

Area 5: Itchen Valley Sports Pitches



Description

- 4.65 It is a flat landscape lying on a gravel terrace and is divided by prominent tree belts of poplars, pine and native species. The land use is predominantly recreational with many sports pitches joined together in groups enclosed by rows of trees.
- 4.66 In the north, Monks Brook runs through Fleming Park, a series of sports pitches, informal open space and leisure facilities. The large area of informal open space to the west of the more formal Fleming Park leisure facilities used to be a golf course which was closed in 2009. Although some work has been done to alter this space, the majority of the sand bunkers and tree belts associated with the golf course still remain. Monks Brook continues south, towards the M27 motorway, past Lakeside Country Park. This popular country park has a contrasting landscape of lakes and planting bands, breaking up the wide views from the south end of Eastleigh. Below Lakeside are the Southampton University playing fields and a sports centre with gravelled car park. These leisure uses front onto Wide Lane, the main thoroughfare into Eastleigh from the south. The main railway line and Southampton Airport are located directly opposite, on the other side of Wide Lane.
- 4.67 In the south, the influence of the M27 is conspicuous over a wide area. Maturing planting is present to help mitigate the motorway's intrusive effects, although recent Highway Agency works around Junction 5 have reduced the level of tree screening.
- 4.68 The area of land around the motorway junction is predominantly used for formal recreation, with associated lighting, equipment, structures and car parking. The highway planting and linear tree belts in the southern part of the character area act to divide up the generally open landscape.

Historic Features

- 4.69 This landscape character area comprises a small section of the North Stoneham historic park in the south above the motorway, which is listed on the Hampshire Historic Parks and Gardens. The majority of this historic parkland is found in landscape character area 6 (North Stoneham Park).

HCC Historic Landscape Types:

- 4.70 Historic landscapes types in this area are:
- 9.6 Post 1810 settlement (general)
 - 11.3 Major sports fields and complexes

Ecological Features

- 4.71 Monks Brooks is an historic stream which has suffered from considerable intervention over time. At present it does not offer significant ecological value, although it is protected because of its role as a tributary to the River Itchen. The

brook runs through Fleming Park, which provides the right conditions to sustain associated wet woodlands

4.72 The land around Monks Brook provides a green corridor linking Fleming Park and the countryside south of Eastleigh. Lakeside Country Park provides a range of habitats, including unimproved grassland. This is of particular importance for protected Slow worm populations.

Key Characteristics

4.73 The key characteristics for this area are:

- Open recreation areas
- The stream corridor through the area and the lakes at Lakeside Country Park
- Enclosure provided by treebelts
- Influence of urban edges and M27 motorway

Landscape Types

4.74 Landscape types as set out in the Hampshire County Council Integrated Character Assessment 2011 for this area are:

- Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated

Landscape Character Sensitivity

4.75 The existing developments in the area have largely been mitigated through buffer planting. The loss of this planting would increase the prominence of the man-made structures. Further development or intensification of uses would lead to further fragmentation of the open landscape character.



Figure 10. View of Lakeside Country Park panorama



Figure 11. Monks Brooks

- 4.76 The area has no special landscape features; it is of high amenity value and has low to moderate wildlife value.

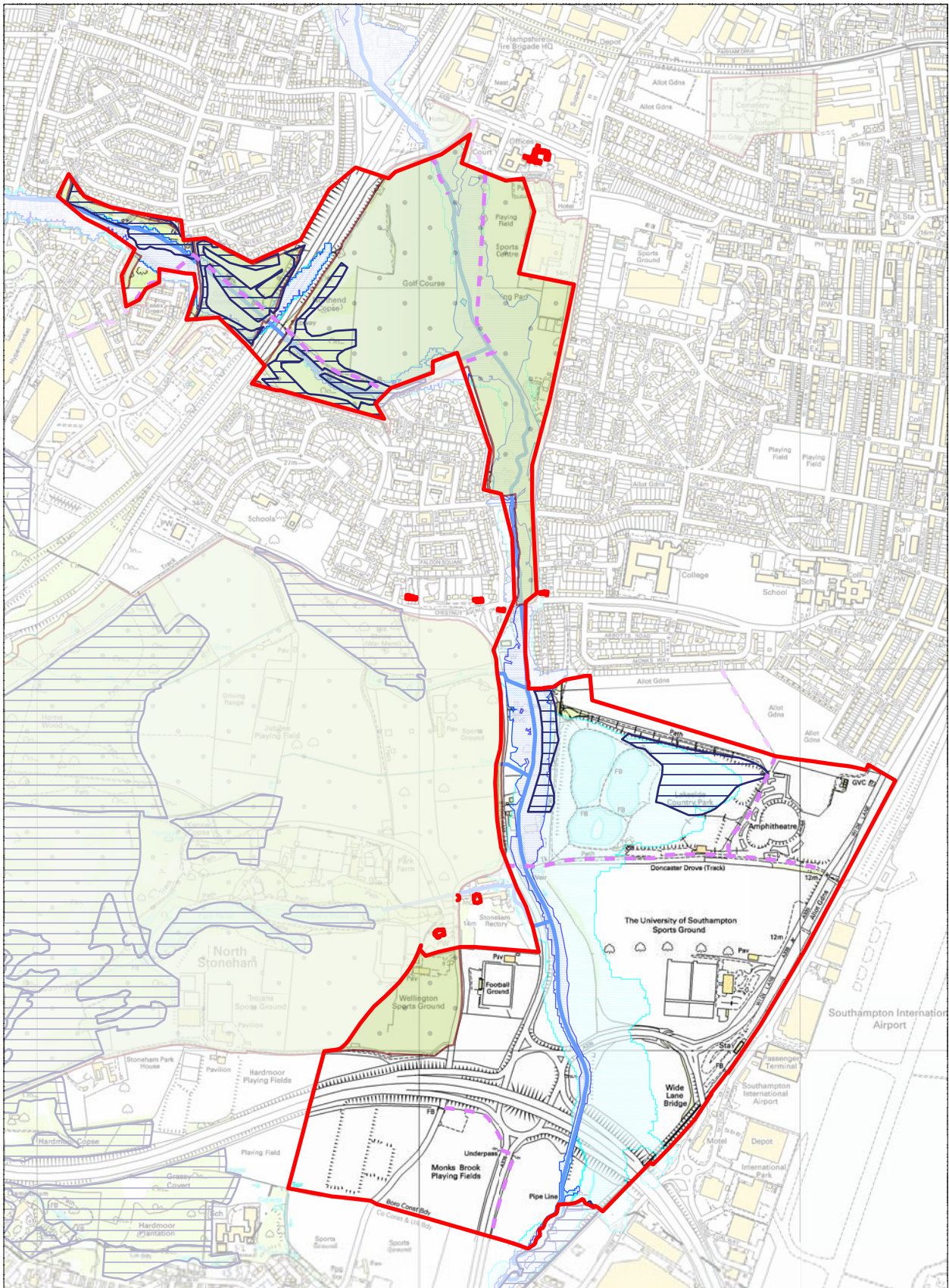
Visual Sensitivity

- 4.77 Generally open areas enclosed by vegetation limit the overall visibility throughout the character area.

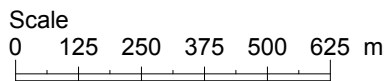


Figure 10. View of Lakeside Country Park panorama















Designations and Constraints



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Key for Designation & Constraints:

	Character Area Boundary		Main River
	Area designated Ramsar, SPA* & SSSI Area		Floodzone 2
	SAC - Special Area of Conservation		Floodzone 3
	SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest		Right of Way
	SINC - Site of Important Nature Conservation		
	LNR - Local Nature Reserve		
	Historic Parks and Gardens		
	Conservation Area		
	Scheduled Ancient Monument		
	Listed Building		

*SPA - Special Protection Area



Figure 12. View looking north on Fleming Park



Figure 13. University Playing Fields panorama

Key Issues

4.78 The key issues for this area are:

- Monks Brook has historically been managed for its ability to discharge water downstream. This narrow vision has limited opportunities for ecological improvements.
- The integration of the former Golf course into Fleming Park and its future purpose.
- The protection of the narrow green corridor running between the Aviary Estate and the area to the east of Passfield Avenue, for wildlife value and pedestrian and cycle access.
- Significant pressure for future development to the south of Eastleigh, south of Chestnut Avenue, west of Stoneham Lane as identified in the draft Local Plan proposals
- Management of Lakeside Country Park.
- Intensification of uses, e.g. development of sports facilities, leading to the introduction of lighting, structures and car parks.
- The presence of floodlights associated with the playing fields, car parks, motorway and airport in the southern part of the character area cause significant light pollution and heighten the visibility of these facilities.
- The temporary nature of the tree screening on highway land.



Figure 13. University Playing Fields panorama