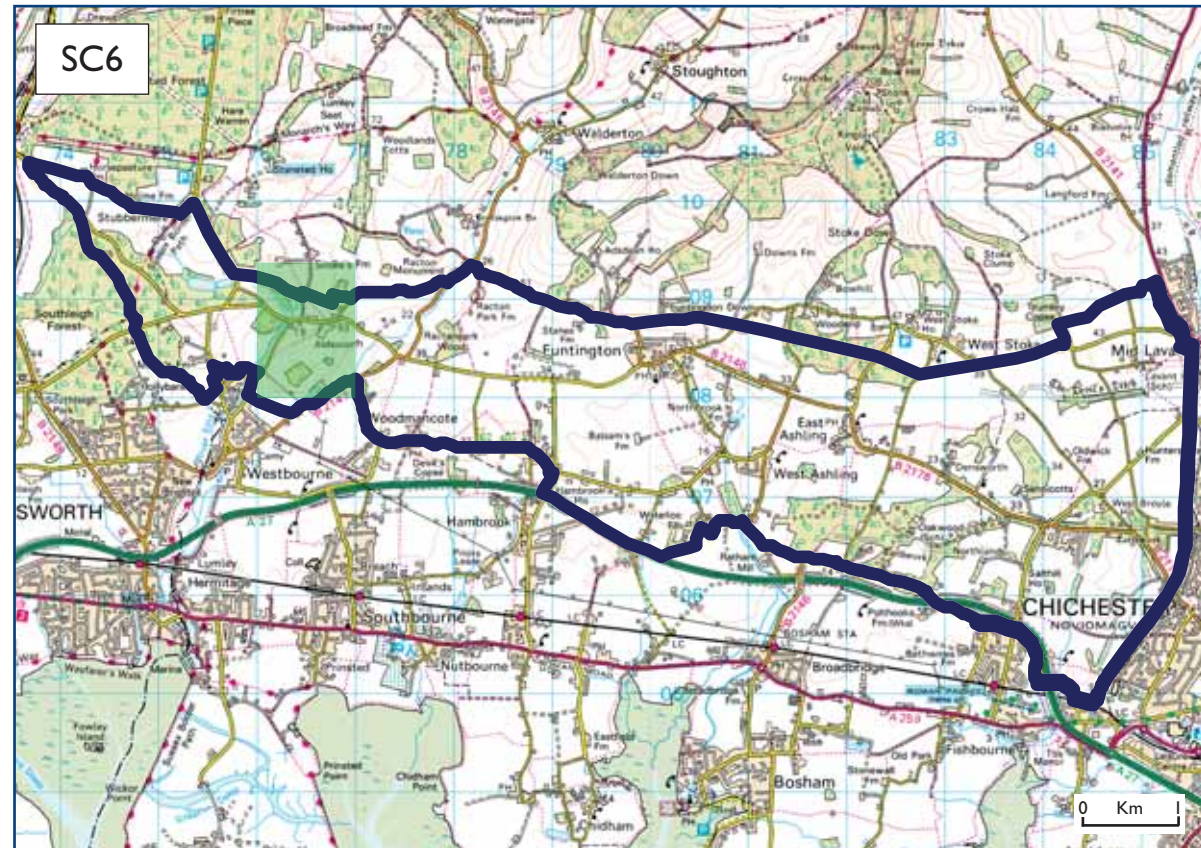


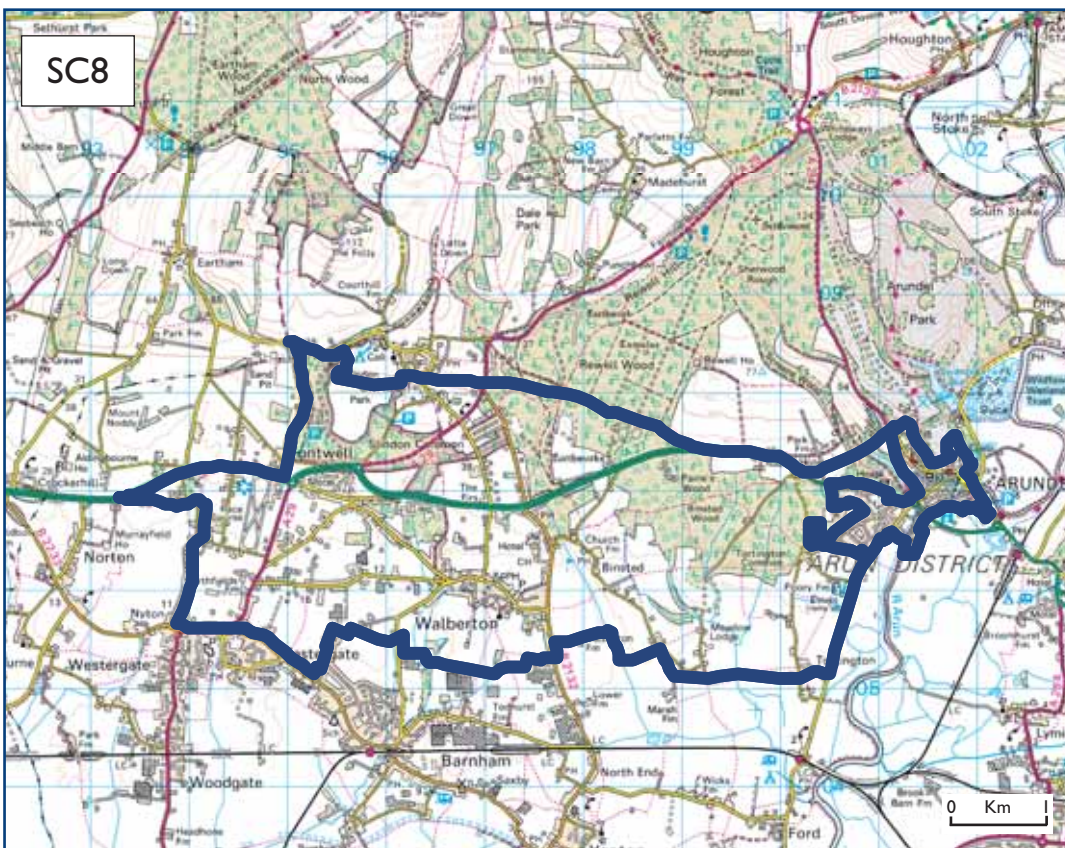
Overall Character

These Character Areas lie in a line between Funtington in the west and Arundel in the east. They form a transition between the open lower Coastal Plain to the south and the wooded Downs to the north. The landform is very gently undulating in the west, more intricate in the east, encompassing the distinctive landscapes of Binsted valley. Over much of the area, strong networks of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodlands enclose small to medium-sized fields. At the northern edge, larger woodlands and forests merge with those on the gently dipping slopes of the western Downs, where historic parklands are distinctive features. Whilst the busy A27 trunk road briefly cuts across the southern edge, there are few urban influences in much of the area. As a result, it retains a mostly undeveloped, rural character.



Key Characteristics

- A transitional landscape.
- Clear views to the higher ground of the Downs to the north.
- A good cover of woodland and trees, with a high percentage of ancient woodland.
- Mainly gently undulating farmland enclosed by woods with numerous hedgerows.
- Pattern of small to medium sized pastures, arable fields, livestock farming and market gardening.
- Winterbourne chalk streams emanate from this area.
- Wealth of historic landscape features including historic parklands, many ancient woodlands and earthworks.
- Parkland is concentrated in the southern areas of Goodwood and around the Ashlings.
- Area is well settled with scattered pattern of rural villages and farmsteads, including traditional flint village centres such as Boxgrove.
- Suburban fringes with high commuter populations and small commercial sites such as at Halnaker.
- Leafy or wooded settlements.
- Intimate hidden valleys at Binsted.
- Winding hedged or wooded lanes.
- Large scale gravel workings.



Sheet SC6, SC7, SC8

Ashlings, Halnaker and Fontwell Upper Coastal Plain

South Coast Plain

The area covered by the Sheet is derived from:

Funtington to Highdown Coastal Plain (D1) Landscape Character Area as defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment** (November 2003).



Historic Features

- Iron Age embankments around Chichester (the Chichester entrenchments) thought to represent territorial boundaries.
- Iron Age territorial boundaries which demarcated and protected the settlement of the coastal plain and Selsey peninsula.
- Evidence of humanoid existence (Boxgrove Man) some 500,000 years ago, recently uncovered in sediments at Eartham Quarry, Boxgrove, near Chichester.
- Remains of a Benedictine Monastery at Boxgrove Priory.
- Iron Age and Roman earthworks in Gobblestubs Copse.
- Historic parklands at Salthill, Goodwood, and Aldingbourne.
- Mix of small, medium and large-sized fields with mainly straight Parliamentary enclosure boundaries. Some earlier, irregular assarts.

Biodiversity

- Remnant semi-natural broadleaved woodlands, interconnecting hedgerows and trackways provide important habitats for wildlife.
- A large proportion of the woodland cover is ancient. Some of these are also Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), such as at The Valdoe, Slindon Bottom, Binsted Wood, Rewell Wood and Tortington Common. Typical tree species include oak, ash, beech, elm and sweet chestnut.
- A few significant patches of unimproved or semi-improved neutral grassland and meadows.
- Pockets of remnant heathland in glades and woodland rides associated with Tortington Common and Binsted Woods (SNCI).
- Steep-sided stream valleys add variety, for example in the Binsted area.
- The "disturbed" gravel working environment has considerable nature conservation potential.
- Stream valleys, both ephemeral and permanent, add to the nature conservation interest.
- Improved pasture is common and there is a significant area of unimproved grassland near Woodmancote.
- Near the Hampshire border, the two Brick Kiln Ponds and Aldsworth Pond are rich in wildlife.

Change - Key Issues

- Potential development pressure from the extension of existing settlements.
- Workings associated with gravel extraction.
- Lack of woodland management resulting in a decline in the structure and condition of existing woodlands.
- Increased recreational activities, for example associated with horse-riding and golf courses.
- Major existing road improvements along the A27 trunk road and the possibility of new ones.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities:

Key sensitivities are:

- Suburban expansion pressures from the urban fringes.
- Visual intrusion of gravel workings. Can be substantially visible from adjacent higher ground.
- Inappropriate or visually intrusive road improvements.
- Views from the higher ground of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the north and to Arundel.
- Erosion of historic character due to changes in farming practices.
- Expansion of horse paddocks.



St. Mary's Church - Binsted



Horse paddocks - Funtington

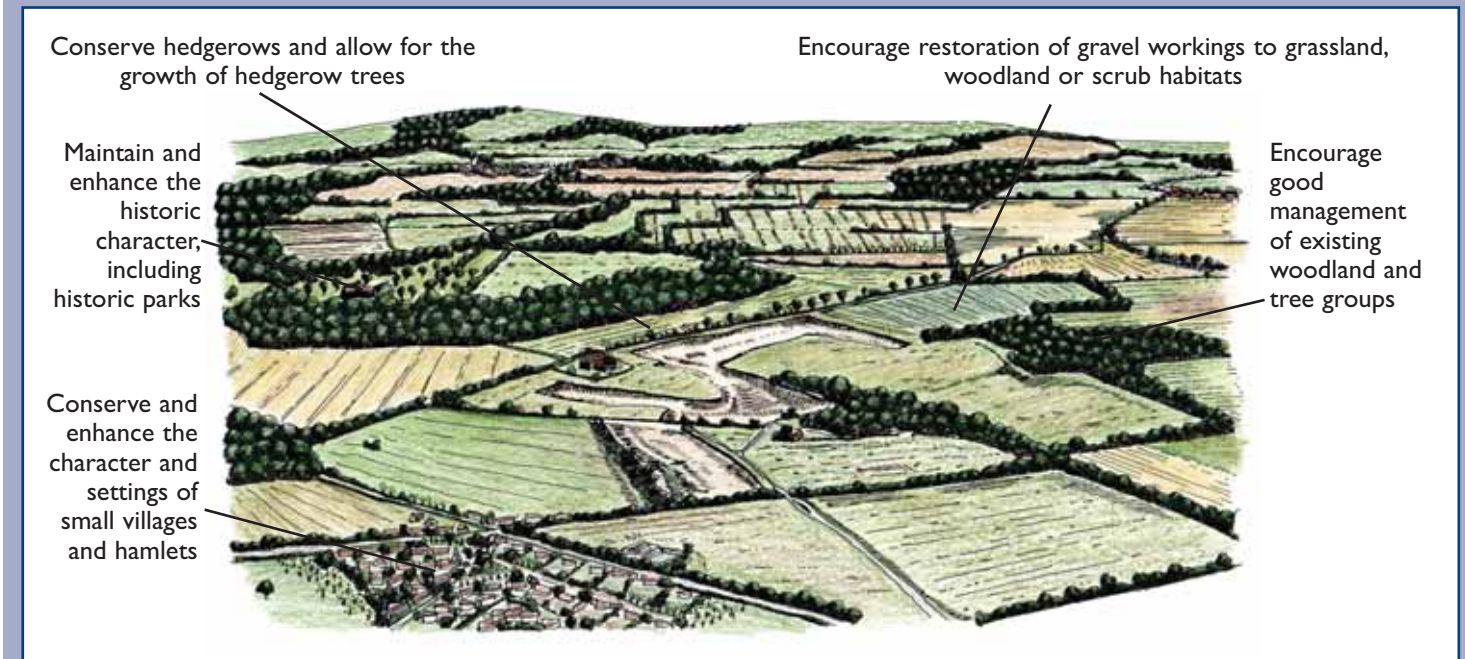


View to the South Downs



Binsted Valley

Land Management Guidelines



Conserve the undeveloped rural character of the area.

- Maintain and enhance the historic character of the area including earthworks, historic field patterns and historic parks.
- Conserve and manage distinctive habitats including meadows, heathland, chalk grassland, stream sides and woodland.
- Seek, where appropriate, the restoration of gravel workings to grassland, woodland and scrub habitats, including restoration of field edges and hedgerows.
- Promote management of existing woodland, especially where under pressure from gravel working or urban fringe development.
- Conserve and enhance the character and setting of small villages and hamlets.
- Promote good management of important village and roadside trees. Plant new tree features in villages.
- Encourage careful woodland design to screen new housing and other visually intrusive landscape elements, for example, pig farms, communication aerials.
- Consider the cumulative impact on landscape character of small developments and land use change.
- Avoid the introduction of suburban styles and materials.
- Ensure any new development is well integrated into the wider landscape. Use new woodland and hedgerow planting as appropriate.
- Conserve ancient semi-natural woodland as an historical, landscape and wildlife feature.
- Encourage good management of existing woodland and tree groups, including planting up edge areas.
- Conserve hedgerows and allow for the growth of hedgerow trees.
- Conserve and enhance the stream side vegetation along the River Ems in the west.
- Conserve the rural character of the Binsted valley to the east. Conserve and enhance historic features of Binsted especially in the vicinity of the golf course. Conserve and manage the streams and their sides in the Binsted valley.
- Plant small tree groups on the eastern boundary of Binsted valley to screen glasshouses and traffic movement on its margins.

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.
- Objectives and actions contained in the Interim South Downs Management Plan (March 2004) published by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board.