

Site Assessment Report

RM18 8AX

Tilbury St Chads, Thurrock · East of England

Prepared for	Date	Reference	Risk Level
Sample report	8 October 2026	LL-20261008-9T9EMQ	Moderate

Development Snapshot

An at-a-glance summary derived directly from verified constraint and location data. Indicative only — read alongside the detailed analysis that follows.

Moderate Planning Risk	Medium Est. Planning Complexity	Not determined Surrounding Land Use	0 Bus Stops <400m
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Suitable For

Residential (C3)	✗ Significant barriers
Mixed-use	✗ Significant barriers
Commercial / Industrial	⚠ Possible — constraints apply

Likely Supporting Surveys

- Drainage / SuDS strategy
- Transport & access appraisal
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Designations & Constraints

⚠ Flood Zone 3	✓ Flood Zone 2	✓ Conservation Area	✓ Listed Building (500m)	✓ Green Belt	✓ SSSI	✓ AONB / Nat. Landscape
✓ Ancient Woodland						

Executive Summary

1 Active Constraints	Moderate Overall Risk	9 Categories Checked	Thurrock Council Planning Authority
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Location: 51.464273°N, 0.375937°E · Ward: Tilbury St Chads · Authority: Thurrock · County: N/A · Parish: N/A

Disclaimer: Data sourced from third-party government APIs including the Environment Agency, OS Data Hub and HM Land Registry. This report is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional planning advice. Edvance Technologies Ltd accepts no liability for decisions made based on this report.

Planning Constraint Summary

Data queried from government APIs for RM18 8AX (51.464273, 0.375937). Search radius: 500m unless stated otherwise.

CONSTRAINT	STATUS
Flood Zone 2 (Medium Risk)	✓ None
Flood Zone 3 (High Risk)	⚠ Identified

CONSTRAINT	STATUS
Conservation Area	✔ None
Listed Buildings (500m)	✔ None
Green Belt	✔ None
Brownfield Register	✔ None
SSSI	✔ None
AONB / National Landscape	✔ None
Ancient Woodland	✔ None

Detailed Constraint Interpretation

Below is a detailed interpretation of each constraint check and what it means for development at this location.

Flood Zone 2 (Medium Risk) No Flood Zone 2 designation identified within the search area. Standard surface water drainage considerations still apply.
Flood Zone 3 (High Risk) Area identified within or near Flood Zone 3 (high probability). Development will require a detailed FRA and must pass both Sequential and Exception Tests. Residential development faces significant constraints.
Conservation Area No conservation areas identified within the search radius. Standard design and character considerations apply under local plan policies.
Listed Buildings (500m) No listed buildings identified within 500m. However, unlisted buildings of local interest may still be relevant — check the local heritage list.
Green Belt Not within Green Belt designation. This removes a significant development constraint and allows proposals to be assessed primarily against local plan policies.
Brownfield Register No registered brownfield sites identified in the immediate vicinity. The site's brownfield/greenfield status should be confirmed through site-specific assessment.
SSSI No SSSIs identified within the search area. Standard ecological considerations still apply — a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal may still be required.
AONB / National Landscape Not within an AONB or National Landscape designation. Landscape character considerations from the local landscape assessment will still be relevant.
Ancient Woodland No ancient woodland identified within the search area.

Planning Intelligence Analysis

This section is generated by AI using verified constraint data and professional planning knowledge. It should be reviewed alongside formal professional advice.

RM18 8AX is located within the Tilbury St Chads ward of Thurrock Council. Tilbury is a town situated within the borough of Thurrock, in the East of England region, positioned on the north bank of the River Thames in the county of Essex. Thurrock is a unitary authority, meaning that Thurrock Council exercises both district-level and county-level planning functions, including responsibility for the Local Plan, development management, and strategic infrastructure planning. The Tilbury St Chads ward is one of several wards comprising the town of Tilbury, and the site at Portsea Road falls within an unparished area, meaning there is no parish council layer of governance that would introduce an additional tier of planning or neighbourhood plan consideration at the most local level.

Tilbury is characterised predominantly by residential development of varying ages, interspersed with industrial and port-related land uses that reflect the town's historic and ongoing economic relationship with the Port of Tilbury — one of the largest and most operationally significant port complexes on the Thames Estuary. The built form across Tilbury is generally low-rise, with a predominance of two-storey terraced and semi-detached housing stock, much of which dates from the mid-twentieth century, alongside some later infill and estate development. The Tilbury St Chads ward, in common with much of the town, is understood to represent an urban setting rather than a suburban or rural one, with a relatively dense street pattern and a mix of residential, community, and employment land uses in the broader vicinity. It should be noted that the verified data does not confirm the specific surrounding land use within approximately 250 metres of the site, and no assumptions are made beyond what the verified data supports.

In terms of transport access, the verified data confirms that there are **zero bus stops within 400 metres** (straight-line) of the site. No railway station data has been supplied within the verified dataset for this report, and accordingly no station name, distance, or service frequency is cited. Clients should commission independent transport assessments and consult Thurrock Council's transport officers to establish the precise public transport accessibility level (PTAL or equivalent) applicable to this location, as this will be a material consideration in any planning application, particularly for residential or employment-generating uses. The absence of verified bus stops within 400 metres is a factual characteristic of the site's immediate transport environment that will require careful consideration in the context of sustainable development policy under the NPPF.

The site address of Portsea Road, Tilbury, provides the primary locational reference. No verified parks, schools, retail centres, or other named landmarks have been confirmed within the verified dataset for this report, and none are therefore cited. Professional judgement suggests that, as an urban ward within a town of Tilbury's scale, community facilities and local services are likely to exist within the broader town area, but their precise proximity to this site cannot be confirmed without independent survey and mapping work. Any planning application for a use that generates significant trips or relies upon proximity to services should be supported by an independently verified accessibility audit.

2. Planning Policy Framework

The statutory development plan for this site is administered by Thurrock Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Thurrock's planning policy context has been subject to a protracted and complex evolution. The authority has been working on a new Local Plan for a number of years; however, the plan-making process has faced significant challenges, including the well-documented financial difficulties experienced by Thurrock Council following its investment activities, which came to public attention from 2021 onwards. These financial pressures have had material implications for the council's capacity to advance its Local Plan. As of the date of this report (8 October 2026), clients are strongly advised to verify the current status of the emerging Thurrock Local Plan directly with the LPA, as the plan may have progressed, been paused, or been subject to intervention by the Secretary of State or the Planning Inspectorate. In the interim, the adopted development plan documents — including the Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (adopted 2011) and associated Development Plan Documents — continue to carry statutory weight, supplemented by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration.

The NPPF is a central material consideration for any development proposal at this location. The Framework's overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) is relevant, particularly given Thurrock's historically challenged position with respect to housing land supply. Where an LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS), the tilted balance under NPPF paragraph 11(d) may apply, potentially making it easier to secure planning permission for residential development, subject to the policies most important for determining the application not being significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the benefits. However, the presence of Flood Zone 3 constraints (discussed in detail in Section 3) introduces a significant complicating factor, as flood risk policy under the NPPF and the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) imposes a sequential and exception test framework that operates independently of the tilted balance. Clients should obtain up-to-date confirmation of Thurrock's 5YHLS position from the LPA or through the Planning Inspectorate's records.

Thurrock has historically been identified as a strategic growth location within the Thames Estuary Growth Area, a sub-regional framework that has sought to direct significant housing and employment growth to the north bank of the Thames, capitalising on infrastructure investment and brownfield land availability. The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission, which reported in 2018, identified Thurrock and the wider estuary corridor as a priority for economic and housing growth. Tilbury itself has been the subject of regeneration ambitions, with the town centre and port-adjacent areas identified in various policy documents as locations for investment and renewal. Clients should investigate whether any specific Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), masterplans, or regeneration frameworks apply to the Tilbury St Chads ward or the Portsea Road area specifically, as these could either support or constrain particular development typologies.

With respect to neighbourhood planning, the site falls within an unparished area, and no neighbourhood plan has been identified as applying to this location. This means there is no additional layer of locally prepared neighbourhood plan policy that would need to be satisfied alongside the statutory development plan. However, the absence of a neighbourhood plan does not diminish the importance of community engagement, particularly in a ward such as Tilbury St Chads, where local residents and community groups may have strong views on the character and nature of new development. Thurrock Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule, if adopted and in force, would also apply to eligible development at this location, and clients should confirm the current CIL rate applicable to the relevant use class and zone with the LPA's CIL team.

3. Constraint Analysis & Interpretation

Flood Zone 3 (High Risk)

The verified data confirms that the site is within or near Flood Zone 3, as defined by the Environment Agency's (EA) Flood Map for Planning. Flood Zone 3 represents land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding, or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea. This is the highest category of fluvial and tidal flood risk in the EA's classification system and carries the most onerous policy requirements under the NPPF and the accompanying PPG on Flood Risk and Coastal Change. Given Tilbury's location on the north bank of the Thames Estuary, tidal flood risk is a particularly material consideration; the town sits within the Thames tidal flood plain, and while the Thames Barrier and associated flood defences provide a significant degree of protection, residual risk and the long-term implications of climate change must be addressed in any planning submission.

In practical terms, Flood Zone 3 designation triggers the requirement for a Sequential Test and, where applicable, an Exception Test to be passed before planning permission can be granted for most forms of development. The Sequential Test requires the applicant to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available alternative sites at lower flood risk that could accommodate the proposed development. The Exception Test — required for certain more vulnerable uses in Flood Zone 3 — requires demonstration both that the development provides wider sustainability benefits that outweigh flood risk, and that the development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Highly vulnerable uses (such as basement dwellings or certain institutional uses) are not permitted in Flood Zone 3b (the functional floodplain), and more vulnerable uses (such as standard residential dwellings) require the Exception Test to be passed in Flood Zone 3a. The precise sub-classification of the site (3a or 3b) must be confirmed with the EA and through a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

A site-specific FRA, prepared by a suitably qualified flood risk engineer, will be a mandatory requirement for any planning application at this location. The FRA must assess both fluvial and tidal flood risk, consider the residual risk behind existing defences, address climate change allowances in accordance with current EA guidance (which requires assessment over the lifetime of the development, typically 60–100 years for residential uses), and propose appropriate mitigation measures. Mitigation may include raising finished floor levels, incorporating flood-resilient and flood-resistant construction techniques, providing safe access and egress routes, and ensuring that development does not increase flood risk to third parties. The FRA will need to be agreed in scope with the EA prior to submission, and early pre-application engagement with both the EA and Thurrock Council's flood risk team is strongly recommended.

No Conservation Areas Identified Nearby

The verified data confirms that no conservation areas have been identified in the vicinity of the site. In practical terms, this means that the site does not fall within or immediately adjacent to a designated heritage area where the character and appearance of the area is subject to enhanced protection under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Development proposals will not therefore need to demonstrate special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This removes one layer of heritage-related constraint that can otherwise significantly influence design parameters, material choices, and the scope for new development. Standard design quality requirements under the NPPF and Thurrock's adopted design policies will still apply.

No Listed Buildings Within 500 Metres

The verified data confirms that no listed buildings have been identified within 500 metres (straight-line) of the site. This means that the statutory duty under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 — requiring decision-makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings, and any features of special architectural or historic interest — is unlikely to be engaged by development at this location. The absence of listed buildings within 500 metres substantially reduces the risk of heritage impact objections from Historic England or the LPA's conservation officer. Nonetheless, clients should commission a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment as a precautionary measure for any significant development, to confirm the absence of undesigned heritage assets (such as locally listed buildings or archaeological remains) that may not be captured in the verified dataset.

Not Within Green Belt

The verified data confirms that the site does not fall within the Green Belt. This is a significant positive factor for development potential. Green Belt designation under NPPF Chapter 13 imposes a strong presumption against most forms of development, with only a limited range of uses considered appropriate in the Green Belt. The absence of Green Belt designation means that this constraint — which can be one of the most difficult to overcome in planning terms — does not apply. Development proposals will be assessed on their merits against the development plan and the NPPF without the additional burden of demonstrating very special circumstances. This is particularly relevant in the context of Thurrock, where Green Belt land exists in parts of the borough, making non-Green Belt urban sites relatively more straightforward to bring forward for development.

No Registered Brownfield Sites Nearby

The verified data indicates that no registered brownfield sites (as listed on Thurrock Council's Brownfield Land Register) have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the site. This does not necessarily mean that the site itself or surrounding land is greenfield in character; it means that no sites have been formally registered on the statutory Brownfield Land Register in the area. The Brownfield Land Register is a material consideration in planning decisions and can confer a degree of policy support for residential development on registered sites. The absence of nearby registered sites may indicate that the surrounding area is already developed or that land has not been formally assessed and registered. Clients should consider whether the subject site itself might be eligible for inclusion on the Brownfield Land Register, which could strengthen the policy case for residential development.

No SSSIs Nearby

The verified data confirms that no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) have been identified in the vicinity of the site. SSSIs are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and represent the country's most important wildlife and geological sites. Their absence removes a significant layer of ecological constraint that can otherwise require detailed Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), Natural England consultation, and potentially onerous mitigation requirements. However, the absence of a SSSI designation does not eliminate the need for ecological survey work. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey and, where appropriate, targeted species surveys (for protected species such as bats, breeding birds, and reptiles) should be commissioned for any development proposal, in accordance with the NPPF's requirement to protect and enhance biodiversity and the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements introduced under the Environment Act 2021.

Not Within AONB / National Landscape

The verified data confirms that the site does not fall within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Landscape designation. AONBs carry a high level of landscape protection under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and development within or affecting an AONB must have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. The absence of this designation means that the heightened landscape protection policies applicable to AONBs do not apply. Standard landscape and visual impact considerations under the NPPF and Thurrock's local policies will still be relevant, particularly for any development of significant scale or height, but the policy bar is materially lower than it would be within or adjacent to an AONB.

Cross-Referencing Constraints

Considered in combination, the constraint profile presents a picture that is relatively unencumbered in heritage and landscape terms, but materially complicated by flood risk. The Flood Zone 3 designation is the dominant constraint and will drive the scope, cost, and complexity of the technical evidence base required for any planning application. The absence of brownfield registration, combined with flood risk, may affect the viability of residential development in particular, since the costs of flood mitigation (raised floor levels, resilient construction, potential land raising) can be significant and must be factored into development appraisals. The absence of SSSIs and conservation areas means that ecological and heritage constraints are unlikely to add materially to the technical burden, though standard surveys remain necessary. The non-Green Belt status is the most straightforwardly positive constraint characteristic, removing what would otherwise be a near-absolute policy barrier.

4. Development Potential Assessment

The development potential of the site at Portsea Road, Tilbury St Chads, must be assessed in the context of the dominant flood risk constraint, the absence of heritage and landscape designations, and the broader regeneration ambitions that have historically been associated with Tilbury as a town. In principle, the site's location within an urban ward of a designated growth area, outside the Green Belt and free from heritage constraints, would ordinarily support a range of development typologies. However, the Flood Zone 3 designation fundamentally shapes what can be brought forward and on what terms. The Sequential Test must be satisfied before any development is pursued, and applicants should be prepared to demonstrate — with robust evidence — that no sequentially preferable sites at lower flood risk are available to meet the identified need. This is a high evidential bar and should not be underestimated.

Subject to the Sequential and Exception Tests being satisfied, the uses most likely to be considered appropriate in Flood Zone 3a (assuming the site is not within the functional floodplain, i.e., Flood Zone 3b) include residential development (Use Class C3), which is classified as a "more vulnerable" use under the PPG's flood risk vulnerability classification. More vulnerable uses can be permitted in Flood Zone 3a only where the Exception Test is passed. Less vulnerable uses — including many commercial and employment uses falling within Use Class E (commercial, business and service), and certain sui generis uses — face a lower policy bar in Flood Zone 3a and may be more straightforwardly achievable without needing to pass the Exception Test. Highly vulnerable uses, including basement dwellings and certain institutional uses, should be avoided entirely in Flood Zone 3. On this basis, employment-generating uses, community facilities (Use Class F1 or F2), or mixed-use schemes with a commercial ground floor and residential above (where the residential element can be designed to be safe and resilient) may represent the most policy-compliant development typologies, subject to detailed flood risk assessment.

In terms of density and height, Tilbury's prevailing built form of predominantly two-storey residential development suggests that any new development should be contextually responsive, though the NPPF encourages efficient use of land and does not preclude higher-density or taller development where it is appropriate to the context and supported by design quality. Thurrock Council's design policies and any applicable SPDs will set parameters for height, massing, and density. In a flood risk context, raising finished floor levels above the 1 in 100-year (plus climate change) flood level may effectively increase the apparent height of ground-floor uses, which should be factored into design development from the outset. Any residential development should anticipate an affordable housing requirement in accordance with Thurrock's adopted and emerging policies; the precise threshold and percentage requirement should be confirmed with the LPA, but a requirement of between 25% and 35% affordable housing on qualifying residential schemes is a reasonable working assumption pending confirmation.

Section 106 (S106) planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions are likely to be required for any development of meaningful scale. S106 obligations may include contributions to education, open space, transport infrastructure, and affordable housing (where not provided on-site). CIL, if applicable at this location under Thurrock's charging schedule, will be calculated on the basis of the net additional floorspace created and the applicable CIL rate for the use class and charging zone. Clients should obtain a CIL liability estimate from the LPA at the earliest opportunity, as CIL obligations are non-negotiable (unlike S106, which is subject to viability negotiation) and must be factored into development appraisals. The cumulative cost of flood mitigation, affordable housing provision, and infrastructure contributions will be a critical viability consideration, and an early-stage development appraisal is strongly recommended before significant expenditure is committed to the planning process.

5. Key Risks & Mitigation Strategies

- **Risk 1: Failure of the Sequential Test**

The Sequential Test requires the applicant to demonstrate that no reasonably available alternative sites at lower flood risk exist that could accommodate the proposed development. In a borough such as Thurrock, where there is a range of land at varying flood risk levels, this test can be difficult to pass, particularly for residential development. *Mitigation:* Commission a Sequential Test assessment at the earliest stage, prepared by a suitably qualified flood risk consultant. Engage with Thurrock Council's flood risk team pre-application to agree the geographic scope of the sequential search area and the methodology. A robust, well-evidenced Sequential Test prepared in advance of submission will reduce the risk of refusal on this ground.

- **Risk 2: Failure of the Exception Test (for more vulnerable uses)**

Even where the Sequential Test is passed, more vulnerable uses (including standard residential dwellings) in Flood Zone 3a must also pass the Exception Test, which requires demonstration of wider sustainability benefits and that the development will be safe for its lifetime. This is a two-limb test and both limbs must be satisfied. *Mitigation:* Prepare a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment that addresses both limbs of the Exception Test. Ensure that the development design incorporates appropriate flood mitigation measures (raised floor levels, resilient construction, safe access and egress) and that the sustainability benefits of the scheme are clearly articulated in the planning statement.

- **Risk 3: Environment Agency Objection**

The Environment Agency is a statutory consultee on all planning applications in Flood Zone 3 and has the ability to lodge a holding objection, which can significantly delay or prevent the grant of planning permission. EA objections on flood risk grounds are treated very seriously by LPAs and the Planning Inspectorate. *Mitigation:* Engage with the EA at pre-application stage to agree the scope and methodology of the FRA. Submit a draft FRA to the EA for comment before finalising the document. Ensure that the FRA addresses all EA requirements, including climate change allowances, residual risk, and safe access and egress.

- **Risk 4: Viability Constraints Arising from Flood Mitigation Costs**

The cost of flood mitigation measures — including land raising, raised floor levels, resilient construction, and potentially sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) — can be substantial and may materially affect development viability. Combined with affordable housing obligations and CIL/S106 contributions, the cumulative financial burden may render certain development typologies unviable. *Mitigation:* Commission an early-stage development appraisal that incorporates realistic cost estimates for flood mitigation. If viability is marginal, prepare a formal viability assessment in accordance with the RICS Guidance Note on Viability in Planning (2019) to support negotiation of affordable housing and S106 obligations with the LPA.

- **Risk 5: Uncertainty Arising from Thurrock Council's Financial Position and Local Plan Status**

Thurrock Council's well-documented financial difficulties have had implications for its capacity to advance its Local Plan and to resource its planning department. An out-of-date or absent Local Plan creates policy uncertainty, and a financially constrained LPA may have reduced capacity to process applications efficiently. *Mitigation:* Monitor the status of the emerging Local Plan closely and engage with the LPA at pre-application stage to understand the current policy position. Allow additional time in programme for LPA processing. Consider whether the Planning Inspectorate's intervention (if applicable) has any bearing on the policy framework.

- **Risk 6: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Requirements**

The mandatory BNG requirement under the Environment Act 2021 requires most new developments to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity value. Depending on the existing ecological value of the site, achieving the required BNG may require off-site habitat creation or the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits, both of which carry cost implications. *Mitigation:* Commission a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a Biodiversity Metric assessment at an early stage to quantify the existing biodiversity baseline and the BNG requirement. Explore opportunities to deliver BNG on-site through landscaping and habitat creation, which is generally more cost-effective than off-site or credit-based solutions.

- **Risk 7: Transport and Accessibility Concerns**

The verified data confirms zero bus stops within 400 metres of the site. For development typologies that generate significant trips — particularly residential development — the absence of nearby public transport infrastructure may attract objections from the LPA's transport officers and from Thurrock's highways authority on sustainability grounds. The NPPF requires development to be located where it is accessible by sustainable modes of transport. *Mitigation:* Commission a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement (as appropriate to the scale of development) to quantify trip generation and assess accessibility. Explore whether contributions to public transport infrastructure improvements could be secured through S106 obligations to mitigate accessibility concerns. Engage with Thurrock's transport officers at pre-application stage.

- **Risk 8: Community and Stakeholder Opposition**

Development proposals in established residential areas can attract opposition from local residents and community groups, particularly where proposals involve changes in scale, density, or use that differ from the prevailing character of the area. In a ward such as Tilbury St Chads, where the community may have particular sensitivities around the pace and nature of change, inadequate community engagement can generate objections that complicate or delay the planning process. *Mitigation:* Develop a proactive community engagement strategy prior to submission. Consider holding a public exhibition or drop-in event to present proposals and gather feedback. Engage with ward councillors at an early stage. Incorporate community feedback into the design development process where possible and document this in a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) submitted with the application.

6. Pre-Application Strategy

1. Confirm Site Ownership, Title, and Legal Status

Before any planning expenditure is committed, confirm that the client has clear title to the site or has secured an option agreement. Commission a full Land Registry title search and review any restrictive covenants, easements, or rights of way that may affect development potential. This step should be completed immediately and will typically take 1–2 weeks.

2. Obtain and Review the Environment Agency's Detailed Flood Mapping

Request the EA's detailed flood mapping data for the site, including the Flood Map for Planning, the Flood Risk from Rivers and Sea dataset, and any available hydraulic modelling data. Confirm whether the site falls within Flood Zone 3a or 3b (functional floodplain), as this distinction is critical to determining which uses can be considered. This should be done within the first 2–4 weeks of the project.

3. Commission a Flood Risk Assessment Scoping Exercise

Appoint a suitably qualified flood risk engineer to scope the FRA requirements in consultation with the EA. Request a pre-application meeting with the EA's Development and Flood Risk team to agree the scope, methodology, and data requirements for the FRA. Allow 4–6 weeks for this process. The FRA itself should be commissioned in parallel with other technical surveys to avoid programme delays.

4. Commission a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Metric Assessment

Appoint a suitably qualified ecologist to undertake a Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site. The survey should be carried out during the appropriate survey season (typically April to September for most species). The ecologist should also prepare a Biodiversity Metric assessment to quantify the existing biodiversity baseline and the BNG requirement. Allow 4–8 weeks for survey work and reporting, depending on survey season timing.

5. Undertake a Sequential Test Assessment

Appoint a flood risk or planning consultant to prepare a Sequential Test assessment. Agree the geographic scope of the sequential search area with Thurrock Council's flood risk and planning policy teams at pre-application stage. The Sequential Test should be prepared before significant design work is undertaken, as its outcome will determine whether the proposed use can be justified at this location. Allow 4–6 weeks for preparation and LPA review.

6. Submit a Formal Pre-Application Enquiry to Thurrock Council

Submit a formal pre-application enquiry to Thurrock Council's Development Management team, setting out the proposed development concept, the site's constraint profile, and the key planning issues to be addressed. Request a pre-application meeting with the case officer, flood risk officer, transport officer, and ecology officer. Allow 6–8 weeks for the LPA to respond to a formal pre-application enquiry, noting that Thurrock's resourcing constraints may affect response times. The pre-application response will provide valuable guidance on the LPA's likely position and any additional requirements.

7. Commission a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement

Appoint a transport consultant to prepare a Transport Assessment (for larger schemes) or Transport Statement (for smaller schemes) in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and Thurrock's local transport policies. The assessment should address trip generation, accessibility by sustainable modes of transport, and any required highway improvements or contributions. Engage with Thurrock's transport officers and National Highways (if the development may affect the strategic road network) at pre-application stage to agree the scope of the assessment. Allow 6–10 weeks for preparation.

8. Develop a Design Concept and Undertake a Design Review

Appoint an architect or urban designer to develop an initial design concept for the site, informed by the outputs of the technical surveys and the pre-application engagement. Consider submitting the design concept to a design review panel — such as Design South East or an equivalent body — to obtain independent design quality feedback before submission. Design review can strengthen the planning application and reduce the risk of design-related objections. Allow 8–12 weeks for design development and review.

9. Prepare a Development Viability Appraisal

Commission an early-stage development viability appraisal to assess the financial viability of the proposed development, incorporating realistic cost estimates for flood mitigation, affordable housing, CIL, and S106 obligations. The appraisal should be prepared in accordance with the RICS Guidance Note on Viability in Planning (2019) and should be updated as the design and technical evidence base evolves. This will inform negotiations with the LPA on affordable housing and infrastructure contributions and should be completed before the planning application is submitted.

10. Prepare and Submit the Planning Application with a Comprehensive Evidence Base

Once all technical surveys, assessments, and pre-application engagement have been completed, prepare a comprehensive planning application comprising the application forms, site location plan, drawings, Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement (addressing the Sequential Test, Exception Test, and all relevant policy considerations), FRA, Transport Assessment, Ecological Assessment, BNG Metric, Heritage Desk-Based Assessment, and Statement of Community Involvement. Ensure that all documents are cross-referenced and consistent. Allow a minimum of 8–12 weeks for application preparation following completion of the technical evidence base.

7. Summary & Professional Opinion

The site at Portsea Road, Tilbury St Chads, Thurrock, presents a development opportunity that is materially shaped by a single dominant constraint: its location within or near Flood Zone 3. In the absence of heritage, landscape, Green Belt, or ecological designations, the site's constraint profile is relatively straightforward in most respects — but the flood risk designation introduces a significant and non-trivial policy and technical burden that must be addressed rigorously before any development can be brought forward. The requirement to pass the Sequential Test, and potentially the Exception Test, means that the planning case for development — particularly for residential or other more vulnerable uses — must be built on a robust and well-evidenced technical foundation. The absence of bus stops within 400 metres of the site is a further material consideration that will require careful treatment in the context of the NPPF's sustainable development and transport policies.

In professional terms, this site is not without development potential, but that potential is conditional. The most straightforward development typologies from a flood risk policy perspective are those classified as less vulnerable uses under the PPG's flood risk vulnerability classification — including many commercial and employment uses within Use Class E — which face a lower policy bar in Flood Zone 3a than residential development. If the client's objective is residential development, the Sequential and Exception Tests must be addressed head-on, and the design must incorporate appropriate flood mitigation measures from the outset. Viability will be a critical consideration, given the cumulative cost of flood mitigation, affordable housing obligations, and infrastructure contributions. An early-stage viability appraisal is essential to determine whether the development economics support the investment required to bring a planning application forward.

The recommended priority actions are: first, to confirm the precise flood zone sub-classification of the site (3a or 3b) through engagement with the Environment Agency; second, to commission a Sequential Test assessment to determine whether the proposed use can be justified at this location; and third, to submit a formal pre-application enquiry to Thurrock Council to obtain the LPA's initial view on the development concept and the key issues to be addressed. These three steps will provide the client with a clear picture of the planning prospects for the

site before significant further expenditure is committed. This report has been prepared on the basis of the verified data supplied and should be read alongside formal searches, surveys, and direct engagement with the LPA and statutory consultees. The findings and opinions expressed herein are those of Vince James, Edvance Technologies Ltd, as at 8 October 2026, and are subject to revision as further information becomes available.

Local Planning Authority

The following authority has planning jurisdiction for RM18 8AX.

Authority Name	Thurrock Council
Authority Type	Unitary Authority
Region	East of England
Entity Reference	343
Website	https://www.thurrock.gov.uk
Planning Portal	planningportal.co.uk
planning.data.gov.uk	View on planning.data.gov.uk

How to Engage With Your LPA

- Review the Local Plan:** Visit the authority website to access their adopted Local Plan, supplementary planning documents (SPDs), and any emerging plan consultations.
- Check site allocations:** Look for site-specific allocations, area action plans, or masterplan frameworks that may cover this postcode or surrounding area.
- Pre-application enquiry:** Submit a formal pre-application request to the planning team. This typically costs £250–£1,500+ depending on scheme scale, but provides invaluable officer feedback. Allow 6–8 weeks for a response.
- Planning history search:** Review recent planning decisions in the immediate area to understand local precedent and the authority's appetite for development.
- Validation checklist:** Download the authority's local validation checklist to understand exactly what documents and surveys will be required with your planning application.
- CIL/S106 guidance:** Check the authority's Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule and S106 planning obligations policy to understand financial contributions required.

Data Sources & Methodology

This report was compiled using data from the following authoritative government sources. All data was queried in real-time at the point of report generation.

Source	Data Used	Licence
planning.data.gov.uk	Conservation areas, listed buildings, green belt, brownfield register, SSSI, AONB, ancient woodland	OGL v3.0
Environment Agency	Flood zones 2 & 3, flood risk areas, flood monitoring	OGL v3.0
postcodes.io	Postcode validation, coordinates, administrative geography, ward & parish data	Open
Ordnance Survey	Geographic reference data, boundary data, National Grid references	OS OpenData
Historic England	Heritage asset data — listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks	OGL v3.0
HM Land Registry	Title boundary reference data, INSPIRE index polygons	OGL v3.0
Natural England	SSSI boundaries, AONB/ National Landscape designations, ancient woodland inventory	OGL v3.0

Methodology

Constraint data was queried using point-based spatial intersection searches centred on the postcode centroid (51.464273, 0.375937). A default search radius of 500m was used for most datasets, with 1000m for broader environmental designations. Data was queried in real-time on 8 October 2026.

AI analysis was performed using a large language model with the verified constraint data as input. The AI component provides contextual interpretation and should not be treated as a substitute for professional planning advice.

Important Disclaimer

Data sourced from third-party government APIs including the Environment Agency, OS Data Hub and HM Land Registry. This report is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional planning advice. Edvance Technologies Ltd accepts no liability for decisions made based on this report.

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