

Overall Character

The Lower Arun Valley character area, SCI0, extends from where the river leaves the downland at Arundel; its extensive drained floodplain pastures merge with the Coastal Plain. Stretches of the tidal river are contained by high banks engineered to control flooding, with suburban and urban fringe development visible over a distance. The river reaches the sea at Littlehampton, flanked by wharves, jetties, moorings, a golf course and sand dunes.

Key Characteristics

- Extensive areas of drained pasture and floodplain.
- Wide wandering river course throughout, with meanders increasing in size to the south. Tidal character up to Pallington Lock.
- Meandering river, fed by rifes and dykes with adjacent reed beds.
- Stretches of engineered concrete river banks.
- Very shallow valley sides, consisting of slightly undulating farmland or the urban edge of the coastal development, in particular Littlehampton.
- Little riverside vegetation.
- Intrusive surrounding suburban activities.
- Prominent railway on embankment.
- Extensive high level views onto the area.
- Key close dramatic views of Arundel (castle, Roman Catholic cathedral, parish church, clustered hillside housing) from the south.
- Seaward views from elevated positions.
- Long views of river valley towards the Chalk Downs and Arundel from the south.



Sheet SCI0

Lower Arun Valley

South Coast Plain

The area covered by the Sheet derives from:

The Arun Valley (02) Landscape Character Area, as defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment** (November 2003).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 SCI0, WG6, SD2, and LW3.



Historic Features

- Remains of former medieval settlement at Church Farm, Climping.
- Augustinian Priors at Tortington and Pynham outside Arundel historic water meadows, with associated earthworks.
- Water meadows, with associated earthworks mostly lost to the plough.

Biodiversity

- Rich marginal vegetation along the riverbanks and floodplain ditches.
- Low lying grassland important for wintering birds and breeding waders.
- Climping sand dune system.

Change - Key Issues

- Development pressures at Littlehampton.
- Loss of some pasture and remaining wetland areas on floodplain due to drainage schemes.
- Introduction of further concreted sections on river banks for flood protection.
- Road improvements, particularly along the A27 trunk road.
- Changes in farm practice from permanent pasture to silage or arable.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

This valley and floodplain is unique in the context of the Lower Coastal Plain. It forms a visual and physical link between the Chalk Downs and the sea.

Key sensitivities are to:

- Loss of pastoral character of the valley.
- Any large scale housing/commercial development.
- Change to open character.
- Loss of long views to Arundel and the Downs.
- Change in important views including those of settlements and landmarks.
- Loss of wetland areas.
- Change to river banks and drainage by unsympathetic reprofiling or flood protection measures.



View to the Downs



Littlehampton Development

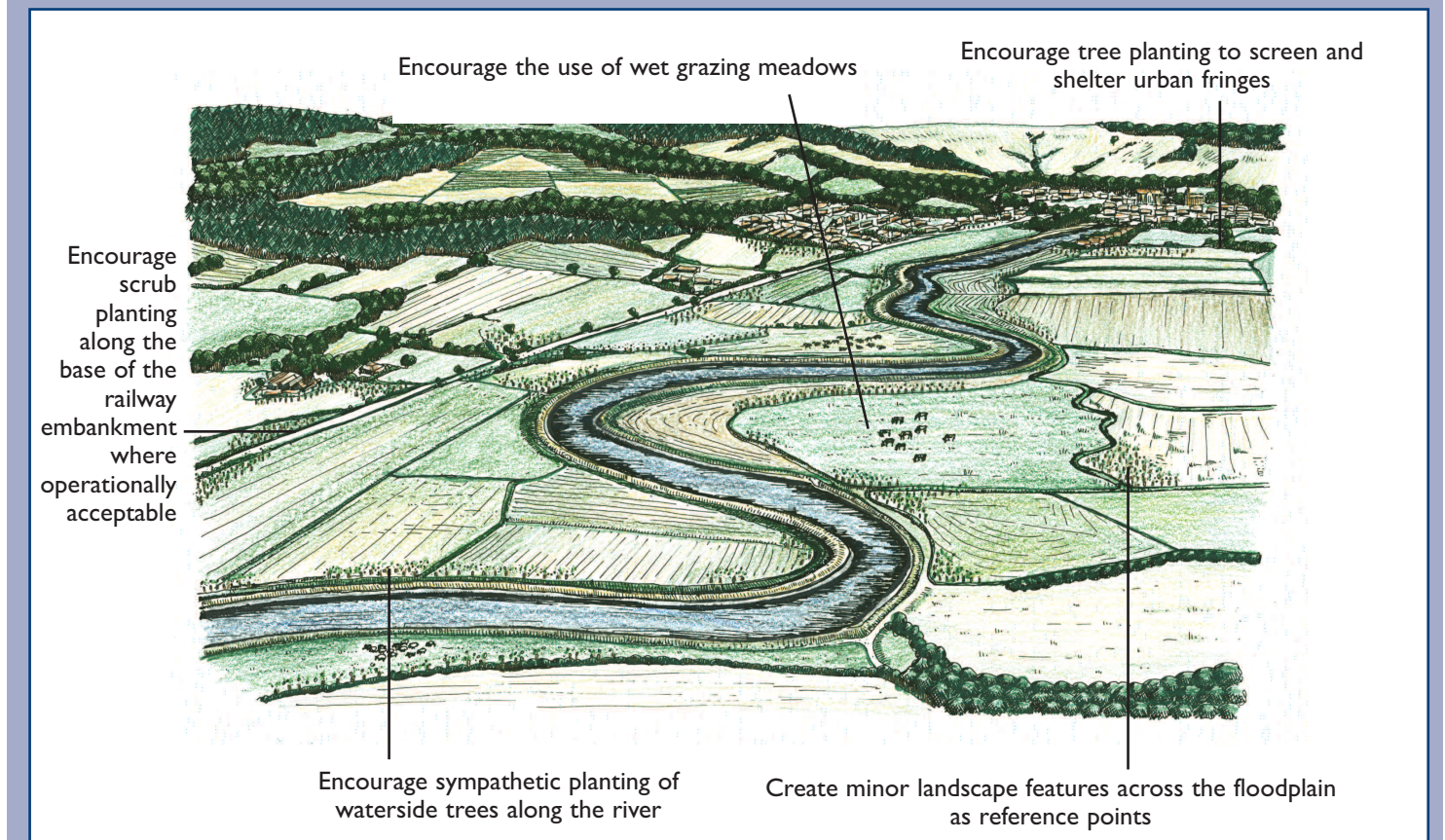


Little vegetation alongside the meandering river



Long views towards Arundel

Land Management Guidelines



Conserve and maintain key views across valley.

- Conserve and maintain existing floodplain habitats and encourage the use of wet grazing meadows.
- Ensure the open nature and characteristic vegetation of the valley are considered in any future development, especially the landscape treatment of any A27 improvements.
- Encourage creation of lakes and ponds along rifes to increase visual and wildlife value.
- Encourage tree planting to screen and shelter urban fringes.
- Encourage the planting of waterside trees to increase the visual quality of the river alignment and enhance habitat diversity.
- Encourage tree group planting on higher ground and along the edges of roads whilst maintaining views across the area.
- Create minor landscape features through the establishment of planted areas up to half a hectare on the floodplain.
- Promote sympathetic management of river valley edge.
- Encourage and promote grassland and wetland management schemes for the benefit of nature conservation and increased biodiversity through Stewardship schemes.

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.