

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)

Adopted April 2022



Countryside, settlement gaps and the coast

Relevant issues and objectives

Issues (Chapter 2): G1, G2, G3

Objectives (Chapter 3): ii, iv, vii

Related local and national strategies/policies (see Appendix B)

Source	Reference/Title
Eastleigh Borough Council	Biodiversity Action Plan 2012 - 2022
PfSH	Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework for Gaps
North Solent Shoreline Management Plan Client Steering Group	North Solent Shoreline Management Plan (see policy Units 5C04 - 5C10).
Hampshire County Council	Hamble River Harbour Authority Strategic Vision, Strategic Plan and Management Plan Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment ¹⁴ 2011 Countryside Access Plan for Hampshire
Marine Management Organisation	Draft South Marine Plan ¹⁵
NPPF	Paragraphs 17, 109 - 114

Countryside and Settlement gaps

- 4.25 The issues set out in Chapter 2 suggest that the Borough's countryside is under pressure from development and non-agricultural uses, with some areas in need of improved management, in particular those adjoining the urban edges of settlements. Quite a large proportion of the Borough's countryside is in use for recreational horse-grazing, with related development pressures for stabling and other built facilities.

Strategic policy S5, New development in the countryside

1. **Planning permission will be granted for new development in the countryside provided it is related to:**
 - a. **the provision of employment through agricultural development (policy DM17), the extension and replacement of existing employment uses (policy DM18) and the re-use of existing buildings (policy DM19);**

¹⁴ <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/landscape/integratedcharacterassessment>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/south-marine-plans>

- b. residential extensions and replacement buildings (policies DM18 and 26), limited residential conversions (policy DM19), rural workers' dwellings (policy DM27) and accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (policy DM31);
 - c. community, tourist, or visitor uses through the re-use of buildings including facilities for the interpretation of heritage assets (policies DM12);
 - d. outdoor recreation and open space (policies DM32 and DM33);
 - e. allotments and community farms (policy DM32);
 - f. cemeteries (policy DM37); and
 - g. essential public utilities (policy DM9).
2. In permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to:
- a. avoid adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, the intrinsic character of the landscape including the avoidance of adverse landscape impacts on areas adjoining national parks and their settings, the significance of heritage assets and on the biodiversity of the area;
 - b. secure long-term beneficial management practices that will enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the countryside and coast;
 - c. avoid sterilisation of mineral resources, in accordance with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan;
 - d. safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land unless the benefit of the development clearly outweighs the loss; and
 - e. protect soils during construction wherever possible in line with the 'Defra code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites'.

[Note: DM (development management) policies are in Chapter 5.]

- 4.26 The Borough's countryside (as defined in the glossary) is an important and diminishing resource. It is valued for many reasons, including agriculture and community food production, its landscape qualities and biodiversity value. Habitats of value include the special characteristics of the valleys of the rivers Itchen and Hamble and the networks of ancient woodlands, streams and wetlands throughout the Borough. The countryside is also important for the setting it provides for towns and villages, and the opportunities it provides for recreation. The Council is keen to protect and enhance the countryside within the Borough and maximise its opportunities for people and wildlife, from the urbanising impacts of development.
- 4.27 However, there are particular needs arising from rural activities and the rural communities require housing and services, the strategy allows for limited development to ensure these needs are met. In permitting such developments, the Council will seek to promote the beneficial management of the countryside. This will include encouragement of proposals that enhance the woodlands in the Forest of Bere¹⁶ area and recreational links to and within this area.

- 4.28 Parts of the countryside are underlain with mineral deposits. As the minerals planning authority for this Borough Hampshire County Council seeks to avoid the sterilisation of such resources by permanent non minerals development. Areas safeguarded because they contain important minerals are identified by the County Council in the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013), and they are also shown on the Local Plan policies map. The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan identifies the former Hamble Airfield as an area for the extraction of sand and gravel.
- 4.29 The countryside within Eastleigh Borough is not regarded as being a rural area for the purposes of applying the provisions of the NPPF in relation to supporting a prosperous rural economy. Much of it has the characteristics of urban-fringe where careful management is required to avoid urbanisation and the coalescence of settlements, and the Local Plan's policies are framed accordingly.
- 4.30 Policies S5 and S6 restrict development in the countryside principally in order to maintain its rural character and to limit urbanisation. In accordance with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan it also seeks to limit the sterilisation of mineral resources by new development.
- 4.31 Residential development includes houseboats, of which a number exist on the River Hamble estuary - any proposals to moor additional houseboats along the coast will be treated in the same way as proposals for new residential development in the countryside.
- 4.32 Please note that a number of sites in the countryside are covered by special policies in the Local Plan including policies for recreation facilities at the Ageas Bowl (policy WE4), the employment and Travelling Showpeople site at Netley Firs (policy HE5) and boatyards (policy DM20).

Strategic policy S6, Protection of settlement gaps

1. **Development within a Settlement Gap as set out in the policies map will be permitted provided that:**
 - a. it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and
 - b. it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:
 - i. The character of the countryside; or
 - ii. The separate identity of the adjoining settlements.

Settlement gaps are defined between:

- a. Eastleigh and Southampton;
- b. Eastleigh and Bishopstoke;
- c. Fair Oak and Horton Heath;
- d. Hedge End, Botley and Boorley Green;
- e. Hedge End, West End and Southampton;
- f. Hedge End, Horton Heath and Boorley Green;
- g. Hedge End and Bursledon;