

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 2
LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL

BISHOP'S WALTHAM

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.

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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:

- *Main character area (Bishop's Waltham and setting to south, west and east): **Forest of Bere West 2e***
- *Secondary character area (north of Bishop's Waltham): **Owslebury and Corhampton Downs 7g.***

District level²

There are two character areas overall creating a landscape setting of contrast for the settlement of Bishop's Waltham. They identify key characteristics, issues and designations with landscape and built form strategies specific to each area.

- *Main landscape and townscape character area (for settlement and area to south-east, south and west): **Durley Claylands***
- *Secondary character area (north of Bishop's Waltham): **South Winchester Downs.***

1.1 Landscape Character

1.1.1 Durley Claylands Landscape Character Area

- Low-lying, gently undulating landscape of mixed clays, sands and loams
- Long views from open elevated ground across farmland; shorter views enclosed by woodland on lower lying ground
- Headwaters of the river Hamble around Bishop's Waltham with water-related features, including numerous ponds, springs, wells and associated wetland habitats and mills
- Variable landscape of arable and pasture, copses and scattered settlement
- Strong hedgerow and assorted woodland network
- Hedgerows often low but with large mature oaks, some of ancient origin; area is strongly associated with the Forest of Bere, a former royal hunting forest since the 11th century and the last to be disbanded in 1810; diverse character of woodland, heathland, grassland and wetland sites with high biodiversity and amenity value.

1.1.2 South Winchester Downs Landscape Character Area

- Large area of tranquil, undulating chalk downland stretching from Winchester to Meon valley, southern boundary of South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Remote, rural landscape of predominantly arable with some mixed farmland
- Numerous scattered farms, hamlets and villages

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

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

- Well-drained area of chalk with occasional areas of clay with flint creating a varied topography of hills, dry valleys, scarps and combes
- Significant areas of woodland mainly small copses in the vicinity of Bishop's Waltham
- Accessible countryside with good network of footpaths, tracks, drove roads and winding lanes with straight sections of Roman Road.

1.2 Townscape (Bishop's Waltham settlement)

- One of two main settlements in the character area (the other is Colden Common).
- Defined settlement gap³ retains the generally open and undeveloped nature of the area between Bishop's Waltham and Swanmore / Waltham Chase; avoiding coalescence of settlements retains individual identity within their wider setting
- Strong east-west linear footprint evolving from its origins as a spring line settlement
- Generally well integrated and contained by topography and tree cover
- A locally distinctive character with historic vibrant centre
- Distinctive contrast between the town and its countryside setting
- Generally a well defined edge of settlement; some ribbon development along main approach roads
- Good established footpath network connecting town and country and between neighbouring settlements; poorer connections through recent housing developments.

1.3 Landscape Types for Bishop's Waltham 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 landscape types (WLCA classification) are -

- a. Mixed Farmland and Woodland (open)
- b. Pasture on Clay
- c. Chalk and Clay (farmland).

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 Bishop's Waltham 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; WCLA

2.1.1 Landform

- Topography: the settlement of Bishop's Waltham evolved on lower ground around spring lines at the base of the South Downs, creating a distinctive east-west linear footprint
- Higher levels to the west are in Newtown and to the north-east around the school (c. 50-60m AOD); main historic centre is on lower ground (c. 40m AOD); high point is Durley Manor Farm (70m AOD); main east-west ridgeline to the north (over 80m AOD) and north-south ridgeline defined by the Botley Road (over 50m AOD)
- Open undulating landscape on higher ground contrasts with the more wooded and contained river valley setting in and around the southern part of the town (c. 40m AOD)
- Development has extended up the slopes as the settlement has grown although generally away from river banks and avoiding ridgelines; recent development continues to encroach onto higher ground.

2.1.2 Land cover

- Undulating open chalk downland to the north, mixed arable and pasture, with tree cover, mainly small woodland copses and distinctive beech hangers on high ground and skylines; good quality soils (grades 2 and 3); high ground across the valley to the south is mixed farmland on poorer (grade 4) soil, with sporadic scattering of larger woodland copses (not ancient woodland)
- Tree cover is more extensive on lower-lying ground in the Hamble valley, mainly as enclosure for small field boundaries, and includes assorted woodland alongside roads, paths and riverbanks; main species include oak, ash, hawthorn, hazel, field maple; rich pasture for grazing (cows) and horse paddocks
- Approach roads, lanes and field boundaries are generally well contained by hedgerows and tree cover
- Magnificent spreading oak trees are a feature of grassed verges and local hedgerows, the latter often low-clipped, occasionally high and unmaintained; ancient oaks still feature and are significant and highly valued assets reminiscent of the former Forest of Bere, as well as characteristic of park lugs, a locally distinctive feature associated with Bishop's Palace.

- Some of the more visually prominent lines of oaks are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), e.g. along the Park Lug adjacent King's Way between Bishop's Waltham and Waltham Chase; other areas with protected trees include a large area north of the Bishop's Palace ruins and field boundaries around Woodlea Nursery
- Abundant areas of publicly accessible grassed open space, mainly for sport and recreational use, along the south side of settlement; large area of well used informal green space to the north-east around Hoe.

2.2 Experiential/Perceptual

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

- Contrasting landscape character between Hamble river valley and tributaries as an intimate, contained landscape and the open, expansive mixed use fields on higher ground with long views of countryside and treed skylines beyond
- Pedestrian connectivity in countryside: good footpath network including national trails (King's Way, Pilgrims' Trail) linking Bishop's Waltham with other nearby hamlets and settlements; King's Way follows the line of the Park Lug and Roman Road; lanes north of the town link up with selected cycle routes within the SDNP
- Pedestrian connectivity in town: good footpath network around historic centre and through residential areas to main community facilities; no clear direction or legibility within more recent housing development; good links throughout with countryside
- Abundance of tree cover among rooftops and views of countryside create a distinctive semi-rural character
- Tranquil within residential areas away from main approach roads; birdsong predominant along rural lanes and footpaths; flocks of birds in fields around cricket field and horse paddocks.
- Far reaching panoramic views across countryside on higher ground
- The South Downs National Park Authority is seeking to apply for dark sky status to protect quality of countryside where dark skies are most significant and to promote improvement of remaining areas. Opportunities to increase enjoyment of landscape and night skies as seen from within Bishop's Waltham and surrounding countryside.

2.3 Historic Environment

Ref: GIS constraints map; HICA; WLCA; WCC Historic Environment record

- The historic centre of Bishop's Waltham is a Conservation Area with many listed buildings; it remains relatively unaltered with on-street building frontages and retention of strong medieval grid plan of streets
- Buildings of contrasting ages from the historic core of the town to high proportion of 19th and 20th century development on the outskirts

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

- Scheduled Ancient Monument: Bishop's Palace ruins and fishponds within surrounding area, part of which is also on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens (deer park)
- Significant number of heritage assets within built and natural environment, including historic Park Lug features
- Line of Roman Road through Tangier View Farm in river valley.

2.4 Biodiversity

Ref: GIS constraints map; HICA; WLCA

- Protected sites for biodiversity include a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the Moors, which supports a species rich and diverse flora including local and rare plants confined to unimproved damp meadows; it is also a Local Nature Reserve, probably the richest site of its kind in the Hampshire Basin.
- Forest of Bere and Hamble Catchment Biodiversity Opportunity Areas in the character area
- Many Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in and around Bishop's Waltham, including unimproved grassland resource.

2.5 Visibility

A visibility constraints map for the Bishop's Waltham area is included at Appendix 1.

3.0 SENSITIVITY APPRAISAL OF AREAS

A number of individual sites and areas of land in and around Bishop's Waltham 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 Area around Tangier View Farm (SHLAA site 283)

- Context: integral part of Bishop Waltham's countryside setting to the south providing contained views across tributary of River Hamble to upper valley slopes and ridgeline from built environment; highest spot is Durley Point (70m AOD) with views in all directions
- Character: large open expanse of farmland, mainly pasture and arable, on higher north facing slopes of river valley; very tranquil rural setting with no traffic. Good footpath network through the area
- Agricultural land quality: poor - grade 3b on higher ground; grade 4 elsewhere on lower ground
- Important views: far-reaching panoramic views to north, north-west and south-east from public rights of way (PRoWs) through site, including King's Way; uninterrupted views north across valley to various recreational activities along southern edge of the settlement, including cricket field, allotments, and beyond to the SDNP; only detractors are large pylons and overhead cables through valley
- Skyline features: SDNP
- Landmarks to connect with place: Bishop's Waltham settlement seen within its wider countryside setting.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A ***most sensitive*** location in terms of visual and landscape impacts as this area is an integral part of Bishop's Waltham's countryside setting and is visually prominent from the settlement and SDNP beyond.

3.2 Area around the Vineyard and Southfields Farm (SHLAA site 356)

- Context: mixed use, urban fringe along the southern edge of the settlement comprising smaller fields (mainly horse paddocks) close to housing with a small vineyard on higher south-facing slopes of the river valley; recreational activities either side with allotments and cricket field to the west and main recreation ground with football pitches and pavilion to the east; small fields, mainly pasture, on lower slopes.

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

- Character: well contained by local topography in northern part of the site around Southfields Farm; also by boundary hedgerows and tree cover, including large, spreading oaks (TPO) along northern boundary adjacent housing); open aspect from the Vineyard; tranquil, special sense of place on lower slopes through valley floor; PRoW adjacent Southfield Farm
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4 (poor)
- Panoramic or important views: west from higher ground to Durley Street on skyline; distant views of countryside to south-east over Botley Road ridgeline
- Skyline features and landmarks to connect with place: Durley Point; Durley Street.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

Adjoins a well-defined edge of the settlement and comprises varied urban fringe activities including recreation, which integrate well with the countryside beyond. Rural lower slopes and valley floor are **most sensitive** due to their special quality and sense of place in terms of local landscape character. The change of use from pasture to horse paddocks on the higher slopes creates a more suburban feel and, when combined with views across the valley, results in **moderate sensitivity**. The area between Southfields Farm and edge of built development is **least sensitive** in terms of landscape and visual impacts.

3.3 Area around Woodley Nursery (SHLAA sites 1877, 1879, 2390, 2399, 2520, 2554, 2569)

- Context: urban fringe mixed use on western edge of the town, comprising former nursery complex and small fields, mainly horse paddocks on higher more level ground adjacent housing along Winchester Road with pasture/meadow on lower valley slopes
- Character: well contained by topography and boundary vegetation, including large, mature oaks protected by TPOs; some traffic noise; PRoW through valley west of the area
- Agricultural land quality: diverse mix of grades; poor grade 4 on lower valley slopes and higher ground adjacent Winchester Road; grades 3a and 3b for the remainder of the site
- Panoramic or important views: none
- Skyline features: Botley Road on ridgeline to east
- Landmarks to connect with place: Durley Street across valley; houses along Winchester Road.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

The meadow between the former nursery buildings and cricket field is a **highly sensitive** location as it forms part of the rural valley setting with protected trees and lies adjacent to a PRoW. The Park Lug along the field boundary north of the nursery buildings is also **highly sensitive** in terms of its heritage, amenity and biodiversity value. The fields on higher ground between the nursery buildings and houses along Winchester Road are **moderately sensitive** as they are not an integral part of the rural valley landscape and not near a PRoW. The remainder of the area close to houses on Winchester Road is **least sensitive** in terms of landscape and visual impacts.

3.4 Area adjacent Priory Park Recreation Ground (SHLAA sites 281, 284, 2572)

- Context: adjacent to urban fringe mixed use along southern edge of settlement with main recreation ground, football pitches and pavilion; distinctive character as part of the main east/west and secondary north/south valley settings; large grassed area with public access on lower slopes
- Character: main field of pasture bordered by clipped hedges and large feature oaks; good footpath network.
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4 (poor)
- Important or panoramic views: distant views from higher ground across valley to Durley Street with 180 degree views to west, south and east; no views from lower slopes
- Skyline features and landmarks to connect with place: Botley Road on ridgeline to the east; Winters Hill to the west.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **moderately sensitive** location. Although there are few constraints in terms of biodiversity and heritage, and there are limited views of the site from the public realm, the area forms part of the rural valley character within the countryside setting of Bishop's Waltham.

3.5 Area around Coppice Hill (SHLAA sites 280, 852, 2398, 2519)

- Context: urban fringe activities on eastern edge of settlement along main route to Waltham Chase and Wickham; part of the area is close to an SSSI and the SDNP
- Character: small, well contained fields, mainly horse paddocks, on level/gently sloping ground between houses adjacent Coppice Hill and King's Way; large spreading oaks along the Park Lug adjacent a PRoW; desire lines through field opposite Shore Lane connecting houses with King's Way
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4 (poor)
- Panoramic views: none
- Important views: none
- Skyline features: none
- Landmarks to connect with place: none.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

The field opposite the SDNP boundary and The Moors SSSI with a more wooded, riverside character is a **most sensitive** location. Western boundary is **highly sensitive** with Park Lug heritage feature and protected trees adjoining King's Way. The **least sensitive** area is adjacent to existing development (by Shore Lane) which provides opportunities to improve and strengthen footpath links.

3.6 Area south of Botley Road (SHLAA site 2524)

- Context: high ground with open aspect on the Botley Road ridgeline as seen on the skyline from Bishop's Waltham. King's Way national trail runs alongside northern boundary
- Character: large gently sloping field with rural character; very tranquil

- Agricultural land quality: grade 4 (poor)
- Panoramic views: far reaching, uninterrupted views in all directions
- Important views: elevated views of Bishop's Waltham and SDNP beyond
- Skyline features: this site.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

Views in all directions make this a **most sensitive** location for visual impact. Site is on the skyline when seen from Bishop's Waltham, with uninterrupted views of the SDNP from within the site. This is further reinforced by its rural character and location adjacent to a national trail and Park Lug feature.

3.7 Area opposite the Chase PH, Wickham Road (SHLAA site 2406)

- Context: part of the important semi-rural area within the settlement gap east of Bishop's Waltham on the main route to Waltham Chase and Wickham
- Character: large area of pasture on level ground contained by boundary vegetation; large, mature oaks to boundaries with some protected along the Park Lug adjacent King's Way / Pilgrims' Trail; rural character, but with detracting elements, e.g. pylons and overhead cables are an intrusive feature through the centre of site; traffic noise from Wickham Road
- Agricultural land quality: grade 4 (poor) and 3b
- Panoramic views: none
- Important views: none
- Skyline features: none
- Landmarks to connect with place: none.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

A **most sensitive** location with potential impacts on significant trees (including the Park Lug feature), existing water course and associated biodiversity, and the settlement gap between Bishop's Waltham and Waltham Chase.

3.8 Area north of Hoe (SHLAA sites 1968, 2521, 2525, 2570)

- Context: adjacent northern edge of settlement within SDNP
- Character: tranquil, semi-rural with no traffic; includes a cemetery and a large, elevated expanse of informal open space adjacent to SINC woodland (site 2525); area is accessible and well used by the local community for informal recreation, e.g. dog walking, flying kites; perception of a village common; recent clearance of vegetation in the field to the south (site 1968) has had an adverse impact on landscape character
- Agricultural land quality: grade 3b
- Panoramic views: east and south east across countryside within SDNP
- Important views: SDNP, treed skyline
- Landmarks to connect with place: setting of Bishop's Waltham within SDNP.

Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

Most sensitive in terms of its elevated location, long uninterrupted views across the SDNP and proximity to designated sites.

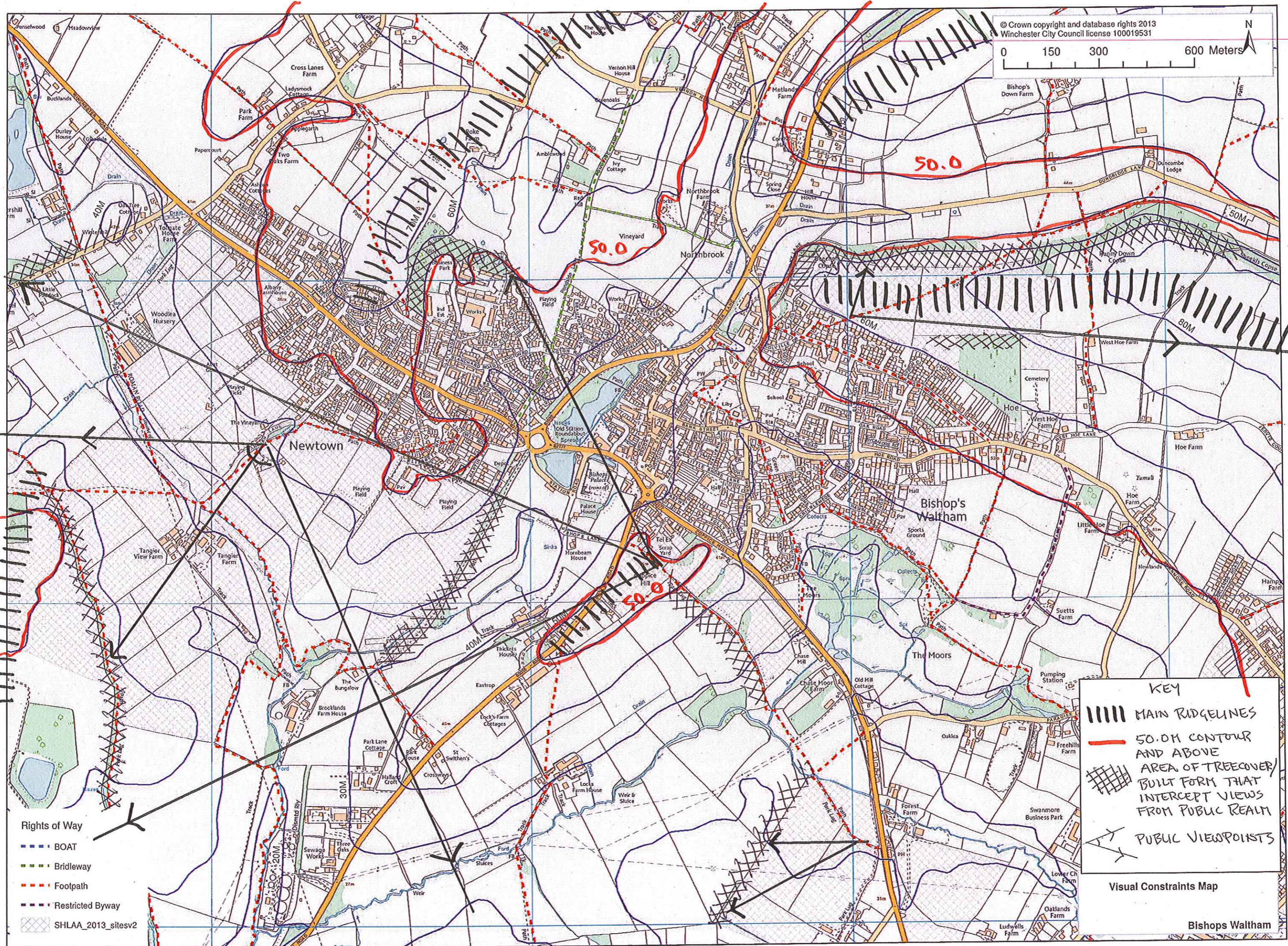
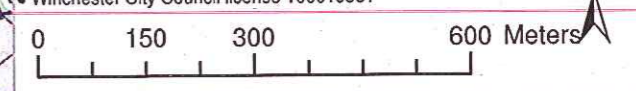
4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE ISSUES FOR BISHOP'S WALTHAM

Durley Claylands Landscape Character Area

- Proximity to South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Undesignated areas with special qualities that contribute significantly to setting of Bishop's Waltham are vulnerable to change
- Visual intrusion of large pylons and overhead cables
- Coalescence of settlements (Bishop's Waltham, Waltham Chase and Swanmore) including incremental small-scale development particularly along main routes
- Further loss of farmland, including loss of boundary hedges and oak trees, to equestrian use and development to accommodate planned growth, resulting in fragmentation of historic field patterns, loss of biodiversity and amenity value
- Potential loss of valued green space
- Over formalisation of semi-natural areas to provide recreational facilities
- Loss of rural lane character with increased traffic use
- Degradation and loss of significant locally distinctive features in the landscape, e.g. Park Lug, sunken lanes.

South Winchester Downs Landscape Character Area

- Impact of intrusive structures and development on high ground and skylines
- Increased number of visitors to the area with SDNP designation creating pressures on town and countryside
- Potential pressure to urbanise rural lanes with additional kerbing, signage, passing bays, etc to accommodate increased traffic volume
- Degradation and loss of significant, locally distinctive features in the landscape, e.g. beech hangers
- Suburban fringe encroachment, e.g. horse paddocks, fencing, outbuildings.



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

- KEY**
- MAIN RIDGELINES
 - 50.0M CONTOUR AND ABOVE
 - AREA OF TREECOVER/ BUILT FORM THAT INTERCEPT VIEWS FROM PUBLIC REALM
 - PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Visual Constraints Map

