

Landscape Appraisal: West of Waterlooville Area 2

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

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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.

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

- Ridgeline along N boundary, 40m max.
- No protected trees (TPO) within or close to site.
- Agricultural land classification: mainly grade 3b (MAFF 246/94R).
- Geology: existence of London clay formation which may impact on proximity of existing/new trees to proposed development.

Land cover:

- Landcover mainly relatively flat open farmland, largely arable, with tree cover and hedgerows confined mainly to field boundaries and roadside vegetation. Minor

watercourse flowing into R Wallington in S corner of site. No significant areas of high amenity value.

Experiential:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Tranquillity: traffic noise during peak traffic periods.
- Countryside Access: poor pedestrian links within site. Better connections with wider landscape via Wayfarers Walk (national trail) abutting NW corner of site and public right of way alongside E boundary.
- No current designated CRoW access within or close to site.

Historic Environment:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Historic landscape character: strong associations with the Royal Forest of Bere, former royal hunting reserve. Surviving features within site include mature specimen oak trees and remnants of assarted hedgerows, although presence minimal within site.

Visibility:

- Panoramic views from Closewood Road on ridgeline S across site and beyond to historic landmark of Portsdown Hill and buildings E of Fort Southwick.
- Interruption of views from double line of large pylons to E of site.

Biodiversity:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- No protected areas within site.
- 1no SINC outside site approx 150.00m to N (Piers Hill Wood).

Landscape Sensitivity:

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, in particular assarted hedgerows and visual links with Portsdown Hill to the south.