

An aerial photograph of a lush, green landscape in West Sussex. The image shows rolling hills, valleys, and fields, with some trees and small buildings visible. The lighting suggests a bright day, with shadows cast across the terrain.

West Sussex
County Council

A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape

October 2005

An aerial photograph of a vast, rolling landscape in West Sussex. The terrain is covered in lush green fields, with some areas showing signs of agricultural activity like ploughing or planting. The hills are gently sloping and undulating, creating a sense of depth and scale. The sky is overcast, with soft, diffused light illuminating the scene. The overall tone is natural and serene, emphasizing the beauty of the countryside.

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Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by West Sussex County Council in association with the consultants Chris Blandford Associates and the partners in the *Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme*. Thanks are due to the consultants and to the partner authorities for their assistance in compiling this report:

Adur District Council
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Worthing Borough Council
Chichester Harbour Conservancy
High Weald AONB Unit
Sussex Downs Conservation Board

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Foreword

The quality and diversity of the West Sussex landscape is one of the County's greatest assets. In drafting this Strategy as part of the work of the Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme, the County Council acknowledges this. The enhancement and protection of character and sense of place is identified as a priority aim in the Strategy and is the subject of appropriate policies in the County Structure Plan.

The landscape is going through a period of considerable change due to climatic, economic and other pressures. It is therefore important that the County Council have a clear vision to guide effort designed to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape. Partnership working will be vitally important. The County Council commends the Strategy as a framework for guiding co-ordinated action in West Sussex in years to come.

The Strategy was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholder interests. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who contributed, including the local authority and AONB partners within the Partnership Programme.



*Mrs Louise Goldsmith
Cabinet Member for
Environment and Economy*



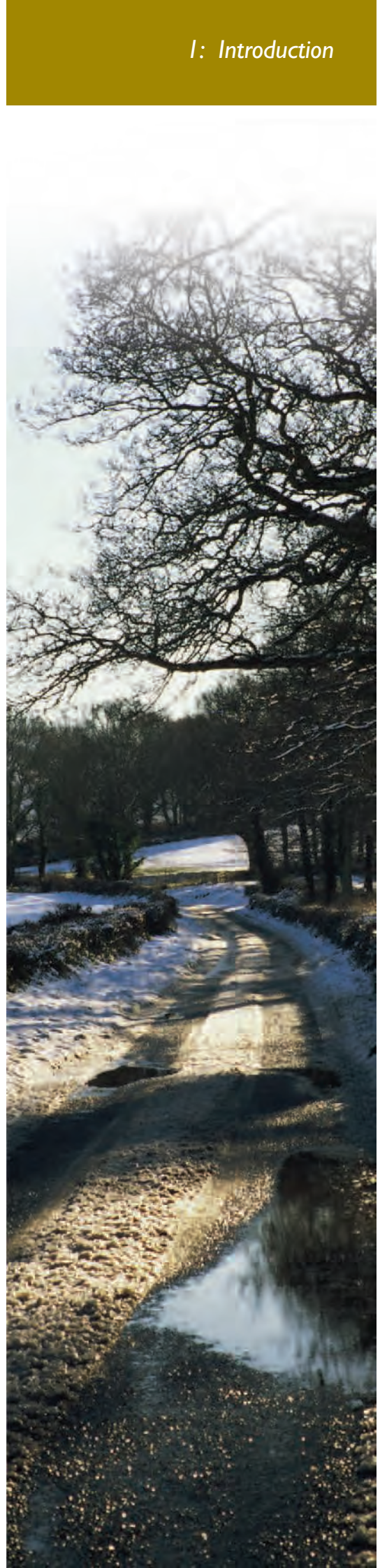
*Mr Frank Wilkinson
Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning*



The South Downs at Beacon Hill, Elsted

INTRODUCTION

This section sets out the background to the Strategy, outlines its purpose and explains how the Strategy works. It refers to the Appendices which contain more detailed information about the content and development of the Strategy itself.



Background

1.1 The Landscape Character Assessment upon which the Strategy is based was carried out for West Sussex County Council by Chris Blandford Associates (CBA), being a revision of the *Landscape Assessment of West Sussex* (1995). The Landscape Character Assessment and *Land Management Guidelines* for individual Landscape Character Areas will be published separately. The County Council also recognises the importance of working jointly with partners to produce new, localised landscape character assessments for the Borough, District and AONB areas. In participating in such work, the County Council is spearheading a consistent approach at strategic and local levels.

1.2 The Landscape Strategy is part of the work of the *Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme* being carried out by the County Council and its partners. The five-year programme (2003-08) aims for higher quality development and land management practices which respect the character and environment of the County. Implementing the Landscape Strategy is one of a number of tools to help achieve this.

1.3 The information collected in the programme will be used to produce guidance for planners, developers, landowners and communities. It will help to build character into the heart of development and land management decisions. It will also be used to raise awareness of the value of the diverse landscapes of the County and assist communities to relate to a sense of place.

Purpose of the Strategy

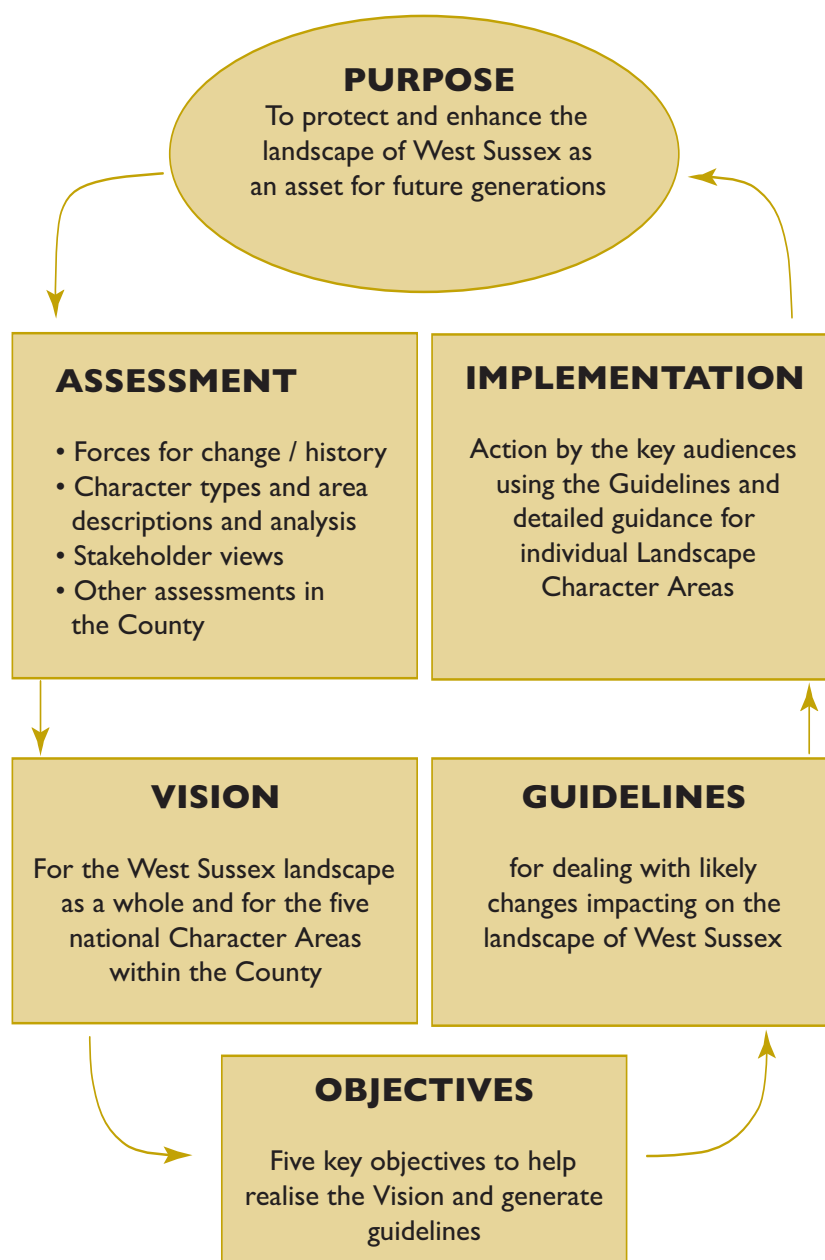
1.4 The distinctive character of our surroundings has a fundamental impact on our quality of life. Identifying, protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and cultural elements that contribute to character are key activities contributing to sustainability. Part of sustainable planning and land management 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.

1.5 If the landscape were unchanging, we would not need a Strategy to protect it. Today, we imbue the landscape with a history and an emotional and cultural significance which reaches back to the turn of the nineteenth 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 purpose of the Strategy is therefore to protect and enhance the landscape of West Sussex as an asset for future generations.

How the Strategy works

1.6 Figure 1.1 illustrates the purpose of the Strategy, what it consists of, and how will it be put into practice. Based on the Landscape Character Assessment, the Strategy begins with a fifty-year vision for the County as a whole, supported by more detailed visions for the five national Character Areas within West Sussex. Five key Strategy objectives follow which, if achieved, will realise the visions. In turn, the objectives will be achieved through the implementation of County-wide guidance for planning and land management purposes to be used by key audiences.

Figure 1.1 HOW THE STRATEGY WORKS

Appendices

1.7 The Appendices contain background information. *Appendix 1* contains national and regional policy background and refers to the relevant policies of the County Council. *Appendix 2* describes the process of developing the Strategy. *Appendix 3* describes the national Character Areas defined by the Countryside Agency and English Nature and used in the Strategy. *Appendix 4* describes forces for change in the landscape, all of which will have implications for policy and action. *Appendix 5* contains details of partnerships and action whilst *Appendix 6* lists the partners and stakeholders involved in carrying out the Assessment and formulating the Strategy. Finally, *Appendix 7* lists the background documents used in the compilation of the Strategy.



Horse rider and walkers on the South Downs

A LANDSCAPE VISION

What kind of landscapes do we want to see in West Sussex in fifty years' time? Whilst this seems a long way off, it is important to try and envisage this now to help identify priorities for the protection and enhancement of landscape and its diversity. The County Council believes that, without a vision and action to counter adverse change, the West Sussex landscape is likely to succumb to a multitude of pressures.

The visions presented here include one for the County as a whole and more detailed ones for each of the five national Character Areas.

Appendix 3 describes how the national Character Areas were derived and what significance they have for the organisation of the Assessment and the Strategy.

The Strategy takes them as a starting point for local visions, and to underpin the overall vision for the County.



Developing a landscape vision for the County

2.1 What makes West Sussex different from the counties surrounding it and from all of the other counties in the South East Region? There are many similarities between West Sussex and its neighbours, not least the wooded Greensand hills of the north west shared with Surrey; the glorious South Downs running into Hampshire and East Sussex; the characteristic Low and High Weald landscapes which comprise much of East Sussex, Surrey and a bulky portion of Kent; and the low South Coast Plain running from Brighton to the harbours of Portsmouth.

2.2 However, West Sussex is notable not so much for the number of nationally characteristic areas within it (one or two counties of comparable size have more) but for their intimate alignment and association as a series of parallel zones; the bold relationship between geology, landform and vegetation; and the sheer variation and contrast within the landscape, mile-for-mile.

2.3 As a part of the Weald (the great woodland of the past), large parts of which were scarcely settled in Domesday times, West Sussex shares the rich legacy of medieval and post-medieval landscapes which characterise this part of the region. This richness is scarcely paralleled elsewhere in England, even in areas which have experienced less pressure for development. It is therefore important to remember that this busy region has some of the best historic landscapes, many in West Sussex.

2.4 West Sussex is the second most wooded English county after Surrey. It has a rich legacy of remnant ancient woodland and extremely varied woodland landscapes. These include the deep ghyll woodlands of the High Weald; the remnant thick woodland belts between fields in the Low Weald (shaws); the downland plantations and woods hanging on the steep downland edge; and the newer woodlands developed over the acidic soils of the Greensand hills.

2.5 The settlement pattern of the County is also a strong defining characteristic (with most of the population living in towns and villages). It is a network of small to medium-sized towns, villages and hamlets. This pattern varies significantly only around Crawley (a post-war New Town developed around a medieval core), Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill (essentially twentieth century railway towns) and along the coast, where the main towns were developed in the Victorian era as resorts. The local authorities have sought for decades to preserve the character of the settlement pattern by applying strong strategic gap policies.

2.6 For the larger buildings, building stone has often been imported. However, when built from stone, the domestic architecture of West Sussex uses a wide variety of local types, parts of the west of the County qualifying as predominantly stone-built areas. The County also has a unique legacy of local brick and tile-making and use.

2.7 Building on the diverse character and qualities of the landscape that are widely cherished today, a long-term Vision for the future of the West Sussex landscape is proposed.



A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPE OF WEST SUSSEX

Throughout the County, *character and local distinctiveness* are recognised, valued and celebrated by those who live and work in (and visit) West Sussex.

The *diverse character* of the landscapes of the County is nurtured, conserved and enhanced as part of a thriving economy. A strong sense of place is evident.

***Change is accommodated* in ways which reinforce and restore character - and facilitate the creation of appropriate new and valued landscapes - in the County as a whole and in each Landscape Character Area.**

The *characteristic settlement pattern* of small- to medium-sized towns, villages and hamlets persists through careful measures to protect it.

All *new development* is of good quality, well-designed, and at varying densities which fit sympathetically with the differing character of localities.

In *urban fringe areas*, the landscape is a valued and positive zone which combines a distinctive landscape character with well-managed land uses for the benefit of residents and visitors.

***Land owners and managers* are working with others to achieve continuous landscape renewal and re-creation as part and parcel of their land use activities.**

The *rich diversity of wildlife habitats* and the national heritage of woodlands, trees and hedges which make the County so special are being conserved, extended and enhanced.

The *protection and conservation of historic landscape features* and archaeological sites continues. Well-managed historic landscapes provide continuity with the past.

There is a *high degree of accessibility* to the countryside, which is enjoyed by all social groups.

VISIONS FOR THE FIVE NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS

South Coast Plain

2.8 The generally flat South Coast Plain within West Sussex is highly distinctive, without a cliffline, unlike the adjoining coastline of East Sussex to the east, where the chalk downs form high, white coastal cliffs. However, to the west, the County coastline of substantial inlets and creeks centred on the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is continuous with the deep inlets and bays behind Hayling Island and encircling the City of Portsmouth. The turn-of-the-century resorts and other holiday destinations of the West Sussex coast are part of its historic character – “Sussex by the Sea” – although the coast has its quieter aspects, at Pagham Harbour and within Chichester Harbour (renowned for their wildlife), in parts of the Manhood peninsula, and between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

2.9 An ancient, low straight cliffline lies inland, under the rising downland, the latter providing a bright, dramatic backdrop to the coastal scene. The spire of Chichester Cathedral is a major landmark from land and sea. The equable and sunny climate of the Plain, combined with high grade farmland, supports valuable agriculture and horticulture. Long an activity to the west, gravel extraction has left its mark.



Groynes along the shingle beaches of the West Sussex coastline

A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUTH COAST PLAIN

High quality new development is well-integrated with existing towns and the wider landscape.

The urban fringe combines a distinctive landscape character (including a combination of open spaces, woodlands, and hedgerows) with well-managed land uses which benefit residents and visitors in town and country alike.

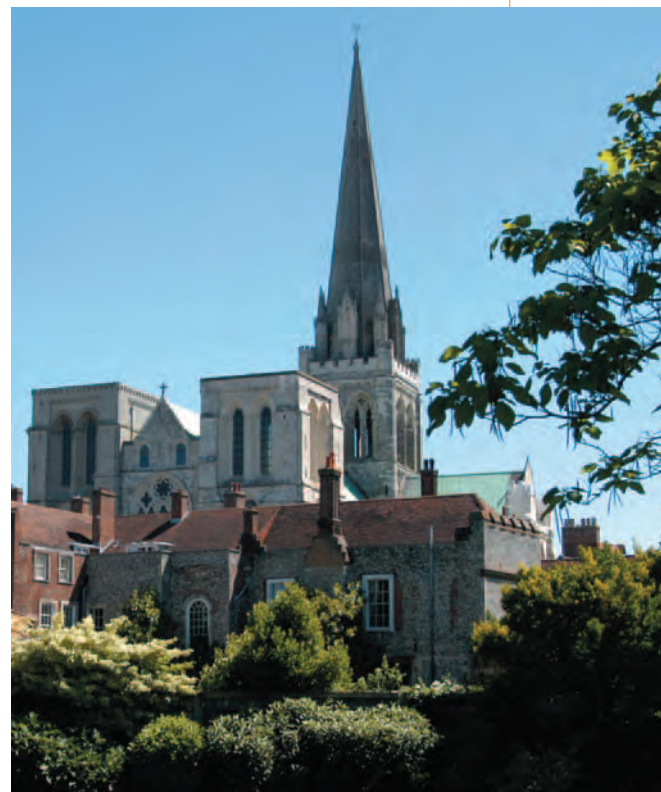
A strong network of woodlands and hedgerows forms green corridors within the gaps between the coastal towns, providing informal recreational opportunities and helping to connect the towns and their residents with the wider landscape.

Productive farmland and permitted horticultural uses are set within a strong landscape framework of woodlands, shelterbelts and hedgerows. Agriculture adopts sympathetic farming and land management methods, contributing to landscape renewal and biodiversity, including conserving wetlands and pastureland.

Extensive new areas of mudflats, salt marsh and coastal grazing marsh are established within coastal inlets, as an important part of coastal retreat schemes.

The historic and inspiring long views so characteristic of the Coastal Plain, to Chichester Cathedral and its downland backdrop, to other church towers and spires, to Arundel and its castle and cathedral, and from the coast to the downs, are maintained.

The local distinctiveness of villages and their settings continues to be evident, with a return to the greater availability and use of traditional local materials.



Chichester Cathedral

South Downs

2.10 Designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the famous, open landscape of the South Downs is celebrated for its history, much beloved by numerous writers, notably Hilaire Belloc, who did much to popularise the downland and the history of its people, not least the downland shepherds of old. The South Downs is a long, thin ridge composed of the chalk which millions of years ago covered much of the South East. Together with the North Downs, the chalk downland forms the rim of the wooded Weald. The steep edge of the chalk, open and grassy to the east, wooded to the west, faces northward into the Weald and forms the most dramatic scenery in the County.

2.11 To the south of the downland edge, the rolling downland - mainly open fields but with some extensive forest and woodland - slopes gently to the Coastal Plain, cut through dramatically by the Rivers Adur and Arun draining out of the Weald. The South Downs has long been highly valued for its beautiful scenery and the varied opportunities it offers for outdoor recreation, including the long-distance South Downs Way. The once common herb-rich downland grass habitats are now relatively rare. However, English Nature and its partners intend that more of these habitats be conserved – and their area increased – as part of a vigorous programme of biodiversity action planning.



Wooded western downland near South Harting

A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUTH DOWNS

The *setting* of the South Downs and the long views from the downland edge northwards continue to remain unaffected by landscape loss and visible major new development.

Where down meets town to the south, the *setting* of the South Downs remains unaffected by new development, and the character of the landscape fringing the coastal towns is strengthened by screening woodland, scrub and tree cover.

Areas presently noted for their *tranquillity* are surviving, because the intrusive effects of noise, light, power lines, telecommunications masts and transport infrastructure have been minimised.

The landscape is managed as a *major resource for informal recreation*, but without loss of tranquillity.

Highly distinctive features of the chalk downland, such as old, species-rich chalk grassland, woodland hangers on steep ground, historic parklands, deserted or shrunken medieval settlements (lost villages), hill forts, burial mounds and other historic and archaeological monuments and their settings, continue to be protected and are being conserved.

Extensive new areas of chalk grassland, particularly on the upper and steeper slopes of the Downs, are managed by sheep grazing.

Arable fields are framed with wide chalk grassland and arable weed margins. The current tendency to soil erosion has been reversed.



Chanctonbury Ring

Wealden Greensand

2.12 A large proportion of the Greensand hills in the Weald is included in the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The hills parallel the downland chalk and fill out the north-western sector of West Sussex. Comprised of a mixture of sands, clays and hard sandstones, these hills and the narrow vales and basins between them offer a strong contrast to the strong, simple landform of the high downland. They present a complex landscape, both as a series of successive edges of varying heights and lengths, and in respect of the system of streams and rivers which drain them, many of which cut across the grain of the land in small, deep gorges. The legacy of the early iron industry, based on sandstone, iron ore, water and timber, has left extensive areas of coppice woodland, and hammer ponds which once provided water power. The land use and vegetation of these hills also contrasts with the chalk, an intricate blend of large, open arable fields, small, enclosed pastures, much woodland including coppices and plantations of conifers, wooded streams, and remnant lowland heaths.

2.13 Lowland heath was widespread in this area in the last century because grazing kept the ground clear of trees and scrub. Today, little is left, the rest covered with invasive and planted woodland, particularly on the sandier, undulating areas stretching in a clear line from Rogate in the west to the River Arun around Storrington and Washington in the east. As with herb-rich downland grass habitats, English Nature and its partners intend that more of these habitats be conserved – and their area increased – as part of a vigorous programme of biodiversity action planning.

2.14 The Weald reaches its highest point in this area at just under 1000 feet at Blackdown Hill near Haslemere. From this lofty vantage point, the views across the Weald to the South Downs and into eastern Hampshire are inspiring, the vistas barely interrupted by evidence of development. Virtually all the historic building in the area is domestic in scale, with a widespread and varied use of local stone, varying between the intensely white Buriton stone, the blue, hard cherts of Amberley, purple ironstones, and a suite of very locally varied sandstones, some honeyed in colour.



Hedgerow oaks near Petworth

A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPE OF THE WEALDEN GREENSAND

The *characteristic mixture* of enclosing woodland and farmland is being maintained and strengthened.

***Distinctive characteristics* such as sunken lanes and woodland hangers on steep ground are retained, remnant heathlands are protected and extended, and parkland is conserved and managed. New development is of high quality, well integrated with, and sitting comfortably within, existing towns and the wider landscape.**

***Long views* from the higher ground (particularly from Blackdown Hill) which presently convey a sense of tranquillity are uncompromised by visible major new development.**

The *local distinctiveness* of villages and their settings is evident, with a return to the greater availability and use of traditional local materials.

***Mineral extraction* sites are assimilated into the landscape and worked out sites are restored to locally characteristic habitats and land uses.**



Woolbeding Common near Midhurst

Low Weald

2.15 Beyond the chalk and Greensand lies the Low Weald, a large stretch of secluded lowland countryside occupying the central portion of the County. It comprises gently undulating clay vales drained by the extensive network of lightly incised, wooded streams feeding the Rivers Arun and Adur, only rising to low hill country in the prominent clay ridge between Rudgwick, Charlwood in Surrey, and Crawley. The typical landscape is an intimate patchwork of fields enclosed by an intricate mix of small woodlands, shaws and hedgerows. Topography and soils vary locally over the clay and the higher, drier sandstone beds. Typically, the Low Weald includes many ponds and small stream valleys often with wet woodlands of alder (carr) and willow. Tall hedgerows with numerous mature trees link copses, shaws and remnant woodlands, contributing to a well-wooded character.



The Low Weald landscape

2.16 The dense, wet Weald Clay covering much of the area made movement difficult in earlier times, and relatively little settlement was recorded in the Domesday Book of the eleventh century. As woodland was cleared for agriculture (assarting), small settlements were established on the higher, drier sandstone beds, with moated manor houses a characteristic feature. The settlement pattern comprises a mix of market towns, large and small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads. Characteristic building materials are brick, tile and timber with relatively little local stone usage other than the highly distinctive Horsham Stone, a sandstone found locally and used mainly as large roofing slates. Today, the larger urban areas of Horsham and Crawley, Gatwick Airport, Burgess Hill, and expanded settlements such as Southwater and Billingshurst, convey a strong urban presence.

A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPE OF THE LOW WEALD

The *characteristic mixture* of pastures, woodlands, hedges and shaws, particularly within the shallow valleys of rivers and tree-lined streams, provides an intimate and secluded landscape.

The *agricultural landscape* so characteristic of the Low Weald is maintained, owners and managers signed up to continuous landscape renewal as part and parcel of the husbandry of the land.

Woodland in the Low Weald is flourishing, with many new large and small woodlands and hedgerows, enclosing glades and meadows and linked to existing woodlands, hedges and shaws.

The *characteristic settlement pattern* of scattered villages, hamlets, some dispersed settlement and farmsteads is evident.

New development of high quality is well integrated with, and sits comfortably within, existing towns and villages and the wider landscape.

The *local distinctiveness* of villages and their settings is evident, with a return to the greater availability and use of traditional local materials.

The *urban fringe* combines a distinctive landscape character (including a combination of open spaces, woodlands, and hedgerows) with well-managed land uses.



Boundary oaks in the Low Weald

High Weald

2.17 Occupying the central portion of the Wealden basin, the High Weald is a large area of wooded, heavily dissected upland mainly in Kent and East Sussex but with a substantial portion in West Sussex. Virtually all of the upland is designated as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The underlying geology is a complex mix of hard and soft sandstones, sandy beds and clays. Distinctive and scattered sandstone outcrops rise above the farmland and woodland and edge some of the valleys. By English standards, much of the High Weald is heavily wooded. The landscape is deeply-incised in many places to give a complex pattern of ridges and steep, deep stream valleys (ghylls). In modern times, these valleys have afforded sites for reservoirs, as at Ardingly and Weir Wood. The ridge-and-valley system may be parallel, as in St Leonard's Forest, or more sinuous, for example at Ardingly, Balcombe and West Hoathly (although the broad, straight upper Ouse Valley at Cuckfield is not typical). Grazed lowland heath was once a feature of the High Weald. Once grazing ceased, most of the heathland in West Sussex was invaded by trees. The extensive open heathlands of Ashdown Forest on the edge of the County, in East Sussex, are a regionally significant survival of this landscape type.

2.18 Main roads and settlements hug the prominent ridge-lines with a dense network of small, narrow, and winding lanes linking scattered villages, hamlets and farms. The legacy of the early iron industry, based on sandstone, iron ore, water and timber, has left extensive areas of coppice woodland and hammer ponds which once provided water power. High forest, small woods and copses, and a network of hedges and shaws link small, irregular fields created from cleared woodland. Building materials characteristic of the historic settlements, farms and cottages include hung red tile, local brick, white weatherboarding and timber-framing. Stone is less widespread although the hard sandstones of the Tunbridge Wells series provide a grey-weathering Wealden stone, used locally mainly as ashlar (cut and dressed stone). Also characteristic in many parts of the High Weald are grand Victorian and Edwardian properties, developed in the early railway era as outposts from London. Parts of the area are also characterised by suburban estates of grander houses in woodland settings.



Woodland and pasture in the High Weald

A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPE OF THE HIGH WEALD

The *characteristic mixture* of highly distinctive and extensive woodlands, many of them ancient, including shaws and steep valley woodlands in the deep ghylls, is managed as a woodland resource and as wildlife habitats, with new plantings linking up once-isolated woodland features.

***Distinctive characteristics* such as sandstone outcrops, the pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by shaws, historic routeways and rural lanes, old iron working sites and hammer ponds, are protected and conserved.**

The *characteristic pattern of small fields* is well-managed and is being maintained.

***New development* of high quality fits with the characteristic settlement pattern of scattered villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads.**

The *local distinctiveness* of villages and their settings is evident, with a return to the greater availability and use of traditional local materials.



Parkland and farmland in the High Weald



New roadside planting at Tillington



Farm Buildings in the Low Weald

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

This section describes the five strategic objectives underpinning the Strategy. If the visions for the five national Character Areas – and therefore for the County as a whole – are to be realised, then the objectives must be reached.

The objectives focus on ensuring high quality development, the conservation of historic character, supporting the maintenance and renewal of the agricultural landscape, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, and promoting the celebration of the value and variety of the landscape.



Objective 1: ensure high quality new development which contributes to and reinforces landscape character

3.1 The siting, scale and design of much new development is tending to reduce or even destroy variety and distinctiveness in the landscape. Much modern development, including new housing estates and areas for business and industry, tend to be built to standardised designs. They have a weak “sense of place” prompting the speculation that we could be “anywhere” when we are in them. The Strategy is based on the principle espoused by the Countryside Agency of development *good enough to approve*. The design and setting of new development must recognise, reflect and reinforce existing landscape features and the key characteristics which make each Landscape Character Area unique and distinctive.

Objective 2: conserve and enhance historic landscape character

3.2 West Sussex is particularly rich in historic landscapes and features, including historic parklands and gardens. No part has been unaffected by past human activity. In many of the Landscape Character Areas, historic landscapes and features make a vital contribution to distinctiveness and character, imparting a strong sense of place. However, as a result of changes in agricultural practice, lack of management, loss from development, and damage to the settings of ancient monuments and other features, this rich historic character is being eroded. Appropriate conservation and management measures based on sustainable farming practice and appropriate development standards are therefore essential.

Objective 3: ensure the maintenance and renewal of the agricultural landscape

3.3 Farmland makes up well over half of the West Sussex landscape embodying the landscape character of the County. However, it is essential that farmland be used and managed sustainably if the desired environmental outcomes are to be achieved and if the character of the landscape is not to change drastically. The spread of intensive arable farming methods and the abandonment of pasture since the Second World War have eroded local character and distinctiveness in many areas.



Arable farmland on the downs near Amberley

3.4 Environmental Stewardship and the new types of Agri-Environment Scheme present significant landscape enhancement opportunities. The Government’s report *Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food* published in 2003 encourages farming practices which favour efforts to conserve, enhance and extend local distinctiveness and biodiversity, including re-creating diminishing habitats such as unimproved grassland.

Objective 4: conserve and enhance semi-natural habitats including securing the future of woodlands, hedgerows and trees as distinctive landscape features

3.5 Semi-natural habitats such as wetlands, heaths and chalk downlands are vital features of the West Sussex landscape including highly characteristic woodlands, hedges, and trees. The conservation and enhancement of these habitats and features, including creating new ones, is fundamental to the Strategy. Many habitats are protected for their nature conservation importance through international, national and local designations. However, management of these often vulnerable habitats is essential if they are to continue to retain their nature conservation value and contribute to landscape character. Major habitat creation schemes will complement these efforts.



Heathland at Ambersham Common

Objective 5: promote and celebrate the value and variety of the West Sussex landscape

3.6 As well as celebrating the variety and beauty of the landscape and the history it embodies, such countryside also has other riches to offer related to health, education and quality of life. The importance of the countryside for access and recreation is part and parcel of healthy living including the appreciation of landscape and what it has to offer.

3.7 This Strategy objective recognises the importance of raising public awareness of the idea and purpose of character, to help communities and individuals manage land, property and their surroundings in ways which reinforce locally distinctive landscapes. Apart from the local authorities themselves, many agencies are involved including statutory bodies, farmers, landowners, conservation and amenity organisations, and numerous community groups. Collectively, these interests implement programmes which benefit character – or could do so. Making information available to them and encouraging and co-ordinating beneficial actions are clear priorities for the Strategy. This Strategy objective is considered in more detail in Section Five dealing with Implementation.



The South Downs Way, Cocking

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

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Objective 1: ensure high quality new development which contributes to and reinforces landscape character

3.1 The siting, scale and design of much new development is tending to reduce or even destroy variety and distinctiveness in the landscape. Much modern development, including new housing estates and areas for business and industry, tend to be built to standardised designs. They have a weak “sense of place” prompting the speculation that we could be “anywhere” when we are in them. The Strategy is based on the principle espoused by the Countryside Agency of development *good enough to approve*. The design and setting of new development must recognise, reflect and reinforce existing landscape features and the key characteristics which make each Landscape Character Area unique and distinctive.

Objective 2: conserve and enhance historic landscape character

3.2 West Sussex is particularly rich in historic landscapes and features, including historic parklands and gardens. No part has been unaffected by past human activity. In many of the Landscape Character Areas, historic landscapes and features make a vital contribution to distinctiveness and character, imparting a strong sense of place. However, as a result of changes in agricultural practice, lack of management, loss from development, and damage to the settings of ancient monuments and other features, this rich historic character is being eroded. Appropriate conservation and management measures based on sustainable farming practice and appropriate development standards are therefore essential.

Objective 3: ensure the maintenance and renewal of the agricultural landscape

3.3 Farmland makes up well over half of the West Sussex landscape embodying the landscape character of the County. However, it is essential that farmland be used and managed sustainably if the desired environmental outcomes are to be achieved and if the character of the landscape is not to change drastically. The spread of intensive arable farming methods and the abandonment of pasture since the Second World War have eroded local character and distinctiveness in many areas.



Arable farmland on the downs near Amberley

3.4 Environmental Stewardship and the new types of Agri-Environment Scheme present significant landscape enhancement opportunities. The Government’s report *Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food* published in 2003 encourages farming practices which favour efforts to conserve, enhance and extend local distinctiveness and biodiversity, including re-creating diminishing habitats such as unimproved grassland.

Objective 4: conserve and enhance semi-natural habitats including securing the future of woodlands, hedgerows and trees as distinctive landscape features

3.5 Semi-natural habitats such as wetlands, heaths and chalk downlands are vital features of the West Sussex landscape including highly characteristic woodlands, hedges, and trees. The conservation and enhancement of these habitats and features, including creating new ones, is fundamental to the Strategy. Many habitats are protected for their nature conservation importance through international, national and local designations. However, management of these often vulnerable habitats is essential if they are to continue to retain their nature conservation value and contribute to landscape character. Major habitat creation schemes will complement these efforts.



Heathland at Ambersham Common

Objective 5: promote and celebrate the value and variety of the West Sussex landscape

3.6 As well as celebrating the variety and beauty of the landscape and the history it embodies, such countryside also has other riches to offer related to health, education and quality of life. The importance of the countryside for access and recreation is part and parcel of healthy living including the appreciation of landscape and what it has to offer.

3.7 This Strategy objective recognises the importance of raising public awareness of the idea and purpose of character, to help communities and individuals manage land, property and their surroundings in ways which reinforce locally distinctive landscapes. Apart from the local authorities themselves, many agencies are involved including statutory bodies, farmers, landowners, conservation and amenity organisations, and numerous community groups. Collectively, these interests implement programmes which benefit character – or could do so. Making information available to them and encouraging and co-ordinating beneficial actions are clear priorities for the Strategy. This Strategy objective is considered in more detail in Section Five dealing with Implementation.



The South Downs Way, Cocking

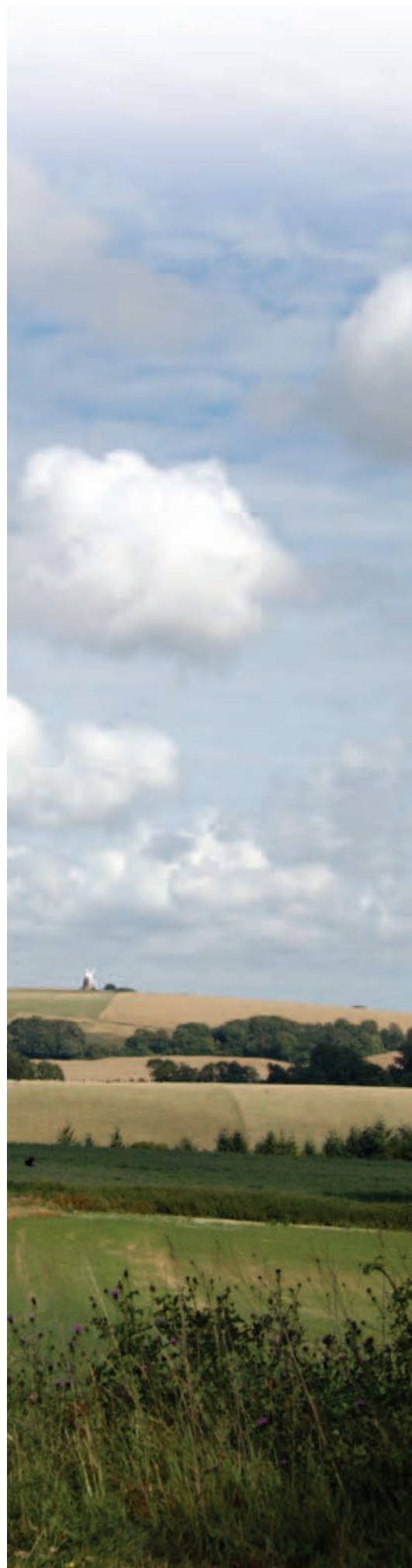


New tree planting on pasture at Frog Farm, Petworth

COUNTY-WIDE LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

This section translates the five key Strategy objectives into a series of County-wide Landscape Guidelines for dealing with the likely changes impacting on the landscape of West Sussex.

These will be used by the partners to instigate actions which, in turn, will realise the vision. The County Landscape Character Assessment, to be published separately, describes individual Landscape Character Areas and contains complementary Land Management Guidelines for each of them.



Landscape Guidelines for general development and land use change

4.1 The first Strategy objective aims to secure high quality new development which contributes to and reinforces landscape character. These Guidelines will be used to influence and inform development planning policy and the development control process:

- encourage and promote the preparation and adoption by the local authorities of Countryside Design Summaries and Village Design Statements as a way of providing detailed design principles for new development and its setting and resisting the suburbanisation of the environment, for instance, standard treatments of highways and other public areas, and inappropriate designs and materials.
- locate and design development to retain a sense of the identity of settlements and ensure their separateness.
- protect the setting of areas valued for their natural beauty.
- minimise the visual prominence of outdoor storage and parking areas.
- encourage the planting of mainly native tree and shrub species in association with new development. Use native plant species of local provenance specific to the national Character Areas.
- ensure where possible that both landscape and planting schemes are carried out in advance of development.
- minimise the impact of lighting in the landscape.
- protect areas of tranquil character from visually intrusive or noisy development.
- incorporate where possible existing biodiversity, heritage and landscape features into new development schemes.
- secure where appropriate landscape and habitat enhancement both on and off site (informal open space, tree planting, habitat creation including grassland, heath and wetland features etc) as a requirement of new development.
- encourage the use of available locally distinctive building materials in new development.



Modern housing development

Landscape Guidelines for residential development on the rural urban fringe

4.2 The first Strategy objective also applies, linked with initiatives on open land which connect town and country visually and create access to the local and wider countryside. Guidelines for development on the rural urban fringe include:

- ensure that buildings and infrastructure are located to avoid loss of important on-site views, and off-site views towards features such as church towers, fine buildings, historic and archaeological monuments or the wider landscape, as well as avoiding intrusion onto sensitive ridgelines, prominent slopes, and damage to settlement settings.
- seek new development of high quality which fits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness and characteristics in terms of settlement form, height, scale, plot shape and size, elevations, roofline and pitch, overall colour and texture and boundary treatment (walls, fences, hedges, gates),



Horse grazing on the rural urban fringe

- make the most of opportunities for conservation, restoration and enhancement of existing buildings in keeping with local and historic character.
- retain where possible on new development sites key landscape features such as woodland, watercourses and hedgerows, as a basis for the new landscape structure and setting of the site.
- conserve and enhance green corridors into settlements when development is being considered and retain where possible existing wildlife habitats, hedgerows, shelterbelts, orchards, and trees and shrubs.
- ensure that the design, layout and ground modelling of new development takes account of the nature (grain) of the adjoining landscape.
- integrate new development on the edges of settlements into the wider landscape. Use open space and planting in keeping with local character to provide a visual link to the countryside and an attractive backdrop and foil to new development.
- incorporate where possible intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscaping schemes.

Landscape Guidelines for development in rural settlements

4.3 The planning policies of the local authorities in West Sussex allow for small-scale incremental development in the countryside in rural settlements as a means of supporting the economic and social health of the countryside. The amount of such development envisaged in the County Structure Plan is small. A further aspect of the first Strategy objective will be to ensure that new development in villages and in the countryside is handled sensitively to complement and strengthen landscape character. Guidelines for development in rural settlements include:

- ensure that new development respects and complements rural settlement form, pattern and character and its landscape setting, reinforcing local distinctiveness.
- identify and conserve sensitive parts of settlement settings. Where possible, maintain a direct relationship between the old settlement core and the surrounding landscape, allowing views in and out of the settlement.
- taking into account road safety issues, seek to design highways improvements and traffic management and calming schemes, within and on the approaches to the settlement, in ways which do not detract from local historic and rural character.
- use where possible designs and materials for rural road schemes which are locally distinctive, and road surface dressings which complement local building materials.
- use mainly native tree, woodland and hedge planting to screen intrusive development, provide an attractive backdrop to new development, frame good views and create a sense of enclosure and arrival.
- minimise urban features such as close-board fencing and fast-growing coniferous trees such as cypresses.
- incorporate where possible intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscaping schemes.



Shipley village

Landscape Guidelines for commercial and industrial development including rural diversification

4.4 Supporting and maintaining the social health and economy of the County is a prime policy aim. Under the first Strategy objective, it will be important to ensure that, as with new housing, the location, design and setting of new commercial and industrial buildings are handled sensitively to complement and strengthen landscape character. Guidelines for commercial and industrial development including rural diversification include:



Commercial greenhouses on the South Coast Plain

- ensure new land uses and development associated with rural diversification projects relate well to and retain key existing landscape features and minimise modification to existing landforms and vegetation cover.
- ensure that new development makes the most of opportunities for conservation, restoration and enhancement of existing buildings in keeping with local historic and architectural character.
- locate buildings and associated infrastructure to avoid loss of views on and off the site, intrusion on to sensitive ridgelines or prominent slopes and other highly visible locations, and to minimise damage to the settings of settlements.
- retain key landscape features on new development sites such as woodland, watercourses and hedgerows, to aid the new landscape structure and setting of the site.
- ensure that the design of buildings and structures is of high quality with clean, elegant lines. Consider massing, form, height, colour, ensure that the design, layout and ground modelling of new development takes account of the “grain” of the adjoining landscape, and avoid visual clutter including signage on all elevations.
- orientate and position buildings to minimise the landscape impact of servicing them.
- co-ordinate building colour to secure a complementary effect between buildings and the surrounding landscape (for example, matt neutral colours minimising reflectivity).
- secure the use of mainly native tree, woodland and hedge planting to screen developments sufficiently and integrate them with the wider landscape. This may include substantial advance woodland planting on and off-site, in wide belts, on land secured specifically for this purpose.
- ensure site entrances are designed to fit within the landscape and use discreet signage.
- minimise the impact of lighting used in development in the landscape.
- secure where appropriate habitat creation and enhancement both on and off site as a requirement of new development.
- incorporate where possible intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscaping schemes.

Landscape Guidelines for agricultural buildings and farm access development

4.5 Under the first Strategy objective, the location, layout, design and finish of agricultural buildings must also be handled with particular care, to ensure that landscape character is not needlessly damaged. Guidelines for agricultural buildings and farm access development include:

- avoid siting new farm buildings on sensitive ridgelines and visible slopes or where they could have an adverse visual impact on historic farmsteads.
- reflect where possible traditional building layout in new development.
- retain where possible on new development sites key landscape features such as woodland, shelterbelts, orchards, single trees, watercourses and hedgerows, as a basis for the new landscape structure and setting of the site.
- minimise the visual prominence of outdoor storage and parking areas.
- minimise the visual domination of large expanses of wall and roof using changes of materials or colour, and varied pitches and shapes for roofs.
- incorporate available local building materials into new development favouring neutral matt colours, for example, olive green or grey.
- secure the use of mainly native tree, woodland and hedge planting to screen and integrate developments into the wider landscape. Fast-growing conifers such as cypresses should be avoided.
- retain original farm entrances and site new ones to minimise tree and hedgerow loss, replacing any planting unavoidably lost.
- avoid the use of chain-link, weld-mesh, close-board and other forms of fencing and gates normally associated with urban commercial and industrial locations.



Modern farm development in the landscape

Landscape Guidelines for telecommunications developments

4.6 Only a few years ago, telecommunications masts were few and far between, often confined to larger masts on prominent sites, for instance, at Bexley Hill near Midhurst and, on a lesser scale, at Truleigh Hill on the South Downs. In the past, larger-scale telecommunications mast development was successfully opposed at The Trundle, a prominent landmark topped by an Iron Age hill fort (a Scheduled Ancient Monument or SAM) at Goodwood. The mast at Tolmare Farm, Longfurlong was recently taken down because of its unacceptable impact on the setting of two SAMs (the adverse impact of development on the setting of a SAM is referred to in the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979*).

4.7 Today, smaller telecommunications masts have proliferated. Moreover, the process of achieving full telephonic coverage is by no means complete and is likely to evolve further as new generations of telecommunications are developed. Under the first Strategy objective, the location, appearance and finish of telecommunications masts and equipment must be handled with particular care, to ensure that landscape character is not needlessly damaged.



Disguised telecommunication masts near Cuckfield

Guidelines for telecommunications development include:

- in siting telecommunications masts and other development, avoid prominent skylines, sites highly visible from settlements, roads, rights of way, important heritage sites, and sites within important views.
- locate new masts and associated development where the impact can be mitigated by strong landscape features such as woodland.
- seek masts of a simple, elegant design finished in neutral matt colours to blend with the dominant colours of the background.
- seek a minimum of associated buildings and fencing, and screen any necessary development that is required using native tree and shrub species local to the area.
- use existing roads and tracks where possible to gain access to installations.
- where unavoidable, avoid prominent locations (such as open hillside) for new access routes and hard standings, following field boundaries, surfaced as trackways with crushed stone and grass verges.

Landscape Guidelines for new roads, major road improvements and maintenance

4.8 All parts of the County are highly accessible to those who have cars. This has led to a sea change in the social and economic composition of rural areas, where urban-based dwellers have progressively replaced dwindling populations occupied in agriculture and rural servicing.

4.9 Given the substantial increase in traffic over the last few decades, many new roads have been built to cope with the flows. Large roads present particular landscape challenges and can be a threat to tranquillity. Dealing with these challenges is an important part of the first Strategy objective. Much can be done to mitigate the impact of highways development, improvement and maintenance on the landscape, whilst meeting road safety requirements. Guidelines for new roads, major road improvements and maintenance include:

- ensure that routes for new roads and bypasses are aligned and designed to respond to the pattern and character of the landscape, minimising their impact on existing landscape and historic landscape features and allowing sufficient space for embankments and cuttings to be shaped to reflect the surrounding landform.
- secure mitigation measures including new planting, earthworks and hardworks reflecting the pattern and character of the local landscape, and where possible ensure that these measures are partly or wholly undertaken in advance of construction.
- secure bridges and other engineering structures of elegant design with clean lines, reflecting where possible traditional local design, and using locally distinctive building materials where appropriate and available.
- ensure, where appropriate, habitat creation and enhancement within the road curtilage and seek such measures off-site, on land secured specifically for this purpose.
- encourage reappraisal of the visual impact of existing major roads and develop landscape enhancement schemes to help to integrate them more effectively into the landscape.
- limit the extent and intensity of lighting to the levels required for road safety.



The A27 Trunk Road crossing of the River Adur near Lancing College, Shoreham-by-Sea

Landscape Guidelines for protecting the character of rural roads and lanes

4.10 Many rural roads and lanes bear the brunt of heavier traffic and improvements to them (together with road maintenance works) for the purposes of easing traffic flow and road safety may adversely affect landscape character. As with major transport routes, meeting this challenge is an important part of the first Strategy objective. Much can be done to mitigate the impact of highways development, improvement and maintenance affecting the character of rural roads and lanes, whilst meeting road safety requirements. Guidelines for protecting the character of rural roads and lanes include:

- respect the historic character of rural roads and lanes, notably those with sunken profiles or verges and, where possible, use designs and materials that are locally distinctive, and road surface-dressings which complement local building materials.
- minimise alteration to rural roads and, where alterations are unavoidable, generally avoid the use of kerbs, make restrained use of coloured surfacing and road markings, and keep tree and hedgerow loss to a minimum, replacing any planting unavoidably lost.
- retain and manage ecologically important road verges.
- conserve where possible traditional features such as fords and stone and brick bridges.
- minimise street lighting between and within settlements.
- keep the number of signs to a minimum, combining them, replacing redundant ones, and minimising the visual intrusion of signs.
- manage hedgerows with appropriate trimming methods, including the laying of hedges, the conservation of hedgerow trees, and new planting where appropriate.



Roadside oaks at Elsted Marsh

Landscape Guidelines for conserving historic landscapes and features

4.11 The second Strategy objective seeks to conserve and enhance historic landscape character, including the location, layout and character of the historic settlements and buildings throughout the County. The historic aspect of landscape provides a cultural dimension of great richness, often with a time-depth stretching back hundreds of years. The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) for Sussex now well on its way to completion will add the historical dimension that has been lacking in the past, allowing a fine level of detail to be fed into the Assessment process. Guidelines for conserving historic landscapes and features include:

- identify and conserve surviving historic landscapes, recognising the particular value of those showing little change and greater time-depth, including intact historic field systems, and old lanes, tracks, drove roads, banks and ditches.
- support the conservation and enhancement of features such as old hedgerows and shaws, old lanes and tracks, drove roads, stone walls, timber signposts, stone and brick bridges, mileposts, windmills and moated farmsteads.
- promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of ancient woodlands, individual mature and ancient trees of historic importance and other distinctive tree types including pollarded trees.
- protect, conserve and enhance archaeological monuments and their settings, including ancient earthwork monuments (very many of which are prehistoric in date) using appropriate management methods including the avoidance of ploughing, manual scrub clearance and the restoration of grazing uses.
- protect important views of and from historic landmarks and their settings.



The Queen Elizabeth Oak at Cowdray Park, Midhurst

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and enhancing historic parks and gardens

4.12 West Sussex has its share of fine historic parks and gardens, including the nationally renowned Great Park at Petworth House. The best and most intact examples are contained on the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* maintained by English Heritage. However, there are many other parks and gardens of note throughout the County, and the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) is revealing remnants of many more. Conserving and enhancing these assets is an important part of the second Strategy objective. Guidelines for conserving and enhancing historic parks and gardens include:

- encourage preparation of conservation and restoration plans in accordance with existing Countryside Stewardship, the new Environmental Stewardship (entry-level and higher tier) and Heritage Lottery Fund guidelines.
- give priority to the conservation, restoration and management of parkland and garden features such as avenues and designed vistas, parkland trees, water areas, and estate boundary features (tree belts, deer pales, ha-has, arboreta, ornamental fencing and gates, and gatehouses).
- encourage where appropriate the conversion of arable parkland to pasture.
- maintain a visual relationship between buildings, parkland and the surrounding landscape.



Cowdray Ruins, Midhurst



Petworth House and Park

Landscape Guidelines for the maintenance and renewal of agricultural landscapes

4.13 The third Strategy objective seeks the maintenance and renewal of agricultural landscapes. It is a truism that farmers are the custodians of our landscapes, which they have largely been responsible for shaping over the centuries. This shaping has been dynamic. The landscapes of today would appear very strange indeed to our medieval forbears – and yet there would be points of recognition: as landscape has evolved and changed over the centuries, remnants of past systems have survived as part of an accumulating time-depth. Medieval remnants in the landscape of the Wealden basin are particularly rich and evident.

4.14 The emotional and cultural appreciation of landscape is a relatively modern phenomenon, developing strongly at the turn of the nineteenth century. There is an assumption today that the landscape does not change and that it will persist in its familiar, reassuring form. This is far from the truth. Pilot work on the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) for Sussex shows that the landscape has changed greatly since Edwardian times when we entered the modern era of social, economic and locational freedom allowed by growing affluence and modern transport. Farming benefitted too, moving towards ever larger markets and with a corresponding diminution in agricultural labour consequent on mechanisation.

4.15 Continuous change is a keynote of modern farming and land ownership. However, future prospects for landscape and nature conservation are promising. The new types of Agri-Environmental Scheme, whereby farmers and landowners may receive payments in exchange for environmental improvement works, has been widely acclaimed, and much is hoped of it. Guidelines for the conservation of agricultural landscapes are bound to be general in a Strategy of this nature. However, they attempt to span the breadth of issues and concerns, and include:

- support agricultural reform which benefits landscape character, local distinctiveness and wildlife.
- encourage take-up of Agri-Environmental Schemes.
- devise a Land Management Information System (LaMIS) or equivalent for West Sussex to provide a “one stop” easily accessible source of landscape and other environmental information for farmers and landowners.
- work in partnership with farmers and landowners, including the large estates in West Sussex, to produce comprehensive land management and whole farm plans which take account of the landscape implications of replacing traditional arable crops by new ones; contain measures to conserve and improve the landscape and wildlife habitats; and facilitate public enjoyment of the agricultural landscape.
- encourage and promote measures to support agricultural methods (including organic farming) where these will reduce agri-chemical and other pollution, and avoid damage to wildlife and habitats.
- support ecologically sound farm diversification schemes appropriate to maintaining countryside character including the widespread use of woodland as a renewable energy source.
- support local produce initiatives where this tends to reinforce distinctiveness in the landscape, for instance, the breeding of traditionally local grazing livestock.

Landscape Guidelines for improving the rural urban fringe

4.16 The rural urban fringe is that area of land surrounding the settlements of the County. In many areas, the agricultural landscape in particular is evidently degraded and opportunities are not always realised to link settlements with countryside nearby and areas further afield. The County Council and its partners are aware of the vision for connecting town and country in the pursuit of sustainable development contained in *The Countryside in and around Towns* published by the Countryside Agency and the Groundwork Trusts in January 2005. The vision encourages a whole view of the rural urban fringe, seeking co-ordinated effort through area action plans and other initiatives. The pursuit of this integrated view is therefore an important part of the third Strategy objective. Guidelines for improving the rural urban fringe include:

- give priority to landscape enhancement on the fringes of urban areas where the landscape is degraded and where there are pressures for development, recreation and other new land uses.
- encourage the planting of new woodlands and hedgerows where appropriate to reinforce existing or former landscape character, and create and enhance wildlife habitats.
- encourage the preparation of community-led landscape and environmental improvement strategies for key urban fringe areas.
- respect and incorporate intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscape enhancement schemes, so promoting a sense of place and continuity.



Urban fringe landscape adjoining Gatwick Airport

Landscape Guidelines for the management of land used for horses

4.17 The keeping and exercising of horses for recreation is a modern phenomenon which brings with it implications for land use and landscape. The use of land for this purpose tends to be concentrated (though not exclusively) in the rural urban fringe. Unless attention is paid to the quality and appropriateness of fencing, stabling and storage associated with horse-riding, the activity may have a deleterious affect on the landscape. The third Strategy objective therefore seeks to address the issues associated with this singular land use. Guidelines for the management of land used for horses include:

- encourage management practices on existing paddocks and larger equestrian sites which avoid overgrazing, benefit hedgerow conservation and renewal and protect trees and woodland, avoid unsightly fencing, and encourage the removal of highly visible equipment when it is not being used.
- encourage new hedge planting outside unsightly fence lines.
- encourage the re-use of existing buildings and locate new buildings deemed necessary in close association with existing ones.



Horses grazing under the downs at Amberley

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and enhancing existing woodlands

4.18 The fourth Strategy objective concerns the conservation and enhancement of semi-natural habitats including securing the future of woodlands, hedgerows and trees as distinctive landscape features.

4.19 West Sussex is the second most wooded county in England. In large parts of it woodland is the essence of the landscape, including a high rate of survival of ancient woodland (woodland established on the same site for at least 1000 years) compared with almost any other county. Formerly managed as a major rural resource – for timber, fuel for the iron industry, charcoal, wood products, grazing areas and the like – much of the woodland today is unmanaged, as traditional woodland practices such as coppicing have greatly reduced. The Strategy therefore places great importance on the conservation and enhancement of the woodland we have inherited (for instance, the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* includes targets to restore back to native woodland by 2020 substantial areas of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)). Guidelines for conserving and enhancing existing woodlands include:



Woodland management at The Haven, near Billingshurst

- conserve and enhance woodlands as a major contribution to protecting the unique landscape character of West Sussex as well as for their environmental, wildlife, historic, economic, and cultural importance.
- prioritise the restoration of neglected coppice, and the conservation of high forest, wood pasture, and ghyll and sandrock woodlands.
- promote traditional woodland industries and crafts as a sustainable use of woodlands, especially for coppice and restoration.
- encourage woodland management planning.

- promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of ancient woodlands, individual mature and ancient trees of historic importance and other distinctive tree types including pollarded trees.
- protect trees and woodland where appropriate using Tree Preservation Orders and designations.
- preserve ancient features of relict woodland management, such as woodland and woodland pasture boundary banks, and the numerous relict features of ancient Wealden ironworking, for instance, groups of minepits (iron ore extraction pits), earth- and tree-covered slag mounds, remains of artificial watercourses and earthwork pond bays (former dams to streams, now breached).
- preserve ancient land boundary banks surviving within present-day woodland, such as former park boundaries and parish boundary banks.
- encourage natural regeneration of woodland where this is considered desirable from wildlife and landscape viewpoints.
- continue to encourage an integrated approach to the restoration and re-stocking of storm-damaged woodlands.
- promote the use of native plant species of local provenance typical of each national Character Area.
- encourage the restructuring of conifer woodland to incorporate a broadleaved element, especially on ancient woodland sites, around the fringes of woodlands, and along ridges and streams.
- where appropriate, restore heathland as part of the fabric of woodland areas.
- encourage the appropriate management of shelterbelts by expanding the range of tree and shrub species and removing over-mature conifers where necessary.



Chestnut coppice on the Cowdray Estate, Midhurst

Landscape Guidelines for establishing new woodlands

4.20 In line with the Forestry Commission Regional Forestry Framework *Seeing the Wood for the Trees* published in March 2004, the fourth Strategy objective encourages new broadleaved woodland planting to strengthen and complement existing landscapes. Guidelines for establishing new woodlands include:

- encourage the creation of new, multi-purpose broadleaved woodlands that complement the shape and scale of the surrounding landscape whilst conserving unimproved meadows, heathlands, and historic field patterns or other archaeological features.
- encourage the extension of existing woodland and re-connect fragmented or isolated woods.

Landscape Guidelines for the conservation of trees

4.21 Despite the past ravages of Dutch Elm Disease which all but removed the English Elm and other elm species as specimen trees from the countryside of southern Britain, individual trees and tree groups continue to be important and widespread feature of the West Sussex landscape. Conservation of them is therefore a vital part of the fourth Strategy objective. Field and hedgerow trees are characteristic of many parts of the County, as are trees and tree groups on skylines and specimen trees of great character or age, some of them with historic associations. However, owing to disease and old age, many of these trees are dying. They require to be replaced if the characteristic landscape is to continue. Guidelines for conserving trees include:

- promote programmes for the planting of new specimen trees on farmland.
- protect trees from loss and damage (including, where appropriate, the use of Tree Preservation Orders) and conserve existing field and hedgerow trees.
- encourage the retention of stag-headed oaks and other dying trees for wildlife purposes and plant new trees to succeed them, to ensure a varied age class within the tree population.
- promote the conservation of prominent trees on skylines, along roadsides and in villages.
- promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of individual mature and ancient trees of historic importance and other distinctive tree types including pollarded trees, and those in parkland avenues and in churchyards.



Woodland coppice management: cutting fenceposts

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and increasing hedgerows and shaws

4.22 Hedgerows and shaws (broad woodland belts left behind when fields were cut out of woodland) are a strong, defining characteristic of much of the County. The County Council's thirty-year record of land use and habitat change shows the persistence of dense, intricate networks of hedgerows and shaws throughout much of the Low Weald (except where significant Parliamentary enclosure and twentieth century hedgerow removal occurred) and within the non-wooded parts of the High Weald and some areas of the Greensand ridges. However, strong hedgerow patterns are not characteristic either of the South Downs or of much of the South Coast Plain although in both areas there are exceptions that prove the rule, in the lower downland valleys and slopes and on parts of the Manhood peninsula.

4.23 The conservation (and increase in the length) of hedgerows and shaws in many areas of the County is therefore an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. Guidelines include:

- conserve, enhance or restore the hedgerow and shaw network to reinforce existing field patterns and enhance the character and unity of the landscape.
- conserve hedges that may not fulfil the criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations including prominent hedges and those along roadsides.
- manage hedges to ensure they are stockproof, visually interesting and valuable for wildlife by using traditional management methods including hedge-laying, coppicing and trimming, rather than repeated, severe cutting back.
- encourage an increase in new hedgerow trees by retaining self-sown saplings and planting new trees.
- establish new hedgerows and fill gaps in fragmented ones, ensuring mixes of numerous native shrub and tree species typical of each national Character Area, good width and density, with associated banks and ditches appropriate to local character.



Newly-laid hedge

- attempt to link hedgerows wherever possible to create wildlife corridors.
- ensure that resources are available for the care and maintenance of all new planting.
- support the objectives and targets of the *Sussex Hedgerow Habitat Action Plan*.
- retain existing ancient field and droveway bank and ditch boundaries.

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and increasing the area of chalk grassland and heathland

4.24 The fourth Strategy objective seeks to conserve and enhance all semi-natural habitats in the County, all of which contribute to landscape character and local distinctiveness. Chalk grassland is a particularly distinctive habitat in West Sussex.

4.25 Chalk grassland and heathland were relatively common at the turn of the century. The County Council and its partners are actively involved in preparing and implementing *Biodiversity Action Plans* aiming at large-scale and widespread renewal of these – and other – valuable and attractive habitats, with benefits both to wildlife and the landscape. Guidelines for conserving and increasing the area of chalk grassland and heathland include:

- promote the retention and appropriate management of chalk grassland and heathland, targeting the largest areas for active management.
- Significantly increase the area of these habitats, particularly by linking and extending existing areas, through programmes of land management (for example, in agri-environment schemes and through woodland restructuring and management).



Chalk grassland on the slopes of The Trundle, near Goodwood



Heathland restoration at Blackdown Hill

Landscape Guidelines for conserving river environments, ponds, other water bodies, wetlands and coastal habitats

4.26 Water bodies form a wide variety of types in many different kinds of locations, most of them having value for wildlife, some particularly so. Their conservation is an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. As well as on the coast (where the County Council and its partners are pursuing Shoreline Management Plans), water bodies and wetland also contribute strongly to landscape character, particularly the form and aspect of rivers and streams, the particular qualities of freshwater marsh, and the presence of ponds of varying types and sizes, from dewponds to artificial hammer ponds and reservoirs. Measures to conserve and increase freshwater marsh and ponds are particularly important, as these habitats are in decline. The County Council and its partners will continue to liaise closely with the Environment Agency with regarding the landscape implications of implementing inland flood management strategies. Guidelines for conserving water environments include:

- support initiatives which restore, conserve and enhance the natural features of river and stream environments, including river and stream edges and the diversity of features such as meanders, shallows, backwaters, and small river cliffs.
- support the use of “soft” engineering techniques where channel protection and modification works are deemed essential.
- encourage the inclusion of appropriate semi-natural habitats between improved farmland, development and the edges of watercourses.
- enhance the appearance and setting of watercourses by using varied bank profiles, and where appropriate riverside trees, wet woodland and scrub, in keeping with local landscape character.
- re-instate where possible natural watercourse alignments, reintroducing features such as meanders, cut-offs and multiple courses, whilst respecting and promoting understanding of the visible traces of ancient water management and water transport systems, such as water meadow ditch systems, ancient mill ponds and mill races, Wealden furnace and forge ponds, spillways and tailraces and disused canal cuts and lock chambers.
- pursue traditional methods of ditch clearance on a “little and often” basis, ensuring wildlife diversity using a range of channel widths and depths.
- maintain the banks of watercourses on a rotational basis to avoid clearance of vegetation over extensive stretches.
- protect, conserve and enhance village ponds, other ponds and open areas of water, and dewponds, taking account of the specific conservation requirements for each kind of pond feature.
- conserve and enhance traditional grazing marshes and water meadows by appropriate water level and livestock grazing management.
- encourage the conservation of ponds and areas of open water, restoring where possible neglected ponds on farmland and in villages whilst retaining ancient features of former pond use, such as pumps and sluices.
- support initiatives which protect, conserve and enhance other kinds of wetland (for example, bogs, marshes, wet meadows), and tidal and coastal habitats.

Landscape Guidelines for landscape renewal and wildlife conservation on field margins and land set aside

4.27 Environmental Stewardship, the new types of Agri-Environmental Scheme and various small- and large-scale habitat creation initiatives provide significant opportunities for habitat and landscape renewal. Opportunities for such renewal are an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. Guidelines for landscape renewal and wildlife conservation within fields include:

- encourage as funded options in Agri-Environmental Schemes the establishment of substantial field margins comprising herb-rich semi-natural grassland to help minimise damage to hedges and other sensitive landscape features and habitats, and to assist habitat creation.
- encourage as funded options in Agri-Environmental Schemes the adoption of semi-natural wildlife habitats (including space for arable weeds and field corner copses) at the heads of fields (“conservation headlands”).
- encourage the management of land that is set aside from agriculture in ways which benefit local landscape character, heritage and wildlife.



Pond restoration at The Haven, Billingshurst

Landscape Guidelines for the conservation of orchards

4.28 Orchards and other prominent agricultural features such as hopyards are a defining characteristic of many parts of the landscape of the South East (although large commercial hopyards and the characteristic oast houses associated with them are a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of our landscape). Since the war, the acreage of commercial orchards in the County – as elsewhere – has declined to the point where these are no longer a strong landscape characteristic. Nevertheless, there is much interest in preserving local fruit species, marketing them, and making commercial orchards, however small, a going concern, thereby maintaining landscape diversity. Supporting this renewal is therefore an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. Guidelines for the conservation of orchards include:

- promote the conservation and enhancement of traditional orchards as distinctive landscape features.
- promote the planting of new orchards emphasising locally distinctive fruit varieties, as well as nationally-known and continental varieties.



Apple orchard in the Low Weald



*Under the South Downs:
Bugshill Lane, Bepton*

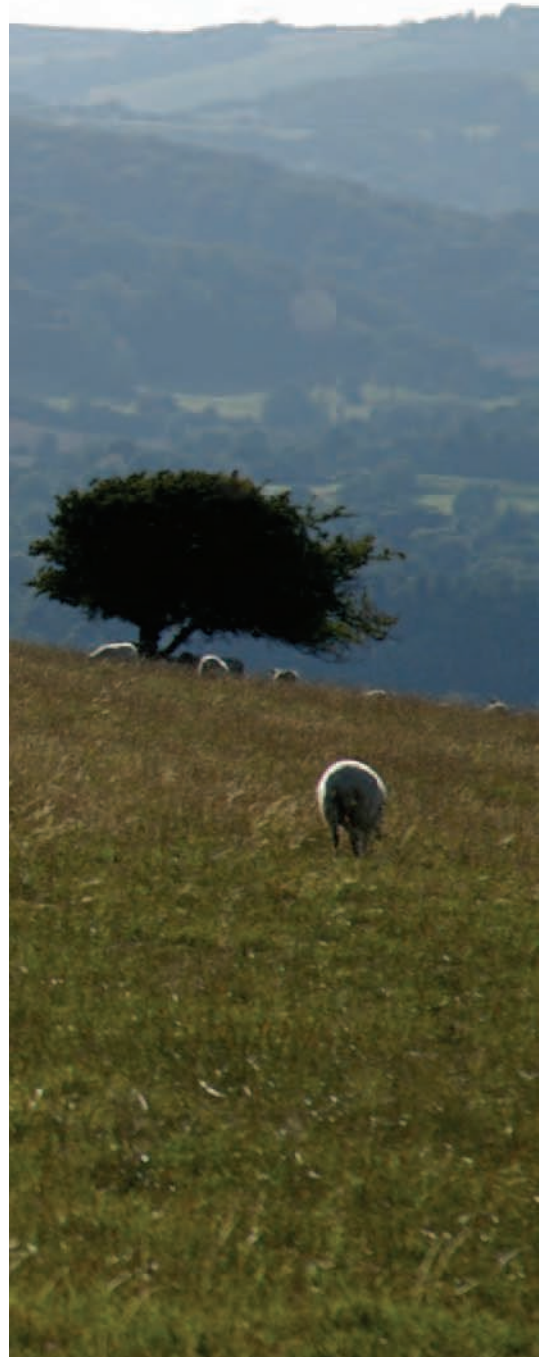
*The pastoral landscape of
the Low Weald*



Parham House and the Wealden Greensand ridges from the downs

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

This section outlines how the Strategy will be used to meet the needs of four main audiences drawn from planning, land management, community and educational interests and to raise awareness of the importance and value of landscape character.



Introduction

5.1 The Strategy provides a framework and direction for the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character of West Sussex. By taking account of forces for change in the landscape it will help guide planning and land management decisions, raise public awareness, and stimulate the appreciation of landscape character. This Part describes the audiences to whom the Strategy is addressed and the roles they will play. *Appendix 5* sets out details of the actions the County Council and its partners are taking and intend to take and lists other agencies actively involved with landscape conservation.

Four main audiences

5.2 The Strategy is addressed to four main audiences by the County Council, the Borough and District Councils and the AONB agencies forming the Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme. These audiences are:

- landowners, their agents and land managers
- developers and statutory agencies
- communities
- the public at large and educationalists.

5.3 These interests are encouraged to implement the Strategy with the help of appropriate guidance and information. They are urged to achieve the Strategy objectives through policies of their own and through action on the ground. The principal mechanisms for action are discussed in more detail below.

Land use planning

5.4 The policy makers and decision-takers in the statutory land use planning (development plan) system have a potentially major impact on character 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. They are therefore in a strong position to influence the character of town and country for the better. The results of their decisions and actions will assist delivery of the Strategy if:

- strong landscape character-based development plan policies are adopted.
- the location of development in Development Plans takes account of the Strategy objectives.
- the Strategy informs the preparation of development briefs and concept statements for sites subject to major development proposals.
- the Strategy informs and supplements development control, landscape protection and design policies and criteria.
- the Strategy underpins the preparation of Countryside Design Summaries to help foster local distinctiveness.

Land management

5.5 Land management decisions by landowners (including statutory bodies) and farmers – the latter traditional custodians of the countryside – have a significant impact on the landscape. It is therefore vitally important to influence farmers and landowners together with the

multiplicity of agencies involved (including the County Council and its partners) to manage land in ways which benefit character. The Strategy will be used to:

- inform decision-making on land management issues and the targeting of resources.
- assist in targeting increases in the core area of semi-natural habitats.
- assist in setting priorities for Environmental Stewardship Agri-Environmental Schemes.
- assist in setting strategic environmental improvement priorities.
- assist in the development of urban fringe strategies.
- assist with strategies for woodland management and creation including priorities for woodland grant schemes.
- inform 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

5.6 Communities throughout the County have close ties to their localities, and can provide a genuine local perspective on what landscape character means to them. In recent years, the planning system has recognised the importance of involving local people. 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 local development frameworks the land-use and development delivery mechanism for the community strategy itself. In the planning sphere, Government Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPG12) entitled *Local Development Frameworks* (2003) makes it clear that local authorities should involve the community at an early stage in the process of preparing local development documents.

5.7 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.

5.8 Local Development Frameworks have 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 feed upwards and be included in technical and policy work, just as characterisation studies can feed downwards and serve as a context for local action.

5.9 Particularly strong in 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 realise concepts of character which are worth asserting strongly, whilst appreciating the constancy of change. Finally,

information on character will provide a vital input to work on the regional Small Market Towns Initiative, for instance, as part of the health checklists for individual towns, and to other work aimed at the conservation and enhancement of historic urban areas.

5.10 The Strategy 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

5.11 When it comes to public priorities, character is 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 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 County and to help communities to understand how these can be protected and enhanced.

5.12 The Assessment and Strategy 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
- drawing attention to the Strategy and landscape guidance in schools and colleges.
- helping community-led appraisal and planning work aimed at harnessing the commitment and actions of the people who live and work in the area, and on whom the success of the Strategy depends.



Ouse Valley Viaduct, Balcombe



Hang gliding at The Devil's Dyke, South Downs

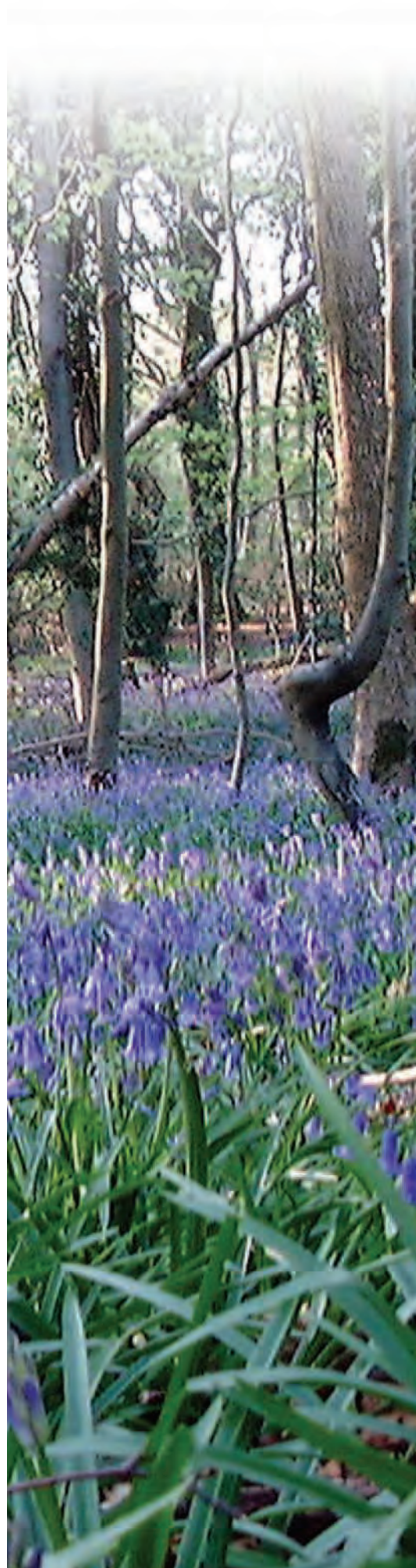


The Lavant Valley, near Chichester



Pastures near Halnaker Windmill

APPENDICES



Appendix I

POLICY BACKGROUND

AI.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, in the case of West Sussex, the emerging *South East Plan*. The Countryside Agency provides non-statutory guidance on the definition of landscape character and its use as a development planning tool. The paragraphs below summarise briefly the policy background at national and regional levels and the stance of the County Council.

Government planning guidance

AI.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.

AI.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. It states as a key principle (para 1 (vi), p.7):

...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.

AI.4 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.

AI.5 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.

AI.6 Government Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) entitled *Local Development*



PPS7

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).

AI.7 Of particular interest in a character context is the use of *Area Action 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.

AI.8 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.

The draft South East Plan

AI.9 The *South East Plan* (the new Regional Spatial Strategy) is required under the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, prepared in accordance with Government Planning Policy Statement 11 (*PPS11*) entitled *Regional Spatial Strategies*.

AI.10 In January 2005, the South East of England Regional Assembly (SEERA) published for public consultation the *South East Plan Core Document* entitled *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 (para 1.3).

AI.11 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 (para 2.2.1). 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

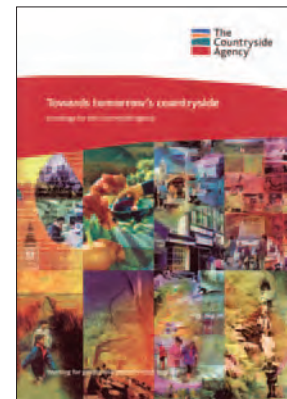
our understanding of what character is, how it is changing, and delivering benefits through land management.

AI.12 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 on 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 and recognising the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness and sense of place. The full plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State in Spring 2006. Further public consultation will follow. The Plan is expected to be approved Spring 2008.

Non-statutory policy from the Countryside Agency

AI.13 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).



*Towards Tomorrow's
Countryside*

AI.14 Following reorganisation in 2005, the Agency will continue to advise nationally on character and landscape issues.

County Council policies

AI.15 The County Council and its partners wish 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.

AI.16 A key priority of the *County Strategy 2001-2005* is “to protect and enhance the heritage and environment of West Sussex”. Protecting the distinctive character of the towns, villages, countryside and coast is one of the three aims of the adopted *West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016*. Policy CHI of the Plan seeks to reinforce the combined character of the five national Character Areas in the County. Other policies safeguard Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; protect woodlands, forests; rivers, waterways and the coast; seek to retain the separate identities of towns and villages; and seek to protect historic heritage.

Appendix 2

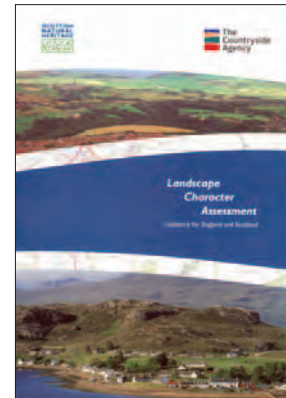
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Key issues and opportunities

A2.1 In preparing the Assessment and the Strategy, the County Council followed the advice set out in *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* published in 2002 by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

A2.2 As noted earlier, if the landscape were unchanging, we would not need a Strategy to protect it. Accordingly, the The Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy development process began with a consideration of key issues and opportunities concerning the future of the landscape:

- the implications of climate change for landscape character. Managing change in ways which do not result in the loss of local character and distinctiveness, whilst taking advantage of new opportunities.
- changes in character resulting from current farming practices. Opportunities for landscape renewal presented by Agri-Environmental Schemes and other initiatives.
- decline in the extent and quality of key habitats including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, grassland and wetland. Opportunities for habitat management, renewal and creation.
- loss of distinctive local character owing to standardised designs of new development, within and on the edges of settlements. Opportunities for landscape and land management guidelines and guidance seeking development which respects landscape character.
- impact of transport and other infrastructure developments. Opportunities for landscape and land management guidelines and guidance seeking development which respects landscape character.
- small-scale, incremental erosion of local character through, for example, changing or neglected land uses. Opportunities for landscape renewal.
- Erosion of historic urban and landscape character. Opportunities for landscape and land management guidelines and guidance seeking development and management which respects landscape and townscape character.



Landscape Character Assessment Guidance

How was the Strategy developed?

A2.3 The Strategy development process was as follows (see *Figure 1.1*):

Involving and consulting stakeholders

A2.4 A wide variety of partners and stakeholders was involved and consulted during the preparation of the Landscape Character Assessment and throughout the Strategy development process. This involved talking to stakeholders and communities about what they valued in the West Sussex landscape and what kind of guidance would help them in their own efforts to preserve local distinctiveness. For the composition of the stakeholder group see *Appendix 6*.

Defining purpose and audiences

A2.5 The purpose of the Strategy was defined and the main audiences identified.

Description of the diverse character of the County

A2.6 A Landscape Character Assessment was prepared describing the landscape character of the County and individual Landscape Character Areas. In the Assessment, “character” is defined as a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes each landscape different. The definition does not imply that any one landscape is better or worse than another. Character is influenced by – and embodies – particular combinations of visual, ecological, and historical elements together with settlement patterns, built components, and “intangible” aspects such as tranquillity and sense of place.

A2.7 Important elements of the Assessment process included:

- *taking account of previous studies:* the Assessment drew on all previous landscape studies in West Sussex, including those for the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- *analysis of forces for change in the landscape.*
- *charting the history of the landscape:* the first task was to trace the history of the landscape, to understand how it evolved. This included studying the relationship of landscape to underlying geology and understanding the history of agricultural, land-use and habitat change. This provided a clear picture of why the landscape is the way it is today: what forces, in shaping it, led to the creation of diversity, and what must happen if landscape change is to be managed successfully.
- *appreciating landscape diversity:* the Assessment recognises the great diversity of the West Sussex landscape. It defines a number of landscape character types in the County (areas which share similar characteristics), as well as over twenty unique Landscape Character Areas. The Assessment describes the distinctive qualities of each type and area.

Formulation of a vision and Strategy objectives

A2.8 Visions were formulated for the West Sussex landscape as a whole and for the five national Character Areas within the County. Strategy objectives were then defined to help to realise the vision and generate guidelines

Landscape and Land Management Guidelines

A2.9 The Strategy objectives were translated into a series of County-wide Landscape Guidelines for dealing with the likely changes impacting on the landscape. These will be used by the partners and others to institute actions which, in turn, will realise the vision. *Land Management Guidelines* containing more detail will be published separately for individual Landscape Character Areas defined in the Assessment.

Mechanisms for implementation

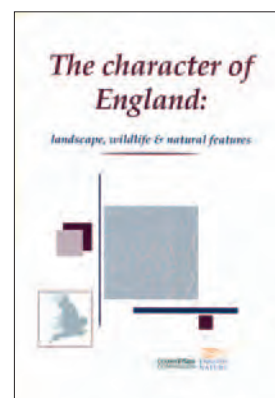
A2.10 The Strategy describes mechanisms for implementation including partnership action. The County Council is also working in partnership to produce new, localised landscape character assessments for the Borough, District and AONB areas.

Appendix 3

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS

What are national Character Areas?

A3.1 For many years, the Countryside Agency (formerly the Countryside Commission) has sought to raise the national profile of landscape character and natural areas. In 1996 English Nature and the Countryside Commission, with help from English Heritage, produced a map entitled *The Character of England: landscape, wildlife and natural features* (the *Character of England Map*) depicting the natural and cultural dimensions of the landscape. The Map shows nearly 200 unique landscape and coastal character areas in England, based on an assessment of the natural, geological and man-made features of the landscape. The boundaries of the Character Areas coincide with individual and grouped *Natural Areas* previously defined by English Nature. Accompanying the Map is a series of descriptions which provide a summary of the more detailed nature conservation and landscape information. In the Introduction to the Map the Commission writes:



Character of England Map

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.

A3.2 The *Character 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 national Character Areas also provide an ideal framework for monitoring countryside quality. The national Character Areas within and adjoining the Weald are set out in *Table A3.1*, those in West Sussex tinted. The areas in the County are shown on *Map 1.1*.

Table A3.1: NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS IN THE WEALD

<i>Character Map Area No.</i>	<i>Character Area</i>	<i>Coverage</i>
120	Wealden Greensand	Part of the Surrey Greensand hills. <i>Strong feature in West Sussex.</i>
121	Low Weald	<i>Substantial portion in West Sussex.</i>
122	High Weald	<i>Significant portion in West Sussex.</i>
125	South Downs	<i>A defining characteristic of West Sussex.</i>
126	South Coast Plain	Outside of the Wealden basin, sharing rock strata with the Hampshire basin. <i>Substantial portion in West Sussex.</i>
170	Coastline: Folkestone to Selsey Bill	<i>Substantial portion in West Sussex. For the purposes of the Assessment, the coast is included in the analysis for the South Coast Plain.</i>
119	North Downs	Northern chalk edge of the Weald. <i>Absent in West Sussex.</i>
123	Romney Marshes	Kent/East Sussex coasts. <i>Absent in West Sussex.</i>
124	Pevensy Levels	East Sussex coast. <i>Absent in West Sussex.</i>

Appendix 4

FORCES FOR CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE

A4.1 We need a Landscape Strategy because change is inevitable. Unless change is creatively managed, we may lose unnecessarily those characteristics of the landscape we cherish whilst missing opportunities to create new landscapes. This Appendix identifies in more detail the key forces for change in the landscape, both globally and locally. These have been taken into account in shaping the Strategy.

Climate change

A4.2 The evidence that significant climate change is occurring globally is now compelling enough to stimulate international debate. 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.

A4.3 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.

A4.4 Climate change could have all manner of affects on our environment including development and land use. 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. In short, there may well be problems and opportunities associated with climate change. In monitoring the Strategy, it will be necessary to take an adaptive view from now on, possibly including “climate proof” decisions.

A4.5 Should they occur, the impacts of climate change on the landscape character of West Sussex are likely to be complex and interrelated, varying over space and time but happening within decades. In summary, possible impacts include:

- changes in temperatures and rainfall patterns with effects on 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.
- increasing frequency of winter gales, leading to greater storm damage to woodlands.
- increasing replacement of traditional arable crops by drought-tolerant species such as sunflowers and maize.
- drier summers leading to reduction in groundwater level and the drying out of ponds and

watercourses (impacts on wildlife). This could result in less water being available to dilute pollutants, thereby reducing water quality.

- increasing requirement for irrigation reservoirs to store winter rainfall (plus changes to water management).
- increasing effects of pests and diseases.
- rising sea level, leading to increasing flooding and inundation of the coast, and inland areas. Possible contamination of fresh water through salt water inundation.
- increasing flooding of heavier, less well-drained soils during the winter and hot, dry spells leading to soil desiccation, subsidence and increased risk of wind erosion.
- warmer summers, encouraging greater recreation and tourism, thereby exacerbating existing problems such as traffic congestion and erosion. Disruption to wildlife.
- decreased temperatures as well, with associated impacts on increased energy demands.
- damage to archaeological sites through soil desiccation and changing farming practices. This will affect the integrity of historic landscapes. Within historic gardens the maintenance of specimen plants and fine grass swards may not be viable in 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.

Coastal change

A4.6 The coastline of West Sussex is characterised by dunes and beaches fronting low-lying plains. Some areas of the coastline are still operating in a natural way, for example the moving spit of East Head at Chichester Harbour. Much of the coast is now defended by a variety of means including shingle beaches with timber and rock groynes, sea walls and promenades.

A4.7 Since the end of the last Ice Age, sea levels have been rising whilst the South Coast has been sinking, leading to a greater risk of flood and increasing erosion. These effects are likely to be increased as a consequence of climate change. Erosion and flooding along the South Coast has been well recorded and in the past few hundred years some communities have been lost (although others which were once flourishing medieval ports, such as Steyning and Bramber, declined due to the silting up of the estuary river). Today there is a greater public expectation that losses of assets through inundation can be prevented through engineering and investment. However, continuing to defend the existing coastline will require defences to be higher, wider and more visually intrusive. The water on the seaward side will be deeper, conceivably leading to the total loss of the beaches for which the South Coast is renowned.

A4.8 The draft of the *Selsey Bill to Beachy Head Shoreline Management Plan First Review* paints a picture of how the Sussex coast might look if defences were to be maintained at the level that they are today:

If we were to continue to defend into the future as we have done in the past, the long-term picture would be one of a very fragmented shoreline, characterised by a series of concreted headlands with embayments and tidal inlets between. Seawalls would result in a series of large promontories, in some cases extending 100 to 200m out from the adjacent (undefended) eroded shoreline by the end of the century. These promontories would be highly exposed to waves in deep water, requiring much more

substantial defences to be constructed. These defences would also need to be extended landward to prevent outflanking of the present seawalls. There would be no beaches present along these frontages and the groynes would have become redundant; water will remain present at the structures at all times. The Middleton frontage today provides a good example of how some of the defended frontages within the Shoreline Management Plan area might look in the future.

A4.9 The Shoreline Management Plan Review, which sets policy for management of the coast over the next 100 years, seeks to “sustain existing dense urban areas through proactive management of the existing beaches”. In other areas however, the Review has identified opportunities where a more free-functioning natural coastline could be developed, creating a more natural coastal landscape by reducing artificial structures on the beach.

Renewable energy

A4.10 As our reliance on renewable energy sources increases, these will have an impact on the landscape. The current benefits and potential landscape consequences of wind farms are well-rehearsed. However, other technologies can also have effects. One example is the increased 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 biomass, such as wood and straw, or by oils and gases derived from plant material.

A4.11 Current *Regional Planning Guidance for the South East* envisages that by 2026 at least 14% of regional electricity generation capacity will be provided from renewable sources. The greatest potential resource in West Sussex is biomass (wood). The technology to utilise this is therefore likely to become commonplace, with resultant benefits for the sustainable management of woodland resources and for the local economy. The majority of CHP and heat-generating installations will be small-scale projects, less obtrusive within the landscape. These would be appropriate in rural locations and in discrete sets of buildings such as schools and farms.

Agriculture and land management

Agriculture

A4.12 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 Entry-Level Agri-Environmental Scheme (ELS). These changes are likely to present fresh challenges with regard to landscape character including significant opportunities for landscape restoration and enhancement.

A4.13 Taking into account the implications of climate change, the implications for landscape character of agricultural change include:

- a potential further increase in large arable farm units, which may lead to greater homogenisation of the landscape, reduction of already depleted biodiversity, and potential demand for more centralised and large-scale buildings such as grain storage facilities. However, larger business units may also have the resources, labour and capital to respond to environmental initiatives and to carry out landscape and biodiversity enhancement in association with productive agriculture.

- potentially greater development of local environmentally friendly and organic produce, building on the opportunities presented by the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), which could help to stem the loss of biodiversity on farmland.
- further pressures for new uses of marginal land, including smallholdings, leisure uses and expansion of horse paddocks.
- the current poor agricultural economy and increasing competition may make it 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 High Weald, and has recently become more common in the Low Weald.
- continuing decline in traditional land management practices, and “improvements” leading to the loss of habitats such as herb-rich grasslands, wet grasslands and degradation of field boundaries.
- increases in 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 the east of the county.
- potential adverse effects on biodiversity of genetically modified herbicide-tolerant and insect-resistant crops.
- soil erosion as a result of ploughing on steep slopes, particularly on downland.
- loss of visible archaeological features from ploughing.
- potential for some forms of rural diversification development to conflict with the historic and architectural character of farmsteads and settlements.
- potential effects on landscape character of the introduction of biomass crops.

Woodland management

A4.14 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 increased over recent years). Despite woodlands providing many social and environmental benefits for the inhabitants of the Region, the management of a substantial proportion of them is inadequate or neglected. A regional expression of the *England Forestry Strategy*, the South East Region Forestry and Woodlands Framework *Seeing the Wood for the Trees* highlights how trees, woodlands and forestry can contribute to sustainable development and sets out the steps needed to secure the future of the woodland resource.

A4.15 In order to ensure that woodlands continue to contribute towards the sustainable development of the region and quality of life, the draft *South East Plan* urges:

- protection and enhancement of the value and character of woodland, promoting appropriate woodland planting in association with major areas of development to restore and improve degraded landscapes.
- realisation of the economic, environmental and social benefits that woodland management and tree planting can provide.
- promotion of the management of existing woodlands and seeking new markets for woodland produce.

- supporting the implementation of the Regional Forestry and Woodlands Framework.
- managing woodland in response to climate change.

A4.16 Woodland and tree cover has been maintained in West Sussex since the 1970s. Woodland land cover actually increased by over 2,800 hectares from 17.4% to 18.8% of the land area between 1980 and 1995. The total area of woodland of 0.1 hectares and over in West Sussex is 37,507 hectares. This represents 18.9% of the land area making West Sussex the second most wooded county in England. Despite this, important issues include the continuing decline in woodland management, the isolation and fragmentation of ancient woodland, and the introduction in the past of conifers into ancient woodlands.

A4.17 The key forces for change related to woodland and their implications for landscape character include:

- decline in coppice woodland and lack of natural regeneration. However, encouragement of sustainable woodland management through the development of new markets for woodland products, including woodfuel, and woodland management grants, may help to reverse this trend.
- low proportions of broadleaved trees in some ageing coniferous plantations, and erosion of distinctive broadleaved woodland types in the county.
- problems of providing affordable housing for woodland workers and high cost of living for workers in the South East.

A4.18 Initiatives such as the West Weald Woods Landscape Partnership aim to reduce the isolation and fragmentation of some of the finest ancient woods in Europe. This will be achieved 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.

A4.19 The potential for floodplain woodland restoration in the county has been examined in the Sussex Floodplain Woodland Concept Study. The next stage will be to implement the findings, restoring a habitat largely lost to the County.

Land management of wildlife habitats

A4.20 Species-rich meadows and grasslands, heathlands and wetlands all need positive management to maintain their character and biodiversity. Whilst the rate of loss from direct damage appears to be lessening, management of the remaining habitats will require effort and resources.

Built development

A4.21 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. Proposed development levels for West Sussex over the coming years likely to emerge from the draft *South East Plan* represent

an important challenge in accommodating housing development without eroding character and local distinctiveness.

A4.22 It is not just the location of new development that has implications for new development. The density and design of that development are also crucial. The Countryside Agency is keen to see development *good enough to approve* and this also means good design, sympathetic to local surroundings. Accommodating additional housing infrastructure will mean increased housing densities. This will have an impact on the townscape and landscape, particularly with higher, bulkier buildings. It is essential that the opportunity is taken to secure good quality, well-designed buildings at varying densities which fit in sympathetically with the differing character of localities.

A4.23 The key forces for change related to built development and their implications for landscape include:

- 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 leading to erosion of rural character.

Infrastructure

A4.24 Continuing proposals for major road improvements and bypasses in the County may bring significant impacts on landscape character including loss of tranquillity. According to a study prepared by the Council for the Protection of Rural England in 1995, West Sussex experienced the fastest loss of tranquillity in the region between 1960-1975, particularly as a result of growth in road traffic noise. Less than half of the County area is now tranquil. Tranquillity has been severely eroded along the South Coast, in the South Downs, and in the Gatwick and Crawley area, with increasing fragmentation of quiet areas. The large block of tranquil countryside to the north of Chichester is an important exception. Telecommunication masts may intrude on visual tranquillity: high, prominent ground is under particular pressure. Future potential for the expansion of Gatwick Airport has considerable implications for the character of the landscape in the Crawley area.

A4.25 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 communication 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.

Minerals and waste

A4.26 Mineral working takes place on the gravel deposits of the Coastal Plain, in the chalk quarries of the South Downs, and within other smaller quarries and claypits elsewhere. Generally, the wider visual impacts of these workings have been minimised, but they can have significant impacts locally. The increased requirement for landfill and waste treatment installations may introduce new pressures although, as with mineral extraction, there are also important opportunities for landscape restoration and enhancement.

A4.27 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.

Recreation and tourism

A4.28 West Sussex has long been a popular tourist destination, famous for its coastal resorts. Today the County is increasingly valued for its scenery, climate and amenity. The South Downs in particular provides an outstanding recreational resource. Although there have been relatively few recent major outdoor recreational developments, recreational pressures are likely to continue. Important attractions can create seasonally intense visitor pressure – a general concern expressed by some in respect of the proposed National Park for the South Downs.

A4.29 The key forces for change related to recreation and tourism, and implications for landscape character include:

- potential impacts on landscape and wildlife of large formal recreational developments such as golf courses with associated facilities.
- increasing development of new forms of recreation such as four-wheel driving and mountain biking.
- 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 management of hedgerows.
- increase in the number of visitors to some historic cities, towns and villages and pressure for new visitor car and coach parks.
- pressure for marinas, holiday villages and car parks.
- pressure for motorised water sports.

Small-scale incremental change

A4.30 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.

A4.3I 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.
- loss and deterioration of locally distinctive and historic features such as walls, fencing, paving, gates, timber signposts, milestones, windmills, orchards, fords, and dewponds.

Appendix 5

PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTION

A5.1 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. This Appendix outlines the main actors and partnerships.

The Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme

A5.2 Under the leadership of West Sussex County Council, a partnership of local authorities and national and local agencies has begun a five-year scheme (2003-08) known as *The Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme*. The Programme aims for higher quality development - and land management and conservation practices - which reflect the character of the County and respect environmental assets.

Aim and objectives of the Programme

A5.3 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 which are capable of benefiting character.

A5.4 Its objectives are to:

- initiate, complete, make accessible, integrate and use *characterisation studies* as a basis for guidance, advice and awareness-raising, including subsequent monitoring of character change and review of data sources.
- engage and advise all relevant audiences including members, stakeholders and communities, by preparing *strategy, guidance and advice* for planning and land management purposes and giving additional guidance and advice on character where necessary.
- implement a strategy of *awareness-raising* through education, marketing and promotion with members, stakeholders, communities and the public, centred on a Character of West Sussex website.
- lobby government and national and regional agencies on matters relating to character and to promote *good practice* using work in West Sussex as an example.
- work with and influence other agencies to improve character in West Sussex.
- undertake review and further research using the latter in support of these objectives.

Action and monitoring

A5.5 The Partnership will be responsible for many of the actions taken under the Strategy. A *Character Action Plan* is being drawn up to guide its work.

A5.6 Monitoring systems will be vital in tracking change and adjusting the Strategy. The County Council is working with the Countryside Agency on the national *Countryside Quality*

Counts initiative aimed at monitoring landscape change in the national Character Areas. Work on devising and agreeing the Strategy monitoring programme is now under way. In addition, the success of the Action Plan will be monitored as a regular part of business planning activities undertaken by the partnership authorities.

Partnership activities

A5.7 The main activities currently being undertaken by the Partnership Programme concern the following main areas:

Characterisation studies

A5.8 The County Council began preliminary work on the Programme by initiating an ambitious suite of characterisation studies. Various partners are supporting the characterisation work financially. These include the Borough and District Councils, the AONB agencies, local organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust, and the national agencies English Heritage, English Nature and the Countryside Agency, which have contributed generous grant aid. The extensive suite of character studies is now well under way.

Planning policy and guidance

A5.9 West Sussex County Council, residents and visitors to West Sussex have long-cherished the well-loved and precious character of the County. Protecting and enhancing this character is an important element in the County Strategy 2001 – 2005 and in its other strategies and plans. This theme also came out strongly in public comment on the Structure Plan and is a key aim in the adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016.

A5.10 An important part of the Programme will be to generate policy regarding character. The Borough and District Councils are seeking to reflect the character approach in their emerging Local Development Frameworks. In this respect, the County Council has teamed up with the Countryside Agency and two District Councils (Horsham and Mid Sussex) in a Demonstration Project (2005) to produce policy guidance on landscape character for inclusion in Local Development Frameworks and model 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. The findings of the Project will be used by the local authorities in West Sussex and be disseminated nationally as an example of good practice.

A5.11 The County Council is also working closely with the Borough and District Councils on character aspects of development options planning. For instance, the County Council has supplied historic landscape analysis to Chichester District Council to support technical work on the assessment of the visual impact of development options on the City of Chichester (2005). Historic landscape analysis has also been supplied to Mid Sussex District Council regarding the East Grinstead Area Action Plan.

Land Management Guidelines

A5.12 As noted earlier, a significant output of the Landscape Character Assessment work will be the publishing of *Land Management Guidelines* for the local authorities, landowners and farmers, to help guide landscape conservation and restoration. The Guidelines will also be used by communities in parish planning initiatives and the preparation of Village Design Statements.

Action on the ground

A5.13 West Sussex County Council, the AONB agencies and other partners are already pursuing (and have long done so) a wide range of environmental and land management initiatives, including landscape renewal, contributing to the conservation and enhancement of the character of the County. It would be impossible to mention the full range of activities here. Suffice it to say that this work has been backed up by considerable activity relating to biodiversity, and the County Council has consistently provided a lead in these endeavours. The County Council is actively involved in the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership, which is responsible for preparing *Biodiversity Action Plans* (BAPs). The creation of a diversity of habitats previously denuded in the County will contribute directly to the fostering of strong character and local distinctiveness, notably in areas valued for presently rare habitats such as herb-rich downland grassland and lowland heath.

A5.14 The County Council's Countryside Ranger Service continues to undertake important land management and nature conservation duties, at the internationally renowned wildlife site at Pagham Harbour National Nature Reserve, at Buchan Country Park and elsewhere.

A5.15 These activities complement those of the District Councils (for instance, in respect of Local Nature Reserve management and other initiatives such as urban fringe management schemes). They also parallel the considerable land management and nature conservation programmes of the agencies managing the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the County, focused on:

- providing land management policy guidance.
- giving advice to land managers.
- distributing grants.
- managing of land in their control as examples of good landscape protection and enhancement.
- undertaking research to improve understanding.

A5.16 It is also worth mentioning the important contribution made by the County Council to the built heritage of the County through advice given to the Borough and District Councils on listed buildings development applications. The County Council's responsibilities for rights of way are also of the greatest importance. The excellent network of rights of way in West Sussex gives access to fine countryside for countless residents and visitors.

A5.17 The Action Plan will build soundly on current and past activities, initiating new projects "on the ground" to help fulfil the objectives of the Strategy.

Community planning

A5.18 In partnership with the District Councils, the County Council will continue to lend its support to the development of a County-wide programme of parish planning, providing local communities with information to assist in fostering a sense of place.

Awareness-raising

A5.19 An important part of the Partnership Programme will be to publicise and make available its work and to raise awareness of local distinctiveness and sense of place including through educational programmes. The County Council is preparing a marketing programme for the character work, the broad objectives of which will be to:

- make all characterisation studies and material available in appropriate forms and formats (published documents, CDs, electronic transfer etc) for the different audiences wishing to use them.
- develop and maintain a Character of West Sussex website on behalf of the partners, linked to the County Council website.
- meet requests for the analysis of historic landscape data contained in the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) for Sussex.
- continue to work closely with stakeholder groups, parish councils and other community groups.
- develop an educational programme concerning character.
- convey the character message in all consultations on statutory plans and on strategies, including fostering fruitful working relationships within the Partnership and with other local authority departments, and regional and statutory bodies, with a view to disseminating the character message.
- continue to participate in good practice and other professional conferences, seminars and workshops and continue to liaise with practitioners in other local authorities and in the private sector.

National and regional agencies

A5.20 DEFRA, the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, English Nature, English Heritage, the South East England Development Agency and the South East England Regional Assembly are the principal national and regional agencies which, through programmes of their own, can assist the implementation of the Strategy by:

- commissioning research.
- giving grants and advice.
- demonstrating exemplary management of landscapes within their own estates.

A5.21 The Countryside Agency has consistently pioneered research for many years into the characterisation of the countryside. It is to the Agency and its forbears that we owe the *Character of England Map* and techniques for evaluating landscape sensitivity, monitoring landscape change, and putting character techniques and rural proofing into planning and land management policy and implementation. In recent years, it has been increasingly supported in its efforts by English Nature, which is today advocating large-scale habitat renewal, and by English Heritage, which has pioneered techniques to characterise the historic landscape and historic towns. National research and advice on character will continue to flow from the reorganised Agency.

Stakeholders

A5.22 The County Council has developed its programme of character work with its Borough, District and AONB agency partners. In pioneering new characterisation methods, it has also been highly successful in attracting substantial grant aid from national agencies, principally the Countryside Agency, English Nature and English Heritage. However, it recognised from the outset the need to work with a wide range of stakeholders and local communities to develop the characterisation studies and subsequent policy guidance.

A5.23 In line with advice from the Countryside Agency, the County Council consulted widely on the preparation of the Assessment and Strategy. A mailing list was formed to keep stakeholders regularly informed of progress. From this body, participants were drawn for two stakeholder workshops to discuss the emerging documentation (a process paralleled in Horsham District during the preparation of the District Landscape Character Assessment). The stakeholder representation included is set out in *Appendix 6*. The County Council will continue to consult its stakeholders, many of whom responded to consultation on the content of the Strategy.

A5.24 Many stakeholders are involved in direct environmental action and the County Council has worked in partnership with them over many years. Non-statutory organisations such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Archaeological Trusts and the Woodland Trust are assisting the implementation of the Strategy by:

- bringing together community interests and carrying out programmes of action.
- providing guidance on practical conservation management techniques.

Landowners

A5.25 The importance of working with landowners, particularly the large country estates in West Sussex, has already been noted. However, as land parcels become more fragmented and new owners take over farmland, it will be important to reach as many of them as possible to provide advice and guidance on good land management practices which benefit nature conservation and character. Landowners can assist the implementation of the Strategy by:

- preparing landscape management plans.
- contributing resources to maintenance and management.
- taking up Agri-Environmental and other conservation grant schemes.

Local community groups

A5.26 Working with a wide range of community groups including parish councils has long been a tradition in West Sussex, and will become increasingly important as community planning initiatives develop. Local community groups can assist the implementation of the Strategy by:

- using landscape guidance.
- initiating local community-based environmental enhancements.

Appendix 6

STAKEHOLDERS

Local authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Adur District Council
 Arun District Council
 Chichester District Council
 Crawley Borough Council
 Horsham District Council
 Mid Sussex District Council
 Worthing Borough Council
 Chichester Harbour Conservancy
 High Weald AONB Unit
 Sussex Downs Conservation Board (now the Sussex Downs Joint Committee)
 Brighton and Hove City Council
 East Sussex County Council Transport and Environment
 Hampshire County Council Landscape Group
 Surrey County Council Countryside Conservation
 East Hampshire AONB
 Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) for Sussex (Project Officer)

National agencies

Countryside Agency
 DEFRA
 English Heritage
 English Nature (Surrey and Sussex)
 Environment Agency
 Forestry Commission
 GOSE Rural Team

Heritage, conservation and amenity bodies

Action in Rural Sussex
 Brinsbury Campus
 Campaign to Protect Rural England
 National Trust (West Sussex Downs)
 Ramblers Association (Sussex Area)
 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (SE England Office)
 Society for Sussex Downsmen
 Sussex Wildlife Trust
 Sussex Rural Community Council
 Sussex Federation of Amenity Societies
 Sussex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
 Weald Vale Association
 Woodland Trust

Parish councils

Sussex Association of Parish Councils

Amberley PC
 Ardingly PC
 Bury PC
 Easebourne PC
 Harting PC
 Kirdford PC
 Lodsworth PC
 Lurgashall PC
 Oving PC
 Slinfold PC
 Thakeham PC
 Washington PC
 West Itchenor PC
 Wisborough Green PC

Landowners and farming

County Land and Business Association (CLA)
 National Farmers Union (NFU)
 Coombs Cottage Farm
 Cowdray Estate
 Goodwood Estate
 Paddockhurst Estate
 West Dean Estate
 Wiston Estate
 AJM Consultants
 Strutt and Parker

Planning consultancies

David Hares Associates
 CGMS Consulting
 DPDS (Crawley)
 FPD Savills
 Miller Hughes Associates Ltd
 Richard Maile Associates

Developers

Berkeley Strategic
 Henry Smith and Co
 House Builders Federation

Individuals and Rural Forum members

Jake Clausen	
Dr Angela Chapman	Rural Forum
Mrs P.A. Greenwood	Rural Forum
Bill Lanning	Rural Forum
Juliet Kay	Rural Forum
Roger Paterson	Rural Forum
Mrs R. Perrin	Rural Forum
Mrs K. Worvell	Rural Forum

Appendix 7

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Government and national

DEFRA *Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England* (October 2002).

DEFRA *Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food* (2003).

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West Sussex and AONBs

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Goodwood Racecourse from the Iron Age hillfort on The Trundle

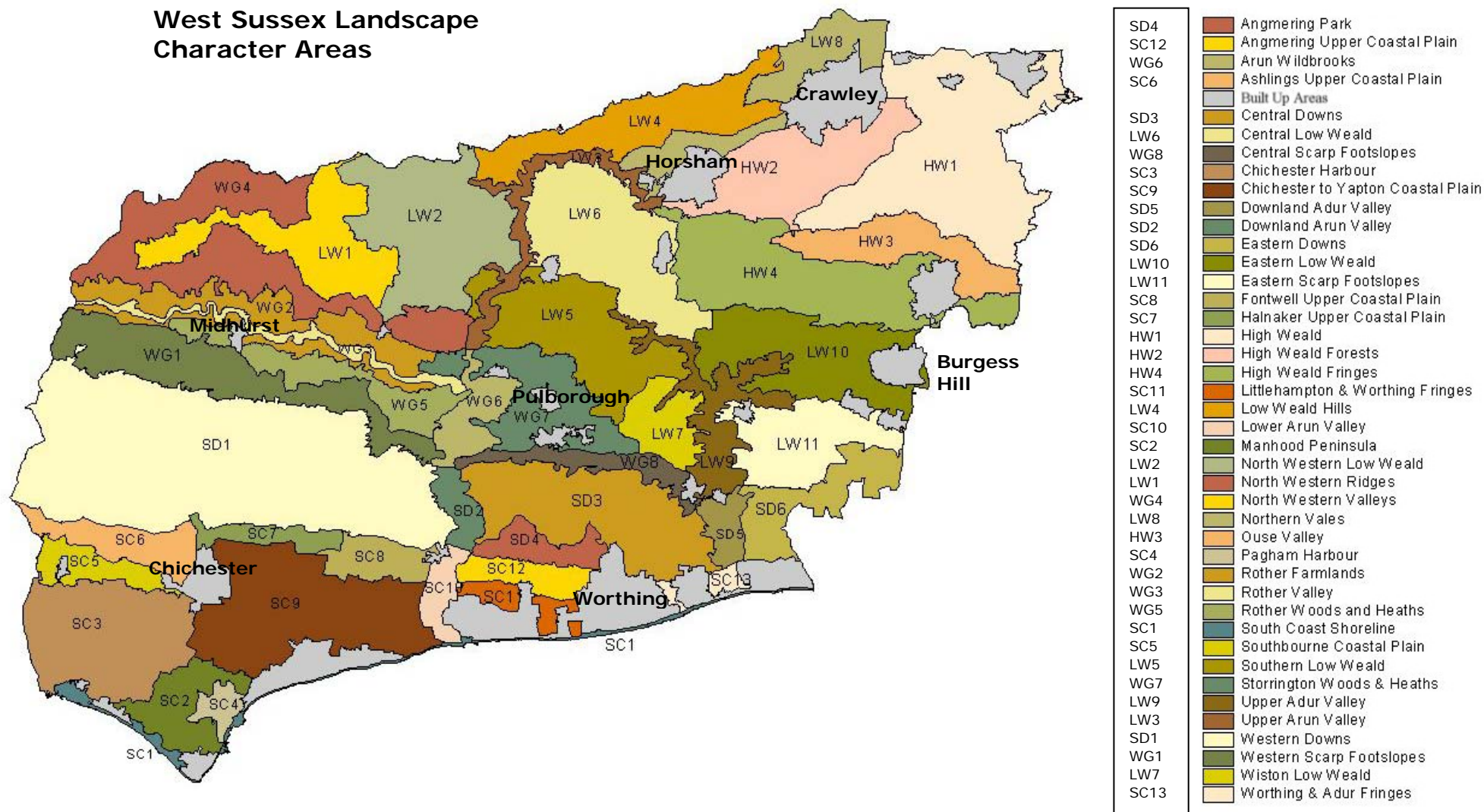
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West Sussex Landscape Character Areas



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.

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

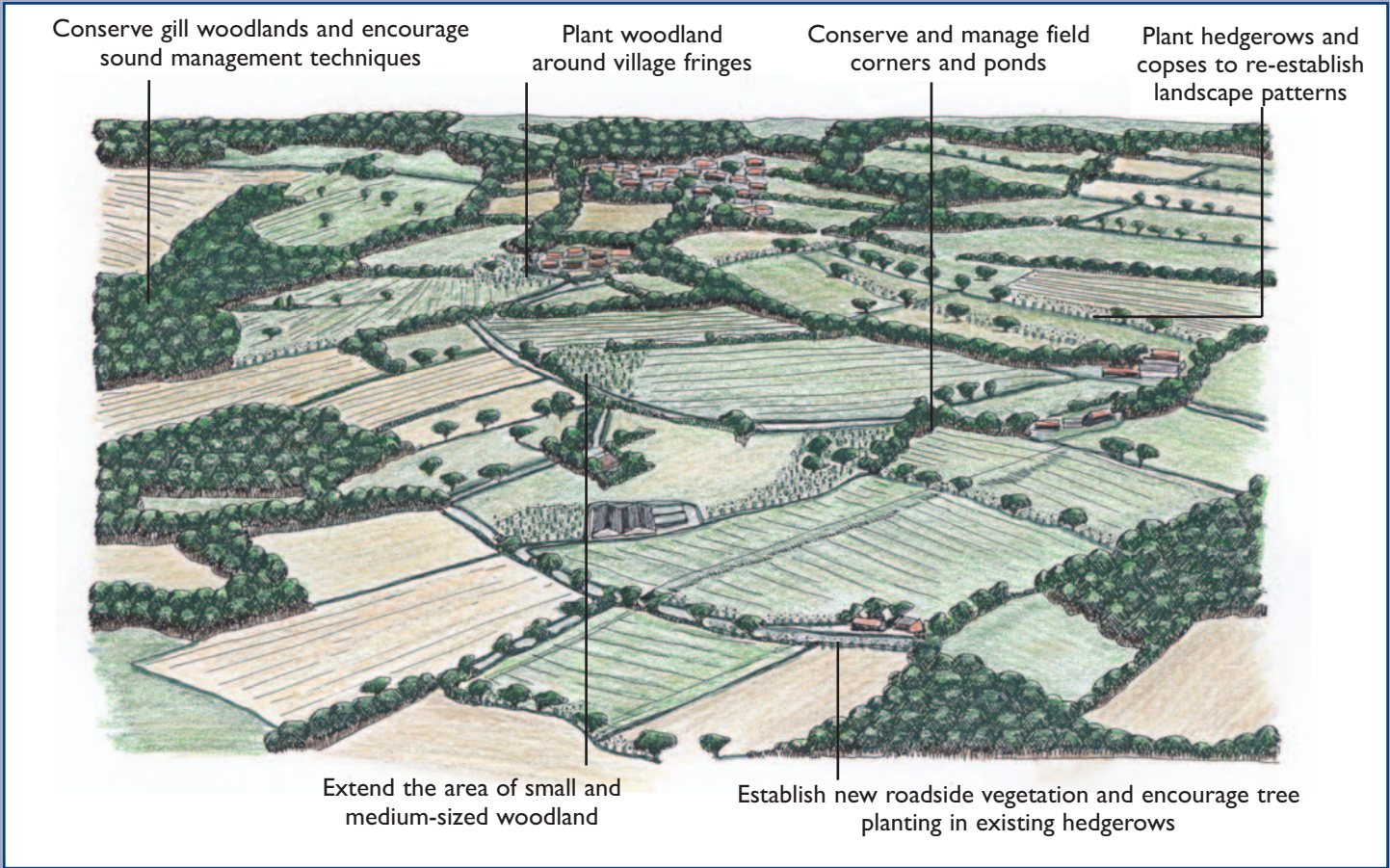


Arable farmland



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.

Overall Character

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.

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

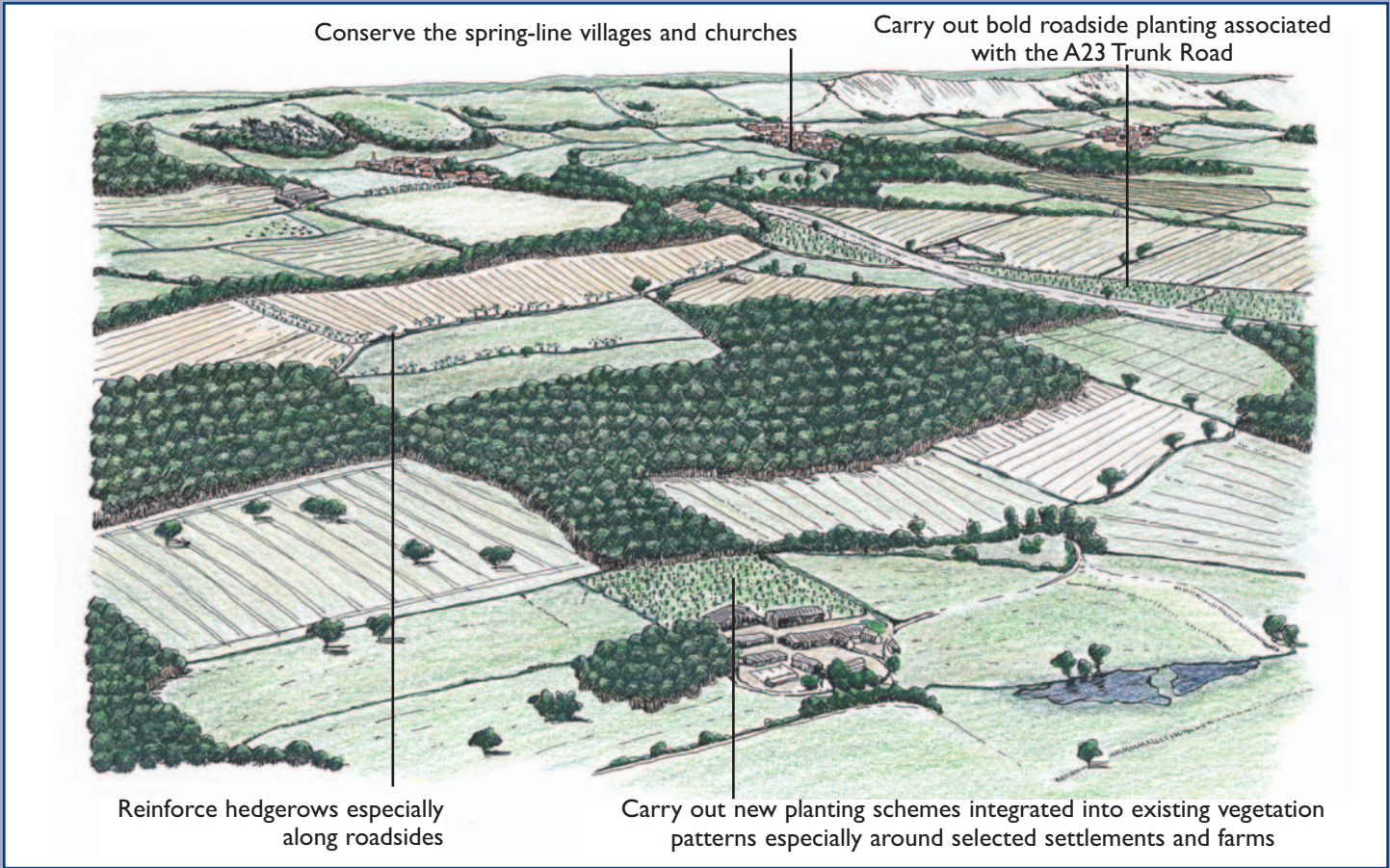


North from Perching Sands



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.