

Appendix 4

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

Introduction

A4.1 As noted in the previous Appendix, many organisations, agencies and individuals are involved in conserving and shaping the landscape. There are great advantages in working in partnership, agreeing policies and priorities, and sharing resources. Everyone living and working in West Sussex is a potential contributor. For the purposes of compiling the Assessment, a wide-ranging group of stakeholders was given the opportunity to comment on the draft documentation. The full list of those invited is given at the end of the Appendix.

The Stakeholder Workshop

A4.2 All stakeholders were invited to a workshop to discuss the draft Assessment. The event was held on Thursday 8 September 2005 from 6.00pm to 9.00pm in the Martlets Hall, Burgess Hill. The stakeholders attending were:

Councillor Gill Balsdon	Mid Sussex District Council and Burgess Hill Town Council
Councillor Richard Bates	Mid Sussex District Council
Ken Boyle	Slaugham Parish Council
Kathleen Dumbovic	Mid Sussex District Council/Burgess Hill Town Council
Andy Gattiker	Sussex Downs Conservation Board
Councillor Ann Jones	Mid Sussex District Council
Councillor Graham Knight	Mid Sussex District Council
Ian Mc Kerchar	Arrow Residents' Association
Chris Maidment	Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council
Phil Mead	Hassocks Parish Council
Stuart Meier	Ashenground Residents' Association
Bruce Milton	Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team
Michael Nailard	Hurstpierpoint Parish Council/Sussex Biodiversity Steering Group
Michael Pryke	Hassocks Parish Council
Dr David Rudling	Centre for Continuing Education, Sussex University
Sally Walker	Sussex Gardens Trust
Sarah Witts	Friends of Ashenground Wood
Councillor James Worsley	Mid Sussex District Council
Pat Dalley	

Officers in attendance:

Lyndsey Beveridge	West Sussex CC Planning Services
Rupert Browning	Mid Sussex DC Estates Management
Ian Burton (<i>Chairman</i>)	Mid Sussex DC Outdoor Business (Environment)
Bob Connell	West Sussex CC Planning Services
Ann Griffiths	West Sussex CC Environment Group Leader
Joe Harries	Mid Sussex DC Estates Management (Landscape)
Judith Hewitt	Mid Sussex DC Planning Policy
Alma Howell	Mid Sussex DC Planning Policy
Charmaine Smith	West Sussex CC Environment Group (Landscape)
Esmond Turner	West Sussex CC Environment Group (Landscape)

A4.3 The Workshop began with an introduction by the chairman Ian Burton, who thanked the stakeholders for attending. He said that the Assessment was truly a joint effort by Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council staff as part of the *Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme*. He introduced Bob Connell as Project Manager, and Esmond Turner and Joe Harries as the principal landscape staff (thanks were also given to the contribution made by David Gray, a landscape architect with West Sussex County Council who led the fieldwork and had since left the authority). Ian outlined the reasons why the Assessment was thought necessary:

- input to the District Local Development Framework.
- input to the District community strategy and parish planning.
- to encourage land management practices which benefit landscape character.
- To put across the message about landscape character and its importance to quality of life in the District.

The Assessment will be published shortly and formally launched at a Conference concerning Landscape and Biodiversity in Mid Sussex District on 4 November 2005. The document would be widely disseminated thereafter in paper and electronic formats.

A4.4 Bob Connell introduced the workshop sessions of smaller groups, each of which was asked to discuss the following questions:

- (1) *Forces for change: what changes do you see in the Mid Sussex landscape? Which appear the most important to you and do you see these changes happening for the better or for the worse?*
- (2) *What do you think about the choice of Landscape Character Areas? Do they make sense to you?*
- (3) *What do you think of the content of the Assessment document? How do the descriptions of the Landscape Character Areas come across to you? Would you like any parts clarified or added to? Any presentation tips?*
- (4) *What do you think about the content and layout of the Land Management Guidelines Sheets? What map styles do you prefer?*
- (5) *How useful do you think the Assessment might be and to whom?*

The results of the group discussions and plenary points are summarised below and an indication given of whether they have been taken on board as amendments to the Assessment.

Stakeholder questions and responses

A4.5 These notes record the rich array of observations and comments made by stakeholders. In some cases, a brief comment has been added to clarify the points made. Many practical suggestions were forthcoming about the content and presentation of the Assessment. A commentary has been added stating how the local authorities have responded.

- (1) ***Forces for change: what changes do you see in the Mid Sussex landscape? Which appear the most important to you and do you see these changes happening for the better or for the worse?***

A4.6 The groups mentioned various anticipated future changes in the landscape, many of them perceived as negative, but some positive. All groups mentioned the deleterious effects on the countryside of increased traffic growth and many points made referred to various kinds of development pressure. The stakeholders considered that it will be important in using and up-dating the Assessment to continue to examine carefully the ramifications of forces for change. One stakeholder wondered a degree of countryside loss as a consequence of development should be accepted.

A4.7 The stakeholders posed the question: 'do we try to recapture previous landscapes or perpetuate what we've got now'? Or as one stakeholder put it, 'at

what point is the historic landscape to be preserved'? This is an important landscape issue, which is often debated professionally. The Assessment describes the landscape as it is now, considers forces for change and presents an evaluation and guidelines that seek to maintain the current landscape structure, accepting that change will continue and possibly be momentous as a result of climate change. In some cases (as on the downs), the guidelines support a degree of landscape change back to larger areas of open chalk grassland characteristic of the downland before the era of wartime ploughing. The restoration of heathland reflects a similar desire to restore landscapes and habitats which have been lost.

A4.8 The following specific points were made:

Agriculture

- Nature and intensity of farming is changing. Farming places pressures on the landscape – and farmers need to make a living.
- Farming community is more supportive of countryside and its users.
- Monoculture of crops will increase. Exotic crop species will be more common bringing new colours and textures to the landscape.
- The creation of bigger fields is still continuing in some areas.
- Excessive deep ploughing of chalk creates unsightly 'white' fields.
- Growth of 'horseculture' - can be unsightly.

Biodiversity

- A perception of more wildlife in some places [*this is not borne out generally by land use and habitat research in West Sussex*].

Development and roads

- Housing and infrastructure pressures will increase.
- Urban pressures on – and activities in - in the countryside. Government pressure for brownfield sites development could affect the countryside, as well as development permitted in the national interest.
- 'Urban creep' (new and expanded settlements encroaching on the countryside).
- Good development can confer positive contributions to the landscape.
- Development pressures should be equalised throughout areas, otherwise some places will grow disproportionately (for instance, Crawley).
- Recognise future development implications for amenity and recreation, for instance, possible airport expansion at Gatwick.
- Perception of more aircraft flying over the District.
- Increasing light and noise pollution from development and from highways and highways infrastructure (loss of tranquillity).
- Separation and isolation of land by development with access restricted or denied.
- Need for water and possible new reservoir.
- Waste and landfill sites needed.
- Congestion in urban areas and loss of open space, amenities and businesses due to 'town cramming'.
- Growth of telecommunications masts in the landscape – seen as detrimental.

Global warming

- Global warming will bring about many unforeseen changes including an adverse impact on the survival of native species.

Recreation

- Recreational economy will be great force for change – this must be recognised.
- Recreational pressures are changing and growing (for instance, four wheel-drive events).
- Green lanes should become recreational assets with no vehicles allowed.
- Changes in AONB boundaries will come about due to National Park designation.
- The public rights of way network is better signposted, looked after and used.

Woodlands and hedgerows

- Forestry Commission policies are important, especially with reference to ancient woodlands (the need to protect them).
- A perception that no new woodlands and hedgerows being planted and hedgerows renewed. *[not strictly true: there is much regenerating woodland in West Sussex].*
- Loss of black poplar trees is a problem in the District. *[a Habitat Action Plan (June 2005) for the renewal of Black Poplar has been prepared by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership].*
- Woodland coppicing is not presently economic but coppicing should return as a sound way of managing woodlands, enabling woodland repair and use.
- Management of woodland (for instance, coppicing) could have knock-on impacts on biodiversity.
- Different hedgerow management practices have come in, including flailing: this affects the health of hedges and specimen hedgerow trees are being lost, as are field trees.
- Hedgerows are getting taller because un-managed, restricting views and appearing too enclosing (this is not the same situation as in sunken lanes, where the enclosing effect is a part of the experience of the lane).

(2) What do you think about the choice of Landscape Character Areas? Do they make sense to you?

A4.9 The stakeholders were generally happy about the choice of areas, which made sense to them, subject to the comments below. No comments were received on the names chosen for the areas (but see para A3.11 below). The following specific points were made:

- A list of stakeholders and consultees would be useful. *[A list is now included in this Appendix].*
- Colour on A1 Map is needed to identify the landscape Character areas clearly including the clear definition of County and District boundaries. *[Done].*
- It is hard to distinguish the changes in landscape character 'on the ground' when moving from one area to another. *[Agree. This is a problem when any*

boundary is drawn. The text now refers to the need to recognise transitional zones between the areas].

- Explain the methodology used to select Landscape Character Area boundaries. *[This explanation is included in the text].*
- The choice of Landscape Character Areas based on geology and landform loses sight of the thin, linear parishes in the District which run north off the downs and cross different historic landscapes in the Low Weald. *[Agree. The importance of parish boundaries is now referred to in appropriate parts of the text].*

(3) What do you think of the content of the Assessment document? How do the descriptions of the Landscape Character Areas come across to you? Would you like any parts clarified or added to? Any presentation tips?

A4.10 The stakeholders were generally pleased with the style, content and readability of the document and easily identified the Landscape Character Areas. It should be forward-looking and capable of regular up-dating – the condition of the landscape does not stand still. We must ensure the importance of “ordinary” countryside is not lost sight of. For instance, the Low Weald should not be seen as second-rate or poor relation of other areas. The following specific points were made:

- Include a more informative section on the importance of geology in the formation of the District landscape showing the geology for each Landscape Character Area. A map of the geology in each Landscape Character Area would be useful.
- *[Agree. Additional information on the geological formation of the Weald and the District including a north-south geological section will be included. The Assessment will contain an A4 map of the simplified solid and drift geology of the District. To overlay the Landscape Character Area boundaries on this already complex map would be to complicate it further. The map can be looked at in relation to each Landscape Character Area and the geological description followed in the text].*
- Refer to management of remnant heathland. *[Done].*
- Make clear the relationship between national Character Areas and Landscape Character Areas. *[Done].*
- Historic parks and gardens are not given enough weight and inadequately represented. Historic parkland management should be referred to. Correct inaccuracies about the origins of Cuckfield Park and the Danny Estate.
[Corrections will be made and additional information included on parks and gardens based on material supplied by Sally Walker of the Sussex Gardens Trust].
- A thumbnail map at the beginning of each section of each Landscape Character Area in relation to the others would be useful. *[Done].*
- Add useful contacts eg DEFRA, Forestry Commission or have an accompanying sheet with the contacts on. *[It is considered that the Internet is a more useful source of information. Printed contact lists rapidly become out-of-date].*
- Pressures on water resources and on water drawn from Downs should be highlighted. There is no mention of future fuel resources and impact on the environment of harvesting these. *[Material will be added].*

- The document and sheets should identify what trees might be planted and where.

[A section on tree planting species appropriate to the national Character Areas in Mid Sussex District will be added. In due course the County Council will be producing a separate sheet outlining appropriate tree planting species for all national Character Areas in West Sussex].

- Mention current pressures on the Borough and District Councils to extend the urban footprint and ensure that strategic gaps are mentioned.

[The document will contain a note on future likely housebuilding levels in Mid Sussex and the extent and purpose of currently defined strategic gaps within and on the boundaries of the District].

- Recreational issues should be highlighted. Recreation and tourism – including forward-looking material - are not given full weight in the document and on the *Land Management Guidance* sheets. *[Material will be included in the document].*

A4.11 Further comments received from stakeholders after the Workshop included:

- The *Key Characteristics* panel is useful and would also benefit from a highlighted, brief summary. *[Done].*
- Incorrect material appears to have been included in the section on the historic landscape on formal parliamentary field enclosure in Mid Sussex.

[The material in the document on formal field enclosure taken from the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project notes the extent of formal field enclosure in the District but does not ascribe this to enclosure through Acts of Parliament. It refers instead to acts of private, formal enclosure by individual landowners. The document will contain a note making clear the mechanism for formal field enclosure in the rural parts of the District].

(4) What do you think about the content and layout of the Land Management Guidelines Sheets? What map styles do you prefer?

A4.12 The format of the *Land Management Guidelines* sheets was generally liked. The maps should not be too small to read. A consensus of stakeholders favoured the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey (OS) maps (for instance, maps should be detailed enough to show woodland boundaries) with the Landscape Character Area boundaries clearly defined. The *bullet point* approach and *line drawings* were liked. The following specific points were made:

- As in the document, a thumbnail map on each sheet of each Landscape Character Area in relation to the others would be useful.

[This is not thought to be necessary as the document provides the context. When all the sheets for West Sussex have been published, a key map to the areas will be provided].

- OS Landranger Sheet No. references would help in providing a mapped context for the sheets. *[Not thought necessary].*
- There was very little comment on the names of the chosen areas (although one participant suggested the name *East Adur Catchment* as a substitute for the Eastern Low Weald (*Land Management Guidelines* Sheet LW10)).

[The name was chosen to remain consistent with the names of other Low Weald sheets throughout West Sussex as a whole, since the sheets are based on a County-wide division. No change].

(5) How useful do you think the Assessment might be and to whom?

A4.13 As noted above, the landscape does not stand still. It is constantly changing. We should not allow ourselves merely to accept 'accidental change' but seek to manage the landscape positively in accordance with a shared set of objectives (see para A2.16 in **Appendix 2** regarding the inclusion of this important point in the District Council's Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy).

A4.14 The stakeholders made many useful comments, including the importance of 'selling' the landscape message to a variety of audiences in the right format, in view of the potential interest in the subject and its importance for decision-making. As one stakeholder put it, we need a 'sales pitch'. On promoting the Assessment, one stakeholder thought that every school and person in the District should be circulated with appropriate details! Whilst inevitably falling short of this aim, the Assessment should nevertheless be promoted vigorously.

A4.15 The Assessment should be a 'living document' and be up-dated and reviewed regularly as landscape change occurs. Information is also dynamic and new material is constantly coming to light. The most effective way of doing this – and reaching the widest audience - would be to publish the Assessment on the web. All audiences should be reached: the effort should be 'inclusive' allowing people to 'experience the landscape'.

Audiences

- Communities.
- County, District, Town and Parish Council members.
- Developers.
- Educational value.

Purpose

- The Assessment is a strong planning tool. Greater knowledge of landscape is needed to make decisions (some decision-makers lack the knowledge), especially where development touches on boundaries with other authorities. Wider consultation is needed on decision-making with regard to landscape and development.
- The Assessment informs decisions but it not itself policy. It is an evidence base for supporting policy and land management decisions.
- The Assessment will be useful in protecting features not statutorily protected and 'ordinary countryside'.
- Input to Planning Design Statements and parish plans.
- Mitigation of the effects of development – particularly roads – on the landscape has often been poor or non-existent or simply not followed through. Standards of mitigation need to be much higher with enough land reserved alongside roads for landscaping.
- Awareness should start with farmers and landowners, especially to help combat damage to archaeological remains resulting from agricultural operations. Also, tree planting can be very destructive of archaeology and efforts must be made to make landowners aware of this.
- Substantial funds would be needed to implement the Guidelines. Landowners may be reluctant to invest and need financial incentives. Businesses should

be encouraged to get involved and financial contributions from them should be sought.

*[Numerous mechanisms are in place to finance and carry out landscape and habitat restoration including payments for Agri-Environmental Schemes, and actions and finance from national bodies, the local authorities and the AONB agencies. Private wildlife and amenity organisations also carry out work including the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership. **Appendix 3** of the document covering Partnerships and Action contains further details].*

Marketing and promotion

- Circulate the *Land Management Guidelines* sheets to estate agents and circulate them as part of local authority searches.
- Circulate the Assessment in health centres, libraries and information points.
- There is a need for parish-based documents.

[Comment: the local authorities have discussed the usefulness of this idea. The means of doing it would, however, need further consideration including resource implications].

List of stakeholders invited

A4.16 The stakeholders felt that *all* interests (including historic and amenity groups) and not just those present should if possible be given time to comment on and check the draft document. Stakeholders should also be represented at the launch of the Assessment on November 4 2005.

A4.17 representatives from all parish and town councils in the District (including selected District Council members) and from the following organisations and groups were invited to attend the stakeholder workshop:

Adur District Council
Arrow Residents' Association
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Countryside Agency South East
Country Landowners and Business Association
Crawley Borough Council
DEFRA – Countryside Stewardship
English Heritage South East – Field Monuments Wardens
Environment Agency
Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies
Forestry Commission
Friends of Ashenground Wood
Government Office for the South East
High Weald AONB Unit
Horsham District Council
Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils
Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team
National Farmers Union
National Trust South East– archaeology and estate management
Society of Sussex Downsmen
South West Haywards Heath Residents' Association
Sussex Downs Conservation Board
Sussex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Sussex Gardens Trust
Sussex Heritage Trust
Sussex Wildlife Trust
University of Sussex Centre for Continuing Education
West Sussex County Council (selected members and officers)
Woodland Trust