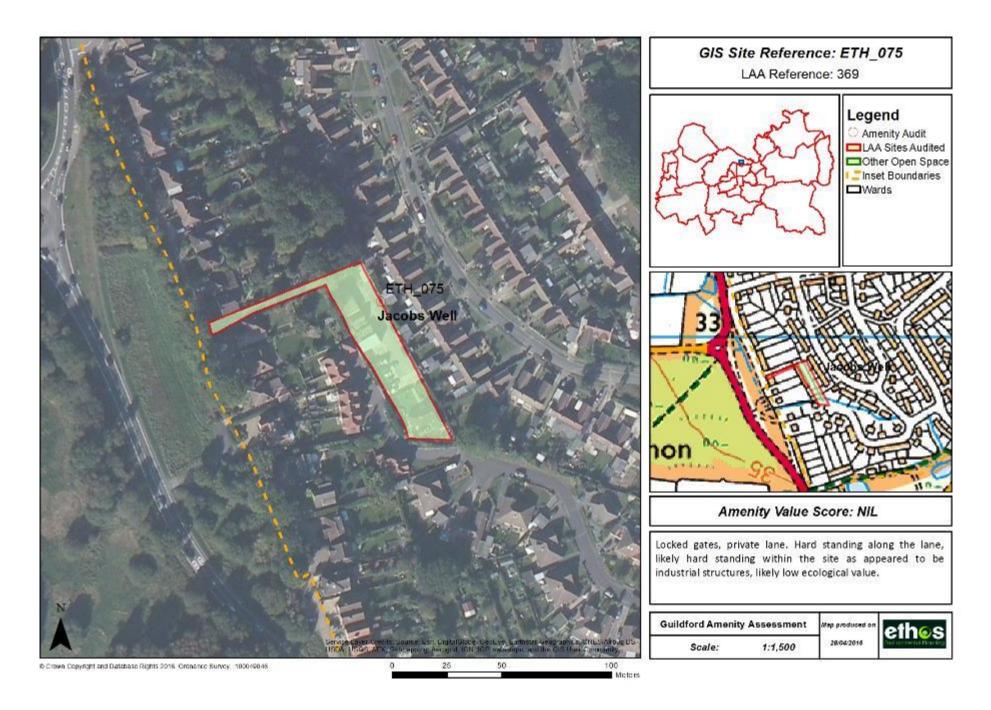




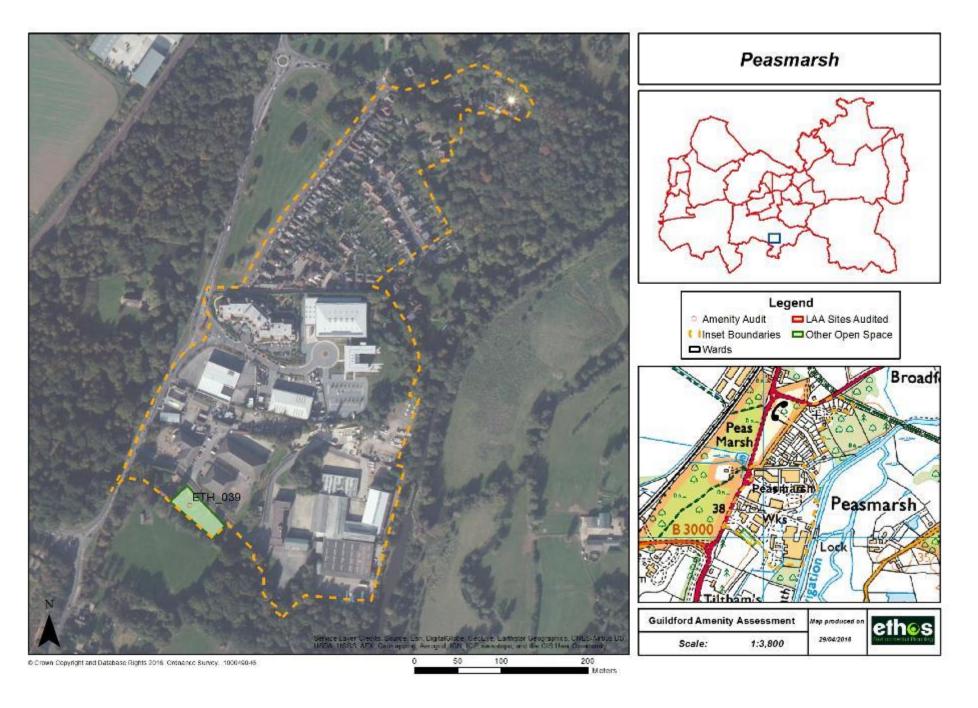


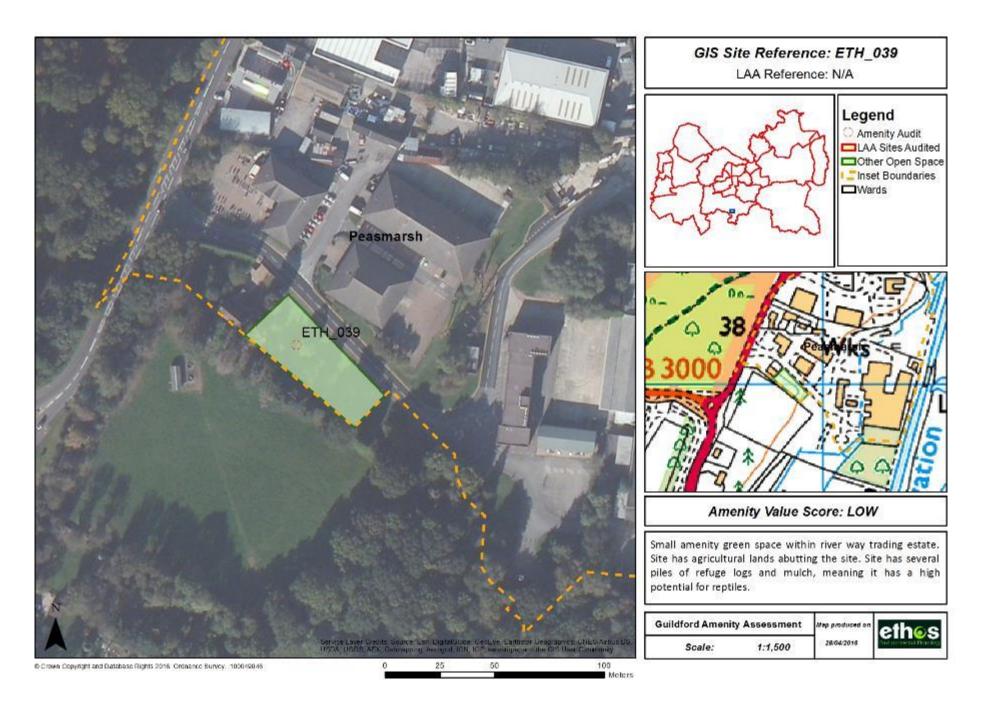
Jacobs Well



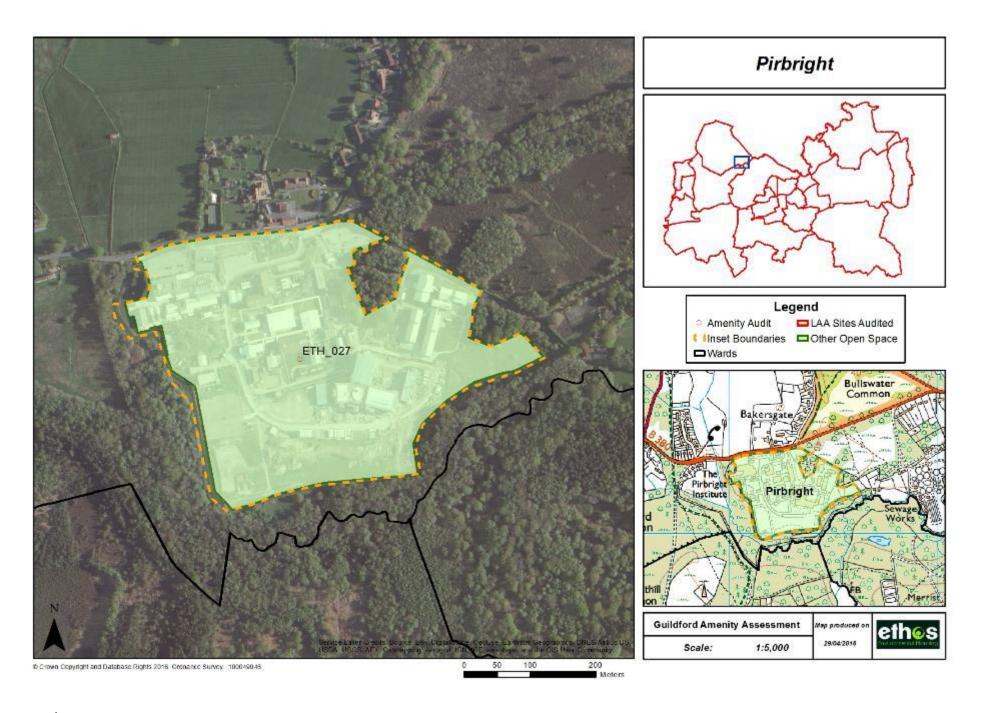


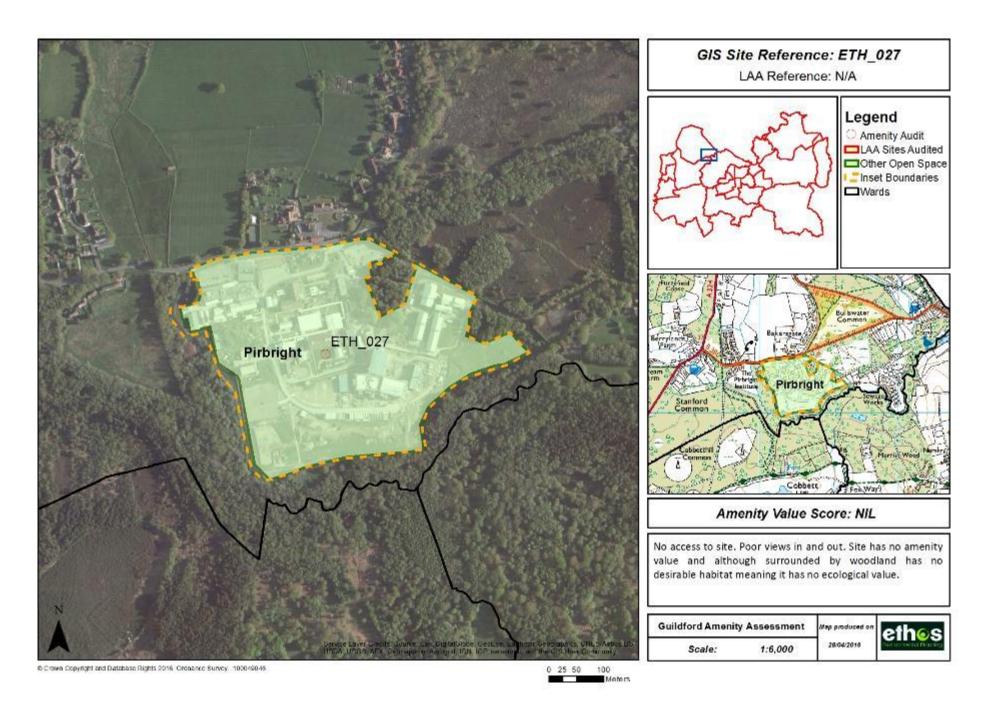
Peasmarsh



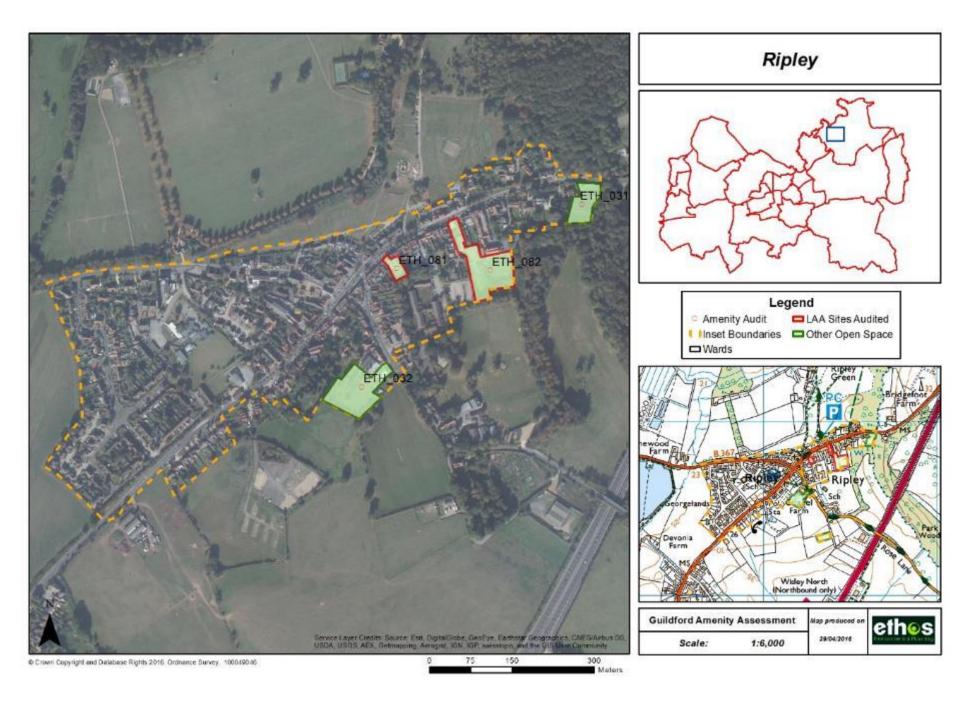


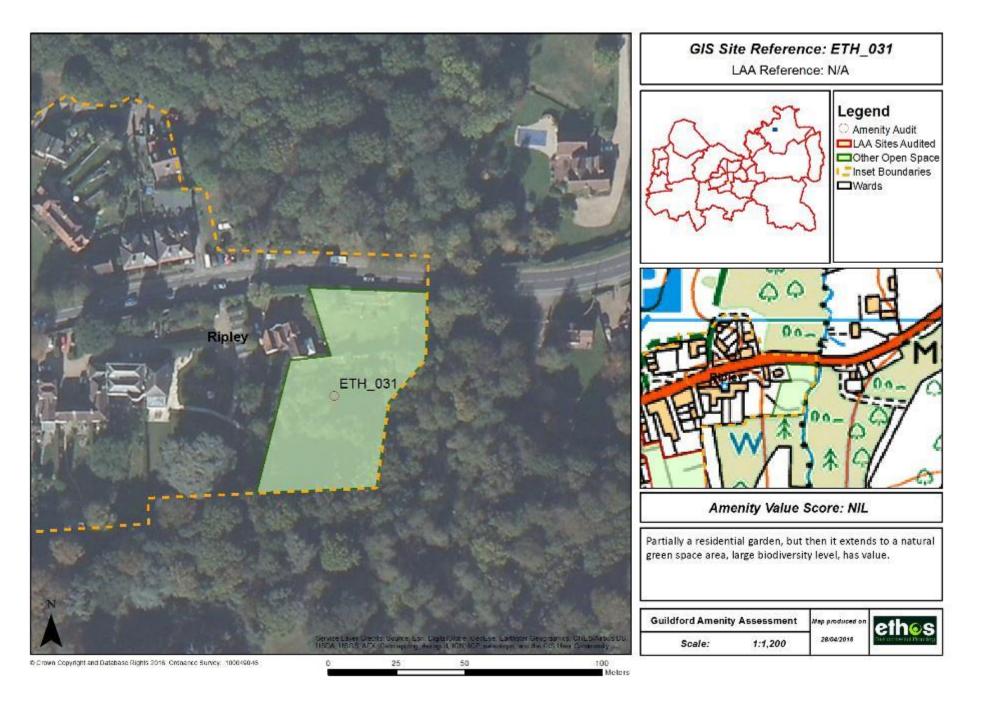
Pirbright

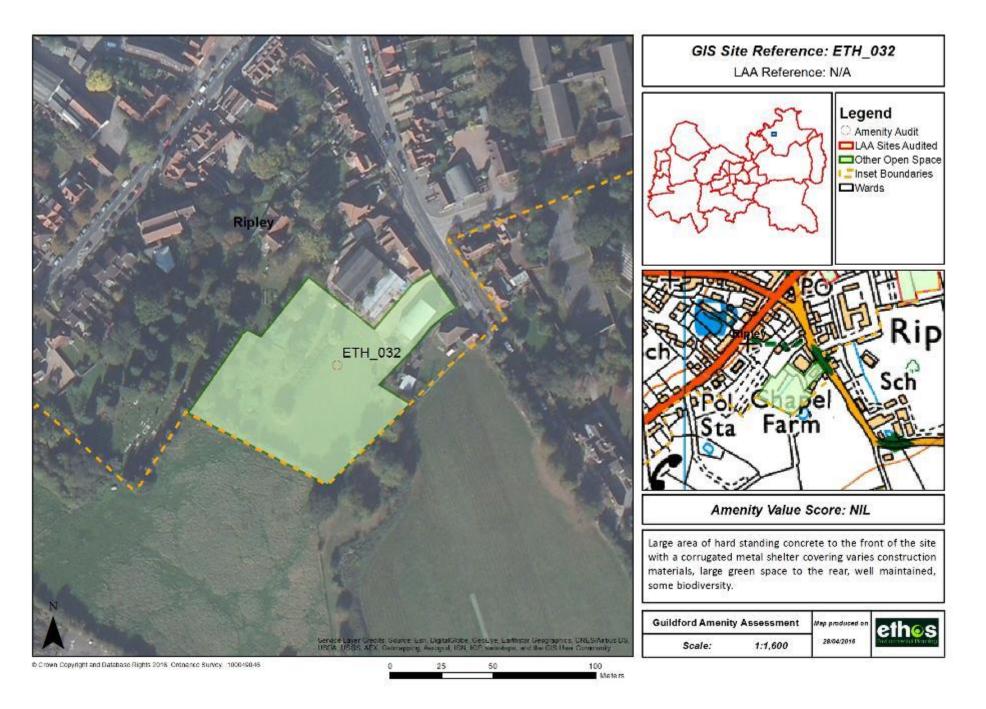


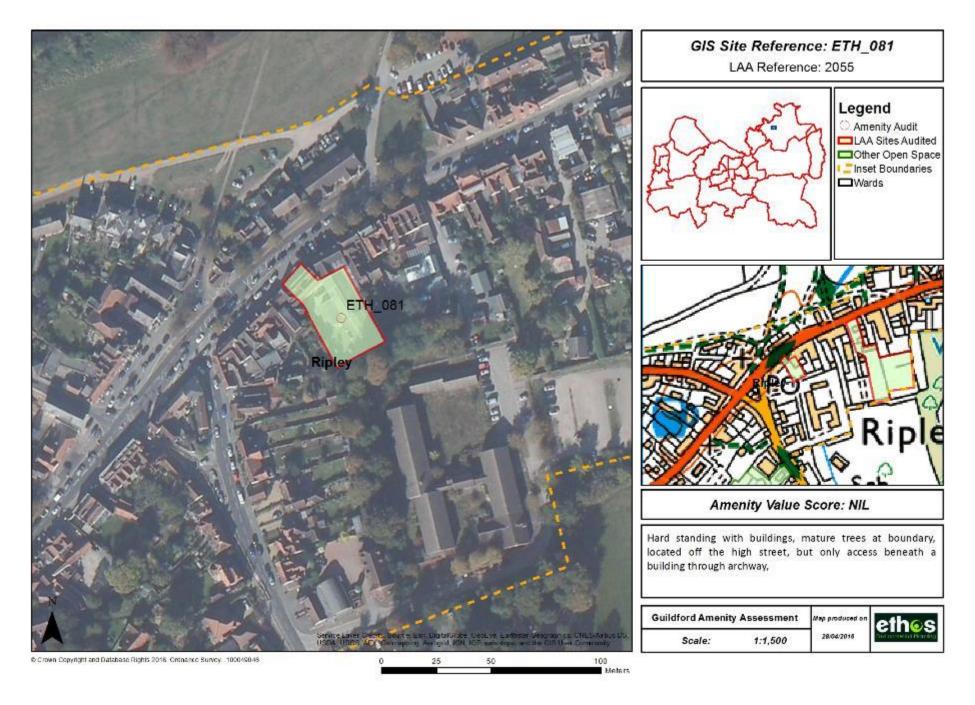


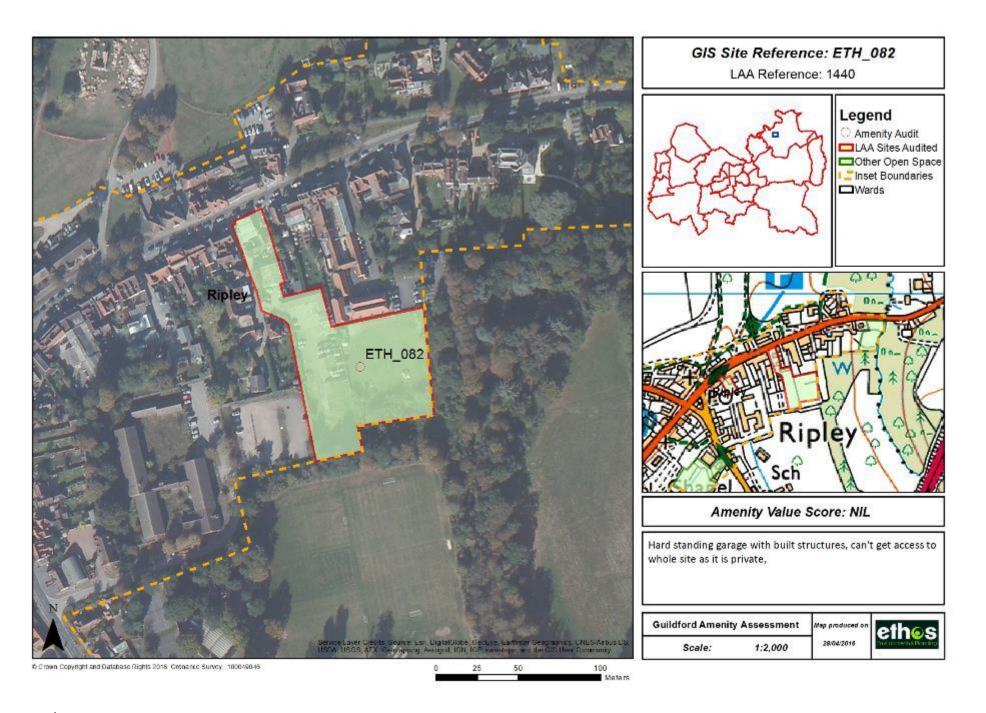
Ripley



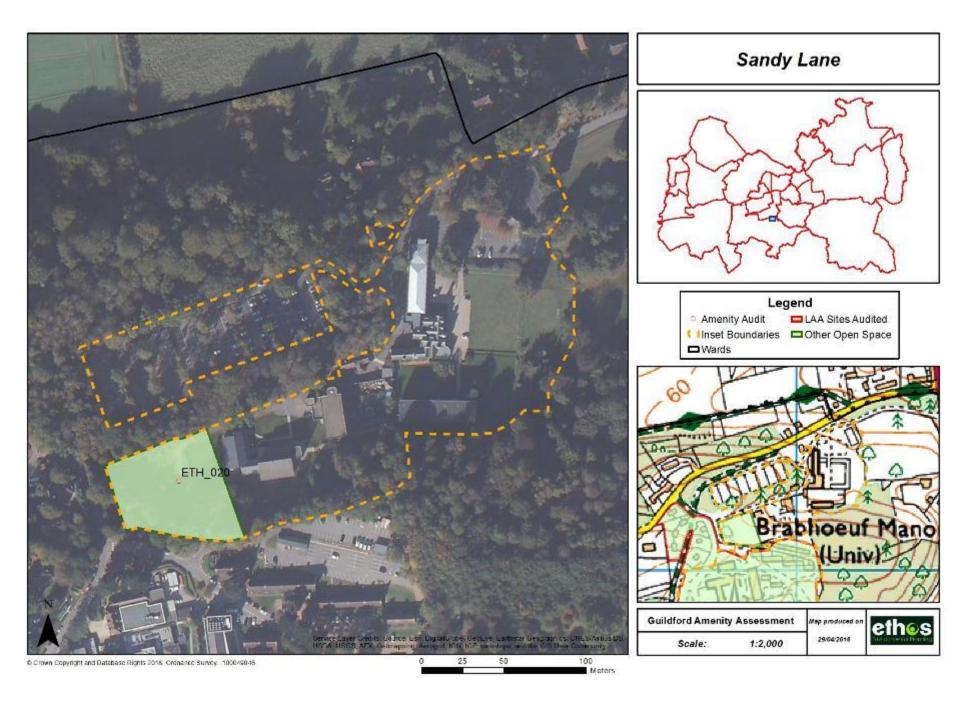


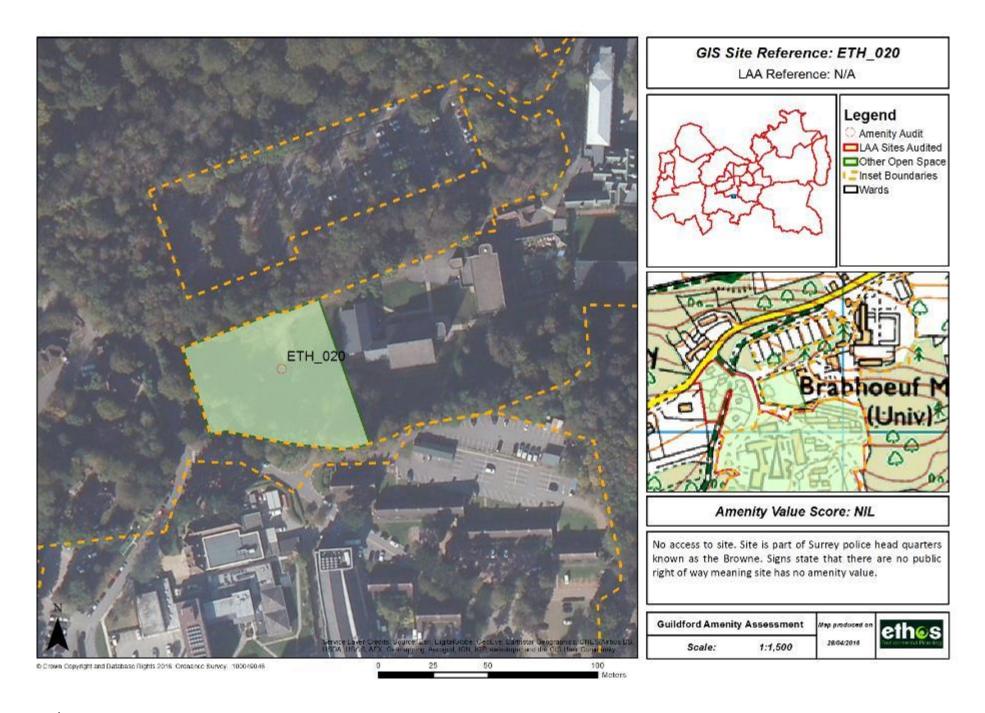




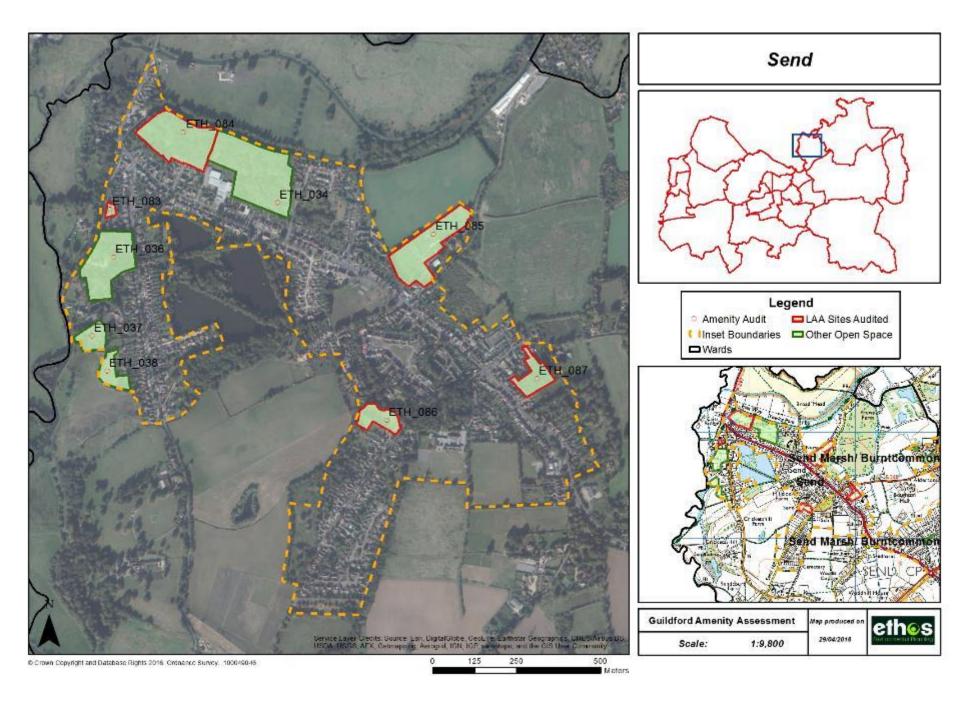


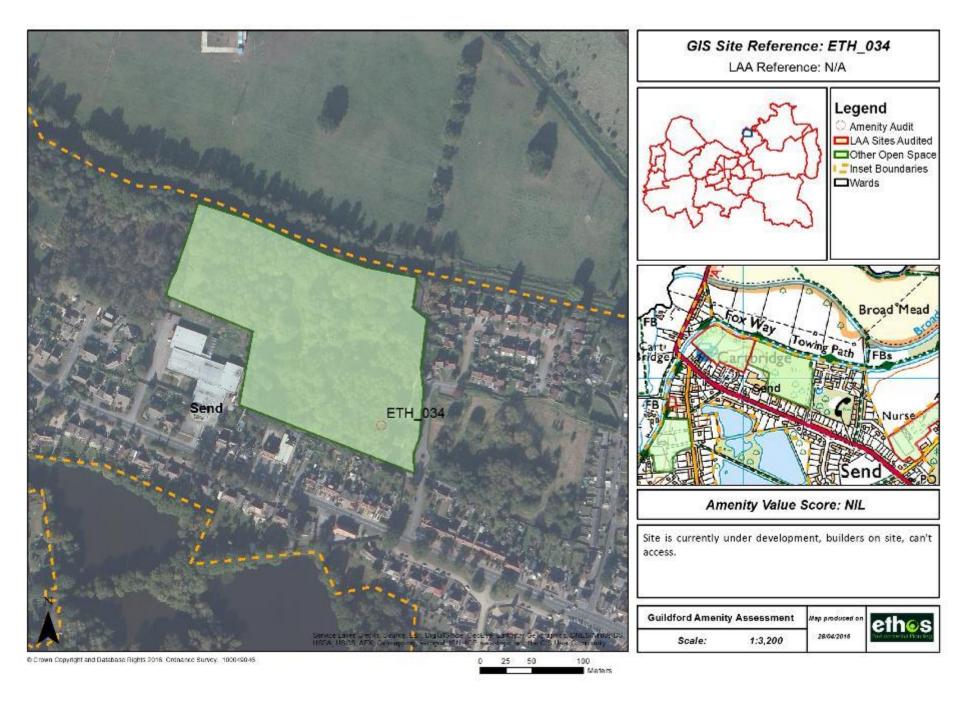
University of Law

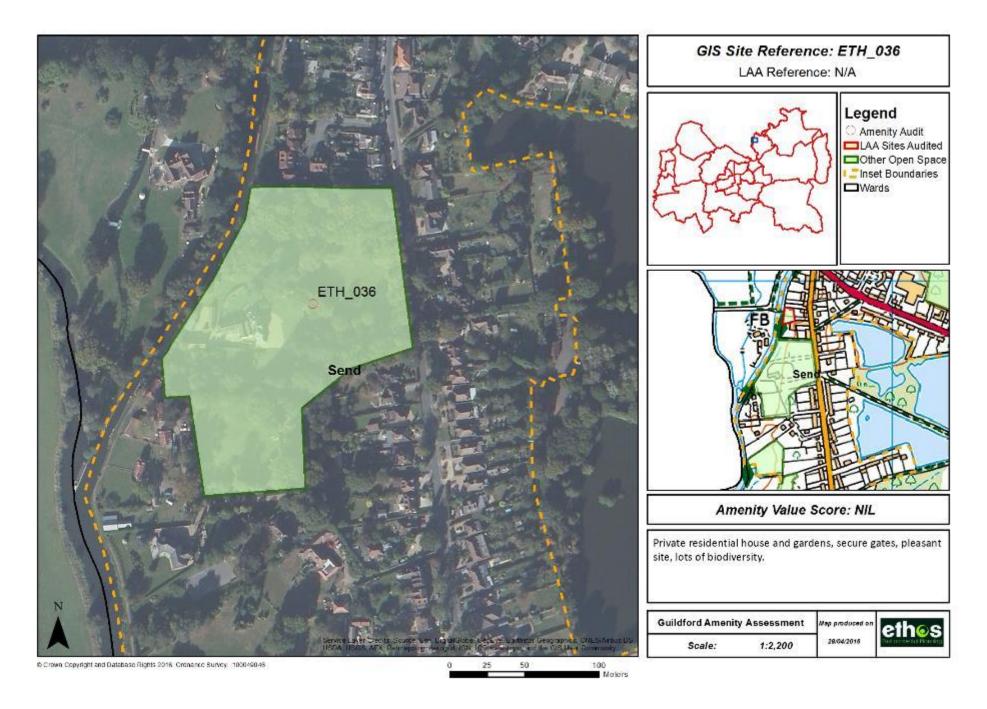


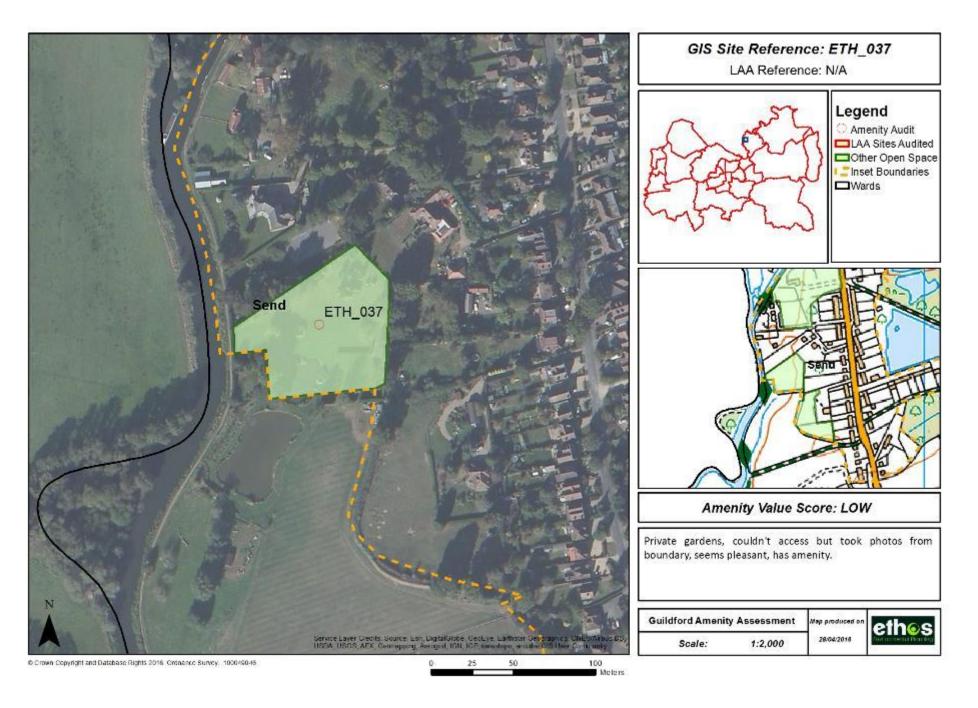


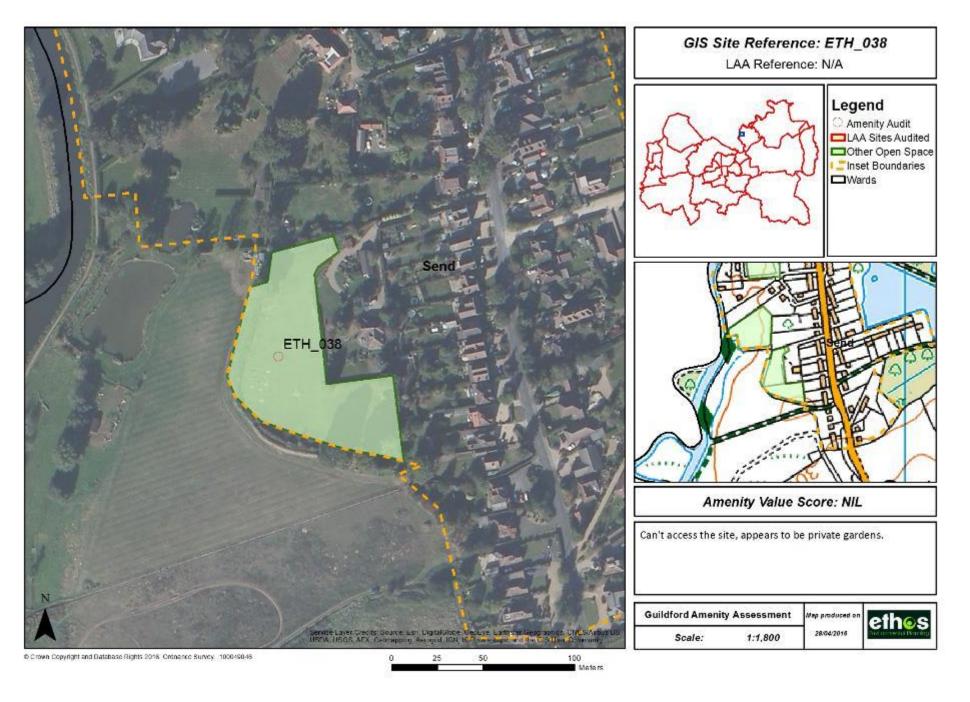
## Send

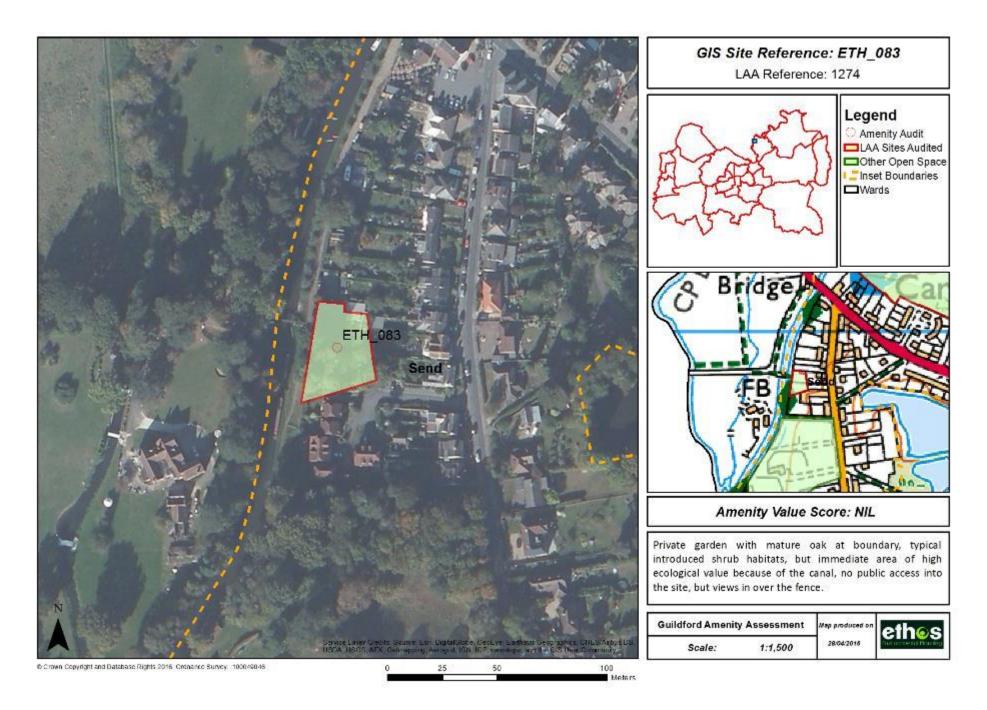




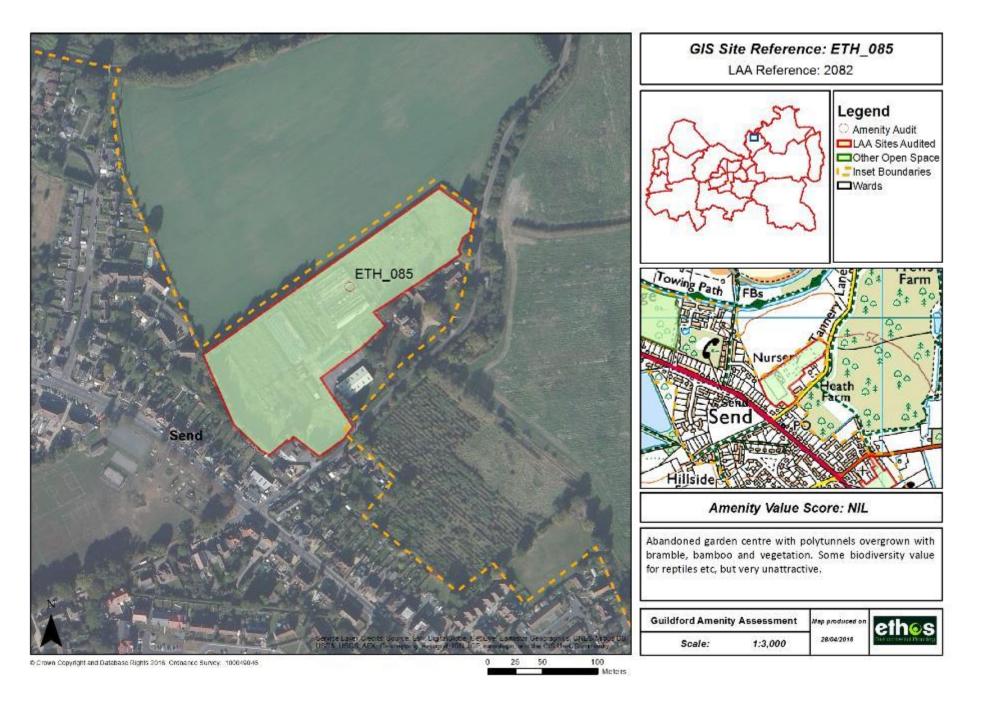


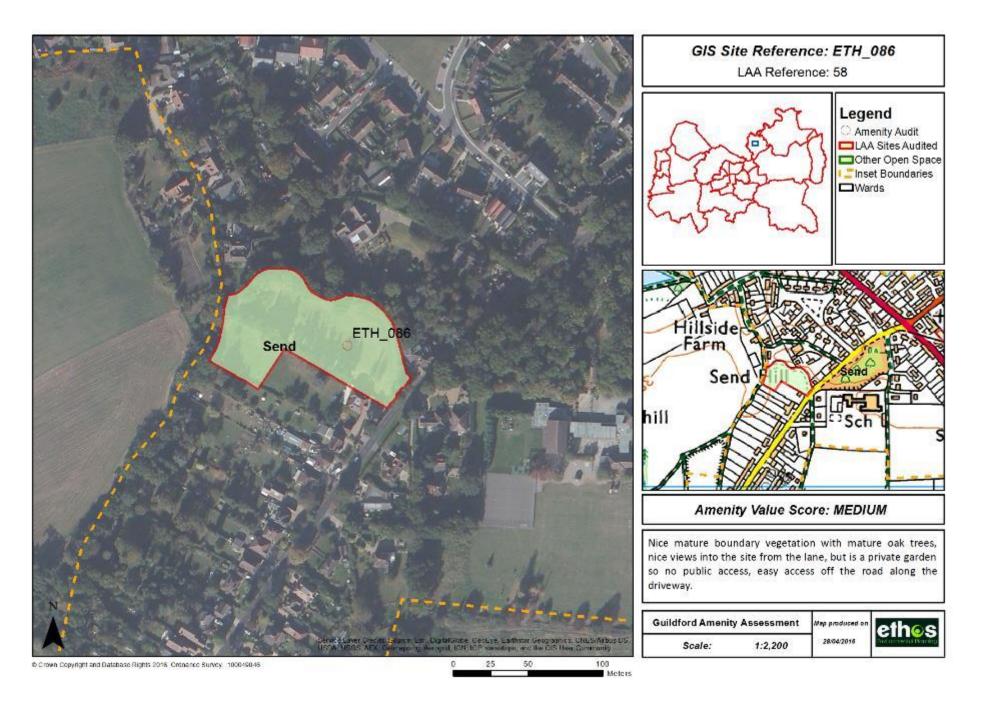


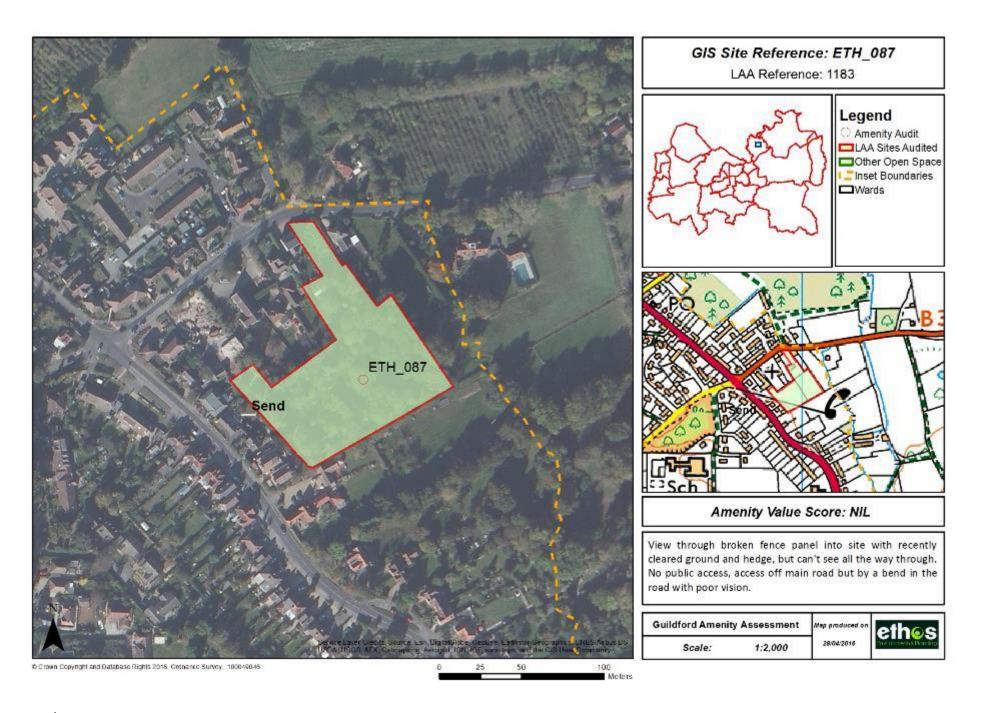




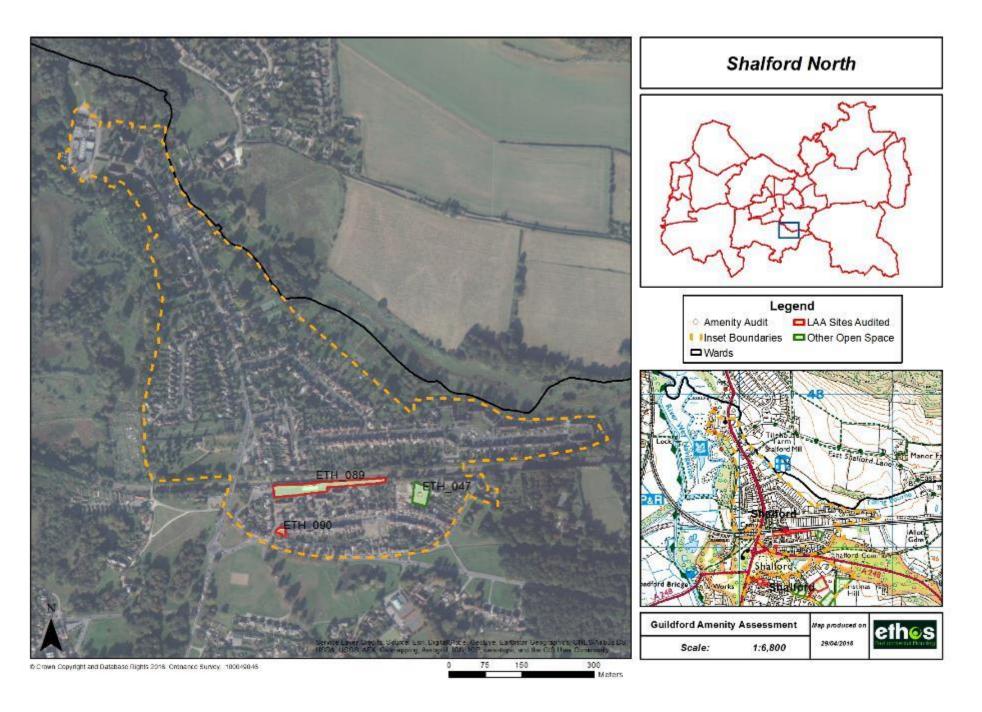








## **Shalford North**



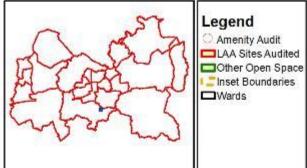


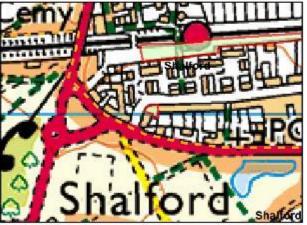




GIS Site Reference: ETH\_090

LAA Reference: 1180



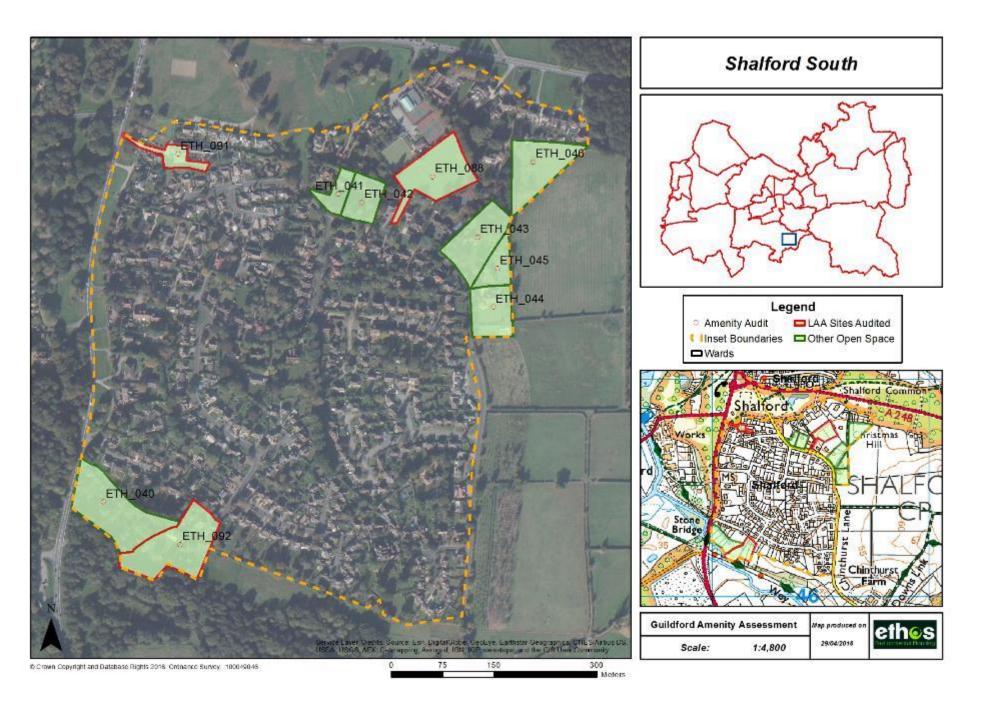


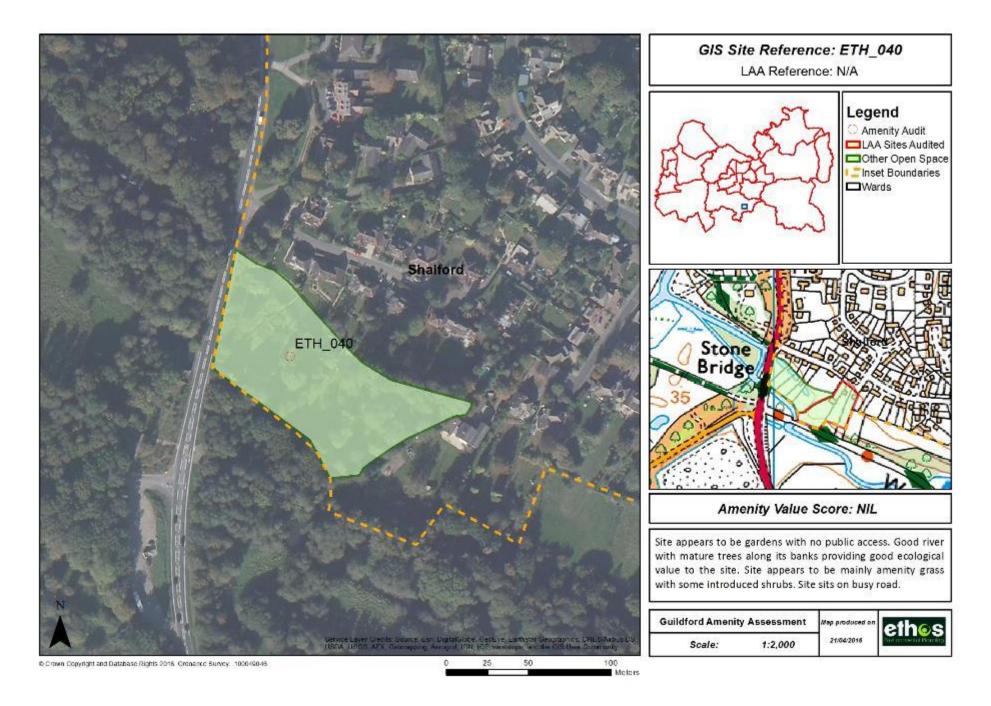
Amenity Value Score: NIL

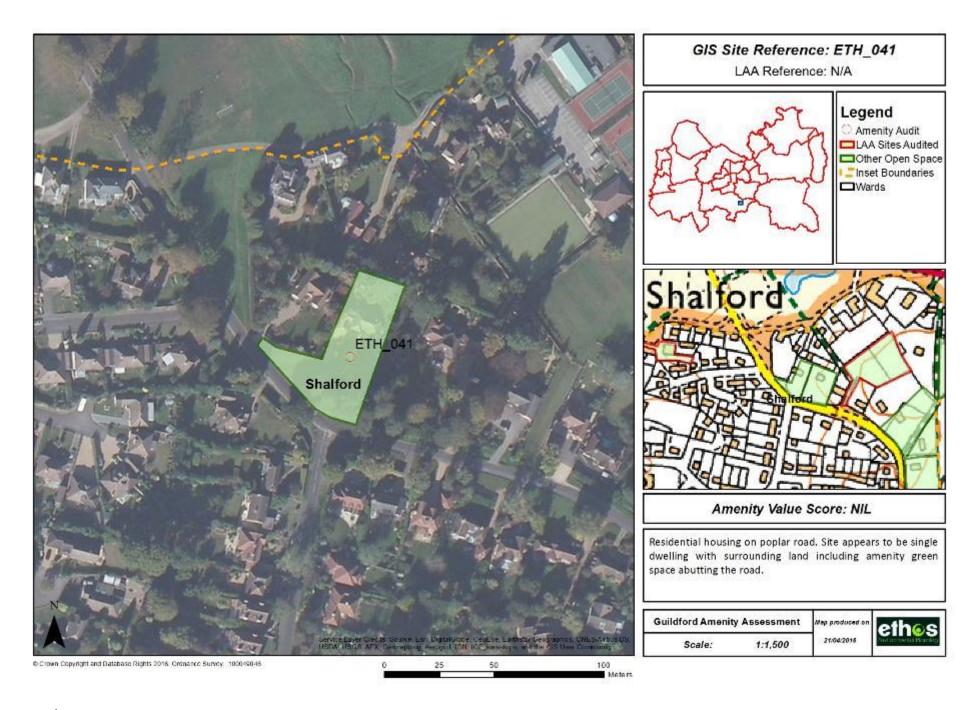
Site is Shalford and District Social Club. Access to site boundary but not within the site. A building with no amenity value,

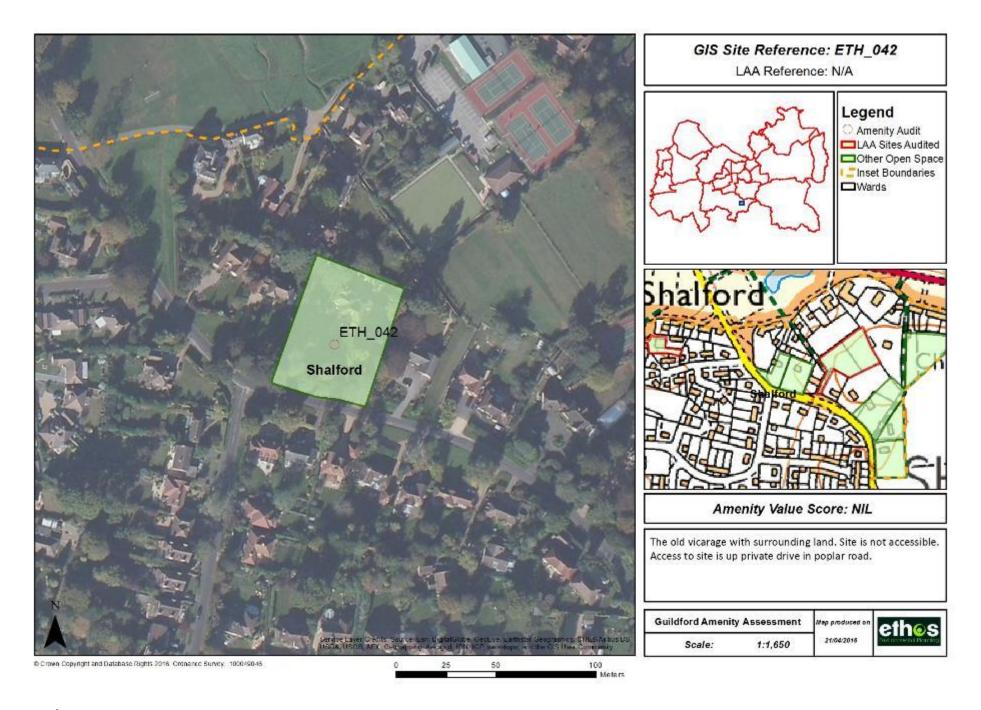
Guildford Amenity Assessment		Map produced on	ethes
Scale:	1:1,200	28/04/2016	See accesses borden

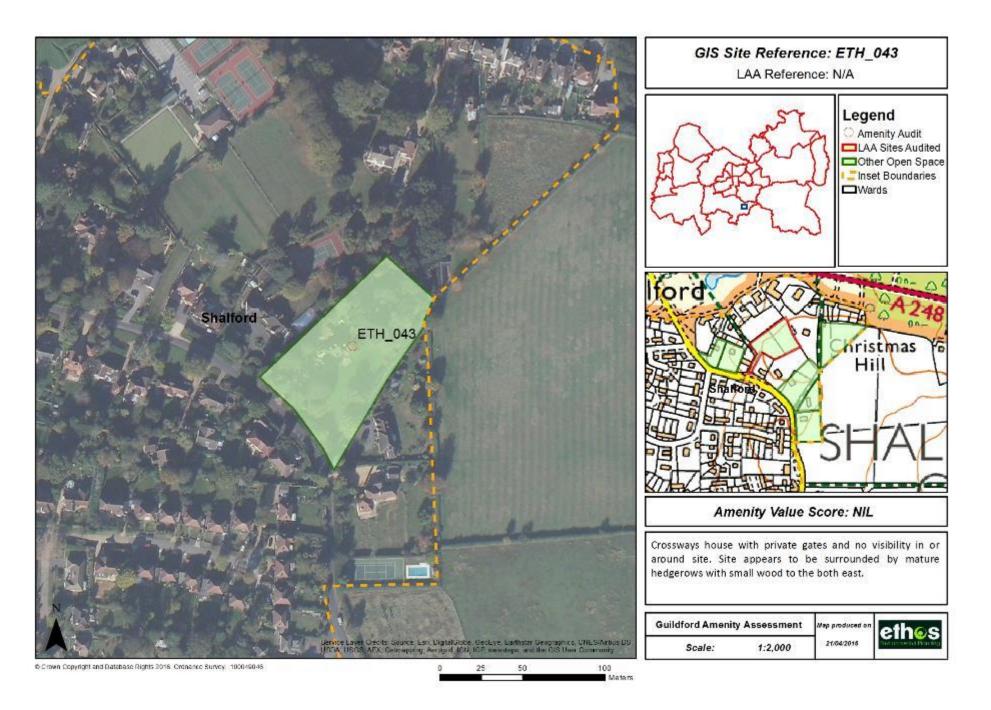
## **Shalford South**



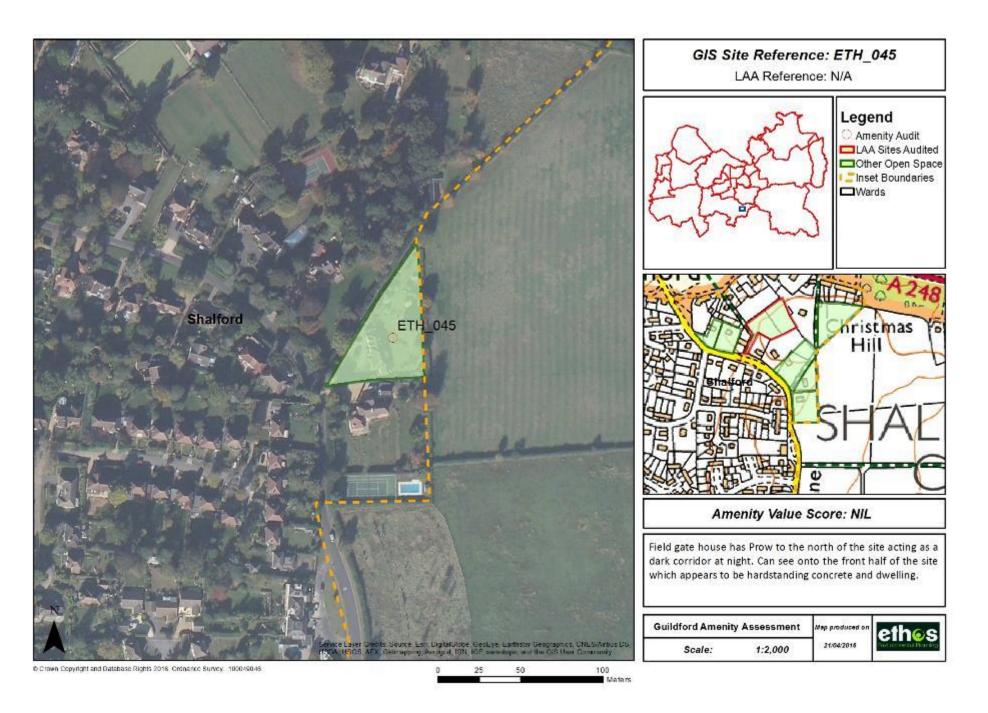


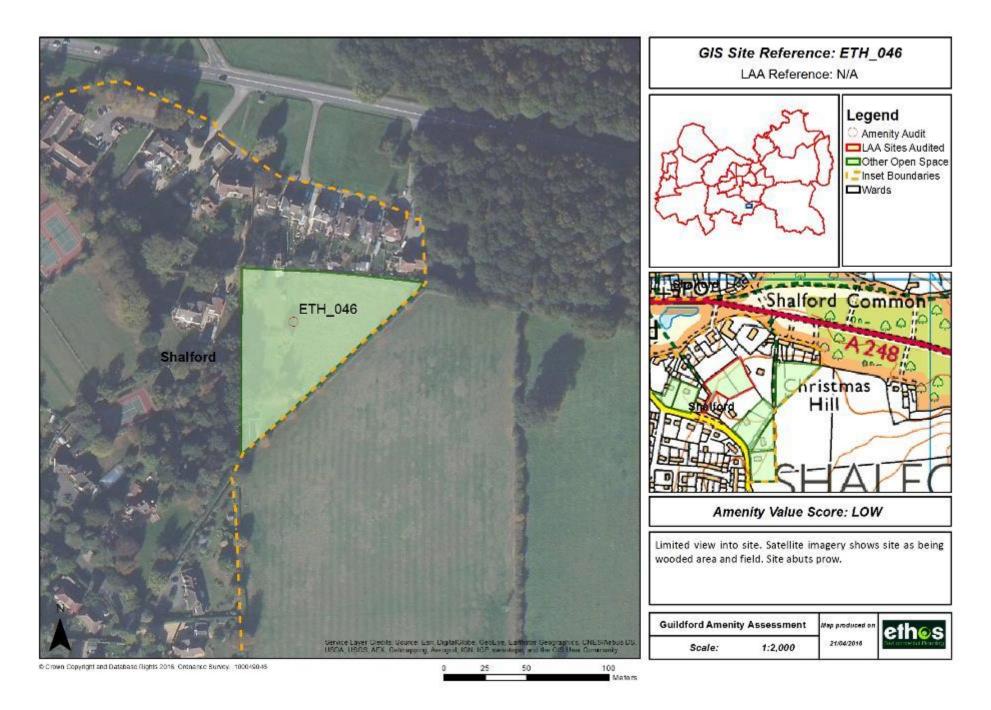


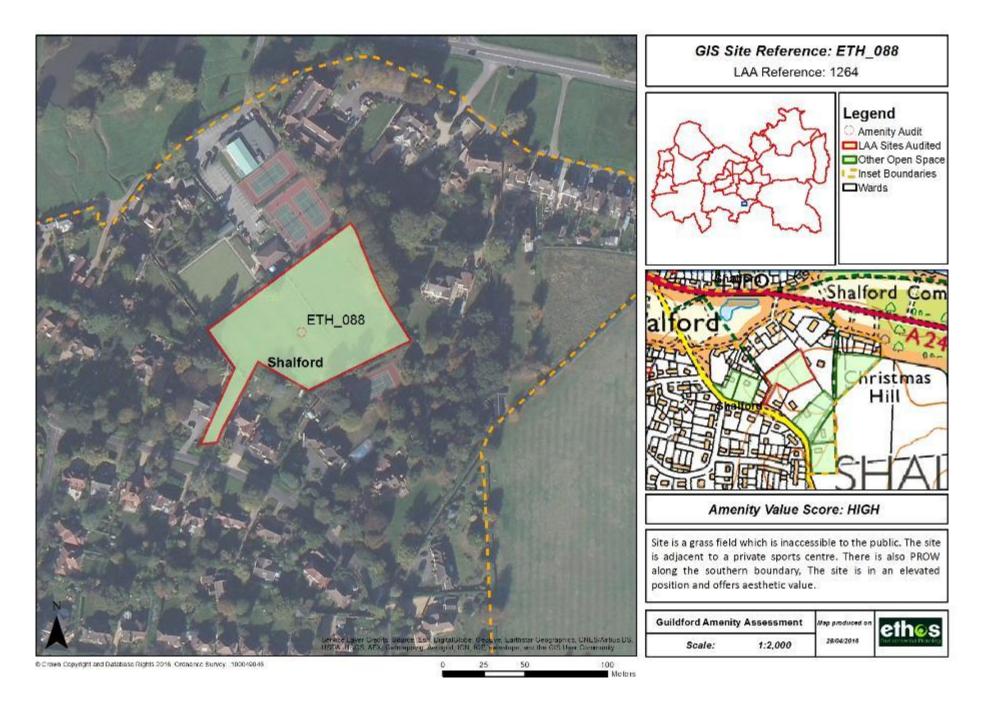


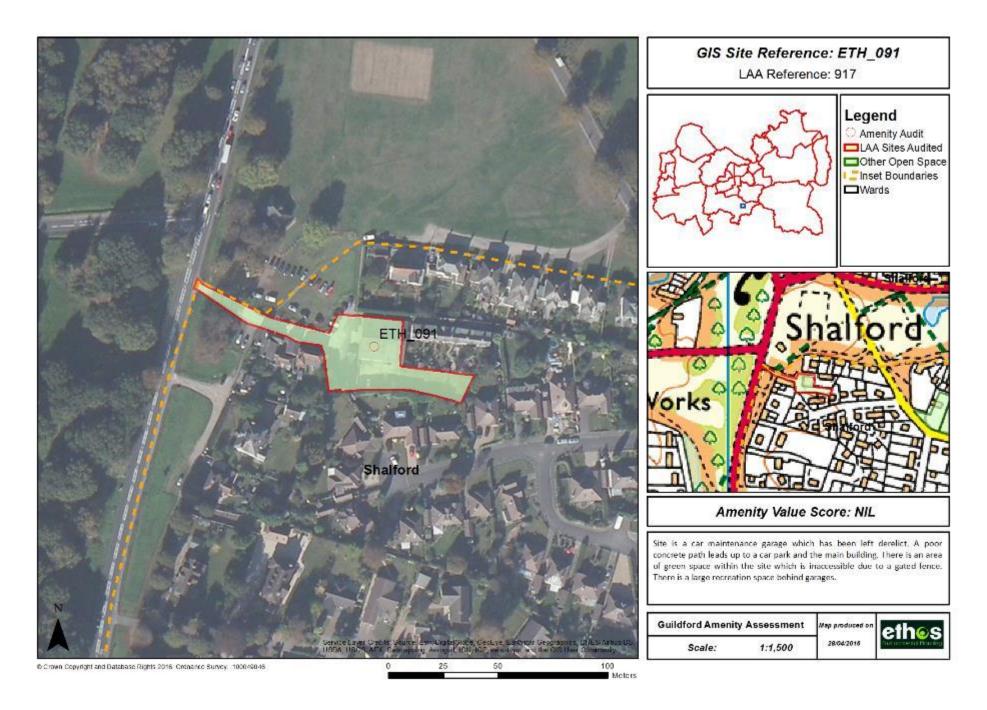


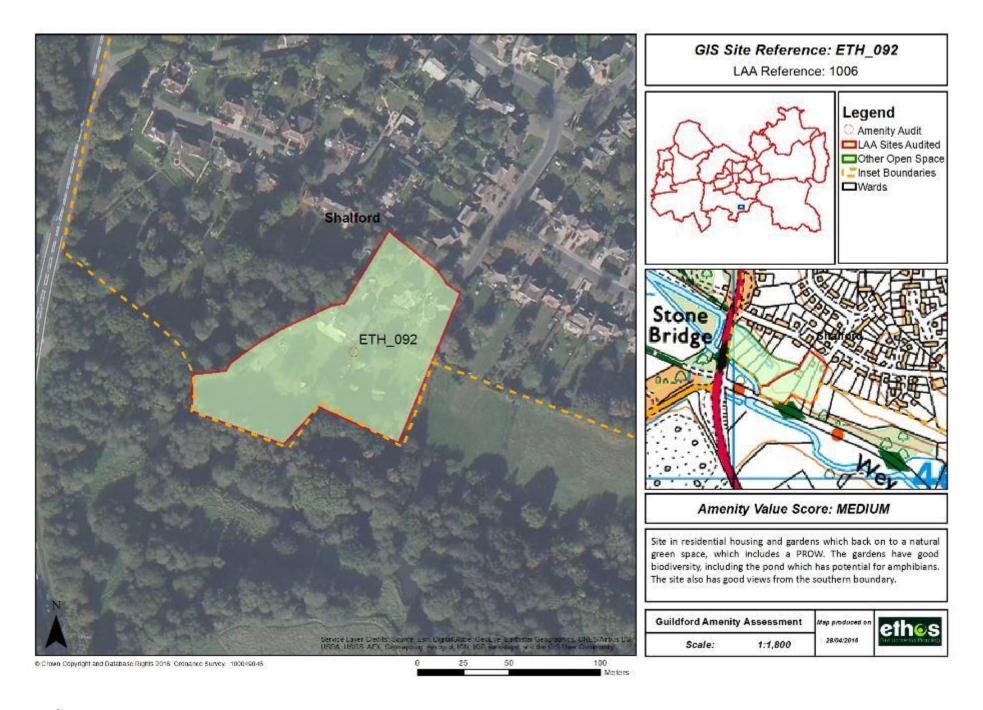




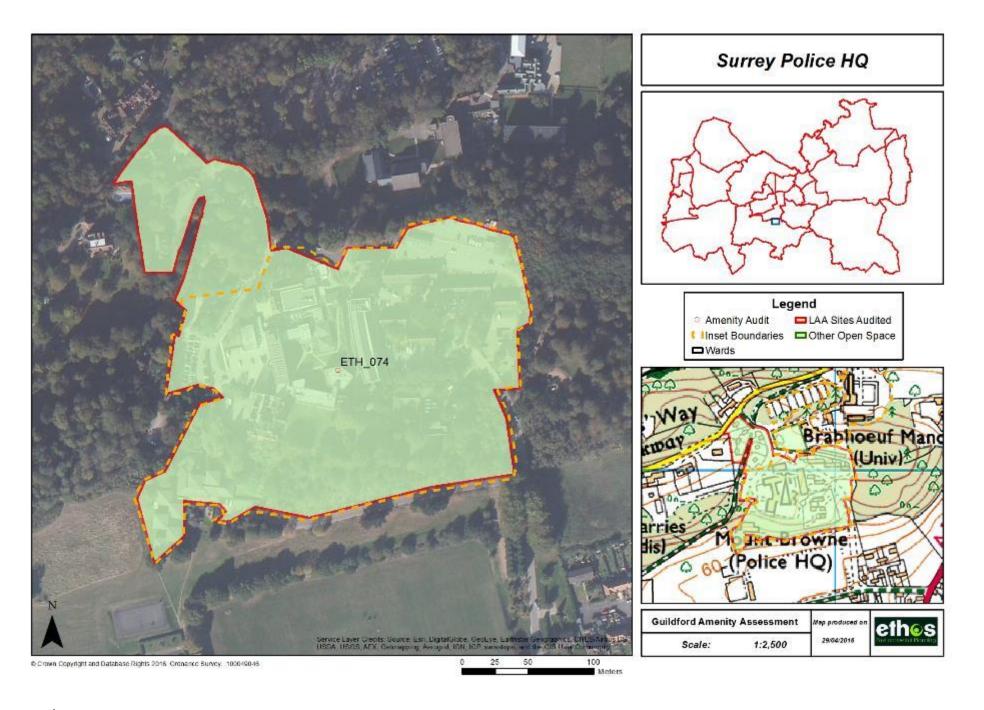


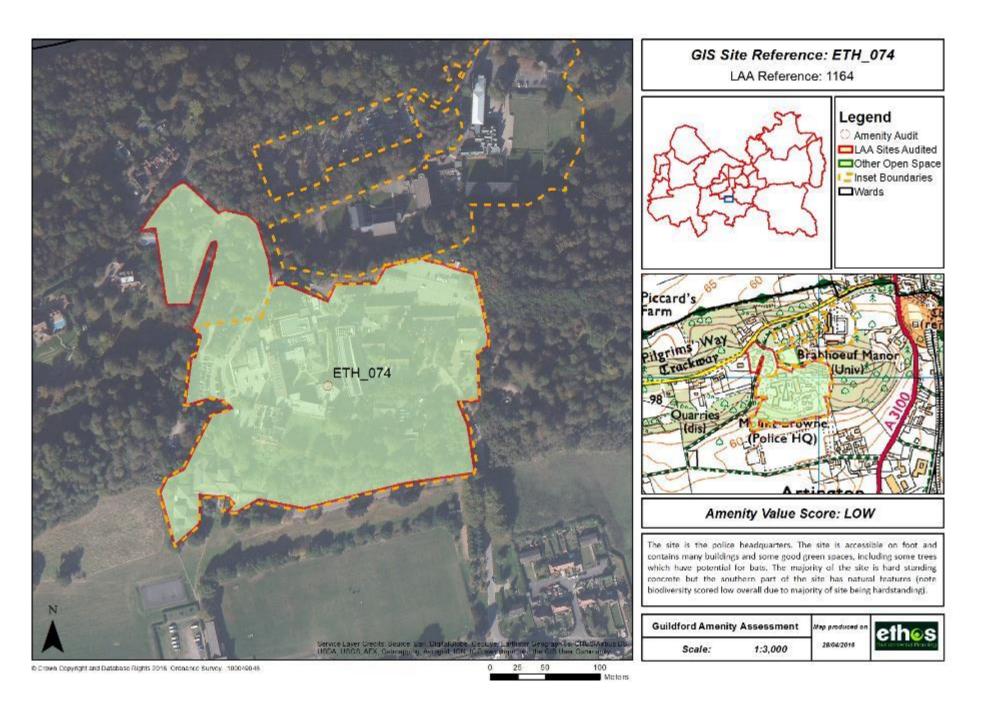






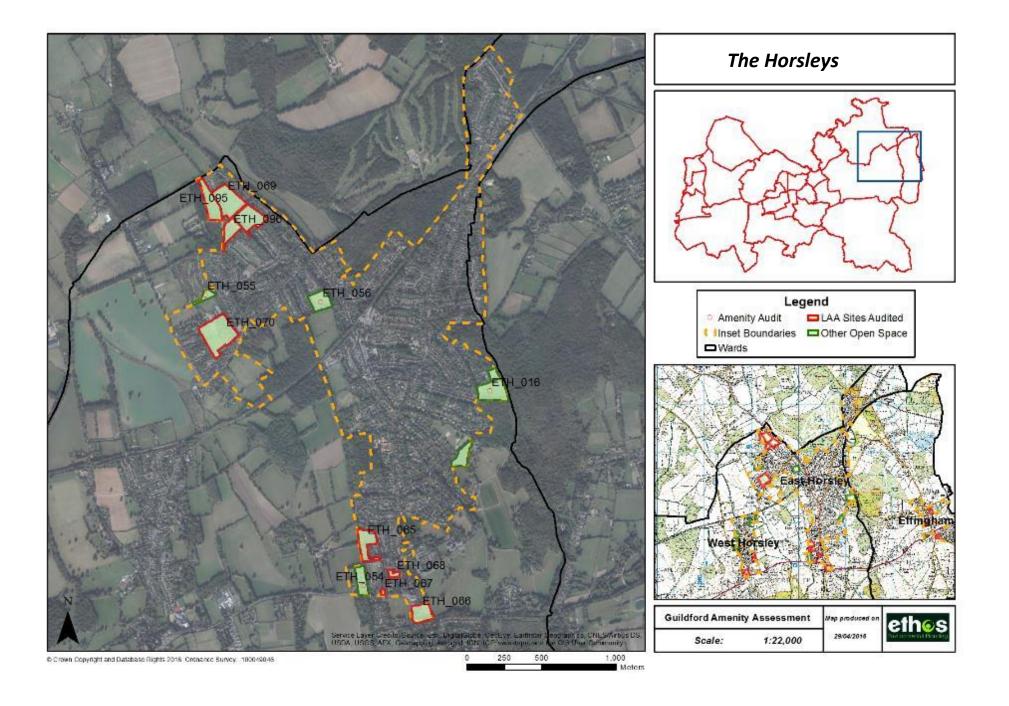
## Surrey Police Headquarters, Mount Browne

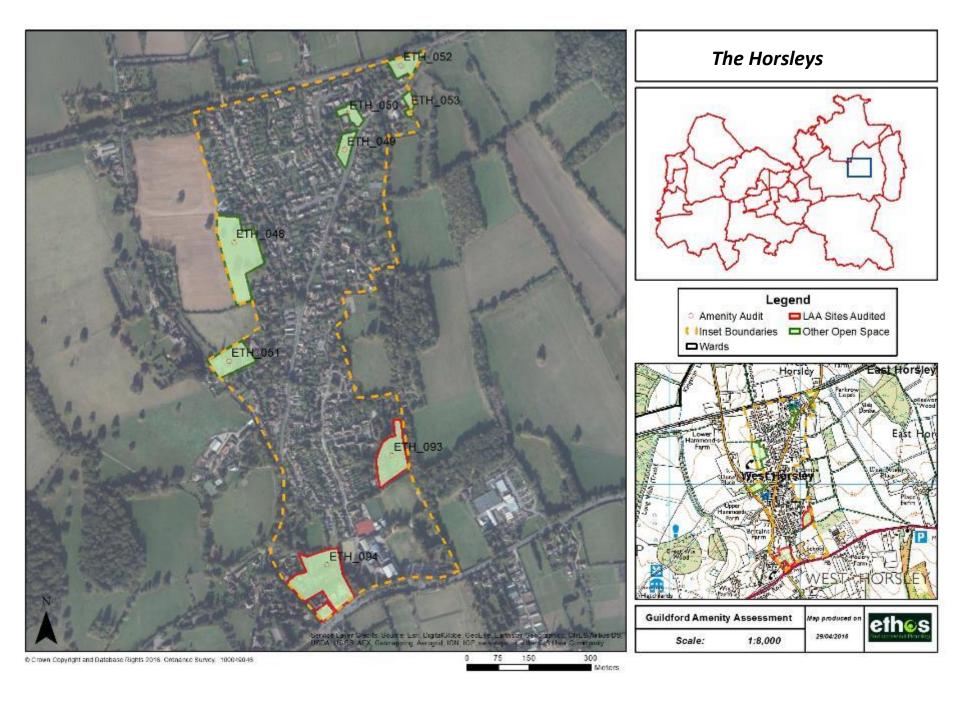


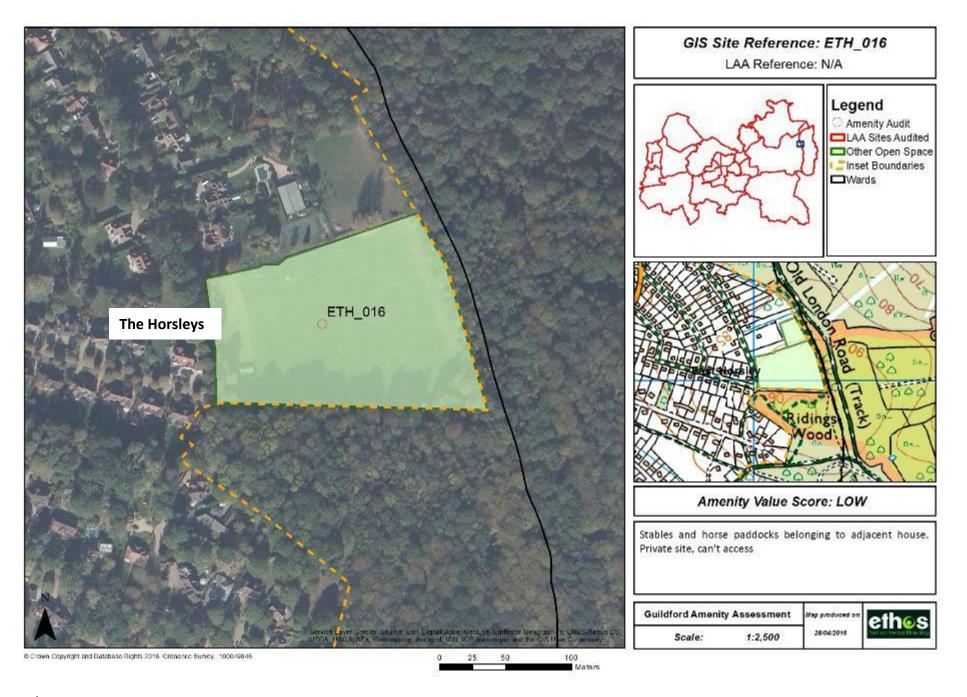


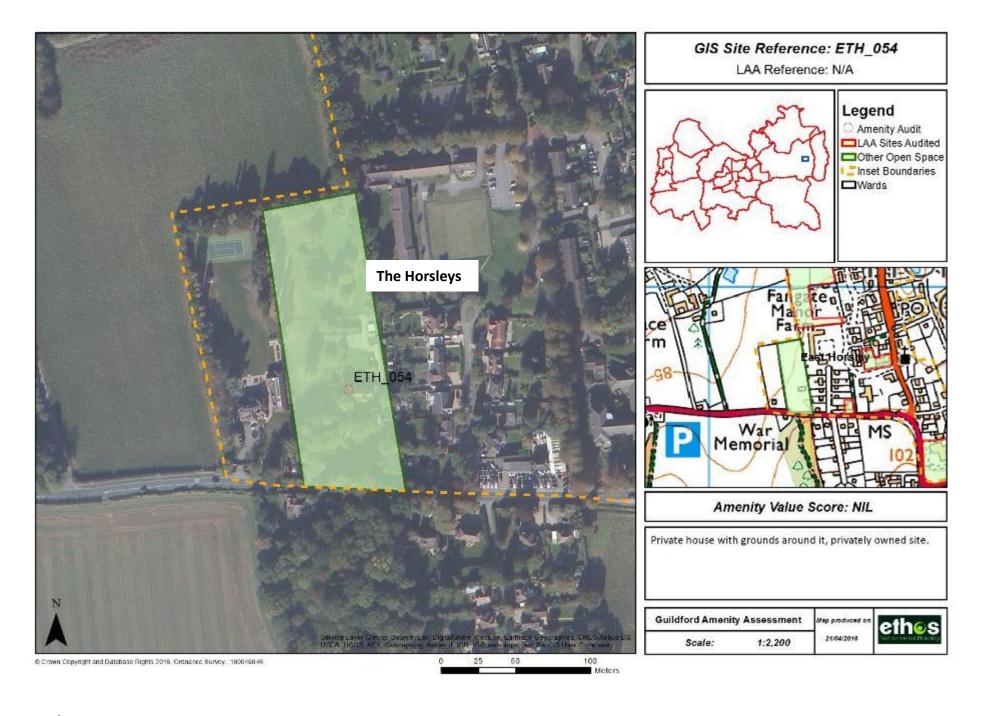
The Horsleys\*

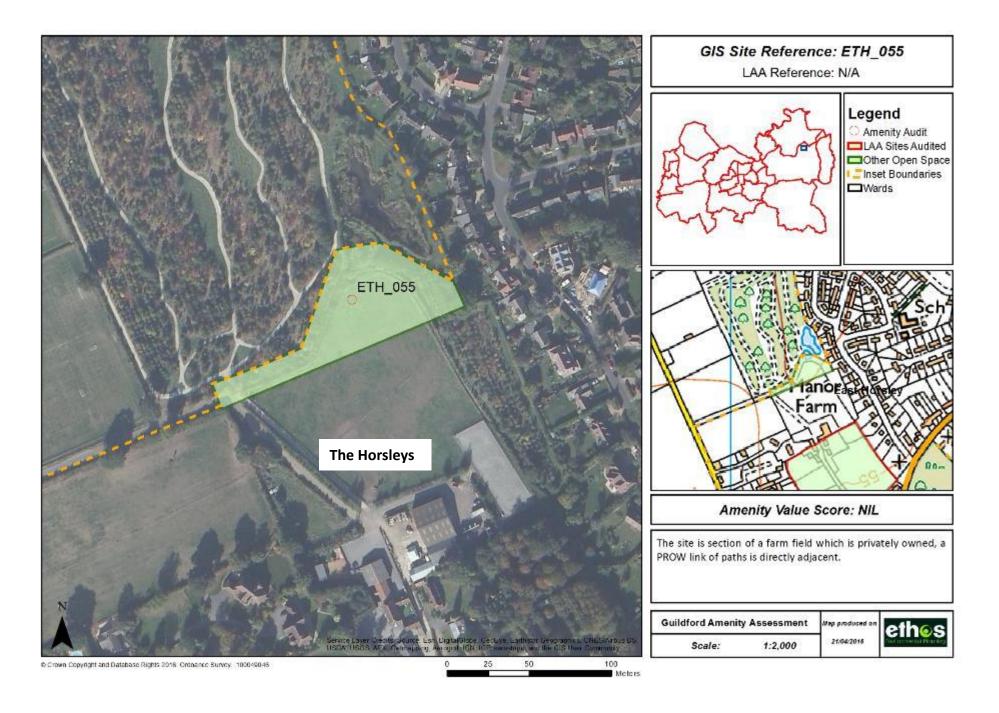
\*This area includes the settlement boundaries of East Horsley and West Horsley



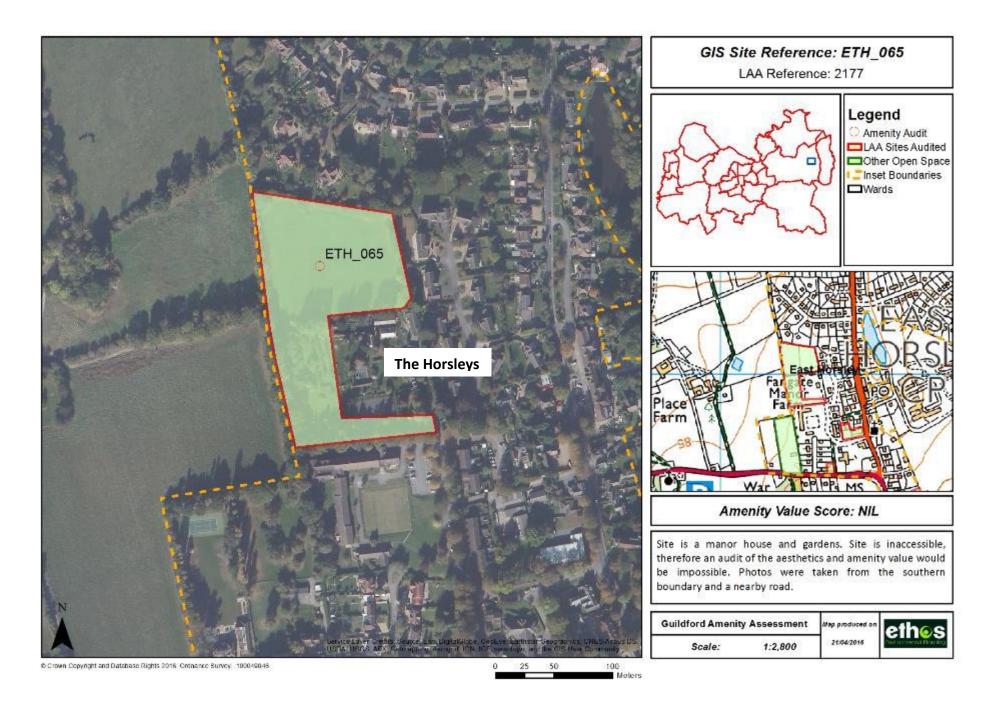


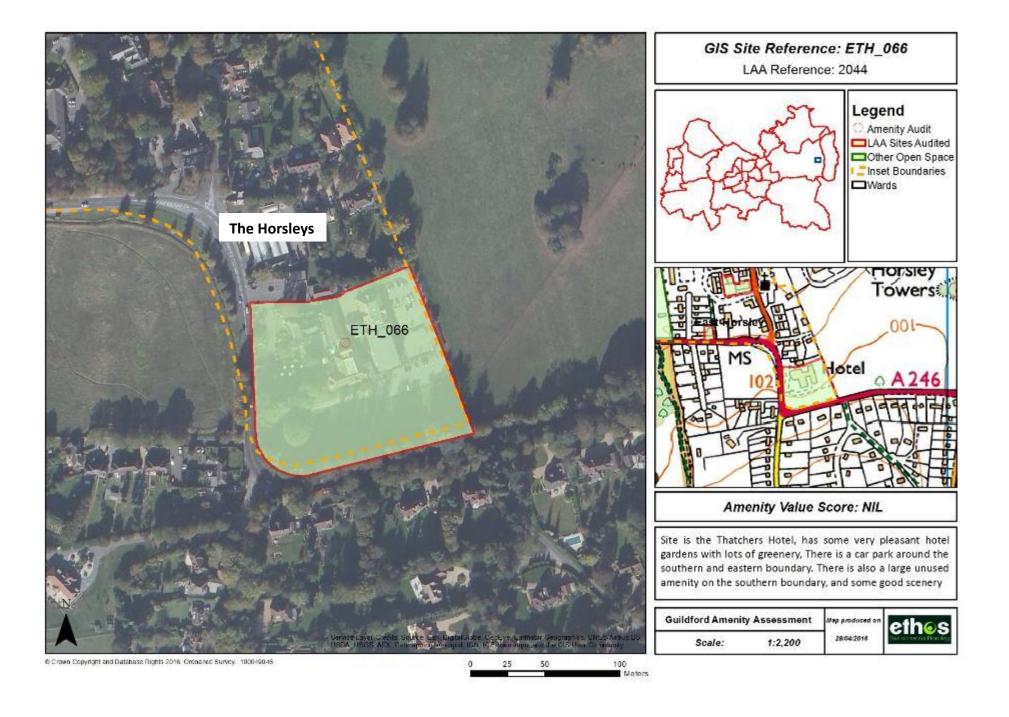




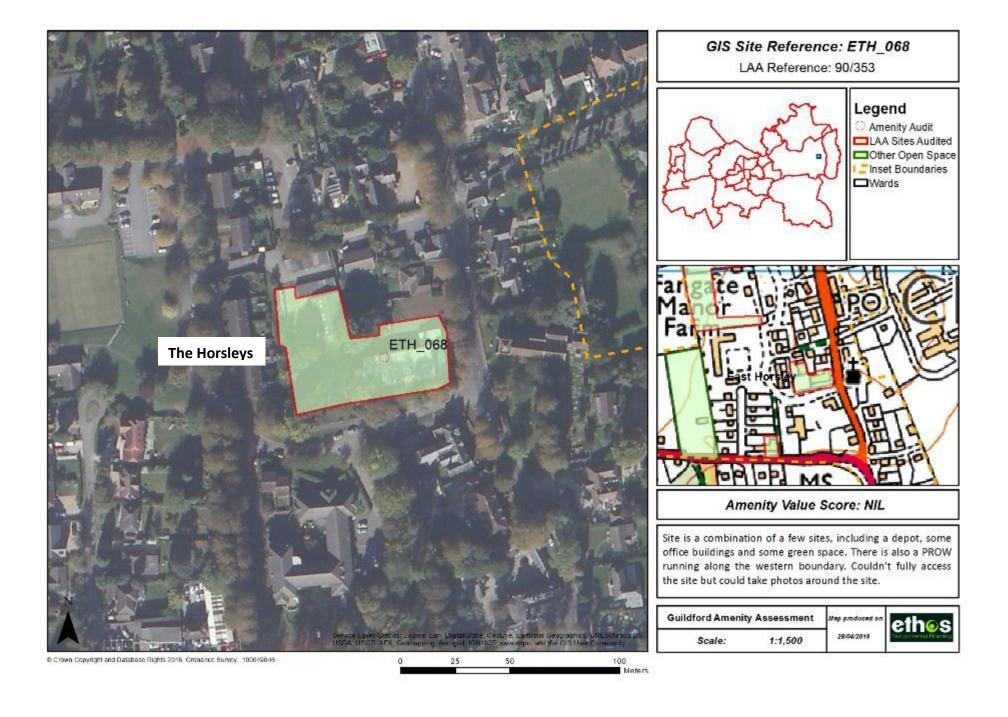


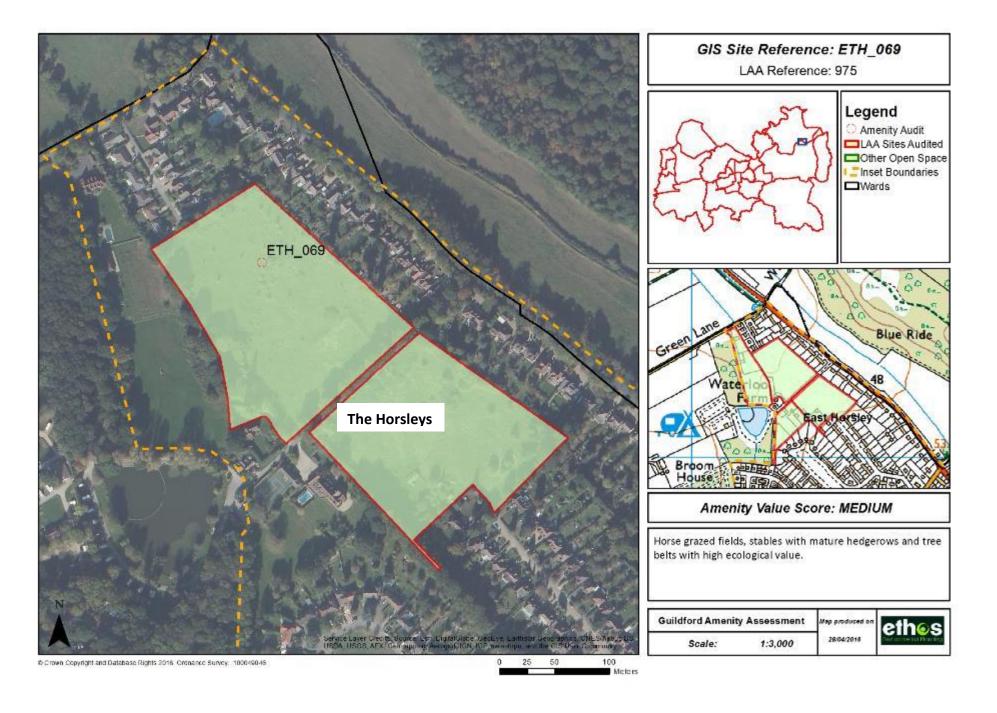


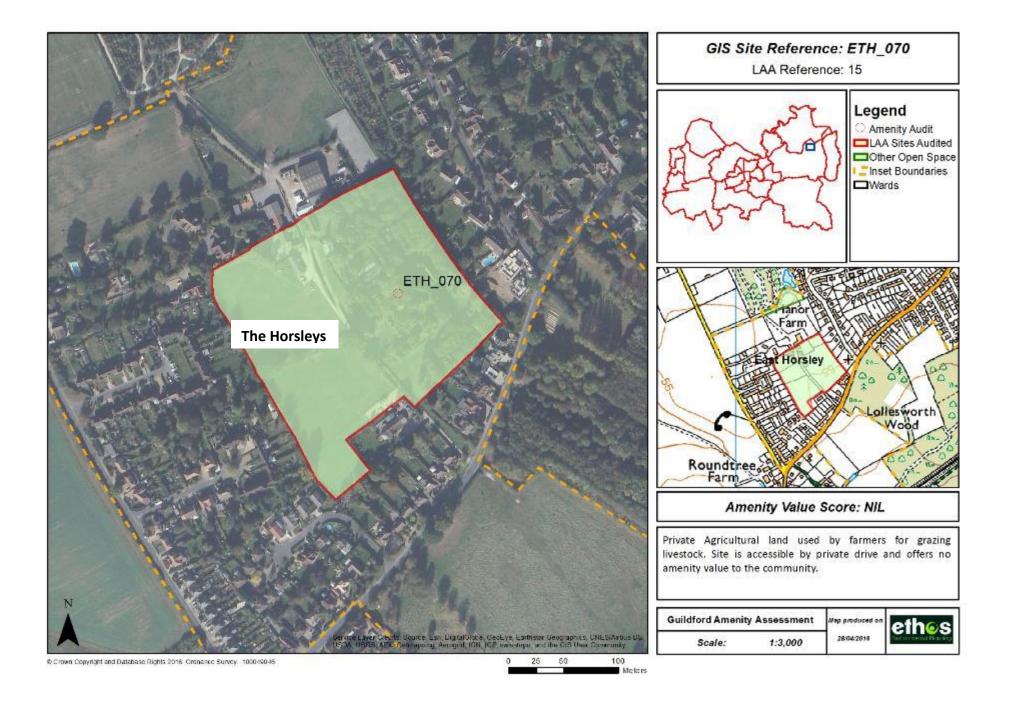


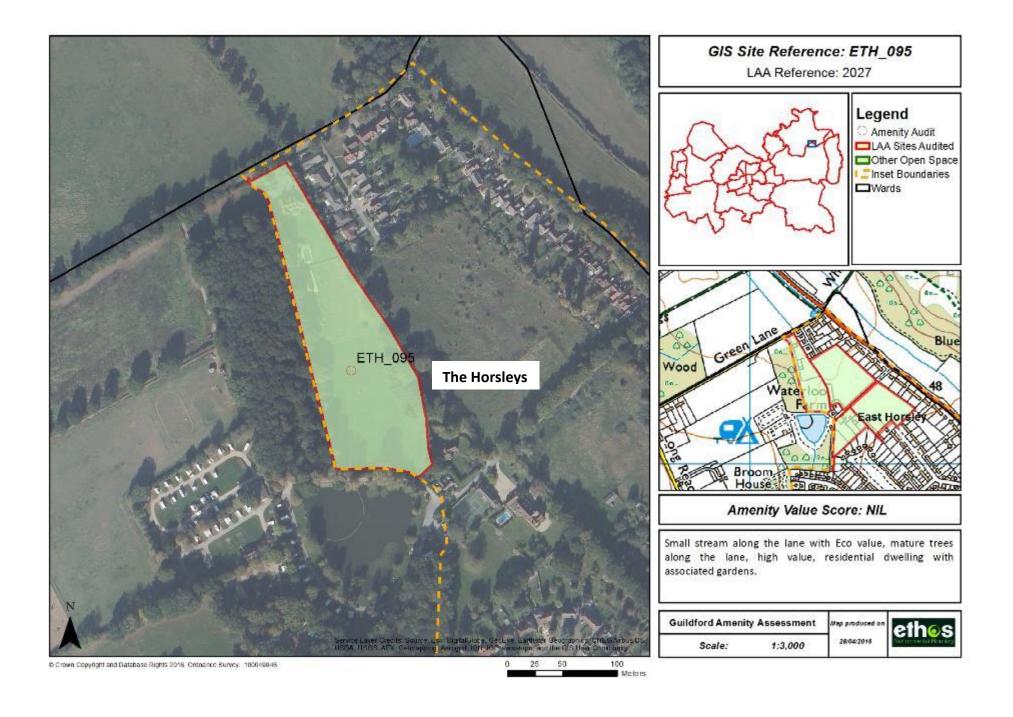


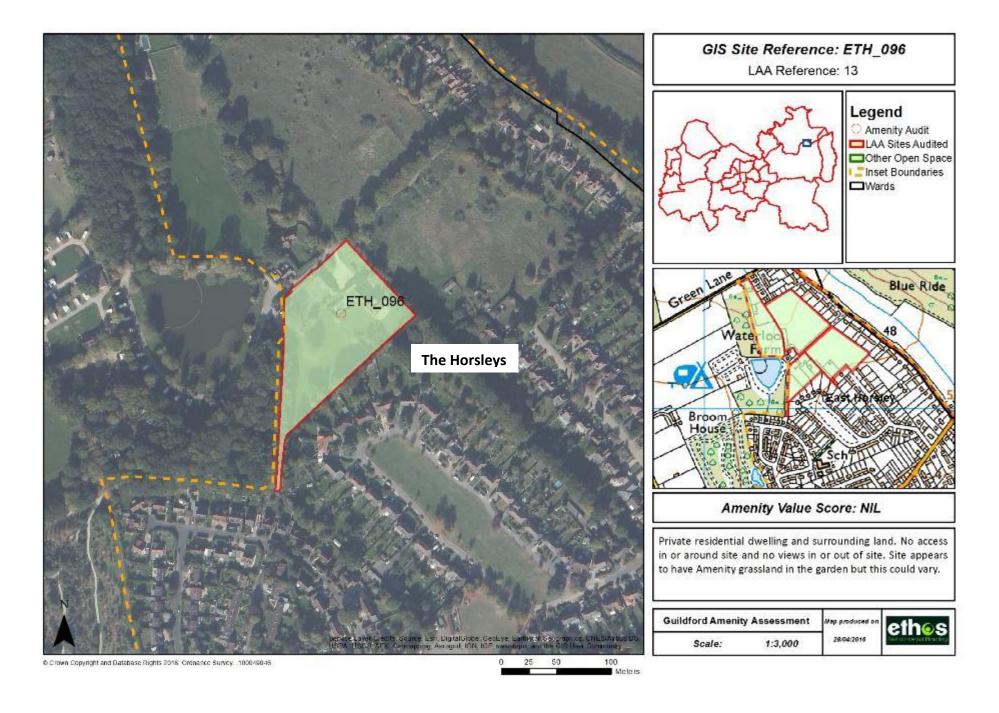


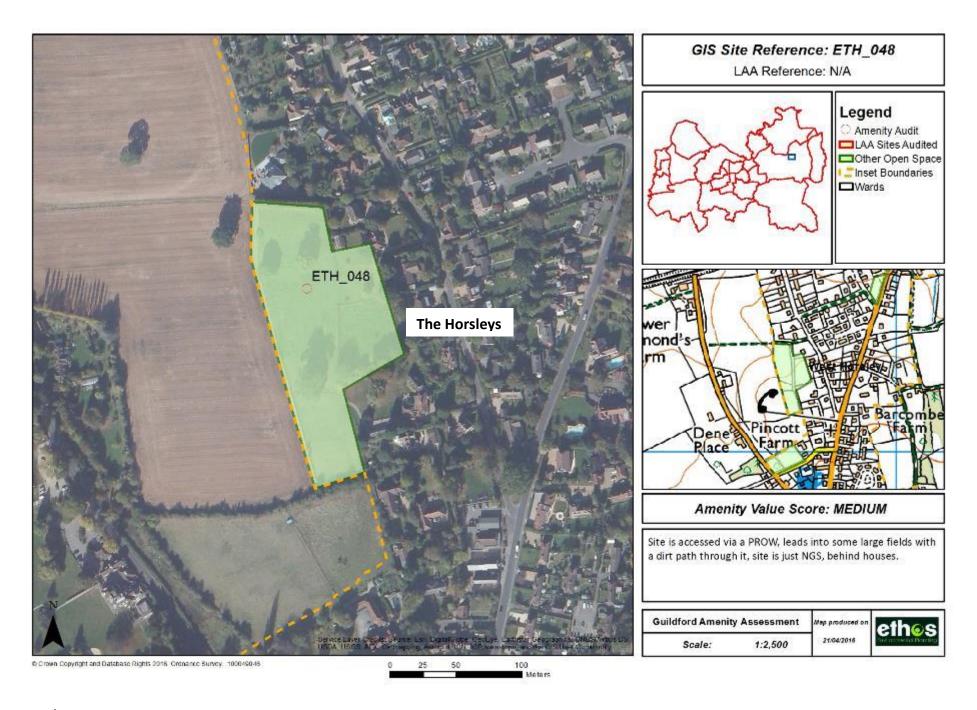


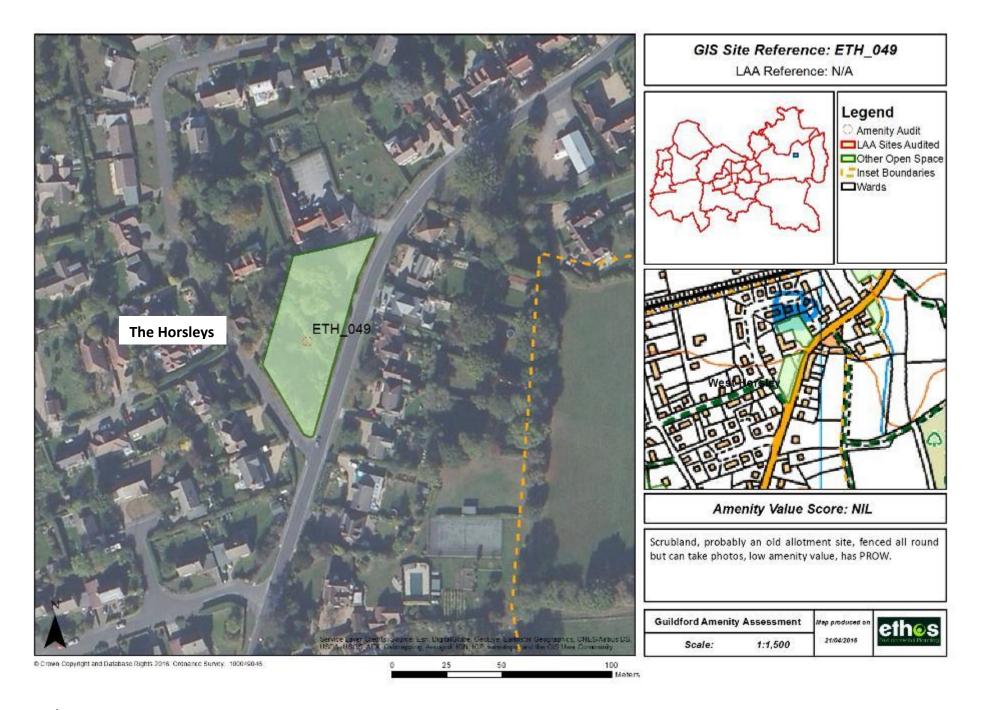


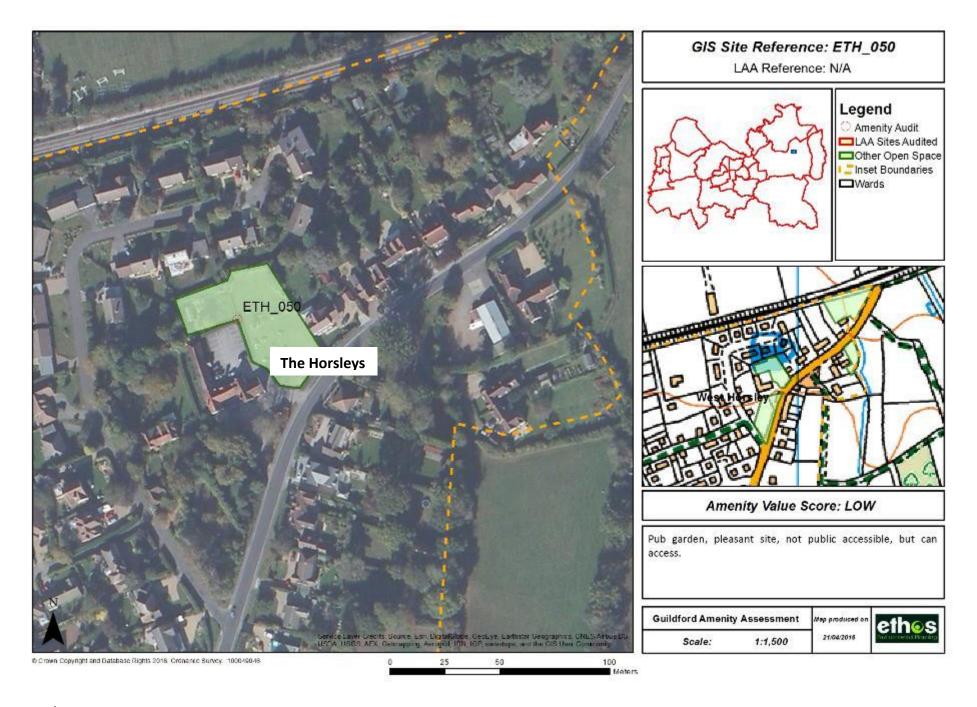


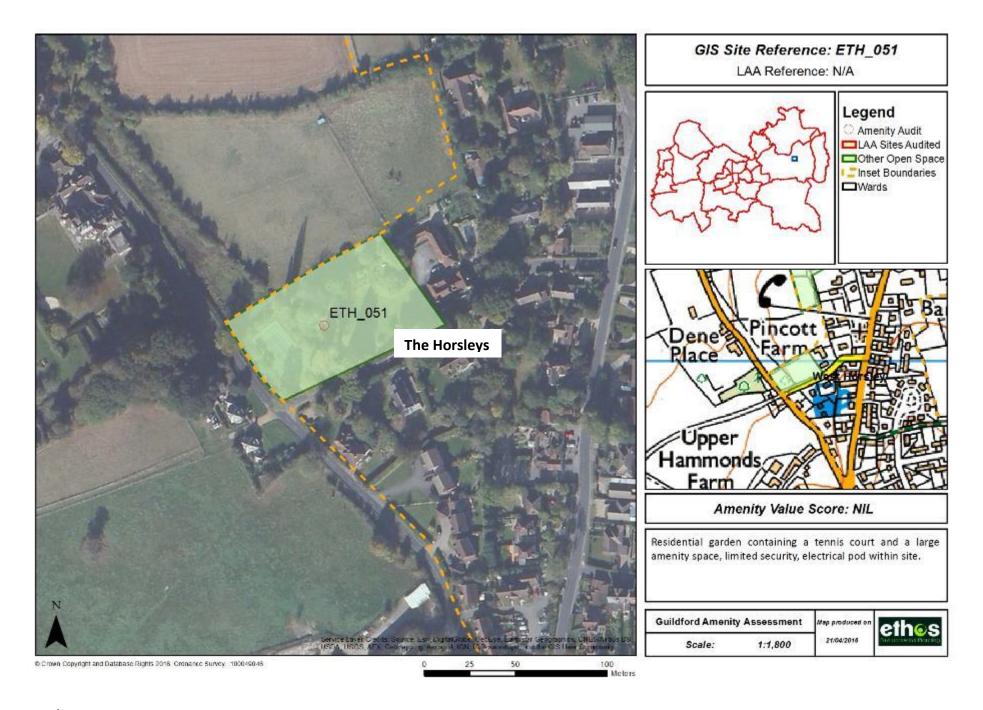


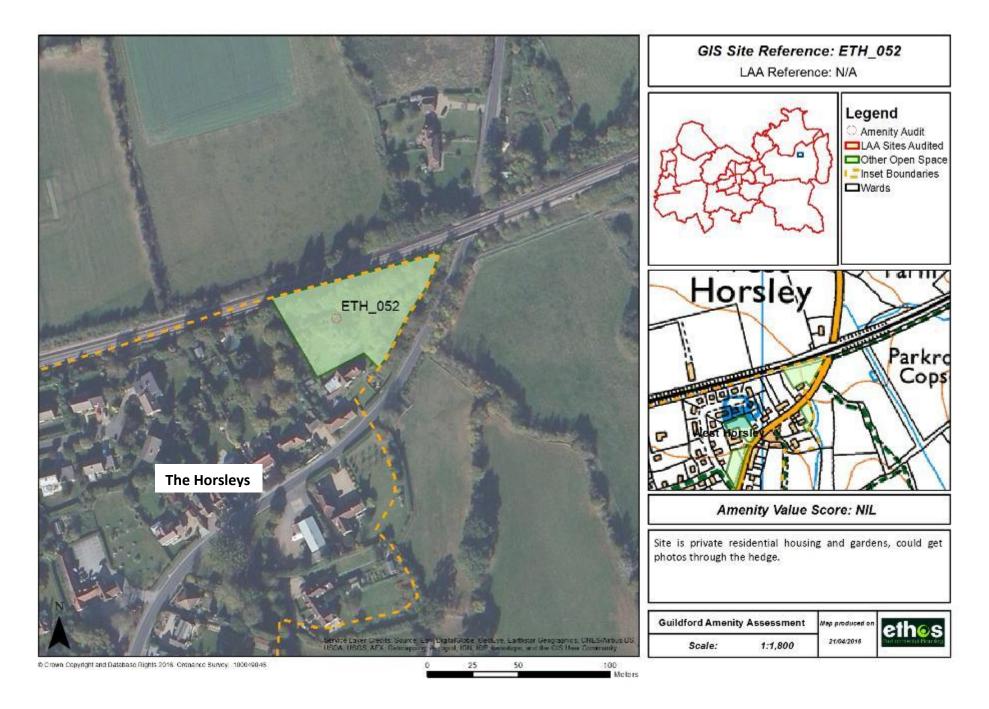




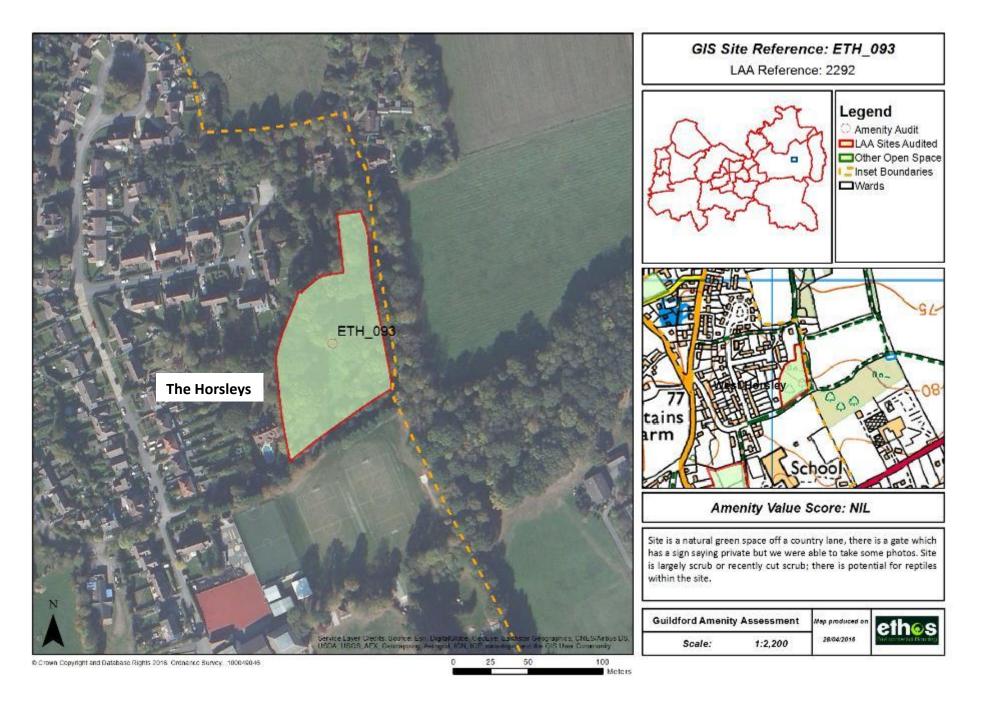


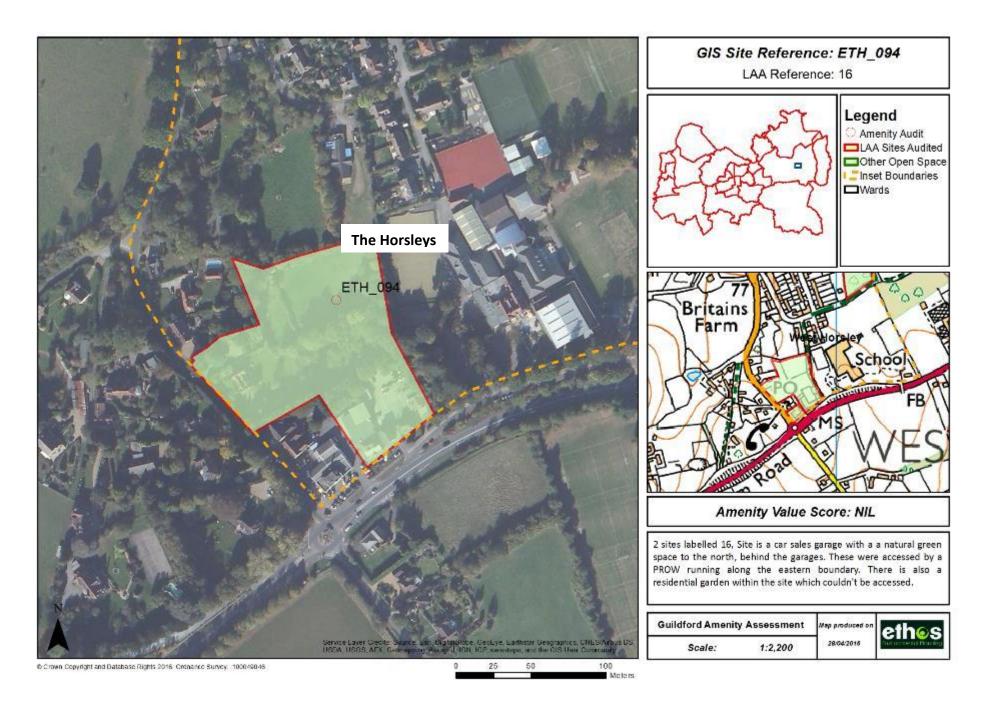




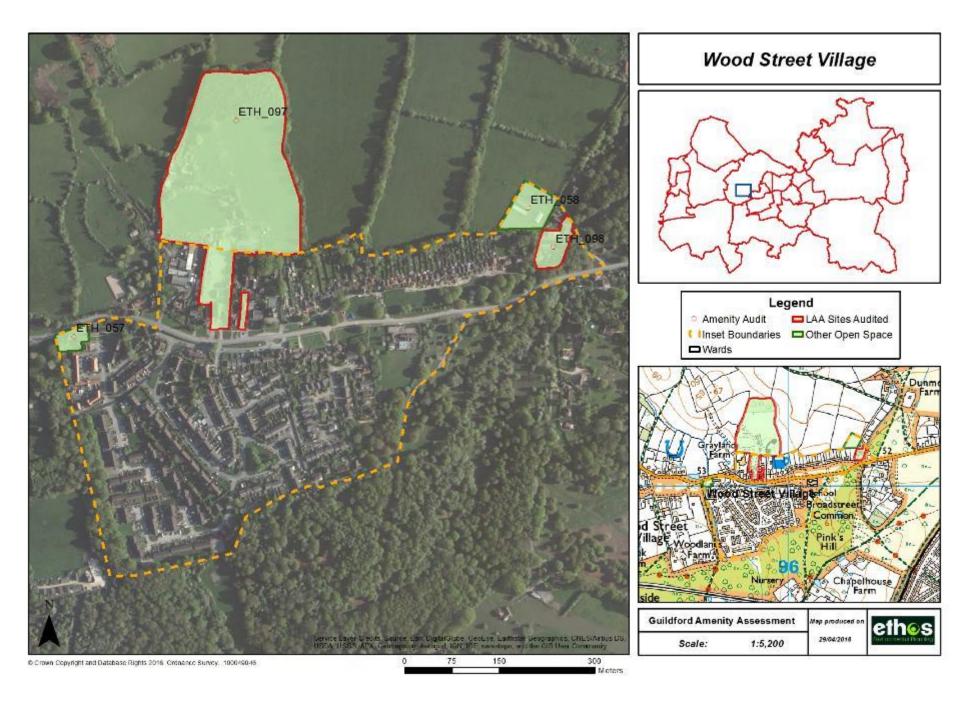






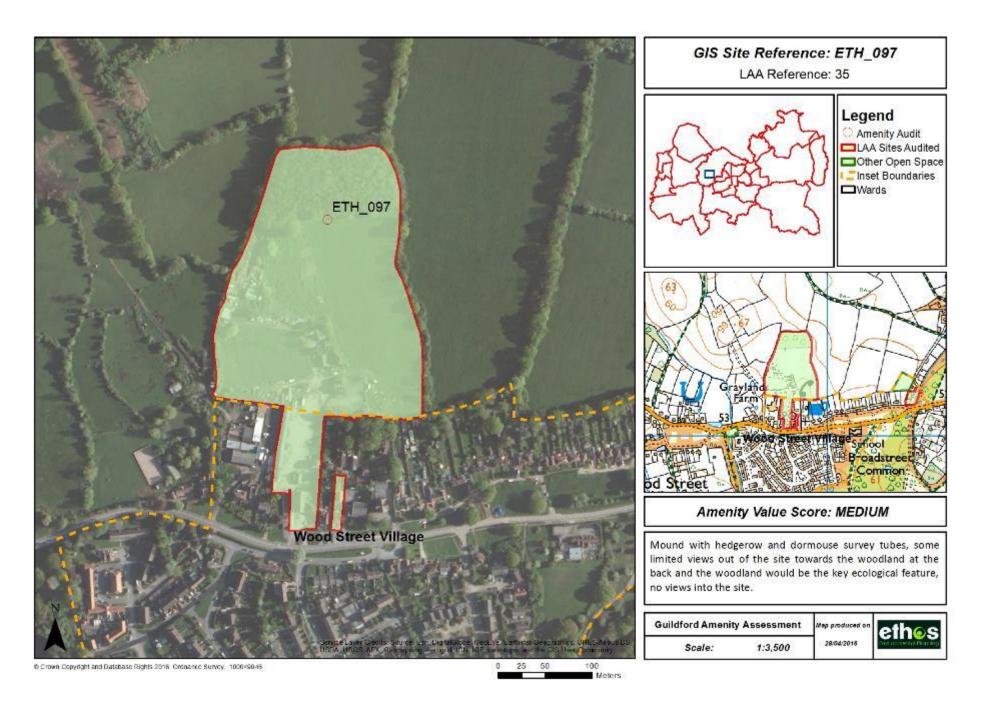


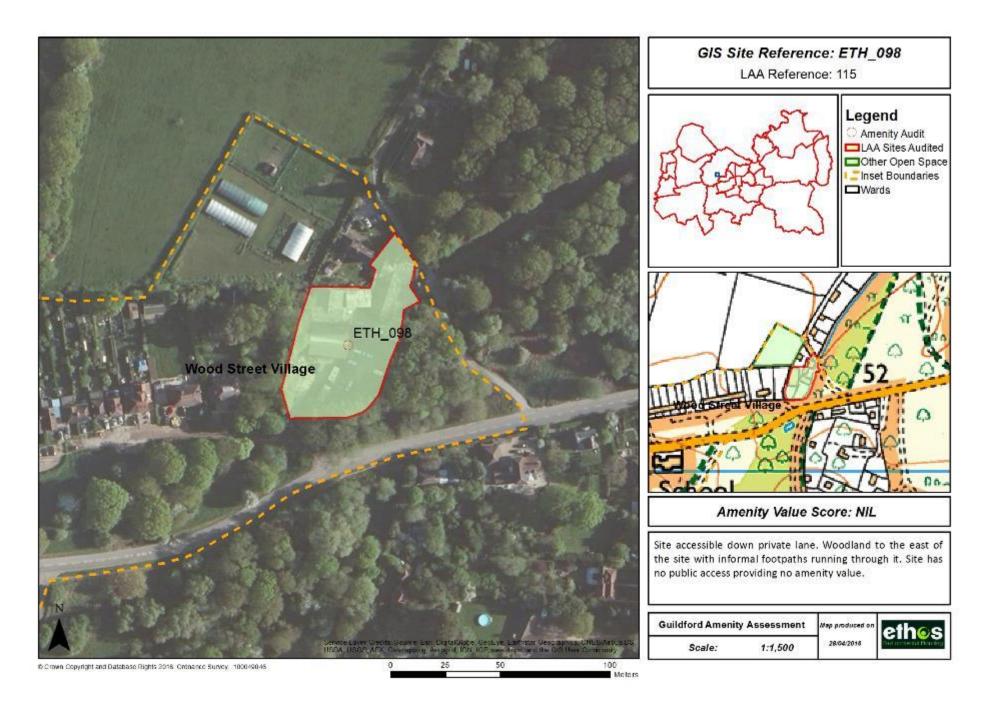
Wood Street Village











## 5. Analysis of results

Table 2 below provides a summary of the amenity value score for each site assessed against the criteria set out in table 1.

As can be seen, a large number of the sites assessed scored either Nil or Low for amenity value (based on the scoring thresholds set out under section 3.2.2), and these areas are not considered to require protection as Open Space (subject to further planning assessment e.g. biodiversity/presence of protected and notable species and habitats).

A number of sites scored either Medium or High for their amenity value, and it is these sites which should be protected as Open Space. A number of sites that scored Medium or High may not require protection as Open Space because their amenity value could be retained or enhanced if the site is developed (or only partially developed). This is detailed in the Amenity Audit Spreadsheet that has been provided to the council, and a summary of sites is provided in table 3 below.

Table 2 Summary of Amenity Value Score Results

Study Area	Site Reference Amenity Value Score		
Ash Green	ETH_003	Medium	
	ETH_004	Medium	
	ETH_005	Nil	
	ETH_006	Nil	
	ETH_007	Medium	
	ETH_008	Low	
	ETH_009	Nil	
	ETH_010	Nil	
	ETH_059	Nil	
	ETH_099	Medium	
	ETH_100	Nil	
Burntcommon/ Send Marsh	ETH_028	Nil	
	ETH_029	Nil	
	ETH_035	Nil	

Study Area	Site Reference	Amenity Value Score	
	ETH_080	Nil	
	ETH_102	Medium	
	ETH_103	Medium	
Chilworth	ETH_011	Nil	
	ETH_012	Nil	
	ETH_013	Nil	
	ETH_014	Nil	
	ETH_015	Nil	
	ETH_060	Nil	
	ETH_061	Nil	
	ETH_062	Nil	
	ETH_063	Nil	
	ETH_064	Nil	
Effingham	ETH_017	Nil	
	ETH_018	Nil	
	ETH_071	Medium	
	ETH_072	Nil	
	ETH_073	Nil	
	ETH_101	Medium	
Flexford	ETH_022	Nil	
	ETH_024	Nil	
	ETH_025	Nil	
	ETH_076	Nil	
	ETH_078	Nil	
	ETH_079	Nil	
Jacobs Well	ETH_075	Nil	
Peasmarsh	ETH_039	Low	
Pirbright	ETH_027	Nil	

Study Area	Site Reference	Amenity Value Score
Ripley	ETH_031	Nil
	ETH_032	Nil
	ETH_081	Nil
	ETH_082	Nil
University of Law	ETH_020	Nil
Send	ETH_034	Nil
	ETH_036	Nil
	ETH_037	Low
	ETH_038	Nil
	ETH_083	Nil
	ETH_084	Medium
	ETH_085	Nil
	ETH_086	Medium
	ETH_087	Nil
Shalford North	ETH_047	Nil
	ETH_089	Nil
	ETH_090	Nil
Shalford South	ETH_040	Nil
	ETH_041	Nil
	ETH_042	Nil
	ETH_043	Nil
	ETH_044	Nil
	ETH_045	Nil
	ETH_046	Low
	ETH_088	High
	ETH_091	Nil
	ETH_092	Medium
Surrey Police Headquarters, Mount Browne	ETH_074	Low

Study Area	Site Reference	Amenity Value Score
The Horsleys	ETH_016	Low
	ETH_054	Nil
	ETH_055	Nil
	ETH_056	High
	ETH_065	Nil
	ETH_066	Nil
	ETH_067	Nil
	ETH_068	Nil
	ETH_069	Medium
	ETH_070	Nil
	ETH_095	Nil
	ETH_096	Nil
	ETH_048	Medium
	ETH_049	Nil
	ETH_050	Low
	ETH_051	Nil
	ETH_052	Nil
	ETH_053	Nil
	ETH_093	Nil
	ETH_094	Nil
Wood Street Village	ETH_057	High
	ETH_058	Nil
	ETH_097	Medium
	ETH_098	Nil

Table 3 Sites where development/partial development would retain and/or enhance Open Space amenity value

Site Reference	Amenity Value Score	Comments on Impact of Development
ETH_048	Medium	Partial development could retain and potentially improve amenity value
ETH_069	Medium	Partial development could retain and potentially improve amenity value
ETH_071	Medium	Partial development could retain and potentially improve amenity value
ETH_084	Medium	Partial development could retain and potentially improve amenity value
ETH_086	Medium	Partial development could potentially improve amenity value
ETH_088	High	Partial development could potentially improve amenity value by making the land accessible. Full development would result in loss of amenity value.
ETH_092	Medium	Some low scale development would allow key amenity and biodiversity features to be retained, full scale development would result in loss of amenity value.
ETH_097	Medium	The amenity value of this site could be retained through considered masterplanning and design of the site.
ETH_101	Medium	The amenity value of this site could be retained through considered masterplanning and design of the site.
ETH_103	Medium	Some low scale development would allow key amenity and biodiversity features to be retained, full scale development would result in loss of amenity value.