

## **Landscape Appraisal: West of Waterlooville Area 1**

(follow on from LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper consultation response February 2008)

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2 March 2009

### **Landscape Character Area: Forest of Bere Lowlands**

Ref: *Landscape Character Assessment for Winchester District* (March 2004)

Landscape Type:                      Mixed Farmland and Woodland

Key characteristics specific to this site:

- Undulating landscape at the foot of the chalk downs which drop steeply down to the coastal plain at Portsdown Hill to the south of this area.
- Varied geology mainly consisting of London Clay with areas of Bagshot sand and river valley alluvium.
- Land cover characterised by farmland and a high proportion of assarted woodland. The farmland is largely arable with pasture concentrated on lower ground but retains an exceptionally high cover of semi-natural habitats.
- Remote and enclosed feel to much of the area due to the presence of woodland and narrow hedged roads.

Key Issues:

- Suburbanised urban 'fringe' character of parts of the area.
- Opportunities to protect and enhance re-establish and link habitats and features characteristic of the Forest of Bere including heaths, grasslands and ancient woodland.

Landscape Strategies:

- Identify and restore ancient species rich hedgerows.
- Increase awareness of Forest of Bere.
- Conserve and restore green spaces that are characteristic of the area.

Built Form Strategies:

- Resist development which further fragments the restoration of the former Forest of Bere or suburbanises local settlements.
- Minimise the impact of intrusive structures.
- Retain the rural character of the local minor roads within the character area.

### **Physical Landscape:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

Landform:

- Landscape character: remote and enclosed feel to much of the area due to presence of woodland, field boundaries and narrow hedged roads to site boundaries. Horse paddocks in S half of site.
- The site contributes significantly to the semi-rural landscape setting of Denmead, the character of village settlement and local distinctiveness, and acts as an effective landscape buffer between Denmead and development to the E.
- Small hamlets of Anmore and Soake and isolated farms located within site are typical of existing landscape character area, supporting their retention within existing landscape setting.

- Ridgeline along N boundary, 50.00m max. height, with high point at Clarendon Farm.
- Geology: existence of London clay formation.
- Agricultural land classification: mainly grade 4 throughout.
- Dry valleys / watercourses: low lying land containing numerous watercourses and a pond; part of catchment area to R Wallington.

**Land cover:**

- Significant but unprotected existing green space through centre of site featuring fishing lakes and minor water course which flows to the W, existing woodland and areas of natural regeneration. This area is considered to be of high amenity value even though unprotected. Part of the woodland is currently used as a storage yard for building materials by Jewson.
- No protected trees (TPO) within or close to site although significant tree cover of high amenity value around fishing lakes within centre of site and occasional mature specimens to field and site boundaries.

**Experiential:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Tranquillity: evident mainly within existing green space around lakes and along public right of way along N boundary.
- Countryside Access: poor pedestrian connectivity as no public rights of way within and beyond site other than along northern boundary passing by Clarendon Farm.
- No current designated CRoW access within or close to site.

**Historic Environment:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Historic landscape character: strong associations with the former Royal Forest of Bere, surviving features include mature specimen oak trees; remnants of assarted hedgerows.
- Ancient lanes/hedgerows; small parliamentary field enclosure.

**Visibility:**

- Main views from Clarendon Farm to south limited by tree cover surrounding fishing lakes and filtered views of built settlement edge along E boundary.
- Views from within site mainly confined to local prominence within site due to small/medium enclosed field pattern and woodland.
- Interruption of views by main pylons crossing the site.

**Biodiversity:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Protected sites: one SINC on N boundary W of Clarendon Farm (local designation). No other protected sites within site.
- 2no SINC's outside site: one in NW corner between Anmore and Denmead; the other approx 220.0m to S (Piers Hill Wood).

**Landscape Sensitivity:**

An important consideration is the location of the site as it lies between the edge of built development to the east and the village of Denmead to the west. The site also provides an appropriate landscape setting for the small hamlets of Anmore and Soake, a typical feature of the existing landscape character area. Whilst there are currently no protected features and areas within the site, consideration needs to be given to the special local characteristics of the site in terms of amenity value, not least the woodland and fishing lakes.