

Sevenoaks District Countryside Assessment

Babtie Group
Management & Technical Consultants

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Forward

The District Council has decided to produce a **District wide Countryside Character Assessment**. Now adopted, this will contribute towards the formulation of policies and decisions at a local level, including the provision of essential background information for the Sevenoaks District Community Strategy theme, - “Green and Healthy Environment”. It will also be taken into account in assessing planning applications.

This project work has been carried out by the Babbie Group on behalf of Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council and the Countryside Agency.

The document is based on the policies contained in National Guidance, as set out in the main document under “National Planning Guidance”. It is also consistent with the land use Development Plan policies at a local level contained within: the Kent Structure Plan (adopted 1996), Deposit Draft Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2003) and the Sevenoaks District Local Plan (adopted 2000). It is intended to supplement planning policies by describing the landscape character to which these policies apply.

The most relevant Structure and Local Plan Policies are listed on the following pages.

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - Adopted 2000

Policy

No

- EN6 The Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are shown on the Proposals Map. Development, which would harm or detract from the landscape character of these areas, will not be permitted
- EN7 Development within the North Downs and Greensand Ridge Special Landscape Areas will be permitted only where it would cause no significant harm to the landscape character of the area.
- EN8 Proposals in Areas of Local Landscape Importance must not harm the local character of the area. Particular attention should be paid to the design, layout and landscaping of any development and to its boundaries with the open countryside.
- EN9 The Local Planning Authority will safeguard important areas of green space within built confines
- EN10 The Local Planning Authority will protect and enhance important areas of urban fringe. Where appropriate, the Authority will seek to enter into legal agreements with landowners to secure appropriate land use, management and access arrangements for the benefit of the community.
- EN11 Beyond the confines of the urban areas towns and villages identified in Policy GB1, the Local Planning Authority will not permit development, which is likely to cause loss of, or material damage to landscape features or wildlife habitats which are of scenic, historic or wildlife importance, or are of an unspoilt quality.

KENT STRUCTURE PLAN - Adopted 1996

Policy ENV1: The countryside will be protected for its own sake. Development in the countryside should seek to maintain or enhance it. Development which will adversely affect the countryside will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for it which outweighs the requirement to protect the countryside.

Policy ENV2: Kent's landscape and wildlife (flora and fauna) habitats will be conserved and enhanced. Development will not be permitted if it would lead to the loss of features or habitats, which are of landscape, historic, geological or wildlife importance, or are of an unspoilt quality free from urban intrusion, unless there is a need for development, which outweighs these countryside considerations.

Policy ENV3: The Local Planning Authorities will provide long-term protection for the designated Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, including landscape, wildlife and geological features, over other planning considerations. Proposals for development, which would be inconsistent with the conservation of natural beauty, will be weighed in the light of their importance in securing the economic and social well-being of the area. The siting of major industrial or

commercial development will not be permitted unless there is a proven national interest, and a lack of alternative sites.

Policy ENV4: Special Landscape Areas are defined as follows:

North Downs: including the scarp and crest Greensand Ridge: from Westerham to Offham and south of Maidstone High Weald Eastern Low Weald Old Romney shoreline North Kent Marshes Sandwich Bay/Pegwell Bay Dungeness Blean Woods

The Local Planning Authorities will provide long-term protection for these areas through local plans and development control, and will give priority to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty of the landscape over other planning considerations, whilst having due regard to the economic and social well-being of the area. The detailed boundaries of the SLAs will be defined through the local plan process.

Policy ENV7: It is policy to maintain tree cover and the hedgerow network in the County, and enhance these where compatible with the character of the landscape. Local plans should include policies to protect, maintain, and enhance tree cover and woodlands.

Policy ENV11: It is policy to conserve and enhance the environment within river corridors, including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats, and where consistent with this, to encourage increased public access and water-related recreation opportunities.

Policy ENV13: Rural lanes which are of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, historic or archaeological importance will be protected from changes which would damage their character, and enhanced.

KENT STRUCTURE PLAN – Deposit Draft Sept 2003

POLICY E1: PROTECTING KENT'S COUNTRYSIDE

Kent's countryside will be protected for its own sake. Development in the countryside should seek to maintain or enhance it. Development which will adversely affect the countryside will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for it, which outweighs the requirement to protect the countryside

POLICY E3: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Kent's landscape and wildlife habitats will be conserved and enhanced. Development will not be permitted if it would lead to the loss of features or habitats which are of landscape, historic, wildlife or geological importance, or are of an unspoilt quality free from urban intrusion unless there is a need for development which outweighs these countryside considerations.

Where a need for development in the countryside is justified important features and characteristics will be retained. Proposals will be required to reflect the need for conservation, reinforcement, restoration or creation of countryside character and provide for the appropriate management of important features and the wider landscape.

POLICY E4: AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY AND THE HERITAGE COAST

Protection will be given to the nationally important landscapes of:

- the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- Kent's Heritage Coast between Kingsdown and Dover and between Dover and Folkestone.

The primary objective in these areas will be to protect and enhance landscape character and natural beauty.

Major commercial, mineral or transport infrastructure developments will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. there is a proven national interest;
- ii. there are no alternative sites available or the need cannot be met in any other way; and
- iii. appropriate provision can be made to minimise harm to the environment.

Other development which would be detrimental to the natural beauty, quality and character of the landscape and quiet enjoyment of the area will not be permitted. Development that is essential to meet local social or economic needs should be permitted provided that it is consistent with the purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast.

POLICY E5: SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

Special Landscape Areas are defined as follows and indicated on the Key Diagram. Detailed boundaries of the SLAs will be reviewed and defined in local plans/development documents.

North Downs Greensand Ridge High Weald Eastern Low Weald Western Low Weald Old Romney Shoreline North Kent Marshes Sandwich Bay/Pegwell Bay Dungeness Blean Woods

The primary objective in Special Landscape Areas will be the long-term protection and enhancement of the quality of the landscape whilst having regard to their economic and social well-being.

POLICY E9: TREES, WOODLAND AND HEDGEROWS

Provision should be made for the creation of new woodland, especially indigenous broad-leaved species at appropriate locations in Kent, including provision of new habitats as part of development proposals.

Tree cover and the hedgerow network should be maintained and, where it would improve the landscape, enhanced. Ancient and semi-natural woodland will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

POLICY E11: PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE URBAN FRINGE

Local Planning Authorities will work together and with others to draw up strategies for ensuring effective environmental management and high quality design for urban fringe areas, particularly in

Dartford/Gravesham (Kent Thameside), at Ashford and where other large-scale new developments are proposed.

Local Development Documents will provide policies for such areas that ensure:

- The maintenance or enhancement of landscape and urban character;
- The creation of new habitats;
- The safeguarding of land for public access and the provision of recreational networks, including linkage with existing communities/built-up areas;
- Where appropriate, the enhancement of damaged or degraded land.

Where directly related, contributions from developments to the implementation of such programmes may be required

POLICY E12: RIVER CORRIDORS

The environment within river corridors, including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats, will be conserved and enhanced. Where consistent with this provision will be made for:

- increased opportunities for access and water recreation;
- increased public access for walking and cycling and links to existing rights of way and cycleway networks.

Sustainable water resource and flood risk management should deliver environmental benefits.

POLICY E14: RURAL LANES

Rural lanes which are of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, historic or archaeological importance will be protected from changes and management practices which would damage their character, and where possible will be enhanced.

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1.0 About this document

- 1.1 Sevenoaks District Landscape Character Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the guidelines '*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance*' as published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage in 2002. Its purpose is to define and describe the different types and character areas of the landscape in the Sevenoaks District, and then to evaluate each area in terms of the condition of the landscape and its sensitivity.
- 1.2 This data should be used to inform policy-makers, forward planners, architects, highway engineers, developers and development control officers on management, development, conservation or change in the landscape. It may also be used as baseline data by anyone engaged in Village Design Statements, Countryside Summaries, Quality of Life Consultations etc.
- 1.3 There are two location maps at the beginning of the Report section. The first shows the 13 broad landscape types which are found over the District. The second shows 53 individual local landscape character areas. Users of this document should first locate their site (or sites) on the maps and then refer to the corresponding description and evaluation report sheets which form the main body of the document.
- 1.4 Character area report sheets have been sorted into their landscape types - thus, one landscape type, e.g. Mixed Settled Downs, will front a number of landscape character areas e.g. Darenth Downs, Fawkham, Hartley and New Ash Green etc.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 This study was commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council in order to carry out an appraisal of the district's countryside. The appraisal was funded largely by Sevenoaks DC, with a contribution from the Countryside Agency.

The Landscape Character Approach

- 2.2 Landscape character assessment tells you what makes a place distinctive and provides a framework for describing an area in a systematic way. It emerged in the mid 80s as a process by which to define the character of the landscape - i.e. what makes one area distinct or different from another. It sought to separate the classification and description of the landscape from the evaluation process, the latter being more concerned with what makes one landscape 'better' than others. During recent years, the techniques and methodology have been refined, culminating in the publication of definitive guidance by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage: *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland 2002*.

- 2.3 Landscape character assessment is not a tool designed to resist all change within the landscape. Rather, it recognises that landscapes are continually evolving. Our understanding of character will aid decision-making in the planning sphere and can be used to ensure that any change or development does not undermine whatever is valued or characteristic in a particular landscape. In particular, it is linked to the idea of a sustainable environment in which our social and economic needs, and natural resources, are recognised.

National Planning guidance

- 2.4 The protection of landscape character and diversity is a national objective. This is embedded in Planning Policy Guidance, in particular PPG1 *General Policy and Principles (1997)*, PPS7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)* and PPG15 *Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)*. National guidance (PPS7) states objectives to maintain or enhance the character of the countryside and conserve its natural resources, including safeguarding the distinctiveness of its landscapes making specific reference to the character approach. Landscape character assessments are increasingly required in order to support Local Plan policies; PPG1 states that 'policies should be based on a proper assessment of the character of the surrounding built and natural environment, and should take account of the defining characteristics of each local area'.

The Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment

- 2.5 This appraisal aims to provide logical, robust and defensible justifications to assist with future planning for the Sevenoaks District. Drawing upon work already completed at a County scale on the Countryside Assessment of Kent this appraisal seeks to describe the countryside character around Sevenoaks in greater detail. The report also identifies the extent to which the area has the capacity to accept change and gives guidance on opportunities and constraints.
- 2.6 The countryside assessment has been based on the Countryside Agency's landscape assessment guidance. Factors used to assess the countryside character include:
- Physiography - geology, soils, topography, vegetation
 - Human Activities - land use, settlement, field enclosure, landscape history
 - Aesthetics - form, scale, enclosure, unity, colour, views, cultural perceptions

A description of the methodology and proposed framework based on the Consultant's Brief for the report is outlined in the following introduction.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 The landscape of Sevenoaks District has evolved over many hundreds of years. It has been created by the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, in particular the combination of physical, biological and cultural influences. Physical influences such as geology and landform, together with the overlying pattern of settlement and land use are key determinants of landscape character.
- 3.2 The objective of the Sevenoaks District Countryside Assessment is to ensure that decisions on the rural landscape are underpinned by a robust and widely accepted assessment of the landscape character. The challenge is to find ways of identifying the important characteristics of the landscape that assist the process of accommodating change, where this is both desirable and practicable, whilst maintaining the links with the past and the natural environment. There is a need to retain pattern and diversity in the landscape to ensure that character and local distinctiveness are maintained. This is not necessarily about keeping the landscape as it is but is more about preventing everywhere becoming the same. In addition we need to ensure that landscapes are visually satisfying and give enjoyment to those who visit them and those who live and work in them.
- 3.3 Many of the judgments regarding landscapes are subjective, which means that they are open to equally valid but different individual interpretations. The process of landscape assessment has to resolve this matter and has evolved so that current practice is now based on a logical and well thought out procedure. This procedure breaks down the analysis into the component parts which collectively make up the landscape as we know it. It is a logical process which enables decisions to be revisited over time as well as enabling different assessors to understand and contribute to the decisions reached.

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 The methodology used to undertake the landscape assessment is based on the Countryside Agency's landscape assessment guidance. There are essentially two elements to the Landscape Appraisal. Firstly the characterisation of the landscape where the landscape character areas are defined, and secondly the analysis of these areas where judgments are made about these character areas.
- 4.2 In the first instance the assessor interrogates the geological, soil and topographical information as well as accumulating as much information as is readily available regarding historic and cultural influences, nature conservation interests and land use.
- 4.3 Having initiated the desk based research, the fieldwork was undertaken. Normally two landscape assessors working together in the field debate and define the broad character distinctions using 'Field Assessment Sheets' and taking photographic records as data.
- 4.4 The Field Assessment Sheets are designed to analyse the component factors of the landscape, to reach a series of decisions on the:
- aesthetics
 - key characteristics
 - visual unity
 - ecological integrity
 - condition of heritage features
 - impact of built development

- 4.5 Both **landscape types** and **landscape character areas** have been identified and mapped (see accompanying plans) in the appraisal process. Landscape character **types** occur at the larger scale, each having a distinct pattern of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, and land use. The landscape character **areas** represent more fine-grained local patterns of character based on unique geographical areas. They share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but have their own particular identity. For example, the '*Mixed Settled Downs*' type within the Sevenoaks area encompasses several distinct character areas such as *Ash Cum Ridley*, *Fawkham*, *Hartley* and *New Ash Green*, and *West Kingsdown*.
- 4.6 Having identified the landscape character areas as a series of largely homogeneous units, the data collected was analysed in terms of each character area's **Condition** and **Sensitivity**.
- 4.7 Each of these words is strictly defined to avoid as far as possible any subjective interpretation which could not be justified. The objective is also to define a standard methodology which can be used by other assessors for other landscapes so that comparisons can be made and priorities set.
- 4.8 **Condition** is strongly influenced by the impact of external factors. The assessment of condition evaluates the pattern of the landscape and the presence of incongruous features on the unity of the landscape. It also evaluates how well the landscape functions as a habitat for wildlife and the condition of cultural or 'man-made' elements such as enclosure, built elements and roads. Urban fringe areas are often under pressure which can frustrate other land uses. This may mean that these areas are described as being in a poor condition whilst other more remote areas may still have the same basic features but be in a better condition. It is therefore practical to assume that condition may vary throughout a character area so that any conclusions should be regarded as a summary of the overall situation. **Condition** is defined by an analysis of Visual Unity and Functional Integrity and is classified as very poor, poor, moderate, good and very good.

Visual Unity is the result of an analysis of the Pattern of Elements, for example the pattern of vegetation, enclosure, settlement, and the relationship of these to the landform etc., weighed against the number of Detracting Features in the landscape.

Functional Integrity is an assessment of how the landscape functions and considers both the influence of man (Cultural Integrity) and nature (Ecological Integrity).

- 4.9 **Sensitivity** is a measure of the ability of a landscape to accept change without causing irreparable damage to the essential fabric and distinctiveness of that landscape. The term change refers to both beneficial change such as a new woodland as well as change that may be brought about by new land uses. Sensitivity is defined by an analysis of Sense of Place and Visibility and ranges from very low through low, moderate, high and to very high.

Sense of Place balances Distinctiveness with Time depth. Distinctiveness is defined by how much the key characteristics contribute to a sense of place. For example in a landscape where hedgerows are a key characteristic, if the network is intact the landscape can be described as *distinct* or '*characteristic*'. Some landscapes have features which may be considered unique or rare and these will obviously contribute to a strong sense of place. Time depth ranges from recent, through historic to ancient and reflects how long that landscape has taken to establish. Ancient landscapes are uncommon in the Sevenoaks area but include those that have had very little intervention by man or contain ancient or prehistoric features. Historic landscapes are generally those formed from the medieval period onwards. This is when the pattern of most landscapes in the Sevenoaks District was

established and is generally discernible today (although overlain with modern features). Recent landscapes are those where historic elements have been replaced with new elements or land management. They include reclaimed landscapes.

Visibility addresses the issues of Landform and the intercepting feature of Tree cover. For example an open hilltop landscape has a higher visibility than an enclosed lowland landscape.

4.10 The conclusions reached regarding each of the character areas are expressed using a matrix which encompasses Condition and Sensitivity. This analysis gives a broad indication of each area's ability to accommodate a change in management or use without loss of overall integrity. The matrix helps to assist in the direction of any policy that might be applied to the land in question.

4.11 The combination of condition and sensitivity assessments has generated appropriate *landscape actions* for each character area.

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE	
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
low	moderate	high	
Sensitivity			

4.12 Although conclusions have been reached for each of the character areas, it is not the purpose of this study to rank one character area against another. Likewise this study is not intended to identify in detail areas suitable for development. It may however offer guidance to both the local planning authority and developers when deciding the type and scale of development that may be appropriate whilst respecting the character of the landscape. For each of the district landscape areas, the recommended *landscape actions* refer to one of the following:

Conserve - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition.

Conserve and reinforce - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, and strengthen and reinforce those features which may be vulnerable.

Reinforce - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape.

Conserve and restore - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst restoring elements or areas in poorer condition and removing or mitigating detracting features.

Conserve and create - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Restore - actions that encourage the restoration of distinctive landscape features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features.

Restore and create - actions that restore distinctive features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Reinforce and create - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Create - actions that create new features or areas where existing elements are lost or in poor condition.

- 4.15 It has to be recognised that whilst the process adopts a complex but logical critique of the landscape many of the individual decisions are still based on the trained but subjective judgments of the assessors. However by simplifying the conclusions into a series of generic actions it is possible to reach informed and well supported judgments on the landscape character.
- 4.16 Actions are offered that are locally appropriate to the character area and respond to the generic actions that have been identified. Many of these actions are not within the remit of the Local Authority to implement directly as they are not responsible for managing the land in most cases. Such references are included with the view to influencing opinions, generating support and guiding policy. In many instances certain forms of land management have a strong influence on the landscape character. These are often dependent on market forces and land management practices for their retention e.g. the coppicing of woodland, fruit production and sheep grazing.

5.0 Summary of Landscape Issues

- 5.1 A number of local issues that affect the landscape were identified as a result of the study. The following summary of these issues may be helpful in the formulation of policies, management plans, and the consideration of development proposals within the Sevenoaks landscape.
- 5.2 To set the broader context; the District has a high proportion of designated areas which include the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Notably, there are areas of unique ancient woodland and grass downland. The area enjoys some areas of high visibility, where the long views are particularly important, and also a small-scale historic landscape pattern in which distinctive buildings and local vernacular are significant. Some areas are influenced by historic parkland and estate farmlands such as at Knole, or on the Knockholt Scarp.
- 5.3 In some areas of the Sevenoaks landscape, the condition of the landscape has deteriorated or is considered to be at risk due to factors as summarised below. It is recognised that some of the causes of poor landscape condition are outside the remit of the Planning Authority, however, some may be addressed by policy and development control.

Fringe landscapes

- 5.4 Pressure for new development is the most obvious challenge to existing landscape character. A particular problem is the growth of unremarkable development which has no local distinction or relevance to the site or to the local settlement pattern, and this may include post 1801 linear built development which is frequently cited as a detracting feature within the landscape. New development on the fringe of an existing urban area often introduces an incongruous or harsh urban edge into the adjacent landscape. In addition, the spread of suburban elements, such as coniferous planting, often constitute major detracting elements in the view.
- 5.5 In the above cases, it may be considered appropriate to create a landscape framework that recognises existing post 1801 settlement and any recent existing development, but this should be a framework which also recognises the fundamental basis of the landscape in soils, topography, vegetation, and the scale and pattern of the existing landscape.
- 5.6 Pressures on fringe landscapes include major recreational uses such as at West Kingsdown - there is a growing demand for the landscape in these areas to sustain urban recreational activities.
- 5.7 At the same time, the conservation of existing cultural elements that create a sense of place will be of prime importance. The enhancement of the settings of historic settlement cores - such as Hextable - would restore a more profound sense of place to many of the expanded settlements.
- 5.8 The growth of horiculture has had a marked influence on the condition of the landscape around many settlements, leading to the addition of inappropriate fencing and stabling to the view and the deterioration of the small-scale historic enclosed landscape amongst other factors.

Agricultural landscapes

- 5.9 In the farmed landscape, the network of hedgerows is often vulnerable. Due to current agricultural practice, hedgerows lose their function in arable (and residential) landscapes, but still form an essential part of the ecological network, in particular where they act as a wildlife corridor. Where hedgerows have been removed, i.e. in large-scale arable farmland, there will be a need for the implementation of new semi-natural habitats, along with the introduction of sensitive land management.
- 5.10 A frequent problem is the over-mature hedgerow being supplemented or replaced with post and wire fencing. Where hedgerows are characteristic but in poor condition, the integrity of these field boundaries and roadside hedges should be restored by replanting and careful management.
- 5.11 The form of modern agricultural buildings is also often a detractor in the landscape, most of these buildings being of large scale and having no local distinction.
- 5.12 The Sevenoaks area has experienced an extensive loss of riparian landscape both in the Eden and Darent Valleys. In general, there is a lack of sensitive management of trees, and little replacement planting. Small areas of water meadows persist, but this type of landscape is generally in decline.

General settlement pattern and pressure for development

- 5.13 The characteristic pattern of rural settlement, which often includes small dwellings and farmsteads located in direct relationship to the landform (such as isolated farmsteads on ridges in the Eynsford Downs) is greatly at risk from zoned or opportunist development. One general problem of the more remote parts of the Downs is the development of small buildings and small holdings – many probably having achieved deemed planning permission over time, but in the majority of cases incorporating unsympathetic land-uses and poor quality building (such as corrugated iron stabling, storage of waste goods etc).

Motorway corridors, major communication routes

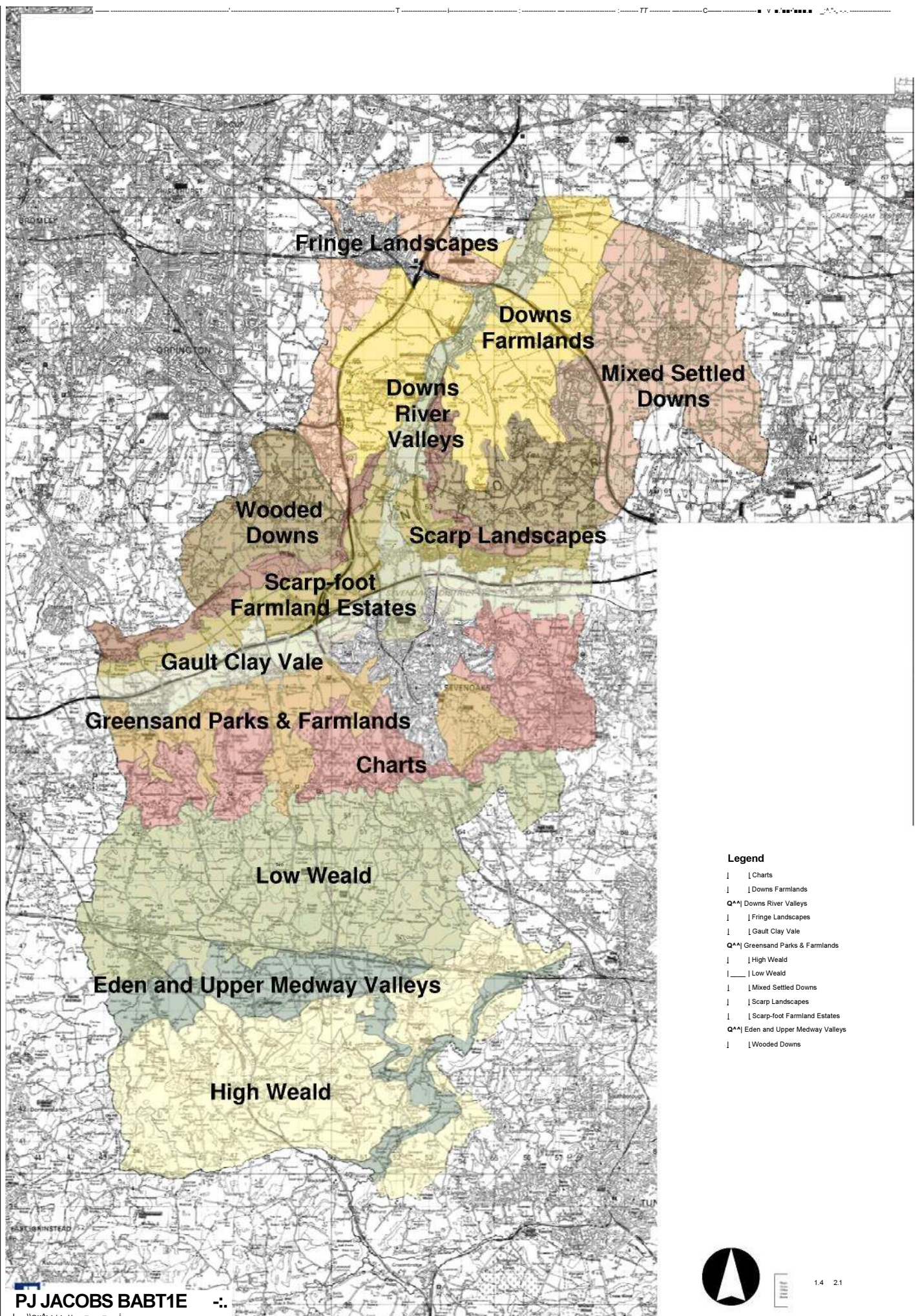
- 5.14 Motorway corridors, local highways and major communication routes have a large-scale impact on landform, including landscapes near Eynsford and Shoreham, Badger's Mount, Otford etc. The integration of transport and rail corridors into the wider landscape is needed; most major roads do not currently contribute to local distinctiveness. In particular, junctions and pockets of road-associated open space are treated as part of the linear corridor, but have no association with the landscape into which they lead.
- 5.15 The loss of distinctive features along rural roads is also an issue. Narrow verge-less roads, such as those which are characteristic in the Downs, may deteriorate if subject to widening or experiencing an excessive number of vehicles, causing damage to chalk banks and hedgerows.
- 5.16 As roads approach urban edges, they often lose distinctive qualities and suffer abrupt transitions from the rural to the urban landscape. Local design codes are needed for these areas in order to embrace both highway standards and distinctive features appropriate to the area.

Ecology – Grassland and Woodland

- 5.17 The Sevenoaks area contains some unique natural characteristics which require a broad view of their landscape character, and targeted management in addition to ecological protection. These include:
- acid woodland
 - the ecological and cultural integrity of unsettled woodland areas
 - broadleaf cover and woodland to ridgetops and steeper slopes, such as at East Hill Woodlands
 - the simple form of the Chart woodlands, conforming to topography, with small scale pastoral use and the isolation of existing properties
 - chalk grassland
 - standard oaks in estate fields and agricultural areas
 - specimen trees in parkland and estate farmland.
- 5.18 One of the main factors in the historic deterioration of the landscape in the north of the District is the former loss of elm trees and hedgerow, from which the countryside has not yet recovered. Policies should be adopted to replace the former level of vegetative cover with other species.

The combined effect of inappropriate land-uses, poor design and suburban fringe development.

- 5.19 In many cases, it is the combined effect of the detracting elements - mainly in the landscape areas to the north of the District - which support the perception of a landscape in decline. The contributing factors include: the loss of tree cover caused by Dutch elm disease, poor unremarkable design in the built environment, inappropriate location of development, insensitive agricultural land management, horsiculture and suburban land-uses and boundaries, the introduction of urban edges into the view, the effect of litter and the effect of rural lanes worn by over-use and heavy vehicles.

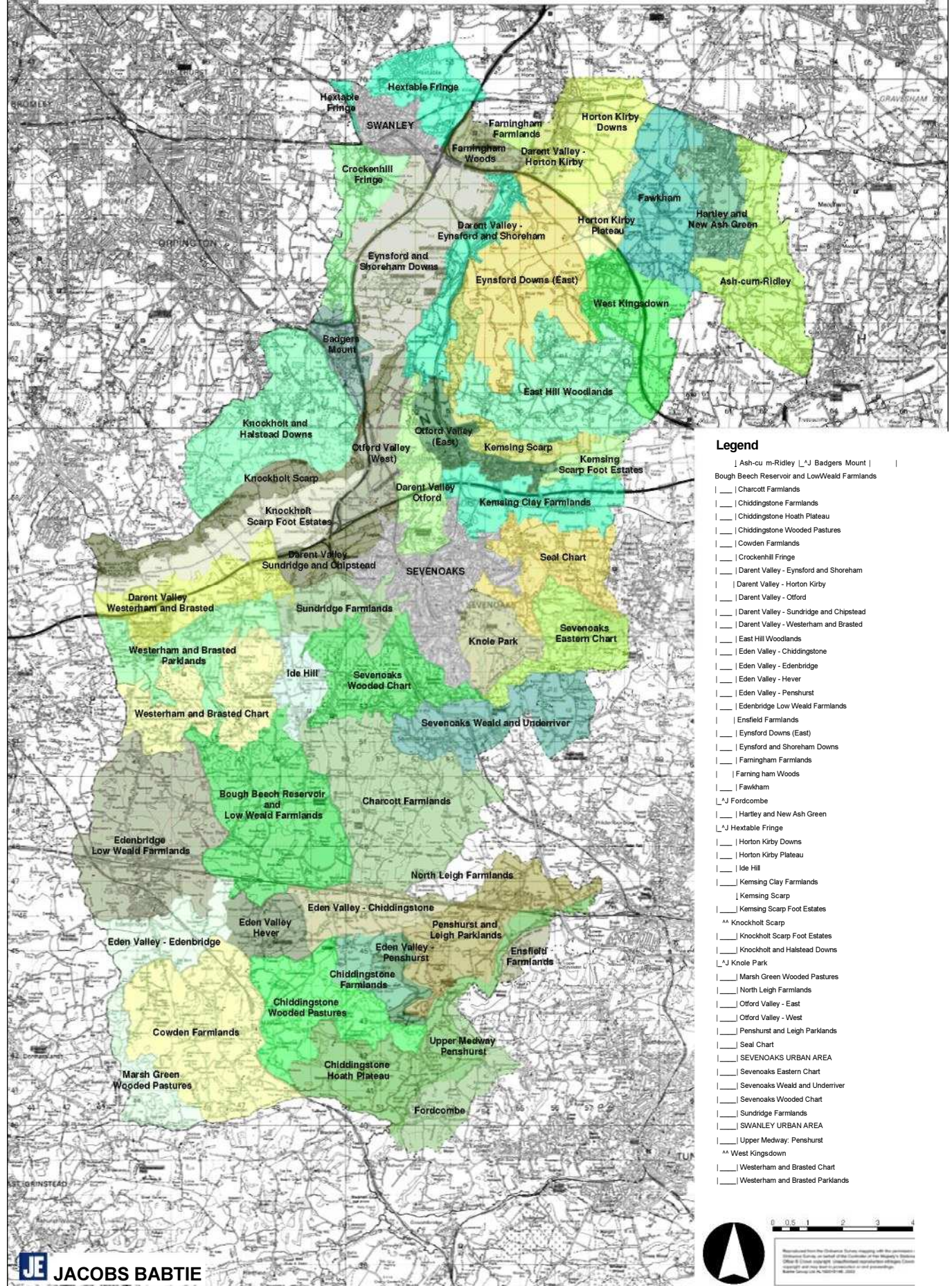


Sevenoaks District Countryside Appraisal

LANDSCAPE TYPES

Sevenoaks District Countryside Appraisal

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



9.0 Report Sheets

Landscape Type: **Mixed Settled Downs**

Character Areas: Ash-cum-Ridley
Fawkham
Hartley and New Ash Green
West Kingsdown

Landscape Type: **Downs Farmlands**

Character Areas: Eynsford and Shoreham Downs
Eynsford Downs (East)
Farningham Farmlands Horton
Kirby Downs Horton Kirby
Plateau

Landscape Type: **Wooded Downs**

Character Areas: East Hill Woodlands Knockholt
and Halstead Downs

Landscape Type: **Scarp Landscapes**

Character Areas: Kemsing Scarp
Knockholt Scarp

Landscape Type: **Scarp-foot Farmland Estates**

Character Areas: Kemsing Scarp-Foot Estates
Knockholt Scarp-Foot Estates

Landscape Type: **Fringe Landscapes**

Character Areas: Badgers Mount
Crockenhill Fringe
Farningham Woods
Hextable Fringe

Landscape Type: **Downs River Valleys**

Character Areas: Darent Valley – Eynsford and Shoreham
Darent Valley – Horton Kirby Darent
Valley - Otford Otford Valley - East
Otford Valley - West

Landscape Type: **Gault Clay Vale**

Character Areas: Darent Valley – Sundridge and Chipstead
Darent Valley – Westerham and Brasted
Kemsing Clay Farmlands

Landscape Type: **Greensand Parks and Farmlands**

Character Areas: Ide Hill Knole Park Sundridge
Farmlands Westerham and
Brasted Parklands

Landscape Type: **Charts**

Character Areas: Seal Chart
Sevenoaks Eastern Chart
Sevenoaks Wooded Chart
Westerham and Brasted Chart

Landscape Type: **Low Weald**

Character Areas: Bough Beech Reservoir and Low Weald
Farmlands
Charcott Farmlands
Edenbridge Low Weald Farmlands
Sevenoaks Weald and Underriver

Landscape Type: **Eden and Upper Medway Valleys**

Character Areas: Eden Valley - Chiddingstone
Eden Valley - Edenbridge
Eden Valley - Hever Eden
Valley - Penshurst Upper
Medway -Penshurst

Landscape Type: **High Weald**

Character Areas: Chiddingstone Farmlands
Chiddingstone Hoath Plateau
Chiddingstone Wooded Pastures
Cowden Farmlands Ensfield
Farmlands Fordcombe
Marsh Green Wooded Pastures
North Leigh Farmlands
Penshurst and Leigh Parklands

Regional	North Downs
Landscape :	
Geology	Upper Chalk valleys with Clay-with-Flints capped ridges
Soils	Loamy: rich wet neutral soils in valleys with poor wet acid soils on ridges
Landform	Undulating folded ridges and valleys aligned north to south

Landscape Description:

Undulating chalk downland with plateaus and some dramatic steep slopes.
Open field systems and small scale enclosed pasture.
Arable and grassland on slopes with woodland on hilltops.
Small compact farmsteads and hamlets on higher ground.
Urban influences.
Views well contained.
Major communication routes impact on landform and local highways.
Characteristic cross-contour and direct valley-bottom roads link existing settlements.
Blocks of coppice woodland. Beech and oak standards.
Large areas of formal recreational space.

Biodiversity Targets:

All areas of unimproved grassland to be retained, managed, restored or recreated where feasible
Areas of scrub to be encouraged and maintained especially on chalk soils both in association with grassland and woodland on its own.
Maintain and enhance important remnants of banks and strips of natural grassland.
Establish non-crop habitats within farmland including copses, hedges and unsprayed strips within crops.

Historic Landscape:

Small fields with wavy boundaries.
Assart fields containing scattered small woods and crops.
Elsewhere large areas of regular ladder fields bounded by tracks or lanes - ancient overtones within the landscape.
Pockets of small regular shaped fields including paddocks adjacent to dense dispersed settlements probably derived from C19th enclosure.
Occasional large prairie fields.
Small, isolated pre-1801 coppice areas.

North Downs

Mixed Settled Downs

Key Characteristics

Undulating chalk downs with clay and flints capping to ridges and small plateau and base of valley.

Calcareous soils on slopes support arable and grassland. Acid clay soils on hilltops support woodland and some farms.

Tranquil, rural landscape, small scale and enclosed.

Small, compact farmsteads and hamlets on higher ground.

Narrow, direct valley bottom roads with circuitous lanes linking settlements.

Some flint used as a building material.

Whitebeam, yew, oak, ash, and beech in woodlands.

Holly and beech banks on some roads.



Landscape Description

This is an undulating landscape of chalk slopes and clay ridges, with a notable outcrop of Woolwich Beds around Ridley. The relief is accentuated by frequent hill-top woodlands which mark the upper edge of the chalk slopes. Tranquil and rural views are enclosed, but there are occasional longer views along the valleys.

Field sizes are generally small with boundaries which reflect the contours of the land, although fields are increasingly larger and more open towards Longfield Hill. The frequency of small woodlands and shaws is an important characteristic as it contributes to the small-scale of the landscape. Wooded shaws run from the wooded hill-tops into more formal tall hedgerows or clipped hedgerows along highways. Woodlands include occasional yew and whitebeam, and evocative beech and holly stands along highways.

Highways are narrow and hedged, with frequent passing places and standard trees such as oak and ash. The main route runs in a relatively straight line along the base of the valley and has some banked edges. This feeds into the more circuitous lanes which serve the hamlets and farming on the higher ground. Settlements are small hamlets and isolated farmsteads, and there is evidence of ancient settlement and civilisation in earthworks and trackways.

Traditional built farm is compact using brick and tile, subdued lines for roofing, and much variation in roof lines. The use of flint is also evident. Recent built farm is also an occasional part of the view. The variation and smaller scale of land use within the farmsteads has declined in recent years, as evidenced by remnant orchards.

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This is a unified landscape in which the small-scale land-use and settlement patterns reflect the landform and historic land-use patterns. A few inappropriate land uses detract from the view, but the frequent patches of woodland enclose many views and help to maintain the rural and tranquil character. The small woodlands incorporate a range of characteristic species and features such as holly and beech banks, and form a strong ecological network by linking into shaws and hedgerows. There is some intensive arable use of the calcareous soils on the slopes, and so the ecological integrity of the area is considered to be moderate. The condition of this area is good.

Sensitivity :

Despite the frequency of woodland cover, visibility is considered to be high as some views are open on the straighter stretches of the valley. The small scale and isolation of the settlements contribute to a strong sense of place. Woodlands, narrow roads and ancient trackways have a great time-depth although the built-form is rarely strongly distinctive.

The sensitivity of the area is considered to be high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Ensure that built form, including agricultural buildings, is appropriate to the area in scale, location and materials.
Control the occurrence and appearance of commercial-industrial land uses.
Conserve the frequency of small woodlands, and the small scale of the landscape. Encouraging the management of hill-top woodlands and shaws.
Conserve the isolation of settlement and ensure that distinctive characteristics of traditional built farm are adapted and encouraged.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Very High
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
		moderate	

North Downs

Mixed Settled Downs

Key Characteristics

Small scale and enclosed.
Dramatic relief of chalk valleys with steep slopes.

Varied land cover included assorted woodlands, commons, ancient coppice woodland, open field systems and enclosed pastures.

Recent parkland and estate woodland.

Cross-contour lanes and straighter routes through the base of dry valleys.

Beech standards. Mature oak and beech.

Dead and regenerative elm.

Unremarkable residential buildings.



Landscape Description

A very small-scale and enclosed tranquil landscape which has developed around a steeply incised chalk valley, overlain with clay with flints on the higher ridges and flood plain gravels, following the bottom of the valley. Woodland is frequent and encloses the valley-side pastures and covers the clay-capped ridges. Views along the valley are also extremely limited by tall roadside hedges and mature standard trees.

Some of the varied characteristics of the landscape include assorted woodland, ancient woodland and common land. Towards Longfield the fields open up to a larger scale, reflecting the more gentle contours and richer soils. There is also more recent parkland and estate woodland around the Fawkhams Manor Estate.

Settlement follows a general pattern of older farmsteads on the higher ground and at crossing points, and more recent linear development at the base of the valley.

FAWKHAM

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

There is a unified pattern of elements in the landscape. The small-scale fields on the valley sides reflect the landform and the underlying soils, hill-top woodlands accentuate the valleys. Settlement is generally isolated and retains its characteristic location on the higher ground. Newer settlement follows the linear route at the base of the valley. There are however some visual detractors in the form of the golf course, horsiculture and some inappropriate buildings.

Natural habitats occur throughout the woodland and hedgerow network, becoming less strong towards the larger fields nearer Longfield. Woodland is also considered to be vulnerable to isolated developments, lack of appropriate management and highway routes.

The overall condition of the area is good.

Sensitivity :

The isolation, enclosure and the evident time-depth of the landscape contribute to a strong sense of place, despite the recent nature of much of the built form. The rural lanes are very distinctive despite significant levels of traffic causing some erosion to the banks on either side and at passing places.

The occasional open view, and the dominant landform augment the visibility rating of this otherwise enclosed landscape to high. The sensitivity of the area is considered to be high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve ancient woodland, the range of species including oak, ash and beech, and the range of age structure. Conserve existing woodland. Conserve and manage woodland cover on the higher ridges, and cross-contour shaws which link these to the base of the valleys. Conserve the small-scale of the field pattern. Conserve the isolation of settlements and the remote character of settlements.

Conserve and manage existing highway works, maintaining tall hedgerows with standard oaks and ash. Manage traffic levels to reduce erosion to the roads.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Very High
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
		moderate	

HARTLEY AND NEW ASH GREEN

North Downs

Mixed Settled Downs

Key Characteristics

Elevated chalk plateau with patches of clay-with-flints on plateau-top and chalky soils elsewhere.

Two distinct and large areas of residential development.

Views well-.

Remnant woodland strips.

New highway and suburban planting.

New, wide sweeping roads with infill development.

Some vernacular (red brick, small houses including original manors) and innovative building (Span Housing).

Otherwise unremarkable built form.



Landscape Description

This area is defined by a large chalk plateau which is overlain with clay and flint soils. The chalk is apparent at the surface in various locations, mainly on the valley slopes. The plateau lies at around 140m OD, edged by the dry chalk valleys. Formerly manorial farmland, based on dry acid soils of the clay, very little agricultural land-use now remains and the predominant land use is made up of two distinct recent residential areas.

Through-roads skirt the plateau or follow the higher ground. The pattern of these is now altered by new roads and junctions which serve as accesses to new settlement areas.

Remnant patches of woodland remain and much of the residual farmland has wooded edges. Very small parcels of the formerly open agricultural plateau are surrounded by housing and strips of woodland; which includes mature ash and oak.

Views within the area are limited by the edge of built form and the woodland. In the wider landscape view, the bulk of the residential development is visually well contained, especially during the summer months.

New settlement within Hartley is based around an original hamlet and retains some original narrow roads, now with linear infill development. Built form is generally unremarkable and is associated with suburban uses and planting such as ornamental trees and conifer hedging.

New Ash Green is a wholly-designed new village with an original innovative core of houses and commercial centre, built in the early 1960's. Although there are some sweeping peripheral roads with wide verges, the internal roads follow the original landscape pattern and the inherent woodland element of the landscape has been maintained throughout the built area, thus contributing to local character and the creation of a distinctive residential development. Ornamental planting is contained within residential areas whilst the remaining rural open spaces associated with the village such as residual orchards, yew-dominant woodland and small, enclosed pastures are maintained as a community resource.

HARTLEY AND NEW ASH GREEN

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The limited extent of semi-natural habitat and the intensity of residential and agricultural land uses results in an overall weak ecological integrity within the plateau. The remaining woody shaws are mature and function mainly as residential edges. However, a new structure is evolving for this area and the cultural integrity is considered to be variable.

Visual detractors include the suburbanised roads and land uses road furniture such as fences. Visually, the landscape is coherent as the open plateau is extensive in some areas, and the fringe woodland contributes to the inherent landscape context. The pattern is mostly disturbed by new roads and linear suburban development outside the main housing enclaves.

Sensitivity :

Infrequent traditional houses and farms do not exhibit a great time depth and are obscured by the impact of new residential development. Most elements of the landscape are of recent original and very few are locally distinctive, with the exception of some residential clusters in New Ash Green which have introduced a new character to the area.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Create distinctive highway characteristics which are appropriate for the inherent landscape conditions and the evolving land-use.

Introduce distinctive elements into the existing higher density housing. Contain existing residential areas and suburban land uses, creating a defined edge to both land uses.

Create and manage landscape features to contain suburban land use such as golf courses and pony paddocks. Create a design code for these land uses.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Poor
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Weak
Functional Integrity:	Weak

SENSITIVITY:	Very Low
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Recent
Sense of Place:	Very Weak
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
		moderate	

WEST KINGSDOWN

North Downs

Mixed Settled Downs

Key Characteristics

Undulating plateau overlain with clay and flints.

Heads of dry valleys.

Former isolated manor and commons.

Major communication routes of A20 and M20 with a wide impact on vegetation, landform and local highways.

Major recreational uses.

Unremarkable linear residential development.

Blocks of woodland.



Landscape Description

The West Kingsdown area encompasses the village of West Kingsdown, Brands Hatch racing circuit, a golf course and long stretches of the A20 and M20 highways. The underlying landform is an elevated, gently undulating plateau overlain with clay and flints. A small chalk valley leads to the northern edge of the area. Land use is predominantly residential and recreational, but was formerly commons and large blocks of woodland, the latter now replanted with native species.

There are many medium range views, but these are extended near the motorway and approaches and golf course, where the landscape has opened up further.

There is no evident historic pattern of enclosure. Evidence of historic settlement is limited to the site of South Ash Manor. The routes of historic highways crossed the plateau in a north-south direction but the characteristics of these have been changed to accommodate motorway approaches and bridges, fencing, highway planting and signs and embankments. Motorway planting is a significant feature of the area. Brands Hatch is based on chalky valleys, the golf course on the higher plateau.

The residential area of West Kingsdown has developed along the A20 trunk road and is spreading into the woodland. Bungalows are a common form of residential style. Some new housing within the woodland is putting the extent of woodland at risk.

Much of the former agricultural land is declining in use.

WEST KINGSDOWN

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

Only fragments of the inherent landscape pattern remain. The visual unity is therefore considered to be severely disrupted. The landscape has undergone a dramatic change of use which has physically removed many of the historic and cultural indicators. The new uses do not wholly embrace or enhance the inherent landscape conditions. With the exception of the rough ground of the common at the centre of the plateau, there are few established natural habitats although the motorway embankments and golf course could become more valuable ecological resources in time. This area is considered to be in poor condition.

Sensitivity :

There is a weak sense of place which is perpetuated in the open rough ground and the infrequent blocks of coppice woodland. New landscape features are prevalent, but are less locally distinctive including highway planting, recreational suburban land uses, and mostly unremarkable built form. Inherent settlement patterns are not well represented. Tree cover occurs intermittently over the area, the landform is locally insignificant, although it is elevated. The sensitivity of the area is therefore considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

This is a landscape in which the use and cultural emphasis has changed dramatically. There are opportunities to reconstruct a landscape framework based on the physiography incorporating the remaining historic features, and the new uses. As the current ecological bases are weak, these should be augmented by woodland and sensitively managed grassland.

Encourage the sensitive management of open grassland in recreational areas.

Retain and enhance the open area of common.

Create areas of characteristic plateau-top woodland, linked with highway embankments, to create a strong network.

Create more sensitive boundary treatments to highways.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Poor
Pattern of elements	Incoherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Poor
Ecological integrity	Weak
Functional Integrity:	Very Weak

SENSITIVITY:	Very Low
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Recent
Sense of Place:	Very Weak
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
	moderate		high



Regional North Downs

Landscape :

Geology Upper chalk

Soils Loamy: Base rich calcareous and wet neutral soils

Landform Gently undulating dipslope descending towards the Darent Valley

Landscape Description:

Rolling downland, open medium scale field pattern.

Long views.

Arablisation of the plateau, loss of hedgerows and shaws.

Woodland now exists only in limited areas, generally on the ridges - this includes species mixes characteristic of ancient woodland; including yew and beech.

Hedgerows on roads, with standard oaks

Narrow roads with passing places - across contours or in the valley bottoms or along ridgelines. Roads are linked very closely to topography, they are often eroded.

Urban influences and agricultural buildings.

Biodiversity Targets:

Unimproved chalk grassland to be retained and managed, restored or created where feasible.

Public access and recreation to be low-key and sensitively managed.

Retain all native broad-leaved woodlands under appropriate management, introduce wide rides and promote natural regeneration.

Opportunities for new areas of scrub to be established and managed adjacent to chalk grassland or adjacent to woodland along road and rail corridors.

Historic Landscape:

Some ancient woodland types - woodland blocks on ridges.

Many open fields, bounded by tracks - there are ancient overtones in this landscape

Large assarts

Older settlements on ridges, isolated, linked by roads

Isolated farms

Pre-1801 Parkland

EYNSFORD AND SHOREHAM DOWNS

North Downs

Downs Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Rolling downland with large arable fields.

Small isolated woodlands and hedgerow corridors.

Large and medium scale rectangular and irregularly shaped fields.

Few isolated settlements and farms.



Landscape Description

This is an area of rolling agricultural downland, dominated by large rectangular arable fields, created as a result of agricultural intensification. Sloping steeply to the east, there are spectacular long views from the higher areas, across the Darent Valley, and to the Greensand Ridge around Sevenoaks.

Isolated corridors of broken, overly mature hedgerows provide limited enclosure. Fragmented hedgerows along lanes are supplemented by various styles of wire, metal and timber fencing. Woodland is restricted to small isolated shaws. Fine specimen oaks are found within Lullingstone Park golf course, formerly a deer park to the neighbouring Lullingstone Castle.

Settlement is limited to isolated cottages and farms and small linear settlements scattered along narrow winding, tree lined lanes, where few passing places are available. Building styles include traditional flint and brick cottages, gentrified oasts, mixed style 20th century residential properties and large modern block and steel barns.

The M25 cuts north - south through the area, is visually intrusive and very noisy. Large pylons are visually prominent, positioned across the upper fields, alongside the M25 corridor.

EYNSFORD AND SHOREHAM DOWNS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

Large-scale visual detractors of the motorway corridor and rows of pylons interrupt the visual unity of the landscape. This landscape is considered to be in a moderate condition; former hedgerow patterns are now fragmented, visual enclosure is limited, and the area is dominated by large, rectangular arable fields. Small woodlands and stretches of hedgerow form corridors of semi-natural habitats. The motorway contributes to ecological bases, however the intensive land-use reduces the overall ecological interest of the area. Post-1801 linear development and more recent village enlargements, and recent agricultural buildings have a moderately negative impact on the area, although isolated farmsteads and traditional building materials such as flint do still demonstrate local vernacular and sense of place.

Sensitivity :

Visibility is considered to be moderate as there are intermittent woodland and mature hedgerows which contain some views, however, long distance views of the valley can be seen from some viewpoints.

There is an historic landscape pattern with ancient elements such as the former Deer Park in which some mature oaks remain to indicate its former characteristics. Elements such as the landform and historic built form contribute to a very distinct sense of place.

This area is therefore considered to be highly sensitive.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The main emphasis on the management of this landscape should be the conservation of historic buildings and their settings, and the restoration of heritage landscape features such as hedgerows, hedged lanes and woodland edges.

The open arable fields may be retained, but enclosure by hedgerow and appropriate, small broadleaf woodland and shaws should be restored along rural lanes and around settlements.

The restoration of estate farmland features such as cross-contour beech avenues would also augment local distinctiveness.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Very Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

EYNSFORD DOWNS (EAST)

North Downs

Downs Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Intensively farmed rolling downland landscape with deep dry valleys.

Long open views.

Mixed woodland on valley ridgelines.

Medium to large-scale fields used for pasture and arable crops.

Isolated farmsteads and small hamlets.



Landscape Description

This is an intensively farmed, rolling Downland landscape with deep, dry valleys and broad plateau tops. There are long views to the north, from the upper areas, over adjacent Downs. There are also significant views along the valley floor and views extending up the valley sides to the wooded ridgelines. Broken views of the A20 are evident from within the site.

There is a feeling of enclosure created by the topography and mature woodland growing along the ridgelines. The isolated woodlands contain oak standards with groups of Scots Pine, Hazel and Hawthorn. There is a strong field pattern, but the hedgerows are breaking down and being replaced by post and wire fencing. The fields are generally medium to large scale and rectangular in form. The land is mainly used for pasture and the production of crops. Adjacent to the village of Eynsford are found some smaller scale paddocks. A large golf course is also tucked unobtrusively within the hills to the rear of southern Eynsford.

Settlement is limited to a scattering of isolated farmsteads and small hamlets. These groups of buildings include renovated flint and brick oasts and barns that would have been associated with farming at one time. Elsewhere, large modern farm buildings and barns are often located on the skyline. Narrow winding lanes have high grass verges and mature, species-rich hedgerows. Along the valley floor, lanes have narrow grass verges and no hedgerows.

EYNSFORD DOWNS (EAST)

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The rolling downland has a coherent landscape pattern of medium-sized fields, tall hedgerows and blocks of woodland. This pattern is interrupted by the loss of some woodland and hedgerows, some post and wire fencing and by prominent large agricultural buildings, and poor woodland management. Hedgerows represent much of the semi-natural habitat, but are in decline within the fields. Woodland blocks are isolated and therefore the bases of ecological interest are patchy. Built form has a moderately negative impact, although some characteristic flint and brick does demonstrate a local vernacular, and the location of farms and settlement on ridges is distinctive.

The area is considered to be in a moderate condition.

Sensitivity :

The landform of this rolling Downland is the dominant element of the view. Views are generally open and long, but some are intermittently enclosed by the cover and the topography. Visibility is high.

The numbers of Yew within the woodland indicate the great time depth (ancient) of some vestiges of the character area, but the majority of the pattern is based on historic land use, overlain with more recent features of new settlements, unremarkable buildings and fenced field boundaries.

The high visibility factor over the area, contributes to its high sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the character of the woodland by ensuring that locally distinctive species are used in replanting, and as an edge to existing/new plantation woodland.

Conserve standard oaks in hedgerow and restore this feature, and restore the characteristic species mix in new hedgerow planting.

Conserve and restore the settlement patterns of isolated, small dwellings and farmsteads on ridges. Restore woodland and hedgerow enclosure around settlements. Restore the integrity of field boundaries, avoid the use of post and rail or wire. Restore the emphasis on ancient trackway boundaries. Restore vernacular interest in built form within the area. Restore larger areas of woodland on ridgelines, and as cross-contour shaws on steeper slopes.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND RESTORE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	<u>CONSERVE & RESTORE</u>
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

FARNINGHAM FARMLANDS

North Downs

Downs Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating open arable landscape.

Hedgerows limited to lanes.

No internal field boundaries.

Large scale irregularly shaped fields.

Mixed 20th century residential properties along main road.



Landscape Description

This is a gently undulating, intensively farmed arable landscape, with wide open views to the Darent Valley and the Downs beyond. Natural vegetation is restricted to isolated mature field trees and a single broken, overly mature hedgerow growing alongside a narrow lane leading to the back of Farningham Woods. There are no internal hedgerows separating the fields. The large scale and irregular shape of the field pattern is distinguished simply by changes in crop.

Along the main road, on the eastern boundary are groups of mixed style 20th century residential properties. There are also examples of gentrified agricultural buildings including an oast and barns. To the rear of these properties lie a number of small fields of rough pasture used for horseculture.

FARNINGHAM FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This is a landscape in poor condition due to its lack of visual unity and lack of semi-natural habitats. The land is intensively used for both arable farming and suburban purposes. There is no longer a unified pattern within the landscape although traces of the original pattern can still be perceived in the road pattern and isolated fragments of hedgerow. The cultural integrity of the area is also reduced by the incongruous nature and location of linear residential developments.

Sensitivity :

There is a very high visibility factor over this open landscape. However, many of the elements which make up the current view are not considered to contribute significantly to a local sense of place, most settlements and remnants of woodland or hedgerows are not of distinct character. Few landscape features suggest any great time depth or continuity within the landscape. The area is therefore considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The landform is arguably the strongest feature of this landscape in its current condition.

There is an opportunity to restore a more unified pattern in the landscape by enhancing the heritage features along the road and within traditional settlements. This would include replanting hedgerows with standard trees. In the large-scale arable farmland there is a need to create or identify a landscape pattern which respects the current use and at the same time introduces some natural vegetation. The ecological bases within selected areas could be enhanced by more sensitive land management, in order to maximise the ecological potential of existing fields.

The rolling landscape may be accentuated by woodland planting following the landform. Hedgerows and standard trees, and the creation of new fringe features to built development may also be used to create settings and approaches to existing linear settlements.

Existing open areas and views should be maintained and restored by removing landscape clutter.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Poor
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Weak
Functional Integrity:	Weak

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Weak
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Open
Visibility:	Very High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

RESTORE AND CREATE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	<u>RESTORE & CREATE</u>	RESTORE
poor			
	low moderate		high

HORTON KIRBY DOWNS

North Downs

Downs Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating open landscape with views to the north

Medium scale regular field pattern

Smaller fields further north with occasional hops gardens and shelterbelts

Broken mature hedgerows

Narrow winding lanes

Isolated farmsteads often with traditional flint buildings



Landscape Description

The Horton Kirby Downs are a gently undulating, open arable landscape with good views to the north. The area is largely intensively farmed for cereals within a medium-scale field pattern. To the north, the field pattern is smaller with some hop gardens and associated poplar shelterbelts.

These fields are mostly defined by the tracks and lanes that surround them. Boundaries are generally made up of declining mature hedgerows with some hedgerow trees. Species include hawthorn, field maple, with sycamore, bramble and ivy being common in many boundaries.

Infrequent farmsteads are scattered in the Downland ridges with flint used as a traditional material in the buildings and boundary walls. Elsewhere, more recent brick residential buildings reflect the area's proximity to the urban fringe.

Narrow winding lanes run northwest to southeast towards the ridgeline. These lanes are contained by banks, often surmounted with hedgerows.

HORTON KIRBY DOWNS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

Overall, the Horton Kirby Downs are in moderate condition. There is a generally coherent field pattern with regular, reasonably intact hedgerows. There are some detracting features, in particular; modern housing and inappropriate fencing - the latter associated mainly with residential and suburban land-uses. The diverse hedgerows and occasional clusters of trees create a moderate to strong ecological network, although the intensively farmed arable areas have a low ecological value. Taken as a whole, the ecological integrity of the area is moderate, however the hedgerows tend to be over mature which threatens to break up and fragment the ecological network.

Settlement and buildings have a moderately negative impact on the area, lacking in distinction and continuity. Infrequent, isolated farmsteads include some locally distinctive flint buildings. Otherwise buildings are generally unsympathetic, mixed style modern residential properties at low densities. Generally the farmsteads are found on the downland ridges and the urban fringe development in the valleys.

Sensitivity :

The distinct elements in the landscape are a product of the historic, medium scale pattern of farming, and the infrequent farmsteads exhibiting traditional materials. The urban fringe and other residential developments have introduced a more recent emphasis to the landscape. The influence of the historic pattern, and therefore the sensitivity of the landscape, has been reduced.

Views are intermittently enclosed by over mature hedgerows over the rolling and otherwise open landscape, and visibility is therefore considered to be moderate.

The landscape is of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Some areas of this landscape are changing in use and cultural emphasis and therefore require the creation of new landscape features to fulfill the ecological potential and cultural pressures of the area. Distinct and historic features, which currently contribute to the sense of place, should be conserved with appropriate landscape characteristics such as maintaining the isolation of traditional settlements, conserving selected networks of existing hedgerows and conserving open views of rolling landform.

The creation of new or enhanced ecological resources should be a priority of this area.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
	moderate		high

HORTON KIRBY PLATEAU

North Downs

Downs Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating open arable landscape

Enclosed by large areas of coppice woodland and hedgerows

Medium scale irregularly shaped fields

Small isolated hamlets



Landscape Description

The Horton Kirby Plateau is a gently undulating open arable landscape. There is a strong feeling of enclosure created by large areas of coppice woodland with intermittent long views along the Eynsford Downs. The woodlands are predominantly coppiced sweet chestnut with oak standards, with silver birch and beech evident.

Overall the field pattern is medium scale with irregularly shaped fields, enclosed by woodlands and native mixed hedgerows. Close to farmsteads the fields are small regular, rectangular paddocks that are enclosed by post and rail fencing.

Settlement is limited to small isolated rural hamlets grouped at the woodland edges. Traditionally these groups of buildings would have been linked to farming. They include some vernacular flint and weatherboarded properties, converted barns and mixed style 20th century properties. Small winding lanes without verges are lined with mature hedgerows and, intermittently by blocks of woodland.

HORTON KIRBY PLATEAU

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The Horton Kirby Plateau is a coherent landscape with large areas of reasonably intact woodland. The area is of moderate ecological interest with its combination of extensive woodland blocks and broken hedgerows. However a lack of management of some woodlands and fly tipping create an untidy and neglected appearance in places. Intermittent, over-mature hedgerows are vulnerable to replacement with post and wire and post and rail fences.

Recent built development is limited. There are some barn conversions in traditional weatherboarded style and a limited number of traditional flint buildings. More recent 20th century buildings often reflect uncharacteristic and unsympathetic materials and styles. Overall the built form has a moderate impact on the landscape.

Overall the condition of the Horton Kirby Plateau is moderate.

Sensitivity :

The Horton Kirby Plateau is a moderate sense of place. The coppice woodlands and dense mature hedgerows are distinctive and historic features where they are intact. The traditional buildings and narrow hedged lanes add to the downland character. More recent buildings and fenced enclosures are indistinct.

Visibility in this area is low. The undulating landform combined with the extensive woodlands and hedgerows contain views within the area. Overall the sensitivity of this landscape is low, largely due to the degree of enclosure.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The distinctiveness of the built form may be reinforced by creating a local design code to guide the location, scale, structure and use of materials in built form and residential land uses. The adoption of more sympathetic and cohesive designs and scale for all built form may reduce the amount of detracting features, and create a distinguishing local character.

The heritage landscape features of existing hedges and woodland blocks should be reinforced. The use of characteristic hedgerows may also be encouraged in new land uses.

Reinforce the locational characteristics and isolation of traditional hamlets, which are characteristically grouped at woodland edges. Reinforce the 'enclosed' characteristics of the landscape.

The creation of a new landscape pattern may be appropriate where the existing woodland edge and hedgerows are currently unmanaged.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

AND REINFORCE

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	<u>CREATE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
poor			
	low		
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE

moderate high

Wooded Downs



Regional North Downs
Landscape :

Geology Clay-with-Flints

Soils Loamy free draining mineral soils

Landform Folded

Landscape Description:

An enclosed landscape, gently undulating and folding into steep valleys.

Woodlands along tops of slopes with unimproved grassland used for recreation and paddocks on the steep slopes.

Larger arable fields on flatter slopes.

Narrow, winding lanes and small isolated settlements on higher ground.

Small to medium scale irregular field pattern.

Broken hedgerows along narrow lanes.

Biodiversity Targets:

Promote coppice management where existing.

Existing unimproved grasslands to be retained and managed. Existing native broad-leaved woodland to be maintained and varied management methods introduced to diversity habitats, for example the creation of wide rides.

Public access should be limited to woodlands of low native conservation interest.

Establish scrub to be managed adjacent to chalk grassland or woodland.

Historic Landscape:

Extensive areas of post 1801 extent and small regular fields.

Many areas of pre 1801 coppice surrounded by fields of small regular shape and small and large fields with wavy boundaries.

Small regular assarts.

EAST HILL WOODLANDS

North Downs

Wooded Downs

Key Characteristics

Enclosed landscape folding into steep valleys

Narrow winding lanes and isolated linear, C20th residential settlements, devoid of facilities.

Enclosure provided by topography, densely tree lined lanes and many blocks of woodland.

Wooded areas to tops of slopes and on plateau with unimproved pasture and golf within steep valleys. Managed coppiced woodland on plateau

Isolated views out from plateau.



Landscape Description

A level plateau gives way to steeply undulating and folding valleys. From points on the plateau boundary, there are long views over Dartford and of Eynsford Downs. Elsewhere, views are restricted by topography and vegetation. There is a strong sense of enclosure created by the topography and large areas of mixed woodland.

The field pattern is small to medium scale with irregular shaped fields, enclosed by woodland and hedgerows, of mixed native species. Woodland is mixed coniferous and deciduous, with large blocks of mature coppiced Sweet Chestnut on the plateau. The folding valley slopes are used for agriculture and recreation. Land use includes unimproved pasture, horsiculture, arable fields and a golf course.

Settlement includes isolated farmsteads, a large caravan site and residential properties, scattered along narrow winding lanes within woodland areas. There are many ridgeline lanes which link older ridge-top settlements and now feed linear settlements with long plots on either side of the road. These lanes undulate across the valleys and are enclosed by dense woodland that forms vegetative tunnels over the road. Agricultural properties are generally in vernacular style and date from the 19th century. Elsewhere linear residential settlements are of mixed style 20th century housing, sited on large plots.

EAST HILL WOODLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This simple landscape is clearly defined by the topography, the form of which is emphasised by the ridge top and cross-contour woodland blocks. The simplicity and tranquility of some views are interrupted by longer views of the urban fringe to the north, and by suburban land-uses such as horsiculture and golf courses. Linear ridgeline/residential development is also an incongruous feature in this landscape. These latter land-uses and newer residential patterns also reduce the cultural integrity of the landscape. Ecological bases are extremely strong: extensive woodlands are linked by shaws and hedgerows, and there are areas of unintensively used grasslands.

There are few incidences of vernacular building: the dominant form of C20th housing has a moderately negative impact on the landscape.

Sensitivity :

This area portrays many distinctive Downland features. The strong enclosure by the woodland, and the small-scale of the landscape pattern are locally distinctive and also suggest more ancient overtones. The land-use pattern however, is historic, and the time depth of the landscape is further reduced by the localised impact of recent built form. Visibility is limited by the topography and the woodland/hedgerow/shaw enclosure. This area is considered to have a moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Reinforce the enclosure of settlements and the isolation of ancient settlement sites and historic farmlands.

Reinforce the enclosure of ridge-top roads with hedgerow and wooded edges.

Reinforce broad-leaf woodland cover by managing and maintaining the woodland network with appropriate species, and restoring woodland cover to steeper slopes.

Reinforce the incidence of local vernacular built form by enhancing the settings and maintaining the character of roads/trackways leading to historic settlements.

Develop a local design code for the location, pattern and materials of new residential and agricultural buildings.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			

poor

low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
moderate		
high		

KNOCKHOLT AND HALSTEAD DOWNS

North Downs

Wooded Downs

Key Characteristics

Mainly agricultural land use, with plenty of horsiculture and many small woodlands.

Generally gently undulating, but with steep valley slopes to centre.

Large golf course where mature orchards have been retained and used within the design.

Rough grassland used as paddocks on steep valley slopes.

Larger arable fields found on the flatter ground.

Small historic properties at core of settlements, large C20th housing to the outskirts.

Large manor house set in parkland estate in heart of Knockholt

Small flint and brick vernacular buildings.

Mature Beech trees and roadside hedgerow.



Landscape Description

This is a downland landscape based on a gently undulating landform which has steeper slopes to the centre of the area.

The main land use is agricultural, but also involves much horsiculture and many small woodlands - the latter is notable as replanted and 'other' ancient woodland. It has a varied field pattern; generally, the rough grassland is used as paddocks on steep valley slopes, larger arable fields are found on the flatter ground .

The area contains a large golf course where mature orchards have been retained and used within the design. Small historic properties can be found at the core of the settlements, with relatively large C20th housing developments to the outskirts of the villages. There is a distinct use of flint and brick in the small buildings in local vernacular style.

The area includes a manor house set in a parkland estate in the heart of Knockholt.

KNOCKHOLT AND HALSTEAD DOWNS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

Despite much residential development around the historic village cores, the landscape pattern retains a coherent rural pattern which reflects the landform and historic development. Adaptations of the landscape for horsiculture, and the decline of hedged boundaries; urban recreation and the intrusion of new-building in the view, are some of the many visual detractors. Visually, this landscape is poor, however, it maintains some cultural integrity as many heritage features such as woodlands and rough grasslands have been retained as working features of the landscape. Despite the pressures of residential development and general fragmentation, the ecological network retains some value due to a corresponding lack of intensity in agricultural practices in the area. However, the overall condition of the landscape is considered to be poor.

Sensitivity :

Some cultural heritage features such as historic village cores and internal field boundaries have become indistinct. This area, however, does retain some historic sense of place within the farmland in which woodland edges preserve the small-scale of enclosures. Parkland trees, mature Beech trees and roadside hedgerows are all distinctive and provide clear historic continuity. The frequent tree cover in the small woodlands ensures that visibility is low - views are generally well-enclosed by topography and vegetation, although some views stretch over the lower valley pastures. The sensitivity of the area is considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The changing use and emphasis of this area means that new landscape features are needed to accommodate new uses. In the farmed landscape the rural heritage features should be reinforced, such as woodlands and hedged boundaries to roads. However, new features may be introduced into the urban fringe landscape, which should express both the historic and natural characteristics of the area. This may involve the enhancement of historic village cores, and the replanting of community orchards, or the provision of a rural fringe edge which enhances the wildlife interest and provides space for urban recreation.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Poor
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high



Regional
Landscape : North Downs

Geology Middle Chalk

Soils Base rich shallow rendzinas

Landform South facing scarp slope, steep undulating, in some localised areas the slopes are near to vertical

Landscape Description:

Enclosed, folding downland.
Steep chalk scarp with a mosaic of mixed woodlands.
Isolated farmsteads and enclosed pastoral fields.
Occasional long views south, but generally enclosed by tree cover.
Chalk quarrying - working and redundant quarries.
Small to medium scale irregular field pattern.
Small linear residential groups sited along narrow lanes at the foot of the scarp.

Biodiversity Targets:

Unimproved chalk grassland to be retained, managed and restored.
Public access and recreation to be low key and sensitively managed.
All native broad-leaved woodland to be maintained and diversified where possible.
New areas of scrub to be established and maintained where possible.
Establish and maintain non-crop habitats within farmland including hedges, copses, and wide road verges.
Ensure that redundant quarries are appropriately managed in order to realise the potential of these diverse habitats.

Historic Landscape:

Some ancient woodland types at top of scarp.
Small fields on scarp face with wavy boundaries.

KEMSING SCARP

North Downs

Scarp Landscapes

Key Characteristics

Enclosed, folding downland

Open rough grassland areas, within large areas of mature mixed woodlands.

Glimpses of urban areas to the south & M26 beyond.

Isolated farmsteads and enclosed pastoral fields at top of scarp



Landscape Description

This is a folding Downland scarp slope that is enclosed by large areas of mature mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland. Where the trees open to clearings there are long but limited views across the Darent Valley, over Otford and Kemsing to the M26 beyond. Woodland species include beech, oak, yew, holly, field maple, birch, hazel and ash.

Isolated farmsteads and a limited number of pastoral fields, at the top of the scarp, are enclosed by woodland or by mature hedgerows containing many mature oak standards. Narrow winding lanes with no verges and high grassy banks, climb up across the wooded scarp slopes.

Small linear groups of 20th century residential dwellings of indistinct style are located along the scarp slopes north of Kemsing. Large, elegant, isolated properties are scattered across the slopes overlooking Shoreham. The noise of the M26 dominates an otherwise tranquil area.

KEMSING SCARP

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The woodland cover on the scarp, the rough grassland and ridge-top assarts, combine to give unified pattern of landscape elements which directly relate to the topography of the area. The residential ridgeline development is one of the few detracting features of the area.

Extensive coverage of mature, mixed woodland, linked to strong hedgerow boundaries, creates a strong network of semi-natural habitat, although recreational use modifies this assessment of the ecological value. The introduction of new settlement patterns has changed the cultural emphasis of the landscape. Vernacular styles of building are not clearly defined.

The condition of the area is considered to be good.

Sensitivity :

This is predominantly an historic landscape in which ancient woodland coverage (of which vestiges remain) has been modified by plantations and scarp-foot estate farms. The woodland and the network of narrow, enclosed roads both contribute to the strength of character of the area. However, the emphasis on recent built development reduces the sense of the great time depth of the landscape.

The scarp landform is extremely dominant in the view and is therefore a sensitive landscape. Views from within, however, are often enclosed by tree cover.

The overall sensitivity of the area is considered to be high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the dominant feature of broad-leaf woodland and reinforce the characteristic species mix. Reinforce hedgerow enclosure of lanes and field boundaries where these are vulnerable.

Conserve the settlement pattern and locational characteristics of isolated settlement - which is characteristically set back from the ridge - and the characteristics of infrequent settlement along the base of the scarp.

Conserve the distinct line of the 'Pilgrims Way', enhancing the line with appropriate vegetation in the rural countryside, and other linear features in built areas.

Conserve areas of rough pasture and downland.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
			moderate

KNOCKHOLT SCARP

North Downs

Scarp Landscapes

Key Characteristics

Steep chalk scarp with a mosaic of scrubby woodland and pasture.

Settlement limited to scattered farmsteads and large detached houses

Chalk quarrying - working and redundant



Landscape Description

This is a steep chalk scarp with small wooded areas and regenerative scrub vegetation. The scarp is occasionally scarred by the legacy of white quarry faces. Occasional farmsteads are found at the top and base of the scarp, whilst ancient and estate landscape (Chevening) covers a portion of the scarp.

Settlement is limited to a small number of large houses and the scattered farmsteads. Ancient trackways mark the top and base of the scarp. Highways are characteristically cross-contoured, steep and enclosed. Cross-contour shaws, wooded scarps and ghylls and steep pastures are also characteristic. There are long views towards the Darent Valley and beyond, which are significantly affected by views of the M25.

The field pattern on the lower scarp is medium-large, regular, with many fields now bounded by tracks.

KNOCKHOLT SCARP

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The small, steep pastures, woodland, and large sloping fields, have a coherent but irregular pattern, with few visual detractors. The grassland and frequent blocks of ancient woodland, provide a strong ecological mosaic with clusters of wildlife interest. However, heritage shaws and hedgerows have declined - sometimes replaced with post and wire fencing - and the unsympathetic development of farmsteads occasionally encroaches on the view. Overall the area is considered to be in very good condition.

Sensitivity :

The landform and the strong presence of ancient woodland augments the distinctive quality of the landscape. Other key characteristics such as shaws and field boundaries have become indistinct, reducing the sense of place. Visibility is high due to the dominant landform of the scarp slopes, and the intermittent nature of the tree cover. The landscape is considered to be of high sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

It is important to conserve the wooded cover and the scale of the steep grasslands and cultivated fields. The infrequency of settlement is a key characteristic. Development is not appropriate for this ridgeline and scarp. Woodland cover to ghylls and shaws/hedgerows to the lower slopes should be restored.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibilty:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
		moderate	



Regional North Downs
Landscape :

Geology Lower Chalk

Soils Base rich loamy calcareous soils

Landform Undulating, south facing spurs

Landscape Description:

Large to medium scale, often intensive arable, chalky when ploughed. Enclosed managed hedgerows rising up the scarp. Some shaws. Often based along the Pilgrim's Way - a defined, often hedgeline route of an ancient trackway. Cross-contour and along-contour highways. Hedgerows are vulnerable.

Scattered historic country houses at the foot of the scarp with mature parkland trees, indicative of former parkland estates. Isolated farmsteads and villages with historic cores and many examples of vernacular architecture. 20th century sprawl to periphery of villages.

Long views to south from upper scarp.

Pressure of urban fringe activities on traditional land uses.

Major transport infrastructure of the M25 and the railway have fragmented the area to some extent, leaving small isolated pockets of land to revert to scrub.

Biodiversity Targets:

Unimproved chalk grassland to be retained and managed.

All areas of native broadleaf woodland to be maintained and diversified through management.

New areas of scrub to be established and maintained.

Reinforce hedgerows where they are breaking down.

Maintain areas of copse and shaw.

Public access to be low key and sensitively managed.

Historic Landscape:

Historic estate farmland, parkland and houses. Estate cottages.

Small block of ancient woodland adjacent to transport links.

Regular ladder fields, large and medium regular fields on scarp slopes surrounded by small wavy boundaries.

Small regular fields adjacent to settlements.

Large pre-1801 parkland and associated hamlet with historic buildings.

KEMSING SCARP FOOT ESTATES

North Downs

Scarp-foot Farmland Estates

Key Characteristics

Steep scarp with wooded top.

Medium scale chalk pasture and arable on slopes.

Fragmented mature trimmed hedgerows along narrow winding lanes.

Scattered grand mansions, small isolated tree avenues and scattered mature parkland trees indicative of former parkland estates.



Landscape Description

This is a landscape of undulating scarp slope and gently sloping scarp-foot farmland. The scarp top has a wooded edge. Roadside tree avenues, scattered mature parkland trees and small blocks of woodland are all indicative of the former parkland estates found here. It is an area that is strongly enclosed by its topography and hedgerows.

There is irregular, small to medium scale pasture in the lower areas and arable on the scarp slopes. Along the narrow winding lanes, fragmented, mature, clipped hedgerows are supplemented by post and wire fencing. Generally the internal field boundaries are post and wire fencing connecting small sections of over mature hedgerow.

Settlement includes small isolated hamlets, grand historic houses, isolated farms and scattered residential properties. Historically many would have been associated with the grand parkland estates. Many vernacular buildings are present, built in flint, ragstone and brick. There are also several large mansions dating from the Georgian period. Small winding lanes have narrow grass verges and are enclosed by fragmented clipped hedgerows. The constant noise of the motorway is quite intrusive.

KEMSING SCARP FOOT ESTATES

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

There is a very clear pattern of elements in this landscape; the toe of the scarp eases to more gentle slopes and the transition is marked by the line of the Pilgrim's Way and by well-spaced estate houses and farm buildings within regular fields.

Occasional beech avenues line cross-contour roads. Some loss of hedgerow and large, recent agricultural buildings occasionally detract from the general view. There are areas of intensive, large arable fields, and some loss of internal hedged field boundaries, the occurrence of semi-natural habitats is generally limited to scarp-top woodland and some intact hedgerow. The historic houses and estate buildings have a highly positive impact on this landscape; their setting, location and use of building materials are major components of the local sense of place. This is a strong cultural landscape and the condition of the area is considered to be very good.

Sensitivity :

The dramatic form of estate farmlands is a very distinct characteristic with an historic time depth. The field pattern is also historic but with a greater time-depth suggested by the Pilgrim's Way trackway. The hedgerow network, however, is felt to be vulnerable.

Views of the area are not always open, despite large areas of pasture and arable fields; tree cover in the form of avenues, mature hedgerow and woodland blocks, contains and limits some views. The sensitivity of this area is considered to be high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the open and grand settings of the estate farmlands, avoiding the introduction of any competing built form in the landscape.

Conserve estate form features such as avenues, beech plantations and entrances.

Conserve open grassland on the steeper scarp slopes.

Conserve woodland blocks and shaws on the steeper scarp slopes

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Very Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
		moderate	

KNOCKHOLT SCARP FOOT ESTATES

North Downs

Scarp-foot Farmland Estates

Key Characteristics

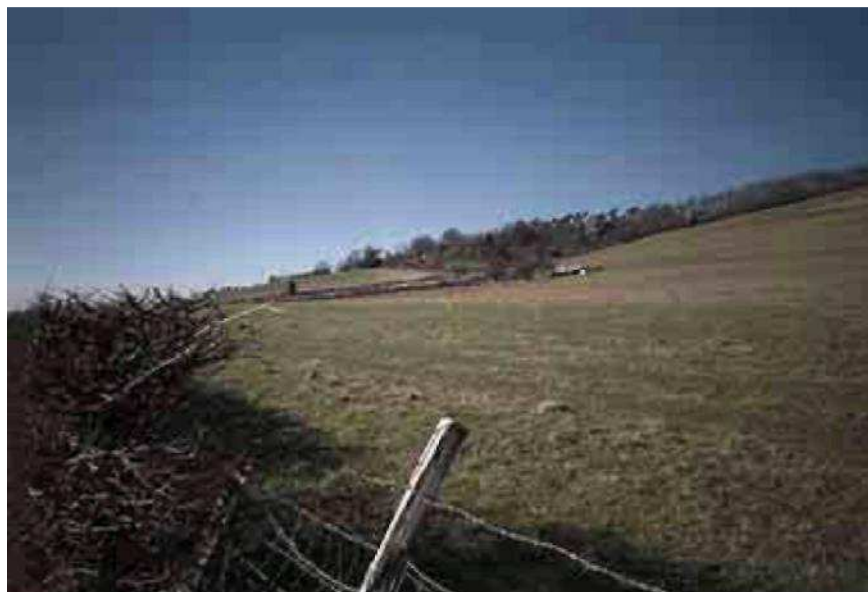
Medium to large scale rolling arable fields and pasture on slopes at foot of North Downs scarp.

Scrubby patches of over mature native species to some internal fields boundaries.

Many fragmented mature hedgerows with large standard trees across farmland and along lanes.

Large historic country house at Chevening with park and associated hamlet

Narrow, winding hedge lined lanes.



Landscape Description

These are the gently undulating chalky slopes found at the foot of the North Downs scarp. There are many long views from this area, to the high land of the Greensand Ridge and the North Downs. Within the site views across the rural landscape are interrupted by the M25.

Fragmented, mature hedgerows define large open fields and lanes. Many internal field boundaries have been removed in the interest of agricultural intensification. The field pattern is irregular medium to large scale arable and pasture. Smaller-scale fields are found around Chevening Park. A mature avenue of Lime trees lines the approach road to the hamlet of Chevening. Elsewhere mature standard oaks are scattered across cultivated fields, but woodland is otherwise limited to scrubby patches at field boundaries.

Settlement is limited to isolated farmsteads, Chevening country house and its associated hamlet. These 18th and 19th century properties are located at the foot of the scarp. The hamlet is made up of small brick and half tile hung cottages. Many of the farms are late 19th century, with late 20th century barns in various styles and materials. Lanes are narrow, winding and enclosed by mature hedges. The ancient Pilgrim's Way trade route cuts across the site.

KNOCKHOLT SCARP FOOT ESTATES

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This is a unified landscape in which the lower slopes of the chalk scarp support a well defined irregular pattern of medium-large fields either side of the Pilgrim's Way. Chevening Park is a significant and harmonious feature with its estate parkland and farmlands. The motorway is one of the few detracting features.

The intensity of agricultural management of the arable areas reduces the extent of ecological interest. Tree cover is limited and hedgerows are often limited to the edges of the highway. Built development is not a highly significant feature, but the C18-C19th estate cottages and farmsteads do contribute to a local sense of place. This landscape is considered to be in good condition.

Sensitivity :

The foot of the chalk scarp here, is a noticeable element of the view, and as it is an open landscape, the visibility is reasonably high. This is an historic landscape which includes historic field patterns and historic settlement, based around the ancient trackway of the Pilgrim's Way and the fertile land around it.

The key characteristics of the estate farmlands, parkland, avenues and the field pattern, are considered to be distinct, but not unique in the Kentish landscape. The area is of high sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the open views of the fields either side of the Pilgrim's Way.

Conserve the incidence of standard oaks in fields by management of the existing stock and a replanting programme.

Conserve the incidence of estate-buildings and maintain this style for all built form.

Maintain existing hedgerows, and ensure their regular maintenance in clipped form.

Conserve and reinstate estate landscape features such as specimen trees, avenues, gates and entrances.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Open
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
		moderate	



Regional Landscape : North Downs

Geology Tertiary deposits

Soils Base rich loamy non calcareous soils

Landform Undulating

Landscape Description:

Gently undulating enclosed landscape. Large areas of coppiced ancient woodland. Fragmented remnant broad-leaved woodland on hilltops.

Regular rectangular, small to medium scale field pattern. Intensive cultivation on fertile soils includes market gardening. Rough unimproved grassland used for paddocks. Fragmented hedgerows along roads with standard trees. Occasional historic building in vernacular style. Generally isolated, 20th century residential and agricultural properties with suburban fringe development.

Biodiversity Targets:

All native broad-leaved woodland to be managed.

Conservation of plantations of existing coppice.

Management of non-crop habitats within farmland should be encouraged including hedges, copses, road verges and unsprayed strips within crops.

Limit public access to non-vulnerable features.

Historic Landscape:

Largely regular ladder fields.

Large isolated areas of coppiced ancient woodland.

Historically, orchards were grown in this area, but only a very limited orchard area now exists.

Small areas of regular fields adjacent to existing settlement.

BADGERS MOUNT

North Downs

Fringe Landscapes

Key Characteristics

Undulating topography, vulnerable to urban fringe development.

Residential properties built within woodland and along main roads.

M25 corridor cuts north south through the site, which together with other main roads makes the areas noisy.

Large garden centre and nursery set back off the main road.

Large areas of woodland, including extensive areas of managed Sweet Chestnut coppice.

Public picnic sites and recreation within woodlands.



Landscape Description

The landscape is formed by the undulating topography of chalk valleys and folds, overlain with varying cover of sandy Thanet beds and heavy clay with flints.

It is vulnerable to urban fringe development. Residential properties have increasingly been built within existing woodland and along main roads. The M25 corridor cuts north-south through the area which, together with other main roads, reduces the tranquillity of the rural and residential areas.

Significant commercial developments are also set back off the main road, creating some visual disturbance and increasing the emphasis of the development in the landscape.

Large areas of woodland are characteristic of the area, including extensive areas of managed Sweet Chestnut coppice.

Public picnic sites and pressures for recreation are a feature within the woodland.

BADGERS MOUNT

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This wooded landscape is mainly coherent in its landscape pattern and form, but the visual integrity of the area is interrupted by some plantation type woodland and the visual detractors of motorway infrastructure and urban development. A further negative influence is the lack of connectivity between the existing cultural uses and the inherent landscape pattern - the cultural integrity of the area is weak. However, the large areas of mixed woodland and coppice do provide a strong ecological network - this landscape area is therefore considered to be in a moderate condition .

Sensitivity :

The time-depth of this landscape varies dramatically between the recent nature of building and transport/motorway corridor, and the relatively significant continuity of replanted ancient woodland and former wood pastures. It is a very distinctive area which retains its ancient overtones. Visibility is low, well enclosed by tree cover - the sensitivity of this area is therefore moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The well wooded and intensely enclosed nature of the landscape should be conserved. In particular, strong, deep woodland enclosures should be maintained around clearings which contain new development, creating a definite edge. The narrow, hedged characteristics of highways should also be conserved.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Poor
Ecological integrity	Coherent
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Very Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

CROCKENHILL FRINGE

North Downs

Fringe Landscapes

Key Characteristics

Good quality soils leading to intensive cultivation-medium scale arable, pasture, market gardening and orchards in the past.

Horticulture extensive in more steeply sloping areas, where rough grass paddocks have been created.

Some well kept mature hedgerows, some broken and overly mature.

Substantial suburban and transport influence.

Some ornamental evergreen screen planting in areas of open landscape



Landscape Description

This is an area that undulates steeply in places and slopes gently elsewhere. Views out are limited by the topography, but glimpses of Swanley urban fringe are visible on the skyline. Fragmented remnant woodland on hilltops, dilapidated ancient orchards and broken mature hedgerows with many mature trees, all provide the area with a strong sense of enclosure. This feeling is emphasised by the topography. Many of the hedgerows are being replaced by post and wire fencing.

Although an urban fringe area, the land use is essentially rural and has remained so through its distinct division from Swanley, by the location of the A20, along the northern boundary. The field pattern is medium to small scale and irregular. Arable production, market gardening and former orchards reflect the fertile nature of the soils. Rough-grass pony paddocks are located in the more steeply sloping areas.

Settlement includes a large nucleated village with many Victorian brick properties to the core, occasional flint buildings and many mixed style 20th century houses. Elsewhere residential properties and isolated farmsteads are scattered across the rural landscape. Highways vary from wide urban roads with kerbs and pavements to less sophisticated narrow, winding, hedge lined lanes.

CROCKENHILL FRINGE

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The landscape pattern remains coherent. The formerly rural landscape, with hedge-lined roads and small-medium scale field pattern, is still evident but is interrupted by the loss of hedgerows, the fragmentation of woods and widespread changes in land use. There are also many detracting features in the view which include buildings on ridgelines, roads, pony fencing and general neglect.

Heritage landscape features such as hedgerows and woodland are still evident, but are in variable condition and are felt to be vulnerable to suburban influences.

Built form has a moderately positive impact on the whole area as there are still a few examples of isolated farms and groups of buildings which demonstrate a local vernacular.

The condition of the area overall is considered to be poor.

Sensitivity :

There is a moderate level of visibility over the character area. Views are limited by intermittent tree cover over the undulating landform.

A great proportion of elements in the landscape are considered to be indistinctive and show very little continuity in the evolution of the whole landscape. Recent built form is a dominant element and contributes very little to local distinctiveness. Key characteristics of ancient woodland and hedge lined roads are localised features.

The sensitivity of this area is considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Create a landscape framework which recognises the post 1801 settlement and helps to make it an integral part of the character area. The landscape framework should provide both a visual setting and amenity natural areas. The framework should relate to the topography and soils, and should enhance the inherent small scale of the landscape.

A stronger woodland element is needed, and could be implemented as wooded edges to paddocks and as a network of small woodlands through the character area.

A design code should be agreed in order to develop distinctive local character in built form.
Create rural corridors along existing rural lanes, using existing characteristics of tall hedgerow and small spinneys.

Agree a code of suburban land use and promote the development of localised design solutions for new landscape features such as pony fencing.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Poor
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Weak
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

FARNINGHAM WOODS

North Downs

Fringe Landscapes

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating enclosed landscape.

Large area of coppiced ancient woodland.

Regular, rectangular, medium to small scale field pattern.

Isolated clusters of 20th century residential and agricultural properties.



Landscape Description

The landscape is based on gently undulating topography, with a mixture of agricultural and urban fringe amenity uses. There is a strong sense of enclosure created by the location of Farningham Wood on the ridge, by the network of mature hedgerows and by the vegetated banks of the motorway embankments. The M25 and M20 run along the eastern and southern boundaries respectively. Views are limited by the topography and vegetation.

A large part of this landscape is woodland. Farningham Wood is ancient woodland, a pre 1801 coppice, housing a wide variety of species. It has been designated an SSSI and LNR. Elsewhere, a strong pattern of mature hedgerows indicates a field pattern that is regular, rectangular and medium to small scale. Where over-mature hedgerows are breaking down, post and wire fencing has been introduced.

Isolated clusters of 20th century residential properties and agricultural buildings are found scattered along the narrow lanes. Small semi-detached cottages set along the road front are likely to have been linked to farming in the earlier part of the century. Elsewhere large modern detached properties have been built for wealthy urban fringe dwellers. These are set back off private drives and are well screened. Wide grass verges along the lanes are planted up intermittently.

FARNINGHAM WOODS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This landscape has a coherent pattern of elements which includes the dominant ridge-top woodland and a network of mature hedgerows. The cultural links of settlements of the farmed landscape is still obvious although the more recent residential developments have no locational or practical links with the actual use of the land.

Due to the dominant woodland, the ecological bases for this area are very strong although the wider network of hedgerows is felt to be vulnerable in the long term.

Overall, the condition of the area is considered to be good.

Sensitivity :

Many of the landscape features have very little time depth and do not contribute to the local sense of place in the landscape. Built form, road networks and farming patterns have few highly distinctive characteristics. It is however the dominance and time depth of the ancient woodland which influences the sense of place in this character area.

Visibility is moderate, overall, and the sensitivity of the area is therefore considered to be moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The highly distinctive woodland cover should be conserved and reinforced. It is important to manage this area to increase woodland coverage with an emphasis on ridge line woodland cover. Existing mature hedgerows should be conserved and reinforced by appropriate management and replanting. Long term management agreements for the conservation of the hedgerow network may help to reinforce this distinctive feature.

It is important to retain the enclosure of views and elements within the area, in particular around settlement, and to avoid the spread of suburban features such as ornamental conifers, standard highway details and residential boundaries. The isolation of settlement should be conserved. Where the transport corridors run adjacent to ridge tops, characteristic species should be used in woodland planting which emphasise the contour lines. These should be physically linked to other motorway planting, under-storey planting and the hedgerow network, and should aim to maintain the characteristic range of broadleaf species and associated woodland floor species.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			

poor

low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
moderate		high

HEXTABLE FRINGE

North Downs

Fringe Landscapes

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating slopes.

Sense of enclosure largely due to topography.

Small scale rectangular fields.

Scattered urban fringe development, nuclear village and isolated farms.

Influence of major transport routes.

Very gently undulating slopes.

Some market gardening evident.

Sense of enclosure largely due to the topography.

Suburban fringe development.

Substantial transportation routes.



Landscape Description

This is a gently undulating rural-urban fringe area. The topography provides a strong sense of enclosure, which is emphasised by the strong pattern of small scale rectangular fields. Tree cover is restricted to hedgerows, where Hawthorn and Field Maple are the dominant species. Hedgerows are mature, and in some areas have become weak and fragmented - in many of these cases now being replaced by post and wire fencing.

Urban highways turn into narrow winding lanes with steep banks, as they leave urban fringe areas and enter the rather unkempt adjacent countryside - the latter visibly deteriorating in terms of maintenance and coherent management. Settlements include a nucleated village with historic core including some traditional flint and weather boarded properties, occasional Victorian housing and 20th century infill. Within more rural parts there is mixed age linear sprawl scattered along lanes, isolated cottages and farmsteads. Many recently built properties have been prominently sited on the undulating ridge-lines.

Land use is divided between market gardening, arable and horsiculture. On the urban fringe some fields have become amenity facilities such as playing fields. Visual detractors include mixed style housing and horse stabling blocks, incongruous suburban planting and embankments of major transport routes.

HEXTABLE FRINGE

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The small-scale rural landscape pattern has been significantly interrupted by many visual detractors and by the fragmentation of many of the characteristic elements-such as narrow roads and former small scale, diverse land-use. Visual detractors in the landscape involve widespread suburban planting and mixed building styles, but also include the large-scale influence of transport routes. Much of the agricultural land is intensively used for arable production, and has lost the visual diversity. Ecological bases are limited to the corridors of roadside planting and remnants of hedgerow. The condition of this area is considered to be very poor.

Sensitivity :

Very little time-depth is evident in the current view of the landscape. The dominant elements such as the urban fringe and suburban land use are recent. The more historic elements of villages, settlement patterns and hedged field boundaries contribute very little to local distinctiveness. Views are intermittent due to the undulating topography and frequent interruptive elements in the landscape, in addition to suburban planting and fragments of hedgerow. The sensitivity of this area is considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

It is desirable to maintain the small-scale pattern in this landscape. However, new features should be created to reflect the changing cultural emphasis of the land use and settlement patterns, and to increase the scale and importance of semi-natural habitats. A 'managed' landscape will be appropriate here.

In order to create local distinctiveness, local landmarks and views should be identified and enhanced. The material quality and settings of historic settlement cores, farmsteads and notable buildings should be upgraded and maintained.

Define the rural edge with a strong vegetative theme, which could also contribute to ecological bases and for open space. Shelter belts would be appropriate.

Create a design code for open space to include suburban land uses and horsiculture.

Create a design code for urban roads.

Create rural corridors along the remaining rural roads. Retain and enhance historic characteristics of rural lanes and ensure that there is a definition between urban and rural routes.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Poor
Pattern of elements	Incoherent
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Significantly Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Poor
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Weak

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Recent
Sense of Place:	Very Weak
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

	low		
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE

moderate high



Regional North Downs

Landscape :

Geology Alluvium and Gault Clay

Soils Alluvial and heavy clay soils

Landform Flat or very gently undulating

Landscape Description:

Gently undulating river valley containing traditional rural settlements with many vernacular buildings and isolated farms.

Enclosure is provided by small woodlands, riparian vegetation and embankments of major transport routes.

The field pattern is small to medium scale and mostly regular in form.

Narrow, winding, hedge-lined lanes and wide A roads.

Many internal field boundaries supplemented or replaced by post and wire fencing, some are ditches.

Many fields of open pasture and smaller scale paddocks.

Many historic features and traditional buildings.

Biodiversity Targets:

Promote varied management systems.

Plant new native broad-leaved woodland where possible.

Protect all remaining semi-natural habitats from destruction.

Maintain wetland habitats and riverine systems. Increase ground water levels within river valley flood plains to encourage shallow winter flooding and a high spring/summer water level.

Increase areas under grassland management in flood plains to include low intensity stock grazing and hay production. Develop uncropped field margins for biodiversity objectives.

Promote rotational ditch clearance and restoration, develop and protect hedgerows.

Restore farm ponds.

Historic Landscape:

Isolated, historic farms and villages linked by lanes.

Small regular fields adjacent to flood plain.

Many man-made historic features including an ancient Roman villa and more recent but traditional vernacular buildings scattered along the valley floor.

Traditional farming methods including hop-growing.

DARENT VALLEY- EYNSFORD AND SHOREHAM

North Downs

Downs River Valleys

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating rural river valley.

Well screened transport routes cross the valley providing enclosure.

Internal hedgerows removed and replaced by post and wire.

Small scale irregular fields adjacent to river, larger and more rectangular on slopes.

Many historic features.

Dense historic mill villages along river.

Narrow winding hedge lined lanes and wide open 'A' roads.



Landscape Description

This is a gently undulating rural river valley, with a small to medium scale agricultural landscape. There are long views to adjacent downland scarp slopes. Internal views are restricted by mature isolated woodlands and the network of well-screened transport routes that cross the valley. There are, however, some long views along the river valley to dominant features such as the railway viaduct at Eynsford.

Overall, the field pattern becomes less regular and smaller in scale adjacent to the river. The low lying areas are used for grazing, with the higher chalky ground used for arable production. Small scale copses are found around field boundaries and mature riparian vegetation along the river corridor. Hedgerows have largely been removed from the valley floor and are now limited to roadside verges. In their place is post and wire fencing, so the landscape now feels quite open.

The intrinsic character of the area is a result of its long history. Important historic features are found throughout the valley, including Lullingstone Roman Villa and castle. Historic mill villages, built on managed stretches of the river, are dominated by charming buildings in vernacular styles, many dated pre-1801. Isolated historic farms and cottages are scattered throughout the area. Traditional building styles include flint and brick and weather boarding.

Narrow lanes wind across the valley and through the villages. Away from settlements these are enclosed by dense mature hedgerows. To the south of Eynsford the 'A' road becomes wide and open with many large parking areas that provide viewing point across the valley.

DARENT VALLEY- HORTON KIRBY

North Downs

Downs River Valleys

Key Characteristics

Gently sloping river valley with two distinct small scale settlements.

Significant wetland habitat to the north enclosed by dense riparian vegetation.

Medium scale, open arable fields, with hedges supplemented and replaced by post and wire fencing. Rough pasture to the south and small scale paddocks to the north.

Narrow winding lanes run parallel and across the river valley.

Historic villages with distinct core character and modern residential infill.



Landscape Description

This area is a gently sloping river valley containing two distinct, small historic settlements. Views from the centre of the valley are limited by riparian vegetation, but there are long views across the valley from the higher areas. Dense tracts of mature tree and scrub vegetation follow the river and the narrow lanes - the latter crossing and following the river valley. To the north of the area, gravel workings are also enclosed by dense riparian vegetation.

Medium scale irregularly shaped fields, used for arable production, are surrounded by remnant broken hedgerows that are being replaced by post and wire fencing. Large areas are used for recreational purposes, including central playing fields and small scale paddocks to the north. Associated with this horsiculture are stable blocks built in a style unsympathetic to the local character of the area.

There are two nucleic villages, Horton Kirby and South Darenth, with historic cores of distinct character predating 1801 and expanded thereafter. Many examples of traditional vernacular architecture include an ancient flint church and a large weather boarded barn. Other industrial structures sited along the river include a large Victorian, brick built, paper mill and railway viaduct. Many Victorian cottages were built in association with these developments at the time of industrialisation. 20th century residential development includes core infill and peripheral expansion. Isolated modern residential clusters are found scattered along roads leading into the villages. Franks Hall is of historic interest.

DARENT VALLEY- HORTON KIRBY

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The river course remains the unifying element of the landscape. Varying densities of riparian vegetation follow the river. Roads also follow the watercourse.

The pattern of the rural landscape which rises up the slopes is breaking down due to loss of managed hedgerow and the increase in suburban land uses, which have augmented the number of detracting features in the landscape.

Heritage landscape features are generally poor, although the historic cores of the settlement do upgrade the cultural integrity of the area.

The river corridor is a strong ecological base, but there are fewer semi-natural habitats linking into the intensively farmed slopes, or into the built environment.

The condition of this area is therefore considered to be moderate.

Sensitivity :

The basis of the landscape pattern is historic, with an increasing number of more recent elements such as post and rail field boundaries and areas of settlement. There are a few more ancient overtones associated with ancient roads and trackways. Key characteristics which include open arable fields, narrow winding lanes and historic settlements with recent enlarged residential developments, do exhibit some local distinction, but also have many indistinct elements. The landform of the river valley is apparent in the landscape, and views are generally open.

The sensitivity of this area is considered to be high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

There is a strong base for semi-natural habitats, based on the river valley. These existing ecological resources should be conserved, but there is also an opportunity to restore linked habitats within the farmland, further up the valley sides, and to enhance wetland habitats around the river.

It is considered that the outline pattern of the landscape, which involves the hedged boundaries on the upper reaches of the slopes, and the road following the course of the river, should be emphasised and restored where it has been fragmented. Riparian vegetation should be restored around settlements along the river.

The emphasis and the setting of historic cores to settlements should be restored.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Open
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND RESTORE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			

poor

low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
moderate		
high		

DARENT VALLEY- OTFORD

North Downs

Downs River Valleys

Key Characteristics

Urban fringe river valley with open pasture.

Enclosure provided by small isolated woodlands, riparian vegetation and motorway embankment.

Small to medium scale regular rectangular fields.

20th century residential estates and isolated farmsteads.

Miscellaneous urban fringe activities.



Landscape Description

This is a low lying landscape that slopes very gently towards the river. Long views across the open fields extend to the distant downland scarp slopes of Kemsing and Knockholt. Some enclosure is provided by small isolated woodlands on the urban fringes, by mature riparian vegetation and by road embankments. The woodlands are predominantly oak and many standard oaks are found scattered across open fields.

The field pattern is medium to small scale regular and rectangular with large areas of irregular, open, wet pasture along the immediate river corridor. Fields are often divided by ditches as well as post and wire fencing. Broken hedgerows are found along the narrow winding lanes.

Urban fringe activities have created a landscape of miscellaneous features, including large water bodies created through mineral extraction, now developed as a nature reserve, a landfill site and an isolated mobile home park. The area is fragmented by the prominent M26 embankment. Settlement is limited to 20th century urban sprawl on the outskirts of Otford and isolated farmsteads. The transport network includes narrow winding lanes, A and B roads, motorway and railway.

DARENT VALLEY- OTFORD

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The visual unity of this valley landscape is considered to be significantly interrupted by the presence of many detracting features. Among these are the motorway, electricity pylons and increasing numbers of suburban features in the rural environment. The general pattern of the landscape itself has been fragmented by former mineral extraction, landfill and the motorway corridor.

The current cultural basis of the landscape varies - suburban (negative) influences are noticeable, but the continued importance and use of inherent features such as some hedgerows, wet pastures and ditch networks, and the regeneration of riparian scrub around waterbodies are positive factors. In places, the pastures, ditches and open water contribute to a very strong ecological interest, whilst overall the ecological interest is moderate.

The very varied visual and functional attributes, as described above, combine to form a landscape that is considered to be in a moderate condition.

Sensitivity :

Built form within this area generally has a moderate negative impact - there is an attractive village core at Otford, but many historic settlements in the area have been overtaken by the urban expansion of Sevenoaks and the expansion of village housing estates. The landscape pattern retains an evident historic basis, but true local distinction in landscape elements such as hedgerows, woodlands, building style and highways is now particularly weak.

Moderate visibility can be enjoyed throughout the area as it is a relatively open landscape, with no dominant landform. The sensitivity of this area is considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

There is much opportunity in this area to improve the condition and local distinctiveness of the landscape. This may be achieved by reinforcing the existing strong attributes such as the ecological interest of the wetlands, and creating new landscape features and policies to address existing deficiencies:

Create small riparian woodlands as an urban edge.

Develop a local design code to assist in the approach to new built form.

Reinforce the physical characteristics of the river valley such as wetlands, streams, ditches and the edge of the flood plain.

Create features within built form which respond to the landscape context - i.e. the river valley, small scale woodlands and wetlands
Create landscape features which respond to the landscape context in order to integrate the motorway corridor.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Incoherent
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Significantly Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Weak
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Open
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

AND REINFORCE

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	<u>CREATE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
	moderate		high

North Downs

Downs River Valleys

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating enclosed landscape.

Strong network of mature hedgerows, enclose a medium scale, regular field pattern.

Large villages with historic centres and 20th century peripheral sprawl.

Urban fringe recreational facilities, replace traditional agricultural areas.



Landscape Description

This is a gently undulating landscape, which slopes from the foot of the adjacent scarp slopes towards the river. It has a strong field pattern that is medium to small scale, regular and rectangular. The mature hedgerows, dense vegetation of the railway embankment and frequent isolated copses and woodlands, all add to the strong sense of enclosure. The network of hedgerows restricts views across the area. There are long external views to the scarp slopes and extensive areas of housing - the latter are visually prominent on the foot of the eastern scarp slopes.

Entry into the area is via high quality A and B roads, but village centres are under pressure from over trafficking. Village centres are dated from the Saxon period, but most of the development is post 1801. The core vernacular buildings include timber framed and half tile hung cottages, and also barns, houses and oasts built of Kentish ragstone. Large areas of 20th century suburban housing, of mixed style, surround the nucleated village centres.

Urban fringe facilities, such as recreation grounds, golf courses and horsiculture have replaced some traditional agricultural land use. Despite this urban influence some areas are still used for farming purposes, mainly arable, with pastures on the lower slopes adjacent to the river.

OTFORD VALLEY - EAST

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This is an extensively settled area with widespread recent built development and suburban land uses. Agricultural land use is very limited, and where it remains, the historic hedgerow pattern is over mature and/or supplemented with post and wire. Historic village cores are still evident, but now overwhelmed by C20 residential built form. There are many detracting features in the landscape, stemming from suburban land uses, urban recreational uses and intensive agricultural management. The historic landscape pattern is almost wholly fragmented. Current land use bears very little relationship to the inherent landscape characteristics, semi - natural habitats are infrequent.

This area is considered to be in poor condition.

Sensitivity :

With the exception of small historic field systems near the river, the key elements in this landscape area contribute very little towards a distinctive sense of place.

Recent developments in land-use and landcover are generally unremarkable in form, and very few heritage features survive to give any great sense of time-depth.

Visibility is high due to the topography.

This area is considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The remaining rural pockets are of great importance to the amenity of the urban development in this character area.

Riverside pastures and extensive riparian vegetation should be restored. The rural edge to existing settlement, and road approaches should be restored with heritage landscape features (hedges and isolated copses, medium-sized fields).

Pressure for change in the land-use requires the creation of new landscapes which sustain recreational and suburban land use pressures, and a sound ecological network. The existing mature hedgerow network, copses and vegetated railway embankment could form the basis of a new network of semi-natural habitats, extending and managing these woodland and riparian habitats to enhance their biodiversity. New suburban planting could also play a role in this, and would be more appropriate to the use of the area.

A local design code for residential buildings and highways should also be developed.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Poor
Pattern of elements	Incoherent
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Significantly Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Poor
Ecological integrity	Weak
Functional Integrity:	Very Weak

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Recent
Sense of Place:	Very Weak
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

RESTORE AND CREATE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	<u>RESTORE & CREATE</u>	RESTORE
poor			
	low moderate		high

North Downs

Downs River Valleys

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating scarp slopes fragmented by major transport infrastructure including M25 and railway.

Small isolated shaws and copses.

Medium scale open arable fields of regular form, with hedgerows replaced by post and wire fences.

Well maintained mature hedgerows along lanes.

Small scattered post 1801 settlements.



Landscape Description

The gently undulating Downland scarp slopes fall away towards the river. Many field hedgerows have been replaced with post and wire fencing, thus creating a relatively open arable landscape, with medium-scale fields of regular, rectangular form. Tree cover is limited to small isolated shaws and copses of alder, willow, hazel and sycamore. Well maintained, dense mature hedgerows, with mature standards are found on either side of the narrow country lanes.

Major transport infrastructure of the M25 and railway has interrupted and fragmented the area, so that small parcels of land have been allowed to revert to scrub. Recent tree planting includes motorway screening of hazel, birch and alder.

Settlements are limited to isolated hamlets and farmsteads in the valley, with linear sprawl along the main road approaching Sevenoaks. Building styles include some traditional vernacular farm houses, oasts and brick-built Victorian cottages, with indistinct mixed 20th century style properties on the edges of settlements.

OTFORD VALLEY - WEST

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The condition of this gently undulating landscape has declined mainly due to the negative impact of major transport infrastructure in the area. A traditional pattern of scattered farmsteads, oasts and cottages on the contours of the lower scarp fosters an historic sense of place, but this is now becoming increasingly modified by strong suburban influences such as indistinct housing and incongruous development on the fringes of settlements, and by the development of over-engineered details (and over-trafficking) on former narrow rural lanes. Fly-tipping adds to the many detracting features. The condition of this landscape is considered to be poor.

Sensitivity :

There is a loss of some visual and ecological integrity associated with the fragmentation of hedgerows. Culturally, this is also considered to be a problem as hedgerow patterns have been shattered by transport corridors and internal field boundaries have been lost to arable farming practices, although mature hedgerows persist along some lanes. Potentially important grasslands are becoming neglected and are reverting to scrub.

The widespread motorway planting blocks are considered to contribute less to a sense of place due to a lack of local distinctiveness (planting block age, species and management are relatively similar) and their lack of time-depth.

This is a landscape area with a weakened sense of place and moderate visibility - its sensitivity is therefore considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The local distinctiveness of this landscape is reduced by its poor condition and low sensitivity - there is much opportunity in this area to create new landscape features in order to address the problems faced:

Develop a sympathetic approach to the use and development of the highway. It is important that rural lanes retain historic features and that new highway alignments respond to the landscape context and local detail. Create planting associated with the motorway which responds to the surrounding landscape and does not merely follow the line of the road

Develop a localised design code for new built form and encourage the production of local community design codes in order to reduce suburban features.

Create new hedgerows where internal field boundaries have been replaced by post and wire fencing
Create management techniques to restore neglected grassland and create new grasslands where appropriate.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Poor
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Recent
Sense of Place:	Very Weak
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

Gault Clay Vale



Regional North Downs

Landscape :

Geology Alluvium and Gault Clay

Soils Alluvial and heavy clay soils

Landform Flat or very gently undulating

Landscape Description:

Gently undulating clay vale dominated by major transport routes.

Poorly drained farmland with many ponds and low-lying hedge-lined lanes. The field pattern is generally irregular, small to medium scale, with internal boundaries of over-mature native hedgerows supplemented with post and wire fencing.

Standard Oaks and Horse Chestnut found in the field boundaries and standard Oaks scattered across fields of arable and pasture. Small blocks of mixed broadleaf woodland and isolated shaws add to the feeling of enclosure.

Large, open water bodies resulting from mineral workings, and water filled channels and associated riparian vegetation.

Small historic villages.

Biodiversity Targets:

Protect all remaining semi-natural habitats from destruction.

Maintain or restore stock grazing in parks and wood pastures to stimulate re-introduction of traditional tree and woodland management including pollarding. Restore woodland glades and plant new trees.

Maintain wetland habitats and riverine systems.

Maintain water levels in river valleys.

Increase areas under extensive grassland management in flood plains to include low intensity stock grazing and hay production.

Encourage rotational ditch clearance and ditch restoration.

Develop and protect hedgerows.

Develop uncropped field margins for biodiversity aims. Restore farm ponds.

Historic Landscape:

Traditional droving routes link the Greensand Ridge and Chalk Downs.

Large, open prairie fields, large fields with wavy boundaries and small fields with and without wavy boundaries.

Permanent pasture with historic shaws.

Areas of former clear parkland.

Many former gravel worked areas.

DARENT VALLEY - SUNDRIDGE AND CHIPSTEAD

North Downs

Gault Clay Vale

Key Characteristics

Gently undulating urban fringe landscape.

Enclosed by motorway embankments, isolated woodland and mature hedgerows.

Small to medium scale irregular fields with standard oaks.

Large open water bodies.

Small historic villages.



Landscape Description

This is a gently undulating urban fringe landscape with long views out to Kemsing ridge and Knockholt scarp. It is an area enclosed by the embankments of major transport networks and dense mature vegetation. Isolated woodlands are of mixed deciduous species, including oak, beech, alder, willow, ash, horse chestnut and silver birch.

The field pattern is generally irregular, small to medium scale, with fragmented over mature hedgerows that have been supplemented with post and wire fencing. Standard oaks are scattered across the fields of arable and pasture. Small isolated parcels of land have been created around major road junctions. Small fields of unimproved grassland on the urban fringe are used for horsiculture. Former gravel workings have created large open water bodies, enclosed by mature riparian vegetation and scrub. The largest of these lakes is used as a sailing club.

Settlements are small historic villages with vernacular building styles to the core and unremarkable 20th century residential and industrial buildings to the outskirts. Local vernacular style cottages are red brick, with some half tiled. Transport routes are busy 'A' and 'B' roads and motorways.

DARENT VALLEY - SUNDRIDGE AND CHIPSTEAD

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The inherent features of this landscape are significantly interrupted:

The former river course, small-scale fields and settlement pattern based on river-crossings and historic mill villages, are now only fragmented elements in a landscape which is defined by the urban fringe, transport routes and wet gravel pits. There are many detracting features associated with industrial uses and the impact of residential development and suburban land uses. Localised ecological interest is high in the wetland areas, but the network of semi-natural habitats is only weakly extended into the rural areas due to the fragmentation of the hedgerows. Some farmsteads remain, and the historic cores to villages are of note, but are overshadowed by the impact of unremarkable C20th development.

This landscape is considered to be in poor condition.

Sensitivity :

The very gentle lower valley slopes are an insignificant part of the general view. Tree cover tends to be intermittent, and therefore the visibility over the landscape is restricted.

The heritage features of the hedgerow and woodlands are isolated and in decline. The dominant landscape elements of urban fringe and transport routes do not contribute to a localised sense of place. This area is therefore considered to be of very low sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Encourage the creation of visual features in the landscape which recognise the flow of the water course beyond the wetland areas: a riparian corridor should be recreated, in either a formal or natural form appropriate to urban or rural areas respectively.

Create an edge to the urban fringe to contain existing residential developments and to provide an appropriate interface with adjacent rural and natural areas.

Develop a design code for residential development and for highways, which will introduce a new, locally distinct character.

Enhance the settings of groups of historic buildings.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Poor
Pattern of elements	Incoherent
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Significantly Interrupted
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Very Low
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Recent
Sense of Place:	Very Weak
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low moderate		high

DARENT VALLEY - WESTERHAM AND BRASTED

North Downs

Gault Clay Vale

Key Characteristics

A gently undulating river valley on gault clay.

Medium-small scale arable and pastoral fields.

Open views across arable fields.

Over mature and fragmented hedgerows with isolated standard oaks.

Riparian vegetation.

Historic highways from the North Downs to the Greensand.

The area is dominated by the M25.



Landscape Description

This is a river valley within the gently undulating gault clay. Views across open arable areas are of the steep slopes of the Downs to the north and the Greensand Ridge to the south that enclose the river valley. Views across the area are interrupted by the M25 that bisects it and by the areas of settlement. In the more rural parts, there are views across open arable fields.

The field pattern is medium scale becoming smaller around settlements. Internal field boundaries are over mature hedgerows, supplemented by post and wire fences. Isolated standard oaks are scattered across open arable fields. The river winds along a level valley floor, its path indicated, by the distinctive riparian vegetation dominated by alder trees. Along the river corridor small pockets have been left unmanaged, reverting to scrub, and have become valuable for wildlife.

The M25 dominates what is otherwise a peaceful, undulating, arable and pastoral landscape. Narrow lanes pass over and under the motorway. These are historic routes from the North Downs to the Greensand Ridge. They are lined by well maintained mature hedgerows, fragmented in areas and supplemented with post and rail fencing. Adjacent to these lanes are isolated woodland shaws.

Settlements are traditional nucleated villages and towns built along the A25 south of the River Darent and isolated farmsteads. Most of the buildings are in traditional vernacular styles, built in local materials including red brick, rag stone, weather boarded and some half tile hung.

Historic landscapes are associated with Tanners and Coombe Bank

DARENT VALLEY - WESTERHAM and BRASTED

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The landscape is readable as a formed river-valley and floodplain, with mill-based settlement on the river itself. This pattern is interrupted by the M25 which bisects the valley into north and south zones, and by industrial and residential developments outside the established settlement areas.

Hedgerow and woodland blocks are limited and fragmented basis of semi-natural habitats in the rural landscape, some of which is under arable cultivation and some pasture.

The pattern of enclosure and the distinctive lines of riparian alders are extant, but are vulnerable as long-term features due to their maturity and lack of replacement.

This area is considered to be in good condition.

Sensitivity :

The rural landscape with its field pattern running down to the river floodplain and the large isolated farmsteads located slightly up-slope, has an historic pattern.

Riverside mill settlements are also historic and contribute greatly to local distinctiveness in their location and their vernacular style. Cottages and larger historic houses display the characteristic use of ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick. Their scale and close grouping is particularly distinctive.

The landform of the river valley is reasonably noticeable in the view, especially in open, pastoral views. Tree cover is intermittent and therefore views within the area are occasionally open.

The landscape is of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the positive impact of the historic built form on the area: ensure that vernacular styles are interpreted for use in new building and that the existing building groups, and their landscape setting are conserved. Reinforce the edge and the small-scale of riverside settlements. Reinforce the riparian corridor by introducing a replanting and management programme of alder and other characteristic vegetation. Encourage non-intensive agricultural use of the floodplain.

Conserve the isolation of farmsteads and encourage the use of distinctive localised detail in agricultural buildings.

Reinforce the routes of N-S highways by maintaining hedgerow links and ensuring that the visual impact of these routes is not lost due to the motorway. Reinforce hedged and ditch field boundaries.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

Condition	good	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low moderate		high

KEMSING CLAY FARMLANDS

North Downs

Gault Clay Vale

Key Characteristics

Enclosed gently undulating pasture mainly used for sheep grazing and large arable fields.

Wet, gault clay farmlands, with low-lying lanes liable to flooding.

Many small ponds and fragmented water filled channels throughout valley. Sedges in areas of permanently damp ground.

Mature standard trees scattered across fields and along field boundaries.

Major transport links (M26 and railway) cut across and divide the area.



Landscape Description

This is a gently undulating clay vale severed by two major transport routes. It is poorly drained farmland, with many ponds and low-lying lanes that are subject to seasonal flooding. Pasture and arable production are the main land-uses, but numerous small fields of rough grass are used for horsiculture. Gravel extraction is also evident. The topography, as well as rail and road embankments, limits views across the landscape.

The field pattern is irregular, small to medium scale, with well-maintained mature hawthorn hedges adjacent to lanes. Internal boundaries are generally over mature, clipped hedgerows with gaps at the base, supplemented with post and wire fencing. These field boundaries contain many fine standard oaks and horse chestnuts. Small blocks of mixed broadleaf woodland and copses add to the sense of enclosure.

Settlement is limited to small isolated farms, a well-screened industrial estate and scattered groups of residential properties on the fringes of Kemsing and Seal. They include some vernacular rag and flint agricultural buildings including oasts, small Victorian brick cottages, mixed style 20th century housing and large modern industrial units. Transport routes include motorway, railway and narrow winding, enclosed lanes.

KEMSING CLAY FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The simplicity of the clay vale retains an influence over the landscape, despite the severance of the area by the railway and motorway routes. These transport routes are detracting features in the rural landscape due to the incongruous form of embankments, motorway furniture, and traffic noise and movement. Other common detractors include views of the urban edge, and some large industrial buildings in the rural area.

The land pattern has formed around isolated farmsteads and estate farm buildings, which have been augmented by occasional C20th brick houses and isolated commercial buildings. Built development has a moderately positive impact on the area. There is some intensive agricultural use of the land, and fields are generally large and open. However, some significant blocks of woodland, hedgerows and standard Oaks, and some wetland and water courses provide localised semi-natural habitats.

The area is considered to be in a moderate condition.

Sensitivity :

This is predominantly an historic landscape which has some irregular and wavy-bounded field boundaries, a fragmented hedgerow network with standard trees, and some historic woodland plantations. The distinctive historic buildings demonstrate the location between the Downs and the Greensand in the use of ragstone and flint as building materials. Oasts are characteristic of the area. The more recent features of large-scale industrial buildings and the motorway corridor have introduced elements which detract from the sense of place in this landscape area.

The gently dished landform is not a dominant element of the view, and views are intermittently enclosed by tree cover and woodland.

The sensitivity of the area is therefore considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

As an historic landscape in a variable condition, the emphasis in the management of these farmlands should be the reinforcement of the historic field pattern, and of the watercourses.

The incidence of mature trees on field boundaries should be reinforced by appropriate management and replanting. Riparian vegetation which marks the watercourse and wetlands should also be reinforced and managed in order to enhance ecological interest. The incidence of ponds and wetland habitats along the streams should be encouraged.

The introduction of the more recent elements of the transport routes prompts the creation of a more comprehensive landscape strategy for this area. It is suggested that characteristic woodland blocks (not linear planting) could be planted within the existing field pattern in order to integrate some of the motorway/railway embankments and define/enclose the urban edge. There is also an opportunity to create more extensive wetlands along the corridor between the two transport routes.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	<u>CREATE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high



Regional
Landscape : Greensand

Geology Lower Greensand, predominantly Hythe Beds with occasional outcrops of Folkestone and Sandgate Beds

Soils Free draining, base poor sandy brown acid soils

Landform Undulating

Landscape Description:

Small to medium scale, undulating to steeply sloping rural landscape.

Very enclosed intact farmland with strong hedgerow networks and scattered dense woodland and shaws.

Large country houses and extensive parkland with mature specimen trees scattered throughout.

Narrow, winding hedge-lined lanes along which are found isolated farmsteads and historic settlements.

Many examples of traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts and timber framed barns. Largely a pastoral landscape.

Occasional long views but generally a moderate range of views.

Biodiversity Targets:

Protect existing semi-natural habitats.

Maintain or restore grazing in parks and wood pastures and re-introduce traditional tree and woodland management, restore woodland glades and lawns.

Protect hedgerows and shaws. Manage and restore these features to provide wildlife corridors and refuges.

Create pesticide-free headlands and uncropped field margins within arable fields.

Manage woodlands to diversify woodland age and structure.

Restore any farm ponds and manage these to provide a network of varying habitats.

Historic Landscape:

A carriage-ride from London.

Historic field pattern, well maintained by strong hedgerow network.

Historic parklands.

North-South routes to the top of the Greensand Ridge - droving roads; characteristically narrow, sunken and hedge-lined.

IDE HILL

Greensand

Greensand Parks & Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Very enclosed intact farmland.

Narrow hedge lined lanes with few passing places.

Undulating landscape looking inward towards central valley.

Outer views largely restricted by topography.

Traditional building styles include oasts and large timber framed barns.

Ide Hill village set around a large green, comprising of many different styles of timber and brick housing of mixed age.

Isolated farmsteads scattered through valleys.



Landscape Description

The village of Ide Hill is set in an enclosed farmland within a dip of the Greensand Ridge. Within the undulating landscape views focus inwards contained by the topography and dense woodland of the neighbouring Chart landscapes. Where the area reaches the scarp of the Greensand Ridge at Hanging Bank there are wide views over the Low Weald and Bough Beech Reservoir to the higher ground of the High Weald.

It is largely a pastoral landscape with a network of dense hedgerows and small shaws creating small to medium scale irregular fields. Isolated farmsteads are scattered throughout this landscape

IDE HILL

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

There are very few detractors in this well-contained, tranquil landscape. Small shaws and irregular fields compliment the undulating landform, allowing occasional long views of Knockholt scarp and the wider landscape context. Trees, hedgerow and shaws are in good condition, and emphasise the steeper slopes, providing a strong network of semi-natural habitats in a low-moderately intensive pastoral land use. Built form has a reasonably positive impact on the area; ragstone and brick/tile and weatherboarding are much in evidence, but there are some suburbanised boundaries and building styles.

The condition of the landscape is very good.

Sensitivity :

This landscape has an historic field pattern and evidence of historic settlement. It is visually coherent, the combination of the enclosed valley and the rural land use and strong enclosures contribute to a locally distinct character, slightly eroded by some built form and the introduction of post and wire fencing in some fields. Visibility is moderate, occasionally opening up over the wider landscape.

The sensitivity of the area is considered to be moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Most of the rural landscape features are in good condition; hedgerows, shaws and mature standard trees should be maintained in their existing form and replanted where already lost or over mature.

The small-medium irregular form of the fields should be conserved and maintained.

The contribution of the built form within the landscape should be enhanced by the use of localised detail and materials, and the development of a design code for new-build to guide issues of location, scale, materials and boundary features.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
good			
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

KNOLE PARK

Greensand

Greensand Parks & Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Steeply undulating, rolling parkland.

Much fallen timber remains from storm damage 1987, but many fenced plantations of young trees planted to replace those lost.

Deep grass valleys, damp on valley floor, closely cropped by herds of deer.

Bracken covered hills. Small isolated ponds on hill tops.

Many footpaths cut across the park.

Large area given over to golf course. Small area used as school playing fields.



Landscape Description

Knole Park is an ancient deer park with the distinct features of mature, standard trees, a near-oval shape, clear peripheral boundaries, but no internal enclosures, and the central stately home, built of local ragstone. The current boundary of the park includes an outlier of common land to the east.

The landform is steeply undulating and provides some long views from the tops of ridges towards the Kemsing and Halstead scarps, and towards the Sevenoaks fringe and the Darent Valley.

Much fallen timber remains from the storm damage of 1987. Specimen trees include cedar and sweet chestnut. oak, beech, pine, hornbeam and blackthorn are also characteristic. Grazing deer keep the grassland close-cropped, and there are also areas of bracken, and isolated ponds.

Other land uses within the park involve a golf course with isolated patches of scrub and gorse on ridges.

There is no historic settlement or highways-with the exception of Knole House and some well-used footpaths. However, gatehouses and buildings associated with the estate are intermittently found on the boundary.

There is peripheral residential development at the boundary with Sevenoaks, and some of the parkland is used as school playing fields.

KNOLE PARK

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The pattern of use of the Deer Park; its shape, lack of settlement or vernacular access, and the specimen trees and absence of enclosure, clearly distinguish this landscape from the adjacent areas. It retains its ancient cultural identity, and the low intensity of much of the land use, combined with the ecological value of mature trees, ensures that there are some strong semi-natural habitats. This landscape is largely intact and is in very good condition.

Sensitivity :

Knole is unique in this regional landscape area due to its scale, the presentation of its form and features, its time-depth and strong cultural associations.. Views over the parkland are reasonably open, and there are some larger views to landscapes beyond the park. The visibility is therefore moderate over this area, but due to its ancient and unique characteristics, the sensitivity of the parkland is considered to be high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve groups of parkland trees by the management of existing specimens and a long-term programme of replanting.
Conserve open grasslands with parkland trees.
Ensure that access remains limited to existing footpaths.
Conserve the integrity of the park boundary, avoiding any development on the boundary.
Ensure that materials used in the maintenance of the boundary are appropriate.
Conserve open views and the setting of Knole House.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Very High
Distinctiveness	Very Distinct
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Very Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Open
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low moderate		high

SUNDRIDGE FARMLANDS

Greensand

Greensand Parks & Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Small to medium scale enclosed agricultural landscape with strong hedgerows and scattered dense woodland.

Small group of residential properties and scattered farms with concealed private lanes.

Medium-scale commercial plant nursery.

Urban recreation provided for by KCC picnic area and footpaths.

Noise from the M25 and A21 is dominant



Landscape Description

This area is part of the parkland and estate farmland belt which runs along the gentle north-facing slopes of the Darent Valley. It is based on the underlying Lower Greensand and infrequent patches of river terrace gravel around Sundridge and Dryhill. It is a small-medium scale agricultural landscape with a near-intact hedgerow pattern to internal field boundaries, which includes hedgerow trees. Small, mixed woodlands are scattered throughout the farmland supporting a wide range of species including Birch, Beech, Oak, Pine, Cherry and Alder. Roads follow the general N-S route to the top of the Greensand Ridge from the edge of the Darent Valley (the A25). They are characteristically narrow, vergeless, with hedgerow on either side. Isolated, small farmsteads, linked by trackways, are the main type of settlement. There are some large houses, some of which are historic and some more recent. The linear residential form at Sundridge is typical of the local Greensand landscapes. Noise from the A21 and M25 affects the area.

Historic Landscape: Montreal Park

SUNDRIDGE FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This landscape has a strong and coherent pattern of small fields and woodlands, defined by mature hedgerows. The pattern of isolated farmsteads and highways/tracks within the area is consistent. This inherent pattern of elements is interrupted by the route of the A21 to the east of the area, and by urban fringe and village expansion. Noise from the A21 is an additional detracting feature. Ecological networks are pervasive due to the hedgerow and woodland links, but their value is reduced by intensive cultivation of some of the arable fields.

Built form is limited in its extent and has a reasonably positive impact on the general area. Vernacular style and materials are evident, but there is no strong or obvious localised character influencing the mixed-age buildings.

The area is considered to be in a good condition.

Sensitivity :

An historic pattern of land use and historic features are dominant in this landscape. Roads and tracks are more ancient in origin, but the well maintained rural scene owes more to the historic development of the farmsteads and field enclosure.

Heritage features of hedges, woodlands and vernacular buildings all contribute to a discernible local character. Views are intermittent over the valley slopes, frequently contained by the small areas of woodland, and by mature hedgerows.

The area is considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The features which contribute the most to the distinctive nature of the area are the heritage features of hedges, woodlands and farmsteads. These should be conserved in their scale and form.

Hedgelines may need to be reinforced where they are over mature or in decline. A programme of consistent maintenance and replanting, to include appropriate species of standard trees, should be encouraged.

Conserve woodland, encouraging the integration of some new, small-scale woodlands with roadside planting on the A21.

Reinforce the setting of existing vernacular buildings, and develop a strong design code for agricultural and residential form in the rural areas.

Conserve and manage parkland features (boundaries and parkland trees) at Montreal Park, and use these features to define and enhance the urban fringe.

The scale and enclosure of narrow lanes should be conserved.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

Condition	good	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low moderate		high

WESTERHAM AND BRASTED PARKLANDS

Greensand

Greensand Parks & Farmlands

Key Characteristics

Small to medium scale undulating pasture and arable associated with scattered farmsteads.

Large country manor houses sited in areas of parkland located on the lower slopes of the valley.

Scattered mature trees throughout parks.

Mixed age residential properties, many C20th, in ragstone, brick and some half tile hung, well sited within vegetative screening.

Few hedgerows to internal field boundaries where post and wire is used to break up previously open parkland



Landscape Description

The Westerham and Brasted Parklands occupy the lower northern slopes of the Greensand Ridge. This undulating pastoral and woodland landscape, and its proximity to London, has led to the creation 17th and 18th century estates and parklands.

Squerrys Court is a Jacobean house and park to be found in Westerham.

A Capability Brown landscape survives in part as a golf course between Valence School and Brasted Park.

In today' s landscape, the open valleys are grazed whilst the wooded ridges have been supplemented by coniferous plantations.

Follies and parkland features such as towers, temples and bridges are scattered throughout the landscape. Lodge houses and estate cottages and farmsteads are also a feature

WESTERHAM AND BRASTED PARKLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This was formerly a series of romantic pastoral parklands, now in decline due to a change in function. The pattern of irregular small fields and wooded ridges is still discernible. Parkland features of specimen trees, lodges, estate cottages and follies are very much in evidence. However, the introduction of fencing to previously open parkland, and the development of the golf course features and coniferous plantations make the landscape less intelligible. Changes in use have affected the management of the houses and parklands.

Plantations and mixed farmlands provide a limited basis for semi-natural habitats. There are, however, few obvious detracting features and the area is considered to be in good condition

Sensitivity :

The woodland cover is ancient in origin; some areas now replanted as plantation woodlands. The parklands and estate farmlands are unmistakably historic, and of great cultural significance.

The narrow lanes, climbing the northern slopes of the Greensand, are distinct in their enclosure - by woodland or hedgerow - and have a distinctive N-S pattern. Recent field enclosures are considered to be uncharacteristic and have no locally distinct qualities. Visibility is intermittently limited by tree cover throughout the area, although there are some open views over pastoral valleys.

The sensitivity of the area is considered to be moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The conservation of historic parklands is a complex issue, and usually requires sympathetic uses of the estate. Boundaries of the estate often create a visual indication of the scale and presence of the parkland, and should be sympathetically maintained. Selected views into tranquil parklands areas, and the setting of the houses are key characteristics to conserve. This includes parkland trees.

Open parkland/pastoral landscape and broad-leaf woodland should be reinforced by ensuring that there are broadleaf edges to plantations, and that tree cover on ridges is also broadleaf. Open parkland should be as uncluttered as possible (i.e. reduce the visual impact of fencing and landscape furniture).

Reinforce the boundary features and reinforce the landscape views from the A25.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low moderate		high



Regional	Greensand
Landscape :	
Geology	Lower Greensand, Hythe Beds overlain with Head deposits
Soils	Free draining, base poor sandy brown acid soils
Landform	Folded, occasionally steep and convoluted

Landscape Description:

Densely wooded, undulating farmland and steep Greensand scarp slopes.

The higher areas are covered with dense, mature broadleaf woodlands with small clearings opening to rough grazing and sweet chestnut plantations on the lower slopes. Small to medium-scale irregular fields of pasture, arable and orchard in the lower lying areas.

The topography and land use means that the area is generally enclosed with occasional long views south over the Weald from viewpoints on the scarp slopes.

Narrow lanes lined by mature hedgerows with occasional standard Oaks.

Internal field boundaries being replaced by post and wire.

Small isolated settlements scattered along lanes.

Large areas used for urban recreational purposes.

Biodiversity Targets:

Protect and maintain existing hedgerows and broadleaf woodlands.

Restore coppice management to areas of semi-natural ancient woodland that still retain a coppice structure.

Manage other semi-natural ancient woodlands to enhance their ecological diversity.

Manage conifer plantations to encourage natural regeneration of native trees and shrubs.

Restore woodland glades and grassed areas.

Maintain stock grazing of acid grassland to maintain short grass swards.

Within arable fields, create pesticide-free headlands and uncropped field margins.

Conserve old orchards and cobnut plats.

Promote plans to diversify the woodland age and structure.

Historic Landscape:

The term Chart is derived from old English meaning 'a rough common'. Today it is applied to the highest wooded areas of the Greensand Ridge particularly in the Sevenoaks area of West Kent. Here, it appears in many place names such as Brasted Chart, Seal Chart and Chartwell.

Extensive areas of ancient coppice woodland and ancient woodland.

Commons on top: Bitchet Common, Fawke Common to the east of Sevenoaks; and Hosey Common, Crockhamhill Common, Goathurst Common.

Significant areas of traditional orchard on lower ground.

SEAL CHART

Greensand

Charts

Key Characteristics

Greensand ridge with acid soils.

Medium scale fields of arable and pasture on the lower slopes

Mature acid woodlands at top of slopes with coppice Sweet Chestnut in lower areas.

Small clustered villages with many vernacular properties and large 20th century detached properties with extensive grounds.

Large areas used for urban recreation, including golf course and many footpaths.

Narrow winding lanes and main A road.



Landscape Description

This is a rolling landscape that slopes north and south from a central Greensand ridge. Extensive mature woodlands and hedgerows restrict views out of the area. Views north from the upper slopes do, however, include glimpses of Kemsing and the M26. Acid woodlands on the hill-tops are predominantly Oak, Birch and Beech, with other species including Rowan, Broom, Bracken and Heather. On the lower slopes are coppice Sweet Chestnut & Hazel.

The field pattern is medium scale, enclosed by woodland and mature but fragmented hedgerows. Arable fields are located on the higher slopes and pasture in lower areas. Internal field boundaries have largely been replaced by post and wire fencing, but along the narrow winding lanes, hedgerows are strong and in tact.

Settlement includes small hamlets and nucleated villages with many vernacular properties, including flint, brick and rag stone. Elsewhere large detached, 20th century properties of mixed style, are scattered along lanes. These are set within large gardens and well set back from the road. Large areas are given over to recreational facilities, including a golf course and many footpaths. The character of Seal is degraded to an extent by the A25 which cuts through its centre.

Medium scale arable and pasture on lower areas. Oak, birch, beech woodlands to top of slopes. Coppice chestnut along lower slopes. Small clustered villages and hamlets and scattered large C20th properties introducing ornamental planting within the woodland environs. Urban recreation - many footpaths/golf course.

SEAL CHART

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The strong, distinct nature of the woodland ensures that the landscape is visually unified. Within this strong framework, the location of roads, farms and villages corresponds to the landform. There are some detracting features associated with the trunk road and residential plots. Due to the nature of the woodland, the semi-natural habitats are extensive, although the recreational use and residential development within woodlands may change the ecological interest of isolated areas.

Vernacular built form has a highly positive impact and, currently, the more recent residential development is well concealed, although suburban elements (ornamental hedges, entrances etc.) are increasing.

The landscape is currently considered to be in a very good condition.

Sensitivity :

There is a strongly defined sense of place which is due to the dense and extensive acid woodland, and the ancient nature of the wooded clearings, linked by the narrow roads and closely related to the topography.

Built form can be very distinctive and the settlement patterns are strong although the nature of the more recent settlement changes the emphasis of the string of farmsteads and hamlets. Ragstone is a distinctive material, often used in walls and cottages. However, other vernacular building styles using timber and Kent peg are frequently seen.

The narrow, extremely enclosed wooded and/or hedged roads contribute significantly to the sense of place. Visibility is low where there is dense tree cover. However the elevated landscape allows long views out in open areas. Overall visibility is moderate.

The sensitivity of this area is therefore high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the extent and specialist species of the acid woodland.

Conserve the narrow and hedge- lined, or woodland enclosure of narrow roads.

Conserve the integrity of unsettled woodland, and the simplicity of woodland edges and field boundaries.

Conserve the settlement pattern and the enclosure of settlement within woodland.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Very Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE

poor

	low		
CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE	
			high
			moderate

Greensand

Charts

Key Characteristics

Densely wooded farmland.

Small to medium scale irregular fields of pasture, arable and orchard.

Narrow lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows with occasional standard Oaks.

Open pasture with internal field boundaries of post and wire fencing & woodland edge to outskirts.

Occasional Alder windbreaks to some orchards.



Landscape Description

This is a gently undulating area where slopes occasionally dip steeply into valleys and over the top of the steep greensand scarp. The topography and strong pattern of mature woodlands, orchards and hedgerows, all contribute to the sense of enclosure and limit views out, often limited to glimpses of Knockholt scarp in the east. Mature Oaks are the dominant species found in the acid woodlands, which also contain Hazel, Silver Birch, Scots Pine, Beech, Rhododendron and Broom.

The field pattern is small to medium scale and irregular in shape. Land use is divided between woodland and agriculture, with roughly equal areas of orchard, arable and pasture. Dense, mature, clipped hedgerows, containing occasional standard Oaks, line the undulating lanes. Apart from scattered Alder windbreaks along some orchard boundaries, most internal fences are post and wire.

Settlement includes isolated farmsteads, small nucleated villages and isolated groups of large houses. These residential and agricultural properties vary in style from historic vernacular designs in timber frame, ragstone, weather-board and brick, to many large 20th century brick and half tile-hung houses. The lanes are generally narrow and enclosed by the hedgerows. Some widen out in places.

Historic Landscape: Riverhill House

SEVENOAKS EASTERN CHART

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This is a strongly unified landscape in which the cultural perceptions of the current use of the land are in accord with the physical elements of landform, woodland and field patterns. Woodland cover is strong on the ridges, the roads generally follow plateau or ridge-lines or are distinctly cross-contour. Settlement patterns are mostly related to land use and landform. Views are enclosed and there are few detracting features. The extensive woodland cover has a diverse age-structure and there are mature hedgerow and orchards between woodland blocks. Agricultural use is small-scale and therefore this area has sound ecological bases.

The landscape is considered to be in a very good condition.

Sensitivity :

Many of the woodlands in this area are recognised as ancient woodland, especially woodland on ridges and on the top of the scarp. This acid woodland has locally distinct characteristics which are not common in Kent. The visual density and colours of the vegetation and woodland floor are notable.

The agricultural land use pattern which can be seen today is predominantly historic, although the framework of the buildings are locally distinct and have a positive impact on the landscape, using ragstone, weatherboarding and brick.

Due to the extensive tree cover, visibility is low. The sensitivity of the area is therefore moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the extent and unique characteristics of the acid woodlands, ensuring that species diversity and relationship to landform are retained.

Conserve the isolation and pattern of nucleic villages and farmsteads. Reinforce the settings and fabric of existing vernacular buildings. Develop the use of local vernacular for any new built form in the landscape. Reinforce enclosure by native hedgerow in the agricultural areas.

Conserve the routes and narrow, enclosed nature of highways.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Very Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
good			
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low moderate		high

SEVENOAKS WOODED CHART

Greensand

Charts

Key Characteristics

High Greensand scarp slopes with dense woodland.

Generally enclosed landscape with small pockets of open pasture.

Urban fringe activities close to Sevenoaks such as horsiculture.

Occasional glimpses from the steep southern scarp slopes over the Weald of Kent



Landscape Description

Sevenoaks Wooded Chart occupies the undulating wooded area of the Greensand Ridge between Ide Hill and Sevenoaks. The enclosed dense Oak and Beech woodland includes extensive areas of Sweet Chestnut coppice and some coniferous plantation. There are a few fields within the woodland - they are typically pasture, bounded by woodland.

The landform includes the top slopes of the steep Greensand scarp, and some small, high plateau areas as the scarp levels out. Behind these, the land continues to fold into valleys and ridges, gradually falling towards the Darent Valley. The land is almost wholly wooded, but where there are agricultural clearings, the fields are irregular, small-scale pastures with strong wooded edges. There are very clear historic uses of the woodland such as wood pasture, historic assarts and plantations. Very occasional views of the Low Weald can be seen from the scarp. There is a general perception of the landscape being elevated -this is reinforced by the effect of the steep cross-contour roads which lead into the area. Ridgeline N-S routes are characteristic of the circulation within the area. These lead from the scarp to the Darent Valley and beyond.

Commons are typical features of the scarp-top plateau and, in this area, Goathurst Common is an ancient and notable feature. It is also the main site of historic linear and common-edge settlement. More recent settlement has developed on the edge of the scarp, where the views across the Low Weald are dramatic. These houses are highly visible from the south. Occasional incidences of new residential settlement are also developing on ridges within the area.

SEVENOAKS WOODED CHART

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

There is a very clear and simple pattern of woodland cover and occasional clearings, which is the essence of this area. Detracting features include the A21 and some modern, large detached properties - especially those visible on ridgelines - which are introducing inappropriate built form into previously unsettled areas. Some suburban uses have been introduced (mainly horsiculture), but generally the use of the land is still linked to the topography, existing settlement and an established cultural basis. Other detractors include damage to vegetation resulting from storm damage and from highway management policies. The acid woodland supports a strong and specialised spread of semi-natural habitats.

This area is in very good condition.

Sensitivity :

Very distinct acid woodland and conifer plantations cover this elevated landscape. The time depth and continuity of the use of this woodland are clearly visible in the range of assarts, wooded commons, ancient broadleaf and plantation woodlands. The ancient routes and enclosed nature of the N-S former drove roads contribute to the very strong sense of place and venerability of the landscape.

The limited settlement reflects a long-established pattern of habitancy.

This is a uniquely distinct landscape of the Sevenoaks area. Its sensitivity, however, is considered to be moderate as the visibility within the landscape is restricted by the dense tree cover, and by the topography.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the extent and characteristic species of woodland, with an emphasis on mixed broadleaf woodland.
 Conserve the enclosed, narrow lanes.
 Conserve the infrequency of clearings, reinforcing their pastoral use and wooded edges.
 Conserve the tranquillity and unsettled characteristics of those areas without any built form. Avoid ridgeline development.
 Reinforce the isolation and enclosure of existing settlement. Maintain the scale and pattern of linear settlement and isolated farmsteads.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

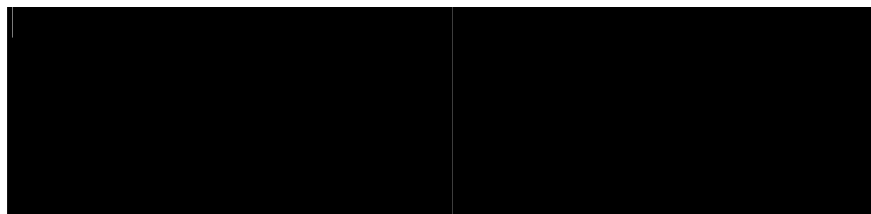
SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Very Distinct
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Very Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high



Key Characteristics

Undulating woodland landscape, steeply climbing to central area from valleys to north and south.

Enclosed by woodland with long views over the Weald from points along the southern scarp slope.

Dense, mixed broadleaf, acid woodland. Small clearings of rough grazing in woodland valleys.

Small cottages and pubs arranged in linear form along roads, with larger properties taking advantage of sites overlooking the Weald.

Chartwell House and gardens are tucked into the valley floor, surrounded by woodland.

Landscape Description

The Westerham and Brasted Chart is an undulating woodland landscape. Views out are generally limited by the woodland enclosure however there are extensive views out from the south at the edge of the Greensand Ridge where it drops steeply down to the Low Weald.

The woodlands comprise Oak and Beech with extensive Chestnut coppice and occasional Scots Pine. Within the woodland there are occasional irregular small scale fields enclosed by the woodland. To the south there is a higher proportion of grazing on the lower, less steep areas of the scarp. Here there are strong internal and external hedgerow boundaries. These are typically dense and clipped, containing Holly, Hazel and Hawthorn. Wooded shaws are a feature of the steeper topography.

Spring line villages and farmsteads are located to the south of the area for example at Crockham Hill. Nestled within the wooded scarp, these settlements originally took advantage of the shelter and dry land above the Low Weald and more recently the extensive views. Ragstone cottages, barns and oasthouses are mixed with more recent housing. Within the woodland there linear residential settlements of usually detached houses set within large woodland plots such as at Goodley Stock and Brasted Chart.

Historic Landscape: Chartwell, Emmetts

WESTERHAM AND BRASTED CHART

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This clear and simple landscape is dominated by dense woodland cover which closely follows the contours of the undulating landform. The location of settlement also is clearly influenced by ancient ridge-line roads and commons, and by the advantageous conditions on the south-facing scarp. There are some uncharacteristic properties or residential boundaries, but these are few in number and their impact is limited by the woodland enclosure. The extensive mature woodlands and coppice provide an extremely strong ecological network. There is a strong cultural identity here too: the distinct location of linear settlement along narrow wooded lanes, and the tradition of large, isolated properties on the ridge; small villages on the scarp and spring line.

Sensitivity :

Although most views are well contained within the woodland, this landscape has a high sensitivity due to the ancient nature of the woodland cover, and its very distinct characteristics. The obvious time-depth is demonstrated by the plateau-top commons and ridgeline roads. The acid woodland species and extent are considered to be rare in Kent.

The historic linear settlement of 'Charts' is also a distinctive characteristic. Ragstone is used extensively. Large, isolated properties of cultural significance are found around the scarp (Chartwell)

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the extent and characteristic species of the woodland cover and woodland floor. Ensure that woodland cover retains the irregular shapes which relate to landform.

Conserve the small scale of the pastoral landscape, retaining and maintaining thick hedgerows and shaws.

Conserve the isolation of existing large properties and their woodland settings. Avoid ridgeline development- conserve the impact of the wooded scarp on long-distance views.

Conserve the scale and extent of linear built development.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Very Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high



Regional Low Weald

Landscape :

Geology Weald Clay with occasional head deposits

Soils Poor draining, base rich, loamy soils

Landform Very gently undulating

Landscape Description:

The Low Weald is a low lying, poorly draining landscape. It has a very distinctive field pattern.

Traditionally, the landscape pattern is pastoral - fields enclosed by dense well maintained hedgerows with many standard oaks.

Sheep grazing is common. Often, a field will include a pond in one corner. The difficult nature of the soils means that the traditional land-use survives today with little influence of arabilisation. The field pattern is generally larger to the west, with fewer woodlands.

Many examples of historic vernacular architecture can be found within the rural areas.

Many gentrified oasts and barns.

Biodiversity Targets:

Maintain and extend semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Improve management of hedges and increase through new planting, conserve those of value and bring derelict features into appropriate management.

Maintain unimproved grassland, restore degraded neutral grassland.

Encourage ditch clearing and re-profiling to maintain conditions for flora and fauna.

Encourage suitable grazing regimes to enhance sward structure of grasslands and pastures.

Maintain and improve the conservation interests of standing open water.

Create new ponds where appropriate and restore existing ponds.

Historic Landscape:

Believed until recently to be unsettled in ancient times due to its heavy clay soils and wetland characteristics, although evidence has emerged of ancient settlement - thought to be either Iron-age or Bronze-age.

Evidence exists of transhumance in pre-Saxon times in the use of seasonal woodland pastures in the Low Weald.

The presence of ponds maybe due to the extraction of clay for marling, or/and for watering of livestock.

Woodland has been assarted pre 1801.

There are small isolated pockets of ancient woodland.

Large fields with wavy boundaries.

Small fields with wavy boundaries and ponds.

BOUGH BEECH RESERVOIR AND LOW WEALD FARMLANDS

Low Weald

Low Weald

Key Characteristics

Small scale enclosed pastoral landscape.

Many ponds and road side ditches.

Wide bands of wooded roadside vegetation separate many lanes from adjacent fields.

Many well maintained clipped hedgerows along lanes and to internal field boundaries.

Mature Oaks are a feature of this landscape, found within hedgerows, as standards within open fields and roadside vegetation.

Properties of mixed ages many in traditional style, including gentrified barns and Oasts

Large reservoir of wildlife interest



Landscape Description

This character area encompasses an area of undulating Wealden clay, with frequent small woods amongst assorted woodland clearings. Further subdivisions of the farmland occur with numerous, well maintained hedgerows marking the internal field boundaries, and there are wide woodland edges which follow many of the lanes.

Numerous mature oaks are a distinctive feature of the landscape, frequently found within hedgerows, along roads, and as standard trees within fields or pastures.

Streams and ponds within fields are also characteristic of the area, and this emphasis on wetland elements is carried through into many roadside ditches.

Ditches, hedgerows and tree belts strongly reinforce the field pattern in this landscape.

Isolated farmhouses and small farming hamlets, in which the built form is in traditional style and through-access is limited, are the characteristic settlement pattern.

Building materials include red brick, ragstone, weatherboard and some localised ornamentation of tile-hung detailing.

Gentrification of traditional agricultural buildings (barns & oasts) is evident.

The Bough Beech reservoir covers a large area within this landscape.

BOUGH BEECH RESERVOIR AND LOW WEALD FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The extremely good condition of this landscape is due to the intact nature of the very strong landscape features of woodland, tree belts, hedgerows and watercourses. The small-scale of the landscape pattern clearly reflects the rural emphasis and historic development of the area. There are very few suburban details to be found in this rural area, despite the gentrification of traditional agricultural buildings.

The strong network of semi-natural habitats is augmented by the diversity of woodland and wetland habitats, and the low-intensity of agricultural land use.

Bough Beech reservoir interrupts the traditional pattern but creates a new and distinctive wetland feature.

Sensitivity :

The development of the landscape owes much to historic land-use, but the strong presence of ancient woodland gives it a more ancient time-depth. Special features such as ponds within fields, and the open water of the reservoir, are unique and therefore contribute to the highly distinctive character of this area. Visibility is very low due to the very enclosed nature of the farmland and the frequent woodlands and tree belts. The sensitivity of the area is therefore moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

There are many separate elements in this landscape which should be conserved as part of a strategy to maintain the more historic, very distinctive landscape character.

The small scale, enclosure pattern and settlement pattern should be conserved. It is important to maintain the diversity of tree cover in woodland, tree belts, hedgerows and standard trees, and to maintain the existing wetland habitats within the farmland and in roadside ditches. Ancient woodland should be conserved with appropriate management.

The good condition of the landscape is largely due to its rural emphasis, although this is showing signs of pressure. The emphasis is on the rural use and settlement of this area should therefore be reinforced.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Very Distinct
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Very Strong
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Very Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
good			
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

CHARCOTT FARMLANDS

Low Weald

Low Weald

Key Characteristics

Very wet low lying area with many ponds and ditches.

Mixed farming to large part of the area, interrupted only by woodland.

Very narrow lanes, with few passing places, undulating and climbing with topography.

A working landscape which is less pristinely maintained than other areas.

Extensive ghylls in valleys.

Settlement is limited to a small hamlet at Charcott and isolated farmsteads



Landscape Description

This is a very wet, generally low-lying area with many ponds and ditches. Mixed farming covers a large part of the area, interrupted only by woodland. Extensive ghylls in the valleys are feature of the area. The lanes are very narrow, with few passing places, and they follow the undulations in the landform, running N- S in generally parallel lines, climbing and falling with the topography. There is a distinct feel of the working nature of this landscape in which dominant functions associated with agriculture do not necessarily have aesthetic aims or other land management objectives - the landscape appears relatively less pristinely maintained than other rural areas. The scarcity of cores of settlement is notable - limited to one small hamlet and some isolated farmsteads, however, the built form includes oasts, brick and tile-hung farmsteads and traditional barns.

CHARCOTT FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

There is a unified visual pattern of shaws and irregular fields which relates to the folding landform. The view holds few visual detractors, but there are occasional detracting features such as post and wire fencing and large agricultural buildings. As a whole, the visual component of the landscape is a very strong, positive element. The landscape's functional aspects are good - it has a strong cultural basis but its ecological interest is considered to fall short of its full potential. The form and location of historic farmsteads and the wooded shaws have a positive impact on the area, however, some negative influence is derived from the poor condition of internal field boundaries. Generally, it is considered to be a landscape in very good condition.

Sensitivity :

This is a distinct historic landscape with some ancient overtones which are due to the small areas of replanted ancient woodland. It has a moderate sense of place, supported in some instances by the presence of traditional buildings, but without any rare or exclusive local distinguishing features.

Visibility is low; views are enclosed and limited by the scattered woods and the gently undulating, folding topography.

These factors contribute to a landscape which is considered to be of low sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Although the condition of this landscape is generally very good, the hedgerow network is deteriorating and therefore the wildlife network is losing essential links and is becoming weaker. The internal hedgerows should be reinforced by replanting, by appropriate long-term management, and by reinforcing links to local and adjacent woodland areas. It is suggested that woodland also should be reinforced by the management and extensions of existing woodland areas.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

Low Weald

Low Weald

Key Characteristics

Undulating landscape.
Long views to northern scarp and southern High Weald

Mixed urban and rural land uses.

Infrequent small isolated woodlands, shaws and hedgerows enclose small to large scale fields of arable and pasture. Many streams and natural ponds.
Strong hedgerow pattern with many mature Oaks to field boundaries and across open fields. Some hedge internal field boundaries breaking down and supplemented by post and wire or post and rail fencing.

Many historic properties within rural and urban areas.
Major transport routes restricted to railway lines which cut across the area and through Edenbridge.



Landscape Description

These farmlands surround the town of Edenbridge and are based on the undulating landform of the Wealden clay which gradually rises from 40m OD around Edenbridge to 130m OD near Crockenhill. There are some small areas of isolated woodland but the majority of tree cover is provided within the mature hedgerow network. Mature oaks are a feature of this landscape - some are now situated within more open fields as standard specimen trees. The hedgerow pattern is a strong feature but in places is breaking down, occasionally supplemented with post and wire. The scale of the landscape is predominantly small - medium scale, but does have some areas of larger fields. In addition, where internal hedgerows are failing, the field system is opening up.

There are some long views to the Greensand scarp and over the Weald. Highways are traditionally narrow and hedge-lined, but lanes with wide verges can also be seen.

The characteristic form of settlement is farmsteads and isolated houses, but more recent built form includes some scattered linear settlement and industrial development on the fringe of Edenbridge. Traditional buildings are of red brick, weatherboarding and timber frame.

Ponds and streams are frequent elements within the area.

EDENBRIDGE LOW WEALD FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The small field pattern on the higher ground, opening out into larger fields on the lower areas around Edenbridge, clearly reflect the landform. The pattern is well-defined by the hedgerows, lanes and watercourses, although some definition is lost with the opening-out of the field system and the introduction of recent industrial and residential elements in the view. Land use is reasonably intensive in some areas; woodland habitats are scarce, and gaps are appearing in the hedgerow network. The network of watercourses is also in variable condition, often overshadowed by unmanaged vegetation. The impact of the urban area is largely well-contained and is therefore considered to have a low negative effect on the landscape area.

Sensitivity :

Although woodland is not a dominant element, the origin of the small shaws and individual mature trees is ancient. Standard trees in fields and hedgerows are numerous, especially Oaks, and it is these trees which sustain the ancient time depth of the area.

The network of narrow lanes also evoke a sense of long-use and continuity, and ancient highways exist too, such as the route of the present B2026 - formerly a Roman road. Other elements such as settlement and field enclosures portray an historic time depth. Visibility is low over the landscape area, and the sensitivity is therefore considered to be moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The most distinctive elements of this landscape are the standard Oaks and the network of hedgerows and ancient highways. Conservation of these should be part of management aims for the area, including long-term replanting programmes.

The conservation and sensitive management of watercourses and ponds should also be a priority..

The introduction of recent settlement and industrial development requires the creation of a suitable landscape infrastructure which should incorporate the new land uses into existing landscape character, and should respect existing settlement patterns.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND CREATE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & CREATE</u>	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

Low Weald

Low Weald

Key Characteristics

Undulating, enclosed, rural landscape.

Numerous 18th, 19th and 20th century properties set within large gardens.

Topography emphasised by the numerous internal field boundaries.

Narrow lanes with clipped hedges.

Many gentrified Oasts and barns.

Further east the area becomes less undulating, more open with a greater amount of post and wire fencing to internal boundaries

A21 towards skyline and associated bridge are both prominent from upper areas and unscreened.



Landscape Description

This is an enclosed, undulating rural landscape which is influenced in the higher contours by the prominence towards the skyline of the A21 and associated bridge - both are both prominent and unscreened. Otherwise it is a tranquil area containing numerous 18th, 19th and 20th century properties within large gardens and there are many gentrified oasts and barns - estate houses are strung along the tops of the gentler slopes. Red brick and some sandstone are evident in the vernacular buildings - these are mainly small-scale. The topography is emphasised by numerous hedged internal field boundaries around large assarts - many of these hedgerows have standard trees. Narrow lanes with clipped hedges and numerous woodlands and shaws are characteristic. Further towards the east, the area becomes less undulating and more open with a greater amount of post and wire fencing to internal boundaries. Other elements such as poplar windbreaks and estate landscapes have a minor influence on parts of the landscape. Riverhill House and gardens form part of this landscape area.

SEVENOAKS WEALD AND UNDERRIVER

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This is a very (visually) unified landscape with heritage features such as hedged field boundaries and lanes in very good condition. However, it has a major visual detractor in the form of the A21 and associated bridge and is therefore considered to be significantly 'interrupted' in visual terms. It has a strong ecological interest due to the intact hedgerow and tree network, which forms a substantial mosaic across the whole area - the cultural basis of the landscape is also a strong feature. The area is considered to be in good condition, despite the negative impact of the road and bridge.

Sensitivity :

This is a distinctive historic landscape in which the settlement pattern, field enclosures, wooded edges and small woodlands contribute to the local sense of place and time-depth. Remnant estate landscape is also evident but not a dominant feature. Visibility is moderate; views are contained by the frequent trees, hedgerows and woodland, and by the topography. It is a landscape of moderate sensitivity

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The conservation of heritage landscape features is the objective for this area, such as roadside hedgerows, internal field boundaries, tree cover and the pattern of settlement - the latter infrequent and following the tops of the gentler contours. It is suggested that the pattern of individual estate landscapes should be reinforced by conserving distinctive boundaries and by using characteristic materials and details in any new construction. The tranquillity of the landscape may be reinforced by managing the characteristic woodland cover in order to help screen the A21 where it intrudes into the view.

Woodlands should be managed in order to conserve the area of coverage.

Conserve and reinforce the feature of standard trees in hedgerows within the landscape.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Many
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high



Regional	Low Weald / High Weald
Landscape :	
Geology	Alluvium with river gravels and head deposits
Soils	Heavy soils affected by ground water
Landform	Flat to gently undulating river valleys

Landscape Description:

Undulating enclosed small scale pastoral landscape.

The river meanders through the flattened flood plain and riparian vegetation indicates its course. Some dense scrub along areas of the river bank.

Some larger arable fields above the flood plain.

Tree cover is limited to small scattered shaws, mature trees along railway corridor, hedgerow standards and occasional standards within fields.

Many streams cross the landscape and drain into the river.

Some mature hedgerows are intact along lanes elsewhere fragmented and over mature, they are supplemented with post and wire fencing.

Areas liable to flooding.

Isolated farmsteads, small hamlets and many vernacular buildings.

Biodiversity Targets:

Improve and manage hedgerows for conservation and increase total length through restoration and new planting.

Maintain the quality and extent of unimproved grassland, restore degraded neutral grasslands to buffer sites adjacent to sites of high ecological interest.

Maintain water levels in ditches to prevent drying out.

Encourage a reduction in use of herbicides and fertilizers to eliminate pollution.

Create, maintain and restore open water bodies to improve the conservation interests of standing water.

Historic Landscape:

Ancient parklands and large manor house with small historic hamlet.

Many characteristic Kentish vernacular buildings scattered across the flood plain.

Large assarts.

Small fields with wavy boundaries.

EDEN VALLEY - CHIDDINGSTONE

Low Weald / High Weald Eden
and Upper Medway Valleys

Key Characteristics

Undulating enclosed small scale pastoral landscape with internal views.

Buildings of mixed age group, some modern and many historic.

Corridors of mature trees along, railway, river and field boundaries.

Dense, intact, clipped hedgerows to most field boundaries.

Many streams cross the area draining into the River Eden



Landscape Description

This is an undulating, enclosed, small-scale pastoral landscape with predominantly internal views; views out are largely limited by the topography.

Buildings within the area are of mixed age; some are recent, but many historic buildings are also evident. Within the landscape there are some corridors of mature trees along the railway, river and along field boundaries - tree cover, however is generally limited. Hedgerows to most field boundaries are dense, mostly intact, and are maintained to a well-clipped standard. The area is characterised by the many streams which cross the area draining into the River Eden.

EDEN VALLEY - CHIDDINGSTONE

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This area is enclosed with well-defined hedgerows, which pattern the perceptible landform of the river valley, producing a visually coherent landscape. It has some detracting features in the form of suburban planting, the line of the railway and the presence of large, unremarkable agricultural buildings.

The hedgerows and built form reflect a reasonably strong cultural integrity in the way the land is used and in the sustainability of heritage landscape features, however, there is a noticeable lack of tree cover - somehow unexpected in this landscape area - which represents the loss of an inherent characteristic.

Sensitivity :

The area has an historic pattern of small, pastoral field enclosures, with strongly distinctive lines of N - S lanes which cross the river. This combination of distinctive and historic features produces a landscape which is endowed with a moderate sense of place - not rare or with an uncommon span of continuity, but distinctive in its own right. Visibility is moderate as views are generally unlimited by tree cover, but long views are limited by the topography. The overall sensitivity of the area is therefore moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the historic pattern of hedgerows and scattered farmsteads.
Conserve the characteristics of the ancient N - S highways. Create riparian features of the river corridor and tributaries.
Create more frequent small copses.
Create a localised design code for agricultural structures.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Open
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND CREATE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

Low Weald / High Weald Eden
and Upper Medway Valleys

Key Characteristics

Flat to gently sloping, open mixed farmland.

Large arable fields and smaller sheep pastures.

Seasonally flooded with many small ponds and crossed by small streams.

Mature hedgerows remain intact along some lanes. Where hedgerows have been depleted they are supplemented with post and wire or post and rail fencing.

Mature standard Oaks are dotted throughout the landscape.

Edenbridge urban edge, including industrial areas, located centrally within area.



Landscape Description

This is an open landscape which is based on Wealden clay and river terrace gravels, and some alluvium along the watercourses. It is a distinct character area which is found around a stretch of the river Eden and some of its tributaries. It is low lying and subject to seasonal flooding, also featuring many small streams and ponds. The land form ranges from flat to gently sloping, enabling long views to the Greensand ridge to the north, and wide views generally over the farmland. Views also take in the urban edge and some linear residential built areas. The land-use is mixed, but is predominantly sheep pastures in the smaller-scale fields.

Mature standard Oaks are a consistent if not frequent feature of the landscape, and tree cover is generally limited to hedgerows and field boundaries.

Mature hedgerows are more likely to be found along highways. Intact hedgerows, however, occur infrequently in this landscape. Many internal field boundaries are now marked with post and wire. The dominant tree species are varied, including Oak, Willow, Yew, Alder and Pine. In addition, mixed ornamental species can also be seen in the landscape around residential properties. Isolated farms remain a feature of the agricultural landscape.

EDEN VALLEY - EDENBRIDGE

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This area is based on an open river valley floodplain. However the river corridor is often not clearly defined or recognisable in the view. The inherent nature of the floodplain is considered to be vulnerable and almost incoherent. Some of the urban fringe elements such as linear housing developments create harsh edges with the surrounding countryside. The intensity of the agricultural land-use varies, but is considered to weaken the function of the semi-natural habitats that occur in watercourses, floodplain pastures and the remaining hedgerows. These features themselves, as heritage landscape features, are often in variable condition.

The traditional form of farmsteads which are located at the upper edge of the floodplain have a slight positive impact on the landscape in general.

Sensitivity :

Views are occasionally limited by scrub vegetation and mature hedgerow in the floodplain. This intermittent vegetative cover limits views and contributes towards the low sensitivity of the landscape area.

Distinctive, historic elements such as ditches, hedgerow, field patterns and traditional settlement, contribute to the moderate sense of place. The ancient line of the B2026 (Roman road) also enforces the sense of continuity in the landscape.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The natural characteristics and the heritage landscape features reflect the basis of the area as a river floodplain. It is important that these features, such as ditches, ponds and edge of floodplain settlement are reinforced as major characteristics of the area. The re-establishment of hedgerows would also strengthen the pattern of floodplain fields and allow the re-introduction of standard trees.

New landscape features which reflect the inherent nature of the floodplain landscape may also be used to create an appropriate context for the industrial and urban fringe developments which currently detract from the visual and functional integrity of the area. The creation of wetlands, drainage courses and riparian vegetation in this context should also increase the extent of semi-natural habitats.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	<u>CREATE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

EDEN VALLEY - HEVER

Low Weald / High Weald Eden
and Upper Medway Valleys

Key Characteristics

Rough grassland and
sheep pasture.

Small to medium scale
fields.

Fragmented hedgerows
replaced by post and rail
fencing.

Many field boundaries are
densely treed, but often
without lower structure and
therefore supplemented
with fencing.

Wet in valley with many
small streams cutting
across the landscape.

Historic ornamental
gardens within Hever
Castle grounds.

Properties are generally
well kept traditional Kentish
buildings, red brick and
half tile hung, including
gentrified Oasts



Landscape Description

The irregular pattern of the small - medium scale fields is further enhanced by the undulating topography which gradually rises either side of the river Eden and from the lake at Hever.

The historic castle, and the more recent estate parkland cover a significant part of this landscape area. It is a managed landscape which includes a golf course, dense woodland plantation and ornamental tree planting.

The agricultural landscape is punctuated with small woods and frequent narrow strips of woodland - which incorporate some planting to field boundaries. Typical species include Holly, Poplar, Oak, Ash and Yew.

There is a strong enclosure pattern which has occasional Oak standards, but which is in decline due to the over-maturity of the vegetation, and the use of post and wire to supplement the lower structure of hedges.

Small hamlets, isolated farms and scattered farm cottages are the characteristic settlement form. Historic red brick houses and farm buildings demonstrate the traditional use of brick and hung tile; many farm buildings now adapted for residential use.

The route of the narrow lanes is determined by the location of river crossing, and lined by deep ditches.

Historic Landscape: Hever

EDEN VALLEY - HEVER

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This small - medium scale pattern, tranquil, rural area has a coherent pattern of enclosure which includes small woodlands. Historic parkland is also a strong feature. There are very few detracting features in the landscape view. Although post and wire is increasing in use for the purpose of internal field boundaries, and the hedgerow and standard trees tend to be over mature, the general condition of heritage landscape features is good. In particular, the built form is generally a very positive feature. The ecological bases throughout the area can be found in woodlands, the river corridor and pastoral areas of low-intensity. However, it is considered that the overall ecological network lacks cohesion, and the condition of understorey is often poor. The ecological integrity of this area is therefore only moderate. Other elements in the landscape, however, combine to achieve a landscape in a very good condition.

Sensitivity :

With the exception of the small woodlands, the major part of the landscape is of historic origin. The small woodlands which enclose the park contribute an ancient time depth, although this is a minor influence.

The castle, castle grounds and associated buildings and ornamental planting are considered to be extremely distinct and unique features contribute to a strong local distinctiveness.

Visibility over the area is confined by tree cover, and therefore the area is considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

It is the distinctive built form and historic development of the farmland and parkland which gives this landscape area its strong and distinctive character. All these elements and their landscape context; views in and out, should be conserved.

Elements which currently contribute less to the distinctive nature of the area, or are in poor condition, such as internal hedgerows and small woodlands, may be reinforced by replanting and appropriate management of the vegetation.

Conserve small scale land patterns.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Very Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Very Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

Condition	good	REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low moderate		high

EDEN VALLEY - PENSHURST

Low Weald / High Weald Eden
and Upper Medway Valleys

Key Characteristics

Enclosed, winding, river valley.

Small streams draining into river across flattened flood plains.

Dominant land use is pasture.

Marker posts indicate that the area may flood extensively during particularly wet periods.

Areas of scrub and rough grass adjacent to river.

Buildings are limited to the upper slopes of the river valley to avoid flooding



Landscape Description

This small landscape area is an enclosed stretch of the winding, river valley of the Eden at the point just before it joins the Medway. It features small streams draining into the river across flat flood plains. The area is liable to flooding. The dominant land use is pasture, covering the floodplain in medium-large scale meadows bounded by gappy hedgerows and occasional, over-mature standard trees. Areas of scrub and rough grass cover the reaches adjacent to the river itself. Characteristic built form is occasionally evident in small cottages, brick and tile hung, located on a line limited to the upper edges of the river floodplain.. It is an open area, with some riparian vegetation. Brick and concrete pill boxes are an occasional feature in the landscape.

EDEN VALLEY - PENSHURST

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The condition of the heritage landscape features is variable as the hedgerows are in decline and characteristic standard hedgerow trees have generally become over-mature. The ecological network is based on the riparian corridor which is not strongly linked into the wider area. The current ecological status of the area is therefore considered to be variable - this is a potentially rich ecological area. The view is coherent as a river floodplain; the landscape elements such as buildings, pastoral land-use and the agricultural pattern are visually linked to the natural landform. Detracting elements in the view are mostly limited to gappy hedgerows and senescent trees. The area is considered to be in good condition.

Sensitivity :

This is an historic landscape with some recent features such as pill boxes and post and wire fencing. Its distinct landscape is a product of the landform, the sparse peripheral settlement and of the distinct pattern of enclosed fields with standard trees. It has a moderate sense of place, largely based on the inherent attributes of the floodplain. Visibility is high throughout the area, due to the openness of the floodplain. This is therefore considered to be a sensitive landscape.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the field pattern of the area by replanting and managing hedgerows and replacing standard trees in the hedgerow. The visual emphasis and ecological interest of the riparian corridor should be conserved by retaining and managing open grasslands and pastures adjacent to the watercourse. Riparian vegetation to be replanted and scrub to be managed in order to create a wider base of natural areas.

Conserve views across flat pastures.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Open
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

Low Weald / High Weald



Key Characteristics

Meandering river cuts through this flattened flood plain.

Riparian vegetation along river banks. Areas of dense scrub vegetation around the river.

Pasture and arable.

Pylons visually prominent in their location across the river valley.

Numerous lanes cut across the valley and over ornamental bridges in different styles, one in decline.

Many streams and tributary rivers join the Medway in this area.

Few properties as mainly confined to higher ground

Landscape Description

The landscape is formed by the meandering river Medway as it flows through a flattish floodplain. Riparian vegetation is characteristic along the river banks and there are areas of dense scrub vegetation around the river. In other areas, the land is under agricultural use, with some pasture but it is also occasionally intensively farmed for arable crops. The inherent landscape pattern of hedged field boundaries and mature trees is no longer prevalent. This is a relatively open landscape, despite some tree cover, in which the dominant visual influence is the flat landform. Pylons are visually prominent in their location across the river valley. Numerous narrow lanes cut across the valley and over ornamental bridges in different styles. There are many streams and tributaries which run off the High Weald to join the Medway in this area. Limited settlement is a characteristic feature - built form is found on the higher ground at the extremities of the floodplain, and at river crossings.

UPPER MEDWAY - PENSHURST

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

In visual terms, this section of the floodplain no longer presents a totally unified landscape. The flat river valley with riparian vegetation is coherent but does have a number of visual detractors such as pylons and post and wire fencing. The river corridor is the ecological basis for this area, but does not link well into the farmed landscape, therefore reducing the potential wildlife interest of the whole area. The continued limited extent of settlement in itself has a moderately positive impact on the area, however, the overall condition of the landscape is considered to be poor.

Sensitivity :

The distinct elements of this historic landscape are the bridging/fording points of the river and the riparian vegetation. Other characteristics such as hedged field boundaries no longer contribute to the local distinctiveness - the sense of place is generally very weak. Visibility is high over the flat landscape, despite intermittent tree cover and small woodlands. This is a landscape of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Restore the hedgerow pattern and standard trees on the higher slopes.
Create a stronger riparian corridor with links into adjacent farmland.
Restore the visual prominence of bridging points across the river.
Restore some open floodplain areas.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Poor
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Poor
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Weak

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Indistinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Weak
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

RESTORE AND CREATE

Condition

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	<u>RESTORE & CREATE</u>	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high

Regional	High Weald
Landscape :	
Geology	Ashdown Beds overlain with Wadhurst Clay and Tunbridge Wells Sand
Soils	Poorly draining, sandy and silty clays
Landform	Steeply undulating

Landscape Description:

Undulating landscape climbing to the south. Enclosed upper slopes where mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland opens occasionally for long views north across the Low Weald. Significant areas of sweet chestnut coppice. Wooded ghylls in valleys. Medium-scale arable and pasture enclosed by woodland edge. Large rock outcrops on high ground. Dense, fragmented hedgerows along narrow undulating lanes with post and wire to internal field boundaries. Many streams and ponds throughout the area. Small hamlets, isolated farms, numerous grand manor houses and extensive parkland areas. Many examples of historic vernacular buildings and features within the landscape.

Biodiversity Targets:

Maintain the extent and quality of ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and expand this by natural regeneration.
Convert conifer plantations to locally appropriate broadleaf plantations.
Promote sustainable woodland management.
Provide mechanisms to clear rhododendron.
Maintain the existing coverage of ghyll woodlands and enhance their quality as features of interest.
Improve and manage hedgerows and shaw.
Maintain unimproved grassland and restore degraded neutral grasslands.
Create, maintain and improve standing open water to maximise its wildlife benefit.
Maintain and enhance all existing rock exposures.

Historic Landscape:

Numerous ancient parklands.
Ancient woodland on higher ground.
Medieval manor houses scattered throughout.
Fields with small wavy boundaries and ponds most common.
Occasional large fields with wavy boundaries.
Small and medium assarts.
Small isolated pockets of ancient coppice and orchard.

CHIDDINGSTONE FARMLANDS

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Small groups of historic buildings.

Medium scale mixed agricultural landscape, including small area of hops and soft fruit.

Distinctive character introduced around field and property boundaries with the use of metal park fencing and wattle hurdles.

Narrow undulating lanes, with occasional narrow grass verges and ditches.

Many naturally occurring ponds and streams, with associated riparian vegetation, such as Alder and Willow



Landscape Description

This landscape area includes landscape parkland associated with Chiddingstone Castle country house and estate. Its field patterns are large-medium scale with irregular boundaries, supporting a mixed, agricultural landscape, including small area of hops and soft fruit. Areas of woodland rise near the castle itself and follow small tributaries of the River Eden, covering some of the slopes towards the higher ground of the High Weald to the south. Lanes are distinctly rural and twisting with occasional narrow grass verges and ditches. They follow the higher undulations of ground to the south of the River Eden, branching down into the floodplain to a number of small river crossings. The streams, lakes, poorly draining soils and river floodplain all contribute to the strong presence of water within the landscape and there are many naturally occurring ponds and streams, with associated riparian vegetation, such as Alder and Willow.

The main cultural influence is the estate - the boundary of the current parkland is evident, in particular where distinctive features such as metal park fencing and wattle hurdles have been introduced around field and property boundaries. Small groups of historic buildings are characteristic.

CHIDDINGSTONE FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This strongly agricultural area has a coherent pattern of large - medium fields sloping down to the river, with few detracting features - it is considered to be a visually unified landscape. There is some intensive land use and a fragmented network of ecological bases; the cultural emphasis of the castle and historic village are very strong but, combined with a varying ecological interest, the functional integrity of the area is considered to be moderate. Overall, this is a landscape in good condition.

Sensitivity :

The very distinct nature of the village and castle contribute to a very strong sense of place, along with the numerous oasts and barns. There is an historic emphasis to the farmlands, landscape features and general field pattern, combined with a moderate range of visibility over the area, but the strong sense of place which is experienced in Chiddingstone Farmlands means that it is a highly sensitive landscape.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the setting of the castle, village, other historic buildings and parkland.
Conserve the field pattern and infrequent settlement within the farmland.
Conserve and manage hedgerows and field boundaries.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

CHIDDINGSTONE HOATH PLATEAU

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Steeply folding valleys with extensive wooded ghylls to valley floors.

Small scattered woodlands and shaws.

Large rocky outcrops on high ground, acidity of these outcrops indicated by vegetation of naturalised Rhododendron, Broom, Gorse, Bracken.

Relatively open aspect with topography and small wooded shaws providing enclosure.

Numerous grand manor houses of historic interest.

Small hamlets of modern residential properties



Landscape Description

The steeply folding valleys with extensive wooded ghylls which run into the valley floors are characteristic elements of the landscape. Woodlands and shaws, which are small in scale, and can be seen scattered over the steep slopes, contain a characteristic mix of Beech, Holly and Oak. This landscape has a relatively open aspect in which the topography and small wooded shaws provide some enclosure to the view. The fields are large assarts, supporting a mixture of arable and pasture where south-facing slopes open out on to farmed land. There are some ponds. Large rocky outcrops occur on high ground - the acidity of the soils in particular around these outcrops is indicated by the surrounding vegetation of naturalised Rhododendron, Broom, Gorse, Bracken. Standard Holm Oaks are a notable feature. The area has numerous grand manor houses of historic interest which exhibit localised detail in sandstone and half timbered construction. Settlement is generally scattered on the slopes - there is additional development in the form of small hamlets of modern, brick-built residential properties.

CHIDDINGSTONE HOATH PLATEAU

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The large, farmed slopes and steep wooded ghylls have a unified pattern with few visual detractors. The landform and landcover interact, creating a clearly intelligible landscape of interdependent elements. Wildlife corridors have a strong basis in the wooded ghylls, streams and ponds - the area is considered to be ecologically strong, but varies in its cultural integrity - large houses and settlements are no longer inextricably linked to the farmed landscape and some farmed land is losing its heritage features. Nevertheless, the historic evolution of the area is mainly emphasised by the heritage landscape features of hedges, parkland and woodland, and by historic buildings. The area is considered to be in very good condition.

Sensitivity :

There are some very distinct features in the area, from the characteristic species mix of the shaws and wooded ghylls, to Stonewall Park, specimen Holm Oaks and rocky outcrops. There is also a great sense of historic continuity and more ancient overtones due to the woodland cover. Visibility is high, augmented the dominant landform and more open areas of farmed land. This is a landscape of high sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

In order to conserve the large pattern of the farmed landscape and its diversity, internal hedgerows should be replanted and managed. Woodland cover to ghylls and steeper slopes should be conserved - as should the ponds and distinctive parkland features, and scattered shaws. Conserve the integrity of the scattered settlements and the emphasis of local details and materials.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Very High
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

CHIDDINGSTONE WOODED PASTURES

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Semi-enclosed undulating area.

Half woodland, half open farmland.

Steeply sloping in areas providing long views to the north over the Low Weald.

Narrow and wide country lanes, many with grass verges, some enclosed entirely by woodland.

Many traditional Kentish style, well maintained properties.

Small post and rail paddocks close to settlements.

Occasional Oast and thatched cottage



Landscape Description

This area may be described as 'semi-enclosed' in which views are often contained by the frequent areas of woodland over the undulating area. Coppice is characteristic - some of this considered to be ancient woodland and some a post 1801 change to the woodland cover. Wooded ghylls are also characteristic. Where the woodland gives way to small fields in farmland clearings, as it does in about one half of the area, the more steeply sloping areas provide long views to the north over the Low Weald. The landscape exhibits both narrow and wide country lanes, many of the latter with grass verges, some enclosed entirely by woodland. There are many traditional Kentish style, well maintained properties. Small paddocks delineated by post and rail fencing have developed close to settlements. There are occasional Oasts and thatched cottages. Ponds are an occasional feature of the fields. Rocky outcrops are also characteristic.

CHIDDINGSTONE WOODED PASTURES

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

The simple pattern of small-medium irregular clearings in the dominant woodland is a strong, visually unified pattern with very few detracting elements. This is a landscape where the visual links between landform and landcover are very clear and the small hamlets and isolated cottages are a strong cultural feature. Ecological interest is underpinned by the extensive network of woodland blocks and wooded slopes, hedgerow, hedgerow trees and occasional ponds. The landscape is considered to be in very good condition.

Sensitivity :

This is a very distinct landscape with its steeply undulating landform, rocky outcrops and extensive woodland coverage. The woodland and small-scale clearings reinforce the ancient nature of this landscape. Visibility is moderate, as most views are enclosed but long views are obtained from the upper slopes. The landscape is considered to be of high sensitivity to change.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

It is important to conserve and manage the extent and distinct species mix of the woodland, and the scale and pattern of the farmed clearings. Wooded edges, and hedges with standard trees, which surround fields and pastures are an inherent feature to be conserved. It is suggested that a local design code should be adopted to retain these features in paddock areas.

Hedgerows and wooded edges to the highways should be retained.

The small-scale and infrequency of settlement should be conserved.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Strong Network
Functional Integrity:	Very Strong

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Very Strong
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

COWDEN FARMLANDS

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Hilly enclosed landscape with woodland across hill slopes and wooded ghylls in valleys.

Secluded limited access.

Many streams and ponds throughout this wet clay areas.

Medium scale arable and pasture, poorer wetter grazing on low lying land.

Dense over mature vegetation growing over lanes in lower areas.

Isolated farmsteads and manor houses, small nucleated villages and hamlets



Landscape Description

This is a hilly and enclosed landscape in which woodland covers many slopes. Wooded ghylls are a feature of the landscape. There are limited views out of the area but these include long views of the Greensand Ridge to the north, and across the wooded ridges of the High Weald to the south. Views within the area are of enclosed pasture and medium-scale arable fields. Access throughout the area is limited, and the settlement pattern is of scattered and isolated farmsteads and manor houses, some small nucleated villages, hamlets which are reached by tracks and narrow lanes. Verges and ditches characterise the lanes. This wet clay area is characterised by numerous streams and ponds - the latter often found in a corner of the field, moated houses are also found.

There are occasional Oak and Ash standards in hedgerows, however many hedgerows are intensively clipped: many are fragmented and many replaced by post and wire on internal field boundaries. Conversely, hedgerow and woodland edge to some lanes is over-mature and poorly managed. There is a range of vernacular building styles of mixed age which includes timber-framed, weatherboarded and brick and hung tile; with much recent residential conversion.

Historic Landscape: Waystrode Manor: (strod = "marshy land overgrown with brushwood")

COWDEN FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

In this landscape, one is able to distinguish the medium-scale pattern of arable and pastoral fields, and woodland; and the relationship of all these to the topography. This is possible despite the fragmentation of hedgerows. The woodland network provides a strong ecological base, although hedgerows and ponds are becoming neglected features of the farmland.

The area is relatively unsettled, but the scattered farmsteads, villages and manor houses have a moderately positive impact on the landscape view.

Of the very few detracting features, the gentrification of farms and poorly-managed field boundaries are the most notable.

Sensitivity :

This is generally an historic landscape pattern which is influenced by very distinctive ancient woodland. The hedged landscape with its distinctive settlement pattern and historic lanes and buildings, dominates the sense of place.

Due to the intermittent tree cover, the visibility over the landscape is moderate. This area is considered, therefore, to be of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Although strong, the pattern of this landscape is no longer unified due to the decline in the hedgerow framework. It is therefore important to reinforce the existing historic pattern of hedgerows by replanting and by sensitive and co-ordinated management of this feature.

The impact of vernacular building should be reinforced by ensuring existing buildings remain in a rural/isolated context, or as the focal point of their locality. The scattered pattern of settlement should be conserved. Woodland cover of appropriate broadleaf species should be conserved in particular across slopes, ridges and ghylls.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Gently sloping pastoral landscape, some arable and horsiculture.

Medium scale, with very evident field boundaries.

Many mature standards within hedgerows.

Several natural ponds and streams cross the area.

Small areas of woodland.



Landscape Description

This is an area of gently sloping pastoral landscape adjacent to a narrow section of the Medway floodplain. It is a small-medium-scale, relatively intimate landscape with very evident field boundaries; woodland edge, hedgerow and some shelterbelts, although all these features are in decline. Many mature standards remain within the extant hedgerows. The road which runs through the area takes a characteristically direct route downslope to the river crossing on the Medway. The pastoral landscape is interspersed with small areas of copse and one large woodland block - some of which is replanted ancient woodland. At the same time as losing hedgerows and shelterbelts the landscape is opening out to include some arable fields and paddocks - with the result that there are large, regular fields in addition to the small irregular pattern. There are several natural ponds, and streams which cross the area, running into the Medway valley. Small areas of copse and a large woodland block. There is one farmstead within the area. Recent agricultural buildings are evident in the view.

ENSFIELD FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This is a visually coherent, small-medium scale landscape pattern which clearly reflects the landform and evolution of the land. It opens out into more large-scale intensive land use, with an associated decline in hedgerow and small woodlands. There are few detracting features although recent agricultural buildings do not visually enhance the landscape - however, the area remains visually very strong. The ecological bases of woodland, ponds, streams and hedgerow, provide a moderately strong network but the cultural emphasis of the landscape is considered to be poor due to the introduction of more intensive farming and horsiculture. Overall, the landscape is considered to be in good condition.

Sensitivity :

The heritage feature of the hedgerow pattern contributes much to the distinctive nature of this historic landscape despite changes in land use (horsiculture), recent agricultural buildings and the replacement of hedges by post and wire fencing to some internal field boundaries. This is a characteristic High Weald landscape which is distinct and visually pleasing but has no uncommon distinguishing features. Intermittent tree cover contains some views, but there are some long views towards the Greensand Scarp - visibility is moderate.

The landscape is considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Reinforce features such as the mature hedgerow trees and strong pattern of enclosure should be conserved.

The ecological value of arable and pastoral fields should be reinforced with environmentally sensitive management, ensuring that the hedgerow networks and standard trees are retained and managed. The cultural emphasis of this single-farm landscape could be improved by the setting of the group of agricultural buildings and the views to them.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Folding valleys and hills with roads falling steeply to river floodplain.

Some ditches to narrow lanes, many natural ponds and streams.

Many old properties dating from C14th to modern day.

Long views north west over the Low Weald.



Landscape Description

This is a landscape of folding valleys and hills where the narrow, hedge-lined roads fall steeply through the area down to fording and bridging points over the Upper Medway valley, or turn sharply to follow the upper edge of the floodplain. It is a small-scale, visually enclosed landscape in which small woodlands and a patchwork of small-medium scale irregular assorted fields run down-slope. There are ditches to some lanes, and many natural ponds and streams throughout the area - natural surface drainage is a feature. There are isolated properties dating from C14th to modern day although the village of Fordcombe itself is a relatively recent and planned rural settlement. The remaining isolated small farmsteads are orientated with their main access towards the adjacent river floodplain. Occasional long views can be gained looking north west over the Low Weald, but this is mostly a visually-contained landscape.

FORDCOMBE

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This small-medium scale landscape of well-spaced small farmsteads/large houses has an inherent pattern which is interrupted by the fragmentation of some hedgerow and the introduction of linear and village development. Ponds, streams, pasture, woods and hedgerow provide a moderately diverse wildlife interest although this is considered to be a relatively weak ecological network - due to loss of woodlands, arable farming methods, gappy hedgerows and the introduction of horsiculture. Conversely - visually it is a coherent landscape with few real visual detractors and a strong cultural basis for the existing landscape features. The landscape is considered to be in very good condition.

Sensitivity :

This is an historic landscape in which the most locally unique landscape features are the well-spaced farms and houses and the use of stone, brick and timber in some buildings. The hedgerow and field pattern is also distinctive, characteristic of the High Weald but not unique, giving a moderate sense of place.

Visibility is also moderate, enclosed by topography and vegetation but with some occasional views over the Low Weald. It is a landscape of moderate sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The distinctive nature of this landscape may be enhanced by the reinforcement of small woodland blocks on steeper slopes, and by the sensitive management of the historic hedgerow network.

The settlement pattern of infrequent, well-spaced farmsteads should be conserved.

Ponds, streams and wetland habitats should be conserved.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Good
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	Moderate
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

MARSH GREEN WOODED PASTURES

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Secluded area with limited access.

Large areas of farmed sweet chestnut coppice, mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland.

Medium scale arable and pastoral landscape enclosed by woodland edge, dense fragmented hedgerows and post and wire or post and rail fencing to internal field boundaries.

Areas of narrow woodland planting adjacent to lanes.

Many natural ponds sit within the hill slopes with streams cutting through wooded valleys



Landscape Description

This is a secluded landscape area with limited access. There are large areas of managed Sweet Chestnut coppice, mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland.

Within the generally wooded landcover, there are medium-scale arable and pastoral fields enclosed by woodland edge and dense, fragmented hedgerows. Some post and wire or post and rail fencing exists to mark internal field boundaries.

Areas of narrow woodland planting adjacent to lanes are a characteristic feature. Many natural ponds sit within the hill slopes whilst streams cut through the wooded valleys.

Settlement is limited to small farmsteads located just off the road which follows the base of the valley.

MARSH GREEN WOODED PASTURES

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This landscape has a unified pattern of managed woodland and formed clearings with few visual detractors. It is considered to be in very good condition, partly due to the strong ecological basis of wetlands and woodland which form a cohesive network throughout the area. It retains a reasonably strong cultural basis in the way the land and the landscape features function, although the inappropriate management of some farmland slightly reduces the cultural integrity of the landscape .

Sensitivity :

There is a moderate level of visibility due to the dominant landform, with some long views north to the Greensand ridge, although the area is otherwise visually well-enclosed by the woodland and views within the area are limited. The landscape is considered to be distinct, but not rare or unique within the Sevenoaks area, however, the ancient pattern of woodland clearings, or assarts, gives a significant time-depth to the landscape - this is one of the main contributing factors to the strong sense of place which is experienced here and which makes the landscape highly sensitive to change.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The main feature of this area - the woodland cover - should be conserved using appropriate and characteristic broadleaved species, and the development of long-term management schemes to sustain the woodland as the basis of local land-use. It is also important to conserve the pattern of enclosure, including the characteristic dense form of the hedgerows which achieve the enclosure of the land parcels. The conservation of these hedgerows is likely to involve some replanting.

Characteristically, settlement is infrequent in the view and follows the valley-bottom road. The introduction of more frequent built form - or built development introduced to the isolated slopes - should be avoided as it would significantly reduce the visual unity of this rural area.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Very Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Few
Visual Unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Strong

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Ancient
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Dominant
Extent of tree cover	Enclosed
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
good			
	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
moderate			
	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
poor			
	low	moderate	high

NORTH LEIGH FARMLANDS

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Broad sweeping, gently sloping arable landscape of large to medium scale fields.

Settlement is restricted to a small hamlet, two isolated farms and a few scattered cottages.

Strongly hedged and tree lined lanes.

Many mature Oaks standards scattered across open fields and within hedgerows.

Estate parkland at Hall Place.



Landscape Description

This is a broad, sweeping, gently sloping arable landscape of large to medium scale fields, many of regular form and outline, drained by streams and featuring some ponds. Through-access is limited and settlement is restricted to a few large farmsteads, barns, a hamlet and a few scattered cottages - these have a vernacular style involving hung-tiles and weatherboarding. Lanes are wide with grass verges. Hedgerows with standard trees are an inherent part of this farmed landscape, formerly dividing the large field pattern, and now most strongly represented by the hedged and tree-lined lanes. Many mature Oak standards remain scattered across open fields and within remnant hedgerows. Large blocks of plantation woodland and small areas of replanted ancient woodland are also found in the area. The landscape is influenced by the nearby line of estates and manors which line the edge of the river valley, such as the adjacent estate parkland at Hall Place.

NORTH LEIGH FARMLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

This relatively intensely farmed landscape has lost some definition due to the decline of the mature hedgerow network and the decline in localised copses and small woodlands. It is affected to some extent by the nearby A21 corridor and by recent residential growth in the countryside. Visually, it reads coherently as estate farmland which is managed on a large scale, however, the heritage landscape and ecological features are variable in their impact - wildlife areas have been fragmented by the loss of the wider hedgerow network and the area also suffers visually from this loss. It is a landscape area in moderate condition.

Sensitivity :

There is an historic time-depth to the subtle and distinct landscape of estate farmlands, which is however losing some sense of place as the internal hedgerows fragment, standard trees are isolated within fields becoming senescent, and the unremarkable landform opens up to larger-scale fields with no strong framework. The farms and built form in general display some vernacular style and some distinctive features associated with estate farmland, however, more recent agricultural buildings and residential development add detracting features to the view. The intermittent blocks of trees ensure that visibility is limited. This is considered to be a landscape of low sensitivity.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

The contribution of mature trees to this landscape may be reinforced by the management and replanting of standard trees in the hedgerow, and by the replanting of internal hedgerows and small copses. Characteristics such as wide verges to roads and the setting of historic manors should be reinforced with the creation of linking landscape features along the road on which they are situated. The creation of an appropriate interface with new residential areas is also suggested.

Create a design code for agricultural buildings - in particular those associated with historic farmsteads.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Moderate
Pattern of elements	Coherent
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	Low
Distinctiveness	Characteristic
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CREATE AND REINFORCE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	<u>CREATE & REINFORCE</u>	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

PENSHURST AND LEIGH PARKLANDS

High Weald

High Weald

Key Characteristics

Substantial areas of woodland, areas of mixed age coppice being managed.

Pasture for sheep grazing and arable fields, cut into woodland areas. Many natural ponds occur throughout

Impressive historic parkland estates with mature planting.

Hedgerows along lanes breaking down and supplemented or replaced with post and wire, post and rail and temporary chestnut fencing in places.

Many examples of historic residential properties dating from C16th and possibly earlier. Clustered villages with strong historic building styles to core.

Major transport routes include railway and A road, both built on embankments.



Landscape Description

Historic landscape features which form part of this landscape are: Hall Place, Penshurst Place and pre-1801 parkland. This is a landscape of modest contours and clay soils, which sits on a small headland between the river floodplains of the Eden and the Medway at the confluence of the two rivers. The area contains substantial areas of woodland; many comprising of managed, mixed age coppice and including characteristic landcover of pasture for sheep grazing and arable fields, cut into the woodland areas. There is an impressive historic parkland estate with mature planting and there are many examples of historic residential properties dating from C16th and possibly earlier. Buildings of local sandstone are a highly distinctive feature. Nucleated villages with strong historic building styles to their core are also a characteristic feature. Hedgerows along lanes are breaking down and are being supplemented or replaced with post and wire, post and rail and temporary chestnut fencing in places. Major transport routes include railway and A roads; both have introduced linear embankments into the landscape. Many natural ponds occur throughout the landscape.

PENSHURST AND LEIGH PARKLANDS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition :

There is a strong parkland basis for this visually unified landscape, which nevertheless has some visual detractors such as horsiculture and post and wire replacement for hedgerow. It is considered to have a moderate functional integrity as, although it has a high cultural emphasis due to the historic buildings and parkland and some clusters of ecological interest, the landscape has lost some ecological integrity due to the loss of some hedgerow network and the introduction of intensive agricultural use. Overall, the area is in good condition.

Sensitivity :

This is a landscape sensitive to change, due to a very intense sense of place and an ancient-historic time depth. The parkland, which is defined by peripheral roads and marked with lakes and parkland trees, presents a highly distinct landscape feature. The design and use of local stone in historic buildings is a notable localised feature. Ancient overtones remain in the woodland (replanted and plantation) and in features such as the line of the highway, although buildings and current farmland patterns represent less time-depth and are considered to be historic (not ancient) in character. Visibility over the area is moderate as the tree cover is intermittent - most views are enclosed or are medium-range.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:

Conserve the woodland cover in large blocks, and conserve parkland and the setting of the village and historic buildings in the landscape by replanting and tree management.

Replant shaws and hedgerows within the agricultural areas, and ensure that suburban land uses do not encroach upon the view.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CONDITION:	Good
Pattern of elements	Unified
Detracting features	Some
Visual Unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity	Variable
Ecological integrity	Moderate
Functional Integrity:	Coherent

SENSITIVITY:	High
Distinctiveness	Unique/Rare
Continuity	Historic
Sense of Place:	Strong
Landform	Apparent
Extent of tree cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

CONSERVE

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

High Weald AONB



TUFIIB RIDGE WEL1S

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Top

FIELD EVALUATION

SHEET CHARACTER

HEXTABLE FRINGE

AREA:

Context 1: North Downs
Context 2: Fringe Landscapes
Photograph Number: 0
Map Reference: Date of Survey: 27-Jan-00

Summary of Characteristic Features:
Sprawling suburban fringe development into scruffy countryside. Very gently undulating slopes. Some market gardening evident. Sense of enclosure largely due to the topography. Substantial transportation routes

CONDITION

VISUAL UNITY - assess the overall unity of the landscape and note the significance of any detracting features:

Patterns of Elements: Describe the extent of uniform or unifying features / coherent or incoherent pattern of landform and elements. Are these intact, interrupted or fragmented ?
Fragmented hedgerows

Incoherent

Visual Detractors:
Incongruous suburban planting, mixed style stabling for horses, transport routes, widened roads, mixed recent building styles

FUNCTIONAL INTEGRITY

Ecological Integrity How does this area function as a habitat for wildlife?

Extent and type of semi-natural habitat:
Hedgerows and roadside planting
Ecological Bases:
Corridors of motorway planting and fragmented hedgerows
Intensity of Landuse:
Intensive arable and suburban amenity uses

Moderate

Cultural Integrity
Condition of Heritage Features - assess current condition and vulnerability to change

Tree Cover Extent: Age Structure: Vulnerability:
 N/A

Field Boundaries Extent: Age Structure: Vulnerability:
 Weak subdivided hedgerows Mature

Variable

Other:

Impact of Built Development:
How does built development demonstrate or respect the local vernacular, character and sense of place?

Type: Villages and isolated cottages
Design: Predominantly brick, some fruit
Extent: Densely settled in areas, scattered linear development along lanes
Siting: On undulating ridges

High Negative Impact

SENSITIVITY:

SENSE OF PLACE (strength of character):

How do the Key Characteristics contribute to local distinctiveness and continuity?
Woodlands: N/A

Distinctiveness

Continuity

Hedgerows:

Other Veg:

F Boundaries: Post and wire

Indistinct

Recent

Settlements:

Buildings:

Highways:

Other Features:

VISIBILITY : assess the interaction of and relative dominance of elements in the landscape view.

Landform: Apparent
Tree Cover: Intermittent

11.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arabalisation

The conversion of agricultural land to arable production often resulting in the loss or decline of hedgerows and trees to create large open fields.

Assart

The clearance of woodland to create fields. This results in small irregular shaped fields enclosed by hedgerows formed from remnant woodland rather than the planned and planted hedgerows found in enclosure landscapes (see below). This is particularly common in the High Weald where the field pattern typically dates from the medieval period.

Character

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Characteristics

Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

Elements

Individual components that make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

Enclosure

Enclosure is the term applied to the joining of strips of open field systems to make larger compact units of land. These were then fenced or hedged off so that farmers had land in one farm rather than in scattered strips. Prior to 1740 most land was enclosed by agreement, which often meant larger farmers buying off smaller farmer to get rid of opposition. In areas where there was sufficient opposition or a number of smaller farmers an Act of Parliament to enclose than land had to be obtained. This became the accepted procedure after 1750.

Kent differs from other parts of England in its lack of open field systems. It is not clear whether this is due to pastoral traditions and a distinct inheritance custom or to the complexities of Kent's peninsular geology. Whatever the reason the Enclosure Acts did not affect Kent and the field systems found in today's landscape maintain their medieval origins.

Features

Particularly prominent or eye catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

Characterisation

The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Condition

The assessment of condition evaluates the pattern of the landscape and the presence of incongruous features on the unity of the landscape. It also evaluates how well the landscape functions as a habitat for wildlife and the condition of cultural or 'man-made' elements such as enclosure, built elements and roads.

Sensitivity

This is a measure of the ability of a landscape to accept change without causing irreparable damage to the essential fabric and distinctiveness of that landscape. The term change refers to both beneficial changes such as a new woodland as well as change that may be brought about by new land uses. Landscape assessment considers sensitivity on an areas sense of place and its visibility.

Sense of Place

Sense of place is the term used to describe the individuality and distinctiveness of a particular place or area. It is about the common identity and perception of a particular place to groups or individuals.

Time depth

Time depth reflects how long that landscape has taken to establish. Ancient landscapes are uncommon in Kent but include those that have had very little intervention by man or contain ancient or prehistoric features. Historic landscapes are generally from the medieval period onwards. This is when the pattern of most landscapes in Kent was established and is generally discernible today (although overlain with modern features). Recent landscapes are those where historic elements have been replaced with new elements or land management. They include reclaimed landscapes.