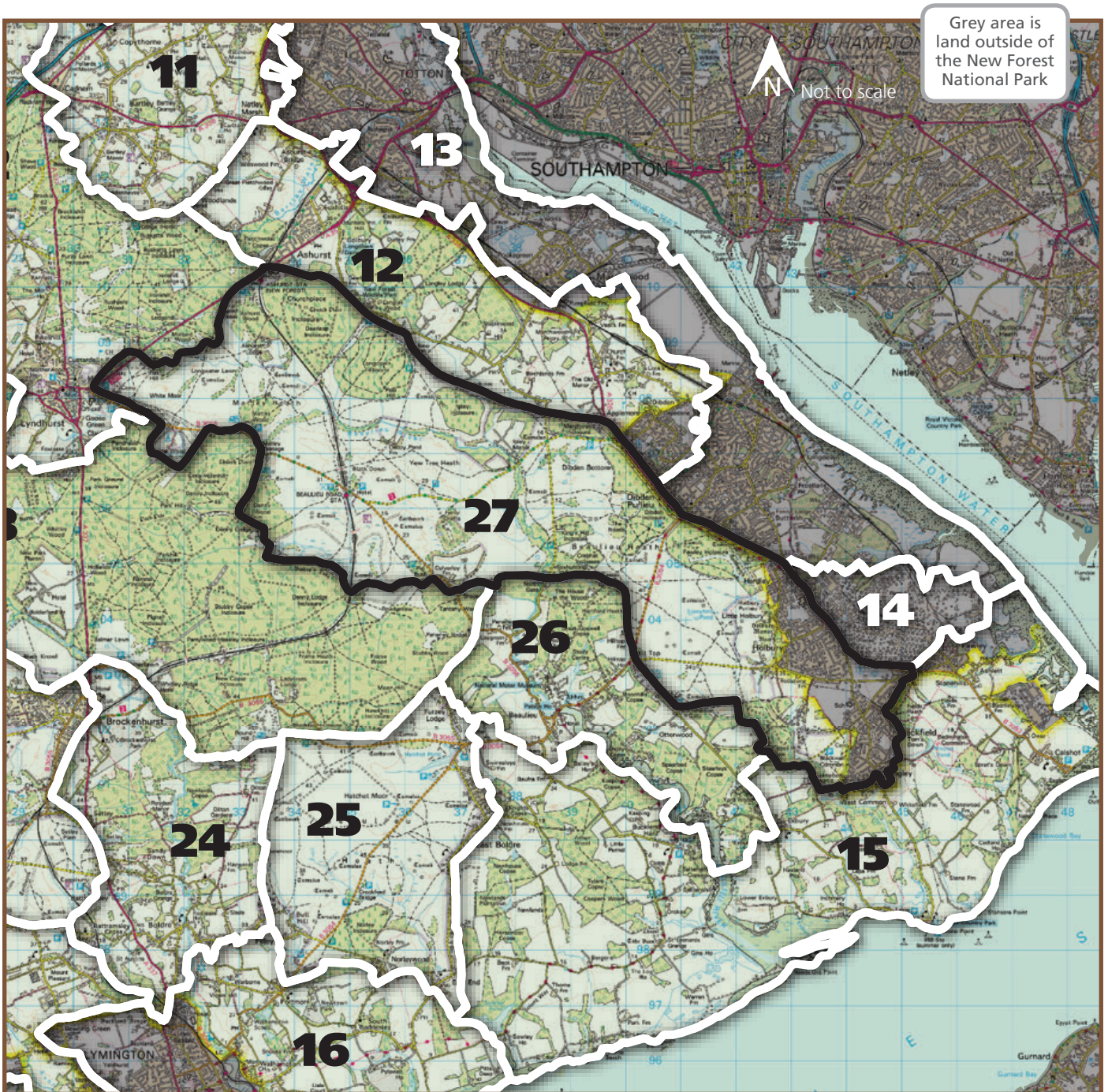




View across Matley Heath towards LCA 23

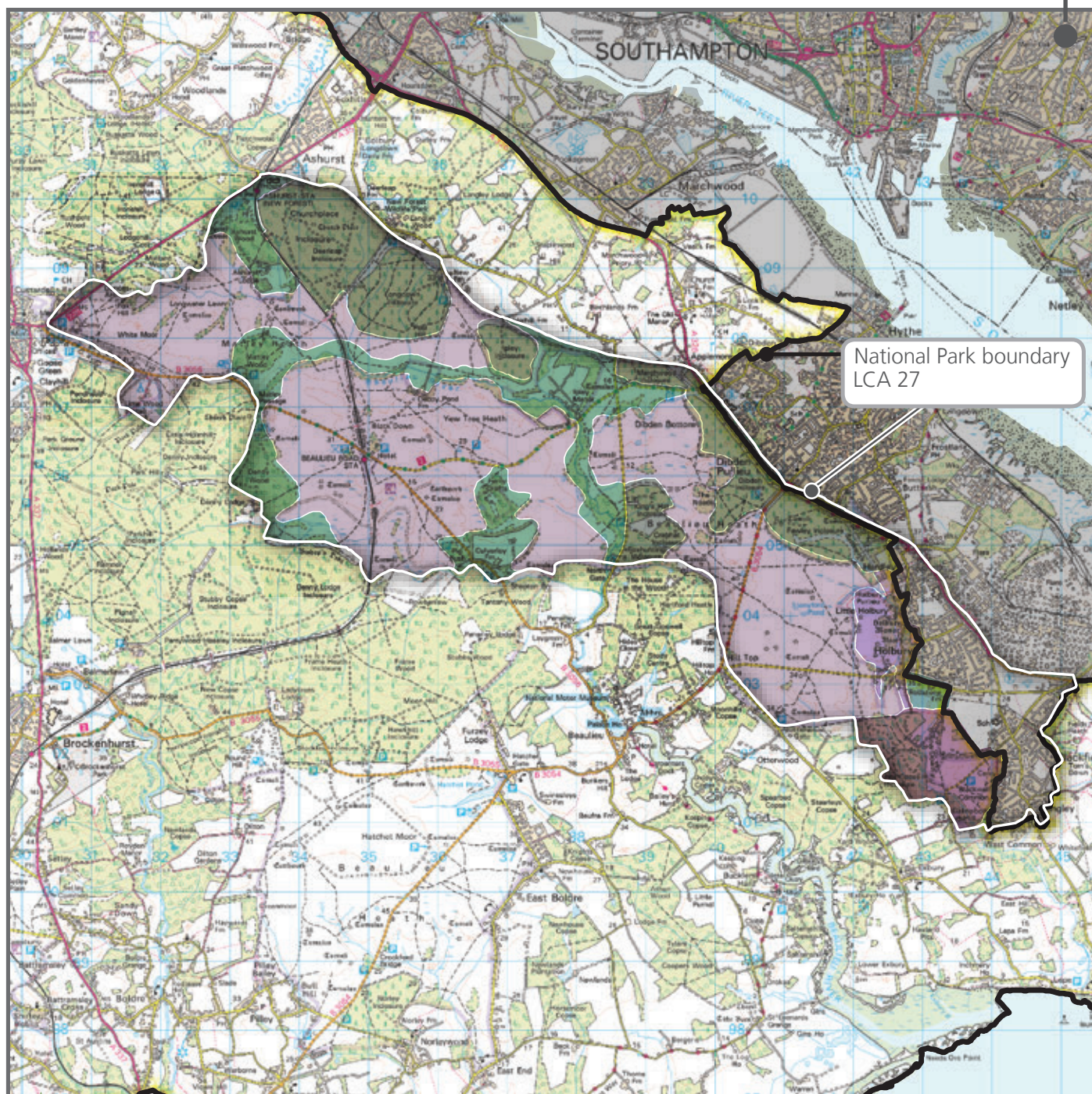
LCA 27: EASTERN FOREST HEATHS

Location of LCA in the National Park



Component landscape types within LCA 27

Area in shadow- outside National Park



National Park boundary
LCA 27



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- 3. Coastal Plain Estates – large informal enclosures (very small area on southern edges of Holbury)
- 5. Heath Associated Estates
- 6. Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings
- 18. Ancient and Ornamental Woodland
- 19. Timber Inclosures / Plantations
- 20. Heathland

Most of this LCA lies within the New Forest National Park, apart from Holbury, Blackfield and Langley.

A. LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

Key landscape characteristics

- Gently undulating plateaus of open heath, bog and woodland in the east of the district, close to the urbanised and industrialised landscape of the Waterside Parishes LCA (outside the National Park).
- Meandering rivers in wide, shallow valleys with riverside lawns and wooden bridges.
- Ancient ash rich riverine woodland with some alder and willow carr along river courses, particularly the Beaulieu River.
- Boggy hollows and open water provide drinking holes for animals as well as important wetland habitats for flora and fauna.
- Red brick farmsteads or forest lodges set within small enclosed 'clearings' in the Open Forest.
- Long views over open heaths with woodland visible in the background.
- Pylons, Fawley Refinery stacks and Fawley power station chimney visible in the distance.

Component landscape types

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

3. Coastal Plain Estates – large informal enclosures (very small area on southern edges of Holbury)
5. Heath Associated Estates
6. Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings
18. Ancient and Ornamental Woodland
19. Timber Inclosures/Plantations
20. Heathland

Key positive landscape attributes

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extensive area of open heathland, with tracts of heather and gorse broken only by woodland or clumps and individual stands of Scots Pine of landscape value. ■ Valley bogs supporting rich wetland habitats fringed by alder and willow woodlands. ■ Ancient ash-dominated riverine woodland and lawns following meandering river courses, including the Beaulieu River. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Numerous Bronze Age burial mounds strongly visible in the open landscape. ■ Sparse settlement limited to red brick thatched farmsteads or lodges within forest clearings. ■ Small areas of anciently enclosed heath surrounding farmsteads. ■ Minor roads crossing the heath on dead straight routes. ■ Long views across the open heath, framed by woodland on the horizon. |
|--|--|

Relevant designations relating to positive landscape attributes

Key landscape features	Relevant designations
Extensive area of open heathland, with tracts of heather and gorse broken only by woodland or clumps and individual stands of Scots Pine with landscape value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The majority of the LCA is within the New Forest SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar designations.
Valley bogs supporting rich wetland habitats fringed by alder and willow woodlands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The majority of the LCA is within the New Forest SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar designations.
Ancient ash-dominated riverine woodland and lawns following meandering river courses, including the Beaulieu River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The majority of the LCA is within the New Forest SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar designations. ■ A number of riverside copses are designated as SINC.
Numerous Bronze Age burial mounds strongly visible in the open landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Many of the LCA's prehistoric features are Scheduled Monuments.
Sparse settlement limited to red brick farmsteads or lodges within forest clearings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The cemetery near Bolton's Bench and far western corner of the LCA is within the Lyndhurst Conservation Area.
Small areas of anciently enclosed heath surrounding farmsteads.	N/A
Minor roads crossing the heath on dead straight routes.	N/A
Long views across the open heath, framed by woodland on the horizon.	N/A

B. LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

Current condition

Landscape structure: The large tracts of open heathland that characterise this landscape have survived through centuries of common grazing following woodland clearance in the Bronze Age. Today, the heathland is punctuated by clumps of Scots Pine, which are valued landscape features, a spread of scrub and secondary woodland from the rivers that cross the landscape, disrupting its open character in places. The 20th century introduction of conifer plantations has interrupted the open structure and varied habitat mosaic of wood pasture, wetlands, open glades and heathland historically associated with this landscape. However, in places, pine and conifer plantings positively serve as a screen to modern development and industry outside the National Park, along with visitor facilities such as car parks within the Open Forest landscape. The strong rural and sparsely settled character of the LCA is maintained through the shielded location of farmsteads and lodges within forest clearings. However, modern intrusions are present in the form of large electricity pylons and the mainline railway line, the former standing out prominently in the Open Heathland landscape type.

Landscape elements: The centuries-old tradition of commoners using the open heathland for grazing continues today, although in places levels vary leading to secondary woodland. This has had an impact on the biodiversity value of the heathland, which is reliant on grazing to maintain its varied mosaic. Woodland management, some of which dates back to the 19th century, has caused the loss of areas of valued wetland, wood pasture, broadleaf woodland and heathland habitats. These habitats are gradually being restored in places in line with objectives outlined in the Forest Design Plans. The condition of the built form is, on the whole, good with the red brick and thatch local vernacular reflected in the farmsteads and lodges found within the landscape. Some unsympathetic use of brick walls, fences and security gates has, however, eroded this traditional character in places.

Landscape change

Key issues and trends

- 20th century management including the planting of conifers at the expense of oak and beech species, as well as historic wood pasture, is affecting their character, form and biodiversity value of woodland (in the Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape type).
- Creation of 20th century coniferous Inclosures on former areas of heathland and mire are reducing the extent of Open Forest habitats (in the Heathland and Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape types).
- Changing pests and diseases leading to decline or death of certain tree species.
- Recent conifer removal from the Inclosures to restore heathland habitats and encourage broadleaf woodland regeneration to improve overall landscape structure (in the Heathland and Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape types).
- Varying grazing levels on the open heath leading to scrub and secondary woodland succession in places (including a spread from riparian zones) is impacting on its open landscape character (in the Heathland landscape type).
- Continued pressure from recreation and visitor facilities across the landscape with car parks, camp sites and visitor traffic impacting on its peaceful character.
- Successful use of Scots Pine clumps to screen visual impact of car parks within the open heath e.g. at Beaulieu Road Station (in the Heathland and Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape types).
- Inappropriate use of features such as brick walls, security gates and high fencing around private dwellings, combined with private gardens, at odds with landscape character (in the Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings and Heath Associated Estates landscape type).
- Intrusion into the open heathland landscape by large electricity pylons on the edge of Dibden Inclosure (in the Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape type) and the main Southampton to Bournemouth railway line, crossing through the Heathland landscape type. Combined with the visual prominence of the nearby oil refinery and power station at Fawley, and urban development at Hythe (outside the National Park), these cumulatively impact on perceptions of tranquillity.

C. LANDSCAPE QUALITY OBJECTIVES (LQOS) / STRATEGY

Vision

A landscape strongly associated with large tracts of open heathland punctuated by character stands and clumps of Scots Pine and freely grazed by commoners' livestock. Rivers fringed by ancient woodland and grazed lawns wind through the landscape, giving a distinctive sense of place. The Inclosure woodlands contain a mixture of predominantly broad-leaved tree species within a mosaic of restored open heathland, wetland and wood pasture habitats. The landscape retains its sparsely settled character, with red brick thatched farmsteads and forest lodges hidden within their forest clearing settings surrounded by ancient Purlieu. The area's valued prehistoric archaeology is preserved and enhanced, with barrows remaining visible in the open heathland. This is a landscape that continues to be enjoyed in a sensitive manner, with visitor facilities on the open heathland continuing to be screened by stands of Scots Pine and other woodland. Long views across the landscape, framed by woodland, are maintained as important aspects of character.

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 27)

Future landscape management guidelines

Forestry and woodlands

- 1 Manage the Inclosure woodlands to achieve a gradual conversion of conifers to native broadleaves through thinning, natural regeneration and the planting of broadleaf species. Refer to the appropriate Forest Design Plan for further detailed information.
- 2 Restore further areas of heathland and open glades through the targeted clearfell of selected conifer plantations within the Inclosures. Refer to the appropriate Forest Design Plan for further detailed information.

Biodiversity

- 3 Manage and restore areas of valued mire within and outside the Inclosures through re-establishing water flows and reinstating natural channel courses. Refer to the appropriate New Forest Wetland Management Plan for further detailed information.

- 4 Manage and enhance the landscape's large areas of open heath through continued grazing by commoners' stock in line with the New Forest SAC plan.

Recreation

- 5 Manage the setting of recreational facilities in the landscape (e.g. through sites continuing to be screened by stands of Scots Pine).

Development, settlement edge and tranquillity

- 6 Protect the remote rural character of the landscape, including avoiding the location of development outside forest clearings.
- 7 Protect the sparse settlement pattern and remote rural character of the area, avoiding new development outside existing forest clearings and ensuring new development is constructed in sympathy with the local vernacular (red brick farmsteads and forest lodges).
- 8 Protect and retain woodland and conifer stands with landscape value in strategic locations to minimise views to electricity pylons, the mainline railway line, industry at Fawley and nearby urban development outside the National Park to retain the landscape's strongly rural character and perceived levels of tranquillity.

Summary table LCA 27 showing landscape issues and guidelines by Landscape Type

Landscape type	Summary of issue	Management guidelines (number)
Timber Inclosures / Plantations	Creation of Inclosures on former areas of wood pasture, heathland and mire.	1,2,3
Heathland	Varying levels of grazing leading to a spread of scrub and secondary woodland.	4
Heathland	Intrusion of electricity pylons and mainline railway line into the open heath.	8
Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings	Inappropriate development particularly surrounding residential properties.	6
Heath Associated Estates		
Ancient and Ornamental Woodland	No identified issues.	N/A
Coastal Plain Estates – Large Informal Enclosures	No identified issues.	N/A
ALL – LANDSCAPE-WIDE ISSUES	Visitor and recreation pressure including the location of car parks, camp sites and prominent signage.	5
	Views to the nearby industry at Fawley and urban development outside the National Park.	8
	Development pressure (National Park-wide issue).	6,7

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LCA 27: EASTERN FOREST HEATHS

View across Matley Heath towards LCA 23



Area of clear fell, Foxhunting Inclosure

