

Countryside and Environment
Working Group

Upper Clatford Parish Council

Neighbourhood
Development Plan –
Evidence Document

The Local Gap

UC10 – The Local Gap

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UC10 The Local Gap¹

UC 10.1 Introduction

Andover is separated from a number of small rural communities by relatively narrow areas of countryside; section E3 of the Local Plan defines some of these narrow areas and the protections afforded to them. This chapter will attempt to supplement this information by describing the attributes of our Local Gap (the 'Gap') and providing an analysis of why these attributes are worthy of protection.

UC10.2 Community Evidence

Analysis of our community NDP survey shows that 87% of Parish respondents rated the Gap as very important or fairly important. 25 comments were submitted that endorsed the purpose of the Gap whereas only one comment questioned its value. Comments typically referred to separation from Andover rather than between settlements within the Parish, an example being "it is important that Upper Clatford retains its individual identity, physically separate from the town of Andover".

The comments also suggest that the Gap is important both visually to retain the character of the villages but also practically to preserve the rich habitat that accommodates a variety of species.

There is an overwhelming sense amongst respondents that protection of the Local Gap is essential to ensure that the Parish settlements remain separate, particularly from Andover, and to maintain the settlement identities. Residents returned a near unanimous articulation that the benefits of village life will be eroded if the Local Gap is not maintained.

UC10.3 Description

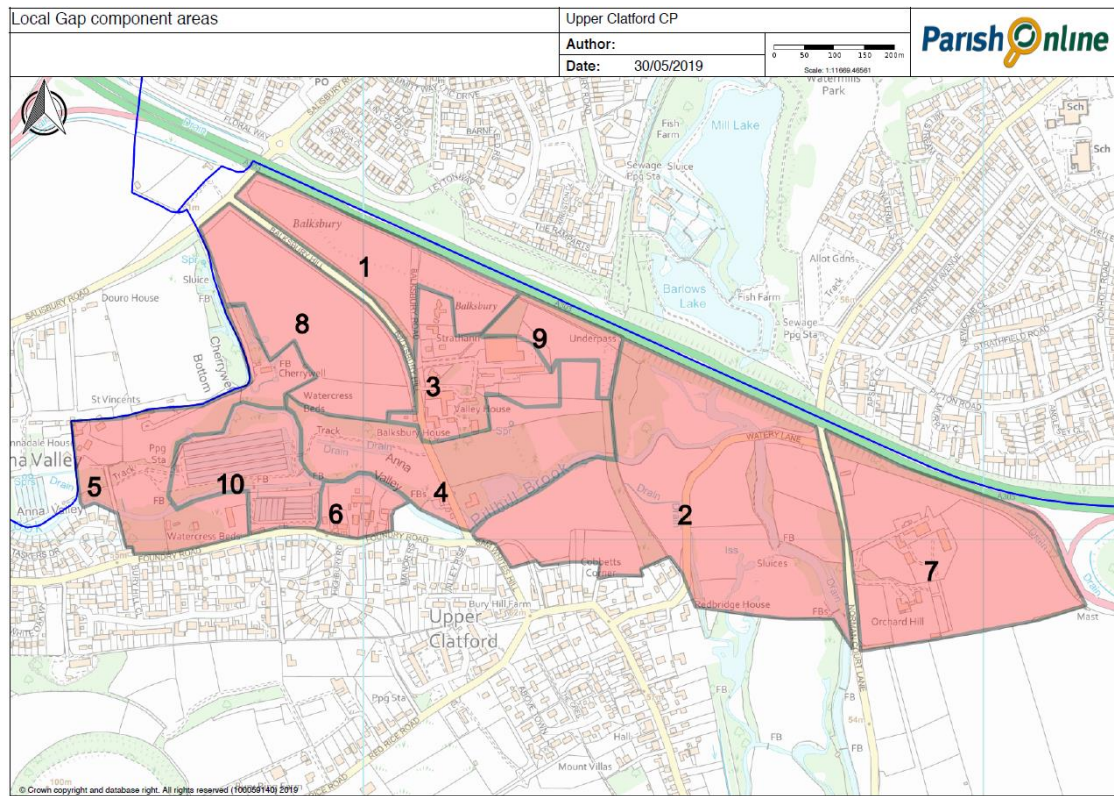
The designated Gap primarily provides separation between Andover² and the settlements of Upper Clatford and Anna Valley. No designated Gap exists around Red Rice. Upper Clatford and Anna Valley are largely co-joined though modest areas exist that provide some sense of separation. Views within and through the Gap are numerous and public access is provided via Balksbury Hill, Watery Lane, Norman Court Lane and a footpath (all of which pass through the Gap).

Land within the Gap varies in type but is mainly open countryside, water meadow, streams and wooded areas. There are also Sites of Important Nature Conservation (SINCs)³, a playing field and a scheduled monument. A small number of residential properties and business premises exist, particularly in the former farm complex buildings of Balksbury Business Park and Era Park. The Gap can be divided into differing areas as seen in the map below. Each has its own unique characteristics.

¹ All photographs have been taken by John Baxter and Rob Hall who have granted permission to use them in the NDP

² TVBC Local Plan, Inset Map 11

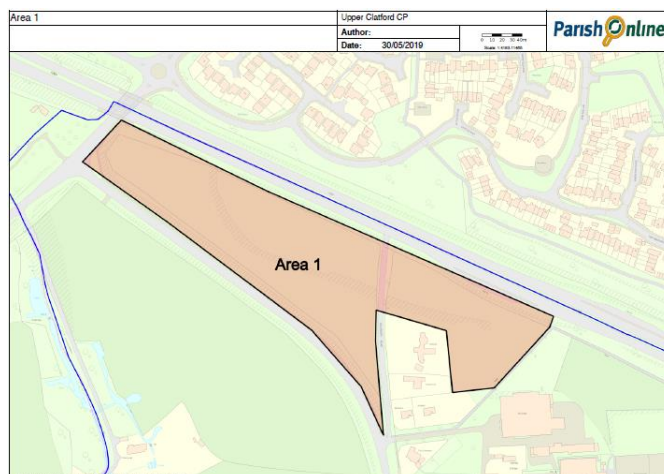
³ Refer to chapter UC12



Map 1: Local Gap component areas

Proposal: the composition of the Gap is a mosaic of different land types rather than a single narrow strip of countryside. Alongside the requirements of the Local Plan, the additional criteria as laid out below must be satisfied dependent upon location within the Gap.

UC10.4 Balksbury Camp



Much of the Iron Age hill fort of Balksbury Camp gave way to the A303 and housing provision within Andover. The southernmost portion of Balksbury hill fort, to the south of the A303 and within the Gap (area 1), survives well despite some later disturbance, and will contain further archaeological remains and environmental evidence relating to the construction and use of the monument⁴.

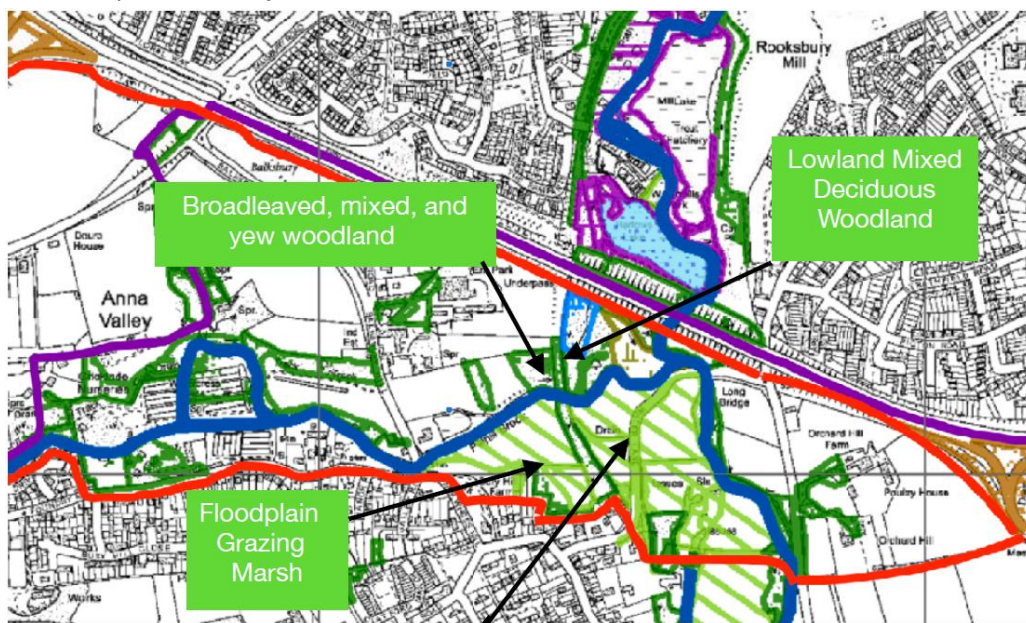
Map 2: Component Area 1 - Balksbury Camp

⁴ Historic England listing 1018562

Proposal: to protect the landscape setting and remnants of historic features, development of any kind is unacceptable in this location. Furthermore, development in this elevated position would be visible from higher elevations towards the southern settlement boundary and would erode the physical separation from Andover.

UC10.5 The floodplain

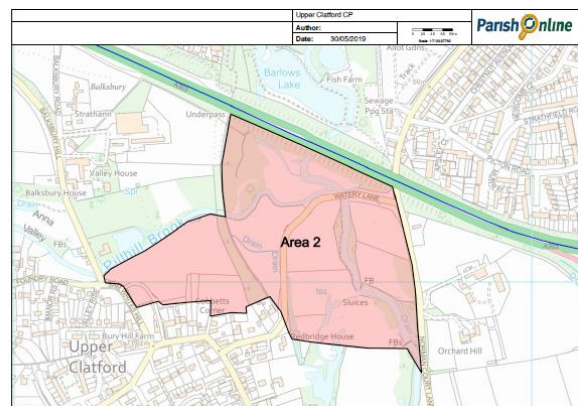
The map below⁵ shows 'priority habitat' within the Gap. Area 2 lies within the Pillhill Brook Valley Floor LCA, an ecologically-rich seam running through the more expansive arable landscapes to the north and south, and consists of mixed vegetation with undeveloped areas of woodland, scrub, pasture and marsh grassland. LCA management guidelines specific to this area include retaining undeveloped areas adjacent to the river⁶.



Map 3: Component Area 2 - Priority Habitats within the floodplain (HBIC)



Photo 1: Photo - Looking east from Watery Lane.



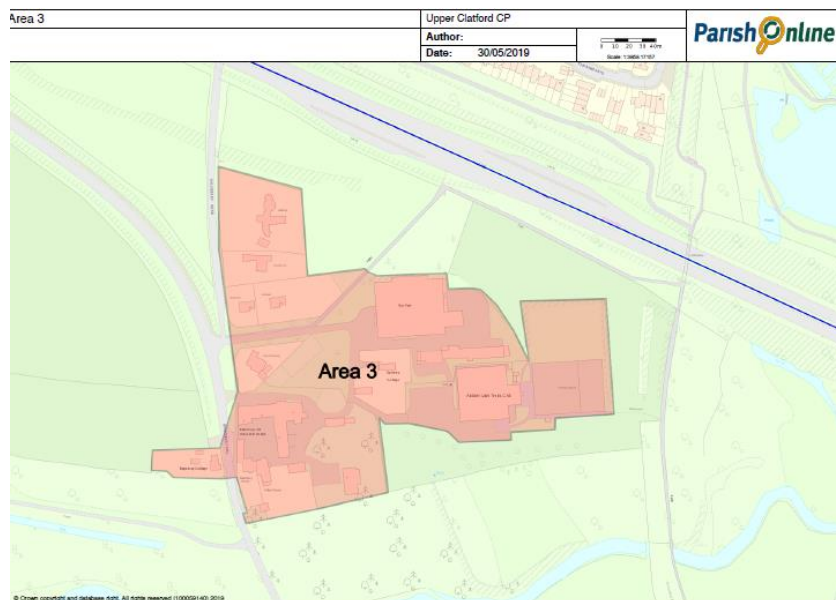
Map 4: Component Area 2 - The Floodplain

⁵ Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) 8174 with Gap boundary superimposed

⁶ LCA 5H.26

Proposal: no development should be permitted within this area in order to preserve the landscape character, visual separation to the north of the settlement and biodiversity. Area 2 is critical to the integrity of the Gap.

UC10.6 Balksbury Hill



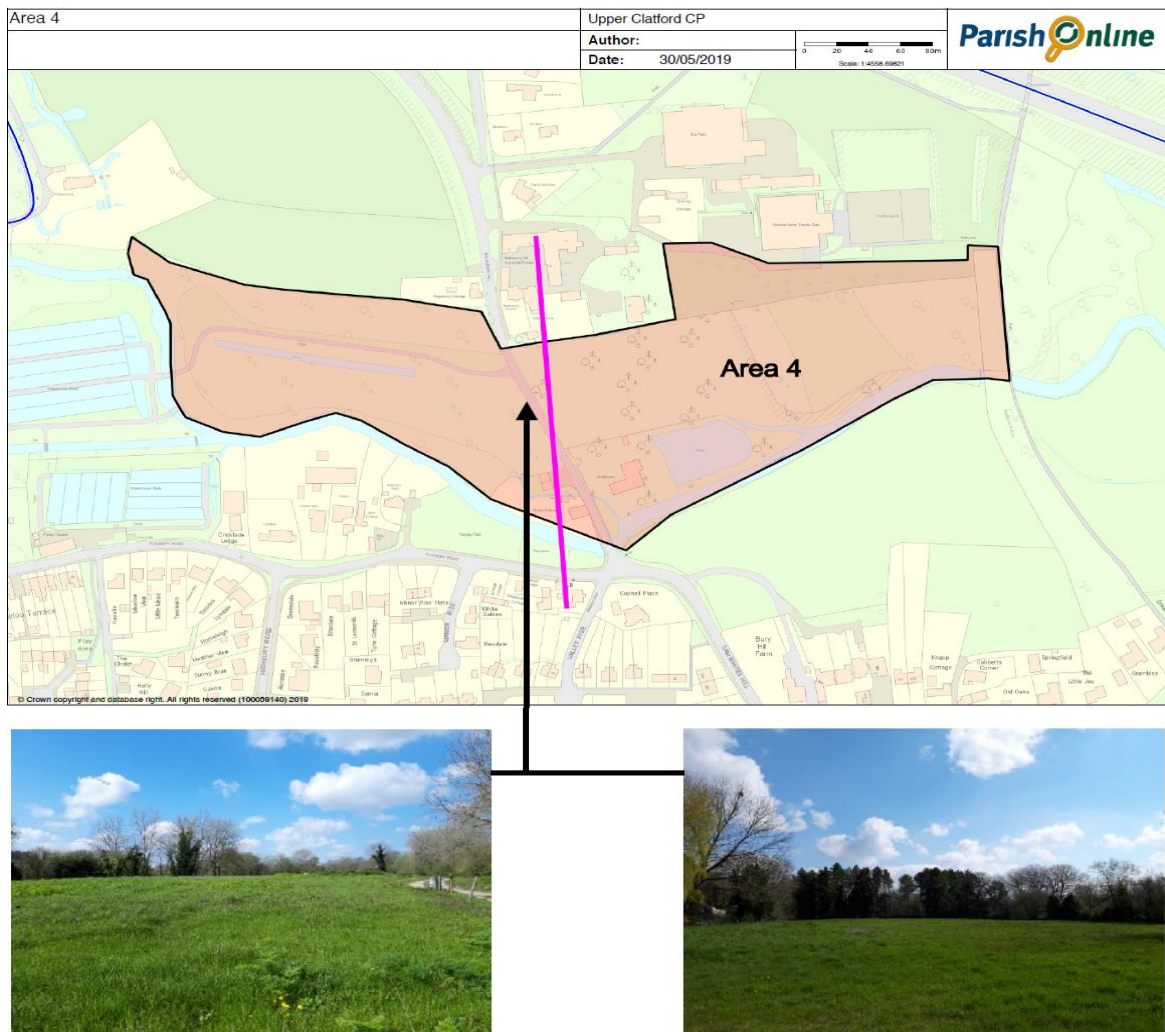
As this area has built environment considerations, it will be considered within the Built Environment Evidence Statement.

Map 5: Component Area 3 - Balksbury Hill

UC10.7 The 'physical' Gap

A section through the Gap, indicated by a magenta line on the map below, shows the vulnerability of the Gap to development within or upon the boundary of area 4. Starting from the south in the developed area of Upper Clatford, this line passes residential property to the immediate north of the Pillhill Brook and then crosses a short physical gap before meeting the developed areas of Balksbury Hill, the A303 and Andover.

Proposal: if the integrity of the Gap is to be maintained in accordance with community evidence, no development should be permitted within the open green or woodland space of area 4 and in accordance with guidelines presented in the Landscape Character Assessment document, which state “avoid use of valley floor for intrusive new infrastructure development” and “retain undeveloped areas adjacent the river”.



Map 6: Area 4 The "Physical" Gap and associated photographs

Area 4 is traversed in a mere 7 seconds by car and represents the only physical break in what would otherwise be near-uninterrupted development between the Upper Clatford settlement boundary and Andover; its integrity is therefore fundamental to the purpose of the Gap. Countryside views of the Gap exist both to the east and west from Bawksbury Hill, as seen above, contributing to the sense of separation between the Parish and Andover.

Numerous outbuildings, some in various states of disrepair as pictured below, exist within the Gap including within Bawksbury Hill and adjacent to the boundary of area 4. A trend has emerged with recent proposals to convert outbuildings to⁷ enlarged ancillary residential accommodation, potentially just one step away from fully autonomous dwellings; this 'staggered' development potentially creates (subject to planning permission⁸) a dwelling where none previously existed.

⁷ TVBC planning application 19/0131/FULLN

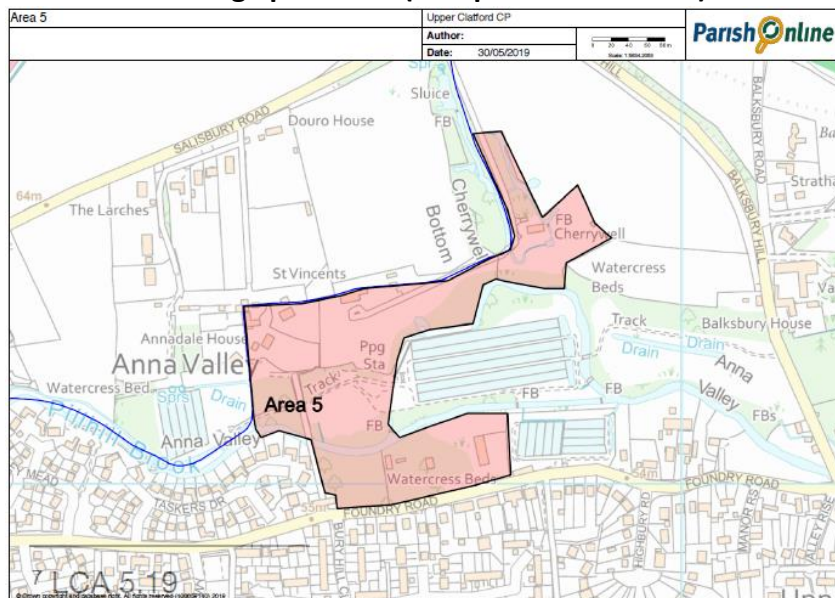
⁸ Subsequently permitted by TVBC Planning Department (23 April 2019), subject to conditions & notes.



Photo 2: Outbuildings within the Local Gap

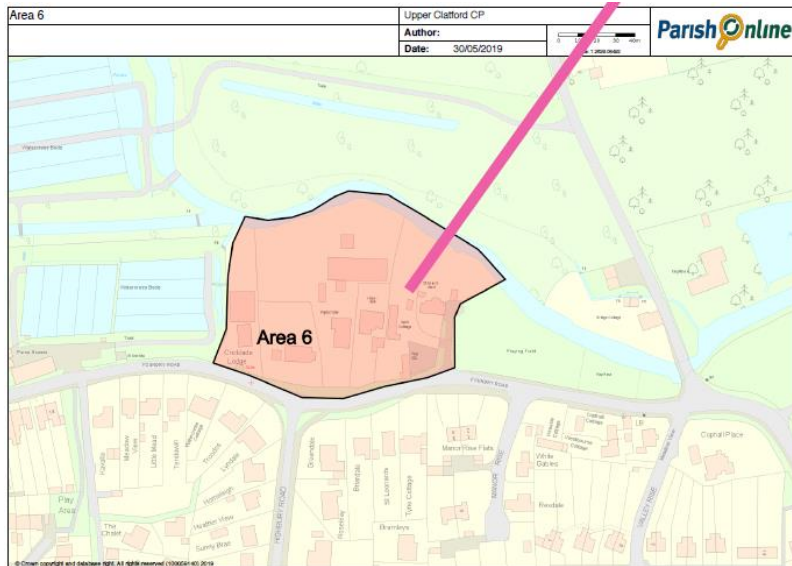
Proposal: in order to prevent urbanisation bordering this section of the Gap, a position of refusal should be applied to a change of use or further enlargement of development previously permitted under the provisions of RLP section COM11 (such as the creation of annexes or outbuildings), thus preventing the staged creation of a dwelling.

UC10.8 Remaining open areas (Component Areas 5-9) and existing sparsely developed areas



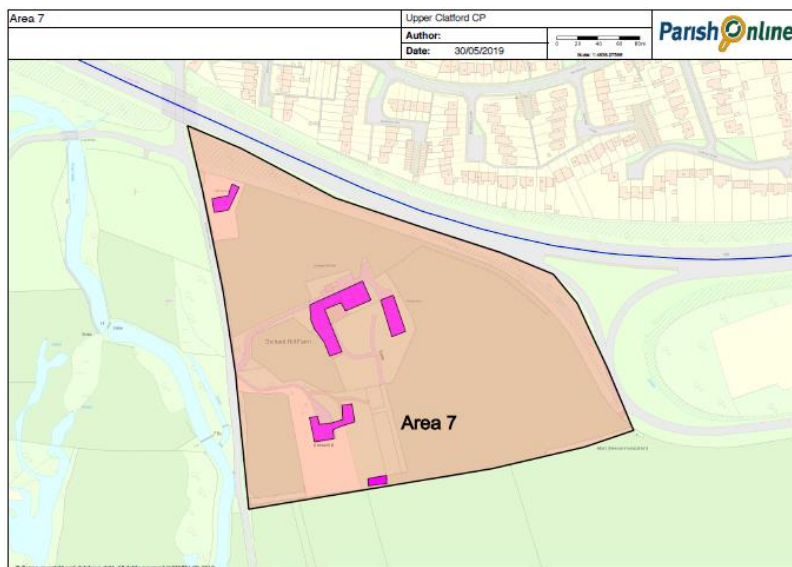
Map 7: Component Area 5 of the Local Gap

Areas 5-7 above show areas within the Gap that are already sparsely developed. The effect of further development differs between these areas. Area 5 is an important green space that warrants protection in accordance with LCA Land Management Guidelines to “protect and enhance the important green spaces around and within the settlement fringe and their contribution to green infrastructure, links with the wider countryside, nature conservation and the setting of settlement.”



Area 6 is anomalous in that a part falls within both the settlement boundary and the Gap. However, development in this area closes the remaining physical non-developed green space (once again depicted with a magenta line) and Gap policy will therefore take priority.

Map 8: Component Area 6 of the Local Gap



Development in area 7 would create a perception of the continuation of suburban Andover as one passes south below the A303, entirely contrary to the purpose of the Gap and community evidence of opposition to the southward sprawl of Andover. Existing buildings are shown in magenta. It is possible to refurbish or replace these without intensifying the amount of building.

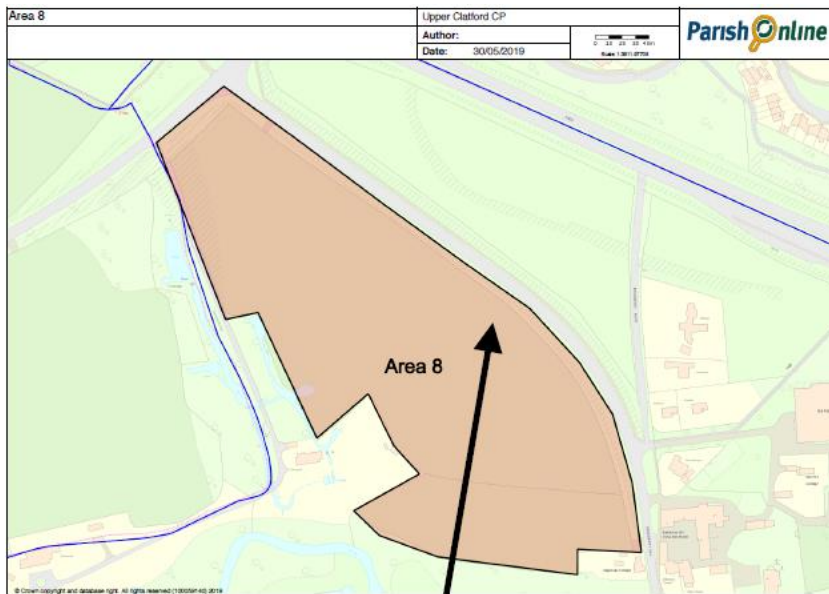
Map 9: Component Area 7 of the Local Gap

Proposal: in order to protect areas 5-7 against 'staggered' development, a position of refusal should be applied to a change of use or further enlargement of development previously permitted under the provisions of RLP section COM11 (such as the previous creation of annexes or outbuildings), thus preventing the staged creation of a dwelling.

Any redevelopment must maintain the green field aspect of surrounding land and adopt a cautious approach to building height in elevated positions such as area 7.

The following image of component area 8 demonstrates perfectly the purpose of the Gap. Traffic on the A303 with Andover beyond is within a short distance of the photographer; yet the image projects a rural tranquillity and a distinct separation between Andover and our settlements, the very

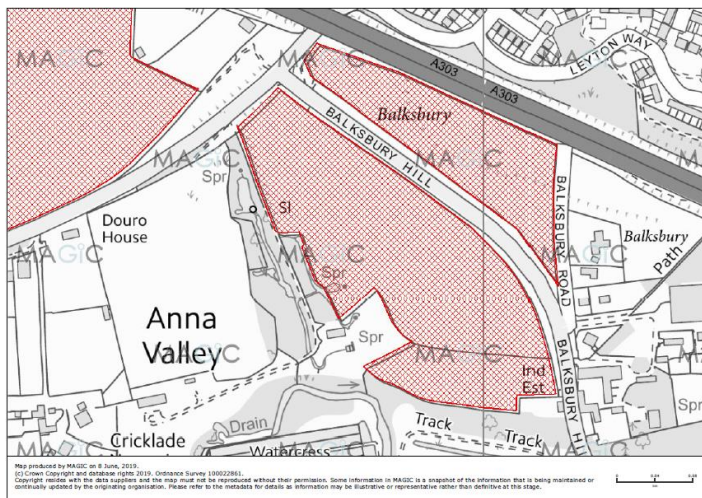
essence of the Local Gap. “Maintaining the Local Gap and the treasured and unique views in and around the Parish should be high priority in our NDP” was the comment from one resident.



Map 10: Component Area 8 of the Local Gap



Photo 3: Aerial photo of Component Area 8



Area 8 is also a designated Countryside Stewardship Middle Tier area⁹ (as in fact is area 1) as shown in red on the map below. This provides a range of options and capital items that together help to deliver a broad range of environmental benefits. The main priority is to protect and enhance the natural environment, in particular the diversity of wildlife and water quality.

Map 11: Designated Countryside Stewardship Middle Tier area in Component Area 8

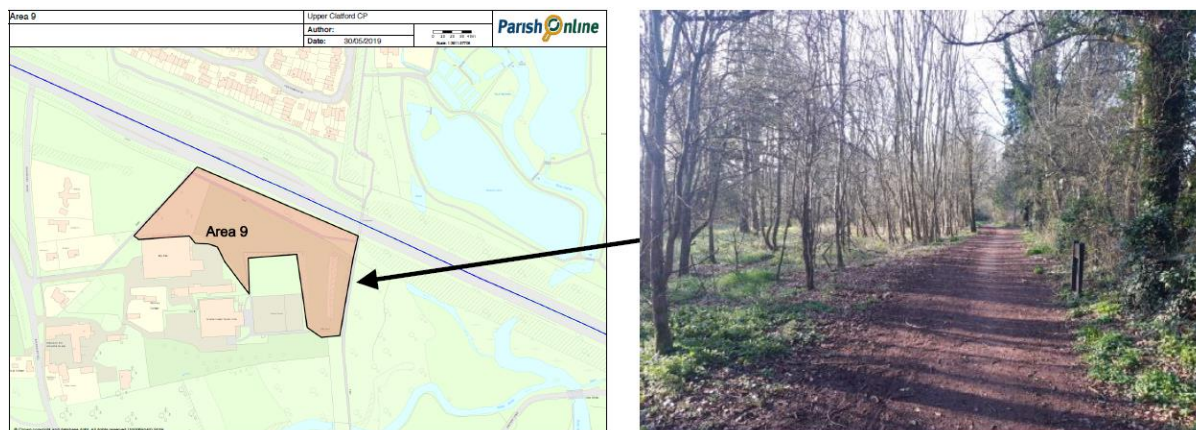
⁹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779225/CS_Mid_Tier_leaflet_v1_view_online.pdf

Wildlife and nature benefits include restoring habitats, providing food and nesting places, creating areas for rare flowering plants and managing hedges.

The scheme is competitive which means that all applications are scored against others. This is because applications are assessed to determine which ones offer the best results for the environment in the local area, and the best value for money.

Area 9 is an important buffer zone separating Balksbury Hill from the A303. The view from the public footpath, looking south, is shown. Further details of important views are provided in UC9 Landscape Views.



Map 12: Component Area 9 and associated photo of Cycle Track

Similar to area 7, development here would create a sense of settlement continuation walking through the underpass below the A303. An opportunity exists in this area to create additional woodland, fulfilling a Landscape Character Assessment aim to “encourage measures to reduce the visual impact of the existing roads.”

Proposal: if the integrity of the Gap is to be maintained in accordance with community evidence, no development should be permitted within or upon the boundary of areas 8 and 9 as depicted above.

UC10.9 SINC

Two SINC (TV0275 and TV0331) are located within the Local Gap. A further two (TV0299 and TV0599) and a Road Verge of Ecological Importance (RV149) border the Gap. **Area 10 is predominantly comprised of SINC TV0275, the Anna Valley watercress beds. Further details are contained within chapter UC12.**

These non-statutory designated sites are analysed in **UC12 SINC**.

Trees and potential wildlife habitat are considered in **UC8 Landscape Character**.

UC10.10 Summary

The Local Gap is highly valued by residents and is essential for developed separation from Andover. No new building should be permitted on existing Local Gap land that is free from existing buildings. Renewal of current buildings must be contained to their existing curtilage. Criteria for confirming the impact upon the Gap should include intended versus current usage.



Photo 4: Aerial view across the Local Gap towards the Upper Clatford and Anna Valley Settlement Boundary, with Balksbury Park light industrial and residential area to the top left.