

# LAND AT WATERMILL BRIDGE, NEWBURY

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL WITH IMPACT STATEMENT (LVAIS)  
OCTOBER 2021

# ISSUE SHEET

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## 1.0

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

fabrik Chartered Landscape Architects have been appointed by Bewley Homes to carry out a Landscape and Visual Assessment with an Impact Statement (LVAIS) of Land at Watermill Bridge, Newbury (The Site) and its surrounding area, in order to consider the likely physical and visual impacts arising as a result of the proposed development.

The desktop survey carried out includes the review of Ordnance Survey maps, interactive maps, aerial photography, published landscape character assessment documents, planning policy and the emerging development proposals. The field work was carried out on 9th March 2021 and recorded the existing landscape features, Site conditions and key representative views.

The Site has a typical settlement fringe character on the edge of the predominately unlit residential environment and distinct landscape features to be retained include its topographic profile; the Public Footpath; the field boundary vegetation, including the majority of the internal mature tree belt alongside the tributary stream and a parallel tree belt, a number of mature Oaks and green buffers; peaceful quality relationship with the river courses; and annexed views from the AONB and wider countryside to the south.

Overall the night time character of the Site and its surrounding area is predominantly dark with exception of light sources including; internal lighting to Common Farmhouse within the Site; internal lights to dwellings, occasional low level bollard lights within private drives and external garden lighting in Washwater; flood and uplighting associated with the Woodpecker pub and car park in Washwater; Standard highway light columns on the Andover Road roundabout and slip road to the A34; and interior lighting from the dwellings west of Andover Road opposite the Site and single standard highway light column at the road junction leading to the roundabout off old Andover Road. Other than the noise, there is no sense of traffic or associated headlights from vehicles using the A34.

A series of key representative viewpoints have been considered in this LVAIS to demonstrate a range of receptors at various distances from the Site. The baseline visual assessment reveals that the Site is well-screened and that public views of the Site (its boundary vegetation and internal area) are only possible from the immediate environment along Wash Water (north of the Site), the A343 Andover Road and Penwood Road (east of the Site). Views of the Site begin to diminish and become difficult to distinguish further away from the local environment due to a combination of intervening vegetation, built form and undulating topography. Subsequently, views of the Site from the distant environment are truncated. Views of the Site from the AONB are obscured by intervening layers of vegetation.

The development proposes up to 350 dwellings set within a retained landscape framework of open space and vegetation. The proposed built form has been located and orientated so as to be sensitive to the settlement edge and provide natural surveillance to the areas of proposed open space. It has been prepared considering the retention of the key landscape features of the Site (namely the vegetated boundaries and relationship with the water corridors); the tiers of landscape policy; and landscape character guidance, alongside the visual constraints associated with the local landscape. The proposed development therefore:

- Retains existing high-quality tree belts/hedgerow/trees and includes additional tree and shrub planting through the Site that maintains and enhances the character of the borough's rivers and tributaries whilst enhancing biodiversity. This provides green corridors which retain opportunities for wildlife connectivity. The retention of the Site's vegetation provides a mature landscape setting for the new development.

- Provides new areas of native woodland belt planting and hedge planting, part of which is to compensate for the loss of the area of tree and scrub proposed to be removed as a result of the regrading and site access works;
- Retains the existing public footpath within a tree lined green corridor;
- Proposes tree planting adjacent to the A34 boundary, reflecting the local area and treed character of the adjacent Chase woodland. This will maintain the visual character and amenity of the area;
- Conserves the rural character to the River Enborne through the implementation of blue and green corridors through the Site and a new riverside park incorporating existing trees and planting, semi-natural attenuation and wetland features;
- Proposes a streetscape which will be complemented by street tree planting, and where possible hedgerow and shrub planting to set the proposed development into an enhanced landscape framework. Where possible, large trees will be positioned so that they become apparent above rooftops in the long-term, allowing the dwellings to nestle into a treed setting.
- Maintains the character of the approach towards and from Wash Water along the A343 Andover Road, the A34 and Wash Water Road by the retention of the majority of the boundary vegetation;
- Incorporates sustainable urban drainage systems, coordinated with the ecological proposals to conserve, enhance and contribute to local amenity and habitat creation.
- Provide areas of informal open space to serve the existing and new residents alike which exceeds the policy requirement.
- Responds positively to the Basingstoke and Dean Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD and North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership expectations on development affecting the setting of the AONB by providing up to 20m native vegetation biodiversity buffer zone along the boundaries, with the proposed development fronting onto this zone, creating a positive interface and providing further vegetated woodland/tree belt measures against the setting to the AONB.
- The Site will also ensure that there is care and restraint over the use of lighting within the development to minimise harm to the night time dark skies of the Site and local area.

The development responds positively to the following local and national policies:

- In the Basingstoke and Dean Local Plan: Policy EM1, EM5
- In the NPPF (2021): Section 2 para 8, subsection C; section 8 para 98 and para 100; section 12 para 126, 130, 131 and 132; section 14 para 154 and para 161, subsection C; section 15 para 174, 176 and 185. The development does not fulfil the objectives of section 12 para 127 of the NPPF.
- In the NPPG: Section , para 004, 029 and 036; section 18 para 013; section 26 para 001.
- In the NDG: The 10 characteristics of a well designed place.

The assessment of effects is based on the delivery of a high quality scheme, which reflects the character of the local area. Overall, landscape effects will be limited to the Site, with visual effects limited to those in the immediate environs due to the combination of intervening mature vegetation, built form and topography.

The effects of the proposed development on this Site will commence at the Site enabling and construction stage. The land use and character of the Site will change from that of pastureland and a farmstead (Common Farm - with associated storage and outbuildings) set within a well treed framework associated with the field boundaries and the River Enborne, to a construction site with an emerging domestic scale built form, set within the retained vegetated field boundaries; and ultimately that of a new, high quality residential scheme with a community hub, set within areas of retained green infrastructure (forming new areas of publicly accessible green space,

including allotments), retained and bolstered boundary vegetation and retained PRoW (Footpath 116/9/1) access across the Site (albeit with a slightly amended east to west alignment).

During the construction stage where there will be a minor effect upon the topography of the Site, to accommodate development platforms, and the formation of the road corridor, swales and attenuation basins. Effects are considered to be minor adverse.

Considering the removal of the existing vegetation to create the new Site entrance, effects will initially be minor adverse on the existing vegetation of the Site. However, with the introduction of new tree planting to the Site boundaries (including up to 20m buffer to the existing woodland/tree belts and River Enborne) to the new built form and street scene, effects on the existing tree and hedgerow stock, will be moderate beneficial on balance.

In terms of night-time character during the construction phases, it is predicted that there will be an increase in lighting experienced across the Site for security and safety reasons and that this will see the sequential increase in lighting across the landscape associated with the initial construction phases. The overall effect on the night-time character during the construction phase is predicted to be direct, medium term and temporary and to be of substantial to moderate adverse significance.

On completion and during the operational stage, the proposals will retain the key components of character at the Site level, which include the inherent sloping landform to the River Enborne and its tributary; the field boundary vegetation, including the majority of the internal mature treebelts, a number of mature Oaks and green buffers; and the landscape setting to the river courses. Despite the realignment of the PRoW (Footpath 116/9/1), access across the Site will remain and new routes introduced around the Site and along the proposed riverside park. Whilst the PRoW (Footpath 116/9/1) will be altered in a minor way, the path will remain set within green space to maintain its immediate green setting.

Despite measures proposals to minimise lighting across the Site to reflect the character of the local area (with lighting columns restricted to the main access into Andover Road, key internal road junctions, the communal hub and with the use of groundlevel solar studs along the riverside park and circular walking routes) it is predicted that effects on night-time character during the operational phase will nevertheless result in an increase in lighting experienced across the Site due to both the limited external lighting alongside the internal lighting to the dwellings. The magnitude of change is predicted to be medium, with the overall effect on the night-time character of the Site during the operational phase predicted to be moderate adverse overall. These effects are predicted to be limited to the Site and immediate environs.

As with any development on a greenfield site, with the introduction of dwellings across a series of pastoral field parcels, will effectively wholly replace the existing character with a domestic scale built form set within a retained green infrastructure, including a new linear park to the north. The built form will result initially in a major adverse effect on both the land use and landscape character of the Site, the existing character which cannot be readily recreated. These effects will moderate overtime as the proposed development matures. Effects on the district and county level character areas will be minor adverse. With the exception of effects on character, effects on the remaining contextual landscape elements beyond the Site are predicted to be negligible, as there will be no physical change to the landscape features beyond the Site.

Effects on the open space network are considered to be minor beneficial at the Site

and local level, where new publicly accessible green space and allotments will be provided which exceeds the quantum required to serve the proposed development.

At the Site enabling, construction and operational stages of the proposed development would be apparent in the views from the residential receptors and those transient receptors immediately adjacent to the Site along A343 Andover Road and Penwood Road to the east; and Wash Water Road to the North over and filtered between the intervening retained vegetation. Effects on these receptors are considered to range from moderate to minor adverse overall. Visual effects will diminish over time as the landscape proposals mature and the elevational treatments weather.

In particular, and assuming that Footpath 116/9/1 which crosses the Site will remain open during the construction phase, there will be clear views of the construction operations and new built form, where the character and amenity would change from a rural edge pastureland and farmstead with storage and outbuildings, set within well vegetated field boundaries, to that of a construction site and emerging high quality built form and village fringe, set beyond the retained mature hedgerows, tree belts and supplementary planting. Effects on these receptors are considered to range from moderate to major adverse (considering close proximity, internal and local views). Visual effects will diminish over time as the landscape proposals mature and the elevational treatments weather.

Views of the current Site from receptors within the AONB are currently very limited due to the combination of the mature woodland of Chase Wood and the A34 transport corridor, raised landform and associated planting beyond. It is predicted that views of the construction and operational stages of the proposed development would similarly remain obscured due to the intervening layers of vegetation, coupled with the fact that the proposed development would be below the tree line, set back from the vegetated edge by the proposed 10m buffer. Overall effects on the character and amenity of the views from the AONB are predicted to be negligible.

Where views are currently limited by intervening vegetation, topography or built form, it is predicted that the character and amenity of these views will not alter with the proposed development in place and will therefore not significantly alter the existing visual envelope to the settlement.

As with the development of any green field Site, adverse effects will occur, however, the proposed development has been sensitively arranged to retain the key characteristics of the Site in a way that provides a positive extension to the village.

## 9.1 PHASE 1 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT CONCLUSIONS

Within this LVAIS the impact statement is assessed for the proposed Phase 1 detailed masterplan to the north-east of the Site (please refer to section 8.3 and 8.4).

In alignment with the proposed development of the Site, phase 1 development responds positively to the local and national policies highlighted in 9.1. Phase 1 is located in the north-eastern corner of the Site and proposes 90 dwellings set within an enhanced landscape with features including; a wetland/carbon store, attenuation basins, green and blue corridors and riverside park. The proposed built form has been located and orientated so as to be sensitive to the settlement edge and provide natural surveillance to the existing open space. It has been prepared considering the retention

of key landscape features of the Site including the vegetated boundaries and setting to the river corridor.

Similarly to the proposed landscape masterplan, the effects of the proposed Phase 1 development on this Site will commence at the Site enabling and construction stage. The land use and character of the Phase 1 area within the Site will change from that of pastureland set within the vegetated framework of trees and hedgerows associated with the field boundaries, the River Enborne and the access road to Common Farm, to a construction site with an emerging domestic scale built form, set within partially retained vegetated field boundaries; and then ultimately that of a new, high quality residential scheme set within areas of retained green infrastructure (forming new areas of publicly accessible green space) and partially retained and bolstered boundary vegetation.

During the construction stage where there will be a minor effect upon the topography of the Site, to accommodate development platforms, and the formation of the road corridor, swales, attenuation basins and the proposed wetland/carbon store. Effects are considered to be minor adverse.

Considering the removal of the existing vegetation to create the new Site entrance and accommodate the new built form, effects will initially be moderate adverse on the existing vegetation within the Site. However, with the introduction of new tree planting to the new built form and street scene and riverside park, effects on the existing tree and hedgerow stock, will be moderate beneficial overall.

In terms of effects on night-time character, it is predicted that during the construction phase effects will be direct, medium term and temporary and to be of substantial to moderate adverse on this part of the Site, with moderate adverse and in-direct effects on the landscape setting to the phase 1 area. Despite measures to minimise lighting across the Site to reflect the character of the local area, Phase 1 will include the implementation of a limited number of lighting columns around the proposed Site entrance and key road junctions; the implementation of solar studs to the riverside park; and with additional light sources relating to the internal lighting of the proposed dwellings. Therefore, it is predicted that effects on night-time character during the operational phase will nevertheless result in an increase in lighting experienced across the Phase 1 area of the proposed development. The magnitude of change is predicted to be medium, with the overall effect on the night-time character of the Site during the operational phase predicted to be moderate adverse, with in-direct minor adverse effects on the setting to the Phase 1 area (prior to any other works being implemented).

On completion and during the operational stage, the Phase 1 proposals will retain some of the key components of character at Site level, which includes sections of field boundary vegetation, including the internal mature treebelt to the east; and the landscape setting to the river courses. The route of the PRoW (Footpath 116/9/1) will be altered in a minor way, but will remain set within green space to maintain its immediate green setting.

As set out earlier, as with any development on a greenfield site, with the introduction of dwellings across a series of pastoral field parcels, will effectively wholly replace the existing character with a domestic scale built form set within a retained green infrastructure, including a new linear park to the north. The built form will result initially in a major adverse effect on both the land use and landscape character of the Site, the existing character which cannot be readily recreated. These effects will moderate overtime as the proposed development matures. Effects on the district and county level character areas will be minor adverse. With the exception of effects on character,

effects on the remaining contextual landscape elements beyond Phase 1 are predicted to be negligible.

Phase 1 development provides 4.33 ha of public open space (including proposed SUD's), therefore the effects on the open space network are considered to be minor beneficial at the Site and local level, where new publicly accessible green space will be provided which exceeds the quantum required to serve the proposed development.

At the site enabling, construction and operational stages, the associated works and proposed development would be apparent in the views from the residential receptors and those transient receptors immediately adjacent to the Site along A343 Andover Road and Penwood Road to the east; and Wash Water Road to the north, over and filtered between the intervening retained vegetation. The most open views of the Phase 1 area would occur from the east and as a result of removing part of the existing eastern field boundary vegetation to create the new entrance to the Site.

In particular, and assuming that Footpath 116/9/1 which crosses the Site will remain open during the construction phase, there will be clear views of the construction operations and new built form from this Footpath, where the character and amenity would change from a rural edge pastureland set within well vegetated field boundaries, to that of a construction site and emerging high quality built form and village fringe, set beyond the partially retained mature hedgerows, treebelts and supplementary planting to support the proposed riverside park and green/blue corridors. The proposed soft landscape character and amenity will change to formal ornamental planting at the borders to housing to more naturalistic planting, as it follows the green and blue corridors to the open spaces, where there are swathes of grass, meadow and shrub mixes that are used to define spaces and create varying tapestry of habitats and conditions. Effects on these receptors are considered to be limited to those north of Footpath 116/9/1 and range from moderate to major adverse (considering close proximity, internal and local views). With exception of the proposed new entrance to the Site, visual effects will diminish over time as the landscape proposals mature and the elevational treatments weather.

Views of the Phase 1 area from receptors within the AONB are truncated due to the combination of the mature woodland of Chase Wood, the A34 transport corridor, raised landform and associated planting beyond and the intervening layers of vegetation within the southeastern section of the Site. It is predicted that views of the construction and operational stages of the Phase 1 area would remain obscured due to the fact that the proposed development would be below the tree line. Overall effects on the character and amenity of the views from the AONB are predicted to be negligible.

Consistent with the overall visual effects arising from the Landscape Masterplan outline in 7.2, where views are currently limited by intervening vegetation, topography or built form, it is predicted that the character and amenity of these views will not alter with the proposed development in place and will therefore not significantly alter the existing visual envelope to the settlement.

Overall, whilst adverse visual effects will occur, the scale of the Phase 1 development is to a lesser degree than the landscape masterplan proposal and therefore, will have a reduced visual effect. The difference in visual effect is not of a scale which will influence the overall significance. Furthermore, the proposed Phase 1 development has been sensitively arranged to retain the key characteristic elements of the Site in a way that provides a positive and high quality extension to Wash Water.

## 2.0

# INTRODUCTION

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

fabrik Chartered Landscape Architects have been appointed by Bewley Homes to carry out a Landscape and Visual Assessment with an Impact Statement (LVAIS) of Land at Watermill Bridge, Newbury (The Site) and its surrounding area, in order to consider the likely physical and visual impacts arising as a result of the proposed development.

This LVAIS sets out landscape policy (together with any related policy on ecological and heritage assets) and any supporting SPG's/SPD's and then goes on to describe the constituent baseline landscape elements (the existing topography, drainage, land cover, vegetation pattern, public rights of way, landscape features, detracting landscape elements, the history of the landscape and the way that landscape is experienced) which together inform landscape character, landscape condition and value. The LVAIS then describes the baseline character and amenity of the identified visual receptors (considering the visual envelope, the different groups of people, places affected, the nature of the view and the visual amenity). The landscape constraints and opportunities are then set out to inform the proposed development. This is followed by the assessment of the proposed development against landscape character and policy. The statement of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and Phase 1 is then considered in the penultimate section of this LVAIS.

The Site lies to the south of Newbury, between the suburb of Wash Common and the A34 dual carriageway. The Site also abuts the small hamlets of Enborne Row and Wash Water, which lie in close proximity to Wash Common. It comprises pastureland and a centrally positioned farmstead (Common Farm) with storage and outbuildings. The Site is bound by the River Enborne, with adjacent field parcels and dwellings leading to Wash Water beyond to the north; the A343 Andover Road to the east; and the A34 to the south and west.

The location and extent of the Site is shown on the plan opposite. The red line area extends to 22.45 ha.

The methodology for the LVAIS is based on the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (third edition) by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Routledge, 2013). A full methodology is set out at Appendix 1.

## 2.2 DESKTOP RESEARCH

The desktop survey carried out as part of the LVAIS included the review of Ordnance Survey maps, interactive maps, aerial photography, published landscape character assessment documents, planning policy and the emerging development proposals. The extent of the baseline and therefore the impact appraisal is broadly defined by the Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI) as determined by the initial desk study and verified in the field and therefore extends to 2.5 km from the Site.

The desk top assessment also identifies any likely changes to the current baseline situation which are likely to be in place prior to the proposed development proceeding.

## 2.3 FIELD WORK

The field work was carried out on 9th March 2021 and recorded the existing landscape elements within the Application Site; the contextual landscape elements; and identified a series of key visual receptors. The visual assessment element includes a photographic survey of the Application Site taken from a series of representative key views, chosen to represent a range of locations including both public and private views, distances and directions around the Site. The weather conditions and camera lense were also recorded.

## LEGEND

 SITE BOUNDARY

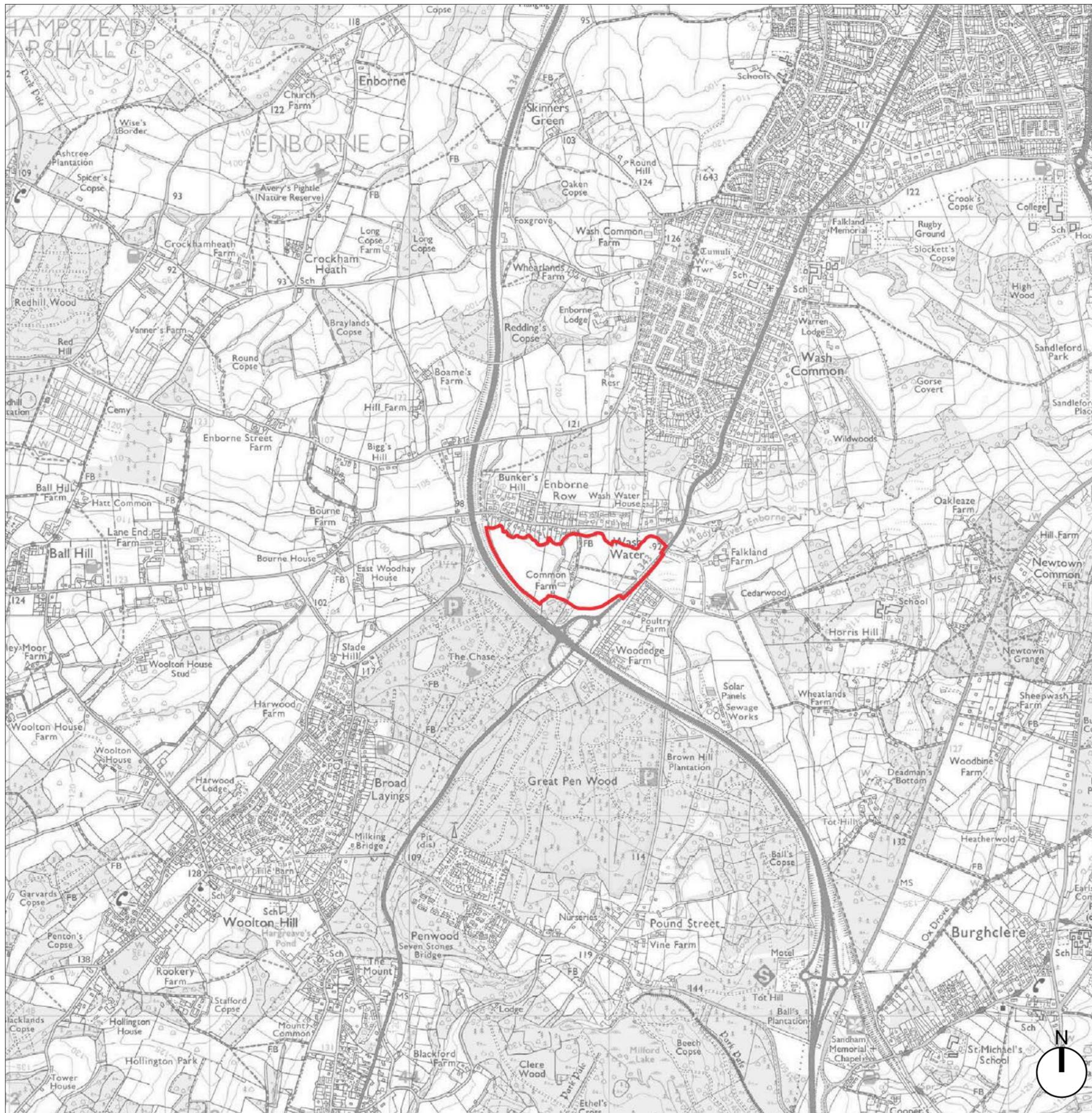


FIGURE 1.1 – EXTRACT FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY PLAN SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE APPLICATION SITE (FABRIK, 2021)

## 3.0

# LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS AND POLICY

## 3.1 LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS & POLICY

### 3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Land at Watermill Bridge is located to the south of Newbury between the suburb of Wash Common and the A34 dual carriageway. The Site also abuts the small hamlets of Enborne Row and Wash Water, which lie in close proximity to Wash Common.

The Site lies within the administrative boundaries of Highclere Parish, East Woodhay Parish and the District of Basingstoke and Deane. The parishes of Enborne and Newbury and the District of West Berkshire are to the north of the Site. The District Boundary follows the River Enborne, which also forms the Site's northern boundary.

### 3.1.2 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is the south and west of the Site. The Site is separated from the AONB by the A34 corridor, which serves as a strong physical and visual boundary.

### 3.1.2 HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

There are no heritage designations within or immediately adjacent to the Site. Locally the Grade II Listed Mill and Granary and Falkland Farm is to the east of the Site and the Grade II Listed Yew Tree Cottage is to the south of the Site (and the A34 corridor). There are also listed buildings scattered across the wider study area.

A detailed heritage assessment has been prepared by RPS (April 2021). The setting to the listed buildings at Falkland Farm relates most immediately to buildings of the farmstead. Intervisibility between the Site and the farmstead is restricted by the A34 and a high degree of boundary planting. The setting to Yew Tree Cottage relates to its private garden, which is surrounded by woodland. The cottage lies to the north of the A34 and there is no intervisibility with the site.

Beyond the Site and settlement at Enborne Row, land to the north and west of the suburb of Wash Water is a designated Historic Battlefield. The area around Round Hill, which remains open agricultural land, was the site of a significant battle during the English Civil War, the 1643 Battle of Newbury.

Other heritage designations within the wider study area include the Grade I Listed Highclere Estate to the north and the Grade II Listed Hamstead Marshall Park to the north-west.

### 3.1.2 ECOLOGY DESIGNATIONS

Designations of wildlife interest include areas of Ancient Woodland within the Chase and Great Pen Wood to the south of the Site and the A34 corridor.

### 3.1.2 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND OPEN ACCESS LAND

The Site is crossed by a public right of way. Footpath 116/0/1 extends through the site, between Washwater Road and Common Farm (north south orientation) and between Common Farm and the A344 Andover Road (east-west orientation). A wider network of public rights of way extend over the study area.

North of the site, Great Pen Wood and the Chase areas of woodland have a network of accessible tracks. The Chase is managed by the National Trust and Great Pen Wood is open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

Refer to Figure 3.1 for the landscape related designations.

### 3.1.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2021)

The 2021 NPPF seeks the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following issues and policies of the NPPF are pertinent to the proposed development and this LVAIS.

Section 2 deals with achieving sustainable development. At para 8, subsection c relating to an environmental objective, it states: *"to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change..."*

Section 8 deals with promoting healthy and safe communities, para 98 under the open space and recreation sub-heading states that: *"Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support effects to address climate change..."*

Para 100 goes on to say that: *"Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails."*

Paragraph 101 deals with Local Green Space and states that: *"The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them..."*

Section 12 sets out the requirements for achieving well-designed places. Para 126 states that: *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities..."*

Para 127 states that: *"Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics."*

Para 130 goes on to state that: *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- a. *Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b. *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c. *Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d. *Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e. *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f. *Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

Para 131 deals with trees and states that: *"Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users."*

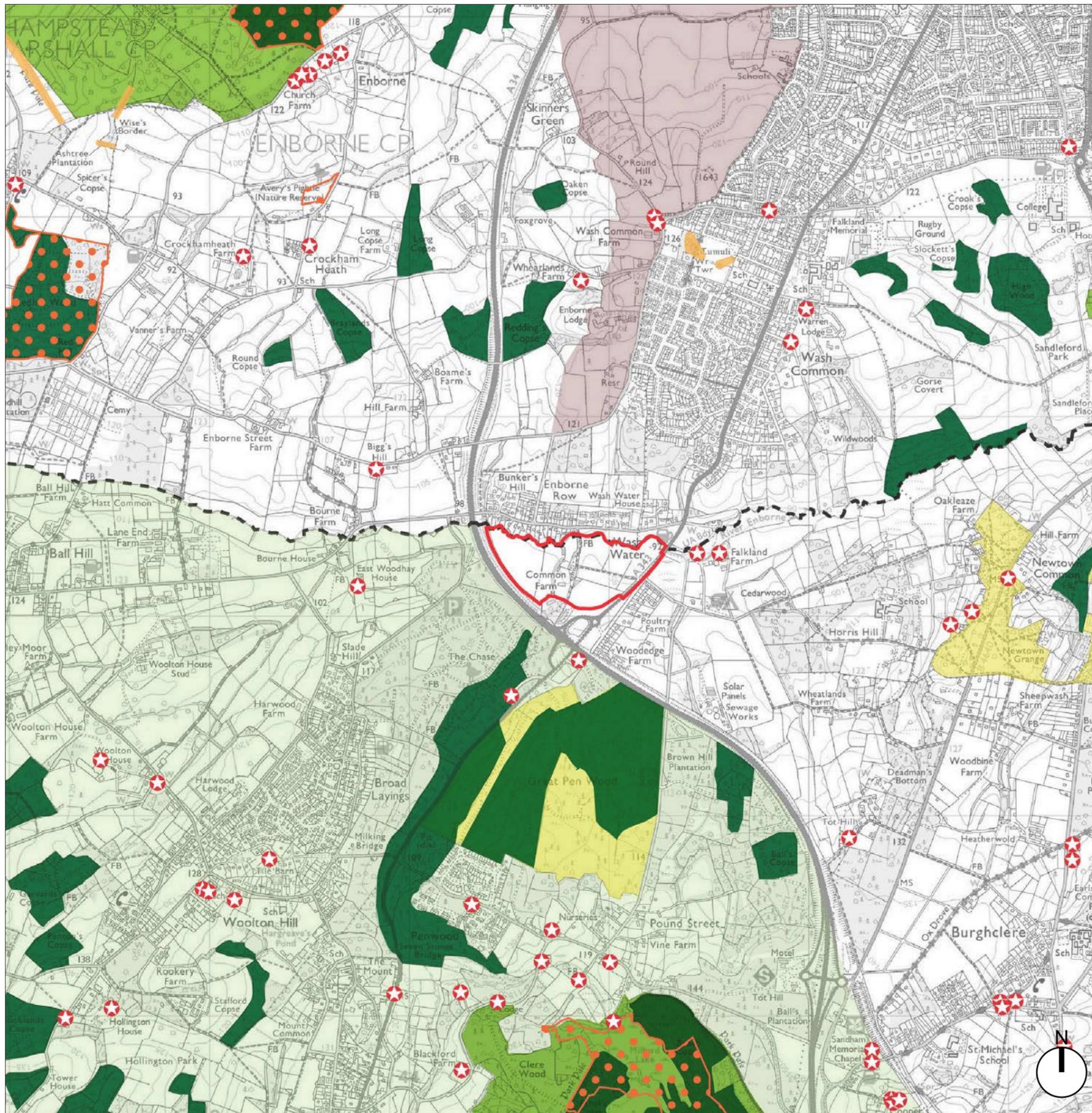
Para 132 sets out that: *"Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals."*

Section 14 covers meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. The elements relevant to landscape matters include para 154 states that: *"New development should be planned for in ways that:*

- a. *Avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure;...*

Para 161, subsection c goes on to state that: *"using opportunities provided by new development and improvements in green infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, (making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management."*

Section 15 deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Para 174 states that: *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*



LEGEND

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  BOROUGH BOUNDARY
-  NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AONB
-  ANCIENT WOODLAND
-  LISTED BUILDINGS
-  REGISTERED BATTLEFIELD
-  SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT (SAM)
-  REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDEN
-  OPEN ACCESS LAND (COUNTRYSIDE RIGHTS OF WAY ACT, 2000)
-  SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)

FIGURE 3.1 – PLAN ILLUSTRATING LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS (FABRIK, 2021)

## 3.0

# LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS AND POLICY

### 3.1.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2021) CONTINUED

- a. *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b. *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the nest and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*
- c. *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it...*

Para 176 states that: “Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

With regard to the sub-section on ground conditions and pollution, para 185 states that: “Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- a. *Mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*
- b. *Identify and protect tranquil areas which have remaining relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason;*
- c. *Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”*

Section 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Para’s 199 states that: “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation...”

Para 200 states that: “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a. *grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks and gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b. *assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and grade II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”*

### 3.1.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The NPPF is supported by the on-line resource Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). There are a number of sections that relate to this LVIA as set out below.

The guidance on Natural Environment: The sub section under Section ID 8 of the Natural Environment Paragraph 004 in Chapter relates to green infrastructure, which is defined as that which: “... can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and ‘blue infrastructure’ such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies. References to green infrastructure in this guidance also apply to different types of blue infrastructure where appropriate...”

Paragraph 008 identifies the importance of green infrastructure and goes on to state that: “Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision...”

Paragraph 029 relates to trees and woodlands, and states that: “Well-placed and well-chosen trees on streets and in urban spaces can provide a range of benefits: encouraging walking and enhanced physical and mental health; contributing to local environmental character and distinctiveness; providing habitats for wildlife; reducing noise and excessive heat; and supporting sustainable drainage. Changing climate, in particular hotter summers and more frequent periods of dry weather, and unknown pests and diseases, will place new pressures on green infrastructure in the long-term, so trees of the right species and age profile are essential”.

Paragraph 036 discusses landscape character and states that: “The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.”

The guidance on Design: process and tools at section ID 26 (updated on 01 October 2019) and the key elements to be considered to planning for well-designed places. Paragraph 001 sets out that: “Well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications... Good design is set out in the National Design Guide...” The following section on the National Design Guide sets out those pertinent characteristics relative to landscape and visual matters.

### 3.1.4 NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE (NDG) UPDATED OCTOBER 2019

The guidance on achieving well designed places is identified in the NDG. The key elements to be considered to achieve good design relative to landscape matters are set out in the NDG follows.

Part 1: The purpose of the National Design Guide, paragraph 004 notes: “The long-

*standing, fundamental principles for good design are that it is: fit for purpose; durable; and brings delight. It is relatively straightforward to define and assess these qualities for a building. We can identify its activities and users, the quality of detail, materials, construction and its potential flexibility. We can also make judgements about its beauty.”*

Paragraph 006 follows: “The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that achieving high quality places and buildings is fundamental to the planning and development process. It also leads to improvements in the quality of existing environments. The National Planning Policy Framework expands upon the fundamental principles of good design to define what is expected for well-designed places and explain how planning policies and decisions should support this”

Paragraph 008 identifies: “The underlying purpose for design quality and the quality of new development at all scales is to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities. This includes people who use a place for various purposes such as:

- *to live, work, shop, for leisure and recreation, and to move around between these activities; and*
- *those who visit or pass through.*

*It also includes people at different stages of life and with different abilities – children, young people, adults, families and older people, both able-bodied and disabled.”*

The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. Paragraph 20 in Part 1 sets out the components of good design, including layout, form and scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing. The 10 characteristics of a well designed place are described in paragraph 35 as follows:

- *“Context - enhances the surroundings.*
- *Identity - attractive and distinctive.*
- *Built form - a coherent pattern of development.*
- *Movement - accessible and easy to move around.*
- *Nature - enhanced and optimised.*
- *Public spaces - safe, social and inclusive.*
- *Uses - mixed and integrated.*
- *Homes and buildings - functional, healthy and sustainable.*
- *Resources - efficient and resilient.*
- *Lifespan - made to last.”*

Paragraph 038 and 039 in Part 2: Context, highlights the importance of designing a positive sense of place: “An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.

Well-designed places are:

- *based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding*

### 3.0

# LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS AND POLICY

- context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
- integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them; influenced by and influence their context positively;
- and responsive to local history, culture and heritage.”

#### 3.1.5 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

##### BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LOCAL PLAN 2011-2029 (2016)

This section describes relevant policies from the local plan as set out below.

##### Policy EM1 – Landscape

“Development will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated, through an appropriate assessment, that the proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned. Development proposals must respect, enhance and not be detrimental to the character or visual amenity of the landscape likely to be affected, paying particular regard to:

- a The particular qualities identified within the council’s landscape character assessment and any subsequent updates or relevant guidance;
- b The visual amenity and scenic quality;
- c The setting of a settlement, including important views to, across, within and out of settlements;
- d The local character of buildings and settlements, including important open areas;
- e Trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows, water features such as rivers and other landscape features and their function as ecological networks;
- f Intrinsically dark landscapes;
- g Historic landscapes, parks and gardens and features;”
- h The character of the borough’s rivers and tributaries”

The policy goes on to state that:

“Development proposals must also respect the sense of place, sense of tranquillity or remoteness, and the quiet enjoyment of the landscape from public rights of way. Development proposals will not be accepted unless they maintain the integrity of existing settlements and prevent their coalescence.

Where appropriate, proposals will be required to include a comprehensive landscaping scheme to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings. The assessment of character and visual quality and the provision of a landscaping scheme should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.”

##### Policy EM5 – Green Infrastructure

The Policy states that amongst other things: “Development proposals will only be permitted where they do not:

- a Prejudice the delivery of the Council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy (and subsequent updates);

- b Result in the fragmentation of the green infrastructure network by severing important corridors/links; or
- c Result in undue pressure on the network which cannot be fully mitigated.

The Council will support proposals which seek to improve links and remedy identified deficiencies in the green infrastructure network in accordance with the council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy...

Development proposals will be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that green infrastructure can be provided and phased to support the requirements of proposed development and be in accordance with the council’s adopted green space standards. Green space and equipped play will normally be provided on-site”

#### 3.1.7 GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

##### BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY SPD (2018)

The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance to support the achievement of high quality sustainable development including guidance relating to contextual analysis, spatial structure and form, movement and walkability, cycle storage and parking, built form and details.

##### BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LANDSCAPE, BIODIVERSITY AND TREES SPD (2018)

The SPD addresses how landscape, biodiversity, and tree considerations should inform new development to help deliver high quality, sustainable places to live, that enhance biodiversity and support healthy lifestyles. The document includes for the provision of biodiversity buffer zones to woodland/tree belts (20m), important hedgerows (5m), main rivers (20m) and non-main rivers, ditches and ponds (5m). The document also provides quantity, quality and distance standards for the provision of public open space and children’s play. Appendix 4.1 of the document provides design guidance for new development in the countryside (See section 4.1.3 Landscape Character Context).

The Strategy highlights the Local Scale Green Space Standards in chapter 4.4 of the supplementary planning document. The tables below identifies the maximum Distance Thresholds, quantity standard, absolute minimum requirements and minimum sizes identified in the chapter

##### Maximum Distance Thresholds:

Multifunctional Green Space (MFGS) made up of:	
Amenity Green Space (including informal play space and kick-about)	5mins (300m walking)
Accessible Natural Green Space	10mins (600m walking, 1500m cycling)
Parks	15mins (900m walking, 2250m cycling, 5625m car)
Equipped play areas	10mins (600m walking) to nearest facility
Allotments	10 mins (600m walking, 1500m cycling, 3750m by car)

##### Quantity Standard:

Multifunctional Green Space (MFGS) made up of:	
Amenity Green Space (including informal play space and kick-about)	65m2 per person (in/adjacent to Basingstoke)
Accessible Natural Green Space	32m2 per person (rural)
Parks	
Green corridors and buffers	
Important biodiversity sites and landscape features	

##### Absolute Minimum Requirements:

Multifunctional Green Space (MFGS) made up of:	
Amenity Green Space (including informal play space and kick-about)	20m2 per person (all areas)
Accessible Natural Green Space	
Parks	
Equipped play areas	0.5m2 per person (all areas)
Allotments	3.4m2 per person (all areas)

### 3.0

# LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS AND POLICY

## BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LANDSCAPE, BIODIVERSITY AND TREES SPD (2018) CONTINUED

### Minimum Sizes:

Multifunctional Green Space (MFGS) made up of:	0.2ha (2000m2) with no dimension less than 15m
Neighbourhood Parks	2ha
Strategic equipped play areas including provision for teenagers	1250m2 in/adjacent to Basingstoke
Neighbourhood equipped play areas including provision for teenagers	750m2 in/adjacent to Basingstoke 1000m2 in rural settlements to allow for the lack of strategic sites
Local equipped play areas	300m2 in/adjacent to Basingstoke 450m2 in rural settlements to allow for the lack of strategic sites
Allotments	10 plots (approx. 1375m2) min 5 rods

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS PLAN 2015-2025

The Countryside Access Plan (CAP) is the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for the county. The duty for local highway authorities to produce a ROWIP was established through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. A ROWIP is intended to provide the means by which the highway authority will manage and improve its rights of way network to meet the Government's aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems. The Site lies within the Hampshire Downs plan area. The plan sets out the vision, issues and actions within the plan area to provide sustainable access to the countryside.

## NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AONB POSITION STATEMENT SETTING (2019)

The AONB position statement is set out to "inform local planning authorities, landowners, applicants and other interested parties regarding development outside but within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB". The North Wessex Downs AONB Lies beyond the A34, south of the Site.

The section of Avoiding Harm to the Setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB, Paragraph 16 highlights: "The North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership does not set out to judge the precise extent of the setting of the AONB. The scale, height, siting, use, materials or design of a proposed development will determine whether it affects the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB...there is no defined boundary where the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB ends. However, distance away from the AONB will obviously be a material factor in forming a decision on any proposals, in that the further away a development is from the AONB boundary the more the impact is likely to be reduced.

Development likely to result in a negative impact on the setting of the AONB will not be supported, in accordance with meeting the key aims of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan and the primary purpose of designation.

Accordingly, development resulting in the conservation of the existing setting of the AONB and its enhancement will be supported where all other environmental considerations are also acceptable."

Paragraph 17 identifies the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership expectations on development within or affecting the setting of the AONB. This include the following:

- "measures to consider impact on the setting of the AONB, including where required through Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments;
- care over orientation, site layout, height and scale of structures and buildings;
- consideration not just of the site but also the landscape and land uses around and beyond it;
- careful use of colours, materials and non-reflective surfaces;
- restraint and care over the installation and use of street lighting, floodlighting and other external lighting to prevent harm to the dark night skies of the AONB;
- the grouping of new structures and buildings close to existing structures and buildings to avoid new expanses of development that are visible and out of context (though detrimental impact on historic buildings/groupings will need special consideration to avoid insensitive development); and
- detailed mitigation measures, for example including native landscaping (where possible contributing to BAP targets), and noise reduction (though again landscaping in certain contexts can be damaging to historic features/deposits/landscape/character so again will require careful consideration)."

Paragraph 18 follows by stating "It is considered that many issues in relation to new development within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB can be resolved through careful design, appropriate materials, location and layout and mitigation measures from landscaping to use of minimal, well-directed and full cut-off street (and other external) lighting."



## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 4.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

### 4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'landscape' commonly refers to the view or appearance of the land as perceived by people. Landscape applies to any natural, rural, urban, peri-urban areas, in land water and seascape areas.

Landscape character is the combination of both natural / physical, cultural / social and perceptual / aesthetic influences, which give rise to a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse and which define the 'sense of place'. The landscape is not therefore simply a visual phenomenon.

The following sections set out the landscape character framework of the study area from the national and regional level through to county and district scale based upon existing character assessments undertaken by Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

### 4.1.2 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The general character of the English countryside has been described at a national level by Natural England. The Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 129 'Thames Basin Heaths'.

The Thames Basin Heaths NCA stretches "westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. The London greenbelt incorporates countryside around Chobham and the rivers Wey and Mole. West of the greenbelt, 20th-century development has given rise to large conurbations including Camberley and the 'new town' of Bracknell. Among these conurbations, gardens amount to a significant area of greenspace, with rhododendron being a particular feature, and a major road network incorporates the M25 and M3. This densely settled area can be a significant source of pollution and rapid run-off."

The key characteristics pertinent to the study area as described as:

- "Plateaux of Tertiary sands and gravels in the London Basin, with intervening river valleys floored by London Clay. In the far west, Chalk forms the Hampshire Downs escarpment and the river beds of the Kennet and Pang.
- High woodland cover, offering an array of colour in the autumn. Conifers and large plantations on former heathland are dominant features in the east, while the west is scattered with small, semi-natural woodlands on ancient sites.
- Acid, leached soils mean that farming on the plateaux is limited to rough pasture, and that alternative land uses (such as forestry, golf courses and horse paddocks) have emerged. Heather, gorse, oak and birch all thrive here. Arable land and improved pasture are found in the valleys, on alluvium.
- Beyond the large areas of heathland and woodland, there is a patchwork of small to medium-sized fields with woods. The legacy of historic hunting forests includes veteran trees, ancient woods, ancient hedgerows and parklands. Historic meadows remain as fragments along watercourses.
- Prehistoric earthworks such as barrows and hill forts mark promontories on the

plateaux. Archaeology is well preserved on historic heathland. Mosaics of open heathland and grassland with scrub, secondary woodland and plantation. Valley bogs, ponds and streams enhance diversity. Large, continuous mosaics are found in the east: they include Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Chobham Common National Nature Reserve (NNR).

- Historic commons offer tranquillity and unenclosed views, while other rights of access are enjoyed across farmland, canals and downland. Ministry of Defence ownership restricts (but does not entirely prevent) public enjoyment.
- 'Churring' nightjars, dragonflies and purple heather are all readily identified with heathland. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA protects internationally important populations of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.
- Valley floors are wet with ditches, numerous watercourses, ponds, waterfilled gravelpits, reedbeds and carr. Historic features include mills, relict water meadows, and canals such as the River Wey Navigations.
- 20th-century conurbations, including Camberley, sprawl along the Blackwater Valley, with associated roads (including the M3) dissecting heathland and woodland into blocks. Elsewhere, there are winding lanes and historic dispersed villages and farmsteads of traditional, locally-made brick and tile."

The Statements of Environmental Opportunity are set out below:

*SEO 1: At a catchment scale, manage and create woodlands, highway verges, field margins, reedbeds and other features in urban and rural settings to intercept run-off and to filter pollutants. In the heavily developed flood plains of the Blackwater and Thames, adapt the urban environment to manage floodwaters, and restore or enhance modified watercourses.*

*SEO 2: Maximise the variety of ecosystem services delivered by wooded features – from wet woodlands in the Kennet Valley to the large conifer plantations around Camberley and new woodlands. Conserve soils, water, biodiversity and the sense of place and history; enhance timber and biomass production; and provide for recreation and tranquillity as appropriate.*

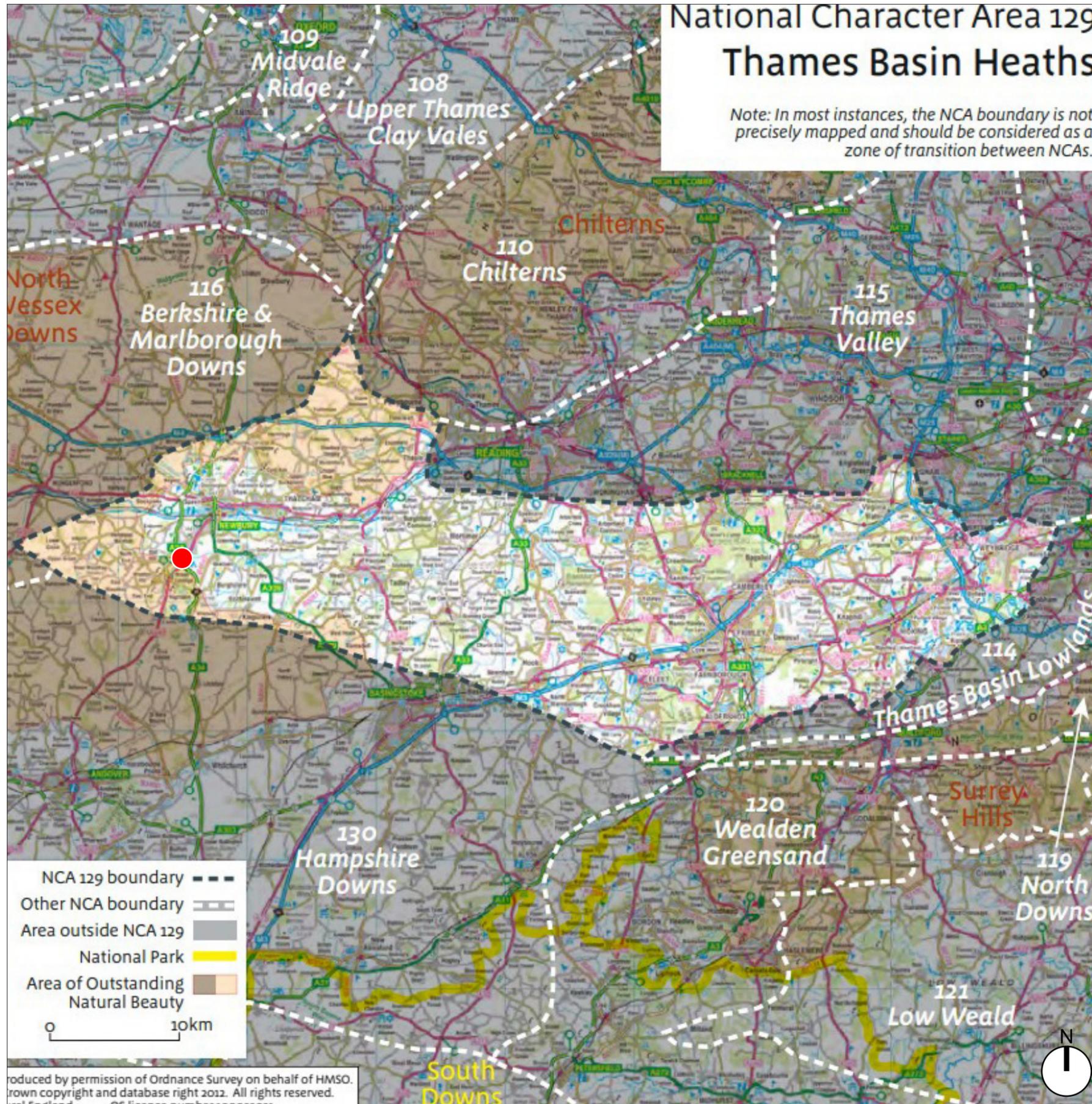
*SEO 3: Enhance the sense of history and biodiversity by conserving, restoring and building the resilience of long-established habitats such as heathland, ancient woodland and meadows, and of archaeology such as hill forts. Work at a landscape scale to conserve and restore key attributes of the historic hunting forests (such as Eversley) and historic common land. Engage the public in enjoying this heritage.*

*SEO 4: With a focus on the Blackwater Valley, Newbury and nearby major settlements such as Reading, provide good-quality green infrastructure (incorporating commons, woodlands and restored gravel pits) to facilitate people's sustainable engagement with the local landscape. In doing so, also seek benefits for wildlife, water quality, flood amelioration and climate regulation.*

Value: Low-High

# National Character Area 129 Thames Basin Heaths

Note: In most instances, the NCA boundary is not precisely mapped and should be considered as a zone of transition between NCAs.



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## LEGEND

● APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION

FIGURE 4.1 – EXTRACT FROM NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA MAP (NATURAL ENGLAND, 2011)

## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

### 4.1.3 REGIONAL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

#### HAMPSHIRE COUNTY INTEGRATED CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (2012)

The study area is situated within 2a - Highclere Chase. The key characteristics pertinent to the study area as described as:

- *"Mosaic of clay, gravels, sands, and loams resulting in subdued undulating relief.*
- *The landform generally slopes northwards towards the River Enborne and is dissected by incised stream valleys adding complexity to landform.*
- *Numerous woodlands (ancient semi-natural assarted woods and plantation) giving an enclosed, intimate character.*
- *Varied biodiversity, deriving from the area's woodland, heathland, agricultural, grassland and wetland habitats.*
- *Unusual concentration of 19th century origin estate houses and parks.*
- *Predominantly pastureland use (including paddocks/stud farms) within medium to small, scaled fields defined by hedgerows with hedgerow trees.*
- *Areas of former heath/common land much of which is now wooded.*
- *Strong visual and cultural link to the chalk escarpment to the south.*
- *Numerous scattered villages and farmsteads.*
- *Unusually high density of narrow winding lanes, tracks and footpaths which is a striking aspect of this landscape."*

The pertinent key qualities and their associated opportunities are highlighted below:

*7.1 High density of rural lanes, tracks and footpaths is a striking aspect of this landscape and provides public access into this relatively tranquil area.*

- *"CAP actions, particularly encouragement of access into the countryside from towns and villages, maintenance of public rights of way, resolution of conflicts of interests between user groups, production of publicity and education material, and working with landowners to encourage greater public access.*
- *Increasing public use of open access land on commons and in accessible forested areas."*

*7.3 Mosaic of land uses and habitats including agricultural land, pockets of heathland, extensive woodland, wetlands, grassland and scrub which create an intimate and diverse landscape of high scenic quality*

- *"Target agri-environment (and other grant) schemes to encourage retention of ecological diversity in agricultural areas and linking of heathland areas, and traditional woodland management (e.g. hazel coppicing; use of wood pasture) in accordance with AONB management plan.*
- *Increasing the biodiversity of conifer plantations through planting of deciduous native species. Monitoring of veteran trees in hedgerows/parkland and planting replacements as necessary."*

*7.4 Strong sense of time-depth due to historic landscape features including woodland, assarts, parkland, deer park pales, fishponds, heathlands and commons.*

- *"Manage and retain hedgerows and historic field patterns.*

- *Use local level assessments such as Village Design Statements and planning policies to identify and retain local distinctiveness in terms of materials, design and location of development.*
- *Promote active management (in line with AONB management plan) to encourage species diversity and health of vegetation in woodlands and heaths/commons to counter possible effects of climate change.*

#### WEST BERKSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (AUGUST 2019)

The northern Site boundary follows the county boundary to West Berkshire, therefore the study area falls within WH1 Inkpen Woodland Heathland Mosaic Landscape Character Type. The key characteristics pertinent to the study area as described as:

- *"Geologically and topographically varied with undulating slopes rising from the rivers Enborne and Kennet*
- *Presence of surface water and small streams running parallel to ridges*
- *Patchwork of land use, dominated by woodland including areas of common and parkland*
- *Varied field pattern with strong hedgerows*
- *Ecologically important network of ancient woodland and heathland habitats*
- *Tight network of rural lanes, often bounded by banks form the framework for loose, linear settlements*
- *Intimate small scale rural character including dark skies"*

The landscape strategy pertinent to the study area is highlighted below:

1. *"Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the nationally designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB*
2. *Promote appropriate woodland management*
4. *Conserve and strengthen existing boundary elements*
5. *Maintain the distinctive patterns of settlement and rural character*
6. *Conserve the existing character of the rural lanes"*

LEGEND

 SITE BOUNDARY

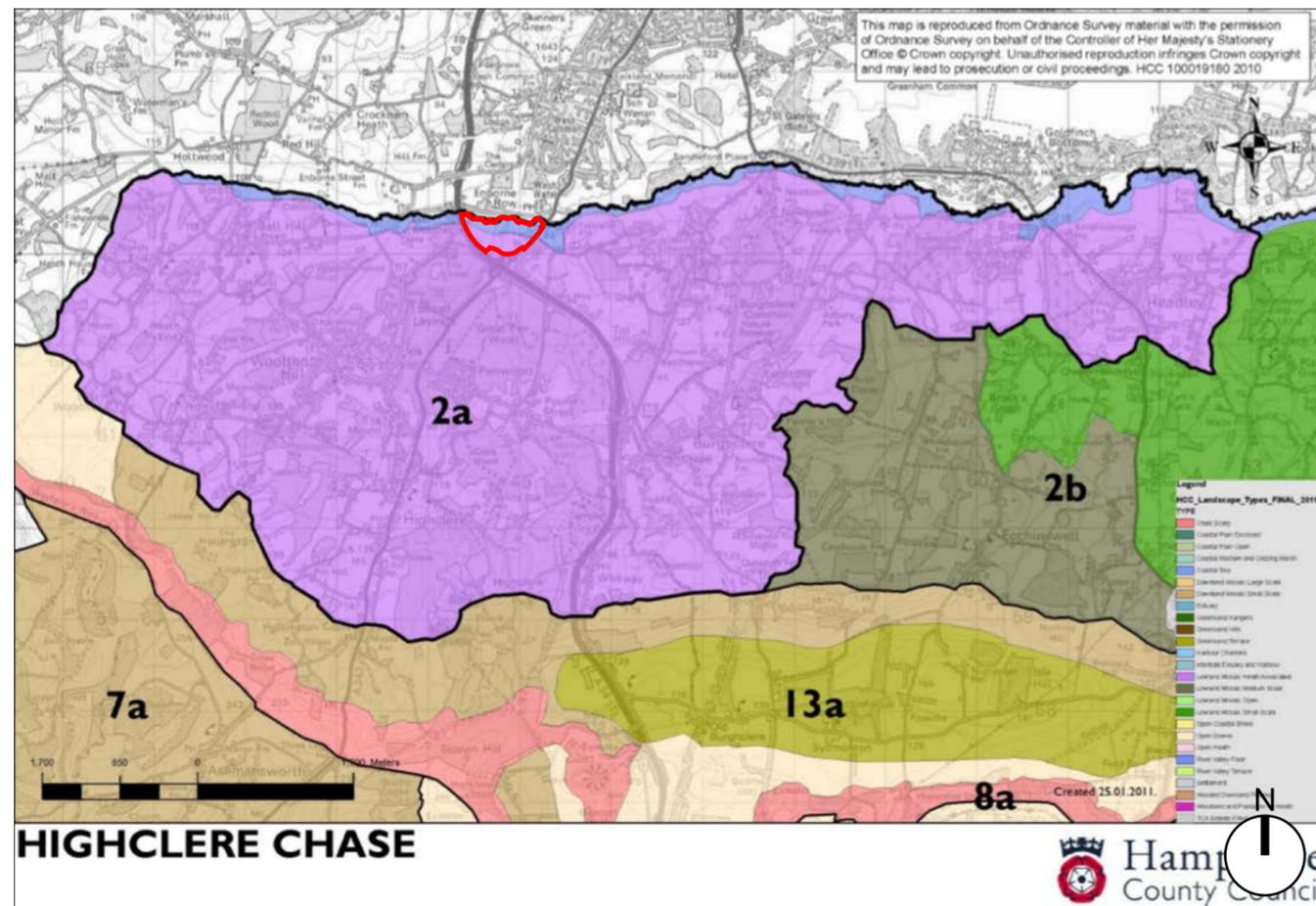


FIGURE 4.2 – EXTRACT ILLUSTRATING HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, 2012)

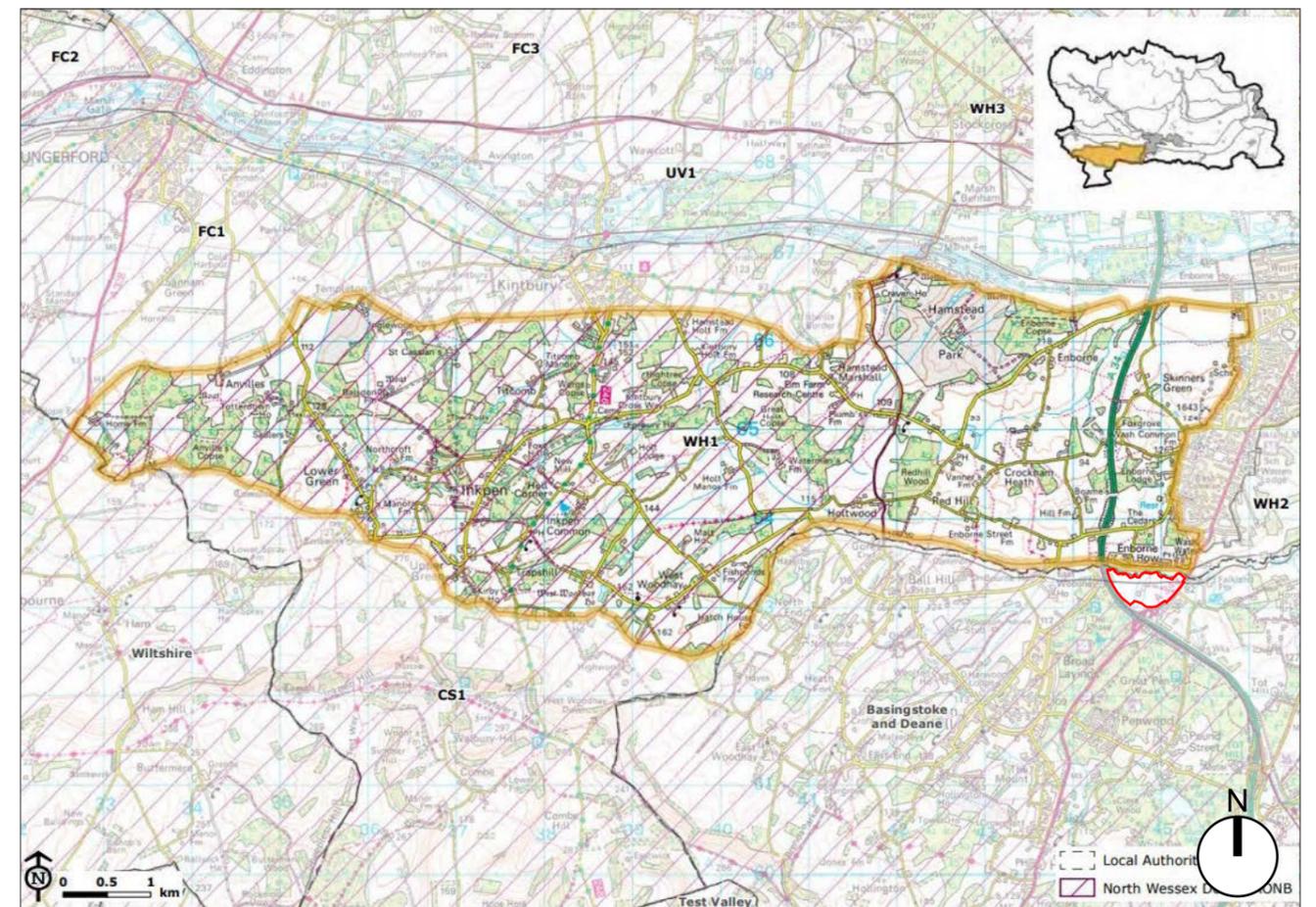


FIGURE 4.3 – EXTRACT ILLUSTRATING WEST BERKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE (LUL FOR WEST BERKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, AUGUST 2019)

## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

### 4.1.3 DISTRICT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

#### BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT (2001)

The study area is situated within 1. Highclere and Burghclere. The key characteristics pertinent to the study area as described as:

- "Subtle but complex landform, steep in places but generally gently undulating and falling towards the River Enborne in the north, dissected by a network of minor tributary valleys;
- Small-scale mosaic of woodland, some mixed farmland and numerous paddocks, giving an enclosed, intimate character in parts;
- Area west of the A34 lies within the North Wessex Downs 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'(AONB) and generally has a quiet, rural character away from larger residential areas, apart from some noise and visual intrusion from the A34 and A343;
- Generally medium to small-scale fields, with a predominance of pasture, enclosed within an established assarted woodland and intact hedgerow structure with a high proportion of hedgerow trees;
- High percentage of woodland cover, particularly close to Penwood and Highclere, between the A34 and A343, where extensive coniferous plantation encloses and contains views. Large-scale broadleaf woodland within Highclere Park contributes to a strongly wooded character;
- Examples of scarce and fragile heathland and forest landscapes (e.g. Burghclere and Newtown Common), with evidence of heathy vegetation characteristics in many areas. Also remnants of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland;
- High proportion of well-managed parkland of varying scales, notably the Grade 1 listed medieval deer park of Highclere Park, plus other parklands associated with smaller private estates and stud farms;
- Low intervisibility across the area, with vegetation and the low-lying nature of the landscape containing views;
- Numerous scattered small villages, hamlets, farmsteads and many residential properties, some accessed through a fairly dense network of narrow lanes. However, the paddocks, together with recent residential development, stud farms and a relatively high local population lend a rather urbanised character;
- Certain settlements of probable medieval origin, eg East Woodhay and Highclere, with the site of a former medieval town marked by an ancient monument at Newtown."

The Landscape guidelines on Land management pertinent to the study area is highlighted below:

- "Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as heathland associated with Newtown and Burghclere commons, and the woodlands and hedgerows across the character area;
- Conserve, enhance and restore broadleaf woodlands generally across the Character Area through effective long term management and replanting with locally appropriate species to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Encourage sensitive management of conifer plantations for their species and wildlife value;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows throughout the

Character Area;

- Encourage improved management of road verges and roadside hedgebanks, along the many lanes, particularly within the eastern and western portions of the Character Area;
- Ensure that infrastructure which supports leisure activities (including car parking, signage, seating and dog bins) is sensitivity designed and placed to conserve the rural character of the area, such as at The Chase and Great Pen Wood;
- Restore grass field margins wherever possible, particularly next to sensitive habitats such as rivers and streams, including tributaries of the River Enborne;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence, in particular Highclere Park"

The Landscape guidelines on built development pertinent to the study area is highlighted below:

- "New development should be associated with existing settlement within the Character Area, for example at Highclere, Burghclere and Woolton Hill, where appropriate.
- Siting of any new development should take into account views within the AONB and from the scarp to the south.
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Retain natural buffers and boundaries to settlements where possible, using existing landscape features and characteristics, in particular tree cover;
- Retain woodland that screens development and consider opportunities for further tree planting sympathetic to the area, in order to help integrate development into the rural area;
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes across the area, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that potential road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, such as roads within Highclere, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline."

Value: Medium-High

#### LANDSCAPE, BIODIVERSITY AND TREES SPD APPENDIX 4.1: COUNTRYSIDE DESIGN SUMMARY

Appendix 4.1 of the Landscape Biodiversity and Trees SPD (refer to section 3.1.7) provides design guidance based upon the detailed character assessments. The District Character Areas that have the same implications for the design of new buildings in the countryside have been amalgamated to form six Countryside Design Areas. The site lies within Area 1: Lowlands and Heath.

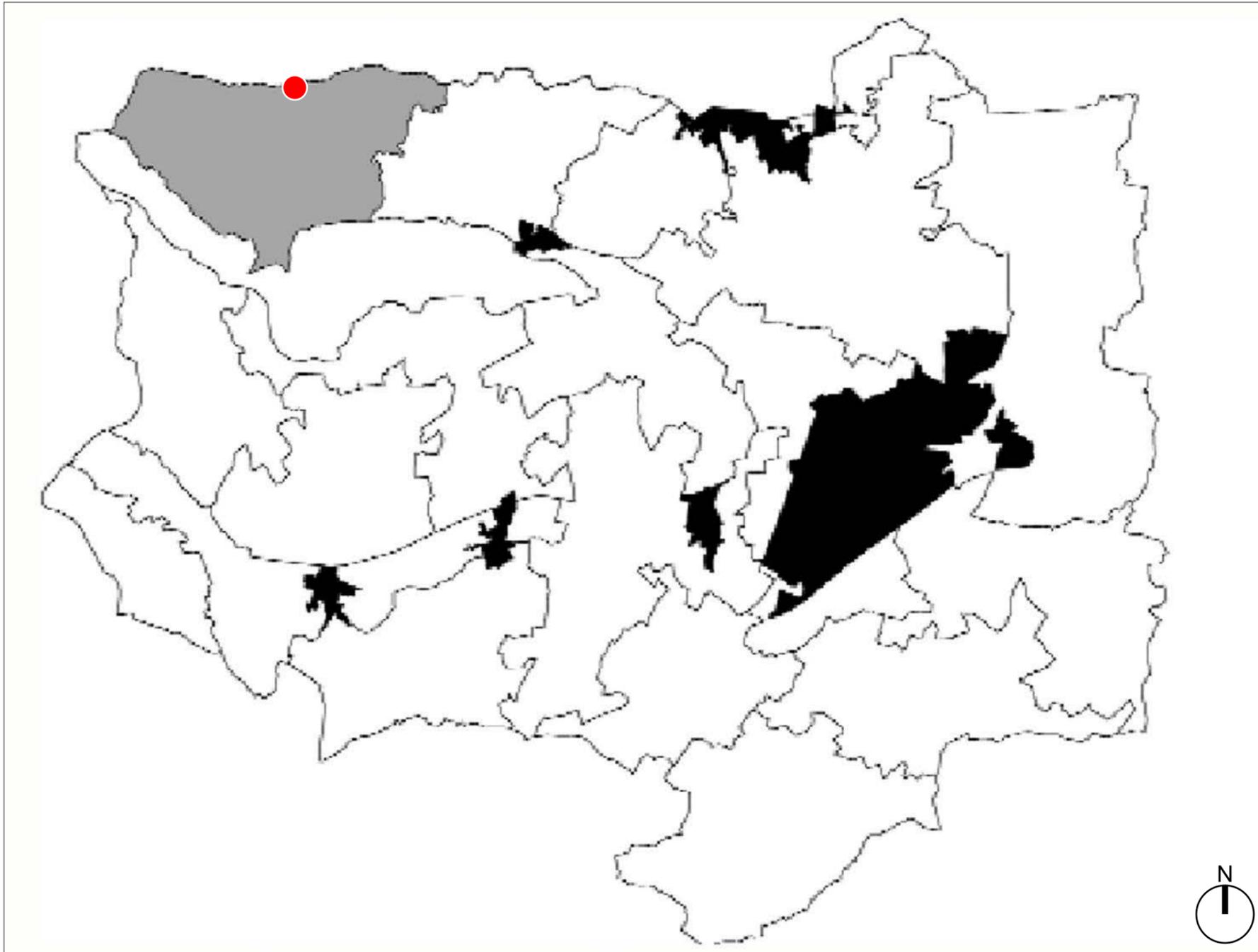
The document states that: "New development should be associated with existing settlements and sited above the many streams that cross the area to reduce the risk of flooding. Wherever possible, existing woodlands, hedgerows and trees should be used to integrate new development into the landscape.

Where necessary, new development should allow sufficient room for a framework of trees and shrubs to be planted, to integrate the built form into the surrounding landscape. Native trees and shrubs should be planted around developments adjacent to open countryside.

The density of new development should be in keeping with that in the existing settlements. Buildings should generally be two-storey and face onto the road. Boundaries facing onto the road should be marked by hedgerows or red brick walls as appropriate to the local area.

Public paths should be retained and new development linked to the wider countryside wherever possible.

New development should reflect the form, scale and proportions of existing vernacular buildings in the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, materials, colours and textures [as set out within the document]... Narrow country lanes should be protected from unnecessary improvements and urbanisation."



LEGEND

● APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION

FIGURE 4.4 – EXTRACT ILLUSTRATING BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE COUNCIL, 2001)

## 4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

### 4.2 TOPOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

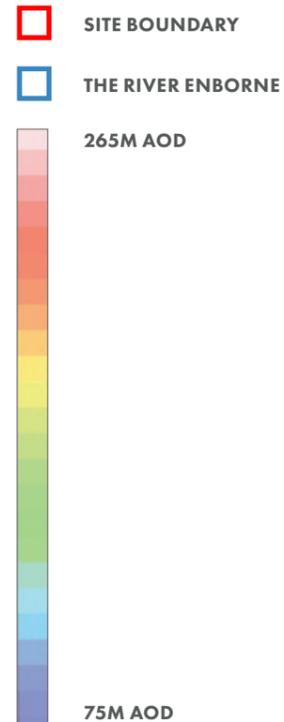
The River Enborne flows west to east through the study area. The study area is gently undulating and generally falls towards the Enborne.

To the north of the study area, the topography rises up from the River Enborne to Wash Common at approximately 126m AOD. Additional high points within the area are located to the south at Burghclere and Tot Hill Service Station ranging from between approximately 135m-145m AOD, Penwood at approximately 127m AOD, and Woolton hill at approximately 130m AOD.

The lowest points within the landscape occur along the River Enborne valley, to the centre of the study area at approximately 90m AOD.

Value: Medium

#### LEGEND



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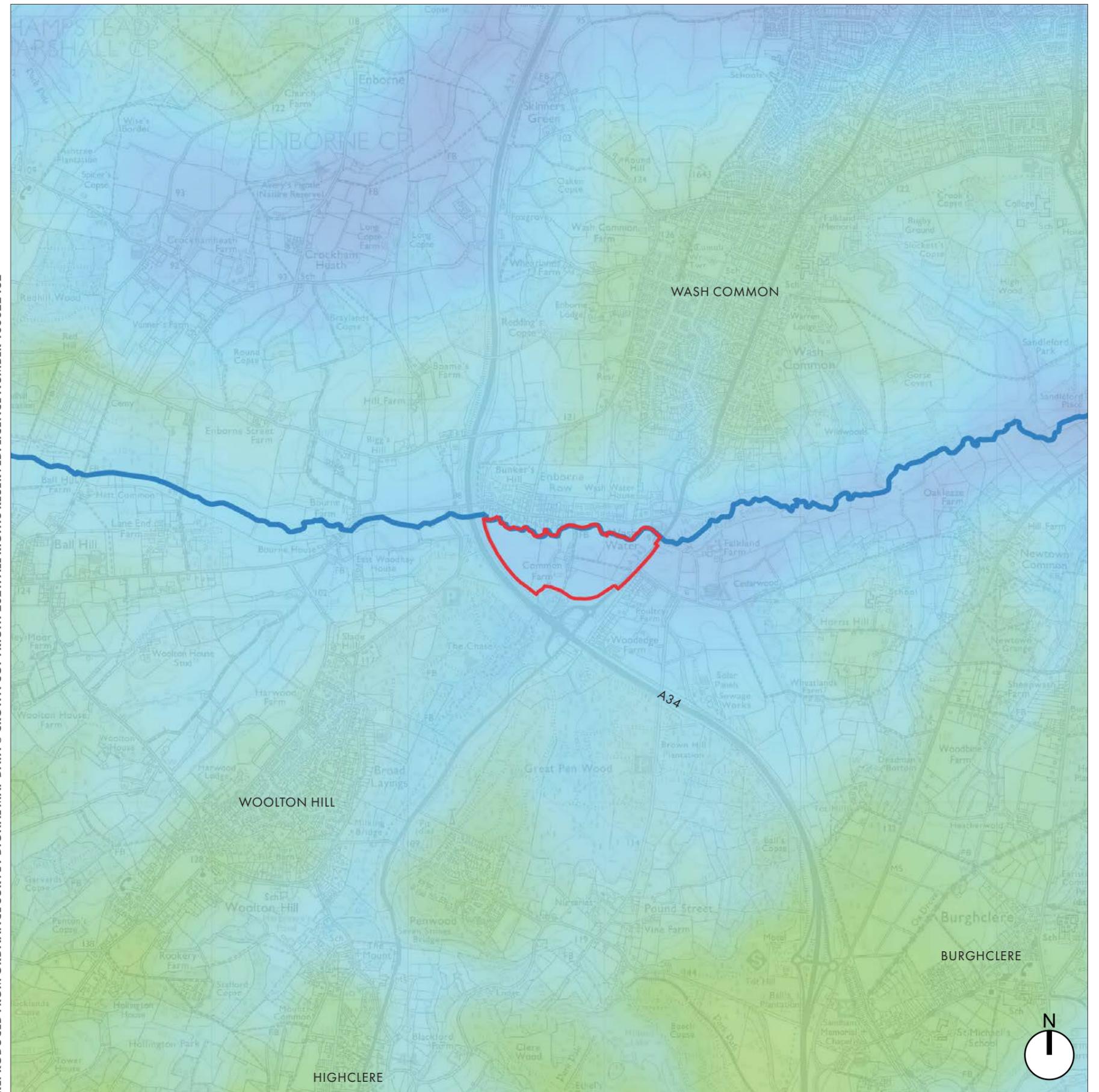


FIGURE 4.5 – PLAN ILLUSTRATING TOPOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE (FABRIK, 2021)

### 4.3 MOVEMENT CORRIDORS AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY CONTEXT

The movement corridors of the contextual area follow the regional characteristics in the 2a - Highclere Chase as having "Unusually high density of narrow winding lanes, tracks and footpaths which is a striking aspect of this landscape." A series of local unclassified roads cross the landscape on a distorted grid pattern, connecting farmsteads, hamlets and villages to the main transport corridors.

The Site is located between Andover Road (A343) on the east and the A34 on the west. The local landscape is bisected by a number of transport corridors. The A34 is the main arterial route through the study area linking the M4 and M40 to the north and the M3 to the south. Andover Road (A343) extends north to Newbury and south to Andover.

Andover Road is a 30 mph single carriageway road, with a typical width of some 6m and a footway on the western side. It connects the site with Newbury to the north and Andover to the south. The A34 is a major road that offers various connection to the site and onwards to the M4. The A34 Newbury Bypass leads further north to the M4. In addition, the A34 provides further connections to travel west along the A4 to Marlborough and Swindon. The A34 continues further north to Oxford. To the south, the A34 leads to Winchester and Southampton.

The main access to the site is via Andover Road from the eastern side. As well as providing access to the site, Andover Road also provides access to residential properties in Highclere and Wash Common.

The study area benefits from a dense, well used, Public Rights of Way Network (PROW). Numerous footpaths, bridleways and byways traverse the local landscape. In particular, the long distance path Brenda Parker Way is located to the south on a east - west orientation. There is an extensive network of footpaths within the local and wider landscape, mainly to the east of the study area, within Newton Common. To the west of the Study area there is a wide range of PROW linking to the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Value: Low-High

#### LEGEND

- SITE BOUNDARY
- FOOTPATHS
- BRIDLEWAYS
- BYWAY
- BRENDA PARKER WAY

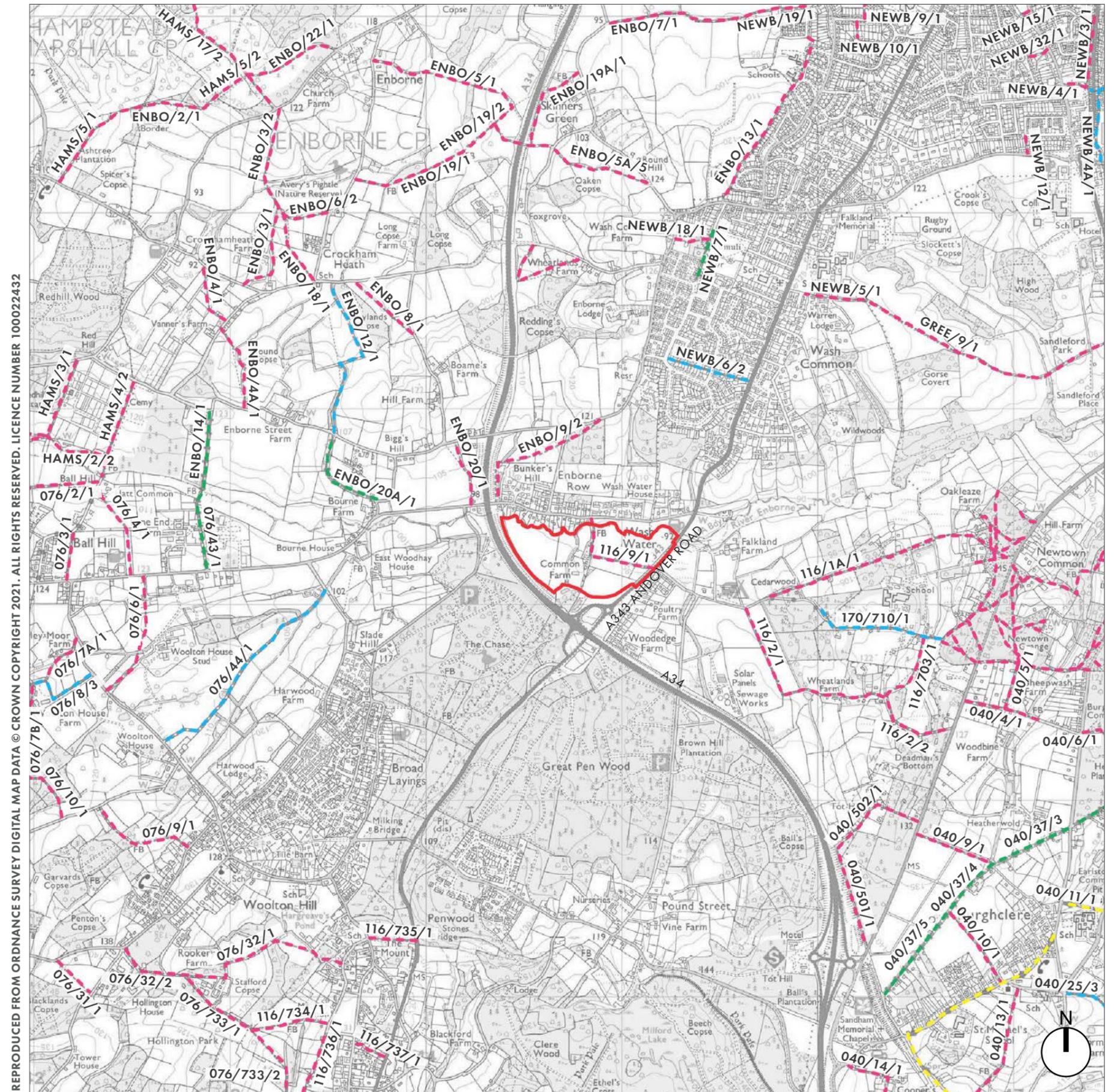


FIGURE 4.6 – PLAN SHOWING DEFINITIVE RIGHTS OF WAY (FABRIK, 2021)

## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 4.4 CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

### 4.4.1 BROAD LAND USE

The Site sits in between existing settlement to the north and east, the A34 and an extensive woodland cover to the south. The agricultural land use is classified as Grade 2 quality in a small area to the south west of the western parcel, Grade 3b quality across the rest of the site bar two areas of Grade 4 quality associated with the buildings running south to the boundary under the post-1988 Agricultural Land Classification data available.

To the immediate north of the Site (approximately 900m), the settlement of Wash Common is located, with primarily residential with educational facilities, shops, sports facilities, and public open space. To the south west, the settlement of Woolton Hill is located at approximately 1.6km from the Site. Land uses are similar to Wash Common and include educational facilities, shops and sports facilities. Other land uses within the rest of the study area includes kennels, cattery, farms, businesses and Oakley Farm caravan park.

Value: Low-High

### 4.4.2 WOODLAND/VEGETATION PATTERN

Land at Washwater is located within a well interconnected treed landscape which includes large areas of woodland blocks and strips, sinuous and lineal hedgerow and treebelts. The dense woodland is heavily scattered within the landscape and cover large areas of land - a significant amount of which are ancient woodland. The most significant tracts of woodland within the contextual area are located to the south of the contextual landscape within the Chase and the Great Pen Wood. The Chase comprises predominately broadleaf and coniferous Ancient woodland, containing a mosaic of different habitats. Great Pen Wood is located south of the site and is a mixed woodland held by the Forestry Commission. Within the local landscape other woodland includes Cedarwood and Redding's Copse.

Field sizes within the study area are varied in size and shape and are bound by hedgerows, trees, streams / the River Enborne and enclosed rural lanes to the A34.

Value: Medium-High

### 4.4.3 PUBLIC / COMMUNAL OPEN SPACE

Public open space within the study area is focused within and around the settlement of Wash Common to the North. The open space within Wash Common is located in the wider landscape and consists of; Wash Common Park, Blossoms Field, Falkland Cricket Grounds, allotments and school pitches. The open space predominantly comprises of short cut grassland.

Value: High

### 4.4.4 SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SETTING

The Site sits on the southern peripheral of Wash Water. This Hamlet is a ribbon settlement following the River Enborne and Washwater Road. Washwater is located to the north of the study area and follows the A323 to Newbury, forming a connected urban character. Residential built form extends up to the edge of the A34 corridor at Woodedge Farm off Andover Road and Bunkers Hill at Washwater.

The local landscape follows the 1. Highclere and Burghclere's key characteristics for settlement pattern and setting as "*Numerous scattered small villages, hamlets, farmsteads and many residential properties, some accessed through a fairly dense network of narrow lanes. However, the paddocks, together with recent residential development, stud farms and a relatively high local population lend a rather urbanised character*".

Value: Low-Medium

### 4.4.5 BUILDING HEIGHTS

Building heights vary across the study area, from dwellings of a domestic scale and mass within the villages, to larger scale buildings evident in the local landscape, including farmsteads and large rural properties. Most buildings are modest in size and domestic in scale, with 2-3 storeys as typical.

Value: Low-Medium

### 4.4.6 LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The key landscape features locally are the gently undulating topography falling towards the River Enborne; scattered Ancient Woodland, tree belts and hedgerow; high proportion of woodland to the south at the Chase and Great Pen Wood. It is this woodland that marks the edge of the AONB and is distinct due to the high proportion of evergreen trees; enclosed and sunken lanes from vegetation; the River Enborne valley; scattered small villages, hamlets, farmsteads and many residential properties, some accessed through a fairly dense network of narrow lanes.

The noise and visual intrusion from the A34 and A343 are detracting features severing the landscape and marking the edge of the AONB.

Value: High

### 4.4.7 SKYLINE

The well treed landscape creates a wooded skyline, interspersed with built form in dispersed areas.

Value: Medium

### 4.4.8 HISTORIC & CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Listed buildings are scattered across rural areas of study area, along transport routes, and mainly clustered within settlements in the North Wessex Downs AONB (refer to figure 3.1). There are listed buildings located within the local setting of the Site. These include Mill at Falkland Farm (Grade II) and Yew Tree Cottage (Grade II).

South of the application area is a range of Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), including; Round barrow cemetery on Wash Common, Deserted medieval town of Newtown, Park Pale in Hamstead Marshall Park, and Cruise missile shelter complex, Greenham Common Airbase. There are no SAM within the immediate contextual area, however there is designated battle field from the Battle of Newbury (Civil war, 1643) approximately 550m south of the Site. It was claimed that Wash Water was named after the spot on the River Enborne where women washed the troops' clothes during/ or after the First Battle of Newbury.

The A34 (Newbury Bypass) runs through the contextual area. The construction of the bypass caused considerable unrest between January and April 1996 from the clearance of land including 120 acres of woodland. This led to some of the largest anti-road protests in European history known as the 'Third Battle of Newbury'.

South of the extended contextual area is the Grade I Listed Parks and Gardens of the Highclere Estate. The List entry, describes its setting which is largely contained from the wider landscape by woodland and trees:

*'The 430ha site, which comprises c 13ha of informal pleasure grounds and 417ha of parkland, pasture, and woodland, is largely bounded by agricultural fencing and enclosed by tree belts. Two short stretches of the north and north-west boundaries abut minor lanes and on the east side, east of Duns Mere, a kilometre of embankment screens the adjacent A34, Whitway diversion. The northern third of the park lies the fairly level ground of the River Avon valley, this rising in undulations southwards before ascending the steep scarp of the Downs onto Sidown Hill in the extreme south of the park. Wooded downland, crowned by the open crest of Beacon Hill, forms the wider setting for the southern part of the park while the remainder is surrounded by extensive woodland with farmland and a scatter of small settlements'.*

Value: Medium-High



LEGEND

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  SETTLEMENT
-  WOODLAND
-  AGRICULTURE LAND
-  WATER BODIES / RIVER
-  COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL / FARMSTEAD
-  A34

FIGURE 4.7 – AERIAL PHOTO SHOWING LAND COVER (FABRIK, 2021)

## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 4.5 APPLICATION AREA DESCRIPTION

### 4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Site comprises of a centrally positioned farmstead (Common Farm) with storage, outbuildings and a mixture of medium to large scale pasture field parcels positioned in the east and west of the Site (currently used for cattle, horses and donkeys). The Site is bound by the River Enbourne, with adjacent field parcels and dwellings leading to Wash Water beyond to the north; the A343 Andover Road to the east; and the A34 to the south and west.

Figure 4.8 shows the existing characteristics of the Site.

### 4.5.2 TOPOGRAPHY

The Site lies within the flat valley floor of the River Enborne. The topography gently falls from the southeast and southwest Site boundary corners to the north, where it meets the River Enborne. There is a minor depression through the centre of the Site, formed by a tributary stream which runs to the River Enborne on a south-north alignment.

In the southeastern corner of the Site, the level reaches approximately 98m AOD and slopes gradually down to the River Enborne where it reaches approximately 92m AOD. In the south western corner of the site, there is a high point where it reaches approximately 100 AOD. The land then slopes north east where it reaches the River Enborne. There is raised landform which runs along the southern boundary and separates the Site from the A34.

Value: Medium

### 4.5.3 LAND USE

A number of ancillary buildings have been built as the farm has grown and these are located to the south of the farmhouse and are contained within narrow tree belts that follow old boundaries that help visually shield them.

Public Footpath 116/9/1 runs north-south to west-east through the centre of the Site and connects the Site to A344 Andover Road and Washwater Road.

The internal makeup of site is defined to the north by the River Enborne on the immediate boundary and then Wash Water which is a residential road with properties that form the southern edge of the settlement of Wash Common immediately adjacent to the Site. In the far western corner of the site where there are now private homes on the boundary there used to be Woodhay Railway station. There is an almost continuous belt of primarily native trees and shrubs that have grown up along the banks of the river.

Running off the River Enborne is a stream that runs north south cutting the Site almost in half and running on, under the A34 to The Chase AONB which is located to the south over the A34. To the east of the stream there are five fields used for grazing

cattle with defined hedgerows marking field boundaries between them. To the west, the north and the south of these five fields are the older more established hedgerows with the hedgerow associated with the stream well established whilst still providing access into the site further to the west.

To the west of the site is a large open grass field used for grazing with its boundaries defined by the planting that buffers the A34 to the south west and tree planting to the north on the southern banks of the River Enborne and further north.

Value: Low - Medium

### 4.5.4 VEGETATION

#### Vegetation / Grassland and fringes Tree Survey

A range of semi-mature to mature trees and hedgerow shrub species follow the Site boundary with variations in thickness, height, species and openings. Sections of mid-rise hedgerow with partial views in and out of the Site form along the eastern boundary. A thick tree belt / hedgerow and mixed linear woodland along the southern boundary on a large bund limits views in and out of the northern area. To the North, a mature tree belt follows the River Enborne along the northern boundary, which is relatively open to the adjacent fields and residential dwellings along Washwater Road.

The Site overall is bound predominantly by native trees and shrub understorey species (both within and beyond the Site boundaries). Internally, there is open, short grassland and a mixture of hedgerow, woodland and native shrubs which follow the water corridors. The species within the Site include: Ash, Alder, Leyland Cypress, English Oak, Norway Maple, Cherry, Hawthorne, Rowan, Cherry Plum, Grey Poplar, Sycamore, Wellingtonia, Crack Willow, Lawson Cypress, Field Maple, Norway Spruce, Goat Willow, Beech, Magnolia, Holly, Silver Birch, Hazel, Blackthorn, Western Hemlock, Western Red Cedar, Elder, Forsythia, Douglas Fir, Scots Pine, Apple, Dogwood, Guelder Rose, Gorse, Bamboo, Horse Chestnut, Rowan, Privet, Elm, Yew, Viburnum, Smoke Bush, Lilac, Buddleia, Mahonia, Broom.

#### Tree Survey

None of the trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The tree survey identifies that there is an even mix of high to low quality trees/ tree groups, ranging from Category A (high Quality) to Category U (low quality) along the Site boundary and within the contextual area. There are 179 identified trees, 49 Tree groups and 11 hedge groups.

Category A trees are Ash and English Oak and are located mainly along tree belts framing the central area of the Site, and along the two main water corridors, the River Enborne and it's tributary stream. There are two other category A trees located in the central eastern section of the Site, along the internal field boundaries. The majority of trees within the Site are category B and C. These tree categories are scattered along the Site boundary and internal areas along field boundaries and within the central area of the Site. 16 category U trees are also dispersed located in these areas of the Site.

Value: Medium

A tree survey has been carried out by Aspect Arboriculture which identified that the majority of trees along the Site boundary and within the Site are a mix, from a range of early mature to mature. The majority of trees are identified as average condition and the tree height ranges from 1.5m to 25m.

The majority of trees and tree groups along the northern, southern and eastern boundary and middle of the Site are outlined as category B trees, with category A (high) trees mainly located within the centre of the Site and along the River Enborne. Along the eastern Site boundary, the hedgerow and tree groups comprise of category C (low) as below average and average condition. The internal field boundary hedgerow similarly is outlined as category C and under average condition.

Value: Medium

### 4.5.5 BUILT FORM

The built form on the Site comprises of 1- 2 story farmhouse, large scale storage, farm outbuildings and storage areas with rubble/ debris / car parts. Built form within the immediate and local area range from large scale commercial / farmsteads and small-large scale dwellings with heights between 1-3 stories.

Value: Low-Medium

### 4.5.6 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

There are no Listed buildings within the Site, however there are two listed building located within the local setting of the Site. These include Mill at Falkland Farm (Grade II) and Yew Tree Cottage (Grade II).

The location of the farmhouse which sits in the centre of the Site first appears on OS maps in 1938 and has been developed over the following years. To the south of the buildings there was an original building called the Old Blanket Mill which was present on OS maps until 1938.

An archaeological desk based assessment was carried out by RPS in April 2021. The assessment identified, in terms of designated archaeological assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Wrecks or Historic Battlefields lie within the application area and there would be no indirect impact on any such assets in the wider landscape. This assessment has identified that the Site can be considered to have a known potential for remains associated with former mill buildings shown on historic mapping and structures associated with the extant farmstead complex. There is also a moderate potential for Medieval remains, and a low to moderate potential for all remaining past periods of human activity within the study site. Any such remains would likely be considered of overall Low/Local significance.

Value: Medium



LEGEND

- SITE BOUNDARY
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- EXISTING VEGETATION
- HEDGEROW
- WOODLAND ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHASE NATURE RESERVE
- WATER BODY
- SLOPE DIRECTION
- BUND
- A34 NOISE
- ★ LISTED BUILDING
- NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AONB
- EXISTING BUILT FORM
- AREA AT RISK FROM FLOODING
- FOOTPATH
- ROAD CORRIDOR
- CONTOURS (AT 5M INTERVALS)

FIGURE 4.8 – PLAN SHOWING THE EXISTING SITE LANDSCAPE (FABRIK, 2021)

## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 4.5 APPLICATION AREA DESCRIPTION CONTINUED

### 4.5.7 LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The Site's main features include:

- The flat topography sloping generally from the southeast and southwest corners to the north, where it meets the River Enborne, creating a minor valley through the centre of the site;
- the River Enborne flowing along the northern boundary and its tributary flowing south-north through the centre of the Site;
- a tall embankment which runs along the southern boundary and separates the Site from the A34;
- centrally positioned farmstead (Common Farm) with storage, outbuildings and a mixture of medium to large scale pasture field parcels positioned in the east and west of the Site;
- hedgerow shrub species and tree belts following the Site boundary and internal area of the Site, including mature tree belt alongside the tributary stream and a parallel tree belt, which historically was associated with the old Mill Race; and
- thick tree belt / hedgerow and mixed linear woodland along the southern boundary.

Value: Medium- High

#### Detracting Features:

Detracting Features within the Site boundary include the large scale storage, farm outbuildings and storage areas with rubble/ debris / car parts within the centre, farmyard area of the Site; and the embankment and noise associated with the adjacent A34

Value: Low

### 4.5.8 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The above elements combine to inform landscape character of the Site. The key characteristics of which are:

- The Site lies within the flat valley floor of the River Enborne, which forms the northern boundary. A tributary to the Enborne flows north through the centre of the Site.
- The Site is contained by raised land form and planting associated with the A34 corridor, hedgerow alongside the A343 Andover Road and riparian trees adjacent to the Enborne.
- Site land uses include fields of pasture, pony paddocks, buildings associated with Common Farm and the Public Right of Way that extends through the Site.
- Common Farm lies within the centre of the Site in the location of a former Mill. A track from the A343 shared with the Public Right of Way leads to a small farmhouse on the eastern bank of the Enborne Tributary. On the western bank and largely contained by mature trees are large modern farmsheds, a storage yard and a pony paddock.
- Internal vegetation features include a mature tree belt alongside the tributary stream and a parallel tree belt, which historically was associated with the old Mill

Race. There are also gappy hedgerows through the Site, which are punctuated by trees including a number of mature Oak's.

- Sections of the Enborne and the Enborne tributary have a peaceful quality. This is particularly apparent adjacent to eastern sections of the Enborne where open fields are retained on both sides of the riverbank; and sections of the tributary stream which are enclosed by trees and vegetation. The northern section of the tributary is appreciated from an adjacent section of the Public Right of Way between Common Farm and Wash Water Road to the north.
- The Site is visually disassociated from the AONB and wider countryside to the south and west by the A34 corridor, associated planting and raised landform.

#### Night Time Character:

The Site lies on the edge of the predominately unlit residential environment of Washwater to the north and Andover Road / Old Andover Road to the east.

Overall the Site and it's surrounding area is predominantly dark with exception of the following light sources:

- Internal lighting to Common Farmhouse within the Site which is perceived from the farm access track off Andover Road / the western section of Footpath 116/9/1.
- To the north of the Site at Washwater, internal lights to dwellings, occasional low level bollard lights within private drives and external garden lighting in Washwater. Flood and uplighting associated with the Woodpecker pub and car park in Washwater (at the time of the night time survey, external lights were switched off at 9.30pm). The lights associated with the dwellings of Washwater are apparent from within the Site (especially the lighting of the Woodpecker pub).
- Standard highway light columns are concentrated on the Andover Road roundabout and slip road to the A34. These are just perceived filtered through the intervening boundary vegetation from the eastern part of the Site.
- Interior lightings from the dwellings west of Andover Road opposite the Site and single standard highway light column at the road junction leading to the roundabout off old Andover Road.

Other than the noise, there is no sense of traffic or associated headlights from vehicles using the A34 due to the intervening bund and associated vegetation on the western edge of the Site.

In views back towards the Site from the surrounding area, the Site is predominantly dark.

Value: Medium - High

## 4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

### 4.6 INTERNAL VISUAL SURVEY

A visual inspection of the Application Site was conducted on 9th March 2021. The photos on the following page illustrate the existing site conditions and characteristics.

Internal viewpoints from the PRoW are covered in section 5.0 Visual Assessment.

#### LEGEND

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  VIEWPOINT LOCATION
-  LOCATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINT – OPEN VIEW (AN OPEN VIEW OF THE WHOLE OF THE SITE OR OPEN VIEW OF PART OF THE SITE).
-  FOOTPATH

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FIGURE 4.9 – PLAN ILLUSTRATING INTERNAL SITE PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION POINTS (FABRIK, 2021)



CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT A**

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST ACROSS THE GRASSLAND FROM THE NORTHWESTERN CORNER OF THE WESTERN FIELD PARCEL. THE VIEW IS BOUND BY THICK HEDGEROW / LINEAR WOODLAND SEPARATING THE SITE FROM THE A34 TO THE SOUTH AND TALL HEDGEROW / TREE LINE, WITH GLIMPSED VIEWS OF RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS ON WASHWATER ROAD TO THE NORTH. THE SITE IS WELL CONTAINED AND THERE ARE DISTANT VIEWS OF EXISTING FARM BUILDINGS AND INTERNAL VEGETATION TO THE EAST OF THE SITE IN THE BACKGROUND. THERE IS A WELL TREED SKYLINE WITHIN THE VIEW.



CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT B**

VIEW LOOKING WEST ACROSS THE GRASSLAND FROM THE NORTHEASTERN CORNER OF THE WESTERN FIELD PARCEL. THE VIEW IS BOUND BY HEDGEROW AND SCRUB TO THE NORTH AND A LOW RISE HEDGEROW FOLLOWING THE FIELD BOUNDARY TO THE EAST. TO THE SOUTH, A THICK HEDGEROW / LINEAR WOODLAND SEPARATES THE SITE FROM THE A34. OPEN VIEWS OF EVERGREEN WOODLAND IN THE CHASE, WITHIN THE AONB ARE VISIBLE BEYOND AND ABOVE THE SITE'S VEGETATION. THE TOPOGRAPHY GENTLY SLOPES DOWN FROM THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH OF THE SITE AND RIVER ENBORNE.



CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT C**

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY IN THE MID-WESTERN FIELD PARCEL. THE VIEW IS BOUND BY HEDGEROW AND SCRUB TO THE NORTH, LEADING TO A LOW RISE HEDGEROW FOLLOWING THE FIELD BOUNDARY TO THE WEST. TO THE EAST, VIEWS OF THE EXISTING FARM BUILDINGS AND STORAGE ARE VISIBLE THROUGH INTERVENING LAYERS OF MATURE VEGETATION ALONG THE EASTERN FIELD BOUNDARY. TO THE SOUTH, THERE ARE OPEN VIEWS OF COW FIELDS LEADING TO THE THICK HEDGEROW / LINEAR WOODLAND THAT SEPARATES THE SITE FROM THE A34.

CUT LINE



CUT LINE



CUT LINE





CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT D**

VIEW LOOKING NORTH ACROSS THE PADDOCK FROM THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE EXISTING DEVELOPED AREA. THE VIEW IS BOUND BY HEDGEROW AND TREE BELTS TO THE WEST AND THE SOUTH, CONTAINING THE FIELD PARCEL. IN THE FOREGROUND THERE ARE VIEWS OF STABLES AND STORAGE FACILITIES. TO THE EAST, THE FARMHOUSE AND FARM BUILDINGS ARE VISIBLE, WITH GLIMPSED VIEWS OF VEGETATION TO THE EAST IN BETWEEN. A TREE BELT AND TRIBUTARY TO THE RIVER ENBORNE SEPARATES THE FIELD PARCEL TO THE BUILT FORM, WITH A SMALL STREAM VISIBLE TO THE SOUTH OF THE VIEW.



CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT E**

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE NORTHWESTERN CORNER OF THE EXISTING DEVELOPED AREA. THE VIEW SHOWS A MIXTURE OF LARGE SCALE STORAGE, FARM OUTBUILDINGS AND STORAGE AREAS WITH RUBBLE/ DEBRIS / CAR PARTS / FARM EQUIPMENT / CONTAINERS / VEHICLES IN THE FOREGROUND TO MID GROUND . THE DEVELOPED AREA IS BOUND BY MATURE HEDGEROW AND TREE BELTS, LIMITING WIDER VIEWS OF THE SITE. THE TREADED SKYLINE IS BROKEN UP BY THE BUILT FORM WITHIN THE DEVELOPED AREA OF THE SITE.



CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT F**

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE NORTHEASTERN CORNER OF THE EXISTING DEVELOPED AREA. THE VIEW SIMILARLY SHOWS A MIXTURE OF LARGE SCALE STORAGE, FARM OUTBUILDINGS AND STORAGE AREAS WITH RUBBLE/ DEBRIS / CAR PARTS / FARM EQUIPMENT / CONTAINERS / VEHICLES IN THE FOREGROUND TO MID GROUND . THE DEVELOPED AREA IS BOUND BY MATURE HEDGEROW AND TREE BELTS, LIMITING WIDER VIEWS OF THE SITE. THERE ARE PARTIAL VIEWS OF EVERGREEN WOODLAND IN THE CHASE TO THE SOUTH, THROUGH THE INTERVENING LAYERS OF VEGETATION.

CUT LINE



CUT LINE



CUT LINE





CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT G**

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE NORTHERN ENTRANCE TO THE EXISTING DEVELOPED AREA. THE VIEW SHOWS A MIXTURE OF LARGE SCALE STORAGE, FARM OUTBUILDINGS AND STORAGE AREAS WITH RUBBLE/ DEBRIS / FARM EQUIPMENT / CONTAINERS / VEHICLES IN THE FOREGROUND TO MID GROUND . THE DEVELOPED AREA IS BOUND BY A LOW LYING HEDGEROW TO THE EAST, WITH PARTIAL VIEWS OF THE ADJACENT FILED PARCEL AND SOUTHEASTERN SITE BOUNDARY VEGETATION IN THROUGH GAPS AND ABOVE THE HEDGEROW.



CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT H**

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE NORTHWESTERN CORNER OF THE NORTHWESTERN FIELD. THE VIEW IS BOUND BY A TREE BELT FOLLOWING THE RIVER ENBORNE TO THE EAST AND WEST. IN THE FOREGROUND THE FILED IS BOUND BY MATURE HEDGEROW AND TREE BELTS, SEPARATING THE FIELD PARCEL FROM ADJACENT FIELDS. THE ACCESS ROAD RUNS EAST-WEST ACROSS THE VIEW AND SEPARATES THE FIELD FROM SOUTHERN FIELD PARCELS IN THE MID GROUND. TO THE WEST, THERE ARE VIEWS OF THE FARMSTEAD ENTRANCE. BEYOND THE SITE, THERE IS A WELL TREED SKYLINE.



CUT LINE

**PHOTOGRAPH – VIEWPOINT I**

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE NORTHEASTERN CORNER OF THE NORTHWESTERN FIELD PARCEL. THE VIEW IS BOUND BY A TREE BELT FOLLOWING THE RIVER ENBORNE TO THE WEST AND MATURE HEDGEROW SEPARATING THE FIELD PARCEL FROM ADJACENT FIELDS TO THE EAST. THE ACCESS ROAD RUNS EAST-WEST ACROSS THE VIEW. TO THE WEST, THERE ARE OPEN VIEWS OF THE FARMSTEAD AND CENTRAL MATURE VEGETATION. VIEWS OF THE WESTERN AND SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE SITE ARE TRUNCATED BY INTERVENING CENTRAL VEGETATION AND TREE BELTS / HEDGEROW.