

Rother District Council New Local Plan 2019-2039 Evidence Base
Housing and Economic Development Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Bexhill

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Study Aims

The Environment Team of East Sussex County Council was commissioned in January 2023 by Rother District Council to carry out the landscape assessment of a number of potential development sites around Bexhill. This required a focused landscape sensitivity assessment which would advise on the potential for development at these sites, in landscape terms. This will contribute significantly to an assessment of the overall suitability of each site to accommodate housing, economic or other development (including renewable energy development) through the Councils' Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

The required outputs are sensitivity assessments of sites regarding particular types of development. For the majority of the sites this would be 2 – 3 storey residential properties (<0.5ha) and for some sites small scale commercial development (office, warehouse or light industrial) around 14m tall (>1ha).

It should be noted that while some of the sites are known to be available for potential development, having been submitted by landowners, the availability of a number of sites is unknown. Their landscape assessment will help inform the District Council's decision on whether to investigate the availability of these sites further through the HELAA process.

It should also be noted that for brevity, not all sites being considered by the District Council through the HELAA are included in this landscape assessment. The inclusion or exclusion of a particular site from this assessment should not be construed as determining its suitability or otherwise for development, as this will be done through the HELAA process. The general information in sections 2 and 3 of this report, together with the methodology used, will help guide the District Council's own assessments of the landscape impacts and sensitivity of those HELAA sites which have not been included.

This Landscape Assessment consequently informs the District Council's emerging Local Plan at a relatively early stage. On completion of the HELAA, further landscape assessment work may be necessary to inform the details of potential development site allocations.

1.2 Structure of the report:

- a) Part one methodology and summary of key findings.
- b) Part two site assessment sheets – Appendix B.
- c) Part three settlement maps – Appendix C.

2.0 Methodology for Assessment

2.1 Existing Guidance

2.1.1 The methodology in this report has used guidance provided by *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) and *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*, Natural England 2014.

2.1.2 This assessment will refer to: *An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management*, Natural England, June 2019.

2.2 Definition of Key Terms

2.2.1 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 A: Glossary of Key Terms and Acronyms.

2.3 Desk Top Assessment

2.3.1 As part of the desk top assessment relevant designations relating to historical, archaeological, biodiversity or other cultural interest have been mapped.

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

2.3.3 Maps have been drawn up for the sites which have been assessed, the maps are provided in Appendix C.

These maps illustrate:

- a) The sites which have been assessed.
- b) Ecological designations (SSSI's, Local Wildlife Sites and Ancient Woodland).
- c) Tree preservation orders.
- d) Heritage Assets (Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed buildings.
- e) Strategic Gaps.
- f) The Combe Valley Countryside Park.

2.4 Published Landscape Assessments

2.4.1 The sensitivity assessments have been informed by published assessments available for Rother District at the regional and county levels. The individual site assessments have taken into consideration the existing assessments.

2.4.2 The following publications have been considered in informing the desk top study and site assessments:

- a) National Character Area Profiles (Natural England 2014)
- b) East Sussex County Council Landscape Character Assessment, (*East Sussex County Council 2016*).
- c) Rother District Strategic Gaps Landscape Assessment (2016)
- d) Bexhill and Hastings Fringes Landscape Assessment (2008)
- e) Landscape Assessment of Northeys, Bexhill (Aug 2018).
- f) Report 1 - North Bexhill: Landscape and Ecological Study (CSA Environmental Planning August 2015)
- g) Report 2 - North Bexhill: Appraisal and Recommendation of Development Options (CSA Environmental Planning August 2016).

2.5 Field Assessment

2.5.1 Field surveys were carried out to assess the intrinsic character and the sensitivity of each site. These are set out in Appendix B.

2.6 Landscape Sensitivity

2.6.1 Within the sphere of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource. Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value.

Table 1 – Landscape Sensitivity Evaluation Criteria

High	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are very susceptible to change and / or its values are high or high / medium and it is unable to accommodate the relevant type of development without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very low.
Medium/High	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are susceptible to change and / or its values are medium through to high. It may be able to accommodate the relevant type of development but only in limited situations without significant character change or adverse effects if defined in the relevant land parcel summary. Thresholds for significant change are low.
Medium	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are susceptible to change and / or its values are medium / low

	through to high / medium and / or it <i>may</i> have some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development in some <i>defined</i> situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate.
Medium/Low	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are resilient and of low susceptibility to change and / or its values are medium / low or low and it can accommodate the relevant type of development in many situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are high.
Low	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are resilient and of low susceptibility to change and / or its values are low and it can accommodate the relevant type of development in many situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very high.

2.7 Landscape Susceptibility

2.7.1 Landscape susceptibility is the degree to which a defined landscape and its associated visual qualities and attributes might respond to the specific development type / development scenario or other change without undue negative effects on landscape character and the visual resource.

2.8 Landscape Value

2.8.1 East Sussex has a rich resource of valued landscapes. The importance of the landscape is recognized in national terms in that the northern and much of the eastern part of the county is designated as the High Weald AONB. Most of the land area of Rother District is within the High Weald AONB, indeed, Rother District consists almost entirely of varied, attractive and valued landscape and many areas are the subject of nature conservation and historic designations. The town of Bexhill and surrounding countryside are not within the AONB designation as this extends only as far south as Catsfield and Crowhurst.

2.8.2 Part of the study area lies within the Strategic Gap between Bexhill and Hastings town. This is the gap between the built up edge at Pebsham and the western edge of St Leonard's. A strategic gap is an area of land which helps to determine the separation of settlements and protect their individual character and prevent coalescence. This gap includes the central part of the Combe Valley Countryside Park (CVCP), an area of unspoilt grazing marsh focused on the Combe Haven River and its tributary streams.

2.8.3 The NPPF (2021) Section 15 provides policies for conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 174 states 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;*

2.8.4 There is no specific definition of “valued landscape” within the Planning Policy Guidance and each area would need to be assessed on its own merits. Key factors which would determine whether a landscape is valued in the local context are perceptual aspects including scenic beauty, tranquility, remoteness or special cultural associations. Other factors would be the presence of designated wildlife sites or heritage assets.

2.8.5 It is open to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to seek to identify “valued landscape” or sites of local landscape value through the Local Plan, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 174(a). However, a detailed assessment of this is outside the scope of this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.

2.8.6 Table 2 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 2: Landscape Value Evaluation Criteria

Value	Typical Criteria	Scale of Significance	Typical Examples/Features
Very High	Very attractive and rare Exceptional landscape quality.	International or National	World Heritage Site, National Park and AONB (in areas which are highly characteristic of the designation) 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.
High	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 (within the study area these could include the more remote parts of the Combe Valley Countryside Park, especially where they have wildlife designations), Greenbelt (or similar designation) or key elements/features within them. Accessible wildlife areas of national value. Tranquil area. Providing setting for Listed Buildings or nationally important cultural features.

Medium	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.
Low	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.

2.9 Sensitivity Assessment

2.9.1 The sites have been assessed individually or in groups, where they are adjacent and contiguous in character. The susceptibility to change for key landscape and visual criteria has been assessed for each site. The relative landscape value for each site has been assessed using the criteria in Table 2 above. Individual site susceptibility and value combined give an indication of the sensitivity for each criteria and the site overall. The study has identified and briefly described the key indicators of landscape & visual susceptibility by describing how the landscape, visual and value related criteria may be affected to a greater or lesser extent by the key attributes of the proposed development type. The criteria are as set out in the site assessment sheets in Appendix B.

2.10 Mitigation and management

2.10.1 The site survey sheets also identify the potential of each site area to accommodate the required landscape mitigation for potential development. The potential to mitigate change in a particular landscape will depend on the factors which determine the character of the landscape. This will help to determine the visual and character sensitivity of the landscape.

2.10.2 This assessment of potential for landscape mitigation is based on the following set of factors as follows:

- a) The need to enhance the key landscape features at a local scale.
- b) The need to restore lost landscape features such as hedges and woods.
- c) The need to restore degraded landscape.
- d) The need to reduce the impact of urban development on the countryside.
- e) Whether mitigation would detract from the sense of place.
- f) Whether the site is already well contained and not visible in the wider landscape.
- g) The forthcoming national policy requirement to achieve biodiversity net gain of at least 10% and ideally more.

2.10.3 Outline mitigation should include:

- a) Retention and management of existing significant landscape features.
- b) New woodland planting to link with existing.
- c) New tree belts to link with existing.
- d) Creation of multifunctional green networks as planting, open space or recreational corridors and incorporating biodiversity net gain.

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

2.10.5 The condition of the landscape will be determined by the degree to which it is soundly managed according to the land use. In the case of the sites being assessed as part of this study this would be assessed according to:

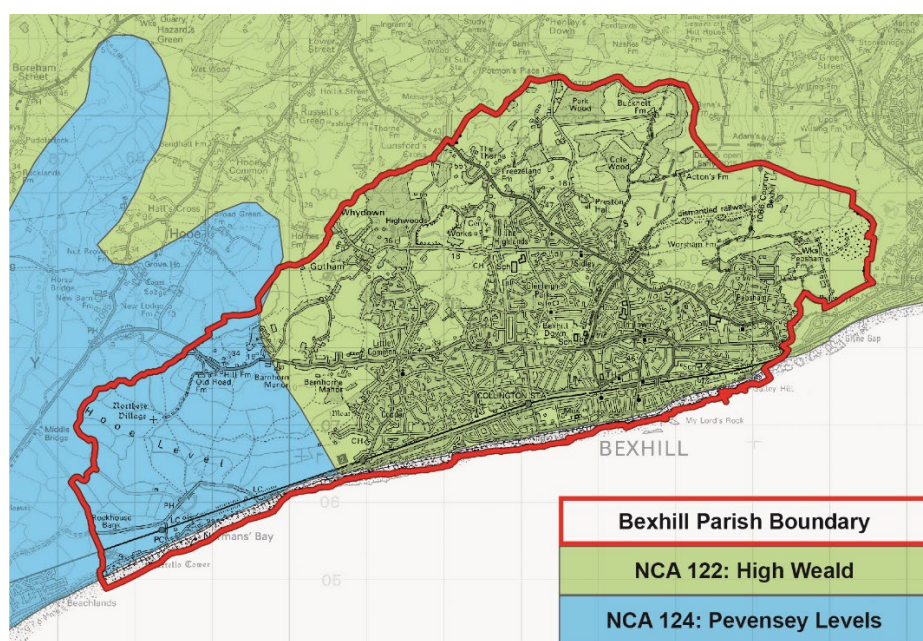
- whether hedges are retained or are grubbed out and replaced with fences.
- whether footpaths are kept open, stiles and gates are maintained.
- unauthorised access is controlled to prevent dumping and tipping.
- whether hedges, copses and tree belts are managed.

2.10.6 As most of the sites which have been assessed are on the rural edges of Bexhill, a comment is included as to how these areas could be managed to maximise the potential amenity value. This may be as areas which are already accessible by public rights of way, which have permissive access, or which can be seen from public areas.

3.0 General Character Context

3.1 Regional Landscape Character Context

3.1.1 Natural England, National Character Area (NCA) Profiles: The majority of the study area falls within the regional landscape character area 122 High Weald. A small part of the western study area falls within the Pevensey Levels (NCA 124).



3.1.2 A summary of the key characteristics for the High Weald (NCA 122), which are relevant to the study area are as follows:

- Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.
- A predominantly grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle.
- A well wooded landscape rising above the Low Weald;
- Distinctive and scattered sandstone outcrops;
- Main roads and settlements are sited along prominent ridges-lines with a dense network of small winding lanes linking scattered villages, hamlets and farms;
- The legacy of the early iron industry has left extensive areas of coppice woodland and hammer ponds;
- High forest, small woods and copses, and a network of hedges, shaws link small irregular fields created from cleared woodland.
- Flower rich meadows bordered by species rich hedgerows;
- Heavy clay soils have reduced the impact of agricultural change in the area and it is still, in the main a quiet pastoral landscape with mixed farming predominating;
- The cultivation of fruit and hops, together with the associated distinctive oast houses; and
- Distinctive red tile, brick, local stone and timber building materials, often including hung tiles and white weatherboarding are characteristic.
- Recent 'suburbanization' of farmstead buildings is eroding the distinctive local style in many places.

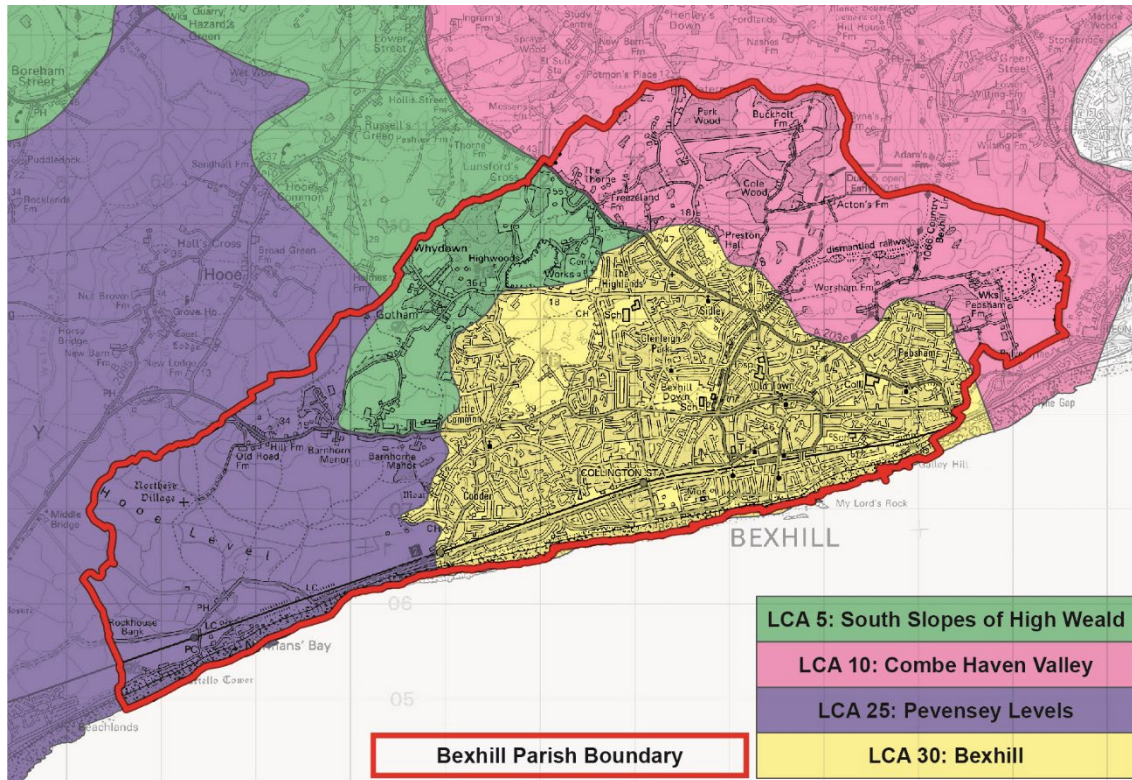
3.1.3 A summary of the key characteristics for the Pevensey Levels (NCA 124), which are relevant to a small number of sites in the western part of the study area are as follows:

- The term 'Pevensey Levels' refers to the low-lying area between Eastbourne and Bexhill in East Sussex. It is a wetland of national and international conservation importance.
- The Levels are predominantly rural and mostly grazed pasture and consist of extensive drainage networks and flood plain.
- A coastline of shingle beach stretches along the length of the area, punctuated by settlements, historic military buildings and sea defence structures.
- The area is framed by the steep scarp of the South Downs in the west and the higher ground of the High Weald in the north, with views of the English Channel to the south.

3.2 County Landscape Character Area Context

3.2.1 The County Landscape Assessment (2016) divides East Sussex into regional character areas: The High Weald, The Low Weald, The Downs, the Levels and the Urban Areas. These areas are further sub divided into the County Landscape Character Areas, the areas of search fall within 4 of these as outlined below.

Map No.	County Landscape Character Area – Appendix D
5	<i>South Slopes of the High Weald</i>
25	<i>The Pevensey Levels</i>
10	<i>Combe Haven Valley</i>
30	<i>Bexhill</i>



South Slopes of the High Weald

3.2.2 This area is the transitional landscape between the High Weald AONB and the low weald. It has similar characteristics to the designated area and therefore some similar sensitivities. This is an intricate small-scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows and woodland. The area falls gently southwards from the Heathfield/Battle ridge to the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels. Characteristically it is an area deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls. The area has frequent scattered small woods and shaws, many of which are Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland.

This is a largely unspoilt and tranquil rural landscape with few intrusive features. The landscape is in generally good condition and well managed as farmland with a strong historic structure. Agricultural change has led to some gentrification of the rural landscape and loss of landscape features. Ribbon development and roadside clutter has added to suburbanisation on the edges of villages. As with most of the High Weald landscape the historic field patterns of small fields and significant hedgerows remain intact.

3.2.3 Characteristics

- Many scattered small farm ponds and hammer ponds as relics of the iron industry which thrived in this area.
- A sense of tranquillity and relative remoteness away from the main settlements and roads.
- Ghyll woodlands in the many steep sided valleys which are a key characteristic of the High Weald.
- There is an abundance of hornbeam or 'horbeech'. Other indigenous characteristic tree species are Oak, ash and wild cherry. Beech and pine also feature locally and other exotic specimens are found in gardens and villages.
- Many scattered small historic villages and hamlets centred around a church or a pub.
- Scattered and often isolated large farmsteads.
- A close network of winding lanes with scattered settlements and individual dwellings often strung out along them.

3.2.4 Special features

- An intricate small scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows.
- Wide views to the Downs from many areas.
- Frequent scattered small woods and shaws, many of which are Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland.

Pevensey Levels

3.2.5 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 internationally 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.

3.2.6 Characteristics

- 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
- An extensive shingle beach and coastline vulnerable to erosion and subject to intervention such as redistribution of the shingle and sea defence groynes.

3.2.7 Special Features

- A sense of remoteness and tranquillity in the heart of the area with big skies and cries of wetland birds.
- 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.
- War time artefacts and in particular pill boxes and tank traps are scattered across the area with Napoleonic Martello towers on the coast.

Combe Haven Valley

3.2.8 This is a largely unspoilt and tranquil rural landscape with few intrusive features. The landscape is in generally good condition and well managed as farmland with some surviving historic structure. Agricultural change has led to some gentrification of the rural landscape and villages. As with most of the High Weald landscape the historic field patterns of small fields and significant hedgerows remain intact in the northern part of the area. The Combe Haven Valley is a farmed landscape and generally in positive management. Woodlands have been affected by lack of traditional coppice management, rhododendron invasion and coniferization.

3.2.9 Characteristics

- Area is enclosed by the Battle ridge to the north-east.
- Focal open, flat, winding valley floor with wetland.
- Intricate terrain of small, winding valleys and ridges around levels, with abundant woods and ghylls.
- Extensive areas of ancient woodland.
- Focal open flat, winding valley floor and wetland in the Combe Haven Basin (Combe Valley Countryside Park).
- Contrast between open valley floor and slopes.

3.2.10 Special features

- Combe Valley Countryside Park has the largest single area of reeds in East Sussex.

Bexhill

3.2.11 Bexhill on Sea arose as a medieval trading port, built on gently sloping ground. It was transformed in the 19th century by the seventh Earl De La Warr into an exclusive seaside resort. By the mid 20th century, the resort began to lose its appeal, and became more residential in nature, while retaining much of its quiet Edwardian character. The town is now comprised of several merged villages including Bexhill Old Town, Little Common, Belle Hill and Sidley Green . It is separated from Hastings by Glyne Gap and Coombe Haven Valley, an important green gap between the built-up areas. Other significant gaps remain between Bexhill and Little Common and Little

Common and Northeye. At the eastern end of the town the railway severs the town from the Seafront.

3.2.12 Characteristics

- A quiet, residential seaside town with small-scale but ornate early Victorian and Edwardian seafront facades, facing spacious seafront lawns.
- Strong 1930's Modern influence, centred on the De La Warr pavilion on the seafront, constructed under the instruction of the ninth Earl De La Warr in 1935.

3.2.13 Special features

- Seafront properties have ornate 'Colonial' wooden verandas and Mogul influences. Located in Bexhill-on-Sea's picturesque Old Town are many fine examples of Georgian architecture.
- Egerton Park
- 'The Down' is a unique and well treed open space in the centre of the urban area.
- Marine archaeology.

4.0 Site Sensitivity Assessments

The detailed criteria-based site sensitivity assessments, which were carried out for each site, are provided in Appendix B. The following sections are a summary of the findings from these assessments. The maps showing the locations of the sites are provided in Appendix C.

4.1 South Slopes of the High Weald

The south slopes character area extends from the Heathfield ridge in the north to the northern edge of the Pevensey Levels in the south. It extends south to wrap around the north eastern edge of the urban area of Bexhill. Eleven of the assessed sites are within this character area.

- a) BEX0048. The area does form an undesignated fragile rural gap between the built-up edge of Little Common and the expanding settlement of Northeye. In this context it is sensitive to change. The topography and historic character also make it sensitive. The eastern area is adjacent to the existing ribbon development along Sandhurst Lane. However, access to this area would be impractical along the very narrow lane and would not be possible from Luffield Drive as it would breach the woodland edge between the lane and the new development. This area could offer opportunities to provide multifunctional Green Infrastructure for the growing population and as biodiversity net gain for other development on the urban edges of Bexhill. The 2008 Landscape capacity assessment identified this area as sub character area 4A and concluded that only two discrete fields adjacent to Sandhurst Lane would have capacity (medium) for development, the rest of the area was not considered suitable for development. However, development of these fields in isolation would be incongruous with the existing and potential future settlement pattern, even if BEX0159 were to be developed in the future. This is because the stream valley and associated vegetation within BEX0159 separate this site (BEX0048) from the potentially developable area of BEX0159 so that it is a discreet

parcel. The 2018 Northeye study identified this part of the Beeches Farm sub character area to have an overall medium sensitivity and medium capacity. This more detailed assessment of the area considers the area to have medium to high sensitivity and medium to low capacity.

- b) BEX0176. The majority of this site is within the south slopes character area and the western part is within the Pevensey Levels area. The area is sensitive as it is contiguous with the wider Pevensey Levels countryside, and it is of high visual sensitivity. This landscape is not suitable for development. Whydown has a unique character as a small settlement outside the urban area, but at the same time being close to Bexhill. The historic narrow and windy lanes provide restricted access opportunities. The recreational opportunities offered by the lanes are affected by rat run traffic. If the area were to be considered suitable for development it would need to be small scale and conserve the rural character of the area. Access is a major issue however a new route into the area could be an opportunity to restrict traffic on the rural lanes and enhance them for recreation. This area was not considered to have any potential for development by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeye assessment considered this area to be of medium to high sensitivity and low capacity.
- c) BEX0159. The stream corridor is the most sensitive landscape feature of the site area. The sensitivity of the wider area is lower than that of BEX0048 due to the more level topography and relatively intensive agricultural use. There could be some scope for development in the central part of the area. Consideration would need to be given to providing adequate buffers to the ancient woodland and Sandhurst Lane. The rural character of Sandhurst Lane and BEX0048 would need to be protected by reinforcing the existing tree belts with more trees and understorey planting. Consideration would need to be given to avoidance of coalescence with the hamlet of Whydown. Any proposal would need to ensure protection and enhancement of the stream corridor and provide enhanced public access to this area. The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment considered this area to have high capacity. The 2018 Northeye study identified this part of the Beeches Farm sub character area to have an overall medium sensitivity and medium capacity. Overall it is considered that this area would have medium to high capacity, reducing towards the rural boundary to the west.
- d) BEX0177. The area is sensitive as a small fragment of historic landscape. Whydown has a unique character as a small settlement outside the urban area but at the same time being close to Bexhill. The historic narrow and winding lanes provide restricted access opportunities. The recreational opportunities offered by the lanes are affected by rat run traffic. This area would not be suitable for development as it provides a buffer between the built up edge of Bexhill and Whydown. Access would be a major constraint for new development in and around the hamlet of Whydown. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeye study identified the wider area around Whydown to be of high sensitivity and to have low capacity.

- e) BEX0133 and BEX0049. There may be some scope for development and particularly of BEX0049. Access to BEX0133 would be constrained by the mature trees. This area may also be sensitive habitat and a buffer would be required to adjacent ancient woodland. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeye study identified the wider area around Whydown to be of high sensitivity and to have low capacity.
- f) BEX0175. Whydown has a unique character as a small settlement outside the urban area, but at the same time being close to Bexhill. The historic narrow and winding lanes provide restricted access opportunities. Widening these lanes would impact on mature trees and historic hedgerows and the historic character. The recreational opportunities offered by the lanes are affected by rat run traffic. If the area were to be considered suitable for development, it would need to be small scale, in keeping with the existing development to conserve the rural character of the area. Opportunities need to be considered to restrict rat running traffic on the rural lanes and enhance them for recreation. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeye study identified the wider area around Whydown to be of high sensitivity and to have low capacity.
- g) BEX0174. The area is characteristic of the wider countryside to the northwest of Peartree Lane and is remote from the built-up area. The northern field is more enclosed. This needs more investigation as it is not viewed from any PROW. There are glimpses into the area from Peartree Lane. Access to this area is constrained by the narrow nature of the lane. The area would not be suitable for development as it is part of the wider countryside. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study did not assess this area.
- h) BEX0173. The area is characteristic of the wider countryside to the northwest of Peartree Lane and is remote from the built-up area. The northern field is more enclosed. This needs more investigation as it is not viewed from any PROW. There are glimpses into the area from Peartree Lane. Access to this area is constrained by trees and woodland and the narrow nature of the lane. The southern field would not be suitable for development as it is more closely related to the countryside than the built-up area. The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment did not consider the western fields to have any capacity for development apart from the more enclosed eastern field, adjacent to the caravan park, which was considered to have high capacity. The 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study did not assess this area.
- i) BEX0113. The site area has medium to high sensitivity as it is rural in character. The western field is more enclosed and less sensitive than the elevated and open eastern field. There could be scope for small scale medium to low density development in the western part of the site. This would be associated with the existing barn and is lower in the landscape than the rest of the area. The existing tree belt adjacent to the road would need to be retained and enhanced as a landscape feature. The more elevated part of the site is part of a defined rural gap which separates Lunsford Cross and The Thorns. This area was not

assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment or the 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study.

- j) BEX0132. There could be some scope for development in the three eastern fields as this is more closely related to the development at Thorne Crescent and Chestnut Meadows. The stream valley forms a natural buffer between the edge of Bexhill and Thorne Crescent. The western field is more closely related to the character of area BEX0173 and is more rural. The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment considered this area to have moderate capacity. The 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study considered the majority of this area to have moderate capacity and the western field moderate to low.
- k) BEX0172, BEX0122 and BEX0130. The area offers scope for housing development as this could enhance local landscape character and views. Access could potentially be gained from the A269 roundabout as there are no significant trees along this part of the boundary. This would protect the rural character of St Mary's Lane. The southern area maybe of wildlife value and could be considered as a multifunctional GI corridor incorporating enhanced amenity for the public footpath. The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment did not assess this area. The 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study considered the area to have moderate to high capacity.

4.2 Pevensey Levels

The Pevensey Levels character area extends from the west side of the built-up area of Bexhill westwards to Eastbourne. Six and a half of the assessed sites are within this character area.

- a) BEX0179. The site has a strong sense of place due to the ridgetop location which extends into the Pevensey Levels. It is contiguous with the surrounding countryside. The open and elevated rural character would make it particularly sensitive to change. The area is not suitable for development. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeye assessment considered this area to be of medium to high sensitivity and low capacity.
- b) BEX0119. The character of this site is influenced by the road and the neighbouring residential development. However, the elevated nature of the site and relationship with the wider countryside would make it sensitive to development. Development on the site would require a robust landscape buffer to the A259 and wider levels landscape and this would detract from the open character. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeye assessment considered this area to be of medium to high sensitivity and low capacity.
- c) BEX0103. The site is not particularly sensitive due to the surrounding suburban influences, lack of distinct character and enclosed nature. There could be some scope for residential development as a discrete extension to the Northeye settlement. The western part of the site slopes steeply into a wooded stream valley. Therefore any proposed development would be restricted to the eastern part of the site. Access from Coneyburrow Lane would be constrained by the narrow width and mature trees, which are close to the lane edges. Access could possibly

gained from the north of the site within the Northeys complex. This would breach a mature hedge, but could avoid mature trees. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeys assessment considered this area to be of medium sensitivity and medium capacity.

- d) BEX0178. As the site is contiguous with the Hoo Levels and shares characteristics with that area it would be sensitive to housing development. The presence of the former prison site and associated high fence does have an urbanising influence as will future development of the prison site. There could be some scope for extending potential development on the prison site into the existing playing fields. This site could then be enhanced as a landscape buffer and area of multifunctional GI to mitigate development on the allocated site from the wider countryside. This area was not assessed by the 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment. The 2018 Northeys assessment considered this area to be of medium to high sensitivity and low capacity.
- e) BEX0100 and BEX0140. The western fields of BEX0100 are sensitive and would not be suitable for development due to the open character and relationship with the levels. The eastern part of the BEX0100, east of no. 25 Barnhorn Road, and BEX0140 could be suitable for development in association with the neighbouring allocated site BEX9. Consideration would need to be given to providing a buffer to the ancient woodland and listed buildings. The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment considered BEX0100 to have medium capacity and 0140 to have high capacity. The 2018 Northeys study did not assess this area.

4.3 Combe Haven Valley

The Combe Haven Valley character area wraps around the north and east of the urban area of Bexhill. An extensive part of the character area is part of the designated strategic gap between Bexhill and Hastings. The southern part of the character area between the two towns is the Combe Valley Countryside Park.

- a) BEX0162. The site area has low to medium sensitivity. There could be scope for small scale development which does not extend beyond the existing gardens. This would be a continuation of the existing ribbon development between The Thorns and Lunsford Cross. A well-defined and defensible buffer would be needed on the north-eastern boundary with the wider countryside. This area has not been assessed by previous landscape sensitivity or capacity studies.
- b) BEX0126 and BEX 0149. BEX0149 is sensitive as it is elevated above the road, which is in a slight cutting. Houses on this site would be very prominent by comparison to the development on the allocated site to the south of the road. In this context the road could be considered a defensible buffer to the countryside in this location. From this point of view BEX0149 is not suitable for development. BEX0126 is less sensitive as it is lower in the landscape and is screened from the wider countryside. There are open views from the A269 roundabout into this area towards the existing house, which would need to be considered. The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment considered BEX0126 to have medium capacity, BEX 0149 was only assessed in the southern,

less elevated part, also as medium capacity. The 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study considered BEX0126 to have moderate to high capacity and BEX0149 moderate capacity, again only the area closest to the road was assessed and not the more elevated part of the area. It should be noted that these assessments were carried out before the construction of the road, when these areas were contiguous with the allocated area (BEX3a) which lies to the south of the road.

- c) BEX0164 and BEX0165. These areas are sensitive as they are open to rural views and are more closely associated in character with the wider countryside than the urban area. The northern part of BEX0164 is elevated and widely visible. The public footpath which crosses BEX0164 affords some long views to the south and the coast. A further constraint in the southern part of BEX0165 are groups of mature trees. As with b) above the road could be considered a defensible buffer to the countryside in this location. The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment considered the area to the south of the public footpath within BEX0165 to have high capacity and the area to the north was not assessed. This assessment considered that the whole of BEX0164 had high capacity. For BEX0165 the 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study assessed the area between the footpath and the road, as moderate to low capacity, the area to the north of the footpath was not assessed. BEX0164 was only assessed in the southwest corner and was of moderate to low capacity. It should be noted that these assessments were carried out prior to the construction of the new access road.
- d) BEX0163. There could be some scope for development in the eastern part of this area as it is lower in the landscape than the other areas on the north side of the Haven Brook Avenue. The land immediately to the south of BEX0164 is more elevated and therefore more sensitive to change. Buffers would be required to the ancient woodland and the road (to retain the rural character of the access road). The 2008 Landscape Capacity Assessment considered the area to have high capacity. The 2015 North Bexhill Landscape and Ecology Study assessed most of the area as having moderate capacity and the more elevated area in the northwest corner as moderate to low capacity. It should be noted that these assessments were done prior to the construction of the new access road, which has now defined the northern edge of the built-up area.
- e) BEX0102. The site is within the CVCP and the strategic gap. This site is not suitable for development as it is habitat mitigation and public space. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities. This area has not been considered in previous assessments.
- f) BEX0087. The site is within the CVCP and the strategic gap. The character and sensitivity of the site will change due to encroaching development. The southern part is more visually sensitive as it is elevated and is viewed from the PROW. If the site is considered suitable for development this should be restricted to the northern areas, however access to the northern field is constrained by the need to breach

significant tree belts. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities. This area has not been considered in previous assessments.

- g) BEX0200. The site is within the CVCP and the strategic gap. If, despite these current designations, the principle of development were to be accepted here, there could be some scope for low density development (5-10 houses) associated with the existing houses and gardens in the western part of the site. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities. This area has not been considered in previous assessments.
- h) BEX0183. The site is within the CVCP and the strategic gap. It is rural in character it is also visually prominent. In this context it would not be suitable for development. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities. This area has not been considered in previous assessments.
- i) BEX0146. The site is within the CVCP and the strategic gap. There could be some scope for development of the western part of the site, as a natural extension to Pebsham, avoiding the steeper slopes. The eastern part is more closely related to the wider CVCP and would be of greater (Moderate to High) sensitivity. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities. This area has not been considered in previous assessments.

Appendix A 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 Woodland (or semi- natural ancient woodland): In the United Kingdom, an ancient woodland is a woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

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 and fieldscapes: The pattern of hedges or walls that define fields in farmed landscapes.

High Weald AONB Key Components: The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019- 2024, Statement of Significance identifies five key characteristics of the AONB that need to be taken into account in decision making. These are:

- Geology, landform and water systems.
- Settlement
- Routeways
- Woodland
- Field and heath

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: 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: 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: 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: 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: 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: 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: 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: 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 Susceptibility: Landscape susceptibility is the degree to which a defined landscape and its associated visual qualities and attributes might respond to the specific development type / development scenario or other change without undue negative effects on landscape character and the visual resource.

Landscape Sensitivity: 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: 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: 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.

Visual Resource: The visual context for an area of landscape including the type and quality of views and the receptors that experience the views.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0179

County Landscape Character Area: Pevensy Levels

Date: 27.01.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open	x						The area is very open and large scale
Landform	Ridgetop	x						The site is on an elevated ridge top and is a trig. Point, which is prominent above the surrounding levels.
Landcover, land use and condition				x			Arable	Mixed arable and pasture with hedgerow boundaries and some tree groups. Some loss of field boundaries. Reasonable condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Some detractors	Some modern agricultural buildings and associated clutter. Views to the adjacent former Northeye Prison complex. Some detractors.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The prison has treed boundaries. The site is remote from the built-up area of Bexhill. It would be difficult to mitigate potential development or to create a natural extension to the settlement edge.
Scenic quality and character	Ridgetop		x					The site has character as a rural ridge that sits above the levels and the long views from the area contribute to the character. There has been some loss of historic field structure due to loss of hedges.
Tranquillity			x	x			A259	The southern part is influenced by the busy A259. The northern part is more tranquil.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Hooe levels	x						The elevated character and long views across the distinctive levels and the Northeye settlement add to local sense of place.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	Pevensey levels	x						Wide views across the levels from much of the area include views to the sea, the South Downs and the High Weald.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW	x						Two public footpaths cross the area from north to south. Views from the A259.
Landscape value			x					The area is locally of value as the rural setting to Northeye and Cooden. The public footpaths give access to the wider levels
Visual value		x						The wide views across the levels are valued as are views back towards the ridgetop from an extensive area.
Mitigation Potential								
Conservation and enhancement of an intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve and enhance field boundaries, replace lost hedgerows. Increase the landscape buffer to the former Northeye Prison site. Restoration of a degraded landscape : N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.		x						The site has a strong sense of place due to the ridgetop location which extends into the Pevensey Levels. It is contiguous with the surrounding countryside. The open and elevated rural character would make it particularly sensitive to change. The area is not suitable for development.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0019

County Landscape Character Area: Pevensy Levels

Date: 27.1.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open		x					The site is small scale. It is open on the boundary with the A259 and enclosed on other boundaries.
Landform				x			Gentle	The site slopes gently from north to south
Landcover, land use and condition	Pasture		x					The site is pasture grazed by ponies and enclosed by tall, vegetated hedges. Good well managed condition
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			A259	The busy A259 and an adjacent house and garden.
Settlement pattern and edges	Soft edge		x					The site is outside the settlement boundary and is separated from the Northeye settlement by a defined tree belt. It would be difficult to mitigate potential development or to create a natural extension to the settlement edge.
Scenic quality and character	Rural		x					The site is contiguous with the countryside to the south even though it is severed from this by the A259. Some historic character as fieldscape with defined boundaries.
Tranquillity						x	A25	A259 traffic influences tranquillity.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	The long views to the Pevensey Levels to the south provide some sense of place, otherwise lacking.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	Pevensey Levels			x				Long views to the Pevensey Levels otherwise limited value.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	A259		x					Users of the A259 in vehicles, cycling and pedestrians. Long views across the levels to the south
Landscape value				x				The site has limited value as there is no public access.
Visual value			x					The site is of local visual value as an open green space on the edge of the built-up area.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve the pastoral character and boundary vegetation. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The site is not of great landscape importance as it is influenced by the road and the neighbouring residential development. The elevated nature of the site and relationship with the wider countryside would make it sensitive to development. Development on the site would require a robust landscape buffer to the A259 and wider levels landscape and this would detract from the open character.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0103

County Landscape Character Area: Pevensey Levels

Date: 27.01.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	The site is enclosed and is small in scale.
Landform				x			Gentle	Gently sloping and steeper to the west
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees		x					Pasture and mature treed boundaries. Good condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Prison site	The buildings on the former Northeye prison site are evident and the neighbouring house and garden with close board fence.
Settlement pattern and edges				x			Semi-rural	The site is outside settlement boundaries and has soft treed boundaries. The buildings on the prison site are evident development of the site could be a natural extension to the existing built-up area.
Scenic quality and character				x				The site has some character as a green field site bounded by mature trees but is not of significant scenic value
Tranquillity				x				Influenced by rat run traffic on Coneyburrow Lane and the presence of buildings.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	The site lacks distinctiveness and is ordinary.
Views related to designated landscapes or				x			None	There are some longer views out of the site to the north. Otherwise, there are limited views onto the site from public areas.

locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors				x			Few	The site is enclosed and public views are limited to those from a short section of Coneyburrow Lane. The neighbouring houses have views across the area.
Landscape value				x				The site has limited and very localised value as it is ordinary in character and is not particularly rare or distinctive.
Visual value				x				Views into the site are limited.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve mature trees and boundary tree groups. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.				x				The site is not particularly sensitive due to the surrounding suburban influences, lack of distinct character and enclosed nature. There could be some scope for residential development as a discrete extension to the Northeys settlement.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0178

County Landscape Character Area: Pevensey Levels

Date: 27.01.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness			x				Open	The site is relatively open to the levels on the western boundary and enclosed by tree belts on the other 3 sides. The eastern field is more enclosed.
Landform					x		Flat	The site is level.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees and water		x					Pasture, some wet, bounded by mature tree belts and a stream. The eastern field parcel has been used as a motorcycle scrambling track and has an urban fringe character.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)					x		Urban fringe	The site is adjacent to the playing fields of the former prison site and a motorcycle club area with a modern agricultural barn. The high fence around the prison site and power lines are detractors.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The site is separated from development at Northeye by the open playing fields of the prison site. It would be difficult to mitigate potential development or to create a natural extension to the settlement edge.
Scenic quality and character	Levels		x					The area is contiguous with the wider Hooe levels and has some valued landscape features.
Tranquillity				x			Motorcycle track	It is relatively tranquil as it is set back from the lane and houses at Northeye. Future development of the former prison site could reduce this tranquillity. If still active the motorcycle track would detract when in use.

Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Levels		x					The area has some sense of place as countryside and due to proximity to the Northeye settlement. The relationship with the wider levels adds to this.
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x			No designations	There are long views across the area from the Hooe ridge to the west and south.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					A public footpath runs around the southern boundary and there are long views from other publicly accessible areas to the north and west.
Landscape value				x				The site is valued as part of the levels landscape. It is not particularly rare and is influenced by detractors.
Visual value			x					The site is of value in local views.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve and reinforce the boundary tree belts. Retain the pastoral character. Restoration of degraded landscape: Restore track area and remove large agricultural sheds.								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					As the site is contiguous with the Hooe Levels and shares characteristics with that area it would be sensitive to housing development. The presence of the former prison site and associated high fence does have an urbanising influence as will future development of the prison site. There could be some scope for extending potential development on the prison site into the existing playing fields. This site could then be enhanced as a landscape buffer and area of multifunctional GI to mitigate development on the allocated site from the wider countryside.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0140 and 0100

County Landscape Character Area: Pevensey Levels

Date: 27.1.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and openness	Open in the west		x	x			Enclosed in the east	The western fields are open to the Pevensey Levels. The eastern part is more enclosed from the rear of 125 Barnhorn Road eastwards.
Landform				x			Gentle slope	Gently sloping from the Barnhorn ridge towards the Pevensey Levels in the south.
Landcover, land use and condition	Pasture, trees and hedges		x	x			Caravans and farm uses	Pasture with mature hedges boundaries and these are more sensitive in the three eastern fields. The eastern part supports a caravan park, a historic farm settlement and a group of modern and modern farm buildings. Good condition apart from the extensive farmyard area.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Some detractors	The farmyard and associated uses are detractors. The caravan park is pleasant and tidy.
Settlement pattern and edges			x	x			Ribbon	Settlement here is characteristically ribbon development strung along the A259. It would be difficult to mitigate potential development in the western more open fields or to create a natural extension to the settlement edge. The more enclosed area around the farm buildings and caravan park would be less sensitive.
Scenic quality and character	Levels		x	x			Detractors	The western fields have retained some historic character and landscape features on the well treed boundaries. The eastern part lacks scenic quality.

Tranquillity				x			Urban fringe	This is impacted by the land uses on the eastern part and the proximity of houses and gardens to the western fields.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Limited	The western fields have a stronger sense of place as they are more closely related to the wider Pevensey Levels. The historic farmstead and listed buildings provide a localised a sense of place
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	Listed buildings		x					There are long views for the eastern fields towards the Pevensey levels and these fields are prominent in views from the wider levels. There are two listed buildings with views across the eastern part of the site.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					Two public footpaths cross the site areas. Views from houses and gardens across the western fields.
Landscape value			x	x				The western fields are of higher value as they are contiguous with the wider levels. The eastern fields are distinctly different and more enclosed with several urban fringe influences.
Visual value			x					The areas are viewed from public rights of way. The western fields are of greater visual value from the wider levels.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve and enhance mature trees and hedges. Restoration of degraded landscape: Remove modern farm developments and detracting features.								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x	x				The western fields are sensitive and would not be suitable for development due to the open character and relationship with the levels. The eastern part of the site east of no. 25 Barnhorn Road could be suitable for development in association with the neighbouring allocated site BEX9. Consideration would need to be given to providing a buffer to the ancient woodland and listed buildings.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0048

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 27.1.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Some open areas		x	x				The area has some more open areas in the central area which is more elevated. The northern and western parts are smaller fields enclosed by mature tree belts. The fields are mostly small scale with a larger field at the top of the ridge. A medium scale landscape.
Landform	Ridge		x					The landscape is on a ridge which extends out from the Barnhorn ridge and slopes down to the windy rural lanes which enclose it to the west and east. The northern and eastern fields are more level.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees		x					Farmland under pasture with historic field boundaries of mature tree belts.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors			x				There are few if any detractors. Houses strung along Sandhurst Lane. Pleasant pastoral landscape. Some houses on the southern edge.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The site area is outside the settlement edge and the boundaries to existing scattered development on Sandhurst Lane are soft.
Scenic quality and character	Historic		x					The site has a pleasant rural character as the pattern of historic assart fieldscapes is largely intact. The mature tree belts predominantly of oak are significant landscape features.
Tranquillity	Tranquil		x					The area is relatively tranquil with some rat running traffic on the rural lanes.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Strong		x					The area is distinctive as an historic wealden landscape enclosed by windy rural lanes.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	Listed building		x					A public footpath crosses the southern edge. A listed building adjacent to this path.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					There are long views from the public footpath across the site area to the wider countryside to the north. There are views onto the area from Coneyburrow and Sandhurst Lanes. Both are used by walkers and cyclists.
Landscape value			x					The site has local value as unspoilt rural landscape with several historic features. There is limited public access.
Visual value			x					There are some long views and notably from a PROW.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve mature trees and the pastoral character. Consider opportunities to increase public access from the urban area. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The area does form an undesignated fragile rural gap between the built-up edge of Little Common and the expanding settlement of Northeye. In this context it is sensitive to change. The topography and historic character also make it sensitive. The eastern area adjacent to the existing ribbon development along Sandhurst Lane. However, access to this area would be impractical along the very narrow lane and would not be possible from Luffield Drive as it would breach the woodland edge between the lane and the new development. This area could offer opportunities to provide multifunctional Green Infrastructure for the growing population and as biodiversity net gain for other development on the urban edges of Bexhill.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0176

County Landscape Character Areas: Pevensey Levels / South Slopes of the High Weald 50:50 split

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open		x					The area is very open and is of a medium to large scale.
Landform	Undulating /steep		x					The area is undulating and rises from a stream valley which lies to the south. The land rises steeply to the Whydown ridge in the northern section.
Landcover, land use and condition	Trees and streams		x					Mixed pasture and arable farmland. Streams on the northern and southern boundaries. Some loss of field structure due to arable and some well treed field boundaries in the north. Good condition as well managed farmland. Wooded stream valleys.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors		x					There are few man made influences apart from agriculture. A caravan park and some houses around the boundaries.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The area is remote from the settlement of Bexhill and forms the rural setting for the hamlet of Whydown.
Scenic quality and character	High		x					The area is scenic and pleasant rural countryside. It is contiguous with the wider countryside between Whydown and Hooe.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The area is very tranquil.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Strong		x					The area is distinctive as part of the Hooe Levels landscape. The area which rises to the Whydown ridge is distinctive as the setting for the hamlet.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	Wide views		x					There are wide open vistas across the area to the wider countryside, Some long views across the area from two listed buildings on the Whydown ridge.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PRsOW		x					Several public footpaths cross the area which enjoy long views across most of the area.
Landscape value			x					The area has a regional value as part of the Pevensey levels landscape which is accessible to long distance footpaths.
Visual value			x					The area is of high visual value due to the long views across and public access.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve the habitat value of the stream valleys, mature trees and hedges. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The area is sensitive as it is contiguous with the wider Pevensey Levels countryside, and it is of high visual sensitivity. This landscape is not suitable for development. Whydown has a unique character as a small settlement outside the urban area, but at the same time being close to Bexhill. The historic narrow and windy lanes provide restricted access opportunities. The recreational opportunities offered by the lanes are affected by rat run traffic. If the area were to be considered suitable for development it would need to be small scale and conserve the rural character of the area. Access is a major issue however a new route into the area could be an opportunity to restrict traffic on the rural lanes and enhance them for recreation.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0159

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 27.1.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	To the south and west of the stream the area is small scale and enclosed. The fields to the north are larger scale and open within the site but enclosed form the surrounding landscape.
Landform				x			Gentle slopes	Level and relatively low lying with gentle slopes down to the stream valley.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees and water.		x					Pasture, mostly improved. Mature treed field boundaries and the ancient woodland on the eastern boundary. The well vegetated stream corridor in the southern part of the area. Good condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors			x				Power lines cross the area. The new development to the south can be glimpsed through the trees. Some modern and derelict agricultural buildings around the boundaries.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x	x				The site is outside the development area and is rural in character. Areas to the south and east are built up.
Scenic quality and character	Strong in parts		x	x				The area has a rural character however, apart from the stream valley the landscape is not particularly rare or distinctive. The key landscape features are mature trees belts.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The area is tranquil.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Limited	The area has some sense of place but is not particularly distinctive.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x			Few	Limited. Views from the public footpaths will be locally valued. There are views into the area from Sandhurst Lane which is used by cyclists and walkers.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					A public footpath crosses the area along the eastern boundary. Another crosses the southern boundary. These both give access to the area from the new development to the south. There are no long views into the area from the wider landscape.
Landscape value				x				The area is of local value as accessible countryside close to residential areas. Otherwise limited due to tree cover and topography.
Visual value			x					Views from public rights of way and the lane.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve the stream valley and associated vegetation. Protect and enhance mature trees and woodland. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x	x				The stream corridor is the most sensitive landscape feature of the site area. The sensitivity of the wider area is lower than that of BEX0048 due to the more level topography and relatively intensive agricultural use. There could be some scope for development in the central part of the area. Consideration would need to be given to providing adequate buffers to the ancient woodland and Sandhurst Lane. Separation and avoidance of coalescence with the hamlet of Whydown. Any proposal would need to ensure protection and enhancement of the stream corridor and enhanced public access to this.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0177

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	Mostly enclosed and small scale. The southern fields are more open.
Landform	Steep on parts		x	x				Gently undulating and falling to the woodland in the east. The eastern field adjacent to Cowdray Park Road is steeper.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees		x					Pastoral farmland with some arable in the southern field. Mature treed field boundaries and some woodland /scrub. Houses and gardens along Sandhurst Lane and a farmyard at Gotham Farm. Good condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)			x	x			Farm	The farmyard and associated modern buildings. Some historic cottages.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					Whydown is a dispersed settlement of ribbon development strung along the country lanes. Garden edges are soft. The area is rural in character. Extensive development could conflict with this character.
Scenic quality and character	Pleasant		x					Pleasant rural character. The area has some historic character and notably the northern two fields which have intact field boundaries with mature oaks. There is some modern infill development between the historic farm buildings and older cottages. As the area is not perceived from the wider countryside this character is of local importance only.
Tranquillity				x			Busy lane	Sandhurst and Whydown Lanes are rat runs with some speeding traffic. Otherwise the area is relatively tranquil
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Historic		x					The area has some distinctiveness due to the historic character and typical wealden architecture. The narrow windy lanes contribute

								to this character. The hamlet of Whydown has some unique characteristics.
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x				Views across the area are local. There are some longer views across the area from the fields of BEX0159 which lies to the south.
Vistas and Typical Receptors			x					Two public footpaths cross the area and there are views across from Whydown and Sandhurst Lanes. Both are used by cyclists and walkers as well as cars.
Landscape value			x					The area is of local value.
Visual value			x					The locally valued views are from public rights of way and roads.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve and enhance treed field boundaries. Protect mature trees. Enhance the safety and amenity of the lanes for recreational use. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The area is sensitive as a small fragment of historic landscape. Whydown has a unique character as a small settlement outside the urban area but at the same time being close to Bexhill. The historic narrow and windy lanes provide restricted access opportunities. The recreational opportunities offered by the lanes are affected by rat run traffic. If the area were to be considered suitable for development it would need to be small scale and conserve the rural character of the area. Access is a major issue however a new route into the area could be an opportunity to restrict traffic on the rural lanes and enhance them for recreation. In this context if BEX0159 were suitable for development proposals for that area should consider potential future access to this area.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change NOTE : Desk top study as the sites are difficult to access.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0133 and BEX0049 **County Landscape Character Area:** South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness					x			The areas are small scale and very enclosed.
Landform	Slope			x				From the contours on OS mapping the areas appear to slope to the west. Similar contours to neighbouring development on Cowdray Park Road.
Landcover, land use and condition	Trees		x					BEX0049 has a residential property with gardens and a tennis court. Mature trees and woodland cover one third of the site area. BEX0013 appears to be unmanaged with encroaching scrub and mature trees around the boundaries. There appears to be informal public access. From the adjacent footpath.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Houses	Adjacent residential areas otherwise few detractors. BEX0049 appears to be a garden.
Settlement pattern and edges				x			Edge of settlement	There are soft garden edges to the residential area. The sites are closely related to this suburban built up edge.
Scenic quality and character				x			Limited	The areas are not perceived from the wider landscape. The mature trees are the most significant landscape features. Otherwise an ordinary landscape.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					This is influenced by the adjacent houses bit the area is relatively quiet.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	There is nothing particularly distinctive.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x			None	The sites are very enclosed with no long views on or out.
Vistas and Typical Receptors				x			Few	The trees on the site can be seen from surrounding residential areas. There may be glimpses through the trees to BEX0133 from the public footpath in the woods
Landscape value				x				The mature trees on the site are of landscape value. The scrubby areas and woodland have habitat value.
Visual value				x				This is limited as there are few views onto the areas.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve mature trees and habitats. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.				x				There may be some scope for development and particularly of BEX0049. Access to BEX0133 would be constrained by the mature trees. This area may also be sensitive habitat and a buffer would be required to adjacent ancient woodland.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change NOTE: This is mostly a desk based assessment as views in to the area are limited to glimpses from the lane

Number of assessment unit: BEX0175

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	The area is of medium scale and enclosed.
Landform				x			Gentle	The area is gently undulating and falls towards a stream valley on the northern boundary.
Landcover, land use and condition				x			Horsey pasture	Most of the area appears to be under horsiculture with stabling, a sand school and temporary fencing. Much of it seems to be intensively grazed. The northern and western fields have mature treed field boundaries. Mature trees on the boundary with the lane. Some loss of structure o historic filed boundaries.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)					x		Horsey	Horsiculture. Houses opposite the site on Whydown Lane
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The area is rural in character and remote from the built-up area. Existing development tis limited to ribbon development along the lane and larger properties in grounds set back from the lane. Lare scale development would be out of character.
Scenic quality and character				x			Limited	The area is not perceived from the wider landscape. It has been degraded by the horse related uses.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The site area is relatively tranquil apart from traffic n the lane.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	The area is not particularly distinctive.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x			Few	There are two listed buildings adjacent to the site. These are screened from the site by mature trees
Vistas and Typical Receptors				x			Limited	These are limited to users of the site and glimpsed views from the lane.
Landscape value				x				The site would be of value to keepers of horses within otherwise the value is limited.
Visual value					x			Public views in a limited to glimpses from Whydown Lane.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve the stream valley and associated vegetation. Retain and protect mature trees. Restoration of degraded landscape: Replace lost field boundaries.								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.				x				Whydown has a unique character as a small settlement outside the urban area, but at the same time being close to Bexhill. The historic narrow and windy lanes provide restricted access opportunities. The recreational opportunities offered by the lanes are affected by rat run traffic. If the area were to be considered suitable for development it would need to be small scale and conserve the rural character of the area. Access is a major issue however a new route into the area could be an opportunity to restrict traffic on the rural lanes and enhance them for recreation.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change NOTE: The assessment is desktop as the areas have no public access.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0174

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness			x				Enclosed	The area is medium scale and open to the wider landscape.
Landform				x			Level	The area slopes gently to the northeast.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees		x					The area is meadow pasture with wooded boundaries, regenerating woodland and tree groups.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors in part		x	x				Traffic on Peartree Lane as a rat run. Part of the area appears to be used for materials recycling and vehicle storage.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The area is rural and remote from the built-up areas.
Scenic quality and character	Pleasant		x					The area has a pleasant rural character which is characteristic of the South Slopes landscape. It is contiguous with the wider landscape to the north.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The site is relatively tranquil with some noise from traffic on Peartree Lane.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Some		x					The area has sense of place as part of the wider countryside to the north.
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views				x			None	The area is enclosed and there are no adjacent designations.

including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors				x			Limited	There are glimpsed views across the area from Peartree Lane.
Landscape value			x					The area is locally valued as part of the wider countryside.
Visual value				x				The area is relatively enclosed from public views.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Protect trees and woodland. Restore the central field boundary hedge. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The area is characteristic of the wider countryside to the northwest of Peartree Lane and is remote from the built-up area. The northern field is more enclosed. This needs more investigation as it is not viewed from any PROW. There are glimpses into the area from Peartree Lane. Access to this area is constrained by the narrow nature of the lane. The area would not be suitable for development as it is part of the wider countryside.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change NOTE: Some of the assessment is desktop as the areas have no public access.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0173

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	The area is medium scale and enclosed.
Landform				x			Gentle	The area slopes gently to the northeast.
Landcover, land use and condition	Pastoral		x					The area is meadow pasture with wooded boundaries on three sides.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors		x					Traffic on Peartree Lane as a rat run. Otherwise few detractors
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The area is rural and remote from the built-up areas.
Scenic quality and character	Pleasant		x					The area has a pleasant rural character which is characteristic of the South Slopes landscape. It is not perceived from the wider landscape
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The site is relatively tranquil with some noise from traffic on Peartree Lane.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Some	The area has some sense of place as part of the wider countryside.
Views related to designated landscapes or				x			None	The area is enclosed and there are no adjacent designations.

locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					There are views across the area from a public footpath which crosses the southern boundary.
Landscape value			x					The area is locally valued as part of the wider countryside.
Visual value			x					Views from a PROW.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Protect treed field boundaries. Restore the central field boundary hedge. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The area is characteristic of the wider countryside to the northwest of Peartree Lane and is remote from the built-up area. The northern field is more enclosed. This needs more investigation as it is not viewed from any PROW. There are glimpses into the area from Peartree Lane. Access to this area is constrained by trees and woodland and the narrow nature of the lane. The southern field would not be suitable for development as it is more closely related to the countryside than the built-up area.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0113

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x				The field is enclosed from the countryside and from Ninfield Road. It is small scale
Landform				x			Gentle	The area is gently undulating and falls towards the northwest. It is elevated above Ninfield Road.
Landcover, land use and condition	Trees		x					The site is mowed grassland, possibly cut for hay. There is a modern agricultural building in the north field. Mature trees around the boundaries and a hedge between the two fields. A scrubby bank adjacent to the road.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Road	The busy Ninfield Road and houses to the east.
Settlement pattern and edges				x			Ribbon	The development along Ninfield Road and Potman's Lane in this location is typically ribbon development. Thorne Crescent is an isolated nucleated modern development to the southeast. High density development would not be in character.
Scenic quality and character			x				Lacking	The fields have some features which add to character and it is rural; however it is not scenic or perceived from the wider countryside.
Tranquillity					x		Traffic	The busy Ninfield Road detracts from tranquillity

Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	The area lacks distinctiveness or sense of place apart from being part of a gap which separates Lunsford Cross from the Thorne Crescent.
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x			None	Views into the area are limited.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	Park users		x					There are glimpsed views across the area from Ninfield Road for drivers and pedestrians. Some houses overlook the area. Users of the caravan park and farm shop have views across the area from the access road.
Landscape value				x				The site lacks distinctive features apart from mature trees.
Visual value				x				Public views are limited to those from the road and caravan access.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Retain and enhance the tree belts on the boundaries. Restoration of degraded landscape: Remove the derelict barn.								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.				x				The site area has medium sensitivity as it is rural in character. There could be scope for small scale medium to low density development in part of the site. A well defined and defensible buffer would be needed on the boundaries with the road and the recreational caravan site. A defined landscape gap needs to be retained between Lunsford Cross and The Thorns. The western field is more enclosed and less sensitive than the more elevated and open eastern field.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0132

County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open		x					The area is of a medium scale and is relatively open.
Landform				x			Gentle	The area is gently undulating and falls towards a valley in the southeast.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees and water		x					The area is predominantly pasture with well treed field boundaries. Stream valleys.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Residential	Adjacent residential development and Chestnut Meadows camp site. Views to the urban edge of Bexhill. Some agricultural type buildings.
Settlement pattern and edges				x				The edges to neighbouring development are softened by vegetation. The western field is more remote from these influences. The two eastern fields are more closely related to the urban edge than the western one.
Scenic quality and character	Pleasant		x					The site has a pleasant rural character and as part of the south slopes has a similar character to the wider wealden landscape.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The site is relatively tranquil but less tranquil on the boundary with St Mary's Lane. The caravan site may be noisy in the summer months.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	The area is lacking a strong sense of place.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features					x		Few	There are no local cultural features or valued landscapes. There are views towards the area from the Bexhill cemetery.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					There are views across the area from the public footpath which crosses the north of the area.
Landscape value				x				The area is locally valued and is part of the gap between the built-up area of Bexhill and Lunsford Cross.
Visual value			x					Views across this area of countryside are valued by users of the public footpath and the caravan park.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Protect and reinforce mature tree belts. Conserve the natural character of the stream valley. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x	x				There could be some scope for development in the three eastern fields as this is more closely related to the development at Thorne crescent and Chestnut Meadows. The stream valley forms a natural buffer between the edge of Bexhill and Thorne Crescent. The western field is more closely related to the character of area BEX0173 and is more rural.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0172, BEX0122, BEX0130 County Landscape Character Area: South Slopes of the High Weald

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness					x		Enclosed	The areas are small scale and enclosed
Landform					x		Level	The area is relatively flat.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees		x					Grassland paddock in the central field, a house and garden in the northern field, unmanaged scrub with mature trees in the southern section. Reasonable condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Houses	Houses and gardens, roads on each side.
Settlement pattern and edges					x		Urban influences	The area is halfway between the built -up edge of Bexhill and the settlement at Lunsford Cross. It is not rural or countryside and is part of the gap between settlement however it already has some development.
Scenic quality and character					x		Low	The area is not scenic mature trees contribute to the character.
Tranquillity					x		Roads	Tranquillity is reduced by traffic and the presence of houses.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place					x		Lacking	The area lacks senses of place and is ordinary.
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views						x		There are no valued views

including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors				x				Views from adjacent houses and St Mary's Lane. Views across the southern part from a little used and overgrown public footpath.
Landscape value					x			There are few distinctive features. The unmanaged southern area has mature trees and may be of ecological value.
Visual value					x			There are limited public views, views from the public footpath and the lane could be enhanced.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of an intact unspoilt landscape: N/A								
Restoration of degraded landscape: Introduce positive management in the southern area possibly for wildlife. Remove tall conifer hedge.								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.					x			The area offers scope for housing development as this could enhance local landscape character and views. The southern area maybe of wildlife value and could be considered as a multifunctional GI corridor incorporating enhanced amenity for the public footpath.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0162

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness			x					The wider field is large scale and open to the north
Landform					x		Flat	The site is level.
Landcover, land use and condition				x			Few features	Arable and laid to grass. Hedged boundaries to three sides.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Road	The busy Ninfield Road and houses to west and east.
Settlement pattern and edges				x			Ribbon	The development along Ninfield Road and Potman’s Lane in this location is typically ribbon development. Extensive development would not be in character.
Scenic quality and character				x			Lacking	The field lacks landscape features and is not particularly scenic.
Tranquillity					x		Traffic	The busy Ninfield Road detracts from tranquillity
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	The area lacks distinctiveness or sense of place.
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views				x			Few	There are wide views across the area as it is open to the countryside to the north.

including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors				x			Road users	There are views across the area from Ninfield Road for drivers and pedestrians. Some houses overlook the area.
Landscape value				x				The site lacks distinctive features and is not accessible.
Visual value				x				Public views are limited to those from the road.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Retain and enhance the hedged boundaries. Provide a landscape buffer to the countryside. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.				x				The site area has low to medium sensitivity. There could be scope for small scale development which does not extend beyond the existing gardens. A well defined and defensible buffer would be need on the boundary with the wider countryside.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0126 and BEX0149

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 1.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open in part		x	x				BEX0149 is medium scale and open. BEX0126 is more enclosed and small scale.
Landform				x			Gentle	The land is elevated above the A2619 and slopes gently down to it.
Landcover, land use and condition				x			Pasture	The area is grazed pasture with pony paddocks in BEX0216. A belt of trees encloses the southern boundary of BEX0129.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Road	The new, Haven Brook, Avenue separates the area from the landscape to the south.
Settlement pattern and edges				x			New development	The site is outside the built-up area and is separated from it. There is an allocated housing site to the south of the A2691. Which will extend the settlement edge up to the edge of the site.
Scenic quality and character				x			Lacking features	The fields have some character as the setting of the historic Freezelands Lane and settlement. It does lack landscape features.
Tranquillity				x			Road	The area lacks tranquillity due to the proximity of the road.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Low	The area does not have a strong sense of place.
Views related to designated landscapes or				x			Few	There are views across the area from Freezelands Lane.

locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors			x					A public footpath crosses the area and affords views across it. Freezelands Lane is also a public right of way and historic routeway. Views across BEX0216 from the house.
Landscape value				x				The area is locally valued as it gives access to the countryside.
Visual value			x					The elevated character and views across from public access routes makes the area more sensitive
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Replace lost field boundaries. Plant tree and hedges along the A2691 to reduce the impact of the road on the area. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x	x				BEX 0149 is sensitive as it is elevated above the road which forms a defensible boundary to the countryside in this location. From this point of view it is not suitable for development. BEX0126 is less sensitive as it is lower in the landscape and is screened.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0164 and BEX0165

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 15.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open in parts		x					The sites are of medium scale. BEX0164 is enclosed and BEX0165 is open to long views to the south.
Landform	Elevated		x					The area is elevated with some steep slopes.
Landcover, land use and condition	Mature trees		x					Pasture with well treed hedgerows and mature trees.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors		x					There are few detractors with only historic farmland influences.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The area is outside the settlement boundaries and separated from proposed new development in the south by the A2691.
Scenic quality and character	Pleasant		x					These areas are pleasant and rural and are contiguous with the wider countryside to the north. They have historic characteristics in fieldscapes, lanes and boundaries.
Tranquillity	Quiet in Places		x	x				The areas are quiet away from the A2691.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Some		x					The area has characteristics which are similar to the High Weald AONB which lies to the north. The historic farmland character is reinforced by ancient track and a listed building.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x			Few	There are views across BEX0164 from the listed Cockerels farmhouse. There are views across BEX0165 from Watermill Lane.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					There are wide vistas from BEX0164 towards the south and across both sites from public footpaths.
Landscape value			x					The sites are of local value as they are pleasant countryside crossed by public footpaths. The value will increase with the extension of residential development on the north side of Bexhill.
Visual value			x					Extensive views are afforded across the areas from public rights of way and the A2691.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Retain pastoral character, mature trees and hedges. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The A2691 in this location does create a defensible buffer to the wider countryside. These areas are sensitive as they are open to rural views and are more closely associate in character with the wider countryside than the urban area.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0163

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 5.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	Medium scale and enclosed
Landform				x			Gentle	Gently Sloping
Landcover, land use and condition	Trees and wood		x					Pasture and adjacent ancient woodland. Mature trees.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Road	New roads and planned development to the south of the road.
Settlement pattern and edges				x			New settlement	The new development will extend up to the road to the south. This will be buffered from the road by new tree planting. The road could be considered the edge of development.
Scenic quality and character	Rural		x					The area is pleasant and rural but influenced by the road and planned development.
Tranquillity					x		Road	This is influenced by the road.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place					x		Lacking	The mature woodland provides some sense of place but generally lacking.
Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views					x		None	There are no valued views.

including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors				x			Road	The area is enclosed from wider views and views in are restricted to those from the road.
Landscape value				x				The site is of low value as an area of countryside severed by the road.
Visual value				x				Views are local and limited in extent.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve mature trees and woodland. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.				x				There could be some scope for development associated with the road. Buffers would be required to the ancient woodland and the road (to retain the rural character of the access road).

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0102

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 15.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open		x					The site is open and of medium scale.
Landform				x			Level	The site is level.
Landcover, land use and condition	Habitat	x						The site is habitat mitigation relating to the Combe Valley Way construction for badger foraging and is wild meadow. It is in good condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Road	New road construction and adjacent housing.
Settlement pattern and edges			x					Then site is on the edge of settlement and has soft boundaries with this. It is rural.
Scenic quality and character			x					The site is influenced by urban development however it is rural and the character has been enhanced as wild meadow.
Tranquillity					x		Road	This is influenced by the presence of the road.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Some	The area has some sense of place as accessible open space on the urban edge which has been enhanced as habitat.
Views related to designated landscapes or	CVCP		x					There are views across the area from the CVCP.

locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features								
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					The CVCP and the greenway associated with the Combe Valley Way.
Landscape value			x					The area is of local value as accessible space within the CVCP.
Visual value			x					Views from CVCP and the greenway.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve and manage the wildflower meadow and boundary tree features. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					This site is not suitable for development as it is habitat mitigation and public space. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0087

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 15.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	The upper slopes are open to long views to the north otherwise the site is enclosed by trees and woodland. It is of medium scale.
Landform	Elevated		x					Gently sloping and steeper to the north. The site is on the edge of a prominent ridge.
Landcover, land use and condition	Trees		x					Pasture surrounded by mature trees and is divided by a tall tree belt.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors.		x					There are few detractors.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural edge		x	x			Adjacent allocations.	The site is separated from the urban edge by two large fields. These have planning permission for housing development, which is currently being built. The site to the west is also allocated for development.
Scenic quality and character	Rural		x					The site has an unspoilt rural character and is within the boundary of the CVCP.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The site is quiet at present but may become less tranquil once the surrounding sites are developed.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Some		x					The long views across the Combe Valley to the north, the wooded character provide some sense of place.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	CVCP		x					Views across the CVCP and long views back towards the site from the wider CVCP.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					Views from within the CVCP and an adjacent public footpath.
Landscape value	CVCP		x					The site is rural and has informal access it is also within the CVCP.
Visual value	PROW		x					Views from within the CVCP and from a PROW.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Conserve the rural character and boundary trees and woodland. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The character and sensitivity of the site will change due to encroaching development. The southern part is more visually sensitive as it is elevated and is viewed from the PROW. If the site is considered suitable for development this should be restricted to the northern areas, however access to the northern field is constrained by the need to breach significant tree belts. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0200

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 15.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	Enclosed and partially open on the eastern boundary. Small scale.
Landform				x			Gentle	Level in the west and gently sloping towards the east.
Landcover, land use and condition	Pasture		x					Houses and gardens in the southwest and pasture to the north and east. Mature tree belts and ancient woodland bounding the north. Good condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)	Few detractors		x					The houses and gardens are rural in character and do not detract. Some garden clutter detracts.
Settlement pattern and edges				x			Changing	The site is currently separated from the urban edge of Pebsham by two large fields. These have planning permission for housing which will place the site on the urban edge.
Scenic quality and character				x			Some	The site has a pleasant rural character and is within the CVCP. The character will change with the new development. Worsham Lane is an ancient routeway
Tranquillity				x			Changing	Currently tranquil and would become less so with the new development.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place			x					The site has some sense of place as part of the historic farmstead of Worsham Farm and it is within the CVCP. The area will change considerably with the new development.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features				x			Few	There are local views within the CVCP. Views are of local value.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					Views from within the CVCP and the PROW which is a long distance walk and the 1066 Country Walk.
Landscape value			x					The site is within the CVCP and is enclosed by ancient woodland.
Visual value			x	x				There are views into the area from the CVCP and Worsham Lane. The western part is of medium sensitivity and the eastern part is more visually sensitive (medium/high).
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Protect and conserve nature trees and the boundary ancient woodland. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x	x				There could be some scope for development associated with the existing houses and gardens in the western part of the site. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities.

Number of assessment unit: BEX0183

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

Date: 15.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness	Open		x					The site is open with long views out on all sides and is of medium scale
Landform	Ridgetop		x					The site is gently undulating and is the crest of a ridge.
Landcover, land use and condition				x			Arable	Arable farmland with a hedged boundary to the west and scrub on all other boundaries. Good condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Some detractors	There are adjacent waste developments and a traveller site. There are views to the built-up area to the south.
Settlement pattern and edges	Rural		x					The site is outside the settlement boundary and is separated from the built-up edge of Pebsham by paddocks and stabling. It is rural in character.
Scenic quality and character	CVCP		x					The site has a pleasant rural character as part of the countryside setting to the northern edge of Bexhill. Pebsham Lane bounds the site and is a byway and ancient routeway. The site is in the CVCP.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The site is tranquil, the adjacent land uses may impact on this at times and give a perception of urban fringe.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place	Some		x					The site has a sense of place as countryside close to the town with local historic features at Pebsham Farmstead and Pebsham Lane. Views across the site from within the CVCP.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	CVCP		x					The listed Pebsham farmhouse and historic Pebsham Lane. Views across the site would be locally valued as countryside accessible from the town.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					Views from Pebsham Lane, a PROW.
Landscape value			x					The site is valued as unspoilt countryside within the CVCP. The field is not accessible to the public.
Visual value			x					The site is prominent in views from the built-up area which lies to the south and from within the CVCP.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Replace lost hedgerows and create habitats. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x					The site is within the CVCP and is rural in character it is also visually prominent. In this context it would not be suitable for development. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities.

Landscape Sensitivity to Specific Change

Number of assessment unit: BEX0146

County Landscape Character Area: Combe Haven Valley

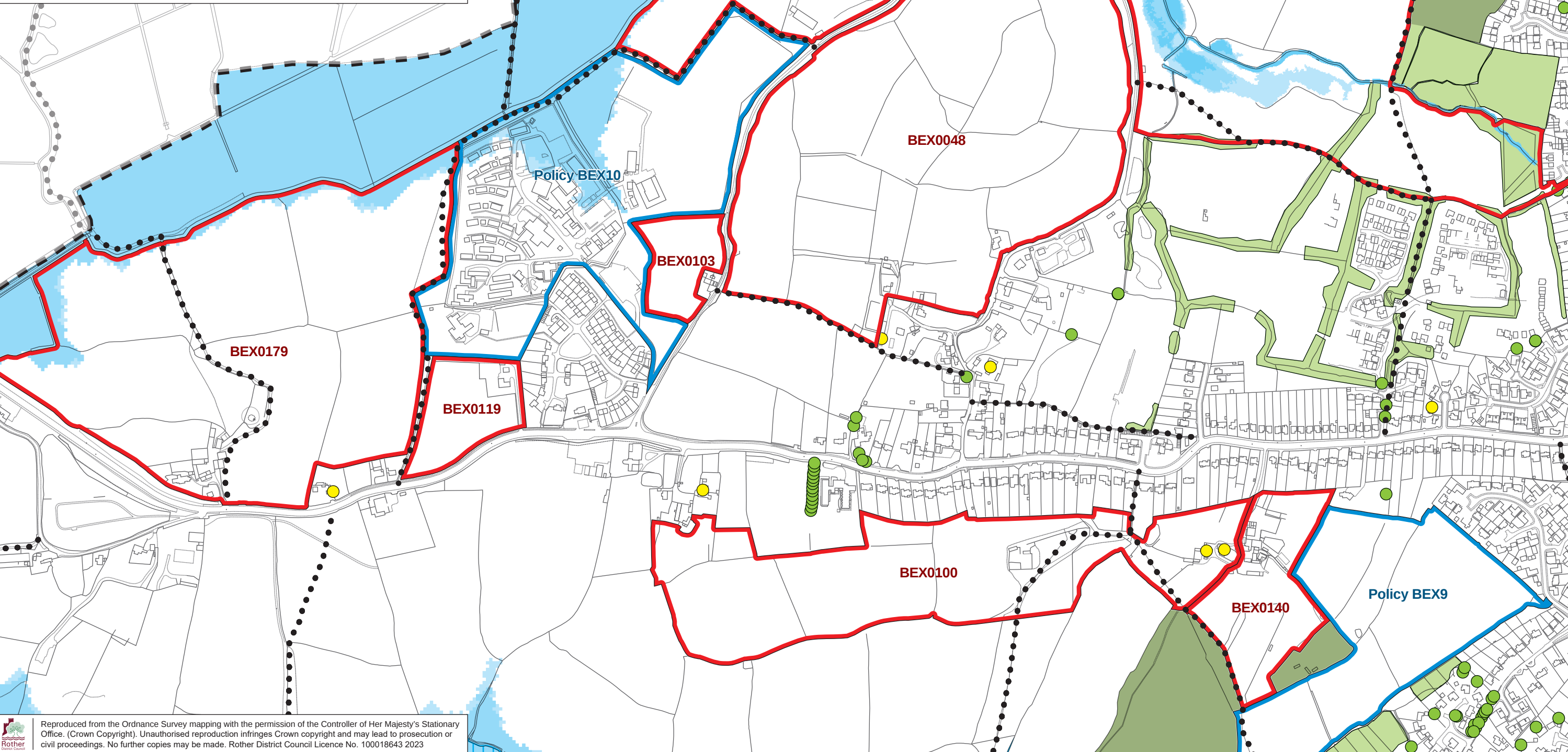
Date: 15.2.23

Criteria	Higher susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Sensitivity					Lower susceptibility (informed by indicators)	Notes – indicators of susceptibility to development. Housing X Light industrial Solar
		H	HM	M	ML	L		
Landscape								
Scale and Openness				x			Enclosed	The area is enclosed in much of the western part and more open to the east and of medium scale.
Landform	Steep in places		x	x				The site slopes towards the south with some steep slopes in the western fields.
Landcover, land use and condition				x			Horsiculture	The site is a riding school with stables and sheds in the western part and pony paddocks in the east. Mature tree belt features. Reasonable condition.
Man-made influences (Negative/ Positive)				x			Horsiculture	Stables and paddocks
Settlement pattern and edges				x			Urban edge	The site is adjacent to the built-up edge of Pebsham.
Scenic quality and character				x			Urban fringe	The site has some valued features in the belts of mature pine trees. Belts of leylandii and macrocarpa are less important. The horsiculture uses detract from scenic quality. The site is within the CVCP and the eastern paddocks are more contiguous with the wider CVCP.
Tranquillity	Quiet		x					The site is quiet but influenced by the adjacent residential area and horse-riding activities.
Local distinctiveness/ sense of place				x			Lacking	The site is within the CVCP but lacks distinctiveness.

Views related to designated landscapes or locally valued views including from Cultural Heritage features	CVCP			x			Limited	Views from within the CVCP but these are limited.
Vistas and Typical Receptors	PROW		x					There are open views into the eastern part of the site and glimpses into the western part from Pebsham Lane.
Landscape value				x				The site has some value as the only riding facility within the CVCP but, it is not publicly accessible.
Visual value				x				Views into the area are limited, the eastern area is of more value as it is open to views from the wider CVCP and town.
Mitigation potential								
Conservation or enhancement of and intact unspoilt landscape: Preserve and protect mature trees of landscape value. Restoration of degraded landscape: N/A								
Overall Landscape Sensitivity (landscape and visual susceptibility combined with value) of the assessment unit.			x	x				There could be some scope for development of the western part of the site, as a natural extension to Pebsham, avoiding the steeper slopes. The eastern part is more closely related to the wider CVCP and would be of greater (MH) sensitivity. The site offers opportunities for the creation of multifunctional Green Infrastructure for public access and habitat creation. With increasing pressure to find land for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain areas within the CVCP, which are not SSSI, could provide these future opportunities.

Map Key

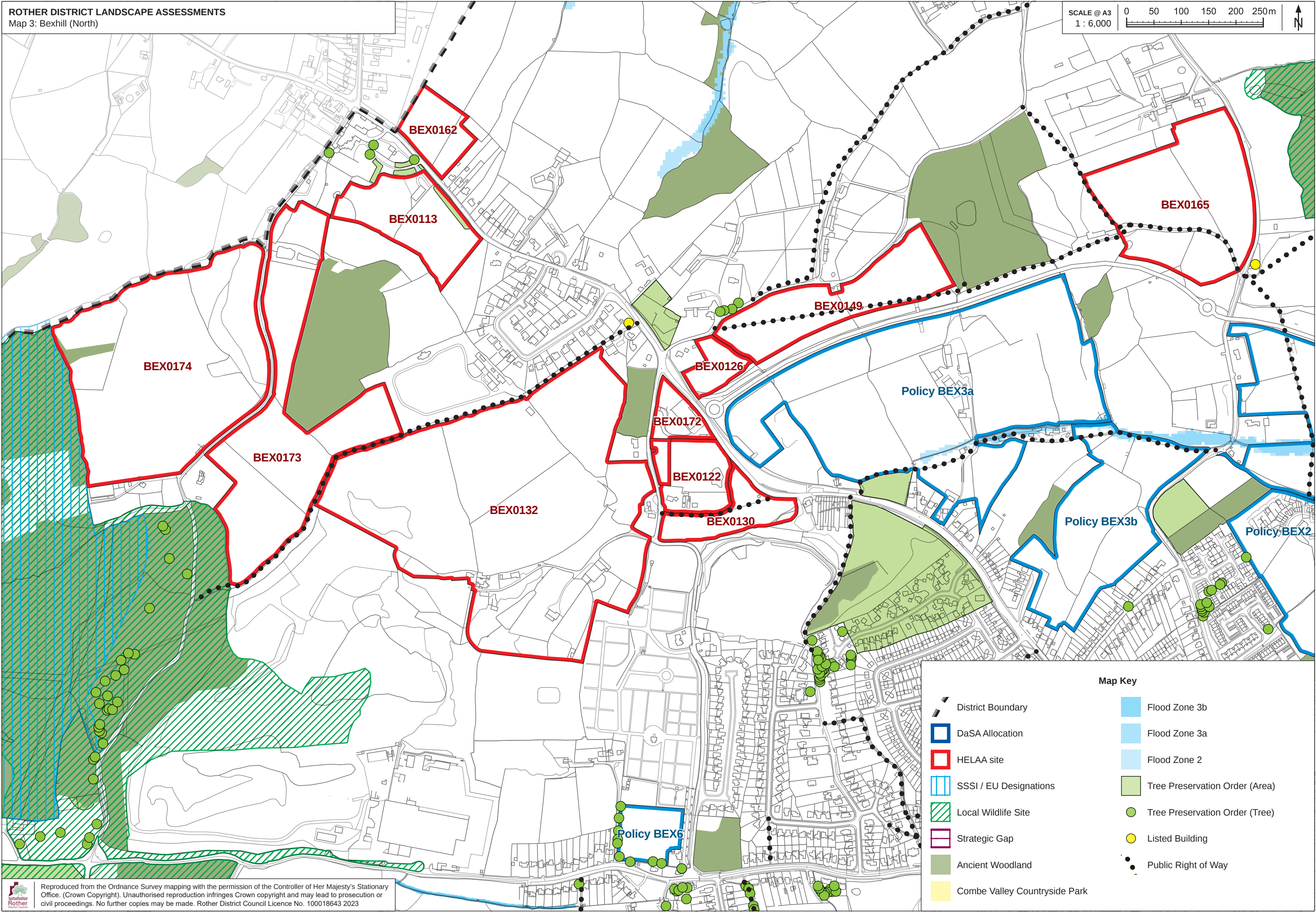
- District Boundary
- DaSA Allocation
- HELAA site
- SSSI / EU Designations
- Local Wildlife Site
- Strategic Gap
- Ancient Woodland
- Combe Valley Countryside Park
- Flood Zone 3b
- Flood Zone 3a
- Flood Zone 2
- Tree Preservation Order (Area)
- Tree Preservation Order (Tree)
- Listed Building
- Public Right of Way

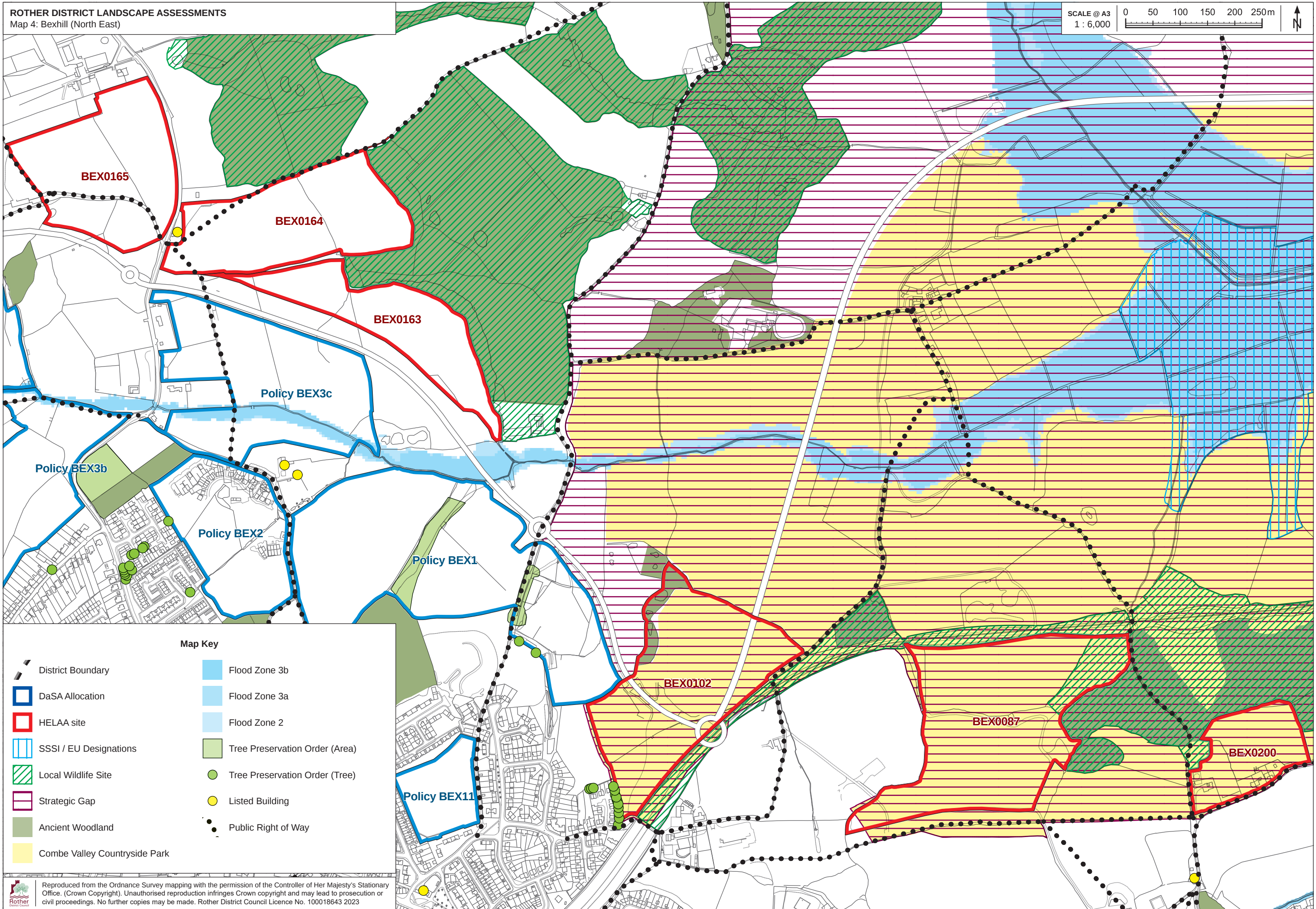


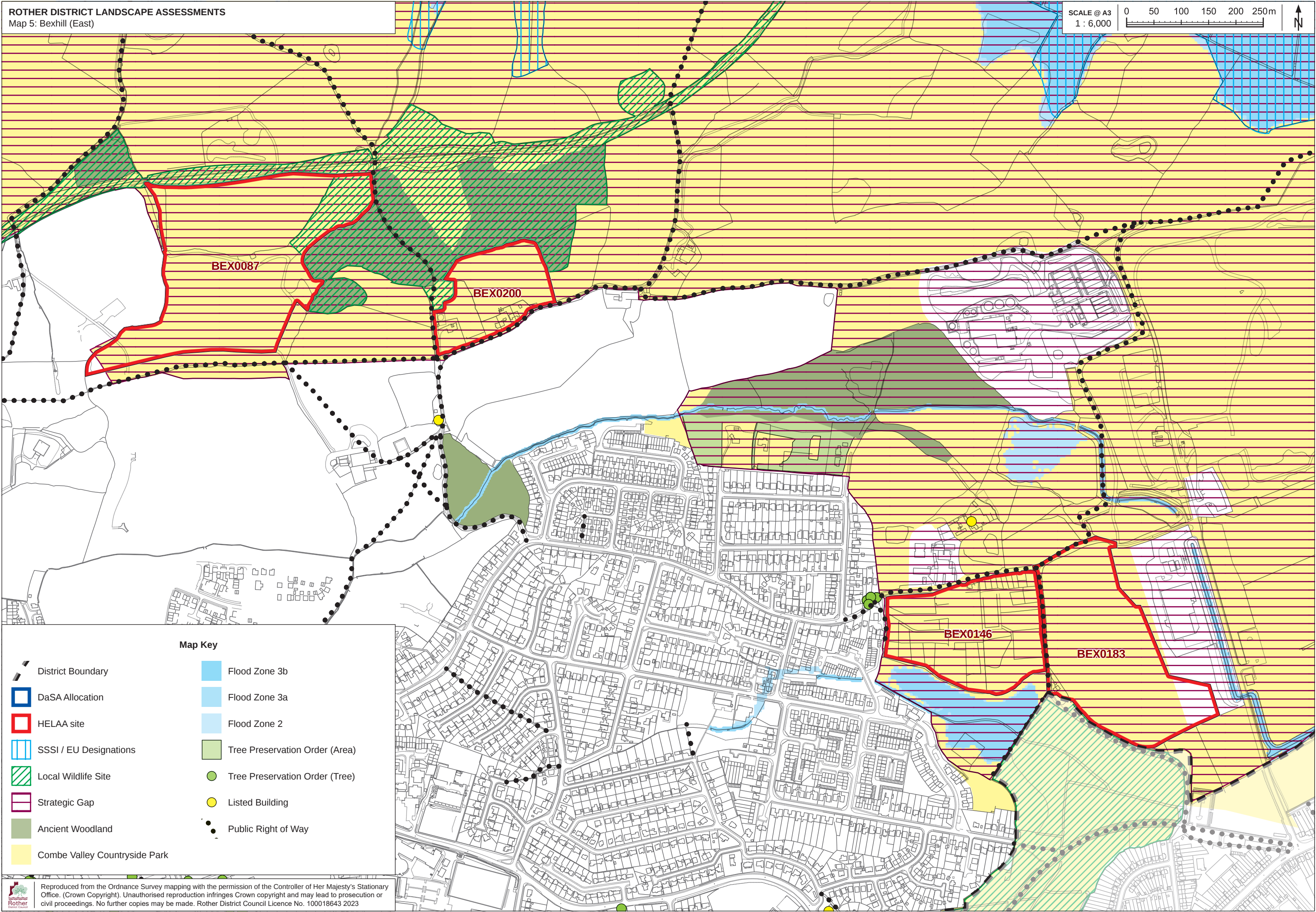
Map Key

- District Boundary
- DaSA Allocation
- HELAA site
- SSSI / EU Designations
- Local Wildlife Site
- Strategic Gap
- Ancient Woodland
- Combe Valley Countryside Park
- Flood Zone 3b
- Flood Zone 3a
- Flood Zone 2
- Tree Preservation Order (Area)
- Tree Preservation Order (Tree)
- Listed Building
- Public Right of Way









Map Key

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | District Boundary | | Flood Zone 3b |
| | DaSA Allocation | | Flood Zone 3a |
| | HELAA site | | Flood Zone 2 |
| | SSSI / EU Designations | | Tree Preservation Order (Area) |
| | Local Wildlife Site | | Tree Preservation Order (Tree) |
| | Strategic Gap | | Listed Building |
| | Ancient Woodland | | Public Right of Way |
| | Combe Valley Countryside Park | | |

Bexhill

Bexhill on Sea arose as a medieval trading port, built on gently sloping ground. It was transformed in the 19th century by the seventh Earl De La Warr into an exclusive seaside resort. By the mid 20th century, the resort began to lose its appeal, and became more residential in nature, while retaining much of its quiet Edwardian character.

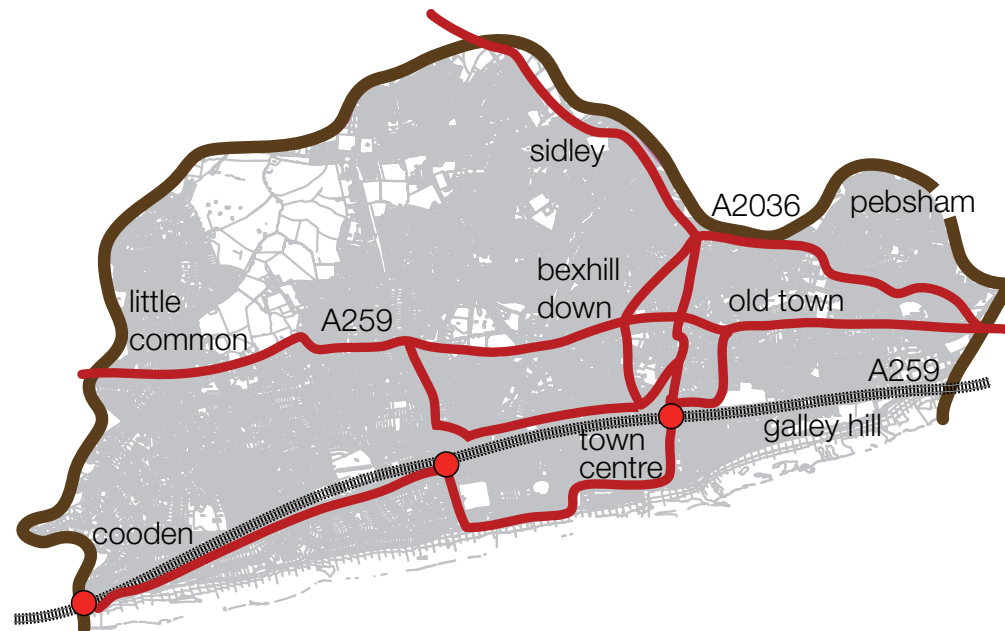
The town is now comprised of several merged villages. It is marginally separated from Hastings by Glyne Gap and Coombe Haven valley, an important green gap between the built up areas. At the eastern end of the town the railway severs the town from the Seafront.

Characteristics

- A quiet, residential seaside town with small-scale but ornate early Victorian and Edwardian seafront facades, facing spacious seafront lawns.
- Strong 1930's Modern influence, centred on the De La Warr pavilion on the seafront, constructed under the instruction of the ninth Earl De La Warr in 1935.

Special features

- Seafront properties have ornate 'Colonial' wooden verandas and Mogul influences.
- Located in Bexhill-on-Sea's picturesque Old Town are many fine examples of Georgian architecture.
- Egerton Park
- 'The Down' is a unique and well treed open space in the centre of the urban area.
- Marine archaeology.



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Bexhill

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Problems, pressures, detracting features

- Clutter and lack of unity marring seafront lawns as a recreational space.
- Extensive suburban areas lacking features and focal points.
- Absence of any strong pedestrian and cycle linkage between seafront/town centre and Old Town.
- Signage clutter and lack of spatial focus in the town centre.

Vision

A coastal town of relatively quiet, leafy character, centred on three strengthened and more strongly related foci: an integrated seafront/De la Warr pavilion space, enhanced town centre and Old Town.

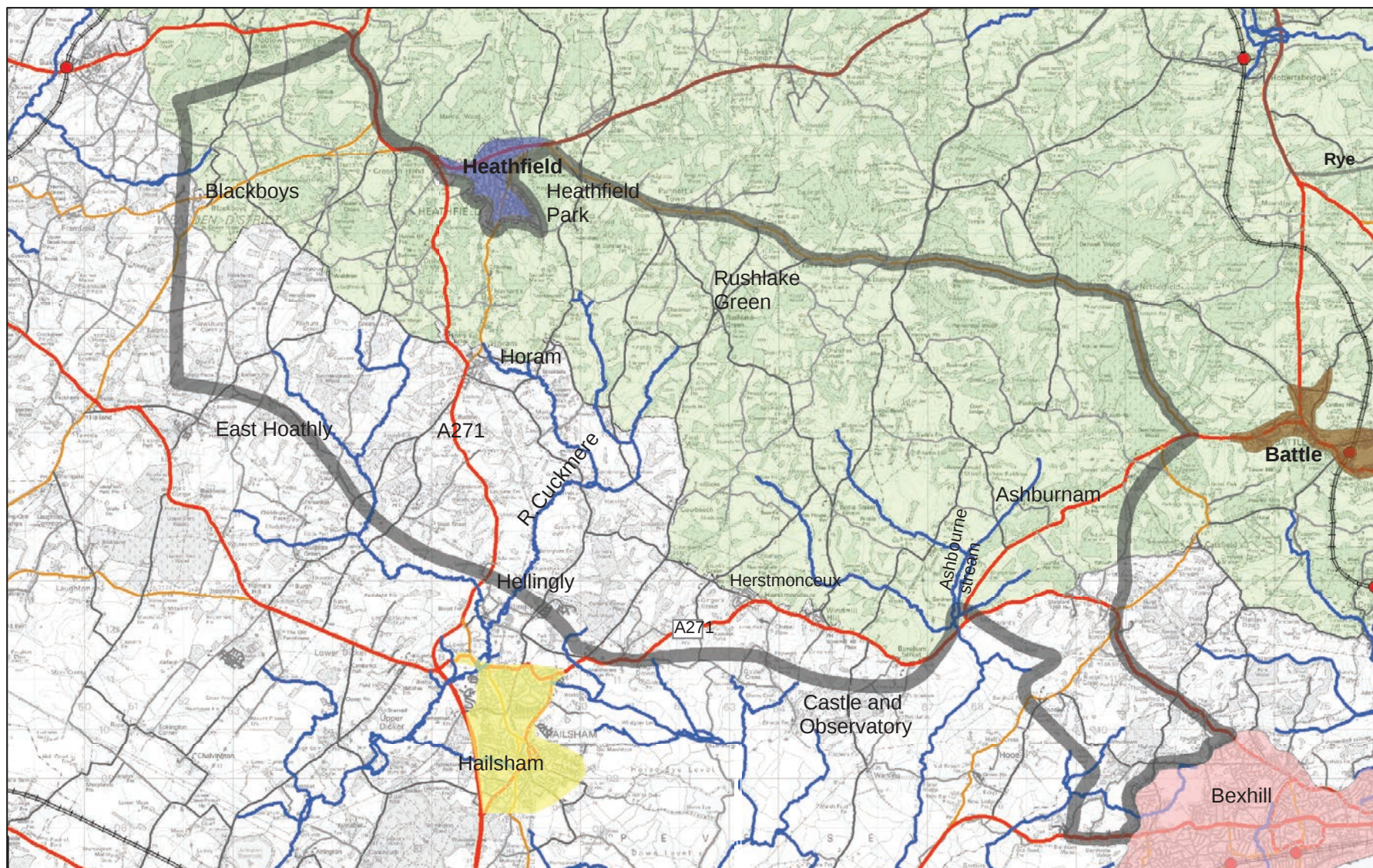
Environmental enhancements in the town centre and Old Town achieved through cohesive design and traffic management.

Landscape action priorities

- A tree strategy for the whole town to strengthen its character and create local/neighbourhood distinctiveness, including suburban areas.
- A green network study of open space and recreational corridors
- A comprehensive re-design/landscape strategy for the seafront lawns area to create a stronger character focus and setting for De la Warr Pavilion.
- Consider a new focal space/feature in town centre, perhaps combined with traffic management and continuing enhancement of streetscape. Recent initiatives have made a significant difference, i.e. improvements to building facades and the environmental improvements in Devonshire Square.
- A landscape improvement plan for Egerton Park, including an improved tree structure.
- In the longer term, consider the creation of a major new park in the Broadoak area.
- Create an 'amenity route' - visual and functional link - between the seafront, town centre and Old Town.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle access.
- Development of Pebsham Countryside Park in conjunction with other regeneration initiatives.
- Reduce and control traffic on the main roads through the town.

South Slopes of the High Weald

5



5 South Slopes of the High Weald Landscape Character Area

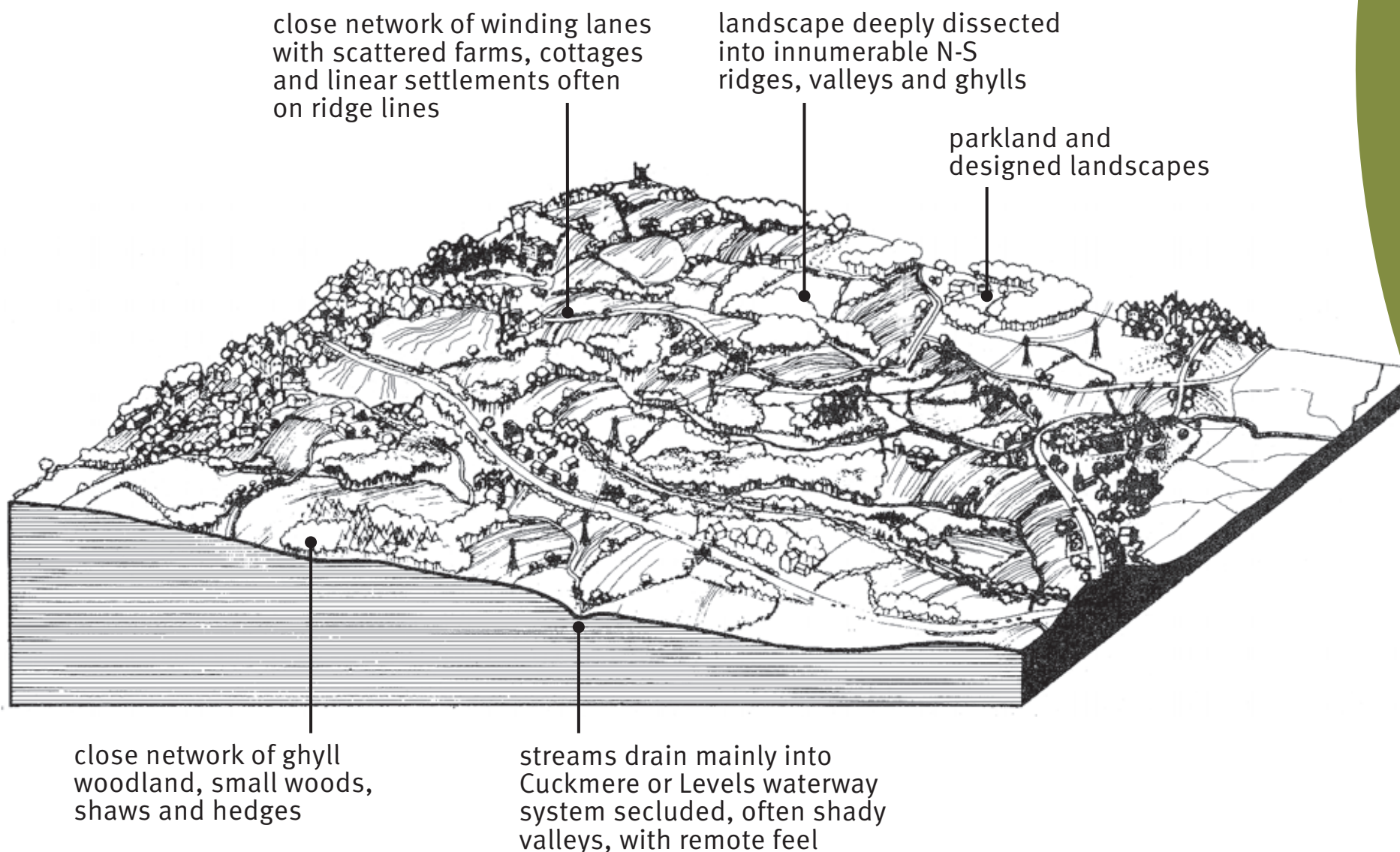
High Weald AONB

0 1 2 4 6 8 Kilometers

South Slopes of the High Weald

5

The High Weald



South Slopes of the High Weald

5

Contents

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

A Landscape Description

Key Landscape Characteristics

- An intricate small scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows.
- The area falls gently southwards from the Heathfield Battle ridge to the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels.
- Wide views to the Downs from many areas.
- An area deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls.
- The source of the River Cuckmere into which most streams in the western part of the area drain and the Ashbourne stream catchment in the east.
- Many scattered small farm ponds and hammer ponds as relics of the iron industry which thrived in this area.
- A sense of tranquillity and relative remoteness away from the main settlements and roads.
- Frequent scattered small woods and shaws, many of which are Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland.
- Ghyll woodlands in the many steep sided valleys which are a key characteristic of the High Weald.
- Larger areas of continuous woodland in the Great Wood complex to the east of Rushlake Green and the largest woodland block in the area to the east of Penhurst at Creep Wood.
- There is an abundance of hornbeam or 'horbeech' which is a clue to the local place names such as Cowbeech and Horam. Other indigenous characteristic tree species are Oak, ash and wild cherry. Sweet chestnut is a feature tree in villages and as notable ancient trees and avenues in the parklands of Ashburnum and Herstmonceux Castle. Beech and pine also feature locally and other exotic specimens are found in gardens and villages.
- Many scattered small historic villages and hamlets centred around a church or a pub.
- Scattered and often isolated large farmsteads.
- A close network of winding lanes with scattered settlements and individual dwellings often strung out along them, particularly on the ridges.
- The extensive park and woodland estate at Ashburnum with lakes and vistas designed by Capability Brown.
- Heathfield Park in Old Heathfield, a Repton designed landscape.
- The significant historic moated manor house of Herstmonceux Castle with the associated museum of the old National Observatory which has distinctive domes visible from a wide area to the south.

South Slopes of the High Weald

- Traditional building materials for the area are red brick, often laid as Flemish bond with blued brick ends, red tiled roofs and tile hung upper stories are typical. Oak timber framed and sandstone houses reflect the abundance of locally sourced timber and quarried stone. Flint is found in the south of the area, closer to the downs where it was sourced. Houses built of non-local materials are found close to the railway.
- Much of the area is free of main roads and traffic; the A271 forms the southern boundary of much of the area before it turns north to Old Heathfield.

Cultural Associations

The area was the centre of a thriving Wealden iron industry due to the locally mined ore, abundance of wood and streams to form ponds. Ashburnum Forge was the last furnace to close in Sussex.

As London night skies became too brightly lit for star gazing in 1957 the Royal Greenwich Observatory was moved to a rural site at Herstmonceux Castle. Several of the telescopes remain but the largest telescope, the 100 inch (254 cm) aperture Isaac Newton Telescope was moved to La Palma, Canary Islands in the 1970s. The estate provides housing to the Equatorial Telescope Buildings, which have been converted to an interactive science centre for schoolchildren. The empty dome for the Newton Telescope remains on this site and is a landmark being visible from afar.

Herstmonceux and the surrounding area were the home of traditional Sussex trug making and there are still some businesses in the area continuing the tradition. Trugs are baskets made from willow boards and oak or ash frames.

The actor Harry H. Corbett is buried in Penhurst Churchyard.

South Slopes of the High Weald

Table 1 Key positive Landscape Attributes

- An intricate small scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows.
- Wide views to the Downs from many areas.
- The source of the River Cuckmere into which most streams in the western part of the area drain.
- Many scattered small farm ponds and hammer ponds as relics of the iron industry which thrived in this area.
- A sense of tranquillity and relative remoteness away from the main settlements and roads.
- Frequent scattered small woods and shaws, many of which are Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland.
- Ghyll woodlands in the many steep sided valleys which are a key characteristic of the High Weald.
- Larger areas of continuous woodland in the Great Wood complex to the east of Rushlake Green and the largest woodland block in the area to the east of Penhurst at Creep Wood.
- Many scattered small historic villages, hamlets and large farmsteads centred around a church or a pub.
- The extensive park and woodland estate at Ashburnum with lakes and vistas designed by Capability Brown.
- Heathfield Park in Old Heathfield, a Repton designed landscape.
- The significant historic moated manor house of Herstmonceux Castle with the associated museum of the old National Observatory which has distinctive domes visible from a wide area to the south.

South Slopes of the High Weald

B Landscape Evaluation

Table 2 Current Condition

This is a largely unspoilt and tranquil rural landscape with few intrusive features. The landscape is in generally good condition and well managed as farmland with a strong historic structure. Agricultural change has led to some gentrification of the rural landscape and loss of landscape features. Ribbon development and roadside clutter has added to suburbanisation on the edges of villages. As with most of the High Weald landscape the historic field patterns of small fields and significant hedgerows remain intact.

Forces for Change impacting on positive attributes

Past / Current forces for change

- Creeping suburbanisation and cumulative changes in the rural landscape. Increasing roadside clutter and village developments which are not in sympathy with local distinctiveness or vernacular architecture.
- Urban fringe influences around Heathfield and Bexhill and widespread encroachment of 'horsiculture'.
- Extensive golf course development which are not in character with the rural landscape, especially around Horam.
- Clay extraction for bricks leaving unrestored quarries.
- Intrusive utility developments in the form of power lines, National Grid complexes and the Southern Water Complex near Ninfield.
- The spread of arable prairie areas causing the loss of historic field boundaries and landscape structure, especially around Ashburnham.
- 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 several farms in the valley are farmed organically.
- Intrusive modern farm buildings which are especially prominent on the ridges.

South Slopes of the High Weald

- Loss of traditional coppicing in woodlands and increase in game shooting.
- Woodland Grant schemes are scattered across the area, notably at Ashburnum, Ponts Green, Tickerage Wood and Summertree Farm, reversing the trend of poor woodland management.
- Increasing traffic on the A roads which cross the area and the main roads along the ridges and rat running on rural lanes.

Future Forces for Change

- The need to provide local housing in the villages, especially the larger service centres.
- The associated infrastructure required for new development such as waste water treatment works.
- 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, farm shops and allotments for local food production.
- 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.
- Failure to control 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.
- Water quality in the Cuckmere and Ashbourne catchments.

South Slopes of the High Weald

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 and other native vegetation.
- 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.
- Changes in water levels in ditches, ponds and streams.

South Slopes of the High Weald

C Vision and Strategy

Table 4 Vision

A tranquil landscape retaining the strong rural High Wealden historic character. The secluded ghyll valleys and associated woodland conserved and enhanced. The unspoilt character of settlements and farmsteads retained and the distinct sense of place protected. The characteristic medieval field pattern with associated shaws and hedges conserved. Areas of semi-natural ancient woodland brought into positive management to ensure long term health and security.

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 Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods and the Pevensey, Rother and Cuckmere Watershed Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, which extend into the area.
2. Protect and manage existing woodland habitats and in particular the characteristic ghyll woodlands.
3. Protect and manage existing wetland habitats and plan for restoration of ditches and riverside vegetation to restore habitat linkages and continuity.
4. Plan for the creation of multifunctional green infrastructure to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity and recreation offered by the rural lanes, rights of way network and extensive woodland.

5. 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.
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 and notably the registered parklands of Ashburnum, Herstmonceux and Heathfield Park.
10. Consider appropriate species for new plantings to maintain landscape character and biodiversity but also adaptation to climate change influences.

South Slopes of the High Weald

D Guidelines for Managing Change

Development considerations for housing and other development

Proposals need to have regard for the current High Weald Management Plan:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-documents/1475-high-weald-management-plan-3rd-edition-2014-2019/file.html>

The main pressures for development in this character area will be to accommodate housing for the rural populations in the rural settlements of Herstmonceux, Rushlake Green and East Hoathly.

There will also be a demand for local housing in the smaller villages. Pressures for expansion of Heathfield may impact on the part of the character area which borders the town. Tourism is an important source of income to this area and there is likely to be increasing demand for accommodation in hotels, bed and breakfast, caravan and camp sites. The modern trend for luxury and exotic camping (glamping) is already appearing in the guise of teepees, tree houses and the like. There will be demand for new facilities and to improve or expand existing, some of these putting pressure on ancient woodland. 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.

South Slopes of the High Weald

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Table 5

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Countryside and Farmland Farm environment plans relating to much of the farm lands including organic farming. Pressure for farm diversification and development of hobby farms, solar arrays, wind farms, waste recycling operations etc. Expansion of camping and caravan sites as well as other holiday related development such as 'Glamping'. Land falling out of positive management and dereliction of farm buildings. Loss of hedgerows and other traditional field boundaries. Loss of traditional orchards, pasture and traditional meadows. Clearance of natural vegetation from drainage channels and ditches. Low water levels and poor water quality in some drains and streams. Deterioration of by ways and lanes due to erosion of un-surfaced routes by horses, bikes and 4 wheel drives.	Countryside and Farmland Encourage establishment of more farm conservation schemes to conserve the landscape structure of hedges, shaws, ponds and streams. Conserve hedges, trees and ghyll woods. Maintain the mixed farmed character of the area. Protect and manage historic field patterns and conserve boundary features. Maintain water levels in drains and ditches. Conserve and enhance byways and rural lanes. Use tree and woodland planting to screen intrusive farm buildings and caravan sites. Enhance the biodiversity value of wet meadows, drainage and stream channels. 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. Address existing flooding issues of farmland and properties through flood management and by identifying areas which can provide flood alleviation.	Provisioning services Water availability Food production Regulating services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation) Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Soil conservation and erosion control Habitat and species resilience to climate change Carbon sequestration. Areas of peat in the river valleys, hedges, trees, reed beds and grassland regulate air quality by absorbing and retaining CO₂.

South Slopes of the High Weald

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Damage to verges on narrow country lanes caused by increasing size of farm vehicles and passing traffic. Overstocking and arable production on some soils can result in soil erosion and reduce soil quality.	Reduce the risk and incidence of soil erosion by encouraging the restoration of arable land to pasture. Apply best land management practices to prevent soil and fertiliser run off, thereby protecting surface and ground water.	Cultural Services Sense of Place and local distinctiveness. Source of Inspiration Sense of History Tranquillity Biodiversity
Trees and Woodland Ancient woodland and tree belts are not in positive management. Ghyll woodland not in positive management and are difficult to manage due to the steep and inaccessible nature of these woods. Traditional management has stopped as it is not commercially viable e.g. pollarding of stream side willows. Tree diseases. Ancient parkland trees dying off and not being replaced. Extensive areas of woodland are already in woodland grant schemes. Pressure for glamping sites in woodland. Invasive species competing with native flora and fauna e.g. Spanish Bluebell, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed.	Trees and Woodland 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 for the habitat.	Provisioning Fuel (woodfuel for local communities from woodland management) Regulating Carbon sequestration, woodland absorbs and holds CO₂. Habitat and species resilience to climate change Cultural Tranquillity Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Cultural heritage (traditional woodland management) Biodiversity

South Slopes of the High Weald

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Other Key Habitats Deterioration and loss of habitats : Water Loss of river and streamside vegetation. Deterioration of water quality in streams, ditches and ponds Invasive species of plants and animals which compete with native flora and fauna. Wet Meadows Financial and viable farming constraints affecting the continued management of wet meadows reducing the biodiversity value. Improvements to Grassland and meadows reducing species richness. Loss of wetland meadows to arable farming.	Other key Habitats Encourage management of river and stream channels, especially conservation of riverside trees and vegetation. Conservation and re-creation of wet meadow/pasture habitats. Agri-environment schemes to maximise biodiversity and encourage the retention of grazing. Opportunities to maximise reed bed creation. Encourage measures to improve water quality. Continue schemes to encourage farmers to minimise the use of chemicals and fertilizers.	Provisioning Nature's larder of free berries and herbs. Conservation of insect pollinators for pollination of crops. Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change. Cultural Appreciation of nature Educational value Biodiversity

South Slopes of the High Weald

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Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Recreation, Green Infrastructure (GI) and ANGS (glossary) 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 for improved access. Need for better recreational linkages and improved sustainable transport corridors. Extensive footpath and bridleway network 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.	Recreation, Green Infrastructure and ANGS 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 Hailsham as well as the seasonal holiday makers. 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. Maximise opportunities for and manage water based recreational activities.	Provisioning Protected farmland Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Carbon sequestration Cultural Recreation Heritage assets and cultural heritage Inspirational Tranquility Biodiversity

South Slopes of the High Weald

5

The High Weald

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings 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.	Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings Enhance the condition of areas of horsiculture and small holdings through the restoration of an intact, well managed hedgerow or ditch network and retaining a diverse grass sward by preventing overgrazing. Encourage local food production and allotment provision in areas where this will not detract from local landscape character.	Provisioning Grazing Food production Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change Cultural Recreation Heritage assets Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Biodiversity
The character of the villages Gentrification Urbanisation Development pressures Gradual loss and deterioration of Heritage features. Fast traffic on rural lanes Visitor pressure and cars detracting from local character and distinctiveness of the area in general.	Protect and Enhance the character of the villages Encourage the production of Neighbourhood Plans which incorporate village design guides. Plan for new development in the villages to ensure it is designed to a high standard to reflect local character and sense of place. Establish defined development edges to villages with new tree planting. Prepare village design guides and tree conservation plans. Consider traffic management on rural lanes.	Provisioning Local amenities and facilities. Regulating Use of sustainable materials Habitat and species resilience to climate change Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Cultural Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Heritage assets Biodiversity

South Slopes of the High Weald

5

The High Weald

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Flood management and SUDS schemes? Flash floods and run off. Flooding of properties in low lying areas by river and ground water.	Flood management and SUDS schemes? Plan for flood management by conserving and enhancing the flood plains and managing water levels in ditches and drains. Encourage the design of sensitive flood defence schemes which conserve and enhance the landscape and habitats Conserve and enhance existing man made and natural drainage features. Maximise opportunities for the creation of SUDs schemes which contribute to local amenity and habitat creation.	Provisioning Water conservation Regulating Flood control Protection of aquifers Cultural Heritage assets Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Tranquillity Amenity and recreation Biodiversity

South Slopes of the High Weald

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.

Glamping: New types of camp sites with permanent tent features in yurts, teepees, vintage caravans, timber pods etc. Woodlands are popular locations for these.

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.

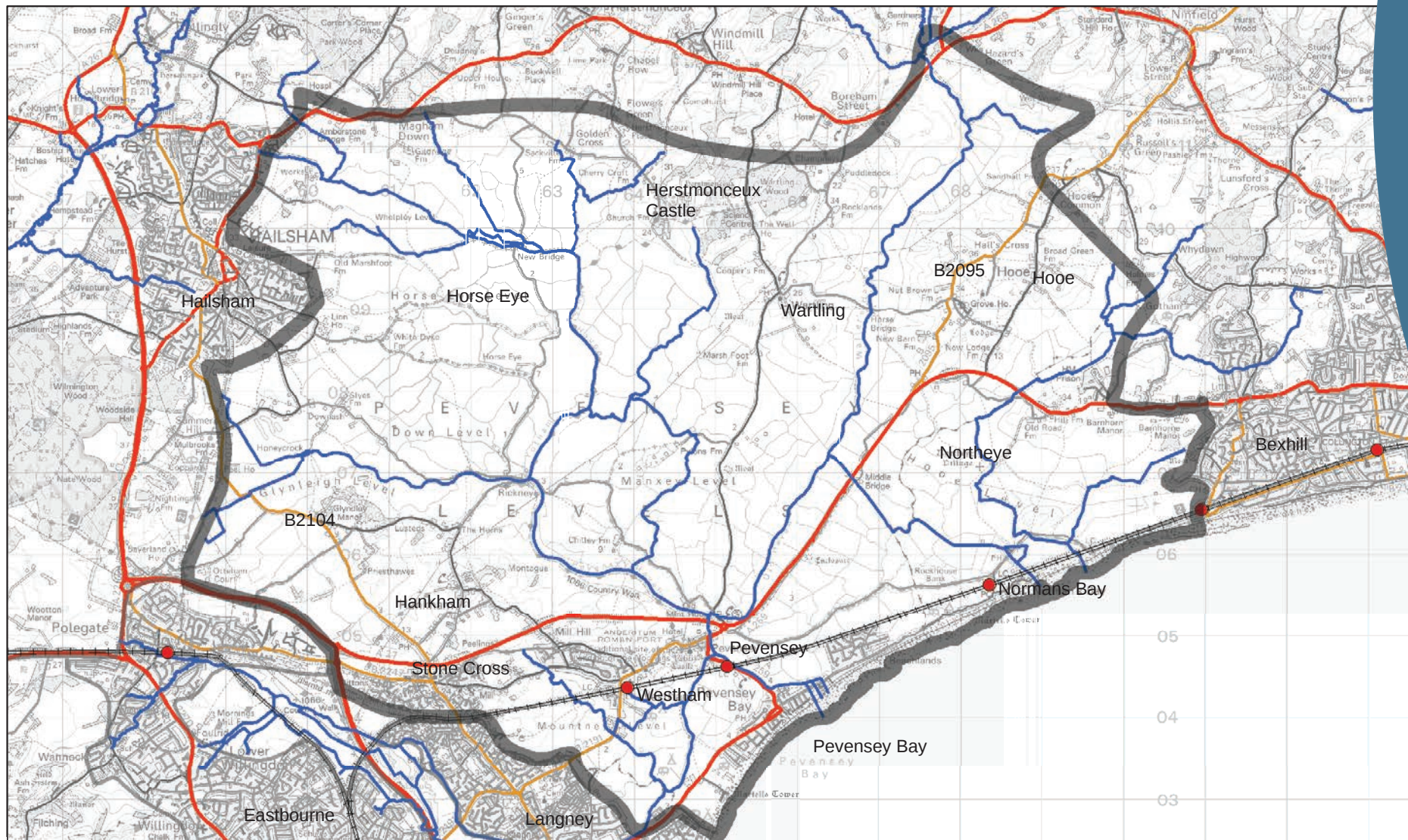
Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance for biodiversity designated under the Ramsar Convention.

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.

Pevensey Levels

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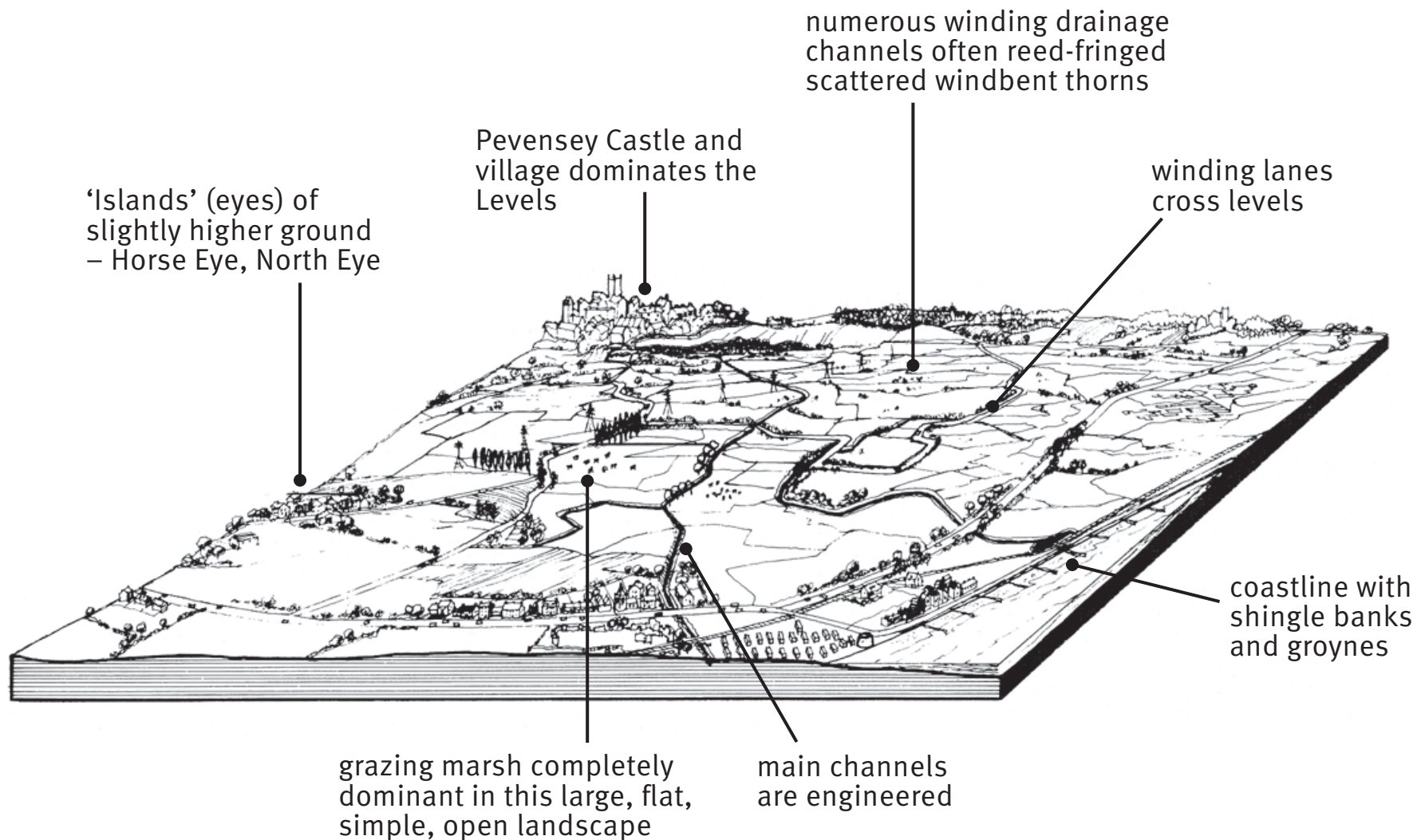


25 Pevensey Levels Landscape Character Area

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

Pevensy Levels

25



Pevensy 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 Pevensy 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 Pevensy 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. Northeys 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.

Pevensy 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.

Pevensy 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 Pevensy 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
Countryside and Farmland Pressure for farm diversification and development of hobby farms, solar arrays, wind farms, waste recycling operations etc. Expansion of caravan sites on the coast and elsewhere. Land falling out of positive management and dereliction of farm buildings. Loss of traditional pasture and wetland meadows. Clearance of natural vegetation from drainage channels and ditches. Low water levels and poor water quality in some drains and streams. Deterioration of by ways and lanes due to erosion of un-surfaced routes by horses, bikes and 4 wheel drives. Damage to verges on narrow country lanes caused by increasing size of farm vehicles and passing traffic. Flooding of farmland and properties affecting the viability of farms. Overstocking and arable production on some soils can result in soil erosion and reduce soil quality.	Countryside and Farmland 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. Maintain water levels in drains and ditches. Conserve and enhance byways and rural lanes. Use tree and woodland planting to screen intrusive farm buildings and caravan sites. Enhance the biodiversity value of wet meadows, drainage and stream channels. Extend organic and catchment sensitive farming initiatives. 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. Address existing flooding issues of farmland and properties through flood management and by identifying areas which can provide flood alleviation. Reduce the risk and incidence of soil erosion by encouraging the restoration of arable land to pasture.	Provisioning services Water availability Food production Regulating services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation) Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Soil conservation and erosion control Habitat and species resilience to climate change Carbon sequestration. Areas of peat in the river valleys, hedges, trees, reed beds and grassland regulate air quality by absorbing and retaining CO₂.

Pevensey Levels

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
	Apply best land management practices to prevent soil and fertiliser run off, thereby protecting surface and ground water.	Cultural Services Sense of Place and local distinctiveness. Source of Inspiration Sense of History Tranquillity Biodiversity
Trees and Woodland 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.	Woodland 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.	Provisioning Fuel (woodfuel for local communities from woodland management) Regulating Carbon sequestration, woodland absorbs and holds CO ₂ . Habitat and species resilience to climate change Cultural Tranquillity Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Cultural heritage (traditional woodland management) Biodiversity

Pevensey Levels

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

Pevensey Levels

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

Pevensy Levels

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Recreation, Green Infrastructure (GI) and ANGTS (glossary) 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.	Recreation, Green Infrastructure and ANGTS 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.	Provisioning Protected farmland. Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Carbon sequestration Cultural Recreation Heritage assets and cultural heritage Inspirational Tranquility Biodiversity
Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings 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.	Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings 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.	Provisioning Grazing Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change Cultural Recreation Heritage assets Sense of Place and local distinctiveness

Pevensey Levels

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

Pevensy 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.

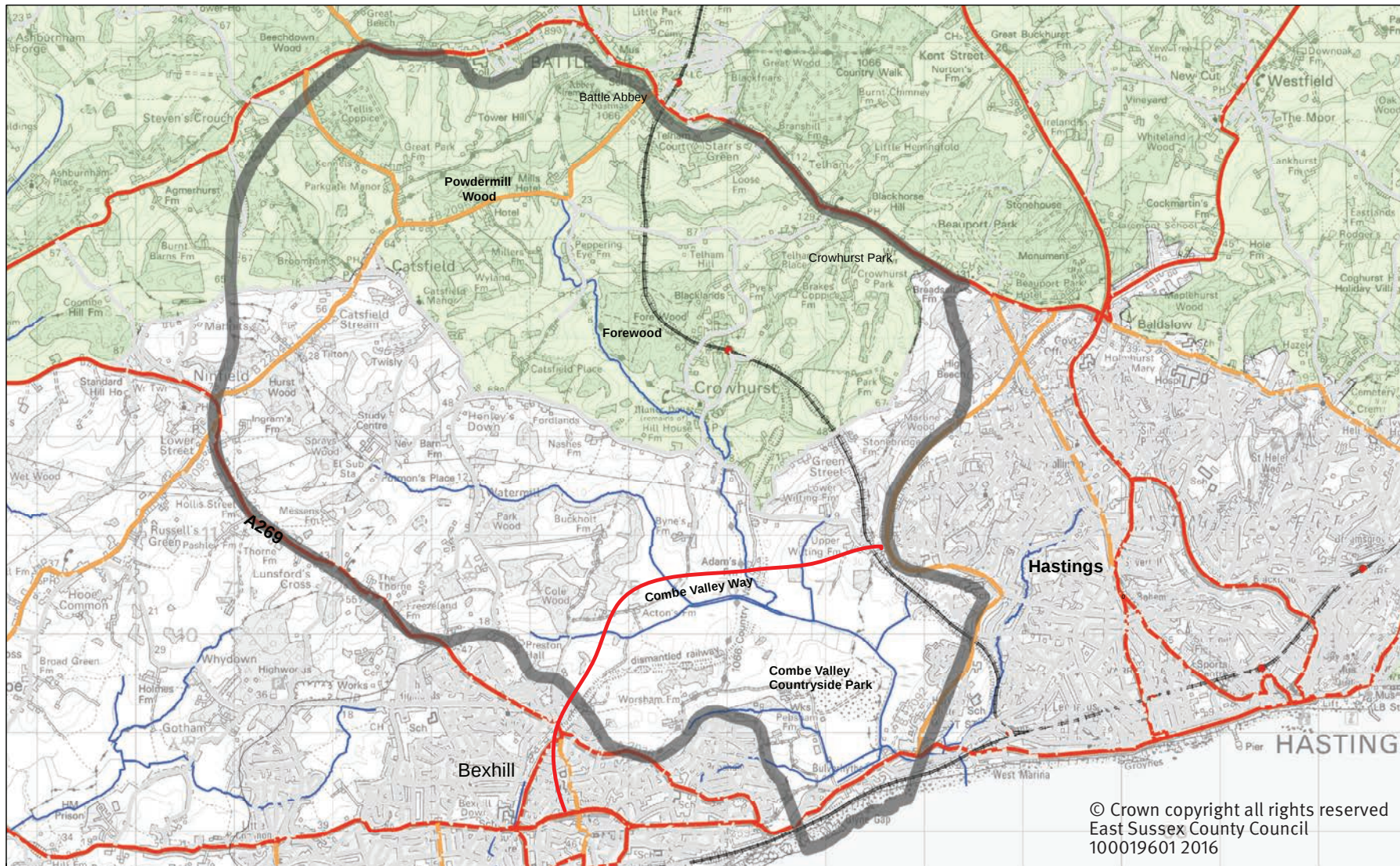
Local Nature Reserve: Local Nature Reserve (or LNR) is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, by principal local authorities.

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.

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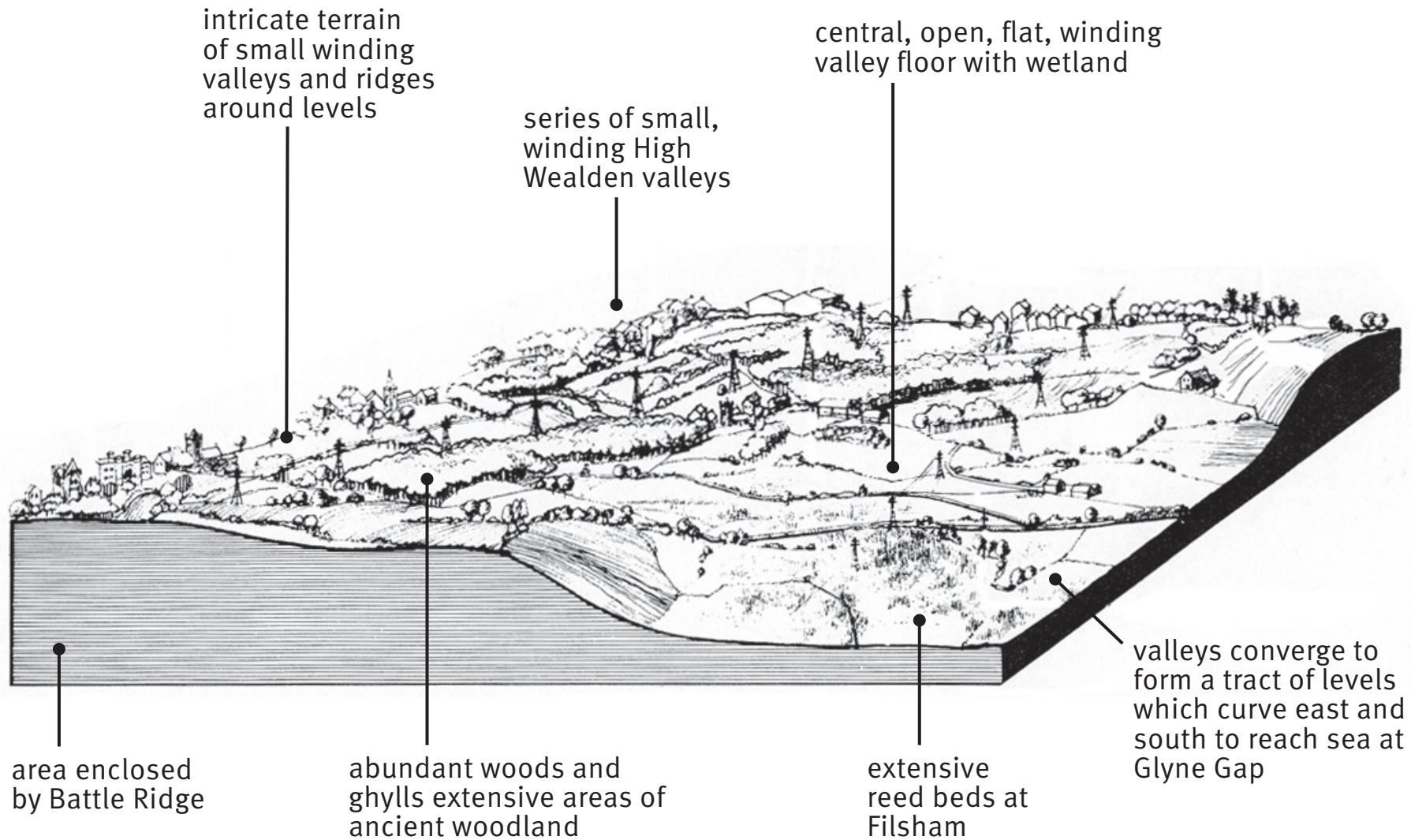
10 Combe Haven Valley Landscape Character Area

High Weald AONB

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

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Combe Haven Valley

Contents

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

A Landscape Description

Key Landscape Characteristics

- A series of small winding High Wealden stream valleys which converge on a tract of levels to join the Combe Haven basin.
- Rolling well wooded countryside with typical High Wealden character of rolling landscape and historic field patterns.
- Ghyll woodlands on the steeper slopes.
- The area is enclosed by the Battle ridge to the north.
- Focal open, flat, winding valley floor and wetland in the Combe Haven Basin.
- Intricate terrain of small, winding valleys and ridges around levels, with abundant woods and gills.
- Extensive areas of ancient woodland.
- Filsham reed beds at the eastern end of the Combe Haven Valley are one of the largest areas of reedbeds in East Sussex.
- The Heritage England Registered 1066 battlefield and parkland on the northern edge.
- A sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and roads.
- Indigenous characteristic tree species are oak, ash and field maple, with wild cherry and sweet chestnut coppice in woodland on the drier slopes. Scattered scrub and large white willow on the levels.
- Wetland birds are a feature in the wetland landscape.
- Some remnant historic parkland associated with historic manors at Crowhurst Park, Catsfield Place and Parkgate Manor.
- Scattered historic farmsteads typical of the High Weald.
- Caravan and chalet developments which reflect the attractiveness of the area for holiday makers.
- A large electricity sub station near Catsfield with associated pylons extending across the area in several directions.
- Urban fringe intrusions around the edges of Bexhill and Hastings.
- The Hastings to London railway line cuts across the eastern part of the area.
- Remnants of the disused Bexhill to Crowhurst rail link cross the Combe Haven.
- The main A269 crosses the area from Bexhill to Battle forming the western boundary to the area.
- The B2029 runs along the eastern boundary from Glyne Gap to Baldslow.

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- The Combe Haven and Glyne Gap area perform an important function, maintaining a physical and visual gap between St Leonards and Bexhill.
- At Bulverhythe, Glyne Gap and Filsham, open edges of housing estates face onto the exposed levels of Glyne Gap and Filsham – emphasised by the rising ground and Combe Haven Caravan Park.

Cultural Associations

Crowhurst has a ruined medieval manor house adjacent to St Georges Church. There is a well-documented ancient yew tree in the church grounds.

Catsfield Hunt Kennels is the home of the East Sussex and Romney Marsh Hunt. The East Sussex Hunt was founded in 1853 and the Romney Marsh Hunt in 1858. The East Sussex Hunt relocated to the Kennels at Catsfield in 1882 when new purpose built kennels were constructed. They have remained there ever since becoming the combined kennels for the merged hunt in 1966.

Table 1 Key positive Landscape Attributes

- A series of small winding High Wealden stream valleys which converge on a tract of levels to join the Combe Haven basin.
- Rolling well wooded countryside with typical High Wealden character of rolling landscape and historic field patterns.
- Ghyll woodlands on the steeper slopes.
- Focal open, flat, winding valley floor and wetland in the Combe Haven Basin.
- Intricate terrain of small, winding valleys and ridges around levels, with abundant woods and gills.
- Extensive areas of ancient woodland.
- Filsham reed beds at the eastern end of the Combe Haven Valley are one of the largest areas of reedbeds in East Sussex.
- The Heritage England Registered 1066 battlefield and parkland on the northern edge.
- A sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and roads.
- Indigenous characteristic tree species are oak, ash and field maple, with wild cherry and sweet chestnut coppice in woodland on the drier slopes. Scattered scrub and large white willow on the levels.
- Wetland birds are a feature in the wetland landscape.
- Some remnant historic parkland associated with historic manors at Crowhurst Park, Catsfield Place and Parkgate Manor.
- Scattered historic farmsteads typical of the High Weald.

Combe Haven Valley

B Landscape Evaluation

Table 2 Current Condition

This is a largely unspoilt and tranquil rural landscape with few intrusive features. The landscape is in generally good condition and well managed as farmland with some surviving historic structure. Agricultural change has led to some gentrification of the rural landscape and villages. As with most of the High Weald landscape the historic field patterns of small fields and significant hedgerows remain intact in the northern part of the area. The Combe Haven Valley is a farmed landscape and generally in positive management.

Woodlands have been affected by lack of traditional coppice management, rhododendron invasion and coniferisation.

Forces for Change impacting on positive attributes

Past / Current forces for change

- The northern part of the area is in the High Weald AONB and has been more protected from intrusive development than the area between the urban areas and the AONB boundary.
- Urban edges of Hastings and Bexhill have expanded into the edges of the area and will do so more with the expansion of North Bexhill.
- The establishment of Combe Valley Countryside Park should ensure that this area is safeguarded from further development and managed as multifunctional green infrastructure into the future.
- A large and very visible caravan park on slopes at Filsham and a holiday mobile home and chalet park at Crowhurst Park. Smaller more contained caravan sites at Crowhurst and Watemill.
- The Pebsham Landfill site, which will soon be restored and landscaped but will still have indicators of its former use for some years.
- The waste water treatment plant at Pebsham.
- The large electricity sub-station at Catsfield and pylons extending out from this.
- Ribbon development to the south east of the Battle ridge.
- The Combe Valley Way new road which crosses the Combe Haven Valley to the south of the area.
- Widespread horsiculture especially on the urban fringes of Bexhill and pressure for new development associated with this such as sand schools.

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- The positive land management initiative associated with the High Weald AONB.
- 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.
- The reducing viability of farming and in particular on the less productive soils of the High Weald.
- Creeping suburbanisation and cumulative changes in the rural landscape, roads and villages which are not in sympathy with local distinctiveness or vernacular architecture.
- Water quality in the channels and ditches.
- Loss of vegetation along rivers and dykes due to maintenance regimes, agricultural intensification and drainage works.
- Farm Environment Plans, much of the farmland in the Combe Haven Valley is under Countryside Stewardship Agreements and Buckholt Farm is farmed organically.
- 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.
- Intrusive modern farm buildings.
- Loss of traditional coppicing in woodlands and increase in game shooting.
- RSPB acquisition and management of Forewood Nature Reserve reversing this trend for this significant woodland in the area.

- Woodland Grant schemes to ensure positive management of Forewood and Powdermill wood.
- Increasing traffic on the main roads which cross the area and rat running on rural lanes.

Future Forces for Change

- The need to provide local housing in the villages, especially the larger service centres.
- 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, farm shops and allotments for local food production.
- 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.
- Failure to control 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.
- Water quality in the Brede catchment.

Combe Haven Valley

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 and other native vegetation.
- 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.
- Changes in water levels in ditches, ponds and streams.
- The Combe Haven valley and tributary valleys are flooded for longer periods of the year.

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C Vision and Strategy

Table 4 Vision

A tranquil landscape with some areas of relative remoteness, particularly in the north of the area. The Combe Haven Valley and its tributary valleys contained by well wooded slopes. The Combe Valley Countryside Park in close proximity to urban areas providing great potential for unique recreational opportunities. Well managed and enhanced wildlife habitats and increased biodiversity. The distinctive historic character of this wealden landscape conserved and enhanced.

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 Bexhill Fringe and the Combe Haven and Marline Biodiversity Opportunity Areas 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 to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity and recreation offered by the river corridor and extensive woodland.
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. Maximise opportunities for water based activities where this does not conflict with wild life interests, water quality or tranquillity.
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.

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D Guidelines for Managing Change

Development considerations for housing and other development

Proposals need to have regard for the current High Weald Management Plan:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-documents/1475-high-weald-management-plan-3rd-edition-2014-2019/file.html>

The main pressures for development in this character area are the construction of the Combe Valley Way and the associated development this will release. Expanding business development to the west of Queensway is filling the green gaps between this road and the protected woodland areas. There will be some need to accommodate housing for the rural populations in the rural settlements of Catsfield and Crowhurst. A priority should be to identify opportunities to enhance the degraded and poorly managed parts of the character area on the Hastings urban fringes.

Tourism is an important source of income to this area and there is likely to be increasing demand for accommodation in hotels, bed and breakfast, caravan and camp sites. The modern trend for luxury and exotic camping (glamping) may put pressure on woodland and parkland areas. There will be demand for new facilities and to improve or expand existing, some of these putting pressure on ancient woodland. 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.

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Table 5

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Countryside and Farmland Farm environment plans relating to much of the farm land, including organic farming. Pressure for farm diversification and development of hobby farms, solar arrays, wind farms, waste recycling operations etc. Expansion of camping and caravan sites as well as other holiday related development such as 'Glamping'. Land falling out of positive management and dereliction of farm buildings. Loss of traditional orchards, pasture and wetland meadows. Clearance of natural vegetation from drainage channels and ditches. Low water levels and poor water quality in some drains and streams. Deterioration of by ways and lanes due to erosion of un-surfaced routes by horses, bikes and 4 wheel drives. Damage to verges on narrow country lanes caused by increasing size of farm vehicles and passing traffic.	Countryside and Farmland Encourage establishment of more 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. Maintain water levels in drains and ditches. Conserve and enhance byways and rural lanes. Use tree and woodland planting to screen intrusive farm buildings and caravan sites. Enhance the biodiversity value of wet meadows, drainage and stream channels. 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. Address existing flooding issues of farmland and properties through flood management and by identifying areas which can provide flood alleviation.	Provisioning services Water availability Food production Regulating services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation) Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Soil conservation and erosion control Habitat and species resilience to climate change Carbon sequestration. Areas of peat in the river valleys, hedges, trees, reed beds and grassland regulate air quality by absorbing and retaining CO₂. Cultural Services Sense of Place and local distinctiveness. Source of Inspiration Sense of History Tranquillity Biodiversity

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Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Flooding of farmland and properties affecting the viability of farms. Overstocking and arable production on some soils can result in soil erosion and reduce soil quality.	Reduce the risk and incidence of soil erosion by encouraging the restoration of arable land to pasture. Apply best land management practices to prevent soil and fertiliser run off, thereby protecting surface and ground water.	
Trees and Woodland 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 Invasive species competing with native flora and fauna e.g. Spanish Bluebell, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed. Some areas of woodland are already in woodland grant schemes. Pressure for glamping sites in woodland.	Trees and Woodland 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. Replant parkland and individual hedgerow trees.	Provisioning Fuel (wood fuel for local communities from woodland management) Regulating Carbon sequestration, woodland absorbs and holds CO₂. Habitat and species resilience to climate change Cultural Tranquillity Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Cultural heritage (traditional woodland management) Biodiversity

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The High Weald

Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Other Key Habitats Deterioration and loss of habitats : Water Loss of river and streamside vegetation. Deterioration of water quality in streams, ditches and ponds Invasive species of plants and animals which compete with native flora and fauna. A Nitrate Vulnerable Zone designated across most of the area. Wet Meadows Financial and viable farming constraints affecting the continued management of wet meadows reducing the biodiversity value. Improvements to Grassland and meadows reducing species richness. Loss of wetland meadows to arable farming.	Other key Habitats Encourage management of river and stream channels, especially conservation of riverside trees and vegetation. Conservation and re-creation of wet meadow/pasture habitats. Agri-environment schemes to maximise biodiversity and encourage the retention of grazing. Opportunities to maximise reed bed creation. Encourage measures to improve water quality. Continue schemes to encourage farmers to minimise the use of chemicals and fertilizers.	Provisioning Nature's larder of free berries and herbs. Conservation of insect pollinators for pollination of crops. Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change Cultural Appreciation of nature Educational value Biodiversity

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Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Recreation, Green Infrastructure (GI) and ANGTS (glossary) Pressure on bridleways and byways as multi use, including cycling and 4 wheel drives increasing erosion. The Combe Valley Countryside Park Pressure on sensitive wetland habitats. Lack of funding to manage and enhance GI for improved access. Need for better recreational linkages and improved sustainable transport corridors. Extensive footpath network including the 1066 Country Walk Need for improved access to natural green space for all users both close to homes and in the wider countryside. Existing access to extensive areas of woodland at Marline Woods and Foreland Wood. Gentrification Loss of tranquillity due to more cars and access.	Recreation, Green Infrastructure and ANGTS 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 of Bexhill and Hastings as well as the seasonal holiday makers. 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. Maximise opportunities for and manage water based recreational activities.	Provisioning Protected farmland Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Carbon sequestration Cultural Recreation Heritage assets and cultural heritage Inspirational Tranquility Biodiversity

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Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings This tends to be an issue around the villages. There are a lack of bridleways in this countryside forcing horse riders to use country lanes. 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.	Horse Keeping ('horsiculture') and small holdings Enhance the condition of areas of horsiculture and small holdings through the restoration of an intact, well managed hedgerow or ditch network and retaining a diverse grass sward by preventing overgrazing. Create new safe accessible bridleways, especially to link the urban areas with the countryside. Encourage local food production and allotment provision in areas where this will not detract from local landscape character.	Provisioning Grazing Food production Regulating Habitat and species resilience to climate change Cultural Recreation Heritage assets Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Biodiversity
The character of the villages Gentrification Urbanisation Development pressures Gradual loss and deterioration of Heritage features. Fast traffic on rural lanes Visitor pressure and cars detracting from local character and distinctiveness of the area in general.	Protect and Enhance the character of the villages Encourage the production of Neighbourhood Plans which incorporate village design guides. Plan for new development in the villages to ensure it is designed to a high standard to reflect local character and sense of place. Establish defined development edges to villages with new tree planting. Prepare village design guides and tree conservation plans. Consider traffic management on rural lanes	Provisioning Local amenities and facilities. Regulating Use of sustainable materials Habitat and species resilience to climate change Water quality and protected aquifers. Regulating water flow and preventing flooding Cultural Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Heritage assets Biodiversity

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Current issues offering opportunities for protection and enhancement	Landscape Management Guidelines	Benefits delivered by Ecosystem Services for each area of interest
Flood management and SUDS schemes? Flash floods and run off. Flooding of properties in low lying areas by river and ground water.	Flood management and SUDS schemes? Plan for flood management by conserving and enhancing the flood plains and managing water levels in ditches and drains. Encourage the design of sensitive flood defence schemes which conserve and enhance the landscape and habitats Conserve and enhance existing man made and natural drainage features. Maximise opportunities for the creation of SUDs schemes which contribute to local amenity and habitat creation.	Provisioning Water conservation Regulating Flood control Protection of aquifers Cultural Heritage assets Sense of Place and local distinctiveness Tranquillity Amenity and recreation Biodiversity

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Glossary

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

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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.

Glamping: New types of camp sites with permanent tent features in yurts, teepees, vintage caravans, timber pods etc. Woodlands are popular locations for these.

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.

RSPB Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

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.