

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE:

### Coastal Plain Enclosed

Found parallel and inland along the length of Hampshire's coast. Less prevalent than Coastal Plain Open. More extensive in less developed areas such as south of the New Forest.



### SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT AND BOROUGH LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

<b>Basingstoke:</b>	n/a
<b>East Hampshire</b>	n/a
<b>Eastleigh</b>	Wooded Coastal Plain; Parkland Coastal Plain; Coastal Heathland; and Wetland.
<b>Fareham</b>	Wooded Valley Heath Associated; Enclosed Coastal Amenity Land; Open Coastal plain: Strong Structure.
<b>Gosport</b>	The Alver Valley, 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Harbour Defence
<b>Hart</b>	n/a
<b>Havant</b>	Enclosed Lower Harbour Plain
<b>New Forest</b>	Costal Plain Estates – Small Parliamentary Enclosures, Coastal Plain Estates – Large Informal Enclosures. (not strongly correlated with District classifications)
<b>Rushmoor</b>	n/a
<b>Test Valley</b>	n/a
<b>Winchester</b>	n/a

### SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES IN NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY ASSESSMENTS

<b>Dorset</b>	
<b>West Berkshire</b>	n/a
<b>West Sussex</b>	Coastal Harbour Peninsulas (enclosed and open not differentiated)
<b>Wiltshire</b>	n/a

## KEY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS AND BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

- Incised by streams but generally relatively flat and sloping north to south with deep rich silty soils overlying gravels.
- Variable field size but mainly medium to large arable and market gardening with more pasture than Coastal Plain Open and a strong framework of trees and woodland.
- Diverse woodland types, and wet fen and marsh as well as more acidic habitats.
- Associated with stream valleys.
- Most prevalent on the New Forest Coastal Plain and associated with thick treed hedges and small to medium size fields.
- Archaeology tends to be similar to the Coastal Plain Open. Exploitation was varied in intensity and generally little evidence of ancient field systems but favoured for grazing.
- The wooded stream valley settings and wooded less agricultural areas with which this landscape is associated with provide a more semi natural feel than the Coastal Plain Open.
- Views bounded by thick hedgerows and small woodlands create intimacy and refuge from more extreme coastal weather.

## PHYSICAL

### GEOLOGY, LANDFORM, ELEVATION:

**Bedrock and Superficial Geology:** The bedrock occurs in narrow bands in the central southern Hampshire coastal plain, with London Clay furthest north, followed by sandstone formations such as Wittering, Earnley sand and Selsey sand. The New Forest Coastal plain landscapes are almost continuous Headon Beds formation.

The River Terrace Deposit superficial geology is widespread and very influential in determining land use, as it supports very high quality agricultural soils. The further west this type occurs the more gravelly the deposits and the more pressure for mineral extraction.

**Landform and Elevation:** Gently undulating and sloping plain landscape, which is more incised by rivers and wooded stream valleys than the Coastal Plain Open type. Less than 30m AOD and typically 15m and below. Towards the east of the county the slope becomes imperceptible and very low lying at Hayling Island the landscape is flat and less than 5m AOD.

### SOILS TYPES:

**Typical soil type pattern:** Generally deep stoneless silty, well drained soils over gravel. 57Is and z, predominantly in the west and 841e more common in the eastern coastal plain landscapes. The latter tends to be a deeper loamy soil.

### FUNCTIONS:

**Hydrological function:** Soils often affected by groundwater from chalk aquifers. This LCT is often located over minor groundwater protection zones.

**Food and Biomass:** Often high grade agricultural land; 1 and 2. The area is regarded as being nationally important for its agricultural soils. Other areas are more suitable for biomass and short rotation crops which have lower grade soils.

**Biodiversity potential:** There is occasional heathland creation opportunity, but little or no ancient woodland reversion opportunity and no chalk grassland creation opportunities.

**LANDCOVER AND LAND USE PATTERN:**

The medium to large mainly arable improved grassland fields are defined by a strong framework of woodlands, which include a mixture of coniferous and mixed plantations, poplar belts and semi natural ancient woodlands. There would appear to be a greater proportion of improved grassland and less arable land use in this type compared with the Coastal Plain Open type. This reflects the greater presence of amenity open space and the presence of 'back up' grazing land south and east of the New Forest. The field size south of the New Forest is very variable from 3 to 15ha, but in other areas of south Hampshire the range and average size is much smaller; typically between 1.5 and 7ha.

**HYDROLOGY:** Strong association with small wooded river valleys, where land is less well drained and more difficult to farm. Slightly more susceptible to sea level rise and more vulnerable to seasonal fluvial flooding than Coastal Plain Open type.

**EXPERIENTIAL****ACCESS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES:**

The smaller settlements are typically linked by minor roads and lanes. There are no bridleways in this type and the footpath network is not particularly dense and relies on the minor road network for connectivity. Designed parks and gardens are also characteristic. There are numerous countryside service access sites which allow multi user access.

**TRANQUILLITY:**

Not identified as being particularly tranquil apart from where this type occurs in the Chilling and Brownwich area and where it occurs south of Beaulieu Heath. No discernable correlation with open and enclosed type and the CPRE tranquillity mapping.

**BIODIVERSITY**

Agricultural land consists of arable land and improved grassland, with habitats tending to be concentrated at field boundaries and margins. Within this agricultural landscape, there are mosaics of species rich habitats which may indicate areas of less fertile soils. The character of these habitat mosaics varies and includes unimproved neutral grasslands, dry acid grasslands and dry heaths. Heath associated habitats are often fragmented but provide valuable habitat variation within this agricultural landscape. Other habitat mosaics differ and comprise wetter habitats, such as wet heaths, small acid fens/ flushes and freshwater marshy grasslands: streams and ponds exist within this type and the shores of these tend to support habitats including tall marginal vegetation and occasional base rich fens. There is a limited coastal influence associated with this type with occasional patches of coastal grazing marsh adjacent to the River Hamble's lower reaches.

Woodland cover is relatively high in the Coastal Plain Enclosed landscape character type and is diverse in composition. It is predominantly broadleaved but there are coniferous plantations, mixed woodlands, scattered trees over woodland (possibly old wood pastures), some active coppice with standards as well as forestry scrub and scattered scrub. There are occasional patches of ancient and semi-natural woodland in the landscape, along with some replanted ancient and semi-natural woodlands. Ancient and semi-natural woodlands tend to support a more diverse range of habitats and associated species in comparison with more recently planted woodlands. In this landscape character type, hedgerows tend to be limited, with occasional exceptions notably, there is much less woodland cover associated with increased hedgerow cover.

Two BOAs exist within this landscape character type:

The Solent BOA identifies opportunities for coastal grazing marsh and coastal saltmarsh habitat creation and enhancement. Chichester/Langstone Harbours and Hayling Island BOA identifies opportunities for coastal grazing marsh, purple moor grass and rush pastures, and coastal saltmarsh habitat creation and enhancement.

This landscape character type provides limited opportunity for heathland habitat creation: the greatest potential exists on sites located near to the mouth of Southampton Waters and west of Gosport.

## **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT** *(leave to Historic. Specialist)*

### **ARCHAEOLOGY**

Review of the archaeological evidence does not generally suggest a difference in the archaeological record between open and enclosed coastal plain.

There does appear to be a presence in the coastal plain in the Mesolithic, but it must be borne in mind that the present coast was not the coastline for earlier parts of the Mesolithic. In particular Portsmouth and Langstone Harbours seem to be relatively rich in evidence around the fringes, and in Langstone Harbour the record is clearer due to intensive survey and lower modern development. A similar picture emerges in the Neolithic. In the Bronze Age some, limited, evidence of settlement emerged. Langstone Harbour is well studied and shows activity around the harbour edge, and it is likely that the coastal plain was used for grazing. For example on the New Forest Solent shore it seems likely that there was some form of transhumance between the coastal plain and the interior of the forest. This continued into the Iron age and it is noticeable that there is an absence of field systems and enclosures, which seems to suggest that the coastal plain, whilst exploited and settled to some degree, is not fully settled or absolutely intensively exploited.

In the Roman period there were areas of more intense activity. These are where the Roman roads touch coastal locations, such as Stone Point, Portchester and Hayling island. Hayling island has both a villa and a temple site. (also Warblington villa, which is on the coastal east west road close to the head of the harbour and may well have had a coastal link). But the overall level of occupation and exploitation seems lower on the coastal plain. It is interesting to note the Roman settlements occur at the highest navigable points of significant rivers rather than on the coast.

### **HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

There is a wide range of fields of different enclosure origin. In the Eastern Solent the enclosure pattern has changed quite dramatically since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century –through field enlargement and encroachment by development especially post WW2. Some of the field boundaries are remnant early regular enclosures around the non developed small villages. Early informal enclosures are best conserved on the New Forest coast between Lymington and Calshot where there this landscape type pervades. The term open is used to describe the sense of openness and expansiveness rather than in respect to the process of field enclosure.

### **HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Settlement types by form:**

This coastal plain type occurs in more remote and less developed areas. There is also an association with this landscape type and the presence of estate landscapes of the New Forest.

The district divides this into coastal plain estates with small parliamentary enclosures and large informal enclosures but they share similar sense of enclosure by thick hedgerow and woodland.

**Building materials and type;**

The coastal plain has some good examples of Victorian and Arts and Crafts villas which overlook the coast. There are large individual detached houses associated with estates on the New Forest coast. Brick is the traditional building material with some use of flint adjacent to Eastern Solent examples. Yellow brick is a particularly distinctive feature on the South East New Forest Coast

## VISIBILITY

**Prominency:** The landscape is lower lying than land to the north and there are very few high spots to obtain vantage points within the type.

**Enclosure:** Despite the degree of enclosure within much of this landscape, the presence of windswept oaks, hedges, shelterbelts and woodland allow occasional glimpses of the Isle of Wight. It follows that the seaward fringes are very visible from the Solent.

**Public perceptions:** Close to major centres of population and therefore experienced by many local people and visitors travelling in the coastal plain, important in providing the sense of visual separation between development and sense of ruralness. A significant visual amenity particularly for those in high rise development particularly where this type abuts large settlements.