

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 2

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL

WALTHAM CHASE

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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1.0 Landscape and Townscape Character and Types	2
1.1 Landscape Character	
1.2 Townscape Character	
1.3 Landscape Type	
1.4 Summary	
2.0 Landscape Sensitivity	4
2.1 Physical landscape	
2.2 Experiential / Perceptual	
2.3 Historic Environment	
2.4 Biodiversity	
2.5 Visibility	
3.0 Sensitivity Appraisals	6
3.1 Areas off Forest Road and between New Road and Forest Road	
3.2 Area east of Winchester Road	
3.3 Area west of Winchester Road	
3.4 Area between Clewers Hill, Clewers Lane and Winchester Road	
3.5 Area adjacent to Sandy Lane	
3.6 Area adjacent to Bull Lane	
3.7 Area adjacent to Curdridge Lane	
3.8 Area between Little Bull Lane and Sandy Lane	
3.9 Area east of Winchester Road opposite Brooklyn Close	
3.10 Area south of Solomons Lane	
4.0 Summary of Key Landscape and Townscape Issues	
Appendix 1 Visibility Constraints Map	
Appendix 2 Landscape Sensitivity Map	

1.0 LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AND TYPES

Reference:

County level¹

Landscape and Townscape Character Areas which identify key characteristics, qualities and forces for change:

- Character Area: **Forest of Bere West 2e.**

District level²

Two character areas create a diverse landscape setting for the settlement of Waltham Chase. They identify key characteristics, issues and designations with landscape and built form strategies specific to each area:

- Main landscape and townscape character area: **Shedfield Heathlands**
- Other character area: **Durley Claylands.**

1.1 Landscape Character

1.1.1 Shedfield Heathlands Landscape Character Area

- Low lying, flat or gently undulating topography, of mixed farmland
- East of Waltham Chase is a low-lying gently undulating area of poor drainage with minor streams on the underlying clay
- Ancient winding lanes on the higher ground west of Waltham Chase with strong hedgerow boundaries with trees
- The landscape between Waltham Chase and Swanmore is characterised by the straight boundaries, hedges and roads; predominantly pasture and arable farmland with fields often subdivided to provide pony paddocks and small holdings, giving rise to a suburbanised 'fringe' character
- A relatively high proportion of the area is settled, with Swanmore, Bishop's Waltham and Shedfield close by
- Strong hedgerow and assorted woodland network including areas of assorted semi-natural ancient woodland, such as Dirty Copse and Bishop's Enclosure
- South of Waltham Chase is the Meon Valley Hotel and Country Club within the historic grounds of Shedfield House, now more manicured and with a golf course
- The high water table between Waltham Chase and Swanmore is part of the drainage system for The Moors wetland which forms the source of the River Hamble.

1.1.2 Durley Claylands Landscape Character Area

- Low-lying, gently undulating arable and pasture agriculture

¹ [Hampshire County Council Integrated Character Assessment 2010](#) (HICA)

² [Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment 2004](#) (WLCA)

- Strong hedgerow network with scattered woodland
- The high water table between Waltham Chase and Bishop's Waltham is part of the drainage system for The Moors wetland which forms the source of the River Hamble.

1.2 Townscape (Waltham Chase village)

- A relatively recent development on both sides of the main route through the village (B2177 Winchester Road), and with a generally well-defined settlement edge
- The defined settlement gap³ retains the generally open and undeveloped nature of the area between Waltham Chase and Swanmore/Bishop's Waltham; avoiding coalescence of settlements retains individual identity within their wider contextual setting.
- Contained by sloping topography to the east along Sandy Lane
- East of Winchester Road is on lower lying gently undulating ground
- Gradual development since the 1940s with housing developments taking place in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, typically cul-de-sacs or small developments
- The King's Way national trail runs north and east of Waltham Chase
- Centred on the crossroads of Winchester Road, Forest Road and Curdridge Lane with shops; the village also has a primary school and several areas of open space
- Accessible countryside to the south with a good footpath network.

1.3 Landscape Types for Waltham Chase and surrounding area

1.3.1 As well as identifying landscape character areas, the HICA and WLCA detail the characteristics of each landscape type. These include 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. The WLCA also outlines key issues affecting landscape features typical of the area.

1.3.2 The three landscape types (WLCA classification) here are -

- a. Mixed Farmland and Woodland (north of Waltham Chase)
- b. Pasture and Woodland: Heath Associated (east of Waltham Chase)
- c. Horticulture and Smallholdings (west and south of Waltham Chase).

1.4 Summary

The descriptions of landscape character areas and landscape types outlined above have been used to inform the degree of landscape sensitivity for areas around Waltham Chase as set out in the following sections.

³ Policies CP18 and SH4, Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (March 2013)

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; HICA; WLCA

2.1.1 Landform

- The undulating topography west of the village rises from approximately 40m AOD along the B2177 Winchester Road to the highest point in the landscape at the junction of Bull Lane and Sandy Lane at approximately 60m AOD. From here, the landform slopes down to the northern and southern edges of Waltham Chase at approximately 35m AOD.
- The predominantly flat landscape east of the B2177 is low-lying at approximately 35m AOD. Land to the south-east rises gently to approximately 80m AOD at Shirrell Heath.

2.1.2 Land cover

- Soils are low quality north and east of Waltham Chase (agricultural classification grade 4), but better (between grades 2 and 3) to the north-west.
- A mixture of arable and pasture fields with mature hedges/tree boundaries.
- Predominantly pasture land between Waltham Chase and Swanmore; often subdivided to provide pony paddocks which gives rise to a suburbanised 'fringe' character.
- Areas of assorted semi-natural ancient woodland south of Swanmore, such as Dirty Copse and Bishop's Enclosure.
- Golf course on the south-west edge of Waltham Chase within the historic parkland landscape.
- More visually prominent lines of oaks are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), e.g. along the Park Lug adjacent to King's Way between Bishop's Waltham and Waltham Chase. Other areas with protected trees are mostly within the northern and western parts of Waltham Chase.

2.2 Experiential/Perceptual

Ref: GIS constraints map and site assessment; CPRE Tranquillity Map⁴; Dark skies (CPRE / SDNP)⁵

- Contrasting rural landscape character between the higher land west of Waltham Chase which is an intimate landscape of winding lanes with scattered farms with mature hedgerow and tree boundaries, with the low-lying flat open landscape east of the village.
- Long views from the straight roads between Waltham Chase and Swanmore over the low-lying mixed farmland, with boundary hedgerows.
- Pedestrian connectivity along King's Way connecting Swanmore and Bishop's Waltham with Waltham Chase, with a network of footpaths south of Waltham Chase into the countryside.
- Opportunities for improving pedestrian and cycle routes in the area.
- Tranquillity along the winding lanes and footpaths north, west and south of Waltham Chase into the surrounding countryside.
- Traffic noise is evident along the main route through the village and along Forest Road towards Swanmore.
- Quiet residential areas away from Winchester Road (B2177).

2.3 Historic Environment *Ref: GIS constraints map; HICA; WLCA*

- No Conservation Areas.
- No listed buildings.
- The remnants of the wooded hunting ground associated with Shedfield House, now the manicured landscape of the golf course south of Waltham Chase, form part of the designated Historic Park.

2.4 Biodiversity *Ref: GIS constraints map; HICA; WLCA*

- Waltham Chase Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): 6.38 ha of unimproved neutral meadow. This habitat is now exceedingly rare in Hampshire.
- The SSSI includes The Moors wetland north-west of Swanmore on the outskirts of Bishop's Waltham - a nationally recognised habitat resource of wetland habitat.
- A number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) west of Waltham Chase include Bishop's Enclosure woodland and Gravelhill plantation, as well as smaller areas within the settlement gap between Waltham Chase and (but closer to) Swanmore.

2.5 Visibility

A visibility constraints map for the Waltham Chase area is included at Appendix 1.

⁴ www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/1839

⁵ www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/dark-skies
www.southdowns.gov.uk/looking-after/dark-skies

3.0 SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL OF AREAS

A number of individual sites and areas of land in and around Waltham Chase have been promoted for development through the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)⁶. Those of similar landscape character have been grouped together for the purposes of assessing their sensitivity in the local landscape (Appendix 2). Four categories of sensitivity are used –

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

3.1 Areas both sides of Forest Road and between New Road and Forest Road (SHLAA sites 1837, 1894, 2432, 2567, 2568)

- Context: area of open farmland on the urban fringe close to village centre, with views across the important local gap towards Swanmore
- Character: gently undulating, relatively low-lying fields on edge of Waltham Chase sloping towards Swanmore; some suburban fringe activities, mainly horse paddocks; evidence of high water table in fields – within Environment Agency (EA) Flood Zone 2 and 3
- Important or panoramic views: towards Swanmore from Forest Road, view from New Road towards Waltham Chase
- Skyline features: higher ground east of Swanmore within the SDNP
- Landmarks to connect with place: edge of Waltham Chase settlement
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **most sensitive** location with potential impacts on the effectiveness of the settlement gap, and adverse visual impacts from surrounding roads such as Forest Road and New Road and from the footpath south-west of Swanmore College. Potential impact on the drainage system that feeds The Moors wetland and the River Hamble.

3.2 Area east of Winchester Road (SHLAA site 2405)

- Context: area of open farmland on the urban fringe, with views across the important local gap towards Swanmore
- Character: low lying fields on edge of settlement; evidence of high water table in fields adjacent to EA Flood Zone 2 and 3
- Important or panoramic views: towards Swanmore from Winchester Road
- Skyline features: hedgerows with mature trees and large pylons
- Landmarks to connect with place: The Chase Inn Pub.
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4.

⁶ www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/evidence-base/housing/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **most sensitive** location with potential impacts on effectiveness of Local Gap, and in terms of adverse visual impacts. Potential impact on the drainage system that feeds The Moors wetland and the River Hamble.

3.3 Area west of Winchester Road (SHLAA site 2406)

- Context: area of farmland on the urban fringe, including Park Lug heritage feature and protected trees adjoining Kings Way
- Character: low-lying fields on the edge of the settlement; evidence of high water table in fields adjacent to area of EA Flood Zone 2 and 3
- Important or panoramic views: views of trees running along Park Lug from Winchester Road
- Skyline features: large pylons
- Landmarks to connect with place: none
- Agricultural land quality: grades 3b and 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

The part of SHLAA area including and north of the historic feature of Park Lug and protected trees adjoining King's Way is a **most sensitive** location with potential impacts on effectiveness of the local gap, and in terms of adverse visual impacts, water quality and visual amenity. The remaining area is outside the gap and is screened from Winchester Road by a mature hedgerow. This area has poor connectivity with the existing village and is a **highly sensitive** location due to its contribution to the countryside setting of Waltham Chase.

3.4 Area between Clewers Hill, Clewers Lane and Winchester Road (SHLAA sites 1753, 2288, 2491, 2529)

- Context: area of some farmland, urban fringe and adjacent to open space; within the settlement gap between Waltham Chase and Bishop's Waltham
- Character: field and urban fringe with some existing housing
- Important or panoramic views: none
- Skyline features: none
- Landmarks to connect with place: open space adjacent
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

Based on the known constraints and the character of Waltham Chase, this is a **least sensitive** location in terms of adverse visual impacts and biodiversity. The area has a variety of urban fringe activities adjoining the settlement.

3.5 Area adjacent to Sandy Lane (SHLAA sites 1890, 1893, 2566)

- Context: high point in the landscape of small fields with good hedgerow boundaries, adjoining settlement edge, close to the village centre

- Character: small fields adjacent to settlement edge with good hedgerow boundaries ensuring rural character remains
- Important or panoramic views: roofs of housing and SDNP beyond
- Skyline features: hills within the SDNP
- Landmarks to connect with place: Waltham Chase settlement edge
- Agricultural land quality: grades 3a and 3b.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **highly sensitive** location in terms of adverse visual impacts to Sandy Lane, and due to its high point in the landscape and contribution to the countryside setting of Waltham Chase.

3.6 Area adjacent to Bull Lane (SHLAA site 2466)

- Context: small area of urban fringe adjoining the settlement edge, close to the village centre
- Character: urban fringe with planted boundaries
- Important or panoramic views: none
- Skyline features: none
- Landmarks to connect with place: none
- Agricultural land quality: grades 3b and 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

Based on known constraints or character of Waltham Chase, a **moderately sensitive** location in terms of adverse visual impacts and biodiversity.

3.7 Area adjacent to Curdridge Lane (SHLAA sites 2530, 2564)

- Context: visually prominent small field above the road; good hedgerow boundaries, but poor connectivity to Waltham Chase village
- Character: small elevated field with hedgerow boundaries
- Important or panoramic views: none
- Skyline features: telecoms mast
- Landmarks to connect with place: none
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **most sensitive** location in terms of adverse visual impacts from Curdridge Lane due to its elevated location in the landscape.

3.8 Area between Little Bull Lane and Sandy Lane (SHLAA site 2573)

- Context: area of open farmland and urban fringe beyond the village edge within the settlement gap
- Character: gently undulating fields with hedgerow and tree boundaries; some urban fringe activities and small area of woodland
- Important or panoramic views: none

- Skyline features: none
- Landmarks to connect with place: none
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **most sensitive** location in terms of adverse visual impacts. Potential impacts also include water quality and visual amenity from the rural winding lane of Little Bull Lane, Sandy Lane and the footpath through the area.

3.9 Area east of Winchester Road opposite Brooklyn Close (SHLAA site 2065)

- Context: small field bordered to the north by the SSSI and to the east and south by car parking and industrial use; good boundary hedge along the B2177 Winchester Road.
- Character: small area of undeveloped land surrounded on most sides by existing development; edge of village location with good boundary planting.
- Important or panoramic views: none
- Skyline features: none
- Landmarks to connect with place: none
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **least sensitive** location in terms of adverse visual impacts, based on the known constraints or the character of Waltham Chase. However, development could impact upon the biodiversity of the SSSI along its northern boundary.

3.10 Area south of Solomons Lane (SHLAA site 2516)

- Context: small area of green associated with barns within the settlement gap
- Character: flat area of green with mature boundary hedge
- Important or panoramic views: across the landscape from Solomons Lane towards Swanmore
- Skyline features: none
- Landmarks to connect with place: none
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **moderately sensitive** location with potential impacts on effectiveness of the settlement gap and visual impact. Poor connectivity to central Waltham Chase and its facilities.

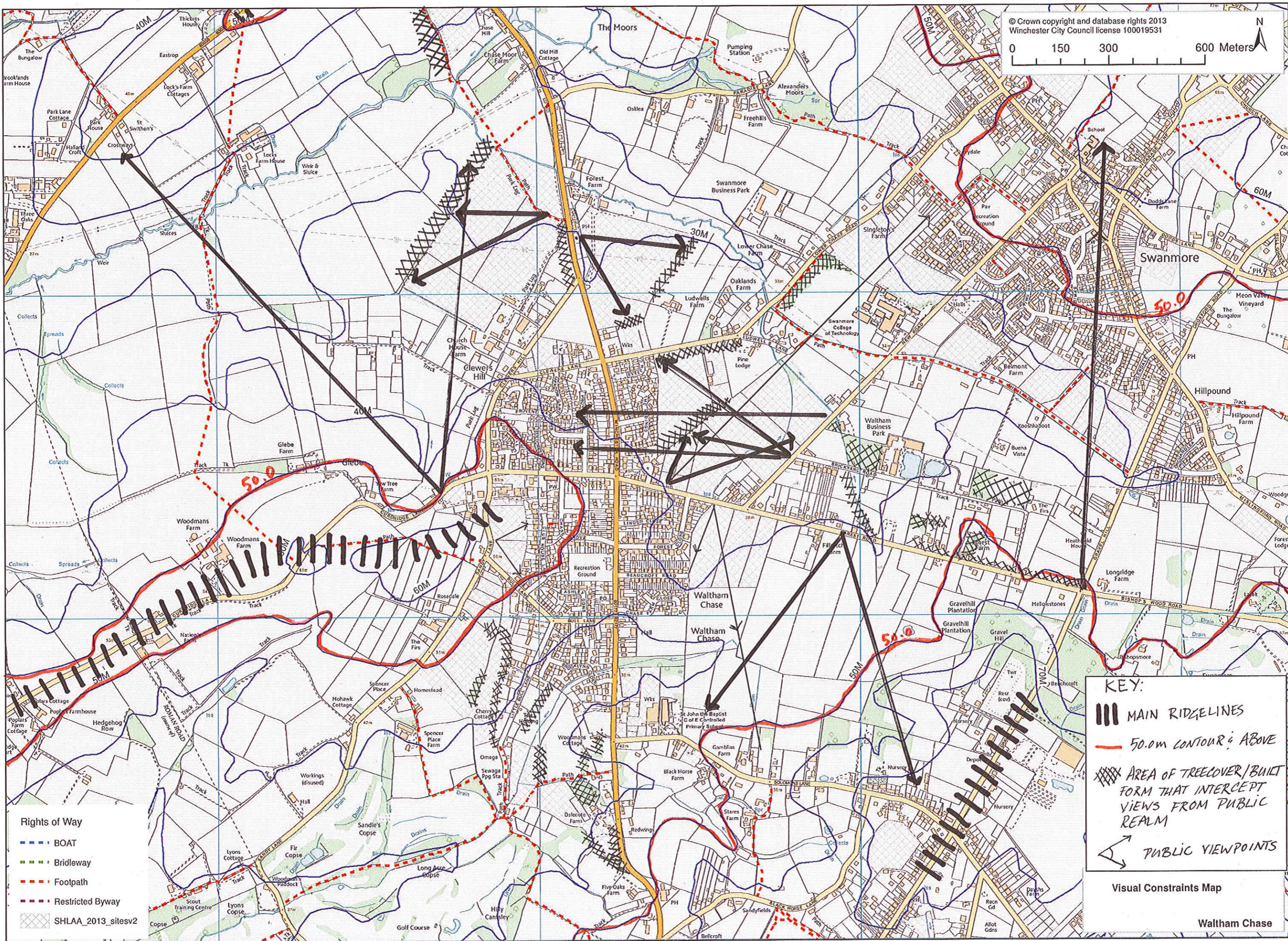
4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE ISSUES FOR WALTHAM CHASE

Shedfield Heathlands Landscape Character Area

- Impact of intrusive structures and development on high ground and skylines
- Suburban fringe encroachment, e.g. horse paddocks with fencing, outbuildings etc, within countryside setting of Waltham Chase including the settlement gap
- Undesignated areas with special qualities that contribute significantly to setting of Waltham Chase are vulnerable to change
- Area prone to flooding due to Hamble river catchment area, high water table and extent of new development in the area
- Over-formalisation and loss of semi-natural habitats for sport / recreational use
- Further loss of farmland, particularly boundary hedges and oak trees, to equestrian use and development to accommodate planned growth.

Durley Claylands Landscape Character Area

- Area prone to flooding due to Hamble river catchment area; high water table; extent of new development in the area
- Coalescence of Bishop's Waltham and Waltham Chase settlements
- Impact on Park Lug heritage feature and assorted linear woodland features.



- Rights of Way**
- BOAT
 - Bridleway
 - Footpath
 - Restricted Byway
 - SHLAA_2013_sitesv2

- KEY:**
- ||| MAIN RIDGELINES
 - 50.0m CONTOUR & ABOVE
 - ███ AREA OF TREECOVER/BUILT FORM THAT INTERCEPT VIEWS FROM PUBLIC REALM
 - ↔ PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Visual Constraints Map