

2017

FAREHAM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

LD&DESIGN



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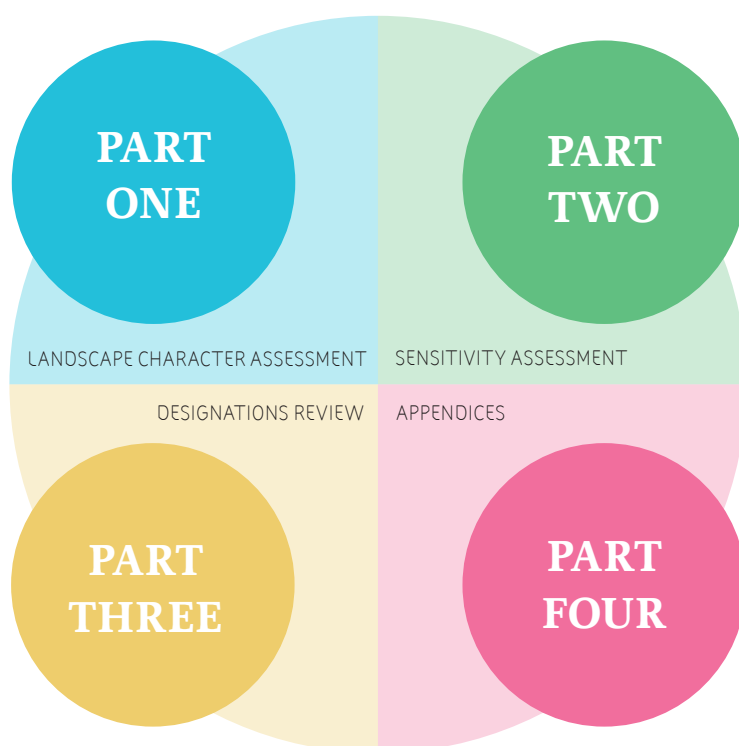
PREFACE

The National Planning Policy Framework makes a clear commitment to conserving the natural environment in the planning system and recognises that it has a key role to play in the achievement of sustainable development. The Framework principles and policies make clear that planning should take account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and promoting local distinctiveness. Planning policies and decisions should be based upon up-to-date and relevant evidence about the landscape characteristics of the area and the primary tools for achieving this are landscape character assessments and, where appropriate, assessments of landscape sensitivity.

Fareham Borough Council is currently undertaking a review of its adopted Local Plan and commissioned *LDA Design* to up-date and expand upon the previous Fareham Landscape Assessment, undertaken in 1996, to provide robust evidence to inform Local Plan policy and planning decisions. The study brief included three main components:

- Landscape character assessment - a review of the baseline 'audit' of the character of the Borough landscape provided by the 1996 Landscape Character assessment, updated as necessary. The aim is to improve understanding of the key characteristics of the landscape that make places distinctive and different from one another, rather than better or worse;
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment - detailed analysis and judgements regarding the value of the landscape and its sensitivity to change. The aim is to assist the Council in the evaluation of possible development options/alternatives to meet housing needs in the Local Plan Review and to inform the assessment of potential impacts on the landscape when determining planning applications;
- Designations Review - a review of landscape designations within the Borough, with specific reference to 'Strategic Gaps' and 'Areas of Special Landscape Character', but also 'other areas of protected or valued landscape designations'. The aim is to assist the Council in framing policy related to landscape protection, strategic gaps and settlement boundaries within the review of the Local Plan.

These components are presented in three separate 'parts', supported by appendices, and together form the 2017 Fareham Landscape Assessment. It should be emphasised that the assessment findings are based upon the professional judgement of the qualified landscape architects/planners within the consultant team and have not been influenced by, nor tested against, the opinions of the Council or the public.



**PART
ONE**

FAREHAM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

LDÄ DESIGN



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Version 01
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1.0
LANDSCAPE
CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT OF
FAREHAM BOROUGH



ABOUT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Landscape character assessment (LCA) is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape that results from the combination of underlying geology, soils, topography, land cover, hydrology, historic and cultural development and climatic factors. Landscape character may be defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse¹. LCA documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character ‘types’ and ‘areas’. They also show how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people.

Current guidance on landscape character assessment was published by Natural England in 2014². This updates and supplements guidance previously published in 2002 and 2012^{3,4} and sets out the steps in the LCA process, making clear that it stops after the characterisation of the landscape, i.e. that the map(s) and accompanying description of the landscape character types/areas are the final product. This then exists as a ‘neutral baseline’ of the current character of the landscape that can subsequently be used as part of an evidence base to inform decisions and judgements concerning the planning, management, protection and enhancement of our environment. The steps in the LCA process and how it informs the management of change is illustrated in Figure 1.1 (taken from the 2014 guidance) on the following page.

¹ An approach to landscape character assessment, Natural England (2014)

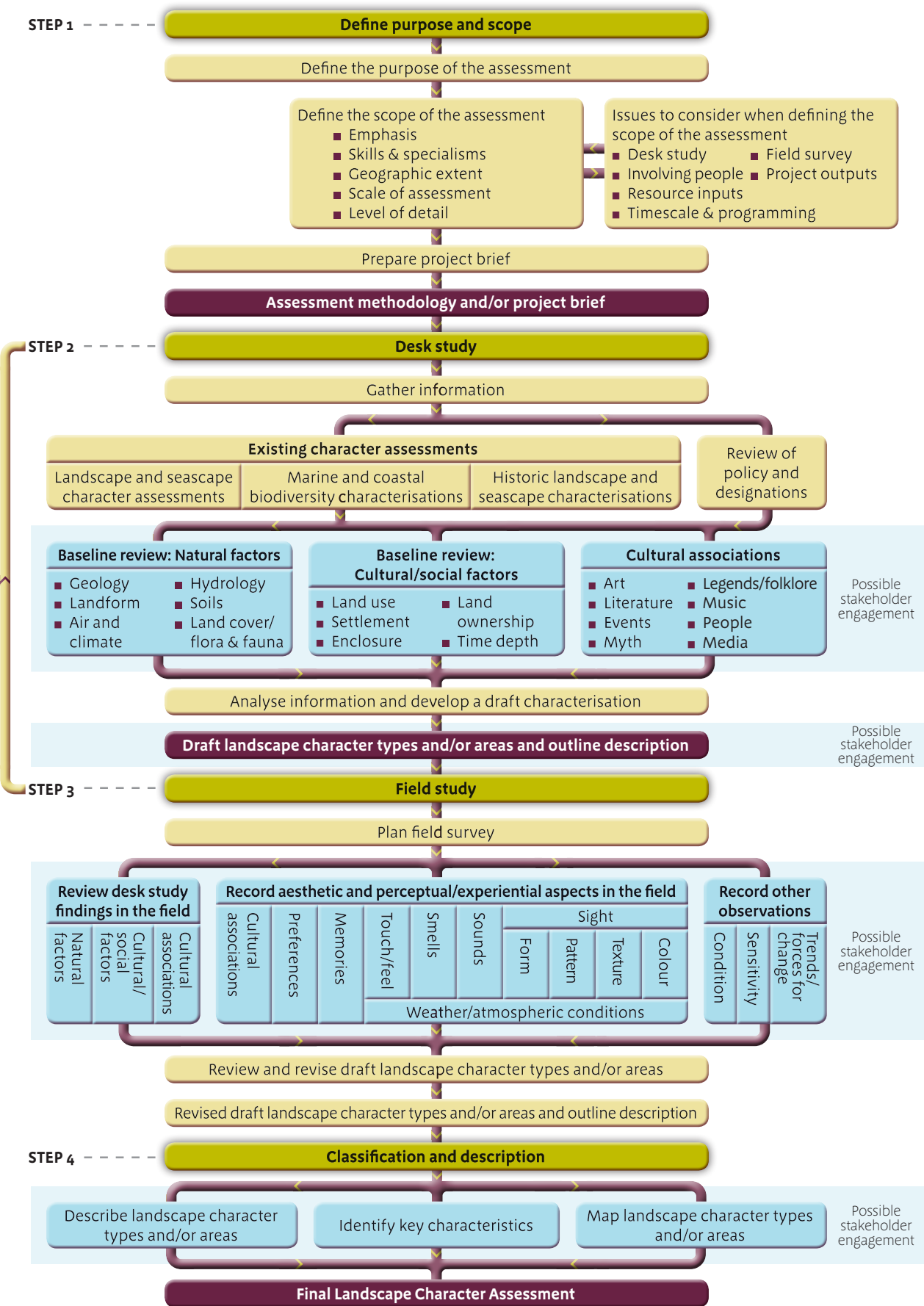
² As above

³ Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, for Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage (2002)

⁴ An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment, for Natural England (2012)

FIGURE 1: THE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT PROCESS
(EXTRACT FROM AN APPROACH TO LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - NATURAL ENGLAND - OCTOBER 2014)

Figure 2: Landscape Character Assessment - the process



1.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

ASSESSMENT IN FAREHAM

A landscape character assessment for Fareham Borough was undertaken and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in May 1996⁵. It has been used since then as background information in support of local plan policy when assessing the potential impact of planning applications on the character of any particular locality, and when looking at priorities for enhancement.

The 1996 assessment constitutes a rigorous ‘audit’ of the landscape and townscape character of the Borough written under national and county council guidelines in use at the time⁶. It examined the factors responsible for shaping the landscape, focusing upon the physical influences of geology, landform, drainage and soils, and the human influences that have affected the landscape through time. It then analysed the variations in character that have resulted from the interaction of these various forces, describing the way in which certain landscape, and townscape, elements combine to produce areas of distinctively different character with a particular local identity.

The assessment examined landscape and townscape character at two levels. Firstly, it looked at the way in which particular landform and landcover elements combine to produce distinctive **landscape types** in both the urban and rural context. These are generic descriptions (e.g. small-scale enclosed valley) and the types can repeat across the Borough without being specifically related to geographical location. They are particularly useful as a tool for understanding the detailed pattern of landscape variation that occurs

across the Borough as a whole. The starting point for identifying landscape types at that time was a county-wide LCA produced by Hampshire County Council⁷, which defined ten rural landscape types within two broad groupings: the ‘chalklands’ and the ‘lowland mosaic’. The Fareham assessment further sub-divided these into 26 rural types, reflecting variations in character at a more detailed, local scale (see plan in Appendix 3).

In planning and management terms, it is often more important to understand the landscape character and qualities of particular *places* within the study area so that appropriate policies and action can be applied at a local level. Therefore, it is common practice to define **landscape character areas**, units of landscape which may embrace areas of differing character but which in some way have a coherent and recognisable local identity or ‘sense of place’ (e.g. the Meon Valley, which includes a range of landscape types but has a recognisable local identity). The 1996 assessment defined 14 rural character areas and a further 25 urban character areas (see plan in Appendix 3). These provided the main framework for describing local identity and distinctive characteristics, and outlining priorities for enhancement of landscape or urban quality within the Borough.

⁵ Fareham Borough Landscape Assessment, for Fareham Borough Council (1996)

⁶ Landscape Assessment Guidance, CCP 423, Countryside Commission (1993)

⁷ The Hampshire Landscape, Hampshire County Council, 1993

1.3 UPDATING THE FAREHAM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

The Fareham Landscape Assessment was prepared twenty years ago but it has evidently stood the test of time and most of its findings remain largely relevant today. This review has considered the extent to which any updating might be required to reflect changes that have occurred in the past two decades, particularly in respect of:

- changes in the landscape characterisation context provided by more recent county-wide and local landscape character assessments;
- changes in best practice guidance for how Landscape Character Assessments should be undertaken;
- any changes in the character of the landscape on the ground; and
- changes in the planning context and purpose for which the assessment is to be used.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

In the past few years Hampshire County Council has developed the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (ICA)⁸, an online, interactive resource which up-dates earlier county-wide assessments⁹ and incorporates current district-wide landscape and townscape assessments. The aim is to provide a strategic overview of landscape across Hampshire and an evidence base which is to be used in the county's work, including strategic planning, land management work and place shaping programmes. It defines a total of 24 landscape types (outside of settlements) of

which 12 occur within Fareham Borough. These types are very closely related to those identified in the 1993 Hampshire LCA, upon which the 1996 Fareham LCA was based. It also defines landscape character areas, of which 10 apply to land within Fareham Borough, either wholly or in part.

This review has considered whether the landscape types and landscape character areas defined in the 1996 Fareham LCA require up-dating in the light of the Hampshire ICA. It concludes that the 1996 characterisation remains generally consistent with the county-wide types and areas, with the finer-grained characterisation at district level 'nesting' within the larger county level areas. The main difference is that the county landscape character areas are not confined to landscape outside of settlement boundaries but 'wash-over' the entire urban area. The relationship between the landscape types and landscape character areas defined in the county and district assessments is summarised in the table in Appendix 1.

There have been no new landscape character assessments prepared at a local level within this intervening period. A landscape study was carried out to support the Local Plan Part 3: Welborne Plan¹⁰ but this was based upon the 1996 Fareham LCA which was considered to remain valid as a description of landscape character within and around the Strategic Development Area.

⁸ See <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/landscape-and-heritage/hampshire-integrated-character-assessment.htm>

⁹ See [6] above and The Hampshire Landscape: A Strategy for the Future, Hampshire County Council, 2000

¹⁰ New Community North of Fareham – Landscape Study, LDA Design, 2012

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The review has also considered whether the findings of the 1996 Fareham Assessment require updating in the light of current guidance on LCA. Although there have been revisions and additions to best practice guidance published by Natural England (2012, 2014) and its predecessor the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) in the intervening period, the overall approach and methodology has remained essentially unchanged. The 1996 Fareham assessment was approached in the same way as the process set out in Figure 1, adopting the same steps and activities, and the same approach to classification and description of landscape types and character areas (see Appendix 2 for a summary of the methodology used). The main differences in more recent practice are the increased use of technology, such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), to help analyse the factors responsible for shaping landscape character during the desk study, and an increased emphasis on stakeholder participation, where feasible.

This review concludes that the existing landscape assessment was prepared in a manner that is essentially consistent with current best practice and continues to provide an accurate reflection of the patterns of landscape character that exist across the Borough. In this respect there is, therefore, no need for a major up-date of the assessment, only some minor adjustment to boundaries where there has been change on the ground or to reflect the specific purposes of the assessment (see below). In respect of stakeholder engagement, this was not undertaken in 1996 and resource limitations have precluded the involvement of local communities in this current review. However, the landscape assessment (and sensitivity assessment in Part Two) will form part of the Local Plan review consultation process, including the programme of neighbourhood consultation, which will provide opportunities for the input of local views.

LANDSCAPE CHANGE

The principal change in the landscape that has occurred over the past two decades has been some loss of open countryside to new roads, housing and energy developments. However, a review of the extent of 'countryside' as defined within the Local Plans current in 1996 and in 2015, shows that there has been relatively modest actual change on the ground outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries (see Figure 2), in contrast with the rapid urban expansion of the preceding decades. The main recorded changes on the ground are as follows:

- expansion of housing development around the edges of Whiteley;
- development within and around the edges of the Western Wards, notably at Titchfield Common and Titchfield Park;
- small pockets of new development around the northern and eastern edges of Stubbington and around Portchester;
- a small area of housing development to the west of the railway line near Funtley;
- sections of new/improved roads at Whiteley, Warsash/Locks Heath and Knowle Road within the Welborne SDA;
- solar farm development off Newgate Lane.

Other types of change, such as changes in agricultural land use (e.g. abandonment of horticultural sites or agricultural land, expansion of horticulture within farmland, removal of hedgerows) or restoration of land within mineral or landfill sites etc., are likely to have occurred but are not easy to map or quantify. Such small-scale, localised changes are unlikely to have altered the overall character of the landscape, although cumulatively over longer periods of time, they may have the potential to do so. There is no evidence of any other large-scale change, such as woodland clearance or major new mineral extraction operations, that has a major effect on landscape character over this period.

More significant future change is planned for allocated strategic development areas at Welborne, Daedalus and Coldeast Hospital, from which the countryside designation has been removed (see Figure 2). Although not all of the land within these allocations will be built upon, the character of the remaining open spaces and landscape infrastructure is likely to be affected to a substantial degree by the proposed developments. Further significant change will be brought about by improvements to the strategic road network between the southern edge of Fareham and Gosport. The proposed new Stubbington Bypass will cut through open countryside between Fareham and Stubbington, while the realignment of the main road within the Newgate Lane corridor will impact on open countryside within the Alver Valley to the east (see Figure 2). Not only will the roads themselves have an impact on the character of the undeveloped rural landscape through which they pass, but they may also encourage future built development within the remaining gap between the road and the existing edge of the urban areas.

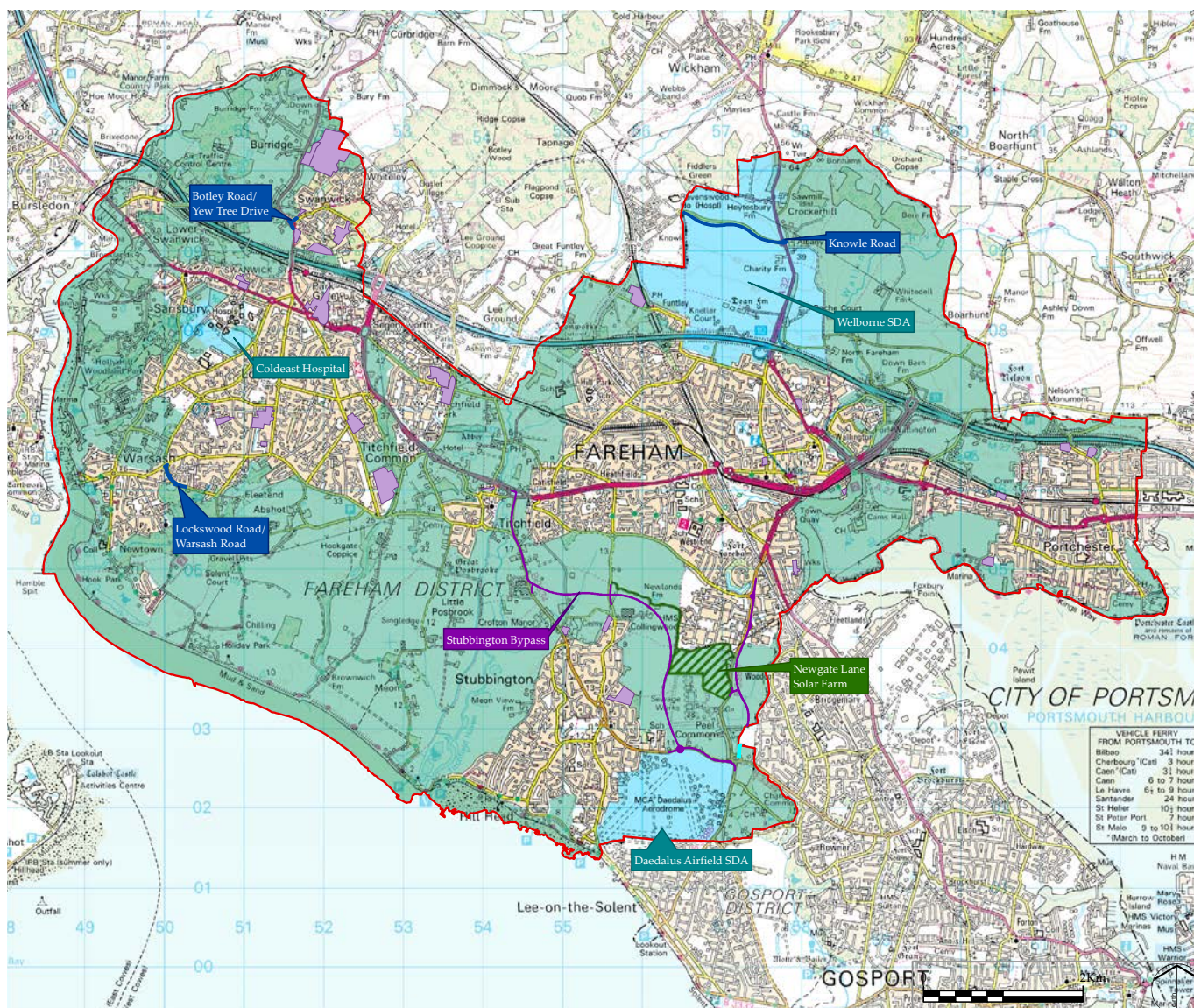
The need for up-dating of the landscape assessment is, therefore, confined to some localised refinement of landscape type/character area boundaries where new development has taken place or is planned as part of an allocated Strategic development Area. It is considered that the characterisation and descriptions of the landscape types and character areas remain valid and do not require any significant up-dating.

PLANNING CONTEXT AND PURPOSES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The essential purpose of the landscape character assessment remains the same as it was in 1996, that is to provide a baseline 'audit' of the character of the Borough's landscape as evidence to inform Local Plan policy and planning decisions, and to identify priorities for landscape management and enhancement. However, in this case, there is a specific focus on the countryside areas of the Borough, i.e. land outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries (DUSB), in order to assist the Council in making decisions regarding the most appropriate directions for future growth beyond existing settlement limits in the event that there is insufficient capacity within the urban areas. There was no requirement for the study to re-assess the townscape character of the urban areas themselves.

For this reason, the study area for the landscape character assessment has been re-defined as the area that lies outside of the current DUSB. This has required some revision to the boundaries of the landscape character areas to include some areas of 'countryside' which were previously included within the urban character areas defined in the 1996 LCA, e.g. the Warsash Nurseries area, previously included within the Locks Heath urban character area rather than the adjacent Lower Hamble Valley rural landscape character area.

FIGURE 2: DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN 1996 AND 2016



LEGEND

- Fareham Borough Boundary
- Road Improvements Delivered Since 1996
- Proposed Improvements to Strategic Road Infrastructure
- New Housing Development Since 1996
- Other Development Since 1996
- Countryside Extent in 1996 - now allocated for Strategic Development
- Countryside Extent in 2016

THE UP-DATED ASSESSMENT

The review has confirmed that the baseline information, landscape character and planning context, and the methodology for preparing a Landscape Character Assessment have remained essentially unchanged since the 1996 assessment was completed. Some minor refinement of landscape character area boundaries is required but the characterisation and description of the landscape types and character areas remain valid and largely accurate today. For this reason, the new landscape character assessment for Fareham reiterates much of the background and description of character that was contained in the 1996 assessment, with only modest refinement and up-dating as appropriate.

The up-dated landscape character assessment (Part One of the Fareham Landscape Assessment) therefore comprises:

- a description of the factors responsible for shaping the landscape of the Borough, focusing upon the physical influences of geology, landform, drainage and soils, and the human influences that have affected the area through time and will affect it in the future;
- an overview of the landscape character of the Borough today at a broad, 'macro' level, highlighting the basic structure and essential components of the landscape that are critical to local identity and need to remain 'legible' and distinct for the Borough's overall sense of place to be maintained;
- a description of the way in which certain landscape elements combine to produce areas of distinctively different character at a more detailed, 'micro' level (i.e. landscape types);

- a description of the individual landscape character areas, highlighting their distinctive characteristics and qualities and their special features and attributes.

A considerable amount of further, 'new' information on the landscape characteristics of the individual Landscape Character Areas, including assessments of landscape value, potential for development and priorities for enhancement, is provided within the Sensitivity Assessment which forms Part Two of the Fareham Landscape Assessment.

2.0

OVERVIEW OF THE
BOROUGH
LANDSCAPE

2.1 FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Fareham lies in the south-eastern corner of Hampshire sandwiched between chalkland and coast. Covering an area of approximately 75 square kilometres (29 square miles), it is one of the smaller Hampshire districts but it has a remarkably complex landscape for its size. It is bounded to the north by the chalk hills of the Hampshire and South Downs and to the south by the coastal waters of the Solent, with the estuary landscapes of the River Hamble and Portsmouth Harbour framing the Borough to west and east.

Between these distinctive and varied 'edges' lies a rich mosaic of valleys and coastal plain, farmland and woodland, extensive built-up areas and open countryside. This pattern is further complicated and fragmented by the motorway, roads and railway lines which cross the Borough from west to east and link the major urban centres of the region - Southampton, Fareham, Gosport and Portsmouth. This mixed pattern of landscape nevertheless contains some notable contrasts, for example between the enclosure of the wooded valleys and the open and expansive landscapes of Portsdown Hill and the coastal plain, and between the predominantly urban and distinctively rural landscapes of the Borough.

This patterning results from the interaction of the physical structure of the landscape and the nature of the vegetation and land uses that clothe it. In this section, the assessment draws out the key physical and human influences which have been responsible for shaping the Borough's landscape over time and which continue to influence the dynamics of landscape change. The assessment then goes on to examine in greater detail the way in which the individual components of the landscape interact to produce distinctive patterns and places within the landscape and help us to unravel and understand its overall complexity.

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

The basic structure of any landscape is formed by its underlying rocks and relief. Geology, and the processes of weathering, erosion and deposition, influence the form of the landscape, its drainage, soils and, in turn, its patterns of vegetation and land use. In addition, the landscape of the Borough is also exposed to the influence of marine processes which have contributed significantly to the shape of the land and have affected the character of vegetation, land use and patterns of settlement along the coast.



GEOLOGY, LANDFORM AND DRAINAGE

The geological structure underlying Fareham Borough is comparatively simple but it nevertheless has a strong influence on landform and landscape character (see Figures 3 and 4). The basic underlying geology is formed by a deep chalk bed, laid down in the Cretaceous period when this part of England lay beneath a vast, shallow and warm inlet of the sea. The belt of chalk stretches right across Hampshire and its neighbouring counties of Wiltshire and Sussex, forming the distinctive downland landscapes of southern England. The influence of the chalk is evident in the north-east of the Borough where an outlier of the South Downs forms the prominent landform ridge and scarp of Portsdown Hill and the distinctively rolling, open countryside of its flanks.

Across the remainder of the Borough, however, the chalk strata dip towards the sea and are buried beneath the younger deposits of sands and clays which were laid down in the seas which occupied the Hampshire Basin during Tertiary times. The coastal plain is underlain by the clays and clayey sands of the Bracklesham Beds, while further inland, deeper bands of sands, gravels and clays of the Bagshot Beds, Reading Beds and London Clay are exposed. These are all comparatively soft sedimentary deposits which are easily eroded to form low-lying landscapes of subdued relief.

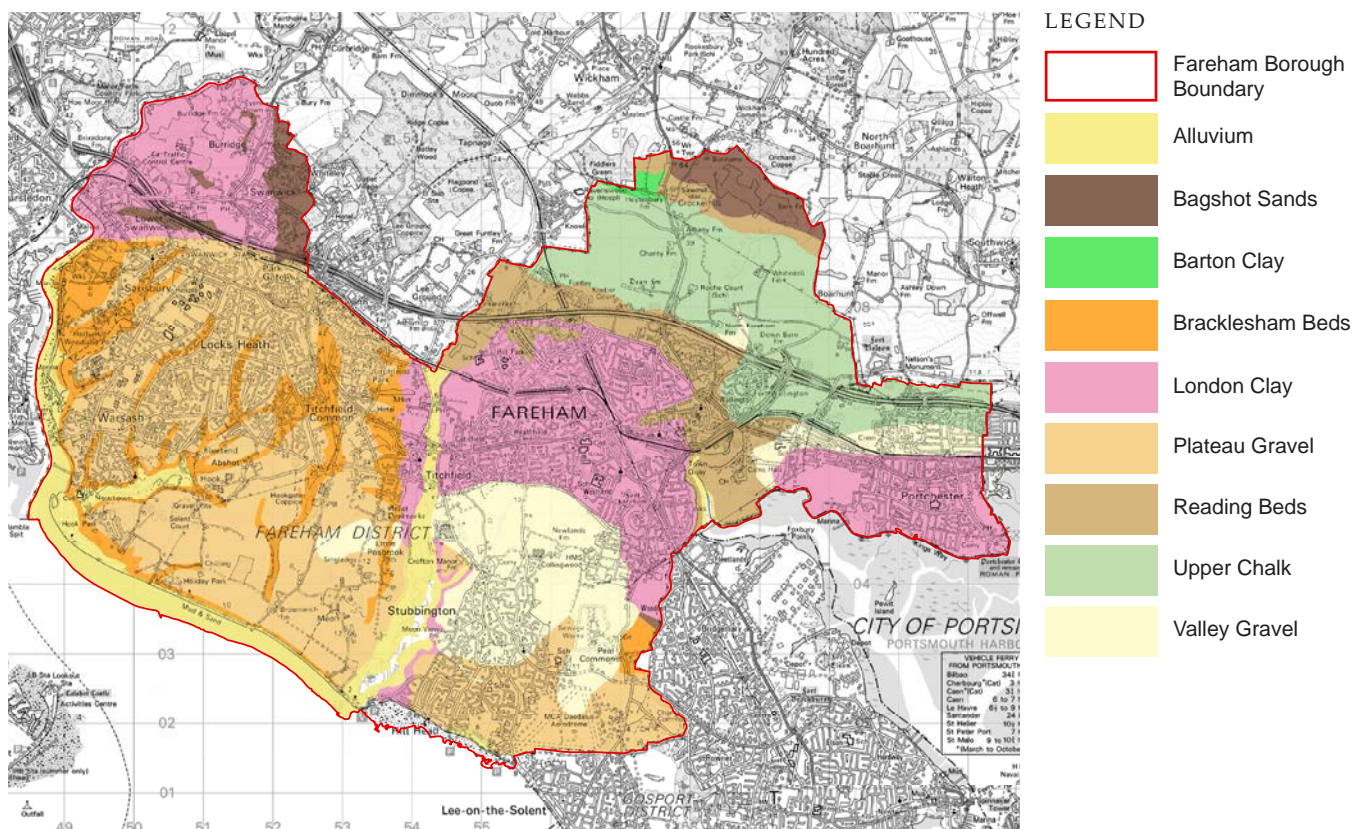
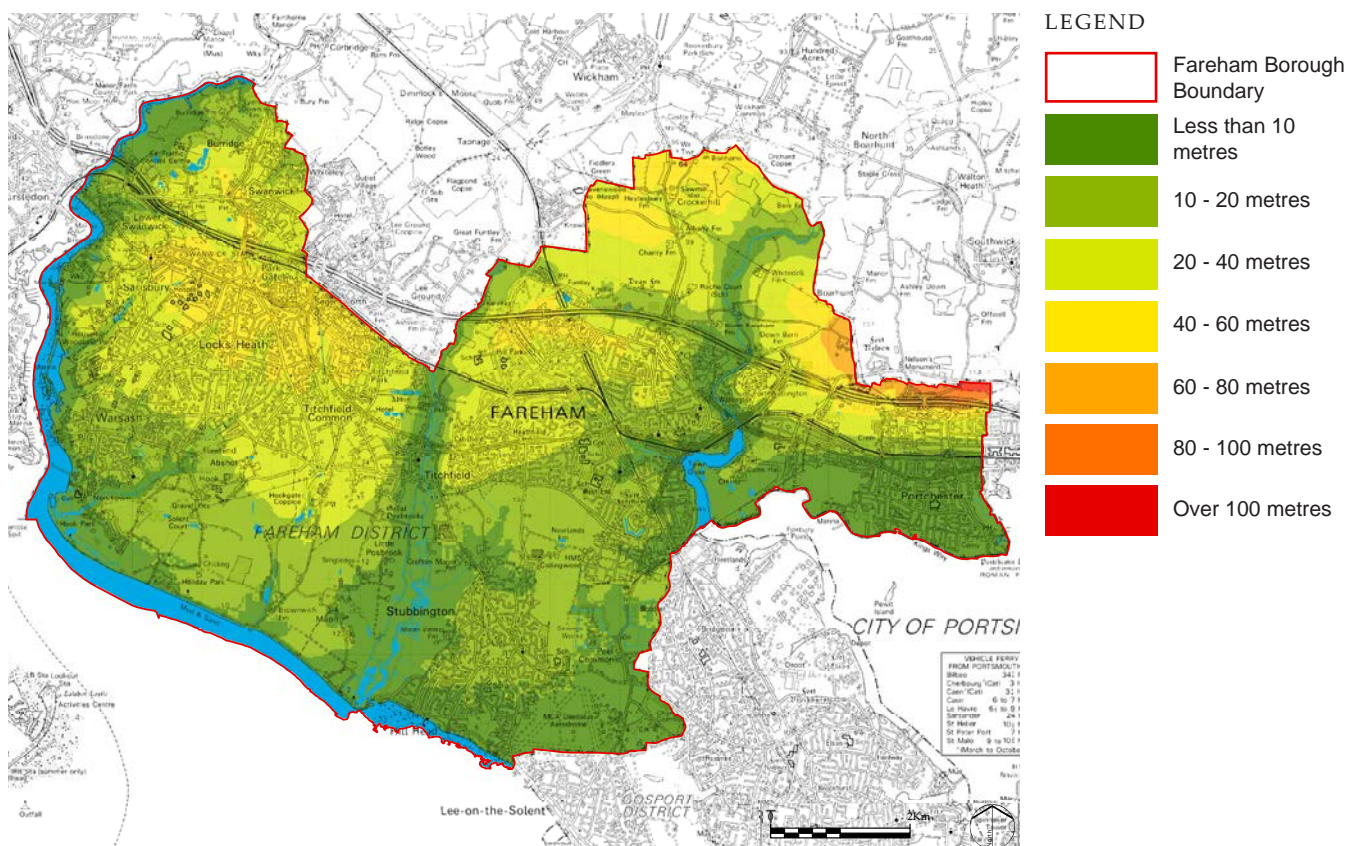
The coastal margin is consequently 'soft' but is marked for much of its length by low cliffs and shingle beaches. Brownwich Cliffs provide nationally important exposures of the Terrace gravels of the former Solent river system, which overlie the Bracklesham Beds, as well as a rich source of Palaeolithic artefacts. Deposits of alluvium form the coastal marshes and occupy the floor of the main river systems along with deposits of river and valley gravel.



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There are three major river systems within the Borough which all follow a predominantly north-south course. The River Hamble flows through a well-defined valley on the western edge of the Borough and is subject to tidal influence for some miles inland. It is flanked by mudflats and marshes and has a predominantly estuarine character. By contrast, the River Meon is much smaller in size and flows through a shallow and less distinct valley form. Once an estuary which reached up as far as the former port of Titchfield, it was dammed by a sea wall at Titchfield Haven and reclaimed from the sea in the early 17th century. The river consequently now has a predominantly freshwater or brackish character. The third river system is formed by the Wallington River, a comparatively small-scale watercourse which flows around the northern and western flanks of Portsdown Hill before entering the tidal system of Portsmouth Harbour where it assumes a more dominant scale and estuarine character. Apart from these three major systems, the Hook and Brownwich valleys also dissect the coastal plain creating some localised landform variation.

FIGURES 3 AND 4: TOPOGRAPHY AND SIMPLIFIED GEOLOGY



SOILS AND AGRICULTURAL LAND CAPABILITY

A variety of soil types occur across the Borough, related to variations in geology, landform and drainage and influencing the capability of the land to support agriculture. Soils on the chalk tend to be well-drained and calcareous and range from the Grey Rendzinas of the chalk escarpment to the Brown Earths of its flanks. These soils are of good quality and are often intensively farmed but relief and soil depth are limiting factors, with the shallow soils of the steeper slopes being less suitable for cultivation. Agricultural quality therefore ranges from Grade 3 on the thinner soils of the higher land at Portsdown Hill to Grade 2 on the deeper soils to the west.

Brown Earth soils also overlie the terrace gravels and sands of the coastal plain and are typically deep, silty and well-drained. Their high agricultural quality (Grade 2) has given rise to extensive arable cultivation, vegetable production, glass house and cereal crops. Coastal exposure is the main limiting factor and areas closest to the sea tend to remain under pasture, but the coastal plain is a “highlight” area with both the duration and intensity of light being of importance to the horticultural industry.

Some of the best quality soils (Grade 1) in the Borough occur on the river terrace drifts along the river and stream valley sides where they are typically well-drained, flinty, loamy and sandy. In contrast, the alluvium of the valley floors bears stoneless, clay, fine silty and fine loamy soils affected by ground water. These are Grade 4 and 5 in quality and are more suited to permanent pasture. Soils of similar low agricultural quality occur on the London Clay to the north of Swanwick and across the north of the Borough, where poor drainage gives rise to heavy, Stagnogley soils. These soils are less suitable for cultivation and typically support extensive areas of woodland.

VEGETATION

The vegetation cover of the Borough has been so modified by man's activity through time that there is little that can be termed truly 'natural', the exception perhaps being the saltmarshes that fringe the River Hamble and Portsmouth Harbour. However, fragments of 'semi-natural' vegetation do occur, such as chalk grassland, heathland and broadleaved woodland, representing the plant communities that develop in response to local soil, water, climatic conditions and specific management regimes. These vegetation types, and those which have occurred more obviously as a result of man's intervention (e.g. planted woodland, parkland and hedgerows), are an important part of local distinctiveness within the landscape of different areas.

The Borough contains extensive areas of woodland, much of it semi-natural in origin and important remnants of ancient woodland survive within the river valleys and in isolated blocks within the coastal plain. Woodland occurs principally on the less easily cultivated ground, on the steep slopes of valleysides and the heavy clay soils to the north of the Borough.



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Oak is the dominant species throughout but different soil types introduce more localised variations in species composition. For example, on the more acid, sandy soils to the south of Locks Heath, birch and pine lend a heathland character to the woodlands. In contrast, ash and hazel are common components of woodlands on more neutral or calcareous soils to the north. Areas of secondary woodland and scrub are developing on land where mineral extraction has ceased and where land is not in active agricultural use.

Some areas of semi-natural woodland have been modified and inter-planted with conifers or more ornamental tree species, for example, within the wooded residential areas between Sarisbury and Warsash. Other woods have been planted specifically for commercial purposes or as part of formal parkland landscapes or grounds of large houses, such as at Cams Hall, Brooklands and Coldeast Hospital.



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Chalk downland, with its species-rich grassland and scrub habitats, has virtually disappeared from the Borough through widespread conversion to arable cultivation and agricultural improvement. Only the steepest slopes of Portsdown Hill and scarp have escaped these effects and retain some remnants of unimproved grassland.

The same processes have affected the formerly extensive grasslands of the lower-lying areas and coastal plain but pockets of unimproved or semi-improved meadows and pastures do survive along the Meon Valley and on some of the steeper valley sides elsewhere. Low intensity grazing or absence of management have created areas of rank grassland and scrub which are typical of urban fringe and coastal pastures and former parkland at Hook.

To the south of Locks Heath, the grassland takes on an acidic, heathland character with a greater incidence of bracken and gorse scrub. Heathlands would have formerly been much more widespread on the acid sandy soils but have now largely disappeared under woodland, urban development or the plough.

Wetland vegetation is a feature of the Meon and Hook valleys, where drainage is impeded allowing the development of carr woodland, marsh, fen and aquatic plant communities. These areas are particularly species-rich and of high ecological value. The other main vegetation type of particular wildlife value is unimproved saltmarsh which occupies the littoral zone along the River Hamble and Portsmouth Harbour.



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HUMAN INFLUENCES

Superimposed upon the basic physical structure of the landscape are shifting patterns of land use and landcover elements which are the result of man's occupation and activity over several millennia. The landscape has continued to evolve in response to changing human needs but the pace and scale of change has been very different between prehistoric, historic and recent times, with rapid and significant changes taking place within the present. In particular, Fareham Borough has experienced rapid urban expansion over the past seventy years, leading to the fragmentation and loss of countryside and the coalescence of its settlements and villages. Transportation development and agricultural change are other key factors which have affected the Borough landscape. This process of landscape evolution is outlined briefly below.

PREHISTORIC INFLUENCES

The term 'prehistoric' covers thousands of years but has been divided into five distinct phases: the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. During this time, man experienced a change from a nomadic to a more settled way of life, the introduction of cereal crops, the domestication of animals and the introduction of pottery making and metal working.

At the beginning of the Palaeolithic period, some 700,000 years ago, the landscape of the Borough bore little resemblance to that of today. For long periods of time, Hampshire and other parts of southern England were connected to the continent, allowing passage at periods of low sea level. On Portsdown Hill, three raised beaches have been identified by geologists indicating three separate sea level changes over a long period of time.

This was basically a time of primitive colonisation and human population would have been very sparse. Towards the end of the Palaeolithic period, a rapid rise in temperature allowed the development of soils and establishment of plants, including forest trees.

During the Mesolithic period (7000-4500 BC) the developing tree cover evolved into mixed woodland which would have clothed the whole landscape of the Borough. Early man began to adapt to a new way of living and began to change his environment, possibly through the use of stone tools and fire but made a limited impression. Finds of flints on the sea bed show that the Borough was still joined to the Isle of Wight during the early Mesolithic, with separation possibly occurring around 6,000BC. At the end of this period, the landscape would probably have still been covered by a dense forest of oak, elm, lime, ash, birch, hazel and alder, though differences would exist depending upon local soils and drainage.



It is not until the Neolithic period (4500-2600 BC) when man began to make significant changes to the landscape. Hunting and gathering gave way to more settled arable and pastoral farming and, after an initial phase of land clearance in the Neolithic period, an agriculturally-based economy was firmly established with clearance of woodland from the chalk downland areas for cultivation and grazing. Evidence of definitive settlements is sparse in both Fareham Borough and Hampshire as a whole, but flint and pottery finds suggest that there must have been widespread occupation of the chalk where the fertile soils were most easily worked.

Even in the Bronze Age (2600-750 BC), there is still little evidence of settlements. Forest clearances continued, however, and resulted in large areas of open country on chalkland as well as the beginnings of colonisation of lower-lying, less exposed areas. During the Iron Age (750 BC-AD 43), however, the development of iron, a hard metal suitable for plough shares and for tree felling, resulted in the widespread clearance of woodland cover on the heavier, more clayey soils on the lower slopes of the downs and in the river valleys. This period of prehistory, therefore, saw the greatest destruction of wood and forest cover in Hampshire.

ROMAN INFLUENCE

The Romans brought new impetus to woodland clearance. By the late Roman times it was possible, and indeed necessary with an increasing population, to farm all but the heaviest soils. However, many Roman villages and farmsteads would have needed wood as a source of fuel and for their potteries, iron-smelting activities and a brick and tile cottage industry that fringed the Forest of Bere. The wood for kilns was obtained not only from woodland clearance but also by coppicing and it is possible that the Romans introduced sweet chestnut for this purpose. The network of Roman fortified and unfortified towns, roads, villages, villas and farmsteads was laid over the irregular pattern of earlier settlements, fields and trackways and mainly occupied the lower slopes of the downs, the river valleys and the coastal plain. In Fareham Borough, the most significant reminder of Roman fortification along the coast is the fortress at Portchester, built on a low-lying point bordered on two sides by Portsmouth Harbour in the 3rd Century AD (it was later to be transformed into a medieval castle in the 12th Century). This is a Grade 1 Listed Building and is one of the most significant examples of its type still surviving. Other evidence of late Roman settlement has been found underneath the town of Fareham, indicating that this was a favourable settlement site even at that time.



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ANGLO-SAXON INFLUENCE

The impact on the landscape during the Saxon period is not clear as there is very little archaeological evidence available. It is likely that the majority of present day villages date back to this period and many places with 'ham' or 'ing' endings, such as Fareham, may be indicative of Saxon settlements. Titchfield is known to date back to the seventh century when a Saxon church was established there. Woodland clearance continued at such a pace through this period that it was considered necessary to protect the diminishing stock of tree cover by legislation. However, the Saxon passion for hunting led to the formation of extensive hunting parks ('haga'), including the Forest of Bere which extended across much of the Borough.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND LATER

Although the hunting forests were established by the Saxons, it was the Normans who codified their management, introducing forest law. By 1231, the forest known as Bere Portchester (part of the larger Forest of Bere) stretched across the north of the Borough and as far south as Titchfield, although these legal 'forests' were far larger than the actual physical forests of woodland and heathland.

The Normans were also responsible for introducing a new concept in defence - the castle - and monastic foundations, with their large complexes of stone buildings and extensive estates, as striking features in the landscape. Portchester Castle was transformed into a medieval castle from the earlier Roman fortress in the 12th century and Titchfield Abbey was founded in the early 13th century. At Titchfield Abbey, an outstanding complete example of a great monastic barn is still in use today. The location of the abbey's former park is marked by Park Gate and Little Park Farm and a series of medieval fish ponds are other important remnants of the former historic landscape.



The early middle ages were a period of relative prosperity and rapid population growth and new towns were being built or villages expanded at this time. The Town Quay at Fareham was developing as a thriving port with a tidal mill and the present alignment of Fareham's High Street still follows that of the early mediaeval town. Most villages that had a stream or river nearby had at least one water-powered mill, a sign of prosperity. A lost mill site can be seen as bumps in the ground near Longwater Bridge over the River Meon at Funtley.

Villages were typically surrounded by a farming system of large open fields divided into a number of strips, all individually owned but farmed together. It appears that many villages and manors adopted the three or four field system, with the land being cultivated for two years in rotation, producing cereal crops in succession and then left fallow for a third year. Such open field systems have been recorded for the Titchfield Abbey Estates. However, by the 13th and 14th century, the pattern of farming changed with the enclosure of fields by hedges, banks and sometimes ditches and many of Titchfield Abbey's lands were enclosed during this period. It was also in the 13th century that sheep rearing started to expand and grazing became a feature of the chalk downland, taking over from the predominance of arable land.



© Ozzy Delaney

By the mid-sixteenth century, pressures to enlarge the flocks of sheep led to the progressive enclosure of sheep-grazing land to ensure more efficient grazing. The increase in the number of animals also led to shortages of late winter and spring fodder and in the early part of the 17th century, the then Earl of Southampton had the mouth of the River Meon blocked to reclaim the land between the sea and Titchfield for pasture purposes. Water meadows were developed in the valley floor which enabled water to run across valley bottoms early in the year and so produce an early grass crop in late March or April. The 16th century also brought the dissolution of the monasteries and the conversion of part of the former Abbey at Titchfield into a mansion (then known as Place House) by Thomas Wriothesley, very soon after he received the property from the King.



THE INFLUENCE OF THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the process of enclosure had created a patchwork of small, irregular shaped fields and winding lanes and tracks. However, there were still large areas of woodland, extensive tracts of heathland to the west and open and enclosed chalk downland to the north. The second half of the eighteenth century, however, saw great change as the result of the agricultural revolution. The most significant changes were the virtual extinction of the common field systems, the conversion of down pasture to arable and the enclosure of commons and heaths. In contrast to the older irregular pattern of enclosure, the new enclosures endowed the landscape with square or rectangular fields surrounded by straight hedges of hawthorn, often interspersed with oak and holly. There were also new wide roads with grass verges on either side instead of the winding lanes.

The process was completed by the parliamentary enclosures of the remaining fields during the nineteenth century. During this period, the heaths and commons between Southampton and Fareham were enclosed. It was then discovered that the soils in the area were particularly conducive to strawberry growing and consequently settlements such as Swanwick and Locks Heath grew up as the result of an expanding 'strawberry industry'. Hence, when the railway line between Swanwick and London was opened in the latter part of the century, it was strawberries from this region that were first to reach the tables of the Savoy.



© Anna L Martin

The area was also noted for the production of wrought iron at Funtley by Henry Cort in the late eighteenth century, stimulated by the demands of the Navy's ship-building industry. The need to defend the important dockyards and naval bases around Portsmouth Harbour provided the impetus for the construction of a series of Victorian hill forts, completed by 1868, including five along the chalk scarp of Portsdown Hill. The remains of Fort Wallington is the only fort within Fareham Borough itself. The forts were constructed with bricks made in a local brickworks just north of Fareham and their solid red brick walls can be clearly seen from the sea along the ridge of Portsdown Hill.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the growth and development of the Borough's towns and settlements and the construction of many fine Georgian and Victorian buildings, many of which now form the core of Conservation Areas. Fareham's High Street presents a splendid series of Georgian buildings and is one of the best county-town streets in the south of England. The Town Quay is graced by a number of fine examples of late Georgian grainstores and by the adjacent impressive early Victorian railway viaduct.

Other attractive settlements with Conservation Area status, such as Titchfield, Portchester village, Wallington and the small hamlet of Hook, are characterised by their Georgian or Victorian architecture.

This period also saw the establishment of the eighteenth century country mansion set within a formal parkland estate, the apotheosis of the classical English landscape. Examples within Fareham include the Cams Hall estate, built in 1781, once one of the grandest mansions in south Hampshire, and the mansion at Holly Hill, the landscaped grounds of which are thought to have been the work of Sir Joseph Paxton. Large houses at Cold East, Brooklands and Hook were also established at this time and were set within formal, landscaped 'parks and lawns'.



THE INFLUENCE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The most significant change the Borough has experienced during the present century has been the rapid and widespread expansion of its urban areas. Major urban growth from 1920 onwards has meant the loss of large areas of countryside to development and the total or partial coalescence of towns and villages: Fareham with Catisfield and Funtley; Stubbington with Crofton and Hill Head; Portchester with Downend and Paulsgrove; and Locks Heath with Park Gate, Warsash and Titchfield Common. This has resulted in a weakening of the identity of these formerly separate settlements and increasing pressures on the fragmented pieces of countryside that lie between and within the built-up area.

The need to protect the remaining areas of countryside and areas of landscape that form 'gaps' or green wedges between urban areas has been recognised in planning policy over the last few decades. This has been effective in slowing the rate of urban expansion (as described in section 1.3) although pressures on the countryside still remain. Although the attractions of the coast have encouraged some residential development during the last century at Hill Head and Hook Park, and leisure development along the River Hamble, on the whole the coastline of the Borough remains remarkably undeveloped to this day.



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Other forms of development, such as the defence establishments of HMS Collingwood and Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus and the construction of new roads and the M27 motorway, also affected countryside areas in the Borough during the last century. Improved communications have brought with them increased impetus and pressures for further development along transportation corridors. Mineral extraction also had an impact on parts of the escarpment and coastal plain, and near Swanwick, leading to loss of farmland and woodland cover but introducing new features into the landscape in the form of wetland habitats following cessation of working.



The other main impacts on the landscape have arisen from post-war agricultural change, which has encouraged the removal of hedgerows and trees, field enlargement and the conversion of grasslands to arable land. These effects are most marked on the chalklands to the north of Fareham. In recent years, the trend has slowed and 'agri-environment' policies now attempt to integrate agricultural activity with wider environmental benefits.

FORCES FOR FUTURE CHANGE

Although the rate of urban expansion has been controlled through strict planning policy over the past few decades, the pressures to find land for new development are ever-increasing, particularly to accommodate future housing needs. Current planning policy remains restrictive regarding development beyond existing settlement limits, but the increased demand for housing sites and shortage of available land within the urban areas has led to the planned development of Welborne, a major new 'garden community' of 6000 new homes on 'greenfield' land to the north of Fareham. This development will result in major landscape change within this part of the Borough. Even with this provision, there is likely to be further pressure for development to be accommodated on greenfield land within countryside outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries in future. This could have significant consequences for the character and quality of the Borough landscape without the most careful siting and sensitive, responsive design.

Other forces for future change within countryside areas include the decline of the horticultural industry and redevelopment of nursery sites, the redevelopment of defence establishment land (e.g. Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus), infrastructure improvements (e.g. Stubbington bypass) and possibly further proposals for energy-related development, such as solar farms, on agricultural land.



2.2 THE FAREHAM LANDSCAPE TODAY

For its relatively small size, Fareham Borough today still retains a rich and varied pattern of landscape character that has evolved as a result of the interaction of the physical and human influences described above. However, open countryside is a diminishing resource and the outward spread and coalescence of settlements and urban infrastructure across the Borough has already begun to mask some natural features (e.g. minor river valleys) and erode the legibility of the underlying landscape structure and the distinctive character of surrounding landscapes. A key priority will be to ensure that the essential character and local identity of the Borough's diverse landscape and settlements is protected and reinforced, so that it remains legible and distinct at both the large-scale (macro) and more complex, local (micro) levels.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

At the 'macro' level, the basic structure of Fareham's remaining countryside can be distilled down to a few key components: the open, rolling chalk downland of Portsdown Hill and heavily wooded farmland of the Forest of Bere to the north; the flat, coastal plain framed by estuarine/marine landscapes to the south; and the Hamble and Meon Valleys, and other river valleys that cut through the Borough from north to south, connecting the rural hinterland with the coast. This basic landscape structure represents the 'essence' of Fareham's landscape and provides a framework for the Borough's settlements, shaping their form and their character.



Features of the landscape such as the coast, river valleys, extensive woodland, poorly drained soils or highly productive land have provided ‘natural limits’ to the growth of settlements that can still be discerned in parts of the Borough today. So, for example, the southern edge of Fareham coincides with the geological boundary between a band of heavy London Clay to the north (which underlies most of the built area of modern day Fareham) and the tertiary sands and clays of the intensively farmed coastal plain, forming the ‘natural edge’ of the latter. Similarly, the Meon, Brownwich and Hook valleys form the natural edge to settlement on the western edge of Fareham and the eastern and southern edges of the Western Wards and Warsash. These ‘natural boundaries’ are critical in maintaining a clear distinction between ‘town and country’ across the Borough and the separate, distinctive identity of individual settlements.

Maintaining the ability to read this ‘bigger picture’ in the landscape of Fareham will be a fundamental part of the ‘litmus test’ for the acceptability of future landscape change. It is paramount that the essential structure of the landscape (the essence of Fareham’s character) remains evident to future generations, along with the more detailed variations in local character, that give different parts of the Borough their own distinctive identity and particular sense of place.

LOCAL VARIATION IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Within the broad framework of chalklands, coastal plain, river valleys and coast, there is a complex pattern of locally distinctive landscape character at the ‘micro’ level. As described in section 1.2, the Landscape Character Assessment analyses and describes this local variation in two ways:

- As a series of generic **landscape types** based upon particular combinations of landform and landcover elements that can repeat across the Borough without being specifically related to geographical location. They are particularly useful as a tool for understanding the detailed pattern of landscape variation that occurs across the Borough as a whole;
- As **landscape character areas**, larger units of landscape which may embrace areas of differing character but which in some way have a coherent and recognisable local identity or ‘sense of place’. These provide the main framework for describing local identity and distinctive characteristics, and outlining priorities for enhancement of landscape quality within the Borough.

The landscape types and landscape character areas defined within Fareham are described in the following sections of the assessment.

3.0 THE LANDSCAPE TYPES

3.1 LANDSCAPE TYPE

BOUNDARIES

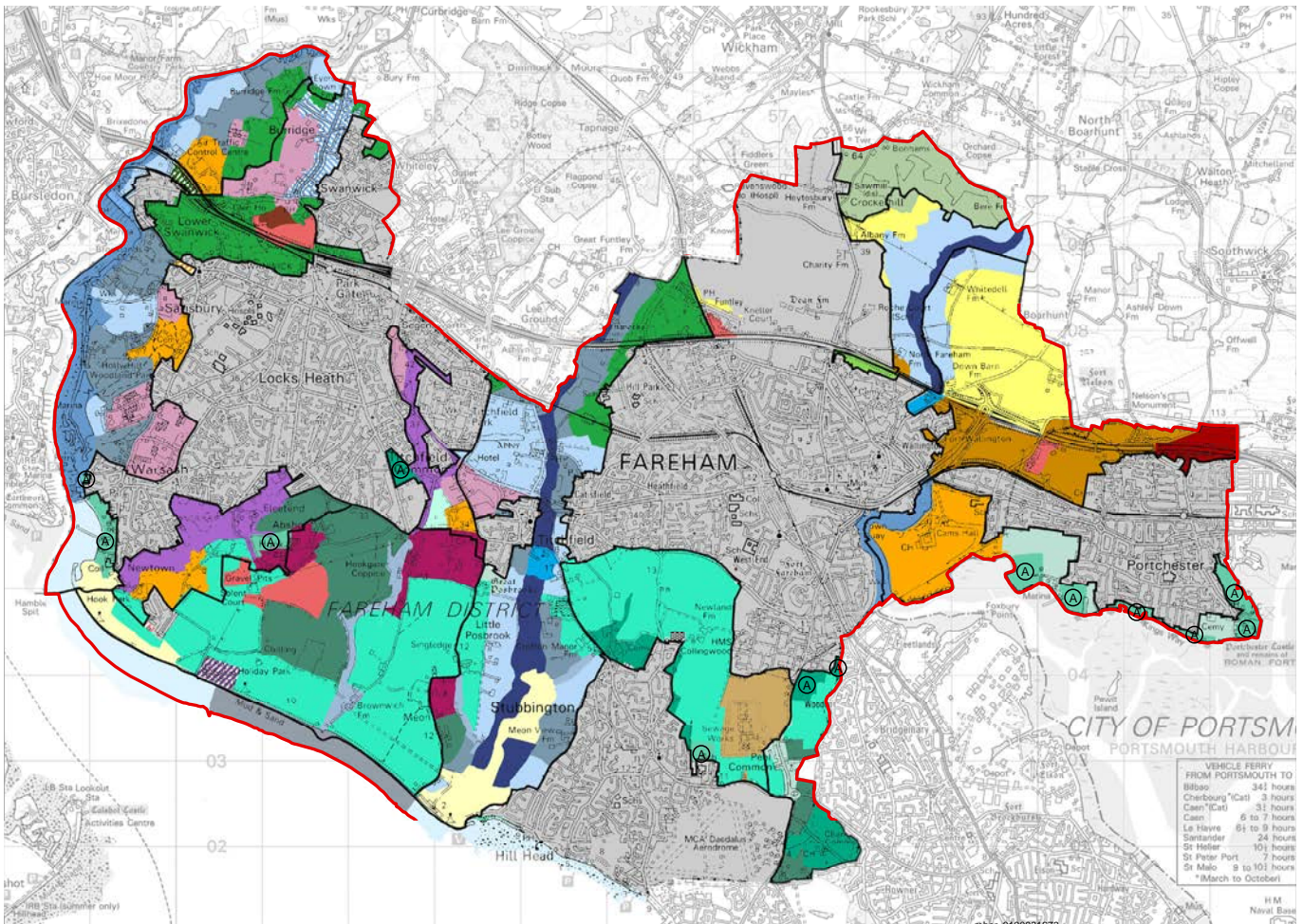
The processes of urban growth and landscape change described above have produced a landscape of very mixed character that embraces the broad spectrum of essentially rural areas of unspoilt countryside, through transitional landscapes on the fringes of built-up areas and along roads, to the true urban landscapes, or townscapes, of the Borough's towns and settlements. This transition means that the boundaries between types are not always clear and that the urban/rural boundary is blurred by the fringe landscapes.

The 1996 landscape assessment identified character types (rural and urban) across the whole of the Borough (see appendix 3). A distinction was made between those landscapes that are predominantly rural and those which are predominantly urban in character, and the transitional or fringe landscapes were included in one or other category depending upon which of the urban or rural influence was considered to be most dominant. This meant that the boundary between urban and rural did not necessarily accord with the Urban Settlement Boundary as defined in the Local Plan. It also meant that some small-scale pockets of rural landscape were contained within a wider urban landscape and vice versa. The study area for this updated assessment is defined by the current urban settlement boundary and therefore includes some character types that previously fell within the realm of 'urban', e.g. urban greenspace types.

It is important to stress that the boundaries between any of the landscape types are rarely distinct, although they may be easier to determine in some cases such as where an incised wooded valley runs through open farmland. Instead, as a general rule, the boundaries tend to be best approximations of a gradual but discernible change in character. It is also important to stress that landscape character rarely stops at the Borough boundary and will usually extend beyond into neighbouring districts.

As described in section 1.2, the starting point for the definition of landscape types within Fareham was a county-wide landscape assessment produced by the County Council in 1993, which defined a range of generic landscape types for the rural areas of Hampshire (urban areas being defined as a separate type) divided into two broad groupings: the chalklands and lowland mosaic. The county-wide assessment identifies a total of ten rural types in the Borough of Fareham and these formed the basis for the initial landscape characterisation. However, further sub-divisions of these types were recognised during the course of the assessment along with a number of additional types that were too localised or small-scale to be recorded at a county-wide level. These are summarised briefly on the following pages and are also described in Appendix 4. The overall distribution of the landscape types across the Borough is shown in Figure 5 and the landscape types that occur within individual landscape character areas is shown in section 4.

FIGURES 5: LANDSCAPE TYPES



LEGEND

	Fareham Borough Boundary		Wooded Valley: Heath Associated		Enclosed Tidal River
	Landscape Character Areas		Enclosed Valley Side		Cliff Coastline
	Land Within Defined Urban Settlement Boundary		Open Valley Side		Parkland and Grounds
Chalklands			Open Floodplain Farmland		Airfield/Large-Scale Utilities
	Open Arable Downs		Enclosed Floodplain Farmland		Disturbed Landscapes
	Open Arable Downs: Fringe Character		Marsh, Reedswamp and Brackish Lagoon		Recolonising Landscape
	Scarp Face		Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure		Urban: Industrial
Lowland Mosaic			Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure		Urban: Greenspace
	Mixed Farmland and Woodland: Large-Scale		Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character		Urban: Low Density Fringe / Ribbon Development
	Mixed Farmland and Woodland: Small-Scale		Enclosed Coastal Plain		Urban: Inter / Post Suburban Housing
	Mixed Farmland and Woodland: Fringe Character		Open Coastal Amenity Land		Urban: Chalet / Caravan park
	Horticulture and Small-holdings: Large-Scale		Enclosed Coastal Amenity Land		
	Horticulture and Small-holdings: Small-Scale		Open Estuary		
	Small-Scale Enclosed Valley				

3.2 THE LANDSCAPE TYPES

CHALKLANDS

Landscape types associated with the chalk occur in a broad sweeping band across the north-eastern part of the Borough. The assessment distinguishes between the distinctive *scarp face* of Portsdown Hill and the rolling, *open arable downs* farmland of its western flanks. The scarp landscape is distinguished by its prominent and distinctive steeply sloping landform, thin soils and rough vegetation cover, whereas the open arable landscapes are typically large-scale, expansive and comparatively featureless landscapes dominated by smoothly rolling landforms and intensive arable cultivation.

An additional landscape type has been defined where the proximity to urban development or roads and less intensive land use has introduced a *fringe character* to areas of open arable farmland. These areas are typically severed from the wider countryside or affected by the motorway and lie on the edge of the chalk. They include land lying between the railway line and the motorway above Downend; and land to the north of the motorway below Fort Nelson. Despite the influence of the urban area or roads, these pieces of landscape are an important part of the wider landscape setting of the motorway corridor and Fareham itself.



LOWLAND MOSAIC

Lowland mosaic landscape types account for the majority of the Borough's non-urban landscapes. Although the pattern is complex and fragmented, a broad distinction can be drawn between the landscapes of the coastal plain and those that lie further inland, to the north and west of the Borough.

The assessment identifies quite extensive areas of *mixed farmland and woodland*, which occur to the north of the Borough, flanking the areas of open downland to the north of Fareham, stretching alongside the northern section of the Meon Valley, and covering most of the area to the east of the Hamble around BurrIDGE and Swanwick. This broad type has been sub-divided to distinguish between the *large-scale* pattern of big fields with large blocks of woodland found in the area around Crockerhill; the *small-scale*, more intimate mosaic of farmland and woodland which occurs in the BurrIDGE area; and the *fringe character* of the mixed farmland and woodland alongside the M27. Again, despite such influences, these areas of landscape are an important part of the wider landscape setting of the motorway corridor and Fareham itself.



The dominance of *horticulture and small-holdings* amidst the woodlands at Swanwick and around Titchfield Common and Abbey is recognised by the assessment. These landscapes are characterised by neatly patterned, unfenced fields growing a wide variety of horticultural crops, with glasshouses, storage buildings, polythene tunnels and agricultural dwellings. Such characteristics do occur and dominate the landscape elsewhere, however, and the Borough assessment recognises a distinction between the predominantly *small-scale*, enclosed character of the horticultural landscapes to the north and the more open, *large-scale* character of those located in and around the coastal plain.

The other main type identified by the county-wide assessment that occurs behind the coastal plain is *pasture and woodland: heath associated*, which covers quite extensive areas of former heathland in the area of Sarisbury, Locks Heath and Titchfield Common. Much of this area has been so affected by urban development or land management practices that its heathland origins are now difficult to detect on the ground. Furthermore, much of this landscape type occurs on the wooded slopes of the Hamble and Hook Valleys where landform has a more dominant influence on landscape character. For these reasons, only limited areas of this landscape type were confirmed by the Borough assessment (and termed *wooded valley: heath associated*) although the acid soils and remnants of former heathland in the area undoubtedly do have an influence on vegetation character.



The Meon Valley is the main *river valley* landscape within the Borough. However, other smaller-scale valley features do exist at the local level and, indeed, the character of the Meon Valley varies along the length of its valley floor and sides. The Borough assessment therefore distinguishes between open and enclosed floodplain farmland of the Meon Valley and Wallington River and the reedswamp and brackish lagoon that characterises the valley floor of the Meon Valley; between open and enclosed valley sides along the Rivers Hamble and Meon; and picks out the smaller-scale enclosed valleys of the Hook River and Brownwich Stream.

The remainder of the Borough is classified in the county-wide assessment as one of four coastal landscape types. The most extensive of these is the *open coastal plain*, a broad band of predominantly open landscape that occupies most of the coastal belt between Hook and Portchester. The area is typically characterised by a wide expanse of predominantly arable farmland with a sense of remoteness and exposure. Within this broader character, however, the influence of urban areas and vegetation structure creates some variation in character. The Borough assessment distinguishes between those areas of open farmland with a *weak hedgerow and tree structure* and those areas with a smaller-scale field pattern or where blocks of woodland and belts of trees provide a *strong structure* and create some visual containment. It also recognises parts of the coastal plain that are influenced by adjacent urban development, and consequently have a *fringe character*, and areas where *amenity* uses, such as golf courses and playing fields, have their own distinctive character.





Enclosed coastal plain landscapes are uncommon. The county-wide assessment recognised two small areas, one to the north of Warsash, the other in the vicinity of Chark Common. Although the enclosed character and amenity use of the latter is recognised in the Borough assessment, the Warsash area is classified on the basis of its dominant *horticultural* character instead.

The *coastline* landscape type includes the whole of the River Hamble and the lower Wallington River where it enters Portsmouth Harbour. These landscapes have a distinctively maritime character, with their tidal fluctuation, fringing saltmarshes and mudflats and boating activity. However, the Borough assessment distinguishes between the character of the *open estuary* at the mouth of the rivers and the *enclosed tidal river* character further inland. The strip of *cliff* coastline stretching between the Solent Breezes caravan site and Hill Head is a distinctive feature of the Borough coastline when viewed from the sea.

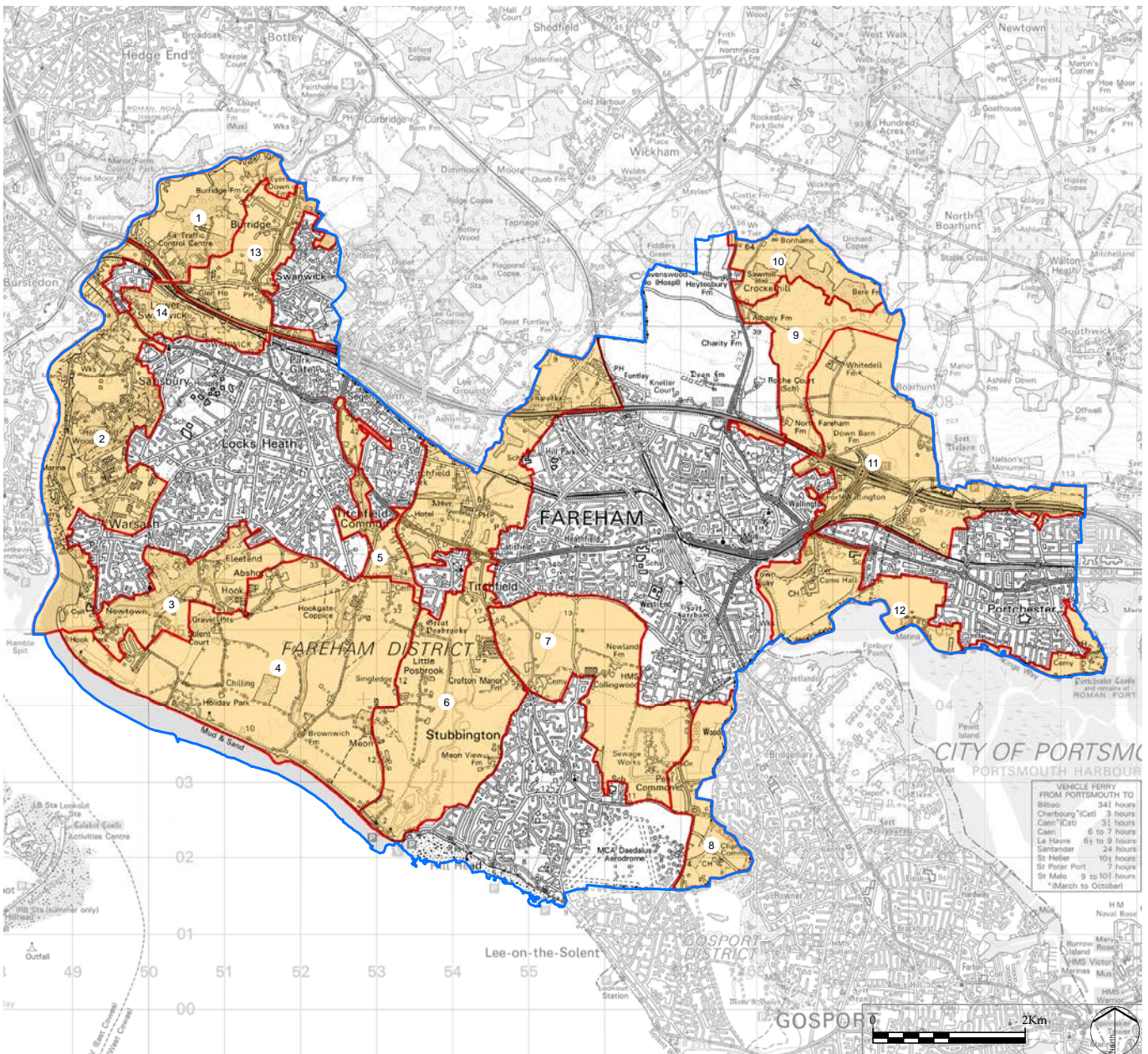


In addition to these sub-divisions of the county landscape types, the Borough assessment identifies a number of small-scale, 'stand alone' landscape types. These include areas of *parkland and grounds* of large houses or institutions, where the landscape is characterised by mature trees and a formal, designed character; *airfields and large-scale utilities*, which are non-agricultural and urbanised land uses set within a rural context; *disturbed landscapes*, including quarries, landfill sites or vacant land, where the landscape has a degraded, disturbed character; and former quarry sites where the creation of wetlands and the re-establishment of vegetation is developing a new, *recolonising landscape* character.

4.0

THE LANDSCAPE
CHARACTER
AREAS

FIGURES 6: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

- Fareham Borough Boundary
- Landscape Character Areas
- ① Upper Hamble Valley
- ② Lower Hamble Valley
- ③ Hook Valley
- ④ Chilling - Brownwich Coastal Plain
- ⑤ Titchfield Corridor
- ⑥ Meon Valley
- ⑦ Fareham - Stubbington Gap
- ⑧ Woodcot - Alver Valley
- ⑨ North Fareham Downs
- ⑩ Forest Of Bere
- ⑪ Portsdown
- ⑫ Cams - Wicor Coastal Plain
- ⑬ BurrIDGE - Swanwick - Whiteley
- ⑭ North Sarisbury

4.1 THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARIES

The distribution of landscape types described above (and illustrated in Figure 5) demonstrates two important aspects of the Borough's landscape: firstly, it shows in considerable detail the range and variety of landscapes of different character that occur across the Borough as a whole, i.e. the breadth and nature of the total landscape resource; and secondly, it begins to show how the pattern of landscape types contributes to the particular character of different parts of the Borough.

Analysis of this pattern of landscape character led to the definition of Landscape Character Areas - tracts of land that display a coherent character or recognisable identity – based on the following criteria:

- Each area should contain strong unifying or defining elements which create a distinctive sense of place and distinguish it from its neighbours;
- The boundaries of the areas should follow well-defined 'edges' (such as obvious changes in landscape character and physical edges formed by topography, rivers and coastal margins);
- The scale of the areas should reflect the complexity of the study area landscape, the purpose for which the assessment is to be used and should, as far as possible, be consistent with the scale of other landscape characterisations within Hampshire.

The overall extent and boundaries of the 14 Landscape Character Areas are shown in Figure 6 and the essential characteristics of the individual areas are summarised below. These descriptions are based upon those within the 1996 assessment report but have been updated where appropriate to reflect any changes in the landscape of these areas or their boundaries since that time. More detailed description of the characteristics of each LCA, together with assessment of landscape value, potential for development and priorities for enhancement, is provided within the Sensitivity Assessment which forms Part Two of the Fareham Landscape Assessment.

4.2 THE UPPER HAMBLE VALLEY (LCA 1)

The Upper Hamble Valley covers the upper, more enclosed reaches of the River Hamble and its wooded valley sides to the north of the M27 motorway crossing. The character area extends eastwards from the river to include the mosaic of mixed farmland and woodland within which the buildings, lakes and grounds of the CAA complex have been integrated.

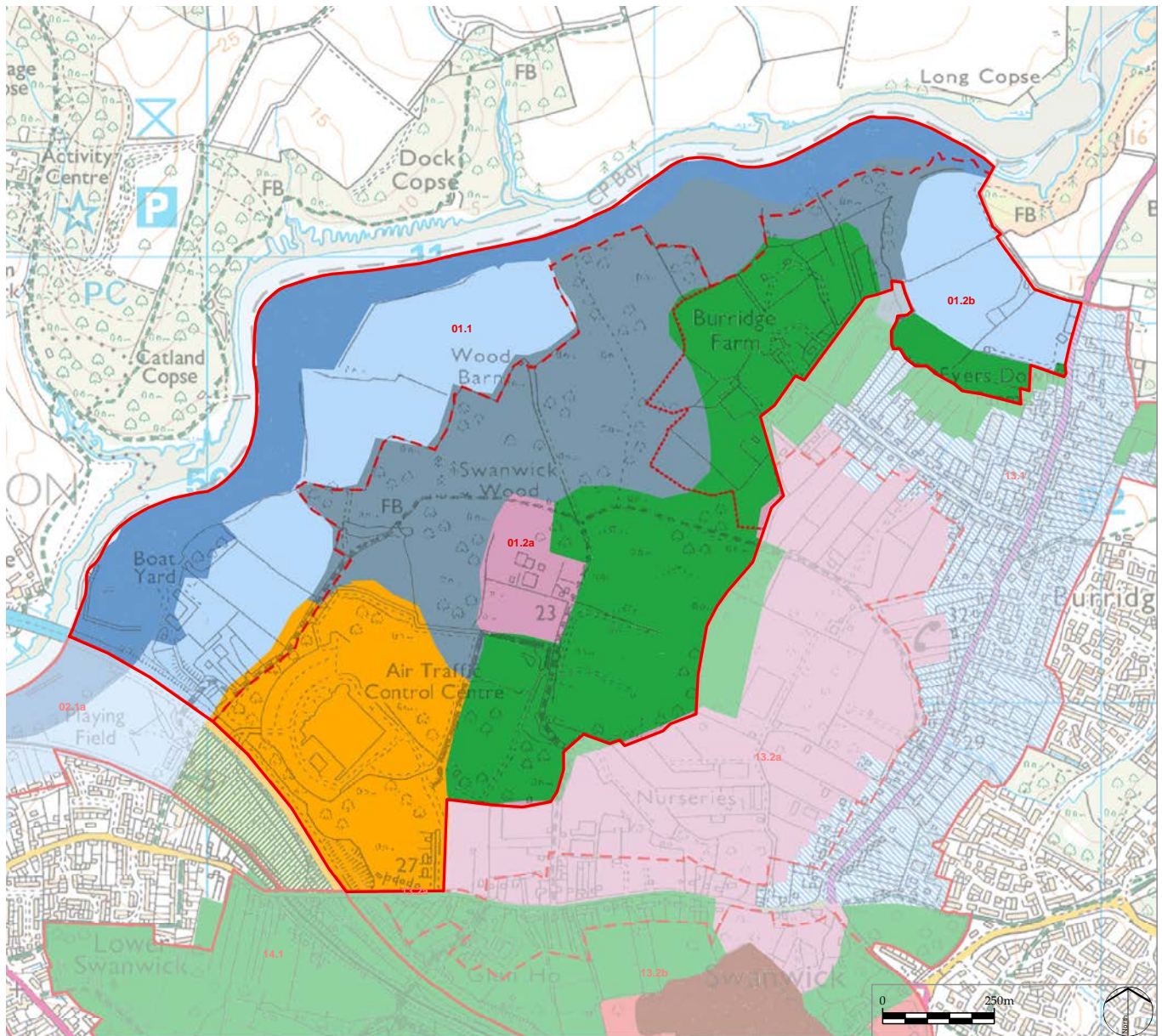
The essential characteristics of the Upper Hamble Valley are:

- The strong landform of the Hamble Valley itself;
- Dense woodland cover which clothes the valley sides and surrounding farmland, providing a strong sense of enclosure and privacy;
- The River Hamble, with its distinctive tidal creek character, semi-natural mudflats and saltings (part SSSI), and changing patterns of light and texture;
- Intimate mosaic of broad-leaved woodland and farmland, with strong enclosure and fields seemingly carved out of the woodland;
- Relative absence of human influence or activity and, apart from the CAA complex that is relatively well-absorbed within the woodland structure, no settlements and relatively few buildings;
- Peaceful, private and relatively undisturbed character.



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LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale
	Parkland & Grounds
	Enclosed Tidal River
	Enclosed Valley Side
	Open Valley Side
	Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale

4.3 THE LOWER HAMBLE VALLEY (LCA2)

The Lower Hamble Valley covers the lower reaches of the River Hamble and its extensively wooded hillsides, from the M27 crossing to just beyond the mouth of the Hook Valley. The essential characteristics of the Lower Hamble Valley are:

- Well-defined and strong landform of the steep valley sides and complex of tributary valleys;
- Dense semi-natural woodland cover which clothes the valley sides and tops, reinforcing a sense of enclosure and naturalness;
- The River Hamble, with its distinctive estuarine character, semi-natural mudflats and saltings (part SSSI), and changing patterns of light and texture;
- Lively, colourful and distinctive character provided by boats, boat-yards/ marinas and very active recreational use of the river and waterside areas;
- Relatively sparsely settled but with large, detached residences set within mature woodland along the valley tops and at the water's edge, with large gardens or grounds and a private, secluded character;
- Historic parklands at Brooklands and Holly Hill, the latter now owned and managed by the Borough Council as a public park;
- Small-scale field pattern 'carved out' of the valley-side woodland, occupied by horticultural activities or horse grazing.

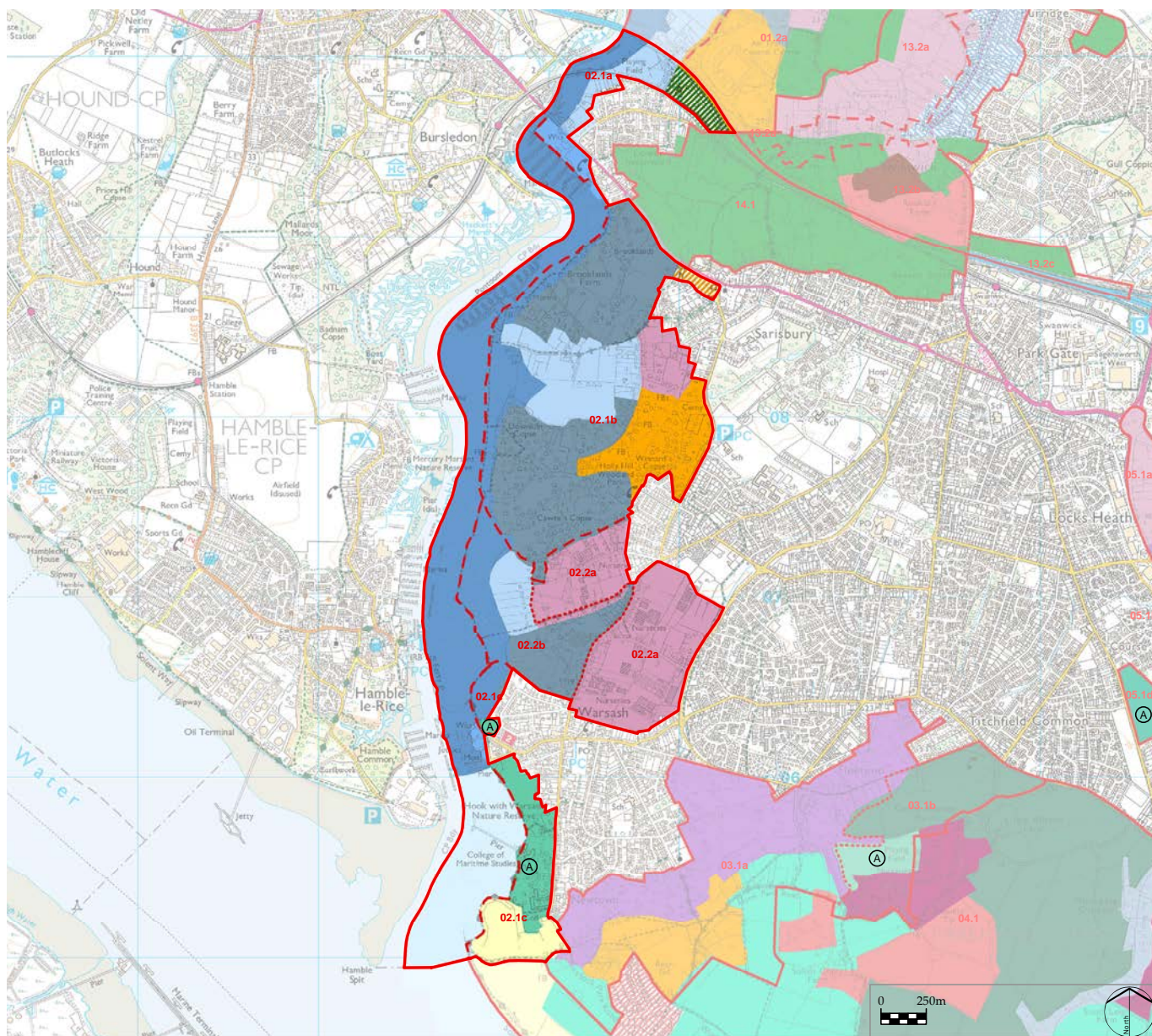


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LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Enclosed Tidal River		Open Coastal Amenity Land
	Enclosed Valley Side		Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale
	Open Valley Side		Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure
	Open Estuary		Urban: Industrial
	Marsh Reedswamp & Brackish Lagoon		Urban: Greenspace
	Parkland & Grounds		

4.4 THE HOOK VALLEY (LCA3)

The Hook Valley lies to the south of Warsash and Locks Heath and forms a tributary of the Hamble, unified by its valley form and its heavily wooded and 'natural' character. The character area covers the valley floor and sides upstream of where the road crosses the valley below the School of Nautical Studies. The more open valley mouth is contained within the Lower Hamble Valley character area.

The essential characteristics of the Hook Valley are:

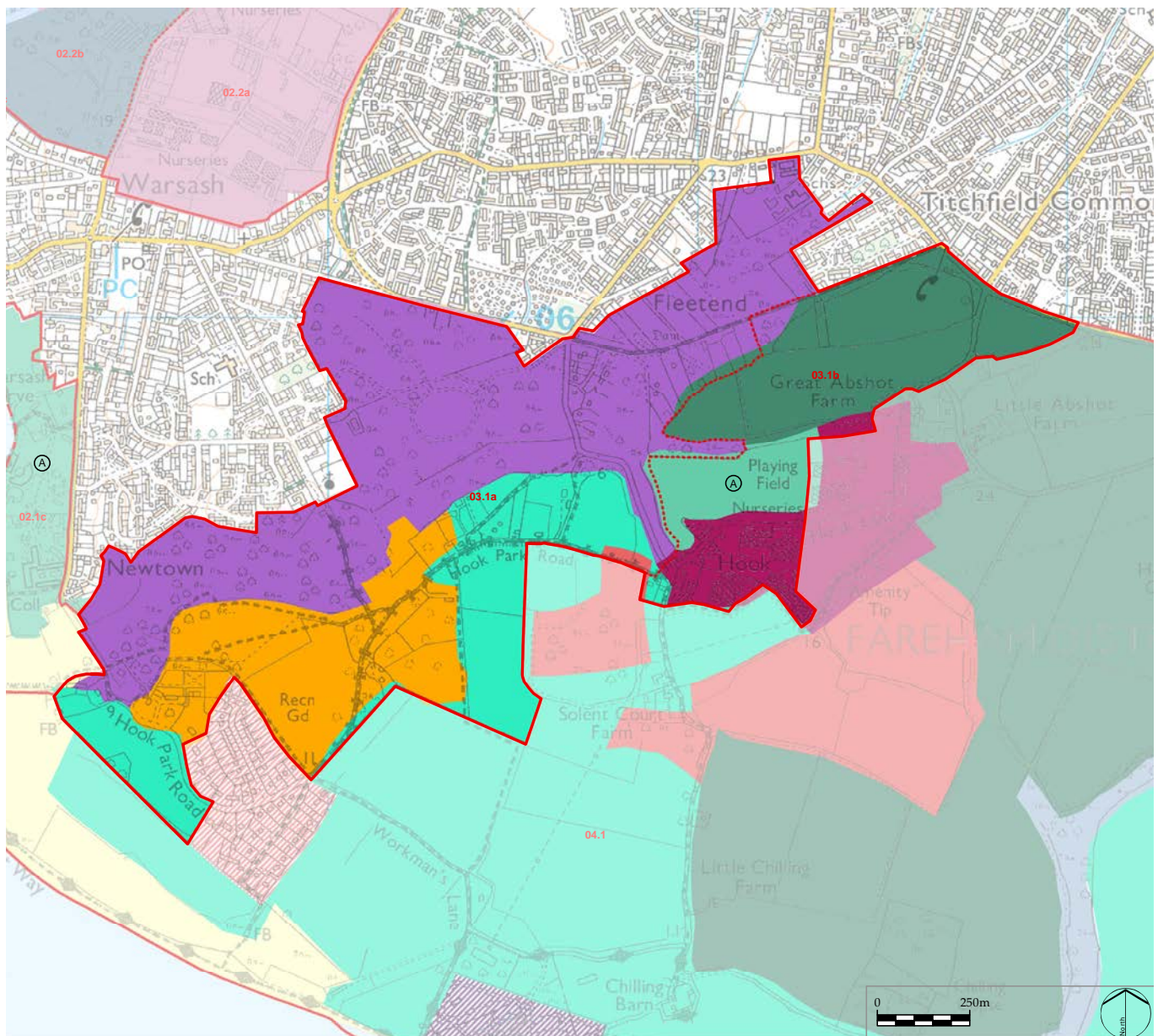
- Strong valley form with dense woodland clothing the valley sides, increasing the sense of enclosure and naturalness;
- Enclosed valley floor containing dense carr woodland and the open water and reed beds of Hook Lake, of high nature conservation value (SSSI/SINC) and with unspoilt, natural qualities;
- Dominance of mature semi-natural woodland (partly Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland) forming a mosaic with small areas of grassland on upper slopes and higher ground, marking the remnants of former heathland and characterised by presence of oak, birch, pine, gorse, bracken etc.;
- Remnant parkland at Hook Park, with a neglected parkland character, old parkland trees and horse-grazed, rough pasture;
- Relatively sparsely settled with a few isolated dwellings and the attractive estate hamlet of Hook (a Conservation Area) with its well-treed character, and limited intrusion from urban development or influences.



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LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types



Open Coastal Amenity Land



Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure



Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure



Wooded Valley: Heath Associated



Horticulture & Smallholdings: Large Scale



Parkland & Grounds

4.5 CHILLING/BROWNWICH

COASTAL PLAIN (LCA4)

The Chilling/Brownwich Coastal Plain forms a discrete topographic and landscape unit that extends from the top of the Hook valley eastwards to the edge of the Meon valley. It is defined to the north by the urban edge of Titchfield Common and to the south by the coast.

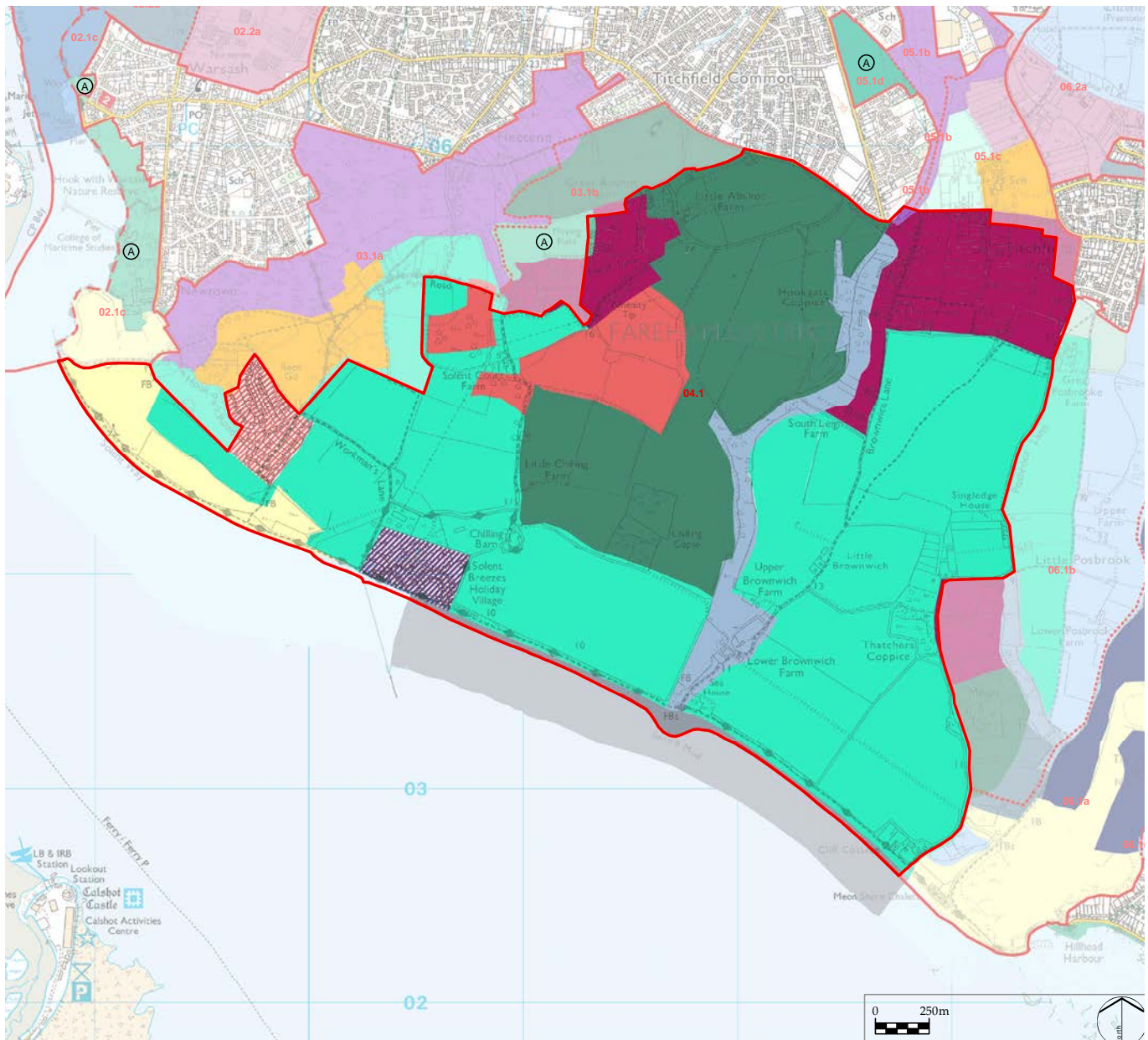
The essential characteristics of the Chilling/Brownwich Coastal Plain are:

- Expansive flat or gently undulating landform forming an extensive, relatively homogenous coastal plain broken only by the small-scale, heavily wooded Brownwich river valley;
- Extensive area of farmland with a predominantly rural character, typically under arable cultivation, horticultural use or pasture but with occasional intrusive elements, such as prominent overhead power lines, an active landfill site and caravan/chalet site, which detract from the rural qualities of the landscape;
- Isolated remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland at Chilling Copse and Thatchers Coppice and along the Brownwich Valley, and regenerating scrub/woodland/wetland habitats associated with former mineral extraction sites, which are all of wildlife value;
- Generally very open, large-scale field pattern and weak hedgerow structure with windswept character and evidence of coastal exposure, e.g. windpruning, to the south;
- A somewhat more sheltered character to the north and centre of the plain, with a stronger hedgerow structure (e.g. around Chilling Farm) and woodland in the Brownwich Valley providing some visual containment and incidence;
- Scattered farm buildings sited inland from the coastal margin to reduce exposure accessed by long, often rough, rural lanes with limited east-west access, increasing the sense of remoteness within this area;

- An undeveloped coastal margin (apart from the Solent Breezes Caravan Site) with steep cliffs (of national geological significance) and shingle beach, with extensive views out to sea and a windswept, natural and generally unspoilt character.



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LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Cliff Coastline		Marsh, Reeds swamp & Brackish Lagoon
	Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure		Valley - Small Scale - Enclosed
	Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure		Urban: Inter/post War Suburban Housing
	Horticulture & Small-holdings: Large Scale		Urban: Chalet/Caravan Park
	Recolonising/Re-stored Landscape		

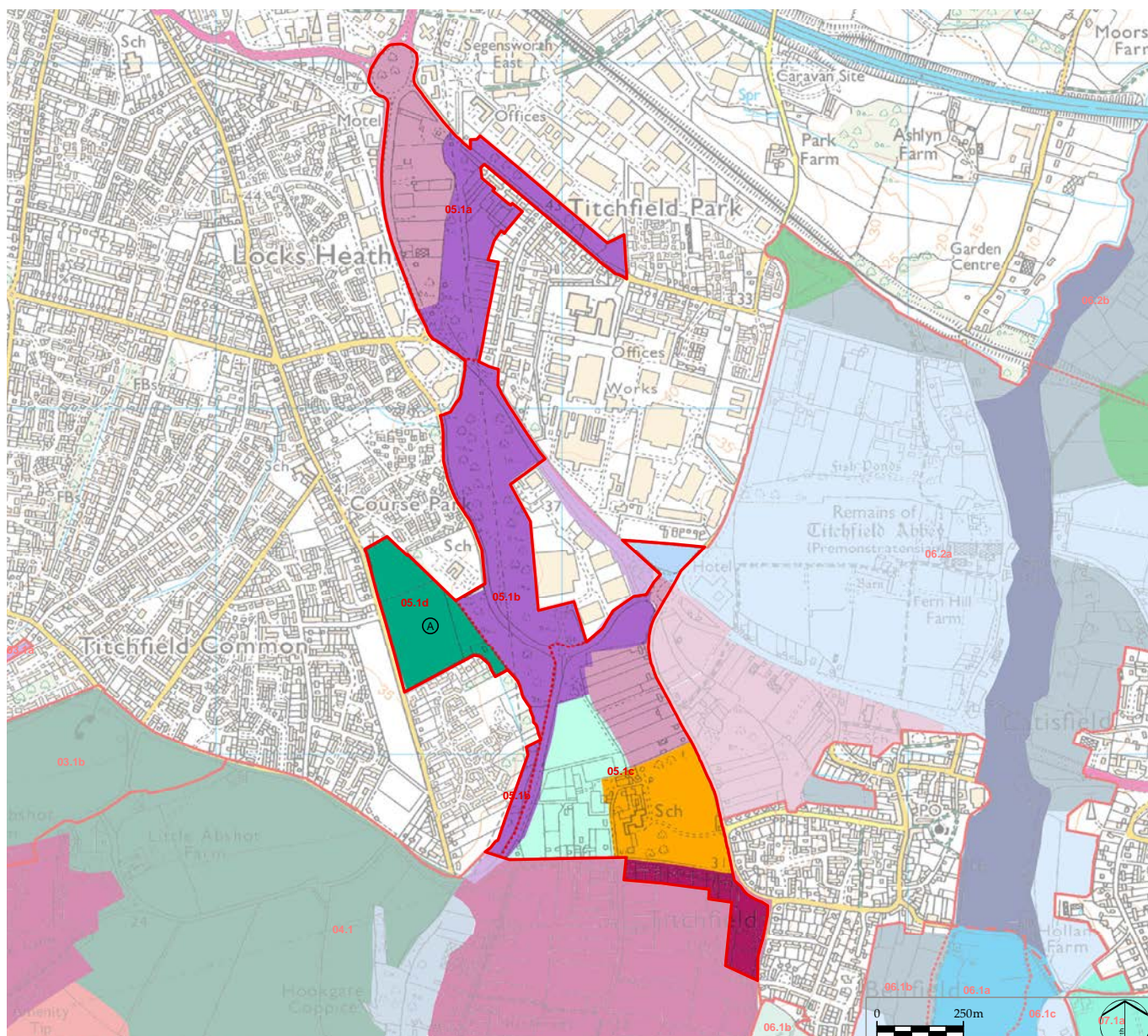
4.6 TITCHFIELD CORRIDOR (LCA5)

The Titchfield Corridor follows the northern section of the Brownwich Valley and forms a distinctive and important wedge of greenspace between the urban edge of Locks Heath and the residential and industrial development at Titchfield Park and Segensworth.

The essential characteristics of the Titchfield Corridor are:

- Distinctive valley form and enclosed, well-wooded character along the Brownwich stream;
- Valuable areas of broad-leaved woodland, including Kite's Croft and Lambert's Coppice which follow the stream valley, forming an important green corridor and recreational and landscape resource within this area;
- A mixed, fringe character with areas of horticulture, small-holdings and small-scale pasture, interspersed with houses, gardens and educational uses near Titchfield;
- Fragmentation by roads and intrusion of overhead power lines which introduce an urbanising influence on the valley and surrounding landscape.
- Strong tree cover along road corridors which helps to reduce intrusion of neighbouring development and maintain separation of urban areas.





LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Wooded Valley: Heath Associated
	Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale
	Horticulture & Smallholdings: Large Scale
	Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character
	Enclosed Coastal Amenity Land
	Parkland & Grounds

4.7 MEON VALLEY (LCA6)

The Meon Valley character area embraces the whole length of the valley within the Borough, from Funtley in the north to the coast at Titchfield Haven. Although the immediate floor and valley sides are quite narrow in places, the character area embraces a wider swathe of landscape on either side of the valley that broadly defines the extent of open countryside within the corridor between the urban edges of Stubbington, Hill Head and Fareham to the east and Titchfield Village and Titchfield Park to the west.

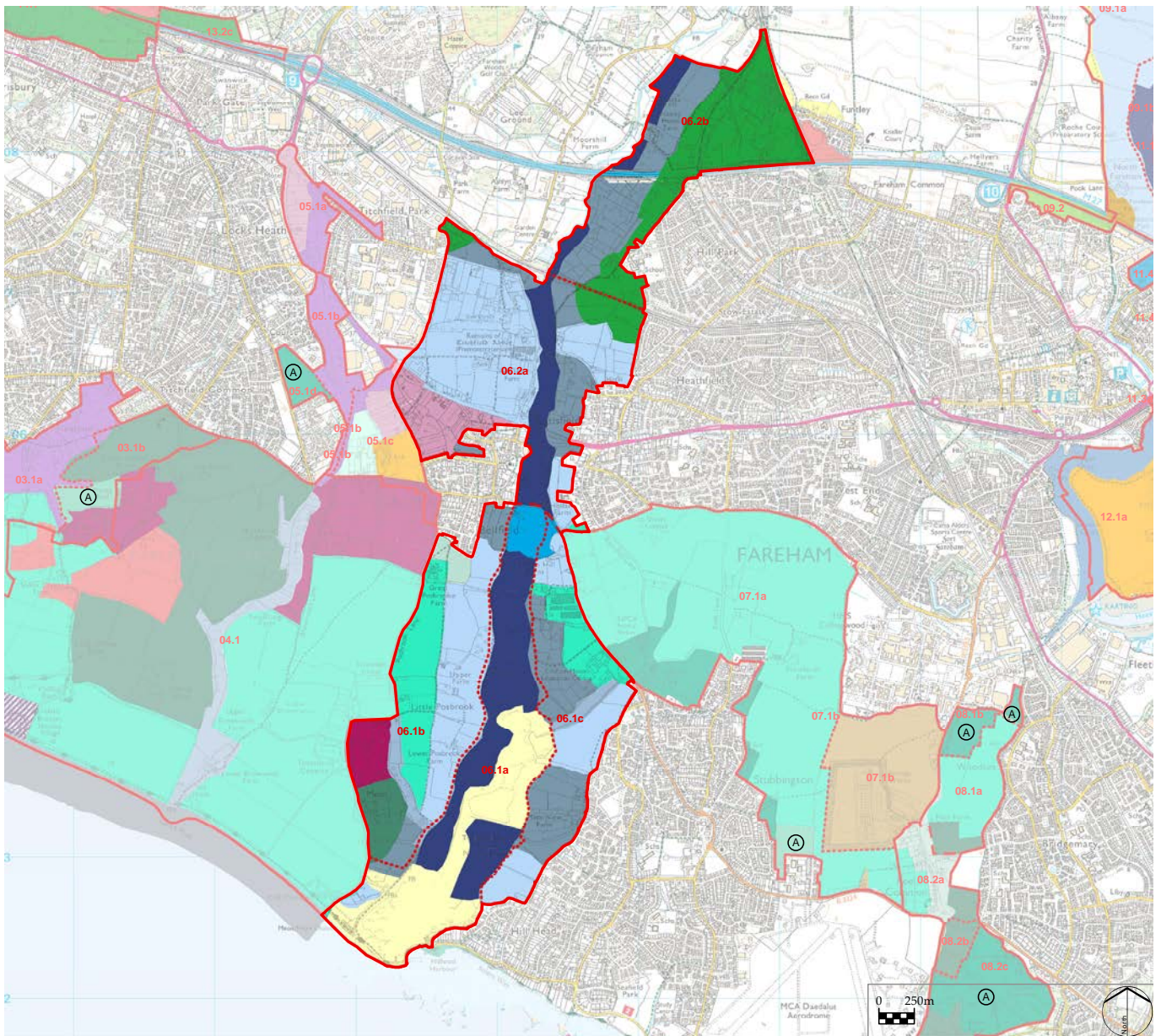
The Meon Valley is characterised by:

- A relatively gentle but distinctive valley landform, running through the Borough from Funtley in the north to the coast at Hill Head;
- Distinct valley floor characterised by small-scale pasture and variable cover of trees (typically willow and alder) in the narrower, upper reaches and broadening into open floodplain pasture and complex of wetland communities to the south at Titchfield Haven, where the natural qualities of the valley and maritime influences are most strongly evident;
- Restricted vehicular access to the valley floor resulting in a generally quiet and intimate character in the northern and southern sections of the valley, making it attractive for quiet recreation and for wildlife;
- A mosaic of open farmland (part of the wider coastal plain farmland), minor wooded valleys and smaller, enclosed pastures bordering the valley to the south of Titchfield, the latter helping to buffer the intrusion of adjacent urban development and fringe farmland to the east on the setting of Titchfield Haven;
- A more fragmented character and stronger influences of urban development and roads within the central section of the valley, resulting in some damage to the integrity of the valley form and a more suburban character;
- Garden centre and horticultural activity around Titchfield Abbey which detract from the setting of the historic Abbey and associated buildings (a Conservation Area);
- Dense mosaic of wooded farmland mainly to the north of the railway which provides an intimate, rural context for the river valley, but with localised intrusion of the M27 motorway bridge.



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LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

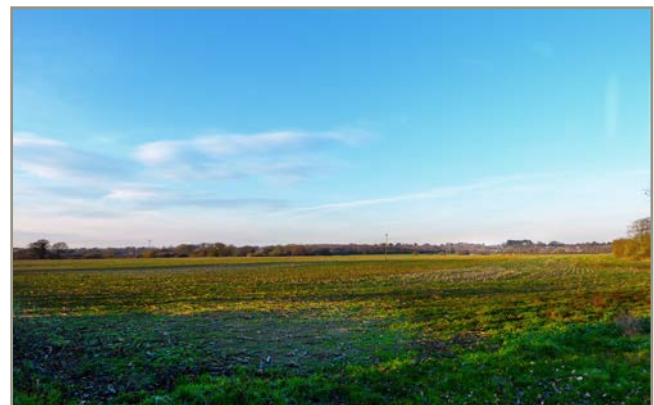
	Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale		Small Scale Enclosed Valley
	Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale		Open Floodplain Farmland
	Horticulture & Smallholdings: Large Scale		Enclosed Floodplain Farmland
	Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure		Marsh, Reedswamp & Brackish Lagoon
	Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure		Enclosed Valley Side
	Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character		Open Valley Side

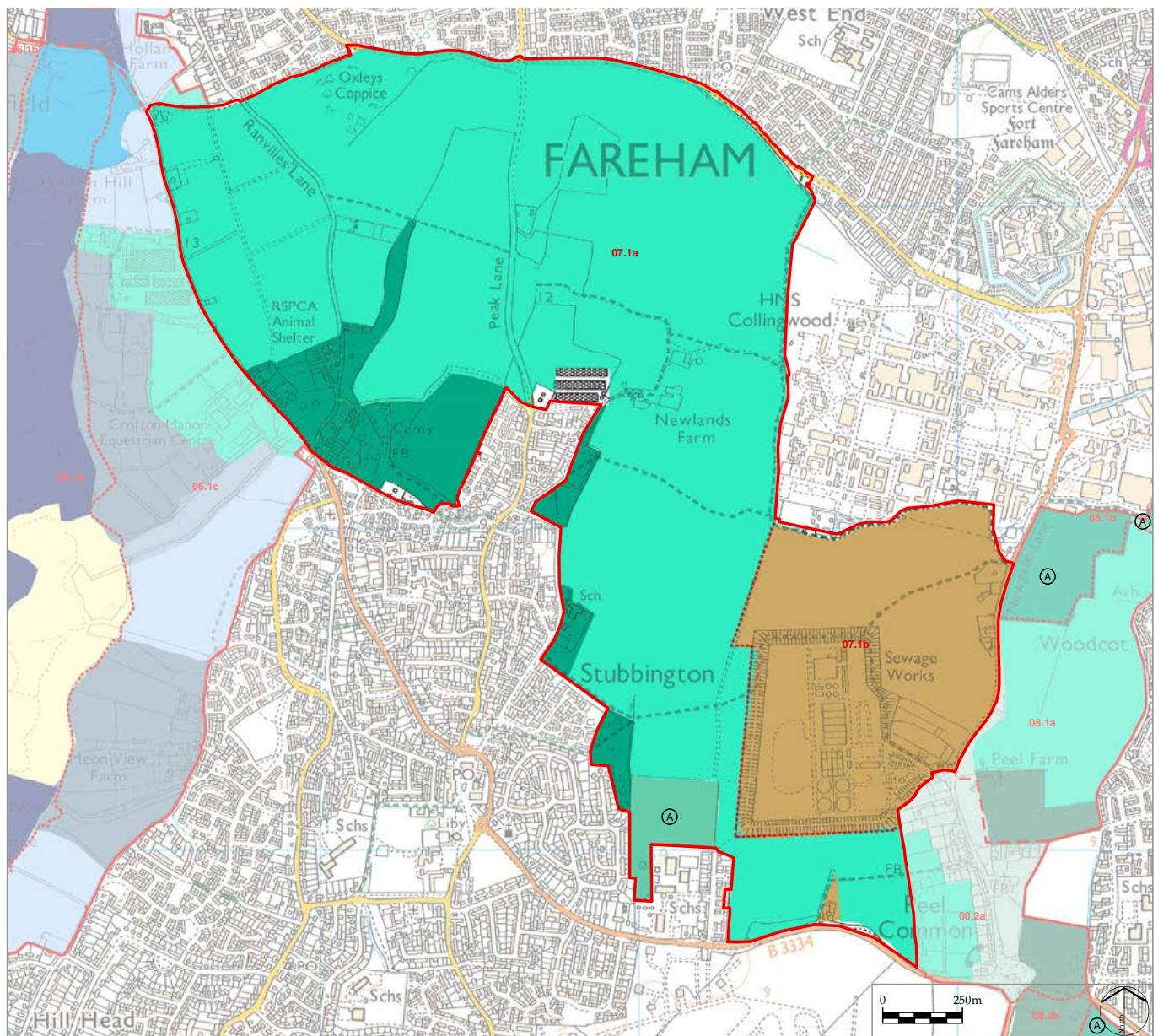
4.8 FAREHAM/ STUBBINGTON GAP (LCA7)

The Fareham/Stubbington Gap comprises the major part of a strategic wedge of open landscape which separates the urban areas of Fareham to the north, Stubbington to the south and Gosport to the east. It excludes the built area of HMS Collingwood (included within an urban area) and also the corridor of the Alver Valley to the east which has a different character.

The essential characteristics of the Fareham/Stubbington Gap are:

- Level or gently undulating landform which physically forms part of the coastal plain but which has become isolated from the coast by the development of Stubbington;
- Open, predominantly arable farmland and horticulture with a weak hedgerow structure and few trees and a relatively homogenous character;
- Some intrusion from neighbouring development of Fareham, Stubbington and HMS Collingwood around edges of area but retains overwhelmingly rural agricultural character.
- A few scattered farmsteads/horticultural holdings with a few limited north-south access routes and little or no east-west access, reinforcing the sense of a true gap between the built-up areas of Fareham and Stubbington;
- Activity associated with airfield;
- A mosaic of small fragments of open farmland and horse-grazed pastures sandwiched between large-scale non-agricultural, but predominantly unbuilt, land uses of the Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus airfield and the Peel Common Waste Water Treatment Works.





LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Airfields & Large Utility Sites
	Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure
	Enclosed Coastal Plain
	Open Coastal Amenity Land

4.9 WOODCOT/ALVER VALLEY

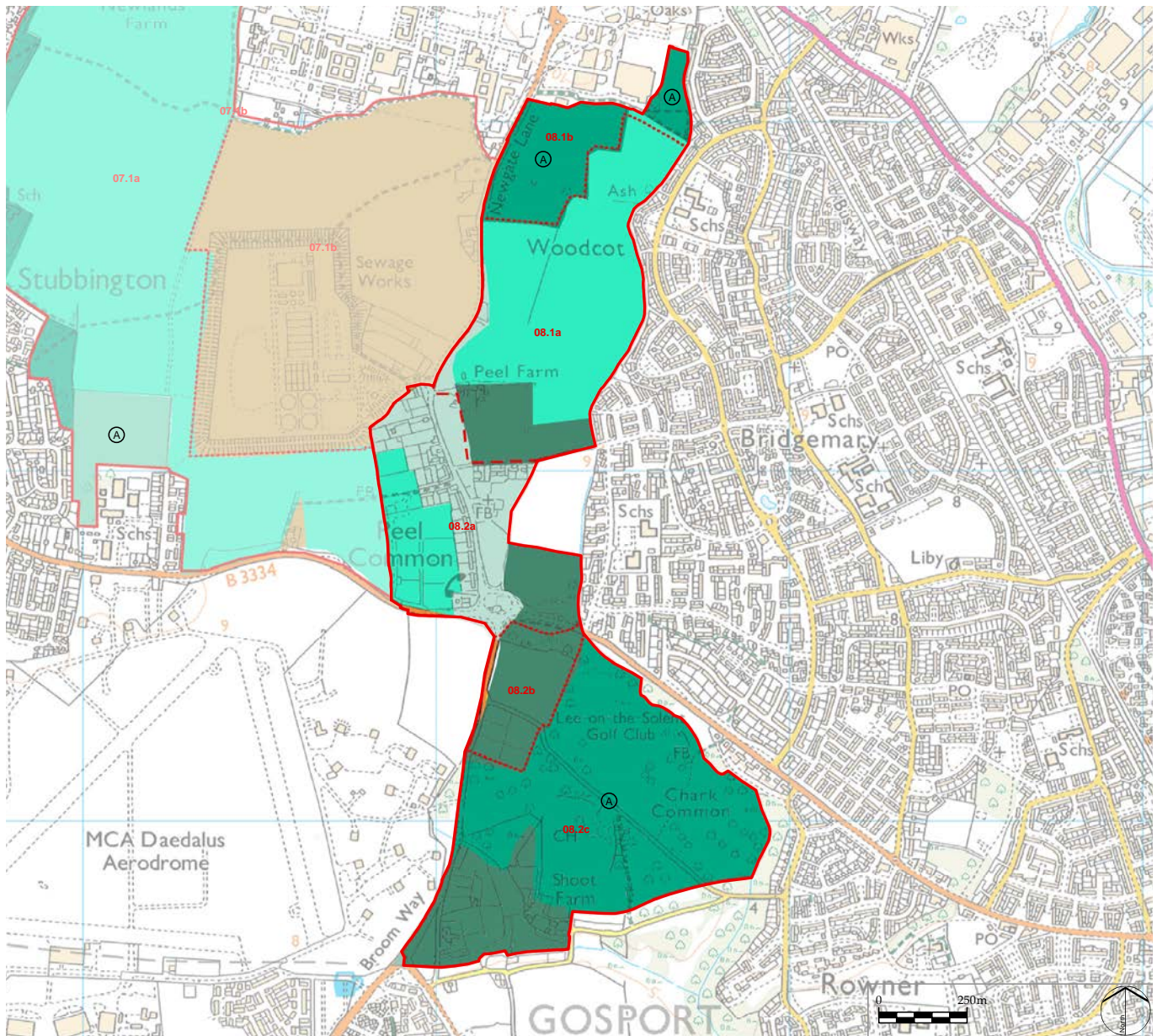
(LCA8)

The Alver Valley also forms part of the strategic gap separating Fareham and Gosport but it is very different in character and scale from the open farmed landscape to the west. It comprises a mixed pattern of wooded common, small-scale pasture and ribbon development along the corridors of the River Alver and Newgate Lane and is bounded to the east by the urban edge of Gosport and to the north by the outskirts of Fareham.

The essential characteristics of the Alver Valley are:

- A mosaic of small and medium scale fields at Woodcot, forming a mixture of small horse-grazed pasture and larger arable fields divided by fences, ditches and gappy hedgerows;
- Although this area forms the upper part of the Alver Valley it lacks a distinct valley character;
- The hedgerow pattern is gradually replaced by scrubby woodland to the south, enclosing Chark Common and the golf course;
- The character is influenced by the busy road corridor and the urban characteristics of Peel Common and Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus on one side and the urban edge of Bridgemary on the other.





LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure
	Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure
	Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character
	Enclosed Coastal Amenity Land

4.10 NORTH FAREHAM DOWNS

(LCA9)

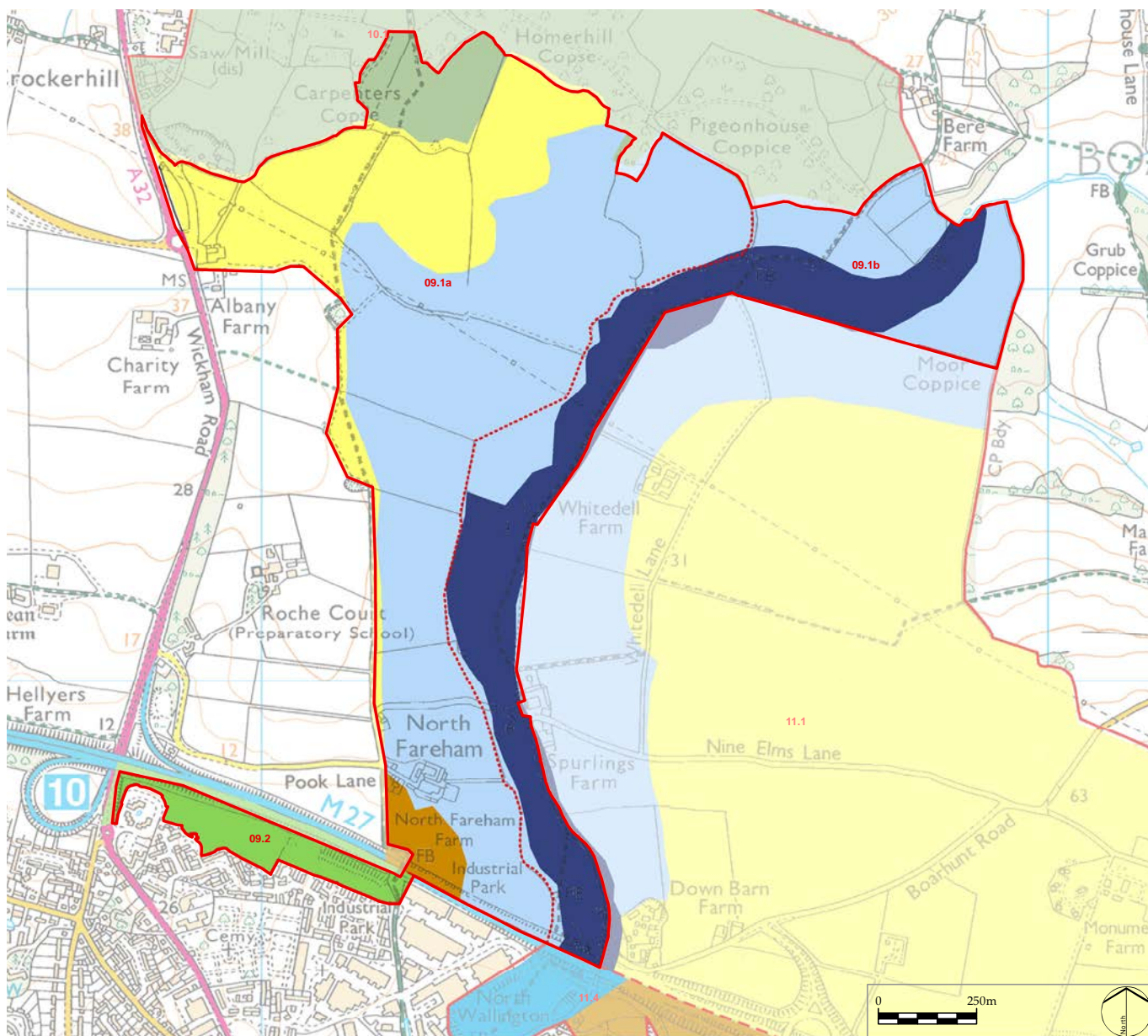
The North Fareham Downs form part of an extensive tract of countryside to the north of the Borough which once extended right up to the fringes of Fareham but is now severed by the M27 motorway. This character area previously included land which is now allocated for the development of the new community at Welborne and excluded from the current study area. It formerly stretched as far west as the railway line near Funtley which marks a sharp change in character with the more enclosed landscape of the Meon Valley. The character area is now defined to the west by the Welborne boundary and forms a relatively narrow strip of land along the valley floor and sides of the River Wallington, bounded to the north by the wooded clay landscape of the Forest of Bere and to the east by the prominent ridge of Portsdown Hill. The area also includes a small parcel of land severed from the main chalkland landscape by the M27 motorway, along the southern edge of the character area.

The essential characteristics of the North Fareham Downs are:

- Gently rolling landform along and above valley sides, sloping down to flat floodplain of Wallington River;
- Intensively farmed arable farmland with a large field pattern and an open, and denuded character, a weak hedgerow structure and only occasional copses and trees;
- Small-scale, pastoral landscape along the flat floor of the Wallington River valley, dominated by pasture and riverside trees and with a more intimate, semi-enclosed character;
- A distinctively rural, agrarian character, sparsely settled and with few buildings or intrusive urban influences aside from the M27 motorway corridor and pylons/transmission lines;
- Visual containment to the north by the strong woodland structure of the Forest of Bere character area;
- Rough grassland and scrub and urban fringe character within isolated land to south of M27.



© Chris Wimbush



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Open Arable Downs		Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Large Scale
	Open Arable Downs: Fringe Character		Open Floodplain Farmland
	Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Fringe Character		Open Valley Side

4.11 FOREST OF BERE (LCA10)

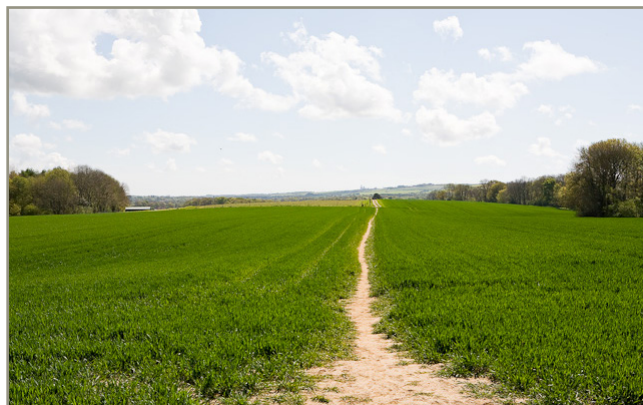
The Forest of Bere character area lies in the extreme north of the Borough beyond the North Fareham Downs. It forms a distinctive area of large-scale, wooded farmland on clay soils that forms part of the wider landscape of the Forest of Bere that extends northwards across the Borough boundary into Winchester District.

The essential characteristics of the Forest of Bere are:

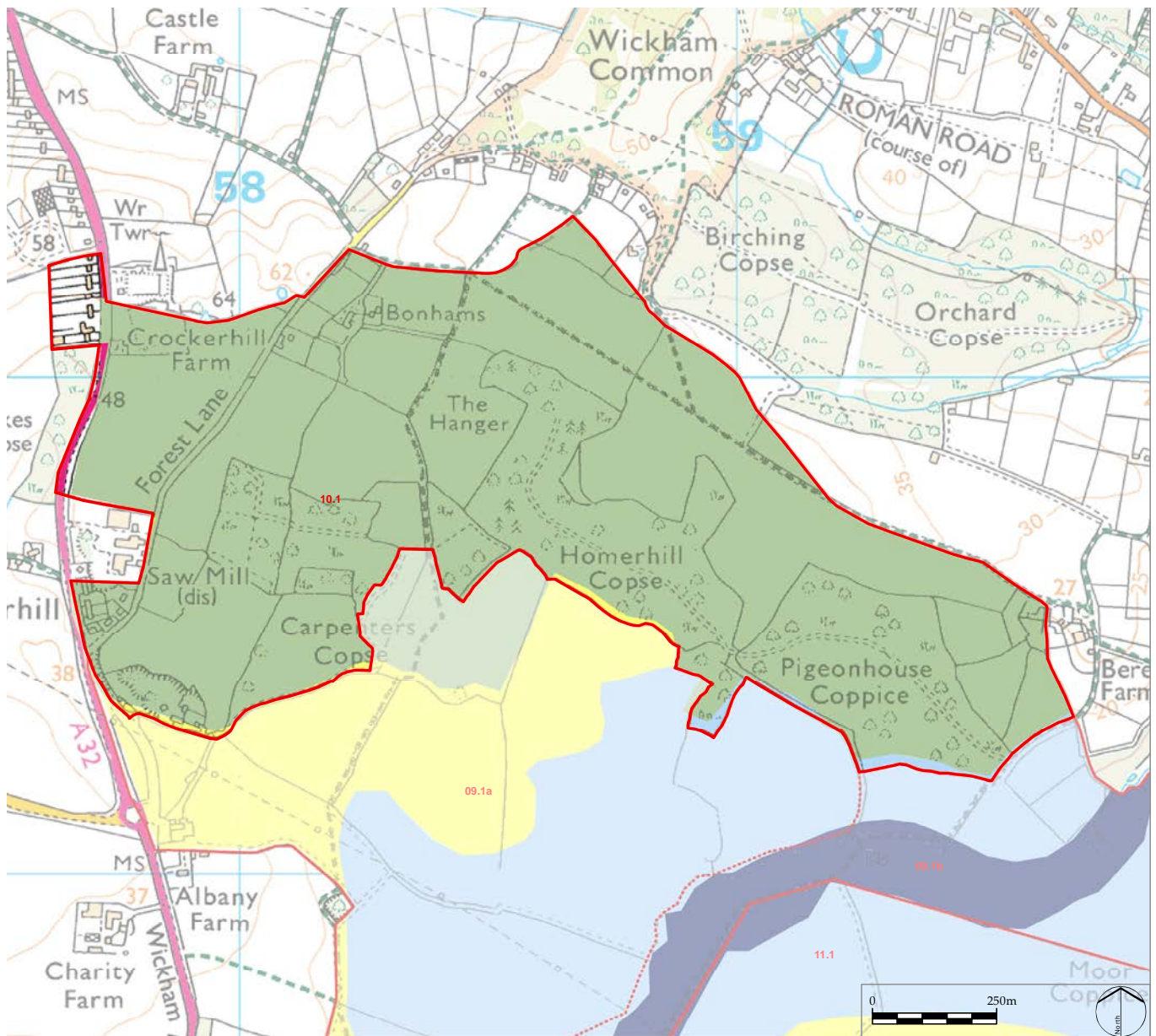
- A distinctive and attractive, enclosed character formed by large blocks of mixed woodland connected by mature hedgerows, including important remnants of ancient woodland;
- The woodland blocks form the southern edge of a much larger character area that extends to the north beyond the Borough boundary;
- The woodland edge is continuous and forms an attractive backdrop to the open arable farmland of the North Fareham Downs;
- The woodland blocks contain a matrix of medium scale farmland with a strong sense of enclosure.



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LEGEND

Landscape Types

	Landscape Character Area		Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Large Scale
	Local Landscape Character Area		
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		

4.12 PORTSDOWN HILL (LCA11)

This character area embraces the distinctive scarp and downland landscape that forms the western flanks of Portsdown Hill, a landscape unit that extends beyond the Borough boundary into neighbouring Winchester District. It is defined on its western boundary by the minor valley of the Wallington River and to the south by the urban edge of Downend and Portchester. Although the scarp slopes form a single landscape unit, the lower slopes are severed from the upper by the M27, effectively dividing the area into two separate but associated parts.

The essential characteristics of the Portsdown Hill area are:

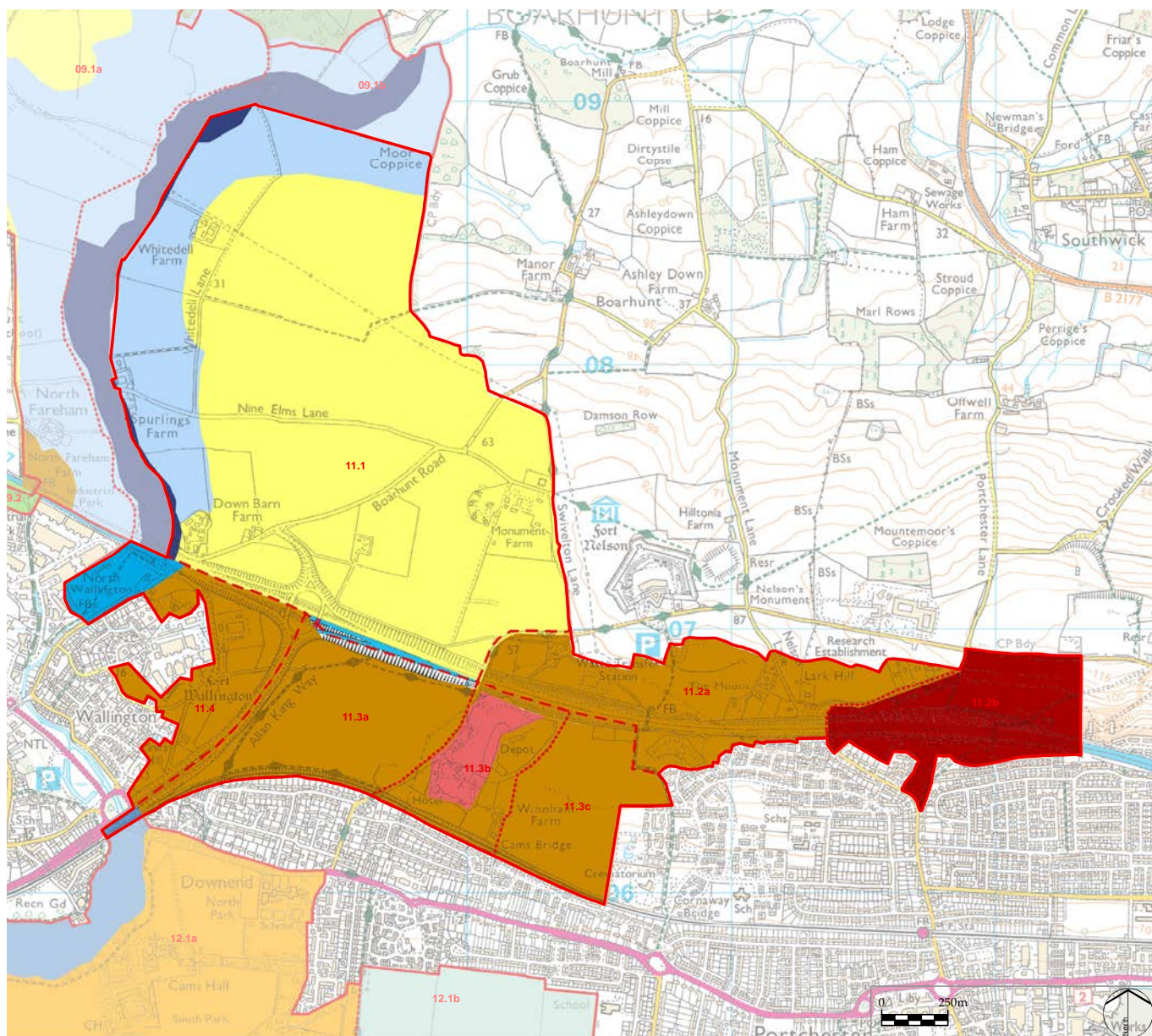
- Large to medium-scale mosaic of pasture and arable fields with an open expansive character and few hedgerows or trees;
- The distinctive rolling chalk downland above the Wallington River valley and the dramatic landform ridge and steep, south-facing scarp of Portsdown Hill itself, which provides the setting for a number of landmark features such as Nelsons Monument and Fort Nelson (both outside the Borough boundary) and spectacular views over Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent;
- The prominence of a number of unsightly elements in the form of masts, fences and typical roadside clutter;
- The intrusion of the M27 motorway which cuts through the chalk scarp and divides its upper and lower slopes;
- The physical isolation of the lower slopes by roads, railways and urban development, and the impact of quarrying, all of which intrude upon its open, rural character.



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LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

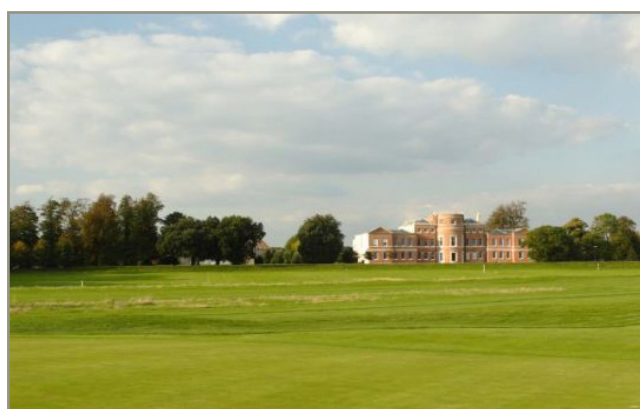
	Open Arable Downs		Recolonising Landscape
	Open Arable Downs: Fringe Character		Enclosed Tidal River
	Scarp Face		Open Valley Side
	Open Floodplain Farmland		
	Enclosed Floodplain Farmland		

4.13 CAMS/WICOR COASTAL FRINGE (LCA12)

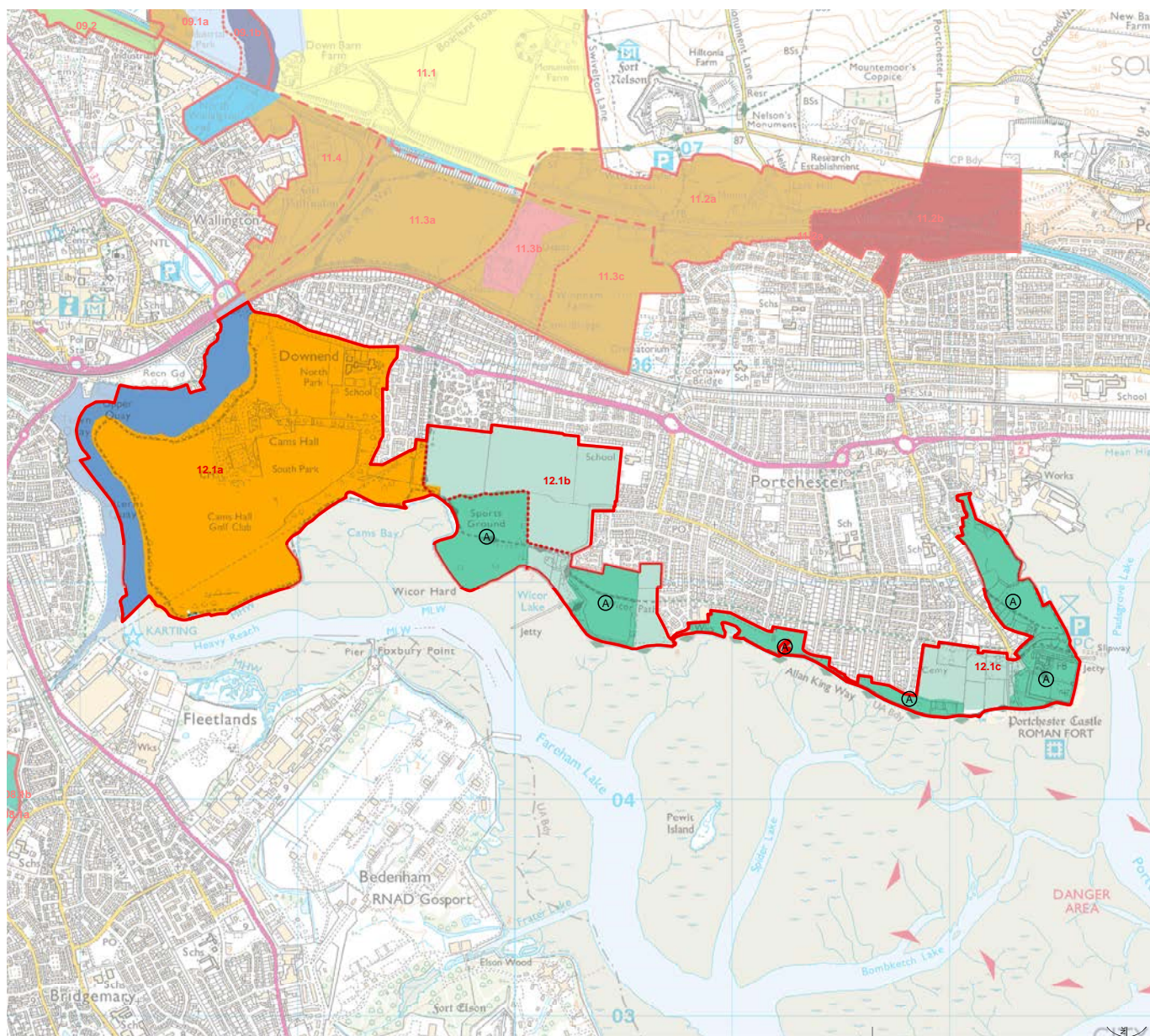
This area forms a discrete parcel of open landscape contained by the coast and the urban fringes of Downend and Portchester. One of its main features is the extensive parkland and woodlands of the Cams Hall Estate but it also includes other areas of open amenity landscape, fringe pasture and coastal industry to the east.

The essential characteristics of the Cams/Wicor Coastal Fringe are:

- An area of flat or gently undulating landform occupied by mixed but open land-uses, sandwiched between the urban fringes of Downend and Portchester and the shores of Fareham Lake;
- Strong coastal influence with wind-pruned trees and bushes and an exposed, windswept character and salty smell;
- Fringe character influenced by proximity of built form along the urban edge and non-agricultural land uses, such as the golf course, recreation ground and areas of neglected pasture;
- Valuable areas of open space with attractive views out across Portsmouth Harbour and to Portsdown Hill which provide an important recreational resource for nearby built areas;
- Cams Hall Estate (a Conservation Area) with its important historic buildings, historic parkland and Cams Plantation. The estate has undergone restoration and redevelopment for recreational and business use to preserve the buildings and grounds;
- Small-scale coastal industry adjacent to Wicor Lake.



© Neil Thompson



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Open Coastal Amenity Land
	Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character
	Parkland & Grounds
	Enclosed Tidal River

4.14 BURRIDGE/SWANWICK/ WHITELEY (LCA13)

This area lies to the north-west of the Borough and has similarities with the wooded farmland mosaic to the west alongside the Hamble. However, it differs in that it contains the existing settlements of Swanwick and Burridge, strung out along the roads in extensive ribbon development. A large part of the previous LCA has been removed from the current assessment as it has since been developed as part of the new settlement of Whiteley, which now falls within the defined urban settlement boundary.

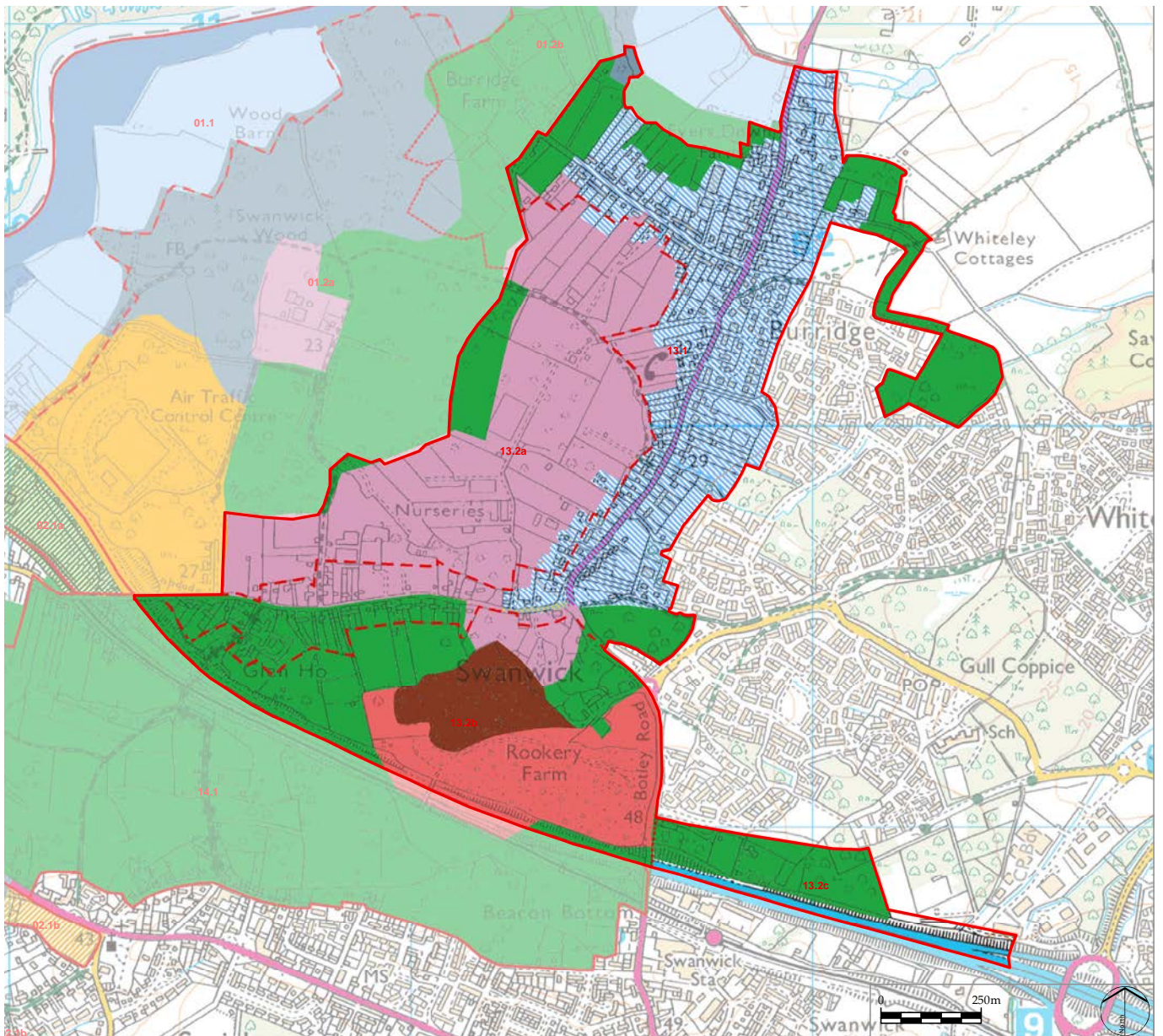
The essential characteristics of the Burridge, Swanwick and Whiteley area are:

- A strong, mature woodland framework within which is set a complex mixture of settlements, landfill and mineral operations, large-scale horticultural activity and farmland;
- Continuous residential ribbon development along the main roads, of relatively recent origin and without special townscape or architectural merits, but typified by a leafy streetscape, long garden plots and a distinctively suburban character;
- A distinctive pattern of small-scale fields, typically occupied by pasture or horticultural land uses, and defined by a strong hedgerow and woodland structure, providing a strong sense of enclosure and intimacy which helps to mitigate the effects of potentially intrusive land uses;
- More extensive areas of glasshouses and large-scale horticulture or farmland with a more open character but visually contained by fringing woodland;
- Strong associations with the wooded landscape of the Upper Hamble Valley;
- Significant landscape change with extensive new development on adjacent land at Whiteley, and disturbed landscapes arising from mineral extraction, former brickworks or landfill operations which are undergoing restoration or have been occupied by new uses.



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LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types



Disturbed Landscapes



Recolonising Landscape



Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale



Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale



Enclosed Valley Side



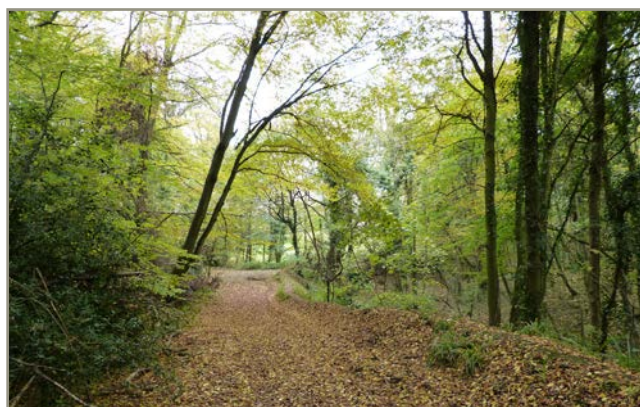
Urban: Low Density Fringe/ Ribbon Development

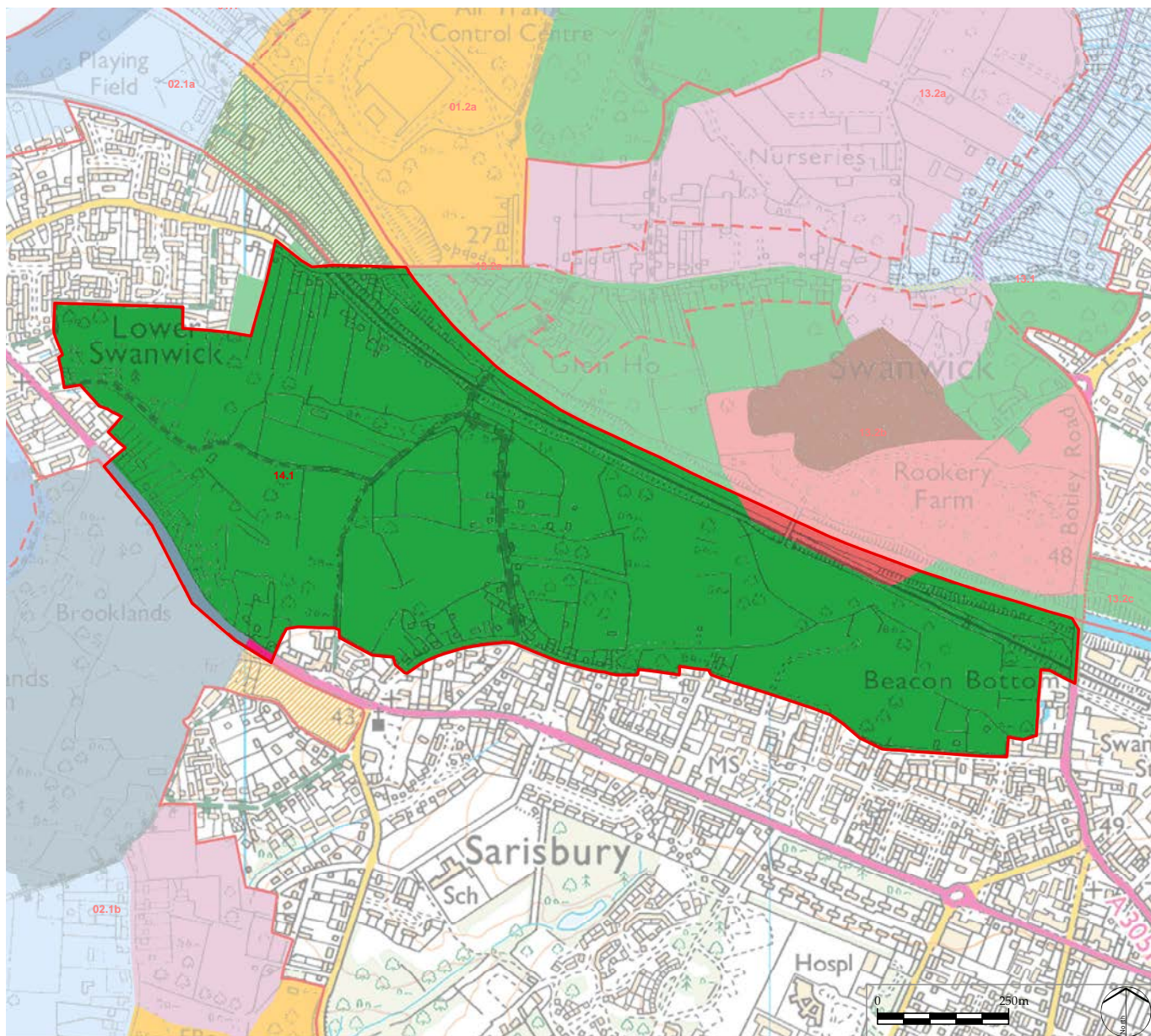
4.15 NORTH SARISBURY FRINGE (LCA14)

This is a small area of semi-rural, wooded landscape that is sandwiched between the M27 to the north and the urban edges of Lower Swanwick, Sarisbury and Park Gate. It was formerly part of the mosaic of wooded farmland that characterise this general area before it became isolated from open countryside by roads and urban development. It lies on a north-facing valley side and is unified by its physical characteristics and its intimate and strongly wooded character.

The essential characteristics of the North Sarisbury Fringe are:

- A steep north facing valley side;
- A small-scale complex of horse-grazed pasture, farmland and horticulture set within mature hedgerows and small woodland copses;
- Parts of the area have a somewhat neglected and scrubby character, particularly at Beacon Bottom;
- Localised urban influences, including adjacent housing development and the M27 Motorway.





LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale
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PART
TWO

FAREHAM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

LD&A DESIGN



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Version 01
August 2017

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1.0 BACKGROUND & APPROACH



BACKGROUND

The landscape character assessment set out in Part One describes the key characteristics of the landscape that give different areas their distinctive character and local identity, providing a neutral ‘baseline’ of the current character of the landscape. The sensitivity assessment augments this baseline by providing detailed information and judgements on the sensitivity of areas of landscape beyond the existing defined settlement boundaries, and the potential impacts that new development might have on their particular characteristics, qualities and valued attributes.

The resulting analysis of sensitivity and development potential is primarily intended to assist the council in:

- Evaluating different development options to meet future housing needs beyond those already planned for in the adopted Fareham Local Plan;
- Reviewing Local Plan policies in relation to landscape; and
- Assessing the potential impact of development on the landscape when determining future planning applications at specific locations.

It is also intended to inform the management of landscape change in other ways, including:

- Informing the design of new development proposals
- Identifying opportunities for positive landscape enhancement, as part of new development or by other means.

Undeveloped countryside is an ever-diminishing resource within the Borough and it is inevitable that any further development beyond existing settlement boundaries will have an impact on this limited resource in some way. The purpose of this exercise is to identify where this change matters most and least, depending upon the importance and sensitivity of the landscape affected, and to help define how change might be designed to achieve positive benefits rather than adverse effects.

1.2 KEY ASPECTS OF APPROACH

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

A number of best practice guidance documents have been published that deal with the issue of landscape sensitivity within the context of the assessment of landscape character, landscape and visual impacts and landscape capacity (**see References**). The most specific of these is 'Topic Paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity', produced by the former Countryside Agency/SNH in 2004. Together, these guidance documents set out a great variety of techniques, definitions and criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity and, although they contain some common threads and principles, it is clear that this is not an 'exact science' and that there is no single advocated method, nor consistent application, within current practice. Natural England (successor to the Countryside Agency) is seeking to address this with a review of Topic Paper 6 but definitive guidance is, as yet, unavailable.

APPROACH ADOPTED FOR FAREHAM

The approach adopted for the Fareham sensitivity assessment has been informed by the available and emerging guidance but has also been tailored specifically to the purposes of this study. It is underpinned by the following fundamental principles:

1. The approach is predicated on the basis that 'all countryside matters' (especially in such a fragmented and urbanised Borough as Fareham) and that, in planning for development beyond the urban boundary, the primary aim should be to protect the Borough's most important landscape assets and to maintain and enhance the character and quality of the visual environment and the setting of urban areas within the Borough;
2. It is also predicated on the basis that some form of development can potentially be accommodated within most landscapes as long as it can be demonstrated that it would not have unacceptable impacts on valued landscape assets or visual amenity and would provide positive landscape benefits;
3. The assessment process should be simple to follow and easy to understand by everyone (e.g. avoiding confusing terminology, complex scoring systems or highly technical language); and
4. It should encourage a responsive and properly considered approach to designing, and assessing, development proposals (e.g. by providing detailed, location-specific information about what is important in the landscape and why, and how development should respect and respond to this).

As described in Topic Paper 6 (para.8.2 and 8.3), many existing sensitivity studies are highly complex and can involve a confusing array of terminology, criteria and scoring systems that even experienced practitioners may struggle to understand fully. Conversely, some studies are short on transparency and the basis for judgements is often not clear, or they can result in over-simplistic conclusions that can be misinterpreted. The Fareham sensitivity assessment aims to find an appropriate balance between technical rigour and clarity of reasoning and presentation.

Key aspects of this approach are as follows:

- The assessment framework (i.e. the sub-division of the landscape into ‘parcels’ or areas for assessment) is appropriate to the scale of variation in local landscape character, quality etc. and the purposes of the assessment;
- For these individual areas of landscape, the different ‘roles’ (or functions) that they perform, and for which they may be valued, are separated and clearly described, i.e. as part of the landscape resource (or environmental assets) of the Borough, as part of the visual environment enjoyed by people, as part of the setting of urban areas or settlements, and as part of the local Green Infrastructure network;
- The sensitivity of the landscape in respect of each different function is assessed independently, using the method and criteria set out in section 2.2 below. Crucially, there is no attempt to quantify sensitivity, nor combine the judgements into an ‘overall’ measure of landscape sensitivity or capacity;
- The findings of the sensitivity assessment are described as a narrative, in a way that makes clear what is important and why in each area, the criteria/considerations to be met for any development to be deemed acceptable, and the key priorities for landscape enhancement.

By separating out these different functions and clearly explaining the basis upon which key judgements have been made (see section 2.2), the findings of the assessment should be highly transparent and clearly understood by anyone.

It is important to stress that the assessment findings rely heavily upon the professional judgement of the qualified landscape architects/planners within the consultant team and have not been influenced by, nor tested against, the opinions of the Council or any input from the public/local stakeholders. The assessment was undertaken purely from a landscape perspective and as objectively as possible, although an element of subjective judgement is inevitable. It has not been influenced by any knowledge of the amount of development land that might be required to meet future targets or by any other environmental, socio-economic or planning considerations which may influence development potential.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The assessment process involved the following key steps:

- Confirmation of purpose and methodology
- Desk review and field survey
- Assessment of sensitivity and development potential
- Presentation of findings

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

An essential first step in the assessment process was to confirm the purpose of the study with the Council so that the methodology and outputs could be tailored to suit its specific requirements. This involved detailed discussion at the inception meeting, followed by a familiarisation visit to different parts of the study area, accompanied by officers of the Council.

The Study Area for the sensitivity assessment was confirmed at the inception meeting as the entire extent of the Borough outside of the current defined urban settlement boundary, i.e. all areas of 'countryside' (as defined on the Adopted Local Plan proposals map).

DESK REVIEW AND FIELD SURVEY

Following the inception stage, a large amount of background data and information was collated and reviewed, including map based GIS data and other documentary evidence of relevance to the study. This process included detailed consideration of best practice guidance and examples of sensitivity assessment studies, as well as existing studies of the landscape and green infrastructure of the Borough (and wider context) and relevant planning documents for Fareham, Hampshire and PUSH (**see References**).

Following the collation of relevant information, a preliminary analysis of the individual Landscape Character Areas was undertaken as a desk exercise. This involved producing a series of plans identifying features that may influence sensitivity, including:

- Physical and visual characteristics (e.g. topography, ridgelines, major woodlands, flood zone/flood alert information, key landmarks, key views/view corridors, intrusive features such as overhead power lines, exposed urban edge)
- Planning context (e.g. urban area boundary, relevant landscape, heritage and ecological designations, Strategic Gap designation etc.)
- Green Infrastructure (e.g. public rights of way, long distance footpaths, national cycle routes, public open space, major woodlands, strategic and local GI features, corridors, links etc.)
- Landscape Character (i.e. landscape types identified in the Landscape Character Assessment)
- Local Landscape Character Areas (i.e. preliminary breakdown of the LCA into smaller assessment units, or LLCAs)

This preliminary desk analysis was followed by detailed field survey to verify the boundaries of the LLCAs and to record perceptual, aesthetic and visual attributes of the landscape that are only evident in the field (e.g. sense of tranquillity, remoteness, scale, enclosure, condition, scenic quality, visibility of the area from surrounding areas, role in the setting of urban areas etc). Opportunities for landscape enhancement were also recorded and a photographic record was made.

The desk and field information provided the basis for the sensitivity assessment of each of the Landscape Character Areas using the methods and criteria described below. A worked example of the sensitivity assessment for one of the Landscape Character Areas, illustrating the proposed method for defining LLCAs and for recording, evaluating and presenting the assessment findings, was produced at an early stage of the process and submitted for agreement with the Council.

ASSESSMENT OF SENSITIVITY

The assessment of sensitivity is concerned with analysing the ability of the different local landscape character areas beyond the urban area boundary to accommodate development without unacceptable adverse effects upon four specific roles:

- As part of the Borough's landscape resource;
- As part of the visual environment enjoyed by people within the Borough (i.e. their visual amenity);
- As part of the setting and identity of urban areas within the Borough; and
- As part of the network of Green Infrastructure within the Borough and wider context.

The method for evaluating sensitivity with respect to each role was devised on the basis of a combination of available best practice guidance, previous relevant work and the experience of the professional landscape architects and planners in the consultant team, in agreement with the Council. It was not possible within the scope of the study to involve local communities or stakeholder groups in the evaluation process but anecdotal, written or visual evidence of local community values was taken into account where available. Any further evidence of landscape value/sensitivity at a local community level that may come to light through future studies or proposals for development should be considered as an additional layer of information augmenting the findings of this assessment. The basis for making judgements is explained for each role on the following pages.

This study examines the sensitivity of the landscape to 'development' but the nature of that development is not specifically defined. The primary purpose of the assessment is to assist the council in evaluating different development options to meet future housing needs beyond those already planned for in the adopted Local Plan. Therefore, new housing development is the principal type of development that is addressed in the sensitivity assessment, based upon an appreciation of the typical scale and nature of potential schemes put forward by landowners and site promoters in the area during previous calls for sites. However, the development principles and criteria that arise from the sensitivity assessment (see below) are also relevant in testing the suitability of other types and forms of development.

LANDSCAPE RESOURCE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

This part of the sensitivity assessment examines the role of the landscape within the LLCA as a resource in its own right.

In this study, the sensitivity of the landscape resource is judged in terms of two main considerations:

- The ability of the landscape to accommodate change without unacceptable effects upon the particular components that make up its distinctive character (defined variously as its 'vulnerability', 'robustness', 'tolerance', 'fragility', 'susceptibility', 'landscape character sensitivity' etc.), together with the scope for mitigating adverse change and reinforcing distinctive character;
- The quality of the landscape resource and the value attached to it as a whole or individual components within it, together with the scope for enhancing the quality and value of the landscape resource through positive intervention.

FACTORS AFFECTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND ITS ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE CHANGE

The ability of the landscape to accommodate change will depend upon the particular combinations of elements and aesthetic qualities that make up its distinctive character. Key factors affecting this include:

- Natural/physical factors such as topography, drainage, vegetation cover, extent and pattern of semi-natural habitat etc.
- Cultural factors such as land use, settlement pattern, enclosure pattern, built elements etc.
- Aesthetic factors such as scale, enclosure, diversity, texture, colour, visual/topographic unity etc.

FACTORS AFFECTING LANDSCAPE QUALITY AND VALUE

The presence of national or local landscape designations will signify recognition of high landscape quality, but they are not the sole indicator of value and the absence of a designation does not mean the landscape resource is not of high quality or valued in a local context.

The quality and value of the landscape resource of each LLCA has been assessed against a set of criteria based upon those outlined in best practice guidance [see GLVIA3 box 5.1, LCA 2002] and include:

- Landscape quality/condition – a measure of the physical state of the landscape, including the extent to which typical character is represented, the intactness of landscape character and the condition of individual elements;
- Scenic quality – used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses), with pleasing combinations and patterns of features;
- Rarity – the presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or of a rare landscape character type;
- Representativeness – whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples;
- Conservation interests – the presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological and cultural interest can add value to the landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- Perceptual aspects – a landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity;
- Associations – some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

Best practice guidance [see GLVIA3 para 5.29] suggests that areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to be highly valued.

In more ordinary, 'everyday' landscapes where some of these criteria do not apply, there is a greater emphasis on representation of typical character, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of its elements. Scenic quality may also be relevant and will reflect factors such as sense of place and aesthetic and perceptual qualities. Judgements are made about which particular components of the landscape contribute most to its value.

MAKING JUDGEMENTS ON SENSITIVITY

Judgements on the overall sensitivity of the landscape resource are based on a balance between the ability to accommodate change/mitigate effects and the value of the landscape resource. A high value does not necessarily preclude development, for example if the character of the landscape, or the scale of the development, is such that change can be readily absorbed without major adverse change to the characteristics that are valued.

VISUAL ENVIRONMENT SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

This part of the sensitivity assessment examines the role of the landscape within the LLCA as part of available and important views and the general visual environment enjoyed by people within the Borough.

In this study, the sensitivity of the visual environment is judged in terms of two main considerations:

- The visibility and visual characteristics of the LLCA and its ability to accommodate change without unacceptable effects upon views and visual amenity (including the scope for mitigation of visual effects) and the quality/value of available views;
- The range and 'susceptibility' of viewers experiencing views of the area and the impact that change might have on their enjoyment of those views, including the opportunity for positive enhancement.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE CHANGE

The ability of the visual environment to accommodate change will be a function of the extent of views into it from surrounding areas and within the area itself. This will depend on such factors as physical elevation and the potential screening effects of landform, vegetation cover and built form. It will also depend upon the quality and importance of existing views enjoyed by people, looking both towards and outwards from the area.

Key factors affecting this include:

- The visual prominence of the LLCA and the overall extent of visibility from surrounding areas
- The degree of intervisibility (visibility between places) both within the area itself and with neighbouring areas
- The extent, character and quality of the key views into the LLCA from surrounding areas and outwards from it
- The presence of visually prominent features or landmarks (positive, neutral or negative), visual intrusion from neighbouring land use/features (e.g. urban areas, roads, infrastructure etc.)
- Evidence of any viewpoints or views of recognised importance (e.g. promoted in guidebooks, literature, maps etc.)

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUSCEPTIBILITY OF VIEWERS TO CHANGE

This involves assessing how people's enjoyment of the visual environment is likely to be affected by changes to it, and is primarily a function of their occupation or activity and the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views and visual amenity they experience at different locations.

Best practice LVIA guidance [see GLAVIA₃ para 6.33] suggests that the people most susceptible to change are likely to include:

- Residents at home
- Those engaged in outdoor recreation, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views
- Visitors to heritage assets, or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience
- Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.

Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change, but where travel involves recognised scenic routes, awareness of views is likely to be particularly high.

Viewers likely to be less susceptible to change include:

- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape
- People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where setting is not important to the quality of working life.

MAKING JUDGEMENTS ON SENSITIVITY

Judgements on overall visual sensitivity are based on a combination of the ability to accommodate change/mitigate effects, the value of the views to people and the susceptibility of the viewer to changes in the visual environment.

SETTING OF URBAN AREAS SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

This part of the sensitivity assessment examines the role and value of the landscape within the LLCA as part of the setting and character of urban areas within the Borough.

A settlement's identity can be as much as a result of its setting, within the surrounding countryside, as with the quality of its buildings. In this study, sensitivity is judged in terms of the following considerations:

- Whether the area has an important role in maintaining the distinction between the urban area and surrounding countryside, or provides an important buffer between the two, helping to soften the impact of development on the urban edge
- Whether the area plays an important role in defining the 'natural setting' or limits to growth of any urban area/settlement, such as physical containment by a ridge, basin, river valley, woodland or other strong/permanent feature
- Whether the area forms an important part of the visual setting of the urban area (i.e. there is a strong visual inter-relationship between the urban area and the landscape surrounding it), e.g. as a backdrop framing views of the urban area
- Whether the area forms part of a green wedge or gap separating one urban area from another, preventing coalescence and maintaining their individual character and identities
- The quality of the landscape within the urban fringe areas, in particular the degree to which it is affected by the particular pressures brought about by proximity to urban areas (e.g. fly-tipping, vandalism, trespass, poor land management, unsightly features etc.)

MAKING JUDGEMENTS ON SENSITIVITY

There are no established criteria for assessing the sensitivity of landscape settings and so the evaluation relies heavily on professional judgement. However, where available, this is supported by evidence contained within current planning policy (e.g. the designation of Strategic Gaps) and other documentation.

This part of the sensitivity assessment examines the role and value of the landscape within the LLCA as part of the local and wider green infrastructure network within the Borough.

In this study, sensitivity is judged in terms of three main considerations:

- The existing contribution that the area makes to the local and strategic GI network in respect of providing areas of accessible greenspace, access routes and links
- The quality (e.g. state of repair) and value of existing GI assets and evidence of popularity, e.g. whether part of a recognised long-distance network, or promoted in tourist literature or local guides etc.
- Opportunities that exist for enhancing the network in extent or quality.

MAKING JUDGEMENTS ON SENSITIVITY

There are no established criteria for assessing the sensitivity of the landscape in respect of GI and so the evaluation relies on professional judgement, supported by evidence contained within strategies and other documentation.

The assessment process concludes with a summary of the key sensitivities identified within each of the four roles, presenting an overall picture of the potential for development within the LLCA, and a set of specific ‘performance criteria’ that form the test against which the suitability of any particular development can be assessed.

These criteria spell out in some detail the priorities for landscape conservation or enhancement to which development proposals would need to respond in order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure. These range from very stringent criteria in landscapes of higher landscape or visual sensitivity where mitigation of effects would be difficult to achieve, to criteria that focus on the opportunities for positive landscape enhancement to improve or restore degraded or denuded landscapes of low intrinsic quality.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Although dealing with a wide range of quite complex issues, the assessment findings are presented in this report with as much clarity as possible. A consistent format is used for each of the 14 Landscape Character Areas (LCA), as follows:

- The LCA is introduced by a series of detailed plans containing a wide range of information relevant to the sensitivity assessment, including a plan showing the breakdown of the LCA into smaller assessment units, or Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs);
- For each LLCA, the assessment of sensitivity is broken down into the four component ‘roles’, each of which is presented separately. For each role, the narrative explains the basis for the judgements regarding sensitivity and development potential as clearly as possible in plain language, and is supported by images to support the points made in the text;
- The conclusions and development criteria for each LLCA are clearly set out in a separate ‘box’ format at the end of the section.

2.0




ASSESSMENT OF
SENSITIVITY AND
DEVELOPMENT
POTENTIAL

2.1 LCA 1: UPPER HAMBLE VALLEY

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



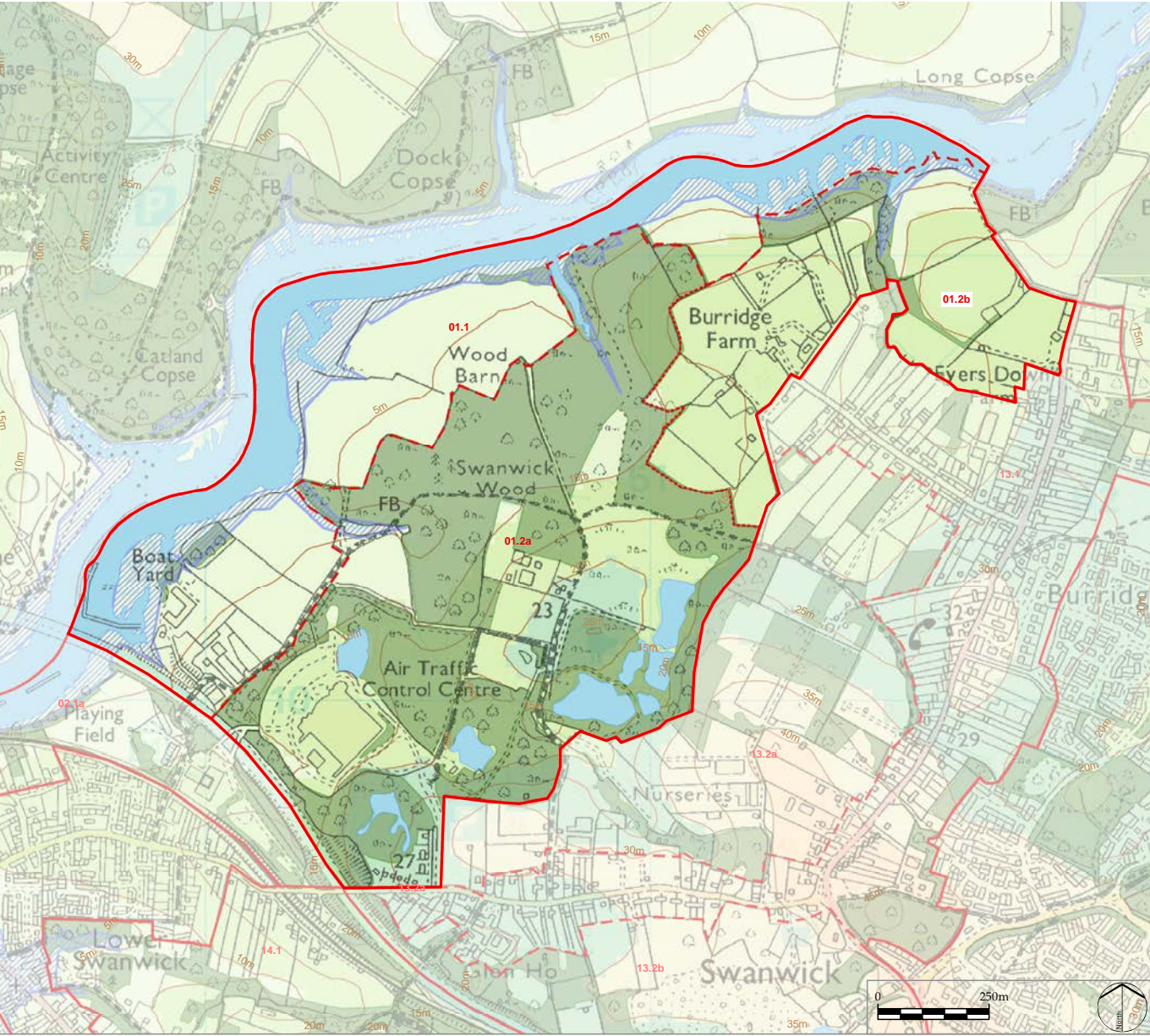
LEGEND

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Local Landscape Character Area
-  Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

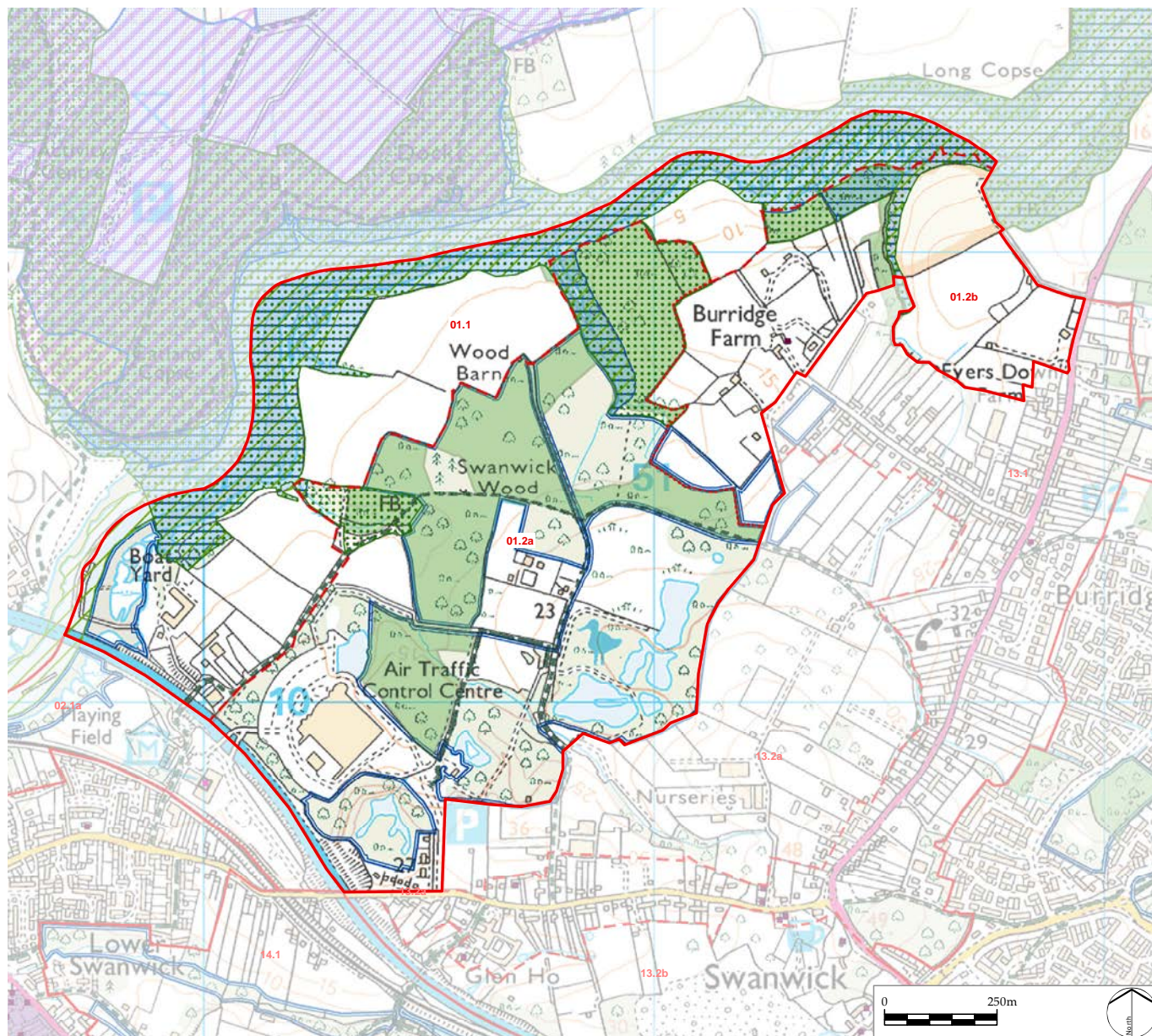
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------|
| | Landscape Character Area | | Woodland |
| | Local Landscape Character Area | | 5m Contours |
| | Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision | | Elevation (m AOD) |
| | Water | | 0m |
| | Flood Alert Areas | | 40m |

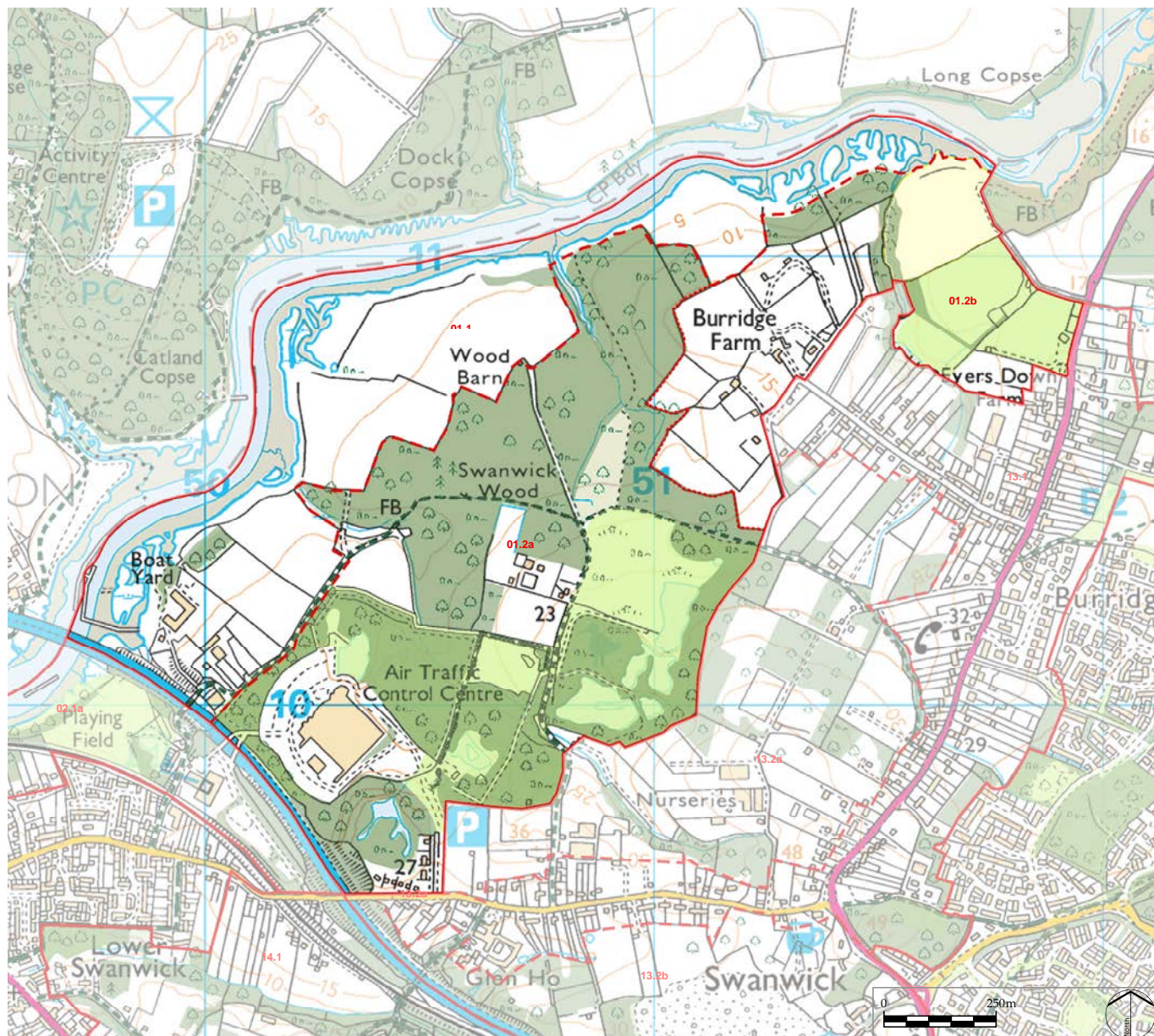
PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest
	Local Landscape Character Area		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Special Protection Area
Designations			Special Area of Conservation
Listed Building Grade			RAMSAR
II			Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

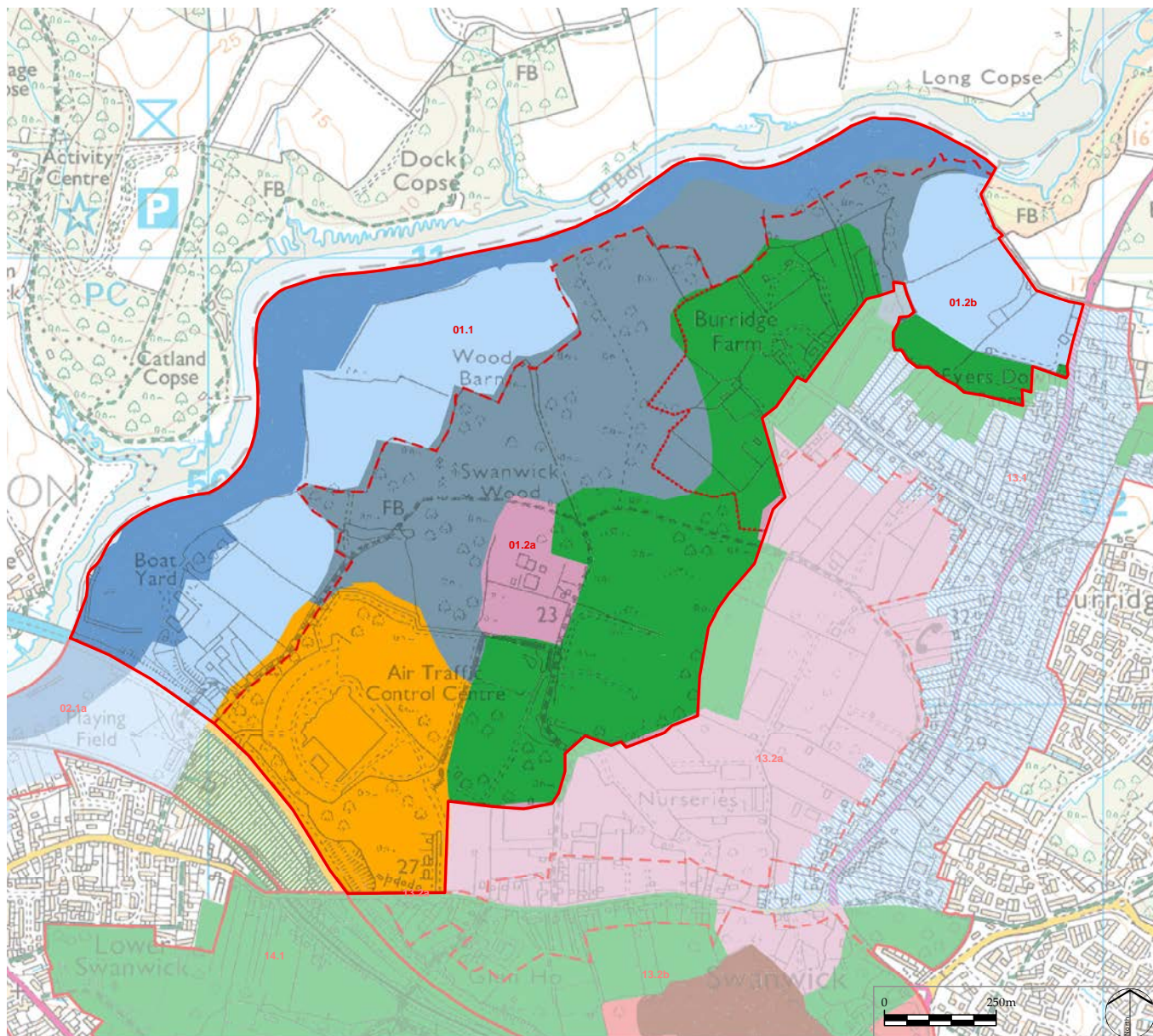
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Footpath
	Local Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Access Land
	Green Infrastructure Projects		Existing Open Space

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

- Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale
- Parkland & Grounds
- Enclosed Tidal River
- Enclosed Valley Side
- Open Valley Side
- Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area comprises the upper reaches of the tidal River Hamble to the north of the M27, together with its inter-tidal habitats and salt marsh, and adjacent low-lying flat fields backed by dense woodland on gently rising ground to the east. This woodland, and trees along parts of the riverside and internal field boundaries, create a sense of enclosure but there are some open views within the larger fields and across the river to the north and west that create a strong relationship between land and water.

Apart from some commercial buildings at the far southern end, adjacent to the M27, there are no buildings or other urban influences and relatively little human activity within this area of private farmland. The area as a whole has a coherent character typified by strong visual containment and a relative absence of human influence or activity, lending it a peaceful, secluded and relatively undisturbed character.

The area is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but the area was included within the Hamble Valley Area of Special Landscape Character, the former Local Plan designation (no longer in use) which provides an indication of local value. Justification for its designation included the following: it was regarded as being of exceptional scenic quality, with a strong sense of place and topographic and visual unity and a sense of privacy and enclosure; it has a generally unspoilt, rural character and has strong natural qualities; it is of at least Borough-wide importance as a representative example of a tidal river valley, the only example within the Borough; it has notable conservation interests, in particular the ecologically important inter-tidal habitats (SPA/SSSI/SAC), and neighbouring woodlands and wetlands (SSSI/Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands).

These qualities are still evident in this part of the LCA and so the area is judged to be of high value as part of the Borough's landscape resource.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The sensitivity of the landscape resource in this area is judged as high, with very limited scope to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on landscape resources and features of particular value. Apart from in the area already affected by development at the southern extremity of the area, the intrusion of built development of any scale would significantly compromise the intrinsic rural, unspoilt character of the river landscape, and the qualities of remoteness, seclusion and 'naturalness' could be significantly affected by increased urban influences or activity.



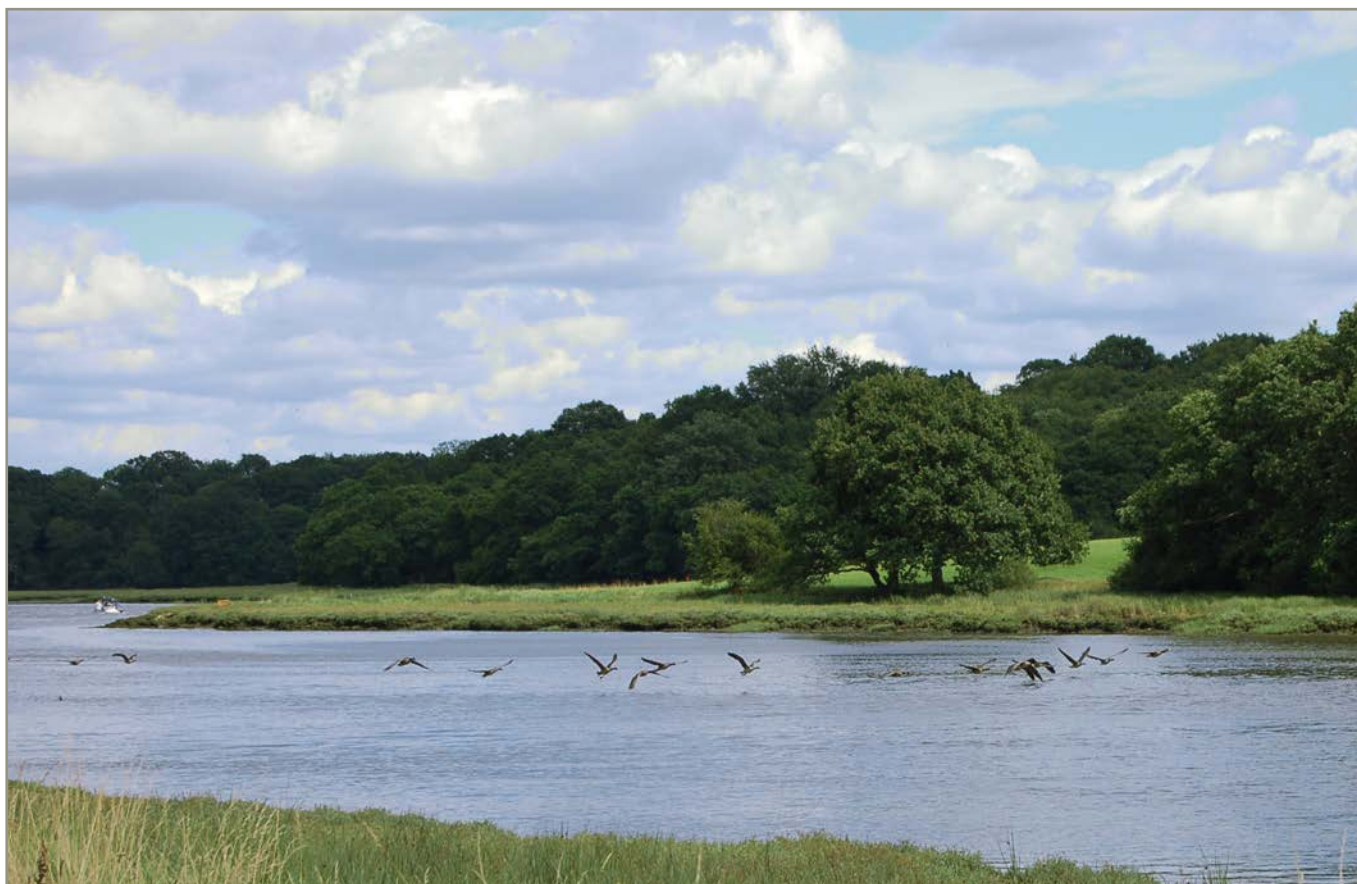
VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

The overall visibility of this LCA from surrounding areas is extremely restricted by the extensive cover of woodland and trees within the landscape. A glimpsed view of the river and adjacent land at the far southern end of the area is possible from the M27, when travelling eastwards, but the rest of the area is hidden from view from the motorway by vegetation cover or the motorway embankment. Views from the settlements of Swanwick, Burridge and Whiteley, to the south and east, are blocked by dense woodland cover.

There are views into the area from the river itself and from the footpath that runs along the opposite bank (outside of the Borough), but longer distance views from the north and west are also blocked by woodland and tree cover on this side of the river. There are some views within the area from the public right of way that runs along the edge of the CAA facility but most of the area is not accessible, or visible, to the public from within and there are relatively few viewers.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Although available views into the area are limited they will be seen by people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and may be more sensitive to change, notably recreational users of the River Hamble and the public footpath network on the northern side of the river, and within the area itself. These viewers will be particularly focused on enjoyment of their surroundings and sensitive to changes in the character and quality of views, which are currently attractive and generally unspoilt by the intrusion of urban influences or detracting features. Visual sensitivity is therefore relatively high.



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SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The area forms part of an extensive swathe of countryside on either side of the River Hamble that separates settlements at Swanwick, Burridge and Whiteley in the east from the edge of Southampton in the west (although this is not currently designated as a Strategic Gap). It also contributes to the setting of the River Hamble which forms a 'gateway' to the Borough when approaching from the west. Apart from some commercial development along the southern edge of the area adjacent to the M27 corridor, this area retains a strongly rural character and has an important role in maintaining the distinction between urban areas and surrounding countryside. This distinction could be compromised by significant development in the area.

The area is physically and visually separated from the main urban areas within the Borough by the motorway corridor and by dense woodland to the east, therefore does not form part of the immediate setting of any settlement.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area does not form a critical role in the setting of urban areas but it does have some sensitivity as part of the wider countryside context of the Borough, maintaining the clear distinction between built areas and open countryside, and forming part of the extensive buffer of rural landscape around the River Hamble separating the built areas of Southampton and settlements in the north-east of the Borough. Built development could compromise these roles if it intrudes upon and erodes the rural, unspoilt character of the area.



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GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

Parts of this area contribute to the existing green infrastructure network at a local and strategic level, and it contains a number of important GI assets. The River Hamble is identified in the PUSH GI strategy as a ‘sub-regional scale blue corridor’. The strategy (Project Code F4) seeks “to conserve and enhance these corridors as semi-natural refuges through the creation of wooded stepping stones (such as the planting of trees on arable field edges and within hedgerows) in order to connect existing woodland habitats, enhance biodiversity and reinforce local landscape character.”

Access opportunities are limited to a c. 50m length of public footpath at the southern end of the area and there is no public access to the riverside through the privately owned woodland and farmland. The Fareham GI Strategy (2014) includes this area within GI Project BW37: the Hamble Catchment Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA), which aims to promote targeted enhancements to various habitats and ecological corridors within the area.

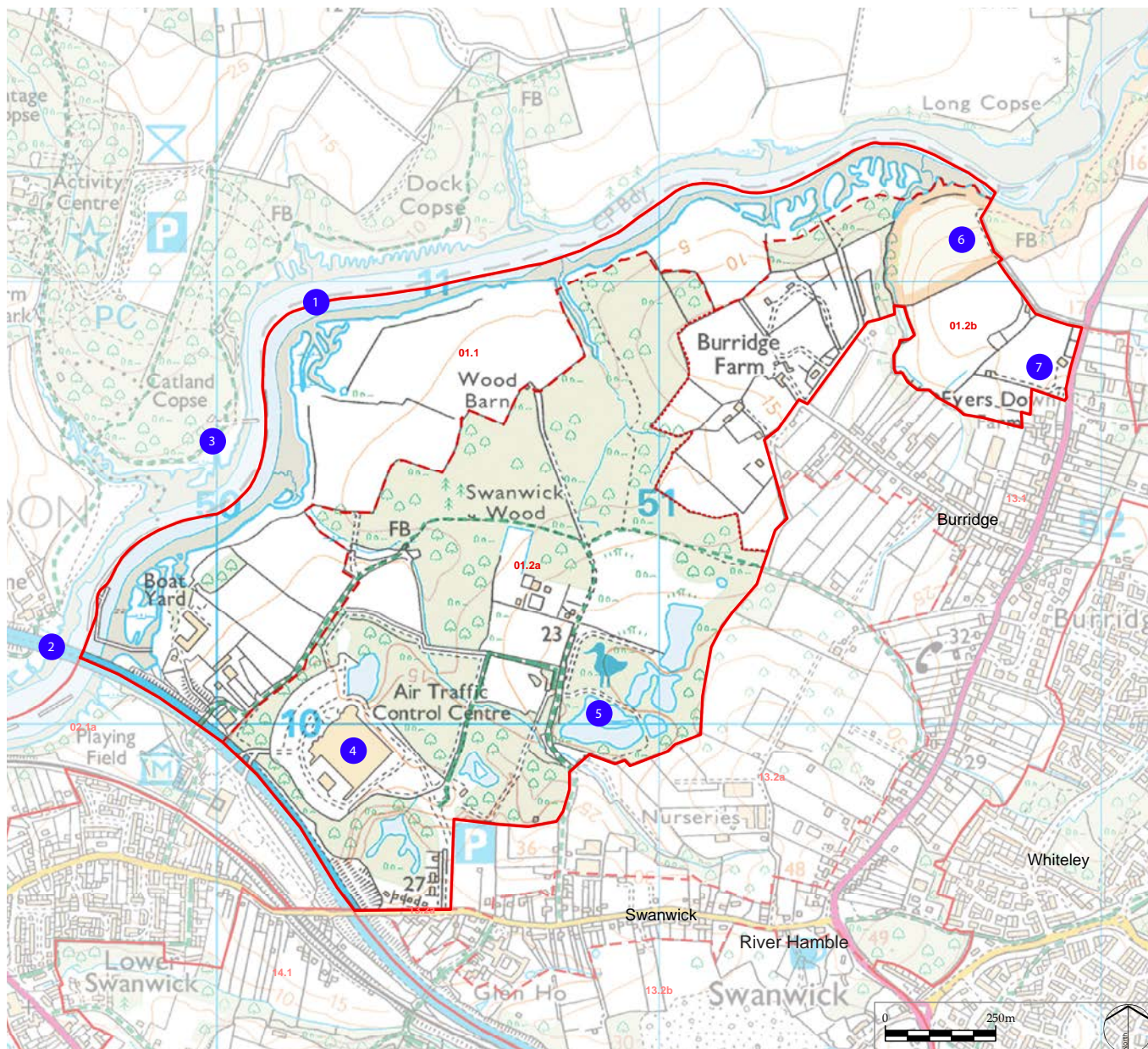
SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area contains a number of important GI assets, including habitats of international and national importance within the river corridor, all of which are highly sensitive to disturbance. These assets should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their value. Development that would adversely affect these assets should be avoided.

Opportunities to provide extended public access within this area, particularly along the riverside, could be considered but need to be balanced against the need to protect valuable ecological assets from disturbance.



LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		River Hamble
	Local Landscape Character Area		M27 Motorway
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Footpath along opposite bank of River Hamble
			NATS Complex
			Swanwick Lake Nature Reserve
			Curbridge Nature Reserve
			Burridge Recreation Ground & Cricket Club

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This area is of high sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, and its contribution to the countryside setting of the Borough and the strategic and local GI framework. The potential adverse effects of the intrusion of built development on these valuable resources and sensitive visual receptors significantly outweigh the restricted visibility of the area from surrounding areas. There is therefore very limited potential for development within the area.

There may be some very modest scope for accommodating small-scale development at the far southern end of the area adjacent to existing commercial development, but the design response for any such proposals would need to be very carefully considered and sensitive to local character in order to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of landscape or ecological importance, in particular the semi-natural habitats associated with the river and its foreshore and the natural tidal regime, and the areas of semi-natural woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats and established hedgerows and trees along field boundaries and watercourses within the area;
- Maintain the quiet, remote and rural character of the river corridor and the quality of views from PROW and other publicly accessible viewpoints ;
- Be located in areas where built development is already present, avoiding intrusion into areas which are currently devoid of buildings or urban influences or activity;
- Be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality and the distinctive character of the receiving landscape;
- Avoid the introduction of any structures that would be visually prominent or intrusive within the wider landscape, e.g. masts or tall buildings;
- Maintain and enhance the existing footpath network within the area and provide opportunities to extend the access network and create new areas of publicly accessible greenspace within the river corridor, where compatible with the protection of ecological and landscape assets,
- Enable management of landscape and ecological features to maximise their role as multi-functional components of the local and wider green infrastructure network (in line with the aims of Project BW37).

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This comprises the intimate mosaic of woodland and farmland that extends eastwards from the river corridor. The dense woodland, much of it of ancient semi-natural origin, incorporates the buildings and grounds of the NATS complex, and the grassland and wetland habitats associated with abandoned clay workings, now managed as the Swanwick Lakes Nature Reserve. The area as a whole has a coherent character typified by the strong sense of enclosure and a relative absence of human influence or activity, lending it a peaceful, secluded and relatively undisturbed character. However, there are some variations in land use and local character within it, and two sub-areas have been identified.

Area 1.2a comprises the most heavily wooded and largest part of the LCA. The extensive and mature woodland creates a predominantly enclosed character but within the dense woodland cover are occasional pockets of open space, occupied by grassland, farmland or wetland habitats, which provide variety and contrast in character. A network of paths cross the area (associated with the Nature Reserve) and are evidently well-used, but this activity is absorbed within the enclosed woodland and it retains a quiet, remote and essentially 'natural', unspoilt character. The buildings and grounds of the NATS complex to the south are also relatively well-absorbed within the woodland structure, as are a small number of residential properties and small-holdings.

Area 1.2b is characterised by open fields, rather than dense woodland cover, and comprises a number of small-scale pastures and open spaces (including recreation ground) seemingly carved out of the woodland around the settlement of Burrage. The area is contained by woodland and a strong network of hedgerows and trees around its margins but has a relatively more open character than the area to the south and contains a number of private residential properties/farmhouses set in large gardens or grounds, with swimming pools, tennis courts etc.). Nevertheless, it retains a secluded and predominantly rural and unspoilt character.

The area is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but the entire area was included within the Hamble Valley Area of Special Landscape Character, the former Local Plan designation (no longer in use but indicative of local value). Justification for its designation included the following: it was regarded as being of exceptional scenic quality, with a strong sense of place and topographic and visual unity and a sense of privacy and enclosure; it has a generally unspoilt, rural character and has strong natural qualities; it is of at least Borough-wide importance as a representative example of a tidal river valley, the only example within the Borough; it has notable conservation interests, in particular the ecologically important inter-tidal habitats (SPA/SSSI/SAC), and neighbouring woodlands and wetlands (SSSI/Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands).

These qualities are still evident in the Swanwick Wood LLCA and so the area is judged to be of relatively high value as part of the Borough's landscape resource.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The sensitivity of the landscape resource in this area is judged as relatively high, with very limited scope to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on landscape resources and features of particular value. Although the extensive woodland cover could potentially absorb or reduce the impacts of development on the wider landscape, development would significantly compromise the intrinsic value of the woodlands themselves, and the mosaic of habitats and landscape features that lie within and around. In particular, the qualities of remoteness, seclusion and 'naturalness' would be affected by increased urban influences or activity. Only area 1.2b could offer some very limited potential to accept development of the type already present, i.e. individual properties set within extensive plots, without unacceptable detrimental effects.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

The overall visibility of this LLCA from surrounding areas is extremely restricted by the extensive cover of woodland and trees within the landscape. The area is hidden from view from the motorway and areas to the southwest by vegetation cover or the motorway embankment. Views from the settlements of Swanwick, Burr ridge and Whiteley, to the south and east, are blocked by dense woodland cover. Views from the north and west are also blocked by woodland and tree cover.

The main available views are from the extensive public rights of way network, accessible open space and individual private properties within the area, but these are quite localised and intervisibility within the area is generally restricted. Large parts of the area are not accessible, or visible, to the public from within and there are relatively few viewers in the locality.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

In principle, development could potentially be absorbed within the heavily wooded areas (area 1.2a), without significant impacts on views from the wider surrounding areas. However, there are parts of **area 1.2a** that are visible to people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and may be more sensitive to change, in particular recreational users of the public footpath network, including those visiting the Swanick Lakes Nature Reserve for quiet pursuits such as bird watching. These viewers will be particularly focused on enjoyment of their surroundings and sensitive to changes in the character and quality of views, which are currently attractive and unspoilt by the intrusion of urban influences or detracting features.

The area around Burr ridge Farm within **area 1.2b** is relatively well-screened from surrounding areas by hedgerows and woodland/tree cover, and has limited public access. There may be some limited potential to absorb small-scale development within this area without significant visual effects, and to mitigate with additional woodland/tree planting of an appropriate character to the locality.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The area forms part of an extensive swathe of countryside on either side of the River Hamble that separates settlements at Swanwick, Burridge and Whiteley in the east from the edge of Southampton in the west (although this is not currently designated as a Strategic Gap). It also contributes to the setting of the River Hamble which forms a 'gateway' to the Borough when approaching from the west. Apart from some commercial development along the southern edge of the area adjacent to the M27 corridor, this area retains a strongly rural character and has an important role in maintaining the distinction between urban areas and surrounding countryside. This distinction could be compromised by significant development in the area.

The area is physically and visually separated from the main urban areas within Fareham by the motorway corridor and therefore does not form part of their immediate setting. The relatively gentle topography of the area also means that the woodlands are not visually prominent and do not have a strong role as a backdrop to the nearby settlements of Swanwick and Burridge. However, the wooded background does contribute to the character of these settlements where it is glimpsed in views from local roads, paths and public spaces.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area does not form a critical role in the setting of urban areas but it does have some sensitivity as part of the wider countryside context of the Borough, maintaining the clear distinction between built areas and open countryside, and forming part of the extensive buffer of rural landscape around the River Hamble separating the built areas of Southampton and settlements in the north-east of the Borough. Built development could compromise these roles if it intrudes upon and erodes the rural, unspoilt character of the area.



LLCA 1.2 - SWANWICK WOOD AND LAKES

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

Parts of this area contribute to the existing green infrastructure network and it contains a number of important GI assets. The River Hamble is identified in the PUSH GI strategy as a 'sub-regional scale blue corridor' and the habitats and access links within this area contribute to the multi-functional value of the corridor. The PUSH strategy seeks "to conserve and enhance these corridors as semi-natural refuges through the creation of wooded stepping stones (such as the planting of trees on arable field edges and within hedgerows) in order to connect existing woodland habitats, enhance biodiversity and reinforce local landscape character."

The Swanwick Lakes Nature Reserve and network of paths and open spaces set within the wooded landscape of area 1.2a make a valuable contribution to the local access network, providing for informal recreation and appreciation of wildlife, and access links with the nearby settlements of Swanwick and Burridge. At its far northern end, area 1.2b includes a small parcel of Access Land owned by the National Trust that forms part of the Curbridge Nature Reserve (extending northwards along the river beyond the Borough boundary), and public open space at Burridge Recreation Ground and Cricket Club.

The Fareham GI Strategy (2014) includes this area within GI Project BW37: the Hamble Catchment Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA), which aims to promote targeted enhancements to various habitats and ecological corridors within the area.

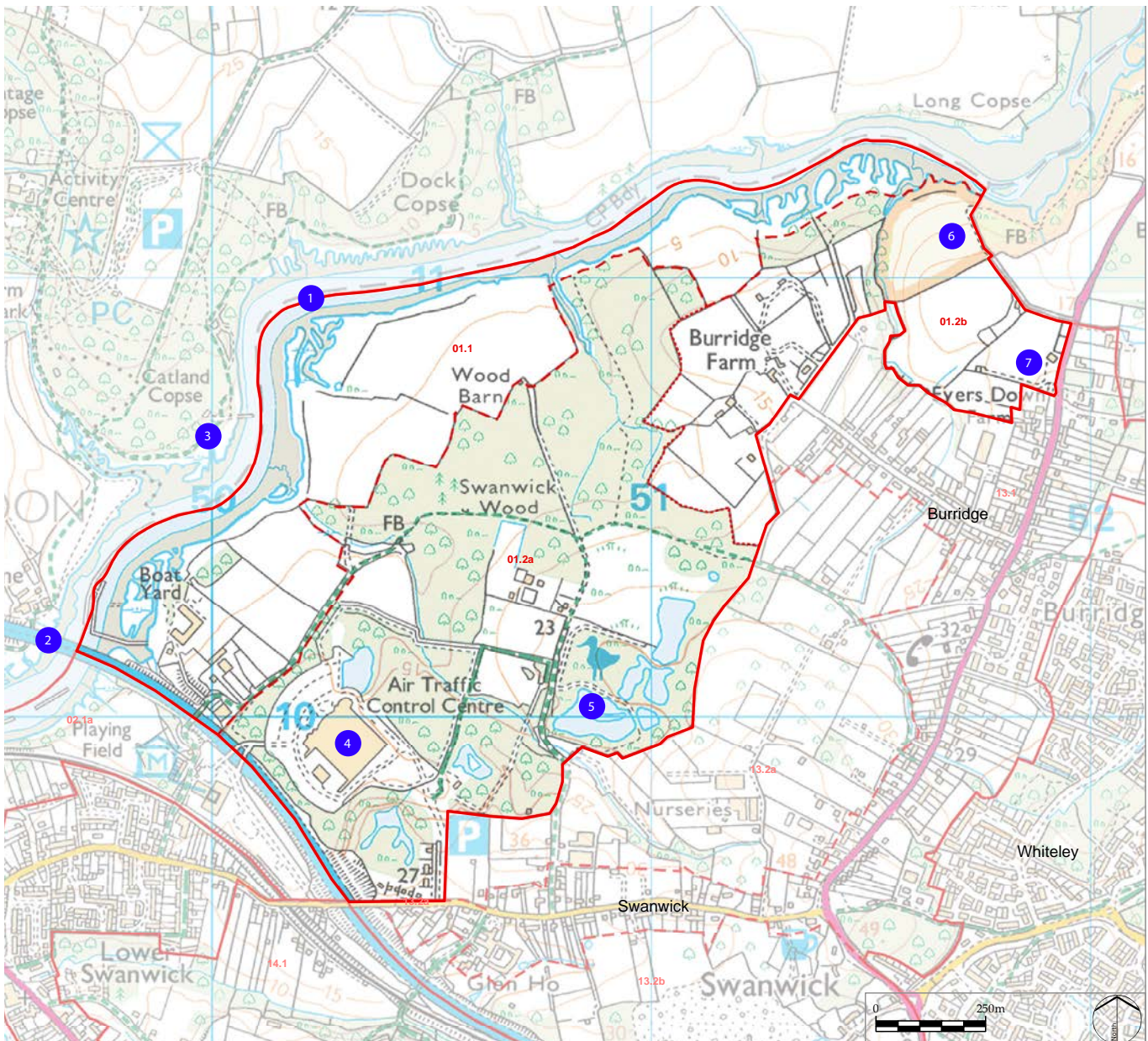


The area contains a number of important GI assets, including habitats of international and national importance within the river corridor and woodlands, grasslands and wetlands within the Swanwick Lakes Nature Reserve, all of which are highly sensitive to disturbance. The area also provides a valuable network of footpaths and accessible spaces, including access land and formal open space at the northern end of the area. These assets should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their value. Development that would adversely affect these assets should be avoided.

Opportunities to provide extended public access within this area, particularly along the riverside, could be considered but need to be balanced against the need to protect valuable ecological assets from disturbance.



LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Landscape Character Area | | River Hamble |
| | Local Landscape Character Area | | M27 Motorway |
| | Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision | | Footpath along opposite bank of River Hamble |
| | | | NATS Complex |
| | | | Swanwick Lake Nature Reserve |
| | | | Curbridge Nature Reserve |
| | | | Burridge Recreation Ground & Cricket Club |

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a whole, this area is of high sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, and its contribution to the countryside setting of the Borough and the strategic and local GI framework. The potential adverse effects of the intrusion of built development on these valuable resources and sensitive visual receptors significantly outweigh the restricted visibility of the area from surrounding areas and the potential to mitigate visual effects by integration within the woodland structure. There is therefore very limited potential for development within the area.

There may be some very modest scope for accommodating small-scale development (i.e. individual dwellings or built form) within area 1.2b but the design response for any such proposals would need to be very carefully considered and sensitive to local character in order to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of landscape or ecological importance, in particular the areas of semi-natural woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats and established hedgerows and trees along field boundaries and watercourses within the area;
- Maintain the quiet, remote and rural character of the wooded farmland mosaic across the whole area and the quality of views from PROW and other publicly accessible viewpoints ;
- Be located in areas where built development is already present, avoiding intrusion into areas which are currently devoid of buildings or urban influences or activity;
- Be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality and the distinctive character of the receiving landscape, e.g. individual buildings set within large, well-treed plots within area 1.2b;
- Avoid the introduction of any structures that would be visually intrusive within the wider landscape, e.g. masts or tall buildings;
- Maintain and enhance existing footpaths, access routes and links within the area, to maximise their role as multi-functional components of the local and wider green infrastructure network (in line with the aims of Project BW37)
- Provide opportunities to extend the access network and links to neighbouring areas and to create new areas of publicly accessible greenspace within the area, where compatible with the protection of ecological and landscape assets;
- Maintain and strengthen the existing structure of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value. Use native broadleaved species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions in new woodland and tree planting.

2.2 LCA 2: LOWER HAMBLE VALLEY

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

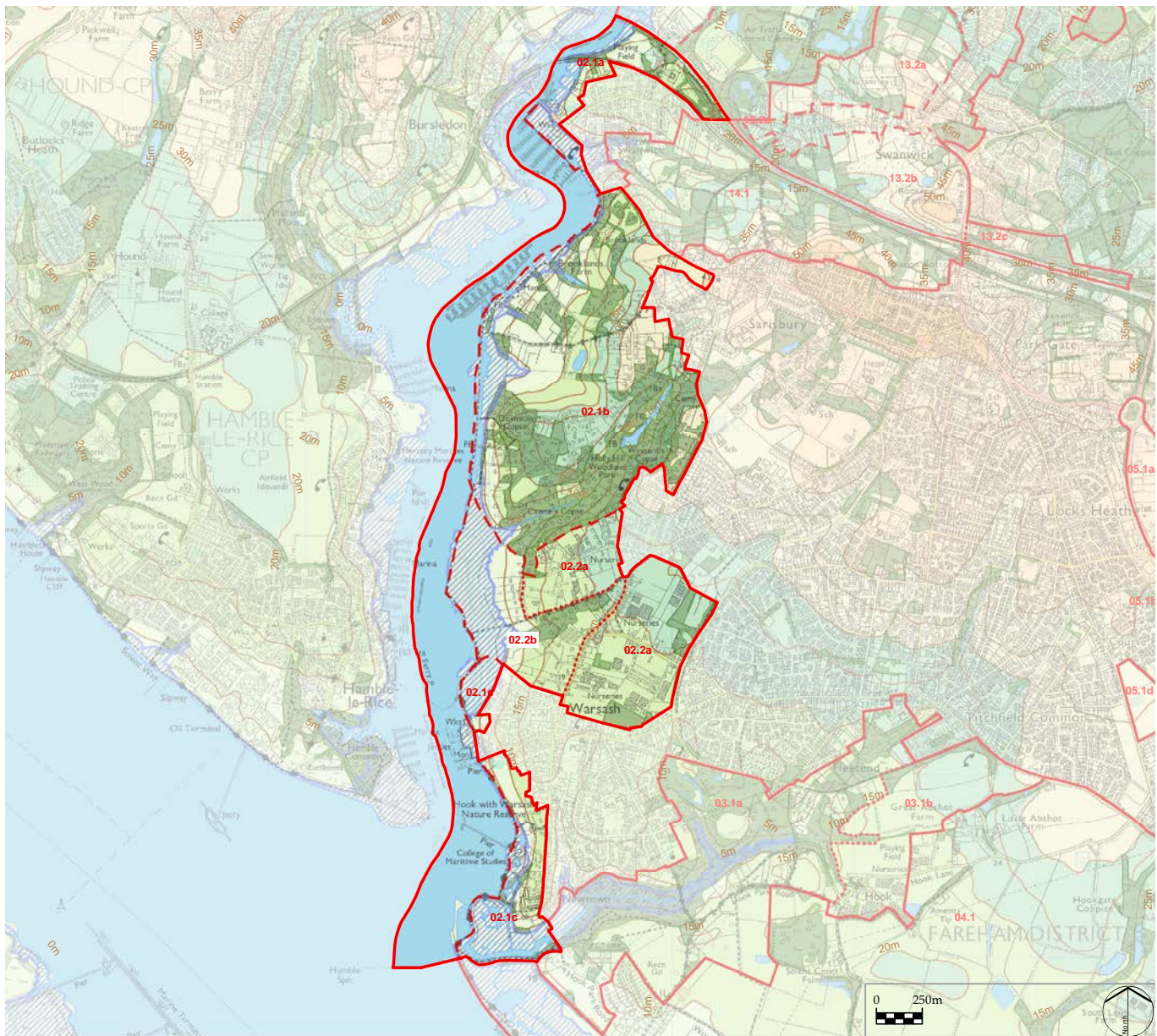
	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

LCA 2 - LOWER HAMBLE VALLEY

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

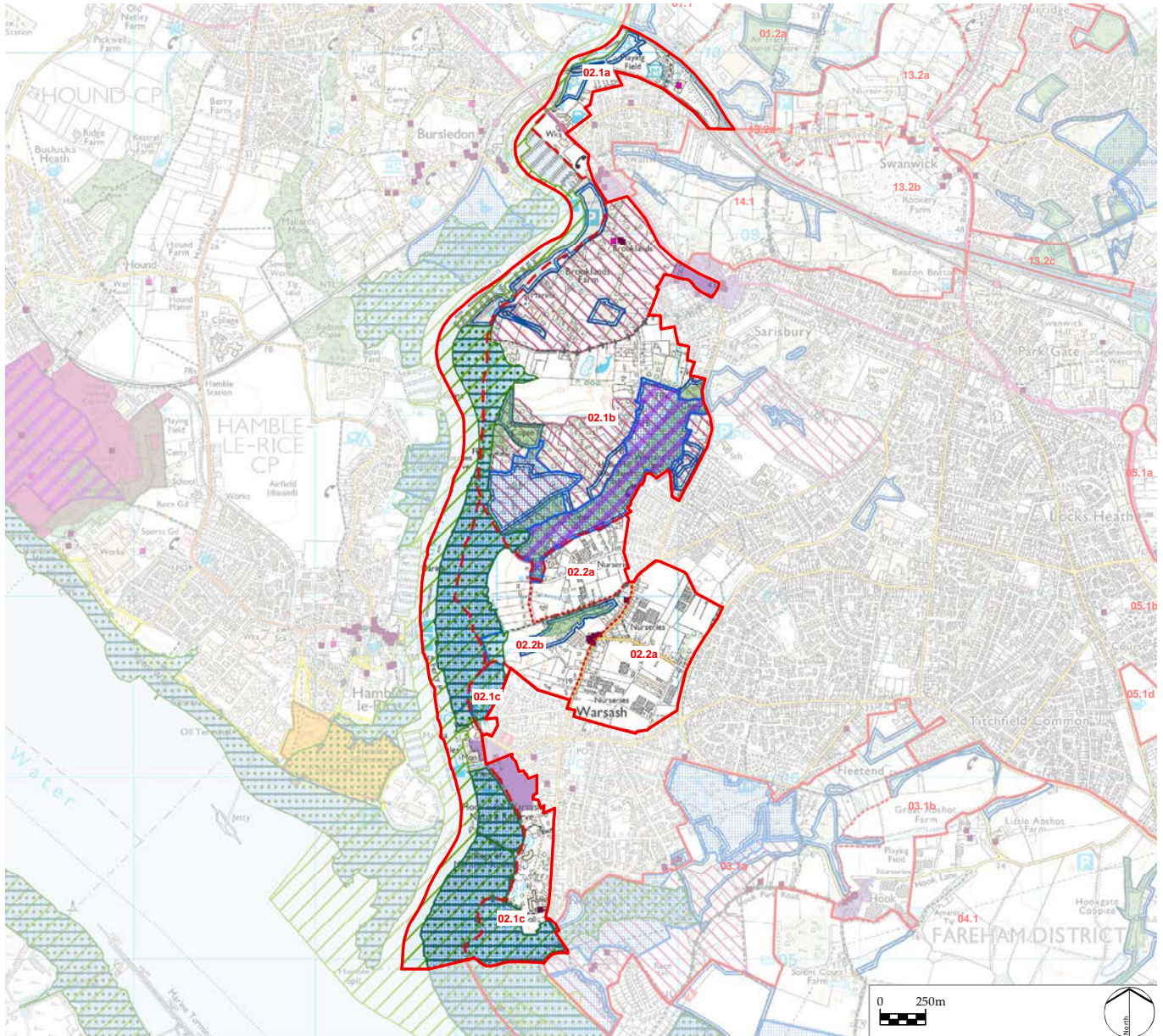


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		5m Contours
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		
	Water		
	Flood Alert Areas		
			0m
			50m

LCA 2 - LOWER HAMBLE VALLEY

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest		RAMSAR
	Local Landscape Character Area		Local Nature Reserve		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Special Protection Area		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
			Special Area of Conservation		Conservation Areas
			Country Park		Historic Parks and Gardens

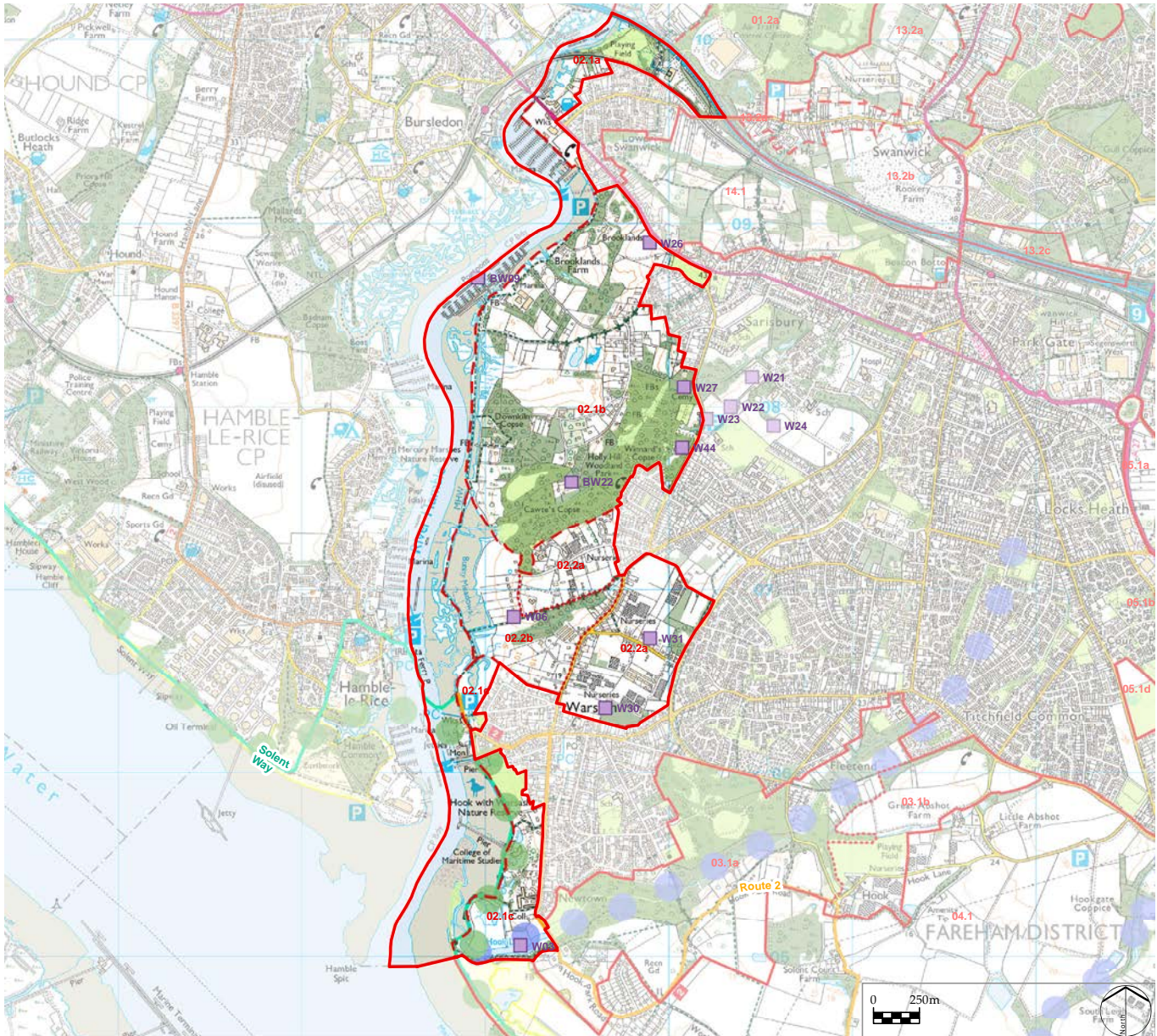
Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

LCA 2 - LOWER HAMBLE VALLEY

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

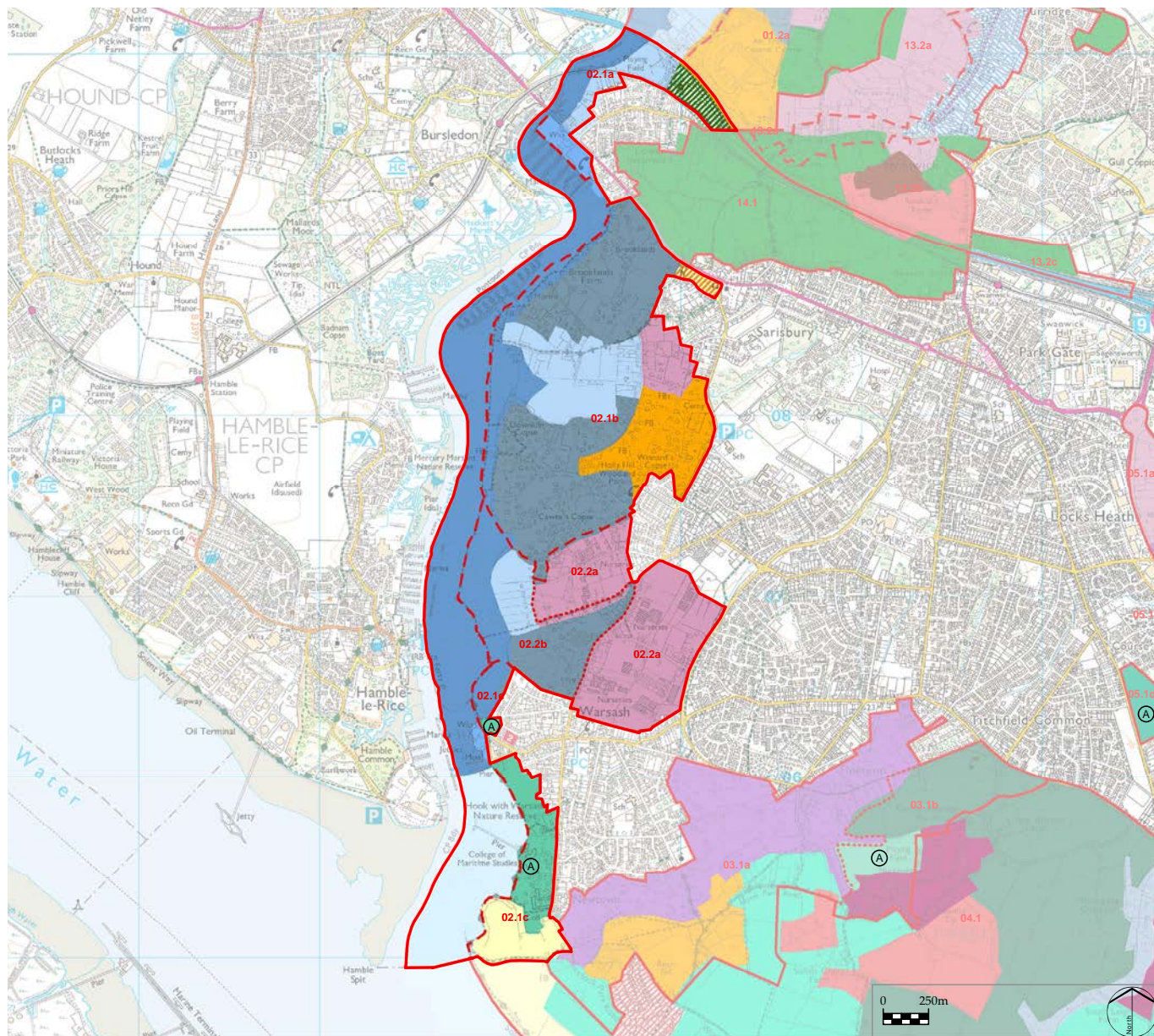


LEGEND

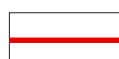
	Landscape Character Area		Recreational Route
	Local Landscape Character Area		National Cycle Network
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Footpath
	Green Infrastructure Projects		Woodland
	Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Green Corridor		Access Land
	Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor		Existing Open Space

LCA 2 - LOWER HAMBLE VALLEY

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

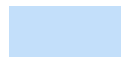
Landscape Types



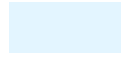
Enclosed Tidal River



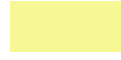
Enclosed Valley Side



Open Valley Side



Open Estuary



Marsh Reedswamp & Brackish Lagoon



Parkland & Grounds



Open Coastal Amenity Land



Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale



Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure



Urban: Industrial



Urban: Greenspace

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area comprises most of the extensively wooded valley sides of the lower reaches of the River Hamble, excluding a section of the valley side which is classified as 'small-scale horticulture and small holdings' landscape type (included in LLCA 2: Warsash nurseries). The character of the valley side landscape is quite varied but its overall west-facing aspect, steep slopes and undulating topography (incorporating a series of minor tributary valleys), extensively wooded character and strong relationship with the River Hamble are all unifying features.

Area 2.1a is a small area of low-lying, flat land along the edge of the River Hamble, sandwiched between the M27 motorway and Swanwick Marina. It is mainly occupied by existing development and urban land uses, and only two parcels of 'unbuilt land' remain within the area: playing fields lying between the motorway and railway line, enclosed by dense vegetation; and a single small field grazed by horses next to 'The Navigator' pub on Bridge Road (incorporating a play area). Both areas are affected by their context and land uses and have an urban fringe character, more pronounced in the latter area.

Area 2.1b comprises the main area of semi-rural landscape within this LLCA. The valley side sweeps westwards down to the foreshore of the River Hamble from a highpoint of c.43m at the northern end and is indented by a series of minor tributary valleys which produce quite complex topography, clothed in a diverse patchwork of woodland, farmland, parkland and the gardens/grounds of private houses.

The northern part of the area contains Brooklands, a Georgian country house (Grade II* Listed), surrounded by designed gardens and parklands which include extensive woodland and lawned terraces sweeping down to the River Hamble, and are of high landscape quality.

Further south is an area of landscape characterised by a mosaic of small scale pastures and larger fields under grassland, mature hedgerows, copses and more extensive areas of woodland, occupying the slopes of a gentle, minor valley. Apart from a marina development on the foreshore, there is little built development on the lower slopes but the upper slopes are lined with large detached houses set within wooded or well-treed plots and accessed by narrow, enclosed lanes.

The abundance of tree cover means that this development is not conspicuous and the landscape retains a pastoral, semi-rural and relatively unspoilt character.

Beyond this lies the thickly wooded landscape around Holly Hill Woodland Park, a mid and Late 19th century landscaped woodland park (owned and managed by the Borough Council as a public amenity), which occupies another minor tributary valley of the Hamble and includes lakes and woodland walks. As well as its value as a historic designed parkland, the woodland landscape is of considerable ecological and amenity value and connects into the woodlands and inter-tidal habitats of the Hamble Estuary which are covered by multiple designations.

Area 2.1c occupies gently sloping or flat land alongside the mouth of the River Hamble in the far south of the LLCA. It comprises a large area of open grassland designated as public open space (known as Strawberry Field), the gardens of private houses, the campus of Warsash Maritime Academy and a small area of wetland and grassland habitats around Hook Lake, at the mouth of the Hook Valley. These areas have a strong relationship with the River Hamble and large parts are covered by multiple designations, reflecting the exceptional environmental and amenity value of the area.

The area is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but the area was included within the former Hamble Valley Area of Special Landscape Character (not replaced within the current adopted plan but indicative of local value). Justification for its designation included exceptional scenic quality, with a strong sense of place and topographic and visual unity and a sense of privacy and enclosure; a generally unspoilt, rural character with strong natural qualities; a representative example of a tidal river valley, the only example within the Borough; notable conservation interests within the river corridor and adjacent wetlands and woodlands. These qualities are evident in this part of the LCA and so the area as a whole is judged to be of high value as part of the Borough's landscape resource.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Landscape sensitivity within **area 2.1b** is high. The designed landscapes of Brooklands and Holly Hill are of recognised landscape value at the County level (i.e. listed on the Hampshire Register of Parks and Gardens) and the comparatively unspoilt, pastoral valley landscape in between has many positive qualities, including a diverse patchwork of landscape elements enclosed within the valley form and strong wooded framework, and perceptual qualities enhanced by a strong visual relationship with the tidal river landscape beyond. Existing development is relatively inconspicuous, as it is generally well-integrated within mature woodland or tree cover, and does not intrude significantly on the semi-rural character of the area. Further development of a similar kind (i.e. individual properties set within well-treed plots) could potentially be accommodated without altering this character, but more extensive development within the more open parts of the area, or which would result in loss of woodland/tree cover is likely to have unacceptable landscape impacts.



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Within **area 2.1a**, the playing fields are enclosed within by mature belts of trees and woodland around the perimeter that provide a sense of enclosure and help to reduce intrusion from the adjacent transport corridors and built development. As an area of landscape it has some positive qualities but its isolation from wider tracts of unbuilt land and proximity to the urban edge of Lower Swanwick reduce its sensitivity to change. However, its value as public open space and its inaccessibility are likely to preclude development. The field adjacent to The Navigator pub is heavily influenced by its urbanised context and of low sensitivity and high development potential in landscape resource terms.

Area 2.1c also contains highly sensitive landscape resources in the form of valuable open space at Strawberry Field, which has a strong visual relationship with the adjacent high quality river landscape, and the semi-natural habitats at Hook Lake. These resources are covered by multiple designations and are of high sensitivity and little or no obvious potential to accommodate new development. The mature tree cover, wetlands and open spaces along side the river within the grounds of the maritime college are also of value and contribute to the setting of the River Hamble. These should be retained as far as possible in any future proposals for redevelopment of the campus land.

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

In general terms, visibility and intervisibility over much of this area is very restricted from areas to the east, north and south by the visual enclosure provided by landform and extensive woodland and tree cover. However, parts of the wooded valley sides are visible from the River Hamble, including footpaths along the river corridor, and some areas further to the west.

In **area 2.1a**, the playing fields are well-screened by mature vegetation with only glimpsed views from the rail corridor and possibly from a small number of properties along Coalhouse Lane. Conversely, the field on Bridge Road is highly visible from the road and neighbouring properties but is viewed within an urban context.

Area 2.1c is open to views from the river itself and the riverside footpath (part of the Solent Way long distance footpath), and also from nearby housing on the edge of Warsash and the Maritime College.

Local topography and extensive woodland and tree cover limit views into **area 2.1b**. The area is not visible from main roads or settlements in the surrounding area and only glimpses are available from the local and residential road network (e.g. a small part of the Brooklands estate from Swanwick Shore Road). The principal views are from the river and the PRoW and access network alongside and within the area, comprising the riverside footpath, the footpath linking the riverside with Crableck Lane, and the access routes and spaces within the Holly Hill Woodland Park. Some properties within and on the edge of the area may also have partial views but mostly these will be localised and interrupted by vegetation. There are some more distant views across the River Hamble from the opposite shore and some properties and minor lanes along the valley side, but these are infrequent and the area is typically seen as a thickly wooded valley side from this distance and elevation.

The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would be local residents and recreational users of the river and the PRoW and open space network within the area as a whole. Only the field within area 2.1a will be visible to a wider range of viewers travelling along the A27 Bridge Road.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The playing field site in **area 2.1a** is considered to be of low visual sensitivity because of the screening provided by mature vegetation, the relatively low number of viewers and the fleeting nature of views from the railway. The field on Bridge Road is also considered to be of low visual sensitivity because, although highly visible, the views are urbanised and would not be changed dramatically by development on this site. Development potential is moderate to high.

Area 2.1c is considered to be of high visual sensitivity because of its predominantly open character (Strawberry Field) and the high quality of the views, combined with the high sensitivity of local residents and recreational users of the River Hamble and the PRoW network, including the Solent Way, a designated long-distance footpath. Development potential is highly constrained.

In **area 2.1b** the most sensitive areas from a visual perspective are the parklands surrounding Brooklands (where intrusion of development could have a major impact on the setting of the Listed Building and views across the River Hamble), the woodland landscape of Holly Hill Park (where there is extensive public access, highly sensitive viewers and high quality views, albeit restricted within wooded areas) and the more open, visually exposed slopes of the central valley area, where development may be visible from the river, PRoW network and surrounding properties, intruding on high quality views. The potential for development in these areas is highly restricted. However, there may be some potential for development within the well-treed parts of the valley tops where it could be absorbed without substantial adverse influence on views or visual amenity, for example within and around existing residential areas along Holly Hill Lane and Barnes Lane.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The broad lower reaches of the River Hamble act as a physical barrier to coalescence of urban development on either side of the river but this swathe of unbuilt landscape helps to reinforce perceptions of this separation. However, it does not play a critical role in the setting of the urban area as the land falls away from the urban edge and there is little visual inter-relationship between the two (e.g. in general, it does not form a significant backdrop or foreground to the urban area). However, area 2.1c does contribute to the setting of Warsash, forming a foreground to the settlement in views from the river, riverbank and opposite shore.

In respect of settings, the most significant role this area performs is as an integral part of the setting of the Hamble River, lending a distinctively heavily wooded and unspoilt character to the valley sides as a backdrop to views from the river and the west. In turn, this contributes to the distinctiveness and quality of the wider landscape setting of the Borough as a whole.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The importance of the area in respect of settings lies with its heavily wooded, semi-rural and essentially unbuilt character as a high quality setting for the River Hamble and the western edge of the Borough. Any major loss of tree cover or extension of urban form that would intrude visually and weaken this role would be damaging, but there may be some potential for small scale development to be integrated without compromising the area's overall character or integrity.



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GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

Parts of this area contribute to the existing green infrastructure network at a local and strategic level, and it contains a number of significant GI assets, including the extensive areas of woodland and habitats within the River Hamble corridor, which is identified in the PUSH GI strategy as a ‘sub-regional scale blue corridor’. Project F4: River Meon and River Hamble Corridors seeks “to conserve and enhance these corridors as semi-natural refuges through the creation of wooded stepping stones (such as the planting of trees on arable field edges and within hedgerows) in order to connect existing woodland habitats, enhance biodiversity and reinforce local landscape character.” The area also includes part of the ‘sub-regional scale green corridor’ which follows the Solent coastline and Project C4 of the strategy applies to Hook Lake, and seeks to create an intertidal compensation habitat as part of wider habitat creation programmes.

A number of projects are identified for this area within the Fareham GI Strategy, mostly relating to improving links between Holly Hill Woodland Park and new greenspace and GI assets to be developed at the former Cold East Hospital site but also including footpath links between the River Hamble Corridor and the Solent Way, and the strategic project at Hook Lake.

In addition to habitats of ecological and landscape importance, GI assets include significant area of public open space at Holly Hill Woodland Park and Strawberry Field, as well as playing fields at Lower Swanwick, and a continuous footpath route along the river corridor with links to urban areas to the east.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area contains a number of important GI assets, including habitats of international and national importance within the river corridor, and an extensive framework of woodland, trees and other habitats, open space and footpaths. These assets should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their ecological, landscape and amenity value, and development that would adversely affect them should be avoided.

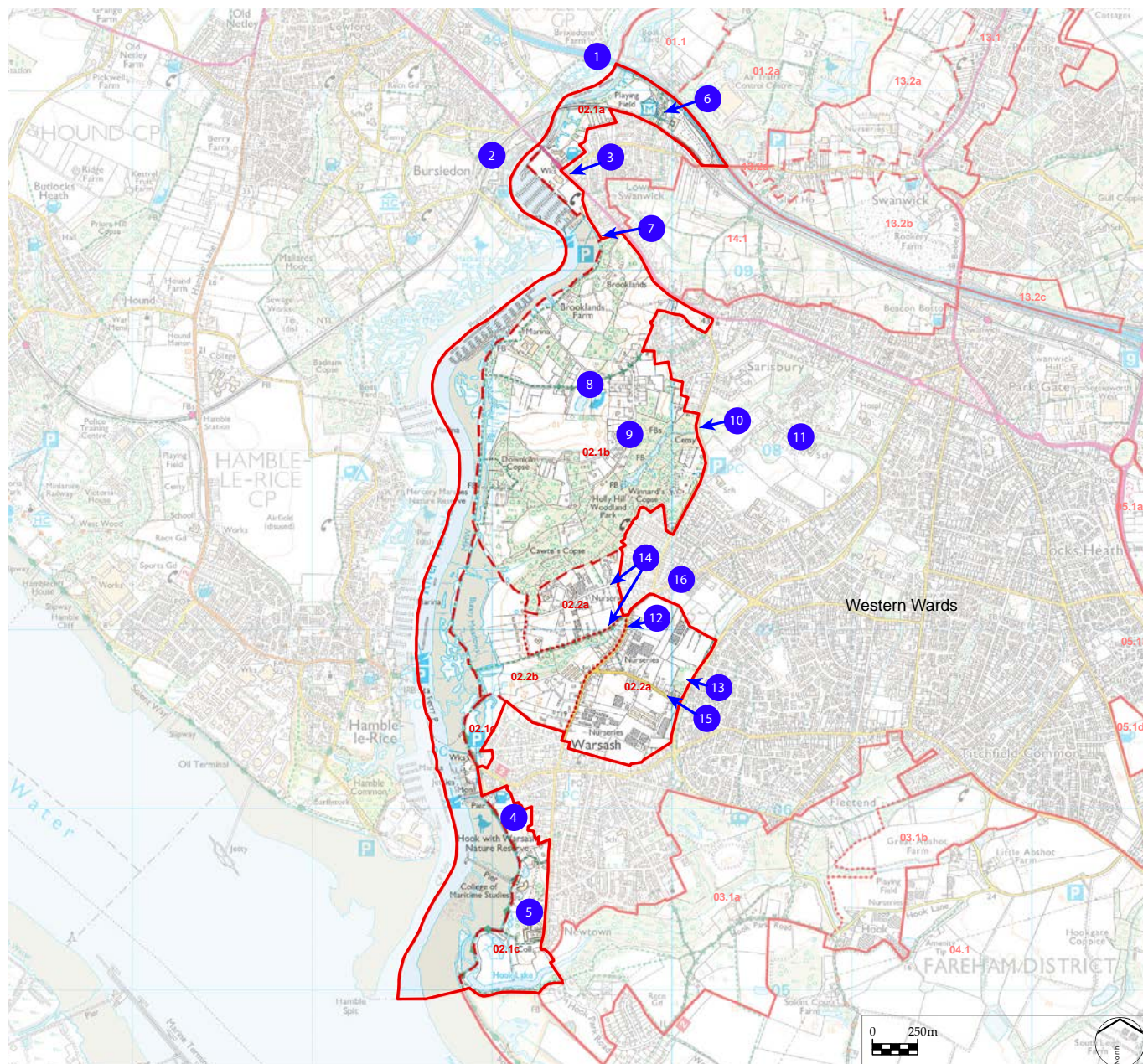
Enhancement of the GI network should be encouraged, in accordance with the priorities identified in the PUSH and Fareham GI strategies, e.g. providing improved access links between Holly Hill Woodland Park and the wider network.



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LLCA 2.1 - LOWER HAMBLE VALLEY SIDE

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area	1	M27 Motorway	9	Holly Hill Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area	2	Swanwick Marina	10	Barnes Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	3	Bridge Road (A27)	11	Cold East Hospital
		4	Strawberry Field	12	Brook Lane
		5	Warsash Maritime Academy	13	Lockwood Road
		6	Coalhouse Lane	14	Brook Avenue
		7	Swanwick Shore Road	15	Greenaway Lane
		8	Crableck Lane	16	Sarisbury Green

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This is a complex and diverse area of landscape which is generally of high sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, the lack of intrusion from existing development, its contribution to the setting of the River Hamble and its diverse range of valuable ecological, heritage and GI resources.

Overall the area offers very limited potential for development but there may be some modest scope for accommodating small-scale development in some areas of lower sensitivity, where there is greater opportunity for integration within the landscape. In particular, the small field alongside Bridge Road is of low sensitivity, and there are potential opportunities to integrate some new development within the well-treed parts of the valley tops, for example within and around existing residential areas along Holly Hill Lane and Barnes Lane. There may also be some potential for redevelopment of existing sites (e.g. Warsash Maritime Academy) as long as the well-treed/wooded character of the riverside landscape, particularly when viewed from the river and PRoW network, is maintained.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of recognised landscape, ecological, heritage or amenity value within the area as a whole, including historic parks and gardens at Brooklands and Holly Hill Woodland Park, significant areas of public open space (Holly Hill and Strawberry Field) and woodland, wetland, inter-tidal and other habitats of ecological significance within the area;
- Protect and enhance the extensive cover of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value, and the distinctively wooded character of the setting of the River Hamble;
- Maintain the characteristic mosaic of landscape features along the valley side and avoid the intrusion of urban features into pastoral, unspoilt areas, such as within the central valley area;
- Be carefully integrated within well-treed plots in areas of lower landscape and visual sensitivity, for example within and around existing residential development along Holly Hill Lane and Barnes Lane;
- Be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality (e.g. individual or small groups of detached dwellings in large, well-treed plots);
- Maintain the essentially quiet semi-rural character of the area and lanes and access routes, avoiding intrusive or inappropriate urban styles of lighting, signage, paving etc;
- Avoid the introduction of any structures that would be visually intrusive within the wider landscape, e.g. masts or tall buildings;
- Use native species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions within new planting schemes.
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network (including footpaths and open space) and take advantage of opportunities to strengthen and extend access and habitat links within the area, in particular to improve access connections between the public open space at the Holly Hill Woodland Park with the local network.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area occupies the sloping valley side above the River Hamble between Holly Hill and the edge of Warsash, and an adjacent area of flatter land at the valley top to the east lying between Brook Lane and Lockwood Road. The area is divided into two sub-areas.

Area 2.2a once formed part of a much larger area of open farmland (covering much of the area now known as Locks Heath and Warsash) dominated by nurseries and glasshouses predominantly used for the growing of strawberries, much of which has been lost to urban encroachment. The landscape is characterised by regular shaped, small to medium sized fields under horticultural crops or pasture, contained within a strong structure of field boundaries, and frequent groups of large-scale glasshouses and agricultural buildings set in large open areas. Some of these glasshouses have been abandoned and have fallen into disrepair.

Mixed in with the nurseries are pockets of low-density residential development (running along the roadsides, in individual plots or in groups), small-scale pastures, areas of rough open grassland and developing scrub on abandoned farmland, and blocks/lines of trees. The area of horticultural land centred around Brook Avenue is contained by the dense woodlands of Holly Hill to the north and a heavily wooded minor valley to the south, lending this area an enclosed, private character, reinforced by the low-key character of the narrow access roads and sloping topography. In contrast, the other horticultural area is surrounded by busier local roads (Brook Lane and Lockwood Road) and has a less secluded character, despite some substantial blocks of woodland, hedgerows and belts of trees. The mixture of land uses, housing types, boundary treatments and varying condition of land, buildings, vegetation and other features lend a suburban, fringe character to much of the landscape in area 2.2a. The area is undergoing change with major new residential development replacing former horticultural land to the immediate north east of the area. In general, its scenic quality and landscape value is judged to be moderate, although the blocks of woodland, hedgerows and mature trees within the area are valuable landscape features.



Area 2.2b comprises the minor wooded valley between Brook Lane and Brook Avenue and the lower slopes of the main valley side below Brook Avenue that sweep down to the River Hamble. Apart from the enclosed wooded valley itself, this land is mainly occupied by residential rather than horticultural development. Typically this comprises sizeable detached houses set within large, well-treed plots or grounds containing tennis courts, pools etc., many with views out across the River Hamble and some with river frontage. The low key nature of the road network, abundant tree cover and sloping topography lend this area a sense of seclusion and exclusivity. Although somewhat suburbanised by residential uses, the landscape is in good condition and generally attractive and it contains some valuable features, such as the wooded valley (designated as a SINC). It also has a strong visual relationship with the river and its fringing inter-tidal and marshland habitats, which are covered by multiple designations reflecting their ecological significance.

The area as a whole is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but area 2.2b was included within the former Hamble Valley Area of Special Landscape Character (no longer in use but indicative of local value). Justification for its designation included exceptional scenic quality, with a strong sense of place and topographic and visual unity and a sense of privacy and enclosure; a generally unspoilt, rural character with strong natural qualities; a representative example of a tidal river valley, the only example within the Borough; notable conservation interests within the river corridor and adjacent wetlands and woodlands. These qualities are evident in this part of the LCA and it is therefore judged to be of high value as part of the Borough's landscape resource.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The type of horticultural landscape represented within **area 2.2a** has been progressively reduced in extent over the years with the encroachment of residential development, and a case could be put for the remaining areas to be protected from further loss as an increasingly 'rare' landscape type. However, the abandonment of many glasshouses suggests that such enterprises are in decline, and the evidence of dereliction and lack of management of buildings and land has an adverse effect upon the quality and condition of the landscape. The character and quality of the landscape has already been affected by urban influences and landscape value is relatively low and, therefore, tolerant of change. The presence of a good structure of woodland, hedgerows and trees provides opportunities for integration of new buildings within the existing field pattern, without significant adverse effects upon landscape resources.

New development may also have positive effects, providing opportunities for new investment in the landscape to return it to good condition and to create a coherent identity for the area. Any redevelopment of former nursery sites or other land within this area should be undertaken in accordance with a clear vision for a new distinctive character and sense of place for this area, which in some way reflects its former uses and landscape context (e.g. as a productive landscape) and its distinctive regular, orthogonal patterns, and distinguishes it from the rather anonymous and amorphous sprawl of the Western Wards.

Area 2.2b is of higher landscape quality and sensitivity. The existing residential development is relatively inconspicuous, as it is generally well-integrated within mature woodland or tree cover, and does not intrude significantly on the character of the area. Further development of a similar kind (i.e. individual properties set within well-treed plots) could potentially be accommodated without altering this character, but more extensive development within more open parts of the area, or which would result in loss of woodland/tree cover is likely to have unacceptable landscape impacts.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

In general terms, visibility and intervisibility over much of this area is restricted by the visual enclosure provided by woodlands, hedgerows and tree cover and by built form within the settlements that surround the area to the north, east and south.

The northern part of **area 2.2a** (around Brook Avenue) is contained by woodland and tree cover or urban form on all sides and is visible only from close quarters, with occasional glimpsed views from Brook Avenue through gaps in boundary vegetation and from the properties along the lane. There is no public access within this area apart from the along the lanes. Intervening vegetation along field boundaries reduce the extent of these views and intervisibility generally within this area.

Area 2.2b is also relatively enclosed by landform, built development and strong vegetation cover within the minor wooded valley and the mature gardens and grounds of the residential properties that occupy this land. The most visually sensitive part of this area are the slopes with a more open character which are visible from within the river corridor and opposite bank. Some of the residential properties are visible from these locations but are set against a backdrop of the wooded hillside which reduces their prominence.

The remainder of **area 2.2a** (between Brook Lane and Lockswood Road) is more visible than the Brook Avenue area but it is still relatively visually contained from views from surrounding areas. The roads that define the edge of the area are mostly lined by houses, hedgerows or roadside trees and vegetation, which screen or interrupt views into the 'interior' of this area from the road network, although there are occasional glimpses through gaps. However, there are views into this interior from Greenaway Lane and from the minor lane that forms the northern boundary of the area at Sarisbury Green. There are two short sections of public footpath within this northern area but views are limited by vegetation cover or glasshouses.

The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would therefore be local residents and users of the local road network, and recreational users within the river corridor for area 2.2b only.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area as a whole is of relatively low visual sensitivity because of the strong structure of trees, woodland and boundary vegetation within and surrounding the area. Local residents will be very sensitive to changes in the view but relatively few properties have views into the area and these are generally very localised and restricted by vegetation or built form. Recreational users in the river corridor are also highly sensitive but would be affected only by changes in area 2.2b.

There is potential for new development to be integrated within both parts of **area 2.2a** without significant adverse visual impacts, so long as the existing structure of vegetation within the surrounding area and along field boundaries is maintained and strengthened through additional planting.

Development potential is more restricted within **area 2.2b** because of the quality of views and visibility of some areas from the river corridor. However, there may be some limited potential for infill within areas which are screened by the valley-side woodland or other mature vegetation cover, where it could be absorbed without substantial adverse influence on views or visual amenity.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The lack of visibility of **area 2.2a** from wider areas means that it does not have a significant role in the visual setting of settlements in the area. However, the area between Brook Lane and Lockwood Road currently provides an area of predominantly unbuilt land between the edges of the urban area at Sarisbury Green/Locks Heath and Warsash, creating some sense of separation and potentially preventing coalescence. Perceptions of a gap are substantially weakened along Brook Lane by the almost continuous ribbon development that lines one side of the road or the other between Sarisbury Green and Warsash, and further development to the rear is unlikely to alter these perceptions. The strongly vegetated eastern edge of this area alongside Lockwood Road, however, currently acts as a stronger visual edge to the urban area at Locks Heath and reinforces the perceptions of a boundary between the urban area and undeveloped land to the west. Any future development in this area would need to be contained behind this continuous ‘barrier’ of vegetation along the road corridor in order to prevent the perception of further outward sprawl of Locks Heath. The part of area 2.2a around Brook Avenue does not have a particular role in preventing coalescence or in the setting of the urban area because of its containment between areas of woodland and strong vegetation cover.



As part of the valley sides, **area 2.2b** contributes to the wider setting of the River Hamble when viewed from the river corridor and opposite banks, forming part of its wooded and unspoilt character. In turn, this contributes to the distinctiveness and quality of the wider landscape setting of the Borough as a whole.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The northern part of **area 2.2a** (around Brook Avenue) is of lowest sensitivity in terms of settings – further development within this area would form a western extension of the urban area at Sarisbury Green but would be relatively inconspicuous and would not significantly alter perceptions of the character of the urban area or its setting. Strong vegetation cover and local topography mean that it would also not have an impact on the setting of the River Hamble.



Development in **area 2.2b** is also unlikely to affect the setting of the River Hamble or Warsash as long as it is well-integrated within a strong framework of vegetation and does not substantially alter the wooded, unspoilt character of the valley side landscape.

Extensive built development within the Brook Lane/ Lockwood Road part of **area 2.2a** has the potential to cause further ‘sprawl’ and coalescence of urban areas. However, the effects of this on the separate identity and character of the surrounding settlements could be substantially mitigated by maintaining/reinforcing a strong, uninterrupted ‘green’ corridor of vegetation and greenspace along the eastern boundary with Lockwood Road and to the rear of properties along the southern boundary (on Warsash Road). New planting at the southern end of Brook Lane, where there is currently a break in the roadside housing, could help to create a more distinct ‘gateway’ and sense of arrival at Warsash from this direction.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

As part of the valley sides of the River Hamble, **area 2.2b** forms part of the ‘sub-regional scale blue corridor’ identified in the PUSH GI strategy. Project F4: River Meon and River Hamble Corridors seeks “to conserve and enhance these corridors as semi-natural refuges through the creation of wooded stepping stones (such as the planting of trees on arable field edges and within hedgerows) in order to connect existing woodland habitats, enhance biodiversity and reinforce local landscape character.” This area contains the valuable landscape and habitat feature of the wooded minor valley alongside Brook Avenue (SINC), and the lane itself provides an important access link between Sarisbury Green and the PRoW network along the river corridor. The Fareham GI strategy includes one project in this area (Wo6) which is aimed at preventing disturbance to the internationally important intertidal habitats by control of dogs.

There is limited public access within **area 2.2a** and fewer GI assets, although the blocks of woodland, trees, scrub, hedgerows and grassland habitats scattered all make a contribution to habitat networks. The Fareham GI strategy identifies two projects within the area (W30 and 31) seeking improvements in the provision of access to countryside and natural greenspace, and footpath and cycling opportunities within the Greenaway Lane area.

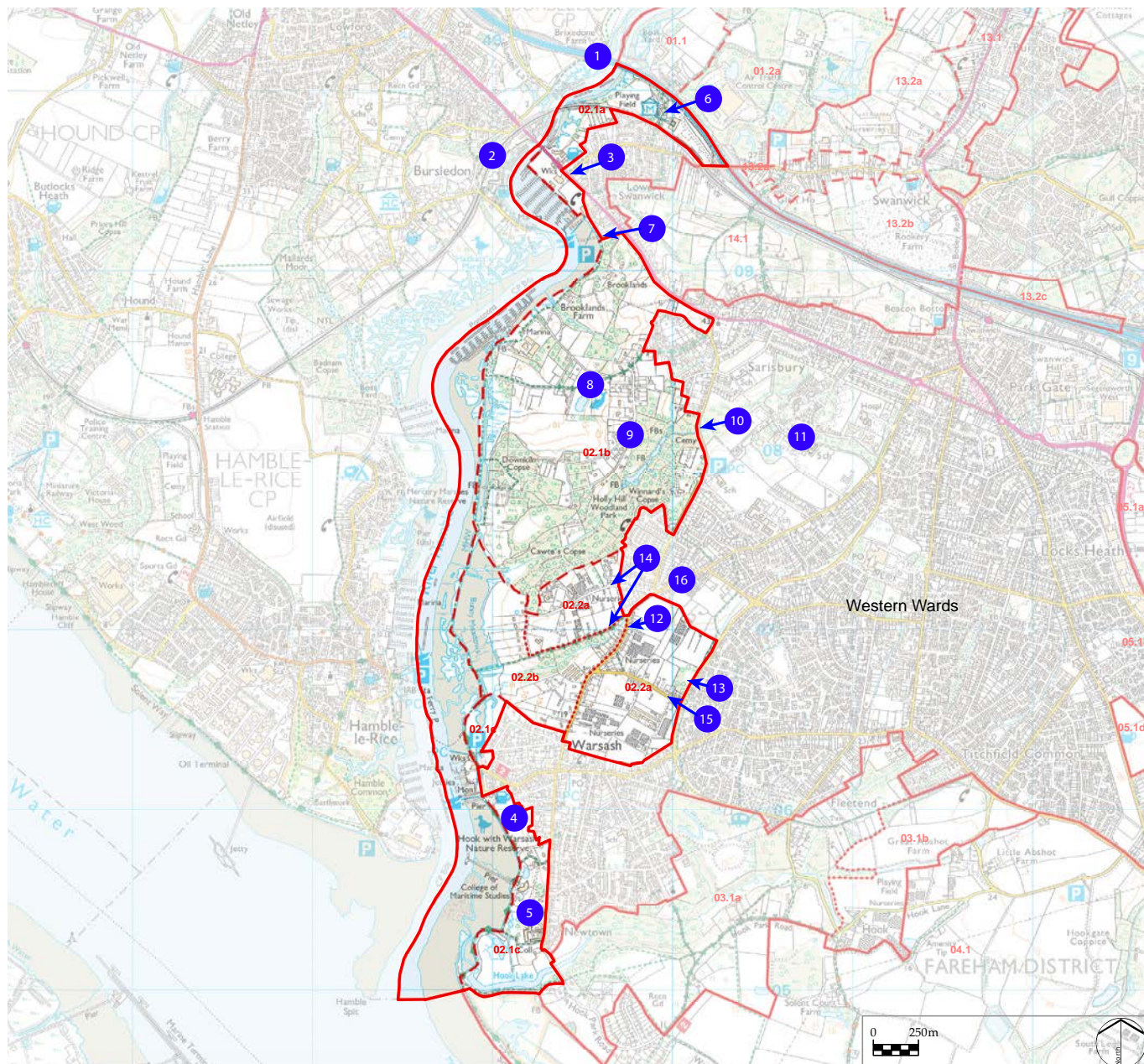
SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Existing GI assets (e.g. the framework of woodland, mature trees, hedgerows, scrub and areas of open grassland, as well as existing PRoW) should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their ecological, landscape and amenity value, and development that would adversely affect them should be avoided. The emphasis in this area is more on improvements in the provision of open space/ greenspace and access and habitat links, particularly around Greenaway Lane and within other parts of area 2.2a.



LLCA 2.2 - WARSASH NURSERIES

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area	1	M27 Motorway	9	Holly Hill Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area	2	Swanwick Marine	10	Barnes Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	3	Bridge Road (A27)	11	Cold East Hospital
		4	Strawberry Field	12	Brook Lane
		5	Warsash Maritime Academy	13	Lockwood Road
		6	Coalhouse Lane	14	Brook Avenue
		7	Swanwick Shore Road	15	Greenaway Lane
		8	Crableck Lane	16	Sarisbury Green

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This is a landscape of mixed sensitivity and development potential. The valley side landscape in **area 2.2b** is of high sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, the lack of intrusive development, and its contribution to the setting of the River Hamble and to the local GI network. Small-scale development of the kind already present in the area (i.e. individual properties set within well-treed plots) could potentially be accommodated without altering this character, but more extensive development within more open parts of the area, or which would result in loss of woodland/tree cover is likely to have unacceptable landscape impacts.

Area 2.2a is of lower sensitivity, mainly because the character and quality of the landscape has been adversely affected by urban influences and some elements of the landscape are in poor condition. There is limited visibility from surrounding areas and the area does not currently make a significant contribution to the setting of the urban area or to the local GI infrastructure. These factors mean that the landscape is more tolerant of change and that there is scope for development to bring about positive opportunities for new investment in the landscape to return it to good condition and to create a coherent identity and sense of place for the area. Any redevelopment of former nursery sites or other land within this area should be undertaken in accordance with a clear vision for a new distinctive character which in some way reflects its former uses and landscape context (e.g. as a productive landscape) and its distinctive regular, orthogonal patterns, and distinguishes it from the rather anonymous and amorphous sprawl of the Western Wards.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of recognised landscape and ecological value within the area as a whole, including the wooded minor valley (SINC), and the wetlands and inter-tidal habitats within the river corridor;
- Protect and enhance the extensive cover of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation throughout the area, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value, and the distinctively wooded character of the setting of the River Hamble;
- Within area 2.2b, be carefully integrated within well-treed plots in areas of lower landscape and visual sensitivity for (e.g. within and around existing residential development on the valley sides below Brook Lane and Brook Avenue) and be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality (e.g. individual or small groups of detached dwellings in large, well-treed plots);
- Within area 2.2a, be designed to contribute to a new, distinctive character for the area, with a strong sense of place and local identity, that reflects past uses and landscape context. Appropriate design references might include: orthogonal layout of buildings and roads (avoiding amorphous curves); typical linear and regular patterns in the landscape (lines, rows, grids); a strong network of greenspaces and corridors (for wildlife and access) incorporating the existing structure of woodland, hedgerows, mature trees and other habitats; a 'green', 'productive' landscape of orchards, allotments, flower gardens, greenhouses etc reflecting past uses;
- Avoid coalescence of the Warsash nurseries area with Locks Heath, Sarisbury Green and Warsash, by providing strong buffers of landscape around the edges of area 2.2b, incorporating the existing uninterrupted belt of trees and mature vegetation along Lockswood Road and creating a distinct 'gateway' to Warsash at the southern end of Brook Lane;
- Use native species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions within new planting schemes.
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network and take advantage of opportunities to strengthen and extend access and habitat links within the area, particularly around Greenaway Lane and within other parts of area 2.2a.

2.3 LCA 3: HOOK VALLEY

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

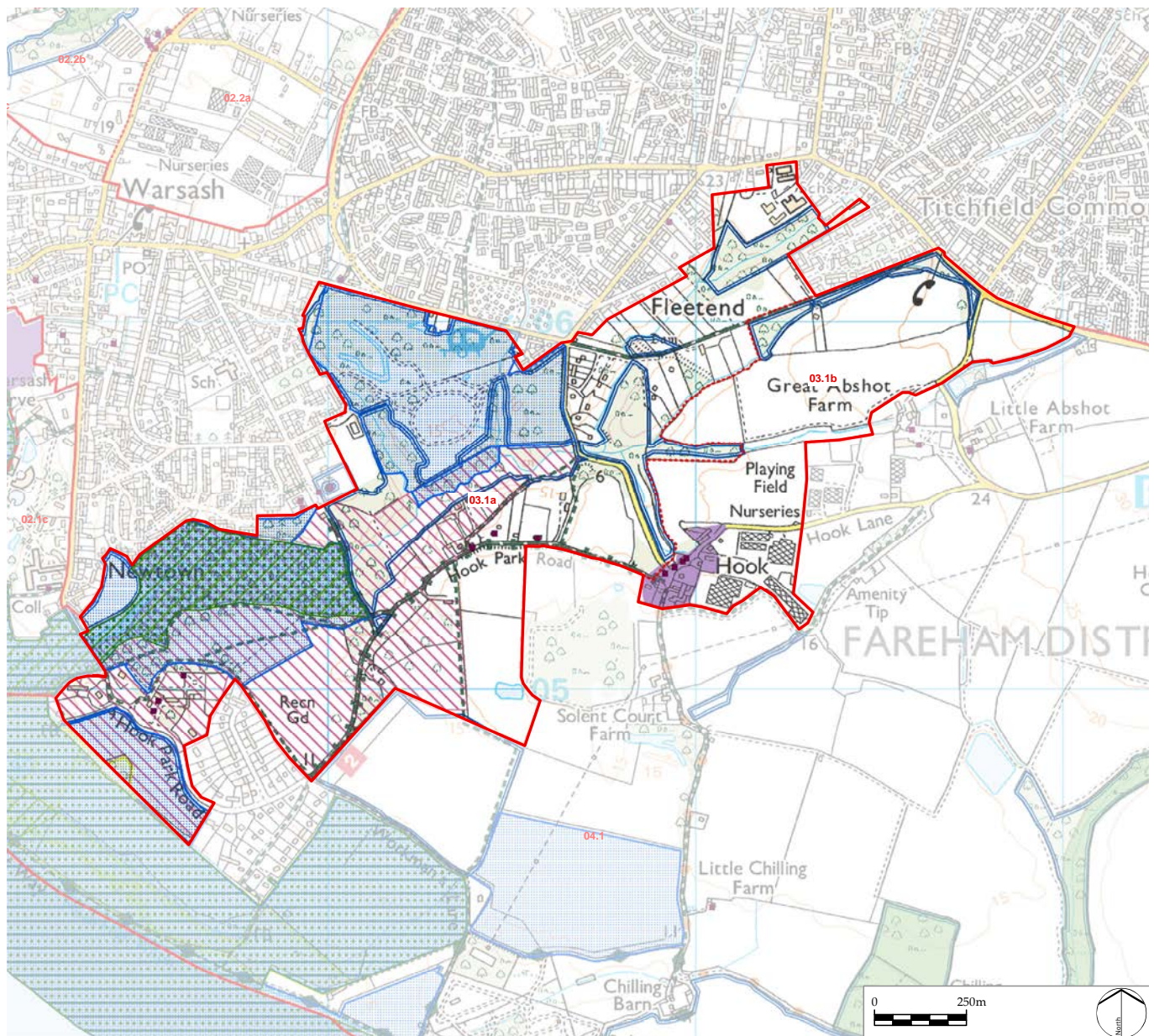
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		5m Contours
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Elevation (m AOD)
	Water		0m
	Flood Alert Areas		50m

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest
	Local Landscape Character Area		Local Nature Reserve
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Special Area of Conservation
			Conservation Areas
Designations			Historic Parks and Gardens
Listed Building Grade			Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
I II II*			

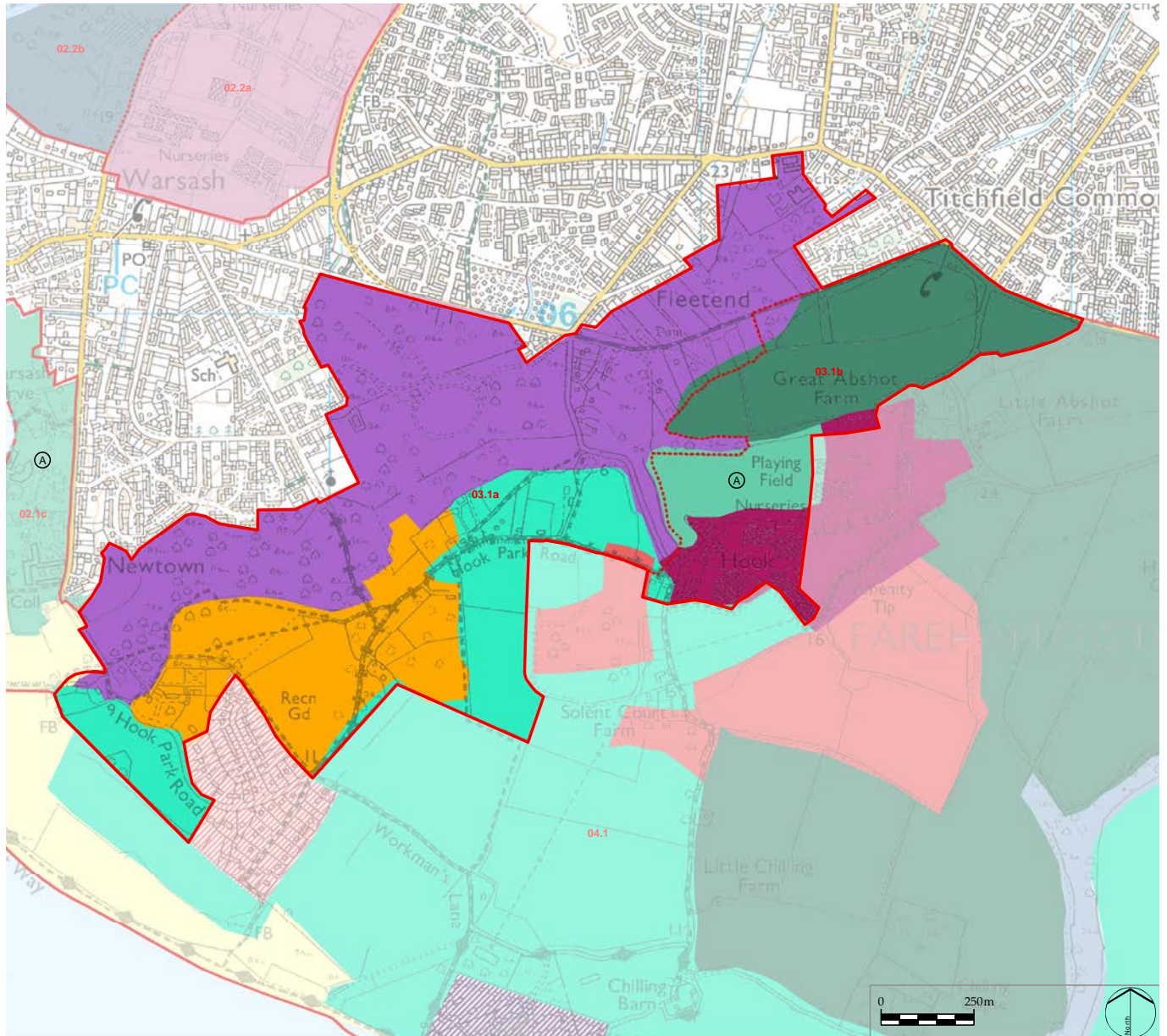
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Landscape Character Area | National Trails | Woodland |
| Local Landscape Character Area | Long Distance Footpaths | Existing Open Space |
| Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision | National Cycle Network | |
| Green Infrastructure Projects | Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor | |

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Open Coastal Amenity Land		Horticulture & Smallholdings: Large Scale
	Local Landscape Character Area		Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure		Parkland & Grounds
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure		
			Wooded Valley: Heath Associated		

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

The Hook Valley lies to the south of Warsash and Locks Heath and forms a tributary of the Hamble, unified by its valley form and its heavily wooded and 'natural' character. The character area covers the valley floor and sides upstream of where the road crosses the valley below the Warsash Maritime Academy. The more open valley mouth is contained within the Lower Hamble Valley character area (LCA2).

The LCA boundary was drawn to encompass the valley 'system', including the minor tributaries that feed into the main valley and the land in between. The defining characteristic of the area as a whole is the dense blanket of mature woodland cover, which clothes the floor and sides of the main valley and the minor tributaries, and also parts of the adjoining higher ground (e.g. at Warsash Common). This creates a very strong sense of enclosure and intimacy, and a sense of naturalness and seclusion that is reinforced by the very strong structure of hedgerows, mature trees and copses within neighbouring farmland and areas of public open space. However, there are some variations in the scale and complexity of the landscape at either end of the valley and these are reflected in division into two sub-areas.

Area 3.1a covers most of the LLCA. It is dominated by extensive woodland and tree cover (as well as wetland and other habitats) most of which developed naturally within the river valleys and on former commons and heaths, e.g. Warsash Common, formerly part of Titchfield Common but left to regenerate naturally following gravel extraction and subsequent tipping and now managed as a nature reserve with public access.

Other areas of woodland are associated with the creation of Hook Park, a late 18th century country estate with parkland that remained until the mid 20th century (although the main house burnt down earlier in that century). The former estate extends over most of the land within the western end of the character area and remnants of its parkland character are still evident in the large areas of woodland, open spaces, clumps of trees and individual specimen trees. Nothing remains of the house itself apart from the stable block (Grade II listed) which is converted into several houses, each with a portion of the walled garden standing almost intact.

The area also includes the former industrial hamlet of Hook, a Conservation Area, linked to the park by the old carriage drive, Hook Park Road, which has an attractive, low-key rural character. To the north of Hook Park Road, and in the far north-eastern corner of area 3.1a, the landscape is characterised by small to medium scale fields bounded by strong woodland or hedgerows and predominantly under pasture (including paddocks). To the south of Hook Park Road, land use is similar but the land has a more open character with a weaker internal boundary structure.

Area 3.1b occupies a wedge of farmland between two minor tributary valleys at the eastern end of the system, north of Great Abshot Farm, and a large playing field and glasshouses around the attractive settlement of Hook. Although set within a strong framework of woodland and tree-lined watercourses, the removal of internal fields boundaries for the growing of horticultural crops has given the landscape of the north-eastern fields a more open, simple character.



The area as a whole is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but it was formerly designated as an Area of Special Landscape Character in the former Fareham Local Plan (not replaced within the current Adopted Plan but indicative of local value). This was on the basis of its high scenic quality, with a pleasing combination of wetland and woodland habitats; a strong sense of place, reinforced by its natural qualities and sense of enclosure; a predominantly unspoilt character and strong natural qualities; it is of Borough-wide importance as one of the few remaining areas of intact 'natural' landscape, including valuable remnants of ancient woodland and former parkland which would be vulnerable to change; it contains wetland, woodland, grassland and heathland habitats of high nature conservation importance (SSSI/SINC/LNR) and features of historic interest, including the remnants of Hook Park (listed on the Hampshire Register of historic parks and gardens); there is a local consensus as to its importance as a wildlife resource within the Borough, although a landscape consensus is less well-established. These qualities are still evident in this part of the LCA and so the area is judged to be of high value as part of the Borough's landscape resource.

Settlement within the area is generally sparse and mostly well-integrated within trees and woodland, and includes the attractive estate hamlet of Hook (Conservation Area) as well as individual estate cottages and detached houses on large well-trees plots. There are few intrusive influences from urban development or features and most of the landscape is in good condition. Although parts of area 3.1b lack the intimacy and diversity of the rest of the area, most of this area is contained within a strong framework of woodland and trees and retains an essentially rural, unspoilt and attractive character.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area is generally of high sensitivity as a landscape resource within the Borough. It contains a range of valued landscape, ecological and heritage features across a large proportion of the area, and its natural and unspoilt qualities mean that it would be highly susceptible to the intrusion of built development. Within **area 3.1a** in particular, there is very little potential for development apart from possibly some limited development, set within well-treed, strongly enclosed plots of land, of a similar character and scale to those dotted around the edges of the area (e.g. at Fleetend).

In **area 3.1b**, the 'grain' of the landscape pattern is much larger-scale and its more expansive, open character does not lend itself to the 'infill on small-scale plots' approach. Larger-scale development across this area would have a significant adverse effect upon its rural character and would breach the strong wooded edge that, together with Warsash Road, currently defines a clear boundary between the urban area of Titchfield Common and open countryside to the west.



VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

In general terms, visibility and intervisibility over much of this area is restricted by the visual enclosure provided by woodlands, hedgerows and tree cover. There are very few views into the area from the urban areas to the north and east, or from the surrounding road network (the tops of trees are visible from a wider area but there are only a few glimpses into the area at ground level). There are occasional glimpsed views into land at the eastern end of the area (3.1b) through or over boundary vegetation along the Warsash Road, Little Abshot Road and Hook Lane. There are virtually no views into the area from Fleet End Road, which crosses the valley from north to south. The most open views into the area from roads are from Hook Park Road where it runs through the parkland and eastwards towards the hamlet of Hook. The eastern parts of the road are more enclosed by hedgerows but there are some views through gaps into the farmland areas to north and south of the road.

Otherwise, the main views into the area are from the public open space and rights of way network within the boundary of the area. Public open space includes a recreation ground and playing fields in Hook Park and near Hook, public access within the Hook with Warsash and Warsash Common local nature reserves, and access to other fragments of woodland around the area (e.g. on the eastern boundary along Warsash Road). There are a number of public footpaths at the western end of the area through Hook Park (and a section of National Cycle Route 2 along Hook Park Road) but only one to the east of Fleet End Road, along a track leading from the road to Titchfield Common. Most of these public spaces and routes go through wooded or heavily treed areas with limited views into and across the area but there are open views across the parkland from Hook Park Road.

The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would therefore be local residents, users of the PROW and open space network and users of the minor road network, particularly Hook Park Road and Hook Lane.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Although available views into the area are limited they will be seen by people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and may be more sensitive to change, notably local residents and recreational users of the public rights of way and access network within the area itself. These viewers will be particularly focused on enjoyment of their surroundings and sensitive to changes in the character and quality of views, which are currently attractive and generally unspoilt by the intrusion of urban influences or detracting features.

So, despite its visual containment from wider views, visual sensitivity is therefore relatively high and there is limited potential for development unless it is of a scale and in a location where it can be absorbed within a strong framework of woodland or tree cover.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The main contribution that this area of landscape makes to the setting of settlements is by providing a strong 'natural edge' to prevent encroachment of urban areas into the surrounding countryside. The valley form, together with the dense woodland cover within the valley and Warsash Common, creates a very strong physical and visual boundary along the southern edge of development at Fleetend and Warsash/Newtown. Thick belts of woodland and mature hedgerows along Warsash Road also act as a strong physical and visual boundary between the urban area of Titchfield Common and open, undeveloped countryside to the west.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The Hook Valley and the woodlands within the area are highly sensitive as resources in their own right but also they perform a critical role in containing the outward sprawl of urban development from the north and east, and their integrity must be maintained. This includes the strip of woodland at the eastern end of the area along the Warsash Road which currently 'holds back the tide' of development at Titchfield Common. Encroachment of development over this line would have a significant effect on the character of the immediate valley landscape and there is no obvious 'second line of defence' until some way to the west, by which point there could be a major impact on the character and integrity of the wider Hook Valley landscape and, potentially, on the quiet, rural setting of the Hook Conservation Area.

This role is possibly marginally less critical in the triangular field at the very far eastern end of the area along Warsash Road. The roadside hedgerow is trimmed and gappy and does not form such a strong visual boundary for the urban area, while vegetation along the southern edge of this triangle could potentially form a strong and defensible edge as a second line of defence if the current boundary was breached. This would require strengthening of the western side of the triangle along Little Abshot Lane. Encroachment into this area would, however, be undesirable given the unspoilt, rural and relatively high quality of the landscape in this area.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This area makes a significant contribution to green infrastructure, particularly in respect of ecological and landscape assets. There are extensive areas of semi-natural habitat (including dry and wet woodland, scrub, wetland, grassland and heath) that are of significant wildlife, and landscape, value within the area. The Hook Valley is identified in the PUSH GI strategy as a 'sub-regional scale blue corridor'. Project C4 of the strategy applies to Hook Lake (parts of the valley floor subject to tidal inundation), and seeks to create an intertidal compensation habitat as part of wider habitat creation programmes.

There is also a relatively extensive network of public open spaces and access routes within the area, including a recreation ground and playing fields in Hook Park and near Hook, public access within the Hook Common and Hook with Warsash LNRs, and within other fragments of woodland around the area. There are a number of public footpaths at the western end of the area through Hook Park but only one to the east of Fleet End Road, along a track leading from the road to Titchfield Common. National Cycle Network Route 2 runs along Hook Park Road from the western end of the area to the hamlet of Hook, before turning southwards along Chilling Lane.

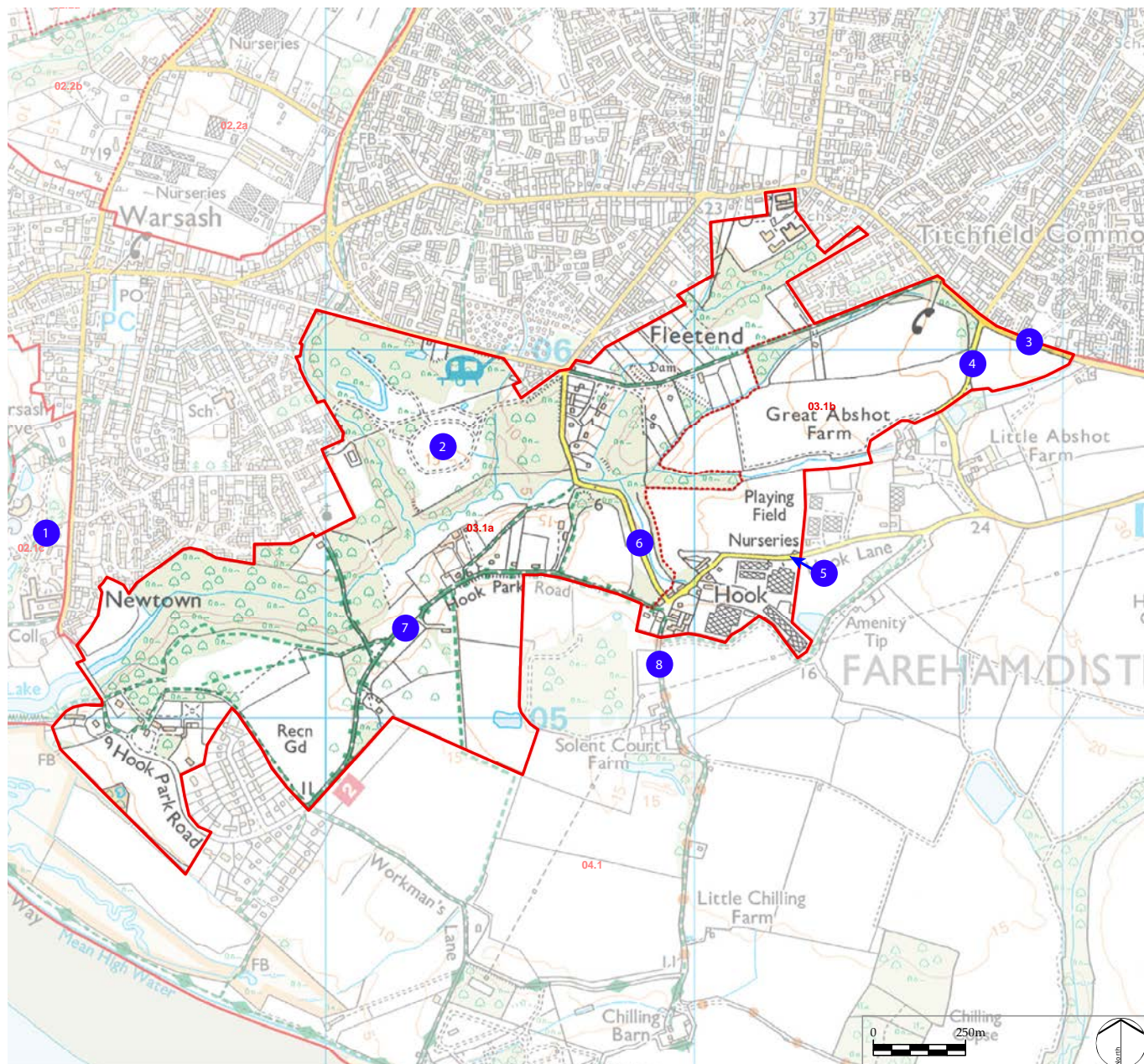
The Fareham GI Strategy identifies a number of projects aimed at improving the quality of the 'Greenway Network' in this area (W15, 16, 17), in particular along routes connecting with Fleet End and Warsash Common. A further project (w36) aims at improving drainage to enable sports pitch provision at Hook Recreation Ground.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Existing GI assets (e.g. the framework of woodland, mature trees, hedgerows, scrub and areas of open grassland, as well as existing PRoW and areas with public access) should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their ecological, landscape and amenity value, and development that would adversely affect them should be avoided. The emphasis in this area is more on improvements in the provision of open space/greenspace and access and habitat links, particularly at the eastern end of the area.



LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Warsash Maritime Academy
	Local Landscape Character Area		Warsash Common
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Warsash Road
			Little Abshot Road
			Hook Lane
			Fleet End Road
			Hook Park Road
			Chilling Lane

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This is an area of high overall sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, the abundance of valued landscape, ecological and heritage features across a large proportion of the area, its role in containing the outward sprawl of urban development from the north and east and its significant contribution to green infrastructure, particularly in respect of ecological and landscape assets and the extensive network of public open spaces and access routes within the area.

Overall the area offers little potential to accommodate development. The only exception may be some limited development that can be contained within well-treed, strongly enclosed pockets of undeveloped land adjacent to existing built areas (e.g. at Fleetend), where it is of a character and scale that is in keeping with the local area and respects the sensitivity of its context.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of recognised landscape, ecological, heritage or amenity value within the area as a whole, including the remnants of Hook Park, wetland, woodland, grassland and heathland habitats of high nature conservation importance (SSSI/ SINC/LNR) and the extensive network of public open spaces and access routes within the area, including Hook Common and Hook with Warsash LNRs, and within other fragments of woodland around the area
- Protect and enhance the extensive cover of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value;
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network (including footpaths and open space) and take advantage of opportunities to strengthen and extend access and habitat links within the area, in particular along routes connecting with Fleet End and Warsash Common in accordance with the Fareham GI strategy;
- Avoid encroachment beyond the existing urban edge along Warsash Road at the eastern end of the area, particularly where this is formed by a strip of woodland that provides strong definition of the boundary between urban and rural areas;
- Be carefully integrated within well-treed, strongly enclosed plots of land, of a similar character and scale to development around the edges of the area (e.g. at Fleetend).
- Maintain the essentially quiet semi-rural character of the area and lanes and access routes, avoiding intrusive or inappropriate urban styles of lighting, signage, paving etc.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

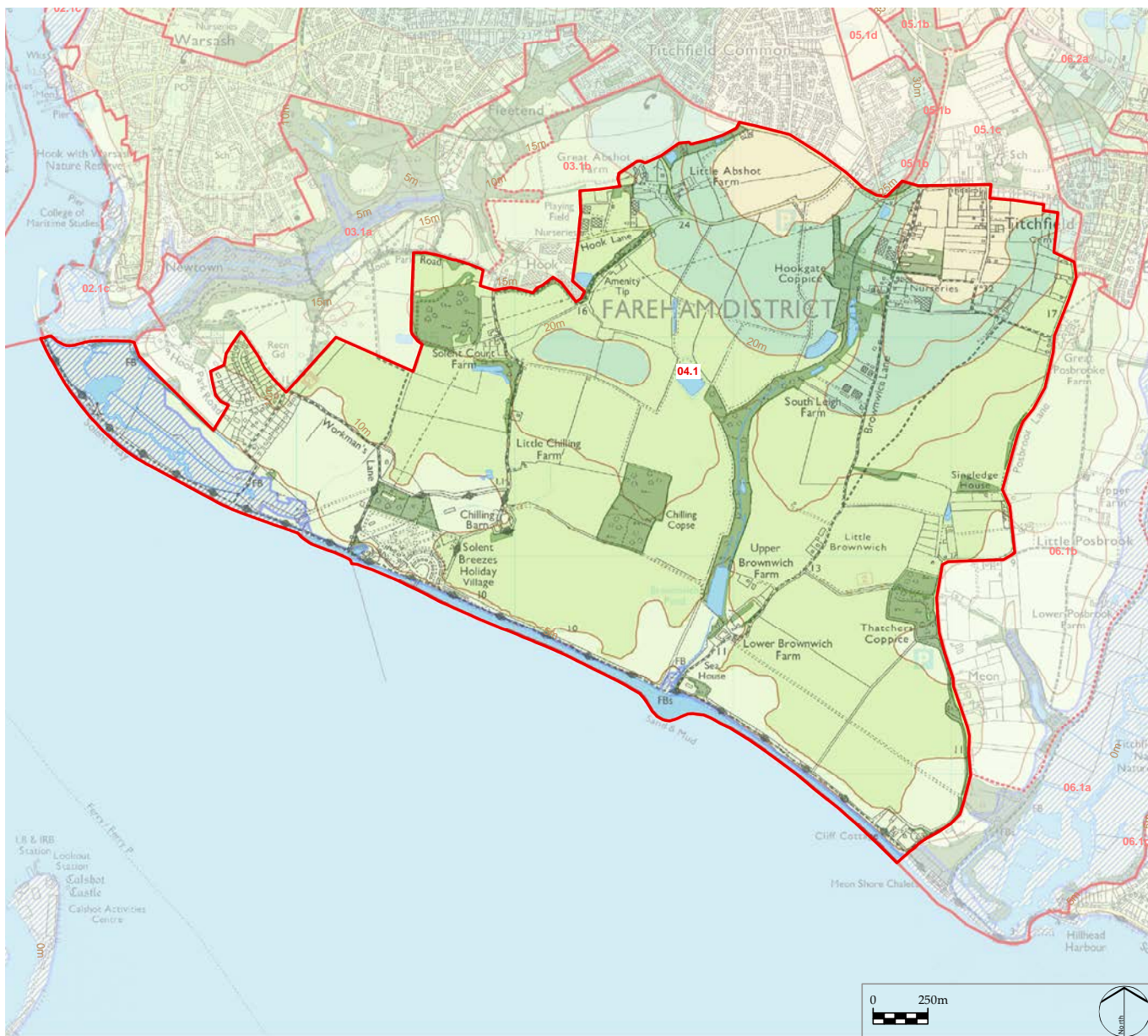
- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

LCA 4 - CHILLING – BROWNWICH COASTAL PLAIN

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

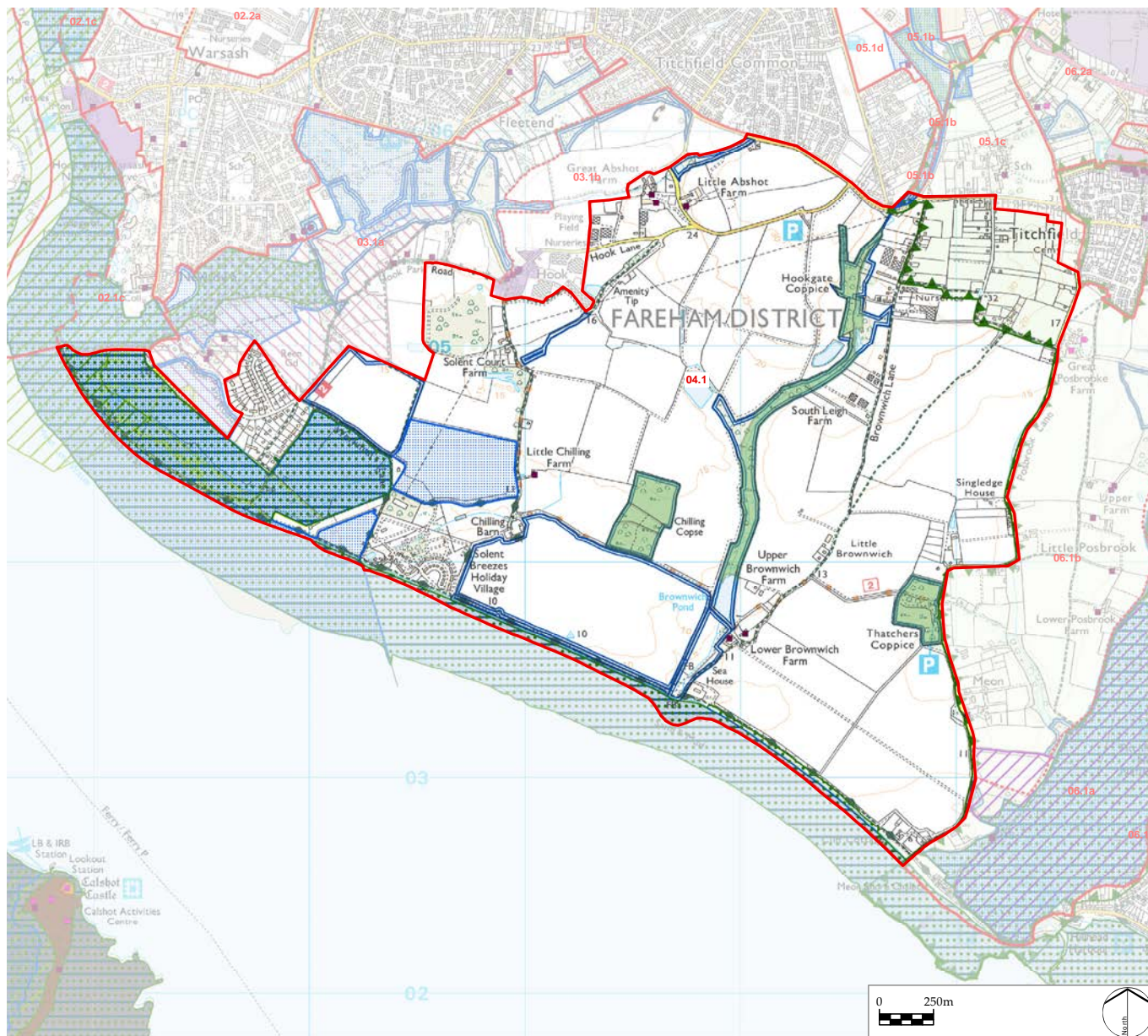


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		5m Contours
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Elevation (m AOD)
	Water		0m
	Flood Alert Areas		50m

LCA 4 - CHILLING – BROWNWICH COASTAL PLAIN

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest		RAMSAR
	Local Landscape Character Area		Local Nature Reserve		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Special Protection Area		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
			Special Area of Conservation		The Meon Gap

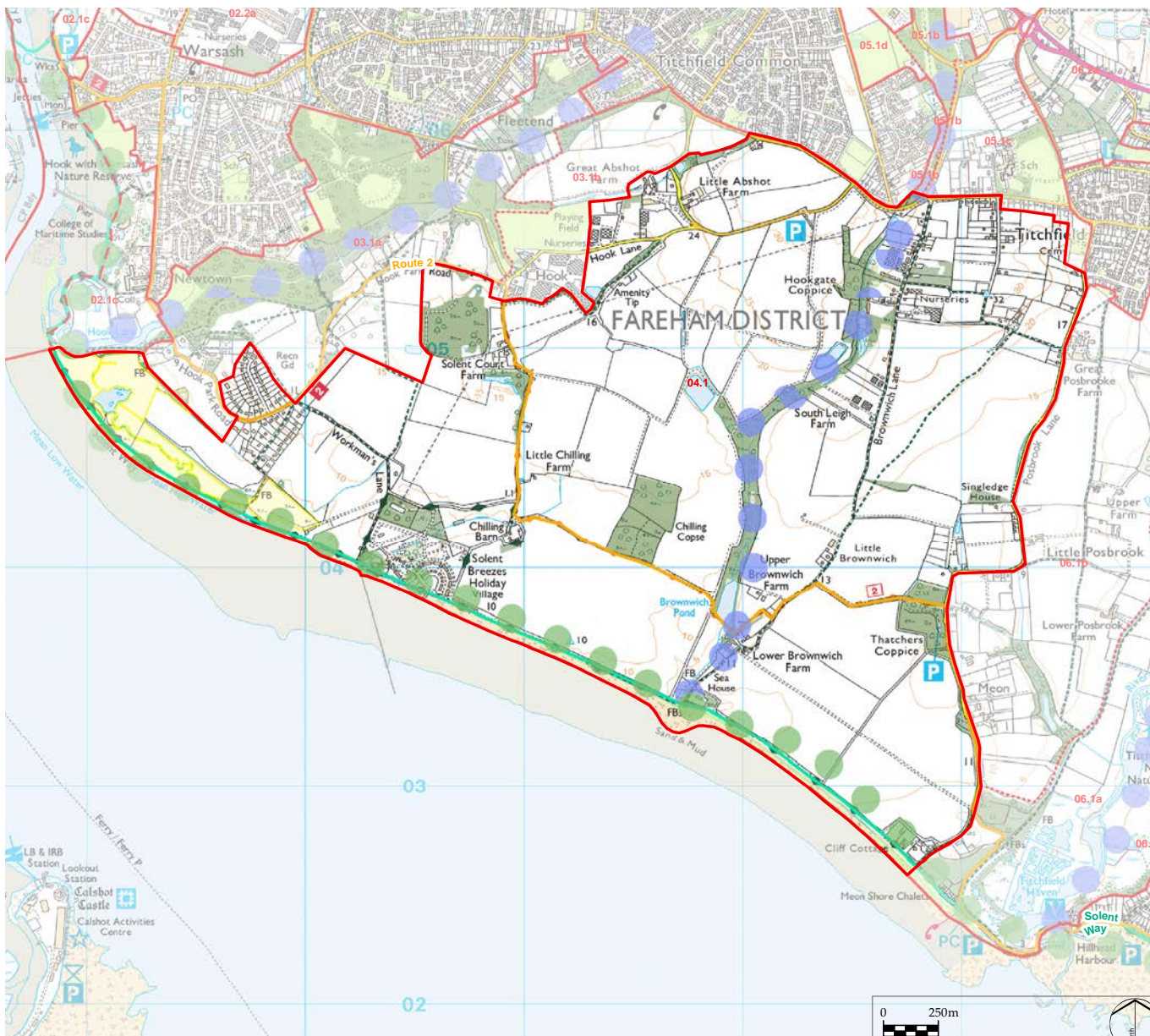
Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

LCA 4 - CHILLING – BROWNWICH COASTAL PLAIN

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

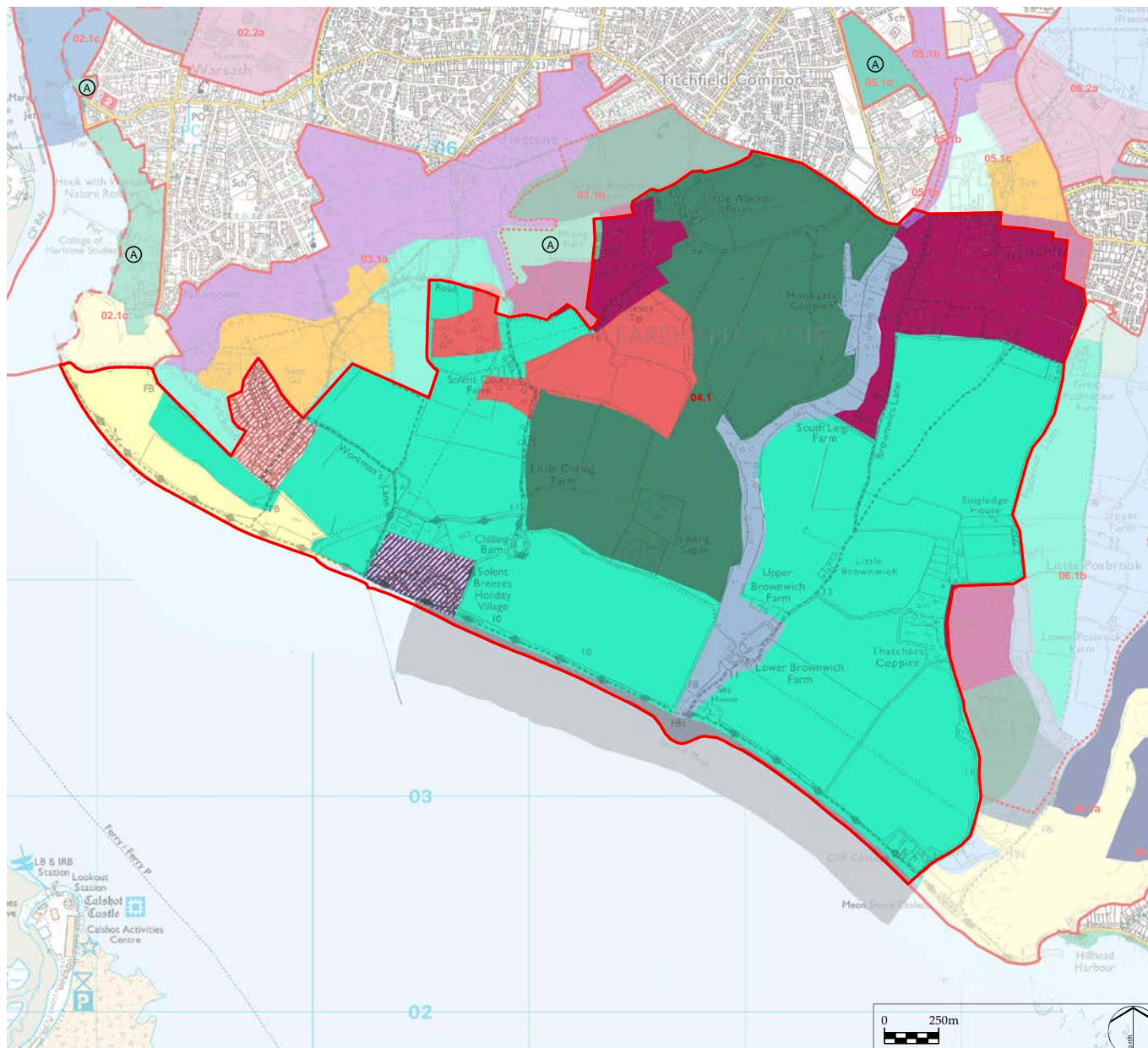


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Long Distance Footpaths		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		National Cycle Network		Access Land
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Green Corridor		
	Green Infrastructure Projects		Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor		

LCA 4 - CHILLING – BROWNWICH COASTAL PLAIN

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Cliff Coastline		Recolonising/Re-stored Landscape
	Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure		Marsh, Reeds swamp & Brackish Lagoon
	Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure		Valley - Small Scale - Enclosed
	Horticulture & Small-holdings: Large Scale		Urban: Inter/post War Suburban Housing
	Parkland & Grounds		Urban: Chalet/Caravan Park

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

The Chilling/Brownwich Coastal Plain forms a discrete topographic and landscape unit that extends from the top of the Hook valley eastwards to the edge of the Meon valley. It is defined to the north by the urban edge of Titchfield Common and to the south by the coast. The area is characterised by flat or gently undulating landform forming an extensive, relatively homogenous coastal plain broken only by the small-scale, heavily wooded Brownwich river valley, which forms a distinctive feature in this otherwise fairly uniform landscape. Although there are some minor variations in landuse and landcover across the area, the dominance of its agricultural land use and lack of complexity mean that the area is assessed as a single LLCA.

The landscape has a predominantly rural character and is typically under arable cultivation, horticultural use or pasture. Over much of the area there is a very large-scale field pattern and weak hedgerow structure with an exposed, windswept character and evidence of coastal exposure, e.g. windpruning, to the south. There is a somewhat more sheltered character to the north and centre of the plain, with a stronger hedgerow structure (e.g. around Chilling Farm) and woodland in the Brownwich Valley providing some visual containment. Other features include isolated remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland at Chilling Copse and Thatchers Coppice and along the Brownwich Valley, and regenerating scrub/woodland/wetland habitats associated with former mineral extraction sites, which are all of wildlife value.

The coastal margin remains undeveloped (apart from the Solent Breezes Caravan Site) with steep cliffs (of national geological significance) and shingle beach, and coastal marsh and other intertidal habitats within the Hook-with-Warsash Nature Reserve at the western end of the area. From the coastline there are extensive views out to sea and the area has a windswept, natural and generally unspoilt character. Much of the coastal farmland is important as feeding and roosting habitat for wading birds and includes areas designated as SSSI, LNR and SIN. A strip of landscape along the southern edge of the area is also identified as a 'Coastal Change Management Area', where development will not be permitted.

Settlement is sparse within the area and generally comprises scattered farms, nurseries and associated buildings/glasshouses sited inland from the coastal margin to reduce exposure, accessed by long, often rough, rural lanes with limited east-west access, increasing the sense of remoteness within this area. There are two exceptions to this pattern: an isolated area of low-density residential development around Hook Park Road in the far west of the area (developed on land that was formerly part of Hook House and its surrounding park), and the Solent Breezes Holiday Park on the coast. Despite the incongruous character of these developments, their influence on surrounding landscape character is limited by their low density nature, the screening effects of vegetation and the flat topography of the area. There is also some low-density housing and nurseries along Common Lane, Occupation Lane and Brownwich Lane in the north-eastern corner of the area, on the edge of Titchfield, which is well-integrated within a small-scale pattern of fields with well-treed boundaries.



© Alex Liivet

The area generally lacks intrusive or urban influences, although there are some prominent overhead power lines crossing the landscape between Titchfield and the coast, and former mineral extraction and land fill activity has modified the landscape to the south of Hook. There is evidence that many of the agricultural fields to the east of Solent Court Farm and Little Chilling Farm towards the centre of the area play host to temporary agricultural structures such as poly tunnels on a seasonal basis. These may have a temporary effect on the landscape in the summer months. However, none of these elements detract from the underlying landscape character or general perceptions of the area.



The area is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but, despite the smaller pockets of built development, the area remains the largest area of undeveloped, intact coastal plain in the Borough, (and one of the most extensive remaining areas of undeveloped coastline in Hampshire) and consequently is of a high intrinsic value. The area lacks the exceptional scenic qualities of more diverse landscapes but its distinctive rural, agricultural character is intact and essentially unspoilt, and its features are generally in good condition. The distance from major roads and settlements, particularly in the south of the area, contributes to a feeling of remoteness that is lacking in the Borough's other areas of coastal plain, and exposure to the elements, expansive sea views and the presence of features of wildlife and geological interest, all add value to the landscape experience.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, this area is of high sensitivity as a landscape resource within the Borough. The essential characteristics and qualities of the landscape, in particular its remote and rural, 'undeveloped' character, are highly sensitive to the introduction of built development. The qualities of remoteness, isolation and naturalness are particularly susceptible to the intrusion of urban influences, not just in terms of built form but also any 'improvements' in the character of the local road network, introduction of lighting, signage, activity etc that inevitably accompany new development.



© Leimenide

The extensive scale of this area of rural landscape is also important as a contrast to the highly urbanised character of much of the Borough and, as one of the largest remaining areas of undeveloped coastline in the county, it is important that its overall integrity is not eroded by piecemeal development. As such, development potential is considered to be highly constrained beyond small scale alterations or low density replacement development to existing properties and plots within existing residential areas, Solent Breezes or individual farmsteads.

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

The coastal plain is characterised by a large scale field pattern, within which are some very large fields with weak or non-existent hedgerows and few trees or woodland blocks, allowing extensive views across the area. Elsewhere, a stronger hedgerow structure and occasional blocks of woodland or belts of trees are present which, in this flat landscape, interrupt views and limit the extent of visibility. So, visibility is variable across the area depending upon local vegetation patterns. Furthermore, the extremely sparse pattern of settlements and roads across the coastal plain, and its general remoteness, means that there are very few views from publicly accessible places and relatively few ‘viewers’.

More distant views from the main urban area (Warsash/Fleet End, the Western Wards, Titchfield Common and Titchfield) are substantially restricted by intervening woodland, vegetation and built development along the edges of these areas. From closer distance at the western end of the areas, there are some views into the surrounding fields from the properties on the immediate edge of the residential development on Hook Park Road, and a few glimpses through the boundary from the road itself. Further east, there are some intermittent views over or through hedgerows from Hook Lane, some of which are quite extensive, others interrupted by vegetation along more distant field boundaries. Views from Warsash Road, and properties and roads around the edge of Titchfield are largely screened by buildings or vegetation. Views from the eastern boundary, formed by Posbrook Lane, Triangle Lane and Meon Road, are also largely screened by mature hedgerows, tree belts and occasional built development (such as isolated residential properties and horticultural nurseries) but there are some open sections of the roadside boundary through which there are quite extensive views.

Although the primary road network skirts around the periphery of the area, a secondary network of minor lanes and tracks (e.g. Brownwich Lane, Chilling Lane and Workman’s Lane) provides access to scattered farms and properties within the area and to the Solent Breezes Holiday Village. Most of the public footpaths and other PRoW follow these lanes/tracks, with some additional links from them to areas around Hook and Titchfield.

The area also includes part of the Solent Way (long distance recreational route), which follows the coastline along the entire southern boundary of the area, with an additional inland loop around the Solent Breezes site. National Cycle Route 2 also crosses the area inland along Chilling Lane from Hook in the west to Triangle Lane in the east. This secondary network provides opportunities for views into a larger part of the area, with variable visibility – some lanes/tracks are bounded by strong vegetation with only occasional glimpsed views (e.g. Chilling Lane), other routes lack such enclosure and are open to more extensive views (e.g. the footpath between Titchfield and Brownwich Lane, and the coast path).

The key viewers within the area are, therefore, the relatively small number of local residents, users of the local road network between Warsash, Hook and Titchfield and recreational users of the PRoW network and visitors to the Solent Breezes Holiday Park. The views available to these viewers are generally of high quality.



VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The key visual receptors are users of the PRoW and national cycle network, most of whom are likely to use routes for recreational purposes and be very aware of their surroundings. Given the importance of the visual resource for such users, they are likely to be highly sensitive to any change. Residents and occupiers of private dwellings, farmsteads and holiday homes may also be sensitive to localised change, particularly those in more isolated dwellings and farmsteads away from the existing clusters of development at Hook and Solent Breezes. Most roads within the area are narrow, lightly trafficked and have strongly vegetated boundaries, offering very limited visibility into surrounding fields and limiting the sensitivity to change of motorists, pedestrians and cyclists using these lanes.

Despite the relatively low number of visual receptors, their high sensitivity to change, the extensive visibility over some parts of this large-scale landscape, and the predominantly rural, unspoilt quality of existing views means that development potential in this area is highly constrained.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Together with the neighbouring Hook and Meon Valleys, the area forms the major part of an extensive swathe of countryside that separates the urban edge of Stubbington in the east from the settlements of Warsash, Titchfield and the Western Wards in the west. The adjacent area surrounding the Meon Valley to the east is designated as a Strategic Gap, designed to prevent any further westward expansion of the urban area at Stubbington (and coalescence of settlements within the Titchfield corridor). The area itself does not form part of the Strategic Gap but it nevertheless has a function in maintaining the separation and individual identity of the urban areas to the north and west and containing any further ‘sprawl’ into open countryside.

This area retains a strongly rural character, with few urban influences or ‘fringe’ characteristics, and has an important role in maintaining the distinction between urban and countryside areas. This rural, unspoilt character extends right up to the edge of the urban area at Titchfield Common, and vegetation within the Warsash Road corridor helps to create a strong, defensible edge to the urban area, beyond which to the south the open countryside character is clearly perceptible. This distinction would be compromised by significant development extending into the area beyond the existing urban edge.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area does not form a critical role in the immediate setting of any individual settlement (except for maybe Titchfield Common) but it does have sensitivity as part of the wider countryside context of the Borough. It performs a key role in maintaining the clear distinction between built areas and open countryside, and forming part of the extensive buffer of rural landscape between urban areas in the south-west of the Borough. Built development could compromise these roles if it intrudes upon and erodes the rural, unspoilt character of the area or blurs the existing clear distinction between town and country. Development potential in this area is therefore very limited.



CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

Contribution to Green Infrastructure Network

This area makes a significant contribution to the strategic and local GI network, not only through its countryside character in a predominantly urban Borough, but also through a range of existing GI assets and planned projects.

Key biodiversity assets include remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland at Chilling Copse and Thatchers Coppice and along the Brownwich Valley (SINCs), extensive areas of coastal farmland of importance for wildfowl (SSSI/SINC/LNR) and areas of marshland and other coastal habitats and features of ecological significance. These also represent important landscape features within an intensively farmed agricultural landscape that lacks significant diversity. Recreational assets include the National Cycle Route 2 and the Solent Way long distance recreational route, and the area includes a network of other PRoW but lacks significant areas of public open space or access land.

The PUSH GI strategy identifies two sub-regional scale corridors within the area: a blue corridor extending along the Brownwich Valley from the Titchfield area in the north to the coast; and a green corridor which follows the Solent coastline along the southern, coastal boundary of the area. Project C5 of the strategy seeks “to enhance access, biodiversity and rural landscape character through countryside stewardship schemes”.



The Fareham GI strategy includes the following projects in this area:

- W04 – Enhancement of access, biodiversity and rural landscape character on Hampshire County Council owned land in the Chilling Farmland area;
- W07 – Enhanced information to balance recreation uses with the need to protect designated wildlife sites and species;
- W08 – Linking the Chilling Farmland area with the Western Wards as part of a wider programme of works to enhance the Western Wards Greenway;
- W35 – Improved parks and amenity open space in the Hook Park area, to be linked to project W04.
- BW02 – Improving sustainable transport to Warsash Nature Reserve and Titchfield Haven from surrounding settlements, including works to routes within this area;
- BW23 – Better balancing of recreational activities and ecology interests in area of coast between Solent Breezes Caravan Park and Hill Head, along with provision of additional open space on HCC land currently used for agriculture.

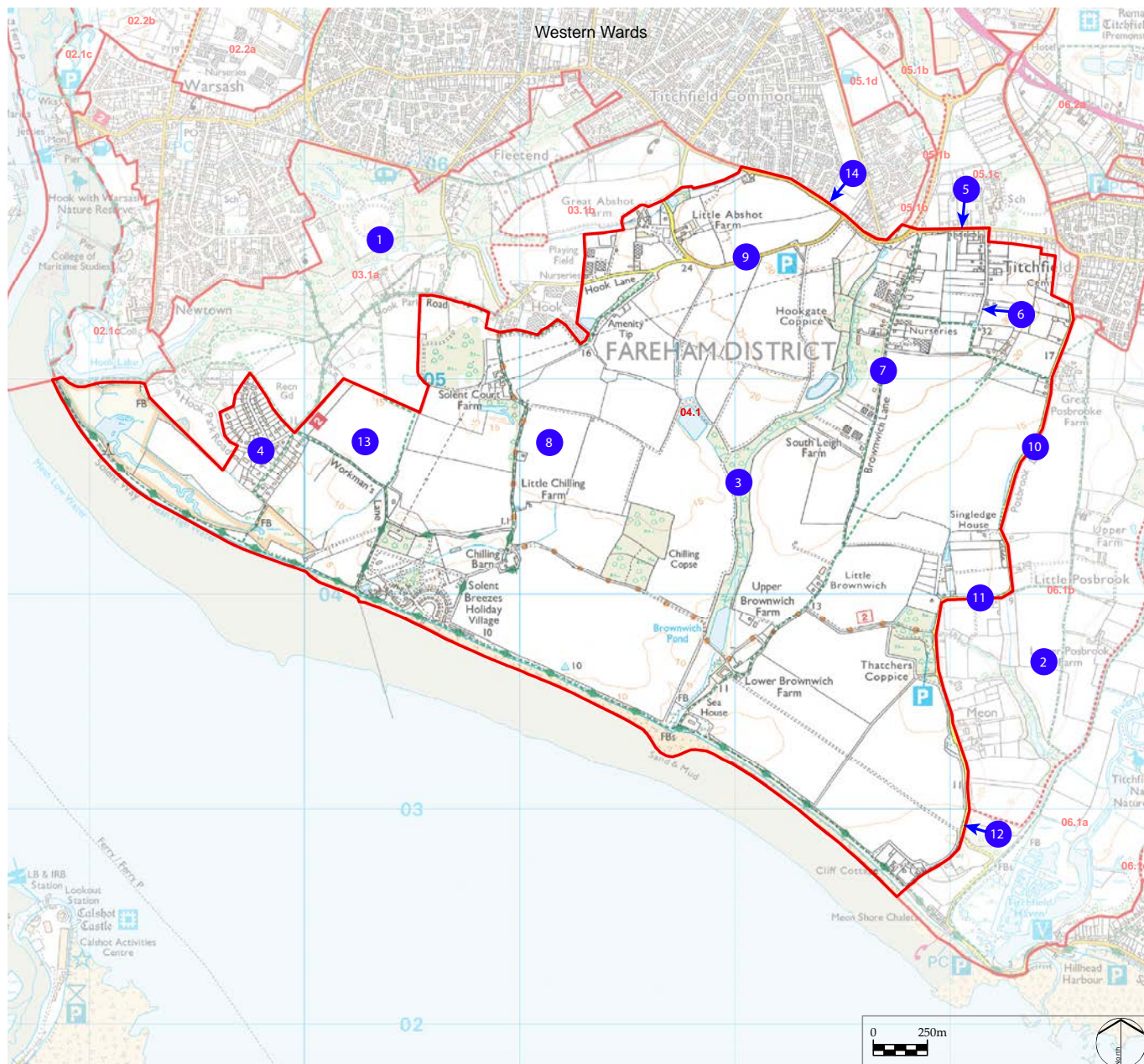
SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area contains a number of important GI assets, including habitats of international and national importance along the coastline and areas of remnant ancient semi-natural woodlands, all of which are highly sensitive to disturbance. The area also provides a valuable network of footpaths and other PRoW including long distance cycle and recreational footpath routes. These assets should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their value. Development that would adversely affect these assets should be avoided.

Opportunities to provide additional access links and extended public access within this area should be considered but need to be balanced against the need to protect valuable ecological assets from disturbance.

LLCA 4.1 - CHILLING – BROWNWICH COASTAL PLAIN

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area	1	Hook Valley	8	Chilling Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area	2	Meon Valley	9	Hook Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	3	Brownwich Valley	10	Posbrook Lane
		4	Hook Park Road	11	Triangle Lane
		5	Common Lane	12	Meon Road
		6	Occupation Lane	13	Workman's Lane
		7	Brownwich Lane	14	Warsash Road

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

While not possessing the exceptional scenic qualities of more diverse landscapes, this area nonetheless is of high sensitivity, particularly in respect of its distinctively rural, remote and unspoilt character, its rarity as a large expanse of undeveloped coastal plain (in a Borough and county-wide context), the relative lack of intrusion from existing development or other urban influences, and its contribution to the wider countryside setting of the Borough, and its contribution to strategic and local GI networks. It's expansive, open character and variable hedgerow/tree cover mean that parts of the area are also visually sensitive and it would be difficult to integrate substantial areas of new development within such a large-scale, exposed landscape without significant and widespread harmful effects on landscape character and visual amenity.

There is therefore very limited potential for development within the area, apart from some modest potential for accommodating small-scale development (i.e. individual dwellings or buildings) within existing pockets of land in and around existing development, e.g. around Titchfield, Brownwich Lane and Hook, where it can be more successfully integrated within the existing or a new vegetation structure.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:




- Protect the essentially rural, countryside character of the area and its role in maintaining the separation of settlements and a clear distinction between urban and rural areas;
- Protect and manage important areas of woodland, particularly remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland in the Brownwich Valley, at Chilling Copse and Thatchers Coppice, as features of landscape and ecological significance;
- Protect and enhance other key landscape and ecological features of the area, including the hedgerow structure and habitats of ecological value along the coastline;
- Avoid any incursion of the urban area into the countryside beyond existing boundaries, or create new pockets of urban or urbanising development within open countryside;
- Be located within pockets of landscape within and around existing areas of settlement, where development can be integrated within a strong framework of vegetation to minimise its influence on surrounding landscape character and visual amenity;
- Avoid the introduction of buildings or structures that would be visually prominent within the open, flat landscape;
- Maintain the informal character and distinctive alignment of the rural lanes
- Protect and enhance enjoyment of the landscape, including through safeguarding of attractive, rural views and improvements to the PRoW network in accordance with the PUSH/Fareham GI Strategies;
- Demonstrate design that has minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and is in keeping with the character of the local landscape, settlement pattern and built form;
- Maximise landscape and ecological value of restored mineral and landfill sites and avoid further disturbance by intrusive activities and land uses.

2.5 LCA 5: TITCHFIELD CORRIDOR

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

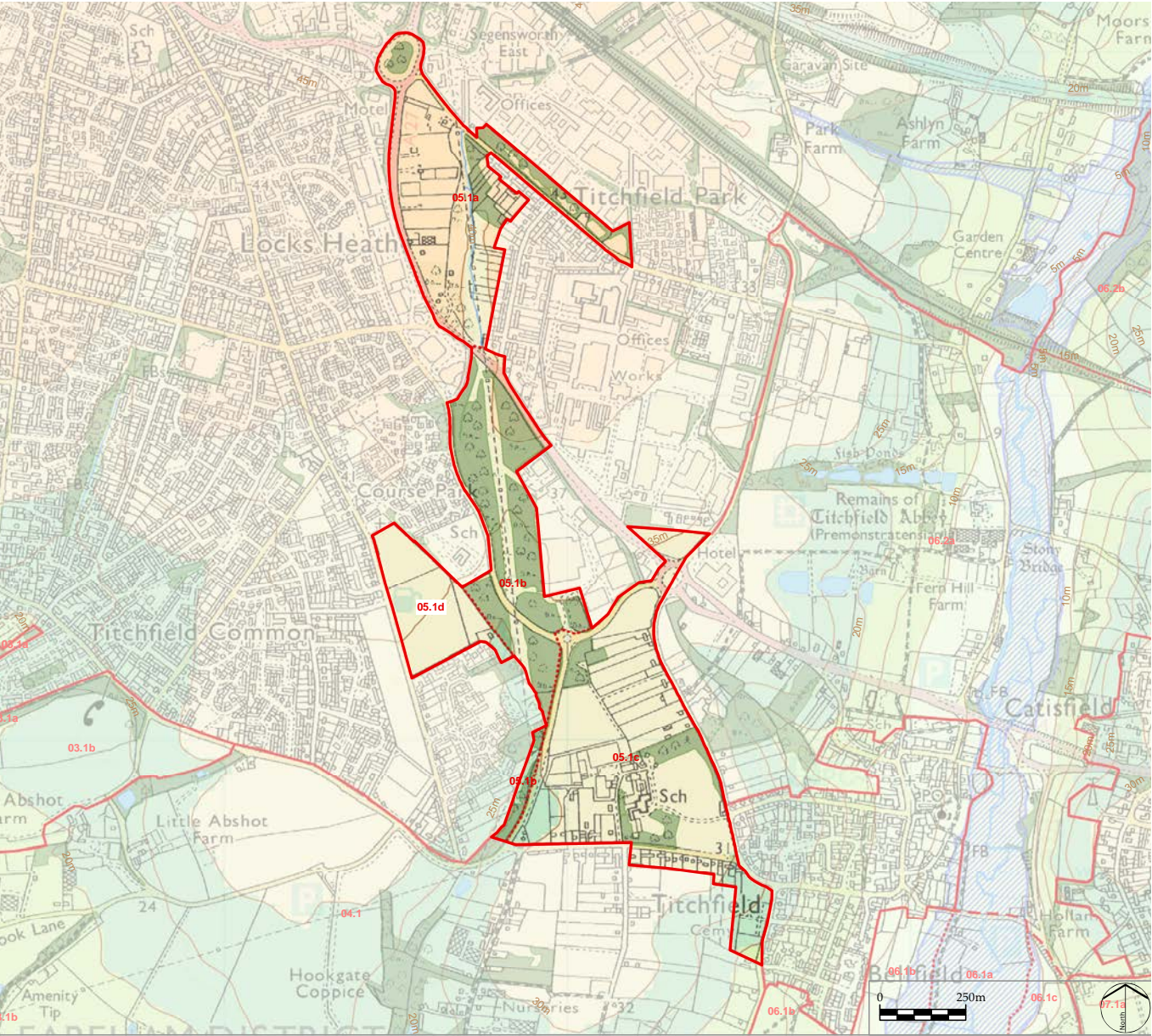
	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision








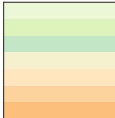
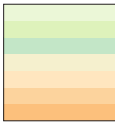

Location Diagram

LCA 5 - TITCHFIELD CORRIDOR

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

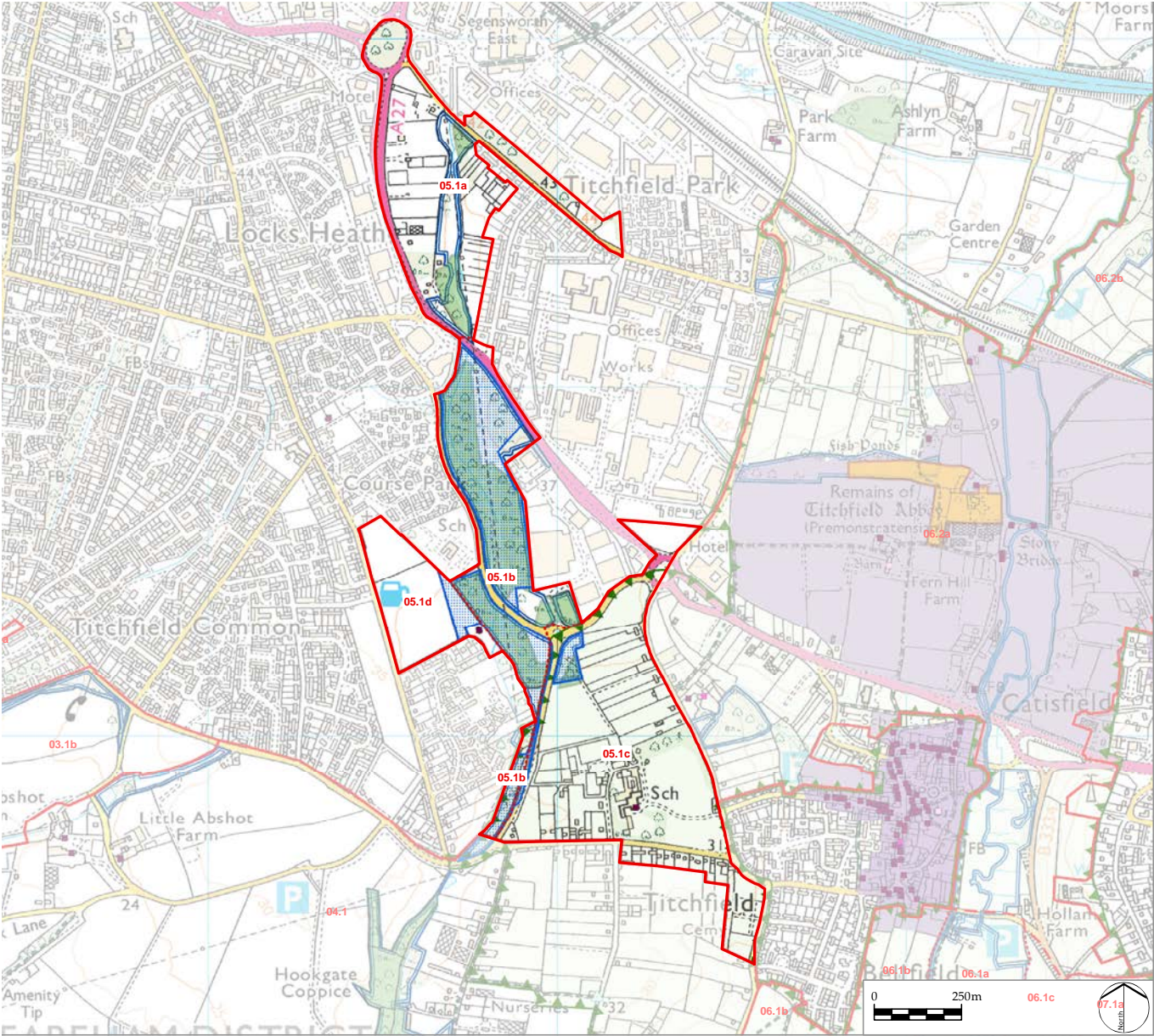


LEGEND

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Landscape Character Area |  Woodland |
|  Local Landscape Character Area |  5m Contours |
|  Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision | Elevation (m AOD) |
|  Water |  0m
70m |
|  Flood Alert Areas | |

LCA 5 - TITCHFIELD CORRIDOR

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

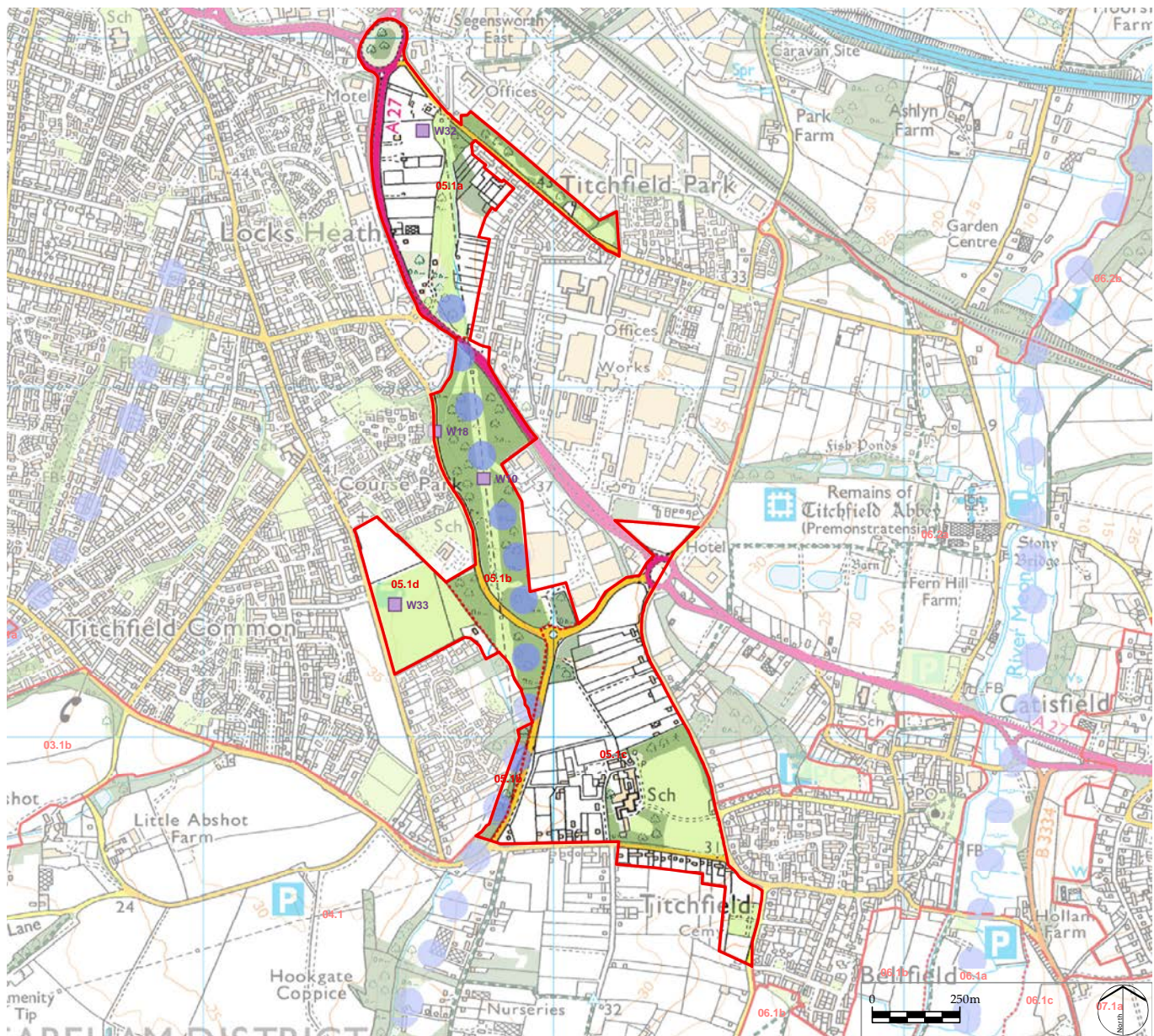
	Landscape Character Area		Local Nature Reserve
	Local Landscape Character Area		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		The Meon Gap
			Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

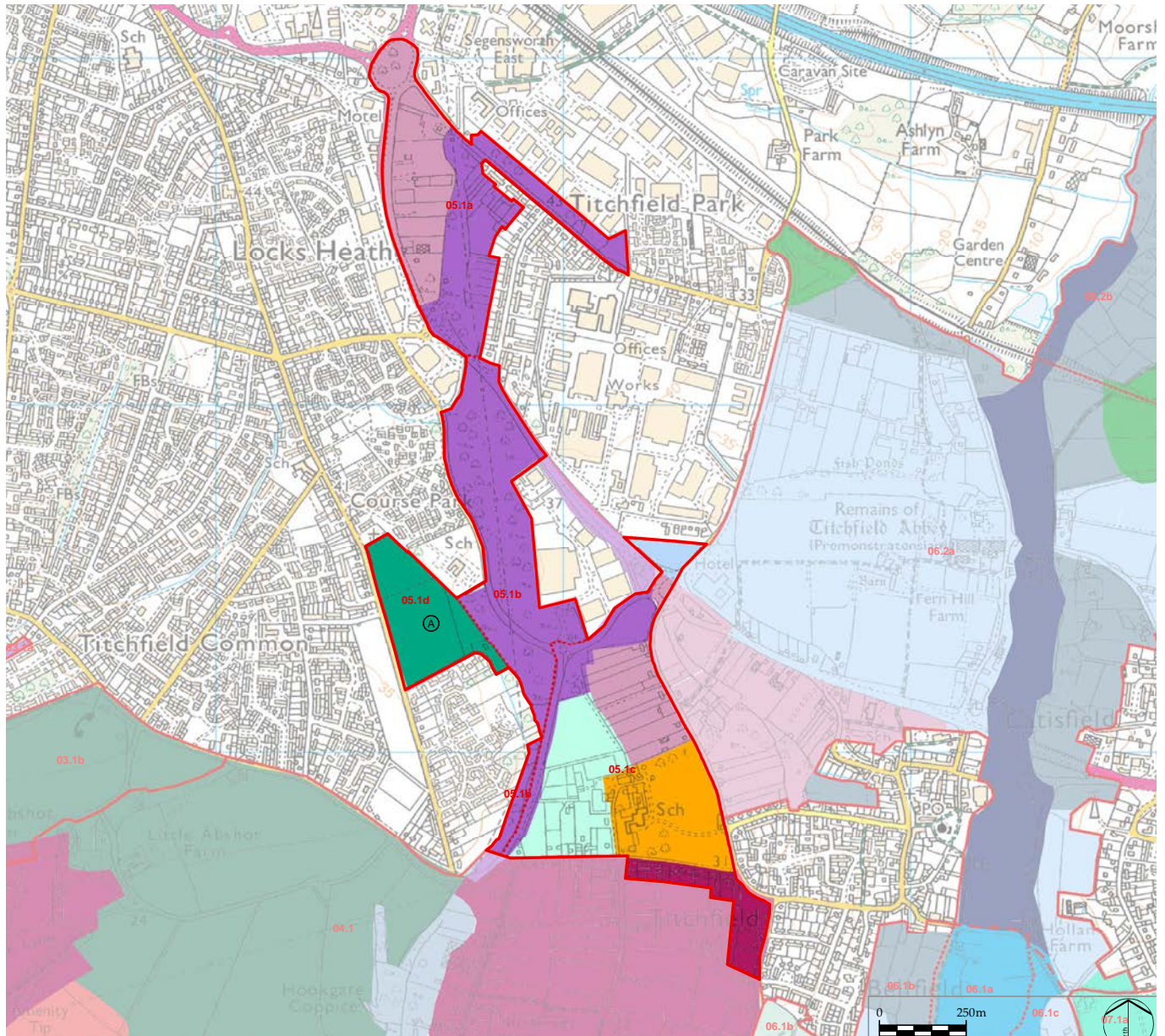


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		Existing Open Space
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor
	Green Infrastructure Projects		

LCA 5 - TITCHFIELD CORRIDOR

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types



Wooded Valley: Heath Associated



Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale



Horticulture & Smallholdings: Large Scale



Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character



Enclosed Coastal Amenity Land



Parkland & Grounds

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

Landscape character, quality and value The Titchfield Corridor LCA follows the northern section of the Brownwich Valley, one of a number of similar landform features (e.g. Hook, Meon and Alver Valleys) that run southwards from within or through the urban area, dissecting the flat coastal plain before reaching the Solent shoreline. Where it cuts through the open farmland of the coastal plain to the south (within LCA 4), the incised wooded valley forms a distinct and continuous feature that can be clearly 'read' in the landscape. However, this upper section of the valley (from Titchfield Common to Segensworth) has a less distinct profile and its form has been fragmented and masked by roads, built development, transmission line corridors and other urban infrastructure. Despite this fragmentation, the dense blanket of mature woodland and tree cover that clothes the valley sides and floor remains as a unifying linear feature that runs through the length of the corridor, linking together disparate pockets of landscape and forming the defining characteristic of the area as a whole.

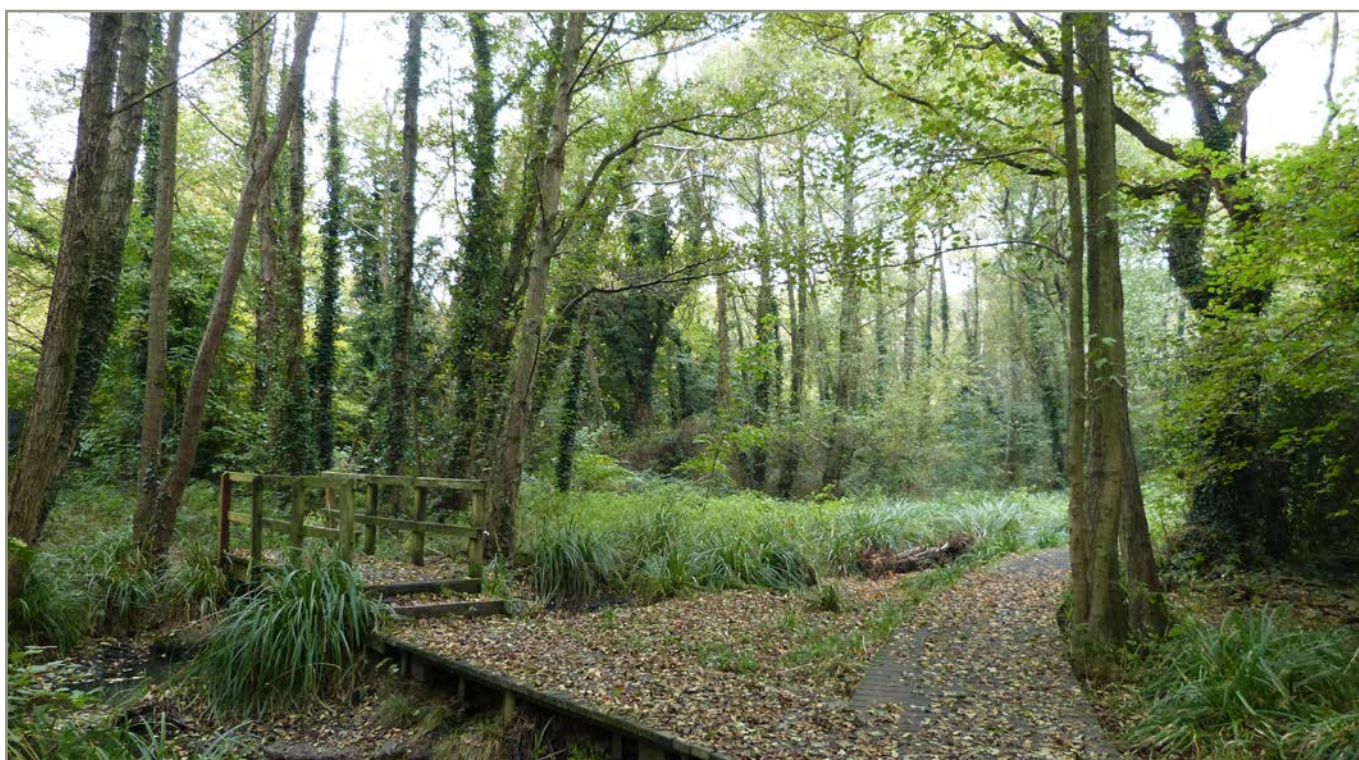
The corridor now forms a distinctive and important wedge of greenspace sandwiched between the edges of residential and employment areas at Locks Heath and Titchfield Common to the west, and Segensworth and Titchfield Park to the north and north-east. At its southern end, the corridor broadens to include part of the coastal plain that lies between Titchfield Common in the west and the separate settlement of Titchfield in the east, forming part of the wider Meon (Strategic) Gap. The area is treated as a single LLCA because of its relatively small size and the unifying effect of the wooded valley and well-treed character, but four sub-areas have been identified to reflect local differences in land use and character.

At the northern end of the corridor, **area 5.1a** comprises an 'island' of landscape bounded by busy roads to the west and east (A27 Southampton Road, Segensworth Roundabout and Segensworth Road) and by the rear boundaries of housing along Titchfield Park Road to the south. The upper end of the Brownwich Valley runs through the middle of the area and is generally clothed in woodland or dense cover of trees/scrub – it is designated as a SINC and public open space (known as Sylvan Glade). A high voltage electricity transmission line follows the alignment of the valley requiring some clearance of trees within the easement strip.



On the eastern side of the valley, the landscape is characterised by narrow, linear gardens extending down the valley sides from the rear of residential properties, and small-scale pasture land, typically bounded by strong hedges with abundant mature tree cover and an enclosed character. On the western side of the valley, the landscape has a different character, comprising larger-scale fields enclosed by hedgerows or fences and a more open 'internal' character. This land is occupied by a mixture of rough pasture, paddocks and horticultural uses (garden centre), with the occasional private dwelling, set behind well-vegetated roadside boundaries and backed by the central spine of woodland. The wooded central valley, together with the strong cover of trees and vegetation within gardens, small-scale fields and along the roadsides, are all valuable landscape (and ecological) features and give much of the area an enclosed, attractive 'sylvan' character. However, the land to the west has a somewhat scruffier, fringe appearance, lacks a well-treed character and is generally of lower landscape quality. Its character is affected by the adjacent busy A27 and its highly urbanised surroundings, although the strong boundary vegetation along the roadside helps to reduce some of these influences.

The central part of the corridor (**area 5.1b**) is occupied entirely by intact, densely wooded valley landscape. The area is bounded to the east by the A27, the Kite's Croft employment site and Warsash Road, and to the west by the urban edge of Titchfield Common and Locks Heath. This part of the wooded valley landscape, known as Bowling Green and Kite's Croft, follows the upper reaches of the Brownwich stream and contains alder, oak, willow and hazel coppice woodland and associated habitats, including meadows and ponds. It is designated as a SINC and managed as a Local Nature Reserve, and is accessible to the public along various permissive paths and boardwalks. Primate Way crosses the woodland at the southern end separating the main part of Kite's Croft from its smaller components, such as Lamberts Coppice. Apart from the intrusion of a high voltage electricity transmission line which follows the valley and the section of Primate Way that cuts through the woodland, the area has an essentially unspoilt, enclosed and semi-natural character and is of high landscape value.



Area 5.1c lies at the southern end of the corridor and mainly comprises land beyond the Brownwich Valley lying within the coastal plain between the settlements of Titchfield Common and Titchfield. The wooded Brownwich valley runs along the western edge of the area and it is bounded to the north by roads and employment sites, to the south by Common Lane and the agricultural landscape of the coastal plain, and to the east by St Margaret's Lane and the western edge of Titchfield. The area is characterised by a patchwork of land uses, including educational facilities and playing fields associated with West Hill Park School, fields of varying scales comprising mainly pasture and horticultural uses (nursery and glasshouses) bounded by fences or weak hedgerows, low-density housing along the roadsides with long linear gardens to the rear, and blocks of woodland and belts/groups of mature trees. These include an area of semi-natural woodland associated with the Brownwich valley (designated as a SINC) in the north-west corner, and more ornamental woodland and trees within the school grounds within the south-eastern part of the area. The area has a semi-rural, rather than urban, character and the woodlands and mature tree/hedgerow cover within and around the area are valuable features. However, the peripheral housing, roads and school facilities have a suburbanising influence, and the somewhat unkempt condition of some land, field boundaries and buildings also detract from the quality of the landscape.

Area 5.1d lies above the valley side to the west and comprises a parcel of land occupied by playing fields (Hunts Pond Road Recreation Ground) and a few smaller fields and paddocks. Although outside of the current defined urban settlement boundary, the area lies within the urban context of Titchfield Common and part of the area is designated (or allocated) public open space. The area has an attractive backdrop of mature trees but the poorly maintained roadside hedgerows, the use of the land for horse-grazing and formal recreation, and the influence of surrounding urban development lend a suburban character to the landscape and detract from its intrinsic quality.

The area as a whole is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation and its quality is affected by its urban context, particularly in the north of the area, and the intrusion of roads, power lines and large-scale commercial development. However, the remaining areas of intact wooded valley landscape that run through the heart of the area are of high intrinsic value as a scarce and scenically attractive landscape (and ecological) resource within a highly urbanised part of the Borough. In addition to the woodland along the valley, the area benefits from extensive tree cover along the road corridors and within some gardens/grounds of private properties and along some field boundaries. This helps to integrate existing development into the landscape, reduce its impact on the remaining open land and lends a well-treed character to the area as a whole.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The wooded Brownwich valley landscape that forms the core of this area (**area 5.1b** and part of **area 5.1a**) is of high landscape value and highly susceptible to change. Development within this area would not only erode extent of this distinctive and scarce woodland resource, but would also have adverse effects upon the unspoilt, semi-natural qualities of the woodland landscape. There is, therefore, no potential to accommodate development within the intact areas of wooded valley without unacceptable effects on the landscape resource.

Other parts of the Titchfield Corridor are less sensitive to change because of their lower intrinsic landscape quality and the possibility of absorbing some built form within the framework of mature trees along road and field boundaries. In particular, the western part of **area 5.1a** suffers from a number of already intrusive features along its western boundary (A27, large employment units etc.), overhead power lines and areas of rough ground or 'vacant land' etc. Development within this western area would alter its character from essentially 'undeveloped' to urban but this would not necessarily result in unacceptable landscape impacts as long as it was well-integrated within the existing field pattern and structure of vegetation along road and field boundaries, and adequate buffers were incorporated to prevent impacts on the wooded valley landscape to the east.

There may also be some scope for small-scale development within **area 5.1c**, although the semi-rural character (albeit with some suburban influences) would need to be maintained. Any development would need to be carefully integrated within the existing field pattern and hedgerow structure, and be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality (e.g. individual or small groups of detached dwellings in large, well-treed plots). This area lies within a strategic gap and any prospect of physical, visual or perceived coalescence of development with neighbouring settlements must be avoided (see 'setting of urban area sensitivity assessment').

Development within the southern part of **area 5.1d** is likely to be resisted because of its status as existing or allocated public open space (see green infrastructure sensitivity assessment). Apart from the attractive mature trees that form the backdrop to this area (associated with the wooded Brownwich valley beyond), it is an area of relatively undistinguished landscape that lacks any specific features or attributes of note and is influenced by its suburban context. Aside from its value as 'open land' within a predominantly built-up area, it is therefore of moderate to low sensitivity and could potentially accommodate some development without significant adverse effects on landscape resources.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Visibility of the landscape within the Titchfield Corridor is very limited, despite being surrounded by roads and built development on most sides. The dense woodland within the Brownwich valley (**area 5.1b** and part of **area 5.1a**) restricts views into the interior of the valley from surrounding areas, although there are views from the permissive footpath network within the woodland area itself. However, the woodland edges and canopy are visible from a wider area and form an important component of views from surrounding roads and built areas, affecting large numbers of viewers.

Another key factor in limiting visibility is the strong framework of trees and boundary vegetation along the road corridors within the area. Views into **area 5.1a** are substantially restricted by boundary vegetation along the A27 Southampton Road and Segensworth Road, with housing along Titchfield Park Road and Segensworth Road obscuring views from the east. Views from these properties into the interior of this area are also very limited because of intervening vegetation within the gardens and valley landscape to the rear. There are a few gaps and low sections of hedgerow that allow occasional glimpsed views but overall visibility into this area is low.

Area 5.1c is similarly bounded by strong hedgerows and roadside trees and vegetation around most of its periphery, and woodland cover within the area, and built development along the roadsides also helps to reduce visibility from further afield. There are some lengths of open boundary or gaps through which glimpsed views into the interior are possible, particularly from the road network and St Margarets roundabout in the northern part of the area.

There are no public rights of way or accessible areas (other than the school playing fields and sports facilities) within this area and views from private properties along Common Lane and on the edge of Titchfield are largely restricted by vegetation along field boundaries, gardens or within the school grounds. The overall visibility of this area is also relatively low.

Views into **area 5.1d** are interrupted by mature trees and hedgerow vegetation along the eastern and southern boundaries but tree/hedgerow cover along the boundary along Hunts Pond Road to the west is intermittent and there are open views through gaps into the area from the road and some properties opposite the area. Visibility of this area is therefore moderate to high. Intervisibility within the area is also high, with all internal boundaries formed by fences apart from a length of hedgerow bounding a small field to the east.

The key viewers within the area are local residents and users of the public open space in area 5.1d, and users of the network of permissive paths within the Brownwich valley woodlands (area 5.1b and part of area 5.1a). These viewers will be highly focused on their surroundings and very sensitive to change. Elsewhere, other potential receptors will be local residents and users of the road network around areas 5.1a and c but most views are filtered or glimpsed and changes in these areas would have relatively limited impacts on the quality of views or the visual amenity of these viewers.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Visual sensitivity is relatively low within the Titchfield Corridor as a whole, largely due to its extensive cover of woodland and trees which limit views into the land within the corridor itself, as well as acting as a barrier to views from one side of the corridor to the other from wider urban areas. Any development which reduced the extent, effectiveness and quality of this tree cover is likely to have adverse effects on the quality of views and the visual amenity of the surrounding local population. Maintenance of this well-treed character is therefore a priority and key requirement of any development proposals, and includes maintaining the quality of both external and internal views of the woodland areas and the well-treed character of the road corridors.

Outside of the woodlands, the area of highest visual sensitivity is the public open space and adjacent fields along Hunts Pond Road in area 5.1d, where major investment in new hedgerow and tree planting along the roadside and internally within the area would be required to minimise the visual impact of new built development on local residents and recreation ground users. In other parts of the corridor (e.g. the western side of area 5.1a and area 5.1c) there is some potential to integrate sensitive new development within an existing and strengthened framework of vegetation without significant adverse effects on the character and quality of views or visual amenity.



CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Although it occupies a relatively narrow corridor and has been progressively encroached upon by roads and urban development, this area still makes a significant contribution to maintaining a sense of separation between neighbouring urban areas, defining their edges and contributing to their character and settings.

The physical gap has been ‘squeezed’ tightly in places, for example between areas 5.1a and 5.1b where the residential development on Titchfield Park Road (which lies within the Titchfield Park neighbourhood) is separated from the retail development along the eastern boundary of the separate neighbourhood of Locks Heath by a gap only a little wider than the carriageway of the A27 Southampton Road. Despite this physical proximity, the perceived gap is successfully maintained by the dense, mature vegetation cover within the valley landscape and along the roadside between the two areas. Without this extensive continuous tree and woodland cover, both within the Brownwich valley but also along the roadsides, the integrity of the gap would be significantly compromised.

The wooded Brownwich valley plays a particular role in defining a strong, natural eastern boundary (and wooded setting) for the urban areas of Locks Heath and Titchfield Common. Together with a belt of woodland to the north of Segensworth Road, it also forms a strong natural feature defining the limits of the urban area of Titchfield Park in the north east and contributes to the ‘leafy’ character of its setting.

In the southern part of the corridor, the area forms a wedge of largely undeveloped, semi-rural landscape that lies between, and physically separates, the settlements of Titchfield Common and Titchfield and forms part of the wider strategic gap that separates the western wards from the urban areas of Stubbington and Fareham. The eastern edge of Titchfield Common is strongly defined by the wooded valley but the typically dispersed pattern of development within the coastal plain landscape (e.g. linear residential development strung along roads such as Common Lane and St Margaret’s Lane), threatens to blur the definition of the settlement edge of Titchfield. The grounds of West Hill school and strong roadside vegetation currently form a clear barrier to further encroachment westwards and it will be important to maintain and reinforce a tight settlement boundary to protect the integrity of the gap.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area plays a vital role in maintaining separation between urban areas and settlements, most importantly because of its heavily wooded character which acts as a visual barrier between built areas, particularly in areas 5.1a and 5.1b. Any development that reduced the extent, effectiveness and quality of this tree cover within the wooded valley and along the road corridors, is likely to have adverse effects on perceptions of a gap between built areas. Maintenance of this well-treed character and visual barrier is therefore an absolute priority and key requirement of any development proposals if the integrity of the gap is to be maintained.

Area 5.1c provides greater physical separation but extensive built development within this area has the potential to blur the distinction between settlements and there is a danger of perceived coalescence if the existing settlement limits are not clearly defined and development is allowed to sprawl outwards along the road corridors. The area could potentially accommodate some small-scale ‘infill’ development but this would need to be well-contained behind mature vegetation along the road frontages to ensure that the perception of settlement edges, and the gap between them, is maintained.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This area makes a significant contribution to the local and strategic GI network. The Brownwich valley is a finger of natural greenspace that forms a wildlife corridor through the urban area southwards to the coastal plain and the coast. The whole of the wooded valley in this area is designated as a SINC (containing semi-natural woodland and associated habitats, including meadows and ponds) and a large part is managed as the Kite's Croft Local Nature Reserve.

In terms of the access network, there are no public rights of way within the area apart from the road network, which offers pedestrians and cyclists routes through the area. Part of the National Cycle Route 22 crosses the area, linking Titchfield and Titchfield Common, utilising St Margaret's Lane and Primate Road. However, the area contains a substantial area of designated public open space, including most of the Brownwich valley woodlands, within which there is a network of permissive paths. This links to other designated open space at Titchfield Common (including the recreation ground on Hunts Pond Road and adjacent open land), and to a strip of wooded open space that runs along the northern side of Segensworth Road in the north of the corridor. Further open space within the grounds of West Hill school is not connected to this network.

The strategic importance of the valley is recognised within the PUSH GI strategy, which identifies it as a 'sub-regional scale blue corridor', although there are no specific projects noted for the area. The Fareham GI Strategy, however, lists several projects within the area to improve footpath and cycling access and links (Wo8, W10, W18, W29, W32 and W33) and to progress completion of the Greenway Network.

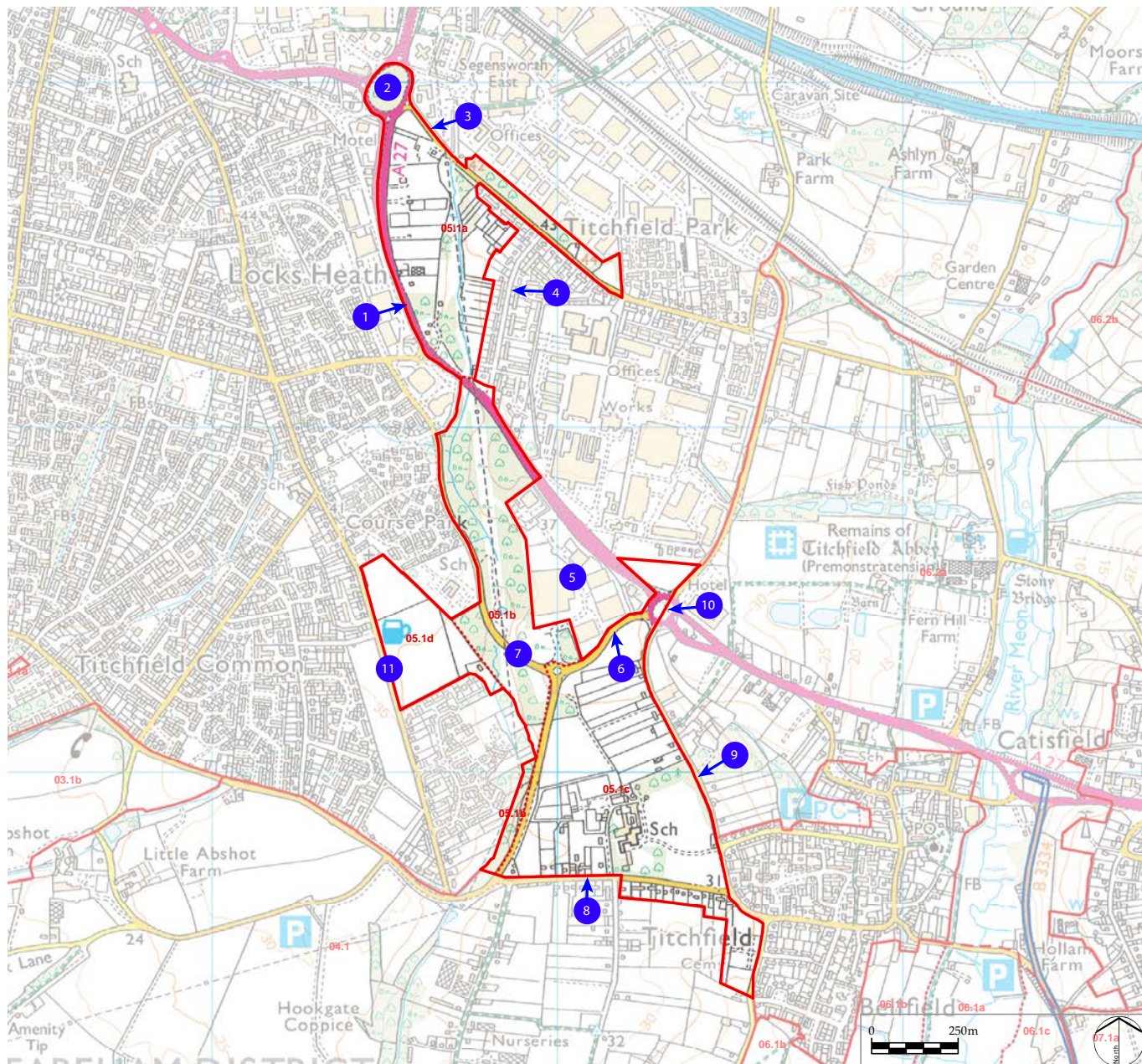
SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The Brownwich Valley, with its extensive woodland habitats and network of permissive paths, is a particularly important and sensitive greenspace resource within this urbanised area. Other important assets include areas of greenspace along the Segensworth Road, Titchfield Common and in the grounds of West Hill School, and the strong network of mature trees and vegetation along the road corridors and along field/property boundaries which connect all of these areas together. These assets should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their value, and development that would adversely affect them, e.g. through large-scale removal or disturbance of trees or other vegetation, or through loss of existing access opportunities and links, should be avoided. Opportunities to provide additional access links and extended public access within this area should be considered as part of any development proposals.



LLCA 5.1 - TITCHFIELD CORRIDOR

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area	1	Southampton Road (A27)	8	Common Road
	Local Landscape Character Area	2	Segensworth roundabout	9	St Margarets Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	3	Segensworth Road	10	St Margarets roundabout
		4	Titchfield Park Road	11	Hunts Pond Road
		5	Kites Croft employment site		
		6	Warsash Road		
		7	Primate Road		

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The majority of this area is of high sensitivity as part of a scarce and distinctive landscape resource, for its contribution to the local and wider GI network and for its role in maintaining the separation of settlements. Some other parts of the area are relatively less sensitive, because of their condition or the influence of their urban setting or other intrusive land uses/features. However, across the area as a whole, it is the extensive cover of woodland, trees and other mature vegetation that is absolutely critical to maintaining local landscape and settlement character, and the various important functions that this area of landscape performs. Any new development within this area must maintain this wooded and well-treed character and strengthen it through additional planting and appropriate management.

There is very limited potential for development within the wooded valley itself but there is some potential scope for development within areas of lower landscape sensitivity (such as the western part of area 5.1a and parts of area 5.1c) as long as the role of these areas in separating settlements is not compromised and landscape and settlement character is enhanced.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Protect and extend the extensive cover of existing woodland, trees and other mature vegetation within the Brownwich valley and along road corridors and field boundaries within the area as a whole, to maximise its landscape, wildlife and recreational value;
- Pay particular attention to protecting woodland/tree cover in locations where a continuous dense 'screen' plays the most critical role in maintaining physical, visual and perceived separation between urban areas (e.g. at the pinch point between areas 5.1a and 5.1b);
- Pay particular attention to maintaining continuous, well-treed boundaries along road corridors siting development discreetly behind screening vegetation along site frontages and avoiding large gaps for site access;
- Avoid the introduction of tall buildings or large structures that could cause visual intrusion that would be difficult to mitigate through planting or existing vegetation;
- Would be difficult to integrate without visual intrusion
- Avoid the creation of 'ribbon development' along roads, particularly around the southern part of the area, where this may lead to physical, visual or perceived coalescence of settlements;
- In particular, reinforce tight settlement boundaries, maintaining clear definition of settlement edges (e.g. along the western edge of Titchfield) and avoiding 'sprawl' outwards along roads;
- Follow existing settlement densities and patterns, particularly within the semi-rural southern part of the area (e.g. individual buildings set in long, narrow, well-treed plots) and, generally, demonstrate design that has minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and is in keeping with the character of the local landscape, settlement pattern and built form;
- Be integrated within the existing field pattern and vegetation structure, retaining and reinforcing hedgerows, trees and other mature vegetation;
- Maintain the informal character of the rural lanes within the coastal plain landscape (area 5.1c) and avoid intrusion of other features that may urbanise the semi-rural-character of this area, e.g. lighting, signage, conspicuous development etc.
- Protect and enhance existing GI assets and provide opportunities for expanding public access and connectivity within the area, and with neighbouring areas and the wider access network in accordance with the PUSH/Fareham GI Strategies.

2.6 LCA 6: MEON VALLEY

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



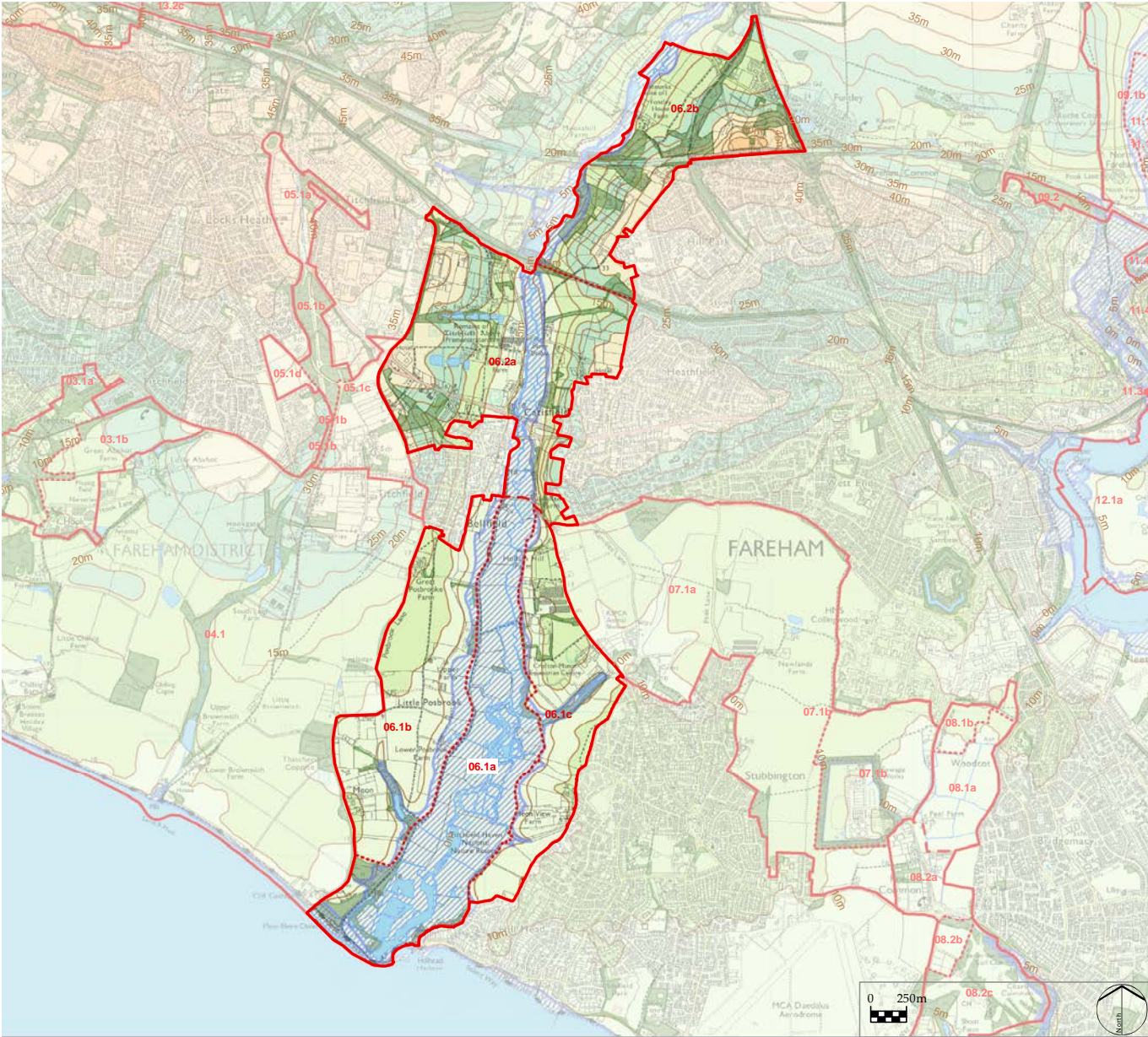
LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

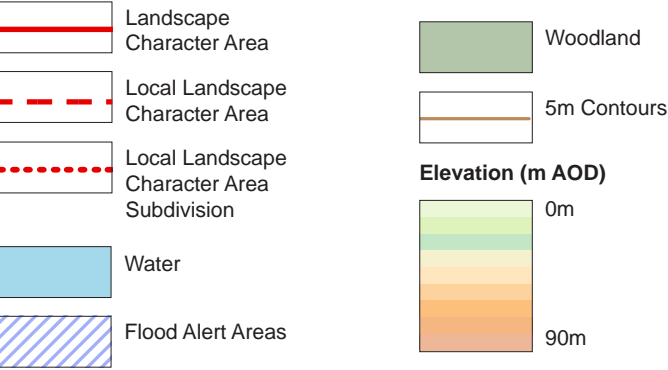


Location Diagram

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

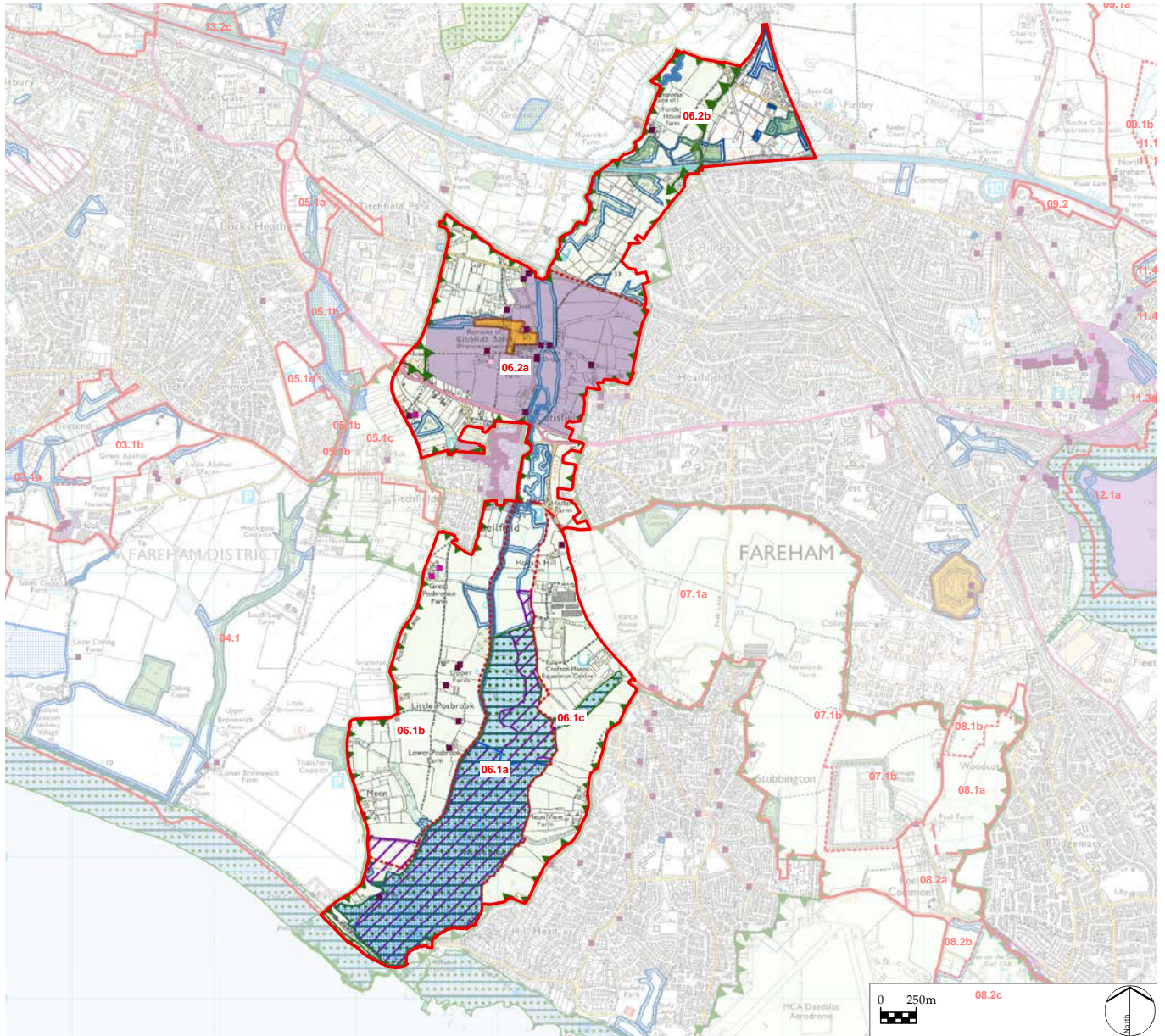


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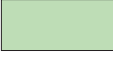












LCA 6 - MEON VALLEY

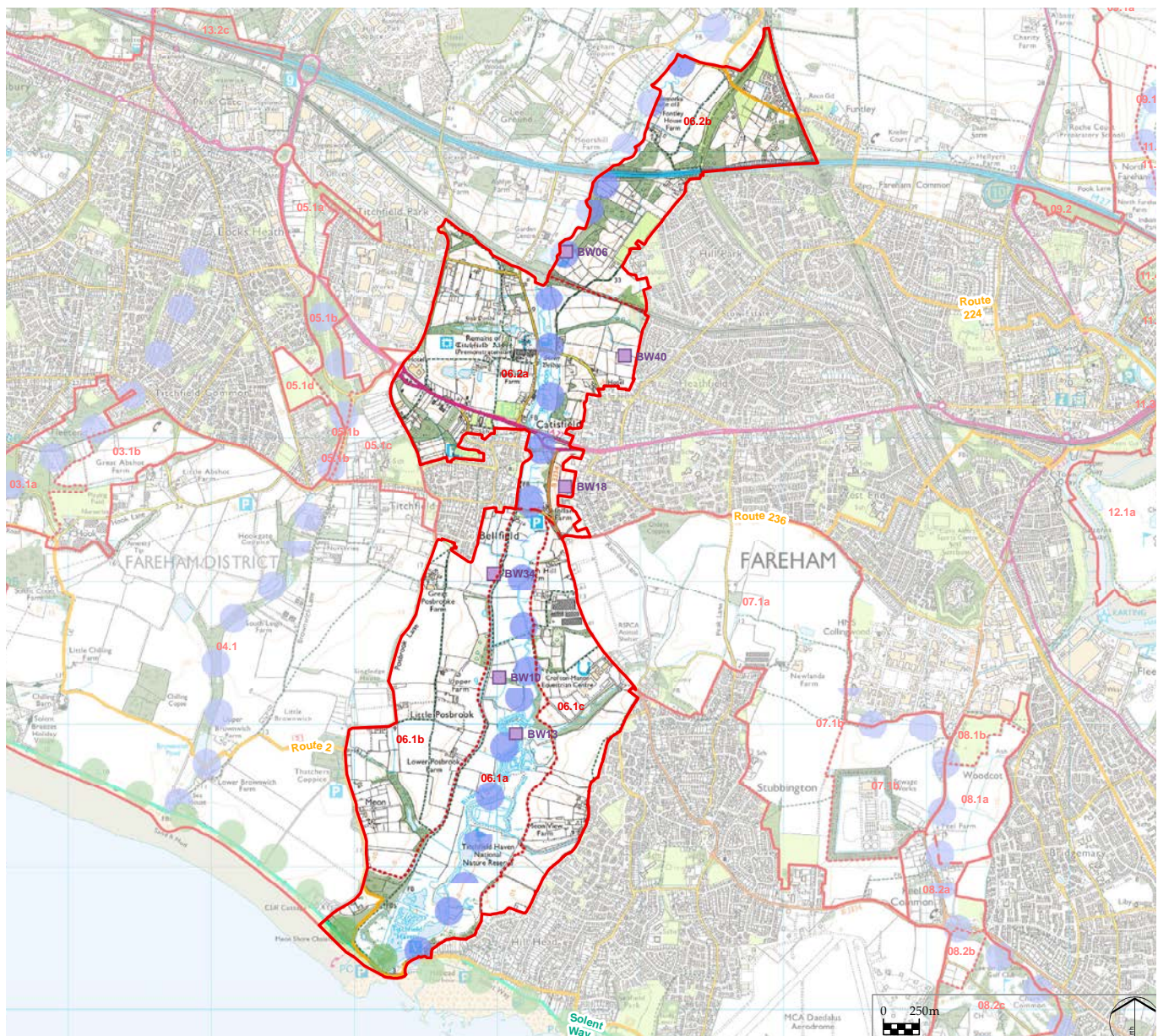
PLANNING CONTEXT













LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest		RAMSAR
	Local Landscape Character Area		Local Nature Reserve		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Special Protection Area		The Meon Gap
			Special Area of Conservation		Conservation Areas
			RAMSAR		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
Designations					
Listed Building Grade					
	I		II		II*

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

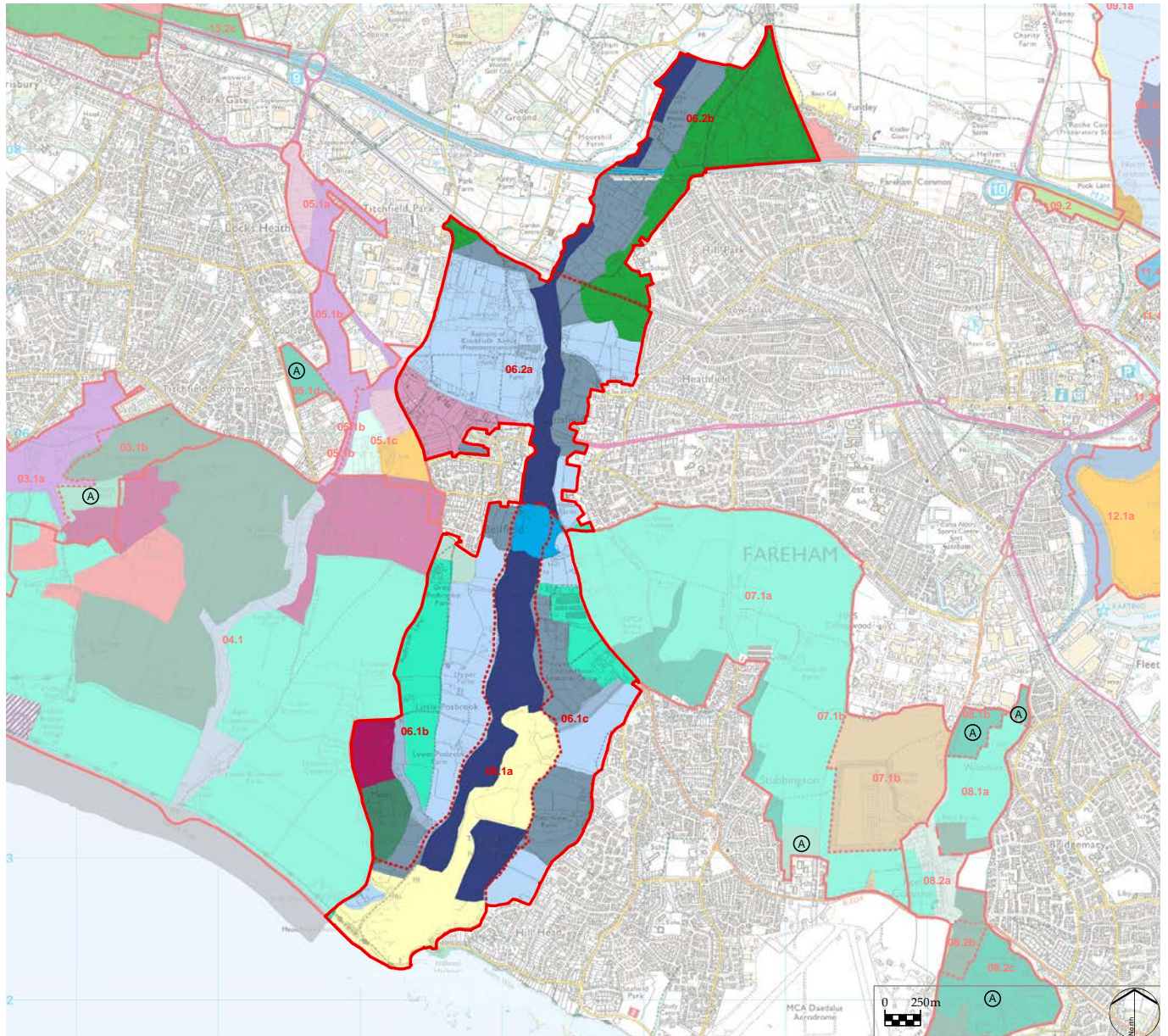


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Long Distance Footpaths		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		National Cycle Network		Existing Open Space
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Green Corridor		Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor
	Green Infrastructure Projects				

LCA 6 - MEON VALLEY

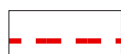
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types



Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale



Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale



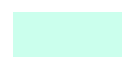
Horticulture & Smallholdings: Large Scale



Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure



Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure



Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character



Small Scale Enclosed Valley



Open Floodplain Farmland



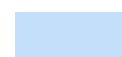
Enclosed Floodplain Farmland



Marsh, Reedswamp & Brackish Lagoon



Enclosed Valley Side



Open Valley Side

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

Area 6.1 comprises the lower section of the Meon Valley from the southern edge of Titchfield and Bridge Street in the north to the confluence with the Solent at Titchfield Haven in the south. To the east lies Stubbington, and countryside forming the Fareham-Stubbington Strategic Gap (LCA 07), while to the west the area is bounded by the expansive area of open countryside within the Chilling-Brownwich Coastal Plain (LCA 04).

The area embraces the broad, flat floodplain of the River Meon, its valley sides and a strip of peripheral landscape. While the valley form is more gentle and less well-defined than further to the north, it nevertheless forms a distinct landscape feature that cuts through the coastal plain between Titchfield and the coast. The inter-relationship between the valley floor and its fringing landscapes give the area a sense of topographic and visual unity, but the river corridor has been divided into three sub-areas for the purposes of the assessment.

Area 6.1a comprises the flat valley floor (formerly the estuary of the River Meon), characterised by open floodplain pasture, a distinctive complex of wetland habitats (including reedbeds, calcareous fen, fen meadow, brackish marsh and salt marsh, pools, scrapes and ditches), tree-lined watercourses (notably willow) and the open water of the River Meon itself. The valley floor progressively broadens as it approaches the historic sea wall that separates it from the Solent, with wetland areas becoming more expansive and the River Meon itself taking a more meandering route. An increasing number of oxbow lakes and pools form a particularly distinctive feature of the valley floor landscape to the east of Little Posbrook and around Titchfield Haven to the south. Many of the most distinctive landscape features are a result of historic intervention to manage water flows (some of which dates from at least 1611) and more recently, to provide new and enhanced habitats for wildlife. Much of the valley floor forms part of the Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest or SINC designations, and the natural qualities, historical interest and distinctive maritime influences all contribute to the high landscape value of the area.

Areas 6.1b and 6.1c embrace the mosaic landscape on either side of the valley floor, forming a gentle transition from valley sides into the landscape of the wider coastal plain. On the western side (between Posbrook Lane and the Titchfield Canal) **area 6.1b** is characterised predominantly by open, large-scale farmland and horticultural uses that are typical of the coastal plain, with some minor variation within pockets of more enclosed pasture land bounded by strong vegetation, a couple of woodland blocks and a small-scale enclosed tributary valley. This area also notably contains the tree-lined Titchfield Canal, running from Titchfield in the north to the Titchfield Haven in the south. The landscape is essentially rural and unspoilt with a sparse road and settlement pattern and no significant detracting influences.

On the eastern side of the valley floor, **area 6.1c** is occupied by similar land uses but with greater variation in field pattern and enclosure. The area comprises a mosaic of smaller-scale pastures bounded by strong hedgerows and trees (particularly within the northern and southern ends of the area), two small-scale enclosed tributary valleys and some larger fields with a more open, denuded character within the central section around the Crofton Manor Equestrian Centre. Together with the adjacent horticultural glasshouses and other commercial operations, this lends a localised fringe character to the landscape but does not detract significantly from the essentially rural characteristics of the overall area.



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Built development is very sparse within **area 6.1** as a whole, and is limited to scattered farmsteads on either side of the valley and a handful of residential properties in the small villages of Meon and Little Posbrook. The larger settlements of Titchfield and Stubbington are located to the north and east respectively, but these have very little influence on the landscape character within the area itself largely because of the screening/filtering effects of boundary vegetation along the edges of these settlements.

The overall character is one of a rural, intact landscape with a distinctive topographic unity and sense of place, based around the diverse landscape features of the valley and the strong relationship between the valley floor and the gently sloping agricultural landscape beyond.

The area as a whole is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation (although forms part of a Strategic Gap) but it was formerly designated as part of the Meon Valley Area of Special Landscape Character in the former Fareham Local Plan (not replaced within the current Adopted Plan but indicative of local value). The valley (including the northern section, LLCA 6.2) was designated on the basis that it is generally of high scenic quality, “particularly in the lower reaches”, with a pleasing combination of wetland and woodland habitats and small-scale floodplain pasture; it has a coherent sense of place along its length, which is “strongest to the south of Titchfield”; it has a predominantly unspoilt character and strong natural qualities, “particularly in the lower reaches”; it is of Borough-wide importance as the only example of an open river valley landscape within the Borough, which is in a fragile condition and would be very vulnerable to urban expansion and other forms of development pressure; it contains notable conservation interests in the form of ecologically important wetland, woodland and grassland habitats; and there is probably a local consensus as to its importance as a wildlife, landscape and historical resource within the Borough.

These qualities are still evident in this part of the LCA and so the area is judged to be of high value as part of the Borough’s landscape resource.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area is generally of high sensitivity as one of the most distinctive and important landscape resources within the Borough. It contains a range of highly valued landscape, ecological and heritage assets across a large proportion of the area, and its natural and unspoilt qualities mean that it would be highly susceptible to the intrusion of built development. The potential for development to be accommodated within this area is consequently very low.



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VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

The relatively flat, low-lying topography of the area and the strong vegetation cover along the edges of the valley floor, within field boundaries and along roadsides result in quite restricted visibility of the Lower Meon Valley from the wider and more immediate surrounding areas. Views from outside the area to the north and east (including built areas in Titchfield, the southern edge of Fareham and Stubbington) are generally screened by vegetation or built form. Views into the area from the wider countryside areas of the coastal plain to the west are also largely limited by intervening vegetation along field boundaries and roadsides.

Views into the area are possible from the roads that form the immediate boundaries of the area (notably Bridge Street in the north, Posbrook Lane to the west, Titchfield Road, Cuckoo Lane and Old Street to the east, and Cliff Road/Meon Road in the south). These are typically glimpsed views over or through hedgerows into fairly small parts of the area, rather than open or sweeping views across it. However, Cliff Road which runs along the sea wall at the far southern end of the valley, affords a more open view into the area, allowing an appreciation of the flat topography and many of the distinctive features that characterise the valley landscape. There may be some glimpsed views into the area from properties along the edge of Stubbington and Titchfield and scattered properties and farms within the area, but these are mostly screened by vegetation around the boundaries of the area.

Other than Cliff Road, the main views are from the fairly extensive public rights of way and access network within the valley, including the Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve. The network includes part of the Solent Way (which runs along Cliff Road at the far southern end of the area); a public footpath that runs through the entire length of the area from Cliff Road in the south to Bridge Street in the north, following the line of the Titchfield Canal on the western side of the valley floor; another north-south footpath route parallel to this between the canal and Posbrook Lane; a couple of branches off these main footpaths providing some east-west access links to Posford Lane in the west and Titchfield Road in the north-east; and a section of footpath running along part of the western edge of Stubbington. There is also a network of informal paths within the nature reserve, providing access to hides and other viewing points around the reserve.

Overall, quite a large extent of the area is visible from this network and the views from it are attractive, unspoilt and of high quality. The exception to this is in the north-east of the area, where the quality of local views from the footpath is partially impaired by adjacent commercial, horticultural and equestrian land uses.

The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would therefore be local residents, users of the PRoW and access network within the valley (particularly those visiting the Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve) and users of the local road network, particularly Cliff Road, Posford Lane and Titchfield Road.



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VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Although available views of the area from outside are restricted, there are quite extensive internal views from the public rights of way network which will be seen by people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and will be more sensitive to change, notably local residents and recreational users of the network within the area itself, including visitors to the nature reserve. These viewers will be particularly focused on enjoyment of their surroundings and sensitive to changes in the character and quality of views, which are currently very attractive and generally unspoilt by the intrusion of urban influences or detracting features.

So, despite its visual containment from wider views, visual sensitivity is therefore relatively high across much of the valley landscape and there is consequently very limited potential for development without significant detrimental effects on the character and quality of local views from the local access network.

There are a few small pockets of land which are enclosed by strong hedgerows or vegetation and are not so visible from public access routes (e.g. small-scale fields on the south-eastern edge of Titchfield village, around Titchfield Nursery and in the south-east around Meon View Farm). From a visual sensitivity perspective, it may be possible to absorb some limited small-scale development within these areas without significant impacts on views or visual amenity, but there are likely to be other factors that constrain development in these rural and relatively unspoilt parts of the valley landscape.



CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Together with the neighbouring Chilling-Brownwich Coastal Plain (LLCA04), the Hook Valley (LLCA 03) and the Fareham-Stubbington Gap (LLCA 07), this area forms a significant part of an extensive swathe of countryside that separates the urban edge of Stubbington in the east from the settlements of Warsash, Titchfield and the Western Wards in the west and Fareham in the north. The area is designated as part of a Strategic Gap (together with LLCA 6.2 to the north) and has an important function in maintaining the separation and individual identity of the urban areas to the north and east and containing any further ‘sprawl’ into open countryside, particularly westwards from Stubbington.

This area retains a strongly rural character, with few urban influences or ‘fringe’ characteristics, and has an important role in maintaining the distinction between urban and countryside areas. This rural, unspoilt character extends right up to the edge of the settlements of Titchfield and Stubbington, and acts as an important buffer between the urban edge and the highly sensitive environment of the valley floor. The clear distinction between town and countryside, and the integrity of the valley landscape as a whole, would be compromised by significant development extending into the area beyond the existing urban edge.

The low-lying topography of the area and the screening effects of vegetation within the valley means that there is not a strong visual relationship between the area and neighbouring settlements. However, as a strong topographic feature, the Meon Valley acts as a natural ‘limit to growth’ and a ‘natural setting’ for the urban areas on either side.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This lower part of the Meon Valley has a crucial role in defining the natural limits to growth of settlements to the north and east, preventing further sprawl into open countryside to the west of Stubbington and south of Titchfield and Fareham and the potential coalescence of these settlements. This role is recognised by the Strategic Gap designation which covers the entire area.

Although physical coalescence of built form could in theory be prevented by a narrower corridor of landscape along the valley (e.g. the valley floor itself), any significant encroachment of development within the adjoining valley side and coastal plain farmland would potentially blur the clear distinction between ‘town and country’ along the settlement edges and adversely affect the quality of their natural, rural settings.

The eastern side of the valley (area 6.1c) is potentially the area most vulnerable to the threat of further development, either from westward expansion of Stubbington or along the corridor of Titchfield Road, which is to form part of the proposed Stubbington Bypass. Although there is already some development along this road, this does not affect the current perception of a clear gap between the urban areas of Fareham and Stubbington. Further, more conspicuous ribbon development in the northern part of area 6.1c could, however, alter this perception and affect the separate identity of these settlements.

Within the southern part of area 6.1c, the belt of unspoilt, rural farmland provides a clear distinction between the urban area of Stubbington (which is contained behind a relatively strong boundary along Cuckoo Lane and Old Street) and the open countryside of the Meon Valley and wider coastal plain to the west. Encroachment of development into this area would blur this distinction and may set a precedent for development to extend right up to the edge of the floodplain, with potentially significant adverse effects its highly sensitive wildlife habitats and the character and integrity of the valley landscape as a whole.

Overall, therefore, there is very limited capacity to accommodate development without a significant impact on the integrity of the area’s rural, unspoilt character and the role it performs in maintaining the separate identity and character of the settlements and their landscape settings.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This area makes a significant contribution to green infrastructure, particularly in respect of ecological and landscape assets. There are extensive areas of semi-natural wetland, grassland and woodland habitat within the river valley that are of significant wildlife and landscape value (designated as NNR/SSSI/SINC).

The area also makes a significant contribution to local green infrastructure through the network of public rights of way and other paths that allow recreational use of much of the area (as described under visual sensitivity assessment). Crucially, this network provides links with the surrounding urban areas and other GI resources, including the Solent Way long distance recreational route and National Cycle Route 2. Titchfield Haven NNR provides additional access opportunities within the valley along a network of permissive paths through the reserve. There are no other significant areas of open space or access land within the area.

The Meon Valley is identified in the PUSH GI strategy as a ‘sub-regional scale blue corridor’ and project C6 of the strategy applies to the Lower Meon Valley and seeks “to conserve and enhance this area to ensure continued contribution to sense of place, climate change adaptation, providing open space close to urban areas for recreation and tourism”.

The Fareham GI Strategy 2014 proposes a number of GI enhancement projects across the area, the majority of which form part of larger “borough wide” projects that will enhance the area’s contribution to the wider GI network. These include:

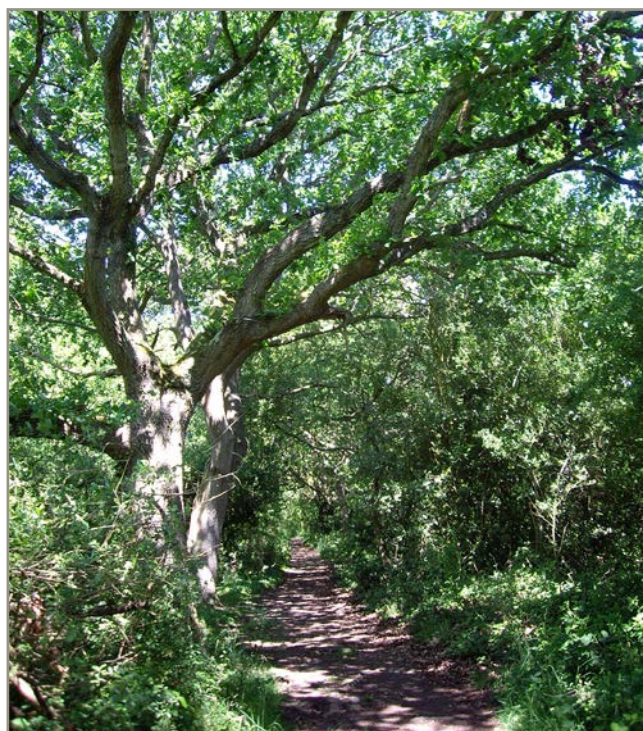
- BW10 – Project to create a circular walking route encompassing the Meon Valley Trail, Shipwright’s Way and South Down’s Way, linking these existing routes together while enhancing their connectivity with the settlements of Fareham and Titchfield and the wider PRoW network.
- BW13 – Lower Meon Valley - same as the PUSH Project C6.
- BW34/36 – Enhancements to a variety of habitats within the Meon Valley and Solent Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, including river valley floodplain, reed beds and grassland.
- Tor – Titchfield Canal towpath improvements, including enhanced links between Titchfield Haven and the Meon Valley Trail to the north of the area.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Existing GI assets (e.g. the mosaic of open water, marsh, fen, grassland, scrub and woodland habitats as well as existing PRoW and areas with public access) should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their ecological, landscape and amenity value, and development that would adversely affect them should be avoided. The emphasis in this area is more on improvements to existing access and habitat links, particularly with the upper Meon Valley to the north.



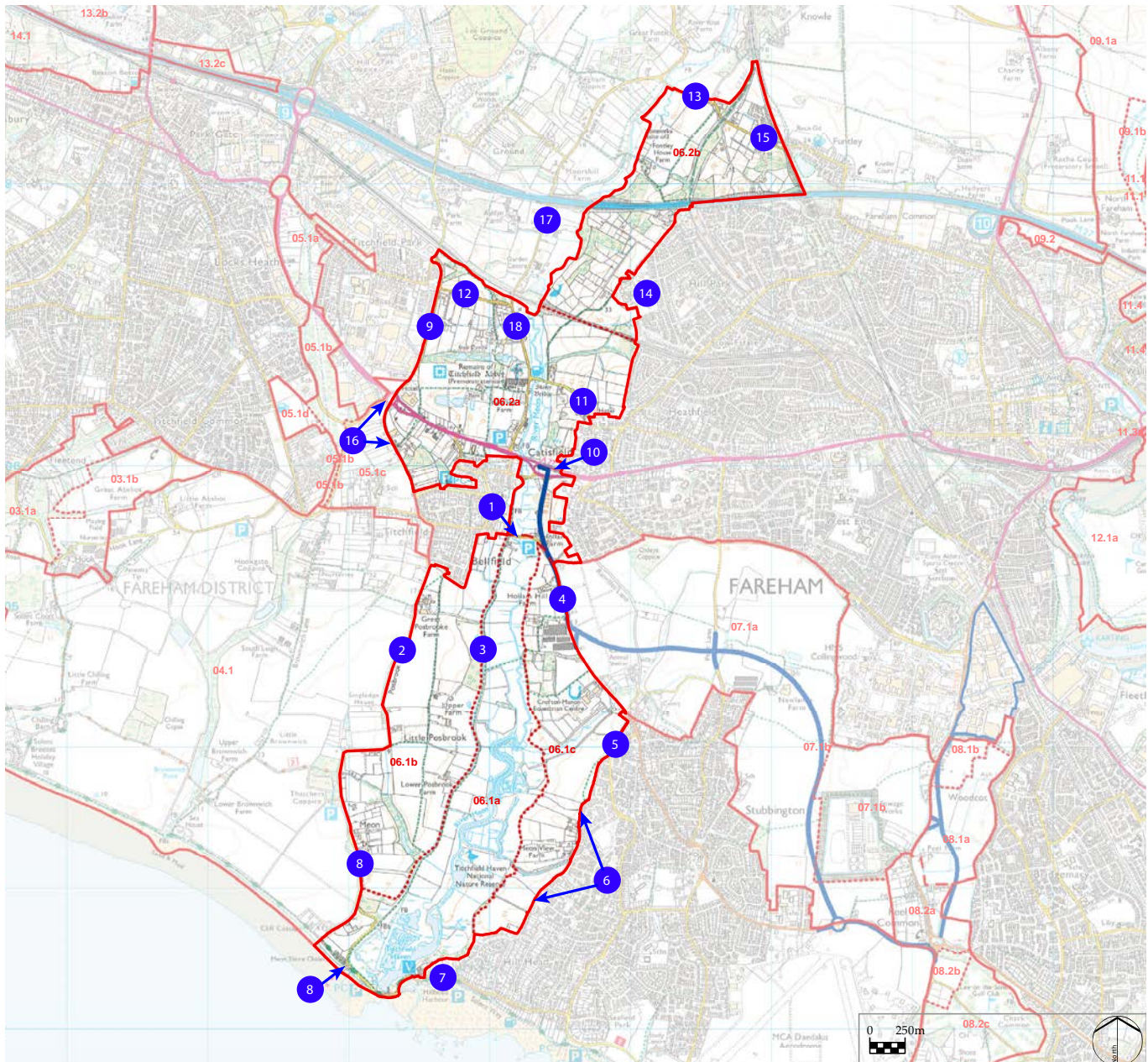
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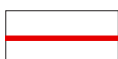
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LLCA 6.1 - LOWER MEON VALLEY

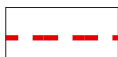
LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

1 Bridge Street

2 Posbrook Lane

3 Titchfield Canal

4 Titchfield Road

5 Cuckoo Lane

6 Old Street

7 Cliff Road

8 Meon Road

9 Cartwright Drive

10 Titchfield Gyratory (A27 Southampton Road)

11 Fishers Hill

12 Segensworth Road

13 River Lane

14 Henry Cort Community College

15 Funtley Road

16 St Margarets Lane/roundabout

17 Fontley Road

18 Mill Lane

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This is an area of high overall sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, the abundance of valued landscape, ecological and heritage features across a large proportion of the area, its role in containing the outward sprawl of urban development from the north and east and its significant contribution to green infrastructure, particularly in respect of ecological and landscape assets and the extensive network of public rights of way and access routes within the area.

Overall, the area offers extremely limited potential for development, apart from possibly individual properties set within well-treed, strongly enclosed plots of land, of a similar character and scale to the scattered farmhouses and other dwellings within the area (e.g. in the south-west and north-east corners of the area).

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of recognised landscape, ecological, heritage or amenity value within the area as a whole, including the habitats of high nature conservation importance (SSSI/SINC) and the extensive network of public rights of way and other access routes within the area, including Titchfield Haven NNR;
- Protect and enhance the existing cover of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation along field boundaries, watercourses and roadsides, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value;
- Maintain the essentially quiet, rural and unspoilt countryside character of the landscape, and the local lanes and access routes within the area, avoiding intrusive or inappropriate urban styles of lighting, signage, paving etc.
- Avoid encroachment beyond the existing urban edges of Stubbington and Titchfield and along the Titchfield Road corridor, especially where this may erode the physical or perceived gap between settlements or intrude upon the unspoilt, rural character and high quality of the landscape settings of these urban areas;
- Be of a small-scale (e.g. individual dwellings) located only in places where it can be carefully integrated within well-treed, strongly enclosed plots of land, and is of a similar character and scale to similar built development within the area;
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network (in accordance with the PUSH and Fareham GI strategies) and take advantage of opportunities to strengthen and extend access and habitat links within the area, in particular with the northern part of the Meon Valley.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

Area 6.2 comprises the upper part of the Meon Valley and occupies a corridor of land contained between the urban edges of Fareham to the east, Titchfield Park to the west and Titchfield to the south. Its northern section is bounded by the Borough boundary to the west and by the M27 and railway line near Funtley to the east.

The area is unified by the valley landform (which is more distinct than in the lower Meon Valley) and the pastoral, riparian character of the floodplain, with its small-scale meadows and pastures, and tree-lined watercourses. It is also unified by a larger-scale pattern of fields enclosed by areas of woodland (particularly in the northern section) and strong belts of trees and mature vegetation along the valley sides, and following railway and road corridors, minor valleys and historic features, and field and roadside boundaries. The overall effect is a well-treed and essentially rural (or semi-rural), pastoral landscape, despite the proximity of urban development in places and the intrusion of roads and railways which cut across the valley (including the M27, the A27 and the main Southampton to Portsmouth railway line). The area lacks the 'wilder' qualities of the lower Meon Valley floodplain but there are many features of wildlife value (e.g. woodland, wetland and grassland habitats designated as SINCS) throughout the valley and, most notably, the area contains features of exceptional heritage value, most notably the remains of the medieval Titchfield Abbey (SAM), its fishponds and historic setting and a number of other important historic buildings (including the Monastic Barn, Stony Bridge, various cottages, a mill, mill house and public house) dispersed within the surrounding valley. All of these features add significant value and local distinctiveness to the landscape of this part of the Meon Valley.

Within the distinctive and high quality landscape of the valley as a whole there are, however, some localised variations in land use, landscape quality and condition. For the purposes of describing these variations, the area has been divided into two sub-areas, to the north and south of the main railway line.

Area 6.2a lies to the south of the railway and includes the widest part of the valley centred around Titchfield Abbey, lying between Cartwright Drive (along the edge of Titchfield Park) in the west and the urban edge of Fareham in the east (approximately 1.5kms wide). It also includes the narrowest unbuilt section of the valley to the south of the A27, which is squeezed between the edge of Titchfield to the west and the urban boundary of Fareham to the east (<400m wide at its narrowest point). Most of the valley landscape within area 6.2a lies within the boundary of the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area and forms the setting for the remains of the Abbey and other important historic buildings and features in the valley. The protection afforded by various designations has meant that there has been limited intrusion of development in the area and many features of the historic landscape remain evident (e.g. field pattern, woodland blocks, fish ponds, pattern of rural lanes etc).



The landscape within the valley floor through this area has an unspoilt, intimate and riparian character, with small-scale pasture and willow-lined watercourses, much of which is designated as SINC. The 'Titchfield Gyrotory' on the Southampton Road (A27) cuts across the valley floor to the north of Titchfield but causes only localised intrusion on the valley landscape because of the extensive tree cover along roadsides, field boundaries and within the valley floor. The eastern valley sides, once part of the parkland estate that surrounded Place House (converted from Titchfield Abbey), are characterised by medium sized, irregularly shaped fields, mainly under pasture and enclosed by thick, well-treed boundaries and blocks of woodland. To the north of Fishers Hill, the field size is larger but still reflects the historic pattern. The landscape has a more open character but strong vegetation along boundaries, within a minor valley and along the road and rail corridors provides containment and effectively screens built form along the eastern edge of Fareham. The area has the character of unspoilt open countryside.

The valley sides to the west of the river have a slightly different character, with larger, more regularly shaped fields, a weaker structure of vegetation along field boundaries and a more open character. There are some substantial belts of woodland and trees that frame these open fields (e.g. along the minor valley containing the historic fish ponds, at Segensworth Coppice, to the north of Segensworth Road and around the periphery of the area) which provide visual containment from the surrounding urban areas. The open character of the valley sides, the lack of intrusion of surrounding urban areas and the essential character of the landscape as undeveloped, open countryside are all cited as important attributes of the setting of the Conservation Area, and to the setting of Titchfield Village, also a Conservation Area, to the south (see Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal 2013). However, there are some features of these western slopes that detract from landscape character and quality. These include commercial development such as nurseries and equestrian centres, some residential development and some urban fringe uses such as allotments and recreation land, which intrude upon or detract from the setting of Titchfield Abbey and the wider Conservation Area, or lend a fringe character to the landscape (particularly in the north-west corner of the area).

The valley landscape within **Area 6.2b** is bounded by the railway embankment to the south and River Lane/Funtley to the north and is bisected by the M27 motorway corridor. The valley is at its narrowest within this section and, apart from a small section of floodplain at the northern end, it is mainly the eastern valley sides that lie within the Borough boundary. These are typically clothed by a matrix of woodland, some of ancient origin, apparently 'carved out' of which are largish, open fields or areas of amenity grassland/floodlit sports pitches (e.g. associated with the Henry Cort Community College). The large fields are typically sub-divided into paddocks for horse grazing, bounded by open fences and containing various shelters and small-scale structures. In themselves, these have a somewhat scruffy, fringe character but these influences are absorbed by the extensive woodland and tree cover and the landscape retains an essentially rural and unspoilt wooded farmland character, with no significant intrusion from surrounding built areas or transport corridors.



There is a typically sparse pattern of settlement within the whole of area 6.2, consisting mainly of individual farms or dwellings, or small clusters of buildings. The exceptions to this are a localised area of 'ribbon' development along the Southampton Road (in area 6.2a) and a rather anomalous area of recent residential development off the Funtley Road in the northern tip of area 6.2b. Lying on the opposite side of the railway line, the latter has no visual connection with the settlement of Funtley and is out of character with the surrounding landscape. However, its influence is limited by surrounding woodland (including SINC)s and vegetation along the rural Funtley Road and the character of the landscape within the triangle of land between the two sections of disused railway line and the motorway corridor remains essentially rural and unspoilt.

The area as a whole is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation (although forms part of a Strategic Gap) but it was formerly designated as part of the Meon Valley Area of Special Landscape Character in the former Fareham Local Plan (not replaced within the current Adopted Plan but indicative of local value). The valley as a whole was designated on the basis that it is generally of high scenic quality, with a pleasing combination of wetland and woodland habitats and small-scale floodplain pasture; it has a coherent sense of place along its length; it has a predominantly unspoilt character and strong natural qualities although parts of the central section are subject to intrusion from neighbouring urban areas and intensive horticultural activities; it is of Borough-wide importance as the only example of an open river valley landscape within the Borough, which is in a fragile condition and would be very vulnerable to urban expansion and other forms of development pressure; it contains notable conservation interests in the form of ecologically important wetland, woodland and grassland habitats and the historically important complex of buildings, landscape and fish ponds at Titchfield Abbey; and there is probably a local consensus as to its importance as a wildlife, landscape and historical resource within the Borough. These qualities are still evident in this part of the LCA and so the area is judged to be of high value as part of the Borough's landscape resource.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area is generally of high sensitivity as one of the most distinctive and important landscape resources within the Borough. It contains a range of highly valued landscape, ecological and heritage assets across a large proportion of the area, and its natural and unspoilt qualities and the sensitivity of those valued assets, mean that it would be highly susceptible to the intrusion of built development. The potential for development to be accommodated within this area is consequently very low.



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VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Overall, the extensive woodland and tree cover within the valley landscape and, particularly along the edges of the urban areas and roads which surround and cross the valley, result in quite restricted visibility of the Upper Meon Valley from the wider and more immediate surrounding areas. Despite their proximity, views into the area from neighbouring settlements and urban areas are extremely limited. The entirety of the western boundary of **area 6.2a** along St Margarets Lane and Cartwright Drive is screened by dense vegetation, while properties on the edge of Fareham prevent public views in from the urban area to the east. These same properties on the periphery of the area may, however, experience private views into the area to the rear from upper stories. Views of the valley from within Titchfield are similarly restricted but there are some views from the eastern edge of the settlement where this immediately abuts the floodplain (e.g. from The Tanneries industrial estate).



Further north in **area 6.2b**, built development also screens public views in from the edge of the Fareham urban boundary to the east, although the Henry Cort School enjoys a commanding position on the upper slopes with open views down and across the valley to the west. Views looking back across the valley from Fontley Road and further to the west (outside of the Borough) are dominated by the heavily wooded valley floor and eastern slopes. The motorway cutting and railway corridors prevent views into the northern part of this area from the edge of Fareham and from the main village of Funtley. Wider views from the countryside areas to the north-west of this area are also screened by extensive vegetation cover and intervening landform, road and rail corridors etc. However, part of the wooded eastern valley sides, and an open area of paddocks, are visible from a short section of the M27 motorway when travelling eastwards, albeit at speed.

Within the area, there are no views from the motorway or rail corridors that cross the valley, and views from much of the road network within the area (including Southampton Road, Segensworth Road and Titchfield Road), are also substantially screened by roadside vegetation or buildings, with only very occasional glimpses. There are, however, some more open views through or over the roadside hedgerows into the river floodplain from Mill Lane, the lower part of Fishers Hill and from Bridge Street, which forms the southern boundary, and from Funtley Road and River Lane in the north.

The main views of the area are obtained from the extensive public rights of way network that runs through the valley landscape. This is particularly developed around the vicinity of Titchfield Abbey, with routes running north-south parallel to the valley floor, and east-west connecting St Margarets roundabout to the west with the Abbey and the eastern side of the valley via the historic Stony Bridge. Further routes run parallel to the railway embankment that divides areas 6.2a and 6.2b, and along the valley sides and disused railway line in the vicinity of Funtley to the north. These routes are generally well connected, and offer an appreciation of the various landscape, ecological and historic features within the valley and an opportunity to experience its unspoilt qualities and underlying sense of seclusion. Overall the quality and value of the available views and visual amenity is high, although affected in places by the influence of built development or unsightly land uses (particularly in the region of St Margarets roundabout and the large derelict glasshouse complex adjacent to Titchfield Abbey).

Key views of the Abbey are obtained from the eastern side of the valley, from the lower part of Fisher's Hill and from the PRoW that runs down the valley sides to cross the historic Stony Bridge. These high quality views of the abbey are unaffected by the inappropriate development that is visible at closer range.

The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would therefore be local residents, users of the PRoW network within the valley (particularly those visiting Titchfield Abbey) and users of the local road network within the area itself.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Although available views of the area from outside are restricted, there are quite extensive internal views from the public rights of way network which will be seen by people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and will be more sensitive to change, notably local residents and recreational users of the network within the area itself, including visitors to Titchfield Abbey. These viewers will be particularly focused on enjoyment of their surroundings and sensitive to changes in the character and quality of views, which are currently very attractive and generally unspoilt by the intrusion of urban influences or detracting features.

So, despite its visual containment from wider views, visual sensitivity is therefore relatively high across much of the Upper Meon Valley landscape and there is consequently very limited potential for development without significant detrimental effects on the character and quality of local views from the local access network.

There are a few small pockets of land which are enclosed by strong hedgerows or vegetation and less visible, and/or lie within areas where views are already affected by built development or intrusive/unsightly land uses (e.g. small pockets of undeveloped land within existing residential areas off the Funtley Road, along Southampton Road or St Margarets Lane). In all cases, any development would need to be small-scale and sensitively integrated within the existing or new vegetation structure to avoid adverse visual impacts. Measures to improve the quality of views through the removal of intrusive or unsightly features (e.g. redundant glasshouses at Titchfield Abbey Garden Centre) should be encouraged.



LLCA 6.2 - UPPER MEON VALLEY

SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Together with the Lower Meon Valley (LLCA6.1), this area forms a critical part of the corridor of undeveloped landscape that separates the urban areas of Fareham to the east from Titchfield and the Western Wards to the west. The area is designated as part of a Strategic Gap (together with LLCAs 6.1 and 7) and has an important function in maintaining the separation and individual identity of the urban areas within and surrounding the valley. This role is perhaps even more critical than within the Lower Meon Valley as development pressures have ‘squeezed’ the gap at its narrowest point to less than 500m between Titchfield and the urban edge of Fareham at the southern end of the area. Only a small proportion of the eastern valley sides and the floodplain itself now physically separate these settlements in this location, and the strong vegetation cover within the valley floor and sides is vital to maintaining a sense of visual separation. Land to the north of Titchfield (between the A27 and St Margarets Lane) also has a particularly important role (along with the adjacent Titchfield Corridor (LLCA 5) in maintaining the separate identity of Titchfield and preventing coalescence with the commercial development at Titchfield Park to the north.

Apart from the settlement of Titchfield (which grew up in the valley as a port on the Meon estuary before it was dammed by the sea wall at Titchfield Haven in the 17th century) most settlements in this part of the Borough developed on the higher, more level ground above the valley. They have since sprawled and coalesced and the urban edge has extended to the top of the valley sides. As a strong topographic feature, the Meon Valley acts both as a natural ‘limit, or barrier, to growth’ and a ‘natural setting’ for these urban areas on either side. Any further encroachment of development down the valley sides would disrupt this typical settlement pattern.

This area retains a predominantly rural character, with relatively few urban influences or ‘fringe’ characteristics, and has an important role in maintaining the distinction between urban and countryside areas. The clear distinction between town and countryside, and the integrity of the valley landscape as a whole, would be compromised by significant development extending into the area beyond the existing urban edge.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This upper part of the Meon Valley has a crucial role in defining the natural limits to growth of settlements to the west, east and south, preventing their potential coalescence. This role is recognised by the Strategic Gap designation which covers the entire area. Although physical coalescence of built form could in theory be prevented by a narrower corridor of landscape along the valley (e.g. the valley floor itself), any significant encroachment of development within the adjoining valley side would potentially blur the clear distinction between ‘town and country’ along the settlement edges and adversely affect the quality of their natural, rural settings and their separate identity. Overall, therefore, there is very limited capacity to accommodate development without a significant impact on the integrity of the area’s rural, unspoilt character and the role it performs in maintaining the separate identity and character of the surrounding settlements and their landscape settings.



CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This area makes a significant contribution to green infrastructure, particularly in respect of the riparian habitats and extensive areas of semi-natural woodland and tree cover within the river corridor (designated as SINCs) which are valuable ecological and landscape features. It also makes a significant contribution through the network of public rights of way that provide access for quiet recreation and appreciation of landscape, ecological and heritage assets associated with Titchfield Abbey (as described under visual sensitivity assessment). Crucially, this network provides both cross-valley links with the surrounding urban areas and links along the valley to the north and south. In addition to the PRoW network, the area includes a few areas of publicly accessible open space, including a recreation ground to the north of the Southampton Road near Titchfield and playing fields, woodlands and the corridor of a disused railway line in the northern part of the area.

The Meon Valley is identified in the PUSH GI strategy as a ‘sub-regional scale blue corridor’ and project C6 of the strategy applies to the Upper Meon Valley and seeks “to conserve and enhance this area to ensure continued contribution to sense of place, climate change adaptation, providing open space close to urban areas for recreation and tourism”.

The Fareham GI Strategy 2014 proposes a number of GI enhancement projects across the area, the majority of which form part of larger “borough wide” projects that will enhance the area’s contribution to the wider GI network. These include:

- BW6 – General programme for the improvement/ repair of bridges within the rights of way network to ensure the continuation of high quality access to the countryside.
- BW10 – Project to create a circular walking route encompassing the Meon Valley Trail, Shipwright’s Way and South Down’s Way, linking these existing routes together while enhancing their connectivity with the settlements of Fareham and Titchfield and the wider PRoW network.
- BW13 – Same as the PUSH Project C6 which applies to the whole of the Meon Valley LCA.
- BW40 – Wide ranging project to increase access to natural open greenspace within Fareham North and North West, including providing better access to the countryside, preserving Titchfield Abbey and providing links from the Welborne SDA to Titchfield, improving accessibility and access to the Meon strategic gap to south of Fareham, and possible opportunities to link with Meon Valley Trail and Meon Valley Trail Extension, beyond the area to the north (GI Projects BW11 and BW28).
- T01 – Titchfield Canal towpath improvements, including enhanced links between Titchfield Haven and the Meon Valley Trail to the north of the area.



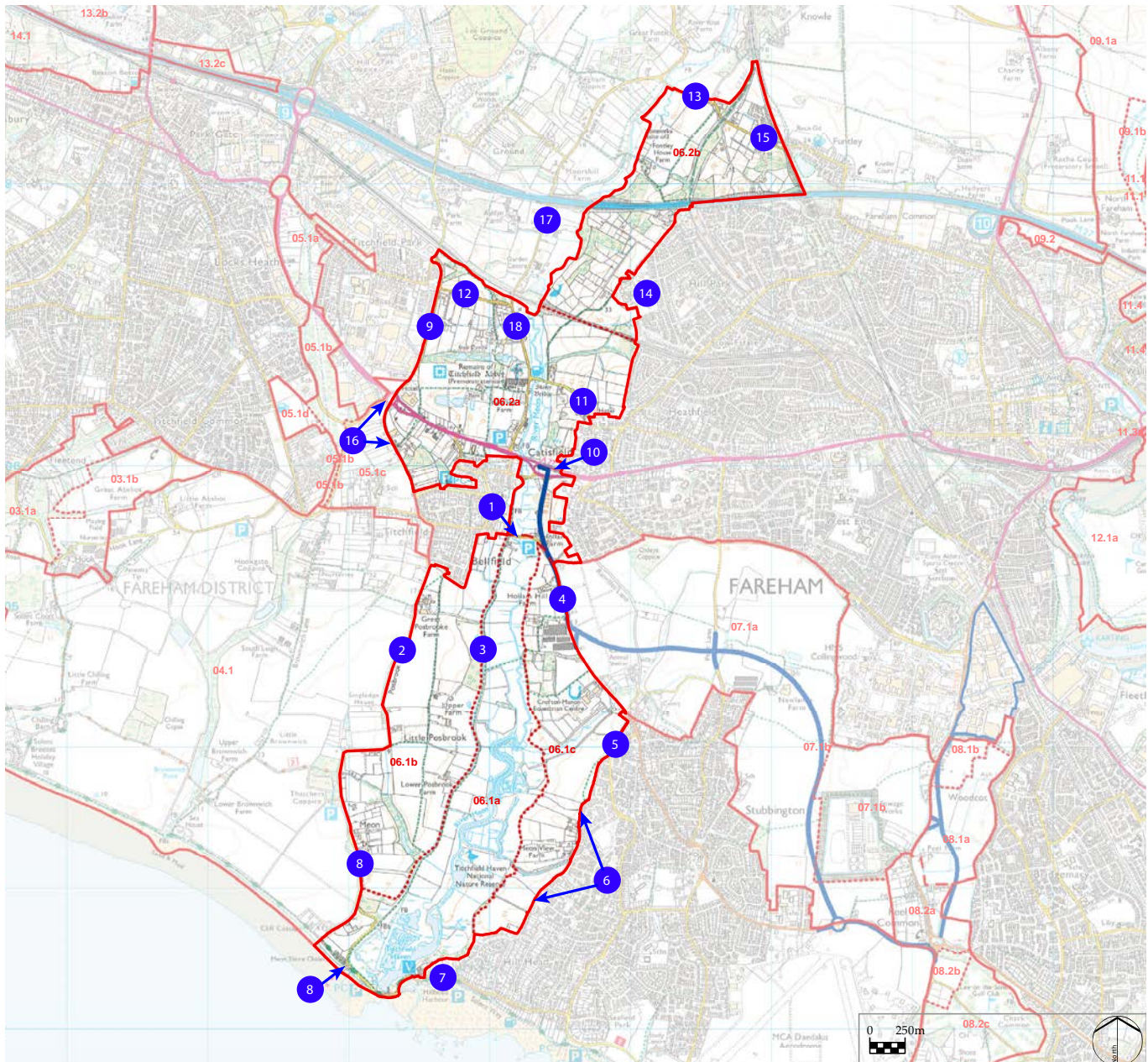
SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Existing GI assets (e.g. the mosaic of riparian, grassland and woodland habitats as well as existing PRoW and areas with public access) should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their ecological, landscape and amenity value, and development that would adversely affect them should be avoided. The emphasis in this area is more on making further improvements to the existing access and habitat links along the valley to the north and south, and the GI infrastructure within the urban areas to the east and west.

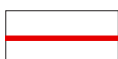


LLCA 6.2 - UPPER MEON VALLEY

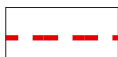
LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1 Bridge Street | 10 Titchfield Gyratory (A27 Southampton Road) |
| 2 Posbrook Lane | 11 Fishers Hill |
| 3 Titchfield Canal | 12 Segensworth Road |
| 4 Titchfield Road | 13 River Lane |
| 5 Cuckoo Lane | 14 Henry Cort Community College |
| 6 Old Street | 15 Funtley Road |
| 7 Cliff Road | 16 St Margarets Lane/roundabout |
| 8 Meon Road | 17 Fontley Road |
| 9 Cartwright Drive | 18 Mill Lane |

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This is an area of high overall sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, the abundance of valued landscape, ecological and heritage features across a large proportion of the area, its role in preventing the coalescence of settlements and maintaining their distinctive separate identities and landscape settings, and its significant contribution to green infrastructure, particularly in respect of ecological and landscape assets and the extensive network of public rights of way and access routes within the area.

This wide range of sensitivities mean that development potential is highly constrained across the entire valley landscape and any significant development is likely to have unacceptable impacts upon one or more of the area's important attributes. The only opportunity may be to accommodate development within small pockets of undeveloped land within existing residential areas, e.g. off the Funtley Road, along Southampton Road or St Margarets Lane, as long as it is of a similar character and scale to other dwellings within the locality and can be sensitively integrated within the landscape to avoid adverse impacts.

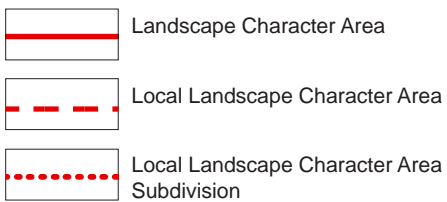
In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Protect and enhance features of recognised landscape, ecological, heritage or amenity value within the area as a whole, and the extensive network of public rights of way and other access routes within the valley, particularly in the area around Titchfield Abbey;
- Protect and enhance the existing cover of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation along field boundaries, watercourses and roadsides, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife potential;
- Maintain the essentially secluded, rural and unspoilt countryside character of the valley landscape, and the local lanes and access routes within the area, avoiding intrusive or inappropriate urban styles of lighting, signage, paving etc. and other intrusive features;
- Avoid any significant encroachment into the area beyond the existing urban edges of Fareham, Titchfield Park and Titchfield, especially where this may erode the physical or perceived gap between settlements or intrude upon the unspoilt, rural character and high quality of the landscape settings of these urban areas and important heritage assets;
- In particular, reinforce tight settlement boundaries, maintaining clear definition of settlement edges (e.g. around Titchfield) and avoiding 'sprawl' outwards along roads (e.g. St Margarets Lane, Southampton Road, Titchfield Road) where this may lead to physical, visual or perceived coalescence of settlements;
- Be of a small-scale and located only in places where it can be carefully integrated within well-treed, strongly enclosed plots of land in association with existing development, fits within the existing field pattern and is of a similar character and scale to similar built development within the locality;
- Maintain key views of Titchfield Abbey from the local access network;
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network (in accordance with the PUSH and Fareham GI strategies) and take advantage of opportunities to strengthen and extend access and habitat links within the area, in particular with other parts of the Meon Valley and the urban areas on either side of the valley;
- Provide enhancement of the valley landscape and settings of heritage assets through removal or mitigation of intrusive or unsightly features, and restoration of field boundaries and other landscape features within 'denuded' or degraded landscapes (e.g. areas used for horse grazing or horticulture with a weak hedgerow structure and 'fringe' characteristics).

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

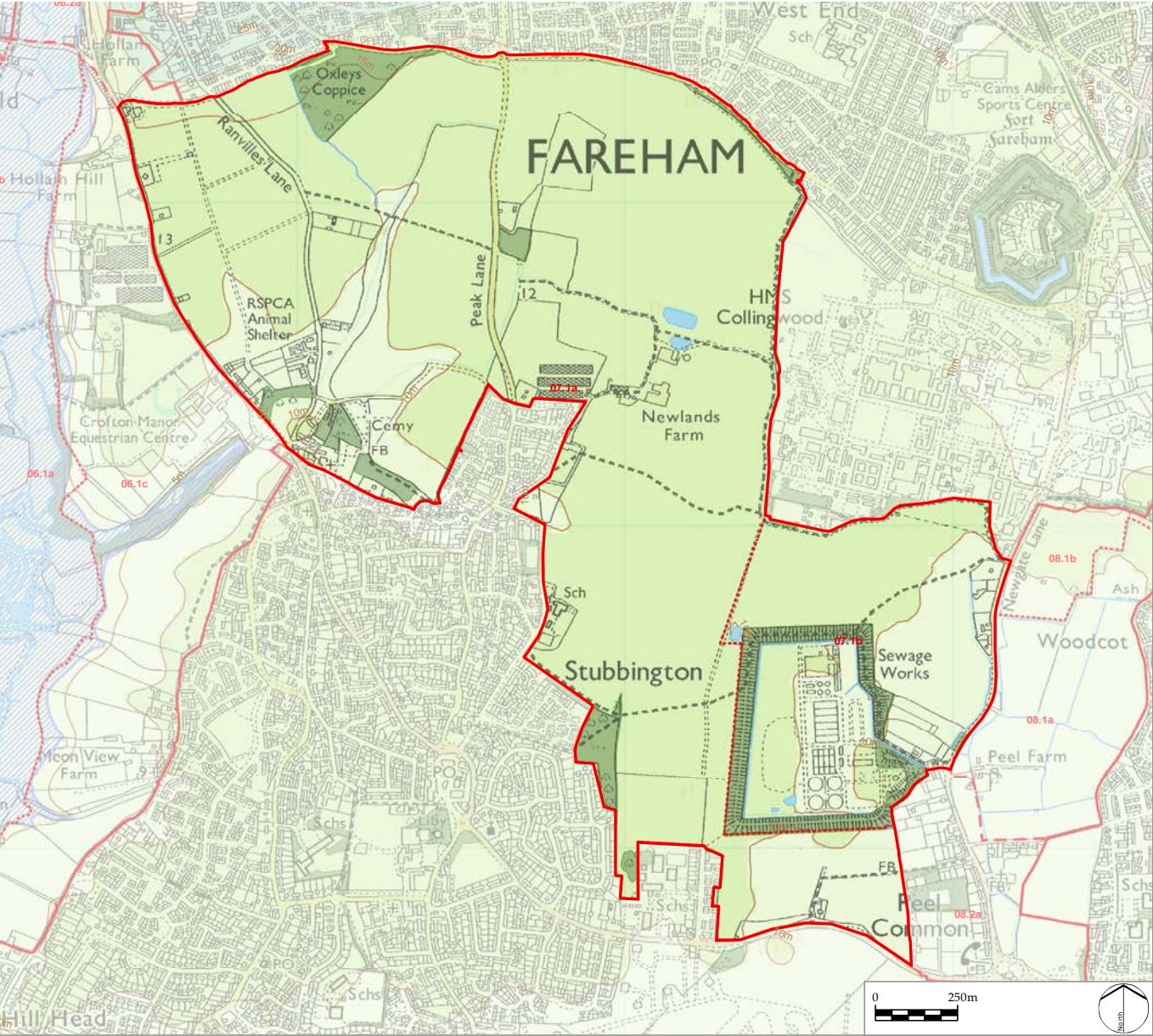


LEGEND



Location Diagram

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

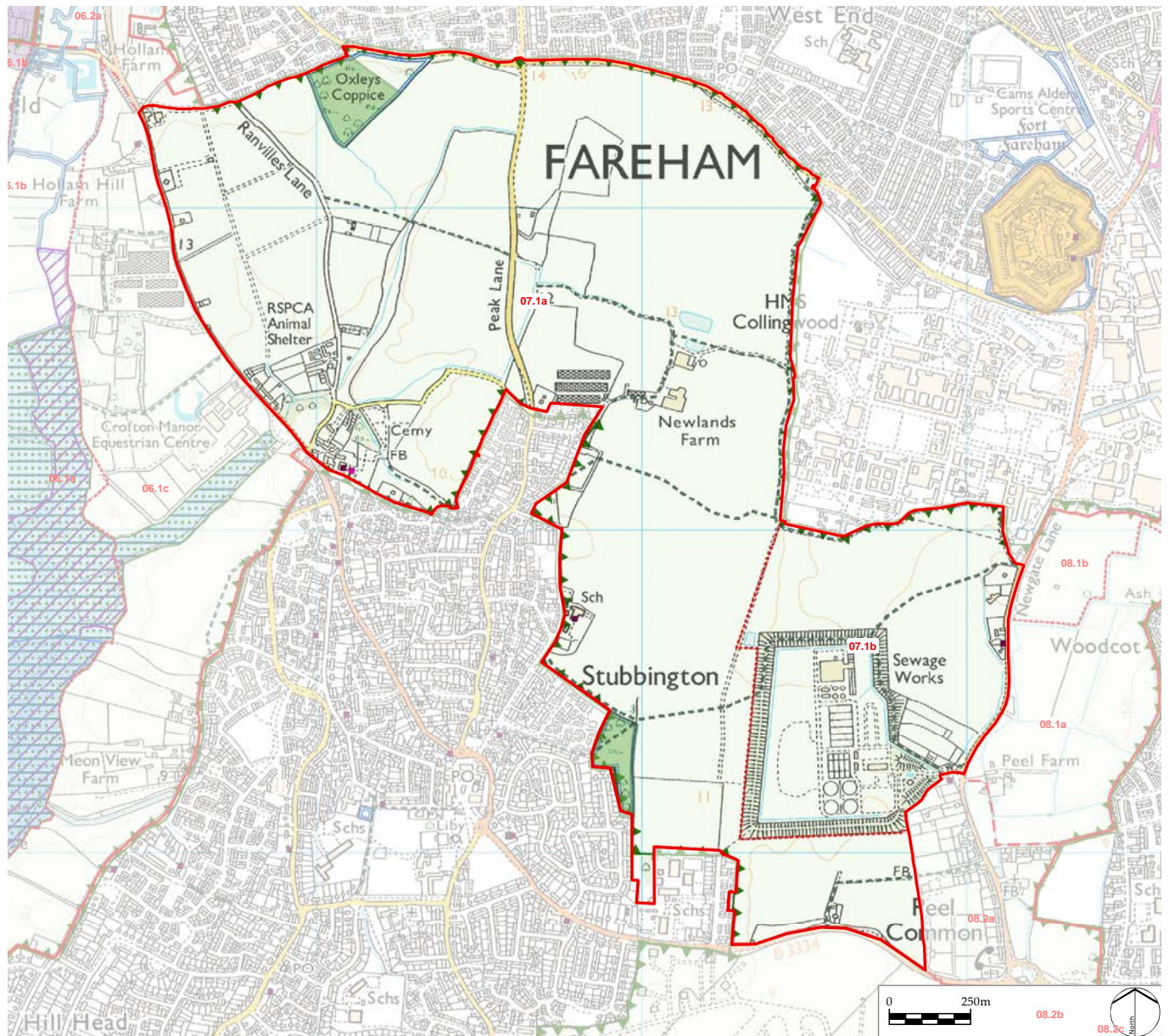


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		5m Contours
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Elevation (m AOD)
	Water		0m
	Flood Alert Areas		50m

LCA 7 - FAREHAM - STUBBINGTON GAP

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

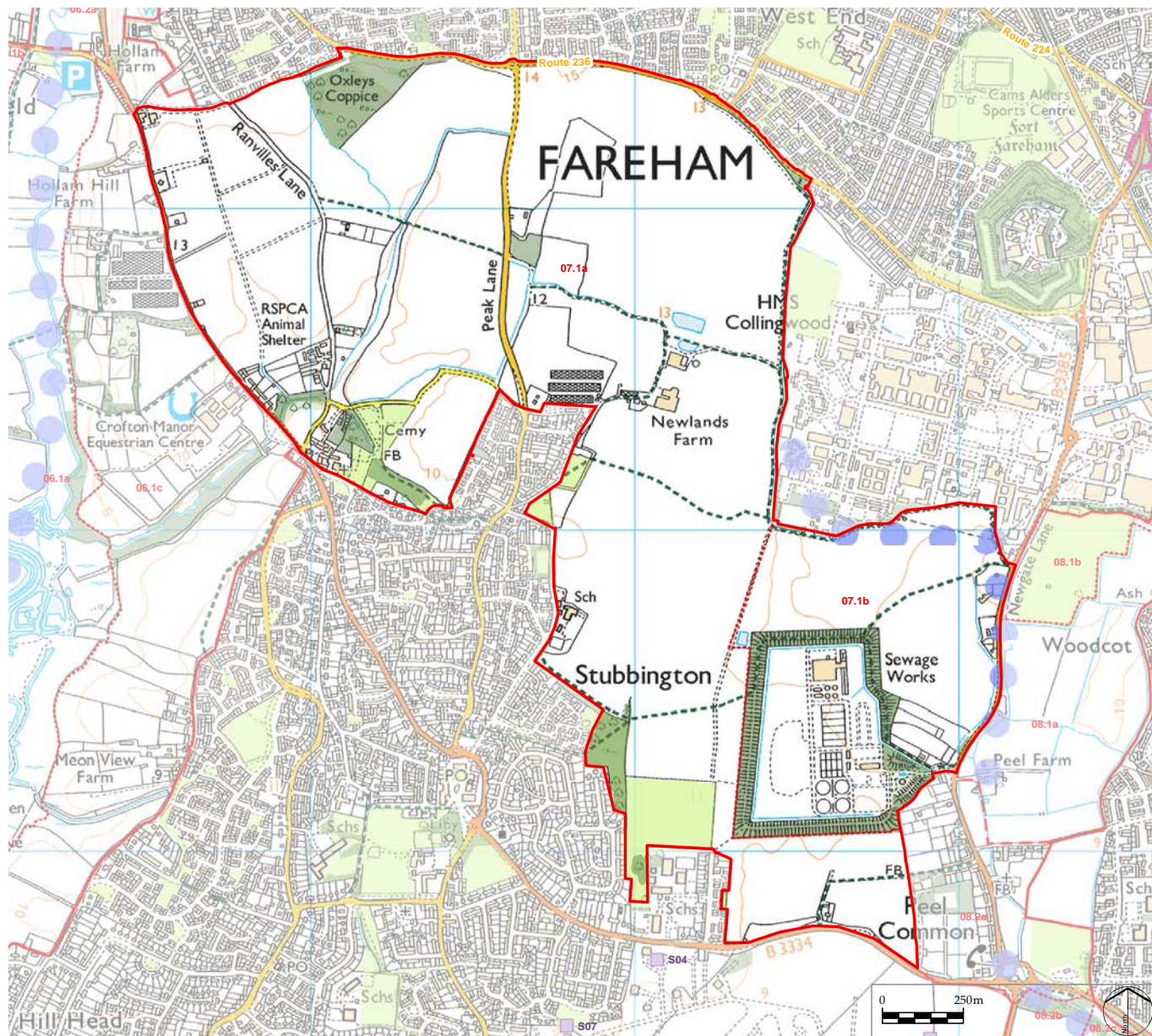
	Landscape Character Area		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		The Meon Gap
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

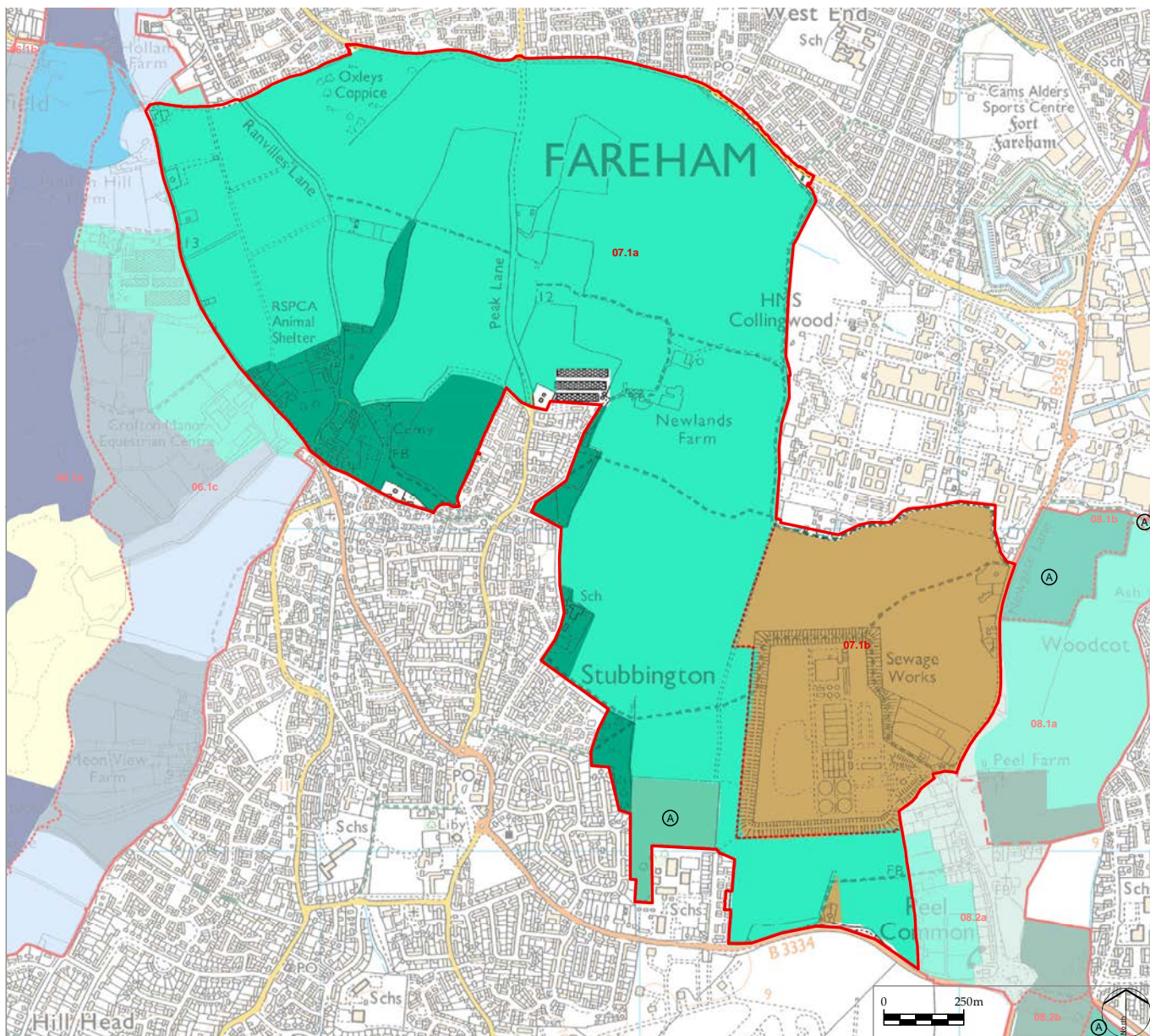


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		National Cycle Network
	Local Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Existing Open Space
	Green Infrastructure Projects		Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor

LCA 7 - FAREHAM - STUBBINGTON GAP

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

- Airfields & Large Utility Sites
- Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure
- Enclosed Coastal Plain
- A Open Coastal Amenity Land

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

The Fareham/Stubbington Gap comprises the major part of a strategic wedge of open landscape which separates the urban areas of Fareham to the north, Stubbington to the south and Gosport to the east. It excludes the built area of HMS Collingwood and also the corridor of the Alver Valley to the east which has a different character (see LCA 8). The area for assessment also excludes the Daedalus Airfield Strategic Development Allocation at the southern end of the area, which will effectively lie within the urban settlement boundary following proposed future redevelopment. The landscape of the area is relatively homogenous and therefore is assessed as a single LLCA, but two sub-areas have been identified to distinguish the predominantly agricultural landscape (7.1a) from a part of the area where specific land uses (a sewage treatment works and solar farm) dominate and have created a distinct variation in character to the south of HMS Collingwood (7.1b).

The area as a whole is characterised by low-lying, level or gently undulating landform which physically forms part of the coastal plain but which has become isolated from the coast by development at Stubbington. The land is underlain by deep, silty and well-drained soils which have given rise to extensive arable cultivation, market gardening and horticultural production across the area. Across **area 7.1a**, the landscape has a relatively homogenous character and is dominated by medium to very large sized fields (resulting from amalgamation), which are bounded by fences or open banks and ditches with a very sparse network of hedgerows, much of which is defunct or in poor condition. As a result, the landscape has a very expansive, open character allowing long-distance views over the level farmland. However, this large scale landscape is punctuated by scattered blocks of trees or woodland, notably Oxleys Coppice on the northern boundary, and other occasional belts of trees or mature vegetation along field boundaries, roadsides, tracks and stream courses. These form important structural features that provide some visual containment and help to break up the expansiveness of the agricultural landscape. They are also effective in limiting the influence of neighbouring urban development, with strong belts of woodland, trees or other vegetation concentrated around the edges of most of the adjoining settlements within the area (e.g. along the northern edge of the area on the boundary with Longfield Avenue and Rowan Way).

Within the area, settlement is very sparse and comprises a few scattered farmsteads and horticultural holdings, with associated large-scale farm buildings or glass houses, and a few individual dwellings or premises along Titchfield Road and Ranvilles Lane. The road network is also relatively sparse, comprising two main roads (Titchfield Road and Peak Lane) providing north-south access across the 'gap' between Fareham and Stubbington. Ranvilles Lane also links Titchfield and Stubbington, running roughly parallel with Titchfield Road, but there is no through-access for vehicles. The only other road access is the minor Oakcroft Lane and the unfenced single-lane tracks, Tanner Lane and Stroud Green Lane, which provide a low-key, route between Newlands Farm and Newgate Lane to the east.

Despite its urbanised context, **area 7.1a** currently retains a predominantly rural, agricultural character with limited influence from surrounding urban areas. Some larger structures associated with HMS Collingwood, or tall buildings within more distant areas, are visible across the flat, open landscape, but they do not intrude significantly on its intrinsic character or quality. Mature vegetation cover along most of the northern boundary of the area and around the edges of Stubbington has a substantial effect in reducing and softening the visibility of surrounding built form, although the urban edge is visible between the tree cover in a few places (e.g. Harcourt Road, Stroud Green Lane and Marks Road). Some strong hedgerows and tree cover along the road network also limit the impact of these features. A few large-scale agricultural sheds and glasshouses are prominent features within the area (e.g. around Newlands Farm) but, while perhaps unsightly, these do not detract from the agricultural character of the area or substantially degrade its quality.

In the southern part of area 7.1a, the recently constructed solar farm (within area 7.1b), and the pylons and poles supporting overhead transmission lines, do have some impact on the immediate surrounding landscape. However, these effects are relatively localised, and the effects of distance, foreshortening, intervening hedgerows and strong vegetation cover around the sewage works and the periphery of HMS Collingwood and on the eastern boundary all help to soften and limit the impact on the wider landscape within area 7.1a.

The character of **Area 7.1b** is dominated by the Peel Common Waste Water Treatment Works, which is contained within large, heavily vegetated earth bunds, and the recently built Newgate Lane solar farm which occupies the entire area of farmland sandwiched between HMS Collingwood, Newgate Lane and the treatment works. Electricity transmission lines supported by pylons and substantial poles are also a feature of this area. These utilities have introduced artificial features into the farmed landscape and completely altered the character of the immediate area. The wooded bunds that surround the water treatment works are a positive, if somewhat incongruous, feature in the landscape, creating some visual enclosure and shelter. The adjacent solar farm comprises rows of solar arrays, supported on steel frames, underlain by grassland and enclosed behind security fencing. The arrays are relatively low in height and planting along the western edge of the development will, in time, reduce its visibility and influence on landscape character within wider parts of area 7.1a. Within area 7.1b itself, the effects will remain for 25 years (the lifespan of the development) after which the land is to be restored to agriculture unless an extension of this use or another use is subsequently consented.

In terms of its **intrinsic quality and value** as part of the Borough's landscape resource, the landscape in **area 7.1a** is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but it has a number of positive attributes. It is representative of the coastal plain landscape type (an increasingly rare resource within the Borough) and many of its characteristic and distinctive features are intact, notably its flat, open character and expansive views, sparse settlement pattern and generally undeveloped character, woodland blocks and hedgerows and other boundary vegetation, which provide some shelter and containment of long distance views.

Scenic quality is unexceptional and is affected by some localised intrusion of urban features around its periphery. However the area does retain a predominantly rural, agricultural character and a strong sense of place, and the sheer scale of the landscape pattern is striking. Its aesthetic appeal is particularly strong during the summer, when vegetation is in full leaf and there is a pleasing combination of extensive rolling fields of crops set against a distant backdrop of substantial blocks of woodland or belts of trees, and interspersed by plump hedgerows and grassy verges along roadsides and field margins. At this time, the influence of the area's urban context is much reduced and it has the sense of open countryside. These qualities may be less evident in winter, when the fields are bare and boundary vegetation is less effective at screening or filtering views of surrounding urban areas and land uses.

The landscape is generally well-managed as agricultural land and in good condition, with limited evidence of 'fringe' uses or influences (e.g. horse paddocks, vacant land, unkempt fencing, fly tipping etc.). However, the highly intensive horticultural and arable farming practices have led to widespread field amalgamation and loss of landscape features, and some of the remnant internal hedgerows are heavily trimmed or gappy. The rather denuded landscape does not contain many features of recognised conservation interest other than the remnant ancient woodlands and copses (notably Oxleys Wood, Tips Copse which are SINC's). The area also lacks the sense of remoteness and natural qualities that are found in other parts of the coastal plain. It has the sense of a 'landlocked' piece of countryside and the area's urban context is perceptible even if not dominating. Overall, landscape value in area 7.1a is judged as moderate to high while in area 7.1b it is low, although the wooded bunds and boundary trees are valuable landscape features.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

In such an open, expansive landscape, susceptibility to change is high. The distinctive character of the area relies on its openness, its rural agricultural character and the absence of prominent urban features, and it would be difficult to accommodate significant new development without affecting these characteristics or altering the delicate balance between a predominantly rural or predominantly urban landscape. The potential to contain development within the existing structure of woodland, hedgerows and trees is very limited and substantial new planting would be required to mitigate against the effects on landscape character, which would take many years to mature and become effective.

The existing balance is likely to change with the construction of the recently consented Stubbington Bypass, the alignment of which will cut through the entire length of **area 7.1a** from Titchfield Road in the north west to Gosport Road in the south. The degree of impact that this major road scheme will have on the rural character of the area is uncertain but it will inevitably introduce further activity, noise and urbanising features into the agricultural landscape, as well as resulting in physical disturbance to land and vegetation cover.

However, the carriageway will not be lit and mitigation proposals include new hedgerow and tree planting along the route to reduce its visibility and impact on the landscape. Once such mitigation has become effective, the road by itself, may not have an overwhelming urbanising effect. However, significant further development in addition to the road scheme would almost certainly tip the balance towards this outcome.

So, overall, the sensitivity of the landscape resource within **area 7.1a** is judged to be high (moderate to high value and high susceptibility to change), with very limited capacity to accommodate development without a significant impact on the integrity of the area's rural, agricultural character.

There may be some limited scope for development in areas where there is an existing structure of vegetation to help integrate it into the landscape and where it is closely associated with existing built development around the fringes of the settlements (i.e. not out in open countryside) or character is already affected by urban influences, e.g. enclosed land on the northern edge of Stubbington or to the south of the treatment works between Marks Lane and Peel Common. However, any such development would need very sensitive siting, design and mitigation to avoid piecemeal attrition of the area's overall rural character.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Long distance visibility towards the area is low due to the typically low-lying and flat topography of the Borough (including the area itself), and the screening effects of boundary vegetation and surrounding built form. The area may be visible from some local elevated viewpoints (e.g. tall buildings in Fareham) and from higher ground at Portsdown, but from this distant location it forms an insignificant part of a wide panorama of the urban and coastal plain landscape.

Views into the area from the immediate surrounding settlements are largely filtered through established vegetation (e.g. along the boundary with Longfield Avenue/Rowan Way to the north). However, there will be views from some properties on the periphery of the area where vegetation cover is weaker or non-existent (e.g. properties long the northern boundary at Harcourt Road and along the eastern edge of Stubbington at Stroud Green lane, Marks Road etc.) and there are open views into the southern part of the area from sections of the B334 Gosport Road where there is no intervening roadside vegetation.

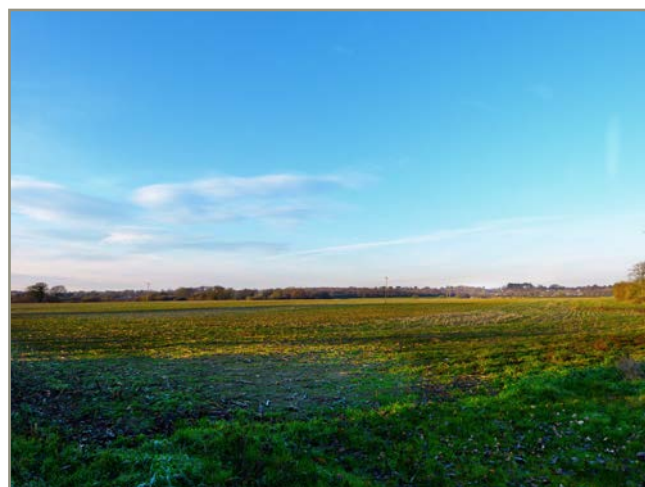
The most significant views are from roads, PRoW and individual properties within the area itself. Although roadside vegetation helps to restrict views from some sections of Titchfield Road and Peak Lane, there are other substantial sections with open and extensive views across the surrounding landscape within the northern part of the area. Views from Oakcroft Lane are largely screened but there are uninterrupted and very extensive views from Tanners Lane and the network of unbounded lanes and PRoW that cross the farmland. Intervisibility between areas is also very high within much of this very open, expansive landscape.

Key receptors within area 7 will therefore be local residents within properties that adjoin or lie within the area (including occupants of HMS Collingwood) and users of the road and PRoW network within the area. In future, the construction of the Stubbington Bypass will increase the extent of the views available to road users, opening up the entire area to potential views from the road. Roadside planting will mitigate some of these effects but will take time to become effective.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, visual sensitivity in area 7 is high. Views from the roads and PRoW network within the area, and some short distance views from peripheral areas, are extensive and there is limited opportunity to mitigate these in such an open landscape and over a wide area. The potential visibility of the area will be exacerbated, at least over the short term, by the introduction of the Stubbington Bypass. While road users are only moderately susceptible to change, because of their focus on the road and fleeting nature of views, local residents and recreational users of the PRoW network are likely to be more focussed on the landscape and their surroundings and will be highly susceptible to change. The introduction of development into the agricultural landscape is likely to have a significant impact on the character and quality of existing predominantly rural views, unless it can be successfully integrated within a substantial framework of existing or new vegetation.

There may be some limited scope for development in areas where such an existing structure of vegetation exists and where views are already affected by urban influences. However, any such development would need very sensitive siting, design and mitigation to avoid significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The area lies within the lower-lying parts of the Borough, forming part of the coastal plain that slopes gently up to the foot of Portsdown Hill in the north of the Borough. While the area does not play a significant role in the topographic setting of the urban area, it is notable for a general lack of development and for providing both physical and visual separation between the settlements of Stubbington to the south and Fareham to the north, and between Stubbington and Gosport to the east. The significant role of the area in separating and preventing coalescence of these settlements is enshrined in policy, with the area designated a Strategic Gap in the Fareham Borough Local Plan.

The visual separation is apparent in all short distance views into the site from the edge of Fareham to the north and east and Stubbington to the south, and from the main roads and that cross the 'gap' between these settlements. Where longer distance views are available from the north, the area's role in separating the two settlements is less evident, though it is still perceived as a 'green' break in a predominantly urban landscape. The edges to the urban areas at Fareham and Stubbington are clearly defined by strong boundary vegetation and there is a clear sense of coming out of one settlement and entering another, with a distinct rural character to the landscape of this area in between. This helps to reinforce the separate identity of each settlement and also provides the urban areas with an attractive, essentially rural setting.

The role of the southern part of the gap in providing separation between Stubbington and the urban area of Woodcot (a northern suburb of Gosport), to the east of the Newgate Lane corridor, is less easily perceived because of intervening development and other features that interrupt views, and occupy land, between the two areas. These include the Newlands Solar Farm, the waste water treatment plant and development along the Newgate Lane corridor at Peel Common. These features in themselves reinforce the separation of the main urban areas by providing a physical constraint to permanent built development (for at least the foreseeable future) but they also reduce the importance of area 7.1a in providing visual separation between Stubbington and the edges of the Gosport urban area.

The parcel of land to the south of the treatment works still performs a role in providing physical separation and a clearly-defined eastern edge to Stubbington but this may be compromised in future by the proposed redevelopment of land at Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus, potentially extending built development across the existing gap to the south.

Overall, area 7 plays an important role in defining the edges and separate identity of Fareham and Stubbington and a critical role in preventing their coalescence. It also makes a contribution to the swathe of landscape that currently separates Stubbington from Gosport (which includes the adjacent Woodcot-Alver Valley LCA) but this role is less critical than areas to the north and may be further weakened by redevelopment of the Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus site in future years.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Given its designation as a Strategic Gap and the critical role that the area plays in preventing coalescence between the settlements of Fareham and Stubbington, the area is highly sensitive to change. The landscape lacks any strong landform feature (e.g. ridges or valleys) or a mature framework of woodland that could potentially contain and provide a strong landscape edge to any major extension of built form into this area. Intrusive development within the area would inevitably erode the visual and physical separation that currently exists and potentially alter the character of the landscape settings of the two settlements from predominantly agricultural to predominantly urban. Ultimately, the function and integrity of the area as farmland could be significantly eroded to the point where the gap becomes a corridor of greenspace between urban areas, or an ‘urban park’, rather than a functioning area of agricultural landscape with a distinct character and identity.

The proposed bypass already threatens to erode the integrity of the existing gap, particularly if it is regarded as forming a potential new edge for development. If the rural, undeveloped and expansive character of this area is to be maintained, it will be crucial to keep the urban boundaries as tightly drawn as possible and avoid infilling the land between the existing urban edges and the new road.

In the area to the south, the weaving of the new road alignment through the tight gap between the water treatment works and the playing fields at Crofton School effectively severs the farmland to the south from the rest of the area, and will have an effect on both its function and character. There may be some potential for development to infill areas of fragmented farmland up to the road in this area, and possibly in other small-scale parcels of land where there is an existing structure of vegetation to help integrate it into the landscape and where it is closely associated with existing built development around the immediate fringes of the settlements. Overall, however, there is very limited capacity to accommodate development without a significant impact on the integrity of the area’s rural, agricultural character and the role it performs in maintaining the separate identity and character of the settlements and their landscape settings.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This intensively farmed area does not support a wide range of GI assets in terms of biodiversity or landscape features. The only designated features are two areas of remnant ancient woodland at Oxleys Coppice and Tips Copse (SINC) but other features of local landscape and wildlife value include fragments of woodland, scrub, trees, grasslands and wetland habitats that occur along field margins, roadsides and stream courses within the area. Despite the relative lack of diversity and extent of such assets, the area as a whole does make a significant contribution to the local GI network as an extensive area of undeveloped greenspace within the heart of a highly urbanised area. The area acts as a link between the Meon Valley to the west and the Alver Valley to the east and its network of public footpaths and lanes provide access links between the urban areas as well as an important resource allowing opportunities for local people to enjoy informal recreation within a rural and largely unspoilt landscape setting.

The value of the footpaths is enhanced by the ease of access from the surrounding urban areas. However, they are generally in a poor condition, with their use affected by a combination of poor/absent signage, broken stiles, over planting of paths with agricultural crops and surface water flooding following periods of heavy rain. The area does not contain any designated public access or common land, though a publically accessible fishing pond is located to the south west of Newgate Lane solar farm. There are no specific areas of public open space within the heart of this area but there are few spaces around the fringes of Stubbington, including school playing fields, allotments, a recreation ground, cemetery and woodland at Tips Copse.

The PUSH GI strategy identifies a sub-regional scale blue corridor following the drainage network that runs around the eastern side of area 7.1a and through area 7.1b to join the corridor of open land on the eastern side of Newgate Lane and southwards to join the River Alver (within Gosport District). The strategy includes a project to strengthen wildlife corridors connected to the River Alver but this is focused on the Alver Valley outside of the Borough. The Fareham GI strategy does not identify any specific projects within the area.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area's GI value lies in its largely undeveloped nature and the significant public access afforded by PRoWs connecting the surrounding urban areas. It is therefore highly sensitive to change. Any development that compromised the PRoW network, through restricting access, damaging path quality or compromising the sense of openness and being 'in the countryside' would have an adverse effect on the GI network.



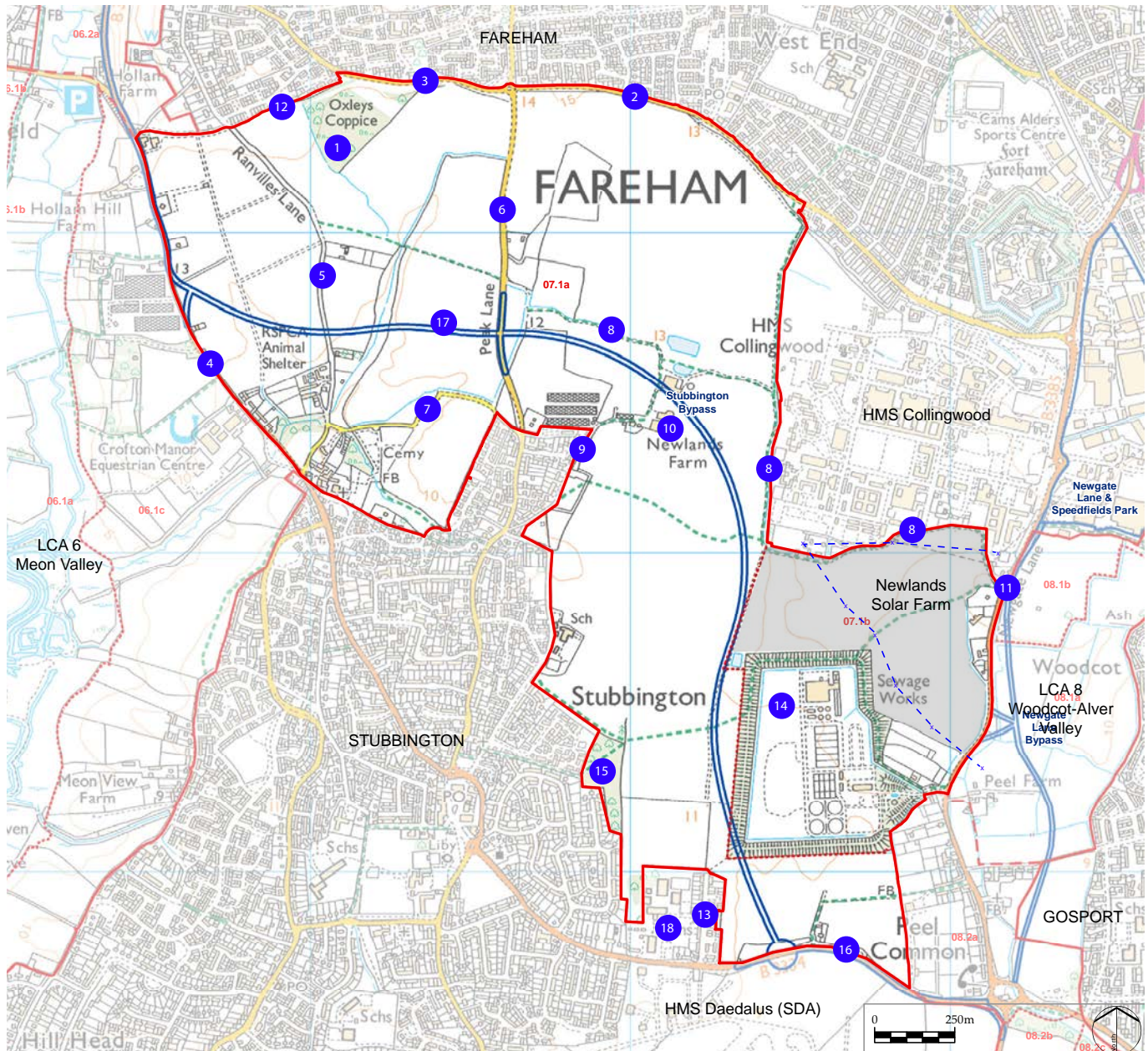
This area would benefit from improvements and extension of the local GI network, through major investment in the reinstatement or creation of hedgerows, woods and other habitats that have been lost or damaged by agricultural intensification, and through the creation of additional public open space or access areas.



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LLCA 7.1 - FAREHAM - STUBBINGTON GAP

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		1 Oxley's Coppice		10 Newlands Farm
	Local Landscape Character Area		2 Langfield Avenue		11 Newgate Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		3 Rowan Way		12 Harcourt Road
	Transmission Line and Pylons/Poles		4 Titchfield Road		13 Marks Court
	Route of Stubbington Bypass		5 Ranville's Lane		14 Peel Common Waste Water Treatment Works
			6 Peak Lane		15 Tips Copse
			7 Oakcroft Lane		16 Gosport Road
			8 Tanner's Lane		17 Stubbington Bypass (Proposed)
			9 Stroud Green Lane		18 Crofton School

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Overall, this area is considered to be of high sensitivity but this judgement has involved balancing a number of quite complex factors. On the one hand, the landscape of this area is not of exceptional scenic quality, it lacks some of the distinctive qualities that characterise other parts of the coastal plain further to the south (e.g. naturalness, remoteness, extensive conservation interests etc.) and its urban context does have some influence on its character. Intensive farming practice has resulted in a somewhat denuded landscape that lacks diversity or many features of significant landscape, ecological or heritage value.

On the other hand, it does have a value as a relatively unspoilt and representative example of undeveloped coastal plain, a dwindling landscape resource within the Borough and county context and one which is under significant pressure for change. Despite its urban context, it retains a predominantly rural character and a sense of open countryside, albeit 'captured' within the urban area. Its condition is generally good and its character and quality is intact and consistent across the area as a whole, giving it a strong sense of unity. It provides opportunities for quiet recreation within a farmed landscape within easy reach of the urban areas, and provides an attractive visual amenity for local residents and setting for settlements in the area. Its most critical role, however, is in preventing the coalescence of settlements and maintaining the separate identity and character of Fareham and Stubbington and, to a lesser degree, Stubbington and Gosport.

The very open, expansive nature of the landscape means that it is difficult to integrate development without it being highly visible and potentially affecting the rural undeveloped character across a wide area, as well as eroding the physical, visual and perceived gap between settlements. The situation is further complicated by the proposed bypass which will inevitably have some effect on the integrity and character of the landscape resource and undeveloped gap. Even a small amount of encroachment of development within the area will exacerbate these effects to the point at which the character of the whole area may be fundamentally altered.

There is therefore very limited potential for development within the area if it is to maintain its integrity as a valuable part of the Borough's landscape and GI resource, and as a gap between settlements. There may be some modest potential for infill development to the west of the new road at its far southern end and in small, enclosed pockets of landscape around the immediate edges of Stubbington, where it can be successfully integrated within the existing landscape structure.

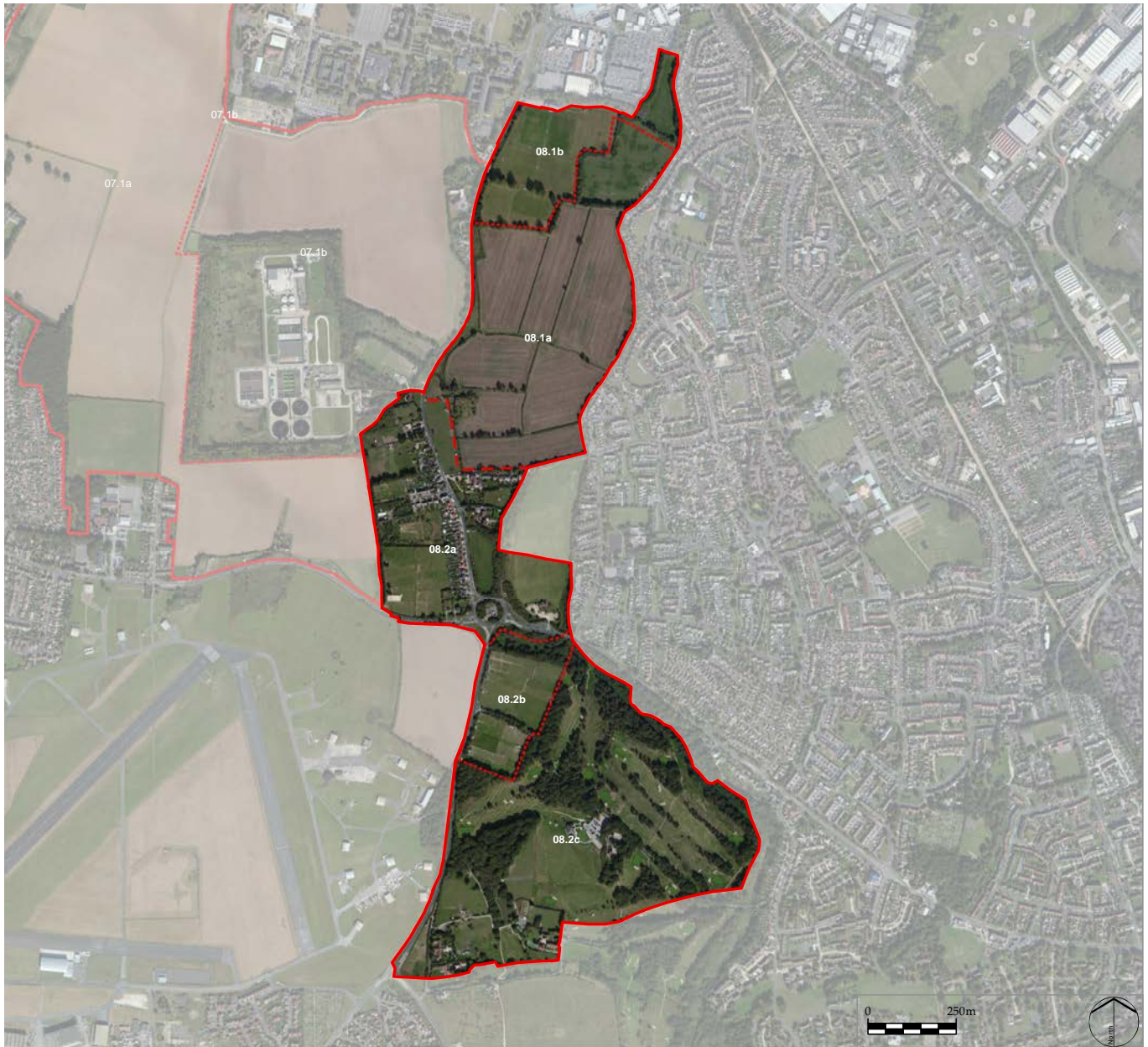
DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Protect the overall area's open, predominantly rural and undeveloped character and other distinctive characteristics of the coastal plain landscape;
- Avoid any major incursion of the urban area into the countryside beyond existing boundaries, or create significant new pockets of urban or urbanising development within open countryside;
- Protect the area's role in maintaining the separation of settlements and a clear distinction between urban and rural areas. In particular, avoid ribbon development strung out along road corridors and any development beyond the existing urban edge that cannot be successfully integrated within the existing landscape structure;
- Be located 'tightly' around the edges of the existing urban areas (particularly Stubbington), within pockets of landscape where development can be integrated within a strong framework of vegetation to minimise its influence on surrounding landscape character and visual amenity (e.g. around the northern fringes of Stubbington);
- Maintain significant distance and separation from the corridor of the new bypass to minimise the road's urbanising effects upon the rural character of the area (apart from a small section at the far southern end where it runs very close to the urban edge and isolates a small area of farmland adjacent to Mark's Road);
- Avoid the introduction of tall buildings or structures that would be particularly visually prominent within the open, flat landscape;
- Protect and manage important areas of woodland, particularly remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland at Oxleys Coppice and Tip Copse, as features of landscape and ecological significance;
- Protect and enhance other landscape and ecological features of the area, including the remnant hedgerow structure, trees, woodland and other habitats of ecological value within the farmed landscape, to maximise its landscape and wildlife value and to minimise impacts on the rural character of the landscape;
- Protect and enhance enjoyment of the landscape by maintaining and enhancing the existing PRow network and making further provision for accessible greenspace within the area;
- Provide substantial new investment in the landscape through extensive tree, hedgerow and woodland planting using native broadleaved species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions and habitat creation to diversify the intensively farmed landscape;
- Demonstrate design that has minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and is in keeping with the character of the local landscape context.

2.8 LCA 8: WOODCOT-ALVER VALLEY

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



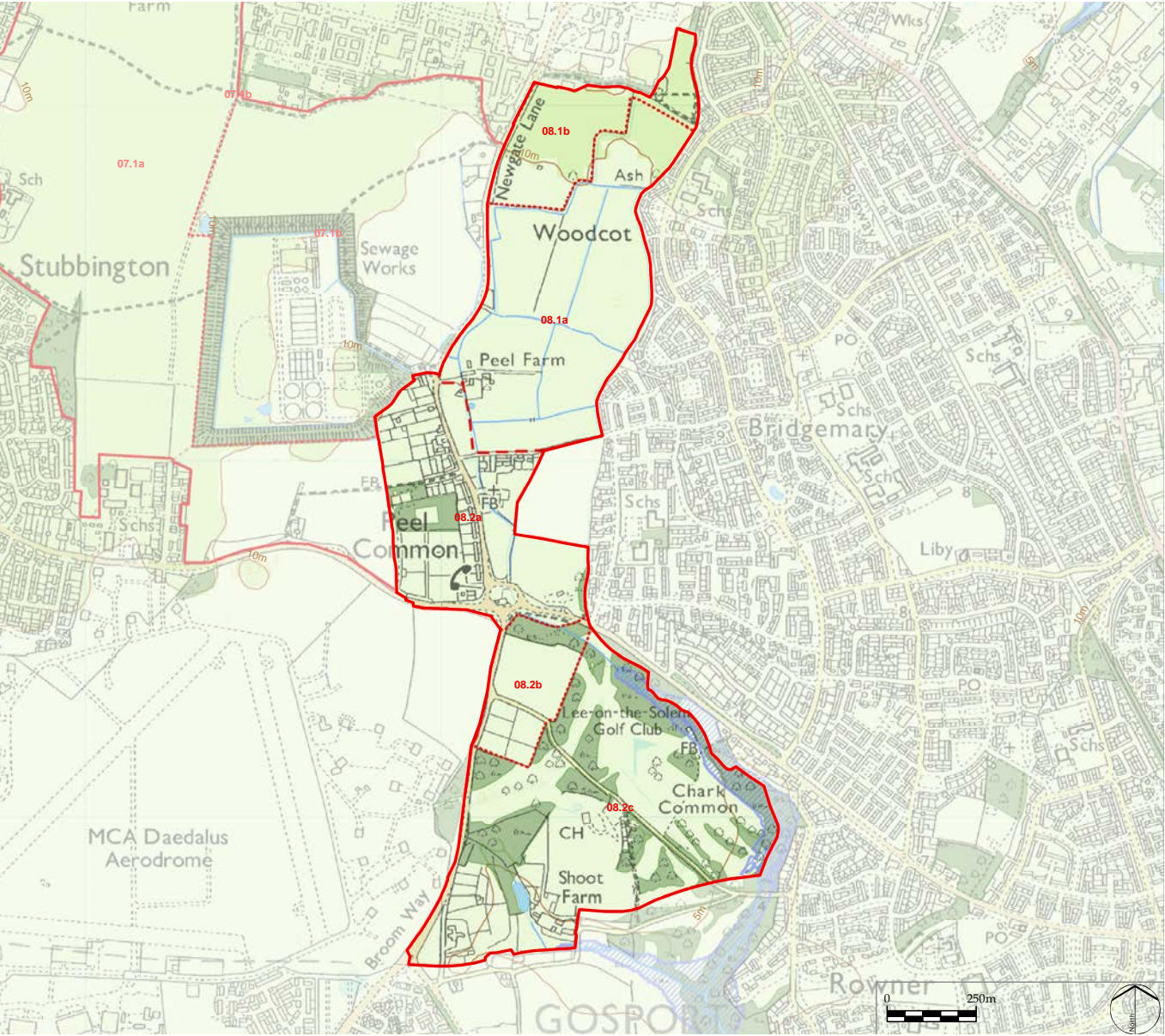
LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

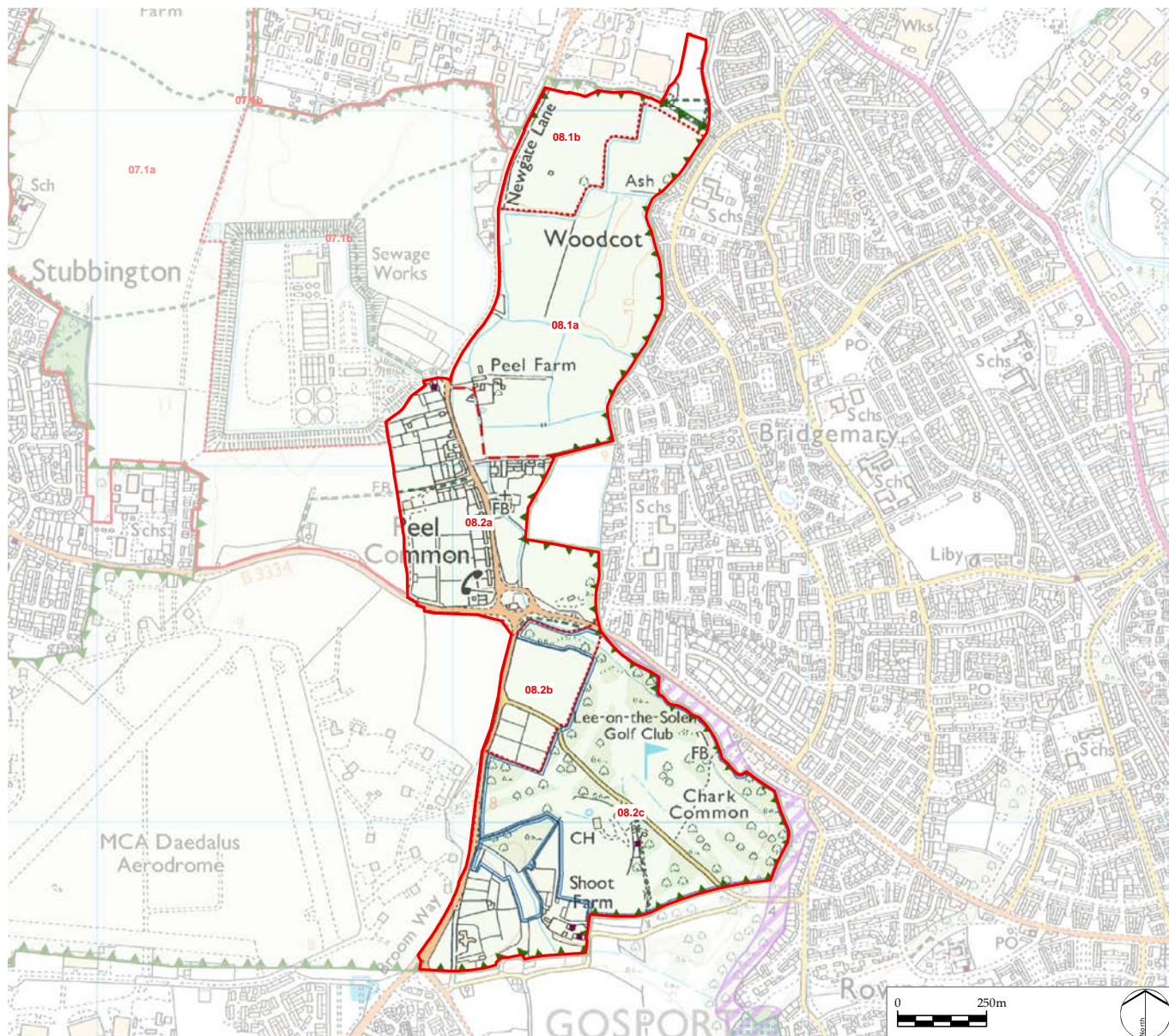


LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------|
| | Landscape Character Area | | Woodland |
| | Local Landscape Character Area | | 5m Contours |
| | Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision | | Elevation (m AOD) |
| | Water | | 0m |
| | Flood Alert Areas | | 60m |

LCA 8 - WOODCOT-ALVER VALLEY

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

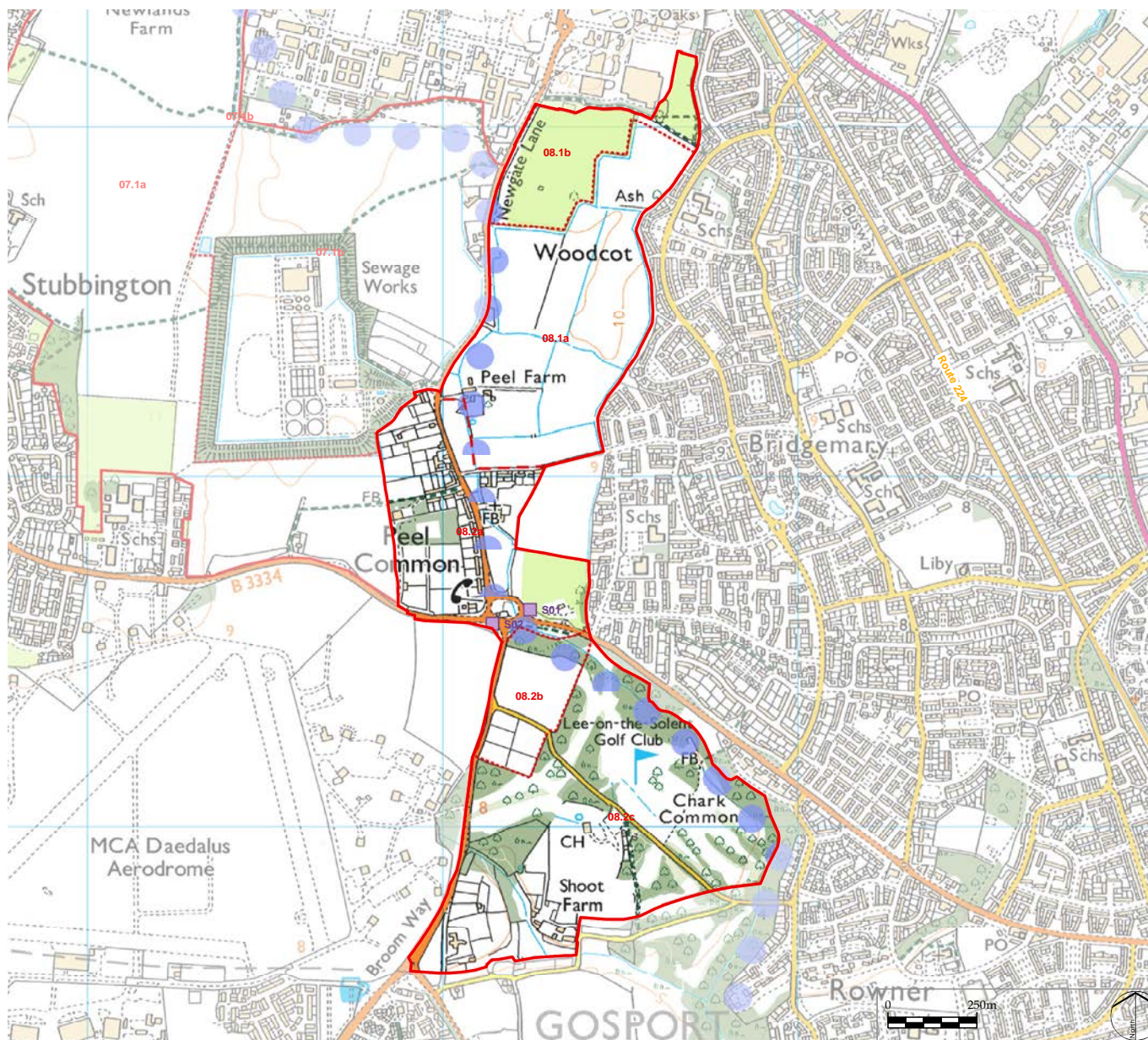
	Landscape Character Area		The Meon Gap
	Local Landscape Character Area		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		

Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

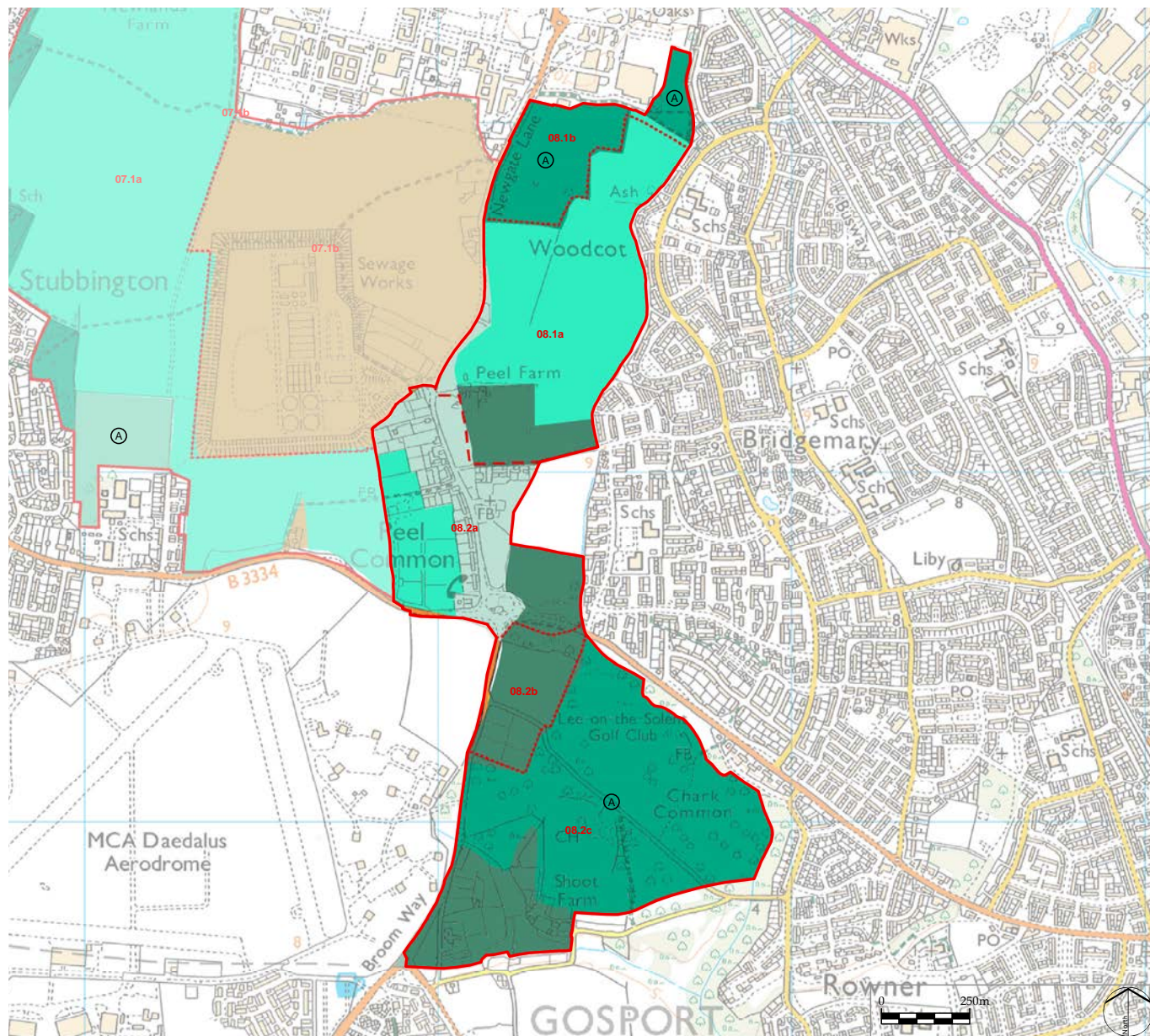
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		Existing Open Space
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor
	Green Infrastructure Projects		

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

	Open Coastal Plain: Weak Structure
	Open Coastal Plain: Strong Structure
	Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character
	Enclosed Coastal Amenity Land

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area forms part of the easternmost extent of the Stubbington–Fareham Strategic Gap. It is bounded by Newgate Lane to the west, beyond which lie the Newlands Solar Farm and Peel Common Waste Water Treatment Works. Out-of-town retail uses border the area to the north, while the eastern boundary is shared with the western edge of the Bridgemary area of neighbouring Gosport district. The southern boundary is formed by Woodcote Lane.

The LLCA is divided into two sub-areas, reflecting different land uses and their effects on intrinsic landscape character and quality. **Area 8.1a** comprises the land between Woodcote Lane in the south and Speedfield Park Playing Fields in the north. This area shares the typically flat, low-lying character of the coastal plain landscape that extends south and westwards to the Solent, but lacks the very expansive and denuded character of these areas. It is characterised by medium-scale, regular shaped fields, mostly under arable cultivation, bounded by a network of drainage ditches and a relatively intact structure of hedgerows, albeit heavily trimmed with some gappy sections and few mature hedgerow trees. Internally, the area has an open character but tree belts form taller, denser boundaries around the periphery of the area, especially to the north, east and south, which give the area a sense of enclosure from surrounding urban areas. The western boundary along Newgate Lane is more open and allows some intrusion from passing traffic but the area is devoid of built development (apart from farm buildings at Peel Farm) and retains a predominantly unspoilt, rural, agricultural character with limited intrusion from surrounding urban influences.

Area 8.1b is comparatively small and comprises two separate areas of recreation land and playing fields collectively referred to as Speedfields Park, connected by a surfaced pedestrian and cycle route. Both areas comprise amenity grassland and are enclosed by well-treed boundaries. The larger field adjacent to Newgate Lane contains a pavilion building and small car park along its northern boundary, with a variety of rugby posts, football goalposts and tall flood lights located in the centre of the field. The smaller field to the north east contains a single sports pitch and a children's play area in the south west corner. Despite retaining some of the characteristics of the adjacent landscape type (e.g. flat landform, well-defined hedgerow and tree boundaries and a regular field pattern) the introduction of built elements, car parking and management for sports use give the area a suburban, rather than rural agricultural, character.

The landscape of area 8.1 is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation. Scenic quality is not exceptional and is affected by some localised intrusion of urban features around its periphery and within area 8.1b. It does not contain any features of recognised conservation interest and it lacks the sense of remoteness and natural qualities that are found in other parts of the coastal plain. It has the sense of a 'landlocked' piece of countryside and the area's urban context is perceptible even if not dominating. However, area 8.1a does retain a predominantly rural, agricultural character and has a reasonably intact structure of hedgerows and significant tree cover around its periphery that contributes to its aesthetic appeal. The landscape is generally well-managed as agricultural land and in good condition, with limited evidence of 'fringe' uses or influences (e.g. horse paddocks, vacant land, unkempt fencing, fly tipping etc.). Overall, landscape value in area 8.1a is judged as moderate to high while in area 8.1b it is moderate, although the well-treed boundaries are valuable landscape features.



LANDSCAPE RESOURCE - SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area lacks the very open, expansive character of other parts of the coastal plain (including adjacent land within the strategic gap to the west) but it nevertheless has a relatively open and large-scale character which makes it susceptible to change.

The distinctive character of **area 8.1a** relies on this openness, its rural agricultural character and the absence of prominent urban features, and it would be difficult to accommodate significant new development without affecting these characteristics or altering the balance between a predominantly rural or predominantly urban landscape. So, overall, the sensitivity of the landscape resource within area 8.1a is judged to be high (moderate to high value and high susceptibility to change), with very limited capacity to accommodate development without a significant impact on the integrity of the area's rural, agricultural character.

The existing balance will be affected, however, with the approved construction of the new southern section of Newgate Lane, which will provide a new connection from Newgate Lane to Peel Common Roundabout and a junction and link road to access the existing route of Newgate Lane. The road alignment just clips the extreme south-western corner of area 8.1b but cuts right through the middle of the southern half of area 8.1a and will inevitably introduce further activity, noise and urbanising features into the agricultural landscape, as well as resulting in physical disturbance to land and tree/vegetation cover.

However, the road corridor is relatively narrow and unaffected land within the rest of the area should be of a sufficient scale to remain viable as farmland and to maintain its essentially rural character. Mitigation proposals include new hedgerow and tree planting along the route to reduce its visibility and impact on the landscape and, if this is effective, the road itself may not have an overwhelming urbanising effect across the area as a whole in the longer term. However, significant further development in addition to the road scheme would almost certainly have this effect, potentially tipping the balance towards a predominantly urban character.

The sensitivity of the landscape resource within **area 8.1b** is slightly lower, as its rural character is already influenced by the proximity to built up areas/roads and the development of sports facilities and amenity uses within the area. Despite its more urbanised character, the area nevertheless has some value as part of the Borough's amenity landscape resource (as well as a role in the strategic gap and local GI network, see below) and its essentially open, undeveloped character would be significantly altered by further encroachment of built development. However, strong boundary vegetation would help to limit the influence of development within this area on the more rural landscape of area 8.1a to the south, particularly if located within the smaller northern field which is contained within very strong, well-treed boundaries.



VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Long distance visibility towards the area is low due to the typically low-lying and flat topography of the Borough (including the area itself), and the screening effects of boundary vegetation and surrounding built form. The area may be visible from some local elevated viewpoints (e.g. tall buildings in Fareham) and from higher ground at Portsdown, but from this distant location it forms an insignificant part of a wide panorama of the urban and coastal plain landscape.



Shorter-distance views into the area from built up areas to the north and east are largely filtered through established trees and boundary vegetation or interrupted by built form. Short distance visibility from the east is limited to private views from the rear of properties that back onto the area within the residential suburb of Bridgemary (e.g. Tuke's Avenue, Pettycot Crescent and around Heron Way). Short-distance visibility from the north is also significantly restricted by planting along the southern edge of the retail park, but there open views through fencing into area 8.1b from the footpath that runs along the northern edge of the sports ground from Newgate Lane. Views of area 8.1a are largely screened from this direction by intervening vegetation.

Views from roads and public places to the south of the area are also very limited but there are some occasional views into the southern end of area 8.1a over or through the hedgerow that runs along Woodcote Lane/Brookers Lane at the far south of the area. Private properties along Woodcote Lane will experience similar views from upstairs windows.

The most significant views are from Newgate Lane which runs along the western side of the area, and from a number of properties along the roadside. Open views across large parts of areas 8.1a and b are possible from much of this length of road, where the roadside hedgerow is absent, gappy or trimmed to a low level. Land further to the east is less visible because of some intervening hedgerows or tree cover within the area.

Most of the available views are across open, undeveloped and relatively attractive countryside, with a strong backdrop of mature trees and limited evidence of built development or other urbanising features. The exceptions to this are views from the southern section of Newgate Lane between Peel Farm and Woodcote Lane, where a foreground of small-scale horse-grazed paddocks with wire fencing, shelters etc lends a fringe character to the view, and views into the sports fields in area 8.1b which have a more suburban character.

Currently, the main viewers are local residents within properties around the immediate periphery of the area, motorists and pedestrians on Newgate Lane and users of the sports facilities, public open space and footpath within area 8.1b. In future, the new alignment of Newgate Lane will increase the extent of the views available to road users, opening up most of area 8.1a to potential views from the road. Roadside planting will mitigate some of these effects but will take time to become effective.



VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, visual sensitivity in this area is moderate to high. Although it is screened from longer-distance views, a large proportion of **area 8.1a** is highly visible from short distance views from Newgate Lane to the west, and it is overlooked by a number of properties around its periphery through or over boundary vegetation. The high intervisibility within the area means that these views are quite extensive across the area and they generally have an attractive, unspoilt rural character.

The extent of visibility will be exacerbated, at least over the short term, by the introduction of the new alignment proposed for Newgate Lane. This will open up additional views across the area from the new road and will affect the character of rural views across the area for a period of time. Roadside planting will mitigate some of these effects but will take time to become effective and visual sensitivity of the remaining undeveloped area will remain high.

While road users are only moderately susceptible to change, because of their focus on the road and fleeting nature of views, local residents are likely to be more focussed on the landscape and their surroundings and will be highly susceptible to change. The introduction of further development into the agricultural landscape is likely to have a significant impact on the character and quality of existing predominantly rural views, unless it can be successfully integrated within a substantial framework of new vegetation.

Area 8.1b is slightly less visually sensitive, partly because it benefits from more extensive tree cover around its boundaries, and also because the existing character of the views is already affected by some urbanising influences. Nevertheless, local residents and recreational users of the public open space and PRoW network are highly susceptible to change and will value the existing open, essentially undeveloped character of this recreational landscape. Their visual amenity would be significantly affected by the introduction of built development within this area.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The area lies within the lower-lying parts of the Borough, forming part of the coastal plain that slopes gently up to the foot of Portsdown Hill in the far north. While the area does not play a significant role in the topographic setting of the urban area, together with LCA7 to the west it forms part of a swathe of largely undeveloped agricultural landscape that lies between the urban areas of Fareham in the north, Stubbington in the west and Gosport in the east, providing clear visual and physical separation of these settlements. The significant role of the area in separating and preventing coalescence of these settlements is enshrined in policy, with the area designated a Strategic Gap in the Fareham Borough Local Plan.

The visual separation between settlements is apparent in all short distance views into the area from the edge of Fareham to the north, Newgate Lane to the west, Woodcote Lane to the south and in private views from Bridgemary (residential suburb of Gosport) in the east. The substantial vegetation along the northern and eastern boundaries provides strong definition of the edges of the urban areas of Fareham and Bridgemary and marks a clear distinction between town and country (albeit slightly blurred by the amenity uses in the north). This helps to reinforce the separate identity of each settlement and also provides the urban areas with an attractive, essentially rural setting.



The alignment of the approved Newgate Lane South encroaches within the Gap but, in itself, should not fundamentally alter the sense of separation, indeed it may in some ways strengthen it. The lack of roadside development along the new route will reinforce the experience of moving out of Fareham, passing through an area of undeveloped countryside and entering the urban area of Gosport beyond the Peel Common roundabout. Similarly the physical and visual gap across the area between the edge of Bridgemary and Peel Common may be more readily appreciated in views from the road as it passes through the middle of the gap between these two settlements.

The role of the area in separating Stubbington and Gosport is less easily perceived because of intervening development and other features that interrupt views, and occupy land, between the two areas. These include the Newlands Solar Farm, the waste water treatment plant and housing development along the western side of the Newgate Lane corridor at Peel Common. Nonetheless, the area does have a critical role in preventing the coalescence of these areas and this is likely to become more significant with the future redevelopment of land at MCA Daedalus and construction of the Stubbington Bypass to the west, within the existing gap between built areas.

The area does not play a significant gateway role for the Borough as a whole, being some way to south of the M27 and main railway line and therefore not visible from the main approach routes. However, it does provide a strong rural backdrop along Newgate Lane which forms part of a key approach into the Borough from Gosport District to the south via the B3334. This reinforces the sense of moving between settlements and districts.

Overall, **area 8.1** plays an important role in defining the edges, separate identity and settings of Fareham and Gosport and a critical role in preventing their coalescence. It also makes an important contribution to the swathe of landscape that currently separates Stubbington from Gosport, a role that may become more critical to maintain with the redevelopment of the MCA Daedalus site in future years.

SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Given the area's designation as part of the Strategic Gap and the role it plays in preventing coalescence between the settlements of Fareham, Stubbington and Gosport, the area is highly sensitive to change. The landscape lacks any strong landform feature (e.g. ridges or valleys) or a mature framework of woodland that could potentially contain and provide a strong landscape edge to any major extension of built form into this area. Intrusive development within the area would inevitably erode the visual and physical separation that currently exists and potentially alter the character of the landscape settings of the two settlements from predominantly agricultural to predominantly urban. Ultimately, the function and integrity of the area as farmland could be significantly eroded to the point where the gap becomes a corridor of greenspace between urban areas, or an 'urban park', rather than a functioning area of agricultural landscape with a distinct character and identity.

The proposed new bypass could potentially erode the integrity of the existing gap if it is regarded as forming a potential new edge for development. If the rural, undeveloped and open character of this area is to be maintained, it will be crucial to keep the urban boundaries as tightly drawn as possible and avoid infilling the land between the existing urban edges and the new road. Overall, therefore, there is very limited scope to accommodate development without a significant impact on the integrity of the area's rural, agricultural character and the role it performs in maintaining the separate identity and character of the settlements and their landscape settings.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This area does not support a wide range of GI assets in terms of biodiversity or landscape features (there are no designated features) but the area as a whole does make a contribution to the local GI network as an extensive area of undeveloped greenspace between the urban areas of Fareham and Gosport, albeit with limited public access. The tree lined boundaries and reasonably intact structure of hedgerows provide a valuable framework of vegetation within this large-scale, intensively managed landscape and the playing fields, public open space and footpath within area 8.1b are valuable recreational assets for local people. The footpath along the northern edge of the area and Woodcote Lane/Brookers Lane in the south provide east-west access links between the residential suburbs of Gosport across the strategic gap to Stubbington and beyond to the Meon Valley. There are no other PRoW or access routes across or within area 8.1a.

The PUSH GI strategy identifies a sub-regional scale blue corridor following the drainage network that runs through the western side of the area southwards to join the River Alver (within Gosport District). The strategy includes a project (C7) to strengthen wildlife corridors connected to the River Alver but this is focused on the Alver Valley outside of the Borough. The Fareham GI strategy does not identify any specific projects within the boundary of this area.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

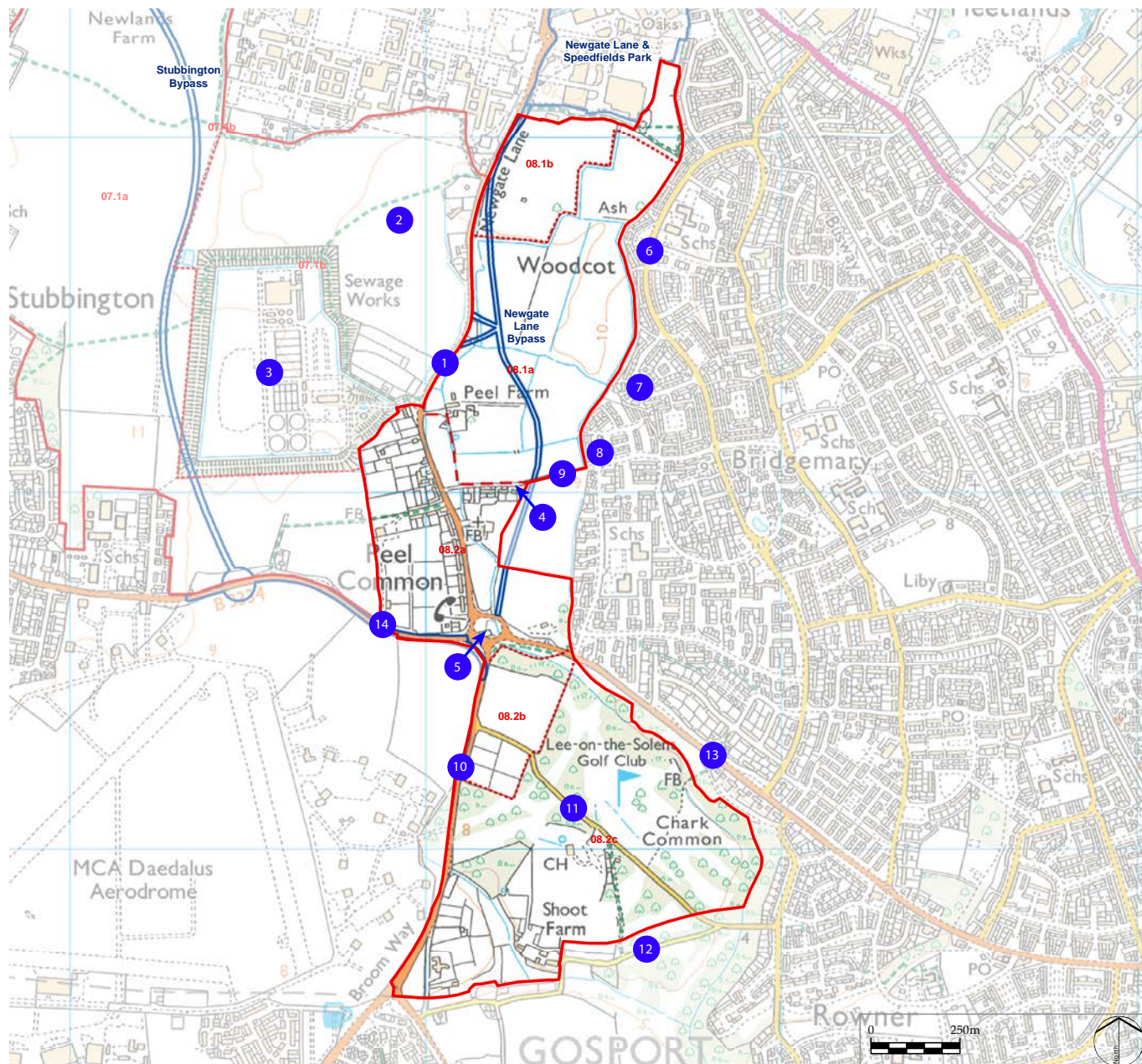
The area's GI value lies in its largely open, undeveloped nature, the public open space at Speedfields Park and the functional connections between Newgate Lane and Bridgemary provided by the public footpath to the north and Woodcote Lane to the south. The area is moderately sensitive to change. Any development that compromised the PRoW network or the sense of openness and being 'in the countryside' would have an adverse effect on the GI network.

This area would benefit from improvements and extension of the local GI network, through major investment in the reinstatement or creation of hedgerows, woodlands and other habitats that have been lost or damaged by agricultural intensification, and through the extension of public open space or access connections through the area.

The main impacts of new road on GI resources are its potential interference with the east-west footpath link between Bridgemary and Peel Common that crosses the area along Woodcote/Brookers Lane, the loss of small areas of amenity space within the Speedfields Park and Brookers Field Recreation Grounds and the loss of some trees and hedgerow vegetation along the road alignment. Mitigation proposals will offset much of this impact.



LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area	1	Newgate Lane (B3385)	8	Heron Way
	Local Landscape Character Area	2	Newlands Solar Farm	9	Brookers Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	3	Peel Common Waste Water Treatment Works	10	Broom Way (B3385)
		4	Woodcote Lane	11	Brune Lane
		5	Peel Common roundabout	12	Shoot Lane
		6	Tuke's Avenue	13	Rowner Road
		7	Pettycoat Crescent	14	Gosport Road (B3334)

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a whole, this area is of high sensitivity primarily on account of its critical role in preventing the coalescence of the urban areas of Fareham, Bridgemary and, to a lesser extent, Stubbington, and in defining the edges, setting and separate identity of these settlements. The relatively small size of the area, the high degree of intervisibility and its generally unspoilt, rural character make it particularly vulnerable to change. The generally open nature of the landscape means that it is difficult to integrate development without it being highly visible and potentially affecting the rural undeveloped character across a wide area, as well as eroding the physical, visual and perceived gap between settlements. The situation is further complicated by the proposed new road which will have some effect on the integrity and character of the landscape resource and undeveloped gap. Even a small amount of encroachment of further built development within the area could exacerbate these effects to the point at which the character of the whole area may be fundamentally altered.

There may be potential for some modest, small scale development associated with existing recreational land uses and built form within area 8.1b, as long as it is closely related to existing features and can be successfully integrated within the existing structure of hedgerows and trees without altering the essentially 'undeveloped' character of the amenity landscape or the wider agricultural landscape of area 8.1a.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Protect the open, predominantly agricultural and undeveloped, rural character of area 8.1a;
- Maintain and strengthen the existing structure of trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation, to maximise its landscape and wildlife value and to minimise impacts on the rural character of the landscape;
- Maintain the essentially open, undeveloped character of the public open space, playing fields and sports facilities within area 8.1b, and be designed to relate closely to the existing structure of trees hedgerows and existing characteristic built features within the area;
- Avoid any major incursion of the urban area into the countryside beyond existing well-defined boundaries, or create significant new pockets of urban or urbanising development within open farmland;
- Protect the area's role in maintaining the separation of settlements and a clear distinction between urban and rural areas. In particular, avoid ribbon development strung out along road corridors (e.g. along the existing and proposed new alignment of Newgate Lane) and any development beyond the existing urban edge that cannot be successfully integrated within the existing landscape structure and which could affect the visual, physical or perceived integrity of the strategic gap;
- Maintain significant distance and separation from the corridor of the new road to minimise its urbanising effects upon the rural character of the area;
- Avoid the introduction of tall buildings or structures that would be particularly visually prominent within the open, flat landscape;
- Protect and enhance enjoyment of the landscape by maintaining and enhancing the existing areas of public open space and access network, and by making further provision for accessible greenspace and access links within and across the area;
- Provide substantial new investment in the landscape through extensive tree, hedgerow and woodland planting using native broadleaved species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions and habitat creation to diversify the intensively farmed landscape;
- Demonstrate design that has minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and is in keeping with the character of the local landscape context.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

Landscape character, quality and value

This area forms the southern part of the Woodcot-Alver Valley LCA and the south-eastern part of the wider Stubbington–Fareham Strategic Gap. The area forms part of the flat, low-lying coastal plain but is very different in character and scale from the open agricultural landscape to the north and west. It is characterised by a mixed pattern of wooded common, small-scale pasture and ribbon development along the corridors of the River Alver and Newgate Lane and is bounded to the east by the urban edge of Gosport, to the west by the Daedalus airbase, to the north by the Peel Common Waste Water Treatment Works and arable farmland, and to the south by the open amenity land of the Alver Valley.

Area 8.2a comprises a strip of land on either side of Newgate Lane, extending from Peel Farm in the north to the Peel Common roundabout in the south. To the west of the road, the area is occupied by residential ribbon development backed by gardens and a small-scale pattern of fields, paddocks and other plots of land, contained by strong boundary vegetation to the rear. The eastern side of the road is characterised by a similar patchwork of small-scale, horse grazed pastures, built development south of Woodcote Lane (including housing, church and care home), gardens and small parcels of land enclosed by woodland, trees and hedgerows. In the far south-east corner is an area of public open space, including sports pitches and associated buildings. The character of this corridor is significantly affected by the influence of busy roads, street lighting, built development and other urban land uses, while the management of the small-scale pastures and plots of land - with their associated rather ramshackle fencing and structures - lends a distinct fringe character to the remaining unbuilt landscape. This situation will be exacerbated by the construction of the proposed new Newgate Lane-Peel Common bypass which will further fragment and intrude upon areas of undeveloped landscape. Overall landscape quality is therefore substantially degraded although the strong structure of vegetation that encloses this area is of some landscape value.

On the southern side of the Peel Common Roundabout lies Chark Common, which marks a distinct change in character from the open arable landscape of the northern part of the Woodcot-Alver Valley LCA, to a landscape which is strongly enclosed by extensive cover of woodland and trees, within which small-scale fields or open spaces are seemingly ‘carved out’ from the woodland cover. Within the overall area, **area 8.2b** is distinctive in that it forms a relatively large, regularly shaped parcel of open land, divided into smaller horse-grazed paddocks by fencing. This area shares some of the fringe characteristics of the roadside paddocks further north (e.g. fencing, land management, structures etc) but has a less urbanised context and is framed by a strong, attractive backdrop of woodland, mature trees and hedgerows. Its quality is less degraded and it retains a semi-rural character.

The remainder of the Chark Common area (**area 8.2c**) is dominated by the Lee-on-Solent Golf Course, which extends across the majority of the area, excluding the far south-west corner (comprising fields in use for horse-grazing along with former farm buildings converted for residential use). The landscape is characterised by open areas of grassland, heathland and wetland habitats (associated with the River Alver) contained within a strong structure of woodland belts, copses, mature trees and scrub. Parts of the land are intensively managed as part of the golf course (e.g. greens, fairways, bunkers etc.) and there are associated buildings and structures, which have an amenity character that somewhat detracts from the rural character of the landscape. However, most of the area is designated as a SINC (for its woodland, heathland and wetland habitats) and retains an attractive, enclosed and well-treed character with some ‘semi-natural’ qualities. The strong tree cover also provides an effective buffer to the influence of surrounding roads and neighbouring development within Gosport. The area is generally unspoilt and of relatively high landscape quality although it is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The sensitivity of the landscape resource varies within this overall area. **Area 8.2a** is already substantially degraded by urban influences and has a predominantly 'fringe' character which reduces its sensitivity to change. This will be exacerbated by the construction of the proposed bypass. Further development within this area would further erode the extent of surviving 'undeveloped' land but would not have a significant effect upon the overall character and quality of the landscape resource. Notwithstanding its value as part of the strategic gap or other roles, in landscape resource terms alone this area has relatively low sensitivity and high development potential.



Area 8.2b also has fringe qualities but has not been degraded in the same way. It retains an essentially rural, pastoral character that is susceptible to change and would be significantly affected by the introduction of permanent built development. The area is physically and visually detached from other built form by the strong surrounding woodland framework and significant development would appear as an isolated area of built land within open countryside. A section of the western boundary along Broom Way is open and there is a visual relationship between the area and currently undeveloped land within the Daedalus site to the west which would also be affected by development within this area. Redevelopment proposals for the Daedalus site may change the situation but current indications suggest that the undeveloped 'green' character of this corner of the site is to be maintained. Overall, therefore, landscape sensitivity is judged as moderate to high and the potential for development is low.

Area 8.2c is highly sensitive to change. Although its use as a golf course has altered the underlying character of the landscape it nevertheless has an attractive wooded and enclosed character and supports a mosaic of other habitats and features of landscape and ecological value. Built development would undoubtedly intrude upon its quiet, semi-rural and secluded character. There may be some modest potential for accommodating small-scale development (i.e. individual buildings) within the south west corner of the area, where it is associated with existing built form and can be more successfully integrated within the existing vegetation structure, but otherwise there is very limited potential for development within the area.

VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

The area's low lying position within the coastal plain means that there are few long distance views. The area may be perceived as one part of a much wider panorama taking in the urban and coastal landscapes in views from higher ground to the north of the Borough. However, its small size and lack of landmark features means the area is generally indistinguishable from the wider landscape within long-distance views.

More locally, large parts of **area 8.2a** are visible from roads, adjacent dwellings, lanes, public rights of way and open spaces within the area itself, although there are some small pockets of land enclosed behind built form and strong boundary vegetation that are less visible from public areas. The character and quality of the available views is already heavily influenced by urban characteristics and would not be fundamentally altered by additional built development.

Area 8.2b is largely enclosed within a strong wooded framework which restricts its visibility from surrounding areas but it is open along parts of its western boundary, allowing some direct views from adjacent Broom Way. There are also occasional filtered glimpses through the roadside trees along Brune Lane, which cuts through the middle of this area. Given that the main viewers will be road users, the visual sensitivity of this area is moderate and could be reduced further by mitigation planting to close the gap along the western boundary, although this will take time to become effective.

Area 8.2c is generally of low visual sensitivity. The extensive cover of trees and woodland around and within the area prevent all but glimpsed views from surrounding roads, through trees and gaps in the boundary vegetation. There are no views from neighbouring urban areas to the east. There is a public footpath that cuts through the golf course, linking Shoot Lane with Brune Lane, and another sort section of footpath into the area off Rowner Lane on the northern side of the area, otherwise there are no other publicly accessible viewpoints in this area.

The main viewers of this area are therefore local residents within Peel Common (area 8.2a), users of the main road network (Newgate Lane, Broom Way) and minor local lanes (Brune Lane, Shoot Lane), users of the limited network of PRow and open spaces, and golf course members. Apart from some attractive views within area 8.2c, the value of the landscape as a visual resource for these receptors lies primarily in its character as undeveloped land rather than its intrinsic scenic quality.



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VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Visual sensitivity is relatively low within this area. Area 8.2a is highly visible but the character of the views is such that further development is unlikely to have a major impact on visual amenity. Area 8.2b is visually well-contained apart from a section of its western boundary, but this visual exposure could be mitigated by additional planting to close the gap. Likewise, area 8.2c is also highly visually contained by the extensive cover of trees and woodland within and around the area, with very limited publicly accessible views. However, balanced against this is the relatively unspoilt character of the views in the Chark Common area which are highly susceptible to change, and the high level of sensitivity of people using the PRow network (albeit very restricted) and otherwise accessing the area for recreational purposes, who appreciate their surroundings and will be very aware of changes.

Across much of the area, therefore, there are limited opportunities to integrate development into the visual environment without unacceptable adverse effects on the character and quality of existing views and on the visual amenity of sensitive viewers. However, there may be some modest scope for accommodating small-scale development (i.e. individual buildings) within less visible, well-contained pockets of land within areas 8.2a and in the south-western corner of area 8.2c, where the existing vegetation structure has the potential to limit effects on high quality views and visual amenity.



CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The area lies within the lower-lying parts of the Borough, forming part of the coastal plain that slopes gently up to the foot of Portsdown Hill in the far north. While the area does not play a significant role in the topographic setting of the urban area, together with LCA7 to the west (and area 8.1 to the north) it forms part of a swathe of largely undeveloped landscape that lies between the urban areas of Fareham in the north, Stubbington in the west and Gosport in the east, providing clear visual and physical separation of these settlements. The significant role of the area in separating and preventing coalescence of these settlements is enshrined in policy, with the area designated a Strategic Gap in the Fareham Borough Local Plan.

The role of **area 8.2a** as part of the gap is evident to the east of Newgate Lane, where the strip of roadside paddocks forms part of a wider corridor of undeveloped landscape between the road and the western edge of Bridgemary. However, the role of this area in maintaining the gap westwards towards Stubbington is less easy to perceive from the Newgate Lane corridor as views in this direction are blocked by built development along the roadside at Peel Common. Nevertheless, when viewed from the west (from the Gosport Road) it becomes apparent that Peel Common is an isolated small settlement that lies within the wider gap, rather than defining its western boundary or connecting to a larger urban area. It will be vital to maintain this 'isolation' of development at Peel Common if the physical and visual integrity of the wider gap is to be maintained.

The Peel Common Roundabout is a critical 'pinch point' within the gap between Peel Common and the edge of Bridgemary where there is a real risk of the two areas coalescing. This will be further exacerbated by the new bypass which eats into the remaining undeveloped land to the north of the roundabout and also, potentially, by redevelopment of the Daedalus site to the south. It will be vital to protect the undeveloped landscape within the public open space to the east of the roundabout in order to maintain a physical, visual and perceptual gap between the built areas.

Areas 8.2b and c also play a pivotal role in maintaining separation of urban areas and as a link between the upper and lower parts of the Alver Valley corridor. This triangle of semi-rural, heavily wooded landscape is important not only in physically and visually separating built areas at Peel Common and Bridgemary but also in separating Bridgemary from the northern edge of Lee-on-the-Solent. The redevelopment of MCA Daedalus may potentially exacerbate the perceived closing of the gap between Lee-on-the-Solent and Peel Common. It will be essential, therefore, to maintain the undeveloped character of all sides of this triangle, avoiding encroachment of development along Broom Way, Shoot Lane and Gosport Road.

This southern area also forms a vital link in the wider Alver Valley landscape corridor which extends southwards into Gosport District to the coast, providing a distinct edge and landscape setting to the urban areas to the south. It will be very important to maintain the integrity of this continuous corridor of undeveloped landscape and avoid the encroachment of development within and across it.

SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Given the area's designation as part of the Strategic Gap and the role it plays in preventing coalescence between the settlements of Fareham, Stubbington, Bridgemarky and Lee-on-the-Solent, the area is highly sensitive to change. The area also contributes to the perceived sense of separation between Gosport District and Fareham Borough. Any development that reduced the physical or visual separation between these settlements would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the gap and on the area's contribution to the distinct identity and settings of the surrounding urban areas. Consequently, the area offers very limited development potential in respect of its role in maintaining the separation and setting of settlements. The only opportunities may lie within areas that are closely associated with existing development (e.g. at Peel Common or in the SW corner of area 8.2c) and can be integrated within the landscape without any physical or perceived encroachment within the gap.



CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

The area's main contribution to the GI network is through its role as an extensive area of undeveloped land between the urban areas of Fareham and Gosport and, in particular, as part of the wider corridor of greenspace and habitats that follow the course of the River Alver, identified within the PUSH GI strategy as a 'sub-regional scale blue corridor'. The strategy includes a project (C7) to strengthen wildlife corridors connected to the River Alver but this is focused on the Alver Valley outside of the Borough.

The northern part of the area (8.2a) does not support a wide range of designated GI assets but the framework of mature hedgerows and trees and the playing fields to the east of the Peel Common Roundabout are all valuable GI resources in this urbanised area. Woodcote Lane and the footpath linking Newgate Lane with Gosport Road also provide a valuable access link connecting Bridgemark with Stubbington across the middle of this area.

The southern part of the area (**areas 8.2b and c**) contains significant biodiversity assets in the extensive woodland, grassland, heathland and wetland habitats (designated as a SINC) within the golf course and surrounding area but is relatively inaccessible to the public, with only three short lengths of public footpath and no public open space. An extension of public access in this area, particularly along the river corridor to link with the Alver Valley Country Park to the south (in Gosport District) would be desirable. The Fareham GI strategy identifies project BW14 which aims to create 'cross boundary links from South Fareham Gap and Daedalus to the Alver valley Country Park' and 'to provide a linear corridor between Stubbington, Lee-on-the-Solent and Gosport'.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

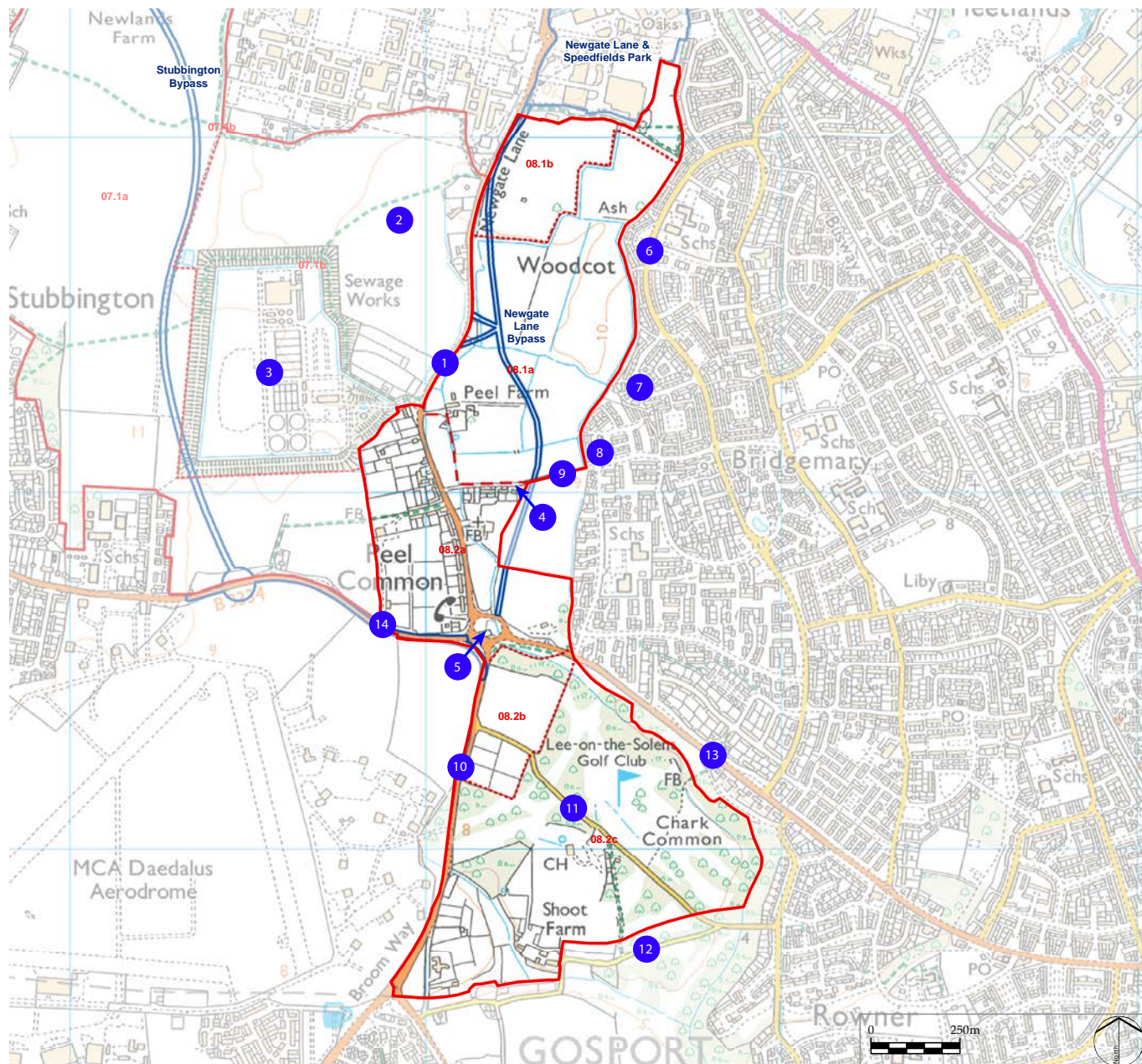
The area's primary GI value lies in its largely undeveloped nature and the extensive network of woodland, grassland, heathland and wetland habitats within the corridor of the River Alver and within Chark Common in the south of the area. These assets are particularly scarce and valuable within the heavily urbanised and pressured context of this part of the Borough and are therefore very sensitive to change.

The existing network of public access an open space is fairly sparse within the area and existing features need to be protected and their function and quality enhanced. The area would benefit from improvements to the local access network to provide improved east-west links between urban areas and the wider access network of the coastal plain, and north- south links to connect the northern part of the river corridor with the Alver Valley Country Park and the coast.

Any new development would need to maintain the largely 'undeveloped' character of the area, ensure the protection of features of landscape or biodiversity value, and maintain and extend the provision of access and public open space opportunities. There is very limited scope for this to be achieved in this highly constrained area.



LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area	1	Newgate Lane (B3385)	8	Heron Way
	Local Landscape Character Area	2	Newlands Solar Farm	9	Brookers Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	3	Peel Common Waste Water Treatment Works	10	Broom Way (B3385)
		4	Woodcote Lane	11	Brune Lane
		5	Peel Common roundabout	12	Shoot Lane
		6	Tuke's Avenue	13	Rowner Road
		7	Pettycoat Crescent	14	Gosport Road (B3334)

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a whole, this area is of high sensitivity primarily on account of its critical role in preventing the coalescence of the urban areas of Fareham, Bridgemary, Lee-on-the-Solent and, to a lesser extent, Stubbington, and in defining the edges, setting and separate identity of these settlements. The narrowness of the gap between development at Peel Common and the edge of Bridgemary means that this area has a particularly vital role in maintaining physical, visual and perceived separation and even a limited amount of development in the ‘wrong’ place, particularly along the main roads that enclose the southern part of the area, could threaten the integrity of the gap. The situation is further complicated by the proposed new bypass which will inevitably have some effect on the integrity and character of the landscape resource and undeveloped gap and further ‘squeeze’ the gap at its narrowest point.

Other key sensitivities include the important range of habitats within the Chark Common area and the area’s contribution to the corridor of undeveloped greenspace (albeit largely inaccessible) along the course of the River Alver, from Fareham to the Alver Valley Country Park and beyond to the coast.

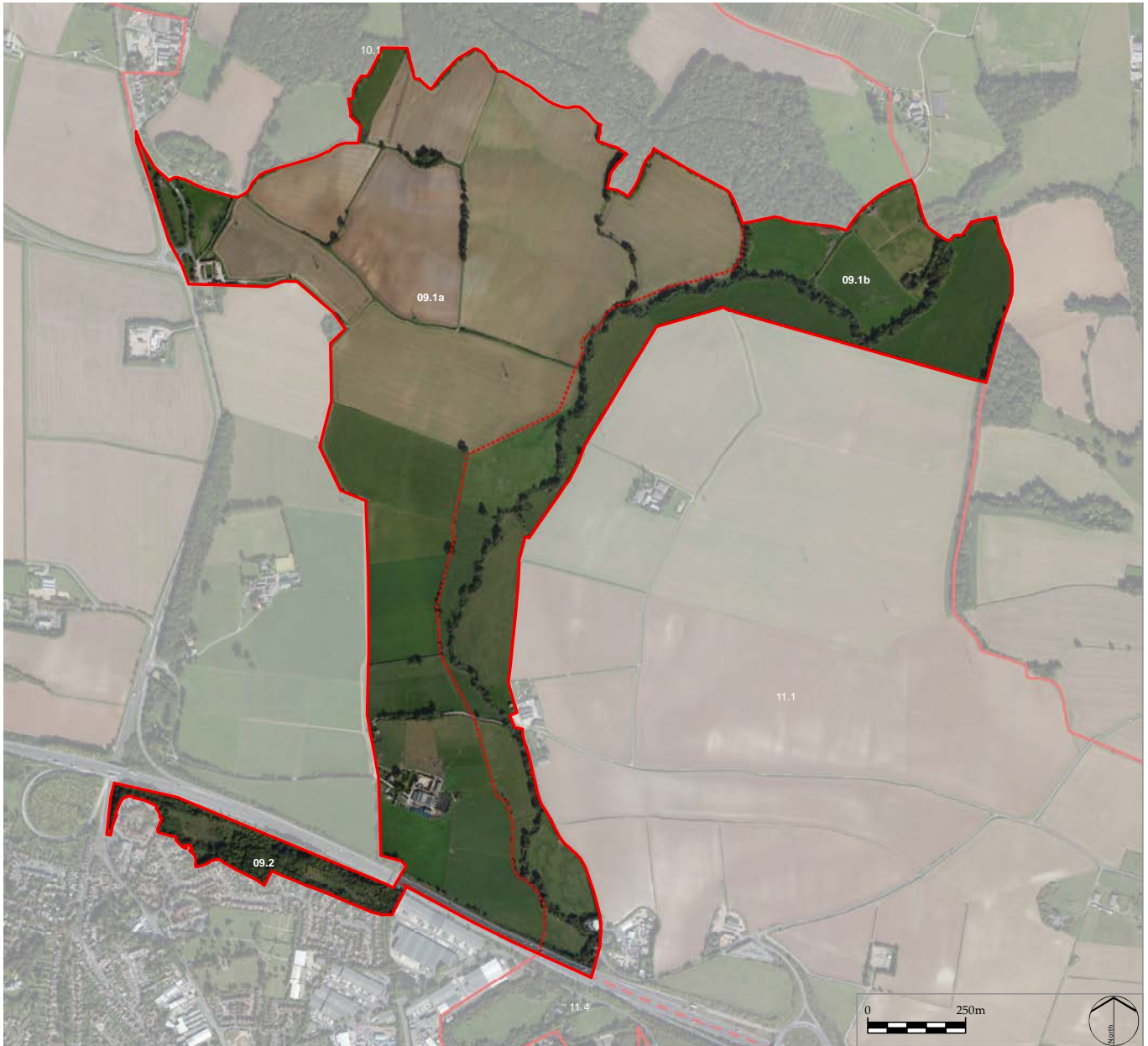
There may be potential for some modest, small scale development associated with existing built form at Peel Common or in the far south-west of the area, as long as it is closely related to existing features and can be successfully integrated within the existing structure of hedgerows and trees without altering the essentially ‘undeveloped’ character of the landscape or threatening the integrity of the gap.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Safeguard the area’s vital role in maintaining the separation of settlements and a clear distinction between urban and rural areas. In particular, avoid ribbon development along road corridors (e.g. Broom Way, Shoot Lane and Gosport Road) and any development beyond the existing urban edge that cannot be successfully integrated within the existing landscape structure and which could affect the visual, physical or perceived integrity of the strategic gap;
- In particular, protect and strengthen the undeveloped character of the public open space to the east of the Peel Common roundabout;
- Maintain the distinctly ‘isolated’ nature of settlement at Peel Common and ensure that any potential small-scale infill development within this area effectively ‘rounds off’ rather than extends the settlement boundary, to avoid the risk of physical or perceived coalescence with other built areas;
- Protect the semi-rural, undeveloped character of areas 8.2b and c;
- Maintain and strengthen the existing structure of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation in all parts of the area, to maximise its landscape and wildlife value;
- In particular, maintain and enhance the mosaic of woodland, heathland, grassland and wetland habitats of value within the Lee-on-the-Solent golf course at Chark Common and encourage further habitat creation and diversification within intensively managed areas to maximise wildlife and landscape value;
- Avoid the introduction of tall buildings or structures that would be particularly visually prominent within the landscape;
- Protect and enhance enjoyment of the landscape by maintaining and enhancing the existing areas of public open space and access network, and by making further provision for accessible greenspace and access links within and across the area, particularly along the River Alver corridor and with the Country Park to the south;
- Demonstrate design that has minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and is in keeping with the character of the local landscape context.
- Use native broadleaved species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions in new tree and hedgerow planting.

2.9 LCA 9: NORTH FAREHAM DOWNS

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

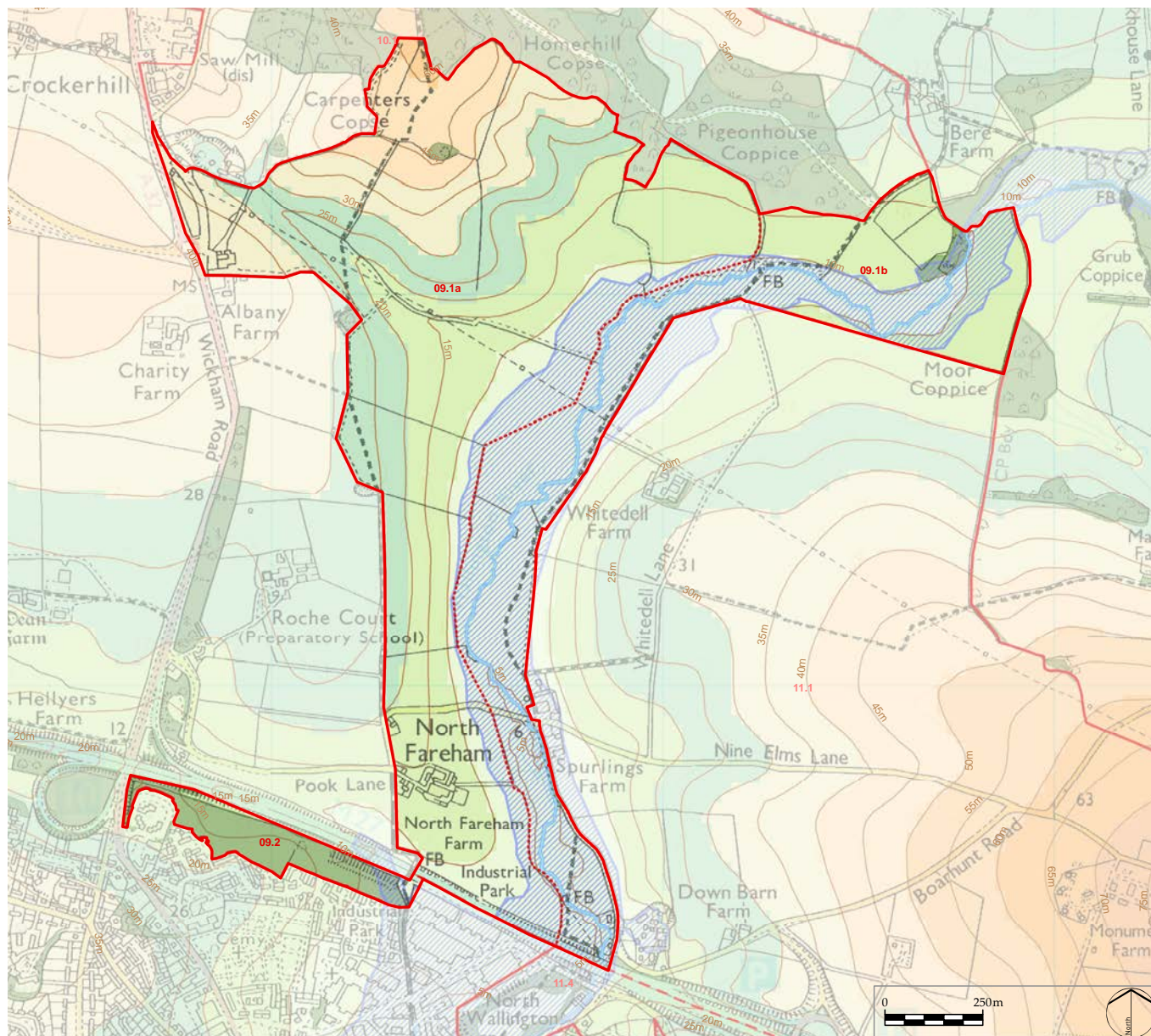
- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



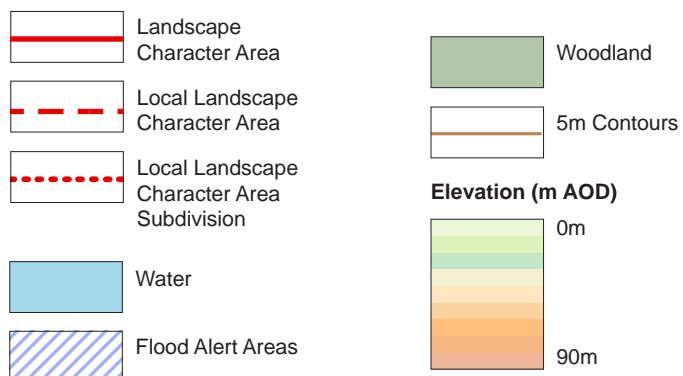
Location Diagram

LCA 9 - NORTH FAREHAM DOWNS

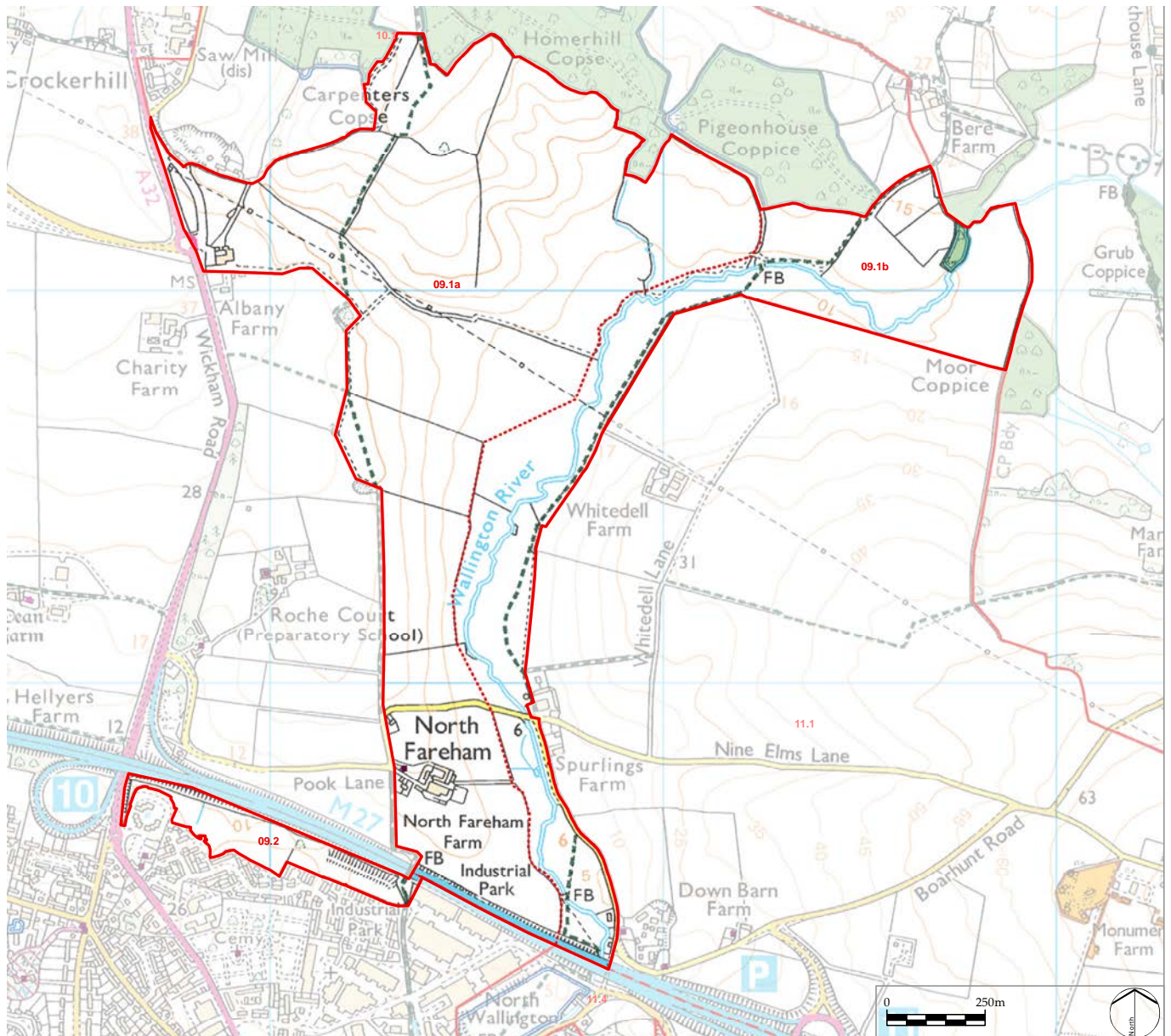
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND



PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

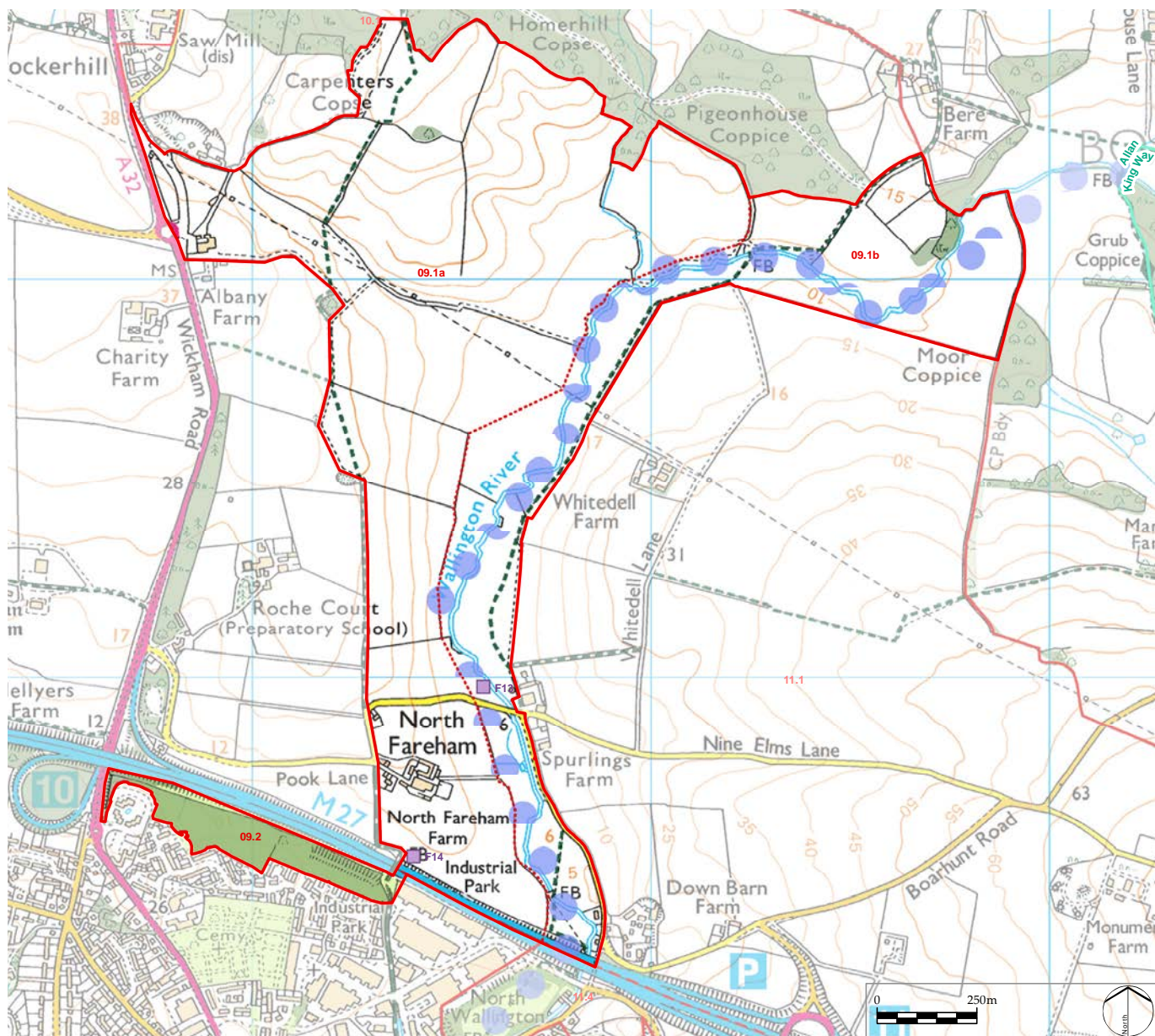
	Landscape Character Area		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		

Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

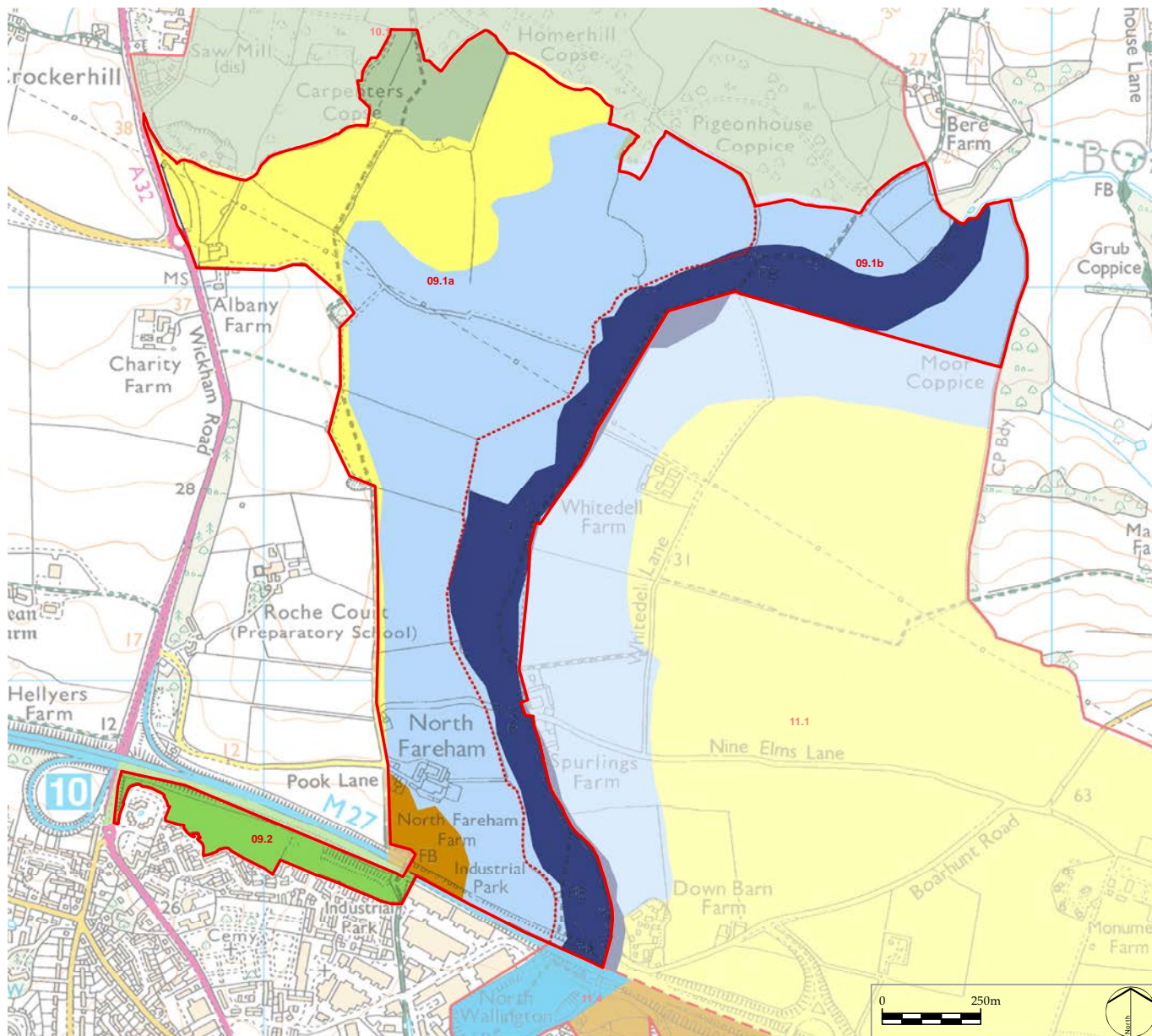


LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Footpath
	Local Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		
	Green Infrastructure Projects		
	Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor		

LCA 9 - NORTH FAREHAM DOWNS

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

Landscape Types

	Landscape Character Area		Open Arable Downs		Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Large Scale
	Local Landscape Character Area		Open Arable Downs: Fringe Character		Open Floodplain Farmland
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Fringe Character		Open Valley Side

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area forms the eastern side of the much larger North Fareham Downs LCA defined in the 1996 landscape character assessment. Land to the west has been excluded from this assessment as it now falls within the Welborne SDA boundary. The area is bounded to the north by the heavily wooded landscape of the Forest of Bere (LCA10), to the east by the flanks of Portsdown Hill (LCA 11) and to the south by the M27 motorway corridor which severs it from the urban area of Fareham beyond. It forms part of the broad sweep of rolling chalkland landscape that runs across the north of the Borough and is focused on the valley of the Wallington River and the land which slopes down to it from the west. The area is divided into two sub-areas reflecting the differences between the valley floor and sides.

Area 9.1a comprises the east-facing slopes on the western side of the Wallington River valley. It has a relatively uniform character and, although mainly classified as 'Open valley-side' landscape type, there is little discernible difference in character between this area and the 'Open arable chalk downland' landscape type into which it grades imperceptibly to the north and west. The area is typical of the chalkland landscapes and is characterised by smoothly rolling landform, large-scale fields dominated by intensive cultivation (arable or reseeded grassland), with few hedgerows or trees, an open, rural character and a very sparse pattern of settlements and roads.

However, its character differs somewhat from the more denuded flanks of Portsdown Hill opposite. Field sizes are slightly less expansive, there is a predominance of grassland (in the southern area) over arable land, and some field and roadside boundaries (e.g. along Pook Lane) are quite well-vegetated. Stronger hedgerows, a small copse and the extensive woodlands along the northern edge of the area (in LCA10) also provide a sense of visual containment and enclosure in this part of the area.

Area 9.1b more or less defines the floodplain of the Wallington River which runs along the eastern side of the area, separating it from the west-facing flanks of Portsdown Hill. This area is typically low-lying and flat and occupied by small to medium sized, irregularly shaped fields predominantly under permanent pasture through which the meandering course of the river is marked by its tree-lined margins.

Although still quite open in parts, the more intimate and pastoral, riparian character of the floodplain, at times waterlogged, is in marked contrast to the large-scale, open and free-draining chalkland landscapes that border it on either side. The upper sections of the river corridor are characterised by a more dense cover of trees and woodland, including part of Gravelhole Copse, which is designated a SINC.

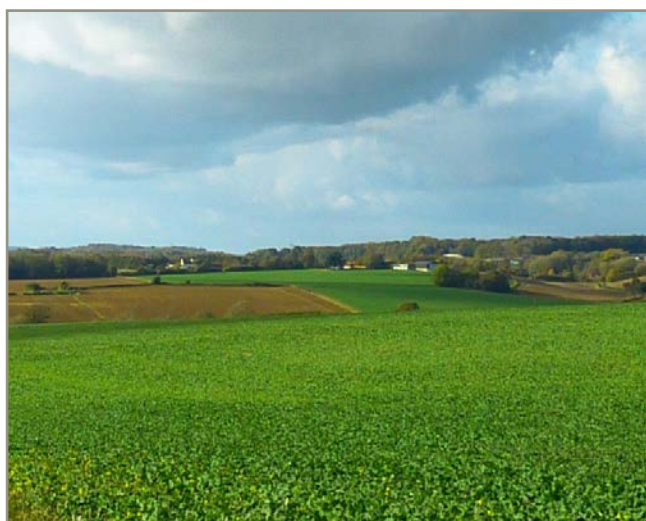
The area is not covered by any national landscape designation but the northern part of the area was included within the former Forest of Bere Area of Special Landscape Character on the grounds that it forms an important part of its landscape setting. The case for designation of this ASLC included its high scenic quality and scarcity value, its clear sense of place, strong topographical and visual unity, its nature conservation value (e.g. remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland), and its largely unspoilt rural character, a scarce resource within the Borough. The former Portsdown Hill ASLC extended westwards to the Wallington River and included part of the floodplain in area 9.1b but the land to the west of the river (the southern part of area 9.1a) was excluded. There is no apparent difference in the essential character and quality of the landscape within this area from the Portsdown area, except that it does not form part of the main topographic unit of the chalkland ridge. Overall, it has similar scenic quality, unspoilt character and scarcity value as part of the distinctive chalk scenery of the Borough. Only some localised intrusion from the motorway on the southern edge, and prominent power lines crossing the northern part of the area, detract from its essentially unspoilt, intact countryside character.

However, the existing character of the landscape is likely to be affected by future planned development at Welborne, which will extend into land to the east of the A32 Wickham Road between Albany Farm and just south of Roche Court, immediately adjoining area 9.1. The Adopted Welborne Plan (June 2015) defines this as 'The Parkland Character Area' and identifies the following individual qualities that should guide an appropriate design response:

"The landform in this part of the site falls gently eastwards towards the Wallington River valley, which along with the strong tree belt along the western edge, create a strong sense of separation from the rest of Welborne."

The design response will therefore need to exploit its semi-rural location, respect Roche Court and its exposed parkland setting and create a strong and defensible edge to Welborne, whilst at the same time include measures to ensure that this part of the site is properly integrated with the rest of Welborne. The open character of this site provides an opportunity for a design response which maximises the potential to create long views out of the site. Likewise a parkland approach to the layout and design of this Character Area would soften the impact of the development when viewed across the valley and Portsdown Hill."

Adopting a design approach characterised by parcels of development set within a 'designed' parkland landscape, that responds to and enhances the existing pattern of woodland belts, open pasture, buildings, avenues and parkland trees associated with Roche Court, will help to integrate the development within the landscape and filter views of it from the east. However, it is inevitable that this scale of development will have some influence on the rural character and qualities of the adjoining river valley. The challenge will be to minimise this influence and to ensure that it is not exacerbated in future by further development to the east of the defined SDA boundary (i.e. within area 9.1). Key to this will be the definition of a 'strong defensible edge' along the length of the track (PRoW) that forms the boundary between the Welborne SDA and area 9.1, through substantial new belts of planting to supplement and link together the copses and other isolated groups of trees along this route, while still allow occasional long views out from the development area.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Sensitivity and development potential

Currently, this is an intact and unspoilt, characteristic chalk downland and valley landscape, representing a scarce resource within the Borough with very few existing urban influences or detracting features. It is therefore a valuable part of the Borough's remaining landscape resource, and its openness, sloping aspect and the strong visual relationship between the valley sides and floor mean that changes in this landscape would have an influence over a wide area, including potentially the western slopes of Portsdown Hill. Overall, the sensitivity of the landscape resource in this area is judged as high, with very limited scope to accommodate development and to mitigate the effects of change. Only a couple of small parcels of relatively enclosed land around Chalk Lane in the north-west may offer limited scope for small-scale development to be accommodated, as long as this is effectively enclosed within strong vegetation and of a scale and character similar to existing built form within this locality (e.g. individual dwellings or small clusters of buildings as at nearby Albany Farm or Crockerhill).

The importance of maintaining the rural, undeveloped character of this landscape is heightened by the planned development of the new community on adjacent land and across an extensive area of existing countryside further to the west. This will reduce the extent of undeveloped chalk landscape within the Borough, adding scarcity value to the remaining resource. Although the Welborne development may potentially affect the rural character of this area, particularly in the southern part, this should be mitigated by the creation of a substantial belt of new green infrastructure along the boundary between these areas and a well-treed parkland setting for the development. In general, encroachment of any additional development beyond this defensible edge into area 9.1 should be resisted, to prevent further erosion of the landscape resource and urbanisation of the Wallington River valley.

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Views into **area 9.1** from the wider surrounding landscape are restricted by the extensive woodlands and rolling landform to the north, the strong belts of woodland and tree cover along the A32 Wickham Road to the west, and the embankments and vegetation along the motorway corridor to the south. However, there are quite extensive views across the valley from elevated ground and west-facing slopes of Portsdown Hill to the east (e.g. from Boarhunt Road, Nine Elms Lane and Whitedell Lane). The valley floor is largely hidden from view by the sloping foreground but a large part of the east-facing slopes within area 9.1a is visible from the roads and PRoW network on these flanks.

There are views into the southern end of the floodplain from Spurlings Road and the eastern end of Pook Lane, and a fleeting view from the M27 motorway into the land to the south of North Fareham Farm. However, vegetation and landform screen views from other roads in the area, including the A32 Wickham Road.

Apart from those from the flanks of Portsdown Hill, the most extensive views of the area are from the PRoW network within the area itself. These include two footpaths that run along the full length of this area from its southern to northern boundaries. One of these follows the eastern edge of the floodplain from the motorway underpass at North Wallington in the south to the north-eastern end, where it crosses a footbridge and ascends the western valley sides along a track towards Bere Farm. Views from this low-lying path are mainly of the immediate floodplain areas with views up to the western valley side filtered by vegetation along the valley floor. The other footpath crosses over the motorway to the south of North Fareham Farm, then generally follows the track that leads from Pook Lane northwards along the valley side (along the boundary with the Welborne SDA) before branching off along a path that leads uphill to the edge of Homerhill Copse and the Forest of Bere woodlands. There are extensive, uninterrupted views down and along the valley sides and across to Portsdown Hill from this path which has no hedgerow vegetation or tree cover along its eastern side for most of its length. A footpath linking this path to the A32 south of Albany Farm will also have some open views across the northern part of the area, although it is not certain whether this link is currently in use.

The area is currently sparsely settled but there will be partial views from the farms and properties within or adjacent to the area, including those around North Fareham Farm, Spurlings Farm, Roche Court, Albany Farm and Whitedell Farm. There will potentially also be views from properties and open spaces within the development that is planned for the adjacent land within the Welborne SDA, although the parkland setting and green infrastructure framework that is proposed should help to limit these over time.

The main viewers will therefore be local residents and visitors using the local roads and public rights of way network within and around the area.

VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Although hidden from wider areas to the north, west and south, this area is judged to be of high visual sensitivity. Extensive parts of the area are visible from publicly accessible viewpoints on the flanks of Portsdown Hill and from the network of PRoW that cross or follow the valley floor and sides. Viewers from these locations will be primarily engaged in recreational activity and will be very aware of their surroundings and are likely to be highly sensitive to change, as will local residents within the area. The existing views are generally unspoilt and of a high quality, and change is more difficult to accommodate within a predominantly large-scale, open and visually exposed landscape.

The numbers of viewers affected may be relatively low at present but the planned development at Welborne will increase the numbers of local residents with potential glimpsed views into the area and people using the footpath network for recreation. It will also affect the character and quality of some views, particularly those looking west from within or across the area, until the proposed green infrastructure matures. Further development within this predominantly open area would exacerbate these impacts and is generally undesirable.

Overall, the high sensitivity to change of the viewers, the extensive visibility over this open, large-scale landscape, and the predominantly rural, unspoilt quality of existing views means that development potential in this area is highly constrained.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

This area is physically and visually detached from the urban area of Fareham (severed by the motorway corridor) and lies beyond its immediate natural setting, although it forms part of its wider countryside context. It does not currently have a role in defining the character of any other local settlement or their settings but this will change when the adjacent land is developed as part of Welborne. The Wallington Valley will not only become part of the immediate landscape setting of the new community but will also have a strategic role as part of the larger swathe of open, undeveloped countryside (including LCA 10 and 11) that will maintain separation between Welborne and existing settlements to the north.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area does not currently perform a significant role in the setting of settlements or maintaining their separation. However, once the Welborne SDA has been developed on land immediately to the west, it will have a more vital role as the setting for the new community and as a buffer to further urban expansion into open countryside and in maintaining separation between Welborne and settlements further to the north-east. Further expansion of development into this area would undermine these roles and the breaching of well-defined settlement boundaries (for Fareham and Welborne) would potentially blur the clear distinction between built up areas and open countryside.



CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

There are limited biodiversity assets within this intensively farmed area but the trees, areas of woodland (including Gravelhole Copse SINC) and riparian habitats along the Wallington river corridor are of GI value, as well as the few isolated copses, hedgerows and trees within the valley side farmland. The river corridor is identified as a Sub-regional scale Blue Corridor within the PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy, and Project F6 seeks ‘to enhance the biodiversity value of the corridor and to develop circular routes connecting historic sites and points of interest with local settlements and North of Fareham SDA’ (Welborne).

The most important GI assets are the footpaths that run through the area from north to south, along the valley side on the western boundary and along the valley floor to the east. These routes provide strategic north-south connections between Fareham and the wider access network within the Forest of Bere to the north, including access land at Wickham Common and the South Downs National Park. There are also east-west connections with Portsdown Hill, via the network of rural lanes and footpaths on its western flanks, and with areas to the west via Pook Lane and a footpath link to the Wickham Road. There is no open access land or public open space, formal or informal, within the area itself.

The Fareham GI Strategy identifies just two projects relating to Pook Lane (F13, 14) and the opportunity this country lane provides for key footway and cycle links between the new community at Welborne, areas to the east and Fareham to the south via the motorway footbridge.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area is well-provided for in terms of PRoW and other access routes and links, and these important assets should be protected and enhanced to maximise their potential value within the local GI network. Opportunities to extend and improve the network through the planned development of the Welborne new community should be fully exploited.

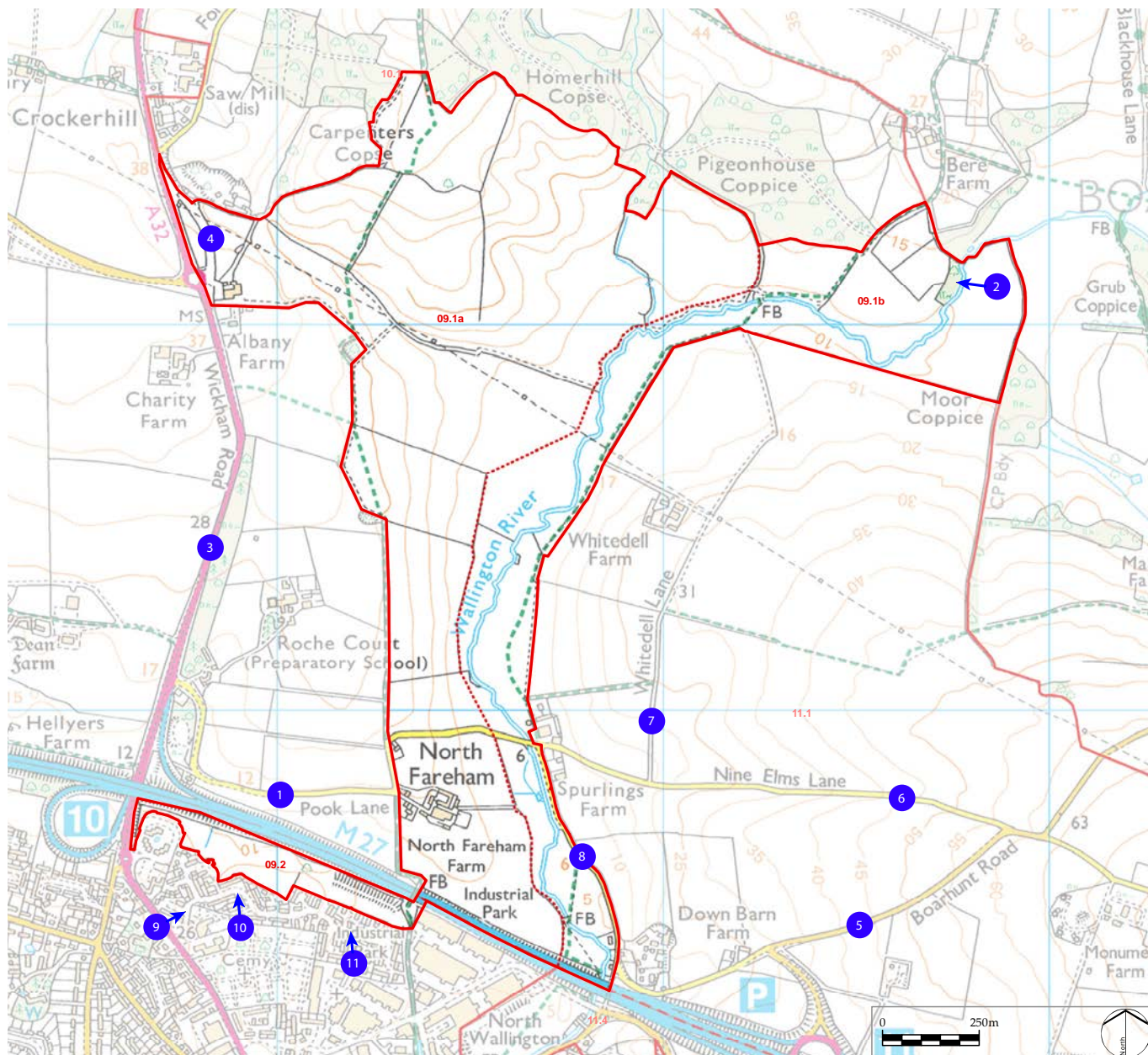
Apart from habitats within the river corridor, the area is generally lacking in landscape and biodiversity assets. The existing assets should be protected, and advantage should be taken of opportunities to enhance the GI network within this area on the back of the Welborne development proposals. In particular, the Strategic Framework set out in the Welborne Plan proposes strategic green corridors, landscape buffers and links along the shared boundary along the western side of area 9.1.

Where opportunities arise within the valley side farmland, specific enhancement priorities include the creation of less intensively managed field margins, strengthening of the hedgerow network, planting of new areas of woodland, tree belts and copses, the re-creation of chalk grassland, and the provision of accessible greenspace.



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LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area	1	Pook Lane	8	Spurlings Farm
	Local Landscape Character Area	2	Gravelhole Copse	9	Cornfield
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	3	Wickham Road (A32)	10	Furzehall Avenue
		4	Chalk Lane	11	The Meadows
		5	Boarhunt Road		
		6	Nine Elms Lane		
		7	Whitedell Lane		

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Overall, this area is of high sensitivity, in terms of the value of the landscape resource, its visibility within the immediate surrounding area, its contribution to the local GI network and its role in the wider countryside setting of the Borough as a whole. This sensitivity will increase once the planned development at Welborne has been implemented and the area becomes part of the immediate landscape setting of the new community.

The essentially open, exposed character of the landscape makes it more difficult to integrate development and to mitigate the effects of change. Therefore, there is very limited potential for development within the area and only a couple of small parcels of relatively enclosed land around Chalk Lane in the north-west may offer limited scope for small-scale development to be accommodated.

Much of the area is intensively farmed and lacks denuded of features and it would therefore benefit from investment in new green infrastructure to enhance its landscape and wildlife value.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Maintain the essentially undeveloped countryside character of the area, avoiding the intrusion of further development beyond the defined settlement boundary of Welborne, or the creation of new pockets of urbanising development within open countryside;
- Be located only in existing small-scale parcels of land where it can be successfully integrated within a strong framework of vegetation and is associated with existing built development (e.g. around Chalk Lane);
- Demonstrate design that has minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and reflects the scale and character of the local settlement pattern and built environment (e.g. individual dwellings or small clusters of buildings around courtyards, typical of farmsteads).
- Avoid the introduction of other buildings or structures that would be visually prominent within the open valley landscape;

- Protect and enhance key landscape and ecological features of the valley side and floodplain, including the existing hedgerow structure, trees, copses, woodlands, riparian habitats and semi-improved pasture land along the valley floor;
- Provide investment in green infrastructure to create a more diverse network of landscape features and habitats, through such measures as reinstatement, strengthening and management of hedgerows and other boundary features; tree planting in belts/ copses and in field corners; the creation of less intensively managed field margins; and the recreation of chalk grassland; and diversification of grassland and wetland habitats within the river corridor;
- Use native species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions in new tree and hedgerow planting and habitat creation/ landscape enhancement proposals;
- Protect and enhance existing footpaths and links within the area, and provide connections with new GI assets within the Welborne development, to maximise their role as multi-functional components of the local and wider green infrastructure network;
- Promote the establishment of a strong green corridor along the footpath that forms the boundary between the Welborne SDA and the western edge of the area, including substantial planting to screen new development to the west while maintaining some open views across the valley to the east;
- Provide opportunities to extend the access network and create areas of publicly accessible greenspace within the valley landscape.

LANDSCAPE RESOURCE - SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This small area forms a single parcel of captured landscape on the northern edge of the urban area that is surrounded by built form and roads. It is sandwiched between the M27 motorway corridor (which effectively cuts it off from open countryside to the north) and an area of mixed residential and commercial development which runs from the Furze Court business park (incorporating the listed farmhouse and buildings of Furze Hall) in the west to the edge of the Wallington Industrial Estate in the east. This area was included within the Furzehall/ Broadcut urban character area (28) within the 1996 assessment as it 'belongs' more to the urban environment than the countryside to the north. However, it is included within the North Fareham Downs LCA for the purposes of this assessment as this is the closest area of defined countryside to which it can be attached.

The area once formed part of the farmland associated with Furze Hall (now redeveloped) but agricultural management has been abandoned and the land is now characterised by a dense cover of woodland and scrub interspersed by areas of open, rough grassland. It comprises a continuous strip of undeveloped, natural greenspace running along the fringes of the urban area.

Its isolation from surrounding countryside to the north and the influence of its urban context and 'rough', scrubby vegetation cover lend the area a distinctive 'fringe' character which is not of the highest scenic value but has some attractive semi-natural qualities that contrast with its urban surroundings. The woodland forms an important landscape feature along the edge of the urban area and the area is of value as a local landscape and greenspace resource for nearby residents (see Green Infrastructure below). There are no current or former landscape designations affecting this area, and no designated features of ecological or heritage value present within it.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This piece of fringe landscape is not of significant value in the overall context of the landscape resources of the Borough. However, its woodland cover and semi-natural character forms a 'soft', green edge and foil to the urban area, especially when perceived from the motorway corridor, and the area is also of some value as an accessible local landscape and greenspace resource within a highly urbanised area. The enclosed character of the area could potentially absorb some development but the significant loss of woodland cover and local landscape/greenspace resource would be undesirable.



VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

There is limited visibility of this area from the wider surrounding urban and rural areas because of intervening built form, vegetation cover, topography and the motorway corridor. The dense woodland cover that encloses the area is itself more visible (e.g. from the motorway corridor and as a backdrop to adjacent built development) but it effectively screens views into the ‘interior’ of the area, even from residential areas at close quarters (e.g. the cul-de-sacs off Cornfield, Furzehall Avenue and The Meadows). The main views of the interior are therefore from within the area itself, from the network of informal paths and spaces that are enclosed by the peripheral woodland and scrub. There are also some elevated views across and into the area from the footbridge that crosses the M27 at the eastern end.

The main receptors of views into the interior of the area will therefore be local residents using the area for informal recreation and who might obtain partial glimpsed views over or through trees from their properties (mainly upper floors) or through the access points leading off the surrounding residential streets. Key viewers of the woodland cover around and within the area will be people travelling along the motorway and pedestrians using the overbridge that links the eastern end of the area with Pook Lane and the Wallington Valley to the north.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Viewers within the area will be primarily engaged in recreational activity and will be very aware of their surroundings and are likely to be highly sensitive to change. However, the extent of internal views is restricted by vegetation cover within the area and there may be scope to absorb some small-scale development in areas that are less visible, if carefully sited and integrated, without affecting visual amenity over the whole area. However, substantial ‘incursions’ into the area, especially which require extensive clearance of vegetation, would undoubtedly alter the character of the area and have an adverse effect on the quality of views. Similarly, any development requiring clearance of vegetation would potentially have an impact on views from outside the area (e.g. from the motorway and over bridge) and may expose wider views of the existing urban edge which is currently screened, or softened, by the dense tree cover.

Providing this woodland cover is substantially maintained, visual sensitivity is judged to be moderate with some potential for small-scale, sensitive development to be integrated without significant adverse effects on views or visual amenity.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

The area makes an important contribution to the setting of Fareham when viewed from the motorway corridor and areas to the north, helping to screen existing development from view and providing a soft, green edge to the urban area. It also provides a distinctly leafy, green backdrop to local residential development, contributing to the quality of its suburban setting.

It does not currently perform any function in maintaining the separation of settlements but in future it will form part of the buffer of undeveloped landscape on either side of the motorway corridor that will separate Fareham from the new development at Welborne.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The wooded character of this area is central to its role in the setting of Fareham and its future role in helping to maintain the separate identity of Fareham and Welborne. Any major incursion of development into this area that resulted in extensive loss of tree cover and a more urbanised character would compromise these roles and should be avoided. Only small-scale development that can be integrated within the existing wooded structure and is well-screened might be acceptable.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

There are no specific projects relating to the area within the PUSH or Fareham GI strategies and no designated ecological or heritage resources within it. Nevertheless, the semi-natural woodland, scrub and grassland habitats are valuable GI assets, both as landscape features and ecological resources. They also link into the local habitat network that includes the motorway corridor, the A32 corridor to the north and a green corridor that follows the course of a tributary stream of the Wallington River through the industrial park at the area's eastern end.

The area also has some potential GI value as natural greenspace that is accessible to the local community in the immediate vicinity for low-key recreation, such as dog-walking. The value of this buffer of undeveloped land is enhanced by the effects of the motorway corridor, which acts as a physical and perceptual barrier between the urban area and wider countryside areas to the north. The area also links into the wider GI network at its eastern end, where a footpath leading from Wallington Village cuts through the area and crosses over the motorway to access the network of PRoW within the Wallington River Valley and areas beyond to the north. This route will provide for key footway and cycle links between Fareham and the new community at Welborne (see PUSH GI Strategy project F14). Access connections to the west are more restricted and there is a need to improve pedestrian and cycle links in this direction.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

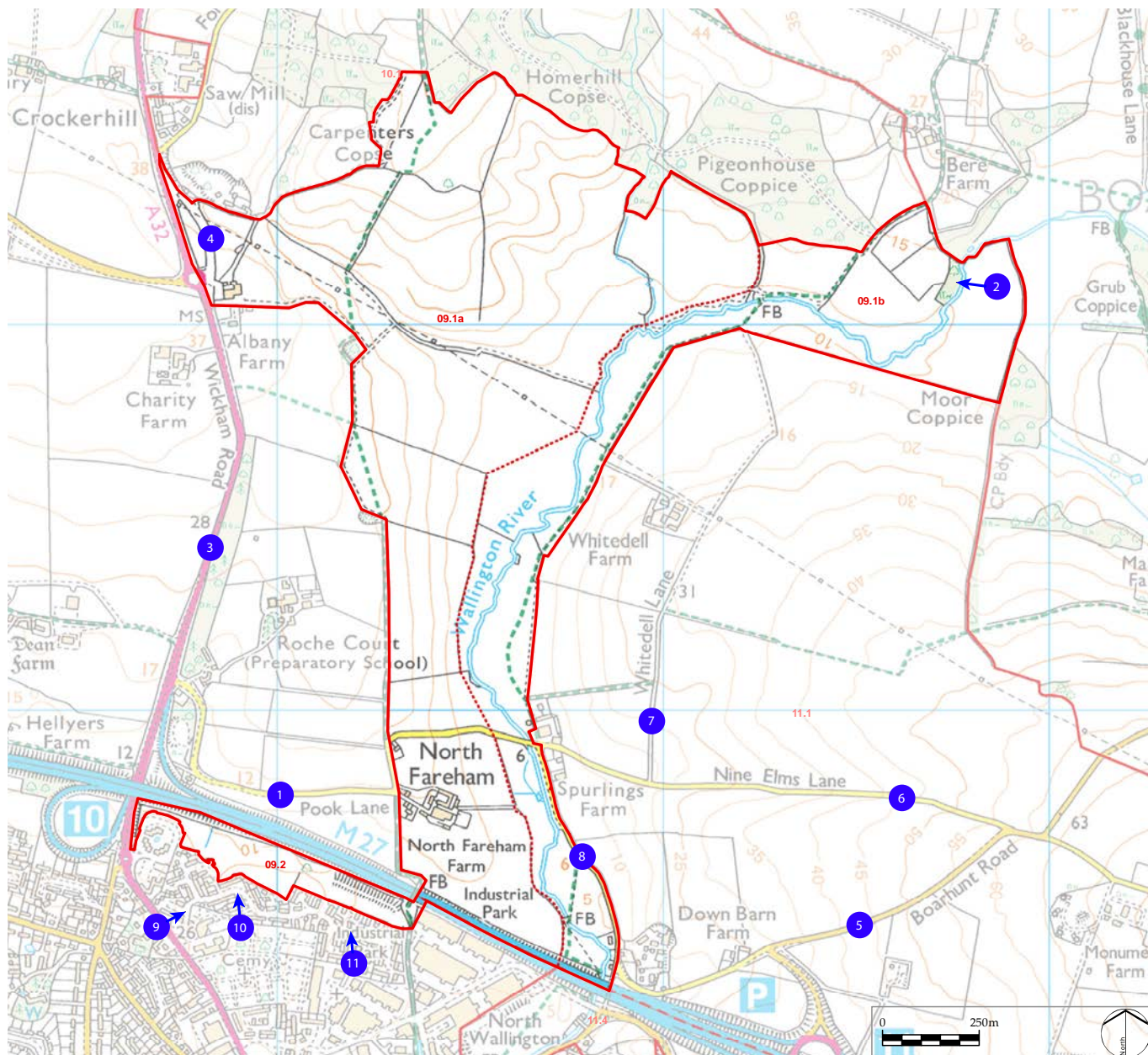
The role of this area in providing accessible local natural greenspace, and access links into the wider GI network, are important factors to consider in terms of the area's development potential. In principle, the loss of this resource would be undesirable and the area therefore has limited potential to accommodate development.

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the area is currently not well used, nor actively managed as an open space resource, and there are some concerns relating to safety and anti-social behaviour within the area. There is clearly a need for positive management and enhancement of the area to maximise its value as an open space asset. Some limited, small-scale development may provide a mechanism for achieving positive change, providing it incorporates proposals for the active management of a significant area of public open space. Such proposals will need to retain the essentially semi-natural character of the open space and its component habitats, particularly the extensive cover of woodland and trees and a continuous corridor of vegetation around the boundaries of the area, in order to maximise the area's overall value within the local GI network.

Opportunities to extend and improve the access network through the planned development of the Welborne new community, and to extend links to the west, should also be fully exploited.



LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		1 Pook Lane		8 Spurlings Farm
	Local Landscape Character Area		2 Gravelhole Copse		9 Cornfield
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		3 Wickham Road (A32)		10 Furzehall Avenue
			4 Chalk Lane		11 The Meadows
			5 Boarhunt Road		
			6 Nine Elms Lane		
			7 Whitedell Lane		

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Despite its urban context and 'fringe' character, this area is of high sensitivity because of the contribution that the extensive woodland and tree cover makes to the landscape setting of Fareham and the local built environment. It also forms an important link in the network of habitats and access corridors within the local and surrounding area, and has the potential to provide the local community with a valuable open space asset on their doorstep. These factors, particularly the need to maintain the extensive tree cover, constrains development potential within this area.

However, the area would benefit from enhancement to maximise its value as an open space resource. This could potentially be facilitated by some limited, sensitive, small-scale development providing it retains the essentially semi-natural, wooded character of the area as a whole and results in the active management of a significant area of public open space and links to the wider GI network.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Demonstrate design that maintains the function of this area as a natural greenspace resource and provides opportunities to enhance its distinctive character and qualities;
- Protect and enhance the overall wooded character and the mosaic of habitats within the area, to maximise its wildlife and landscape potential and value as a natural greenspace resource and 'green' setting for the urban area;
- Maintain and manage public access within the area, protect and enhance existing footpath links, and enhance connections to the west and with the Welborne development to the north, to maximise their role as multi-functional components of the local and wider green infrastructure network.

2.10 LCA 10: FOREST OF BERE

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



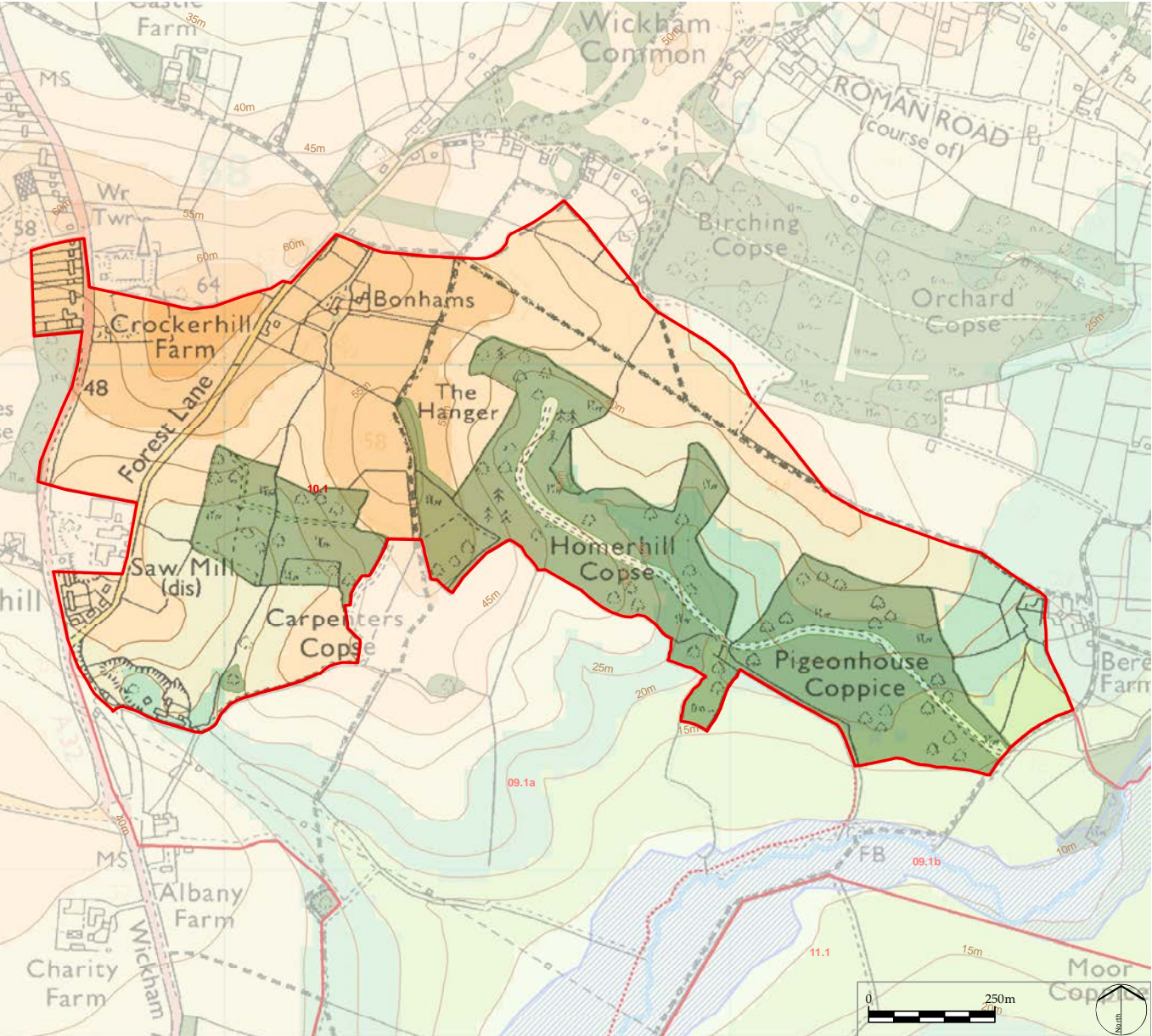
LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

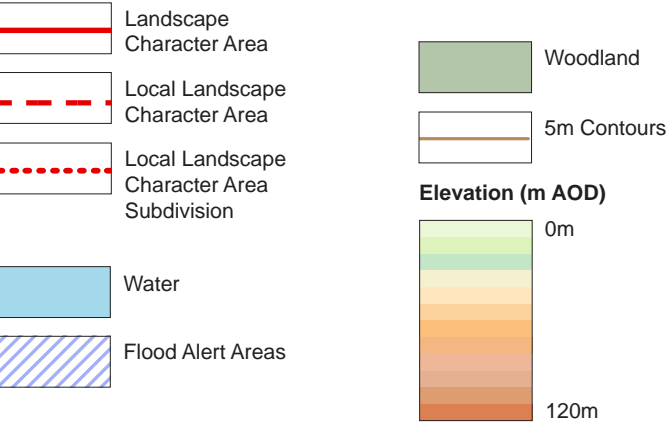


Location Diagram

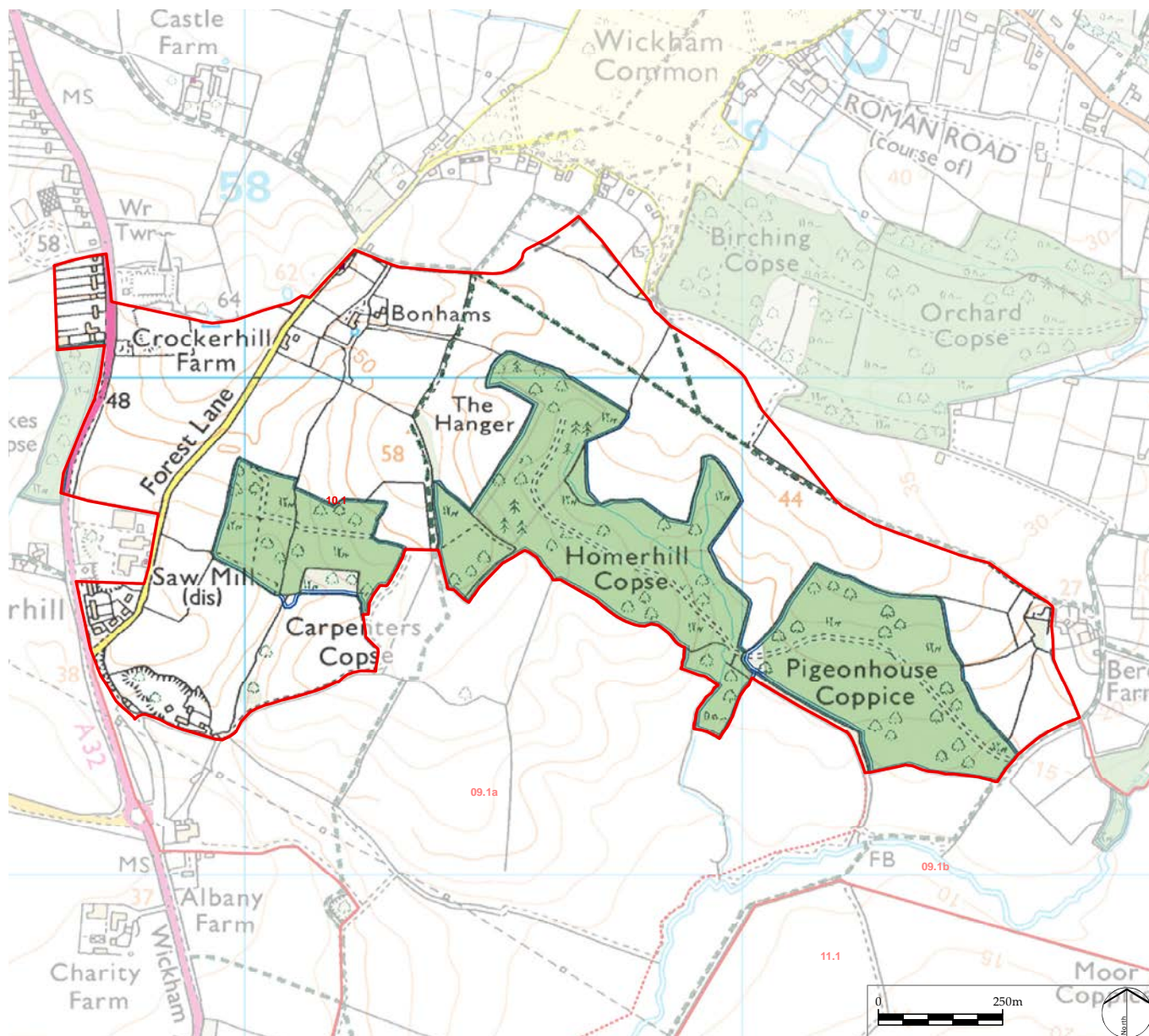
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND



PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

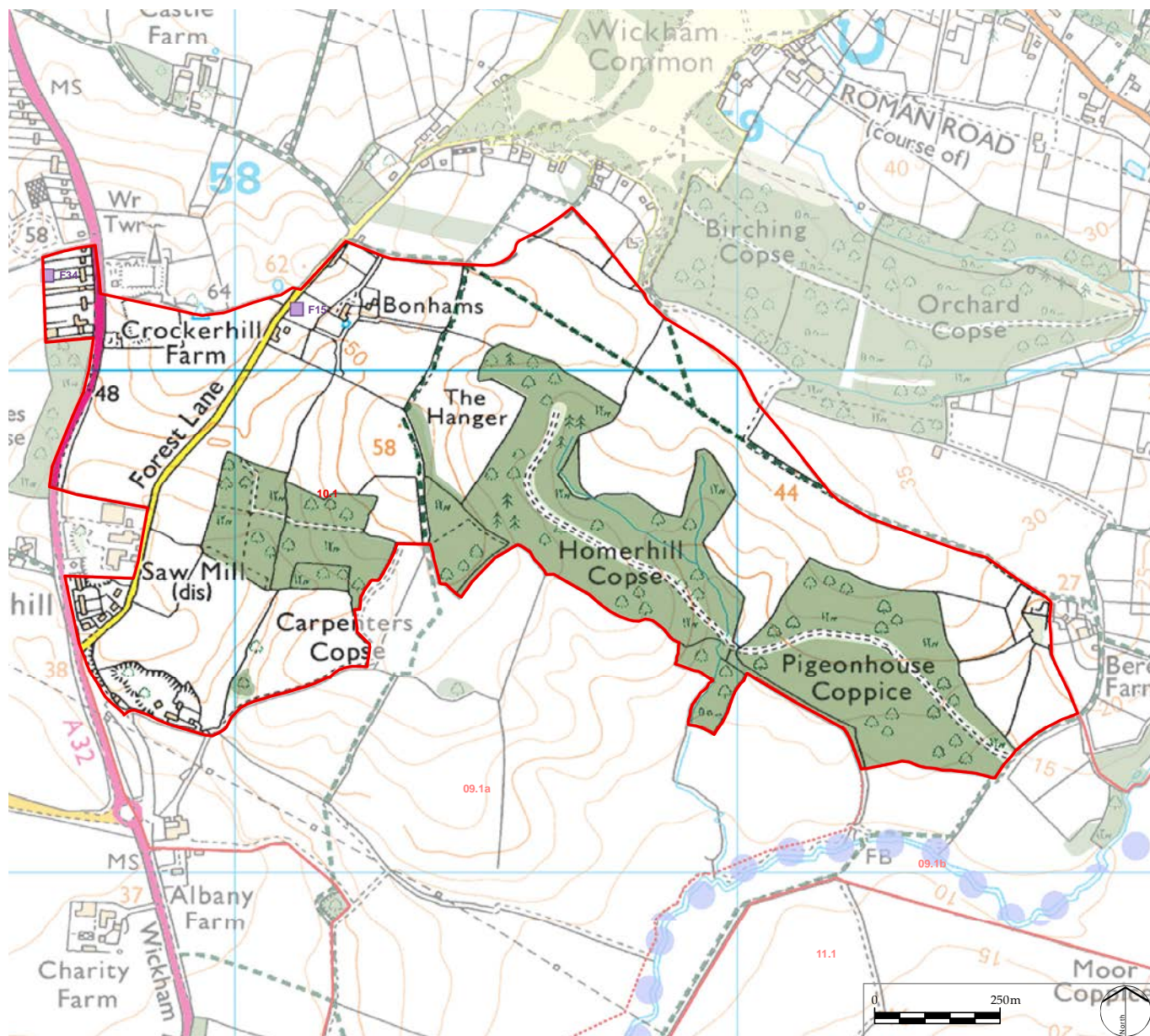
	Landscape Character Area		Ancient Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		

Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

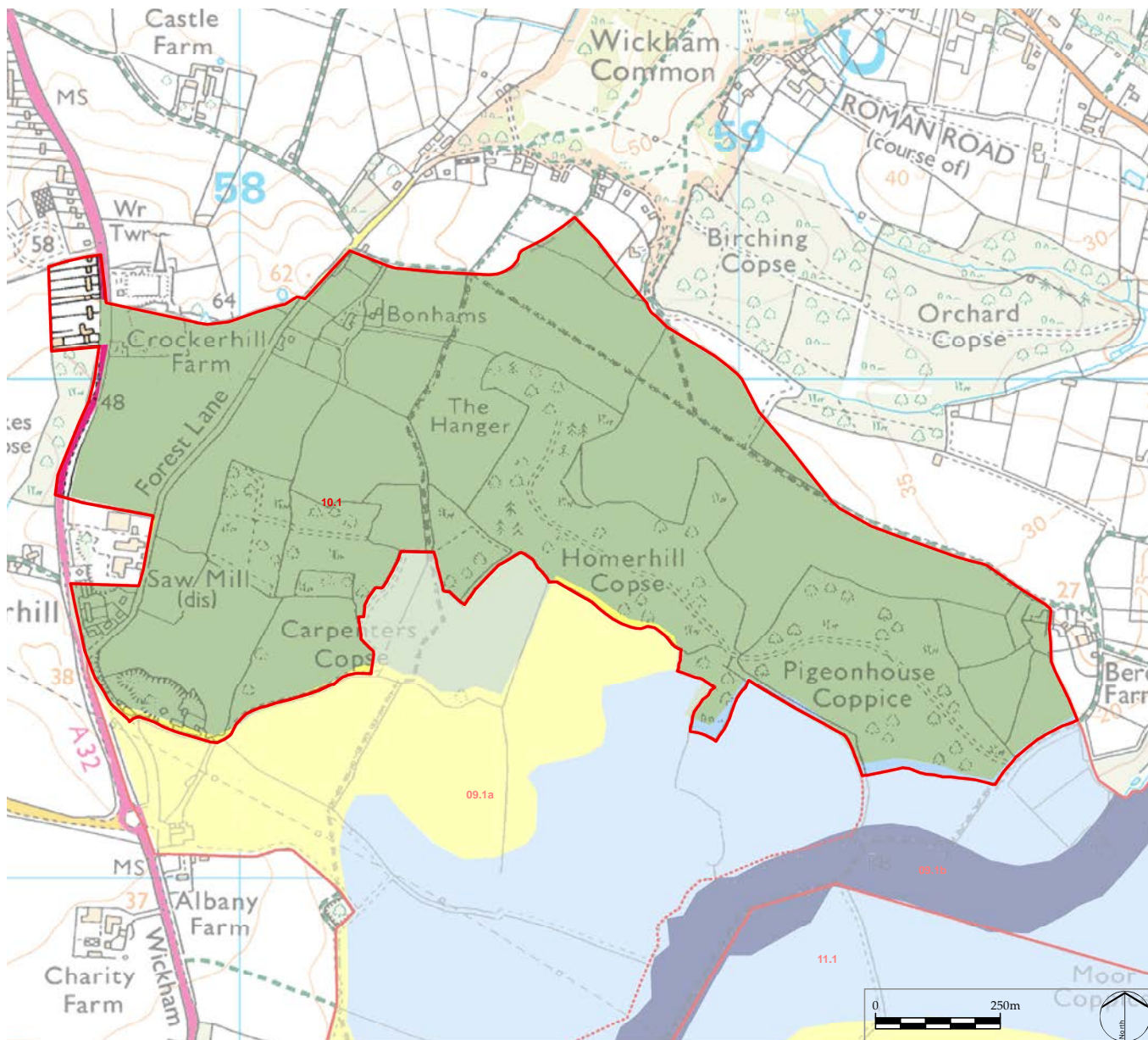
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

Landscape Types

	Landscape Character Area		Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Large Scale
	Local Landscape Character Area		
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		

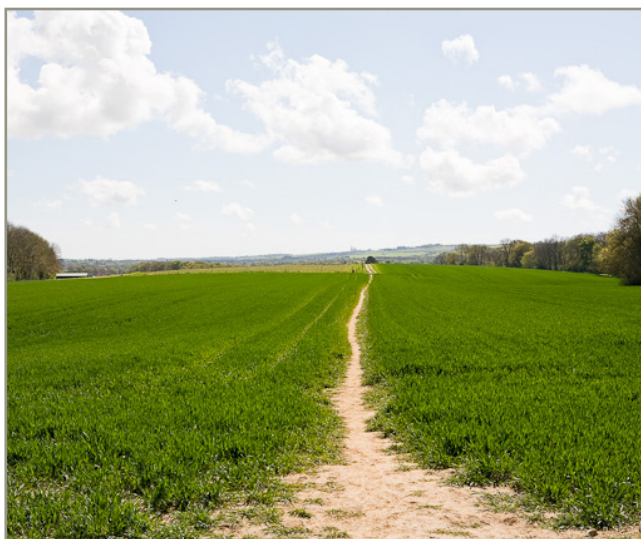
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

The Forest of Bere landscape character area lies in the extreme north of the Borough beyond the North Fareham Downs (LCA9). It forms a distinctive area of large-scale, wooded farmland on clay soils that forms part of the wider landscape of the Forest of Bere that extends northwards across the Borough boundary into Winchester District. The LCA boundary defined in the 1996 landscape character assessment extends further to the west of the A32 (to include Blakes Copse and farmland to the north of Heytesbury Farm, and the Pinks Industrial Park) but this land now lies within the Welborne SDA boundary and is therefore excluded from this assessment. This relatively small LLCA has a homogenous character and is therefore treated as a single unit for the purposes of the sensitivity assessment.

The landscape in this area is characterised by gently rolling topography clothed in extensive areas of mixed woodland connected by mature hedgerows, including important remnants of ancient woodland (designated as SINC). These woodlands enclose medium to large-scale fields, mainly intensively farmed for arable cultivation but with some areas of pasture, and weak internal hedgerow structure. This contributes to a somewhat 'denuded' character to some of the larger fields. The woodlands form the southern edge of a much larger character area that extends to the north beyond the Borough boundary and also form a continuous and attractive wooded backdrop to the open arable farmland of the North Fareham Downs to the south.

Land to the west of Forest Lane is broadly consistent with this character but includes some small-scale residential/commercial development along the roadsides to the west of the A32 and at the junction of the A32 and Forest Lane (adjacent to the Pinks Industrial Estate which lies within the Welborne SDA boundary) which have a somewhat suburban character. Apart from this, and a small number of more attractive vernacular dwellings and farm buildings to the east of Forest Lane, there is virtually no built development within this LLCA and the area has a distinctively rural, unspoilt and attractive countryside character.

The area is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation but it was formerly designated as part of the Forest of Bere Area of Special Landscape Character in the former Fareham Local Plan (not replaced within the current Adopted Plan). The Forest of Bere was designated on the grounds that it contains areas of high scenic quality, particularly the mature mixed woodland which contains the areas of farmland; it has a distinct sense of place, with strong topographical and visual unity particularly in its degree of enclosure and its clearly defined woodland edge; its landscape has escaped the intrusion of urban development and it retains a largely unspoilt rural character, a scarce resource within the Borough; it contains areas of nature conservation value, in particular important remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland. These qualities are still evident in this part of the LCA and so the area is judged to be of high value as part of the Borough's landscape resource. Its scarcity value as one of the few areas of undeveloped countryside within the Borough will be increased by the large-scale development Welborne settlement on land to the south-west.



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SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall the sensitivity of the landscape resource in this area is judged as high. The area is essentially rural and has an unspoilt and intact character which has a strong relationship with the surrounding wider context. Built development is very sparse and any substantial new development would be out of place and intrusive within this overwhelmingly agricultural landscape.

Development potential is therefore highly restricted in this attractive area of open countryside. The only potential may be to accommodate modest, small-scale infill development in areas associated with existing built form along Forest Lane, as long as it is of a complementary character and scale and is contained within existing small parcels of land with strong boundary vegetation to limit its influence on local landscape character and quality.



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VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Together with the rolling topography, the extensive cover of dense woodland both within the LLCA and in the surrounding landscape, significantly restrict views from outside of the area itself from all directions. From wider areas to the south, views are limited to the outer woodland edge and the ‘interior’ farmland to the north cannot be seen. To the east, a narrow view from the very short distance is available from Bere Farm, but beyond this location views are restricted by substantial woodland and tree cover to the east of the farm. Some views into the ‘interior’ farmland to the north of the woodland blocks are possible from a small number of properties along the lane leading off Forest Lane (south of Wickham Common) but views from wider areas to the north are blocked by intervening vegetation cover, as are distant views from the west (e.g. by Blakes Copse, extensive woodland to the north of the Welborne SDA and substantial mature vegetation along road and field boundaries).

Views from the A32 Wickham Road are substantially blocked by mature road side vegetation and rising ground, with only a couple of glimpses through gaps into the fields immediately to the east of the road. However, the roadside boundaries along Forest Lane are less substantial and allow quite extensive views across the western part of the area from the road. There are also open views across the western and northern parts of the area from the network of public rights of way that cross the area from north to south across the central high ground, and from east to west along the northern side of the woodlands. Much of the area will be visible from views along these paths but more extensive panoramic views across the area and outwards across the surrounding countryside are interrupted by the rolling landform and woodland cover. The woodlands create an attractive backdrop to these views, the quality of which is generally high and unspoilt by any intrusive influences.

The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would therefore be local residents, users of the PROW network within the area and users of Forest Lane.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Although available views of the area from outside are very restricted, there are quite extensive internal views from Forest Lane and the public rights of way network which will be seen by people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and will be more sensitive to change, notably local residents and recreational users of the network within the area itself. These viewers will be particularly focused on enjoyment of their surroundings and sensitive to changes in the character and quality of views, which are currently very attractive and generally unspoilt by the intrusion of urban influences or detracting features.

So, despite its visual containment from wider views, visual sensitivity is therefore relatively high across much of the area and there is consequently very limited potential for development without significant detrimental effects on the character and quality of local views.

There are a few small pockets of land which are enclosed by strong hedgerows or vegetation and are not so visible from public access routes, for example some parcels of land off Forest Lane. From a visual sensitivity perspective, it may be possible to absorb some limited small-scale development within these areas without significant impacts on views or visual amenity. However, there are likely to be other factors that constrain development in these rural and relatively unspoilt parts of the Borough landscape.

SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

This area is physically remote from any existing urban area or settlement and, therefore, does not have a role in defining the character of local settlements or their settings. In a broader context, it forms part of a larger area of open, undeveloped countryside that lies between the settlements of Wickham, North Boarhunt and the planned new community at Welborne and has a wider strategic role in maintaining the separation of these settlements.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area does not currently perform a significant role in the setting of settlements or maintaining their separation. However, once the Welborne SDA has been developed on land immediately to the west, it will have a more vital role as a buffer to further urban expansion into open countryside and in maintaining separation between Welborne and settlements further to the north-east.



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CONTRIBUTION TO
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This area makes an important contribution to the local green infrastructure network, both in terms of woodland habitat and PRoW assets and links. A large part of the area is covered by extensive blocks of mixed woodland of ancient origin, designated as SINCs, which form part of a wider mosaic of woodland, hedgerows and other habitats within the surrounding countryside and are of high landscape, as well as ecological, value. The area is also crossed by a number of public footpaths that link into the wider network of PRoW, providing strategic east-west connections between Wickham village and Boarhunt, and north-south connections between Fareham and access land at nearby Wickham Common and beyond to the South Downs National Park. There are no public open spaces within the area itself.

There are no specific projects within the PUSH GI strategy for this area but the aims of the Forest of Bere project F1 are relevant, i.e. to enhance linkages between woodlands in the area, and to encourage active woodland management and create new woodlands.

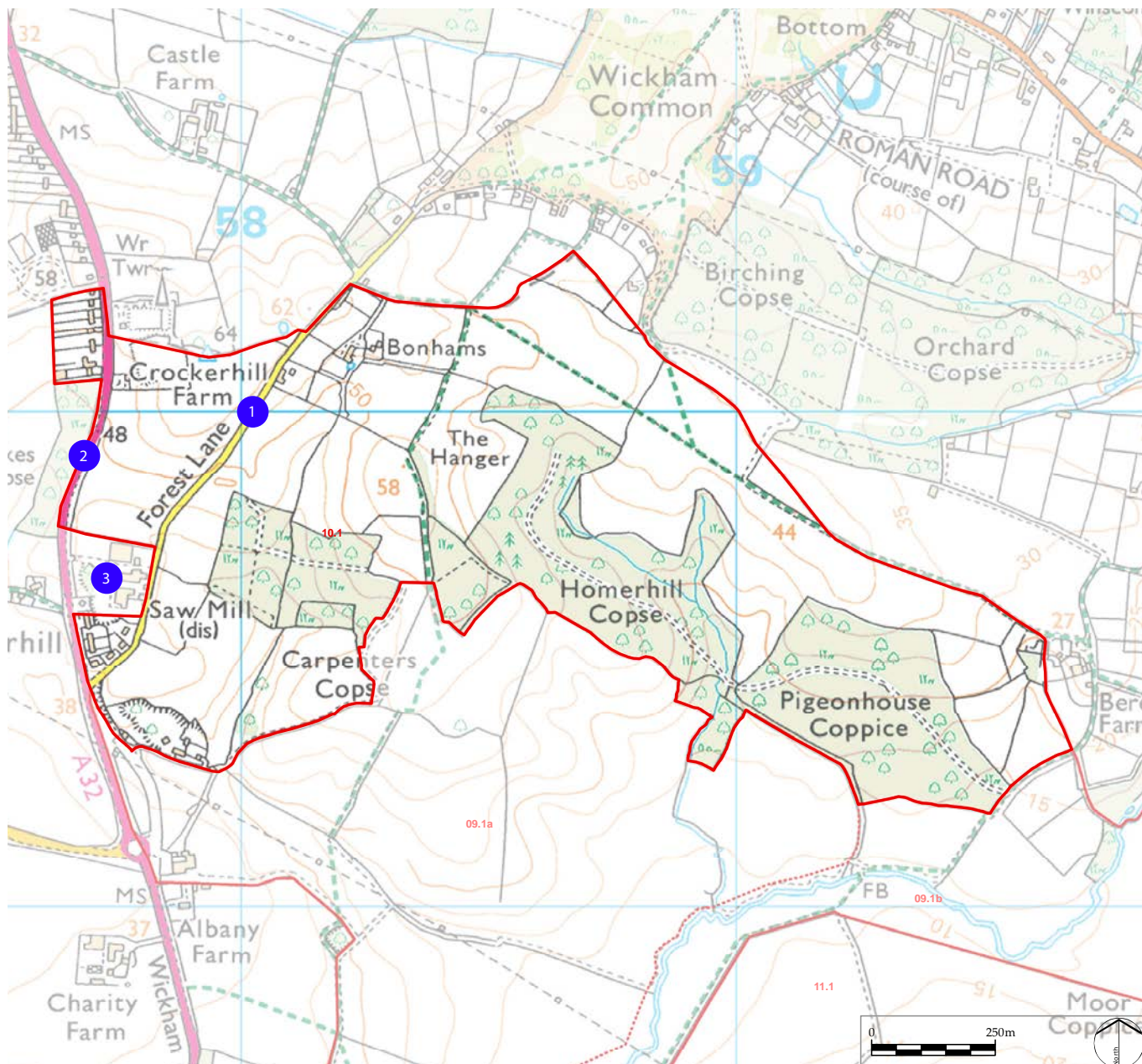
The Fareham GI Strategy 2014 includes two projects of relevance to this area. Project F15 relates to Forest Lane and notes that it provides a footpath/cycle link to the northeast of the Welborne site and ultimately connects up to the B2177 which links to north Portsmouth. However, no specific improvements are proposed to this existing link in the strategy. The other is Project BW 19 which relates to the enhancement of linkages within the Forest of Bere Woodlands to support biodiversity interests, recreational resources and increase low carbon fuel sources.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This area is relatively well served for GI assets in the form of woodland habitats and the footpath network. These assets need to be protected and, where possible, enhanced, in particular through the creation of additional access opportunities and management of the woodlands in line with borough-wide GI objectives for the Forest of Bere.



LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Forest Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area		Wickham Road (A32)
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Pinks Industrial Estate

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This is an area of attractive, undeveloped countryside located well away from existing settlements and of high landscape and visual sensitivity, as well as containing important ecological and GI assets. In addition, it will have an increasingly important role in maintaining separation between the new community at Welborne and settlements to the north-east as the development progresses.

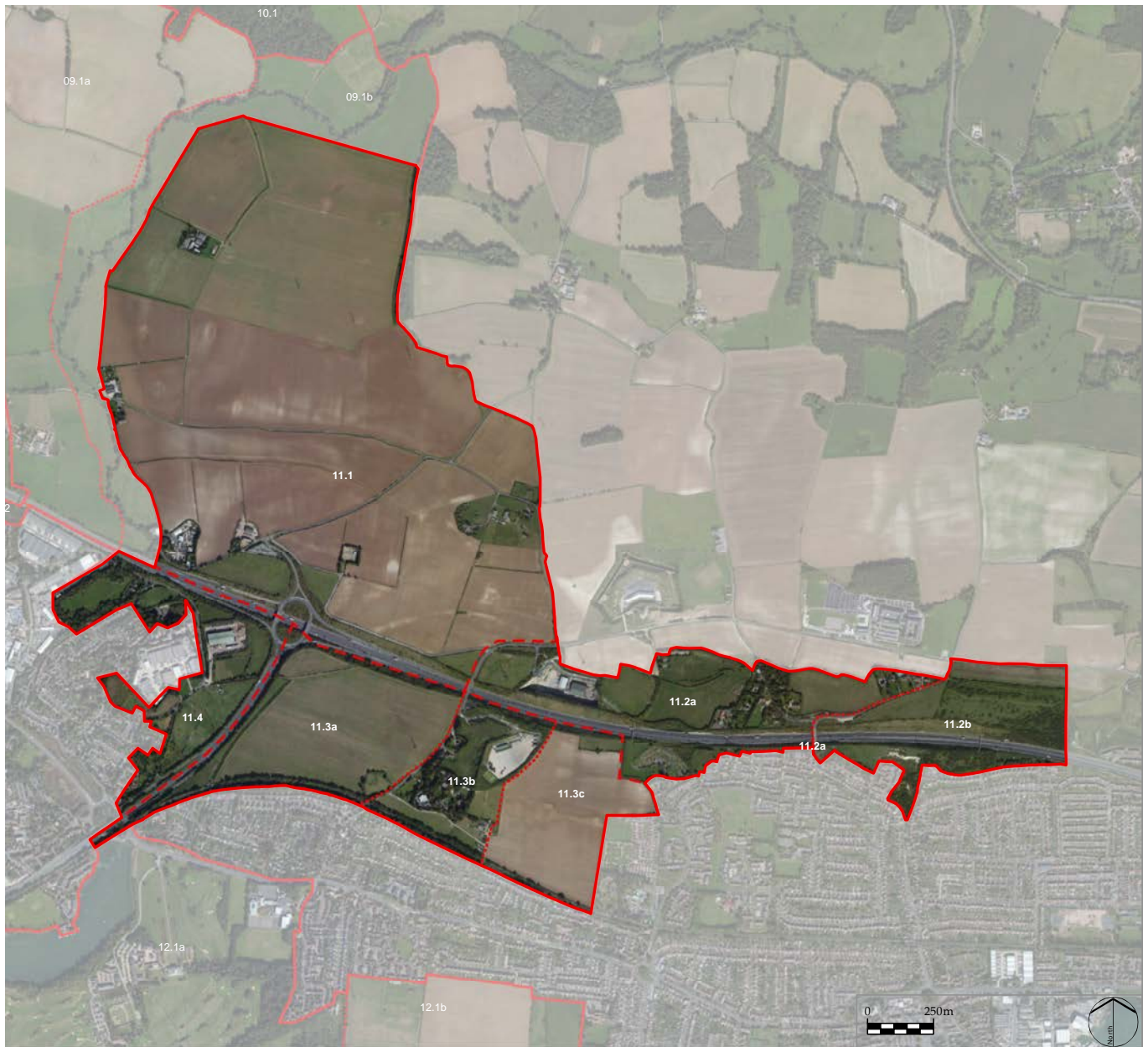
Overall, new built development within this area would be out of character and is likely to have unacceptable impacts on these important resources. Only very modest infill development associated with existing built form could potentially be accommodated without such undue adverse effects.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, any development or enhancement proposals would need to:

- Maintain the quiet, remote and attractive rural character of the area;
- Be located within existing small parcels of land in association with existing built form and be contained within a strong structure of hedgerows/vegetation to minimise landscape and visual impacts;
- Be of a type and scale that responds positively to the distinctive character of existing vernacular buildings in the area;
- Protect and manage the extensive areas of woodland, particularly those of ancient origin which are of the highest landscape and ecological value, to maintain and enhance their landscape, ecological, screening and GI potential;
- Strengthen the existing structure of trees, hedgerows and other vegetation outside the main woodland areas to maximise landscape and wildlife value.
- Use native broadleaved species appropriate to the locality and soil condition.
- Maintain and where possible enhance existing footpaths, access routes and links within the area, maximising their role as integral components of the wider green infrastructure network.

2.11 LCA11: PORTSDOWN

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



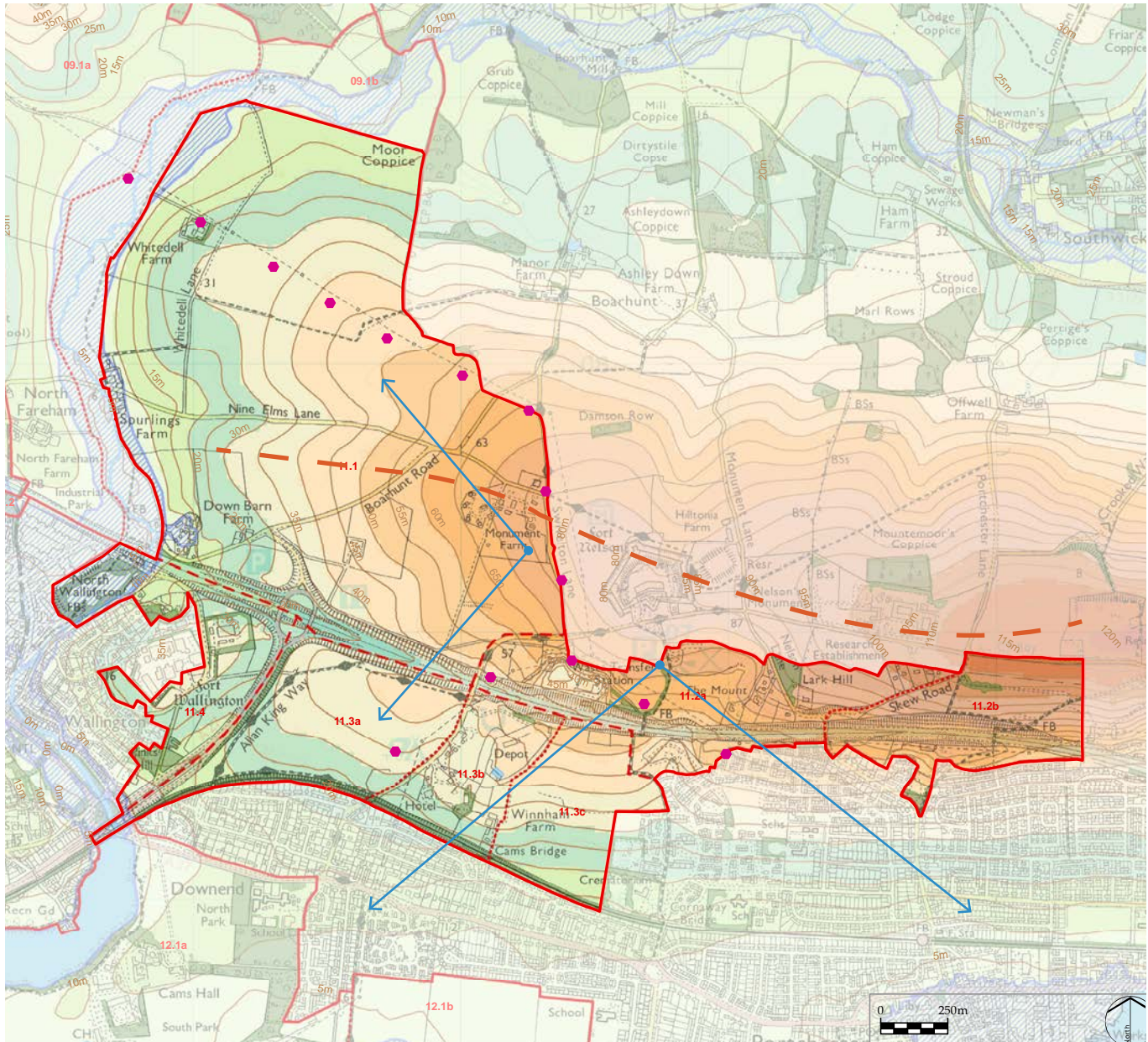
LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

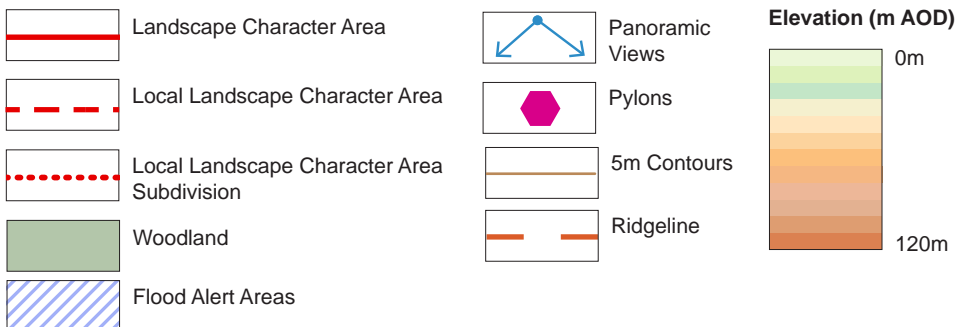


Location Diagram

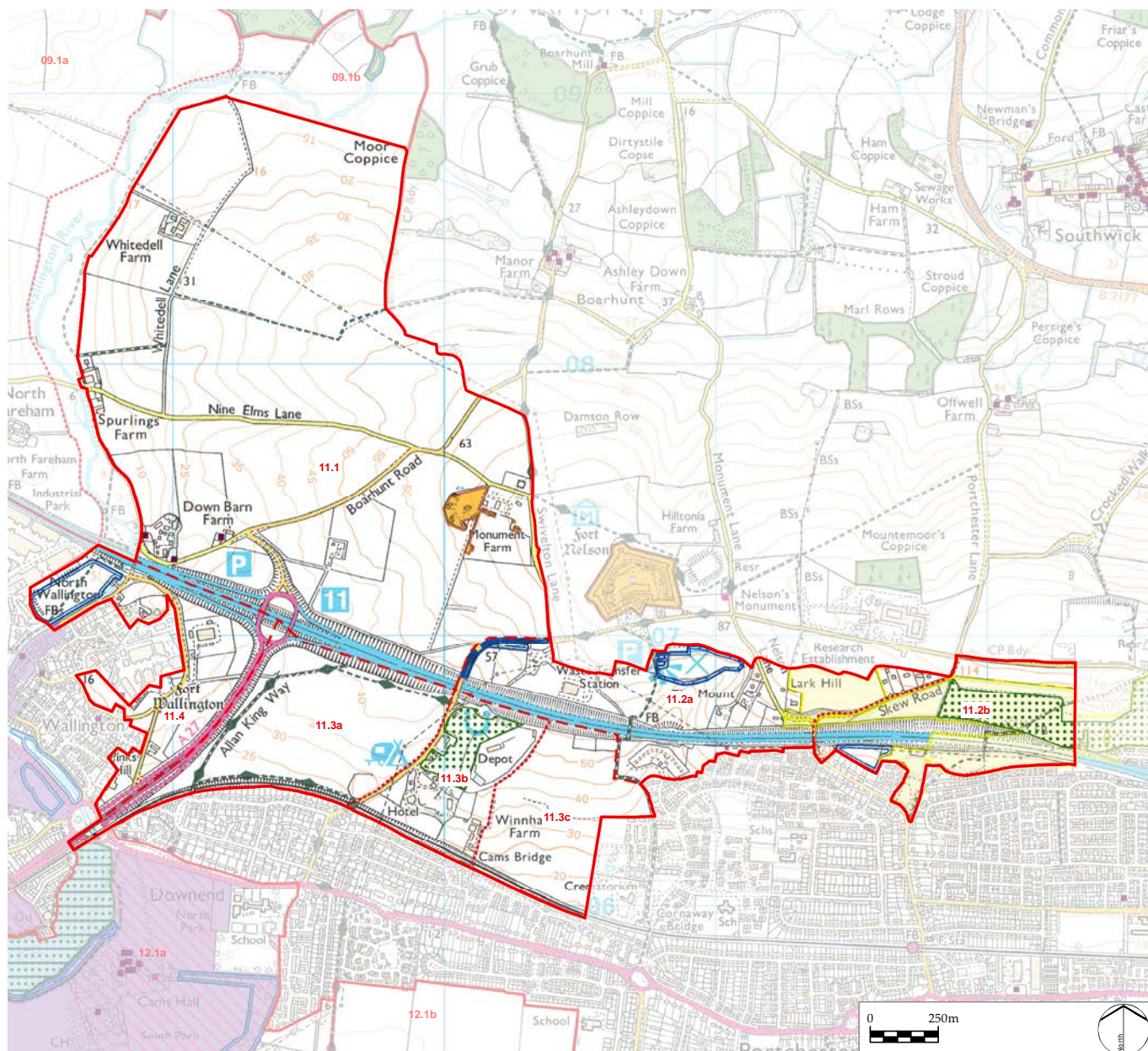
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND



PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

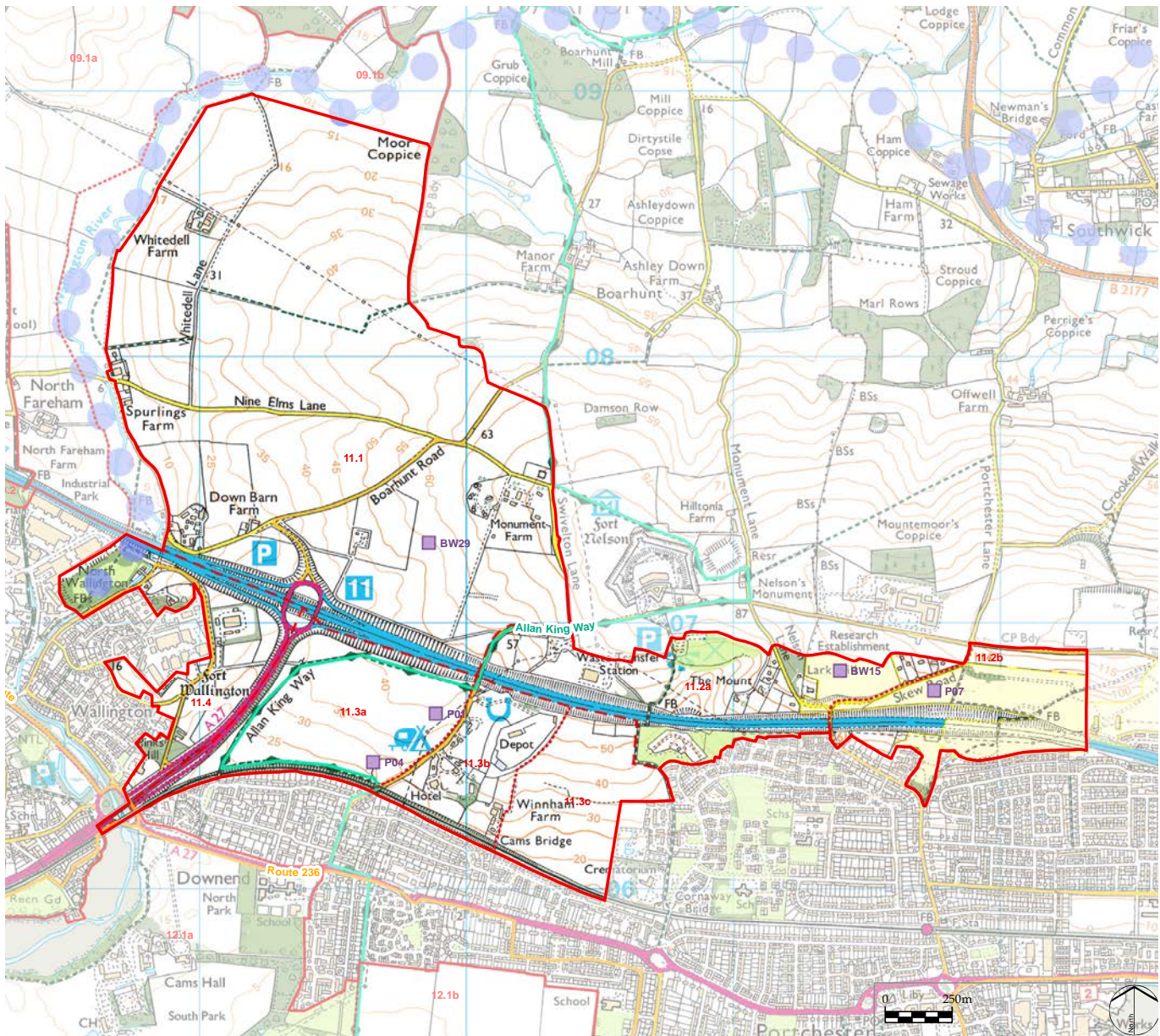
	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest
	Local Landscape Character Area		Scheduled Monument
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Access - Open Country and Registered Common Land
			Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Designations

Listed Building Grade



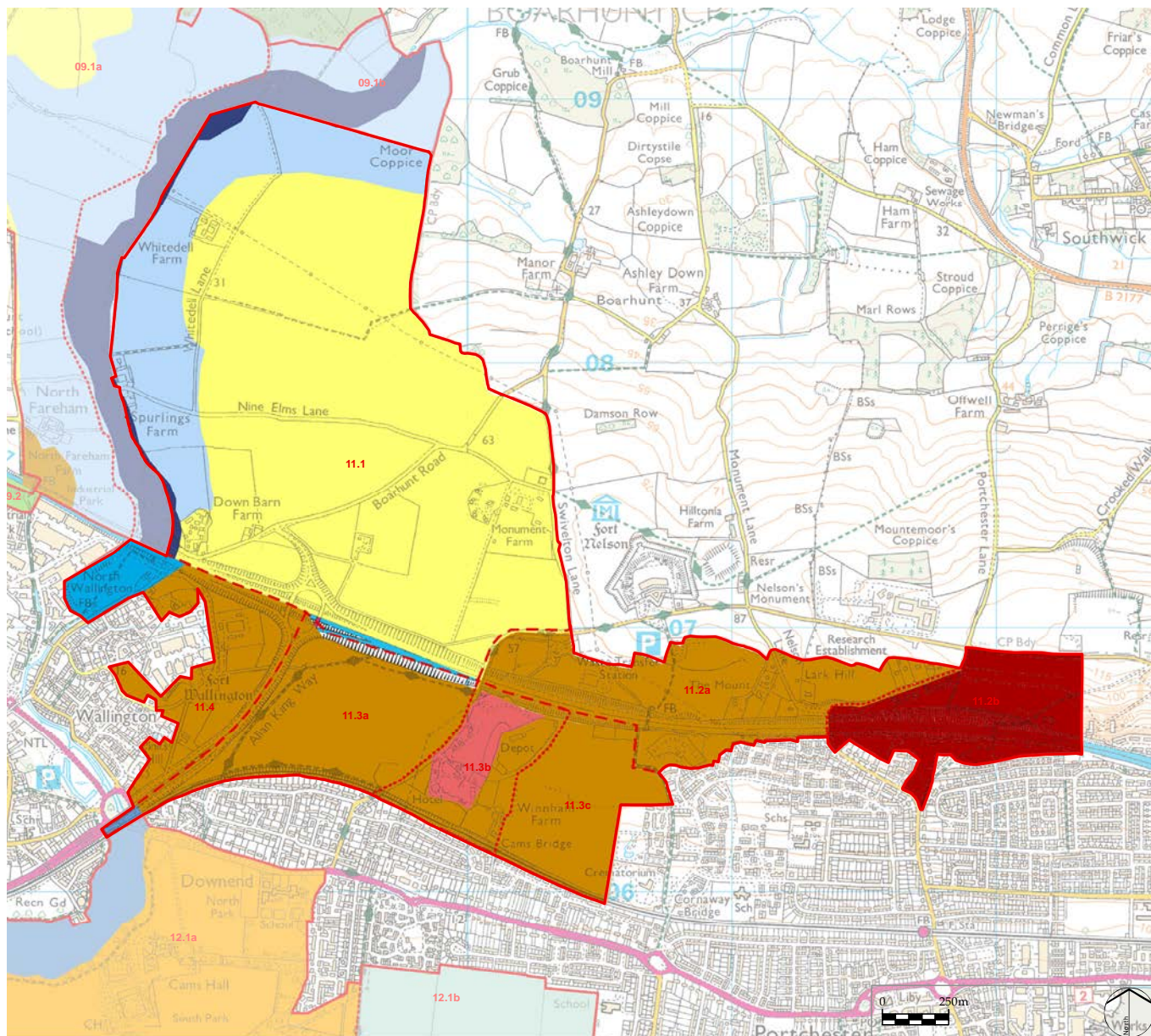
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Recreational Route
	Local Landscape Character Area		Footpath
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Woodland
	Green Infrastructure Projects		Access Land
	Green Infrastructure Sub-Regional Blue Corridor		Existing Open Space

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Open Arable Downs		Recolonising Landscape
	Local Landscape Character Area		Open Arable Downs: Fringe Character		Enclosed Tidal River
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Scarp Face		Open Valley Side
			Open Floodplain Farmland		
			Enclosed Floodplain Farmland		

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area forms the western flanks of the chalk ridge of Portsdown Hill and slopes generally westwards from the highest point (approx. 75m AOD) in the east, down to the floodplain of the Wallington River which forms the boundary to the west. The Borough boundary defines the area to the east, while the southern boundary is formed by the motorway cutting.

The landscape has a relatively uniform character across most of the area and is typical of the 'Open arable chalk downland' landscape type, characterised by large-scale fields dominated by intensive arable cultivation, with few hedgerows or trees, an open and exposed character and a sparse pattern of roads and settlements. Although the lower slopes along the side of the Wallington River valley are classified as 'Open valley-side' landscape type, there is little discernible difference in character, other than elevation, between this area and the expansive sweep of open downland that covers the rest of the area. There are no substantial blocks/belts of trees that are typical of chalkland landscapes elsewhere (e.g. Damson Row and Mountemoor's Coppice to the east) but there are some established hedgerows and vegetation around isolated features (e.g. farms, former quarries etc.) and along the access roads at Junction 11.

The area is not covered by any national landscape designation but was part of the Portsdown Hill Area of Special Landscape Character (former Local Plan designation, no longer in force but indicative of local value), recognised for its scenic quality and unspoilt character, its strong topographical and visual unity and its scarcity value as part of the most distinctive area of chalk scenery in the Borough. The landscape retains an essentially rural, intact character but is somewhat denuded, with a weak structure of heavily trimmed hedgerows and very sparse tree cover. There are some urbanising features along the southern edge of the area (e.g. the motorway and junction, a small P&R car park, industrial estate, gas compressor station etc.), but the effects of sloping landform, the setting of development within abandoned quarries or cuttings and well-vegetated boundaries means that the effect of these influences is relatively localised. Further north, large overhead power lines are prominent features within the area but do not alter the essentially rural character of the area.

The area contains a Scheduled Ancient Monument (a WWII gunsite) on higher ground to the east of the area at Monument Farm and there are three Grade II listed buildings to the south west corner of the area. The area lacks any other specific conservation interests or features of value.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, this is an intact and unspoilt chalk downland landscape with urban development/influence confined to small 'pockets' along the southern edge, with very localised effects. It retains a predominantly rural, agricultural character and forms an integral part of the wider landscape of Portsdown Hill which is a landscape feature of local value within the Borough context, as evidenced by its former ASLC designation.

The open, expansive character of the landscape and its characteristic lack of tree cover would make development difficult to integrate without unacceptable adverse effects. Extensive woodland/tree planting would be inappropriate, although there is scope for the introduction of some individual blocks or belts of trees as landscape features without creating uncharacteristic enclosure. There may also be scope for some limited small-scale development to be integrated within parcels of land isolated by roads or contained by strong vegetation in the south western corner of the area. Overall, however, the sensitivity of the landscape resource in this area is judged as relatively high, with limited scope to accommodate development and to mitigate the effects of change.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Despite its elevation and very open, exposed character, the visibility of this area is more restricted than might be expected, with the most significant views obtained from roads and PRow within and immediately around the area, rather than from further afield. From Swivelton Lane on the highest, eastern edge of the area, there are sweeping views outwards over the area to the south and west, over a wide expanse of the Borough and beyond to the Solent, suggesting that these west facing flanks of Portsdown Hill are visually prominent when looking back from a wide surrounding area. However, although visible in the background of occasional views (e.g. from a section of the motorway near Fareham Common, and through a gap in the trees along Wickham Road), from most of the surrounding area to the south and west the slopes are obscured behind local landform, vegetation or buildings in the foreground. Views from wider areas to the north and east are also significantly restricted by the effects of the intervening rolling landform of Portsdown Hill or by vegetation.

However, the area is extremely exposed to the views of users of the local road and PRow network, and a few isolated farms and private properties, that lie within or immediately adjacent to the area. The lack of vegetation cover allows extensive views from Swivelton Lane (and the Allen King Way Recreational Route), Boarhunt Road, Spurlings Road, Nine Elms Lane and Whitedell Lane, and from other tracks and footpaths, across the open arable farmland. However, the rolling landform interrupts some of these views across the area, and vegetation alongside the Wallington River partially screens/filters views from PRow along the valley floor and land to the west (to be checked). Screening is also provided by vegetation around the parcel of land containing the P&R and access road embankment.

The earthworks and vegetation associated with the WWII gun site near Monument Farm, located at the highest point within the area, stands out a prominent, albeit low-key, feature on the skyline within this denuded landscape. There are no other landmarks or features of note within the area itself but electricity pylons are visually prominent features.



VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The key visual receptors are users of the local road and PRoW network within and immediately adjacent to the area, including a section of the Allan King Way that runs along part of Swivelton Lane. Many of these will be recreational users who are particularly aware of their surroundings and highly sensitive to change. Although not within the area, visitors to nearby Fort Nelson may also experience these views and are likely to be highly susceptible to changes in the setting of this and other local monuments and heritage features, and a small number of residents/occupants of the few local farms and properties within the area may also be affected. Viewers on the motorway will be travelling at speed, focused on the route and less aware of their surroundings, and are therefore less sensitive to change.

Apart from small parcels of land in the SW corner of the area, where there is some screening provided by vegetation, any development within this area would be highly visible and there is limited opportunity for mitigation because substantial planting is generally not appropriate in this distinctively open and featureless landscape (although repair and strengthening of the hedgerow structure would be desirable). Furthermore, the sweeping views afforded from the higher parts of the area are important to retain and any screening of these by new planting would be undesirable.



However, it may be possible to integrate some small-scale development, especially in areas with some existing urban influences to the south, by adopting careful and sensitive design responses, such as: using low building heights, earth-sheltered structures (e.g. setting buildings into the ground with green roofs), and/or containment within earth banks or strongly vegetated boundaries to minimise potential visual impacts as well as providing an appropriate response to the characteristics of the landscape.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Forming the western flanks of Portsdown Hill, the area is an integral part of this large-scale topographic feature that is an important part of the wider landscape setting of Portchester and urban areas to the east of the Borough. Although it is not visible from many parts of the wider surrounding area, the higher ground nevertheless does appear as a backdrop to some distant views from the west and south and has a relatively high value in establishing the topographic setting of the urban area, constituting part of the distinctive 'green' ridge that frames the otherwise low-lying, urbanised settlements of the Borough to the south.

The chalk ridge as a whole forms a strong 'natural boundary' containing urban development to the south, a physical and perceived boundary that is reinforced by the motorway which severs the urban area from the predominantly agricultural chalkland landscape beyond. Across these western flanks of Portsdown Hill, the sense of separation from the urban area increases northwards of Boarhunt Road where the landscape has a stronger visual relationship with open countryside areas to the north and west. Apart from its southern edge, therefore, the landscape of this area does not have a strong relationship with the urban area and lies beyond its immediate natural setting, although forming part of its wider countryside context. It does not lie within any designated Strategic Gap, does not have a role as a buffer required to maintain the separate identity of settlements and does not form the setting for any other individual rural settlement or urban area.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area as a whole does not form a critical role in the setting of the urban area but it does have some value and sensitivity as part of the 'green' backdrop and natural boundary provided by the landform feature of Portsdown Hill. Encroachment of prominent development on the higher ground and south-west facing flanks of the hill (south of Boarhunt Road) would potentially blur the distinction between town and country, and breach the physical and perceived boundary that is reinforced by the motorway corridor. Small-scale development in the lower, more enclosed areas within the SW corner could potentially be accommodated if such impacts could be avoided.

Development elsewhere within this area would not affect the setting of any specific urban area or rural settlement but may alter the typical pattern and character of rural settlement within this sparsely populated area. Furthermore, any urbanisation of this area would detract from its role as the main area remaining within the Borough that contributes to its wider countryside setting.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

The Wallington River valley, which runs along the western edge of the area, is identified as a Sub-regional scale Blue Corridor within the PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy. A public footpath runs along the valley floor from north to south along the entire length in this area and there are east-west connections with Portsdown Hill via the network of rural lanes (e.g. Nine Elms Lane and Spurling Road across the southern part of the area) and a bridlepath and farm tracks across the central area. Allan King Way, a long-distance Recreational Route follows part of Swivelton Lane along the eastern boundary of the area before joining Portsdown Hill Road to link into the footpath network on the southern side of the motorway.

This network forms part of a Borough-wide Fareham Green Infrastructure Project (BW29: A Round of Bere) which aims to create a 30km multi-user circular route that includes links between the communities of the Fareham SDA and Portsdown Hill.

There are no formal or informal open spaces, and few trees, hedgerows or wildlife corridors/habitats within this intensively farmed agricultural landscape.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

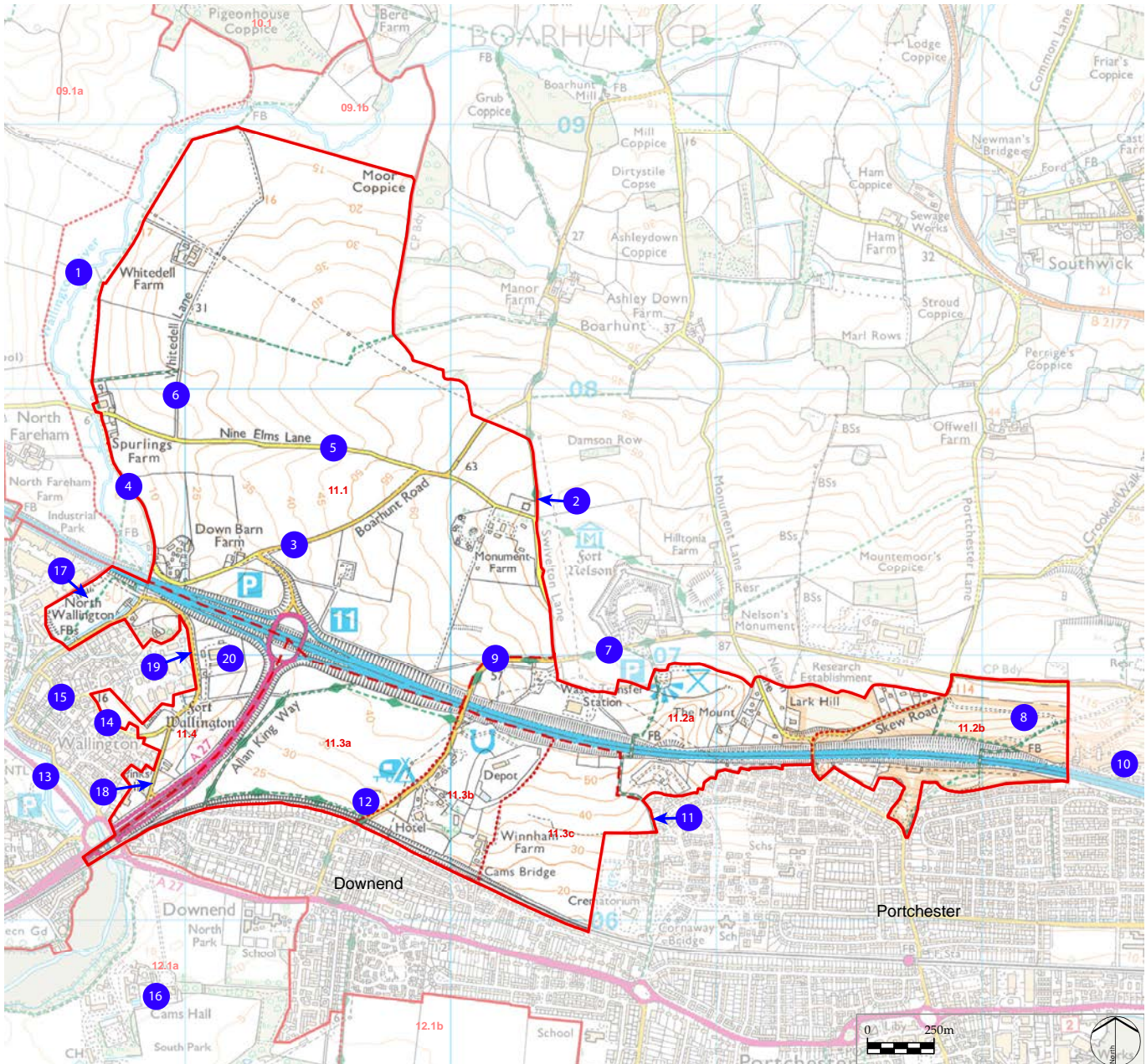
The area is relatively well-provide for in terms of PRoW and other access routes and links, and these should be protected and enhanced to maximise their potential value within the local GI network. The area currently lacks value in terms of public access areas/ open space and, in particular, in terms of landscape features and wildlife corridors within the farmed landscape.

Any development or enhancement proposals should focus on the introduction or reinstatement of such features: e.g. through the creation of less intensively managed field margins; strengthening and management of hedgerows; tree planting in small groups/copses and in field corners; the recreation of chalk grassland and the provision of accessible greenspace. These should be linked together to provide a more diverse network of landscape features and habitats.

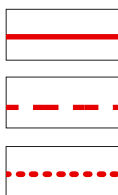


LLCA 11.1 - WESTERN PORTSDOWN HILL

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND



Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area
Subdivision

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Wallington River Valley | 11 Upper Cornaway Lane |
| 2 Swivelton Lane | 12 Downend Fort |
| 3 Boarhunt Road | 13 Wallington River |
| 4 Spurlings Road | 14 Military Road |
| 5 Nine Elms Lane | 15 Drift Road |
| 6 Whitedell Lane | 16 Cams Hall |
| 7 Portsdown Hill Road | 17 Water Meadow |
| 8 Portchester Common | 18 Pinks Hill |
| 9 Downend Road | 19 Standard Way |
| 10 Hillsley Road | 20 Waste Transfer Station |

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a whole, this area is of relatively high sensitivity, in terms of the landscape resource and its visibility within the immediate surrounding area, and its role in the setting of the urban area as part of Portsdown Hill and as part of the wider countryside setting of the Borough as a whole. The essentially open, exposed character of the landscape makes it difficult to integrate development and to mitigate the effects of change. Therefore, there is very limited potential for development within the area and design responses for any proposals would need to be very carefully considered and sensitive to local character in order to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts.

Notwithstanding these sensitivities, the area is intensively farmed and particularly denuded of features and it would therefore benefit from investment in new green infrastructure to enhance its landscape and wildlife value.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Avoid intrusive development in the most visually exposed, rural and unspoilt parts of the area, particularly in the most elevated areas in the east (around Monument Farm) and to the north of Boarhunt Road
- Maintain the expansive views from elevated parts of the area (e.g. along Swivelton Lane/Allan King Way)
- Adopt appropriate design responses that reflect the characteristics of the chalkland landscape and minimise visual impacts, by using appropriate devices for integrating development in the landscape such as low building heights, earth-sheltered structures (e.g. setting buildings into the ground with green roofs), and/or containment within earth banks and/or strongly vegetated boundaries
- Reflect local building form and character, i.e. well-dispersed, small clusters of buildings typical of local farmsteads
- Respond to the distinctive sloping topography of the area, avoiding any significant modification of natural contours through cut and fill operations, although some localised 'setting-down' of development into the ground to reduce its impact may be appropriate
- Avoid any physical disturbance or impacts on the setting of the heritage feature at Monument Farm, which is a prominent feature on the skyline of the area
- Maintain and enhance existing footpaths, access routes and links within the area, to maximise their role as multi-functional components of the local and wider green infrastructure network (in line with the aims of Project BW29)
- Provide opportunities to extend the access network and create new areas of publicly accessible greenspace within new development or off-site
- Provide investment in green infrastructure to create a more diverse network of landscape features and habitats, through such measures as reinstatement, strengthening and management of hedgerows and other boundary features; tree planting in small groups/copses and in field corners; the creation of less intensively managed field margins; and the recreation of chalk grassland and other wildlife habitats.
- Maintain and strengthen the existing structure of trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation where it occurs, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value.
- Use native broadleaved species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions in new tree and hedgerow planting and encourage development of chalk grassland in areas of open greenspace on chalk.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

Area 11.2 forms a narrow strip of landscape running along the south-facing slopes (or escarpment face) of the chalk ridge of Portsdown Hill. The land falls steeply at the eastern end from around 114m AOD near Portsdown Hill Road to around 61m AOD on the northern edge of the urban area of Portchester. Further to the west, the slopes become progressively less steep as they grade into the rolling south-western flanks of the ridge, falling from around 75m AOD to approx. 55m AOD along the lower boundary with the M27 cutting. The natural topography of this area has been significantly modified by quarrying at the western end and by the deep motorway cutting, which has cut a swathe through the chalk hillside and isolated some small fragments of landscape along the northern edge of Portchester.

Land uses and landcover across this area are also fragmented and the overall character of the landscape is quite varied. Two main sub-areas have been identified, reflecting broad distinctions between the more complex pattern of land uses and features within the western and central areas (11.2a), and the simpler character of the steep scarp face at the eastern end (11.2b).



Area 11.2a is characterised by a mosaic of medium scale, open fields mainly under arable cultivation with irregularly shaped, well-vegetated boundaries interposed by parcels of land containing built development or other non-agricultural land uses. These include two areas characterised by large detached dwellings set in extensive, well-treed or wooded plots with an enclosed character; at the western end, an area dominated by a large former chalk pit that is now occupied by a waste transfer station, with associated roads and infrastructure, areas of developing scrub and woodland; a parking and picnic area with designated viewpoint associated with the historic Fort Nelson located on top of the ridge; and a network of roads, tracks and towering electricity pylons. Area 11.2a also includes part of the steep sides of the motorway cutting, recolonised by chalk grassland and developing scrub and, to the south of the motorway, an isolated parcel of land on the lower scarp slopes characterised by urban fringe land uses of allotments and amenity grassland.

In contrast, the landscape of **area 11.2b** is much simpler and more uniform in character, mainly comprising Portchester Common, a large open area of semi-natural chalk grassland, developing scrub and woodland (designated as a SSSI) and access land. It is characterised by an extensive network of 'unmarked' tracks and trails, in addition to designated public rights of way. The access land to the south of the motorway has a similar character although it is more densely vegetated and enclosed (to be checked). Despite these differences, areas 11.2a and 11.2b are unified by their underlying topography as part of the Portsdown Hill escarpment and by their generally open, elevated character and the strong relationship with the wider urban and coastal landscapes to the south which form an expansive landscape panorama. The area is not covered by any national landscape designation but was part of the former Portsdown Hill Area of Special Landscape Character (no longer in force but indicative of local value), recognised for its scenic quality and unspoilt character, its strong topographical and visual unity and its scarcity value as part of the most distinctive area of chalk scenery in the Borough. As an integral part of this important and distinctive topographic feature, the area as a whole is of high landscape value and the chalk downland of Portsdown Common on the eastern escarpment is an especially scarce and valued feature. Elsewhere, the intrusion of the M27, pylons and various other urbanising land uses detract from the rural character and qualities of the chalk escarpment landscape.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, the sensitivity of the landscape resource in **area 11.2** is judged as relatively high. The open nature of the landscape, from which the area derives its strong relationship with surrounding landscapes and distinct character and sense of place, makes development difficult to achieve without significant adverse impacts in most places.

There may be some very limited scope to accommodate small-scale infill development within existing residential areas, as long as this was carefully integrated to maintain the overall well-treed character of these parcels and avoid impacts on openness elsewhere.

The western part of area 11.2a, closer to Downend Road, offers some scope for small to medium scale development with fewer landscape impacts subject to appropriate integration within a strong structure of vegetation. Landscape character and quality here is already compromised by the presence of pylons, modified landform (chalk pit) and infrastructure associated with the waste transfer station, while the area lacks the strong visual relationship with areas to the south because of enclosure by maturing boundary vegetation.

Development would be difficult to integrate elsewhere in area 11.2a or in area 11.2b due to the generally open nature of the landscape, the strong relationship with surrounding landscapes and other notable features. Portchester Common's access land and SSSI designations and the generally intact nature of the chalk grassland landscape are particularly notable features constraining the development potential of area 11.2b. The fragments of landscape severed from the main escarpment to the south of the motorway are also of landscape and amenity value as public open space/allotments and unsuitable for development (confirm on site).

It is difficult to foresee a scenario in which development would be appropriate elsewhere in area 11.2a or in area 11.2b due to the generally open nature of the landscape, the strong relationship with surrounding landscapes and other notable features as referred to above. Portchester Common's access land and SSSI designations and the generally intact nature of the chalk grassland landscape are particularly notable features affecting the development potential of area 11.2b.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Area 11.2 is theoretically highly visible from middle and long distance viewpoints to the south and east owing to its elevated position in relation to the rest of the Borough. However, intervening vegetation, topography and built development limit actual visibility in most places to filtered views of the upper slopes (e.g. area 11.2a looking north from Cranleigh Road and area 11.2b looking north from Grove Avenue, Kent Grove and Seaway Grove) or no views at all.

Short distance visibility from the south is zero due to the embankments surrounding the M27 cutting. Perimeter vegetation and the sloping topography of the area prevent short distance public views from the east, though some views from private properties on Hillsley Road may exist of the eastern slopes of area 11.2b.

Short distance visibility of **area 11.2a** is much greater from the west and north along Portsdown Road, which runs parallel to the northern boundary of the area and incorporates a significant section of the Allan King Way Recreational Route PRoW. This stretch of road affords open views across the upper slopes of area 11.2a, including open arable fields and the wooded parcels.



The topography of the area results in only the upper slopes of area 11.2a being visible, but these views also take in the expansive urban and coastal landscapes beyond. Lower slopes, including area 11.2b, are not visible from Portsdown Road.

A designated Viewpoint is located in the middle of area 11.2a south of Fort Nelson, connected to the Fort and Allan King Way by a PRoW (footpath) which links into the urban area of Portchester to the south via a footbridge over the M27. The viewpoint and PRoW afford similar views out over the urban and coastal landscapes to those from Portsdown Road and Allan King's Way.

A PRoW running along the southern and western boundaries of Portchester Common affords views across the Common and area 11.2b, which is not visible from other PRoWs in the area, and the urban and coastal landscapes to the south. However, the quality of this viewpoint is compromised by the embankments of the M27 cutting that lies immediately adjacent to the PRoW to the south.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, visual sensitivity in **area 11.2** is relatively high. Despite the area being largely hidden from view or perceived as a comparatively minor element of a wide landscape panorama in most places in the Borough, the area is visually exposed to people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and may be more sensitive to change, in particular users of the PRoW network within and surrounding the area and users of Portchester Common access land.

Users of the PRoW network in the area are most likely to appreciate the area for the long distance panoramic views out that allow a full appreciation of the landscape of the Borough, including the strong relationship between the Portsdown, urban and coastal landscapes. These views could be lost or seriously compromised by the introduction of built development. Consequently, mitigation planting to screen or filter views of development would in most cases be insufficient, and in itself would have an adverse visual impact.

There is some limited potential for development in the more degraded parcel of area 11.2a between Downend Road and the waste transfer station, where the quality of the visual resource is already undermined by vegetation blocking views out and electricity pylons crossing the site. However, views into this area from the Allan King Way and Portsdown Road could still be adversely impacted unless mitigated by substantial screening along the boundaries.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Forming the south-western ‘face’ of Portsdown Hill, the area is an integral part of this large-scale topographic feature that is an important part of the wider landscape setting of Portchester and urban areas to the east of the Borough. It has a relatively high value in establishing the topographic setting of the urban area, constituting part of the distinctive ‘green’ ridge that frames the otherwise low-lying, urbanised settlements of the Borough to the south. The chalk ridge as a whole also forms a strong ‘natural boundary’ containing urban development to the south, a physical and perceived boundary that is reinforced by the motorway which severs the urban area from the predominantly agricultural chalkland landscape beyond.

However, the area’s perceived setting value is reduced by its very limited visibility from surrounding areas. It is only perceived as part of the setting of the urban area within relatively distant views from the Grove Avenue/Seaway Grove/Kent Grove/Cranleigh Road areas of Portchester to the south. However, these views only take in parts of the upper slopes, with most areas, including the lower slopes, completely screened by built development. Where glimpsed views are available elsewhere in the Portchester area, these are always so minor that the area is not perceived as a dominant or particularly important part of the urban area’s setting.

The area does not play an important role in gateway perceptions of the urban area for people arriving into the Borough by either the M27 or railway due to the cutting embankments and changes in natural topography preventing views. Consequently, area 11.2 does not play a significant role in the immediate visual setting and character of the urban area and there is a very limited visual connection between the two. The area also does not lie within a designated Strategic Gap and does not have a role as a buffer required to maintain the separate identity of settlements.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Given the limited visibility of some areas, not all of this area performs a critical role in the setting of the urban area. However, it does have some sensitivity as part of the ‘green’ backdrop and natural boundary provided by the landform feature of Portsdown Hill, albeit this is experienced from a very limited number of locations and always in the context of other more dominant landscapes and built development. Encroachment of prominent development on the more open parts of the escarpment slopes could breach the physical and perceived boundary between town and country that is reinforced by the motorway corridor. Small-scale development in the more enclosed areas could potentially be accommodated if such impacts could be avoided.



CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

Area 11.2 currently makes a significant contribution to the Green Infrastructure (GI) network of the Borough due to its largely undeveloped nature and a combination of public right of way and access land designations at several locations, including: the Allan King Way Recreational Route, which skirts around the northern boundary of area 11.2a; a PRoW connecting Portchester with Fort Nelson Historic Military Bastion to the north; a Viewpoint and picnic area to the south of Fort Nelson in area 11.2a; and Portchester Common and associated PRoWs within area 11.2b.

The good connectivity to the urban area and the wider GI network through PRoWs and the access land that continues eastwards of Portchester Common further enhances the overall recreational and ecological value of GI in area 11.2. The area also forms part of the broad location where future projects have been identified (BW15, BW39) to enhance grassland habitat and improve and create links between historic assets as part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Fareham Borough (2014).

Despite the generally high GI value, there are elements within the area that are not valuable as GI resources, such as the former chalk pit, high voltage electricity pylons, and the M27 motorway which has an adverse effect on the ecological value and user enjoyment of GI resources on the southern slopes in particular.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area's GI value lies in its largely undeveloped nature and the significant public access afforded by PRoWs and access land designations. Any development which results in a loss of undeveloped land, reduced public access or adverse impacts on existing PRoWs or access land would undermine the GI network.

Opportunities exist to improve the GI network through the opening up of currently restricted access spaces and removing or lessening the impact of unsightly structures that reduce public enjoyment of the GI resource. Specifically, opportunities exist to improve the more degraded parcel of area 11.2a containing high voltage electricity pylons and to restore or repurpose the former chalk pit containing a waste transfer station for recreational and/or ecology benefits.

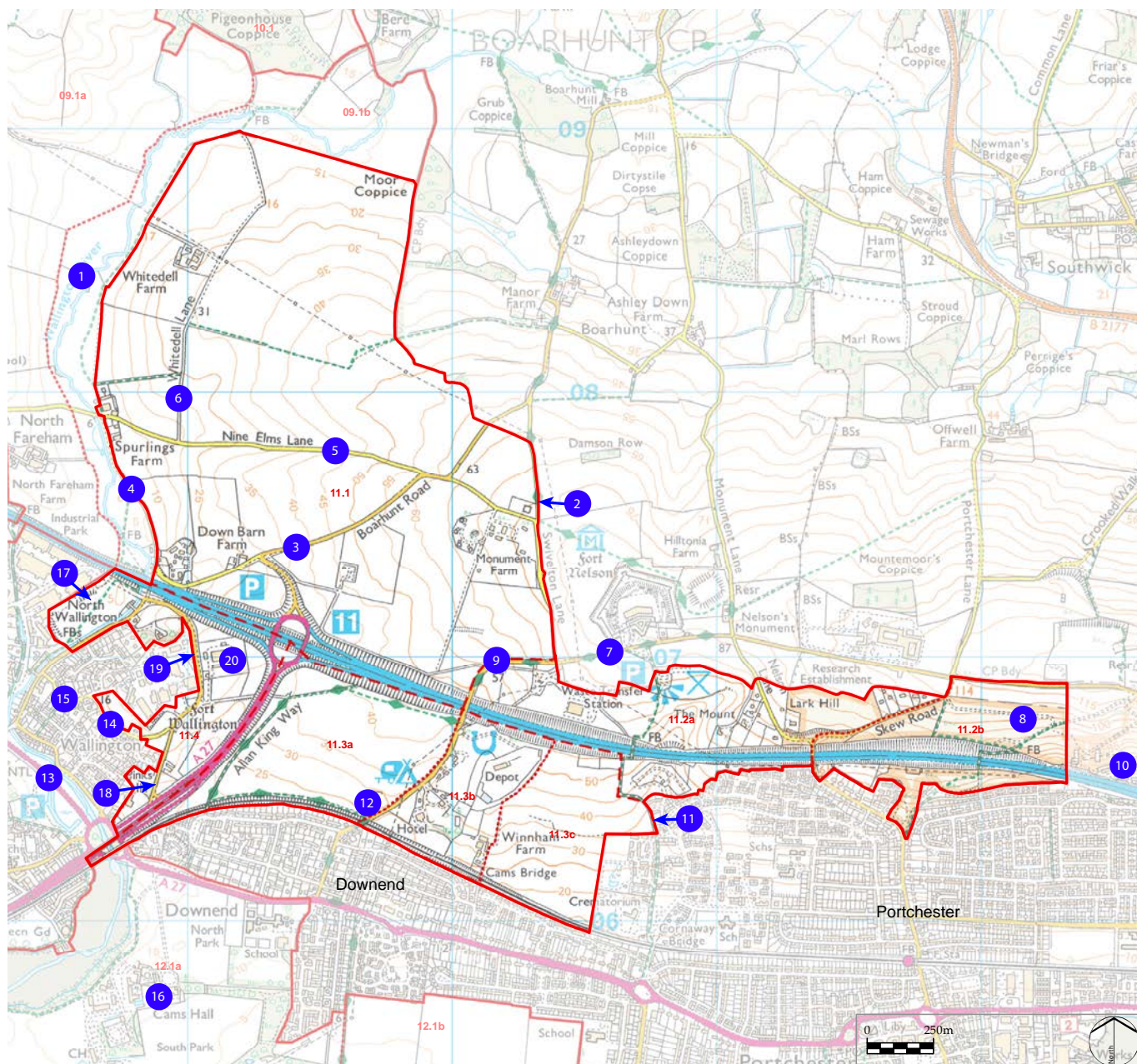
Opportunities to lessen the impact of the M27 motorway on the southern slopes are limited, though additional planting may have some effect.

The network of tracks across Portchester Common could be upgraded to PRoW standard and/or extended into the wider access land area to the east. Any development affecting GI resource in the area should maximise opportunities to fulfil ambitions in the Fareham GI Strategy.



LLCA 11.2 - PORTSDOWN ESCARPMENT

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND



Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area
Subdivision

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Wallington River Valley | 11 Upper Cornaway Lane |
| 2 Swivelton Lane | 12 Downend Fort |
| 3 Boarhurst Road | 13 Wallington River |
| 4 Spurlings Road | 14 Military Road |
| 5 Nine Elms Lane | 15 Drift Road |
| 6 Whitedell Lane | 16 Cams Hall |
| 7 Portsdown Hill Road | 17 Water Meadow |
| 8 Portchester Common | 18 Pinks Hill |
| 9 Downend Road | 19 Standard Way |
| 10 Hillsley Road | 20 Waste Transfer Station |

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a whole, this area is of relatively high sensitivity, in terms of the landscape resource and its visibility within the immediate surrounding area, its role in the setting of the urban area as part of Portsdown Hill and its existing and potential contribution to the local GI network. The essentially open, elevated character of the landscape across much of the area makes it difficult to integrate development and to mitigate the effects of change. Therefore, there is very limited potential for development within the area and design responses for any proposals would need to be very carefully considered and sensitive to local character in order to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts. Notwithstanding these sensitivities, the area is also affected by some urbanising influences and would therefore benefit from investment in new green infrastructure to enhance its landscape and amenity value.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Protect the escarpment's generally open, expansive character and the strong relationship with the urban and coastal landscapes to the south that afford the area its distinctive character and perceptual quality
- Avoid intrusive development in the most visually exposed areas along the escarpment face (particularly the upper slopes), and the introduction of any further intrusive or urbanising influences within areas of unspoilt farmland or open space along the escarpment
- Avoid disturbance to features of importance within the area, notably the chalk downland habitats within Portchester Common Access Land and SSSI in area 11.2b (above and below the motorway cutting)
- Maintain the expansive views from the designated Viewpoint and picnic site below Fort Nelson and other publicly accessible locations along the escarpment, particularly Portchester Common
- Take advantage of opportunities to enhance the quality of areas that are currently degraded by urbanising land uses or intrusive features, e.g. at the western end of area 11.2a
- Protect and advance the interests of PROW users, including through protecting views out across the area and the wider landscape and enhancing the quality and connectivity of the network (in accordance with the Fareham GI Strategy objectives)
- Adopt appropriate design responses that reflect the characteristics of the chalkland landscape and minimise visual impacts, by using appropriate devices for integrating development in the landscape such as low building heights, earth-sheltered structures (e.g. setting buildings into the ground with green roofs), and/or containment within earth banks or strongly vegetated boundaries
- Maintain and strengthen the existing structure of trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation, to maximise its landscape and wildlife value, and maintain the enclosed, heavily-treed character of residential areas to minimise impacts on the rural character of the landscape
- Use native broadleaved species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions in new tree and hedgerow planting and encourage development of chalk grassland and associated habitats.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area forms part of the lower flanks of Portsdown Hill but it is severed from the wider chalkland landscape and open countryside to the north by the M27 motorway, forming an area of 'captured' farmland bounded by roads, railway and urban areas. Areas 11.3a and 11.3c contain some characteristics of the 'Chalk Downland Open Arable' landscape types in the wider Portsdown LCA (e.g. smoothly sloping landform, large-scale fields under intensive arable cultivation, weak internal hedgerow structure, open, expansive character) but area 11.3b is atypical, comprising an area of 'recolonising landscape' on and around a former quarry (Downend Chalk Pit), characterised by a mosaic of developing woodland, scrub and grassland habitats, disturbed ground, small fields and small-scale built development.

The area is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation and was excluded from the Portsdown Hill Area of Special Landscape Character former Local Plan designation (no longer in force) by virtue of its 'fringe' characteristics and physical/perceptual isolation, evidence of its lower value. Intrusive features (e.g. overhead power lines, neighbouring urban development and surrounding roads/railway) detract from its scenic qualities, rural character and perceptual/experiential qualities. Most of the land is intensively farmed with evidence of internal boundary removal and very limited vegetation cover/diversity. The disturbed ground and piecemeal development within the central area also detracts from landscape condition and intactness. Apart from trees and other established vegetation around the outer boundaries, and habitats within area 11.3b (which includes the Downend Chalk Pit SSSI), the area is devoid of any landscape, ecological or heritage features of note.



Overall, this is an area of undistinguished farmland and modified landscape, disconnected from the wider rural landscape and Portsdown Hill, and which lacks any special qualities or features of recognised landscape value. Its overall value as part of the Borough's landscape resource is therefore relatively low.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The sensitivity of the landscape resource in this area is judged as relatively low, with scope to accommodate some change without unacceptable adverse effects on any landscape resources and features of particular value, and opportunities to mitigate the effects of change by appropriate strengthening of the existing landscape framework.

The open, denuded character of areas 11.3a and 11.3c would make development more difficult to integrate than within a more enclosed, diverse landscape. However, there is scope to repair the former structure of internal field boundaries and introduce new features that are typical of chalkland landscapes within the wider area (e.g. shelterbelts and copses), providing landscape enhancement and a stronger landscape framework for accommodating relatively large-scale change without unacceptable adverse effects.

The landscape of the central area (11.3b) may also be able to accommodate change because of its enclosed character and patchwork of different land uses, including existing built development. However, only small scale change that is carefully integrated to avoid any adverse effects on designated features (e.g. SSSI), and which maintains the overall well-vegetated character of this area, would be acceptable.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Despite the location of this area on the flanks of Portsdown Hill, its visibility from surrounding areas is relatively restricted. The area is not visible from the motorway or land beyond to the north because of intervening landform and the motorway cutting. The area is also not visible from the east, with views blocked by vegetation, landform and buildings, and apart from the far western edge of area 11.3a, the area is also hidden from view from the A27 and areas to the west. Views from immediate areas to the south, and from the A27, are blocked by strong vegetation along the railway line and built form. The middle and upper slopes of area 11.3c are visible in the far distance from a section of Cranleigh Road (and adjoining rights of way and sports ground), over a kilometre to the south but visibility is very restricted elsewhere from the south.

The most extensive views into the area are from Downend Road, which cuts through the middle of the area: from here there are open views into the eastern side of area 11.3a and glimpses into area 11.3b, but area 11.3c is not visible. There are open views into area 11.3a from the public right of way (Allan King Way) that runs around the edge of the field, and possible glimpses into the eastern side of area 11.3c through the hedgerow along the public footpath that runs along a green lane (Upper Cornaway Lane) on the eastern boundary of the area. Residents of a few private properties, and users of the Crematorium and Memorial Gardens, within the immediate vicinity (e.g. within area 11.3b) will potentially have some partial or glimpsed views over parts of the area but these are relatively few in number. There are no important landmarks or visual features within the area but the electricity pylons in area 11.3a are visually prominent features.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, visual sensitivity in this area is quite low, as the area is mostly hidden from view from surrounding areas. However, there are some parts of the area that are visually exposed to people who have a particular awareness of their surroundings and may be more sensitive to change, in particular users of the Allan King Way recreational route, from which there are open views across area 11.3a. Other areas of sensitivity are the eastern side of area 11.3a that is visible to users of Downend Road; and the middle and upper slopes of area 11.3c in views from users of Cranleigh Road and the PROW network/sports ground approx. 1km to the south. From here, the area appears as a distant green backdrop to existing housing development in Downend which, together with built development in Portchester and prominent electricity pylons, has an urbanising influence on the character of those views.

The generally low visual sensitivity of the area means there is potential for some development, particularly within area 11.3b, within which some small-scale development could potentially be absorbed as long as the overall enclosed, well-treed character is maintained. Area 11.3c also has some potential, as it is generally well-screened by surrounding vegetation and built development from views at close quarters. Although exposed to more distant views from the south, it forms a relatively small component of the view, and potential visual impacts could be ameliorated by locating development towards the lower part of the area (maintaining a sense of green backdrop along the skyline) and by investment in substantial new planting to reinstate former field boundaries and landscape features (e.g. belts of trees and copses) to break up and provide screening of development in views from the south.

In area 11.3a, development would be highly prominent for users of Allan King Way and Downend Road unless it is accompanied by major investment in landscape infrastructure, such as the creation of substantial green 'buffers' (i.e. corridors of new tree/woodland planting and open space) along the footpath routes and along the eastern field margin, to soften and screen its impact on views across this open area over time. In addition to this substantial new planting, impacts could be reduced by avoiding development on the more elevated north-western parts of this area.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Topographically, this area occupies part of the lower slopes of Portsdown Hill, a distinctive large-scale landform feature that forms an important part of the wider landscape setting of Portchester and urban areas to the east of the Borough. However, the area's contribution to this setting is partly reduced by its limited visibility from surrounding areas. The only area from which it is perceived as part of the setting of the urban area is within relatively distant views from the Cranleigh Road/Wicor recreation ground area, around 1 kilometre to the south, where the area appears in the distance as part of the ridge forming the backdrop to housing development in Downend. Unlike the upper slopes and scarp face, it does not form the most distinctive part of the ridge landscape and its role is therefore judged as 'supportive' (i.e. an area which is not distinctive but which supports the character of those areas which are distinctive to the urban area and which bolsters its sense of place by supporting and buffering its special character).

The area does not play a significant role in the immediate visual setting and character of the urban area because it is largely concealed from the surrounding built environment by vegetation and there is a very limited visual connection between the two. The area also does not lie within a designated Strategic Gap and does not have a role as a buffer required to maintain the separate identity of settlements. However, part of the area may be perceived as having a role as a buffer between the existing urban edge and the wider countryside of Portsdown Hill. In particular, the undeveloped character of the eastern side of area 11.3a is clearly visible on the approach to Portchester from the north along Downend Road, with the heavily treed railway corridor currently forming a strong urban edge and a minor 'gateway' to the residential area of Downend to the south. Visible development within this area may potentially blur the strong definition between town and 'country', although some urbanising influences (e.g. pylons and development within area 11.3b) are already evident.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area does not form a critical role in the setting of the urban area but it does have some sensitivity as part of the 'green' backdrop provided by the landform feature of Portsdown Hill, albeit this is experienced from only a very small area in south-west Portchester. It also has some sensitivity in forming a semi-rural approach to the urban area along Downend Road, and lies beyond the strong urban edge defined by the railway corridor. However, these sensitivities would not necessarily preclude development and could be addressed through avoidance of development on the most visually exposed upper slopes (maintaining the green backdrop) and along the Downend road corridor (maintaining the perception of a semi-rural approach to Downend).



LLCA 11.3 - WEST PORTCHESTER FRINGE FARMLAND

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

The area does not form part of a Green Infrastructure Corridor identified at the sub-regional scale.

The Fareham GI Strategy (2014) notes that there is scope to upgrade existing routes from Portchester to Portsdown Hill, providing safer off-road passage and creating a historic themed route taking in the important historic military bastions such as Fort Nelson and Monument Farm. Two projects are identified within the area PO1 and PO4. These involve improvements to access to Portsdown Hill along Downend Road and the provision of new open space at Down End Fort, located in the south-east corner of area 11.3a.



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Apart from Downend Road, the Allen King Way recreational route within area 11.3a and the green lane (Upper Cornaway Lane) that runs along the eastern boundary of area 11.3c also have a valuable green infrastructure function, linking Portchester and Portsdown Hill. There are currently no east-west access links within the eastern side of the area (11.3c), e.g. linking Upper Cornaway Lane with Downend Road along the railway corridor.

There are no formal or informal public open spaces within the area but the established vegetation along the road and rail corridors around the area, together with the woodland, trees and developing habitats within area 11.3b, provide habitat links and are also valuable local GI elements.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Any proposals for development would need to maintain and, where possible, enhance the function and quality of the key elements of the existing local GI network, namely the north-south access links, and areas of established woodland, trees and other habitats along road and rail corridors and within area 11.3b.

Any development proposals should also take advantage of opportunities to extend the GI framework within the area, for example by providing new areas of public open space (e.g. at Downend Fort and within the development area) and new east-west access and habitat links (e.g. across area 11.3c).



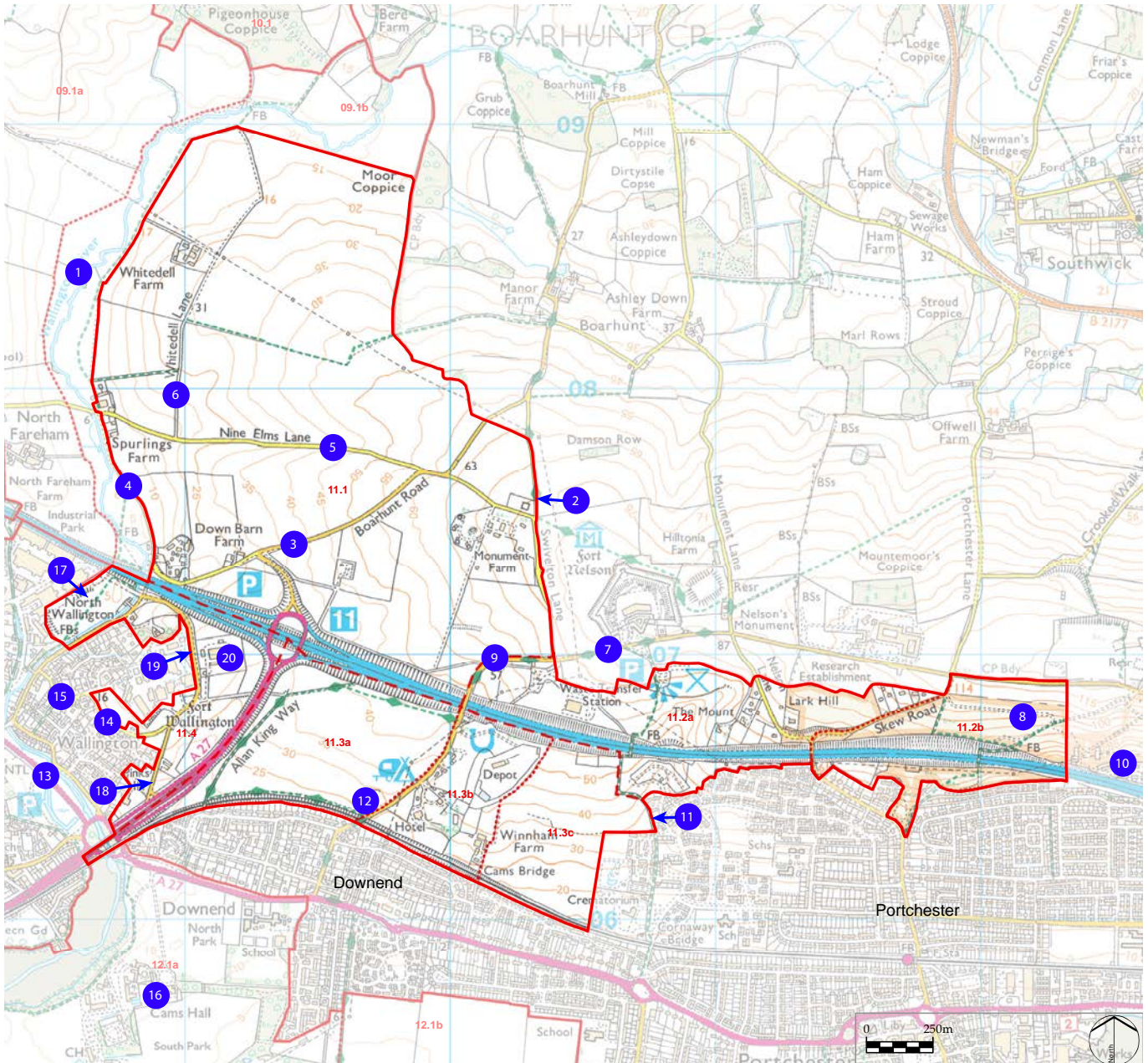
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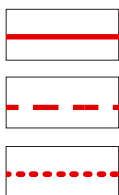
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LLCA 11.3 - WEST PORTCHESTER FRINGE FARMLAND

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND



Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area
Subdivision

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Wallington River Valley | 11 Upper Cornaway Lane |
| 2 Swivelton Lane | 12 Downend Fort |
| 3 Boarhurst Road | 13 Wallington River |
| 4 Spurlings Road | 14 Military Road |
| 5 Nine Elms Lane | 15 Drift Road |
| 6 White Dell Lane | 16 Cams Hall |
| 7 Portsdown Hill Road | 17 Water Meadow |
| 8 Portchester Common | 18 Pinks Hill |
| 9 Downend Road | 19 Standard Way |
| 10 Hillsley Road | 20 Waste Transfer Station |

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Although landscape and visual sensitivities are comparatively low in this area, there are a number of potential development constraints, in particular the need to maintain the green character of the upper slopes of area 11.3c to protect the landscape setting of Portchester, and to create substantial landscape buffers along the route of Allan King Way and Downend Road to protect/enhance green infrastructure assets and the visual amenity of sensitive recreational users. Other key sensitivities include Downend Chalk Pit SSSI and mature trees and vegetation along road and rail corridors and within area 11.3b.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Respond to the distinctive sloping topography of the area, avoiding any significant modification of natural contours through cut and fill operations
- Avoid any impacts or disturbance to features of recognised value within the area, notably the Downend Chalk Pit SSSI
- Maintain the well-treed character of the central part of the area (area 11.3b) and retain and reinforce the existing structure of trees and established vegetation along field boundaries, road and rail corridors and elsewhere within the overall area
- Locate development towards the lower part of area 11.3c in order to maintain the area's supportive role in the setting of Portchester (e.g. by maintaining the appearance of a 'green', undeveloped backdrop along the skyline)
- Reinstate former field boundaries and invest in significant new landscape features/infrastructure (e.g. woodland belts, blocks and copses) in order to break up and provide screening of any new built development in views from the south
- Create substantial landscape buffers (i.e. corridors of new tree/woodland planting and open space) along the routes of Allan King Way and Downend Road, to soften and screen impacts on views across this open area over time and maintain the perception of a semi-rural approach to West Portchester.
- Be of an appropriate scale to reflect distinctive differences in landscape character, i.e. the large-scale, simple character of the 'open arable landscape' within areas 11.3a and 11.3c, and the smaller, intimate and enclosed character of the 'recolonising landscape' in area 11.3b.
- Ensure that new planting reflects the distinctive characteristics of more intact and diverse chalkland landscapes within the area and provides a strong framework for the successful integration of development
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network, including north-south access links, and habitat links along road and rail corridors and within area 11.3b
- Take advantage of opportunities to extend the GI framework within the area, by providing new areas of public open space (e.g. at Downend Fort and within the development area) and new east-west access and habitat links (e.g. across area 11.3c)

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This small, fragmented area also forms part of the lower flanks of Portsdown Hill and is severed from the wider chalkland landscape and open countryside to the north by the M27 motorway, forming an area of 'captured' landscape sandwiched between the motorway, the A27 road corridor and the northern edge of Wallington. It was included within the urban character area of Wallington (LCA30) within the 1996 character assessment, reflecting its urban fringe location and its physical isolation from the wider countryside of the Borough. However, for the purposes of this assessment it is included as an extension of the Portsdown LCA, with which it shares the underlying chalk geology and topographic unit of Portsdown Hill.

LLCA 11.4 occupies parts of the northern and eastern flanks of a prominent spur or knoll at the foot of the main chalk ridge, bounded to the west and south by the Wallington River. The village of Wallington (a Conservation Area) developed along the riverside and residential development has spread up its southern and western flanks, while the top of the knoll is dominated by the remnants of the Fort Wallington, one of the seven 19th century Palmerston Forts strung out along Portsdown Hill, now occupied by an industrial estate.

The remaining undeveloped parts of the knoll surrounding Fort Wallington comprise variously sized fields under pasture, most of which are bounded by strong hedgerows or belts of trees, particularly along the outer boundaries with the motorway and A27 road corridor. The land is predominantly used for horse grazing and some of the larger fields are subdivided by fences into smaller paddocks. Some of the hedges and fences are in a poor state of repair and the land has a somewhat scruffy appearance typical of horse-grazed pastures. Coupled with this, there are a number of other features that contribute to an over-riding 'urban fringe' character in this area including: the presence of large-scale industrial/commercial buildings and infrastructure with associated parking (albeit mostly hidden behind the walls of Fort Wallington, mature vegetation cover or within a former chalk pit); the urban character of signage, lighting, road treatments and site entrances; cars parked on road verges; litter; smells arising from the recycling/waste transfer station; and the visibility of existing residential development, particularly along Military Road and Drift Road.

However, the strong vegetation cover within and around the edges of the area is a positive feature – it significantly reduces intrusion from the motorway and road corridor and some built development (e.g. waste transfer station), it creates an enclosed and more attractive character to some parcels of land (e.g. fields on the northern side of the knoll) and it also contributes to the attractive character of views out over the fields from high ground on the eastern side of the knoll towards Cams Hall and Portsmouth Harbour. Overall, however, the intrinsic quality of the landscape immediately surrounding Fort Wallington is relatively low and it displays few distinctive characteristics of the wider chalkland landscape of the Portsdown LCA.



The LLCA also includes an area known as the Water Meadow, a low-lying area of unimproved grassland traditionally managed for hay that lies within the floodplain of the Wallington River on its northern side and is enclosed by strong belts of mature trees. Its value as a wildlife habitat is recognised by its designation as a SINC, it also serves as a valued area of open space for the local community and it is noted as an important part of the setting of the Wallington Conservation Area (although located outside of the CA boundary). The surrounding tree cover significantly limits intrusion from roads and neighbouring industrial land uses and this small area retains an essentially rural and attractive character.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area is not covered by any current national or local landscape designation and was not included within the Portsdown Hill Area of Special Landscape Character former Local Plan designation (not replaced within the current adopted plan). It is an area of lower quality landscape, disconnected from the wider rural landscape and Portsdown Hill. Apart from the trees and other established vegetation along field boundaries, the water meadow at North Wallington (SINC), and the remnants of Fort Wallington (Grade II Listed Building), the area is devoid of any special qualities or features of recognised landscape, ecological or heritage value. Its overall value as part of the Borough's landscape resource is therefore relatively low.

North Wallington water meadow is of considerable value and should be protected from change. The sensitivity of the remaining landscape resource in this area is judged as relatively low, with scope to accommodate some change without unacceptable adverse effects on any landscape resources and features of particular value, and opportunities to mitigate the effects of change by appropriate strengthening of the existing landscape framework. However, although intrinsic landscape value is low, there may be a case for retaining the open, undeveloped character of the fields on the eastern side to allow the distinctive topography of this chalk spur and the commanding position and setting of the former Fort to be appreciated more readily than if clothed in built development.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Despite its elevated hill-top location, the visibility of the undeveloped parts of the knoll from surrounding areas is comparatively limited. The area is not visible from the motorway or most of the land beyond to the north because of intervening landform and the motorway cutting and vegetation cover within and around the area. Views from wider surrounding areas to the west, south and east (including the A27 corridor) are also substantially blocked by vegetation, landform or built form. However, there is some intervisibility between the top of the knoll and parts of the farmland at a similar elevation on the eastern side of the A27 (LLCA 11.3a) and the south-facing fields below Monument Farm on the northern side of the M27 (LLCA 11.1). A section of the Allan King Way recreational route is the only public viewpoint from within these locations.

There are also very limited views from the immediate surrounding area, including residential areas and local roads to the south and west in Wallington, which are obscured by intervening built development or vegetation cover. The main views into the undeveloped parcels of land are from the minor roads and some properties or commercial businesses within the area itself and the most visible parts of the area are the fields immediately to the south and east of Fort Wallington Industrial Estate.

There are open views into the field immediately to the south of the Fort from Military Road and from some adjoining residential properties but views from Drift Road are mostly screened or filtered by hedgerow vegetation. There are also open views into and across the fields to the east of the Fort from Pinks Hill and Military Road (a private road), through gaps in the hedgerows and other open sections of boundary and gateways. From the most elevated viewpoints, most of the land within the eastern fields is visible as the foreground to sweeping and attractive views south-eastwards over the Borough towards Portsmouth Harbour. The areas of fenced grassland that provide the immediate setting for the surviving walls of the Fort are also open to view from Pinks Hill/Military Road but the far southern corner of the fields to the east is less visible, enclosed by strong boundary vegetation along the lower section of Pinks Hill and along the A27 corridor.

Other parts of the undeveloped area are less visible. The field to the north of Fort Wallington is visible from Standard Way along a section of fenced boundary, but is hidden by boundary and other vegetation in views from other directions, including the road and water meadow at North Wallington and housing to the west. Views into the water meadow itself are blocked by surrounding belts of trees. A couple of small fields to the north and east of the waste transfer station are also mostly hidden by vegetation, or the bunding that encloses the WTS, with only occasional glimpses through gateways from Standard Way or the 'dead end' gated section of Military Road.



The main viewers potentially affected by changes in the view will be local residents within neighbouring properties and, in particular, users of the access roads and the industrial/office premises within the industrial estate and waste transfer station. Apart from the local roads and the water meadow, there are no public rights of way or public open spaces within the area.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

In general, visual sensitivity in this area is quite low, as the area is mostly hidden from view from surrounding areas, the quality of views is already affected by urban fringe influences and the views are available to a limited range of viewers, mostly those working within the industrial estate who will be focussed on their work and are less sensitive to change.

However, there are some other viewers, such as residents of nearby properties and people using the local road network (and Allan King Way on land to the east of the A27) who will have a particular awareness of their surroundings and may be more sensitive to change, and there are some available views which are of a higher quality, namely those expansive views from the top of the knoll looking south-eastwards over the undeveloped fields towards Portsmouth Harbour. The undeveloped land to the south and east of the Fort is therefore judged as being of moderate visual sensitivity.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Topographically, this area occupies an outlying spur of Portsdown Hill, the distinctive large-scale landform feature that forms an important part of the wider landscape setting of Portchester and urban areas to the east of the Borough. However, its lower-lying position at the foot of the ridge and substantial surrounding vegetation cover reduce its visibility from surrounding areas such that it does not form a significant component of this wider visual setting, either as a backdrop or foreground to views across the urban area.

At a local level, the distinctive spur of landform has influenced the character of Wallington village and the way that the settlement has developed over time, spreading up the steep slopes of the knoll from the river valley below. This area therefore forms part of the physical setting of the village but the landform feature is not particularly evident from the surrounding area and the open character of the top of the knoll is largely obscured from within Wallington itself. It is only really from the knoll itself that its open character and elevation above the urban area is really appreciated. Maintaining this open character is, therefore, not critical to the character and setting of Wallington or the wider urban area of Fareham.

The area does not lie within a designated Strategic Gap and does not have a role as a buffer required to maintain the separate identity of settlements. Its severance by the motorway means that the area does not have a role in maintaining the definition between town and country, and its character is more associated with the surrounding urban area than the open countryside to the north of the motorway. The lack of visibility from the motorway and A27, and its location off the main routes into the Borough, mean that it does not have a role as a 'gateway'.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, this area is of low sensitivity in terms of its contribution to the setting and character of settlements but it does form part of the setting of the listed remains of Fort Wallington. Of particular importance are the grassed areas immediately in front of the curtain walls on the south-east side and the fields immediately opposite on the eastern side of Pinks Hill/Military Road. The field immediately to the south-west of the fort may be less critical to its setting because this side lacks such obvious features of interest and is mostly obscured behind strong tree cover. However, the importance of maintaining the open character of these areas as part of the setting of this heritage feature, which has already been substantially destroyed or degraded, requires consideration by relevant specialists. Apart from this consideration, there are no significant constraints to development within the area based upon its role in the setting of settlements.



CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

The key feature of this area in terms of green infrastructure is the important water meadow and woodland habitat (SINC) and open space at North Wallington within the floodplain of the Wallington River. The river corridor is identified in the PUSH GI Strategy as a Sub-regional scale Blue Corridor and Project F6 seeks to enhance the River Wallington corridor's biodiversity value and develop circular routes connecting historic sites and points of interest with local settlements and North of Fareham (Welborne) SDA.



There is a relatively strong network of hedgerows, trees and woodland within and around the margins of the area, especially along the motorway and road corridors, which are valuable GI elements. However, the area makes a very limited contribution to the GI network in terms of local access and open space provision. Apart from the water meadow at North Wallington, there are no accessible public spaces or footpaths within the area and public access through the area is confined to local roads (North Wallington, Standard Way, Pinks Hill and Military Way) and the residential streets of Wallington village (e.g. Drift Road). Access connections with the wider area are limited by the barriers created by the surrounding motorway and road corridors (for example, the route of Military Way eastwards is blocked by the A27) although there is a tunnel under the motorway off Standard Way which provides a corridor for access along the Wallington River valley.

The Fareham GI Strategy does not contain any projects of specific relevance to this area.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

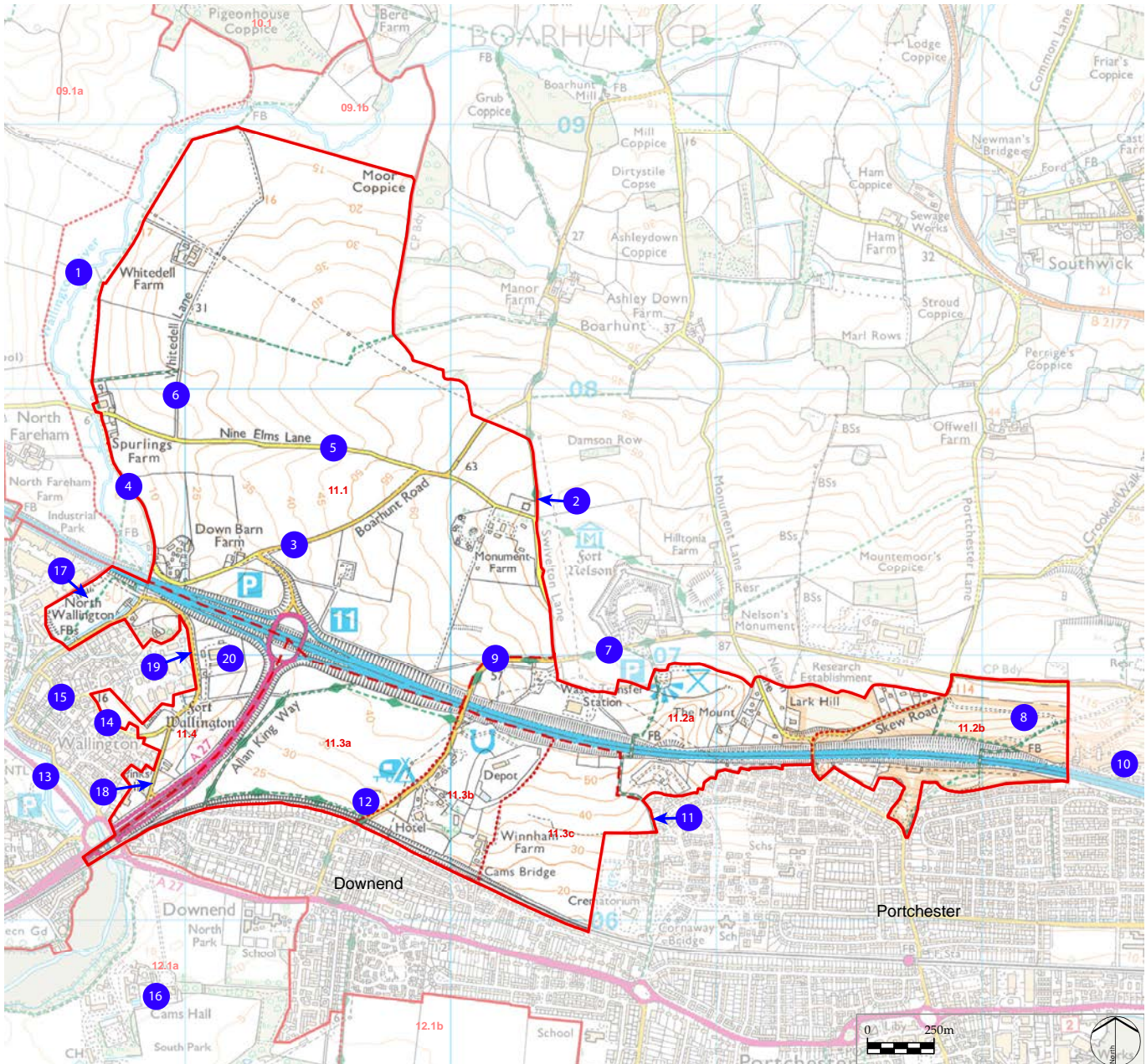
Any proposals for development would need to maintain and, where possible, enhance the function and quality of the key elements of the existing local GI network, namely the habitats and open space at North Wallington, access links along the Wallington River and areas of established woodland, trees and other vegetation along road corridors and field boundaries. Any development proposals should also take advantage of opportunities to extend the GI framework within the area, for example by providing new areas of public open space and improved access links, although the potential for this is limited within such a confined and physically constrained area of landscape.



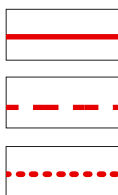
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LLCA 11.4 - FORT WALLINGTON FRINGE

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND



Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area

Local Landscape
Character Area
Subdivision

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Wallington River Valley | 11 Upper Cornaway Lane |
| 2 Swivelton Lane | 12 Downend Fort |
| 3 Boarhurst Road | 13 Wallington River |
| 4 Spurlings Road | 14 Military Road |
| 5 Nine Elms Lane | 15 Drift Road |
| 6 Whitedell Lane | 16 Cams Hall |
| 7 Portsdown Hill Road | 17 Water Meadow |
| 8 Portchester Common | 18 Pinks Hill |
| 9 Downend Road | 19 Standard Way |
| 10 Hillsley Road | 20 Waste Transfer Station |

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Overall, landscape and visual sensitivities within this isolated area of urban fringe landscape are relatively low and the area offers some potential to accommodate development without significant adverse effects on the Borough's important landscape resources, key views, the setting of settlements or valuable GI assets.

The main factors constraining development potential are the need to protect the water meadow and associated woodland habitats at North Wallington and the potential effects that development of open land may have on the setting of the listed building at Fort Wallington (the latter requires consideration by an appropriately qualified historic buildings specialist).

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban setting and green infrastructure, development proposals will need to:

- Respond to the distinctive sloping topography of the area, avoiding any significant modification of natural contours through cut and fill operations
- Avoid any impacts or disturbance to features of recognised value within the area, notably the meadow and woodland habitats at North Wallington (SINC);
- Retain and reinforce the existing structure of trees and established vegetation along field boundaries and road corridors and elsewhere within the overall area;
- Preferably, maintain the open, undeveloped character of land immediately in front of the south-east wall of Fort Wallington, including the fields on higher ground immediately opposite, to the east of Pinks Road/Military Way;
- Locate development in areas which benefit from at least partial enclosure by existing vegetation cover or which are generally less visible from surrounding areas (e.g. to the north of the industrial estate, and on the lower, more enclosed slopes of the eastern fields) and in areas where it could be most sensitively integrated within the context of existing development (e.g. the field to the south-west of Fort Wallington, subject to considerations of the setting of the listed building);
- Be well-integrated and visually contained by existing or new planting, or other appropriate features (e.g. vegetated bunds), to minimise impacts on views and visual amenity;
- Be of a scale and character appropriate to existing development within the locality;
- Avoid tall buildings or structures which would be particularly prominent and intrusive in this elevated location;
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network, notably the open space and access and habitat links within the Wallington River corridor, and habitat links along road corridors and field boundaries;
- Take advantage of opportunities to extend the GI framework within the area, by providing new areas of public open space and new access and habitat links where possible.

2.12 LCA 12: CAMS – WICOR COASTAL PLAIN

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

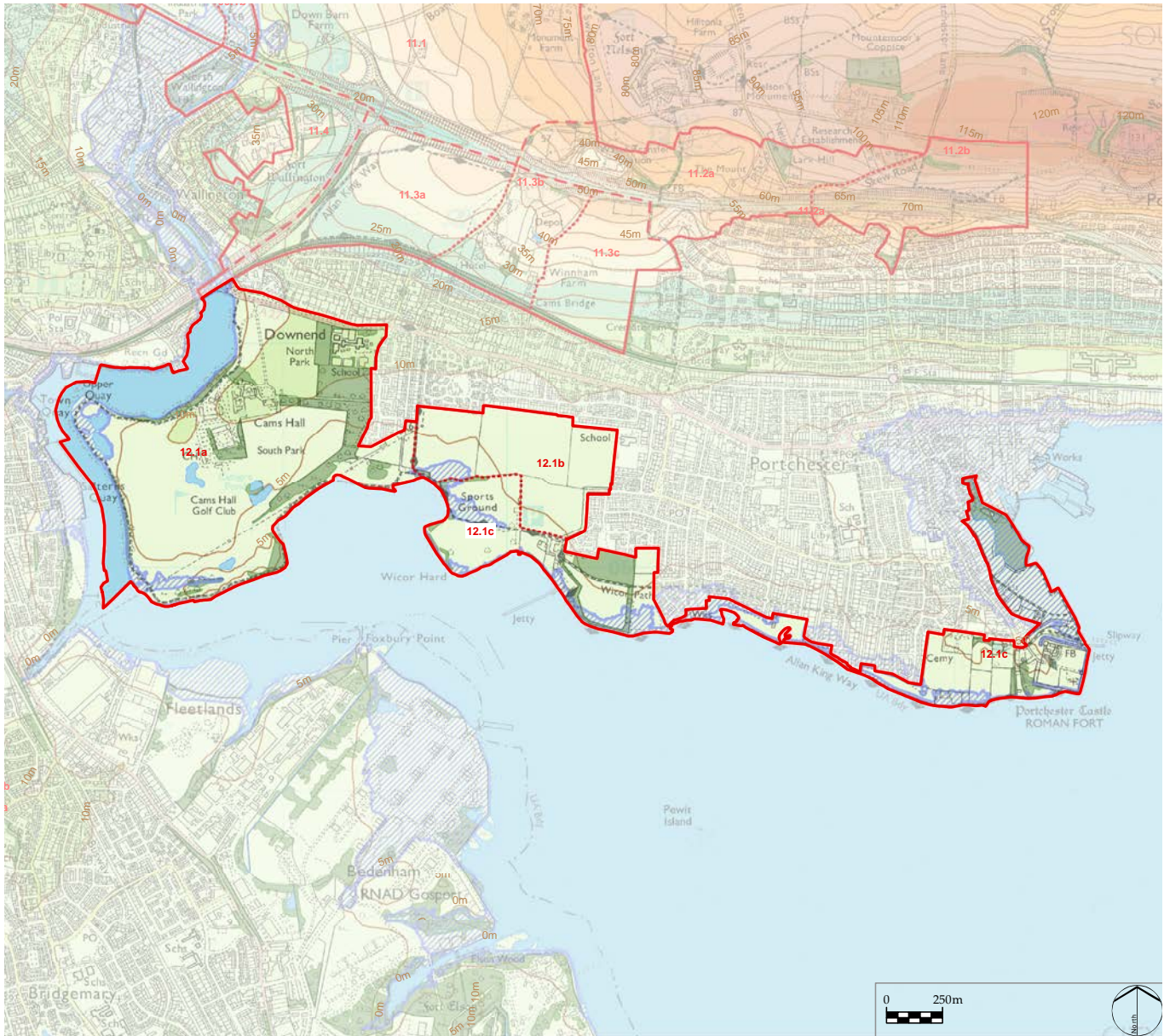
	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

LCA 12 - CAMS - WICOR COASTAL PLAIN

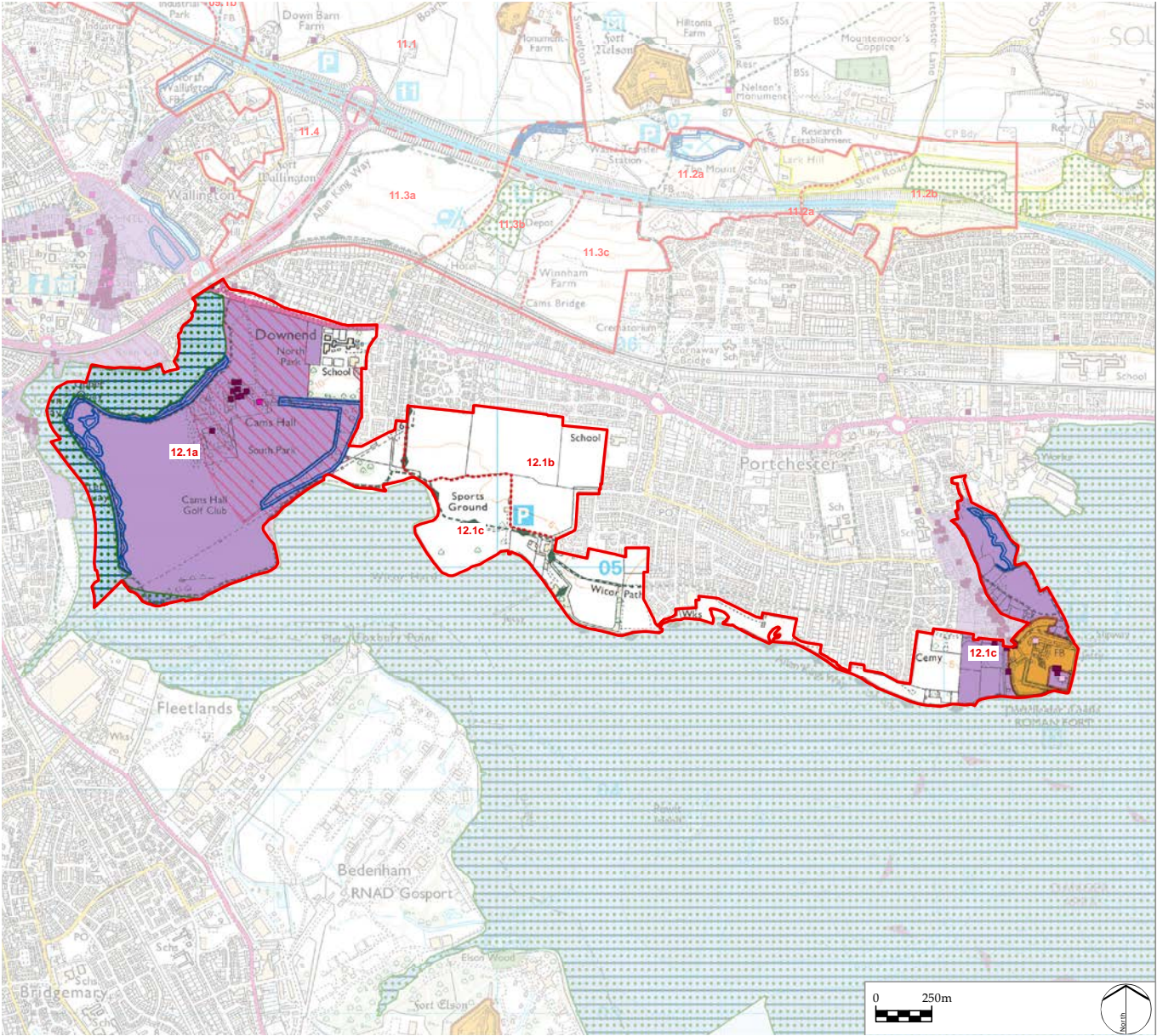
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		5m Contours
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision	Elevation (m AOD)	
	Water		0m
	Flood Alert Areas		60m

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

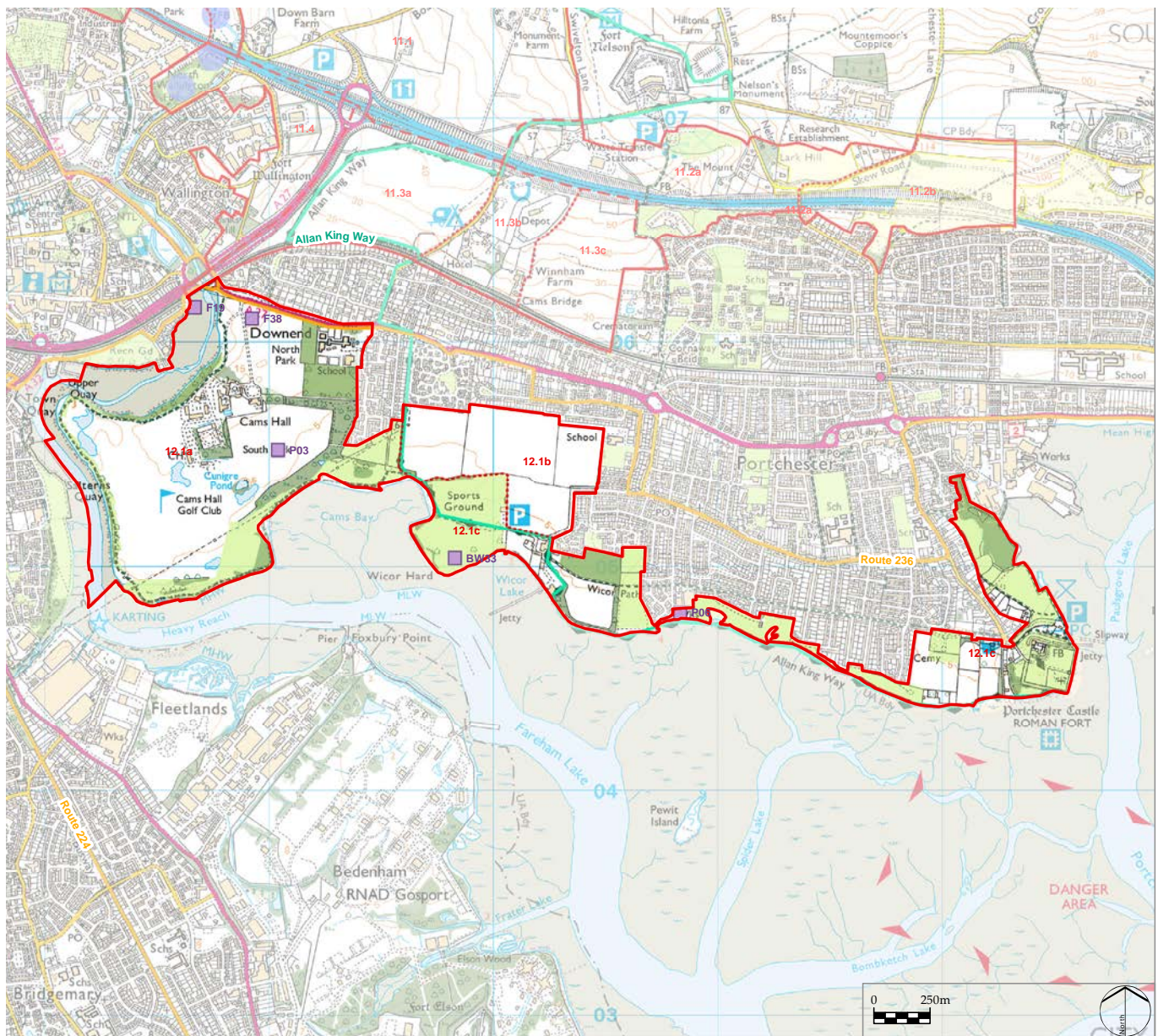
	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest		Conservation Areas
	Local Landscape Character Area		Special Protection Area		Historic Parks and Gardens
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		RAMSAR		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
			Scheduled Monument		

Designations






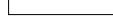


Listed Building Grade

I II II*

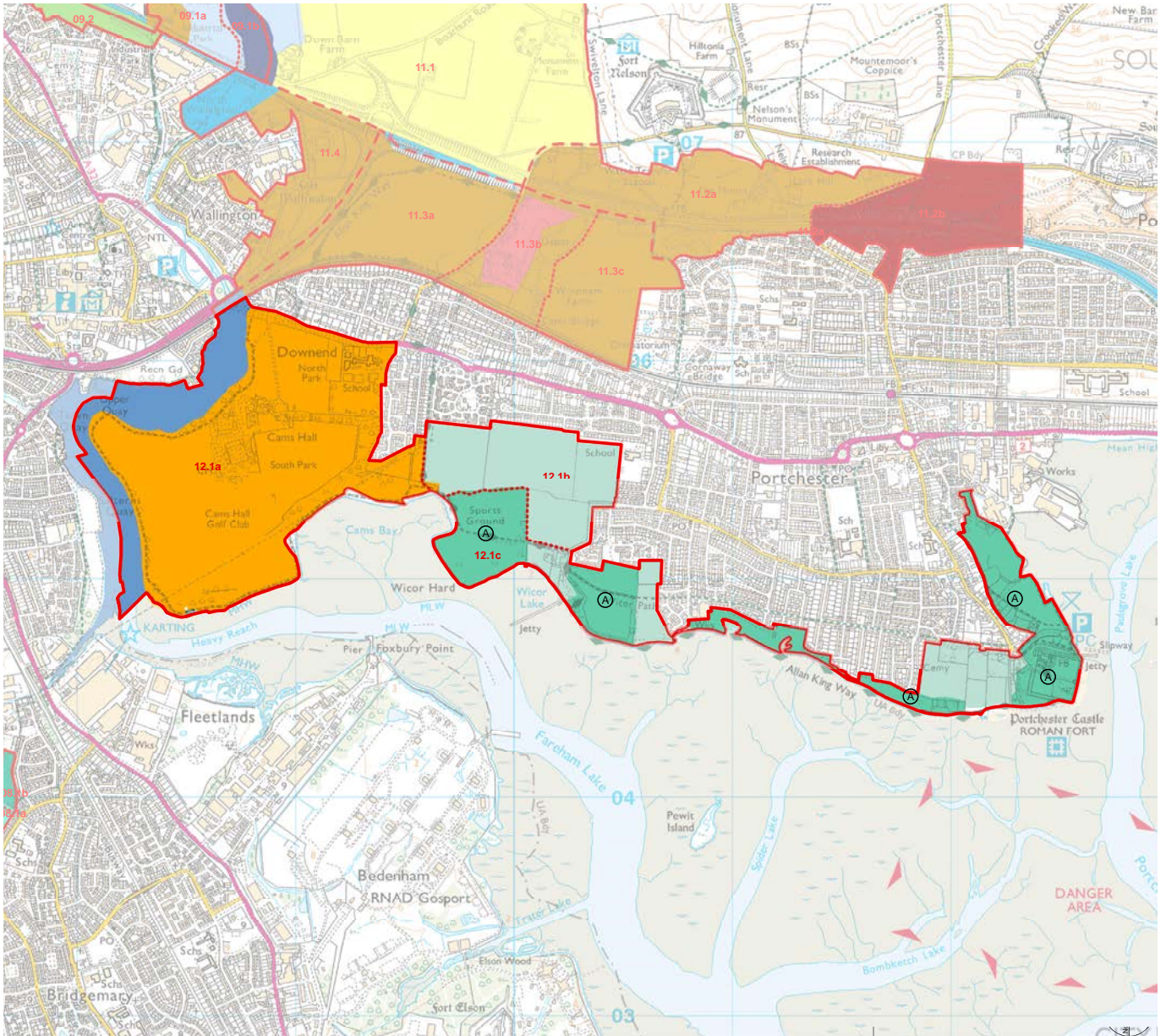
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Long Distance Footpaths
	Local Landscape Character Area		National Cycle Network
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Woodland
	Green Infrastructure Projects		Existing Open Space

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Open Coastal Amenity Land
	Local Landscape Character Area		Open Coastal Plain: Fringe Character
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Parkland & Grounds
			Enclosed Tidal River

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

The Cams/Wicor Coastal Fringe LCA forms a discrete parcel of coastal plain landform sandwiched between the urban fringes of Downend and Portchester and the northern shores of Portsmouth Harbour. The area as a whole is unified and distinguished by its flat, low-lying topography and the influence of its coastal location, with characteristic salty smells, an exposed, windswept character and open, expansive views out across Portsmouth Harbour. It is also unified by a predominance of amenity land uses along the coastal strip (including the golf course at Cams Hall, the Wicor recreation ground and various other areas of accessible open spaces linked by footpaths along the coastline) which are intermixed with some pockets of farmland or undeveloped private land and of coastal industry. The area has a 'fringe' character influenced by the proximity of built form along the urban edge, areas of somewhat degraded farmland or abandoned pasture and some scruffy or unsightly features associated with pockets of commercial development and overhead power lines. However, it also has many positive attributes, not least the important heritage and landscape features of the Cams Hall estate and Portchester Castle at either end of the area, and the estuarine setting which includes internationally significant maritime habitats (SPA, SAC, SSSI, SIN). On the basis of these unifying features, the area is treated as a single LLCA but with three sub-divisions, reflecting some local variations in this overall character arising from specific individual, or mixed, land uses.

Area 12.1a comprises the peninsula of land formed by the curve of Fareham Lake as it flows from the mouth of the Wallington river into Portsmouth Harbour at the western end of the area, and is dominated by the Palladian mansion and other historic buildings, extensive parkland and woodlands of the Cams Hall Estate. Having fallen into disrepair, the whole estate was designated as a Conservation Area in 1982, including the north and south parks and the significant belts of trees known as Cams Plantation. Now restored, the historic core of the estate comprising the Hall, its associated Home Farm, Orangery and Walled Garden are set within the restored North and South Parks which are enclosed by important historic woodland planting belts. This was achieved through enabling development of a golf course, some offices and housing outside of the area. The buildings and surrounding gardens/parkland are all now listed or registered as important heritage features.

Despite the presence of the golf course, car parking, a school and other associated features of the enabling development, the predominantly open, undeveloped and well-managed character of the Cams peninsula landscape is generally of high quality and forms an important setting for the listed buildings and features of the estate, as described in the Cams Hall Conservation Area Character Assessment (2008). Many of the original features of the designed parkland remain, including the surviving parts of three significant tree belts which are of great importance to both character and setting, and also help to screen modern office/housing development and car parking. The golf course has been sensitively incorporated into the restored landscape avoiding significant intrusion on the landscape setting of the hall, and the areas of lawn, avenues and scattered trees within the restored parkland all contribute to landscape character and quality.



While part of the same coastal plain landscape, **area 12.1b** has a very different character. It comprises an area of flat, open farmland immediately to the east of the Cams estate and bordered to the north and east by residential development along the urban edge of Downend and Portchester and to the south by the playing fields of the Wicor recreation ground. It is characterised by fairly large, regularly shaped and intensively cultivated fields, a couple of smaller fields under rough pasture and an area of fenced paddocks used for horse grazing. There is substantial vegetation cover along the western boundary with the Cams Estate and the southern boundary with the recreation ground, and a couple of other mature hedgerows, but most other boundaries within and around the fields comprise low, trimmed hedges or fences, with few trees. The landscape consequently has a predominantly open, exposed and rather featureless character which is influenced by development around its edges and other intrusive features such as electricity pylons. It is physically isolated from open countryside elsewhere within the Borough but has some scarcity value as a remnant of open coastal plain farmland within the urban context. Overall, however, it is a relatively undistinguished piece of landscape with very few distinctive or notable features and is of lower intrinsic quality than other parts of the coastal plain.

Area 12.1c comprises the remaining areas of undeveloped land along the coastline to the east of the Cams peninsula and south of the open farmland of area 12.1b. The area is occupied by a mix of land uses and is characterised by a small-scale patchwork of open amenity grassland, strong belts of trees and areas of woodland, scrub and rough grassland, small enclosed fields and pastures, allotments, a cemetery, occasional individual properties and industrial premises and the historic landmark of Portchester Castle (SAM), all squeezed between built development to the north and the open water of Portsmouth Harbour to the south.



The belts and blocks of woodland and other mature and more semi-natural vegetation cover make a significant contribution to the character and quality of the open spaces within this corridor, providing enclosure and shelter from coastal exposure and helping to reduce the influence of neighbouring urban development and unsightly features. The varying degrees of enclosure, vegetation cover, land use, scale and type of spaces along the waterfront provides a rich and varied landscape experience, enhanced by the pervasive views and other sensory influences of the adjacent waterscape of Portsmouth Harbour, and the impressive remains and attractive setting of Portchester Castle. There are some intrusive or detracting influences from neighbouring residential or commercial development, some of the open spaces are somewhat sterile or bleak in character (e.g. adjacent to Kenwood Road) and there are small pockets of private land associated with existing development with a weaker relationship with the coastal landscape that may be of lesser value. However, on the whole, this patchwork coastal fringe landscape is of moderate to high landscape quality and is an important landscape resource within the Borough context, worthy of protection and enhancement.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The majority of the landscape within **area 12.1** is highly sensitive to change. Undeveloped landscape at the extremities of the area – i.e. the Cams peninsula (area 12.1a) and around Portchester Castle (eastern end of area 12.1c) – is of particular sensitivity, not just because of its intrinsic quality but also because it provides the landscape setting for nationally important heritage assets and contains features of ecological and landscape value (e.g. Cams Plantation). New development would be highly intrusive within these settings and should be avoided.

The rest of the coastal strip (**area 12.1c**) is also mostly highly sensitive as a diverse, undeveloped amenity landscape along the coastal margin, with a strong connection with the waterscape of Portsmouth Harbour and attractive views out over the water. Existing areas of woodland or tree cover are especially valuable features within the open spaces along this coastal margin, providing visual interest, enclosure and shelter and screening some of the more unsightly land uses within and around the area.

Although landscape quality in some areas is influenced by existing development and land uses, the priority should be to reduce these effects rather than exacerbate them, or erode further the limited extent of undeveloped land along the coast. Development potential is therefore very limited within this area, the only exceptions possibly being the enhancement of existing commercial sites through redevelopment, or some very limited small-scale infill development in enclosed parcels of land closely associated with existing built development (e.g. gardens or small areas of vacant/brownfield land) that have a weaker connection with the coastal landscape.

Area 12.1b, however, represents an area of undistinguished landscape of lower intrinsic value and sensitivity with no specific features of note other than the mature tree cover and vegetation around some of its margins and no direct connection with the coast. Although it has some value as part of the undeveloped coastal plain landscape, some development in this area could potentially be accommodated without unacceptable adverse effects on the Borough's most valued landscape resources and without adversely affecting the character and quality of the rest of the landscape in this LLCA. There are also opportunities to mitigate any effects of change on neighbouring areas through sensitive design and appropriate strengthening of the existing landscape framework.



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VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Views into the area from the south are primarily from the water, from which most of the area, apart from **area 12.1b**, is visible to some degree. However, vegetation along the coastal margins and within the area effectively interrupts or filters many of these low-level views. Most of the land to the south of Fareham Lake is in private ownership, occupied by industrial uses and Royal Navy land, with virtually no public views across the water to this area.

Apart from along the immediate boundaries of the area, views from land to the north are interrupted by the built development of Downend and Portchester and intervening vegetation cover. The viewpoint on Portsdown Hill below Fort Nelson provides expansive, elevated views from the north over this area but it appears only as a small component in the wide panoramic view of the urban and coastal landscape from this distance.

Views from the east are also mostly confined to views from the water, although Portchester Castle and the mature waterside vegetation cover at the far eastern end of the area is visible in some views from Southampton Road and across the water from the eastern side of Portsmouth Harbour (e.g. Lock View/Approach and Marina Keep). The rest of the area is not visible from this direction.

Views from distant areas to the west are blocked by the urban area of Fareham but there are views across to the Cams peninsula (area 12.1a) from various roads, public spaces and properties along the eastern edge of Fareham, including key views from Lower and Town Quays, the Bath Road recreation ground and from Military Road, Wallington, albeit partly filtered by vegetation around and within the peninsula.

The main views into the area are, however, from the immediate periphery and from within the area itself. Public views into and across **area 12.1a** are available from the Delme Roundabout and A27 at Cams Hill on its northern edge and from the public footpath that runs along the periphery of the peninsula. There are also extensive internal views from the golf course, Cams Hall and offices within the estate itself. Views from the school and neighbouring housing development on the eastern side are screened by woodland and boundary vegetation.

Open views into and across **area 12.1b** are available from much of its immediate periphery, in particular from properties overlooking the area along Romsey Avenue and Quintrel Avenue, from Cranleigh Road and from the Allan King Way, a long-distance footpath route that follows the western boundary of the area. However, strong vegetation cover along parts of the peripheral and internal boundaries helps to filter or interrupt views into and across the area, particularly along the eastern, southern and western edges of the northern group of fields. Built form also blocks views from the residential streets and properties behind the immediate edge of the area.

Despite the quite extensive cover of woodland and trees, there are also views into most parts of **area 12.1c**. At the western end, the Wicor recreation ground is well-contained by strong vegetation cover which screen most views from outside, but is visible to its users and also from the Allan King Way long distance footpath that runs through the middle of the area. Moving eastwards, this path together with the Wicor Path, provides opportunities for views into most of the area between the boatyard at Wicor Lake and housing at Cadour Drive, although parts of this area are obscured by woodland or scrub (e.g. an area of overgrown allotments behind Tattershall Crescent/Seaford Road). Most of the coastal strip between Cadour Drive and Bayley Avenue is overlooked by adjacent housing and visible from the coastal path (Allan King Way) which runs along the waterfront within this area.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Conversely, there are very few views into the area of land that lies between Bayley Avenue and Hospital Lane, which is occupied by allotments, a cemetery and private gardens/plots and small fields, with very limited access. Views from the coast path are hidden behind property boundaries and strong vegetation cover within and around this area. At the far eastern end of the area, there are views into most of the coastal land surrounding Portchester Castle from the public access network and from some adjoining properties. Land at the far north of this area is less visible as it is enclosed by mature woodland and vegetation.

Overall, quite a wide range of viewers will experience views of different parts of the area but the main viewers will be local residents in properties on the immediate boundary of the area and recreational users of the public rights of way network and open spaces along the coastal strip, as well as the golf course and recreation ground, and visitors to Portchester Castle.



Despite its low-lying nature and the presence of woodland and other screening vegetation, the overall visual sensitivity of **area 12.1** is considered moderate to high. Most parts of the area are open to some partial views at least from surrounding areas or from within, and the viewers affected (local residents and recreational users) are people who will be particularly focused on enjoyment of their surroundings and sensitive to changes in the character and quality of views.

This is particularly the case within the Cams peninsula and along the coastal strip (areas 2.1a and c), where views outwards across Portsmouth Harbour make a significant contribution to visual amenity. These are also the areas best served by the network of public footpaths and open spaces and which are most sensitive to views from neighbouring housing and from or across the water. There are a few minor exceptions to this along the coastal strip, where small-scale parcels of land are enclosed by strong vegetation and inaccessible to the public. Such areas may offer some limited potential for small-scale, sensitive infill development.

The quality of views is somewhat lower within **area 12.1b**, where surrounding built development and electricity pylons already intrude upon the character of the area and where there is no direct visual connection with the coast. Boundary vegetation already limits views around parts of the area and there is an opportunity to strengthen and extend this screening by additional planting to reduce visibility from neighbouring properties and the Allan King Way. This area is, therefore, considered to be of moderate visual sensitivity and with a greater potential for accommodating development, as long as this is accompanied by extensive supplementary planting to maximise the screening potential of boundary vegetation.

SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Given its physical location, bounded on three sides by the open water of Portsmouth Harbour, this area does not have a role to play in preventing the coalescence of settlements, in maintaining a clear distinction between town and country, nor defining the natural 'setting' or limits to growth of the urban area (which is effectively defined by the coast itself). However, it does form part of the visual setting of Portchester, particularly when viewed from, or across, the water and acts as a 'green' buffer of open spaces and vegetation along the shoreline, softening the impact of development on the urban edge.

This fringe of greenspace along the coastal margin not only forms an important part of the character and setting of Portchester as a settlement, but also is a vital part of the setting of the heritage features at Portchester Castle and within the Cams Hall Conservation Area. The open character of the Cams peninsula in turn provides an important setting for Fareham Lake and the creek and it has also been recognised as contributing to the setting of the historic settlements of Lower Quay and Upper Quay in the Town Quay Conservation Area Character Assessment (2005).

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The most critical and sensitive parts of the setting are those areas along the coastal margin that are visible in views from and across the water, principally the Cams peninsula (area 2.1a) and the most prominent areas of undeveloped land along the coastal margin (area 2.1c). Any development that urbanises the coastline or affects the 'green', undeveloped character of the coastal setting of Portchester and important heritage assets should be avoided. However, there may be some potential for development within areas that are less critical to the visual setting of Portchester and/or the heritage assets. These are primarily the 'inland' areas adjacent to the existing urban edge within area 12.1b, and small pockets of enclosed land that are hidden from view within area 12.1c.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

This area as a whole makes a significant contribution to the local GI network through its well-connected network of public footpaths and open spaces, the provision of significant areas of land for informal and formal recreation (including golf course, sports pitches, skate park, open spaces and play areas) and the network of woodlands, tree belts, scrub, grasslands and other vegetation along the coastal corridor. These features are mostly concentrated within areas 12.1a and c, although area 12.1b contains some valuable boundary vegetation and the Allen King Way long distance path follows an enclosed route along its western boundary. This route provides important links between the coast and Portsdown Hill to the north of the Borough.

The PUSH GI Strategy includes one project of some relevance to this area: Project C9 Wallington Estuary (which runs along the western side of the Cams peninsula) which seeks to conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of this area, retaining its character and the contribution it makes to the setting and sense of place of adjacent urban areas. This project is repeated within the Fareham GI Strategy as Project F19.

Other projects of some relevance to this area within the Fareham GI Strategy are:

- F38 – promoting cycle route connections from Cams Hill through Portchester to link with Portsmouth network;
- PO3 – promoting improved public access to Cam Hall Golf Club;
- PO6 –promoting the development of alternative footpath routes through the urban area to divert recreational pressures away from sensitive ecological areas (SPA) along the coast and within Portsmouth Harbour;
- BW33 – relates to the Portchester Castle to Hoeford Lake Shoreline Defence Strategy which provides guidance for the future of coastal defences along the frontages in Fareham and Portchester.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

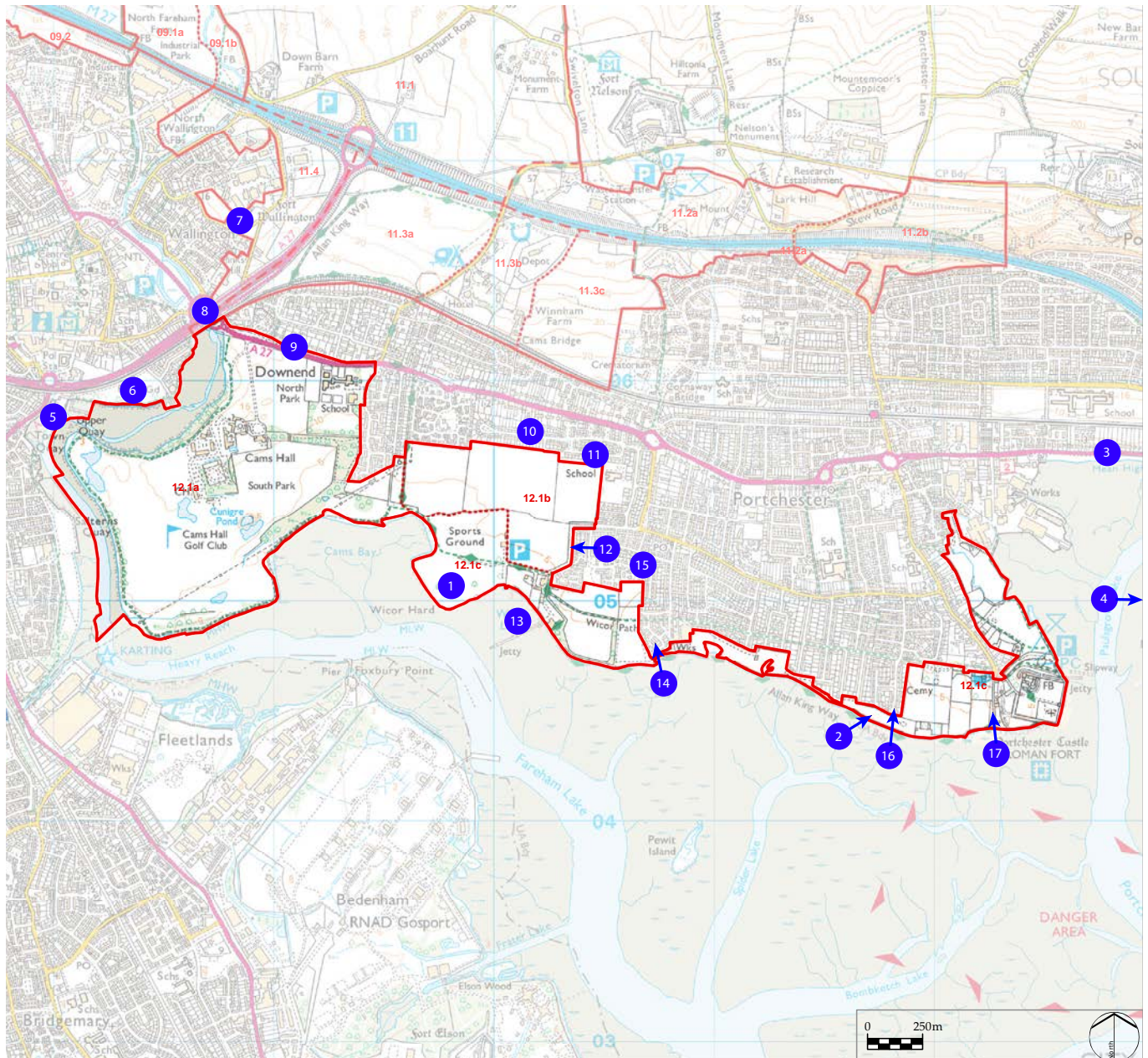
The area contains a number of important GI assets, including a valuable network of footpaths and other PRoW including long distance recreational footpath routes. These assets should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to maximise their value, and development that would adversely affect them should be avoided.

Opportunities to provide additional access links and extended public access within this area should be considered but need to be balanced against the need to protect valuable ecological assets from disturbance, especially habitats of international and national importance along the coastline.



LLCA 12.1 - CAMS/WICOR COASTAL FRINGE

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Wicor Recreation Ground		Romsey Avenue
	Local Landscape Character Area		Kenwood Road		Quintrel Avenue
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Southampton Road (A27)		Cranleigh Road
			Lock View/Approach and Marina Keep (off map)		Wicor Lake
			Lower & Town Quays, Fareham		Cador Drive
			Bath Road Recreation Ground		Tattershall Crescent/Seafield Road
			Military Road, Wallington		Bayley Avenue
			Delme roundabout		Hospital Lane
			Cams Hill (A27)		

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Despite its fringe characteristics and moderate landscape quality, much of this area is of relatively high sensitivity, particularly in respect of its role as an undeveloped landscape setting for Portchester and for the Conservation Areas (Cams, Portchester Castle and Town Quay) and other important heritage assets within the area, its visual sensitivity, its close relationship with the waterscape and internationally important habitats within Portsmouth Harbour, and its contribution to the local GI network.

These sensitivities are most pronounced within **areas 12.1a** and **c**, where most of the valued assets are concentrated and there is a direct interface with the estuary. The ability to accommodate development is also affected by the sheer lack of space in an already tightly confined corridor of land within area 12.1c. Development potential is therefore very limited within these areas, the only exceptions possibly being the enhancement of existing commercial sites through redevelopment, or some very limited small-scale infill development in enclosed parcels of land closely associated with existing built development (e.g. private gardens or small areas of vacant/brownfield land) that have a weaker connection with the coastal landscape.

Area 12.1b, however, represents an area of undistinguished landscape of lower intrinsic value and sensitivity with no specific features of note other than the mature tree cover and vegetation around some of its margins, no direct connection with the coast or role in the setting of urban areas or heritage assets, and a very limited contribution to the local GI network. Although it has some value as part of the undeveloped coastal plain landscape, development in this area could potentially be accommodated without unacceptable adverse effects on the Borough's most valued landscape, heritage and ecological resources and without adversely affecting the character and quality of the rest of the landscape in this LLCA. This is particularly the case within the fields adjacent to the existing urban edge to the north where development could form a more 'natural' extension of the existing urban area.

Development within this area should provide substantial benefits in terms of strengthening landscape character and enhancing the GI and habitat networks, as well as minimising any effects on the visual amenity of neighbouring residents. It should also respond to the distinctive 'amenity' character of the local area, for example, by creating a new 'parkland' setting for development that reflects the woodland blocks, avenues and groups of trees, lawns and designed landscape of the adjacent Cams Hall estate. This should incorporate substantial networks of open space and wildlife habitat to divert pressures away from the more sensitive parts of the coastal margins.

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid any intrusion or adverse impacts on the settings of important heritage assets and Conservation Areas at Cams Hall, Portchester Castle and Town Quay, Fareham and any further urbanisation of the coastal margin (areas 12.1a and c);
- Protect and enhance the cover of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation within the area as a whole, to maximise its screening/shelter, landscape and wildlife value;
- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of recognised ecological value within the area (SINCs), and sensitive ecological resources within the adjacent Portsmouth Harbour;
- Maintain the function and quality of the existing GI network within the area as a whole and take advantage of opportunities for enhancement of these assets, in particular within some of the more 'sterile' areas of amenity grassland along the coastal margin within area 12.1c;
- Within area 12.1c, be sensitively located and integrated within existing small-scale plots that are closely associated with existing development, are of low visual sensitivity and do not contribute to the character and setting of the coastal landscape, urban area or heritage assets;
- Be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality (e.g. individual or small groups of detached dwellings in large, well-treed plots);
- Within area 12.1b, be designed to create a distinctive character and strong sense of place within a high quality setting that reflects the local landscape context. Appropriate design references might include individual groupings of built development within a 'parkland' or estate setting (reflecting the adjacent Cam Hall landscape), with the introduction of substantial new woodland blocks, avenues and groups of trees, extensive areas of lawns/open grassland and characteristic road/boundary treatments etc.
- Within area 12.1b, protect and enhance the quality of the Allan King Way and incorporate significant new areas of greenspace and access/habitat networks, providing good connections to the wider GI network and with surrounding urban areas;
- Within area 12.1b, provide appropriate landscape buffers (i.e. corridors of new tree/ woodland planting and open space) around the edges of the area to protect the visual amenity of neighbouring residents;
- Avoid the introduction of buildings or structures that would be visually prominent within the open, flat landscape;
- Use native species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions within new planting schemes.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



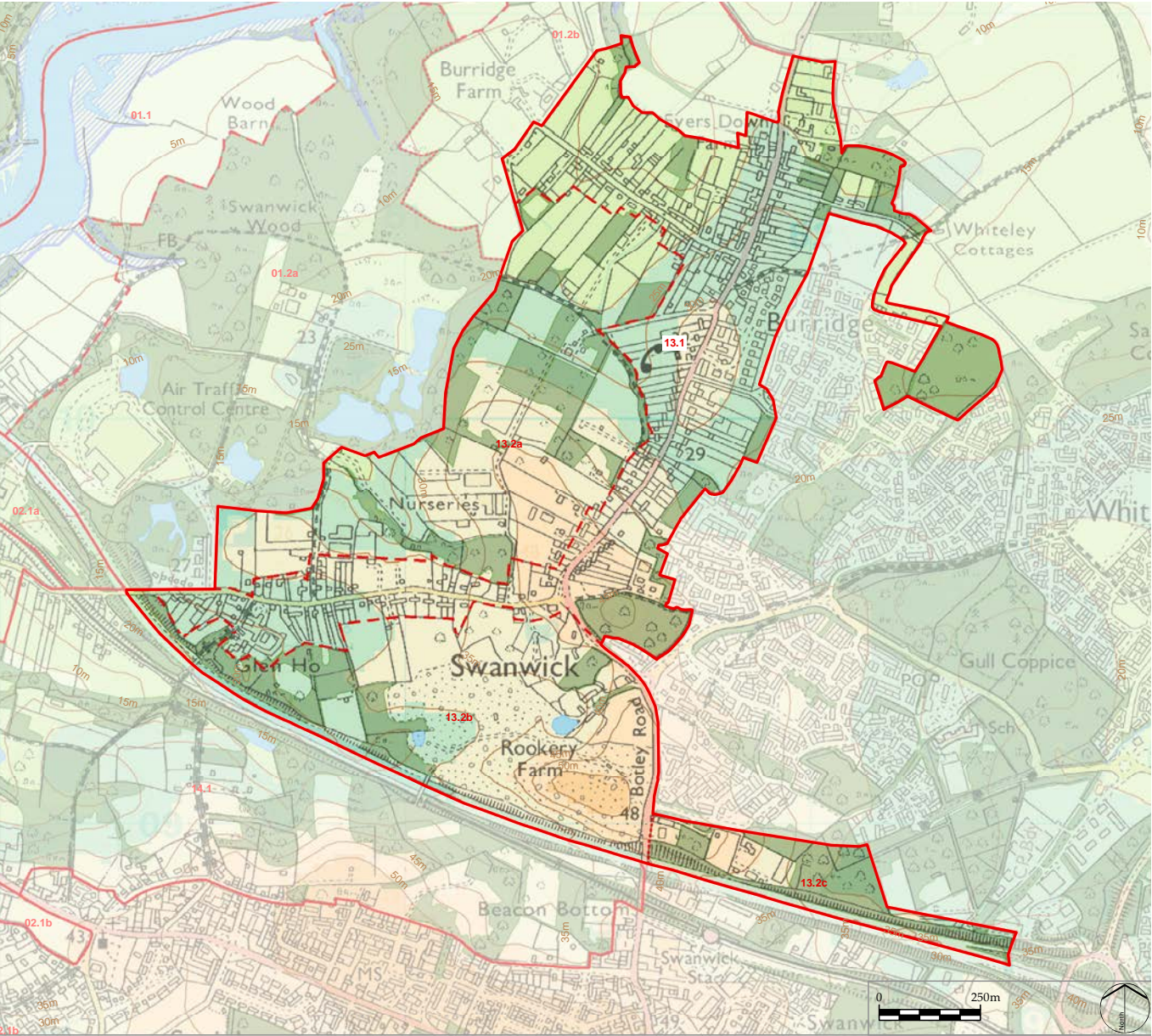
LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

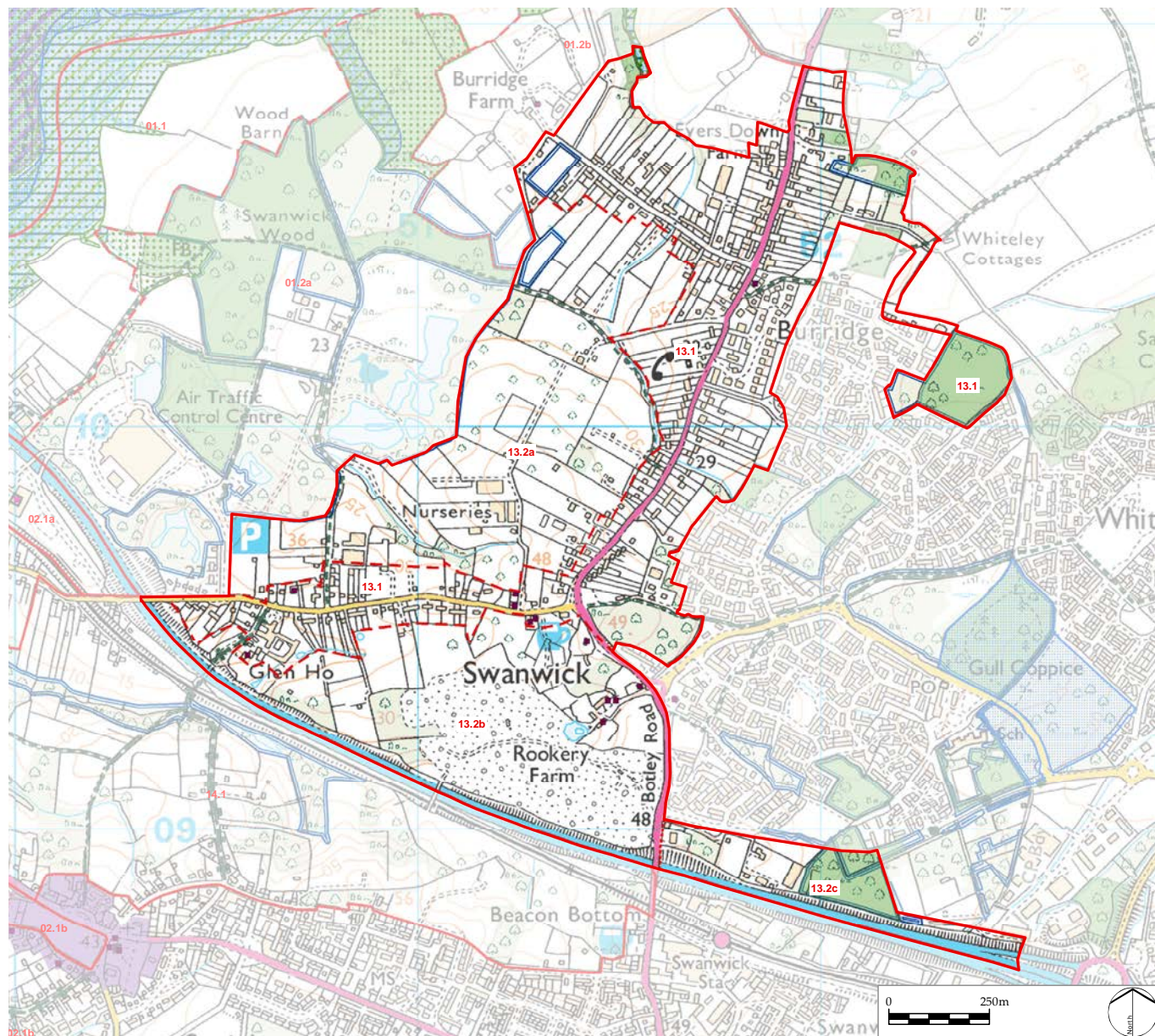
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		5m Contours
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Elevation (m AOD)
	Water		
	Flood Alert Areas		

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

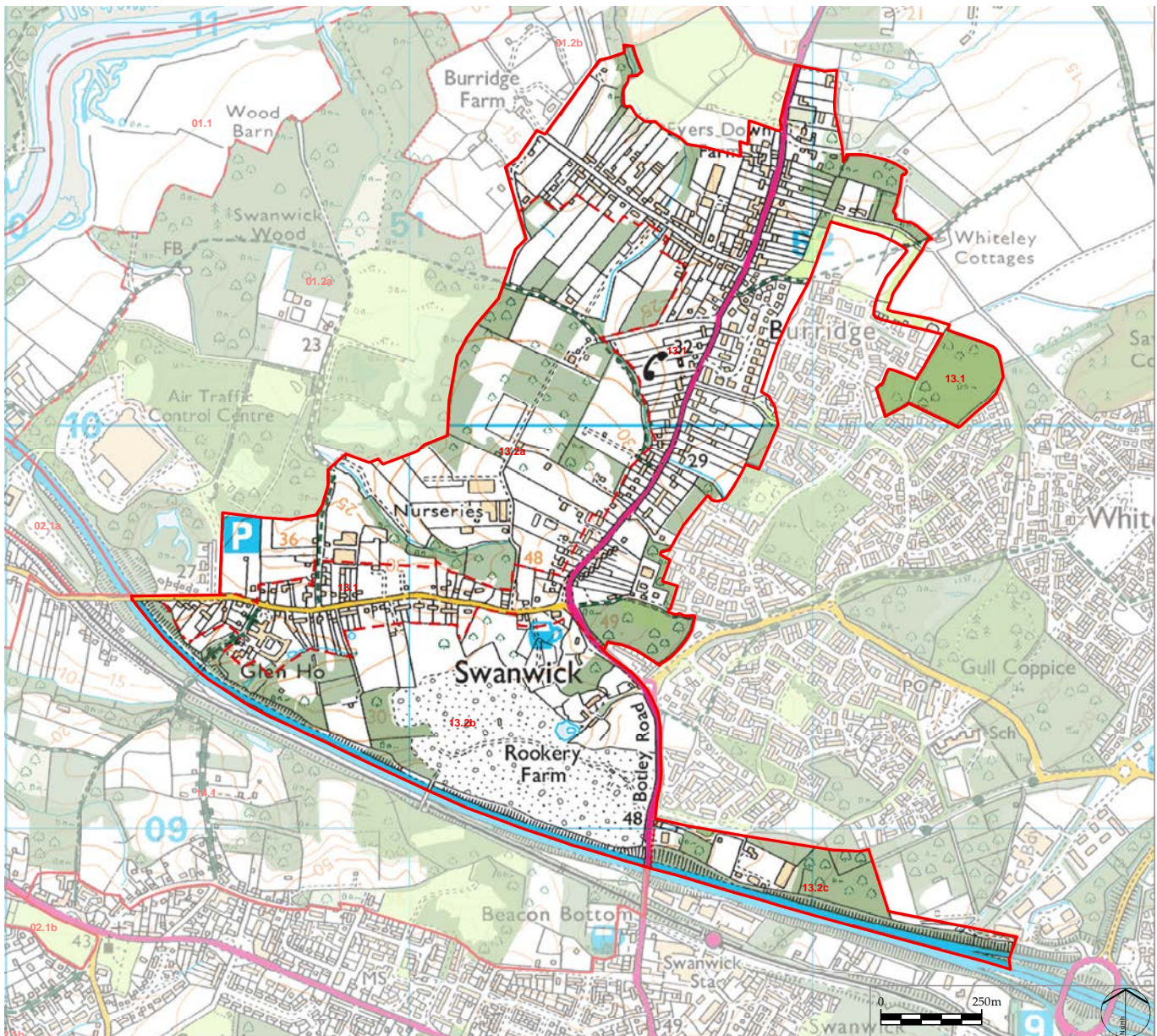
	Landscape Character Area		Site of Special Scientific Interest
	Local Landscape Character Area		Special Protection Area
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Ancient Woodland
			Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Designations

Listed Building Grade

I II II*

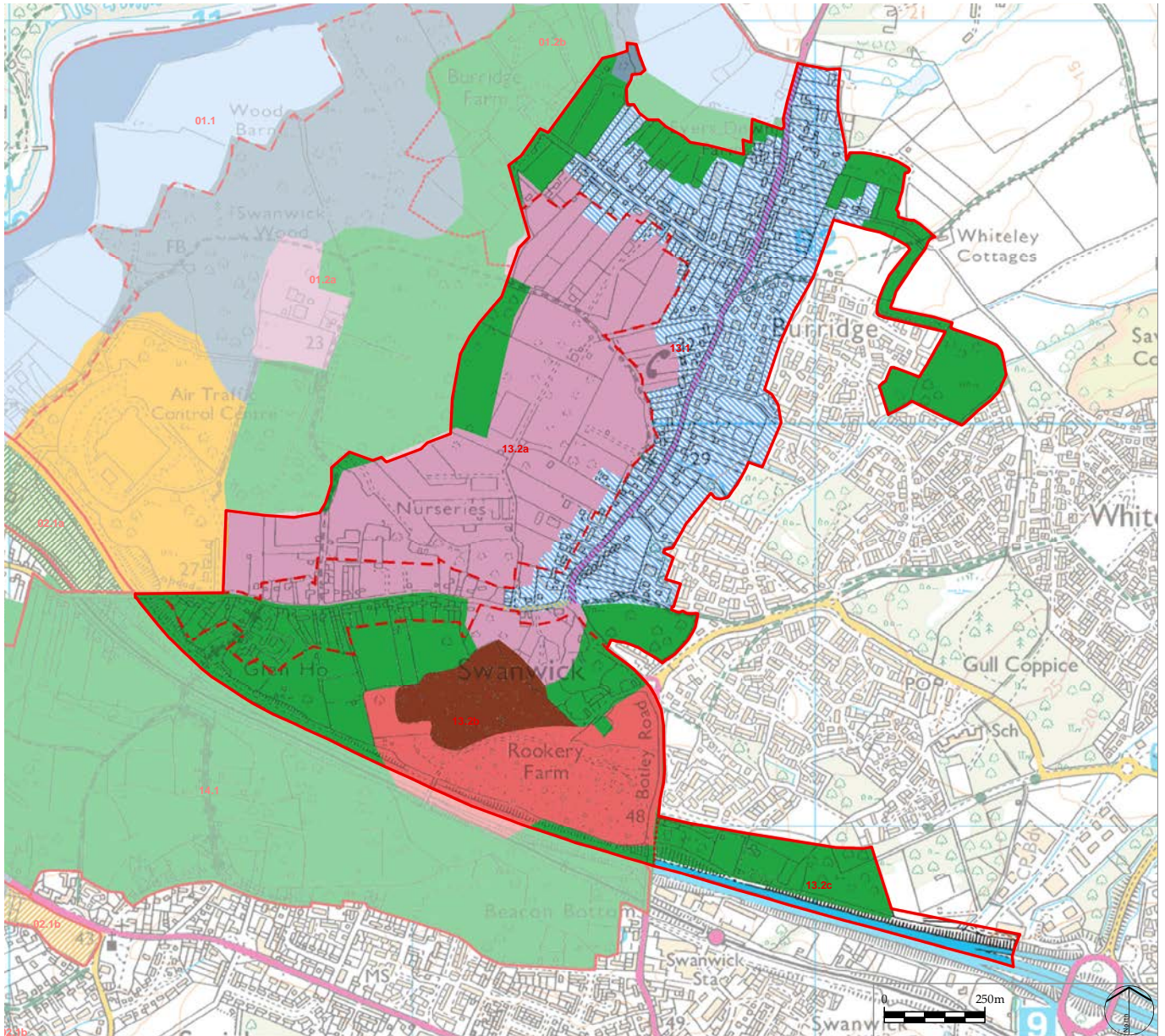
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



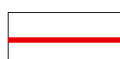
LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		Existing Open Space
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		
	Green Infrastructure Projects		

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND



Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area



Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types



Disturbed Landscapes



Recolonising Landscape



Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale



Horticulture & Smallholdings: Small Scale



Enclosed Valley Side



Urban: Low Density Fringe/ Ribbon Development

LANDSCAPE RESOURCE - SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area is dominated by a more or less continuous strip of low density ribbon development along the road corridors of Swanwick Lane, Botley Road and Burridge Road. The area was characterised as urban type 'low density fringe and ribbon development' in the 1996 assessment and is essentially urban in character, despite being included within the category of 'areas outside of defined urban settlement boundaries' on the Fareham Local Plan proposals map.

Buildings mostly comprises detached properties facing the road/street, with suburban frontages and long garden plots to the rear. Roadside development is typically backed by farmland/countryside (e.g. to the west) but development to the east of Botley Road is now more or less contiguous with housing development on the western edges of Whiteley, separated by only a few small blocks of woodland and areas of open space.

In essence, this is continuous residential ribbon development of relatively recent origin and without special townscape or architectural merit, but typified by a leafy streetscape, long garden plots and a distinctively suburban character.

There are no landscape designations affecting this area and it is, therefore, of low value as a landscape resource. However, trees and woodland are valuable landscape features and should be retained where possible.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Built development is the dominant characteristic of his area and further infill development would not be out of place in this suburban environment. However, any new development would need to respond to the existing settlement pattern and retain mature trees/ woodland and areas of public open space.



VISUAL ENVIRONMENT – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Although the immediate road sides are highly visible from Swanwick Lane, Botley Road and Burridge Road, the near-continuous built frontage means that land behind is substantially screened by built form and vegetation within gardens, with only occasional gaps allowing glimpses through. Views into these ‘backlands’ from wider surrounding areas are also restricted by the extensive cover of woodland and other mature vegetation that characterises land to the west and south, while land to the rear of properties along the eastern side of Botley Road is also substantially screened from views from Whiteley by blocks of mature vegetation or buildings.

However, some views into these areas are possible from minor lanes and the PRoW network that provide connections between the main roads and areas behind, e.g. Glen Road, Sopwith Way, New Road and footpaths off Swanwick Lane, and Green Lane and footpaths connections with Whiteley off Botley Road. These routes allow some glimpses into the rear of properties but many of these are tree lined with few open views.

The main viewers will be local residents and users of the road and PRoW network within the area and the views they will experience are strongly influenced by their urban/suburban context.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Local residents and users of the local PRoW network will be very conscious of their surroundings but the introduction of built development into already urbanised views is less likely to have a significant impact on the character of those views than in a more rural setting. Visual sensitivity is therefore judged to be low with some potential for small-scale, sensitive development without substantial adverse effects on views or visual amenity. Existing mature vegetation should be retained, particularly woods, copses, orchards and other stands of mature trees, and there is scope for further mitigation of potential visual impacts through investment in additional planting of a similar character.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO
SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Most of the area comprises built development within the settlements of Swanwick and Burrridge but there are few parcels of land included within this area at the rear of properties that are important to the setting and character of these settlements. In particular, the blocks of woodland and planting to the rear of properties along the eastern side of Botley Road provide visual separation between Burrridge and more recent development at Whiteley. Although they occupy a very narrow strip of land between these two settlements, they do help to maintain a semblance of separate identity and should be maintained and enhanced to retain this function.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Further small-scale infill development within this area would not adversely affect its setting or character, as long as any such development responds sensitively to local settlement character, and the framework of woodland and vegetation that separates Burrridge from Whiteley is maintained.



LLCA 13.1 – SWANWICK AND BURRIDGE ROAD CORRIDORS

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

There are two main ways in which this area contributes to the existing local GI network: through the lanes and footpaths that connect into the wider network of footpaths and open spaces within Swanwick Woods to the west and within Whiteley to the east; and through the woodland, mature trees and vegetation along green lanes extending out from the settlements (e.g. Green Lane in Burridge) and along the rear of properties on the eastern edge of the area, which form valuable wildlife corridors and links with habitat networks in surrounding areas.

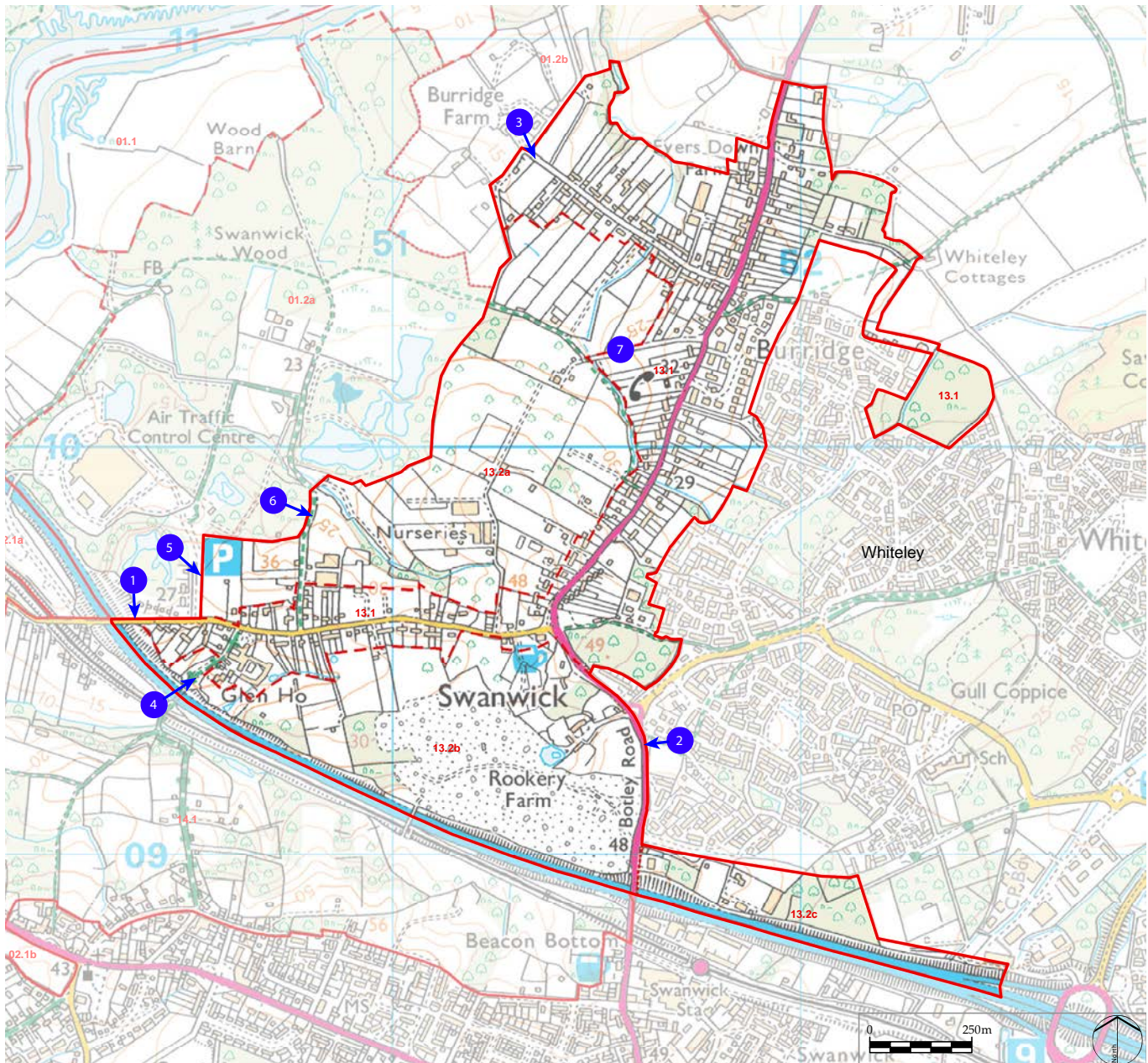
SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The Fareham GI Strategy does not identify any projects within this area but the links into the network of access routes and habitats within Swanwick Woods provides support to the strategic and local GI projects for the River Hamble Corridor (PUSH GI project F4) and the Hamble Catchment BOA (Fareham GI project BW37). It will be important to maintain these and other assets within the area, and enhance the network where opportunities arise.



LLCA 13.1 - SWANWICK AND BURRIDGE ROAD CORRIDORS

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		1 Swanwick Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area		2 Botley Road
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		3 Burridge Road
			4 Glen Road
			5 Sopwith Way
			6 New Road
			7 Green Lane

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a whole, this area is of relatively low sensitivity to development as it is essentially an 'urban settlement' rather than an area of countryside. The main sensitivity lies in the need to protect the character and identity of the settlements of Swanwick and Burridge and prevent their complete coalescence with Whiteley, which has spread westwards almost to the edge of Burridge, and to protect and strengthen the area's GI links and assets.

There may be some scope for accommodating small-scale infill development within the area but the design response for any such proposals would need to be very carefully considered and sensitive to local settlement character in order to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality and the distinctive character of the local settlement;
- Maintain and strengthen the green 'buffer' of woodland, trees and greenspace between the eastern edge of Burridge and western edge of Whiteley areas, and other established vegetation that contributes to the character of the settlements and surrounding area;
- Maintain and enhance existing footpaths, green lanes and other links within the area, to maximise their role as multi-functional components of the local and wider green infrastructure network.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This area forms the hinterland to the settlements of Swanwick and Burridge. As a whole, the area is characterised by a strong, mature framework of woodland, trees and hedgerows within which is set a complex mix of land uses, including horticultural activity and glasshouses, small-holdings, pockets of open farmland under pasture or arable, disturbed landscapes arising from mineral extraction and landfill operations and occasional individual dwellings/farm buildings. It forms three discrete parcels of land which display some variations in land use and landscape character.

Area 13.2a comprises the land lying between the edge of Swanwick Woods to the west and the rear of properties along Swanwick Lane, Botley Road and Burridge Road. This area is characterised by a distinctive pattern of small-scale fields, typically occupied by pasture or horticultural land uses. These are contained by a strong framework of mature hedgerows, trees and blocks of woodland, providing a strong sense of enclosure and seclusion. The character and condition of the landscape is generally intact and unspoilt but there is some localised degradation and intrusion from horticultural and other buildings, and some urbanising influences, particularly in close proximity to the edge of settlements. The woodlands and mature hedgerows and trees are important landscape features and help to mitigate the effects of these potentially intrusive features, particularly those associated with the small-holdings, nurseries and other commercial enterprises that occur within the area.



The landscape of **area 13.2b** has been substantially modified through mineral extraction and processing, landfill and recycling operations and restoration at the Rookery Farm site which dominates this area. The centre of the area is occupied by an extensive excavated area occupied by machinery and infrastructure associated with a minerals recycling facility, while the southern part of the area is now occupied by a large artificial grassy mound where the former landfill site has been capped and restored. Around the edges of the disturbed area is a mosaic of woodland, small-scale fields and paddocks, remnants of orchards, areas of rough grassland and scrub, playing fields, horticultural uses and a number of individual private properties set with large, well-treed gardens or grounds. The area is still undergoing change and has an urban fringe character.

Area 13.2c is a relatively small parcel of landscape that is 'captured' between the M27 motorway to the south, the Botley Road to the west and the urban edge of Whiteley to the north and east. It comprises a similar mix of small-scale pasture, a nursery and private residences located within a heavily wooded and enclosed setting. The character of the area is influenced by its proximity to the M27 motorway, neighbouring development and other urbanising influences (although these are partially mitigated by the dense tree cover) and it lacks a rural, 'countryside' character.

There are no current or former landscape designations affecting this area and no evidence of any particular value being attached to any of these areas. However, the extensive woodland cover and strong framework of hedges, trees, remnant orchards and other established vegetation are important landscape features within the area as a whole.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The sensitivity of the landscape resource in this area varies between the three sub-areas. The character and quality of the landscape within areas 13.2b and 13.2c has been significantly affected and compromised by their immediate context (e.g. neighbouring roads and built development) and disruptive land uses (e.g. mineral extraction/processing and landfill operations). Area 13.2b in particular has undergone extensive change, its former landscape of mixed farmland, woodland and orchards having been replaced by a highly modified landscape as a result of quarrying and landfill operations. However, the extensive woodland cover and strong framework of hedges, trees and other established vegetation are important landscape features within the area and they help to mitigate some of the intrusive land uses. Given the low landscape sensitivity of these two areas, development could potentially be accommodated without undue adverse effects on the landscape resource, as long as the existing cover of woodlands, trees and hedgerows is maintained.

Area 13.2a retains a more intact and essentially rural character, albeit with some localised degradation. However, the strong framework of woodland, hedgerows and trees helps to mitigate such influences which have only a relatively localised impact on landscape quality, and the area generally has an attractive, peaceful and enclosed character. Overall, it is of moderate landscape sensitivity with limited potential for development. However, there may be potential to accommodate some small-scale development in areas of lower sensitivity where landscape character and quality is partly degraded and where the effects could be mitigated by the existing framework of woodland or by new planting, for example, along the eastern and southern fringes of the area adjacent to existing built development, particularly where the landscape is affected by horticultural or non-agricultural land uses. Development would need to fit within the existing structure of woodland and other mature vegetation, and avoid any disturbance or other impacts on the character of the landscape within the nearby Swanwick Wood, in order to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

Most of this generally low-lying area is screened from view by vegetation and by buildings along the road corridors.

The extensive woodland within and around area 13.2a prevents most views from surrounding areas and also limits intervisibility within the area. There are no views into this area from the main roads and views from properties within BurrIDGE and Swanwick are also restricted by intervening vegetation, although there may be some glimpses from some upper, rear windows. The principal views into this area are from the two PRoW that cross the area leading into Swanwick Wood (Green Lane and New Road) but these views are very localised and interrupted by hedgerows and other vegetation along the lanes and within the area.

Vegetation, built form and the restored landform of the landfill site prevent views into Area 13.2b from Swanwick Lane and Botley Road, as well as from the wider surrounding area. The motorway embankment obstructs any views from the south and public access is very restricted within the area, with only a short section of footpath within the woodland at the far western end, so there are virtually no opportunities to obtain views into this area. Views into area 13.2c are also very limited, restricted by dense woodland cover, the motorway embankment and built development.

The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would therefore be some local residents whose properties back onto areas 13.2a and 13.2b and users of the PRoW within area 13.2a.



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SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Local residents and users of the local PRow network will be very conscious of their surroundings and highly sensitive to change. However, the views that they experience are relatively limited in number and extent because of the screening effects of the extensive vegetation cover in these areas and the opportunities for further mitigation of potential visual impact through appropriate new planting. Visual sensitivity is therefore judged to be relatively low with some potential for small-scale, sensitive development without substantial adverse effects on views or visual amenity, particularly in areas where views are already affected by urban or other detracting influences. Existing mature vegetation should be retained, particularly woods, copses, orchards and other stands of mature trees, and there is scope for further mitigation of potential visual impacts through investment in additional planting of a similar character.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Area 13.2a forms part of the extensive swathe of countryside on either side of the River Hamble that separates settlements at Swanwick, Burridge and Whiteley in the east from the edge of Southampton in the west (not currently designated as a Strategic Gap). However, as a relatively small component of this extensive 'buffer' it performs a comparatively modest role in preventing coalescence of settlements. Areas 13.2b and 13.2c also occupy gaps separating Swanwick/Whiteley from urban areas within the Western Wards to the south of the M27 but the motorway corridor provides both physical and visual separation and these areas do not perform a significant role in maintaining the separate identity of these settlements.

Much of the land within these areas is hidden from view and, therefore, does not contribute to the visual setting of the settlements. However, the mature blocks of woodland within **area 13.2a** form part of a wooded background that contributes to the character of Swanwick and Burridge where it is glimpsed in views from local roads, paths and public spaces, and there is a general perception when moving around the area that these settlements are set within (almost 'carved out' from) the well-wooded landscape that is characteristic of this north-western part of the Borough. The woodland cover in these areas is, therefore, quite critical to the setting of the settlements and should be maintained.

These areas (particularly area 13.2a) also have an important role in maintaining the characteristic form, or shape, of these distinctively linear settlements. The separate identity of Swanwick and Burridge is quite difficult to discern, with a continuous built frontage connecting the two settlements with no clear distinction between the end of one and start of the other. Their typical linear form has, however, remained relatively intact, typically comprising a single row of houses fronting the road network and backed by long, narrow gardens with open land beyond. 'Filling in' these hinterland areas with development would potentially disrupt this traditional settlement pattern and could lead to a somewhat amorphous urban form. This issue is not relevant in area 13.2c which is removed from the linear settlement and more closely associated with the settlement pattern that has developed at Whiteley.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The key factors defining the character of these settlements are their heavily wooded landscape settings and their distinctive linear pattern of built form. **Area 13.2a** is particularly sensitive in both respects as it contains substantial blocks of woodland and mature vegetation and it forms the characteristic 'undeveloped' hinterland to the linear development along Swanwick Lane and Botley Road. The potential for development in this area would be constrained by the need to retain the woodland cover and to respect local settlement form, avoiding wholesale infilling and reflecting the traditional pattern of linear development along access routes (such as along Burridge Road).

Areas 13.2b and 13.2c have a less critical role but, nevertheless, any development in these areas should be set within mature woodland and vegetation and similarly reflect local settlement patterns, including dispersed individual dwellings within large plots typical of these hinterland areas.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

There are no specific strategic or local GI projects identified within these areas within the PUSH and Fareham strategies. However, these areas make various contributions to the local GI network through access and habitat links.

Area 13.2a contains a strong framework of woodland, mature hedgerows and trees and green lanes that connect into the network of habitats within the adjacent Swanwick Wood/Lakes area and provide corridors for wildlife through the area. It also contains two PRoW and access links connecting Swanwick and Burrridge with Swanwick Wood and the wider Hamble Valley to the west.

Areas 13.2b and 13.2c also contain significant woodland blocks that provide links with habitats within the motorway corridor and woodland within the Whiteley area, and other areas of scrub, grassland, remnants of orchards and developing habitats associated with the Rookery Farm site in area 13.2b also contribute to the local habitat network. However public access is currently limited with no PRoW or designated public open space within these areas (although it is understood that permissive access may potentially be granted to the restored landfill area in future, as part of proposals to retain a permanent recycling facility at the site).

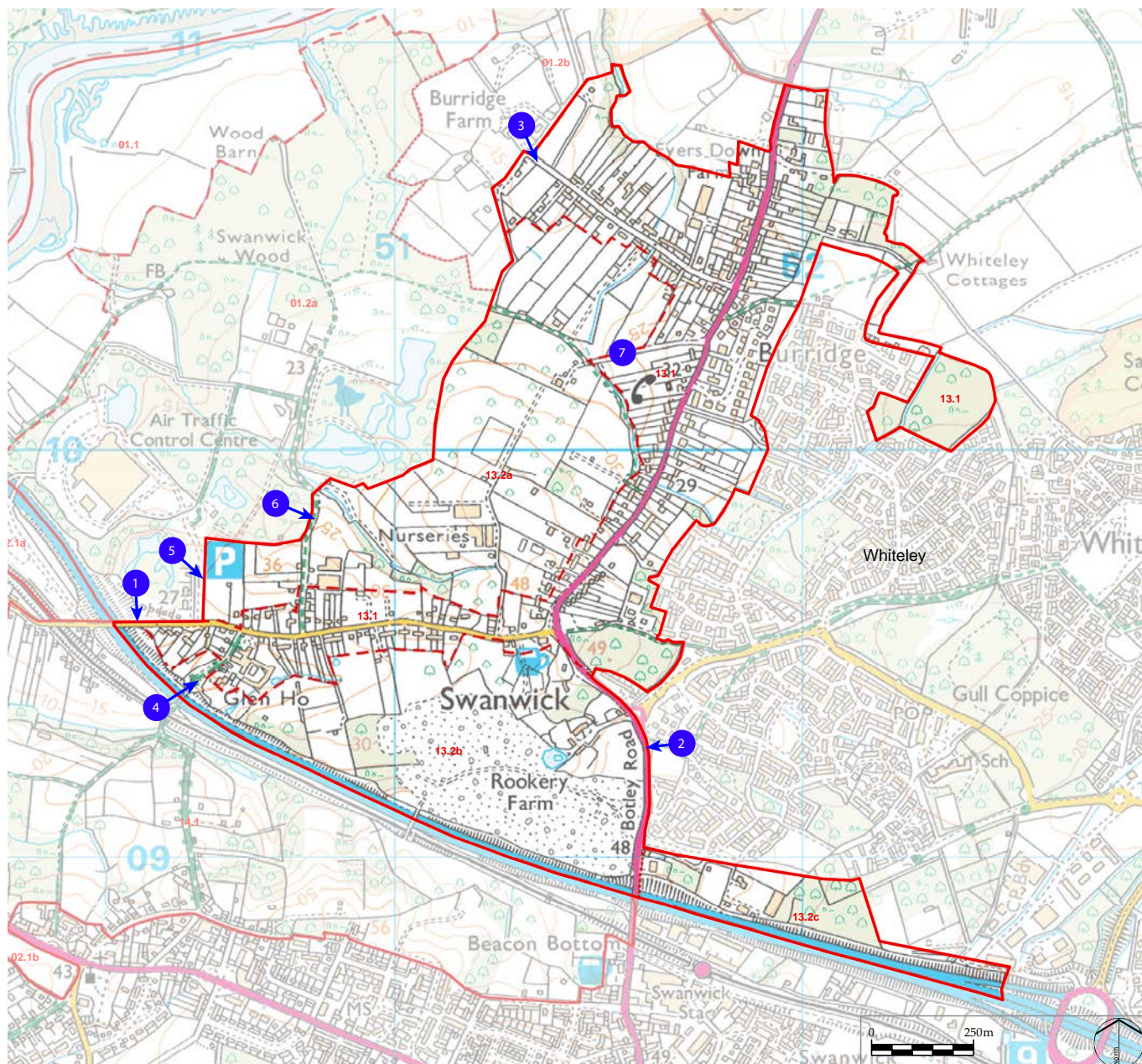
SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The Fareham GI Strategy does not identify any projects within this area but the links between area 13.2a and the network of access routes and habitats within Swanwick Woods provides support to the strategic and local GI projects for the River Hamble Corridor (PUSH GI project F4) and the Hamble Catchment BOA (Fareham GI project BW37). Any development within these areas should maintain these and other GI assets, and enhance the network where opportunities arise, in particular, any opportunities to provide enhanced access within area 13.2b.



LLCA 13.2 - SWANWICK AND BURRIDGE FRINGES

LOCATION PLAN FOR ROADS AND OTHER FEATURES



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		1 Swanwick Lane
	Local Landscape Character Area		2 Botley Road
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		3 Burridge Road
			4 Glen Road
			5 Sopwith Way
			6 New Road
			7 Green Lane

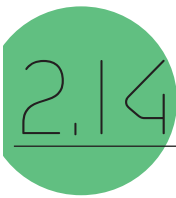
DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There is a mixed picture of sensitivities across this area as a whole. **Area 13.2a** is the most sensitive area, particularly in respect of the quality of the landscape resource, the role it plays in defining the setting and character of settlements and the contribution it makes to the local GI framework. However, it is visually well-contained and the strong framework of woodland and mature hedgerows and trees would help to integrate development within the landscape and provide it with a quality setting. Overall, this area offers some potential for small-scale development that follows the existing settlement and field pattern, especially where it is related to existing built development, or where the landscape is already affected by horticultural or non-agricultural land uses. However, proposals for larger-scale infill would fundamentally alter local landscape and settlement character and is therefore considered undesirable.

Areas 13.2b and 13.2c generally have fewer sensitivities and a greater potential for development. However, the established woodland, trees, orchards and other vegetation within these areas are important features contributing to landscape character, the local GI network and the setting of settlements, and should be maintained. Together with the need to maintain distinctive local settlement patterns and the constraints on development imposed by minerals and landfill activity at Rookery Farm, the retention of woodland cover limits the extent of land available for development within either area.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Avoid damage or disturbance to features of landscape or ecological importance, in particular areas of semi-natural woodland and established hedgerows and trees along field boundaries, within these areas and adjacent land (e.g. Swanwick Lakes Nature Reserve);
- Invest in measures to maintain and strengthen the existing structure of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value;
- Reflect the distinctive settlement pattern within the local area, i.e. linear development along access routes or a dispersed pattern of individual dwellings within large well-treed plots, and be of a scale and character appropriate to the locality;
- Fit within the existing field pattern and woodland structure;
- Be located in areas of lower sensitivity where landscape character and quality is partly degraded and where the effects could be mitigated by the existing framework of woodland or by new planting (e.g. adjacent to existing built development, particularly where the landscape is affected by horticultural or non-agricultural land uses or other urbanising influences);
- Maintain the essentially quiet countryside character of the hinterland areas and the rural character of lanes and access routes, avoiding intrusive or inappropriate urban styles of lighting, signage, paving etc;
- Avoid the introduction of any structures that would be visually intrusive within the wider landscape, e.g. masts or tall buildings;
- Maintain and enhance existing footpaths, access routes and links within the area, to maximise their role as multi-functional components of the local and wider green infrastructure network
- Provide opportunities to extend the access network and links to neighbouring areas and to create new areas of publicly accessible greenspace within the area;
- Use native species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions within new planting schemes.






2.14 LCA 14: NORTH SARISBURY

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



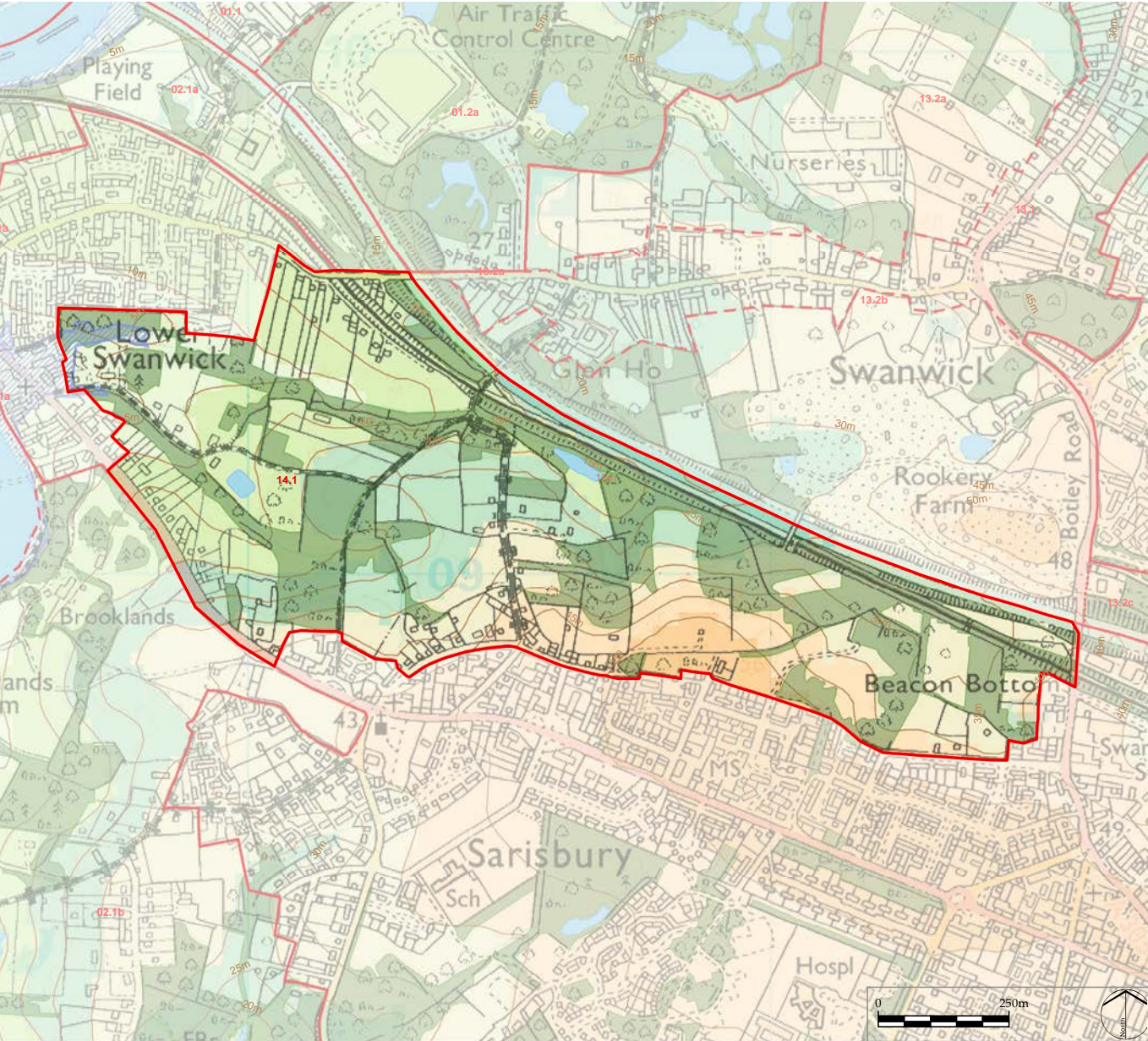
LEGEND

-  Landscape Character Area
-  Local Landscape Character Area
-  Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision



Location Diagram

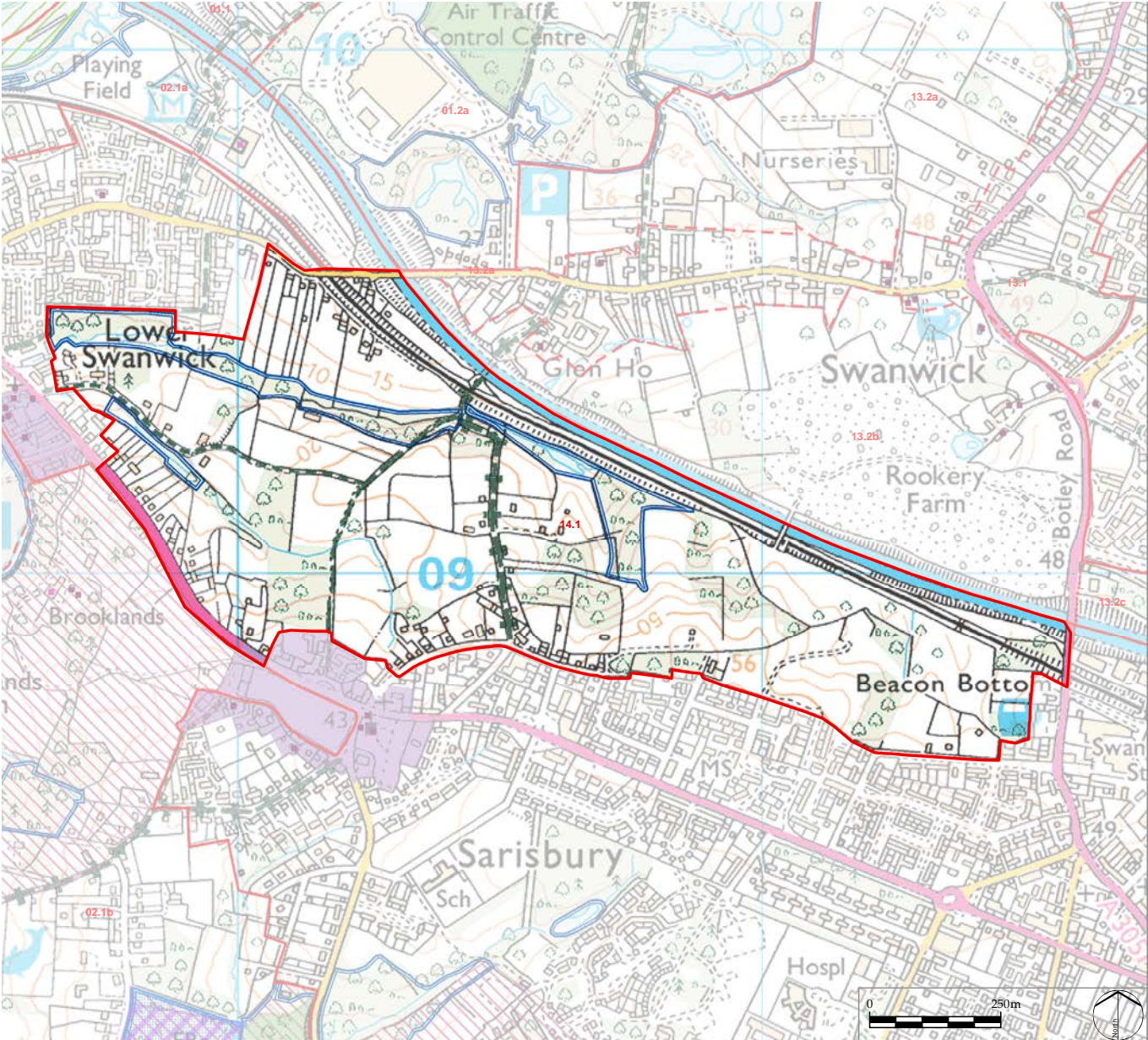
PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		5m Contours
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Elevation (m AOD)
	Water		0m
	Flood Alert Areas		70m

PLANNING CONTEXT



LEGEND

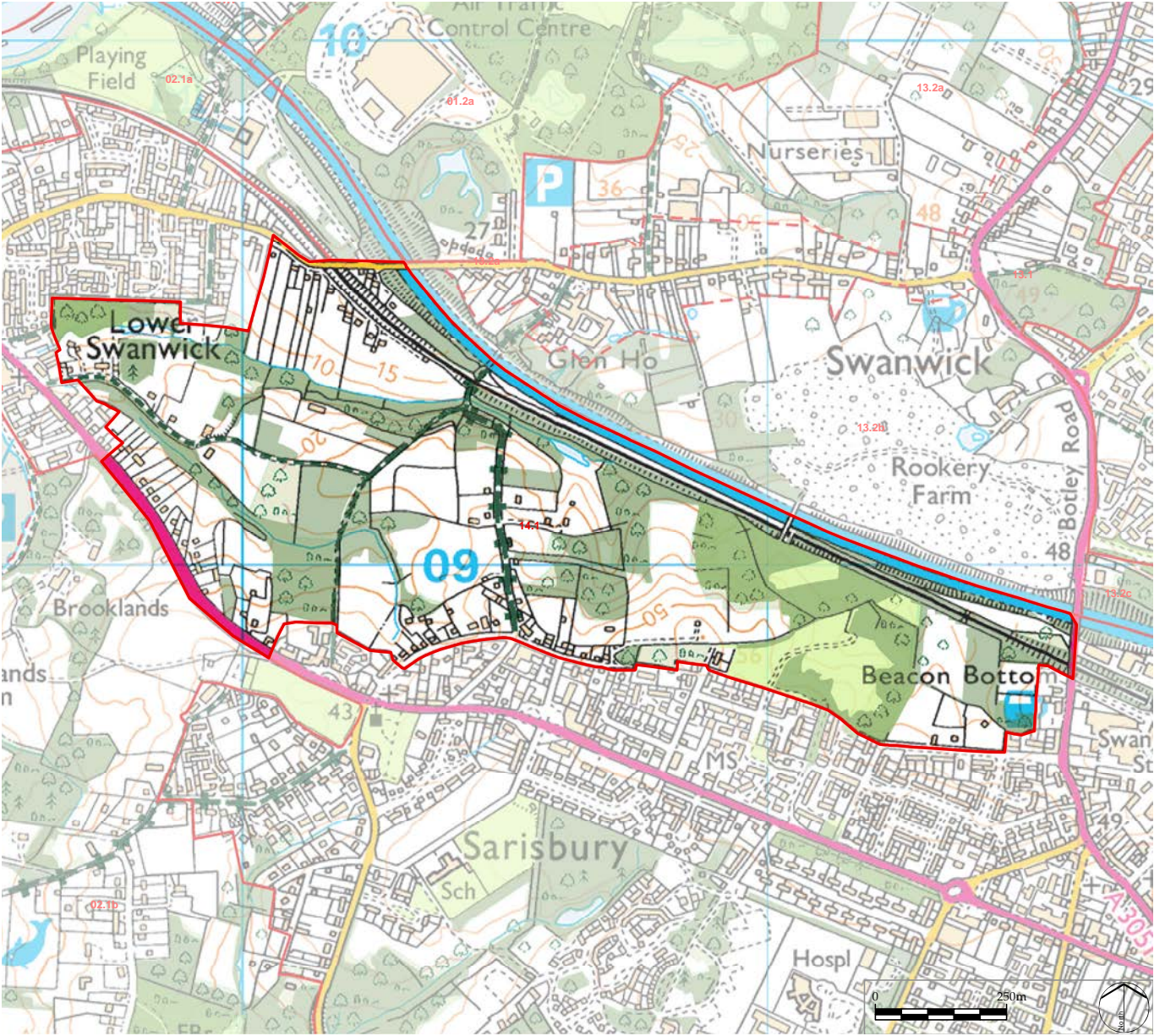
	Landscape Character Area		Conservation Areas
	Local Landscape Character Area		Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		

Designations

Listed Building Grade

	I		II		II*
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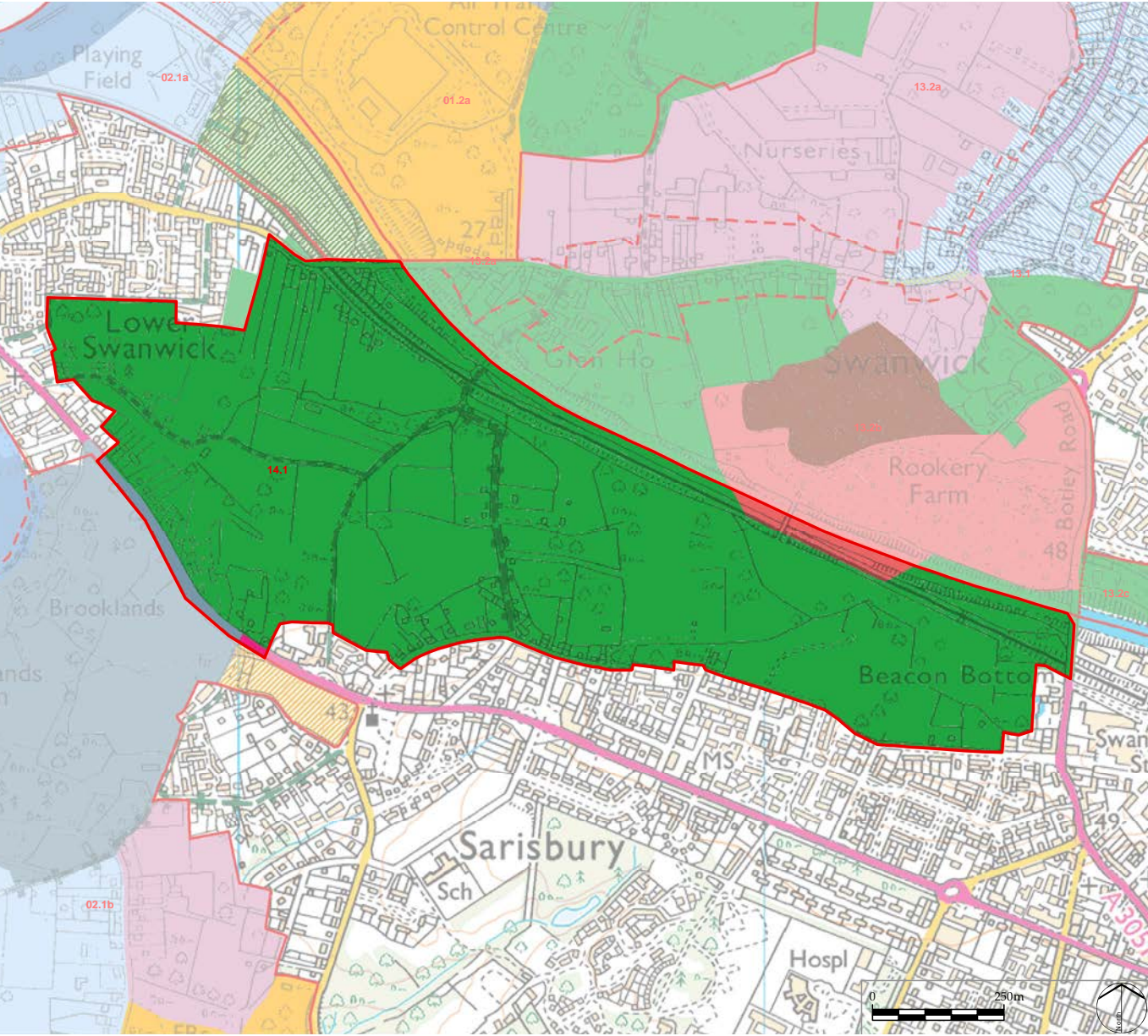
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Woodland
	Local Landscape Character Area		Existing Open Space
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		
	Green Infrastructure Projects		

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



LEGEND

- Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area
- Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision

Landscape Types

- Mixed Farmland & Woodland: Small Scale

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, QUALITY AND VALUE

This is a small area of semi-rural, wooded landscape that is sandwiched between the M27 to the north and the urban edges of Lower Swanwick, Sarisbury and Park Gate. It was formerly part of the mosaic of wooded farmland that characterised this general area before it became isolated from open countryside by roads and urban development. It occupies the western end and north-facing slopes of a ridge rising up from the Hamble Valley and is unified by its physical characteristics and its intimate, enclosed and strongly wooded character. As the patterns of land use and the patchwork of wooded and open land are relatively consistent across the whole area, it is treated as a single LLCA with no sub-divisions.

The area of 'captured landscape' is characterised by a small-scale patchwork of farmland, paddocks, horticulture, private houses and gardens/grounds (mainly located around the fringes and along/off Glen Road), and public open space with areas of open grassland and scrub, all set within a strong framework of woodland, copses and mature hedgerows and trees. These features are representative of the 'mixed farmland and woodland: small-scale' landscape type and are relatively intact, and the area has an intimate, secluded and pastoral character.

However, its isolation from surrounding countryside to the north and the influence of its urban context lend a distinctive 'fringe' character to the landscape. These influences include the intrusion of noise and activity from the motorway and rail corridor running along the northern edge, 'scruffiness' caused by poor management of pasture land, fencing and buildings, localised dumping of scrap, materials, rubbish etc. and presence of telecommunication masts. Development around the edges of the area and residential properties within it (some with swimming pools, tennis courts and landscaped gardens) also lend a suburban, domesticated character to the landscape in places.

There are no current or former landscape designations affecting this area. However, it has some value as a remnant of the mixed farmland and woodland landscape type which formerly covered much of this north-western part of the Borough but has been substantially reduced in extent by the expansion of built development within the Western Wards and, in more recent years, at Whiteley to the north.

The extensive woodland cover (some designated as SINC) and strong framework of hedgerows and trees across the area, and the grassland and scrub habitats within the open space at Beacon Bottom, are also of value as habitats and landscape features.



SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Overall, landscape sensitivity in this area is judged as moderate. This is not an area of pristine countryside but the landscape has value as a relatively intact remnant of a representative landscape type, with several positive scenic and perceptual qualities (diverse, intimate, pastoral and secluded character) and features of landscape value (particularly the strong structure of woodlands, hedgerows and trees). On the other hand, this wooded framework also makes it relatively robust in its ability to accommodate change, providing screening and helping to absorb intrusive influences, which have a relatively localised impact on landscape character and quality.

The area has some potential to accommodate limited small-scale development within the existing framework of small fields and woodland, particularly in areas adjacent to existing built development where landscape character and quality is already influenced by urban/suburban features, and where the effects could be mitigated by the existing framework of woodland or by new planting. More extensive development would be more difficult to absorb without major adverse change to the characteristics of value, especially if it resulted in a significant alteration to the heavily wooded, pastoral and secluded character of the area.



VIEWS, VISUAL FEATURES AND VIEWERS

The overall visibility of this area is low as a result of its extensive cover of woodland and trees, its predominantly north-facing aspect and its undulating topography. From the north, there are a few publicly accessible views over the area from elevated positions such as bridges over the motorway (Swanwick Lane, Botley Road and a footbridge leading to Rookery Farm), from where the area appears as a thickly wooded hillside. There are also views from the motorway itself and adjacent railway, although views from here are mostly screened by vegetation within the road and rail corridors with only occasional glimpses into the area. Views from roads and urban areas around the western end and southern edge of the site are similarly restricted by vegetation cover, even at close quarters, and landform and built development obscures views from more distant areas to the west, south and east.

The principal views into the area are those obtained from within the area itself, from along the footpaths and bridleways that cross the centre and west of the area (Glen Road, Oslands Lane and the PRoW in between), and the private properties along these routes or dispersed within the area. These views are also very localised and contained by vegetation cover, and intervisibility within the area is low. The main people who could potentially be affected by changes in views would be local residents and users of the PRoW network and open space at Beacon Bottom.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Local residents and users of the local PRoW network will be very conscious of their surroundings and highly sensitive to change. However, the views that they experience are relatively limited in extent because of the screening effects of the extensive vegetation cover in these areas.

Providing this woodland cover is maintained, visual sensitivity is judged to be relatively low with some potential for small-scale, sensitive development to be integrated without substantial adverse effects on views or visual amenity, particularly in areas where the quality of views is already affected by urban or other detracting influences.



SETTING OF URBAN AREA – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO SETTING AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

This area forms a wedge of landscape that separates Lower Swanwick and Sarisbury and helps to maintain their separate identity. The 'gap' between these two urban areas is not readily perceived from the A27 (Bridge Road) because of continuous ribbon development on the northern side of the road but it is experienced by local residents and users of the PROW network at the western end of the area.

The area also has a role in providing an accessible semi-rural setting for these settlements which is important because of the effects of the motorway and rail corridor, which acts as a physical and perceptual barrier between these settlements and wider countryside areas to the north.

Finally, the area does not form an important part of the visual setting of the urban areas of Lower Swanwick and Sarisbury because of the lie of the land (e.g. it does not appear as a backdrop to these areas in views) but it does contribute to the distinctively wooded setting of the Western Wards and Hamble Valley in general, and perceptions of the wider setting of this part of the Borough in approaches from the west.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The western end of the area has a key role in preventing coalescence between urban areas and the heavily wooded character of the area is also important as part of the wider setting of the urban area in this part of the Borough. Any major loss of tree cover or extension of urban form that would weaken these roles would be undesirable. However, there may be some potential for small scale development to be integrated without compromising the area's overall integrity as a green wedge or heavily wooded, semi-rural setting for the urban area.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION TO GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

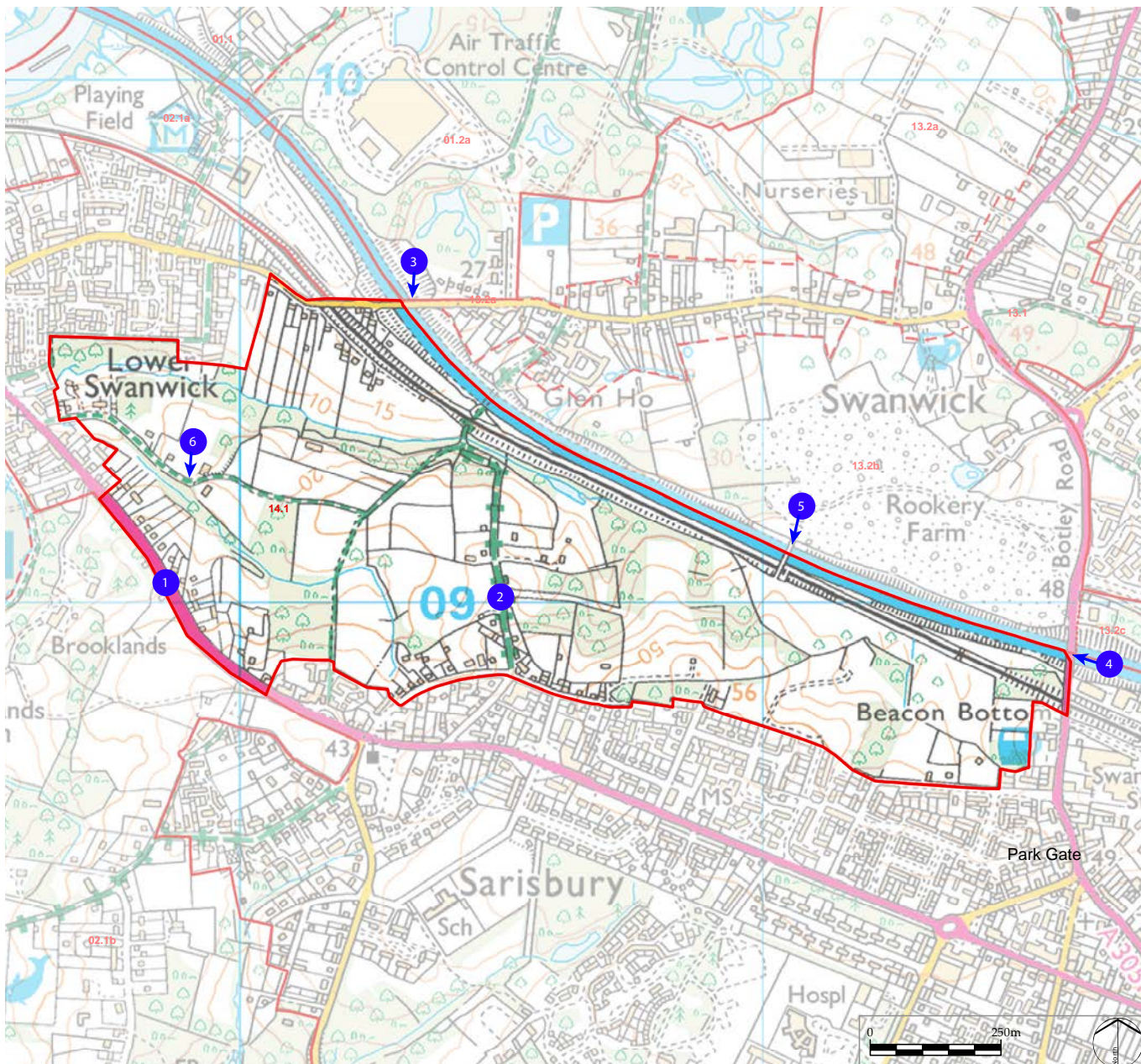
There are no specific strategic or local GI projects identified within these areas within the PUSH and Fareham strategies. However, these areas make various contributions to the local GI network through access and habitat links. The area contains a strong framework of woodland, mature hedgerows and trees and green lanes that connect into the habitats along the motorway and rail corridor and provide conduits for wildlife movement. The PRoW network comprises three routes within the central and western parts of the area which link the settlements of Sarisbury and Lower Swanwick with areas to the north of the motorway/rail corridor via an underpass, providing valuable connections with the GI network around Swanwick Wood.

At the eastern end of the area is an area of public open space, comprising areas of woodland and open grassland/scrub which is evidently well-used by dog-walkers etc. There is a footbridge over the motorway between this area and the restored landfill site at Rookery Farm but this is not a formal public right of way and there are no other connections between this open space and the local and wider GI network.

SENSITIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The area contains important GI assets in the form of the framework of woodland, trees and other habitats, open space and green corridors. In particular, the access and habitat links play a vital role in connecting GI assets on either side of, and along, the motorway/rail corridor and, in particular, providing access links to open countryside from the urban areas of Sarisbury and the Western Wards. Any development within this area should maintain and enhance these assets and links and, in particular, take advantage of any opportunities to improve connections between the public open space at the eastern end and the local and wider GI network.





LEGEND

	Landscape Character Area		Bridge Road (A27)
	Local Landscape Character Area		Glen Road
	Local Landscape Character Area Subdivision		Swanwick Lane
			Botley Road
			Footbridge to Rookery Farm
			Oslands Lane

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Despite its relatively small extent, physical isolation and urbanised context, this area does have a number of key sensitivities. The landscape is not of the highest quality, being affected in parts by urban influences, but its character and features are sufficiently intact to give it value as a representative remnant of a landscape type that has become increasingly scarce within the Borough, particularly to the south of the M27 corridor. Visual sensitivity is low but its role in maintaining separation of settlements, and its contribution to the wider setting of the urban area within north-west Fareham and to the local GI network, make it unsuitable for large-scale expansion of development across the area, particularly if this resulted in any significant loss of woodland/vegetation cover and opening up of views. However, there may be potential for some small scale development that could be integrated without such unacceptable adverse effects.

In order to protect and enhance the character and quality of landscape resources, views and visual amenity, urban character and green infrastructure, development proposals would need to:

- Maintain the essentially semi-rural character of the area and the key perceptual qualities of the mixed farmland and woodland landscape type (e.g. its intimate, enclosed and secluded character)
- Maintain the characteristic mosaic of landscape features and, in particular, protect and enhance the extensive cover of woodland, trees, hedgerows and other mature vegetation, to maximise its screening, landscape and wildlife value;
- Avoid any impacts or disturbance to features of recognised value within the area, notably the SINC woodland at the western end of the area
- Respond to the topography of the area, avoiding any significant modification of natural contours through cut and fill operations
- Maintain separation of urban areas of Lower Swanwick and Sarisbury and avoid locations close to the road and rail corridor, or on more open high ground (near the telecommunications masts) where built development may be more visible
- Be located in areas of lower sensitivity where landscape character and quality is partly degraded and where the effects could be mitigated by the existing framework of woodland or by new planting (e.g. adjacent to existing built development);
- Be of an appropriate scale to 'fit' within the existing field pattern and intimate scale of the landscape;
- Ensure that new planting reflects the distinctive characteristics of the typical mixed farmland and woodland landscape type and provides a strong framework for the successful integration of development.
- Use native species appropriate to the locality and soil conditions within new planting schemes
- Maintain the rural character of green lanes and access routes, avoiding intrusive or inappropriate urban styles of lighting, signage, paving etc;
- Maintain and enhance the function and quality of the existing GI network (including footpaths and open space) and take advantage of opportunities to strengthen and extend access and habitat links within the area, in particular to improve access connections between the public open space at the eastern end with the local network and with areas to the north of the motorway corridor.

**PART
THREE**

FAREHAM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

DESIGNATIONS REVIEW

LDĀ DESIGN



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August 2017

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1.0 INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

In addition to the Sensitivity Assessment, the brief for the Fareham Landscape Assessment also included a review of landscape designations within the Borough, with specific reference to ‘Strategic Gaps’ and ‘Areas of Special Landscape Character’, but also ‘other areas of protected or valued landscape designations’.

The purpose of this part of the study is to assist the Council in framing policy related to landscape protection, strategic gaps and settlement boundaries within the review of the Local Plan, particularly in advising on any possible changes to the current policy framework that might be required to safeguard the Borough’s most important landscape assets.

The advice is based upon a brief review of the past and current landscape policy framework, relevant planning guidance, approaches adopted in neighbouring authorities and the findings of the Sensitivity Assessment. It is divided into two main parts:

- Advice concerning policy approaches for protecting the landscape resources of the Borough, with specific reference to the case for local landscape designations;
- Additional advice relating to the Strategic Gap designation, with specific reference to the role of landscape in maintaining the separation of urban areas, and character and identity of settlements and their settings.

2.0

REVIEW OF
LANDSCAPE
DESIGNATIONS
AND POLICY
ADVICE



BACKGROUND

In line with Structure Plan policy and national planning policy guidance at the time, landscape policies within the previous Local Plan (Fareham Borough Local Plan Review 2000) aimed to protect the distinctive character and sense of place of all parts of the remaining countryside within the Borough, based upon the 14 predominantly rural Landscape Character Areas identified within the Fareham Landscape Assessment 1996 (Policies C1, DG3 and DG4) (see Appendix 3).

In addition, the Local Plan also contained Policy C9 which specifically sought to protect six areas of distinctive character, known as Areas of Special Landscape Character (ASLC): Upper Hamble Valley, Lower Hamble Valley, Hook Valley, Meon Valley, Forest of Bere and Portsdown Hill. These areas were identified within the 1996 Landscape Assessment as those considered of particular value for their scenic quality and other valued attributes, based on criteria agreed jointly with the County Councils and other Hampshire authorities (see Appendix 3).

The Landscape Assessment also informed the definition of the Coastal Zone, protected by Policy C5, while undeveloped countryside was also an important consideration in policies for the protection of the setting of settlements (Policy C10) and the protection of Strategic and Local Gaps (Policies C11 and C12).

The current adopted Fareham Local Plan (Parts 1, 2 and 3) has now replaced the policies of the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review 2000 and the only designation that is of some relevance to landscape that has transferred from the previous Local Plan is the Strategic Gap (CS22), which is primarily concerned with preventing the coalescence of settlements and maintaining settlement character, rather than protecting landscape for its own sake.

The specific landscape designations that were addressed in the 1996 Landscape Character Assessment, i.e. 'Areas of Special Landscape Character' (former policy C9) and the 'Coastal Zone' (former policy C5) no longer exist and have been replaced by the Adopted Local Plan policies (primarily CS14 and DSP6-10) which apply across all of the land outside of the 'defined urban settlement boundaries' (DUSB) and do not have any specific designated areas attached to them.

This approach is consistent with neighbouring authorities and the other authorities in Hampshire and typical of a wider trend. Over recent years, local landscape designations designed to protect an area's most valuable landscape assets have fallen out of favour because of the guidance given by the former Countryside Agency promoting landscape character assessments and the philosophy that 'all landscapes matter'. In practice, most county- and district-level landscape designations have been discarded in favour of the landscape character approach, with over-arching policies that apply across the whole countryside, as currently in Fareham.

2.2 POLICY CONTEXT

The following sets out the current landscape planning context at the national, regional and local levels, summarising briefly the policies and guidance that are of most relevance to the protection of the countryside and other functions of the landscape within Fareham Borough. The key planning documents that provide this context are:

- NPPF (and Planning Practice Guidance)
- South Hampshire Strategy (PUSH 2012)
- Spatial Position Statement (PUSH 2016)
- Fareham Borough Local Plan: (Part 1 Core Strategy (Adopted August 2011); Part 2 Development Sites and Policies (Adopted June 2015))

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) AND PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The NPPF promotes the achievement of sustainable development and sets out what the planning system needs to do to contribute to this with reference to three specific roles (economic, social and environmental) and 12 core principles.

Considerations of landscape primarily fall within the **environmental role** which involves, ‘contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy’.

Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people’s quality of life.

Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, the NPPF sets out 12 **core land-use planning principles** that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The most relevant of these to landscape are that planning should:

- *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;*
- *Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;*
- *Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production).*

These planning principles support specific policies that the Framework identifies as contributing to the delivery of sustainable development, and which should be considered in developing local plans and reviewing planning applications. The most directly relevant of these with regard to landscape policy is ‘11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’. This states an overall requirement that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and describes various means by which this should be achieved including ‘... protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...’ (para 109).

The Framework contains specific requirements with regard to nationally designated landscapes (i.e. National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, The Broads, Heritage Coasts), affording them special protection and weight in planning policy and decisions (paras 115, 116).

For the rest of the countryside/wider landscape, the approach is less explicit. There is no reference to local designations and landscape considerations are seemingly wrapped up as an implicit part of the 'natural and local environment' and 'Green Infrastructure networks'. The following are the key references of relevance to landscape that should inform planning policy and decisions:

Para 110: In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise ... other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.

Para 111: Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value

Para 113: Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged....

Para 114: Local planning authorities should:

- *Set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and*
- *Maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.*

Para 123: Planning policies and decisions should aim to:

- *Identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.*

Para 125: By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Elsewhere within the Framework there are policies that have some bearing on landscape, for example within '7 Requiring good design', which states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments 'respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials...'; 'seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness...' and 'address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment' (paras 58-61).

The Framework emphasises the importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts (9 Protecting Green Belt land). The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open so this is not a landscape policy as such. However, the Framework cites five purposes of the designation which include '...safeguarding the countryside from encroachment' (para 80). It therefore has some relevance to landscape/countryside protection but only in those areas where Green Belt policy applies, and there is no such designation currently in Fareham. The Framework does not make any reference to other types of designation intended to prevent coalescence of settlements, urban sprawl etc. such as Strategic or Local Gaps.

In terms of guiding landscape policy and decisions, therefore, the NPPF places particular weight on the protection of nationally designated landscapes and Green Belt land, and more generally promotes sustainable development on land of 'the least' environmental or amenity value. The Framework itself does not make it clear how land of 'least environmental value' or land of 'environmental significance' is to be defined with respect to landscape, and whether the latter applies only to nationally designated landscapes or other landscapes of recognised local value.

However, it is explicit in the Framework principles and policies that planning should take account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and promoting local distinctiveness. This is supported by Planning Practice Guidance - Natural Environment: Landscape (Para 001) which states that:

One of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

In 'Plan-making', the Framework also requires that '...Crucially, Local Plans should:

- Identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
- Contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment...' (para 157)

Under the section titled 'Using a proportionate evidence base', the Framework requires each local planning authority to ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental

characteristics and prospects of the area. The Framework states that '...planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area ...' (para 165). It goes on to say '...where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and for areas where there are major expansion options assessments of landscape sensitivity' (para 170).

This is supported by Planning Practice Guidance - Natural Environment: Landscape (Para 001) which states that:

Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should be prepared to complement Natural England's National Character Area profiles. Landscape Character Assessment is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change and may be undertaken at a scale appropriate to local and neighbourhood plan-making.

Planning Practice Guidance - Natural Environment: Green Infrastructure includes reference to the contribution that the wider landscape makes to GI networks and the need to reflect and enhance local landscape character in the creation of GI within new development. The guidance emphasises that GI should be a key consideration in both local plans and planning decisions. Para 030 contains the following specific references to landscape:

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment: The components of green infrastructure exist within the wider landscape context and should enhance local landscape character and contribute to place-making.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes: Green infrastructure can help deliver quality of life and provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction and play in new and existing neighbourhoods. More broadly, green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place.

Requiring good design: Well-designed green infrastructure helps create a sense of place by responding to, and enhancing, local landscape character.

SOUTH HAMPSHIRE STRATEGY (PUSH 2012)

The South Hampshire Strategy, prepared by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) establishes a framework to guide sustainable development and change to 2026 within this sub-region. It articulates a vision for South Hampshire's future and sets out the strategy to align policies, actions and decisions with that overall vision.

The strategy has been shaped by spatial planning principles, which include the following of particular relevance to landscape (Para 1.7):

Conserve the unique natural features and man-made heritage of South Hampshire's countryside, coast and built environment, as part of the area's attractiveness to residents and entrepreneurs.

Maintain local distinctiveness and sense of place by requiring development to be appropriately located, and to be of a high quality and design so that it creates quality places.

Encourage and enable South Hampshire to become more sustainable and resilient to climate change, by balancing economic growth with social and environmental considerations, by more prudent use of natural resources, and by reducing human impact on the environment.

The Strategy recognises that '...South Hampshire has a rich and diverse natural and built heritage with many sites designated as being of national or international importance. So the National Planning Policy Framework's policies for conservation of the natural and built environment will need to be taken into account when local plans take forward the policies in this strategy' (para 2.20).

The key policies within the Strategy relating to landscape are those concerning new and enhanced Green Infrastructure (Policy 14) and those concerning Strategic Gaps (Policy 15).

Increasing demands for recreational opportunities are putting South Hampshire's valued natural environment under considerable pressure and the Strategy recognises that it is vital to conserve and enhance South Hampshire's green infrastructure.

Policy 14: Green Infrastructure - South Hampshire authorities and their partners will work together to plan, provide and manage connected networks of multi-functional green spaces including existing and new green infrastructure. These networks will be planned and managed to deliver the widest range of environmental, social and economic benefits. Local Plans will protect the value of existing green infrastructure and the integrity of green infrastructure networks. They will provide for enhancements to the quality, connectivity and multi-functionality of green infrastructure.

There are tracts of undeveloped land within South Hampshire which keep settlements separate from each other and the prevention of significant development within these 'Gaps' has been a feature of strategic and local planning documents in South Hampshire for over 30 years. Whilst their primary function is to prevent coalescence of settlements and to maintain their individual identity and character, the gaps also help to retain open land adjacent to urban areas which can be used for new or enhanced

recreation and other green infrastructure purposes. So, whilst not strictly a landscape protection policy, the PUSH Gap policy seeks to protect and enhance the multifunctional capacity of the undeveloped landscape within the gaps and the contribution that it makes to the setting of settlements and the local green infrastructure network. These issues are dealt with in more detail in section 3 of this document.

SPATIAL POSITION STATEMENT (PUSH 2016)

This document has no formal policy status and is not part of the statutory development plan. However, it does provide a framework to guide and co-ordinate the review of Local Plans of individual local planning authorities within South Hampshire.

The Position Statement confirms PUSH's four key ambitions: to grow the local economy, improve the quality of life for residents, create high quality places and protect the natural environment. Paras. 4.13 to 4.16 set out these ambitions in more detail, stating that the area's natural environment - the coast, rivers and countryside - is what makes South Hampshire particularly special. As well as protecting and enhancing the area's designated wildlife sites and landscapes, it aims to provide green links and new green infrastructure alongside new development.

It also states:

"We want places that are distinctive and to maintain or enhance the local character of existing settlements. We see countryside gaps between settlements as important to maintaining the identity of different places. We also want to protect local landscapes and wildlife sites".

The Key Principle of relevance to landscape and 'strategic gaps' is D. *Protecting and Enhancing Countryside Gaps: Locating development in a way which creates a high quality pattern of town and countryside, maintaining the distinct identity and separation of key cities and towns, to avoid urban sprawl. The Position Statement highlights*

the importance of countryside gaps and further work will be undertaken to define these gaps. Key country parks will be protected. Investment to enhance the quality of the countryside in recreational, landscape and ecological terms will be important.

This principle is translated into Position Statement S1: Strategic Countryside Gaps which emphasises that:

Strategic countryside gaps between settlements are important in maintaining the sense of place, settlement identity and countryside setting for the sub-region and local communities. The Meon Valley is identified as a strategic gap of sub-regional significance and should be protected from inappropriate development.

The Statement also states that Councils should identify other countryside gaps of strategic or local importance as appropriate, but that *'the number and extent of gaps should only be that needed to achieve their purpose'*.

In terms of the wider landscape, Position Statement G1: Green Infrastructure is relevant to landscape, stating:

"The PUSH authorities and their partners will continue to work together to plan, provide and manage connected networks of multi-functional green spaces including existing and new and green infrastructure. These networks will be planned and managed to deliver the widest range of environmental, social and economic benefits."

Position Statement ENV1: Environment is also of relevance to landscape as part of the 'natural environment', stating that:

"The PUSH authorities will protect the natural environment...in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework."

FAREHAM BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN; PART 1 CORE STRATEGY (ADOPTED AUGUST 2011)

The Core Strategy sets out a vision and objectives for the future of the Borough that reflects national policy (pre-NPPF) and has informed the other LDF documents. The vision includes the following key paragraph with respect to landscape:

Para 3.6: The distinctive character and quality of the environment with its existing natural and historic environment, including its coastal location which helps to create the character and identity of the Borough and its settlements will continue to be protected and enhanced. The countryside around the settlements will be protected thus avoiding further coalescence and ensuring that new development respects its context.

This is supported by the following relevant Strategic Objectives:

SO10: To manage, maintain and improve the built and natural environment to deliver quality places, through high quality design sustainability and maintenance standards, taking into account the character and setting of existing settlements and neighbourhoods and seeking safe environments which help to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

SO11: To protect and enhance access to green infrastructure, the countryside, coast and historic environment whilst protecting sensitive habitats or historic features from recreational pressure, and protect the separate identity of settlements, including through the designation of strategic gaps.

These Strategic Objectives are met through various policies within the Core Strategy. The most relevant of these to the protection and enhancement of the countryside is Policy CS14: Development outside of settlements, which states that:

Built development on land outside the defined settlements will be strictly controlled to protect the countryside and coastline from development which would adversely affect its landscape character, appearance and function. Acceptable forms of development will include that essential for agriculture, forestry, horticulture and required infrastructure. The conversion of existing buildings will be favoured. Replacement buildings must reduce the impact of development and be grouped with other existing buildings, where possible. In coastal locations, development should not have an adverse impact on the special character of the coast when viewed from the land or water.

In addition, Policies CS4, CS17 and CS22 are of relevance to landscape. Within the Natural Environment section of the Core Strategy, the policy justification for Policy CS4 states that:

The remaining countryside in the Borough has a locally distinctive character which is described in the Fareham Landscape Character Assessment, the Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment and in Hampshire's Historic Landscape Report (para 4.36).

It also refers to the role of landscape as part of the Green Infrastructure resources, stating that these resources ‘...need to be planned and managed to deliver the widest range of linked environmental economic and social benefits including conserving and enhancing biodiversity as well as landscape, recreation, water management, social and cultural benefits to underpin individual and community health and ‘well being’ and to help communities to be more resilient to the effects of climate change’ (para 4.40).

Policy CS4 itself, however, does not specifically refer to landscape and focuses primarily on the protection and enhancement of sites of biodiversity and geological importance. There is also no explicit reference to landscape or the wider countryside in the policy wording for the protection and enhancement of the GI network within Policy CS4.

Amongst other things, Policy CS17: High Quality Design aims to ensure that any new development is in keeping with its local landscape and built context, stating:

‘...Proposals will need to demonstrate adherence to the principles of urban design and sustainability to help create quality places. In particular development will be designed to:

- *Respond positively to and be respectful of the key characteristics of the area, including heritage assets, landscape, scale, form, spaciousness and use of external materials...*
- *Create a sense of identity and distinctiveness and one that is legible...*
- *Provide green infrastructure, including landscaping, open spaces, greenways and trees within the public realm...*

Policy CS22: Development in Strategic Gaps is not strictly a landscape policy but it is relevant to landscape in terms of the role that it performs in defining the settlement character of the area as well as separating settlements at risk of coalescence. This policy is examined in more detail in Section 3 of this document.

FAREHAM BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: PART 2 DEVELOPMENT SITES AND POLICIES (ADOPTED JUNE 2015)

The role of the Development Sites and Policies Plan is to identify development sites and development management policies for the Borough (excluding Welborne) up to 2026 and to help deliver the Vision and Strategic Objectives set out in the Core Strategy. The policies contained within it follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF.

The key policy with regard to landscape is DSP6: New residential development outside of the Defined Urban Settlement Boundaries (DUSB). This policy states that there will be a presumption against such new development outside of the DUSB apart from some specified instances and also states that:

‘Proposals should have particular regard to the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS14: Development Outside Settlements, and Core Strategy Policy CS6: The Development Strategy. They should avoid the loss of significant trees, should not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of residents, and should not result in unacceptable environmental or ecological impacts, or detrimental impact on the character or landscape of the surrounding area.’

A similar requirement is made for other proposals for development outside of the DUSB (i.e. Policy DSP8: Leisure and recreation development, Policy DSP9: Economic development, Policy DSP10: Educational facilities).

In order to accord with Policy CS6 and CS14 of the Core Strategy, proposals for additional housing sites outside of the urban area boundaries will be strictly controlled and proposals will only be considered if it is demonstrated that the Council cannot meet its five year land supply target against the housing requirements set out in the Core Strategy. The DSP plan states that protecting the character and beauty of the countryside is an important objective and so the careful design of any proposal will be a key consideration. Any proposal must be adjacent to an existing urban area boundary and sensitively designed to ensure it is as well related, and integrated, to the neighbouring settlement as possible. Proposals that minimise the impacts on the countryside and, where relevant, Strategic Gaps will be preferred (para 5.166).

Policy DSP40: Housing allocations allows for such additional housing development sites outside of the DUSB where it meets all of the specified criteria, including:

The proposal is sensitively designed to reflect the character of the neighbouring settlement and to minimise any adverse impact on the Countryside and, if relevant, the Strategic Gaps.

Policy DSP56: Renewable Energy requires that there are no significant negative impacts upon the landscape arising from proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development. Proposals will need to demonstrate that they have taken into account ‘ the scale of the proposal and its visual impact in relation to the character and sensitivity of the surrounding landscape and designated landscape features’ and also effect of the development on green infrastructure resources (para 6.80). They should also not prejudice the purpose of the Strategic Gaps, as set out in Core Strategy Policy CS22.

2.3 DISCUSSION AND ADVICE

ON LANDSCAPE POLICY AND

DESIGNATIONS

DISCUSSION OF CURRENT LANDSCAPE POLICY APPROACH

A clear pattern that has emerged from the review of the current planning context affecting Fareham is that 'landscape-specific' policy has all but disappeared from planning documents and guidance at all levels. Individual policies for nationally designated landscapes (National Parks, AONBs and Heritage Coasts) remain in place within the NPPF, affording them the highest levels of protection, but no such designations apply in Fareham. There are no longer any policies requiring or defining designated landscapes at a local level, and considerations of landscape protection and enhancement for the wider countryside outside of designated areas tend to be incorporated within policies for the 'Natural Environment' or Green Infrastructure', or within policies directed at specific types of change or development affecting the countryside, rather than as a topic worthy of a specific policy in its own right (as is the case with the protection of biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment).

This lack of specific focus on 'landscape' (synonymous with the wider countryside) as a key component of the natural environment, could potentially diminish the attention and weight that is given to it in planning decisions. Nevertheless, despite 'landscape' or 'countryside' being rather less prominently mentioned than other aspects of the 'natural environment' (e.g. biodiversity resources) in policy wording, it is evident from the review that the intrinsic character and beauty of the wider countryside is recognised as an important resource to be protected and enhanced within current national, sub-regional and local planning policy.

At the heart of the NPPF is an overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development which, it states, 'should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking'. A fundamental part of achieving this is through the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and the Framework clearly states that, in preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment. It therefore requires that allocations of land for development should prefer land of 'lesser' or 'least environmental or amenity value', although such areas are not defined in respect of landscape.

The Fareham Local Plan currently aims to meet this requirement principally through policies of restraint on development, of most kinds, in areas outside of the Defined Urban Settlement Boundaries (or land already allocated for development within the Plan). Such policies form the 'first line of defence' in minimising adverse effects on all areas of undeveloped landscape or open countryside beyond settlement boundaries. However, in the light of significant pressure for new housing in particular, it is unrealistic to expect that these needs can continue to be met from brownfield sites or other land within the DUSB, and there will be increasing pressure for the release of greenfield land beyond the settlement boundaries, or for settlement boundaries to be extended to incorporate adjacent undeveloped landscape.

The challenge for the Council with respect to landscape is to identify which parts of the remaining undeveloped countryside outside of settlement boundaries are of 'lesser' or 'least' value and are therefore to be preferred (under the requirements of the NPPF), and to understand how development should respond to its landscape context in a way that minimises adverse effects and maximises opportunities to reinforce local distinctiveness and provide positive enhancement. In the absence of local landscape designations and any other form of comprehensive landscape evaluation of the Borough's landscape resources, there are currently limited tools available to assist planners (and developers) in making such judgements, although the Fareham Landscape Character Assessment 1996 provides guidance on local landscape character and enhancement priorities.

Making judgements about landscape value and its ability to accommodate development can involve an element of subjectivity and is often undertaken by those without specific landscape expertise, which makes it all the more vital that decisions are based on a clear understanding of what is important in the landscape and why.

PROVIDING MORE DETAILED EVIDENCE

The NPPF requires Councils to set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development affecting the landscape will be judged. It does not explicitly advocate the identification of 'special' areas of landscape within the local context (i.e. local landscape designations) but it does require Councils to identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its 'environmental significance'. This must be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the environmental characteristics of the area, which should include landscape character assessments and, where appropriate, assessments of landscape sensitivity.

The updated landscape character assessment and sensitivity assessment for Fareham provides this evidence and will help to fill the current gap in understanding of 'value' within the Borough landscape, identifying where change matters most and least depending upon the importance and sensitivity of the landscape affected, and helping to define how change might be designed to achieve positive benefits rather than adverse effects.

The approach adopted in the sensitivity assessment is predicated on the basis that 'all countryside matters' (especially in such a fragmented and urbanised Borough as Fareham) and that, in planning for development beyond the urban boundary, the primary aim should be to protect the Borough's most important landscape assets and to maintain and enhance the character and quality of the visual environment and the setting of urban areas within the Borough. It is also predicated on the basis that some form of development can potentially be accommodated within most landscapes as long as it can be demonstrated that it would not have unacceptable impacts on valued landscape assets or visual amenity and would provide positive landscape benefits.

The sensitivity assessment also recognises that landscape is valued for a variety of reasons: as a resource (or environmental asset) in its own right; as part of the visual environment enjoyed by people in their daily lives; as part of the setting of urban areas or settlements; and as part of the local Green Infrastructure network. Each of these roles, or values, and the sensitivity attached to them is independently assessed in a way that makes clear what is important and why in each area, the criteria/considerations to be met for any development to be deemed acceptable, and the key priorities for landscape enhancement.

LANDSCAPE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In simple terms, landscape policies should be designed to protect and enhance the areas of landscape that ‘matter’ most within Fareham. However, from the discussion above, it is evident that defining ‘what matters’ is quite a complex exercise and involves consideration of a range of roles, or services, that the landscape of a particular area performs. Landscape policies need to recognise all of these factors and ensure that they are taken fully into account in the decision-making process.

The following are the key landscape considerations (the things that ‘matter’) that need to be reflected in the review of Local Plan landscape policies.

All landscapes matter

Open countryside is a rapidly diminishing resource within the Borough and is under increasing threat from physical encroachment of built development and the erosion of rural character. All areas of undeveloped landscape, irrespective of their character or condition, are therefore of some value in the context of such an urbanised and densely populated area and great care must be taken to minimise further loss or degradation of the countryside. The existing presumption against development in the countryside outside of settlement boundaries (enshrined in the NPPF and current Local Plan policy) should therefore be maintained and strengthened, with development allocated within existing urban settlement boundaries wherever possible. Where development is deemed permissible within open countryside, its impact on the immediate landscape and surrounding areas should be minimised by sensitive and appropriate high quality design.

Landscape character and local distinctiveness

For its relatively small size, Fareham Borough has a remarkably rich and varied pattern of landscape character that has evolved as a result of the interaction of physical and human influences. At a ‘macro’ level, the basic structure of Fareham’s landscape is formed by the chalk downland of Portsdown Hill and wooded farmland of the Forest of Bere to the north, by the coastal plain and estuarine landscapes to the south, and by the river valleys that run north-south connecting the rural hinterland with the coast. This broad landscape structure provides the framework for the Borough’s settlements and has helped to shape their form and character. At a ‘micro’ level is a complex pattern of locally distinctive landscapes, as described in the Fareham Landscape Character Assessment.

The outward spread and coalescence of settlements and urban infrastructure across the Borough has already begun to mask some of the ‘natural’ settlement boundaries and features (e.g. minor river valleys) and erode the legibility of the underlying landscape structure and the distinctive character of surrounding landscapes. A key priority for landscape policy is to ensure that the essential character and local identity of the Borough’s diverse landscape and settlements is protected and reinforced in development proposals, so that it remains legible and distinct at both the macro and micro levels.

Particular contribution to landscape resources and visual environment

While all undeveloped countryside has some value, there are some parts of the landscape that are of particular value (in the Borough context) because of their intact, unspoilt character, strong sense of place, aesthetic/scenic qualities, rarity etc. There are no nationally designated landscapes within the Borough but there are some landscapes which are comparatively scarce at a regional scale (e.g. undeveloped coastal plain) and the presence of significant biodiversity or heritage assets also adds value to the landscape, along with popular landmarks, views and other valued landscape features (e.g. woodlands, wetlands, historic parkland etc.). Such attributes are identified within the Sensitivity Assessment and are additional factors which should be taken into account within both plan-making and decision-taking.

In previous Local Plan policy, areas with particularly valuable attributes were designated as Areas of Special Landscape Character and afforded an additional layer of protection. The merits or otherwise of this approach are considered later.

Particular contribution to setting and character of settlements

A settlement's identity can be as much as a result of its setting and relationship with the surrounding countryside, as with the quality of its buildings and public spaces. The Sensitivity Assessment identifies those areas which make a particularly strong contribution to the character and setting of settlements in a variety of ways that include:

- Maintaining the distinction between the urban area and surrounding countryside, or providing an important buffer between the two, helping to soften the impact of development on the urban edge
- Defining the 'natural setting' or limits to growth of any urban area/settlement, such as physical containment by a ridge, basin, river valley, woodland or other strong/permanent feature
- Forming an important part of the visual setting of the urban area (i.e. there is a strong visual inter-relationship between the urban area and the landscape surrounding it, from outside in and vice versa)
- Forming part of a green wedge or gap separating one urban area from another, preventing coalescence and maintaining their individual character and identities.

The role of the landscape in separating settlements currently forms part of Strategic Gap policy, which is discussed in more detail in section 3. Areas of landscape that make a particular contribution in other ways to settlement character and their settings should also be recognised and protected within Local Plan landscape policies.

Particular contribution to the Green Infrastructure Network

All areas of open countryside form part of the Borough's network of Green Infrastructure but some areas make a greater contribution in terms of opportunities for access and recreation, or in terms of the diversity of landscape features (e.g. woodlands, hedgerows, wetlands, grasslands etc.) that provide habitats and corridors for wildlife. The contribution made by different areas is set out within the Sensitivity Assessment. Landscape policy should aim to protect and enhance existing GI assets, particularly opportunities to access the countryside from the more urbanised parts of the Borough, and promote investment in GI in those areas where improvements and additional opportunities would be desirable.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

In considering Local Plan landscape policy approaches, a key question is whether policies for ‘whole countryside’ protection (supported by the updated Landscape Character Assessment and detailed Sensitivity Assessment) offer sufficient protection for the Borough’s important landscape assets, or whether there is a need to reintroduce an additional layer of protection afforded by a specific landscape designation, such as the former Areas of Special Landscape Character.

Local designations have some potential benefits:

- By representing landscapes that are identified as being ‘more important’ than others, they remove the ambiguity that can arise with whole-countryside policies and give added weight to the planning balance in favour of landscape protection in these areas;
- The designated areas are defined by clear boundaries on a map which are easy to understand and defend.

However, there are also potential problems with local landscape designations:

- Attempting to define the ‘most important’ areas of landscape is difficult because of the variety of ways in which landscape is valued (as described above) and the complex pattern of these values and sensitivities across the Borough, which don’t easily fit within neatly defined areas;

- The presence of a designated landscape tends to undermine the case for protection of the wider countryside, with the assumption that the latter is of lesser value and therefore more suitable for development. The reality is not so black and white - some development may be possible within designated areas if designed and integrated well without affecting the area’s special qualities, whereas development in the wider countryside may be very damaging for different reasons.

The former Areas of Special Landscape Character (ASLC) were designated primarily on the basis of their scenic quality together with some or all of a number of other valued attributes, including sense of place, topographic and visual unity, unspoilt character, scarcity, representativeness, notable conservation interests etc. The designated areas are broadly consistent with the evaluation of landscape as a resource within the Sensitivity Assessment (and, indeed, the Sensitivity Assessment makes reference to the former designation as evidence of perceived landscape value).

However, the ASLC designation covers only some aspects of the values identified in the Sensitivity Assessment and, for example, does not include the value of the landscape in contributing to the character and setting of settlements or Green Infrastructure. Furthermore, the finer ‘grain’ of the Sensitivity Assessment, based upon Local Landscape Character Areas, shows that the pattern of landscape value can be quite patchy, both within and outside of the former ASLC boundaries.

The overall picture of landscape value and sensitivity is, therefore, complex and the danger of over-simplifying landscape value and suitability for development generally militates against adopting the local landscape designation approach. Instead, a criteria-based, whole countryside policy approach is favoured. This approach is more rigorous in that it allows the suitability of a particular development to be judged on its merits according to the particular values and sensitivities of the area, the individual characteristics of a site, the nature of the development proposals, and against the detailed development criteria defined for that area. This approach is particularly suitable for assessing the impacts of a given development on a particular site, i.e. at the decision-taking end of the planning process, as well as helping to influence the design of development proposals in the first place to minimise their impact and maximise their sustainability.

At the plan-making end of the process, local landscape designations can theoretically be helpful in providing a clearly defined picture of areas of 'greater' or 'lesser' landscape value to help guide strategic planning decisions about where new development would best be located. However, as explained above, this over-simplified picture can be potentially misleading in terms of actual suitability for development.

The Sensitivity Assessment offers an alternative tool for planning for the most appropriate direction for future growth. Each area of landscape within the assessment has been assigned to one of three generalised categories of 'development potential', with the aim of providing a broad steer as to which parts of the Borough may be more or less able to accommodate change. The categories were defined on the basis of the range of landscape sensitivities identified for each area and the scope for mitigation of effects. Those areas with fewer sensitivities and greater opportunities to accommodate change, and landscape enhancement, are considered to offer a higher potential for development relative to other areas.

It is important to emphasise that these categories do not equate to an overall 'averaging out' of different types of sensitivity or value across an area (e.g. overall high, medium or low), nor imply that development is completely unacceptable or acceptable within any one area. Development potential will be less constrained in some areas but will still need to meet certain criteria in order to avoid unacceptable landscape impacts and maximise opportunities for enhancement.

Some correlation is evident between areas formerly designated as Areas of Special Landscape Character and the areas with least development potential identified in the sensitivity assessment, but it is not an exact 'fit'. The fact that there are areas of landscape in this category that were not previously covered by the ASLC designation, reinforces the view that it is important to adopt a more holistic approach in order to pick up sensitivities in areas that may seem to be of lesser landscape value, and vice versa.

As long as it is applied correctly, the much greater accuracy and rigour provided by a whole countryside policy that requires compliance with detailed, location-specific criteria within the Sensitivity Assessment, should render any additional local designation as unnecessary.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

The following general recommendations are made regarding an appropriate landscape policy approach within the Fareham Local Plan Review.

The Local Plan should:

- Give due prominence to the importance of 'landscape' as a fundamental component of the Borough's natural environment and green infrastructure, to raise awareness of the significant pressures affecting this highly valued but finite and irreplaceable resource and the importance of safeguarding what remains;
- Ensure that the full range of roles, or services, that landscape performs (and for which it is valued) are clearly described, with reference to the supporting evidence within the Fareham Landscape Character Assessment and Sensitivity Assessment;
- Ensure that protection and enhancement of the Borough landscape is a clear thread that runs right through the Plan (from the vision, strategic objectives and policies set out in the Core Strategy to the detailed development policies), giving it equivalent attention to that afforded to other components of the natural, historic and built environments;
- Place a strong emphasis on protection of the remaining undeveloped landscape as part of achieving sustainable development, retaining the strict control of development beyond existing settlement boundaries as a 'first line of defence';
- Adopt a holistic, criteria based policy approach that applies across the whole countryside, rather than an approach based upon local landscape designations;
- Include an over-arching 'core' landscape policy under the Natural Environment topic heading, which establishes general criteria for the conservation and enhancement of landscape characteristics and functions, a) as a resource (including intrinsic character, quality and important features); b) as part of the visual environment (including key views); c) as a setting for settlements; and (d) as part of the GI network. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that all of these general criteria have been met and that the specific development criteria contained within the Sensitivity Assessment for the area affected have also been satisfied, with no significant residual adverse effects on landscape character and quality, visual amenity, settlement character and green infrastructure. They will also be required to demonstrate positive enhancement of landscape and GI resources;
- Support this 'core' policy by cross-reference to landscape protection and enhancement within other policies of the plan as appropriate, e.g. policies for specific development types (e.g. housing, energy etc.) or individual topics such as Strategic Gaps and Green Infrastructure;
- Contain policies that promote high quality design as a key aspect of sustainable development, requiring developers to demonstrate a sensitive and appropriate design response that reflects local landscape and settlement character, reinforces local distinctiveness, provides a range of positive landscape benefits and creates a high quality development with a strong sense of place appropriate to its landscape setting.

3.0

REVIEW OF

STRATEGIC GAP

DESIGNATION



BACKGROUND

As noted earlier, there are tracts of undeveloped land within South Hampshire which keep settlements separate from each other and the prevention of significant development within these ‘Gaps’ has been a feature of strategic and local planning documents in South Hampshire (and other counties within the south-east of England) for over 30 years, commanding wide public support.

As a well-established spatial planning tool, Strategic Gaps are designed primarily to define and maintain the separate identity and character of settlements rather than protect open countryside for its own sake. However, the effects of this policy are to help retain open land adjacent to urban areas which can be used for new or enhanced recreation and other green infrastructure purposes, or as a visual amenity for local people. There is, therefore, some potential overlap between the functions of the Strategic Gap policy and other policies for protection and enhancement of the landscape and local green infrastructure networks.

The purpose of this review is not to examine the validity of Strategic Gap policy in planning terms, nor the designation criteria or the broad areas that have been identified and designated as Strategic Gaps within Fareham. These have been agreed jointly with other authorities in South Hampshire. In addition, the areas for designation were assessed thoroughly as part of the Fareham Borough Gap Review in 2012 (David Hares Landscape Architects) to inform the preparation of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies. The Policies Map that supports the adopted Local Plan Parts 1, 2 and 3 defines the areas that the Gap Review confirmed as meeting the criteria for designation, based on a detailed assessment of the suitability of land for inclusion within a Gap, and the broader level of functionality that the land provides.

This review is not a repeat of that process. Instead, its purpose is to use the findings of the Sensitivity Assessment to provide further insight into the role that the landscape plays within the defined Strategic Gap areas and the extent to which this may support the Gap designation purposes and criteria, i.e. its effectiveness in shaping the character and identity of settlements, helping to maintain their separation and in providing opportunities for new and enhanced recreation and other GI purposes.

It also considers the relationship between the Strategic Gap policy and other policies for landscape protection (as set out in section 2) and comments on the most effective policy approach for protecting all of the important functions of the landscape in the Borough, including those related to Strategic Gaps.

3.2 POLICY CONTEXT

The following is a brief review of the current policy context for Strategic Gaps at the sub-regional and local levels with reference to the following key planning documents:

- Policy Framework for Gaps (PUSH 2008), South Hampshire Strategy (PUSH 2012) and Spatial Position Statement (PUSH 2016)
- Fareham Borough Local Plan: (Part 1 Core Strategy (Adopted August 2011); Part 2 Development Sites and Policies (Adopted June 2015)
- Fareham Borough Gap Review (David Hares Landscape Architects 2012)

SUB-REGIONAL POLICY

In 2008 the PUSH authorities adopted a joint Policy Framework which sets out criteria for the designation of Gaps in order to ensure consistency across South Hampshire. The Gaps which cross authority boundaries need a coordinated approach to ensure that their designation and their extent is aligned across the boundary. The Policy Framework identified the broad location of four Strategic Gaps, two of which include land within Fareham Borough:

- Between Fareham/Stubbington and Western Wards/Whiteley (the Meon Gap);
- Between Fareham/Gosport and Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent.

The Policy Framework emphasises that Gaps are designed to shape the pattern of settlements and that they are not countryside protection or landscape designations. It states that the designation of a Gap does not completely preclude development if it would not adversely affect the function or compromise the integrity of the Gap (individually or cumulatively) and would otherwise be acceptable in planning terms. It also notes that, in considering the future planning of the land within defined gaps, the local planning authorities should also consider such opportunities

for the positive uses of the land within the gap to meet wider planning objectives, such as provision of new/enhanced recreation and other green infrastructure purposes.

The following criteria are established for the designation of gaps:

- The open nature/sense of separation between settlements cannot be retained by other policy designations;*
- The land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence.*
- In defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation.*

The approach in the Framework formed the basis for Policy 15 of the South Hampshire Strategy (2012), which confirms the four Strategic Gaps and includes the Framework's designation criteria above, adding:

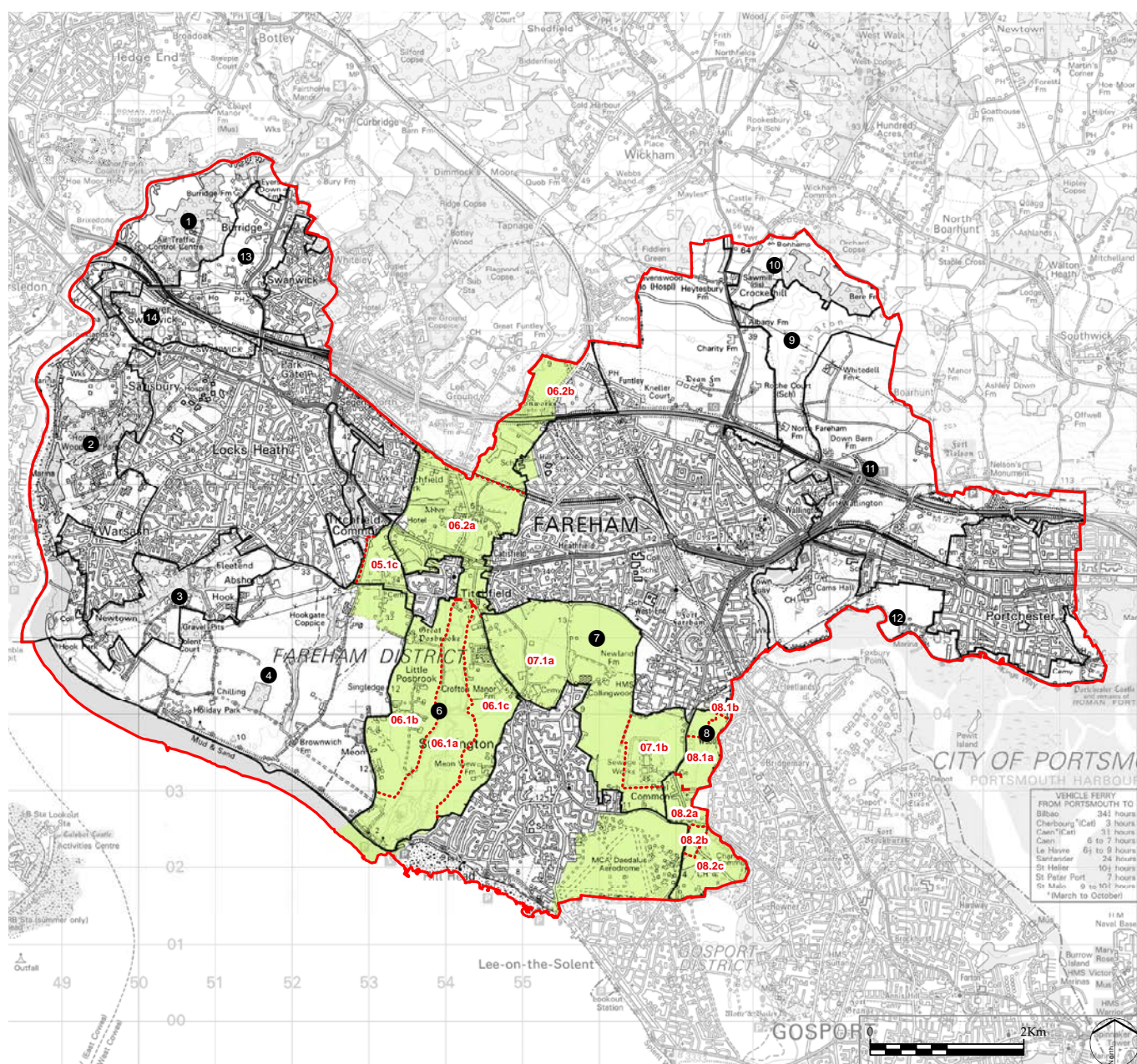
- *The Gap's boundaries should not preclude provision being made for the development proposed in this Strategy.*

The identification of strategic gaps is an integral part of the implementation of the PUSH Position Statement (2016), which emphasises the need to deliver future growth in a way that will ensure the integrity of the highly valued natural environment and that key elements of the settlement pattern of South Hampshire are maintained.

Position Statement S1 Strategic Countryside Gaps states that:

Strategic countryside gaps between settlements are important in maintaining the sense of place, settlement identity and countryside setting for the sub-region and local communities.

FIGURE 8: STRATEGIC GAP



The Meon Valley is identified as a strategic gap of sub-regional strategic significance and should be protected from inappropriate development. In addition to this, Councils should identify in their Local Plans, other strategic countryside gaps of sub-regional significance as appropriate; and may also identify local countryside gaps which are of fundamental local importance in their area. The precise extent of the Meon and other gaps will be defined in Local Plans. Given the long term need for development, the number and extent of gaps should only be that needed to achieve their purpose

The Position Statement specifically highlights the sub-regional significance of the Meon Valley Gap as demarcating the boundary of the Portsmouth and Southampton Housing Market Areas, but does not name other strategic gaps, leaving the number and extent of these to individual Councils to determine through their Local Plan review process. Although the Statement states that “*further work will be undertaken to define these gaps*”, no guidance is given on the approach to be used. The PUSH Policy Framework is not referred to specifically in the Statement nor listed as part of the evidence base for that document. However, in the absence of any revised policy guidance, it is assumed that the approach set out in the Framework remains relevant as the basis for PUSH policy relating to strategic gaps.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Fareham’s Core Strategy was adopted in August 2011 and sets out the planning framework for the Borough up to 2026. Policy CS22 sets out the policy for Strategic Gaps, based upon the PUSH Framework, as follows:

Policy CS22 Development in Strategic Gaps

Land within a Strategic Gap will be treated as countryside. Development proposals will not be permitted either individually or cumulatively where it significantly affects the integrity of the gap and the physical and visual separation of settlements.

Strategic Gaps have been identified between Fareham/Stubbington and Western Wards/Whiteley (the Meon gap); and Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent and Fareham/Gosport.

Their boundaries will be reviewed in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) *The open nature/sense of separation between settlements cannot be retained by other policy designations;*
- b) *The land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence;*
- c) *In defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation.*

The policy justification states that gaps between settlements, particularly between Fareham and the Western Wards and Fareham and Stubbington, help define and maintain the separate identity of the individual settlements in this densely settled part of South Hampshire. Continuing pressure for high levels of development mean that maintaining these gaps continues to be justified, and they have strong local support. Strategic gaps do not necessarily have intrinsic landscape value but are important in maintaining the settlement pattern, keeping individual settlements separate and providing opportunities for green infrastructure/green corridors. The countryside separating the settlements is narrow in places and under pressure for development, but it provides opportunities for additional public access.

Based on the requirements of Policy CS22, a review of the detailed boundaries of these areas was undertaken as part of the evidence base informing the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies, to identify the land essential to perform this role and that which cannot be protected by other designations. The Fareham Borough Gap Review was undertaken by David Hares Landscape Architects in 2012 using a robust methodology that involved structured field assessment of 41 sub-areas of landscape within the Gaps (based on the 1996 Fareham Landscape Character Assessment character areas) and recording of the factors by which these areas contributed to the primary (coalescence/visual separation) and secondary (green infrastructure value) purposes of the gap (see appendix 5 for boundaries of sub-areas).

As a result of the Gap Review, the Development Sites and Policies Plan (Para 3.14) confirms that:

The Strategic Gap boundaries are shown on the Policies Map. They will continue to follow the edge of existing settlements, with the exception of the area immediately west of the Meon Valley and south of Warsash Road where the gap has been amended in line with the recommendations of the Fareham Borough Gap Review.

The Plan also confirms that

Policy CS22: Development in Strategic Gaps does not provide a policy basis for the designation of any Local Gaps that are outside the two Strategic Gaps between Stubbington/Fareham and Western Wards/Whiteley (the Meon Gap) and; Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent and Fareham/Gosport. In light of this, Local Gaps have not been retained in this Plan.

The DSP Plan refers to the Core Strategy policy CS22 as the primary policy regarding the definition of Strategic Gaps but it makes reference to the protection of Gaps within other policies of the Plan relating to development outside of the DUSB (e.g. DSP7, DSP40 and DSP56) which require development proposals to minimise adverse impacts on the Gap and demonstrate that they do not undermine or compromise its function or integrity.

3.3 DISCUSSION AND ADVICE ON STRATEGIC GAP DESIGNATION

DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIC GAP DESIGNATION

The PUSH Framework for Gaps and Local Plan Policy CS22 make clear that the **primary purpose** of Strategic Gap designation is to maintain the 'separate identity of settlements' within the Borough, thereby aiming to prevent their individual character and sense of place from being lost beneath continuous and anonymous urban sprawl. There is no such clear definition, however, of what exactly determines 'separate identity', although a variety of terms and phrases are used in planning documents in relation to the concept, such as physical and visual separation/coalescence, a sense of separation, defining settlement character, shaping and maintaining settlement pattern etc.

It is helpful to consider the range of factors that contribute to 'separate identity' as a starting point for considering the effectiveness of the landscape in different parts of the Gap in achieving this primary purpose. The discussion below examines the main ways in which landscape can influence the separate identity of settlements.

Separation of settlements

This is essentially about keeping settlements apart so that it is obvious where one settlement ends and another one starts and they do not merge into one another without any clear distinction. However, this is not just about preventing physical coalescence, i.e. development within one settlement running continuously into the next with no physical space or barrier to separate them. It is also not just about maintaining a visual gap and preventing visual coalescence between settlements - while this can often be a key factor in achieving separation, it is perfectly possible for two settlements to be in sight of one another (e.g. on either side of a valley) and still maintain their separate identities because of the nature of what lies between them. For a gap to be effective, it is the perceived 'sense of separation' that is critical, the ability for anyone to 'feel' and to understand where one place ends and another different place begins, and to experience a clear sense of moving out of one and into the other.

There can be no hard and fast rules about how big a gap needs to be to achieve that perception of separation. This will be dependent entirely on the particular character of the settlements and the land that lies between them. What is critical, however, is that there is a clear and distinctive experience of leaving one settlement behind, passing through another quite different area (the 'gap') before entering another separate settlement. This experience of travelling from out of one place into another can be both physical and visual. Importantly, the 'bit in between' needs to have integrity and distinct character as an entity or place in its own right, rather than simply be a physical space or feature, such as a field or a block of woodland etc., in order for the two settlements to feel distinct and separated.

On this basis, the effectiveness and integrity of the gap in providing a sense of separation will be maintained where:

- There is no actual physical coalescence between the two settlements;
- There is no perceived visual coalescence (this does not necessarily mean that there needs to be a visual barrier between them but that the appearance of one settlement coalescing with another is avoided);
- Measures designed to block views between built areas do not in themselves undermine the sense of visual separation that is reinforced by long-distance views between settlements;
- There is a strong and well-defined boundary between the settlement and the gap, so that it is clear where the edge of the settlement lies and the gap begins;
- There is a clear and distinct experience of leaving one settlement behind, passing through another quite different and distinct area (the 'gap') before entering another separate settlement;
- The gap has sufficient scale and coherence of character to be experienced as a place, or entity in its own right (e.g. an intact area of open farmed countryside) rather than simply a transitional space between urban areas.

Shaping settlement patterns

This concerns how the structure and nature of the underlying landscape has helped to shape the patterns of settlement within the Borough over time. Physical factors such as soils, drainage, natural vegetation, landform and the coast have all played a part in determining the historic and present day patterns of land use and settlement across the Borough and, in many cases, defining their 'natural' limits to growth (e.g. by providing a strong physical boundary, such as the coast, a ridge of land, a river valley etc.). This response to landscape is part of the individual identity of settlements, often the reason why they exist where they are and have developed a particular form (e.g. linear, nucleated, dispersed or densely settled). The uncontrolled spread of development could potentially breach natural boundaries and mask the characteristic pattern and individual distinct identity of settlements within the Borough.

Influencing the character of settlements and their settings

As described in 2.3 above, a settlement's identity can be as much as a result of its setting within the surrounding landscape, as with the character of its buildings and spaces. For example, the character of the landscape that adjoins or surrounds an individual settlement can influence whether it feels essentially rural or urban, enclosed or exposed etc. The landscape can form an important part of the visual setting of the urban area (i.e. there is a strong visual inter-relationship between the urban area and the landscape surrounding it) which influences perceptions of its identity and character by providing the backdrop or foreground to views towards the settlement, and views outwards from within the built area. The landscape immediately around settlements also has an important role to play in providing strongly defined settlement boundaries and softening the impact of built form within the urban area on the wider landscape, thus reinforcing the distinction in character and identity between town and country.

In addition to the primary purpose of designation, Strategic Gaps have a '**secondary purpose**' - by keeping land open and undeveloped it opens up opportunities for positive uses of the land within the gap to meet wider planning objectives, notably the provision of green infrastructure. All areas of open countryside form part of the Borough's network of Green Infrastructure but some areas make a greater contribution in terms of opportunities for access and recreation, or in terms of the diversity of landscape features (e.g. woodlands, hedgerows, wetlands, grasslands etc.) that provide habitats and corridors for wildlife. The contribution made by different areas is set out within the Sensitivity Assessment. The Strategic Gap policy can help to protect and enhance existing GI assets, particularly opportunities to access the countryside from the more urbanised parts of the Borough, and promote investment in GI in those areas where improvements and additional opportunities would be desirable.

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC GAP AREAS

This review of the Strategic Gap areas examines how the landscape in different parts of the designated area ‘performs’ in relation to the above factors, i.e. how effective it is in supporting the purposes (primary and secondary) and the criteria for designation. This analysis draws directly from the approach and findings of the Sensitivity Assessment and is presented in the form of notes for each Local Landscape Character Area (set out in the following tables) to supplement the evidence already provided by the Sensitivity Assessment and the 2012 Borough Gap Review.

AREA 6.1: LOWER MEON VALLEY

(EQUIVALENT TO AREAS 14-17, 27, 28 IN GAP REVIEW)

PHYSICAL SEPARATION

The area provides effective physical separation between north-western edge of Stubbington and southern edge of Titchfield (approximately 1.5kms at closest point). This area also adjoins the Fareham Stubbington Gap, which physically separates Stubbington from the south-western edge of Fareham, and the northern part of the area also provides important physical separation between Titchfield and Fareham. Most critical areas providing physical separation are 6.1c, particularly along the Titchfield Road corridor, and the northern part of 6.1a.

VISUAL SEPARATION

The area provides very effective visual separation between Stubbington and Titchfield – intervisibility is entirely restricted by distance and intervening vegetation cover within the Meon Valley. Vegetation within the valley in the northern part of the area also helps to provide visual separation between Titchfield and Fareham. Important to maintain this vegetation cover to prevent opening up of views and visual coalescence between settlements, particularly Titchfield and Fareham.

OVERALL SENSE OF SEPARATION

The area provides a strong sense of separation between Titchfield and Stubbington. Meon Valley acts as a barrier to movement and views between the settlements, and has its own distinct identity as an intact area of 'structural' landscape. Route between the settlements along Bridge Street and Titchfield Road has rural character with no sense of connection between the built areas. Clear sense of moving out of one settlement, through an area of countryside before entering a different settlement. Vegetation cover is critical in maintaining the sense of separation between Titchfield and Fareham at northern end of area.

ROLE IN SHAPING CHARACTER OF SETTLEMENT

The Meon Valley is a coherent topographic feature with an important role in shaping the pattern, form and character of local settlements. Titchfield village originated on valley sides next to the river with a small port and a mill (river formerly navigable). Other settlement originated on better drained, flatter land to west and east of valley but since expanded up to top of valley sides which form 'natural' settlement edge. Valley form less pronounced within Lower Meon Valley but western edge of Stubbington more or less coincides with 10m contour below which land grades gently into the valley floor. The valley has an important role in containing any further outward 'sprawl' of development into open countryside.

Valley landscape has rural, unspoilt character that extends right up to edge of settlements, forming distinctive, countryside setting. Provides strong definition between town and country and also important buffer between urban edge and sensitive environment of valley floor.

CONTRIBUTION TO GI NETWORK

The area makes a significant contribution to green infrastructure network. Valley contains important ecological assets and access opportunities (including links to NCR 2 and Solent Way). Projects are identified in PUSH and Fareham GI strategies. Main emphasis is on improvements to existing GI assets, habitat links and open space close to urban areas for recreation and tourism.

CONCLUSION

This area is a cohesive valley landscape which performs effective, multiple roles in respect of the primary and secondary purposes and functions of the Strategic Gap. Even minor encroachment beyond existing settlement boundaries could have an adverse effect on these functions and the overall integrity of the valley landscape and Strategic Gap. It is recommended that the Gap boundaries remain unchanged.

AREA 6.2: UPPER MEON VALLEY

(EQUIVALENT TO AREAS 3-6, 8-10 IN GAP REVIEW)

PHYSICAL SEPARATION

In the southern part of area (6.2a) the valley floor and sides provide effective physical separation of the urban edges of Titchfield Park and Fareham, with a gap of some 1.6kms. However, Titchfield village lies within the valley itself and is virtually connected to development within the Western Wards by almost continuous ribbon development along the Southampton Road from the St Margaret's Roundabout, with minimal physical separation. On its eastern side, the valley floor creates a narrow (c. 330m) but effective physical gap between the eastern side of Titchfield and Fareham. Both of these narrow gaps are highly vulnerable in terms of providing physical separation.

The valley landscape to the north (6.2b) is part of a swathe of countryside that forms an effective physical gap of c.1.7kms between Fareham and Whiteley in neighbouring Winchester District (and part of larger cross-authority Strategic Gap designation). It also provides physical separation between the northern edge of Fareham and the village of Funtley.

VISUAL SEPARATION

Extensive vegetation cover along the valley sides and floor provides very effective visual separation across most of this area. It also helps to break up views of development along the Southampton Road corridor, providing some visual separation between Titchfield and the Western Wards. Important to maintain this vegetation cover to prevent opening up of views and visual coalescence between settlements, particularly between Titchfield and urban areas to east and west.

OVERALL SENSE OF SEPARATION

The area generally provides a strong sense of separation between the Western Wards and Fareham. The heavily wooded Meon Valley restricts views and movement between the urban edges, and has its own distinct identity as an intact area of 'structural' valley landscape. Even the narrow gap between Titchfield and Fareham provides some sense of separation as the route across the valley floor between the settlements along Bridge Street has a distinct, rural character with no real sense of connection between the built areas.

However, the sense of separation is much weaker to the west of Titchfield where ribbon development along the Southampton Road starts to blur the distinctions between the end of one settlement and the start of the other. Vegetation cover is critical in maintaining some sense of separation between Titchfield and the urban areas on either side of the valley.

ROLE IN SHAPING CHARACTER OF SETTLEMENT

The Meon Valley is a coherent topographic feature with an important role in shaping the pattern, form and character of local settlements. Titchfield village originated on valley sides next to the river with a small port and a mill (river formerly navigable). Other settlement originated on better drained, flatter land to west and east of valley but since expanded up to top of valley sides. As a strong topographic feature, the Meon Valley acts as both a natural 'barrier to growth' and a 'natural setting' for urban areas on either side. Any significant encroachment down the valley sides could disrupt this typical settlement pattern and compromise the clear distinction between town and country and the integrity of the valley landscape as a whole.

CONTRIBUTION TO GI NETWORK

The area makes a significant contribution to green infrastructure network. Valley contains important ecological, historic landscape and heritage assets, and access opportunities. Projects are identified in PUSH and Fareham GI strategies. Main emphasis is on improvements to existing GI assets, habitat links and open space close to urban areas for recreation and tourism.

CONCLUSION

This area is a cohesive valley landscape which performs effective, multiple roles in respect of the primary and secondary purposes and functions of the Strategic Gap. Even minor encroachment beyond existing settlement boundaries could have an adverse effect on these functions and the overall integrity of the valley landscape and Strategic Gap. It is recommended that the Gap boundaries remain unchanged.

AREA 5.1: TITCHFIELD CORRIDOR AND AREA 4.1: CHILLING –BROWNWICH COASTAL PLAIN

(EQUIVALENT TO PART OF AREAS 7 AND 13 IN GAPREVIEW)

PHYSICAL SEPARATION

The landscape in this part of the two adjacent LCAs provides physical separation between the Western Wards and Titchfield, generally forming a gap of c. 700m between the settlement edges. Ribbon development strung outwards from Titchfield, particularly along Common Lane and also St Margaret's Lane, brings the areas of built form closer together but they do not physically connect. Further ribbon or infill development could potentially close these gaps along the road corridors.

VISUAL SEPARATION

Extensive vegetation cover, including areas of woodland, copses, hedgerows and other mature trees (e.g. within West Hill Park School grounds) provides very effective visual separation across most of this area, particularly within and around area 5.1c.

OVERALL SENSE OF SEPARATION

The woodland cover and strong boundary vegetation within and around area 5.1c, contributes to a definite sense of separation between the areas of intensive commercial development (Kites Croft and Titchfield Park), residential areas at Titchfield Common and the main settlement of Titchfield itself. However, the sense of separation between settlements is compromised by the scattered development dispersed throughout the area, particularly along the road network. There is a danger of perceived coalescence if settlement edges are not clearly defined and development is not contained within the existing built areas. Vegetation cover is critical in maintaining some sense of separation between Titchfield and the urban areas to the west and north.

ROLE IN SHAPING CHARACTER OF SETTLEMENT

This landscape lies on the northern edge of the coastal plain occupying an area of higher, level ground (more or less bounded by the 30m contour) defined by the edges of the Meon Valley to the east and the wooded Brownwich valley to the west. The latter plays a particular role in defining a strong, natural eastern boundary and wooded setting for the urban area of Titchfield Common.

Titchfield itself developed within the Meon Valley and has expanded up to the top of the valley sides, forming a 'natural edge' to the settlement that is reasonably well-defined by Posbrook Lane and St Margaret's Lane. However, the typically dispersed pattern of low-density development within the flatter coastal plain landscape threatens to blur the definition of Titchfield's 'natural' settlement edge. Further spread or intensification of development within the gap to the west of Titchfield would disrupt the distinctive settlement pattern within the area and compromise the character of the settlements and the integrity of the gap.

CONTRIBUTION TO GI NETWORK

The area contains significant areas of woodland and other vegetation cover that contribute to the local GI network. The Brownwich Valley along the western edge is of particular value. There are several footpath routes and connections within the coastal plain in area 4 around the southern edge of the gap but access opportunities are relatively limited in area 5.1c and the emphasis is on improving GI provision within this area.

CONCLUSION

The landscape in this part of the gap provides a vital role in maintaining the physical and visual separation of Titchfield from development within the Western Wards. However, its role is compromised by the dispersed pattern of development throughout the area and particularly along the minor road network, which blurs the definition of settlement edges. Existing settlement boundaries need to be tightly maintained and significant intensification or infill development avoided within the more dispersed areas of settlement, especially along road corridors. It is recommended that the Gap boundaries remain unchanged.

AREA 7.1: FAREHAM- STUBBINGTON GAP

(EQUIVALENT TO PART OF AREAS 19 AND 20 IN GAP REVIEW)

PHYSICAL SEPARATION

The landscape within the gap between Fareham and Stubbington (northern part of area 7.1) maintains effective physical separation of these settlements by some distance (approximately 1km north-south along Peak Lane), although it narrows to 400m between the corner of HMS Collingwood and the eastern edge of Stubbington). Although the gap is narrow at this point, the settlement boundaries are clearly defined and there is no intervening built form or road connection across the gap that could potentially lead to physical coalescence. The southern part of the area (including the Water Treatment Works and land currently occupied by a solar farm) provides effective physical separation between permanent built development in Stubbington, Peel Common and Woodcot (Gosport), although any new development along the Gosport Road could potentially lead to physical coalescence between these settlements.

VISUAL SEPARATION

The distance between the settlements, combined with the screening effects of vegetation along the edges of the urban areas, also provides effective visual separation, despite the essentially open, expansive character of the landscape. Even at the narrowest part of the gap where parts of the settlement edge are visible from one side to the other across a completely open landscape (i.e. between the SW corner of HMS Collingwood and the eastern edge of Stubbington), the distance is sufficient to maintain visual separation between the two. At the southern end, vegetation cover around the Water Treatment Works and along field boundaries interrupts views between Stubbington and Peel Common/Newgate Lane corridor, maintaining visual separation.

OVERALL SENSE OF SEPARATION

The landscape within the gap performs a highly effective role in terms of providing the 'sense' of separation and the experience of moving between one settlement and the other. It forms a continuous tract of undeveloped countryside, with strong visual and topographic unity and a distinctive coastal plain character and sense of place.

The edges of Fareham and Stubbington are clearly defined by strong boundary vegetation and there is a clear distinction between 'town and country', and a strong sense of leaving one urban area behind, moving through open countryside, before re-entering another, different urban environment. The scale of the gap allows time to appreciate fully the expansive character of the landscape and the sense of being out in open countryside. Being able to see so far across the gap, and identify its edges, also strengthens the sense of separation by emphasising the distance between settlements.

ROLE IN SHAPING CHARACTER OF SETTLEMENT

The landscape of this area also performs an effective role in defining the character and settings of the settlements. It is a remnant of a more extensive swathe of open, undeveloped coastal plain landscape and remains a functioning, productive agricultural landscape, providing an intact countryside setting for both Fareham and Stubbington. The existing southern edge of Fareham is well-defined by the broad road corridor with substantial verges, hedgerows and belts of trees and woodland at Oxleys Coppice. This edge coincides with the geological boundary between a band of heavy London Clay to the north (which underlies most of the built area of modern day Fareham) and the tertiary sands and clays of the intensively farmed coastal plain, forming the 'natural edge' of the latter. When crossing this boundary, there is a strong sense of coming out into the wide open landscape of the coastal plain from the enclosure of the built-up area. The edges of Stubbington are mostly well-defined and it retains the sense of being contained by the sea and open countryside on all sides. It has a sense of place as a 'coastal plain' settlement and does not currently feel part of a continuous urban sprawl, although there is the risk of coalescence with Peel Common to the east and Lee-on-the-Solent on its south-eastern corner which may be exacerbated by the redevelopment of the Daedalus airfield and by the proposed Stubbington Bypass.

CONTRIBUTION TO GI NETWORK

The area does not support a wide range of existing GI assets but it makes a significant contribution to the local GI network as an extensive area of undeveloped countryside, accessed by a good network of public footpaths, within easy reach of a highly urbanised area. It provides significant opportunities for quiet recreation and enjoyment of the countryside, despite the lack of formal recreation facilities and public open space. Any development that compromised the sense of openness and countryside experience would have a potentially adverse effect on the GI value of the area. However, the area could benefit from improvement and extension of the Local GI network through investment in appropriate new landscape features, habitats and access opportunities.

CONCLUSION

This area is a cohesive agricultural landscape which performs multiple roles in respect of the primary and secondary purposes and functions of the Strategic Gap. Even minor encroachment beyond the existing, strong settlement boundary along the southern edge of Fareham could potentially disrupt local settlement pattern and character and have an adverse effect on the Gap functions and the overall integrity of the agricultural landscape. There may be some scope for very modest 'rounding off' of Stubbington on its northern edges, within existing parcels of land where development could be integrated without unacceptable impacts. Overall, however, it is recommended that the Gap boundaries remain tightly drawn around the existing settlement edges, with allowance for development only in exceptional circumstances where the purposes and integrity of the Gap can be maintained and significant GI and other benefits would result.

AREA 8.1: WOODCOT

(EQUIVALENT TO PART OF AREAS 21, 22 23 IN GAP REVIEW)

PHYSICAL SEPARATION

This area forms part of the extensive swathe of undeveloped landscape to the west and south that physically separates Fareham, Stubbington and Gosport. As well as its contribution to the wider Strategic Gap, this particular area provides local physical separation between commercial development on the southern edge of Fareham (Speedfields Park) and Woodcot/Bridgemary (residential areas in Gosport). These two settlements are already virtually connected immediately to the north-east of the area where only narrow strips of mature vegetation separate the residential streets in Gosport from the commercial areas in Fareham.

VISUAL SEPARATION

Substantial mature vegetation within and around the boundaries of this area and along the Newgate Lane corridor interrupts views between the settlement edges of Fareham, Gosport and Stubbington and provides very effective visual separation of the three settlements.

OVERALL SENSE OF SEPARATION

Despite the close proximity of Fareham and Gosport in the north of this area, the landscape within the gap performs an effective role in terms of providing the 'sense' of separation between these two settlements. Substantial vegetation around its boundaries currently prevents visual coalescence and provides a well-defined boundary along the settlement edges, and the gap has sufficient scale and coherence of character to be experienced as an intact area of open countryside/amenity landscape. It makes a strong contribution to the sense of separation when experienced from the Newgate Lane corridor - there is a clear and distinct experience of leaving Fareham behind, passing by/through an area of open, undeveloped countryside before arriving in Gosport. However, this is less effective when experienced from the footpath along the northern boundary linking Newgate Lane with Woodcot, where the proximity of the neighbouring settlements may be evident to some degree despite the strong vegetation cover. Distance and lack of views creates a very strong sense of separation between Gosport and Stubbington. In itself, the approved Newgate Lane South road development should not fundamentally alter the experience of moving out of Fareham, passing through undeveloped countryside and

entering the urban area of Gosport beyond the Peel Common Roundabout. However, further development within the gap in addition to the road scheme could potentially cause visual, or even physical, coalescence of settlements on either side of the new road corridor.

ROLE IN SHAPING CHARACTER OF SETTLEMENT

Fareham developed on higher ground underlain by London Clay to the north while Gosport originated at the mouth of Portsmouth Harbour and has expanded northwards. Further expansion of Fareham onto the coastal plain along the Newgate Lane corridor has more or less connected the two settlements. This area forms a remnant of the coastal plain landscape at the junction of the two settlements and has a key role in maintaining their separate identity and providing them both with an essentially rural, countryside setting. It provides a strong rural backdrop along Newgate Lane which forms part of a key approach into the Borough from Gosport District to the south, reinforcing the sense of moving between separate settlements.

CONTRIBUTION TO GI NETWORK

The area's existing GI value lies in its largely open, undeveloped nature, the public open space at Speedfields Park and the public footpath connections between Newgate Lane and Bridgemary to the north and Woodcote Lane to the south. Any development that compromised the PRoW network or the sense of openness and being 'in the countryside' would have an adverse effect on the GI network. The area would benefit from improvements through major investment in the reinstatement or creation of hedgerows, woodlands and other habitats and through the extension of public open space and access connections.

CONCLUSION

This is a cohesive area of undeveloped landscape which performs an important role in respect of the primary purposes of the Strategic Gap, i.e. in defining the edges, separate identity and settings of Fareham and Gosport, preventing their coalescence. Even minor encroachment beyond existing settlement boundaries could have an adverse effect on these functions and the overall integrity of the landscape and Strategic Gap. It is recommended that the Gap boundaries remain unchanged.

AREA 8.2: ALVER VALLEY

(EQUIVALENT TO PART OF AREAS 24, 25, 26 IN GAP REVIEW)

PHYSICAL SEPARATION

This area contributes to the extensive swathe of undeveloped landscape within the Strategic Gap to the west and south, that physically separates Fareham, Stubbington, Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent. Between Woodcote Lane and the Peel Common Roundabout (area 8.2a), the open land also maintains the physical isolation of the small settlement of Peel Common that lies within the wider strategic gap between Gosport and Stubbington. The gap is very narrow (150-300m) in this location and there is a real danger of physical coalescence of Peel Common with Bridgemary, potentially exacerbated by new bypass proposals.

Further south (area 8.2b and c), the area forms part of the larger gap between Gosport and Stubbington (1.5-2.5kms) that includes the Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus to the west. The importance of maintaining this physical separation will be increased with the proposed employment intensification of the Daedalus site. This triangle of undeveloped land also maintains effective physical separation of Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent (gap of around 1km).

VISUAL SEPARATION

Substantial mature vegetation within and around the boundaries of this area (particularly at Chark Common) interrupts views between the edges of Gosport, Stubbington, Peel Common and Lee-on-the-Solent, providing effective visual separation between settlements. However, there is the potential for visual coalescence within the narrowest part of the gap where there is some intervisibility between housing along Woodcote Lane and along Brookers Lane and The Drive on the western edge of Bridgemary.

OVERALL SENSE OF SEPARATION

This area contributes to a strong sense of separation between Gosport, Stubbington and Lee-on-the-Solent, due mainly to the substantial vegetation that defines the settlement boundaries and limits views between them. In particular, the gap in the southern part of the area (around Chark Common) maintains a strong sense of separation between built areas and has sufficient scale and coherence of character to be experienced as an intact area of open countryside/amenity landscape. It will be essential to maintain the undeveloped character of this 'triangle' of land, avoiding ribbon development

along surrounding roads.

However, the sense of separation between Peel Common and Bridgemary is more tenuous. Most views are blocked by vegetation along field boundaries and the River Alver corridor that provides a sense of separation when travelling between them on the road network (Newgate Lane and the B334). However, users of Woodcote Lane/Brookers Lane and the Brookers Field Recreation Ground, are likely to perceive a close connection between the two settlements. It will be vital to protect the distinct undeveloped character of the public open space, and the screening effects of the strong boundary and riverside vegetation, in order to maintain a physical, visual and perceptual gap between the built areas in this location.

Role in shaping character of settlement

These areas form a vital link in the wider Alver Valley landscape corridor which extends southwards into Gosport District to the coast. The extensive woodland and other habitats within the river corridor and the adjoining amenity landscapes (recreation ground and golf course), provide a well-defined edge and distinct landscape setting for the surrounding urban areas.

CONTRIBUTION TO GI NETWORK

The area contains a variety of valued GI assets associated with the corridor of the River Alver (a 'sub-regional scale blue corridor' in the PUSH GI strategy) and Chark Common, including designated woodland, heathland, grassland and wetland habitats. It also includes playing fields and some public footpath access, although the area would benefit from improved links, e.g. with the Alver Valley Country Park to the south. It will also be important to take advantage of any opportunities for creating GI links between this area and new open space provision and planting arising from the proposals for the Solent Enterprise Zone at HMS Daedalus to the west.

CONCLUSION

As a whole, this area performs a critical role in preventing the coalescence of the built areas of Bridgemarky, Peel Common, Lee-on-the-Solent and, to a lesser extent, Stubbington, and in defining the edges, setting and separate identity of these settlements. The narrowness of the gap between Peel Common and the edge of Bridgemarky means that this area has a particularly vital role in maintaining physical, visual and perceived separation and even a limited amount of development in the 'wrong' place, particularly to the east of Peel Common and along the main roads that enclose the southern part of the area, could threaten the integrity of the gap. The situation is further complicated by the proposed new bypass which will inevitably have some effect on the integrity and character of the landscape resource and undeveloped gap and further 'squeeze' the gap at its narrowest point. It is recommended that the Gap boundaries remain unchanged and existing well-defined settlement edges be maintained.

CONCLUSIONS AND ADVICE ON STRATEGIC GAP DESIGNATION AND BOUNDARIES

The review has indicated that all of the areas of landscape that currently lie within the designated Strategic Gap boundaries as defined in the adopted Local Plan are effective, to some degree, in supporting the primary purposes of designation, i.e. maintaining the separate identity of settlements. In many cases, they also support the secondary purpose of designation in providing important Green Infrastructure assets that benefit the local population and wildlife, or offer the potential to do so with appropriate investment in landscape and access improvements.

The review has identified areas of undeveloped landscape which have a particularly critical role, e.g. where the gap is especially narrow and vulnerable, or where encroachment of development could have particularly significant effects on the integrity of the gap as a whole or the pattern and character of settlements. These areas are:

- The central section of the Meon Valley, particularly those parts of the gap surrounding Titchfield that are vital to maintaining the separation of the village from settlements to the west and east of the valley and are highly vulnerable to coalescence (i.e. 6.2a, 5.1c and the northern parts of areas 4, 6.1 a, b and c);
- The eastern side of the Meon Valley which has a vital role in preventing sprawl and coalescence with Titchfield and Fareham, and protecting the form, character and countryside setting of Stubbington;
- The great majority of the open farmland within the gap between Fareham and Stubbington (area 7.1) which is critical to maintaining the sense of separation between these settlements, as well as their countryside setting and distinctive settlement form and character, and is highly vulnerable to change because of its very open, expansive character. Only a few small, enclosed parcels of land around the immediate northern fringes of Stubbington may play a marginally less critical role;
- The southern end of this area (7.1a) which is a narrow part of the gap and vital to maintaining the separate identity of Peel Common and preventing coalescence with Stubbington;
- The open farmland, public open space and strong structure of vegetation to the east of the Newgate Lane corridor, especially within area 8.2a, which has a vital role in maintaining separation between Fareham, Gosport and, in particular, the separate identity of Peel Common;
- The undeveloped and distinctive wooded landscape within the 'triangle' of land at Chark Common, which is vital to maintaining the separation of Gosport and Peel Common from Lee-on-the-Solent.

The remaining parts of the gap area perform important functions but are marginally less vulnerable in terms of the threat of coalescence or loss of settlement identity.

These areas are:

- The parts of the valley floor and western side of the Meon Valley (areas 6.1a and b) that lie beyond the immediate setting of Titchfield to the south. These areas form an integral part of the valley landscape unit, are critical to the setting and character of Stubbington and contribute significantly to the local GI network, but are less critical in terms of coalescence of settlements because of the extensive 'buffer' of open countryside to the west and the protection against westward 'sprawl' afforded by area 6.1c;
- The northern section of the Meon Valley (area 6.2b), which is an important landscape feature that forms the 'natural' edge and setting of Fareham and maintains separation between the town and built development at Whiteley to the west. Visual and physical separation between these settlements is particularly strong within this part of the gap, and the threat of coalescence is also reduced by the physical barrier of the motorway and rail corridors, which also help to prevent coalescence of Fareham with Funtley.

Overall, the review concludes that all of the landscape that currently lies within the Strategic Gap contributes in some way (often in multiple ways) to the function and purpose of the designation and, therefore, there is justification for the boundaries to remain as they are currently defined. However, as the PUSH Policy Framework makes clear, this does not mean that development is completely precluded in these areas. Fareham Local Plan Policy CS22 states that 'development proposals will not be permitted either individually or cumulatively where

it significantly affects the integrity of the gap and the physical and visual separation of settlements'. It follows that some development may be permitted within the gap if the relevant criteria can be met and there is no significant harm caused to the purposes and function of the gap.

However, the current policy wording and supporting justification is not particularly clear on how such 'significant effects' are to be judged if and when development proposals come forward. The policy contains three criteria that form the 'tests' for land to be included within the designation and, by extension, against which the potential effects of development proposals will be judged. As discussed earlier, these criteria include a variety of terms or phrases (e.g. open nature, sense of separation, important role in defining the settlement character of the area, separating settlements at risk of coalescence, maintaining physical and visual separation etc.) that are not clearly defined or explained. Clarification of such terms and the basis upon which the effects of development will be judged is required with reference, if considered appropriate, to the approach set out in this review.

The Strategic Gap policy should embrace all of the ways in which landscape contributes to the purposes and functions of the designation, as set out in this review and the Gap Review, and provide protection for those attributes of the landscape that are critical to those purposes. It should not, however, be confused with policies for the protection of the landscape for other reasons, such as protection of its intrinsic character and quality or visual amenity, which will be protected by the overarching 'core' landscape/ countryside policy approach described in section 2.3.

PART FOUR

FAREHAM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

APPENDICES

LD&DESIGN



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APPENDIX I

**Relationship between Landscape Types
defined in the County-Level and Fareham
Landscape Character Assessments**

Hampshire county-wide LCA (1993)	Hampshire county-wide ICA (current)	Fareham Borough LCA (1996)
CHALKLANDS		
Open arable	Open Downs	Open arable downs Open arable downs: fringe character
Scarps: downland	Chalk scarp	Scarp face
LOWLAND MOSAIC		
Pasture and woodland: heath associated	Lowland mosaic heath associated	Wooded valley: heath associated
Mixed farmland and woodland	Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Lowland mosaic Small scale	Mixed farmland and woodland: large-scale Mixed farmland and woodland: small-scale Mixed farmland and woodland: fringe character
Horticulture and smallholdings	(incorporated within coastal plain)	Horticulture and small-holdings: large-scale Horticulture and small-holdings: small-scale
Open coastal plain	Coastal Plain Open	Open coastal plain: weak structure Open coastal plain: strong structure Open coastal plain: fringe character Open coastal amenity land
Enclosed coastal plain	Coastal Plain Enclosed	Enclosed coastal plain Enclosed coastal amenity land
Coastline	Coastal sea Open coastal shore Estuary Intertidal estuary and harbour	Open estuary Enclosed tidal river
Cliff coastline	Open coastal shore	Cliff coastline
River Valley	River valley floor (incorporated within coastal plain)	Small-scale enclosed valley Open floodplain farmland Enclosed floodplain farmland Marsh, reedswamp and brackish lagoon Enclosed valley side Open valley side
(no equivalent)	(no equivalent)	Parkland and grounds
(no equivalent)	(no equivalent)	Airfield/large-scale utilities
(no equivalent)	(no equivalent)	Disturbed landscapes (including quarries, landfill etc.) Recolonising/restored landscapes (including vacant land, disused/restored gravel pits, quarries)
URBAN		
Urban	Urban	Urban: industrial
		Urban: greenspace
		Urban: low-density fringe/ribbon development
		Urban: inter/post war suburban housing
		Urban: chalet/caravan park

APPENDIX 2

Fareham Landscape Character Assessment 1996: Methodology

The 1996 Landscape Character Assessment included the following description of the methodology used in the original study:

“Landscape assessment, as a tool for identifying and describing the character of our landscapes, is increasingly recognised as an important first step in conserving and enhancing them. Over recent years, there has been a general trend away from quantitative systems of landscape evaluation towards an approach based on understanding the intrinsic character of a locality and its distinctive features. This approach – which has now become part of established practice – allows land-use planning and management to respond to the local landscape ‘vernacular’.

The approach recognises that the character of the landscape relies closely on its physiography, its history and land management in addition to its scenic or visual dimension. Hence, other factors which may influence the ways in which landscape is experienced and valued, such as ecology, history and culture, should be examined although they are not in themselves to be the subject of detailed discussion.

Advice on principles and methods of landscape assessment was first published by the Countryside Commission in 1987 but since then many assessments have been carried out and the approach has been developed and refined. New guidance, prepared by CRC on behalf of the Countryside Commission, has recently been published which builds on the earlier advice but brings it up-to-date [1]. Our approach to the Fareham Borough landscape assessment is based closely upon this guidance, and as an agreed approach adopted by all District Councils in Hampshire co-ordinated by the County Council. Essentially, the assessment relies upon a mix of subjective and objective judgement, used in a systematic and iterative way.

The main steps in the assessment process are:

- defining the purpose preliminary survey desk study
- field survey analysis
- presentation of results

The purpose of the assessment determines the detailed method to be used and the scale at which the assessment is to be presented. In this case, the assessment is intended to increase understanding of the landscape resources of the Borough as a whole, to assist with policy formulation and development control, and also to assist with the targeting of resources for enhancement and management. Both of these purposes require the assessment to be pitched at a level of detail which lies somewhere between the broad-brush and the field-by-field assessment.

Initially, a rapid preliminary survey of the district was undertaken to familiarise the study team with its overall character and range of landscape variation. In the course of this initial survey, a range of different types of landscape type was observed and compiled into a list which formed the basis of a recording system for use during the field survey. Each detailed landscape type was given a reference code which could be used to provide a ‘shorthand’ description of landscape character when annotating field survey plans.

The desk study involved the collation of a wide range of existing information from which some of the key formative influences on landscape character could be deduced. A 1:50,000 overlay mapping exercise was undertaken, analysing geology, landform and drainage, landcover, woodland/parkland and sites of ecological and historical importance within the Borough. Review of other landscape assessments, notably the county-wide assessment [2] and those for neighbouring districts, formed a fundamental element of the desk study and provided both broad context and local detail of landscape character upon which to build within the Borough assessment. In addition, various books, plans and reports were also examined in order to build upon our understanding of the landscape resource. On the basis of this analysis, a preliminary characterisation of the landscape was made, dividing the Borough into broad areas of common character, termed 'Rural Character Areas' and 'Urban Character Areas'.

The purpose of the field survey was to confirm or refine the boundaries of the preliminary Urban and Rural Character Areas and to identify and record the range of variation in landscape types within them. It also allowed the recording of emotional responses to the landscape, of features critical to its character and quality, and of its sensitivity to change.

The field survey involved travelling extensively throughout the study area, recording detailed variations in landscape types and key features onto 1:25,000 base maps using the annotations derived from the preliminary survey. Field survey forms, supported by a photographic record, were completed at representative locations to provide further information on the positive and negative attributes of the rural landscape or urban townscape, its ability to accommodate change and its enhancement needs and priorities.

Analysis of desk and field information, and discussions within the study team and with the Borough and County Councils, helped to confirm the boundaries of the Character Areas, to refine the classification of Landscape Types and to define enhancement priorities in different parts of the district."

APPENDIX 3

**Fareham LCA 1996: Landscape Types
and Character Areas (Rural and Urban)
and Areas of Special Landscape Character**

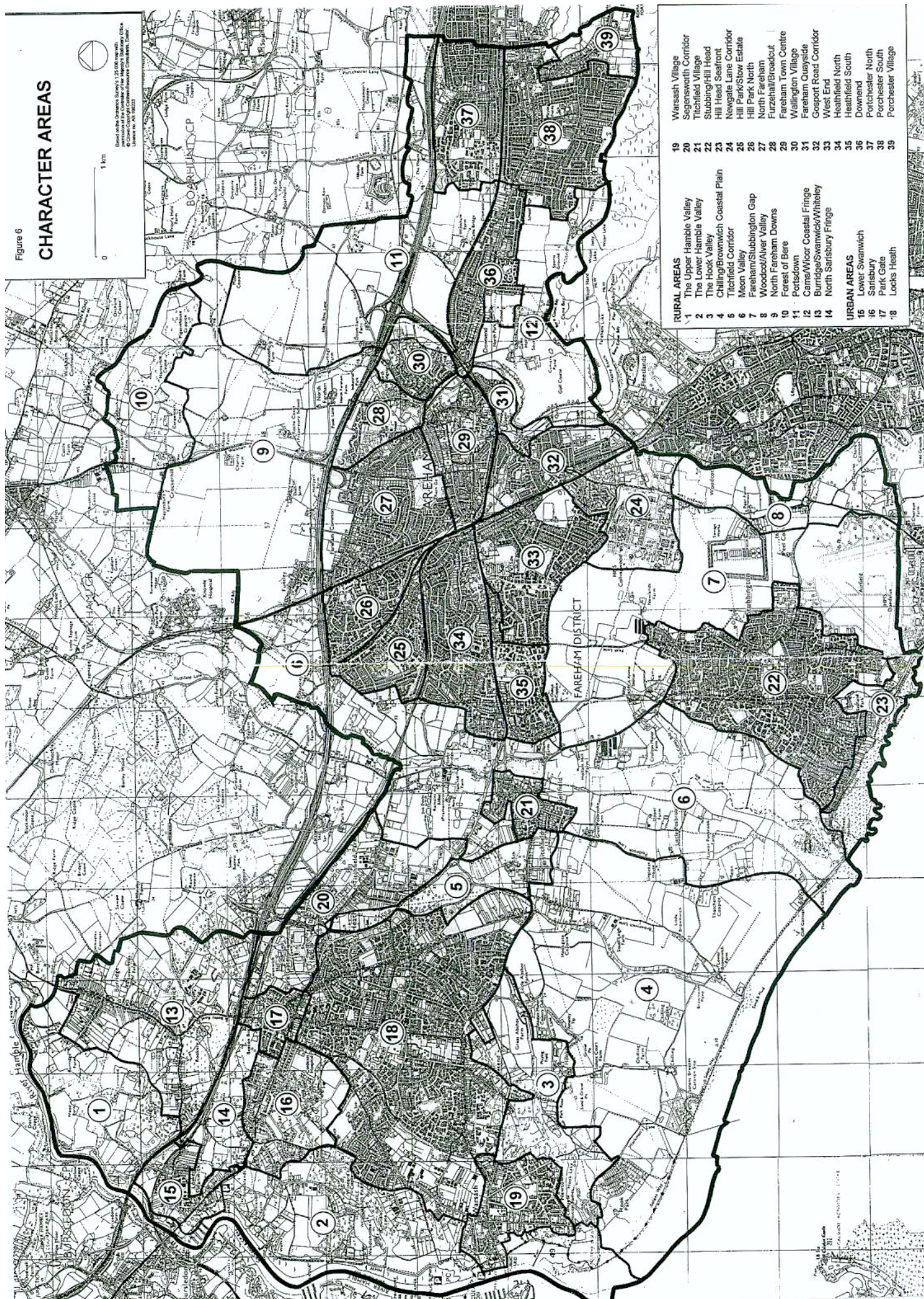
Figure 6

CHARACTER AREAS



1 km

Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map WD, published by the Controller of the Majesty's Stationery Office, London in 1973.



RURAL AREAS

- 1 The Upper Hamble Valley
- 2 The Lower Hamble Valley
- 3 The Hook Valley
- 4 Chilling/Brownish Coastal Plain
- 5 Titchfield Corridor
- 6 Mean Valley
- 7 Fareham/Stubbington Gap
- 8 Woodcut/Aver Valley
- 9 North Fareham Downs
- 10 Forest of Bere
- 11 Portsdown
- 12 Camas/Wicor Coastal Fringe
- 13 Burridge/Swanwick/Whiteley
- 14 North Salisbury Fringe
- 15 Lower Swanwick
- 16 Salisbury
- 17 Park Gate
- 18 Locks Heath
- 19 Warsash Village
- 20 Segensworth Corridor
- 21 Titchfield Village
- 22 Stubbington Hill Head
- 23 Hill Head Seaford
- 24 Newgate Lane Corridor
- 25 Hill Park/Stow Estate
- 26 Hill Park North
- 27 North Fareham
- 28 Furzehall/Broadway
- 29 Fareham Town Centre
- 30 Wallington Village
- 31 Fareham Quayside
- 32 Gosport Road Corridor
- 33 West End
- 34 Heathfield North
- 35 Heathfield South
- 36 Downend
- 37 Portchester North
- 38 Portchester South
- 39 Portchester Village

URBAN AREAS

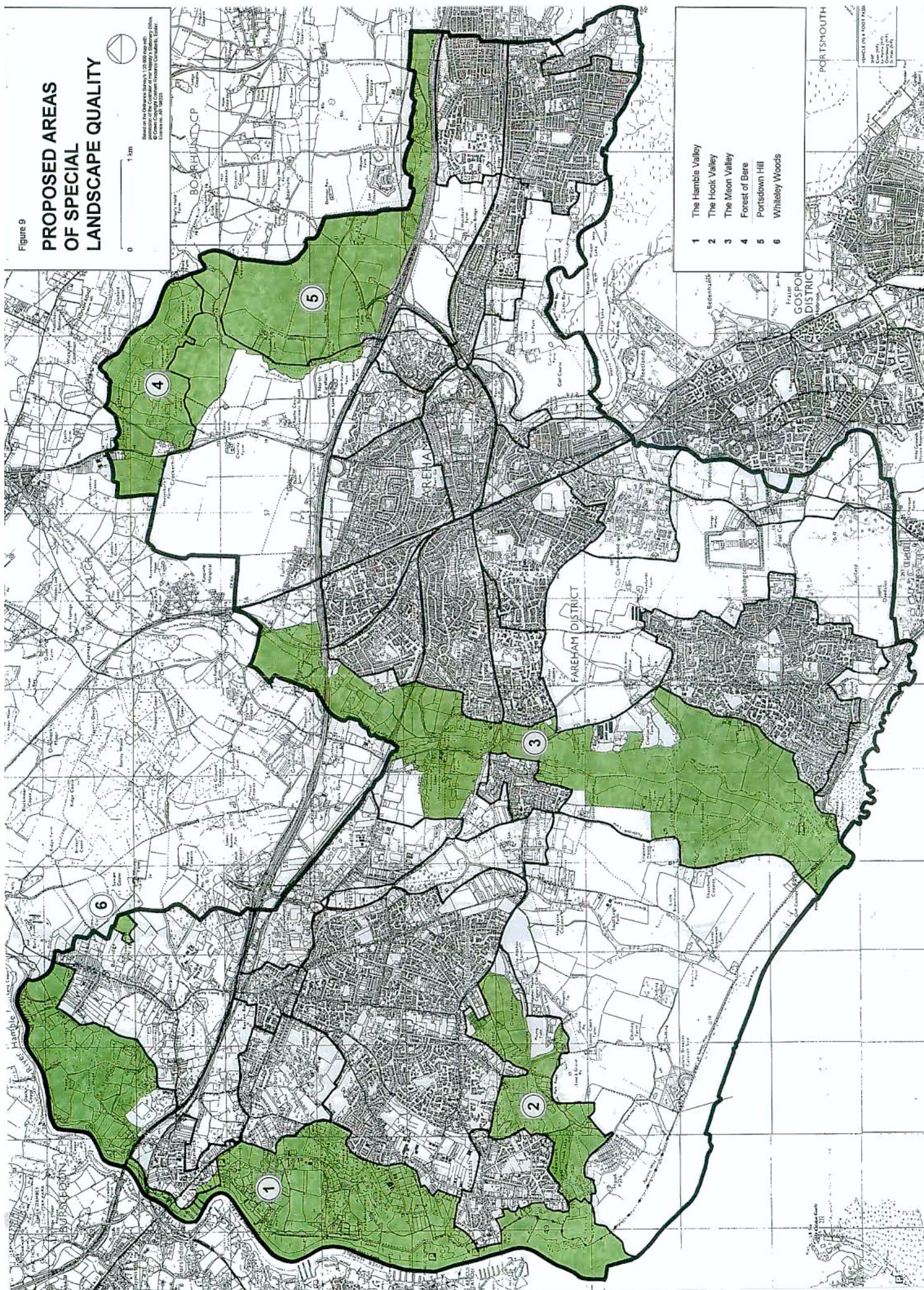
- 15 Lower Swanwick
- 16 Salisbury
- 17 Park Gate
- 18 Locks Heath

Figure 9

PROPOSED AREAS OF SPECIAL LANDSCAPE QUALITY



- 1 The Hamble Valley
- 2 The Hook Valley
- 3 The Meon Valley
- 4 Forest of Bere
- 5 Portsdown Hill
- 6 Whiteley Woods



APPENDIX 4

Summary descriptions of Landscape Types

CHALKLAND TYPES

OPEN ARABLE DOWNS

Smoothly rolling chalk landform; very open character with few trees or hedgerows; dominance of intensive arable cultivation with only occasional areas of pasture; exposed and elevated character with sweeping views; rural and generally unspoilt character; sparse settlement and road pattern.

OPEN ARABLE DOWNS: FRINGE CHARACTER

Smoothly rolling chalk landform but with intrusive influences of roads, masts, buildings, urban development and quarrying; poorly maintained field boundaries; rough pasture grazed by horses with unkempt, neglected appearance.

SCARP FACE

Steep, chalk scarps with rough grassland, weak hedgerow structure and treeless; open, exposed character; dominated by pasture; sweeping views across surrounding landscape or townscape.

LOWLAND MOSAIC TYPES

WOODED VALLEY: HEATH ASSOCIATED

Distinctive valley landform; strong woodland cover with 'heathy' characteristics in the vegetation, including birch, pine, bracken, gorse, broom etc.

MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND: LARGE-SCALE

Mainly arable farmland with large fields; strong hedgerow and tree structure and backdrop of woodland blocks; contained views; absence of 'heathy' characteristics.

MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND: SMALL-SCALE

More intimate mix of farmland and woodland; small-scale fields of pasture or arable; strong hedgerow and tree structure; enclosed character; absence of obvious 'heathy' characteristics.

MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND: FRINGE CHARACTER

As mixed farmland and woodland: large-scale above but with intrusive influences of roads, buildings and urban development; poorly maintained field boundaries; unkempt, somewhat neglected appearance.

HORTICULTURE AND SMALL-HOLDINGS: LARGE-SCALE

Distinctive, large-scale and neat pattern of crops or pasture in plots and strips, usually in unfenced large fields; weak hedgerow and tree structure; open, exposed and coastal character; frequent glasshouses, polythene tunnels and buildings; scattered dwellings.

HORTICULTURE AND SMALL-HOLDINGS: SMALL-SCALE

Strong, small-scale pattern of crops or pasture in plots and strips; either in unfenced larger fields or within a small-scale field pattern; stronger landscape framework of hedges, trees and woods creates a more enclosed character; scattered glasshouses, buildings and dwellings; somewhat suburbanised character.

OPEN COASTAL PLAIN: WEAK STRUCTURE

Flat, coastal plain; open character with very weak hedgerow and tree structure; coastal exposure evident in wind-pruning and salty air; sparse settlement pattern and remote, undeveloped character; extensive views across coastal plain and out to sea.

OPEN COASTAL PLAIN: STRONG STRUCTURE

Similar to above but with the presence of woodland blocks and a stronger hedgerow structure which provides some shelter and containment of views.

OPEN COASTAL PLAIN: FRINGE CHARACTER

Flat, open landscape with weak hedgerow and tree structure; influenced by proximity of urban development, poorly maintained field boundaries and non-agricultural land-uses (eg. waste water treatment works, military land); sense of exposure but built form provides protection from coastal influences and reduces sense of remoteness.

OPEN COASTAL AMENITY LAND

Similar characteristics to the open coastal plain farmland but with a distinctive amenity character; typically occupied by intensively managed sports pitches or rough, unkempt grassland; benches and other municipal landscape elements; windswept, coastal character; recreational activity reduces sense of remoteness.

ENCLOSED COASTAL AMENITY LAND

Similar to above but with a stronger structure of woodland and trees which creates a smaller-scale, more enclosed and sheltered landscape; the only example of this type is occupied by a golf course, with its own distinctive landscape 'vernacular' features and manicured character.

OPEN ESTUARY

The lower reaches of the tidal rivers where they enter the wider landscape of Portsmouth Harbour; strongly estuarine and maritime character; tidal fluctuations and inter-tidal habitats of saltmarsh, mudflats and shingle beaches; dominance of sea and sky; open, exposed character and extensive views; changing light conditions; presence of wildfowl and waders, rough water and salty smells; presence of ships and other craft.

ENCLOSED TIDAL RIVER

The more enclosed reaches of the tidal rivers inland from the estuary mouth; enclosed character, often fringed by heavily wooded valley sides, which limit views inland; fringing mudflats and saltmarshes; recreational boating activity, marinas and boatyards; tidal fluctuation and changing patterns of light and texture; generally unspoilt, natural qualities.

CLIFF COASTLINE

Similar qualities to the open estuary landscape but with the coastal margin defined by a steep, abrupt cliff face; generally undeveloped, unspoilt character; shingle beach at foot of cliffs and strong visual separation between the beach and the farmland of the coastal plain beyond.

SMALL-SCALE ENCLOSED VALLEY

Small-scale but strong valley landform which reads as a single landscape unit rather than as separate valleys sides and floor, minor watercourse with a floodplain very narrow or absent; visually and physically enclosed by valley form and dense woodland; natural, unspoilt qualities.

OPEN FLOODPLAIN FARMLAND

Low-lying, flat floodplain farmland, dominated by pasture; generally weak hedgerow and tree structure; open character but with more extensive views contained by valley landform; rural, pastoral character; generally unspoilt and tranquil but with some intrusive influences from road crossings or valley side development.

ENCLOSED FLOODPLAIN FARMLAND

As above but with greater degree of enclosure provided by stronger structure of hedgerows, blocks of woodland and trees along watercourses (typically willow and alder).

MARSH, REEDSWAMP AND BRACKISH LAGOON

Areas of open water and marsh within the floodplain, dominated by semi-natural marshland or fen vegetation; tranquil unspoilt character with strong natural qualities and important wildlife communities; valley form and vegetation, including carr woodland, creates enclosed, private character.

ENCLOSED VALLEY SIDE

Distinctive valley-side landform sloping, sometimes steeply, down to flat floodplain farmland or tidal creek; strong landscape structure of woods, hedges and trees create a sense of enclosure and privacy; natural, unspoilt qualities.

OPEN VALLEY SIDE

Distinctive valley-side landform sloping, sometimes steeply, down to flat floodplain farmland or tidal creek; lack of woodland or strong hedgerow/tree cover creates a more open valley-side landscape with views out across the valley floor; generally pastoral and unspoilt character but with some intrusive influences of roads or built development.

PARKLAND AND GROUNDS

Landscapes with characteristics of formal parkland, or farmland and woodland with a managed, 'estate' character, forming the grounds of large houses and institutions; usually well-wooded but with areas of open grassland and individual or avenues of mature trees, often of exotic, ornamental species.

AIRFIELD/LARGE-SCALE UTILITIES

Large-scale, flat landscapes dominated by airfield or military barracks uses; extensive areas of hard-standing or built development; hard, un-natural and unwelcoming character; unsightly security fencing and dominant signage; exposed and somewhat hostile character.

DISTURBED LANDSCAPES

Land which has been substantially disturbed through such activities as quarrying, landfill or construction works etc. and has a modified, un-natural character.

RECOLONISING/RESTORED LANDSCAPES

As above but where the process of recolonisation has begun or is substantially advanced and the landscape is taking on a new character; typically areas of recolonised open water created following gravel workings or areas of vacant land, with developing wetland, scrub and woodland habitats with a 'quasi-natural' and unmanaged character.

URBAN TYPES

URBAN: INDUSTRIAL

Small pockets of land under industrial, or related, land use outside of the defined urban settlement boundary, within a rural or semi-rural context.

URBAN: GREENSPACE

Pockets of undeveloped greenspace lying beyond the defined urban settlement boundary but the character of which is influenced by its predominantly urban context.

URBAN: LOW-DENSITY FRINGE/RIBBON DEVELOPMENT

Areas of low-density built development (usually residential) which lie on the outskirts of the main urban centres or which form continuous ribbon development along roads outside of the main urban areas; suburbanised character of built frontages and gardens, backed by open countryside.

URBAN: INTER WAR/POST WAR SUBURBAN HOUSING

Medium to low-density housing of a suburban style and character, concentrated into distinctive groupings of bungalows, semi-detached or detached houses; all have typically uniform layout and regular pattern of streets, often with street trees; large private spaces at front and rear of properties, defined by hedges, fences or walls; cars confined to the street or garages.

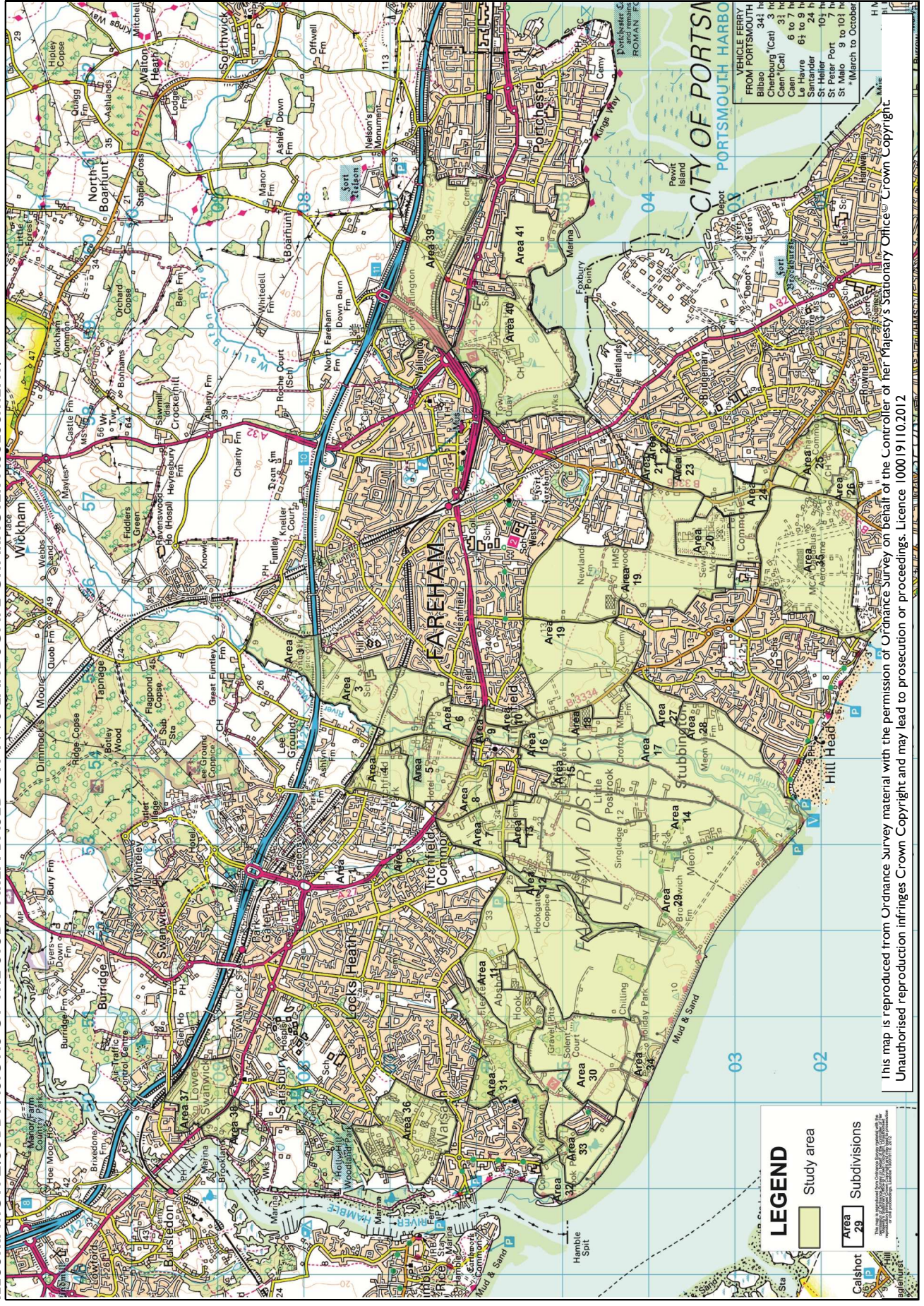
URBAN: CHALET/CARAVAN PARK

Typical caravan or chalet-style homes arranged in a particularly distinctive layout; personalised external areas but with lack of boundary definition between plots; dedicated public open space uncommon; distinctive but low-key site 'landscaping'.

APPENDIX 5

**Assessment sub-areas from
Fareham Borough Gap Review,
David Hares Landscape Architects 2012**

ILLUSTRATION 2: SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STUDY AREA BASED ON 1996 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT.



APPENDIX 6

References and relevant information sources

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