

**Fareham Local Plan 2037
Revised**

**Examination Statement
Matter 6
Site HA56**

**Prepared by Lynne Evans BA
MA MRTPI MRICS, Ian
Donohue BA Hons MRTPI and
Alice Drew
BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**



Prepared on behalf of Raymond Brown Rookery Properties

February 2022

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SOUTHERN PLANNING PRACTICE LTD

Registered Office: Youngs Yard, Churchfields, Twyford, Winchester, SO21 1NN
Tel: 01962 715770 Fax: 01962 715880 Email: info@southernplanning.co.uk Website: www.southernplanning.co.uk
Registered in England and Wales No. 3862030

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1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Southern Planning Practice Ltd on behalf of Raymond Brown Rookery Properties who own land at Rookery Farm, Botley Road, Swanwick which was allocated in the Supplement to the Draft Local Plan in January 2020; however, it was subsequently removed as an allocation from the Regulation 19 Submission Version of the Local Plan.
- 1.2 It is pertinent to note that representations have been made on behalf of our client, Raymond Brown Rookery Properties throughout the preparation of the emerging Local Plan. Whilst this statement is not a duplication of the contents of representations previously submitted to the emerging Local Plan, this statement draws on previous responses where necessary.
- 1.3 This Statement is prepared in response to the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions – Matter 6 – Housing Allocations and in particular in respect of the following proposed allocations:
- FTC 3 Land East of Fareham Station
 - FTC4 Land West of Fareham Station
 - HA42 Land South of Cams Alders
 - HA55 Land South of Longfield Avenue
 - **HA56 Land West Of Downend Road**
 - BL1 Town Centre
- 1.4 This should not be taken to be the only sites to which objection is raised on grounds of soundness but we do not wish to repeat the representations we have earlier submitted in December 2020 and July 2021, which remain before the Inspector. We have therefore focused these further statements on a small number of key sites which we consider are unsound and should not be allocated. The assessments which are submitted individually are accompanied and supported by a number of Appendices.
-

2.0 **Introduction**

- 2.1 The site (measuring 33.80 hectares) is located on the slopes of Portsdown Hill north of the Portsmouth to Southampton railway line which forms the development's southern boundary. The western boundary is formed by the link road from the M27 and the east by Down End Road
- 2.2 The site comprises agricultural land with a small number of buildings in the south east corner
- 2.3 The site is in the countryside and lies outside of the urban settlement boundary as defined in the existing adopted local plan. There is at present no vehicular access.
- 2.4 Proposed vehicular access is proposed from both the Link Road to the A27 and from Down End Road.
- 2.5 The site is indicated to provide 550 dwellings school playing fields and local centre.

3.0 **Key Issues**

3.1 Access

Access via the link road from the M27 motorway.

- It is not clear from the proposal if the access is solely into the site (left turn) or in and out or it is to be a full junction.
- If a left in left out, the link road splits allowing traffic to continue west (flyover) towards the railway station/Gosport or a slip road to travel east to Portchester or to the eastern link towards Sainsburys and the A32
- At rush hour it is common for traffic to back up to the M27 blocking both the flyover and the slip road.
- As the slip road tends to move quicker than the flyover cars will often use to slip road to jump the queue for the flyover.
- If egress is allowed, then it could result in firstly problems of vehicles trying to get across three lanes to get onto the flyover to travel west or adding to the queue along the slip road.
- Even if it the access was 'in' only it would add to queues of the slip road and may lead to frustration of the time taken to access the site.
- Any issues with traffic accessing the site the site could result in tailbacks and potentially block the motorway.
- The new access would impact on the layby which is quite often used by lorries.
- If the new access is to be a full access managing all 5 lanes then this could result in tailbacks on to the M27 west bound and also affect traffic on the roundabout when exiting from the eastbound carriageway.

Egress onto Down End Road

- The development would affect use of the bridge that resulted in site H4 being refused. The highways information for site H4 does not have regard to increased capacity resulting from this site allocation. This would put significant pressure on the bridge and the capacity at the junction with Down End Road and the A27.

- If the new access to the link road allowed for egress, then it likely that the road through the site will be used as a rat run to avoid the lights across the railway bridge and at the junction of Down End Road and the A27.
- It should be note that the site has been previously discounted in 2017. Due to access issues. In particular because of the time it would take to deliver this access.

Comments from Bellamy Roberts

- Comments from Bellamy Roberts, a highways consultancy firm are attached at **appendix 1** to this report. In summary the comments are as follows: -

*There are a plethora of transport assessments and studies that have been undertaken in respect of the local plan. I refer to Mayer Brown's Highway Review June 2021, Document Ref: TO1013, which considers the Downend site. This highway review refers to a number of transport reports and technical notes, and in particular those prepared by iTransport in connection with promoting the site west of Downend Road. In the discussions it appears that they have sought advice on the Southern Regional Transport Model (SRTM) which was produced by Systra on behalf of Fareham Borough Council. **It should be noted that none of the background documents are available on the councils web site.***

What is confusing is the conclusion reached at paragraph 4.16, which states that:- 'Scenario 1a i.e. the proposed link road to the A27 supporting an additional 500 or so units, would, "in total decrease the number of vehicles using the key junctions across the network by around 750 vehicles in the morning peak and 675 vehicles during the evening peak period". The report goes on to list at paragraph 4.17 key junctions which would experience a reduction in vehicle flows.

It is acknowledged that the Downend Road/A27 Porchester Road/Shearwater Avenue junction may have a reduction because of the link to the A27, however how can there then be a reduction at the Junction 11 of the M27. The report states the reduction will be 149 vehicles in the morning peak hour and 82 vehicles in the evening peak hour. Such conclusions in my view do not follow logic, particularly when bearing in mind that this site and the site east of Downend Road would provide a thousand dwellings.

What the Mayer Brown Report does not do, is list the junctions that would have an increase in traffic flows associated with these sites. Unfortunately, strategic traffic models are only as good as the set-up data within the model. Whilst we can criticise the model it would take a considerable length of time to look at it in any detail to see why it redirects the traffic away from key junctions, as clearly traffic does not at present. I am aware that in the evening peak hour period, westbound traffic queues along the M27 to get off at Junction 11, and traffic queues on the flyover bridge above Delme junction gyratory due to the congestion to the southwest into Gosport and beyond.

However, the model may take on board the improved public transport system proposed, but even so, I fail to accept such dramatic reductions in traffic flows at key junctions.

Paragraph 4.17 states the Downend Road/Portchester Road/Shearwater Avenue will be reduced by 128 vehicles in the morning and similarly Delme Roundabout would have a reduction of 486 vehicles in the morning. This presumably is because the new link road to the A27 will take those movements i.e. the traffic flows will be diverted. If that is the case, and if the traffic is diverted on to the link road and on to the A27, then surely the flows at Junction 11 of the M27 should increase not decrease. It is difficult to follow the Mayer Brown Report without having sight of the various reports that have been produced promoting this site.

3.2 Landscape

- With regard to the site the 'Fareham Landscape Assessment' 2017 states: -

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.

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.

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'

- The proposed development would inevitably result in long term adverse change to the landscape character of the countryside.
- Distinct difference in character between the supported scheme on the east side of Down End Road which is mostly screened and the west side of Down End Road which is exposed and prominent in the landscape. Once beyond the railway line the west sides open up and raise as such any development will have a significant detrimental visual impact this would be contrary to paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

- Comments from WH Landscape who have been commissioned to assess the landscape impact have been submitted with this statement (**appendix 2**). The conclusions to the comments are as follows: -

6.2 Development within the site will expand the settlement northwards, breaking the well-defined urban edge to subsume open arable land in a relatively visually prominent location. This will have a detrimental impact on landscape character, will result in a loss of the sole surviving remnant of rural land between the settlement and the M27, and will affect the landscape setting of the Grade I Listed Fort Nelson. This will have a significant adverse effect on landscape value overall.

6.3 Residential and mixed use development within the site would be visible from the Alan King Way, a long distance footpath, and combined with the effects on views from Downend Road and other sensitive receptors to the north, the level of visual impacts are also considered significant, and will affect visual amenity for those using the footpath or road.

3.3 Local Plan Policy

- The allocation of the site would be contrary to the following priorities and policies in the local plan

Priority 1 - In the first instance maximise development within the urban area and away from the wider countryside, valued landscapes and spaces that contribute to settlement definition.

Priority 9 - Protect and enhance the Borough's landscape features, valued landscapes, biodiversity, green infrastructure networks and the local, national and international sites designated for nature conservation.

DS1 j proposals will need to demonstrate that they conserve and enhance landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils,

DS3 as it is not clear how such an exposed site can be integrated into the landscape

3.4 Other issues raised by the allocation include: -

- Overhead power lines dominate the eastern half of the site which is not addressed in Framework Plan
- Accessibility. The assessment in the SHLAA is only 3/10.

4.0 Response to Inspector's Questions

4.1 In direct response to the Inspector's questions (48 – 52) inclusive, I have the following comments:

- 48. What evidence is there to demonstrate the impact of the development on the local highway network. If that impact is a negative one, would suitable mitigation measures address the issues?

See comments from Bellamy Roberts

- 49. How has the indicative yield been calculated?

550 houses is a significant number of houses for the site. It is presumed that the number is required to fund the local centre and primary school.

- 50. Why is it necessary for delivery to be phased to follow the development at Downend Road East? How would this be achieved? Is the policy effective and justified in this regard?

The development on the east side of Down End Road requires liaison with British Rail for the pedestrian bridge and phased lights on Down End Road. There is no time scale for this, and any delay would result in a delay to Down End Road west.

- 51. Are the infrastructure requirements justified? What is the implication for site viability?

The cost of a full access across the five lanes of the link road may be prohibitive.

It is presumed that without the access from the link road the scheme would result in a highways objection

It is not clear what Hampshire's view is on the need for a primary school.

There are no details of the local centre which indicates more than just one shop and the subsequent highway/traffic implications.

Any increase in costs would affect viability and therefore the delivery of affordable housing.

- 52. Should public transport accessibility be addressed in the site-specific requirements?

This is not a sustainable site and together with Down End East there would be nearly 1000 houses with no onsite bus services.

- 4.2 This is a site where the issue does not simply relate to whether the site can properly accommodate the number of units being proposed, but the suitability, availability and achievability must be questioned. It therefore remains our conclusion that the allocation is UNSOUND and should be deleted.

APPENDIX 1



Clover House
Western Lane
Odiham
Hampshire
RG29 1TU
Tel: 01256 703355

Our Ref: ITR/5732/dw

18th February 2022

Ian Donohue
Southern Planning
Youngs Yard
Churchfields
Twyford
Winchester, Hants
SO21 1NN
Via Email: IanD@southernplanning.co.uk

Dear Ian

Re: Land West of Downend Road, Fareham

I refer to our telephone conversation this morning and provide you with my brief understanding of the highway and transport matters arising from the Highway Review report dated 21st June prepared by Mayer Brown on behalf Fareham Borough Council, Document reference TO1013.

As you are aware there are a number of transport assessments and studies that have been undertaken in respect of the local plan and in particular I refer to the ones undertaken for the site west of Downend Road, Fareham. The Mayer Brown Highway Review refers to a number of transport reports and technical notes, and in particular those prepared by iTransport in connection with the promotion of the sites east and west of Downend Road. In the discussions between the consultant and highway and local authorities it appears that they have sought advice on the Southern Regional Transport Model (SRTM) which was produced by Systra on behalf of Fareham Borough Council.

What I fail to grasp and accept is the conclusion reached at paragraph 4.16, of the Mayer Brown Review which states that:- Scenario 1a i.e. the proposed link road to the A27 supporting an additional 500 or so units, would, "in total **decrease** the number of vehicles using the key junctions across the network by around 750 vehicles in the morning peak and 675 vehicles during the evening peak period". It goes on to list at paragraph 4.17 the key junctions which would experience a reduction in vehicle flows. Whilst I accept that the Downend Road/A27 Porchester Road/Shearwater Avenue may have a reduction because of the link to the A27, I cannot accept there will be a reduction at Junction 11 of the M27. The report states the reduction will be 149 vehicles in the morning peak hour and 82 vehicles in the evening peak hour. Such conclusions in my view do not follow logic, particularly when bearing in mind that this site and the site east of Downend Road would generate additional traffic movements at that junction.

The Mayer Brown Review does not provide or refer to junctions that would have an **increase** in traffic flows as a consequence of the development traffic and alleged redistribution of traffic. Clearly if, as alleged, a reduction in traffic at certain junctions would result following additional number of dwellings, it must follow that there will be a corresponding increase in traffic due to the redevelopment and additional traffic generated at other junctions on the network. As far as I am aware there is no assessment that has been undertaken on these other junctions, such impact could be severe. Whilst the Southern Regional Traffic Model (SRTM) suggests that traffic redistributes itself the model is only as good as the set up data within it. Whilst we can criticise the model at face value. Whilst we can criticise the model it would take a considerable length of time to look at it in any detail to see why traffic is redistributed away from key junctions as clearly traffic does not do that at present.





Page 2: Land West of Downend Road, Fareham

Traffic in the evening peak hour travelling westbound at junction 11 of the M27 queues back onto the motorway and along the flyover bridge above Delme junction gyratory due to the congestion to the southwest into Gosport and beyond. Currently the traffic does not redistribute itself from the area to avoid the congestion, and there is no valid reason why it would do so in the future.

The reports undertaken thus far are misleading and only refer to the alleged reduction in traffic flows at key junctions and not those that would experience an increase in traffic flows. It is clear that a thorough assessment needs to be undertaken to identify those junctions which undoubtedly will experience a significant increase in traffic flows as a consequence of the development and redistributed traffic.

In accordance with para 4.32 of the Mayer Brown review, the information submitted to date does not satisfy the local Highway Authority's. As such, a further study of the true impact for the site would generate on the surrounding highway network is needed before a considered view can be reached on the allocation of the site west of Downend Road.

I trust this is of assistance and should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Ian Roberts MCIHT
Partner

APPENDIX 2

HA56 LAND WEST OF DOWNEND ROAD

FAREHAM LOCAL PLAN 2037 REPRESENTATIONS

THIRD PARTY LANDSCAPE COMMENTS

On behalf of
RAYMOND BROWN ROOKERY PROPERTIES LIMITED

February 2022

REF: 22.1424

REV: A

**Landscape
Institute
Registered
Practice**

WH Landscape Consultancy Ltd
Sandcliffe House
Northgate Street
Devizes
Wilts
SN10 1JT

t: 01380 727539

e: info@whlandscape.co.uk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WH Landscape has been commissioned by Southern Planning Practice on behalf of Raymond Brown Rookery Properties Limited to provide comments pertaining to likely landscape and visual impacts in respect of land west of Downend Road, Portchester, Fareham East (the site). The site is currently being promoted through the Local Plan process for residential and mixed use development, including a primary school and local centre. The site's SHELAA reference is 3009 and its housing allocation policy number is HA56.

1.2 The indicative housing yield for the site is for approximately 550 dwellings. The site was initially included as a part of a 'Strategic Growth Area' in Fareham's Development Strategy (Fareham Draft Local Plan Supplement, January 2020) but was subsequently placed on a list of sites to be no longer promoted in the Publication Version of the Fareham Local Plan 2037 (Fareham Borough Council Press Release 23 September 2020 "Council to consider its Publication Local Plan following Government changes").

1.3 The site primarily occupies a large arable field, with a number of small, narrow grazing paddocks to its western margins (with a few small low-rise stable buildings), and another small area of pasture to its south-eastern corner, enclosed by mature trees (this is identified as 'Downend Fort' in the Fareham Borough Landscape Assessment, 2017). The southern-most section of the Alan King Way long-distance footpath runs parallel with the site's southern boundary, inside the site, before it connects to Paradise Lane, inside the site's western boundary. It then turns eastwards inside the site's northern boundary before striking out to the north towards Fort Nelson and beyond. The long-distance footpath is named after Alan King, who was responsible for setting up a number of ramblers groups across Hampshire, and was a former Publicity Officer for the Ramblers' Association.

1.4 The site, along with land to the east of Downend Road, forms the sole remaining area of open farmland between Portchester/Fareham East and the M27 motorway, and the landscape serves as an important transition zone essentially providing a landscape buffer between the urban areas to the south and the overtly rural chalk downland landscape to the north.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 The application site lies on farmland beyond the northern edge of the Downend/Cams Hill area of Portchester, outside the defined urban settlement boundary (marked by the railway line), between the settlement and the M27 motorway corridor, and to the west of the Downend Road, and the east of the A27. The land within the site is predominantly arable, although there are a few areas of grassland to the west and south east (which is enclosed by mature hedgerow trees).

2.2 Paradise Lane, towards the western margins of the site, is lined by established Hawthorn-rich hedgerows. Beyond this a mature tree belt marks the boundary with the A27, although this dissipates to a degree to the south-western corner, allowing some views into the grazing paddocks from the A27.

2.3 The site is flanked to the south by a belt of mature trees that marks the railway corridor and visually separate the rural hinterland of the site from the urban areas to the south. The railway is cut in along this section.

2.4 The wooded embankment of a cut-in section of the M27 marks the sites northern boundary, whilst to the east the boundary with Downend Road is marked, for the most part, by low hedgerow and ruderal vegetation on the roadside verge, allowing open views into the site.

2.5 There are no areas of vegetation or landcover within or on the fringes of the site that are identified as Priority Habitat Inventory habitats (there are some areas of Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchards around Ellerslie Cottage and Ellerslie House to the immediate east of Downend Road), and the site contains no formal landscape designations.

2.6 There are no designated areas of nature conservation value within the site itself, although the site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (established to assess likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites) for a number of SSSIs, including Downend Chalk Pit SSSI, Portsdown SSSI and Portsmouth Harbour SSSI. Of these, Portsmouth Harbour SSSI also contains a RAMSAR site and a Special Protection Area. There are no trees with TPOs either within or immediately adjacent to the site which could be affected by the proposed development.

2.7 There are a number of designated heritage assets within 1.0km of the site, including several listed buildings. The most significant of these is the Grade I Fort Nelson, which is also a Scheduled Monument (SAM). This lies approximately 0.5km to the north east, and is intervisible with the site.

2.8 The South Downs National Park lies to the north, approximately 4.0km (approximately 2.5 miles) distant at its closest point. Although terrain analysis may show some theoretical visibility from Wickham Common and Wickham on the southern edge of the National Park boundary towards the site, a desk study has shown that due to a significant amount of intervening tree cover, particularly within and to the south of Wickham Common (where there are large tracts of woodlands and coniferous plantations), there is unlikely to be any intervisibility between the site and the National Park.

3.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1 Local landscape character in relation to the site and its receiving landscape is defined at a 1:25,000 scale within the 'Fareham Borough Landscape Assessment' (prepared by Scott Wilson Resource Consultants on behalf of Fareham Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 1996) and the 2017 Fareham Landscape Assessment which provides a review of the baseline 'audit' of the character of the Borough landscape provided by the 1996 Landscape Character assessment, updated as necessary. This forms part of the 'evidence base' for the emerging Draft Local Plan. The site itself falls within the 'Portsdown' Character Area 11, and, more specifically Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) 11.3, which encompasses visually open predominantly arable land (subdivided areas 11.3a - the site, and 11.3c - land to the east of Enerslie House and Winham Farm), and a more visually-enclosed central area characterised by a mosaic of developing woodland, scrub and grassland habitats (subdivided area 11.3b).

3.2 Areas 11.3a (the site) and 11.3c have characteristics shared with the 'Chalk Downland Open Arable' landscape types in the wider Portsdown LCA 11 (e.g. a smoothly sloping landform, large-scale fields under intensive arable cultivation, and an open, expansive character), and there is some intervisibility/visual connection between these areas where the M27 is cut in.

3.3 An initial site-specific Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been carried out in preparation for this statement. This found that whilst the site is of medium landscape quality overall, with some negative influences, such as the tall electricity pylon on its eastern flank, and has a medium overall landscape sensitivity and does not constitute a 'valued landscape' for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 174, it is still valued for its intrinsic qualities as open countryside, and the role the site plays as a buffer between urban areas and the rural downlands. The nature of sensitive receptors within and adjacent to the site, including the Alan King long-distance footpath and Downend Road, are significant constraints to future residential development.

3.4 The 2017 Landscape Character Assessment highlighted this in its 'Visual Environment – Sensitivity Assessment' which describes the nature of views, visual features and viewers within LLCA 11.3. This found:

'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.'

And continued:

'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'

3.5 The 2017 study also examined the site's sensitivity and development potential. This found that whilst much of LLCA 11.3 had quite a low visual sensitivity where it was hidden from view from surrounding areas, in contrast:

'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.'

And it continued:

'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.'

'In area 11.3a, development would be highly prominent for users of Allan King Way and Downend Road.'

3.6 In terms of the role LLCA 11.3 plays in respect of the settlement's setting, the study found that whilst the land did not form part of a Designated Strategic Gap it nonetheless found that:

'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.'

And summarised that the landscape:

'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.'

3.7 Therefore, although the West Porchester Fringe Farmland LLCA was found overall to have some lower sensitivity to change, the sub area 11.3a, which contains the site (HA56), may have higher sensitivity as a consequence of its visually open character, rising landform, open public views from Alan King Way and Downend Road, and the role the site plays as a buffer between the existing urban edge and the wider countryside. This would confer a high level of sensitivity than within other parts of the local landscape character area.

4.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Originally published in March 2012, with subsequent revisions in July 2018, June 2019 and, most recently, in July 2021, the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Of particular relevance to this assessment is Section 15. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, specifically paragraph 174, which states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

(a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

(b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

(c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

(d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

(e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

(f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

4.2 Planning policies and decisions should therefore reflect a site's landscape quality, value and sensitivity, thereby preserving areas of undeveloped countryside – in particular recognising its intrinsic character and beauty. The site should therefore be afforded protection under Section 15 of the NPPF.

FAREHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY (ADOPTED AUGUST 2011)

4.3 Fareham Borough Council's New Local Plan is currently under development. The Council submitted the plan to the Planning Inspectorate on 30th September 2021. Until this has been formally adopted, saved policies in the existing Local Plan form the development plan document for the borough.

4.4 The Council's Proposals Map show that the site (HA56) lies outside of the Defined Urban Settlement Boundary in an area defined as Countryside. Policy CS6 'The Development Strategy' states:

'In identifying land for development, the priority will be for the reuse of previously developed land, within the defined urban settlement boundaries including their review through the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD, taking into consideration biodiversity / potential community value, the character, accessibility, infrastructure and services of the settlement and impacts on both the historic and natural environment.'

4.5 Additionally, Policy CS7 'Development in Fareham' also sets out policy for the protection of landscape character. It states:

'Development will only be permitted where it does not significantly affect the setting and landscape character of the town or diminish the town's, community, historic, biodiversity and cultural resources nor have an adverse impact on air quality.'

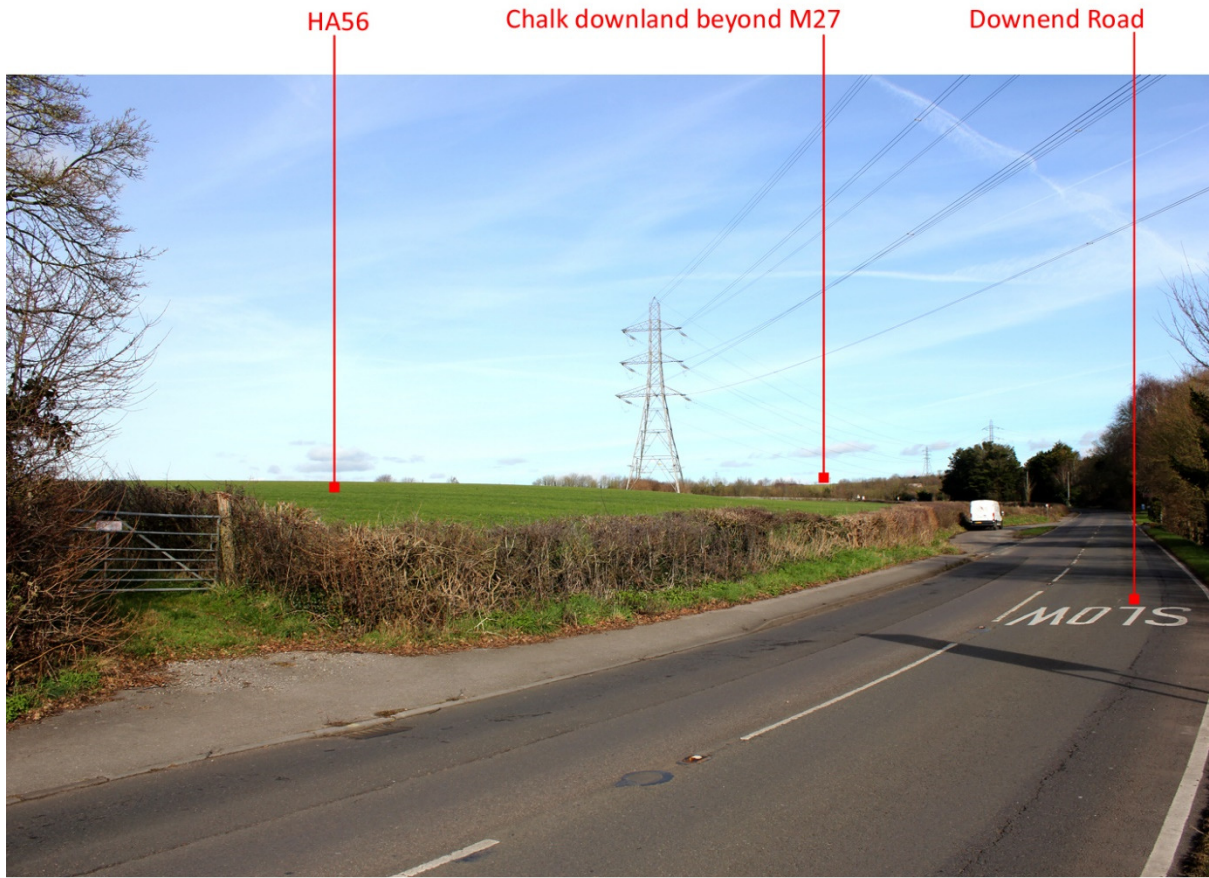
4.6 The site (HA56) is therefore afforded protection under Policies CS6 and CS7 of the Local Plan.

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

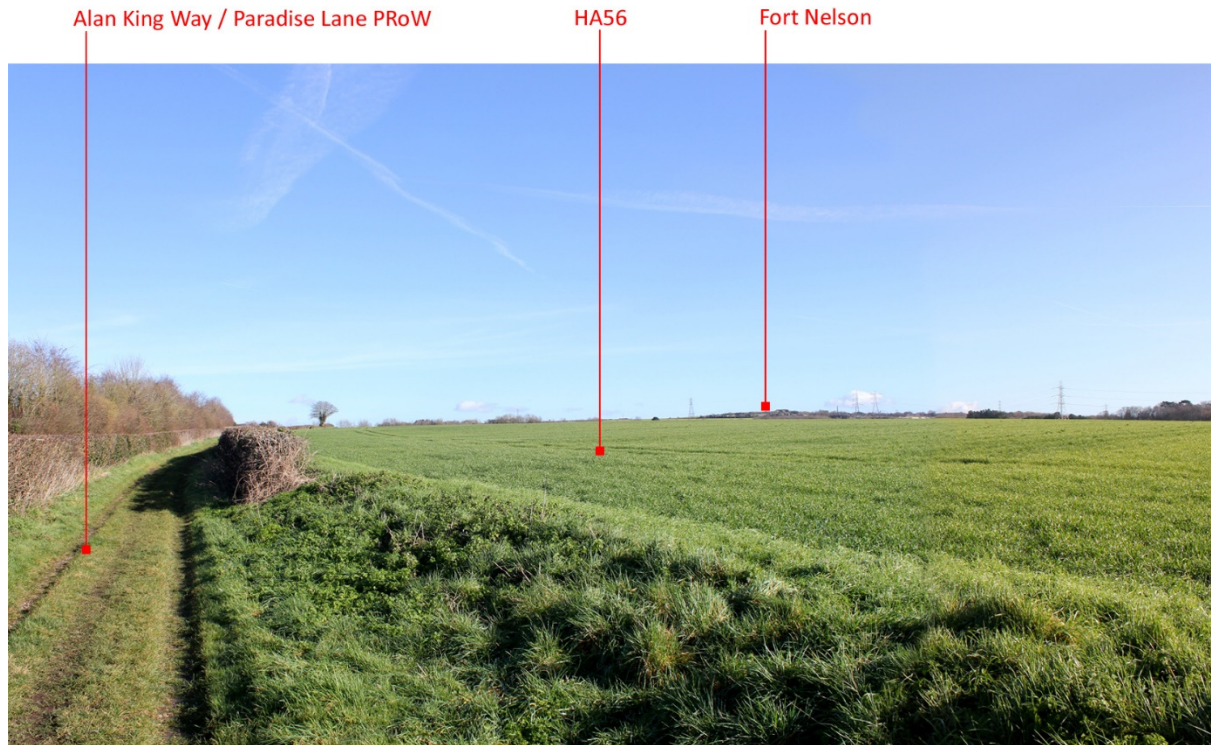
5.1 As a consequence of the site's rising landform (from approximately 11m AOD at its south-western corner to approximately 41m AOD at its north-eastern corner), and its visually open character, residential development within the site will be visually prominent when viewed from Downend Road and from the Alan King long distance footpath, forming a dominant new feature in the landscape.



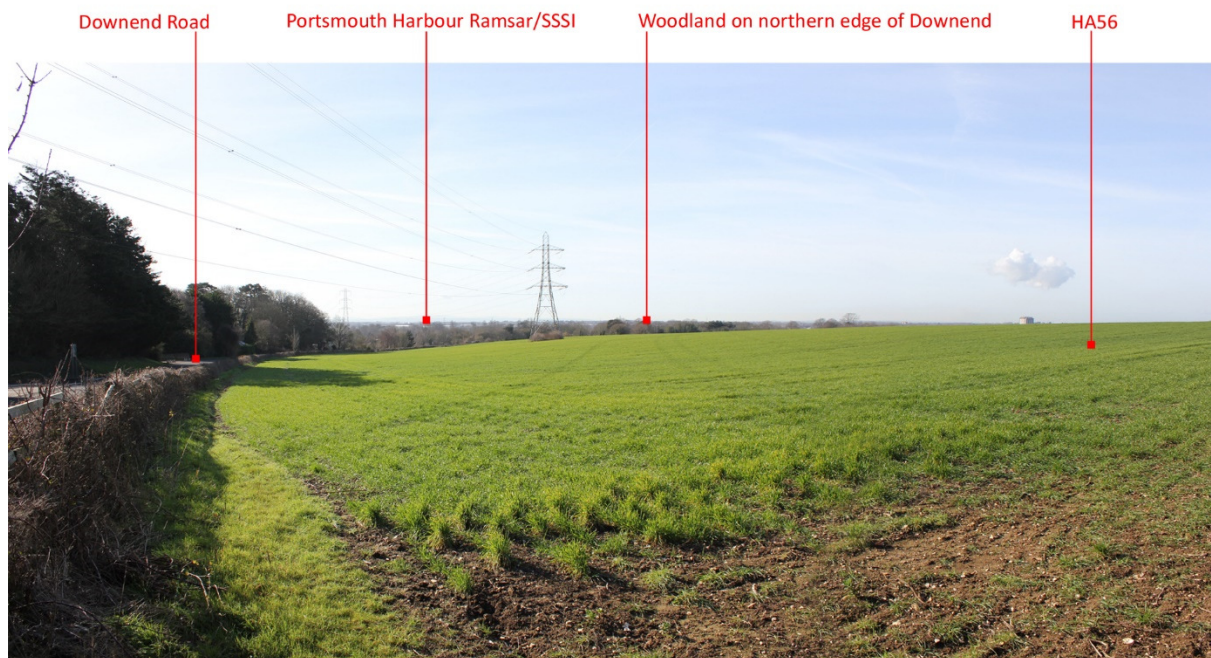
VIEW 1: Facing north east across the site from Paradise Lane/Alan King Way



VIEW 2: Facing north across the site from Downend Road, just beyond settlement edge



VIEW 3: Facing north east across the site from Paradise Lane/Alan King Way towards Fort Nelson

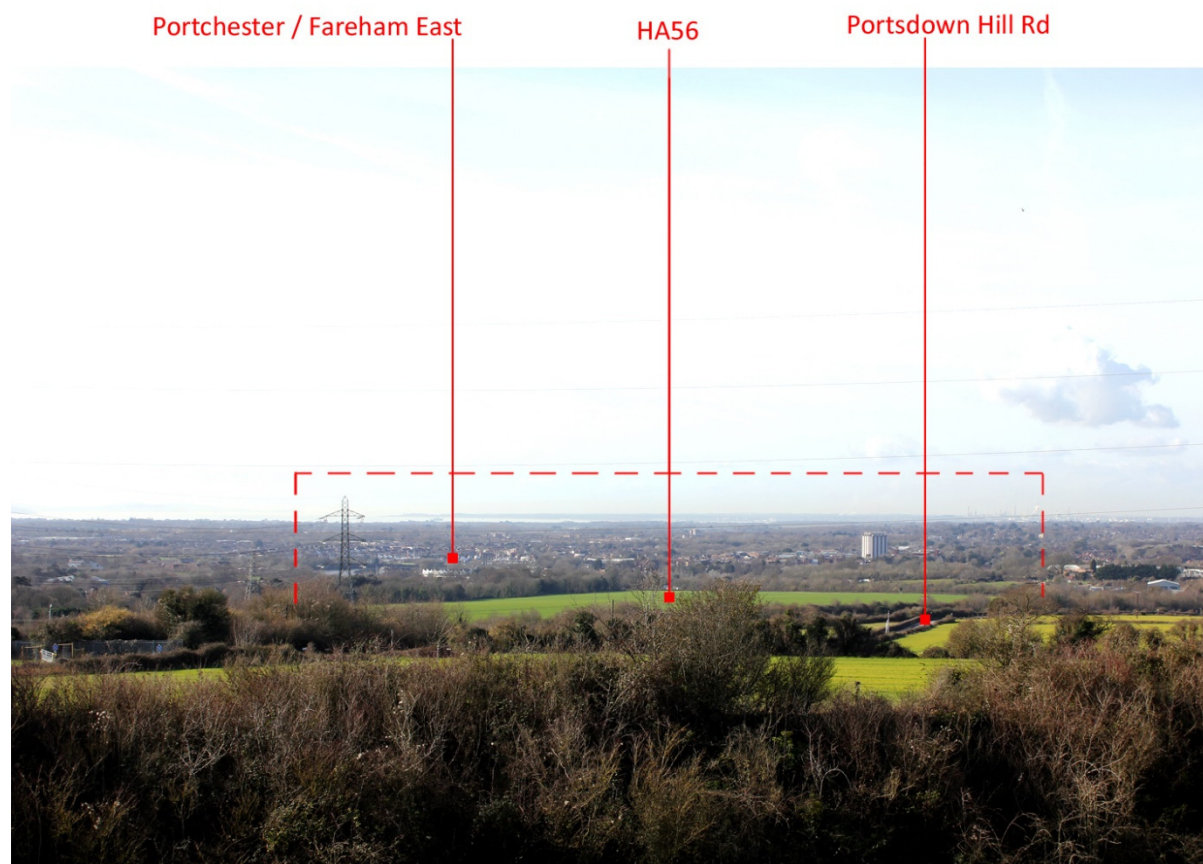


VIEW 4: Facing south west across the site from Alan King Way adjacent to Downend Road

5.2 Residential development within the site will also be visible from the north, particularly on approach from Downend Road and Portsdown Hill Road, and notably from Swivelton Lane and Fort Nelson (Grade I Listed and a SAM) which each offer elevated views of the site. Views of the residential development will be particularly notable during winter months.



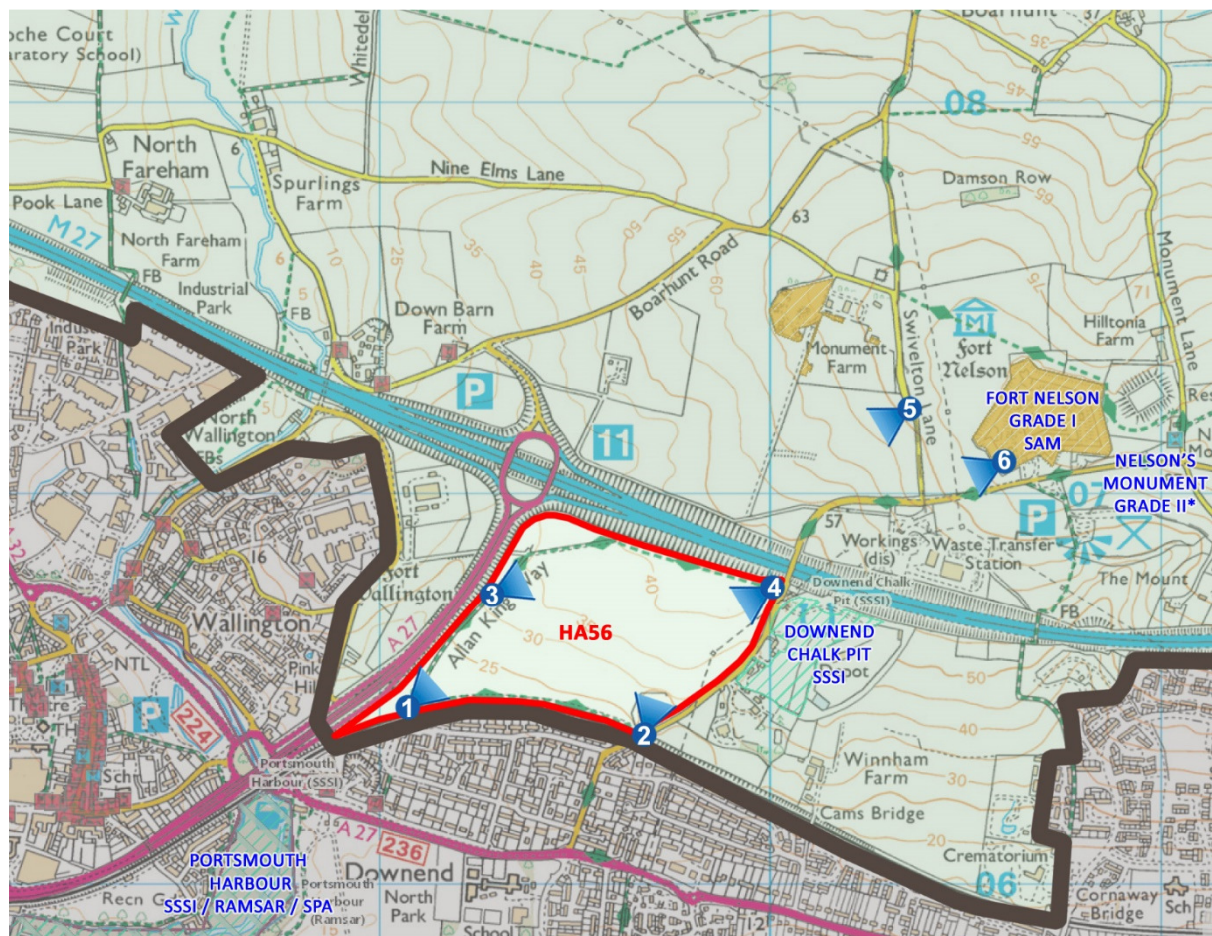
VIEW 5: Facing south west across adjacent LLCA from Swivelton Lane, adjacent to Fort Nelson



VIEW 6: Facing south west across the site from Fort Nelson

5.3 The landscape setting of the north of Downend has changed dramatically in the last half century. This section of the M27 was opened in 1976, and subsequent decades have seen a steady northwards urban expansion from the (now largely coalesced) settlements to the south towards the motorway. The West Porchester Fringe Farmland LLCA, which includes the site, remains as the sole remnant of the previous farmland landscape, and provides a gap in the otherwise largely unbroken urban sprawl. As such the current baseline conditions, although partially denuded, retain the landscape's association with the chalk downland farmland to the north. The baseline landscape character within the site will change completely with the introduction of residential development, and the site's current association with the wider landscape setting will be lost. The impact on the historic setting of Fort Nelson is the subject for a heritage specialist, but its landscape setting will certainly be affected where outward views from the upper ramparts of the Fort will see further encroachment by urban sprawl.

5.4 Should sub areas LLCA 11.3b and 11.3c also see future urban expansion, then the level of cumulative impacts will be greater still. Planning permission was granted on appeal for an outline application for 350 dwellings on land to the east of Downend Road (Ref P/20/0912/OA). This occupies land identified in the 2017 Fareham Landscape Assessment (Area 11.3b) as having less visual sensitivity, and hence the potential for some development, due to a more visually enclosed, well-treed character, and the southern part of Area 11.3c, which the study found also has some potential, as it is generally well-screened by surrounding vegetation and built development from views at close quarters. The baseline conditions of these two sub areas, and their inherent sensitivities, therefore differ to HA56, and should not set a precedent for development to the west of Downend Road.



6.0 SUMMARY

6.1 Likely landscape and visual impacts resulting from the site's change from arable farmland to residential and mixed use development are significant. HA56 lies within open countryside beyond the defined settlement boundary, serves as a landscape buffer between the settlement and the chalk downland to the north, and is therefore within a transition zone between the two. The site 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. The site is visually linked with Portsdown Hill to the north east where there is intervisibility between the two areas.

6.2 Development within the site will expand the settlement northwards, breaking the well-defined urban edge to subsume open arable land in a relatively visually prominent location. This will have a detrimental impact on landscape character, will result in a loss of the sole surviving remnant of rural land between the settlement and the M27, and will affect the landscape setting of the Grade I Listed Fort Nelson. This will have a significant adverse effect on landscape value overall.

6.3 Residential and mixed use development within the site would be visible from the Alan King Way, a long distance footpath, and combined with the effects on views from Downend Road and other sensitive receptors to the north, the level of visual impacts are also considered significant, and will affect visual amenity for those using the footpath or road.

6.4 The site is afforded protection through both national (the NPPF) and local (the Fareham Local Development Framework Core Strategy - the Local Plan) planning policies, and the site's allocation for residential and mixed use development, based on likely adverse landscape and visual impacts, should not take priority over other less sensitive and more suitable sites promoted within the borough.