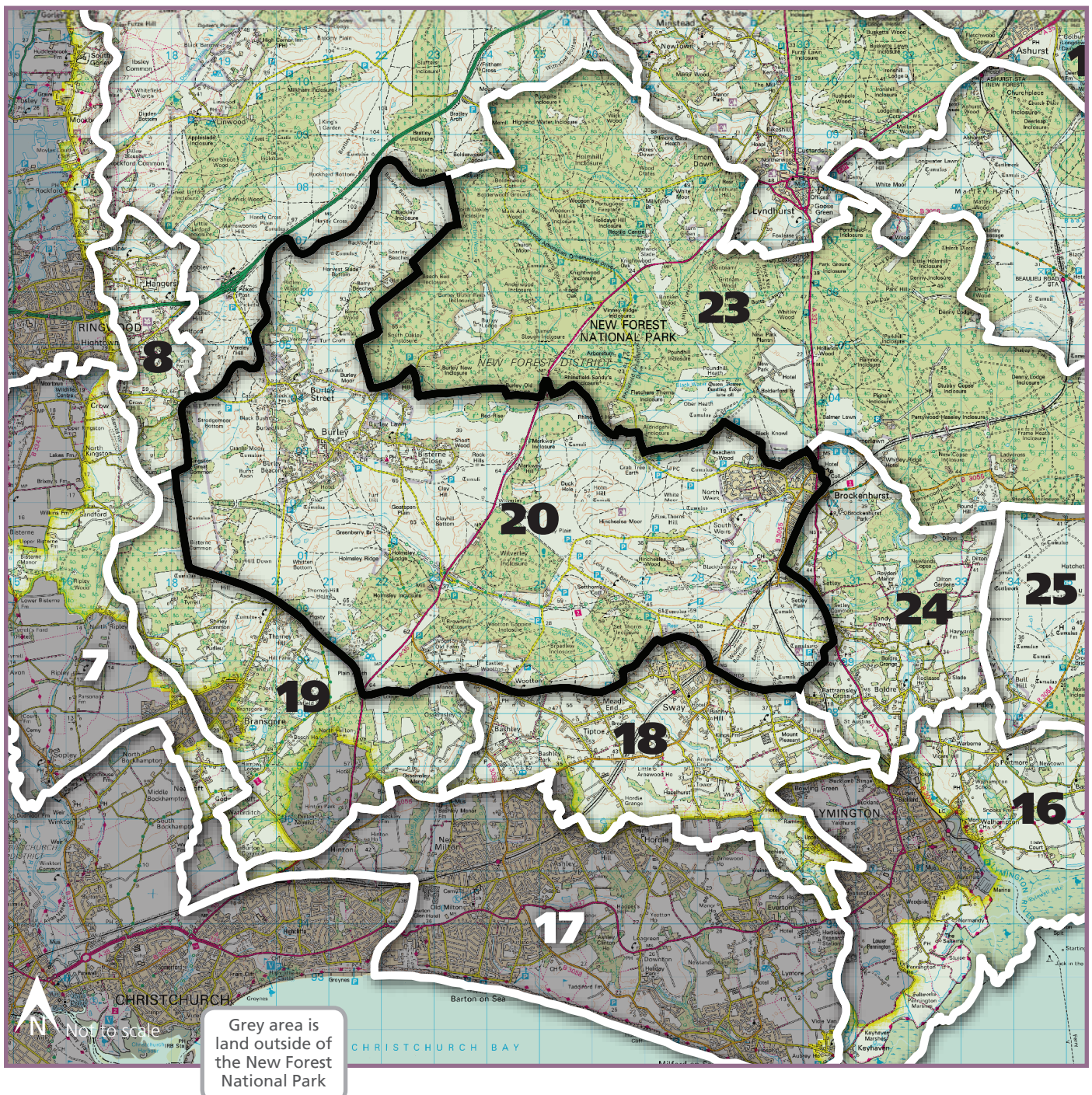




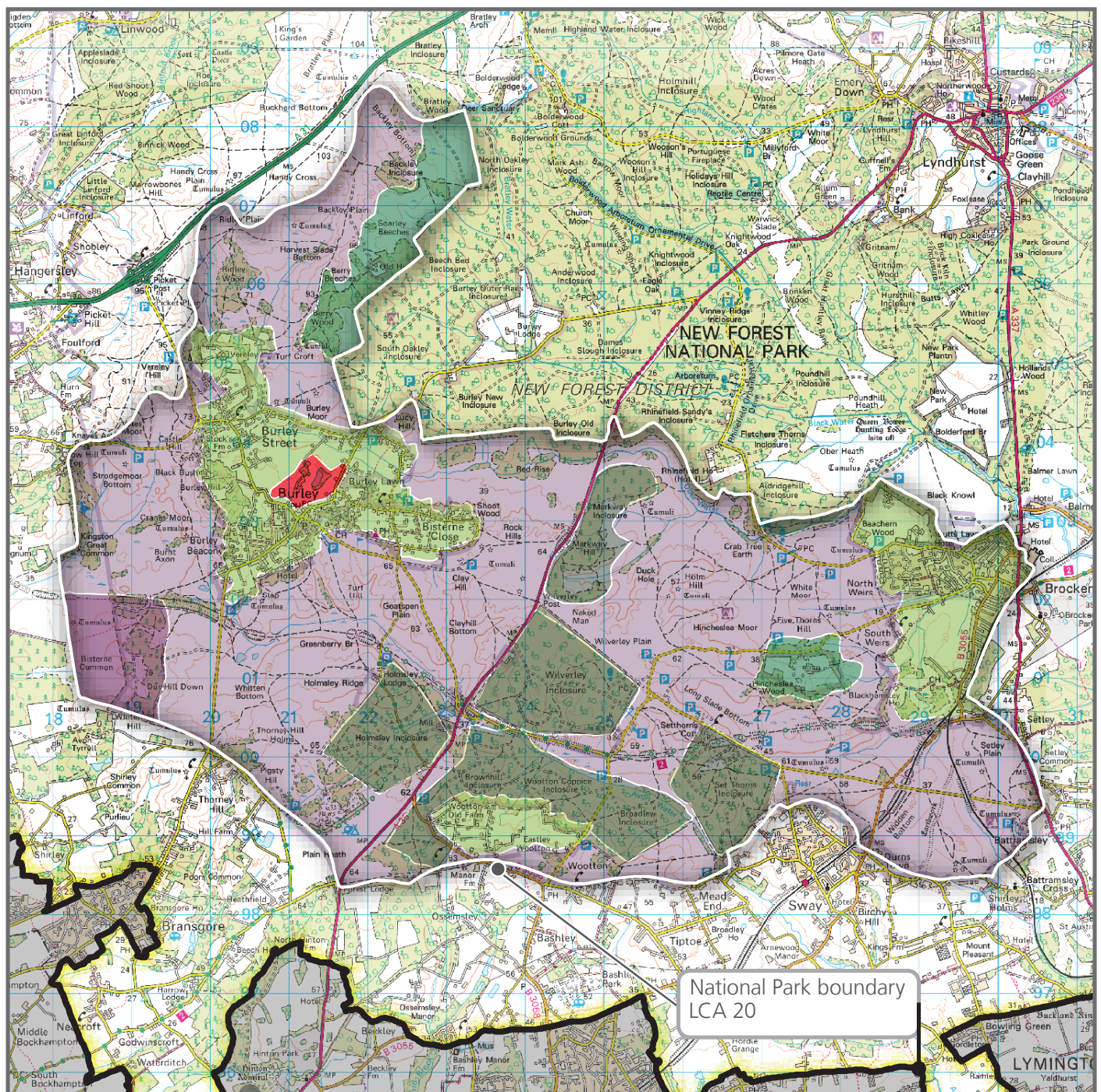
Heathland near Castle Hill, popular for recreation

LCA 20: SOUTHERN HEATHLAND AND FOREST

Location of LCA in the National Park



Component landscape types within LCA 20



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All of this LCA falls within the New Forest National Park.

A. LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

Key landscape characteristics

- Gently rolling landscape in the south of the district falling gradually away toward the south coast; Avon Water drains the area in a south-easterly direction.
- Dominated by large expanses of open unenclosed heathland on acidic soils with internationally important valley mires and enclosures.
- Unenclosed ancient and ornamental woodlands and extensive areas of closely cropped forest lawns complete the mosaic.
- New Forest ponies and cattle freely roam across heath and Open Forest roads, which follow straight routes across the open heath.
- Forest villages of Burley and Brockenhurst, focused around a village centre, are busy centres for tourists.
- Popular part of the forest for recreation with many car parks, picnic spots, campsites and visitor facilities scattered throughout.
- Long distance views to the chimneys of the Fawley Refinery complex, Fawley power station and Sway Tower.

Component landscape types

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

5. Heath Associated Estates
7. Ancient Forest Farmlands
18. Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands
19. Timber Inclosures/Plantations
20. Heathland

Key positive landscape attributes

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extensive tracts of lowland heath, punctuated by clumps of Scots Pine which are valued landscape features and Inclosure plantations. ■ Valley bogs and mires within shallow valleys, heathland grassland and ponds. ■ Closely cropped New Forest Lawns, ancient wood pasture, lowland beech woods and riverine woodland. ■ Unenclosed ancient and ornamental woodlands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Numerous Bronze Age burial mounds and other prehistoric earthworks historically protected from damage by medieval forest law. ■ Historic forest villages with village greens and verges grazed by New Forest ponies and cattle. ■ Strong local vernacular characterised by cottages of thatched, clay, tiled and slate roofs and farmsteads surrounded by small fields and paddocks. ■ Long views across the open heaths and beyond. |
|--|---|

Relevant designations relating to positive landscape attributes

Key landscape features	Relevant designations
Extensive tracts of lowland heath, punctuated by clumps of Scots Pine, which are valued landscape features and Inclosure plantations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of the LCA (outside the main settlements) is within the New Forest SSSI, SAC and SPA. ■ Kingston Great Common is a NNR.
Valley bogs and mires within shallow valleys, heathland, grassland and ponds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of the LCA (outside the main settlements) is within the New Forest SSSI, SAC and SPA. ■ Kingston Great Common is a NNR.
Closely cropped New Forest Lawns, ancient wood pasture, lowland beech woods and riverine woodland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of the LCA (outside the main settlements) is within the New Forest SSSI, SAC and SPA.
Unenclosed Ancient and Ornamental woodlands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of the LCA (outside the main settlements) is within the New Forest SSSI, SAC and SPA.
Numerous Bronze Age burial mounds and other prehistoric earthworks preserved by medieval forest law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Many prehistoric sites are designated as SMs.
Historic forest villages with village greens and verges grazed by New Forest ponies and cattle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of Burley is a Conservation Area. ■ Waters Green and older parts of Brockenhurst are a Conservation Area.
Strong local vernacular of red brick or thatched cottages and farmsteads surrounded by small fields and paddocks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of Burley is a Conservation Area. ■ Waters Green and older parts of Brockenhurst are a Conservation Area. There is a significant number of Listed Buildings within the LCA (e.g. 11 Grade II Listed Buildings in Burley and 20 within the Brockenhurst Conservation Area).
Long views across the open heaths and beyond.	N/A
Designed landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rhinefield is listed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens.

B. LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

Current condition

Landscape structure: This is a quintessential New Forest landscape containing the classic mosaic of New Forest lawns, heathland, commons, ancient woodlands and plantations backed by historic settlements with strong commoning communities. The main issues that have impacted on the structure of this landscape are those relating to development within the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type (particularly infill and property extensions encroaching onto valued areas of common land and New Forest Lawn); large-scale conifer plantations breaking up the open form of the heathland and interrupting the shape and composition of the Timber Inclosures/Plantations and Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands landscape types and recreational facilities located within the open heathland landscape. Although a spread of development has been an issue in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type, it is often well integrated into its landscape, for example through the screening effects of trees and woodlands. However, the changes in land use around smallholdings have led to a dilution of traditional New Forest character and interruption of the ancient field pattern in places.

Landscape elements: This is a classic New Forest landscape with key elements reflecting its cultural evolution. Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands are found alongside mixed Inclosures set in a framework of open heathland. Historic settlements are framed by oak and beech plantations and linked by winding rural lanes backed by farmland. The large expanses of open heathland have in part been affected by historic variations in levels of grazing – with a spread of gorse and birch, as well as past drainage operations (also within the Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape type) leading to a loss of valued wetland habitats. The popularity of the open heathland for recreation has also led to ‘hotspots’ of footpath erosion creating scars in this landscape and damage to valued habitats. The area’s New Forest lawns, particularly within the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type, have seen a concentration of grazing pressure influencing the quality of the sward. Grazing has been lost in the Ancient Forest Farmlands to changes in land use. Incremental changes to the built form of settlements and local vernacular details have impacted on the condition of the built environment, although overall, the settlements’ historic sense of place remains strong and one of the key reasons for this landscape’s popularity as a National Park visitor destination.

Landscape change

Key issues and trends

- Loss of traditional land use and impact on field patterns due to sub-division (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type).
- A succession of conifer species within the Inclosures and decline in the remaining areas of historic oak and beech pasture woodland and open forest habitats within the Inclosures. Forest Design Plans and restoration are reversing decline (in the Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape type).
- Spread of exotic and invasive species, including bracken and rhododendron, in the area’s Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands, affecting their character and condition. Work in recent years to reverse this trend (in the Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands landscape type).
- Changing pests and diseases leading to decline or death of certain tree species.
- Past planting of conifer plantations within the heathland, with dark, abrupt outlines at odds with the area’s open heathland character (in the Heathland and Heath Associated Estates landscape types).
- Drainage and channel modifications leading to a drying out of valued wetland habitats – particularly mires, wet heath and riverine woodland. Some restoration work has restored habitats to positively reverse this trend (in the Heathland and Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape types).
- Scrub, bracken and secondary woodland encroachment can be an issue on the heathland commons due to varying levels of grazing and other interventions (in the Heathland, Heath Associated

Estates, Timber Inclosures/Plantations and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types).

- Recreational pressures leading to erosion of heathland and lawns, along with the presence of visitor facilities (e.g. picnic areas, car parks, camp sites) and road improvements impacting on levels of tranquillity (particularly in the Heathland and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types).
- Some modern development out-of-keeping with local vernacular styles, materials, scales and traditional landscape settings (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands and Urban Areas landscape types).
- Infill development and property extensions abutting valued areas of common land and New Forest Lawn – e.g. Burley Lawn (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands and Urban Areas landscape types).
- Use of close boarded fencing around dwellings instead of traditional boundary treatments such as brick walls, post-and-rail fencing, hedgerows, picket fences and the locally distinctive ‘Burley fences’ (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands and Urban Areas landscape types).
- Pylons, telecommunications masts and long-range views of the industry at Fawley, at odds with the strongly rural character of this landscape (particularly in the Heathland landscape type).

C. LANDSCAPE QUALITY OBJECTIVES (LQOS) / STRATEGY

Vision

An open forest landscape containing extensive tracts of lowland heath, freely grazed by commoners’ ponies and cattle, allowing long views. Numerous Bronze Age burial mounds and other prehistoric earthworks are a reminder of the time depth of the landscape. The landscape is punctuated by clumps of Scots Pine, which are valued landscape features, ancient woodlands, lowland beech woods, and well-managed wood pasture. All areas of woodland have a diverse structure and age range of trees with many ancient and veteran trees. Grazed New Forest lawns, valley bogs and mires contribute to the diversity of habitats. Recreational users continue to enjoy the landscape whilst minimising their impacts on its special habitats and species. Traditional red brick settlements centred on village greens have a thriving commoning community with verges grazed by commoners’ livestock. Smallholdings are surrounded by small paddocks and fields used for grazing. Characterful long views across the open heath and beyond are a strong feature of this landscape.

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 20)

Future landscape management guidelines

Agricultural land use

1. Retain commoners’ smallholdings and the stock of grazing land around villages. (In the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type)

Biodiversity

2. Protect and reinstate areas of heathland through grazing and restoration work. Refer to the

appropriate Forest Design Plan for more detailed information in line with New Forest SAC plan (in the Heathland, Heath Associated Estates and Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape types).

3. Protect and restore areas of mire, wet heathland and riverine woodland through re-establishing water flows and reinstating natural channel courses. Refer to the appropriate New Forest Wetland Management for more detailed information (in the Timber Inclosures/Plantations and Heathland landscape types).

Forestry and woodlands

4. Protect the remaining Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands, including rhododendron and bracken control. Forestry Commission continues to control and eradicate exotic species. Allow natural regeneration to encourage a diverse age and species range within the woodlands (in the Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands landscape type).

5. Manage the Inclosure woodlands aiming towards a gradual conversion of conifers to predominantly native broadleaves and open forest habitats through thinning and natural regeneration. Refer to the appropriate Forest Design Plan for more detailed information (in the Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape type).
6. Manage and restore further areas of ancient wood pasture and New Forest Lawn, particularly through appropriate grazing by commoners' livestock and control of scrub/invasive species (particularly in the Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape type).
7. Manage and enhance the Inclosures' ground flora and habitats including heathland, wood pasture and lawns, including potentially opening up the Inclosures to commoners' livestock if appropriate and carefully monitored. Refer to the appropriate Forest Design Plan for more detailed information (in the Timber Inclosures/Plantations landscape type).
8. Protect and retain stands of Scots Pine where they are valued as landscape features within the open plains (in the Heathland landscape type).

Recreation

9. Manage the setting of recreational facilities in the landscape, utilising the screening benefits of vegetation and topography. Manage visitor locations and timings to protect valued flora and fauna (particularly in the Heathland and Ancient Forest Farmlands landscape types).

Development and settlement edge

10. Protect areas of common land, lawn and verges traditionally grazed by ponies and cattle. This includes protection from new development (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands and Urban Areas landscape types).
11. Protect and enhance the rural character of the landscape's historic forest villages, with property boundaries of brick walls, post-and-rail fencing, hedgerows, picket fences and the locally distinctive 'Burley fences' rather than close board fencing (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands and Urban Areas landscape types).
12. Refer to the Burley and Brockenhurst Conservation Area Appraisals for details on historic landscape setting, layout and plan form of the historic settlements, and architectural styles, materials and detailing of buildings within these settlements (in the Ancient Forest Farmlands and Urban Areas landscape types).

Tranquillity and views

13. Protect levels of tranquillity and views with the use of strategic tree planting, or allowing vegetation succession, to screen views of pylons and the industry at Fawley on the horizon.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LCA 20: SOUTHERN HEATHLAND AND FOREST

Heathland near Castle Hill, popular for recreation



Ancient beech/oak woodland on the edge of Burley Lawn



Summary table LCA 20 showing landscape issues and guidelines by Landscape Type

Landscape type	Summary of issue	Management guidelines (number)
Heathland	Varying levels of grazing – scrub, bracken and secondary woodland encroachment.	6
	Past planting of heath with conifer plantations.	2,5,7,8
	Past drainage operations leading to a loss of wetland habitats.	3
	Recreational pressure.	9
	Pylons, communications masts and long-range views of industry at Fawley.	13
Timber Inclosures / Plantations	Succession of conifers within the Inclosures – decline in historic oak/beech pasture woodland and open forest habitats.	5,7
	Scrub, bracken and secondary woodland encroachment on heathland commons due to varying levels of grazing.	2,6,7
	Past drainage operations leading to a loss of wetland habitats.	3
	Recreational pressure.	9
	Modern development out of keeping with local vernacular styles.	12
	Changes in land use impacting on grazing.	1
	Infill development and property extensions abutting common land/lawn.	10,12
	Use of unsympathetic close-board fencing around properties.	11,12
Ancient & Ornamental Woodlands	Control of exotic and invasive species, including rhododendron and bracken.	4
Heath Associated Estates	Past planting of heath with conifer plantations.	2,5,7,8
Urban areas	Modern development out of keeping with local vernacular styles.	12
	Infill development and property extensions abutting common land/lawn.	10,12
	Use of unsympathetic close-board fencing around properties.	11,12
ALL – LANDSCAPE-WIDE ISSUES	Death of some tree species; diversity of species needed to maintain tree numbers in future.	