

Part Three

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Introduction

3.1 The descriptions of the Mid Sussex landscape in the District Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy were based on the three National Character Areas in the District. The more detailed Landscape Character Areas devised in this Assessment fit within the national Character Areas and their extent is discussed below.

3.2 As noted earlier, the landscape of Mid Sussex District comprises a striking series of landforms strongly shaped by geology, running across the district in parallel bands. This pattern is reflected closely in the boundaries of the ten **Landscape Character Areas** defined in the District:

1. **Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs**
2. **Fulking to Clayton Scarp**
3. **Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes**
4. **Hickstead Low Weald**
5. **Upper Adur Valley**
6. **High Weald**
7. **High Weald Plateau**
8. **Worth Forest**
9. **Ouse Valley**
10. **High Weald Fringes**

3.3 The profile of the Landscape Character Areas description is as follows:

CHARACTERISATION

Key characteristics: a summary of character.

Description and experience of the landscape: a general analytical description to evoke the character and special qualities of the area.

Biodiversity: a summary of biodiversity and principal habitats.

Historic features: summary of the historic landscape and visible features.

Settlement form and local distinctiveness: a description of the settlement pattern, building styles and materials and important buildings.

EVALUATION

Change - key issues: summary of local forces for change.

Landscape and visual sensitivities: aspects of the landscape vulnerable to change.

MANAGEMENT

Management Objective: the main focus of land management actions.

Land Management Guidelines: character area-based guidelines for instituting actions to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape.

Appendix 4 describes cultural perceptions of the South Downs and High Weald from the 18th Century to the present.

The Landscape Character Areas are shown on the 1:50,000 A1 Map included with the Assessment.

3.4 It is important to note that the boundaries between Landscape Character Areas do not always signal an abrupt change of character. In contrast with the seemingly accurately-defined lines on the map, the character of an area will be likely

to be transitional at the edges, as one distinctive landscape merges with another, as part of the landscape continuum across the District.

Extent of the character areas

3.5 The Landscape Character Areas in the District are ranked by size as follows:

<i>Landscape Character Area</i>	<i>Hectares</i>
High Weald	11,408
High Weald Fringes	5,401
Hickstead Low Weald	4,336
Ouse Valley	3,635
Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes	2,899
Worth Forest	2,090
Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs	1,498
High Weald Plateau	1,458
Fulking to Clayton Scarp	412
Upper Adur Valley	268

Total **33,405**

The *High Weald* Landscape Character Area (Area 6) is by far the biggest in the District.

3.5 The corresponding extent of the three national Character Areas in the District ranked by size is therefore as follows:

High Weald	23,992
Low Weald	7,503
South Downs	1,910

Total **33,405**

The High Weald is by far the largest national Character Area in the District.