

Overall Character

The Upper Arun Valley character area, LW3, stretches northwards from Pulborough towards Horsham. The valley is relatively narrow with gently to strongly undulating sides, small to medium size pastures, and curving, narrow strips of deciduous woodland along the river and valley sides.



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Sheet LW3

Upper Arun Valley

Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Upper Arun Valley (P1) Landscape Character Area as defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).

The Arun is the major river of the County. It extends from the vicinity of Horsham to the sea at Littlehampton. The river cuts across the *Low Weald*, *Wealden Greensand*, the *South Downs* and the *Coastal Plain* Regional Character Areas, giving rise to strong variations in valley side landform and tree cover. This is the basis for the division of the four *Land Management Guideline Sheets* SC10, WG6, SD2, and LW3.

Key Characteristics

- Mostly narrow valleys with undulating valley sides.
- Lush valley bottoms with small, drained, irregularly shaped pastures.
- Occasional curving strips of woodland on valley sides.
- Tightly meandering and steeply banked river and stream courses.
- A few widely dispersed small farms on elevated valley sides.
- The Wey and Arun Junction Canal which is currently being restored.
- Mostly rural unspoilt character except for urban edge influence around Horsham and some road and aircraft noise in places.
- Distinctive stone and brick bridges.



Historic Features

- Historic mills.
- Moated farmsteads.
- Small irregular field pattern.
- Stone and brick bridges.
- Wey and Arun Canal.

Biodiversity

- Rich marginal vegetation along many riverbanks and watercourses supporting notable dragonfly interest.
- Small valley side broadleaved woodlands.
- Unimproved pastures.
- Small ancient woodlands.

Change - Key Issues

- Introduction of concreted sections on river banks.
- Possible pressures for engineered flood defences.
- Loss of hedgerows and woodland on valley sides.
- Decline in traditional land management.
- Localised visual impact of horse paddocks.
- Pressure for further urban development, in particular around Horsham.
- Potential for increased recreational pressures around Horsham.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

The overall condition is good with some local areas of decline of unspoilt character in the Horsham area. Overall sensitivity to change is high, reflecting many landscape qualities of the area, and visual prominence of some valley sides. *Key sensitivities are:*

- Small scale incremental changes eroding rural character.
- Maintenance of historic character made up of dispersed historic farm and manor buildings, stone bridges and small irregular fields.
- Loss of riverside trees and vegetation.
- Any development which would damage the integrity of the valley floor or sides.
- Unsympathetic flood defences.
- Change in agricultural practices – pasture improvement and land drainage.
- Expansion of horse paddocks.
- Change to river banks and drainage for wildlife by unsympathetic reprofiling.
- Any large scale housing/commercial development.



Rich marginal vegetation



Small valley side woodlands



River Arun



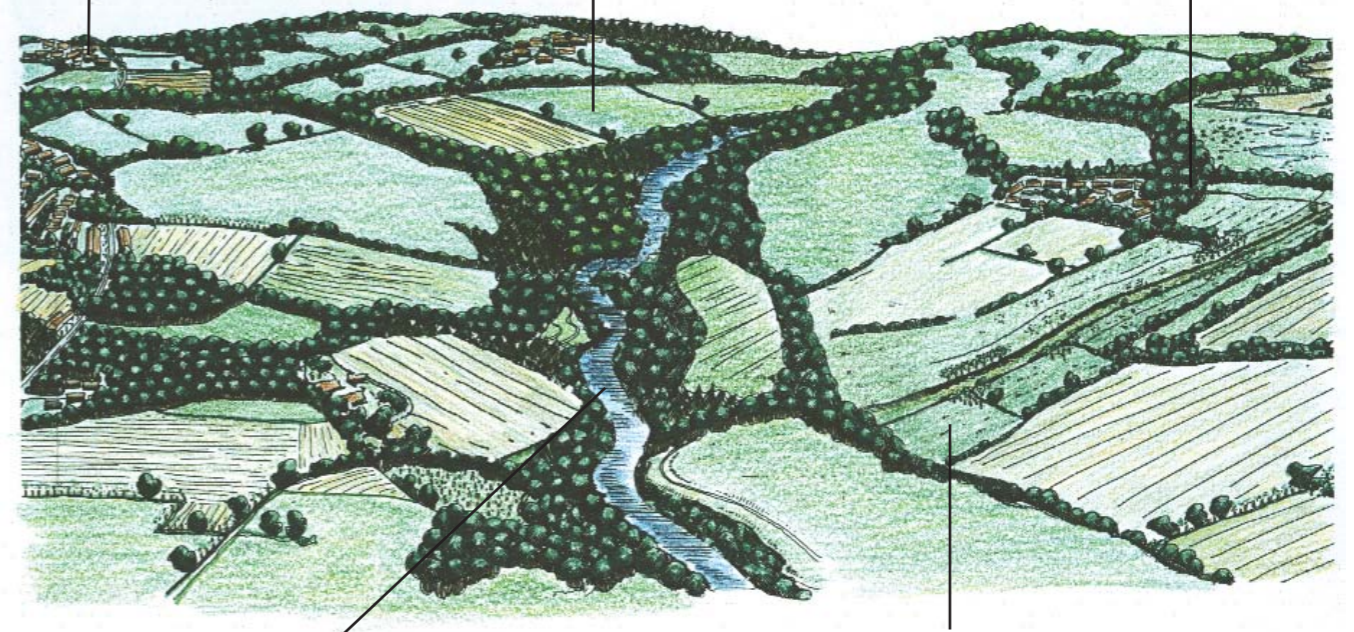
Stone Bridge

Land Management Guidelines

Ensure any development on the valley sides is integrated into existing landscape pattern of small woodlands and hedgerows

Conserve and extend existing grassland managing for species richness

Conserve and manage valley side woodland and hedgerows



Where possible, enhance the wildlife potential of river banks and drainage channels by reprofiling in a sympathetic manner

Conserve the wildlife potential of wetland areas by controlling scrub, to avoid suppressing marshland plants and drying out of the ground

Conserve the rural character of the valley.

- Ensure any development on the valley sides respects historic settlement pattern, form and building materials, and is integrated into existing landscape pattern of small woodlands and hedgerows.
- Promote natural watercourse management avoiding the introduction of engineered flood defences.
- Conserve and manage valley side woodland and hedgerows.
- Create new wetland areas such as reed beds and marsh.
- Conserve the wildlife potential of wetland areas by controlling scrub, to avoid suppressing marshland plants and drying out of the ground.
- Promote the use of pollarding of wetland trees and shrubs as a management technique.
- Seek to reduce the intensity extent and visual impact of horse grazing.
- Conserve historic stone and brick bridges.
- Conserve and extend existing grassland, managing for species richness.
- Where possible enhance the wildlife potential of river banks and drainage channels by reprofiling in a sympathetic manner.
- Encourage clearance cycles of watercourses that increase floristic diversity.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

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