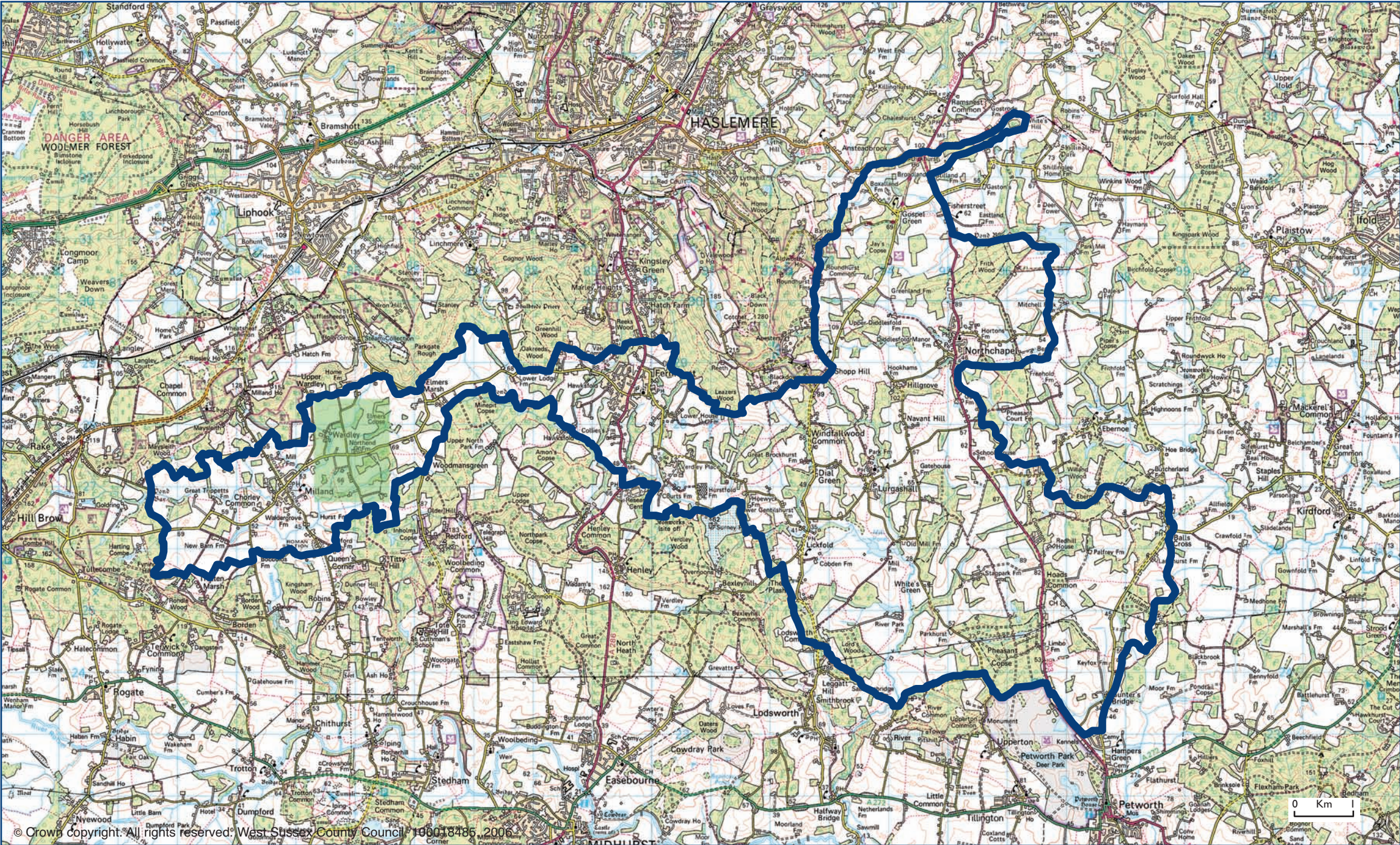


Overall Character

This Character Area is a unique, narrow extension of the clays of the western weald with the Fernhurst Basin in the east and terminating in the west at the Milland Basin. The area is contained within the heavily wooded horseshoe shaped escarpments of the Hythe sands. The clay valley floor has a relatively dense and prominent pattern of mature woodland linked by a strong network of shaws and hedgerows which enclose small to medium sized pastures. Fernhurst, Milland, Lurgashall and Northchapel are the most notable settlements. Elsewhere settlement is sparse with few scattered farms and cottages.

Key Characteristics

- Enclosed and contained landscape.
- Dense cover of medium sized woodlands, shaws and hedgerows.
- Ancient semi-natural woodland and old wood pasture.
- Small to medium sized fields of pasture with well linked hedgerow network.
- Strong hedgerow tree cover, predominantly oak.
- Wealden villages, some centred on village greens.
- Scattered farmsteads and cottages.
- Network of narrow winding lanes.
- Winding rivers of the Hammer Stream and the River Lod drain south to the River Rother.
- Remote and tranquil character.



North Western Valleys

Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet is derived from:

North Western Low Weald (K1) Landscape Character Area defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment** (November 2003).



Historic Features

- Route of Roman Road and Roman Station at Milland.
- Hammer ponds at Bobbolds, Trippets.
- Registered Parkland at Blackdown Park and Historic Parkscape at Hollycombe and Hawksfold.
- Glassworks at Kingsmead, Hillgrove and Roundhurst Common.
- Ironstone works at Milland and Lurgashall.
- Brickworks at Milland Marsh and Henley Common.

Biodiversity

- Numerous mill ponds, hammer ponds and ornamental ponds.
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCl)s at Upper Barn and Mire Hangers, Lurgashall Mill Pond, Meadow at Ebernoe Common and Windfall Wood.
- The small streams in the upper catchments improve the connectivity with woodlands and neighbouring catchments enabling the migration of wildlife (for example, otters).
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), at Ebernoe Common.

Change - Key Issues

- Fragmentation of hedgerows.
- Decline and loss of hedgerow and field trees, very noticeable west of Milland.
- Poor hedgerow and woodland management in some areas.
- Poor management of ponds.
- Expansion of horse paddocks with electric fencing divisions.
- Introduction of larger farm buildings.
- Changes in farming practices resulting in silt and sand run off, causing loss of topsoil and siltration issues in streams.
- Development pressures around the edges of some settlements.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Key sensitivities are:

- Declining hedgerow tree cover with little new planting to perpetuate tree cover.
- Removal of hedgerows.
- Suburbanisation of traditional dwellings with inappropriate entrances and exotic hedging materials.
- Change in farming practices and the introduction of modern farm buildings.



View across North Western valleys



Village green - Lurgashall

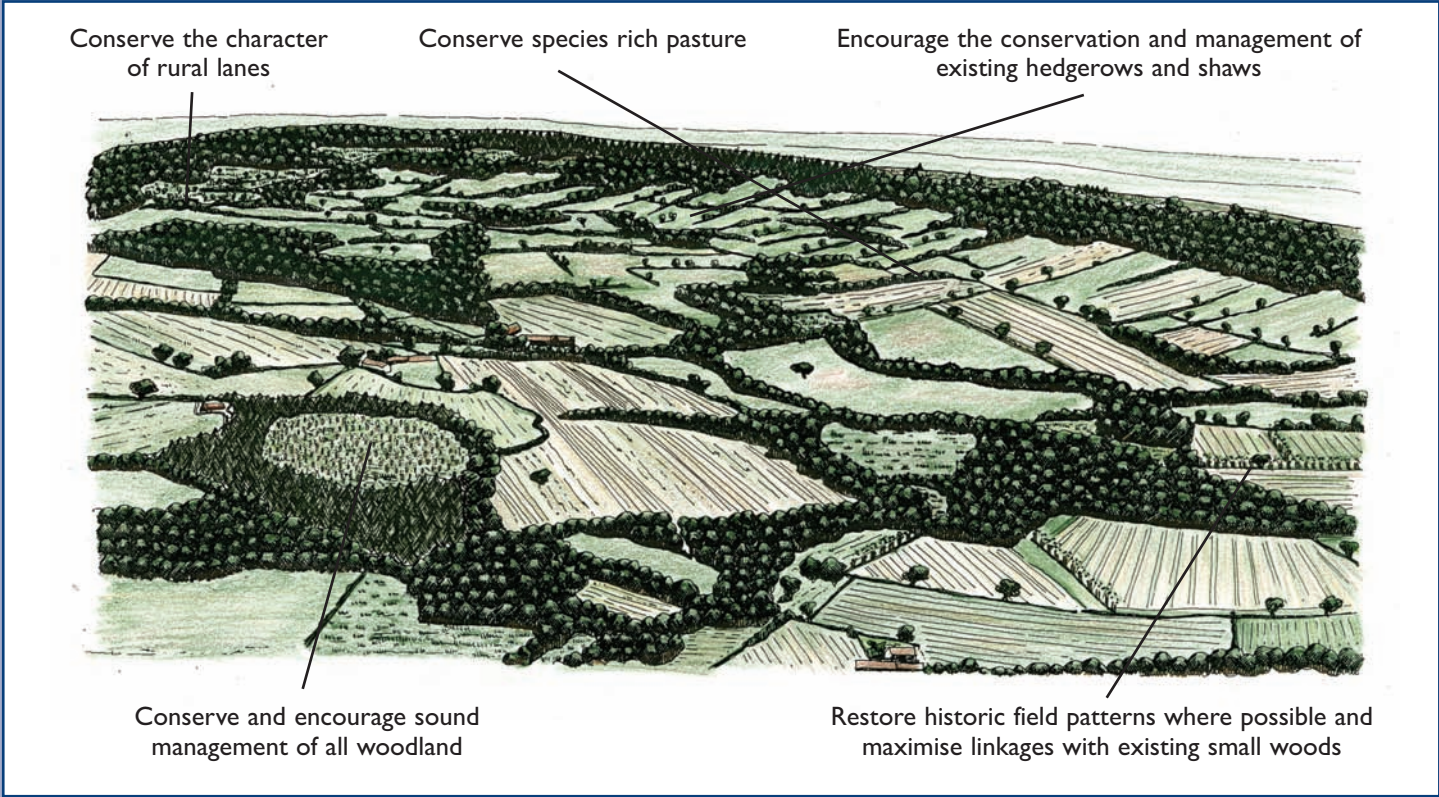


Pylons cutting through fields of pasture



Hedgerows and hedgerow trees near Hampers Green

Land Management Guidelines



Conserve and enhance the remote, tranquil and pastoral rural character of the area.

- Maintain the historic character, including the pattern of small fields and village greens.
- Encourage conversion of arable fields to permanent pasture.
- Encourage the conservation and management of existing hedgerows and shaws.
- Replant hedgerows with a diverse mix of native species where these have been removed or depleted.
- Encourage the planting of hedgerow oaks to ensure a new generation of individual specimens.
- Restore historic field patterns where possible and maximise linkages with existing small woods.
- Replant and manage isolated trees in pasture.
- Conserve and encourage sound management of all woodland. Support and promote woodland industries.
- Conserve species rich pasture.
- Conserve and manage streamside vegetation and ponds. Encourage appropriate management to perpetuate conservation and landscape interests.
- Promote the use of current Stewardship schemes or equivalent.
- Seek to reduce the extent, intensity and impact of horse grazing. Encourage the planting of tree belts and hedgerows around paddocks.
- Consider the cumulative impact on landscape character of small developments and change. Avoid the introduction of suburban styles and materials.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agriculture and other development.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their conservation value.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (October 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *South Downs Management Plan* (October 2007) published by the South Downs Joint Committee.