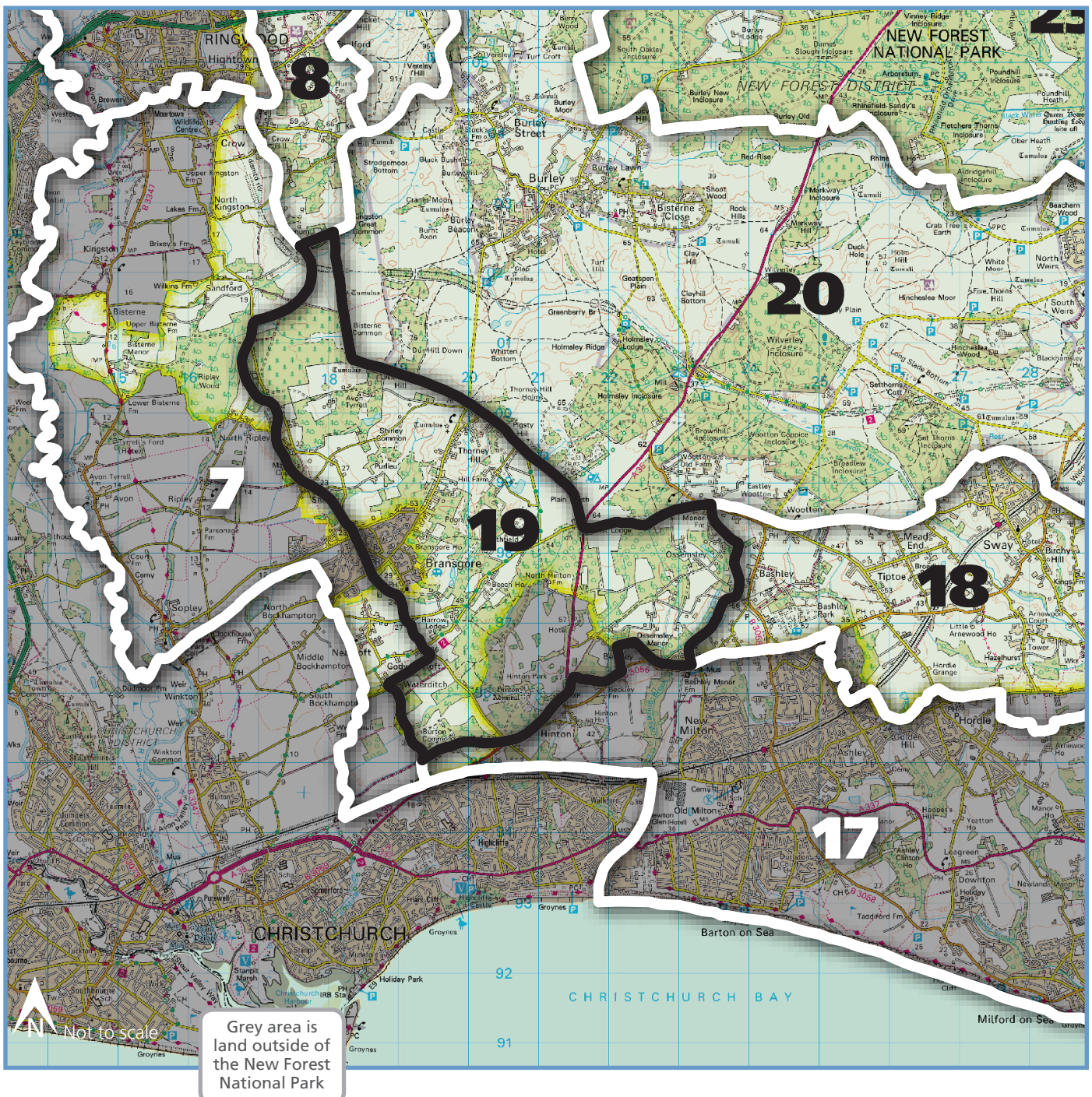




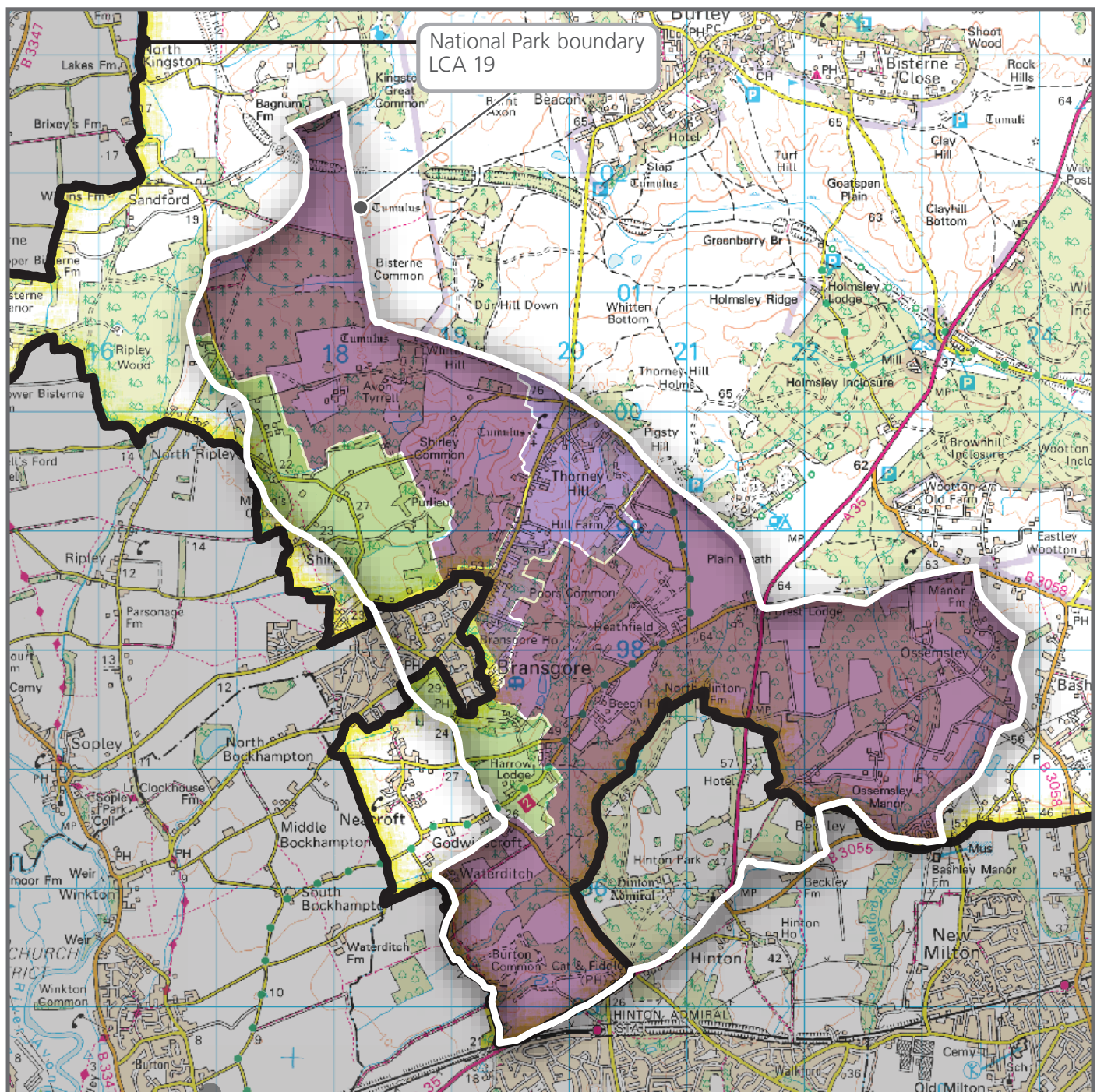
Horse grazing at Thorney Hill

LCA 19: BRANSGORE WOODS AND PASTURES

Location of LCA in the National Park



Component landscape types within LCA 19



Not to scale

Area in shadow- outside National Park

- 5. Heath Associated Estates
- 6. Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings
- 7. Ancient Forest Farmlands

Hinton Park, it's surrounds, and the settlement of Brangsore lie outside the New Forest National Park boundary.

A. LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

Key landscape characteristics

- Steep, undulating edge to the New Forest plateaus forming a wooded backdrop to the Avon Valley.
- Enclosed and settled mosaic of ancient deciduous woodland, semi-improved grassland and plantation woodland on the edge of the New Forest.
- Enclosed commons support areas of valuable acid grassland at Shirley Common and Poors Common.
- Leafy roads wind up the valley side, contrasting with the open lanes that follow the ridge tops. Trees always create a backdrop.
- Farms are scattered throughout the wooded agricultural land.
- Scots pines are a local feature.
- Large houses such as Bransgore House and Avon Tyrell within designed parkland.
- Red brick and thatch or whitewash and thatch are the traditional building types. Weatherboarding is also popular, particularly on exterior agricultural buildings.

Component landscape types

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

5. Heath Associated Estates
6. Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings
7. Ancient Forest Farmlands

Key positive landscape attributes

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acid grassland and remnant heathland on Shirley, Burton and Poors Commons. ■ Ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations and wood pasture forming a rich mosaic with mixed agricultural land. ■ Winding leafy lanes climbing up the valley side. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Traditional cottages and smallholdings of red brick, whitewash, weatherboarding and thatch or tile. ■ Large houses within designed parkland with veteran trees. ■ Ridgetop views across the Avon Valley and the Open Forest to the north (LCA 20). |
|--|--|

Relevant designations relating to positive landscape attributes

Key landscape features	Relevant designations
Acid grassland and remnant heathland on Shirley, Burton and Poors Commons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The commons are all within the New Forest SSSI. ■ Shirley Common is also within the New Forest SAC.
Ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations and wood pasture forming a rich mosaic with mixed agricultural land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Many of the woodlands are SINC. ■ A small area of woodland to the west of Avon Tyrrell is within the New Forest SSSI and SAC.
Winding leafy lanes climbing up the valley side.	N/A
Traditional cottages and smallholdings of red brick, whitewash, weatherboarding and thatch or tile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some of the buildings within the LCA are listed.
Large houses within designed parkland with veteran trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avon Tyrrell is on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens.
Ridgetop views across the Avon Valley and the Open Forest to the north (LCA 20).	N/A

B. LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

Current condition

Landscape structure: This is a typical settled forest landscape with strong visual links to the nearby Open Forest. The landscape seen today includes a rich mosaic of fields, heathland, wood pasture, parkland, hedgerows and woodlands. This structure has, however, been altered by the removal of hedgerows and hedgerow trees as well as the planting of geometric conifer plantations on areas of former heathland. Agricultural improvements have altered its traditional heathland/pastoral character and diluted small-scale field patterns. Settlement extension is at odds with the traditional dispersed nature of settlement in this landscape. Nevertheless, its traditional forest character is still legible in today's landscape – providing ecological and visual links between the Open Forest to the north and east and the Avon Valley to the west.

Landscape elements: The elements that combine to give this landscape its traditional forest-edge character are largely intact, although a key issue has been the past removal of hedgerows and important oak/beech specimens which has interrupted a valued ecological network. Frequent oak and beech trees are a key feature of this landscape (particularly in the Heath Associated Estates and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types), giving it an enclosed character and strong New Forest feel. The condition of the remaining commons within the Heath Associated Estates landscape type has been affected in parts by scrub and secondary woodland encroachment, along with conifer planting, affecting their biodiversity value and open character. In other areas across the landscape, pasture has been improved or converted to arable or paddocks. The strength of the local vernacular has been weakened in the Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings landscape type due to modern development, although this does not have a significant landscape impact due to the successful integration of dwellings into their woodland setting.

Landscape change

Key issues and trends

- Loss and fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow oaks and replacement with unsympathetic substitute fencing. This has affected the small scale field patterns of the area and disrupted the ancient network of hedgerows, trees and woodlands (in the Heath Associated Estates, Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types).
- Scrub and secondary woodland encroachment on the remaining areas of common land, due to a lack of sufficient grazing (in the Heath Associated Estates landscape type).
- Enclosure of common land (e.g. Shirley Common), impacting on open character (in the Heath Associated Estates landscape type).
- Large-scale improved pasture fields on higher ground stand in contrast to the open heathland lying immediately adjacent (LCA 20) (in the Heath Associated Estates landscape type).
- Increase in arable land use on lower land, in large, amalgamated fields. Elsewhere, a significant amount of agricultural land, in large fields has been subdivided (in the Heath Associated Estates, Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types).
- Prominent blocks of coniferous plantation, including on commons is affecting the quality and extent of heath and wood pasture (in the Heath Associated Estates landscape type).
- Changing pests and diseases leading to decline or death of certain tree species.
- Invasion of rhododendron and other ornamental species (including from private gardens) into the landscape's semi-natural woodlands is affecting their biodiversity value (in the Heath Associated Estates, Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types).

- Loss of and decline in the remaining areas of wood pasture, due in part to a lack of grazing (in the Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types).
- Modern, linear development extending up the ridge from the edges of Bransgore – coalescing with the small settlement of Thorney Hill (in the Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings landscape type).
- Many residential properties (including bungalows) are incongruous with local vernacular styles and their landscape setting. However, dwellings are often well integrated into their woodland setting and located back from roads (in the Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings landscape type).

C. LANDSCAPE QUALITY OBJECTIVES (LQOS) / STRATEGY

Vision

A sustainably managed and diverse forest edge landscape, with heath commons, acid grassland and ancient wood pasture, grazed by commoners' livestock, set within a mosaic of small fields. Well-managed woodlands with predominantly broadleaved species and parkland are linked by a lush network of hedgerows and frequent oak and beech trees. Traditional cottages and smallholdings of red brick or whitewash are linked by a network of winding leafy lanes. Open ridge top views and ecological links are maintained between the Open Forest and Avon Valley.

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 16)

Future landscape management guidelines

Field patterns and boundary features

1. Protect and strengthen the landscape's small scale field patterns, bounded by a well managed hedgerow network with a healthy stock of hedgerow oaks and beech.
2. Manage an intact hedgerow network, strengthening and creating links with the area's woodlands as key wildlife corridors.

Agricultural land use

3. Protect the stock of paddocks and small pasture fields for use as grazing land for commoners' livestock and to maintain the traditional pastoral character of the landscape.

Biodiversity

4. Protect and manage areas of heathland, for example through grazing and the control of invasive species. Plan for a gradual restoration of conifer plantations to heathland in line with the New Forest SAC plan.

5. Protect the remaining areas of wood pasture and ancient commons, managing through grazing and preserving their open landscape setting (avoiding settlement encroachment) in line with relevant HLS agreements.

Forestry and woodlands

6. Protect and manage the landscape's semi-natural ancient woodlands, including coppicing and thinning and rhododendron control, to maintain a diverse age structure and species range.
7. Manage and enhance the species- and age-diversity of the area's 19th century mixed pine and oak plantations – gradually moving towards a greater balance of native broadleaves through selective felling and natural regeneration.
8. Protect the biodiversity and landscape value of the landscape's semi-natural woodlands, including promoting the planting of native trees and shrubbery in gardens.

Development and settlement edge

9. Protect the network of narrow lanes and residual commons – maintain the rural character including reducing levels of signage and street lighting, and encouraging sensitive road engineering works where required.

Views

10. Protect key views from the ridge tops across the Open Forest and Avon Valley.

Summary table LCA 19 showing landscape issues and guidelines by Landscape Type

Landscape type	Summary of issue	Management guidelines (number)
Heath Associated Estates	Fragmentation and loss of hedgerows and hedgerow oaks.	1,2
	Scrub and secondary woodland encroachment on common land.	4,5
	Enclosure of common land (e.g. Shirley Common).	5
	Large-scale, improved pasture fields on higher ground.	2
	Increase in arable land use on lower land.	3
	Subdivision of fields.	3
	Past coniferisation of areas of heathland and wood pasture.	4,5
	Invasion of exotics in semi-natural woodlands.	8
Ancient Forest Farmlands	Fragmentation and loss of hedgerows and hedgerow oaks.	1,2
	Increase in arable land use on lower land.	3
	Subdivision of fields.	3
	Loss of wood pasture, due in part to a lack of grazing.	4
Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings	Fragmentation and loss of hedgerows and hedgerow oaks.	1,2
	Subdivision of fields.	3
	Loss of wood pasture, including due to a lack of grazing.	5
ALL – LANDSCAPE-WIDE ISSUES	Development pressure (National Park-wide issue).	9,10

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LCA 19: BRANSGORE WOODS AND PASTURES

View across Shirley Common



Horse grazing at Thorney Hill

