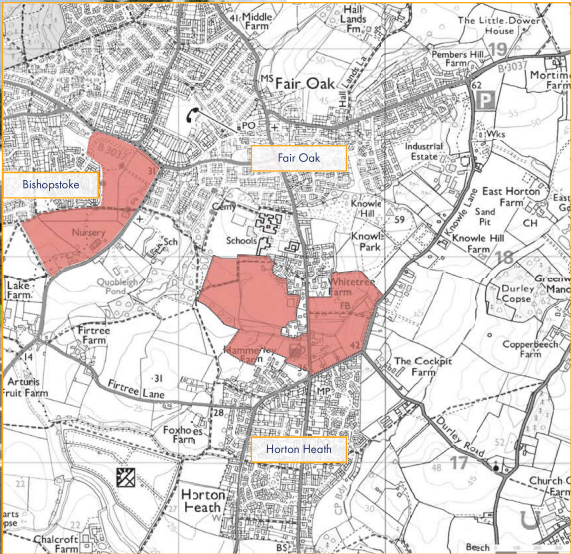


Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak



Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

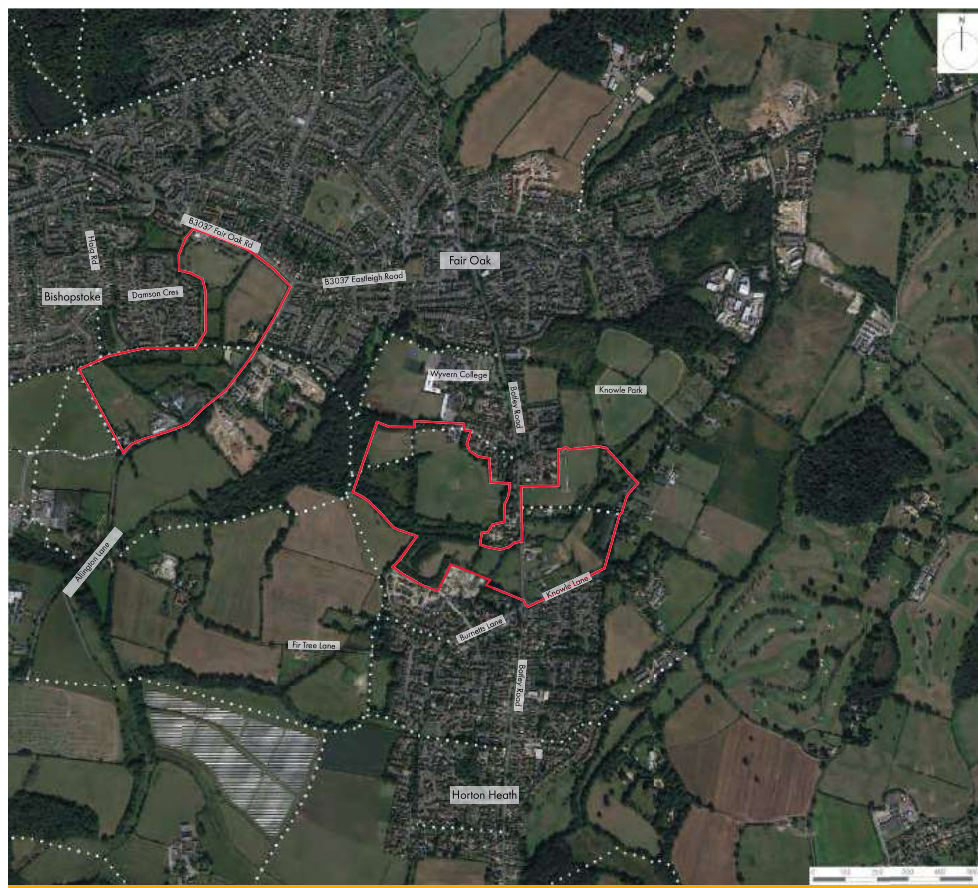


Figure H1 - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak and Bishopstoke Aerial Image with current Gap Boundary

Settlement Character

The Area H covers the Gap no 4, which has been recently reduced due to new developments around the settlements. Following the completion and findings produced from the desktop study and fieldwork survey, a general description of each settlement outlining their overall character, settlement hierarchy level (shown in brackets), scale and identity is set out below.

Horton Heath (small village)

The small historic core of Horton Heath village is located at the southern end of the village and has expanded incrementally to the north along the main thoroughfare during the 20th century. In the last 40 years there has been significant growth to the east and west of this main spine of development, based predominantly on multi-headed cul-de-sac route structures. This growth includes some backland development to the west of the main thoroughfare.

Fair Oak (village)

The village of Fair Oak is located at the intersection of the main thoroughfares connecting it with Bishopstoke to the west and Botley to the south. The settlement has a small historic core, which expanded along and between the main thoroughfares to the north and west during the inter-war/immediate post-war period. The village remained relatively small until the 1960s, since when it has experienced significant growth to the south and east of the centre on the sites of the reclaimed quarries.

Bishopstoke (village)

The village of Bishopstoke is located on the eastern bank of the River Itchen. The historic centre is located to the north of the intersection of what were originally two main thoroughfares. The historic core of the settlement expanded during the late 19th century when two terraced developments laid out on regular grids were constructed to the east.

During the inter-war / immediate post-war period, development along the main route to Fair Oak and the construction of a number of large estates to the east significantly increased the size of the village.

Bishopstoke has continued to expand to the east during the last 50 years and the historic core is now joined to Fair Oak by continuous urban development.

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

Settlement Edge Character

Following the methodology, a summary of the settlement edge adjacent to the Gap, its characteristics and relevant features are set out below:

Horton Heath

Horton Heath's settlement edge varies from the rising ground to the east of Botley Road along Knowle Lane to the lower areas of housing, north of Burnetts Lane (west of Botley Road). Residential dwellings along Knowle Lane vary from larger individual plots to clusters of more modern infill development. Varying boundary treatments and street lighting provides a hard edge to the settlement edge with views permitted to the immediate parcels of land to the north.

To the west, newly formed development, some proposed under the Local Plan allocation and some already under construction will create limited physical separation between the two settlement. However, except for a small section of hedgerow (offering glimpsed views of properties in Daisy Fields) the settlement edge is largely contained by mature field boundary vegetation, coppice and mature scrub.

Fair Oak

Ribbon development along Botley Road and more recent suburban housing developments behind, have helped to shape the settlement edge to Fair Oak. The most recent of these is the modern housing at Knowle Park to the east. This is wrapped by a generous area of open space which rises beyond the Gap boundary towards Knowle Hill – a local viewpoint.

Despite the higher levels, views from the settlement edge to Horton Heath are limited due to the layers of mature field boundary vegetation between the two settlements. In contrast, the land to the west of Botley Road is set lower down and encompasses late 20th century suburban housing at Daisy Fields and Pavilion Close. The latter overlooks the Lapstone Playing fields, which are contained by surrounding mature tree belts and the wet woodland that follows the watercourse extending west to Quobleigh Pond. Despite the close proximity, the low-lying topography and vegetation prevents views of Horton Heath.

Bishopstoke

Despite Bishopstoke being joined to Fair Oak by continuous urban development along Fair Oak Road, the remaining Gap to the south is concentrated around the suburban housing scheme known as Damson Crescent. Accessed by a long drive through the adjacent recreation ground (that forms part of the Gap) this settlement built around the turn of the 21st century has a positive relationship to the Gap edge. This comprises a blend of frontages overlooking the Gap, a strong landscaped buffer and good pedestrian/cycle connections to the wider network.



View of modern housing scheme (Knowle Hill) to east of Botley Road forming the settlement edge to Fair Oak.



Glimpsed view from within the Gap of recent development along the northern settlement edge to Horton Heath, north of Burnetts Lane.



View of Lapstone Play Fields forming the north western settlement edge boundary to Fair Oak.



Knowle Lane travelling east with the Horton Heath settlement edge on the right.



Typical view from cycleway alongside properties to Damson Crescent with establishing landscape buffer forming soft landscape edge to Bishopstoke settlement.

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

Linkages

Movement Types

Roads:

- Botley Road provides the sole vehicle link between Horton Heath and Fair Oak.

Public Rights of Way:

- Footpath No. 1b / Route 10 provides a cohesive pedestrian link between Horton Heath and Fair Oak - approximately 15 minutes walking time.
- Footpath No. 744 provides a route through the centre of the western Gap linking Allington Lane to Damson Crescent - approximately 5 minutes walking time.

Sense of Arrival / Leaving

Vehicle Users

The junction with Botley Road and Knowle Lane provides a sense of leaving Horton Heath. The settlement changes at this crossroads from tight urban settlement to informal housing and field boundaries, and a subtle drop in levels towards the Lapstone public house. Notwithstanding, it takes less than a minute to travel between here and the crossroads Junction with Knowle Lane.

Travelling east along Knowle Lane the junction with Durley Road also provides a sense of leaving Horton Heath as the line of development and settlement stops abruptly, changing to rural lanes and limited individual properties beyond. Botley Road forms the sole connection between the two settlements.

The newly built Fair Oak Parish Hall forms the main building to the edge of the settlement and provides a sense of departure when leaving Fair Oak. In addition, the open space and associated field hedgerows and loose cluster of housing to west of Botley road offers a change in character to the more suburban Fair Oak settlement. Whilst the experience is limited, the drop in level associated with the watercourse does provides some sense of leaving Fair Oak. Hanging baskets on lighting columns also delineate this separation.

Public rights of Way

Footpath No.1b / Route 10 provides a connected route between the two settlements running from Botley Road, Fair Oak to Burnetts Lane via the Lapstone Playing Fields, Wyvern Meadow SINC and fields north of Horton Heath. This provides an attractive rural path with the settlement arrival experience largely defined by the contrast in experience from the hidden wet woodland boardwalks, associated with the SINC designation, to the open fields and sports pitches. The future experience of this route may well be affected by the proposed housing allocation known as One Horton Heath.

Whilst Footpath No. 744 through the Western Gap is short-lived it does provides a continuous route connecting into the wider footpath network to the east of Allington lane linking to Footpath No.1b / Route 10 above. To the west this continues along the southern edge of Bishopstoke all the way through to the Ichen Valley.



Footpath link from Wyvern Meadow SINC to Horton Heath across land forming part of the One Horton Heath development site.



Boardwalk link through Wyvern Meadow SINC



Junction of Botley Road, Burnetts Lane and Knowle Lane defining the settlement edge to Horton Heath.



View from Fair Oak Parish Hall looking south along Botley Road towards the settlement edge.



footpath link the centre of the western Gap linking Allington Lane to Damson Crescent.

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

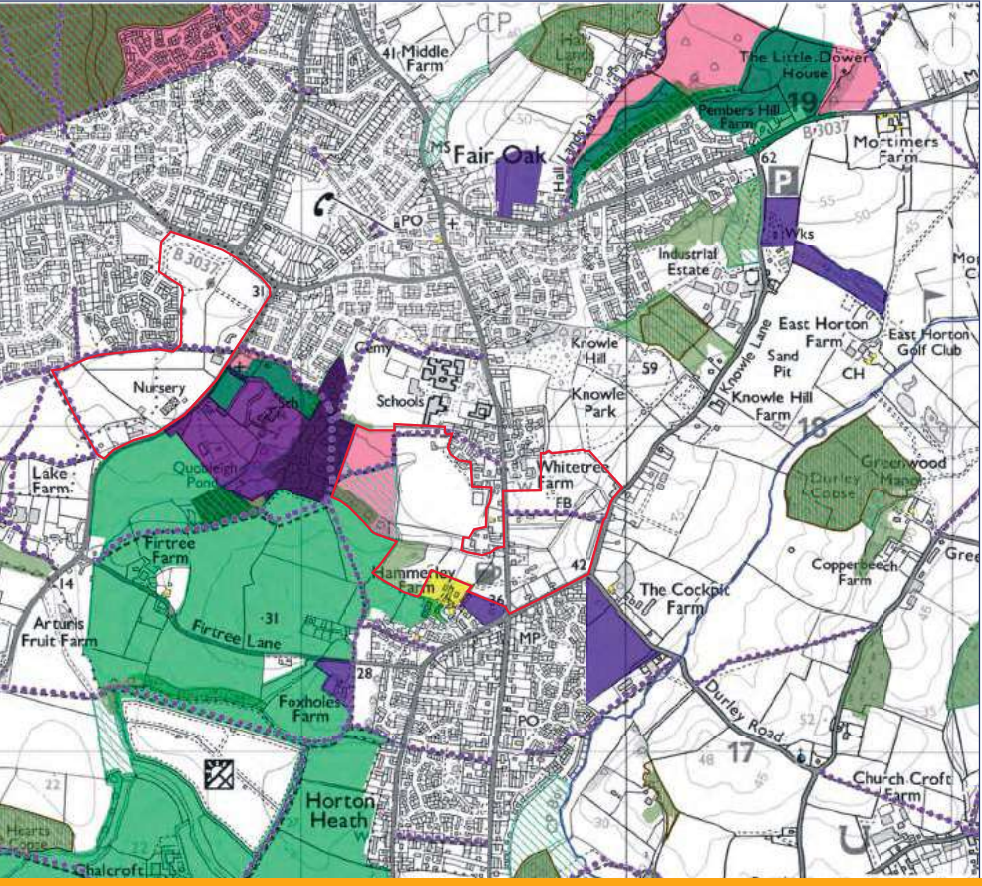


Figure H2 - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak and Bishopstoke - Designations Plan

Key

- Eastleigh Borough Council Boundary
- Horton Heath and Fair Oak 'Gap'
- Landscape**
 - Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- Ecology**
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Heritage**
 - Locality Listed Parks and Gardens (EBC)
 - Grade I Listed Building
 - Grade II* Listed Building
 - Grade II Listed Building
- Other Considerations**
 - National Forest Inventory
- Local Plan - 2016 to 2036**
 - S3 Proposed Housing Allocation
 - S4 Proposed Employment Allocation
 - DM24 Housing Sites with Planning Permission

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

Gap Description / Characterisation

The Study Area covers the Gap no 4, which has been recently reduced due to new developments around Horton Heath, Fair Oak and Bishopstoke. The western parts of the Gap (west of Botley Road) lie within the LCA 9 Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and the eastern part lies within the LCA 8 Knowle Hill Farmland and Woodland.

A summary of the key landscape character features of the Gap is provided below to understand how these contribute to the physical and perceptual separation of the settlements. The characterisation includes a combination of landscape, historical and ecological elements.

Designations

The relevant designations are shown in Figure H3. There are no landscape designations in this area.

The eastern area contains one SINCE designation and a Historic Park and Garden. There are no designations in the western part.

Landscape Features

Topography

The Gap is relatively shallow and undulating and influenced by higher ground to the east notably Knowle Hill and Durley Copse. This creates a valley running east to west across and supports the flat landscape forming the Lapstone Playing Fields.

Development / Land Use / Vegetation

The area comprises a mix of open recreational areas, smallholdings and associated dwellings, and a area of woodland belts associated with the watercourse that flows through the centre of the Gap.

Openness

Despite its relatively small scale and central tree belt, the Gap offers a mix of openness associated with the public open space provision, but is also reliant on neighbouring fields to contribute to the wider sense of openness.

Gap Boundaries

The eastern part of the area is defined by Fair Oak and Horton Heath open farmland and woodland, while the western part is defined by Fair Oak and Bishopstoke built form and open farmland with vegetated field boundaries.

A large DM24 housing site with planning permission wraps around the eastern part of the area and separates it from the western part adjacent to Bishopstoke.

Access through the Gap

Movement / Connectivity

The main receptors travelling through and experiencing the Gap include:

- Motorists travelling along Botley Road and Knowle Lane;
- Residents along the edge of the settlement who overlook the Gap, particularly those on higher ground to the east of Botley Road; and
- Walkers, recreational users who use the Gaps open space and footpath network.

Presence of Green Infrastructure within The Gap

Key GI features that contribute to the Gap character include:

- Generous provision of formal and informal open space access and facilities;
- Watercourse and riparian vegetation, part of which has ecological designation status;
- Allington Manor Historic Park and Gardens (part of) to the most western part of the Gap; and
- Communal Orchard providing edible landscape for local residents.



Knowle Hill Park



Lapstone Communal Orchard



Recreational facilities off Blackberry Drive.

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke



Figure H3 - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak and Bishopstoke - Field Findings Plan

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

Sub Areas & Observations

Informed by the desktop studies and field study observations the plan opposite identifies a series of sub areas (within the Gap) comprising one or more parcels of land that together have similar characteristics / features that contribute to the performance of the Gap function.

The plan also identifies a series of Observations which records key landscape / GI features and opportunities for enhancements to strengthen Gaps' function.

Sub Areas

Area H1 - Lapstone Playing Fields provides a flat expansive recreational landscape and is well defined by mature boundary vegetation and the wet woodland along its southern edge.

Area H2 - Locally designated as a Site of Important to Nature Conservation (SINC), Wyvern Meadow is nestled amongst the wet woodland at the lowest point of the Gap. Its narrow boardwalks and wooded character creates a strong sense of separation from both settlements.

Area H3 - Knowle Hill Park, to the east of Botley Road, provides a generous area of open space comprising formal play and open grassland. Despite its raised setting on the slope of Knowle Hill, views to the south

towards Horton Heath are curtailed by mature boundary vegetation.

Area H4 - Forming the main area of the Gap between Botley Road and Knowle Lane this area sits on lower ground and comprises a range of typical settlement edge land uses including semi-rural dwellings, farmsteads, smallholdings and the Lapstone Public House. Despite its low setting, the mature vegetation and boundary treatments combined with the dwellings being positioned close to the road offers limited views between the two settlements.

Area H5 - Lapstone Farm – A single field parcel west of Botley Road used for cattle grazing. Despite its relatively small scale only supporting a small amount of cattle, its well-managed field boundary provides a strong rural feature to the main road. A permissive path provides access to the adjoining Lapstone Community Orchard and wider landscape, further west.



View of sub area H1



View of sub area H3



View across Sub area H4 from Botley Road



View of sub area H2



View of sub area H5

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

Area H6 - Planted in 2012, Lapstone Community Orchard provides a variety of fruit trees for the local community. Visual coalescence between the two settlements is at risk at this narrowest point of the Gap. This is furthered by the openness of the orchard and meadow which defines the main landscape treatment between the settlement in this location.

Area H7 - Forming part of Lapstone Farm, this area of coppice, scrub and grassland with permissive pathways, provides a strong visual separation to Fair Oak and a pleasant sense of isolation.

Area H8 - Open land leading along Blackberry drive provides expansive recreational space comprising equipped play, outdoor sports and a youth centre. The open landscape creates a gateway to the residential areas with mature boundary vegetation and tree coverage.

Area H9 - Large expansive fields, primarily used as horse paddocks with a large scale dwelling on its southern edge. The area is enclosed with mature vegetation on all boundaries and limited visibility into the area.

Area H10 - large expansive of green space, mostly used as scrub land with strong mature vegetation acting as woodland, provides a natural backdrop to the residential area. Area comprises of a mixture of permissive footpaths leading through the clearings mostly for dog walkers.

Area H11 - Industrial/commercial establishments and Alligton Nursery, creating a hard edge to the gap boundary along Allington Lane.

Area H12 - Large open fields for grazing with large dwelling providing frontage along Allington Lane. Strong boundary vegetation limits views into the space.

Opportunities for Green Infrastructure Improvements Observations

- 1. Watercourse with associated riparian vegetation weaves through the Gap and in places provides a strong physical / visual barrier preventing coalescence. Gaps in this does provide views between each settlement. This should be strengthened where possible.
- 2. Landscape buffer to development edges need to be bolstered to address visual coalescence.
- 3. Hanging baskets define route between settlements.
- 4. Roadside native field boundaries to Batley Road / Knowle Lane contribute to sense of separation / rural edge. This is however compromised in certain place by less sensitive boundary treatment.



View of sub area H8



View of sub area H12



View of sub area H7



View of sub area H6

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

Analysis and Evaluation

Analysis of Sub Areas

The Horton Heath, Fair Oak and Bishopstoke Gap separates three settlements which are at risk of coalescence, especially when the permitted developments and allocation sites are considered.

The Gap has been subdivided into 12 sub areas, as shown in Figure H3, comprising one or more parcels of land that together have similar characteristics / features that contribute to the performance of the Gap's function. The existing characteristics of these sub areas were described in the previous section and an evaluation of their contribution to the Gap's function is set out below in a form of a matrix followed by justifications.

Area H1 - This area contributes to all PUSH Gap criteria and is located in a narrow Gap between Fair Oak and Horton Heath. It is necessary to

remain in the Gap to prevent the coalescence of the settlements.

Area H2 - This area partially contributes to the open nature of the Gap, as it is enclosed by woodland. Only glimpsed views of the open part of this area are available from the adjacent footpath. It helps maintain the sense of separation between the settlements, in particular for the footpath walkers, and is necessary to remain in the Gap to prevent the coalescence of the settlements as it is located adjacent to the permitted development to the south.

Area H3 - This area contributes to all PUSH Gap criteria and is located in a narrow Gap between Fair Oak and Horton Heath. It is necessary to remain in the Gap to prevent the coalescence of the settlements and prevent new developments to the south of Horton Heath which would be detrimental for this Gap. Additionally, the area defines the rural character of the setting of Horton Heath.

Area H4 - The area offers some contribution to the open nature of the Gap which is perceived primarily by users of the footpath crossing this area and people travelling between the settlements on Botley Road. Users of Knowle Lane receive filtered views due to mature vegetation on its boundaries. The area lies in a narrow and vulnerable part of the Gap which has eroded along Botley Road. It must be protected from further development to avoid the risk of coalescence of the settlements.

Area H5 and H6 - These areas are in the most critical part of the Gap and offer the only physical and perceptual separation between the settlement boundaries immediately to the west of Botley Road. They contribute to all the Gap criteria and are necessary to avoid the coalescence of Horton Heath and Fair Oak.

Area H7 - This area contributes to all Gap functions and inclusion in the Gap is necessary for the physical and perceptual separation of the settlements to the west of Botley Road.

Area H8 and H9 - Whilst Fair Oak and Bishopstoke have merged to the north of Fair Oak Road, the separation between these settlements is evident to the south, where large residential areas are separated by recreational fields and horse paddocks. The areas contribute to the open nature of the gap and the rural setting of both settlement edges. The areas are necessary in preventing the coalescence of local communities along Allington Lane (Fair Oak) and Damson Crescent (Bishopstoke).

Area H10 - This area of farmland enclosed by dense vegetation on field boundaries creates a narrow and important gap of undeveloped countryside between the local Bishopstoke and Fair Oak communities. It is necessary to prevent the coalescence of both settlements to the south of Fair Oak Road. The area is also important in defining the rural setting of both settlement edges and it is perceived from a footpath connecting both settlements as it cuts through this area.

Area H11 - Whilst this area contains industrial/commercial establishments, it is perceived as a peripheral or settlement edge development typically found in Countryside Gaps. It lies in a very narrow part of the existing gap, which is under severe pressure from development to the south (Horton Heath One). It should remain in the gap to protect this land from further sprawl of residential development that would, in time, lead to the coalescence of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak south of Fair Oak Road.

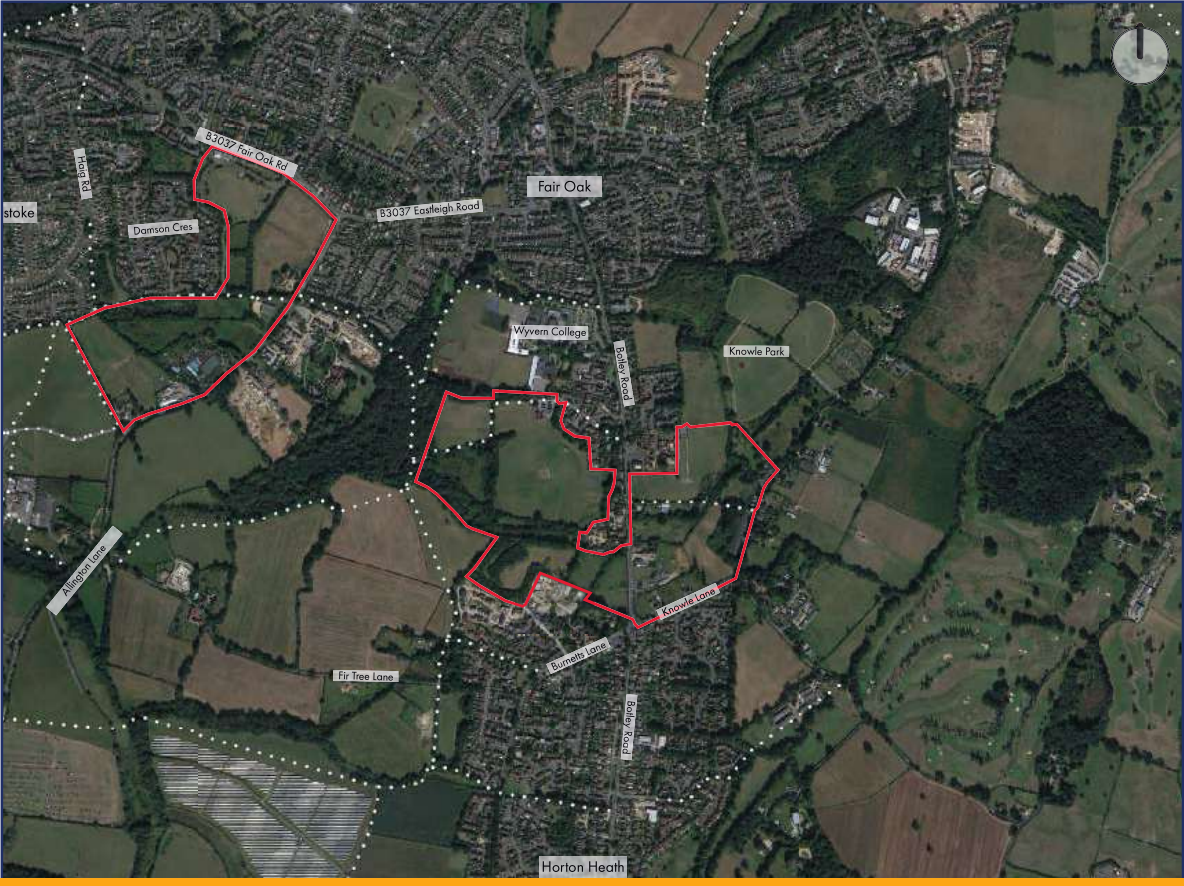
Area H12 - This area plays an important role in defining the rural setting of Bishopstoke, in contributing to the open nature of the gap (as perceived from Bishopstoke edge and local footpaths) and in preventing the coalescence of local communities along Allington Lane (Fair Oak) and Damson Crescent (Bishopstoke).

Gap H Horton Heath, Fair Oak												
Criterion check for each Sub Area (Gap component area playing a similar function)	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6	H7	H8	H9	H10	H11	H12
The area helps preserve the open nature of the Gap.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
The area helps maintain the sense of separation between settlements.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
The area plays an important role in defining the settlement character.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
The area plays an important role in separation of settlements at risk of coalescence.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
The land is necessary in preventing the coalescence of settlements.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

TABLE H1: Area H Horton Heath and Fair Oak Sub Area Matrix



Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke



Key

- Existing Countryside Gaps
- Public Rights of Way

Figure H4 - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak and Bishopstoke - Gap Amendment Plan

Gap Analysis - Area H Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke

Area H Conclusions and Recommendations

Proposed Gap Boundary Description

The gap boundary has been amended to exclude the area south of sub area H2 as this area is part of the West of Horton Heath development allocation and has a extant planning permission. Otherwise the gap boundaries remain unchanged due in part to the relatively small expanse of Gap remaining and the pressure for these areas to prevent further coalescence between Horton Heath - Fair Oak and Bishopstoke and Fair Oak/Horton Heath with further recognition that the emerging development at One Horton Heath is likely to increase the size of the Horton Heath settlement significantly and place further pressure on the sense of separation.

The central area of the eastern Gap along Botley Road provides limited perception of settlement separation due to the nature of ribbon development and infill development behind. This is the most vulnerable part of the Gap and future landscape enhancements should be prioritised in this area to avoid the coalescence of Fair Oak and Horton Heath. This may include the reduction of urbanising influences to the highway, retention of field hedgerows and open fields beyond.

To the west of Botley Road the existing smallholdings and individual dwellings should be protected and enhanced with native planting. Further urbanisation influences within this part of the Gap should be avoided to prevent the suburban settlement edges of Fair Oak and Horton Heath merging.

The cluster of scrub, grassland, woodland and vegetated watercourses on lower ground to the west of Botley Road combine to create an attractive mix of open spaces, largely accessible to the public for recreation and with opportunities to interact with the natural environment. These areas should

be protected with enhancements seeking to conserve and improve the natural habitats whilst ensuring that any visual intrusion between the two settlements are mitigated.

The Gap to the West of Allington Lane seeks to protect the remaining areas of separation between Bishopstoke and Fair Oak. As identified in the Sub Area studies parts of Fair Oak and Bishopstoke have merged to the north of Fair Oak Road. Nevertheless, the separation between these settlements is still evident to the west of Allington Lane, where large residential areas are separated by recreational fields and horse paddocks. The areas contribute to the open nature of the gap and the rural setting of both settlement edges. The Gap is necessary in preventing the coalescence of local communities along Allington Lane (Fair Oak) and Damson Crescent (Bishopstoke).

Future improvements to these Gaps should seek to maintain visual separation to the emerging One Horton Heath masterplan but also improve landscape connections which will help to provide combined enhancements to the local landscape character and associated ecological habitats and support improved recreational links between the two Gaps and further afield.

Opportunities for Gap Enhancements

Provision for Future Landscape Mitigation

Adopting Green Infrastructure principles, we have set out below a series of enhancement recommendations that together could help to supplement and reinforce the Gap function. These include:

- Providing strong protection to the remaining Gap through appropriate landscape management / designations that offers a cohesive landscape solution;
- Managing potential fragmentation/erosion of the central Gap by controlling future development and further subdivision of parcels particularly between Botley Road and Knowle Lane. This should include opportunities to enhance the small-scale uniform field parcels and field hedgerows with supplementary native tree planting will help to reinforce the function of the Gap;
- Retaining and enhancing important wooded riparian vegetation along the existing watercourse that provides a clearly defined natural barrier between the two settlements and maintains a sense of physical / visual separation particularly to the west of Botley Road;
- Exploring opportunities to provide a cohesive landscape management strategy to the emerging One Horton Heath masterplan which will help to provide greater protection to existing landscape / ecological assets and support improved recreational links to the west; and
- Reviewing the potential for improved pedestrian links to the countryside east of Knowle Lane.