

## WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 2

### LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL

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**WINCHESTER NORTH:** Landscape west of Winchester from Farley Mount Country Park to the Itchen valley in the east which includes settlements of Sparsholt, Littleton and Headbourne Worthy; also residential suburbs of Teg Down, Harestock, Weeke and Abbots Barton.

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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(ref SHLAA site 2507)

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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:

Character area to the north of Winchester:

**Mid Hampshire Open Downs 8E**

Character area NE of Winchester:

**Itchen Valley 3c**

Character area west of Winchester:

**West Winchester Downs 7F**

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

There is one main character area for the north of Winchester defined by the highly distinctive open chalk downland landscape: **Wonston Downs**

Other landscape character areas adjoin the main area, creating a diverse landscape in the northern half of Winchester:

**Sparsholt Woodlands** which includes Littleton and Sparsholt to the west

**Upper Itchen Valley** which extends into the city centre from the NE

The appraisal also takes account of the following South Downs National Park, Winchester City Council and Parish documents that help to define local landscape character and distinctiveness:

SDNP *Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (updated 2011)*

*Winchester City and its Setting* document (1999)

*Related Village Design Statements*

#### 1.1 Landscape Character

Main Landscape Character Area: **Wonston Downs**

Key Characteristics specific to this area are set out below (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment). Also with reference to *Winchester City and its Setting* document, which identifies 'supportive' and 'distinctive' character around Winchester.<sup>3</sup> Definitions of

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

(HILA)

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

<sup>3</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 (WCS ref para. 25)

these terms are as follows and as shown on the Areas of Influence map in the document:

1. Distinctive townscape/landscape character:  
*Areas specifically recognisable and distinctive to Winchester. These include townscape and landscape components such as quintessential views, interaction of buildings forming spaces or the setting to local events, landform, backdrops to the city, areas of rich biodiversity, historic approach routes and landmarks of positive character.*
2. Supportive landscape:  
*Areas which support the character of the historic cores and areas distinctive to Winchester. They provide the backdrop and ambience that bolster the sense of place by supporting and buffering its special character.*

These special qualities help to define local distinctiveness and local character in support of Local Plan Part One (LPP1) policy CP20.

#### Landscape

- Gently sloping and undulating topography forming a relatively low-lying area of downland (50-110m OD).
- Comprises a significant part of the City's 'supportive landscape'. Supportive and distinctive landscapes play a crucial role in the setting and perception of the city.
- Well drained upper chalk geology with minor deposits of clay with flints.
- Mainly arable, consisting of medium to large fields many with straight boundaries from C18 and C19 formal field enclosure; loss of field boundary hedgerows in C20.
- Habitats and species of greatest importance in character area are associated with arable farmland, such as the stone curlew.
- Sparse woodland, mainly C19 plantations and shelterbelts. Beech and coniferous species are predominant around Barton Farm.
- Worthy Down: remnant downland consisting of diverse calcareous grassland.
- Visually open and expansive landscape with long, panoramic views over the downs. Key views towards Winchester. Intrusive development is a key issue.
- A widely spaced network of straight roads (including Roman roads such as Andover Road), lanes and tracks. Also N-S route of main Winchester to London railway line passes through the area.
- Limited public rights of way network and limited public access to countryside.
- Sparsely populated although proximity of Winchester and Kings Worthy and intrusion of main roads, such as A34, create a more urban feel.
- Most notable historic features are the drove roads, which run predominantly in an E-W direction connecting Salisbury with market towns such as Alresford and Alton. Also numerous prehistoric barrows which are locally characteristic of the area.

#### Landscape character area NW of Winchester: **Sparsholt Woodlands**

Key Characteristics specific to this area (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment):

- Undulating well drained chalkland landscape to the NW of Winchester.
- High ridgelines, which include Lanham Down and defines route of Harestock Road along northern edge of settlement forms part of the 'supportive landscape' surrounding Winchester. Area in and around The Royal Winchester Golf Course is part of the 'distinctive landscape' surrounding Winchester. Supportive and distinctive landscapes play a crucial role in the setting and perception of the city.
- Medium scale arable landscape with a strong hedgerow network.
- Strong rural character dominated by woodlands, in particular Crab Wood and West Wood in Farley Mount Country Park.
- Medium size fields with straight boundaries to the north of the area around Sparsholt and Littleton created by formal enclosure during C18 and C19.
- Fairly visually contained landscape due to strong woodland and hedgerow structure.
- Two settlements in the character area, Sparsholt and Littleton, which are both Saxon in origin. Important ecological habitats such as Crab Wood (a SSSI and Local Nature Reserve). Also local areas of importance which are designated SINCs; they include a large area of calcareous grassland at Royal Winchester Golf Course and smaller woodlands located throughout the N half of the character area.
- Network of footpaths and narrow, winding lanes, including sunken lanes as local heritage assets.
- Other numerous heritage features, including Lainston House, Roman villa in West Wood and a number of tumuli, many of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- Transitional land uses around western urban edge of Winchester ie Sir John Moore Barracks; Teg Down golf course.

Landscape Character Area which extends into the city centre: **Upper Itchen valley**

Key Characteristics specific to this area (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment):

- Distinctive river valley topography with sloping valley sides and relatively narrow river floor located in a chalk downland setting.
- Valley floor consists of mainly small fields of pasture with remnants of historic water meadows. Valley sides are mainly medium sized arable fields following informal enclosure.
- Part of the 'distinctive' landscape setting of Winchester which plays a crucial role in the setting and perception of the city.
- Rivers and streams consist of clear alkaline spring water of high ecological importance in meandering narrow channels, often braided, together with associated lakes, ponds, mill chases, springs and headwaters supporting many water related activities, including trout farms and a thriving watercress industry.
- River and its valley setting are of high amenity and biodiversity value with important habitats associated with chalk river; fen/carr/swamp/reedbed; unimproved neutral grassland; ancient semi-natural woodlands.
- Long views across river valley from open valley sides and from valley floor.
- Communication routes make use of the linear valley topography. Network of footpaths, tracks and lanes that follow the valley and cross the river; routes that follow the river such as B3047 and B3046; national trails such as the Itchen Way; disused railway line.
- Connections between river path network and adjacent downland via drove roads and sunken lanes.

- Remote feel away from busy main roads.
- Archaeology an important factor as there is a long history of occupation.

## 1.2 Landscape Types for Winchester north and north west

In addition to the identification of landscape character areas, the HILA 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 main landscape type (WCLA classification) to the north of Winchester is a mix of 'open arable' and 'open arable exposed'; it includes the area within and surrounding the new Barton Farm MDA and extends eastwards into the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

The River Itchen runs N-S between Barton farm MDA and the SDNP, creating a further landscape type known as 'river valley side' which includes the settlement of Headbourne Worthy and fields between Worthy Road and the river. Banks either side of the river is 'river valley floor' landscape type.

There is a distinct change of landscape type west of Andover Road to a mix of 'chalk and clay farmland' and 'chalk and clay woodland'. This area extends beyond the villages of Littleton and Sparsholt.

In summary, there is a total of 6no different landscape types, creating a diverse landscape setting of high amenity and biodiversity value in the northern half of Winchester.

## 1.3 Townscape Character

### Winchester City

The siting and development of Winchester has been strongly influenced by the distinctive topography and river valley setting. Having evolved around the river crossing to its present day size, the setting remains a key characteristic with the treed ridgelines and hills surrounding the low lying city centre, providing a distinctive sense of containment and enclosure.

'Winchester and its cathedral are subservient to the landscape'.<sup>4</sup>

The Itchen valley is the most extensive area of semi-natural vegetation within Winchester.<sup>5</sup> It is of high amenity and biodiversity value with the valley floor recognised more recently as a vital means of flood attenuation when dealing with effects of climate change.

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<sup>4</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para.38.

<sup>5</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para.3.8.2.

Key characteristics associated with the River Itchen are an integral part of the townscape within the city with its historic water meadows; mills; leats and channels and associated vegetation. The presence of water within the town is a locally distinctive feature.

A valued pedestrian and cycle network has evolved along the river corridor which connects to the suburbs and the countryside beyond.

There is a notable contrast between predominantly open elevated chalk downs to the north and east, and more varied landscape types to the west. The River Itchen forms a transitional key boundary between eastern and western downland.

Significant roads into Winchester are tree lined e.g. Stockbridge Road, Andover Road. This is a key townscape feature of Winchester.

Rural and urban areas are clearly distinct along much of Winchester's perimeter, an important characteristic that defines the city's sense of place.

The northern edge of Winchester is well defined by Andover Road, a Roman road that functions as a main N-S linear route into the city, although this will eventually merge with the Barton Farm MDA when built. Harestock Road is another traffic route that provides a well defined edge along the northern perimeter of Winchester. Elsewhere, this edge is defined by suburban garden boundaries, for instance, adjoining the new Barton Farm MDA in Park Road and further east in Abbots Barton. A relatively narrow strip of countryside designated a local gap exists between Abbots Barton and Headbourne Worthy which prevents Winchester merging with the village settlement.

The older residential suburbs of Harestock and Weeke are contained by tree lined roads creating a soft built edge. They have until recently included a considerable number of Victorian and Edwardian suburban villas set within generous plots that support many of the larger forest trees in the urban fabric, such as lime and beech, creating a distinct sense of place. The move towards replacement of larger gardens with higher density housing development is creating a more urban, harder edge to Winchester, which arguably compromises local distinctiveness.

Abbots Barton and Teg Down are more recent housing developments generally lacking softened views of built edge. Exceptions are boundaries along the historic green corridors of Lanham Lane, Salters Lane and Worthy Road.

The village of Littleton lies immediately to the north of Harestock. It is visually and physically separated from Winchester by the army training base, known as Sir John Moore Barracks, which provides a transitional land use between the city and the village. This is further reinforced by a small but significant designated Local Gap on the north side of Harestock Road. As with Headbourne Worthy, the existence of a narrow strip of countryside designated a local gap serves to retain the identity of Littleton as a village settlement within its rural landscape setting.

There are significant views across the city from elevated ground to the north, most notably from public viewpoints along ridgelines; also sporadic views when

approaching the city along main traffic routes and from the footpath and cycle network.

Treed ridgelines are significant in the landscape setting from within the city, for instance, looking north to Barton Farm MDA and Harestock Road; treed railway line embankment.

## **Littleton**

Relevant extracts from the adopted *Littleton Village Design Statement (2009)*, which provides residents views on existing local character and distinctiveness, state the following:

### Landscape character:

*3.2 Littleton fits snugly into three valleys of rolling downland. The undulations of the land and the high banks along Main Road hide much of the village and its development from its surroundings in dips and hollows. Exposed higher areas are generally screened by hedges and woodland.*

*3.3 Littleton is surrounded by agricultural land or woodland. Some is arable land and much is pasture for horses, including, among others, the Littleton Stud. This gives a general impression of a rural settlement encircled with open green space all around the village...*

*3.4 There are few long views from within the village, other than from houses built on the tops of the downs... In general, the views are of trees, fields and open farmland.*

*3.5 An abundance of mature trees, woodland and hedgerows hide the village perimeter within soft green edges and line the approach roads... Exposed development on higher ground has generally been avoided in the past and should be in the future.*

*3.6 The trees and hedgerows around and in the village are mainly of native types, including ash, beech, blackthorn, elm, hawthorn, hazel, horse chestnut, field maple, lime, oak, sycamore and yew.*

*3.7 Areas of landscape within the village and between Littleton and surrounding settlements, provide a highly valued feeling of a green and rural environment and protect the individual character of the various parts of the village...*

### Settlement pattern character:

*4.5 The Sir John Moore Barracks occupies a large area of Littleton to the east of the village and lies partly in the Local Gap. With the rolling landscape, extensive woodland planting and an area of countryside between the barracks and the village, the proximity of the army base has no great impact on Littleton's character.*

*There is, however, some concern that the barracks could further encroach upon the village through building development and an increase in artificial lighting..*

*4.6 The open space around the Sir John Moore Barracks is an important feature that should be maintained in order to prevent coalescence with the village and loss of village character.*

## Headbourne Worthy

The village of Headbourne Worthy has managed to retain its identity as a small settlement due essentially to its contained location. It is segregated from the Barton Farm MDA to the west by the main railway line; from Kings Worthy to the north by the A34; and from Abbots Barton to the south by a relatively narrow strip of countryside designated a local gap,<sup>6</sup> which together have successfully avoided any coalescence of settlements.

Key characteristics of the village are the number of historic farms in the locality and the many tributaries, ponds and water related features, such as the watercress beds and trout lakes, which form part of the distinctive valley setting of the River Itchen. These qualities, combined with the low-lying fields and meadows surrounding the village, create the perception of a peaceful rural settlement. However, this is offset by traffic noise close to busy through roads and lanes, the latter also forming a main part of the existing footpath and cycle network, which exacerbates the feeling of traffic dominance within a village setting.

### 1.4 Summary

Detailed descriptions of relevant landscape and townscape character areas and landscape types as outlined above have been used to inform the degree of landscape sensitivity for areas around individual settlements 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; HILA; WCLA*

#### 2.1.1 Landform

*The clarity of the landforms provides a powerful setting for the city.*<sup>7</sup>

- **Ridgelines**  
Four visually prominent main ridgelines are predominant features in the northern half of Winchester:

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<sup>6</sup> Winchester District Local Plan (2006) and Winchester District Local Plan Part One (2013)

<sup>7</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document (WCS) para.6.13

1. the first runs along the N built edge of Harestock to Headbourne Worthy (c60-75m OD) passing E-W through the centre of Barton Farm MDA; a public right of way follows the top of this ridgeline.
2. a higher ridgeline lies further north in countryside, extending E-W from Worthy Down to Headbourne Worthy. Down Farm Lane runs along the top of this ridgeline from Three Maids Hill roundabout (c60 -120m OD).
3. a third ridgeline lies to the west around Teg Down(60-147m OD). It extends SW-NE from Sarum Road (Roman road) at its highest point through Royal Winchester Golf Club to the suburb of Weeke. This ridgeline contains a well defined built edge alongside Chibolton Avenue.
4. the highest ridgeline in the northern area runs parallel to the third ridgeline from Teg Down telecommunication masts at the highest point (156m OD) graduating down towards Harestock. The NW built edge of Winchester is well defined by Salters Lane and Langham Lane, both routes running along the top of this ridgeline and continuing along N boundary of the Royal Winchester Golf Course, which sits on the higher more visible part of the ridgeline further west.

- Dry valleys

Two main E-W dry valleys are predominant features north of Winchester

1. the first forms part of the northern built edge of Winchester from the catchment area at Teg Down, through Weeke, the southern half of the MDA and the local gap between Abbots Barton and Headbourne Worthy to the River Itchen.
2. the second dry valley feature lies further north and also runs from the Teg Down catchment area along the northern boundary of the MDA heading east to Headbourne Worthy and River Itchen. The Sir John Moore Barracks, Well House Lane and the Sewage Treatment Works are located within this dry valley.

- High Points

Teg Down masts: 156m OD  
 Crab Wood: 145m OD  
 Moor Court Farm, Sparsholt: 126m OD  
 Lainston House: 122m OD  
 Worthy Down: 122m OD

- Low Points

Itchen valley: 37m OD  
 Dry valley between Abbots Barton and Headbourne Worthy (local gap): 45m OD

- Extensive slopes and gradients

A common feature associated with the undulating topography of chalk downland and river valley landscape character of this area. Some of the most visually significant slopes influencing the setting of Winchester include:

- a. north and south facing slopes of main E-W ridgelines between northern built edge of Winchester and A34.
- b. slopes that provide containment around Littleton
- c. slopes of river valley and tributaries around Headbourne Worthy and Abbots Barton to the east; also views of slopes across the valley to Winnall industrial estate and SDNP beyond.

### 2.1.2 Land cover

- A rural landscape encircles Winchester with agricultural land extending up to the built edge of the city in many places.<sup>8</sup>
- Treelined roads along the northern perimeter of Winchester provide a 'soft, visually contained edge',<sup>9</sup> ie along Andover Road; Harestock Road; Teg Down Road; Park Road; around N and W edges of Abbots Barton.
- Protected trees mainly within treed skylines and sporadically along main road corridors. Tree Protection Orders include:
  1. NW Winchester: parts of Lanham Lane; Harestock Road; Stockbridge Road;
  2. N Winchester: Barton Farm MDA;
  3. NE Winchester: Worthy Road through Abbots Barton.
- Land use and vegetation cover within the Itchen valley is of particular importance to the city and its setting.<sup>10</sup> Key characteristics include mix of water meadows, river edge trees, woodland and scrub in a complex of braided channels and drainage ditches of high amenity and biodiversity value.
- Significant areas of vegetation extend into the city forming part of the urban fabric. Communication network links town and country, most notably tree lined main roads into the city centre; main railway line to London.
- Treed ridgelines are a key skyline feature looking out from Winchester.

## 2.2 Experiential/Perceptual

*Ref: GIS constraints map and site assessment; Tranquillity map (CPRE website); Dark night skies (CPRE and SDNP websites)*

- Contrasting landscape character between river valley to the east set within its well treed landscape and the open, expansive arable fields on higher ground.
- SDNP boundary extends into Winchester on east of the R Itchen. SDNP is visually prominent on the skyline from higher ground and across river valley from within Winchester.
- Pedestrian connectivity: limited network in rural areas north of Winchester. Better footpath and cycle access to the NW around Littleton and Sparsholt. National trails eg Kings Way; Itchen Way provide good access through the Itchen valley linking Winchester with countryside beyond. Also Clarendon Way through Teg Down.
- Opportunities for improving pedestrian and cycle routes in the area.
- Abundance of treecover among rooftops and treed skylines with views of countryside beyond creates distinctive semi rural character.
- Tranquil within residential areas away from A34 and main routes into the city centre. Birdsong predominant from footpaths including skylarks from PRow in Barton Farm MDA. Open downland setting; peaceful away from A34. River valley: perception of countryside although traffic noise evident from A34 and M3. Tranquil semi-rural valley setting between Abbots Barton and Headbourne Worthy
- Far reaching panoramic views of Winchester within its countryside setting when looking south from higher ground.
- Significant natural skyline features visible from higher ground, such as St Catherines Hill and Cheesefoot Head in the SDNP which create a strong sense of place. Also

<sup>8</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999: para. 3.9

<sup>9</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999: visual analysis map of the city

<sup>10</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999: para. 3.9.7

visible is Romsey Road treed skyline and HM Prison tower creating a distinctive built landmark feature that reinforces the sense of place. However, the 8 storey tower block housing the County Police HQ dominates HM prison tower adjacent, appearing visually incongruous and overbearing within the treed skyline.

### **2.3 Historic Environment**

- *Ref: GIS constraints map; HILA; WCLA; WCC Historic Environment record*

- Communication network: Andover Road is one of the main historic routes into city centre (Roman road) and recognised as an important green corridor in *Winchester City and its Setting* document (WCC 1999). Drove roads are evident further north around South Wonston.
- Historic Parks and Gardens: a few sites are listed on national and local registers NW of Winchester eg Northwood Park; Lainston House (National register); Sparsholt Manor. There is a significant number along the upper Itchen valley. Those closest to Winchester include Headbourne Worthy Grange; Abbots Worthy house; Itchen Abbas Manor; Martyr Worthy Manor House; Worthy Park; Avington Park (National register). There are no sites identified to the north of Winchester around Barton Farm MDA.
- Small settlements of historic origin, such as Littleton, Sparsholt and Headbourne Worthy have a number of Listed Buildings and heritage assets that contribute to local distinctiveness.
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments: many sites as there is a long history of settlement in the area with evidence of prehistoric activity, including Royal Winchester Golf Course.
- Multi period historic site of potentially national importance at Barton Farm MDA east of railway line in the local gap.
- Conservation Areas: Kings Worthy; Abbots Worthy; Sparsholt; Littleton.
- Lanham Lane: possible hollow way and/or historic boundary with ancient yews and other veteran trees.
- Roman roads eg Sarum Road; Andover Road.

### **2.4 Biodiversity**

- *Ref: GIS constraints map; HILA; WCLA*

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC): River Itchen
- SSSIs include Itchen valley; Crab Wood.
- SINCs include Sir John Moore Barracks; Royal Winchester Golf Club (Teg Down); reservoir (Lanham Lane); West Wood/Crab Wood complex; Pitt Down; Northwood Park Woods; Worthy Down.
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR): Crab Wood; Winnall Moors.
- Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) between Winchester and Farley Mount Country Park<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Green Infrastructure Study (Winchester City Council 2010).

## 2.5 Visibility

- Important views  
Views south from ridgelines to Winchester city and beyond  
Views E and SE from ridgelines to SDNP
- Panoramic views  
Far-reaching views to S and E from ridgelines  
Views of Kings Worthy across railway and A34 to NE from northern ridgeline  
Views to E and SE from ridgelines to SDNP  
Views to NE across Itchen valley from ridgeline on Abbots Barton site boundary  
Views of Headbourne Worthy from Abbots Barton which is seen as a separate settlement within its landscape setting.
- Skyline features and land marks  
Police HQ on Winchester skyline to S  
Teg Down telecom masts to SW  
Cheesefoot Head to SE in SDNP  
Treed ridgelines around Winchester eg Romsey Road; Chilbotlon Avenue.

The visibility constraints map for Winchester is included at Appendix 1.

## 3.0 SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL OF AREAS

A number of individual sites and areas of land in and around Winchester have been promoted for development through the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>12</sup>. Those of similar landscape character have been grouped together for the purposes of assessing their sensitivity in the local landscape (see Appendix 2). The appraisal uses four categories of sensitivity –

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

### 3.1 Area around Teg Down between Sarum Road and Stockbridge Road (ref: SHLAA sites 2541; 2023; 2490; 416; 2013; 417; 2026; 2014; 2426)

- Context: much of this area lies within the 'distinctive' landscape setting of Winchester with visually prominent ridgelines; sheltered dry valleys; steeply sloping ground; treed skylines; well defined built edge. Good footpath network linking settlements of Sparsholt and Littleton with Winchester, although opportunities exist to strengthen links further with wider area including Farley Mount Country Park and Crab Wood.

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<sup>12</sup> [www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/housing/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/housing/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/)

- Character of site: mainly rural with far reaching views of countryside from higher ground, absence of rivers, streams and water related features. Much of this area is taken up by Royal Winchester Golf Course, providing a transitional land use adjacent built edge; sensitive site as a designated SINC with Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM); public access within and adjacent to site providing views of Winchester and setting. Heritage assets also associated with communication network in the area eg veteran trees and hedgerows along Lanham Lane; Roman roads. Topography is important in terms of natural drainage as it forms part of the Itchen valley catchment area.
- Panoramic views from public viewpoints including Lanham Lane; Clarendon Way; Sarum Road. Views of treed skylines to and from Winchester.
- Skyline features: Teg Down masts.
- Land marks that connect with place: Lainston House; Farley Mount Country Park.

Summary of landscape sensitivity:

A most sensitive location in terms of its amenity, biodiversity and heritage value. Ridgelines are a key characteristic of this area that help to contain existing development and define the built edge. The treed skyline provides a backdrop for views into and out of Winchester.

Any potential sites for future development should respect the special qualities of the area as an integral part of the supportive and distinctive landscape setting of Winchester, which contributes to sense of place and local distinctiveness.

### **3.2 Area between Stockbridge Road and Andover Road (ref SHLAA sites 423; 424; 2489; 2542)**

- Context: a main feature ridgeline runs along the northern built edge defined by Harestock Road, which is identified as part of the 'supportive' landscape setting of Winchester. This ridgeline forms part of a narrow countryside strip that lies between Winchester and the village of Littleton; it is a designated local gap in the existing Local Plan and recently adopted Local Plan Part One (LPP1), to prevent coalescence of settlements. Sir John Moore Barracks is situated on lower ground within this local gap, providing transitional use adjacent to settlements and countryside.
- Character of site: semi-rural area consisting of a scattering of houses alongside the road network outside the settlement boundary; small enclosed fields and paddocks; treelined roads and lanes; small copses and shelterbelts; absence of rivers, streams and water related features. High level of tree cover throughout. Poor footpath network as much of the land is privately owned and not accessible to the public.
- Panoramic views across this character area from higher ground to the north.
- Views of treed skylines to and from Winchester, especially Harestock Road, that softens the built edge.
- Landmarks that connect with place: Sir John Moore Barracks. Northwood Park.

Summary of landscape sensitivity:

This is a most sensitive area in terms of its location, visual amenity and biodiversity value. It is also important as a landscape buffer between the built edge of Winchester and the village of Littleton preventing coalescence of settlements. The main ridgeline as a key characteristic of this area helps to contain existing

development and define the built edge. The significant treed skyline softens the built edge and provides a backdrop for views into and out of Winchester. Any potential sites for future development should respect the special qualities of the area as an integral part of the supportive landscape setting of Winchester, which contributes to sense of place and local distinctiveness.

### **3.3 Area to the north of Barton Farm MDA (ref SHLAA sites 418; 2021)**

- Context: Main E-W ridgelines within a visually open and expansive landscape with big skies on upper slopes of chalk downland. The entire area south of A34 is identified as a 'supportive' landscape setting for Winchester. The lower dry valley slopes either side of Well House Lane have a more enclosed character with shorter views. Character of site: gently sloping and undulating topography, mainly large arable fields with sparse tree/woodland cover and few remaining boundary hedgerows. Sparse but well used footpath network throughout the area, especially E-W route across Barton Farm MDA. Opportunities for increasing tree cover and extending path network.
- Panoramic far reaching views from high ground south across Winchester to the treed skyline along Romsey Road; uninterrupted views SE across the Itchen valley to SDNP; views NE from Down Farm Lane to Kings Worthy and SW to Farley Mount Country Park.
- Skyline features: 8 storey tower block housing County Police HQ and adjacent HM Prison Tower on treed skyline along Romsey Road; St Catherines Hill; Cheesfoot Head in the SDNP; Farley Mount Country Park; line of beech on ridgeline in Barton Farm MDA.
- Landmarks that connect with place: skyline features outlined above; main tree lined road corridors to and from the city eg line of mature sycamores along Andover Road.

Summary of landscape sensitivity:

This is a most sensitive area in terms of its location, sustainability and recognised contribution to the landscape setting of Winchester. Visual impact would be an issue in this area where potential sites for future development are located on ridgelines and higher ground. On lower ground, natural topography, vegetation cover and drainage patterns should be retained (as mentioned earlier) to retain local character and avoid flood related issues eg around Well House Lane and Sir John Moore Barracks (ref extensive flooding during winter months 2013-2014).

Any potential sites for future development should respect the special qualities of the area as an integral part of the supportive landscape setting of Winchester, which contributes to sense of place and local distinctiveness.

### **3.4 Area between Abbots Barton and Headbourne Worthy (ref SHLAA site 2507)**

- Context: an area contained by the railway line to the west; Headbourne Worthy and the A34 to the north; The River Itchen and SDNP to the east and the built edge of Winchester to the south. The area is identified as part of the 'supportive' landscape setting of Winchester. Medium sized fields within an E-W dry valley either side of Worthy Road, providing a significant landscape buffer between the built edge of

Abbots Barton and Headbourne Worthy. This area has been designated a local gap in LPP1 to prevent coalescence of settlements. Two well used footpaths; one linking site with Barton Farm MDA; the other is St Swithuns Way following the River Itchen (E boundary of SHLAA site 2507).

- Character of site: a well contained landscape framework of mature trees, hedgerows and understorey to field boundaries and railway embankment.
- Views: topography restricts views from within the site; longer distance panoramic views from higher ground especially SE across the Itchen valley to SDNP.
- Skyline features: Cheesefoot Head in SDNP.
- Landmarks that connect with place: Cheesefoot Head; River Itchen.

Summary of landscape sensitivity:

This is a most sensitive area in terms of location, amenity, heritage and biodiversity value. It is important as a landscape buffer between the built edge of Winchester and Headbourne Worthy preventing coalescence of settlements.

Visual impact may be an issue in this area where potential sites for future development are located on higher ground. Natural topography, vegetation cover and drainage patterns should be retained on lower ground to retain local character and avoid potential flood related issues in the dry valley.

Any potential sites for future development should respect the special qualities of the area as an integral part of the supportive landscape setting of Winchester, which contributes to sense of place and local distinctiveness.

#### **4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY LANDSCAPE ISSUES FOR THE NORTHERN HALF OF WINCHESTER**

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

Key landscape and townscape issues that apply generally in the northern half of Winchester:

- Loss of prominent green corridors due to pressure of development, such as tree lined roads, railway lines, footpaths, bridleways and other green spaces that extend into the city.
- Loss of sufficient space within the built fabric to support forest scale trees, such as beech and lime, through to maturity, which are presently a key characteristic of Winchester.
- Loss of panoramic open views of Winchester within its landscape setting.
- Loss of treed skylines and special views of landmarks and features.
- Poor management of historic parkland.
- Adverse impact of development on the historic character of settlements.

Key landscape and townscape issues specific to the main character area of **Wonston Downs:**

- Impact of intrusive structures on undulating open chalkland setting
- Historic network of rural lanes, tracks and drove roads eroded by increasing traffic volumes; HGVs and pressure of new development.

- 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.
- Potential loss of valued green space and
- Over formalisation of semi-natural areas to provide recreational facilities.

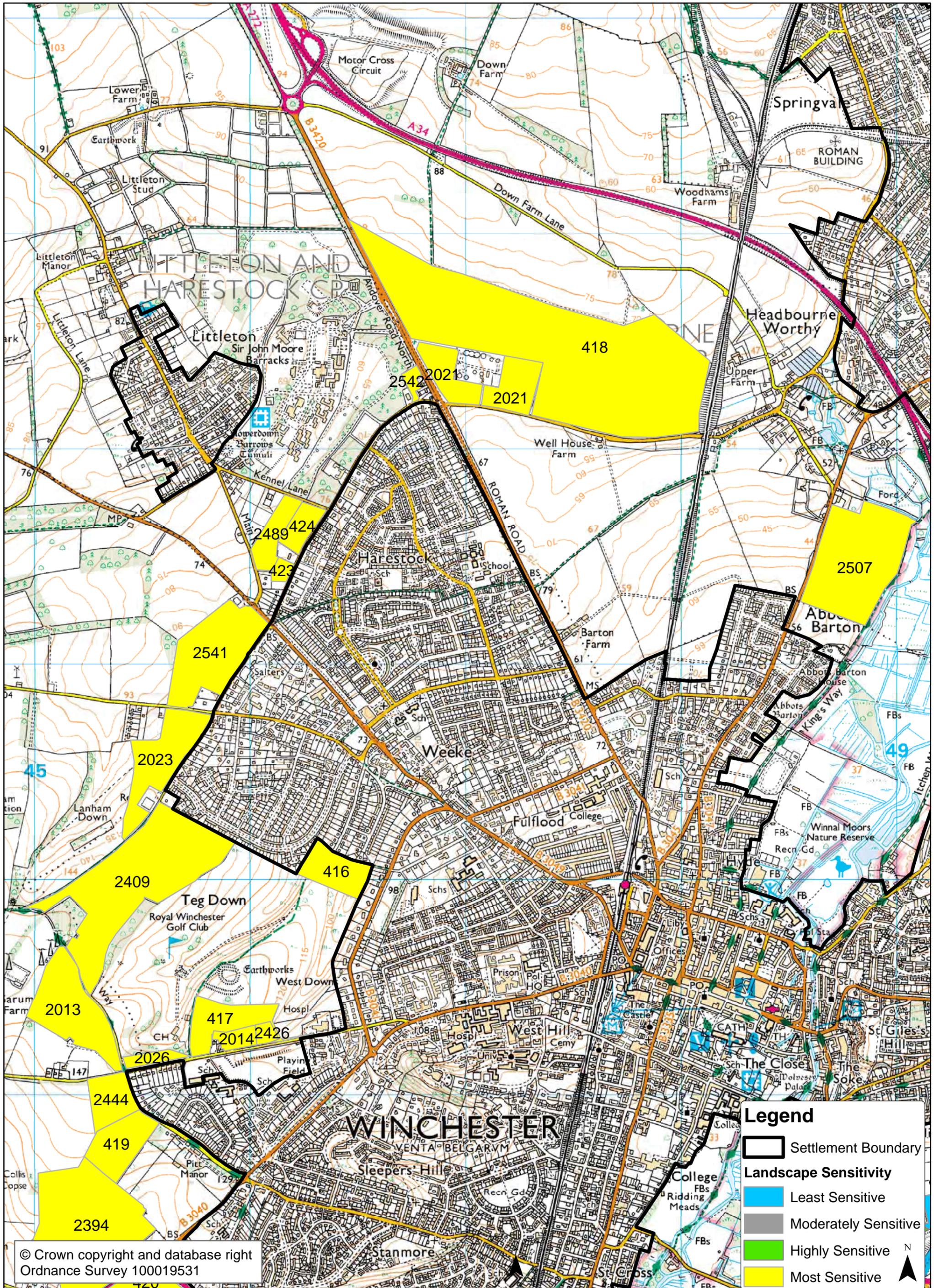
Key landscape and townscape issues specific to the main character area of **Upper Itchen valley:**

- Water quality of River Itchen.
- Potential flood risk in Winchester, requiring retention of natural ground profile and related features, such as the water meadows, to meet sustainable urban drainage requirements and flood alleviation; also to maintain and enhance amenity and biodiversity value of the valley floor and sides.
- Increasing recreational pressure on sensitive landscapes, such as ancient woodlands, exacerbated by pressure of new development and increased population; also poor management.
- Fragmentation and neglect of hedgerows and woodlands.
- Proximity of development to protected areas, including River Itchen and SDNP.
- Coalescence of settlements between Abbots Barton and Headbourne Worthy.

Key landscape and townscape issues specific to the main character area of **Sparsholt Woodlands:**

- Coalescence of settlements between Winchester and the village of Littleton.
- Visual impact of development on high ground and ridgelines
- Fragmentation and neglect of hedgerows and woodlands.
- Increasing recreational pressure on sensitive landscapes, such as ancient woodlands and local nature reserves eg Crab Wood.
- Erosion of rural lane character caused by increasing vehicular traffic volume and HGVs.

# Winchester Town North Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Map - October 2014



# WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 2

## LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL

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**WINCHESTER SOUTH EAST:** Landscape south east of Winchester is from Alresford Road to the Itchen Navigation, which includes the residential suburbs of Bar End and Highcliffe.

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:

Character area to the south of Winchester:

#### **Itchen Valley 3c**

Character area east of Winchester:

#### **East Winchester Open Downs 8g**

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

There is one main character area for the south east of Winchester defined by the highly distinctive open chalk downland landscape: **East Winchester Downs**.

Other landscape character areas adjoin the main area, creating a diverse landscape in the southern east area of Winchester:

#### **Lower Itchen Valley**

The appraisal also takes account of the following South Downs National Park, Winchester City Council and Parish documents that help to define local landscape character and distinctiveness:

*SDNP Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (updated 2011)*

*Winchester City and its Setting* document (1999)

*Related Village Design Statements*

### 1.1 Landscape Character

Main Landscape Character Area for the area south east of Winchester: **East Winchester Downs**

Key Characteristics specific to this area (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment). Also with reference to *Winchester City and its Setting* document, which identifies 'supportive' and 'distinctive' character around Winchester.<sup>3</sup> Definitions of these terms are as follows and as shown on the Areas of Influence map in the document:

1. Distinctive townscape/landscape character:  
*Areas specifically recognisable and distinctive to Winchester. These include townscape and landscape components such as quintessential views, interaction of buildings forming spaces or the setting to local events, landform, backdrops to the city, areas of rich biodiversity, historic approach routes and landmarks of positive character.*

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

(HILA)

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

<sup>3</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 (WCS ref para. 25)

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## 2. Supportive landscape:

*Areas which support the character of the historic cores and areas distinctive to Winchester. They provide the backdrop and ambience that bolster the sense of place by supporting and buffering its special character.*

These special qualities help to define local distinctiveness and local character in support of Local Plan Part One (LPP1) policy CP20.

### Landscape

- Topographically varied landscape; the undulating landscape of downland, has high open expansive areas punctuated by a series of intermittent but prominent ridgelines escarpments with dry valleys.
- Intensive arable farmland occasionally broken by shelterbelts and beech clumps.
- Upper chalk geology enclosed by long winding escarpments of hard Middle Chalk
- Overlooked by the major historic feature of St Catherine's Hill, a prehistoric hill fort with drove road.
- The main route through area is the M3, connecting the major towns of Southampton and London.
- M3 motorway planted embankment encloses the south and eastern boundary of south east Winchester.

Landscape character area which extends into the city centre: **Lower Itchen Valley**  
Key Characteristics specific to this area (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment):

### Landscape

- Wide flat, low-lying floodplain with gently rising valley sides. The main channel contains the river with many meanders and braided sections.
- The area includes the transition in the underlying geology with the northern valley sides lying on chalk and the southern ones lying on clay, with alluvium soils in the valley floodplain.
- Well treed character, individual specimens and belts of trees including specimens and belts of trees which are commonly located along the river and its tributaries and on the valley sides.
- Irregular field pattern largely made up of unimproved nutrient rich pasture for sheep and cattle.

## 1.2 Landscape Types for Winchester south east

In addition to the identification of landscape character areas, the HILA 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 main landscape type (WCLA classification) to the south east of Winchester is a mix of 'open arable' and 'scarp'; it includes the area on the south eastern edge of Winchester and the landscape beyond the M3 and extends eastwards into the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

The River Itchen runs N-S between southern edge of Winchester to Highbridge, creating a further landscape type known as 'river valley floor' and 'river valley side' which includes the wide flat river valley, sides and floodplain with the settlements of Shawford, Tywford located along its length.

In summary, there is a total of 4 no landscape types in close proximity to the SHLAA sites, creating a diverse landscape setting of high amenity and biodiversity value in the south eastern area of Winchester.

### 1.3 Townscape Character

#### Winchester City

The siting and development of Winchester has been strongly influenced by the distinctive topography and river valley setting. Having evolved around the river crossing to its present day size, the setting remains a key characteristic with the treed ridgelines and hills surrounding the low lying city centre, providing a distinctive sense of containment and enclosure.

'Winchester and its cathedral are subservient to the landscape'.<sup>4</sup>

The Itchen valley is the most extensive area of semi-natural vegetation within Winchester.<sup>5</sup> It is of high amenity and biodiversity value with the valley floor recognised more recently as a vital means of flood attenuation when dealing with effects of climate change.

Key characteristics associated with the River Itchen are an integral part of the townscape within the city with its historic water meadows; mills; leats and channels and associated vegetation. The presence of water within the town is a locally distinctive feature.

A valued pedestrian and cycle network has evolved along the river corridor which connects to the suburbs and the countryside beyond.

There is a notable contrast between predominantly open elevated chalk downs to the north and east, and more varied landscape types to the west. The River Itchen forms a transitional key boundary between eastern and western downland.

Significant roads into Winchester are tree lined e.g. Stockbridge Road, Andover Road. This is a key townscape feature of Winchester.

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<sup>4</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para.38.

<sup>5</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para. 3.8.2.

Rural and urban areas are clearly distinct along much of Winchester's perimeter, an important characteristic that defines the city's sense of place.

The south east edge of Winchester consists of the flat valley floor of the Itchen valley contained by the rising slopes of the valley sides. The river is integrated into the built fabric of the city, with sections remaining predominantly pastoral and well wooded.

'The whole of the Itchen Valley is of key importance as a linear landmark feature within the setting of the city and presents an unforgettable image of a green pastoral landscape extending into the heart of the city'<sup>6</sup>

'The distinct form of St Catherine's Hill rises above the eastern side of the valley floor'<sup>7</sup>

St Catherine's Hill combined with the M3 major road delineates the south eastern edge of Winchester visually enclosing the sites from the Eastern Downs beyond the M3. The M3 motorway functions as the main route through the area connecting London and Southampton.

Beyond the M3 to the east is the rolling chalk downland with distinctive dry valleys and broader vales enclosed by steep slopes and escarpments radiating from the principal summit of Cheesefoot Heads.

Elsewhere, the eastern suburbs of Winchester include the industrial/commercial estates of Bar End, an area of shed-like structures and isolated suburb of Highcliffe on the edge of the city consisting of some characterful Victorian/Edwardian terrace streets with borrowed character from surrounding downland. Limited tree cover throughout, with large open spaces including sports fields and allotments on the southern boundary of Highcliffe

## 1.4 Summary

Detailed descriptions of relevant landscape character areas and landscape types as outlined above have been used to inform the degree of landscape sensitivity for areas around individual settlements 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.

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<sup>6</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para 5.3.13

<sup>7</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para 5.3.10.

## 2.1 Physical Landscape

Ref: GIS constraints map; HILA; WCLA

### 2.1.1 Landform

*The clarity of the landforms provides a powerful setting for the city.*<sup>8</sup>

- **Ridgelines**  
Two visually prominent main ridgelines are predominant features in the south east area of Winchester:
  1. the first runs from Twyford Down east along the Roman Road to Deacon Hill. (c95-120m AOD)
  2. the second ridgeline lies further north in countryside, extending E-W from east of the A272 junction with the B3404 to just south of the Magdalen Hill Cemetery. (c90 - 125m OD).
- **Dry valleys**  
The main E-W dry valley lies between the two scarps of Magdalen Hill Down and Deacon Hill scarp. With the lowest point at the Sewage Farm east of the M3 and A31.
- **High Points**
  - St Catherine's Hill: 97m OD
  - Deacon Hill: 144m OD
  - Cheesefoot Head: 176m OD
  - Chilcomb Down: 135m OD
  - Magdalen Hill Down: 124m OD
  - St Gile's Hill: 80OD
- **Low Points**
  - Itchen River valley floodplain, a wide low-lying river plain: 30m OD
  - Dry valley around the sewage farm: 41m OD
- **Extensive slopes and gradients**  
A common feature associated with the undulating topography of chalk downland are the steep scarps. Some of the most visually significant slopes influencing the setting of Winchester include:
  - a. north and south facing slopes of main E-W ridgelines on the eastern built edge of Winchester.
  - b. slopes of St Catherine's Hill

### 2.1.2 Land cover

- Undulating open arable farmland land use of regular medium to large fields.
- The significant escarpments running east west are semi-natural woodland that form strong features within the surrounding landscape.

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<sup>8</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document (WCS) para.6.13

- Land between the south-eastern urban edge of Winchester and the major M3 road includes a flat area of manicured sports pitches and small remnant fields.
- Mixed agricultural quality grade from grade 2 in the dry valleys to Grade 4 along the escarpment overlooked by Deacon Hill.
- The low-lying River Itchen floodplain, contains the river with many meanders and braided sections, the river plain is well treed.
- Between the open undulating landscape and the river plain is the townscape of southern eastern edge of Winchester.
- The significant major roads of M3, A34 and A31.

## **2.2 Experiential/Perceptual**

*Ref: GIS constraints map and site assessment; Tranquillity map (CPRE website); Dark night skies (CPRE and SDNP websites)*

- Contrasting landscape character between river valley; south eastern suburbs of Winchester and the rolling landscape beyond the M3.
- Very rural landscape character of the landscape east of Winchester has long views from steep dramatic long winding escarpments and elevated positions such as St Catherine's Hill, Magdalen Hill Down and Deacon Hill across farmland to other ridgeline horizons within the South Downs National Park.
- High density of major roads creates a physical barrier between the town of Winchester and the countryside beyond.
- The Itchen River valley has an enclosed and sheltered feel, in stark contrast to the open arable landscape to the east.
- Urban townscape of Winchester suffers from the noise and visual impact of the M3 motorway.
- Pedestrian connectivity in countryside: good footpath network connecting Winchester City with the countryside beyond the major road corridor, with a one PRow (Itchen Way national trail), running north south along the river valley, and several other PRow crossing the M3 connecting with the Pilgrims' Trail and South Downs Way national trail.

## **2.3 Historic Environment**

*Ref: GIS constraints map; HILA; WCLA; WCC Historic Environment record*

- The prehistoric hill fort at St Catherine's Hill is an ancient scheduled monument and what remains of the Dongas, the ancient trackways leading down off the South Downs into the valley of the River Itchen.
- Routes such as Morestead Road and Alresford Road are generally fairly straight and direct reflecting their Roman origins.
- The Ancient Monument designation at Twyford Down is a rich historic feature of an Iron Age village, pre-Roman field system, and ancient trackways known as the Dongas.

## **2.4 Biodiversity**

*Ref: GIS constraints map; HILA; WCLA*

- SSSI include the calcareous grassland at St Catherine's Hill
- SINCs include the area covering diversity of habitats associated with ancient woodland are located on the escarpments at Magdalen Hill Down and Deacon Hill.
- Butterfly nature reserve adjacent to Magdalen Hill Cemetery

## 2.5 Visibility

- Important views  
Views from ridgelines to Winchester city and beyond  
Views with circular prospect from St Catherine's Hill  
Views of M3 motorway and associated road infrastructure
- Panoramic views  
Far-reaching views from ridgelines  
Views from St Catherine's Hill providing uninterrupted view across the whole of the city and its setting, St Cross, and the Itchen Valley  
Views to E and N from Cheesefoot Head  
Views to N from ridgeline at the bend in the Roman Road adjacent to Deacon Hill Escarpment  
Views W from A272 Peterfield Road below Magdalen Hill Down
- Skyline features and land marks  
St Catherine's Hill  
Cheesefoot Head to SE in SDNP  
Treed ridgelines around Winchester eg Magdalen Hill and Deacon Hill

The visibility constraints map for this area is included at Appendix 1.

## 3.0 SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL OF AREAS

Three individual sites in an area of land around the south eastern edge of Winchester have been promoted for development through the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>9</sup>. Those of similar landscape character have been grouped together for the purposes of assessing their sensitivity in the local landscape (see Appendix 2). The appraisal uses four categories of sensitivity -

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

### 3.1 Area around south eastern urban fringe of Winchester between Bar End and the M3 motorway

<sup>9</sup> [www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/housing/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/housing/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/)

(ref: SHLAA sites 2417; 2538 and 1831)

- Context: flat area of recreation land used for sports pitches; old farm buildings at the end of Chilcomb Lane and a small thin triangle of remnant field with well treed high bank, which visually mitigates the proximity of the M3 motorway. The area is on the south eastern edge of Winchester situated between the urban edge of Bar End Industrial Estate, Highcliffe residential area and the major transport corridor of the M3. Part of the site is within the Environment Agency Floodzone 2 and 3. There is considerable awareness of the M3 due to the traffic noise.
- Character of site: Flat area of manicured grassland, popular with the residents of Winchester for recreational sports use, adjoining an area of farm buildings with house (mostly single storey), and area of field used as pasture, with a strong high bank along the southern edge planted with trees and shrubs, visually screening the M3
- Important or panoramic views: from the sport pitches there are views of the dramatic long winding escarpments, St Catherine's Hill, Magdalen Hill Down and Deacon Hill all within the South Downs National Park, while the other SHLAA site are visual contained by existing buildings and boundary tree/shrub planting.
- Skyline features: elevated wooded ridgelines on the horizon and prominent high points in the landscape such as St Catherine's Hill, Deacon Hill, and Magdalen Hill Down from the sports pitches and wooded bank along the M3.
- Landmarks to connect with place: St Catherine's Hill and M3 motorway embankment and houses along Chilcomb Lane

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity:

SHLAA 2471 is a highly sensitive location due to its recreational use as sports pitches for the residents of Winchester. SHLAA 2538 is highly sensitive location due potential impact of the high bank and associated planting that visually mitigates views of the M3. SHLAA 1831 is a least sensitive location due to its proximity to the M3 motorway and existing development on site.

#### **4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY LANDSCAPE ISSUES FOR THE SOUTH EASTERN PART OF WINCHESTER**

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

Key landscape and townscape issues that apply generally in the south eastern half of Winchester:

- Loss of recreational use land would exacerbate the deficit of sports pitches serving the residents of Winchester City.
- Loss of open land in the Flood risk zone 2 and 3.
- Loss of land that forms a green gap between Winchester City edge and the M3 motorway.
- Proximity of land to M3 motorway.
- Potential impact of the high bank that visually mitigates views of the M3 from urban areas of Winchester.

- The area is overlooked by the high ridgelines within the South Downs National Park to the east and St Catherine's Hill.

Key landscape and townscape issues specific to the main character area of  
**East Winchester Downs**

- Overlooked by the topographically varied landscape of high rolling downs and extensive areas of arable farmland.
- Overlooked by the major historic feature of St Catherine's Hill, a prehistoric hill fort with drove road.

Key landscape and townscape issues specific to the main character area of  
**Lower Itchen Valley**

- Water quality of River Itchen.
- Potential flood risk in Winchester, requiring retention of natural ground profile and related features, such as the water meadows, to meet sustainable urban drainage requirements and flood alleviation; also to maintain and enhance amenity and biodiversity value of the valley floor and sides.
- Increasing recreational pressure on sensitive landscapes, such as ancient woodlands, exacerbated by pressure of new development and increased population; also poor management.
- Potential impact of development within a floodzone which forms part of the drainage system that feeds into the River Itchen.



# WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 2

## LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL

---

**WINCHESTER SOUTH WEST:** Landscape south west of Winchester from Farley Mount Country Park to the Compton Down which includes the settlements of Hursley; the hamlets of Pitt and Standon; also residential suburbs of Oliver Battery and Teg Down.

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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**Appendix 1** Visibility Constraints Map

**Appendix 2** Landscape Sensitivity Map

### 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:

Character area to the south west of Winchester:

**West Winchester Downs 7f**

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

There is one main character area for the south west of Winchester defined by the highly distinctive open chalk downland landscape: **Hursley Scarplands**.

Other landscape character areas adjoin the main area, creating a diverse landscape to the west of Winchester:

**Lower Itchen Valley** which extends into the city centre from the south

**Sparsholt Woodlands** which includes Littleton and Sparsholt to the west

The appraisal also takes account of the following South Downs National Park, Winchester City Council and Parish documents that help to define local landscape character and distinctiveness:

*SDNP Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (updated 2011)*

*Winchester City and its Setting* document (1999)

*Related Village Design Statements*

#### 1.1 Landscape Character

Main Landscape Character Area for the area south west of Winchester:

**Hursley Scarplands**

Key Characteristics specific to this area are set out below (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment). Also with reference to *Winchester City and its Setting* document, which identifies 'supportive' and 'distinctive' character around Winchester.<sup>3</sup> Definitions of these terms are as follows and as shown on the Areas of Influence map in the document:

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

(HILA)

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

<sup>3</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 (WCS ref para. 25)

1. Distinctive townscape/landscape character:  
*Areas specifically recognisable and distinctive to Winchester. These include townscape and landscape components such as quintessential views, interaction of buildings forming spaces or the setting to local events, landform, backdrops to the city, areas of rich biodiversity, historic approach routes and landmarks of positive character.*
  
2. Supportive landscape:  
*Areas which support the character of the historic cores and areas distinctive to Winchester. They provide the backdrop and ambience that bolster the sense of place by supporting and buffering its special character.*

These special qualities help to define local distinctiveness and local character in support of Local Plan Part One (LPP1) policy CP20.

### Landscape

- A very undulating mixed scale downland landscape, with small steep scarp slopes and dry valley spurs. This dramatic landscape has prominent ridges and high points with far reaching views over adjoining downs. (50-110m OD)
- Comprises a significant part of the City's 'supportive landscape'. Supportive and distinctive landscapes play a crucial role in the setting and perception of the city.
- The southern boundary is formed by the southern extent of the chalk where it meets the lowland clay landscape at Hursley.
- Strong landscape structure provided by; substantial tracts of interconnecting ancient, plantation woodland, and semi-natural woodland blocks which are located on higher and steeper ground, with tree belts, hangers and hedgerows.
- Hursley Park 18<sup>th</sup> Century deer park landscape, with its associated estate type village of Hursley.
- Predominantly arable fields influenced by informal enclosure of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries.
- Dry valley landscape with almost no naturally occurring open standing or permanent running water due to geology. Winterbournes have been recorded running from Hursley (Winter 2001).
- The main settlement of Hursley is an estate village lying south of the character area, situated in a dry valley on the chalk clay boundary. Large chimneys are a distinctive feature.
- The single main route through area is the A3090, connecting the historic towns of Winchester and Romsey. The village of Hursley lies approximately half way between also passing through the hamlets of Standon and Pitt.
- Network of narrow winding and often sunken lanes with a historic character.

Landscape Character Area which extends into the city centre: **Lower Itchen valley**

Key Characteristics specific to this area (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment):

- Wide flat, low lying floodplain with gently rising valley sides
- Area includes transition in the underlying geology with northern valley sides lying on chalk and southern valley sides lying on clay.

- A well treed character, particularly in association with historic parkland. Individual specimens and tree belts are commonly located along the river and on valley sides.
- A fairly irregular field pattern largely made up of paddocks and pasture resulting from the enclosure of historic water meadows.
- Enclosed and sheltered feel in stark contrast to the open arable landscape to the east and west of the character area.
- Important landmark buildings and features such as St Cross Hospital; Hockley Viaduct.
- Habitats of national and European ecological importance. The Itchen watercourse and banks are designated SSSI; watercourse a SAC.
- River valley is a transport corridor, which includes several B roads; main railway line; numerous footpaths including Itchen Way and historic Itchen Navigation.

Landscape character area W of Winchester: **Sparsholt Woodlands**

Key Characteristics specific to this area (ref HILA, WLCA and site assessment):

- Undulating well drained chalkland landscape to the NW of Winchester.
- High ridgelines, which include Lanham Down and defines route of Harestock Road along northern edge of settlement forms part of the 'supportive landscape' surrounding Winchester. Area in and around The Royal Winchester Golf Course is part of the 'distinctive landscape' surrounding Winchester. Supportive and distinctive landscapes play a crucial role in the setting and perception of the city.
- Medium scale arable landscape with a strong hedgerow network.
- Strong rural character dominated by woodlands, in particular Crab Wood and West Wood in Farley Mount Country Park.
- Medium size fields with straight boundaries to the north of the area around Sparsholt and Littleton created by formal enclosure during C18 and C19.
- Fairly visually contained landscape due to strong woodland and hedgerow structure.
- Two settlements in the character area, Sparsholt and Littleton, which are both Saxon in origin. Important ecological habitats such as Crab Wood (a SSSI and Local Nature Reserve). Also local areas of importance which are designated SINCs; they include a large area of calcareous grassland at Royal Winchester Golf Course and smaller woodlands located throughout the N half of the character area.
- Network of footpaths and narrow, winding lanes, including sunken lanes as local heritage assets.
- Other numerous heritage features, including Lainston House, Roman villa in West Wood and a number of tumuli, many of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- Transitional land uses around western urban edge of Winchester ie Sir John Moore Barracks; Teg Down golf course.

## 1.2 Landscape Types for Winchester south west

In addition to the identification of landscape character areas, the HILA 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 main landscape type (WCLA classification) to the south west of Winchester is a mix of 'open arable exposed', 'chalk and clay farmland', 'historic parkland', 'Golf course' and 'Scarp'; it includes the area both sides of the A3090 and extending into the landscape south west of Oliver's Battery.

In summary, there is a total of 5no different landscape types, creating a diverse landscape setting of high amenity and biodiversity value in the south western part of Winchester.

### 1.3 Townscape Character

#### Winchester City

The siting and development of Winchester has been strongly influenced by the distinctive topography and river valley setting. Having evolved around the river crossing to its present day size, the setting remains a key characteristic with the treed ridgelines and hills surrounding the low lying city centre, providing a distinctive sense of containment and enclosure.

'Winchester and its cathedral are subservient to the landscape'.<sup>4</sup>

The Itchen valley is the most extensive area of semi-natural vegetation within Winchester.<sup>5</sup> It is of high amenity and biodiversity value with the valley floor recognised more recently as a vital means of flood attenuation when dealing with effects of climate change.

Key characteristics associated with the River Itchen are an integral part of the townscape within the city with its historic water meadows; mills; leats and channels and associated vegetation. The presence of water within the town is a locally distinctive feature.

A valued pedestrian and cycle network has evolved along the river corridor which connects to the suburbs and the countryside beyond.

There is a notable contrast between predominantly open elevated chalk downs to the north and east, and more varied landscape types to the west. The River Itchen forms a transitional key boundary between eastern and western downland.

Significant roads into Winchester are tree lined e.g. Stockbridge Road, Andover Road and Sarum Road. This is a key townscape feature of Winchester.

Rural and urban areas are clearly distinct along much of Winchester's perimeter, an important characteristic that defines the city's sense of place.

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<sup>4</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para.38.

<sup>5</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para. 3.8.2.

'A series of major and secondary ridgelines form a prominent and enclosing landform to the setting of Winchester, particularly to the east, west and south.'<sup>6</sup>

This well defined setting was interrupted with development of the flat-topped chalk ridge (about 100-120m AOD) at Oliver's Battery in the 1960s.

Sarum Road (a Roman road) and the A3090 function as the main west and south-west routes into the city with the secondary route of Port Lane, a quiet rural lane is popular with cyclists, runs south west from the edge of Oliver's Battery to Hursely.

'To south-west of Winchester forms a significant 'wedge' of open farmland extending into the heart of the city south of Oliver's Battery, Badger Farm and Bushfield.'<sup>7</sup>

Oliver's Battery forms a triangular spur of townscape extending south west from Badger Farm Road, developed between 1960 and 1970 built on a hilltop location and clearly visible from other high point in the vicinity including Romsey Road near Yew Tree garage, Sarum Road, Yew Hill and St Catherine's Hill.

The overall street pattern of Oliver's Battery is a grid pattern with a main spinal route along the ridge. Much of the development at Oliver's Battery formerly consisted of small holding which were relatively self sufficient. However, with the subdivision of these plots, the overall character of the settlement became primarily residential with detached dwelling.

The residential suburb of Teg Down along Kilham Lane which edges western Winchester, is contained by tree lined roads creating a soft built edge. This area consists of post war large detached suburban housing in generous plots, with a mature mixed wooded backdrop closely associated with the downland and routes into the city. The move towards replacement of larger gardens with higher density housing development is creating a more urban, harder edge to Winchester, which arguably compromises local distinctiveness.

An appeal decision in 2011 allowing 200 new homes on a green field site at Pitt Manor has extended the urban edge further into this character area. A robust landscape framework to site boundaries forms part of the approved layout, which will help to alleviate the severity of a newly built edge adjoining countryside in the longer term. Houses will nonetheless remain visible from public viewpoints, mainly from the south and west, as the site lies on higher ground.

The village of Hursley lies approximately 2km south west of Oliver's Battery along the B3090 connecting the historic towns of Winchester and Romsey, also passing through the hamlets of Standon and Pitt. It is visually and physically separated from Winchester by intervening rural landscape.

### **Olivers Battery**

Relevant extracts from the adopted *Oliver's Battery Village Design Statement* (2008), which provides residents views on existing local character and distinctiveness, state the following:

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<sup>6</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para. 3.5.3.

<sup>7</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999 para. 4.3.9.

Landscape setting/countryside Area:

*2.1 The two concordant summits of Oliver's Battery and St Catherine's Hill, guarding the vital southern approach to Winchester along the Itchen Valley, have been regarded as significant landscape features from prehistoric time. Oliver's Battery is sited on a flat-topped chalk ridge about 100-120m above sea level. The settlement trends southwards, with steep eastern slopes falling away to Stanmore and Bader Farm and form a wedge shape surrounded by landscape on its western and south eastern sides. Yew Hill to the south, is separated from it by a small col which is mainly arable land with a pair of prominently sited ancient tumuli. A dry valley to the west now contains the South Winchester golf course.*

*The panoramic views (and, indeed perhaps more significantly, glimpses) of river valley, cityscape, fields and woodland are an intrinsic feature of the settlement.....*

*Evidence for the historic nature of this landscape is present in the form of footpath bridleway and field boundaries which follow ancient tumuli and the buildings associated with the First World War.....*

*An area to the south and east of Oliver's Battery has been designated as a Local Gap, maintaining separation between the settlement of Winchester and Compton Street.*

Settlement pattern character:

*2.2 The overall street plan within Oliver's Battery is a grid based on the roadways of the First World War army camp.....*

*Other important aspects of the settlement are the relatively wide streets with few road signs, grass verges, large well-planted front gardens and significant area of open plan garden, which give an open, uncrowded feel and enable broad view of surrounding countryside. These contribute to making Oliver's Battery an attractive safe and low crime area.....*

*The development character of Oliver's Battery includes both commercial and residential buildings in a wide variety of materials and architectural styles. Some of these were seen as innovative both in style (for example, the use of monopitch roofs) and materials (for example, the use of weatherboard cladding which is not traditionally associated with Hampshire) at the time of their development, but it is unlikely that such experiments would be repeated today....*

## **Hursley**

The village of Hursley has managed to retain its identity as a small historic settlement due to approximately 2km of rural landscape separating the edge of Winchester and the village. Hursley is an estate village associated with 18th Century Hursley Park, with a distinct historic architecture style of large ornate chimneys. It has a linear form relating to its valley setting with significant tree belts clearly define the northern and southern extremities of the village, adding to the well-treed village character.

Recent settlement pattern has continued merely expanding lengthways along the main route from Winchester to Romsey. The village has good, centrally located, community facilities, including shops and Open Space. IBM has an office at Hursley, centred around Hursley House employing over 1500 people.

## 1.4 Summary

Detailed descriptions of relevant landscape character areas and landscape types as outlined above have been used to inform the degree of landscape sensitivity for areas around individual settlements 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; HILA; WCLA*

#### 2.1.1 Landform

*The clarity of the landforms provides a powerful setting for the city.*<sup>8</sup>

- **Ridgelines**  
Five visually prominent main ridgelines are predominant features in the south west area of Winchester:
  1. the first runs along the south from Yew Hill along the northern edge of Hurdle Way near Compton (c100-80m AOD) a public right of way follows the top of this ridgeline.
  2. the second ridgeline runs south west from a high point Yew Hill towards Collins Lane near Hursley (c100 -70m AOD).
  3. The third ridgeline runs from a high point of Nan's Trodds Hill (126m AOD) south west to Hursley village (85m AOD)
  4. a fourth ridgeline lies north of Vale Farm (150-120m AOD). It extends north to south from Sarum Road (Roman road) at its highest point through to Vale Farm. This ridgeline contains a track running along its length.
  5. the fifth ridgeline runs parallel to the third ridgeline from Crabwood House at the highest point (144m AOD) graduating down towards Stopham's Copse (80m AOD).
- **Dry valleys**  
Two main S-W dry valleys are predominant features south west of Winchester

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<sup>8</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document (WCS) para.6.13

1. the first dry valley forms path of the A3090 road from the Pitt roundabout to Hursley, with the land rising on either side of the road.
2. the second dry valley feature lies further south and runs from Oliver's Battery south west towards Hursley.

- High Points
  - Yew Hill: 121m AOD
  - Nan Trodds Wood: 126m OD
  - Vale Farm entrance way from Sarum Road: 148m OD
  - Crabwood House: 144m OD
- Low Points
  - Hursley: 50m AOD
  - Dry valley between Hursley and Oliver's Battery along Port Lane: 76m -50m AOD
  - Dry valley between Pitt and Hursley along A3090: 90m -50m AOD
- Extensive slopes and gradients
 

A common feature associated with the undulating topography of chalk downland and dry river valley landscape character of this area. Some of the most visually significant slopes influencing the setting of Winchester include:

  - a. east and west facing slopes of main N-S ridgelines running south from Sarum Road.
  - b. slopes that provide containment both sides of Port Lane and the A3090.

### 2.1.2 Land cover

- A rural landscape encircles Winchester. Agricultural land extends up to most edges of the city.<sup>9</sup>
- Land use and vegetation cover within landscape character area of undulating open clay and chalk mixed farmland with a high proportion of arable farmland.
- Steeper escarpments are semi-natural woodland that forms strong features within the surrounding landscape.
- Approach roads, tracks and field boundaries are generally well contained by hedgerows providing containment and or screening.
- Suburbanised land cover nearer Winchester with some paddocks south of Oliver's Battery; 2.5ha area of smallholdings in an area along Texas Drive, which is now rough grazing; and an area of recreation ground includes a football pitch junior play area and picnic area near Oliver's Battery Primary School.
- Soils are low agricultural land quality grade 3 throughout the area south west of Winchester.
- Manicured golf course land use in the area north of Oliver's Battery with man-made lakes, small woodlands with more recent tree planting and grassland with varied maintenance regime.
- Dispersed farmsteads within the valley floor along Port Lane.
- Approach roads into Winchester from the south west benefit from hedgerows with trees provide a 'soft, visually contained edge',<sup>10</sup> ie along A3090 and Sarum Road.
- Protected trees mainly around Pitt Manor, Pitt roundabout and Hursley village. Tree Protection Orders include:

<sup>9</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999: para. 3.9

<sup>10</sup> Winchester City and its Setting document 1999: visual analysis map of the city

1. The several area Tree Preservation Orders surround Pitt Manor providing visually effective containment of the historic grounds.
2. A Tree Preservation Order protects one large area at the southern end of the Hursley village.
3. The area Tree Preservation Orders surround Pitt roundabout

## **2.2 Experiential/Perceptual**

*Ref: GIS constraints map and site assessment; Tranquillity map (CPRE website); Dark night skies (CPRE and SDNP websites)*

- Tranquil rural areas away from the main A3090 roads of rural landscape character with long views from elevated positions across farmland to other ridgeline horizons with trees and along the dry valley floors, together with shorter views enclosed by the strong woodland features and hedgerow network to create dramatically rural sense of place;
- Rural winding rural lanes of Enmill Lane, Port Lane, Farley Mount Road and Sparsholt often lined with hedges on banks.
- Valley floor with a field pattern of predominantly arable farmland gives rise to views to the higher ridgelines and scarp woodlands.
- Popular for recreational activities, such as Golf and walking and cycling along the rural lanes.
- Pedestrian connectivity in countryside with footpath network throughout the area extending as far as Yew Hill, Compton Street and Shawford Down; the PRoW (Monarch's Way), running west and east from Hursley linking up the with Silkstead Lane national trail; PRoW running from The Old Kennels at the southern tip of Oliver's Battery east; the Clarendon National Trail runs along Kilham Lane
- The area retains dark skies typical of more remote downland, but these are affected by night time glow from adjacent development.

## **2.3 Historic Environment**

- *Ref: GIS constraints map; HILA; WCLA; WCC Historic Environment record*
- Almost the entire village of Hursley is within a Conservation Area
- Parkland estate landscape of Pitt Manor has a Historic Parks designation.
- Significant areas of ancient woodland around Standon e.g. Pages Copse and Groveland Copse.
- The ancient linear wooded ridge of the Park Pale to the west of Hursley is the remains of the medieval deer park boundary, it has a Scheduled Ancient Monuments designation along with Merdon Castle.
- The two concordant summits of Oliver's Battery and St Catherine's Hill, guarding the approach to Winchester from the south along the Itchen Valley, are significant landscape features.
- The square earthwork situated at the highest point within Oliver's Battery at 130m AOD and the two bronze Age burial mounds located in the large field bonded by Texas Drive have a Schedules Ancient Monument designation.

- Pitt Manor in enclosed C19 large park setting on edge of western fringe of Winchester (Hants Register of Historic Parks and Gardens)
- A high proportion of the buildings along the main A3090 at Pitt are listed buildings and contribute to local distinctiveness of the village and its setting.

## 2.4 Biodiversity

*Ref: GIS constraints map; HILA; WCLA*

- SINC's include West Wood/Crab Wood complex; Pitt Down; Yew Hill and associated scarp; Juniper Bank woodland and Grovelands Copse.
- SSSIs include Itchen valley; Crab Wood.
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR): Crab Wood; Winnall Moors.
- Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) between Winchester and Farley Mount Country Park<sup>11</sup>
- Butterfly reserve at Yew Hill

## 2.5 Visibility

- Important views  
A high proportion of the properties at Oliver's Battery have views over the surrounding landscape and many of the streets scenes include distant views of countryside.  
Views from Nan Trodd's Hill  
Views east and west from Yew Hill  
Views north from Hurdle Way towards Winchester Cathedral  
Housing edge of Oliver's Battery is visible from the adjacent landscape.
- Panoramic views  
Far-reaching views from Sarum Road south over the undulating landscape  
Views of the edge of Winchester from Vale Farm ridge  
Views from ridgeline footpath over the undulating landscape  
Skyline features and land marks  
Yew Hill and Nan Trodd's Hill  
Oliver's Battery urban area of Winchester  
Treed ridgelines around Winchester eg Romsey Road; Chilbotlon Avenue.

The visibility constraints map for this area is included at Appendix 1.

## 3.0 SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL OF AREAS

A number of individual sites and areas of land in and around Oliver's Battery and Hursley have been promoted for development through the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>12</sup>. Those of similar landscape character have been grouped together for the purposes of assessing their sensitivity

<sup>11</sup> Green Infrastructure Study (Winchester City Council 2010).

<sup>12</sup> [www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/housing/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/housing/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/)

in the local landscape (see Appendix 2). The appraisal uses four categories of sensitivity –

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

### **3.1 Area abutting south west of Winchester from Millers Lane between Oliver's Battery and Hursley both sides of the A3090 (ref: SHLAA site 2540)**

- Context:
  - i. Very rural undulating landscape often with far reaching view over adjoining downs and dry valleys.
  - ii. High ridges and hills within the area are visible the surrounding countryside.
  - iii. The area is situated between the southern most tip of Oliver's Battery and the historic village of Hursley.
  - iv. Poor existing road infrastructure to accommodate further development.
  - v. Area is within the setting of Schedule monuments of Merdon Castle and Park Pale.
  - vi. Conservation Area of Hursley Village forms the southern boundary of the SHLAA site.
  - vii. Significant network of ancient woodland, woodlands and hedgerows.
  - viii. Steep scarps prominent feature within the landscape.
  - ix. Views of the south-west slopes of Oliver's Battery development.
- Character of site: undulating scarp and dry valley landscape of predominantly arable, with good network of woodland and hedgerows.
- Important or panoramic views: across the countryside to other ridges within the landscape
- Skyline features: wooded ridgelines on the horizon
- Landmarks to connect with place: Oliver's Battery

#### Summary of Landscape Sensitivity:

A most sensitive location in terms of adverse visual impact on the strong rural landscape setting that visually contains the City of Winchester. A most sensitive location in terms of adverse visual impact on the historic setting of Hursley Park, Merdon Castle, the Hursley village Conservation Area and the rural landscape character.

### **3.2 Area between Romsey Road, Millers Lane and Oliver's Battery (ref: SHLAA site 420 and 2022)**

- Context: topographically varied landscape with mixed use e.g. arable farmland and paddocks, golf course criss-crossed with footpaths. Panoramic views across the surrounding landscape from the highest areas and a sheltered dry valley with significant tree belts and good boundary hedges. The

manicured golf course landscape with centrally located areas of woodland surrounding an area of 'lodge style' caravans, with artificial lakes in the lowest part of the site running north south from the golf course club house.

- Character of site: undulating landform with dry valley landscape with varied visual enclosure, ranging from open arable fields to more intimate well treed dry valley within the manicured golf course with a variety of mowing regimes to with network of remnant woodland and hedgerow boundaries with additional recent planting.
- Important or panoramic views: towards the northern edge of Oliver's Battery and panoramic views across Compton Down to the well-treed ridges beyond.
- Skyline features: wooded ridgelines on the horizon
- Landmarks to connect with place: Oliver's Battery

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity:

A most sensitive location in terms of adverse visual impact on the strong rural landscape setting that visually contains the Oliver's Battery for SHLAA 420

A highly sensitive location in terms of adverse visual impact and landscape setting of Oliver's Battery for SHLAA 2022.

### **3.3 Area to the west of Winchester between Sarum Road, Kilham Lane and Enmill Lane (ref: SHLAA site 2444, 419 and 2394)**

- Context: Undulating open fields on the western edge of Winchester generally sloping down to Romsey Road, with a ridgeline along the track from Sarum Road to Vale Farm with open views over the landscape. The urban edge of Winchester in this area has a well treed boundary, with an area of Historic Parkland landscape around Pitt Manor.
- Character of site: Gently undulating fields within the countryside edged with rural lanes and the western edge of Winchester with strong historic parkland character of Pitt Manor
- Important or panoramic views: over the undulating landscape from Sarum Road and Romsey Road.
- Skyline features: views of wooded ridgelines on the horizon with some glimpsed views through hedgerows
- Landmarks to connect with place: Oliver's Battery south, Sarum Road north and Kilham Lane along the eastern boundary of the sites.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity:

A most sensitive location in terms of adverse visual impact on the strong rural landscape setting of Winchester, Hursley and the historic parkland setting of Pitt Manor.

#### 4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY LANDSCAPE ISSUES FOR THE SOUTHERN AREA OF WINCHESTER

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

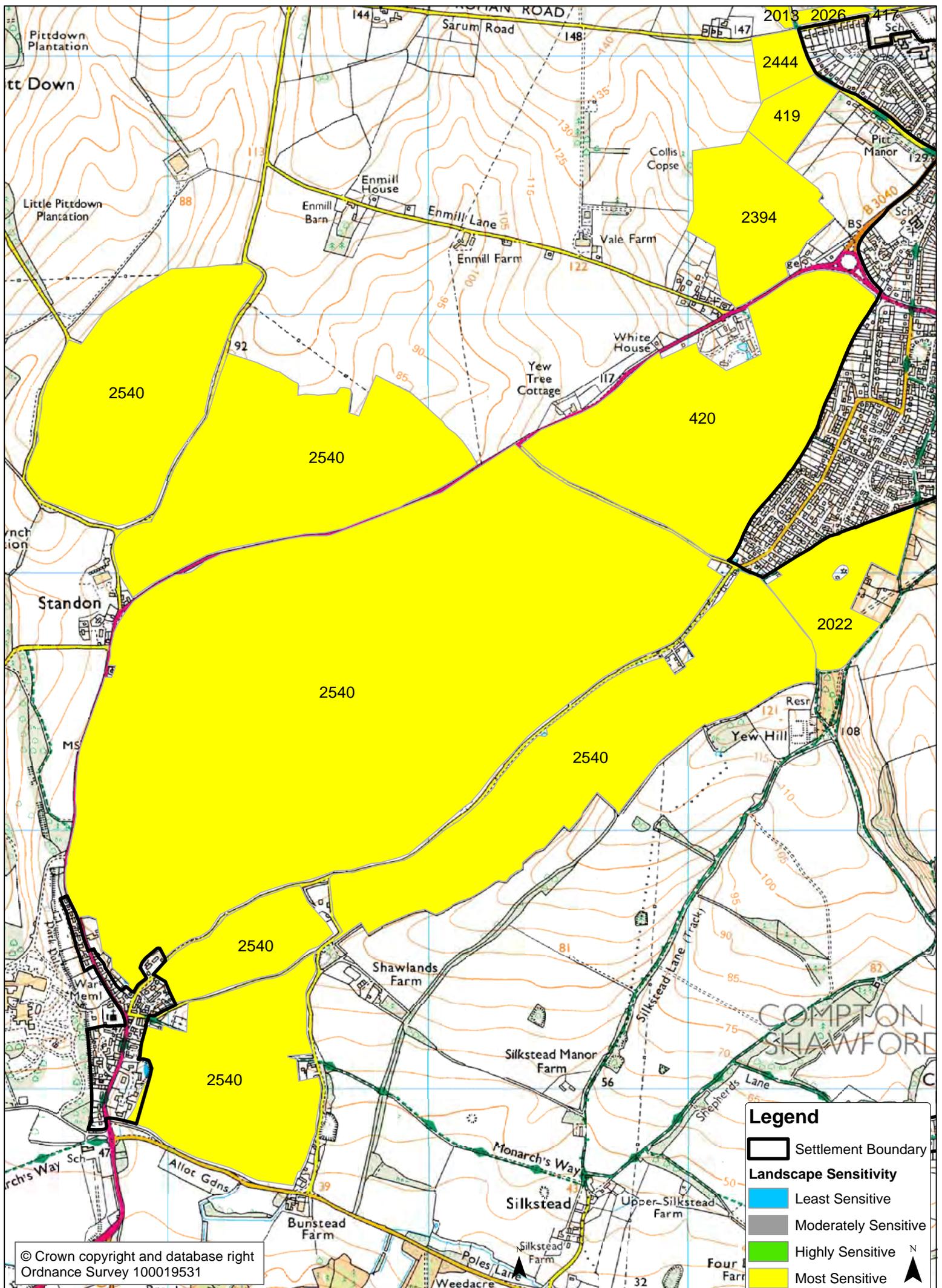
Key landscape and townscape issues that apply generally in the south west area of Winchester:

- Development creep into the open undulating unspoilt landscape which includes the dry valley sides, high points and ridgelines, which forms the undeveloped countryside setting to Winchester City.
- Development would extend urban development out of the well defined visually contained western urban edge of Winchester City.
- Urban creep would impact the landscape gap between the settlement of Winchester City and Hursley preventing coalescence.
- Impact on the wildlife corridors provided by the network of ancient woodlands and hedgerows.
- Potential impact of significant TPO tree groups around Pitt Manor.
- Suburban fringe encroachment within countryside setting of Hursley village and the Conservation Area.
- Loss of farmland to development to accommodate planned growth, in particular boundary hedges and woodland.
- Impact of setting for the historic Hursley Park and Merdon Castle.
- Development would extend the edge of Winchester disproportionately south west.
- Historic Parkland landscape surrounding Pitt Manor on the urban edge of Winchester along Kilham Lane.
- Visual open landscape due to recent (20th century) hedgerows boundary loss resulting in 'prairie' type fields.
- Development would extend urban development on to high points in the landscape visible from the surrounding landscape, along Sarum Road.
- Poor existing road infrastructure.

Key landscape and townscape issues specific to the main character area of **Hursley Scarpland**:

- Impact of intrusive structures on undulating open chalk downland setting
- Historic network of rural lanes, tracks and drove roads eroded by increasing traffic volumes; HGVs and pressure of new development.
- Visual impact of development on high ground and ridgelines
- Loss of woodlands and hedgerows
- Loss of chalk grassland and wild flora to agriculture and development.
- Over formalisation of semi-natural areas to provide recreational facilities.
- Fragmentation and neglect of hedgerows and woodlands.
- Coalescence of settlements between Winchester and the village of Hursley.
- Increasing recreational pressure on sensitive landscapes, such as ancient woodlands and local nature reserves e.g. Crab Wood.

# Winchester Town South West Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Map - October 2014



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