



TRACT OF LAND TO THE SOUTH EAST OF BASINGSTOKE NPPF VALUED LANDSCAPE

A report by CPRE Hampshire, the countryside charity

1.0 Introduction

An area of land ("the Area") of some 296 hectares to the south east of Basingstoke and to the southward of the village of Cliddesden is proposed to contain a Garden Village of at least 2500 dwellings. The Area sits within a larger tract of downland landscape stretching from the M3 to Farnham – the North Hampshire Downs.

CPRE Hampshire has now had the opportunity to make an assessment of the Area in the context of an NPPF Valued Landscape which should be protected according to national planning guidance. This assessment has regard to:

- Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment ("HICA")
- Basingstoke and Dean Landscape Assessment ("BDLA")
- a study of criteria used by Inspectors on appeal in deciding whether appeal sites are NPPF Valued Landscapes
- our own observations



2.0 Assessment of landscape character and physical distinctiveness

Irregularly shaped, the Area extends from where Woods Lane meets the M3 motorway some 2.8 kilometres in an east south easterly direction to the junction off the A339 of the lane leading to Swallick Farm, and then south westerly to a maximum depth of some 1.5 kilometres towards Farleigh Wallop church and White Hill. Cliddesden Primary School is centrally located.

Immediately to the north of the western part of the Area is the village of Cliddesden. Adjoining the Area to the north west, over the M3 motorway, is the large built up area of Basingstoke. In general terms, Cliddesden is at the start of the downs and there is a dramatic contrast between the densely developed townscape of Basingstoke and the countryside to the south-east of the M3 with thinly scattered and villages and hamlets such as Cliddesden, Winslade, Farleigh Wallop and Ellisfield, and occasional isolated farms.

These settlements reflect the pattern of early medieval manor houses associated with a church and manor farm which have grown gradually over many centuries but remain largely intact and protected by conservation area status. They give the historic settlement context to the Area, notably the village of Cliddesden which immediately adjoins the Area.

There are no nationally designated landscapes in the vicinity.

Nearly all of the Area lies in the southern part of HICA CCA 8B - Basingstoke Open Downs and BDLA LCA 16 - Basingstoke Down. A small part between the A339 and the dismantled Basingstoke to Alton Light Railway lies within HICA CCA 8C - North East Hampshire Open Downs but being in arable use appears as if part of HICA CCA 8B.

The part of Basingstoke Down CCA in which the Area sits consists of an extensive tract of intensive arable cultivation, defined by ancient tracks and footpaths. Made up of chalk downland, it undulates across a south east to north west axis, rising to the southwest to about 190 metres onto an elevated and wooded chalk plateau, on which stands the Grade 2* listed Farleigh Wallop church. The transition from downland to plateau provides a clear ridgeline, which is largely wooded and clearly visible from many vantage points in the Area, including Cliddesden Primary School. This ridgeline provides the boundary of the 8b Landscape Character Area. Other than the primary school there is no development within the Area and the landscape is generally intact.

The Area is traversed by the B3046 Farleigh Road, leading from the Cliddesden towards Broadmere, which is bounded by hedgerows; Northgate Lane leading northwards from Cliddesden Primary School to Hackwood Lane and Cliddesden, and southwards towards Ellisfield, which is open to the adjoining fields until it reaches the ridgeline; a public footpath (Farleigh Wallop No 5) leading southwards to Farleigh Wallop Church from a point some 0.7 km south of the centre of Cliddesden, which is bounded by a hedgerow on the side nearest to the B3046; a bridleway (Farleigh Wallop Route 501) leading southwards also to Farleigh Wallop Church from Cliddesden Primary School, which is bounded on both sides by tall hedgerows with gaps; and a Byway Open to All Traffic (Farleigh Wallop Route No 3) which

leads westwards from Swallick Farm towards Cliddesden, also bounded on both sides by hedgerows with gaps.

These public rights of way are ancient and are likely to have been drove roads historically. The associated hedgerows define the boundaries of the large arable fields which make up the Area, breaking up the open and exposed character of the agricultural land, adding interest and, in the case of those leading to Farleigh Wallop Church, drawing the eye up the slope to the ridgeline.

It is noted that the part of the Area located to the west of the B3046 is within the Landscape Character Areas BA19 (Cliddesden Valley) of the Basingstoke, Tadley and Bramley Landscape Capacity Study 2008. This leads south westwards into BA20 (Farleigh / Cliddesden Slopes). The Study concludes that landscape capacity for development within BA19 is Medium / Low, with Cliddesden having potential for some mitigation planting on the edge of the village, and with the higher ground acknowledged as more sensitive in relation of skyline views. Within BA20, with the steeper more prominent slopes, landscape capacity for development is assessed as Low.

3.0 Assessment of public experience of the landscape

Boat No 3 is a classic historic unsurfaced road, bounded by historic hedgerows, climbing away from Swallick Farm and then descending towards the village of Cliddesden from which, on the north side and through gaps in the hedgerow, there are fine long distance views stretching from north west to south west, over rolling agricultural land divided by hedgerows and woodland.



This view is disturbed in part of the middle distance by prominent large white commercial buildings and a single white high-rise tower, all situated within the built up area of Basingstoke, but ameliorated by nearer views of the Grade 1 listed Hackwood House.



On the south side of Boat No 3, again through gaps in the hedgerow, there fine views to the west south west of rolling agricultural land leading up to the ridgeline.



From the car park at Cliddesden Primary School there is a first class panoramic view from east through south to south west of rising downland leading up to the ridgeline, and of Northgate Lane leading up the incline.





There are similar views of the ridgeline from the permissive footpath which runs from Cliddesden Primary School to the B3046, and those near Cliddesden Village Hall. These paths are well used by residents of Cliddesden and Brighton Hill



From a gateway near Farleigh Wallop Church on the BOAT which bounds church land to the north there is a fine long distance view looking north east over land descending towards Cliddesden, bounded by the hedgerows of footpath No 5 and Bridleway No 501.



The Area is visible from many locations within Basingstoke, forming a rural backdrop which becomes more significant as the higher ground rises to form the skyline. Cyclists, walkers and runners from the south western parts of Basingstoke make regular use of the lanes and public rights of way.

Tranquillity in terms of noise is disturbed over the whole of the Area by the continuous hum of the M3, but this is not overbearing and reduces with distance. Tranquillity in its wider sense is disturbed in the western part of the Area, looking north eastwards, by the commercial buildings in Basingstoke. In other parts, however, undisturbed by development, tranquillity is high.

4.0 Conclusion

Accordingly, taking account of

- the attractive and distinctive chalk downland landscape with high quality views from many points to a clearly defined ridgeline, and long-distance views over Basingstoke
- the lack of development and overall sense of tranquillity despite noise from the adjoining M3

- the high quality public experience of this landscape from public and permissive rights of way
- the contribution this landscape makes to the landscape setting of Basingstoke and views from the built up area
- the important contribution of this tract of landscape to the characteristics identified in HICA CCA 8B - Basingstoke Open Downs and BDLA LCA 16 - Basingstoke Down

CPRE Hampshire considers that the Area has demonstrable attributes which raises it above the ordinary, such that it is both an NPPF Valued Landscape in its own right and as an essential part of a tract of NPPF Valued Landscape extending north-eastwards from Farleigh Wallop to Hackwood Park. Accordingly, NPPF paragraph 170(a) applies and requires it to be protected.

Christopher Napier OBE

CPRE Hampshire, the countryside charity

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Map Showing positions of viewpoints



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