

Land to the west of Cobett Way, Botley

Eastleigh Borough Council Ref: O/23/96432

Landscape and Visual Hearing Statement

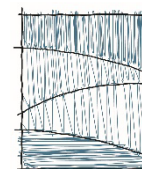
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on behalf of

Trustees of the Mulberry Investments Pension Scheme

R002a_2229 Landscape and Visual Hearing Statement

Fellow
of the
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Appendices / Plans / Photosheets

- Appendix LP1:** Introduction to the author
- Appendix LP2:** Email submitted with the planning application
- Appendix LP3:** Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping
- Appendix LP4:** Extract of the Council's Settlement Gap analysis

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Section 1: Introduction

Introduction to the author

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Hearing Statement (LVHS) has been prepared by Clare Brockhurst FLI, owner and sole practitioner at Leyton Place Limited (LPL), on behalf the Trustees of the Mulberry Investments Pension Scheme (the appellant).
- 1.2 As author of this Statement my professional qualifications and credentials are included at **Appendix LP1**.
- 1.3 LPL was instructed by the appellant in April 2024, after the Decision Notice had been issued, to undertake 2 streams of work
 - 1.3.1 Review the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by Green Landscape Studios Limited (GLS) submitted with the planning application and
 - 1.3.2 To consider the design approach and gap issues considering Eastleigh Borough Council's (EBC) Decision Notice.

LVIA Review

- 1.4 GLS sought confirmation for the scope of the LVIA on the 9th June 2023 (**CD XX** LVIA, Appendix 5), but no response was provided, see LVIA, paragraph 3.4.
- 1.5 As a point of fact, the LVIA was submitted to planning@eastleigh.gov.uk by Phillippa Gatehouse of Chapman Lily Planning on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 via email (**Appendix LP2**). However, at the time of preparing this LVHS only some of the plans had been uploaded to the planning website and not the main report. EBC were made aware of this omission by the Appellant. The full LVIA is included in the material being lodged with the Appeal.
- 1.6 The review concluded in respect of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that:

"... the LVIA is in general compliance with the Landscape Institute's published guidance 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', 2013 (GLVIA¹). It can be referenced within the evidence, although elements will need to be supplemented in the material submitted to PINS."

'Gap' matters

- 1.7 In respect of the second part of my instruction ('gap' matters and the proposal) I made the following observations:

The Site is physically and visually well contained by housing and mature tree belts;

There are distinctive components of settlement to the north, east and west, with urban fringe uses to the south. Whilst this indicates new homes would be appropriate, the need to address

¹ The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 2013 (GLVIA) is the Landscape Institute's published guidance for professional members and is referenced within this LVHS as it provides the basis for assessing landscape and visual effects of development.

the issue of the Settlement Gap in terms of visual and physical separation and ensuring the separate identified of the two settlements (Hedge End and Botley) is critical.

There is sufficient land available to provide both the quantum of development for which planning consent is sought and provide open space and multifunctional Green Infrastructure. However, the spatial distribution and arrangement of the land uses within the Site could be improved (from that shown within the previously submitted illustrative layout) to respond positively to the constraints.

The most notable role the Site plays in the 'gap' function is experienced from Broad Oak (A334), where there are views into the site and a sense of separation within the urban fabric can be appreciated.

Design approach

1.8 I made the following recommendations for the design approach.

- *To created wooded areas which contain new the development reinforcing and reflecting the character of Botley in order to maintain "...separate identity of the adjoining settlements."*
- *Place the new housing to maintain a visual link through the site to provide a visual and perceptual break in the townscape.*
- *Use new tree planting to reduce the prominence of housing in the view from Broad Oak.*

1.9 The illustrative/proving layout was amended to test and consider the implications of these recommendations. It was established that the amended proposals could be accommodated within the parameters for which consent is being sought (see Planning Statement).

1.10 Subsequent to making these observations, and advice shared within the team, I was instructed to prepare this LVHS.

Context to this Statement

1.11 The purpose of this LVHS is to address those aspects of the Reasons for Refusal related to the landscape and visual analysis, specifically the matters embolden below:

1. *The proposals represent an inappropriate and unjustified form of development which would have an **unacceptably urbanising** and **visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside and settlement gap**, thus the proposals would be contrary to Policies S1, S5, S6, and DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).*

1.12 This Statement is structured as follows:

Section 2: An overview of, and commentary on, the published character assessments and the landscape and visual analysis submitted with the respective applications

Section 3: This section identifies propositions arising from the officer's comments and the Decision Notice.

Section 4: Considers the baseline situation and relevant published analysis.

Section 5: Describes the proposals and likely effect for each appeal scheme (including analysis of benefits).

Section 6: Explores the propositions identified in Section 2.

Section 7: contains a summary and conclusions on matters pertaining to the planning aspect of 'character and appearance'.

Declaration

- 1.13 I understand that my duty is to provide information and evidence to assist the Inspector in respect of this appeal. This statement represents my professional opinion on the objective and subjective aspects of the development for the Appeal Sites and the local planning authority's objections so far as they relate to the landscape and visual effects of the Appeal proposals. Based on my knowledge, it is considered that the facts stated in this statement are true and accurate and I have complied with the Landscape Institute's professional Code of Conduct.
- 1.14 The right to respond to matters which arise from the Council's Appeal Hearing Statement is reserved and will be subject to the verbal replies offered at the Hearing if agreement cannot be reached in drafting the Statement of Common Ground.

Section 2: Overview of landscape analysis

2.1 This section gives an overview of the following material relevant to the determination of the appeal.

- Published Landscape Character Assessments
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Neighbourhood Plan (Draft)

Context

2.2 The European Landscape Convention – A Framework for Implementation, October 2007, contains the short definition of 'landscape' and provides supporting text at paragraph 1.2, namely:

*"The ELC definition is short, yet comprehensive: 'landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' **The definition applies to the whole territory of states including all urban and peri-urban landscapes, towns, villages and rural areas, the coast, and inland areas. It applies to ordinary or even degraded landscape as well as those area that are outstanding or protected.**"*
(emphasis **emboldened**)

- 2.3 I record this definition to reinforce the importance of considering all components of the landscape. LVIA's and Landscape Character Assessments typically focus on the undeveloped landscapes, which is the case in this instance. The adjoining settlement is a component of the landscape context. This is relevant to the comments made in GLVIA 3 (paragraphs 2.13 to 2.15) wherein change is driven by the need for development to meet a growing and changing population. All of these landscapes have their own merits, the definition is neutral and does not suggest some types of landscape (e.g. Urban) are harmful or not acceptable.
- 2.4 Furthermore, the distinction of character between urban, peri-urban, towns and rural areas does not necessarily correlate with imposed planning policies. In this instance the BUAB excludes the housing and farm/sawmill development and land uses south of The Bridleway, the CCW Storage and warehousing and the housing on Broad Oak (see **Figure 2.1**) These are in terms of the policy context 'countryside' whereas in character terms they are features which contribute to the settled character and urban appearance of the area. They do not suggest rural or agricultural land. This demonstrates the error in applying planning policies to the determination of character, particularly declaring an area as being 'countryside'.

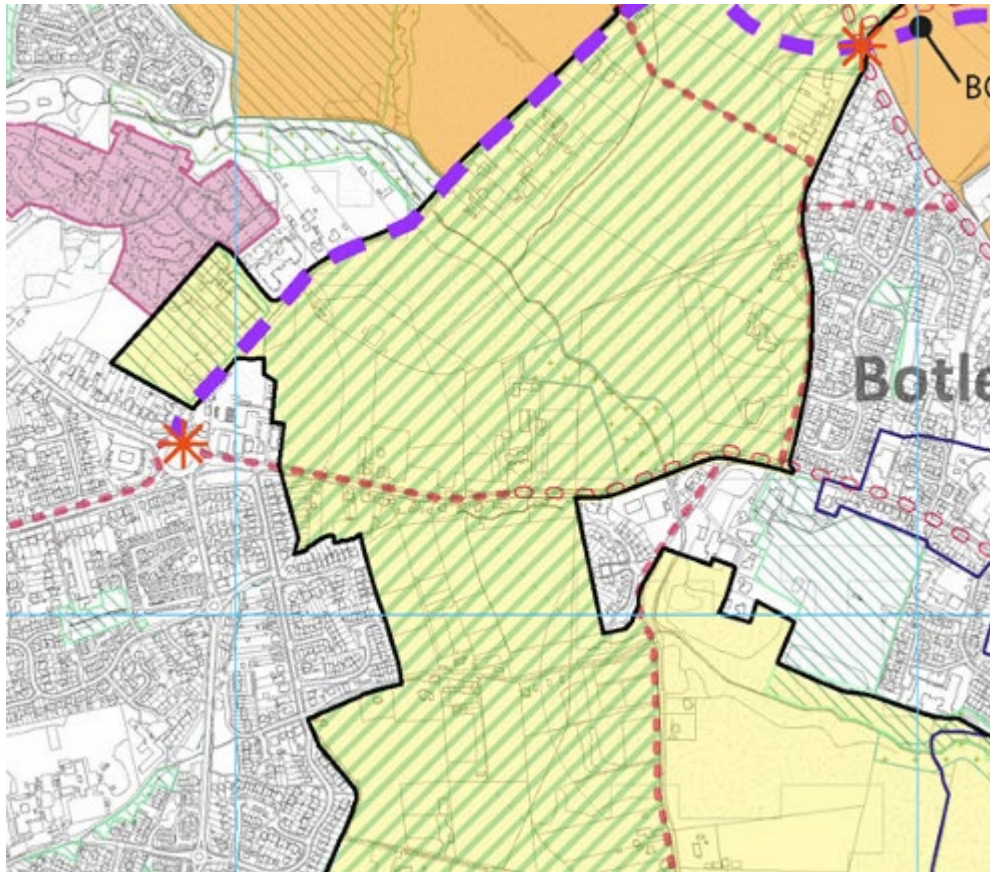


Figure 2.1: Extract from Local Plan Policies Map

- 2.5 In general terms the typical starting point in the determination of planning applications (from a landscape and visual perspective) is that housing and the associated changes of bring forward much needed homes are 'harmful.' I make no apologies for supporting new housing in greenfield locations, particularly in those locations with fewer constraints than many alternatives.
- 2.6 New homes are important and fundamental components of our wider environment. They are places we live in and value. Indeed, we celebrate and protect some of our most urban and densely settled townscapes through the application of Conservation Area policies. Whilst this reflects historic elements, this does not mean only historic properties are attractive and do not cause harm. New developments win awards and are celebrated by communities.
- 2.7 The introduction by the LI's President to its position statement '*Making it home: the power of landscape to create good housing*' of which I was a co-author, notes:
- "The creation and maintenance of good quality housing requires achieving a balance between the economics of the project, the social needs of those who use it and its environmental impact."*
- 2.8 The landscape profession does not shy away from or take an in-principal objection to the provision of new housing, it is supportive of development on the basis that it should respond to its context.
- 2.9 I note that GLVIA 3 does not contain the word 'harm', the guidance recognises that the landscape is not unchanging, and development to meet the growing and changing population responding to drivers of change. Paragraph 4.26 notes that:

“...It should also be remembered that well-designed new developments can make a positive contribution to the landscape and need not always be hidden or screened.”

- 2.10 Landscape Characterisation is the process whereby areas are identified and classified into distinct, recognisable, and consistent patterns of elements and features. This is a value-free process and does not provide for comparison of areas being 'better' than others. The determination of 'value' primarily comes through the process of determining and applying designations, policies, or local expressions of value.
- 2.11 Landscape Character Assessments typically classify and describe the countryside beyond settlement boundaries, sometimes referencing the presence of settlements. As a result, the descriptions do not consider or focus on the character of the peri-urban areas or specific townscapes.

Published Character Assessments

- 2.12 Published characterisations cascade from the National Character Areas (NCA), prepared by Natural England, through to regional and local Landscape Character Areas (LCA) and Landscape Character Types (LCT) prepared by County and District Councils. Typically, the smaller scale, local assessment is most relevant to small-scale projects.
- 2.13 The following are the relevant character areas:
- National scale** – South Hampshire Lowlands²
- County scale** – 2E. Forest of Bere West³
- Local Scale** – 12. Farmland and Woodlands⁴⁵
- 2.14 As a result of the geographic extent of the classification, not all key characteristics identified in the published analysis apply to the site. This is most notable for the national and county scale character area which extends across extensive geographic areas.
- 2.15 The most relevant published character area is the local scale 'Farmland and Woodlands'. The key characteristics of this area are recorded as:
- Gently undulating landform
 - Arable in large fields
 - Large area of ancient woodland and steeply undulating edge
 - Manorial building groups
 - Smallholdings around Botley village
 - Some fragmentation of fields into pony paddocks and disused land between Botley and Hedge End.
- 2.16 In accordance with GLVIA, paragraphs 5.15 and 5.16 recognise that the published character areas should be reviewed and interpreted and the extent to which the site and its context conform to or are different from the wider assessments which exist. The extent of the landscape classified as Farmland

² Natural England

³ Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment

⁴ Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment

⁵ The LVIA recorded the correct key characteristics and that it is area 12. However, it mislabelled the character area as Hamble Valley.

and Woodland and the varied nature of land uses and land cover within the area (**Figure 2.2**) means that not all key characteristics are manifest equally across the area. In respect of this appeal the only relevant key characteristic is the *'fragmentation of fields into pony paddocks and disused land between Botley and Hedge End'*.

- 2.17 In the absence of characterisation of the urban area in this document, it is notable that the Eastleigh Borough Landscape Character Assessment records for Area 12: Farmland and Woodland that:

"4.186 This landscape is largely undisturbed and rural without major detractors and with strongly contrasting landscape patterns. Its distinctiveness is largely due to the lack of twentieth century influences."

- 2.18 This is clearly not an appropriate summary of the Appeal Site or its immediate context.

Area 12: Farmland and Woodlands

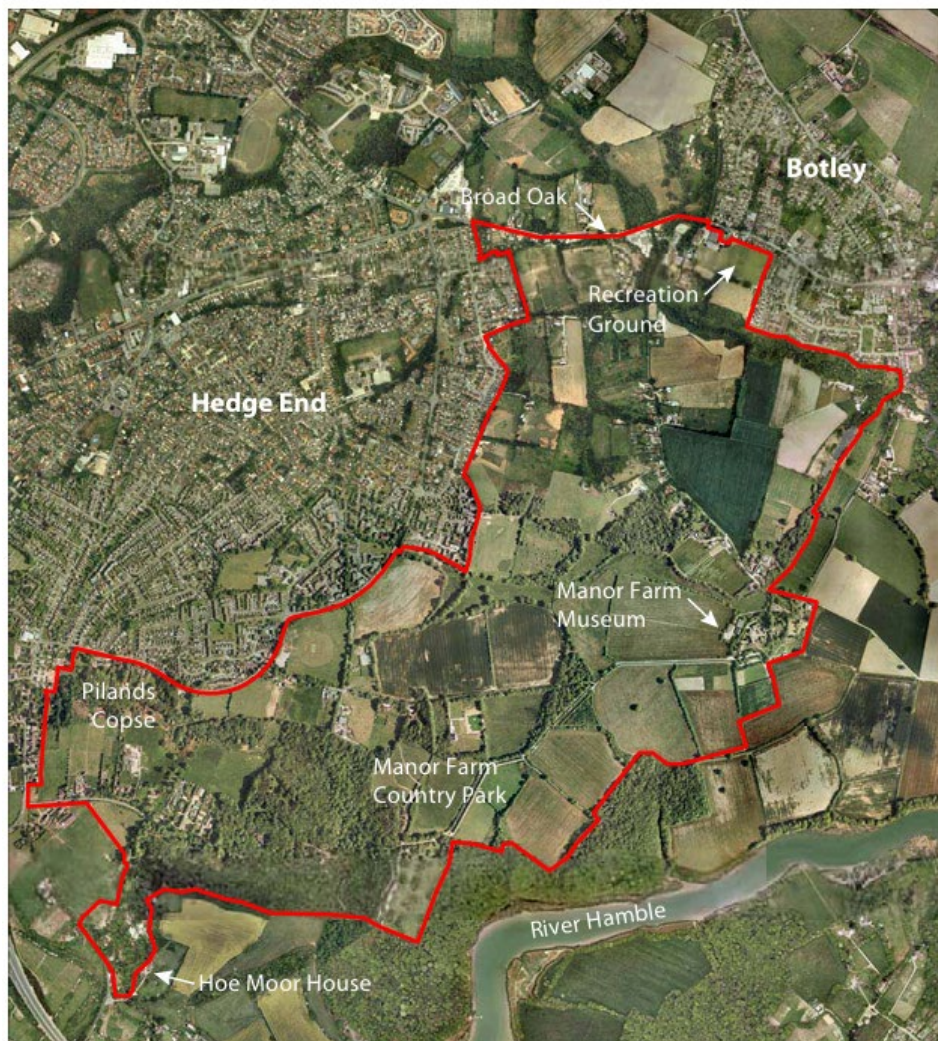


Figure 2.2: Extent of published character area 12: Farmland and Woodlands

- 2.19 The Eastleigh Borough Council assessment is now 13 years old. In respect of the Appeal Site there have been few changes to the landscape (see **Figure 2.3** below), the most notable being the intensification of land uses to the south of the bridleway and within the woodland to the south of the Appeal Site.



Figure 2.3: Comparison of 2011 and 2023 aerial photography

GLS Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 2.20 The submitted LVIA considers a number of landscape factors to establish the degree of consistency between the published material and the findings in respect of the Site. The analysis goes further to assess the value of the local landscape.
- 2.21 In terms of the character of the area, the LVIA reaches the conclusion that:

The site has some elements in common with the local landscape character, Area 12 – Hamble Valley (Sic), particularly the topography and fragmentation of fields between Botley and Hedge End. The wider study area has more in common with this character area, particularly moving further south. The site and wider study area have limited commonality with the landscape character study with the exception of the study area including what is described as 'extensive C.20th development, including urban expansion and infilling of common-edge settlements' in Character Area 2E. In general, the site is relatively commonplace and not particularly notable at a county or national character area scale as it forms a relatively small element in these larger scale areas. It can therefore be concluded that the site is seen as partially characteristic to the local character area, but not the county or national character area.

Botley neighbourhood Plan (Draft)

- 2.22 The draft neighbourhood plan (dNP) does not include an assessment of the character of the landscape, nor is there a specific evidence base in this regard to underpin the dNP. There is commentary on the historic evolution of the settlement and the green spaces. There is analysis in respect of the settlement gaps, which I address in more detail in Section 6.

Section 3: Analysis of the objections and identification of propositions

- 3.1 This section seeks to interrogate the information provided to the appellant by EBC in respect of the landscape and visual objections. This assists in establishing the issues which need to be explored in this Hearing Statement, so that the material before the Inspector is focussed on the matters likely to be in dispute.
- 3.2 This LVHS should be read alongside the others produced on behalf of the appellant to understand all issues to be considered in the planning balance.
- 3.3 I address a number of propositions in my evidence at Section 6, where I address the first reason for refusal. These propositions have been identified from the following sources:
- The Decision Notice and wording in the reason for refusal.
 - The key landscape matters discussed in the delegated officer's reports.
- 3.4 Further matters which may arise subsequent to lodging the appeal, potentially contained in the Council's Statement of Case or matters of disagreement contained within the Statement of Common, may be the subject of either a rebuttal statement or verbally at the Hearing.

The decision notice

- 3.5 In the first reason for refusal the Council alleges three unacceptable effects on the landscape and visual environment arising from development of the Appeal Site:
- Urbanisation of the Site
 - Visually intrusive impact upon the designated countryside and
 - Visually intrusive impact on the settlement gap
- 3.6 At the outset I should make clear that the assertion by the Council that the Appeal Site is 'designated countryside' has the potential to be misleading. Designation of a landscape occurs after scrutiny of a landscape against stated criteria set out in statute or local policy. The designation of qualifying landscapes confers a value to that landscape, above and beyond ordinary countryside.
- 3.7 This is a key issue because of the manner in which the 'value' is weighed in the planning balance. If a landscape is determined to be a 'Valued Landscape' there is a requirement to *protect and enhance*. In this respect in the High Court judgement⁶ handed down on the 15th November 2023 the judge made clear the distinction in respect of NPPF paragraph 180 and the sub paragraphs (a) and (b). Valued Landscapes are to be 'protected' and 'enhance' whereas other countryside is to be 'recognised' for its intrinsic character and beauty. 'Recognising' has some level of protection, however the level of protection afforded to valued landscapes is plainly higher.
- 3.8 The Appeal Site not within, or in the setting of, any 'designation' pertaining to the value or quality of the landscape (see LVIA, Appendix 1, **CD XX**). Such designations are typically understood to be:

⁶ R (Bramley Solar Farm Residents Group) v Secretary of State LUHC [2023] EWHC 2842

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/National Landscapes;
- National Park;
- Heritage Coast;
- Areas of Great Landscape Value;
- Areas of High Landscape Value; and
- Local Green Space.

- 3.9 Strategic Policy S5 applies to the 'countryside' which all the land outside of the Built-Up Area Boundaries. It is indiscriminative in its application and does not convey any particular value on the countryside. The aim is to maintain the 'rural character' (Local Plan, paragraph 4.30, CD XX), I explore the extent to which the Appeal Site has a 'rural character' in the following sections.
- 3.10 The 'Settlement Gap' (Strategic Policy S6) is a spatial planning tool akin to Green Belt which seeks to limit urbanisation and avoid the coalescence of settlements (Local Plan, paragraphs 4.29 and 4.30, CD XX). Similarly, this policy does not convey any value on the qualities of the landscape, its application is not determined by reference to specific criteria, it is a geographically based policy.
- 3.11 On the basis that these observations are not challenged and that the Appeal Site and its local context is agreed to not be a 'Valued Landscape', I consider that the following propositions require analysis in this LVHS:

Proposition 1: That the proposals for the development would result in harmful urbanisation of a rural location.

Proposition 2: That the proposals for the development would be visually intrusive from locations (undetermined) in the Countryside causing harm to those experiencing the view.

Proposition 3: The development will result in harm to the visual aspect of the settlement gap

The Delegated Officer Report

- 3.12 Notably, there was no EBC Landscape or Conservation Officer responses to the planning application. Setting aside the policy context (S5 and S6), which result in an in-principal objection, the EBC Tree Officer raised no objection and the EBC Urban Design Office recorded:

"Therefore. The proposed layout is considered to be acceptable and balanced. The green open space proposed between the residential development and the western and southern boundary works as a buffer for these very different functions as well as contributing to the transition in scale to a looser grain."

"No objections to the 'Building heights Parameter Plan'"

"All sustainability measures mentioned are welcomed."

- 3.13 Despite the various office consultation responses, and in the absence of any independent analysis, landscape officer consultation, and without regard to the fully compliant and professionally unchallenged Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CD XX) the case officer concludes:

Whilst the Urban Design Officer has not raised any significant concerns regarding the scale and layout of development shown on the plan (from an urban design perspective), this does not outweigh the fact that the principle of development is unacceptable (as outlined in this report), and that the (sic) it would result in an unacceptable visual impact and urbanising effect on the countryside and settlement gap

- 3.14 No additional propositions, pertinent to this LVHS, emerge from reading the Delegated officer's Report.

Section 4: Baseline Situation

Landscape Character

- 4.1 The published assessments and the analysis in the LVIA set out the general overview of the landscape outside of the settled areas. As a result, there is a disproportionate focus on the undeveloped landscape in the published material, which in effect ignores the presence of settlements and urban features. In terms of my own observations, I broadly agree with the LVIA. However, I would add that the degree of wooded enclosure means that the wider landscape in the 'study area' has limited influence on the character and appearance of the Appeal Site.
- 4.2 The Appeal Site is contained by or associated with urban development/non rural land uses on three sides.



Figure 4.1: Immediate context to the Appeal Site © Google earth

- 4.3 On the northern boundary there are a number of residential properties on Broad Oak, which provide an impermeable urban edge to the site, abutting the trafficked road. Immediately to the north is the

industrial complex of CCW Services Limited (subject to some hard-standing removal following enforcement action). The nature of the buildings, land use and traffic provide a distinctly urban context to this boundary, the influence of which extends into the Appeal Site.

- 4.4 The eastern boundary abuts the residential development on Cobbett Way, an area of mixed residential properties (1 and 2-storey homes and garage blocks).
- 4.5 To the south is an unsurfaced bridleway that connects Brook Lane and Marls Road. Despite the absence of surfacing this track is driven on and used to access the properties to the south and cut through. Cars park on the lane as part of the sawmill to the south and for those using the dog agility area. The uses and condition of the track and land uses reduce the sense of rurality.
- 4.6 To the west the pasture is subdivided for pony paddocks with stabling and car parking so that the land has a horsiculture character, which is experienced in the context of the housing off Blossom Close.
- 4.7 Overall, the land use function of the Appeal Site is for the grazing of ponies, but its character and appearance is not one of 'countryside'. It is a settled and peri-urban landscape.

Townscape Pattern and Grain

- 4.8 There is a distinction between the townscape qualities and character of Hedge End and Botley. Understanding these differences assists in developing a scheme which responds to its local context and therefore can be appropriate assimilated into the landscape. The Eastleigh Borough Settlement Gap Study, 2020 (extract at **Appendix LP4**) describes a number of land uses and the settlement edge bounding the gap, this has limited value in planning and designing areas of housing.
- 4.9 Botley has a strong wooded character, with housing within a mature framework of trees and woodland (See **Figure 4.2a**). Development is appreciated in enclosed wooded 'cells' so that intervisibility is limited and each area of development can exhibit different form within an overriding and distinctive sense of place as part of Botley. Passing through this townscape the buildings and vegetation have the greatest influence on the character.



Figure 4.2a: Townscape character - Botley



Figure 4.2b: Townscape character – Hedge End

- 4.10 By contrast Hedge End has a highly urban form (**Figure 4.2b**), with the road network and linear and regular pattern of housing dominating the character of the townscape. Whilst there are occasional clusters of remnant woodland, they are insufficient in terms of presence and scale to create a verdant townscape.

Views and Visibility

- 4.11 This visual mapping contained in the LVIA (Appendix 1. Plans, **CD XX**) is an aspect of the assessment which I am critical of. The use of 'bare earth' landform data in generating areas of theoretical visibility is wholly unhelpful in identifying the areas from which development is potentially visible from. As a result, I have prepared Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping (**Appendix LP3**) which uses LiDAR landform data. This data is up to date and includes vegetation, landform (including embankments) and buildings.
- 4.12 Those areas which are coloured in, are the locations from which the proposed development will be visible, in effect in totality this represents the Visual Envelope for the development. The colouration represents the amount of the development that will be visible from those locations within the Visual Envelope. Those areas coloured red will experience >80% visibility of the Development within the Site, the counter point is that the blue colouration indicates that <20% of the new buildings will be visible.
- 4.13 Fieldwork has enabled me to confirm that the ZTV is a fair representation of extent of the Visual Envelope and identify the representative viewpoints which form the basis of the assessment contained within the appellant's LVIA (see **Figure 4.3** for extract of viewpoint locations plan).

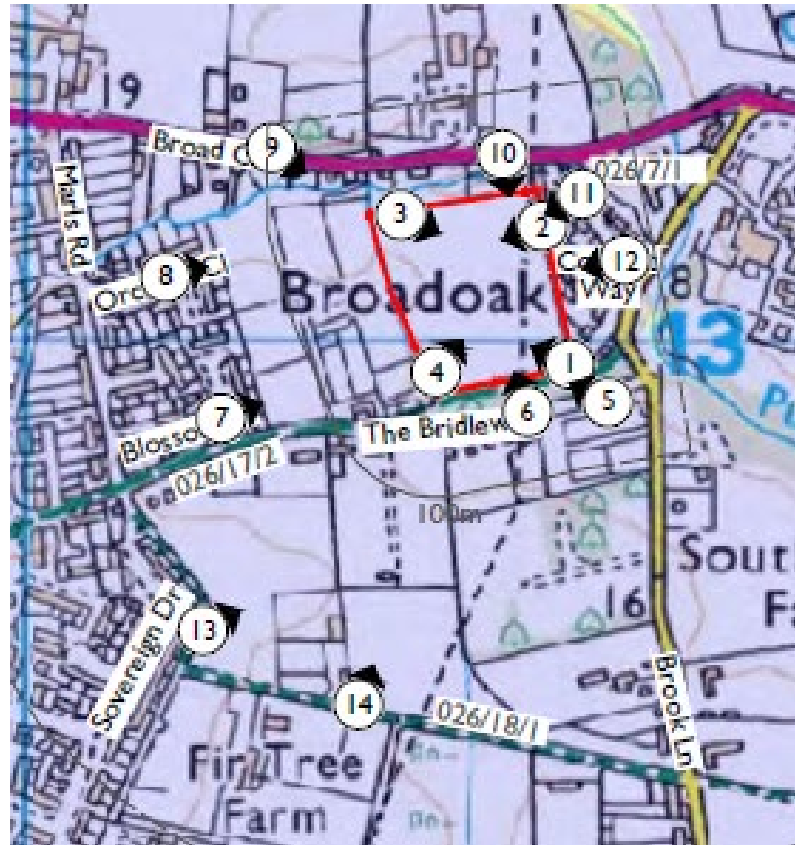


Figure 4.3: LVIA viewpoint locations

- 4.14 These viewpoints were shared with EBC prior to the preparation of the LVIA, but as noted above no response was received, or agreement reached.
- 4.15 By reference to my field observations and the photography appended to the LVIA from viewpoints 13 and 14 the Appeal Site, and development therein is not and would not be visible.
- 4.16 As a result of the technical analysis and field work, I can confirm that:
- 4.16.1 The geographic extent of visibility of each scheme of proposed development is limited and highly localised.
 - 4.16.2 There are no locations from which the proposed development will be visible that it are not already locations from which it possible to see the existing settlement, or from close views, individual houses, roads, and ancillary domestic elements.
- 4.17 The Appeal Site is visually well contained, even in the winter months.
- 4.18 Notably, within the Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment, in respect of Area 12: Farmland and Woodland the assessment records:
- “Weak visual separation between Hedge End and Botley, due to proximity of the urban edge and development within the character area”.*
- 4.19 This statement is supported by the LVIA photography (viewpoints 1, 2, 7 and 8).

Section 5: The consequences of development

- 5.1 The GLS Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has not been challenged by the Council's officers or any externally appointed consultant, no criticism has been made in respect of the approach adopted, the analysis or conclusions reached.
- 5.2 The methodology for the assessment, and identification of effects, is contained within section 2 of the GLS LVIA.
- 5.3 As a matter of judgement change does not equate to harm, GLVIA 3 does not include the word 'harm'. Even if adverse effects are identified they do not necessarily fall to be considered as significant.
- 5.4 The LVIA does not identify any significant landscape or visual effects either during the construction or operational phases of the development. It does acknowledge the adverse consequences of development on the settlement gap. As this is not a 'landscape' designation I do not consider it is appropriately addressed in the LVIA process. I deal with this in more detail in the next section.
- 5.5 As part of my original instruction, I considered the parameters plan and illustrative masterplan to explore the degree to which development could be brought forward and whether further measures could be accommodated to reduce residual adverse effects.
- 5.6 My comments on the Illustrative landscape framework plan (**Figure 5.1**) which accompanied the planning application, underpinning the parameters plans for which approval is sought, related to:
 - 5.6.1 Closing off the only visual gap in the street scene on Broad Oak, this currently provides a fleeting but no less important break in the built-up corridor;
 - 5.6.2 The northeastern corner being developed does not positively invite access for informal recreation and connectivity between the existing and new communities;
 - 5.6.3 The scheme appeared to be extending the edge of Cobbett Way without recognising the townscape to the north (south of Broad Oak); and
 - 5.6.4 The distribution of development parcels would restrict the long-term provision of meaningful tree planting, which is a characteristic feature of the townscape structure.



Figure 5.1: Illustrative Landscape Framework plan - submitted

- 5.7 I shared a schematic landscape framework (**Figure 5.2**) to challenge the masterplanning team to address these issues and to establish the extent to which there is flexibility within the submitted parameter plans, and therefore understand the degree to which the Council's objections are capable of being accommodated in the reserved matters applications.

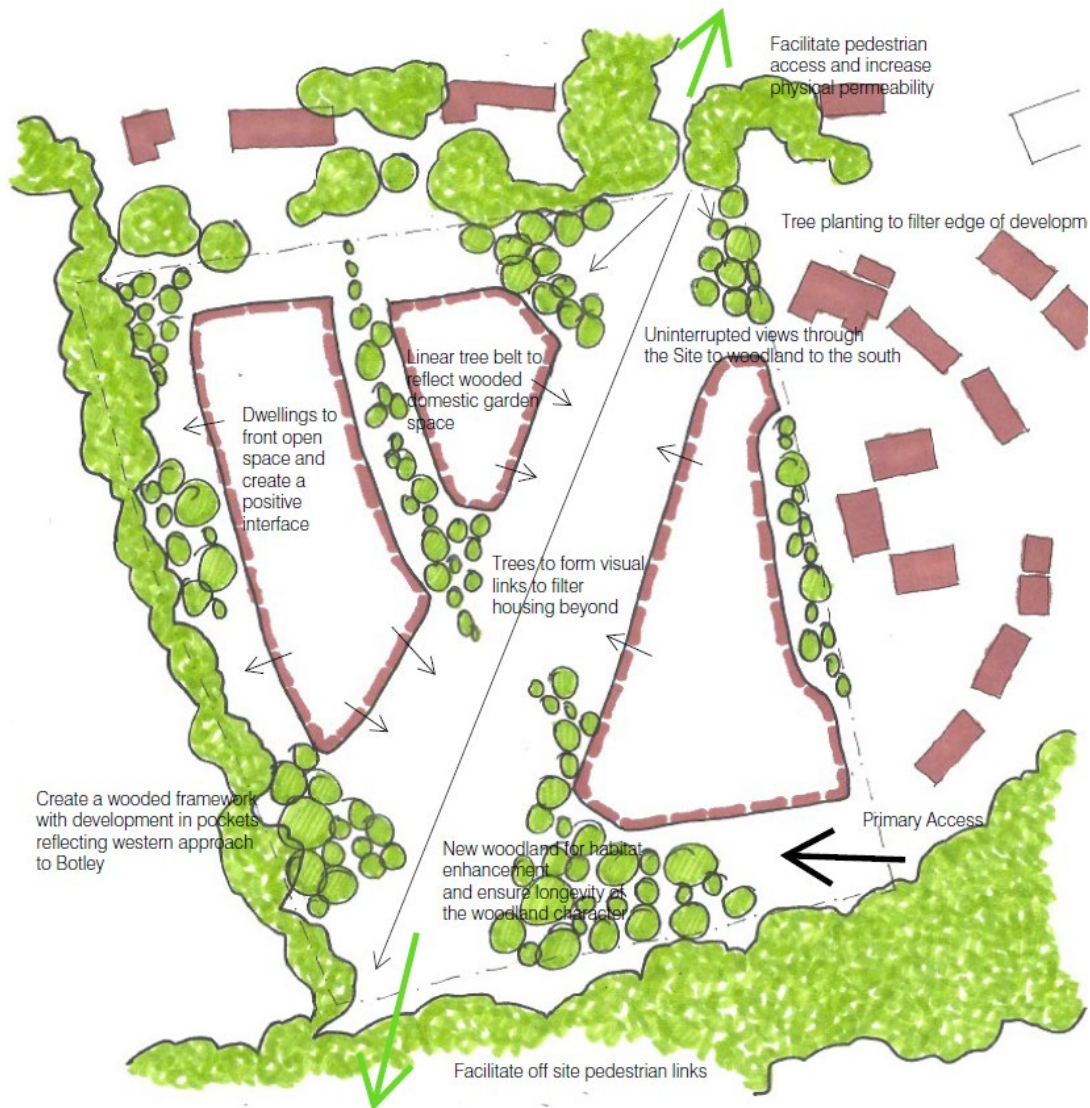


Figure 5.2: Leyton Place schematic landscape framework

- 5.8 The exercise undertaken by the design team demonstrates that an alternative design approach (Figure 5.3) can be achieved within the parameter for which consent is sought (CD XX), i.e. notwithstanding matters relating to the principle of development specific criticisms made by EBC can be resolved through the detailed design phase of the project.



Figure 5.3: Alternative illustrative masterplan

- 5.9 This alternative masterplan maintains an open gap to the south of Broad Oak, allowing open and vegetated views into the Site, and has the potential to facilitate access and connectivity and create a well-defined and vegetated boundary defining the western extent of Botley.
- 5.10 The arrangement of the development parcels and provision of green space reflects the townscape pattern and grain of Botley to ensure that the settlement edge is distinctly aligns with Botley and will not be perceived as linking Hegde End and Botley.

Section 6: Exploration of the propositions

- 6.1 The following propositions have been identified in Section 2 as a means of interrogating the Council's position expressed in the first Reason for Refusal, to assist the Inspector.

Proposition 1: That the proposals for the development would result in harmful urbanisation of a rural location.

- 6.2 The term 'urbanisation' is typically used as a pejorative term in the planning process as a means of expressing contempt or disapproval, it is frequently combined with the word 'harmful.' This 'objection' appears to be relied upon to describe, in negative terms, the provision of new homes and the change from unmanaged pony paddocks to settlement. As noted above (paragraphs 2.5 – 2.7) new homes are not necessarily unacceptable or harmful features particularly when abutting and visually associated with a settled landscape.
- 6.3 That is not to say development is always without harm, but this is primarily an issue when new built form is inconsistent with the receiving context and without due regard to the prevailing character and appearance of the locale.
- 6.4 As noted above in Sections 2 and 4, the Appeal Site and its immediate context does not have a rural character. It is a peri-urban location which is strongly influenced by the contextual features in the adjoining townscape, comprising housing, roads and commercial development. The containment by development and woodland has the effect of isolating the Appeal Site from the wider rural Farmland and Woodland landscape and creating a close association with the settled components of the local area.
- 6.5 The scheme proposals provide a transitional settlement edge combining housing and private gardens with extensive areas of grassland and tree planting.
- 6.6 I accept that the proposals are suburban in nature, however as described above they respond positively to the local context and incorporate beneficial areas of open space and contribute to multifunctional Green Infrastructure. The housing reflects the heights, pattern, and grain of the properties at Cobbett Way and on Broad Oak. The open spaces and linear green routes would be attractive for the enjoyment of the existing community as well as the new residents.
- 6.7 The appeal proposals will change the Appeal Sites from peri-urban pony paddocks to settlement. This transition as the illustrative masterplans demonstrate, can bring positive elements to the townscape. The changes will not inevitably give rise to harm. With the appropriate design approach, the proposals can deliver a high quality and attractive scheme which will be desirable to future occupants. The evolution of the illustrative masterplan (section 5 above) demonstrate the ability to modify the scheme and enhance the positive attributes.
- 6.8 I also reiterate the observations from the Council's professional urban design officer, namely:

The proposed layout is considered to be acceptable and balanced. The green open space proposed between the residential development and the western and southern boundary works as a buffer for these very different functions as well as contributing to the transition in scale to a looser grain.

- 6.9 Accordingly, I do not agree with proposition 1. EBC overstates the rurality of the receiving landscape in order to substantiate an objection. The change from paddocks to settlement is no different to that found to be acceptable in this landscape, where a housing need is identified.

Proposition 2: That the proposals for the development would be visually intrusive from locations (undetermined) in the Countryside causing harm to those experiencing the view.

- 6.10 Critically, EBC has not identified in the reasons for refusal or the Delegated Officers Report any specific viewpoints or broader locations from which such 'visual intrusion' will be experienced from. The Council asserts that the harm will be caused by visual intrusion within the countryside, however, beyond the Appeal Site and paddocks immediately to the west (both inaccessible to the public) there is no intervisibility between the proposed development and the 'Countryside' (**Appendix LP3**).
- 6.11 As explained above the extent to which the new housing will be visible is highly localised.
- 6.12 Simply put beyond the two parcels of land used for pony paddocks (subject to Policy S5: Countryside), from which if one were able to access the land one can already see housing, there will be no 'visual intrusion' in the countryside. This assertion is not borne out by analysis of the visual context and the effects of the proposals. I therefore do not agree with this proposition.

Proposition 3: The development will result in harm to the visual aspect of the settlement gap

- 6.13 The Planning hearing Statement sets out the approach to development in settlement gaps elsewhere in the borough.
- 6.14 At the outset of this part of my statement, I highlight that the Appeal Site lies outwith areas designated for their landscape value and/or quality or settings of such designations, including:
- Local Green Space
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - National Park;
 - Registered Parks and Gardens
 - NPPF Valued landscape
 - Ecological designations
 - Tree Preservation Orders
- 6.15 Typically, the purpose of having a 'gap' is to ensure that settlements are physically separated, and each retains its own character and identity.
- 6.16 This is achieved through:
- Conserving the countryside between settlements
 - Maintaining the open (undeveloped) character
 - Recognising the distinctive character of the settlements and their setting.
- 6.17 The Council have 5 criteria for the evaluation of Sub Areas within the Settlement Gap, namely:
- i. The area helps preserve the open nature of the gap
 - ii. The area helps maintain the sense of separation between settlements
 - iii. The area plays an important role in defining the settlement character

- iv. The area plays an important role in separation of settlements at risk of coalescence
- v. The land is necessary in preventing the coalescence of settlements.

6.18 In my opinion (i) it is the application of the policy which preserves the open nature of the land. Furthermore, (ii), (iv) and (v) address the same aspect of the gaps functionality, the prevention of coalescence.

6.19 The Council's settlement gap study (extract at **Appendix LP4**) has considered the character and functionality of the gap through analysis of land parcels. The Appeal Site lies within Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green, Sub Area I6. In terms of the qualities of the landscape within the gap the report concludes:

"Area I6 - Combination of ribbon development, scattering of mature trees and paddocks to the rear provide a short lived but clear change of character from the built form edges to Hedge End and the wooded arrival to Botley. Whilst the horse paddocks are poor in landscape character, the remnant field boundaries and open nature contribute to the separation between the two settlements particularly when experienced from the A334 and bridleway No. 17."

6.20 The manner in which Area I6 functions against the gap functions is summarised as:

"Area I6 - This area lies at the narrowest section between Botley and Hedge End and performs all Gap functions. The fields on both sides of Botley Road (A334) contribute to the perception of Gap's openness and the separation between the two settlements. Thanks to the open nature of those fields, and their predominantly undeveloped character, the sense of leaving/arriving to either of the settlements is maintained despite the short distance (approximately 300m). The fields also contribute to the separation of the settlements for viewers on the bridleway No. 17 to the south."

6.21 At a local scale the draft Neighbourhood Plan (**CD XX**) proposes 2 local settlement gaps to supplement the Policy S6 settlement gap, in effect completely encircling Botley.

6.22 In terms of the third proposition, I consider the conclusions reached in the Council's gap analysis in respect of the functional aspects of the landscape:

6.22.1 In terms of the physical and measured width of the gap I agree that the Appeal Site is within the narrowest section of undeveloped land between Botley and Hedge End. However, using a simplistic linear measurement there are gaps which when measured are narrower, such as Sub Area I3, or in the wider borough there are settlement gaps which are narrower (e.g. H8 and H9 combined 275m, H7 264m, H4 269m). It is evident that the measured distance is not determinative of the efficacy of the gap. However, this is a simplistic metric and does not take account of the degree to which one senses leaving one location and arriving at another.

6.22.2 The analysis of the function of the gap then turns to the open character of the fields north and south of the A334 (Broad Oak/Botley Road) which are considered to contribute to the perception of openness. This appears to be based on experience the gap from a birds eye view. Based on my observations and experience there is no perception of settlement separation or openness derived from the A334.

6.22.2.1 Firstly, when travelling along the A334 the open fields are not apparent. This is demonstrated by the photography on pages 125 and 126 (**Appendix LP4**) and

viewpoints 9 and 10 in the LVIA (CD XX). The route is dominated by ribbon development along the road corridor (Figure 6.1)



Figure 6.1: Streetview⁷ images travelling west to east on the A334.

⁷ The use of Streetview images are to assist the inspector but are not presented as accurate LI compliant photography, they are provided as an *aide memoir*.

- 6.22.2.2 On the north boundary of the Appeal Site and the paddocks to the west there is a continuous line of development (**Figure 6.2**) which obscures views into the 'open fields'



Figure 6.2: Aerial view of development south of the A334

- 6.22.2.3 With the exception of Bridleway 17 there are no publicly accessible footpaths or areas of open space where such openness may be appreciated.

- 6.22.2.4 The Council's settlement gap evidence base appears to contradict its analysis recorded above, wherein it concludes at page 139 that:

Central Area to Area I (Hedge End – Botley) along Botley Road. Ribbon development along the main link road has reduced the sense of openness provided by the field parcels behind. Proposed expansion to the north of the Gap Area including the Botley Bypass is likely to put future pressure on the settlement identity. (emphasis added)

- 6.22.3 The Council's analysis further asserts that there is a sense of leaving/arriving to either settlement. As illustrated by the images in **Figure 6.1**, when travelling on this route it is difficult to discern where each settlement ends. There is no perceptual change or transition between Hedge End and Botley. Beyond the presence of development alongside the road, the road itself has a constant character within and between the settlements, it is a linking feature.
- 6.22.4 Finally, turning to the visual separation as experienced from Bridleway 17 it is clear from the Council's analysis that the key view from this track is across the western paddocks, not across the Appeal Site. Viewpoints 5 and 6 in the LVIA illustrate the limited visibility from Bridleway 17 across the Appeal Site in the winter months. Even where a view is possible (under the overhead lines) it is not without settled components and does not result in a visual composition of experience of the absence of settlement.
- 6.23 Overall, I do not agree that the conclusions reached in the Council's evidence base demonstrate that the Appeal Site contributes to the perceptual or visual sense of separation of the settlements or is appreciated as an open gap.
- 6.24 The first reason for refusal is specific in respect of the potential for visual intrusion into the gap. As now shown in the alternative masterplan from the only location where there is an open break in the linear development south of the A334 (LVIA, viewpoint 10) the land can be kept undeveloped with a swathe of open and treed landscape, this avoids visual intrusion in the sequence of views from Broad Oak and will be read as providing the green gap between settlement components.

- 6.25 From the south views into the Site from the Bridleway will be addressed through the undergrounding of the power lines, thereby allowing the tree canopies to close and reinforcement planting on the boundary.
- 6.26 The development can be designed to reflect the character of Botley so that in terms of the townscape and sense of place the settlement edge will be distinctly different from hedge End avoiding any perceptual coalescence of the settlements in this location.
- 6.27 In conclusions I do not agree with proposition 3. The proposals will not be visually intrusive and in the context of the limited function of the Appeal Site in the perceptual and visual gap functions will not significantly alter the current function of the remaining gap.

Section 7: Summary and Conclusions

7.1 In respect of the natural environment, as a point of fact, the Appeal Site is not covered by specific policies listed in the NPPF, paragraph 11, footnote 7, including:

- SSSI;
- Habitat Sites;
- Green belt
- Local Green Space
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- National Park;
- Heritage Coast;
- Irreplaceable habitats;
- Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change

7.2 Furthermore, the Appeal Site is not:

- Within a Registered Parks and Gardens
- Identified as a NPPF Valued landscape
- Subject to any ecological designation
- Affected by a Tree Preservation Order.

7.3 The locational benefits of the Appeal Site can be summarised as:

- Not affected by the policies and designations listed above, thereby avoiding the most sensitive landscapes and locations in the Borough;
- Located adjacent to the built edge of Botley, utilising the existing infrastructure;
- Physically, visually, and perceptually associated with the settlement edge.
- Able to be brought forward with a design approach which is capable of being sensitive and respectful to the townscape and landscape context.

7.1 Overall, the issue is not whether there is a change, development of greenfield locations inevitably leads to changes in landscape character and visual effects, a matter that is not an absolute impediment to granting consent and allocating land for new housing. The issue is whether the development results in undue⁸ and significant effects.

7.2 The appellant commissioned and provided professional guidance compliant landscape and visual analysis which was not disputed or challenged by EBC.

7.3 In my professional opinion, reached after critically considering the landscape, townscape, and visual consequences of the development by reference to the allegations and assertions made by EBC. The proposals complement and reflect the existing context and settlement character of Botley.

⁸ Unwarranted or inappropriate because excessive or disproportionate (online dictionary definition). Disproportionate, or excessive (Oxford dictionary).

- 7.4 The proposals are neither excessive nor disproportionate and will not lead to significant or unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the local area and environs of Botley.
- 7.5 Furthermore, with an appropriate design the proposals can be delivered with minimal impacts on the settlement gap and have the potential to create a positive and characteristic settlement edge.

Appendix LP1: Author of the Landscape and Visual Hearing Statement

Qualifications and Relevant Experience

- A1. I am Clare Brockhurst, Director of Leyton Place Limited. I have had a career in landscape architecture and landscape planning spanning more than 32 years. Within my technical area of expertise, I specialise in landscape and visual planning matters and the design of strategic green infrastructure (GI).
- A2. I have a BSc (Hons) degree in Landscape Management from the University of Reading, and a postgraduate diploma in Landscape Architecture from the University of Central England.
- A3. I completed and passed my professional practice examinations and became a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) in 1997. In 2007 I was invited to apply for, and was awarded, Fellowship of the LI (FLI) in recognition of my contribution to the profession in the field of landscape planning.
- A4. I have sat on the Landscape Institute's (LI) Policy and Awards committees and have served as an elected member of Council. I have been a judge for the LI on four occasions, most recently in 2019. In January 2017, I was the LI's guest speaker for the Pathway Graduation Ceremony. I am a pathway mentor and support the development of newly qualified graduates.
- A5. I have been involved in the preparation of a number of the LI's policy and technical position papers in respect of Green Infrastructure and new housing, some of which I reference in my evidence.
- A6. In March 2020 I was invited to speak at the Planning Inspectorate's Annual Training Event held over two days. I assisted with the workshops on the latest visualisation guidance, sat on the panel discussing the landscape and visual assessment process and specifically addressed matters relating to the presentation of evidence at inquiries.
- A7. In February 2021 I was invited to speak at the Landscape Matters Debate on the published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment –a virtual event that was recorded and uploaded to YouTube. In October 2023 I was an invited speaker for the South West regional RTPi CPD training day.
- A8. I have been appointed by the South Downs National Park Authority as a landscape advisor in respect of strategic and large-scale development in the setting of the National Park.

Career and Employment

- A9. I started my career as an in-house Landscape Architect for Bovis Homes, where I gained an understanding of the house-building process and the effects of development on the landscape.
- A10. I joined Countryside Planning and Management (CPM) as a Graduate in 1997. I became Managing Director of Waterman CPM in 2007, after the company was acquired by Waterman Group Plc. During this time, I worked with numerous developers on a range of housing, commercial and recreation projects.
- A11. During my career with Waterman CPM, I was the lead landscape witness for the Countryside Agency at the year-long inquiry into the designation of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). As part of that inquiry, I gave evidence at over 250 informal Hearings and a number of formal inquiry sessions and gained extensive knowledge of the South Downs, landscape

characterisation and the process of assessing valued landscapes. I also addressed issues related to the concept of 'setting' of statutorily designated landscapes.

- A12. I set up Leyton Place Limited after I sold my ownership in Tyler Grange LLP, where I was a founding partner. I continue to focus on delivering landscape planning consultancy services to clients, in particular as an expert witness.
- A13. In the last 32 years, I have been involved with over 50 Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs) and over a hundred Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs), either as stand-alone reports or as chapters for Environmental Statements. I have been appointed by clients, including local planning authorities, to review and critique the work of others. My approach to LVIAs and LVAs has been subject to scrutiny through peer review and the public inquiry process over the past 25 years.
- A14. In addition to the yearlong SDNP inquiry, I have been called as an expert witness on more than 90 occasions, including giving evidence on behalf of developers, private clients, district councils, and local community groups.

Appendix LP2: Email correspondence submitted with the planning application

From: Phillippa Gatehouse

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 11:19 AM

To: planning@eastleigh.gov.uk

Subject: RE: PP-12595998 - planning application - supporting plans and documents.

Good afternoon,

Please can you confirm that planning portal ref has been received PP-12595998 as I have not yet received a reference number?

Please also see attached the plans and documents to support the application which I trust will result in the timely registration of the application. Due to file sizes, these form multiple emails. I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of each email. This email forms email 16 and includes those highlighted yellow below;

- An Assessment of the Housing Land Supply Position in Eastleigh Borough Council courtesy of Intelligent Land
- PropG Stage 1 Risk Assessment (REV.A) courtesy of Clarke Saunders
- Agricultural Land Classification and Considerations November 2023 courtesy of Kernon Countryside Consultants Limited
- Air Quality assessment courtesy of Hawkins Environmental 2023
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment courtesy of Thames Valley Archaeological Services
- Bat Activity surveys courtesy of MM Ecology
- Biodiversity net gain assessment courtesy of MM Ecology
- Copy of Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool courtesy of MM Ecology
- Reptile Survey and Mitigation Strategy courtesy of MM Ecology
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal courtesy of MM Ecology
- Plans and drawings courtesy of Cooper Baillie;
 - Outline Design and Access Statement – REV C
 - Constraints Plan Rev E
 - Site Location Plan Rev C
 - Illustrative Master plan Rev C
 - Land Use Plan Rev C
 - Open Space Plan Rev C
 - Building Heights Plan Rev C
 - Access and Movement Plan Rev C
- Transport Statement courtesy of Paul Basham Associates
- Arboricultural Impact appraisal and method statement courtesy of Barrell Tree consultancy
- Tree Protection Plan courtesy of Barrell Tree Consultancy
- Manual for Managing trees on development sites courtesy of Barrell Tree Consultancy
- Planning Statement Incorporating Affordable Housing Statement courtesy of Chapman Lily Planning
- Broad Oak Energy Strategy V4 courtesy of SEES
- **LVIA REV A Main report courtesy of Green Landscape Studio Ltd**
 - LVIA – Appendix 1 part 1
 - LVIA – Appendix 1 part 2
 - LVIA - Appendix 2a
 - LVIA – Appendix 2b
 - LVIA – Appendix 5
 - REV B Illustrative Masterplan
 - REV B Landscape Strategy

Many thanks,

Phillippa Gatehouse

Planner

Chapman Lily Planning Limited



T: Wareham, Dorset Office: 01929 553818

E: phillippa.gatehouse@clplanning.co.uk

W: <http://www.clplanning.co.uk>

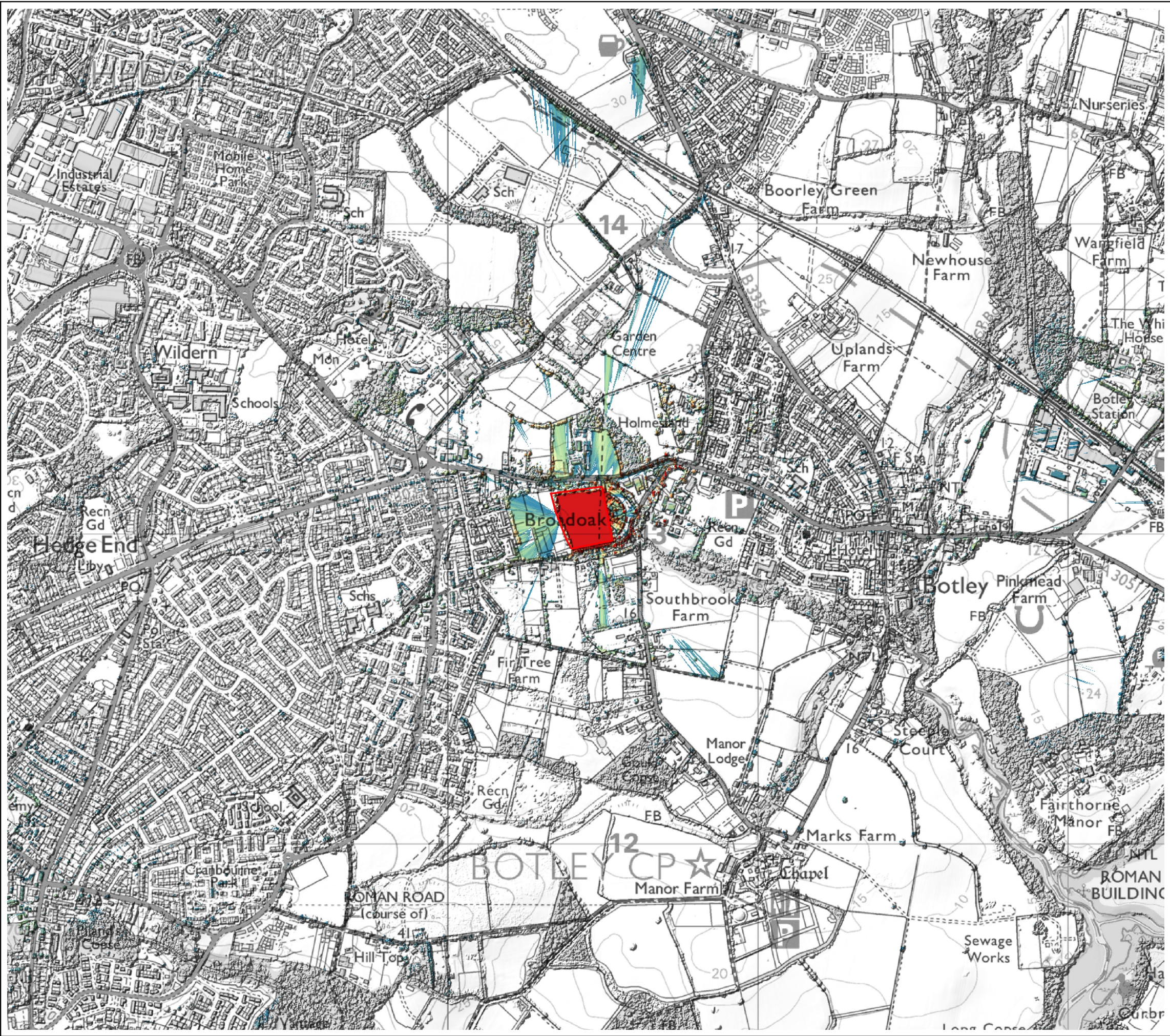
Unit 5 Designer House, Sandford Lane, Wareham, BH20 4DY

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Appendix LP3: Zone of Theoretical Visibility Mapping



 Application Site Boundary

Key for Relative Visibility

High Potential Visibility 

Low Potential Visibility 

No Visibility 

Note:
Relative visibility is based on the percentage of development potentially visible. eg areas coloured blue potentially see <20% of development, and areas coloured red potentially see >80% of development.

Source:
The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the development as a whole (modelled at up to 9m ridge height) is potentially visible from the surrounding area (1.6m high receptor).
The plan has been prepared using GIS computer software (MapInfo) and Environment Agency LiDAR DSM data, and as such takes into account built form and vegetation. Field verification is required to refine the accuracy of the ZTV.



Project Details	Broad Oak, Botley
Title	ZTV Analysis
Scale	1:12 500 @A3
Drawing Ref	THL/02
Date	April 2024
Checked	AP

Appendix LP4: Extract of Council's Settlement Gap analysis



Eastleigh Borough Settlement Gap Study

On behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council

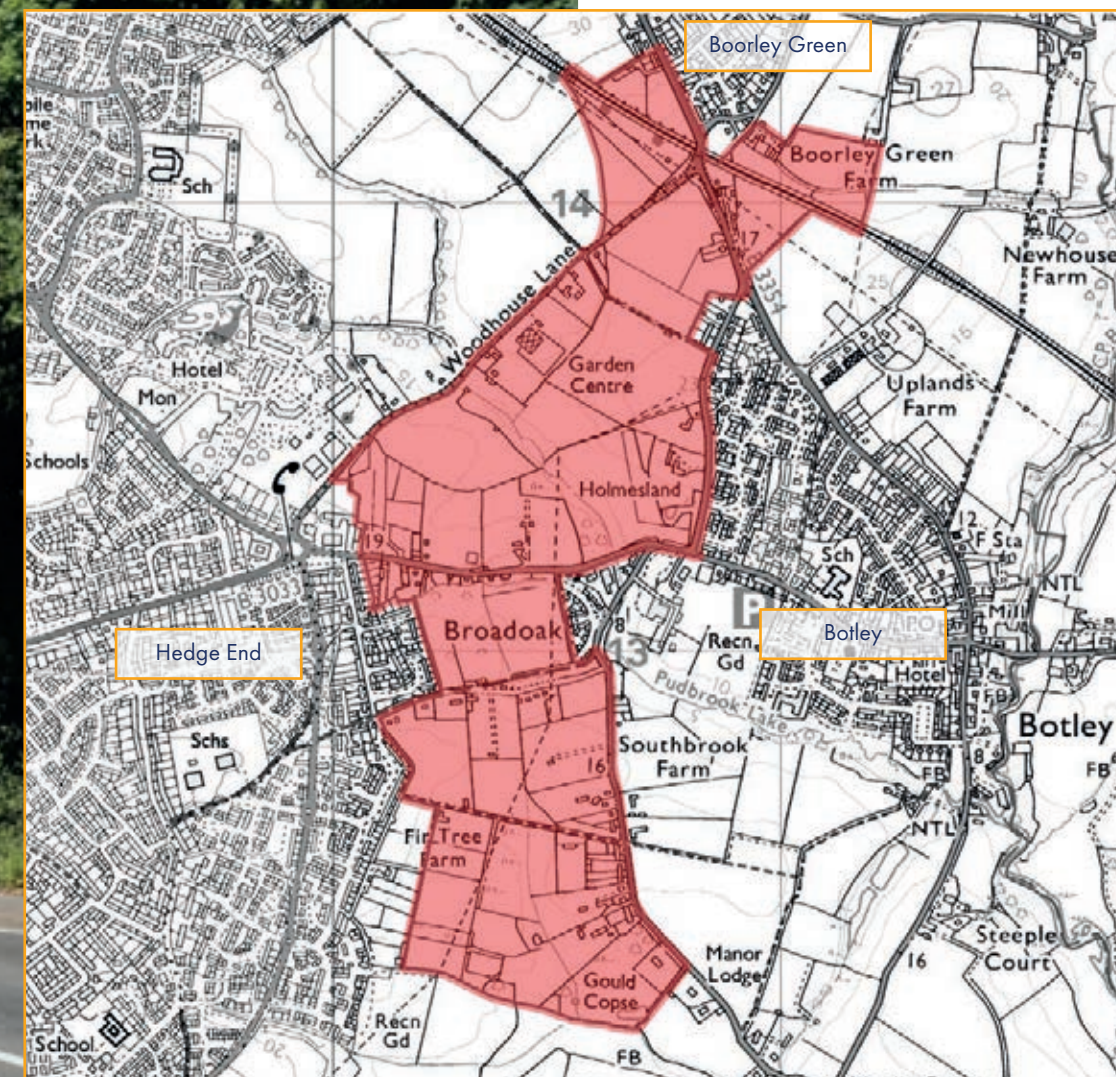
DATE: 15/10/2020

REFERENCE: DD422R02

REVISION: FINAL



A photograph of a road with a 40 mph speed limit sign. The road is a two-lane road with a white line on the left and a dashed white line on the right. A blue car is driving away from the camera. A white van is further ahead. On the left side of the road, there is a grassy verge and a tall street lamp. A large, dense tree line is on the right side of the road. In the bottom right corner, there is an inset map showing a street layout. The map has a red-shaded area labeled 'Hedge End'. Other labels on the map include 'Sch', 'Hotel Mon', 'Schools', 'Woodhouse Lane', 'Broadoak', 'Fir Tree farm', and 'Recn Gd'.



Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

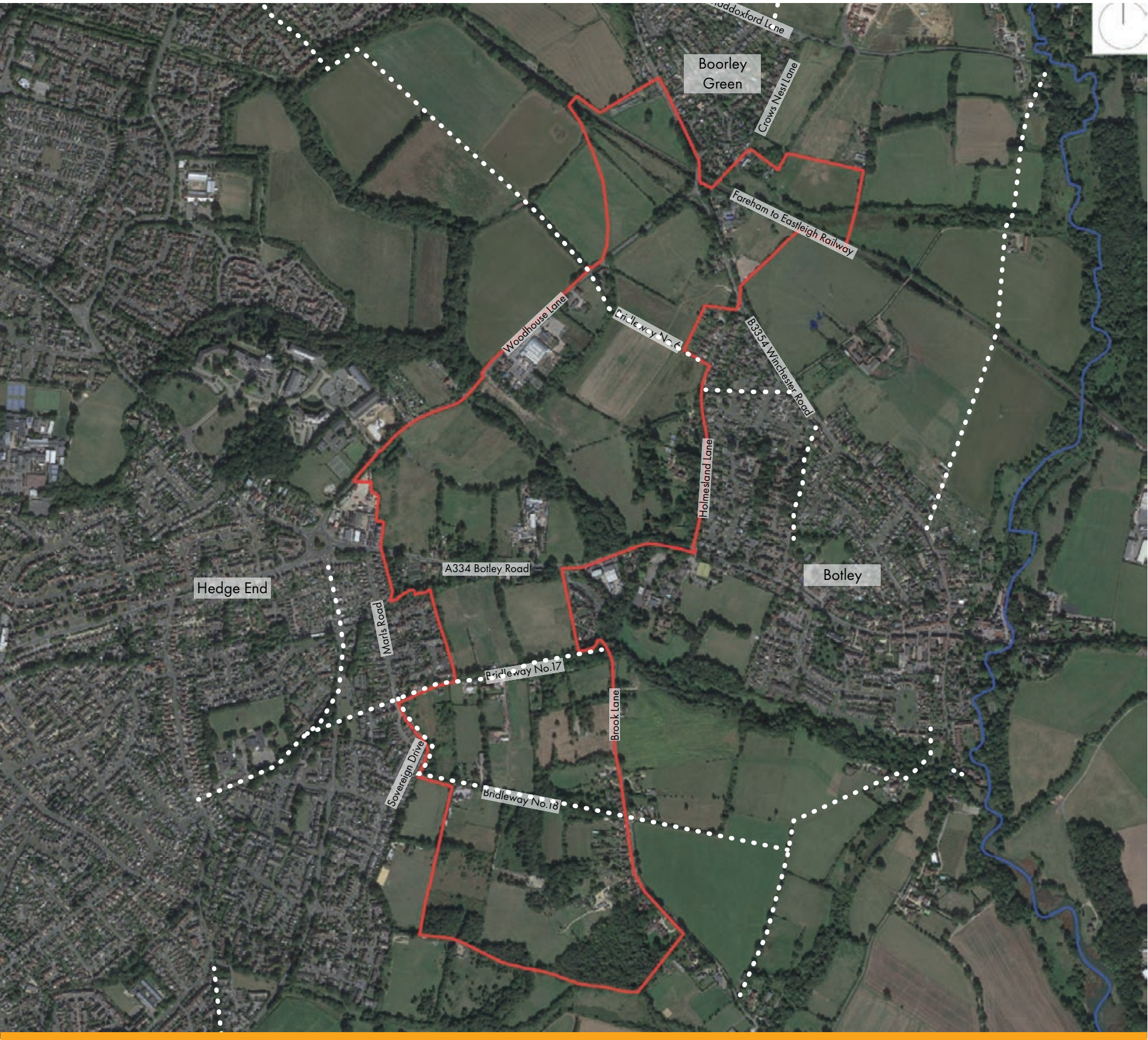


Figure I 1 - Area I Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green Aerial Image with current Gap Boundary

Settlement Character

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.

Botley (village)

Botley has a ‘small historic market town feel’ comprising low density development and mostly traditional red brick houses with some small-scale industrial uses on the outskirts. The historical centre lies within a Conservation Area away from the settlement edge to Hedge End and Boorley Green.

The settlement is formed of mainly two-storey detached / semi-detached residential, with some larger commercial bulk elements associated with the Sparshatts Car Sales and forecourts along A334.

Hedge End (medium town)

Hedge End is a town with a central core and is defined by late 20th Century and modern two-storey suburban residential developments, out of town retail / commercial uses to the west and office uses around Botleigh Grange.

The eastern settlement areas are mainly two-storey detached / semi-detached residential, with a scattering of individual dwellings and commercial units along Woodhouse lane and Botley Road.

Boorley Green (small village)

Boorley Green is a low-density residential village, lying to the north of Winchester Road and the Fareham to Eastleigh railway line. Recent residential developments, most notably the emerging development at Boorley Park (on the former golf course), has significantly increased the scale and identity of the village.

The settlement along the southern edge lies between the confluence of Winchester Road and Maddoxford Lane, consisting of mid-to-late-20th century residential development.

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

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:

Botley

Established residential ribbon development along Holmesland Lane and Brook Lane to the north and south of the main A334 Botley Road currently forms the main Gap boundary. These larger detached plots, incorporating the former Holmesland Estate, comprise mature vegetation and woodland blocks which provide a consistent sensitive edge to Botley. Some residential Plots on higher ground to the north east do offer open views across the Gap and these buildings are more prominent when viewed from Hedge End.

The exception to the above is the main link road (A334) between Botley and Hedge End, which includes the Sparshatts car dealership that sits on the edge of the Botley development.

Proposed housing allocation (B02) will extend the settlement edge to the railway line. This will also include the proposed new strategic Botley Bypass link to Woodhouse Lane designed by Hampshire County Council.

Hedge End

Like Botley, the A334 forms a clear break in character to the northern and southern settlement edge. From the Maypole Roundabout running north along Woodhouse lane the settlement is defined by a mixture of commercial activities and residential dwellings. Nevertheless, the mature field hedgerow / highway vegetation that runs along much of its route provides a strong edge to the settlement. The exception being the garden centre businesses to the northern part of Woodhouse Lane which has an open frontage / car parking with limited landscape treatment.

The proposed employment (WE2) and housing allocation (HE1) to the west of Woodhouse Lane will potentially form a strong line of development stretching as far as the railway line.

To the south of the A334 Botley Road, suburban residential development forms an abrupt edge to the settlement, with remnant field boundary trees offering some relief to the adjoining paddocks and fields / settlement edge.

Boorley Green

The settlement edge of Boorley Green is largely defined by detached residential properties along Winchester Road and Crow's Nest Lane. Whilst this does create a partial hard edge to the residential areas, the single / two storey dwellings, combined with the rising levels and mature vegetation associated with the railway line, form some softer edges and limited open views between the three settlements.

Planning approvals for future residential developments will increase the urban character to the edge, most notably to the south of Winchester Road and along Maddoxford Lane.

Linkages

Movement Types

Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green are connected by the following links:

Roads

- A334 / Botley Road forming the main thoroughfare between Botley & Hedge End settlement - approximately 1 minute driving time;
- B3354 / Winchester Road linking Botley to Boorley Green - approximately 1 minute driving time;
- Woodhouse Lane linking Hedge End to Boorley Green / Botley via Winchester road - approximately 1 minute driving time.

Railways

- Section Fareham to Eastleigh linking Hedge End Station to Botley Station - approximately less than 1 minute experienced travelling between the settlements.

Public Rights of Way

- Bridleway No. 6 connecting Holmesland Lane to Woodhouse Lane - approximately 5 minutes walking time;
- Bridleway No. 17 connecting Brook Lane to Sovereign Drive / Marls road - approximately 10 minutes walking time;
- Footpath No. 18 connecting Brook Lane to Sovereign Drive - approximately 10 minutes walking time.



View of typical ribbon residential along Botley settlement edge - Holmesland Lane.



View of typical suburban settlement edge to Hedge End overlooking paddocks - East of Marls Road / Sovereign Drive.



View of residential properties along Winchester Road defining Boorley Green settlement edge adjacent to current settlement Gap.

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

Sense of Arrival / Leaving

Vehicle Users

A334 / Botley Road

Forming the main thoroughfare between the Botley and Hedge End settlements, and measured at approximately 0.4miles, this route is characterised by ribbon development, some unsympathetic commercial activities detrimental to the local character.

However, separation, whilst brief, does encompass several landscape features that contribute to a sense of departure and arrival. This includes:

- 1. Winding road with large extents of mature vegetation;
- 2. Sunken levels associated with watercourses;
- 3. Grassed embankments preventing screening views of propertie;
- 4. Historic residential ribbon dwellings with glimpsed views of paddocks and field boundaries behind.

Woodhouse Lane and Winchester Road

The Gap between Hedge End, Botley and Boorley Green is centred around the junction of Woodhouse Lane and Winchester Road (B3354) and the raised bridge over the railway line.

This, along with the mature tree belt and railway vegetation, provides a physical separation between the three settlements (approximately 0.2miles between Botley and Hedge End/Boorley Green). The latter are only separated by the vegetated railway line. Nevertheless, the emerging housing allocation and Botley Bypass is likely to put further pressure on this small area of landscape to form the Gap.

Railway Users

The section of railway that lies to the north of Botley and Hedge End is mainly set within a vegetated cutting with limited visual connectivity to the surrounding settlements. The railway line will form the northern edge to the proposed housing allocations and DM24 sites.

Combined with the speed of travel, this is likely to reduce any rail-user experience of leaving/arrival between the three settlements.

Public rights of Way

Bridleway No.6

Bridleway No.6 to the west of Holmesland Lane lies on relatively higher ground and offers open views across a number of gently sloping grassed fields towards the vegetated watercourse and mature roadside vegetation to Woodhouse lane and Winchester Road.

The uninterpreted views over the adjoining fields creates a strong sense of countryside and a departure from the settlement. However, this is likely to be affected by the emerging HE1 housing allocation, DM24 sites and the proposed Botley Bypass to the north west.

Looking back to Botley from Woodhouse Lane, the bridleway runs alongside existing farmstead dwellings across the well vegetated watercourse from which open views are afforded across the fields towards properties along Holmesland Lane. The combination of the open landscape and individual character of dwellings give a strong sense of arrival to the Botley settlement.

Bridleway 17 and footpath 18

In contrast to the Bridleway No. 6, both rights of way to the south of the A334 offer a more enclosed experience. Bridleway No. 17 and Footpath No. 18 linking Brook Lane to the suburban Hedge End edge Marls Road / Sovereign Drive. With the exception of the woodland belt to the south-east section of footpath No. 18, both routes are similar in character in that they mainly follow winding gravel tracks that provide access to small scale paddocks and associated small scale detached dwellings.

The cluster of fields, vegetation and woodland blocks, combined with the rural tracks, limit any intervisibilty between the two the settlements; and whilst the landscape is of a poor quality, there is still a sense of departure from each settlement.



View from A334 / Botley Road leaving Botley with the levels reduced as it crosses the watercourse and the Sparshatts car dealership on the left and ribbon development properties beyond.

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green



View from A334 / Botley Road arriving at Hedge End. Beyond the large trees on both sides of the road, the view opens up to reveal the urban edge of Hedge End set around the Maypole roundabout.



View from Woodhouse Lane with established field boundary providing a clear sense of leaving the Hedge End settlement.



View from railway bridge and surrounding vegetation defines the junction of the three settlements.



View from higher ground along Bridleway No. 6 to west of Holmesland Lane offering open views to wooded horizons.



View along Bridleway 17 with gravel track access to individual properties and varying vegetation containment (field boundaries and woodland blocks).

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Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

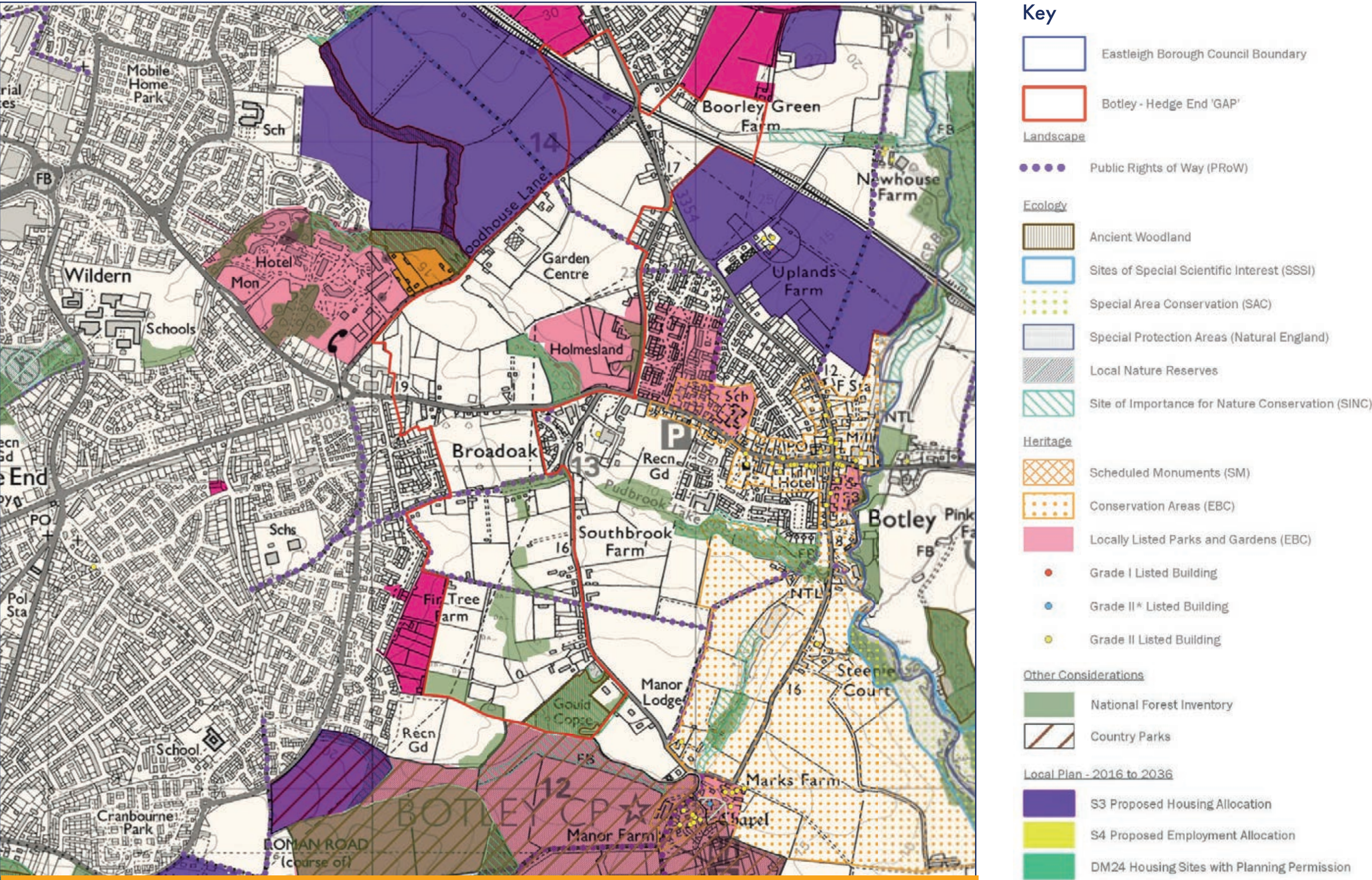


Figure I 2 - Area I Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green - Designations Plan

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

Gap Description / Characterisation

This section of the report sets out a summary of the Gap character features to understand how these contribute to the physical and perceptual separation of each settlement.

The characterisation of the Gap is drawn from descriptions focusing on a combination of physical, historical, ecological elements uniquely present to the defined area.

They include a summary of landscape, related ecological and heritage designations, landscape features, access and green infrastructure.

Designations

Figure I 3a opposite shows that despite its proximity to Botley Conservation Area and the protected River Hamble, designations within the Gap are limited to the following:

- 2 locally designated SINC associated with the woodland belts to the west of Holmesland Estate and Gould Copse;
- 1 Locally Listed Parks and Gardens associated with the former Holmesland Estate, which includes a number of mature trees.

Landscape Features

Topography

The topography of the entire Gap is relatively shallow following the watercourses that link to the River Hamble, with the exception (at the north east of the Gap) where the grounds rises gently to Holmesland Lane.

Development / Land Use / Vegetation

Land use within the Gap is largely a combination of paddocks / open farmland, woodland belts, ribbon residential developments with commercial (car sales, garden centres and agricultural use).

A mixture of small streams and associated riparian vegetation of varying depth weave through the Gap from the north-west to the south-east connecting into the River Hamble.

Openness

In keeping with the landscape character, the study area is split into two main landscape areas with open grassland/ farmland to the north; and enclosed small scale paddocks to the south.

Dense tree belts and woodland, combined with varying field boundaries, also influence its sense of openness and largely prevents intervisibilty between the settlements.

Gap Boundaries

Landscape and urban features that define the current Gap boundary are summarised below:

- Established character of ribbon development with large rear gardens along Brook Lane and Holmesland lane forming the boundary to Botley.;
- Suburban housing to Hedge End with varying quality of defining field boundaries / oaks;
- Strong line of highway vegetation / field boundaries to Winchester Road and Woodhouse Lane with some encroachment associated with the garden centres and associated uses;
- The railway line vegetation and vegetated bridge;
- Woodland blocks to southern boundary.

Access through the Gap

Movement / Connectivity

- Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians along the A334, Woodhouse Lane and Winchester Road;
- Train passengers;
- Users of the PRoW network.

Presence of Green Infrastructure within The Gap

Key GI features that contribute to the Gap character include:

- Watercourses with mature vegetation and woodland blocks supporting key ecological connectivity to River Hamble;
- Some field boundaries provide a degree of continuity / green linkages;
- Railway line vegetation.



Typical view across open farmland looking north towards Boorley Green with the mature tree belt at the junction of Woodhouse Lane and Winchester Road.



Typical view of equestrian paddocks to South of A334 / Botley Road.



View from railway bridge overlooking the sunken railway Line and vegetated embankment looking towards Boorley Green.

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green



Figure I 3a - Area I Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green - Field Findings Plan (North)



Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

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 I 1 - Cluster of pastoral fields close to the convergence of the three settlements and the elevated junction at Woodhouse Lane / Winchester Road where it crosses the railway line. The openness of the fields, combined with the associated field hedgerows, field oaks, railway line vegetation and associated topography, provides an important role in creating a sense of separation to the settlement edges of Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green. Note that the south western parcels is situated within the proposed HE2 allocation however it is understood that this has been set aside within the approved masterplan as retained Gap.

Area I 2 - This expansive grassland provides a strong sense of openness between the settlements of Botley and Hedge End experienced by users of the bridleway and properties along Holmesland Lane.

In addition to the sense of openness, intervisibilty between the settlements

is contained by the wooded horizons and mature tree vegetation along Woodhouse Lane and Holmesland Lane. This creates a strong sense of countryside separation between the two settlements.

The proposed future Botley Bypass link to Woodhouse Lane will connect through the northern parcel is likely to affect the sense of openness particularly when viewed from higher ground near Holmesland lane.

Area I 3 - A cluster of established edge of settlement commercial uses (garden centre and pet shop) and farmstead dwellings.

The proposed housing allocation to the adjacent side of Woodhouse Lane is likely to have some impact on the isolated nature of this developed site and once completed may well form the future edge of Hedge End settlement along Woodhouse Lane.

Area I 4 - Associated with the former Holmesland Estate, this area is a Locally Listed Park and Garden and consists of two larger dwellings set within mature parkland with associated tree cover. This plays an important role in defining the edge of settlement character to Botley along Holmesland Lane and curtails views to the Hedge End.

Area I 5 - Accessed via Woodhouse Lane, this parcel has been sub-divided into paddocks and is contained by roadside vegetation, mature woodland to the north and east, and varying depths of field boundaries to the south.

The glimpsed view from Woodhouse Lane shows that whilst the field provides an opportunity for long distance views in the direction of Botley, the mature tree belt associated with the watercourses to the north and east provides a strong visual barrier.

Area I 6 - Combination of ribbon development, scattering of mature trees and paddocks to the rear provide a short lived but clear change of character from the built form edges to Hedge End and the wooded arrival to Botley. Whilst the horse paddocks are poor in landscape character, the remnant field boundaries and open nature contribute to the separation between the two settlements particularly when experienced from the A334 and bridleway No. 17.

Area I 7 - An unmanaged parcel of land contained on two sides by the existing Hedge End settlement. Two public rights of way wrap around the northern, western and southern boundary and the parcel is well screened by existing boundary vegetation.



View across Sub Area I 5 paddocks with woodland backdrop preventing views towards Botley.



View across Sub Area I 1 showing open farmland in Boorley Green with field boundary and railway vegetation preventing views to Hedge End.



View across Sub Area I 2 towards Botley settlement edge.

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green



Figure I 3b - Area I Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green - Field Findings Plan (South)



Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

Area I 8 - Cluster of horse paddocks and associated paraphernalia and boundary treatments. As identified within the landscape character, this area is relatively poor in landscape quality with certain areas exposed to the urban edge of Hedge End. The linear nature of vegetated field boundaries, whilst gappy, does contribute to the visual separation and sense of leaving / arriving at the two settlements, particularly when experienced from the rights of way network.

Area I 9 - Defined by a single dwelling and horse paddocks to the rear. The unmanaged field boundaries / heathland to the south and woodland block to the west curtails views, particularly when viewed from Footpath No. 18. Similar in experience to Area I 8, this area contributes to the sense of separation when leaving the suburban edge of Hedge End.

Area I 10 - Situated to the east of the DM24 site (Sovereign Drive), this parcel of unmanaged land is partially contained by scrub, mature vegetation and woodland to the south, separating the site visually from the nearby Little Hatts Recreation Ground, to the south. This unmanaged parcel provides a rural backdrop to Hedge End, although the adjacent woodland curtails views between the two settlements.

Area I 11 - Well defined grassland with established field boundary vegetation and tree cover, this area contributes to the rural settlement character along Brook Lane and open views further east towards Botley.

Area I 12 - Brook Lane ribbon development. This attractive line of properties, with its associated mature front and rear garden vegetation combined with woodland belts, offers clear break in character and intervisibilty between the two settlements. The mature vegetation backdrop offers a clear edge to the settlement before entering the paddock landscape beyond.

Area I 13 - An isolated parcel of land possibly linked to Hatts Copse Farm. Like Area 10, it is largely surrounded by woodland / copses, including the locally designated Gould Copse SINC. Its lack of public access and isolation means that its function in maintaining the Gap is relatively limited, albeit it does provide an attractive backdrop to the existing farm dwelling.



Typical view of equestrian paddocks to north of A334 (Sub Area I 6).



Typical view of equestrian paddocks to South of A334 (Sub Area I 6).



View from right of way overlooking Sub Area I 9 with tree coverage / scrub providing containment to settlement.



Ribbon Development along Brook Lane (Sub Area I 12).

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

Opportunities for Green Infrastructure Improvements

Observations

- 1. Vegetated railway line embankment forms strong linear feature contributing to settlement separation.
- 2. A key node mainly experienced by vehicle users formed from a combination of raised road over railway line and mature tree planting provides a short-lived but small sense of leaving the three settlements.
- 3. Scope for associated Botley Bypass landscape mitigation to reinforce landscape character, address intervisibility to adjacent settlements and enhance sense of arrival/departure.
- 4. Protect edge of settlement character to Holmesland lane and Brook Lane to maintain soft edge and rural features.
- 5. Mature vegetation associated with watercourses provides clear sense of boundary.
- 6. Good example of rural roads / sense of leaving settlement with field hedgerows and trees providing symmetry on both sides. May be compromised by proposed future employment and housing allocations. Scope to improve frontage to garden centre to reinforce consistent landscape treatment.
- 7. Scope for improvements to field boundary vegetation to maintain connectivity and reinforce field pattern / visual separation and address hard urban edge.
- 8. Protect linear field boundaries, woodland blocks and tree belts to maintain visual separation and landscape character.
- 9. Address poor field boundary treatments to A334 to reinforce landscape setting and sense of leaving Hedge End settlement.

Analysis and Evaluation

Analysis of Sub Areas

The Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green 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 13 sub areas, as shown in Figures I 3a and I 3b, 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 I 1 - This cluster of four pastoral fields contributes to the openness of the Gap and is important for the separation of the three settlements. The fields adjoin the proposed developments which, once implemented, will significantly diminish the current Gap between the three settlements. Whilst the existing railway line provides a strong, impenetrable, separation between Boorley Green and the settlements to the south, the cluster of pastoral fields with the associated field hedgerows, field oaks, railway line vegetation and associated topography, provides a sense of separation and preserves their identity.

Area I 2 - This area is important for the separation of the three settlements due to its openness combined with a good level of intervisibility between settlement edges. Whilst the area is relatively narrow, it does provide a sufficient perception of separation to maintain the separate identity of these settlements. The Gap is perceived from a bridleway connecting Botley and Hedge End which provides excellent view of both settlement edges. No

Gap I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green													
Criterion check for each Sub Area (Gap component area playing a similar function)	I 1	I 2	I 3	I 4	I 5	I 6	I 7	I 8	I 9	I 10	I 11	I 12	I 13
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 I 1: Gap I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green Sub Area Matrix



Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

changes are proposed to this area, as it is considered necessary to maintain the separation between the settlements.

Area I 3 - The garden centre area is developed and so not an open part of the gap, and enclosed from the wider gap by mature vegetation. However, the Council considers that in overall terms Woodhouse Lane forms a clear boundary to the gap along Hedge End's edge. The garden centre presents informal single storey buildings and is a use typical of the countryside. The Gap increasingly narrows at this point and is experienced from the footpath connecting the settlements. Botley's edge is clearly visible from just beyond the boundary of this site, and occasional glimpses of the garden centre development can be gained from the footpath through the mature vegetation in the summer months notwithstanding the low key nature of the current development. The Council concludes this area should be retained within the gap. The northern, less developed part, is experienced by walkers on the short footpath connecting the settlements and should be protected to maintain the open nature of the gap

Area I 4 - This area helps preserve the open nature of the Gap and is important in defining the character and identity of Botley due to the presence of a Locally Listed Park and Garden, creating a soft and vegetated edge to the settlement.

Area I 5 - This area contributes to the openness of the Gap and plays an important role in defining the character of Hedge End's edge. It should be protected from development to avoid diminishing the gap in its narrowest and most vulnerable part. Whilst the woodland wrapping around the area to the east provides screening and prevents intervisibility between Botley and Hedge End, the development of this area would significantly reduce the physical separation between the settlements and increase the risk of their coalescence.

Area I 6 - This area lies at the narrowest section between Botley and Hedge End and performs all Gap functions. The fields on both sides of Botley Road (A334) contribute to the perception of Gap's openness and the separation between the two settlements. Thanks to the open nature of those fields, and their predominantly undeveloped character, the sense of leaving / arriving to either of the settlements is maintained despite the short distance (approximately 300m). The fields also contribute to the separation of the settlements for viewers on the bridleway No. 17 to the south.

Area I 7 - This area is relatively open and, when experienced from the surrounding footpaths, it helps preserve the open nature of the Gap. However, the contribution is limited by the existing vegetation along the area's boundary. It is considered that the area plays an important role in defining the rural character of Hedge End's settlement edge and it plays an important role in separating Hedge End from Brook Lane development, which may in time become the south western boundary of Botley. The

Council has already removed the area to the east of Brook Lane from the gap designation prior to submission of the plan. The remaining relatively narrow overall gap between Hedge End and Brook Lane therefore increases in importance for the ongoing longer term separation of the settlements.

Area I 8 - This area comprises a cluster of horse paddocks, associated paraphernalia and boundary treatments, which contribute to the Gap's openness when perceived from the footpaths to the north and south. The area plays an important role in the visual and perceptual separation of Hedge End and Botley and does provide a sense of leaving / arriving at Hedge End. Due to the short distance from both settlements, inclusion of the area in the Gap is considered to be necessary to the Gap's function and the sense of separation between Hedge End and Botley.

Area I 9 - This area contributes to the Gap's openness and the character of Hedge End settlement edge. The woodland block to the east provides a strong visual barrier and, further to the east, the footpath continues to run through a large area of countryside before reaching Botley. However the area should be protected from development to avoid Hedge End's sprawl to the east and the coalescence with the ribbon development along Brook Lane, which may in time become the south western boundary of Botley. The Council has already removed the area to the east of Brook Lane from the gap designation prior to submission of the plan. The remaining relatively narrow overall gap between Hedge End and Brook Lane therefore increases in importance for the ongoing longer term separation of the settlements.

Area I 10 - This area of unmanaged land plays an important role in defining the character of Hedge End's suburban edge and currently helps maintain the sense of separation between Botley and Hedge End. The area should be protected from development to avoid Hedge End's sprawl to the east and the coalescence with the ribbon development along Brook Lane.

Area I 11 - This area of well-defined grassland, with established field boundary vegetation and tree cover, plays an important role in defining the character of the Botley village and contributes to the openness of the Gap. The area is located in the vicinity of the settlement edge and its inclusion in the Gap is considered necessary for the separation of Botley and Hedge End.

Area I 12 - This area comprises Brook Lane ribbon development and is located half way between Botley and Hedge End. Whilst it does not contribute to the Gap's openness due to its largely developed nature, it does help define the settlement character and maintain the sense of separation between them.

Area I 13 - This area of private farmland is open. It does not contribute to the perception of the Gap from publicly accessible areas. However, it plays

an important role in defining the rural setting of Hedge End's suburban edge and currently helps maintain the sense of separation between Botley and Hedge End. The area should be protected from development to avoid Hedge End's sprawl to the east and the coalescence with the ribbon development along Brook Lane.

DM24 Site (Sovereign Drive)

The site was identified within policy DM24 and so removed from the settlement gap only as a result of permission for development being granted on appeal in 2015 (APP/W1715/W/14/3001499). This permission has now lapsed, and a further application refused in 2020. The site will no longer be identified in a policy in the Local Plan. The 2015 appeal Inspector placed substantial weight on the fact that, at that time, the Council had not met its 5-year land requirement and on the national imperative to boost housing supply, over the relatively limited harm to the fundamental intentions of the local gap policy. The context for the decision is now significantly different because the relative merits of Settlement Gaps are being reviewed on a consistent plan led Borough wide basis, and the emerging Local Plan has identified 10 years of housing supply. Therefore the area should be considered afresh.

The Council considers that the rear gardens of properties on Sovereign Drive backing onto this area provide a strong settlement edge to Hedge End. This area contributes to the openness of the gap and plays an important role in defining the settlement edge and the perception of leaving Hedge End, particularly when viewed from the public footpath (Botley 18) to the north. This area also provides a green link from this footpath to the recreation ground in the south. The boundary is largely defined by mature hedge planting with associated hedgerow trees. While there is no inter-visibility with Botley to the east, the area should be protected from development to avoid Hedge End's sprawl to the east and the coalescence with the ribbon development along Brook Lane, which may in time become the south western boundary of Botley. The Council has already removed the area to the east of Brook Lane from the gap designation prior to submission of the plan. The north – south orientation of the Hedge End – Botley gap maintains separation between the existing settlements and the development along Brook Lane, whilst also setting a clear gap for the ongoing longer-term separation of the settlements. The Council concludes that this area should be reinstated in the settlement gap.

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

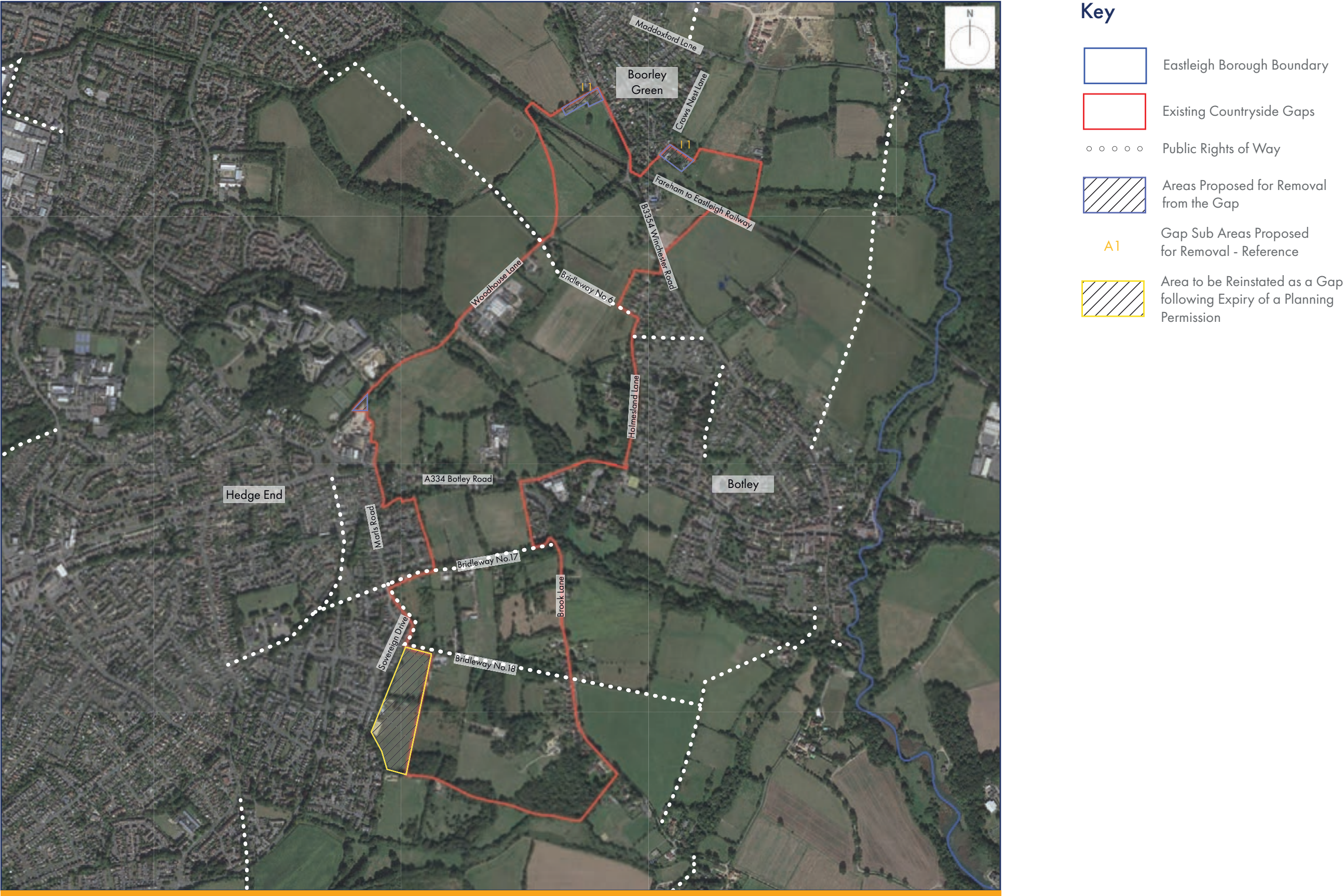


Figure I 4 - Area I Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green - Gap Amendment Plan

Gap Analysis - Area I Botley, Hedge End & Boorley Green

Area I Conclusions and Recommendations

Areas to be Removed

Following the characterisation and evaluation of the Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green Gap we recommend the following areas for removal (see Figure I 4).

- Sub Area I 1 - Already developed land that forms settlement edge to Boorley Green and doesn't contribute to the Gap function.
- Small area next to Woodhouse lane to reflect the boundary of the industrial land use defined by vegetation.

Proposed Gap Boundary Description

The slightly revised Botley, Hedge End and Boorley Green Gap provides sufficient land to ensure physical and perceptual separation of these settlements and to protect their character and separate identities.

Whilst the western edge is currently defined by the existing Hedge End settlement and proposed future allocations and approved developments, the eastern edge generally has a strong, uniform, rural character which provides a robust edge to the Botley settlement.

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:

- Retaining the visual separation between Boorley Green and Botley settlements by reinforcing the landscape character consisting of field boundaries / woodland belts, which together should inform future masterplan proposals for proposed housing allocation along its northern edge and the proposed Botley Bypass.
- Reinforce field boundary and highway boundaries with hedgerow planting. This should apply to the both the edges and throughout the Gap to support visual separation, provide ecological connectivity opportunities and reinforce local landscape character.
- Retain semi-rural character to ribbon development along Holmesland Lane and Brook Lane by maintaining balance of development and mature vegetation cover to garden plots.
- Protect and conserve setting to Holmesland Registered Park and Garden to complement the settlement edge character.
- Retain and enhance important woodland / coppice and associated watercourses that combined provide a clearly defined natural barrier and supports a strong sense of physical / visual separation whilst supporting biodiversity and ecological connectivity through the Gap.
- Where possible address hard urban edge to Hedge End edge by ensuring any future development is sensitively designed with positive frontages to the settlement edge with provision for generous landscape buffer planting that can reinforce the landscape character and integrate with the footpath network and public open space provision.

Summary and Conclusions

The findings of this report have been carefully formulated from the Methodology agreed with Eastleigh Borough Council project team and are based on the PUSH (Partnership for Urban south Hampshire) policy principles and criteria for assessing the Settlement Gap needs in the region.

Aims and Objectives

Eastleigh and its surrounding settlements are uniquely positioned between the coastal landscapes of The River Hamble, Southampton Water and the South Downs to the north.

These protected landscapes have placed greater constraints on the urban expansion across the PUSH region. Eastleigh has seen significant urban expansion over recent decades which has increased the threat to Settlement Gaps and the varying communities retaining their own identity.

The process has followed a consistent approach based on the following tasks:

Desktop analysis

- Settlement character appraisals to understand individual settlement character and the sense of leaving / arriving for different users (vehicles/railway/rights of way);
- Landscape related designations that contribute to the characterisation of the Gap including any heritage and ecological protection; and
- An appraisal of the local landscape character using EBC published documents to understand the landscape elements that shape the Gap landscape including topography, vegetation, watercourses, land uses.

Fieldwork Studies

- Further interrogation of the Gap on the ground to inform site specific appraisal / observations; and
- Sub-Area Categorisation to assess how individual elements / land parcels contribute to the function of the Gap

Analysis and Evaluation

- Examination of the Task 1 and 2 findings to assess whether the identified Sub-Area elements contribute to the criteria set out in the methodology;
- Amending the Gap boundary where appropriate; and
- Applying high level recommendations for strengthening the settlement gap and sense of separation by applying green infrastructure.

Letting the Landscape Shape the Gap

Based on the above methodology, a greater understanding of the Borough's settlement Gap functionality has been assessed. Whilst the study allows for site-specific conclusions based on individual settlement characteristics and issues, there is a consistent approach to redefining Gap boundaries that focuses on realignment to defensible landscape features; both natural and manmade.

The list below is not exhaustive but, in many situations, combine to shape the Gap character and boundaries. They include:

Natural (soft) Features

- Large Areas of Woodland – Whilst they do not contribute to the openness of the Gap they provide a dominant feature in the landscape separating settlements and help to frame the Gap boundaries.
- Open Accessible Spaces including country parks, nature reserves, that help to maintain a sense of openness.
- Open farmland / field parcels – In many places particularly to the north of the M27 on flat land, open field patterns with well-kept hedgerows help to provide a strong sense of openness between the settlement.
- Watercourses – Several of the Gap boundaries follow watercourses, particularly along the Itchen Valley. In many areas these watercourses are supported with well vegetated green corridors and associated floodplains that help to prevent intervisibility between settlement whilst retaining a strong a sense of openness and rural character between settlements.

Manmade (hard) Features

1. Highway Infrastructure including:
 - M27 Motorway – Forming a dominant feature cutting through the centre of the Borough this regionally important road link is supported by a strong vegetated buffer which, for the most part helps to separate settlements that might be at threat of coalescence such as West End/ Hedge End
 - Other Major Roads – Strategic links that connect to the M27 and settlements. Whilst less dominant in the landscape they do contribute to the experience of leaving and arriving between settlements. Good examples include Tollbar Way which alongside the buffer planting provides a strong defensible edge to Hedge End.
 - Rural Lanes – Remnants of the borough agricultural history these rural lanes have largely been replaced with modern strategic routes. Nevertheless, many of these narrow rural lanes framed by field hedgerows and field oaks help to shape the character of the settlement Gap. Examples include Satchell Lane, Hamble and

Shamblehurst Lane, Hedge End.

- Railway Lines – Influence large parts of the settlement edges these railways are set within cuttings, framed by established tree belts and provide a clearly defined edge as shown to the north of Hedge End, Netley, Hamble and east of Eastleigh.
2. Open Accessible Sports Uses including sports pitches, golf courses that help to maintain a sense of openness such as Boundary Lakes Golf Course north of the Hedge End and the Sports pitches, south of Eastleigh.

Settlement Hierarchy

The report assesses the current hierarchy of each settlement to understand where the experience of Gap needs to be greater. This varies across the Borough and does not rely solely on distance, but the sense of arrival/ departure and the landscape experienced between each settlement. Two examples of this include the importance of the rural setting (and sense of openness) to the villages of Botley and Hamble given their historic setting. Similarly, it is important to provide a greater sense of leaving and arrival larger settlements such as experienced travelling from Southampton to Hedge End.

It is highly likely that the settlement hierarchy will need to be changed and updated over time to acknowledge the changes from future expansion such as proposed to the south of Boorley Green and west of Horton Heath.

Gap Fragmentation

Insensitive development can quickly lead to the failure of the Gaps function. This is evident along Hamble Lane where the increased sub-division of fields for equestrian use combined with intensification of development to Hound roundabout (Hamble School/ Blackthorn Health Centre) has started to erode the Gap from within and may put further pressure on the Hamble Gap in the future and potential for Bursledon and the northern settlement of Netley (including Hound) to merge with Hamble.

Ribbon development along main road links can also reduce the sense of leaving and arriving between many of the settlements notably Hedge End- Botley and Fair Oak – Horton Heath.

Despite this it is recognised that there are particular forms of development within the Gaps across the entire Borough that accommodates development of a rural nature which enhances the settlement character. Typical examples of these include small hamlets, farm shops.

Gap Amendments

Figure 2 opposite shows the areas of the Gap proposed to be removed from the Gap.

Summary and Conclusions

Settlements at Risk

This report has identified the extent of gaps which are necessary across the Borough. Any development proposals within these gaps should be carefully controlled and limited in accordance with the Local Plan’s settlement gap policy. Assessing the above characteristics across the Gap has also enabled us to document which Settlement Gaps are at particular risk of coalescence where in addition opportunities should be taken wherever possible to enhance these gaps. Those of obvious and potential risk include:

- Northern Edge to Area A (Bursledon – Southampton). This relies on a limited land to the north and south of Bursledon Road to provide the Gap function albeit it understood that EBC have set aside some of this as public open space provision to safeguard this area.
- Central Area to Area F – (Eastleigh Bishopstoke) along Bishopstoke Road. This short section through which the River Itchen flow offer negligible experience of the Gap. Future development along this main link into Eastleigh Town Centre should avoid any further encroachment and where possible provide sensitive landscape enhancements.
- Area H – (Horton Heath - Fair Oak). The nature of the Ribbon development along Botley Road and limited depth of the Gap has reduced the sense of openness between these settlements. Emerging development to the north of Burnetts Lane will increase the Horton Heath settlement and will put further pressure on the western and eastern Gap to prevent the settlements of Horton Heath, Bishopstoke and Fair Oak merging. The future masterplan for One Horton Heath has the potential to support the Gap function.
- Central Area to Area I (Hedge End – Botley) along Botley Road. Ribbon development along the main link road has reduced the sense of openness provided by the field parcels behind. Proposed expansion to the north of the Gap Area including the Botley Bypass is likely to put future pressure on the settlement identity.

Future Opportunities

To mitigate against potential further erosion of the settlements and associated identity the report identifies a number of Green Infrastructure opportunities that could be assimilated into the Gap designation process to strengthen and enhance existing settlement boundaries and provide appropriate transition to their rural context. Any future applications that affect the Gap setting should seek to apply these recommendations.

It is intended that this report will not only inform the review of Settlement Gaps process but could also be integrated with future landscape guidance policies and Supplementary Planning Documents.

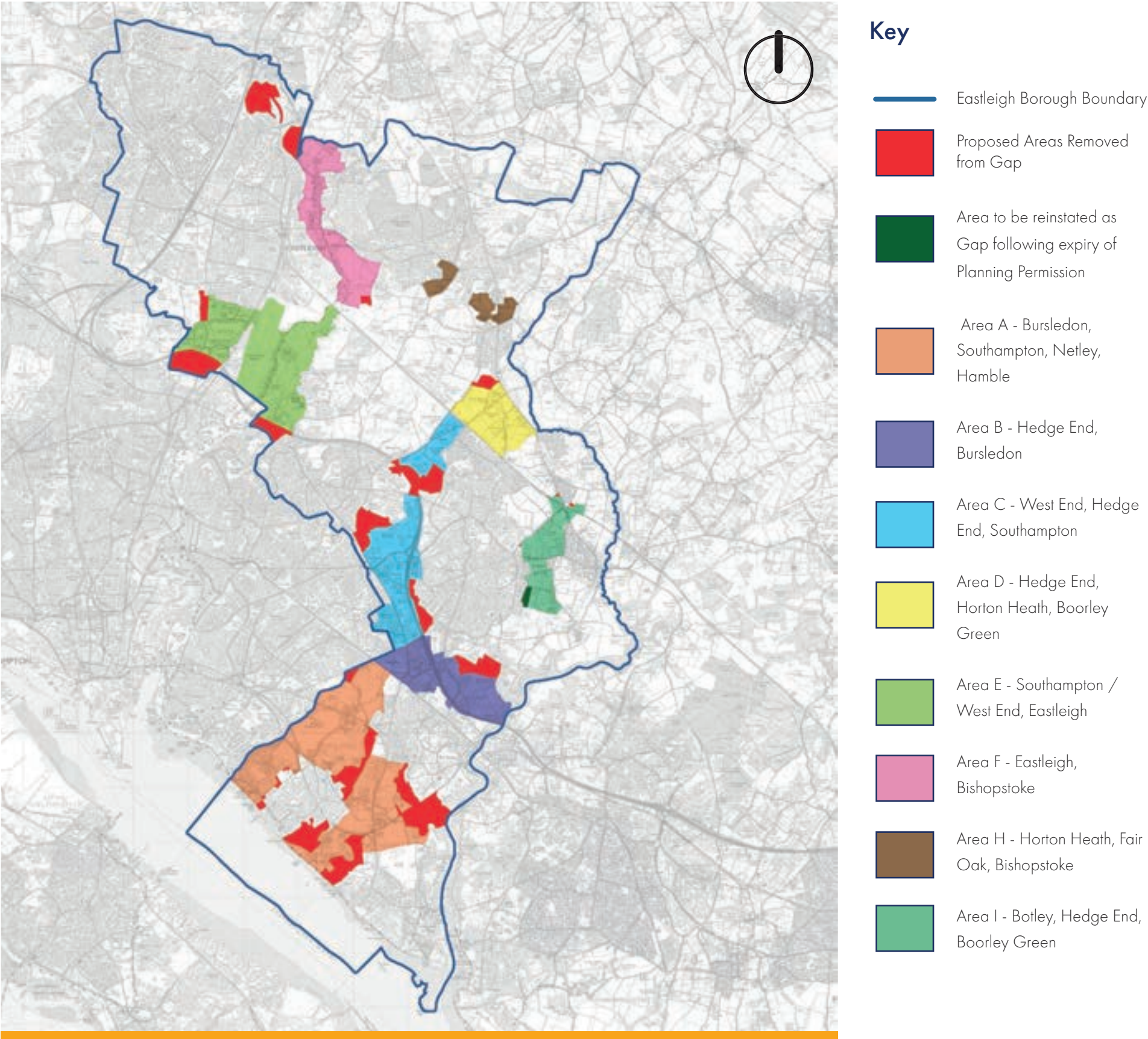


Figure 2 - Proposed Amendments to Settlement Gap.

Thank you

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