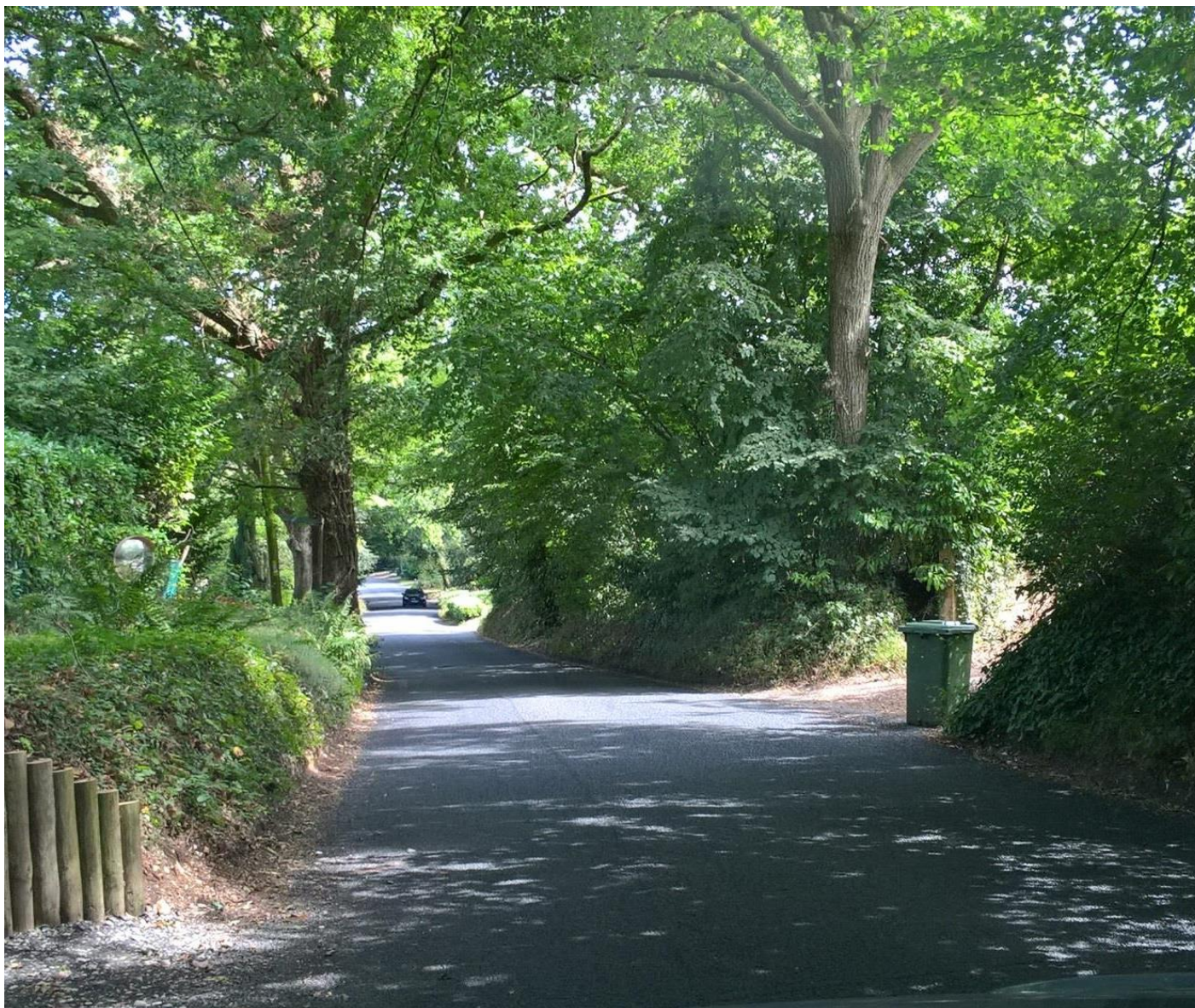


# Neighbourhood Character Study for East Hampshire District Council

## Final Report: Classification and Description

December 2018



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# Neighbourhood Character Study for East Hampshire District Council

## Executive Summary

East Hampshire District Council appointed the Landscape Team, Hampshire County Council, to undertake a Neighbourhood Character Study of twenty areas identified in the East Hampshire District Council planning area. This report is intended to be published as part of East Hampshire District Council's evidence base to support the consultation draft (Regulation 18) of the Local Plan Review.

The twenty study areas chosen by the Client, are based on eight sites identified in existing saved policies H9 and H10 Special Character Areas of the East Hampshire Local Plan Second Review (March 2006), with three additional sites to be assessed for their similarity to the H9 and H10 policy areas, and a further nine sites in areas where landowners/site promoters had expressed interest in residential development through the Client's 2018 "call for sites". These nine sites have been considered specifically for the purposes of identifying design influences for potential housing allocation sites and/or informing decisions on residential development proposals (although all twenty of the study areas have the potential to inform new design).

The study methodology follows the Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 05/2017: Townscape Assessment, revised April 2018. For each study area, detailed descriptions of their urban characteristics are included, identifying the pressures for change, their sensitivity to change, and describes possible solutions to ensure any future changes are influenced positively through the planning process, indicating suitable policy and development control practice.

The twenty study areas that were assessed are in a particular part of East Hampshire's settlement hierarchy. The areas are predominantly low to very low density 20<sup>th</sup> century residential developments with low levels of service provision and infrastructure. They are essentially car-based commuter neighbourhoods on a rural fringe however they display characteristics which play a significant part in forming East Hampshire's character. The distinctive, attractive and special qualities that these areas bring to East Hampshire are:

- a strong visual and physical relationship between current settlement edges and their landscape setting
- a strong green infrastructure, distinctive to East Hampshire of:
  - extensive tree cover with large tree species (mostly native)
  - high hedge boundary treatments
  - grass verges
- the majority of buildings in the areas studied are low-rise, detached residential properties (average two storey with pitched roof), face the road but are set back from it, with off-street parking, for the most part built as ribbon development.

- an overt lack of highways clutter, with the absence of urbanising signage, street furniture and road markings.
- a tranquil environment with good dark night skies:
- residential buildings are subservient to and often 'hidden' amongst a screen of trees.

Currently these special qualities, particularly the green infrastructure, play an important role in providing an attractive setting for pleasant suburban development. These qualities are considered to be under threat to creeping suburbanisation and intensification, where the green infrastructure is being gradually eroded through cumulative low scale changes to more significant plot intensification, resulting in:

- more visible rooflines
- wider driveways and 'harder' boundary treatments, and increasingly visible car parking arrangements generally
- some insensitive extensions and individual plot redevelopments
- some insensitive infill
- increased glazing
- use of new materials that are not part of the local vernacular

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised July 2018, gives a direction to policies in the emerging East Hampshire Local Plan, in that they should not be overly prescriptive, nor impose architectural styles, but should concentrate on guiding overall standards of design in new development and can seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. The NPPF explicitly states that plans cannot prevent innovation, which may for example increase densities. It also highlights the valuable role that can be played by Neighbourhood plans, design guides and codes in terms of setting out local expectations. This study concludes that a strong overarching Design Policy, with an emphasis on 'designing in context' linked to strong policies on landscape and green infrastructure provision and retention, should be sufficient in guiding appropriate development, especially when coupled with clear policies in Neighbourhood Plans. It is appropriate to continue to identify Special Character Areas as a distinct policy, if there is demand from the local Community, but the policy direction should guide developers in more general terms to scale and massing of built form, rather than be prescriptive on density. The development of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Design Guidance is strongly recommended.

# Neighbourhood Character Study for East Hampshire District Council

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# 1. Introduction: Purpose of the Neighbourhood Character Study

- 1.1. East Hampshire District Council (the Client) appointed the Landscape Team, Hampshire County Council (the Consultant), to undertake a Neighbourhood Character Study (the Study) of twenty areas identified in the East Hampshire District Council planning area.
- 1.2. The purpose and scope of the Study were agreed during the commissioning of the work, but this has also been an iterative process, as findings have emerged. The emphasis of the original remit for the Study was to determine the value of taking existing **Special Character/Special Housing Area policies** through to the emerging Local Plan, but there has also been a growing identification of how the Study can provide contextual information to inform future residential development in areas that are subject to significant development interest.
- 1.3. The principal objectives of this work are to:
  - Provide detailed landscape/townscape character studies of the twenty study areas identified, identifying their key characteristics, pressures for change and their sensitivity to change.
  - Test the value of taking forward either a set of site-specific policies, in the emerging Local Plan, that reflect the current H9 and H10 policies and/or advise the Client on a range of suitable planning policy measures that would achieve appropriate protection of the current distinctive aspects of the H9 and H10 neighbourhoods studied.
  - Provide character studies that assist the Client in vetting the suitability of site selection, and/or inform any site development briefs for potential housing allocations that could come forward in the new Local Plan.
- 1.4. The twenty study areas were chosen by the Client, based on the eight sites identified in existing saved policies H9 and H10 of the East Hampshire Local Plan Second Review (March 2006), with three additional sites to be assessed for their similarity to the H9 and H10 policy areas, and a further nine sites in areas where landowners/site promoters had expressed interest in residential development through the Client's 2018 "call for sites". These nine sites have been considered specifically for the purposes of identifying design influences for potential housing allocation sites and/or informing decisions on residential development proposals (although all twenty of the study areas have the potential to inform new design).
- 1.5. The Study has sought to answer the following key questions:
  - What are the distinctive characteristics of the built environment within the study areas?
  - How could proposals for new development within/adjoining the study area respond to the local context, to maintain or enhance local character and distinctiveness?

- How could new development within/adjoining the study areas contribute to the creation of safe and accessible environments?
  - What are the strategic and local policy recommendations emerging from the study?
- 1.6. This report sets out the study findings and the methodology used. It gives summary findings as they affect the East Hampshire District Council planning area. For each study area, detailed descriptions of their urban characteristics are included, identifying the pressures for change, their sensitivity to change, and describes possible solutions to ensure any future changes are influenced positively through the planning process, indicating suitable policy and development control practice.

### Emerging East Hampshire Local Plan

- 1.7. East Hampshire District Council has commenced work on a full review of its Local Plan. The new Local Plan will replace the current Joint Core Strategy (JCS), Housing and Employment Allocations and the saved policies from the Local Plan Second Review 2006.
- 1.8. The new Local Plan will be a single, whole new Local Plan with a plan period of 2017-2036, for the area covered by East Hampshire District Council as a Planning Authority. This is the area of East Hampshire outside of the South Downs National Park (SDNP).
- 1.9. This report is intended to be published as part of East Hampshire District Council's evidence base to support the consultation draft (Regulation 18) of the Local Plan Review, in January 2019.
- 1.10. This Study covers a specific topic: townscape/landscape character assessment, but is mindful of other areas of study not addressed by this report, which are also underway as part of the new Local Plan, and which may have overlapping impact on the study areas, such as:
- Housing and Employment Allocations
  - Affordable Housing need
  - District-wide Landscape Character Strategy
  - District-wide Green Infrastructure Strategy
  - Conservation area and Listed building Assessments
  - Infrastructure assessments and provision, for example school and open space requirements
  - Transport needs, especially walking and cycling
- 1.11. This report completes Step 4, of the commission:  
 Step 1: Define purpose and scope  
 Step 2: Desk study  
 Step 3: Field study  
**Step 4: Classification and description**



## 2. Scope and Methodology of the Study

### The study areas assessed

- 2.1. For ease of reference, the study areas have been clustered into three groups which correlate to their geographical location in the District (as it is subdivided by the South Downs National Park). This subdivision also corresponds well to the Landscape Character Areas in which they sit. The study areas are listed below (and shown in *Figure 1* towards the end of this chapter):

#### North Western part of East Hampshire (listed West to East):

1. Eastern Ropley
2. Western Four Marks
3. Northern Four Marks (Medstead Parish)
4. Telegraph Lane, Four Marks (**suggested as potential H9/H10 policy area**)
5. Medstead Road, Beech (**current H10 Policy Area**)
6. Holybourne (**current H10 Policy Area**)
7. Eastern Holybourne
8. Northern Bentley

#### North Eastern part of East Hampshire (listed North West to South East):

9. Headley Fields (**current H9 Policy Area**)
10. Headley Down (**current H10 Policy Area**)
11. Whitmore Vale and Hammer Lane (**suggested as potential H9/H10 policy area**)
12. Kingswood Firs, Grayshott (**current H9 Policy Area**)
13. Waggoners Way (**suggested as potential H9/H10 policy area**)
14. Eastern Liphook
15. Chiltley Way Area, Liphook (**current H9 Policy Area**)

#### Southern Parishes of East Hampshire (listed North to South):

16. Catherington Lane Area
  17. Lovedean Lane Area
  18. Portsmouth Road, Horndean (**current H9 Policy Area**)
  19. Links Lane, Rowlands Castle (**current H9 Policy Area**)
  20. Southern Rowlands Castle
- 2.2. Five of the study areas fall under Policy H9, with three study areas coming under Policy H10. Of the remaining twelve study areas, three were chosen due to their potential similarity to the existing Policy areas and nine due to their potential to inform character of new housing allocations, (although all twenty study areas can help to inform characteristics for new development).
- 2.3. The following is a high-level summary of common study area characteristics, known at outset from a desktop analysis:

- low to very low density (with house prices above the national average and typically above the average for the district of East Hampshire).
- predominantly 20<sup>th</sup> century development (with a small number of older dwellings occurring).
- predominantly one, two (and occasionally three) storey residential, detached 'family homes' with pitched roofs, although some semi-detached properties, and a small number of short terraces occur.
- relatively small-scale suburban development, typically within the settlement boundary of a village, except Whitmore Vale and Hammer Lane which are in the countryside.
- strong presence of green infrastructure, particularly large trees and evergreen hedges.
- a strong landscape setting.
- strong tranquillity and dark night skies.

2.4. Key variations between the study areas were in the:

- size of the study area, ranging from a row of approximately 16 houses along a road, as occurs in Portsmouth Road, to a medium-sized estate of 600 plus dwellings in Headley Down
- homogeneity of the built form, with:
  - a wide variation of age of properties within the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and
  - variation of uniformity of the property styles i.e. some estates were predominantly built in one age and style e.g. Chitley Way area, Liphook, whereas others, such as Medstead Road, Beech, have highly varied building ages and styles
- size of the detached 'family home'
- landform and views in and out of the study areas.

2.5. The Client did not select:

- Residential areas in rural hamlets, and isolated individual properties in rural locations, apart from Whitmore Vale and Hammer Lane
- Towns and Town Centres
- Business or retail parks, although some small-scale presence of business or retail occurs in a few sites, as do community uses e.g. churches, community buildings and schools.

2.6. There was some overlap with Conservation Area designations, historic settlements and Listed Buildings, for example five study areas: Ropley; Central Holybourne; Eastern Holybourne; Northern Bentley and; the Catherington Lane Area, all have overlapping boundaries with Conservation Area designations and Headley Fields is adjacent to a historic settlement.

2.7. It is also important to note that none of the study areas cover a whole settlement, although the Medstead Road Study Area in Beech, North Bentley and Ropley were extensive.

## Methodology

2.8. The study methodology follows the Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 05/2017: Townscape Assessment, revised April 2018. The methodology is set out in four steps:

- Step 1: Define purpose and scope
- Step 2: Desk study
- Step 3: Field study
- Step 4: Classification and description

### Step 1: Define purpose and scope

2.9. The purpose and scope of the study were agreed during the commissioning of the work, but this has also been an iterative process, as findings have emerged.

### Step 2: Desk Study

2.10. The collection and collation of data was primarily through layers of information held in OS-based GIS Mapping, and was also informed by the review of relevant documents, and using Google 'Street view', to prepare a specific checklist for use on site. The structure of the desktop analysis was:

- **Site location within wider context** (with for example, landform, landscape character context, settlement boundaries, SDNP Boundary, nearest local centre)
- **Site internal description** (with 'buffer' of adjacent land for each site) with the following categories
  - **Historical Development and Assets**
    - Historical development, for example, Epoch mapping
    - Historical Assets (Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas)
  - **Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations**
    - OS Green Space Dataset
    - Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
    - Environmental Designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
  - **Movement and Connectivity**
    - Legibility (Landmarks, nodes, paths, edges/barriers 'districts')
    - Road classifications (A, B, C), Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), cycle routes
    - Road and footway widths, parking, lighting, description of road type and permeability i.e. connected grid roads/cul-de-sacs
  - **Urban Structure and Built Form**
    - Block shape and size, plot size, scale, massing, building orientation and density
    - Building type and age
    - Materials colour and texture
    - Conditions

- **Site specific pressures for change** for example, through examination of recent planning applications history.

### Step 3: Field Study

- 2.10. The subject matter and format for the site assessment followed the structure described above for Step 2, with the use of a standard pro-forma for site assessment.
- 2.12. Two Landscape Architects/Urban Designers carried out site visits as a ‘buddy pair’ to ensure robust analysis of each site. Relevant illustrative photographs were taken. The site and its immediate surroundings were surveyed. Where longer views were noted to be important, these were verified on site. At times it was difficult to see into private land due to dense vegetation cover obscuring views, and where this was the case, it has been stated.

### Councillor Workshop

- 2.13. Following the data collection and study area survey, the emerging findings were presented to East Hampshire Councillors for their information and comment given, with detailed examples given on seven of the twenty sites, to show methodology, with summary conclusions of key characteristics common to all sites. Feedback from the Councillor Workshop fed into the final site assessments.

### Step 4: Classification and Description

- 2.14. This stage involved final analysis of the sites, with identification of their key characteristics, pressures for change, possible issues to take forward to policy development, and the production of this report.

### Comparison of Study Areas with rest of East Hampshire

- 2.15. In order to assess how well the Study Areas typified East Hampshire several maps covering the whole of East Hampshire were prepared, for the following:
- East Hampshire Landscape Character Types
  - Residential Density (net dwelling per ha (dpha)<sup>1</sup>)
  - Tranquillity Mapping based on the CPRE methodology
  - Dark Nights Skies Mapping, against based on data from the CPRE

These are shown in maps figures 2-5, at the end of this chapter.

- 2.16. Key findings of this high-level comparison mapping confirm that all but one of the study areas are within small settlements, just within/overlapping the edge of the settlement boundary, and have a strong link to the surrounding landscape, i.e. suburbs on the edge of rural/semi-rural settlements. This small, dispersed settlement pattern is fairly common in East Hampshire, with only the Southern

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<sup>1</sup> The net density definition is based on that applied in PPS3: Housing

Parishes being more closely associated with a larger conurbation along the South Coast and Holybourne being in close proximity to Alton (although separated by a gap). But even where the study areas, are on the periphery of these built up areas, they transition to a rural character and are close to the SDNP boundary.

- 2.17. All the study areas are low to very low density, ranging from the highest density of 23.1dpha to less than 3dpha, with all the existing Special Character Areas and the suggested Special Character Areas having a net dwelling density less than 12dpha. It also appears that, whilst low, this range of densities is representative of many of the suburban areas in East Hampshire, with East Hampshire only exhibiting higher densities in the centre of its larger settlements and in very small enclaves of recent development. This also implies that there is potential for other areas in East Hampshire to fit the same criteria as the current **H9 Areas of Special Housing Character** and; **Policy H10 Special Housing Areas** but have not been identified for inclusion in this area based policy.
- 2.18. As a result of the above the study areas are also tending towards showing a medium level of tranquillity and medium to high levels of dark night skies, but again, this is fairly typical of many parts of East Hampshire, with lower levels of tranquillity and dark night skies occurring in the centre of the larger settlements and along busy transport corridors.

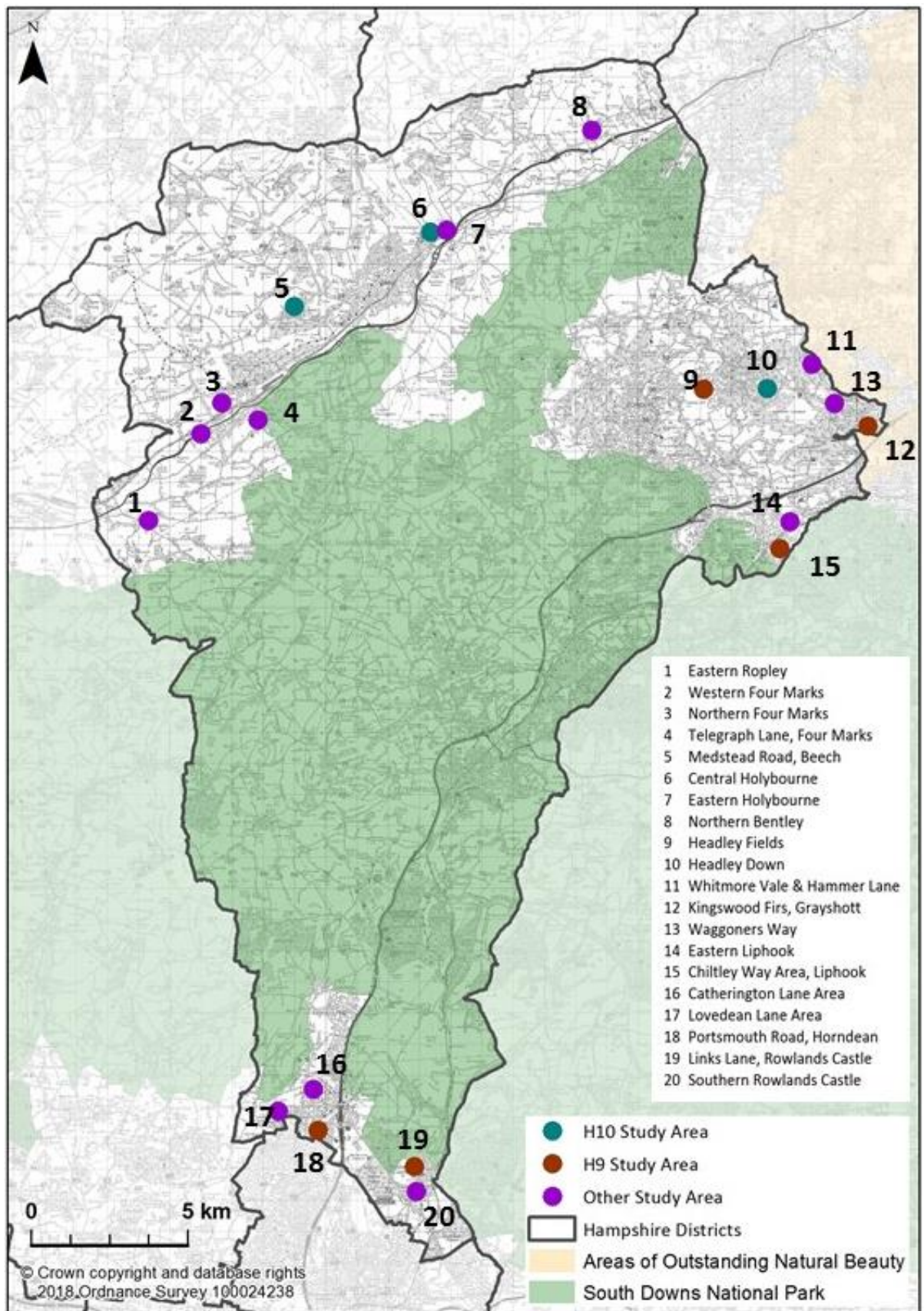


Figure 1. Location Map showing the Twenty Study Areas in East Hampshire

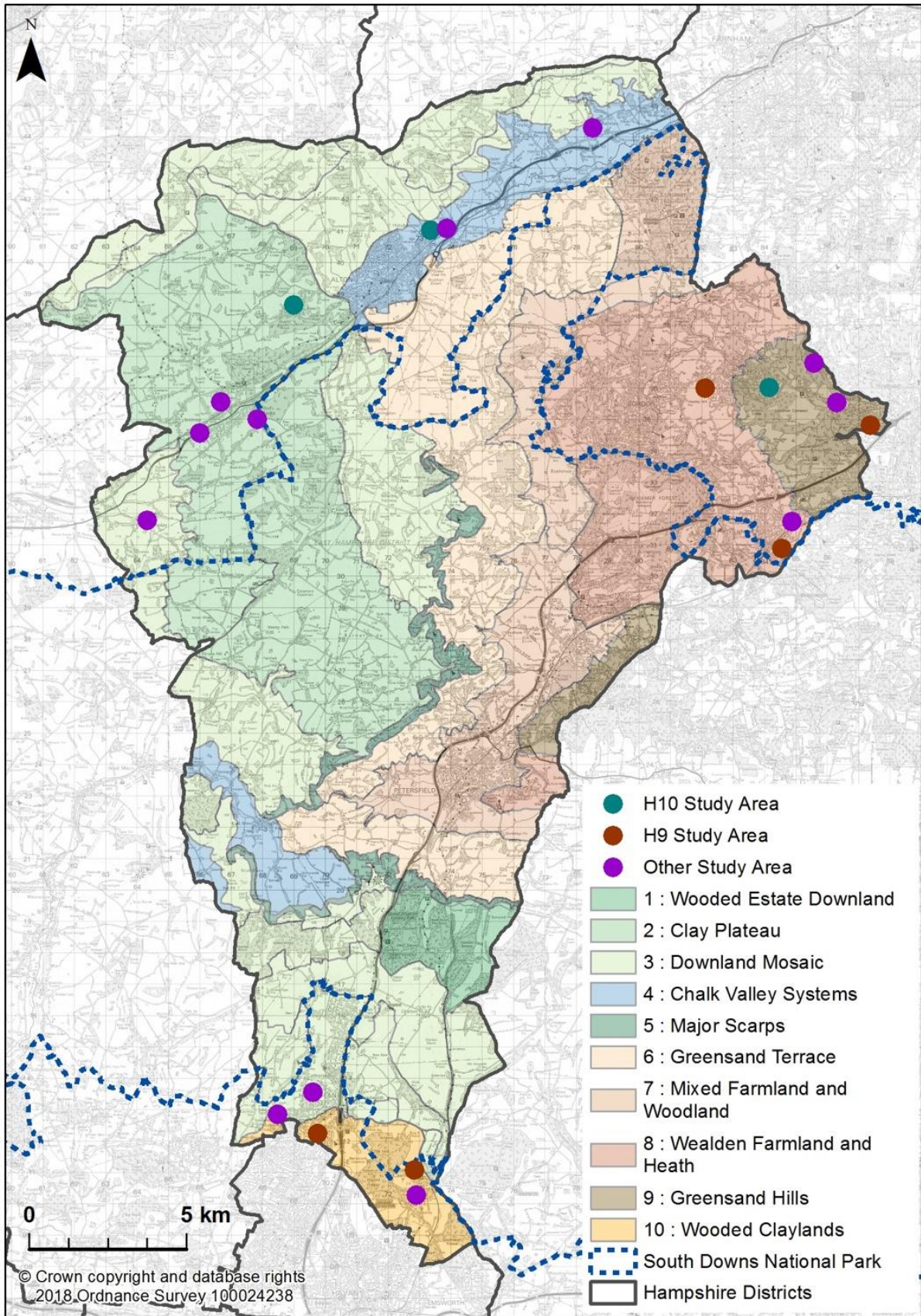


Figure 2. Landscape Character Types in East Hampshire

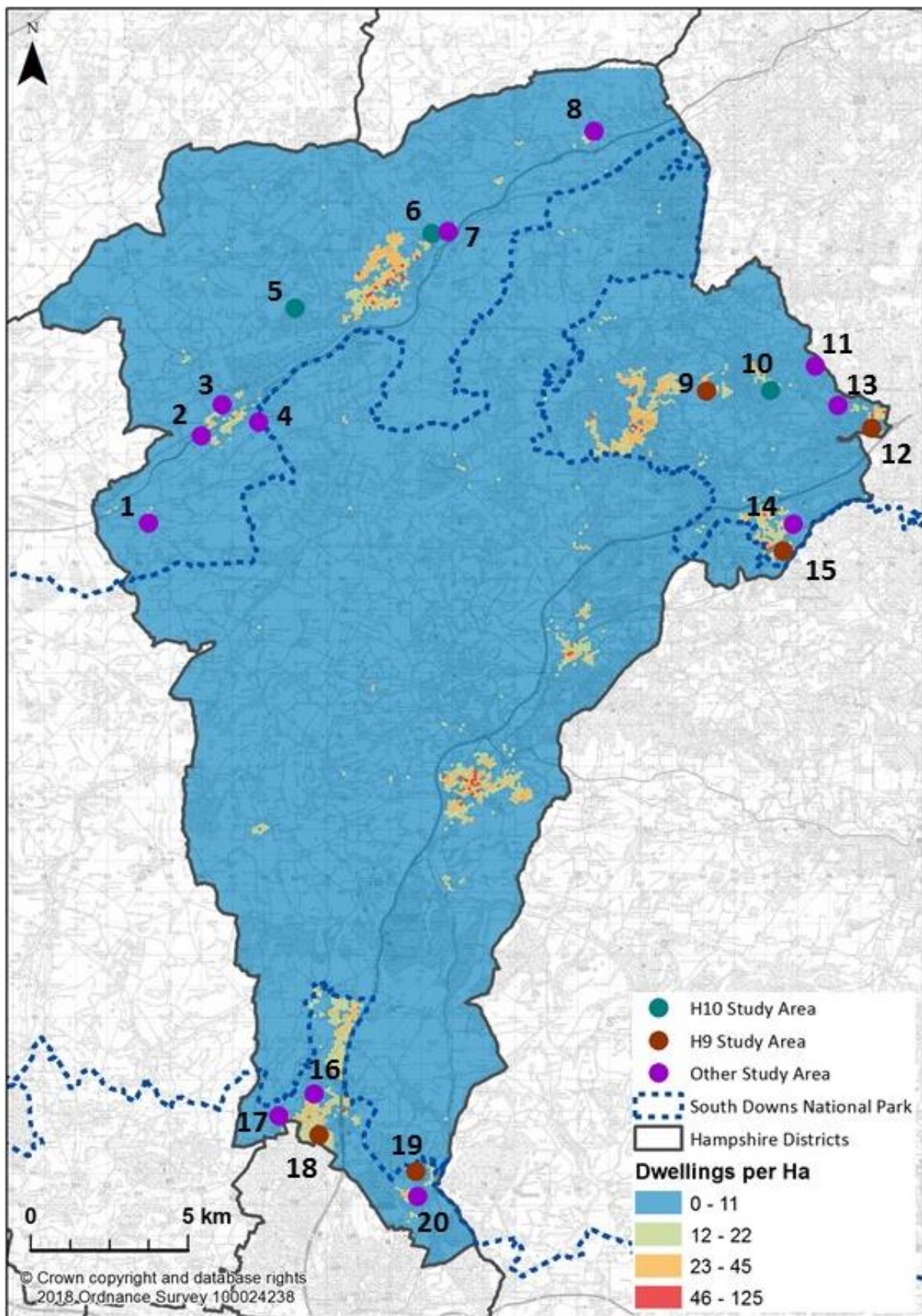


Figure 3. Dwelling Density Map of East Hampshire



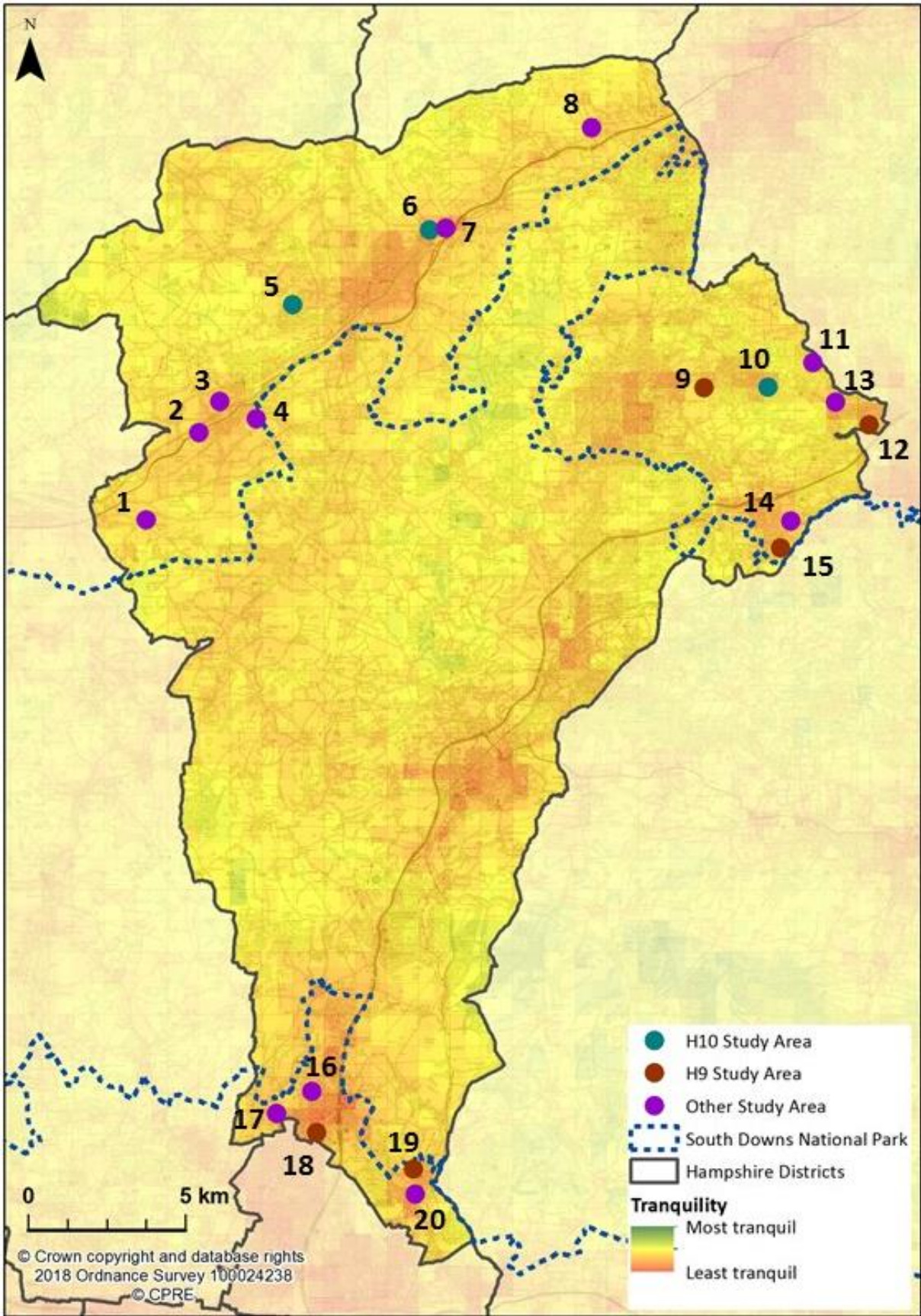


Figure 4. Tranquillity Map of East Hampshire

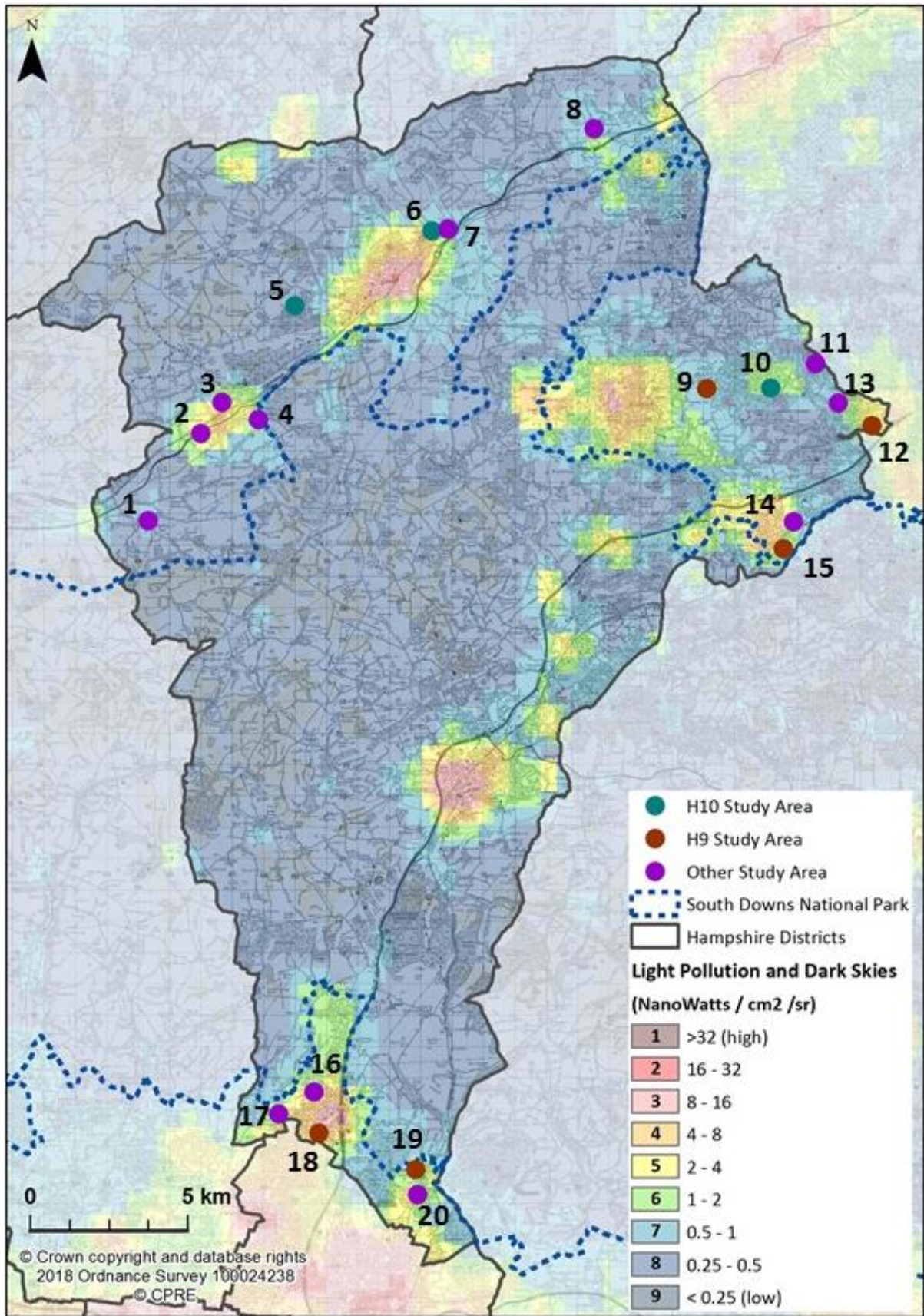


Figure 5. Dark Night Skies Map of East Hampshire

## 3. Planning Policy and Townscape/Landscape Context

- 3.0. This chapter describes relevant planning policy, at the national and local level pertinent to townscape and landscape character considerations.

### National Planning Policy

- 3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published on 27 March 2012 and revised 24 July 2018, sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.<sup>2</sup> In particular, Chapter 12, policies 124 to 132, set out the principles for achieving well-designed places. The NPPF states (emphasis added):

*"125 Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. **Neighbourhood plans** can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.*

*126 To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as **design guides and codes**. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.*

- 127. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
  - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
  - c) are **sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);***
  - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
  - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

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<sup>2</sup>NPPF July 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

*f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future.*

*128. Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for Life. These are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels. most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.*

*129. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).*

*130. In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*

- 3.2. In summary the NPPF gives a direction to policies in the emerging East Hampshire Local Plan, in that they should not be overly prescriptive, nor impose architectural styles, but should concentrate on guiding overall standards of design in new development and can seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. It explicitly states that plans cannot prevent innovation, which may for example increase densities. It also highlights the valuable role that can be played by Neighbourhood plans, design guides and codes in terms of setting out local expectations.
- 3.3. The NPPF supersedes the suite of Planning Policy Guidance documents, e.g. PPG3: Housing, against which the current East Hampshire 'saved policies' were written.

#### **Local Planning Policy - The Adopted Joint Core Strategy 2014**

- 3.4. Currently, the East Hampshire District Council implements an Adopted Joint Core Strategy (JCS) with the South Downs National Park, adopted in June 2014.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/DP01EastHampshireDistrictLocalPlanJointCoreStrategy.pdf>

- 3.5. The JCS recognises four distinct areas, one of which is the land that has become part of the South Downs National Park. The other three areas that remain within the East Hampshire District are:
- The North Western part of East Hampshire (along A31 and including Alton and Four Marks)
  - Whitehill and Bordon and the North Eastern part of East Hampshire (including Headley, Headley Down and Grayshott)
  - The Southern parishes (strongly influenced by proximity to development in west of Waterlooville and Urban South Hampshire).
- 3.6. The Vision of the JCS states (emphasis added):
- “These four distinct areas of the District will be carefully managed to achieve sustainable communities within a **high quality natural and built environment**. The district’s rich biodiversity, historic environment and diverse countryside and landscape will be conserved and enhanced. Within this context local people will be able to live in affordable homes. The rural nature of the district suggests there will be continued reliance on the car; a key aim will therefore be to create sustainable working and living environments.” (page 19)<sup>4</sup>*
- 3.7. The JCS also states that:
- “New development will be high quality design, imaginative whilst conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment will help ensure that the character and distinctiveness of towns and villages is retained, the contribution of the historic environment to quality of life maintained and the economic benefits of attractive places realised. The design and layout of new development will have a positive impact upon the character of the area creating a distinctive identity or sense of place that respects and enhances local character. This will help to create attractive places that are valued by local people” (page 19)*
- 3.8. Whilst all the policies in the JCS have relevance to/influence upon neighbourhood character, the most directly relevant policies, addressed here are:
- CP19 - Development in the countryside
  - CP20 - Landscape
  - CP23 - Gaps between settlements
  - CP28 - Green Infrastructure
  - CP29 - Design
  - CP30 - Historic Environment<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/DP01EastHampshireDistrictLocalPlanJointCoreStrategy.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/DP01EastHampshireDistrictLocalPlanJointCoreStrategy.pdf>

### CP19 – Development in the countryside

- 3.9. CP19 states that the only development allowed in the countryside will be that with a genuine and proven need for a countryside location, such as that necessary for farming, forestry, or other rural enterprises.

### CP20 – Landscape

- 3.10. CP20 states that:

*“the special characteristics of the district’s natural environment will be conserved and enhanced. New development will be required to:*

- a) conserve and enhance the natural beauty, tranquillity, wildlife and cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park and its setting, and promote the opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities...;*
- b) protect and enhance local distinctiveness sense of place and tranquillity by applying the principles set out in the district’s Landscape Character Assessments, including the Community/Parish Landscape Character Assessments;*
- c) protect and enhance settlements in the wider landscape, land at the urban edge and green corridors extending into settlements;*
- d) protect and enhance natural and historic features which contribute to the distinctive character of the district’s landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, soils, rivers, river corridors, ditches, ponds, ancient sunken lanes, ancient tracks, rural buildings and open areas;*
- e) incorporate appropriate new planting to enhance the landscape setting of the new development which uses local materials, native species and enhances biodiversity;*
- f) maintain, manage and enhance the green infrastructure networks (see Policy CP28 Green Infrastructure).”*

### CP23 - Gaps between settlements

- 3.11. CP23 states that *“The generally open and undeveloped nature of the [identified list of] gaps between settlements will be protected to help prevent coalescence and retain their separate identity:*
- a) it would not undermine the physical and/or visual separation of settlements;*
  - b) it would not compromise the integrity of the gap, either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development; and*
  - c) it cannot be located elsewhere.”*

### CP28 – Green Infrastructure

- 3.12. CP28 states that (emphasis added):

*“Development will be permitted provided that it maintains, manages and enhances the network of new and existing green infrastructure. Development will need to take forward the objectives and priorities presented in the District’s Green Infrastructure Study and Strategy, the South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and its Implementation Framework and the avoidance and mitigation*

*measures set out in the Adopted Joint Core Strategy's Habitats Regulations Assessment. Account will also need to be taken of other relevant joint core strategy policies such as landscape, historic environment, biodiversity, flood risk and design. **New green infrastructure must be provided either through on-site provision or financial contributions.** The size of contribution will be linked to the scale of the development and the resulting new green infrastructure must be located as close as possible to the development it is intended to serve."*

- 3.13. It is worth noting that the current Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>6</sup> concentrates on large land areas in public ownership or single large landownership, that form part of either a recreational network or an environmental network. It does not address the cumulative contribution of green infrastructure to the public realm, made by small-scale landownership, especially private residential front and back gardens. There would be benefits in addressing long-term management of green infrastructure and in monitoring any losses and gains in green infrastructure through the planning process. A new Green Infrastructure Strategy is being produced to support the new Local Plan.

## CP29 – Design

- 3.14. According to CP29 (emphasis added):

*"All new development will be required to respect the **character, identity and context** of the district's towns, villages and countryside and must help to create places where people want to live, work and visit.*

*New development will be required to:*

- a) seek **exemplary standards of design and architecture** with a high quality external appearance that respect the area's particular characteristics;*
- b) take particular account of the setting and context of the South Downs National Park where relevant, be in accordance with the National Park purposes ... where the National Park's setting is affected;*
- c) reflect national policies in respect of **design, landscape, townscape and historic heritage**;*
- d) ensure that the layout and design of development contributes to local distinctiveness and sense of place, and is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of its **scale, height, massing and density**, and its relationship to adjoining buildings, spaces around buildings and landscape features;*
- e) ensure that development makes a positive contribution to the overall appearance of the area by the use of good quality materials of appropriate scale, profile, finish, colour and proven weathering ability;*
- f) make provision for waste and recycling bin storage and collection within the site;*
- g) be designed to the Lifetime Homes Standard as appropriate;*
- h) take account of local town and village design statements, neighbourhood plans that identify local character and distinctiveness and the design elements of parish and town plans and conservation area appraisals;*

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Part%2B1%2BEast%2BHampshire%2BGreen%2BInfrastructure%2BStrategy%2B2011%2B-%2B2028.pdf>

- i) be accessible to all and designed to minimise opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour without diminishing the high quality of the overall appearance;*
- j) embrace new technologies as a considered part of the design and in a way which takes account of the broader impact on the locality;*
- k) provide car parking in a way that secures a high quality environment and is conveniently located, within curtilage wherever possible, taking account of relatively high levels of car ownership where necessary.*

- 3.15. Whilst this design policy is suitably aspirational and comprehensive without being overly prescriptive, there could be stronger reference to effective green infrastructure provision and stronger cross referencing with the Green Infrastructure Policy. The relationship with streetscape design and the application of highways standards and impact of high levels of car ownership, and walking and cycling routes would also benefit from more detailed consideration or cross referencing.

### CP30 – Historic Environment

- 3.16. CP30 requires development proposals to conserve and, where possible, enhance the District’s historic environment. It states:

*“All new development will be required to:*

- a) conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park if in the National Park and take account of this cultural heritage where the National Park’s setting is affected;*
- b) reflect national policies in respect of design, landscape, townscape and historic heritage;*
- c) conserve, enhance, maintain and manage the district’s heritage assets and their setting including listed buildings, conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, archaeological sites and Historic Parks and Gardens;*
- d) ensure that the development makes a positive contribution to the overall appearance of the local area including the use of good quality materials of appropriate scale, profile, finish, colour and proven weathering ability;*
- e) take account of local conservation area appraisals and town and village design statements where they exist.”*

- 3.17. As part of the review of its Local Plan, all the current policies will be reviewed by the Client and assessed for their applicability going forward. The results of this study will have implications for the effectiveness of the policies highlighted above in helping to protect and promote the special qualities of the twenty sites identified, and/or to determine the direction for any future development. It is considered that these policies seem relatively comprehensive in the issues they address and the aims and objectives for positive enhancement or protection, but it is to be seen if problems arise in application.

### ‘Saved Policies’ from Local Plan Second Review 2006



- 3.18. As well as the Adopted JCS, in place are a series of ‘saved policies’ brought forward from the East Hampshire Local Plan Second Review 2006.<sup>7</sup>
- 3.19. Two saved policies: **H9 Areas of Special Housing Character** and; **Policy H10 Special Housing Areas** form the focus for eleven of the sites covered in the Study. These policies have been in operation for over twelve years.

### H9 - Areas of Special Housing Character

- 3.20. The current adopted policy position is that the areas listed in Policy H9 have a special housing character which should be protected from further intensification of development or change of use, in order to retain the important contribution, which they make both to the variety of the housing stock and the street scene. Policy H9 is as follows (emphasis added):

*“Within the District there are certain residential streets and areas which have been developed at a low density and provide substantial homes set in large plots, often with mature trees around them.*

*In order to maintain the important contribution which they make to the variety of District wide environments, the character of the local environment and the wide range of accommodation available in the District, development will only be permitted that maintains the overall character of the area and does not have a detrimental impact on it.*

*Within these special housing areas the following applies:*

- a) replacement dwellings will only be permitted if they are on a 'one-for-one' basis;*
- b) extensions to dwellings and ancillary detached buildings within the gardens will be permitted providing they are in-keeping with the scale and character of the property and its surroundings;*
- c) all development must retain or enhance the landscape setting of the site within its surroundings;*
- d) change of use from residential to other uses will not be permitted; and*
- e) infilling development will not be permitted.”*

- 3.21. The following five residential areas in Policy H9, which are included in this Study are:
- Kingswood Firs, Grayshott
  - Headley Fields
  - Portsmouth Road, Horndean
  - Chiltley Way Area, Liphook
  - Links Lane, Rowlands Castle.

- 3.22. Areas covered by Policy H9 that now lie within the SDNP Authority boundary are: Bell Hill, Heath Road, Love Lane, Ramshill, Shear Hill, Sussex Road, and Tilmore Road,

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/local-plan-second-review-2006-saved-policies>

in Petersfield; and Hill Brow (two areas), Liss, and The Island, Steep, and have not been considered as part of this study.

- 3.23. Draft Local Plan for the SDNP, submitted to the Secretary of State, does **not** propose to take forward these current Policy H9 areas, in specifically identified areas.

### H10 - Special Housing Areas

- 3.24. Policy H10 and its supporting text states (emphasis added):  
*“Within the Special Housing Areas of Headley Down,... Beech ... Holybourne... planning permission will be granted for residential development provided that:*
- a) there is no harm to the **character and appearance** of the area;*
  - b) as many **trees and landscape** features as possible are retained as identified in a detailed survey of the proposed site;*
  - c) the **size of a new dwelling** is in-keeping with its plot size;*
  - d) within the Headley Down Special Housing Area **plot sizes are more than 0.07 hectares** (approximately 1/6 acre) excluding land in the highway; and*
  - e) within the Beech and Holybourne Special Housing Areas **plot sizes are more than 0.2 hectares** (0.5 acres) excluding land in the highway.”*

*“...A special housing policy has operated successfully in Headley Down for a number of years, maintaining the character of the area. Although much of the area has been developed in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy H10, certain areas still remain to be developed. The District Council considers it essential that these plots are developed to the same standard as the rest of the Special Housing Area.”*

*“...an H10 policy designation would enable a more efficient use of land, as required by PPG3: 'Housing', (now superseded) whilst retaining the special character which makes a significant contribution to the environment of the settlements. ... It will be important to retain as many trees and landscape features as possible, to maintain the existing low-density character and a range of housing in the District. Within Headley Down a minimum plot size of 0.07 hectares (excluding land in the highway) will be maintained. Within the new areas a minimum plot size of 0.2 hectares will be maintained.*

*...This means that the maximum density within these areas will be **14 dwellings** per hectare in Headley Down, **five dwellings** per hectare in Beech and Holybourne, which is very low. However there may be cases where even this density is too high to ensure that the character of the area is retained. Care must be taken to ensure that the new dwellings are in keeping with their plot size and are not over-dominant; a variety of house designs should be used.”*

- 3.25. The essential difference between Policy H9 and Policy H10 is that Policy H9 does NOT allow any plot intensification, i.e. an increase in the number of dwellings on a plot, whereas Policy H10 allows for a modest amount of plot intensification, as long as

minimum plot sizes are retained. Otherwise the policies are considered to be the same in spirit and intention.

### Recent Appeal decisions

- 3.26. In a recent Appeal Decision, at Tinkers Wood, Plantation Road, Hill Brow (APP/Y9507/A/13/2203009) for a proposed new dwelling within a Special Housing Area, the Inspector stated that **Policy H9 should not be rigidly applied** without considering whether the effect on character and appearance would merit an exception being made.
- 3.27. In an earlier, similar proposal at 65 Links Lane, Rowlands Castle (Ref: APP/M1710/A/08/2072264), it was concluded that an exception should be made to Policy H9 because of the absence of any detrimental effect. This decision, together with a more recent appeal decision (APP/Y9507/A/13/223009), demonstrated that each and every proposal must be considered and determined on its own individual merits. ***“It is not appropriate to solely and simply refuse development proposals because they are infill developments without assessing the harm and overriding policy objective.”***
- 3.28. In the context of these decisions and the emphasis of the NPPF, any policy proposals that could potentially continue a form of protection of the ‘Special Character’ of parts of the Client’s built environment will need to be flexible and not overly prescriptive. Specifying that plots cannot be intensified or that specific plot sizes must be maintained could be interpreted as rigid and inflexible. These saved policies were written before the NPPF was first published in 2012, and any new iteration of the policies would need to be mindful of the revised NPPF (July 2018).

### Other relevant saved policies from Local Plan Second Review

- 3.29. As part of the new Local Plan the continued relevance of all the saved policies will be considered, and their requirements and guidance updated where necessary. Generally speaking, it is considered that the subject matter will still be of direct relevance to neighbourhood character are:
- C6 - Tree Preservation
  - HE2 – Alterations and Extensions to Buildings
  - HE4 – New Development in Conservation Areas
  - HE5 – Alterations to a Building in a Conservation Area
  - HE8 – Development affecting the setting of a Conservation Area
  - HE10 – Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building
  - HE12 – Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
  - HE13 – Buildings of a Local Architectural, Historic or Townscape Interest

### South Downs National Park (SDNP) Local Plan

- 3.30. The SDNP Local Plan was submitted for Approval to the Secretary of State in August 2018, and is currently under examination. Subject to the examination proceeding as expected, adoption of the plan is due in May 2019.
- 3.31. The SDNP Local Plan is a ‘Landscape Led’ plan, as this forms the basis of its designation as a National Park. The influence of the SDNP will be mostly felt along its borders and many areas in East Hampshire form part of the setting of the SDNP, so need to be mindful of the SDNP Policies, but there is benefit in examining the SDNP policies in more detail to determine if there is an overlap in policy direction.
- 3.32. As a neighbour to the South Downs National Park, of particular importance is: the landscape setting, with settlements sitting well in their landscape; the quality of views; relative tranquillity; and dark night skies, where these have cross boundary impact on the Park. The Pre-submission South Downs Local Plan, Chapter 5a: Landscape, is particularly relevant, where the following draft policies are described:
- Strategic Policy SD4: Landscape Character
  - Strategic Policy SD5: Design
  - Strategic Policy SD6: Safeguarding Views
  - Strategic Policy SD7: Relative Tranquillity
  - Strategic Policy SD8: Dark Night Skies<sup>8</sup>
- 3.33. Other draft policies from the Pre-submission South Downs Local Plan worthy of examining in more detail due to their potential relevance to neighbourhood character in East Hampshire are:
- **Development Management Policy SD11: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows**
  - Strategic Policy SD12: Historic Environment
  - Development Management Policy SD13: Listed Buildings
  - Development Management Policy SD15: Conservation Areas
  - Strategic Policy SD19: Transport and Accessibility
  - Strategic Policy SD20: Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes
  - **Development Management Policy SD21: Public Realm, Highway Design and Public Art**
  - Development Management Policy SD22: Parking Provision
  - Strategic Policy SD45: Green Infrastructure
- SD11 and SD21 are described below to highlight their particular relevance.
- 3.34. The purpose of draft Policy **Development Management Policy SD11: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows** is to ensure the management, including conservation and enhancement, of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, and to ensure that opportunities for restoration and new planting is realized. Of note:
- “Development proposals that affect trees, hedgerows and woodland must demonstrate that they have been informed by a full site survey, including an*

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<sup>8</sup> South Downs Local Plan, Pre-submission 2017 [https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SDLP-01-Pre-Submission\\_South\\_Downs\\_Local\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SDLP-01-Pre-Submission_South_Downs_Local_Plan.pdf)

*Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and associated Tree Protection Plan, and include a management plan...*

*Development proposals must demonstrate that appropriate protection measures are in place prior to any work on site throughout the development process as part of a comprehensive landscaping plan, and that suitable opportunities for the restoration, enhancement or planting of trees, woodland, and hedgerows are identified and incorporated” (page 77)*

- 3.35. **Development Management Policy SD21: Public Realm, Highway Design and Public Art**, does not permit development where it would reduce the biodiversity, landscape and amenity value and character of historic rural roads. It also states that movement through the site must be a safe, legible and attractive experience for all users, with roads and surfaces that contribute to the experience rather than dominate it.

*“...Street design and management proposals must be context-sensitive, responding to the specific character, activities, heritage, built form and layout, materials and street furniture of the location.” (page 101)*

- 3.36. The SDNP is also developing a Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to accompany the plan, which is due for consultation in mid-2019.

### Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.37. Neighbourhood Plans have been made for:

- Alton (which also covers Holybourne)
- Bentley
- Medstead and Four Marks<sup>9</sup>

- 3.38. Alton Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2028 addresses neighbourhood character through two Design Policies, with the stated objective: *“To ensure that future housing development in and around Alton respects the character of the town and the surrounding countryside” (page21)<sup>10</sup>*. The Policies are: DE1: Town setting and natural assets, and; DE2: Building design and town character. These policies are relevant for the study areas in Holybourne.<sup>11</sup>

- 3.39. The Bentley Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2028, states that the vision for Bentley in 2028 is:

*“Bentley will have retained its character and identity as a rural village with a strong sense of community and strengthened its relationship to its landscape setting through the careful siting of development to maintain views and the character of the rural lanes, and the development of new open spaces and community amenities.”*

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans/made-adopted-neighbourhood-plans>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/AltonNeighbourhoodPlan.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/AltonNeighbourhoodPlan.pdf>

...with a modest growth on housing numbers .... designed to meet local needs (page 23).<sup>12</sup>

3.40. The Bentley Neighbourhood Plan Policy 3: Design and Development Principles states:

*“Proposals for development will be supported, provided their scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials, including alterations to existing buildings, reflect and enhance the architectural and historic character and scale of the buildings and landscape of Bentley Parish.” (page 28)*

3.41. Medstead and Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan does not have policies that are directly aimed at the design of new residential development.

3.42. Neighbourhood Plans are emerging for:

- Beech
- Bramshott and Liphook
- Ropley (draft plan for consultation was published in Spring 2018)<sup>13</sup>
- Rowlands Castle

3.43. The Neighbourhood Character Studies included in this report could be a valuable resource of information for the Neighbourhood Planning Teams.

#### **Waverley Borough and Surrey Hills AONB**

3.44. The Surrey Hills AONB lies adjacent to the north-eastern edge of East Hampshire and is close to several of the study areas, especially Whitmore Vale and Hammer Lane. The relevant Councils, including Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council, have adopted the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan. As such the Management plan is a material consideration in planning, where great weight is placed on conserving landscape and biodiversity, and whilst it doesn't extend into East Hampshire, the proximity of its western edge will have an inter-relationship with settlements in this part of East Hampshire.<sup>14</sup>

3.45. Neighbouring Waverley Borough and its settlement hierarchy, with the towns of Farnham and Haslemere being located close to the district boundary (and serving communities within the north-eastern part of Hampshire), will also have an impact on the this part of Hampshire.<sup>15</sup>

#### **South Hampshire Sub-region/Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)**

3.46. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) is a voluntary partnership of eleven Local Authorities including East Hampshire District Council. The South Hampshire sub-region is a focus for growth and is planned to undergo significant development and change over the next 20 years. PUSH recognises that such development will be important to the area's economy but is equally concerned to

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/BentleySubmissionNeighbourhoodPlan.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.myropley.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RNP\\_DraftPlanforPublicConsultation.pdf](http://www.myropley.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RNP_DraftPlanforPublicConsultation.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.surreyhills.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Surrey-Hills-Management-Plan-17b-SP.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.waverley.gov.uk/localplan>

ensure that development is delivered at the highest possible quality and is designed and managed to create quality places. In East Hampshire, those parts of the southern parishes of Clanfield, Horndean and Rowlands Castle that are outside of the South Downs National Park are included within the PUSH area.

- 3.47. Recognising the need for good urban design, all PUSH authorities adopted a Design Charter in 2010 and PUSH produced Quality Places Model Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2011. The Model SPD provides concise and thorough advice on the design expectations in the PUSH Area<sup>16</sup>. Each Local Authority in PUSH can take this model guidance and tailor it to suit its own needs.
- 3.48. The guidance has key design principles, which include analysis of context, legibility and density, and scale, and correlates to Building for Life Assessments. The key design principles are supported by a series of illustrations. A checklist based on these key design principles can be used as an assessment tool for development schemes from pre-application stage onwards. This would serve as a useful starting point for an SPD Design Guidance should East Hampshire wish to develop and adopt one, finding more locally relevant illustrations and tailoring details to suit East Hampshire's distinctive built environment.

### Existing Townscape Studies

- 3.49. Townscape Studies were produced for the historic Towns of Alton (including Holybourne) and Petersfield, and the Waterlooville, Cowplain, Purbrook and Horndean Area in 2010, as part of Hampshire's Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2010. A link to the methodology is attached below<sup>17</sup>.
- 3.50. To be consistent in defining East Hampshire's Townscape, the same referencing system for Townscape Types, has been used in this Character Study. A link to the Townscape Types can be found below.<sup>18</sup>

### Permitted Development Rights

- 3.51. Certain types of work can be carried out on residential dwellings without the need to apply for permission. These are called "permitted development rights". The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 sets out classes of development for which a grant of planning permission is automatically given, provided that no restrictive condition is attached or that the proposed development is exempt from the permitted development rights.
- 3.52. A few examples of permitted development rights that would be allowed in all the study areas, including the H9 and H10 areas, include the construction of:

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Quality-Places-Place-Model-Supplementary-2011.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Hampshire Integrated Character Study, Method Statement:  
[http://www3.hants.gov.uk/summary\\_method\\_statement.pdf](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/summary_method_statement.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Hampshire Integrated Character Study, Townscape Types:  
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

- Garages (except within the curtilage of a listed building or if being converted to living accommodation)
- Extensions within a set of limits and conditions (planning permission is required if the extension is more than 50 percent of the area of the land around the 'original house')
- Porches less than 3m<sup>2</sup>
- Repairs or maintenance to windows/doors/walls/facias and drainpipes.
- Driveways less than 5m<sup>2</sup> (if constructed in porous materials or rainwater flows naturally to border)
- Small domestic fuel tanks
- External lighting
- New roof lights/skylights, within certain parameters.
- Permission for hedge planting is not required.

3.53. As a cumulative effect, it is possible for a wide variety of domestic alterations to have a significant impact on the character of an area, without recourse to planning policy or planning control measures.

3.54. Permission is still required for:

- Larger extensions
- Driveways over 5m<sup>2</sup> in non-porous materials
- Fences, walls and gates over 1m, when next to the highway, or over 2m elsewhere within the property.

3.55. Permitted development rights are more restricted in some 'designated areas', such as: Conservation Areas; National Parks; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; World Heritage Sites or the Norfolk or Suffolk Broads. There are also different requirements if the property is a listed building. A Local Planning Authority may remove some of permitted development rights by issuing an 'Article 4' direction. This will mean that an owner/occupier will have to submit a planning application for work which normally does not need one. Article 4 directions are made when the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened. They are most common in Conservation Areas, and very rarely applied to other areas with less stringent designations. It would be unlikely that an Article 4 direction could be applied to the H9 and H10 areas, and it would be hard to justify the need, to the satisfaction of central government. It is worth noting, where the areas of Special Housing Character overlap with Conservation Areas, the Conservation Area designation, will restrict permitted development rights, therefore providing more planning oversight in smaller scale alterations to properties.

3.56 Any **Areas of Special Housing Character** or **Special Housing Area** policy, would not exist in isolation. A whole range of inter-related policies would have an impact on the resulting special characteristics of an area. It is considered that a strong overarching Design Policy, with an emphasis on 'designing in context' linked to strong policies on landscape and green infrastructure provision and retention, should be sufficient in guiding appropriate development, especially when coupled with clear



policies in Neighbourhood Plans. The development of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Design Guidance is strongly recommended.

- 3.57. It is appropriate to continue to identify Special Character Areas as a distinct policy, if there is demand from the local Community, but the policy direction should guide developers in more general terms to scale and massing of built form, rather than be prescriptive on density.