

Landscape Appraisal: West of Waterlooville Area 3

(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.
- 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:

- No protected trees (TPO) within or close to site although specimen mature oak trees of high amenity value within fields and boundary hedgerows.
- Agricultural land classification: mainly grade 3.
- Geology: mainly Reading formation of mottled clay, locally sandy.

Land cover:

- Landscape character: remote and enclosed feel to much of the area due to presence of tree cover and hedgerows confined mainly to field boundaries and public right of way. Small fields of pasture and arable with exception of larger arable field to W of Woodcroft Farm.

Experiential:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Tranquillity: traffic noise minimal even with proximity of housing development.
- Countryside Access: poor pedestrian links for amenity purposes within site. One public right of way along S boundary linking site to existing built development.
- 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 and woodland.
- Other features of interest: small parliamentary field enclosure.

Visibility:

- Views mainly contained to and from the site by woodland and hedgerows. Main views from public right of way along S boundary are mainly local prominence across fields to treed skyline and James Copse (SINC) to the N and filtered views of housing and recreation ground to S.

Biodiversity:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- No protected areas within site.
- 1no SINC outside site to NE (James Copse).

Landscape Sensitivity:

The area within the Winchester District Council boundaries is considered the least sensitive in landscape terms, although site constraints on and beyond site boundaries remain a consideration with any proposals for new development.