

**WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 2**  
**LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL**

**KINGS WORTHY**

This appraisal has been prepared with reference to Hampshire County Council's guidance document '*Assessing Landscape Sensitivity at a Strategic Level*' (2006) which recognises the use of Landscape Character Assessments to inform land use and land management policy and, in addition, the need to assess the main attributes of landscape as a basis for gauging sensitivity. The approach in this guidance document does not try to place a value on different landscapes, nor does it seek to establish the capacity of landscape to accommodate development.

In addition, this appraisal is based on published Winchester City and Hampshire County Council documents on landscape character and type; physical constraints identified through a desk top exercise; and professional judgement from site visits. A more detailed landscape assessment may be required prior to the final identification and allocation of sites for development.

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## 1.0 LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AND TYPES

Reference:

### County level<sup>1</sup>

*Landscape and Townscape Character Areas which identify key characteristics, qualities and forces for change:*

*Main character area: **Itchen Valley 3c.***

*Secondary character area (covering the northern section of Kings Worthy): **Mid Hampshire Open Downs 8E***

### District level<sup>2</sup>

*There are three character areas creating a diverse landscape setting for the settlement. They identify key characteristics, issues and designations with landscape and built form strategies specific to each area.*

*Main landscape and townscape character area: **North Itchen Downs***

*Other character areas: **Wonston Downs** and **Upper Itchen Valley**.*

In addition, the appraisal also takes account of the following Winchester City Council documents:

- Kings Worthy Conservation Area technical assessment (1997)
- Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy Village Design Statement (2007)
- Springvale Road Local Area Design Statement (2007).

### 1.1 Landscape Character

Landscape Character Area for the settlement and areas east and north east of Kings Worthy: **North Itchen Downs**

#### Landscape (east and north east of Kings Worthy)

- Well drained rolling chalkland along upper slopes of Itchen Valley (north side).
- Medium and large fields (enclosed C18 and C19) with straight surveyed boundaries.
- Open, exposed feel with panoramic views across Itchen valley and beyond (high points exceeding 110m OD).
- Sparse woodland cover; low, clipped hedgerows often fragmented with occasional hedgerow trees.
- Kings Worthy is the only main settlement; elsewhere scattered farmsteads.
- Sparse footpath network.

#### Townscape (Kings Worthy)

- Main settlement in character area.
- Defined settlement gap<sup>3</sup> retains the generally open and undeveloped nature of the area between Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy.

<sup>1</sup> [Hampshire County Council Integrated Character Assessment 2010](#) (HICA)

<sup>2</sup> [Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment 2004](#) (WLCA)

- Avoid coalescence of settlements to ensure retention of individual identity within the wider contextual setting.
- Development has been well contained by established communication routes with main rail link to the west; A34 to the south; A33 to the east and Lovedon Lane to the north, resulting in a well defined edge of settlement.
- Distinctive contrast between Kings Worthy and its countryside setting.
- Semi-rural character with proximity and close views of countryside from within residential areas.
- Settlement has evolved within a significant N-S dry valley creating a locally distinctive character with its linear footprint and local views of staggered rooftops on slopes across the valley (up to 80m OD on eastern slopes).
- London Road and Springvale Road are main traffic routes through Kings Worthy. Springvale Road is seen as a 'spine road' following the N-S dry valley floor through existing housing (50m OD). London Road (B3047) is the original historic route through the older settlement in Kings Worthy Conservation Area.
- Sporadic locations for existing community facilities and shops. In addition to the historic hub along the B3047, there is a secondary centre in the Ramsay Road area which includes a shop, post office, pharmacy, surgery and community facilities.
- Poor footpath/cycle network within existing housing areas, especially layouts with cul-de-sacs; and weak connections to main community facilities, shops, schools, etc.

#### Landscape Character area west and north of Kings Worthy: **Wonston Downs**

- Large expanse of gently sloping and undulating topography (50-110m OD)
- Well drained upper chalk geology with pockets of clay/flint deposits
- Medium to large arable fields are predominant in the area
- Sparse woodland character
- Visually open and expansive landscape
- Sparsely populated, main settlement is South Wonston to north west.
- Good footpath links with South Wonston.

#### Landscape Character Area south, south west and south east of Kings Worthy: **Upper Itchen Valley**

- Much of character area immediately south and south-east of Kings Worthy lies within the South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Highly valued and protected Itchen river valley setting with Special Area for Conservation (SAC) designation for distinctive river valley topography in chalk downland setting.
- Small enclosed fields, mainly pasture; high diversity of species and habitats; significant heritage assets.
- Numerous river crossings, lanes and footpaths.

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<sup>3</sup> Policy H3, Winchester District Local Plan Review (2006)

- Long views across valley where more open, e.g. floodplains; water meadows.
- Remote feel along public rights of way within the river valley away from main roads; traffic noise intrusive close to main roads, e.g. M3, A34, A33.
- Historic houses and parkland are locally characteristic through valley, e.g. Abbots Worthy House south of Kings Worthy and of high amenity/biodiversity value.

### **1.3 Landscape Types for Kings Worthy and surrounding area**

In addition to the identification of landscape character areas, the HICA and WCLA documents describe the characteristics of each landscape type in detail. This includes the distribution of areas, typical soils and geology, topography, archaeological and historic features and field patterns, vegetation, land use, settlement pattern, building materials, routes and degree of tranquillity. WCLA also outlines key issues affecting landscape features typical of the area.

The landscape types (WLCA classification) for Kings Worthy are -

- a. Open arable west, north and east of Kings Worthy
- b. River valley side to south west
- c. River Valley floor to south and south east

### **1.4 Summary**

The descriptions of landscape character areas and landscape types outlined above have been used to inform the degree of landscape sensitivity for areas around the settlement as set out in the following sections.

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

Hampshire County Council's 'Assessing Landscape Sensitivity at a Strategic Level' (p6) states, "*Landscape sensitivity relates to the stability of character, the degree to which that character is robust enough to continue and to be able to recuperate from loss or damage. A landscape with a character of high sensitivity is one that once lost would be difficult to restore and must be afforded particular care and consideration in order for it to survive*". Five main attributes which contributed to this assessment have been used in this appraisal: physical landscape; experiential/perceptual; historic environment; biodiversity and visibility.

### 2.1 Physical Landscape

Ref: GIS constraints map; HICA; WCLA

#### 2.1.1 Landform

- Topography: The main settlement of Kings Worthy lies within a distinctive north-south dry valley which defines its linear footprint. Built development has extended up the slopes either side of the valley floor with Springvale Road serving as a main vehicular access. Highest areas within the built development area are the northernmost point (Stoke Charity Road); middle section of Lovedon Lane and fields north and south of dismantled railway between Springvale Road and main railway line (all 70m OD). Lowest areas are Springvale Road following the dry valley floor and the southern edge of Kings Worthy, including the historic hub, adjacent to the Itchen valley.
- Wider setting: Variable landscape character; intimate small scale nature of the river valley to the south contrasting with the large arable fields on higher open chalk downland. Ridgelines are predominant west, north and east of the settlement with low lying river valley setting to the south. Highest areas within this countryside setting are north along the Ox Drove and north-east around Shroner Wood (100m OD).

#### 2.1.2 Land cover

- Much of Kings Worthy's setting comprises undulating open chalk downland, mainly arable, with sparse woodland cover and treebelts in exposed locations. Low lying river valley to the south where the treecover is more extensive, found mainly as enclosure for small field boundaries, alongside roads and paths, along riverbanks.
- Tree Preservation Orders within river valley and throughout Kings Worthy, including an area south of Hinton House.
- Very few areas of valued chalk grassland and informal green space. Large area of grassland in elevated location well used by dog walkers and families north of the dismantled railway line by Hookpit Farm Lane.
- Extensive indigenous treecover along main transport corridors ie dismantled railway line, Winchester to London main railway line and A34.
- Significant trees of high amenity and biodiversity value in historic parkland setting, e.g. grounds of Abbots Worthy House, Worthy Park. Also along roadside verges and in private gardens, creating a semi-rural character. Species include copper and green beech, horse chestnut, pine, sycamore, ash.

- Approach roads: mainly well contained by hedgerows and field boundary trees. Examples: Stoke Charity Road; Down Farm Lane, B3047 from Winchester.

## 2.2 Experiential/Perceptual

*Ref: GIS constraints map and site assessment; CPRE Tranquility Map<sup>4</sup>; Dark skies (CPRE / SDNP)<sup>5</sup>*

- Contrasting landscape character between river valley to the south set within a well treed landscape and the open, expansive arable fields on higher ground with long views of countryside and treed skylines beyond.
- Pedestrian connectivity in countryside: good footpath network linking Kings Worthy with Itchen valley, including national trails (Kings Way, St Swithuns Way, Itchen Way). Good links on higher ground to historic drove routes and South Wonston. Sparse elsewhere.
- Pedestrian connectivity in village: generally good connectivity through residential areas, although more restricted where cul-de-sacs predominate. No clear direction or legibility when walking to main community facilities, e.g. shops, school, recreation ground.
- Opportunities for improving pedestrian and cycle routes in the area.
- The historic centre is located around the B3047 in the southern part of the village with a more recent secondary nucleus in the Ramsay Road area providing community facilities.
- Abundance of treecover among rooftops, fields among housing and views of countryside creates distinctive semi rural character.
- Tranquil within residential areas away from A34. Birdsong predominant from footpaths and field south of Hookpit Farm Lane on higher ground, including skylarks.
- Far reaching panoramic views of countryside setting on higher ground.
- SDNP authority is seeking to apply for dark sky status to protect quality of countryside where dark skies are most significant and to promote improvement of remaining areas. Opportunities to increase enjoyment of landscape and night skies as seen from higher ground within Kings Worthy.

## 2.3 Historic Environment

*Ref: GIS constraints map; HICA; WCLA*

- A number of listed buildings within Kings Worthy Conservation Area, which include Cart and Horses PH; several buildings on south side of London Road including St Mary's Church and cottages in Church Lane.
- Most sensitive area in terms of heritage assets lies within and adjacent to the river Itchen valley setting.
- Abbots Worthy Conservation Area lies in close proximity to southern edge of Kings Worthy.

<sup>4</sup> [www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/1839](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/1839)

<sup>5</sup> [www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/dark-skies](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/dark-skies)  
[www.southdowns.gov.uk/looking-after/dark-skies](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/looking-after/dark-skies)

- A number of historic parks and gardens on the Local Register are situated in the Itchen valley, e.g. grounds of Hinton House; Abbots Worthy House; Worthy Park.
- Listed buildings in Headbourne Worthy, which include Upper Farm and Manor Farm.
- Scheduled Monuments: field south of dismantled railway and west of Springvale Road (site of Roman Building); Anglo Saxon burial ground at Worthy Park.

## **2.4 Biodiversity**

*Ref: GIS constraints map; HICA; WCLA*

- Important protected sites for biodiversity exist within Itchen river valley with its international SAC and national SSSI designations. Locally designated SINC sites also prevalent in this area.
- No protected or designated sites within main settlement or wider chalk downland setting.

## **2.5 Visibility**

The visibility constraints map for the Kings Worthy area is included at Appendix 1.

### 3.0 SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL OF AREAS

A number of individual sites and areas of land in and around Kings Worthy have been promoted for development through the Council's [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#). Those of similar landscape character have been grouped together for the purposes of assessing their sensitivity in the local landscape (see Appendix 2). Four categories of sensitivity are used –

- Most sensitive**
- Highly sensitive**
- Moderately sensitive**
- Least sensitive**

#### 3.1 Area around Bull Farm, Stoke Charity Road (SHLAA site 2510)

- Context: part of countryside setting adjoining the northernmost of housing in Kings Worthy. The sloping site forms part of a distinctive north-south dry valley setting. A public right of way (PRoW) adjoins the eastern site boundary and follows the contours along the valley floor. Lovedon Lane and Stoke Charity Road form the western site boundary, which defines edge of settlement and physically segregate site from existing housing.
- Character: large arable field on sloping ground contained by low clipped boundary hedgerows. Residential development W of Lovedon Lane. No protected or designated sites within or close to the site.
- Agricultural land classification: grade 3b.
- Panoramic middle distance views from higher ground within site across paddocks to south-east, east to ridgeline and west to treed corridor along main railway line. No far reaching views. Views of site from Stoke Charity Road and PRoW along S boundary.
- Skyline features: Distant view of mast north over treetops. Localised countryside views of ridgeline to the east which forms part of the dry valley setting. Restricted views to the west across roof tops to railway embankment.
- Landmarks to connect with place: none

##### Summary of landscape sensitivity

A **highly sensitive** location as it lies within the countryside setting of main settlement and has impacts on visual amenity when seen from the public realm.

#### 3.2 Area east of Lovedon Lane and A33 (SHLAA site 364)

- Context: part of countryside setting south-east of Kings Worthy on lower ground bordering Itchen valley, South Downs National Park (SDNP), Worthy Park Historic Park and Garden (HPG), Abbots Worthy Conservation Area. Lovedon Lane which is physically separated by road from main settlement.
- Character: large arable field contained by hedgerows and significant treebelt along northern boundary. Traffic noise.
- Agricultural land classification: mainly grade 3a; 3b adjacent A33.
- No panoramic or important views as contained by local boundary vegetation. Little visual connection with existing development.
- Landmarks to connect with place: none



### Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **most sensitive** location close to protected sites within the countryside setting of the main settlement with good agricultural land quality.

#### **3.3 Area between recreation ground and A33 (SHLAA site 365)**

- Context: landscape buffer on lower ground between Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy. Borders Itchen valley, SDNP, Kings Worthy Conservation Area, grounds of Hinton House HPG; TPO along south-west boundary.
- Character: large arable field well contained by significant tree cover along south-east and south-west boundaries. Semi-rural character.
- Settlement gap between Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy.
- Agricultural land classification: mainly grade 3a; grade 3b on lower slopes.
- PRoW along south-west boundary provides links to recreation ground and the centre of the main settlement.
- No panoramic or important views other than glimpses of distant skyline within SDNP to south-east from higher ground.
- Landmarks to connect with place: none.

### Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **most sensitive** site in terms of location, effectiveness as a landscape buffer between settlements and proximity to protected sites. Good agricultural land quality throughout most of the site. Some opportunities may exist for extending adjacent recreational use and strengthening local footpath network.

#### **3.4 Area between A33 and Hinton House (SHLAA site 2508)**

- Context: landscape buffer on lower ground between Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy. Paddock alongside A33 reinforces the landscape buffer between Abbots Worthy and the main village of Kings Worthy. Area borders Itchen valley, SDNP, Abbots Worthy Conservation Area, grounds of Hinton House HPG.
- Character: Semi-rural; area of amenity and heritage interest well contained by trees. PRoW along northern and eastern boundaries.
- Settlement gap between Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy.
- Significant trees of high amenity value protected by a TPO.
- Agricultural land quality: mainly grade 3b
- No panoramic or important views as contained by local boundary vegetation. Little visual connection with existing development.
- Landmarks to connect with place: none.

### Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A most sensitive site in terms of location, effectiveness as a landscape buffer between settlements, protected trees and proximity to protected sites. Some opportunities may exist for strengthening local footpath network.

### 3.5 Area around Woodhams Farm between main railway line and Springvale Road (ref SHLAA site 500 )

- Context: only undeveloped area remaining in agricultural use within main settlement.
- Character: large fields of arable on western slopes of dry valley topography. High point in north-west part of site by disused railway line (70m OD). Large specimen trees within site protected by TPO. Avenue feature on track to Woodhams Farm (copper and green beech, horse chestnut, pine, lime) protected by TPO. Scheduled ancient monument in field south of disused railway line (site of Roman building).
- Agricultural land classification: grade 3a on higher ground; 3b on remainder.
- Opportunities to further strengthen local pedestrian links with disused railway line and publicly accessible area off Hookpit Farm Lane.
- Panoramic views: views contained by field boundary vegetation on lower slopes. Far reaching views from higher ground especially north west part of site (next to disused railway line) across Winchester to SDNP and east over rooftops across valley.
- Important views south and south-east across Itchen valley to SDNP.
- Skyline features and landmarks to connect with place: Police HQ and HM Prison tower in Romsey Road; Deacon Hill and Cheesefoot Head (check)

#### Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

Higher slopes are **highly sensitive** in terms of impacts on archaeology, agricultural land quality, visual amenity and landscape character. Protected trees within and around the area are also constraints. Least sensitive areas are on lower lying ground adjoining Springvale Road where opportunities may exist for alternative land use, e.g. housing, recreational and/or amenity use as it is also accessible and central to existing development.

### 3.6 Area around Hookpit Farm Lane (ref SHLAA site 2506 )

- Context: large area of open space with peripheral scrub vegetation. An elevated location adjoining housing to north and east. No vehicular access or public rights of way within site, although there is a PRow north of the site linking Kings Worthy with South Wonston.
- Character: large area of grassed open space with diverse ground flora (golden rod, vetch, clover, forget me not, buttercup, plantain etc). Well used by local residents for informal recreation, i.e. dog walking, flying kites, etc.
- Agricultural land quality: grade 3a
- No formal layout or footpaths but evidence of many desire lines to and from surrounding area. Tranquil area, no traffic, birdsong predominant. Special character with perception of a village common in terms of appearance and use.
- Opportunities to strengthen local pedestrian links
- Panoramic and far reaching views north, east and south-east across rooftops to treed skylines and countryside beyond
- Important views: south-east across Itchen valley to SDNP

### Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **highly sensitive** area in terms of location on higher ground, agricultural land quality, visual amenity and landscape character as it affects the settlement of Kings Worthy and its wider countryside setting, including SDNP. Retention of this well used area as natural green space would provide opportunities to enhance local amenity and biodiversity value and to consolidate local footpath links with adjoining residential development.

## 4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE ISSUES FOR KINGS WORTHY

*Ref: GIS constraints maps and site assessment; HICA; WCLA*

Key landscape and townscape issues specific to the **North Itchen Downs** character area:

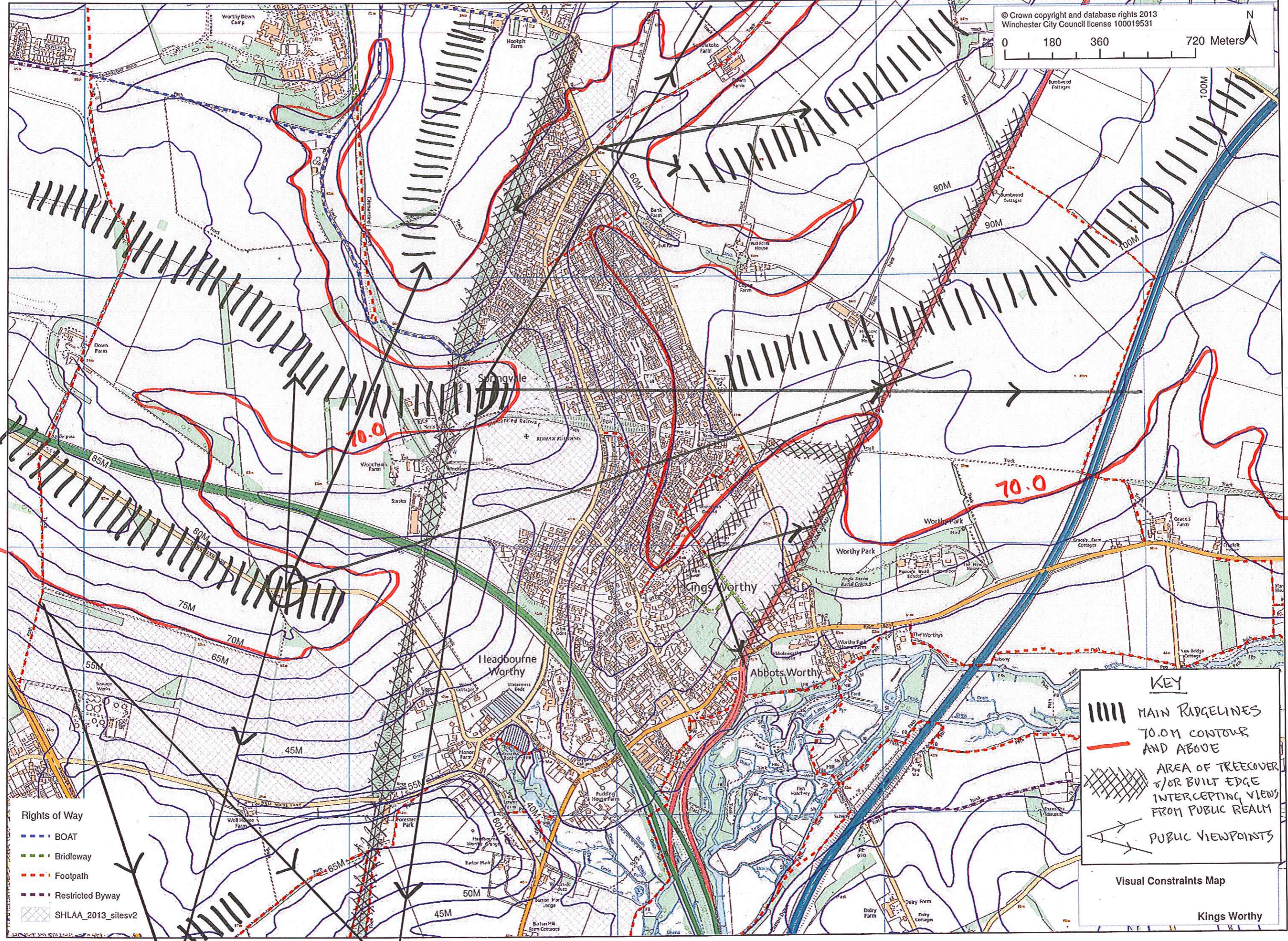
- Proximity of SDNP (adjacent A33 in south-east corner)
- Undesignated areas with special qualities that contribute significantly to setting of Kings Worthy are vulnerable to change
- Visual impact of development on high ground and ridgelines
- Impact of intrusive structures on undulating open chalkland setting
- Coalescence of settlements (Kings Worthy, Abbots Worthy, Headbourne Worthy, Abbots Barton)
- Suburban fringe encroachment, e.g. horse paddocks, fencing, outbuildings etc (N.B. the 'old village' of Kings Worthy is an exception)
- Traffic noise from A33, M3 and A34
- Potential loss of valued green space
- Over formalisation of semi-natural areas to provide recreational facilities.

Key landscape issues specific to the **Wonston Downs** character area north and west of Kings Worthy:

- Visual intrusion of main roads and traffic noise in Kings Worthy setting
- Impact of intrusive structures on undulating open chalkland setting
- Visual impact of development on high ground and ridgelines
- Loss of sparse tree cover and hedgerows
- Loss of chalk grassland and wild flora to agriculture and development.

Key landscape issues specific to **Upper Itchen Valley** character areas south, south-west and south-east of Kings Worthy

- Proximity of Kings Worthy to protected areas, most notably River Itchen with international SAC designation and SDNP
- Potential for contamination of water course from agriculture and development
- Potential loss of mature feature trees and local landscape character
- Coalescence of settlements (Kings Worthy, Abbots Worthy, Headbourne Worthy, Abbots Barton).



- Rights of Way
- BOAT
  - Bridleway
  - Footpath
  - Restricted Byway
  - SHLAA\_2013\_sitesv2

**KEY**

- MAIN RIDGELINES
- 70.0M CONTOUR AND ABOVE
- AREA OF TREECOVER &/OR BUILT EDGE INTERCEPTING VIEWS FROM PUBLIC REALM
- PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Visual Constraints Map

# Kings Worthy Landscape Sensitivity Assessment - September 2013

