

**Rother District Council**

**Development and Site Allocations Local Plan**

**Landscape Assessment of Northeys, Bexhill**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Study Aims**

1.1.1 The Environment Team of East Sussex County Council was commissioned in June 2018 by Rother District Council to carry out a landscape assessment of The Northeye area of Bexhill as specified in the project brief (Appendix 1). The focus of the assessment is to seek specialist advice of the landscape character and quality, and capacity to redevelop Northeye (United Arab Emirates – Former Technical Training Centre), Wartling Drive, known, hereafter as ‘The Site’ as mapped in Appendix 1.

1.1.2 The Rother District Council Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (DaSA) – Options and Preferred Options, which was publically consulted upon between December 2016-February 2017, identified four potential redevelopment options, including:

- An employment-led redevelopment
- A residential-led redevelopment
- A tourism-led redevelopment
- An institutional-led redevelopment

1.1.3 Common to all options was the existing greenfield part of the site is proposed to remain as open space or playing pitch/es. The Council did not put forward a preferred option for this site at that time.

1.1.4 The aim of the study is to define the landscape character, value and sensitivity of the site area to identify the potential capacity of the site area to accommodate particular types of development. The assessment will have regard to the scope for mitigation of potential development without detracting from the existing intrinsic character of the landscape.

1.1.5 The outcome will be an analysis of the baseline characteristics of the site in the context of the East Sussex County Council Landscape Assessment (2016).

1.1.6 The assessment set out in this report identifies the indicative capacity of the site area to accommodate development. No assessment of the landscape impacts of specific development proposals has been undertaken as part of this study.

1.1.7 To inform the assessment the study includes:

- a) Detailed analysis of the landscape character and visual baseline of the site and surrounding area.
- b) An assessment of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of the area to accommodate change.
- c) Opportunities will be identified for zoning of potential development within the site and for landscape enhancement.

## 1.2 Landscape Policy Context

### 1.2.1 The NPPF Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, Paragraph 170 requires that:

*‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

### 1.2.2 The NPPF Section 12, Paragraph 130 requires that:

*‘Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents’.*

### 1.2.3 The Rother District Council Core Strategy (adopted 2014) sets out the Council's long-term spatial vision and policies to deliver that vision. Chapter 5 presents a “Vision for Rother in 2028” which is translated into 12 Strategic Objectives in Chapter 6. One of the Strategic Objectives relates specifically to the environment of the District:

*“To maintain the high quality and improve the long term stewardship, of the natural and built environment, with full regard to potential future consequences of climate change.”*

### 1.2.5 Chapter 7 of the Core Strategy sets out the overall spatial strategy for the District. Policy OSS3 lists the factors which sites and/or proposals for development will be considered in the context of. These include: (i) *‘the spatial strategy for the particular settlement or area and its distinct character’* and (vi) *‘the character and qualities of the landscape’.*

### 1.2.6 The specific “environment” strategic objective is amplified in chapter 17 of the Core Strategy, which sets out more detailed environment objectives including: (i) *‘To conserve, manage and, where appropriate enhance, the high quality landscape resources, including the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the historic built environment’* and (iii) *‘to place strong emphasis on design quality in all development’.* The resulting policies are EN1 – Landscape Stewardship which states that ‘Management of the high quality historic, built and natural landscape character is to be achieved by ensuring the protection, and wherever possible enhancement, of the district’s nationally designated and locally distinctive landscapes and landscape features’ (setting out 8 such landscapes/ features, including the visual character of settlements, settlement edges and their rural fringes); and Policy EN3, which requires development to be of a high design quality, ‘contributing positively to the character of the site and

surroundings, including taking opportunities to improve areas of poor visual character or with poor townscape qualities', and demonstrate robust design solutions tested against identified key design principles set out in the Policy.

## **2.0 Methodology for Assessment**

### 2.1 Existing Guidance

2.1.1 The methodology in this report has used *Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)* published by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (Third Edition 2013). Detailed guidance for undertaking landscape character assessments to inform planning policy and decisions is also provided in the *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* published jointly by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002). This assessment will make particular reference to: *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Sensitivity and Capacity (Natural England 2002)*.

### 2.2 Methodology for Landscape Character Assessment

2.2.1 The Assessment involves an appraisal of the landscape of the site in relation to the character of the surrounding area.

2.2.2 Desktop and field surveys have been undertaken to identify the character of the defined study area.

2.2.3 The landscape character of the area has been assessed according to existing guidance for character assessment. Published assessments are available for Rother District at regional and county levels. The assessment has taken in to consideration the existing assessments and identifies the character of the site area at the local level.

2.2.4 The following strategies have been considered in defining the landscape character of the study area:

- National Character Area Profiles (Natural England 2014)
- East Sussex County Council Landscape Character Assessment, (*East Sussex County Council 2016*).

2.2.5 The landscape character of the site and surrounding area has been divided into local character areas based on the site assessment findings.

### 2.3 Definition of Key Terms

2.3.1 The landscape is a combination of both cultural and physical characteristics and components, which give rise to patterns that are distinctive to particular localities and help to define a sense of place. The landscape is not therefore simply a visual phenomenon but relies upon other influences including topography, land use, land management, ecology, and cultural associations. The key terms which are

used to describe these different elements of the landscape assessment are listed and defined in Appendix 5: Glossary of Key Terms and Acronyms.

## 2.4 The Study Area

2.4.1 The Site Context and Constraints, Map 1, indicates the area of study which is based on the extent of the area from which the site under consideration could potentially be seen. This map includes the broader landscape, heritage and habitat designations (the Pevensey Levels and High Woods SSSIs and Ancient woodlands) for the area.

## 2.5 Desk top Study

2.5.1 The information obtained from the field survey exercise has been supplemented by a desk top study to map existing designations relating to historical, archaeological, biodiversity or other cultural interest.

2.5.2 Other factors which have been considered as part of the landscape character assessment are local cultural considerations and sense of place.

## 2.6 Field Survey

2.6.1 Field surveys have been carried out to identify the landscape character of the site and surrounding area. The distinct local character context areas which have been identified are indicated on Map 2.

2.6.2 The individual character of these areas is described using the survey sheets contained within Appendix 4.

2.6.3 Representative photographs were taken from key public viewpoints around the site boundaries and from more distant public viewpoints in the local landscape. These are reproduced as Figures 1-10.

## 2.7 Criteria Based Sensitivity Assessment

2.7.1 The landscape character and visual sensitivity of the site and surrounding area is assessed with reference to the following six evaluation criteria, which are set out in Appendix 3, Table 1: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria.

- Physical character
- Settlement setting form and edge
- Natural character
- Visual character
- Perceptual experience and qualities
- Historic character

2.7.2 The assessment of landscape and visual sensitivity makes reference to environmental designations and constraints. These may not directly affect landscape character and visual amenity but they do often contribute to the sensitivity and intrinsic value of the landscape.



## 2.8 Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Judgements

- 2.8.1 The sensitivity of the study area and the scope for mitigation measures has been assessed in accordance with *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition, 2013 and *Landscape Assessment Guidance – Countryside Agency (Topic Paper 6, Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity)*.
- 2.8.2 Landscape character sensitivity is based on judgements about sensitivity of the identified criteria most likely to be affected. This identifies the capacity of the landscape to accommodate a specific type of change.
- 2.8.3 Other factors which have been taken into account in assessing the sensitivity of the landscape resource are existing trends for change in the landscape which may be due to natural process or human activities. It should be noted that strong landscape character could tend to be more able to accept change as it is more robust. An area of weak landscape character could tend to be more vulnerable to change.
- 2.8.4 The visual sensitivity of the landscape has been recorded for the site and surrounding area. Key views and viewpoints have been identified and focal features which enhance or detract from the view are noted. The inter-visibility of the area with surrounding areas has been recorded as have distant views into and out of the area. Key visual receptors with views across the area are recorded.

**Table 2: Criteria for Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Rating.**

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The landscape area has many unique/ rare characteristics that are distinctive with considerable time depth (the site is of ancient origin with many features of historic interest) with notable features. Distinct and unique sense of place. The area is visible from a wide area due to elevated or sloping topography on site or intervisibility from surrounding areas and limited enclosure. The area would be highly sensitive to change from the type of development being considered.
Medium - high	
Medium	The landscape area has some distinctive characteristics and valued qualities with some historic features that provide evidence of time /depth. The area has some characteristics which engender a sense of place. The area has moderate visibility with some views in from surrounding areas and intermittent enclosure by topography or vegetation. Some sensitivity to the type of development being considered.
Medium - low	
Low	The landscape area has few distinctive characteristics or features. There is little evidence of features that provide time/depth. The area has few characteristics to engender sense of place. The area has low visibility due to enclosure by landscape, buildings or vegetation. The site is of low sensitivity to the type of development being considered.

## 2.9 Landscape Value

- 2.9.1 East Sussex has a rich resource of valued landscapes. Rother District consists almost entirely of varied, attractive and valued landscape and many areas are the subject of nature conservation and historic designations.
- 2.9.2 A landscape may be valued by different users for a variety of reasons recognizing perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquility, remoteness, special cultural associations, other conservation or specialist interest. Negative factors can detract from the intrinsic value and in particular the presence of suburban influences. This may be in the form of back garden fences, overhead lines and phone masts, road associated influences including traffic.
- 2.9.3 Table 3 below sets out the criteria for assessing the relative value of different areas of landscape. Observation of these criteria allows a score to be made ranging between Very High through High, Medium and Low Value.

**Table 3: Landscape Value Evaluation Criteria**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Typical Criteria</b>	<b>Scale of Significance</b>	<b>Typical Examples/Features</b>
<b>Very High</b>	Very attractive and rare  Exceptional landscape quality	International or National	World Heritage Site, National Park, AONB or key elements/features within them.  Relatively most tranquil area (CPRE)  Accessible wildlife areas of international or national value.  Providing setting for internationally valued buildings or cultural features.
<b>High</b>	Very attractive or attractive scenic quality and in part rare  High / good landscape quality.	National, Regional, District or Local	National Park, AONB, Areas of Great / Special Landscape Value, Greenbelt (or similar designation) or key elements within them.  Accessible wildlife areas of national value.  Providing setting for Listed Buildings or nationally important cultural features.
<b>Medium</b>	Typical and commonplace or in part unusual  Good / Ordinary landscape quality	Regional, District or Local	Generally undesignated but value expressed through local cultural associations or through demonstrable use.  Accessible wildlife areas of local value.
<b>Low</b>	Monotonous, degraded or damaged;  Ordinary/ Poor landscape quality.	District or Local	Certain individual landscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation and landscape would benefit from restoration or enhancement.

2.10 Landscape Capacity

2.10.1 The following is a definition of landscape capacity taken from the Countryside Agency Guidance:

*“Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.” Further to this: “Capacity is all a question of the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change, and the way that the landscape is valued.”*

2.10.2 The above quotes are taken from *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*, Countryside Agency (2002).

**In summary, Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual Sensitivity + Landscape Value = Landscape Capacity**

**Table 4: Combining Landscape Character and Visual Sensitivity to give overall Landscape Sensitivity**

<b>Landscape Character Sensitivity</b>	High	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	Medium	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
	Low	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
		Low	Medium	High
	<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>			

**Table 5: Combining Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value to give Capacity.**

<b>Overall Landscape Sensitivity</b>	High	MEDIUM	LOW	NONE
	Medium	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW - NONE
	Low	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
		Low	Medium	High
	<b>Landscape Value</b>			

- 2.10.3 As advised in Topic Paper 6, the combined assessments of landscape value and sensitivity have been used to make an informed judgement about the overall capacity of the landscape to accept change. These assessments are arranged in a table or matrix to provide a profile of each identified landscape character area (Table 6).
- 2.10.4 For the purposes of this study a gradation of capacity for identified character areas is based on high, moderate, low or no capacity. This represents the capacity of a particular area to absorb the proposed type of development without significant adverse effects.
- 2.10.5 Using the above methodology an overall assessment has been made for each individual character sub area with regard to the capacity to accept the type of change being considered. This judgement is made according to the combination of criteria that contribute to a particular area of landscape. The capacity of an area to accept change is related to the potential of the area to accommodate development in a particular location without detracting from the overall character and visual amenity of that landscape. The capacity evaluation for each character area does not assume that this is the capacity across the entire character sub area.
- 2.10.6 In this context the capacity score is not a reflection of the scale of potential development in each area, but an indication whether or not any would be acceptable.
- 2.11 Mitigation and Management
- 2.11.1 The potential to mitigate change in a particular landscape will depend on the factors which determine the character of the landscape.
- 2.11.2 This assessment of potential for landscape mitigation is based on the following set of factors as follows:
- The need to enhance the key landscape features at a local scale.
  - The need to restore lost landscape features such as hedges and woods.
  - The need to restore degraded landscape.
  - The need to reduce the impact of urban development on the countryside.
  - Whether mitigation would detract from the sense of place.
  - Whether the site is already well contained and not visible in the wider landscape.
- 2.11.3 Outline mitigation should include:
- Retention and management of existing significant landscape features.
  - New woodland planting to link with existing
  - New tree belts to link with existing
  - Creation of multifunctional green networks as planting, open space or recreational corridors.

2.11.4 The comprehensive landscape mitigation would need to be specified in detailed development briefs.

2.11.5 The condition of the landscape will be determined by the degree to which it is soundly managed according to the land use.

### **3.0 General Character Context**

#### **3.1 Regional Landscape Character Context**

3.1.1 Natural England, National Character Area Profiles: The study area falls within the regional landscape character area 124, The Pevensey Levels.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6717059073310720?category=587130>

#### **3.2 County Landscape Character Area Context**

3.2.1 The study area lies within the County Landscape Character Area 25, The Pevensey Levels (Appendix 2)

Key Landscape Characteristics relevant to the study area:

- Extensive flat open grazing marsh as one of the largest continuous wet grazing systems (3500ha) in south east England.
- Unspoilt and distinctive rural character with no large urban intrusions.
- Islands or 'eyes' of slightly higher ground e.g. Northeye and Horse Eye.
- Scattered farms and cottages generally associated with eyes or on the gentle spurs of higher ground which extend into the levels.
- Reed fringed winding river channels in open wetland pasture.
- Many of the main river channels have been straightened and are managed with engineered structures.
- Evidence of many centuries of human intervention to reclaim an area which was once salt marsh.
- An intricate pattern of manmade ditches as historic field enclosures and drainage systems.
- Few roads cross the area and windy lanes connect the scattered settlements.
- Few trees and hedges but scattered willow and thorn scrub, typically wind sculpted nearer the coast.
- More tree cover on the higher ground which is important for containing development, typical species: ash, sycamore, beech and some large conifers.
- Some distinctive historic manor and farm houses e.g. Ottenham Court, Glyndley Manor, Hankham Hall, Preisthaves and Marshfoot.

#### **3.3 Character of the Study Area**

3.3.1 The study area is within the eastern corner of the Pevensey Levels landscape character area. The area of study lies to the north of the A259 trunk road, which crosses the southern part of the levels. The presence of the road has an impact

on the wild and tranquil experience which is enjoyed in the more remote areas of the levels. The original settlement of Northeye was a village to the south of the road on the levels. This disappeared many years ago, but the name has lived on with the development of the prison (The Site) and associated housing. The houses were built by the Home Office to serve as accommodation for prison staff. Other ribbon development has appeared adjacent to the former prison including a handful of houses and a petrol station. Coneyburrow Lane is an historic rural lane and ancient trackway arising from the main A259. The lane has been widened at the southern end to create the access to the housing and the former prison site off Wartling Drive. To the north of the Wartling Drive junction the lane becomes a narrow rural road enclosed by mature oak trees. The lane retains its rural character beyond the access to the The Site and the adjacent housing.

3.3.2 A previous landscape character assessment, which included this area of Bexhill, was produced in 1992 (East Sussex County Council) and formed part of the North Bexhill Strategic Framework, which supported the allocation of 'North East Bexhill' in the Rother Local Plan (2006). It identified 13 landscape character units, which extended from the Barnhorn Levels in the west, eastwards towards Harley Shute Road and the Hastings to London Railway Line (in Hastings Borough). The southern boundary follows the built up edge of Bexhill and extends northwards to the wooded ridge of High Woods, Lunsford Cross and Crowhurst.

3.3.3 The 1992 Study identified that:

*"The site is visually prominent from much of the surrounding area with extensive views across the Barnhorn Levels from the west and north. From a landscape point of view it is felt that the closure of the prison and demolition of associated structures would be of benefit to the visual appearance of the area. It is very unlikely that the Home Office would take this course of action. However, there are opportunities for a new use as an alternative to major development. It would be an ideal site for the provision of recreational facilities".*

3.3.4 The North Bexhill Strategic Framework Assessment 1993 (East Sussex County Council) made the following conclusions about the Northeye site:

*'This development is at present rather intrusive on the flat open valley of the Barnhorn Levels and from settlements on higher ground to the west. The existing prison buildings and high fence with poplar trees are all unsympathetic to the rural landscape.*

*Any proposed development of this site needs to take account of these factors. The removal of the existing prison structures would be a great enhancement to the landscape but careful consideration needs to be given to potential future development.'*

3.3.5 After the closure of the prison in 1992 the site was taken over the following year by the United Arab Emirates as a Technical Training Centre. The Centre closed in 2011 and the site has been disused since that time. The original single storey white residential buildings, which still reside on the site, are arranged down the slope across the western part of the site. There is a taller more recent building (similar in style to a modern agricultural barn) which is located towards the

centre of the site which is also light in colour. Other buildings within the site include the recreation ground changing blocks and some large glasshouses. The intrusive high metal fence remains around the perimeter of the site as does the old brick boiler chimney. The former prison buildings are not in character with the local vernacular architecture and they do detract from the character of this semi-rural landscape. The lack of use is beginning to give the site a sense of dereliction which further detracts from the local character and the neighbouring residential area. The lower part of the site and some of the buildings are on the levels and within Flood Zone 3.

- 3.3.6 The visual impact of the site is somewhat less stark than it was in the early 90s as the boundary vegetation has grown taller and helps to conceal more of the site from the surrounding countryside. The Lombardy poplar trees which enclose the site boundaries were typically used as windbreaks on the urban fringe and are not particularly characteristic of the area. These have become better integrated with other deciduous vegetation and now help to provide an effective vegetated screen for the site. The high fence forms a stark edge to the southern boundary of the former prison site with the neighbouring houses on Wartling Drive. The western boundary between The Site and the neighbouring farmland is more enclosed by tall trees and hedges. There are gaps in this tree belt along the southwestern boundary which allow long views into the utilitarian buildings on the site. The eastern boundary with Coneyburrow Lane is enclosed by tall trees and there are occasional gaps giving views to the tall fence and the chimney.

#### **4.0 Landscape and Visual Assessment**

##### **4.1 Landscape sensitivity assessment**

- 4.1.1 Within the area of study there are 3 broad local character areas based on landscape character and visual characteristics, these are identified on Map 2. The Barnhorn ridge on which the Northeye site is located can be further sub-divided into three distinct areas of differing character. The detailed descriptions of these are provided in the Local Character Assessment sheets in Appendix 4. The landscape and visual sensitivity of these distinct areas is assessed against the 6 criteria identified in Table 1 (Appendix 3).

- 4.1.2 The distinct local character areas identified on Map 2 are as follows:

- i) Character Area A - Hooe and Whydown Slopes
- ii) Character Area B - The Levels
- iii) Character Area C - Barnhorn Ridge which is sub-divided as:
  - (1) C1 - Middle Yard Farm
  - (2) C2 - Northeye
  - (3) C3 – Beeches Farm

## 4.2 Visual sensitivity assessment.

- 4.2.1 The site is located on sloping ground which falls from the Barnhorn ridge in the south north towards the flat area of the levels. The buildings on the site are prominent when viewed from the surrounding higher ground. There are extensive views across the levels towards the Northeye / Barnhorn ridge from the high ground at Hill Farm, around to Hooe and across to Whydown and Gotham. There are views to the site from the many public rights of way which cross the area. Key viewpoints towards the site from these areas are indicated on Map 1. Photographs 1- 5 illustrate the view to the site from these points. More local views into the site are indicated on Map 3 and photographs 6-10.
- 4.2.2 The views into the site change depending where the viewer is standing in the landscape. Generally there are views into the former prison site from the higher ground which wraps around the levels from Barnhorn to Whydown. From Green Lane Viewpoint 1 is through a gap in the hedge and Viewpoint 2 from a public footpath which drops down from the ridge towards the levels. The residential blocks are clearly visible spilling down the slope of the site from these viewpoints. From higher up the ridge at Broad Green Farm to the north of the site there are views into the west of the site, Viewpoint 3. The view to the residential blocks is broken up to a greater extent than from the Green Lane area. The tall double height sports hall building can be seen from this area. The poplar trees around the boundaries of the site help to locate it in the landscape. There are similar views into the site from the footpaths which run across the ridge from Broad Green Farm to Whydown. There are footpaths which drop down off these ridges and cross the valley towards the site. There are glimpsed views from these paths towards the buildings on the site; these views tend to be obscured by the intervening vegetation in the valley bottom. There are closer views into the site from the public footpath which crosses from the A259 to Green Lane, Viewpoints 4 and 5. From Viewpoint 4 the southern part of the site is obscured by a dense tree screen. From Viewpoint 5 the buildings on the site are more visible and particularly the residential blocks and the taller hall building. The high security boundary fence is dominant in close views from Wartling Drive and Coneyburrow Lane, Viewpoints 6 and 10. There is a dense tree belt along the stream valley which obscures views into the site buildings from many closer views, Viewpoints 7, 8 and 9.



#### 4.3 Landscape Value assessment

4.3.1 The value of each of the assessed local character areas has been evaluated in accordance with Table 3: Landscape Value Evaluation Criteria.

#### 4.4 Landscape Capacity Assessment

**Table 6: Landscape Capacity Assessment by character area (cross refer to Appendix 4 and Map 2)**

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Character Sensitivity</b>	<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
<b>A</b>	Medium	Medium/High	High	<b>Low</b>
<b>B</b>	Medium	Medium /High	High	<b>Low</b>
<b>C1</b>	Medium	Medium /High	High	<b>Low</b>
<b>C2</b>	Low	Low	Medium	<b>Medium/High</b>
<b>C3</b>	Medium	Medium	Medium	<b>Medium</b>

#### 5.0 Development Opportunity (Map5)

##### 5.1 Green Infrastructure

5.1.1 The early edition OS maps for the site circa 1897 -1899 (reproduced as Map 4) give an indication of the area before The Site was developed for a prison. The housing was built at a similar time to house the prison workers. Before The Site's development the landscape of the site would have been similar to the farmland which still exists to the west and east. This is characterised by relatively large fields running down the slope to the East Stream and levels which lie to the north. The development of the houses and the prison appear to have regard to the general field pattern and the various elements have been developed within this. On the early maps the area within the Flood Zone 3 is clearly indicated as a marshy area. The stream forms the boundary between the built up part of the site and the open playing field. There was an historic footpath which crossed the site close to the stream through the marshy area onto the levels, which can be seen on Map 4. This was presumably closed with the development of The Site as a prison and diverted around the site as footpath 50a. The footpath to the west of the site was also present in the 1800s.

5.1.2 The redevelopment of the site would provide an opportunity to plan for a high quality development within an appropriate landscape setting. This would enhance the character of this part of the urban fringe of Bexhill and the transition from the town to the open and sensitive levels. The removal of the austere and ugly boundary fence would enhance local views. The existing open areas of The Site do contribute positively to local landscape character and blend in to the wider, sensitive area of the levels. This includes the open space to the east of Wartling Drive and the recreational area/playing fields of the former prison.

- 5.1.3 The open space and associated boundary trees already provide a buffer between the built development on the site and the wider countryside to the north. The existing wooded area to the north of this space could be managed and the planting enhanced to create a buffer to views from the surrounding countryside. If it is considered that there is a risk from future flooding the area which is within Flood Area 3 should be kept free from development. This would also allow for a wider landscape buffer to the countryside on this boundary. This area could provide an opportunity to provide sustainable drainage (SuDs) for the potential development site.
- 5.1.4 A landscape buffer of locally characteristic native tree and shrub planting could be introduced around the western and northern boundaries. This would help to integrate future development with the wider countryside. This boundary currently has a wooded character and to reinforce this would not be out of character with the local area where woodland is interspersed with the open fieldscapes. The Lombardy poplars could be gradually replaced with more characteristic native woodland planting and this would require adequate space for tree planting on the boundaries. The stream valley forms a distinct boundary to the built up part of the site. This should be retained and managed as the boundary to built development on the eastern side of the site area.
- 5.1.5 The open space area of former recreational area/playing fields, which lies to the north-east of the stream, would need to be kept open. Built development would be intrusive in this area and outside the existing area of built development within The Site. Recreational sports pitches may be appropriate in this area, but careful consideration would need to be given to the impact of structures such as goal posts and floodlighting. If lighting were to be required it would need to be for restricted hours and fully cut off to avoid adverse night time impacts. A single storey pavilion incorporating changing rooms may be appropriate to replace the existing building on the eastern side of the stream. The design of this would need to be in harmony with the surrounding area. A light brown or green stained timber clad building with a green roof would be acceptable. The use of white cladding or painted finishes should be avoided. A small area of well-designed and screened parking could also be provided to the east of the stream using the existing bridge access to minimise the impact on existing trees.
- 5.1.6 A hierarchy of Green Infrastructure would be required through the development to ensure that the built form is broken up by vegetation and open spaces. The main access road into the site could be planted with avenue trees to break up the areas of development. Some smaller areas of open space within the development would also help to break up the mass of development.
- 5.1.7 The original public footpath which crossed the site before the development of The Site as a prison could be reinstated to give enhanced access to the countryside and the levels to the north. This would provide an alternative to the poorly used path 59a which is a long walk up Coneyburrow Lane for local people and appears to be presently underused. This would also provide better access to footpath 12b which links Coneyburrow Lane and the site to Little Common.

5.1.8 The redevelopment of this site would provide an opportunity to enhance the local landscape character and views in this part of the rural countryside. A robust GI framework and landscape led masterplan would ensure that proposed development could be successfully integrated into the landscape and provide enhancements to the landscape and visual amenity of the area for existing and new residents.

5.1.9 The GI strategy, as shown on Map 5, would need to be established for The Site and should include:

- Retention of the stream corridor and associated vegetation.
- Retention of the existing sports pitches as open space.
- Enhanced planted buffers to all boundaries of the site.
- A hierarchy of spaces throughout the development to break up the built form.
- Flood Zone 3 area to be retained as a landscape buffer.
- Tree lined avenues for the main access roads.
- The reinstatement of the footpath through the site adjacent to the stream.

## 5.2 Built Development

5.2.1 Ticehurst Avenue runs through the existing housing area and into Principal Close and the area of administrative buildings for the former prison. The residential character of Ticehurst Avenue could be extended into this area. This would provide an opportunity to create a small area of houses of a similar layout, scale and density to the existing estate. This would form a residential extension which would not have an adverse impact on the existing residents. This part of the development is well contained in views from the wider countryside. A terrace of houses could also be provided on the site of the existing car park in Wartling Drive which serves The Site. This would mirror the residential housing on the opposite side of the road; the area is illustrated as Area 1 on Map 5.

5.2.2 The central part of the site, which contains the communal buildings on the site and is currently enclosed by the former prison security fence, could continue to be accessed off Wartling Drive. The sloping nature of the site and the sensitivity of the surrounding views would influence the scale of potential building on this part of the site. Further housing development could be considered acceptable if of lower density to the surrounding Wartling Drive estate and with larger gardens than the existing. A lower density housing development with a variety of roofscapes, including green roofs, could be acceptable on the northern part of the site. Whilst also ensuring adequate green infrastructure is incorporated throughout the area, as outlined above. An enhanced landscape buffer to the countryside would need to be provided as outlined in section 5 above and illustrated on Map 5.

5.2.3 Proposed housing development on the site would need to be of a high quality design and layout. The layout of access roads should be required to follow the contours of the site so that proposed development steps down the slope minimising the need for retaining structures. The materials used for the housing

should be in keeping with the local vernacular using local stock bricks and clay tiles or green roofs as appropriate. White detailing to windows and roof gables should be avoided as these stand out in distant views.

- 5.2.4 As other potential redevelopment alternatives, a low key tourism development with timber chalets or other ecotourism facilities could be considered acceptable; this would need to be limited to the developable areas 1 and 2 marked on Map 5. A development of small scale single storey business units could also be acceptable across both developable areas. In order to integrate with the landscape this option would need to use sustainable materials and ideally stained timber clad buildings with green roofs. A zoned mixed use development could also be considered within the developable areas of the site as long as the GI infrastructure strategy outlined above is established. Employment or mixed use proposals on the site would also need to be limited to the developable areas 1 and 2 marked on Map 5.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1.1 The redevelopment of this site would provide an opportunity to enhance the local landscape character and views. A robust GI framework and landscape led masterplan would ensure that proposed development could be successfully integrated into the landscape and provide enhancements to the landscape and visual amenity of the area for existing and new residents.
- 6.1.2 High quality sensitively designed housing could be acceptable across the brownfield portion of the site (shown as Area's 1 & 2 on Map 5). The southern part of the site, to the west of the existing housing, could support housing of a similar layout, height and density to the existing. This would sit comfortably in the landscape as it would appear as a natural extension to the existing estate and would not detract from the character of the local area. This part of the site is not widely visible from the surrounding countryside and could therefore accommodate the higher density. On the more open exposed north facing slope, on the area to the west of the stream (Area 2 on Map 5), a housing development could be acceptable. It would need to be of a lower density with larger gardens to allow for the incorporation of adequate GI to break up the scale and massing. The housing would need to be limited to 2 storeys as a maximum and ideally have green roofs.
- 6.1.3 A high quality business development could be acceptable as long as the green infrastructure, as suggested above, is incorporated into the layout and design. The buildings would need to be comprised of small units. Smaller units would be suitable on the sloping ground as large sheds would require unacceptable cut and fill and the use of retaining structures. This would conflict with the rural character of the site and surrounding area. The development would need to be limited to a single storey to be acceptable in the wider views from the surrounding countryside.
- 6.1.4 A mixed use development of housing and either business units or ecotourism would provide the opportunity to enhance the existing residential area in a way that would not detract from the amenity of local residents. A mixed use

development would need to be of an appropriate scale to ensure integration with local landscape character and views.

6.1.5 The open space area of former recreational area/playing fields, which lies to the north-east of the stream, would need to be kept open. Built development would be intrusive in this area. Recreational sports pitches may be appropriate, but careful consideration would need to be given to the impact of structures such as goal posts and floodlighting. If lighting were to be required it would need to be for restricted hours and fully cut off to avoid adverse night time impacts. A single storey pavilion incorporating changing rooms may be appropriate to replace the existing building on the eastern side of the stream. The design of this would need to be in harmony with the surrounding area. A light brown or green stained timber clad building with a green roof would be acceptable. The use of white cladding or painted finishes should be avoided. A small area of well-designed and screened parking could also be provided to the east of the stream using the existing bridge access to minimise the impact on existing trees.

6.1.6 The key principles for a development brief and zoning for the site would include:

- High density development in the south west corner (Area 1 on Map 5).
- Lower density development and consideration of green roofs on the north facing slope (Area 2 on Map5)
- No development in the floodplain and this area retained as a landscape buffer to the countryside.
- The former recreation area/playing fields to remain open with the existing buildings demolished.
- Low key recreational parking and vernacular pavilion associated with the playing fields.
- A green infrastructure framework which retains and reinforces the existing boundary trees and hedges.
- Green infrastructure threaded through the development to break up the scale and massing of proposed development.
- A reinstated footpath through the middle of the site following the stream corridor.

## Consultancy Brief – June 2018

# ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT & SITE ALLOCATIONS LOCAL PLAN

## LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF NORTHEYE, BEXHILL

### Purpose of the Assessment

1. Specialist advice is sought on the landscape character and quality, and capacity to redevelop Northeye (Former United Arab Emirates – Technical Training Centre), Wartling Drive, Bexhill, as shown on the attached plan. The purpose of the Assessment is primarily to highlight the key landscape factors guiding development
2. The Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (DaSA) – Options and Preferred Options, which was publically consulted upon between December 2016-February 2017, identified four potential redevelopment options, including:
  - An employment-led redevelopment
  - A residential-led redevelopment
  - A tourism-led redevelopment
  - An institutional-led redevelopment
3. Common to all options was the existing greenfield part of the site is proposed to remain as open space or playing pitch/es. The Council did not put forward a preferred option for this site at that time.
4. The scope of these DaSA options and their pros and cons are summarised in Appendix 2.
5. A focused Landscape Character Assessment should advise on the potential for redevelopment within this area, in landscape terms. This will contribute significantly to an overall planning assessment of development potential on this part brownfield/part greenfield site a little beyond the western extent of Bexhill and inform potential site allocation(s) in the forthcoming Submission version of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (the DaSA).

### Background

6. The Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2014) sets out the overarching development strategy and strategic policies for the District. It covers the period 2011-2028 and may be regarded as “Part 1” of the Council’s Local Plan. It sets targets for the numbers of additional homes and business floorspace over the plan period but does not allocate sites for development.
7. The function of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (the “DaSA”) is to set out development policies and site allocations; it will form “Part 2” of the Local Plan. The Options and Preferred Options version of the DaSA was published for public consultation in December 2016. It covers Bexhill and those villages that are not covered by on-going Neighbourhood Plans. Site allocations proposed in the DaSA,

together with those within Neighbourhood Plans, should meet the development requirements of the Core Strategy.

## **The Site**

8. This large site lies on a north-facing slope extending down to the edge of the Pevensey Levels on the north side of the A259 a little beyond the western extent of Bexhill. Access is provided by Wartling Drive, served off Coneyburrow Lane, a short distance from its junction with the A259.
9. The site is owned by the United Arab Emirates, but its use as a Training Centre ceased some years ago and the site is presently mothballed. The owners advise that there is no intention to bring the site back into training use for its purposes. Hence, consideration should be given to alternative uses.
10. The site is a somewhat exposed countryside location, reflecting the fact that it was originally established as a RAF base in 1944 and then developed as a prison, which existed until 1992 before being taken over by the United Arab Emirates.
11. The total site area is approximately 15ha, with a variety of accommodation, education and operational buildings covering about 9ha. The remainder is open, with the northern part previously providing recreation fields for the Centre.
12. Alongside the approach to the site is the small residential estate off Wartling Drive. The last six houses on Wartling Drive are still part of the principal site, others having since been sold and now privately occupied. Otherwise, the setting is very rural in character.

## **Development and Site Allocations Local Plan**

13. Due to the redundant nature of this site, the Council sought to proactively plan for its redevelopment through its Local Plan. The countryside setting of the site, allied to its fairly self-contained nature, gave rise to a number of possible future uses which were consulted upon through the Council's Options and Preferred Options consultations of the DaSA. The scope of these options are summarised in Appendix 2.
14. The DaSA highlighted that this is a very sensitive site, most notably due to its position adjacent to an internationally-designated ecological site (the Pevensey Levels), its largely rural setting and associated visual exposure, as well as being somewhat isolated from the main built-up area of Bexhill. New development in such a situation would normally be resisted, but given the brownfield nature of a large part of the site, redevelopment of that area (excluding land that falls in Flood Zone 3) should be considered.
15. Common to all options is the proposal that the essentially undeveloped area of the site north of the stream course should remain open and not be built upon. In particular, this land offers an opportunity to provide additional playing fields, the need for which is identified in the recent Playing Pitch Strategy for Rother and Hastings. If recreational demand does not materialise, then the northern half of the site could return to an agricultural (or possibly low-intensity equestrian) use.
16. Also, in all cases, any development would need to be sympathetic to its sensitive location, both in terms of its impact on the Levels and in reducing the existing visual

impact of existing buildings which are seen in the context of fields surrounding the site, particularly when viewing them from the west and the north.

17. In terms of the comments received to the DaSA consultation, the majority of representations supported the redevelopment of the site, with a slight preference for residential development on the site over the other shortlisted options, although there were some comments which supported employment use on the site. The current landowners are keen to maximise land value and it can be assumed that they would support redevelopment of the site for residential.

### **Existing Landscape Assessments**

18. A previous landscape character assessment<sup>1</sup> which included this area of Bexhill was produced in 1992 (East Sussex County Council) and formed part of the North Bexhill Strategic Framework, which supported the allocation of 'North East Bexhill' in the Rother Local Plan (2006). It identified 13 landscape character units, which extended from the Barnhorn Levels in the west, eastwards towards Harley Shute Road and the Hastings to London Railway Line (in Hastings Borough). The southern boundary follows the built up edge of Bexhill and extends northwards to the wooded ridge of High Woods, Lunsford Cross and Crowhurst.

19. The Study identified that:

*"The site is visually prominent from much of the surrounding area with extensive views across the Barnhorn Levels from the west and north. From a landscape point of view it is felt that the closure of the prison and demolition of associated structures would be of benefit to the visual appearance of the area. It is very unlikely that the Home Office would take this course of action. However, there are opportunities for a new use as an alternative to major development. It would be an ideal site for the provision of recreational facilities".*

20. It is expected that the site-specific Landscape Assessment for Northeye now requested will update the existing landscape character study and look at the identified land area in a greater level of detail than the previous work.

### **Scope and Methodology**

21. The Assessment should be carried out in a rigorous manner, utilising a methodical approach in order to provide a comprehensive and consistent evidence base, in accordance with latest best practice guidance.
22. Landscape advice is sought on the ability of the site to accommodate residential development. The DaSA, although did not specify a preferred option, identified potential capacity for circa 115 residential dwellings on the brownfield part of the site, with the remaining undeveloped part of the site for a playing pitch/open space. The landscape assessment should not necessarily be limited to considering the capacity of the site to accommodate a development of this scale, or treat the DaSA development area as a given. Rather, the study should objectively identify the landscape capacity for change across the site as a whole and advise on the nature of uses consistent with that capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> North Bexhill Strategic Framework – Background Paper – Land Scape Study -



23. To the extent that there are assessed to be discrete “landscape units” within the site, these should be identified and the landscape capacity of each unit assessed, as appropriate. The methodology should utilise existing information as much as possible, but will also require a survey of the Study Area. The assessment should:
- a) indicate the key defining characteristics, including but not limited to, - landform, topography, flood risk, features, condition, views, boundaries
  - b) identify the key public vantage points, both within and outside the district, from which the site can be seen.
  - c) assess the landscape capacity, quality and key sensitivities, including contribution to the character and setting of locality, having regard to the adjoining Pevensy Levels, as appropriate.
  - d) identify opportunities for the potential for development, along with landscape conservation, mitigation or enhancement. Specific reference should also be made to the capacity to accept change with regard to existing areas of built development and the existing recreational areas within the site, including any potential adverse impact of floodlighting in the locality. Advice is also sought on any design parameters that could be used to lessen any potential impacts identified, such as but not limited to the height, scale, massing and density of built form.
  - e) where appropriate, identify opportunities for both effective mitigation of landscape impacts and the potential to bring about landscape enhancements, that could be realised in-conjunction with any potential development. This may include identifying screening measures; the potential for new woodland areas, for example
  - f) conclude on the landscape capacity for development

## **Output**

24. One electronic copy of the report that fulfils the requirements of the Brief is required. No paper copies are required.
25. The report should include brief introductory sections explaining the methodology and context/use of background material. The report should also be suitably illustrated and include clear OS-based maps of the site. The maps should show landscape characteristics, potential areas of high/low sensitivity to change (and hence potential development areas), areas for landscape management and improvement, whilst also identifying potential important existing, and potential new screening measures. The maps should also be provided electronically in a GIS format that is compatible with the Council’s mapping system (which is GGP). The District Council does have the facility to produce Maps in the correct format and if it is proposed to use this facility this should be noted in the fee proposal.

## **Programme**

26. The project should be carried out as soon as possible, with a draft report to be produced by 20<sup>th</sup> July 2018, followed up with a meeting during the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 to discuss the draft report. A final report should be submitted to the Council by 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 at the latest. Key stages/dates for the work will be agreed between the consultant and the Council.

27. The completed report, data collected and analysis undertaken as part of the study will be the property of Rother District Council.

### **Submission**

28. A submission is invited for the above work. This should be received by 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 by letter or email setting out:
- A fixed fee for the work as set out in this brief
  - The name(s), qualifications and experience of the person(s) undertaking the work
  - Proposed methodology, programme of work and time allocated
29. Allowance should be made for a meeting to discuss the draft Report. The fixed fee will be inclusive of travel, subsistence and other overheads but exclusive of VAT.
30. It may be necessary for the Council to call upon the consultant to defend the assessment and its methodology at public examination. An hourly rate should be quoted for such services.

### **Working arrangements**

31. The work will be overseen by:
- Nichola Watters  
Principal Planning Officer – Team Leader  
Rother District Council  
Town Hall  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
East Sussex  
TN39 3JX
- Telephone: (01424) 787637  
Email: [nichola.watters@rother.gov.uk](mailto:nichola.watters@rother.gov.uk)
32. It is envisaged that much of the field work can be undertaken from publicly accessible land. In the unlikely event that the consultant needs to gain access to private land, the Council will make the necessary arrangements to gain access.
33. The Consultant shall not subcontract the works or part of the works without prior written approval from the Contract Administrator.
34. The Consultant shall comply with all relevant statutory obligations, Health and Safety legislation and codes of conduct. Failure to do so will normally result in immediate termination of the contract.
35. The Consultant should acknowledge that the Council is the subject of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) and will be expected to pass any requests for information to the Council immediately they are received. Under no circumstances should the contractor respond directly to a request for Information unless expressly authorised to do so by the Council.
36. The Consultant shall maintain at his own cost a comprehensive or specific policy of insurance to cover professional indemnity and public liability.

37. In the unlikely event of intended termination of the contract, any notices of termination shall be in writing.

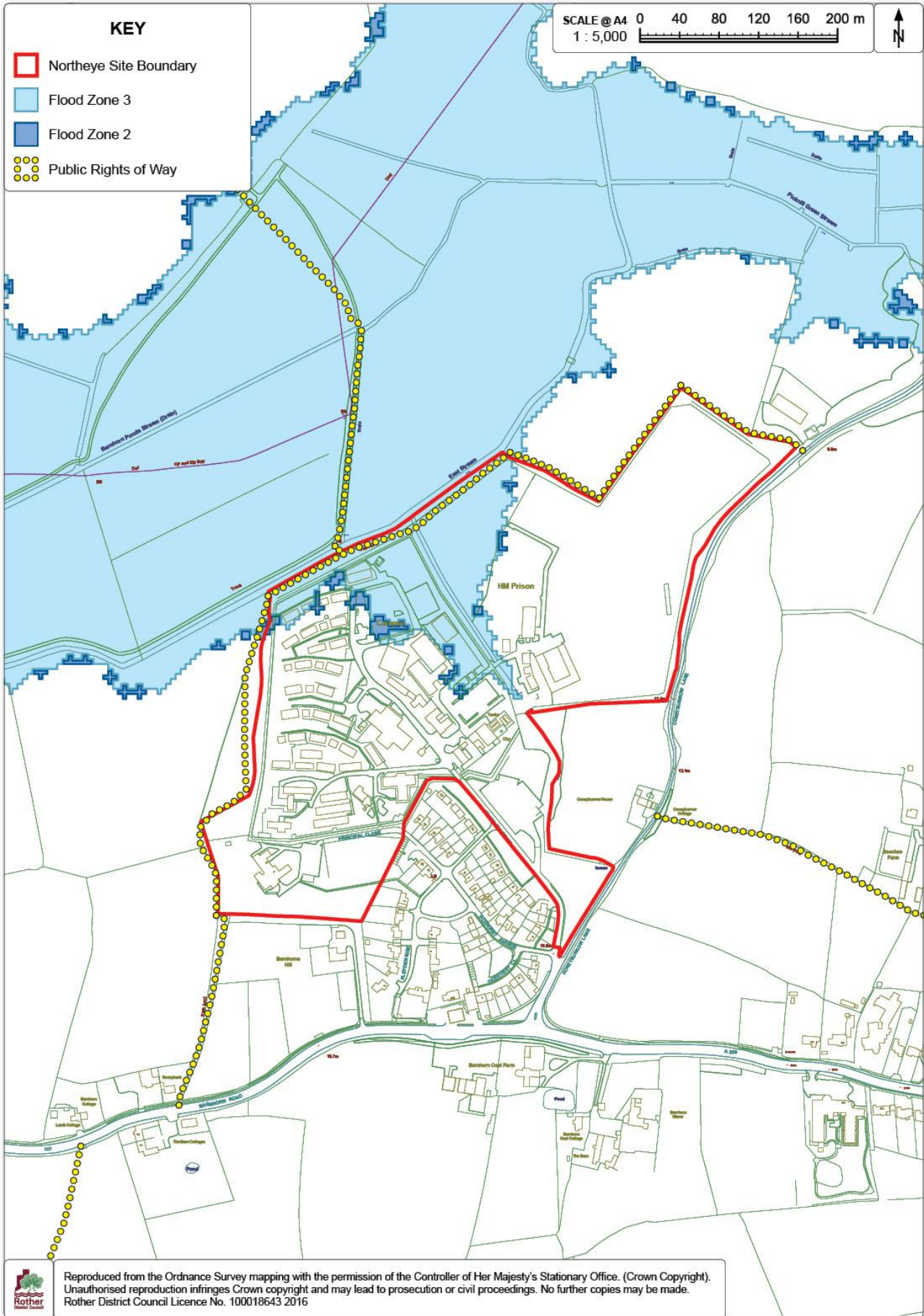
Termination by Employer: If the Consultant without reasonable cause makes default by failing to proceed diligently and in accordance with the agreed timetable with the work required, the Project Manager may give notice to the Consultant which specifies the default and requires it to be ended. If the default is not ended within 7 days of the receipt of the notice, the Employer may by further notice to the Consultant determine the employment of the Consultant under this Agreement.

Termination by Consultant: If the Employer makes default by failing to pay the due amount by the final date, interferes with the carrying out of the works or fails to comply with the requirements of any relevant Health and Safety regulations, then the Consultant may give notice to the Employer specifying the default. If the default is not ended in 7 days the Consultant may by further notice to the Employer, determine the employment of the Consultant under this Agreement.

Upon termination of the employment of the Consultant, they shall prepare an account setting out the value of work properly carried out and the costs of withdrawing from the study. Work carried out up until the termination shall be the property of Rother District Council and shall be handed over to the Council.

June 2018

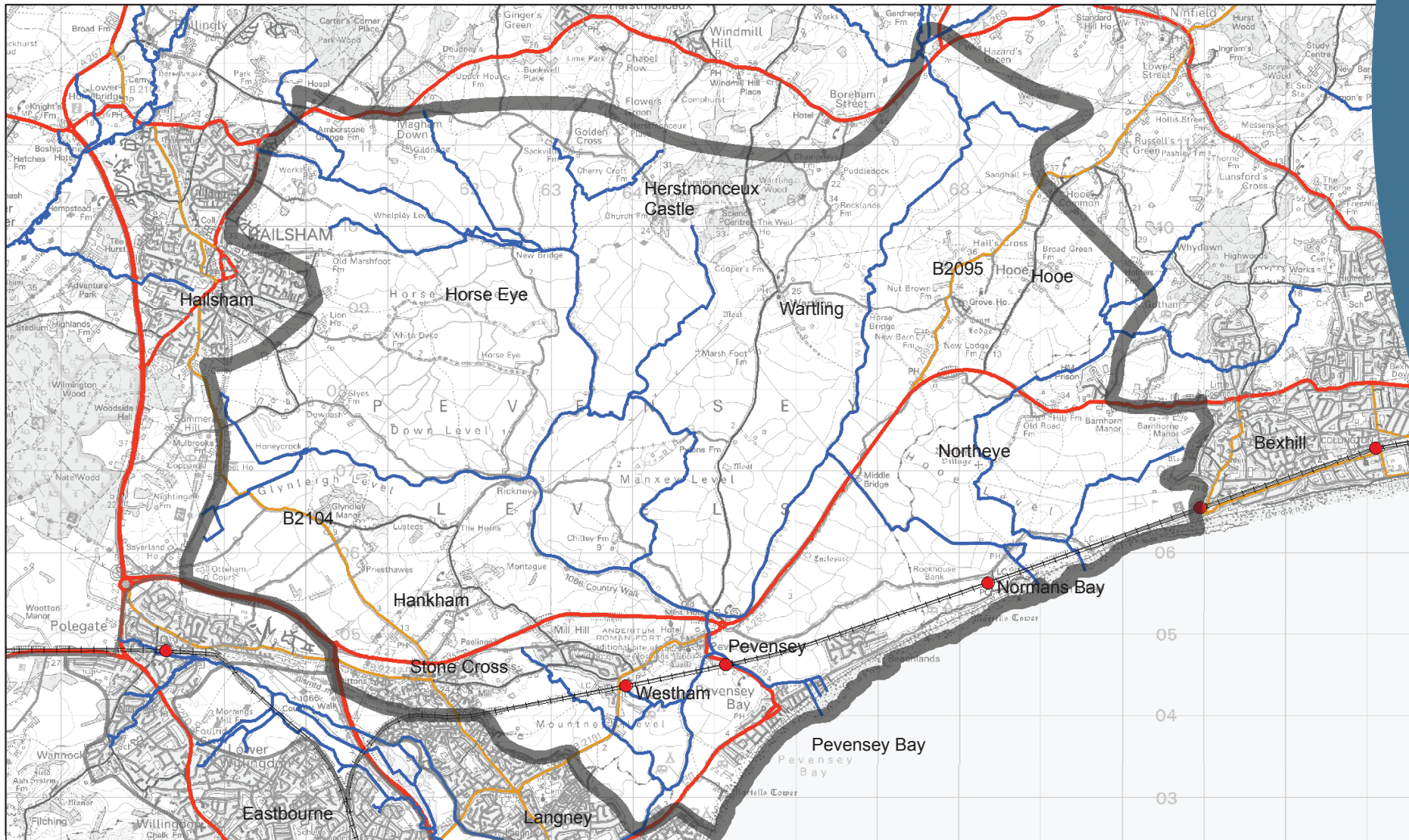
# APPENDIX 1 - Map identifying site for assessment.



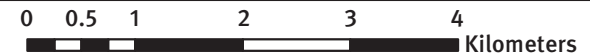
APPENDIX 2 - Extract from DaSA – Options and Preferred Options – December 2016 – see separate document

# Pevensey Levels

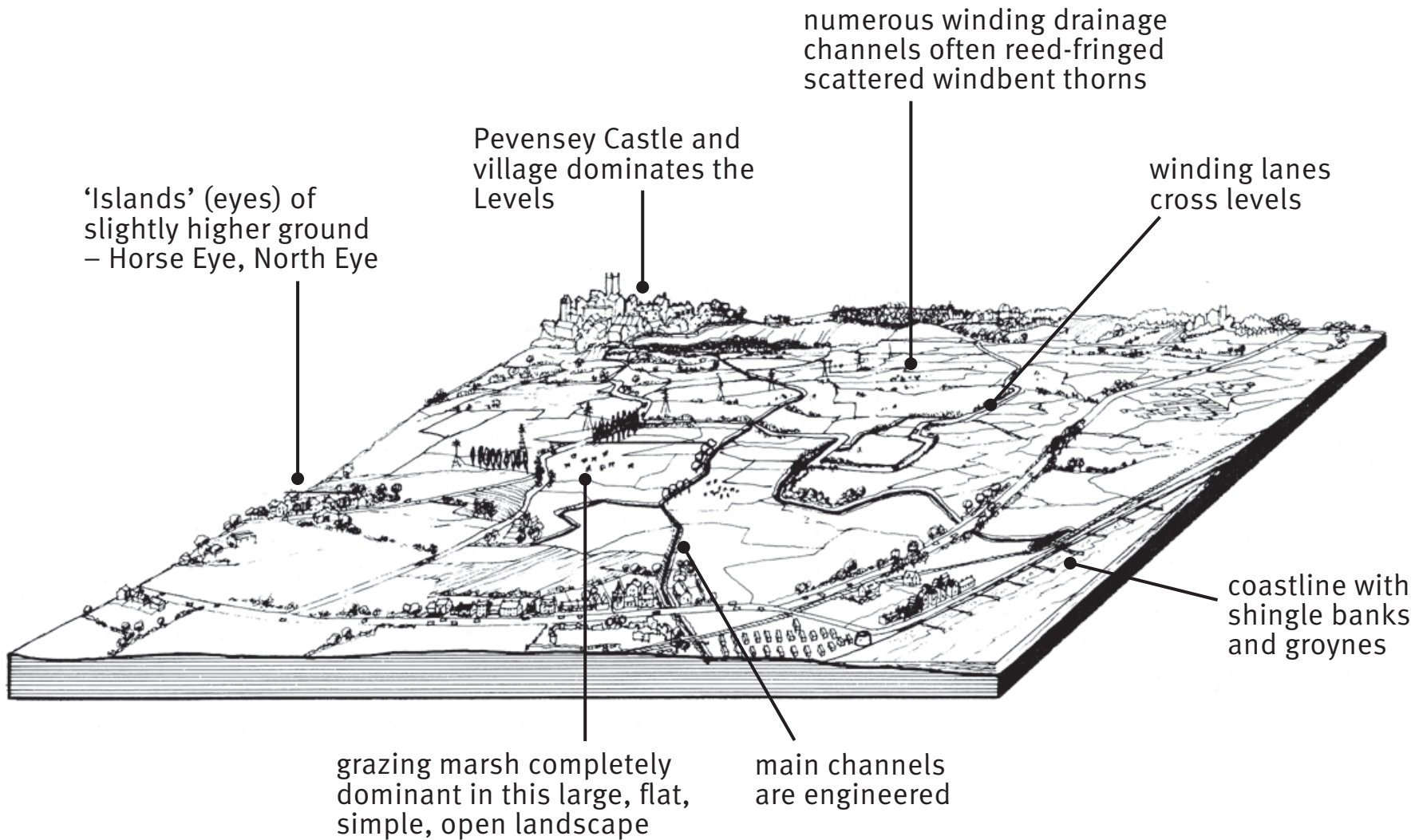
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25 Pevensey Levels Landscape Character Area



# Pevensey Levels



# Pevensey Levels

## Contents

- A. Landscape Description
- B. Landscape Evaluation
- C. Vision and Strategy
- D. Guidelines for Managing Change

### A Landscape Description

#### Key Landscape Characteristics

- Extensive flat open grazing marsh as one of the largest continuous wet grazing systems (3500ha) in south east England.
- Unspoilt and distinctive rural character with no large urban intrusions.
- A sense of remoteness and tranquillity in the heart of the area with big skies and cries of wetland birds.
- Islands or 'eyes' of slightly higher ground e.g. Northeye and Horse Eye.
- Scattered farms and cottages generally associated with eyes or on the gentle spurs of higher ground which extend into the levels.
- Reed fringed winding river channels in open wetland pasture.
- Many of the main river channels have been straightened and are managed with engineered structures.
- Evidence of many centuries of human intervention to reclaim an area which was once salt marsh.
- An intricate pattern of manmade ditches as historic field enclosures and drainage systems.
- Few roads cross the area and windy lanes connect the scattered settlements.
- East to west byways connect the grazing marshes to the historic market town of Hailsham.
- Few trees and hedges but scattered willow and thorn scrub, typically wind sculpted nearer the coast.
- More tree cover on the higher ground which is important for containing development, typical species: ash, sycamore, beech and some large conifers.
- The importance of the area as a habitat is reflected in the designations of SSSI and Ramsar site across much of the area and 182ha are a National Nature Reserve.
- The historic settlement of Pevensey and the impressive medieval castle dominate the landscape to the south.
- Herstmonceux castle and church sit on a spur overlooking the north of the area.
- The Registered parkland and gardens at Herstmonceux Castle.
- Wartling village and church on a prominent spur overlooking the levels.
- An extensive shingle beach and coastline vulnerable to erosion and subject to intervention such as redistribution of the shingle and sea defence groynes.
- Some distinctive historic manor and farm houses e.g. Ottenham Court, Glyndley Manor, Hankham Hall, Preisthawes and Marshfoot.
- Seaside settlement of variable quality, but with distinctive character, which has developed from holiday homes and caravans along the coast from Pevensey to Normans Bay.



# Pevensey Levels

- War time artefacts and in particular pill boxes and tank traps are scattered across the area.
- The busy A259 trunk road crosses the southern part of the area separating the coastal marshes from the inland levels. Other B roads link the A259 with settlements to the north.
- The south coast railway runs across the southern part of the area.

## Cultural Associations

Longleys organic farm was featured in the internationally renowned film *The Moo Man*.

The area was also renowned for smugglers as the remote coast and hinterland allowed them to come ashore unnoticed.

Pevensey and the surrounding area have featured in or been the inspiration for novels by Rudyard Kipling, Salman Rushdie, George Gissing, Peter Cheney and C.S. Lewis.

# Pevensey Levels

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**Table 1 Key positive Landscape Attributes**

- Extensive flat open grazing marsh as one of the largest wet grazing systems (3500ha) in south east England.
- A sense of remoteness and tranquillity in the heart of the area with big skies and cries of wetland birds.
- Islands or 'eyes' of slightly higher ground e.g. Northeye and Horse Eye.
- Historic farms and cottages generally associated with eyes or on the gentle spurs of higher ground which extend into the levels.
- Reed fringed winding river channels in open wetland pasture.
- An intricate pattern of manmade ditches as historic field enclosures and drainage systems.
- Few roads cross the area and windy lanes connect the scattered settlements.
- East to west byways connect the grazing marshes to the historic market town of Hailsham.
- The historic settlement of Pevensey and the impressive medieval castle dominate the landscape to the south.
- Herstmonceux Castle and church sit on a spur overlooking the north of the area.
- The Registered parkland and gardens at Herstmonceux Castle
- Wartling village and church sit on a prominent spur overlooking the levels.
- An extensive shingle beach and coastline vulnerable to erosion and subject to intervention such as redistribution of the shingle and sea defence groynes.
- War time artefacts and in particular pill boxes and tank traps are scattered across the area with Napoleonic Martello towers on the coast.

# Pevensey Levels

## B Landscape Evaluation

### Table 2 Current Condition

This is largely unspoilt and pleasant rural landscape with few intrusive features and areas of relative remoteness. The Pevensey Levels area is generally a well managed pastoral landscape. The landscape is largely intact with many historic features which provide a sense of place and local distinctiveness. The nationally important wildlife designations over much of the area have improved the management of the levels and water bodies. The scattered hamlets and villages have a strong sense of place and there are few intrusive suburbanising elements to detract from this. The coastal areas have a scatter of typical holiday development but these areas are generally well managed and have a seaside character of their own.

The A259 is the busiest road in the area but does not detract from the more remote parts of the levels or the coast. The rural lanes serving the coast can be congested and busy at the height of summer. The coastal habitats on the shingle are in good condition where not disturbed by coastal defence works.

### Forces for Change impacting on positive Landscape Attributes

#### Past / Current forces for change

- Expansion of the surrounding urban areas of Hailsham and Stone Cross.
- Creeping suburbanisation and cumulative changes in the rural landscape, roads and villages which are not in sympathy with local distinctiveness or vernacular architecture.
- The spread of plot land and holiday chalet development along the coast.
- Expansion of caravan and mobile home parks, especially on the coast.
- Water quality in the channels and ditches and Nitrite Vulnerable Zone in the west of the area.
- Loss of vegetation along rivers and dykes due to maintenance regimes, agricultural intensification and drainage works.
- Changes in the types and frequency of grazing animals in the countryside impacts on character as they are a characteristic feature. Lack of grazing can give an unmanaged appearance to the landscape and reduce the biodiversity value.
- Farm Environment Plans, much of the land is under Higher Level Stewardship Agreements and is farmed organically.
- A Nitrate Vulnerable Zone covers much of the area and a Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative extends across the area.
- Intrusive modern farm buildings.

# Pevensey Levels

- Positive management of habitats and water quality and levels in ditches due to the internationally important wildlife interests.
- Increasing traffic on the A259 and rat running on rural lanes.
- Power lines crossing the open landscape.
- The continuing reinforcement of man made coastal defences to protect property along the coast.
- Invasive species of plants and animals in water courses, such as New Zealand Pigmy Weed (*Crassula helmsii*), Parrots Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*), Mink and European Marsh Frog (*Pelophylax ridibundus*). All of these impact on the native flora and fauna which are characteristic of the area.
- Pressure for locating renewable energy facilities for solar, wind and bio energy.
- Pests and diseases of trees which could impact significantly on the mature tree stock. E.g. phytophthora of alder and Ash dieback.
- Improving water quality in the Waller's Haven catchment and in the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone which extends into the North West corner of the area.
- Rising sea levels increasing the demand to build defences to protect coastal properties.

## Future Forces for Change

- Expansion of Polegate, Stone Cross and Hailsham encroaching into the edges of the character area, urban edges are highly visible from the open landscapes.
- Increasing traffic on rural lanes and in villages impacting on tranquillity and on the rural character where passing vehicles cause erosion to banks and verges.
- Demands for traffic calming and road improvements which could introduce increasing urban clutter to rural roads, villages and lanes.
- Continued agricultural change due to changing markets, economic pressures and response to climate change.
- The spread of small agricultural holdings, hobby farming, paddocks and allotments for local food production.

# Pevensey Levels

**Table 3 Potential Impacts of Climate Change**

- Potential changes in woodland / tree species composition and accelerated growth of species such as birch,
- Changes in ground flora which produce distinctive seasonal displays.
- Increased magnitude of storm events changing the character of the coastal areas.
- Increased prevalence of pests and diseases due to warmer weather e.g. Phytophthora of Alder.
- Changes in precipitation and temperatures will change the types of crops that farmers grow.
- Potential impact on the viability of grazing sheep, dairy and beef.
- Increased temperatures and a decline in precipitation levels may dry out wetland habitats and ponds and alter stream flows.

# Pevensey Levels

## C Vision and Strategy

**Table 4 Vision  
(as an update of the County Landscape Assessment 2009)**

A tranquil landscape of predominantly green meadow pasture. A sense of wildness and remoteness in the more isolated areas. An open landscape with wide uninterrupted views. The setting of local landscape features conserved and enhanced including historic buildings and their settings. Historic designed landscapes conserved. Conserved and enhanced reed beds, channels and ditches supporting rich flora and fauna.

As noted in the current Landscape Character Guidance – A Landscape Strategy identifies “*what change if any is desirable for any landscape character area as a whole?*”

### **Landscape change and adaptation to meet the strategy requires:**

1. Planning for the enhancement of the Biodiversity Opportunity Area in the Pevensey Levels and improving habitat continuity.
2. Protect and manage existing habitats and plan for restoration of ditches and riverside vegetation to restore habitat linkages and continuity.
3. Plan for the creation of multifunctional green infrastructure (GI) on the eastern fringes of Hailsham and Stone Cross as a buffer to the open levels from the expanding built up areas.
4. Consider the potential to plan for recreational access in this character area identifying areas where public access can be encouraged whilst protecting other areas where wildlife conservation is the priority.
5. Ensure that the expansion of settlements of Hailsham, Polegate and Stone Cross does not encroach on the visual quality or character of the levels.
6. Integrate proposed and existing development into the landscape through planting of tree features and woodland to define the village boundaries with the countryside.
7. Ensure that the design and layout of new developments respect the character and form of the landscape and existing settlements.
8. Control the spread of suburbanisation by minimising clutter of signage and other urban features in lanes and villages.
9. Conserve the setting of historic buildings and landscape features.
10. Consider appropriate species for new plantings to maintain landscape character and biodiversity but also adaptation to climate change influences.

# Pevensey Levels

## D Guidelines for Managing Change

### Development considerations for housing and other development

The main pressures for development in this character area will be the expansion of the surrounding settlements of Hailsham, Polegate and Stone Cross. There will be some demand to accommodate housing for the rural populations in the smaller rural settlements. The coastal areas are vulnerable to rising sea levels and coastal flooding leading to demands for intrusive coastal defence developments. The area is under pressure as a potential area for sustainable energy schemes such as wind farm and solar array developments. Any new development should respect the key positive attributes in the landscape outlined in Table 1 above. Proposed development should consider opportunities for proactively meeting the Landscape Change Strategy aims for this Landscape Character Area as set out in 1-10 above.

# Pevensey Levels

Table 5

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
<p><b>Countryside and Farmland</b> Pressure for farm diversification and development of hobby farms, solar arrays, wind farms, waste recycling operations etc.</p> <p>Expansion of caravan sites on the coast and elsewhere.</p> <p>Land falling out of positive management and dereliction of farm buildings.</p> <p>Loss of traditional pasture and wetland meadows.</p> <p>Clearance of natural vegetation from drainage channels and ditches.</p> <p>Low water levels and poor water quality in some drains and streams.</p> <p>Deterioration of by ways and lanes due to erosion of un-surfaced routes by horses, bikes and 4 wheel drives.</p> <p>Damage to verges on narrow country lanes caused by increasing size of farm vehicles and passing traffic.</p> <p>Flooding of farmland and properties affecting the viability of farms.</p> <p>Overstocking and arable production on some soils can result in soil erosion and reduce soil quality.</p>	<p><b>Countryside and Farmland</b> Encourage farm conservation schemes to conserve the landscape structure of wetland, ditches and streams on the levels. Conserve hedges, trees and small woods on the higher ground. Maintain the mixed farmed character of the area. Protect and manage historic field patterns and conserve boundary features.</p> <p>Maintain water levels in drains and ditches.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance byways and rural lanes. Use tree and woodland planting to screen intrusive farm buildings and caravan sites.</p> <p>Enhance the biodiversity value of wet meadows, drainage and stream channels.</p> <p>Extend organic and catchment sensitive farming initiatives.</p> <p>Plan for and manage changes which may occur in the landscape due to changes in farm management brought about by economic influences and climate change.</p> <p>Address existing flooding issues of farmland and properties through flood management and by identifying areas which can provide flood alleviation.</p> <p>Reduce the risk and incidence of soil erosion by encouraging the restoration of arable land to pasture.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning services</b> Water availability Food production</p> <p><b>Regulating services</b> (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation)</p> <p>Water quality and protected aquifers.</p> <p>Regulating water flow and preventing flooding</p> <p>Soil conservation and erosion control</p> <p>Habitat and species resilience to climate change</p> <p>Carbon sequestration. Areas of peat in the river valleys, hedges, trees, reed beds and grassland regulate air quality by absorbing and retaining CO<sub>2</sub>.</p>



# Pevensey Levels

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
	<p>Apply best land management practices to prevent soil and fertiliser run off, thereby protecting surface and ground water.</p>	<p><b>Cultural Services</b>            Sense of Place and local distinctiveness.            Source of Inspiration            Sense of History            Tranquillity            Biodiversity</p>
<p><b>Trees and Woodland</b>            Woods and tree belts are not in positive management.            Traditional management has stopped as it is not commercially viable e.g. pollarding of stream side willows.            Tree diseases            A Trees and Woodland Grant Scheme covers Wartling Wood            Invasive species competing with natives e.g. Spanish Bluebell, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed.</p>	<p><b>Woodland</b>            Actively manage trees and woodland through coppicing, pollarding of willows and replanting to create a diverse age structure.            Plant new small woods, wet woodland and tree belts to strengthen the landscape character and where this is appropriate habitat creation.            Consider the need to adapt to changes enforced by climate change, such as specific tree diseases and possible adaptation in species selection.            Plant trees and woodland to contain existing and new built development.            Encourage planting of trees along streams and ditches where appropriate to habitat.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning</b>            Fuel (woodfuel for local communities from woodland management)</p> <p><b>Regulating</b>            Carbon sequestration, woodland absorbs and holds CO<sub>2</sub>.            Habitat and species resilience to climate change</p> <p><b>Cultural</b>            Tranquillity            Sense of Place and local distinctiveness            Cultural heritage (traditional woodland management)            Biodiversity</p>

# Pevensey Levels

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
<p><b>Pevensey Levels</b></p> <p>Deterioration and loss of habitats</p> <p>Loss of river and streamside vegetation.</p> <p>Deterioration of water quality in streams, ditches and ponds</p> <p>Financial and viable farming constraints affecting the continued management of wet meadows reducing the biodiversity value.</p> <p>Improvements to Grassland and meadows reducing species richness.</p> <p>Loss of wetland meadows to arable farming.</p> <p>Invasive species of plants and animals which compete with native flora and fauna.</p>	<p><b>Other key Habitats</b></p> <p>Encourage management of river and stream channels, especially conservation of riverside trees and vegetation.</p> <p>Extend organic and catchment sensitive farming initiatives.</p> <p>Conservation and re-creation of wet meadow/pasture habitats.</p> <p>Farm stewardship schemes to maximise biodiversity.</p> <p>Opportunities to maximise reed bed creation.</p> <p>Encourage measures to improve water quality.</p> <p>Continue to control the spread and prevent introduction of invasive species of animals and plants.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning</b></p> <p>Nature's larder of free berries and herbs.</p> <p>Conservation of insect pollinators for pollination of crops.</p> <p><b>Regulating</b></p> <p>Habitat and species resilience to climate change</p> <p><b>Cultural</b></p> <p>Appreciation of nature</p> <p>Educational value</p> <p>Biodiversity</p>

# Pevensey Levels

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
<p><b>Other Key Habitats</b> Herstmonceux Parkland SSSI</p> <p>Coastal vegetated shingle.</p> <p>Loss and deterioration of species rich shingle habitats due to coastal erosion works and recreational pressure.</p>	<p>Encourage land management practices through the existing stewardship agreements to maximise biodiversity.</p> <p>Protect the remaining shingle habitats and seek opportunities to create new ones.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning</b> Nature's larder of free berries and herbs.</p> <p>Conservation of insect pollinators for pollination of crops.</p> <p><b>Regulating</b> Habitat and species resilience to climate change</p> <p><b>Cultural</b> Appreciation of nature</p> <p>Educational value</p> <p>Biodiversity</p>

# Pevensey Levels

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
<p><b>Recreation, Green Infrastructure (GI) and ANGS (glossary)</b>            Pressure on bridleways and byways as multi use, including cycling and 4 wheel drives increasing erosion.            Pressure on sensitive wetland habitats            Lack of funding to manage and enhance GI.            Need for better recreational linkages and improved sustainable transport corridors.            Need for improved access to natural green space for all users both close to homes and in the wider countryside.            Gentrification            Loss of tranquillity due to more cars and access.</p>	<p><b>Recreation, Green Infrastructure and ANGS</b>            Where appropriate develop Green Infrastructure Strategies based on a county wide GI mapping. Plan for and manage recreational pressure on the countryside which could be affected by the increase in population in surrounding towns (Hailsham, Polegate and Stone Cross).            Maximise opportunities for access away from sensitive habitats.            Maximise opportunities provided by the coast for access and recreation.            Consider opportunities to create new green corridors and improve existing as safe ideally motorised traffic free recreational routes.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning</b>            Protected farmland.</p> <p><b>Regulating</b>            Habitat and species resilience to climate change            Water quality and protected aquifers.            Regulating water flow and preventing flooding            Carbon sequestration</p> <p><b>Cultural</b>            Recreation            Heritage assets and cultural heritage            Inspirational            Tranquility            Biodiversity</p>
<p><b>Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings</b>            Deterioration of the character and quality of the landscape and loss of local distinctiveness.            Can detract from historic field pattern where fences replace hedges.            Can cause soil erosion.</p>	<p><b>Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings</b>            Enhance the condition of areas of horsiculture and small holdings through the restoration of an intact, well managed hedgerow and ditch network and retaining a diverse grass sward by preventing overgrazing.            Encourage local food production as part of multifunctional GI network.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning</b>            Grazing</p> <p><b>Regulating</b>            Habitat and species resilience to climate change</p> <p><b>Cultural</b>            Recreation            Heritage assets            Sense of Place and local distinctiveness</p>

# Pevensey Levels

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
<p><b>The character of the villages</b></p> <p>Gentrification</p> <p>Urbanisation</p> <p>Development pressures</p> <p>Gradual loss and deterioration of Heritage features.</p> <p>Fast traffic on rural lanes</p>	<p>Protect and Enhance the character of the villages</p> <p>Encourage the production of Neighbourhood plans which incorporate village design guides.</p> <p>Plan for new development in the villages to ensure it is designed to a high standard to reflect local character and sense of place.</p> <p>Establish defined development edges to villages with new tree planting.</p> <p>Prepare village design guides and tree conservation plans.</p> <p>Consider traffic management on rural lanes.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning</b></p> <p>Local amenities and facilities.</p> <p><b>Regulating</b></p> <p>Use of sustainable materials</p> <p>Habitat and species resilience to climate change</p> <p>Water quality and protected aquifers.</p> <p>Regulating water flow and preventing flooding</p> <p><b>Cultural</b></p> <p>Sense of Place and local distinctiveness</p> <p>Heritage assets</p>
<p><b>Flood management and SUDS schemes?</b></p> <p>Coastal flooding.</p> <p>Flash floods and run off.</p> <p>Flooding of properties in low lying areas by river and ground water.</p>	<p>Flood management and SUDS schemes?</p> <p>Plan for flood management by conserving and enhancing the flood plains and managing water levels in ditches and drains.</p> <p>Resist further development in areas at risk of coastal flooding.</p> <p>Encourage the design of sensitive flood defence schemes which conserve and enhance the landscape and habitats</p> <p>Conserve and enhance existing man made and natural drainage features.</p> <p>Maximise opportunities for the creation of SUDs schemes which contribute to local amenity and habitat creation.</p>	<p><b>Provisioning</b></p> <p>Water conservation</p> <p><b>Regulating</b></p> <p>Flood control</p> <p>Protection of aquifers</p> <p><b>Cultural</b></p> <p>Sense of Place and local distinctiveness</p> <p>Amenity and recreation</p> <p>Biodiversity</p>

# Pevensey Levels

## Glossary

(also refer to the full version in the County Landscape Assessment).

**ANGS:** Accessible Natural Green Space Natural England - Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)

**Assart:** Field created from the clearance of woodland

**Clunch Barn:** constructed of a building material composed of hardened clay or chalk marl.  
Ecosystem Services: The services provided by nature which support living systems and can be evaluated.

**Enclosure:** The separation of land from the common by fence or private use.

**GI or Green Infrastructure:** Multifunctional green areas which provide areas for recreation, wildlife, water supply catchment, flood relief, food or timber production.

**Local Nature Reserve:** Local Nature Reserve (or LNR) is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, by principal local authorities.

**Ramsar** sites are wetlands of international importance for biodiversity designated under the Ramsar Convention.  
SNCI or Local Site: a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

**SSSI:** A national designation for Site of Special Scientific Interest, these may be of biodiversity or geological significance or both.

**APPENDIX 3**

**Table 1 : Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria**

**Physical character**

This considers the local topography, the scale and complexity of landform, landscape pattern, and presence of natural features that contribute to landscape character with reference to the County Landscape Assessment.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

The physical landscape is simple with few distinctive features which contribute to the intrinsic character of an area.

The physical landscape has some natural or semi-natural features that contribute to, but are not key to the identification of local character, elements of commonplace everyday value.

The physical landscape makes a strong contribution to local landscape character. E.g. a distinctive landform, intact, natural landscape with mature hedgerows, trees and other features such as ponds or streams.

**Settlement setting, form and edge**

The extent to which the site area relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement, and the character of the settlement edge, including the role of key landscape elements which define the edge. The degree to which potential development could be designed to be in keeping with the edge and appear to be a natural extension or not.

Lower sensitivity				Higher sensitivity
<p>The landscape is strongly associated with an existing settlement. Where an extension would be unlikely to be an intrusion into the countryside. The existing settlement edge could easily be improved by further development.</p>		<p>Development may be perceived as settlement advancement into the countryside, but would not represent a complete diversion from settlement form. It would not breach a distinctive boundary feature.</p>		<p>Development would have a poor relationship with existing settlement form. A boundary feature would be breached and development would extend into an area with a distinctly different and more rural landscape .e .g. breaking a ridge crest or skyline, extending onto steep slopes or valley sides.</p>



**Natural character**

Considers the 'naturalistic qualities' of the landscape including coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued features such as native trees and hedgerows and designated habitats.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

Much of the landscape is intensively farmed or developed with little semi-natural habitat coverage. Few valued natural features such as trees and hedges.

Some areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features found in parts of the landscape. Some areas of intensive agricultural or other non-natural land cover.

Large areas of semi-natural habitats and designated areas, Locally or nationally designated for wildlife. Local Nature Sites or SSSI. Frequent occurrence of valued natural featured a cross the landscape.

**Visual character**

The visual prominence of the site whether the site is open and enclosed due to topography and surrounding vegetation. The degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape and whether the site is on a skyline in these views. Views to the site from the surrounding public access areas, scenic views, rights of way, roads and residential areas.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

An enclosed landscape with limited views in from public areas or residential property. A site which is not prominent in the landscape.

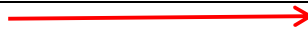
There is some degree of visibility and intervisibility with surrounding areas. The area is not prominent on sloping land or a skyline.

The site area is prominent in local views as it is on high or sloping ground which is overlooked from a wide area. The site sits on a prominent skyline. The area plays a key role in contributing to valued views from promoted scenic spots, recreational areas or national trails. The site has prominent skylines or features in the landscape.

**Perceptual experience and Qualities**

Consideration of the sense of tranquillity and/or remoteness of the site area away from human influences such as development and roads. The rurality of the site, scenic value, perceived naturalness due to lack of evidence of human activity. The presence or not of 'dark night skies' would be a consideration.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

An area which is heavily influenced by development and human activity. There are detracting features present in the landscape in the form of built development. Hard urban edges to the countryside, overhead lines and masts.

An area with some evidence of human activity and a sense of rurality retained. Some evidence of development and a few detracting features. Soft urban edges broken by vegetation. Some rural character retained.

A relatively tranquil landscape. Remote from human influences of development and roads. A high degree of perceived naturalness and rurality. No detracting features and high scenic value.

**Historic Character**

The extent to which the landscape retains historic character and sense of place. The presence of designated or non-designated heritage assets that contribute to landscape character.

Reference is made to the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation data and historic maps.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

A landscape with few historic landscape features. No designated or non-designated heritage assets. A disturbed landscape which has been much altered or disturbed by recent activity. Lacks sense of place.

A landscape with some historic features. No designated heritage assets. Some non-designated heritage assets. No historic features which are rare or of key significance in the landscape. Some sense of place but commonplace.

A landscape with many valued historic features and designated heritage assets. A strong sense of place.

## Appendix 4: Local Character Assessment

Character Area A Hooe and Whydown Slopes	
Description	
Gently rolling countryside sloping down to the Levels	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Physical Character	The land gently slopes up from the levels and forms a series of low ridges dissected by the stream valleys which flow down to the levels. This is a farmed landscape and primarily arable. The fields are medium sized with defined boundaries often bounded by hedgerows.
Settlement setting, form and edge.	The settlement is of scattered farm steads strung out along the system of historic winding country lanes. The lanes follow the higher ground avoiding the floodplain. The area is rural in character.
Natural character	The area is a farmed landscape with a long history of human intervention. The scattered areas of woodland, hedgerows and trees provide help to retain and contribute to the naturalness of the area.
Visual Character	The area is relatively open as there are no large areas of woodland. The south facing slopes are open to views from a wide area of the levels and from the Barnhorn ridge to the south. There are long views across the area from one ridge to another giving a high degree of intervisibility. The area is well served by public footpaths which afford extensive views across the countryside.
Perceptual Experience and qualities	The area feels relatively remote and tranquil as there is little evidence of the built up edge of Bexhill or the urban fringes.
Historic character	The historic mapping indicates that the area has changed little from the early OS mapping. The network of winding country lanes and footpaths are ancient in origin. The hedge pattern and field boundaries are largely intact. There are many listed buildings within the historic farmsteads.
Sensitivity Conclusions	
The area does have a degree of perceived naturalness as it is an historic farmed landscape. The open nature of the area and sloping topography do make it sensitive to change. Historically the field pattern would not appear to have changed much since the 1800s. The landscape character of the area is of medium to high sensitivity. The area is of medium to high visual sensitivity due to the long views across the area from sensitive key viewpoints on public rights of way and country lanes. The overall sensitivity of this area is therefore <b>Medium to High</b> .	

Character Area B The Levels	
Description	
An area of flood plain levels between the Barnhorn and Hooe Ridges	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Physical Character	The area is an extension of the Pevensey Levels where the East Stream picks up the catchment flow from the surrounding valleys. The area is flat and prone to flooding.
Settlement setting, form and edge.	There is no settlement on the flood plain, but the playing fields and open area of the Northeye prison site have been developed within this area. The urban fringe edge of the Northeye ridge dominates the southern side of the levels and in particular the stark white painted buildings on the Northeye site.

Natural character	The natural character is influenced by hundreds of years of artificial drainage and agriculture. The land is mainly under pasture and the flood plain areas, scattered scrub and streams retain a degree of naturalness.
Visual Character	The area is overlooked from the surrounding ridges and the many footpaths which cross the levels. There are long views across the area.
Perceptual Experience and qualities	The area has a tranquil and remote character despite proximity to the urban edge and the busy A259 road. The area is less tranquil on the southern side where development has spread out from the A259.
Historic character	The historic mapping indicates that the area has changed little from the early OS mapping. The network of footpaths connecting the settlements and churches and the field boundaries are likely to be ancient in origin. The hedge pattern and field boundaries are largely intact.
<b>Sensitivity Conclusions</b>	
The area is an extension of the Pevensey Levels which are of high sensitivity due to the natural and manmade character and wildlife value. There is a slight urban edge influence on the area and it is severed from the levels by the A259. The historic mapping indicates that the area has changed little from the early OS mapping. The hedge pattern and field boundaries are largely intact. The overall sensitivity of this area is therefore <b>Medium to High</b> .	

<b>Character Area C 1 Middle Yard Farm.</b>	
<b>Description</b>	
Farmed ridge between the built up area of Northeye and the wider levels.	
<b>Assessment Criterion</b>	<b>Sensitivity description</b>
Physical Character	The Barnhorn ridge extends out from the built up edge of Little Common. This area forms the tip of the ridge that wraps around the East Stream Valley forming a distinct largely undeveloped spur.
Settlement setting, form and edge.	Settlement in this area is restricted to principally agricultural development. There are some large agricultural buildings at Middle Yard Farm. These are clearly separated from the built up area of Northeye by an open agricultural field. The tree belt between the open fields of this farm and the Northeye settlement is a distinct boundary feature between the urban and rural area.
Natural character	The mature trees and hedges on the field boundaries do contribute to the natural character. The open areas to the west and east of the farmstead are in intensive agriculture with a low degree of naturalness.
Visual Character	The area is open to long views from the north and south where there is intervisibility with the higher ground and the open levels.
Perceptual Experience and qualities	The area is influenced by the busy A259 road and associated development.
Historic character	The network of footpath and the field boundaries are ancient in origin. There has been some loss of field structure to intensive agriculture. Modern agricultural development intrudes into the historic character.
<b>Sensitivity Conclusions</b>	
The area is rural in character with some influence urban fringe intrusions associated with a main A road. Some of the historic character is intact with well-defined field boundaries and mature oak trees. There are long views across the area and intervisibility with the ridges to the north and west. The overall sensitivity of this area is therefore <b>Medium to High</b> .	

<b>Character Area C2 Northeye</b>	
<b>Description</b>	
Partly developed ridge extending along the A259 road out of the built up area.	
<b>Assessment Criterion</b>	<b>Sensitivity description</b>
Physical Character	The Barnhorn ridge extends out from the built up edge of Little Common. Suburban development has extended along the ridge associated with the main A259 road. At Northeye the development has extended down the northern slope of the ridge.
Settlement setting, form and edge.	Ribbon development has spread along the ridge and the country lanes which run off it to the north. The stark light white utilitarian building blocks on the Northeye former prison site are a departure from the local vernacular which is typically of small scale residential development with red brick and tiles. The buildings on the site are an intrusive element in the landscape. The neighbouring houses are a small scale development which is well integrated and do not detract to such an extent.
Natural character	The mature trees which line the historic lanes and other tree belts do contribute to the natural character; however the majority of the area is developed.
Visual Character	The area is open to long views from the north where there is intervisibility with the higher ground and the open levels. The area to the west of Ticehurst Avenue and lower areas closer to the stream are relatively well concealed from longer views.
Perceptual Experience and qualities	The area is influenced by the busy A259 road and associated development including the Northeye former prison site, garage and housing.
Historic character	The narrow winding historic Coneyburrow Lane is lined by ancient oaks which are remnants of the historic character. The network of footpaths connecting the settlement and churches and the field boundaries are ancient in origin. The hedge pattern and field boundaries are largely intact. Modern development intrudes into the historic character.
<b>Sensitivity Conclusions</b>	
The area is influenced by urban fringe and suburban intrusions associated with a main A road. Some of the historic character is intact, notably the well treed field boundary to the west with the associated footpath and the wooded stream valley/ field boundary on the eastern side. The character of the area could be enhanced with sensitive development and positive change. The overall sensitivity of this area is therefore <b>Medium to Low.</b>	

<b>Character Area C3 Beeches Farm</b>	
<b>Description</b>	
Urban / rural edge extending along the A259 road out of the built up area.	
<b>Assessment Criterion</b>	<b>Sensitivity description</b>
Physical Character	The Barnhorn ridge extends out from the built up edge of Little Common. The higher ground wraps around the East Stream Valley and is continuous with the Whydown ridge to the north. Suburban development has extended along the ridge associated with the main A259 road.
Settlement setting, form and edge.	Ribbon development has spread along the ridge and the country lanes which run off it to the north. The area is a fragile area of undeveloped

	farmland between the built up edge of Little Common and Northeye.
Natural character	The mature trees which line the historic lanes and other tree belts do contribute to the natural character. The open areas are agricultural with a moderate degree of naturalness.
Visual Character	The area is open to views from the north where there is intervisibility with the higher ground and the open levels. The lower areas are relatively concealed from longer views but are overlooked from public footpaths and the rural lanes.
Perceptual Experience and qualities	The area is influenced by the busy A259 road and associated development including the Northeye site.
Historic character	The narrow winding historic Coneyburrow and Sandhurst Lanes are lined by ancient oaks and are remnants of the historic character. The network of footpaths connecting the settlement and churches and the field boundaries are ancient in origin. The hedge pattern and field boundaries are largely intact even where development has grown up within these the older boundaries are still in evidence.
<b>Sensitivity Conclusions</b>	
The area is influenced by urban fringe and suburban intrusions associated with a main A road. Some of the historic rural character is intact. The area is a fragile rural gap between the built up edge of Little Common and the Northeye development and would be sensitive to change. The overall sensitivity of this area is therefore <b>Medium</b> .	



## **Appendix 5 Glossary of Key Terms**

**Agricultural Diversification.** This refers to the pressure for change of use for farm buildings and agricultural land as alternative development such as offices, riding stables and other recreational uses.

**Analysis (landscape)** The process of breaking the landscape down into its component parts to understand how it is made up.

**Ancient lanes, trackways, hedgerows, trees and field boundaries.** In the context of landscape characterisation of the English countryside refer to landscape features that are likely to date back to as far as medieval times and possibly earlier.

**Ancient Woodland** (or semi- natural ancient woodland). Land continuously wooded since AD1600.

**Arable** Land used for growing crops other than grass or woody species.

**Assessment (landscape)** An umbrella term for description, classification and analysis of landscape.

**Characteristics** Elements, features and qualities which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

**Characterisation** The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

**CLA** County Landscape Assessment, refers to East Sussex County Council Landscape Assessment  
**CPRE** Council for the Protection of Rural England

**Element** A component part of the landscape such as woods, hedges, structures, roads and rock outcrops.

**Field Pattern** The pattern of hedges or walls that define fields in farmed landscapes.

**HLC Historic Landscape Characterisation,** strategic assessment of the extent to which the historic development of landscape can still be seen in the modern landscape.

**Green Infrastructure** is a network of multifunctional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities.

**Intensive Agriculture** is where the use of increasingly bigger agricultural machinery has led to the removal of hedges and other field boundary features to create homogenous and featureless areas for arable farming.

**Landscape capacity** is the indicative ability of the landscape to accommodate different amounts of change or development of a specific type without adverse impacts. In the context of this study this will be a relative comparison for each settlement.

**Landscape character** is the recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that make a place different or distinct. Character is influenced by particular combinations of physical elements such as settlement, land use and built features, and other perceived aspects such as views, tranquillity

and sense of place

**Landscape character areas** are single unique areas in the landscape, which have a particular sense of place. These are discrete areas of an identifiable character reflected by differing vegetation, settlement and field patterns, cultural associations and other landscape characteristics. They share general characteristics with other areas but have their own particular identity; these are distinct from landscape types.

**Landscape character types** are generic types which possess broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern discernable in maps and field survey records. They can occur in different geographical locations.

**Landscape Framework.** A framework of landscape elements or features, which would be required as a setting for proposed or existing development. For example earthworks, tree belts, hedges and woodland, the framework may also include open areas of landscape where this would be in character with the setting.

**Landscape management** is concerned with the development of management actions which conserve, enhance and maintain landscapes for current and future generations. The discipline of landscape management ensures that the design intention of a landscape is realised in the long-term, be it a newly designed or an historic landscape, and that it fulfils its intended function as a component in the landscape, as an amenity resource for people and as a habitat for wildlife.

**Landscape Mitigation** is measures, including any process, activity, or design to avoid reduce, or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project. The potential to mitigate change in a particular landscape will depend on the factors and features which determine the character of the landscape.

**Landscape Sensitivity** is the inherent sensitivity of the landscape resource, which includes the sensitivity of both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to the character. Sensitivity also includes the visual sensitivity of the landscape in terms of views, types of viewers and the scope to mitigate visual impact.

**Landscape Value** is the relative value or importance attached to a landscape. A landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for different reasons. These can include scenic beauty, tranquility, and special cultural / conservation interests. Some may be designated.

**Mitigation** Measures to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project.

**Sense of Place** is the character of a place that makes it locally distinctive i.e. different from other places.

**Settlement** All dwellings/habitations whether single or clustered in cities, towns and village.

**Settlement Pattern** The predominant pattern of settlement in an area.

**Vernacular** Built in the local style, from local materials.

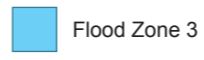
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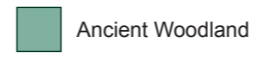
Rother District Boundary



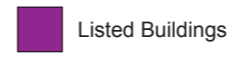
Site Boundary



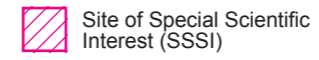
Flood Zone 3



Ancient Woodland

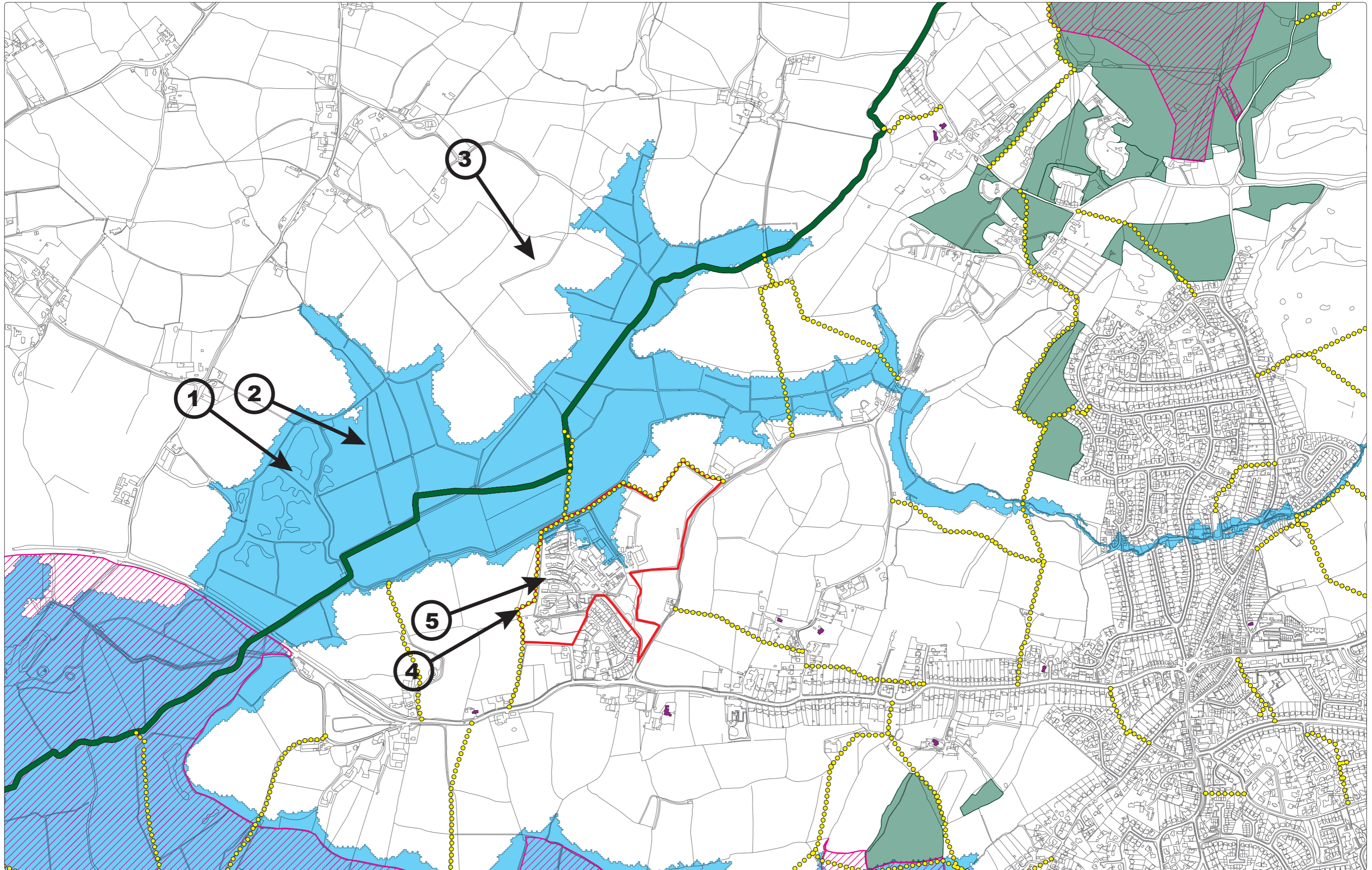
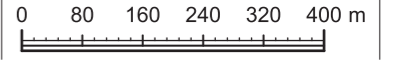


Listed Buildings

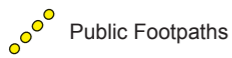


Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

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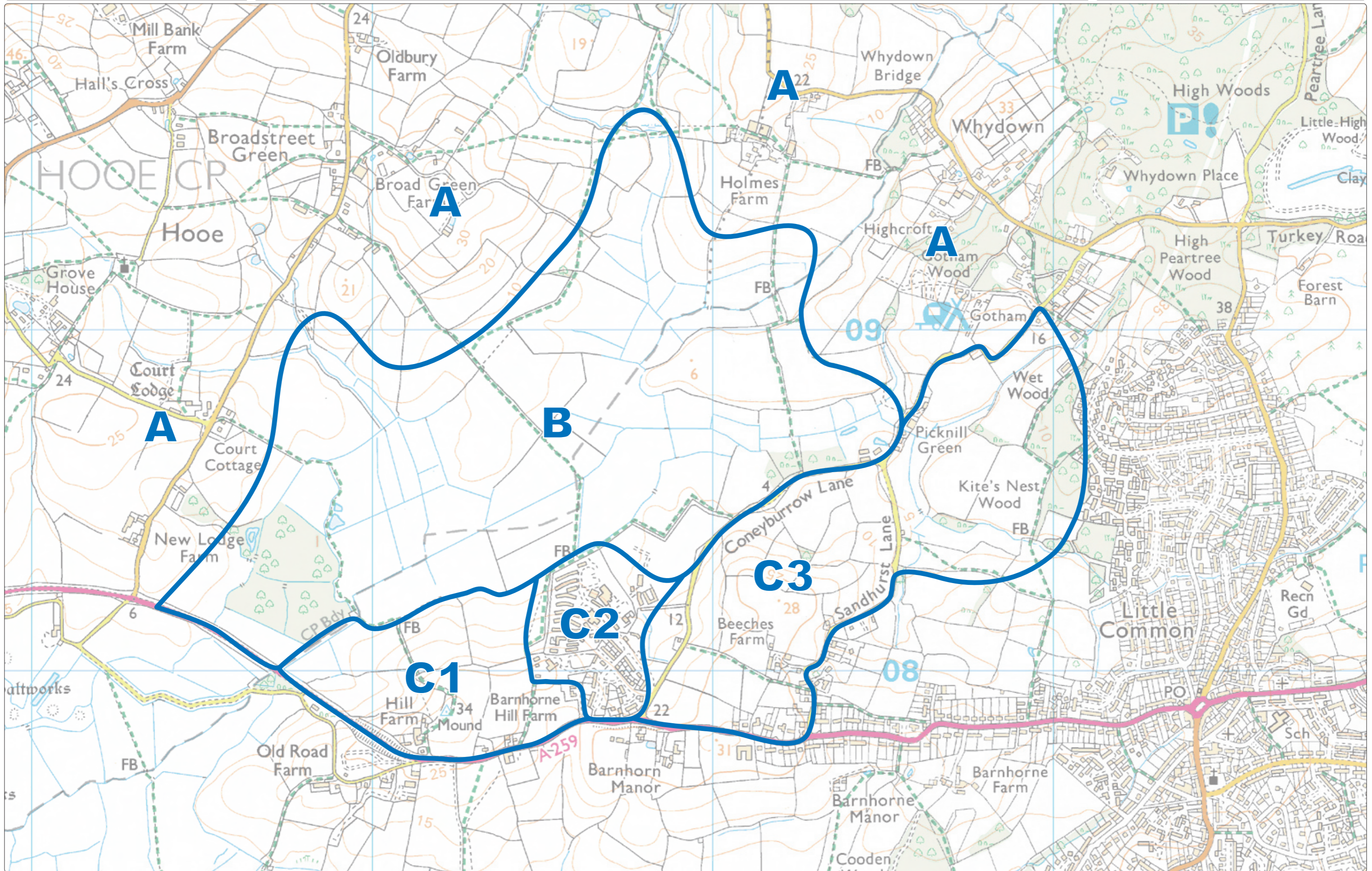
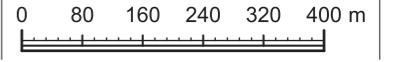


Public Footpaths



Viewpoint Locations





KEY

Site Boundary

Wooded Area

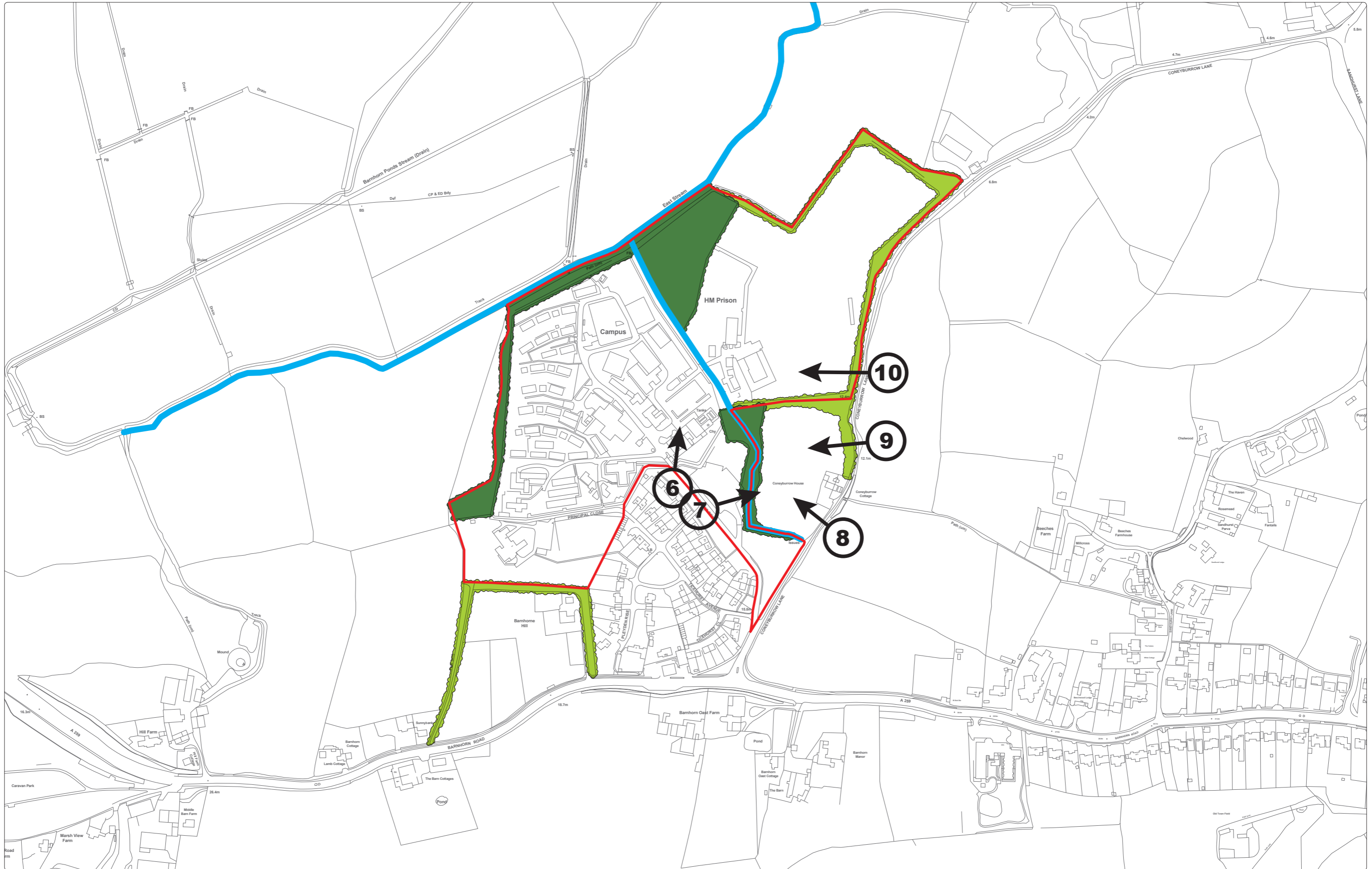
Tree Belt

Streams

Viewpoint Locations

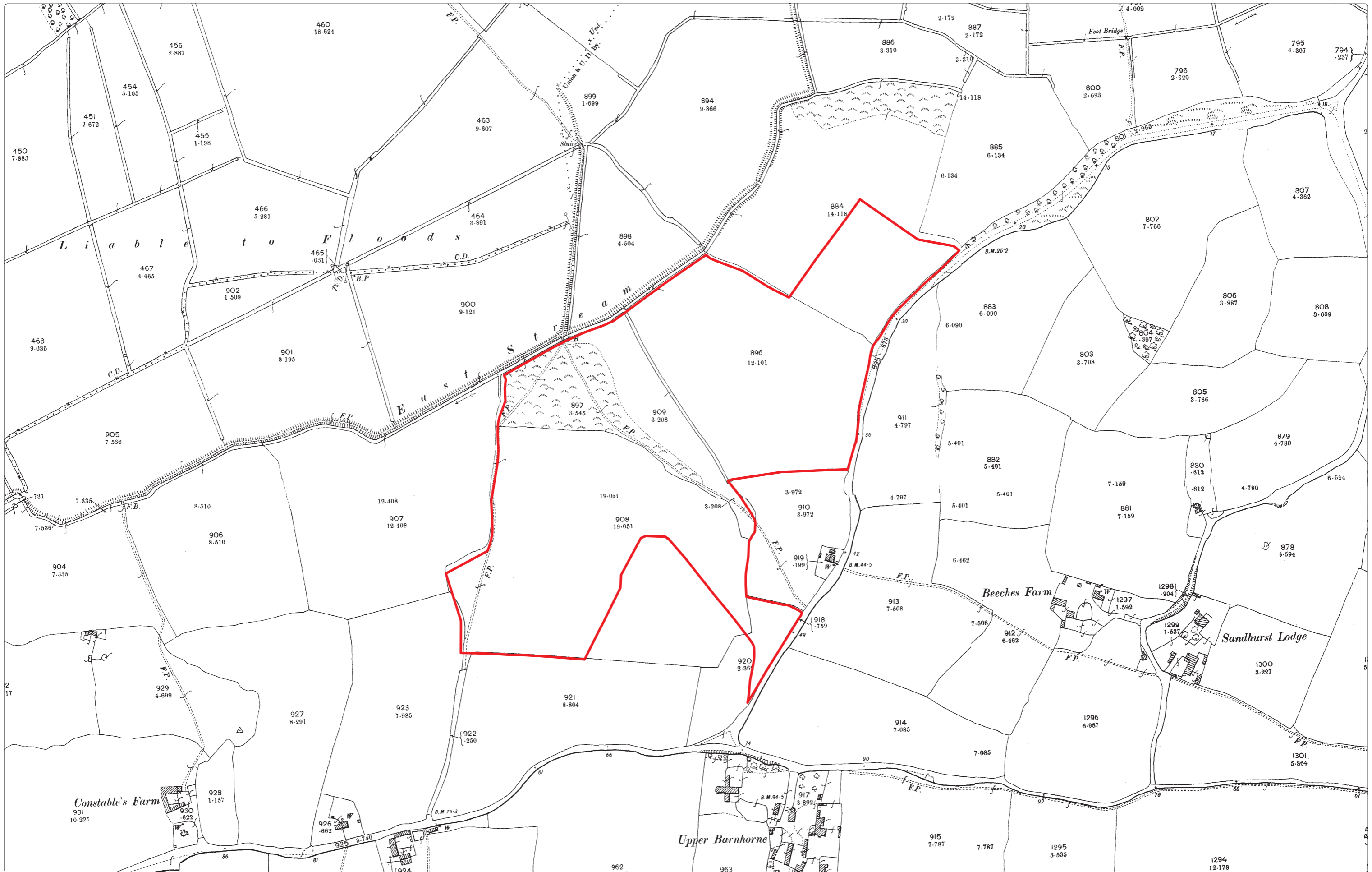
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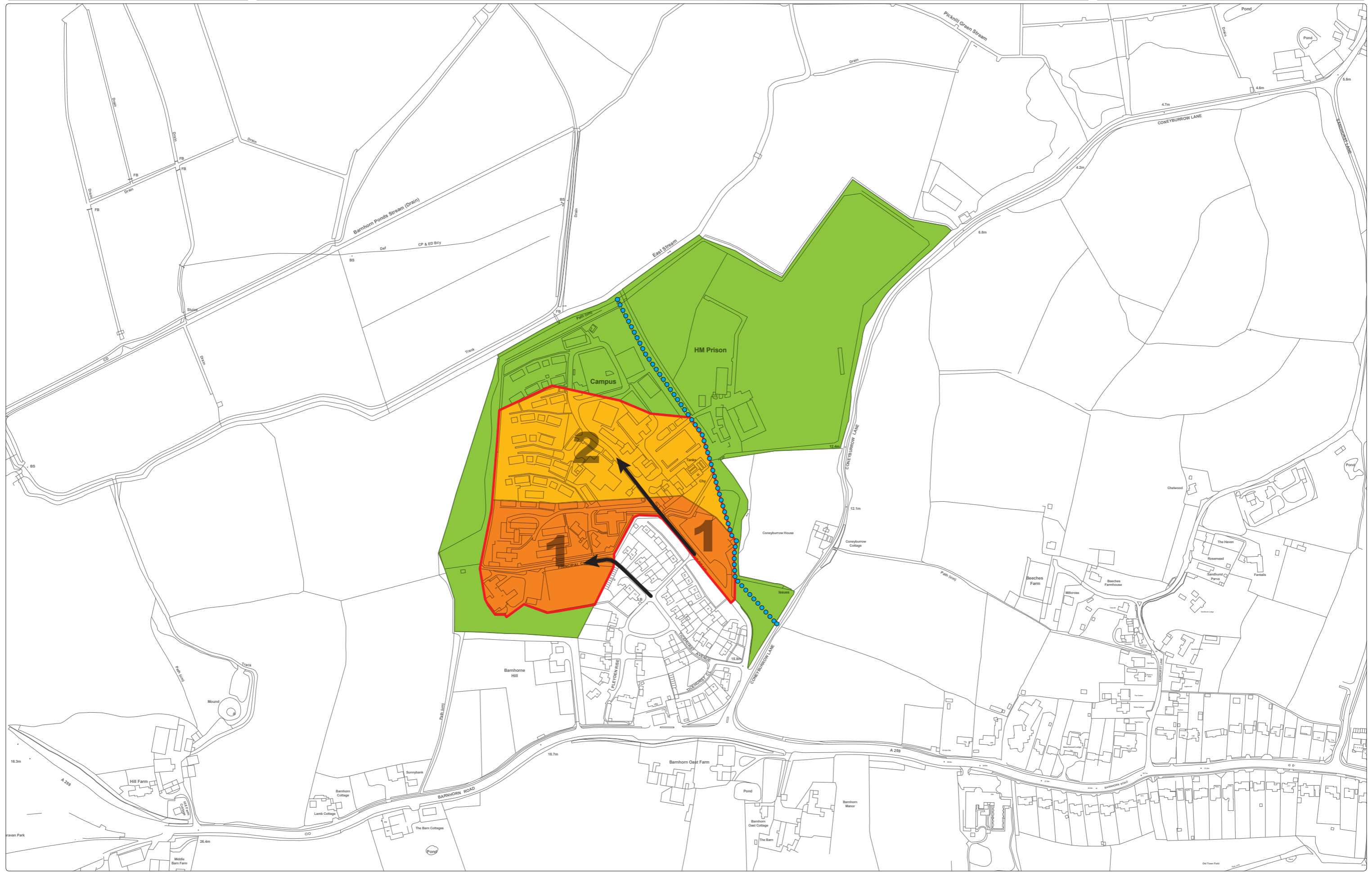
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**Viewpoint 1**

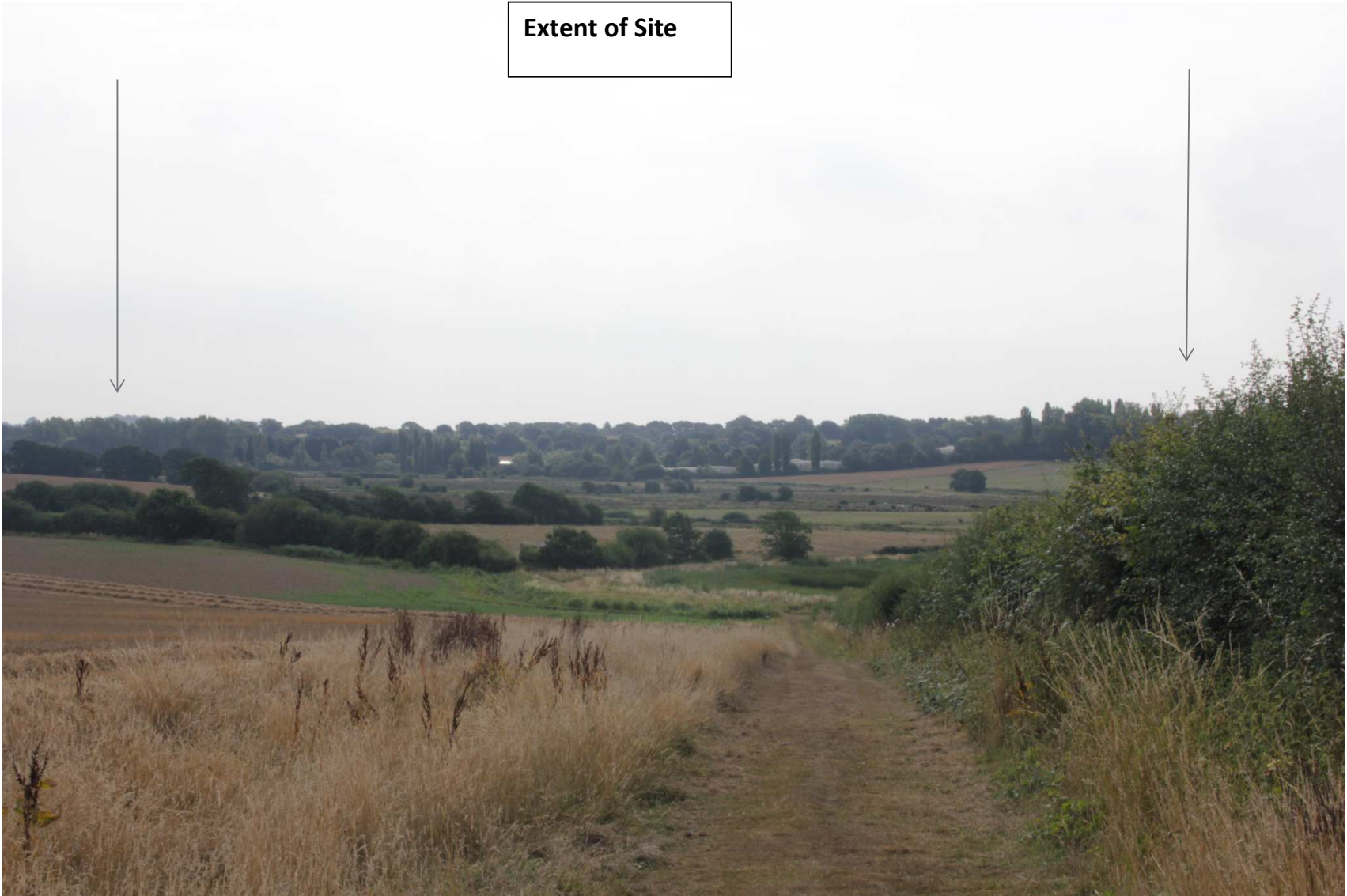
**Extent of Site**





**Viewpoint 2**

**Extent of Site**



**Viewpoint 3**

**Extent of Site**



**Viewpoint 4**

**Extent of Site**



**Viewpoint 5**

**Extent of Site**



Viewpoint 6



**Viewpoint 7**



**Viewpoint 8**



Viewpoint 9





Viewpoint 10

