

# Overall Character

A scenic, undulating pastoral landscape of mixed geology, extending from the Arun Valley in the east and Petworth and Northchapel in the west and represents the western extent of the Low Weald. It comprises a gentle, rolling, enclosed rural landscape, with a sense of unity conferred by strong patterns of woodland, streams and rolling pasture interspersed with more open arable fields. Natural colours and textures of mature semi-natural woodland and pasture predominate. Many pastures contain field oak trees and are enclosed by sometimes dense networks of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, shaws, and frequent small and medium sized woodlands. Overall, the area has a remote and tranquil character.

## Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating pastoral landscape.
- Dense network of medium sized woodlands, shaws and hedges with mature hedgerow trees.
- Mature and over-mature oak trees.
- Woodlands often following winding streams.
- Ancient semi-natural woodland and old woodland pasture.
- Oak - hazel coppice.
- Small and medium sized fields of predominantly pasture with some larger arable fields.
- Wealden villages, some centred on village greens, scattered farmsteads and cottages.
- Varied local building materials of stone, brick, weatherboard and half timber.
- Dominant east-west pylon line.
- Winding narrow lanes linking scattered hamlets and farms.

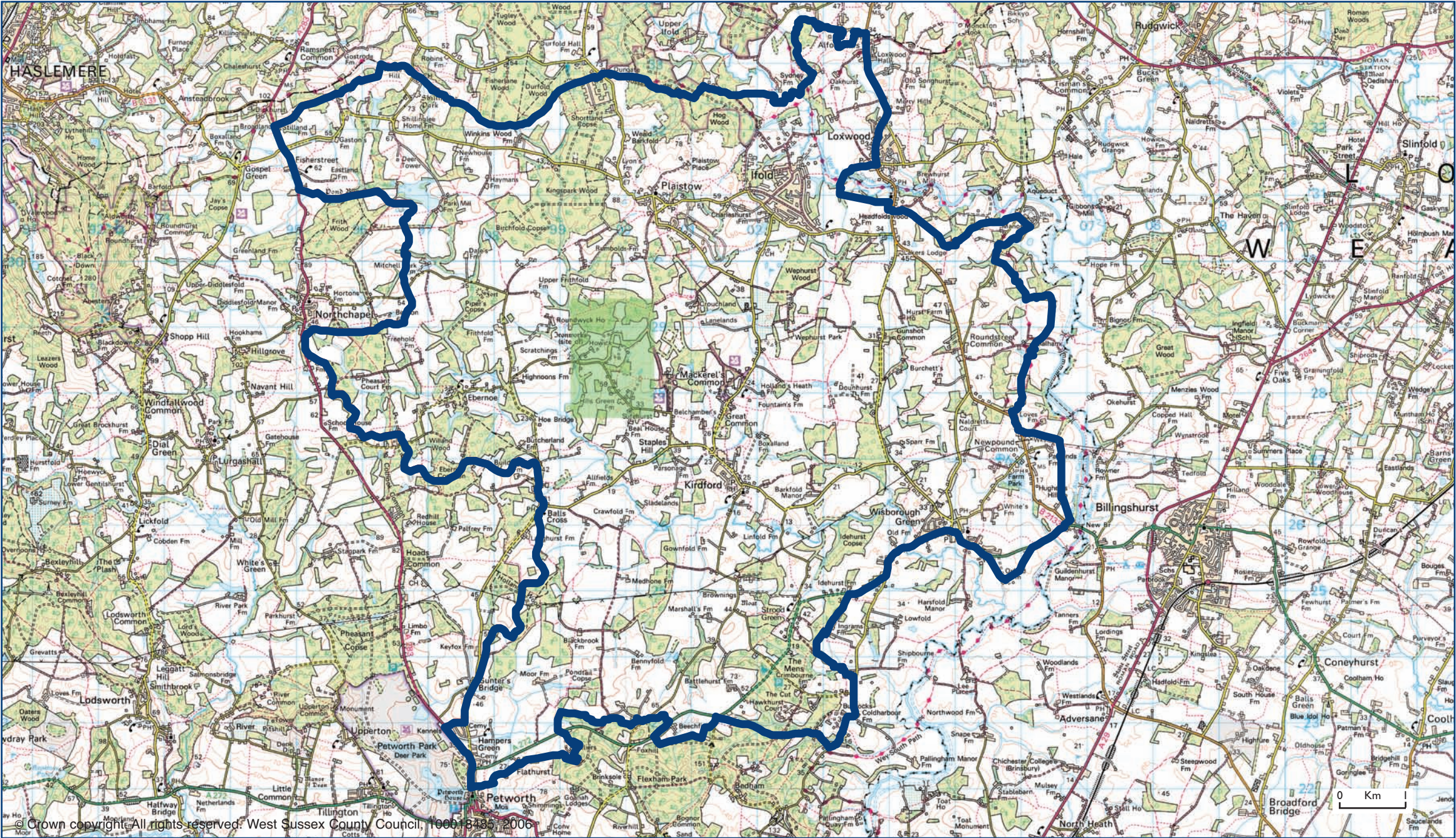
## Sheet LW2

# North Western Low Weald

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North Western Low Weald (K1) Landscape Character Area defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment** (November 2003).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

- Medieval churches at Kirdford and Wisborough Green.
- Woodland assarts and radiating field patterns around settlements.
- A total of 12 glassworks throughout the area including Wephurst, Plaistow.
- Remains of ironworks at Roundwyck Furnace, Ebernoe and Mitchel Park Forge, Northchapel.
- Historic Registered Parkland at Shillinglee.
- Medieval moated sites at Loxwood and Kirdford.
- Lime kilns and brick workings throughout the area.

## Biodiversity

- Hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.
- Diverse natural history.
- Large blocks of ancient, semi-natural woodland.
- The small streams in the upper catchments improve the connectivity with woodlands and neighbouring catchments enabling the migration of wildlife (for example, otters).
- Two fine examples of Wealden ancient woodland at Ebernoe Common and The Mens, both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).
- Large Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) at Colhook Common, Pipers Copse and Sparrwood Copse.

## Change - Key Issues

- Poor hedgerow and woodland management.
- Localised loss and fragmentation of hedgerows.
- Over-maturity and decline of hedgerows and field trees.
- Poor pond management.
- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Introduction of large farm buildings.
- Changes in farming practices resulting in silt and sand run off, causing loss of topsoil and siltration issues in streams.
- Localised increases in traffic on rural roads.
- Introduction of non native, exotic plant species into the landscape giving a suburban, manicured feel in places.
- Former individual farmsteads have been converted to residential use.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Key sensitivities are:

- Loss of tranquillity.
- Loss of individual trees in fields and hedgerows.
- Over maturity of hedgerow trees with little evidence of new young trees.
- Unsympathetic development, changes in settlement pattern and addition of suburban features.
- Changes in farming practices leading to the expansion or addition of modern farm buildings.
- Quality of public rights of way network vulnerable to reduced drainage management and increased use.



Village green, Kirdford



Undulating pastoral landscape, Plaistow

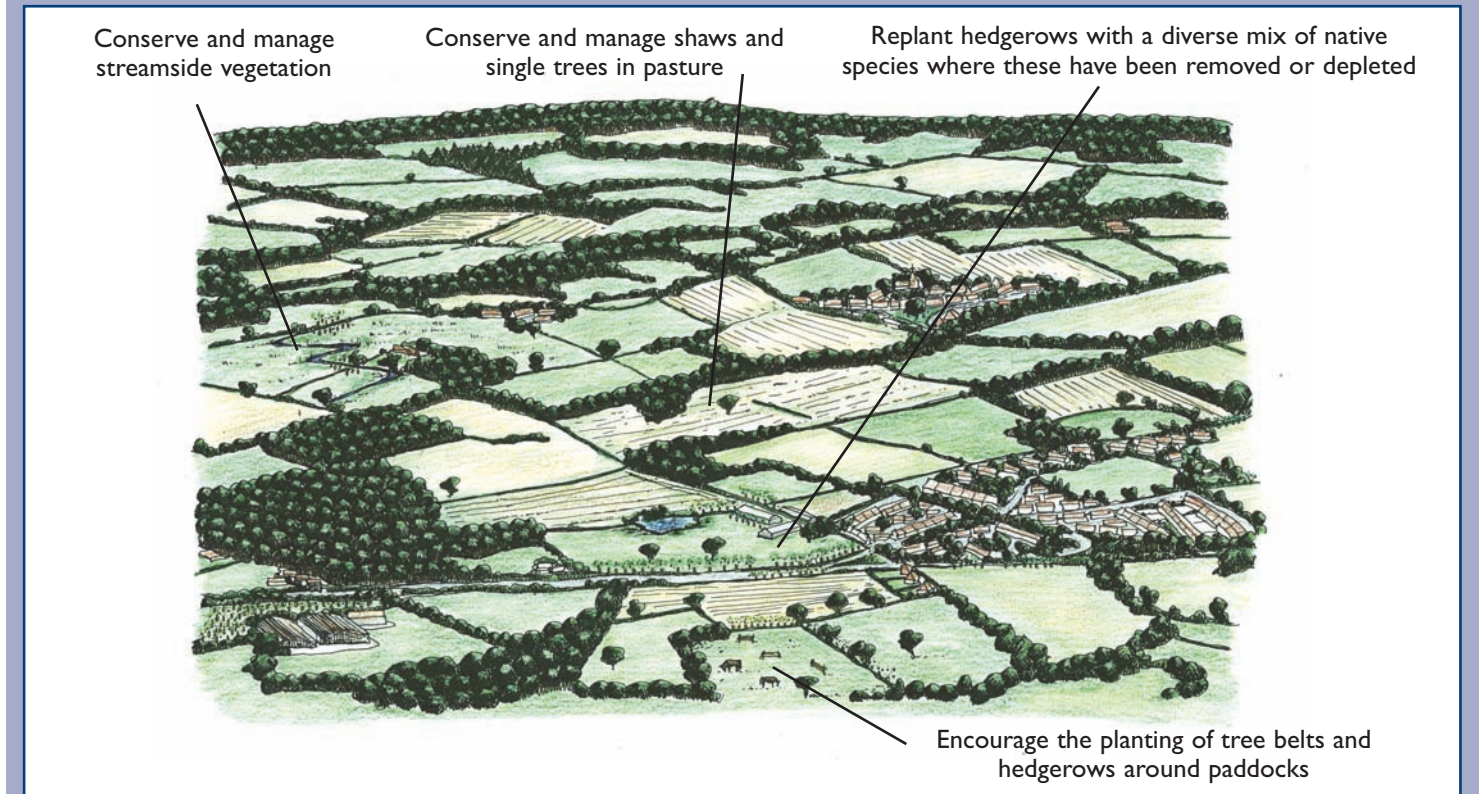


Furnace Pond at Ebernoe Common, SSSI



Shillinglee Park, historic parkland

## Land Management Guidelines



### Conserve existing tranquil rural and predominantly wooded character of the area.

- 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.
- Plant 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.
- Seek to reduce the extent, intensity and impact of horse grazing. Encourage the planting of tree belts and hedgerows around paddocks.
- Promote the use of current Stewardship schemes or equivalent.
- 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.