



Landscape Review of Eastleigh Borough Council's Emerging Local Plan Allocation Area B/C (north / east of Bishopstoke / Fair Oak)

**– Additional comments on EBC's revised 'Landscape Sensitivity
Appraisal of Sites being considered for Strategic Development as
part of the EBLP 2011-2036' (October 2018)**

For CPRE Hampshire

February 2019



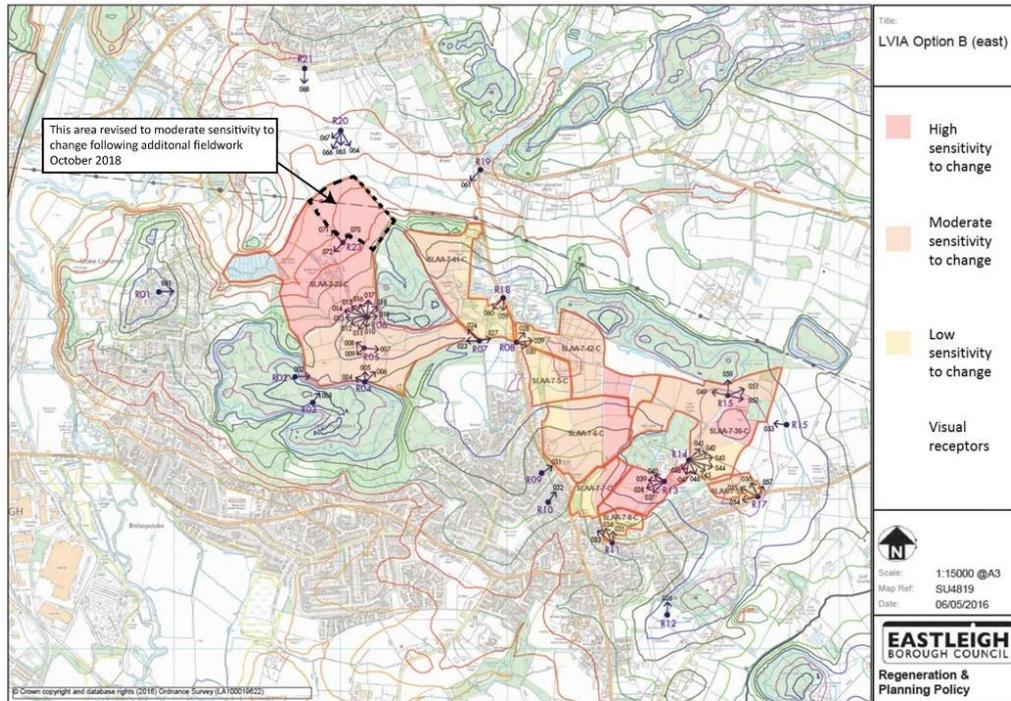
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- 1.1. The terra firma Consultancy Ltd (TF) was appointed by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (Hampshire) in June 2018 to carry out a landscape review of the Strategic Growth Option (SGO) B/C (north / east of Bishopstoke / Fair Oak) allocated in Eastleigh Borough Council's (EBC's) Emerging Eastleigh Local Plan 2016-2036, July 2017 (EBLP 2016-2036). SGO B/C is allocated for approximately 5200 new homes, 30,000 sq. metres of employment space, retail and community facilities, open spaces and a new link road (Allbrook Hill, north of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak link road).
- 1.2. The review included responding to the findings of the EBC's 'Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal of Sites being considered for Strategic Development as part of the EBLP 2011-2036' (April 2017) which formed part of the EBC's evidence base for the EBLP 2016-2036. In October 2018 this Appraisal was updated. These additional comments respond to the updated Appraisal.

Summary of the October 2018 updates to EBC's 'Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal of Sites being considered for Strategic Development as part of the EBLP 2011-2036'

- 1.3. On page 8 of the October 2018 update for Option B-North Bishopstoke there is an adjustment of the assessment of the northern part of SLAA-2-23-C from High sensitivity to Moderate sensitivity '*in response to additional field assessment*'.
- 1.4. The original April 2017 assessment stated that SLAA-2-23-C had a:
 - **High sensitivity to change:** *The more northerly part of SLAA-2-23-C closest to Colden Common is relatively remote, exposed in part from footpaths to the north and the distinctive skyline of Stokepark Wood and Upperbarn Copse are potentially vulnerable to change.*
- 1.5. In the October 2018 updated version the assessment SLAA-2-23-C is split into two area and described as follows:
 - **High sensitivity to change:** *The higher land on the ridgeline within SLAA-2-23-C is visible in part from footpaths to the north and this along with the distinctive skyline of Stokepark Wood and Upperbarn Copse are potentially vulnerable to change.*
 - **Moderate sensitivity to change:** *Whilst the more northerly part of SLAA-2-23-C closest to Colden Common is relatively remote, the intrinsic landscape character is not especially distinct. The land is low lying and largely screened to the north by existing mature hedgerows and trees, whilst the eye is drawn to the higher land beyond making this part of SLAA-2-23-C less sensitive to change than the land to the south.*
- 1.6. On Page 9 in the 'High level guidance/recommendations and landscape opportunities' section the following guidance has been added:
 - *Development should be avoided on the high land nearest to Colden Common...*
- 1.7. On page 10 of the October 2018 updated version an annotation has been included to show where recent fieldwork has revised the Sensitivity rating of northern part of SLAA-2-23-C. An extract of the relevant page is below:



Landscape Sensitivity and Location of Visual Receptors

TF comments on sensitivity of the northern part of SLAA-2-23-C

- 1.8. We would query the downgrading of the northern part of SLAA-2-23-C from High sensitivity to Moderate and the conclusions that its landscape character is not 'especially distinct' for the following reasons:
- The area forms part of the lower slopes of a distinctive ridge which is a key landscape feature of the area with a gently undulating topography, sloping down to the watercourse valley.
 - This area was historically linked with the landscape to the south, forming part of the a historic park on the Hampshire Historic Parks and Gardens register and described as follows “*Deer park referred to as Stoke Wood; used as a hunting ground by King John 1205; wood has changed little in size since medieval times; impark 1242 for Bishop of Winchester; woodland walks; managed by Forestry Commission.*”. This historic park contributes to the strong sense of history of the area.
 - The attractiveness of the landscape of the area is noted in The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment which states under Landscape Character Sensitivity:
 - *Overall it is an attractive landscape with Stoke Park Woods and the sub area (7a) providing distinctive features that have amenity and wildlife value.*
 - *Contained within the area is a very distinctive parkland landscape.*
 - The area is away from the settlement edges and has a strong rural character,

sense of remoteness and tranquillity forming part of extensive area of good quality landscape. The adjacent and nearby Stoke Park Wood and Upperbarn Copse provide strong containment to the surrounding urban areas. A good sense of enclosure is provided by the surrounding strong woodland and hedgerow pattern contrasting with the openness experienced in the larger fields and from elevated ground.

- The area is crossed and bound by public rights of way which form part of an extensive well-used network, providing opportunities for quiet recreation within easy reach of the nearby built up areas.
- The area is visible in views from public rights of way along elevated ground around Upper Barn Copse where there are long views across open countryside towards Colden Common. In these views the area is seen within a wider rural context where there is limited influence of built form.
- The area is also visible in views from the north (including from Colden Common) across to Stoke Park Wood on elevated ground which forms a prominent skyline. Although the area is partially screened in these views by intervening vegetation the area can be appreciated forming part of the wider landscape, notably part of the lower slopes of the distinctive ridge with a gently undulating topography sloping down to the watercourse valley.
- The Landscape and Visual Baseline Report (LVBR) produced in October 2017 by Deacon Design for the proposed Fair Oak North development identifies the area of high landscape sensitivity. The area falls within Area B of this study. Within Area B this assessment identifies: *there are pockets of high sensitivity in the western part of the area (higher elevation and along the northern site boundary)*. This description appears to refer to the area of SLAA-2-23-C.

Conclusion

- 1.9. In conclusion we consider for the reasons noted above that the original assessment of northern part of SLAA-2-23-C as **High sensitivity** in EBC's April 2017 version of the 'Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal of Sites being considered for Strategic Development as part of the EBLP 2011-2036' is more accurate.