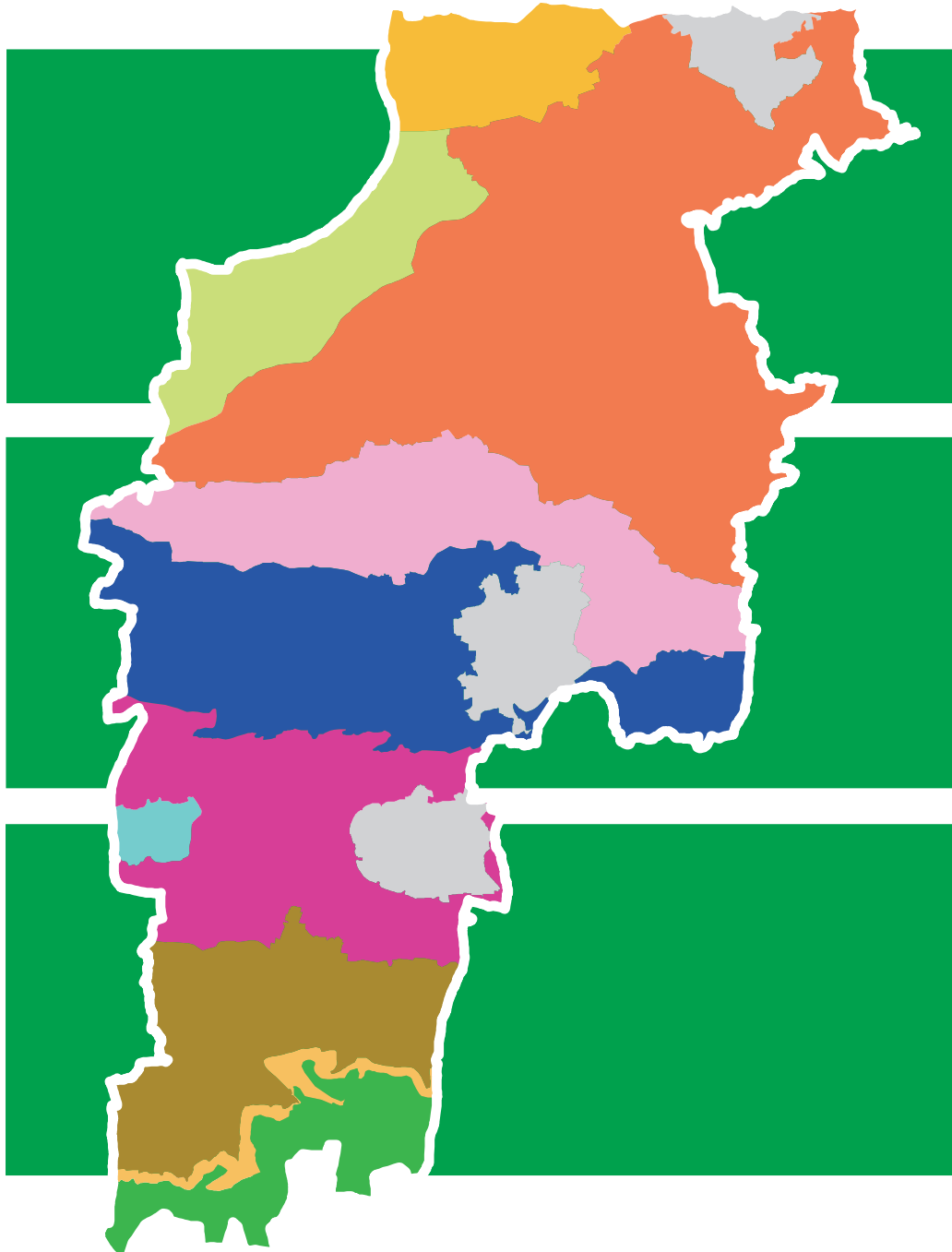


# A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT FOR MID SUSSEX



November 2005



**A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT  
FOR MID SUSSEX**

*Mid Sussex District Council*

November 2005

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## **Acknowledgements**

This report has been prepared by Mid Sussex District Council with support from West Sussex County Council. Thanks are due to the staff of both authorities who compiled it.

Thanks are also due to Sally Walker of the Sussex Gardens Trust for her valuable guidance on historic parks and gardens, including information on Danny and Cuckfield Park. Also gratefully acknowledged is the information on geology, the historic landscape and the historic growth of East Grinstead provided respectively by Councillor James Worsley; Dr Nicola Bannister, Project Officer of the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project; and Dr Roland B. Harris, Project Officer of the Sussex Extensive Urban Surveys (EUS) Project.

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Published by Mid Sussex District Council in association with West Sussex County Council.

November 2005

Text © Mid Sussex District Council

*Landscape Management Guidelines* Sheets © West Sussex County Council

ISBN No: 0-86260-559-8

Designed by Environment and Development Graphics Group, West Sussex County Council, County Hall, Chichester and printed by Beards Digital Ltd.



## **Foreword**

The quality and diversity of the Mid Sussex landscape is one of the District's greatest assets. In preparing this Landscape Character Assessment, the District Council recognises this. The enhancement and protection of character and sense of place is an important element in current District Council policies and programmes concerning planning, land management and the environment. It will continue to be the subject of appropriate policies and actions arising from the forthcoming District Local Development Framework.

The landscape in Mid Sussex is going through a period of considerable change due to climatic, economic and other pressures. It is therefore vitally important that the District Council has a clear vision to guide effort designed to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape. Working with other agencies with similar aims will be essential. The District Council therefore commends the Assessment as a framework for guiding co-ordinated action in Mid Sussex for the years to come.

The Assessment was developed in consultation with stakeholder interests. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who contributed, including local authority and AONB partners.

*Gordon Marples*

Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

## **A GUIDE TO USING THIS ASSESSMENT**

The Assessment document is laid out in sections as follows:

### **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This Part introduces the Assessment, focusing on the importance of landscape character; the planning context; the purpose of the Assessment; and its relationship with other, similar studies. It describes the technical approach and methodology followed.

### **PART TWO: THE MID SUSSEX LANDSCAPE**

Containing map illustrations, this Part describes the physical landscape of the District (geology, landform, soils and ecology). It contains a section on the historic landscape including how it has changed over time. It considers Forces for Change in the landscape and concludes with a brief section on monitoring, indicators and targets and avenues for further research.

### **PART THREE: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**

This part describes the ten Landscape Character Areas defined in the District. The descriptions are followed by an evaluation based on key issues for change and landscape and visual sensitivities. The evaluation concludes with a management objective and land management guidelines for each area.

### **PART FOUR: LAND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

This part contains eight *Land Management Guidelines* sheets covering the locally distinctive landscapes within the District. The sheets have been prepared by West Sussex County Council in association with the District Council.

### **APPENDICES**

The Assessment concludes with seven appendices containing background information:

Planning and land management policy background.

Relevant policies in the *Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004)*.

The means of implementing landscape restoration and biodiversity work.

Details of the Stakeholder Workshop held to discuss the draft Assessment.

Cultural perceptions of the South Downs and High Weald landscapes.

Indicative Tree Planting Guide for different areas of the District.

Background Documents used in compiling the Assessment.

## **Part One**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

**1.1** This Landscape Character Assessment of Mid Sussex has been prepared to help protect and enhance the distinctive character of the District and to manage change. It has been drafted in accordance with the *West Sussex Structure Plan 2001 – 2016* and the *Mid Sussex Local Plan* adopted in 2004 and will contribute to work on the forthcoming District Local Development Framework. It will provide the basis for guidance on landscape matters for planners, developers, landowners and communities. The Assessment also aims to raise awareness of the value of the diverse landscapes of the District and to assist communities to relate to a sense of place.

## The importance of landscape character

**1.2** *Character* is defined as a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes each landscape or townscape different. Character is influenced by particular combinations and patterns of visual, ecological, historic and cultural elements in the landscape and the pattern of settlement. It includes intangible aspects such as tranquillity and sense of place. The distinctive character of our surroundings has a fundamental impact on our quality of life. Identifying, protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and cultural elements that contribute to character are key activities contributing to sustainability. Part of sustainable planning and land management is concerned with protecting and enhancing landscapes. This includes accommodating change in ways that are responsive to the opportunities, constraints and conditions posed by the characteristics of places.

**1.3** If the landscape were unchanging, we would not need policies and plans to protect, conserve and enhance it. Today, we imbue the landscape with a history and an emotional and cultural significance which reaches back to the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when landscape became established as an object of wonder and a source of inspiration. We may like to think that the nature and qualities of the landscape are fixed and that the scenery we have long been used to will somehow persist. However, the landscape has always changed, far more perhaps than we realise, and today at an increasing rate and pace. The management of change in the landscape therefore generates the need for an Assessment such as this.

## Planning, land management and community context

**1.4** Government planning guidance urges the protection and enhancement of the environment, urban and countryside character, the historic environment and local distinctiveness. The Government also sees good quality design as critical to fostering local distinctiveness and sense of place. The new planning system recently introduced calls for greater soundness in preparing plans through the development of a strong evidence base. The Assessment contributes to that evidence base by providing a greater understanding of the nature, value and vulnerabilities of the Mid Sussex landscape.

**1.5** Land management decisions by landowners, farmers, statutory bodies and the local authorities themselves have a fundamental impact on the landscape. It is therefore vitally important to influence the multiplicity of landowners involved in managing land in ways that benefit landscape character. A major function of the Assessment will be to exert that influence.

**1.6** Communities in the District have close ties to their localities and can provide a genuine local perspective on what the character means to them. In recent years, The District Local Development Framework has also brought increased opportunities for local land use and parish planning, through the ability to include additional advice in Supplementary Planning Documents and Area Action Plans. The Assessment will provide a broad context and information base for community planning initiatives.

**1.7** Also of great importance is raising awareness of the local distinctiveness of healthy landscapes as a prime environmental asset in the District and assisting local communities to understand how these can be protected and enhanced. The Assessment will provide a graphic basis for doing this.

**1.8** **Appendix 1** summarises briefly the policy background at national, regional, county and local levels including the approach of the District Council. **Appendix 3** refers to land management, community planning and awareness-raising aspects in the context of action by the District Council and its partners.

## **Purpose of the Assessment**

**1.9** The purpose of the Assessment is to provide a comprehensive account of the landscape character of Mid Sussex, fostering a greater understanding of its value as an asset for future generations. It complements the Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy *Our Green Heritage* (2001) and the *Landscape and Biodiversity: Supplementary Planning Guidance* (2003) prepared by the District Council. It will support District Council policies and programmes that seek to:

- Attain high quality new development that contributes to and reinforces landscape character.
- Protect and enhance landscape character including the historic landscape.
- Maintain and renew the agricultural landscape.
- Conserve and enhance semi-natural habitats including securing the future of woodlands, hedgerows and trees as distinctive landscape features.
- Promote and celebrate the value and variety of the Mid Sussex landscape.

The Assessment also contains *Land Management Guidelines* for locally distinctive landscapes within the District.

## **Relationship with other studies**

### **National Character Areas**

**1.10** In 1996 the Countryside Commission (today the Countryside Agency) and English Nature in association with English Heritage produced a map entitled *The Character of England – Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features*. The map combines Natural Areas (English Nature) and Countryside Character Areas (Countryside Commission) into a single set of *Character Areas* depicting the natural and cultural dimensions of the landscape in England. A set of regional volumes describing nearly 200 unique landscape and coastal character areas accompanies the Map. In the Introduction to the Map the Commission wrote:

*The relationship between ecological and landscape character provides an opportunity to integrate these elements of our natural heritage in a new and exciting way. It is now possible to consider the issues affecting landscape and nature conservation in a single framework.*

The Map has given impetus nationally to the carrying out of landscape character assessments and the preparation of associated planning and land management policy and guidance. The Character Areas also provide an ideal framework for monitoring countryside quality.

**1.11** The relevant areas in Mid Sussex are referred to in the Assessment as *national Character Areas*. Following the lead given by the District Council in its publications concerning landscape and biodiversity, these areas (South Downs, Low Weald and High Weald) have been used as the framework for presenting information on character at a more local level. The national Character Areas in West Sussex and the Landscape Character Areas within them in Mid Sussex are shown on *Map 1.1*.

### **Other studies**

**1.12** The Assessment has been prepared within the context of:

- Existing strategic and planning guidance concerning landscape and biodiversity published by the District Council.
- The unpublished *Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex* (2003) updating the previous County landscape assessment published in 1995.
- *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (October 2005) recently published by West Sussex County Council containing general *Landscape Guidelines* that will support District Council policies and programmes seeking to conserve and enhance landscape character.

**1.13** The Assessment has also drawn on:

- The regional volume on *Countryside Character in the South East* (1999) accompanying the national *Character of England Map* and published by the Countryside Agency.
- Descriptions of the Areas of the High Weald (1994) and South Downs (1996) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty published by the Countryside Commission.
- Current Management Plans for the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- *Sussex Biodiversity Action Plans* prepared by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership.
- The background study to the preparation of the High Weald AONB Management Plan *The Making of the High Weald* by Roland Harris (2003).

A new *Integrated Landscape Character Assessment of the South Downs* (forthcoming, 2006) is currently being prepared by the Sussex Downs Joint Committee. The Mid Sussex Assessment has been drafted alongside this new piece of work, and shares Landscape Character Area boundaries with it.

**1.14** A variety of books concerning the landscape, economy and social history of the Weald, West Sussex and Mid Sussex District has also been used in the compilation of the Assessment. These range from historical accounts to modern landscape and cultural studies. The documents and sources used to compile the Assessment are listed in **Appendix 7**.

### **Approach and methodology**

**1.15** The Assessment is based on the approach described in *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* (April 2002) published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage. The key stages in the process included:

- Desk research.



- Characterisation.
- Analysis and evaluation.
- Stakeholder consultation.

## Desk research

**1.16** This initial work comprised the following elements:

- Review of existing studies, assessments and other sources concerning landscape character and appreciation relevant to the District including the national and regional context.
- Review of national, regional and local policy and guidance relating to the character of the environment including the programmes of non-statutory bodies; the existing land use planning and land management policies and programmes of the District Council, other relevant local authorities in West Sussex and the AONB agencies; and the programmes of amenity and wildlife organisations.
- Using written records, aerial photographs and mapped information available on a Geographic Information System (GIS), the assembly of information concerning the character and landscape of Mid Sussex District (geology, landform, drainage, soils, land use, vegetation and habitats, biodiversity, field and woodland patterns and types, settlement pattern, local distinctiveness in the built environment, communications, and historic landscape and townscape character and archaeology).

## Characterisation

**1.17** The principal stage in the Assessment was the identification, mapping and description of areas of distinctive character within the District. This stage concentrated on making clear what makes one area different or distinctive from another. It resulted in the identification of the following:

- *Landscape Character Types*: distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern. They often occur in more than one place within the District, for example, wooded ridges and valleys and clay vales.
- *Landscape Character Areas*: by comparison, these are unique geographical areas which contain a combination of intimately related landscape types. Each area has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with landscape types in other areas.

This distinction is reflected in the naming of types and areas: landscape character types have generic names – as mentioned above - such as *wooded ridges and valleys* and *clay vales*. However, landscape character areas normally take on the names of specific places such as *Hickstead Low Weald* or *Ouse Valley* or combine a highly distinctive landscape type with a geographical name, for instance, *Fulking to Clayton Scarp*.

**1.18** The unpublished *Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003)* contained an analysis of landscape character types. Because of the complexity and fine grain of the West Sussex landscape, other than in the river valleys and the Low Weald, there was relatively little difference between the numbers of types and the numbers of areas. It was therefore considered unnecessary to carry out a further analysis of landscape character types in Mid Sussex District, relying instead on the typology created at County level.

[continues]

**1.19** The Landscape Character Types in Mid Sussex are described as follows:

*Open downs*

- Smooth, gently rolling elevated downs, scarps and branching dry valleys.
- Steep, mainly open scarp with deeply indented coombes (dry bowls and valleys).
- Large, rectangular arable fields.
- Unimproved chalk grassland.
- Few hedgerows or woodlands.
- Ancient chalkland tracks and prehistoric earthworks.
- Dewponds.
- Few settlements and mainly isolated farmsteads and barns.

*Scarp footslopes (the scarp or escarpment is the steep edge of the chalk)*

- Gently undulating to rolling lowland, dominated by the chalk scarp.
- Pastures and arable fields with irregular shapes.
- Patchwork of farmstead and woodland interlaced with hedgerows.
- Numerous streams flow northwards or westwards.
- Settlements located where springs emerge from the base of the chalk scarp.
- Network of narrow lanes.

*Clay vale farmlands*

- Flat to gently undulating lowland clay vales and occasional low ridges
- Mixed arable and pasture farmland
- Medium density of hedgerows
- Small woods, copses and coppice
- Scattered hamlets and farmsteads.

*Wooded ridges and valleys*

- Steep-sided wooded gills
- Extensive areas of parks and gardens
- Extensive ancient broadleaved woodland and a dense network of hedgerows
- Patches of heathland
- Small scattered farms
- Historic ridgetop settlement.

*Forest plateau*

- Heavily forested plateau and ridges.
- Steep-sided wooded gills.
- Extensive coniferous plantations and birch-pine woodland.
- Smaller areas of oak, ash, beech and coppiced sweet chestnut.
- Patches of heathland.
- Ridge line roads and buildings.

*River valleys*

- Mixed farmland and woodland on valley sides.
- Water meadows.
- Variable hedgerow and hedgerow tree cover.
- Curving, narrow strips of woodland and streamside trees.
- Small farms on valley sides.
- Crossed by roads, lanes and railway line.
- Stone and brick bridges.

The relationship in Mid Sussex between national Character Areas, Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas is shown in *Table 1.1*.

Table 1.1: **AREAS OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IN MID SUSSEX**

See Map 1.1 for a depiction of the relevant areas.

National Character Area	Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area
<b>South Downs</b>	Open downs	Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs
		Fulking to Clayton Scarp
<b>Low Weald</b>	Scarp footslopes	Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes
	Clay vale farmlands	Hickstead Low Weald
	River valleys	Upper Adur Valley
<b>High Weald</b>	Wooded ridges and valleys	High Weald
		High Weald Fringes
	Forest plateau	Worth Forest
		High Weald Plateau
	River valleys	Ouse Valley

**1.20** The Landscape Character Area descriptions and boundaries were refined by a field survey focusing on key visual landscape components including landform, tree cover, field enclosure, settlement patterns, local distinctiveness in the built environment and scenic aspects.

**1.21** The characterisation also drew on analysis derived from the *Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)* Project currently being carried out by West and East Sussex County Councils and Brighton and Hove City Council in association with English Heritage. The main aim of HLC is to produce a digital map of the historic landscape of Sussex supported by a database that records the details of the attributes of each individual landscape unit. The design of the Sussex HLC draws on the experience of other county HLCs within the overall English Heritage Project, which evolved from the Cornwall method developed in the early 1990s. An initial analysis of the data for Mid Sussex contributes to the description of the Landscape Character Areas and is also summarised in the Part Two concerning the *Mid Sussex Landscape*.

### Analysis and evaluation

**1.22** The following analysis was undertaken for the District as a whole:

- Examination of the evolution and key features of the Mid Sussex landscape in physical and historic terms.
- Description of the forces for change in the landscape.
- And for each Landscape Character Area:
  - Change in the landscape – key issues for the area.
  - Overall sensitivity of the visual landscape to change.
  - Formulation of a management objective for the area.
  - Production of Land Management Guidelines for each landscape character area.
  - Incorporation of these guidelines into County-based *Land Management Guidelines* Sheets.

## **Stakeholder consultation**

**1.23** The draft Assessment was placed before a group of stakeholders, who were asked to comment on and discuss:

- Forces for change in the landscape.
- Content of the characterisation.
- Area boundaries chosen.
- Usefulness of the Assessment and land management Guidelines.
- Uses to which the Assessment might be put.
- Presentation and readability of the document.

Comments received from stakeholders were taken into account in the drafting of the Assessment and are summarised in **Appendix 4**.

## **Part Two**

### **THE MID SUSSEX LANDSCAPE**

# THE MID SUSSEX LANDSCAPE

## THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE

### Introduction

**2.1** The landscape of Mid Sussex has evolved as a result of interaction between the physical structure of the landscape and the vegetation and land uses that cover it. To understand what makes the District landscape distinctive, it is necessary to identify the key physical and historical influences that have shaped the landscape over time.

**2.2** Mid Sussex District (33,403 hectares) is relatively long and narrow, stretching from its boundary with Surrey in the north to the boundaries of Adur District and Brighton and Hove City in the south. It is the easternmost West Sussex District, bounded to the east by East Sussex and Lewes District and to the west and north-west respectively by Horsham District and Crawley Borough.

### Geology, landform and soils

**2.3** The structure and relief of the landscape is fundamentally influenced by the underlying rocks. Geology and the process of weathering, erosion and deposition influence the shape and form of the landscape and its drainage and soils. In turn, these influence patterns of vegetation and land use.

**2.4** The District crosses the main geological divisions of the South Downs and the Weald and, as noted earlier, contains three national Character Areas (South Downs, Low Weald and High Weald). The topography of the District is shown on *Map 2.1*.

**2.5** The area of the District includes the complete sequence of Wealden basin rock strata occurring in West Sussex and most of the rock members, the youngest in the south, the oldest in the north. Unconsolidated deposits from the recent Quaternary era ("drift") include small deposits of clay-with-flints on the downs. More substantial deposits of *head* (structureless deposit consisting of unweathered flint within a matrix of chalk mud and disintegrated chalk resulting from soil movement and flow) lie in the downland valleys and form extensive outwash from the downs along the lines of streams crossing the downland footslopes. There are also significant river terrace deposits. The simplified geology of the District showing drift and the underlying rock strata is shown on *Map 2.2*.

**2.6** The pattern of the countryside of the District is a direct consequence of its geological history. Geology matters in the Mid Sussex landscape because it reveals clearly the evolution of the strong and striking landforms with which we are so familiar today. Running across the district in (mainly) parallel bands, the various landforms are reflected closely in the boundaries of the ten Landscape Character Areas. The local geology therefore explains why the assessment of individual areas is structured in the way it is and supplies the logic for singling out certain areas for individual treatment. The relationship between the principal land areas, the underlying geology and the landform is illustrated in *Table 2.1*.

### The formation of the Wealden landscape

**2.7** From about 144 million years ago central Europe including the South of England was a flooded basin. Sea levels then were some 350+ metres higher than today and temperatures also 20+ degrees higher. A semi-tropical lagoon stretched from the Pennine Hills to central Germany. This warm, still lagoon was home to millions of minute marine creatures protected by delicate calcareous shells. As they died,

their shells were deposited on the lagoon floor. The deposition of many millions of shells over many millions of years formed a chalk bed some 400 metres thick in places. This process defined the *Cretaceous* (chalk) period - the only period of chalk formation in earth history. It was also the time when flowering plants (*angiosperms*) evolved. The period ended abruptly, obliterating the dinosaurs together with many other life forms. Theories about how this abrupt ending came about continue to be the subject of debate, including the possibility of a massive meteor hit.

Table 2.1: **LANDSCAPE AREAS, GEOLOGY AND LANDFORM IN MID SUSSEX**

<i>Landscape Area</i>	<i>Geological strata</i>	<i>landform</i>
South Downs	South Downs chalk (Upper and Middle Chalk and Lower Chalk and the thin, harder band of Melbourn Rock between the two).	High chalk downland. Steep, north-facing scarp and dip slope dipping south. Lower Chalk forms a flatter area at the base of the scarp that merges with the scarp footslopes.
Scarp footslopes	Lower Chalk, then a thin band of Upper Greensand and beyond it a vale of Gault Clay.	Lowland clay vale.
Scarp footslopes	Sandstones and sands of the Lower Greensand including the Hythe Beds, the Folkestone (sandy) Beds and a small area of Fuller's Earth near Poynings (the Sandgate Beds and Atherfield Clay are absent).	Lowland. Low sandstone ridges separating the Gault Clay vale from the Low Weald proper.
Low Weald	Weald Clay containing members of Paludina Limestone (can occur locally as marble), Horsham stone (flaggy sandstone), ironstone, sand and Marker Clay.	Lowland. Alternating low ridges and clay vales.
High Weald	Hastings Beds comprising sandstones, sand and clay of the Tunbridge Wells Sand (including the Ardingly sandstone member), the Grinstead Clay (including the Cuckfield Stone member) and the Wadhurst Clay.	Hilly land. Plateaux, ridges and valleys, deeply dissected with narrow, steep-sided valleys.

**2.8** Following this period and pre-dating the mountain-building event leading to the creation of the Alps, the great chalk basin was uplifted bodily into a dome (called an *anticline*). This sloped away to the north and south at a gentle angle today revealed by the dipping slopes of the North and South Downs. Since then the whole centre of the dome has been eroded away, most of the chalk (soluble in water)

being stripped out, revealing the older clays and sandstones beneath, also heavily eroded. The whole structure today can be thought of as a long pie from which the domed pastry covering (chalk) has been removed, revealing the layers of meat and veg (clays and sandstones) underneath, the (chalk) crust remaining on the edges.

**2.9** The resultant assembly of landforms is what we know today as the downs and Weald. The form of the downs has been modified further by the side-effects of glaciation. Although the downland was not shaped by glaciers, the porous chalk was frozen solid and became rock-like. The glacial melt waters poured over this impervious chalk 'rock' and sculpted and eroded it further into the valley and coombe shapes we know today, the hallmarks of ancient, dry river systems characteristic of chalk. *Figure 2.1.* depicts a simplified cross-section of the geological floor of the District.

### **Drainage pattern**

**2.10** The upper reaches of the River Adur drain most of the District. In the Low Weald portion, the leisurely Adur streams form a series of often parallel, shallow valleys running mainly from east to west. In the High Weald, the streams have excavated deep, wooded valleys known as *gills* or *ghylls*. The upper reaches of The River Ouse drain much of the High Weald. However, to the north and north-west, the District is home to the headwaters of three major Wealden rivers, the Eden, Medway and Mole.

### **Soils**

**2.11** Just as the underlying geology has influenced landform, so it has the range of soils in the District. The soil types have in turn influenced significantly the distinctive patterns of vegetation, land cover and land use in each geologically-defined band.

**2.12** The most extensive soils are the heavy, poorly drained *stagnogleys* (seasonally waterlogged clay soils) that have developed over the Gault and Weald Clays. They are difficult to cultivate and traditionally favoured grass, woodland and scrub. However, improved drainage techniques have allowed the significant extension of arable farmland onto these soils. Freer draining brown earths occur in the High Weald on the Tunbridge Wells Sand parent material, and further south, on the sandstones of the Lower Greensand ridge.

**2.13** *Rendzinas* (thin soils developed over calcium-rich rock such as chalk) are typical of the South Downs, often no more than 300mm in depth, containing abundant fragments of chalk and flint. Apart from on the scarp they are extensively ploughed for cereals. Along the scarp footslopes, brown calcareous (chalky) earths much used for cereals have developed on hillwash (head) overlying the Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand.

### **Ecological character**

**2.14** The Mid Sussex landscape contains significant and varied areas of remaining semi-natural habitat that make a vital contribution to its distinctive character. The presence and distribution of these habitats is strongly influenced by geology and landform. They include varied woodland types, hedgerows, chalk, neutral and dry acid grassland and meadowland, lowland heathland, standing fresh waters, marsh, arable field margins and a variety of urban habitats. The principal habitats in the District are shown on *Map 2.3*.

**2.15** Most of the District is in agricultural use, mainly arable land and improved grassland. Survivals of species-rich meadows are rare and isolated. However, the woodland cover in the High Weald is nationally and regionally significant. Within the High Weald in Mid Sussex there is a rich variety of woodland types and habitats including nationally rare sandrock plant communities in the gill woodlands. Also of



national and regional importance are the remnants of species rich unimproved chalk grassland on the steeper slopes of the downs, principally along the scarp. Lowland heathland was once much more common throughout the High Weald and the Wealden Greensand but in Mid Sussex survives only in pockets today. Areas of freshwater marsh and species-rich wet woodland and water margins are also scarce and isolated.

**2.16** Studies of habitat and land use change in West Sussex since 1971 indicate clearly the continuing – and possibly accelerating – loss of semi-natural habitats of all types in the District. Some habitats that once strongly shaped or influenced the character of parts of the District have all but disappeared.

**2.17** The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership has produced a series of *Habitat Action Plans (HAPs)* and *Species Action Plans (SAPs)*, many of which are relevant to habitats important in Mid Sussex District. These plans are mentioned below in association with a commentary on the key habitats in the District. See also **Appendix 3** regarding biodiversity action planning in Sussex and actions proposed by the District Council in its Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy.

## **Woodland**

**2.18** Woodland is a major component of the landscape of the District, particularly in the High Weald. Over 30% of the High Weald AONB area is wooded, with over 90% of ancient woodlands having survived since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Hardwood coppice has dominated forestry in the area since the medieval period and at least 11% of the woodland today is in active coppice, although this is only about one fifth of the area under coppice in 1947. Much unmanaged coppice has not been grubbed up but has become overgrown although fortunately it is recoverable. Just over 25% of the High Wealden woodland is broadleaved and 14% comprises coniferous plantation, today associated with large commercial woodland blocks. Woodland cover is far thinner in the Low Wealden part of the District. However, in association with a dense hedgerow network, the woodland that does exist creates in places a well-wooded effect out of all proportion to the actual density of woodland cover. Woodland is largely absent from the downland landscape. For a brief description of the historic woodland landscape see *paras 2.52-4* below. Woodland types present in Mid Sussex are described briefly below.

### *Lowland beech woods*

**2.19** Stands of planted and semi-natural beech woodland span a variety of distinctive vegetation types, reflecting differences in soil and topographical conditions. In Mid Sussex, these occur in the Wealden area often in association with other woodland types. These woods have been managed historically as coppice and coppice with standards (woodland regularly cut – 'coppiced' - for timber with specimen trees left standing).

### *Broadleaved woods*

**2.20** This category covers a very broad range of woodland types ranging from ash-maple stands on the downs to the mixed oak-hazel-hornbeam woods in the Weald. The heathier oak-birch woods are relatively absent from the small areas of the Lower Greensand in the District but occur in places on the sandier, heathier parts of the High Weald. Most ancient woods in this category have a history of management as coppice with standards

**2.21** Principal sub-types of broadleaved woods in Mid Sussex include:

- *Oak-hornbeam* woods characteristic of the South East and found in damp, clayey soils. They often have a rich flora of spring-flowering herbs. This is the

classic woodland type of the Wealden clays although there is much structural variation within these communities.

- *Gill woodlands* are found in steep, narrow stream valleys and highly characteristic of much of the High Weald terrain in the District. They have a damp, humid microclimate with a lower frost incidence than surrounding woodland. These communities are particularly important, containing a warm, moist microclimate that allows plants to flourish that are more typically restricted to the west of the country. Some of the plants, notably ferns, bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) and lichens, are part of a western 'Atlantic' plant community that was once far more widespread in distribution. Some of the sandrock communities associated with the gill woodlands are nationally rare.
- *Chestnut coppice* is present in the District in the High Weald (it is not abundant on the Lower Greensand, as in other parts of the County). It is one of the few woodland types still occasionally under active coppice management.
- *Wet woodland* occurs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils, usually with alder, birch and willow as the predominant trees. The type is scattered on river floodplains but today is more typically found in the higher catchments of river systems (in Mid Sussex, the upper Adur streams and parts of the middle Ouse Valley and in some gill woodlands in the High Weald). The stands are often small, forming linear strips on alluvial soils alongside streams. Once far more common, the wet woodland species black poplar is now probably the rarest tree in Sussex.
- *Planted conifer woods* are widespread in the High Wealden part of the District, notably in Worth forests although there are substantial mixed coniferous and broadleaved plantings in the Low Weald. Plantings are often on a large commercial scale, species typically including Scots pine, Corsican pine, Norway spruce, western hemlock, Douglas fir and western red cedar.
- *Pasture woodland* (or *wood pasture* - grazed by livestock) comprises areas of grazed woodland with heathland, now relatively rare in the High Weald part of the District but once very common and locally dominant in many areas.

#### *Woodland distribution*

**2.22** The broad distribution pattern of woodland types is as follows:

- Woodland is generally absent on the *Eastern Downs* in Mid Sussex although those woodlands (non-ancient) that do exist have local importance as landscape and biodiversity features, particularly along the foot of the downland scarp and in some of the broader coombes. Ash is a locally-dominant species and hawthorn-dominated scrub is locally common on the grassland swards.
- The *High Weald* woodland in Mid Sussex is generally typical of the broadleaved, ancient and other woodlands of the Forest Ridge, although the plateaux of the Worth forests contain extensive areas of coniferous planting and wood pasture remnants. For centuries the High Weald woods were used to make charcoal to fire the furnaces of the Wealden iron industry. To maintain productivity in the long-term, the woods were carefully managed to keep the raw materials flowing. The predominant woodland type is oak-hornbeam. However, chestnut coppice is now more common and many unmanaged woods have reverted – or have been converted – to high forest. The deep gill woodland communities are generally confined to the High Weald with fewer gills of outstanding ecological interest on the High Weald fringes.

- The *Low Weald* woodland cover in Mid Sussex is not as dense as in other parts of the Low Weald, for instance, in the west of the County. Nevertheless, as noted above, parts of the area present a well-wooded appearance. Woodland types generally consist of oak-hazel woods with some hornbeam supporting fine displays of spring-flowering plants. Gill woodlands are virtually absent in the relatively narrow stretch of the Low Weald in Mid Sussex, although common in some Low Wealden areas elsewhere.
- The *Wealden Greensand* in Mid Sussex is restricted to a narrow band between the ridge line at Hurstpierpoint and the downland scarp. Woodland is locally abundant on the Gault Clay, including ancient woodland. However, woodland cover on the remaining Lower Greensand rocks is scanty in comparison with the more extensive Greensand country in the west of the County. The Folkestone Sand deposits are narrow and generally under cultivation whilst the Lower Greensand areas have been cleared for agriculture or have been built upon. In a narrow band by the South Downs, the downwashes of head and alluvium have created conditions favouring lime-loving trees such as maple and plants such as dog's mercury.

**2.23** The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Woodland Habitat Action Plan* (September 2000) contains ambitious objectives and targets for woodland restoration and planting to 2010 and, in some cases, beyond.

### **Hedgerows**

**2.24** The ecological attributes of hedgerows have much in common with woodland-edge habitats and scrub/underscrub communities. In Sussex, hedgerows are frequently associated with ditches and banks and may include standard trees, historically grown as a source of wood and timber and to provide shelter for domestic animals. Most of the Wealden hedgerows - including *shaws* (narrow belts of woodland remaining when fields have been cut from woodlands) – are likely to date from the time of medieval *assarts* (fields derived from the general, unplanned clearance of woodlands and unenclosed commons by individuals). In Mid Sussex, as elsewhere in the Weald, there are relatively few hedgerows stemming from the formal enclosure of fields. The Weald appears to have a significant proportion of species-rich/ancient hedgerows, revealed by the frequency of indicator species such as field maple, spindle and hazel. However, the data is not yet available to assess with any degree of accuracy the number, length and type of hedgerows in Sussex and its Districts.

**2.25** The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Hedgerows Habitat Action Plan* (June 2004) *inter alia* places high priority on identifying the current extent of ancient and/or species-rich hedges (see *para 2.131* below concerning *Further research*) and encouraging the favourable management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. This includes supporting the local authorities in their execution of the *Hedgerow Regulations 1997* (protection of hedgerows deemed to be of importance).

### **Chalk grassland**

**2.26** The loss of unimproved chalk grassland on the downs in West Sussex has been dramatic. A study by F. Rose (1983) for the period 1813 and 1981 revealed a 90% loss, down from over 16,300 hectares to about 1400 hectares (less than 1% of the total county area). The resource is now greatly fragmented and confined mainly to the scarp, an important concentration lying in Mid Sussex around the Devil's Dyke and Wolstonbury Hill.

**2.27** Nevertheless, great efforts have been made in recent years to halt and reverse this trend. The designation of the South Downs as an Environmentally Sensitive Area in 1987 brought back neglected areas of chalk grassland into sympathetic management also supported the maintenance of chalk grassland. In addition, nearly 6,000 hectares of arable land has reverted back to grassland under the scheme

(significantly so on the Mid Sussex downland) with about 10% sown with a chalk grassland seed mix. However, reversion back to species-rich chalk grassland is a slow process and results are variable depending on the seed mixture, topography, aspect, proximity to seed sources, soil type and depth, and historical land-use. It is to be hoped that the new Agri-Environmental (Environmental Stewardship) Schemes provide a positive opportunity for landowners and managers to increase significantly the area of species-rich downland grassland. The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Chalk Grassland Habitat Action Plan* (April 2000) contains ambitious objectives and targets for chalk grassland restoration to 2010.

### **Neutral and acid grassland**

**2.28** *Unimproved neutral grassland* is a feature of lowland mineral soils which are neither very wet nor very dry and neither very acid nor very alkaline. Of greatest interest, though increasingly rare, are old, species-rich meadow and pasture grasslands. *Dry acid grasslands* overlie sandstone and surface sand and gravel deposits and include specialised species and assemblages not found in neutral grasslands. Although prevalent in the uplands of Britain, acid grassland is rather uncommon in the lowlands where it occurs mainly on nutrient-poor dry, sandy soils. Both types are scarce in the South East although Sussex is a stronghold for unimproved neutral grassland. Accurate data on the extent of these grassland types is limited and, in the case of dry acid grassland, further complicated by its dispersal amongst heathland.

**2.29** The occurrence in Mid Sussex of unimproved neutral grassland is very limited, with few examples left of species-rich meadows, all known examples of which are included in notified and identified wildlife sites. Recorded dry acid grasslands in the District – and indeed in Sussex – are also few in number and randomly scattered where suitable soils are present. They tend to occur in association with heathland on the sandstones of the High Weald.

**2.30** The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Neutral and Acid Grassland Action Plan* (July 2000) outlines a series of initiatives concerned with grassland conservation. The Plan aims to identify the full extent and quality of existing grassland sites and seek to prevent further loss and fragmentation.

### **Lowland heathland**

**2.31** A further study by F.Rose (1992) of lowland heathlands in West Sussex for the same period (1813-1981) revealed a similar level of loss as that for chalk grassland (90%), from 7,500 hectares to 671 hectares, resulting in a pattern of small, isolated sites. Most of the 1813 heathland was on the Wealden Greensand in the west of the County, with relatively little recorded even then in the High Weald (although the survey did not include St Leonard's Forest). This loss is due to the cessation of heathland grazing and management and subsequent invasion by scrub and trees. More recent estimates suggest that some 594 hectares of lowland heathland remain in 18 or so scattered fragments in the western High Weald, in the general area of St Leonard's, Tilgate and Worth Forests (in Horsham and Mid Sussex Districts and on the fringes of Crawley Borough).

**2.32** The potential to expand and enhance heathland in Sussex is considerable, with the possible creation of up to 5,000 hectares according to the Sussex Wildlife Trust in its *Vision for the Wildlife of Sussex* (1996). This could be achieved through a variety of mechanisms including Environmental Stewardship. The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Lowland Heathland Habitat Action Plan* (July 1998) contains similarly ambitious objectives and targets for lowland heathland restoration to 2010.

### **Standing fresh waters**

**2.33** Standing fresh waters include ponds from one metre square up to large lakes. The smaller water bodies (less than 1 hectare) include millponds, dewponds, field

ponds and ponds in gardens and urban parks. Larger areas of standing water include reservoirs, canals, flooded gravel pits, fishing lakes and hammerponds. These waters are nutrient-rich (eutrophic) and support quite different ecosystems to the much smaller ponds, sustaining large populations of fish and waterfowl. Water-fringe habitats including banksides are an integral part of these habitats. Apart from their nature conservation value, the ponds and waters of Mid Sussex contribute greatly to the character of the landscape, in some cases constituting a highly characteristic aspect, as in the case of the High Weald hammerponds.

**2.34** The first systematic survey of ponds in Sussex is now underway with the creation of the *Sussex Ponds Inventory* at the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre. Smaller ponds are very important features of the Sussex landscape, no more so than in Mid Sussex, which has a large number and wide variety of smaller ponds, notably mill ponds, Low Wealden field ponds and downland dew ponds. The District also contains Ardingly Reservoir and adjoins Weir Wood Reservoir. Numerous small and medium-sided hammerponds are a highly characteristic feature of the High Weald, as are strings of ornamental and fishponds, strikingly so in the Birchgrove valley north of Horsted Keynes. Pond Lye and Slaugham Pond are also noteworthy water bodies.

**2.35** The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Standing Fresh Waters Habitat Action Plan* (September 2001) outlines a wide variety of partnerships interested in pond conservation and lists many initiatives. The Plan aims for the maintenance and improvement of the conservation interest of standing open waters and seeks statutory water quality objectives where appropriate.

### **Arable land**

**2.36** Arable land includes all of the farmed area under the plough as well as the field margin, with the margin as the priority habitat. There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence to suggest that in general, the habitat has suffered a severe decline in terms of its associated biodiversity. Arable weeds are now restricted to a few locations, usually in the less well-cultivated margins of downland fields. Farmland bird populations are lower now than 20 years ago. The skylark, which has suffered major reductions in much of Britain, is still present on the downs in reasonable numbers, but the stone curlew became locally extinct in the 1980s.

**2.37** In Mid Sussex, arable farmland no longer dominates the downland: grassland cover has increased significantly in the area in recent years. The generally large farm holdings are mixed, with sheep, cattle and occasional dairy herds. In contrast, High Weald farm holdings are generally less than 100 acres. Sheep and beef are widespread with dairy and arable still significant but localised. However, the number of holdings managed as commercial farms continues to decline significantly throughout the area. In the Low weald, farm holding sizes average about 250 acres. Mixed livestock and arable farms are common, with significant cattle and sheep numbers.

**2.38** Actions relating to biodiversity and arable land are contained in the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Arable Land Habitat Action Plan* (April 2002) and will depend for much of their success on the outcome of Agri-Environmental (Environmental Stewardship) Schemes.

### **Urban habitats**

**2.39** Biodiversity in urban areas includes a complex mosaic of semi-natural and artificial habitat types including woodland and green spaces. The origin, type and extent of urban green space vary greatly between settlements. However, such land represents a significant resource as a refuge for wildlife and for increasing the contact between people and their natural environment. Types of habitat include original habitats remaining after development; remnants of agricultural land near or within urban areas; intensively managed parks, gardens, allotments, churchyards and cemeteries; informal open spaces and derelict land; and road verges. As well as

having a nature conservation value, such land can contribute greatly to landscape and townscape character.

**2.40** The urban areas of Mid Sussex contain all of the above land types. Haywards Heath has a rich series of treescapes and associated habitats developed over the sandy soils of the High Weald, with three nature reserves and areas of ancient woodland within the built-up area as well as two important cemetery grassland sites. At Burgess Hill, the *Bedelands Local Nature Reserve* contains the rare remains of old hay meadows.

**2.41** The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Urban Habitat Action Plan* (October 2001) subtitled *People and Wildlife* aims to safeguard and enhance the biodiversity found in urban areas and to realise social and health benefits associated with the public understanding of – and contact with – nature in towns.

### **Other habitats**

**2.42** Other biodiversity action plans directly relevant to Mid Sussex include the *Mineral Sites Habitat Action Plan* (March 2004) and *Species Action Plans* including that for *Black Poplar* (June 2005) – see *para 2.21* on wet woodlands. A plan for freshwater marsh – which is a limited and diminishing habitat in the District – has yet to be prepared.

### **Notified and identified wildlife sites**

**2.43** Mid Sussex contains 13 areas notified as *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)* and 49 areas identified by the local authorities as *Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs)*. Comprising 1,100 hectares and covering 3.3% of the District area, these sites represent important remnants of a once much more extensive network of habitats covering large areas of the District. *Table 2.2* sets out the number and percentage of SNCIs by Landscape Character Area (including urban areas). The SSSIs include:

- *Chalk grassland*: three substantial sites, two of which extend westwards and eastwards beyond the District boundary. They contain a long, discontinuous band of unimproved species-rich grassland, woodland and scrub running along the chalk scarp between Truleigh Hill in Horsham District and Lewes in East Sussex. The third site includes chalk grassland and woodland at Wolstonbury Hill.
- *High Weald woodland and gills*: at Cow Wood and Harry's Wood (Handcross); the extensive gills at Wakehurst and Chiddingly Woods; and gill woodlands in Worth Forest.
- *High Weald geological sites*: important exposures of the Hastings Beds at Freshfield Lane, Mills Rocks (Ashurst Wood), Philpots and Hook Quarries (West Hoathly), Sharpthorne (West Hoathly), Scaynes Hill, Turners Hill and rock outcrops at Stone Hill Rocks near East Grinstead.

The SNCIs contain a variety of habitats including:

- Ancient woodland in the High Weald, on ridges, farmland, in gills, and on valley sides.
- Habitats associated with exposures of sandstone (sandrock communities).
- Heathland, including wooded and scrub heath.
- Chalk grassland.
- Wet and dry species-rich meadowland, wet woodland and marsh.
- Ardingly Reservoir and lakes, ponds and pond margins including the fishponds at Birchgrove.
- Species-rich grassland in urban cemeteries.

Table 2.2: **SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE IN MID SUSSEX**

Landscape Character Area (LCA)	SNCI hectares	LCA hectares	SNCI % of LCA
Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs	57	1,498	3.8
Fulking to Clayton Scarp	8	412	1.9
Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes	17	2,899	0.6
Hickstead Low Weald	91	4,336	2.1
Upper Adur Valley	0	268	0
High Weald	452	11,408	4.0
High Weald Plateau	64	1,458	4.4
Worth Forest	102	2,090	4.9
Ouse Valley	112	3,635	3.1
High Weald Fringes	196	5,401	3.6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1099</b>	<b>33,405</b>	

**2.44** The District Council manages the *Bedelands Local Nature Reserve* (Burgess Hill) and nature reserves at *Ashplats Wood* (East Grinstead), *Blunts Wood and Paiges Meadow* (Haywards Heath), *Eastern Road* (Lindfield) and *Scrase Meadow* (Haywards Heath). West Sussex County Council manages the *Worth Way* for its recreational and wildlife value. Southern Water manages the *Loder Valley Nature Reserve* at Ardingly Reservoir.

## The historic landscape

### Character of the historic landscape

**2.45** As noted in *para 1.21* above, the Mid Sussex landscape characterisation draws on material derived from the *Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project*. The paragraphs below contain a summary of an initial analysis of the HLC data for Mid Sussex.

#### *Broad historic landscape character*

**2.46** The historic landscape of Mid Sussex is essentially rural in character, dominated by fields and interspersed with small woods and settlements of farms and hamlets. Today, large tracts of forests and woods occur in the north-west where re-planting in the Worth forests (and in the adjoining St Leonard's Forest in Horsham District) has taken place. Un-enclosed and unimproved land survives as species-rich downland remnants on the chalk escarpment of the South Downs. A few pockets of heathland and common land survive in the High Weald, notably around Copthorne.

#### *Fields*

**2.47** There is a clear distinction in the type of fields in the northern and southern parts of the District, with a transitional zone in the middle, in the Low Weald. This pattern of field types is strongly linked to the underlying bands of differing rock strata crossing the District. In the southern part, many fields on the chalk downs, in the Gault Clay vale and the Lower Greensand ridges have resulted mainly from *formal enclosure*. Further north, on the Weald Clay, these formal fields become increasingly intermixed with fields resulting from *informal enclosure*. Where the Weald Clay gives way to the sandstones of the Hastings Beds in the High Weald, the informal fields are in turn intermixed with *assart fields*.

### **Definition of terms used in the Sussex HLC regarding the historic landscape**

**formal enclosure:** enclosure which is planned, that is, laid out in a regular pattern. This was brought about either by an Act of Parliament (the Enclosure Acts) – and usually used to enclose former heath, common, greens or open fields - or by the actions of private landowners, in particular as the reorganisation of former field systems. This category also includes consolidated strip fields, where medieval open fields were enclosed, preserving the pattern of furlongs or strips.

**informal enclosure:** enclosure not formally planned.

**assart fields:** fields derived from the general, unplanned clearance of woodlands and unenclosed commons as a result of actions by individuals.

**cohesive assarts:** assart fields grouped around a farmstead.

**aggregate assarts:** groups of irregular assart fields derived from the general, unplanned clearance of woodlands.

**co-axial fields:** a ladder-pattern group of fields which have often very long, sinuous roughly north-south boundaries sub-divided by short, straight, or slightly sinuous boundaries.

**wood pasture:** woodland grazed by livestock.

**2.48** The visual impact of this distribution is not so apparent in the *pattern* of the fields. For the most part, the southern part of the District comprises regularly shaped fields. These fields extend north into the High Weald and there become far more intermixed with regular, *cohesive assarts* which form the most common field pattern. These are regularly shaped fields but with sinuous woody or hedge boundaries. The more irregularly shaped fields characteristic of *aggregate assarts* occur sporadically amongst the more regular field patterns. These fields are often associated with pockets of ancient semi-natural woodland or mark where such woods once existed. Pockets of fields with no clear pattern occur in the Low Weald but more typically in the High Weald where there has been extensive boundary removal and field reorganisation. These are often the result of boundary removal associated with single, large farm holdings.

**2.49** Informally-enclosed fields tend to have a regular or semi-regular pattern (except where modern field amalgamation has taken place) and are distributed across the District. The only irregularly shaped informally enclosed fields are meadows that lie in the shallow valleys of rivers and streams. Isolated enclosures occur in the Worth forests.

**2.50** The formally enclosed fields are dominated by planned private enclosure mostly confined to the chalk hills and the Gault Clay vale. However they do extend into the Low Weald with some consolidated strip fields and remnants of *co-axial fields*. Formally-enclosed fields occur sporadically across the High Weald resulting from the formal enclosure of commons and woodland or where some form of field reorganisation has taken place, notably in the Worth forests.

**2.51** The fields on the downs are divided by fences, which give way to hedges at the foot of the scarp that extend into the Low Weald. Shaws tend to occur most frequently in the High Weald but with hedges to the north-west, in the forests.

#### *Woodlands*

**2.52** Woodland is a dominant landscape feature in the High Weald with large plantation blocks in the Worth forests. The greatest concentration of woodland lies



here (including ancient sites, many of them associated with High Weald farmsteads for traditional timber conservation purposes), in a fragmented and dispersed pattern. The High Weald woodlands are predominately assart woods with gill woodlands intermixed and associated with them. The Low Weald has the least amount of woodland cover, with no large ancient woodland blocks left on the Weald Clay and the Lower Greensand ridge (although the incidence of small remnants is suspected to be significant). Notable however is the distinctive concentration of woodlands within the Gault Clay vale comprising much replanted ancient semi-natural woodland dominated by a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees (mixed woodland).

**2.53** Mixed plantation woodland is mostly confined to the Worth forests. The remaining plantations are small and in the northern part of the District often lie next to or on ancient woodland sites. Other types of woodlands including shaws and regenerated and non-ancient gill woodlands occur across the District with the largest amount of regenerated woodland on the downs. There are isolated pockets of modern wood pasture.

**2.54** Most woodlands are irregular in shape with sinuous boundaries, sinuous woods for the most part lying in the gills. Regularly shaped woods are more frequently plantations or regenerated woodland reflecting the former, regular field pattern on which they stand.

#### *Settlement*

**2.55** East Grinstead, Lindfield and Cuckfield were medieval market towns, the former greatly expanded in 19<sup>th</sup> Century era of the railways. Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath are comparatively recent towns, both also having developed rapidly in the railway era, with much modern expansion, some of it very recent. The expanded villages in the south (Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint and Keymer) on the Greensand ridge line are also the result of accessibility to the railway, being for the most part modern commuting settlements. Expanded village settlements also occur in the High Weald, at Copthorne and Crawley Down in the busy Crawley-East Grinstead corridor, close to Crawley New Town adjoining the District to the north-west. Ribbon and plotland development are also characteristic in the corridor. Some other villages in the District have experienced modest suburban expansion including Ashurst Wood and Balcombe in the High Weald. The towns and villages of the District expanded onto former heaths, commons and farmland.

**2.56** Outside of the main towns and villages, settlement is typically dispersed, notably sparse on the Downs, in the Worth forests and in parts of the High Weald. The most distinctive historic settlement pattern in the District is in the south, comprising the spring-line villages and hamlets at the foot of the downland scarp (Edburton, Fulking, Poynings and Clayton). In the modern era, there has been a gradual increase in development throughout the District associated with the dispersed farmsteads and other sites and there are many examples of early ribbon development.

**2.57** *Transhumance* (seasonal movements of stock) was a vital part of the ancient agricultural system of the Weald under which its exponents sought to make every use possible of the resources of the Wealden land. The practice of this method – and the configuration of parish boundaries to cover many different kinds of land – may help to explain the dispersed settlement pattern. Over the last millennium, the timber and other resources of the Weald were managed carefully, which in itself tended to lead towards a typically thin and dispersed settlement pattern.

**2.58** Moreover, the long, narrow *parishes*, (pre-1894 boundaries) particularly to the south, stretched from the chalk downs onto the varied geological beds of the Greensand country (Edburton, Poynings and Newtimber) and further, into the Low Weald (Hurstpierpoint, Clayton and Keymer). This highly characteristic pattern (chalk to Weald Clay) continues in adjacent parishes in East Sussex (Ditchling, Westmeston, Streat, Plumpton, East Chiltington and St John Without at Lewes). This pattern of

parish development tended to restrict Low Wealden village development, since all of the hamlets in these narrow parishes were advantageously founded as spring-line villages hard under the downs or as villages on the Greensand ridge.

**2.59** Accordingly, with some exceptions, the historic settlement pattern is marked by an absence of agricultural villages surrounded by communally farmed open fields. Instead, there is a dispersed settlement pattern of numerous farmsteads within discrete or enclosed small-scale holdings. By the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, nucleated villages had emerged, some on ridge tops, often in response to trade (Turners Hill was an important village on the 1770 Turnpike Road from London to Brighton), and are the principal settlements in the area today. The dominance of the nucleated villages increased from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century onwards as new development was concentrated in them. Sometimes, development has resulted from local industries such as clay winning and quarrying. Since the turn of the Century, and particularly after the Second World War, all of the villages have been expanded to some degree by suburban development.

**2.60** The historic settlement pattern of the Low Weald has virtually no nucleated villages, and none of any size, being more a mix of scattered large and small farmsteads and hamlets strung out along lanes ('streets' and 'greens'). Much settlement is confined to the lower ridges, above the heavier clay vales.

**2.61** As noted below in the section on *Forces for Change*, the universally high level of modern private mobility has created an unprecedented opportunity for urban-based living in the countryside. A major consequence of this is the gradual suburbanisation of the rural landscape resulting from the conversion of former agricultural dwellings, buildings and land holdings to residential and other uses. This transformation of rural life has brought about significant changes in the visual character of the 'traditional' countryside. These aspects are referred to further in the descriptions and evaluations of the Landscape Character Areas and in the *Land Management Guidelines*.

#### *Archaeological remains and Wealden iron*

**2.62** The District contains a wealth of archaeological monuments, sites and finds, including 41 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) representing the most important sites nationally. Most of these sites are on the downs, representing successive stages of prehistoric, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and medieval settlement in a rich array of features. These comprise settlement, boundary, defensive and burial features including barrows (including Bronze Age round barrows), bowl barrows, earthworks, cross ridge dykes, hillforts, a Saxon cemetery, a motte and bailey castle site at Edburton and the Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) at Perching.

**2.63** Roman remains include the line of the London to Brighton Roman Road crossing the District from north to south and the Sussex Greensand Way crossing from west to east, across the scarp footslopes, the two roads intersecting at Hassocks. In this vicinity, there are various sites associated with the Roman occupation including terrace ways and branches from the main routeway onto the downs; the villa site at Danny; the cemetery at Hassocks; and evidence of Roman and Romano-British farmstead settlement.

**2.64** There are far fewer ancient sites in the Low and High Weald than on the downs, although the Iron Age hillfort at Philpots Camp near West Hoathly is an important example of a Wealden hillfort. The remaining monuments, all in the High Weald, are mainly moated manor and farmhouse sites and, at Warren Furnace, the remains of a Wealden iron industry site.

**2.65** During two distinct historical periods, the Weald of Kent and Sussex was the major iron-producing region in Britain. Ironmaking was a major industrial activity before and during the Roman occupation and the Middle Ages. The densely wooded area had the natural resources of iron ore and the wood needed for fuel.

The prehistoric and Roman iron industry managed the woodland, even accounting for the introduction of some tree species such as sweet chestnut. The second major period began in the last decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century when the blast furnace was introduced and by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century the Weald was pre-eminent among the iron-producing regions of Britain. However, with the advent of the coke-fired blast furnace in 1709, the fate of the industry was sealed and the Wealden ironmasters withdrew.

**2.66** It is hard to believe today that the industry was so important in the Weald, given that so little evidence of its passing exists. However, a closer look at the modern landscape of the Weald reveals a legacy of slag heaps, hammer and furnace ponds, some furnace remains and roads associated with the industry. In association with the iron industry pond sites are those of the numerous mills that were once common throughout the country. The Wealden iron and mill site remains in the High Weald in Mid Sussex contribute to the historical richness of the landscape and remain in places a distinctive feature of it.

#### *Designed landscapes*

**2.67** Government Planning Policy Note 15 (PPS1) entitled *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) states that no additional statutory controls follow from the inclusion of a site in the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest*. However, local planning authorities should protect registered parks and gardens in preparing development plans and in determining planning applications. The effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. Planning and highway authorities should also safeguard registered parks or gardens when themselves planning new developments or road schemes (see **Appendix 2** for the relevant Mid Sussex District Local Plan policy).

**2.68** English Heritage maintains the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* in England. It is under periodic review with the aim of extending its coverage of parks and gardens deserving protection. The Register contains approximately 1700 sites nationally, under three gradings:

Grade I	of exceptional historic interest (10%)
Grade II*	of great historic interest (30%)
Grade II	special historic interest (60%).

Mid Sussex District has a rich legacy of 9 registered parks and gardens, all within the High Weald:

*Grade II\* (6) (Borde Hill, Brockhurst, Gravetye Manor, High Beeches, Nymans and Wakehurst Place).*

*Grade II (3) (Heaselands, Slaugham Place and Stonehurst).*

These sites account for nearly 30% of the West Sussex total, indicating the high concentration of registered parks and gardens in the District compared with the rest of the County.

**2.69** Many locally important sites falling outside the registration process have a very high importance locally and deserve recognition in their own right. Examples of these in Mid Sussex include Danny at Hurstpierpoint and Cuckfield Park. In addition to the 9 registered parks and gardens, Mid Sussex contains a further 67 sites of greatly varied size recorded by the local authorities, making 76 in all. These cover nearly 5.6% of the District Area (about 1,865 hectares) and in number account for 28% of all parkscapes in West Sussex. They are distributed throughout the Landscape Character Areas (ranked by number) as follows:

<i>High Weald</i>	29
<i>High Weald Fringes</i>	25
<i>Hickstead Low Weald</i>	6
<i>Ouse Valley</i>	5
<i>Worth Forest</i>	4
<i>High Weald Plateau</i>	3
<i>Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes</i>	3
<i>Upper Adur Valley</i>	1
<i>Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs</i>	0
<i>Fulking to Clayton Scarp</i>	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>

The high concentration of over 50 sites in the High Weald and the High Weald Fringes is notable, where parkscapes contribute greatly to the unique character of these landscapes. The sites are shown on *Map 2.4*.

**2.70** Relict parkscapes (including possible former medieval deer parks) are also coming to light as a result of the HLC Project. The landscapes of the parks, both informal and formal (and with a mix of the two), are largely the result of post-medieval gentrification. Only *Danny* and *Slaugham Place and Park* have a medieval date. Large landscaped gardens of more recent times, often with exotic shrubs and trees, are also frequent, especially in the High Weald. The Weald became a favourite area for the extension in the Victorian and Edwardian eras of 'London into Sussex', characterised by widespread, often lavish, house development, the hilly woodland settings highly prized in this, the first 'Commuter Belt'. Brief details of historic parkscapes are contained in the sections covering each Landscape Character Area

#### *Industry and horticulture*

**2.71** Areas of modern industry are largely associated with the principal towns. However, Mid Sussex has a history of extractive industries, principally chalk quarrying and brick making on the clayland, with associated older and modern industrial development and housing. Orchards tend to occur in the north with a concentration of nurseries on the Lower Greensand.

#### *Unenclosed and unimproved land*

**2.72** As noted above, the greatest concentration of unimproved and unenclosed land comprises downland chalk grassland on the downland scarp. A few pieces of common land with heathland and other unimproved habitat remnant survive at Scaynes Hill and at Copthorne. *Bedelands Farm Local Nature Reserve* contains a significant area of unimproved meadowland.

### **The historic landscape over time**

#### *Historic landscapes of medieval origin or earlier*

**2.73** There are evidently relatively few visual historic landscape types of early medieval or prehistoric origin in the District, although detailed research would be needed to reveal the true extent of these remnants. Some areas are obvious and well known such as the Devil's Dyke hillfort, chalk grassland on the crest of the Downs, and groups of co-axial fields in the Low Weald. However, other features of no less importance are to be found virtually everywhere. Such features include the extensive system of tracks and greenways throughout the District, which are essentially medieval in origin. Many of the numerous boundary banks are late Saxon or medieval in origin (see *para 2.130 on Research topics* and *paras 2.78-80* below).

**2.74** Landscapes with an unbroken continuity to the present (medieval and onwards) tend to occur in the High Weald where there are some discontinuous swathes of assart fields and ancient woodlands interspersed with large and small farmsteads. These include the area around Scaynes Hill, to the north west of Burgess

Hill, and in the stretch of land between Haywards Heath and East Grinstead. East Grinstead retains its medieval urban core.

#### *Historic landscapes of post-medieval origin*

**2.75** Post-medieval landscapes date from the periods 1500-1599 (early) and 1600-1799 (late). The landscape at the foot of the Downs on the Gault Clay and Lower Greensand apparently dates from these periods, characterised by privately planned enclosure. Small tracts of similar fields occur in the north of the District with formal enclosure from woods, commons and possibly the re-organisation of assart fields. Various designed landscapes across the District date from this period as well as numerous small and large farmsteads. In the north, relict Wealden iron hammerponds date from this period.

#### *Landscapes of the early modern period*

**2.76** The District contains continuous tracts of landscapes that are essentially 19<sup>th</sup> Century in date. These have resulted from the enclosure and ploughing of former open sheep walks on the downland and from the enclosure and afforestation of the wood pasture and commons of Worth Forest. Changes elsewhere, including the gentrification of the landscape through large and small parklands, have fragmented older landscapes throughout the District. Many woodland plantations and regenerated woods date from this period as do the beginnings of significant suburban development on the edges of historic settlements.

#### *Landscapes of the modern period*

**2.77** This period covers the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century up to the end of the Second World War and the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century up to 2000. Taking the District as a whole, the single largest modern landscape type is late suburban development around the main towns, with considerable areas of this type dating from earlier in the Century. Other changes have resulted from the expansion and modernisation of farm holdings. Loss of character takes many forms, including:

- Breaking up and gentrification of some farm holdings.
- Field amalgamation and enlargement.
- Expansion of farmsteads.
- Suburban expansion of towns, villages and hamlets.
- Increased levels of other isolated countryside developments of various kinds.
- Infrastructure developments.
- Hedgerow, tree and woodland removal and new plantations.
- Loss of orchards.
- Golf course development.
- Sub-division of fields into paddocks for horse grazing.

#### *Boundary loss*

**2.78** Boundaries and the structures associated with them (walls, banks, hedges, ditches, trackways and markers) are a fundamental component of landscape, especially from an historic viewpoint. As noted in *para 2.72 above*, in Mid Sussex, many have survived from prehistoric, Saxon and medieval times, particularly ancient greenways and boundary banks. Boundary loss – whether of ancient boundaries or more recent ones – is therefore a key indicator of historic landscape character change. In Mid Sussex there are few tracts of land where there has been no boundary loss. These areas are fragmented and dispersed throughout the western part of the High Weald. The downs do not have a history of boundary loss but this masks the modern fencing of sheep walks for intensive arable production. Boundaries have been lost most from informal fields of a regular shape where hedges have been removed. Assart fields have lost the least, possibly because of the hilly topography and the relative difficulty in removing wooded strips.

**2.79** In many cases, boundary loss has been so great (between 50 and 100%) that the original pattern of fields cannot be seen on the ground. Such areas are discrete and obvious, confirming the adoption by one or two landowners of an intensive farming, for instance, north of Scaynes Hill and north west of Burgess Hill as well as in various areas in the northern part of the High Weald.

**2.80** Boundary gain for the most part indicates the subdivision of fields into paddocks by fences usually associated with horse stabling and grazing and field re-organisation, notably at and around the Hickstead Showground. There are rare instances of new hedges being planted.

## **FORCES FOR CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE**

### **Introduction**

**2.81** The landscape, ecological and historic character of Mid Sussex District is dynamic, constantly changing in response to human activity and natural processes. Historically, far reaching changes in agriculture, the socio-economic structure of local communities, and economic and industrial growth have all had significant impacts. As the foregoing analysis suggests, the pace of change today is far greater than ever before. Development and other environmental changes are having increasingly visible, cumulative and far reaching effects on landscape character. These include increasing demands for road transport, new infrastructure and high rates of residential and commercial development. The landscape is also undergoing significant change from new patterns of agricultural land use in response to changing climatic and market conditions. Unless change is creatively managed, we may lose unnecessarily those characteristics of the landscape we cherish whilst missing opportunities to create new landscapes. The paragraphs below identify the key forces for change in the landscape, both globally and locally.

### **Climate change**

**2.82** Climate change is a global issue, but has far-reaching-local effects. Taking account of the specific potential affects of climate change on landscape character within Mid Sussex is therefore of the greatest importance.

**2.83** The evidence that significant climate change is occurring globally is now compelling enough to stimulate international debate and action. There is broad scientific consensus that the climate is changing; that human activities are accelerating these changes; and that further changes are unavoidable for the next half century.

**2.84** The Report of the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) (2002) contains a set of future climate change scenarios based on work undertaken by the Hadley Centre and University of East Anglia. The predictive models used all point to unavoidable changes. However, as with all such models, there is always a degree of uncertainty. Whilst there will be change, how it will manifest itself in future is by no means clear today and, in the longer term, the uncertainty is that much greater. The most likely impact in the decades ahead is a general warming with changes in precipitation and weather patterns. However, most models show a weakening in the Gulf Stream during the twenty-first century which could bring about a cooling of average temperatures. We must therefore respond positively to the challenges posed by this uncertainty and provide a clear but flexible Strategy.

**2.85** Consequently, international efforts are being made to reduce the threat of climate change through large-scale limits on emissions. This has direct implications for our use of energy. It seems inevitable that we will come to rely more and more on

renewable energy in many and varied forms, all of which will have an impact on the landscape, some particularly so.

**2.86** Climate change could have all manner of affects on the environment and landscape of the District including the ways in which land is developed and used. This change will create problems and opportunities, and it is our reaction to that change which will be important. It will be necessary to take an adaptive view from now on, possibly including 'climate proof' decisions.

**2.87** Should they occur, the impacts of climate change on the landscape character of Mid Sussex are likely to be complex and interrelated, varying over space and time but gaining ground within decades. The more obvious likely impacts are summarised below.

### **Temperature, rainfall and storms**

**2.88** Changes in temperatures and rainfall patterns will affect biodiversity, including potential loss within decades of some species or habitats (for instance, beech, wet heath, and certain chalk grassland species) with corresponding possible gains for others. This would bring about changes in the composition of hedgerows and beech stands and boundaries in areas such as the Worth forests, and impede efforts to restore heathland and chalk grassland respectively in the Wealden areas of the District and on the downs.

**2.89** An increasing frequency of winter gales is likely to lead to greater storm damage to woodlands. This is of particular importance in the High Wealden part of the District, where dense and varied tree cover is a defining aspect of the landscape.

**2.90** Also likely to increase would be the flooding and waterlogging of the heavier, less well-drained clays of the Low Weald and the heavy Gault Clay vales during the winter and the incidence of hot, dry spells leading to subsidence, and soil desiccation and increased risk of wind erosion.

### **Rising sea levels**

**2.91** Although Mid Sussex is not a coastal district, it contains the headwaters of tidal rivers such as the Adur and Ouse. A rising sea level leading to increasing flooding and inundation of the coast would be likely to affect greatly the regime of these rivers and create the possibility of inland flooding unless new river defences were constructed - which in themselves could have significant landscape affects. Possible contamination of fresh water through salt water innundation would also be more likely to occur.

### **Changes in cropping patterns**

**2.92** An increasing replacement of traditional arable crops by drought-tolerant species could bring about profound changes in the appearance and experience of the landscape and the pattern of wildlife within it. Again, such changes have significant potential consequences for Mid Sussex, since the dominant land use in the District is agriculture. In a few places, crops such as sunflowers and maize are already being planted. Large-scale changes such as these could transform the general appearance of the landscape, exposed as it is to long views from the north and south. Not least would be a change near and far in the colour and textures of the landscape and local visibility changes depending on the height of new crops. The increasing effects of pests and diseases could be deleterious to landscape quality, with potential unforeseen environmental consequences of using new kinds of pesticides.

**2.93** Changes in energy requirements could also be expected to bring about large-scale landscape change through the production of crops to supply biomass fuel (see *Renewable Energy* and *paras 2.100-02 on Woodland Management* below).

## Changes in groundwater levels

**2.94** Drier summers will lead to reduction in groundwater levels and the drying out of ponds and watercourses (again, with impacts on wildlife). This could result in less water being available to dilute pollutants, thereby reducing water quality. Much of the District is drained by the headwaters of the Rivers Adur and Ouse, the valley landscapes of which depend on a wet environment based on numerous water meadows and feeder streams, the latter especially in the High Weald. Should groundwater regimes become drier, the characteristic appearance and wildlife of the valleys in particular could change significantly. Increasing levels of development anticipated in the Crawley-Gatwick sub-Region would tend to exacerbate problems associated with run-off and pollutants and contribute to the increase in demand for water. The District already contains one reservoir and adjoins another. Changes in water management and pressures to create new reservoirs (including an increasing requirement for irrigation reservoirs to store winter rainfall) would have significant landscape affects.

## Other affects of temperature change

**2.95** Other effects of temperature change might include:

- Warmer summers, encouraging greater recreation and tourism, thereby exacerbating existing problems such as traffic congestion and erosion.
- Damage to archaeological sites through soil desiccation and changing farming practices. This could have a highly deleterious affect on the integrity of historic landscapes in the District, particularly on the South Downs. Within historic parks and gardens (of which the District has a particularly rich legacy) the maintenance of specimen plants and fine grass swards may not be viable under new climatic conditions.
- Increasing driving rain and solar radiation leading to the decay of the fabric of buildings and the shortening of building life-expectancies.

## Renewable energy

**2.96** Under a regime of global warming, energy supply would come to rely more and more on alternatives to fossil fuels including biomass energy. Decreased temperatures at certain times of year would also be likely to result from global warming, with an associated absolute increase in energy demand. Current *Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (PPG9)* envisages that by 2026 at least 14% of regional electricity generation capacity will be provided from renewable sources.

**2.97** As our reliance on renewable energy sources increases, the production of these is likely to have a profound impact on the character of the landscape. Current technologies include wind farms and the use of photo-voltaic cells capturing solar energy, from domestic applications to larger-scale schemes including potential industrial applications. The number of combined heat and power plants (CHP) is also likely to increase, fuelled either directly by existing potential sources of biomass, such as wood and straw, or by oils and gases derived from existing and new types of crop. The securing of renewable energy sources has potentially momentous consequences for the Mid Sussex landscape, some highly positive, some more problematic:

- Pressures for windfarms are likely to grow, and in Mid Sussex, the higher ground likely to be favoured is wholly within the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In such a situation, there may well be conflict between energy needs and the requirement in AONBs to protect natural beauty and distinctive character. These pressures have yet to materialise, but may be expected to do so.



- The greatest and most readily-available renewable energy resource in Mid Sussex is wood biomass. The technology to utilise this is likely to become commonplace, with potentially great benefits for the sustainable management of woodland resources, for the local economy and for the renewal of the character of the woodland landscape, given the historical contribution of the Wealden woodland coppices to charcoal production (see *paras 2.100-02 on Woodland Management* below).
- The majority of CHP and heat-generating installations will be small-scale in nature, and could be considered to be less obtrusive within the landscape and appropriate in many rural locations. Nevertheless, such developments would need to be considered carefully and be well-sited.

## **Agriculture, land management and biodiversity**

### **Agriculture**

**2.98** Whilst the effects of post-1945 agricultural changes on landscape character are well understood, the effects of future changes are harder to envisage. Change will result from increasing, globally-based competition; continuing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); and the proposals in the *Government Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food*, including the proposed Agri-Environmental (Countryside Stewardship) Scheme. These changes are likely to present fresh challenges with regard to landscape character including significant opportunities for landscape restoration and enhancement (see also **Appendix 3 paras A.15-22**). Taking into account the implications of climate change, the more obvious likely impacts of changes in agriculture and land management are summarised below.

- There is potential for further increases in large arable farm units, leading to a greater homogenisation of the landscape, the reduction of already depleted biodiversity, and potential demand for more centralised, large scale buildings such as grain storage and produce packaging facilities. Areas of single, enlarged arable farm units are already evident in various places throughout the District.
- The current poor agricultural economy and increasing competition is making it more difficult for some farmers to make a living from dairy and beef livestock farming, causing land abandonment and subsequent scrub expansion. This is already evident in many parts of the District, particularly in the High Weald, and has recently become more common in the Low Weald.
- The decline in traditional land management practices is continuing. Agricultural land improvement can lead to the loss of habitats such as herb-rich grasslands, wet grasslands and degradation of field boundaries.
- Changes in agricultural practice include part-time "hobby" farming with related farm and estate fragmentation, loss of traditional farm boundaries, and decline in traditional farm management. This is particularly evident in Mid Sussex.
- Further pressures are continuing for new uses of marginal land (including in the rural urban fringe) such as smallholdings, leisure uses and expansion of horse paddocks.
- Potential adverse effects on biodiversity of genetically modified herbicide-tolerant and insect-resistant crops may have consequences for the landscape.
- Soil erosion is continuing as the consequence of ploughing on steep slopes, particularly on downland, in places creating a *white* landscape where fragments of the underlying chalk have been brought to the surface. Happily, there is far less evidence of this in Mid Sussex than hitherto.

- Damage to visible archaeological features from ploughing continues, particularly on the downland.
- Unless rigorously controlled, some rural diversification developments may damage the historic and architectural character of farmsteads and settlements.
- The impact of modern agricultural buildings on the landscape is continuing (for instance, there has been a notable increase in the District landscape in recent years of on-farm grain feed silos).
- As already mentioned, the introduction of biomass crops has significant potential consequences for the agricultural landscapes of the District.

**2.99** Many of these changes appear to be negative. More positive changes are likely to include:

- The scope in the new Agri-Environmental Schemes for landscape and habitat renewal.
- As mentioned above, the revitalisation of woodlands through wood biomass fuel production.
- Future development of local environmentally friendly and organic produce, building on the opportunities presented by the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), thereby helping to stem the loss of biodiversity on farmland.

### **Woodland management**

**2.100** The South East Region is the most wooded in the country, with almost 275,000 hectares covering around 15% of the land area (the area of woodland having actually increased in recent years). The South East Region Forestry and Woodlands Framework *Seeing the Wood for the Trees* (2004) (see **Appendix 1** para A1.13) highlights how trees, woodlands and forestry can contribute greatly towards sustainable development and quality of life through the realisation of the economic, environmental and social benefits that woodland management and tree planting can provide.

**2.101** Woodland and tree cover in West Sussex is higher than the regional average, covering 18.9% of the County land area. This percentage has been maintained since the 1970s. Most of this cover, a significant proportion of which is ancient, is concentrated in the Wealden areas. Mid Sussex overall is therefore a densely-wooded district by West Sussex standards by virtue of the inclusion within it of the western High Weald. However, despite woodlands providing many social and environmental benefits for the inhabitants of the District, the management of a substantial proportion of them is inadequate or neglected. The key forces for change related to woodland in Mid Sussex and the implications of these for landscape character include:

- Decline in coppice woodland management and lack of natural regeneration.
- Isolation and fragmentation of ancient woodland (and the introduction in the past of conifers into ancient woodlands) in the High Weald and in the Gault Clay vales.
- Low proportions of broadleaved trees in some ageing coniferous plantations, and erosion of distinctive broadleaved woodland types throughout the District.

**2.102** Positive future directions for woodland change and management include:

- Detailed survey of the ancient woodlands of Mid Sussex (starts October 2005).
- Encouragement of sustainable woodland management through the development of new markets for woodland products, including wood biomass fuel, supported by woodland management grants and Agri-Environmental Schemes.

- Initiatives such as the West Weald Woods Landscape Partnership, which aims to reduce the isolation and fragmentation of woodlands by creating a mosaic of woods, open glades, heath and meadow, linked by strips of woodland and other green corridors. This patchwork will create a matrix of habitats in a landscape that will be invaluable for wildlife and people alike. Such integrated management will bridge the gap between the history of the area and the current landscape.
- Introduction by the Forestry Authority and other woodland owners of broadleaved woodland elements into coniferous plantations, particularly in the Worth forests.
- Continued protection of rare and in some cases nationally-important woodland habitats, for instance, wet woodlands and sandrock communities in the deep High Wealdgills and the recreation of largely lost habitats such as floodplain woodland (Sussex Floodplain Woodland Concept Study) in and adjoining the District.
- The continued promotion of woodland for quiet recreational pursuits which respect woodland habitats and draw on the experience of being in woodland.

### Management of wildlife habitats

**2.103** As in other areas of the County, records show that the extent and variety of wildlife habitats in Mid Sussex has been in steady decline over the last thirty years. Species-rich chalk grassland and meadows, heathlands and wetlands are now rare and precious habitats in the District. All of these need protection and active management if their character and biodiversity are to be maintained. Whilst the rate of loss from direct damage now appears to be lessening, the management of the remaining habitats will require effort and resources (see **Appendix 3** paras A3.47-50 for details on Biodiversity Action Planning).

### Built development

**2.104** The relationship of development with landscape and townscape character is of great importance in Mid Sussex. The District and the areas around it have experienced major sub-regional growth since the Second World War, with the development of the new town at Crawley, the growth of Gatwick Airport, the outward growth of major settlements and new development in most villages. The District today contains three substantial modern towns, the expanded medieval market settlements of Cuckfield and Lindfield, and expanded villages at Hurstpierpoint, Keymer and Hassocks. Despite restraints on new development, development in the countryside has increased, centred on housing infill, farmstead expansion, and infrastructure and commercial development.

**2.105** The populations of the principal settlements in Mid Sussex District (2001 Census) are as follows:

Burgess Hill	28,803
East Grinstead	23,942
Haywards Heath and Lindfield	22,800
Crawley Down and Turners Hill	7,152
Hassocks	6,821
Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common	6,264
Copthorne and Worth	4,580
Cuckfield	3,266

### Strategic gaps

**2.106** The local authorities have long recognised pressures for development in the land between principal settlements and have designated this land as *strategic gaps*

in successive reviews of the County Structure Plan and Borough and District local plans. The policy seeks to maintain and enhance the separate identity and character of such settlements in the District. Development that would undermine this objective or lead to the actual or perceived coalescence of the settlements should not be permitted. The strategic gaps in Mid Sussex District are:

*Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint/Keymer/Hassocks*  
*Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath*  
*Hatwards Heath and Cuckfield*  
*Haywards Heath/Lindfield and Scaynes Hill*  
*Craeley and East Grinstead*  
*Crawley and Pease Pottage*  
*East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood.*

The strategic gaps are mentioned as necessary in the sections on each Landscape Character Area. The District Local Plan also defines *Local Gaps* between smaller settlements.

### **Future development in Mid Sussex**

**2.107** As elsewhere in the Country, proposed levels of new housing development in West Sussex represent a significant pressure for change. Continued coastal urban development on the downland fringe, and recent major expansions around Burgess Hill, Crawley and Haywards Heath have had significant impacts on local landscape character. In Mid Sussex, likely development levels to 2026 will pose an important challenge in accommodating housing development without eroding character and local distinctiveness.

**2.108** For the purposes of regional planning, many parts of the South East have been defined as sub-regions, mainly where growth is anticipated. The greater part of Mid Sussex District (from a point just south of Burgess Hill northwards) lies in the Gatwick sub-Region, the extreme southern part in the Coastal sub-Region. The inclusion of much of the District in the Gatwick sub-Region (and lying as it does across the Brighton to Crawley corridor) emphasises the close relationship between future development and economic growth in Mid Sussex with that in the Crawley-Gatwick area.

**2.109** In the Gatwick area, the aim is to manage economic pressures by supporting the right type of economic growth; making the best use of the labour force of the area; and improving skills to match wider job opportunities. On the Sussex Coast the aim is to promote sustainable economic regeneration and provide high-quality employment sites supported by much-needed infrastructure and improved workforce skills.

**2.110** Under Part Two of the draft *South East Plan*, the South East England Regional Assembly has put forward for consultation (September 23- 4 November 2005) a set of housing numbers for the Borough and District areas for the period to 2026 and proposals covering employment and infrastructure needs. The proposals are summarised in the Public Consultation leaflet *Housing, Jobs and Infrastructure in West Sussex* (September 2005) prepared by the County Council.

**2.111** An allocation of 3,400 or 3,800 houses is suggested for Mid Sussex in addition to the assessment of the existing supply of dwellings. This includes an allowance of about 500 for further housing in the form of small-scale gradual growth which is likely to continue to come forward as additions to existing settlements. This would leave a need to find additional land for 2900 or 3300 dwellings. The Assembly considers that these figures reflect the need to support the economy of the Gatwick area and make up a building backlog (for further material on the *South East Plan* see **Appendix 1** paras A1.14-18). For details of the regional economic context see the *Regional Economic Strategy for South East England 2002-2012* (2001) published by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA). *An Economic Strategy for West Sussex*

County Council (2004) contains an action strategy (pp21-4) for the north east sector of the County which seeks to address the distinctive set of challenges faced by the rapidly developing economy centred on Gatwick Airport and Crawley.

### **Development and landscape and townscape character**

**2.112** In the past, much development has resulted in:

- Expansion of suburban character and infill development in rural areas, which may be at odds with traditional settlement patterns and rural character.
- Development of standardised designs on the fringes of existing settlements, which compromise local distinctiveness, setting and landscape character.
- The introduction of a diverse variety of inappropriate building materials and styles without reference to styles of traditional rural siting and design.
- Expansion of industrial, leisure and retail developments on the edges of the main towns with potential to erode rural character.

The location, density and design of the new development to come will therefore affect the landscape character of the District. It will be the job of the District Local Development Framework to ensure that the location and siting of development reflect the character of the landscape and townscape in which it is set and be *good enough to approve* by way of well-designed buildings at varying densities which fit in sympathetically with the differing character of localities. The District Council is preparing a Supplementary Planning Document on *Sustainable Construction* which explains how sustainable construction techniques can be employed in new developments to improve the environmental and social impacts of new buildings. For further details on relevant policies in the District Local Plan, see **Appendix 2**.

### **Infrastructure including water resources**

**2.113** The key forces for change related to infrastructure and implications for landscape character include:

- Pressure for new roads and the growth in levels of traffic on existing roads, leading to impacts on the tranquillity of the countryside and rural settlements.
- Fragmentation of habitats and historic landscape patterns as a result of linear infrastructure developments. The homogenising influence of road design on local landscape character.
- Additional pylons, overhead transmission lines and telecommunication masts intruding on important views leading to an erosion of tranquillity and sense of remoteness.
- More widespread lighting impacts resulting in loss of clearly visible night skies.
- Visual impact of structures for the management of flood risk and new water supply and waste water infrastructure.
- Maintaining an adequate quality and supply of water and disposing efficiently of waste water and run-off.

**2.114** Road infrastructure in Mid Sussex has developed greatly in recent decades, particularly along the Crawley-Brighton axis, including the development of the modern A23 Trunk Road, and the M23 Motorway along the District boundary with Crawley Borough. Many other roads (including new and proposed relief roads) have been improved to cope with increasing volumes of traffic, notably along the Crawley-East Grinstead corridor. Many rural roads are now requiring road safety improvements to cope with increased traffic flows. This level of road growth and

usage has had widespread effects on the appearance and tranquillity of the countryside throughout the District.

**2.115** The importance of water as a resource and its efficient conservation, supply and disposal, are self-evident and of primary importance in the District. Supply and water quality must not be compromised by development demands. In managing water supply, it will continue to be important to protect existing sources, reduce leakage, manage demand sensibly, and examine carefully storage and transfer possibilities. Policies at regional and local level will continue to seek to safeguard water supply and quality in the light of proposed new development (see **Appendix 1** paras A1.9-11 concerning the actions of the Environment Agency with regard to river catchment management planning).

## **Minerals and waste sites and facilities**

**2.116** Mineral extraction has a long history in Mid Sussex, stretching back over 1,000 years in the case of iron extraction in the Weald. In modern times, activity has centred on brick- and tile-making in the Low Weald, with a few, larger clay pits (for example, at Burgess Hill) and many smaller ones, now mostly closed, although local brick- and tile-making continues, contributing important supply of locally-distinctive materials. Chalk extraction was never carried out in large-scale quarries in the District, mainly confined to many, smaller pits and delvings. Stone quarrying (Wealden stone in the High Weald and Horsham Stone and, very locally, Lower Greensand in the Low Weald) has all but ceased. Policies for minerals and waste sites and facilities in the District are respectively contained in the *West Sussex Minerals Local Plan* (2003) and the *West Sussex Waste Local Plan 2001-2016* (Revised Deposit Draft, 2004) prepared by the County Council.

**2.117** The key forces for change related to mineral extraction, waste disposal and restoration, and implications for landscape character include:

- Impacts of extractive workings during operation and following restoration, including impacts on historic landscape patterns.
- Visual and noise impacts of heavy traffic associated with mineral workings and landfill sites leading to erosion of tranquillity.
- Increasing adverse visual impact from fly tipping.
- Re-creation of new landscapes as part of restoration schemes.

Both local plans emphasise the benefits to be gained by the greater local re-cycling of building and other materials (recycled building materials are often the only source of older materials including local stone).

## **Recreation and tourism**

**2.118** The varied and sometimes dramatic landscape of Mid Sussex is one of the outstanding assets of the District, containing substantial areas of the nationally important landscapes of the High Weald and South Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The District contains an excellent system of public rights of way and longer distance routes allowing walking, cycling and horse-riding.

**2.119** There is a wealth of highly accessible visitor attractions in Mid Sussex. These are listed in the current District Council *Mid Sussex Guide* and *Explore Mid Sussex: Places to Discover in the High Weald to South Downs*; in the County Tourist Guide *Places to Visit in West Sussex* (2005); and in other publications. These last include various walking and cycling guides, pub walk books and brochures, the *Sussex Gardens 2005* (National Garden Schemes gardens open for charity) and the *Sussex Gardens and*

*Specialist Nurseries* guides; and guides to Sussex Churches published by the Churches Conservation Trust and the County Council.

**2.120** Principal attractions include parks and gardens open to the public (notably at Borde Hill and Wakehurst Place), historic houses, golf courses, farm trails, nature reserves, sailing facilities at Ardingly Reservoir, the Bluebell Steam Railway, and the principal and popular viewpoints on the South Downs at Devil's Dyke and at Jack and Jill Windmills.

**2.121** However, recreational activity can bring pressures of its own. In Mid Sussex, the key forces for change related to recreation and tourism, and implications for landscape character, include:

- Increased use of country roads and lanes by motorists visiting attractions, pubs or just enjoying the countryside.
- Potential impacts on landscape and wildlife of large formal recreational developments such as golf courses with associated facilities.
- Potential effects of horse riding and associated facilities on landscape character including over-grazed paddocks, the introduction of post-and-rail fencing and horse jumps, and decline in the management of hedgerows.
- Visitor pressure at Devil's Dyke.
- Increasing development of new forms of recreation such as four-wheel driving, paint-balling and mountain-biking.
- Pressure for noisy sports such as motor scrambling and radio-controlled cars and planes.

### **Small-scale incremental change**

**2.122** The universally high level of modern private mobility has created an unprecedented opportunity for urban-based living in the countryside underpinned by an expensive and buoyant property market. A major consequence of this is the gradual suburbanisation of the rural landscape resulting from the conversion of former agricultural dwellings and buildings to residential and other uses. This transformation of rural life has brought about significant changes in the visual character of the 'traditional' countryside. Notable changes include the sub-division of adjacent fields and orchards around farmsteads into fenced paddocks, with menages, stables, swimming pools and tennis courts. Other aspects include house extensions and re-building; outside lighting; elaborate entrance gateways and fencing; the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species, including Cypress hedges and windbreaks; high levels of garden and verge maintenance; and a recent and increasing tendency to paint over brick and stonework.

**2.123** It is anticipated that pressures for development will persist, as will the suburbanising trends mentioned above. Traffic levels will continue to rise. Together with increasing recreational demands, these numerous changes are likely to have a cumulative effect, eroding further the perceived rural, secluded and tranquil nature of many parts of the area.

**2.124** Many small and often subtle shifts in the type, colour and texture of materials and new patterns of vegetation are contributing to slow changes in the essential character of the landscapes of West Sussex. Local identity, ecological diversity, historic features and a sense of remoteness in the countryside can all too easily be eroded as a result of many, relatively minor changes, resulting in progressive and cumulative urbanisation.

**2.125** The key forces for change related to small-scale incremental changes and implications for landscape character include:

- Small-scale road improvements including widening, straightening and the addition of road markings and signage.
- Erosion by increased traffic of the banks of rural lanes.
- Increases in the number of cars parking in villages.
- Introduction of suburban styles and materials into the countryside as a result of property improvements.
- Introduction of non-native species, for instance, cypresses and the escaping into the countryside of exotic garden species.
- Loss and deterioration of locally distinctive and historic features such as walls, fencing, paving, gates, timber signposts, milestones, windmills, orchards, fords, and dewponds.

## **Mechanisms for implementation**

**2.126** Details of the actions to conserve landscape character which the District Council and its partners intend to take, and the activities of other agencies closely involved with landscape conservation in Mid Sussex are listed in **Appendix 3**.

## **Monitoring, targets and indicators**

**2.127** The District Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy contains various plans concerning landscape and biodiversity actions but no sets of landscape targets and indicators (biodiversity targets and indicators stem from the biodiversity action planning process). The Assessment and the Strategy together provide a basis for devising targets and indicators with which to measure the success of the action plans. Under its *Countryside Quality Counts* initiative, the Countryside Agency is seeking to monitor landscape change within the national Character Areas. This should provide a sound basis for monitoring work at a more local level.

## **Further research**

**2.128** The Assessment is a snapshot of the Mid Sussex landscape: the description and evaluation of landscape in it will not stand indefinitely. As the stakeholders were keen to point out (see **Appendix 4**), the Assessment must be forward-looking and be capable of being up-dated regularly. There will be continuing change in the District landscape. It will therefore be of the utmost importance to review and up-date the Assessment both in the light of change and as the result of fresh knowledge. Further research will need to be identified and carried out at appropriate geographical levels. This section mentions two areas of research and it is anticipated that further research topics will be mooted.

### **Ancient woodland**

**2.129** The District Council in partnership with the High Weald AONB Unit is about to begin a survey of ancient woodlands in the District (see **Appendix 3 paras A3.37-8**). Only woodlands over two hectares in size are recorded in the ancient woodland inventories currently available and this has long been considered a serious omission. The new survey will cover all ancient woodland, allowing, *inter alia*, a more refined approach to landscape characterisation.



## **Historic landscape boundaries**

**2.130** As noted in the discussion of the historic landscape boundaries and the structures associated with them (walls, banks, hedges, ditches, trackways and markers) are a fundamental component of landscape, especially from an historic viewpoint. The extensive system of tracks and greenways throughout the District, are essentially medieval in origin and many of the numerous boundary banks are late originated in Saxon or medieval times. Boundary loss – whether of ancient boundaries or more recent ones – is therefore a key indicator of historic landscape character change. The District Council and its partners will review existing sources of knowledge on this topic and consider the possibility of further research.

## **Hedgerows**

**2.131** The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership *Hedgerows Habitat Action Plan* (June 2004) places high priority on identifying the current extent of ancient and/or species-rich hedges. The *Sussex Hedgerow Inventory Project* seeks to meet this need, based on a standard survey method. In addition, there is a formal exchange of information through regular and structured meetings of the Sussex Hedgerow Habitat Action Plan Working Group and the West Sussex County Council Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows Advisory Group (see paras 2.24-5 above).

## **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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

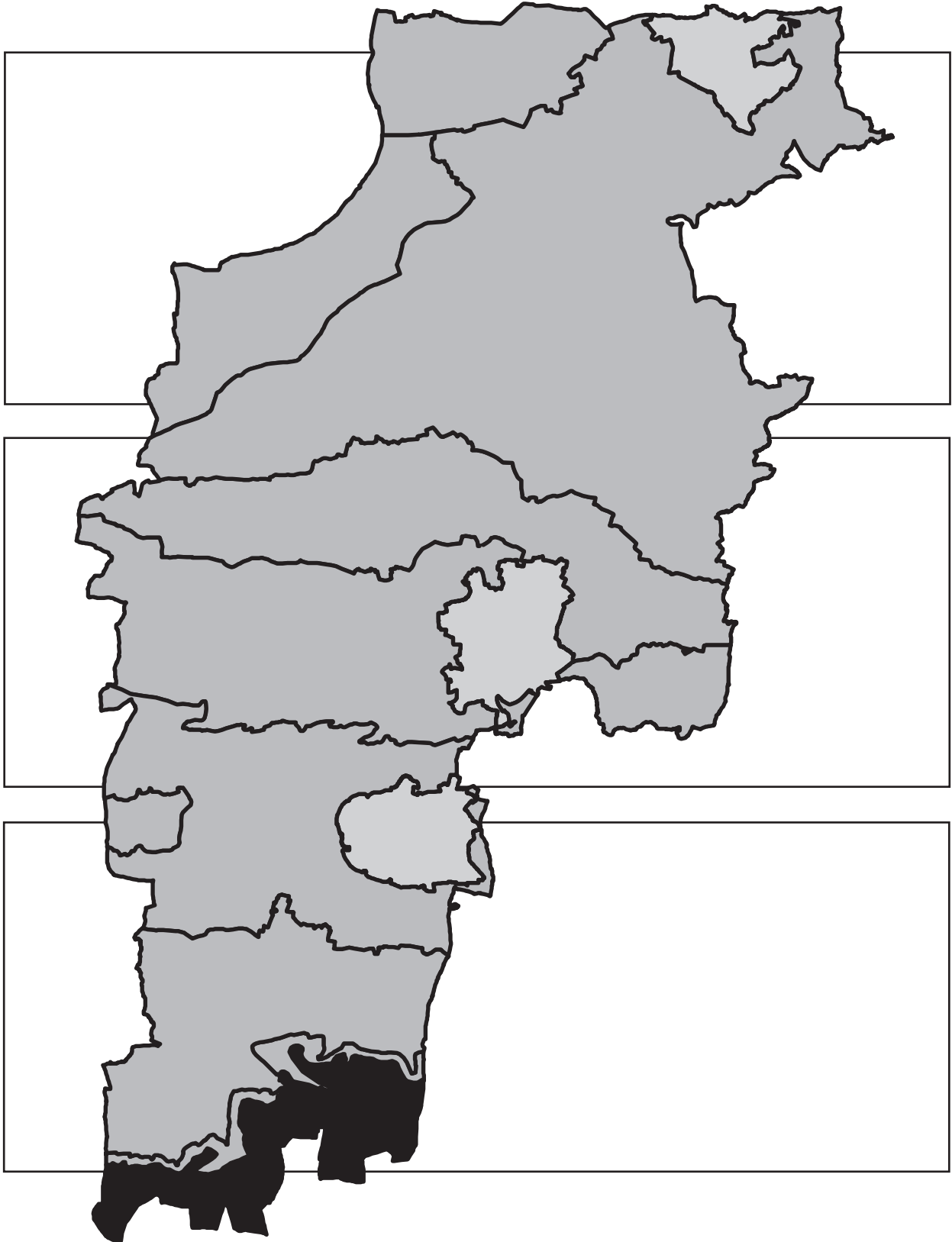
**3.5** The corresponding extent of the three national Character Areas in the District ranked by size is therefore as follows:

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.

Landscape Character Area 1  
**Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs**



## Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**The open, eastern 'glorious South Downs' defined to the north by a steep escarpment (scarp) facing the Weald. An elemental landscape despite intensive cultivation and the closeness of large urban areas.**

- Elevated, open rolling landform of hills, dry valleys and a steep escarpment (scarp) across uniform chalk upland scenery close to the sea.
- Expansive, open landscape under big skies of variable, elemental landforms imparts a sense of wildness and seasonal mood despite the nearness of urban areas and intensive agricultural use.
- Relatively narrow, branching and winding valley systems and coombes in a variety of forms, often with an enclosed, secluded character.
- Panoramic views across the Weald to the Surrey Hills and the North Downs.
- Southern boundary of the area is fringed by the major coastal towns of Brighton, Hove and Shoreham-by-Sea.
- Predominance of open arable and grassland cultivation with irregular, smaller pastures, woodland patches and hedgerows in the chalk valleys and coombes, on parts of the scarp, and along the scarp foot.
- Remnant species-rich grassland confined to the scarp, other steep slopes and valley sides.
- Isolated farms and farm buildings on the high downland and sparse settlement elsewhere, clustered in the valleys, in hamlets and farmsteads.
- Ridge line was line of a major ancient routeway, today the *South Downs Way*.
- Many landmarks and distinctive prehistoric and historic landscape features.
- Chalk quarries and pits, telecommunications masts, pylon lines, golf courses, and intensive recreational use centred on Devil's Dyke.
- Crossed by the A23 Trunk Road, the A27 Trunk Road (Brighton By-pass) to the south, and by a modest network of high lanes, some of them busy with traffic.
- Much localised traffic noise from roads within and on the edges of the downland.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area via Clayton Tunnel.
- Traditional rural buildings built of local flint and brick with weatherboarded barns.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**4.1** The chalk landscapes of the South Downs fall broadly into two types – the enclosed and wooded downs at Angmering Park and west of the River Arun, and the open uplands to the east. The eastern downland is an expansive, open panoramic landscape of uniform upland chalk scenery. Unencumbered by woodland and hedgerows, the rolling land is fully exposed, its height and breadth emphasised by the unbroken landform and its utter difference from the pastoral landscapes beneath and beyond it.

**4.2** The chalk dip slope has been sculpted into distinctive, sweeping forms by dry valleys of various kinds. Most of the valleys are gently rounded, winding trough-shaped hollows which become progressively steeper and narrower as they cut into the more elevated northern part of the chalk dip-slope. These valleys often branch profusely, each branch ending in a deep, steep-sided coombe. Some of the valley features are asymmetrical, comprising a steep mini-scarp on one side and a sweeping, shallow slope on the other. Many of the dry valleys have reached the ridge top, sculpting it into a series of undulating ridges and hills, the latter particularly valued as sites for ancient settlements and fortifications. The sides and floor of the upper dry valley are often used for pasture, the steeper slopes retaining a patchy mosaic of rough grassland and scrub and occasional small patches of woodland.

**4.3** Fields are often very large and rectilinear. Intensive arable cultivation has been the norm since the Second World War although areas of open grassland remain. Hedgerows have never been a feature of the eastern chalk. Where they do occur they tend to be associated with the few farmsteads on the lower slopes, in valley bottoms, or alongside trackways. Some fields are wire-fenced but most remain unenclosed. The arable fields form an extensive, geometric mosaic that varies in colour and texture with different crops and seasonal cycles. The unobtrusive field boundaries detract little from the uninterrupted sweep of the rolling landforms. Small, isolated blocks of woodland, usually with strong, regular shapes, are occasional landmark features, visible for miles around. The uplands feel spacious, bleak and exposed to the elements, skylines and weather a dominant influence. A sense of wildness and seasonal mood pervades the landscape despite the severe pattern of intensive agricultural use and, in places, the nearness of large urban areas.

#### **The open downland in Mid Sussex**

**4.4** The Landscape Character Area lies wholly within the *Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*, bordering on East Sussex to the east, Horsham District to the west, and the City of Brighton and Hove and Adur District to the south. The south-dipping downland with its system of dry valleys and the spectacular scarp with its embayments and coombes constitute the entire landform. However, for the purposes of the Assessment, the distinctive scarp is described separately as the *Fulking to Clayton Scarp Landscape Character Area (Area 2)*.

**4.5** The open downland in Mid Sussex forms a small part of a massive block of upland stretching from the Adur valley in the west to the River Ouse at Lewes in the east, the coastal chalk cliffline starting at Brighton. The irregular District boundary encloses the upper parts of the dip-slope, the heads of numerous dry valleys and the scarp. The long, lower dry valleys run south into the urban areas of Shoreham-by-Sea, Brighton and Hove. The downs are generally open, with patches of woodland and scrub in the dry valleys and on parts of the scarp. The undulating ridgetop is crowned by a series of hills, at Edburton, Perching, Devil's Dyke and Newtimber. Wolstonbury Hill is a spectacular, seemingly detached hill in its own right. Further east, the ridge rises higher, to 234 metres above sea level at Clayton Holt, a mile or so from the high point of Ditchling Beacon (248 metres) in East Sussex.

**4.6** The vistas from the ridge top are panoramic and spectacular. The chalk scarp itself is visible from Devil's Dyke westwards as far as the Rackham Banks at Amberley, Chanctonbury Ring an unmistakable marker on its high, jutting promontory. Further out still, to the north west, lie the steep scarps of Bexley and Blackdown Hills encircling the Milland Basin and the Surrey Hills behind them stretching to Leith Hill. Cissbury Ring above Worthing is visible to the south-west. The rump of Wolstonbury Hill dominates the view east, the parkland at Danny beneath it. Immediately beneath the scarp lie the vales and sandstone ridges of the Gault Clay and Lower Greensand country with shallow, wood-fringed stream valleys and the fine woodland mosaic that has survived on the Gault Clay. Further to the north, the view encompasses the pastoral landscapes of the Low Weald and the fringes of the High

Weald, patterned with woodlands, fields, hedgerows and field trees, an abrupt ridge line south of the hidden Ouse Valley. Beyond these fringes is the high country of the High Weald forming a succession of wooded, receding, differently-shaded ridge lines.

**4.7** From the Jack and Jill windmills at Clayton, the view is equally fine, with a closer view of the Low Weald and its various components. The Lower Greensand ridge line villages of Hurstpierpoint, Keymer and Hassocks generally fit well within the landscape as a result of a wooded urban environment, although one or two new developments are prominent. The westerly extension of Burgess Hill beyond the Greensand and Weald Clay ridges is now quite visible as a thin, long line of whitish buildings. Beyond Burgess Hill, the new development and the hospitals on the high ridge on the southern edge of Haywards Heath at Rocky Lane and Hurstwood Lane are visible in the landscape. The sandstone ridge on which Henfield sits is a prominent ripple in the otherwise low, stratified Low Weald landscape, to all intents well-wooded despite the general absence of significant woodland cover in the area. Landmarks include the spire and buildings of Hurstpierpoint College and distant church spires at St Hugh's Charterhouse Monastery at Shermanbury and at Twineham.

**4.8** There are various pylon lines crossing both the downland and the Low Weald landscapes and, despite the rural qualities of the vistas, there is an abiding impression of pervasive traffic movement, activity and development. Particularly noticeable is the level of traffic noise at the Jack and Jill Windmills arising from the busy network of roads beneath the scarp and from aircraft flying to and from Gatwick Airport.

**4.9** To the south lie the extensive urban areas of Shoreham-by-Sea, Hove and Brighton, a continuous and intensive metropolitan landscape with tower blocks and the new, high chimney stack on the site of the former Brighton Power Station. Beyond the urban area lies the A27 Trunk Road Brighton Bypass with a tunnel at Southwick Hill, although the rolling terrain hides much of the route from ridge top views. Major roads from the urban areas cross the downland at Pyecombe, principally the A23 Trunk Road and the A273 to Haywards Heath, crossing through the gap above Clayton. The London to Brighton Railway Line also follows this line, in cutting and through the Clayton Tunnel. The A281 to Henfield branches off at Pyecombe, under the scarp.

**4.10** The two minor roads running across the downs from Brighton to Devil's Dyke, Saddlescombe and Poyning's are busy. Devil's Dyke has a public house (the Devil's Dyke Hotel) and is a well-known and popular destination for visitors out to enjoy the scenery and the views. The dramatic promontory on which the hotel sits is a major venue for hang gliding. Mountain biking is popular along the ridgetop and downland tracks and there are two golf courses on the downs within the District, at Devil's Dyke and Clayton.

## **Biodiversity**

**4.11** The downland is noted for its unimproved chalk grassland, most of which lies on the scarp and is protected by three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). There are also a few Sites of Nature Conservation Importance on the downland, comprising a mixture of habitats:

- Chalk grassland, scrub, rare areas of chalk heath and acid grassland at Pangdean, on Pyecombe Golf Course;
- Dry valley-side chalk grassland, scrub and anthills near Saddlescombe Farm and rich herb swards at the Cow Down coombes, Pyecombe; and
- Areas of asymmetrical valley side species-rich chalk grassland south of Edburton and Truleigh Hills on the District boundary, and small areas of chalk grassland at Pond Brow, Pyecombe.



## **Historic character**

**4.12** Most of the 41 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) in the District are on the downs, representing successive stages of prehistoric, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and medieval settlement in a rich array of features. These comprise settlement, boundary, defensive and burial features including barrows (including Bronze Age round barrows), bowl barrows, earthworks, cross ridge dykes, hillforts, a Saxon cemetery, a motte and bailey castle site at Edburton and the Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) at Perching. The Jack and Jill Windmills at Clayton are a well-loved downland landmark.

## **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**4.13** There is only one, tiny hamlet of note. Pyecombe comprises two separated settlement groups, lying in the valley gap in the scarp between Newtimber Hill and Wolstonbury Hill. It has a small Norman and 13<sup>th</sup> Century parish church in flint and pebbledash, the low tower with a pyramid roof. The only other settlement of note is the farmstead at Saddlescombe, the farm with a south wing of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century or earlier.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change - key issues**

- Species-rich downland grassland now confined to remnants on the scarp and a few other steep slopes, the significant loss of this habitat due to post-war intensive arable and grass production and scrub encroachment.
- Greater recognition of the value of restoring sheep grazing to maintain increased areas of downland grassland.
- Visual impact of encroaching urban development, new roads and modern farm buildings.
- Continuing pressures for development on the southern downland fringes.
- Impact on the landscape of exposed pylons and telecommunications masts.
- Increasing pressures (including on the public rights of way system) for a variety of activities including walking, horse riding and land use associated with it, mountain biking, off-road vehicle use, hang gliding and golf.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise within and close to the downs.
- Damage to (and loss of) archaeological remains.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape, loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials, and the widespread use of modern fencing.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- Highly distinctive landscape of national importance much valued for its open, scenic qualities, cultural associations and recreational potential.
- High sensitivity to the impact of encroaching urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads, reinforcing the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.

- Views from the downs are highly sensitive to visually prominent development both on the urban edge to the south and in the Weald to the north.
- Species-rich downland grassland has been reduced to remnants.
- Numerous important archaeological remains are vulnerable to damage and loss.

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve and enhance the open, elemental qualities of the downland landscape and its historic legacy, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.***

### Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the essence of the open downland landscape through scrub clearance and grazing.
- Ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Maintain surviving species-rich chalk grassland and plan for the restoration of extensive new areas.
- Protect and enhance the historic legacy of the area including important archaeological remains and ancient routeways.
- Maintain, restore and manage woodland and hedgerow landscapes, and visually important tree clumps and belts where this does not conflict with conservation of the historic and natural environment.
- Carry out landscape improvements to the rural urban fringe to the south in accordance with a long-term plan to be agreed by all partners.
- Maintain and manage dew ponds for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Resist creating areas of horse paddocks, riding schools and stabling in open downland.
- Resist creating areas of horse paddocks, riding schools and stabling in open downland.
- Reduce the visual impact of recreational activities including golf courses, car parks, horse stabling and grazing, and enhance the landscape at Truleigh Hill and around the recreational facilities at Devil's Dyke.
- Conserve and enhance the setting of historic farmsteads and barns.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

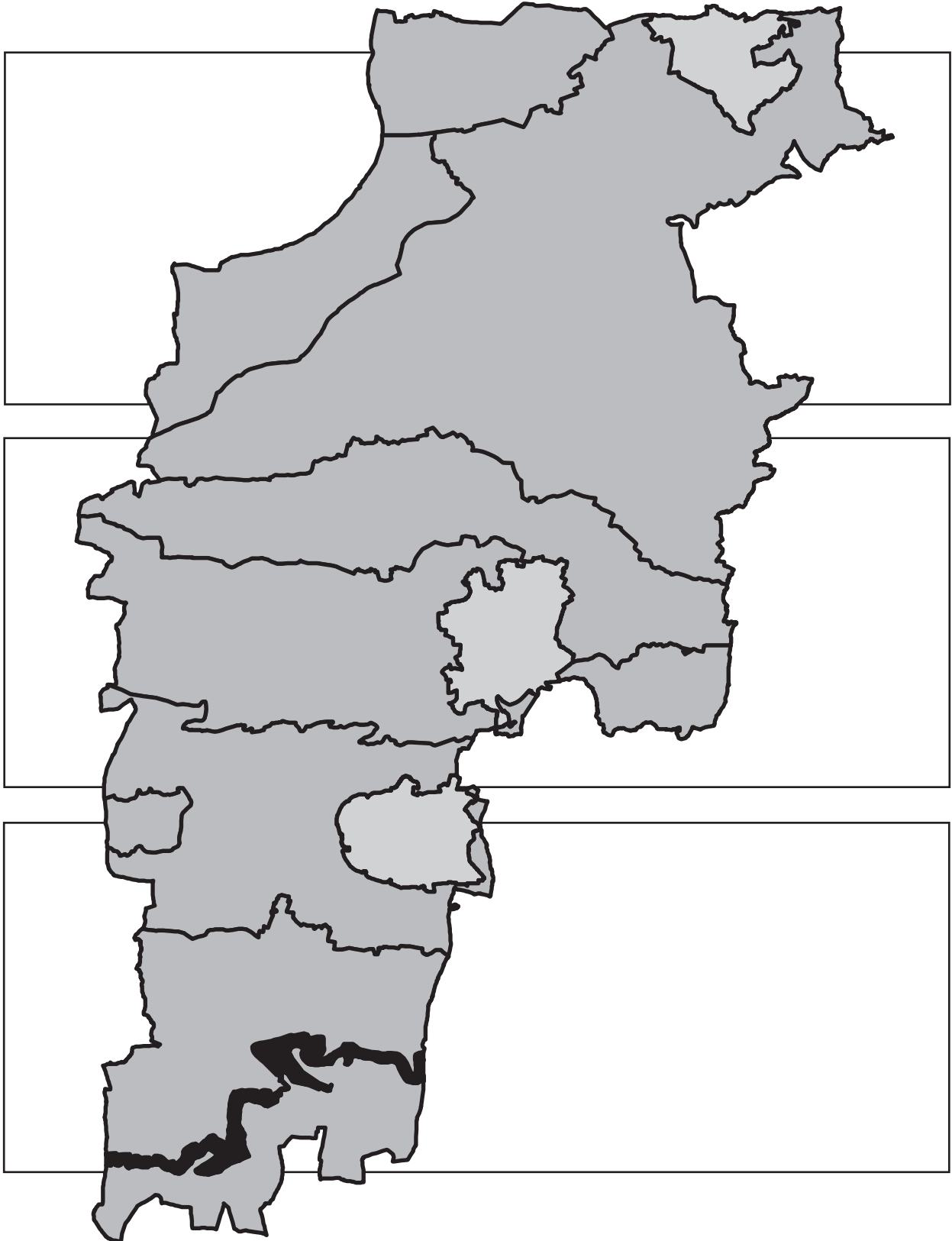
This area is part of the downland east of the Adur Valley. The Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines above have been incorporated into the **Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet SD6 (Eastern Downs)** included in Part Three. As part of the set of County-wide Land Management Guidelines, the area covered by the Sheet is wider than the areas of downland in Mid Sussex and includes:

The *Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs (Area 1)* and *Fulking to Clayton Scarp (Area 2)* Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.

The *Beeding Downs (Area A1)* and the *Beeding to Edburton Scarp (Area C1)* Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).

The *Mill Hill and Southwick Downs* Landscape Character Area (yet to be included in a District Assessment) in Adur District.

Landscape Character Area 2  
**Fulking and Clayton Scarp**



## Fulking to Clayton Scarp

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

***Distinctive steep, abrupt chalk escarpment (scarp) with precipitous north-facing slopes and a dramatic, undulating ridgeline.***

- Scarp edge gives panoramic, long views from the downland edge north across the Low weald to the High Weald, the Surrey Hills and the North Downs.
- Southern boundary of the downland area is fringed by the major coastal towns of Brighton, Hove and Shoreham-by-Sea.
- Wind gaps due to the headwater erosion of southerly draining dry valleys breaking through the escarpment.
- Twisting in the direction of the escarpment due to past geological movement and steep embayments or coombes imparting a rhythmic quality to the swing of the ridge.
- Predominantly open nationally important species-rich grassland with patches of scrub and woodland forms a highly characteristic land cover pattern.
- Spring-line villages and underhill lanes beneath the scarp.
- Farmland patchwork on the downland fringes tends to end at the abrupt break of slope of the escarpment.
- Ridge line was line of a major ancient routeway, today the *South Downs Way*.
- Other distinctive features ancient and modern include chalk quarries and pits, deeply etched zig-zagging bostal tracks, continuous underhill lanes, telecommunications masts, pylon lines and intensive recreational use at the Devil's Dyke.
- Prehistoric earthworks, in particular Iron Age hill forts, on prominent sites on the hilly crests of the ridge.
- Crossed by the busy A23 Trunk Road in the gap at Pyecombe, the A273 at Clayton, and the London to Brighton Railway Line via Clayton Tunnel, with much localised traffic noise from these and other roads beneath the scarp.

### Description and experience of the landscape

**5.1** Generally around 200 metres above sea level on the summit hills and ridges, the north-facing chalk escarpment (scarp) of the South Downs is a wonder of the southern chalk landscapes, stretching from Butser Hill near Petersfield in Hampshire to the west, to Eastbourne in East Sussex. In West Sussex, the scarp is wooded in the west and open in the east, crossing the southern part of the County in a seemingly unbroken, undulating line of steep chalk a few hundred feet high and roughly 40 miles long. It is cut through with wide valley gaps containing the Rivers Arun and Adur, escaping through the chalk from the Weald to the sea. This is a landscape of evocative contrasts, the open, monolithic scarp quite different to the secretive, secluded coombes, the whole assembly wonderfully scenic, especially when cast in deep shadow, whether seen from a distance or close to.

**5.2** The steep slopes are an irregular mosaic of scrub, chalk grassland, rough grazing and occasionally, broadleaved woodland. Hedgerows are infrequent and the field network usually breaks down as the slopes steepen. Some of the arable fields at the foot of the scarp often extend some way up the lower slopes, emphasising the undulating line marking the break of slope between the rough-textured steep slopes of the ridge and the managed, relatively small-scale farmland patchwork below. Mature woodlands with a diverse range of species form irregular strips and patches along the lower scarp slopes. Stands of beech are found in sheltered locations, and oak stands wherever there are pockets of clay. Other species are ash, field maple, wild cherry and, more importantly, large-leaved lime, an indicator of semi-natural woodlands.

**5.3** The chalk scarp east of the River Arun gap includes the section in Mid Sussex and has a largely open character. It is consistently dramatic, abrupt and very steep, embayments and dry valleys or *coombes* (open and shallow or deeply incised, some with distinctive 'bottoms') imparting a rhythmic quality to the impressive line and swing of the ridge. Wind gaps occur regularly due to the headwater erosion of southerly-draining dry valleys breaking through the escarpment. These create the sometimes steeply undulating line of the ridge. In some places, simultaneous dry valley erosion of the scarp and dip slope has met to produce major gaps which, apart from the river gaps, provide corridors for modern road and rail communications.

#### **The scarp in Mid Sussex**

**5.4** The scarp in Mid Sussex runs for a few miles west-east across the southern part of the District. Marked by the telecommunications masts and buildings at Truleigh Hill in Horsham District, the section from the western District boundary at Edburton to Fulking runs straight, with shallow embayments and deeply-cut bostal tracks zig-zagging across the scarp. The downland is largely open, with scrub patches and small copses and groups of trees at the spring line, pasture fields separating the underhill lane from the base of the scarp. A power line crosses the scarp in a gap to the west of Perching Hill.

**5.5** Between Poynings and Clayton, the scarp twists northwards, the result of past geological movement. This part of the scarp has been eroded in a complex fashion to create a delightful and scenic series of chalk hills, promontories, deep valleys and gaps. The Devil's Dyke Hotel lies within the ample ramparts of the Iron Age hillfort on a steep sided promontory, the scarp to the north and the equally steep, dry valley of the Devil's Dyke to the south, its setting enhanced by woodland and scrub on Summer Down. The Devil's Dyke is the most famous of all the chalk dry valleys. It is the largest single coombe anywhere in the chalk scenery of Britain and a remarkable example of chalk erosion.

**5.6** East and south of Poynings are the wooded slopes of Newtimber Hill and the hedged pastures of the Saddlescombe Valley. Beyond Newtimber Hill, the steep scarp ground curves south at Cow Down, above the substantial valley gap in the chalk at Pyecombe. Beyond it lies the massive promontory of Wolstonbury Hill, appearing virtually free standing by virtue of the valleys and gaps around it. The lower promontory of The WARENNE, delightfully topped with a copse, encloses Wellcombe Bottom. Parts of the scarp foot around the hill are wooded and the west face extensively quarried. The face of the scarp is shallow at the Clayton gap but picks up steepness again, topped by the Jack and Jill Windmills, with a large, partly wooded, secluded coombe at Clayton Holt on the District Boundary.

**5.7** Views from the scarp and the impact of roads crossing it are described in the section on the *Devil's Dyke to Clayton* Landscape Character Area.

## **Biodiversity**

**5.8** The area contains three substantial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), two of which extend westwards and eastwards beyond the District boundary. They contain a long band of unimproved species-rich grassland, woodland and scrub running along the chalk scarp in two sections, between Truleigh Hill and Newfimber Hill, and a similar stretch from Clayton to Lewes. The third site includes chalk grassland and woodland at Wolstonbury Hill. Part of one Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCl) lies on the scarp.

## **Historic character**

**5.9** The historic character of the scarp resides in its open character, a remnant of unenclosed and unimproved chalk downland landscape of considerable antiquity. Most of the ancient monuments and archaeological remains are confined to the scarp top and are mentioned in the section on the *Devil's Dyke to Clayton* Landscape Character Area (Area 1).

## **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**5.10** The settlement pattern associated with the scarp comprises the distinctive string of spring-line villages stretching from Edburton to Clayton. These are described in the section on the *Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes* Landscape Character Area (Area 3).

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change – key issues**

- The most extensive areas of species-rich downland grassland are confined to remnants on the scarp and a few other steep slopes, the significant loss of this habitat due to post-war intensive arable and grass production and scrub encroachment.
- Greater recognition of the value of restoring sheep grazing and restoring significant areas of downland grassland.
- Visual impact of encroaching urban development, new roads and modern farm buildings.
- Impact on the landscape of exposed pylons and telecommunications masts.
- Increasing pressures (including on the public rights of way system) for a variety of activities including walking, horse riding and land use associated with it, mountain biking, off-road vehicle use, hang gliding and golf.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise within and close to the scarp.
- Damage to (and loss of) archaeological remains.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- Highly distinctive chalk-edge landscape of national importance much valued for its open, scenic qualities, cultural associations and recreational potential.
- High sensitivity to the impact of development on the immediate setting of the scarp and its skyline including the cumulative impact of masts, pylons and roads (the scarp is crossed by a pylon line at Fulking) and scarring of the chalk.

- Views from the scarp are highly sensitive to visually prominent development both on the urban edge to the south and in the Weald to the north.
- The scarp contains the most extensive and precious survival of nationally-important species-rich downland grassland along the Sussex Downs. The survival of this grassland is not assured unless protected from further loss caused by scrub invasion and agricultural improvement; increased in extent to create a continuous habitat; and enhanced by grazing and other land management methods.
- The scarp slopes and top are highly sensitive to recreational pressures both visually and from usage by walkers, cyclists and horseriders.
- Numerous important archaeological remains are vulnerable to damage and loss.

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve and enhance the open, elemental qualities of the downland scarp and its historic legacy, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development does not detract from the scenic qualities of the scarp and is well-integrated within the landscape.***

### Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the essence of the open scarp landscape through scrub clearance and grazing.
- Ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the scarp and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Maintain and manage surviving species-rich chalk grassland and plan for the restoration of extensive new areas accordance with a long-term plan to be agreed by all partners.
- Protect and enhance the historic legacy of the scarp top, slopes and scarp foot including important archaeological remains and ancient routeways.
- Maintain, restore and manage scarp woodland and hedgerow landscapes, and visually important tree clumps and belts where this does not conflict with conservation of the historic and natural environment.
- Protect the character of the spring line villages and underhill lanes a beneath the scarp.
- Reduce the visual impact of recreational activities including car parks and enhance the landscape at Truleigh Hill and around the recreational facilities at Devil's Dyke.

This area is part of the downland east of the Adur Valley. The Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines above have been incorporated into the ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet SD6 (Eastern Downs)*** included in Part Three. As part of the set of County-wide Land Management Guidelines, the area covered by the Sheet is wider than the areas of downland in Mid Sussex and includes:

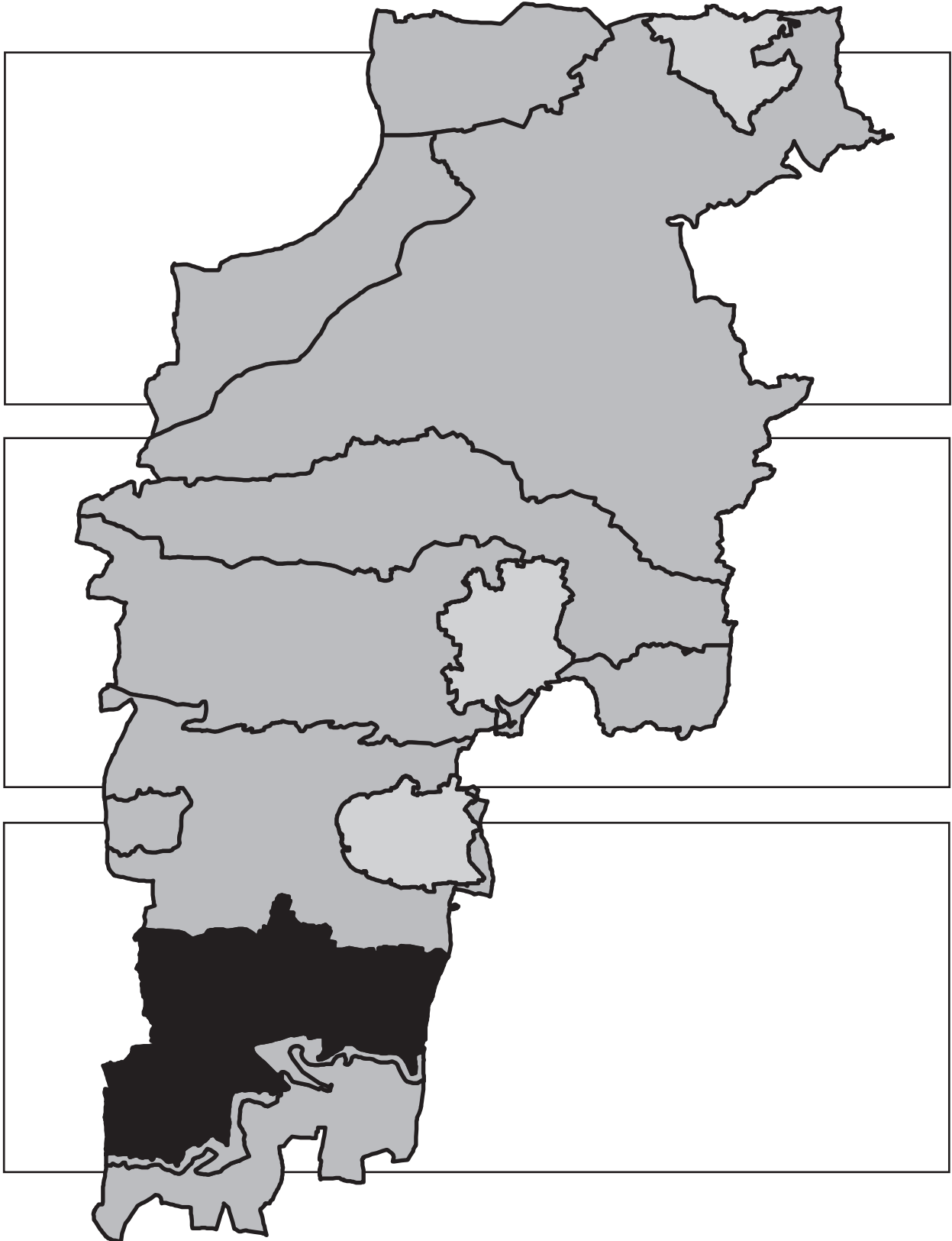


The *Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs (Area 1)* and *Fulking to Clayton Scarp (Area 2)* Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.

The *Beeding Downs (Area A1)* and the *Beeding to Edburton Scarp (Area C1)* Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).

The *Mill Hill and Southwick Downs* Landscape Character Area (yet to be included in a District Assessment) in Adur District.

Landscape Character Area 3  
**Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes**



## Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**Undulating relief of low sandstone ridges and gentle clay vales. Areas of ancient woodland have survived on the heavier soils of the Gault Clay. Views south are dominated by the steep downland scarp.**

- Undulating Lower Greensand low sandstone ridges and gentle and Gault Clay vales drained by the River Adur.
- Concentration of ancient woodland lying on the heavier soils of the Gault Clay.
- Views dominated by the steep downland scarp.
- Arable and pastoral rural landscape, secluded in places, a mosaic of small and larger fields, woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Includes the extensive designed landscape of Danny Estate.
- Modest network of country lanes and underhill lanes beneath the scarp.
- Biodiversity in woodland, ponds and stream valleys.
- Characteristic spring-line villages and dispersed farmsteads, some historic.
- Expanded ridge line villages with suburban development at Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks.
- Criss-crossed by roads, many of them busy, including the A23 Trunk Road.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including flint, timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Dominance of painted render and a wide range of modern styles and materials from the Victorian period onwards.
- Few visitor and recreational attractions.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**6.1** The Upper and Lower Greensand rocks in West Sussex dominate the north west of the County, forming part of the unique sandstone landscape of the Surrey Hills. In this area, the varied, harder sandstone beds (Hythe and Bargate) of the Lower Greensand, the limestone-white sandstones and hard cherts (respectively Buriton stone and Amberley blue) of the Upper Greensand, and the purple, ferruginous (iron stone) deposits in the Folkestone Beds are locally very distinctive building materials. However, these beds narrow significantly towards the Arun Valley and further east become ever narrower, the Upper Greensand disappearing altogether at the County boundary at Hassocks. Nevertheless, although restricted in elevation and width, the full series of these rocks is present in the downland footslopes east of the River Adur. This underlying geology has a powerful influence on landform and landscape.

**6.2** To the west, around Henfield and to the north of the downland scarp, the underlying, compact series of narrow beds of the Upper and Lower Greensand and

the underlying Weald Clay were subject in geological times to intense folding into a steep local anticline or dome. As the dome was planed down by erosion, this exposed the underlying Weald Clay as a vale surrounded by low Greensand ridges and Gault Clay vales to the north and south. The northern ridge of Upper Greensand and a narrow belt of the Folkestone Sands continue from Henfield, through Albourne to Hurstpierpoint, the crest of the ridge enclosing Keymer, separating it from Ditchling in East Sussex. Interestingly, the Folkestone Sands east of Small Dole are reflected in the names of farmsteads – Tottington Sands, Truleigh Sands, Edburton Sands and Perching Sands. The northern face of the ridgeline slopes imperceptibly across the Weald Clay into the Low Weald proper. To the south of the ridge lie a broad vale of heavy Gault Clay and a very thin bed of Upper Greensand, the latter no longer forming a bench under the chalk scarp, as in the west of the County. The footslopes are overlain in places by head, much of it lying immediately beneath the scarp and along the shallow valleys of the characteristic spring line streams issuing from beneath the chalk.

**6.3** The resultant footslopes within Horsham and Mid Sussex Districts comprise an undulating relief of low sandstone ridges and gentle clay vales. Unlike the rest of the Low Weald to the north of Henfield and Hurstpierpoint, the area has a noticeable survival of ancient woodland lying on the heavier soils of the Gault Clay. Everywhere within the footslopes, views south are dominated by the steep downland scarp.

#### **The scarp footslopes in Mid Sussex**

**6.4** That part of the Landscape Character Area south of Hurstpierpoint and on the immediate fringes of the scarp lies within the *Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB).

**6.5** To the west, the footslopes between the scarp and Albourne comprise broad, rolling clay vales drained by a network meandering streams (including streams in narrow valleys flowing from under the chalk) draining westwards to the Adur Valley. This area contains some major woodlands (for instance, Shaves Wood and Park Wood) including ancient woodland, mainly on the Gault Clay. This has created an undulating, wooded, mixed arable and pastoral rural landscape, the woodland and hedgerows of variable quality, based on medium-sized and some larger fields. The area is seen to advantage from the underhill lane running from Edburton to Fulking.

**6.6** South of Hurstpierpoint ridge, the clay vale lies beneath the jutting profile and complex scarp and foot of Wolstonbury Hill. It is characterised by a network of linked or closely spaced woodlands (some parts ancient) centred on the designed landscape at Danny. Apart from the parkland landscape, the pattern of agriculture is similar to that in the area to the west. South of Clayton, there is a substantial grouping of ancient woodlands but in the east, most of the woodland has been cleared and an open landscape created of large fields broken by the shallow, wooded valley at Millbrook Shaw.

**6.7** Between the District boundary and Albourne, the Greensand ridge is generally characteristic of the hedgerow-lined, secluded pastoral landscapes of the Low Weald, although the Cutlers Brook valley and other areas to the south are more open and arable. East of Albourne, the ridge is dominated by urban development at Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks and Keymer, the ridge line swinging north of Hassocks to form the distinct crest at Lodge Hill between Keymer and Ditchling in East Sussex (the intensely white windmill on the crest at Oldlands unmissable in the view).

**6.8** The area is criss-crossed by roads, the A23 Trunk Road crossing the footslopes south to north between Dale Hill, under the downs north of Pyecombe, today bypassing Albourne, Sayers Common and Hickstead. Also crossing south to north is the A273 which leaves the A23 at Pyecombe in the Downs, enters the footslopes down a dry valley in the scarp at Clayton, thence through Hassocks and Burgess Hill to Haywards Heath. The B2112 crosses from Clayton to Ditchling and then north,

alongside Ditchling Common in East Sussex and back into the County and District at Haywards Heath. Also from Pyecombe, the A281 completes its short journey across the footslopes north-west to Henfield in Horsham District. The B2116 and B2117 cross the footslopes west to east, meeting at Hurstpierpoint, linking the ridge line settlements from Albourne in the west to Ditchling in the east. The underhill route beneath the scarp is a country lane between Edburton and Fulking and from Clayton to Westmeston in East Sussex. To the west, there is a modest network of country lanes and roads characteristic of the Low Weald. The busy London to Brighton Railway Line passes south through Hassocks and runs under the downs through the Clayton Tunnel.

**6.9** Other than the ridge line villages already referred to, the area contains a set of small villages and hamlets entirely characteristic of the spring line settlements lying under the scarp. From the west, these are Edburton (just in Horsham District), Fulking, Poynings, Newtimber and Clayton. Otherwise, and especially in the west, there is a pattern of farmsteads and a few loose-knit groups of dwellings along roads and lanes. Parts of the footslopes appear rural and secluded and even locally tranquil. However, some of the minor lanes are busy with traffic. As noted earlier with respect to the experience of the downland view from the Clayton Windmills, there is a marked degree of traffic noise from the complex of roads running over and along the ridge line.

## **Biodiversity**

**6.10** The biodiversity of the area is limited due to the extent of modern agricultural cultivation. The farmed landscape contains hedgerows and some hedgerow trees, numerous small ponds (including a few ornamental ponds) and areas of tree cover and damp ground in some of the stream valleys. Otherwise, the principal interest is in the broadleaved woodland cover (concentrated locally in the west, on the Danny Estate and at Clayton), which is generally characteristic of the Gault Clay. A significant amount of this woodland is ancient coppice and oak and ash standard woodland, much of it still in a semi-natural state. Only the larger Shaves and Park Woods have been substantially cleared and replanted with mixed woodland. The area contains no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and two Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), one of them a small wetland flush.

## **Historic character**

**6.11** The Low Weald in Mid Sussex contains remnants of medieval landscapes, the antiquity of the High Weald landscape being far more apparent. Accordingly, the post-medieval period is far more important as a determinant of the historic landscape character of the area. The historic field pattern in the far south of the District is essentially the result of formal enclosure extending over the downs, the Gault Clay vales and the Upper Greensand ridge before giving way to the more mixed pattern (formal and informal enclosure) in the Low Weald. However, irregular informal fields characteristic of valley meadow enclosures occur throughout the District, in the footslopes notably to the west. Formal enclosure was from woodlands, commons and possibly the re-organisation of assart fields. As elsewhere in many parts of the County and District, modern land use changes have tended to fragment older landscapes. In the area, these include major expansion of the ridge line villages, the expansion of villages, hamlets and farms, field amalgamation, and mixed woodland re-planting.

**6.12** The complex field pattern resulting is not always apparent to the eye, since the boundaries of both types of enclosure may be sinuous, or have been altered by subsequent field amalgamation. Some fields in groupings are today large and open, reflecting the particular amalgamation efforts of some local landowners, for instance,

east of Clayton (west of Clayton the field pattern is more dense and irregular apart from the open aspect of the designed landscape at Danny).

**6.13** As noted above, the persistence of woodland (including ancient woodland) throughout the Gault Clay vale is notable, given that there is virtually no ancient woodland left in the Low Weald within the District. This reflects the consequences of the cultivation of the Low Weald since Saxon times, the Gault Clay being in places simply being too heavy a soil to clear. Where not replanted, the ancient woodlands are most frequently assart woods.

**6.14** Roman remains are important in the area, including the line of the London to Brighton Roman Road crossing the District from north to south and the Sussex Greensand Way crossing from west to east across the scarp footslopes, the two roads intersecting at Hassocks. In this vicinity, there are many sites associated with the Roman occupation including terrace ways and branches from the main routeway onto the downs, the villa site at Danny, the cemetery at Hassocks and evidence of Roman and Romano-British farmstead settlement.

### **Historic parks and gardens**

**6.15** The area contains 3 historic parks and gardens (Danny, Albourne Place and Newtimber Place) of local interest and importance. Pre-eminent among them is *Danny*, the combination of large house and extensive parkland a principal feature of the downland fringe landscape near Hurstpierpoint and, as noted above, prominent in views from the downs. The medieval Park of Danny was enclosed by the last Sir Simon de Pierpoint in 1343. The present house was built 1593-95 by George Goring, slightly to the east of the old house (see para 6.24 below). In 1652 Danny Great Park was 135 acres with arable land and meadow amounting to about 420 acres. The parkland still contains large, noble oaks of varying ages and growth patterns and is used today for a variety of recreational activities.

### **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**6.16** Apart from the spring-line villages and expanded ridge line settlements, the evolution of the historic settlement pattern of the footslopes and the nature of its local distinctiveness today are essentially similar to that for the Low Weald. The section on the *Hickstead Low Weald Landscape Character Area (Area 4)* therefore applies.

**6.17** The spring-line villages and hamlets are entirely characteristic of the downland edge within Sussex, built in the vicinity of springs and streams gushing from under the chalk and running over the impervious rocks of the Weald. However, the pattern of the location of these villages (and the towns of Storrington and Steyning in Horsham District) relative to the foot of the chalk scarp varies greatly depending on the type of geology and lie of the land. In Mid Sussex, the Lower Chalk base of the scarp below the thin, harder Melbourn Rock member is narrow and flattened. Moreover, the Upper Greensand is virtually absent as a broad, gently inclined bench between the chalk and the heavy Gault Clay (as at Amberley, for example).

**6.18** The consequence of this geology is that the villages and hamlets have been located hard up against the scarp itself. To the west, the modest settlements of Edburton, Fulking and Poynings (and the farmstead near the site of Perching Manor) are linked by the underhill lane. They sit pleasingly under the partly enclosed and wooded foot of the scarp, a public spring gushing forth near the Shepherd and Dog public house at Fulking, another spring within the village. Nyetimber Place sits on the flattened Lower Chalk, as does the tiny village of Clayton to the east, joined by the long underhill lane to Westmeston and Plumpton in East Sussex.

**6.19** To the west, the village of Albourne (including Albourne Green and Albourne Street) is now by-passed by the new line of the A23 Trunk Road. It has a small amount of development associated with the old road and some modest suburban properties.

**6.20** The style of rural historic building in the area is diverse. Timber-framed cottages at Albourne characteristic of the Low Weald contrast with a vivid mixture of cottage and house styles and materials at Clayton. Other villages have a mix of styles of various ages including 20<sup>th</sup> century infill, notably Fulking and Poynings.

**6.21** Apart from flint facing, which is not dominant, there is little local stone use evident in the buildings (a house in Fulking built partly of crumbling Upper Greensand stands out and Lower Greensand has been used locally in Hurstpierpoint for walling). More common as materials are varieties of local brick in various patterns, some as nogging (brickwork filling the sections of timber-framed buildings), and tile hanging (sometimes from top to bottom), all redolent of the Low Weald. Increasingly dominant today is the use of painted render, common in Fulking and Poynings and in Hurstpierpoint. The ridge line villages are characterised by a wide range of styles and materials from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods including villas and terrace, particularly in Hurstpierpoint.

**6.22** The area contains a rich variety of historic buildings, many of them prominent in the landscape, which contribute to the distinctive character of the footslopes. The parish church of *St Bartholomew* at Albourne stands outside the village in quiet countryside, flint-faced with a bell-turret. Norman remnants within the church survived a restoration (including Norman copying) in 1859 by the famous Victorian architect Gilbert Scott. Of particular interest is *Albourne Place*, a mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century brick house of seven bays graced with giant pilasters (representation of a classical column in flat relief against a wall) and with unique and curious window details. *Gallops*, on the east side of the village, is a good example of a timber-framed house with brick nogging, probably Elizabethan.

**6.23** Of Clayton, Nairn and Pevsner (1965) note that the village holds in store one overwhelming surprise and two engaging oddities. The surprise is the entrance to the *Railway Tunnel* (1840), yellow brick, with a pointed arch for the trains to disappear into and castellated turrets. The 'oddities' are *Jack and Jill*, the two windmills on the downs above, he a brick tower-mill of 1876, she a wooden post-mill of 1821 with four sails (Jill came from Dyke Road, Brighton, about 1850).

**6.24** Under Wolstonbury Hill, the house of *Danny Park* has two main fronts, the east 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the south early Georgian. The brick-built east frontage is monumental, the south front stately, the whole building a prominent element in views from the downs. Other buildings of interest include *Newtimber Place*, within a wide moat, the main front late 17<sup>th</sup> Century and at Fulking, *Perching Manor Farm* with an early Georgian five-bay frontage.

**6.25** There is no dominant church style within the spring-line villages, with only four examples (including Edburton), tending towards towers. The parish church of *St John the Baptist* at Clayton is small but rewarding, a nave, chancel and wooden bell turret with 11<sup>th</sup> Century work and Saxon echoes in the architecture (the wall paintings inside are unique in England for their extent, preservation and date). At Newtimber, the church of *St John the Baptist* has a fine setting in open country, enclosed on two sides by the downland scarp where it funnels into the Pyecombe valley. It has a gothic tower, the early English origins of the church obscured by restoration. At Poynings, the 14<sup>th</sup> Century parish church of *Holy Trinity*, faced with squared flint, has a tower and interesting architectural details (the *Zion Chapel* (1843) nearby sounds a severe note in this tiny village, now ironically facing the garlanded exterior of the late Victorian *Royal Oak* public house). Nairn and Pevsner (1965) refer to the church and the tiny village at Edburton under one of 'the most sheer and spectacular bits of the whole downs escarpment...the view framed magnificently and perhaps consciously'

in the porch of the parish church of *St Andrew*, another tower church (13<sup>th</sup> Century rebuilding with later restoration).

### **Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks and Keymer**

**6.26** The ridge line villages are another matter entirely, all but one greatly expanded by modern suburban development, with a combined population of 13,085. The medieval township of Ditchling is part of this grouping, albeit far less expanded, just over the County boundary within East Sussex. The urban landscape along the ridge has a distinctly wooded character. As a result, when viewed from the downs (and apart from one or two more obvious areas of recent development), the settlements are well-integrated into the landscape.

**6.27** Hurstpierpoint is the principal village, added to in Georgian times and by 1900 a substantial main street with villas at either end. It was expanded significantly by Edwardian terrace and villas in blocks along and off the Cuckfield Road, to the south of the High Street, and westwards as little blocks of ribbon development as far as Wickham Hill. At this time, Hassocks, on the London to Brighton Railway Line, and Keymer were little more than hamlets although a significant estate of Edwardian villas was built at Hassocks.

**6.28** Interwar building at Hurstpierpoint was significant also, extending the village northwards with some ribbon development on College Lane and enough along the road to Hassocks to close the gaps between the two places. There was a considerable amount of building at Hassocks in this period, the estates snaking out into the countryside south of Ockley Lane. After the Second World War and up to 1970, the suburbanisation of the three villages was virtually complete. Hassocks was greatly expanded on both sides of the railway line and the long northern finger of Hurstpierpoint consolidated and expanded into a considerable suburb. Significant new building also occurred to the west of the village near Hurst Wickham. Since 1970, development has been limited to small areas of infill and some urban edge building in the northern suburbs of Hurstpierpoint.

**6.29** Hurstpierpoint contains two landmark buildings, prominent in views from the downs. The parish church of *Holy Trinity* (1843-5 by Charles Barry) is large and impressive with a high spire. North of the town, in the *Hickstead Low Weald Landscape Character Area (Area 4)*, lies *St John's College* (Hurstpierpoint College), a large independent school building in brick founded by Nathaniel Woodward (Ardingly and Lancing Colleges are the other two Woodward Schools in Sussex). Built in 1851-3, it was designed by R.C. Carpenter, who also designed Lancing. The large building complex is faced with knapped flint, giving a severe effect. The chapel was begun in 1861 and has a tall, landmark tower of 1929.

**6.30** The church of *St Cosmas and St Damian* at Keymer (a rare dedication) was restored in Victorian times, but with some Norman work remaining. It has a small steeple. Another landmark from the downs is *Oldland Windmill* on the brow of the Greensand ridge above Keymer, an intensely white 18<sup>th</sup> Century post-mill tower.

### **Strategic gaps**

**6.31** The County and District Councils have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks and Keymer and have designated this land as a strategic gap.



## **EVALUATION**

### **Change - key issues**

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- High level of perceived naturalness and a rural quality, especially in the more wooded landscape to the west.
- Woodland cover, much of it ancient, imparts a scenic quality to the landscape.
- The area is highly exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern of the spring-line settlements combined with the general absence of significant development.
- Scarce pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Loss and fragmentation of hedgerows has occurred associated with modern farming.
- The area is visually exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new development and the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement throughout the area, particularly on routes crossing from the downs, and along some rural lanes.
- Wooded urban environment and setting of the ridge line villages currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures here and elsewhere in the area.

*[continues]*

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve and enhance the quiet, rural qualities of the western part of the area and the environment of the spring line villages, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.***

### Land Management Guidelines

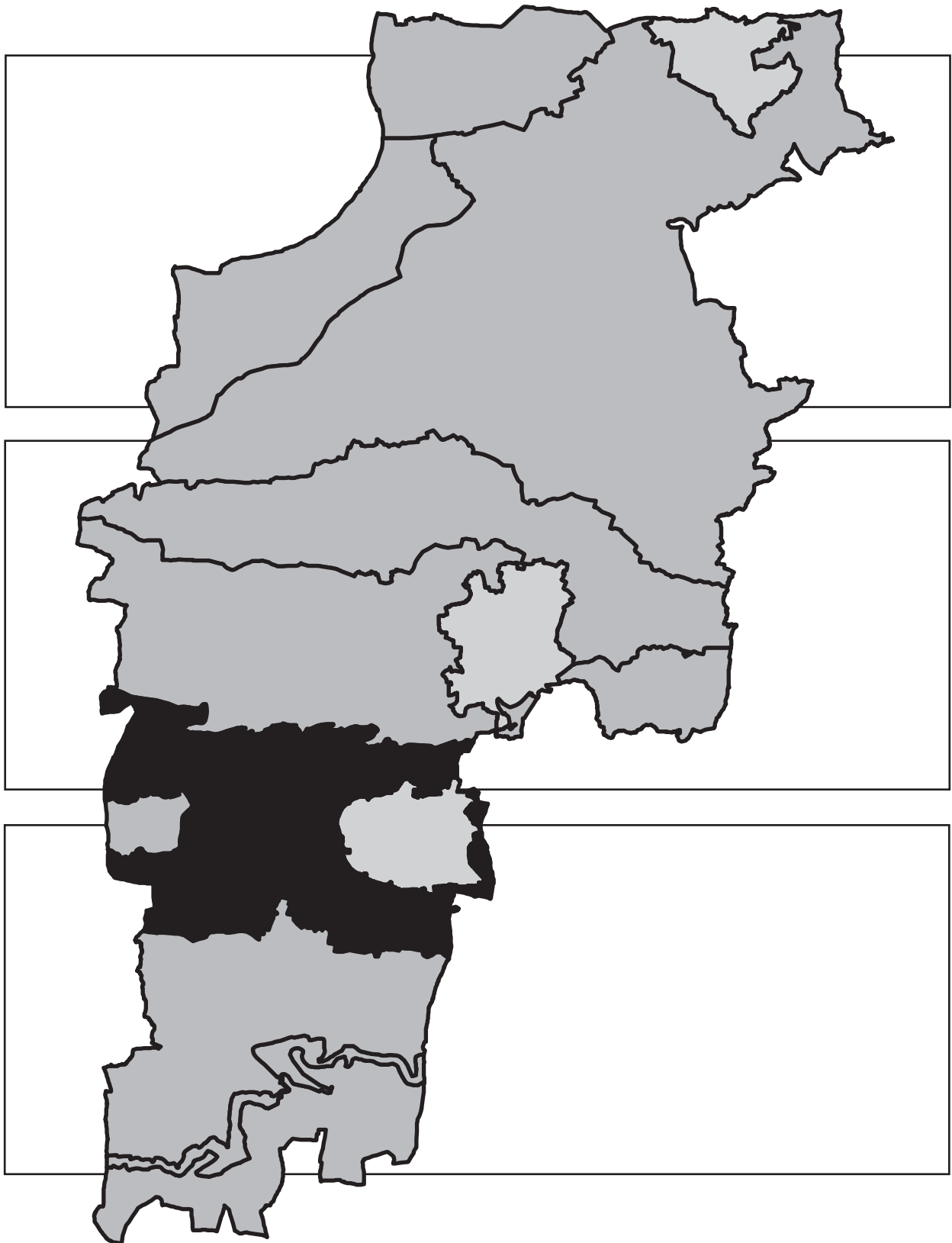
- Maintain and restore the scenic historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape including irregular patterns of smaller fields.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins and corners including alongside the sides of streams.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including the A23 Trunk Road.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, especially around irregular fields, and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of horse stabling and grazing, for instance, under the downland edge in the vicinity of Edburton.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

This area is part of the scarp footslopes east of the Adur Valley. The Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines above have been incorporated into the ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet LW11 (Eastern Scarp Footslopes)*** included in Part Three. As part of the set of County-wide Land Management Guidelines, the area covered by the Sheet is wider than the areas of downland in Mid Sussex and includes:

*The Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes (Area 3) Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.*

*The Henfield and Small Dole Farmlands (Area D2) Landscape Character Area defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).*

Landscape Character Area 4  
**Hickstead Low Weald**



## Hickstead Low Weald

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**Lowland mixed arable and pastoral landscape with a strong hedgerow pattern. It lies over low ridges and clay vales drained by the upper Adur streams. In the east, the area has experienced high levels of development centred on Burgess Hill.**

- Alternating west-east trending low ridges with sandstone beds and clay vales carrying long, sinuous upper Adur streams.
- Views dominated by the steep downland scarp to the south and the High Weald fringes to the north.
- Arable and pastoral rural landscape, a mosaic of small and larger fields, scattered woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Quieter and more secluded, confined rural landscape to the west, much more development to the east, centred on Burgess Hill.
- Biodiversity in woodland, meadowland, ponds and wetland.
- Mix of farmsteads and hamlets favouring ridgeline locations, strung out along lanes.
- A modest spread of designed landscapes and major landmark of Hurstpierpoint College.
- Crossed by north-south roads including the A23 Trunk Road, with a rectilinear network of narrow rural lanes.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area through Burgess Hill.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, weatherboarding, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Principal visitor attraction is the Hickstead All England Equestrian Showground.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**7.1** The geology of this part of the Low Weald is typical of West Sussex, comprising an homogeneous floor of gently undulating Weald Clay rarely exceeding 30-40 metres above sea level with much land under 15 metres. Bands of flaggy Horsham Stone, ironstone and small, scattered beds of *Paludina* (swamp-formed) limestones define the more prominent ridges. Other deposits in the clay include *marker clay* (beds with distinctive rock fragments or fossils which permit their identification wherever found) and sand. Parts of the valley edges are overlain by alluvium and river terrace deposits.

**7.2** In typical Low Wealden fashion, this geological structure results in a broad band of alternating west-east trending low ridges (irregular direction and shape) and clay vales carrying the long, sinuous streams of the Upper Adur river system. This pattern runs from the quiet country around Wineham east to the County boundary at Burgess Hill. Two broad, parallel arms of the upper Adur Valley cross the area, branching at Twineham. The northerly branch parallels the wooded, hilly High Weald fringes. Long, winding and leisurely, it drains the shallow clay vale north of Hickstead

and Burgess Hill. Towards the County boundary, the river-stream breaks up into a series of headwater brooks, some within narrow, wooded gills, including an area of uncharacteristically dense woodland just over the County boundary in the parish of Wivelsfield. This river branch drains the large Pond Lye at Southdown View. Equally long and sinuous, the southern river branch drains the long clay vale between the Upper Greensand ridge with its expanded ridge line villages to the south. To the north a long, flattish irregular Weald Clay ridge runs from Twineham Green east to Burgess Hill.

**7.3** Skyline hedgerows and trees tend to restrict long views. Views south are dominated by the steep downland scarp, with occasionally good prospects of the rising, gently dissected wooded slopes of the High Weald fringe rising to the north.

**7.4** Much of the landscape has a secluded pastoral quality conferred by a mosaic of fields and woodlands, streamside trees, shaws, hedgerows and numerous mature hedgerow and field trees. This wooded effect is all the more surprising as there is a marked absence of woodland networks in general and ancient woodland in particular. Only in the aforementioned area north of Burgess Hill and straddling the County boundary is there any land where woodland cover is concentrated in a network of woodlands, copses and gill woods.

**7.5** The field pattern is a mix of formal enclosures and irregular informal fields enclosed by hedgerows and shaws, pastureland more common on the heavy clays, mixed arable and pasture in a more open landscape on the lighter, sandier soils. Nevertheless, the historic landscape has been greatly altered in places (for instance, around Burgess Hill) by modern field amalgamation and hedgerow removal, imparting much local variability in the landscape.

**7.6** As with the scarp footslopes to the south, the area is crossed south to north by various roads and the busy London to Brighton Railway Line between Hassocks and Burgess Hill. The A23 Trunk Road crosses the area to the west (today by-passing Albourne, Sayers Common and Hickstead) as does the A273, from Hassocks and Burgess Hill to Haywards Heath. The B2036 to Cuckfield runs north-west from Burgess Hill via Abbotsford to Cuckfield and a new, short link road (the A2300) has recently been built linking Burgess Hill with the A23. In the south, the B2116 runs west from Albourne to Partridge Green in Horsham District. Part of a rectilinear network of winding, abrupt-cornered Low Wealden country lanes (typically tree and hedge-lined, some with wide verges), half a dozen long lanes also cross the area from the north to south.

**7.7** The landscape to the west of the A23 Trunk Road is strongly rural, quieter and less frequented (particularly around Twineham and Wineham) compared with the area to the east of the road, where the pervasive impact of modern development has altered landscape character. The dominant change has been the post-Victorian expansion of Burgess Hill including the recent westward expansion of the town. Other modern influences in the landscape include roadside commercial and other development along the old A23; modern, large farm and industrial estate buildings; electricity sub stations, sewage works and pylons; suburban village development at Sayers Common; and the Hickstead All England Equestrian Showground and other equestrian centres and land uses. The Hurstpierpoint College buildings are prominent in the view from the downs. Most of the more important roads are busy, as are many of the country lanes, particularly immediately west and south of Burgess Hill.

**7.8** Designed landscapes centred on manors and other important historic houses are less dominant a feature in this part of the District than in the scarp footslopes to the south and the High Weald to the north.

## Biodiversity

**7.9** The biodiversity of the area is considered to be limited due to the extent of modern agricultural cultivation. The farmed landscape contains an extensive network of small woodlands, hedgerows and some hedgerow trees, numerous ponds (including ornamental and mill ponds and water areas in old minerals sites) and areas of tree cover and damp ground in some of the stream valleys. The area contains no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and four Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs). These include meadowland and deciduous woodland largely within the built-up area of Burgess Hill and the large Pond Lye water body valuable for its breeding birds and species-rich neutral grassland.

**7.10** The District Council manages the complex of important ancient, coppiced woodlands and meadows in the *Bedelands Local Nature Reserve* (LNR) north of Burgess Hill. Habitats there include Valebridge Pond (open water and reedbed); species-rich willow and alder carr (mainly alder woodland found on low-level ground on floodplains and beside rivers where the water table is either permanently or seasonally near the ground surface); and an outstanding group of species-rich meadows and hedgerows.

## Historic character

**7.11** The Low Weald in Mid Sussex contains remnants of medieval landscapes, the antiquity of the High Weald landscape being far more apparent. Accordingly, the post-medieval period is most important as the determinant of the historic landscape character of the area. The historic field pattern in this part of the District is a mixture of formal and informal enclosure. However, irregular informal fields characteristic of valley meadow enclosures also occur. Formal enclosure was from woodlands, commons and possibly the re-organisation of assart fields. As elsewhere in many parts of the County and District, modern land use changes have tended to fragment older landscapes, and this part of the Low Weald is no exception.

**7.12** The resulting complex field pattern is not always apparent to the eye, since the boundaries of both types of enclosure may be sinuous, or have been altered by subsequent field amalgamation. Some fields in groupings are today large and open, reflecting the particular amalgamation efforts of some local landowners.

The site of the London to Brighton Roman Road crosses the area from north to south and the area is notable for tracks and droveways and historic farmsteads.

## Historic parks and gardens

**7.13** The area contains 6 historic parks and gardens of local interest and importance at Wineham, Bolney Grange and on the western and southern fringes of Burgess Hill. These include the grounds of *St John's College* north of Hurstpierpoint (see also *para 6.29* for a brief description of the college buildings).

## Settlement form and local distinctiveness

**7.14** In common with many parts of the Low Weald, the historic settlement pattern of the area has virtually no nucleated villages, and none of any size, being more a mix of scattered farmsteads and hamlets strung out along lanes ('streets' and 'greens'). Much settlement is confined to the lower ridges, above the heavier clay vales.

**7.15** The style of rural historic building in the area is diverse. This diversity is also apparent in the range of materials used, including timber-framing, local brick, tile hanging and black-treated weatherboarding for barns. There are few churches in

the countryside, reflecting the lack of nucleated settlements. There is virtually no stone evident apart from the occasional use of Horsham stone for roofing and some limited areas of paving.

**7.16** *Hickstead Place* lies close to the Equestrian Showground, a tile-hung house with an 18<sup>th</sup> Century air but with earlier parts going back to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, and in the grounds, *The Castle*, a large summer house dating probably from the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The adjoining house *Westovers* is timber-framed, of 15<sup>th</sup> Century origin. At Sayers Common, *Christ Church* (1880) is in flint with redbrick dressings.

### **Burgess Hill**

**7.17** The town of Burgess Hill lies about two miles south of Haywards Heath and a mile and a half north of Hassocks, located within a clay vale between two of the Adur streams. The southern suburbs rise gently onto a broad ridge linking with the ridge line villages to the south. The town is close to the County boundary and Ditchling Common.

**7.18** The town evolved as a railway settlement with two stations associated with the London to Brighton Railway Line and the branch line to Lewes. There was also a large brick and tile industry. Today Burgess Hill is the most populous town in the District (28,803) with extensive new areas of housing and industry. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, development grew around the railway lines and by 1900 the town had significantly increased in size. Development before then was exceptionally piecemeal, the main block centred on the railway station (today the main town centre). Some way to the west, along the London Road and at St John's Common, were built a series of disconnected terraces, individual properties and new frontages on the main road. Edwardian development was equally piecemeal and quite limited, mainly larger houses associated with the existing terraces. Interwar development was more significant but by no means as extensive as in East Grinstead and Haywards Heath. It too tended to consolidate existing blocks, particularly in St John's Common, the separate areas of the town now beginning to join up. At this time, large ribbon developments were built centred on Wivelsfield Station and along Folders Lane to the south.

**7.19** However, it was in the post-war period up to 1970 that development was greatly expanded and virtually the entire urban pattern of the town consolidated. The area of the town also expanded significantly, to the west of St John's Common, to the south in the area centred on Oakmeads School and to the east, north of the extensive clay pits and brickyards. Since 1970 the town has extended significantly once again, with large housing developments on the northern edge, north of Folders Lane to the south east and, most significantly, further west with a large mixed housing, retail and industrial development. A western relief road has been built (Jane Murray Way) based on a green crescent of public open space and the new A2300 road link west to the A23 Trunk Road.

**7.20** The churches in the town are landmarks, including *St John* (1861-3), a big brick-patterned church with a steeple and *St Andrew* (1907-09), in red brick with no tower. The town also has a large, classical *Congregational Church* of 1881. *Hammond Place* is a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house with brick additions.

### **Strategic gaps**

**7.21** The County and District Councils have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Burgess Hill, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks and Keymer, and Haywards Heath and have designated this land as strategic gaps.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change – key issues**

- Growing impact of development in the east of the area.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields, severe hedgerow loss, and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Pressures for further urban development in the east of the area.
- Introduction of telecommunications masts on ridges.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise, particularly around Burgess Hill, and busy use of some rural lanes.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- High level of perceived naturalness and a rural quality in the quieter, rural landscape to the west of the A23 Trunk Road.
- Woodland cover and the mosaic of shaws and hedgerows contribute strongly to the essence of the landscape.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Parts of the area are visually exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new development and the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.

*[continues]*



## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve and enhance the quiet, rural qualities of the western part of the area, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.***

### Land Management Guidelines

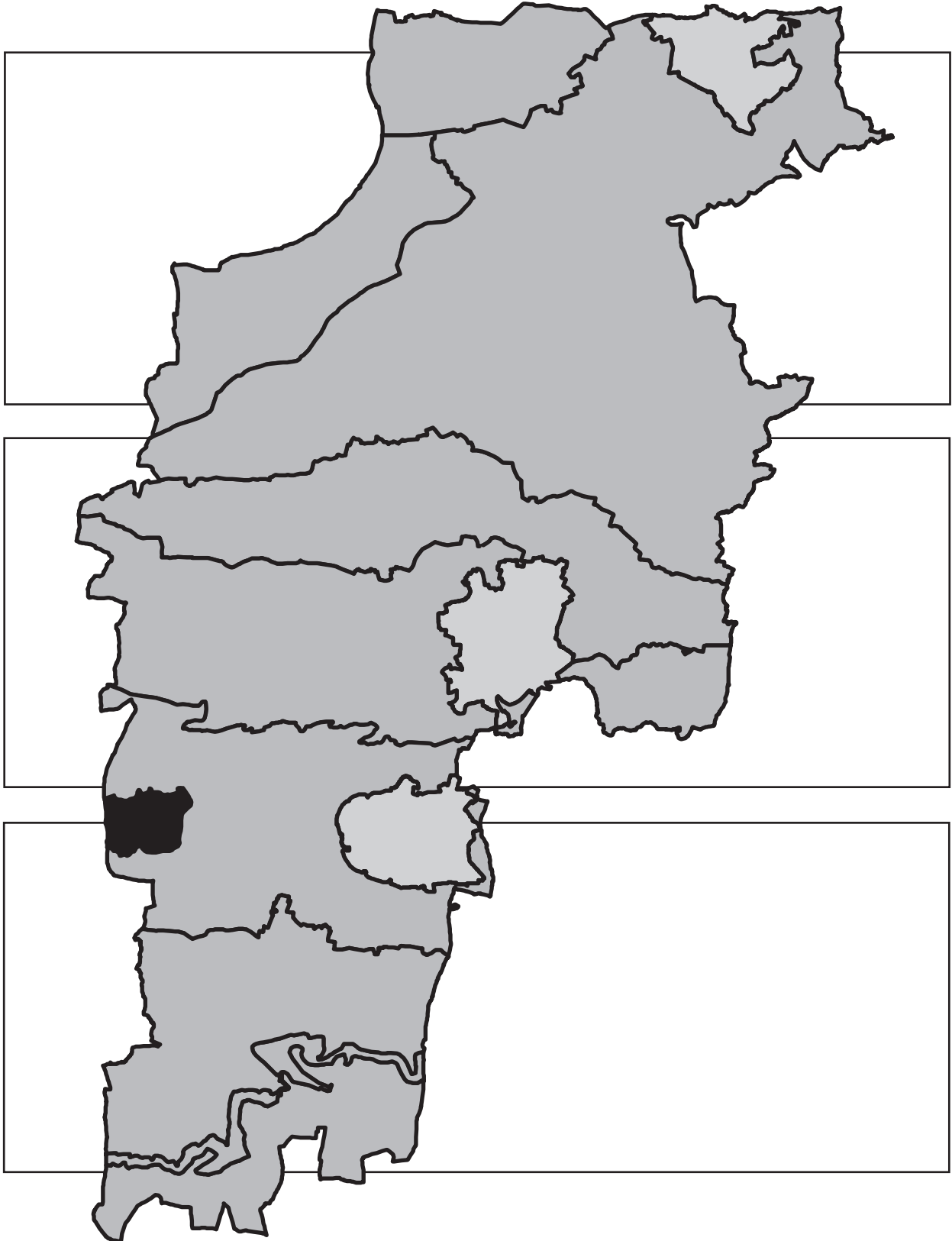
- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape including irregular patterns of smaller fields.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small and medium-sized broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins and corners including alongside the sides of streams.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Where appropriate, increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe of suburban areas and Burgess Hill, including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes including the A23 Trunk Road.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession, and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, especially around irregular fields, and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

This area is part of the Low Weald east of the Adur Valley. The Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines above have been incorporated into the ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet LW10 (Eastern Low Weald)*** included in Part Three. As part of the set of County-wide Land Management Guidelines, the area covered by the Sheet is wider than the area of the Low Weald in Mid Sussex and includes:

The *Hickstead Low Weald (Area 4)* Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

The *Cowfold and Shermanbury Farmlands (Area J3)* defined in the unpublished ***Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment*** (October 2003).

Landscape Character Area 5  
**Upper Adur Valley**



## Upper Adur Valley

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**Small part of the extensive upper catchment of the River Adur drained by a network of long, leisurely streams in confined narrow, shallow valleys.**

- Network of hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Smaller pastures in the valley bottoms and mixed arable and pastoral farming, medium to large-sized fields on the valley sides.
- Wildlife corridor with pockets of biodiversity.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including flint, timber-framing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.

### Description and experience of the landscape

#### The Adur Valley

**8.1** The River Adur is one of two major Wealden rivers lying wholly within West Sussex, the other being the River Arun. Both have similar drainage characteristics and patterns. Both rise in the Low Weald (although the Adur has its headwaters rooted in the fringes of the High Weald) and comprise broad catchments enclosing a branching main river and branching, filigree streams in the low-lying Weald Clay country. Both have extensive alluvial water meadows ('wild brooks') in the middle portion, and both cut a meandering path and flood plain through the chalk of the Downs on their journey to the sea (the Arun has a long, lower section crossing the South Coast Plain, this section much shorter in the case of the Adur, where the Coastal Plain all but disappears in the vicinity of Shoreham-by-Sea). In their lower reaches, both rivers are tidal and are canalised with embankments (levees).

#### The upper Adur reaches in Mid Sussex

**8.2** In the Mid Sussex Low Weald, the eastern arm of the main river crosses the entire District, from just within East Sussex at Ditchling, through Keymer to Hickstead, to the District boundary at Wineham. The upper reaches of this eastern arm flow south from the High Weald fringes around Cuckfield and drain the clay vale north of Burgess Hill. To the south, a long stream drains the Gault Clay vale south of Hurstpierpoint and another, shorter stream the clay vales west of Poynings.

**8.3** Only between Wineham and Twineham (around Twineham Place and Great Wapses Farm) do these streams begin to take on a characteristic profile, of a winding course along narrow water meadows enclosed by low, gently convex pastoral valley sides with streamside reed beds. The underlying geology is river terrace deposits, alluvium, head and, on the higher ground, the Weald Clay bedrock. The Landscape Character Area covers only this small part of the characteristic valley system. The area of the long stream (Cutlers Brook) within Mid Sussex (at Albourne) with these characteristics is tiny, and the definition of this valley as a separate Landscape Character Area in the *Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment* has not been carried over into Mid Sussex District.

## **Biodiversity and historic character**

**8.4** The biodiversity and historic character of the area is essentially the same as that for the wider Low Weald. The coverage of these topics in the *Hickstead Low Weald Landscape Character Area (Area 4)* therefore applies. The area contains a Site of Nature Conservation Importance and a small historic parkscape.

## **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**8.5** The settlement form and local distinctiveness of this almost wholly agricultural area is essentially the same as that for the wider Low Weald. The coverage of these topics in the *Hickstead Low Weald Landscape Character Area (Area 4)* therefore applies.

**8.6** The parish church of *St Peter* at Twineham stands alone, close to the infant Adur. This is a brick church with a shingled spire, entirely early Tudor. Close by is *Slipe*, a compact timber-framed farmhouse of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change - key issues**

- Importance of retaining the unique identity of the valley including its floor and current drainage pattern, and as an important landscape and wildlife corridor.
- Continuing field amalgamation in some places into a pattern of medium and large-sized fields, with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- Quiet, rural quality in the tributary valleys.
- Pockets of biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.

*[continues]*

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve and enhance the tranquil, secluded character of the valleys and their setting.***

### Land Management Guidelines

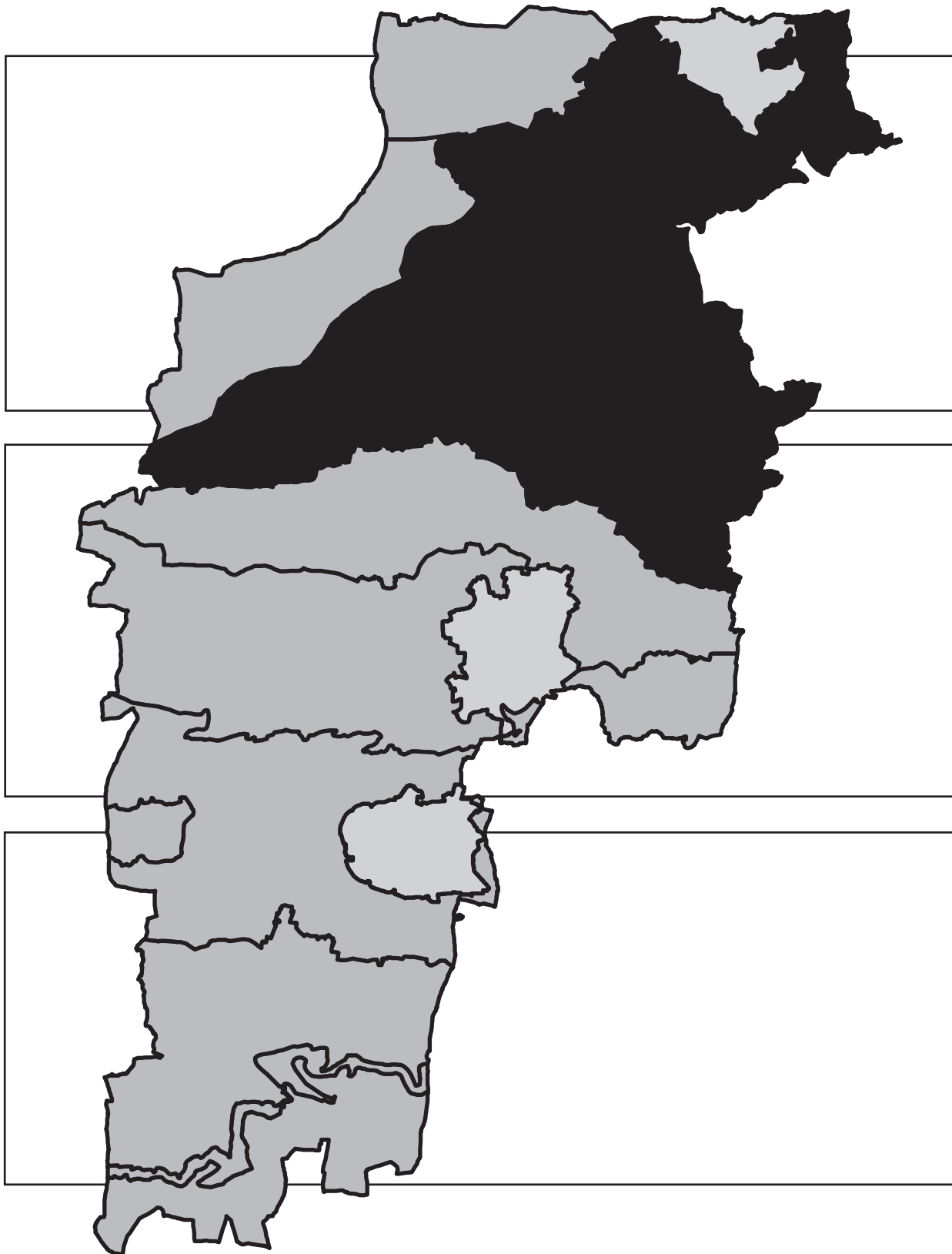
- Conserve and enhance the undeveloped character and pastoral qualities of the valley and the character of the river including its drainage pattern.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, especially around irregular fields, and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins and corners including alongside the sides of streams.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

This small area is part of the extensive Upper Adur Valley lying mainly in Horsham District. The Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines above have been incorporated into the ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet LW9 (Upper Adur Valley)*** included in Part Three. As part of the set of County-wide Land Management Guidelines, the area covered by the Sheet is therefore much wider than the area of the Adur Valley in Mid Sussex and includes:

The *Upper Adur Valley (Area 5)* in Mid Sussex District.

The *Steyning and Henfield Brooks (Area O3)* and the *Upper Adur Valleys (Area P2)* Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished ***Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment*** (October 2003).

Landscape Character Area 6  
**High Weald**



## High Weald

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**The High Weald Forest Ridge. Numerous gill streams have carved out a landscape of twisting ridges and secluded valleys. The ancient, densely-wooded landscape of the High Weald is seen to perfection in the area. Includes the township of East Grinstead.**

- Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, perceived as attractive, locally secluded and tranquil.
- Complex sandstone and clay hilly landscape of ridges and secluded valleys centred on the western end of Forest Ridge of the High Weald plateau deeply cut by numerous gill streams and with sandrock crags.
- Headwater drainage of the River Medway originates here, the southern part of the area drained by the deep, sinuous gill streams running to the River Ouse.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge.
- Includes major reservoir at Ardingly and adjoins Weir Wood Reservoir.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, including some larger woods and a dense network of hedgerows and shaws, creates a sense of enclosure, the valleys damp, deep and secluded.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droeways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages.
- Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area.
- Mill sites, hammer ponds and numerous fish and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.
- Visitor attractions include Wakehurst Place, Nymans Gardens, the South of England Showground and the Bluebell Line Steam Railway.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**9.1** This, the largest Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex, contains the highest ground in the High Weald within West Sussex and lies wholly within the District and the *High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB). It borders on Surrey to the north at East Grinstead and East Sussex to the east. To the north-west lie the

afforested ridges and plateaux of the Worth forests. The area is bounded strongly to the south by the broad, west-east trending line of the Ouse Valley.

**9.2** The geology of the area is complex and locally very variable. It is based on an alternating pattern of heavily faulted, slightly inclined thin sandstone and clay beds which are exposed successively in the deeper valleys. In a few places, local outcrops of sandrock form low, dramatic crags, with many continuous rock exposures edging the valley sides and in the deeper lanes. The underlying rocks contain the entire geological sequence of the High Weald Hastings Beds. The majority of the area comprises mainly Upper and Lower Tunbridge Wells Sandstone and clays and Grinstead Clay in alternating sequences. More localised beds include Cuckfield Stone on higher ground to the south and west and Ardingly Sandstone within the valley systems and to the south and east of Turners Hill.

**9.3** Containing ironstone, the Wadhurst Clay underlying these deposits outcrops in the easterly valley bottoms, making the going on trackways very difficult in places, for the clay can be thick, wet and clinging. The Wadhurst Clay comprises isolated, faulted out portions south of Turners Hill and forms a thick belt running south from Sharpthorne nearly to Horsted Keynes. To the east of this belt lie the sandy Ashdown Beds, so-called because of their dominance as an infertile, heathy rock within the Forest. Finally, there are some scattered deposits of head.

**9.4** The backbone of the High Weald is known as the Forest Ridge, a crest of uniformly high ground running roughly east to west, from Cranbrook in Kent to Horsham, its highest point at Crowborough Beacon in East Sussex (nearly 250 metres above sea level). The Forest Ridge in Mid Sussex runs north westwards from along a high if indistinct ridge line (in places over 170 metres above sea level) through West Hoathly and Selsfield Common to Turners Hill.

**9.5** From this central ridge spring numerous gill (ghyll) streams. These incised streams are the defining landform, dissecting the landscape deeply, carving it into an interlocking array of twisting ridges and secluded, steep-sided narrow valleys. Whilst the pattern of drainage is complex, there are some main pointers to follow. To the north of the Forest Ridge, centred on the boundary with East Sussex, a group of short streams falls to the Medway and Weir Wood Reservoir. To the north lies East Grinstead, the numerous streams draining the southern flanks of the town also emptying into the Medway and the reservoir. The southern slopes of the Forest Ridge are much longer, stretching over a few miles to the River Ouse, which drains them. The biggest, deepest streams include Cockhaise Brook and its tributary streams including the Chiddingly valley; the two valleys flanking Horsted Keynes; the deep valley system below Balcombe containing Ardingly Reservoir; and the western streams draining the southern flanks of the High Weald forests. Many of the streams contain hammer, ornamental or fishponds, the last notably in the valleys flanking Birchgrove north east of Horsted Keynes.

**9.6** A densely wooded landscape clothes this intricate terrain. The woodlands are predominantly deciduous but contain much mixed woodland and coniferous planting (as well as exotic tree species associated with designed landscapes). There is a high incidence of ancient woodland, the core of the historic High Weald landscape. Many woods are small to medium-sized and dominate the deep gills, notably in the Ardingly, Chiddingly and Birchgrove valleys. There is a particular concentration of valley woodlands centred on Gravetye Manor and a network of woods throughout the gills flanking East Grinstead. To the west, the pattern shifts towards large woodlands and plantations more akin to the Worth forests, draped over ridge and valley, for instance at Paddockhurst Park. Between Balcombe and Handcross is a large network of woodlands based on the upper Ouse streams.

**9.7** Once closely associated with the woodland pattern, most of the formerly grazed heathland in the area has disappeared, much of it covered by scrub and



new or naturally regenerating woodland. The small pockets of heathland that remain are a valuable wildlife and landscape resource.

**9.8** Regular fields extend north into the High Weald but become far more intermixed with a landscape of small, irregular-shaped fields predominantly used for livestock grazing. These are the characteristic groups of historic assart pastures, often associated with pockets of ancient semi-natural woodland. Between Crawley Down and East Grinstead and in some places elsewhere there has been extensive boundary removal and field reorganisation due to agricultural intensification.

**9.8** Other than at Handcross and around East Grinstead, there are no major roads in the area although the B roads and some of the lanes are busy with traffic. The area contains a dense network of twisting lanes, droveways and tracks following the sinuous terrain. The lanes are generally narrow, deep in places, some in substantial cuttings with exposed rock faces where centuries of use have progressively cut down into the soft clays and sandstones. The *High Weald Landscape Trail* in Mid Sussex follows many of these routes.

**9.9** On the northern border of the County, the area encompasses the large township of East Grinstead and a portion of the A22 Trunk Road with associated ribbon development. As in the Copthorne and Crawley Down area to the east, the perceived naturalness of the rural landscape is coming under increasing pressure from development and traffic movement along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor. Elsewhere in the area, there has been significant suburban development at Balcombe and Ashurst Wood and continuing pressures for development in the countryside.

**9.10** The area is crossed north to south in the extreme west by the A23 Trunk Road and by the London to Brighton Railway Line. In the east, the Bluebell Line Steam Railway crosses the area north to south, from Kingscote to Sheffield Park in East Sussex. Part of the former Culver Junction (Lewes) to East Grinstead Railway Line given Royal Approval in 1877, the railway was known originally as the 'Sheffield Park Line'. References to it as 'The Bluebell Line' first appeared in 1958 when the railway preservation group was being formed, doubtless a reference to the bluebell woods along the route.

**9.11** Parkscapes associated with large houses are characteristic. The area contains two large reservoirs, at Ardingly and Weir Wood, popular for sailing, angling and wildlife. The permanent South of England Show Ground is located at Ardingly, which includes a large area of fenced paddock grassland.

## **Biodiversity**

**9.12** Based on the alternation of sandy and clay soils and the particular conditions in the deep gills, the natural history of the area is diverse. The richer sites (albeit restricted in extent) are centred on the strong pattern of gills and woodlands, a few unimproved pastures and freshwater marshes, the reservoirs, and numerous valley ponds including field ponds and their margins.

**9.13** The character of the woodlands is varied and includes a range of semi-natural woodland types, many formerly managed as 'coppice-with-standards' (. Dominant forms include oak-ash and hornbeam woodlands with understorey species such as hazel, as well as stands of beech, sweet chestnut coppices and broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation. The reduction of acid heathland to a few pockets scattered through the area is due to the cessation of grazing management, subsequent scrub and woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.

**9.14** The area contains eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), well over half those in the District. These include important geological deposits, water areas,

sandrock crags, and wet woodlands and sandrock communities in the wooded gills. These last are particularly important, containing a warm, moist micro-climate which allows plants to flourish (notably ferns, mosses and liverworts) which are more typically restricted to the west of the country, as well as supporting a diverse breeding community of breeding birds.

**9.15** The area also contains over 20 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance - by far the largest number for any Landscape Character Area in the District. These illustrate the great variety of habitats in the area, ranging from woodland and reservoir sites to smaller areas centred on mill and fish ponds (marginal plants, and birds), sandrock crags, freshwater marsh and unimproved meadows. The District Council manages the SNCI at *Ashplats Wood* (East Grinstead) as a nature reserve.

## Historic character

**9.16** The Forest Ridge in the area forms part of the route of an ancient, pre-Roman ridge-way. It follows the high point of the ridge westwards from Ashdown Forest, through West Hoathly to Turners Hill and then via Peas Pottage to Horsham. Associated with the routeways, the ancient sites in the Low and High Weald are far fewer than on the downs, although the Iron Age hillfort at Philpots Camp near West Hoathly is an important example of a Wealden hillfort. There is limited evidence of Roman settlement in the area, although the line of the London to Brighton Roman Road crosses the area from north to south, just to the east of Ardingly.

**9.17** The colonizing of the High Weald through transhumance (the seasonal movement of stock between woodland and downland) and later, assarting, created a pattern of small-scale holdings, with an absence of communal farming of large open fields. The generally low fertility of the Hastings Beds and the poverty of its soils contributed to this pattern. In addition, the intractable nature of the steep gills for any other use than woodland meant that woodland persisted as a resource through succeeding economies. Within the woodlands, although sweet chestnut appears to have expanded later with the hop industry, the dominance of oak with hornbeam, other species such as ash, and understorey tree species (species below the main woodland canopy) such as hazel, were established through ironworking and pannage (the right of pasturing pigs and other stock in woodlands).

**9.18** Given that the area was enclosed before the post-medieval period of enclosure, we have therefore inherited a quantity, holding size and structure of woodlands in characteristic locations derived essentially from the medieval woodland pattern of the early 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Elements of the post-medieval landscape have survived also, centred on formal enclosures of woodlands, commons and possibly the re-organisation of assart fields.

**9.19** The dense pattern of narrow lanes and tracks in the area is also typical of the High Weald, representing a visible survival of ancient routes (*droves* or *droveways*) used for transhumance. Together with the prehistoric ridge-top routes, the droves were one of the most characteristic features of the High Weald in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and remain so to this day. The landscape also reveals a legacy of slag heaps, hammer and furnace ponds, some furnace remains and roads associated with the Wealden iron industry as well as the numerous mills which were once common throughout the country.

## Historic parks and gardens

**9.20** Seven of the nine Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in the District lie within the area including a further 22 non-registered mainly post-medieval parkscapes identified by the local authorities.

**9.21** *Brockhurst* lies to the east of East Grinstead. By 1875, Ashurst Lodge was situated within substantial pleasure grounds, the name of the house changing to Brockhurst by 1899. The garden comprises a rock garden, gardens and pleasure grounds laid out by Frederick J. Hanbury between 1908 and 1935 and for which the site was famous. The gardens sit in the remnants of a park developed between 1875 and 1899 incorporating the easternmost of the string of four ponds to the west of the house.

**9.22** *Gravetye Manor* to the north of West Hoathly comprises fine formal and informal gardens, set within a landscape of woodlands and lakes, which were laid out between 1885 and 1935 by the horticultural writer and gardener William Robinson and which survive largely intact. The manor house at Gravetye was built in 1598 by a local iron-master, Richard Infield (see *para* 9.34 below). William Robinson purchased it in 1884, restoring the house and laying out the present gardens. Today, the woodland is held in trust and managed on behalf of the Forestry Commission. The house and grounds are run as a country house hotel.

**9.23** *High Beeches* near Handcross on the edge of the Worth forests originated as an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century villa when, in 1849, the estate was purchased by Sir Robert Loder. He enlarged the house and laid out extensive formal gardens immediately around it. The present 20<sup>th</sup> Century plantsman's and collector's garden was designed and planted by Colonel James Loder between 1906 and 1966 (the mansion was destroyed by fire in 1942). The gardens are open to the public.

**9.24** *Nymans* adjoins the south-eastern edge of Handcross. It probably took its name from the family of Robert le Nynweman or Nyman in the early 14<sup>th</sup> Century. It is today a splendid garden with associated striking parkland, the downland views magnificent. Moreover, it is centred on a remarkably romantic modern ruin (see *para* 9.32 below). Owned by the National Trust, *Nymans* is a principal visitor attraction in the District.

**9.25** *Stonehurst*, a 'new' country house and gardens near West Hoathly and directly east of Wakehurst Place, was laid out on the site of an earlier farmhouse, Stone Farm. Part of this earlier estate included two mills, Corn Mill and Stone Mill which were retained, together with the Mill Cottages set next to the mill ponds. Built around 1910, the brick and weather-tiled house is substantial. *Stonehurst* sits on the edge of the deep Cob Brook valley, the pleasure grounds (including ornamental ponds, pools and waterfalls) and estate extending over 80 hectares of farmland and deep gill woodland centred on Chiddinglye Woods. The valleys contain extensive sandrock crags including the famous 'Great-on-Little' Stone remarked on by Cobbett (1835) (see *para* A5.11 in **Appendix 5**). Much of the valley is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (see *para* 9.14 above).

**9.25** *Wakehurst Place* today is an eminent National Trust property comprising gardens, extensive grounds and a substantial visitor centre. It is the home of Kew Gardens in Sussex and houses the Millennium Seed Bank. The manor of *Wakehurst* probably dates from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> Century, when its connection with the *Wakehurst* family was established. It passed by marriage to the *Culpepers* in 1454 with whom it remained for 200 years, Sir Edward *Culpeper* building the present house in 1590 (see *para* 9.34 below). In 1903 the estate was sold to Gerald Loder, younger brother of Sir Edmund Loder of *Leonardslee* and later created first Lord *Wakehurst*, who established many of the plant collections, particularly those from eastern Asia and the southern continents. The estate was eventually bequeathed to the National Trust. In 1984, management passed to the Board of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew which, in conjunction with the Trust, manages the gardens and estate.

**9.26** The house lies on the eastern edge of the deep *Ardingly Brook* gill woodland valleys and sandrock crags, above a long, narrow reach of *Ardingly Reservoir*. It comprises 40 hectares of ornamental gardens, parkland, and mixed native and

ornamental woodland with adjacent fenced farmland. The parkland lies east of the mansion and gardens. It is open in character with an intermittent scatter of trees of varying ages surviving from the pattern of clumps shown on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1874 and 1909.

## **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**9.27** Settlement in the High Weald is typically dispersed, based on an historic pattern of numerous farmsteads within discrete or enclosed small-scale holdings, often set on high ridges, hilltops and high ground. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, nucleated villages had emerged, their dominance as settlements progressively emerging in the modern era. Sometimes, development has resulted from local industries such as clay winning and quarrying. The principal villages are Ardingly, Ashurst Wood, Balcombe, Handcross, Horsted Keynes, Sharpthorne, Turners Hill, and West Hoathly. Slaugham and Staplefield lie on the edge of the Ouse Valley. Since the turn of the century, and particularly after the Second World War, all of the villages have been expanded to some degree by suburban development, notably at Balcombe and Ashurst Wood.

**9.28** Settlement in the area was therefore unobtrusive and scanty until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when the High Weald became a favourite area for the extension in the Victorian and Edwardian eras of 'London into Sussex', characterised by widespread, often lavish, house development, the hilly woodland settings highly prized. The new parkscapes developed as a setting for these houses have bequeathed a legacy of exotic trees and shrubs which are today locally dominant in the landscape. Indeed, the spread of exotic species originally introduced into these parkscapes, particularly rhododendron, have invaded many woodlands, where the 'new' species have supplanted the old. High, clipped roadside rhododendron 'hedgerows' are locally characteristic in parts of the area, for instance, on the road between Turners Hill and Handcross.

**9.29** The style of rural historic building in the area is diverse. There are good examples of timber-framed buildings including "Wealden" houses (variants of the medieval hall house), many formerly owned by ironmasters, most examples of which lie in East Sussex and Kent (it will be remembered that the area of Mid Sussex District was included in East Sussex before 1975). However, whilst timber-framed properties are highly characteristic of the High Weald, they are not visible enough in the area to constitute a dominant visual style, especially as so many of the original frames have been covered by later facades.

**9.30** The so-called Wealden stone from the Ardingly Sandstone and Cuckfield Stone members of the Hastings Beds is an important and substantial fine-grained building stone, especially the deposits won in the East Grinstead area. The stone is very variable in colour depending on its origin, weathering and lichen cover. The stone is markedly grey in some buildings, biscuit-coloured or fawn in others, sometimes iron-caked or rust-stained from iron deposits. However, although locally very distinctive, the use of the stone is not dominant in the area. It tends to be used as ashlar (cut and dressed stone) for more substantial and expensive buildings, rarely used as rough or random stone. Notable concentrations of the use of this stone include at Horsted Keynes and, in delightful profusion, at Slaugham, the various buildings in the village illustrating well the subtlety and variability of colour and texture of the weathered stone. The stone is rarely quarried now.

**9.31** The other local stone used occasionally in the area is Horsham Stone, a flaggy, fine-grained sandstone from the Weald Clay, so-called because the beds occur principally around Horsham. The massive sandstone slabs, often marked with wave formations, are used mainly for roofing and sometimes for paving, and attract a rich patina of mosses and lichens. Apart from some timber-framed houses, more characteristic of the area is the predominance of locally diverse reddish brick and

patterned, hung tiles, and some weather boarding typical of the more easterly parts of the High Weald, notably in East Sussex and Kent.

**9.32** The development of numerous large houses and grounds in the area is a testament to the discovery of the High Weald as a dramatic setting for fine properties. Of the many modern houses, perhaps the finest is *Standen* (National Trust) south of East Grinstead, one of Philip Webb's best houses, built 1891-94. The most remarkable must be the ruined *Nymans*, a convincing evocation of an ancient major manor house, although actually built 1925-30 in Somerset stone in the Cotswold Manor House style. Much of the house was destroyed by fire in 1947. A fine example of an earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century house, *Saint Hill*, lies close to Standen. The High Weald (as with many other areas in West Sussex) was also a popular location for schools. A notable example in the area is *Ardingly College*, a large independent school building in brick, founded in 1858 by Nathaniel Woodward, who also established Lancing and Hurstpierpoint Colleges. *Ditton Place* – a large house of 1904 with stone and brick dressings – is also a school.

**9.33** *Worth Priory of our Lady Help of Christians* lies in a fine position in the Worth forests, on the Forest ridge, looking down on Paddockhurst Park. The principal building is *Paddockhurst*, a vast imitation Tudor mansion of 1869-72 designed by the architect Salvin. Other houses of interest from the Victorian era include the stone-built *Chiddinglye* (1866) and the Tudor-style *Stonelands* (1887).

**9.34** Important historic houses and grounds include *Wakehurst Place* at Ardingly, originally an ironmaster's house, with original parts dating from 1590. *Gravetye Manor* is a late Elizabethan iron-master's house near West Hoathly and *Gullege*, a fine Jacobean house, lies in open country close to the western edge of East Grinstead.

**9.35** Other houses of interest include *Selsfield House* with an early Georgian stone front and *Battens* at Highbrook, a house with two medieval wings, the earliest parts dating from the late 13<sup>th</sup> Century or early 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Near Horsted Keynes, *Treemans* has much Tudor brickwork and some timber framing, with later additions in Wealden stone. The village streetscape of West Hoathly is small and compact with varied materials including Wealden stone, brick, ruddy tile hanging and weatherboarding. The stone front of the *Manor House* faces the church and to the south lies *Priest's House*, timber-framed, of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.

**9.36** The eight older churches in the area are generally typical of the High Weald including four with shingled spires and four with towers:

- *St Peter* at Ardingly, outside the village-, low tower, in Wealden stone with a 14<sup>th</sup> Century doorway.
- *St Mary* at Balcombe, much added to in 1847-50, with a shingled spire.
- *All Saints* (1884) at Highbrook, at the end of a long ridge, quite large with a shingled spire.
- *St Giles* at Horsted Keynes, mainly Norman, again, with a shingled spire.
- *St Mary* at Slaugham, Norman, 13<sup>th</sup> Century and later with a pyramidal-roofed tower, in Wealden stone.
- *St Mark* (1847) at Staplefield with a bellcote (belfry).
- *St Leonard* (1895-7) at Turners Hill with a tower, in Wealden stone.
- *St Margaret* at West Hoathly in the centre of the village, Norman, 13<sup>th</sup> Century and later with the usual shingled spire, in Wealden stone.

## East Grinstead

**9.37** Within the area lies East Grinstead, a town with a population of 23,942. It lies on high, ridge-like ground on the County boundary, the northern flanks of the town falling to Dormans Park in Surrey. To the east, the town embraces the Ashplats Wood valley, older ribbon development flanking the A22 which connects the town with suburban development at Ashurst Wood. To the west, the town adjoins more gentle, open farmland and some woodland stretching towards Crawley Down. To the south, the slopes within and below the town are dissected by a series of streams flowing to the infant Medway, complex ridges in between.

**9.38** East Grinstead is an attractive market town of medieval origin which has been greatly expanded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, four railway lines converged on the town (the first railway station in the town was opened in 1855), and by 1900 the town had significantly increased in size. Edwardian development was of a piecemeal nature, often in isolated blocks along the roads entering the town, notably at Sunnyside and along the main road to North End. Interwar development was more significant, comprising ribbon development at Felbridge, North End and along the Holtye Road and a number of estates (Sackfield Gardens, Halsford Green and Brooklands Park).

**9.39** It was in the post-war period that development was greatly expanded and the urban pattern of the town consolidated. Before 1970, large housing developments were built to the west and a number of consolidating developments on most of the land north of the town centred on Blackwell. Substantial expansion and consolidation of the urban area also occurred at Sunnyside to the south, with new building in Ashurst Wood. Since 1970, there have been smaller, consolidating developments on the edges of various parts of the town. However, the largest development in this period was to the south of the Ashplats Wood, straddling the A22, representing a major eastward extension of the town. These changes have resulted in a compact town form, integrated well with the existing landscape, with relatively few problems associated with the rural urban fringe.

**9.40** The historic town centre of East Grinstead is intimate in scale, revealing its medieval origins, the High Street punctuated by an island, the large 18<sup>th</sup> Century parish church of *St Swithun* with its tower lying behind it, built by James Wyatt using variably coloured Wealden sandstone. The High Street contains many fine buildings, some timber-framed, others elegant examples from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. *Sackville College* is the pre-eminent building, founded in 1617, a long, stone built façade. Other houses of note include *Clarendon House*, late 16<sup>th</sup> Century, timber-framed, of three stories with much adornment, and the gabled *Stone House* of about 1600. Further out, *St Mary's Convent* on Moat Road is an ambitious range of buildings, begun 1865. The chapel was built in 1879-83, very tall with a high tower.

**9.41** The *West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016* allocates land to the west and south west of East Grinstead for a strategic mixed-use development of 2,500 homes with an associated relief road. The District Council is preparing an Action Area Plan for Strategic Development at East Grinstead. It will provide detailed guidance on the form of development and the alignment of the relief road.

### Strategic gaps

**9.42** The County Council, Mid Sussex District Council and Crawley Borough Council have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Crawley, East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood and have designated this land as strategic gaps.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change – key issues**

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing extensive planting of conifers, particularly to the west on the fringes of Worth Forest.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including village expansion, modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Proposals for new development and a relief road on the edge of East Grinstead.
- Introduction of telecommunications masts on ridges.
- Expansion of Crawley and East Grinstead and influence of the M23 corridor.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area, especially along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
- Older, small assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
- Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Long views along valleys and ridges have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve the rich mosaic of woodland and other habitats and the intimate nature of the agricultural landscape, the high level of perceived naturalness of the area including its rural, tranquil qualities, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.***

### Land Management Guidelines

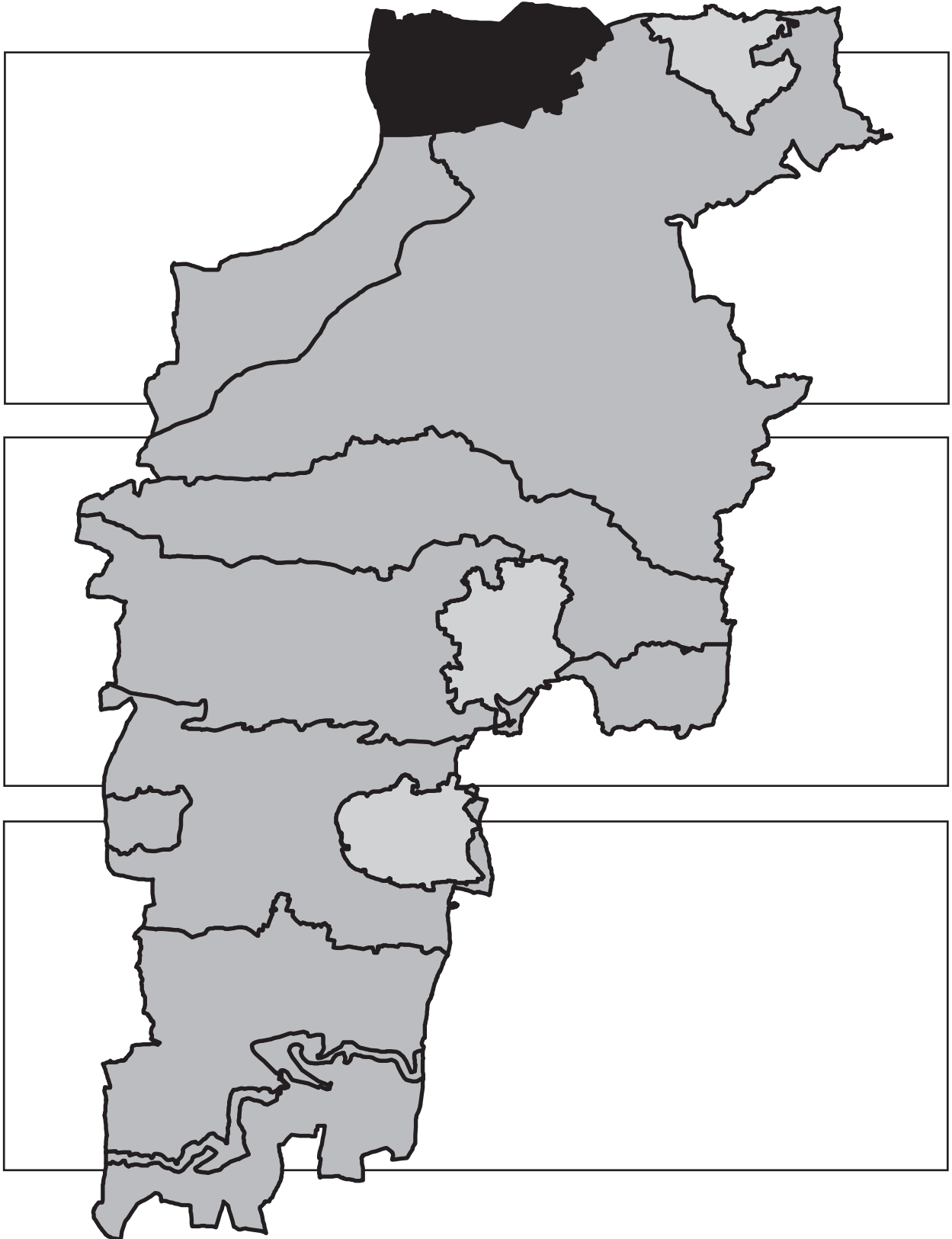
- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Plant trees in drifts and avoid straight lines running across the grain of the land.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including within the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession, and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve the landscape of the gills including wet woodland and sandrock crags, and protect the nationally-rare sandrock plant and other communities associated with them.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Continue to maintain the natural setting of the Worth Way.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.



The area lies wholly within Mid Sussex District. See ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet HW1 (High Weald)*** in Part Three. The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The *High Weald (Area 6)* and *High Weald Plateau (Area 7)* Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.

Landscape Character Area 7  
***High Weald Plateau***



## High Weald Plateau

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**A low sandstone plateau which merges with the clays of the Low Weald plain to the north.**

- Headwater drainage of the Eden, Medway and Mole Rivers originates here, the significant little valleys of the streams bounding the plateau to the south and dissecting it to the north east.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, including some larger woods and a dense network of hedgerows and shaws, creates a sense of enclosure, the valleys secluded.
- Small assemblies of assorted pastures contrast with blocks of larger, modern fields.
- Heathland cover is remnant, most of the former heaths today covered with regenerated woodland.
- Busy lanes and roads, particularly the A264 through Copthorne along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor and the B2038 running north into the area from Turners Hill.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Rural settlement pattern dispersed and scanty, with expanded settlements at Copthorne and Crawley Down, ribbon development along some roads, and plotlands in woodland settings.
- Mill sites and hammer ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber framing and varieties of local brick and tile hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**10.1** Although part of the High Weald forests, this area has a character sufficiently its own to make it worth separating from the *High Weald (Area 6)* and *Worth Forest (Area 8)* Landscape Character Areas surrounding it. Lying wholly within Mid Sussex District, the area forms a distinct plateau bounded to the south by the secluded Rowfant and Fen Place Mill valleys and cut into in the north-east by the streams of Felbridge Water. It adjoins the M23 Motorway and Crawley to the west and lies a mile or so away from East Grinstead to the east.

**10.2** Although plateau-like, the land is not high, generally less than 100 metres above sea level. On the edge of the *High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)* lying to the south, the area comprises the southern edge of a much wider, low plain. Within the plateau, three Wealden rivers (Eden, Medway and Mole) begin life or have tributaries, each river flowing in a different direction. Geologically, the area is a continuation of the High Weald Hastings Beds. The underlying rocks are mainly Upper Tunbridge Wells sandstone and clay with scattered deposits of head.

To the north, these rocks merge without interruption with the Weald Clay in Surrey, the transition marked by the resumption of the typical pastoral landscape of the Low Weald.

**10.3** The deepish gill streams cutting into the plateau help to define its boundaries. Crawley Down perches above the marked slopes falling at Fen Place Mill to the high Medway stream (loaded with hammerponds, which are also numerous elsewhere on the plateau streams), Rowfant secure in a secluded valley to the west. To the north, there is an intricate valley landscape with hammerponds along Felbridge Water, to the south of Hedgecourt Lake, just in Surrey. The plateau proper is flat or undulating. From open ground there are occasional long views over the Surrey Weald to the Surrey Hills.

**10.4** The landscape is strongly characterised by blocks of woodland with shaws, a few of the former substantial, for instance, around Rowfant, south of Copthorne and centred on Felbridge Water at the small valley settlements at Cuttinglye and Furnace Woods. The woodlands and shaws enclose and conceal small assemblies of assart pastures which contrast with blocks of larger, amalgamated fields. Within the fields, the hedgerows are mature, large trees prevalent at field boundaries.

**10.5** Most of the formerly grazed heathland has disappeared, much of it covered by new, naturally regenerating woodland. For instance, the substantial Copthorne Common is no longer predominantly heathy, although the heathland that remains there is greatly valued for its wildlife.

**10.6** The gradual intermingling of development with the traditional High Weald landscape since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and particularly since the Great War, has modified the historic character of the area. However, whilst the bustle of modern life and suburbia is never far away, it is noteworthy how much of the area has managed to keep its distinctive and attractive rural character. Very locally, some areas seem peaceful and tranquil, although aircraft noise is a regular distraction. Despite the degree of development, farming continues to husband the landscape, based on a mix of woodland, pasture and arable farming.

**10.7** Adjoining Crawley at the M23 Motorway, and with Gatwick Airport only a couple of miles away, the area lies on the edge of a part of West Sussex where, arguably, change has been the greatest since the Second World War. The area itself contains two greatly expanded villages, at Copthorne and Crawley Down. Long-established ribbon development and settlements at Effingham Park and Domewood in Surrey characterise the corridor of the busy A264, which weaves in and out of the County between Crawley and East Grinstead. Plotlands established after the War characterise parts of the area, as do commercial and industrial premises (including hotels and garages), notably at Crabbet Park and Rowfant.

**10.8** Other new elements in the landscape include large overhead power lines, their dominance variable depending on the lie of the land and on the openness of the landscape. Part of the great Southern Railway, the former railway line from East Grinstead to Three Bridges (opened 1855, with a station at Rowfant) was scrapped in the 'sixties by Lord Beeching and today is a pleasant cycle and walkway, crossed by the Sussex Border Path. The degree of development in the area means that the fringe between the urban areas and the countryside is long. Problems associated with the rural urban fringe include underused farmland, the fragmentation and degradation of the woodland and field pattern, and access pressures from nearby residential areas.

## **Biodiversity**

**10.9** Based on the alternation of sandy and clay soils and the particular conditions obtaining in the gills valleys, the natural history of the area is diverse. The area

contains no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and a small number of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNICIs). The first of these comprises the ancient woodland in the Lobbs Wood valley and species-rich vegetation on the margins of Furnace Pond. The second comprises the neutral and acid grassland, semi-natural woodland and dry heath of Copthorne Common (two contiguous areas of common land, the larger of which is managed as a golf course).

**10.10** The character of the woodlands is varied and includes a range of semi-natural woodland types, many formerly managed in the centuries-old Wealden way as 'coppice-with-standards'. Dominant forms include oak-ash and hornbeam woodlands with understorey species such as hazel, as well as stands of beech, sweet chestnut coppices and broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation.

### **Historic character**

**10.11** The historic character of the area is similar to that for the High Weald and the background on historic character in the *High Weald* Landscape Character Area section therefore applies. Undoubtedly the most important historical sites in the area are the rich remains of the Wealden iron industry. These include many hammerponds and some former mill sites, one or two of the latter preserved and restored. The area contains three non-registered mainly post-medieval parkscapes identified by the local authorities.

### **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**10.12** The evolution of the historic settlement pattern of the area and the nature of its local distinctiveness today is essentially similar to that for the High Weald and the background on settlement pattern in the *High Weald* Landscape Character Area section therefore applies. Important houses in the area include *Heatherwood* (1871) at Crawley Down, *Crabbet Park* (1873), *Newlands* (1848-9) at Copthorne, and the Elizabethan *Rowfant House* (with an earlier medieval core).

**10.13** The Church of *St John the Evangelist* (1877) at Copthorne is quite large, rock-faced, with a steeple. At Crawley Down, *All Saints* (1843-88) has a bellcote (belfry).

**10.14** As noted above, much of the area has become increasingly suburbanised through development at Copthorne, Crawley Down, Down Park and Furnace Wood (only the area south of Copthorne has a rural character in keeping with adjoining Landscape Character Areas). In addition, traffic associated with this development and trunk road movement through the area is strongly evident to the north, given the position of the area between Crawley and East Grinstead. Much of the suburban development referred to comprises secluded woodland estates developed on plotlands (land allocated for smallholdings and development after the Second World War). Today, these estates are a highly characteristic form of settlement in the Felbridge Water valleys, notably at Furnace Wood.

### **Strategic gap**

**10.15** The County Council, Mid Sussex District Council and Crawley Borough Council have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Crawley and East Grinstead and have designated this land as a strategic gap.

[continues]

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change – key issues**

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing and continuing extensive planting of conifers.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets (principally at Copthorne Common) due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes, with consequent demands for increased signage and road and junction safety improvements.
- Expansion of Crawley and East Grinstead and influence of the M23 Motorway corridor.
- Increasing pervasiveness of development and traffic movement and noise in parts of the area, particularly along the Crawley-East Grinstead corridor and along the rural-urban fringe.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- Areas of perceived naturalness continue to compete with increased and pervasive levels of development and traffic movement, although much of the area has managed to keep its distinctive and attractive rural character.
- Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity although various woodlands have been developed as suburban woodland estates.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
- Assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
- Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Highly characteristic and valuable legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.

*[continues]*

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve the mosaic of woodland and other habitats and the intimate nature of the remaining agricultural landscape.***

### Land Management Guidelines

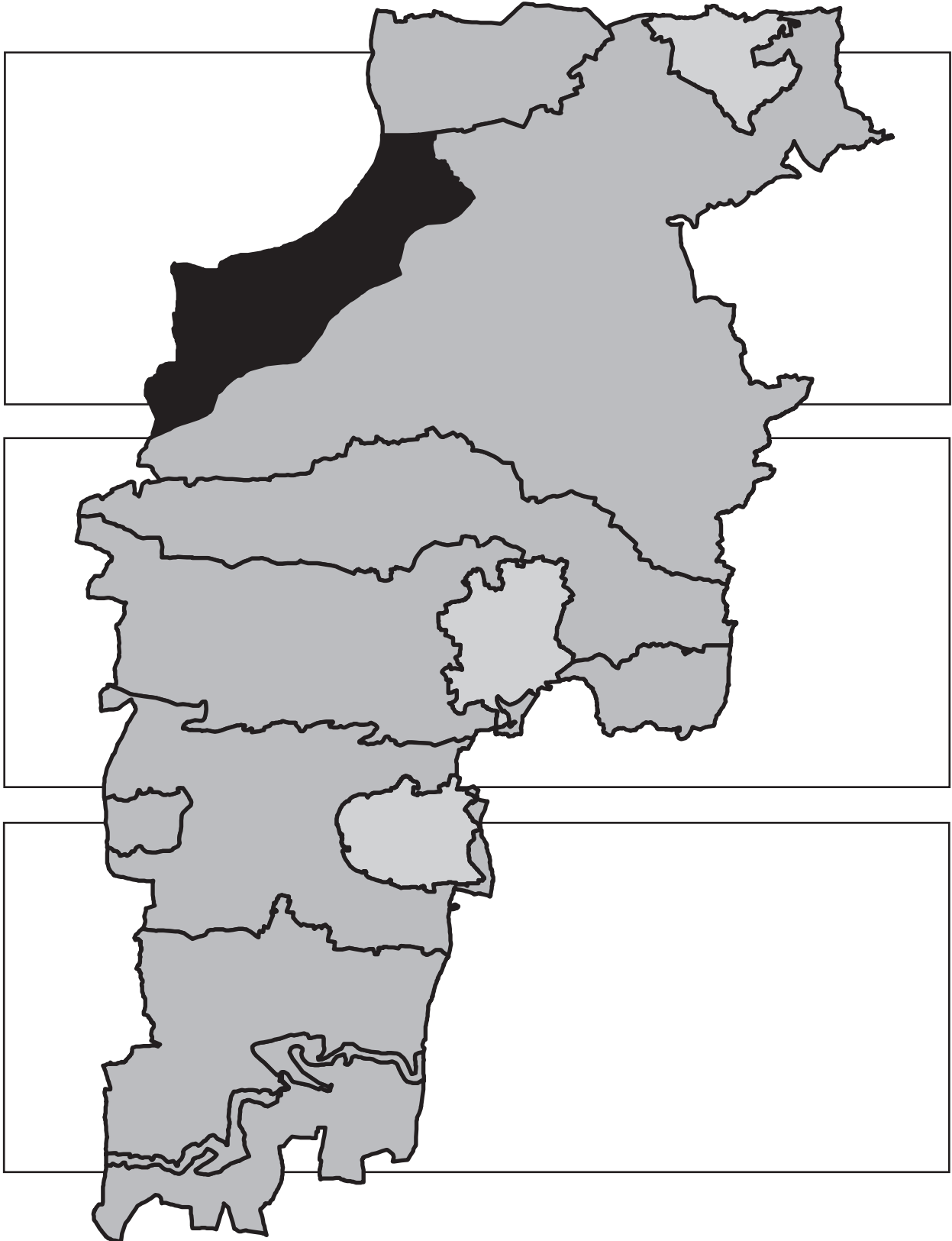
- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views into and from the area and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost, particularly in areas close to urban development, for instance, at Crawley Down.
- Conserve and re-plant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession.
- Where appropriate, conserve and increase significant tree cover in and around villages and on the rural urban fringe of Copthorne and Crawley Down including along the approach roads to settlements and along the busy urban routes including within the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- Conserve and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Continue to maintain the natural setting of the Worth Way.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The area is part of the High Weald in Mid Sussex. For the Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines for the wider area, see **Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet HW1 (High Weald)** in Part Three. The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The *High Weald (Area 6)* and *High Weald Plateau (Area 7)* Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.



Landscape Character Area 8  
**Worth Forest**



## Worth Forest

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**Heavily-afforested, dissected plateau landscape enclosing a post-medieval rural landscape cut from the forest. Includes the western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge. Adjoins Crawley and the M23 Motorway.**

- Densely wooded, confined, dissected plateau landscape with extensive coniferous and mixed afforestation.
- The Worth forests mark the plateau-like western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge, drained by the Rivers Mole and Ouse.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs but fewer long views north.
- Large, regularly-enclosed and some smaller, irregular, assart fields within a woodland setting comprising an arable and pastoral landscape enclosed by shaws, hedgerows and fencing.
- Despite the closeness of Crawley to the north, a secluded, tranquil nature exists in many parts of the forests.
- Clearance and re-planting of large tracts of ancient woodland.
- Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity.
- Spares network of ridge-top roads and lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Sparse, dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads.
- Bounded to the west and north by the the M23 Motorway and to the south east by the B2110.
- The London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area via the Balcombe Tunnel.
- Sizeable hammerponds, lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Exotic treescapes in places including rhododendron hedgerows.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**11.1** Worth Forest lies wholly within Mid Sussex District and the *High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB). It comprises various forest blocks including Brantridge, Cowdray, High Beeches, Tilgate, Worth and Worthlodge Forests and Oldhouse Warren. Though quite distinct as a large, afforested plateau, the forest remains linked to the much wider ancient hunting forest remnants of which it is a part. These include St Leonard's Forest, the land between Crawley Down and Turners Hill, Paddockhurst Park and the large woodland blocks stretching over hill and vale as far south as Staplefield on the northern edge of the Ouse Valley.

**11.2** The forest is part of the westernmost extension of the Hastings Beds in the High Weald. To the north, beyond Tilgate Park in Crawley Borough and Holmbush Forest in Horsham District, the Hastings Beds are faulted out against the Weald Clay, forming an abrupt edge to the steep, wooded topography of the High Weald. The landform and geology of the forest are relatively simple. The area comprises a lightly dissected

plateau of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sandstone with clay bands exposed on the sides of the shallow valleys. The forest plateau extends into Horsham District, the Holmbush Forest plateau to the north and the long ridge-and-valley sequence in St Leonards Forest to the south.

**11.3** The northern and western boundaries of the forest in Mid Sussex are clearly marked by the A23 Trunk Road, its extension as the M23 Motorway and the A264 Crawley South Western Bypass. The northernmost extent of the forest lies beyond the motorway at Tilgate Park in Crawley Borough. The southern boundary of the area is formed by the crest of the Forest Ridge, marked by the B2110 running south-west from Worth Abbey to Handcross. The ridge marks the watershed between streams draining north to the River Mole and those draining south to the River Adur. The forest is wholly within the Mole catchment, its long, secluded streams cutting west-east across the plateau or south-north, through Crawley.

**11.4** The woodland character of the area is based on an important reservoir of ancient woodland, much of which has been replanted as the series of coniferous and mixed plantations that comprise the forest today. However, the relict landscape of the older forest still persists, in the gill woodlands, in other semi-natural ancient woodland areas, and in features such as gnarled beech trees and beech avenues, pollarded oaks and coppiced beeches, old banks, rabbit warrens, and old shaws. Once closely associated with the woodland pattern, most of the surviving wood pasture and heathland has disappeared under the plantations.

**11.5** The forest contains regular clearings of fields largely the result of forest reclamation and improvement in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. These fields are quite different from the Wealden assarts, being large square or rectangular enclosures bounded by ditched hedges. In the forest, they persist as large blocks, generally on the gentle valley slopes, to this day surrounded by the forests on ground that refused to yield to improvement.

**11.1** The forest is something of a conundrum. It can be experienced as different and special, a seemingly impenetrable forest tucked behind the Forest Ridge of the High Weald, tranquil, secluded, scenic and rather wild in places. Yet it is surrounded and crossed by the trappings of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century development. It lies cheek by jowl with Crawley and the M23 Motorway, is crossed by the London to Brighton Railway Line and pylon lines and contains large blocks of regular coniferous plantations divided by forest rides. It suffers from traffic and aircraft noise. The forest therefore has a two-sided character despite its persistence as one of the most densely wooded areas in the western Weald.

## **Biodiversity**

**11.2** The rich areas of biodiversity in the forest lie in the remnant semi-natural ancient woodlands, particularly those in the gills. The area contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the gill woodland in Cowdray Forest. It is important for a nationally uncommon alder woodland type and for its rich community of lichens. The north-western portion of Worthlodge Forest is included in an extensive Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) comprising oak and hazel woodland with birch and small-leaved lime, alder along the streams. Clearings are dominated by common grass species. The forest contains stands of beech, local areas of self-seeded Scots pine and hornbeam coppice. There are remnant and dormant wet and dry acid heathland areas and hammerponds.

## **Historic character**

**11.3** Worth Forest historically was a mosaic of heath, wood pasture and woodland rather than a continuous forest. The main task of woodland clearance in the High

Weald was accomplished in medieval times through processes of assarting and enclosure. During Tudor and Stuart period, the forest wastes shrank still further due to reclamation as farmland and the depletion of woodland stock for fuel by the Wealden iron industry. The character of the wider Worth forests changed greatly during this period, the area between the Forest Ridge and the River Ouse enclosed and divided up into numerous farmsteads.

**11.4** Four centuries of clearance by no means resulted in the clearance of all the Wealden woodland in and adjoining West Sussex. Due to the infertility and barrenness of the soil, the woodlands on the Forest Ridge and the plateaux flanking it persisted as extensive forest tracts. These tracts stretched from Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, across the plateau and Forest Ridge at Worth and Tilgate, and as far west as St Leonard's Forest. It was in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century that a further assault on these remaining forest wastes was begun by land improvers when large areas of former pasture, wood pasture and forest were brought under arable cultivation. Nevertheless, the high forests continued to provide a stern challenge to these efforts. The improvement of St Leonard's and Tilgate Forests presented particularly difficult problems because of badly-drained, sloping silty clays. Even the land previously reclaimed in the forest had been neglected, often used only for rabbit-warrening.

**11.5** The reclaimers of the forest wastes were large-scale operators who had varying degrees of success, the clearings of regular fields in the forest evidence of their efforts. Since the Second World War, the forests have been extensively re-planted with formal coniferous and mixed plantations which co-exist with the remnant ancient woodland.

**11.6** The area contains old lanes and tracks representing a visible survival of ancient routes (*droves* or *droveways*) used for transhumance. The area was particularly important as a centre of the wealden iron industry. The landscape reveals a legacy of hammer and furnace ponds, pond bays, some furnace remains and roads associated with the industry. The area contains five non-registered mainly post-medieval parkscapes identified by the local authorities.

### **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**11.7** The settlement pattern of the forest is scanty, consisting almost entirely of farmsteads associated with land reclaimed from the forest. Much of the forest lies in the parish of Worth, the village of Worth and its splendid Saxon church now isolated beyond the M23 Motorway and engulfed by the neighbourhoods of Pound Hill and Maidenbower in Crawley. The hamlet of Pease Pottage lies to the west, again separated from the eastern forest by the M23 Motorway.

#### **Strategic gap**

**11.8** The County Council, Mid Sussex District Council and Crawley Borough Council have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Crawley and Pease Pottage and have designated this land as a strategic gap.

*[continues]*

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change – key issues and trends**

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Extensive planting of coniferous forest on former ancient woodland.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.
- Continuing pressures for urban development on the northern fringes of the area and an attendant increase in the pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise.
- Visual impact of pylon lines and modern farm buildings.
- Increasing pressures for a variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on rural roads with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- Woodland and forest cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Large blocks of assart pastures impart breadth and depth to the scenic quality to the landscape.
- Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Network of lanes, droeways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Sparse settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.

*[continues]*

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve and enhance the secluded, tranquil nature of the forest and the agricultural landscape, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout the area.***

### Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve the forest and its seclusion for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes, plan for long-term woodland regeneration, and promote a diverse mosaic of woodland types.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Enhance the biodiversity of woodland rides and glades and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural roads and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

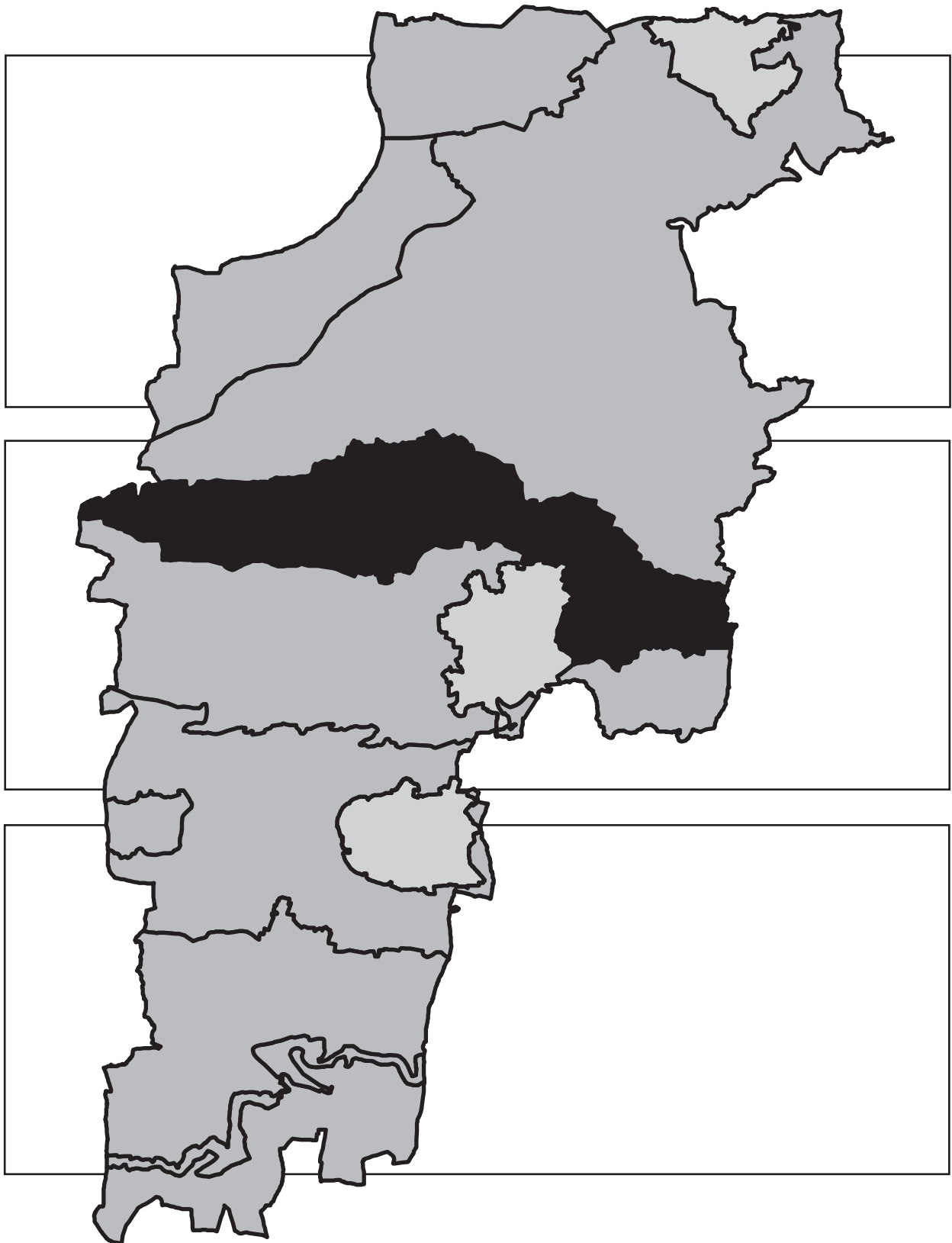
This area is part of High Weald forests - including St Leonard's Forest - in Mid Sussex and Horsham Districts. The Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines above have been incorporated into the ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet HW2 (High Weald Forests)*** included in Part Three. As part of the set of County-wide Land Management Guidelines, the area covered by the Sheet is wider than the area of the Worth Forest in Mid Sussex and includes:

The *Worth Forest (Area 8)* Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

The *St Leonard's Forest (Area L1)* defined in the unpublished ***Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment*** (October 2003).

The *Tilgate Forest* Landscape Character Area and a small part of St Leonard's Forest at Pease Pottage (yet to be included in a Borough Assessment) in Crawley Borough.

Landscape Character Area 9  
**Ouse Valley**



## Ouse Valley

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**Strongly linear valley adjoining Haywards Heath, its boundaries defined clearly by a marked break of slope. In the west, the river is a small, tree-lined stream amidst parallel streams and ridges, the valley broader to the east, the river meandering through water meadows. The signature of the valley is the high, long brick-built Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct on the London to Brighton Railway Line.**

- Shallow but well-defined attractive rural valley landscape of intimacy and unusual complexity with a single, unifying character based on strongly-defined valley edges.
- Parts of the valley are perceived as secluded and locally tranquil.
- A markedly convex v-shaped valley form developed along a heavily faulted rock sequence giving rise to a series of confined parallel tree-lined streams and ridges within and below the valley edges to the west.
- Eastern part of the valley contains a broader, meandering river with water meadows along the as yet narrow but gradually widening, flat valley floor.
- Relatively few panoramic or long views across or down the valley.
- Woodland cover less extensive than that of the High Weald fringes, despite an impression in places of a strong woodland presence strengthened by shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of mixed arable and pastoral medium to large-sized fields is in places uncharacteristic of the High Weald.
- Numerous crossing and flanking roads and lanes including the A23 Trunk Road, many of which are busy.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the valley, spectacularly so at the Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct, and the valley includes a small stretch of the Bluebell Steam Railway Line.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity including ancient woodlands.
- No settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although the townships of Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield lie on the valley edges.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Old mills, weirs and bridges.
- Extensive designed landscape at Borde Hill.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**12.1** Perhaps unusually so for a Wealden river, the valley of the Upper Ouse is strongly linear, its boundaries defined clearly by a marked break of slope. The valley lies wholly within Mid Sussex District and mostly within the *High Weald Area of*



*Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB). It is the most northerly of the six Landscape Character Areas which cross the District in strong west-east bands.

**12.2** The *High Weald (Area 6)* and *High Weald Fringes (Area 10)* Landscape Character Areas respectively bound the valley to the north and south. At the Horsham District boundary, the area adjoins the Landscape Character Area known as the *Mannings Heath Farmlands (Area N1)* in the *Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2003). The character of this fairly small area is more open in character than is usual in the High Weald, comprising a plateau patterned with medium to large-sized fields of arable and pasture, a fragmented hedgerow pattern, and generally fewer woodlands. This character continues across the District boundary into the western headwaters of the Ouse Valley. However, the area concerned within Mid Sussex District is very small indeed, comprising a few flatter, fairly open fields above the valley slopes at Tulleys Rough and Warninglid Lane. The area has therefore been included in the valley Landscape Character Area.

**12.3** The upper parts of the valley, in Mid Sussex, comprise an area of secluded and complex drainage, the river generally taken to rise at the head of the hammerpond stream beyond Slaugham Manor. From source to mouth, the valley is some 30 miles long of which 12 miles are within West Sussex and Mid Sussex District. Outside the County, in East Sussex, the river continues in a south-easterly direction then turning south at Fletching and running on to Lewes (the River Uck joins it on the way). In the manner of the southerly-flowing Wealden rivers, it cuts through the chalk of the South Downs, flanked by *innings* (water meadows) and reaching the sea at Newhaven.

**12.4** Geologically, the valley is on the rock, sand and clay of the Hastings Beds which underlie the High Weald, but is not entirely of them. The line of the valley lies along a heavily faulted rock syncline (strata downward-dipping in a bowl effect). Within this structure, the Hastings Beds (mainly Upper Tunbridge Wells Sandstone) have dropped downward in a series of faults to preserve above them an isolated long, thin member of Weald Clay (an *inlier*). The clay runs from below Lower Beeding in Horsham District to a point just south of Ardingly Reservoir. It contains sandstone beds of Horsham Stone and is covered in places by head. However, the main river does not pick out this line of softer rock as might be expected, but runs above it, across the sandstones of the Hastings Beds. Nevertheless, the presence of this Weald Clay has had an effect on the topography of the valley, as revealed below.

**12.5** Where the valley crosses the County boundary at Freshfield Mill in the east, its character has already begun to change from the quiet, tree-fringed stream in a markedly convex v-shaped valley to the west. It is now a more substantial, meandering (and partly artificially straightened) river with water meadows along the as yet narrow but gradually widening, flat valley floor. This change begins to take place east of College Road running across the valley south of Ardingly. Although the character of the valley topography shifts in this way (and this is to be expected), the area as a whole nevertheless appears to have a single, unifying character. This is embodied in the consistent break of slope which strongly defines the valley edge throughout, even though the higher, convex v-slopes gradually flatten and lengthen in the lower reaches. The valley edge is sometimes seemingly high and quite steep, as at Haywards Heath, or very straight, as at Whitemans Green westward. Only on the north side, between Ardingly and Freshfield Mill, is the integrity of the valley edge compromised by big streams flowing in from the north, principally the outfall stream from Ardingly Reservoir and Cockhaise Brook draining a substantial portion of the High Weald slopes to the north-east. Accordingly, for the purposes of this Assessment, the two 'parts' of the valley are treated as a single Landscape Character Area.

### **The western reaches**

**12.6** As noted above, the higher, western reaches of the valley lie west of College Lane. This part of the valley has a well-defined edge, on the south, running westwards from the Borde Hill Estate along steep slopes to Cuckfield Hospital and Whitemans Green. Between here and the boundary with Horsham District, the B2115 road to Warninglid defines the valley edge. Beyond Warninglid, the boundary follows a narrow ridgeline from The Grange to Eastland Farm, thin watershed between the Ouse streams and the deep gill system draining the woods and gardens of Leonardslee. Indeed, this southern boundary follows throughout the marked ridge separating the Ouse and Adur river catchments.

**12.7** Just a little north, at the Furnace Pond at Lower Ashfold, the northern boundary of the valley runs straight, east along the minor road from Ashfold Crossways to Staplefield. From Brantridge Lane, it crosses to the White House and Pilstye Wood at Rowhill Lane. Hereabouts, the valley edge has climbed higher, over generous, convex slopes. The boundary then crosses the B2036 in a valley and takes in the high ground at Balcombe Place and Stone Hall, both houses sited with magnificent valley viewpoints in mind. In this area, the River Ouse runs close to the Ardingly Reservoir dam as it skirts the bluff at Rivers Wood. The boundary here runs close to the dam and just south of Ardingly College, picking up the east-trending ridge line at Avins Farm, at the point where the character of the lower reaches of the valley begins to develop.

**12.8** As noted above, the main river runs above the Weald Clay member. Nevertheless, the presence of this Weald Clay has had a significant effect on the topography of the upper portion of the valley. The valley in this area is much broader than might be expected, since numerous roughly parallel streams run within it, over the Weald Clay, creating a complex topography of long, little ridges, bluffs and tiny, secluded valleys, the slope pattern generally long, convex and gentle. Notable internal ridges include those at Mallion Farm, Biggs Copse and Sydnie Farm (although this last is developed over the sandstone of the Hastings Beds). The hill at River's Wood forms a shallow bluff-like ridge round which the river diverts. All of these ridges are lower than the valley sides, so that the prospect is of a slightly sunken landscape of interlocking spurs and hidden corners, creating a most attractive, scenic effect.

### **The eastern reaches**

**12.9** East of College Lane, the lower portion of the valley comes into its own, defined to the north by the ridge topped by Hillhouse Farm. East of the farm, the boundary follows naturally along a network of old lanes – including Stonecross Lane and Plummerden Lane – to Wildboar Bridge where Cockhaise Brook enters the valley. The boundary runs on to Freshfield Crossways and to Kettle's Lane at the County boundary. To the south, the valley side and edge at the County boundary is defined sharply by the steep-sided slopes at Waspbourne Wood. Following this steep valley edge north of Scaynes Hill, the boundary encloses the bowl of streams centred on Walstead, draining the eastern edge of Haywards Heath and Lindfield. The boundary then arcs west around the northern edge of Haywards Heath, across High Beech Lane, picking up the high, wooded ground above Copyhold Lane and the open estate pastures of Borde Hill, thus completing the round.

**12.10** Wholly on the sandstone of the Hastings Beds with some head deposits south of Ardingly, the more mature lower part of the valley is more expansive (a particular feature are the tree and hedge-fringed water meadows). However, despite this broadness of the valley floor, the valley edges are still the defining feature, ultimately creating an impression of enclosure rather than openness. The northern slopes are generally flatter and gentler than in the upper portion of the valley, especially where the side streams have had a flattening effect on the ridgelines. However, to the

south, the valley sides are more sinuous and generally quite steep, the land just beyond the valley edge defining a narrow watershed with the Adur streams to the south. It is upon this valley-edge watershed ridge that Haywards Heath sits. The medieval market town of Lindfield, now joined to Haywards Heath by modern development, sits just under the highest point of the valley edge, on a shallow spur which reaches almost to the river.

### **Other aspects of the valley**

**12.11** The valley has more affinity with the less densely wooded character and lower terrain of the High Weald fringes than with the densely wooded landscape of the High Weald. However, the woodland cover in the valley is generally markedly less extensive even than that of the fringes, although its pattern of narrow ridge and valley plantings and occasionally heavily wooded valley sides creates an impression of woodland cover with mass and density. Substantial woodlands are more characteristic of the bluffs and valley sides of the lower portion of the valley, notably at River's Wood, Wickham Woods and at Henfield and Waspbourne Woods near Scaynes Hill. The woodlands are predominantly deciduous in appearance but contain much mixed woodland and coniferous planting.

**12.12** Although the valley contains significant ancient woodlands, the upper portion in particular represents a significant break in ancient woodland cover between the High Weald and its fringes to the south. Only at the eastern portion of the valley is ancient woodland cover significant. The general absence of ancient woodland in the western portion corresponds with the Weald Clay member, the relatively fertile soils of which may have encouraged clearance. However, the sandstone portion is denuded too, suggesting that the explanation of the absent woodland may be less than simple, since the analysis of the historic landscape does not suggest an overwhelming loss of landscapes of medieval origin in the valley. The area does not contain any heathland characteristic of other parts of the High Weald.

**12.13** Regular fields extend north into the High Weald although, in the fringes of the High Weald and beyond, become far more intermixed with the assart landscape. Again breaking away from the High Weald pattern, the overwhelming impression of the area is one of a rich, predominantly pastoral valley landscape composed of a pattern of medium to large-sized fields with some significant tracts of arable farmland, serviced by a network of larger farms. The developing pattern of larger fields has doubtless been fuelled by modern field amalgamation, although not all of this change is of recent origin.

**12.14** Although no roads run along the valley (it was always unsuited as a line for communications) it is crossed or flanked by numerous routes. Almost all running from north to south, these roads link the settlements which fringe the valley. Seven minor roads cross the valley as well as three B roads and the A23 Trunk Road to the west. The B2115 runs along the southern edge of the valley from Warninglid to Whitemans Green and the A272 runs along part of the valley boundary at Scaynes Hill. The valley is also crossed by the London to Brighton Railway Line, spectacularly so at the Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct. At Freshfield, the Bluebell Steam Railway Line crosses the lower slopes of the valley south east from Freshfield Halt. A disused railway line crosses the valley obliquely from the cutting on the London-Brighton line at Copyhold Bridge (Borde Hill) to Horsted Keynes Station on the Bluebell Line. The Sussex Ouse Valley Way, founded by Terry Owens, runs through the Valley on its way to the sea.

**12.15** There are no settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although the small villages of Slaugham, Staplefield and Warninglid and the townships of Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield lie on its edges. Farther off are Handcross, Ardingly and Horsted Keynes. The consequence of this degree of settlement close by is that most of the main roads and B roads and not a few of the minor lanes are busy with traffic. Despite the presence of the A23 Trunk Road, this

effect is far less marked in the western portion, where a more secluded, rural quality is uppermost.

**12.16** Parkscentres centred on large houses down the centuries are as characteristic in or near the valley as in the rest of the High Weald, although the landscapes associated with them are generally more open in character.

## **Biodiversity**

**12.17** The valley has a remnant range of semi-natural woodland types, many formerly managed as 'coppice-with-standards'. Many of these woodlands and associated trees encompass and fringe the numerous small streams and damp hollows of the valley as well as the river itself in its upper reaches. Dominant forms include oak-ash and hornbeam woodlands with understorey species such as hazel, as well as stands of beech, sweet chestnut coppices and broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation. There is a modest spread of field and farm ponds throughout the valley, the only significant water body the mill pond at Slaughman Manor. There are no hammer ponds. The lower reaches of the river are a good example of small grazing marsh meadows. Wet marshy grassland and marginal habitats provide nutrient rich nesting sites for breeding birds, rich with insects.

**12.18** Although the valley contains no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), there are six Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs). These vary between large ancient woodlands at Wickham Woods, Haywards Heath and Henfield Wood (with good ground floor and wet or damp areas) and smaller sites at Slaughman, Balcombe and Walstead valuable for meadow, marshland and water edge plants.

## **Historic character**

**12.19** Notwithstanding more recent changes to the landscape of the valley, its general historic development is broadly similar to that for the High Weald and its fringes. The background on historic character in the *High Weald Landscape Character Area (Area 6)* therefore applies.

### **Historic parks and gardens**

**12.20** Two of the nine Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in the District lie within or on the edge of the valley, including *Slaughman Place*, a small garden enclosure centred on the ruins of the former manor house. The valley contains a further three non-registered, mainly post-medieval parkscentres.

**12.21** The park, house and garden of *Borde Hill* lie partly in the valley and partly in the *High Weald Fringes Landscape Character Area (Area 10)*. For convenience, the site will be described here, since the parkland makes a significant contribution to the valley landscape. *Borde Hill* is a late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century plantsman's and collector's garden, laid out by Colonel Stephenson Clarke and set within an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century park with mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century origins. Today it is a principal visitor attraction in the District. The registered site comprises 155 hectares of ornamental gardens set within wooded parkland, much of it sweeping gently down the southern slopes of the valley. The house stands on the crest of the valley ridge, towards the centre of the park, and commands extensive views north and south over the park and further northwards to the Balcombe Viaduct and the High Weald. It has a west front of 1598, much of the rest early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**12.22** The North Park, laid to grass and permanent pasture, is extensively planted with clumps and individual trees including many exotic species and varieties of oak, the present pattern established by 1909. Other parts of the park contain a pinetum and woodland with exotic tree and shrub species. West of the gardens and on the

slopes to the south towards Lullings Gill, the parkland is more open in character. The eastern end of Lullings Gill contains a chain of new ponds and a lake. The South Park is also less extensively planted with parkland trees. It contains several smaller woods and copses, some with exotic tree species including cedars.

### **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**12.23** The evolution of the historic settlement pattern of the valley and the nature of its local distinctiveness today is essentially similar to that for the High Weald and its fringes. The background on settlement pattern in the *High Weald* Landscape Character Area section therefore applies. The valley has virtually no development within it, the pattern being one of a series of farmsteads at the centre of relatively large land holdings.

**12.24** The valley contains various houses of historic interest including *Slaugham Place* on gentle valley slopes alongside the River Ouse, the ruin of an Elizabethan house. The house was replaced by *Slaugham Manor* in 1901, in a red-brick Tudor style. On the Balcombe Estate lies *Stone Hall*, described by Nairn and Pevsner (1965) as 'a quietly perfect brick house of the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century' (to the north is *Balcombe Place*, the house of the estate, a Tudor-style mansion of 1856). *Pilstye* is dated 1647, stone with mullioned windows. In the eastern part of the valley, on the broad northerly slopes, lie *Paxhill House* (redeveloped 1865) and *East Mascalls*, a 16<sup>th</sup> Century house enlarged about 1896 with a form of reticulated decoration not common in Sussex.

**12.25** The *Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct* (1839-41) is one of the most impressive viaducts in England, 1,475 feet long with 37 brick arches, each pier arched at top and bottom, a classical balustrade along the entire length.

### **Strategic gap**

**12.26** The County and District Councils have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Haywards Heath and Scaynes Hill and have designated this land as a strategic gap.

[continues]

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change – key issues**

- Importance of retaining the unique identity of the valley and as an important landscape and wildlife corridor.
- Pressures for change in the drainage pattern including drainage of water meadows, straightening of channels and loss of river margins.
- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing field amalgamation into a pattern of medium and large-sized fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise on the network of roads crossing the valley.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Pressures for built development in the urban areas fringing the valley.
- Increasing recreational use of the area, including golf course development.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- High level of perceived naturalness in the landscape and drainage pattern and a rural quality with a general absence of development in western reaches of the valley.
- Pattern of medium to large-sized fields and watermeadows intermixed with woodlands and hedges imparts a scenic quality to the landscape.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.
- Scarce pockets of rich woodland biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Valley-edge settlements include Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield, the impact on the valley reduced by their woodland setting.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- High sensitivity to visual intrusion from pylons and telecommunications masts.

*[continues]*

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve the rural quality of the valley including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the mosaic of woodland and other habitats, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement farmstead pattern.***

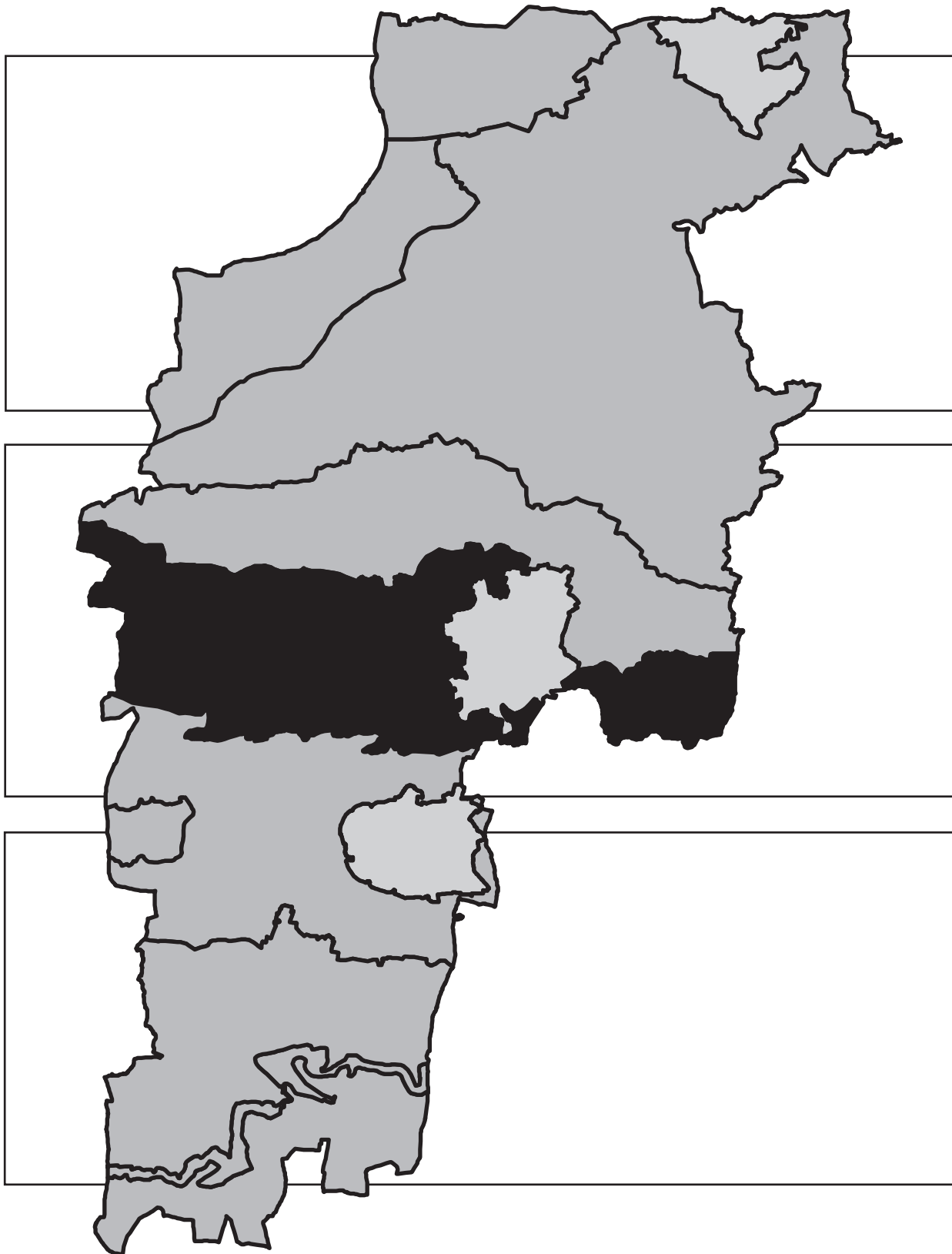
### Planning and Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the undeveloped character, drainage pattern and pastoral qualities of the valley.
- Protect existing views from ridge tops and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Conserve and enhance the presence of the river and its wildlife by streamside planting and creation of new wetland areas.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins including alongside the sides of streams.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.
- Conserve and plant parkland trees and tree groups and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of golf courses, and stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The area lies wholly within Mid Sussex District. See ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet HW3 (Ouse Valley)*** in Part Three. The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The *Ouse Valley (Area 9)* Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

Landscape Character Area 10  
**High Weald Fringes**





## High Weald Fringes

### CHARACTERISATION

#### Summary and key characteristics

**Densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald Forest Ridge, dissected gentle gill streams draining west to the River Adur and east to the River Ouse. Includes the settlements of Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield.**

- Wooded, often confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity partly within the *High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB).
- South and east-draining gills and broad ridges sweeping gently down to the Low Weald.
- Western part drained by the headwaters of the River Arun, eastern part around Scaynes Hill by the River Ouse.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields and larger fields, and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- Orchards and horticulture on lower slopes, particularly to the west.
- Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern, close to Horsham, the principal settlements Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield and a few villages and hamlets.
- Some busy lanes and roads including A and B roads bounding the area to the west, and other roads crossing north to south, including the A23 Trunk Road.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area at Haywards Heath.
- Mill sites, hammerponds and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.
- Major gill woodland garden and visitor attraction at Leonardslee.

#### Description and experience of the landscape

**13.1** This long band of country running east to west comprises the densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald. It lies partly within the *High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB). To the north, it is bounded strongly by the Ouse Valley and merges with the Low Weald to the south. It contains the township of Haywards Heath and the large medieval villages of Cuckfield and Lindfield.

**13.2** The geology of the area is an extension of the Hastings Beds, lying south of the Weald Clay inlier along the Ouse Valley. The majority of the area comprises mainly

Upper and Lower Tunbridge Wells Sandstone and clays and Grinstead Clay in alternating sequences. More localised beds include Cuckfield Stone and Ardingly Sandstone. There are limited deposits of Wadhurst Clay at Cuckfield Park and small areas of inlaid Weald Clay and Horsham Stone south of Warninglid and north of Bolney. Between Bolney and Burgess Hill, the southern edge of the area also includes wooded areas of Weald Clay.

**13.3** The landscape shares many of the characteristics of the High Weald proper, but is generally lower and gentler, the gill streams far less deeply incised, the woodland cover rather less dense. With the exception of the deep gills centred on Leonardslee Gardens on the edge of the area, partly in Horsham District, the streams form much shallower valleys than in the High Weald although many of them remain wooded. Between the valleys are rounded and rolling, broad spurs with shallow slopes. Many of the streams contain hammer, ornamental and fishponds.

**13.4** To the west of Haywards Heath, the area is drained by the headwaters of the River Adur, to the east of the town by the River Ouse. The northern edge of the area west of Haywards Heath comprises a straight, narrow ridgeline, the northern slopes falling abruptly to the jumble of lower streams in the Ouse Valley, the southern slopes dropping far more gently towards the Low Weald. Now more wooded, the ridge follows the valley edge east from Whitemans Green, around Haywards Heath and Lindfield, to Scaynes Hill. In places, the ridge gives excellent views across the Low Weald to the downs.

**13.5** The landscape is wooded throughout, densely in places. The woodlands are predominantly deciduous but contain much mixed woodland and coniferous planting. There is a moderate spread of ancient woodland with particular concentrations around Scaynes Hill, south west of Haywards Heath, between Ansty and Bolney, and centred on the Leonardslee Gardens gills, partly in Horsham District. Although there are numerous small woodlands, many woods are medium-sized or large, occurring in networks and blocks associated with gills and ancient woodland. There is a particular concentration of woodlands centred on Raggets Wood near Ansty and important woodland blocks flanking the slopes south of Haywards Heath. Orchards feature in the landscape west of Bolney.

**13.6** Once closely associated with the woodland pattern, most of the formerly grazed heathland in the area has disappeared, much of it covered by scrub and new or naturally regenerating woodland. The small pockets of heathland that remain are a valuable wildlife and landscape resource.

**13.7** The landscape of small, irregular-shaped fields characteristic of historic assart pastures are far less common here than in the High Weald proper, making this a transitional landscape between the High and Low Wealds. Regularly shaped medium-sized and large fields are common. In places, there has been extensive boundary removal and field reorganisation due to agricultural intensification.

**13.8** The area is crossed or flanked by numerous routes. The B2115 runs along the northern edge of the area between Lower Beeding and Whitemans Green. The A272 crosses the southern edge of the area, swinging into it at Ansty, thereafter running east through Haywards Heath and along the edge of the Ouse Valley at Scaynes Hill. North-south routes include the A23 Trunk Road, the A273 from Hassocks to Haywards Heath, the B2112 from Ditchling to Haywards Heath and the B2036 from Burgess Hill to Ansty. The area is also crossed by the London to Brighton Railway Line between Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath. The area is close to large towns. The consequence of this degree of settlement within and near the area is that most of the main roads and B roads and not a few of the minor lanes are busy with traffic.

**13.9** The area contains a network of lanes, droveways and tracks, rectilinear or sinuous depending on the terrain. The lanes are generally narrow, the deeper ones overcast with woodland vegetation, a characteristic of the Colwood area in the

vicinity of the Leonardslee and Bolney gills. Parkscapes associated with large houses are characteristic.

## **Biodiversity**

**13.10** Based on the alternation of sandy and clay soils and the particular conditions obtaining in the gills, the natural history of the area is diverse. The richer sites (albeit restricted in extent) are centred on plant and animal communities in gill woodlands and on unimproved pastures. There are numerous valley ponds including field ponds and their margins.

**13.11** The character of the woodlands is varied and includes a range of semi-natural woodland types, many formerly managed as coppice with standards. Dominant forms include oak-ash and hornbeam woodlands with understorey species such as hazel, as well as stands of beech, sweet chestnut coppices and broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation. The reduction of acid heathland to a few pockets scattered through the area, for instance at Scaynes Hill, is due to the cessation of grazing management, subsequent scrub and woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.

**13.12** The area contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a geological site of importance at Scaynes Hill. The area also contains numerous Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). These include gill woodlands, hornbeam coppice, species-rich meadowland and grassland. Two of the sites are within the built-up area of Haywards Heath and another site is on the edge of the town. The ancient woodland and meadowland centred on Catts Wood and Ashenground south west of Haywards Heath has recently been subject to new development, the intention being to preserve as much habitat as possible. The SNCI at Blunts Wood and Paige's Meadow on the edge of Haywards Heath and land at Eastern Road, Lindfield are managed as a nature reserves by the District Council. The District Council also manages the *Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve* (LNR) within Haywards Heath. The valley is a particularly good survival of a mosaic of semi-natural habitats within the built-up area.

## **Historic character**

**13.13** The area retains elements of the historic medieval landscape found in the High Weald proper including significant ancient woodland remnants. However, as already noted, this is essentially a transitional landscape. The pattern of narrow lanes and tracks though less dense is also typical of the High Weald, representing a visible survival of ancient routes (droves or droveways) used for transhumance. The line of the London to Brighton Roman Road crosses the area from north to south. The landscape also reveals a legacy of hammer and furnace ponds, some furnace remains and roads associated with the Wealden iron industry as well as the numerous mills that were once common throughout the country.

### **Historic parks and gardens**

**13.14** The area contains no fewer than 25 historic parks and gardens including part of the large registered parkland at *Borde Hill* (for a description of the Borde Hill site see *paras 12.23-25* in the section on the *Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area (Area 9)*) and the much smaller registered park and garden at Heaselands, both near Haywards Heath. Other, non-registered mainly post-medieval parkscapes identified by the local authorities include the extensive Wykehurst Park near Bolney and Cuckfield Park.

**13.15** *Heaselands* is a mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century plantsman's garden with formal elements and extensive ornamental woodland, established by 1874. After 1898 the

Kleinwort family formed the present estate. The house was re-built after 1932 and between 1934 and the late 1970s the gardens were designed and laid out. A small area of parkland, the Park Field, extends south-westwards from the house on a gentle slope to the boundary woodland. It is dotted with a few isolated conifers of mixed ages planted since the turn of the century.

**13.16** Amongst the non-registered sites, *Cuckfield Park* is of particular interest. It is important to note that the *medieval park* originated on a site quite separate from that which now surrounds the house of Henry Bowyer (see *para 13.21* below). Map evidence from 1595 shows two parks close to Cuckfield, the larger one to the south-east in the position of the medieval park. Initially the de Warennes had a hunting lodge and later a house in Cuckfield. In 1440 the early Cuckfield Park contained 104 hectares. This original park was dis-parked at the time that Bowyer built the present mansion of Cuckfield Park (then known as Cuckfield Place) in the 1570s, dismantling the medieval building near the church and using material from it to build his own mansion. The smaller park was positioned south-west of the village and corresponds roughly to the southern half of the present park surrounding the house.

### **Settlement form and local distinctiveness**

**13.17** The typically dispersed historic settlement pattern of the area reflects that of the High Weald proper. Apart from Cuckfield, Lindfield and the ridge line settlements, the villages are few and small: Ansty, Bolney, Scaynes Hill and Warninglid. Apart from the modest expansion of Scaynes Hill, suburban development in these villages has been limited. The numerous parkscapes in the area have bequeathed a legacy of exotic trees and shrubs which are locally dominant in the landscape. The style and materials of rural historic buildings are diverse, the latter including timber framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile hanging. Weatherboarding is scarce.

**13.18** The area contains many fine timber-framed houses including hall houses, of varying dates, including the 14<sup>th</sup> Century *Homewood House* near Bolney (there are half a dozen important houses of antiquity in the Bolney area). Also near Bolney is *Wykehurst* (1872-74), a chateau-like mansion with turrets and a conical roof, set in extensive, wooded parkland. Other houses of interest, near Ansty, include *Legh Manor*, a 16<sup>th</sup> Century tile-hung gabled house and *Moonhill Place* (c.1898) in brick and pebbledash. Cuckfield and Lindfield have churches with shingled spires and there are church towers at Bolney, Haywards Heath and Scaynes Hill (the last with a pyramid roof). Both types are characteristic of the High Weald. The parish church of *St Mary Magdalene* at Bolney has a Norman nave and chancel.

### **Cuckfield**

**13.19** Cuckfield (population 3,266) is close to Haywards Heath, a large, pretty village with a hilly, dog-legged main street, once separate from Whitemans Green to the north, on the edge of the Ouse Valley, but now joined to it by suburban development. Both villages were enlarged by small Edwardian developments. A small estate to the west and an area of large houses to the south were added in the interwar period, together with considerable ribbon development along Copyhold Lane and the Haywards Heath Road. There was much consolidation of the two-village area up to 1970. Since 1970, development has been modest, comprising some infill and minor extensions of the village edges and a recent redevelopment of the Cuckfield Hospital grounds. The village is by-passed by the A272, the spire of the church seen to good advantage across the undeveloped land north of the road.

**13.20** T A former medieval market town, Cuckfield has retained its character admirably, with a mixture of housing styles from many periods. These include timber-framing and Wealden stone, exemplified by parts of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century *Ockenden Manor* (now an hotel), and by the elegant Georgian ashlar stone front of *Marshalls*.

Examples of early Victorian architecture include the Tuscan porch on the front of the former *Kings Head*. The former *Cuckfield Hospital* (1843) north of the village has a long, classical frontage in brick, now the centrepiece of the new housing development in the hospital grounds.

**13.21** T The 14<sup>th</sup> Century parish church of *Holy Trinity* lies on the south side of the village, close to open, rising ground, nearly on the crest of the ridge, a church of nobility and substance. Its shingled spire is a landmark and, as noted above, particularly on approaches along the A272 from the south. Ockenden Manor also looks south down the slope, to *Cuckfield Park*, the Elizabethan brick house (later rendered) of Henry Bowyer with a small but elaborate brick gatehouse, the whole set in post-medieval parkland with an avenue of old limes from the gatehouse to the mansion.

### **Haywards Heath**

**13.22** Haywards Heath is a pleasant Victorian suburban town and quite leafy, the residential developments of varying ages deriving amenity from the built quality of many of the residential estates and from the remnant oaks and pines at home on the heathy land upon which the town was built. The topography of the town is complex, the main portion lying on high ground fringed by the Ouse Valley and, in the east, tilted into it at the broad embayment of the valley at Walstead. All but the western side of the town rises to higher ground. On the whole, the wooded setting screens the town well, particularly along the edges of the Ouse Valley. Only to the south are new housing and the hospitals on the high ridge at Rocky Lane and below Hurstwood Lane highly visible in the landscape, easily seen from the downs at Clayton. Haywards Heath was first joined to the medieval market town of Lindfield by inter-war suburban development, a link that is now solid and complete.

**13.23** Like Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath originated as a railway town on the London to Brighton Railway, a now disused branch line linking through Horsted Keynes to East Grinstead. Today, the town is the third biggest in the District with a population of 22,800 (including Lindfield). By 1900 the present town centre was fully in being (although parts of it were redeveloped before the Great War) with isolated strings of ribbon development to the south east and west and along New England Road. This pattern was lightly consolidated by 1918 with Edwardian terraces all around the town centre, in the vicinity of Lindfield, and out-of-town at Snowdrop Lane.

**13.24** Interwar development was extensive, not only consolidating development in the core areas of the town, but also pushing the town northwards and eastwards, linking with Lindfield. The Fox Hill suburb to the south and land to the north near Sunte House was developed in this period. The town was now set on a pattern of development largely to the east of the railway line, relatively little in the interwar period being built west of it apart from new ribbons of housing to the south of Penland Wood and to the east of Penland Farm.

**13.25** Before 1970, there was the expected consolidation, the town pushing eastwards once again to the edge of the Ouse Valley, and into it at Lindfield and to the south of the Scrase Valley. Franklands Village was built to the south. The hitherto open land between Fox Hill and the town centre was developed and residential areas to the west of the railway pushed as far as Paige's and Penlands Woods and north of the hospital site on the Cuckfield Road (A272).

**13.26** After 1970, smaller developments completed the process of consolidation throughout the urban area. A large new estate was built east of Franklands Village and smaller ones added to many parts of the urban edge, notably east of Hurstwood Lane and up to the edge of Blunts Wood. More recently, development has taken place on the southern edge of the town at Sandrock Lane and on the land south of the long and exposed ridge-top frontage of the former St Francis Hospital, now the Colwood and Royal Princess Hospitals. The old hospital and the development

surrounding it are visible from the South Downs. Most recently the town has begun again a westward expansion with a large new housing development incorporating a south-western relief road centred on the parkland at Bolnore (the new and well-designed Bolnore Village) including a portion of the extensive woodland at Catts Wood.

**13.27** The parish church of *St Wilfrid* (1863-5) is in Wealden stone with a fine oblong central tower. Also of note is the Victorian *Holy Cross Convent* on Bolnore Road with a brick chapel of 1902-6. The *St Francis Hospital*, flamboyantly situated on the ridge-top, is vivid, in yellow brick with red-brick bands and round arches. Beneath it, within the new development, lies an old house of 1660 in brick with stone dressings. The town contains a range of suburban late Victorian, Edwardian and 20<sup>th</sup> Century properties of interest.

### **Lindfield**

**13.28** Nairn and Pevsner (1965) write of Linfield (population 5,394) as having entirely its own personality despite its closeness to Haywards Heath, a large, house-proud village with its half-mile long High Street upon which everything is concentrated – without any doubt the finest village street in the eastern part of Sussex. The High Street (wide common with cottages to the south) lies along a shallow ridge above the Ouse Valley, containing a rich concentration of some three dozen ancient buildings, about half of them of medieval origin. Many of the buildings are timber-framed, notably *Old Place*, a spectacular house of around 1590. The delightful 15<sup>th</sup> Century *Thatched Cottage* screens the entrance to the house from the street (thatch is a rare roofing type in the District).

**13.29** The street alternates timber-framed and Georgian Houses with a profusion of styles and materials. These include various forms of timber framing, much of it of the Wealden type associated with hall houses (*Humphreys* is a well-preserved early hall house probably dating from the late 14<sup>th</sup> Century); red brick, tile hanging, mathematical tiles and render. The parish church of *St John the Baptist* is mainly from about 1300 and into the 14<sup>th</sup> Century with a shingled spire. The setting of the village is enhanced by adjacent open land in the Ouse Valley to the east, and in the shallow basin enclosing Walstead to the south.

### **Strategic gaps**

**13.30** The County and District Council have long recognised pressures for development on open land between Haywards Heath and Lindfield, Burgess Hill, Cuckfield and Scaynes Hill and have designated this land as strategic gaps.

[continues]

## **EVALUATION**

### **Change – key issues**

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing planting of conifers in some areas.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with orchard, hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- New development on the southern edges of Haywards Heath.
- Introduction of telecommunications masts on ridges.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement throughout much of the area, especially in the vicinity of Haywards Heath.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivities**

- Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
- Older, small assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
- Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Network of lanes, droeways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Long views from open ground have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the visual impact of new development, particularly on the south side of Haywards Heath, unless appropriate steps are taken to integrate new development into the landscape.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.

*[continues]*

## MANAGEMENT

### Management Objective

***Conserve the rich mosaic of woodland and other habitats and the intimate nature of the agricultural landscape, the high level of perceived naturalness of the area including its rural, tranquil qualities, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.***

### Land Management Guidelines

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Protect existing views from the area and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.
- Increase screening of prominent parts of new development on the southern fringes of Haywards Heath.
- Conserve and re-plant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.
- Protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.



This area is part of High Weald Fringes in Mid Sussex and Horsham Districts. The Management Objective and Land Management Guidelines above have been incorporated into the **Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet HW4 (High Weald Fringes)** included in Part Three. As part of the set of County-wide Land Management Guidelines, the area covered by the Sheet is wider than the area of the High Weald Fringes in Mid Sussex and includes:

The *High Weald Fringes (Area 10)* Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

The *Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridge and Ghyll Farmlands (Area M1)* and the *Mannings Heath Farmlands (Area N1)* Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).

## **Part Four**

# **LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

## Introduction

**14.1** This part of the Assessment contains *Land Management Guidelines* sheets for locally distinctive landscapes within the District.

### *Explanatory note*

**The sheets have been prepared by West Sussex County Council in association with the District Councils, hence the County Council logo on each sheet.**

The areas covered by the Guidelines do not necessarily fall within Borough and District boundaries since they are being prepared for the whole County, based on Landscape Character Areas defined at County level. They are numbered in accordance with a sequence, generally west to east across the County, based on the national Character Areas. Only two Guidelines areas (High Weald and Ouse Valley) fall wholly within Mid Sussex District. The remaining six areas also include land in Adur and Horsham Districts and Crawley Borough.

**The boundaries of these eight areas and their relationship to the ten Landscape Character Areas in the District are shown on Map 14.1**

The *Land Management Guidelines* sheets are as follows:

*Sheet No.*      *Area*

*Downs*

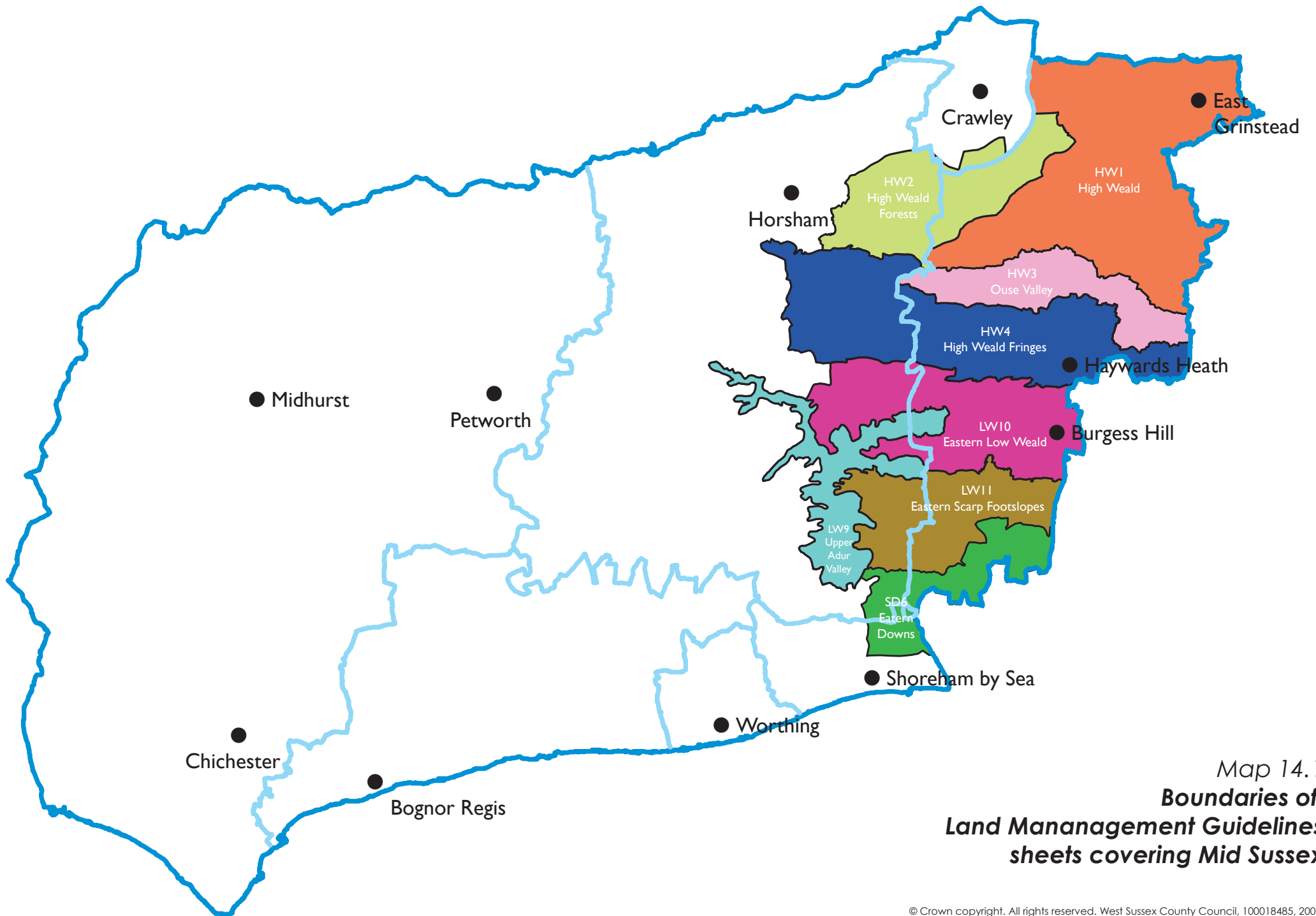
**SD6.              Eastern Downs**

*Low Weald*

**LW9              Upper Adur Valley**  
**LW10            Eastern Low Weald**  
**LW11            Eastern Scarp Footslopes**

*High Weald*

**HW1              High Weald**  
**HW2              High Weald Forests**  
**HW3              Ouse Valley**  
**HW4              High Weald Fringes**



Map 14.1  
**Boundaries of  
 Land Management Guidelines  
 sheets covering Mid Sussex**



The open, eastern 'glorious South Downs', defined to the north by a steep escarpment (scarp) facing the Weald. An elemental landscape despite intensive cultivation and the closeness of large urban areas.

## Key Characteristics

- Elevated, open rolling landform of hills, dry valleys and a steep escarpment (scarp) across uniform chalk upland scenery close to the sea, within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Panoramic views across the Weald to the Surrey Hills and the North Downs.
- Southern boundary of the area is fringed by the major coastal towns of Brighton, Hove and Shoreham-by-Sea.
- Predominance of open arable and grassland cultivation with irregular, smaller pastures, woodland patches and hedgerows in the chalk valleys and coombes, on parts of the scarp, and along the scarp foot.
- Remnant species-rich grassland.
- Isolated farms and farm buildings on the high downland and sparse settlement elsewhere, clustered in the valleys, in hamlets and farmsteads.
- Ridge line was line of a major ancient routeway, today the South Downs Way.
- Many landmarks and distinctive prehistoric and historic landscape features.
- Chalk quarries and pits, telecommunications masts, pylon lines, golf courses, and intensive recreational use centred on Devil's Dyke.
- Crossed by the A23 Trunk Road, the A27 Trunk Road (Brighton By-pass) to the south, and by a modest network of high lanes, some of them busy with traffic.
- Much localised traffic noise from roads within and on the edges of the downland.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area via Clayton Tunnel.
- Traditional rural buildings built of local flint and brick with weatherboarded barns.

# Eastern Downs

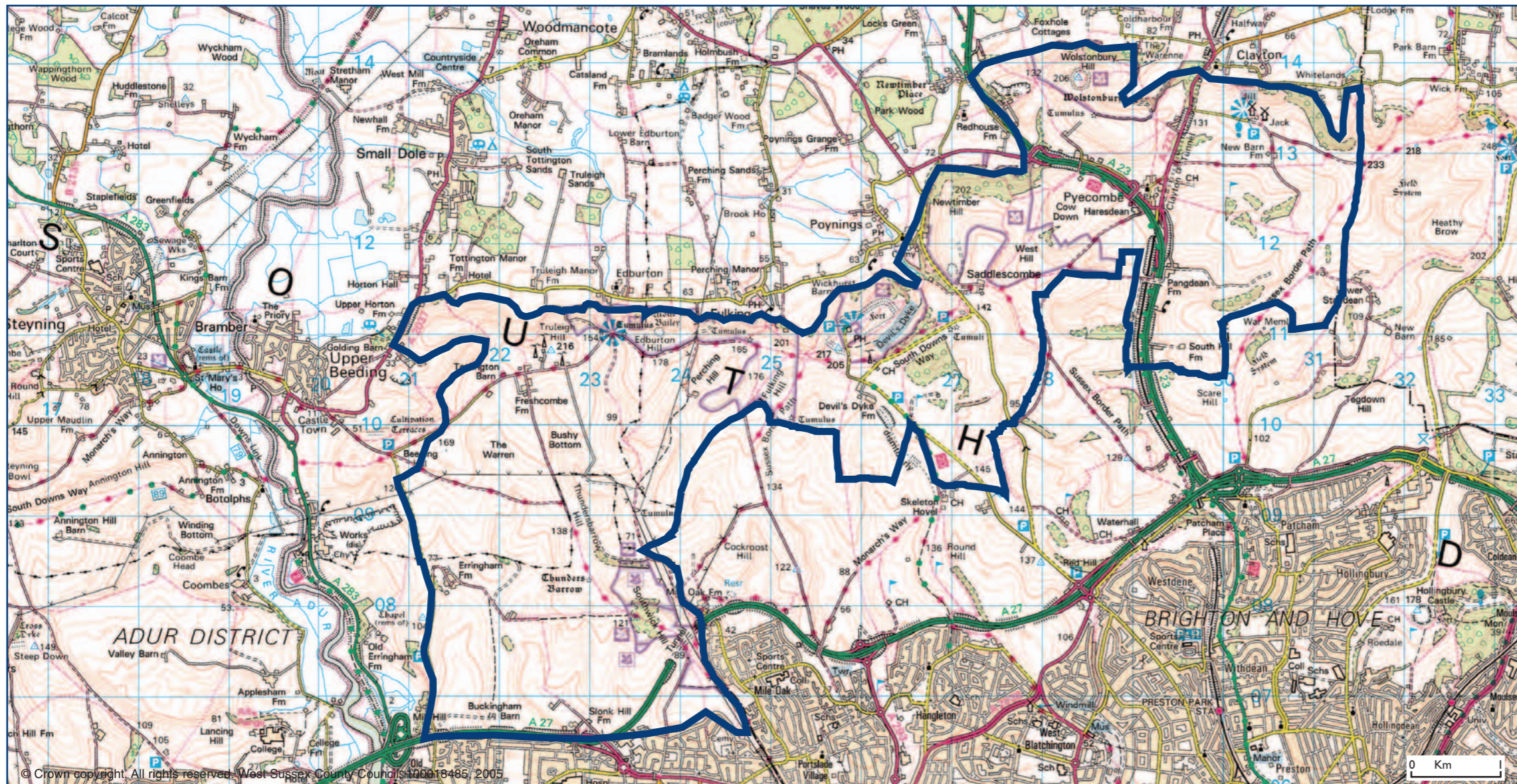
## South Downs

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs (Area 1) and Fulking to Clayton Scarp (Area 2) Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.

The Beeding Downs (Area A1) and the Beeding to Edburton Scarp (Area B1) Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).

The Mill Hill and Southwick Downs Landscape Character Area (yet to be included in a District Assessment) in Adur District.





## Historic Features

- Post-medieval and modern landscape of mixed field sizes.
- Prehistoric and Bronze Age cross-ridged dykes.
- Bronze Age barrows and bowl barrows.
- Iron Age hillforts at Devil's Dyke and Wolstonbury Hill.
- Site of Roman road, earthworks and terrace way.
- Evidence of Roman and Romano-British settlements.
- Saxon cemetery, field systems and cultivation terraces.
- Medieval earthworks and motte and bailey castle site.
- Perching Deserted Medieval Village and lynchet.
- Post-medieval windmill sites and Jack and Jill Windmills.

## Biodiversity

- Remnants of nationally important species-rich grassland confined to the scarp, other steep slopes and valley sides.
- Small woodlands and scrub areas.
- Dew ponds.

## Change - Key Issues

- Species-rich downland grassland now confined to remnants on steep slopes, the significant loss of this habitat due to intensive arable and grass production and scrub encroachment.
- Greater recognition of the value of restoring sheep grazing to maintain increased areas of downland grassland.
- Visual impact of encroaching urban development, new roads and modern farm buildings.
- Continuing pressures for development on the southern downland fringes.
- Impact on the landscape of exposed pylons and telecommunications masts.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise within and close to the downs.
- Damage to (and loss of) archaeological remains.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape, loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials, and the widespread use of modern fencing.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- Highly distinctive landscape of national importance much valued for its open, scenic qualities, cultural associations and recreational potential.
- High sensitivity to the impact of encroaching urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads, reinforcing the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- Views from the downs are highly sensitive to visually prominent development both on the urban edge to the south and in the Weald to the north.
- Species-rich downland grassland has been reduced to remnants.
- Numerous important archaeological remains are vulnerable to damage and loss.



Eastern Downs dip slope from Devil's Dyke



Scarp slope from Devil's Dyke

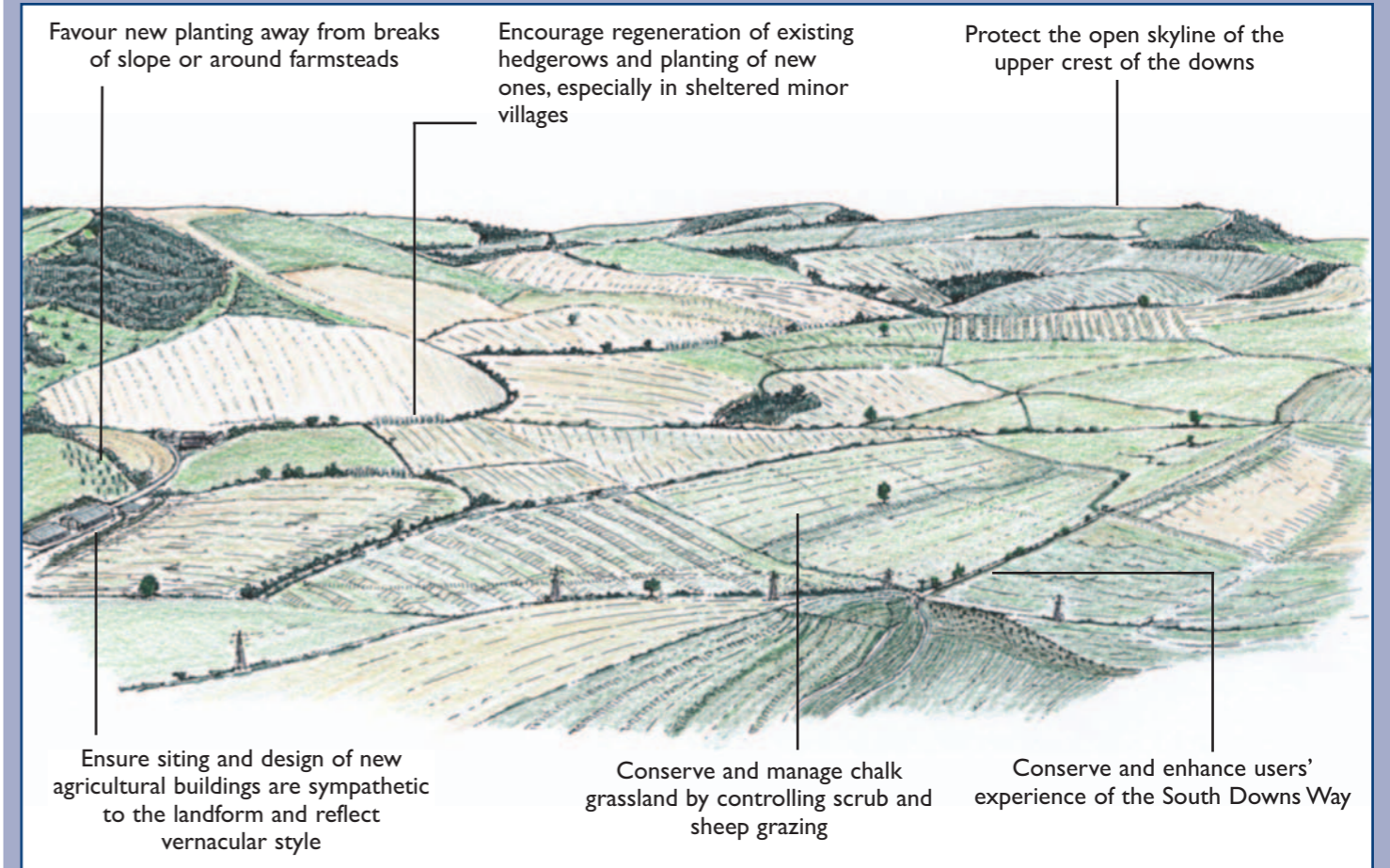


Edburton Hill



Jack and Jill Windmills

## Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve and enhance the open, elemental qualities of the downland landscape and its historic legacy, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.**

- Conserve and enhance the essence of the open downland and scarp landscapes through scrub clearance and grazing.
- Ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Maintain and manage surviving species-rich chalk grassland and plan for the restoration of extensive new areas.
- Protect and enhance the historic legacy of the area including important archaeological remains and ancient routeways.
- Maintain, restore and manage woodland and hedgerow landscapes, and visually important tree clumps and belts where this does not conflict with conservation of the historic and natural environment.
- Carry out landscape improvements to the rural urban fringe to the south in accordance with a long-term plan to be agreed by all partners.
- Maintain and manage dew ponds for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Resist creating areas of horse paddocks, riding schools and stabling in open downland.
- Reduce the visual impact of recreational activities including golf courses, car parks, horse stabling and grazing, and enhance the landscape at Truleigh Hill and around the recreational facilities at Devil's Dyke.
- Conserve and enhance the setting of historic farmsteads and barns.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *Interim South Downs Management Plan* (March 2004) published by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board.



The headwaters of the River Adur in the Low Weald comprise a network of narrow valleys and long streams. Rimmed by low ridges the expansive, open brooks pastures of the Henfield and Beeding Brooks have a downland backdrop.

Sheet **LW9**

## Upper Adur Valley

### Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Upper Adur Valley (Area 5) in Mid Sussex District.

The Steyning and Henfield Brooks (Area O3) and the Upper Adur Valleys (Area P2) Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).



### Key Characteristics

- Extensive upper river catchment drained by a network of long, leisurely streams in confined narrow, shallow valleys, a small part within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Relatively few panoramic or long views within the valley although views to the south are dominated by the steep downland scarp.
- Small woodlands and networks of hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Smaller pastures in the valley bottoms and mixed arable and pastoral farming, medium to large-sized fields on the valley sides.
- Expansive, open brooks pastures of the Henfield and Beeding Brooks including small fields, occasional scrub and a small area of remnant ancient woodland.
- Canalisation and embankment of the main river throughout the brooks pastures and localised river straightening elsewhere.
- Wildlife corridor with pockets of rich biodiversity.
- Local roads, farmsteads and the old townships of Bramber, Henfield and Steyning lie on higher ground flanking the brooks pastures.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including flint, timber-framing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Brick and stone bridges.





## Historic Features

- Post-medieval landscape of mixed field sizes and boundaries.
- Brooks pastures which were once deliberately flooded.
- Canalisation of river (Baybridge Canal).
- Ruins of Bramber Castle keep.
- Medieval churches, manor houses and historic farmsteads.
- Brick and stone bridges and historic trackways.

## Biodiversity

- Expansive watermeadows, species-rich ditches, marsh, reed beds.
- Marginal vegetation along river and stream banks.
- Ancient woodland remnant at Wyckham Wood.
- Alder and willow woodland.
- Small woodlands, hedgerows and ponds in the tributary valleys.
- Small meadowland and water meadow plant communities.

## Change - Key Issues

- Importance of retaining the unique identity of the valley and as an important landscape and wildlife corridor.
- Possible continuing pressure for river flood defences and structures.
- Continuing loss of species-rich pasture and grasslands through drainage of watermeadows for arable farmland.
- Continuing field amalgamation in some places into a pattern of medium and large-sized fields, with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse-riding centres and paddocks.
- Pressures for built development in the urban areas fringing the valley.
- Visual intrusion from sand and gravel workings, landfill and pylons.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise on roads flanking the valley.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- Quiet, rural quality in the tributary valleys.
- Visual impact of flood defences and structures.
- Pockets of biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Brooks pastures landscape is highly exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.



Adur Valley, Upper Beeding



River Adur, Shermanbury

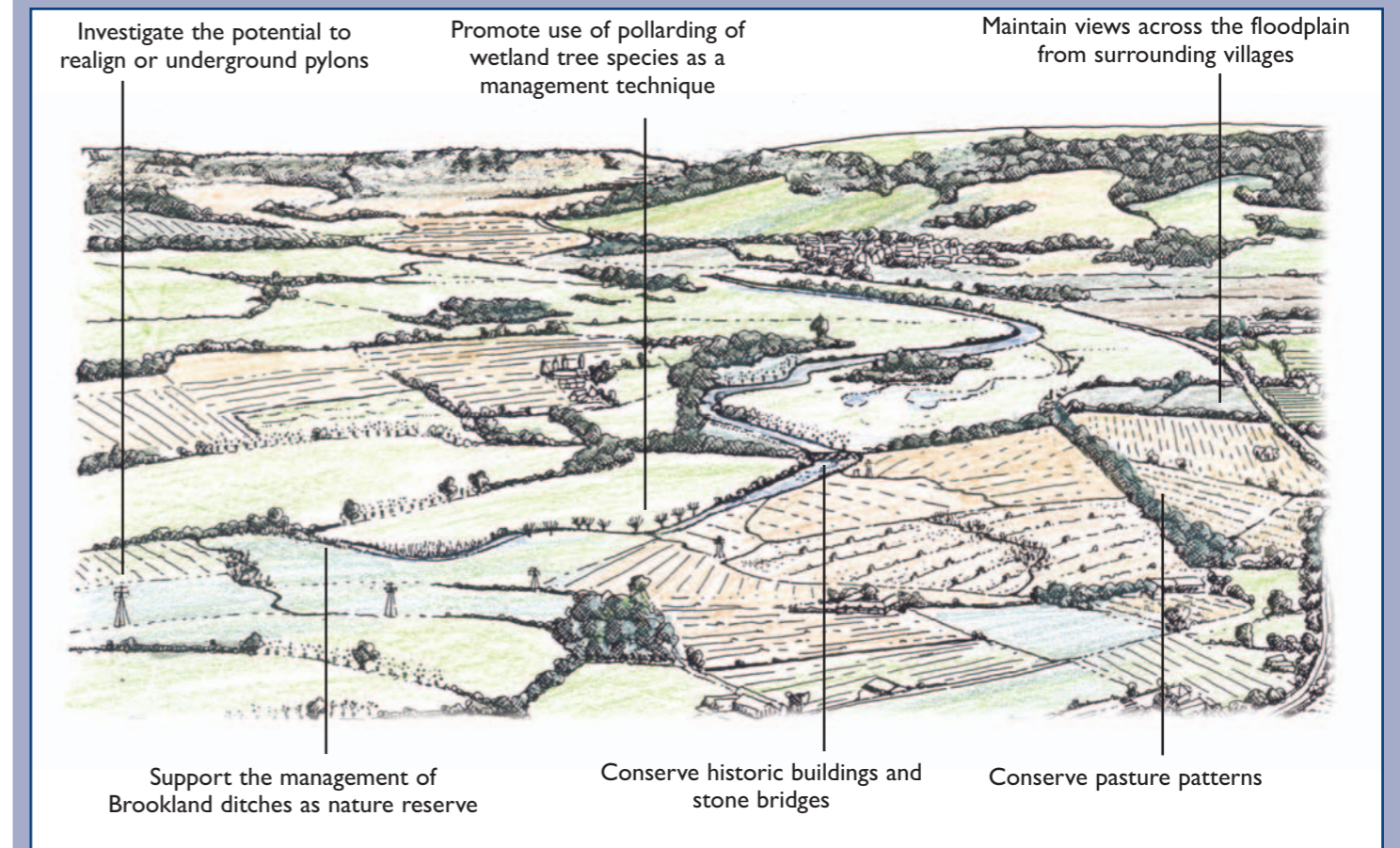


River Adur, Wineham



Adur Valley, Henfield

## Land Management Guidelines



### Conserve and enhance the tranquil, secluded character of the tributary valleys and the landscape pattern and wildlife of the brooks pastures.

- Conserve and enhance the undeveloped character and pastoral qualities of the valley and the character of the river including its drainage pattern.
- Ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Minimise the adverse impact of flood defences and structures.
- Pursue active management of the brooks pastures, maintaining and extending the small-scale pattern of the pastures and enriching biodiversity including streamside vegetation.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration the appropriate management of existing woodland, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands on the valley edges including pollarding of wetland trees, and the creation of landscape features along streams and water channels through alder and willow planting.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, especially around irregular fields, and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins and corners including alongside the sides of streams.
- Undertake landscape improvements and tree planting on the margins of the brooks pastures and around urban areas.
- Ensure that any valley-edge road improvements do not damage character.
- Reduce the visual impact of horse stabling and grazing.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *Interim South Downs Management Plan* (March 2004) published by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board.



## Overall Character

The Eastern Low Weald within Mid Sussex and Horsham Districts comprises a lowland mixed pastoral and arable landscape with a strong hedgerow pattern. It lies over low ridges and clay vales drained by the upper Adur streams. In the east, the area has experienced high levels of development centred on Burgess Hill.

### Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating low ridges and clay vales.
- Views dominated by the steep downland scarp to the south and the High Weald fringes to the north.
- Arable and pastoral rural landscape, a mosaic of small and larger fields, scattered woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Quieter and more secluded, confined rural landscape to the west, much more development to the east, centred on Burgess Hill.
- Biodiversity in woodland, meadowland, ponds and wetland.
- Historic village of Cowfold and suburban village development at Partridge Green, Shermanbury and Sayers Common.
- Mix of farmsteads and hamlets favouring ridgeline locations, strung out along lanes.
- A modest spread of designed landscapes.
- Crossed by north-south roads with a rectilinear network of narrow rural lanes.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area through Burgess Hill.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, weatherboarding, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Major landmarks include Hurstpierpoint College and St Hugh's Charterhouse Monastery at Shermanbury.
- Principal visitor attraction is the Hickstead All England Equestrian Showground.

### Sheet LW10

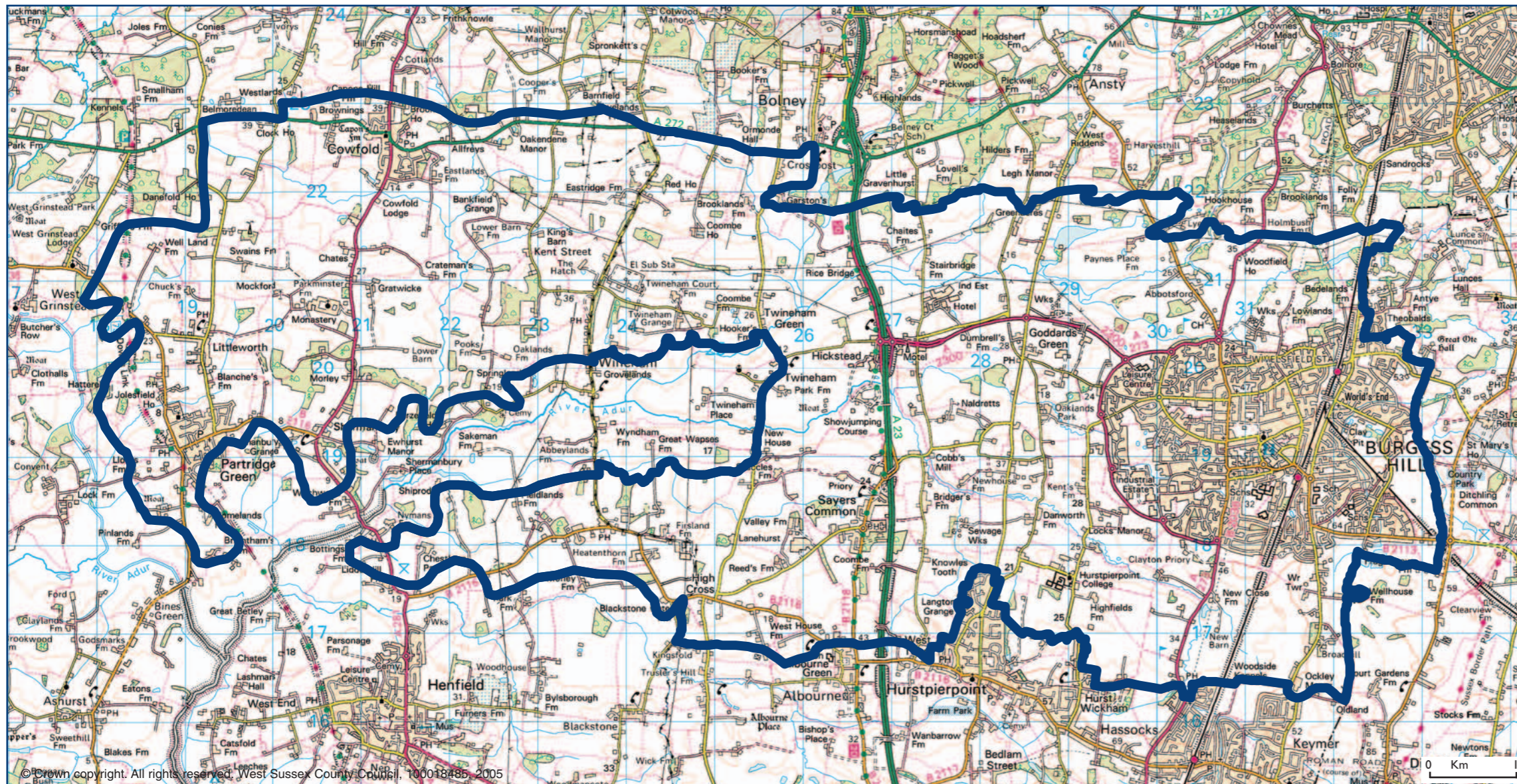
## Eastern Low Weald

### Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Hickstead Low Weald (Area 4) Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

The Cowfold and Shermanbury Farmlands (Area G2) defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).





## Historic Features

- Post-medieval landscape of mixed field sizes and boundaries.
- Line of Roman road.
- Old droveways.
- Historic country houses, farmsteads and parkscapes.

## Biodiversity

- Remnant coppice woodland.
- Species-rich hedgerows.
- Lakes, farm and field ponds, meadowland and wetland.
- Woodland and marginal vegetation along stream banks.

## Change - Key Issues

- Growing impact of development in the east.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields, severe hedgerow loss, and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Introduction of telecommunications masts on ridges.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise, particularly around Burgess Hill, and busy use of some rural lanes.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- High level of perceived naturalness and a rural quality in the quieter, rural landscape to the west of the A23 Trunk Road.
- Woodland cover and the mosaic of shaws and hedgerows contribute strongly to the essence of the landscape.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Parts of the area are highly exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new development and the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.



View south to Cobbsmill



Pellings Barn, Hurstpierpoint

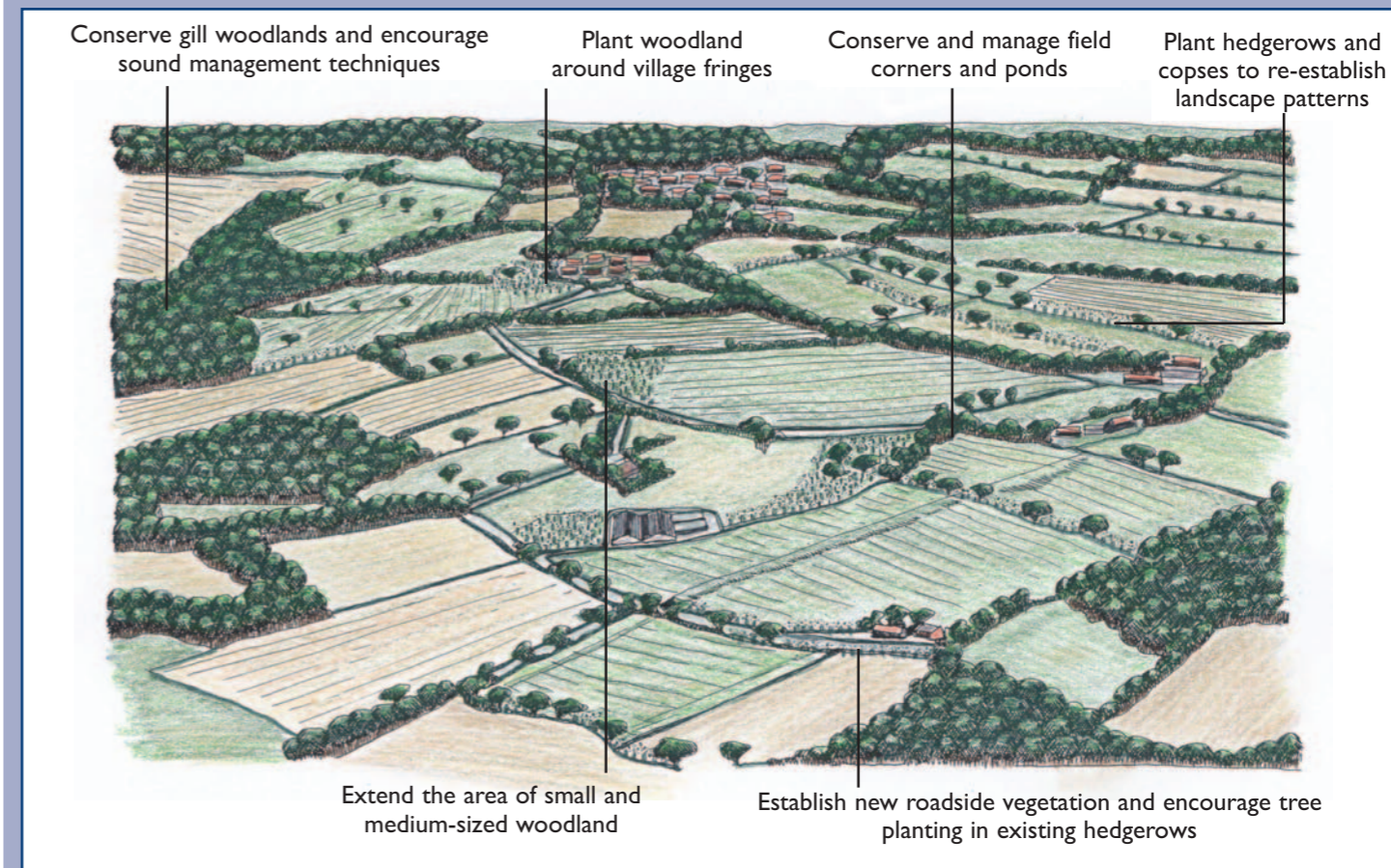


Arable farmland



Pasture

## Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve and enhance the quiet, rural qualities of the western part of the area, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.**

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape including irregular patterns of smaller fields.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small and medium-sized broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodland.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins and corners including alongside the sides of streams.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Where appropriate, increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe of suburban areas and Burgess Hill, including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes including the A23 Trunk Road.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, especially around irregular fields, and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.



The scarp footslopes east of the Adur Valley comprise an undulating relief of low sandstone ridges and gentle clay vales. Areas of ancient woodland have survived on the heavier soils of the Gault Clay. Views south are dominated by the steep downland scarp.

## Key Characteristics

- Undulating Lower Greensand sandstone ridges and gentle Gault Clay vales drained by the River Adur, most of which lie within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Concentration of ancient woodland lying on the Gault Clay.
- Views dominated by the steep downland scarp.
- Arable and pastoral rural landscape, secluded in places, a mosaic of small and larger fields, woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Includes the extensive designed landscape of Danny Estate.
- Small historic commons and orchards around Henfield in the north of the area.
- Modest network of country lanes and underhill lanes beneath the scarp.
- Pockets of biodiversity limited to woodland, ponds and stream valleys.
- Characteristic spring-line villages and dispersed farmsteads, some historic.
- Township of Henfield and expanded ridge line villages with suburban development at Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks.
- Criss-crossed by roads, many of them busy, including the A23 Trunk Road.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including flint, timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Dominance of painted render and a wide range of modern styles and materials from the Victorian period onwards.
- Few visitor and recreational attractions.

## Sheet LWII

# Eastern Scarp Footslopes

## Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes (Area 3) Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

The Henfield and Small Dole Farmlands (Area D2) Landscape Character Area defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).





## Historic Features

- Post-medieval landscape of mixed field sizes.
- Lines of two major Roman roads and Roman villa site.
- Evidence of Roman cemetery and settlement sites.
- Significant areas of common land.
- Historic country houses and manor house site at Edburton.
- Characteristic spring-line villages.

## Biodiversity

- Ancient coppice woodland.
- Species-rich hedgerows.
- Herb-rich grassland, fen, marsh and scrub on common land.
- Woodland and marginal vegetation along stream banks.
- Lakes, field and ornamental ponds.

## Change - Key Issues

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Loss of orchards around Henfield.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Visually intrusive development on the A2037 at Small Dole.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- High level of perceived naturalness and a rural quality, especially in the more wooded landscape to the west.
- Woodland cover, much of it ancient, imparts a scenic quality to the landscape.
- Intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern of the spring-line settlements.
- Scarce pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Loss and fragmentation of hedgerows has occurred associated with modern farming.
- The area is highly exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new development, and the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- Wooded urban environment and setting of the ridge line villages currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures here and elsewhere in the area.



Scarp footslope, Poynings



Scarp footslope, Fulking

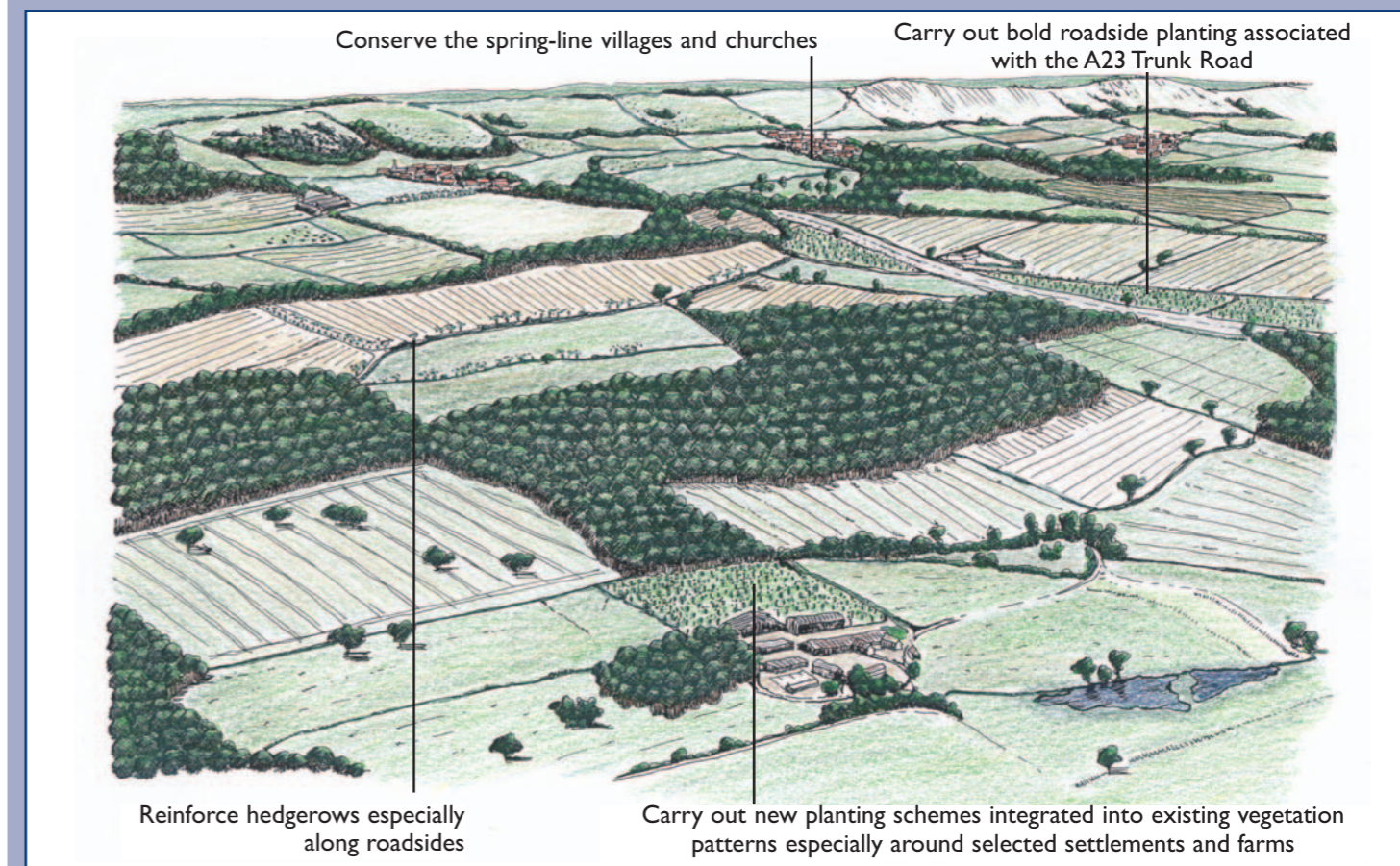


North from Perching Sands



Fulking from Devil's Dyke

## Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve and enhance the quiet, rural qualities of the western part of the area and the environment of the spring line villages, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.**

- Maintain and restore the scenic historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape including irregular patterns of smaller fields.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins and corners including alongside the sides of streams.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including the A23 Trunk Road.
- Carry out tree and woodland planting around Small Dole to screen intrusive development.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, especially around irregular fields, and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of horse stabling and grazing, for instance, under the downland edge in the vicinity of Tottington and Edburton.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *Interim South Downs Management Plan* (March 2004) published by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board.



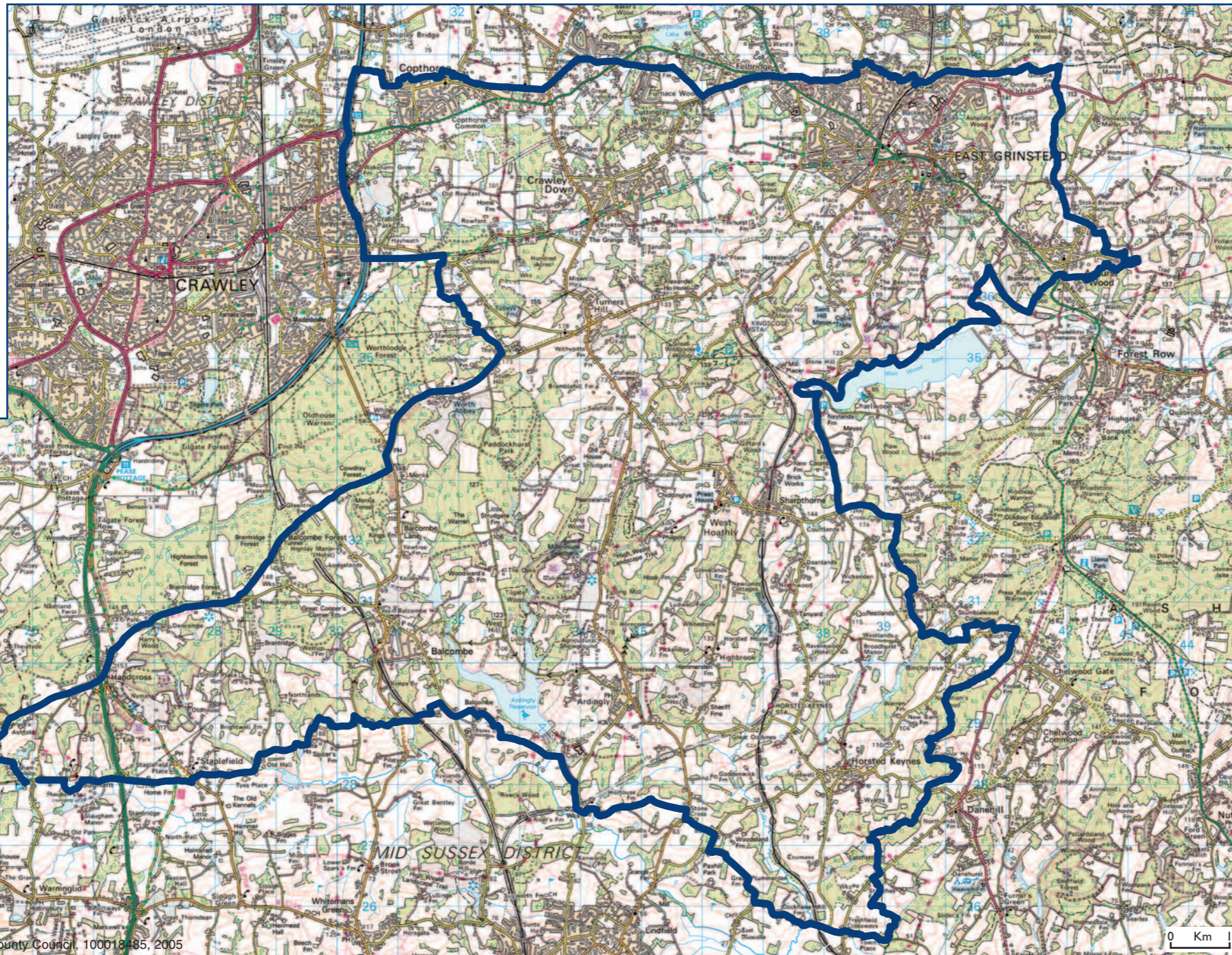
# Overall Character

**The High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex. Numerous gill streams have carved out a landscape of twisting ridges and secluded valleys. The ancient, densely wooded landscape of the High Weald is seen to perfection in the area. Includes the township of East Grinstead.**

## Key Characteristics

- Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Plateau, ridges and deep, secluded valleys cut by gill streams.
- Headwater drainage of the Rivers Eden, Medway, Ouse and Mole.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge.
- Includes major reservoir at Ardingly and adjoins Weir Wood Reservoir.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.

- Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages.
- Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area.
- Mill sites, hammer ponds and numerous fish and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.
- Visitor attractions include Wakehurst Place, Nymans Gardens, the South of England Showground and the Bluebell Line Steam Railway.



## Sheet HWI

# High Weald

## High Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The High Weald (Area 6) and High Weald Plateau (Area 7) Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.





## Historic Features

- Landscape essentially medieval in origin.
- Persistence of ancient woodland.
- Philpots Camp Iron Age hillfort.
- Line of Roman road.
- Ancient routeways and droves.
- Medieval moats.
- Historic farmsteads and parkscapes.
- Wealden iron hammerponds, pond bays, furnace and mill sites.

## Biodiversity

- Diverse natural history.
- Species-rich gill and semi-natural woodlands.
- Geologically important rock exposures.
- Nationally-rare sandrock plant communities in gills.
- Remnant and dormant wet and dry acid heathland.
- Species-rich meadows and hedgerows.
- Reservoirs, hammerponds, field, fish and ornamental ponds.

## Change - Key Issues

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing extensive planting of conifers in some areas.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including village expansion, modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Proposals for new development and a relief road on the edge of East Grinstead.
- Introduction of telecommunications masts on ridges.
- Expansion of Crawley and East Grinstead and influence of the M23 corridor.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area, especially along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
- Older, small assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
- Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Long views along valleys and ridges have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.



Parkscape, Staplefield



High Weald, Rowhill, Balcombe

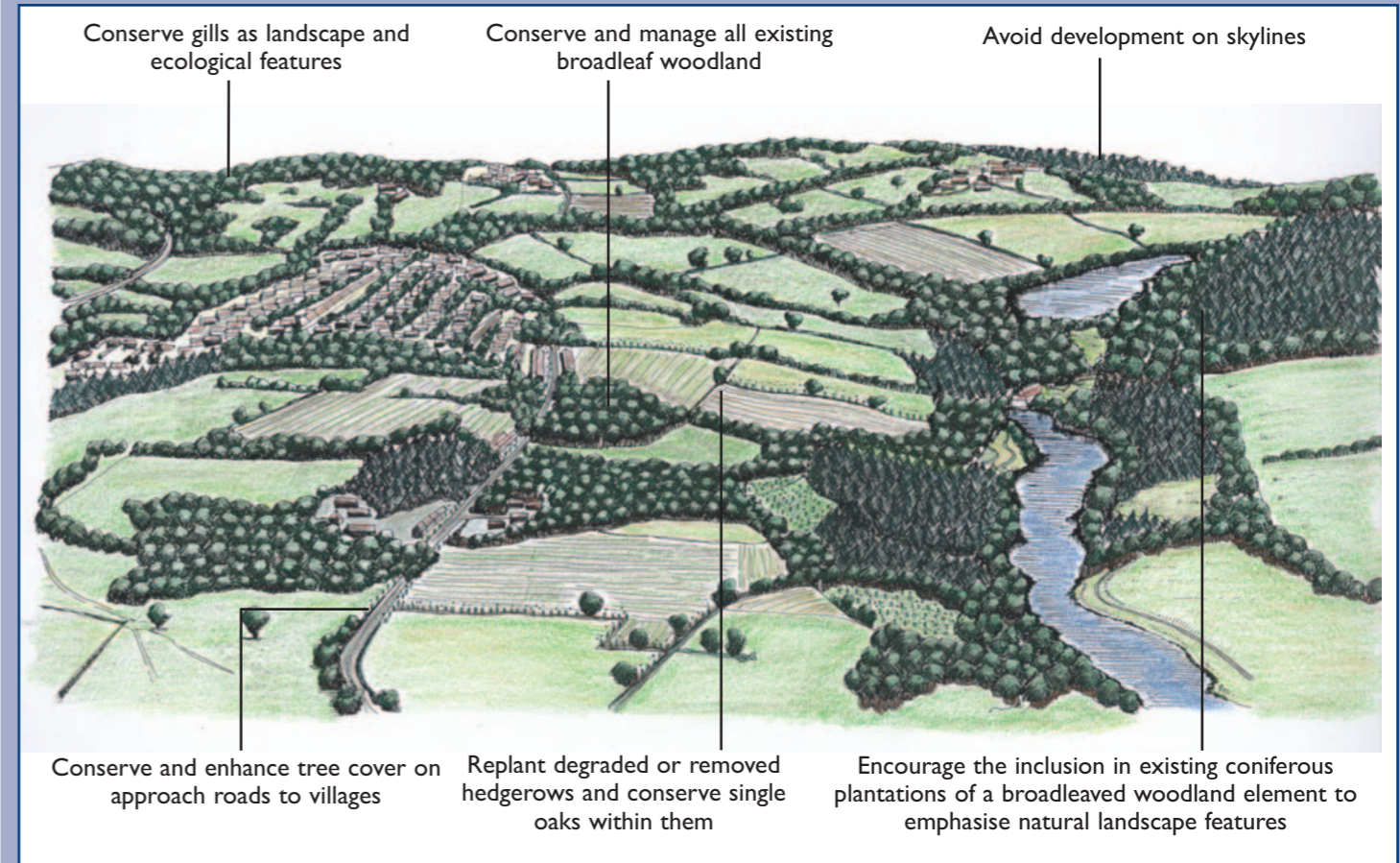


Pasture, Paddockhurst



High Weald at Turners Hill

## Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve the rich mosaic of woodland and other habitats and the intimate nature of the agricultural landscape, the high level of perceived naturalness of the area including its rural, tranquil qualities, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.**

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands, the appropriate management of existing woodland, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Plant trees in drifts and avoid straight lines running across the grain of the land.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including within the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve the landscape of the gills and sandrock crags, including wet woodland, and protect the nationally-rare sandrock plant and other communities associated with them.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Continue to maintain the natural setting of the Worth Way.
- Reduce the visual impact of horse stabling and grazing.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* (Adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee.



Heavily-afforested, dissected plateau landscape enclosing a post-medieval rural landscape cut from the forest. Includes the western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex and the ridge and valley landscape of St Leonards Forest. Adjoins Crawley, Horsham and the M23 Motorway.

## Key Characteristics

- Densely wooded, confined, dissected plateau landscape with extensive coniferous and mixed afforestation within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- The Worth forests mark the plateau-like western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge, drained by the Rivers Mole and Ouse.
- Drained by the River Arun, St Leonards Forest is a unique High Wealden wooded and pastoral landscape of long, parallel ridges and steep-sided narrow valleys.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, but fewer long views north.
- Large, regularly-enclosed and some smaller, irregular, assart fields within a woodland setting comprising an arable and pastoral landscape enclosed by shaws, hedgerows (including tall hedges) and fencing.
- Despite the closeness of large towns and roads, a secluded, tranquil nature exists in many parts of the forests.
- Clearance and re-planting of large tracts of ancient woodland.
- Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity.
- Network of ridge-top roads and lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Sparse, dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets, farmsteads and ridgetop development, mainly in St Leonards Forest.
- Adjoins Crawley to the north and Horsham to the east.
- Bounded by A and B roads, some busy, and crossed from north to south by the A23 Trunk Road and by the M23 Motorway at Tilgate Park.
- The London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area via the Balcombe Tunnel.
- Secluded mill sites, sizeable hammerponds and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes including rhododendron hedgerows.
- Country parks at Buchan and Tilgate and golf courses.

## Sheet HW2

# High Weald Forests

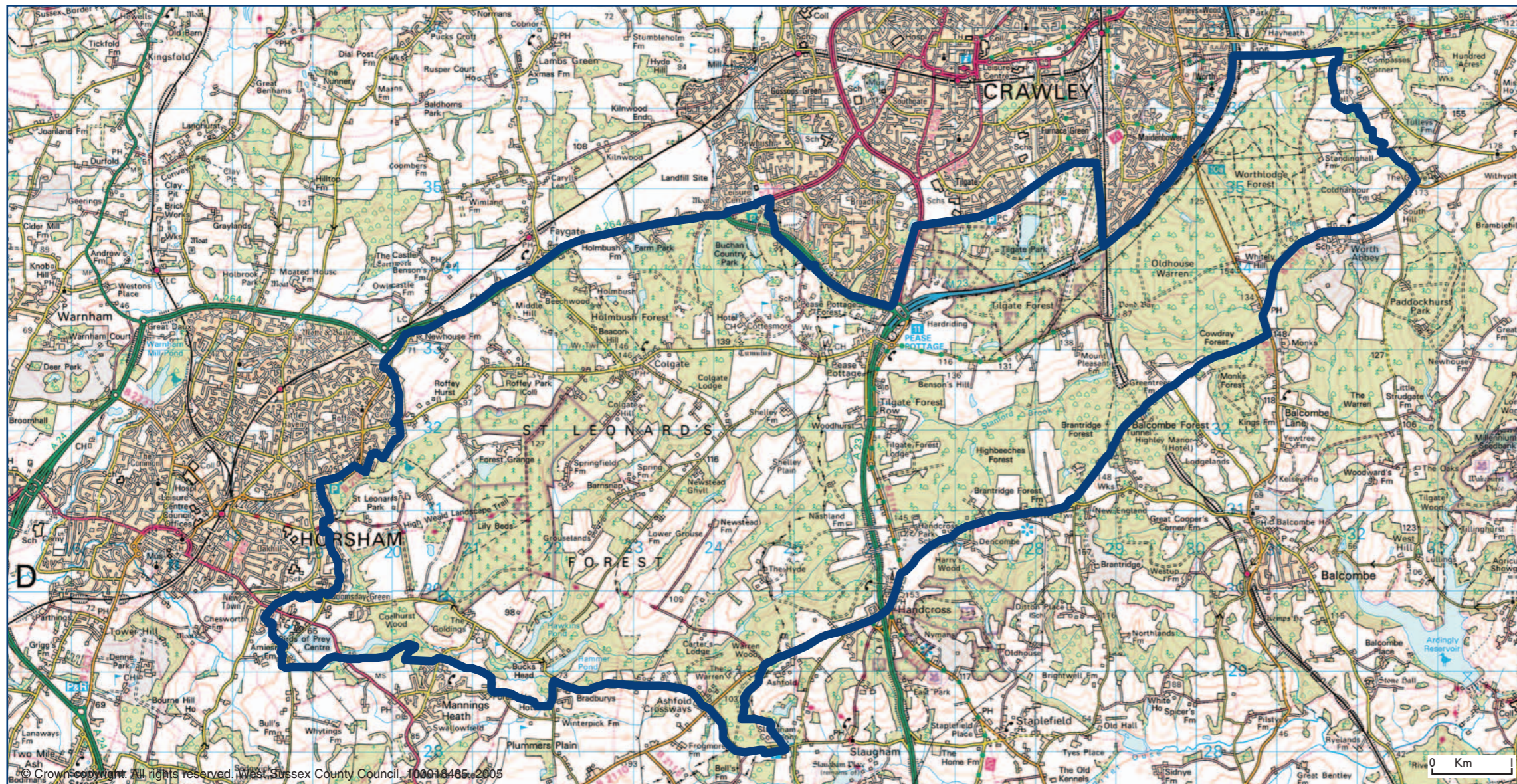
## High Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Worth Forest (Area 8) Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

The St Leonards Forest (Area 11) defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).

The Tilgate Forest Landscape Character Area and a small part of St Leonards Forest at Pease Pottage (yet to be included in a Borough Assessment) in Crawley Borough.





## Historic Features

- Ancient routeways and droves.
- Post-medieval assart landscape reclaimed from hunting forest.
- Extensive ancient woodland sites, mainly replanted.
- Old commercial rabbit warrens ('pillow mounds').
- Important Wealden iron hammerponds, pond bays and mill sites.

## Biodiversity

- Species-rich gill and semi-natural woodlands.
- Variety of woodland tree species including beech and oak-birch.
- Local areas of self-seeded Scots pine.
- Remnant hornbeam coppice.
- Remnant and dormant wet and dry acid heathland.
- Rare and uncommon woodland plant communities.
- Lakes and hammerponds.

## Change - Key Issues

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Extensive planting of coniferous forest on former ancient woodland.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland replanting.
- Continuing field amalgamation with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Continuing pressures for urban development on the northern fringes of the area and an attendant increase in the pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise.
- Visual impact of pylon lines and development including ridgetop properties, modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Increasing pressures for a variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- Woodland and forest cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in most parts.
- Large blocks of assart pastures on the ridges and valley sides impart breadth and depth to the scenic quality to the landscape.
- Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- The few long views from open ground have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.



Worth Forest



St Leonards Forest



Cowdray Forest, Balcombe

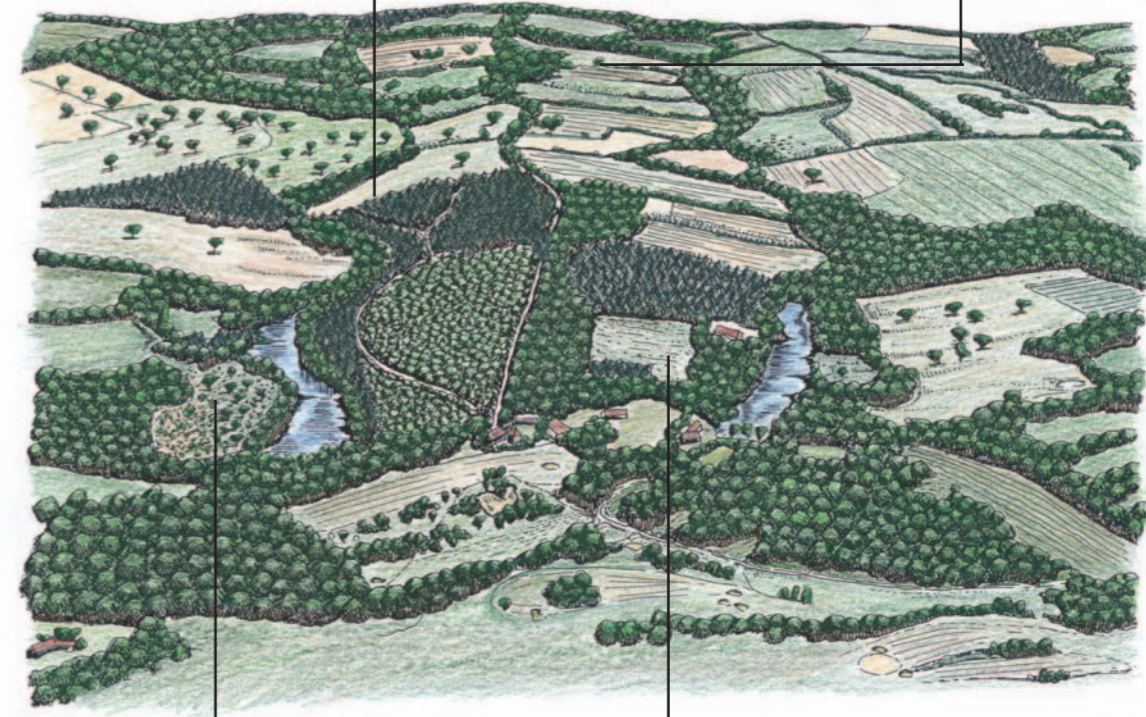


St Leonards Forest

## Land Management Guidelines

Encourage the inclusion in existing coniferous plantations of a broadleaved woodland element to emphasise natural landscape features

Establish management agreements with existing golf courses to retain tree cover



Encourage careful woodland management of broadleaved woodland areas including coppice and newly planted areas

Manage heathland areas within the forests and re-establish heathland where feasible

**Conserve and enhance the secluded, tranquil nature of the forests and the agricultural landscape, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout the area.**

- Conserve the forests and their seclusion for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes, plan for long-term woodland regeneration, and promote a diverse mosaic of woodland types.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape.
- Protect existing views and resist further infill within, and extension of, roadside development patterns, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Increase tree cover around agricultural, ridgetop and other development and maintain and extend woodland cover on the rural urban fringe including within the Horsham-Crawley corridor.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in fields and hedgerows to maintain succession.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows (including tall hedges) and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Enhance the biodiversity of woodland rides and glades and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of golf courses, and stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* (Adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Management Committee.



# Overall Character

Strongly linear valley adjoining Haywards Heath, its boundaries defined clearly by a marked break of slope. In the west, the river is a small, tree-lined stream amidst parallel streams and ridges, the valley broader to the east, the river meandering through water meadows. The signature of the valley is the high, long brick-built Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct on the London to Brighton Railway Line.

## Key Characteristics

- Shallow but well-defined attractive rural valley landscape largely within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Small, tree-lined stream in the western part amidst confined parallel streams and ridges.
- Broader valley and meandering river with water meadows in the eastern part.
- Relatively few panoramic or long views across or down the valley.
- Woodland cover less extensive than that of the High Weald fringes, despite an impression in places of a strong woodland presence strengthened by shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of mixed arable and pastoral medium to large-sized fields.
- Numerous crossing and flanking roads and lanes, including the A23 Trunk Road, many of which are busy.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the valley, spectacularly so at the Ouse Valley (Balcombe) Viaduct.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity including ancient woodlands at Haywards Heath.
- No settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although towns and villages lie on the valley edges.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Old mills, weirs and bridges.
- Extensive designed landscape at Borde Hill.

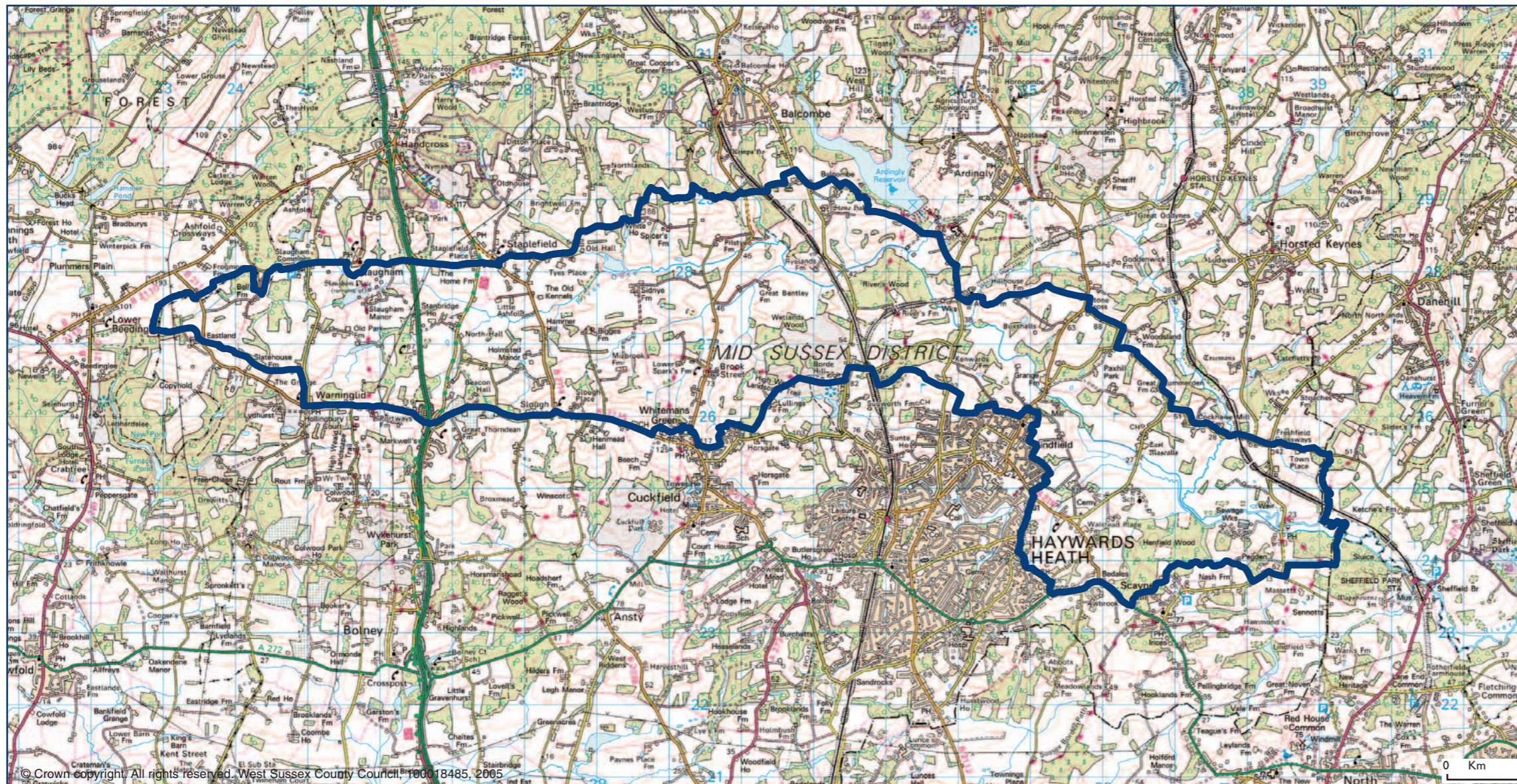
## Sheet HW3

# Ouse Valley

## High Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Ouse Valley (Area 9) Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District





## Historic Features

- Line of Roman road.
- Ancient valley-edge routeways.
- Medieval house, moat and garden remains at Slaugham Place.
- Historic country houses, farmsteads and parkscapes.
- Historic mills, weirs and bridges.

## Biodiversity

- Species-rich valley-side ancient and other semi-natural woodlands.
- Field ponds and marginal vegetation along river banks.
- Small meadowland and water meadow plant communities.

## Change - Key Issues

- Importance of retaining the unique identity of the valley and as an important landscape and wildlife corridor.
- Pressures for change in the drainage pattern including drainage of water meadows, straightening of channels and loss of river margins.
- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing field amalgamation into a pattern of medium and large-sized fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise on the network of roads crossing the valley.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Pressures for built development in the urban areas fringing the valley.
- Increasing recreational use of the area, including golf course development.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- High level of perceived naturalness in the landscape and drainage pattern and a rural quality with a general absence of development in western reaches of the valley.
- Pattern of medium to large-sized fields and watermeadows intermixed with woodlands and hedges imparts a scenic quality to the landscape.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.
- Scarce pockets of rich woodland biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Valley-edge settlements include Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield, the impact on the valley reduced by their woodland setting.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- High sensitivity to visual intrusion from pylons and telecommunications masts.



Ouse Valley, Staplefield



Balcombe Viaduct

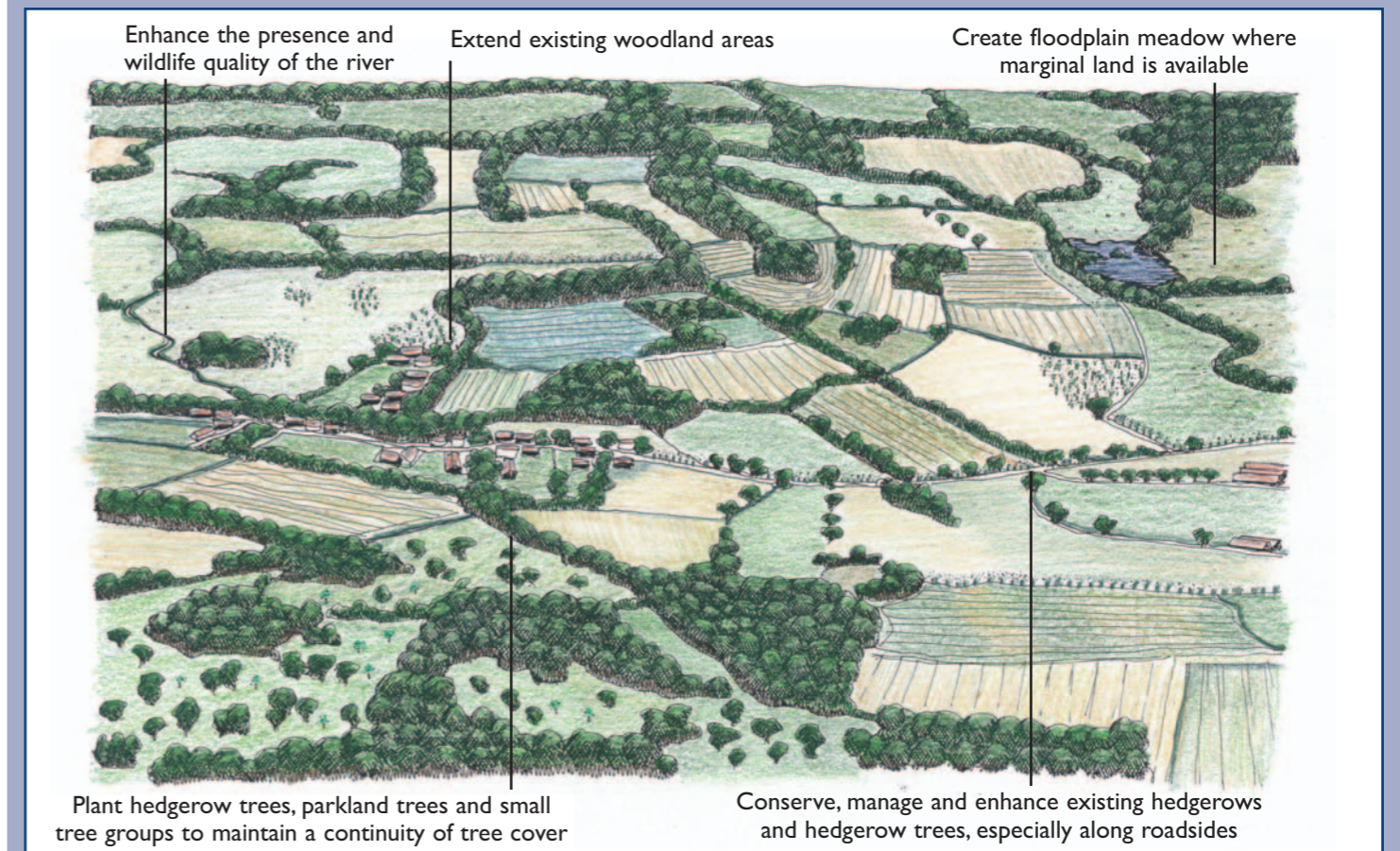


Ouse Valley



Ouse Valley from Slough Green

## Land Management Guidelines



### Conserve the rural quality of the valley including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the mosaic of woodland and other habitats, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement farmstead pattern.

- Conserve and enhance the undeveloped character, drainage pattern and pastoral qualities of the valley.
- Protect existing views from ridge tops and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Conserve and enhance the presence of the river and its wildlife by streamside planting and creation of new wetland areas.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands and appropriate management of existing woodlands.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins including alongside the sides of streams.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.
- Conserve and plant parkland trees and tree groups and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of golf courses, and stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and targets contained in *The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* (Adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Management Committee.



## Overall Character

The densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex, dissected by gentle gill streams draining west to the River Adur and east to the River Ouse. Includes the settlements of Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield.

### Key Characteristics

- Wooded, often confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity partly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- South and east-draining gills and broad ridges sweeping gently down to the Low Weald.
- Western part drained by the headwaters of the River Arun, eastern part around Scaynes Hill by the River Ouse.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields and larger fields, and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- Orchards and horticulture on lower slopes, particularly to the west.
- Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern, close to Horsham, the principal settlements Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield and a few villages and hamlets.
- Some busy lanes and roads including A and B roads bounding the area to the west, and other roads crossing north to south, including the A23 Trunk Road.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area at Haywards Heath.
- Mill sites, hammerponds and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.
- Major gill woodland garden and visitor attraction at Leonardslee.

### Sheet HW4

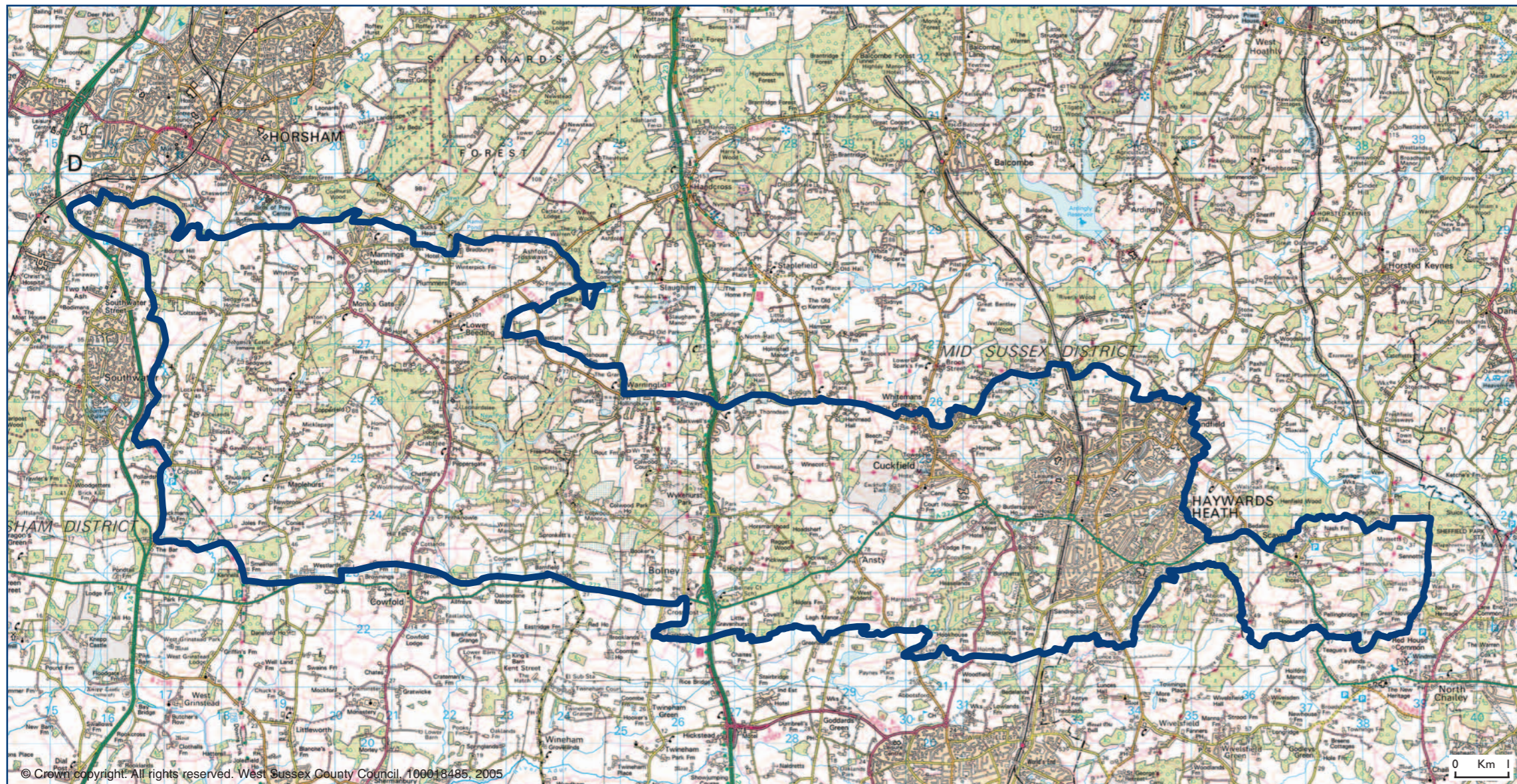
## High Weald Fringes

### High Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The High Weald Fringes (Area 10) Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.

The Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridges and Ghyls (Area M1) and the Mannings Heath Farmlands (Area N1) Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).





## Historic Features

- Much of landscape essentially medieval in origin.
- Persistence of ancient woodland.
- Line of Roman road.
- Ancient routeways and droves.
- Remains of Sedgewick Castle.
- Historic country houses, farmsteads and parkscapes.
- Wealden iron hammerponds and mill sites.
- Cuckfield Park.

## Biodiversity

- Diverse natural history.
- Species-rich gill and semi-natural woodlands.
- Geologically important rock exposures.
- Remnant hornbeam coppice.
- Remnant and dormant wet and dry acid heathland.
- Species-rich meadows and hedgerows.
- Lakes, hammerponds, field and ornamental ponds.

## Change - Key Issues

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing planting of conifers in some areas.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland replanting.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with orchard, hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- New development on the southern edges of Haywards Heath.
- Introduction of telecommunications masts on ridges.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement throughout much of the area, especially in the vicinity of Haywards Heath.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
- Older, small assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
- Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Long views from open ground have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures, particularly on the south side of Haywards Heath.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.



Broxmead, Bolney



Wood pasture, Cowfold

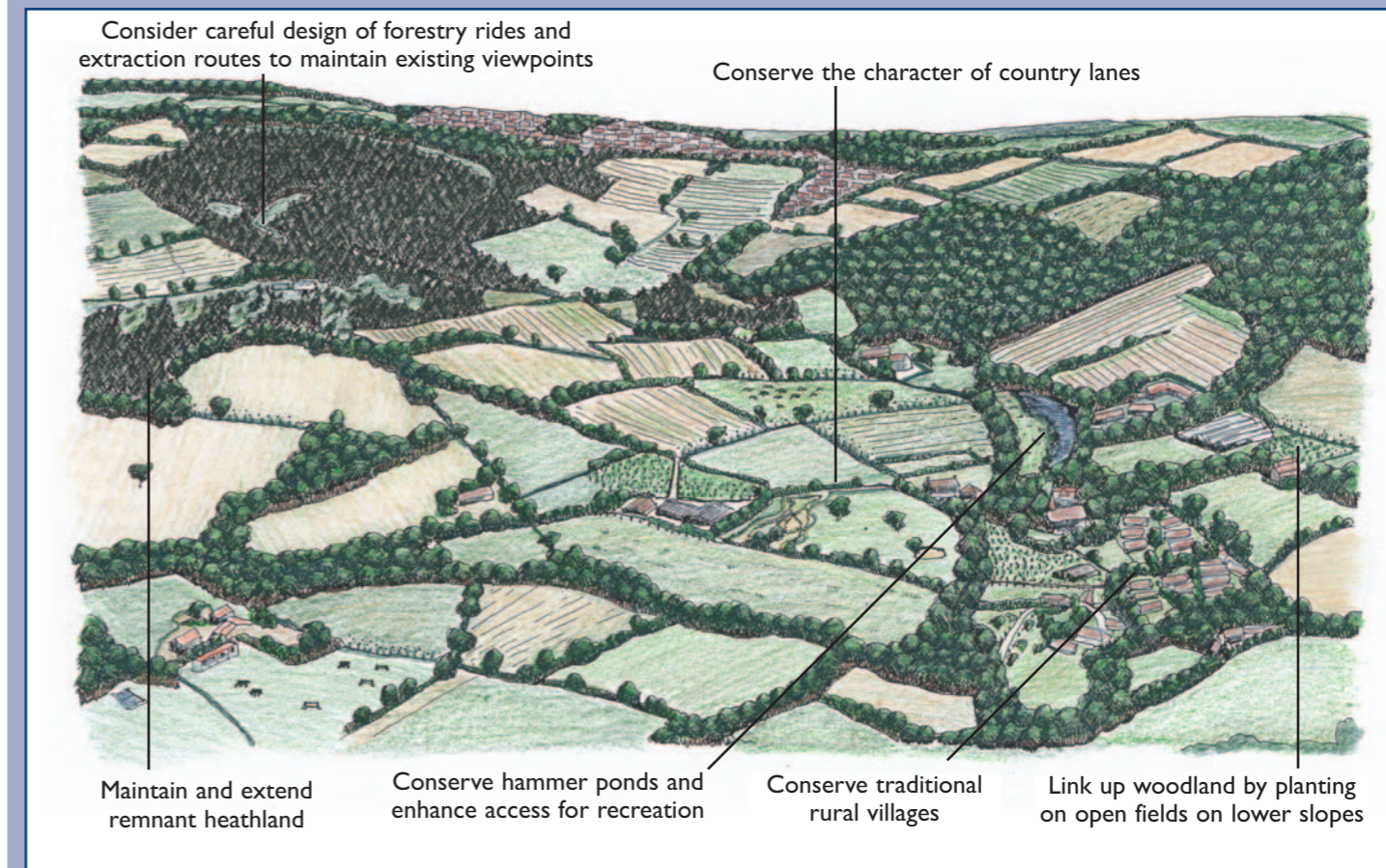


Millenium Wood, Borde Hill



Hedgerow trees, Wealden Fringe

## Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve the rich mosaic of woodland and other habitats and the intimate nature of the agricultural landscape, the high level of perceived naturalness of the area including its rural, tranquil qualities, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.**

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Protect existing views from the area and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands, appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills, including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.
- Increase screening of prominent parts of new development on the southern fringes of Haywards Heath.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* (Adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Management Committee.



## Appendix 1

# POLICY BACKGROUND

### Introduction

**A1.1** In taking account of the impact of development, Government planning guidance urges the protection and enhancement of the environment, urban and countryside character and local distinctiveness. This approach is reflected in the new regional level of statutory land use planning emerging in the *South East Plan*. Various Government-sponsored agencies provide non-statutory policy and guidance relating directly or indirectly to landscape character and biodiversity. The paragraphs below summarise briefly the policy background at national, regional, county and local levels.

### Government planning guidance

**A1.2** Government Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) entitled *Delivering Sustainable Development* (2005) aims *inter alia* to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside (Objectives, p.2). It stresses the importance of protecting the wider countryside and taking account of the impact of development on landscape quality and the preservation of the built and archaeological heritage (para 20). It recognises that character is a significant material consideration in planning policy formulation and development control decisions.

**A1.3** Government Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) entitled *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* replaces PPG7 (*The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*) published in 1997. Para 1 (vi), p.7) states:

*...the Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all.*

Para 15 states:

*Planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced. They should have particular regard to any areas which have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities where greater priority should be given to restraint of particularly damaging development.*

And para 24:

*The Government recognises and accepts that there are areas of landscape outside nationally designated areas that are particularly valued locally. The Government believes that carefully drafted, criteria-based policies in Local Development Documents (LDDs), utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection for these areas, without the need for rigid local designations that may unduly restrict acceptable, sustainable development and the economic activity that underpins the vitality of rural areas.*

**A1.4** The *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* introduced major changes to the way the planning policy system operates. The Development Plan now consists of a Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks (structure plans will disappear). Government Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) entitled *Local Development Frameworks* (2003) replaces PPG12 on Development Plans published in 1999. It sets out the development plan documents which planning authorities must

prepare. The core strategy should set out the key elements of the planning framework for the area. Once adopted, all other development plan documents must be in conformity with it. The core strategy should draw on the various strategies with implications for the development and use of land and provide an integrated approach to the implementation of these strategies. It should set out the long term spatial vision for the authority's area and the strategic policies and proposals required to deliver that vision (paras 2.2.2-3).

**A1.5** Of particular interest in a character context is the use of *Action Area Plans* (paras 2.2.12-14) to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed, including the protection of areas sensitive to change and the resolution of conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressure:

*In areas of conservation, area action plans should set out the policies and proposals for action to preserve or enhance the area, including defining areas where specific conservation measures are proposed and areas which will be subject to significant controls over development.*

**A1.6** In addition, *Supplementary Planning Documents* (SPDs) (paras 2.4.1-3) can play a valuable role in supplementing the policies and proposals in development plan documents. This is particularly helpful in pursuing character-based planning initiatives. SPDs will not form part of the development plan. However, they should be subjected to rigorous procedures of community involvement. They may take the form of design guides, area development briefs, or issue-based documents which supplement policies in a development plan document.

## **Countryside Agency**

**A1.7** In April 1999, the new Countryside Agency published *Tomorrow's Countryside – 2020 Vision* envisaging a countryside rich in landscape and biodiversity, managed to the highest standards for the benefit of all, and with development of a high standard thought *good enough to approve*. The Vision was followed in 2001 by the Agency's *Strategy Towards Tomorrow's Countryside* setting out how the Agency will work by influencing and implementing countryside policy including securing the quality of England's finest landscapes and helping people locally to care for their landscapes, landmarks and traditions:

*We [The Agency and its partners] will promote wide adoption of Countryside Character as a way in which all whose decisions impact on the countryside can evaluate their actions as they prepare their plans and investments (p.11).*

### **Natural England**

In the *Review of the Rural White Paper* (2004) the Secretary of State announced the reorganisation of English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service into a new body called *Natural England*. The new, integrated agency will be responsible for all of the functions of English Nature; the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency; and the environmental and land management functions of the Rural Development Service. The formal establishment of this arrangement is anticipated in January 2007 although the partners have been acting as a confederation since April 2005. The *Natural England* name will be in formal use from October 2006.

## English Nature

**A1.8** English Nature is a Government-funded body set up under the *Environmental Protection Act 1990*. Its purpose is to promote the conservation of wildlife and natural features in England. The actions of English Nature regarding wildlife protection and conservation have considerable direct benefits for landscape restoration in the District. The agency is responsible for the protection, management control and monitoring of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the District, which contain important habitats deemed worthy of protection at a national level. The agency is also committed to achieving the nature conservation goals in the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* over the next 20 years and beyond, at national and local levels. In Mid Sussex this will be achieved through partnership working with the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership (see **Appendix 3** paras 3.48-50).

## Environment Agency

**A1.9** The Environment Agency was set up by the *Environment Act 1995*. It provides a comprehensive approach to the protection and management of the environment by combining the regulation of land, air and water. There are various ways in which the activities of the Agency may influence sound landscape and wildlife management and creation including through flood management planning and conservation projects which deliver habitat and species biodiversity targets at specific sites.

### Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs)

**A1.10** The Agency is currently producing a series of Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) for the major river catchments in the Southern Region. The aim of the CFMPs is to identify long-term, sustainable policies to manage flood risk within the catchment including the identification in more detail of appropriate flood defence measures. Mid Sussex District contains a small portion of the headwaters of the Medway/Eden and Mole catchments and major portions of the Adur and Ouse catchments. Completed CFMPs have yet to be produced for these catchments.

**A1.11** Flood defence measures will have implications for landscape. As an example, catchment objectives in the recent *River Arun Catchment Flood Management Plan Scoping Report* (August 2005) include enhancement of the recreational and amenity value of areas where flood mitigation measures are required. This includes ensuring the protection and enhancement of landscape character and visual amenity, and the protection of cultural heritage and scheduled sites.

## English Heritage

**A1.12** The actions of English Heritage also benefit the maintenance of landscapes and townscape character. Among its many duties, the agency is responsible for administering the listed buildings system, advising on the scope and content of Conservation Area designations, and conducting extensive applied research into historic and archaeological aspects of the built heritage. English Heritage also pioneered the technique of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), the history and outcomes of which are explained in more detail in its publication *Historic Landscape Characterisation: Taking Stock of the Method* (2003). The agency is currently funding the *Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project* and a programme of Intensive and Extensive Urban Surveys for historic towns in Sussex. The preliminary findings from the Sussex HLC have been used extensively in the Assessment (see paras 2.45-80 on the historic landscape of the District and the *Historic character* sections in the chapters on each Landscape Character Areas).

## Forestry Commission

**A1.13** Woodland in the South East Region covers 14% of the land surface – far more than the national average. Four of the five most wooded counties in England are found here. The South East has the highest concentration of ancient woodlands in the country, these being the richest woods in terms of biodiversity and heritage. In *Seeing the Wood for the Trees: A Forestry and Woodlands Framework for South East England* (2004), the Forestry Commission envisions woodland making an increasing contribution to the sustainable development of the Region, in both rural and urban areas. The vision anticipates better places for people to live; enhanced environment and biodiversity; a stronger contribution of woodland to the economy; and a secure **future for woodland resources. The Framework is based on a series of 12 outcomes**, all of which will greatly benefit Mid Sussex District

1. Trees and woodlands support the development of sustainable communities.
2. The health and well being of more people are improved through visiting woodlands.
3. Greater use is made of trees and woodlands for community projects and activities.
4. Woodlands enhance and protect the environment of the Region, the heritage features within them safeguarded.
5. Woodland habitats and species are being maintained or brought into good ecological condition.
6. The economic value of woodland products in the Region is being recognised.
7. Woodlands play a greater role in attracting tourism, inward investment and other economic activity.
8. Woodlands and trees, especially ancient woodlands and veteran trees, are protected from loss.
9. Integrated, strategic planning of woodland management is occurring.
10. The skills base needed to manage woodlands is being secured.
11. Public awareness about woodlands and their management is increasing.
12. The financial viability of woodland management is secured.

The Framework concludes with a list of Priority Topics based on partnership working. This will allow a good start to be made by delivering a selected range of short-term outcomes.

## The draft South East Plan

**A1.14** Under the new planning arrangements, the Government has asked the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) to prepare a plan for new housing, transport, the economy and the environment in the South East for the period to 2026. The plan is being prepared in accordance with Government Planning Policy Statement 11 (*PPS11*) entitled *Regional Spatial Strategies*. Part One of the Plan will contain region-wide policies. Part Two will set out housing numbers for each local authority area and contain proposals covering employment and infrastructure needs.

**A1.15** In January 2005, SEERA published Part One of the Plan for public consultation entitled *The South East Plan: A Clear Vision for the South East*. Incorporating the Regional Transport Strategy, the draft Plan provides the spatial framework that forms the context within which Local Development Documents and Local Transport Plans



need to be prepared, as well as other regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes that have a bearing on land use activities.

**A1.16** The core strategy of the draft Plan recognises that, despite being a region of economic opportunity and enterprise, with an especially varied and attractive countryside, there are also considerable environmental conflicts and development tensions. It is the intention of the Assembly and its partners to nurture and enhance regional environmental assets and quality of life whilst attempting to meet social and economic needs in a sustainable manner. The draft Plan contains policies on Countryside and Landscape Management. Reflecting *PPS1*, para 1.11 states:

*The case for character as part of the wider debate on quality of life is not in dispute. Character is a recognised component of sustainable development and has become a significant material consideration in planning policy formulation and development control decisions...Policy challenges include increasing our understanding of what character is, how it is changing, and delivering benefits through land management.*

**A1.17** The draft Plan seeks to protect and enhance the distinctive qualities of the countryside of the Region. Also of particular importance for character are policies concerning the management of the built and historic environment, including management for an urban renaissance; unlocking the potential of the urban rural fringe; managing development in rural communities and rural market towns; and conserving and enhancing the historic environment, recognising the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness and sense of place.

**A1.18** Part Two of the draft Plan containing the local authority housing numbers is currently undergoing public consultation (Autumn 2005). SEERA will present the entire Plan to the Government by the end of March 2006. Formal government consultation and a public examination will follow before the Secretary of State is asked to approve the Plan in Spring 2008.

## **West Sussex County Council policies and plans**

**A1.19** The County Council and its partners seek to cherish, protect and enhance those aspects of the character and sense of place of West Sussex which are well-loved and precious. This is an important element in County Council plans and strategies covering planning, culture, the rural economy, the coast, tourism, biodiversity, archaeology, minerals and waste. A key priority of the *County Strategy 2001-2005* is "to protect and enhance the heritage and environment of West Sussex".

**A1.20** Protecting the distinctive character of the towns and villages, countryside and coast is one of the three aims of the adopted *West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016*. The Plan is organised around Location, Needs, Character, Environment and resources, and Development. The character element of the Plan is therefore of central importance. **Policy CH1 (Character)** seeks to reinforce the local distinctiveness of the five national Character Areas in the County. The first clause is as follows:

**Development should not be permitted unless it maintains and, where possible, enhances the character, distinctiveness and sense of place of the settlements and different areas and features of the County, including the coast, and that it reflects and, where possible, reinforces the character of the main natural character areas of the County – the South Coast Plain, the South Downs, the Wealden Fringe, the Low Weald, and the High Weald.**

Other policies in the Plan safeguard Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; protect woodlands, forests; rivers, waterways and the coast; seek to retain the separate identities of towns and villages (strategic gaps); and safeguard the historic heritage.

## **Mid Sussex District Council policies, plans and strategies**

### **Corporate Plan for 2005 – 2007**

**A1.21** Constantly under review, the Plan sets out the main themes for areas of improvement in the District – Better Environment, Lives and Services – to meet the primary purpose of 'Working in Partnership for the well being of all in the community'. It sets out details of the action plans for these themes and Service Plans for the 12 principal service areas of the Council.

### **Community Plan for Mid Sussex)**

**A1.22** The Plan (2003) was produced jointly by the Mid Sussex Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the three Area Community Forums covering the District. The LSP recognises that, to improve the quality of life for all in the District, it is imperative that all agencies work together in partnership. The basic aim of the Plan is to improve social, economic and environmental well-being and quality of life for all.

### **Mid Sussex Local Plan**

**A1.23** The *Mid Sussex Local Plan* was adopted in August 2004. Many policies in the Local Plan are crucial to the protection and enhancement of the character and amenity of the District, including its diverse landscapes and townscapes. The key policies are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

### **A Local Agenda 21 for Mid Sussex**

**A1.24** Produced in 2002, this document describes the background to *Agenda 21* arising from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and how the policy direction agreed at the Summit might be translated into an action plan for Mid Sussex District. The document identifies actions that will help create and maintain local quality of life and local environments.

### **A Cultural Strategy for Mid Sussex 2002 – 2007**

**A1.25** The Strategy provides a framework for the development of leisure, recreation, heritage and tourism in the District, seeking to:

- Safeguard and enhance the distinctive natural and built environment.
- Protect the appearance and character of the countryside.
- Manage resources to minimise the damage to the environment (Agenda 21).
- Promote environmental awareness and responsibility.

### **Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy: Our Green Heritage**

**A1.26** In October 2001, the District Council published a Landscape and Biodiversity for Mid Sussex entitled *Our Green Heritage*. The District Council itself has a major role to play in the protection and conservation of landscape and biodiversity as a local planning authority, as a landowner, and as a partner working with many of the agencies mentioned in this Appendix. The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Enhance and maintain existing landscapes and biodiversity.
- Increase biodiversity by sympathetically maintaining the landscape and enhancing and creating habitats.
- Promote the varied landscapes and habitats, with the wildlife they support, to both residents and visitors.

The Strategy provides the overall framework for an action plan covering at least a ten-year period. It links with other actions concerned with landscape and biodiversity and with the activities of communities in the District. The Strategy recognises that the dynamic nature of landscape and biodiversity requires constant review and refinement if actions are to respond to changing circumstances. Of equal

importance is the means by which the community and the District Council can work together to implement (and where necessary, re-formulate) the action plan.

**A1.27** The Strategy contains a description of the District focused on natural areas (equivalent to the national Character Areas used in the Assessment). This background has been fed into the Assessment, to ensure that the area-based actions in the Strategy continue to be focused on the three national Character Areas of the South Downs, the Low Weald and the High Weald.

**A1.28** The core of the Strategy is a series of seven *Action Plans*, the first four District-wide (a general plan and plans for towns and villages, trees and woodlands, and historic parks and gardens), the remaining three focused on the three national (natural) Character Areas. Most importantly, the plans identify the partnerships that will be necessary to achieve the actions. Details of the Action Plans are outlined in **Appendix 3** paras A3.29-33.

## Appendix 2

### **MID SUSSEX LOCAL PLAN (2004)**

#### **Planning policies relevant to character, landscape and townscape**

**A2.1** The *Mid Sussex Local Plan* was adopted in August 2004. Many policies in the Plan are crucial to the protection and enhancement of the character and amenity of the District, including its diverse landscape and townscapes. The protection and improvement of the environment, securing high standards of design, and reducing the impact of development to a minimum are principal aims (paras 2.20 and 2.21). The District Council as the Local Planning Authority will attach great importance to ensuring that the goals of sustainable development underlie all planning decisions, as expressed in the General Policies G1 and G2:

##### **Policy G1**

**Development will not be permitted where it would:**

- (a) **cause irretrievable or irreplaceable loss of significant natural, created or social assets;**
- (b) **cause unacceptable environmental damage;**
- (c) **cause unacceptable disturbance or nuisance; and**
- (d) **be inefficient in its use of resources, including water and energy.**

##### **Policy G2**

**Development will be expected to:**

- (a) **make efficient use of derelict or vacant land or buildings within built-up areas before using greenfield sites;**
- (b) **be efficient in the use of land in terms of density;**
- (c) **meet high standards of design, construction and layout;**
- (d) **include provision, where appropriate for adequate open space;**
- (e) **be accessible by a choice of means of transport and not rely solely for access on the private car; and**
- (f) **create high quality landscape settings including, where appropriate, wildlife habitats.**

**Policies C1 – C7** protect those areas of the countryside and land which have special qualities:

**Strategic and Local Gaps (C2-3)**

**Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) (C4)**

**Areas of Importance for Nature Conservation (C5)**

**Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands (C6)**

**Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (C7).**

The District Council attaches great importance to the quality of design in new development, seeing this as vital if new buildings are to blend successfully with their surroundings and if they are to be attractive in their own right:

##### **Policy B1**

**A high standard of design, construction and layout will be expected in new buildings, including alterations and extensions.**

All proposals for development will be required to:

- (a) demonstrate a sensitive approach to urban design by respecting the character of the locality in which they take place, especially to neighbouring buildings, their landscape or townscape setting and/or local building style. Regard should be given to the proposal's contribution to a sense of place. In the case of alterations or extensions, including new shopfronts, the proposals must be sympathetic to the building to which they relate. Factors to be taken into consideration include scale, massing, siting, density, views, height and orientation of the new buildings in relation to those already existing;
- (b) use materials of a quality, type and colour appropriate to the site and its surroundings, which conform to the general range in the vicinity, and which enhance the distinctiveness of traditional building materials and styles;
- (c) show that adequate consideration has been given to the spaces between and around buildings, and that effective use has been made of any landscape features; and
- (d) provide suitable new planting of trees and shrubs appropriate to the site and its location. Where appropriate, existing wildlife habitats including green corridors and river courses should be protected and enhanced.

All planning applications should include a design statement, unless otherwise agreed with the Council.

**Policies B6-7** protect areas of open space important for landscape and wildlife, and important trees:

**Policy B6**

Proposals for development which would result in the loss of areas of public or private open space of particular importance to the locality by virtue of their recreational, historical, conservation, wildlife or amenity value will not be permitted. Where such open space is to be lost to development, for whatever reason, appropriate alternative provision may be sought elsewhere.

**Policies B10 – B18** protect the built and historic heritage of the District:

- Listed Buildings and their Settings (B10)
- Other Buildings of Merit (buildings of intrinsic architectural/historic merit) (B11)
- Conservation Areas (protection of special character and appearance) (B12)
- Demolition in Conservation Areas (B13)
- Pavements and Roads in Conservation Areas (B14)
- The Setting of Conservation Areas (B15)
- Areas of Townscape Character (B16)
- Historic Parks and Gardens (B17)
- Archaeological Sites (B18).

The effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application (see paras 267-70 regarding *Designed Landscapes*). . The policy regarding Historic Parks and Gardens is as follows:

**Policy B17**

The important features, including trees, of a registered park, or park or garden of special local historic interest will be protected. Development that would adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of a registered park, or

**park or garden of special local historic interest will not be permitted. Particular attention will also be paid to the protection or enhancement of views into and out of a registered park, or park or garden of special local historic interest.**

**A2.2** As noted in para A1.4 of **Appendix 1**, *The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* introduced major changes to the way the planning policy system operates. The Act requires that the District Council prepare Local Development Documents to replace Local Plans. These documents will make up the Local Development Framework now being prepared by the District Council over a three-year period.

## Appendix 3

### MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**A3.1** This Appendix describes the audiences to whom the Assessment will be addressed and the role they will play. It sets out details of the actions to conserve landscape character which the District Council and its principal partners are taking or intend to take, and lists the activities of other agencies closely involved with wildlife and landscape conservation in Mid Sussex.

#### FOUR MAIN AUDIENCES

**A3.2** The Assessment is addressed to four main audiences:

- Landowners, their agents and land managers.
- Planners, developers and statutory agencies.
- Communities.
- The public and educationalists.

#### Land use planning

**A3.3** The statutory land use planning (development plan) system has a potentially major impact on landscape character and biodiversity as a consequence of decisions about the scale and location of development including transport and communications; about the quality of design of new development; and about the integration of development into the landscape. Such plans are therefore able to influence the character of town and country for the better. The Assessment can therefore be used as a positive tool to inform strategic land use planning and development control in the District. Principal mechanisms include:

- Adopting strong landscape character-based Development Plan policies.
- Assessing the sensitivity of landscapes and townscapes and their ability to accommodate new development.
- Guiding the location and design of new development and the adaptation for new uses of existing buildings in the countryside.
- Providing a landscape framework for development briefs related to specific development proposals.
- Providing the basis for Supplementary Planning Documents relating to the protection and enhancement of landscape and townscape character.

#### Land management

**A3.4** Land management decisions by landowners, farmers, statutory bodies and the local authorities themselves have a fundamental impact on the landscape. It is therefore vitally important to influence the multiplicity of landowners involved in managing land in ways that benefit landscape character.

**A3.5** The *Land Management Guidelines* included in the Assessment will be used to:

- Inform decision-making on land management issues and the targeting of resources.
- Assist in targeting significant increases in the areas of semi-natural habitats.

- Contribute to setting priorities for Environmental Stewardship Agri-Environmental Schemes.
- Assist in setting strategic environmental improvement priorities.
- Form the basis for the development of urban fringe strategies.
- Assist with strategies for woodland management and creation including priorities for woodland grant schemes.
- Assist with the development of indicators to monitor landscape change.
- Encourage the conservation and enhancement of biological diversity, supporting the objectives and actions of biodiversity action plans.
- Provide a basis for influencing land management on major estates and land holdings.

## Community-led planning

**A3.6** Communities in the District have close ties to their localities, and can provide a genuine local perspective on what the character means to them. Under the *Local Government Act 2000* the Government conferred on local authorities a duty to prepare *community strategies*. As both community strategies and Local Development Frameworks are concerned with the achievement of sustainable development objectives, the Government made Frameworks the land-use and development delivery mechanism for the community strategy itself. In the planning sphere, *PPS12* makes it clear that local authorities should involve the community at an early stage in the process of preparing Local Development documents.

**A3.7** The Government Rural White Paper *Our Countryside: the Future* (2000) proposed that all rural communities should develop town, village and parish plans to identify key facilities and services, to set out the problems that needed to be tackled, and to demonstrate how local distinctiveness should be preserved. To help deliver the White Paper proposal, the Countryside Agency launched its *Vital Villages* programme in 2001, one of its major objectives to promote parish planning. In 2003 the Countryside Agency published *Parish Plans and the Planning System* setting out guidance and advice for local planning authorities and parish and town councils.

**A3.8** The District Local Development Framework has brought increased opportunities for local land use and parish planning, through the ability to include additional advice in Supplementary Planning Documents and Area Action Plans. Local studies can influence broader technical and policy work, just as such work can provide a context for local action.

**A3.9** Particularly strong in Mid Sussex is the parish mapping initiative, started in earnest at the Millennium. Parish maps represent a form of healthy community assertiveness and celebration. It is a vital part of the character agenda to help communities define and value local character whilst appreciating the constancy of change. Finally, information on character will provide a vital input to work on Other projects, for instance, the Small Market Towns Initiative, as part of the health checklists for individual towns, and to other work aimed at the conservation and enhancement of historic urban areas.

**A3.10** The Assessment will therefore contribute to community planning by providing:

- A broad context for preparation by local communities of Village Design Statements and Parish Plans.
- A framework for development of local environmental enhancement initiatives.



- Information to help with initiatives concerned with small market towns and other urban areas.

## **Awareness-raising and education**

**A3.11** When it comes to public priorities, character appears to be well down the list compared with economic, health and social needs. Nevertheless the protection and enhancement of character is a key consideration for many when development is being proposed, not to mention the immense contribution the countryside and the historic environment make to recreation and to spiritual well-being. A vital part of character work will be to raise awareness of the local distinctiveness of healthy landscapes as a prime environmental asset in the District and to help communities to understand how these can be protected and enhanced.

**A3.12** The Assessment will contribute to awareness-raising and education by:

- Providing a basis for raising public awareness, understanding and appreciation of landscape conservation and enhancement, for instance, via websites, other publicity, talks and walks.
- Providing a teaching aid for schools and colleges.
- Assisting community-led appraisal and parish planning work and harnessing commitment from – and action by – local communities.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTION**

**A3.13** As noted above, many organisations, agencies and individuals from national to local levels are involved in conserving and shaping the landscape of Mid Sussex. There are great advantages in working in partnership, agreeing policies and priorities, and sharing resources. Everyone living and working in Mid Sussex is a potential contributor. The main partnerships active in landscape and wildlife conservation in Mid Sussex are briefly outlined below.

### **National and regional agencies**

**A3.14** As noted in **Appendix 1**, principal national and regional agencies concerned with landscape restoration and habitat management include DEFRA, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, English Nature and English Heritage. They operate mainly by commissioning targeted research, giving grants and advice and, in the case of DEFRA, disbursing grants to landowners signed up to Agri-Environmental (Environmental Stewardship) Schemes.

### **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform and Environmental Stewardship**

**A3.15** The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has potentially considerable landscape and wildlife benefits. Introduced in 2005, CAP reform breaks the link between support payments and production volumes. A Single Farm Payment (SFP) will be made to farmers in return for cross-compliance with environmentally beneficial land management practices. The SFP will initially comprise a 90% historic element relating to production-based payments in the 3 reference years 2000-02, and a 10% regional average element. Over the eight years from January 2005, this ratio will reverse, ending with 100% regional average payment.

**A3.16** The break from production is expected to result in a more market-led industry. A market-led industry may influence producers to change sectors rapidly, with a consequent need to change farm infrastructures accordingly. The future influence

on markets of multiple retailers and EU accession states remains an unknown quantity at this stage. At the other extreme, farmers in unprofitable livestock markets on more marginal land could move towards greater extensification of stocking densities (fewer animals per acre). They would still be eligible for SFP in return for environmental cross-compliance.

**A3.17** The introduction of a SFP, based ultimately on regional averaging, will undoubtedly be beneficial environmentally, as the available funds will be spread more evenly over a greater number of land managers, all of whom will be tied in to environmental cross-compliance measures. The adequate funding of the Entry Level and Higher Tier Agri-Environmental Schemes (Environmental Stewardship) will be equally important.

**A3.18** The new system promises clear environmental benefits within the context of the market and commercial viability. Since the Government sees partnership working in all of this, it will be part of the job in drafting regional and local plans to assess these benefits and to frame appropriate policies. This will include how regional and local government can use tools such as characterisation, biodiversity action planning and recreational strategies to secure the right benefits in the right places.

### **Delivery plan for the DEFRA Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy (2003)**

**advice and training:** giving farmers the help they need and encouraging new entrants.

**countryside access:** promoting and seizing the benefits of increased public access.

**environmental stewardship:** promoting sustainability through whole-farm planning, soil and water management.

**farming mainstream:** improving returns through collaboration and adding value.

**non-food diversification:** overcoming barriers to non-food diversification market-based action on industrial and biomass crops, wood fuel and tourism.

**food chain re-connection:** securing better integration and understanding between farmers and customers.

**health:** driving forward action on food and nutrition for healthy eating and living.

**local food:** building the market and empowering South East suppliers to exploit it.

**London:** developing food strategy to benefit the people and economy of London.

**public procurement:** identifying the opportunities and linking in South East suppliers.

### **Environmental Stewardship**

**A3.19** Administered through DEFRA, the Environmental Stewardship scheme provides a positive opportunity for landowners and managers to conserve and enhance the landscape. The new scheme replaces Countryside Stewardship and the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme and represents a significant step towards comprehensive landscape and wildlife conservation, addressing five main scheme objectives:

- Maintenance and enhancement of landscape character and quality.
- Protection of the historic environment.
- Wildlife conservation.
- Natural resource protection.
- Promotion of public access and understanding.

Environmental Stewardship has two tiers: a basic level aimed at maintenance, comprising *Entry Level Stewardship* and *Organic Entry Level Stewardship*, and the more advanced *Higher Level Stewardship (HLC)* which is aimed at conservation and enhancement. HLS is appropriate for those who are able to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority situations and areas.

**A3.20** Landowners and others wishing to apply for HLS will need to produce a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) or survey of the farm. The FEP needs to cover 'farm-scale environmental features and potential for creation of new features' and includes sections on landscape, the historic environment, field boundaries, biodiversity, access, natural resource protection, flood and coastal management, genetic conservation, and woodland and orchards. The section on landscape is compulsory and to complete it, the applicants need to assess the landscape character of the farm and the surrounding countryside, make decisions about the condition of key characteristics, and develop a landscape management strategy for the farm.

**A3.21** The Countryside Agency believes that landscape aspects now form a greater part of Environmental Stewardship than any previous scheme. However, landscape character assessment may be new to those advising landowners about submissions under the scheme. The Agency is therefore sponsoring training programmes nationally to develop advisors' skills and knowledge about landscape and its restoration.

**A3.22** Should such schemes flourish in the District, the benefits to the landscape and wildlife are potentially enormous. For the purposes of monitoring landscape change and restoration, it will be vitally important to have access to information on the number and type of schemes on land in the District, supplied through the Sussex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

## The local authorities

### Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme

**A3.23** The local authorities and AONB agencies in West Sussex are carrying out a five-year programme of landscape characterisation studies and guidance work known as *The Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme*. Much of this work is of direct benefit to Mid Sussex. The Programme aims to:

*Delineate the diverse character of West Sussex and seek to protect, enhance and promote it through the preparation in partnership of guidance, advice and information tailored to specific audiences, communities and the public, working also with other agencies that are capable of benefitting character.*

The main work of the Programme focuses on characterisation studies, planning policy and guidance, and land management guidelines.

**A3.24** Committed *characterisation studies* include the preparation of:

- West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy.
- Landscape Character Assessments of Horsham and Mid Sussex Districts and Chichester Harbour AONB (arrangements to complete Assessments of the remaining Boroughs and Districts have yet to be made).
- Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project.
- Extensive (EUS) and Intensive (IUS) Urban Surveys of historic towns in Sussex.
- Local distinctiveness studies covering buildings, farmsteads and other built features in the landscape.

- An Integrated Landscape Character Assessment of the South Downs is also being carried out by the South Downs and East Hampshire AONB Joint Committees.

Various partners are supporting the characterisation work financially. These include English Heritage, English Nature and the Countryside Agency, the Borough and District Councils, the AONB agencies, and local organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

**A3.25** The Programme will generate policy advice and guidance on landscape and other aspects of character to the partners themselves. West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex and Horsham District Councils have teamed up with the Countryside Agency (2005) to produce model policy guidance on landscape character for Local Development Frameworks and advice on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents. This work will benefit the local planning policy process as well as forming the basis for development control and enforcement checklists regarding character.

**A3.26** Derived from the Landscape Character Assessment work, County-wide *Land Management Guidelines* concerning landscape conservation and restoration are being prepared for use by landowners and farmers. The Guidelines will also be useful to communities undertaking parish plans and preparing Village Design Statements. The first *Land Management Guidelines* sheets to be produced cover Mid Sussex and are included in the Assessment.

**A3.27** Finally, an important part of the Programme will concern awareness-raising by publicising and making information available and highlighting the importance of character and local distinctiveness with a wide range of audiences.

#### **West Sussex County Council**

**A3.28** West Sussex County Council has long been involved in a wide range of environmental and land management initiatives, many of which have benefitted Mid Sussex. Actions include landscape renewal; biodiversity action planning including habitat management and creation; environmental advice; advice on tree planting and listed building conservation; and research contributing to the conservation and enhancement of the character of the County. Other actions contributing to the enjoyment of the countryside include the management of the public rights of way system and land management carried out by the ranger service (in Mid Sussex, along the Worth Way).

#### **Mid Sussex District Council**

*Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy: Our Green Heritage*

**A3.29** As noted in *paras A1.26-28* in **Appendix 1**, the District Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy contains a series of action plans. The *general District-wide Action Plan* focuses on actions designed to:

- Support national, international and EU Directives and legislation regarding environmental protection and enhancement.
- Safeguard and improve all existing habitats.
- Develop targets for each national Character Area concerning habitat restoration and management.
- Safeguard and preserve all existing species.
- Prepare suitable management plans for all Council-owned land.
- Increase awareness of the wildlife heritage of the District.
- Encourage public awareness about – and understanding of – wildlife and establish management groups for all Local Nature Reserves.
- Increase partnership working and co-operation between conservation groups.

**A3.30** The Action Plan for *Towns and Villages* focuses on actions designed to:

- Secure the least-damaging impact on wildlife and habitats as a consequence of new development.
- Safeguard and improve existing green corridors.
- Safeguard and improve all existing open space (including sports grounds, pocket parks etc) and the wildlife areas within them.
- Safeguard and improve existing Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) and seek to increase the number of sites.

**A3.31** The Action Plan for *Trees and Woodlands* focuses on actions designed to:

- Safeguard and improve all existing woodlands and hedgerows and increase the extent of the resource.
- Seek a broad-leaved element in existing coniferous plantations and the increase in commercial woodland planting where this has landscape and wildlife benefits.
- Safeguard and improve coppice woodland.
- Protect sandrock outcrops and gill woodlands.
- Safeguard trees in existing parklands.

**A3.32** The Action Plan for *Historic Parks and Gardens* concerns actions designed to:

- Safeguard and enhance historic parklands, gardens and estates, protecting existing landscape features and biodiversity features within them.
- Reduce the impact of visitor pressure on popular gardens.
- Extend protection and enhancement to unregistered parks and gardens.

**A3.33** The action plans for the national Character Areas focus largely on the safeguarding and enhancement as appropriate of key habitats including woodlands; grasslands including chalk grassland; pasture, farmland and meadows; heathlands including chalk heath; and wetlands. Other actions focus on the conservation of the open chalk landscape; historic parks and gardens; historic sites; and the character of urban areas. The Strategy makes clear that in respect of habitat conservation, the implementation of the action plans will stem largely from the Biodiversity Action Plans being prepared and carried out by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership. A wide variety of other partners will also be instrumental in implementing the plans, and are listed in the Strategy.

*Landscape and Biodiversity: Supplementary Planning Guidance*

**A3.34** In November 2003 the District Council published *Landscape and Biodiversity: Supplementary Planning Guidance*, a document considered fundamental to the implementation of the Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy. Prepared in accordance with national and regional planning guidance and the District Local Plan, the guidance contains a wealth of practical material designed to ensure that:

- Statutory requirements relating to landscape and nature conservation are being fulfilled, and
- Principles of sustainable development are adhered to which conserve and enhance both the cultural heritage and natural resources of the District including wildlife and landscape.

**A3.35** The guidance covers a wide range of topics including:

- General principles relating to the avoidance and mitigation of damage to landscape and biodiversity; the recognition of the special qualities of the national

Character Areas in the District; the process of biodiversity action planning; and sites designated for their landscape and biodiversity value.

- National and regional policy background including statutory legislation, international obligations and information on protected species, and consultation procedures required for designated sites.
- A five-point approach to planning decisions based on information (checklists and survey reports including the content of ecological surveys); avoidance of damage; mitigation; compensation; and the conferring of benefit through landscape and habitat creation.
- Practical steps to enhance landscape and biodiversity based on case studies (including planting advice, drainage and water management and provision of features in development favouring wildlife).
- Information on the use of planning conditions and obligations.

The document contains a Statement of Consultation and a digest of the comments received from consultees.

#### *Trees and Woodland Management Guidelines*

**A3.36** Produced in 2002, the Guidelines provide a framework for the management and maintenance of woodland and trees for which the District Council is responsible (over 12,000 amenity trees and 70 hectares of woodland, copses and shelterbelts). As well as providing guidance on the management of the tree stock, the Guidelines provide outline management prescriptions for all the main wooded sites; outline a management philosophy; identify the financial and human resources required to manage the tree and woodland stock; and provide a basis for monitoring and review.

#### *Mid Sussex Ancient Woodland Survey*

**A3.37** Ancient woodland over two hectares in size are recorded in Ancient Woodland Inventories compiled in the 1980s and 1990s by the Nature Conservancy Council. These inventories have long provided an important tool for policy makers and planners and have assisted land managers to identify key areas for the restoration and planting of native woodland. However, woodlands below 2 hectares in size were not covered by the original inventories (a serious shortcoming) and much new information on the local ancient woodland resource has since come to light.

**A3.38** Mid Sussex District Council, English Nature and the High Weald AONB Unit will carry out the Survey (autumn 2005 – summer 2006) as a joint project. It aims to re-examine the available information for ancient woodland in Mid Sussex District and, using methodologies piloted in Wealden District in East Sussex, compile a reviewed Ancient Woodland Inventory for the District including woodland under 2 hectares. The resultant Geographic Information System (GIS) and database will be used to inform planning policy seeking to protect ancient woodland and help to identify appropriate woodland management programmes and opportunities to re-connect ancient woodland networks.

### **AONB Management Plans**

**A3.39** Mid Sussex is partly covered by two AONB Management Plans, for the High Weald and South Downs, prepared by the AONB management agencies. The implementation of the objectives and actions contained in these plans will have potentially great benefits for landscape and biodiversity, helping to maintain and enhance the character of the varied landscapes within those parts of the District covered by them.

#### **High Weald AONB Management Plan**

**A3.40** The first management plan for the area to be prepared under the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*, the *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* was adopted by the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee in March 2004. A review of the 1995 Plan, it is based on:

- A 20-year Vision for the High Weald to 2024 with environmental sustainability at its heart.
- An approach derived from an understanding of the fundamental and defining *character* of the whole area – those components of *natural beauty* that have made the High Weald a recognisably distinct and homogeneous area for at least the last 700 years.
- As well as features of national importance, an appreciation of the myriad local details and features that form people's everyday experience of the High Weald.
- A set of management objectives based on components of character.

**A3.41** The Plan contains a vision, issues and objectives for key character-based subject areas; headline indicators derived from continuing research; indicators of success of the management approach; and targets set to 2009 (the Plan review date). The subject areas and the objectives within them include:

*Geology, landform, water systems and climate*

- Restoring the natural functions of river catchments and protecting sandstone outcrops.

*Settlement*

- Re-connecting settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside; protecting the historic pattern of settlement; and enhancing architectural quality.

*Routeways*

- Maintaining the historic pattern and features of routeways and enhancing their ecological function.

*Woodland*

- Maintaining the existing extent of woodland, particularly ancient woodland; enhancing the ecological function of woodland at a landscape scale; protecting woodland archaeology; and increasing the output of sustainably-produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.

*Field and heath*

- Securing agriculturally-productive use for fields, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management; maintaining the pattern of small, irregularly-shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands; enhancing the environmental function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats; and protecting the historic features of field and heath.

*Public understanding and enjoyment*

- Increasing opportunities for education and celebration of the character of the AONB; increasing the contribution of individuals to conservation and enhancement including increasing community involvement; and integrated management of resources for informal open-air recreation to facilitate *green use* by residents and visitors.

**A3.42** The Plan concludes with a section in Implementation referring to the action plan (including appropriate policy guidance) which will be used to meet the objectives, and to the wide range of partners which will be involved.

### *High Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme*

**A3.43** The High Weald AONB Unit has recently secured a planning grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a bid to deliver public access, conservation and economic benefits across a large part of the High Weald AONB. The forthcoming bid focuses on the surviving fragments of the Weald's medieval forests (including the Worth forests in Mid Sussex) that once covered large tracts of the sandstone Forest Ridge between Horsham and Tunbridge Wells. Landscape restoration will be an important part of the project, which also offers exciting opportunities to deliver public access, economic and conservation improvements.

### **The South Downs Interim Management Plan**

**A3.44** The Interim Plan was produced in April 2004. It notes that the South Downs has a profound part to play in the overall picture of the English landscape. The Plan proposes a fifty-year Vision in which the South Downs remains a beautiful, unspoilt landscape, enjoyed by everybody. Air, land and water are cleaner, wildlife and communities flourish, and history and culture are respected. Natural resources are used more wisely and everybody enjoys a better quality of life. The strategic objectives of the Plan are to:

- Protect, conserve and enhance natural beauty and amenity, including the physical, ecological and cultural landscape and natural resources (*Land*).
- Promote quiet informal enjoyment by the general public but only so far as is consistent with the first objective (*People*).
- Generally promote sustainable forms of economic and social development, especially working with local communities, farmers and landowners to encourage land management which supports the first two objectives (*Work*).

The Plan contains a series of more detailed objectives, policies and actions (2004-07) concerned with the conservation, protection and enhancement of:

- Landscape character and diversity.
- The historic environment (connecting with the past).
- Unspoilt and tranquil landscapes.
- Biodiversity.
- Natural resources.

The Plan also seeks to provide for the needs of local people (Living and working in the South Downs); promote suitable recreational activity whilst ensuring recreational pressures are managed (Enjoying the landscape); increase awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the South Downs (New values for a new generation); manage the land as part of a thriving rural economy; and work towards an economy which helps to sustain the environmental character of the area (Sustaining the economy).

**A3.45** A new National Park is proposed for the South Downs and the proposal is currently undergoing scrutiny by way of a Public Inquiry. Should the National Park come to pass, this will have consequences for policy and for the organisation and funding of actions concerned with landscape conservation and enhancement throughout the South Downs.

### **Parish and town councils and local communities**

**A3.46** Working with parish and town councils and a wide range of community groups has long been a tradition in Mid Sussex, and will become increasingly important as community planning initiatives develop which may benefit landscape conservation and enhancement and the appreciation of local landscapes as seen



through the eyes of local people (see *paras A3.6-10* above in the section on *Community-led planning*).

## **Biodiversity action planning**

### ***Vision for the Wildlife of Sussex***

**A3.47** The Sussex Wildlife Trust was founded in 1961, its aim to save the best habitats and to promote the fundamental importance of nature conservation in the two counties. Recognising that environmental issues are now of global concern, in 1996 the Trust published a 50-year *Vision for the Wildlife of Sussex*. Rather than merely identifying specific sites that should be protected, the document proposes a vision for the sort of environment the Trust would like to see in Sussex in 2045. The targets in the document represent a view of what might reasonably be achieved to improve the quality of the environment and the quality of life for the next generation. They also represent a best guess at the nature and extent of each habitat which might be needed to conserve its biodiversity. The targets are presented both as a broadly-drawn vision for a habitat in 2045, and as more specific ten-year targets.

### ***A Biodiversity Action Plan for Sussex***

**A3.48** The purpose of a *Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)* is to focus resources to conserve and enhance biodiversity by means of local partnerships, taking account of both national priorities. The functions of BAPs are to:

- Ensure that national targets for species and habitats, as specified in the UK Action Plan, are translated into effective action locally.
- Identify targets for species and habitats appropriate to the local area, reflecting the values of people locally.
- Develop effective local partnerships to ensure that programmes for biodiversity conservation are maintained in the long-term.
- Raise awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation in a local context.
- Ensure opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of the whole biodiversity resource are fully considered and, if possible, enacted.
- Provide a basis for monitoring progress in biodiversity conservation, at both local and national levels.

**A3.49** The *Sussex Biodiversity Partnership* was set up in 1996 at the time the Sussex Wildlife Trust's visionary document was published. This ensured the formalising of existing working relationships and the setting of common agendas between organisations and individuals. Current partnership members include English Nature, the Environment Agency, West and East Sussex County Councils, the Sussex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Mid Sussex District Council is also a member of the Partnership. Affiliated members include the Country Landowners and Business Association, the national Farmers Union and Sussex Enterprise. The partnership maintains the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (BRC) as an information gathering and monitoring system essential to the drafting and execution of local biodiversity action planning.

**A3.50** The Partnership decided on a habitat-based approach that would also allow the phased production of plans. Species action plans are being produced where appropriate or necessary for species not fully covered under habitats. Each *Habitat Action Plan (HAP)* and *Species Action Plan (SAP)* will stand as separate documents within the context of the full Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan. The Biodiversity Action

Plan also contains details of many other programmes concerned with the management of biodiversity resources throughout Sussex.

*Habitat Action Plans* completed which are relevant to Mid Sussex District include :

*Lowland Heathland* (July 1998).  
*Reedbeds* (July 1998).  
*Floodplain Grassland* (June 1999).  
*Chalk Grassland* (April 2000).  
*Unimproved Neutral and Dry Acid Grassland* (July 2000).  
*Standing Fresh Waters* (September 2001).  
*Urban [People and Wildlife]* (October 2001).  
*Arable Land (including Field Margins)* (April 2002).  
*Mineral Sites* (March 2004).  
*Hedgerows* (June 2004).  
*Woodland* (September 2000).

*Species Action Plans* completed which are relevant to Mid Sussex District include :

*Otter* (June 2005).  
*Water Vole* (June 2005).  
*Black Poplar* (June 2005).

## Other groups and organisations

**A3.51** Many stakeholders are involved in environment activity which benefits landscape and biodiversity and the District Council works in partnership with many of them. Apart from the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the biodiversity partners mentioned above, other non-statutory partners may include the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Archaeological Trusts and town and village societies, the National Trust, the Woodland Trust, amenity and residents' associations and many more. Many of these organisations and groups are assisting in the process of landscape restoration and appreciation and nature conservation by providing information, taking action, and providing guidance on practical conservation management techniques.

**A3.52** Organisations with a particular connection with landscape include the **National Trust**, the registered charity which works to protect and conserve the countryside, coastline and buildings in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Important Trust properties in Mid Sussex include *Standen* and *Wakehurst Place*, both in the High Weald.

**A3.53** The **Woodland Trust** is the largest charity in the country concerned solely with the conservation of the woodland heritage of Britain. The trust acquires woods through purchase and as gifts including land upon which to create new woods. Its objectives are to provide free public access, to safeguard the place of woods in the local landscape and to manage them in the interests of wildlife and nature conservation.

## Farmers and landowners

**A3.54** Given the potential landscape and wildlife benefits of Environmental Stewardship, working with farmers, landowners and agents, particularly on the large country estates still common in West Sussex, continues to be of the greatest importance. The *Land Management Guidelines* sheets included in the Assessment will provide guidance for farmers and landowners. However, many farm holdings and land parcels are becoming more fragmented as new owners acquire smaller holdings. It will therefore be important to reach as many of these newer owners as

possible, to provide advice and guidance on good land management practices which benefit nature conservation and landscape character.

## 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

## Appendix 5

# CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOUTH DOWNS AND HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPES

### Evolving perceptions of the South Downs landscape

**A5.1** Over the years, the Sussex Downs have been the home and inspiration for a host of writers and artists. Their vision of the landscape has guided and expanded our collective perception of its qualities, helping us to see and understand it in new ways. In his books on the Sussex landscape, Peter Brandon provides a comprehensive view of the downs in literature and painting. He notes that the South Downs figured in literary and artistic imagination before the modern discovery of the landscape as an inspirational phenomenon at the turn of the Century. In his *Rural Rides* (1835) William Cobbett, ever the realist, was impressed by the productivity and sound management of the downs farmland and the relative prosperity of the labourers. The Sussex Downs inspired some of Cobbett's most vivid descriptive writing in which he combined a real passion for the scenery with an acute understanding of the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural production. Landowners and clergy wrote downland verse from the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards and the painter Copley Fielding in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century developed a personal vision on the Downs that ushered in new ways of thinking about landscape painting.

**A5.2** At the turn of the Century, a greatly deepened appreciation of the downland scene was firmly established in the nature writings of Richard Jeffries (anticipating the modern interpretation of landscape) and in W.H. Hudson's passionate evocation of the magical qualities of the downs in *Nature in Downland* (1899). The downs as a subject for modern poetry was taken up by two nationally-famous poets, Hilaire Belloc and Rudyard Kipling. Belloc lived in the western downs and celebrated its scenery and tranquillity. However, Kipling was the poet of the east, and the bare, flowing forms of the eastern downs are the quintessence of 'Kipling Country'. Peter Brandon writes:

*Kipling skilfully captures the essence of the intangible atmosphere of the Eastern Downs that has since been lost, such as the voice of the shepherd, the barking of his dog, the cries of the sheep, the far-off clamour of the sheep bells, jingling of harness, calls of the birds and the sound of the sea, in the absence of any mechanical noise whatsoever, something not to be heard any more and yet something so simple and familiar to downsmen since the very beginning of man's farming the Downs some six thousand year ago.*

**A5.3** The South Downs, and 'Sussex by the sea' as Kipling enshrined it, received the best press imaginable, this popularity persisting well into the 1920s and 1930s. The popular market was flooded with guidebooks and articles including E.V. Lucas' excellent and evocative *The Highways and Byways of Sussex* (1904) with powerful illustrations by Frederick L. Griggs and Arthur Beckett's *The Spirit of the Downs* (1909). Images of the South Downs became associated with summer holidays and escape from city life in an idealised picture-postcard landscape. Peter Brandon again:

*Although the Downs became part of writers' and artists' England, they tended to figure in the imagination as a snug retreat which put people out of sight and mind of the business lunch, the social scramble and the 'electric light' type of existence. They thus became a kind of 'never never' Kate Greenaway land of shepherds, tinkling sheep bells, country pubs and cricket on the village green, an England just out of reach which everyone longed to recapture but which they knew never existed in reality.*

**A5.4** Keen observers of this romantic and idealised view of the downs were quick to satirise, no more so than Stella Gibbons in her wicked parody *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932). The tale chronicles the introverted doings of the archetypal rural family of the Starkadders in their bleak, blighted farmhouse near Brighton, where 'something nasty' was seen by Aunt Ada Doom in the woodshed. In promoting her work as a hopeful author, the writer-narrator marks some of the 'finer passages' with one, two or three stars:

*\*\*Dawn crept over the Downs like a sinister white animal, followed by the snarling cries of a wind eating its way between the black boughs of the thorns.... The farm was crouched on a bleak hill-side, whence its fields, fanged with flints, dropped steeply to the village of Howling a mile away....*

**A5.5** Nevertheless, distinguished writers' and artists' colonies proliferated, notably at South Harting, Amberley, Storrington, Ditchling, Rottingdean, Charleston and Rodmell. In 1910 the *Sussex Daily News* reported that 36 artists listed as resident in Sussex exhibited their work at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. These artists created lasting visions of the Downs that have gained a permanent place in English literature and art. Artists were and continue to be inspired by the downs, from Copley Fielding onwards, the most famous early 20<sup>th</sup> Century practitioners including Philip Wilson Steer, Edward Burne-Jones, Eric Gill at Ditchling and the Bloomsbury Group of painters at Charleston.

**A5.6** Perhaps the most remarkable downland artist is Eric Ravilious (1903-42), a versatile painter, designer, engraver, ceramic maker and war artist who died at a young age in the Second World War. Taught by Paul Nash, Ravilious was a meticulous painter of the eastern downland. He brought to his Nash-like downland landscapes a sure grasp of the *design* of the landscape and used the simplest and barest of lines in combination with much complex but light hatching (the white of the paper showing through, like the chalk itself) to depict the graceful bulk of the empty landscape. These bleached watercolour washes made with a lightly-loaded brush (Ravilious did not use oils) are imbued with what Christopher Neve has called 'an irresistible dryness' that embodies the very dryness of the chalk itself. Moreover, the pictures capture perfectly the empty, muted downland landscape in the quiet light of a dull day, and the feelings of stillness and solitude that go with it. Ravilious paid his first visit to the eastern downs in 1934, taking a cottage called *Furlongs* from which he often painted afterwards. His paintings of the downland are not numerous (he also painted chalk landscapes elsewhere in southern England), amongst the most striking works the *Downs in Winter* (c.1934), *Waterwheel* (1934) and *The Wilmington Giant* (1939).

**A5.7** The landscape of the Sussex Downs continues to attract and inspire many artists. Of particular interest is the work of Carolyn Trant. Her drawings and prints of earthworks on the Sussex Downs reveal the layers of cultural history imprinted on the chalk. Her work depicts contemporary mountain-bike tracks alongside the ramparts of hillforts, uniting time and space in an historic continuum and emphasising that this is a landscape fashioned by centuries of human activities and that its future lies in human hands.

**A5.8** The last word is left with John Godfrey, reminding us that although no Lake District, the downs have much to offer:

*The landscape of the South Downs is essentially picturesque rather than sublime and perhaps for this reason occupies a special place in the affections of Englishmen today, as it has done in the past. Long may it continue to do so.*



## Evolving perceptions of the Wealden landscape

**A5.9** The definition of a specifically High Wealden cultural history is more difficult to pin down, suffering as it does in comparison with the rich artistic and literary connections associated with the escarpments, hills and jumbled heaths of the Wealden Greensand, notably the so-called Surrey Hills fringing the northern edge of West Sussex and the basin and escarpment country around Blackdown Hill in the north-western part of the County.

**A5.10** In the early travelogues, the landscape is less differentiated, 'The Weald' often treated as a whole – although the hilly High Weald is more often than not given its due as a place of some awe.. As Peter Brandon notes in his book *Kent and Sussex Weald* (2003), the few early travellers who penetrated the Weald had little admiration to bestow. Daniel Defoe wrote in his *Tour* (1724-26) that, after emptying his pockets in Tunbridge Wells ('a man without money is nobody at Tunbridge'), he came through the southern High Weald, shrewdly observing that it was '...the deepest, dirtiest, but in many ways the richest, and most profitable country in all that part of England'. Another writer who bestowed mixed blessings was the independently-minded William Cobbett, famous for his *Rural Rides* (1835) who, in the 1820s, had an intense relish for the 'heaths, the miry coppices, the wild woods and the forests of Sussex and Hampshire'. However, Cobbett could be praiseworthy and scathing in equal measure, his admiration for the heaths taking a dip in the High Weald:

*At East Grinstead, which is a rotten Borough and a very shabby place, you come to stiff loam in top with sand stone beneath. To the South of the place, the land is fine, and the vale on both sides a very beautiful intermixture of woodlands and cornfields and pasture. – At about three miles from Grinstead you come to a pretty village, called Forest-Row, and then, on the road to Uckfield, you cross Ashurst [Ashdown] Forest, which is a heath, with here and there a few birch scrubs upon it, verily the most villainously ugly spot I saw in England....*

**A5.11** And yet, here he is writing about the Turners Hill area, accurate, observant and appreciative of the sandrock features which were apparently more prominent in the landscape in his day (he was greatly impressed by the perched 'Big on Little' rock at West Hoathly):

*The country that I have come over to-day is a very pretty one. The soil is a pale yellow loam, looking like brick earth, but rather sandy; but the bottom is a softish stone. Now-and-then, where you go through hollow ways (as at East Grinstead) the sides are solid rock. And, indeed, the rocks sometimes (on the sides of hills) show themselves above ground, and, mixed amongst the woods, make very interesting objects. On the road from the Wen [London] to Brighton... which goes through Lindfield... there is a long chain of rocks, or, rather, rocky hills, with trees growing amongst the rocks, or, apparently, out of them.... The country has no flat spot in it, yet the hills are not high. My road was a gentle rise or a gentle descent all the way. Continual new views strike the eye; but there is little variety in them: all is pretty but nothing strikingly beautiful.*

**A5.12** The appreciation of the more subtle charms of the Weald took a long time to mature, the area by-passed for the inspiring and sublime spectacle of nature in upland Britain beloved of the Romantic poets and artists. However, with the advent of the railway era, the region rapidly became better known by a mass audience, increasingly liked for its domesticity and subtlety but also for the touch of 'wilderness' in the rocky gills and mysterious uplands of the High Weald and in the graceful escarpments of the Surrey hills. If Cobbett compared Ashdown Forest (unfavourably) with the wilds of Nova Scotia and the High Weald around East Grinstead with the scarified rock of the Blue Mountains of America, modern commentators such as Vaughan Cornish were now talking about the *grandeur* of the area:

*The ordinary traveller from London to Brighton by the express train is probably entirely unaware that he passes through some of the wildest and most beautiful country in the three kingdoms; he may, particularly about the Balcombe station, get glimpses of almost unrivalled forest scenery which remind him strongly of the run into Namur through the Ardennes... within thirty five miles of London you get a country as primitive and almost as lonely as that of the Adirondack [the Adirondack Mountains in up-state New York].*

**A5.13** The benchmark of Italian scenery prompted by the Grand Tour meant that the Weald (including the Downs) was compared with it, and increasingly favourably. This appreciation was augmented from a by a growing love for heathland, no longer the 'villainously ugly' landscapes of earlier writers, who saw them as unruly places, peopled by lawless souls. John Ruskin and young artists such as Birket Foster and Helen Allingham had a preference for these wilder landscapes, particularly the Surrey hills and Wealden heaths, echoing the earlier in interest in the Weald shown by J. W. Turner, Samuel Palmer and John Linnell. However, throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries the remaining heathlands and forest pasture continued to decline in area, due to continuing agricultural improvement, reduced grazing and re-forestation, for instance, through the seeding of Scots pine originally planted in clumps from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century onwards for ornament and game conservation. Part of this growing appreciation of 'pine country' went hand in hand with the 'London into Sussex' exodus, the Wealden hills becoming a highly prized location for large houses in grounds from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and well into the Twentieth.

**A5.14** The appreciation of Wealden vernacular architecture also took root in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the sturdy Wealden medieval and post-medieval timber-framed manors, farms and houses serving as an inspiration for new architecture based on the re-discovery of the older models. Although the Victorian taste for the Gothic swept the area, by the turn of the Century, there had developed a sound appreciation of the proportion, balance and graceful simplicity of half-timbered and stone-built houses. The members of the William Morris group in particular were fascinated with Wealden vernacular architecture (Philip Webb built *Standen* near East Grinstead) and re-interpreted traditional styles common between the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The eminent country house Architect Edward Lutyens also built in numerous Wealden locations.

#### References

**A5.15** The materials below (also listed as background documents in **Appendix 7**) have been used to compile the Appendix: all are recommended as fascinating introductory sources of information about – and insight into – the history and perceptions of two of the finest landscapes in southern England.

Patricia R. Andrew **Eric Ravilious 1903-42** [*A re-assessment of his Life and Work*] Towner Art Gallery, Department of Tourism and Leisure, Eastbourne Borough Council (1986).

Helen Binyon **Eric Ravilious** [*Memoir of an Artist*] Lutterworth Press, Cambridge (1983).

Peer Brandon **The Sussex Landscape** *The Making of the English Landscape Series* Hodder and Stoughton, London (1974).

Peter Brandon **The Kent and Sussex Weald** Phillimore, Chichester (1993).

Peter Brandon **The South Downs** Phillimore, Chichester (1998).

William Cobbett **Rural Rides** (1835). 'A New Edition with Notes by James Paul Cobbett'. A. Cobbett, London (1853).

Countryside Commission **The High Weald: Exploring the Landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (1994).

Countryside Commission and the Sussex Downs Conservation Board **The Landscape of the Sussex Downs** (1996).

Daniel Defoe **A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain** (1724-26). Seven further distinct editions to 1778. Abridged and edited with an Introduction by P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens. Picture research by A.J. Coulson. Yale University Press, London (199).

John Godfrey **The History of the South Downs** Downs Country Publications, Stedham (1995).

Stella Gibbons **Cold Comfort Farm** Longman (1932). Penguin Books Edition (1938).

W.H. Hudson **Nature in Downland** Longman (1899).

Marcus B. Huish and Helen Allingham **Happy England** Adam and Charles Black, London (1903). Reprinted as a facsimile by Selecta Books (Select Editions), Devizes (2004).

E.V. Lucas **Highways and Byways in Sussex** Illustrated by Frederick L. Griggs. MacMillan, London (1904). Revised, Second Edition (1935).

Christopher Neve 'White. The Chalk Landscape: Eric Ravilious and Lightheartedness' in **Unquiet Landscape** [Places and Ideas in 20<sup>th</sup> Century English Painting] Faber and Faber, London (1990) pp.14-22.

Christopher Neve 'Black. F.L. Griggs: Lost England' in **Unquiet Landscape** [Places and Ideas in 20<sup>th</sup> Century English Painting] Faber and Faber, London (1990) pp.23-27.

West Sussex County Council **West Sussex Literary, Artistic and Musical Links** (1993). Fold-out pamphlet.

## Appendix 6

# INDICATIVE TREE PLANTING GUIDE

## TREE AND SHRUB PLANTING SPECIES NATIVE TO MID SUSSEX

**A6.1** The native tree and shrub species listed below are recommended for use by those preparing planting schemes in the District area. Some non-native species – many of which have been a part of the Mid Sussex landscape for centuries - are also included. These recommendations accord with planning and land management policies and practices concerning landscape restoration and biodiversity adopted by the County and District Councils. The planting mixes follow the main soil types and are related to individual Landscape Character Areas. The list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. It can act only as a guide since the circumstances of each planting site will vary.

Table A5.1 **SPECIES SUITABLE FOR USE ON TYPICAL SOILS OF THE WEALD CLAY AND WEALD CLAY SANDSTONES**

The whole or parts of Landscape Character Areas 3 (Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes); Area 4 (Hickstead Low Weald); and Area 5 (Upper Adur Valley).

Common name	Scientific name	Comment
<b>Dominant tree species</b>		
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	The balance between oak and ash will vary with oak more common on heavy soils and ash on drier soils.
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
<b>Other tree species</b>		
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Often a colonising tree that will give way in time to more dominant species.
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	More common on heavy soils.
Spindle tree	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Widespread but at very low density.
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	
Gean or wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Widespread but at very low density.
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	
Wild service tree	<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Widespread but at very low density. Ancient woodland indicator species – do not plant in existing woodland without consulting Sussex Wildlife Trust.
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Poisonous to livestock so planting locations must be chosen with care.
Small-leaved lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Widespread but at very low density. Ancient woodland indicator species – do not plant in existing woodland without consulting Sussex Wildlife Trust.
<b>Shrubs and understorey</b>		
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	

Table A5.2 **SPECIES SUITABLE FOR USE ON DRIER, SANDIER SOILS**

The whole or parts of Landscape Character Areas 3 (Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes); Area 6 (High Weald); Area 7 (High Weald Plateau); Area 8 (Worth Forest); Area 9 (Ouse Valley) and Area 10 (High Weald Fringes). The drier, sandier soils of the Folkestone Sands, Lower Greensand Tunbridge Wells Series.

Common name	Scientific name	Comment
<b>Trees</b>		
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Locally dominant.
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Locally dominant – more common as a planted tree.
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Locally common – mainly on acidic soils.
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	
<b>Shrubs</b>		
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Locally common – mainly on acidic soils.
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Locally common – mainly on acidic soils.

Table A5.3 **SPECIES SUITABLE FOR USE ON WET, HEAVY SOILS**

Parts of the Gault Clay of Landscape Character Area 3 (Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes); and parts of Area 4 (Hickstead Low Weald) and Area 5 (Upper Adur Valley); and localised clays in Area 6 (High Weald); Area 7 (High Weald Plateau); Area 9 (Ouse Valley); and Area 10 (High Weald Fringes).

Common name	Scientific name	Comment
<b>Trees</b>		
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	More dominant.
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	More dominant.
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	Locally common.
<b>Shrubs</b>		
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	More common.
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Locally dominant in suckering thickets.
Grey willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Locally common.

Table A5.4 **SPECIES SUITABLE FOR USE ON WET AND WATERLOGGED SITES (FLOODPLAINS AND VALLEY BOTTOMS)**

Parts of Area 4 (Hickstead Low Weald); Area 5 (Upper Adur Valley); and parts of Area 9 (Ouse Valley).

Common name	Scientific name	Comment
<b>Trees</b>		
Common alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alongside streams and rivers.
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Locally common – more frequent than <i>Betula pendula</i> .
Downy black poplar	<i>Populus nigra</i> var. <i>betulifolia</i>	Characteristic of river valleys.
White willow	<i>Salix alba</i>	Locally common, particularly in association with ponds, rivers and streams.
Crack willow	<i>Salix fragilis</i>	Less common than <i>Salix alba</i> and generally confined to the waterside.
<b>Shrubs</b>		
Grey willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Locally common.



Table A5.5 **SPECIES SUITABLE FOR USE ON CHALK SOILS**

Landscape Character Areas 1 (Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs) and Area 2 (Fulking to Clayton Scarp).

Common name	Scientific name	Comment
<b>Dominant tree species</b>		
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	The balance between oak and ash will vary with oak more common on heavy soils and ash on drier soils.
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Often occurs as a single-species plantation.
<i>Other tree species</i>		
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	More common on heavy soils.
Spindle tree	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Occurs more frequently on chalk than on other soils in the District.
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	
Gean or wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Widespread but at very low density.
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	
Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus aria</i>	More common than rowan, particularly on thin chalk soils.
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Poisonous to livestock so planting locations must be chosen with care.
Small-leaved lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Widespread but at very low density. Ancient woodland indicator species – do not plant in existing woodland without consulting Sussex Wildlife Trust.
<b>Shrubs and understorey</b>		
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Often the dominant cover in exposed areas with thin soils.
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	
Wayfaring tree	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	

Table A5.6 **SPECIES SUITABLE FOR USE IN HEDGEROWS**

Common name	Scientific name	Comment
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Minor species but high percentages locally and is widespread.
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Minor species but widespread. Locally used as dominant or single species.
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Usually used in very low numbers.
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Widespread and should be used in most new mixed-species hedgerows, in modest numbers.
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Often the dominant species – between 40% and 95% of mix.
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	More typically associated with parks and gardens. Locally used as dominant or single species.
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Widespread and should be used in most new mixed-species hedgerows, in modest numbers. Locally used as dominant or single species.
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Can be invasive through suckering.
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Usually used in very low numbers.
<b>Standard trees in hedges</b>		
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Normally associated with boundary hedges to parks and gardens.
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
Gean or wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Most common hedgerow tree in the District.
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	

Table A5.7 **SPECIES NON-NATIVE TREES COMMONLY FOUND IN THE DISTRICT**

Common name	Scientific name	Comment
Austrian and Corsican pines	<i>Pinus nigra</i> vars.	Locally common as screen planting or specimen.
Sweet chestnut	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Naturalised species widely used for coppice plantations and as occasional specimens.
Horse chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Common around villages and towns
Evergreen oak	<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm or holly oak. Common around villages and towns
Common walnut	<i>Juglans regia</i>	Occasional specimens around farms and villages.

## Appendix 7

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

**A7.1** This Appendix lists all the documents and materials quoted or referred to in the Assessment, revealing the extensive volume of material now available from Government and other sources concerning planning, the environment, landscape and biodiversity at national, regional, county and local levels. The list also contains a selection of local books, studies and materials which were consulted, and which may be of direct interest to those readers wishing to find out more about the landscape of Mid Sussex District and its setting in the wider Weald of the South East.

#### PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT: NATIONAL POLICY AND RESEARCH

##### *Acts of Parliament*

HM Government **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.**

HM Government **Environmental Protection Act 1990.**

HM Government **Environment Act 1995.**

HM Government **Hedgerow Regulations 1997.**

HM Government **Local Government Act 2000.**

HM Government **Countryside and Rights of Way [CROW] Act 2000.**

HM Government **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

##### *Government Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Statements (PPSs)*

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HM Government **PPG 7: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development** (1997).

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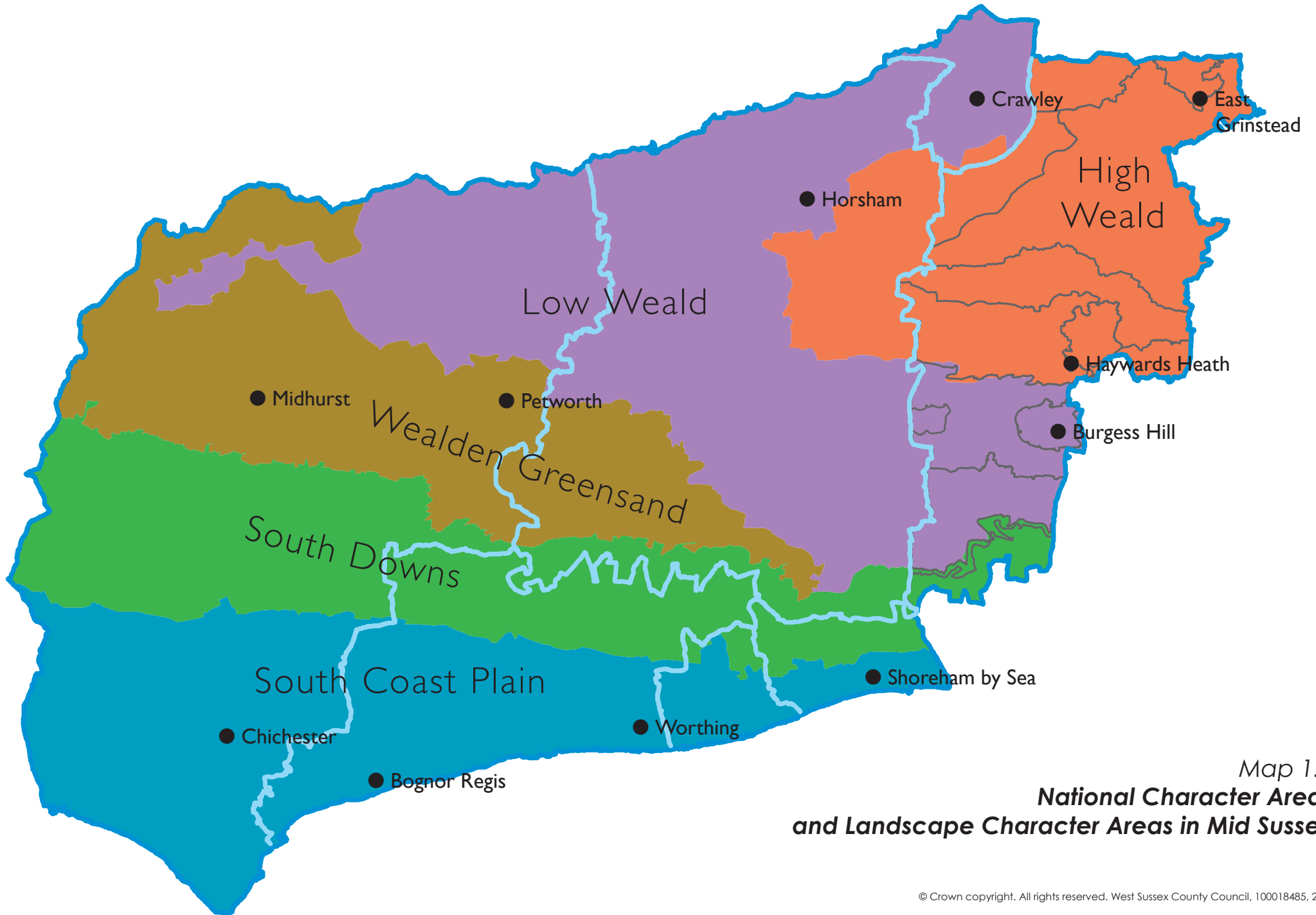
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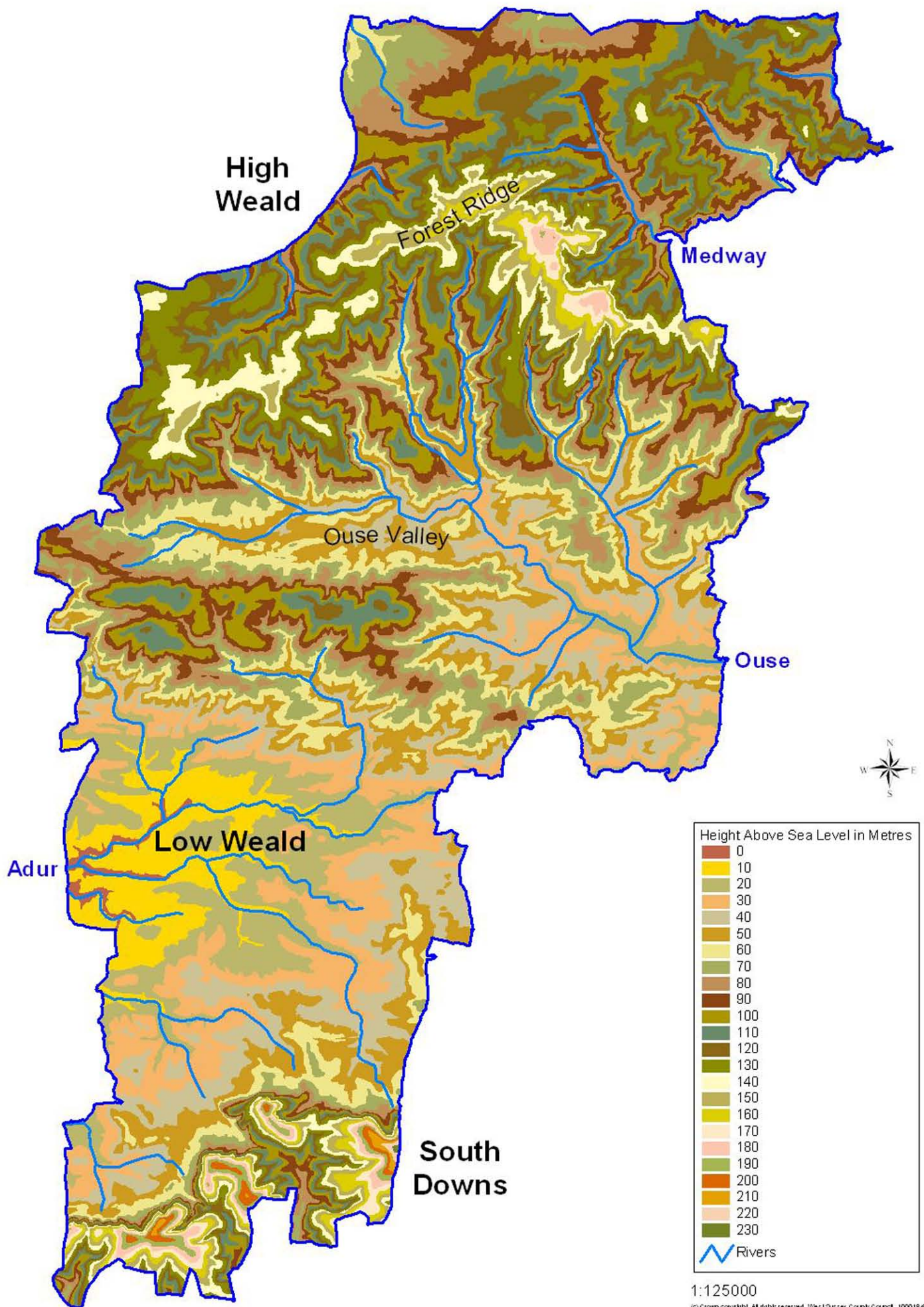
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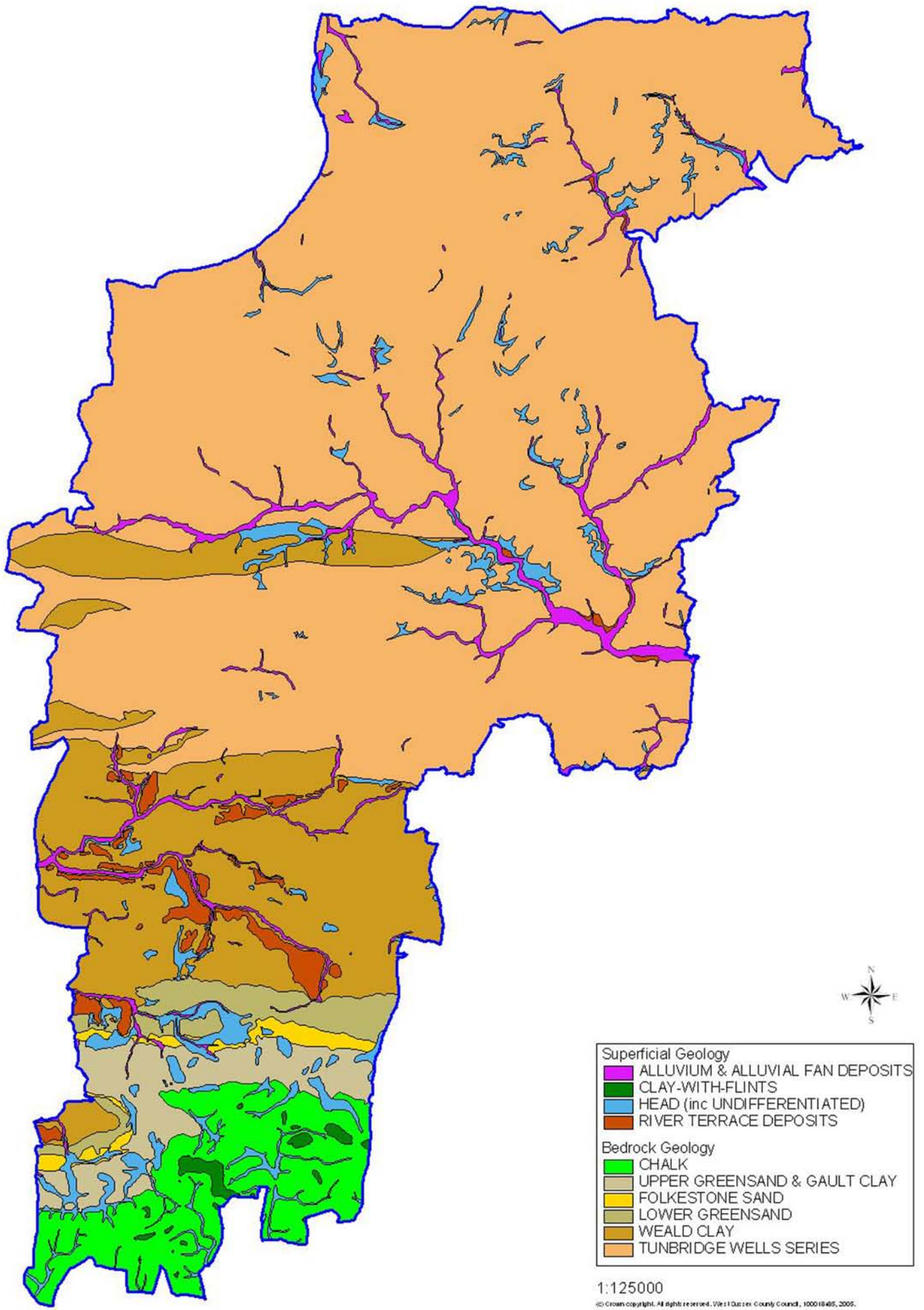
Map 1.1  
**National Character Areas  
 and Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex**





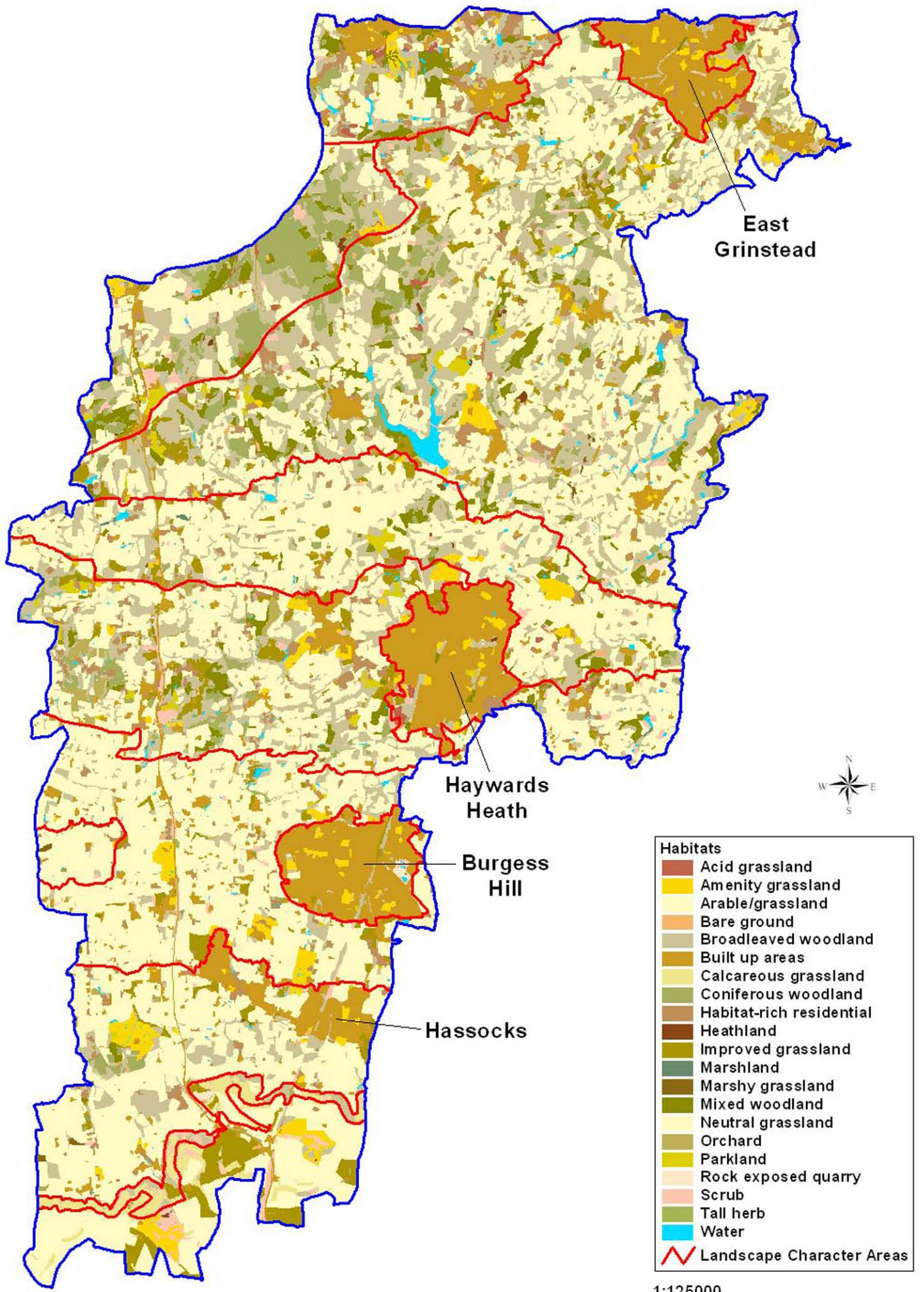
Map 2.1 *Topography of Mid Sussex*



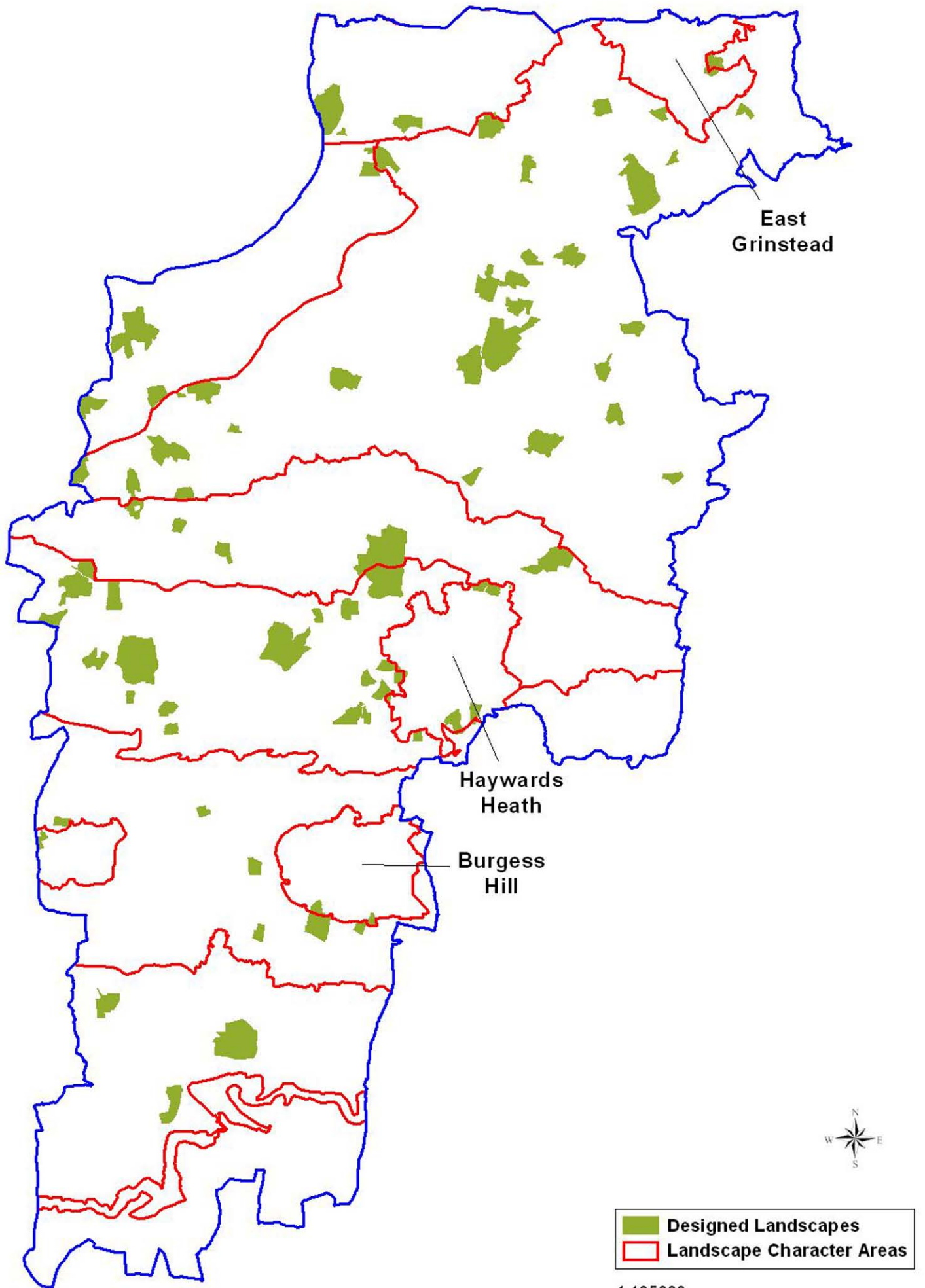


Map 2.2 **Simplified Geology of Mid Sussex**





Map 2.3 *Principal Habitats of Mid Sussex*

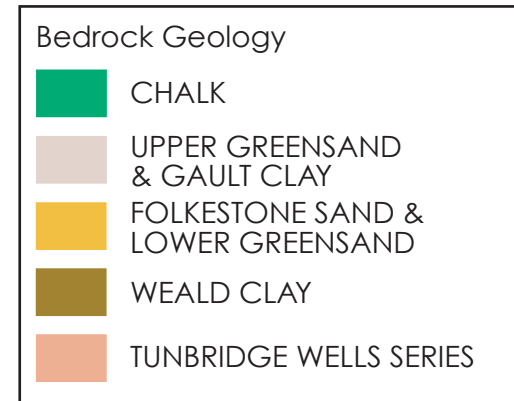
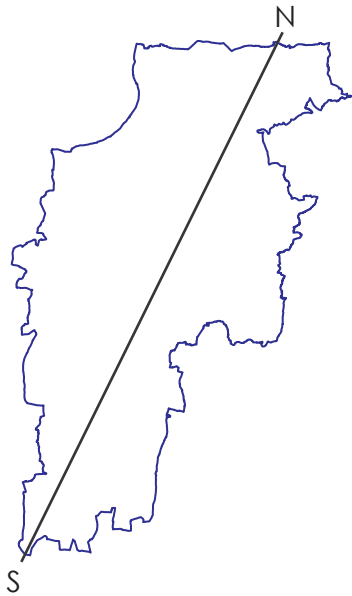
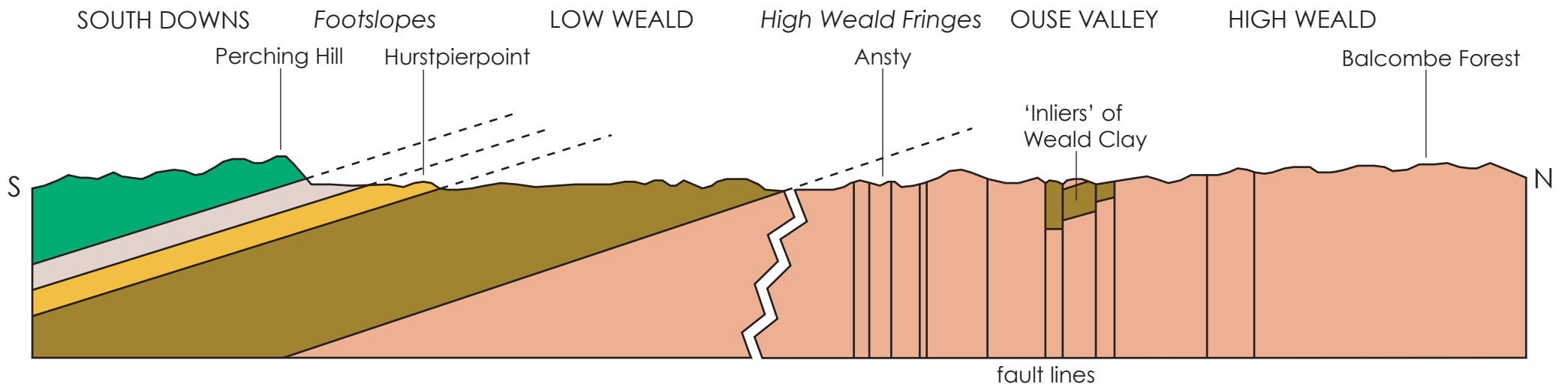


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Map 2.4 *Designed Landscapes of Mid Sussex*





This is a generalised cross-section and is not to scale

Figure 2.1 **Geological Section across Mid Sussex**