

Chapter Four | LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

4.0 Introduction

Landscape Character Areas are defined by the Countryside Agency (2002) as single unique areas and are the discrete geographical areas of particular landscape types. Each Landscape Character Area has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other areas of the same landscape type. This distinction is reflected in the names of Landscape Character Areas, which take on the names of specific places such as 'Durley Claylands' and 'North Dever Downs'

This chapter describes the distinct character of the 23 Landscape Character Areas within the Winchester District. These are shown in *Fig 4.2*. These reflect the patterns set by *the Hampshire Landscape: A Strategy for the Future* (HCC 2000), which subdivides the district into five Landscape Character Areas based on downland, lowland & heath and river valleys (see *Fig 4.1* below). They were also informed by the Historic Landscape Character Areas shown in the assessment of the district undertaken by Oxford Archaeology. The full assessment is provided in Appendix Four of this document. These Historic Landscape Character Areas were mapped according to typical historic field patterns and land uses, based on the *Hampshire Historic Landscape Assessment* (HCC, 1998).

For each of the District's Landscape Character Areas, a set of *Key Characteristics* is described. These are the most important constituents of the identity of the area, based on its geology, topography, drainage, land use, historic field patterns, historic features, ecology, views, transport routes and settlement distribution and structure.

This is followed by more detailed descriptions of the *Location & Boundaries*, *Formative Influences* and *Landscape and Settlements* of the character area. Key Issues affecting each area are then highlighted, based on threats to its characteristic features. In response to the issues affecting the area, a set of *Landscape Strategies* and *Built Form Strategies* are suggested to conserve, enhance and restore the character of its landscape and built form.

Finally, a list of the *Key Designations* for each character area is presented. These include Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Parks on the Hampshire Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. It should be noted however that these are representative of the time when this document was drafted (August 2002) and the accuracy of them cannot be guaranteed. For

the definitive documentation and clarification of the boundaries and locations of these areas the relevant designating body should be contacted. The proposals for a new South Downs National Park are also being considered at the time of writing, which could also be a designation covering the whole or part of a number of the Landscape Character Areas in the district. However, these have not been listed as a Key Designation at this stage.

Landscape Character Areas in the Winchester District Local Plan Review (Revised Deposit 2003)

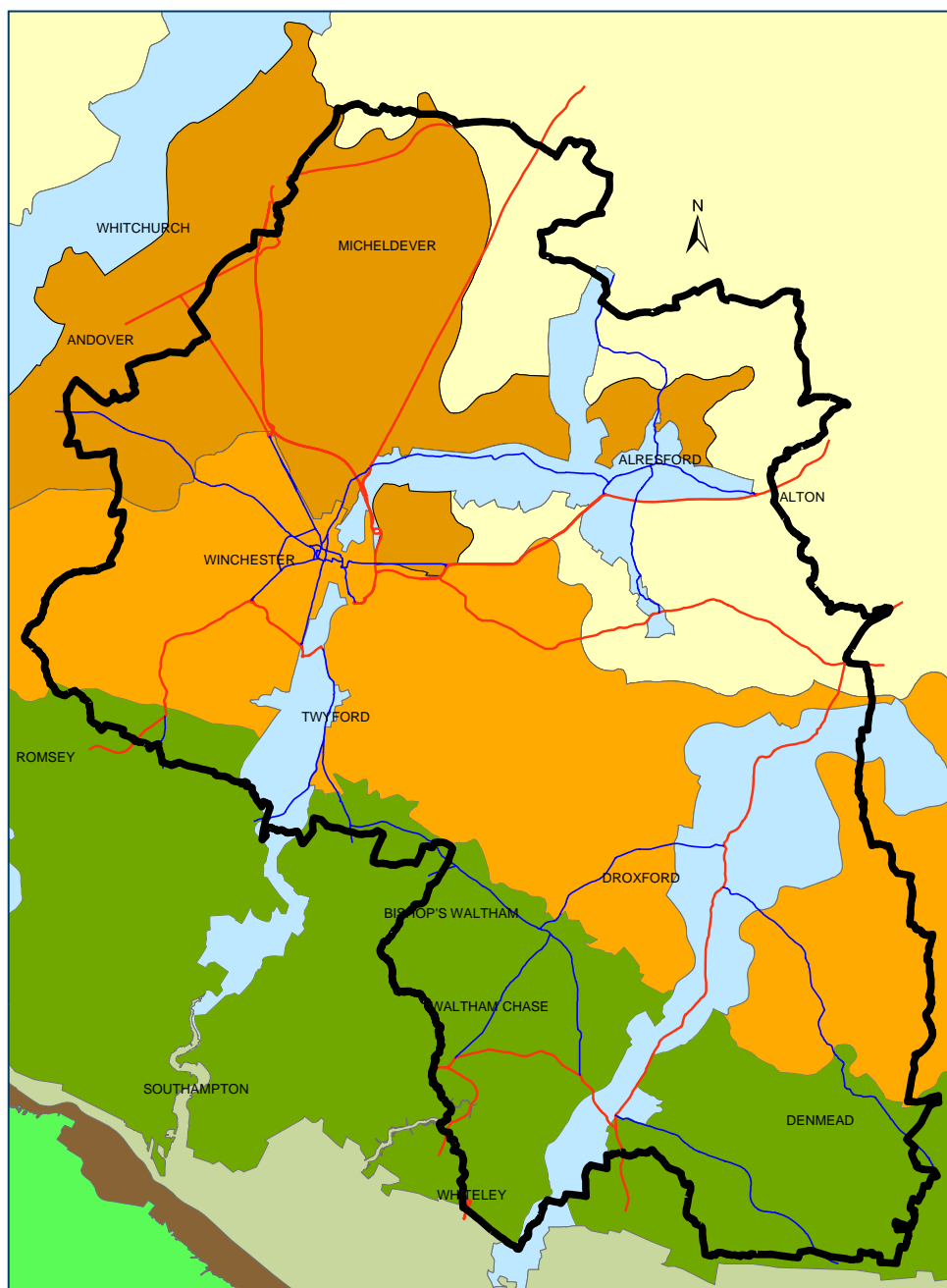
The Key Characteristics, Landscape Strategies and Built Form Strategies for each Landscape Character Area are listed in Appendix 2 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review 2003. This enables the specific character of each area to be protected, restored and enhanced by *Proposal C6* (see below). The plan also notes that Conditions may be used and/or planning obligations sought to achieve landscape and built form improvements in accordance with the proposed strategies. This should prove to be an important means of protecting the character of the district's landscape and achieving the recommended strategies.

Proposal C6

Development which fails to respect the intrinsic character of the landscape, or harms the key characteristics of the Landscape Character Area concerned (as set out in Appendix 2) will not be permitted.

Development which is acceptable within the terms of this and other relevant proposals of this Plan should be consistent with the landscape and built form strategies (as set out in Appendix 2).

Fig. 4.1. *Landscape Character Areas shown in The Hampshire Landscape: A Strategy for the Future (HCC, 2000)*



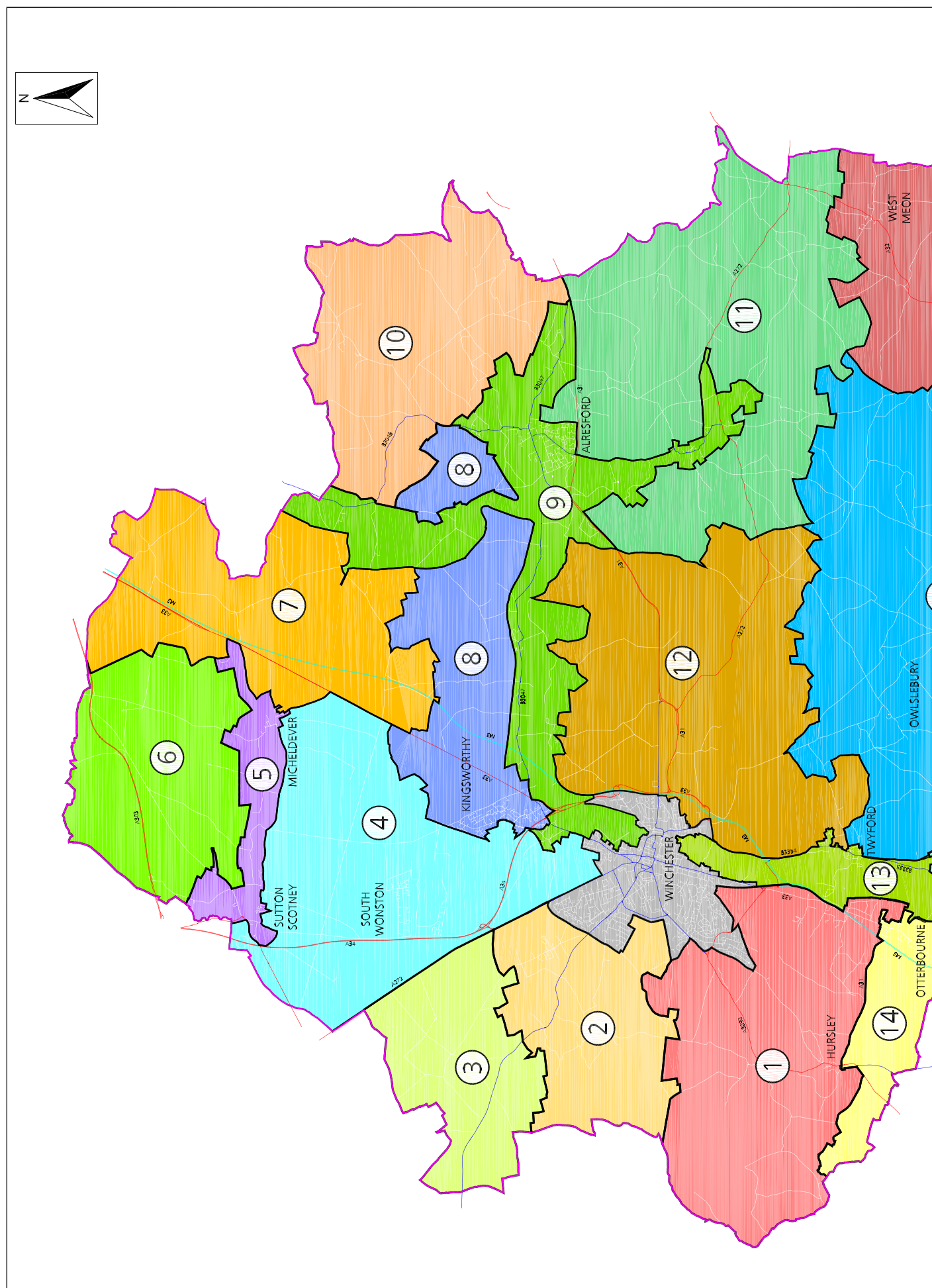
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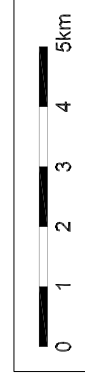
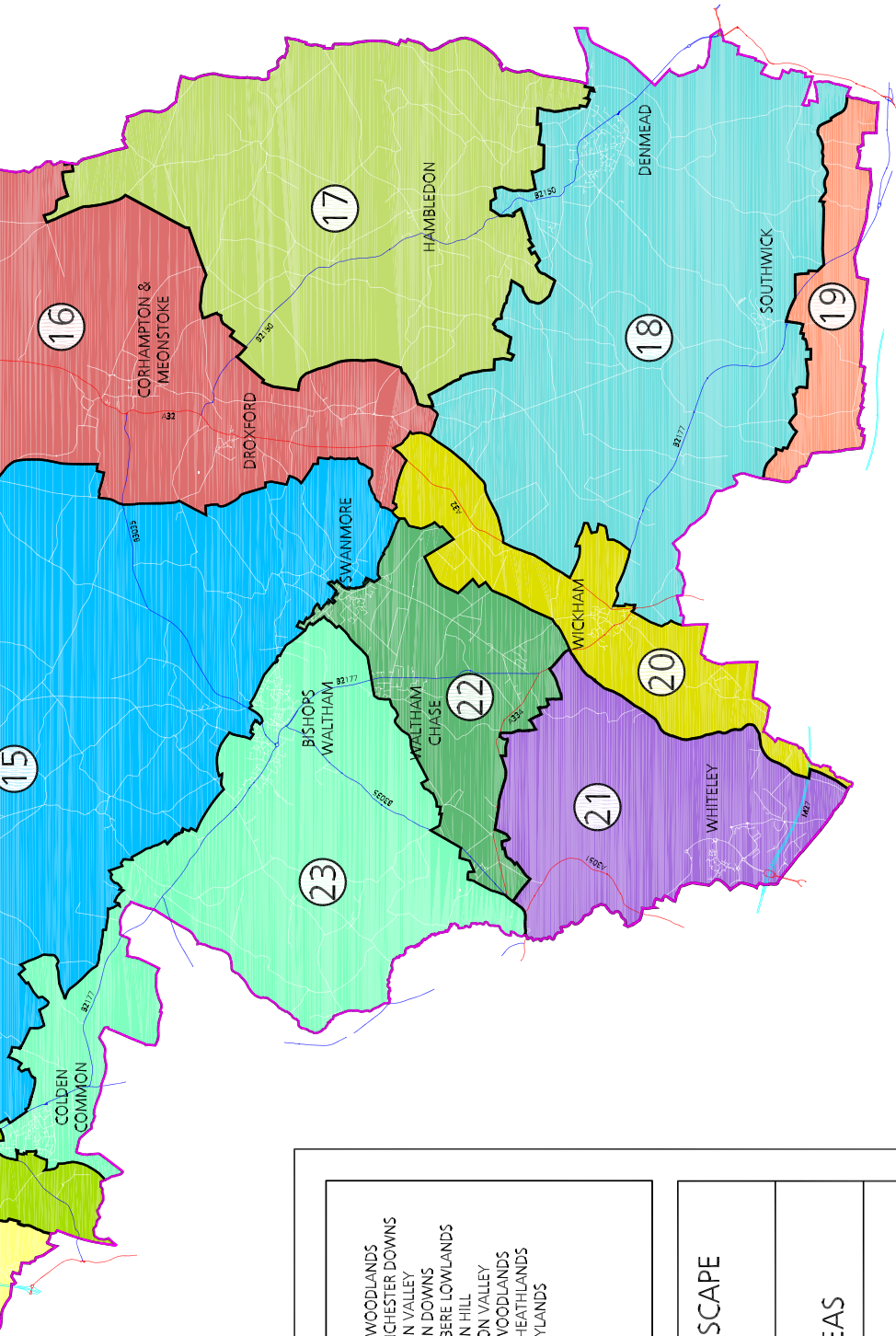
Hampshire County Council Landscape Character Areas

Legend

- District Boundary
- Road centreline B Roads
- Road centreline A Roads
- Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon River Valley
- Hampshire Downs
- Mid Hampshire Downs
- South Hampshire Downs
- South Hampshire Lowland and Heath

Fig 4.2 *Landscape Character Areas for the Winchester District*





- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | HURLEY SCARPLANDS | 14 | CRANBURY WOODLANDS |
| 2 | SPARSHOLT WOODLANDS | 15 | SOUTH WINCHESTER DOWNS |
| 3 | CRAWLEY DOWNS | 16 | UPPER MEON VALLEY |
| 4 | WONSTON DOWNS | 17 | HAMBLEDON DOWNS |
| 5 | DEVER VALLEY | 18 | FOREST OF BERE LOWLANDS |
| 6 | NORTH DEVER DOWNS | 19 | PORTSDOWN HILL |
| 7 | STRAITON WOODLANDS | 20 | LOWER MEON VALLEY |
| 8 | NORTH ITCHEN DOWNS | 21 | WHITELEY WOODLANDS |
| 9 | UPPER ITCHEN VALLEY | 22 | SHEDFIELD HEATHLANDS |
| 10 | BRIGHTON WOODLANDS | 23 | DURLEY CLAYLANDS |
| 11 | BRAMDEAN WOODLANDS | | |
| 12 | EAST WINCHESTER DOWNS | | |
| 13 | LOWER ITCHEN VALLEY | | |

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS











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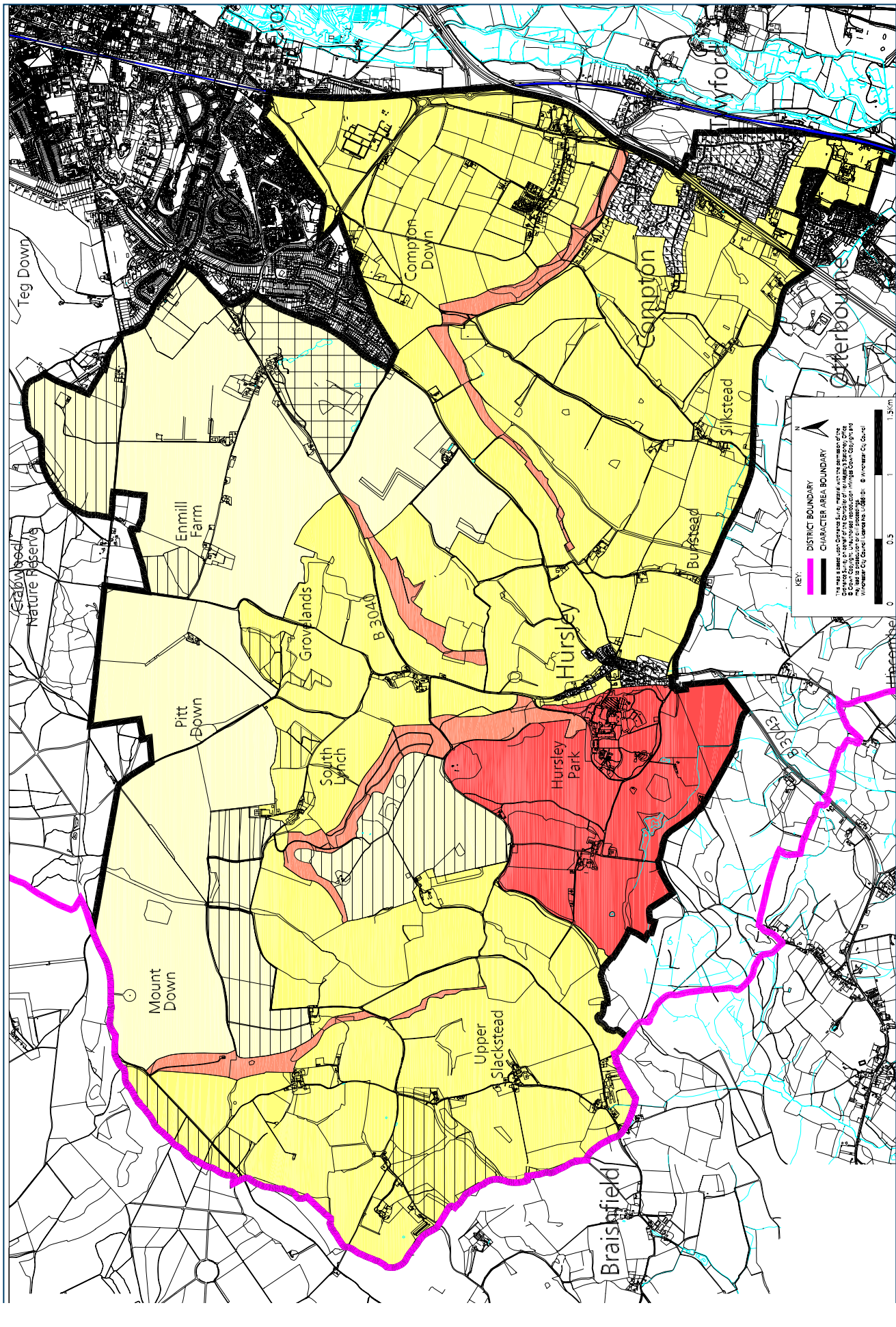
DISTRICT BOUNDARY

CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARY

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LANDSCAPE TYPES KEY

	OPEN ARABLE (EXPOSED)
	OPEN ARABLE
	CHALK & CLAY (FARMLAND)
	CHALK & CLAY (WOODLAND)
	CLAY PLATEAU (OPEN)
	CLAY PLATEAU (ENCLOSED)
	SCARP
	PARKLAND
	MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND (OPEN)
	MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND (ENCLOSED)
	PASTURE ON CLAY
	HEATHLAND
	PASTURE & WOODLAND - HEATH ASSOCIATED
	HORTICULTURE AND SMALLHOLDINGS
	RIVER VALLEY FLOOR
	RIVER VALLEY SIDE
	URBAN AREAS (LOCAL PLAN POLICY BOUNDARY)
	GOLF COURSES
	MILITARY BASES



4.01 Hursley Scarplands Landscape Character Area



Near Standon



Key Characteristics

- Distinctive topographical variation ranging from an east-west ridge in the north reaching 178m at Farley Mount, falling to lower lying land in the south. In between there are a number of ridges, scarps and valleys creating a topographically complex landscape.
- Upper Chalk geology, giving rise to thin calcareous soils, particularly to the north. To the south and west it is overlain by some areas of clay with flints particularly on dip slopes where there is a greater presence of tree cover.
- Predominance of arable fields influenced by informal enclosure of the 17th and 18th Centuries with some parliamentary type enclosure of the 18th and 19th Centuries situated around villages such as Compton & Shawford. Some later boundary loss in the 20th Century has also resulted in 'prairie' type fields at Pitt Down.
- Strong landscape structure provided by numerous small areas of ancient woodland, plantation woodland, tree belts, hangers and hedgerows.
- Wooded beech and yew scarps and beech shelterbelts.
- Numerous historic features including Hursley Park, an 18th Century deer park (with its associated estate type village of Hursley), Merdon Castle and Farley Mount.
- Important ecological habitats include calcareous grassland and juniper scrub associated with scarps and numerous semi-natural ancient woodlands, many of which are designated SINC's, including the butterfly reserve at Yew Hill.
- Network of narrow winding and often sunken lanes to the south, lending an historical character to the area.
- Varied visual enclosure, ranging from the distinctive open fields to the north, to the more enclosed, treed, undulating landscape of the south, all with a backdrop of woodland.
- Settlements concentrated close to main transport routes; the Hursley Road and the Otterbourne Road. Other routes tend to be narrow and winding with the exception of Roman roads, for example Sarum Road to the North.
- Panoramic rural views from Farley mount, Farley church, Merdon castle. Views from Compton Down to Winchester Cathedral.

Landscape Types within the area

Chalk and Clay (Farmland)	Chalk and Clay (Woodland)
Open Arable	Open Arable (Exposed)
Scarps	Historic Parkland

Settlement Types within the Area

Estate Village	20 th /21 st Century
Chalk Downland:	
Dry Valley	

Location and Boundaries

The Hursley Scarplands Landscape Character Area is located to the south-east of Winchester city. Its western boundary is formed by the district boundary with Test Valley Borough. The northern boundary is defined by West Wood and Crab Wood, which fall within the Sparsholt Woodlands Landscape Character Area. The southern boundary of the character area is defined by Poles Lane and the southern boundary of Hursley Park, where the geological transition from chalk to clay is marked by a change in topography and increase in woodland cover. The eastern boundary is defined by the change in topography and land use, relating to the valley of the River Itchen and the settlement edge of Winchester.

Formative Influences

The complex landform of this area is derived from the underlying soft Upper Chalk, with frequent deposits of clay with flints particularly to the south and west of the character area. This has resulted in the formation of scarps, ridges and dry valleys on a broadly north-south alignment.

This varied topography has influenced the land use of the area, with areas of downland and hangers on the steep scarps. Elsewhere, the rolling downland has allowed the enclosure of medium to large fields. The majority of these have wavy boundaries resulting from their relatively early enclosure, from late medieval times to the 18th Century. To the north of the area later enclosure, in the 18th or 19th Centuries, followed by 20th Century boundary loss, has resulted in even larger arable fields.

The area has a long history of settlement and is archaeologically rich, including the Scheduled Ancient Monuments of Merdon Castle, Farley Mount and the Park Pale at Hursley Park.

Landscape and Settlement Description

The undulating landform and the scarps are the key features of the landscape and though woodland is by no means the dominant land use, the woodland and the hedgerow network forms a strong landscape structure particularly to the south, enclosing the fairly large fields. To the north, the high topography and hedgerow loss have resulted in an exposed landscape characterised by large tracts of undulating arable farmland, often set against a backdrop of woodland. Throughout the character area woodland features fairly prominently in views to the south and relates most commonly to the scarps and footpaths or tracks. Further west, these views extend over Ampfield wood within the adjacent Cranbury Woodlands Character Area.

In areas that have not been agriculturally improved, this chalk upland provides some important ecological habitats, including calcareous grassland (such as Farley Down and Yew Hill), juniper scrub and 19th century woodland plantation on steep scarp slopes (South Lynch, Boosey Hanging, Juniper Bank) and pockets of ancient semi-natural woodland (such as Pages Copse, Grovelands Copse and Millers Copse).

The character area has an ancient character and a strong rural appearance, particularly to the south and west with the enclosed fields and the winding, often sunken lanes. To the north there is a sense of tranquillity, but the landscape is more exposed and windswept.

The main settlement, Hursley, is an estate village lying to the south of the character area. It probably originated to service Merdon Castle, but gained its current character with the development of Hursley Park from the 18th century. It has a linear form, relating to its valley setting. This pattern has remained unchanged, merely expanding lengthways along the

main route from Winchester to Romsey, yet confined between the northern and southern lodges of Hursley Park House and the Park Pale to the west. Significant tree belts clearly define the northern and southern extremities of the village, adding to its well-treed character. The buildings are predominantly two storey residential properties, with a church, pub and shops; many with steeply pitched clay tiled roofs and gabled dormer windows. They encompass a wide range of ages and architectural character, from 16th Century cottages through to post-war housing estates. The Tudor estate cottages are particularly distinctive.

Compton Street similarly has a linear form due to its location in a dry-valley at the foot of a scarp. Here too, the buildings are predominantly residential in character, two storey and constructed of locally traditional materials including flint, clay plain tiles, red brick and thatch, plus slate. Pitt, though smaller, also lies in a valley and has a similar linear form.

In contrast, Compton Down and South Down have developed on the relatively high land of dip slopes. These have developed predominantly in the 20th Century and have a fairly dispersed form, characterised by detached dwellings set within comparatively spacious and well-treed plots.

Key Issues

- Increased field sizes through 20th century hedgerow removal and field subdivision with post and wire fencing
- Loss of parkland characteristics at Hursley Park.
- Scrub encroachment and woodland plantation on scarps, loss of important habitats
- Intrusive 20th century farm buildings within open arable landscape
- Noise from motorway, impact on tranquillity of the eastern part of the character area
- Loss of chalk grassland, generally to arable
- Declining farmland bird populations
- Derelict army base at Bushfield Camp

Landscape Strategies

- Conserve and enhance downland pockets.
- Conserve and enhance juniper scrub. Survey and monitor regeneration rates.
- Conserve and enhance the structure and condition of woodlands, through appropriate traditional woodland management, such as thinning, coppicing, replanting, ride and edge management and the restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites to semi-natural communities.
- Restore and replant fragmented hedgerows in areas where there is a strong hedgerow network, particularly to the southern and western parts of the area.

- Create and appropriately manage substantial expanses of permanent chalk grassland to reduce threat to farmland birds, including the stone curlew, particularly to the north of the area.
- 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.
- Monitor distinctive key species of chalk grassland (e.g. Juniper and butterflies) and declining farmland birds to measure success of biodiversity strategy;
- Manage roadside verges which support chalk grassland appropriately.
- Encourage environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural practices, to minimise fertiliser and soil run-off for example, which could lead to the pollution of watercourses and the chalk aquifer.
- Conserve and enhance historic archaeological sites and their setting, such as Farley Mount, Merdon Castle and Hursley Park.
- Conserve and restore the landscape and built features of Hursley Park as appropriate, in particular through continued replacement tree planting, woodland management and the restoration of pasture.
- Conserve important long views to Winchester Cathedral, and other long views from high points

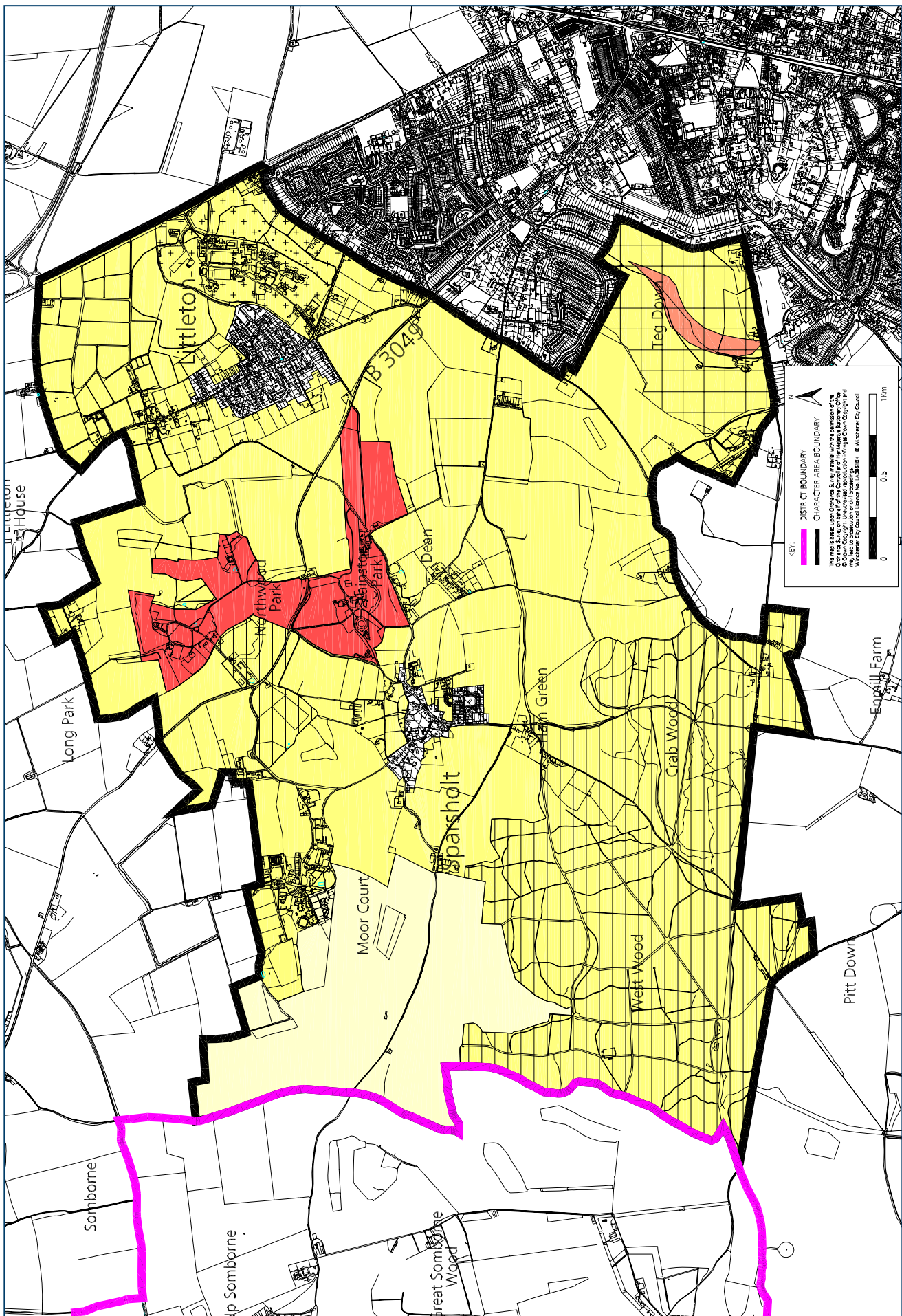
Built Form strategies

- Resist visually intrusive development on elevated ridges, including large-scale farm structures and telecommunications masts.
- Plant locally indigenous species to minimise the impact of visually intrusive buildings.
- Conserve local building materials such as red brick, white colour-washed brick, flint, clay tiles and thatch, and promote their use in any new development.
- Conserve the distinct form and architectural character of Hursley in relation to the Hursley Park Estate.
- New development should respect the existing building character in terms of materials and architectural detail.

- Conserve the well-treed rural setting of villages
- New development should respect the traditional location of settlements within valleys and along and the base of scarps.
- New development should respect the historic linear form of existing settlements.

Key Designations

- **Conservation areas:**
Hursley
Compton Street
- **Scheduled Ancient Monuments:**
Park Pale to the north, west and south west of Hursley Park (Mon. No. 34132)
Merdon Castle, Hursley (Mon. No. 34131)
Two bowl barrows 120m NW of Texas, Oliver's Battery (Mon. No.12145)
Two bowl barrows 200m N of Attwoods Drove Farm, Compton (Mon. No. 12121)
Hilltop enclosure 190m NW of Farley Mount (Mon. No. 34130)
- **SSSI's:**
None
- **SINCs:**
Pages Copse; Grovelands Copse;
Orchard Copse; Ampfield Wood (part);
Miller's Copse; Gudge Copse;
Hursley Park Wood; Yew Hill (Reservoir);
Bushfield Camp A., Oakwood Copse;
Sparrowgrove Copse; Farley Mount (small part);
Hursley Park; Farley Down;
Juniper Hill / Nan Trodd's Hill; Yew Hill
(also a Butterfly Conservation Trust Reserve);
Nan Trodd's Down.
- **English Heritage Register:**
Compton Street
- **Parks listed in the Hampshire Register of Historic Parks and Gardens :**
Hursley Park, (Site No. 1437) 18th C Deer Park.
Farley House and Parnholt Wood (Site No.1534)
Pre 1810 park.
Farley Mount (Site No. 1535) 1930-40
monument to a horse.
- **Countryside Heritage Areas:**
Ampfield



4.02 Sparsholt Woodlands Landscape Character Area



Near Sparsholt



Key Characteristics

- High ridge to the south with land generally falling to the north-west (towards the Test Valley) and to the north-east (to the Itchen Valley).
- Undulating well-drained chalkland landscape to the north-west of Winchester, forming part of the setting of the City.
- Medium-scale arable landscape with a strong hedgerow network.
- Strong rural character, dominated by woodlands, in particular Crab Wood and West Wood (Farley Mount Country Park).
- Medium-sized fields with straight boundaries to the north of the area created by formal agreement at the time of parliamentary enclosures of the late 18th and 19th Centuries. Fields to the south have less regular boundaries, associated with enclosure from the late medieval period and 18th Century.
- Influence of parkland landscape visually evident within central part of character area, dominated by Lainston House
- Important ecological habitats include a large block of mixed woodland including Crab Wood (SSSI), with hazel coppice, rich ground flora, woodbanks and remnants of wood pasture with old pollarded beech. Other woodland SINCs including smaller ancient woodlands are found throughout the northern part of the character area.

- A large area of calcareous grassland at Teg Down (SINC), now the Royal Winchester Golf Course, including some species-rich areas on the scarp slope in the middle of the golf course.
- Fairly visually enclosed landscape due to the strong woodland and hedgerow structure.
- Littleton Stud, with its small enclosed paddocks; the dominant military character of Sir John Moore Barracks and Teg Down golf course to the east of the character area have all modified a proportion of the landscape in this area.
- Network of footpaths and narrow winding, often sunken, lanes lends an historical character to the area.
- Numerous historical features, including Lainston Park and the ruins of St. Peters Church within its grounds; Northwood Park; a roman villa in West Wood and numerous tumuli, many of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- The two main settlements at Sparsholt and Littleton are Saxon in origin and nucleated in form, although the 20th Century development in Littleton is more linear.

Landscape Types within the Area:

Chalk and Clay (Farmland)	Chalk and Clay (Woodland)
Open Arable (Exposed)	Scarps
Historic Parkland	

Settlement Types within the Area:

Chalk Downland: Hill Top

Location and Boundaries:

This character area lies to the north-west of Winchester, and is defined to the west by the Test Valley District boundary, to the south by the outer edge of West Wood and Crab Wood, which coincides with the ridge along Sarum Road. The built edge of Winchester defines the eastern boundary and the northern boundary is largely defined, topographically, by the higher landform and greater presence of woodland, before the landscape falls away to the north to the open arable valley landscape of the Crawley Downs.

Formative Influences:

The geology and landscape of this area is dominated by Upper Chalk with infrequent deposits of clay with flints. The majority of the woodland is on chalk rather than clay, and consists largely of beech with oak, hazel and yew. The highest land is to the south of the character area and generally falls to the north and east.

The arable landscape seen today has been influenced by late 18th and 19th Century parliamentary type enclosure of former grazing land, creating medium-sized fields with straight boundaries. The exception is an area to the south enclosed in the 17th and 18th Centuries, where the fields characteristically have wavy boundaries.

The majority of Crab Wood and West Wood, though ancient, have been subject to replanting. However, many smaller areas of ancient woodland in the character area, particularly those associated with Northwood Park, are ancient semi-natural woodland that have not been subject to replanting.

Much of the open arable landscape west of Moorcourt Farm derives from enclosures formed by the 19th and 20th Century clearance of West Wood to form arable land and, therefore, has a strong physical and visual link with the remainder of this wood.

In the 19th Century, Littleton became a centre for training racehorses, which exercised on Worthy Down and Flowerdown (now Sir John Moore Barracks). This tradition still continues with Littleton Stud, resulting in the pattern of small scale enclosed fields. The stud, the barracks and Teg Down golf course and to some extent the Sparsholt Agricultural College have all influenced/modified the local landscape in parts of the character area.

Landscape and Settlement Description

Woodland and mature hedgerows feature strongly within the character area and, as such, are its unifying features. The Crab Wood and West Wood complex covers a large proportion of the character area and provides an important wildlife and amenity facility. Part of Crab Wood is designated as an SSSI.

The arable landscape, though consisting of medium to large-scale fields, maintains a fairly enclosed character due to the presence of woodland and woodland belts, many of which are associated with parkland settings and well-treed hedgerows. The wooded parkland landscape associated with both Lainston House and Northwood Park contributes much to the distinctiveness of the character area, with avenues and ancient boundary woodland. In addition the horse chestnut avenue along part of the Stockbridge Road also forms a strong feature within the character area.

Teg Down golf course contains some important ecological areas of calcareous grassland, particularly on the scarp slope.

The key settlements are Sparsholt and Littleton. Both

are thought to be Saxon in origin. The village of Sparsholt has a strong link with the landscape, lying on high ground on a clay cap within a strong treed structure. It loosely nucleates around the 12th Century church, which acts as a focal point. The majority of Littleton has developed within the 20th Century in a linear form along the Crawley Road, although original village lies to the north, slightly separated on higher land. Both Sparsholt and the old part of Littleton have retained a low-density rural appearance.

The majority of the older dwellings within Sparsholt are 17th Century, other buildings date from the 19th Century, but many have also been built in the 20th Century. The village includes a variety of building styles and materials, and is particularly characterised by steeply pitched roofs with clay tiles. The older part of Littleton contains a number of timber-framed 16th and 17th Century buildings, while the majority of the village was developed in the 20th Century and has a more suburban character. Boundaries in both Sparsholt and Littleton are largely banked and hedged.

Many of the minor roads within the character area radiate out from Sparsholt and are often narrow, winding, steeply banked and wooded. The busier roads within the character area radiate out from Winchester, on routes to Stockbridge, Crawley and Andover. Some of these are aligned on Roman roads and are typically straight, direct and often tree-lined.

Key Issues

- Ancient woodland and hedgerow/hedgerow tree management.
- Influence of modern non-agricultural land uses on the character of the area, for example the barracks, the college, the stud and the golf course.
- Low biodiversity value of large areas of coniferous woodland
- Management of historic parkland and loss of pasture to arable.
- Management of important ecological habitats.

Landscape Strategies

- Conserve and enhance the structure and condition of woodlands and wood pasture, through appropriate traditional woodland management, such as thinning, coppicing, replanting, ride and edge management, in order to conserve key species.
- Restore locally appropriate semi-natural communities through the replacement or enhancement of plantations on ancient woodland sites.
- Restore and enhance hedgerow structures through replanting and appropriate management, using locally indigenous species, to link existing semi-natural habitats.

- Monitor and minimise the impacts of modern non-agricultural land uses on the landscape and enhance through appropriate siting and planting.
- Monitor key ancient woodland and woodland ride species to measure the success of the biodiversity strategy;
- Conserve and enhance Historic Park landscapes through appropriate management plans, returning arable to pasture and resisting inappropriate development.
- Restore and enhance the biodiversity of golf courses and 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.
- Encourage environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural practices to reduce potential for adverse effects on the underlying aquifer and the River Itchen and River Test.

Built Form Strategies

- Conserve and respect the rural hill top locations of settlements in the area, set within their structure of mature trees.
- Conserve and respect the nucleated form of Sparsholt and the linear form of Littleton.
- Integrate new development into the surrounding landscape through the use of locally indigenous planting and appropriate siting and detailing.
- Conserve and promote the use of local building materials such as red brick, white colour-washed brick, flint, clay plain tiles and long straw thatch.
- Conserve and promote the use of traditional garden and parkland boundaries such as brick and flint walls, palisade fencing, railings and non-coniferous hedging.

Key Designations

• **Conservation areas**

Sparsholt
Littleton

• **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

Bowl barrow 1km E of Farley Mount
(Mon. No. 12139)

Roman villa in Cow Down Copse
(Mon. No. 163HA)

St Peter's Church, Lainston House
(Mon. No. 165HA)

Romano-British farmstead and associated field system on Teg Down (Mon. No. 21902)

Three round barrows 500m WNW of Flowerdown House (Mon. No. 26702)

• **SINCs**

Northwood Park Woods; Strowden's Copse Belt; Garston's Woods; Privet Copse; Ower Wood; West Wood / Crab Wood Complex; Pitt Down; Little West Wood; Crabwood Farm Woodland; Royal Winchester Golf Course (Teg Down).

• **SSSI's**

Crab Wood

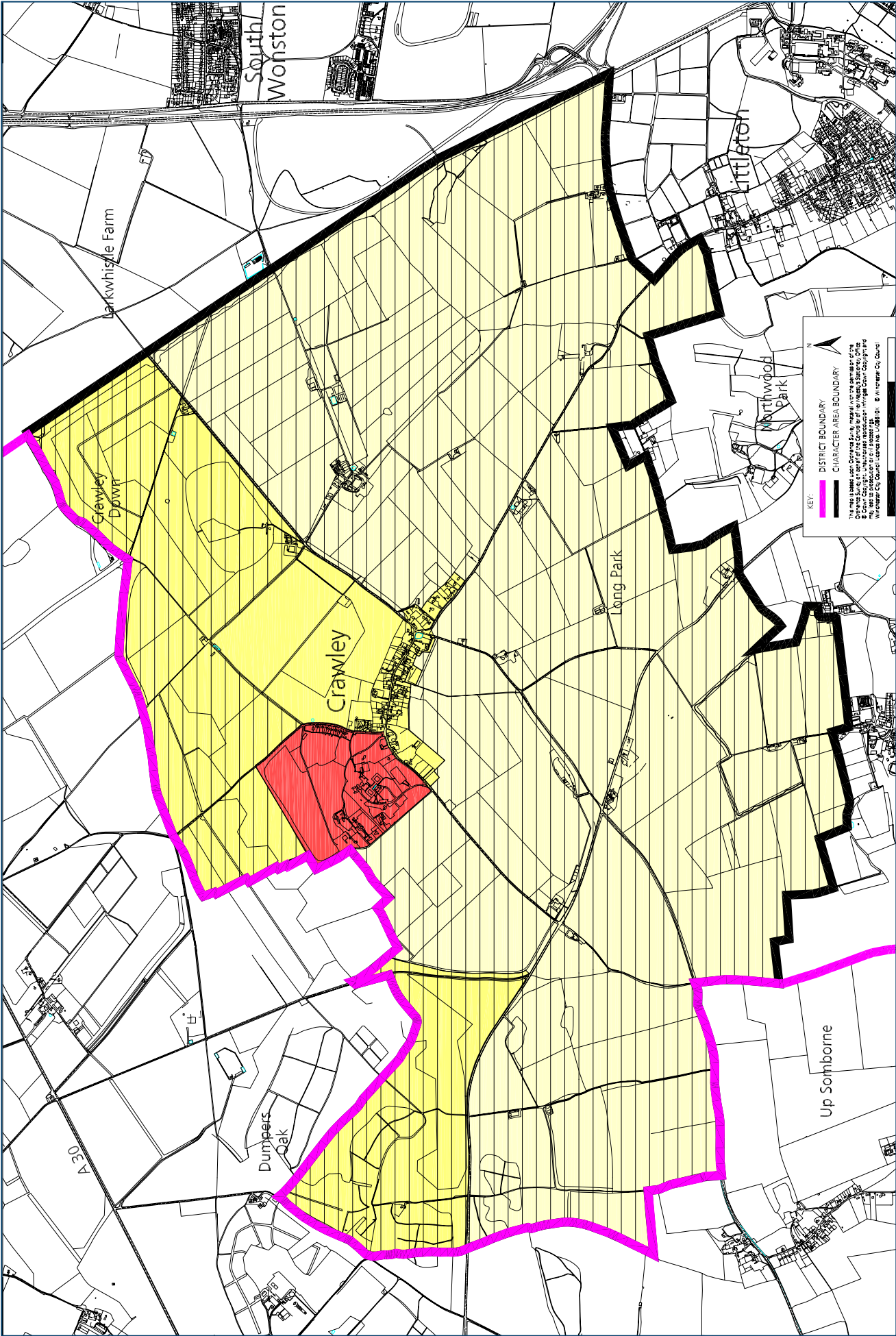
• **Parks listed in the Hampshire Register of Historic Parks and Gardens**

Sparsholt Manor (site 1570),

Lainston House (site 1572 English Heritage Grade II* Listed Park), Pre 1810 Park

• **Local Nature Reserves**

Crab Wood



4.03 *Crawley Downs Landscape Character Area*



Near Crawley



Key Characteristics

- A wide, open, gently rolling dry valley on a west-east alignment and forming part of catchment area of a tributary of the River Test
- Largely shallow, well-drained calcareous soils with a dry valley associated with gravel.
- Predominantly medium to large-scale arable fields with straight boundaries of low trimmed hedges. Historically this was an area of downland that was enclosed by formal agreement at the time of parliamentary enclosure in the 18th and 19th Centuries, followed by boundary loss in the 20th Century.
- Woodland confined to the northern edge of the district, consisting largely of 19th Century plantations (including Crawley Forest) and roadside shelterbelts.
- Historic 18th Century park of Crawley Court lies at the north-western extremity of the village of Crawley.
- Key ecological habitats of nature conservation concern; declining farming birds, arable field margins and a small group of semi-natural ancient woods in the west of the area, centred on Whiteberry Copse.
- Visually contained to the north and south by the generally higher topography and higher proportion of trees and woodland.
- Visually exposed landscape, with much of the area particularly visible from Sparsholt College.
- Distinctive straight roads with direct routes, such as the A272, which follows the course of a Roman road.
- Crawley is the only settlement within the character area. The only other buildings are farmsteads and associated cottages.
- Crawley is situated in a sheltered dry valley and consequently has a linear form. It has a rural character with the majority of buildings constructed using traditional construction methods and materials such as flint, brick and long-straw thatch

Landscape Types within the Area

Open Arable	Open Arable (Exposed)
Chalk and Clay (Woodland)	Chalk and Clay (Farmland)
Historic Parkland	

Settlement Types within the Area

Chalk Downland: Dry Valley

Location and Boundaries

Crawley Downs Character Area is located to the north west corner of Winchester District. It is bounded to the south by the Sparsholt Woodlands Landscape

Character Area and to the north by the rising land and by Crawley Forest and Crawley Clump plantations. Trees along the Andover Road (A272), create a strong visual boundary to the east. To the west, the District boundary identifies the character area boundary, however the visual envelope continues into the adjacent district of Test Valley.

Formative Influences

Soils here over-lie Upper Chalk, and tend to be shallow and well drained, with deeper fine silty calcareous soils in the dry valley. To the north and south of the character area the landscape is generally more treed, corresponding with the more clayey soils associated with adjacent areas of Clay with Flints.

Historically the area was used for sheep rearing, using an old open field system, but typically arable has now become the dominant form of agriculture. The landscape pattern is strongly influenced by the parliamentary enclosure acts of the late 18th and 19th Centuries, with rectangular fields with straight surveyed boundaries. More recently field rationalisation, associated with the increased mechanisation of agriculture, has resulted in hedgerow loss and the creation of some larger fields.

Landscape & Settlement Description

Woods tend to be small and isolated and are largely contained to the northern part of the character area. They are mostly 19th Century plantations, the largest being Crawley Forest. There are a few semi-natural ancient woodlands such as Bushy Copse and Long Copse, which have been assarted.

Crawley is the only village in the character area. It has developed along a single street, which has formed along a dry chalk valley. The manor (Crawley Court) which was demolished and redeveloped in the late 19th Century, is situated at the upper end of the village, while the village pond forms an important landmark at the eastern end; . The village has a strong rural character, consisting of detached cottages constructed using traditional local building materials and techniques. These include flint, brick, timber-frames, long straw and combed wheat reed thatch and clay plain tiles. Other forms of settlement in the area consist of farmsteads and their associated workers cottages, for example, New Barn.

Key Issues

- Declining farmland birds and arable weeds
- Loss and fragmentation of hedgerows through lack of appropriate management, during the second half of the 20th Century
- Opportunities for restoration of species rich chalk grassland
- Potential pollution of the aquifer and the Test from agricultural chemicals

Landscape Strategies

- Extend and reconnect links between existing isolated woodland and hedgerows, whilst retaining the open character of the downland.
- Manage over-trimmed hedgerows and neglected leggy hedgerows appropriately and replant gaps with locally indigenous species. Encourage the planting of new hedgerow trees and retention of self-sown hedgerow saplings.
- Conserve and enhance the structure and condition of ancient semi-natural woodlands, through appropriate traditional woodland management, such as thinning, coppicing, replanting, ride and edge management

- 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
- Restore over-mature shelter-belts.
- Create new broad-leaved woodlands on lower grades of agricultural land using locally indigenous tree and shrub species.
- Create and appropriately manage substantial areas of permanent chalk grassland to reduce threat to farmland birds, including the stone curlew. Monitor declining farmland birds to measure the success of the biodiversity strategy;
- Manage, appropriate, roadside verges which support chalk grassland.
- Encourage environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural practices, to minimise fertiliser and soil run-off for example, which could lead to the pollution of watercourses and the chalk aquifer.

Built Form Strategies

- Conserve the open rural character of the landscape by locating agricultural buildings close to existing farm groups and on lower lying land avoiding skylines.
- Reduce the impact of modern agricultural buildings by using traditional materials or dark colours and careful siting.
- Conserve the sheltered linear form of Crawley by encouraging residential dwellings to respond to local character in terms of location, materials, built form and detailing.
- Local building materials such as red brick, white colour-washed brick, flint, clay tiles and long straw thatch should be conserved, and their use promoted in new development.
- Traditional garden and parkland boundaries such as brick and flint walls, palisade fencing, railings and non-coniferous hedging should be conserved, and promoted in any new development.
- Conserve the intimate rural character of the narrow winding lanes and tracks by ensuring they are not altered through inappropriate road improvements. Conserve the soft road verges.

Key Designations

- Conservation Areas
Crawley

CONT

Key Designations cont.

- **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

Settlement site at Brockley Warren (Mon. No. 518HA)

Two round barrows on Crawley Down, 830m NNE of Warren House (Mon. No. 149HA)

Crawley Clump round barrows, Crawley Down (Mon. No. 148HA)

Round barrow 1600m NNW of Littleton (Mon. No. 150HA)

- **SSSI's**

None

- **SINC's**

Worthy Copse; Hoopshavers Copse; Whiteberry Copse; Long Copse; Bushy Copse and Turnpike Copse.

- **Parks listed in the Hampshire Register of Historic Parks and Gardens**

Crawley Court (site 1512) Pre-1810 Park