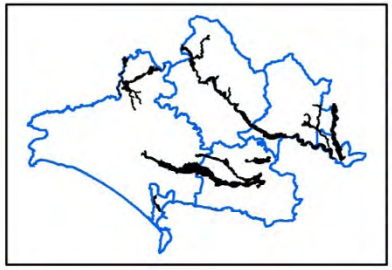
Landscape character type: Valley Pasture



District boundary

AONB

Dorset Landscape Character Type

5. Valley Pasture

Christchurch Landscape Character Area

- 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

0 0.75 1.5 km

Valley Pasture LCT overview
The Valley Pasture LCT is associated with the floodplains of two major rivers that discharge to the Channel at Christchurch, the Avon and the Stour, and is subdivided into LCAs across North Dorset, East Dorset and Christchurch Borough. In Christchurch there are five rural Valley Pasture LCAs, representing stretches of the Stour and Avon and also the Moors River, which joins the Stour 5 miles north of Christchurch harbour. There are also two areas classified as Urban Edges & Enclaves in the Borough assessment which fall within the area defined as Valley Pasture at County-level. The Hurn Bridge & Court LCA includes two distinct sub-areas: Hurn Court lies within the River Terrace LCT but the Hurn Bridge area is centred on the Moors River in the Valley Pasture LCT. The margins of the latter area cross into adjoining LCTs but as these are almost taken up by roads and village buildings they are not assessed separately under those LCTs for sensitivity to wind or solar PV development. The Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm LCT is also split across two LCTs, but the smaller part of the LCA which lies outside of the Valley Pasture is consistent in character with the St Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest LCA to the north and west and so is not assessed as a separate area.

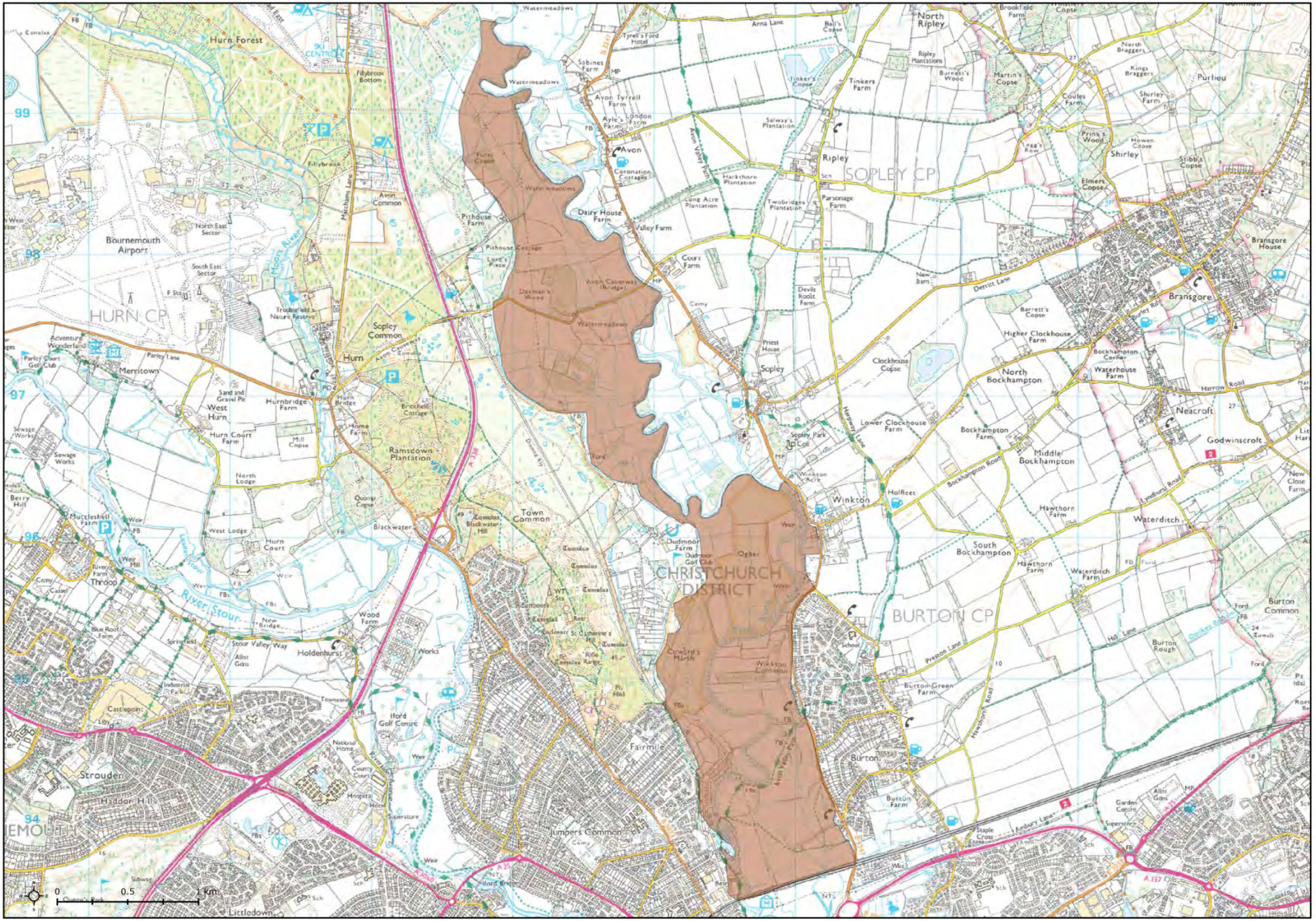
Valley Pasture LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Flat and open valley floor landscape with distinctively meandering river channels which often floods"* The valley pastures are not typically bounded by significantly higher terrain, so landform scale is often large, but in some locations the vally is more incised and smaller in scale.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Typically a grazed pastoral landscape"* *"Generally large fields with a mosaic of smaller fields abutting the river edges"* *"Groups of riverside trees follow the watercourses creating key features along the valleys"* *"Old water meadow systems and features are common."* The sense of land use scale varies, depending on field sizes, extent of tree cover and presence of settlement edges in adjacent LCAs.
Visual exposure: As flat, low-lying areas there will typically be exposure to views from surrounding higher ground, although areas that are not significantly higher will have views restricted by the trees and small copses which are commonplace in the LCT. In Christchurch the urban areas surrounding the floodplains are generally not much higher, so visual exposure is chiefly associated with the St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA, which has views east over the Avon and West over the Stour.	**Development and activity:** *"The valley floors are the focus for settlements, transport and infrastructure corridors and historic river crossings"* *"Settlements … are often on the slightly elevated low terraces to the side of the valleys"* *"…sand and gravel extraction has and still is taking place, creating its own set of impacts"*

Valley Pasture LCT value characteristics	
"The valleys provide the historic and cultural setting to many county towns" *"Historic river crossings points are often over old bridges"* The overall management objective for the LCT is *"to conserve the strong visual unity of the valley, the diversity of semi-natural habitats and to restore features such as wet woodlands pastures, water meadows, boundary features and historical lanes and bridges"* The extent of degradation of the landscape in places is recognised by the statement that *"Opportunities for large-scale multi-functional landscape restoration and creation should be promoted and explored particularly in the Stour Valley"; however this can be considered to apply principally to the LCT in its lower more urbanised reaches.* There are no landscape designations relating to any of the Valley Pasture LCAs within Christchurch Borough.	
Valley Pasture LCT sensitivity to wind energy	**Valley Pasture LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy**
The Valley Pasture LCT is narrowly defined to encompass only the area spanned by the meanders of the present-day course of the Stour, so its character is first and foremost dictated by the presence of the river. Any development in the immediate proximity of the river would be likely to detract from its meandering landscape form. The character and sensitivity of the LCT is also subject to a variety of influences depending on the character of the landscape through which it passes. Valley Pastures are always topographically level, and so are not in themselves unsuitable for wind energy development in this respect, but where the surrounding landform rises to create a narrow valley sensitivity will be higher than is the case where the landform is a more open plain. In terms of land use, there is a traditional relationship between Valley Pastures and grazing, so sensitivity to development which is perceived as industrial rather than agricultural would be high in areas where modern development has a limited influence. Although development within floodplains is very limited, adjacent slightly elevated landscapes have historically attracted settlement and communications links, but in some locations the character of the landscape is still strongly influenced by historic features such as mills and bridges. Where there has been modern development that is large scale or commercial in character, such as business parks and power lines, sensitivity in terms of naturalness is more limited, but smaller scale residential or recreational land use, particularly where it includes historic features, can give a human scale to the landscape that would be sensitive to the introduction of wind turbines. Visually the degree of exposure varies depending on surrounding landscapes, with	The Valley Pasture LCT is narrowly defined to encompass only the area spanned by the meanders of the present-day course of the Stour, so its character is first and foremost dictated by the presence of the river. Any development in the immediate proximity of the river would be likely to detract from its meandering landscape form. The character and sensitivity of the LCT is also subject to a variety of influences depending on the character of the landscape through which it passes. Valley Pastures are always topographically level, and so are not in themselves unsuitable for solar PV development in this respect, but where the surrounding landform rises to create a narrow valley sensitivity will be higher than is the case where the landform is a more open plain. In terms of land use, there is a traditional relationship between Valley Pastures and grazing, so sensitivity to development which is perceived as industrial rather than agricultural would be high in areas where modern development has a limited influence. Water meadows and rough grazing land would be particularly sensitive, but arable land which has intruded on the pastoral character would be less sensitive. Although development within floodplains is very limited, adjacent slightly elevated landscapes have historically attracted settlement and communications links, but in some locations the character of the landscape is still strongly influenced by historic features such as mills and bridges. Where there has been modern development that is large scale or commercial in character, such as business parks and power lines, sensitivity in terms of naturalness is more limited, but smaller scale residential or recreational land use, particularly where it includes historic features, can give a human scale to the landscape that would be sensitive to the introduction of solar PV

less intervisibility where river terraces or low hills frame the LCT, and where the landscape is well treed, but more in the vicinity of higher hills.	development. Visually the degree of exposure varies depending on surrounding landscapes, with less intervisibility where the river terrace or low hills frame the LCT, and where the landscape is well treed, but more in the vicinity of higher hills.

Landscape character area: River Avon Floodplain

Area: 446 hectares

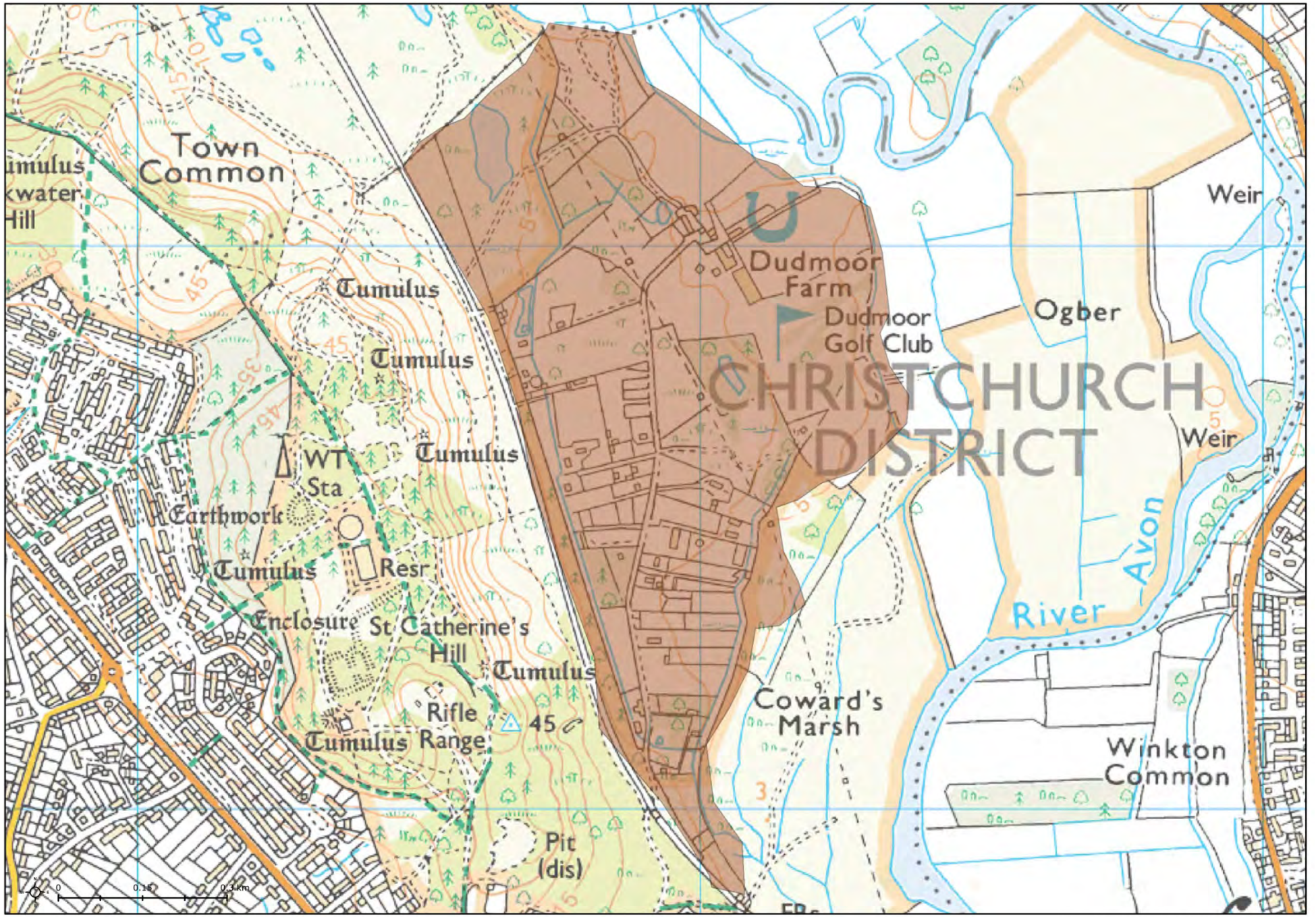


River Avon Floodplain LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"The River Avon flood plain generally sits at below 5m AOD. In some locations this is as much as 5m below the level of adjacent roadways or the wider landscape of the river terraces. "* *"To the west the area merges with the low-lying area of Cowards Marsh before the steeply rising ground of the St. Catherine's Hill ridge."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Tree cover of riverside willow trees and occasional blocks of willow carr woodland."* *"Pastures formed with fencing and small-scale ditches. These include permanent grasslands and water meadows management areas"* *"Low key agricultural management and irregular field patterns give the landscape an informal character"* Whilst tree cover within the LCA and to the west gives a sense of enclosure in some locations the lack of strong field boundaries means that this is typically a large scale landscape.
Visual exposure: *"On the eastern side the area is physically and visually contained by the B3347 and the village of Burton."* *"…for much of its length the river cannot be easily viewed. The channel is set low in the landscape and this is a secluded inaccessible area with minimal public access."* St Catherine's Hill provides a strong viewpoint across the LCA in the vicinity of Winkton and Burton, and there are also views, albeit more restricted by tree cover, from Ramsdown near Hurn. There is little intervisibility with the urban areas due to screening vegetation and lack of elevation.	**Development and activity:** *"Absence of buildings, roadways and other structures help reinforce this as a semi natural landscape"* *"The northern part of the flood plain is inaccessible and remote from a range of urban influences. The southern area is slightly more accessible but at the same time more influenced by the urban area."* The urban area of Christchurch abuts the LCA, with warehouse/industrial development along the margin, and an overhead power line run north-south through the area.
River Avon Floodplain LCA value characteristics	
"The isolation of the river away from the built up area ensures this is a tranquil landscape." The floodplain landscape id described as *"inherently attractive"* but it is noted that *"As a result of urban pressures and intrusions at the southern end of the valley, the quality of the landscape has been severely compromised. The quality (and tranquillity) of the landscape progressively improves up-stream of the built-up areas."* *"The Avon Causeway is one location where the landscape is at least visually 'accessible'. In this area the river valley presents a strong sense of place."* "Hidden detail within the river corridor includes some interesting stone weirs and two thatched 'eel houses' on the River Avon close to Burton and Winkton." Much of the Avon Valley has an international level of ecological protection reflecting its importance as a wetland and habitat for birds, and this in turn reflects its traditional land use. A general lack of public access means that it does not have a high recreational value (the Avon Valley Path crosses the LCA between Burton and Christchurch but does not follow the river).	

River Avon Floodplain LCA sensitivity to wind energy	River Avon Floodplain LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 H H H H 2-4 H H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 H ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H
River Avon Floodplain LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**River Avon Floodplain LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Sensitivity to all scales of wind energy development is **high**. The Avon Valley Pasture and its adjoining river terrace constitute a broad, even landform and the Valley pasture has an open character, both of which tend to lower sensitivity to wind energy development. There is also limited intervisibility with other LCAs, although there are higher sensitivities associated with locations which are prominent in the prospect from the viewing points on St Catherine's Hill and Ramsdown (in the neighbouring St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA). However, despite the proximity of urban development at the southern end of the area, the Avon Valley is a very distinctive landscape reflecting historic agricultural practice (water meadows), and sensitivity to any modern development intruding into this landscape would be high. There are no farm complexes with which smaller turbines could be associated.	Sensitivity all scales of solar PV development is **high**. The Avon Valley Pasture and its adjoining river terrace constitute a broad, even landform, which tends to lower sensitivity to solar PV development. There is also limited intervisibility with other LCAs, although there are higher sensitivities associated with locations which are prominent in the prospect from the viewing point on St Catherine's Hill. However, despite the proximity of urban development at the southern end of the area, the Avon Valley is a very distinctive landscape reflecting historic agricultural practice (water meadows), and sensitivity to any modern development affecting land use would be high. Irregular field boundaries, the "informal character" noted in the Borough assessment and the visual openness within the area resulting from a lack of hedgerows would be very sensitive to the 'hard' landscape elements of a solar PV development. The sense of seclusion increases further north in the LCA, elevating sensitivity further. Only marginal areas that have some sense of detachment from the main valley pasture area, e.g. because of agricultural improvement or uncharacteristically well-screened field boundaries, would have slightly lower sensitivity.

Landscape character area: Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm

Area: 66 hectares

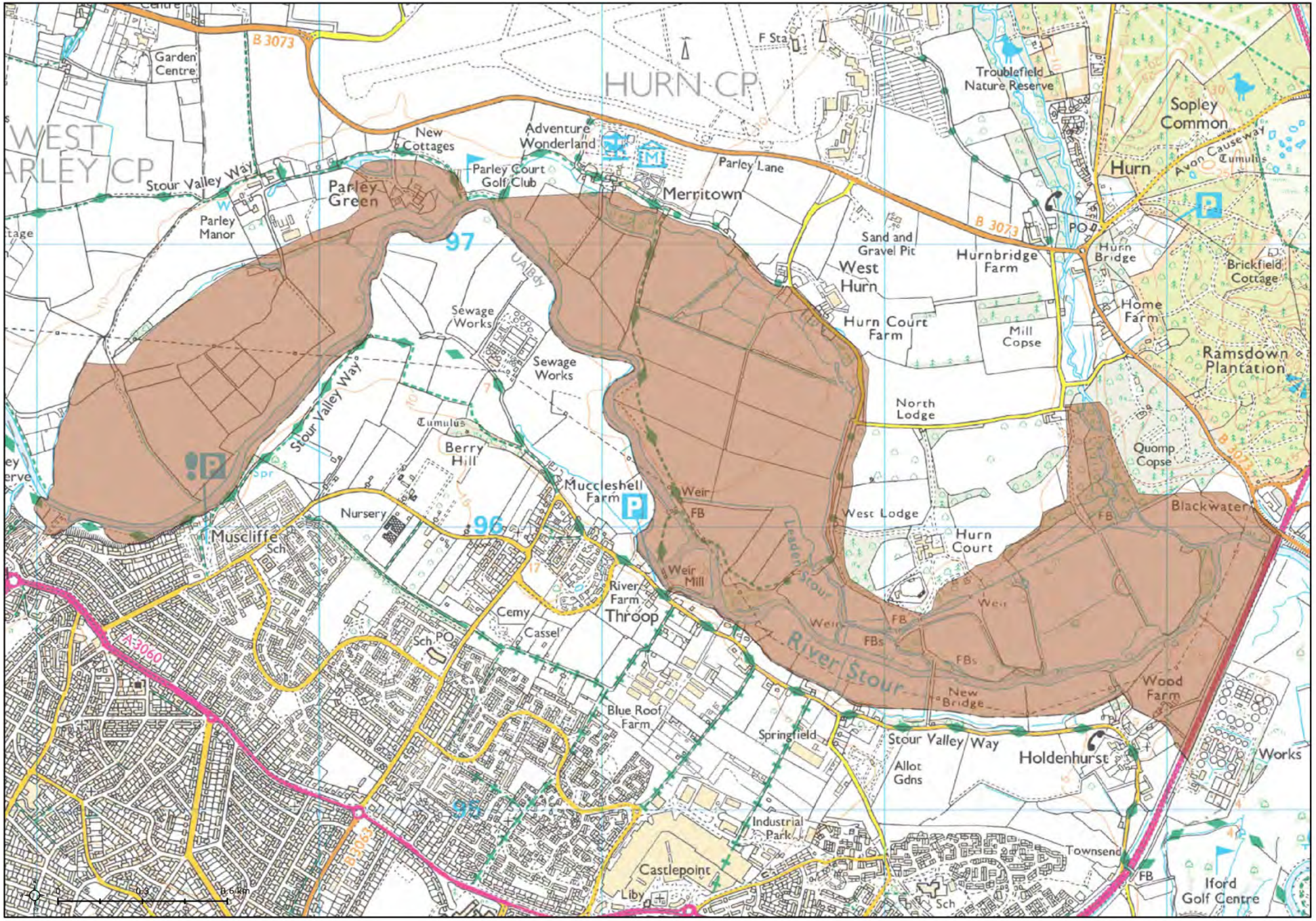


Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"The area sits at the base of St. Catherine's Hill. Although very low lying, the area is enclosed from the general flood plain by a subtle ridge in the valley floor and a fringe of birch scrub woodland."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"An isolated area of wet heathland, rough pasture and scrub woodland."* (note: the wet heathland elements of this LCA fall outside of the Valley Pasture LCT boundary and are instead considered as part of the Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT (St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA) *"The area is well treed and enclosed by the fringe of woodland around Cowards Marsh. The management of individual plots varies between areas of managed grazing and apparently abandoned scrub land."* *"Informal land division, with wire fences and few hedgerows."*
Visual exposure: *"On the eastern side the area is physically and visually contained by the B3347 and the village of Burton."* *"…for much of its length the river cannot be easily viewed. The channel is set low in the landscape and this is a secluded inaccessible area with minimal public access."* St Catherine's Hill provides a strong viewpoint across the LCA in the vicinity of Winkton and Burton, and there are also views, albeit more restricted by tree cover, from Ramsdown near Hurn, but there is little intervisibility with the urban areas due to screening vegetation and lack of elevation.	**Development and activity:** *"Since the 1930's the inner core of this area has been subdivided with individual plots. Some are managed as grass keep. Others have become established as residential plots with a mix of mobile homes and permanent buildings. The area is served by a winding single track private road, the only access being from the main residential area of Jumpers Common to the west. There are no public rights of way through the area, but the access track serves a riding school and Golf Centre located at Dudmoor Farm at the very end of the route"* *"a private enclave with a distinctly remote 'backland' character. The development of individual isolated dwellings has brought a degree of domestication to what would have been a semi natural landscape. Some elements of this development have resulted in the sub-urbanisation of individual plots which in turn, are starting to change the character of the area to a more residential setting."*
Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm LCA value characteristics	
"Areas of 'remote' semi-natural landscape are valuable and inherently sensitive to change."	

Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 MH H H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 LM ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H
Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Cowards Marsh – Dudmoor Farm LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Sensitivity to turbines less than 35m high is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all larger wind energy developments is **high**. As part of the broad, even terrain consisting of the Avon Valley Pasture and its adjoining river terrace, landform sensitivity to wind energy development is relatively low, although proximity to St Catherine's Hill counters this to an extent, in terms of raised visibility from valued public viewpoints. The small scale of the landscape, which has a number of residential properties and strong vegetated areas, also elevates sensitivity, but this development and changes to land use man that there is less sensitivity in terms of historic landscape character than is the case with the main Avon Valley (from which it is distinctly separated by trees and scrub vegetation).	Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is **low-moderate**. Sensitivity to all other scales of solar PV development is **high**. As part of the broad, even terrain consisting of the Avon Valley Pasture and its adjoining river terrace, landform sensitivity to wind energy development is relatively low, although proximity to St Catherine's Hill counters this to an extent, in terms of raised visibility from public viewpoints. The semi-natural character of the LCA, and irregular landscape pattern, mean that sensitivity to anything other than small developments would be high, but the degree of enclosure and the extent of alteration to the natural landscape mean that sensitivity to smaller solar schemes would be lower. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Heathland, wooded or scrub areas are directly affected; • Site has irregular field form.

Landscape character area: River Stour Floodplain

Area: 300 hectares



River Stour Floodplain LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"The low-lying landscape is contained by river terraces on both sides of the river. These are typically 2-3 m above the flood plain level."* As the floodplain is wide, landscape scale is relatively large.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The river flood plain has developed as a gently winding corridor within which the river has cut a meandering channel. Weirs with pools and side channels highlight the past management of the watercourse. The surrounding fields are divided by ditches and drains."* *"The regular pattern of drainage on parts of the floodplain link to the more intensive management of land associated with the enclosure movement. Variations in levels, tree cover, and irregular field patterns create a more informal landscape than the terraces. The natural course of the river also helps break down the regularity of the pastures. The tree cover along the river is predominantly willow and oaks. Additional tree cover encloses the flood plain along the terrace edges."* The landscape is described as having a *"modest scale".*
Visual exposure: "Minor roads and tracks located on terrace edges provide views down into and across the area"	**Development and activity:** *"Absence of buildings, roadways or other 'historic' structures within flood plain area"* *"The landscape of the river corridor is more heavily influenced by its proximity to the urban areas. Sections of the valley are occupied by significant urban elements such as roads and sewage works. The visual and auditory impact of urban development is also present … Modern intrusions include A338, large scale sewage works and overhead power lines."*
River Stour Floodplain LCA value characteristics	
"While the urban areas undoubtedly have an impact, the river corridor also provides a valuable setting and buffer zone to the urban area. Despite the urban elements there is a continuity of landscape character within the flood plain" *"Sections of the river are accessible by public footpath. This area is also visible from the Stour Valley Way (a path following a minor road route on the edge of the Bournemouth area)."* *"This landscape provides valuable recreational access to the River Stour close to the built up area of Bournemouth. It is also a critical part of the buffer space and 'defensible' boundary between the built up areas of Bournemouth and the countryside of Christchurch. In this role the area helps separate the urban area and airport."* *"The glimpsed views of nearby residential development and the presence of urban infrastructure within the floodplain already influence the rural character and quality of the landscape"*	

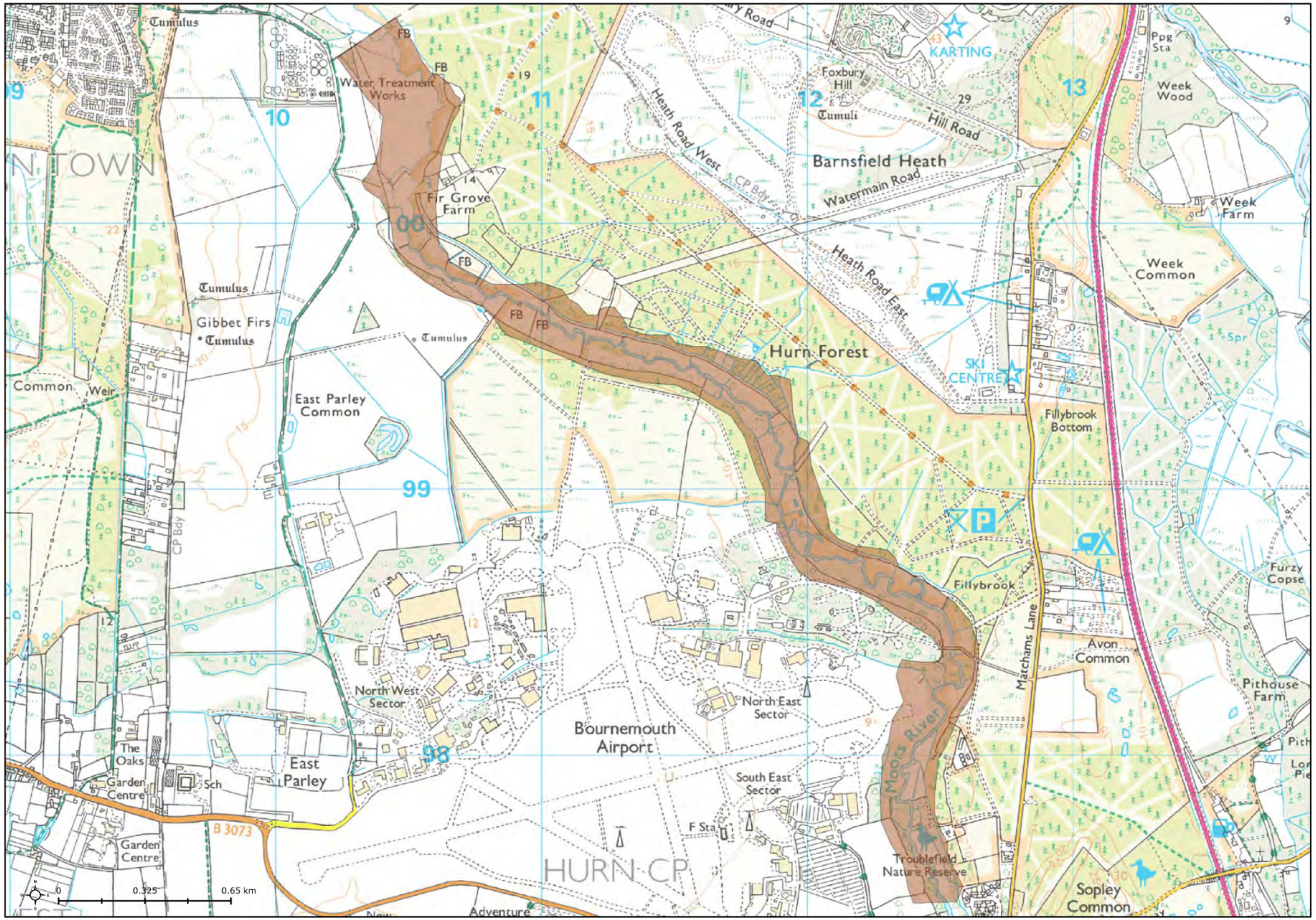
River Stour Floodplain LCA sensitivity to wind energy	River Stour Floodplain LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 LM M H H 2-4 M MH H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 M ≤10 M ≤30 H >30 H

River Stour Floodplain LCA sensitivity to wind energy	River Stour Floodplain LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be **low-moderate** and sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines is **moderate**. Sensitivity to single turbines 35-65m high is **moderate** and sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines of this scale is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high**. The Stour Floodplain Valley Pasture and its adjoining river terrace constitute a broad, even landform with little rise in elevation, so sensitivity in terms of topography and visual exposure is fairly low. Trees screen much of the LCA fringe so there are few locations outside of the area from which the form of the valley can be appreciated, and in views where the valley can be seen, such as from the viewpoint at Ramsdown near Hurn, it appears in the context of a wider landscape that has significant urban development. However, any low-lying and/or enclosed location will potentially raise the prospect of turbine blades appearing up above the tree line out of scale with other landscape elements. The LCA is in proximity to urban areas but, other than being traversed by an overhead transmission line, has no built development within it other than at Parley Green. Land use is principally pastoral, and although some fields have been agriculturally 'improved' the existence of open, green space in close proximity to developed areas but with a degree of separation from them has value for recreation. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Land use is rough pasture/water meadow; • Fields front onto the river; • Field boundaries are well treed, making the landscape smaller in scale;	Sensitivity to solar farms less than 10 hectares in area is **moderate** and sensitivity to larger developments is **high**. The Stour Floodplain Valley Pasture and its adjoining river terrace constitute a broad, even landform with little rise in elevation, so sensitivity in terms of topography and visual exposure is fairly low. Trees screen much of the LCA fringe so there are few locations outside of the area from which the form of the valley can be appreciated, and in views where the valley can be seen, such as from the viewpoint at Ramsdown near Hurn, it appears in the context of a wider landscape that has significant urban development. The LCA is in proximity to urban areas but, other than being traversed by an overhead transmission line, has no built development within it other than at Parley Green. Land use is principally pastoral, and although some fields have been agriculturally 'improved' the existence of open, green space in close proximity to developed areas but with a degree of separation from them has value for recreation. The immediate riverside area attracts the highest sensitivity as development in this area would detract from its meandering form and have greater impact on the homogeneity of land use through the core of the LCA. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Fields have little screening; • Fields front onto the river or are irregular in form; • Land use is rough pasture/water meadow; • There are prolonged views from the Stour Valley Way.

• There are prolonged views from the Stour Valley Way • There is adverse impact on setting of Hurn Court (in a neighbouring LCA to the north)	

Landscape character area: Moors River

Area: 90 hectares

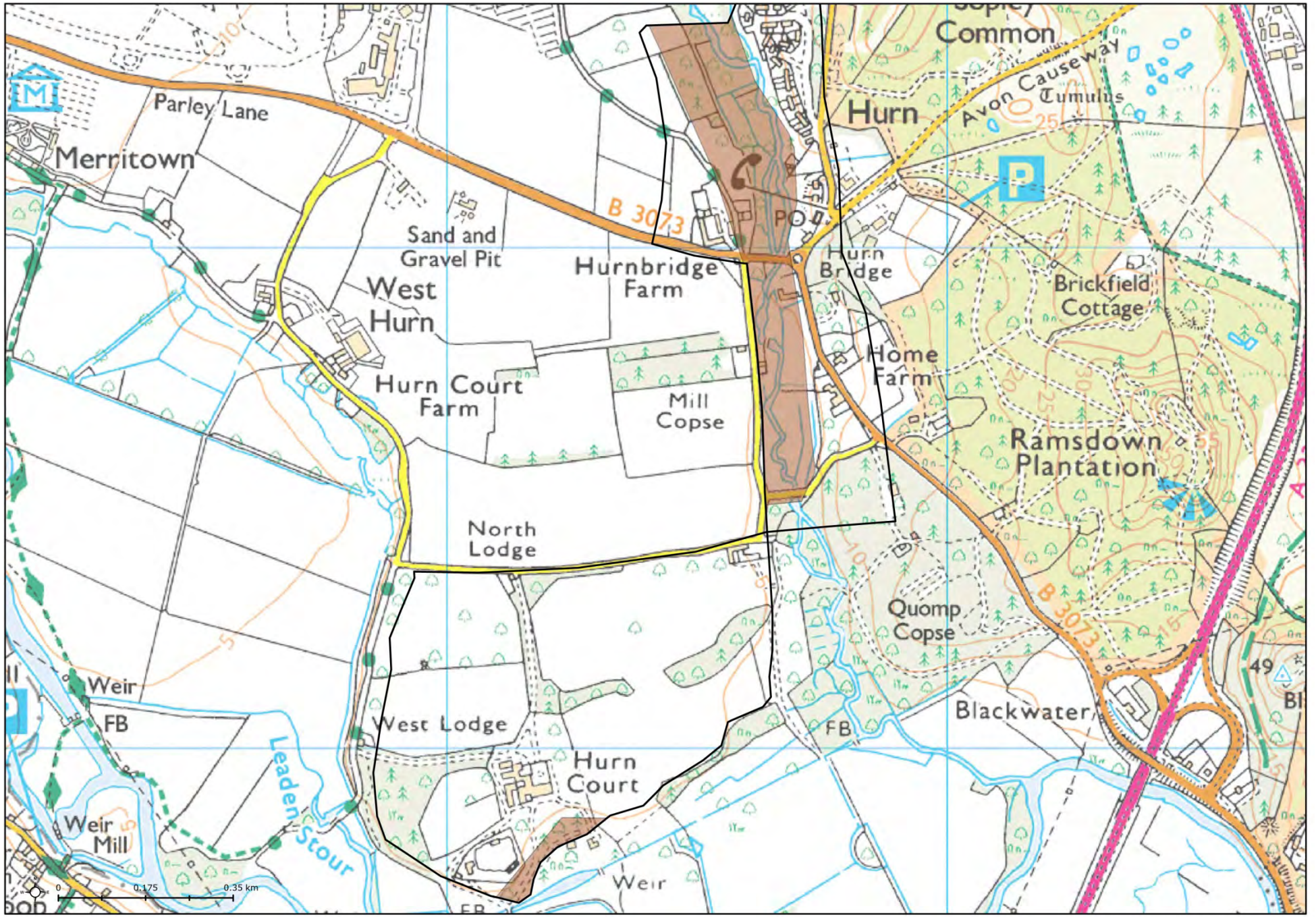


Moors River LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"The river has cut a defined narrow flood plain in the gently undulating topography along the edge of Hurn Forest."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Small scale landscape of secluded valley … River heavily contained by vegetation … Narrow flood plain divided into small water meadow pastures … Semi-natural tree cover of willow, oak in scrub woodland and copses."*
Visual exposure: The containment by vegetation and lack of public access mean that there is little visual exposure associated with this part of the Moors River.	**Development and activity:** *"…the river is in a very secluded landscape with only occasional points of public access. The presence of the nearby airport brings regular noise disturbance to the central section of the river corridor."* There is no built development in the area, although there is a farm complex close to the boundary at the northern edge of the Borough. The airport and associated industrial development are close by but well screened by vegetation.
Moors River LCA value characteristics	
This is described as an "attractive landscape" in the Borough assessment.	
Moors River LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Moors River LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 H H H H 2-4 H H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 H ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H
Moors River LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Moors River LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Sensitivity to all scales of wind energy development is **high**. The constrained size of this LCA means that any development would be in the	Sensitivity to all scales of solar PV development is **high**. The constrained size of this LCA means that any development would be in the immediate vicinity of the river and would detract from its meandering, natural

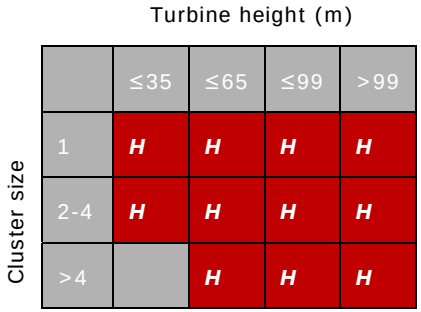
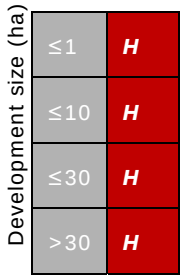
immediate vicinity of the river and set in a very enclosed, small-scale landscape.	form. The degree of enclosure would limit any visibility to a small area within the LCA, but the wet pasture land use that creates a consistent and distinctive character across the whole area is very sensitive to change.

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

Area: 12 hectares



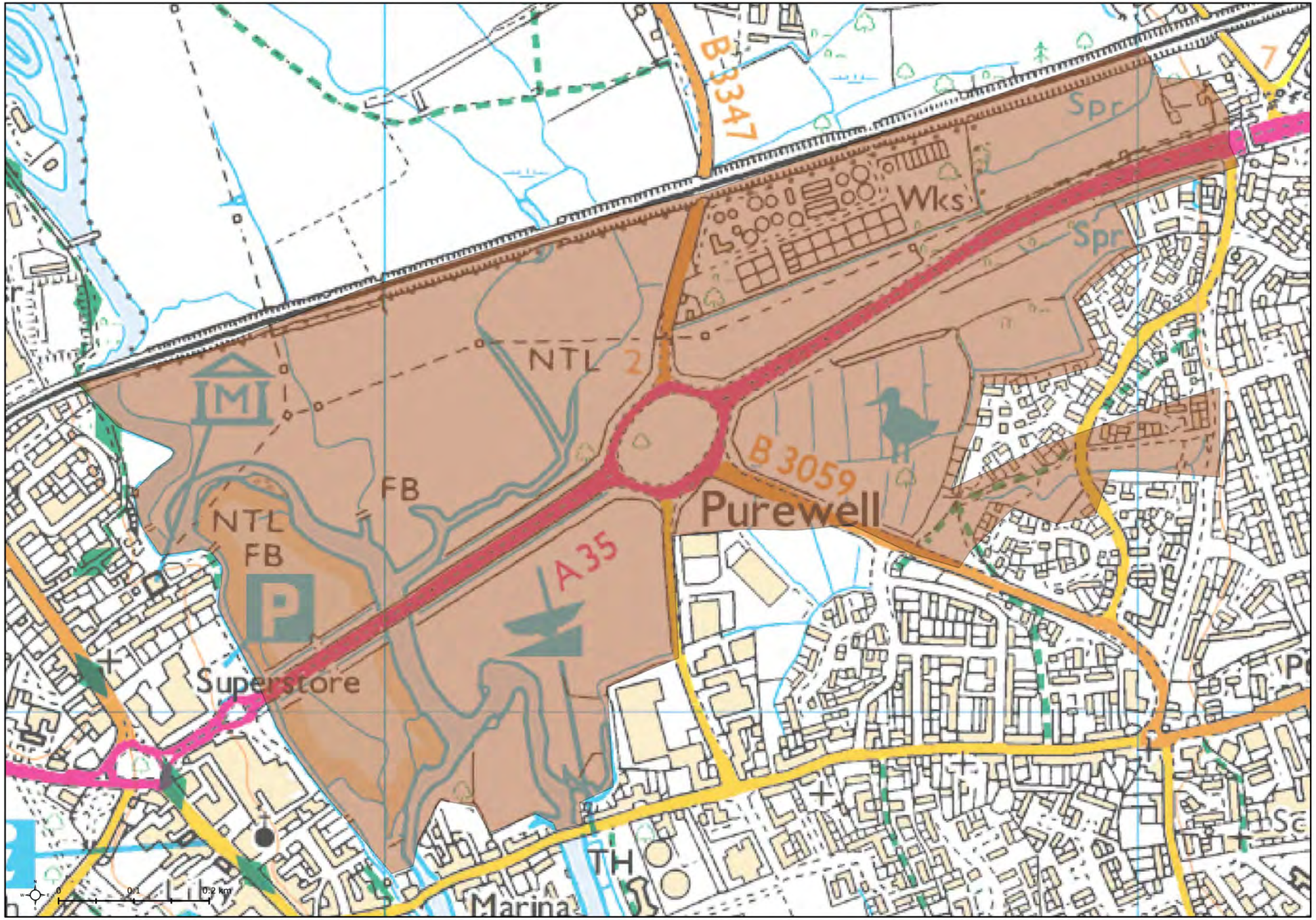
Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: Only the Hurn Bridge part of the LCA is in the Valley Pasture LCT. To the west of the LCA the River Terrace is only slightly higher than the floodplain, but to the east there is a more pronounced slope up towards Ramsdown in the Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The hamlet of Hurn is set on the western side of the St. Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest Ridgeline. The area is contained by the heavily treed higher ground of Ramsdown Hill and Sopley Common. The settlement is comprised of scattered clusters of farmsteads, cottages and a discreet cul-de-sac of post-war housing. The Moors River divides these clusters with a narrow secluded and heavily treed valley. The area opens up into different spaces around the hamlet with small paddocks and fields between building groups"* *"Individual building groups set within distinct spaces of paddocks, fields or woodland edge landscapes."* Most of the village is in the adjacent Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT.
Visual exposure: The wooded setting of Hurn Bridge means that there is little visual exposure between LCAs or within this LCA.	**Development and activity:** *"The settlement is heavily dominated by traffic. The B3073 provides a link from the A338 and Christchurch to Bournemouth International Airport. This road crosses the Moors River via a small bridge. Immediately adjacent to the bridge a roundabout junction links with the Avon Causeway and Matchams Lane … The enclosed wooded setting and modest scale roads concentrate the impact of heavy traffic within this Character Area."*
Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA value characteristics	
"The 'core area' of the hamlet [in the adjacent Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT] is designated Conservation Area. The area protects both statutory listed and locally listed buildings and building groups. A small side road lane, old ford on the river and the tree cover within the valley all contribute to the rural settings of the building groups."	

Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	

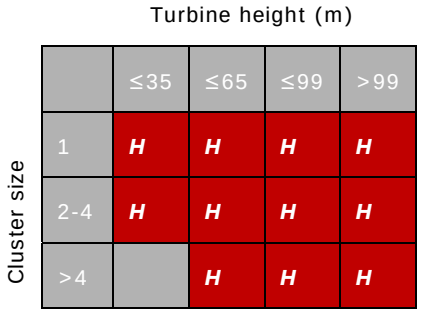
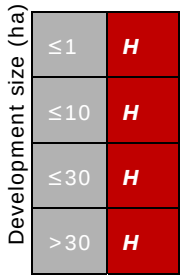
Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
The constrained size and degree of enclosure in this narrow, wooded valley, and the proximity of the hamlet of Hurn, means that sensitivity to any scale of any wind energy development is **high**.	Sensitivity to all scales of solar PV development is **high**. The pattern of land use in the few areas that are not occupied by broadleaf woodland is small scale, irregular and focused on the river, and would be sensitive to any scale of solar PV development.

Landscape character area: Urban Edges & Enclaves - Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell

Area: 76 hectares

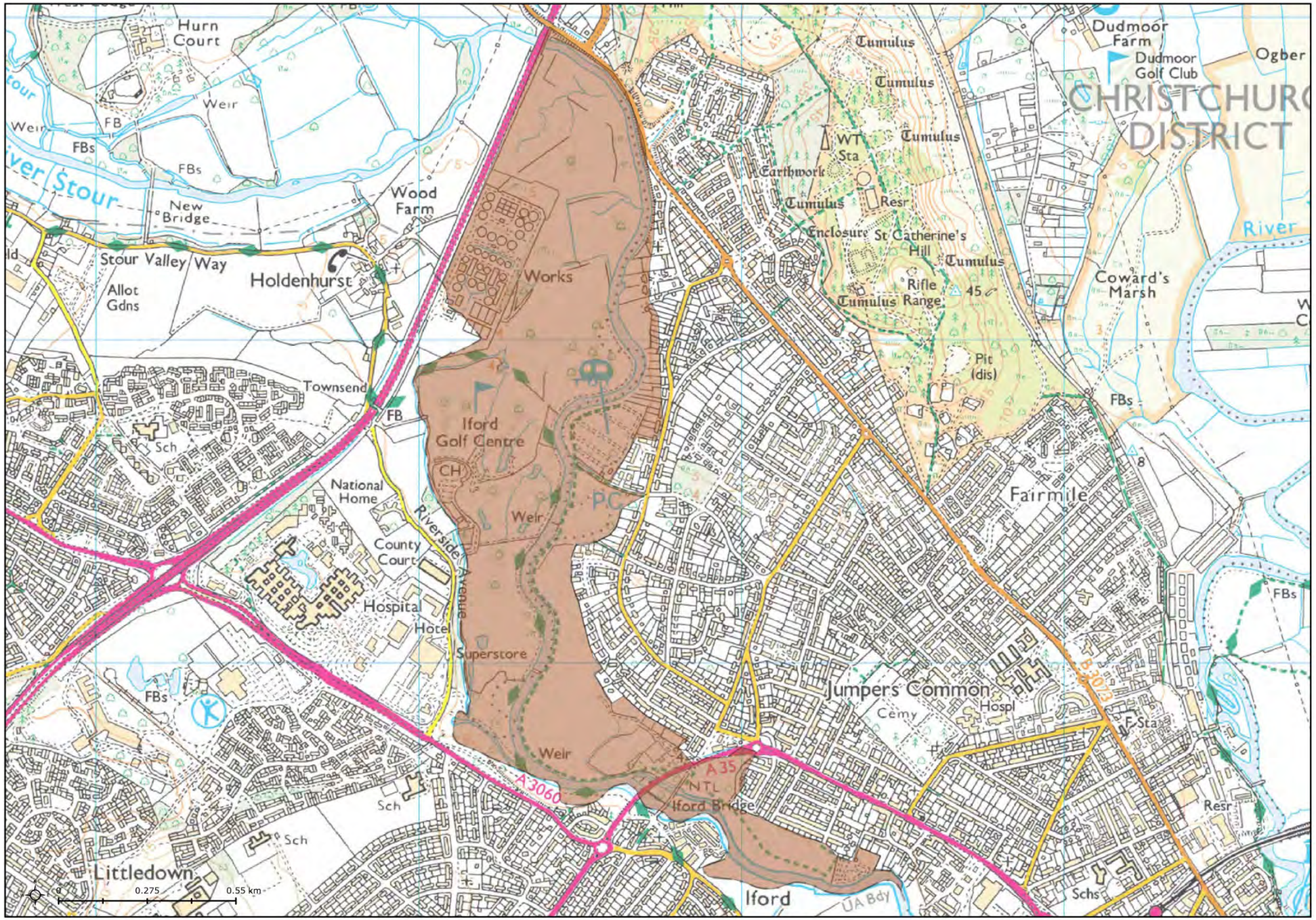


Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Low lying flood plain landscape with meandering and divided river channels, and ditches."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The flood plain areas are predominately water meadow grasslands. To the north of the A35 the area appears regularly grazed. To the south the area appears to be semi abandoned. The areas are fenced with post and wire and occasional sections of post and rail type fences. The flood plain area supports a number of mature trees generally willows, some of which have been managed as pollards. Random groupings of poplar have been planted on the A35 causeway."* *"Generally open landscape area with trees concentrated around the edges nearest the town."*
Visual exposure: *"A short section of path adjoins the Mill Stream but views out of the town from this path are generally blocked by vegetation. Key views are gained from the A35 (eastbound) and the railway to the Town Centre, in which the ancient Priory and the Millhams Street church are seen as landmarks."* *"In winter views are available to the historic building groups in the foreground of the Priory. In summer these are lost to tree cover."* The Priory with St Catherine's Hill behind it forms a significant feature in views north from Hengistbury Head.	**Development and activity:** *"The roadscape and traffic are dominant features. Traffic frequently queues between the roundabouts on either side of the flood plain. The area close to the mill pool is managed by a fishing club. A car park, bridge and fishing facilities have been installed around the river."* *"On the north side of the A35 a power transmission line crosses the flood plain in front of the railway embankment. The pylons are a major detraction in the view."* Although there are no public rights of way within the area, much of the western side, both to the north and south of the A35, is Open Access Land.
Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell LCA value characteristics	
"The relationship of this area to the historic townscape area an important part of the character and historic fabric of the townscape. The open area forms a key setting to the historic core of the Conservation Area, listed buildings and the river corridor, all of which are an integral part of the Borough identity and sense of place. The spaces and views to the town also provide a real sense of arrival on approaches via the A35 and railway." *"The water meadows are an integral part of the historic landscape of Christchurch. The southern area is within the Conservation Area. Both areas of land have been heavily compromised by elements of the urban area. However, despite this they remain of real and potential value to the setting of the town."* The Open Access area has recreational value.	

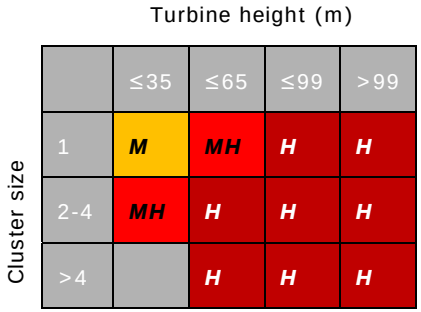
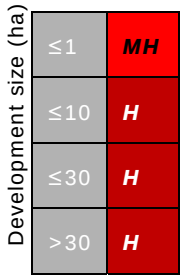
Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	
Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Proximity to the urban area, the small scale of the landscape and the value attached to the area as a setting for the historic town centre and the river mean that sensitivity to all scales of wind energy development is **high**. There is particular sensitivity attached to views of the Priory, both from the LCA, the town and the harbour and coast (e.g. Stanpit March and Hengistbury Head).	Despite their degraded condition, water meadows are a valued historic landscape type, and this value is increased by proximity to the town centre, which gives the area value as a setting for the Conservation Area (in particular the Priory). The absence of field boundaries within the area and the irregular forms of the river and minor channels mean that sensitivity all scales of solar PV development is **high**, despite the extent of modern intrusion into the area.

Landscape character area: Urban Edges & Enclaves - Stour Valley A338 to Iford Bridge

Area: 132 hectares

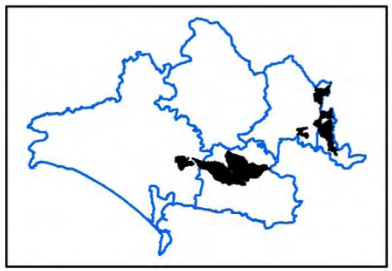


Stour Valley A338 to Iford Bridge LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: There is very little change in elevation across the area and no significant rise in elevation in surrounding areas other than in the Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT to the north where the landform rises sharply up to Blackwater Hill.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Within the Christchurch area the landscape encompasses a major sewage works, golf course, caravan park and local park lands. The landscape is relatively open within the flood plain although the edges of the corridor are enclosed by significant tree cover. The field areas are divided by fences and occasional hedgerows. The river is marked by groups of riverside trees."* *"The area is more open than other sections of the flood plain"*
Visual exposure: *"…recreational uses and views to residential development also confirm the proximity of the urban area."* *"With many of the housing areas backing onto the river and few views from roads or other public spaces adjoining the floodplain the area is not heavily overlooked.* *"…its low lying secluded position between built up areas does not give the area a very high profile."* There are viewpoints over the LCA from Blackwater Hill to the north.	**Development and activity:** *"The riverside areas are accessible to sections of footpaths."* There is public access along the river bank through much of the LCA on both sides, and golf holes, surrounding margins and wooded edges account for most of the land area. *"The sewage works and dual carriageway are major elements of urban infrastructure."*
Stour Valley A338 to Iford Bridge LCA value characteristics	
"Although accessible the area has the feel of a backwater space unconnected to either the urban area or wider countryside. Even the recreational uses along the river are relatively low-key local neighbourhood facilities" The Stour Valley Way long distance route runs along the western bank of the river through most of the LCA. Iford Bridge is a historic feature.	

Stour Valley A338 to Iford Bridge LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Stour Valley A338 to Iford Bridge LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	

Stour Valley A338 to Iford Bridge LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Stour Valley A338 to Iford Bridge LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be **moderate** and sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines of this size is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to single turbines 35-65m high is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines of this scale is **high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high**. The narrow form of the character area and its urban surroundings are very sensitive to turbines that would be viewed as intrusive in an area valued as a recreational space and a buffer between Bournemouth and Christchurch. Higher turbines would also have skyline impact in views towards Bournemouth from the higher ground to the north east (e.g. St Catherine's Hill, Blackdown or Ramsdown) in which the distant Purbeck Ridge provides a backdrop. The even landform, the relatively large scale of the landscape (within its limited extents) and the extent of screening from surrounding urban areas mean that sensitivity to smaller turbines will be slightly lower. Sensitivity could be higher where • Development is adjoining or close to the river, detracting from its meandering form; • Development affects the setting of Iford Bridge.	Sensitivity to developments of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all other scales of solar PV development is **high**, despite the extent of modern intrusion into the area. In terms of historic character and functionality the land use in this LCA is of lower sensitivity than areas further upstream where more of a rural character is retained. The limited visual exposure to the surrounding urban area also reduces sensitivity. However, the dominating the presence of the river, the lack of any geometric field structure or strong field boundaries and the extent of public recreational access to the area all serve to heighten sensitivity to solar PV development. The area is valued as open, green space between Bournemouth and Christchurch and any encroachment seen as urbanising could diminish its value in this respect. Sensitivity could be higher where • Development is adjoining or close to the river, detracting from its meandering form; • Development affects the setting of Iford Bridge.

Landscape character type: Heath/Forest Mosaic



District boundary

AONB

Dorset Landscape Character Type

3. Heath/Forest Mosaic

Christchurch Landscape Character Area

3A - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court

3B - St Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest

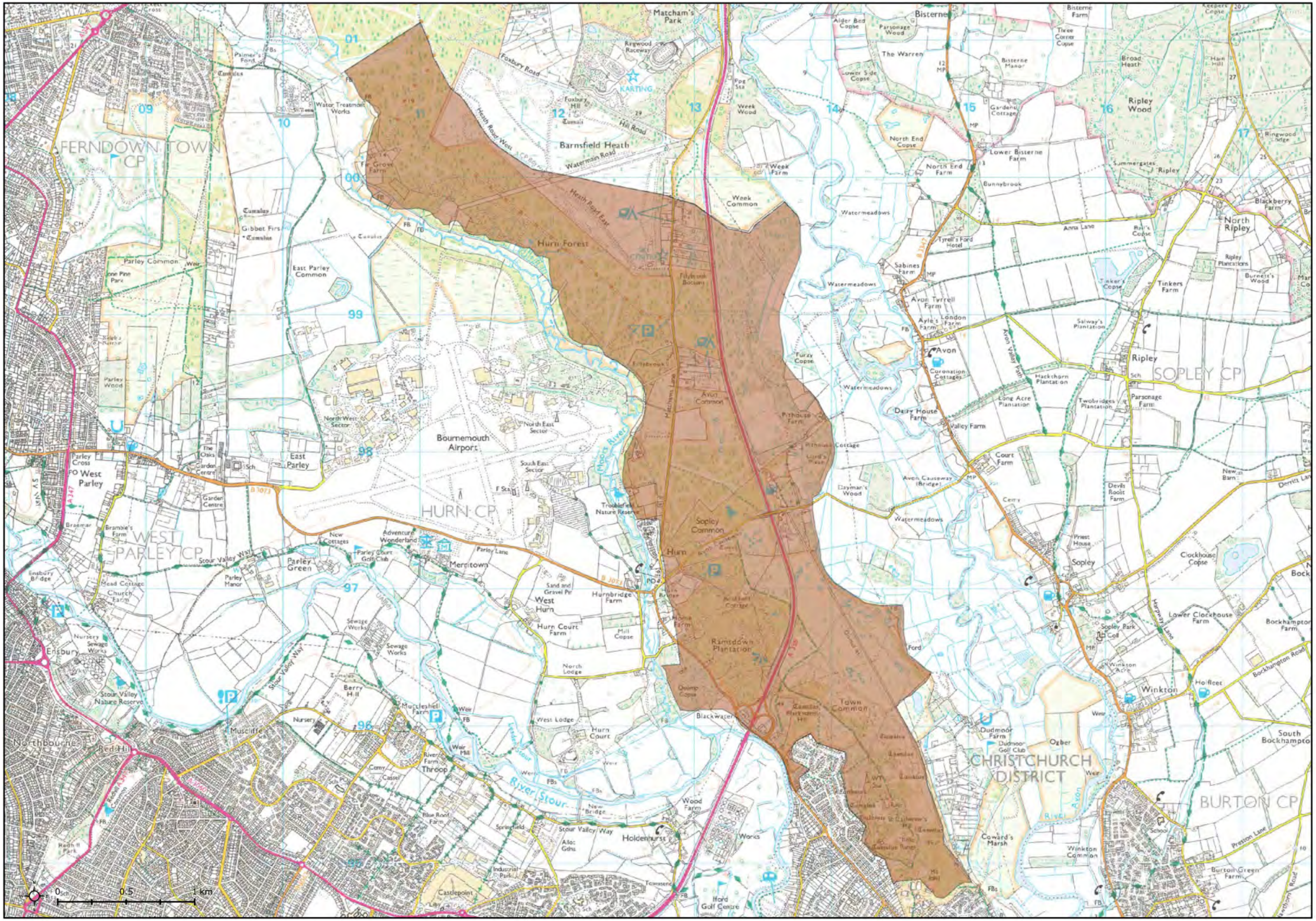
0 0.75 1.5 km

Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT overview	
This landscape type forms a transitional landscape between the chalk landscapes, river valleys and other heathland landscape types. This LCT is represented principally by one LCA within Christchurch Borough, St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest, which is part of a larger heath/forest area occupying the sandy soils between the Avon and Moors valleys, continuing north into East Dorset as the Ringwood – Hurn Forest LCA, and also into Hampshire. The area occupied mostly by the hamlet of Hurn forms part of a separate character area in the Borough Assessment, called Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court, which at County level crosses into three different LCTs and is therefore split down into three separate elements in this sensitivity study.	
Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: "*It has a varied landform from undulating in the west with steeper slopes in the east of the county. It is generally formed on elevated plateaus or ridges cut by the rivers Avon, Moors, Sherford, Piddle and Frome."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "*An extensive and expansive landscape*" "*It is characterised by a patchwork landscape of heath, forest and scrub on sandy soil with extensive blocks of conifer plantation and areas of regenerating birch woodland to create a distinctive mosaic. The conifer plantations blanket former heathland sites often in extensive stands with their margins often creating striking 'sharp edges' but can help to soften urban development*."
Visual exposure: "*Important open vistas from key viewpoints*."	**Development and activity:** "*The urban influences of housing, military and industrial development impact significantly on the area, which is well used and popular for informal recreation… Urban fringe pony/horse paddocks and its associated 'clutter' create more localised but still significant impacts. In the east of the county the fringes of the conurbation butt hard up to the edges of this landscape to create harsh edges in places.*"
Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT value characteristics	
"There are a number of important recreational sites" *"…an unspoilt feel over a large proportion"* *"…Sopley Common and St. Catherine's Hill are all key features in the area particularly because of their open space and landscape value" "for Area popular informal recreation activities as well as for nature conservation"* The overall management objectives for the Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT focus on increasing diversity away from a dominance of hard-edged conifer plantations, but "*skyline trees and trees which help to soften urban development*" are noted as key features to be conserved, together with "*the designated sites of nature conservation and cultural heritage interest and the heathland areas to reduce fragmentation*".	

Heath / Forest Mosaic LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Heath / Forest Mosaic LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
Whilst large scale landscapes are more suitable for wind energy development than those with a smaller scale land cover pattern, the value attached to heathland landscapes makes these areas more sensitive. Coniferous plantation woodland is not inherently sensitive as a land use, but its proximity to heathland areas, and the combined recreational value of two land use types, increases its sensitivity. Farmed areas are less sensitive. The screening effect of coniferous woodland means that there is scope for finding locations in which smaller turbines would have a limited degree of visibility, but larger turbines are likely to stand out sharply, and with skyline impact, in panoramic views where coniferous forest currently dominates. From outside of the LCT, the forest-heath areas form a backdrop to some views from lower ground, and are prominent in panoramic views from the Purbeck Ridge. Sensitivity will be higher where development would have skyline impact in views from beyond the LCT, and it will also be higher where prominent land marks or features are present on the skyline. The impact of modern development is typically fairly localised, because of the screening effect of the afforested areas, so large areas still have a sense of remoteness and, as a consequence, would be more sensitive to development.	The undulating landform can generally be considered of higher sensitivity to solar PV developments. The absence of any regular pattern in areas dominated by heath and forest, and their recreational and scenic value, raises sensitivity. Solar PV development would form a strong contrast to the distinctive colours and textures of the heathland and birch woodland and scrub. There is lower land use sensitivity associated with farmed former heathland areas, but their typical position on the margins of the heath and forest areas makes visual impact on surrounding areas more likely. Where solar PV development has the potential to be visible on elevated hill slopes, or where it would interrupt skylines, there is a raised degree of sensitivity. Forest and woodland could be used to contain views locally. The impact of modern development is typically fairly localised, because of the screening effect of the afforested areas, so large areas still have a sense of remoteness and, as a consequence, would be more sensitive to development.

Landscape character area: St Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest

Area: 779 hectares



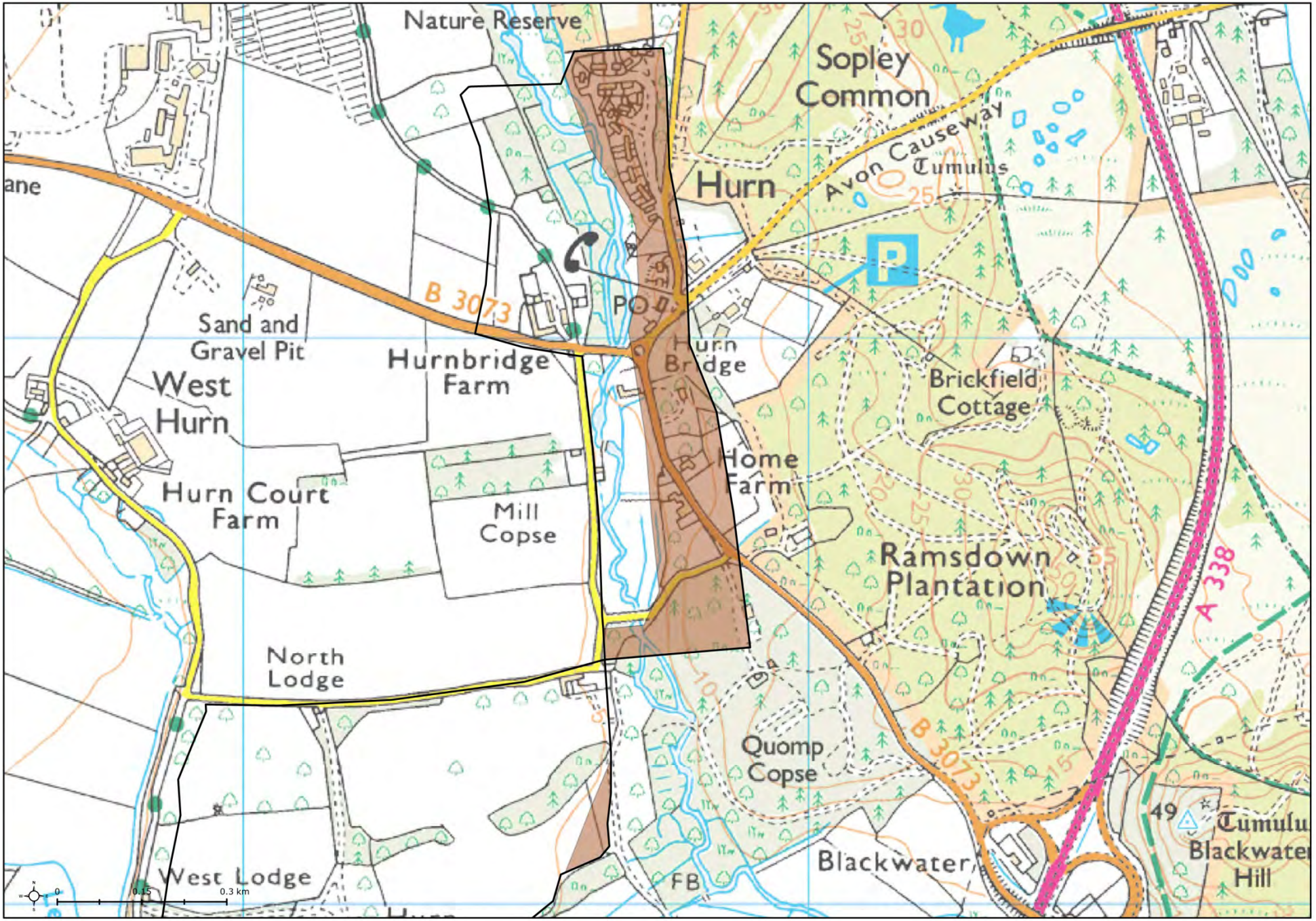
St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"The pronounced landform of the ridge at its southern end softens to a more gently rolling landscape within the forest area to the north"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Land cover of heathland and pine forest with occasional semi-natural pockets of birch and oak woodland"*
Visual exposure: *"…the enclosed woodland landscapes are protected from the visual influences of the urban area"* *"Prominent ridgeline and evergreen tree cover provide key landmark in local views and vantage point for views back across the Borough and over Bournemouth"*	**Development and activity:** *"The proximity of the A338 and Bournemouth International Airport introduce significant background noise sources. In addition, power transmission lines cross the parts of the open heathlands, and telecommunication masts form prominent negative landmarks on the top of St. Catherine's Hill. As a result the landscape is not as tranquil as other parts of the Borough"*
St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA value characteristics	
"The presence of St. Catherine's Hill as a landmark to many local views ensures this area is a key part of Christchurch Borough's identity." *"While the A338 is an intrusion into the landscape, the landscape provides a very strong and distinctive setting to the road as an approach to Bournemouth and Christchurch. This area plays a significant part in the perceived character and quality of the Borough as a whole."* *"Forestry Commission car parks, open forest rides, and a number of bridleways and footpaths provide a comprehensive public access."* *"Accessible and well used recreational landscape"* "*The conservation interest* [there are extensive ecological designations] *also includes aspects of cultural heritage – fourteen scheduled ancient monuments lie within the area. St Catherine's Hill, being one of the earliest known areas of settlement within the Borough, is therefore of significant archaeological interest"*	

St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA sensitivity to wind energy	St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 LM M H H 2-4 M MH H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 LM ≤10 M ≤30 H >30 H
St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**St Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is **low-moderate** and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height is **moderate**. Sensitivity to single turbines of less than 65m is **moderate** and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this scale is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. The distinctive landform of St Catherine's Hill, in close proximity to the urban edge, would be very sensitive to any wind development. Heathlands are a valued landscape type and would therefore also be sensitive to wind turbines, in particular where there is a perception of wildness. The extent of forest and woodland across the area offers scope for containing views of this form of development, although where land is commercial forest consideration should be given to the fact that most of these trees were planted as crops and will at some point in time be felled. Policies for heathland restoration mean that some cleared areas are likely not to be replanted. The few isolated locations in which there is pastoral land use would also be less sensitive. Tall turbines in any location are likely to appear out of scale with the afforested landscape. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Site is on the very visible terrain at the southern end of the LCA, on or around St Catherine's Hill; • Development would directly affect areas of heathland, or areas of heath, scrub and woodland mosaic, in particular where there is a perception of wildness; • Area is important for informal recreation; • Location is prominent as a backdrop for views from adjacent river valley	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is **low-moderate**, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares in **moderate** and sensitivity to all other scales of solar PV energy development is **high**. The distinctive landform of St Catherine's Hill, in close proximity to the urban edge, would be very sensitive to any solar PV development. Heathlands are a valued landscape type and would therefore also be sensitive to any change in land use, particularly to man-made structures such as solar arrays. The extent of forest and woodland across the area offers scope for containing views of this form of development, although where land is commercial forest consideration should be given to the fact that most of these trees were planted as crops and will at some point in time be felled. Policies for heathland restoration mean that some cleared areas are likely not to be replanted. The few isolated locations in which there is pastoral land use would also be less sensitive. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Site is on steeper terrain at the southern end of the LCA, on or around St Catherine's Hill; • Development would directly affect areas of heathland, or areas of heath, scrub and woodland mosaic, in particular where there is a perception of wildness; • Area is important for informal recreation; • Location is prominent as a backdrop for views from adjacent river valley landscapes, or from key panoramic viewpoints within the LCA (e.g. the

landscapes, or from key panoramic viewpoints within the LCA (e.g. the viewpoint on Ramsdown); • Trees which would visually contain development are likely to be felled in the lifetime of the development (reference should be made to Forest Design Plans); • Location detracts from the historic character of scheduled monuments.	viewpoint on Ramsdown); • Trees which would visually contain development are likely to be felled in the lifetime of the development (reference should be made to Forest Design Plans); • Location detracts from the historic character of scheduled monuments.

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

Area: 15 hectares



Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: The heath/forest part of this LCA is set on a slope up towards Ramsdown to the east and bounded by low-lying valley pasture and river terrace to the west.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The hamlet of Hurn is set on the western side of the St. Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest Ridgeline. The area is contained by the heavily treed higher ground of Ramsdown Hill and Sopley Common. The settlement is comprised of scattered clusters of farmsteads, cottages and a discreet cul-de-sac of post-war housing. The Moors River divides these clusters with a narrow secluded and heavily treed valley. The area opens up into different spaces around the hamlet with small paddocks and fields between building groups"* *"Individual building groups set within distinct spaces of paddocks, fields or woodland edge landscapes."*
Visual exposure: The wooded setting of Hurn Bridge means that there is little visual exposure between LCAs or within this LCA.	**Development and activity:** *"The settlement is heavily dominated by traffic. The B3073 provides a link from the A338 and Christchurch to Bournemouth International Airport. This road crosses the Moors River via a small bridge. Immediately adjacent to the bridge a roundabout junction links with the Avon Causeway and Matchams Lane … The enclosed wooded setting and modest scale roads concentrate the impact of heavy traffic within this Character Area."*
Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA value characteristics	
"The 'core area' of the hamlet is designated Conservation Area. The area protects both statutory listed and locally listed buildings and building groups. A small side road lane, old ford on the river and the tree cover within the valley all contribute to the rural settings of the building groups."	

Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 H H H H 2-4 H H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 H ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H
Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Hurn Bridge & Hurn Court LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
The constrained size, degree of enclosure and settlement in this part of the LCA means that sensitivity to any scale of any wind energy development is **high**.	Sensitivity to all scales of solar PV development is **high**. The heath/forest part of the Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court LCA is mostly occupied by housing, and the pattern of land use in the few open areas is small scale and irregular. Locations in such close proximity to settlement would be sensitive to any scale of solar PV development.

8 Wind Energy Sensitivity Summary

8.1 The maps shown in **Figures 15 – 25** illustrate the sensitivity ratings set out in **Section 7**, with a separate map for each combination of turbine height category and cluster size category.

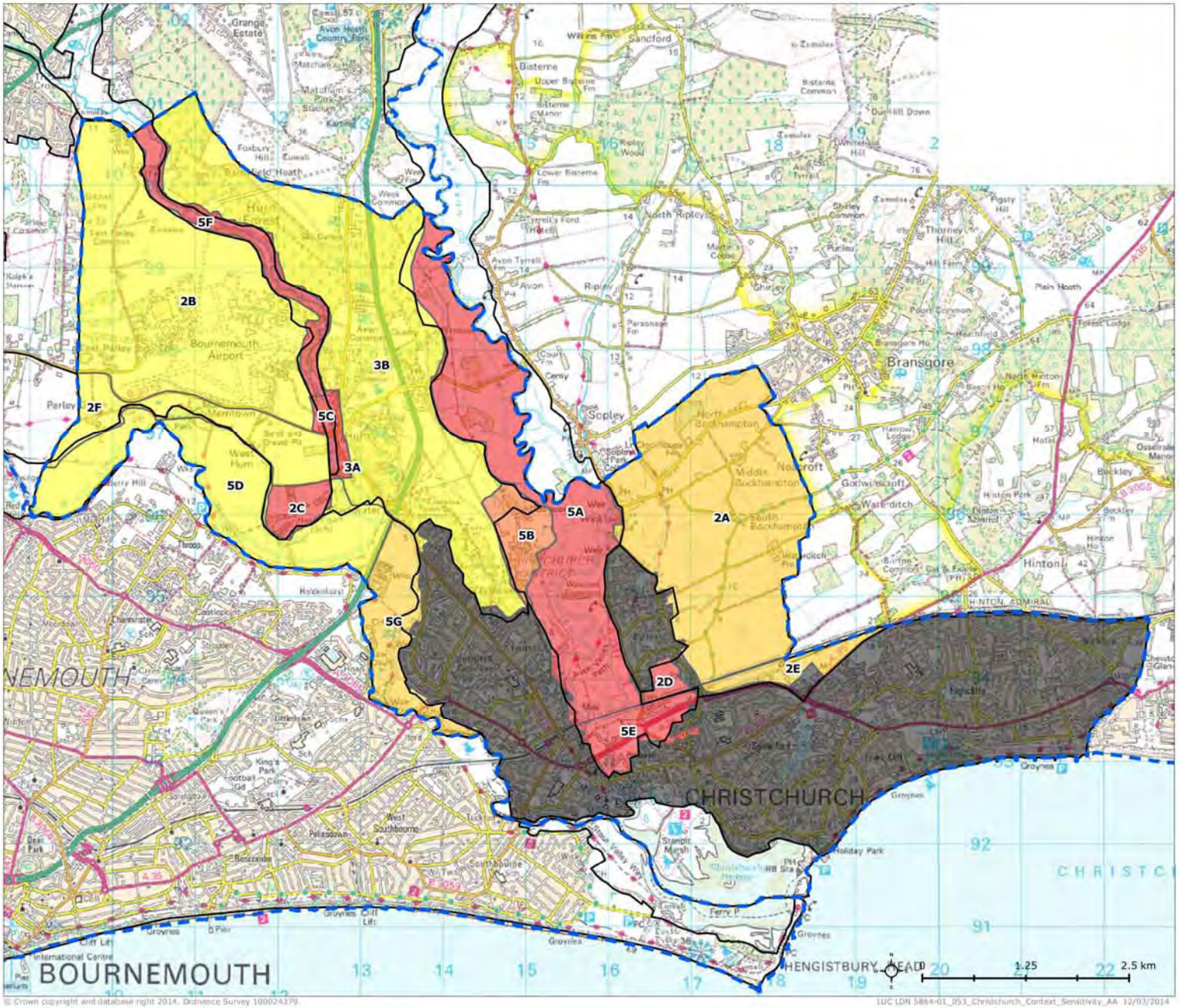
8.2 With the exception of parts of the band of heath/forest running north from St Catherine's Hill the landscapes in the Borough are typically fairly flat, forming the floodplains and terraces of the rivers that open into Christchurch Harbour. Where river valleys are narrow there is limited scope for wind energy development, but wider valleys and terraces have relatively low sensitivity in terms of landform.

8.3 Where areas retain a strong character associated with traditional land use – such as water meadows or heathlands – sensitivity will be higher, but the extent of urban influence in many locations reduces sensitivity to development that is not too large in scale.

8.4 The extent of settlement within the Borough, the constrained sizes of most of the character areas and the recreational value of open areas, combine to elevate sensitivity to large scale development: there are no locations where landscape sensitivity to turbines over 65m high, or groups of more than 4 turbines, is not considered to be 'high'.

8.5 Whilst this sensitivity assessment provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas to wind energy development, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development proposal. It is not a replacement for detailed studies on specific siting and design, and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits.

8.6 This assessment does not consider cumulative impact of wind energy developments, other than within the guidance notes in **Section 10** below, and it is important to note that, however low the sensitivity rating for an individual turbine or cluster, the cumulative effect of a proliferation of turbines can be significant, regardless of turbine size. Cumulative assessment of any specific wind energy proposal on landscape character and qualities will be a key aspect of the development process.



Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 15

Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 15-35 Metres to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hillll 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

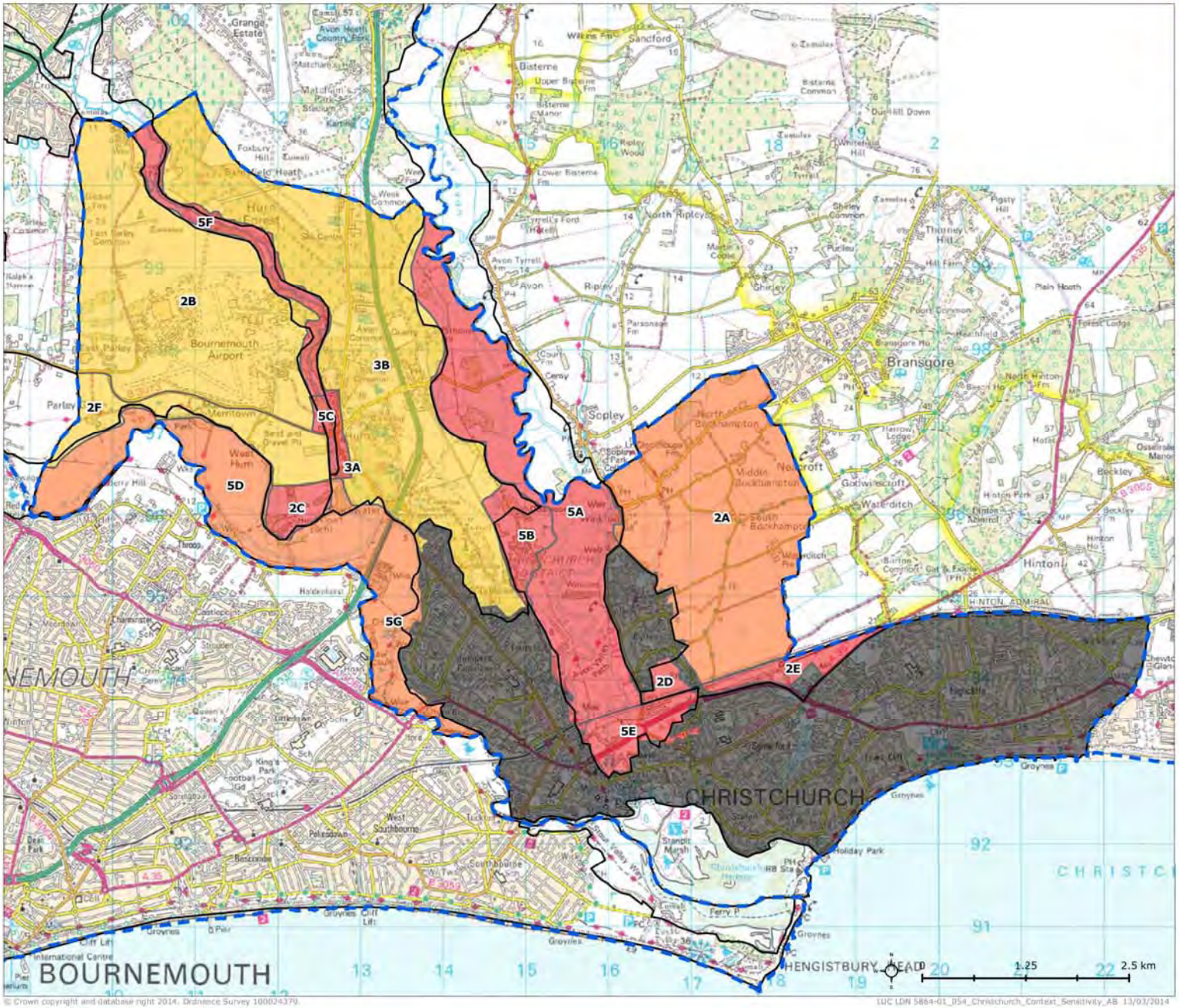
5. Valley Pasture
- 5A - Avon Flood Plain
- 5B - Cowards Marsh - Dudmoor Farm
- 5C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
- 5D - River Stour Flood Plain
- 5E - The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell
- 5F - The Moors River
- 5G - The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford Bridge

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5864-01_053_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_AA 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council



LUC LDN 5864-01_054_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_AB 13/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council

Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 16

Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 36-65 Metres to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hillll 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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

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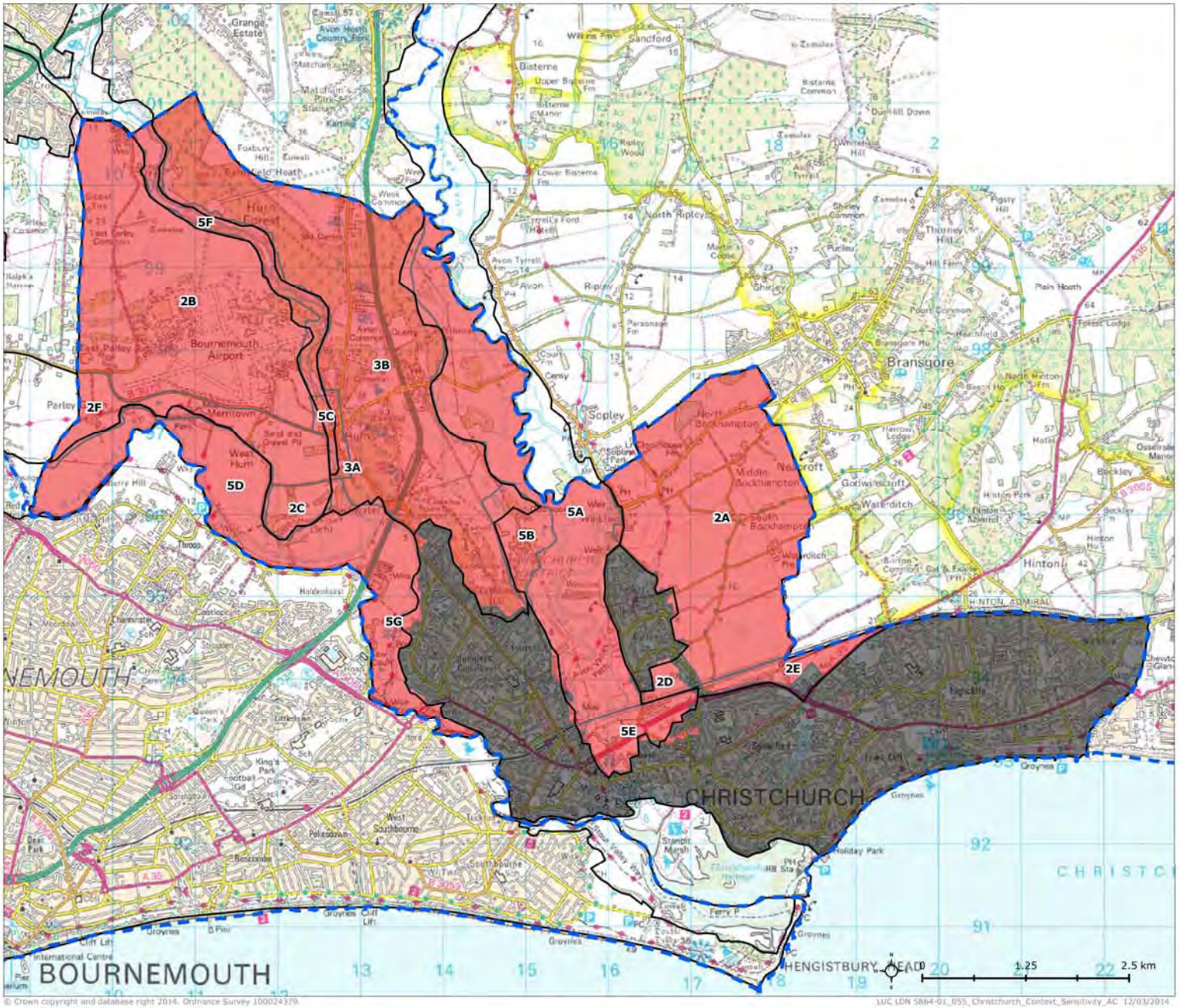


Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 17

Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 66-99 Metres to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hillll 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

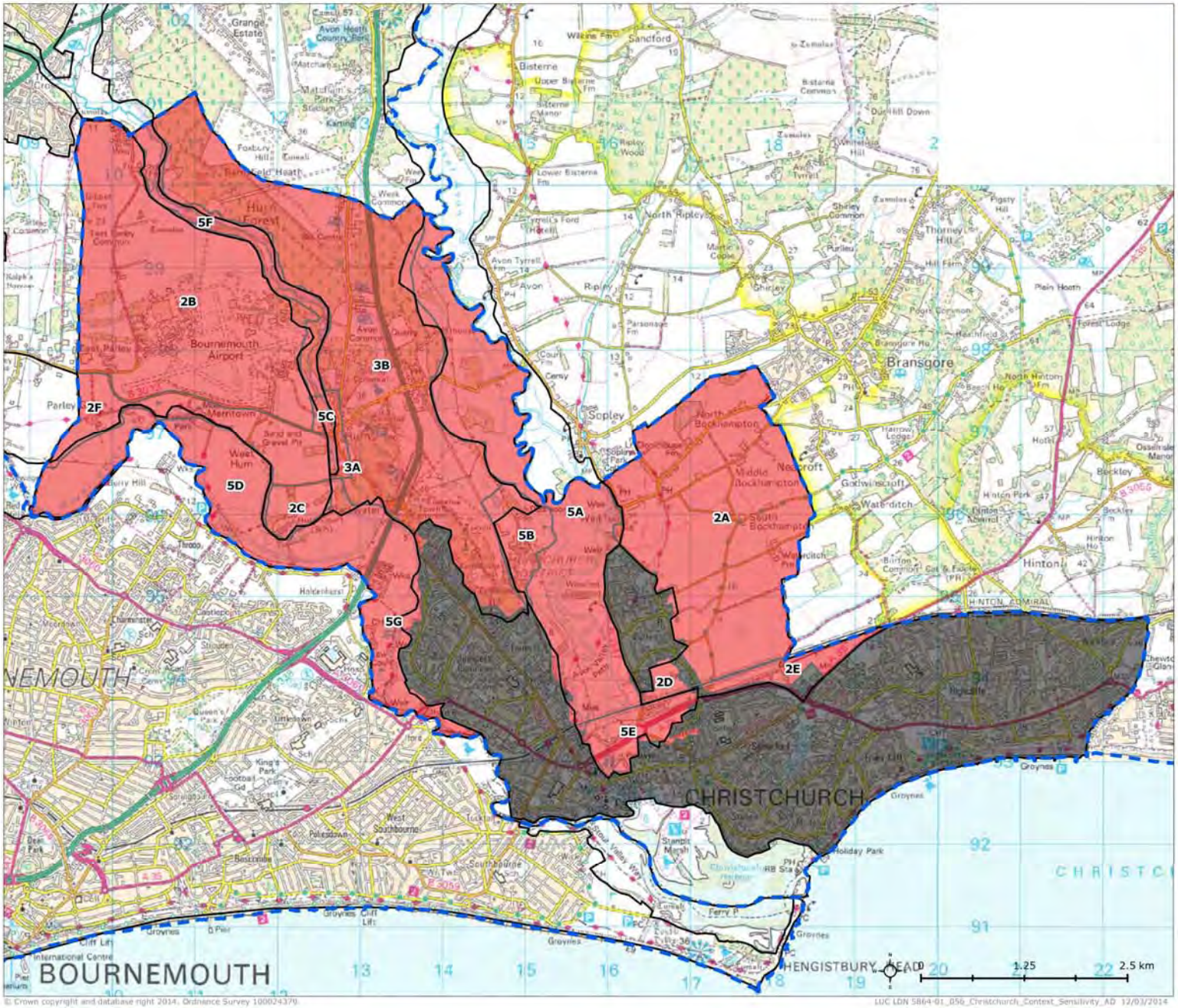
5. Valley Pasture
- 5A - Avon Flood Plain
- 5B - Cowards Marsh - Dudmoor Farm
- 5C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
- 5D - River Stour Flood Plain
- 5E - The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell
- 5F - The Moors River
- 5G - The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford Bridge

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5Bb4-01_055_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_AC 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council



Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 18

Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 100 Metres or More to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hilli to Staple Cross
- 2F - The River Stour Terrace

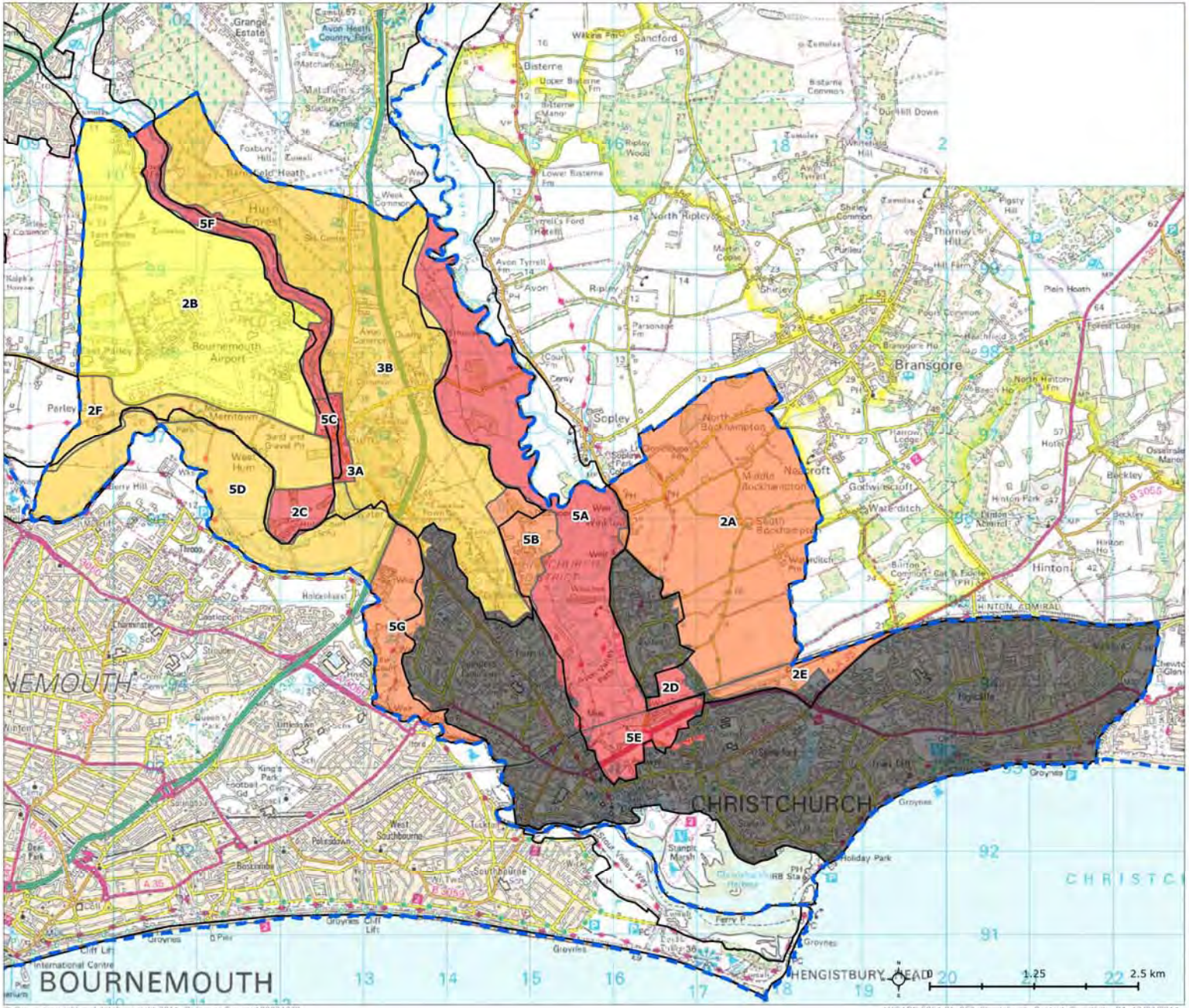
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
- 3A - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
- 3B - St Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest

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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

Source: Christchurch District Council



LUC LDN 5864-01_057_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_BA 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council

Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 19

Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 15-35 Metres to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

Landscape Character Types and Areas

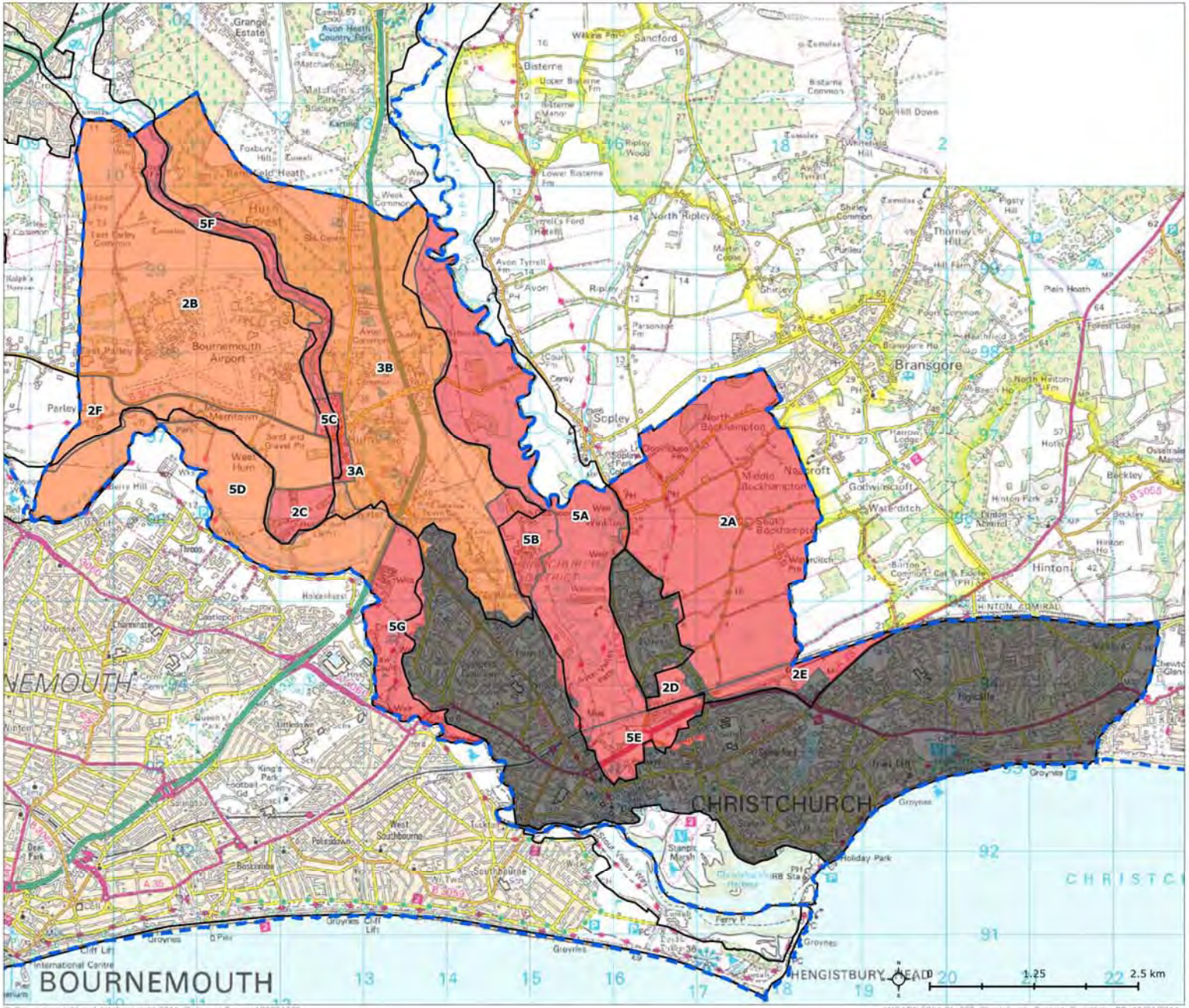
2. River Terrace
2A - Avon River Terrace
2B - Bournemouth Airport and East Parley Common
2C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
2D - South of Burton
2E - Roeshot Hilll to Staple Cross
2F - The River Stour Terrace

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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC



Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 20

Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 36-65 Metres to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hilll 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

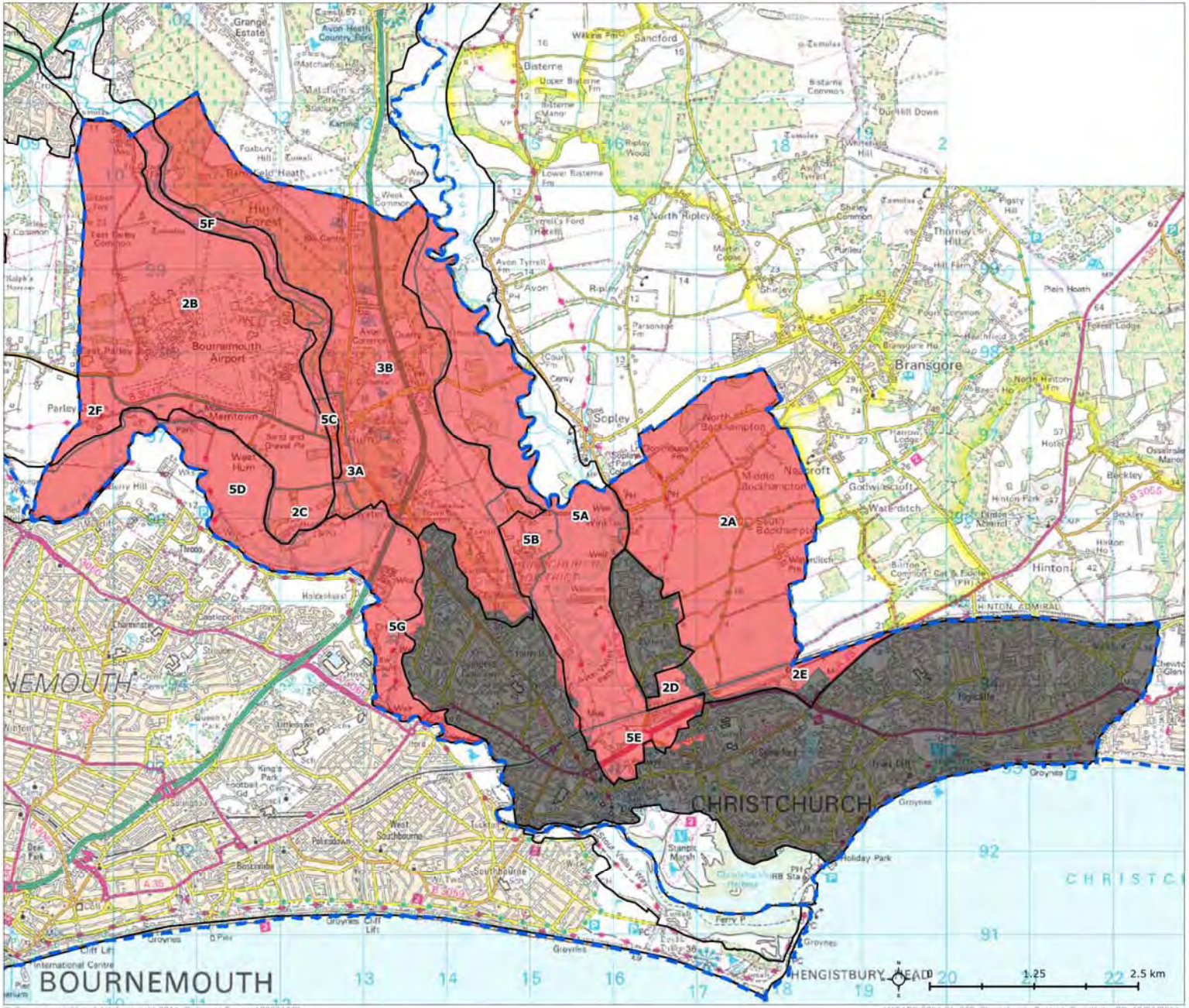
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Avon Flood Plain
5B - Cowards Marsh - Dudmoor Farm
5C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
5D - River Stour Flood Plain
5E - The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell
5F - The Moors River
5G - The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford Bridge

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5864-01_058_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_BB 13/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council



LUC LDN 5864-01_059_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_BC 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council

Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 21

Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 66-99 Metres to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

Landscape Character Types and Areas

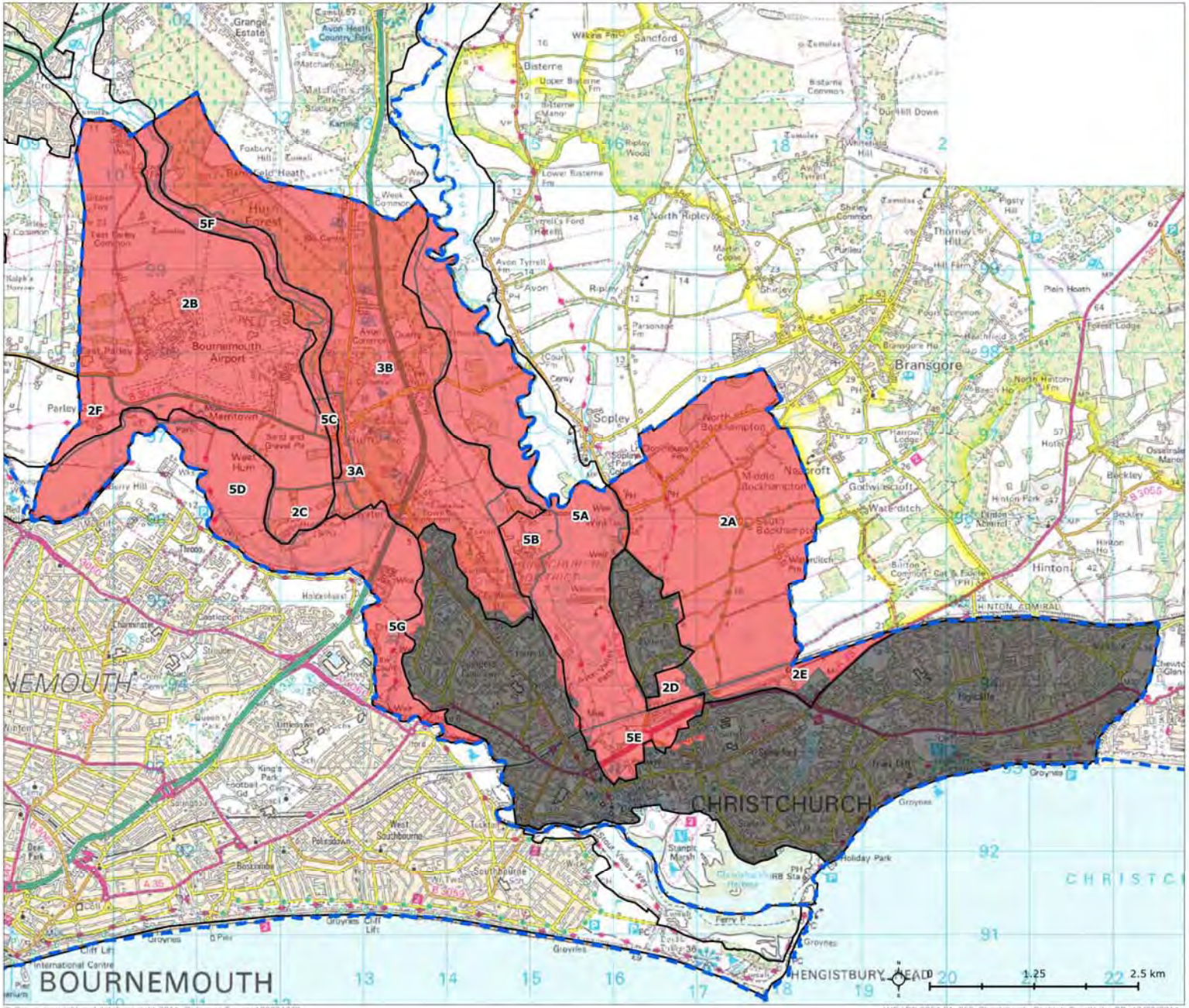
2. River Terrace
- 2A - Avon River Terrace
- 2B - Bournemouth Airport and East Parley Common
- 2C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
- 2D - South of Burton
- 2E - Roeshot Hilll to Staple Cross
- 2F - The River Stour Terrace

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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC



Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 22

Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 100 Metres or More to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hilll 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

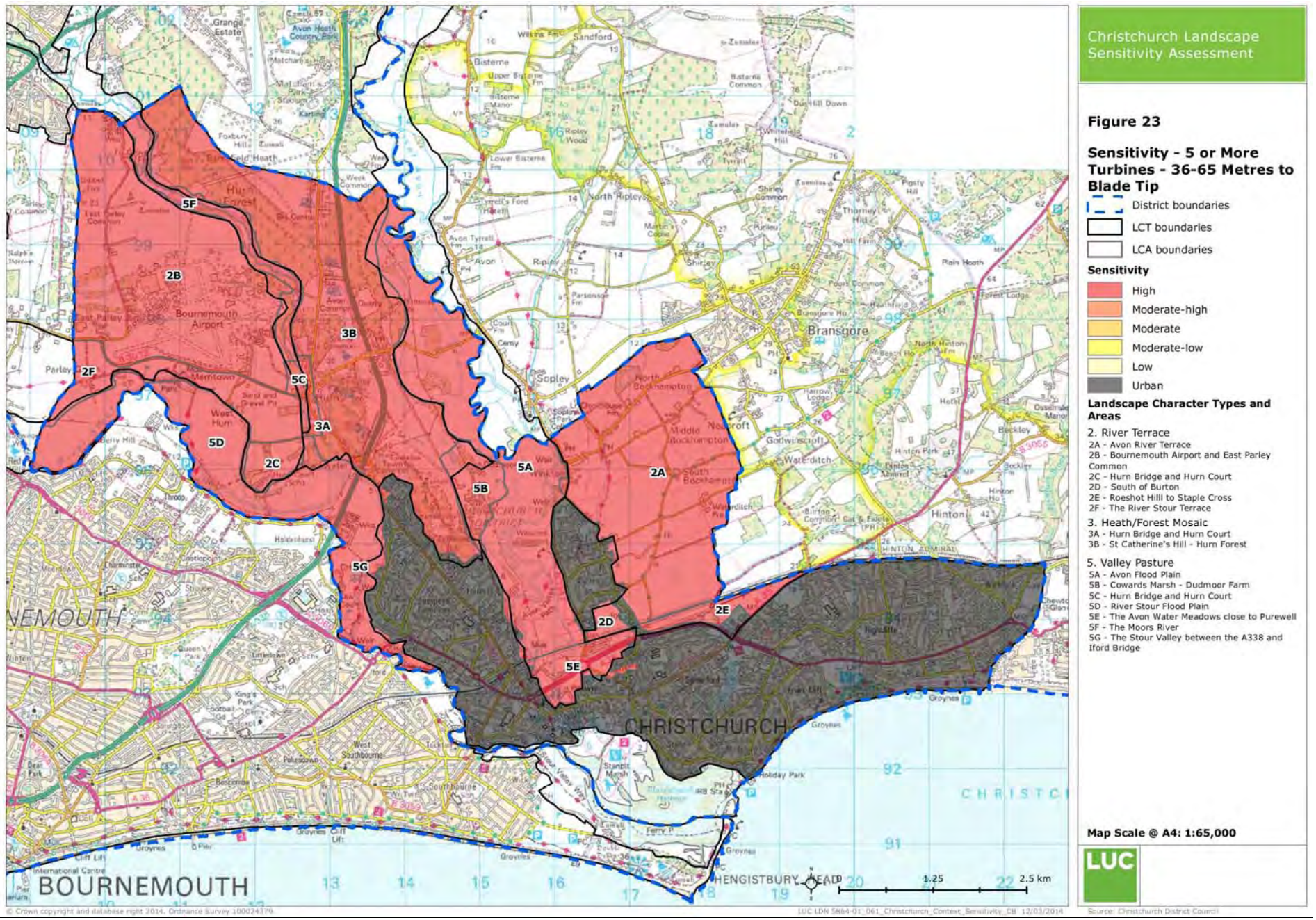
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Avon Flood Plain
5B - Cowards Marsh - Dudmoor Farm
5C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
5D - River Stour Flood Plain
5E - The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell
5F - The Moors River
5G - The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford Bridge

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5864-01_060_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_BD 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council


Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 23
Sensitivity - 5 or More Turbines - 36-65 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
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 Hilll 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
Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000
LUC
BOURNEMOUTH
CHRISTCHURCH
HENGISTBURY HEAD
Bournemouth Airport
Bransgore
Hinton
1.25
2.5 km
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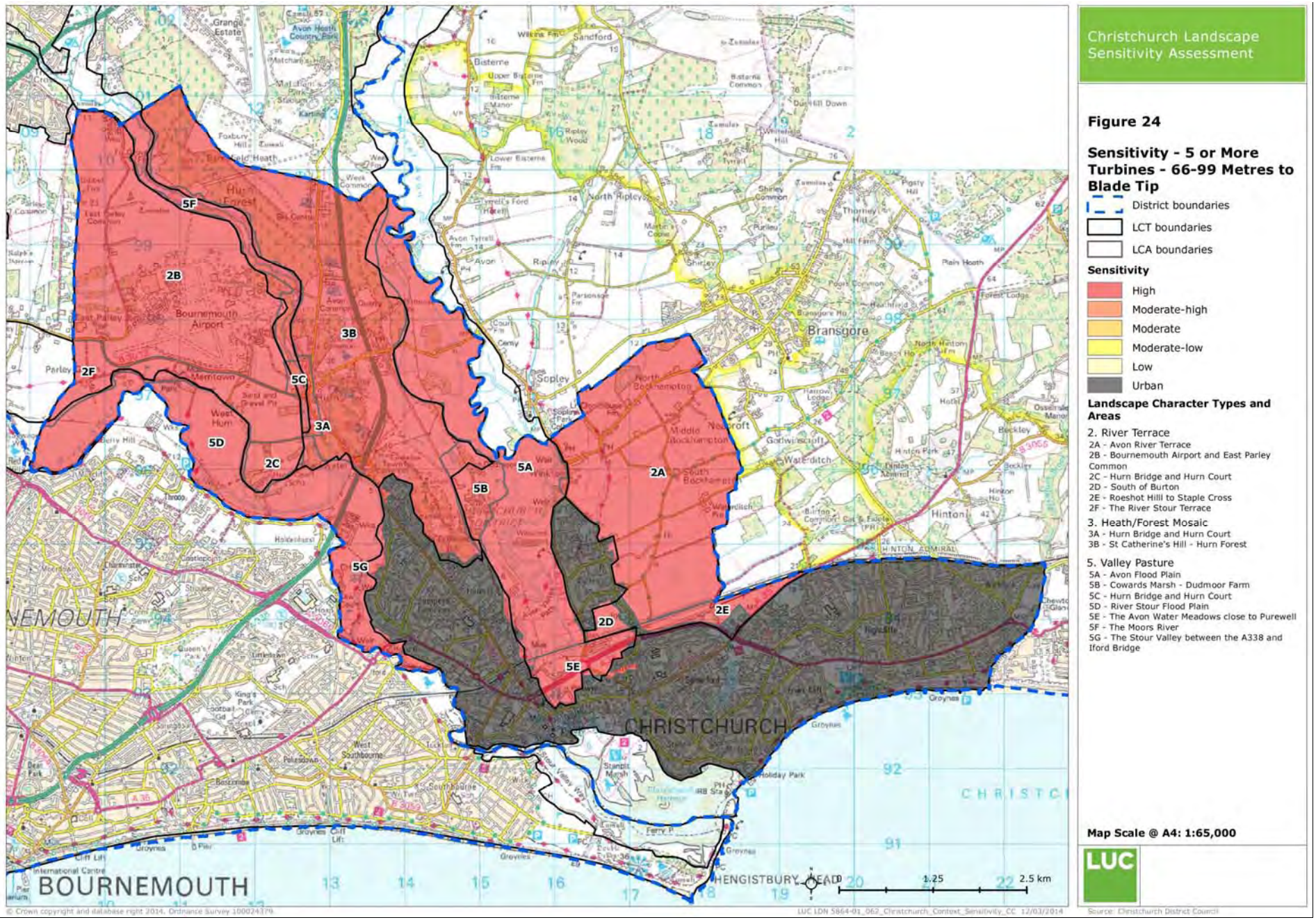
LUC LDN 5864-01_061_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_CB 12/03/2014
Source: Christchurch District Council


Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 24
Sensitivity - 5 or More Turbines - 66-99 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
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 Hilll 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
Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000
LUC
BOURNEMOUTH
CHRISTCHURCH
HENGISTBURY HEAD
Bournemouth Airport
Bransgore
Hinton
1.25
2.5 km
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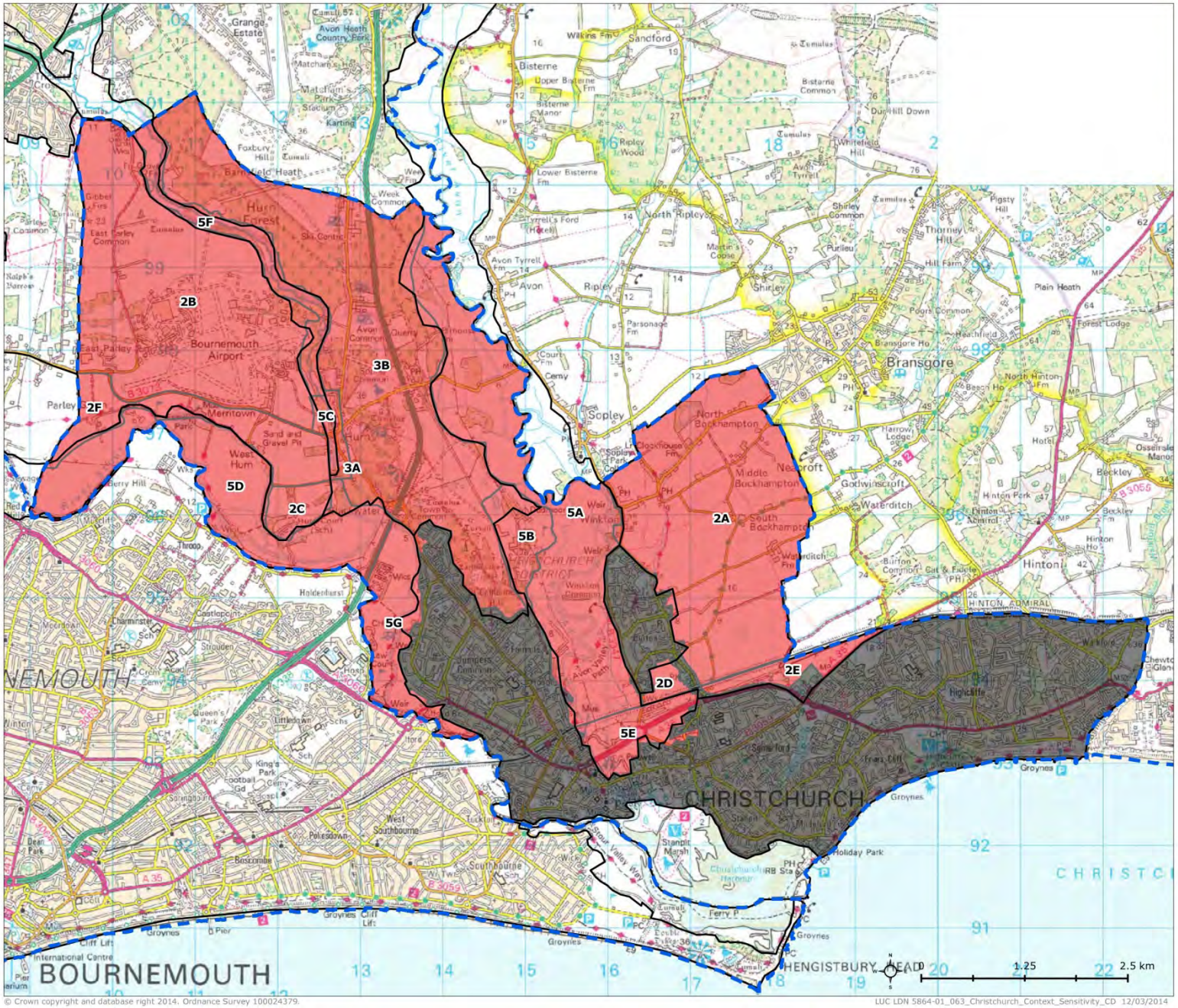
LUC LDN 5864-01_062_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_CC 12/03/2014
Source: Christchurch District Council



Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 25

Sensitivity - 5 or More Turbines - 100 Metres or More to Blade Tip

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hilll 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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5864-01_063_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_CD 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council

9 Solar PV Energy Sensitivity Summary

9.1 The maps shown in **Figures 26 – 29** illustrate the sensitivity ratings set out in **Section 7**, with a separate map for each scale of solar PV development.

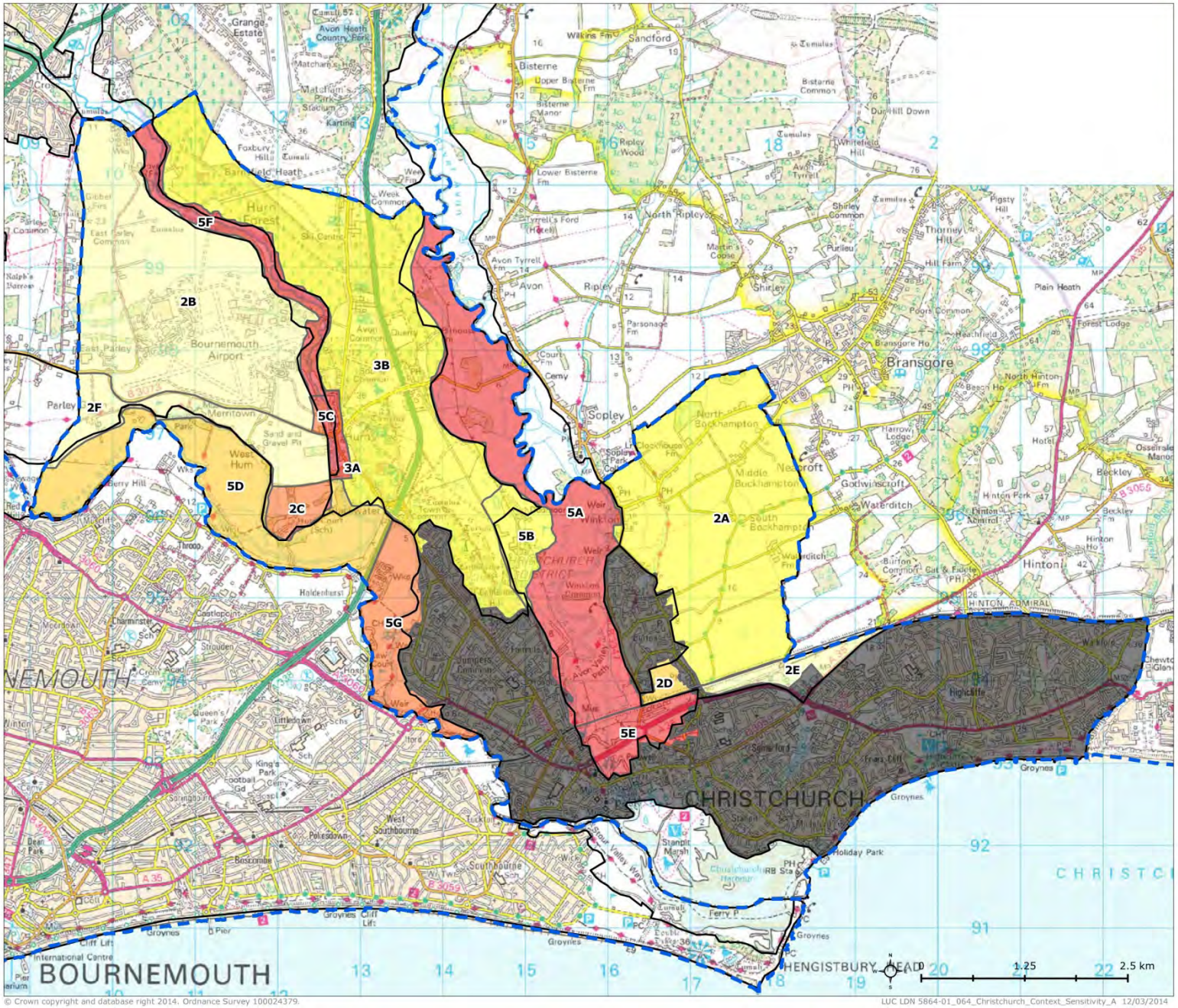
9.2 With the exception of parts of the band of heath/forest running north from St Catherine's Hill the landscapes in the Borough are typically fairly flat, forming the floodplains and terraces of the rivers that open into Christchurch Harbour. Where river valleys are narrow there is limited scope for solar PV development, but wider valleys and terraces have relatively low sensitivity in terms of landform.

9.3 Solar development will usually result in a change in land use for the duration of its operation, (which planning approval usually limits to 25 years, so where the current land cover or land use is more valued, such as heathlands or traditional pastures in river valleys, there will be a higher level of sensitivity than is the case where land has been converted to arable or devalued through industrial activity (e.g. quarrying).

9.4 The constrained sizes of most of the character areas and the recreational value of open areas combine to elevate sensitivity to large scale development in most places, but there are areas where the scale and character of modern development can be considered to have significantly lowered landscape sensitivity to solar PV.

9.5 Whilst this sensitivity assessment provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas to solar PV energy development, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development proposal. It is not a replacement for detailed studies on specific siting and design, and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits.

9.6 This assessment does not consider cumulative impact of solar PV energy developments, other than within the guidance notes in **Section 11** below, and it is important to note that, however low the sensitivity rating for an individual development, the cumulative effect of a proliferation of schemes can be significant, regardless of size. Cumulative assessment of any specific solar PV energy proposal on landscape character and qualities will be a key aspect of the development process.



Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 26

Sensitivity - Solar Farm - Up to 1 Hectare

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

Landscape Character Types and Areas

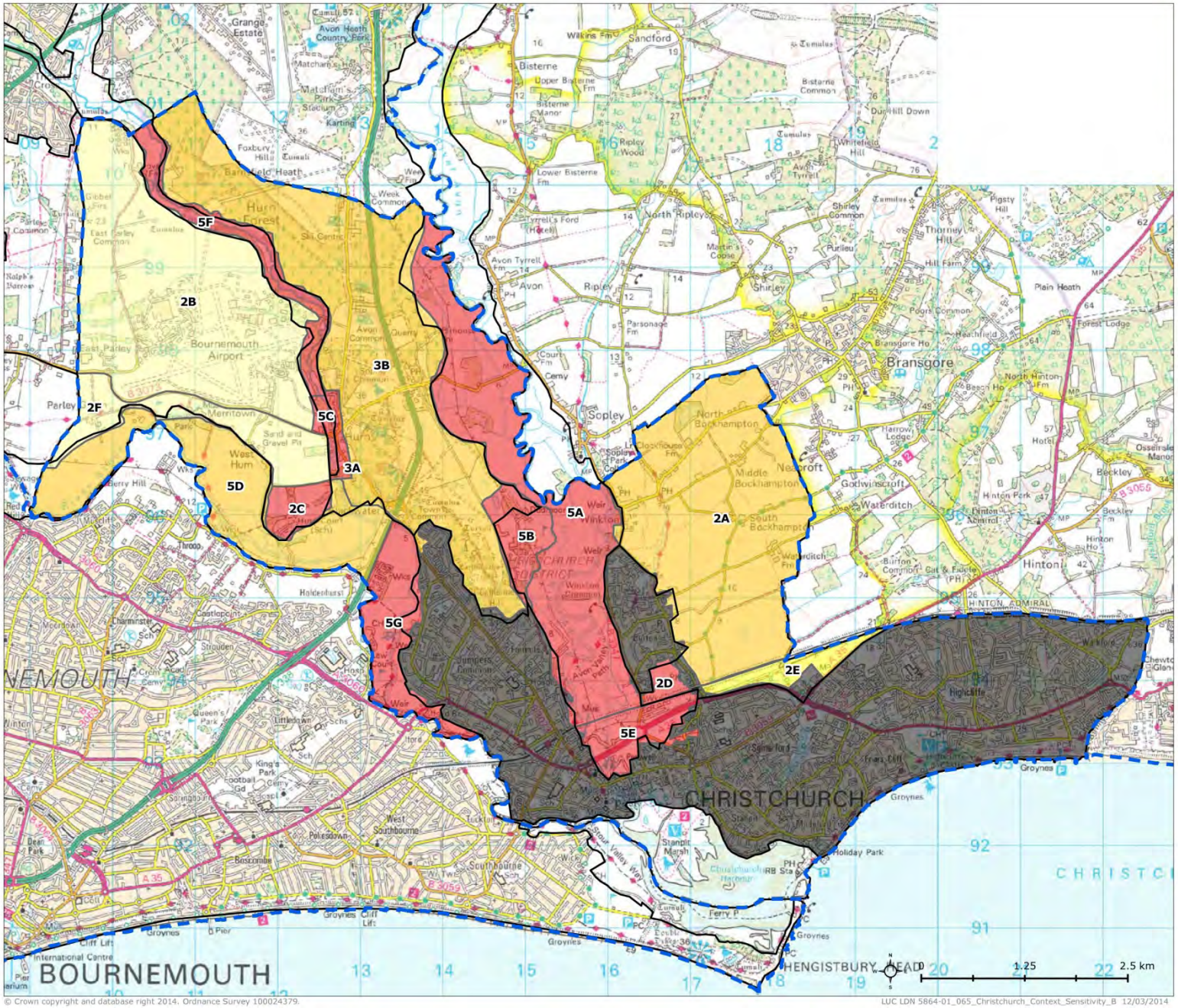
2. River Terrace
   - 2A - Avon River Terrace
   - 2B - Bournemouth Airport and East Parley Common
   - 2C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
   - 2D - South of Burton
   - 2E - Roeshot Hilll to Staple Cross
   - 2F - The River Stour Terrace
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
   - 3A - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
   - 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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5864-01_064_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_A 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council



Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 27

Sensitivity - Solar Farm - 1 to 10 Hectares

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hilll 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

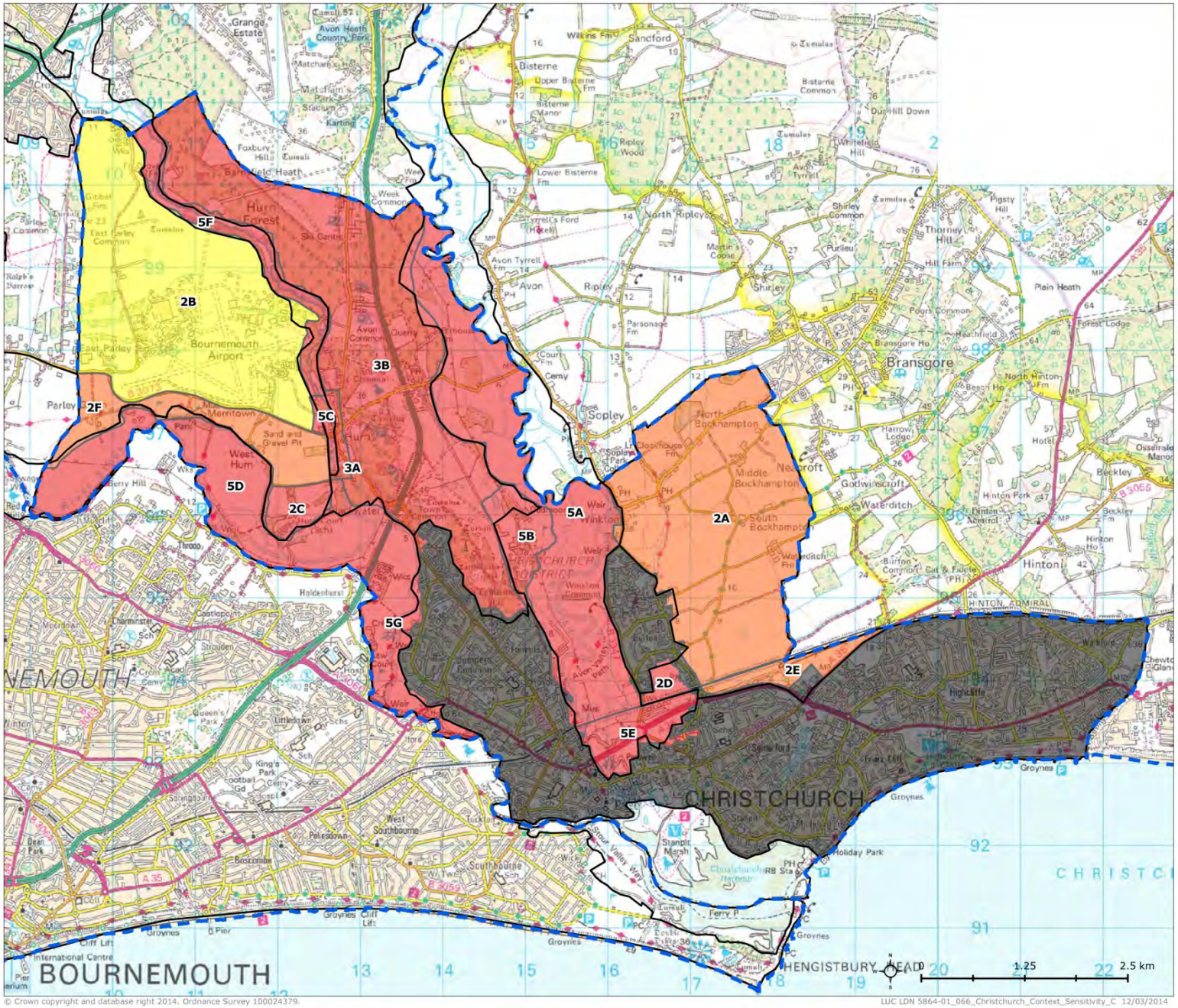
5. Valley Pasture
- 5A - Avon Flood Plain
- 5B - Cowards Marsh - Dudmoor Farm
- 5C - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
- 5D - River Stour Flood Plain
- 5E - The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell
- 5F - The Moors River
- 5G - The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford Bridge

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

LUC LDN 5864-01_065_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_B 12/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council



LUC LDN 5864-01_066_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_C 12/03/2014

Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 28

Sensitivity - Solar Farm - 10 to 30 Hectares

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hilll to Staple Cross
- 2F - The River Stour Terrace

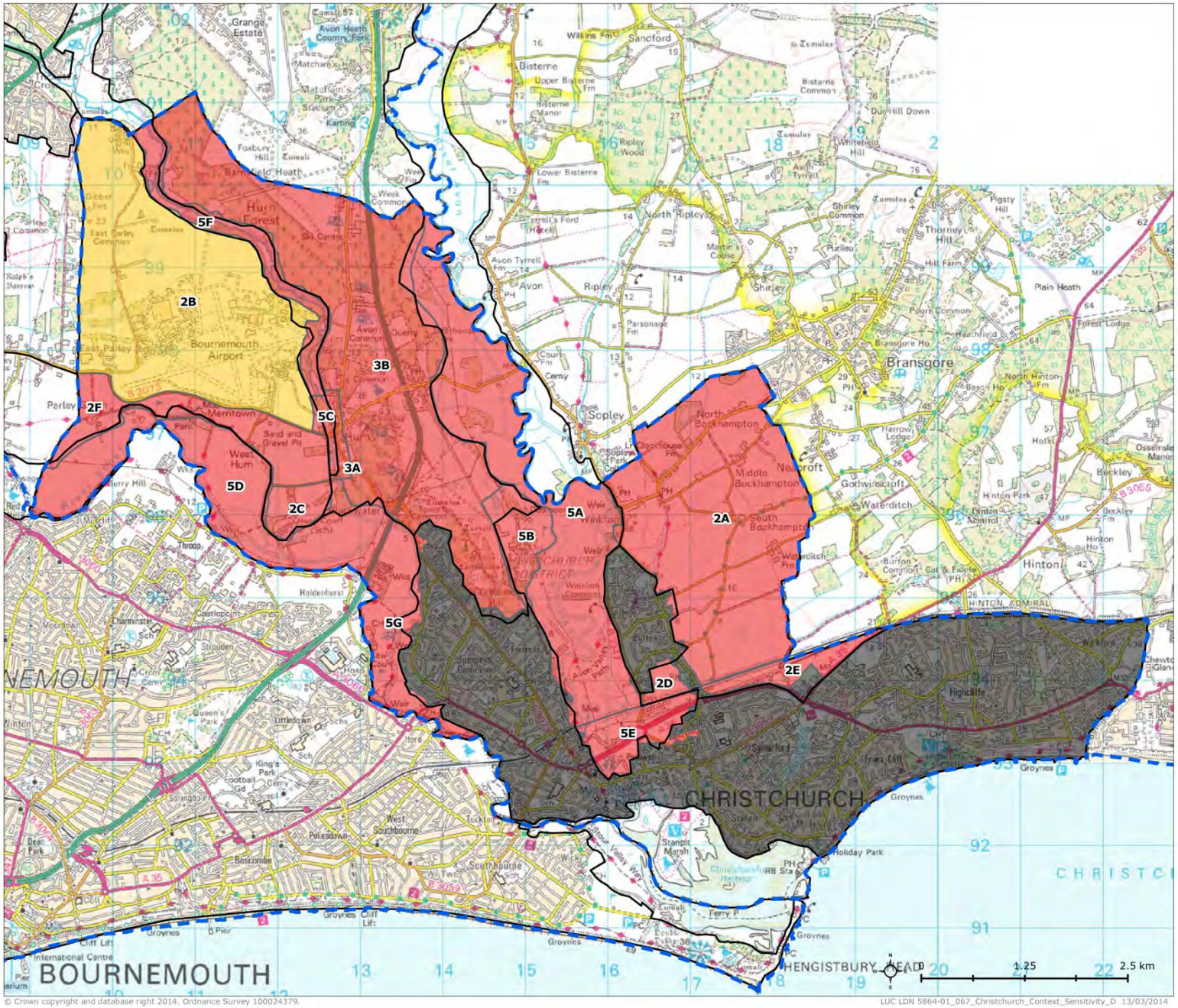
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
- 3A - Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court
- 3B - St Catherine's Hill - Hurn Forest

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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

LUC

Source: Christchurch District Council



LUC LDN 5864-01_067_Christchurch_Context_Sensitivity_D 13/03/2014

Source: Christchurch District Council

Christchurch Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 29

Sensitivity - Solar Farm - Over 30 Hectares

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

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 Hilll 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

Map Scale @ A4: 1:65,000

10 Wind Energy Development Guidelines

10.1 These guidelines relate to landscape sensitivity only, and do not address sensitivities relating to other areas of potential environmental impact or other non-landscape considerations which might affect the feasibility of wind energy development.

10.2 The guidelines are generic across the four local authority areas for which sensitivity assessment has been carried out – North Dorset, East Dorset, Purbeck and Christchurch – so not all comments will be relevant to all districts.

Consideration of Landscape Characteristics

10.3 Consideration of the characteristics of the landscape in the vicinity of the site, but also in any area which either has an existing visual relationship with the site or from which the site will be visible, should be a fundamental and early step in the consideration of a location for wind energy development. Published District and County landscape character assessments (and, where applicable, documents associated with AONB designation) are a start point for this but more specific site assessment will be needed to identify the extent to which the typical characteristics identified in published assessments apply to the site in question.

Scale and Complexity of Landform

- In functional terms a wind turbine will operate more efficiently in a position which has higher wind speed, and there is also a case in terms of landscape and visual impact for locating a turbine in a position that makes functional sense. A turbine will typically appear less out of place if it is located in an open, exposed location than if it is located in a sheltered area.
- An exposed location could be a low but wide vale landform but is also likely to be a more elevated area. The scale of landform in which a wind development will best 'fit' depends on the scale of the proposed development, but in general terms the broader and flatter the landform the more suitable it will be for tall turbines or schemes with multiple turbines. Conversely a dramatic, distinctive landform, with sharp changes in elevation, will be a prominent landscape feature, and will typically be valued as a scenic landmark. Many such sites also have cultural heritage value – e.g. Iron Age hill forts.
- Whilst locating a turbine on a distinctive landform is very likely to be sensitive, the sense of scale that such features give to the landscape means that a small turbine situated on lower ground in the vicinity of a strong landform could appear relatively smaller, and consequently less intrusive (the turbine, 24.5m to tip, at West Melbury Farm, beneath Melbury Hill in North Dorset, is an example of this). There may however be a fine line between the landform diminishing the sense of scale of the turbine and, conversely, the turbine diminishing the sense of scale of the landform, to the detriment of landscape character.
- An undulating or sloping site will be more sensitive to multi-turbine schemes due to the discordant visual effect of having different turbine heights. In an undulating landscape a hilltop will be a more natural location for a single turbine than a valley or dip. A turbine blade appearing above the crest of a valley will have a more disruptive effect on views from higher ground, in which the valley form might not otherwise be perceptible (as is often the case with the narrow river valleys that cut into the chalk downs), than would be the case if it were located on high ground.
- A convex slope will also, particularly if it is wooded, help to reduce visibility of high ground from an adjacent valley.

Scale and Complexity of Land Use and Field Pattern

- A more open landscape is generally considered to be more suitable for wind energy than a more enclosed landscape, although the scale of the proposed development makes a big difference in this respect. The presence of high field boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks, forming a very localised horizon, can create an intimate landscape which would be

compromised by the introduction of a disconnected, out-of-scale background feature. If the proposed development is smaller, a well-treed landscape could have a positive screening effect, blocking views from sensitive receptors (e.g. settlements or important viewpoints).

- A simple landscape, with large areas of consistent, uniform vegetation and a regular structure, will generally be less sensitive to larger turbines than a more complex landscape with irregular patterns and smaller scale ('human' scale) features. However, consideration needs to be given as to whether the simplicity of the landscape creates a distinctiveness which gives the area a particular value that could be adversely affected by turbines (see **Valued Landscapes** below). The combination of landscape pattern and landform is important: a simple land cover is likely to be more sensitive when combined with a distinctive or varied landform than when set in a flatter area.
- Access routes for construction traffic need to be considered. Even if a development site has lower sensitivity there may be landscape effects associated with narrow access routes where roadside trees, hedges or verges have to be cleared or altered.
- A certain amount of vegetation is desirable even in a generally open landscape, to provide screening of the low-level ancillary features associated with wind development, such as access tracks, transformers and security fencing.
- Certain landscapes represent the survival of historic land use types, often with a strong connection with the natural environment, and as such contribute to local character and distinctiveness and should therefore be avoided when siting wind turbines. In Dorset the prime examples of this are lowland heaths, ancient woodlands, water meadows and unimproved pastures.
- There are also more localised survivals of field patterns, such as strip fields, which suggest medieval origins, and a number of sites with ridges and hummocks that represent the remains of abandoned settlements. These are similarly sensitive to modern development.

Visual Exposure

- Locations should be chosen to avoid significant changes in views from important viewpoints, scenic tourist routes and settlements, and in views towards important, scenic landmarks. Key viewpoints may be identified in County or Borough Landscape Character Assessments, Parish Action Plans, Town and Village Design Statements or other Settlement Appraisals.
- Turbines should not be located where they have a significant effect on the understanding or appreciation of historic monuments. Consideration should be given to visual relationships between historic landmarks which could be affected – e.g. views from one hill fort to another.
- Turbines will frequently have an effect on skyline views. A higher level of sensitivity will be attached to more distinctive or undeveloped skylines, or skylines featuring prominent landmarks from which the presence of a turbine could detract.

Development and Activity

- The relationship between level of development and activity and sensitivity to wind energy is not a straightforward one. At one end of the scale an area valued for its remoteness and wildness and absence of human intervention would be highly sensitive in landscape terms, but at the other extreme a wind turbine would be unlikely to fit comfortably into very settled landscape, with many human-scale features.
- In Dorset there are few locations which could be considered wild and untamed but there are areas valued for their historic, rural landscape character, lack of modern development and tranquillity. These will typically have high sensitivity but there may be locations where smaller scale turbines could be sited in association with farm complexes, particularly ones which feature large, modern barns.
- There are particular sensitivities associated with undeveloped coastlines. The Purbeck Heritage Coast, within the Dorset AONB, can be considered as undeveloped coast.
- In more developed landscapes there could be potential to minimise adverse impact by locating turbines in association with large scale built development, such as industrial complexes or business parks, which may already be focal points in the landscape, or on brownfield/reclaimed land.
- Pylons are intrusive features which detract from landscape character but the extent to which they make a landscape less sensitive to further development will depend on the extent to which the addition of turbines would add 'clutter' to views. If the arrangement of pylons is

fairly simple then adverse impact is more likely than would be the case if the area is crossed by more than one transmission line, or if other tall elements add complexity to the landscape.

Valued Landscapes

10.4 Consideration should be given to any particular value attributed to the landscape noted in Borough and County landscape character assessments:

- An elevated level of sensitivity also applies to locations which form part of the setting of a designated landscape. This applies to AONBs and also the New Forest National Park, which in places is very close to the Dorset border.
- Consideration should be given to any potential adverse effect on the character of the setting of a Listed Building or Conservation Area (where the setting is an important aspect of the value of the building/designated area), or on views to and from a Registered Park or Garden (in particular any 'designed views').
- Both County and Borough level assessments may make reference to landscape qualities which reflect a level of value attached to that landscape, such as tranquillity.

Site Design

10.5 Size and number of turbines are clearly the major factors that will affect the landscape sensitivity of a proposed development, but the design of individual turbines and ancillary elements can also have a significant impact, particularly in a relatively undeveloped location.

Turbine design considerations

- Different combinations of mast height and rotor blade diameter are available but from a visual point of view a ratio of close to 1:1 looks most balanced.
- All turbines on a site should be of the same dimensions and should rotate in the same direction and at the same speed.
- Small turbines commonly have faster blade rotation speeds. Faster moving blades tend to draw the eye more, and have a greater impact on an otherwise inactive scene, than slower moving blades, so consideration should be given to limiting speeds where location is exposed.
- Pale grey is the least intrusive colour for a turbine when viewed against a sky backdrop, but depending on the setting other shades, or graduated colouring (usually from green at the base through to light grey) may be effective.
- Use of advertising on turbines will increase landscape and visual impact.

Design considerations associated with ancillary scheme elements

- The creation of new tracks for access to turbines will add landscape impact, particularly if they are exposed to view and more so if they are out of character with the current pattern of roads and tracks. Where new tracks are needed they should as far as possible follow field edges, hedges/trees and contours.
- Although ongoing maintenance access will be needed, some surfaced areas required for construction could be removed/grassed over afterwards (e.g. crane pads).
- Earthworks and clearance of vegetation to facilitate access and construction should be minimised.
- The location of any ancillary buildings or structures, such as substation, control buildings and transformers should be as unexposed as possible, and in rural areas in particular should minimise urbanising features such as hard surfacing, fencing and lighting and should consider the local vernacular in terms of appearance.
- If aircraft warning lighting is required it should be infra-red, to minimise visual impact.
- Cables should be buried where possible. If overhead grid connections are required these will add impact, potentially introducing new linear landscape forms and adding visual 'clutter'.

Layout of Multiple Turbine Schemes

- Typically the cluster size that is feasible will be dictated by the scale of the landscape, with a smaller scale landscape being able to accommodate only a small cluster (if any). The more localised variation there is in landform or land cover the harder it will be to create a group of turbines that have a coherent appearance.
- The layout should consider the pattern and form of the landscape, so that it appears balanced with turbines being grouped rather than disparate. Typically this will mean spacing turbines evenly, so that an individual turbine(s) does not sit apart from the main group, but in some cases difference distances may suit better if it enables turbines to be located at consistent heights, when considered from key viewpoints.
- A linear arrangement may sometimes suit the terrain better than a cluster but consideration should be given to avoiding creating alignments in which turbines may appear 'stacked' in principal directions of view.
- Developments with more than one turbine will tend to have a greater impact if they span more than one landscape character area or, even if within one character area, there are distinct differences in setting – e.g. topography, field size or surrounding land use.

Land Use and Landscaping

- The presence of a wind turbine should not preclude continuation of agricultural land use and management of hedgerows and other landscape elements.
- Opportunities to enhance land use and management to strengthen positive aspects of landscape character (as noted in Borough and County assessments or observed on site) should be explored. This may include the strengthening of existing field boundaries, or introduction of new planting, to assist with screening of intrusive wind energy ancillary elements (such as access tracks and buildings).
- Synergies with habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement should be explored.
- A landscape management plan for the area surrounding a turbine, or cluster of turbines, would be a positive way of demonstrating that the landscape will be managed to provide benefits beyond those of energy generation.
- As a temporary development (usually permitted for 25 years), it will be important to demonstrate that on decommissioning the landscape can be restored to at least as good a condition as it was prior to the development taking place.

Minimising Cumulative Impact

10.6 The sensitivity assessment presented in this document makes no reference to the potential cumulative impact on landscape character resulting from wind energy developments. The cumulative addition of turbines to a landscape could on the one hand be seen as gradually reducing sensitivity to future schemes, as they become a more characteristic element of the landscape character, or on the other as increasing sensitivity by threatening valued aspects of character and decreasing robustness.

10.7 The question of how much wind 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 (see paragraph 1.11), but consideration of the following points can assist with minimising the effects of locating a new development in a landscape which already includes wind turbines:

- When assessing potential effects of a proposed scheme, reference should be made to the relationship between the proposal and i) any existing wind energy developments, but also ii) any consented and iii) any proposed schemes, whether within the Borough or in a neighbouring District or County.
- The character of existing developments in relation to landscape should be considered. If there is a distinct pattern – e.g. developments are typically small single turbines attached to farm complexes – then continuation of this pattern is less likely to have a significant impact on landscape character than introduction of a new size/form of wind development in a different landscape context.

- The closer developments are to each other, and the more likely they are to be viewed in combination from the same viewpoint, the more important it is that they have some consistency of character (unless the existing development is poorly related to its environment). The presence of developments perceived as being of different scales, whether due to height or cluster size being different or due to the landscape setting being different, is likely to increase the level of cumulative impact. The introduction of turbines that, through their scale and relative position, have a distorting effect on perspective in a view will also have greater impact.
- In determining whether cumulative effects are likely to add significantly to any impacts resulting from a proposed development it is useful to identify the focal points that exist in the landscape at present, to identify whether there is any hierarchy amongst them, and to assess the extent to which the introduction of a new development will affect appreciation of these relationships.
- The location of key viewpoints will be important in determining whether a site will have a significant cumulative landscape impact relative to an existing scheme. In general it is better to avoid locations in which separate schemes will appear to coalesce, but there may be situations where this effect is preferable to introducing a more distinctly separate development.
- It is important to avoid creating any sense of turbines having an overbearing or oppressive effect on residential locations, or other valued receptor locations such as popular rights of way or, on a larger scale, a designated landscape area. Maximising distance from such locations is clearly important in this respect, but avoiding developing on sites that would give a sensitive location a feeling of being surrounded by turbines is also important.

11 Solar PV Energy Development Guidelines

11.1 These guidelines relate to landscape sensitivity only, and do not address sensitivities relating to other areas of potential environmental impact or other non-landscape considerations which might affect the feasibility of solar PV energy development.

11.2 The guidelines are generic across the four local authority areas for which sensitivity assessment has been carried out – North Dorset, East Dorset, Purbeck and Christchurch – so not all comments will be relevant to all districts.

Consideration of Landscape Characteristics

11.3 Consideration of the characteristics of the landscape in the vicinity of the site, but also in any area which either has an existing visual relationship with the site or from which the site will be visible, should be a fundamental and early step in the consideration of a location for solar PV energy development. Published District and County landscape character assessments (and, where applicable, documents associated with AONB designation) are a start point for this but more specific site assessment will be needed to identify the extent to which the typical characteristics identified in published assessments apply to the site in question.

Scale and Complexity of Landform

- A flat, gently sloping or gently undulating site, either on lower ground or on a plateau, will be more suitable than a steep, sharply undulating site or an exposed upper slope.
- A development located in an area with a small-scale landform, with significant variations over the site or in its locality, will be more likely to stand out in the landscape than one located on a flatter site or an even slope.

Scale and Complexity of Land Use and Field Pattern

- A more enclosed landscape is generally considered to be more suitable for solar energy than a more open landscape, although the scale of the proposed development will be a key factor in determining the enclosure size that would be most appropriate. Ideally the solar farm should not dilute or distort the enclosure pattern, either by spanning multiple fields or subdividing a larger field to create an area of homogeneous land use that is a different size or shape to its surroundings.
- A patchwork landscape, with a variety of land uses, will be less sensitive than a more homogeneous land cover.
- A landscape in which geometric forms (e.g. field boundaries and woodland blocks) predominate will be less sensitive than a more irregular landscape, or one in which rounded forms predominate.
- Certain landscapes represent the survival of historic land use types, often with a strong connection with the natural environment, and as such contribute to local character and distinctiveness and should therefore be avoided when siting solar PV developments. In Dorset the prime examples of this are lowland heaths, ancient woodlands, water meadows and unimproved pastures.
- There are also more localised survivals of field patterns, such as strip fields, which suggest medieval origins, and a number of sites with ridges and hummocks that represent the remains of abandoned settlements. These are similarly sensitive to modern development.

Visual Exposure

- Locations should be chosen to avoid significant changes in views from important viewpoints, scenic tourist routes and settlements, and in views towards important, scenic landmarks. Key viewpoints may be identified in County or Borough Landscape Character Assessments, Parish Action Plans, Town and Village Design Statements or other Settlement Appraisals.

- Solar developments should not be located where they have a significant effect on the understanding or appreciation of historic monuments. Consideration should be given to visual relationships between historic landmarks which could be affected – e.g. views from one hill fort to another.

Development and Activity

- A landscape influenced by modern development, containing hard elements such as buildings, brownfield sites or horticulture (e.g. glasshouses or poly tunnels) will be less sensitive than a more natural or remote location.
- Intensively farmed, arable land is likely to be less sensitive than extensive pasture.
- There are particular sensitivities associated with undeveloped coastlines. The Purbeck Heritage Coast, within the Dorset AONB, can be considered as undeveloped coast.

Valued Landscapes

11.4 Consideration should be given to any particular value attributed to the landscape noted in Borough and County landscape character assessments:

- An elevated level of sensitivity also applies to locations which form part of the setting of a designated landscape. This applies to AONBs and also the New Forest National Park, which in places is very close to the Dorset border.
- Consideration should be given to any potential adverse effect on the character of the setting of a Listed Building or Conservation Area (where the setting is an important aspect of the value of the building/designated area), or on views to and from a Registered Park or Garden (in particular any 'designed views').
- Both County and Borough level assessments may make reference to landscape qualities which reflect a level of value attached to that landscape, such as tranquillity.

Site Design

11.5 The size of a solar farm is the major factor that will affect the landscape sensitivity of a proposed development, but the arrangement of panel arrays and ancillary elements can also have a significant impact, particularly in a relatively undeveloped location or where a site is overlooked by higher ground.

Layout considerations

- Developments will tend to have a greater impact if they span more than one landscape character area or, even if within one character area, there are distinct differences in setting – e.g. topography or field size.
- The appearance of a development will be quite different from the sides or back in comparison to the front, due to the visibility of supporting frames.
- The arrangement of panels should try and fit with the form and enclosure of the site; a straight edged layout will not sit comfortably in an irregular field. It will be much easier to achieve a more acceptable fit in a geometric landscape, given the shape of the individual panels, but the use of a curving or staggered arrangement of arrays could in some cases provide a better fit than a rectilinear layout.
- Within a field, spacing between panels should be consistent, without outlying or remote clusters.
- The removal of boundary vegetation within a site than spans multiple fields will typically have a negative landscape and visual impact (and is likely also to have adverse ecological effects). Panels should be set back from boundaries to maintain the legibility of field patterns (and also to assist with hedgerow management and potentially to provide habitat).
- Panels should not be positioned where they would be shaded by vegetation, if that would result in vegetation being cut back or removed.
- Panel heights should be kept as low as possible, to minimise visual impact.

- Pile-driven or screw-anchored bases are preferable to concrete foundations.

Design considerations associated with ancillary scheme elements

- The creation of new tracks for access to solar arrays will add landscape impact, particularly if they are exposed to view and more so if they are out of character with the current pattern of roads and tracks. Where new tracks are needed they should as far as possible follow field edges, hedges/trees and contours.
- Although ongoing maintenance access will be needed, consideration should be given as to whether some surfaced areas required for construction could be removed (e.g. perhaps using temporary trackway) and grassed over afterwards. Regular tracks between rows of arrays should be avoided.
- Earthworks and clearance of vegetation to facilitate access and construction should be minimised, although where it does not have a significant adverse effect on landscape character or views, landform remodelling, with appropriate ongoing management, may assist with screening a solar PV development.
- The location of any ancillary buildings or structures, such as substations, transformers and inverters should be as unexposed as possible, and in rural areas in particular should minimise urbanising features such as hard surfacing, fencing and lighting and should consider the local vernacular in terms of appearance. Existing buildings should be utilised where possible.
- Consideration should be given to using deer-stop type fencing in preference to welded mesh fencing, and to minimising its height (subject to insurance requirements). Likewise CCTV camera should not be mounted on unnecessarily high posts.
- Dark, recessive colours in non-reflective materials are generally considered less visually intrusive for panel frames, fencing and ancillary structures than bright colours and reflective materials.
- Cables should be buried where possible. If overhead grid connections are required these will add impact, potentially introducing new linear landscape forms and adding visual ‘clutter’.
- The use of security lighting should be minimised, using passive infra-red (PIR) where possible and minimising any glare or light-spill.

Land Use and Landscaping

- Existing and new landscaping will be important in screening views of the site, but consideration must be given as to whether letting hedges grow higher, or planting new hedges or trees, would be out of keeping with local landscape character. Depending on landscape terrain and character, the use of other forms of screening, such as bunding or tall crops, may be beneficial.
- Fences should be set back from surrounding hedges, to reduce their apparent height when viewed from beyond the boundary.
- Efforts should be made to maintain land uses on the site that fit in with the character of the surrounding area. The space between and surrounding rows of solar arrays can be utilised productively, e.g. for grazing. The potential for heathland restoration should also be explored, where appropriate. Mulching of large areas, in particular the use of plastics to prevent weed growth, should be avoided.
- Maintaining a diversity of land cover types in an area will help to prevent solar PV arrays from having a dominating effect on landscape character.
- Opportunities to enhance land use and management to strengthen positive aspects of landscape character (as noted in Borough and County assessments or observed on site) should be explored. Hedgerows can be managed to provide ecological benefit as well as screening, which may include the strengthening of existing field boundaries, or introduction of new planting.
- Synergies with habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement should be explored. Any new planting should use native, locally appropriate species.
- A landscape management plan for the site would be a positive way of demonstrating that the landscape will be managed to provide benefits beyond those of energy generation.
- As a temporary development (usually permitted for 25 years), it will be important to demonstrate that on decommissioning the landscape can be restored to at least as good a condition as it was prior to the development taking place.

Minimising Cumulative Impact

11.6 The sensitivity assessment presented in this document makes no reference to the potential cumulative impact on landscape character resulting from solar PV energy developments. The cumulative addition of solar farms to a landscape could on the one hand be seen as gradually reducing sensitivity to future schemes, as they become a more characteristic element of the landscape character, or on the other as increasing sensitivity by threatening valued aspects of character and decreasing robustness.

11.7 The question of how much 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 (see paragraph 1.11), but consideration of the following points can assist with minimising the effects of locating a new development in a landscape which already includes solar arrays:

- When assessing potential effects of a proposed scheme, reference should be made to the relationship between the proposal and i) any existing solar PV energy developments, but also ii) any consented and iii) any proposed schemes, whether within the Borough or in a neighbouring District or County.
- The character of existing developments in relation to landscape should be considered. If there is a distinct pattern of development in a particular type of landscape then continuation of this consistent design response is likely to have less of an impact on character than the introduction of a different size/form of solar development.
- The closer developments are to each other, and the more likely they are to be viewed in combination from the same viewpoint, the more important it is that they have some consistency of character (unless the existing development is poorly related to its environment). This is particularly the case where an existing development is being extended. The presence of developments perceived as being of different scales, whether due to the physical area covered or due to the landscape setting being different, is likely to increase the level of cumulative impact.
- In determining whether cumulative effects are likely to add significantly to any impacts resulting from a proposed development it is useful to identify the focal points that exist in the landscape at present, to identify whether there is any hierarchy amongst them, and to assess the extent to which the introduction of a new development will affect appreciation of these relationships.
- The location of key viewpoints will be important in determining whether a site will have a significant cumulative landscape impact relative to an existing scheme. In general it is better to avoid locations in which separate schemes will appear to coalesce, but there may be situations where this effect is preferable to introducing a more distinctly separate development.
- It is important to avoid developing on sites that would give a sensitive location a feeling of being surrounded by solar PV developments.