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Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development in Christchurch Borough

Prepared by LUC
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Planning & EIA
Design
Landscape Planning
Landscape Management
Ecology
Mapping & Visualisation

LUC LONDON
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD
T 020 7383 5784
F 020 7383 4798
london@landuse.co.uk

Offices also in:
Bristol
Glasgow
Edinburgh



FS 566056
EMS 566057

Land Use Consultants Ltd
Registered in England
Registered number: 2549296
Registered Office:
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD

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1 Introduction

Background and Scope

- 1.1 This study assesses the potential effect of wind and solar photovoltaic (PV) energy developments on landscape character in Christchurch borough. It does this on the basis of the subdivision of the Borough into landscape character areas (LCAs) as identified in the Christchurch Borough Assessment¹, organised within the landscape character types (LCTs) identified in the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment². Studies in the same format have also been carried out for North Dorset, East Dorset and Purbeck districts.
- 1.2 Wind and solar power are two of the more 'mature' forms of renewable energy which have seen considerable growth across the UK in recent years. Planning applications for both types of installation have been submitted in most Dorset Districts and several sizeable schemes have been approved, including two solar farms totalling nearly 125 hectares at Parley, Christchurch, and the four-turbine Alaska Wind Farm at East Stoke near Wareham (although this is awaiting a final decision from the Court of Appeal). The first operational solar farm in Dorset, at Park Farm, Shroton, opened in 2011 and a 60m (to tip) wind turbine at Rogershill Farm, Bere Regis, was constructed in late 2012. Councils in Dorset want to ensure that renewable energy development takes place in the most appropriate locations, and landscape sensitivity is a key element in this.
- 1.3 Councils in Dorset recognise that the UK has a legally binding target to generate 15% of its energy from renewable sources. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to proactively address the need to increase the use of renewable energy sources; paragraph 97 of the NPPF states:
- To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:*
- *have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;*
 - *ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;*
 - *consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;*
 - *support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and*
 - *identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.*
- 1.4 Impact on landscape is one of the major planning considerations associated with wind and solar energy so by addressing sensitivity to these things this study will form a key element of the information base for addressing adverse impacts and community concerns, and for developing a positive strategy.
- 1.5 The study addresses sensitivity of landscape characteristics to wind and solar PV development but also considers the extent to which those characteristics will, at a general level, affect views of that landscape. It is not an assessment of visual sensitivity since that is dependent on the nature and location of the viewers (e.g. whether they are residents of a nearby settlement, tourists or passing motorists), and as such cannot be carried out without more detailed assessment of

¹ Christchurch Borough-wide Landscape Assessment – by Macgregor Smith Landscape Architecture 2003

² Prepared by Dorset Senior Landscape Officer Tony Harris subsequent to the Borough study – available on-line as an interactive map with associated data.

specific sites, but consideration of the way in which landscape characteristics affect views contributes to an appreciation of the likelihood of a development being considered acceptable or otherwise.

- 1.6 This assessment considers wind and 'field scale' solar PV developments that require planning consent (permitted development is set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995³). It does not cover roof mounted turbines or PV panels and it does not encompass freestanding 'back garden' installations or turbines less than 15m high, which can be constructed under Permitted Development planning regulations.
- 1.7 The assessment of sensitivity is concerned principally with completed, operational developments, not the construction process, since the effects of construction will typically be more limited or associated with a specific development location.
- 1.8 Although the assessment presented in this document is limited to Christchurch the methodology takes into consideration the effect of interrelationships with landscapes beyond the Borough boundary, in both Dorset and neighbouring counties.

Usage

- 1.9 LUC has been commissioned to undertake sensitivity assessment work for four Dorset Council areas: East Dorset District, Christchurch Borough, Purbeck District and North Dorset District. A common methodology has been employed across all four, but results are presented as separate reports for each Council.
- 1.10 It is intended that this report should:
 - Provide guidance to inform the development of design proposals at the pre-application stage;
 - Assist the Local Planning Authority with the EIA Screening process;
 - Inform the preparation of landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIA) for proposed developments (whether or not Environmental Impact Assessment is a planning requirement);
 - Assist with the determination of planning applications;
 - Contribute to the evidence base used by the Local Planning Authority to inform policy.
- 1.11 The assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind and solar PV development presented in this report does not extend to the assessment of the capacity of any given landscape area for such development, although at a basic level it is reasonable to assume that an area in which sensitivity is judged to be lower is likely to be able to accommodate more development than one in which sensitivity is judged to be higher. The question of how much wind or solar development is too much cannot be answered by a landscape sensitivity assessment, because policy considerations beyond landscape character have a key influence on determining strategies for landscape capacity – i.e. the question of capacity might have strategic considerations beyond those of cumulative impact on landscape character. For example:
 - National planning policy, guidance or targets might influence the level of wind or solar provision in an area, affecting the degree of landscape character change that might be considered acceptable by planning authorities in order to accommodate renewable energy;
 - Planning authorities may decide to adopt an approach to wind or solar PV energy which focuses development in certain locations, in effect accepting that landscape character will change in these areas as a result but considering this to be preferable to a lesser degree of landscape change over a wider area. Similarly there may be certain locations in which it is decided that no wind or solar PV development (or none beyond a certain scale) will be permitted, even though in terms of landscape character the impact of a particular proposal might, if assessed, be less than in an area not subject to a 'blanket ban'.

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1995/418/made/data.pdf>

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.12 There is currently no published method for evaluating sensitivity of different types of landscape to renewable energy developments. However, the approach taken in this study builds on current guidance published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage including the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance⁴, Topic Paper 6 that accompanies the Guidance⁵ and the Landscape Institute and IEMA's guidance for assessing landscape and visual impact⁶. More specifically the assessment methodology reflects the pilot methodology for wind turbine sensitivity assessment set out in the *Dorset Landscape Change Strategy: Pilot Methodology* produced by LUC for Dorset County Council in January 2010, and subsequent and on-going studies of a similar nature.
- 1.13 Paragraph 4.2 of Topic Paper 6 states that:
- 'Judging landscape character sensitivity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This involves making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss... and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change'*
- 1.14 Two aspects to landscape sensitivity assessment can be identified from this quote: the need to consider the characteristics of the landscape in relation to the type of development proposed – i.e. the *susceptibility* of the landscape – and the need to identify characteristics which are 'significant' or 'important'. These dual aspects of sensitivity are stressed in the latest Landscape Institute and IEMA guidance.
- 1.15 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used, which is based on the principles set out in Topic Paper 6 as well as definitions used in other landscape sensitivity studies of this type:

Landscape sensitivity is the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape is susceptible to change as a result of wind energy/field-scale solar PV development.

Basis of Assessment

- 1.16 This assessment uses as its 'baseline' the Borough-level Landscape Character Assessment published in 2003 and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the County-level landscape character typologies (LCT) which were informed by District-level assessments across the County. Both of these studies provide information on landscape characteristics and features, and also on the value which they contribute to overall character.
- 1.17 The study has been supported by fieldwork to verify desk-based assessment work. It does not set out to update the LCA, but it is possible that some conclusions with respect to sensitivity will reflect either a different interpretation of characteristics and their relative contribution or physical changes in the landscape which have occurred since the baseline assessments were published.
- 1.18 Potential effects of development on landscape character draw on LUC's experience in carrying out LVIA for specific development proposals in many part of the UK, preparing guidance on landscape sensitivity for local authorities and observing the landscape effects of operational wind and solar developments.

⁴ Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84

⁵ The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity.

⁶ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment v3 – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013)

Limitations of the Assessment

- 1.19 Certain locations, either localised or covering a broader area, may be considered less suitable for development for construction or operational reasons, e.g. access roads are too small to accommodate construction traffic or location has limited wind speeds or availability of sunlight. These considerations do not form part of the sensitivity assessment and would be expected to be addressed at an early stage in the consideration of a potential development site.
- 1.20 There will be local variations in the balance of sensitivities which this borough-level study cannot pick out but which an assessment of a specific location for proposed development would be expected to identify. Conclusions on sensitivity are generalisations, hence the approach outlined in section 5 below to indicate factors that would raise the typical level of sensitivity.
- 1.21 Although it takes into account ancient monuments or other historic landscapes where they form notable landscape features, the guidance does not cover specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings. Likewise it does not consider ecological issues associated with nature conservation designations, other proposed uses for land which might influence any development proposal (e.g. housing allocations) or technical issues relating to what might make one site more suitable than another for wind or solar PV development. These are factors that will need to be taken into account in site selection and in impact assessment work produced as part of the planning application process.

Document Structure

- 1.22 Sections 2 and 3 set out the principal components of wind and solar PV energy schemes and the nature of the effects that these could have on physical landscape elements, landscape characteristics and landscape value. Consideration is also given to current development trends in these forms of renewable energy.
- 1.23 Section 4 looks at the characterisation of the Borough's landscape in published assessments, providing the baseline information for assessment of sensitivity.
- 1.24 Section 5 sets out the methodology employed to carry out and present this assessment.
- 1.25 Section 6 details the criteria against which sensitivity has been assessed, including definitions of sensitivity levels and typologies used to reflect potentially differing levels of sensitivity to different scales of development.
- 1.26 Section 7 presents the assessment results for Christchurch Borough.
- 1.27 Sections 8 and 9 give brief summaries of the sensitivity findings for wind and solar PV development respectively, together with maps to illustrate sensitivity for different scales of potential development across the Borough.
- 1.28 Sections 10 and 11 provide generic guidance, for wind and solar PV development respectively, to assist in the identification of potential development sites that minimise adverse landscape and visual impact.

2 Characteristics of Wind Energy Development

Components of Development

- 2.1 The key components of wind energy development are the wind turbines, which may be grouped together into a 'wind farm'.
- 2.2 The main visible components of a wind turbine consist of the tower, nacelle and rotor blade system. Depending on the scale and design of the turbine, the transformer may be located inside or outside the tower. The tower itself sits on a buried concrete foundation which is hidden from view.
- 2.3 In addition to the turbines themselves, developments typically require additional infrastructure as follows:
 - Road access to the site able to accommodate Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) carrying long, heavy and wide loads (for the turbine blades and construction cranes);
 - On-site access tracks able to accommodate the construction HGVs - the size of these tracks will vary with the size of turbine and will remain during the operation of the wind farm, although they can be narrowed during operation;
 - A temporary construction compound and lay down area for major components;
 - An area of hardstanding next to each turbine to act as a base for cranes during turbine erection (these can be removed or covered over during operation);
 - Underground cables connecting the turbines (buried in trenches, often alongside tracks);
 - One or more anemometer mast(s) to monitor wind direction and speed;
 - A control building, to ensure that the turbine(s) are operating correctly, and a substation.
- 2.4 Depending on the scale of the operation and the site terrain, borrow pits may also be required to provide construction materials for the access tracks and/or to create level surfaces.
- 2.5 Lighting requirements depend on aviation and can be required on turbines. However, aircraft warning lights can be infra-red (IR) and therefore not visible to the naked human eye. Lighting has not been considered as part of the landscape sensitivity study, although guidance will advise that if lighting is required on turbines for aviation purposes, infra-red lighting should be used where possible to minimise visual impacts at night.
- 2.6 Security fencing may be required, either during construction or on an on-going basis.
- 2.7 The District Network Operator (DNO) is responsible for establishing a connection between the substation and the national grid. This connection is usually routed via overhead cables on poles, but may be routed underground (a more expensive option). Since these are part of a separate consenting procedure these connections are not being considered as part of the landscape sensitivity study.

Location, Size and Arrangement

- 2.8 As noted, in paragraph 1.6, this study is concerned with turbines which are at least 15m from base to maximum rotor tip height. The tallest on-shore turbines currently operating in the UK are c.125m to tip, although larger models are available.
- 2.9 Wind strength and consistency are important factors in determining the efficiency of a turbine, so more exposed locations are favoured, although installations can still be cost-effective in less optimal sites.

- 2.10 Spacing between wind turbines is typically between 5 and 9 times the rotor diameter, reflecting a balance between minimising capital costs (which will be greater if the site is larger) and minimising loss of efficiency as a result of the 'wind shadowing' effect of upstream turbines (which will be greater if turbines are closer together). However, separation may be as little as 3 times the rotor diameter and, conversely, much wider separation distances may be more effective on larger wind farms.
- 2.11 A turbine would usually be located far enough away from any residential property to avoid the phenomenon of 'shadow flicker' (see 2.19 below).
- 2.12 Ecological considerations play a role in the positioning of turbines; in particular they are typically located away from hedgerows to avoid risk of harm to bats (which commute or forage along such linear features).

Appearance

- 2.13 The majority of wind turbines consist of horizontal axis three-bladed turbines on a steel tower, as shown in **Figure 1** below. Other turbines are available including two bladed turbines and vertical axis turbines.
- 2.14 Turbines are typically a pale grey colour but some models have gradations in colour on the lower part of the tower, from a darker green at the base to grey further up.
- 2.15 The movement of a turbine is a unique feature of wind energy, setting it apart from fixed tall structures such as communications masts and electricity pylons.

Permanence

- 2.16 All forms of turbine are usually given planning permission for 25 years, although applications for upgrading (known as 'repowering') in order to enhance energy production (through larger and/or more efficient turbines) may take place during this period or when it due to elapse.



Figure 1: A three bladed turbine at Stowford Cross, Bradworthy, in Devon.

Effect on Existing Landscape Elements

- 2.17 The physical surface area required to accommodate a wind turbine will be relatively modest. The construction of turbines and associated infrastructure may result in direct loss of landscape features such as sections of hedgerow (to facilitate access) and will require land surface and land use change in the immediate area of the turbine, although beyond this the existing land use in a field containing a turbine could continue (e.g. grazing or arable cultivation).
- 2.18 Depending on the road network in the vicinity of a site there may also be requirements for widening, tree clearance or crown-lifting to facilitate access for construction traffic.
- 2.19 The phenomenon of 'shadow flicker', in which the movement of rotor blades in between the sun and a viewer within a building causes an effect akin to lights being repeatedly switched on and off, only theoretically occurs under specific conditions within a limited distance from a turbine. As such it is a specific residential amenity issue rather than a landscape character issue, and falls outside the remit of this study.
- 2.20 Earthworks are occasionally undertaken, e.g. to screen certain views, but the scale of this is usually limited.
- 2.21 A wind turbine/farm is considered a reversible development, so in theory all elements should be removed/reinstated when the site is decommissioned.
- 2.22 If remote grid connection works are required, these would have to be assessed as a separate development.

Effect on Landscape Characteristics

- 2.23 Impact on landscape character will in most circumstances relate to changes in the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character as a result of the introduction of new landscape elements, rather than to any change to or loss of existing physical landscape elements.
- 2.24 The most significant attribute of a wind turbine is its vertical scale. Even a small turbine is likely to be taller than any landscape element in the vicinity, and the movement that accompanies it will enhance its prominence as a landscape element.
- 2.25 Other aesthetic aspects of landscape character which could potentially be affected by wind development include the complexity of the landscape, pattern (in the case of wind farms rather than individual turbines) and the combination of texture, form, line, colour and balance which help to define the landscape character of an area.
- 2.26 Perceptual aspects of landscape character, such as peacefulness and tranquillity, typically reflect a degree of value attributed to the landscape (see below), which could be affected by the movement of a turbine and, at close quarters, by the noise it generates. Where tranquillity is associated with a lack of modern development the presence of a distinctly modern structure could also affect perceptions of tranquillity.

Effect on Landscape Value

- 2.27 Landscapes that have a high scenic quality may be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where the qualities of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB or AGLV) are likely to be affected by wind energy development.
- 2.28 All landscapes are likely to be valued to some degree by some people. 'Special qualities' is the term used to describe the characteristics that make an AONB distinctive and valued, but landscapes that are not designated may also have valued elements or characteristics recorded in B or County landscape assessments – e.g. perceptual qualities such as tranquillity.

Development Trends in Wind Energy

2.29 The following information is taken from 'reNews', a twice-monthly renewables industry publication, in a 'special report' of October 2013:

- There were 468MW of new wind energy installations in England in 2013, compared to average of 168MW per year over the period 2008-2012, which can principally be explained by the rush to install before the 10% reduction in the Renewables Obligation subsidy rate in April 2013.
- Developer predictions for new builds in 2014 are still high (a figure of 427MW was quoted in October 2013), but industry observers are predicting that gradual decline will set in within 5 years, as space and wind resource constraints become more significant, with central and southern England seen as having the most limited capacity.
- There is uncertainty in the industry over the degree of political will for continued growth in the sector, with an increasing number of schemes called in by the Department of Communities and Local Government, but decisions so far do not reflect any trend towards decreasing acceptance of wind energy.
- There is increasing competition for grid capacity between wind and solar developments, with their uncorrelated energy generation profiles creating redundant capacity in individual connections, so it is commercially effective to combine wind and solar on one site.

2.30 There were no planning applications, screening or scoping requests in relation to wind energy developments in Christchurch Borough in the 12 month period to September 2013.

3 Characteristics of Solar Energy Development

Components of Development

- 3.1 The principal component of solar PV development is panels of photovoltaic cells, encased in aluminium frames and supported by aluminium or steel stands. An individual panel is typically in the order of 1mx2m in size, but panels are grouped into 'arrays' of around 20 panels, usually in a double-row linear formation.
- 3.2 Grass is usually grown around and beneath the panels.
- 3.3 Other features of field scale solar PV may include:
 - Temporary storage compounds for plant, machinery and materials during the construction phase.
 - Inverters to convert the electricity from DC to AC - which may be housed within new or existing buildings and will require access tracks.
 - Transformer and underground power cables to transfer the electricity to the National Grid.
 - An on-site power house (usually a Portacabin with a concrete base).
 - Security fencing, usually 2-2.5 metres in height, required for insurance purposes.
 - Hedgerows or tree planting to screen sites.
 - CCTV (such as cameras mounted on 4.5m high poles).
 - Access tracks will be necessary on field scale schemes with central inverters (central inverters cannot be delivered and maintained using temporary tracks). In other instances, temporary matting can be used to bring the solar panels to a site (i.e. if a site is not accessible by existing roads or tracks).

Location, Size and Arrangement

- 3.4 In general, the favoured sites for PV schemes from a technical standpoint are plateau tops or gently sloping landforms, with a southerly aspect required to maximise efficiency. From a logistical standpoint, steep slopes are avoided.
- 3.5 The size of field-scale solar PV developments may vary considerably.
- 3.6 Panel arrays are positioned at a fixed angle between 20-40 degrees from the horizontal. The arrays are usually sited in parallel rows with gaps between the rows, typically 5-8m wide, to prevent shading of adjacent rows and to facilitate access.
- 3.7 The actual arrangement of the arrays within the landscape varies from scheme-to-scheme (i.e. regular layouts versus more varied and irregular, depending on the site situation). Generally though, layouts of the solar arrays tend to be regular.



Figure 2: solar PV development at Benbole Farm, Cornwall

- 3.8 Some developments contain panels that can be manually rotated several times a year to enable the arrays to track the sun and so ensure maximum capture of the sun's energy, while others feature fixed panels which are positioned to face in a southerly direction. The technology does exist to allow for automatic tracking, although this is at present much rarer. Movement due to automatic tracking is likely to be imperceptible as it will be slow.
- 3.9 Ground mounted panel arrays are typically set 0.6-1m above ground level, allowing the growth of vegetation beneath and between the arrays and sometimes the associated grazing of stock (usually sheep, since cattle would be more damaging to the installations and would require panels to be set further from the ground). The overall panel array height above ground level, taking into account the angle at which it is set, is usually between 2m and 3m.

Appearance

- 3.10 Panels are typically described as appearing dark in colour as a result of their non-reflective coating and maximised absorption of light. En-masse they tend to reflect the sky - for example, on a sunny day they can appear bluer while on a cloudy day they can appear a metallic grey. When viewed from a distance panels have sometimes been likened to poly tunnels or, depending on angle of light, to areas of standing water (i.e. reservoirs or lakes).
- 3.11 Whilst the spacing between rows means that a solar farm will not physically cover a whole field the degree of panel tilt means that, from most viewing angles, coverage will be dense and little will be seen of the ground surface in between rows. Similarly, unless viewed from above, it is unlikely that a whole solar PV development would be visible to the eye.
- 3.12 Panels may be seen from behind (back of the panels) or from the side (down the rows of frames), which will also influence how they are perceived.
- 3.13 The possibility of glint or glare emitting from the solar panels is a consideration in terms of the visual health and safety impacts of schemes, as specific alignments associated with a particular development proposal, e.g. a nearby road or airfield runway, might give cause for concern, but this is not addressed as a landscape character issue. Photovoltaic technology requires absorption of sunlight to allow for the conversion of energy to take place, therefore allowing little light energy to be lost, so the extent of impact on landscape character is not generally an issue above any concerns which might exist regarding the modern, man-made materials and geometric form of a solar PV installation.

Permanence

- 3.14 Like wind farms, solar PV developments are usually given planning permission for 25 years. The initial investment required to set up a solar farm, and its very nature as a renewable energy source, means that it would not be considered a short-term investment.
- 3.15 Earthworks associated with solar development are not usually major, so landscape impacts in most settings can be considered reversible. Panels do not require concrete foundations.



Figure 3: solar PV development in Muhlhausen, Germany



Figure 4: 1.25 hectare solar PV development at Five Mile Hill near Pathfinder Village, Cornwall



Figure 5: 8 hectare development at Park Farm, Shroton, North Dorset, viewed from Hambleton Hill

Effect on Existing Landscape Elements

- 3.16 Whilst there is some scope to utilise the space in between panels for other uses, a solar farm is likely, particularly in visual terms, to represent a change in land use. Vegetation within the site area is likely to be affected.
- 3.17 There may be damage to boundary features, e.g. hedgerows, to facilitate access.
- 3.18 Earthworks are occasionally undertaken, e.g. to screen certain views, but the scale of this is usually limited.
- 3.19 A solar farm is considered a reversible development, so in theory all elements should be removed/reinstated when the site is decommissioned.
- 3.20 Any major works associated with grid connections would have to be assessed as separate developments.

Effect on Landscape Characteristics

- 3.21 Solar PV development can affect the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character as a result of the introduction of new landscape elements.
- 3.22 The most significant aesthetic attributes of a solar PV development are its consistency of texture, form, line and colour and the rigidity of the geometric pattern created by massed arrays of panels. These can constitute a strong contrast with more natural textures and forms. These elements can, depending on the scale of development, have a significant impact on the existing landscape pattern.
- 3.23 Perceptual aspects of landscape character, such as a sense of rural tranquillity, typically reflect a degree of value attributed to the landscape (see below) which could be affected by the introduction of an overtly modern development such as a solar farm.

Effect on Landscape Value

- 3.24 Landscapes that have a high scenic quality may be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where the qualities of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB or AGLV) are likely to be affected by solar PV energy development.
- 3.25 All landscapes are likely to be valued to some degree by some people. 'Special qualities' is the term used to describe the characteristics that make an AONB distinctive and valued, but landscapes that are not designated may also have valued elements or characteristics recorded in District or County landscape assessments – e.g. perceptual qualities such as tranquillity.

Development Trends in Field Scale Solar PV Energy

- 3.26 Solar energy development is typically seen as less controversial than large scale wind energy development, and as such it has received clearer government support over recent years than onshore wind energy. Combined with a reduction in construction costs over recent years, this has led to a significant increase in planning applications.
- 3.27 Reductions in subsidies in 2013 and concerns over limited capacity for new grid connections have fuelled a high level of applications in the last year or so, in particular for larger schemes (above 5MW).
- 3.28 The information in the table indicates that major development has been approved in one specific area, adjacent to Bournemouth Airport. There were no applications during this period for smaller schemes within the Borough.

Table 1: Applications to Christchurch borough Council in year to September 2013

Location	Land area (ha)	Other details
Chapel Lane Parley	49ha	20MW Consented
Chapel Lane Parley	77ha	35MW Pending Decision

4 Baseline Landscape Character

Landscape Character Types and Areas

- 4.1 The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment subdivides the county into landscape character types (LCTs), which may occur either as one discrete area or, more commonly, as a number of separate areas.
- 4.2 Each LCT has a description which is subdivided into information on location, key characteristics (bullet points followed by a description), management objectives and key land management guidance notes.
- 4.3 The Christchurch Borough Assessment identifies LCTs which largely correspond to those defined at County level, but the landscape character areas (LCAs) which form the basis of the assessment do not always match, or constitute a subdivision of, the Borough LCTs. The County LCTs also incorporate some areas which are classified as 'urban edges and enclaves' rather than rural
- 4.4 Each LCA description is subdivided into a general description, a bullet-point list of main characteristics and an assessment of sensitivity to change.
- 4.5 In order that this assessment can draw on both County LCT and Borough LCA baseline character data it is sometimes necessary to subdivide the LCA. The table below summarises the relationships between LCTs and LCAs and where necessary makes reference, in the 'notes' column, to any specific treatment for this landscape sensitivity assessment.
- 4.6 **Figure 6** illustrates the LCTs and LCAs into which the Christchurch borough landscape is subdivided.

Table 2: Landscape categorisation

County LCT	District LCT	Borough LCAs	Notes
River Terrace	River Terraces	Avon River Terrace; The River Stour Terrace; Bournemouth Airport & East Parley Common; Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court; Urban Edges & Enclaves	Hurn Bridge (part of Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA) is split across all three LCTs; A small area to the south of the Avon River Terrace LCA is occupied by Urban Edge Area 1: Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross
Valley Pasture	Flood Plains	River Avon Flood Plain; River Stour Flood Plain; Moors River; Cowards March – Dudmoor Farm; Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court; Urban Edges & Enclaves	Hurn Bridge (part of Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA) is split across all three LCTs; The Valley Pasture LCT includes three defined Urban Edges: Area 2 - The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell Area 3 - Land of the South of Burton & North of the Railway Line Area 4 - The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford

			<p>Bridge;</p> <p>The River Stour Floodplain LCA includes a small wooded area which at County-level is categorised as Heath/Forest Mosaic</p>
<p>Heath/Forest Mosaic</p>	<p>Conifer Forests;</p> <p>Heathlands</p>	<p>St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest;</p> <p>Hurn Bridge</p>	<p>At County level, areas of coniferous forest and areas of heathland are considered as one 'mosaic';</p> <p>Hurn Bridge (part of Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA) is split across all three LCTs.</p>

Statutory Designations

4.7 There are no statutory landscape designations relating to the Borough of Christchurch.

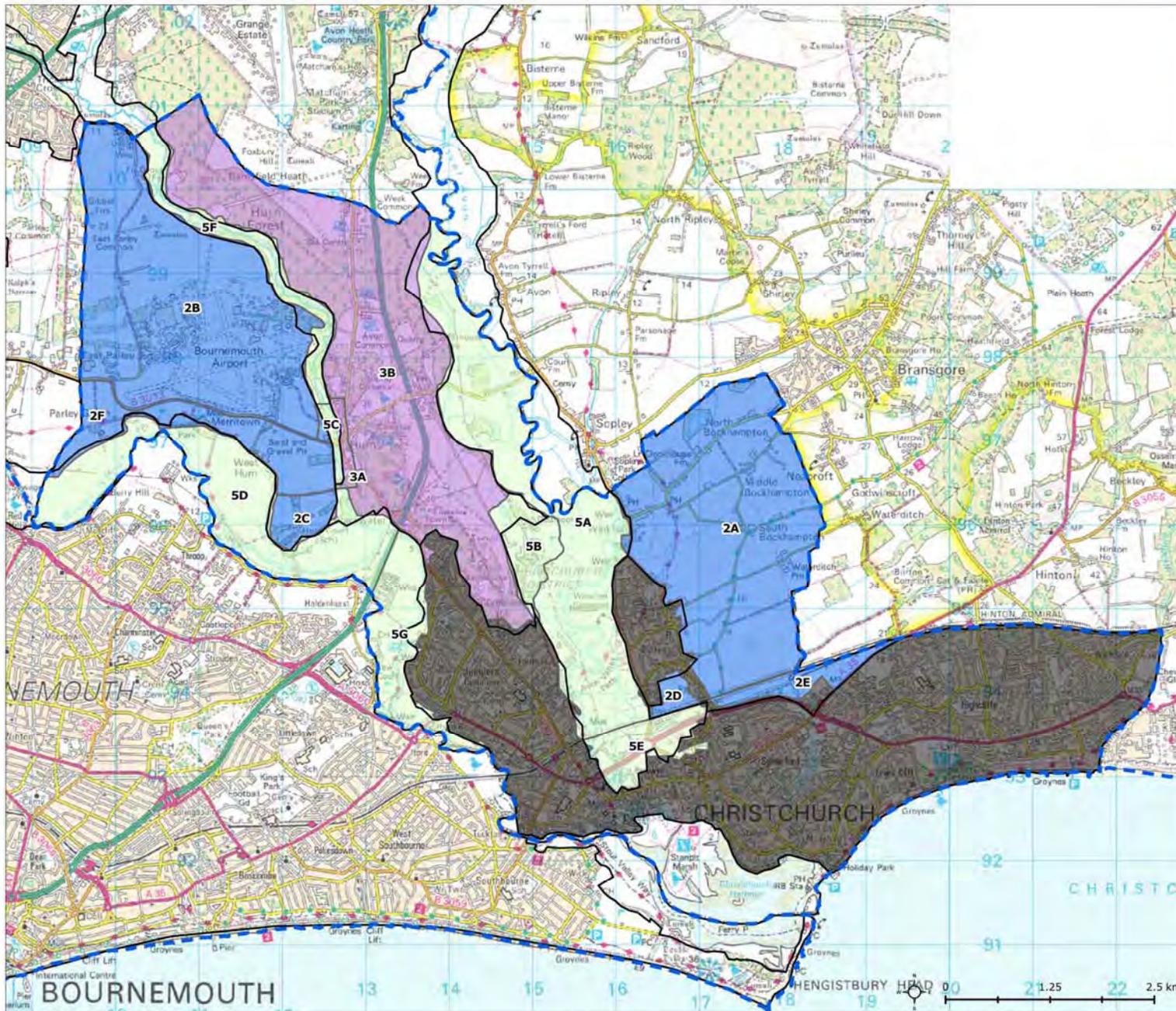
Figure 6

Christchurch - Landscape Character Types and Areas

-  District boundaries
-  LCT boundaries
-  LCA boundaries
-  AONB

Landscape Character Types and Areas

-  **2. River Terrace**
 - 2A - Avon River Terrace
 - 2B - Bournemouth Airport and East Parley Common
 - 2C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
 - 2D - South of Burton
 - 2E - Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross
 - 2F - The River Stour Terrace
-  **3. Heath/Forest Mosaic**
 - 3A - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
 - 3B - St Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest
-  **5. Valley Pasture**
 - 5A - Avon Flood Plain
 - 5B - Cowards Marsh - Dudmoor Farm
 - 5C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
 - 5D - River Stour Flood Plain
 - 5E - The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell
 - 5F - The Moors River
 - 5G - The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford Bridge
-  **23. Urban**



Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000



Source: Christchurch District Council

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LUC LDN 5864-01_060_Christchurch_Context_A4 11/03/2014

5 Methodology

Components of Landscape Sensitivity

- 5.1 The sensitivity of a landscape will depend on the **susceptibility** of the characteristics of that landscape to change as a result of the development type in question, the extent of **contribution** of those characteristics to landscape character and the overall **value** attached to the landscape.
- 5.2 It is recognised that it is not the intention of the Borough Assessment to attribute relative levels of value to different character areas. This approach is in keeping with LCA guidance⁷, which recognises that all landscapes are valued to some extent by some people, but LVIA guidance⁸ recognises that there are differences in value which will affect sensitivity, so some consideration of value is therefore required.
- 5.3 The methodology outlined below presents a systematic approach to assessing sensitivity, making judgements as objectively as possible.

Sensitivity Assessment Process

- 5.4 **Section 6** defines sets of **assessment criteria** relating to wind and solar PV energy development. The criteria are the same for both development types, but the definitions of relative levels of susceptibility vary. The definitions for each sensitivity criterion include examples to illustrate five different levels of sensitivity (see **Table 3**).
- 5.5 The level of impact on landscape character resulting from a development will clearly depend to an extent on the scale of the proposed development so it is necessary to consider different scenarios. These take account of the variable characteristics of each development type which are most likely to have an effect on landscape character. **Section 6** therefore also defines the different **scales of development** for wind and solar PV energy that have been used in this study.
- 5.6 **Section 7** sets out the **assessment of sensitivity to wind and solar PV energy development**. This is presented at the generic Landscape Type (LCT) level, with detailed information presented for constituent Landscape Character Areas (LCA).
- 5.7 Landscape Character Type assessments:
 - The County-level LCT summaries are studied to identify characteristics which reflect **susceptibility** to change as a result of wind or solar PV development as defined in the assessment criteria;
 - Any designations which indicate landscape value, and any characteristics or sensitivities identified in the LCT summary which reflect aspects of landscape **value**, are noted. The landscape typologies provide guidance on management objectives which gives a clear indication of value through the identification of elements to conserve, protect or restore. The latest LVIA guidance suggests a number of factors which can be used to identify the value of landscapes (see definitions in **Figure 7** below);
 - Comments are made on the 'typical' sensitivity within the LCT, weighing up the relative **contribution** of different characteristics and taking into consideration any aspects of landscape **value** which would affect the judgements.
- 5.8 Landscape Character Area assessments:

⁷ Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84

⁸ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment v3 (2013) – Landscape Institute and IEMA

- The above steps are repeated for each LCA represented within the LCT, making reference to the published landscape character assessment;
- An assessment of the LCA's sensitivity, represented by a rating on a five-point scale (defined in **Table 3** below), is made for each combination of the defined **scales of development** for each development type. Consideration is given to any characteristics or features which would elevate the typical level of sensitivity within each LCA.

5.9 Presentation of the landscape sensitivity assessment results:

- **Sections 8** and **9** comprise brief summaries of the assessment findings for wind and solar PV energy respectively, followed by maps illustrating sensitivity ratings across the Borough for each development scale category.
- In addition to the assessment of sensitivity by LCA/LCT a generic check list is provided, in **Section 10** for wind energy and **Section 11** for solar PV, to assist potential developers in the consideration of the sensitivity of a specific site.

Table 3: Sensitivity definitions

Sensitivity Level	Definition
High	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from the development type. Such development is likely to result in a significant change in character.
Moderate-high	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from the development type. There may be some limited opportunity to accommodate the development type without significantly changing landscape character. Great care would be needed in locating development.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from the development type. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb development, it is likely to cause a degree of change in character. Care would be needed in locating development.
Moderate-low	Fewer of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from the development type. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate development with limited change in character. Care is needed when locating development to avoid adversely affecting key characteristics.
Low	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are unlikely to be adversely affected by introduction of the development type. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate development without a significant change in character. Care is needed when locating development to ensure best fit with the landscape.

Range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes

- **Landscape quality (condition):** A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- **Scenic quality:** The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).
- **Rarity:** The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.
- **Representativeness:** Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
- **Conservation interests:** The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Recreation value:** Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- **Perceptual aspects:** A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- **Associations:** Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or event in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

Figure 7: Aspects of landscape value (from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment v3)

6 Criteria for Assessment of Sensitivity

Criteria for Assessment of Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development

- 6.1 **Table 4** identifies landscape characteristics which could potentially be affected by wind development, and gives examples of physical landscape elements which, by exhibiting these characteristics, might suggest a greater susceptibility to character change.

Table 4: Landscape characteristics and their susceptibility to wind energy development

Scale and complexity of landform				
<p>A smooth gently sloping or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent headlands and cliffs) or pronounced undulations. Larger scale landforms are likely to be less sensitive than smaller scale landforms - because turbines may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms or appear visually confusing (due to turbines being at varying heights) in the latter types of landscapes.</p> <p>Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. an extensive lowland flat landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landform	e.g. a simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform	e.g. an undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be a medium scale landform	e.g. a landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. a landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform

Scale and complexity of land use & field pattern

Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and / or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features that are traditional of the landscape, such as stone farmsteads and small farm woodlands⁹. This is because large features such as wind turbines may dominate smaller scale traditional features within the landscape.

Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		↔		Higher sensitivity
e.g. a very large-scale landscape with uniform groundcover and lacking in human scale features	e.g. a landscape with large-scale fields, little variety in land cover and occasional human scale features such as trees and domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with medium sized fields, some variations in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with irregular small-scale fields, variety in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with a strong variety in land cover and small-scale / irregular in appearance containing numerous human scale features

Visual exposure

The relative visibility of a landscape or distinctive elements within it, both from within the character area and in relation to other character areas, will influence its sensitivity. An open, elevated landscape such as a hill range or escarpment, which permits panoramic views and is also widely visible from surrounding landscapes, may be more sensitive than a more enclosed, inward-looking landscape, where turbines are more likely to be screened by vegetation and/or topography. Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a skyline backdrop to a neighbouring area, are considered more sensitive than those with less important visual relationships. The sensitivity of the related landscapes will also affect the importance of visual exposure: a character area will for example be more sensitive if it forms part of the setting of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB), and if the character area itself also has high scenic quality then its sensitivity will be further magnified. Visual sensitivities may also relate to specific landscape features, such as a prominent ancient monument.

Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, fieldwork.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		↔		Higher sensitivity
e.g. An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of lower sensitivity	e.g. A landscape with limited connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of low or medium sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has some relationship with neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which is intervisible with several related areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium or higher sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has important relationships with one or more neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of high sensitivity

⁹ Human scale features are aspects of land cover such as stone walls, hedges, buildings which give a 'human scale' to the landscape

Development and activity				
<p>Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil tend to be more sensitive to wind energy development, since turbines may be perceived as intrusive. Landscapes which are relatively free from overt human activity and disturbance, and which have a perceived naturalness, or a strong feel of traditional rurality, or are dominated by historic rather than modern buildings, will therefore be more sensitive. Wind turbines will generally be less intrusive in landscapes which are strongly influenced by modern development, including settlement, industrial and commercial development and infrastructure.</p> <p>Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps, fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development, such as industrial areas	e.g. a rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity, such as intensive farmland	e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development, such as industrial areas	e.g. a rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes

Wind Energy Development Typologies

- 6.2 For the purposes of presenting the assessment, the following wind turbine height categories are defined:
- 15-35 metres to blade tip;
 - 36-65 metres to blade tip;
 - 66-99 metres to blade tip;
 - Over 99 metres to blade tip.
- 6.3 The following cluster size categories are also defined:
- A single turbine;
 - 2-4 turbines;
 - More than 4 turbines.
- 6.4 These typologies have been defined with reference to the spread of turbine sizes available, the sizes of turbines already operational in the County, the range of sizes for which planning applications or pre-application requests have been made and a general assessment of sensitivity of the Dorset landscape.
- 6.5 In order to visualise how these different turbine heights relate to other tall structures, **Table 5** and **Figure 8** below set out the heights of features including some well-known landmarks and existing wind energy developments in the County:

Table 5: Tall structures comparison

Structure	Height
Domestic buildings	6-10m
Mature deciduous trees (depending on species)	10-25m
Charborough Tower	30m
Horton Tower, near Chalbury Common	43m
Standard lattice tower 'pylons'	25-50m
Sealife Tower, Weymouth	53m
Rogershill Farm turbine, near Bere Regis	60m (to tip)
Salisbury Cathedral	123m

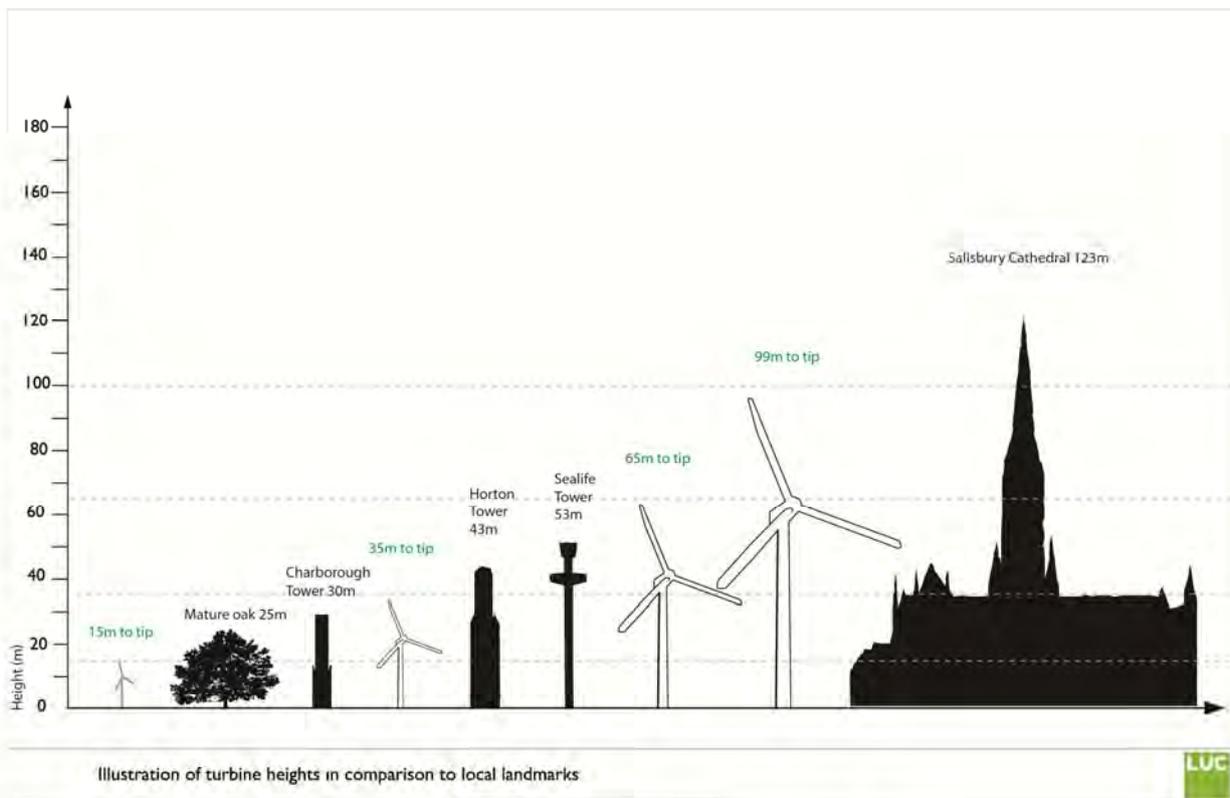


Figure 8: Tall structures comparison

Criteria for Assessment of Sensitivity to Solar PV Development

6.6 **Table 6** below identifies landscape characteristics which could potentially be affected by solar PV development, and gives examples of physical landscape elements which, by exhibiting these characteristics, might suggest a greater susceptibility to character change.

Table 6: Landscape characteristics and their susceptibility to solar PV development

Scale and complexity of landform				
<p>Arrays of solar panels will be less easily perceived in a flatter landscape than on a sloping one, and will also stand out less if the landform is even rather than undulating. A landscape in which topographic variations occur at a more localised scale is more likely to contrast with solar PV land use than a larger scale landscape in which variations are less frequent. The margins of character areas may be more sensitive, if there is a distinct change in landform.</p> <p>Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. An extensive flat lowland landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landscape with no distinctive landform features	e.g. A simple, gently rolling landscape, likely to be of medium-large scale, without distinctive landform	e.g. An undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be of medium scale	e.g. A landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topography (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. A landscape with a distinctive, rugged landform or dramatic topographical features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform
Scale and complexity of land use & field pattern				
<p>A solar farm is a very homogeneous and typically geometric form, and one which is likely to contrast with more natural textures. The presence of a diversity of land uses in the landscape will act to reduce sensitivity in this respect, particularly if those uses include arable land, horticulture or brown-field sites, whereas there is more likelihood that solar PV development will stand out as a significant change in a semi-natural landscape or one in which permanent pasture features heavily. However, complexity of land use needs to be considered in tandem with scale and complexity of field patterns: the size of a proposed development relative to the scale of the field pattern in the locality is an important consideration because of the risk of diluting or masking the characteristic landscape patterns through development that is out of scale with boundary features. In general terms landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of solar PV development than landscapes with medium or large scale fields in regular, geometric patterns, although an open area lacking field boundaries would also be highly susceptible to the imposition of a new pattern.</p> <p>Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. A landscape with a strong variety in land cover, including significant arable or 'brownfield' elements, but with a geometric, medium or large field pattern	e.g. A mixed pastoral and arable landscape with medium sized fields mostly in geometric forms	e.g. A mixed pastoral and arable landscape with a some variation in field sizes or shapes and some semi-natural land cover	e.g. A landscape with irregular or small-scale fields and some variety of land use but largely pastoral	e.g. A landscape of small, irregular fields with uniform pastoral land use, or an open semi-natural landscape

Visual exposure				
<p>The relative visibility of a landscape or distinctive elements within it, both from within the character area and in relation to other character areas, will influence its sensitivity. A landscape with a strong sense of enclosure is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than a more open and exposed landscape in which the development can be more readily perceived. Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a skyline backdrop to a neighbouring area, are considered more sensitive than those with less important visual relationships. The sensitivity of the related landscapes will also affect the importance of visual exposure: a character area will for example be more sensitive if it forms part of the setting of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB), and if the character area itself also has high scenic quality then its sensitivity will be further magnified. Visual sensitivities may also relate to specific landscape features, such as a prominent ancient monument.</p> <p>Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of lower sensitivity	e.g. A landscape with limited connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of low or medium sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has some relationship with neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium sensitivity	A landscape which is intervisible with several related areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium or higher sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has important relationships with one or more neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of high sensitivity
Development and activity				
<p>Landscapes which show evidence of modern development, including settlement, industrial and commercial development and infrastructure, tend to be less sensitive to solar PV development. Landscapes which are relatively free from overt human activity and disturbance, and which have a perceived naturalness, a strong feel of traditional rurality or are dominated by historic rather than modern buildings, will therefore be more sensitive.</p> <p>Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps, fieldwork.</p>				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		↔	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. A landscape with much human activity and development, such as industrial areas	e.g. A rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes	e.g. A rural landscape with some modern development and human activity, such as intensive farmland	e.g. A more naturalistic or historic landscape and/or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. A tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development

Solar PV Development Typologies

- 6.7 Of the scheme elements considered in **Section 3** the only one which is considered to offer sufficient variation to have a significant impact on landscape sensitivity is the overall size of the solar PV development in terms of the land area covered by panels. The technology is very scalable, and can be used from garden-sized installations upwards; applications as large as 50

hectares have been submitted elsewhere in the UK. In general, the larger the proposed development the greater its impact is likely to be, but the characteristics of the landscape in which it is sited may either emphasise or diminish this impact.

- 6.8 The density of rows of solar PV panels doesn't tend to vary more than is necessary to allow sufficient spacing to avoid over-shading (which will differ a little depending on latitude), and the general appearance of a solar farm, in terms of array design, materials and associated fencing and built infrastructure, are fairly consistent.
- 6.9 Higher arrays are unlikely to appear because any benefit of additional vertical panels would be offset by the need to set parallel rows of arrays further apart, to avoid shading. A rare exception to this is where the intention is to graze cattle beneath the panels, requiring higher and stronger mountings.
- 6.10 For the purposes of assessing landscape sensitivity through this study, the following scales of solar PV development are defined:
- Up to 1 hectare (2.5 acres);
 - 1 to 10 hectares (2.5 to 25 acres);
 - 10 to 30 hectares (25 to 75 acres);
 - Over 30 hectares (75 acres).
- 6.11 This banding has been defined with reference to the sizes of solar PV development already operational in the County, the range of sizes for which planning applications or pre-application requests have been made and a general assessment of sensitivity of the Dorset landscape.
- 6.12 In order to visualise these different areas, the table below sets out the size of features including some well-known landmarks and existing solar energy developments in the County:

Table 7: Comparative areas

Structure	Area (hectares)
Typical football pitch	0.6 – 0.8
Moors Lake (in Moors Valley Country Park)	3.6
Badbury Rings Hill Fort	7
Solar Farm at Park Farm, Shroton	8
Longham Reservoir (south of Ferndown)	10
Poole Park Boating Lake	21
Typical 18-hole golf course	50

7 Assessment of Sensitivity to Wind and Solar PV Energy Development in Christchurch

Using the assessment for a specific location or area

- 7.1 The assessment is presented by **Landscape Character Type (LCT)** so the map of all LCTs within the Borough in **Figure 6** should be referenced to identify the relevant LCT(s).
- 7.2 The heading page for each LCT (**Figure 9**) gives the names of the **Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)** that fall (wholly or partly) within the LCT and a **map** is provided to illustrate the relevant LCT and LCA boundaries within the Borough. A smaller inset map shows occurrences of the LCT across the whole County. It should be noted that there is not always a consistent relationship between LCTs and LCAs: typically an LCT will subdivide into one or more LCAs but sometimes one LCA will cover more than one LCT (as noted in **Table 2** in section 4).

Landscape character type: River Terrace

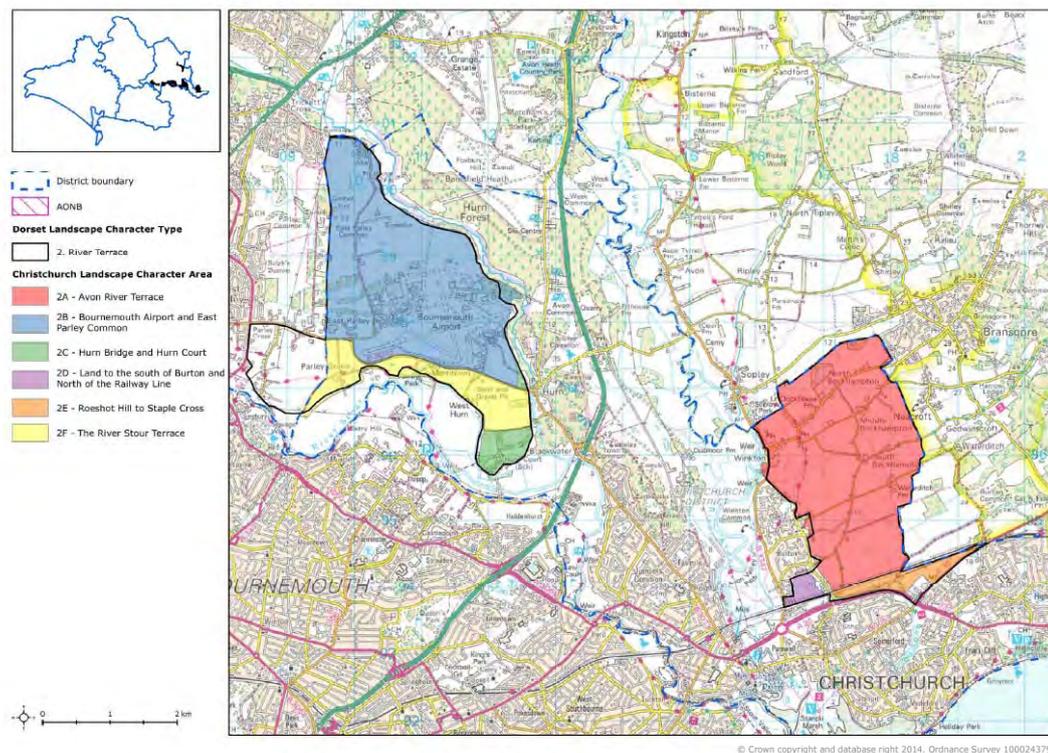


Figure 9: example of heading page for LCT

- 7.3 Where a substantial part of an LCA is defined at County-level as being in a different LCT to the rest the LCA assessment is likewise split, but where boundary differences between LCT and LCA definitions are less significant, affecting only small areas, the LCA is assessed as a whole. In the case of an area of interest in an LCA falling outside of the boundary for the LCT, as will be clear from the assessment mapping, the reader should also make separate reference to the assessment for the nearest LCA in the LCT in question, in case this identifies any potential differences in sensitivity.
- 7.4 An assessment table for the LCT (**Figure 10**) follows the map page. This starts with a brief **overview** of the LCT location and relationship with LCAs and surrounding LCTs. The following lines list relevant information from the County-level 'key characteristics' and 'landscape management guidance' for the LCT, arranged under headings of **susceptibility criteria** (as

identified in section 6 above). Direct quotes from published assessments are shown in italics, whilst other text represents the assessment judgements formed by LUC on the basis of the published assessments and supported by fieldwork carried out by LUC between October and December 2013.

- 7.5 The LCT descriptions are also drawn upon to identify any factors which add **value** either to the LCT or to particular elements within it. **Figure 7** lists aspects of value which could influence the sensitivity of the landscape to wind or solar PV development.

River Terrace LCT overview	
<p>The River Terrace LCT is associated with the lower reaches of the two major rivers that discharge to the Channel at Christchurch: the Avon and the Stour. In Christchurch Borough the River Terrace LCT is subdivided into six LCAs (or parts of LCAs): the Avon terrace is mostly characterised as one LCA but with a distinct area to the south of the railway embankment and an area to the south of Burton considered to have an urban edge character. The Stour terrace is subdivided into the area closest to the river, a wider area largely occupied by Bournemouth Airport, and the enclosed landscape around Hurn Court. Beyond the Borough boundaries, the Stour Valley has a number of distinct areas of River Terrace in East Dorset, whilst the Avon falls within Hampshire. </p>	
River Terrace LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
<p>Scale and complexity of landform:</p> <p><i>"A wide and flat landform with deep alluvial and gravel soils"</i></p> <p>All river terraces are relatively flat, sloping only gently down towards adjacent river valleys.</p>	<p>Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:</p> <p><i>"Mixed agricultural land of arable and livestock with some marginal 'urban fringe' farming"</i></p> <p><i>"Medium scale landscape"</i></p> <p><i>"Fields subdivided by low hedges and or fencing"</i></p>
<p>Visual exposure:</p> <p><i>"Woodland blocks and shelter belts form important landscape features and backdrops"</i></p> <p><i>"There are important groups of interconnected trees, copses and tall mature hedgerows which frame horizons and vistas in places"</i></p>	<p>Development and activity:</p> <p><i>"Heavily influenced and impacted on by urban development including sand/gravel extraction, power lines and transport corridors and the south east Dorset conurbation"</i></p> <p><i>"Scattered farmsteads across the rural parts"</i></p> <p><i>"Some quiet relatively isolated areas"</i></p>
River Terrace LCT value characteristics	
<p>None of the River Terraces LCAs are within designated AONBs.</p> <p>Being flat areas elevated slightly above river floodplains the River Terrace LCT areas have attracted significant development over a long period of time, in terms of settlement and also transport, communications and power supply links. These have given rise to landscape characteristics which are typically considered to detract from landscape value but the proximity to sizeable areas of population also elevates other aspects of landscape value, namely the role of these LCAs for recreation and as 'buffers' of open land between urban areas. The LCT description notes that <i>"Away from [the urban edge] there are some quiet lanes and paths which act as important accessible recreational areas"</i>.</p> <p>This value, but also the need for landscape improvement in some locations, is reflected in the principal management objective for the River Terrace landscape type: to <i>"maintain and enhance the value of the area as a buffer, control and minimise the impact of development and transport infrastructure/use and the opportunities for large-scale multi-functional landscape restoration and creation should be promoted and explored"</i>.</p>	

Figure 10: example of LCT description page

- 7.6 General comments are made regarding the sensitivity of the LCT to wind and solar energy, with reference to the susceptibility criteria and landscape value (**Figure 11**).

River Terrace LCT sensitivity to wind energy	River Terrace LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>The lack of undulations and absence of distinctive shapes mean that the landform is less sensitive to wind energy development.</p> <p>The extent of development and activity that is typically found within this LCT means that there is rarely a strong sense of tranquillity or remoteness, but it also gives a human scale to the landscape that would be sensitive to the introduction of wind turbines. Visually there are unlikely to be panoramic vistas or dramatic skylines to be interrupted by new development, although any tall structure will be widely visible and visually dominant.</p>	<p>The lack of undulations makes the sensitivity of River Terraces low in topographical terms. Land use varies, but the typical medium scale and fairly geometric field pattern can be considered moderately sensitive. Ground cover also varies, with low hedges or fences giving an open character in places but stronger hedgerows and tree groups creating more enclosure and visual screening in other locations. There is potential in places to introduce planting to increase screening, one of the LCT assessment management objectives for the area being to <i>"... integrate new and existing development in a more sympathetic way e.g. by using new and existing woodland blocks and shelter belts to integrate development"</i>.</p> <p>Views within the River Terrace LCT are typically limited by the lack of elevated viewpoints, and slopes beyond the LCT boundaries are usually gentle, so interaction with other LCTs is often limited and woodland blocks within the LCT, or the urban edge, will often form horizons.</p> <p>The extent of modern development and activity reduce the sense of naturalness within much of the LCT, but there are more rural areas where there is some sense of separation from urban influences.</p> <p>Landscape value considerations will be important in determining the level of sensitivity to solar development in any given part of the LCT. Areas which are important in recreational terms, or as 'islands' of rural land use separating more urban surroundings, will have a higher value than the quality of their landscapes would warrant in purely scenic terms, and consequently greater sensitivity. Locations which fall within the settings of historic village cores or parkland estates will also have elevated sensitivity.</p>

Figure 11: example of LCT assessment text

- 7.7 For each LCA represented within the LCT a map is presented to show the LCA, together with its area in hectares¹⁰ (**Figure 12**). This is followed by quotes and comments relating to

¹⁰ Calculation based on LCA boundary data provided by Christchurch Borough Council

susceptibility and value in the same format as for the LCT but with reference to the Borough Landscape Character Assessment (**Figure 13**).

Landscape character area: Avon

Area: 616 hectares

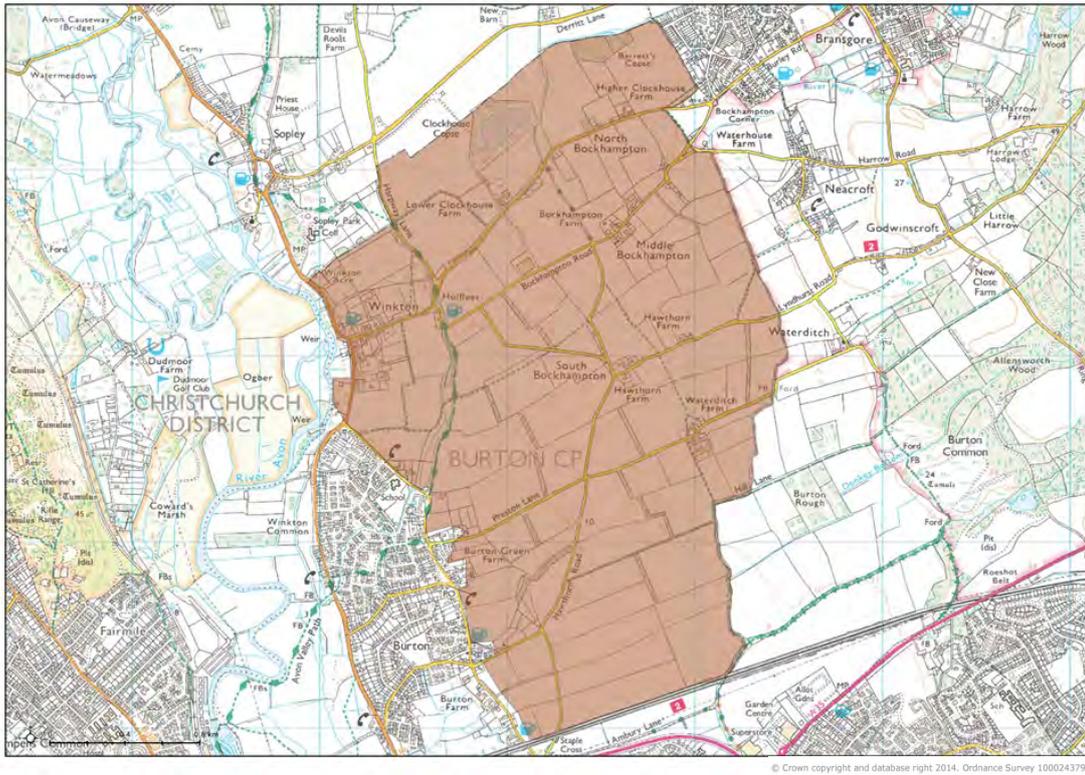


Figure 12: example of LCA map page

Avon LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
<p>Scale and complexity of landform:</p> <p>"As an alluvial terrace the area within the Borough boundary ranges between 7 and 15m AOD, over distances of 2km this change in level is almost imperceptible."</p>	<p>Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:</p> <p>"Medium scale enclosure landscape of low hedged/fenced fields and occasional shelter belt plantations".</p> <p>"Field boundaries being generally low flail cut native hedges with occasional hedgerow trees. A pattern of narrow pine shelterbelts run north south through the landscape, a characteristic noted in other sections of the Avon Valley."</p> <p>Farmland is largely arable in this LCA.</p>
<p>Visual exposure:</p> <p>"Overall area enclosed by rising ground to the east and rail embankment to the south. Low horizon and limited views across and out of the landscape"</p> <p>"From nearby lanes and footpaths [large scale modern farm] buildings are intrusive. Although in the wider landscape the flat landscape provides few elevated viewpoints to give long distance views of the buildings."</p> <p>Whilst there is significantly higher ground to the east, with public viewpoints such as from St Catherine's Hill, the wooded river corridor (Avon River Valley Pasture LCT) which lies in between limits ground level views of the Avon River Terrace.</p>	<p>Development and activity:</p> <p>"The landscape is not heavily populated or developed. With quiet minor roads and footpaths, it is possible to feel some isolation (relative to the other parts of the Borough) within parts of the area".</p> <p>"A network of minor lanes links a number of individual farmsteads to the settlements of Burton and Winkton within Christchurch and Bransgore outside the Borough to the northeast. This is complemented by a number of footpaths and bridleway links giving a good degree of recreational access to the area."</p> <p>"Large scale modern farm buildings exist in a number of locations. These have been set within the open landscape with no significant landscape treatment and reflective roofing materials"</p> <p>"Glimpsed views of urban development, general noise intrusion, and intrusion of the railway result in a degree of connection to the modern townscape. This is not a totally unspoilt landscape."</p>
Avon LCA value characteristics	
<p>"The landscape of the terrace is not one with a strong sense of place or positive identity. However, within the context of Christchurch Borough, the open and essentially 'empty' space is an asset as this provides an area of agricultural countryside as a contrast to the suburban townscapes and enclosed coniferous forests elsewhere in the Borough. There is also a value in the spatial separation the terrace provides between Christchurch and the New Forest."</p> <p>The Borough assessment notes that "as a 'modern' landscape the terrace farmland provides few cultural heritage connections", but this area has a rural character and a sense of separation despite being close to Christchurch which gives it value for recreation and as buffer for the New Forest National Park. The Borough assessment categorises the LCA as a tranquil area, not significantly affected by urbanising influences.</p>	

Figure 13: example of LCA description page

7.8 Matrices are provided for each LCA to give, for each development typology, **ratings** of overall **sensitivity**, weighing up the importance of characteristics and associated susceptibility criteria for the LCT in general and the specific LCA in question and taking into consideration any aspects of landscape value which would affect the judgement. Summaries are provided to explain the judgements and to note any **local characteristics** which might serve to increase or decrease the sensitivity from the rating provided for the LCA as a whole (**Figure 14**).

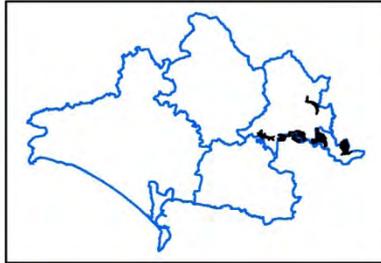
Avon LCA sensitivity to wind energy					Avon LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy																																								
<p style="text-align: center;">Turbine height</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤35</td> <td>≤35</td> <td>≤99</td> <td>>99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cluster size</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>M</td> <td>MH</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2-4</td> <td>MH</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td>>4</td> <td></td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> </tr> </table>						≤35	≤35	≤99	>99	Cluster size					1	M	MH	H	H	2-4	MH	H	H	H	>4		H	H	H	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Development size</td> <td>≤1</td> <td>LM</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤10</td> <td>M</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤30</td> <td>MH</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>>30</td> <td>H</td> </tr> </table>				Development size	≤1	LM		≤10	M		≤30	MH		>30	H
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Figure 14: example of LCA assessment page

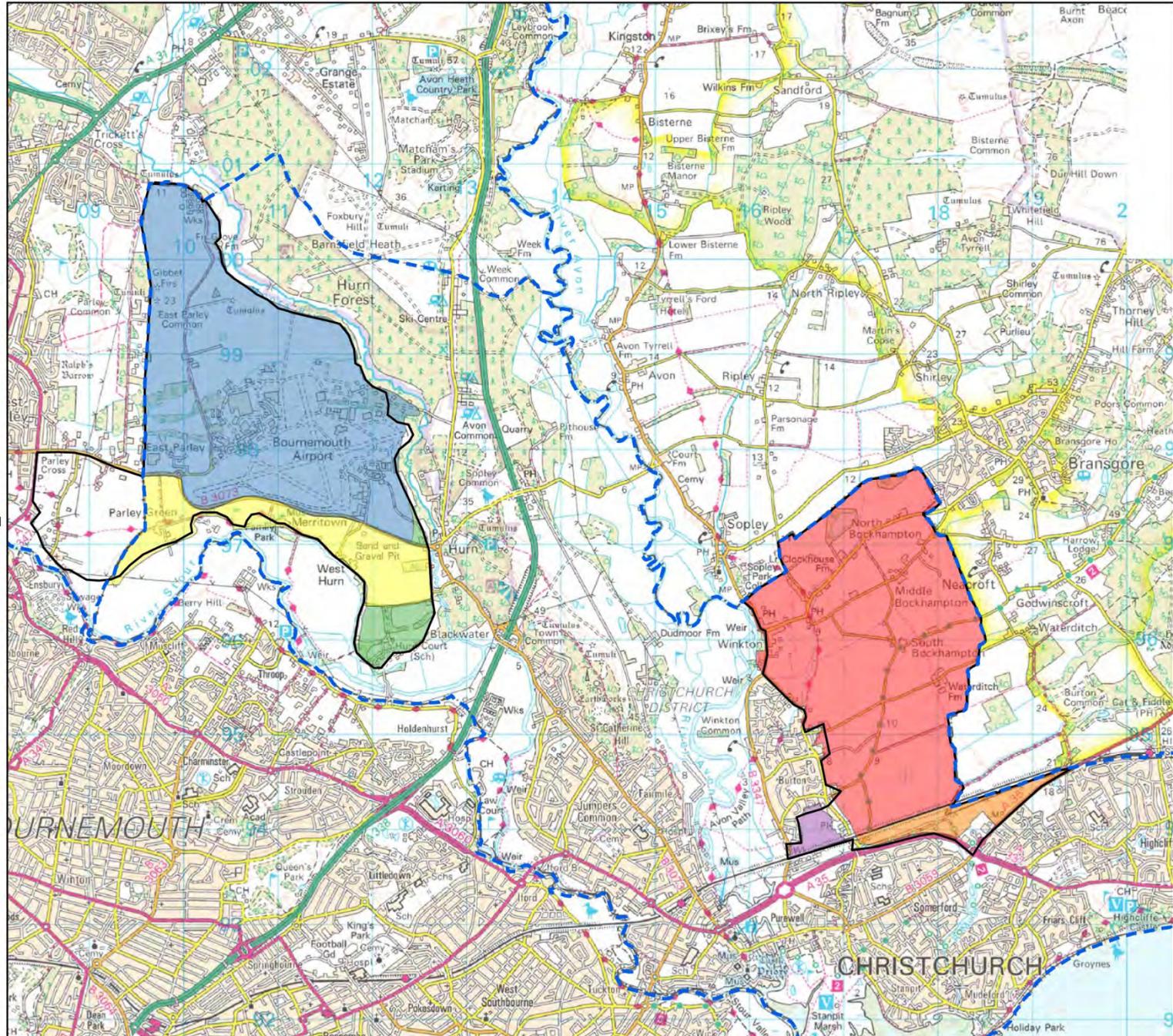
7.9 Reference should be made to the published landscape character assessments to gain a fuller picture of characteristics and features of an area.

7.10 **Sections 8 and 9** have maps to show sensitivity ratings across all the LCAs in the Borough. For wind power there is one map for each combination of cluster size and turbine height and for solar PV energy there is one map per size category.

Landscape character type: River Terrace



-  District boundary
-  AONB
- Dorset Landscape Character Type**
-  2. River Terrace
- Christchurch Landscape Character Area**
-  2A - Avon River Terrace
-  2B - Bournemouth Airport and East Parley Common
-  2C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
-  2D - Land to the south of Burton and North of the Railway Line
-  2E - Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross
-  2F - The River Stour Terrace



River Terrace LCT overview

The River Terrace LCT is associated with the lower reaches of the two major rivers that discharge to the Channel at Christchurch: the Avon and the Stour. In Christchurch Borough the River Terrace LCT is subdivided into six LCAs (or parts of LCAs): the Avon terrace is mostly characterised as one LCA but with a distinct area to the south of the railway embankment and an area to the south of Burton considered to have an urban edge character. The Stour terrace is subdivided into the area closest to the river, a wider area largely occupied by Bournemouth Airport, and the enclosed landscape around Hurn Court. Beyond the Borough boundaries, the Stour Valley has a numbers of distinct areas of River Terrace in East Dorset, whilst the Avon falls within Hampshire.

River Terrace LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"A wide and flat landform with deep alluvial and gravel soils"

All river terraces are relatively flat, sloping only gently down towards adjacent river valleys.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Mixed agricultural land of arable and livestock with some marginal 'urban fringe' farming"

"Medium scale landscape"

"Fields subdivided by low hedges and or fencing"

Visual exposure:

"Woodland blocks and shelter belts form important landscape features and backdrops"

"There are important groups of interconnected trees, copses and tall mature hedgerows which frame horizons and vistas in places"

Development and activity:

"Heavily influenced and impacted on by urban development including sand/gravel extraction, power lines and transport corridors and the south east Dorset conurbation"

"Scattered farmsteads across the rural parts"

"Some quiet relatively isolated areas"

River Terrace LCT value characteristics

None of the River Terraces LCAs are within designated AONBs.

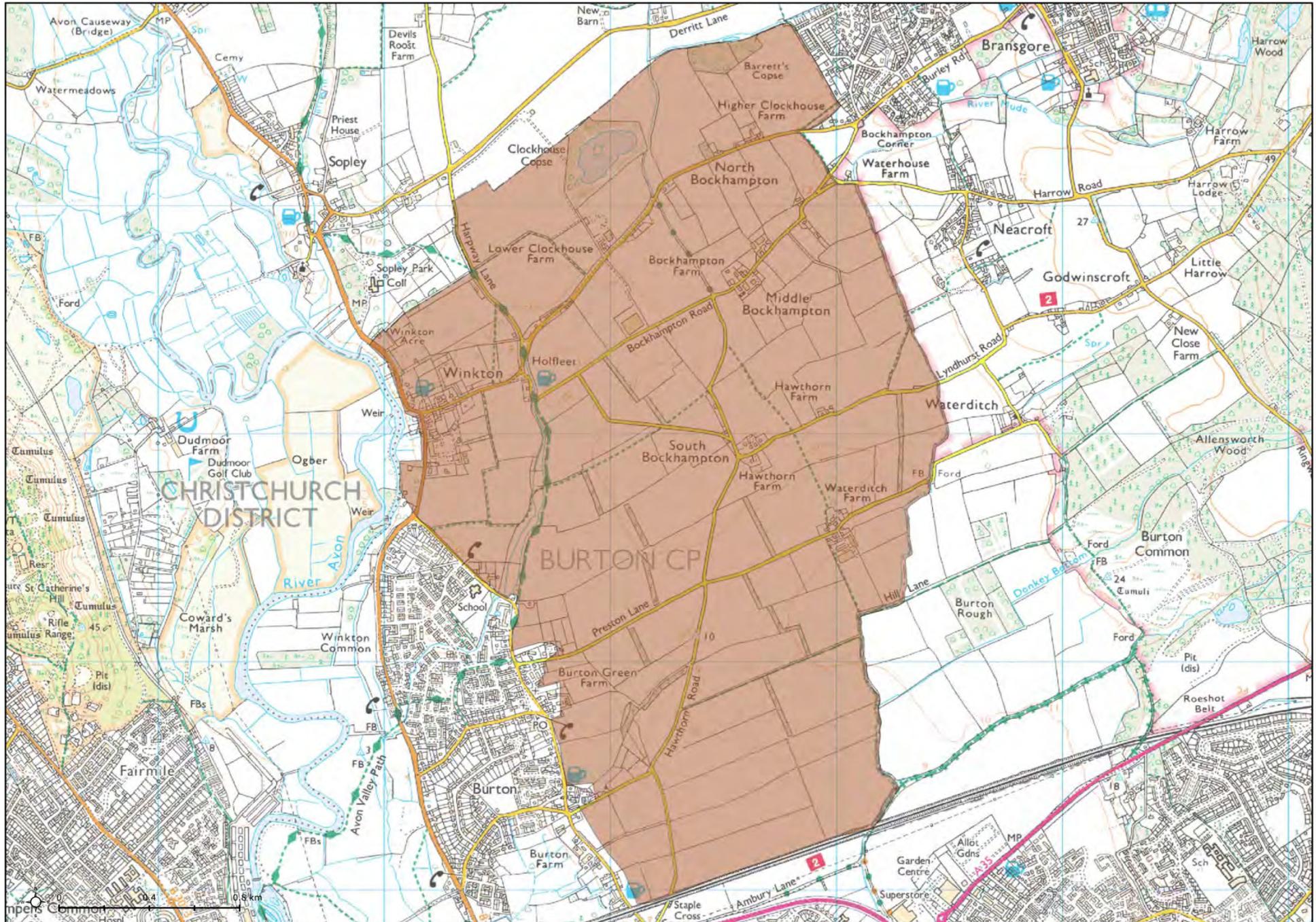
Being flat areas elevated slightly above river floodplains the River Terrace LCT areas have attracted significant development over a long period of time, in terms of settlement and also transport, communications and power supply links. These have given rise to landscape characteristics which are typically considered to detract from landscape value but the proximity to sizeable areas of population also elevates other aspects of landscape value, namely the role of these LCAs for recreation and as 'buffers' of open land between urban areas. The LCT description notes that *"Away from [the urban edge] there are some quiet lanes and paths which act as important accessible recreational areas"*.

This value, but also the need for landscape improvement in some locations, is reflected in the principal management objective for the River Terrace landscape type: to *"maintain and enhance the value of the area as a buffer, control and minimise the impact of development and transport infrastructure/use and the opportunities for large-scale multi-functional landscape restoration and creation should be promoted and explored"*.

River Terrace LCT sensitivity to wind energy	River Terrace LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>The lack of undulations and absence of distinctive shapes mean that the landform is less sensitive to wind energy development.</p> <p>The extent of development and activity that is typically found within this LCT means that there is rarely a strong sense of tranquillity or remoteness, but it also gives a human scale to the landscape that would be sensitive to the introduction of wind turbines. Visually there are unlikely to be panoramic vistas or dramatic skylines to be interrupted by new development, although any tall structure will be widely visible and visually dominant.</p>	<p>The lack of undulations makes the sensitivity of River Terraces low in topographical terms. Land use varies, but the typical medium scale and fairly geometric field pattern can be considered moderately sensitive. Ground cover also varies, with low hedges or fences giving an open character in places but stronger hedgerows and tree groups creating more enclosure and visual screening in other locations. There is potential in places to introduce planting to increase screening, one of the LCT assessment management objectives for the area being to "... <i>integrate new and existing development in a more sympathetic way e.g. by using new and existing woodland blocks and shelter belts to integrate development</i>".</p> <p>Views within the River Terrace LCT are typically limited by the lack of elevated viewpoints, and slopes beyond the LCT boundaries are usually gentle, so interaction with other LCTs is often limited and woodland blocks within the LCT, or the urban edge, will often form horizons.</p> <p>The extent of modern development and activity reduce the sense of naturalness within much of the LCT, but there are more rural areas where there is some sense of separation from urban influences.</p> <p>Landscape value considerations will be important in determining the level of sensitivity to solar development in any given part of the LCT. Areas which are important in recreational terms, or as 'islands' of rural land use separating more urban surroundings, will have a higher value than the quality of their landscapes would warrant in purely scenic terms, and consequently greater sensitivity. Locations which fall within the settings of historic village cores or parkland estates will also have elevated sensitivity.</p>

Landscape character area: Avon

Area: 616 hectares



Avon LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"As an alluvial terrace the area within the Borough boundary ranges between 7 and 15m AOD, over distances of 2km this change in level is almost imperceptible."

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Medium scale enclosure landscape of low hedged/fenced fields and occasional shelter belt plantations".

"Field boundaries being generally low flail cut native hedges with occasional hedgerow trees. A pattern of narrow pine shelterbelts run north south through the landscape, a characteristic noted in other sections of the Avon Valley."

Farmland is largely arable in this LCA.

Visual exposure:

"Overall area enclosed by rising ground to the east and rail embankment to the south. Low horizon and limited views across and out of the landscape"

"From nearby lanes and footpaths [large scale modern farm] buildings are intrusive. Although in the wider landscape the flat landscape provides few elevated viewpoints to give long distance views of the buildings."

Whilst there is significantly higher ground to the east, with public viewpoints such as from St Catherine's Hill, the wooded river corridor (Avon River Valley Pasture LCT) which lies in between limits ground level views of the Avon River Terrace.

Development and activity:

"The landscape is not heavily populated or developed. With quiet minor roads and footpaths, it is possible to feel some isolation (relative to the other parts of the Borough) within parts of the area".

"A network of minor lanes links a number of individual farmsteads to the settlements of Burton and Winkton within Christchurch and Bransgore outside the Borough to the northeast. This is complemented by a number of footpaths and bridleway links giving a good degree of recreational access to the area."

"Large scale modern farm buildings exist in a number of locations. These have been set within the open landscape with no significant landscape treatment and reflective roofing materials"

"Glimpsed views of urban development, general noise intrusion, and intrusion of the railway result in a degree of connection to the modern townscape. This is not a totally unspoilt landscape."

Avon LCA value characteristics

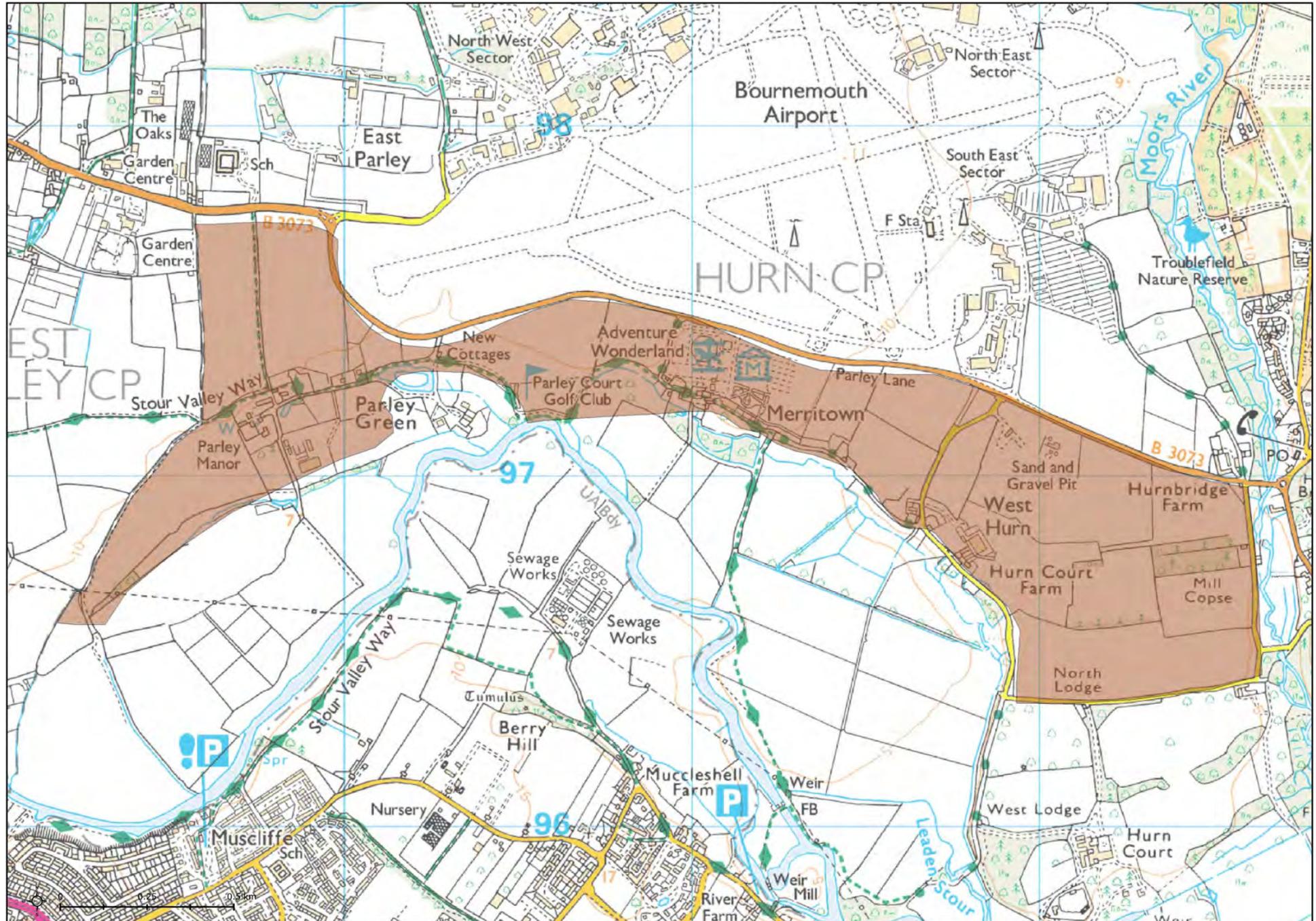
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The Borough assessment notes that *"as a 'modern' landscape the terrace farmland provides few cultural heritage connections"*, but this area has a rural character and a sense of separation despite being close to Christchurch which gives it value for recreation and as buffer for the New Forest National Park. The Borough assessment categorises the LCA as a tranquil area, not significantly affected by urbanising influences.

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Landscape character area: River Stour

Area: 146 hectares



River Stour LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

This is a flat landform, with elevations varying by no more than 1m across the LCA.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"The fields are defined by flailed hedges with a regular pattern of hedgerow oaks"

"Medium scale Parliamentary Enclosure landscape with regular field pattern"

Agricultural land is mostly arable but leisure developments (Adventure Wonderland, the aviation museum and a golf course) and sand/gravel extraction reduce the area being farmed.

The boundary between the River Terrace and, to the south, the River Valley LCT is well treed, following meandering streams. Fields have stronger treed boundaries at the eastern end of the LCA.

Visual exposure:

"Views limited by low lying landscapes, hedgerow cover and enclosing tree cover"

"Adjoining parkland landscape of Hurn Court provides glimpsed views of more formal and varied treescape"

Trees form a low, wooded backdrop to most views, but Bournemouth Airport is a dominating presence to the north.

There are some longer views over the LCA from higher wooded ground to the east, e.g. the viewpoint on Ramsdown near Hurn.

Development and activity:

"... developments have changed the perception of the landscape along the main road [B3073 Parley Lane] corridor. However, the minor lanes and paths leading away from the main road still retain a strong rural character. Occasional glimpsed views to the built up area of Bournemouth, road noise and aircraft noise reduce the tranquillity of the landscape"

River Stour LCA value characteristics

"...as part of a wider tract of agricultural land between the Stour and the airport, this area is an important buffer between the built-up areas. As an agricultural landscape, this area helps define the setting of the airport as countryside, rather than urban fringe or town."

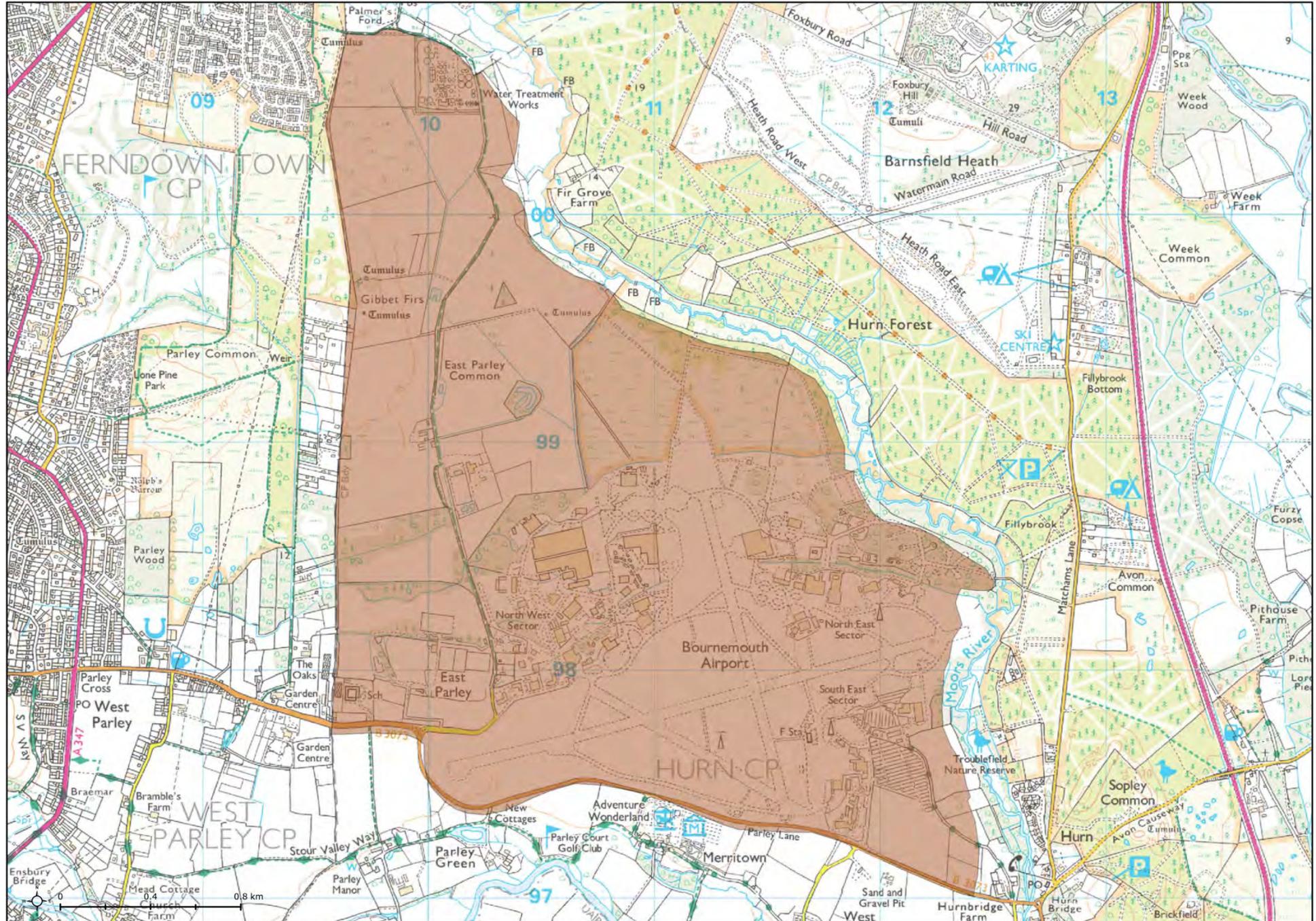
The hamlet of Parley Green is noted as having a number of buildings reflecting its traditional agricultural character.

The Stour Valley Way passes through the western half of the LCA.

River Stour LCA sensitivity to wind energy					River Stour LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy																																						
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<p>Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is low-moderate and sensitivity to developments with 2-4 turbines less than 35m is moderate. Sensitivity to single turbines 35-65m is moderate, sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height is moderate-high. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is high.</p> <p>There are no strong sensitivities associated with the landform or field patterns in this LCA. The extent of development and activity and absence of any distinctive features reduce value in terms of landscape character but, as is recognised in the management objectives for the River Terrace LCT, give a value to the remaining open areas as a buffer between urban areas. Settlement gives a human scale to the landscape in some locations, which would be of higher sensitivity to large scale wind development, although sensitivity to smaller turbines associated with existing farms or other commercial buildings would be lower.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turbines are not located close to existing development, and so have a greater visual impact on open green space; Located in the vicinity of Parley Green, where development could detract from the rural character of the hamlet and would be close to the River Stour; Development is strongly visible from viewpoints on higher ground to the east (the St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA), or from the Stour Valley Way; Development detracts from the setting of Hurn Court. 					<p>Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 10 hectares is low, sensitivity to developments of 10-30 hectares is moderate-high and sensitivity to larger developments is high.</p> <p>There are no strong sensitivities associated with the landform, land use or field patterns in this LCA, there is little intervisibility with other LCAs and the extent of development and activity and absence of any distinctive features reduce value in terms of landscape character. As is recognised in the management objectives for the River Terrace LCT, the remaining open areas have a value as a buffer between urban areas; the Valley Pasture LCT to the south is more important in this respect, but large developments affecting multiple fields could have a significant effect.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located in the vicinity of Parley Green, where development could detract from the rural character of the hamlet and would be close to the course of the River Stour; Development is strongly visible from viewpoints on higher ground to the east (the St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA); Development is strongly visible from the Stour Valley Way. 																																						

Landscape character area: Bournemouth Airport & East Parley Common

Area: 637 hectares



Bournemouth Airport & East Parley Common LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

There is little perceptible change in elevation over this area.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"The Airport occupies a large part of the River Stour terrace" ... "Open expanse of managed operational land presents a tidy frontage to public areas" ... "much of the built development is a cluttered mix of buildings and hard developments."

With reference to the northern side of the airport: *"The general overall impression is of an intensely commercial and untidy collection of development in a chaotic setting"... "Beyond this the area opens out into managed open farmland with few strong features";*

With reference to the western side of the airport: *"... development to date has been relatively piecemeal and mediocre"*

Visual exposure:

"Semi natural woodland cover of oak/birch scrub provide some enclosure to the site"

Farmland to north of airport has *"limited visible connection to the nearby built-up areas beyond the Borough boundary"*

The airport and commercial buildings are visible from some elevated viewpoints in the St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA (e.g. the top of Ramsdown) but the remainder of the LCA is largely screened by tree cover.

Development and activity:

"Commercial development areas of very poor and uninviting visual quality."

Bournemouth Airport & East Parley Common LCA value characteristics

The area to south-east of the airport provides *"an essential buffer area to the Moors River SSSI, Hurn Conservation Area and listed building."*

"Areas outside of Airport boundary provide some level of recreational access to the north of the airport."

Bournemouth Airport & East Parley Common LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Bournemouth Airport & East Parley Common LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy																																			
<p style="text-align: center;">Turbine height (m)</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤35</td> <td>≤65</td> <td>≤99</td> <td>>99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cluster size</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;">LM</td> <td style="background-color: orange;">M</td> <td style="background-color: red;">H</td> <td style="background-color: red;">H</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2-4</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;">LM</td> <td style="background-color: red;">MH</td> <td style="background-color: red;">H</td> <td style="background-color: red;">H</td> </tr> <tr> <td>>4</td> <td style="background-color: grey;"></td> <td style="background-color: red;">H</td> <td style="background-color: red;">H</td> <td style="background-color: red;">H</td> </tr> </table>		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99	Cluster size					1	LM	M	H	H	2-4	LM	MH	H	H	>4		H	H	H	<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Development size (ha)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>≤1</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;">L</td> </tr> <tr> <td>≤10</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;">L</td> </tr> <tr> <td>≤30</td> <td style="background-color: orange;">LM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>>30</td> <td style="background-color: orange;">M</td> </tr> </table>	Development size (ha)		≤1	L	≤10	L	≤30	LM	>30	M
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<p>Sensitivity to up to 4 turbines less than 35m high is low-moderate, sensitivity to developments with 2-4 turbines 36-65m high is moderate-high and sensitivity to all other scales of development is high.</p> <p>The flat, large scale terrain has limited sensitivity for wind energy, and there are no strong sensitivities associated with the land use or field patterns in this LCA, other than an area of remnant heathland to the north of the airport. However, as is recognised in the management objectives for the River Terrace LCT, the remaining open areas have a value as a buffer between urban areas, and development that could be seen extensively from surrounding urban or forest/heath areas would reduce the value of the LCA in this respect. Sensitivity to smaller turbines, particularly if associated with the commercial built development near the airport, would be lower.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development is located in the fields to the south east of the airport, which could detract from the value of the area as a setting to the river corridor and to Hurn Bridge Farm; • Development extends up to the sinuous edge of the LCA adjacent to the Moors River Valley Pasture LCA, detracting from the character of its setting; • Development is visible as a skyline feature from viewpoints on higher ground to the east (the St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA) or from forest or heathland areas to the north (Hurn Forest/Barnsfield Heath) or west (West 	<p>Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 10 hectares is low, sensitivity to developments of 10-30 hectares is low-moderate and sensitivity to larger developments is moderate.</p> <p>There are no strong sensitivities associated with the landform, land use or field patterns in this LCA, other than an area of remnant heathland to the north of the airport. There is little intervisibility with other LCAs and the extent of development and activity and absence of any distinctive features reduce value in terms of landscape character. As is recognised in the management objectives for the River Terrace LCT, the remaining open areas have a value as a buffer between urban areas, but West Parley Heath provides a visually strong, and recreationally more important, buffer than the farmland on East Parley Common, and the Moors River forms a distinct boundary to the low-lying forest and heathland areas to the north.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development is located in the fields to the south east of the airport, which could detract from the value of the area as a setting to the river corridor and to Hurn Bridge Farm; • Development extends up to the sinuous edge of the LCA adjacent to the Moors River Valley Pasture LCA, detracting from the character of its setting; • Development is strongly visible from viewpoints on higher ground to the east (the St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA); 																																			

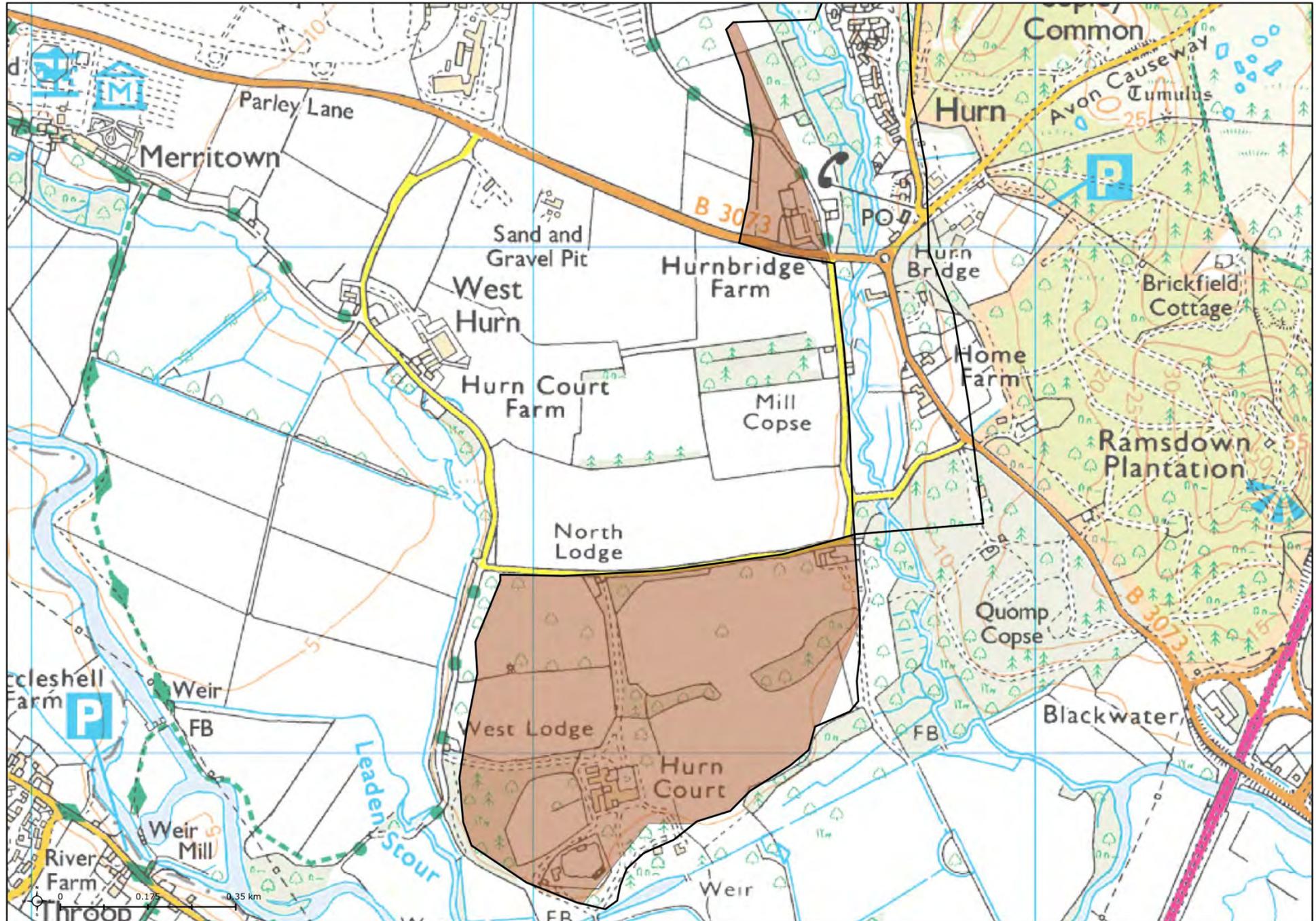
Parley Heath);

- Development detracts from the setting of Hurn Court;
- Development is on the remnant heathland to the north of the airport.

- Development is on the remnant heathland to the north of the airport.

Landscape character area: Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court (part)

Area: 42 hectares



Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

<p>Scale and complexity of landform:</p> <p>This is a flat landscape.</p>	<p>Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:</p> <p><i>"Historic parkland landscape with parkland trees and historic buildings and landscape features."</i></p> <p>The estate includes a number of fields under arable cultivation, some with parkland trees.</p>
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<p>Visual exposure:</p> <p>Woodland blocks and belts within the LCA and along the edge of the Stour create a very enclosed landscape.</p> <p>Woods separate the small river terrace area to the west of the Moors River from the narrow river valley and the settlement of Hurn.</p>	<p>Development and activity:</p> <p>Hurn Court is a collection of private residential properties (formerly a school) set in secluded, wooded surrounds, together with an area of farmland.</p> <p>The small area of river terrace on the edge of Hurn is largely occupied by farm buildings, and is adjacent to the B3073.</p>
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Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA value characteristics

"The parkland of Hurn Court is a particular landscape type that has been lost in other parts of the Borough."

Parkland estates were once more commonplace along the Stour river terraces. Hurn Court occupies the site of a monastic grange, associated with Christchurch, and the site still retains some features of a medieval planned landscape. The main house has been much altered over time, with the earliest visible sections dating to the 18th Century.

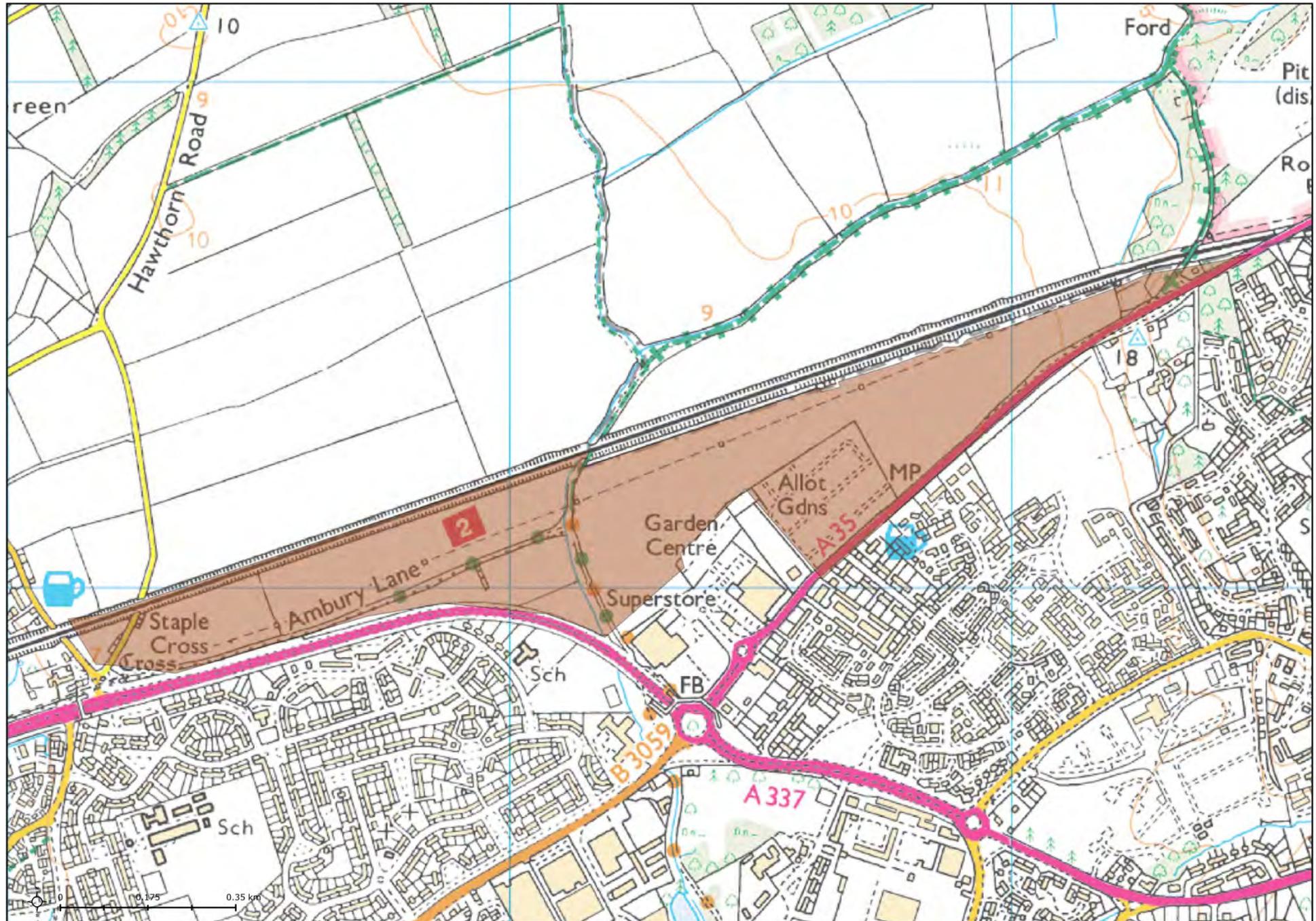
Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
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Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity to all scales of development in the vicinity of Hurn Court is high.</p> <p>Most of the river terrace in this LCA is centred on Hurn Court. Sensitivity to wind turbines in this enclosed, historic landscape would be high regardless of scale, but particularly so if development was visible from the adjacent river valley or from Ramsdown.</p> <p>A lower level of sensitivity would be likely to apply to a single small turbine located in association with farm buildings in the small area of river terrace near Hurn. Strong tree cover to the east separates this part of the LCA from the smaller scale landscape of the Moors Valley; without this it would be a more sensitive location.</p>	<p>Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is moderate-high. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is high.</p> <p>Sensitivity to modern development within this historic parkland setting will be high, although the degree of enclosure means that solar PV development could potentially be screened from the most sensitive parts of the estate.</p> <p>The limited size and irregular shape of the small area of river terrace around Hurn Bridge Farm would limit the potential for anything other than very small developments in this part of the LCA.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development affects the setting of listed buildings or key parkland elements.

Landscape character area: Urban Edges & Enclaves - Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross

Area: 45 hectares



Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

This is a very flat area, although the raised railway embankment reduces the landform scale a little.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"The undeveloped area is predominantly arable farmland"

"Mixed farmland within enclosure field pattern. Some field amalgamation has occurred."

Field pattern is large scale.

Visual exposure:

"Area enclosed by dominant rail embankment, A35 roadways, and tree line alongside the A35 bypass"

"In terms of the perceived character of the landscape from the key route of Ambury Lane, the A35 is shielded by a dominant tree line and bank and the lane has retained an informal rural character. From the lane the area has retained a clear countryside character"

Development and activity:

"There are obvious urbanizing influences of the A35, the allotments, views of developments, a power line and sewage works."

"Although the area has already absorbed significant intrusions of urban infrastructure, there remains a strong connection to the agricultural land use within the enclave and beyond the railway embankment"

Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross value characteristics

"The area is of particular significance because of the continuity of views along the length of the area, and by virtue of the links this area provides to the town and wider countryside."

"In terms of the intrinsic quality of the landscape [the urbanising] influences have a significant impact. Conversely the area is of significant importance in the perception of the built up area of Christchurch."

Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross sensitivity to wind energy

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	M	H	H	H
	2-4	MH	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

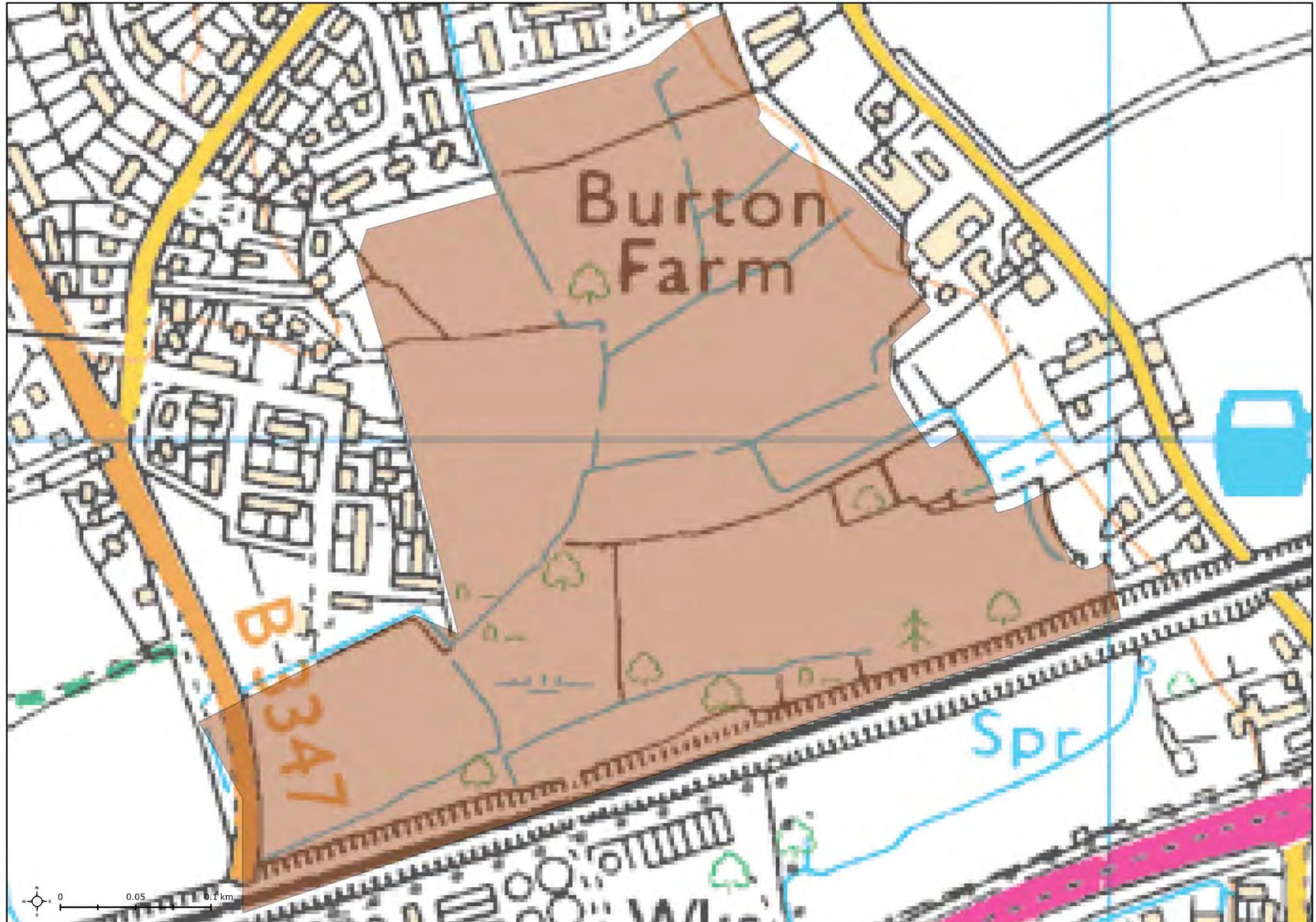
Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	≤1	L
	≤10	LM
	≤30	M
	>30	H

Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross sensitivity to wind energy	Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is moderate, sensitivity to developments with 2-4 turbines up to 35m high is moderate-high and sensitivity to all other scales of development is high.</p> <p>There are no strong sensitivities associated with the landform, land use or field patterns in this area, and development and activity in and adjacent to the LCA have eroded its character as part of a broader landscape type. It is recognised in the management objectives for the River Terrace LCT and in the 'Sensitivity to Change' analysis in the Borough assessment, that the area has value as undeveloped, open space, so development that could be seen extensively from adjacent LCAs and the urban area would reduce the value of the LCA in this respect. Whilst trees alongside the A31 provide a degree of screening, even smaller turbines would be visible above the railway embankment as skyline features in views from the north.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development is close to Staple Cross at the southern end of the LCA, which has two listed buildings and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (the remains of a post-medieval wayside cross). 	<p>Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is low, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is low-moderate, sensitivity to developments of 10-30 hectares is moderate and sensitivity to larger developments is high.</p> <p>The flat topography of this LCA is not sensitive to solar PV development, there are strong urban influences and the agricultural land use is not inherently sensitive. The key consideration with regard to sensitivity to development is the value of the area as undeveloped, open land, and whilst agricultural use would be less sensitive than solar PV the latter does not compromise openness to the extent that built development would. Whilst it provides connections to the Avon River Terrace LCA the area does not constitute a recreational destination in its own right, and the railway embankment is a distinct barrier feature between the areas in visual terms, so the principal issue would be perception of the urban edge for passing traffic on the A35, the railway and for the few residential properties with views into the area. These issues are considered to be more significant to visual receptors than to the landscape.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development is close to Staple Cross at the southern end of the LCA, which has two listed buildings and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (the remains of a post-medieval wayside cross), and the settings of these features could be adversely affected.

Landscape character area: Urban Edges & Enclaves - Land to the South of Burton & North of the Railway Line

Area: 17 hectares



Land to South of Burton characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

This is a very flat, low-lying area.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Low lying isolated pocket of small scale paddocks/pastures... Area of tree cover along the southern edge of the area... Network of small ditches and drains"

"The area is a small-scale enclosed space."

Visual exposure:

"Some limited tree cover screens views into the area and the railway embankment."

"There are limited public views from the older part of the village into the area. The area can be viewed from the railway."

Development and activity:

"On the eastern side the area is enclosed by the older part of the village along Salisbury Road. The area is enclosed on the north and north eastern side by modern estate housing."

Land to South of Burton value characteristics

The historic part of the village of Burton, along the Salisbury Road is designated locally as a Conservation Area, and the LCA has value as part of its setting, but it is not considered to have any particular value as part of a wider landscape type:

"This area forms a small pocket of enclosed farmland in view and forming the setting to the historic Burton Farm buildings. Although not within the Conservation Area, the open space and tree cover provide some context to the farm buildings in the view from Salisbury Road. In terms of this aspect, the area is at least in part sensitive as the setting to the Conservation Area. Beyond this, the area is enclosed by suburban housing and not seen as a continuation of the wider countryside of the open flood plain or higher terraces. With no public access and limited visibility, the area does not contribute to the wider setting of the built up areas of the main town or the main area of the village."

Land to South of Burton sensitivity to wind energy

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

Land to South of Burton sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	≤1	M
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Land to South of Burton sensitivity to wind energy	Land to South of Burton sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>The enclosed nature of this LCA, with small fields, tree cover, housing on three sides and the adjacent railway line, and its value as a setting for the Conservation Area, make sensitivity high for all scales of wind energy development.</p>	<p>Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is moderate and sensitivity to larger developments is high.</p> <p>The presence of open farmland is important as a setting for the listed buildings of Burton Farm and the Conservation Area but also contributes value to the more modern housing that backs on to it. The small stream-edged fields, pastoral character and tree cover also make this a sensitive area. There are sufficient trees to provide screening in places for small developments, but a larger solar farm would affect the scale of the landscape.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development impinges on the setting of the Burton Farm buildings.