

5.0 Introduction

The incorporation of the Winchester District Landscape Assessment's *Key Characteristics, Landscape Strategies and Built Form Strategies into the Winchester District Local Plan Review (Revised Deposit 2003)*, and its proposed adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance, should improve the ability of the planning system to protect and enhance the character of the District's landscape. There are also a number of other ways in which landowners and managers can conserve and strengthen the character of the landscape. This chapter summarises the strategies that should be promoted to achieve this, and describes the various forms of assistance available to help accomplish them.

Over the past century, Winchester's countryside has seen much change, contributed to by intensification of agriculture methods, a decline in livestock farming, increased traffic and suburban growth. Threats to the landscape as described in Chapter 4 have resulted in the loss and neglect of woodlands, hedgerows, trees, ponds and species-rich grassland and traditional farm buildings, as well as the impact of increased chemical pollution of aquifers and rivers and the visual intrusion of large agricultural buildings, telecommunications masts and suburban sprawl. The corresponding decline in biodiversity and the character of landscape and settlements has consequently been a cause for concern.

In recognition of these potential threats, the past 20 years have seen an increase in schemes and regulations aiming to reverse these trends. The government is promoting an agri-environmental approach to farming and promoting a reform to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) so that CAP payments do not act as an incentive to increase production. Through the England Rural Development Programme, schemes such as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme, the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme and The Woodland Grant Scheme are being operated by the Forestry Commission and Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), to protect the environment and support the rural economy and communities. Bodies such as English Nature also designate and manage important areas for nature conservation and the Forestry Commission protects significant areas of ancient woodland through the refusal of felling licenses. The Hedgerow Regulations are also now used to protect 'important' hedgerows from removal.

The future of the British countryside is still very uncertain, as the need for landowners to run their farms as profitable businesses often conflicts with the need to protect and enhance biodiversity and landscape character. Despite the existence of

agri-environmental schemes and regulations, planning authorities and landowners should not become complacent about the need for continued protection of the landscape. Admission to agri-environmental schemes is discretionary and budgets are limited and many farms are either not eligible for funding or do not wish to commit to the stipulations of the various schemes. As the agricultural industry struggles to recover from set backs, such as BSE and foot and mouth disease, there is a danger that intensification and farm diversification could lead to the piecemeal loss of those features which contribute to the identity of the local area. This chapter aims to investigate the means by which land owners and managers can help to maintain and enhance the character of Winchester's landscape and settlements.

5.1 Landscape and Built Form Strategies: A Summary

5.1.1 Woodland:

Winchester benefits from a large number of scattered areas of ancient woodland, some of which make up the characteristic beech 'hangers' on the chalk escarpments of the district. The district also has some large areas of more recent woodland. The woodland of the district is particularly found in the southern parishes where clays dominate the geology, although woodlands can also be found on the chalk downs, generally where areas of 'clay with flints' overlie the chalk. It is important to protect these valuable features of the landscape with their high biodiversity value.

One of the key threats to woodlands has been the lack of management and, with the decline of the coppice markets, ancient woodlands have fallen into neglect. This has resulted in a loss of biodiversity as many species of wildlife also rely on such management techniques. Many woodlands have also been lost in recent years to make way for development and agriculture. This trend is now gradually reversing, as more areas of woodland are planted and planning controls are restricting unnecessary removal. This trend should be continued. The Wessex Coppice Project assists landowners with promotion and marketing of coppice produce.

The biodiversity and character of woodlands has also been threatened by the planting of monocultural conifer plantations. Current Forest Authority policies are encouraging landowners to restore ancient replanted woodland back to broad-leaved woodland, rather than replant with conifers after harvesting the crop. This is another very positive opportunity to recreate some of the most biodiverse habitats in the UK.

The key objectives for woodland are:

- *that the structure and condition of woodland should be conserved and enhanced, in particular ancient semi-natural woodlands, through appropriate management techniques such as coppicing, thinning and replanting of locally indigenous species. Alien species should be removed from semi-natural ancient woodland;*
- *to encourage the restoration of replanted ancient woodland to a more semi-natural condition;*
- *to encourage the conservation and enhancement of the wooded 'hangers';*

Although broad-leaved tree planting is generally to be promoted, careful consideration must be given to the treatment of the chalk downland area of Winchester, with its panoramic views and visible rolling topography. These areas were given over originally to large-scale grazing and, subsequently, to arable production for many centuries and this has contributed to the current open character of this countryside. Tree planting in these areas should therefore be sensitively undertaken to protect this open character and its valuable calcareous grassland, arable weeds and decreasing stone curlew populations.

Advice and financial assistance are available for woodland planting and management through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (See 5.4.2), the Forest Authority (See 5.5.1 & 5.5.2), English Nature (see 5.7), the Woodland Trust (See 5.5.3), and the East Hampshire AONB (See 5.2.4). Advice is also available from FWAG (see 5.3.4).

5.1.2 Hedgerows

Winchester's hedgerows have a strong influence on the character of the landscape, with patterns varying significantly according to the 'age' of the landscape. Hedges associated with the formal parliamentary-type enclosures of the 18th and 19th centuries are generally straighter and with fewer species. These hedges are particularly found on the chalk downlands, where they are more likely to be clipped and enclosing large fields, often having suffered hedgerow loss due to farm mechanisation. The more 'ancient' landscapes towards the south of the district were more likely to have been enclosed in medieval times and contain numerous species often being formed from remnant woodland. These hedgerows are less likely to have been accurately surveyed and therefore tend to have 'wavy' boundaries. The oldest hedges often mark ancient Parish boundaries.

Hedgerows are an extremely important visual feature within the landscape and together with their banks, verges and ditches they also provide an excellent habitat refuge and corridor for wildlife. There are also many agricultural advantages to well-maintained hedgerows. They control and regulate grazing and can provide shelter and shade in adverse weather conditions. They can also protect some crops by helping to minimise soil erosion and by providing a

habitat for predators of some insect pests. Mature standard trees are also an important feature of hedgerows, providing a habitat for birds, bats and invertebrates.

The loss of hedgerows in the last 40 years has been extensive. Threats have included general neglect, overgrazing, mechanised cutting, fertiliser and spray drift from pesticides, as well as hedgerow removal to facilitate farm mechanisation. Over the past 10 years, this trend has now slowed and it is important to continue the improved management of hedges where appropriate.

Key objectives for hedgerows are:

- *To protect and conserve hedgerows through appropriate management, such as coppicing, laying and occasional trimming.*
- *Where hedgerows have been lost or have gaps, they should be replanted using locally indigenous species. Additional hedgerow trees should be replanted and saplings should be allowed to grow where existing trees have been lost or are over-mature.*

Whilst hedgerows should be recognised for their biodiversity value, their contribution to the character of their surrounding area should also be understood. It would not be appropriate visually, economically or ecologically, for example, to aim to plant numerous hedges in some areas of the district where chalk downland has historically been characterised by being open and hedge-free.

Advice and financial assistance are available for hedgerow planting and management works through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see 5.4.2), the East Hampshire AONB (see 5.2.4), English Nature (see 5.7) and Winchester City Council (see 5.2.2). Advice is also available from FWAG (see 5.3.4).

5.1.3 Species-rich grassland

Until the last century, the chalk downs of the Winchester District consisted of extensive areas of grazed calcareous and neutral grassland, which together with riverside water meadows provided seasonal grazing systems. There are few remaining areas of such pasture left, as arable agriculture has replaced much of the sheep stock. Remaining areas of unimproved grass tend to be found on scarp slopes, which have been too steep to cultivate, or scattered along the river valleys. These areas are threatened by scrub invasion and neglect and it is important to identify and protect these remaining areas. This should not only conserve the rich diversity of flora they support but also reduce the increased silt load that rivers are carrying as permanent pasture is ploughed, which has serious biological consequences.

Key objectives for grassland are:

- *Conserve and enhance isolated areas of unimproved calcareous grassland of importance through appropriate management plans.*

- *Identify, conserve and enhance areas of agriculturally unimproved neutral grassland and water meadows.*
- *Link existing areas of species-rich grassland with new areas, including roadside verges and arable field margins and headlands.*

Advice and financial assistance and advice are available for conserving and restoring the traditional management of species-rich grassland chalk grassland through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see 5.4.2) and English Nature (see 5.7). Advice is also available from FWAG (see 5.3.4).

5.1.4 Arable land including Arable Grassland

The large-scale conversion of sheep pasture to mechanised arable farmland across Winchester's chalk downs during the 20th century has had a significant impact on the biodiversity of these areas. Species-rich calcareous grassland and hedgerows have been lost and farm bird populations have declined. The use of agrochemicals such as fertiliser and pesticides have threatened the chalk aquifers and ecologically rich alkaline spring water rivers, such as the Dever, Itchen and Meon that all run through these arable-dominated downs.

Over the past decade or so government agricultural policy has recognised the need for both environmental and economic sustainability in farming. It is now aiming to continue a reversal in the detrimental trends above, and recognises the value arable farming has, for example in supporting arable weed communities that can be found in field headlands.

The impact that arable agriculture is having on the character of the district will need to be monitored, as trends such as the use of Genetically Modified seed stock and climatic change may continue to have an adverse impact on the landscape.

Key objectives for grassland are:

- *Restore and enhance the biodiversity of arable farmland, by encouraging the retention of conservation headlands, wildlife strips and grass strips around fields, and the increased use of spring-sown arable crops and retention of winter fallow fields, to sustain important arable weed flora and seed-eating birds, and especially halt the rapid decline of the stone curlew.*
- *Encourage environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural practices, to minimise fertiliser and soil run-off for example, which could lead to the pollution of the water courses and the chalk aquifer, and to sustain important arable weed flora and seed-eating birds*

Advice and financial assistance and advice are available for conserving arable grassland and minimising the detrimental environmental effects of arable agriculture through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see 5.4.2) and English Nature (see 5.7) and advice is also available from FWAG (see 5.3.4).

5.1.5 Ponds & Rivers

The presence or absence of ponds and rivers has an important influence on the character of Winchester District. The well-drained chalk geology of the majority of Winchester District means that surface water features are uncommon in many areas. These parts of the district do however, benefit from the clear alkaline springwater rivers of the Meon, Itchen and Dever. The chalk itself also forms a valuable aquifer and natural filter, supplying drinking water as well as ultimately feeding the important river habitats. Dewponds are also a feature of the chalk downland and are often present when there is a clay cap over chalk. Wells are historically a feature in chalkland settlements.

To the south of the district, where clay predominates, springs, ponds, streams and wells are numerous, providing a very contrasting hydrology. Here, the Hamble and Wallington form smaller rivers than those in the chalk downs, but are fed by a much denser network of tributaries.

One of the main threats to the aquifers and rivers of the district is that of chemical pollution from farm fertiliser and pesticide use. This could affect the quality of drinking water as well as the important alkaline habitat that the river provides for fish, birds, mammals such as otter and water vole, invertebrates and plants. The introduction of alien plant and animal species has a continuing adverse impact on native species.

Key objectives for ponds and rivers are:

- *Encourage the reduced use of pesticide and herbicides and increased organic farming practices to minimise water pollution due to agricultural run-off.*
- *Encourage the use of buffer strips adjacent to water courses which may help to diffuse pollution and enhance the ecological and landscape value of the river.*
- *Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment of changes in the integrity of the Itchen cSAC, informed by river users, to enable ongoing monitoring of the status of the cSAC.*

Ponds are an important element in the landscape and provide a habitat for many different species of flora and fauna. It is estimated that since the 1950s Hampshire has lost over 50% of its farm ponds, due to agricultural change and intensification, building development and land drainage. As well as some being over managed, many are also threatened by lack of management, as they no longer have a use, resulting in their filling with sediment and eventually drying out as they become densely vegetated. They have also been threatened by the introduction of invasive non-native plants.

- *Conserve and enhance existing ponds through appropriate management such as silt removal, lining repairs and the control of invasive species and the construction of features such as spits, bays, islands and sluices*

Assistance is available for watercourse and pond improvements and chemical minimisation through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see 5.4.2), English Nature (see 5.7), FWAG (See 5.3.4), the Organic Farming Scheme (see 5.4.3), the East Hampshire AONB (see 5.2.4) the Environment Agency and Winchester City Council (See 5.2.2).

5.1.6 Access & Recreation

The landscape of Winchester District provides many opportunities for informal recreation such as rambling, horse riding and cycling, which in turn contribute to the local economy. The South Downs Way and Wayfarers Walk are examples of long distance public footpaths running through the district and these are supplemented by numerous other footpaths, cycle-tracks and bridleways. To the north of the district these often follow ancient drove roads, historically used for the movement of stock to market, while along the Meon Valley a disused railway track provides a popular route. Viewpoints provided at high points of the district such as St Catherine's Hill, Old Winchester Hill and Beacon Hill are also popular, as are riverside walks, particularly along the Itchen.

Tranquil areas are important for passive recreation, providing for bird watching, artistic inspiration and meditation. There is still a need to improve opportunities for access to the countryside and rivers throughout the district though, particularly for the disabled and for the residents for the larger settlements in the district. The Forest of Bere Project is aiming to improve access to the south of the district, where the countryside is close to settlements such as Fareham, Whiteley, Wickham and Bishop's Waltham.

There is also a need to minimise the impact of certain leisure pursuits on the landscape, such as golf, horse riding and off-road motorcycling and BMX riding, which can have an urbanising impact on the countryside and result in the loss of important habitats and landscape features.

Key objectives for access and recreation are:

- *Conserve and enhance opportunities for public access throughout the countryside, particularly allowing the creation of circular and long-distance routes.*
- *Improve opportunities for circular walks and rides by improving connections between existing paths.*
- *Improve the provision of interpretation boards and leaflets to encourage confident use of the countryside and provide educational information.*
- *Improve opportunities for access to the countryside for all ages and physical abilities.*
- *Conserve tranquillity in the areas of the district that still allow peaceful enjoyment of the countryside away from major noise generators, such as roads and flight paths.*
- *Minimise the impact of sports such as golf, horse riding and off-road motorcycling on the landscape and important habitats and which can also reduce*

the tranquillity of rural areas.

- *Where necessary, facilities such as car parks require particularly sensitive design and siting.*
- *Whilst encouraging public access to the countryside, it is important to encourage informal recreation at a sustainable level to ensure that vulnerable landscapes and sites are protected.*
- *Protect archaeological sites and sensitive ecological sites from visitor erosion.*

Assistance is available to protect and improve access to the countryside from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see 5.4.2), the Forestry Commission (see 5.5.1 & 5.5.2) the Forest of Bere Project (see 5.2.3), the East Hampshire AONB (See 5.2.4) and Winchester City Council (see 5.2.2).

5.1.7 The Historic Landscape

The Winchester District landscape contains a wide variety of historic features. These range from individual historic parks and archaeological monuments to large scale historic field patterns, road networks and villages.

There is a particular concentration of historic parks, villages, mills and water-meadows along the Itchen, Meon and Dever rivers which have provided a popular setting for human settlement since Anglo Saxon times, in contrast to the surrounding chalk downlands with their lack of shelter and water. The downs themselves however, have their own historic features, including drove roads, Roman Roads and numerous Bronze and Iron Age burial sites.

To the south of the district, where water and shelter are plentiful, settlement and parks are more dispersed, taking advantage of the local supplies of timber and fuel and rich pastures. Here, as mentioned above, the field pattern is generally much older than on the downs, reflecting earlier enclosure of the forest. The exception to this is the area around the parishes of Shedfield and Curdridge where the forest was much healthier and not enclosed until the 19th century.

The Winchester Local Plan Review Revised Deposit 2003 Chapter 5 sets out detailed policies for the conservation of the historic environment, and is supplemented by detailed assessments of the District's Conservation Areas. The following general strategies summarise the aspects of the historic character of the landscape that should be protected and enhanced.

Key objectives for the historic environment are:

- *Conserve and restore ancient hedgerows and woodlands and tracks, especially where they provide a link with other semi-natural habitats.*
- *Conserve and restore historic buildings and their settings.*
- *Conserve and enhance the setting and traditional open relationship of the buildings of historic farmsteads and promote the sympathetic re-use of redundant buildings.*

- *Conserve and restore historic monuments and parks and protect them from damage by agriculture, forestry or recreation.*

Assistance with the protection and restoration of historic landscape features is available from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see 5.4.2), the Forestry Commission (see 5.5.1 & 5.5.2) English Heritage (see 5.6.1), the East Hampshire AONB (see 5.2.4), Winchester City Council (see 5.2.2) and the Hampshire Gardens Trust (see 5.3.6).

5.1.8 Traditional construction materials and methods

Whilst it is important not to limit innovative contemporary design in the landscape, it should be recognised that the character of an area is often strongly defined by its local building materials and methods. Within the Winchester District for example, there is a general pattern influenced by the underlying geology, with flint and thatch characteristic of the chalk downs, and bricks and clay tiles more characteristic of the clay lowlands. At a more detailed level, various villages have their own characteristic architectural features, particularly those such as East Stratton and Hursley, which were developed as part of an estate.

It is important that new development respects these traditional materials and methods, and where possible takes inspiration from them. More detailed guidance is available in the various Conservation Area Technical Assessments for the district (see references).

Key objectives for the historic environment are:

- *Conserve and enhance buildings and boundaries that are constructed using building materials and construction methods common to the settlement type or landscape character area.*
- *Encourage the use and production of locally distinct materials such as bricks, tiles, flintwork, British slate, long straw and, therefore, encourage the cultivation of suitable wheat for thatching.*
- *Where new development takes place, ensure that it respects the surrounding building materials and construction methods typical of the location, seeking inspiration from them wherever possible, without resorting to 'pastiche' solutions.*
- *Minimise the impact of modern agricultural, forestry or industrial building on the surrounding landscape through appropriate siting and the use of appropriate cladding materials and colours.*

The planning system can be particularly influential in the promotion of traditional building materials and methods, but assistance is also available from Winchester City Council (see 5.2.2), English Heritage (see 5.6.1) the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see 5.4.2) and the Local Heritage Initiative (see 5.6.2).

5.1.9 Visually Intrusive Structures and Development

Whilst robust planning policies have protected much

of Winchester's countryside from excessive development in recent years, piecemeal alterations and additions to rural buildings and the construction of new agricultural buildings have still had an impact on the visual amenity of the landscape. Intrusive structures such as telecommunications masts, electricity pylons and large modern barns can have a detrimental impact on the character of the landscape, as can features such as pony stables and paddocks on the urban fringe. The *Winchester Local Plan Review Revised Deposit 2003* sets out detailed proposals for the design and siting of new development which should be referred to. The following principles are of particular importance to the character of the landscape:

Key objectives for visual intrusion are:

- *Site new buildings according to the traditional relationship between buildings and roads and using the space, scale, orientation and siting of existing buildings as a model.*
- *Minimise the visual impact of new developments, paying particular attention to views from public rights of way and the impact of the development on the setting of listed buildings and historic parkland.*
- *Avoid siting buildings in the open land between settlements and at visible locations, such as the crest of hills.*
- *Minimise light spill and intrusion in the countryside and rural settlements.*
- *Minimise the visual impact of structures such as pylons and telecommunications masts through appropriate siting and the use of screening by indigenous tree planting.*
- *Consider under-grounding transmission lines where they are, or could be, visually intrusive.*
- *Respect existing field boundary patterns and ensure that fencing, hedgerows and lighting along property boundaries merge naturally with the adjoining fields and vegetation.*
- *Minimise disturbance to local landform and vegetation, and design earthworks associated with new development to integrate development with its setting. Avoid the use of substantial retaining walls.*
- *Plant trees and shrubs indigenous to the relevant landscape type to screen or absorb development.*

The planning system can be particularly influential in minimising the impact of visually intrusive structures and development, although funding from sources listed below could be used for tree planting or environmental improvements to the visual amenity of the landscape, so long as these are not required as part of any planning consent.

5.1.10 Infrastructure

The character of roads, railways, footpaths and tracks

in the district has a significant influence on the character of the overall landscape. Whilst the major roads of the district, especially the M3 and A34 may have a detrimental effect on the environment, generating noise, fragmenting the countryside and proving visually intrusive with their wide carriageways, lighting and urban signage, other routes can contribute positively to the landscape's character. The drove roads of the chalk downs are an important historic feature and the historic, remote character of many areas of the district is strongly contributed to by the winding narrow sunken lanes that have evolved. It is important that the need to maintain a safe, efficient highway system does not unnecessarily dilute this character.

Key objectives for infrastructure are:

- *Ensure that new infrastructure is designed and sited to respect the landscape, ecology and historic character of the District.*
- *Avoid developing infrastructure that would fragment or affect the setting of important habitats and historical sites*
- *Resist changes to the character of smaller rural roads, ensure that features such as hedgebanks, verges and sunken profiles are protected.*
- *Create new footpaths, bridleways and cycle-routes where appropriate, to enable improved public access to the countryside.*

5.2 Achieving the Strategies: Advice and Assistance from Local Authorities and Organisations

5.2.1 The Planning Process

The importance of preserving and enhancing the character of the landscape has been emphasised in the Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review) and is reflected in the policies of Winchester City Council (see Chapter 1.1 above). Local Planning Authorities are able to use their planning policies to refuse planning applications that do not comply with them, or to attach conditions to planning consents, to ensure that proposed developments are carried out in an appropriate manner. To this end, the conservation and enhancement of the Key Characteristics, Landscape Strategies and Built Form Strategies for each Landscape Character Area in this document have been incorporated into *Proposal C6 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review, Revised Deposit, 2003* (see Chapter 4.0 above) and this Landscape Character Assessment has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

In addition, other documents that promote the conservation and enhancement of the District's landscape and townscape have been adopted by Winchester City Council as SPG. *Winchester City and its Setting* (HCC et al, 1998) provides an integrated townscape and landscape assessment of Winchester and its immediate environs, while a number of *Conservation Area Technical Assessments* provide

townscape character assessments of various village conservation areas in the District such as Bishop's Waltham and Alresford. Likewise, the *Winchester Conservation Area Project* has produced a townscape character assessment of the city's conservation area. Such summaries enable local authorities to justify the designation of Conservation Areas and to guide applications for certain works to buildings within them. Local Planning Authorities are also responsible under the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act for authorising works to Listed Buildings, and again can use these powers to ensure that permission for proposed works will only be granted if they protect and/or enhance the character of the building and its setting.

Local Planning Authorities are also responsible for protecting certain important hedgerows in the countryside by controlling their removal through a system of notification, in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations (under the Environment Act 1995). The system applies to hedgerows which are 20 metres or more long, or which meet another hedgerow at each end and which are at least 30 years old. These hedgerows must also be defined as 'important' according to a set of specified criteria based on their composition and archaeological, historical and landscape characteristics. Removal of a hedgerow in contravention of the Regulations is a criminal offence. Whilst assisting with the reduction in hedgerow loss however, these tight definitions mean that many hedgerows are not covered by the regulations.

5.2.2 Winchester City Council Initiatives

In addition to the control of proposed works through their role as Local Planning Authority, Winchester City Council also provides financial assistance and specialist advice for works that could enhance the character of both townscape and landscape.

Historic Building Grants

Available through WCC Planning Department, these grants provide assistance towards the cost of repair and conservation of listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, unlisted historic buildings and structures which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area and other historic buildings which are considered to be of significant local interest. The scheme helps toward the cost of repairs to the external historic fabric of buildings that often require the use of specialist building skills, craftsmanship and traditional building materials.

Environmental Improvement Grants

The Council also provides grant funding for projects which will result in the visual, aesthetic and/or ecological enhancement of external spaces in urban, village or countryside locations throughout the District. These may include both hard and soft landscape works, which must be appropriate to the location and character of the area. Schemes include

improvements to the setting, boundaries and approaches to settlements; historic buildings and estates; the upgrading or creation of public open spaces; the provision or refurbishment of paving, steps, walls, railings, gates, seating, planting & focal features; the provision of new footpaths, stiles & signage; the improvement or creation of ponds, wetland, meadows, heathland, hedges, woodland and provision of related interpretation boards, fencing, boardwalks, viewing platforms; tree and hedgerow planting and management and the under-grounding of utility cables.

5.2.3 Hampshire County Council Initiatives:

Hampshire Landscape Strategy

Hampshire County Council highlights issues that are affecting the landscape of the County in their document *The Hampshire Landscape: A Strategy for the Future (HCC, 2000)*. This character-based strategy also provides guidelines for conserving and enhancing the landscape and advice on how the strategy may be put into action. The County Council provides financial assistance to achieve these proposed outcomes in the form of their Landscape Strategy Implementation Budget. This is used to support environmental improvement projects that are of a strategic nature, such as whole farm plans, rather than small-scale schemes.

Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire

Winchester City Council, together with Hampshire County Council and other authorities and agencies, is also a member of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership, which has been responsible for producing the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire*. This sets out a framework and main course of action for advancing the conservation of biodiversity. It also provides detailed Action Plans for habitats and species of conservation concern in Hampshire. These provide information and raise awareness and also direct action, identify the roles of different organisations, establish targets and priorities and provide a monitoring framework. 22 Key Habitats have been identified, comprising 19 of national concern and three of local concern. The relevant habitats in each Landscape Character Area are listed in Appendix 4 of this document. In addition to detailed Action Plans, the BAP also includes topic plans for other issues influencing biodiversity, such as water management.

The Forest of Bere Countryside Partnership

The Forest of Bere is an important area of working countryside used by local communities for a wide range of recreational and commercial purposes. A partnership between local authorities and other organisations has been set up to enhance the forest and provide new opportunities for recreation and tourism. To help achieve its aims, the partnership has drafted the character-based *A Strategy for the Forest of Bere* and offers grant aid towards management projects that help to support the vision. The partnership is led by Hampshire County Council and

includes the local authorities in which the Forest falls, together with the Countryside Agency, Forest Enterprise and Hampshire Wildlife Trust.

The aims of the Strategy are:

- to develop community involvement and to explore ways of working with the urban community;
- to increase people's understanding and appreciation of the importance and values of the countryside;
- to overcome the physical and psychological barriers between the urban population and their local countryside;
- to help people re-establish contacts with the land
- to improve understanding and respect between urban and country dwellers.

Parish Paths Partnership

The Parish Paths Partnership is a grant aid scheme open to parish councils and other local groups interested in maintenance, improvement and promotion of their local public rights of way network. Hampshire County Council provides enabling support for such groups, providing funding and training. The groups, which consist mainly of local volunteers, work to improve the condition and accessibility of their paths and initiate promotions such as leaflets and map boards. Projects range from vegetation clearance and boardwalk construction to way-marking and the provision of circular routes with disabled access.

The Hampshire Road Verge Management Project

Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Wildlife Trust have established a partnership to manage the road verges that the County is responsible for, to enhance their wildlife and landscape value. The project is responsible for surveying a large number of verges to establish their ecological importance and drawing up beneficial management prescriptions. This normally entails arranging the timing and frequency of cutting to allow wild flowers to set seed.

The Hampshire Heathland Project

Since 1990, the Hampshire Heathland Project has secured the conservation of extensive areas of heathland. The main aims of the Project are to restore heathland and to secure its long-term management. The project also promotes public awareness of heathland management, public access to heathland and local involvement in its conservation. The success of the Project lies in a wide partnership between local authorities, conservation agencies, landowners, voluntary conservation groups and the public.

Following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund application in 1999, the project was awarded a grant of up to £869,000. This is helping to achieve much of the practical work, such as scrub clearance, bracken spraying and fencing, which is carried out by contractors and local people who are encouraged to become actively involved as volunteers.

The Hampshire Grazing Project

The grazing project is an initiative funded by Hampshire County Council and English Nature. which aims to encourage appropriate grazing on land of conservation value throughout the County. It is working to overcome the problems of undergrazing and supply of livestock through:

- Providing a central contact point for conservation grazing.
- Running the Hampshire Grazing Forum, an informal support network for those involved in conservation grazing.
- Supporting existing grazing initiatives and developing new ones.
- Finding appropriate stock for site managers and grazing for graziers.
- Organising training events and seminars (e.g. stock husbandry and welfare).
- Raising awareness of the conservation benefits of grazing among the public, local authorities, conservationists and farmers.

The project offers free advice and support to site managers and grazers as well as grants.

5.2.4 East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Initiatives

The protection and enhancement of the landscape and biodiversity of the AONB is covered in the *East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Integrated Management Guidelines, Final Report* (Hampshire County Council, 1998). This character-based approach provides detailed guidelines for landowners and managers in the area. To help achieve these objectives, the AONB also provides grants for environmental improvement projects for land in the area, so long as they are not suitable for other larger grant funding or are required by conditions attached to planning consent. These grants are available for the following:

- *Trees and Woodland.* Small-scale tree and woodland works including coppicing, thinning, tree surgery and planting, surveying and monitoring.
- *Hedgerows:* Small hedge planting and restoration projects (50% grants).
- *Pond Conservation.* Pond restoration and enhancement and the construction of new ponds.
- *Village Design Statements/Community Projects:* Any initiatives or projects that increase an awareness of the local environment, that contribute to the conservation & enhancement of the village as a thriving/balanced community and/or its physical characteristics.
- *Access and Visitor Assistance:* To provide new or replacement steps, stiles, bridges and kissing gates, benches and signage, to prepare local walking

leaflets, and to provide minor restrictions to control vehicle access.

- *Landscape Enhancement and Improvement* To remove or improve isolated eye sores, remove dumped rubbish, remove inappropriate tree planting and small disused structures.

5.3 Achieving the Strategies: Assistance from Community and Voluntary Initiatives

5.3.1 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)

The BTCV provides a skilled, wide-ranging and effective conservation and countryside management service to landowners and managers. In addition to providing advice on suitable conservation projects, the BTCV trains and organises volunteer members and local community groups to undertake the work. This provides a cost-effective way to address environmental issues. Projects include

- High grade nature conservation which offers a sensitive approach to habitat management.
- Landscape conservation, including the restoration of hedges.
- Improving access by constructing footpaths, stiles, gates and bridges.
- Woodland management and tree planting.
- Creating and managing green space.
- Supporting community projects where extra volunteers are needed.

5.3.2 Parish Tree Wardens

The Tree Warden Scheme, run by The Tree Council, enables Parish Councils to appoint voluntary wardens to gather information, to give advice and to encourage practical projects relating to trees in the community. BTCV and the Tree Council provide training to assist wardens. Projects undertaken by Tree Wardens require the co-ordination of tree planting, hedge planting, woodland management and tree nurseries.

5.3.3 Village Design Statements

Village Design Statements were first promoted by the Countryside Commission (now Countryside Agency) in 1996, as a means by which local communities could influence the operation of the statutory planning system and protect and enhance the local distinctiveness of their area. The Statements are adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and should inform decisions on planning applications.

The Statements are prepared by a wide section of the local community and should represent the views of that community. They describe the visual character of the settlement and its setting and establish design guidance, showing how the local character can be protected and enhanced when new development takes place. They also often act as a catalyst to

local communities, highlighting environmental improvement projects that local residents can undertake and unifying local residents with a common interest.

5.3.4 Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)

FWAG is a voluntary body partly funded by farmers, providing them with conservation advice. Currently FWAG operate a number of advisory schemes:

- *Funding Applications.* FWAG provide advice and prepare applications for farmers for a range of grant schemes such as Countryside Stewardship (see 5.4.2);
- *Landwise* scheme. This is a whole farm conservation plan that describes the environmental impact of farm operations; highlights all wildlife habitats and provides a detailed management plan to enable the farmer to integrate conservation into the farm business;
- *Farm BAP.* This is a biodiversity action plan that identifies national, regional and local BAP species and habitats present on the farm and provides individually tailored managed plans for the selected species and habitats;
- *The Nutrient Budget.* This helps to determine the efficiency of manure and fertiliser use on the farm and assess nutrient movement through the farm. It can help to identify the potential for cost savings, as well as reducing pollution;
- *Water Management Guide.* This map-based report shows the catchments, sub-catchments and watersheds on the farm and examines the water-related features and habitats present. It assesses the impact of farm operations on water use and management and makes recommendations for the management of habitats and water resources, linking to Biodiversity Action Plan targets, and aiming to reduce and control pollution.

5.3.5 Hampshire Gardens Trust

The Hampshire Gardens Trust provides help and advice on the conservation, restoration, and the creation of new gardens. They also give guidance on grants, fund-raising, interpretation and promotion.

5.4 Achieving the Strategies: Assistance from Government Agricultural Initiatives

Through its England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), DEFRA aims to protect and enhance the rural environment to safeguard its integrity and value for future generations. Its two main complementary 'environmentally friendly' schemes, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme both aim to conserve important wildlife, landscape and historic features of the countryside. The ERDP also includes the Organic Farm Scheme. These are all detailed below.

DEFRA is currently undertaking a review of the existing agri-environment schemes, concentrating on the

Countryside Stewardship Scheme and Environmentally Sensitive Areas. As part of this review it is developing a revised structure for agri-environment schemes that should enable a proposed 'broad and shallow' scheme to contribute to solving current and future environmental problems. The review, which is due for completion at the end of 2003, also aims to develop a pilot 'entry-level' agri-environment scheme.

The following section outlines the schemes available at the time of writing.

5.4.1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

Currently the ESA Scheme is open to farmers and land managers in the 'Test Valley' ESA which covers part of the Dever Valley Landscape Character Area. The scheme encourages farmers and landowners to protect valuable features on their land by adopting or retaining traditional methods of management, rather than shifting to more profitable modern farming methods. It is entered into voluntarily by farmers whose land falls within the designated area. Farmers enter a 10 year management agreement with DEFRA and are consequently compensated annually for pursuing less profitable but more environmentally sensitive ways of farming. The important features of each ESA are defined and objectives are specified by DEFRA for their conservation and enhancement. Resulting benefits include, for example, the retention of grazing land rather than conversion to arable production, the conservation of particular habitats and species, landscape improvements from better management of features such as hedges and the protection of historic features such as ancient field systems.

Each ESA has one or more tiers of entry and each tier requires different agricultural practices to be followed. Typically, higher tiers have higher payment rates than the base tier, but impose more conditions on farmers and achieve greater environmental benefits. Enclosed land that is particularly suitable for walking and quiet enjoyment by the public may also be eligible for an additional payment if it is agreed to allow new public access to it.

5.4.2 Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme is the government's principal scheme for conserving and improving the countryside. The Scheme aims to sustain landscape beauty and diversity, to protect and extend wildlife habitats, to conserve archaeological sites and historic features, to restore neglected land or features, to create new habitats and landscapes and improve opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside. It is open to farms outside the Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

The emphasis of Countryside Stewardship is on whole farm plans and larger capital grant schemes. Capital and management grants are available over a 10-year agreement period for measures to restore, conserve and enhance semi-natural features in certain 'target' landscapes. The Scheme offers payments, advice and

support to farmers and land managers to manage their land to achieve particular objectives, including the creation of new opportunities for public access.

Payment depends on how much and what type of work is entered into the Scheme - each item of work attracts a set payment. The Scheme is discretionary and not all applications will be accepted. Generally, the more work of different types that are entered the better. Grants are also more likely if plans represent a positive change in management, will produce the planned objectives, are well researched, are supported by environmental bodies and are good value for money.

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme applies to the management of a variety of landscape types and areas, and each county has its own specific targets for them. Priorities and objectives for particular areas are agreed with partner organisations such as English Nature and FWAG and those which could be applicable to the Winchester District are shown below.

5.4.3 Organic Farming Scheme (OFS)

The OSF aims to encourage the conversion to organic farming with its consequent benefits for biodiversity and the landscape, resulting from crop rotations and the absence of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers. Grants are paid by DERFA on a per hectare basis.

COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME: SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Arable Land Objectives

- *Manage crops to encourage the wild flowers, plants, insects and birds which are associated with low input farming.*
- *Restore and recreate field boundaries and other landscape features.*
- *Create networks of uncropped grass margins and areas of wildlife seed mixtures, to provide wildlife habitats and corridors to buffer habitats and features from agricultural operations.*
- *Create wildlife habitats alongside rivers and streams by creating buffer strips and restoring waterside vegetation.*
- *Create and manage grassland to protect sensitive archaeological remains.*
- *Create new grassy walks rides and green lanes.*
- *Maintain or enhance the nature conservation interest of land which has been in non-rotational set-aside and which has developed high environmental value.*

Chalk & Limestone Grassland Objectives

- *Conserve grassland and archaeological sites by adjusting grazing or scrub control.*
- *Restore traditional hedges.*

- *Return cultivated areas to downland, especially where linked to existing grassland or to protect archaeology.*
- *Create grass margins to cropped fields and manage the crop edge to benefit the rare arable weeds found on chalky soils.*

Countryside Around Towns Objectives

- *Improve conservation interest and create new habitats.*
- *Conserve, enhance and interpret archaeological sites.*
- *Restore or create features such as hedgerows, ponds or trees in degraded areas.*
- *Provide opportunities for people to enjoy the area, for example by new footpaths and bridleways, or areas for play, or by school visits.*

Field Boundaries Objectives

- *Develop a network of sympathetically managed field boundaries, restoring boundaries where they are degraded beyond routine maintenance.*
- *Rebuild walls which have gaps or are slumped or unstable.*
- *Regenerate hedgerows and hedge trees by laying, coppicing and planting where these are mismanaged, overgrown or over-trimmed, and replant along old hedge lines.*
- *Rebuild eroded or breached banks and replace hedges.*
- *Introduce ditch management to benefit aquatic wildlife and restore bank-side vegetation and trees.*

Historic Features Objectives

- *Restore registered parklands for the importance of their design or their place in the local landscape. Work may include converting cultivated land to pasture and re-introducing grazing, replanting formal avenues, conserving old parkland trees and restoring water features.*
- *Conserve areas that demonstrate the history and development of the landscape, for example, patterns of hedges, ridge and furrow, walls, lanes, moats, ponds and earthworks.*
- *Preserve major earthworks such as hill forts by low intensity grazing and scrub control, and convert cultivated land to pasture to protect important features and enhance their landscape setting.*
- *Restore historic irrigated water meadows by rebuilding sluices and restoring ditches and carriers to allow controlled seasonal flooding.*

- *Conserve historic deer parks and wood pasture. The former are enclosed areas that retained deer for hunting and the latter are remnants of an ancient system of combining livestock grazing with woodland management. Work may involve reintroducing grazing, clearing scrub and tree planting or surgery to care for old trees.*
- *Restore traditional farm buildings using methods and materials appropriate to their age, function and location.*

Lowland Heath Objectives

- *Sustain or introduce grazing or cutting, remove scrub and control bracken to maintain a characteristic balance of vegetation.*
- *Recreate heath on cultivated or forestry land, particularly to link fragmented heaths.*
- *Conserve archaeological remains by preventing damage from scrub and tree roots.*

Provision of Access Objectives:

- *Create linear routes to make new circular walks or rides and new links or to bridge gaps in the existing rights of way network.*
- *Provide open access to new parts of the countryside such as viewpoints, lakesides or archaeological sites; picnic sites; open spaces close to villages and towns.*
- *Offer opportunities for educational visits by schools, colleges, clubs etc especially where land has some special interest, such as archaeological remains.*

Old Meadows and Pastures Objectives

- *Conserve grassland by maintaining traditional grazing and hay-cutting patterns.*
- *Restore neglected areas by controlling scrub and coarse invasive grasses and reintroducing management.*
- *Restore associated hedges, trees and ponds to enhance the landscape setting.*
- *Create new species-rich grassland to extend or buffer existing areas.*
- *Conserve archaeological sites by adjusting grazing or scrub control.*

Old Orchards Objectives

- *Restore orchard trees by pruning, grafting and restocking with appropriate varieties and keep old trees which provide nest holes for birds.*
- *Manage the grass beneath the trees by grazing or cutting to benefit wild flowers.*
- *Provide access to orchards or allow use by the local community, such as fruit picking.*

- *Conserve archaeological sites by adjusting grazing or scrub control and through sensitive planting.*

Waterside Land Objectives

- *Conserve the landscape, wildlife and archaeology of meadows, marshes and wet pasture by sensitive grazing, hay cutting and scrub control and by stopping fertiliser and pesticide use.*
- *Restore and create waterside features such as ponds, pollarded willows, fens and reedbeds.*
- *Manage water levels in spring and/or winter to create splash flooding conditions suitable for winter-feeding wildfowl and breeding waders.*
- *Restore and manage ditches and dykes by rotational cutting and raised water levels.*
- *Improve habitats for wildlife, both in the water and alongside rivers and streams, by restoring waterside vegetation, where necessary protecting banks from erosion by livestock or by buffering them from the effects of herbicide, pesticide and fertiliser applications.*
- *Provide opportunities for people to enjoy the waterside by creating riverside footpaths or open areas for picnics and bird watching.*

5.5 Achieving the Strategies: Assistance from Government Forestry Initiatives and other Woodland Improvement Schemes

The Woodland Grant Scheme and the Woodland Improvement Grant are run by the Forestry Authority to provide incentives for the management of existing woodlands and the creation of new woodlands in accordance with the Forestry Commission's strategy *A New Focus for England's Woodlands* (1998). Likewise, the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, run under the ERDP encourages the creation of new woodlands, on productive agricultural land. Woodland grants can also help to provide employment and improve the economy of rural areas.

5.5.1 Woodland Grant Scheme

The Woodland Grant Scheme aims to enhance the landscape through woodland creation or management of woodland, by providing money towards the cost of the work, subject to a 10-year management agreement. It also aims to provide new or improved wildlife habitats, increase timber production and offer opportunities for woodland recreation and sport. The Scheme also offers the option of extending existing woodlands by natural regeneration, to create new woodlands where practical and appropriate.

Supplements are paid for the creation of woodland on arable or improved grassland ('better land supplement') or if the land provides access for local

people ('community woodland supplement'). Discretionary payments are also paid if owners carry out work to encourage natural regeneration ('Natural Regeneration Grants'). Grants are also paid for the restocking of existing woodland. Grants are higher for the planting of broadleaf & native Scots Pine than conifers. 'Annual Management Grants' are also paid to help towards some of the cost of work to maintain and improve woodlands, if the work complies with Forestry Authority criteria. These include the safeguarding or enhancing of the existing special environmental value of a wood; improving woodlands that are below current environmental standards and creating, maintaining or enhancing public access.

All woodlands and forests can be considered for grants under the WGS. However, normally the woodland would have to be at least 0.25 hectares in area and at least 15 metres wide, but smaller woods may be eligible if the aims of the scheme are met.

5.5.2 Woodland Improvement Grants

Woodland Improvement Grants are also a type of Woodland Grant Scheme. These help to improve woods if special projects are undertaken such as creating facilities for public recreation in existing woods or restoring coppice. The grants encourage better management of under-managed woodlands, along with informal public recreation and particular types of management to help achieve the woodland aspects of Biodiversity Action Plans. Grants for such projects are paid as a discretionary payment, based on 50 % of the agreed cost of the work.

'Challenge Funds' are also available for specific projects. Bids have to be submitted for these, with priority going to local work priorities.

5.5.3 Farm Woodland Premium Scheme

The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS) encourages the creation of new woodlands on productive agricultural land, to improve the landscape and increase biodiversity. Land managers are encouraged to realise the productive potential of woodland as a sustainable land use. The scheme offers annual payments to compensate for forgone agricultural income, set at 50% of the cost. Payments are made for 10 years (for mainly conifer woodlands) or 15 years (for mainly broad-leaved woodlands).

Entry into the FWPS is conditional upon the land concerned being converted to woodland under the Woodland Grant Scheme and payments are in addition to the full range of establishment grants available under the Woodland Grant Scheme. Where land is to count against the farmer's set-aside obligation, the payment rate will be restricted to the set-aside rate if that is lower.

5.5.4 The Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust is a charity dedicated to the protection of the country's native woodlands. The Trust purchases areas of threatened ancient woodland; plants new areas of native woodland and

manages woodland traditionally, to enhance and protect biodiversity.

5.6 Achieving the Strategies: Assistance from Government Heritage Initiatives

5.6.1 English Heritage Grants for the Repair and Conservation of Historic Buildings, Monuments, Parks & Gardens

English Heritage provides grant aid for the repair and conservation of historic parks and gardens as well as grade I and II* secular buildings and scheduled ancient monuments. The historic parks most likely to benefit are those where there is a significant risk of important historic landscape features being lost. Funding can cover up to 80% of the cost of producing a comprehensive management plan covering the use of the land, maintenance standards, the conservation of archaeological sites and wildlife, visitor management and interpretation as well as 50% of the cost of repairs.

5.6.2 Local Heritage Initiative

The Local Heritage Initiative is a national grant scheme funded primarily by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The initiative helps local groups to investigate, explain and care for their local landscape, landmarks, traditions and culture. It was launched in 2000 and is expected to run until 2010. The initiative provides funding for a range of heritage projects that:

- have been started, supported and carried out by local people;
- show an awareness of the richness and distinctiveness of locally important heritage assets and plans to investigate, explain or care for them;
- offer clear public benefits, proposals for the long-term care of local heritage assets or future actions after the project has finished.

5.7 Achieving the Strategies: Assistance from Government Wildlife and Biodiversity Initiatives

English Nature Grants

English Nature makes grants to individuals and organisations that protect and enhance wildlife. Grants are usually for a maximum of 50% of the project costs, and are available for:

- new projects enabling the safeguarding, management and enhancement of sites and species of nature conservation importance and their enjoyment by the public;
- projects enabling local communities to participate more fully in conservation activities;
- proposals designed to encourage the development of management for wildlife within natural areas of the countryside;
- innovative projects demonstrating new initiatives which are likely to have a wider relevance and

further the practice of nature conservation;

- imaginative proposals which implement the concept of integrating nature conservation with other interests and potentially competing activities.

Grants for wildlife projects must contribute to Biodiversity Action Plans.

Biodiversity Grant Scheme

The Biodiversity Grant Scheme assists groups in meeting the targets of the published Biodiversity Action Plans for habitats and species. In particular, English Nature is seeking to encourage the involvement of the wider community in this grant scheme and prefers to target small, one-year projects. All projects must fulfil the basic criteria of:

- contributing to action delivery for named BAP species and/or habitats, or Species Recovery Programme (SRP) species;
- delivering objectives/actions in a nationally significant Natural Area for the species or habitat.

The BAP Priority Habitats eligible under the scheme in the Winchester District are lowland beech and yew woodland; wet woods; lowland wood pasture and parkland; ancient &/or species rich hedgerows; cereal field margins; lowland meadows; lowland calcareous grassland; reedbeds and chalk rivers. Grants can also be used to assist groups in meeting the targets the Species Recovery Programme. Examples of such work include:

- Leaflets to explain the food and habitat needs of endangered species and to suggest ways for farmers and landowners to create more species-friendly environments.
- The re-introduction of species into areas where they were once common.
- The management of suitable habitats for species colonisation.
- The establishment of new colonies using ex-situ conservation techniques.
- National surveys to establish the status and distribution of threatened species.

Wildspace

This grant scheme is aimed at involving local communities in the improvement, care and enjoyment of their local environment by welcoming applications from organisations involved or interested in managing and developing Local Nature Reserves (see Chapter 2.3.6). The scheme is run in partnership with the New Opportunities Fund under its Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities Initiative. Grants are available until September 2006.

Reserves Enhancement Scheme

This grant scheme is aimed at Voluntary Conservation Organisations which manage Sites of Special Scientific Interest as nature reserves. These five-year grants contribute to the day to day management of such sites.

Section 35 National Nature Reserve Capital Grants Scheme

This scheme provides grants to Approved Bodies under Section 35(1)(c) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, where these Approved Bodies are not eligible for the Reserves Enhancement Scheme. These grants contribute to capital projects for the improvement of reserve management, access and interpretation.

Local Biodiversity Grants

Biodiversity grants are available from English Nature's area teams for work on the conservation and enhancement of local biodiversity.

Volunteer Action Grants

These grants are intended to enable voluntary organisations to put more volunteers into the field to work on projects that help to further nature conservation, by reimbursing volunteers' travelling expenses.

5.8 Conclusion

This Landscape Character Assessment shows that Winchester District has a varied landscape with a strong identity, influenced by many factors such as its underlying geology and agricultural history. Many areas in the District are recognised for their natural beauty and important biodiversity and the Assessment highlights the particular features contributing to this, which should be conserved and enhanced where possible.

The landscape of the District has been subject to many pressures over the past century, including housing development, traffic, tourism, agro-chemicals and farm mechanisation, and while some harmful trends, such as hedgerow loss, are now being reversed, other pressures, such as housing need, are stronger than ever.

This Chapter shows that it is still important that the features that contribute so much to the character of the landscape should be restored and enhanced as necessary and where possible. Woodland, hedgerows, species-rich grassland and arable grassland all require appropriate management and conservation if they are to continue contributing to the character of the District. The chalk river species and clear alkaline spring water of many of the District's watercourses, meanwhile, need to be protected from pollution, and the historic character of the numerous parklands associated with the valleys conserved and enhanced. The character of the built environment within the landscape is also important, given the wealth of historic buildings and traditional construction materials found in the District. These should be respected, and protected, by any new development. New buildings, structures and infrastructure should also be sensitively sited to conserve the character of the existing landscape features.

As well as the importance of development control and forward planning functions of Local Planning Authorities, there are a number of other ways of

conserving and restoring the character of the landscape. Hampshire County, Winchester City Council and the East Hampshire AONB Project all provide grants, and advice, while groups such as BTCV and Hampshire Wildlife Trust can provide assistance in the form of advice and training for volunteers, thus providing a key human resource. Parish Tree Wardens and Members of the Hampshire Gardens Trust also provide not only valuable volunteer assistance, but have experience that can be passed on to others. Other Bodies, such as FWAG, the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and the Hampshire Gardens Trust can provide specialist advice, while major agri-environment schemes such as the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme, Countryside Stewardship Scheme and Woodland Grant Scheme provide both advice and funding. Whilst pressures on the rural environment are high, it is hoped that the increasing recognition of the importance of protecting and enhancing the biodiversity, heritage and character of the District will help to sustain it for generations to come.

GLOSSARY

Agri-environment Scheme: Schemes under EC Regulation 1257/99 that offer grants for measures to conserve and enhance the countryside. The main schemes are Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Countryside Stewardship and Organic Farming.

Agricultural Land Classification: Classification undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to indicate the quality of agricultural land (and not its current management). The classification ranges from 'excellent' to 'very poor' over five grades, with 1, 2 and 3a representing the 'best and most versatile' land.

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland: Woodland that is considered to have existed from at least the start of the seventeenth century which, although modified by man, supports species which are dependent on the long history of the wood.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): Area designated by the Countryside Agency under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Assart: Enclosure formed by the clearance of woodland and scrub to form arable land; generally of early medieval to early post-medieval in age.

Barrow (or tumulus): A mound of earth, turf or stones covering a burial.

Biodiversity: Term used to refer to the diversity or richness of species and habitats.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): Action Plans to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK for our most threatened species and wildlife habitats.

Burgage: Property (including a house and yard) in an ancient borough usually with a narrow street frontage and a long narrow strip behind. Held for a fixed rent by a burgess who has special privileges and duties.

Calcareous: Of, or containing, calcium carbonate.

Carr: A marshy copse, especially of alder or willow.

Celtic Fields: Small, squarish, irregular or semi-regular fields common on chalk downland until modern destruction. Sometimes surrounded by great banks and associated with terraces called 'lynchets' formed as ploughed earth moved downhill.

Coppice(ing): The cutting of certain fast-growing trees or shrubs such as hazel, to ground level, to provide straight poles for fences and hurdles.

Common: Area of land subject to rights of common. Usually a number of people exercised rights such as grazing stock or cutting fuel.

Conservation headland: A 6m–24m wide strip along the edge of a cereal crop that provides opportunities for a wide spectrum of arable plants, insects, foraging birds and other insect-eating animals.

CRoW Act (2000): The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This includes a number of amendments to the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 which strengthen the legislation on the protection of SSSIs and introduces new measures to create access to open countryside (including downlands and commons).

DEFRA: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Dew ponds: A feature of chalk downland, often present when there is a clay cap over chalk. Traditionally these were constructed to ensure an adequate water supply from rainfall alone, by maximising the pond's catchment area in relation to its evaporation area.

Drove road: Ancient long distance route used for driving cattle to fairs or markets (not maintained and not subject to tolls).

Enclosure: Legally, the extinguishing of common rights over a piece of land rather than the act of physically enclosing it with fences, ditches, walls and hedgerows which usually accompanied it. In the 18th and 19th Centuries enclosures were typically formed by parliamentary enclosure acts.

Hanger: An area of woodland on a chalk scarp or steep hillside, often of beech.

Hedge Coppicing: The practice of cutting an old hedge at the base and allowing regrowth.

Hedge Staking: Placing stakes along a laid hedge to keep it together and provide anchorage for secure binding.

Hillfort: Iron Age defence enclosing the top of the hill, often surviving as earthworks.

Integrated Crop Management: Farming practices that reduce the need for pesticide applications.

Ladder Fields: Fields formed by cross boundaries linking long wavy parallel boundaries which are often trackways or footpaths, thus making 'ladders' of long sinuous uprights joined by straight perpendicular 'rungs'. Mainly evident on the chalk uplands, linking lower ground to higher downs. Probably result from informal enclosure of downland in post-medieval times.

Landscape Type: Distinctive types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. Generic in nature, in that they may occur in different areas, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement patterns.

Landscape Character Area: Single unique areas that are discrete geographical areas consisting of one or more landscape types.

Open Field System: Agricultural arrangement by which the land was managed by common agreement of the local community. Arable land was divided into small strips. The strips assigned to each tenant were scattered and intermixed with those of others to ensure a fair balance of good land. From the late medieval period many of these strips became consolidated for convenience.

Pale: Boundary fence, particularly of a park – generally with a ditch on the inside.

Parish: Originally the area served by a parish church and supporting it by the payment of tithes. Later became a secular administrative area.

Park: In the medieval period, an enclosed area for growing timber and/or keeping deer. From the 17th to 19th Centuries many landscape parks were created around the houses of the manorial lords.

Parliamentary Fields: Fields typically formed by Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the late 18th–19th Centuries. Some fields enclosed at this time have a similar appearance but were enclosed by formal agreement.

Riparian: Of or on a riverbank.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs): Archaeological sites and monuments considered to be of national importance by the Secretary of State for National Heritage.

Semi-natural habitat: Habitat that has been affected and changed by the activities of humankind. These can be thousands of years old and as wildlife-rich as natural habitats.

Set-aside: Land which has been taken out of production in return for subsidies on other main crops, as defined in Council Regulation (EC) 1251/99.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs): Sites within Hampshire that are of particular importance for Nature Conservation, containing habitats or features that are effectively irreplaceable. Excludes statutorily designated sites.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs): Areas notified by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Biological or geological sites considered to be of national importance for conservation.

Time-depth Analysis: The technique of analysing evidence for historic events and processes in the landscape.

Track-bounded Fields: Fields bounded by tracks and roads. These are generally found on chalk uplands and probably result from post-medieval informal enclosure.

Wavy-edged Fields: Fields with wavy boundaries. These were probably formed through informal enclosure in the 17th and 18th Centuries, before boundaries were surveyed.

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