

## Overall Character

This Character Area lies in the south west of the county, to the south of Chichester, between the harbours of Chichester and Pagham. A large part of this area has been reclaimed from the sea, and remains below the current high spring tide level. It is mainly flat open landscape, dominated by highly productive large arable fields and modern farm buildings and characterised by a decline in tree and hedgerow cover and loss of grassland habitats. Habitation is predominantly in scattered small traditional settlements and larger suburban villages. Areas of unimproved grassland still exist along the edges of streams and rifees which are often immediately bordered by reed beds. In contrast, some parts have a patchwork of smaller enclosed pastures and horse paddocks which have a more intimate character. Parkland tree belts remaining from former estates are an occasional feature and there are significant clusters of glasshouses in the Sidlesham area.

### Key Characteristics

- Mainly low-lying flat landform.
- Pockets of small enclosed pasture fields and horse paddocks.
- Linear villages.
- Narrow, right-angled or winding lanes.
- Occasional views from the land of the water, or of yacht masts.
- Few trees or hedgerows, partly as a result of Dutch Elm Disease from the 1970s and the Great Storm in 1987 and high value agricultural land, although where they do exist, they form prominent features.
- Large scale arable farming with large, often hedgeless fields.
- Extensive farms with both traditional and modern farm buildings and silos.
- Industry in the countryside mainly associated with horticulture, resulting in large expanses of glasshouses.
- Scattered vernacular villages with mixed building materials, often flint, brick, half timber and stone, often with sprawling modern fringes.
- Rife and ditch systems with associated unimproved grassland and edged by reed beds.
- Busy roads.



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## Sheet SC2

# Manhood Peninsula

## South Coast Plain

The area covered by the Sheet is derived from:

Chichester and Pagham Harbours and the Manhood Peninsula (B1) Landscape Character Area defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Character Assessment** (November 2003).



## Historic Features

- Medieval manor house.
- Field patterns mainly the result of 18th and 19th century Parliamentary enclosure.
- Medieval churches at Sidlesham and Earnley.
- Remnant parkland.
- Smallholdings.

## Biodiversity

- Low-lying species-rich grasslands adjacent to the rifes.
- Remnant semi-natural broadleaved woodlands form pockets of high nature conservation importance.
- Ancient woodland at Keynor Copse, a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).
- Remnants of floodplain woodland and stands of planted black poplar.
- Low-lying, seasonally flooded pasture, adjacent to Pagham Harbour, is important for wintering waders and wildfowl such as Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew and Brent Geese.

## Change - Key Issues

- Changes in farming practices leading to industrial size installations and glasshouses.
- Active recreational and seasonal visitor pressure impacting on access to the coast.
- Traffic generation resulting in erosion of rural lanes and loss of tranquillity.
- New housing development associated with the expansion of Bognor Regis.
- Changes in drainage patterns.
- Climate change may increase the risk of storm surges and storminess with associated flooding, and consequent impacts on inter-tidal habitats, increasing pressure for possibly insensitive coastal defences.
- Management and possible realignment of sea defences, due to predicted sea level rises, will have significant implications for landscape over the coming decades.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Key sensitivities are:

- Large-scale glasshouse expansion which can be highly visible and prominent in long views.
- Managed retreat of the coastline may be particularly influential in the future, providing opportunities for creation of new coastal and inter-tidal habitats and could result in a more naturally functioning landscape.
- Expansion and development on urban and village edges.
- Close proximity to internationally important landscapes of Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- Ingress of salt laden winds inland.



St Mary's Church - Sidlesham



Polytunnels - Highleigh

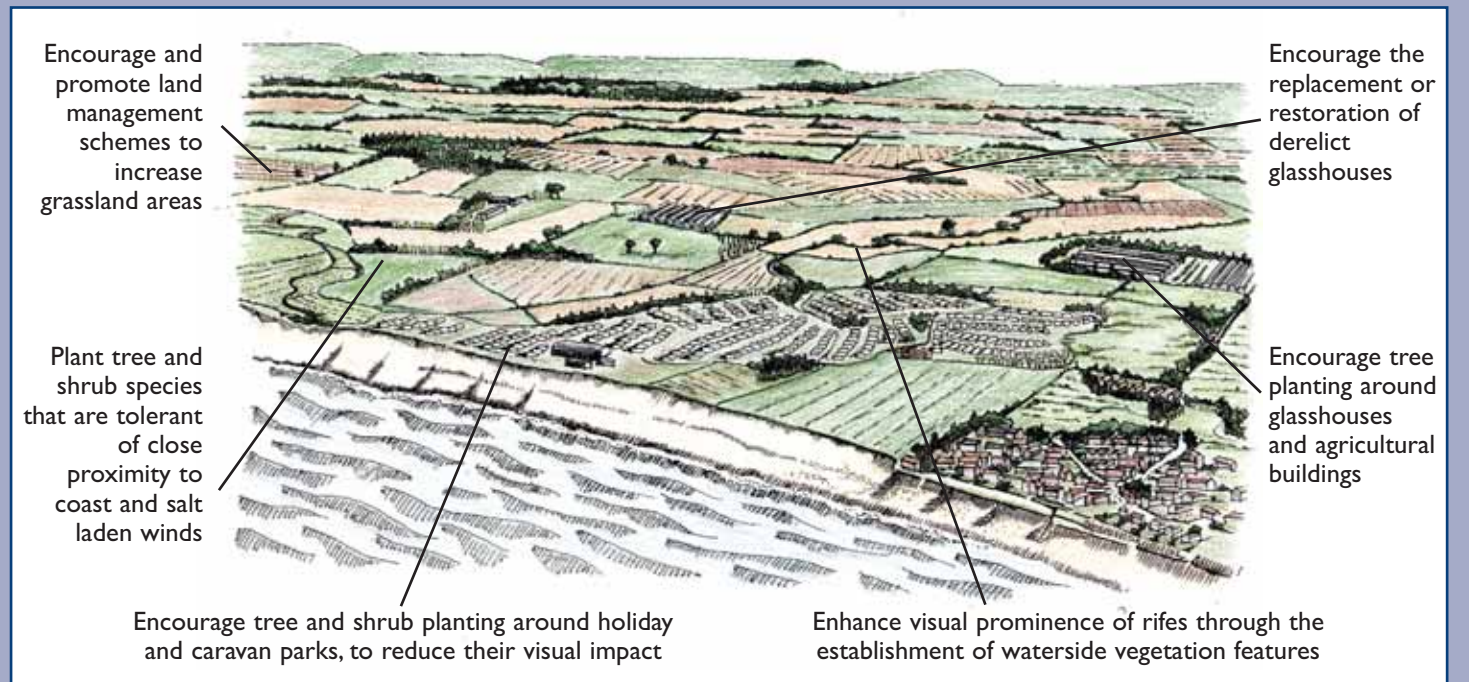


Arable farming - Sidlesham



Open landscapes dominated by horticulture - Norton

## Land Management Guidelines



### Conserve existing area of tranquil character.

- Create a new large scale tree and hedgerow framework which complements the open, intensively farmed landscape, whilst maintaining significant views.
- Encourage a colour and design study with a view to issuing guidelines for new and existing agricultural and industrial buildings
- Conserve and enhance the character and setting of the villages.
- Encourage the replacement or restoration of derelict glasshouses, where these appear detrimental to the landscape.
- Promote sympathetic design of new road schemes.
- Formulate a management plan for urban edges to enhance the distinction between the urban and rural landscape.
- Promote the planting of trees and scrub within and around caravan parks and holiday camps to reduce their visual impact.
- Substantially extend woodland and hedgerow cover around village fringes to screen unsightly elements.
- Restrict extensive areas of tree planting to poorer quality agricultural land.
- Encourage bold tree planting associated with large agricultural buildings and glasshouses to assimilate them into the landscape more satisfactorily.
- Conserve and manage existing tree groups and individuals.
- Maintain and link existing remnant hedgerows and tree lines to re-establish coherent field boundaries and wildlife corridors, strengthening the wider network.
- Establish new vegetation features by the planting of hedgerows and hedge trees along roadsides, especially those approaching settlements, and tree clumps in field corners.
- Enhance the visual prominence of rifes through the establishment of water side vegetation features.
- Encourage and promote land management schemes to increase grassland areas.
- Promote and establish grassland management regimes of grazing, hay cutting and silage.
- Plant tree and shrub species that are tolerant of close proximity to the coast and salt laden winds.
- Enhance the landscape and conservation value of rifes through the reprofiling of banks, and encourage more diverse flora by lengthening clearance cycles.
- Maintain, restore and enhance floodplain woodland and associated species, including native black poplar, where appropriate.

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.
- Black Poplar Species Action Plan for Sussex, June 2005.
- South Downs Shoreline Management Plan - Beachy Head to Selsey Bill (under review).