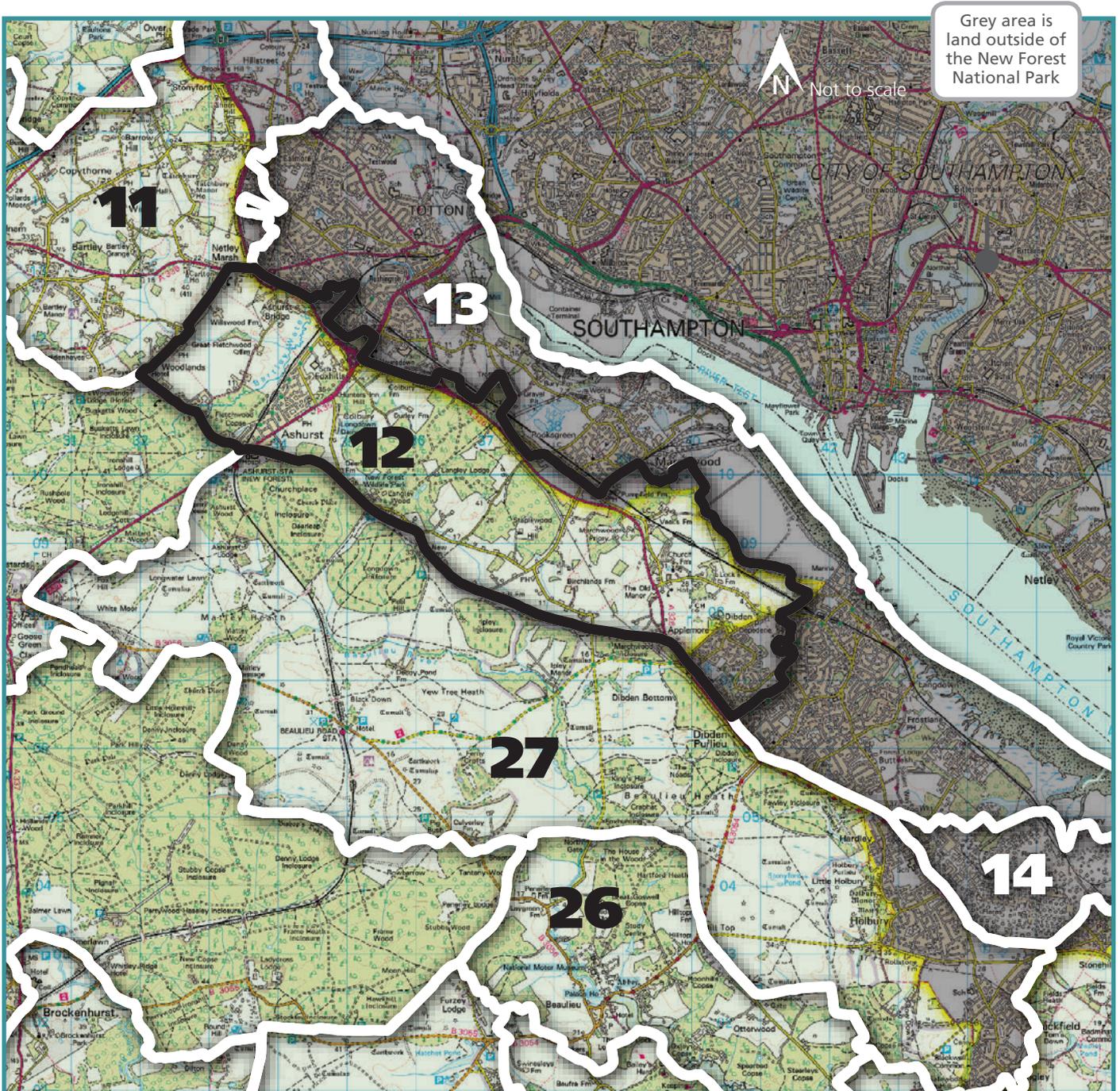




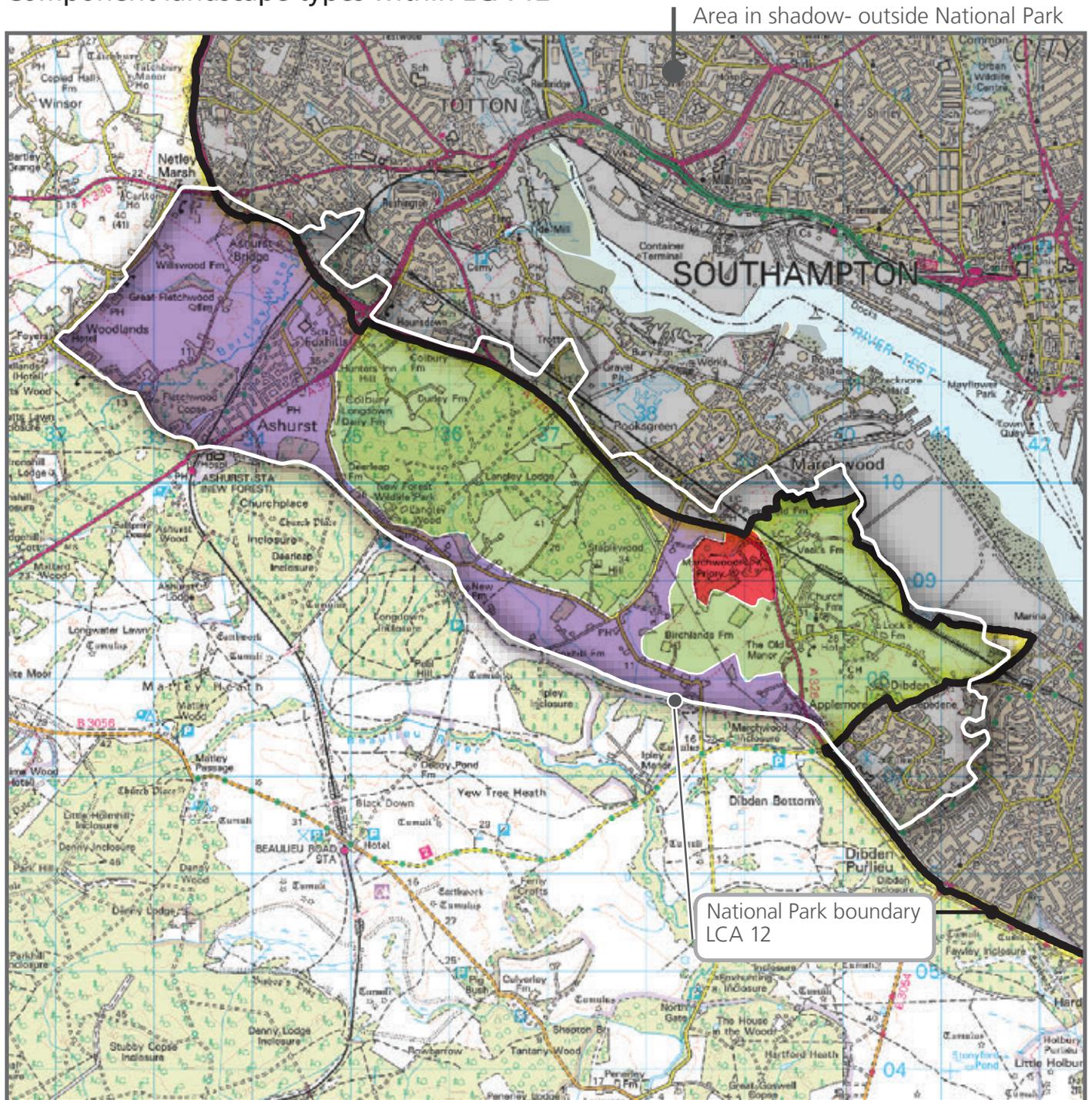
Agricultural fields near Langley Wood

LCA 12: HYTHE AND ASHURST FOREST FARMLANDS

Location of LCA in the National Park



Component landscape types within LCA 12



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Not to scale

- 6. Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings
- 7. Ancient Forest Farmlands
- 21. Historic Parkland

This LCA falls mainly within the New Forest National Park apart from the settlement of Applemore and most of the land fringing the east of the A326.

A. LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

Key landscape characteristics

- Settled farmland on the edge of the forest heaths with large copses and some wood pasture.
- Small-medium scale pastures (from both formal and informal enclosure) bordered by hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Period of predominant character is 17th – 18th century farmland.
- Shaded leafy lanes, sometimes sunken, wind their way through wooded areas.
- Major infrastructure, including the A326, A35 and Totton to Fawley railway line, cuts across the area.
- Scattered farm houses of red brick or white render with slate or thatch.
- Outbuildings often characterised by use of weatherboarding.
- Dense linear development close to settlements exhibiting a variety of modern housing styles and materials.
- Views are short, most usually to the next field boundary or woodland edge.
- Landscape has a strong estate character.

Component landscape types

The landscape types found within this LCA, in the New Forest National Park, are:

6. Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings
7. Ancient Forest Farmlands
21. Historic Parkland

Key positive landscape attributes

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Small-medium Parliamentary enclosures with some remaining areas of irregular assarted fields. ■ Large ancient woodland copses and assarts surrounded by areas of traditionally grazed wood pasture. ■ Predominantly pastoral land use, with paddocks used as commoners' grazing. ■ Leafy sunken lanes winding through the landscape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Historic features including a hillfort on the valley side. ■ Traditional settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets. ■ Historic Parkland at Marchwood Priory. ■ Local vernacular of red brick farmsteads, weather boarded outbuildings, thatched and rendered cottages and tiled Victorian cottages. ■ Strong feeling of enclosure due to dense woodland and tree cover – some longer views from higher ground framed by trees. |
|---|---|

Relevant designations relating to positive landscape attributes

Key landscape features	Relevant designations
Small-medium Parliamentary enclosures with some remaining areas of irregular assarted fields.	N/A
Large ancient woodland copses and assarts surrounded by areas of traditionally grazed wood pasture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most of the woodlands are SINCs.
Predominantly pastoral land use, with paddocks used as commoners' grazing.	N/A
Leafy sunken lanes winding through the landscape.	N/A
Traditional settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some buildings are listed.
Historic Parkland at Marchwood Priory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Marchwood Priory is a Grade II Listed Building.
Local vernacular of red brick farmsteads, weatherboarded outbuildings, thatched white render cottages and tiled Victorian cottages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some buildings are listed.

B. LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

Current condition

Landscape structure: This historic forest-edge landscape retains its associations with the wider New Forest through its strong woodland cover and historic settlement pattern linked by a network of winding rural lanes. However, this structure has been particularly affected due to development pressure – with the busy road corridors of the A35 and A326 cutting through the landscape, and modern development spreading along roadsides, particularly at Ashurst within the Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings landscape type. Views from higher ground to Fawley oil refinery also serve as a reminder of the close proximity of the landscape to modern development. Throughout the landscape, pastoral and rough grazing land has been improved, including arable fields, diluting its traditional character and function for grazing. The traditional field pattern has to some extent been altered by changes in land use. The large ancient woodlands that characterise this landscape have been altered in form and composition by the planting of conifer plantations – which have also led to the loss of areas of wood pasture in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type.

Landscape elements: This landscape contains elements which form a visual and physical connection with the New Forest including mature hedgerow oaks, semi-natural woodlands, ancient pasture fields and remnant wood pastures. Their condition has been largely affected in recent decades by changes in traditional management. For example some hedgerows are suffering from either a lack of management (leading to outgrown sections and replacement by fencing), or over-management – with intensive flailing and a loss of valued hedgerow oaks particularly in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type. However, the presence of mature hedgerow oaks, and gorse in some sections, gives a flavour of New Forest character within this landscape. Assarted woodlands within the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type contain conifer species, decreasing their biodiversity value. The stock of important grazing land has decreased; conversion to intensively grazed paddocks is common, and pasture land has been improved for arable cultivation, intensive grassland production or large-scale conifer planting. Historic parkland remains a feature of the landscape, with veteran trees, pasture and woodlands fringing the Priory at Marchwood. Being on the edge of the urban fringe has had an impact on the strength and unity of the local vernacular. A mixture of housing styles and materials within the settlement of Ashurst has diluted its character, although elsewhere, traditional red brick and thatched render buildings are an important aspect of the local landscape.

Landscape change

Key issues and trends

- Unmanaged hedgerows or loss and replacement with fencing, diluting the landscape's small-scale field patterns. Some lengths of hedgerow are intensively flailed with few hedgerow trees (particularly in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type).
- Intensification of agriculture and an increasing proportion of arable fields disrupting the area's pastoral character and leading to the erosion and loss of traditional grazing land throughout and remnant wood pasture in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type.
- Changes in land use impacting on land available for grazing throughout the landscape.
- Past planting of geometric blocks of coniferous plantation breaking up the form and composition of the landscape's valued semi-natural copses, assarted woodlands and wood pasture (particularly in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type).

- Changing pests and diseases leading to decline or death of certain tree species.
- Spread of exotic species such as rhododendron in the area's ancient woodlands, due to a lack of traditional management (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type).
- Large golf course at Applemore, introducing a modern recreational land use into an historic landscape (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type).
- Modern development at Ashurst (including large housing estates), and the sprawling settlement form, detracts from the traditional settlement pattern and local vernacular styles of the area (in the Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings landscape type).
- Presence of the busy A35 and A326 roads, cutting through a largely peaceful 'backwater'.
- Views to Fawley oil refinery from the higher ground, such as around Langley in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type.

C. LANDSCAPE QUALITY OBJECTIVES (LQOS) / STRATEGY

Vision

A strong Forest-edge landscape with a legible separation in character from the surrounding urban fringe. It is characterised by a mosaic of land uses with visual and physical links to the New Forest; fields surrounded by a dense network of well-managed hedgerows and frequent hedgerow oaks, assarted semi-natural woodlands with a diverse range of species and ages of trees and well-managed historic wood pasture. Paddocks around smallholdings are used for the grazing of commoners' stock and the landscape's small hamlets and farmsteads are unified by their red brick, render and thatch local vernacular and linked by sunken tree-lined lanes. The historic character and setting of Marchwood Priory stands out in the landscape, with veteran trees forming key features. In all, this landscape remains a tranquil backwater with its wildlife and working links with the nearby Open Forest retained and strengthened.

Overall Landscape Strategy

The priority in this landscape character area is to **protect** the positive landscape attributes valued within it. This will require active protection.

This should be accompanied by a strategy to **manage** the landscape to improve those attributes that are in poorer condition to improve overall quality.

Management guidelines number
(as per following table LCA 12)

Future landscape management guidelines

Field patterns and boundary features

1. Manage and protect a healthy stock of hedgerow oaks, to preserve these important landscape features.
2. Protect and strengthen historic small scale field patterns, enclosed by a well-managed hedgerow network.

Agricultural land use

3. Protect the stock of paddocks used as traditional commoners' grazing, and maintain grazing levels on the landscapes remaining areas of wood pasture and heathland.
4. Manage the grazing land use of the landscape's fields to maintain the continuity of a pastoral landscape.

Forestry and woodlands

5. Plan towards a gradual restructuring of conifer plantations with broadleaf species to strengthen the landscape's wooded character.
6. Manage the landscape's copses and assarted broadleaved woodlands, including traditional coppicing techniques and control of exotics such as rhododendron.
7. Manage important areas of wood pasture, for example through tree pollarding and a continuation of traditional livestock grazing.

Development and settlement edge

8. Protect the network of rural roads by keeping signage and street lighting to a minimum, and where required, ensure road engineering works respect the rural character of the landscape's roads.
9. Protect the agricultural land uses of the area, to minimise the development of alternative land uses.

Historic landscapes and features

10. Protect the character and setting of the historic parkland at Marchwood Priory.

Tranquillity and views

11. Protect the landscape's levels of tranquillity and scenic views through using tree cover by allowing specimens to grow or planting in new locations, to filter long-distance views of development, particularly at Fawley (particularly in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type).

Summary table LCA 12 showing landscape issues and guidelines by Landscape Type

Landscape type	Summary of issue	Management guidelines (number)
Ancient Forest Farmlands	Intensively flailed hedgerows and loss of hedgerow oaks.	1
	Unmanaged hedgerows and replacement with post-and-wire fencing.	2
	Intensification of farming – increase in arable fields.	4
	Changes in land use impacting on land available for grazing.	3,4
	Past planting of coniferous plantations in semi-natural woodlands.	5
	Lack of traditional woodland management – spread of exotics such as rhododendron.	6,7
	Large golf course near Applemore.	9
	Views to Fawley oil refinery from higher ground.	11
Heath Associated Smallholdings and Estates	Unmanaged hedgerows and replacement with post-and-wire fencing.	2
	Changes in land use impacting on land available for grazing.	3,4
ALL – LANDSCAPE-WIDE ISSUES	Development pressure (National Park-wide issue).	8,9, 10,11

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LCA 12: HYTHE AND ASHURST FOREST FARMLANDS

Agricultural fields near Langley Wood



Views framed by woodland on the skyline

