



BLENDWORTH PEAKING POWER GENERATION PLANT

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared for Rydberg Development Company Ltd

by

Hankinson Duckett Associates

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This report describes a landscape and visual assessment for a proposed Peaking Power Generation Plant on land at Blendworth Common, Havant, hereinafter referred to as 'the site'. The site extends to 2.34ha and its centre is located at National Grid Reference SU 440788 110460 (Postcode PO7 8RL). The application for full permission is submitted by Rydberg Development Company Ltd to Havant Borough Council (HBC) and East Hampshire District Council (EHDC). The site comprises the generator compound (approximately 0.33ha fenced), proposed planting buffers and the site access track to the B2148 Manor Lodge Road (approximately 1.7km in length). The extent of the red line boundary in HBC is 1.18ha (including the generator compound) and the extent within EHDC is 1.16ha. The assessment was undertaken by Naomi Gilbert of Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) in September 2016. The red line boundary of the site is as shown on Plan HDA 1.

1.2 Scope and Purpose of Report

1.2.1 The report is intended to inform the local planning authorities (HBC and EHDC) of any potential landscape and visual impacts arising from the proposed Peaking Power Generation Plant on land to the east of Waterlooville. The report describes the landscape, visual and rights of way baselines for the site and its surrounds, and a landscape and visual assessment of the existing site is undertaken. This is followed by an assessment of the likely landscape and visual impacts that are likely to occur during the construction and operation of the proposed development.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 National landscape guidance uses landscape character as a basis for policy. Natural England, in its former guise as the Countryside Agency, developed methodology for the character-based approach to landscape assessment (Ref 1). It describes the application of landscape character assessment at different scales: the national/regional scale, local authority scale and local scale. The third edition of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA, Ref 2) set out landscape assessment methodology, which provides a foundation, with adaptation, for use in project-specific landscape impact assessment.

1.3.2 The approach to this landscape and visual assessment is based upon this latest guidance, and upon HDA's extensive practical experience of assessment work. The detailed methodology used when carrying out the assessment is set out in **Appendix A**. The site survey was carried out in September 2016, and took the form of a walkover survey to provide an overview of the development proposals.

2 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Planning Policy

2.1.1 The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (Ref 3) sets the context for county and local authorities' revised development plan policies. The Framework sets out the government's vision for the achievement of sustainable development and identifies three strands to policy guidance – social, economic and environmental – the latter seeking to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment. Paragraph 14 of the Framework states:

*'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.'*

2.1.2 The Framework sets out "*the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play*" which are described in twelve "*core land-use planning principles (that) should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking*". The following principles from Paragraph 17 are considered to be relevant to this landscape and visual assessment:

- *"Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of lands and buildings;*
- *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, ...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs."*

2.1.3 Section 3 of the Framework addresses 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy'. Paragraph 28 of the Framework states:

"To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- *Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses;"*

2.1.4 Section 7 of the Framework provides detailed policy on the issue of "Requiring good design". The most relevant advice for these proposals is Paragraph 58 which states:

"Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *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;*
- *Establish a strong sense of place, ...*
- *Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; and*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping".*

2.1.5 Section 10 of the Framework provides detailed policy on the issue of “Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change”. The most relevant advice for these proposals is Paragraph 98, which states:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- Not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;*
- Approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable;*

2.1.6 The ‘National Planning Practice Guidance’ (Ref 4) supports and informs the Framework, with Paragraph 007 from the ‘Design’ section (reference ID: 26-007-20140306) being of relevance to this landscape and visual assessment. It states:

“Planning should promote local character (including landscape character)

Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

When thinking about new development the site’s land form should be taken into account. Natural features and local heritage resources can help give shape to a development and integrate it into the wider area, reinforce and sustain local distinctiveness, reduce its impact on nature and contribute to a sense of place. Views into and out of larger sites should also be carefully considered from the start of the design process.

The opportunity for high quality hard and soft landscape design that helps to successfully integrate development into the wider environment should be carefully considered from the outset, to ensure it complements the architecture of the proposals and improves the overall quality of townscape or landscape. Good landscape design can help the natural surveillance of an area, creatively help differentiate public and private space and, where appropriate, enhance security.”

2.2 Regional Policy

2.2.1 Hampshire County Council’s primary plan-making responsibilities lie with the preparation of Hampshire’s Minerals and Waste Local Plans. However, the County Council is involved in developing infrastructure planning policies, and will be a consultee on this application in its capacity as the Local Highways Authority.

2.3 Local Policy

2.3.1 In March 2011, HBC adopted a new Local Plan (Core Strategy) (Ref 5) which provides the policy framework for the District for the period up to 2026. The following policies are considered to have particular relevance to this assessment:

- Policy CS13 – Green Infrastructure;
- Policy DM8 – Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features;
- Policy DM10 – Pollution.

2.3.2 Policy CS13 from the HBC Core Strategy states the following:

'Development will be permitted that:

- 1. Maintains and manages the network of green infrastructure identified at the sub regional and local levels;*
- 2. Incorporates, where appropriate, improvements to existing green infrastructure through the restoration, enhancement or creation of additional resources;*
- 3. Does not undermine the functional integrity of the green infrastructure*
- 4. Creates, where appropriate, new green infrastructure (including access management measures) either through on site provision or financial contributions.*

Development proposals that adversely affect green infrastructure will not be permitted unless superior alternative provision can be provided or where it is part of a service provider's plans to provide local services in equally accessible locations.'

2.3.3 Policy DM8 from the HBC Core Strategy states the following:

'Development will only be permitted where it protects and enhances local habitats and landscape distinctiveness and which addresses all of the relevant criteria as set out below:

- 1. Protects natural features of nature conservation and/or amenity importance on the site, for example trees, woodland, hedgerows, soils, streams, stream corridors, springs, ditches or ponds from damage, destruction and a deterioration in quality;*
- 2. Sympathetically incorporates existing features into the overall design of the scheme including measures taken to ensure their continued survival;*
- 3. Provides new landscape works that integrate successfully with the local environment and existing natural features, using local materials and plant species and making provision for future maintenance of new landscape works associated with new developments;*
- 4. Ensures sequences of greenspaces are maintained and protects the attractiveness and visual amenity of all green open spaces that contribute to the identity of the borough.'*

2.3.4 Policy DM10 from the HBC Core Strategy states the following:

'Development that may cause pollution of water, air or soil or pollution through noise, smell, smoke, fumes, gases, steam, dust, vibration, light, heat , electromagnetic radiation and other pollutants will only be permitted where all of the following relevant criteria can be met:

- 1. The health and safety of existing and future users of the site, or nearby occupiers and residents is not put at risk;*
- 2. National air quality standards or objectives would not be breached;*
- 3. The water environment would not be detrimentally affected;*
- 4. It would not lead to an unacceptable deterioration in the quality or potential yield of coastal, surface or ground water resources;*
- 5. External lighting is of the minimum level of illumination and duration for security and operational purposes;*
- 6. External lighting would not interfere with safe navigation in either Chichester or Langstone Harbours and other coastal locations.*

2.3.5 The site crosses the boundary between HBC and EHDC. In June 2014, EHDC adopted their current Local Plan (Ref 6). The following EHDC policies are considered relevant to this assessment and should be considered along with the HBC policies set out above:

- CP1 – Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development;
- CP19 – Development in the Countryside;
- CP20 – Landscape; and
- CP28 – Green Infrastructure.

2.3.6 The first part of Policy CP1 from the EHDC Local Plan states the following:

‘When considering development proposals the Council and the National Park Authority (South Downs National Park) will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). They will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.’

2.3.7 Policy CP19 from the EHDC Local Plan states the following:

‘The approach to sustainable development in the countryside, defined as the area outside settlement policy boundaries, is to operate a policy of general restraint in order to protect the countryside for its own sake. 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 (see Policy CP6).’

2.3.8 Policy CP20 from the EHDC Local Plan states the following:

‘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, and be in accordance with the ambitions within the emerging South Downs Management Plan;*
- 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).*

Priority will be given to working with landowners and others in order to ensure that land management practices improve public access to the countryside, conserve and enhance valued landscapes of major importance for wild flora and fauna, and restore landscapes where valued features have been lost or degraded.

2.3.9 Policy CP28 from the EHDC Local Plan states the following:

'Development will be permitted provided that it maintains, manages and enhances the network of new and existing green infrastructure.....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 green infrastructure must be located as close as possible to the development it is intended to serve.'

2.3.10 The implication of the development proposals on planning policies will be considered in Section 8.

3 SITE CONTEXT

3.1 Location (Plan HDA 1 and Plan HDA 4)

3.1.1 The generator compound part of the site lies approximately 2.4 miles to the north of Havant town centre (from the Town Hall), about 1.8 miles east of Waterlooville (from the Council offices), and 400m east of the A3(M), half way between Junctions 2 and 3. The site's eastern boundary is formed by a permissive track on the western edge of Havant Thicket, which is owned by the Forestry Commission. The southern site boundary is formed by Bell's Copse (also owned by the Forestry Commission). The northern and western site boundaries are undefined and are contiguous with Blendworth Common.

3.1.2 The proposed 1.7km long access track would exit the generator compound at its north-east corner and then run northwards along the western edge of Havant Thicket. North of Horseshoe Hill, the track would turn through 90° along the south-west edge of a field, 30m from and parallel to the B2148 Manor Lodge Road, before turning again through 90° along the northern edge of the same field to join the B2148.

3.2 Landform and Drainage (Plan HDA 2)

3.2.1 The site lies on a shallow north-south orientated ridge between two valleys to the west and east. Land rises to a maximum of 193m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Windmill Hill, approximately 3.5 miles to the north of the site and to 130m AOD at Idsworth Down, 2.9 miles to the north-east of the site. From these high points on the Downs, the built up areas of Horndean, Waterlooville and Havant fall to the south towards the coast. The site of the generator compound lies on a sloping, west-facing valley side falling from a high point of 50m AOD in the north-east corner of the site to 40m AOD in the south-west corner of the site.

3.2.2 The site drains towards the west into a stream, 170m away. The stream flows to the south through Bell's Copse. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and a Groundwater Source Protection Zone as identified by the Environment Agency.

3.3 Local Land Use and Vegetation (Plan HDA 4)

3.3.1 The site is on the southern edge of Blendworth Common and comprises low grade agricultural land (generally Grade 4 as shown on MAGIC), of grassland with bracken and heath, suitable for grazing use (refer to Ecological Assessment). The site was not in use at the time of the survey, but had recently been cut. Large Oak field trees occur on the common, with several in close proximity to the site. The field trees have ferns and bracken growing underneath them. Despite their maturity, none of the trees are currently covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's – as check on the Council's interactive mapping service). The exact location of the trees has not been surveyed, though it is evident that at least eight lie within the red line boundary of the site. The site and adjacent land has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) by HBC, though this is a non-statutory designation.

3.3.2 Bell's Copse forms the site's southern boundary. This is ancient replanted woodland, between 10 and 20m high, consisting of Lime, Birch, Alder and intermittent Oak. Further into the woodland are plantation conifers. Havant Thicket forms the site's eastern boundary and it too is ancient replanted woodland, with similar species to Bell's Copse, though with a higher percentage of deciduous species. Both Bell's Copse and Havant Thicket form part of the Forest of Bere, which dates from the 17th century, and are open access land owned by the Forestry Commission. Natural England and the Forestry Commission provide guidance (Ref 7) which suggests the following as one of five mitigation measures:

- *Leaving an appropriate buffer zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the ancient woodland or tree (depending on the size of development, a minimum buffer should be at least 15 metres)*

3.3.3 The northern and western site boundaries are open to Blendworth Common, which comprises undulating grassland with intermittent field trees. The stream to the west of the site is lined with willow and alder. Where the land rises again towards the A3(M), the motorway itself is in cutting, and it is lined by a screening belt of trees and shrubs (including Oak, Hazel, Hawthorn and Lime). The motorway can be heard, but not seen, except for high-sided vehicles. High voltage pylons follow the route of the motorway, forming an urbanising detractor in an otherwise rural landscape.

3.3.4 Fields to the north of the site are used for grazing and some arable farming also exists in the area. Fields in the area range from medium to large in size, and are generally enclosed by hedgerows with intermittent mature hedgerow trees. Staunton Country Park lies to the south of Havant Thicket and Waterlooville golf course lies to the west of the A3(M). In

addition, Hazelton Common Local Nature Reserve lies 1.3km to the north-east of the site and Leigh Park Grade II* registered park and garden lies 700m to the south-east of the site.

4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 Introduction (Plan HDA 3)

4.1.1 Landscape character can be defined as a distinct pattern of elements that occur consistently in different parts of the landscape. It is determined by a number of underlying factors including topography, past and current trends in land use, vegetation cover and cultural and historical associations. The wider landscape character descriptions are drawn from the published landscape character assessments (see Sections 4.2 to 4.4 below).

4.2 National Scale

4.2.1 Natural England has revised the National Character Area (NCA) profiles, though England is still divided into 159 NCAs, with the landscape around Havant falling on the edge of two NCA's – NCA 125 'South Downs' and NCA 128 'South Hampshire Lowlands' (Ref 8 and 9 – with pages 7-8 and 44-49 for NCA 125 and pages 6 and 33-34 for NCA 128 reproduced at **Appendix B**). The NCA's cover a large geographical extent, so the degree to which they are appropriate to this localised assessment is likely to be limited. However, the following 'Key Characteristics' are considered to be of relevance to this assessment:

NCA 125 – South Downs

- *Woodland a feature of the central downs and, to a lesser extent, the western downs, also concentrated on the steep scarp slopes, consisting of both broadleaved, mostly ancient, woodland with beech, veteran trees, ash, sycamore, and conifers, with some large plantations;*
- *Several different types of heathland habitat, including wet heath, wooded heath and chalk heath dependent on loess soils;*
- *To the west of the River Arun, where holdings were smaller and 'sheep-and-corn' farming less important, hedgerows enclose medium to large irregular fields between the woodlands and designed parkland landscapes..;*

NCA 128 – South Hampshire Lowlands

- *Low-lying undulating plain abutting the chalk downs to the north and the coastal plain and Southampton Water to the south...Soils over much of the area are heavy and clayey with localised pockets of more freely draining soils on higher land;*
- *Well-wooded farmed landscape (particularly to the east of Southampton), characterised by ancient woodland such as Botley Wood and West Walk, the remnants of the Royal Hunting Forest of Bere;*
- *An intimate and enclosed field pattern with many small and irregular fields generally bound by mixed-species hedgerows or woodland.*

4.2.2 The landscape around the site is, as described in the key characteristics for the South Downs NCA, medium to large fields between the woodlands. The woodland in the local area is predominantly ancient, mostly broadleaved, but some replanted as plantation.

4.3 Regional Scale

4.3.1 The Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (Ref 10) places the site in the eastern section of the Forest of Bere East (2f) Landscape Character Area and more specifically in the Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Landscape Character Type. The South East Hampshire Downs Landscape Character Area (7h) lies to the north and more specifically the Downland Mosaic Large Scale Landscape Character Type. The key characteristics of these county character areas are listed below, though full descriptions are included at **Appendix C:**

2f: Forest of Bere East (Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale)

- *A low lying landscape with shallow undulations, predominately south sloping;*
- *Varied geology and soils, with seasonally saturated heavy clays in the central and southern parts and locally higher, more undulating sandy outcrops resulting in agriculturally poor soils;*
- *Predominately pasture, commercial forestry and woodland with some small smallholdings;*
- *High proportion of woodland, both coniferous plantation and ancient semi-natural woodland, some extensive, often accessible;*
- *Woodland creates a secluded landscape, contrasting with the adjoining major towns, although there are strong urban fringe influences around large settlements;*
- *High proportion of semi natural habitats including ancient woodlands, wet woodland, remnant heath, unimproved neutral meadows and acid grassland supporting a rich biodiversity and*
- *Part of the former hunting reserve of the Royal Forest of Bere, which has shaped the pattern of woodland, commons and assart fields. Hedgerow oaks and hedgebanks are common features.*

7h: South East Hampshire Downs (Downland Mosaic Large Scale)

- *A dip slope containing a series of lower, broken escarpments, creating a large scale landscape of ridges and sweeping, smooth undulations;*
- *Sharp transition from clay to the south to Upper chalk geology, with clays in dry valley bottoms giving rise to well drained flinty soils;*
- *Varied degrees of visual enclosure from dramatic panoramic views on the main escarpment to enclosed views framed by coombes and copses;*
- *Very rural, with urban fringe influences largely limited to the south east. A quiet rural lane network, but localised negative influence of the A3M and*
- *Habitats of ecological significance include ancient semi-natural woodland.*

4.3.2 These county-wide landscape character areas cover large geographical extents, such that some of the key characteristics in the descriptions do not occur in the immediate vicinity of the site.

4.4 Local Authority Scale (Plan HDA 3)

4.4.1 The Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment Planning Guidance (Ref 11) places the site in the generic 'Pasture and Woodland (Heath

Associated)' Landscape Character Type A, and more specifically the LCA10 'Blendworth Common and Woodlands'. The key characteristics of this district landscape character type A are listed below, though full descriptions of the type and area are included at **Appendix D**:

Physical characteristics:

- *An undulating landform, with some steep sided small valleys and elevated low ridges;*
- *Numerous surface streams and ditches;*

Biodiversity and vegetation pattern:

- *A mosaic of heathland, poor grassland and woodland;*
- *A well wooded landscape, with broadleaved woodland some of which is ancient, semi-natural woodland, with some plantation adjacent the broadleaved woodland;*

Historic influences:

- *The unenclosed heath of Blendworth Common and woodland of Bell's Copse retain the historic landscape character;*

Built form and settlement pattern:

- *A network of forest tracks and rides and major corridor routes;*

Experiential qualities:

- *Enclosed landscape, with views limited by landform, woodlands and thick hedgerows;*
- *In places a quiet landscape, however the major roads, and over head power lines reduce the sense of tranquillity;*
- *Areas of woodland and heathland with public access, making this landscape character type more accessible to the public.*

4.4.2 The boundaries between landscape character types and areas have been determined by placing together those parcels of land with similar characteristics as dictated by land use, topography and vegetation types. The Havant district assessment defines relatively small Landscape Character Types such that the key characteristics described above are highly relevant to the immediate study area around the site. In the Sensitivity report (part of Ref 10), LCA10 is given an overall theme sensitivity ranking of 4, with 1 being the most sensitive and 6 being the least sensitive. The cumulative theme score for LCA10 was Medium; therefore this assessment has assumed a similar sensitivity for the landscape around the site to the type of development proposed.

4.4.3 The East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 12) defines Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas in the adjacent district. The northern part of the proposed access road lies within the 'Wooded Claylands' Landscape Character Type, and more specifically in LCA10a 'Havant Thicket and Southleigh Forest'. The key characteristics of this character type and area are listed below, though full descriptions are included at **Appendix E**:

Wooded Claylands:

- *Dominated by woodland, including semi-natural copses and mixed plantations, which create a strong sense of enclosure;*
- *Presence of designed landscapes – from medieval deerparks to post-medieval landscape parks containing woodland incorporating a network of paths and rides;*
- *Extensive opportunities for outdoor recreation including forest walks, cycling and horse riding.*

10A Havant Thicket and Southleigh Forest:

- *A varied landcover dominated by woodland and including pasture, paddocks and common land. Pockets of heathland are present at Blendworth Common;*
- *Dominated by woodland, all of it pre-1800 but subsequently replanted (Havant Thicket, The Holt and Southleigh Forest) and smaller copses which provide enclosure and a strong backdrop to views;*
- *Blendworth Common, Forestry Commission managed woodland, Staunton Country Park offer recreational.*

5 EXISTING VISIBILITY

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section describes the locations from which the site is currently visible, and the extent and character of those views. The visual assessment was carried out in late summer, when leaf cover provided a maximum degree of screening. The following paragraphs describe the existing views and visual amenity from the key visual receptors within the vicinity of the site, together with an assessment of the sensitivity of each receptor to the type of development proposed. The differentiation between private and public views is made to highlight that private views are likely to be experienced by individual residents, whereas public views are likely to relate to large numbers of receptors engaged in the enjoyment of the landscape for its own sake, and thus may be given more weight.

5.1.2 Photographs from selective viewpoints have been used which are considered to be representative of the kind of view experienced by those receptors which are located close to where the photograph was taken. Locations for photographs are indicated on Plan HDA 2 with the photographs provided at Sheets 1 to 8 of HDA 6. Plan HDA 4 summarises the extent of visibility of the site (without the proposed development) indicating an approximate Zone of Visual Influence. In such an undulating landscape, ridgelines result in a constrained visual envelope around the site.

5.2 Existing Visibility of the Site from Public Viewpoints (Plan HDA 4)

5.2.1 The closest public right of way is Bridleway 120, which is 700m south of the site. No views of the site are possible due to its position relative to the site and the ability of Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse to screen any views of the site. The woodland also prevents views from Bridleways 121, 123, 502 and Footpaths 16 and 126, Staunton Country Park and Leigh Park Registered Park and Garden.

5.2.2 Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse are both owned by the Forestry Commission and are open access land giving unfettered access to the public. There are several tracks and trails throughout the woodlands, two of which lie parallel to the southern and eastern boundaries of the proposed generator compound site. The hedgerow between the compound site and these paths is well-established and filters out most views apart from glimpsed views through gaps in the hedge (photos 4 and 5). There are no views of the compound site from the A3(M). The northern end of the proposed access track will join the B2148 Manor Lodge Road, thus users of this road will see this entrance to the site.

5.3 Existing Visibility of the Site from Private Viewpoints (Plan HDA 4)

5.3.1 The closest property to the north of the site is Hazelton Farm (1 mile to the north, not the property with the same name on the B2148). The undulating landform, woodland of Havant Thicket and field trees on Blendworth Common ensure that the site is not discernible from this property (Photo 11). The closest properties to the south of the site are on Swanmore Road in Leigh Park (0.7 miles), and any views of the site from these properties are prevented by Bell's Copse. Any views of the site from Waterlooville to the west of the site are prevented by the A3(M) and its associated vegetation together with the undulating landform. Blendworth Common is not publically accessible land, so any views from the north within the common would only be experienced by the land owners, though the field trees help filter any views toward the site reducing them to glimpses only.

5.4 Summary of Existing Visibility

5.4.1 The site has a well contained zone of visual influence, due in part to the undulating nature of the surrounding landscape and the intact vegetation, especially Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse which provide a visual screen along the southern and eastern boundaries. Within this zone of visual influence, local visual receptors with views of the site are users of the tracks through the publically accessible woodlands, or private viewpoints from Blendworth Common to the north of the site.

6 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Description of the Proposals

6.1.1 The compound site would be a rectangular enclosure 52m wide east to west by 66m long north to south, thus occupying a small area (0.33ha) in the south-east corner of Blendworth Common. The proposed Peaking Power Generation Plant' will consist of ten gas generators surrounded by 4.5m high solid wooden acoustic fencing (refer to Dwg No ENQ 6540-05-1011-D-B). Inside the compound, the surfacing will be permeable gravel.

6.1.2 The proposed site access would lie adjacent to the existing track along the western edge of Havant Thicket, but segregated from it by an existing native hedgerow. The access track

would be 1.7km long by 5m wide, within a red line boundary allowance of 8m width, resulting in an area of about 1.16ha within EHDC, and about 0.27ha in HBC. The track would be gravel surfaced, similar in appearance to an agricultural field track. A no-dig construction method would be adopted using a geotextile membrane to spread the weight of vehicles using the track and to avoid damage to the roots of adjacent existing trees. This method would be adopted on the length of the track which lies adjacent to the ancient woodland designation, and then intermittently depending on the occurrence of mature field trees in the adjacent hedgerow to the proposed track.

6.2 Proposed Mitigation

6.2.1 All that would be visible of the generator compound from viewpoints beyond the site would be the 4.5m high solid acoustic wooden fencing, above which would be visible the exhaust stacks from the generators (extending another 4.475m above the top of the fence). The acoustic fencing would give the generator compound the appearance of an agricultural shed or other similar structure.

6.2.2 To mitigate the urbanising visual effect of this fencing and the stacks, it is proposed to plant belts of mixed native trees and shrubs to the perimeters of the compound. To the southern boundary, this planting would be a minimum of 15m wide and to the eastern boundary it would be up to 30m wide. As these boundaries lie adjacent to ancient woodlands, these widths of planting would respect Natural England's and the Forestry Commission's guidance (Ref 7) on the recommended offset between ancient woodlands and proposed development (a minimum of 15m). To the northern and western perimeters of the compound, the depth of planting will be reduced to 5m width, sufficient to screen the fencing once the planting is mature.

7 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The landscape impacts resulting from the proposed development have been subdivided into impacts on existing landscape features on and around the site, and impacts on local landscape character. Cumulatively, impacts on existing landscape features, together with the effects of new features or planting relate strongly to the residual impact on landscape character. Section 7.2 below summarises the likely impact on landscape features and sets these in the context of local landscape character and landscape amenity (Section 7.3). The visual assessment (Section 7.4) addresses the extent and character of views of the site during construction and compares this with the gas generators and access track in place, 15 years after completion.

7.2 Landscape Assessment - Features

7.2.1 The existing landscape features of the site are described in Section 3.4 and those features that are proposed on the site are described in Section 6.2. Existing perimeter features, such as woodland and hedgerows, have been assessed as having Medium sensitivity to change or removal. The proposals would not require the loss of the existing woodlands and hedges along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site as the generator compound would be constructed at least 15m from the edges of the ancient woodlands (30m in the case of the eastern boundary to avoid a mature field Oak tree). The proposals would retain the majority of the mature field Oak trees that fall within the boundaries of the site. However, it would still be necessary to remove at least two mature trees. These trees currently assist in screening the site from the private land of Blendworth Common to the north and west. The loss of mature trees would be unavoidable, but the quantity of quality vegetation to be removed would be minimal compared to the overall extent of Blendworth Common and the number of trees unaffected by the proposals. Therefore the magnitude of change resulting from the loss of these trees has been assessed as Medium, and thus the significance of effect is assessed as Moderate Adverse.

7.2.2 The construction of the new site access would be parallel and adjacent to the existing track within Havant Thicket for its southern section, but segregated from it by mature vegetation. The northern section of the access track would follow field boundaries containing mature trees. The access track would not require the removal of any mature trees due to the non-invasive construction methods to be employed.

7.2.3 To mitigate and recompense the loss of landscape features from the site, it is proposed that new planting would be carried out around the site boundaries, especially along the exposed northern and western boundaries to help screen the site from these directions. It would take many years for new planting to reach the stature of existing vegetation, but over time the impact of any losses would be reduced (to Minor Adverse). Planting around the site would be in keeping with local landscape character, using locally common, native species.

7.3 Landscape Assessment - Character

7.3.1 The construction of the gas generator compound is likely to have a minimal impact on the character of the site's landscape. Although the changes would be permanent, the changes in character occurring, particularly during the construction phase, would only affect a small area of the overall extent of Blendworth Common and would be screened initially by the unifying appearance of the acoustic fencing which in time would be screened by the proposed perimeter planting which would assimilate the compound into the adjacent existing woodland setting.

7.3.2 The proposals would result in the overall loss of 1.8ha of Grade 4 agricultural land to development. However, the majority of these losses would be from field margins, thus not the most productive parts of the existing agricultural land use. Although there would be a decrease in species diversity within the site compound itself, due to its conversion from grassland to hard standing, there would be a net gain in species diversity as about 4,200m² of the grassland would be replaced by mixed native tree and shrub planting around the perimeter of the compound.

7.3.3 The transition from grazing land to a gas generator compound will initially result in a change in the landscape character of the site with the permanent loss of a small area of undeveloped heathland that forms the rural edge to the adjacent ancient woodland of Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse. Given the Medium sensitivity of the character area within which the site sits (refer to paragraph 4.4.2), and the at most Medium magnitude of change arising from the proposed development, it has been assessed that the significance of effect at the time of construction would be Moderate Adverse on landscape character. The proposed perimeter planting to the site would in time screen the fencing and make the compound appear less incongruous in terms of its rural setting. The access road would look very similar to other agricultural tracks in the area, and therefore would be in keeping with the landscape character of the area.

7.4 Visual Assessment

7.4.1 The visibility of the site is relatively well contained to a localised area due to a combination of the undulating nature of the landscape and the layers of existing vegetation. The baseline assessment identified existing views into the site from the private land of Blendworth Common to the north and west, and from the publically accessible woodlands of Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse to the south and east. Of the identified visual receptors, none have been assessed as having the potential to experience substantial adverse visual impacts as a result of the proposed scheme, because none currently have open or partial views of the site. To minimise any potential visual impacts on identified receptors, tree and shrub planting around the perimeter of the site has been proposed, adjacent to the acoustic fencing, in addition to intermittent tree planting along the access road.

7.4.2 The following paragraphs summarise the visual impact arising during the construction of the proposals (at the worst case scenario) and then 15 years after completion of the proposed development.

7.4.3 **Views from public footpaths and roads.** Users of the tracks within Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse would have their current glimpsed views into Blendworth Common changed marginally, though to a greater degree during the winter months when the existing vegetation offers less screening cover. Selecting a recessive-coloured acoustic fence,

such as grey, would help mitigate views from the north and west, especially in the summer, as it would help merge the fencing into the woodland behind. It is also proposed to mitigate the views of the fencing surrounding the proposals by planting between the fencing and the woodland to augment the existing vegetation, thus helping to screen the fencing.

- 7.4.4 Users of footpaths tend to have High sensitivity to change, but as the users of the tracks adjacent to the site only have glimpsed views due to intervening vegetation, their sensitivity to the type of development proposed would be reduced, say to Medium. The magnitude of change in their views resulting from the proposed development would also not be more than Medium, and generally lower depending on the degree of screening at various locations along the tracks and the time of year. In the worst case scenario, the significance of effect on the users of the adjacent tracks to the proposed development would be Moderate Adverse where gaps occur, but more generally Minor Adverse. The existing vegetation in Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse will carry on maturing and will continue to screen the site but the existing planting would need to be maintained adequately to prevent any gaps forming.
- 7.4.5 The existing field trees, the undulating landform and the vegetation along the A3(M) will help screen any transient views into the site from the motorway. Retention of as many of the mature field trees on Blendworth Common as possible, along with new planting outside the fencing will help to more robustly screen the site from the surrounding landscape. The site access will be visible to users of the B2148 Manor Lodge Road, but this will not appear intrusive as it will have the appearance of other agricultural tracks in the area.
- 7.4.6 **Views from private viewpoints.** No residential properties were identified as having views of the site, therefore none would have views of the proposed. The compound site and the access track would be visible from Blendworth Common, but as this is private land, these views would only be experienced by the landowners and their operatives during the course of their work.
- 7.4.7 The views from the identified visual receptors, comprising footpath and road users, will decrease as the existing vegetation and proposed planting continues to mature. It is likely that in time the generator compound will be fully screened from the nearby footpaths within the woodland, though views of the fencing may be possible during the winter months when leaf cover is reduced. The proposals, as seen from the surrounding landscape, will be consistent with the local landscape character and will not have adverse impacts on the identified visual receptors and the visual amenity of the local landscape. There would be no residual impacts on visual amenity arising from the proposals.

8 REVIEW AGAINST LANDSCAPE ASPECTS OF PLANNING POLICY

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 This section addresses the planning policy context relevant to the site and whether the proposals are contrary to those policies. Of particular relevance to the landscape aspects of policy pertaining to this site is the importance placed upon new development being in keeping with the existing landscape character of the area and the effects on the amenity of visual receptors.

8.2 National Planning Policy

- 8.2.1 The assessment has identified above that it will be possible for the proposed generator compound and access track on the south-eastern edge of Blendworth Common to '*respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials*', as required by the Framework (paragraph 2.1.4 above). The proposals would be for a small-scale gas generator compound located in a relatively concealed corner of Blendworth Common, adjoined on two sides by densely screening vegetation of Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse. The soft landscape proposals around the perimeter of the site have been designed to be in keeping with the local landscape character and would in themselves no doubt be visually attractive, as well as having benefits for wildlife.
- 8.2.2 The proposals would protect and enhance the valued landscape of the site as required by paragraph 109 of the Framework. The site does not lie within a designated landscape, though it is adjacent to valued features such as ancient woodland, which the proposals respect by being located at least 15m from the boundary of this designation. The proposals would also be compliant with the Guidance (paragraph 007 of Ref 4) as they promote local character and take the site's landform into account.

8.3 Local Policy

- 8.3.1 The proposals would be consistent with Policy CS13: Green Infrastructure of the adopted Havant Core Strategy (Ref 5), particularly in respect of "*development will be permitted that incorporates improvements to existing green infrastructure through the restoration, enhancement or creation of additional resources*". The site is proposed to be fenced, around which it is proposed to plant belts of mixed native trees and shrubs. This planting, in time, will reduce the urbanising nature of the fencing, thus assimilating the compound into its rural setting.
- 8.3.2 Offsetting the proposed generator compound by 15m from the adjacent ancient woodland and planting the intervening gap with new woodland would also ensure the development is compliant with Policy DM8 of the HBC Core Strategy. Natural features of nature conservation and/or amenity importance would be protected and existing features would be sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme. New landscape

works would be provided that integrate successfully with the local environment and existing natural features, using local materials (wooden fencing) and native plant species found locally in the area. The future maintenance of the new landscape works could be secured by condition.

9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the proposed development of a Peaking Power Generation Plant would primarily be localised, and would only be a temporary addition to the landscape (design life of 20 years). Given the proximity of the proposals to the open access land at Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse, there is the potential that the proposals will be visible to a significant number of people. The original landform and drainage would remain the same apart from some minor levelling of slopes for the gas generators and for the access road.
- 9.2 Moderate Adverse landscape impacts relate to vegetation removal, but this is only in relation to the loss of two mature field trees from within the generator compound, though many other trees would be retained on Blendworth Common, which are currently screening the site from the north and west. The current number of trees that would be lost has been estimated. Further impacts on trees and hedgerows have been minimised with the retention of all of the vegetation within the boundary hedgerows and woodland, though some removal of vegetation for the access road may be required where a field boundary needs to be crossed. Although there would be moderate levels of landscape impact on a few of the site's internal landscape features, and though these are contributory factors to the character of the site, the overall impact on the landscape character of the wider area would be minimal.
- 9.3 Potential views of the proposals would only be possible for users of the tracks within Havant Thicket and Bell's Copse. The proposals would result in the worst case as a Moderate Adverse significance of effect on their visual amenity. Views from the north and west will be moderately affected but as this land is not publically accessible, the impacts will only be experienced by a limited number of private users. Planting is proposed to help reduce impacts; the undulating landform and existing vegetation will also ensure that views of the proposals are available from a very limited number of potential viewpoints.

- Ref 1 - Countryside Agency (now Natural England)/Scottish Natural Heritage (April 2002), *'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland'*
- Ref 2 - The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), *'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'* (third edition)
- Ref 3 - Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012), *'National Planning Policy Framework'*
- Ref 4 - Department for Communities and Local Government (web-based resource launched March 2014), *'National Planning Practice Guidance'*
- Ref 5 - Havant Borough Council (March 2011) *'Havant Borough Core Strategy'*
- Ref 6 - East Hampshire District Council (adopted June 2014) *'East Hampshire Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy'*
- Ref 7 - Natural England and Forestry Commission (updated 29 October 2015) *'Ancient woodland and veteran trees – protecting them from development'*
- Ref 8 - Natural England (2015) *'National Character Area Profile: 125 South Downs'* (NE432)
- Ref 9 - Natural England (2014) *'National Character Area Profile: South Hampshire Lowlands'* (NE543)
- Ref 10 - Hampshire County Council (2011) *'Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment 2011'*
- Ref 11 - Kirkham Landscape Planning Consultants in partnership with Wessex Archaeology and Countryside on behalf of Havant Borough Council (February 2007) *'Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment'*
- Ref 12 - Land Use Consultants on behalf of East Hampshire District Council (July 2006) *'East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment'*

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Appendix A

HDA Assessment Methodology

APPENDIX A

HDA L&V ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1 Guidance

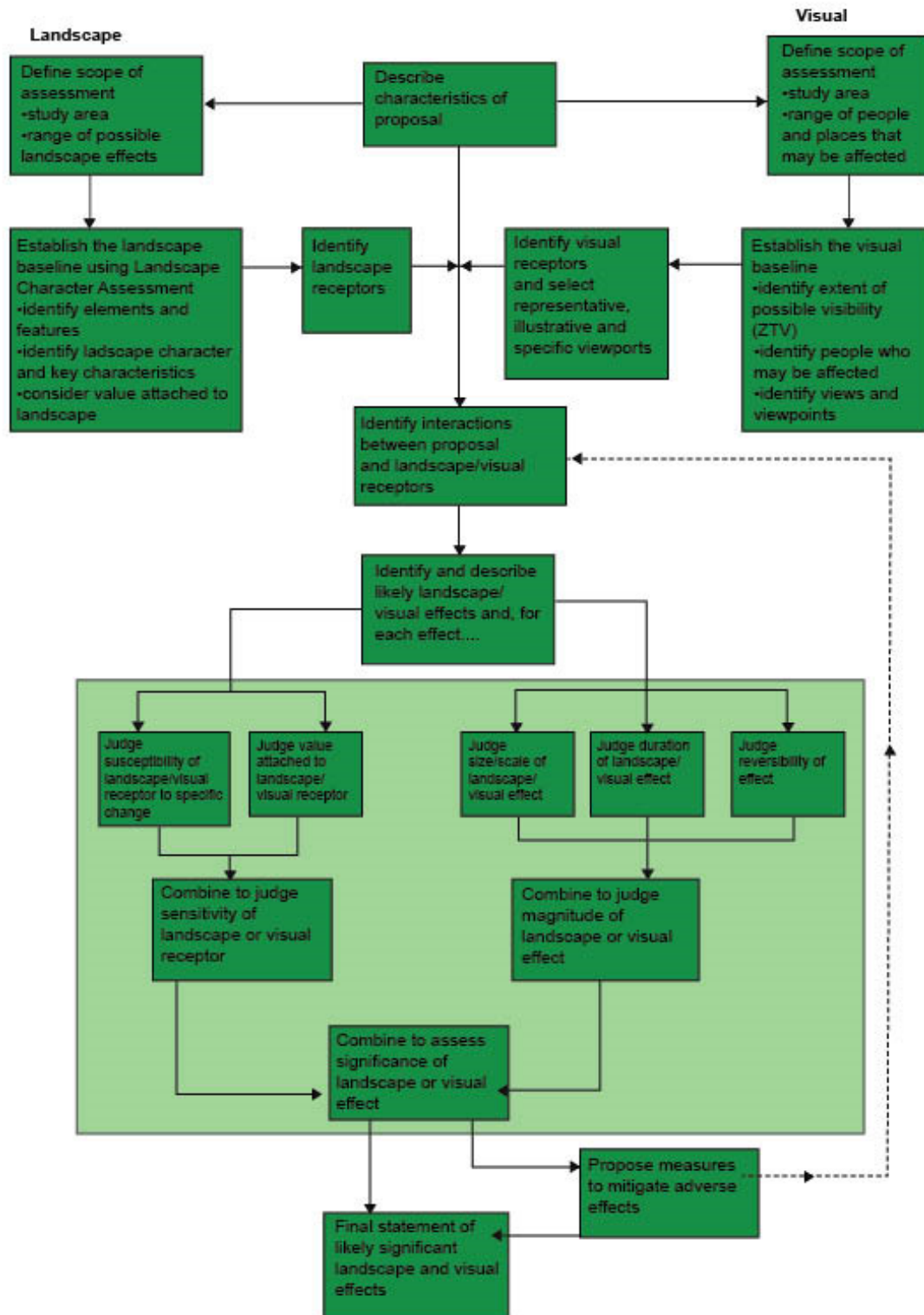
- 1.1 The proposed development is not subject to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011¹ (amended 2015), which implement EC Directive 2011/92/EU.
- 1.2 The methodology used in preparing this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been developed by HDA from guidance given in the following documents:
- The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, (2013), "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" (GLVIA, third edition);
 - Natural England (October 2014), "An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment"; and
 - Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and Scottish Natural Heritage (by Carys Swanwick and Land Use Consultants), (April 2002), "Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland".
- 1.3 The assessment of likely impacts is considered in two separate but inter-linked parts as defined within GLVIA (page 21, para 2.21) as follows:
- ***'Assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right; and***
 - ***Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people'.***

2 Process

- 2.1 The iterative process undertaken through the course of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is illustrated in Figure 1.
- 2.2 The level of detail included within a report will be proportionate to the anticipated extent of potential impacts caused by a proposed development and is also likely to vary between a full LVIA chapter and a more concise Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). Within an EIA compliant LVIA, the assessment section of the report (shown as a pale green box in Figure 1), would provide details of the relative judgement on sensitivity, magnitude of change and would provide an assessment on the significance of effects of the development on various features, character areas and views. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of a small development is likely to cover the key effects but not include any detailed references to judgements on significance.

¹ T&CPA (EIA) Regs 2011, Statutory Instrument No 1824 - Department for Communities and Local Government

Figure 1: Steps in assessing landscape and visual effects.



Referenced from figures 5.1 and 6.1 in GLVIA (Ref.2)

3 Desk Study

3.1 A desk-study is undertaken to establish the physical components of the local landscape and to identify the boundaries of the study area. The following data sources were consulted:

- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps – (1:25,000 to 1:5,000) to identify local features relating to topography, field pattern/shape/size, drainage pattern, woodland cover, existing settlement pattern, rights of way networks, transport corridors and any important extant historic features.
- Vertical aerial photography – used to supplement the OS information.

This data informs the field survey by providing a basis for mapping landscape features and to indicate the likely visibility of the proposed development.

3.2 Topographical analysis is used to identify the extent of potential visibility of the site and the proposed development. The zone of theoretical visibility is identified through mapping, together with potential visual receptors (VRs), for verification by field survey. The VRs include locations with public access within the visual envelope; public rights of way², public open space, key vantage points, roads, etc. together with residential properties and workplaces.

3.3 Natural England's National Character Area profiles, together with local landscape character assessment, provided the landscape character context. Conservation Areas within 1km of the site/proposed development were identified from local authority records in order to consider effects on their setting.

3.4 The current landscape planning context for the site is provided by the local development plan documents for Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council.

4 Field Survey

4.1 A field survey of the site was carried out in September 2016. This involved walking the site and travelling extensively through the local area, the extent of the study area being identified in the desk-study, to verify any variations in landscape character and the locations of visual receptors. The field surveys also served to understand the immediate setting of the proposed development, including the local topography, existing land uses and vegetation structure, position and condition of trees, hedgerows and stream courses.

4.2 The site visit was undertaken from publically accessible viewpoints around the site such as roads and public rights of way. Inter-visibility analysis (projective mapping) was used to verify the zone of theoretical visibility and to evaluate the extent and nature of views from

² From the definitive rights of way maps.

nearby properties (properties were not visited as part of the study). A working photographic record of the visit was also made.

5 Establishing the Baseline

5.1 In order to form a comprehensive assessment of the effects of a proposed development, the existing situation, or baseline condition, must be established. The proposed changes resulting from the proposed development can then be identified and described. As described in section 1.3, the assessment considers the landscape and visual effects of the proposals.

5.2 GLVIA describes the landscape and visual baseline as follows³:

- *'For the landscape baseline the aim is to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected – its constituent elements, its character and the way this varies spatially, its geographic extent, its history,... its condition, the way the landscape is experienced and the value attached to it.'*
- *'For the visual baseline the aim is to establish the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience the views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at those points.'*

6 Landscape Baseline

6.1 For the purposes of assessment, the landscape resource is considered in two ways:

1. Local landscape character variation across the site and Study Area is described and evaluated; and
2. Existing landscape features in and immediately adjacent to the site are identified, quantified and their condition assessed.

6.2 The objective of the landscape baseline is first to schedule, describe, and where possible, quantify the landscape resource that potentially could be affected by the proposed development. A judgement is then made as to the Landscape Value of the Study Area.

6.3 Landscape Value consists of:

- *'The value of the Landscape Character Types or Areas that may be affected, based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value;*
- *The value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities and combinations of these contributors.'* (GLVIA, page 89, para 5.44)

6.4 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF⁴ gives weight to '*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*', however no definition of landscape value is given. In a judgement by Mr Justice Ouseley

³ GLVIA, pg 32, para 3.15.

⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012) '*National Planning Policy Framework*'.

in the case of *Stroud District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (February 2015), Mr Justice Ouseley supported the inspector's finding that for a landscape to be valued it would need to '*show some demonstrable physical attribute, rather than just popularity*'. The assessment of value should therefore first assess the intrinsic value of the physical attributes demonstrated by the site and then consider the popularity of the landscape as a community asset.

Landscape Character

- 6.5 Landscape character units (areas/types⁵) were identified on plan(s), and published descriptions and trends summarised. Where published documents create a hierarchy of landscape units, this is stated and the scale most appropriate to the assessment is explained. The landscape characteristics within the site are compared to the character of the wider area.
- 6.6 The assessment focuses on the landscape within which the site/proposed development is located. The character of a neighbouring character unit may be strongly influenced by the adjacent area, within which the site is located. This relationship may be dependent on the scale of assessment (size of landscape units), as well as landscape characteristics that affect inter-visibility, e.g. topography, vegetation cover.
- 6.7 The degree to which the landscape character unit can accommodate change arising from a particular development without detrimental effects on its character, i.e. susceptibility, varies with landscape value. Indicators of landscape value include⁶:
- **Landscape quality (condition):** '*A measure of the physical state of the landscape*'. This includes land use, the intactness of the landscape and the quality and condition of the features within the landscape and the influence of incongruous features or elements;
 - **Scenic quality:** The effect that a landscape is likely to have on the senses. For example visual enclosure/openness or the pattern and scale of the landscape, whether there is a distinctive sense of place, striking landform or visual interest in the landscape;
 - **Rarity:** '*The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type*';
 - **Representativeness:** Whether the landscape or features within it are exemplary for the local area or whether the landscape being considered covers a high proportion of a particular character area;
 - **Conservation interests:** Recognition of importance through designation, or local consensus. Includes features of wildlife, archaeological, historic and cultural interest;
 - **Recreation value:** '*Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important*';

⁵ Terminology varies in accordance with that used in published landscape character assessment, or as defined in HDA local assessment.

⁶ Adapted from GLVIA, Box 5.1, pg 84.

- **Perceptual aspects:** Including tranquillity and appropriateness of substitution of the characteristics affected;
- **Associations:** *‘With particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area’.*

Landscape Features

6.8 Key landscape features that define site character are identified on plans, and listed in the tables, to provide information relating to their type, condition, value and quantification (area/length/number). The potential for impact on each landscape feature is assessed using a combination of their relationship to the site/proposed development (e.g. within, on or adjacent to site boundary and for those outside the site, the distance from the boundary) and sensitivity.

6.9 The landscape value of site landscape features is evaluated using factors in the following checklist:

- Type of landscape feature (e.g. natural or man-made);
- Size/extent (e.g. covers a large or small area; individual or part of a group);
- Condition or quality of landscape feature (intact);
- Maturity (is feature well established or recent);
- Contribution feature makes to landscape character (e.g. distinct and recognisable pattern or limited influence);
- Rarity (rare or widespread in local and/or regional/national context);
- Recognised importance (e.g. designation either nationally or locally);
- Ease with which the feature may be substituted or recreated.

6.10 The susceptibility of landscape features is closely allied to the ease with which a feature may be substituted or recreated.

6.11 The assessment of landscape features is an integral part of the initial design process and often influences the location of development. The landscape value of features is a contributory factor for the assessment of landscape character, as the assessment of the quality and condition of a landscape is intrinsically linked to its component features.

Landscape Sensitivity

6.12 Landscape sensitivity is defined as:

“a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor”⁷.

⁷ GLVIA, glossary, pg 158

6.13 The susceptibility of the landscape to change is *‘the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies’*⁸.

6.14 The way that landscape responds to or is affected by proposed development is determined in part by the nature of that development. The sensitivity of the landscape will vary depending on the type, form, appearance, extent or scale, duration (temporary or permanent) and phasing of proposed development. Landscape effects are also dependent upon the *“degree to which the proposals fit with existing character”*⁹, or indeed the potential to design-out potential adverse effects. Outline information about the proposed development such as type and scale helps inform preliminary judgement about the relative susceptibility of the landscape. However, the final judgement on susceptibility may change from the preliminary assessment as the scheme’s detail design evolves in parallel with the EIA (an iterative process).

7 Criteria for Evaluation of Sensitivity of Landscape Resource

7.1 The evaluation of overall landscape sensitivity to change is considered to be a product of susceptibility to change and the value of the receptor. The evaluation is an expression of comparative sensitivity, based on a five-point scale: Very Low, Low, Medium, High and Very High as follows:

Sensitivity of Landscape Resource

Very High:	An exemplary part of a nationally recognised landscape, e.g. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. World Heritage Sites of international importance (if landscape reason for designation); Strong landscape structure, characteristic patterns and balanced combination of landform and land-cover; Appropriate management with distinctive features worthy of conservation; Sense of place (usually tranquil); No (or occasional) detracting features; Landscape not substitutable.
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⁸ GLVIA, pg 89, para 5.40

⁹ GLVIA, pg 88, para 5.37

High:	Part of a nationally or locally recognised landscape of particularly distinctive character, e.g. on the edge of a nationally designated landscape; part of the setting to an AONB; or a local policy designation; Recognisable landscape structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and land-cover are still evident; Appropriate management, but potential scope for improvement; Some features worthy of conservation; Sense of place; No or occasional detracting features; Very limited substitutability and susceptible to relatively small changes.
Medium:	Locally recognised, but undesignated, landscape of moderately valued characteristics. Distinguishable landscape structure, with some characteristic patterns of landform and land-cover; Scope to improve management (e.g. of hedgerows); Occasional detracting features; Landscape resource reasonably tolerant to change.
Low:	Ordinary undesignated countryside; Weak landscape structure, without characteristic patterns of landform or land-cover; Limited management which is beginning to show signs of degradation; Abundance of detracting features; A relatively unimportant landscape, the nature of which is potentially tolerant to substantial change.
Very Low:	Degraded to damaged/polluted or derelict landscape structure; Single land use dominates; Lack of or poor management/maintenance/intervention which has resulted in degradation; Presence of disturbed or derelict land requiring treatment; Extensive or dominant detracting features.

8 Visibility Baseline

- 8.1 The visual baseline serves to establish the type of Visual Receptor (VR), the extent and character of existing views, and the contribution that the site makes to each view/local visual amenity and the susceptibility to change in views. This usually correlates with the degree to which the site or proposed development is visible from a VR.
- 8.2 All agreed VRs (Key View Points) were visited as part of the field survey and the extent, character and appearance of their views noted. Where appropriate, the existence of temporary structures or features in the landscape that vary with the seasons and that may therefore affect visibility, such as deciduous vegetation, were noted in order to evaluate the worst case situation in the assessment. The initial appraisal is based on a grading of degrees of visibility, from not visible to fully open in close views. To indicate the degree of visibility of the site from any location, that continuum has been divided into four categories:

- **None:** no view (no part of the site or proposed development is discernible);
- **Glimpse:** only a minor area of the site or proposed development is discernible and/or the view is transient or at such a distance that it is difficult to perceive in the wider view, or sequence of views;
- **Partial:** the site or proposed development forms a relatively small proportion of a wider view. There are open views of part of the site or proposed development such that it is easily visible as part of the wider view;
- **Open:** there are open views of the site or proposed development such that it forms a substantial part (is a dominant element) of the overall view and affects its overall character and visual amenity; or the site or proposed development is the dominant feature of the view, to which other elements become subordinate and where the site/proposed development significantly affects or changes the character of the view.

8.3 The type of activity that a person, or visual receptor (VR), is engaged in affects susceptibility, as does the extent to which a view can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character and extent, which is interrelated with the expectation of the viewer (e.g. whether or not the type of development is consistent with the content of the baseline view).

8.4 The value attached to views should also be considered, i.e. whether the visual receptor/s being assessed are within a designated landscape, the site forms the setting to a heritage asset or there are particular tourism activities associated with the viewpoint location. The combined sensitivity of views/visual amenity within the zone of visual influence of the site/proposed development, is evaluated using factors in the following checklist¹⁰:

- *'The type and relative number of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected, making clear the activities they are likely to be involved in;*
- *The location, nature and characteristics of the chosen representative, specific and illustrative viewpoints, with details of the visual receptors likely to be affected by each;*
- *The nature, composition and characteristics of the existing views experienced at these viewpoints, including the direction of view;*
- *The visual characteristics of the existing views, for example the nature and extent of the skyline, aspects of visual scale and proportion, especially with respect to any particular horizontal or vertical emphasis and any key foci;*
- *Elements, such as landform, buildings or vegetation, which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views.'*

9 Criteria for Evaluation of Visual Sensitivity

9.1 The evaluation of sensitivity, in relation to visual receptors, is considered to be a product of susceptibility to change and the value attributed to the view by the visual receptor. It is represented as an expression of comparative sensitivity based on a five-point scale: Very Low, Low, Medium, High and Very High as follows, with adjustment for professional judgement.

¹⁰ GLVIA, pg 111 para. 6.24.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Very High:	An open view, where the site forms a dominant part of the view, seen from a viewpoint that has a high value (nationally significant), by visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view (e.g. walkers/cyclists on rural public rights of way), whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape. For example a walker on a national trail within an AONB, where the site forms the foreground to the view and is a characteristic part of a scenic and rural landscape.
High:	A distant open or partial view of the site from a viewpoint that has a high value (nationally significant), seen by visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape; for example a walker on a national trail within an AONB, where the site forms a distant part of a wider view and is seen in the context of a foreground which is characteristic and forms part of a scenic and rural landscape; An open view of the site from a viewpoint that either has a medium scenic value (i.e. is locally appreciated), seen by visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view or that the viewpoint has a high value (nationally significant) but the visual receptors experiencing the view have a medium susceptibility to change (i.e. a scenic road route, where the view is transient but is still a focus).
Medium:	An open view of the site from a viewpoint that either has a low scenic value (i.e. has a number of visual detractors/a degraded landscape character), seen by visual receptors that would have a medium susceptibility to a change in the view or that the viewpoint has a medium scenic value (i.e. is locally appreciated) and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change (i.e. a major road or an office, where the view is not the focus of people's attention); A partial view of the site from a viewpoint with medium value, seen by visual receptors with a medium susceptibility to change; A glimpse of the site from a viewpoint that has a high scenic value (nationally significant), seen by a high number of visual receptors and / or visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view and whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape.
Low:	A partial view of the site from a viewpoint that has either: • a low scenic value, seen by visual receptors that would have a medium susceptibility to a change in the view; • a medium scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change; or • that the viewpoint has a low scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change; A glimpse of the site from a viewpoint with medium value, seen by visual receptors with a medium susceptibility to change; No view of the site, but that the viewpoint has a high scenic value and would be seen by a high number of visual receptors and/or visual receptors that would be highly susceptible to a change in the view, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape.

Very Low:	A glimpse of the site from a viewpoint that has either: • a low scenic value, seen by visual receptors that would have a medium susceptibility to a change in the view; • a medium scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change; or • that the viewpoint has a low scenic value and the visual receptors experiencing the view have a low susceptibility to change; No view from a viewpoint with medium value (or lower), seen by visual receptors with a medium susceptibility to change (or lower).
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10 Summary of Landscape/Visual Baseline

10.1 The baseline survey identifies the landscape resource (landscape features and character) and visual receptors (VRs) likely to be affected by the proposed development, and then evaluates the susceptibility, value and combined sensitivity of each to the likely effects of the proposed development.

11 Mitigation

11.1 Mitigation is defined as:

“Measures proposed to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects...”¹¹

11.2 Mitigation proposals are designed to respond to the constraints of the site and mitigate the landscape and visual impacts that arise from the proposed development. The mitigation measures considered fall into the following two categories:

- Primary mitigation – the iterative process of masterplanning;
- Secondary mitigation – additions or changes to the landscape proposals as a direct response to the results and comments obtained through public consultation.

12 Assessment of Landscape Effects

12.1 The landscape impact assessment addresses both direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development. Firstly, the direct effects of the development on the site itself are categorised, through an assessment of the magnitude of effect. The magnitude of effect is a judgement on the size/scale of effect, including consistency of the proposed development with the baseline assessment, the extent of the area influenced and the duration and reversibility of the proposed effects. The focus is on the loss or change to identified landscape features within or adjacent to the site, together with the creation of new landscape elements.

12.2 **Landscape character:** The effects on local landscape character that would result from the proposed development are assessed. The effect on site landscape character directly

¹¹ GLVIA, pg 57 para. 4.21.

correlates with the impact on landscape features (extent and duration). The effect on landscape character in the environs of the site is dependent on a range of factors (sensitivity) and overlaps with the visual assessment because the extent to which the proposed development would be visible from the surrounding countryside may influence neighbouring character areas. Effects on landscape character will also be directly influenced by the type of development proposed and whether it is consistent with existing land-use patterns.

12.3 Changes to landscape features and character may be adverse, beneficial or neutral. The erosion of a feature/character equates to an adverse impact, whilst strengthening of a feature/characteristics is regarded as beneficial. The substitution of a landscape feature/character unit with another that is different but locally appropriate may be assessed as a neutral impact.

12.4 For the purposes of this assessment, 'magnitude of change' on each landscape feature and landscape character area is classified using the categories listed below¹²:

Magnitude of Change for Landscape Effects

High:	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area. The proposals are the dominant feature and there is substantial damage (or major improvement) to key characteristics, features and elements that contribute to landscape, and/or the effects are long term and irreversible. Effect on a landscape feature of designated importance that cannot be replaced; total loss of features that would be difficult to replace. Loss of (or substantial effect on) existing landscape character and its replacement with characteristics that are atypical of the character area. The proposed development is inconsistent with existing land-use patterns.
Medium:	Moderate changes in localised area. The proposals form a visible and immediately apparent new feature that results in partial damage to (or addition of) key characteristics, elements and features that contribute to landscape, and/or the effects are medium to long term and largely irreversible. Total loss of feature that may be recreated over time; loss of small proportion of a feature that would be difficult to replace (e.g. mature woodland or historic species-rich hedgerow). A considerable change to landscape character (proposed landscape character appropriate to character area but different from adjoining areas).

¹² Whilst potential effects may be adverse or beneficial, for simplicity, the following definitions use examples of adverse impact, bearing in mind that significant effects on landscape features, in the context of LVIA, usually equate with total or partial loss. Where effects are deemed to be beneficial this will be clearly stated in the assessment text

Low:	Small change in any components. Some measurable change where the proposal constitutes a minor feature in the landscape and results in loss (or addition) of one (or maybe more) key characteristics, and/or the effects are short to medium term or could be irreversible. Total loss over sizeable area of a feature that can be recreated relatively easily (e.g. arable farmland); partial loss of feature that may be recreated over time, (e.g. young plantation/hedgerow); very minor loss of feature that would be difficult to recreate (e.g. woodland). A noticeable change to landscape character (proposed landscape character similar to existing landscape character of the area).
Very Low	Virtually imperceptible change of a temporary nature. The proposals result in very minor loss (or benefit) to the characteristics, features and elements that contribute to character, and/or effects are likely to be short term or could be reversible. Partial loss of feature that can be recreated relatively easily or which would regain its characteristics over time, minor or temporary effect on feature that can accommodate limited removal without noticeable change (e.g. gappy hedgerow). A barely perceptible change to landscape character.

12.5 The degree of significance of the landscape effect of the development is a product of sensitivity and magnitude of change.

13 Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

13.1 The degree of significance of visual effect is assessed at two levels:

- i) The significance of the effect on each individual VR;
- ii) The overall significance of the visual effect in the context of the zone of visual influence and the range of VRs as a whole.

13.2 In accord with the visual baseline, the degree of visibility of the proposed development from each VR is assessed based on the same four categories: No view; Glimpse; Partial view, Open view. The view as it would be both during construction and operation of the proposed development is described. A direct comparison of the descriptions of the view following development (or during construction) with that of the existing situation, together with degree of visibility, indicates the extent of the change to the view. The relationship between visual intrusion and extent of change to the view is dependent upon the character of the development in the context of the view and whether they are consistent or contrasting.

13.3 The scale or magnitude of visual change has been made with reference to the following¹³:

- *The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;*
- *The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and*

¹³ GLVIA, pg 115, para 6.39.

- *The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.*

13.4 *The geographical extent of a visual effect will vary with different viewpoints and is likely to reflect¹⁴:*

- *'The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;*
- *The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and*
- *The extent of the area over which changes would be visible'.*

13.5 The magnitude of change can be classified as follows:

Magnitude of Change for Visual Effects

High:	Total loss of, or major alteration to, key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements considered to be uncharacteristic of the baseline view. The development would occupy most of the view (open or panoramic view) resulting in significant change in the existing view. The proposals would cause a significant deterioration/improvement in the view. (If adverse, the proposals would be a dominant and incongruous feature in the view).
Medium:	Partial loss of, or alteration to, (one or more) key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic to the baseline view. The development may affect a partial view of most of it, or viewers would have a clear view of only a small part of the development. Also refers to distant views in which the site forms a significant proportion of the wider view resulting in a noticeable change in the existing view; The proposals would cause a noticeable deterioration/improvement in the view. (If adverse, the proposals would form a visible and recognisable incongruous new element readily noticed by a casual observer. If beneficial, the proposals would form a recognisable improvement that could be noticed by a casual observer.)
Low:	Minor loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic of the baseline view. Poor or difficult view of the development resulting in a perceptible change in the existing views; and The proposals would cause a minor deterioration/improvement in the view. If adverse, the proposals would be a small incongruous element in the view that could be missed by a casual observer. If beneficial, the proposals would form a small improvement to the view that could be missed by a casual observer.
Very Low:	Very minor loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements of the baseline view, and/or introduction of elements that are not characteristic of the baseline view. Poor or difficult view of the development resulting in barely perceptible changed of a temporary nature. Approximating to the 'no change' situation, where the proposals overall would not form a noticeable deterioration or improvement in the view.

¹⁴ GLVIA, pg 115, para 6.40.

14 Landscape and Visual Significance

- 14.1 The methodology is first to identify the sensitivity of the landscape features, local landscape character or the viewer and then the scale of change. From these the significance of the changes arising from the proposed development is assessed. At its simplest; sensitivity x scale of change = significance of effects, but modified by professional judgement.

Significance Matrix for Landscape and Visual Effects

	<i>Sensitivity</i>				
<i>Magnitude</i>	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
High	Major	Substantial	Substantial/ Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
Medium	Substantial	Substantial/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Major significance: An effect of international/national significance and is important to the decision-making process;

Substantial significance: An effect of regional/district significance and could be a key decision-making issue; prominent changes to a sensitive view or substantial change or widespread loss of characteristic features in a sensitive landscape with little capacity for change;

Moderate significance: An effect of district/local significance and not likely to be a key decision-making issue; noticeable change to view or in an average, ordinary landscape with some capacity to accommodate development; in combination the cumulative impacts of visual receptors with a moderate significance would be more significant and a key decision making issue;

Minor significance: An effect of very local significance and unlikely to be of importance to the decision-making process; small scale or temporary changes to view or to a low sensitivity landscape with capacity to accommodate development;

Negligible significance: Minimal effect and not significant to the decision-making process.

- 14.2 Effects are judged to be 'significant' if they are assessed as being Substantial/Moderate or higher. The professional judgement of experienced landscape assessors is used throughout the assessment. This may result in levels of significance that are greater or lesser than the application of the landscape and visual impact significance matrices, which are not a rigid formula.

Appendix B

National Landscape Character Area

No 125 South Downs and No 128 South Hampshire Lowlands

Appendix C

Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment

**2F: Forest of Bere East and
7H: South East Hampshire Downs**

Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment

**LCT A: Pasture and Woodland (Heath Associated) and
LCA 10: Blendworth Common and Woodlands**

Appendix E

East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment

LCT Wooded Claylands and LCA 10a: Havant Thicket and Southleigh Forest