

# Overall Character

The scarp footslopes east of the Adur Valley comprise an undulating relief of low sandstone ridges and gentle clay vales. Areas of ancient woodland have survived on the heavier soils of the Gault Clay. Views south are dominated by the steep downland scarp.

## Key Characteristics

- Undulating Lower Greensand sandstone ridges and gentle Gault Clay vales drained by the River Adur, most of which lie within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Concentration of ancient woodland lying on the Gault Clay.
- Views dominated by the steep downland scarp.
- Arable and pastoral rural landscape, secluded in places, a mosaic of small and larger fields, woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Includes the extensive designed landscape of Danny Estate.
- Small historic commons and orchards around Henfield in the north of the area.
- Modest network of country lanes and underhill lanes beneath the scarp.
- Pockets of biodiversity limited to woodland, ponds and stream valleys.
- Characteristic spring-line villages and dispersed farmsteads, some historic.
- Township of Henfield and expanded ridge line villages with suburban development at Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks.
- Criss-crossed by roads, many of them busy, including the A23 Trunk Road.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including flint, timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Dominance of painted render and a wide range of modern styles and materials from the Victorian period onwards.
- Few visitor and recreational attractions.

## Eastern Scarp Footslopes

### Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:  
  
The Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes (Area 3) Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex District.  
  
The Henfield and Small Dole Farmlands (Area D2) Landscape Character Area defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).





# Historic Features

- Post-medieval landscape of mixed field sizes.
- Lines of two major Roman roads and Roman villa site.
- Evidence of Roman cemetery and settlement sites.
- Significant areas of common land.
- Historic country houses and manor house site at Edburton.
- Characteristic spring-line villages.

# Biodiversity

- Ancient coppice woodland.
- Species-rich hedgerows.
- Herb-rich grassland, fen, marsh and scrub on common land.
- Woodland and marginal vegetation along stream banks.
- Lakes, field and ornamental ponds.

# Change - Key Issues

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Loss of orchards around Henfield.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Visually intrusive development on the A2037 at Small Dole.
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

# Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- High level of perceived naturalness and a rural quality, especially in the more wooded landscape to the west.
- Woodland cover, much of it ancient, imparts a scenic quality to the landscape.
- Intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern of the spring-line settlements.
- Scarce pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Loss and fragmentation of hedgerows has occurred associated with modern farming.
- The area is highly exposed to views from the downs with a consequently high sensitivity to the impact of new development, and the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- Wooded urban environment and setting of the ridge line villages currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures here and elsewhere in the area.



Scarp footslope, Poynings



Scarp footslope, Fulking

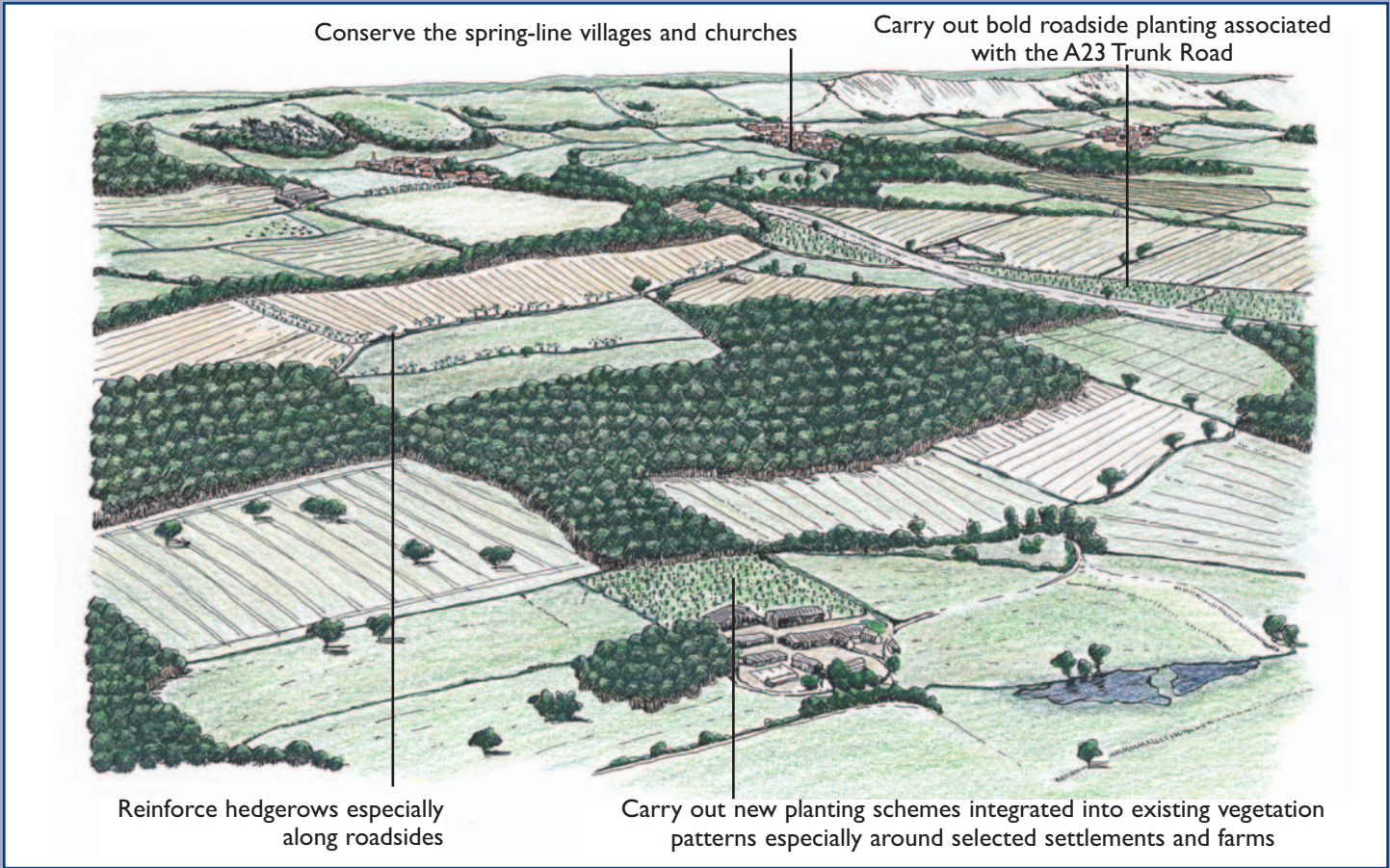


North from Perching Sands



Fulking from Devil's Dyke

# Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve and enhance the quiet, rural qualities of the western part of the area and the environment of the spring line villages, encourage landscape restoration and woodland management, and ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.**

- Maintain and restore the scenic historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape including irregular patterns of smaller fields.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on views from the downs and is integrated within the landscape.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands.
- Promote the creation of arable field margins and corners including alongside the sides of streams.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including the A23 Trunk Road.
- Carry out tree and woodland planting around Small Dole to screen intrusive development.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees, especially around irregular fields, and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of horse stabling and grazing, for instance, under the downland edge in the vicinity of Tottington and Edburton.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

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.