Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal

DRAFT August 2012

JACOBS

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

Contents

Contents

List of Figures

Context

1.1 Canterbury City Council have commissioned Jacobs to undertake a landscape and biodiversity appraisal of the Canterbury District. This appraisal forms an update and extension of previous work prepared by Kent County Council's Kent Environment Consultancy on behalf of Canterbury City Council, which was commissioned to support the Canterbury District Local Plan. This previous work subdivided Canterbury District into three separate areas and subsequent studies which excluded the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the locally designated North Downs Special Landscape Area (SLA). The studies comprised Canterbury Landscape Appraisal (November 1998), Herne Bay and Whitstable Landscape Appraisal (June 2000) and Blean Woods and the Great and Little Stour Valleys Landscape Appraisal (July 2001).

1.2 The purpose of this appraisal is to inform the Core Strategy within the emerging Local Plan. In addition, this report will be a useful tool for a variety of people including planners, land managers, developers and conservation bodies.

1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. Within its 12 Core Planning Principles it identifies that planning should:

- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.*

1.4 The NPPF also states that,

'114. Local planning authorities should:

- *set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and*
- *maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.'*

1.5 In June 2011 the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) entitled "The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature" was launched by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The NEWP provides the Government's vision for the natural environment for the next 50 years, backed up with practical action for delivery. The White Paper sets out the choices that need to be made to ensure how best to enhance the environment, to sustain economic growth and to boost wellbeing. The NEWP promotes an ecosystem-wide approach to nature conservation with an emphasis on connectivity, through the identification of 'Nature Improvement Areas' (NIAs).

1.6 This appraisal supports the principles of the NPPF and NEWP by assessing character and biodiversity at a landscape scale. Specifically the objectives are to:

- Identify and describe the local landscape character areas
- Assess the condition and sensitivity of these landscape character areas
- Identify existing priority wildlife habitats and strategic biodiversity networks

1.7 The study excludes the built-up urban areas. It also excludes the nationally designated AONB. As illustrated on Figure 10, the Kent Downs AONB is located to the south of the district, south of Chartham, Patrixbourne and Adisham. Landscape recommendations in the form of policies for the AONB are included within the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014 (First Review April 2009).

1.8 The assessment aims to provide logical, robust and defensible justifications for managing pressures for change in the area, without diminishing the value of the landscape and existing and potential wildlife habitat networks. The study also provides the opportunity to identify areas that require conservation, restoration, reinforcement or improvement to enable resources to be targeted to those areas in greatest need.

Context

Consultation

1.9 The ultimate value and accuracy of the Landscape and Biodiversity Appraisal is dependent upon a vigorous consultation with the local community, land users and other interest groups.

Summary consultation statement to be inserted in final draft of this document

Introduction

Landscape

2.1 The countryside has evolved over many hundreds of years. It has been created by the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, in particular the combination of physical, biological and cultural influences. Physical influences such as geology and landform, together with the overlying pattern of settlement and land use are key determinants of landscape character.

2.2 The objective is to ensure that the decision making process of the local authority is underpinned by a robust and widely accepted assessment of the landscape character. The challenge is to find ways of identifying the importance of the landscape within Canterbury District which assists the process of accommodating change, where this is both desirable and practicable, whilst maintaining the links with the past and the natural environment. There is a need to retain pattern and diversity in the landscape to ensure that character and local distinctiveness are maintained. This is not necessarily about keeping the landscape as it is but is more about preventing everywhere becoming the same. We need to also ensure that landscapes are visually satisfying, and give enjoyment to those who visit them and those who live and work in them.

2.3 Many of the judgments regarding landscapes are subjective, which means that they are open to equally valid but different individual interpretations. The process of landscape character assessment has to resolve this matter and has evolved so that current practice is now based on a logical and well thought-out procedure. This procedure breaks down the analysis into the component parts which collectively make up the landscape as we know it. This logical process enables decisions to be revisited over time as well as enabling different assessors to understand and contribute to the process.

Biodiversity

2.4 Wild species and semi-natural habitats exist within the landscape and help to define it. Indeed in one sense, our landscapes largely consist of 'habitats', both for wildlife and for people. However, it is widely recognised that suitable spaces for a diverse wildlife community ('biodiversity') within our landscapes have diminished over the centuries, and continue to be threatened by a multitude of human activities. Since 1992 the UK has developed a framework for the conservation of biodiversity known as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). This plan identifies priority species and habitats that are most under threat and develops measures for their conservation. Local authorities now have a clear duty to have regard to the conservation of these species and habitats under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (known as the 'Biodiversity Duty').

2.5 Amongst these pressures, the loss and fragmentation of habitat has been particularly marked, and has additional consequences in the face of climate change. In order to survive and adapt to change, species need enough accessible habitat to sustain viable populations. The requirement will differ between species, but loss of habitat area or quality normally means reduction in population size and, if excessive, local extinction. In a changing environment and to ensure genetic mixing, species also need to be able to disperse or migrate safely between areas of habitat as some areas becomes less suitable and others more so. Therefore habitat fragmentation and barriers posed by inhospitable land cover are also serious threats to species' survival.

2.6 In 2004-2007 Kent County Council, Natural England and other local and European partners undertook a major study to model how wildlife and ecological networks might respond to climate change known as the BRANCH Project: (Biodiversity Requires Adaptation in Northwest Europe under a Changing Climate): Within this, the Kent case study assessed existing connectivity of terrestrial habitats through scientific modelling of indicator species' dispersal behaviour across the landscape. The species chosen were those believed to be indicative of, and dependant on certain characteristic habitat types. From this, existing functional habitat networks could be identified. In addition, the sustainability of these networks could also be assessed in terms of their ability to retain a viable population of the indicator species over time.

2.7 Once the current distribution and sustainability of habitat networks in Kent was determined, network responses to climate change over a sequence of 'time-slices' could be assessed, based on future climate predictions. Climate change is represented in the BRANCH model as an increase or decrease in the quality of each habitat patch for a particular

species (i.e. its 'carrying capacity'), with higher quality habitats assumed to contain more individuals and therefore more potential 'dispersers'.

2.8 In the Canterbury District, the BRANCH modelling shows that habitat networks for some species may have the potential to expand under climate change, whilst others will contract. For instance the grassland bird species, meadow pipit, is likely to see a contraction in its sustainable habitat network with parts of its network, particularly south and west of Canterbury city possibly becoming unsustainable or disappearing altogether. To illustrate this the worst-case scenario for this species is mapped in Figure 1. The hatched shading shows the current grassland dispersal network for this species, and the solid shading represents the time-slice 4 scenario (based on a ten-fold reduction in habitat carrying capacity). A change in network distribution is an indication of how sensitive that species' dispersal opportunity is to climate change.

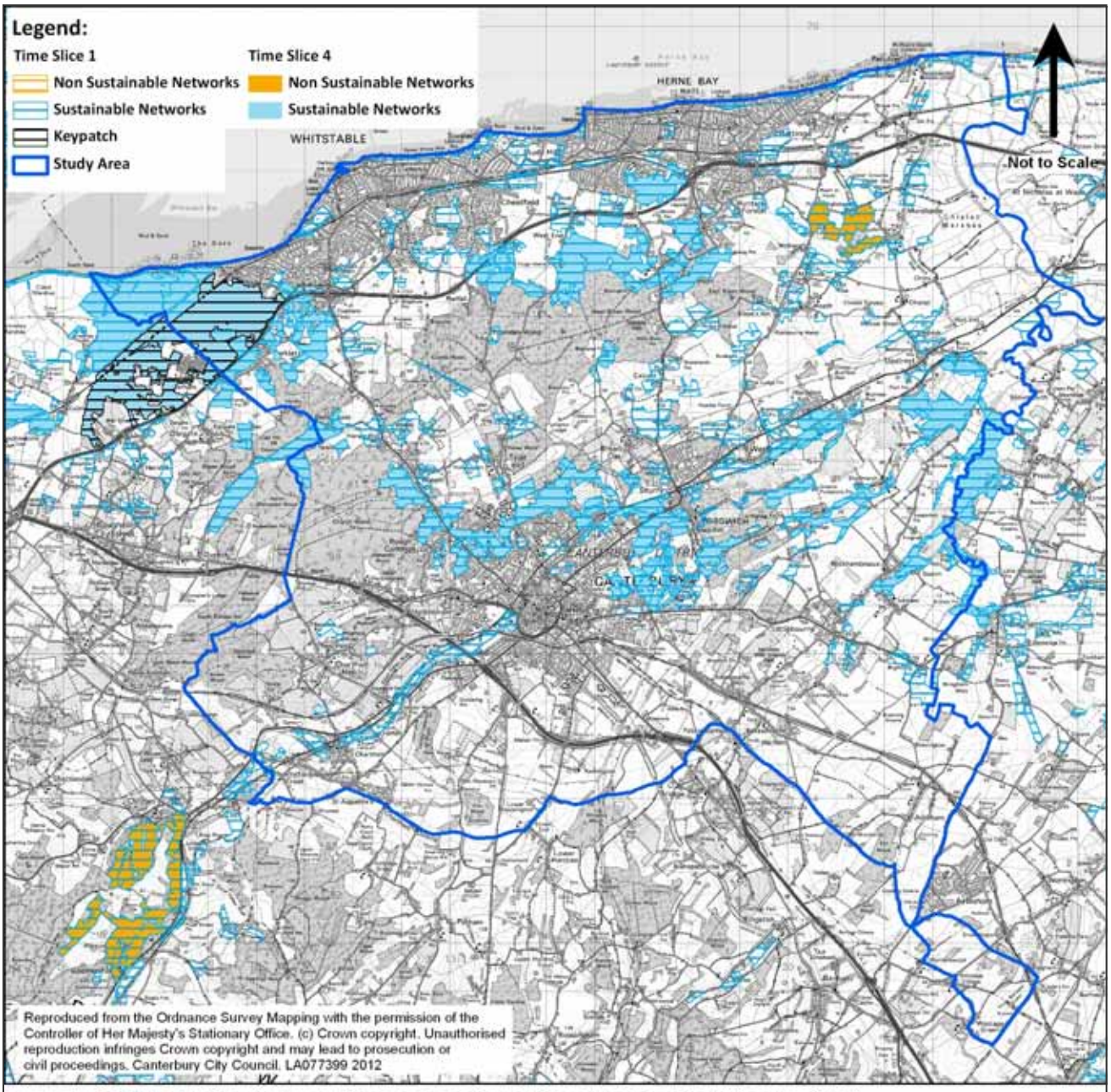


Figure 1: BRANCH Habitat Network Change for a Typical Grassland Species (Meadow Pipit)

2.9 Interestingly, BRANCH shows that other habitats modelled may see an increased suitability for some species and their networks could expand within Canterbury District under a changing climate. However, this may be balancing losses elsewhere in Europe, and such necessary spatial adjustment will only be possible if habitat networks are maintained or enhanced. This is why it is essential that threats and opportunities within Canterbury District are not viewed in isolation.

2.10 It should be noted that the BRANCH model makes an important assumption: that the current distribution of each habitat type remains constant over time, and it is only the quality (carrying capacity) of the habitat that changes under a changing climate. The model does not take into consideration the removal of habitat or creation of new areas of habitat. As climate change progresses, human land use responses are likely to lead to some degree of change in each habitat's distribution as well as its quality. This may either exacerbate or moderate the quality-derived changes shown by the model.

2.11 As part of our assessment of landscape, this document sets out to examine current distribution of BAP priority habitats at the landscape scale, and opportunities for linking these areas to form a more coherent and healthy network to better cope with future environmental change. To do this, geographic information systems developed by Kent County Council, the Kent Wildlife Trust and other Kent BAP Partnership organisations have been used. Like any data systems, these are constantly being refined and updated with new data and revised parameters, so this document can only reflect the data and analysis generated to date by professional ecologists. For future updates to this data, the reader is referred to the Kent Landscape Information System (www.kent.gov.uk/klis) and to the Kent Wildlife Trust.

2.12 It should be noted that such spatial models are designed to provide broad, strategic target areas at the county and regional level. At the local level, care needs to be taken with any detailed use of such mapping, and ***the appropriateness of habitat boundaries and opportunities should always be ground-truthed through environmental surveys*** during the development of proposals for individual sites. It should be stressed that ***those areas not covered by the habitat opportunity network are not devoid of biodiversity opportunity. In fact, substantial gains for biodiversity can be made in these areas where opportunities arise for habitat creation or better management. Their omission from the opportunity network only indicates that they are not as great a strategic priority for improving district- and county-wide habitat connectivity.***

A combined approach

2.13 In the past, landscape character assessment has been conducted somewhat separately from strategic biodiversity planning. It is increasingly recognised that this rather artificial division of approaches does not lend itself to a fully integrated strategy for managing our countryside and the essential environmental services it provides. This document attempts to bring both analyses together in one document so that the recommendations incorporate both landscape character and habitat networks.

Methodology

Landscape Character

3.1 The methodology used to undertake the landscape assessment is based on Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency's '*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland 2002*'. There are essentially two elements to the Landscape Appraisal. Firstly the characterisation of the landscape where the landscape character areas are defined, and secondly the analysis of these areas where judgements are made about these character areas.

3.2 In the first instance the assessor interrogates the geological, soil and topographical information as well as accumulating as much information as is readily available regarding historic and cultural influences, nature conservation interests and land use. An aerial photographic study of the area assists with the identification of the landscape character areas as well as assisting with the appreciation of the conclusions subsequently reached.

3.3 Having initiated the desk based research, the field work is undertaken. Normally two landscape assessors working together in the field debate and define the broad character distinctions using `Field Assessment Sheets' (refer to Appendix C) and take photographic records as data.

3.4 The Field Assessment Sheets are designed to analyse the component factors of the landscape, to reach a series of decisions on the:

- aesthetics
- key characteristics
- visual unity
- ecological integrity
- condition of heritage features
- impact of built development
- sense of place
- visibility

3.5 Having identified the character areas as a series of largely homogeneous units the data collected was analysed in terms of each area's **Condition** and **Sensitivity**.

3.6 Each of these words is strictly defined to avoid as far as possible any subjective interpretation which could not be justified. The objective is also to define a standard methodology which can be used by other assessors for other landscapes so that comparisons can be made and priorities set.

3.7 **Condition** is strongly influenced by the impact of external factors. It has both a visual dimension, reflecting the degree to which a landscape appears unified, and a functional dimension reflecting the degree to which the countryside functions as a self sustaining resource. This in turn is a useful measure of land use change. Condition also addresses the issues regarding the presence of incongruous features on the unity of the landscape. Urban fringe areas are often under pressure which can frustrate other land uses. This often means that these areas are described as being in a poor condition whilst other more remote areas may still have the same basic features but be in a better condition. It is therefore practical to assume that condition may vary throughout a character area so that any conclusions should be regarded as a summary of the overall situation. In more technical terms condition is defined by an analysis of *Visual Unity* and *Functional Integrity* and is classified on a scale ranging from poor, through poor, moderate, good and finally to good.

3.8 Visual Unity is the result of an analysis of the *Pattern of Elements,* for example the pattern of vegetation, enclosure, settlement etc., set against the number and prominence of *Detracting Features* in the landscape.

3.9 Functional Integrity is an assessment of how the landscape functions and considers both the influence of man *(Cultural Integrity)* and the influence of nature *(Ecological Integrity).* Ecological integrity is itself a function of habitat size, quality and connectivity across the landscape, and therefore relates to this study's analysis of existing habitats and potential habitat networks (see below).

Methodology

3.10 For the purpose of this assessment sensitivity is a measure of the ability of a landscape to accept change without causing irreparable damage to the essential fabric and distinctiveness of that landscape. The term change refers to both beneficial change such as a new woodland as well as 'change' that may be brought about by new land uses. Again, in more technical terms, sensitivity is defined by an analysis of *Sense of place* and *Visibility* and is classified on a scale ranging from low through low, moderate, high and finally to high.

3.11 Sense of place balances *Distinctiveness* with *Continuity*. Distinctiveness is defined by the number and pattern of characteristic features in the landscape. For example in a landscape where hedgerows are characteristic if the network is intact the landscape can be described as distinct. Continuity refers to the time depth of the landscape, ranging from recent to ancient.

3.12 Visibility addresses the issues of *Landform* and intercepting features such as *Tree cover.* For example an open hilltop landscape is more visible than an enclosed lowland landscape.

3.13 The conclusions reached regarding each of the character areas are expressed using a matrix which encompasses Condition and Sensitivity. This analysis gives a broad indication of each area's ability to accommodate a change in management or use without loss of overall integrity. The words in the matrix help to assist in the direction of any policy that might be applied to the land in question.

3.14 It has to be recognised that whilst the process adopts a complex but logical critique of the landscape many of the individual decisions are still based on the trained but subjective judgments of the assessors. However by simplifying the conclusions into a series of generic actions it is possible to reach informed and well supported judgments on the landscape character.

Condition	low	moderate	high
good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

Sensitivity

3.15 Guidelines are offered which are locally appropriate to the character area and respond to the generic actions that have been identified. Many of these guidelines are not likely to be within the remit of the Local Authority to implement directly as they are not responsible for managing the land in most cases. Such references have however been included with the view to influencing opinions, generating support and guiding policy. In many instances certain forms of land management have a strong influence on the landscape character. These are often dependent on market forces and land management practices for their retention e.g. sheep grazing on marshland and fruit growing.

Habitat Networks

3.16 The identification of BAP priority habitats and key opportunities for the creation of effective habitat networks are based on recently-developed geographic information systems such as the Kent Landscape Information System (Kent County Council) and the Living Landscapes project (Kent Wildlife Trust and KCC). These are described below. The data that go into these mapping systems are based on sound scientific understanding of the physical landscape in Kent. However, whether a particular area of land is included in any habitat network is partly based on certain species dispersal thresholds and environmental limits set by ecologists, using a degree of professional judgement. Thus, like any prioritisation process, these methods contain an element of subjectivity.

Kent Landscape Information System (KLIS)

3.17 KLIS is a geographic information database that allows the user to map various layers of landscape and habitat data for Kent in various combinations. A variety of layers are available. For this study, the most relevant data layers used has included:

- the Kent Wildlife Habitat Survey 2003 – this is a systematic habitat mapping exercise carried out for the whole county based in the Integrated Wildlife Habitat Survey methodology.
- Habitat Opportunity mapping - which identifies the potential of land throughout Kent for creating or restoring BAP priority habitats based on physical parameters such as soil type, geology, topography and proximity to similar habitat.
- Aerial photography
- Ordnance Survey Maps

Living Landscapes

3.18 This study makes extensive use of the Kent Living Landscapes project to inform identification of habitat network opportunity. The Living Landscapes project is an ongoing initiative led by Kent Wildlife Trust to identify opportunities for county-wide strategic habitat networks in response to past degradation and future threats such as climate change and development. The project makes use of KLIS's habitat opportunity data and the location of existing habitat from the 2003 Habitat Survey.

3.19 A full methodology is provided in Appendix A, but in summary this model looks at parcels of land that have opportunity for creation of a particular habitat type in relation to their proximity to significant existing areas of that habitat. These areas of higher opportunity, are then filtered by setting a threshold distance from patches of existing similar habitat. Those parcels that are within the set distance (based on assumed dispersal distances for less mobile species typical of that habitat type) of the existing habitat are included in the network, and those that are more isolated are filtered-out. This process is repeated for each BAP habitat type and then the resulting maps are combined to form a theoretical network of all BAP habitats across Kent. In this way, the decision as to whether a particular field is in or out of the network is not made subjectively at the individual site level. However, there is a degree of subjective judgement required in setting dispersal distance thresholds and the level of physical 'opportunity' that qualifies.

3.20 It is important to note that by using this model, not all areas of existing BAP habitat or even designated sites will necessarily fall within the resulting strategic network. This is not because the quality or importance of that site is lower, but simply that it is too isolated from other areas of habitat or high opportunity to qualify under the parameters set.

3.21 By using the Living Landscapes network model as its basis, this study of the Canterbury District's habitat network fits neatly into the current county-wide and regional analyses for Kent and SE England. Living Landscapes' network was developed for Kent as a whole, and has been recently used as the key spatial model from Kent to inform the new South East Biodiversity Strategy's 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas Map' (www.sebiodiversity.org.uk). This map identifies regional priority areas for restoration and creation of BAP habitat in the South East of England, and so mirrors one of the key aims of this Canterbury study. The relationship between the local, county and regional draft maps is graphically illustrated in Figure 2 below.

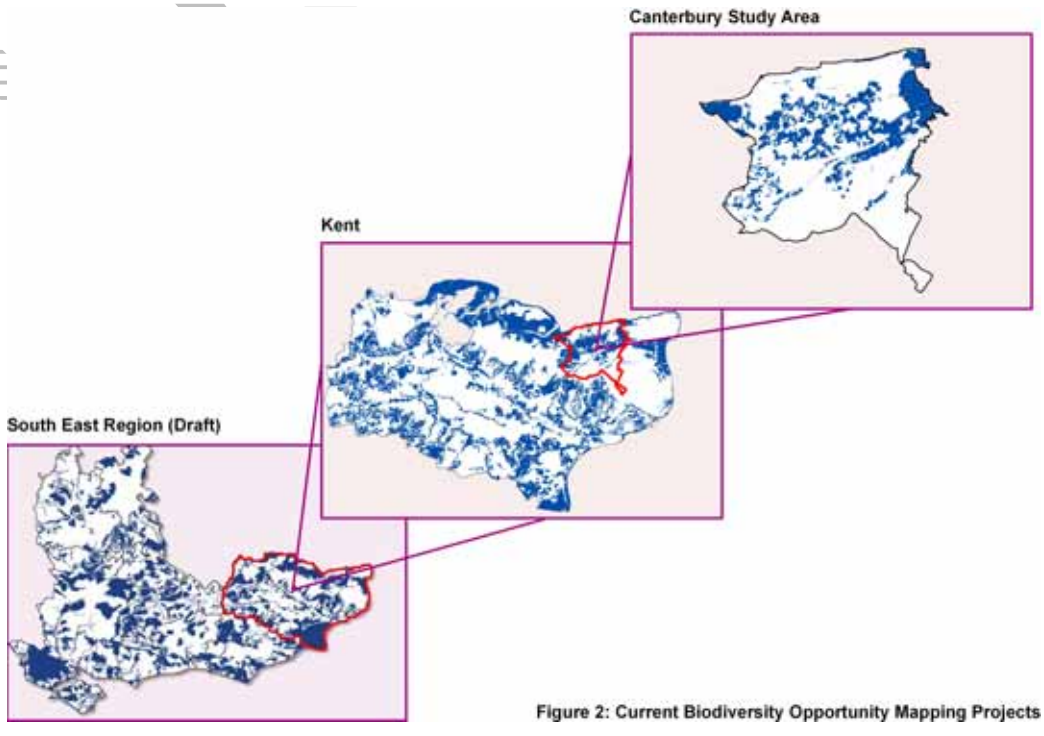


Figure 2: Current Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping Projects

3.22 As mentioned in the Introduction, a similar project has been recently undertaken to look at the robustness of Kent's habitat networks in relation to predicted climate change. The BRANCH project described used species dispersal criteria to develop a model which reveals habitat networks and their likely sustainability through time under climate change. Whilst this model has not been used directly in this Canterbury landscape and biodiversity assessment, it nevertheless is a valuable additional tool when considering the development of habitat networks.

Ecological Designations

3.23 Many BAP priority habitats are also designated for their biodiversity interest. Such designations exist at the International, National and Local (County) level. These sites are often in some form of favourable management and have been subject to some degree of survey to identify and monitor their features of interest. They are also afforded protection in the planning process, either through legislation or through planning policy. Therefore they have been identified in this study as a core element of each landscape character area's existing biodiversity interest.

Limitations in Interpretation

3.24 This study combines information from the above data-sets to identify the existing habitat resource and strategic network opportunities at the broad landscape scale for each landscape character area. This is the first time the Kent Living Landscapes model has been applied at District and local landscape character area scale. It is important to note that while certain areas of opportunity of individual field size are demarcated through this process, any decision-making arising from this must be 'ground-truthed' through more detailed site-level surveys. This scale of this study prohibits identification of exact boundaries or every local opportunity for biodiversity conservation and enhancement, and local knowledge and survey will inevitably modify the scope and location of opportunity shown here.

3.25 It should also be noted that the mapping may show habitat opportunity where recent development has already commenced due to the existing habitat data (KLIS) being based on a 2003 survey. The habitat survey is currently being reviewed and the field of biodiversity opportunity mapping and climate vulnerability mapping continues to develop. However, as a broad strategic exercise, these methods are a unique and invaluable tool that compliments the wider Landscape Assessment.

Natural Environment: Geology and Soils

4.1 Canterbury city is located in the Stour Valley at the foot of the North Downs where the dip slope peters out and the clay cap of The Blean begins. To the north of Canterbury city, an extensive area of London Clay covers the area known as The Blean. The resulting soils are heavy, poorly-drained clay. Occasionally the clay is overlain with Head Gravel and where streams cross the clay there are localised deposits of Head Brickearth. Here the soils are base-rich, neutral, loamy soils that have a tendency to be affected by groundwater. To the south of Canterbury city is an area of Upper Chalk overlain with deep, well-drained, fine, silty soils.

4.2 Running from the west to east between the chalk and London Clay is an area of Thanet Beds and River Terrace Gravels. Here there are deep, fertile, well drained and often stoneless, fine, silty soils. Within it there are outcrops of thinner, acidic, well drained coarse, loamy and gravely soils, such as at Denstead Wood. Similar, but more sandy, soils are located at the Trenley Park Wood and Old Park character areas to the east. A band of alluvium is associated with the Stour Valley that cuts through Canterbury on a south west - north east axis. The alluvial soils in the valley are stoneless, clayey, fine, silty and loamy soils, affected by groundwater. Within the Stour Valley there are outcrops of thinner, acidic, well drained coarse loamy and gravely soils, such as at Bigbury Hill. Likewise there are alluvial deposits in the Little Stour and Nailbourne Valleys.

4.3 From Bishopstone south to Hoath the solid geology changes from London Clay to the Tertiary deposits of the Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds. This change can be seen clearly on the coast where the cliffs change from sloping clay to more resilient vertical cliffs. Inland, overlying drift deposits create a mixed geology and the soils become more loamy. There are areas of London Clay overlain with poorly drained loams; some Head Brickearth deposits with neutral loamy soils affected by groundwater; dry neutral loams over areas of Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds and dry sandy soils associated with Head Gravel deposits.

4.4 The Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes to the west of Whitstable and the Chislet Marshes to the east of Herne Bay are alluvial deposits. The soils in these areas are wet, base-rich, neutral, heavy soils. The underlying geology is London Clay, a blue-marine clay weathering to brown, overlying Upper Chalk, which covers most of the historic Wantsum Channel with some pockets of sand and loams. There are also outcrops of Thanet Beds which are green-grey sands with shell beds and sandy clay which have been exposed alongside the Wantsum Channel. This is overlain with recent deposits of marine clays and some river alluviums producing a grey-brown silty clay. Figure 3 illustrates drift and solid geology, and Figure 4 illustrates the soils of Canterbury District.

Coastal Change

4.5 There have been considerable changes to the North Kent coastline since Roman times. At this time the land extended some 4 - 5 km further north. The explanation for this lies in the geological process of the gradual sinking of the whole of the North Sea Basin. In a sense the British Isles are slowly rising on the west and subsiding on the east. This change is further compounded by the gradual migration of the Thames Estuary to the south, eroding the North Kent coast and depositing on the South Essex coast. There has also been a gradual silting up of the Wantsum Channel that once separated the Isle of Thanet from East Kent. The channel remained navigable until the 1600s when attempts to keep it open were abandoned. Today the River Wantsum is little more than a drainage channel. The erosion of the coast is managed today by coastal protection measures in the form of a seawall. However there is now the threat of a rise in sea level through global warming in addition to the existing pressure from natural geological processes.

4.6 The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan 2008 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Canterbury coastline for the next 100 years. In areas where coastal erosion would be detrimental to existing development, the future management is generally identified as ‘hold the line’ (where the existing defence line will be maintained). At Bishopstone and the cliff frontage along Reculver Country Park the future management is identified as ‘no active intervention’ (where there will be no investment in providing or maintaining defences). West of Seasalter the future management is defined as ‘managed realignment’ (where the shoreline is allowed to change with management to control or limit movement) in the medium to long term. Realignment of coastal defences offers significant opportunity for coastal habitat creation in the intertidal zone (e.g. saltmarsh and mudflats) which should be explored in tandem with realignment proposals.

Natural Environment: Geology and Soils

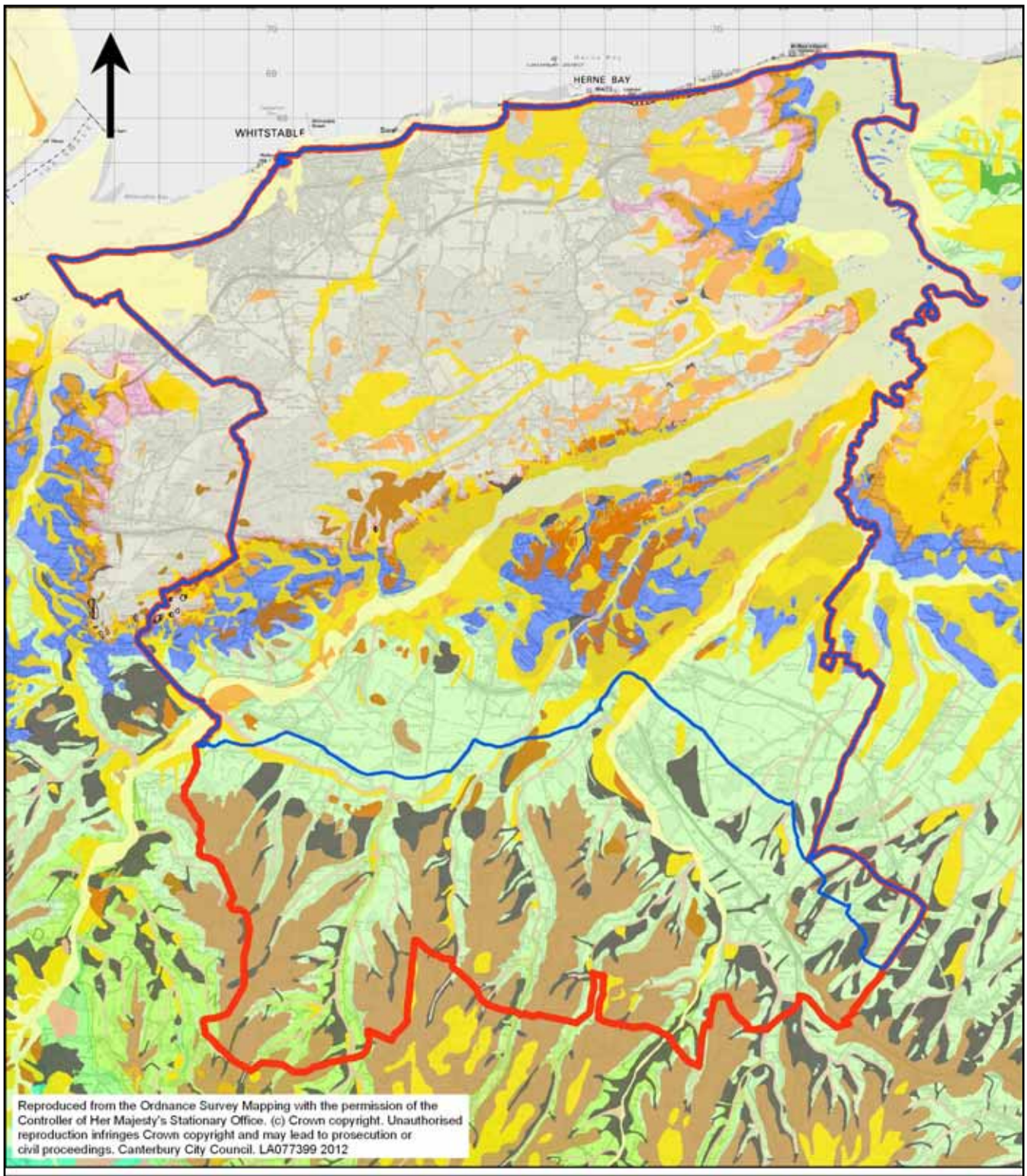


Figure 3: Geology

Natural Environment: Geology and Soils

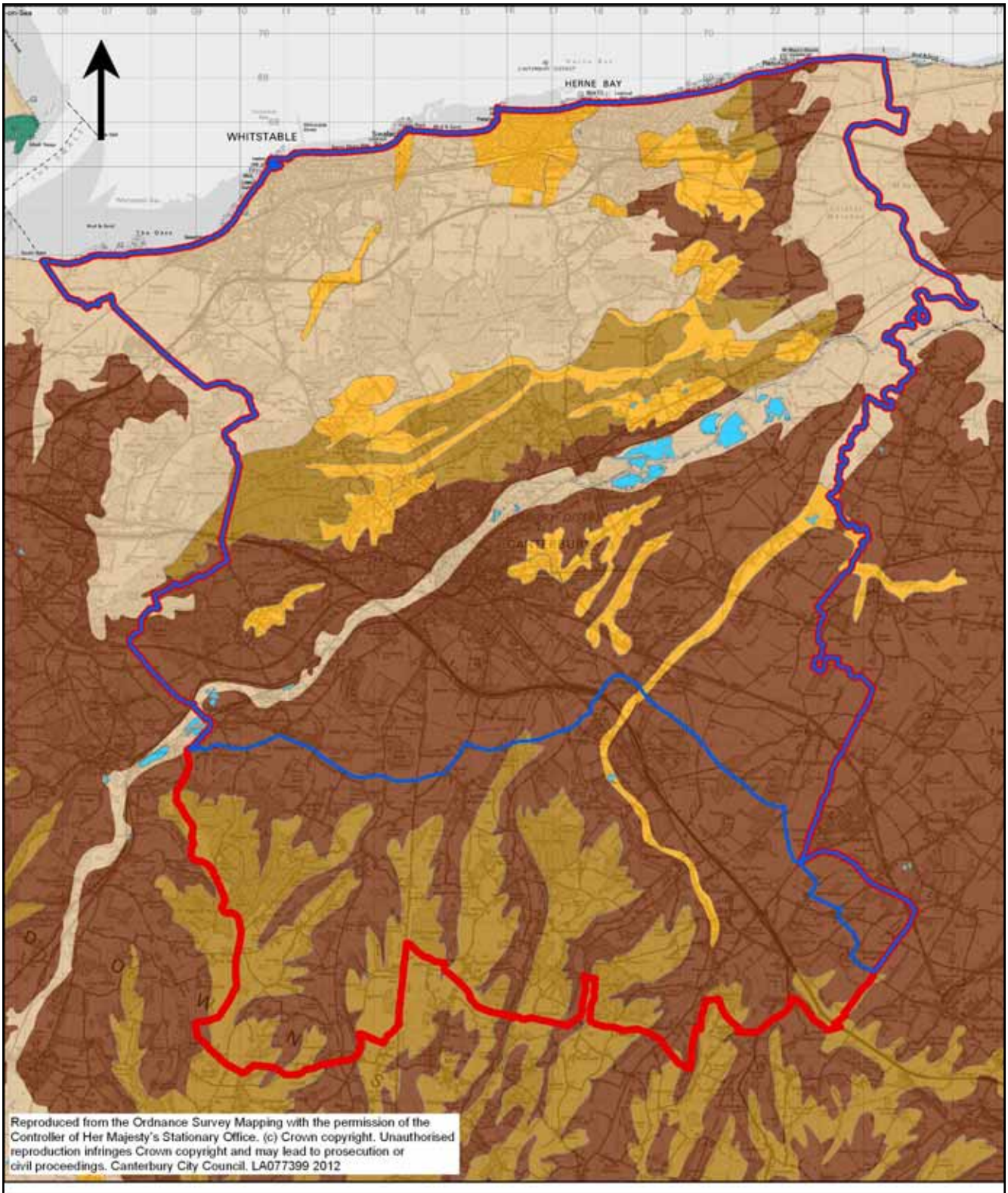


Figure 4: Soils

Natural Environment: Landform and Drainage

5.1 Figure 5 illustrates the topography around Canterbury, which relates closely to the underlying geology. To the south of Canterbury there is a gently rolling topography along the edge of the dip slope of the North Downs. To the east and west of the city there is a folded landform that is associated with the mixed geology.

5.2 The Stour Valley is characterised by the level floodplain and runs from the south west to the north east through the city centre, widening as it travels north eastwards towards the coast. The north side of the Stour Valley is defined by a ridge that runs from north of Harbledown to Broad Oak and beyond. This ridge forms the edge of the London Clay plateau that drops evenly down to the valley floor. To the south east of Canterbury the valley side is less distinct as the ground rises through a series of undulating ridges towards the North Downs.

5.3 To the north, there are three general topographical divisions in the Herne Bay and Whitstable Area - the low-lying coastal land; an area of undulating open country and the higher ground of The Blean.

5.4 To the north east and north west of the London Clay cap are the coastal marshes of the Chislet Marshes, and Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes. The landform is generally flat and low lying marked by ditches and dykes with relatively poor drainage so it tends to become waterlogged in winter, and dry and cracked in periods of low rainfall. The Graveney Marshes originally extended much further seaward, and the Chislet Marshes are the result of the silting up of the Wantsum Channel.

5.5 Small streams flow across the London Clay from The Blean to the coast. From west to east these are known as Swalecliffe Brook, West Brook and Plenty Brook. Swalecliffe Brook emerges to the west of Clowes Wood and flows down to the west of Chestfield, issuing into the sea at Long Rock, north of Swalecliffe; West Brook flows north from Thornden Wood and issues to the west of Hampton Pier, and the Plenty Brook flows from West Blean Wood, across the Herne Bay Golf Course and is then culverted under Herne Bay before issuing into the sea

5.6 To the south and east of the Canterbury District, where the London Clay changes to the Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds, the differential erosion of the mixed geology creates a more rolling landscape. This forms the valley sides to the Great Stour and the backdrop to the flat Chislet Marshes, with extensive views across the marshes to Thanet and the East Kent coast. This area is incised by the Great and Little Stour Valleys, the Nailbourne and the Lampen Stream. A further stream, the Sarre Penn flows parallel to the Great Stour across the London Clay. These rivers and streams rise to the west and south of the study area and flow north, north eastwards to the Wantsum and Chislet Marshes. A forked valley feature around Ford is created by small streams cutting into the Thanet Beds creating a distinctly rolling landscape.

Natural Environment: Landform and Drainage

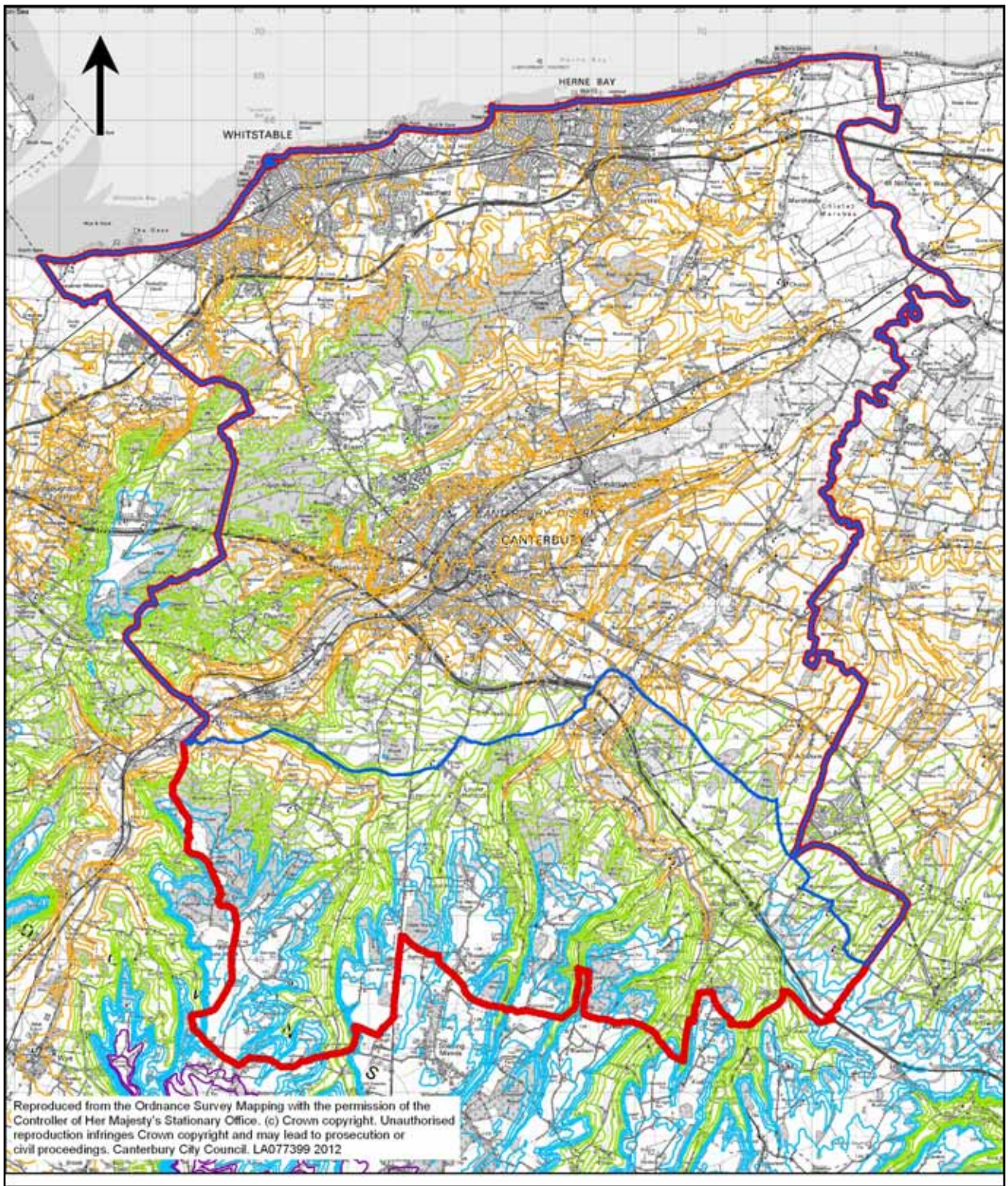


Figure 5: Topography

Natural Environment: Agricultural Land Use

6.1 Figure 6 illustrates the quality of agricultural land, known as agricultural land classification. To the north of Canterbury city and the Stour Valley, the landscape lies within the intensively productive North Kent Plain. To the south of Canterbury city the landscape forms part of the North Downs. This is an extensive cereal belt that thrives on the deep calcareous soils of the North Downs dip slope across the county. At Canterbury this agricultural land is generally classified by the DEFRA as Grade 2. To the north of this is a belt of intensive orchards and hop gardens that runs generally from the east to the west of the city. This land is mostly Grade 1 and 2 and is part of an area of productive and extensive fruit growing associated with the deep well-drained soils overlaying the Thanet Beds and River Gravel Terraces.

6.2 Other areas around the city are less intensively managed for agriculture. To the north of the city, where the soils are poorer and harder to work, the agriculture is less intensive and mostly Grade 3, with areas of Grade 4 land at The Blean and at Clapham Hill. Here there is pasture on the south facing slopes of the Stour Valley and woodland on the clayey soils of The Blean. The woodlands of The Blean are unclassified. In the Stour Valley where the gravel extraction and development are not present the waterlogged alluvial soils are managed as pasture.

6.3 On the thin soils at Bigbury Hill and Old Park there is very little agricultural use. There are a few small orchards and paddocks for pony grazing on Bigbury Hill. Old Park is managed partly as a golf course and partly as a military training ground and rifle range associated with the barracks at St. Martins Hill.

6.4 To the north of The Blean the landscape is very fragmented by blocks of woodland, built development and transport corridors. In many places the pressure on the land is evident and there are numerous horse paddocks and holiday parks particularly on the lower grade agricultural land and near the coast. Where crop production is most viable the land is farmed very intensively often leaving only the narrowest of verges where the fields meet the roads. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) classified the heavy clay soils that cover most of the area around Herne Bay and Whitstable as Grade 3 agricultural land. These soils support mainly cereals with some pasture. To the east of Herne Bay the land is more productive where the drier more loamy soils are located. Here the land is generally classified as Grade 2 with pockets of Grade 1 at Chislet and around Brook Farm near Reculver. The mixed soils support mostly cereals although potatoes and field vegetables are found.

6.5 The low lying Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes are classified as Grade 3 and support grazing marsh. The Chislet Marshes are generally Grade 4 on the marshland with some pockets of Grade 1 around Chislet, Grade 2 around Reculver and Chitty and Grade 3 towards the district boundary in the east.

Natural Environment: Agricultural Land Use

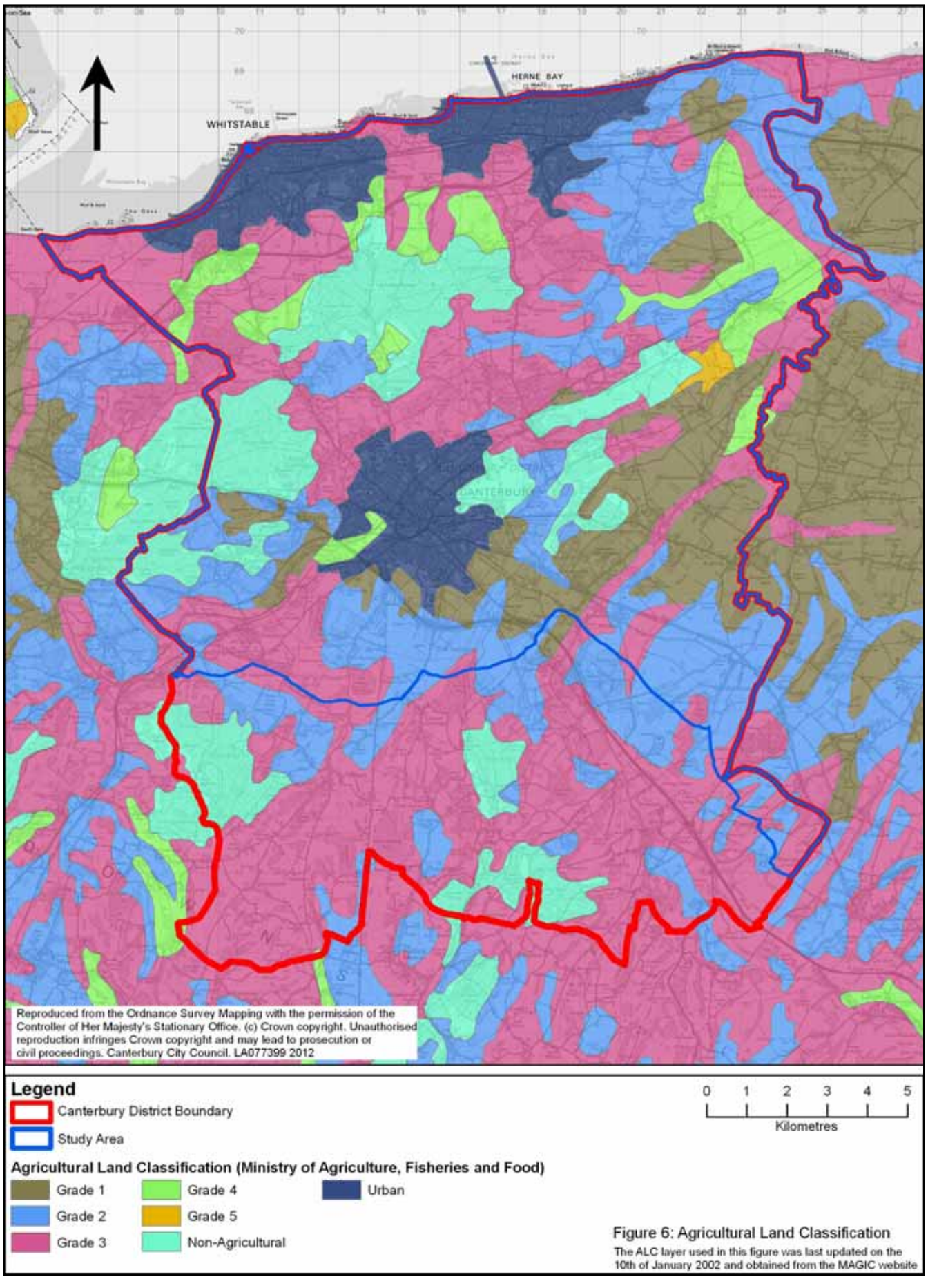


Figure 6: Agricultural Land Classification

The ALC layer used in this figure was last updated on the 10th of January 2002 and obtained from the MAGIC website

Natural Environment: Ecology

7.1 The nature conservation interest around Canterbury is substantial and varied. Canterbury District falls within three 'Natural Areas' (refer to Figure 7) defined by Natural England):

- Greater Thames Estuary
- North Kent Plain
- North Downs

7.2 Profiles for these areas describe their key physical, wildlife and land use features, and outline the main issues affecting them. They also offer a series of objectives for the maintenance and enhancement of the nature conservation value of the Natural Area. The boundaries of the Natural Areas are identical to those of Natural England's National Character Areas, except that the latter do not include the intertidal zone.

Greater Thames Estuary Natural Area

7.3 The Greater Thames Estuary Natural Area comprises the tidal Thames itself, from Tower Bridge downstream to Whitstable in Kent and Southend in Essex, and includes most of the Essex coast north to the mouth of the (Essex) Stour. This wider area encompasses the extent of the southerly migration of the mouth of the Thames over the last 400,000 years. Its present day relevance reflects the geographical extent of a coherent assemblage of estuarine habitats, plant and insect communities, coastal processes, geomorphological features, internationally important bird populations and related conservation issues. The Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes form the most easterly extent of the Greater Thames Estuary in Kent.

North Kent Plain Natural Area

7.4 The North Kent Plain Natural Area is the strip of land between the North Downs and the Thames Estuary. The land, largely derived from the Tertiary deposits, includes some of the most fertile and productive farmland in south east England. It also includes large areas of woodland (such as the Blean Woodland complex) and marshland of outstanding nature conservation interest (such as Stodmarsh).

7.5 The predominant land uses of the North Kent Plain are intensive arable farming and horticulture but on heavier clay soils there are woodlands and grasslands while in river valleys, especially in the east, there are extensive wetlands. These habitats support varied plant and animal communities including scarce and rare species. The area has been greatly influenced by human activities over the centuries, by farming and forestry, and more recently by the growth of towns.

North Downs Natural Area

7.6 To the south of Canterbury lies the North Downs Natural Area, characterised by the distinctive chalk geology. Within Canterbury District the chalk is frequently overlain by the more acidic clay with flints with characteristic dry valleys dissecting the plateau. There are large woodland and plantation blocks of conservation interest, but areas of unimproved chalk grassland are now scarce.

Designated Wildlife Sites

7.7 A significant proportion of Canterbury District is covered by at least one form of biodiversity designation. Such designations exist at the International, National and Local (County) level, and include:

- **European Sites** – a collective term for sites designated under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 such as **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** and **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)**. Often wetland sites designated under the international **Ramsar** Convention are also included with these in practice. These sites are almost always covered by the SSSI designation as well (see below).
- **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)** – A statutory UK designation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Designated by Natural England, these represent the very best wildlife sites in the country.

- **National Nature Reserves (NNRs) -** are almost always SSSIs thus receiving statutory protection, but are also either owned or controlled specifically for wildlife by Natural England or held by approved bodies such as Wildlife Trusts.
- **Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs)** – a non-statutory County designation, administered in Kent by the Kent Wildlife Trust and ratified by the Kent BAP Partnership.
- **Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)** - are designated by local authorities for both people and wildlife. They are semi-natural places that are of special interest locally and can be managed as such. They offer people opportunities for nature study or informal enjoyment. They may include sites that have one of the other designations listed above.

7.8 The locations, boundaries and details (including links to citations) for European Sites and SSSIs can be found at: www.natureonthemap.org.uk. LWS details can be obtained from the Kent Wildlife Trust.

7.9 Such sites are afforded protection in the planning process, either through legislation (for statutory sites such as SSSIs and European Sites) or through planning policy (for local, non-statutory sites such as LWSs). Figure 8 illustrates the main designations located throughout Canterbury District. Each relevant designated site is identified and described in the individual character area sections of this document, but a brief district-wide overview is provided as follows. NNRs and LNRs are generally not included in the analysis and discussion as those Reserves that have high value for biodiversity are already covered by the other designations.

7.10 Figure 8 shows that the majority of the District's coastline within the inter-tidal zone is designated as SSSI, SPA and Ramsar sites. These overlapping designations reflect the importance of these coastal habitats for their wetland species interest and in particular their importance for coastal birds.

7.11 Inland, along the Great Stour valley there are significant freshwater wetland habitats of international importance at Stodmarsh SSSI/SPA/SAC/Ramsar site. These are complimented by other SSSI and Local Wildlife Site wetlands throughout the catchment's floodplains and marshlands.

7.12 The ancient woodland dominated habitats of The Blean to the north and west of Canterbury are highly designated, being a combination of SAC/SSSIs and LWSs. Smaller and more isolated woodland habitats of designated national and county importance are to be found to the south and east of Canterbury as well.

BAP Habitats and Habitat Networks

7.13 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies priority species and habitats that are most under threat and develops measures for their conservation. These measures are in addition and complimentary to the process of site designation and protection. The conservation of BAP habitats has a statutory basis under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and is also enshrined in Government Planning Policy. Canterbury District is rich in BAP habitats, with some notably large expanses of habitat in areas such as The Blean (e.g. ancient woodland), the Stour valley (e.g. wetland habitats), the North Downs (ancient woodland and chalk grassland), and the coastline (intertidal habitats).

7.14 The following broad habitat categories, based on the UK BAP, have been used in this study to identify different habitat networks and are described briefly below:

- **Open water –** This category includes both rivers, streams and standing open water such as ditches, ponds and reservoirs. Such habitats are vital for aquatic and amphibious organisms and the terrestrial animals that feed on them. Notable pond species include great crested newts. Watercourses provide habitat for key species such as otters, water voles, fish, aquatic invertebrates and birds such as kingfishers. Chalk rivers are particularly important due to their diversity and vulnerability to human impacts such as ground-water abstraction.
- **Wetland** – This broad category includes most habitats that are found on permanently or seasonally waterlogged soils and which also often contain small bodies of open water such as pools, ponds and ditches. These include reed swamp, fen, wet woodland, etc. often found in combination. They generally occur in low-

lying areas within river floodplains and reclaimed coastal land where they can occur amongst and adjacent to grazing marsh (see below).

- **Grazing marsh** - periodically inundated pasture or meadow with ditches which maintain the water levels, containing standing brackish or fresh water. The ditches are especially rich in plants and invertebrates. Almost all areas are grazed and some are cut for hay or silage. Sites may contain seasonal water-filled hollows and permanent ponds with emergent swamp communities
- **Species-rich neutral grassland** - unimproved neutral grassland habitat has undergone a remarkable decline in the 20th century, almost entirely due to changing agricultural practice. It forms an important habitat for a variety of plants and the range of notable invertebrates that depend on this floristic diversity. Lowland meadows and pastures are also important habitats for skylark, corncrake and a number of other farmland birds.
- **Intertidal habitat** - this includes habitats found between the tidal limits such as mudflats, saltmarsh, saline lagoons, shingle and littoral chalk bedrock. They form an important transitional habitat between terrestrial and marine environments, and are important for a range of fauna, notably invertebrates and birds.
- **Acid grassland and heath** - Acid grassland and heath occur on acid rock types such as sandstones and superficial deposits such as sands and gravels. In the lowlands, acid grasslands are now rare and they provide an important reservoir of rare species. Lowland heathland contains vegetation dominated by species from the heath family or dwarf gorse species. The UK has an important proportion (about 20%) of the international total of this habitat which is important for many birds, reptiles, invertebrates, vascular plants, bryophytes and lichens.
- **Chalk grassland** - Chalk grasslands contain an exceptional diversity of rare plants, but are particularly characterised by a series of widespread grassland plants which are mainly restricted to lime rich soils. Invertebrate diversity often reflects this floristic richness.
- **Woodland** – Although this study's woodland network is based around existing ancient woodland (land that has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD), new, native broadleaf woodland opportunities are also identified as part of the potential network. In pre-history, before any significant human impacts occurred, woodland was by far the dominant terrestrial habitat covering most of the British Isles. It is claimed that ancient woodland supports more species of conservation concern than any other habitat in the UK.

7.15 In addition to the habitats described above, **species-rich hedgerows** provide important refuges and conduits for wildlife through the landscape, and in particular may help to connect woodland blocks. However, Dutch Elm disease has had a devastating influence on hedgerows within East Kent and, along with arable intensification, has lead to a decline and loss of many hedgerows. It has not been practical to include hedgerows within the network mapping, due to the scale of this study in relation to such features, and the ubiquitous nature of hedgerows in lowland countryside. Nonetheless where these features are particularly notable, their relevance is described in the text of this document.

7.16 Many of Canterbury's BAP habitats are also surrounded by land that has the physical potential for the creation or restoration of such habitat. Currently, most of this will be under some form of intensive land use that has less value for wildlife and which may present barriers to species dispersal. Most of these land uses are likely to continue into the foreseeable future. However, opportunities may arise in the future which allow some of this habitat potential to be realised. Development planning and other land use decisions should take account of this future opportunity if we are to create robust habitat networks that contribute to the wider region's networks. A principal aim of this study is to highlight such opportunity and identify those areas where it will have the most impact in terms of habitat connectivity.

7.17 Figure 9 illustrates the overall habitat network in Canterbury District which has been derived by the Kent Living Landscapes project. The network shown consists of two key elements:

Existing BAP Habitats – The network only includes those BAP habitat patches that are relatively close to other, similar patches of significant size. Some of these areas are also covered by some form of designation and these represent the core parts of the network.

Potential BAP Habitats – Those areas of land that have significant physical opportunity for BAP habitat creation and that are relatively close to existing habitat of similar type.

7.18 Such opportunity can be accounted for in a number of important ways. In some situations, land use proposals may facilitate immediate habitat creation. In other circumstances, careful planning can preserve the potential of the site for future realisation (i.e. by controlling the distribution of permanent built development).

7.19 It should be stressed that those areas not covered by the habitat opportunity network are not devoid of biodiversity opportunity. In fact, substantial gains for biodiversity can be made in these areas where opportunities arise for habitat creation or better management. Their omission from the opportunity network only indicates that they are not as great a strategic priority for improving district- and county-wide habitat connectivity

Natural Environment: Ecology

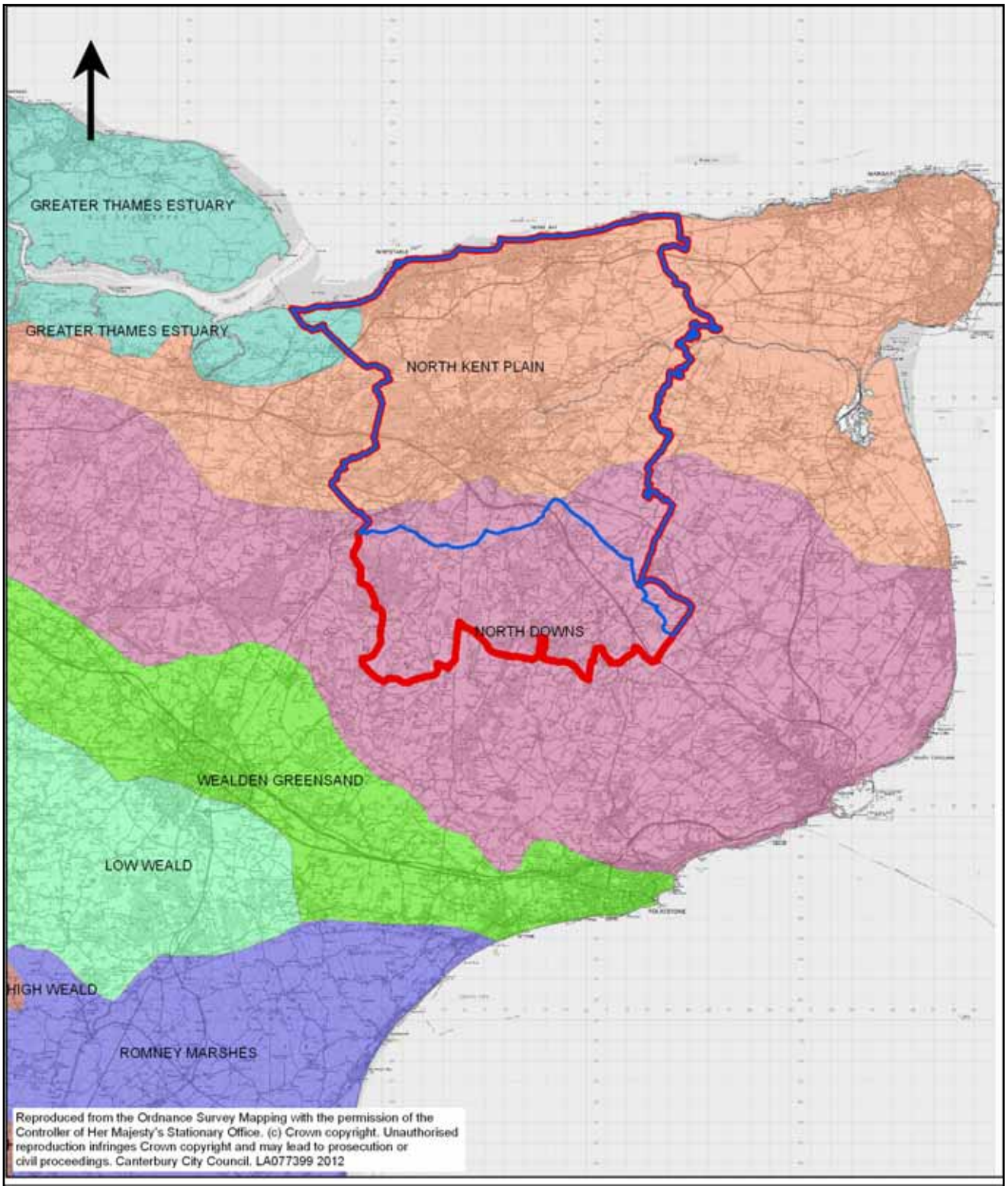
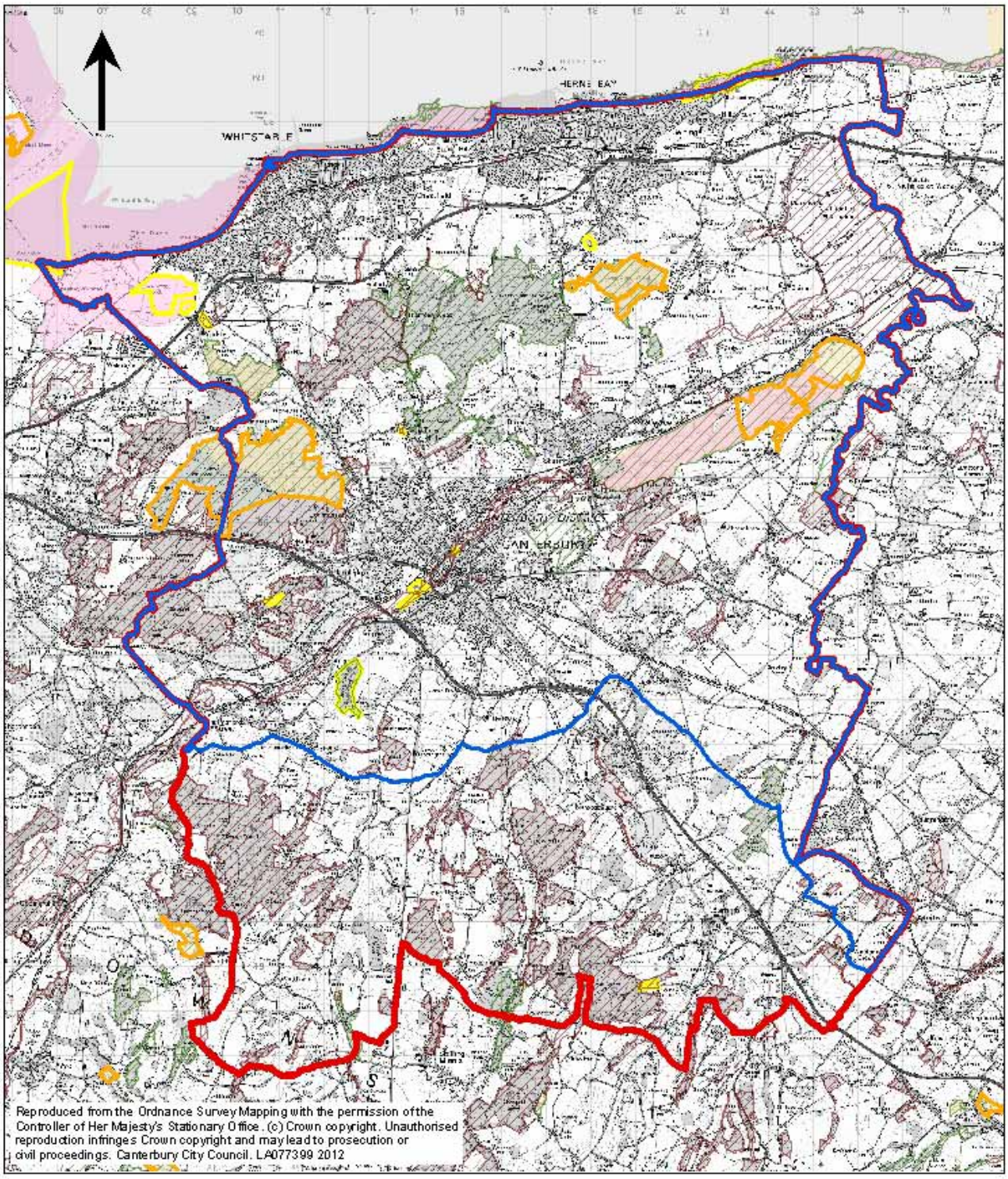


Figure 7: Natural Areas and National Character Areas

Natural Environment: Ecology



Legend

0 1 2 3 4 5
Kilometres

- Canterbury District Boundary
- Study Area
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Reserve
- Special Protection Area for Birds and Ramsar Site
- Special Area of Conservation

Figure 8: Biodiversity Designations

Natural Environment: Ecology

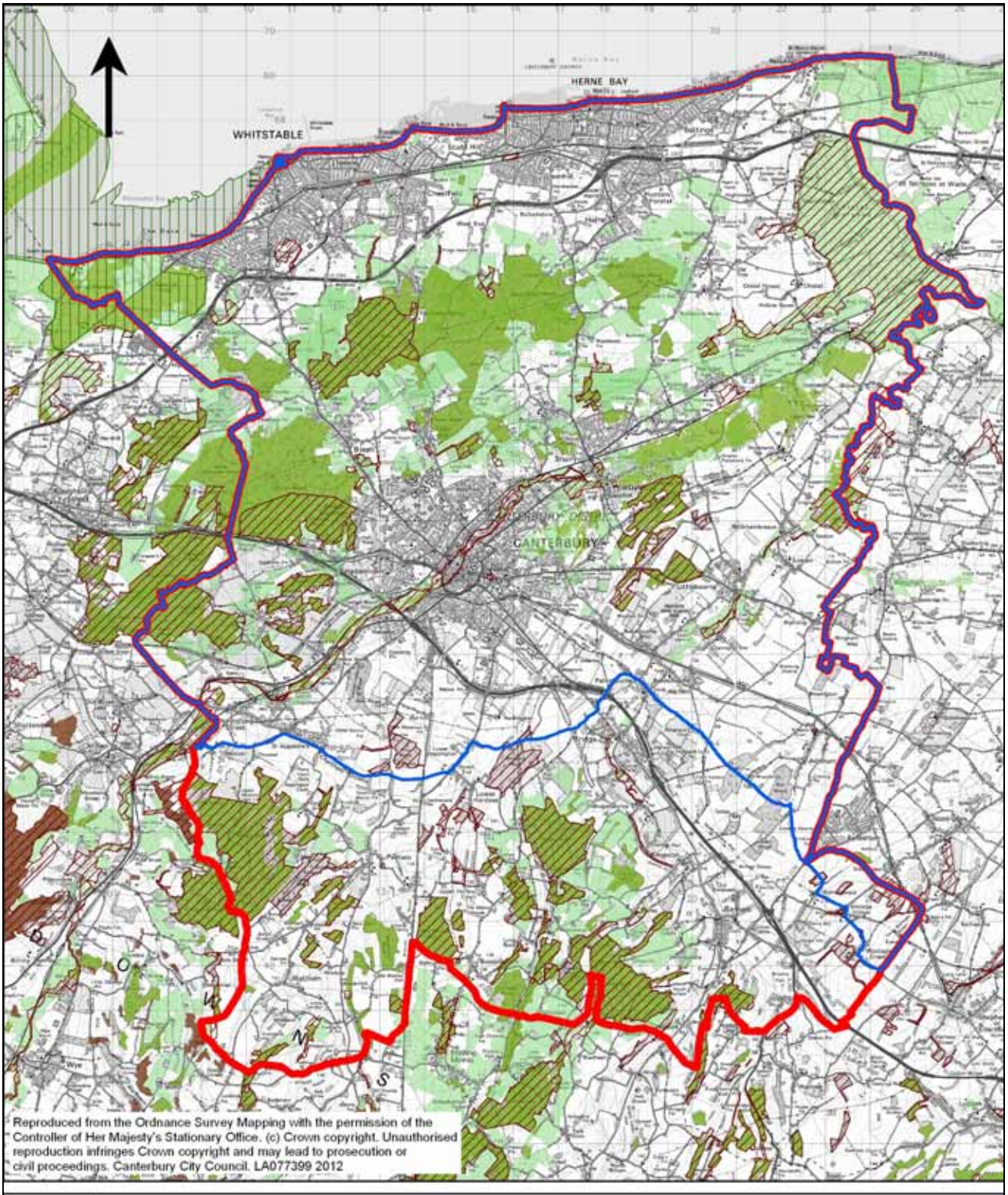


Figure 9: Strategic Habitat Network

Natural Environment: Landscape Designations

8.1 A substantial proportion of Canterbury District is covered by national and local landscape designations (LLDs) (refer to Figure 10). The nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) abuts the south of the study area. The escarpment of the North Downs, which sits to the south of the District, is arguably the most striking landscape feature in Kent and this is reflected in the designation of the wide belt of land stretching across the width of the county.

8.2 An Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) designation applies to the marshes of the former Wantsum Channel that separated the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent. The Chislet Marshes AHLV designation formed part of both the 1998 and 2006 Canterbury District Local Plans, and was considered by the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector in 2004. The Inspector for the 1998 Canterbury District Local Plan recognised that the Chislet Marshes had an 'East Kent significance' and merited inclusion 'as a local landscape feature of importance in the area'. The marshes are a distinct feature and form a dramatic open landscape of ditches and fields, reclaimed from the sea since medieval times. For the most part the settlement pattern reflects this former feature, with villages located on what was the shoreline, from Reculver, through Marshside to Upstreet. The designation was drawn up in conjunction with the neighbouring authorities of Thanet District Council and Dover District Council and reflects the importance of the marshes in East Kent.

8.3 The Canterbury AHLV is also identified in the Canterbury District Local Plan 2006 and covers the landscape immediately around the city. The valley of the River Stour around Canterbury includes areas of high landscape quality and features of archaeological heritage. The designation seeks to protect the historic setting of Canterbury and the World Heritage Site. The Canterbury AHLV designation was considered by the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector in 2004. The Inspector agreed that

"…there is a good case to identify a Canterbury-related AHLV, providing additional protection over that afforded by ordinary open countryside-related policies. However, this necessary Canterbury AHLV would not have a role of local importance simply because of the visual quality of its landscape. The AHLV's special landscape role should be the prevention of visual damage to the City's historic setting".

8.4 In response to his comments, the boundary of the AHLV was rigorously reviewed so that it was confined to land that makes a real visual contribution to the valley setting of the historic city. Further, the purpose of the designation was clearly set out in the local plan as 'seeking to protect the historic setting of Canterbury and the World Heritage Site' as well as landscape quality.

8.5 The Canterbury District Local Plan (2006) also includes Special Landscape Areas (SLA) that were initially identified in the former Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006). These areas are the Seasalter Levels (part of the North Kent Marshes SLA), parts of the North Downs SLA and Blean Woods SLA.

8.6 Both AHLV and SLAs will be reviewed by Canterbury City Council as part of the Local Plan process.

Natural Environment: Landscape Designations

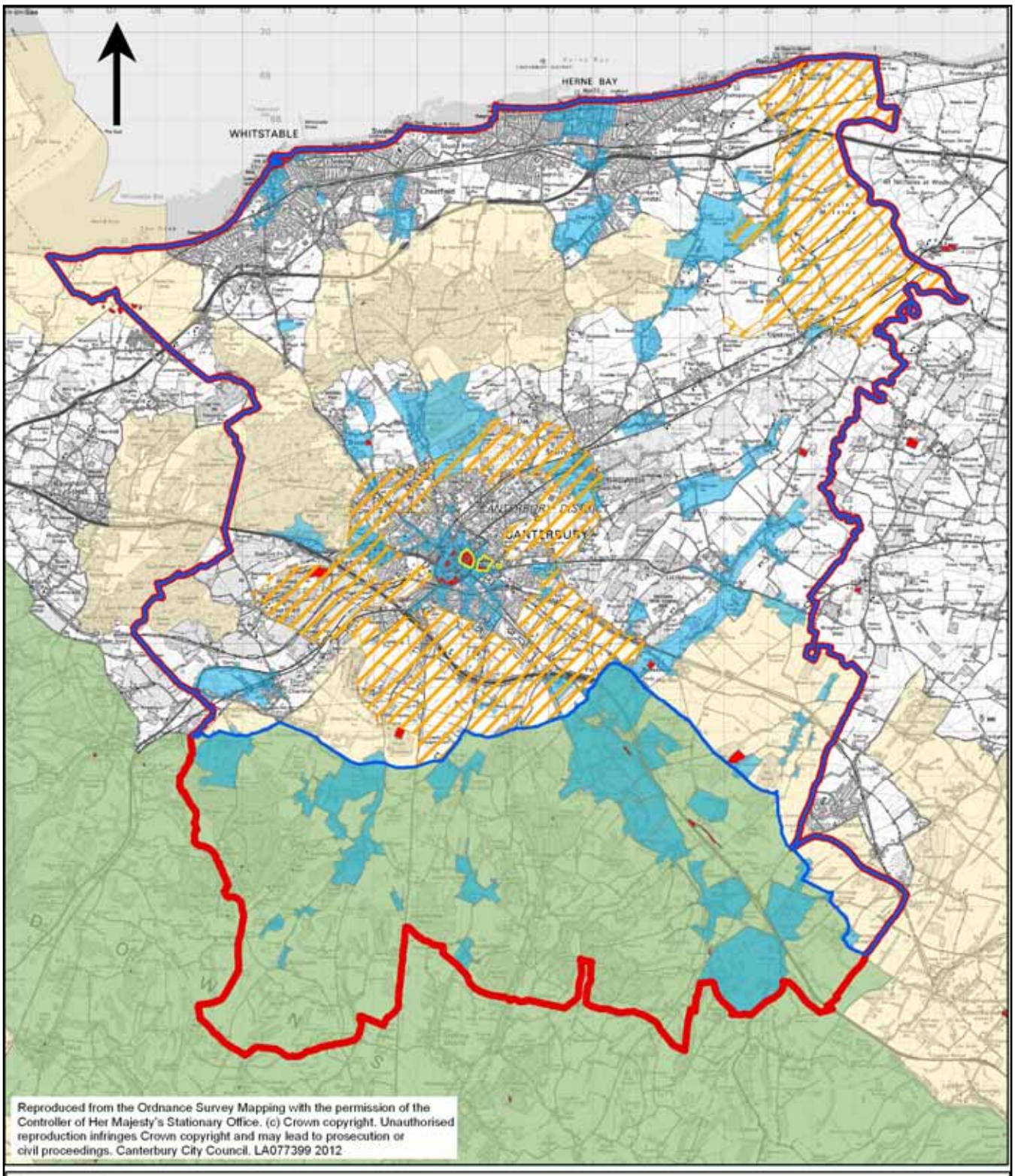


Figure 10: Landscape and Heritage Designations

Natural Environment: Cultural Heritage

Early Settlement

9.1 The Canterbury area has been continuously occupied since prehistoric times with some of the earliest finds including Palaeolithic (early Stone Age - 10,000 B.C.) flint tools and Mesolithic (middle Stone Age - 6,000 B.C.) flints.

9.2 The coastal plain and Blean Woods are believed to have been occupied during the Bronze Age and evidence of fixed settlement is represented by Middle Bronze Age (1,000 BC) pottery finds at Reculver, most likely indicating a farmstead. Other early scattered settlements around Canterbury included an Iron Age fort (500 BC) at Bigbury Hill and possibly a prehistoric settlement at Fordwich. Iron Age pottery has also been found beneath the church levels at Reculver that implies a farmstead. There is visible evidence of ritual landscapes in some locations including a cluster of barrows along the higher slopes of the Stour Valley. Bigbury Hill hillfort is also set within elements of an historic landscape with visible earthworks extending out into the surrounding countryside.

9.3 These ancient settlements were linked by routes selected for ease of use along ridgelines and through the dry valleys. Many of these ridgeways or 'harrow ways' have become adopted roads today. The North Downs Way is widely believed to have originated as a prehistoric trackway.

9.4 Prior to Roman occupation the Belgae, a group of tribes originating from northern Gaul, established what is believed to be their tribal capital and one of their largest open settlements in the south east near Canterbury either side of the Stour in the mid 2nd century BC.

The Roman Landscape 55 BC - 500 AD

9.5 When looking at the possible Roman landscapes Canterbury city seems to be the major focal point for Romano-British settlement and industry. The Romans established Canterbury as a cantonal capital and regional administrative centre, known as Durovernum Cantiacorum, soon after the Claudian invasion in 43 AD. By about 275 AD walls had been built and a grid street pattern had evolved. Roman roads radiated outwards from the city to the coast and westwards to the rest of Britain. This network linking Canterbury to Dover, Richborough, Reculver, Lympne and London network is essentially still in use today. Other roads in the area are also believed to be of Roman origin including the road from The Blean to Seasalter shore via Foxes Cross possibly constructed to serve a minor port off the current coast. It is also likely that there was a coastal road that has been lost to erosion.

9.6 There is little evidence to suggest there are any other Roman ‘towns' in this area although there are some major ports such as Reculver and Fordwich. There are a few Roman villa buildings such as at Ickham, and the fertile valleys and gentle slopes of the North Downs and the extensive woodland would have been well utilised. However, strikingly few high status villa estates are known in Canterbury in contrast to most of the other districts of Kent. The Roman landscape contained a mixture of settlement type including farmsteads and roadside plots, indicating an established, formal legal system. Local industries included flour-milling, pottery and tile making and gravel and chalk quarrying in the suburbs of the city, with a port located at Sturry.

9.7 The coastline in Roman times extended some 4-5 km beyond the present coast, and a long tradition of oyster fisheries in the area is recorded, with oysters from ‘Rutupaie' (modern Richborough) being consumed in the Roman city of Canterbury and some were even transported back to Rome.

9.8 Inland from the coast little evidence of Roman occupation has been found north of The Blean. At this time the landscape was probably one of heathland with stands of oak. At Lavender Farm evidence of iron working has been found using ironstone and local timber for charcoal and more substantial building has been found at South Street on the fringe of the woodland. There is also evidence of Roman activity at Chestfield.

9.9 A major stone fort was built at Reculver in the 3rd century and was probably over a kilometre and a half inland at this time; however, coastal erosion has meant that today a stone apron is all that prevents it from falling into the sea. This fort was a defensive measure against early Saxon raids and represents the first phase of the Saxon Shore Fort system of the south east coast. This fort guarded the northern mouth of the Wantsum Channel while Richborough guarded the southern end.

The Middle Ages 500 - 1500

9.10 Canterbury was still occupied by Romanised Britons during the first half of the 5th century who lived side by side with Germanic settlers. During the late 5th and early 6th centuries a population of squatters lived amongst the ruins of the Roman walled city and it is likely that Canterbury survived as a tribal stronghold for some considerable time after the rest of Kent had been overrun by the Saxons. However by the end of the 6th century Canterbury had become the capital of the independent Saxon kings of Kent and was known as *Cant-wara-byrig*. The Roman roads continued to be used during this period. Additionally drove roads were created to drive swine and cattle to Blean Woods for autumn foraging. Despite indications of earlier settlement, The Blean is believed to have been heavily wooded since this period.

9.11 The influence of Christianity on the development of the area really began in 597 AD when Augustine founded his cathedral on the site of an early church used by Roman Christians. He also founded a monastery outside the city wall now known as the Abbey of St. Augustine.

9.12 The period saw the establishment of a number of ecclesiastical and secular estates and land was being farmed under a manorial system of manor houses and related smaller farms and hamlets, with many of the parish boundaries having their origins in the Saxon period. One of the oldest is Stodmarsh which is first mentioned in 678 AD. Its name is derived from the Saxon 'strode' or mare when the area was devoted to the breeding of horses. Wickhambreaux, Littlebourne and Chartham are also referred to in early documents. Wickhambreaux is believed to have been named after the Norse word 'wics', meaning creeks where the Vikings once would have landed. Saxon and Roman relics have been found in barrows at both Wickhambreaux and Chartham.

9.13 Minor land holdings north of The Blean are described in Saxon charters as ‘bi northanwude' - to the north of the wood. By circa 1050 the great monastic institutions had established a Parochial system with tiny churches to act as focal points in these thinly occupied lands, and by the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 all the land holdings are attributed to the Archbishop demonstrating the power and influence of the Church during this period.

9.14 The name Whitstable appears in the Domesday Book as 'Witenestaple' which is believed to derive from the Early English ‘hwitan stapole' meaning white pillar or post and is associated with the administrative unit or ‘Hundred’. The white pillar is believed to be the tower of All Saints Church that was used for navigation purposes at that time. Broadly the Hundred of Whitstable comprised the area of the parishes of Whitstable, Blean and Swalecliffe.

9.15 In the medieval period Blean Woods were also acquired by various ecclesiastical establishments in Canterbury who managed the woods for timber and also used them for hunting and grazing. The cover of heath, bush and oak trees provided valuable pannage for `pigs' and `herbage' for cattle. Drove roads to the north coast across The Blean were also established by which the animals were herded and these often survive as trackways or footpaths giving a north-south grain to the landscape. Most notably these include the Radfall, a linear earthwork indicating a ridgeway of great, if uncertain antiquity and early road system. Similarly Radfall Road marks the line of an early droveway. The name Radfall is from 'Rodfall' referring to 'a rod's clearance (of woodland)'. As a result of the restricted access the use of the drove roads intensified and consequently widened as travellers endeavoured to avoid the muddiest parts. Alternative routes also developed. In places clearings (‘dens' or ‘cluses') were made in the edge of The Blean such as at Ellenden, Thornden and Clowes. Points of entry to the woodland have names containing `gate', such as Radfallgate, Bleangate and Broomfield Gate. In the later middle ages the woodland was developed as coppice. Much of it retains this character today.

9.16 To the south of The Blean, the Tyler Hill area has a history of pottery and ceramic manufacture probably dating back to the 9th century. This developed into Kent's most important brick and tile industry in the 14th century. These industries were reliant on clay and charcoal extracted from Blean Woods and probably account for much of the woodland clearance evident today.

9.17 Throughout the middles ages the coastal marshes continued to be an important economic resource for fishing, oyster grounds, salt production and summer grazing. Land reclamation of the Wantsum Channel was partly the result of natural silting and partly due to human activity. It started a piecemeal process as early as the 7th century. Banks were constructed to restrain the creeks from overflowing and to protect livestock from periodic flooding

from the Sarre Penn and North Stream. A further groyne would be constructed to help trap the silt, followed by the construction of a short stretch of seawall to keep the sea off the land. Cross ditches were cut to carry away surplus water. These groynes and seawalls have been preserved in the present day landscape in the form of Sarre Wall (now the A28), Rushbourne Seawall (16th century), Gilling, Tipper and Snake Droves. There was a fourth Drove, May Drove, but this was largely destroyed when the marsh was converted to arable cultivation in the early 1990's. These droves were also used for moving livestock down to summer grazing on the marshes and back to the farms on the higher ground for winter. The marshland landscapes we see today were largely completed by circa 1550 and the northern seawall was eventually closed in 1808 transforming the Wantsum Channel from a sea strait to farmland. For example evidence of medieval farming under a manorial system could be seen today through survival of medieval field boundaries, earthworks and field systems (such as ridge and furrow along the Stour Valley). Medieval monasteries are believed to have led the way on developing vegetable and herb cultivation and 'leisure' gardens along with more complex early water management systems. Landscapes are continuously evolving. Drainage management systems were certainly introduced on a large scale in certain areas of Canterbury during the Medieval Period but the process of reclamation is still on-going and the landscape is still changing as more or fewer drainage mechanisms are needed or ditches fill up or are cleared out. There are certainly some areas where modern development is less intrusive or has made less of a visual impact on landscapes and the historic landscape dimension is easier to see and appreciate but the time depth element of landscapes is an on-going process.

9.18 Seasalter Marshes were reclaimed in a similar manner and the name Graveney is derived from the Saxon 'Grafanea' which means 'stream that feeds a canal' or a 'dug river', suggesting the influence of man during this period.

9.19 Fishing was also important both in the streams and along the coast. Eight fisheries are recorded under Seasalter in the Domesday Book. There is some evidence that Seasalter may have been an important Saxon settlement. It is listed in the Domesday Book as 'a small borough ...which belongs to the Archbishop's own kitchen' and at Graveney the remains of a vessel have been found on the marsh and it is believed that this was a local landing place in the 9th century. However by the end of the 11th century coastal changes had brought its trading function to an end.

9.20 Both the Wantsum and Seasalter Marshes were important for salt making. This is shown in Anglo-Saxon charters detailing `Sealterns' or salt houses and emphasising rights to take wood from The Blean to evaporate the brine. Local salt production is also listed in the Domesday Book and a number of medieval saltworks are still evident today. In the Wantsum Channel the majority have been reduced by ploughing while others have been razed totally, some still rise to a height of over 3m and in some cases 350m in length. Most can be found in the middle of the channel which must have reached an advanced state of silting when they were formed. Burnt earth and oyster shells occur on all the mounds and fragments of 13th and 14th century pottery were found on some of them.

9.21 By the eve of the Norman Conquest Canterbury was an established town with two major monastic foundations, various churches, water mills and some suburban development. A deer park was established at Trenley Park by Odo of Bayeux around this time and is the oldest documented deer park in Kent. By 1200 the street pattern within the city walls had been established much as it is today and the landscape pattern that we now see was largely developed.

9.22 To the east of the city the manor of Wickham (later Wickhambreaux) continued to be important during this period. It was confiscated by the King from Odo of Bayeux between 1079 and 1088 and was granted to the Clifford family descended from Richard, Duke of Normandy, and father of William the Conqueror. In the 12th century it was the home of the Fair Rosamund Clifford who was believed to have been married to Henry II and was mother to two sons. Later in the 14th century it was owned by Joan Plantagenet wife of the Black Prince, the eldest son of Edward II.

9.23 In 1170 the murder of Thomas Becket in the Cathedral shocked the whole Christian world and pilgrimage to Canterbury to visit his shrine ultimately became regarded as second only in importance to the traditional pilgrimage to Rome. For three and half centuries thousands of pilgrims from both this country and all over Europe visited Canterbury. The pilgrimage was at its most popular in the latter part of the 14th century, at about the time that Geoffrey Chaucer was writing 'The Canterbury Tales'.

1500s - 1800s

9.24 Pilgrimage to Canterbury ended abruptly when the shrine was destroyed in 1538 by Henry VIII during the Reformation and the city's economy started to decline. This was only checked by the arrival of Walloon refugees a few decades later to establish the profitable weaving industry. This industry grew during the 16th and 17th centuries when many hundreds of Walloon and Huguenot refugees were allowed to settle in Kent.

9.25 By circa 1550 the landscape was essentially complete, and the settlement pattern of farms, tracks, roads, set amidst a mosaic of smaller or larger closes laid out at various dates, remained largely unchanged between the 16th century and the late 18th to early 19th centuries. Until the end of the 18th century Canterbury itself was still contained within the bottom of the Stour Valley and at this time the view of Canterbury was of a huddle of rooftops interspersed with trees and church towers. The city largely retained its aspect of a medieval market town with considerable areas of open space and garden. The Cathedral and particularly Bell Harry Tower and the tall spire on the Lanfranc Tower, which fell in 1704, were dominant features in the landscape.

9.26 The agricultural revolution brought changes in farming practice including the selective breeding of livestock; the removal of common property rights to land; and new systems of cropping, involving turnips and clover. It also brought a change in land management from traditional pasture to arable and added to the draining and reclamation of marshlands and clearing of woodland. Around Canterbury agricultural prosperity was brought to the area by hop growing. Daniel Defoe wrote in 1724 that some 6,000 acres of hops were planted within living memory. The increased prosperity saw the establishment of a number of farm estates and parklands during the 18th century, including Hales Place to the north of Canterbury and Nackington House to south, within the Nailbourne Valley and Elbridge House at Stodmarsh.

9.27 The Great Stour had been the main commercial artery to Canterbury since Roman times. However by the 16th century changes to the coastline and the severe silting up of the Stour limited its navigation. By the 18th century Whitstable had replaced Fordwich as the main port for Canterbury with goods being transported at greater expense over land. Significant landings at Whitstable probably date back to Tudor times when there was a rapid growth in both coastal and continental trading.

9.28 As trade gradually increased so did the traffic through The Blean between the coast and Canterbury and by 1736 the route to the coast had become so important that a Turnpike was established by Act of Parliament. Other roads also developed during this time as many road users sought alternative routes to avoid tolls. The Turnpike continued in operation until 1871 when it was closed by national legislation. The Canterbury to Sandwich road was turnpiked in 1802.

9.29 Increased trade helped the growth of Herne. In particular hops were sent to London and shellfish exported to Holland. In return goods were imported from the Low Countries. The links with Holland are apparent in the 18th century Dutch style buildings many of which remain a feature in the landscape today. Inland however a more agricultural traditional style remained.

9.30 The 19th century brought further changes to the landscape. In May 1830 a steam operated single track 'rail road' was opened between Whitstable harbour and Canterbury to transport coal to the city and passengers to the coast for the sea air. It was powered by Stephenson's 'Invicta' and was the first railway in the world to operate a regular passenger service operated by steam. The Invicta lasted just six years, thereafter the whole line was operated by cables from fixed engines at spaced intervals and in 1846 it was converted to locomotive operation. It is known locally as the Crab and Winkle Line.

9.31 The railways continued to develop with the London to Ramsgate Line in 1849, the London to Dover Line in 1860 and the Elham Valley Line in 1889. The railway was a major force in the development of Whitstable and, in particular, Herne Bay whose popularity grew as a seaside resort. Several large breweries were established and paper mills, corn mills, mineral water factories and clay pipe factories were all present although there was no intensive industrialisation. Housing developed outside of the city walls on the site of St. Gregory's Priory (between Sturry Road/Northgate and Military Road) and between Wincheap and the New Dover Road.

20th Century

9.32 The 20th century has brought some of the greatest changes to the area. Following the First World War there was a considerable loss or decline of the parklands and the country houses around the city. Metalling of the roads had begun by the beginning of the century with the final rural lanes being metalled at the end of the Second World War. Parts of the historic road network that were not metalled now form other public rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways. The most obvious change in the landscape in the 20th century is the spread of suburban development and village expansion. This is particularly notable in those villages closest to Canterbury and has encroached to varying extents on the landscape.

9.33 Following bomb damage to the city during the Second World War there was a major rebuilding of substantial amounts of the city centre. In addition there has also been considerable expansion of the suburbs around the city. This suburban growth has in particular included significant areas on the Stour Valley sides at Hales Place and at Rough Common, and to the south at Wincheap and Thanington and in the Barton Estate area. Perhaps the most notable development of the latter half of this century is the University of Kent that was built in the 1960's. The A2 Canterbury Bypass was built in 1977.

9.34 Development within the District has also included some planned settlements including the development of Chestfield. In 1920 the Manor Estate, which at this time still comprised 700 acres of farmland, a central manor with the surrounding farms of Balsar Street, Highgate and Bodkin and unchanged in essence since the middle ages was sold to George Reeves. Reeves set about realising his lifetime's ambition: the planning and building of an ‘old world' village of part timbered houses, with himself playing the role of lord of the manor. The estate was laid out on a generous scale with substantial timbered houses in large plots and smaller cottage style houses grouped around greens. In addition to a golf course Reeves also provided a cricket ground, tennis courts and a bowling green. A polo ground was planned but not built, although remembered in Polo Way. There was also a dairy and produce from the allotments and orchards was sold at his shop. Reeves ran virtually every aspect of the community until in 1941 when financial difficulties caused him to sell the estate. From then on it developed in a more conventional manner.

9.35 A further new village was created at Hersden adjacent to Chislet Colliery. The mining of coal began at Chislet Colliery in the early 1900s. The village of Hersden was developed as part of Abercrombie's Regional Plan for East Kent, designed by architect J Skipper. This had a significant impact on the rural landscape. Mining in Kent was short lived with Chislet being the first mine to close in 1969. The pithead buildings were demolished leaving the capped shafts and areas of black spoil. Today the spoil heaps have vegetated over and light industrial units are located on the site of the former colliery buildings.

9.36 The valley floor of the Stour has seen some of the most recent and significant development with the growth of out of town shopping. This is particularly evident along the Sturry Road and Broad Oak Road to the north east, to the south west at Chartham and even more recently to the south west at Wincheap. Another obvious change in the landscape in the 20th century is the growth of the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable, and the spread of suburban development which has encroached to varying extents on the landscape to the south. A catalyst to this development was the construction of the Thanet Way in the 1930s to bring development to the area to relieve unemployment. A more recent change in the landscape has come about by the construction of the A299, a new dual carriageway built to bypass a section of the Thanet Way.

9.37 The rich history of Canterbury is recognised today by its designation as a World Heritage Site. There are also numerous conservation areas within the immediate vicinity of the city and in the rural settlements.

Natural Environment: Cultural Heritage Designations

10.1 There are an abundance of designated areas marked for historic significance throughout the Canterbury District. Canterbury city is designated as a World Heritage Site. Figure 10, Landscape Designations, illustrates cultural heritage designations.

Conservation Areas

10.2 A number of conservation areas are located throughout Canterbury District, which are locally designated for their special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Details relating to each of the Conservation Areas throughout the study area are contained within Appendix B. The Conservation Areas that fall within the study area are named as follows:

- Adisham
- Amery Court
- Bekesbourne
- Bekesbourne Hill and Woolton Farm
- Bifrons Park
- Blean
- Bloodden
- Bossington
- Bourne Park
- Boyden Gate
- Bramling
- Broomfield
- Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (Hackington and Blean) Conservation Area
- Chartham
- Chestfield
- Chislet and Chitty
- Cooting
- Court Lee Manor (Whitstable)
- Eddington
- Elbridge House
- Ford, Maypole and Oldtree
- Fordwich
- Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling
- Harbledown and Upper Harbledown
- Harbledown
- Hawe Farm
- Herne
- Herne Windmill
- Highstead (Chislet)
- Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge
- Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal
- Hothe Court (Blean)
- Ickham-Wickhambreaux and Seaton
- Lampen Stream
- Lee Priory and Garrington
- Little Barton Farm
- Littlebourne
- Lower Hardres and Street End
- Marshside
- Mount Hospital
- Nackington
- Nailbourne

- Patrixbourne
- Reculver
- Renville Farm and Bridge Railway Station (Bridge)
- St Martin's Hospital
- Stodmarsh
- Sturry and Fordwich
- The Bridge Conservation Area
- Tyler Hill and Allcroft Grange
- Under the Wood
- Upstreet
- Upper Harbledown
- Westbere
- Womenswold
- Woodlands Park
- Woolage Green

Scheduled Monuments

10.3 English Heritage identifies sites, known as Scheduled Monuments, throughout England which are placed on the schedule by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. A number of Scheduled Monuments are located throughout the study area:

- Archbishops Palace, Bekesbourne
- Bigbury Camp, Harbledown
- Bowl Barrows, Clowes Woods
- Bowl Barrow, Iffin Wood
- Dispersed medieval settlement and Roman buildings, near St. Cosmus and St Damiens Church
- Dovecoat at Burnt House Farm
- Enclosure of Adisham Woodlands
- Enclosure of Newham Farm, Wickhambreaux
- Gateway to Brook Farm, Hillborough
- Horton Chapel near Chartham
- Medieval settlement and earthworks, Iffin Wood
- Reculver Roman Fort and Towers
- Well Chapel Remains, Bekesbourne

10.4 There are a number of parks and gardens listed in the Kent Gardens Compendium (Kent County Council and the Kent Gardens Trust 1996), throughout the study area:

- Adisham Woodlands and associated lands
- Cobham Court
- Elbridge House and associated lands
- Harbledown Lodge
- Havisham House
- Howletts
- Mystole House Park
- Strode Park
- The Quaives
- Vernon Holme
- Westfield

Canterbury District within the broader landscape

National Character Areas

11.1 Natural England's National Character Areas identify seven landscape character areas that fall wholly or partially within Kent:

- Greater Thames Estuary
- North Kent Plain
- North Downs
- Wealden Greensand
- Low Weald
- High Weald
- Romney Marsh

11.2 Canterbury sits within the North Kent Plain and the southern part of the district falls within the North Downs. The north western extent of the district falls within the Greater Thames Estuary.

Landscape Assessment of Kent

11.3 At the county level, the Landscape Assessment of Kent (Kent County Council 2004) provides a more refined study. The following 6 landscape character areas (refer to Figure 11) fall wholly or partly within the Canterbury District:

- The Blean
- North Kent Fruit Belt
- The Stour Valley
- East Kent Horticultural Belt
- East Kent Arable Belt
- The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes

11.4 A summary of the key characteristics of each of these areas is given below:

The Blean

- Densely wooded.
- Rounded hilltops with sparse nucleic settlements and few roads within the woodland.
- Flat coastal plain. Haphazard seaside and leisure development.
- Neglected pasture near the coast- a high proportion of unfarmed land.

North Kent Fruit Belt

- Well enclosed, medium scale field pattern.
- Rolling, quiet, picturesque. Traditional Kentish elements such as hops and orchards are characteristic.
- Well managed, simple form.
- The edge of the Canterbury urban area influences views, land use and circulation.
- The views towards the Cathedral are very important.
- Outlying villages are quiet and rural, but with an increasing suburban influence.

The Stour Valley

- Flat valley floor, widening towards the river mouth. Long distance views of Canterbury Cathedral.
- Valley sides are steep, dropping in height as the valley widens towards the river mouth.
- Wetland pasture drained by well vegetated ditches and dykes; small scale, well enclosed field pattern.
- Marshland, colourful reeds and grasses, lakes and open water.

- Rich and diverse habitats.
- Settlement on river at edge of floodplain and linear settlement surrounding the valley.

East Kent Horticultural Belt

- Enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts, medium scale, gradually sloping or flat.
- Some contained, small-scale landscapes in the central area.
- Long views from higher ground.
- Coastal and marsh edges.
- Diverse agriculture with vineyards, soft fruit, orchards and glasshouses.
- Small isolated linear villages, some piecemeal development along roads based on original small hamlets or farms. Isolated, square, buff-coloured farm cottages.
- Very narrow winding roads following the field and drainage pattern. Regimented, intensive feel to the farmland. Some blocks of unmanaged land, particularly towards the marginal wetlands.

East Kent Arable Belt

- Open, rolling landform with large arable fields and well-wooded hilltops. Simple pattern to the landscape.
- Narrow, winding lanes and dispersed settlement.
- Parkland trees and 18th century estate villages.
- Pine trees on field boundaries.
- Disused collieries, and associated colliery villages.

The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes

- Flat, open and remote. No settlement on marshland.
- Reculver Towers and Richborough Fort mark the end of the Wantsum Channel.
- Regular field pattern fringed with dykes and drainage ditches.
- Flood defences are characteristic elements.
- River courses, flooding and water logging.
- Coastal influences-climate, sand dunes and seabirds.

Canterbury District within the broader landscape

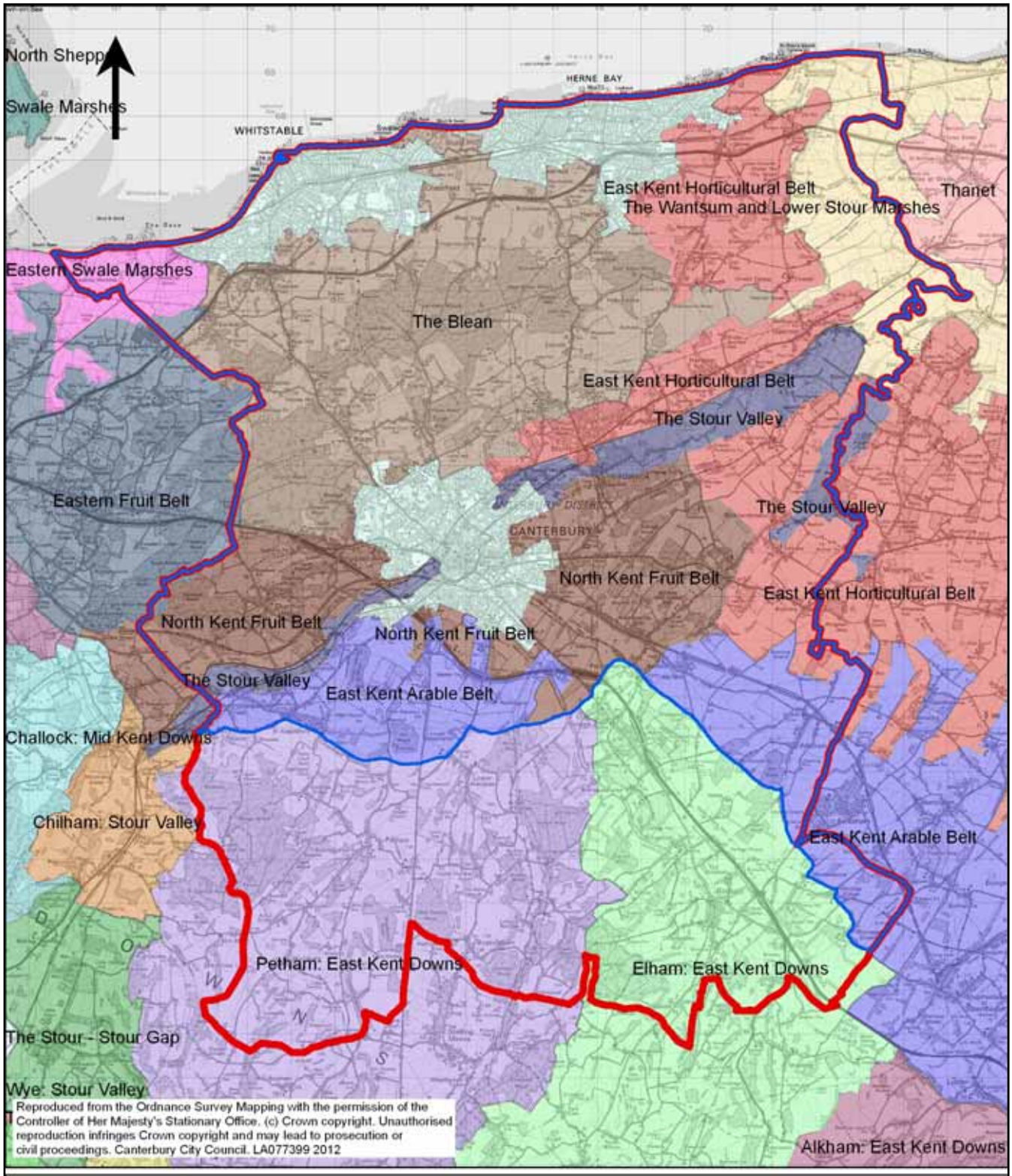


Figure 11: County Wide Landscape Character Areas
(Landscape Assessment of Kent, Kent County Council, 2004)

Landscape Character Areas

12.1 The field and desk study identifies 48 local landscape character areas, illustrated on Figure 13. In the sections that follow, each of these areas is described and the key landscape and biodiversity characteristics are identified, including a description of views of the city where appropriate. An analysis is undertaken to identify the condition and sensitivity of the landscape and, following the methodology outlined in the introduction, guidelines for each area are proposed. It should be noted that changes in the natural landscape are often gradual relating closely to changes in geology and soil type. It is therefore normal to find some characteristics of one area overlapping into another. For ease of use this document groups landscape character areas into landscape types, as illustrated on Figure 12. Descriptions of landscape character areas are grouped alphabetically within the document in accordance with landscape types.

12.2 Not all areas within a landscape character area exhibit all the characteristics of that area and it is usual to have some pockets with very few distinctive features. Often this is due to changes in land use that have resulted in the loss of landscape features, or the addition of features not naturally associated with that area. The proximity of the built environment often affects the condition of the landscape, particularly on the boundaries where pressures are greatest. The landscape character areas therefore identify common characteristics across an area rather than grouping areas that are identical. Where there are marked changes across a character area these are described and, where appropriate, different guidelines are given.

Landscape Character Areas

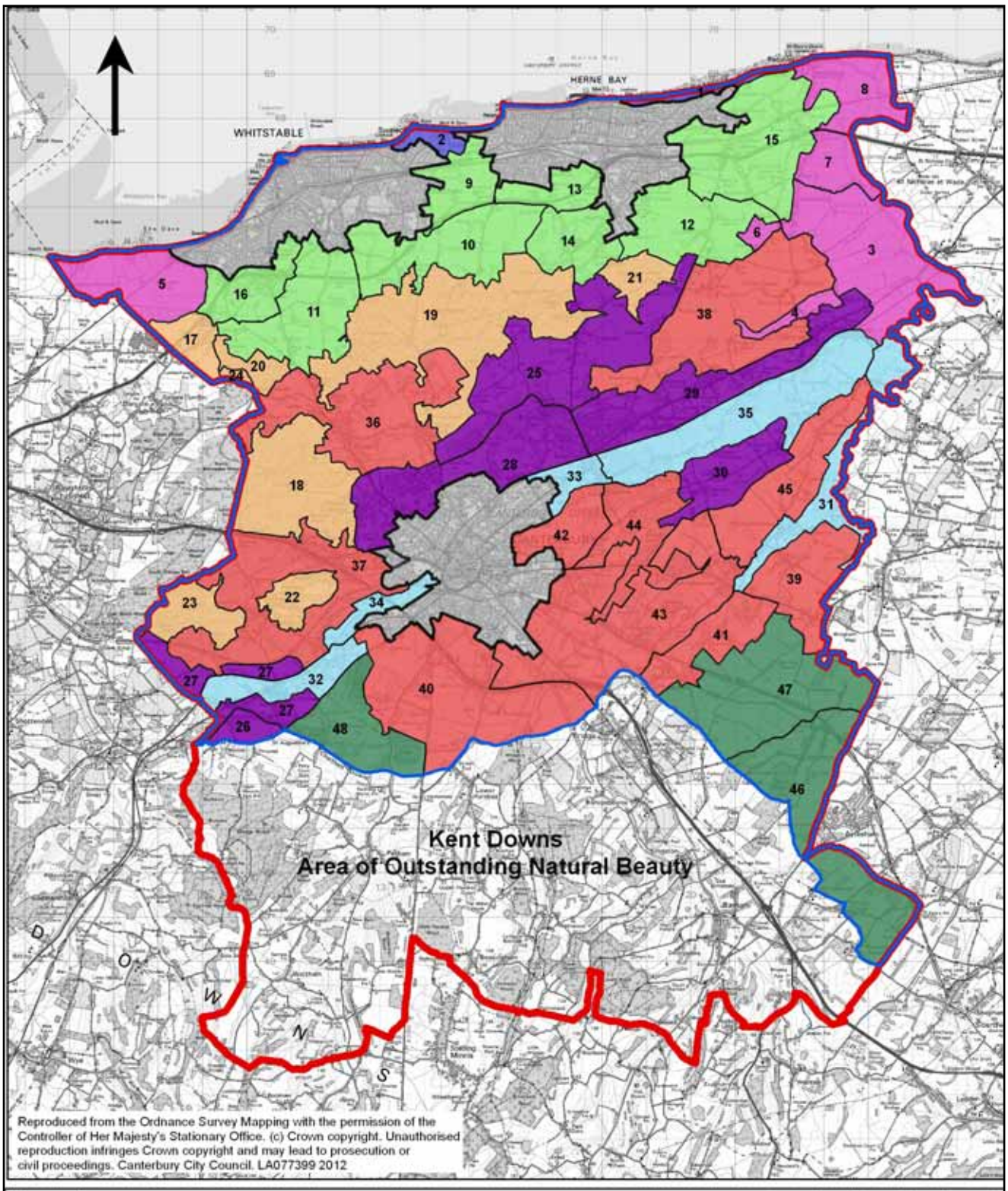


Figure 12: Canterbury Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Areas

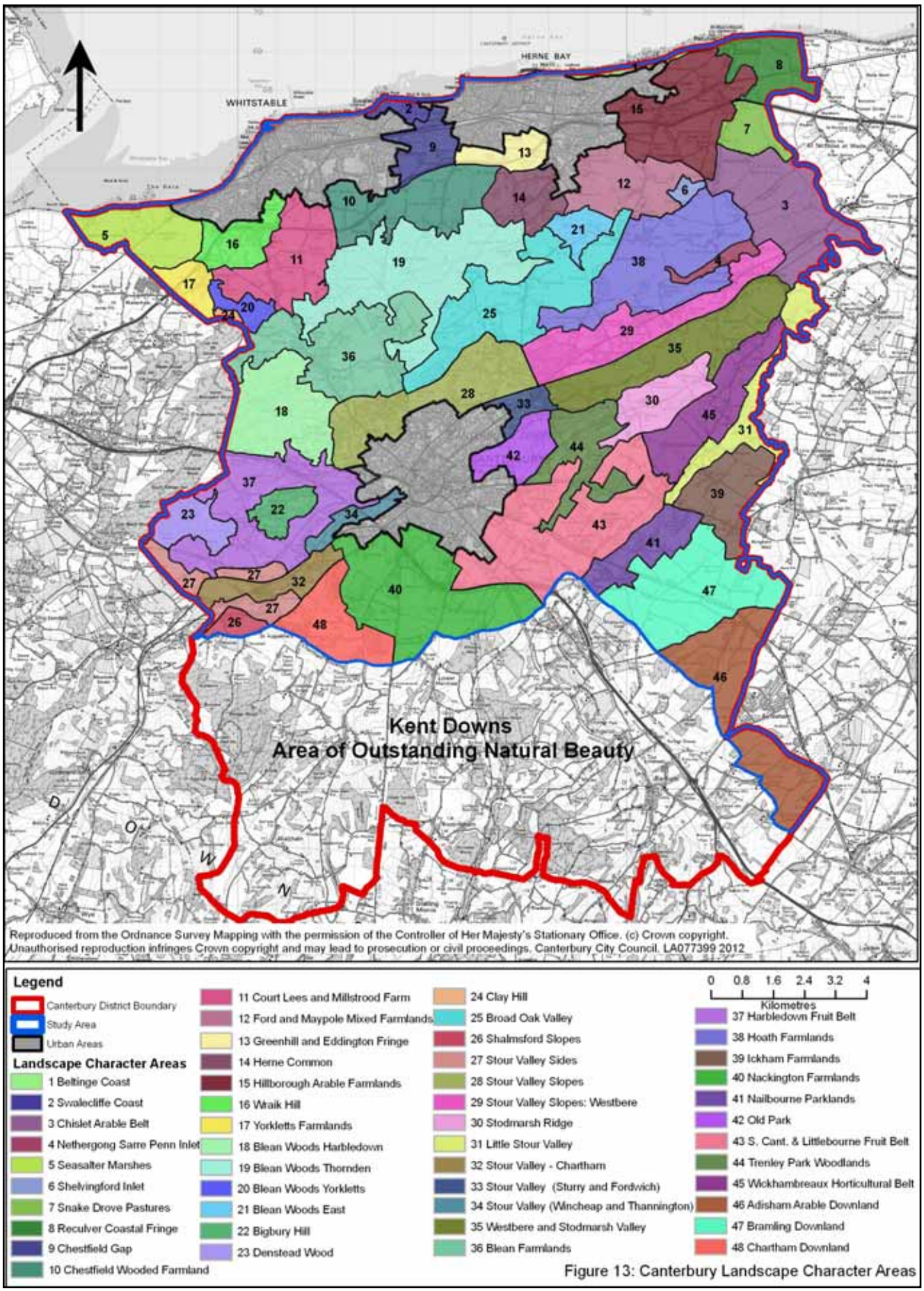


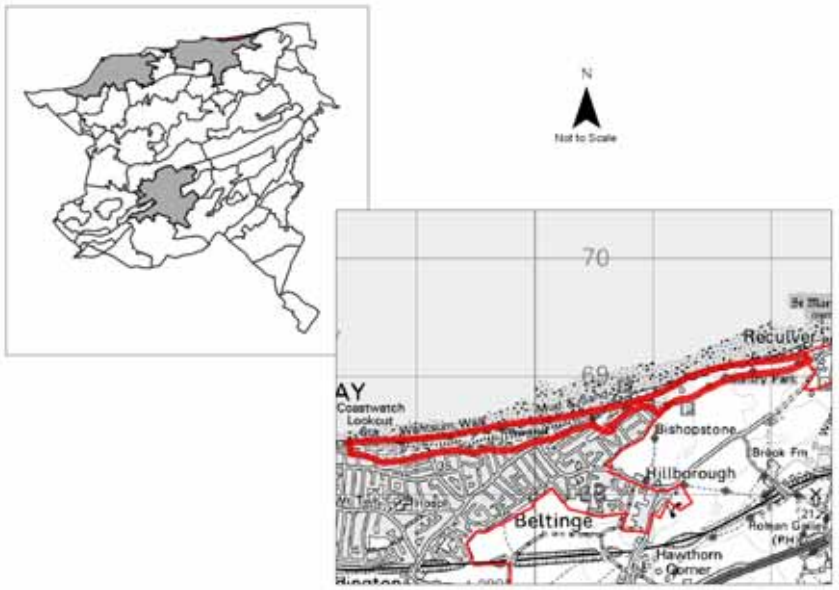
Figure 13: Canterbury Landscape Character Areas

1. Beltinge Coast

Key Characteristics

- Slumped and graded London Clay cliffs supporting rough grass and scrub.
- Shingle beach characterised by groynes and extensive mudflats at low tide.
- Extensive views to Sheppey and Essex and along the coast to Reculver Towers.
- Level cliff top of tightly mown amenity grass area.
- Popular area of public open space with sea views.
- Backed by the sea-side resort of Herne Bay, with its pier, clock tower, promenade and beach huts.
- Key designations are Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation.

Landscape Description



The Beltinge Coast is a narrow strip of open space and sloping London Clay cliffs between Beltinge and the coast. Coastal protection measures over part of the coast have halted some of this erosion by regrading and retaining the cliffs. The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan 2008 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Beltinge Coast for the next 100 years. To the west of Bishopstone, the future management is identified as 'hold the line' (where the existing defence line will be maintained). East of Bishopstone, north of Reculver Country Park, the future management is identified as 'no active intervention' (where there will be no investment in providing or maintaining defences). The shingle, sands and muds of the foreshore are divided by the regular pattern of distinctive sea-washed timber groynes. At low tide there are extensive mudflats in which the remnants of historic groynes can be seen. The change in geology from clay to more resistant strata can be clearly seen at the eastern end of the area where the cliffs abruptly steepen and the exposed, sandy, near vertical cliffs start. A deep ravine, called Bishopstone Glen, has been cut through the Sandstone. This natural, local feature is found at the eastern end of the promenade at Bishopstone where the sea defences end.

The area is almost devoid of tree cover although there is occasional scrubby vegetation on the cliff slopes. The cliff top comprises public open space mostly maintained as tight mown grass. The sloping cliffs themselves are covered by rough grassland containing many species of nature conservation interest. There are interesting views out to the Maunsell Forts which are an important Second World War heritage feature, whilst offshore wind turbines are a recent development. From Beltinge Cliffs, there are extensive views out to sea towards the Isle of Sheppey and Essex and along the coast to Reculver Towers to the east and Herne Bay to the west. For the most part inland views are contained by the urban area which, in this location is characterised by a string of mostly pre-War detached and semi-detached seaside villas and bungalows.

This character area's importance as an ecological resource is recognised by the eastern half's designation as part of the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Thanet Coast is particularly noted

for its extensive chalk sea caves and reefs, plus its coastal birds and assemblages of marine and terrestrial plant species.

This is a very simple landscape comprising three main elements - the open cliff top, the sloping clay cliff and the shingle beach and mudflats. The relationship between these elements is coherent throughout the area and there are very few detracting features. These are limited to a number of minor elements such as signs and litter bins, and the concrete slipway that crosses the slopes. The unimproved grassland and scrub along the cliffs provides a refuge for wildlife and birds. The grassland includes species such as spiny restharrow and dyers greenweed, the latter is listed as notable in the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan. The shingle beaches also support some distinctive flora.

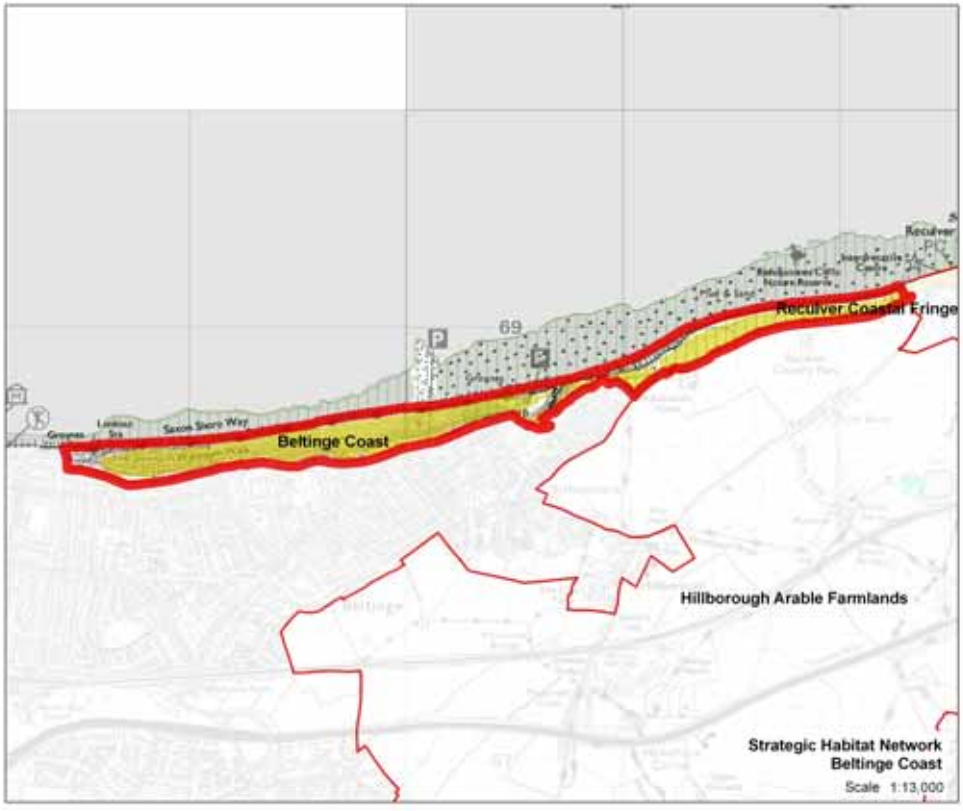
Condition

This is a coherent landscape with very few detracting features. The ecological interest is limited by the narrowness of the corridor and close proximity to the urban area, being virtually absent adjoining the resort of Herne Bay. The tight mown amenity grass on the cliff top has little wildlife interest and overall the ecological integrity of the area is moderate. The Beltinge Coast is in good condition.

Sensitivity

This is a highly sensitive and distinctive landscape, with its many characteristic features including the open grass cliff top, the clay cliffs and the shingle beach with its groynes and traditional coastal features. The cliffs are the dominant element in the landscape. The open and extensive views out to sea and along the coast to the distinctive Reculver Towers make this a highly visible landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

The recommended strategy for this area is primarily to conserve and where feasible restore or enhance the interest of the designated and undesignated coastal habitat as part of a wider coastal habitat network.

In addition to such conservation measures, there is potential opportunity to enhance the grassland at Beltinge Cliff to contribute to a county-wide, species-rich grassland network.

Guidelines

The following guidelines for the Beltinge Coast aim to conserve the open coastal character.

- Conserve the simple uncluttered landscape by keeping the number of introduced elements in the landscape to a minimum. Remove signs, fencing and other elements where not required for safety reasons. Introduce a common palette of low key materials and styles for those that are required.
- Conserve and enhance the clay cliffs' grassland habitats to protect their wildlife potential and reflect the nature conservation designations.
- Ensure that future coastal protection measures respect and enhance the visual and wildlife characteristics of the area and provide space to avoid coastal squeeze.
- Continue to support efforts to reduce wintering turnstone disturbance through public education and visitor management on the coast.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Good**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Very Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very High

Condition				
good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**
	low	moderate	high
	Sensitivity		

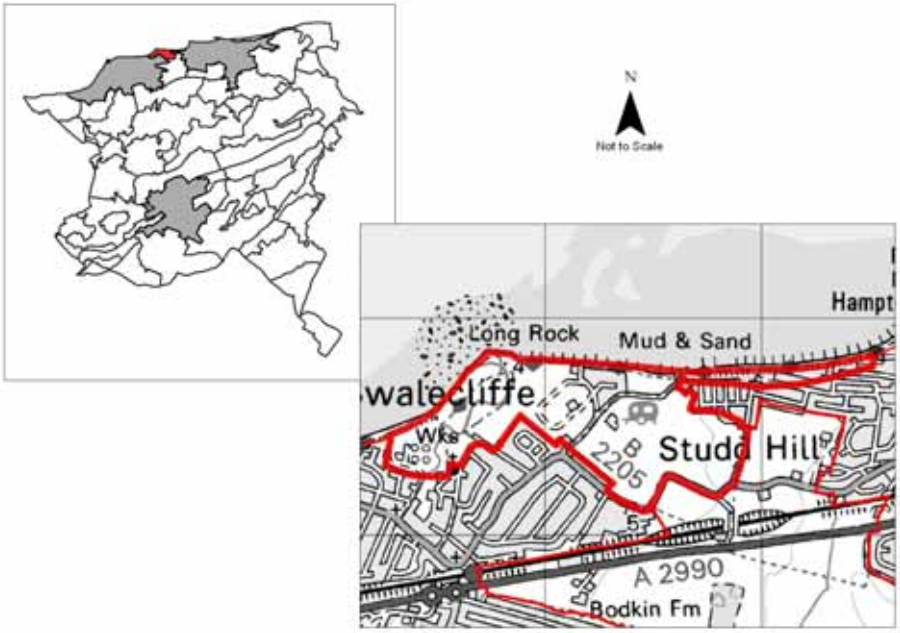
Guidelines: Conserve

2. Swalecliffe Coast

Key Characteristics

- Important area of open space separating the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable.
- Low lying area of poorly drained heavy soils over London Clay mainly supporting rough grass.
- Open coast with shingle beach and extensive mudflats at low tide. The shingle spit at Long Rock is a feature.
- Coastal views to Sheppey and Essex.
- Some Grade 3 agricultural land away from coast.
- The Swalecliffe Brook crosses the area flanked by mature trees including oak and willow associated with the urban area before issuing into the sea at Long Rock.
- Vegetation including pines and poplar containing Swalecliffe wastewater treatment works.
- Holiday parks of caravans and chalets enclosed by high fences and conifer screens.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area for Birds and Ramsar site, Marine Special Area of Conservation and a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The Swalecliffe Coast is an area of flat coastal plain on low lying London Clay overlain with poorly draining heavy soils. The area is less than 500m wide at its narrowest point and performs an important function by providing an area of valued open space separating the towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay. The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan 2008 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Swalecliffe Coast for the next 100 years. The future management is identified as 'hold the line' (where the existing defence line will be maintained). The shingle spit, known as Long Rock is a distinct feature in this area. Also characteristic of this stretch of the north Kent coast are the shingle beaches and extensive mudflats visible at low tide. On a clear day there are views along the coastline and out to sea towards the Isle of Sheppey and Essex. Views inland are contained by the urban edge and conifer screens that subdivide the area.

This character area's importance as an ecological resource is recognised by the designation as part of the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA) and Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. The area is also designated as a Marine Special Area for Conservation (SAC). The Thanet Coast is particularly noted for its coastal birds, plus its assemblage of marine and terrestrial plant species. There are also some notable invertebrates here including the only population of a nationally rare woodlouse found in mainland Britain. This character area also contains the Tankerton Slopes Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is locally designated for its population of hog's fennel, a nationally rare plant confined to a few coastal localities in south east England. The shingle and shell beaches support a distinctive flora with species such as yellow-horned poppy, sea kale, sea holly and sea clover being characteristic. Historically these beaches would have supported breeding populations of terns and ringed plovers, which still attempt to breed at Long Rock. At Long Rock there is also an area of saltmarsh.

The land is mainly not in agricultural use. Although inland it is categorised as Grade 3 agricultural land, much of the area is used for caravan parks and playing fields.

It is a popular area for coastal walks with the Saxon Shore Way long distance path along the coastline and local footpaths into Swalecliffe. A strip of public open space along the coast links Whitstable to the west and Herne Bay to the east. To the west the area is crossed by the Swalecliffe Brook that issues into the sea after winding its way across Long Rock. Mature oaks and woodland vegetation flank the sides of the Swalecliffe Brook near the urban area.

There are very few buildings within the area. A simple row of terraced coastguard cottages is sited on the coast and a string of bungalows and detached houses face onto the coastal open space to the east. Swalecliffe Wastewater Treatment Works lies to the west, enclosed by a mix of conifer and native screen planting.

Condition

The general condition of this area is poor. It has been fragmented by a number of land uses and is strongly influenced by the neighbouring urban area. Non-traditional land uses such as holiday parks and the wastewater treatment works are enclosed by visually intrusive fencing and conifer screens. The coastal strip is cluttered by signs and barriers without any apparent consistency in design. The seasonal pressure to gain access to the coast has created conflict between public and private land. The consequence is that private land has been secured by unsympathetic fencing, with 'Keep Out' signs being an all too common feature.

The high ecological interest in the area is largely limited to the coast. Its importance as an ecological resource is recognised by its designation as a SSSI, SPA and a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. The area is also designated as a Marine SAC.

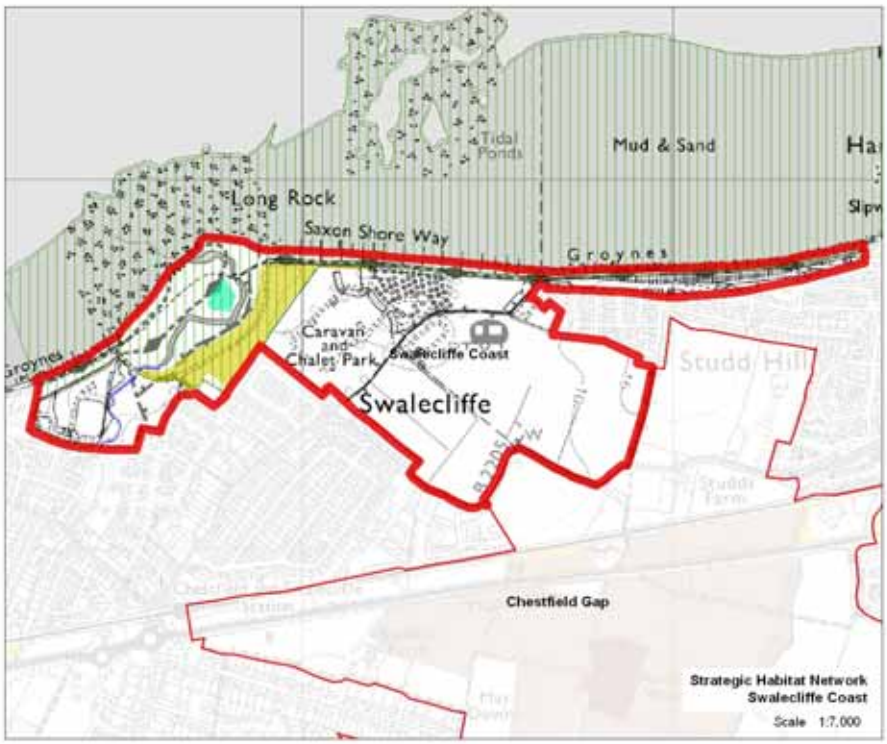
Sensitivity

The Swalecliffe Coast has a strategic importance as a buffer between the towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay. The narrowness of the area means that this function is sensitive to threats from expansion of the neighbouring urban areas. The coast is most sensitive due to the high visibility along the open shoreline and the vulnerability of the landscape and its associated habitats. Additionally there are threats to the shoreline from pressure for increased recreation and coastal engineering works. In the long term changes in sea level could threaten the intertidal flats and saltmarsh areas.

Inland the visibility of the landscape is filtered by hedgerows and coniferous screens that divide the area, so that despite the level topography, there are few views across the landscape. It is an indistinct landscape, particularly inland. Many of the land uses and the features associated with them are of recent origin and appear to have established in a haphazard fashion. Overall the area is considered to be moderately sensitive.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The recommended strategy for this area is primarily to conserve and enhance the interest of the designated coastal sites here as part of a wider coastal habitat network. This includes both the intertidal zone and some inland areas with species-rich grassland potential within the designated site.



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Detracting features:	Many
Visual unity:	Significantly Interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Condition		low	moderate	high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
		Sensitivity		

Guidelines

Appropriate guidelines are those that restore and improve the area whilst respecting and strengthening its function as a green gap between Herne Bay and Whitstable.

- Improve the overall visual quality of the area and promote its value as a green buffer between Herne Bay and Whitstable.
- Prepare an improvement strategy for the entire area to explore ways to reconcile conflicting land use pressures and suggest solutions to secure private land whilst managing the desire for the public to gain access to the coast.
- Improve the visual qualities of the Swalecliffe Brook and associated vegetation.
- Encourage the use of sympathetic fencing, screening and planting.
- Improve signs, barriers and furniture along coastal defences to create an attractive sea front.
- Restore and maintain the visual and physical integrity of the coast reflecting the nature conservation designations.
- Conserve and enhance/restore the interest features of the designated coastal sites.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

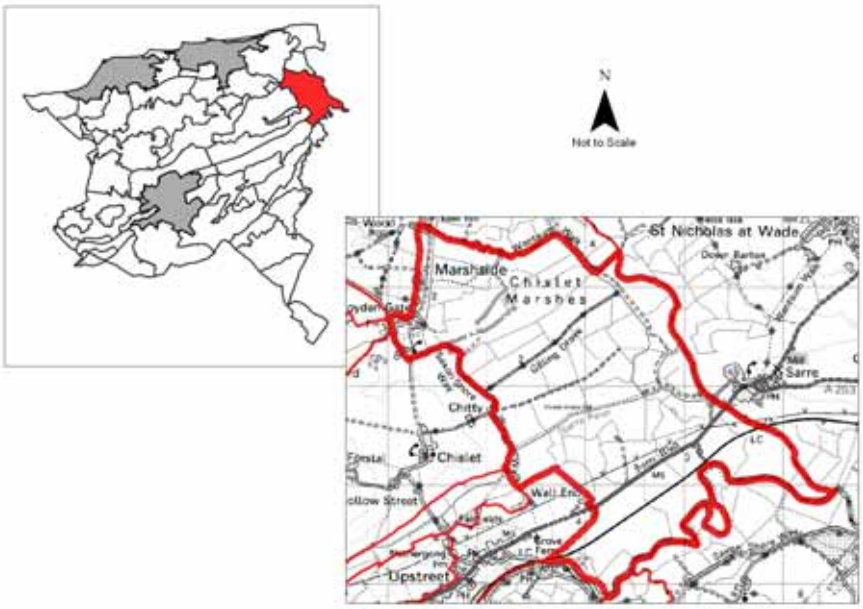
Guidelines: Restore and Improve

3. Chislet Arable Belt

Key Characteristics

- Flat low lying marshland.
- Large arable fields segregated by linear drainage ditches.
- Limited tree and shrub vegetation with fragmented clumps along ditches and around housing.
- Settlement confined to the edge of the marshland.
- Traditional properties with modern infill development.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area and Area of High Landscape Value.

Landscape Description



This is a large area of land predominantly in arable production stretching from Snake Drove in the north to the River Stour near Grove Ferry in the south and excludes the former inlets of Shelvingford and the Sarre and Nethergong Penns. The landform is flat and the drift geology comprises alluvium overlain with Thanet Beds. Soils are clay, used extensively for crop production.

This is an area which has undergone dramatic change in the late 20th century with the ploughing of the grazing marsh for intensive cereal production. Whilst there are some small pockets of grazing marsh, limited to approximately half a dozen or so fields, the landscape is characterised by the large, flat, open arable fields which are segregated by linear drainage ditches. In many places the drainage ditches support excessive algae growth, resulting from the process of eutrophication, where fertiliser from the intensively farmed fields has drained off the land. Some small areas of land adjacent to housing are fenced off for use as equestrian grazing. There is very little tree cover, although some fragmented clumps of vegetation grow along the drainage ditches and around the housing. The landscape around the edge of the marsh tends to have greater tree cover, usually around the farmsteads and villages. However, there has been recent planting along the droves which stretch out across the former channel. There are a number of medieval saltworks also evident in this area.

The Sarre Wall, which carries the A28 connecting Thanet to Canterbury, is a broad causeway averaging 14m in width and 1m in height with drainage ditches on either side. The Wall was wide enough to be used as a road under an act of 1485 when the Wantsum Channel had silted up to such an extent that the area between Thanet and the mainland was only covered with water at high tides rendering the ferry that used to connect these areas impracticable.

3. Chislet Arable Belt

This character area is almost entirely covered by the Chislet Marshes Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designation. Although the former grazing marsh has largely been converted to arable, many of the ditches are still fairly rich in marginal and emergent water plants and bird life. In addition, many of the old drove roads are still present and retain a varied grassland flora.

Settlement is mainly confined to the edge of the marsh, with the marsh itself uninhabited. The small settlements of Marshside and Boyden Gate are located at the edge of the marsh at the foot of the slopes of the former channel. Traditional properties are scattered throughout the settlements, including distinctive large timber framed barns, although there has been infill development comprising modern properties. An important group of features in this area is the series of brick bridges which cross the North Stream at Marshside. Some date back to 1793, and give access to the droves and fields. Six have round arches while the other two have a pointed arch and the other an elliptical arch. These are an important feature in the landscape and have been recently restored by means of a partnership scheme between the owners, the Parish Council and the City Council. There is also a redbrick sheep wash in a field at Boyden Gate which has also been restored, reflecting the former use of the marsh for grazing sheep.

Condition

The condition of this area is moderate. The scale and topography of the open arable areas create a unified, coherent landscape despite the recent agricultural improvements. There are few detracting features within this landscape, mainly recent agricultural developments. The ecological integrity of this area somewhat reduced in the late 20th century as a result of agricultural improvements. There is still some ecological interest which is mainly confined to the streams and ditches which is recognised by the LWS designation.

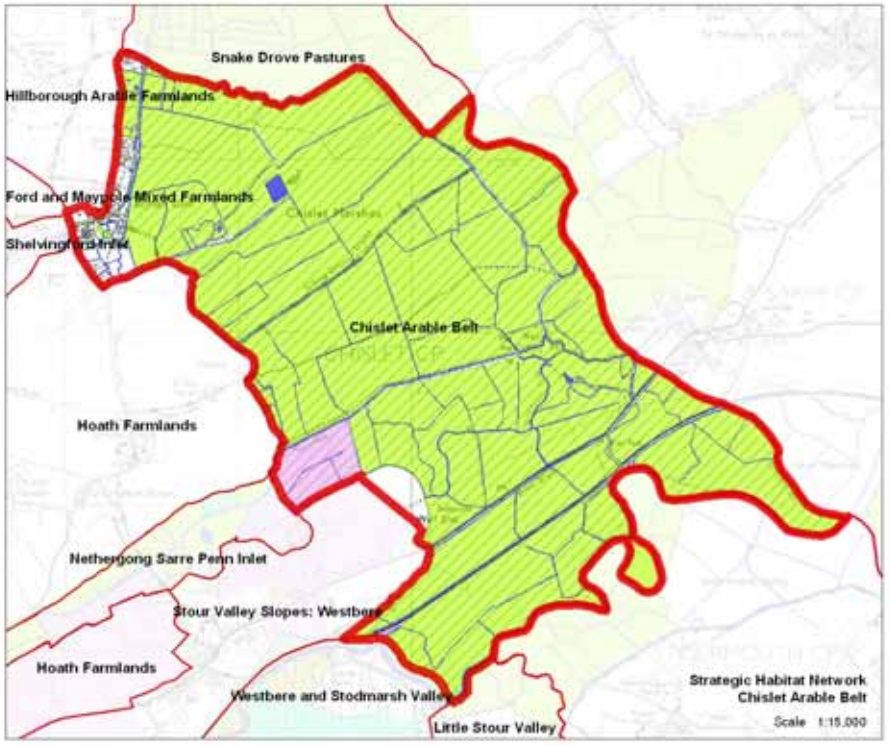
Sensitivity

The sensitivity of this landscape is high. The visibility is generally high due to the open nature of the landscape and the general absence of built development on the marsh. There are long views to St. Nicholas at Wade and Manston. There are some pockets of low visibility, although these are usually within the confines of the settlements. There is evidence of early settlements, and overall there is a moderate sense of place.

Habitat Network Opportunity

As would be expected from a former grazing marsh, there is a strong opportunity for the creation and restoration of wetland habitat here, as part of a wider wetland network in the Lower Stour Catchment. There is also a small area adjacent to the neighbouring Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet character area revealed as having potential for acid grassland/heath network development.

3. Chislet Arable Belt



Guidelines

The guidelines are to conserve and restore those features which are important within this area.

- Conserve the open character of the marshland landscape and long distance views.
- Restore and strengthen field margins adjacent to ditch systems where arable production prevails by working with the relevant bodies and local farmers and to minimise nitrate leakage into watercourses.
- Conserve and restore the nature conservation interest by encouraging more traditional methods of farming through initiatives such as the Environmental Stewardship scheme, and Kentish Stour Countryside Project.
- Resist new development on the open low lying areas and slopes of the channel.
- Conserve the remnants of grazing marsh and restore more marginal areas of agricultural production to grazing marsh.
- Conserve the identity and traditional built features associated with the settlements at the edge of this area and ensure new development, where it is appropriate, is sympathetic in scale, design and siting.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

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- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very High

Condition	low	moderate	high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
	Sensitivity		

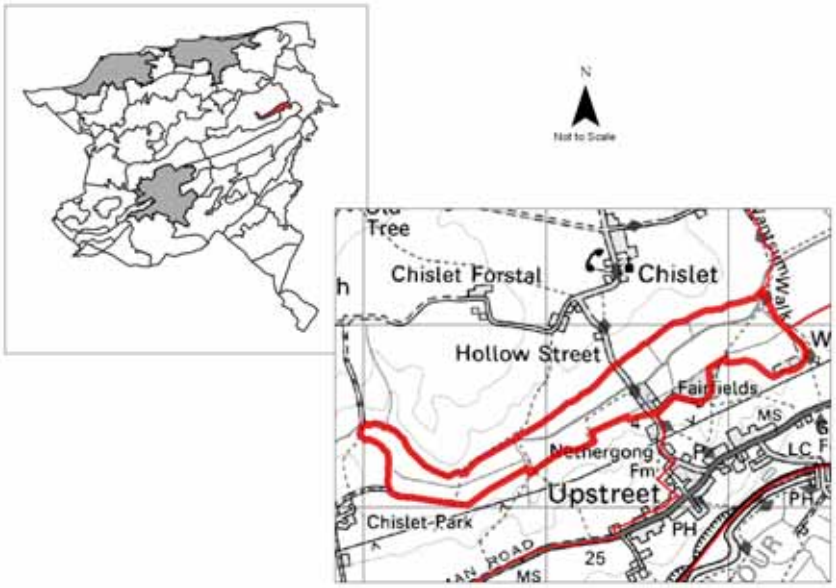
Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

4. Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet

Key Characteristics

- Flat linear inlet with water channels known locally as penns.
- Rectangular arable fields.
- No buildings.
- Predominantly open landscape with limited tree cover.
- Key designations are Area of High Landscape Value and a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This is a wide, flat former inlet of the Wantsum Channel along the Nethergong and Sarre Penn. The Sarre Penn is a stream, which crosses east Kent from Dunkirk to the River Wantsum near Sarre and the River Stour. To the east the inlet widens where it merges with the main channel and the area forms a more enclosed part of the wider, more expansive, marshland landscape to the east.

Alongside the penn, the adjacent flat fields are rectangular and are mainly in arable cultivation. The solid geology comprises Thanet Beds in the east, merging to Woolwich Beds and Blackheath and Oldhaven Beds in the west. The overlying drift deposits are alluvium. There is a tendency for the fields adjacent to the penns to flood, hence the construction of the banks, and so the land is more marginal for agriculture at agricultural classification Grade 4. A small area of equestrian grazing is accommodated within the area. There are two areas, one to the south east and one to the north west, which are extensive areas of reed beds associated with local shooting rights.

This character area contains a small section of the Chislet Marshes Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This former grazing marsh has largely been converted to arable but retains wetland interest within the ditches and streams. There is some woodland on the valley slopes in particular on the south side of the valley near Upstreet, associated with the former cliff line of the Wantsum Channel. There are also two large ponds in the eastern part of this area.

There are no buildings within the area, and only a road which crosses the Nethergong Penn. Although this landscape is predominantly open with limited tree cover, there are some mature roadside trees and a poplar plantation.

4. Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet

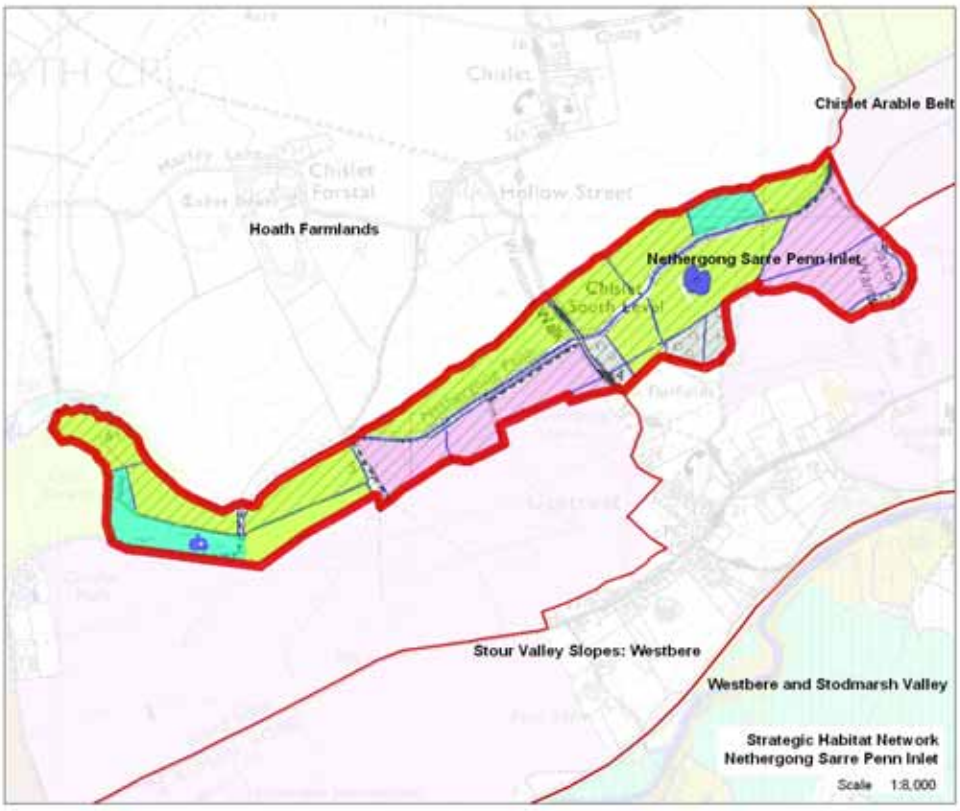
Condition

The condition of this area is good. The flat, open topography and linear penns provide visual unity, even though the area has a mixture of land uses. There are few visual detractors, comprising unsympathetic culverting of the penns and inappropriate fencing in connection with equestrian grazing. The ecological integrity of this area is moderate with semi-natural habitats associated with watercourses and hedgerows.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity is high. The dominance of the flat landform and watercourses provide local distinctiveness and the openness gives way to far reaching views towards Chislet, Hersden, Upstreet and Sarre.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

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- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

4. Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet

The habitat network opportunity here is dominated by its wetland potential along the floodplain. However there are also significant portions of this area, south of the Nethergong Penn, which have potential for acid grassland/heath habitat. All of this opportunity lies within the Chislet Marshes LWS.

Guidelines

The guidelines for this area are to conserve.

- Recreate wet meadows associated with the penns in more marginal fields.
- Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape.
- Encourage appropriate maintenance of watercourses to enhance the nature conservation interest.
- Avoid the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements in the open landscape.
- Explore opportunities for acid grassland/heath creation on drier land south of the Nethergong Penn.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Good**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

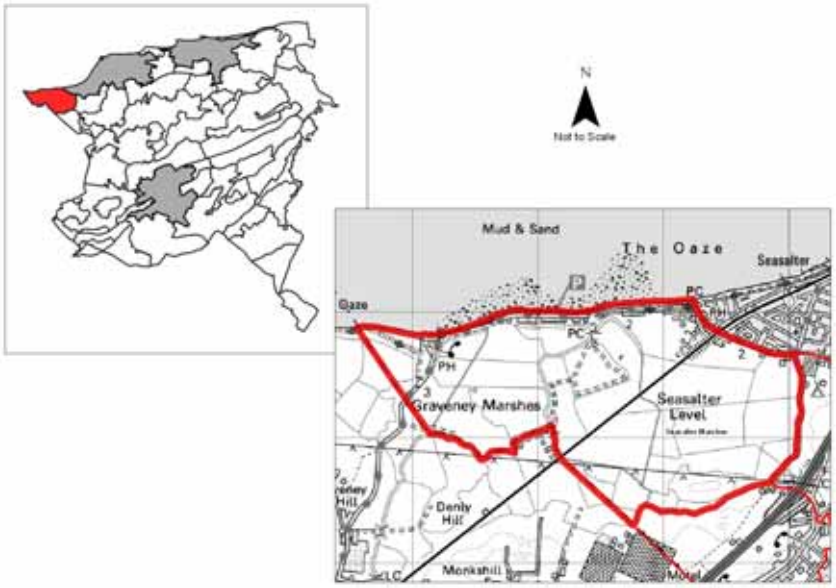
Guidelines: Conserve

5. Seasalter Marshes

Key Characteristics

- Flat open grazing marsh and alluvial marshland.
- Marine alluvial deposits and small raised outcrop of London Clay.
- Transportation corridors include railway and Faversham Road.
- Atmospheric and tranquil landscape with large open and often dramatic skies.
- Open expansive marshlands managed for grazing livestock.
- Vegetation consists of grass, wetland plants, reed filled ditches and scattered scrub.
- Key designations are Scheduled Monuments, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area, Ramsar site and Local Nature Reserve.

Landscape Description



The Seasalter Marshes are located to the north west, and stretch to the mudflats at Whitstable Bay. Marine alluvial deposits have created distinctive flat marshland relief. The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan 2008 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Swalecliffe Coast for the next 100 years. The future management is identified as 'hold the line' (where the existing defence line will be maintained) from the western extent of Seasalter eastwards. However west of Seasalter, although the future management is defined as hold the line from the present day, 'managed realignment' (where the shoreline is allowed to change with management to control or limit movement) is proposed in the medium to long term.

The landscape is typical of the open expanses of grazing marsh with rough grass and tufts of sedge. Fields are large across the open ground, segregated by sinuous reed filled drainage ditches. Management of the area is entirely for grazing livestock and horses. Landscape features are generally limited to scattered mature scrub and small clumps of trees at field margins, although there is evidence of salt workings in the form of minor earth formations. The large skies provoke a sense of remoteness and tranquillity and there are long uninterrupted views to the north and to the south, including distant views of The Blean and the coast. There is a distinct lack of built development, although the urban edge of Seasalter with a large peripheral caravan park is visible to the north.

Almost all of this character area falls within the eastern extent of the Swale Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. This internationally important biodiversity site comprises extensive freshwater grazing marsh, mudflats, saltmarsh, and drainage ditches. It is particularly notable for the important numbers of wildfowl and waders including wintering populations of redshank and dunlin. The area is also very rich in invertebrates and plants. The eastern part of this area is also designated as the Seasalter Marshes Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and is the subject of a management plan.

5. Seasalter Marshes

This area cannot be described as truly remote as it contains a number of transport links including the Faversham to Whitstable railway line which runs across the area in a north east to south west direction, and Faversham Road which runs along the coastline in the north. Nevertheless, it is tranquil, undisturbed and has a traditional character.

Condition

This landscape is in good condition. The regular field pattern and method of enclosure provide strong visual continuity. Visual detractors include pylons to the south and the linear railway line which disrupts the regular field pattern. The urban edge of Seasalter, and in particular the holiday parks, are highly visible across the flat landscape. The ecological interest of the area is strong and the cultural integrity has been maintained in the traditional land management practices. Ditches and long grasses on the open marsh are available for the migrating bird population. However, significant portions of the SSSI, which mostly fall within Canterbury District outside of the LNR, are recorded by Natural England as being in unfavourable condition due to under-grazing, lack of ditch management, fly-tipping and planning infringements.

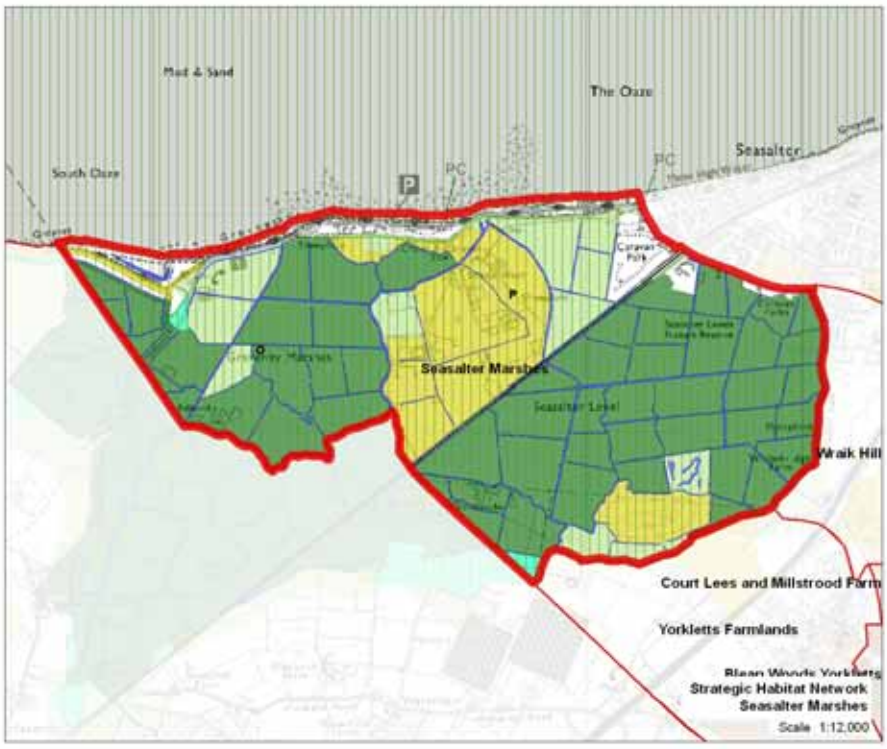
Sensitivity

This is a highly sensitive landscape both in visual and ecological terms. The marshland maintains its distinct character through traditional farming practices. Features within the landscape, although rare, are highly visible where they exist because of the flat and open nature of the landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity

This is an important existing stretch of habitat within a wider coastal habitat network. The key focus for this internationally designated area is clearly one of conservation of existing interest, with strict legislation dictating what habitat changes are acceptable. Measures to improve the condition of the designated site would include reinstating a more active level of grazing and ditch management, plus developing any opportunities to restore arable land to grazing marsh. The RSPB together with Canterbury City Council, Swale Borough Council and Natural England are working together to restore the Seasalter Levels by removing inappropriate development, raising freshwater levels and reintroducing traditional grazing. Control of invasive aquatic plants (e.g. floating pennywort) and damaging human activities such as fly-tipping, water pollution, planning infringement and public vehicular use would also benefit the site. Where possible space between the designated site and development should be allocated through planning to allow for potential coastal managed retreat.

5. Seasalter Marshes



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Strong

Sensitivity:	Very high
Distinctiveness:	Unique/rare
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Strong
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very high

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Guidelines

The distinctive character of the Seasalter Marshes should be conserved.

- Support appropriate proposals that would enable the management of grazing and saltmarsh to maximise both landscape and biodiversity benefits.
- Promote the increase of grazing in some areas and improve ditch management and water levels to increase the biodiversity interest.
- Conserve and enhance the historic character of this area and encourage the creation of traditional grazing and saltmarsh.
- Cultivation of grassland fields should be avoided and opportunities taken to revert remaining pockets of arable land to grazing marsh.
- Encourage the retention and reinstatement of traditional timber wing fencing and gates, together with smaller sporadic features like sheepfolds, washes, footbridges etc.
- The open character of most marshland landscapes accentuates the visual impact of many proposals over a wide distance as compared with more enclosed landscape types. Avoid proposals that can result in the interruption of views of large open skies or horizons, or impinge on the remote undeveloped quality of marshland and its shoreline.
- Where the urban fringe and holiday parks, road and rail corridors have significantly reduced the quality and rural character of the area, the landscape would benefit from softening using appropriate wetland species (i.e. reeds) on adjacent non-marshland areas.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

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- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

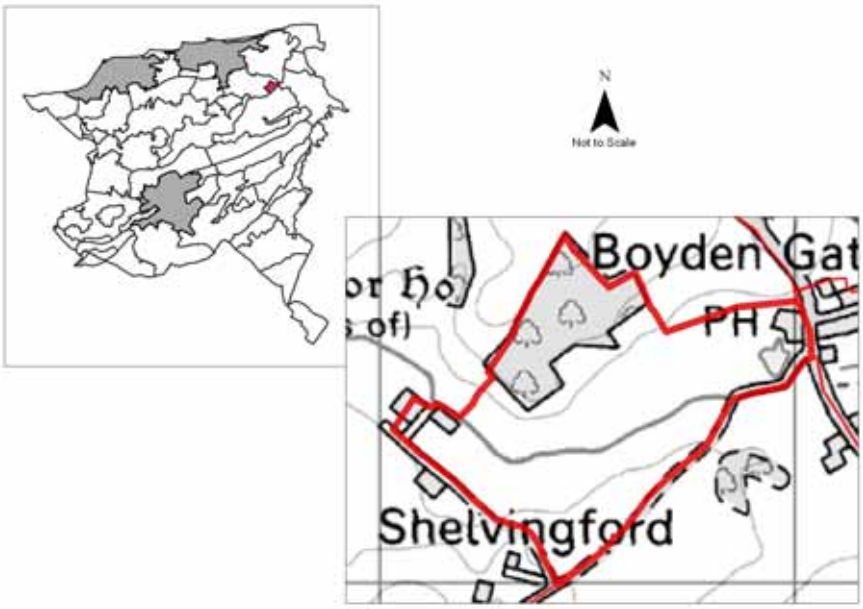
Guidelines: Conserve

6. Shelvingford Inlet

Key Characteristics

- Low lying grazing marsh.
- Fields enclosed by hedgerows and ditches lined with pollarded willow trees.
- Ponds in association with raising game birds.
- Limited development comprising traditional farmsteads.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area, Area of High Landscape Value and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This area comprises a narrow strip of low lying grazing marsh, which once formed a sheltered inlet to the Wantsum Channel, and stretches from Boyden Gate to Shelvingford Farm. The area forms a more intimate section of the wider, more expansive, marshland landscape to the east. The geology comprises Thanet Beds overlain with seasonally wet clay soils. The low lying land is bordered on one side by a gentle slope of large arable fields, and a steeper slope on the other. This steeper slope contains grazing land which abuts Shelving Wood and to the west is the farmstead of Shelvingford Farm. Shelving Wood, on rising ground to the north, provides enclosure to the low lying pasture. Although the land is used primarily for grazing, a large arable field is located to the south. Fields are enclosed by hedgerows and ditches. Ditches and the North Stream flow through the area and are lined with willows.

This small character area contains a small section of the extensive Chislet Marshes Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Whilst some of this former grazing marsh has been converted to arable but retains wetland interest within the ditches and the North Stream. Most of the ditches and the stream in this character area are lined with willows. Some ponds have been created at both ends of the inlet. The area also contains a block of undesignated deciduous woodland.

There are no roads within the area, although Old Tree Road forms a narrow lane to the south. There is limited built development throughout the area, although Boyden Gate Farm to the east comprises a traditional farmhouse with a number of large scale modern agricultural barns.

The farmhouse at Shelvingford is an attractive Grade II jettied timber–framed house. Recently restored, it dates from the 16th century and was much altered in the 19th century.

6. Shelvingford Inlet

Condition

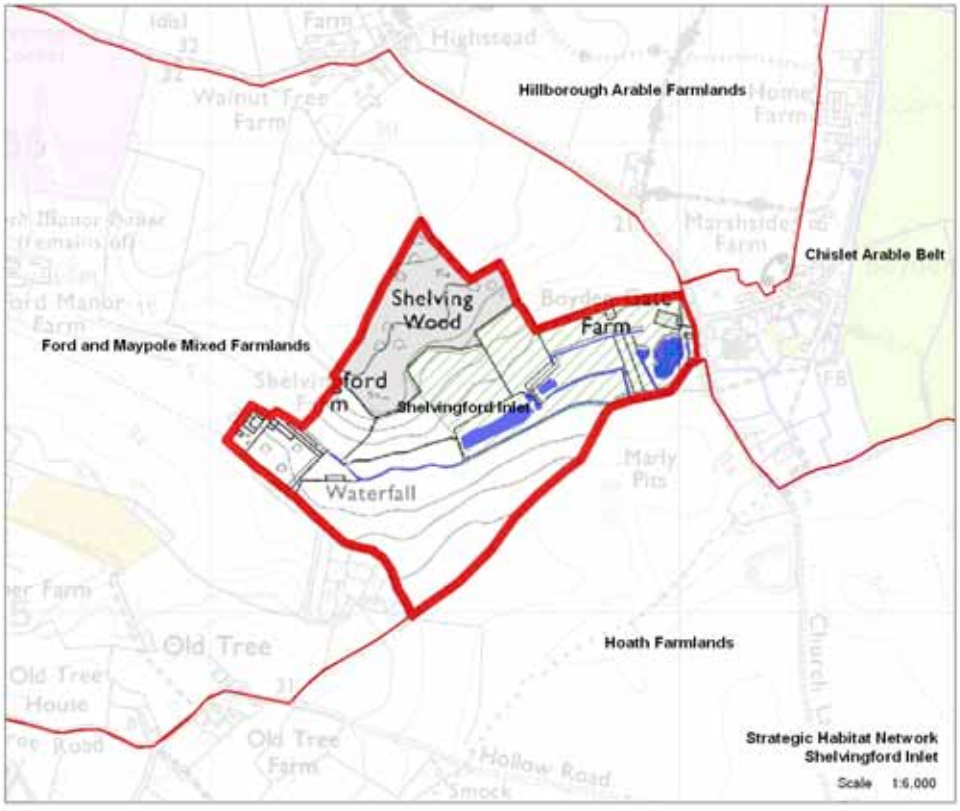
Despite the intensive arable cultivation to the south part of this area, the visual unity of the inlet is coherent and it has a strong functional integrity. The willows that line the eastern end of the road and other watercourses are aged and in decline. Some ponds have been created at both ends of the inlet and the one to the west has been unsympathetically screened with evergreen conifers which are out of keeping with the nearby deciduous woodland. The creation of the ponds is associated with the wider practice of raising game birds.

There are few visual detractors, comprising large agricultural barns and post and wire fencing, some of which is in poor condition. The overall condition of this area is good and its ecological value is moderate to high as it contains grassland, woodland and wetland habitats. There are also linear habitats associated with the hedgerows and watercourses.

Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. There is a distinct sense of place provided by the network of ditches and pollarded willows, although visibility is limited by the tree cover provided by Shelving Wood. Visibility increases further west, while the eastern end is visually contained and framed by trees following the North Stream and the road.

Habitat Network Opportunity



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- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
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- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

6. Shelvingford Inlet

The key focus within this area should be on maintaining the biodiversity interest of this LWS through sensitive grassland and wetland management.

Guidelines

The guidelines are to conserve and reinforce.

- Encourage the removal of coniferous screening and the replanting of indigenous species.
- Encourage the retention of grazing on the low lying land to promote nature conservation interests.
- Where there are ageing trees along the North Stream and road, these should be retained whilst encouraging the planting of young native tree species.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Good**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

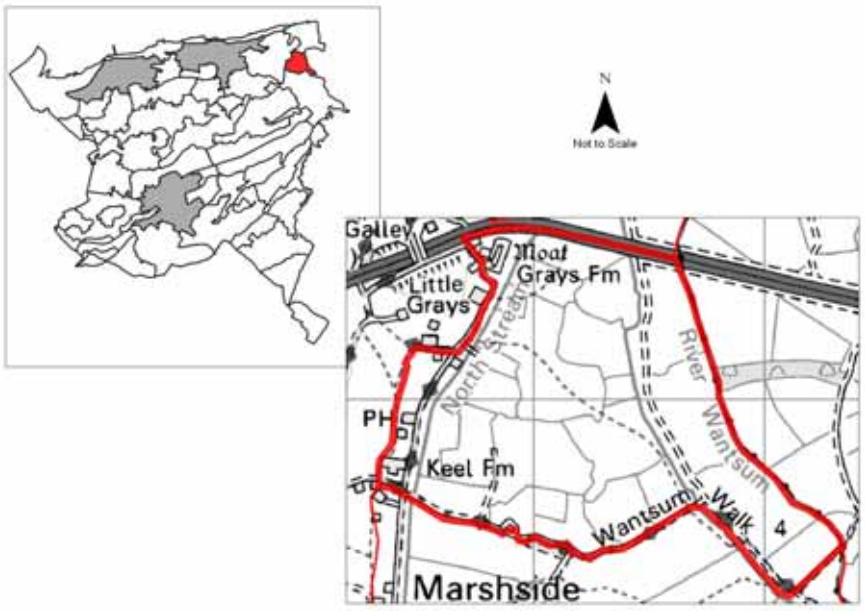
Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

7. Snake Drove Pastures

Key Characteristics

- Flat low lying grazing marsh.
- Some intensive crop production.
- Network of drainage ditches.
- Farmsteads along marsh edge with indigenous tree screening.
- Settlement limited to the higher ground of the marsh edge, whilst the former channel is unsettled.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area, Area of High Landscape Value and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This area runs from the A299 Thanet Way to Snake Drove. The underlying geology is London Clay, with alluvium drift and soils. The land is used for a mixture of intensive production of cereals and other arable crops on the more fertile soils and pockets of pasture used for grazing horses. This is a narrower part of the former channel up to the District boundary and is a sparsely settled landscape with built development comprising farmsteads concentrated around the edge of the marsh. The farmsteads sit well in the landscape and tend to have an indigenous tree screening usually of willow or hawthorn.

The North Stream follows the lane leading from Grays Farm to Keel Farm and continues down as far as Boyden Gate. The road is often lined with willows and hawthorn hedgerows. Snake Drove winds its way across the marsh to St Nicholas-at-Wade; and the deeper into the marsh the greater the feeling of remoteness and tranquillity despite the distant drone of the Thanet Way and London to Ramsgate railway. There are a number of medieval saltworks evident in this area.

The majority of this character area is dominated by the northern portion of Chislet Marshes Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This is a large area of former grazing marsh which has largely been converted to arable. Many of the ditches are still fairly rich in marginal and emergent water plants and bird life. Many of the old drove roads are still present and retain a varied grassland flora.

7. Snake Drove Pastures

Condition

This area is in moderate condition and is on the whole, a unified landscape. It functions well despite the intensive arable production. It is an attractive landscape with the farmstead located on the edge of the marsh surrounded by trees. The most notable detracting feature is the lighting of the Thanet Way A299 at night which forms the north boundary of this subdivision.

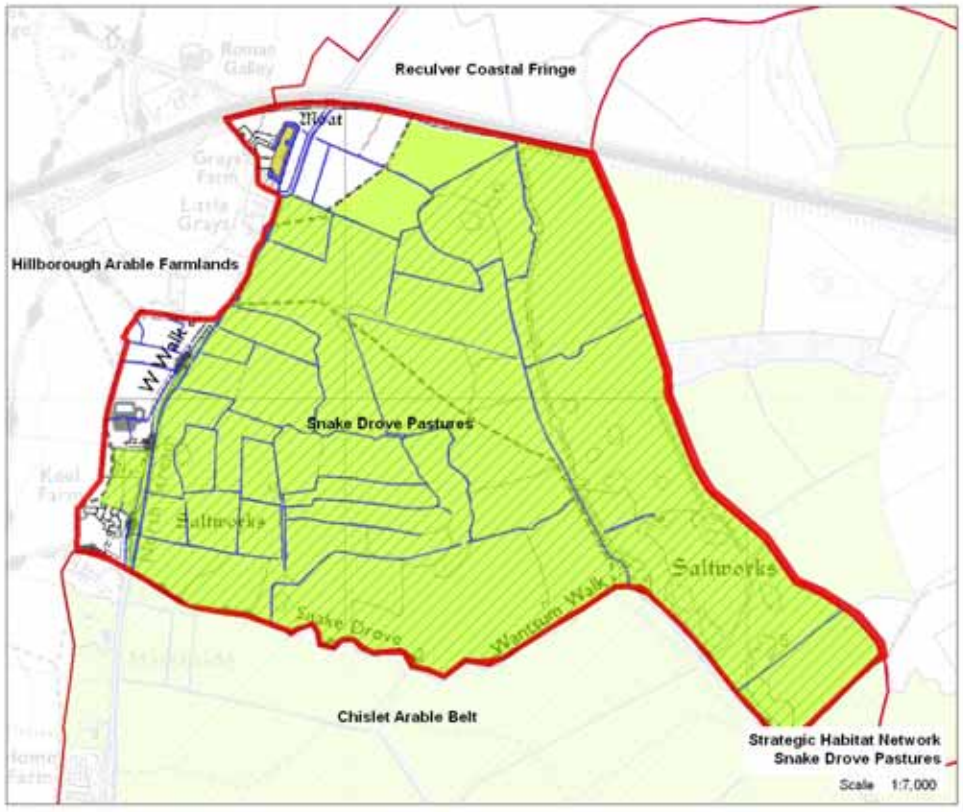
Ecological interest is largely confined to linear features such as the stream and ditches, pockets of grazing marsh and small woodland clumps.

Sensitivity

The sensitivity of this area is high. Although its sense of place is moderate its visibility is high due to the general open nature of the marsh. However, there are some pockets of low visibility usually within the confines of the existing farmsteads.

Habitat Network Opportunity

There is significant wetland network opportunity in this former grazing marsh, particularly in the east of the area near the River Wantsum.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

7. Snake Drove Pastures

Guidelines

- Conserve the open character of the marshland landscape and long distance views.
- Conserve and restore the nature conservation interest by encouraging more traditional methods of farming through initiatives such as the Environmental Stewardship Scheme and the Kentish Stour Countryside Project.
- Improve field margins adjacent to ditch systems where arable production prevails by working with the relevant bodies and local farmers and to minimise nitrate leakage into watercourses
- Resist new development on the open low lying landscape which would intrude into the openness, and maintain the undeveloped and remote character of the former channel.
- Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A299 by installing less light polluting columns in line with best practice.
- Encourage and promote the planting of indigenous species such as willow where these are ageing through appropriate schemes e.g. along the North Stream at Little Grays.
- Encourage the conservation of existing areas of grassland pasture.
- Restore more marginal areas to grazing marsh. This would enhance and promote the nature conservation interest particularly associated with stream ditches.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very High

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

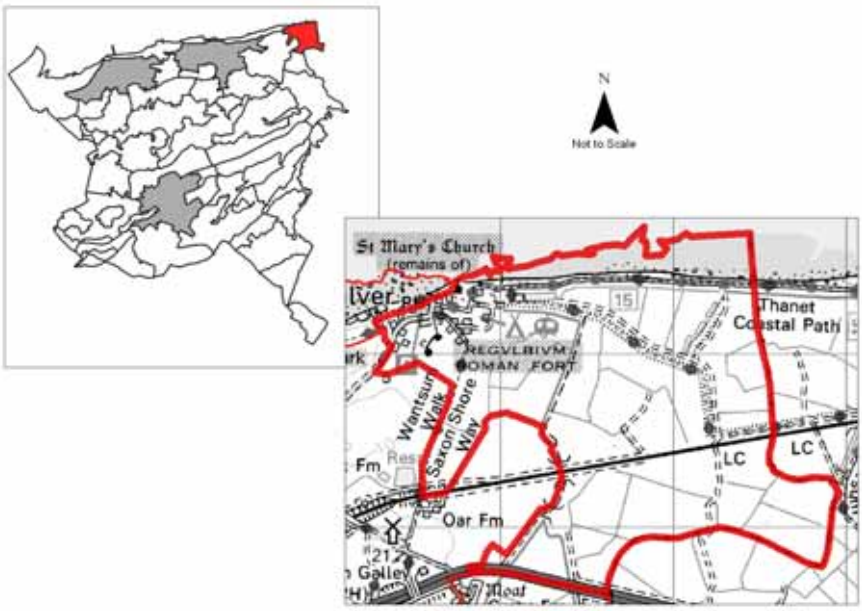
Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

8. Reculver Coastal Fringe

Key Characteristics

- Low lying former grazing marsh.
- Shingle shoreline.
- Extensive views across marshland and the Isle of Thanet to the east.
- Rectangular historic field pattern.
- Distinctive Reculver Towers.
- Limited infrastructure with London to Ramsgate Railway which forms a straight tree-lined route.
- Key designations are a Scheduled Monument, Area of High Landscape Value, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation.

Landscape Description



This is a wide expanse of low lying former grazing marsh between the A299 Thanet Way and the coast at Reculver and represents the northern extremity of the former Wantsum Channel. The land rises gently to the west which marks the former slopes of the channel, while the deeper slopes at Brook Farm could represent a former small inlet. The underlying geology is London Clay, with alluvium drift and soils.

The shoreline is an important component of the landscape. The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan 2008 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Swalecliffe Coast for the next 100 years. The future management is identified as 'hold the line' (where the existing defence line will be maintained) from the present day, whilst 'managed realignment' (where the shoreline is allowed to change with management to control or limit movement) is proposed in the medium to long term. The maximum area of retreat could be as far inland as the existing railway line. The shingle area is important for hogs fennel and little terns can be seen here. The inland seawall is made of chalk and as a result contains plants that would normally be found in a chalk downland landscape. It also supports an isolated population of the small blue chalkland butterfly.

There are extensive views both across the marshland and the Isle of Thanet to the east, to the south towards Upstreet and north to the Isle of Sheppey and sometimes to Essex beyond. The marshland would traditionally have contained no or limited tree cover, whereas marsh edge settlements would typically have trees and shrubs for shelter. Later plantings have been introduced on higher ground, such as along the railway embankment. Whilst this is largely an arable landscape, there are some small pockets of grazing marsh and most fields are enclosed by reed lined ditches.

Important built features in this landscape are the Reculver Towers and associated ruins. The seawall also dominates views from within the low lying marsh. This area is bisected by the London to Ramsgate Railway, which forms a straight tree lined route across the marsh and the A299 Thanet Way.

8. Reculver Coastal Fringe

A caravan park is located to the north west of the area, adjacent to the coast. Sounds tend to be related to the sea and associated wildlife and those linked with the transport corridor. However, the marsh still retains an element of remoteness rarely experienced elsewhere in East Kent.

The agricultural improvement of the land was carried out centuries ago and the largely rectangular fields give a sense of visual unity. The ecological importance of this area is largely associated with the foreshore although some birds winter inland in the marsh and reed lined ditches.

This character area's importance as an ecological resource is recognised by the eastern half's designation as part of the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) for Birds and Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. The area is also designated as a Marine Special Area for Conservation (SAC). The Thanet Coast is particularly noted for its coastal birds, plus its assemblage of marine and terrestrial plant species.

Inland from the coast, there are no designated habitats. However, the ditch network represents a considerable wetland habitat resource that provides habitat connectivity to the wider Lower Stour Marshes complex of watercourses.

Condition

The area between Reculver and the Thanet Way is dominated by arable production and is on the whole a unified landscape. The coastal fringe is of high nature conservation importance which is recognised by its international and national designations.

Detracting features are those associated with 20th century development, namely the caravan park and associated development of amusement arcades. The industrial type buildings associated with the lobster and oyster farm and the light pollution at night associated with the transport corridor also impact on this low lying landscape.

This area has strong cultural associations with the remains of the Roman fort and church at Reculver. The functional integrity of the landscape is considered to be moderate and the overall condition of the landscape is moderate because of the agricultural improvements that have been carried out.

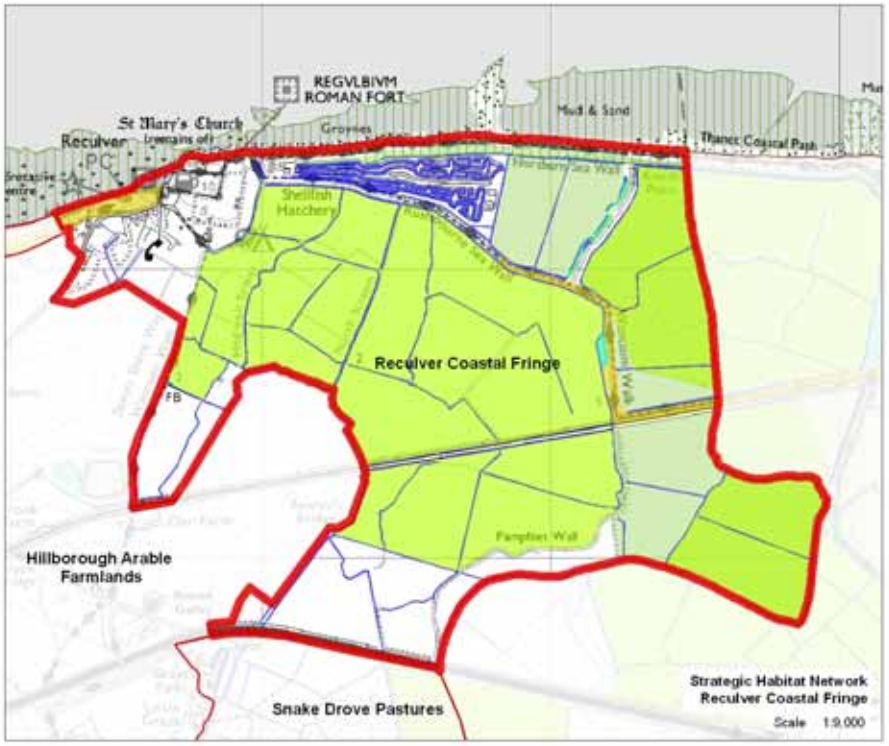
Sensitivity

This is a distinct and historic landscape with areas of former foreshore that have been occupied since before Roman times. Large tracts of this area have recently been improved through arable intensification, although it still retains some of its marshland character. The combination of the broad open topography and the lack of tree cover create a highly visible landscape which is very sensitive to change.

Habitat Network Opportunity

There is significant opportunity for wetland network development throughout most of the farmed marshland, landward of the Rushbourne Sea Wall. Seaward of this, next to the shellfish hatchery, a smaller area of land is shown to have network opportunity for grazing marsh and intertidal habitat. On the raised ground of the seawalls themselves, there is opportunity to develop species-rich grassland.

8. Reculver Coastal Fringe



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Moderate
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	High
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very High

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Guidelines

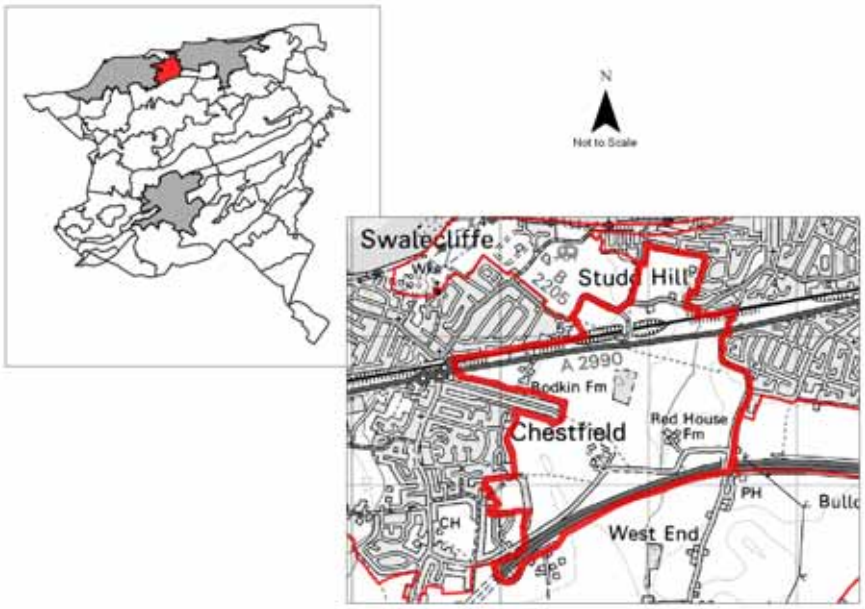
- Conserve the open character of the marshland landscape and long distance views.
- Improve field margins adjacent to ditch systems where arable production prevails by working with the relevant bodies and local farmers and to minimise nitrate leakage into watercourses.
- Resist new development on the open low lying areas which would intrude into the openness.
- Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A299 by installing less light polluting columns in line with best practice.
- Encourage the conservation and restoration of the marshland landscape and encourage and promote the nature conservation interest, particularly ornithological interest associated with the designated site to the north. Continue to support efforts to reduce wintering turnstone disturbance through public education and visitor management on the coast.
- Encourage arable reversion to extensive grazing or sensitive field margin management through initiatives such as the Environmental Stewardship Scheme.
- Comply with principles set out within the Reculver Masterplan (Canterbury City Council), which aims 'to develop Reculver as a high quality strategic regional hub, for green tourism and education in East Kent'.

9. Chestfield Gap

Key Characteristics

- Important area of open space separating the settlements of Swalecliffe, Chestfield, Studd Hill and Greenhill.
- Gently undulating London Clay overlain with poorly drained heavy soils.
- Open arable landscape mixed farming on Grade 3 agricultural land with small plots managed as pasture.
- Occasional small blocks of woodland (some ancient), plantation and mature tree belt associated with minor valley feature of West Brook.
- Crossed by transport corridors for London to Ramsgate Railway and the old Thanet Way A2990.
- Key designations comprise a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The Chestfield Gap is a low lying, very gently undulating landscape that performs an important function by providing an area of valued open space separating the expanded towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay. The geology is London Clay and the soils are heavy and poorly drained. The Grade 3 agricultural land predominantly supports cereals. Occasional small blocks of woodland or plantation are present and there are also some remnants of hedgerows that indicate field boundaries. These are often associated with seasonally wet drainage channels. The area is also crossed by the West Brook where the wetter conditions support more diverse vegetation.

This landscape was continuous with the Chestfield Wooded Farmland until it was severed by the construction of the A299 in the early 1990s.

Elm scrub within the hedgerows suggests that this may have been a more vegetated landscape prior to the outbreak of Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s. The loss of elm coupled with a decline in hedgerow management with farm intensification has created the open landscape we see today.

This area contains a number of undesignated woodland habitats, hedgerows and small watercourses. There is one locally designated site known as Red House Farm Pasture, Chestfield Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This is an area of semi-improved pasture managed as hay meadow, and surrounded by substantial hedgerows. However it is rather isolated, being surrounded by arable land. There is also a block of undesignated ancient woodland in the centre of the character area known as Purchas Wood.

The area is largely unsettled although bordered by modern housing development. To the north there is a small estate of industrial and warehouse buildings. The old Thanet Way (A2990) and the London to Ramsgate Railway Line separate Studd Hill and the area surrounding the industrial estate from the bulk of the area to the south. The railway in particular forms a physical and visual barrier between the north and south. The area is bounded by the A299 to the south. This busy dual carriageway forms a strong visual edge which is slightly softened by the roadside planting.

9. Chestfield Gap

Condition

The condition of this landscape is poor. It is fragmented by the transport corridors and the enclosure pattern is incoherent. In the south the hedgerows and boundaries have largely been lost and in the north those that remain are fragmented and poorly maintained. Most of the land is farmed intensively, however there are areas no longer cultivated that are becoming dominated by coarse grasses; some is used for horse grazing. This is most common in the north.

The housing adjoining the area is indistinct and often sits uncomfortably against the more rural landscape. The large industrial units in the northern part of the area intrude into the landscape. The ecological integrity of the area is weak. The Red House Farm is poorly linked to other areas. The hedgerow network is variable although generally poor. Areas of greater interest include small woodland blocks (such as Purchas Wood) and the West Brook watercourse. The condition of the West Brook in particular is declining in terms of its ecological integrity as a result of agricultural intensification.

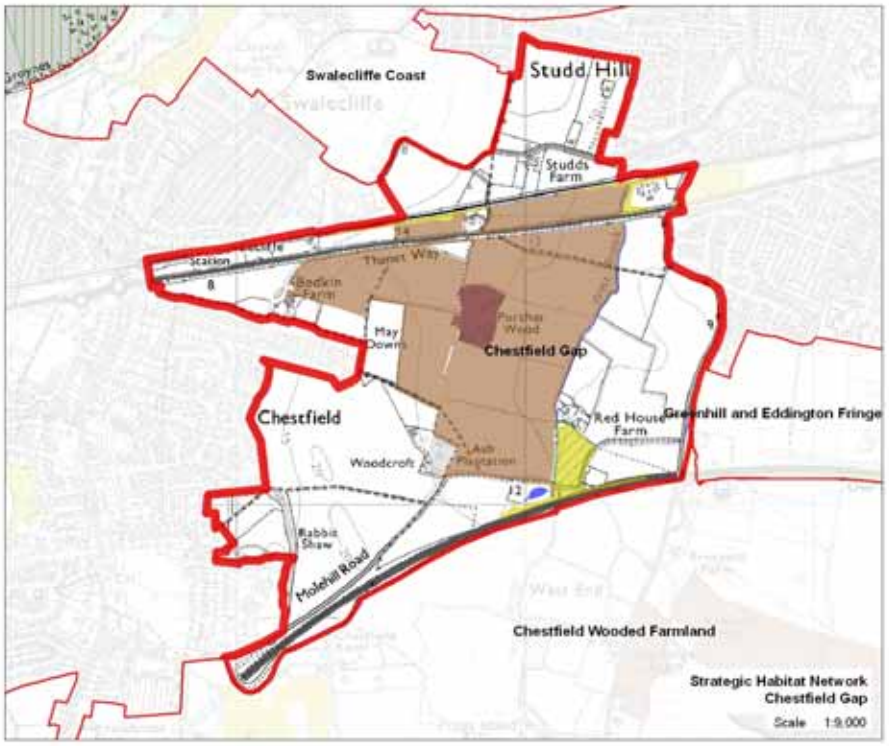
Sensitivity

The Chestfield Gap is an important strategic buffer between the towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay. It is particularly sensitive to threats from expansion of the neighbouring urban area. Its current agricultural use could be marginalised if the area was to become smaller or more fragmented which in turn could undermine the integrity and valuable function of the area as a green gap. Despite being a largely indistinct landscape, heavily influenced by recent changes in the neighbouring development and by agriculture, it is a highly visible landscape. There are wide views across the open landscape with the exception of where the few hedgerows and large elements such as the railway and the industrial units block and enclose some views. Overall the Chestfield Gap is moderately sensitive, particularly to the introduction of new elements.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The strategic habitat network in this area is dominated by woodland opportunity in the fields surrounding Purchas Wood. Some of this woodland linkage could take the form of hedgerow network restoration as well as creation of small woodlands and wooded streams. There is also some network opportunity to buffer and extend the meadow habitat of Red House Farm locally in the south of the area.

9. Chestfield Gap



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Guidelines

Guidelines for this area are those that restore and improve the landscape whilst respecting and strengthening the area's function as a green gap between Herne Bay and Whitstable.

- Improve the overall visual quality of the area and promote its value as a green buffer between Herne Bay and Whitstable.
- Develop an improvement strategy to create a positive image to the area itself, whilst separating and creating distinctive identities to the neighbouring urban areas of Chestfield, Greenhill and Studd Hill.
- Assess new building proposals within and adjacent to the area to ensure that attractive edges are formed.
- Improve the appearance of the transport corridor of the old Thanet Way and London to Ramsgate Railway.
- Improve and enhance the visual and nature conservation interest of West Brook.
- Enhance declining hedgerows with sustainable native species to replace dead or dying elm in the longer term.
- Seek opportunities to create new woodlands around Purchas Wood.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

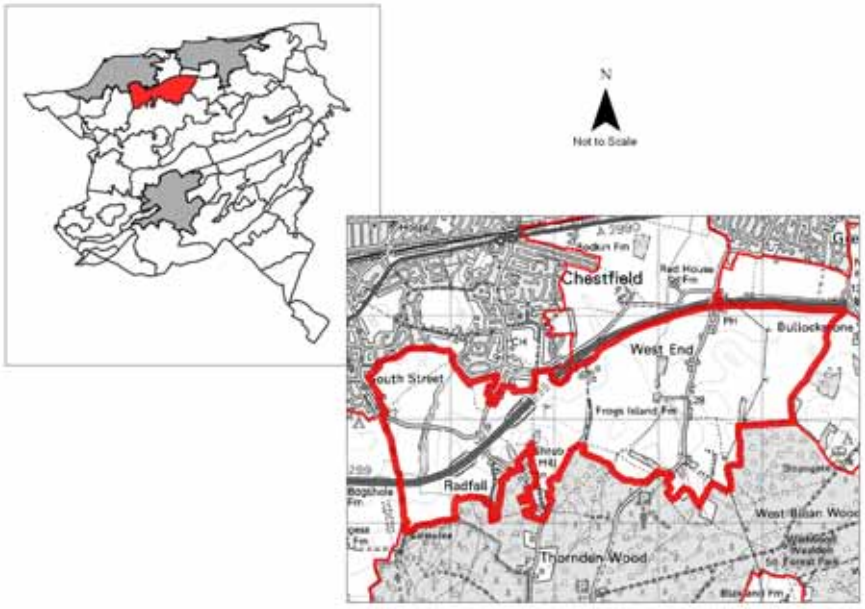
Guidelines: Restore and Improve

10. Chestfield Wooded Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Undulating topography.
- Clay geology.
- Mixed farmland with irregular field pattern.
- Grade 3 agricultural land.
- Scattered blocks of native woodland.
- Native hedgerows featuring oak.
- Wooded streams and water channels which generally run in a north south direction.
- Major A299 corridor.
- Other roads are narrow and often hedged.
- Irregular settlement pattern.
- Key designations are a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The geology is London Clay and the soils are heavy and poorly drained. The Grade 3 agricultural land predominantly supports cereals. Occasional small blocks of woodland or plantation are present and there are also some remnants of hedgerows that indicate field boundaries. The landscape was part of the wider landscape character area of Chestfield Gap to the north until it was severed by the construction of the A299 in the early 1990s.

Native vegetation belts, hedgerows and deciduous woodland blocks are scattered across the mixed farmland, limiting views across the landscape in places. Visibility is higher across more open farmland situated in places close to the urban fringe of Chestfield. Field pattern is irregular, with a smaller scale traditional pattern of enclosed pasture around Thornden Wood Road and surrounding larger fields as a result of arable intensification. Native tree belts and hedgerows enclose fields, with some post and wire fencing segregating parcels of land in places, and the distinctive wooded stream corridors of Swalecliffe Brook and West Brook run across the landscape in a generally north-south direction. Plenty Brook runs along the eastern boundary. Oak is a frequent species found throughout the area within woodland, tree belts and hedgerows.

There are three designated biodiversity sites within this area. The northern edges of West Blean and Thornden Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) extend into the south-central part of this area. This large ancient woodland complex harbours the last few colonies of the rare heath fritillary butterfly, part of a diverse invertebrate fauna. The woods are also noted for their breeding bird communities.

10. Chestfield Wooded Farmland

Thornden Pasture and Crow Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is made up of two sites which compliment the interest of Thornden Woods. Thornden Pasture to the south east is a series of damp pastures cut out from the original ancient woodland many years ago and contain a wide variety of grasses and herbs. Steep west-facing cliffs of rough pasture and scrub crossed by a series of landslips are also present. Crow Park is an old green lane with boundary hedgerows adjoining the golf course. Convict's Wood LWS, to the west, is a strip of ancient woodland habitat with a stream running along its centre.

The southern periphery of the area is bordered by Thornden Wood, which forms a strong visual boundary, and the urban edges of South Street and Chestfield form a boundary to the north. Unusually there is little intermittent suburban land use, and the boundary between the urban edge and arable land is mostly crisp and clearly defined. However a golf course with a typically manicured landscape is located directly south of Chestfield, and the A299 with associated highway planting partially dissects the area, slightly detracting from the rural farmland character and pattern of features. Other roads throughout the area are narrow and form historic routes which are generally well hedged, providing a contrast with the larger and more recent Thanet Way. Settlement is irregular, with mostly modern development along Thornden Wood Road and the pocket of high density housing at Radfall. Some traditional properties and isolated farmsteads are scattered throughout the area.

Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is good. Although there are few visual detractors, the Thanet Way (A299) severs the landscape, and pylons, modern housing, golf course and some commercial buildings slightly interrupt the traditional landscape pattern. Hedgerow field boundaries have been lost to fencing in places, particularly near to the A299. However, the pattern of mixed farmland, fragmented by wooded blocks and vegetated stream corridors, provides a coherent pattern of elements overall. The extent of semi-natural habitat is extensive with areas of pasture, waterways and woodland belts featuring throughout the area and reducing the intensity of land use.

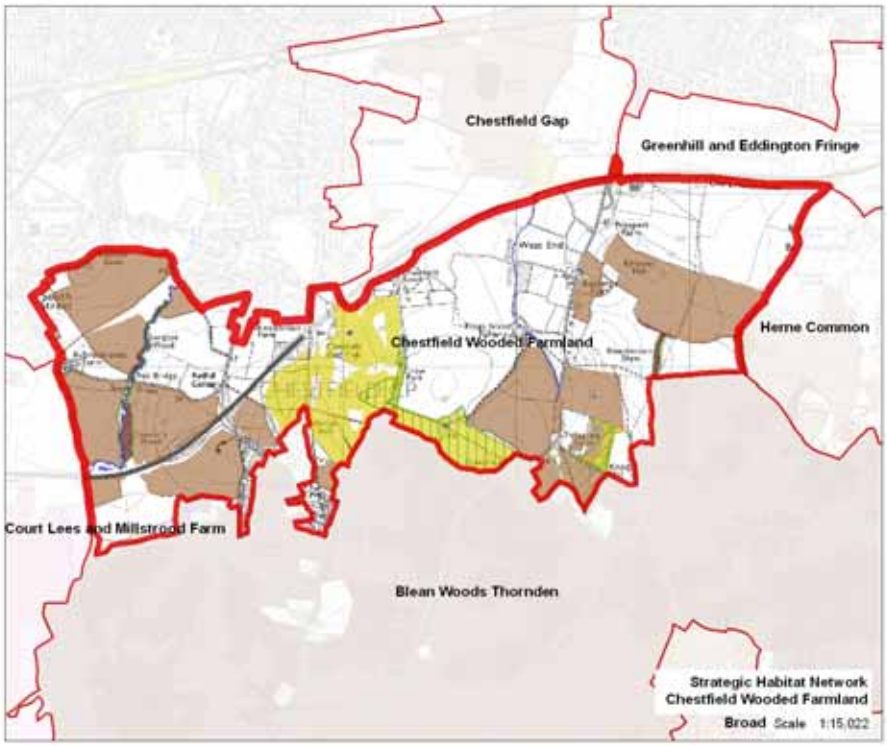
Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The wooded blocks and vegetated meandering stream channels are distinctive features. Scattered traditional style properties and the narrow historic roads provide some local distinctiveness. However, the sense of place is somewhat modified by the Thanet Way (A299) corridor and recent housing.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The land within the Chestfield Golf Course and several fields to the west of this have strategic network opportunity for species-rich neutral grassland habitat. Elsewhere to the east and west of this, there is significant opportunity to develop the woodland network to extend and buffer the Blean complex northwards towards the urbanised coastal strip. This could be achieved through a combination of woodland planting and hedge creation and restoration.

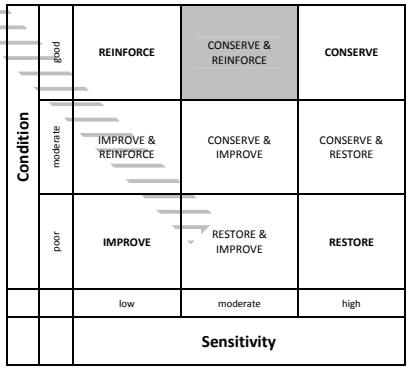
10. Chestfield Wooded Farmland



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate



Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines

The guidelines for the area are to conserve and reinforce.

- Conserve wooded waterways and stream networks.
- Conserve the mature woodland block and vegetation belts and reinforce them with new planting.
- Develop the woodland network to extend and buffer the Blean complex northwards.
- Reinforce the use of oak as a frequent species within woodland planting, tree belts and hedgerows.
- Conserve and restore the remaining hedgerows and encourage hedgerow reinstatement where fencing has replaced former hedgerow boundaries.
- Seek opportunities to create species-rich grassland within and around the golf course.
- Conserve the crisp urban edge and discourage suburban land uses.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

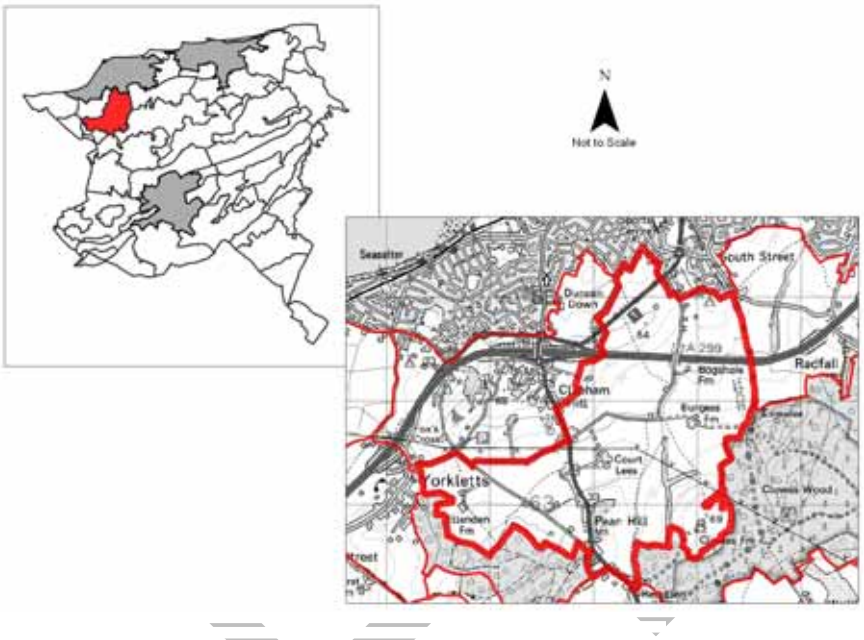
- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

11. Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating London Clay overlain with poorly drained heavy soils.
- Mixed farming on Grade 3 agricultural land.
- Hedgerow network reasonably intact around pasture. Weak and fragmented in arable areas and along roads.
- Linear settlement along Pean Hill.
- Isolated farmsteads.
- Large scale agricultural buildings.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands are a gently undulating agricultural landscape on London Clay. The poorly drained heavy soils support a mixture of pasture and arable farming, with cereals being the dominant crop. Hedgerows are characteristic in this area, particularly where associated with pasture, although hedgerow loss is evident along roads and post and wire fencing forms field boundaries in such locations. The area has a distinctly rural character, although the northern most part of this area is heavily influenced by the urban edge of Whitstable.

It is crossed by both the A2990 old Thanet Way and the A299 dual carriageway which subdivides and breaks up views across the area. To the south and west views are contained by the high ground of the Blean ridge and Wraik Hill. Views within the area are occasionally enclosed by hedgerows.

Marley Wood which forms part of the larger Clowes Wood and Marley Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is present in the south of the area. This woodland parcel is a relict of the Blean Woods complex consisting mostly of oak, hornbeam and hazel coppice, and contains at least ten ancient woodland indicator plant species. Dormouse, a European protected species and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority, has been recorded in this wood.

11. Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands

Condition

The landscape of the Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands is in moderate condition. The field pattern is apparent and the hedgerow network is reasonably coherent. In places the hedgerows are becoming fragmented and are in decline, particularly along roads and where arable farming is dominant and the hedgerows no longer have a function. Post and wire fencing has replaced hedgerows in some areas, particularly along roads and some modern housing detracts from the traditional character of the area.

Pylons and overhead cables cross the landscape, and large agricultural barns and equestrian grazing with inappropriate fencing types and sand surfaced exercise arenas provide detracting features. To the north, the urban edge of Whitstable sits slightly uncomfortably against the rural landscape. The highway corridors divide this part of the area and impose their own highway characters onto the landscape. Although their impacts are significant they are local and, for the most part, they are not apparent in the landscape until viewed at close range.

The ecological interest of the area is moderate. There are numerous hedgerows and the small designated woodland at Marley Wood. This network is generally quite strong to the south where it links to the Blean Woodland complex, although more fragmented to the north. The tree cover and hedgerows are in variable condition and tend to be mature in age structure.

Sensitivity

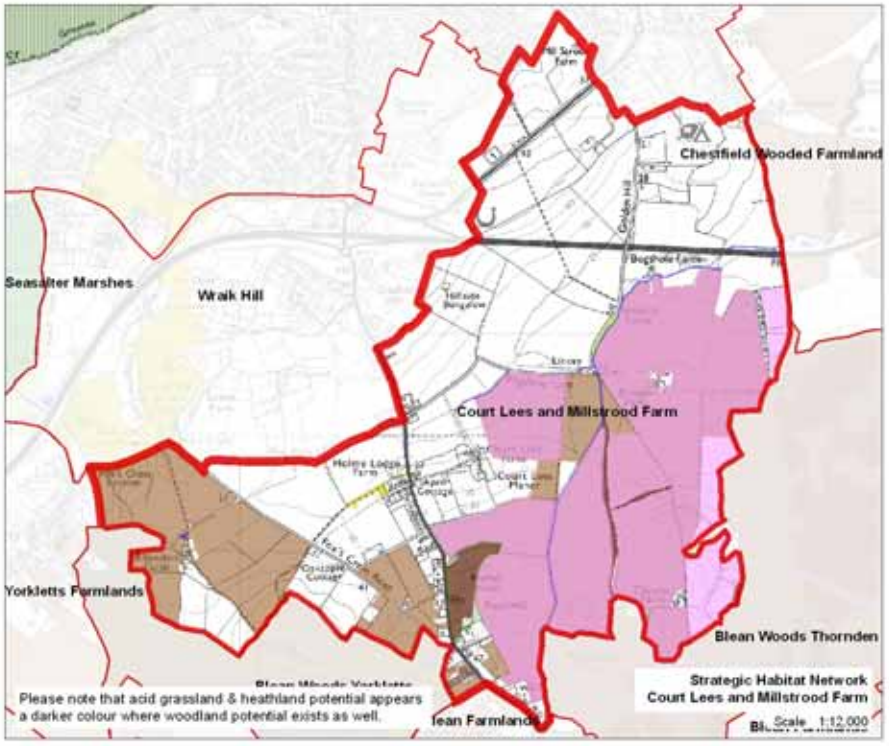
This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The pattern of fields, hedgerows and occasional small woodlands is characteristic of the agricultural landscapes that abut the northern edge of the Blean Woodland complex. It has remained largely unmodified for several centuries.

The undulating landform and filtering effect of the hedgerows create an area of moderate visibility. This visibility varies dependent on the topography and the degree of tree and hedgerow cover.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The southern half of this character area falls within the strategic and woodland network. Network opportunity is dominated to the east by a large area of acid grassland/heath potential, and to the west by woodland potential adjacent to Ellenden Wood.

11. Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Guidelines

Actions that are appropriate to the Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands are those that conserve and improve the rural, agricultural character and the distinctive features of this landscape.

- Conserve and improve the hedgerow network where enclosure is still a function. Link to the woodland blocks of The Blean where practicable.
- Conserve rural character by resisting proposals for increased settlement within the area.
- Assess new building proposals within and adjacent to the area to ensure that attractive edges are formed.
- Improve highway corridors of the A299 and the A2990 Thanet Way in a manner that reflects the countryside that they pass through.
- Encourage suitable planting around visually prominent farm buildings (particularly large, modern sheds) to soften the visual impact.
- Seek opportunities to create areas of heathland/acid grassland and woodland in the south and east of the area, adjacent to the Blean Woods.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

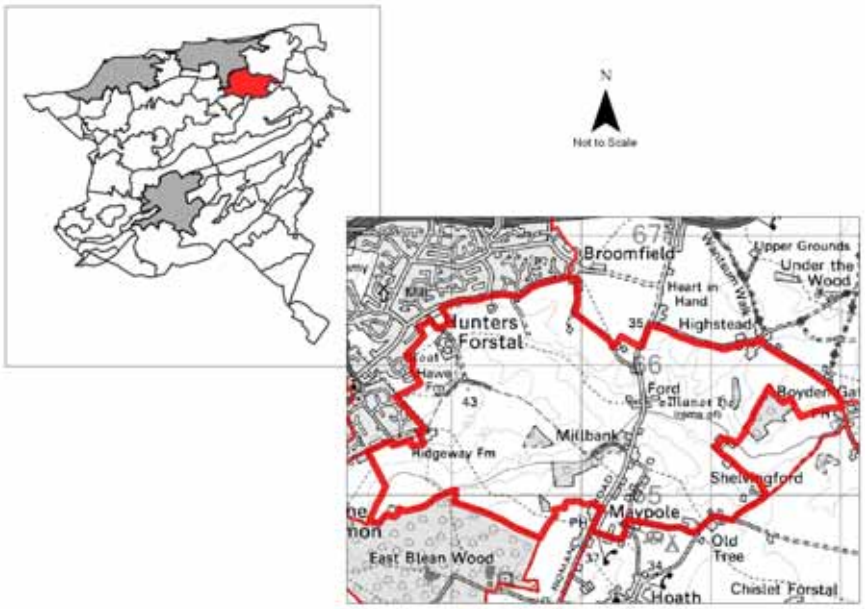
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

12. Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Mixed geology of Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds partially overlain with Head Gravel.
- Free draining neutral and acid soils.
- Distinctive valley feature with rolling hills descending to Wantsum Channel.
- Grade 2 agricultural land supporting mixed farming mostly determined by gradient. Pasture on steeper slopes, arable on more level ground.
- Oasthouses and remnant orchards.
- Mature tree belts, parkland trees and small woodlands and copses.
- Hawe Farm and Ford are sites of important medieval residences.
- Key designations comprise Conservation Areas.

Landscape Description



The undulating Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands lie on an area of complex geology consisting of Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds partially overlain with Head Gravel. These deposits have eroded to create a distinctive forked valley feature with rolling hills descending to Wantsum Channel. This feature was probably formed by the melt waters from the edge of an ice field late in the last glaciation. The sandy geology is overlain with free draining neutral and acid soils which support mixed farming. The land is classified as Grade 2 although the land use tends to be determined by gradient with pasture on steeper slopes and arable on more level ground.

Agricultural land is used for a mix of arable production and pasture. Mature tree belts, hedgerows and small woodlands break up views and create an intimate feel to the landscape. Parkland trees feature to the west of the area near Hunters Forstal. There is also evidence of the area being used for fruit and hop growing by the number of remnant orchards particularly in the Hawe Farm area and oasthouses around Shelvingford and Maypole. The main settlement is the hamlet of Maypole which is very open with groups or individual houses sited within their own plots. Maypole is developed around a Roman Road which links Reculver to Canterbury. Traditional farmsteads with large barns are found at Hawe Farm and Ford.

There are no designated biodiversity sites within this character area. The centre part of this area contains some undesignated deciduous woodland habitat.

The valley was greatly valued during the medieval period when two important residences were established. The first at Hawe Farm was built in 1494 by Sir John Fyneux (1441-1525), the Chief Justice of the Kings Bench in the reign of Henry VII. The house was described in 1887 as one of the most remarkable places of note in the parish.

12. Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands

Today all that remains are fragments of the brick building and the moat. A lane connected the house at Hawe Farm to the second house at Ford. This lane still remains as a public right of way. The house at Ford was the manor of Archbishop Morton and built in the 15th century on an earlier moated site. This was an important residence in its time and Henry VIII was entertained there in 1544. A fragment of map dated 1624 shows a deer park extending north to Oxenden Corner and this is listed in a parliamentary survey of 1647 as 166 acres. The map indicates trees and pastures in a stylised form and Shelving Wood was almost certainly part of the park. The greater part of the buildings were demolished in 1658 and 1678 by a decree of Charles II and the deer park and vineyards survived until the 19th century with their landscape features intact. Today the park survives as a large area of pasture together with Shelving Wood. All that remains of the buildings are part of the gatehouse which houses the current farmhouse, some walls and a great crown post, aisled brick barn.

Condition

Overall the Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands are in good condition. This is a diverse landscape featuring mixed farms of pasture, arable and some fruit growing. The pattern of this landscape is variable. In some places, such as to the east of Ford, the structure is strong whilst in others it is weaker, particularly in the arable landscape where the enclosure pattern is more eroded. There are few detracting features and these tend to be limited to inappropriate fencing and the suburbanisation of some properties, out of character with the rural, agricultural landscape. This is particularly associated with temporary homes and small holdings.

The ecological interest of the area is moderate. Although there is a fair amount tree cover this tends to be poorly linked to the hedgerows. Skeletal trees, the victims of Dutch Elm disease, are common in many views. The area has an interesting history and the medieval landscape structure and historic features still remain. However there are few elements discernible in the landscape today.

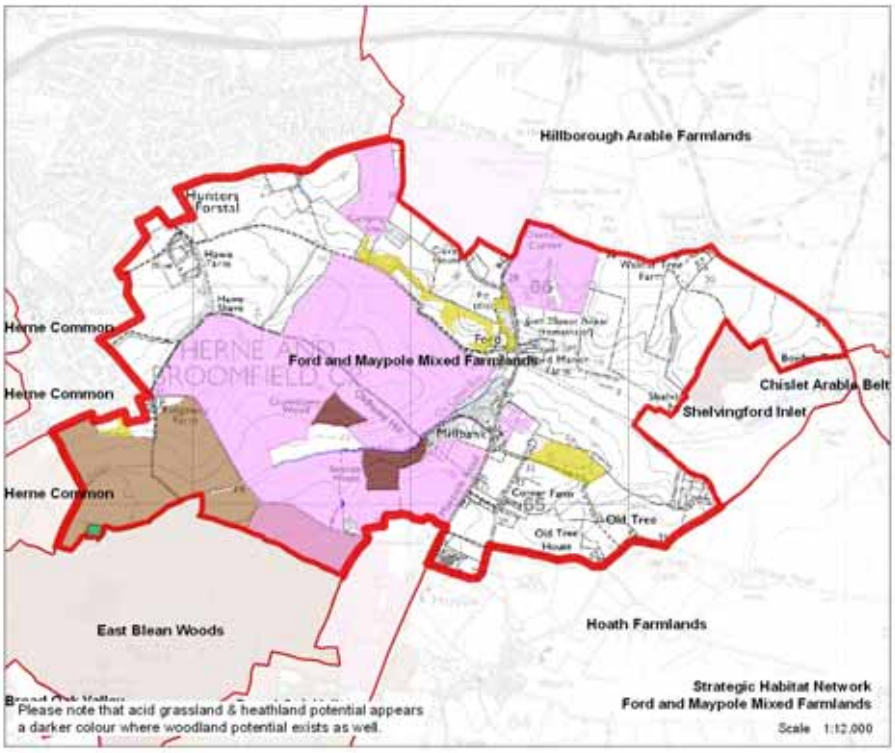
Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The folded landform and vegetation cover create a distinctive, intimate landscape. The characteristic pattern of the landscape has remained largely intact since medieval times. The rolling topography combined with the intermittent tree cover creates a landscape of moderate visibility. However in some locations where the landform is particularly folded or the tree and hedgerow network particularly strong the visibility is lower.

12. Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands

Habitat Network Opportunity

A significant portion of this character area is revealed to have potential to contribute to an acid grassland/heath network. In addition, there are smaller areas of network opportunity for woodland and species-rich neutral grassland.



Guidelines

Guidelines for the Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands aim to conserve and reinforce distinctive landscape features in good condition, and reinforce those that are in decline.

- Conserve and reinforce historic landscape features associated with Hawe Farm and Ford Manor.
- Conserve and reinforce the hedgerow network where enclosure is still a function.
- Conserve rural character by resisting proposals for increased settlement within the area.
- Where they are not used as bat roosts, encourage the removal and replacement of dead elm with more sustainable species.
- Seek opportunities to create heath/acid grassland, woodland and neutral grassland in areas shown to have potential in the opportunity map.
- Identify the biodiversity value of any remnant orchards in the area and seek to retain and manage where appropriate.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Very few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Filtered
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: Moderate	Sensitivity: High
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

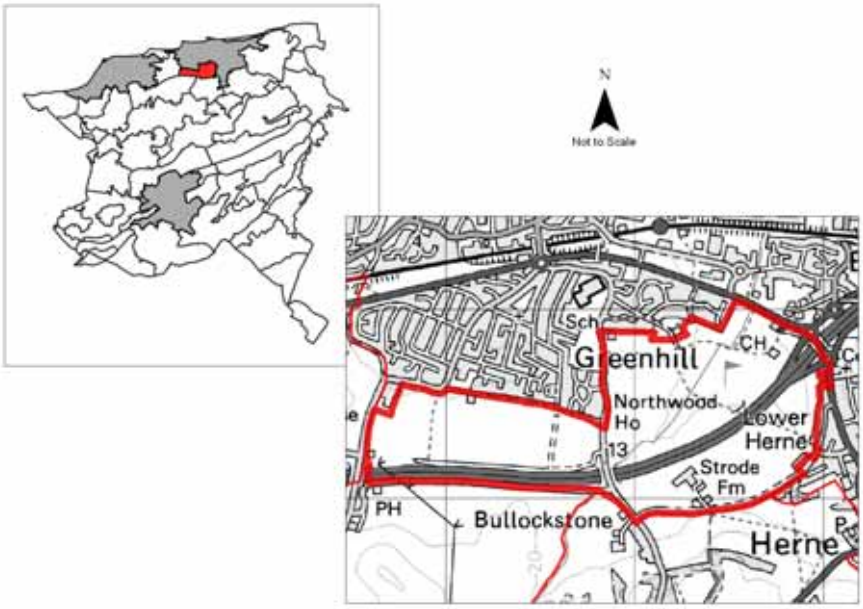
Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

13. Greenhill and Eddington Fringe

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating London Clay overlain with poorly drained heavy soils.
- Crossed by the Plenty Brook which flows down from the Blean ridge to the sea.
- Open arable landscape with mixed farming on Grade 3 agricultural land.
- Golf course landscape with mature trees between Greenhill and Eddington.
- Abbotswood Estate - plotlands from the early twentieth century.

Landscape Description



The physiology of the Greenhill and Eddington Fringe is very gently undulating London Clay overlain with poorly drained heavy soils. It shares many of its physical characteristics with the Chestfield Gap but differs sufficiently that it can be described as a separate area.

It is an open landscape growing mostly cereals on Grade 3 agricultural land. There is only one farmstead at Strode Farm, south of the A299. Buildings are otherwise scarce and other land uses include the Herne Bay Golf Course at Eddington and plotlands dating from turn of the 20th century at the Abbotswood Estate.

Views out of the area to the north are contained by the urban environment and there are views up to the woodlands of Herne Common and the Blean ridge to the south. Herne Mill, a smock type windmill dating from 1781, is a feature in many views. Archaeological finds in the Eddington area indicate that there may have been a significant settlement here during the late Bronze Age.

This open arable area contains limited habitat interest, and has no ecologically designated sites. The golf course landscape is dotted with mature trees, some native and some introduced. Plenty Brook emerges from West Blean Wood and flows north eastwards across the area creating a feature in the golf course landscape. A series of flood alleviation lagoons, associated with Plenty Brook, are located along the A2990 Old Thanet Way. The A299 crosses the area separating Strode Hill Farm from the remaining area.

13. Greenhill and Eddington Fringe

Condition

Overall this landscape is in poor condition. It is a simple arable landscape with few elements. The golf course and the plotlands although introduced into the landscape are contained and tend not to interrupt the visual unity of the landscape. Despite there not being a considerable number of detracting features, those that are present are significant. Most notably the A299, its signs, lighting and traffic that divides the area.

The urban edge often sits harshly against the rural landscape and the increased elevation of the minor roads to cross the A299 increases the impact by making these areas more visible. Scrub associated with the overgrown plotlands at the Abbotswood Estate gives this area an unkempt appearance. This is accentuated by the hard lines of the intensively farmed agricultural land and the line of the A299.

The nature conservation interest of the area is weak. There is little tree cover and few hedgerows. Where these are present they are poorly linked. The Plenty Brook and the golf course offer some refuge to wildlife but generally this is a landscape dominated by agriculture**.**

Sensitivity

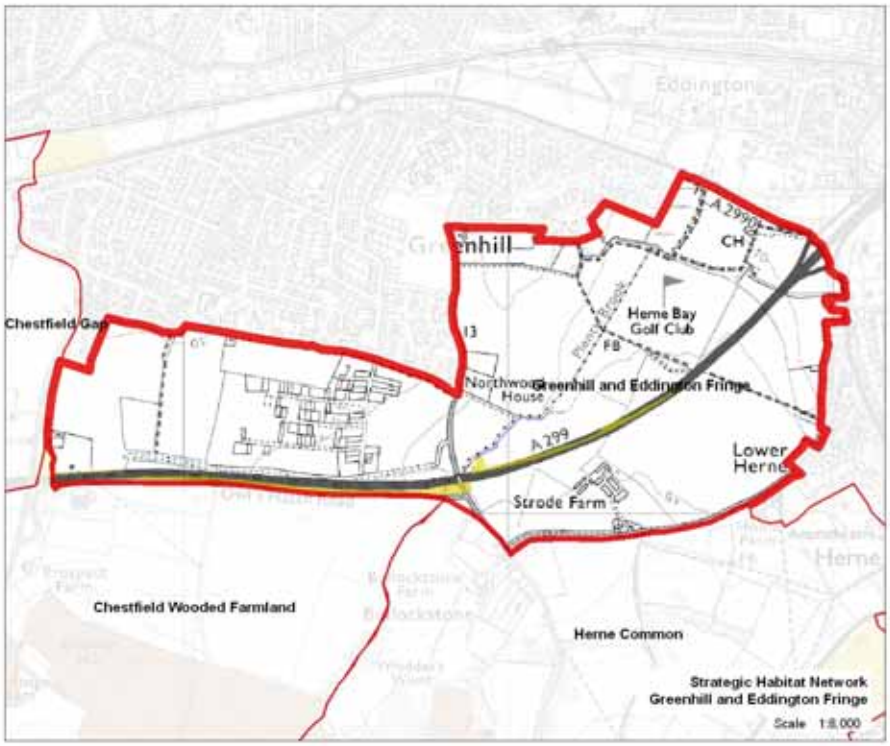
The Greenhill and Eddington Fringe has few characteristic features. The most notable is the Plenty Brook, a stream characteristic of the London Clay farmlands.

Intense agricultural practice and the demise of the hedgerows, many through the effects of Dutch Elm disease, has resulted in an open landscape. Combined with the gently undulating topography this creates a highly visible landscape. This visibility is most apparent where elements such as the urban edge and the A299 sit against the open arable fields. Visibility reduces on the golf course where there is filtered tree cover.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The only habitat network opportunity here highlighted by the Living landscapes model is some limited species-rich grassland potential along the A299 road corridor.

13. Greenhill and Eddington Fringe



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Guidelines

Changes to the Greenhill and Eddington Fringe area should aim improve the appearance of the and restore existing features, whilst respecting the visibility of elements in the open landscape.

- Improve the visual qualities and wildlife value of the landscape through the restoration of boundary features - hedgerows, ditches and verges where practicable.
- Assess new building proposals to ensure that they respect the simple, uncluttered landscape and attractive edges are formed.
- Improve and enhance the visual and nature conservation interest of Plenty Brook and other water bodies.
- Explore opportunities with the highway authority to improve grass verges for biodiversity, particularly north of Owls Hatch Road.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Poor**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	**Low**
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

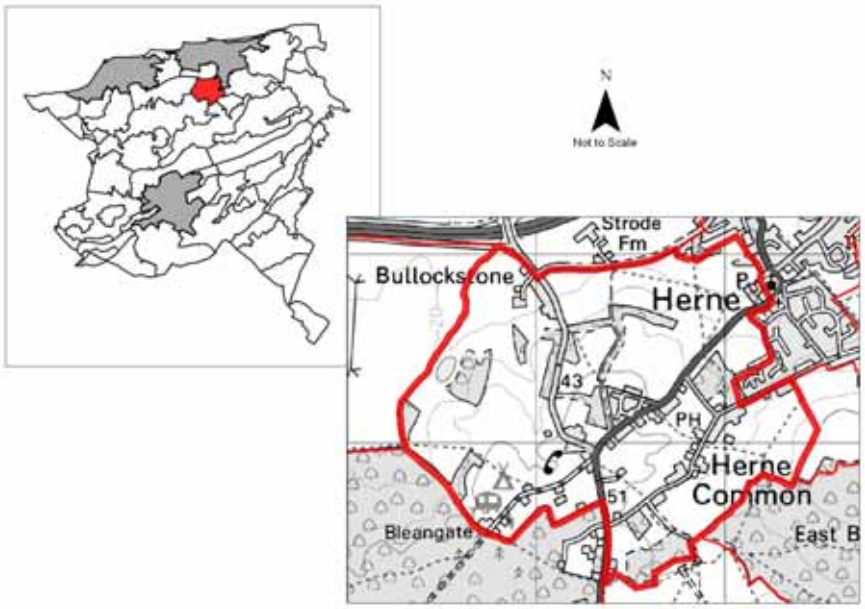
Guidelines: Improve

14. Herne Common

Key Characteristics

- London Clay ridge.
- Poorly drained heavy soils managed as woodland, scrub and pasture.
- Linear development of individual houses along road.
- Former parkland largely managed as pasture contained by tree belts and hedgerows. Some smaller plots for horse grazing.
- Woodland and scrub areas traditionally unfenced although housing and horse grazing have introduced a mixture of fencing styles.
- Key designations are Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve

Landscape Description



Herne Common is situated on the undulating London Clay Blean ridge and soils are clay. It is mainly a pastoral landscape although the abundance of tree belts, hedgerows and small woodland blocks are a reminder of its origins as a woodland landscape.

On its southern periphery, Herne Common contains some small satellite parcels of the much larger East Blean and West Blean and Thornden Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Elsewhere there is a high density of small undesignated woodland habitat with hedgerows and tree belts reflecting the woodland habitat network of the wider Blean landscape. This includes Curtis Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Oak and ash are the dominant woodland species and hawthorn is common in the hedgerows and as regenerating scrub in some pastures. A number of small streams and ponds feature in this area indicating the poor draining heavy clay soils.

The land is used both for crop production and as pasture. Fields vary in size and shape, providing a mosaic which is segregated by the wooded blocks. Larger areas of pasture are found on the north side of the ridge where there are wide views across the open farmland landscape towards Herne Bay. Along the ridgeline the fields are contained by hedgerows and tree belts, and are mostly used for horse grazing. Inappropriate fencing types are associated with horse grazing in this area.

14. Herne Common

Outside of the built environs of Herne Common this is a largely unsettled landscape. However individual houses have developed along the Canterbury Road, Bullockstone Road to the west and Busheyfields Road to the east. 'Herne Hospital Development', which includes a former workhouse conversion and new build, is clustered in a dense pocket along Canterbury Road, extending back from the road towards a wooded edge. A particular feature of the Canterbury Road is the horse chestnut avenue on the approach to Herne. The avenue and parkland style railings create a distinctive entrance to the village. Much of the landscape character area is on the register of Historic Parks and Gardens, with the historic Strode Park located to the north east. Now used as a base for Strode Park Foundation, an independent organisation and registered disability charity, Strode House is set within 14 acres of private grounds.

Condition

Traditionally the woodland and scrub areas were unfenced, with hedgerows and tree belts forming boundaries to the pastures. Today the condition of some of these boundaries has declined creating a fragmented network. In their place housing and horse grazing have introduced a mixture of fencing styles and boundary treatments creating an often untidy appearance to the landscape. Dead or dying trees are common in many views with many specimen trees being lost from the parkland. Hawthorn scrub and bramble are beginning to colonise some of the pastures. The nature conservation interest of the area is moderate. The landscape elements and low intensity land use provide a variety of habitats although the lack of appropriate management is resulting in their gradual fragmentation as the hedgerow and woodland network breaks down. The streams and ponds add to the wildlife interest of the area, although often overgrown and unmanaged.

The housing development built at Curtis Wood Park in 1988 has afforded the opportunity to repair the railings on the east side of Canterbury Road. The railings are twisted or collapsed and have been patched up with other fence types. A number of hornbeams have recently been planted to replace the dying horse chestnuts whilst the remaining trees have been pruned to encourage stronger, more sustainable long term growth.

Overall the condition of this landscape is moderate. Although the pattern and structure of the landscape are largely intact and there are few detracting features, many of the elements are in poor condition.

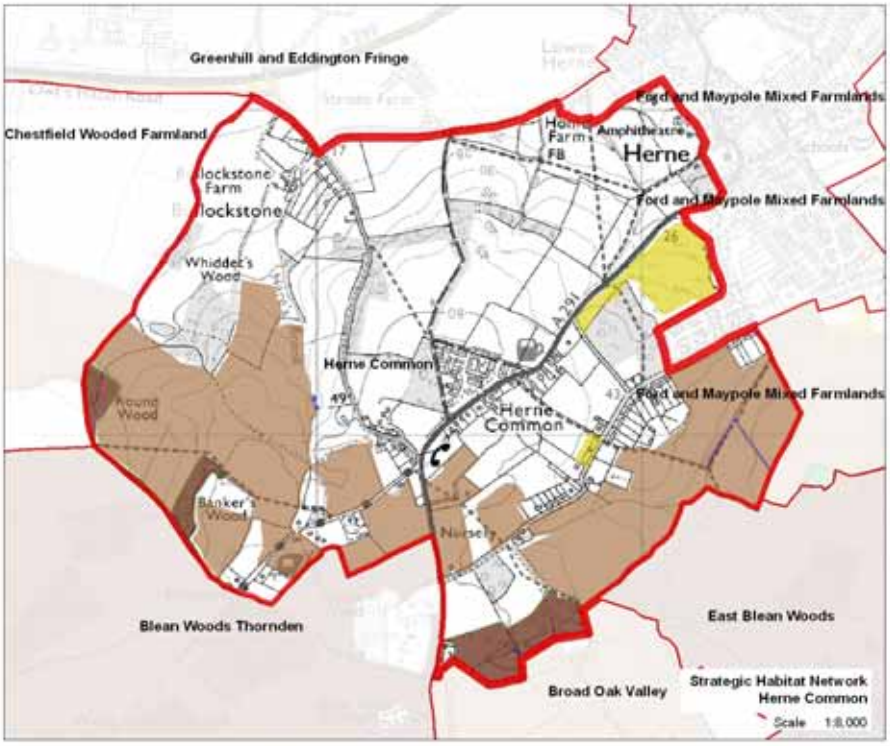
Sensitivity

Herne Common is a moderately sensitive landscape. The landscape retains much of its distinctiveness and characteristic features, the origins of which have survived from the middle ages. Although these features are declining through lack of management the area still retains a moderate strength of character.

The dominant ridgeline topography is enclosed by woodland and tree belts over much of the area containing views in and out and reducing the visibility. However on the more open west face the visibility is high and locally more sensitive.

14. Herne Common

Habitat Network Opportunity



The southern portion of the character area has extensive opportunity to contribute to the Blean Woodland network. This would extend and buffer the larger designated woodlands to the south, while linking many of the smaller undesignated woodlands within the area. In addition, there is a smaller area of species-rich grassland network opportunity between Herne village and Curtis Wood LNR in the east.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Guidelines

The landscape of Herne Common is generally suffering from a lack of management. The landscape elements are still present and appropriate action needs to be taken to conserve, improve and restore them.

- Conserve and extend the network of hedgerows, tree belts and woodland to recreate traditional enclosure pattern and distinct areas of grassland and woodland characteristic of The Blean.
- Conserve and improve the nature conservation and landscape value of streams and ponds through sensitive de-silting and management.
- Conserve the avenue on the approach to Herne and repair or replace traditional fencing.
- Conserve the parkland and common character by resisting proposals for new development within the area and managing existing parkland trees and replacing those that are lost.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Very few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Enclosed
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

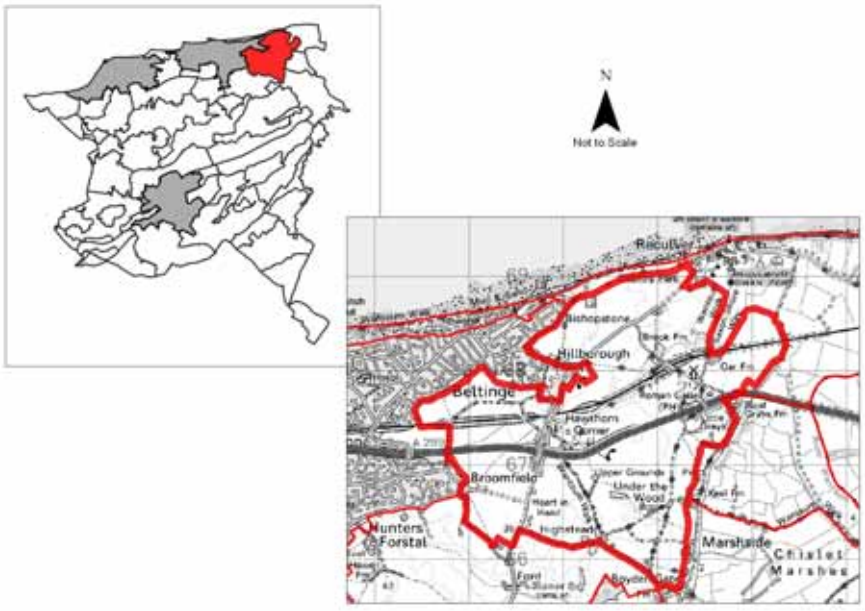
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

15. Hillborough Arable Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating high ground terminating as cliffs at the sea.
- High grade agricultural land intensively farmed mostly for cereals.
- Few hedgerows, land cultivated tight to roadside with very narrow verges.
- Scattered farmsteads and isolated cottages, connected by crisscrossing lanes and paths.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Area of High Landscape Value, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Ramsar site.

Landscape Description



The London Clay geology in the Hillborough Farmlands is overlain with drift deposits of Head Brickearth and Head Gravel. The landform is very gently undulating, although the land drops down dramatically to the Chislet Marshes in the east allowing extensive views across the Wantsum Channel to Thanet and the south east. The soils are poorly drained loams which are classified as Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land. This very productive land is intensively farmed, mostly for cereals. The fields are large and open and there are few hedgerows. Occasional seasonally wet drainage channels divide up the area. The land is cultivated tight to the roadside with very narrow verges to maximise yields. To the north of the railway, near Beltinge, the field size is a little smaller with some pasture. These fields are divided by overgrown scrubby hedgerows.

The Hillborough Arable Farmlands contain only one designated site, situated at its northern coastal periphery. This is part of the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, which is designated primarily for its coastal bird community, but also noted for its assemblage of marine and terrestrial plants and invertebrates. The vast majority of the character area inland is undesignated farmland where field boundary features and small water bodies are the main biodiversity resource.

Historically this area would have formed a headland that dominated the northern approaches to the Wantsum sea channel. The strategic importance of this headland is suggested from archaeological evidence throughout the area indicating near continuous settlement since Neolithic times. This was recognised in Roman times when the fort was constructed at Reculver to defend the channel, complemented by Richborough fort at the other end of the channel. Reculver was linked to Canterbury by a Roman Road that followed the approximate line of the Sweechbridge Road and Hoath Road.

The Elizabethan gateway at Brook Farm is a Scheduled Monument, which is listed as Grade II. It dates from 1580 and is a red brick gateway which survives from an older house. Little Grays Farmhouse is also listed as Grade II and dates from the 17th century as are the weatherboarded and thatched barn adjacent to the house. Nearby at Grays Farm there is still evidence of a former homestead moat which was recorded on the Tithe Map of Chislet in 1838.

15. Hillborough Arable Farmlands

Today this is largely an unsettled landscape although there are scattered farmsteads and isolated cottages. These are connected by lanes and paths that cross the landscape and are often the only boundaries between one field and the next. To the east, just outside the character area, the distinctive tall ruined church towers at Reculver stand almost alone in the open landscape and there are few trees. A disused sand and gravel pit is located to the south of the area, to the west of Highstead Farm. Whilst this will be restored to agricultural land, associated bunding and shelterbelts remain evident. The A299 crosses the area, its presence marked in the wider landscape by the overbridge at Hawthorn Corner. Scrubby vegetation marks the line of the London to Ramsgate railway. Reculver Country Park lies to the north of the area, where there is a narrow strip of land managed as hay meadow and coastal walks extend along the cliff top.

Condition

The Hillborough Farmlands are a landscape in poor condition. There is very little pattern in the landscape - the fields are mostly large and many boundary features have been lost. The hedgerows that remain are fragmented, poorly maintained and have no function in this arable landscape. The drainage ditches and roadside verges are almost devoid of vegetation and the opportunities for wildlife are minimal. The A299 and its traffic, earthworks and signs are visible in the landscape, especially at the Hawthorn Corner junction. The overbridge rises out of the otherwise uniform topography, sitting uncomfortably in the landscape.

Sensitivity

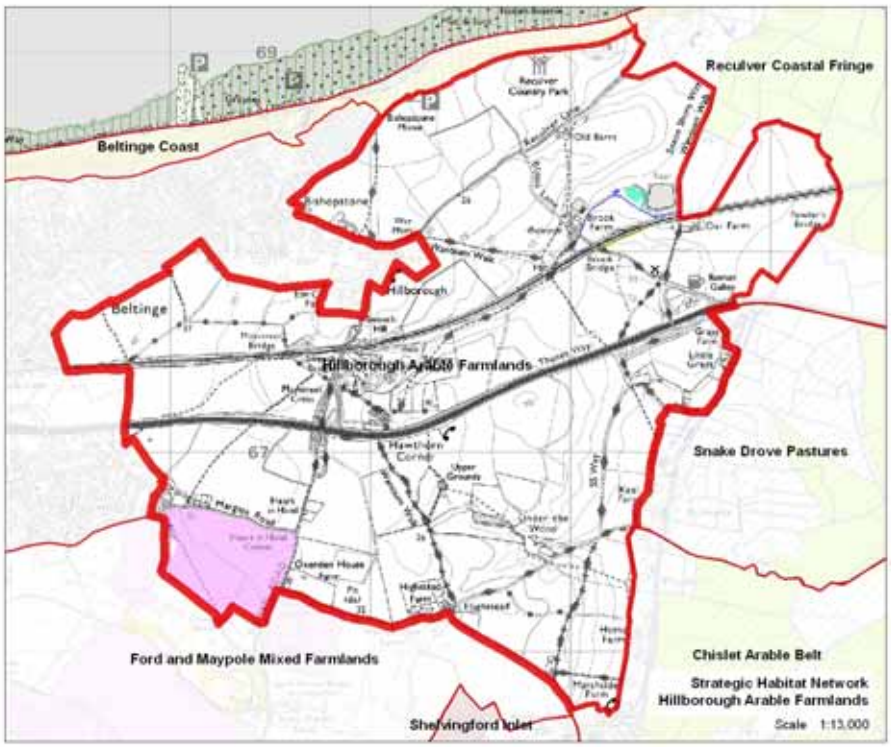
The Hillborough Farmlands is a landscape that lacks distinctive features and has weak strength of character. There are few hedgerows or trees and those that are present tend to be scrubby and indistinct. There is little settlement in the area and this is largely limited to simple farm cottages and bungalows many of which are of recent origin. However there are some fine historic buildings and features on the edges of the area at Highstead and Broomfield, including the Elizabethan gateway at Brook Farm. Despite the lack of distinctive features this is a highly visible landscape. The open high ground creates a landscape in which elements are clearly visible. The simple structure of Reculver Church, for example, is an imposing feature in the open landscape.

In contrast the elevated A299 junction has an impact over a wide area. Balancing the weak strength of character with the high visibility this landscape can be described as moderately sensitive overall.

Habitat Network Opportunity

Most of this character area falls outside of the strategic habitat network. However, there is a limited area of acid grassland/heath network opportunity in the south west corner of the area near Broomfield. Elsewhere, the restoration of linear field and road boundary features such as hedges and ditches would be of benefit in this area.

15. Hillborough Arable Farmlands



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High

Condition		Low	moderate	high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
		Sensitivity		

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Guidelines

Actions that are appropriate to the Hillborough Farmlands are those that restore and improve the landscape.

- Improve the visual qualities and wildlife value of the landscape through the restoration of boundary features - hedgerows, ditches and verges - where practicable.
- Resist proposals to introduce large scale or vertical elements in this open landscape.
- Assess new building proposals within and adjacent to the area to ensure that attractive edges are formed.
- Explore opportunities to create acid grassland/heath south of Margate Road.

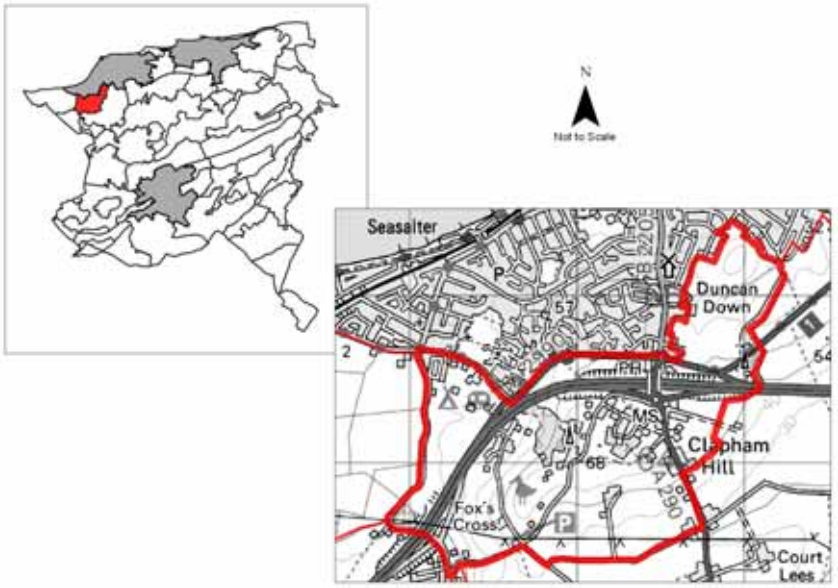
Guidelines: Restore and Improve

16. Wraik Hill

Key Characteristics

- London Clay hill capped with Head Gravel. Poorly drained heavy soils.
- Outlying hill from Blean ridge.
- Extensive views particularly to the west over Seasalter Marshes to coast.
- Scattered houses of mostly recent (20th century) origin often sited to take advantage of views.
- Mosaic of fragmented woodland, scrub and pasture.
- Pasture contained by hedgerows on lower, less steep slopes. Smaller plots for horse grazing on less accessible slopes.
- Woodland and scrub areas traditionally unfenced although housing and horse grazing have introduced a mixture of fencing styles.
- Key designations are a Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape Description



Wraik Hill, including Clapham Hill and Duncan Down, is an extension of the London Clay ridge of The Blean. In common with many of the hilltops of the Blean ridge it is capped with Head Gravel and shares the characteristic poorly drained heavy soils. Its elevated position is emphasised by the low lying Seasalter Levels to the north west and there are extensive views over the marshes and Whitstable town to the coast.

This character area contains two Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). To the south, Seasalter Dairy Farm LWS (which includes Wraik Hill and Foxes Cross LNR) comprises rough semi-improved pasture some of which is wet meadow, plus thorn scrub and small woodlands of oak and ash. The Wraik Hill and Foxes Cross LNR Management Plan 2009-2019 (Canterbury City Council and Kent Wildlife Trust) provides management objectives and prescriptions for this area. Duncan Down LWS, to the north of the area, is a mix of rough grassland, scrub woodland, a stream and marshy grassland. The Duncan Down Village Green Management Plan 2011 - 2016 (Canterbury City Council) provides a series of objectives and management prescriptions for Duncan Down and outlines proposals for monitoring and review. Elsewhere there are significant areas of undesignated woodland and scrub habitat mainly to the south of the Thanet Way.

There are areas of regenerating scrub over many of the lower pastures, and in places the woodland trees remain but the understorey has been cleared or grazed. The fragmented pattern of features create a mosaic landscape. The hill is largely unfarmed and is covered with a mosaic of fragmented oak and ash woodland, hawthorn scrub and pasture. Hedgerows of hawthorn, field maple and blackthorn enclose areas of pasture and scrub on the lower, less steep slopes. Smaller plots are used for horse grazing and there are larger areas of more productive pasture to the south where the gradient is shallower.

Housing is scattered throughout the area and is generally recent in origin, often taking advantage of the extensive views towards the coast to the north and the countryside to the south. Narrow winding lanes run around the perimeter whilst the main route to Canterbury crosses the ridge. The A299 cuts through the hill on its northern side.

16. Wraik Hill

Archaeological investigations suggest that there was an important Iron Age settlement in the Wraik Hill area. In this location it would have been strategically well placed to act as focus for a wide range of economic and social activities and may have prospered for some 400 years as a large urban centre. Its demise and eventual abandonment appears to coincide with the Roman invasion and the subsequent growth of Canterbury as the Roman cantonal capital of Kent. The name Wraik dates from the 14th century meaning 'path' or 'track'.

Condition

Wraik Hill is a landscape in poor condition. It is very fragmented and there are many detracting features. These include some major elements such as the A299 cutting, pylons and overhead cables. In addition there is the cumulative effect of the clutter of pony paddocks with a variety of fencing types and sheds, often dilapidated. Unsympathetic or poorly sited housing, typically with suburban details and enclosures, sit uncomfortably in woodland landscape.

Unlike areas characteristic of The Blean there is no distinct division between woodland and pasture. The various stages of woodland clearance and scrub regeneration creates an untidy appearance to the landscape, but it is recognised that this may have some biodiversity benefits if carefully managed.

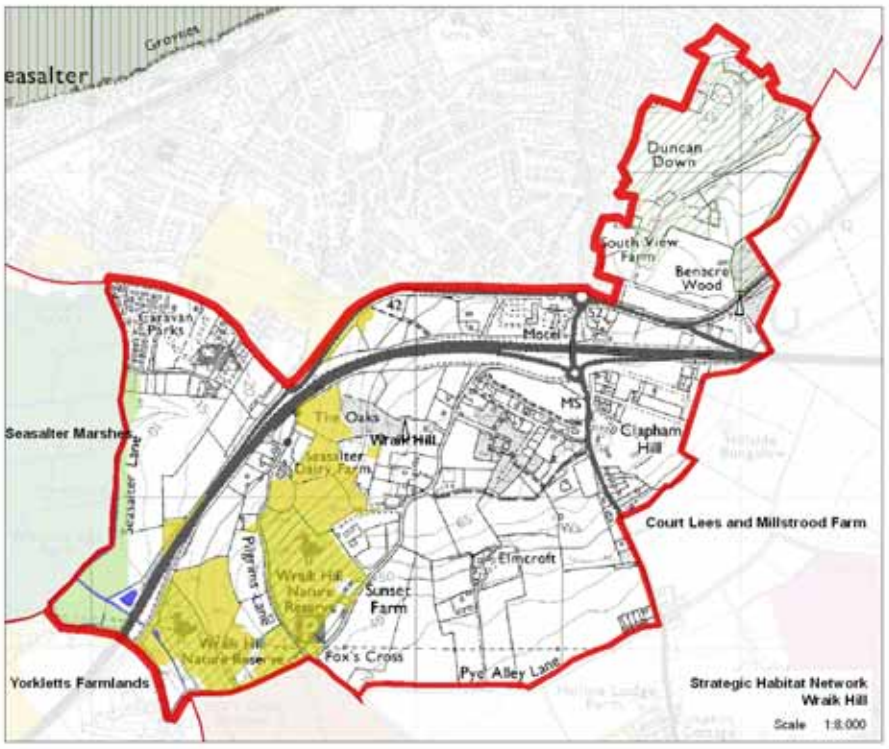
Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The recent changes in the landscape have eroded many of the area's distinctive features and weakened its strength of character. The dominant landform is a strong feature, and with the filtered tree cover creates a highly visible landscape. On the north west face where the hill rises above the Seasalter Levels, the visibility is very high and locally more sensitive.

Habitat Network Opportunity

Within and to the north of Seasalter Dairy Farm LWS there is opportunity to develop the species-rich grassland network in line with the Wraik Hill and Foxes Cross LNR Management Plan. This will involve appropriate levels of grazing and scrub control. To the west there is a strip of land on the edge of Seasalter Marshes where an extension of grazing marsh habitat may enhance the network and buffer the Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.

16. Wraik Hill



Guidelines

To enhance the positive attributes of Wraik Hill measures that restore areas that are in decline and improve those that are damaged are recommended.

- Manage and enhance grassland habitats for biodiversity around Seasalter Dairy Farm LWS.
- Manage scrubland to create distinct areas of grassland and woodland characteristic of The Blean.
- Restore and manage existing woodland.
- Restore rural character by resisting proposals for new development within the area. Use woodland to frame existing buildings, soften hard edges and provide an attractive setting to the properties.
- Restore hedgerow network to recreate traditional enclosure pattern.
- Assess new building proposals within adjacent urban area to ensure that an attractive edge is formed.
- It may be appropriate for the urban boundary to the north of the character area to be reviewed to take into account recent business park development.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
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- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Detracting features:	Many
Visual unity:	Significantly interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

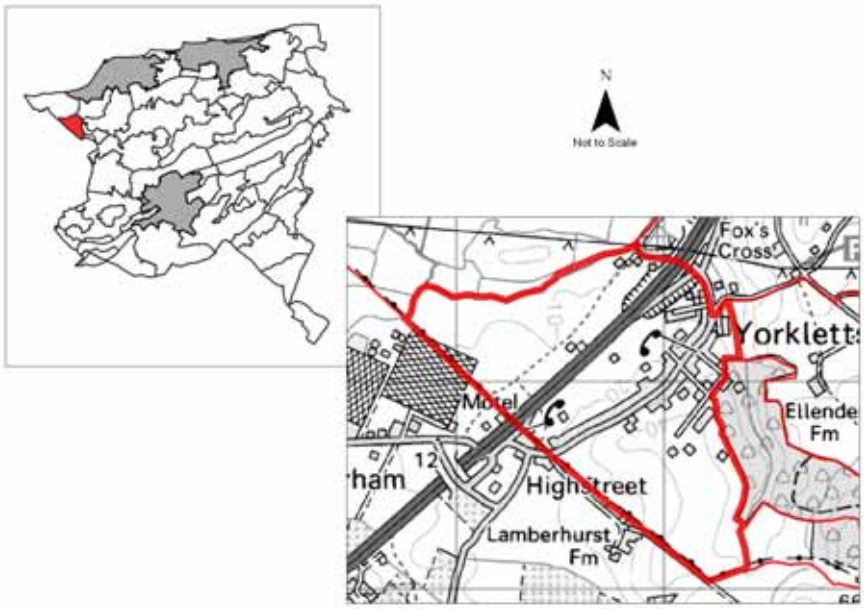
Guidelines: Restore and Improve

17. Yorkletts Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- London Clay with poorly drained soils gently rising inland.
- Grade 3 agricultural land with some large arable fields and some pasture. Smaller plots support rough pasture and horse paddocks.
- Yorkletts is a linear settlement running parallel to the Thanet Way.

Landscape Description



The Yorkletts Farmlands are a small character area at the western entrance to Canterbury District. It is made up of the village of Yorkletts and open fields bordering Ellenden Woods to the east and adjoining open marshes to the west. The area has much in common with the adjacent area within Swale District and the characterisation of this area has been undertaken with this in mind.

The geology of the Yorkletts Farmlands is London Clay overlain with base rich poorly drained heavy clay soils. The land gently rises from the A299 forming the lower slopes of The Blean. There are views across the Seasalter Levels to the north whilst views to the south and east are contained by the Blean ridge and Ellenden Woods. The agricultural land is classified as Grade 3 and consists of large arable fields to the south west of the area and some pasture. This character continues across the district boundary into Swale. Smaller plots adjacent to the A299 support rough pasture and horse paddocks.

There is currently no mature woodland within the area, although Ellenden Woods are immediately adjacent and influence the character and setting of the agricultural landscape. These woods are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and are noted as an example of oak-hornbeam woodland. As one of only two such sites in the UK it is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Other vegetation is limited to a mix of woodland remnants and ornamental trees in and around Yorkletts. Recent woodland planting has been undertaken on land surrounding Lamberhurst Farm, which has been purchased by the Woodland Trust because it was in an ideal location to link Ellenden Wood to the east with Blean Wood to the south by converting part of the land to woodland. Whilst views within this area are currently open, planting will eventually mature and create a more enclosed character.

This area was cleared of woodland for agriculture in the 20th century; therefore this will restore the landscape in this area to its original character. There is limited habitat interest in this intensively farmed character area, although it is bounded to the east by Ellenden Wood, a designated area of very high ecological interest. Yorkletts is a linear settlement which almost exclusive fronts onto the Dargate Road. The A299 encloses and overlooks the village to the north.

17. Yorkletts Farmlands

Condition

Yorkletts is a linear settlement running parallel to the Thanet Way. It has a mixture of building styles and enclosures that give it the appearance of being unplanned. The area immediately around the village contributes to this haphazard picture. The traditional road network is truncated by the A299 which dominates the north of the area and small pastoral plots between the A299 and the rear of the houses are cluttered by a variety of sheds, stables and fences, many in a dilapidated condition. Fly-tipping is also a problem which adds to the untidy appearance of the landscape.

Although recent planting has taken place on land adjacent to Ellenden Wood, an area of very high ecological interest, this is yet to mature. There are some trees, retained and introduced, amongst the houses which partially soften the built up area and provide some limited ecological interest. Overall the condition of the Yorkletts Farmlands is considered to be poor.

Sensitivity

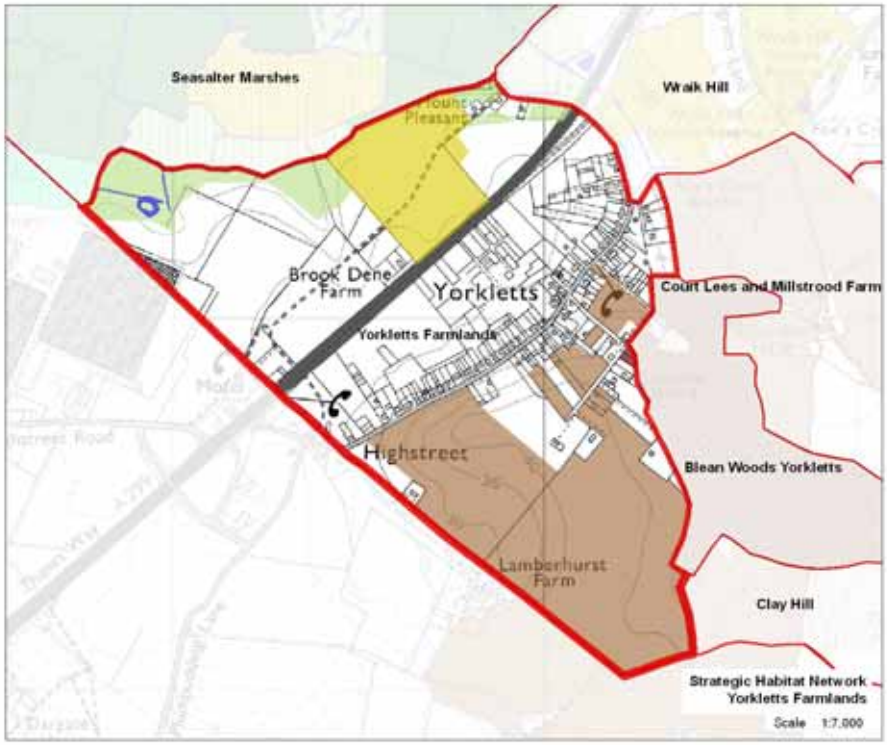
The Yorkletts Farmlands are a moderately sensitive landscape. The village of Yorkletts is indistinct and relatively recent in origin. The adjacent countryside, although not unattractive can be described as unremarkable. There are few features in the landscape that can be described as characteristic and overall the sense of place is very weak.

The landform gently undulates and rises to the south and, although contained to the west by Ellenden Woods, it is an open landscape. Visibility in the area is moderate.

Habitat Network Opportunity

There is significant opportunity to add to the woodland network south of Yorkletts village. To the north west of the A299, on the edge of Seasalter Marshes, there is opportunity to buffer and extend the grazing marsh habitat and to develop the species-rich grassland network.

17. Yorkletts Farmlands



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
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- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Guidelines

Changes to the Yorkletts Farmlands should aim to enhance the function and appearance of the area, whilst respecting the visibility of elements in the open landscape.

- Buffer the grazing marsh habitats of Seasalter Marshes by creating species-rich grassland to the north of the A299.
- Buffer the woodland habitat of The Blean with woodland and scrub planting to the south of Yorkletts village.
- Investigate ways to reduce the visual dominance of the A299 on Yorkletts, tidy up and contain the northern edge of the village.
- Assess new building proposals within and adjacent to the area to ensure that attractive edges are formed.
- Avoid inappropriate large-scale agricultural and commercial buildings or other obtrusive elements, particularly to the north of the A299, which would damage views from higher ground over the Seasalter Marshes towards the Thames Estuary.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Poor**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

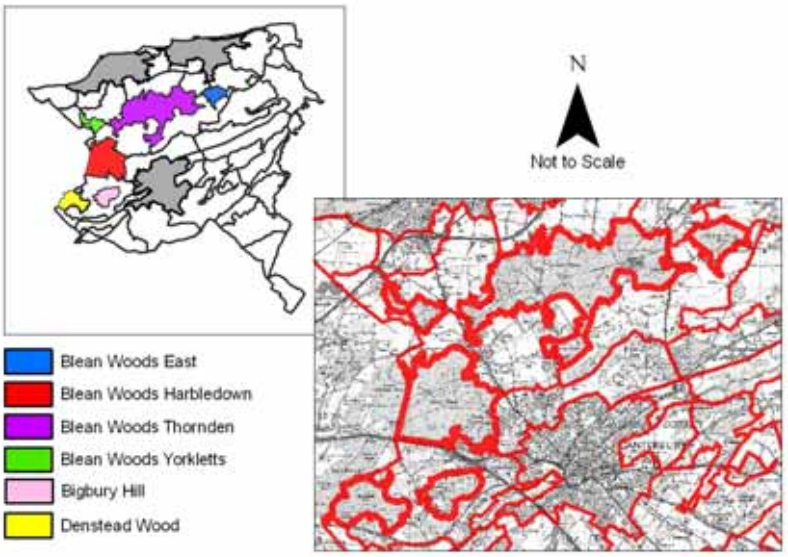
Guidelines: Restore and Improve

Blean Woods

Key Characteristics

- London Clay ridge.
- Dense extensive ancient woodland.
- Species include hazel, sweet chestnut, hornbeam, oak, beech, aspen, pine and cherry.
- Clearings provided by coppice woodland management.
- Scattered evergreen species providing seasonal continuity in places.
- Loam to clay soils.
- Network of paths through trees.
- Few roads and lack of development.
- North-south links from coast to city.
- Areas of woodland cleared for grazing.
- Key designations are Scheduled Monument, Area of High Landscape Value (Bigbury Hill), National Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation and Local Wildlife Site.

Blean Woods: Introduction and General Character



The Blean Woods are subdivided into six different landscape character areas – Blean Woods Harbledown, Blean Woods Thornden, Blean Woods Yorkletts, Blean Woods East, Bigbury Hill and Denstead Woods. The general landscape character described below is applicable to all five areas, although subtle differences are described under each sub heading.

This is a distinctive undulating ridge, across loam to clay geology with slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged soils. Gentle valleys contain a network of narrow meandering watercourses and small pools of water situated at low points. The landscape is characterised by the Blean Woodland, and comprises an amalgamation of a number of named woods. Historically, the woods were used for pannage for pigs and herbage for cattle in association with Canterbury Cathedral. The droveways by which the animals were herded often survive as trackways or footpaths running north to south. This pattern is reinforced by the strong historical link between the coast and Canterbury that has resulted in the road layout generally running north to south. The sites of historic entry points to the Blean Woods are evident in place names such as Radfallgate, Bleangate and Broomfield Gate.

Views are contained by the dense woodland, although a network of cleared paths runs throughout the area. The woodland is dominated by ancient woodland or ancient replanted woodland, with areas of managed hornbeam and chestnut coppice providing clearings and allowing light to spill into the otherwise dark and enclosed environment. Other woodland types include regenerative birch and scrub and oak standards within the coppice. This remains one of the most extensive semi–natural woodlands in the south east of England, containing many designated habitats of national and international importance. Amongst the dominant woodland matrix, there are smaller clearings and rides containing heathland/acid grassland habitat. The woodland/heath mosaic harbours a varied fauna including the last few colonies of the rare heath fritillary butterfly as part of an outstanding assemblage of invertebrate species. There is a distinct lack of development throughout much of the area, although the woodland has been cleared in places within Blean Woods Thornden to accommodate recent development.

Blean Woods

18. Blean Woods: Harbledown

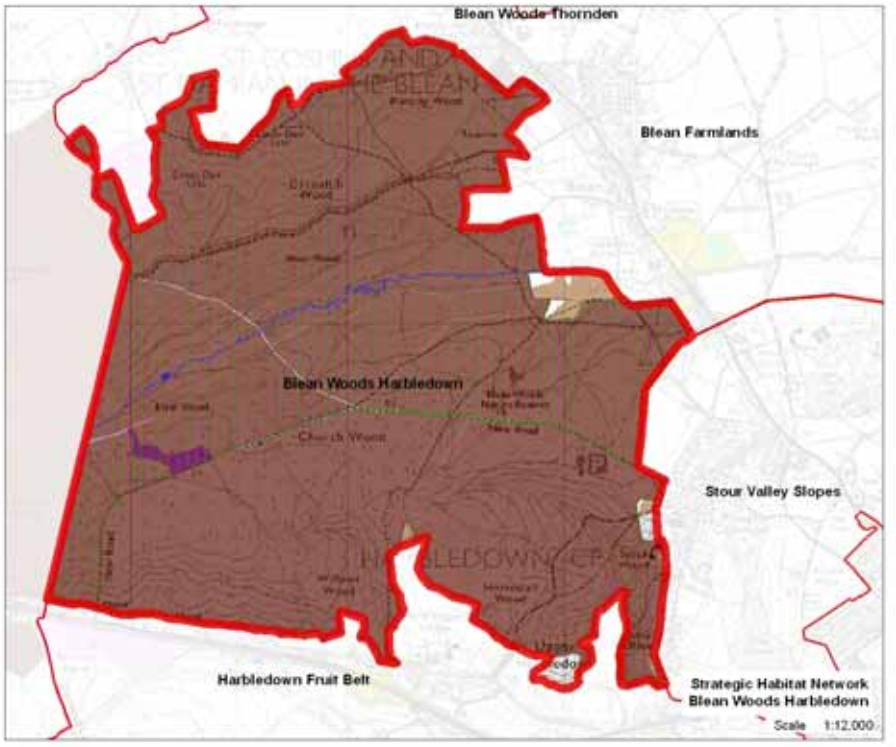
Landscape Description

Blean Woods Harbledown are located north of Harbledown and the A2 corridor. The landscape is characterised by the Blean Woodland, and comprises an amalgamation of a number of named woods including Grimshill Wood, Mincing Wood, Church Wood and Homestal Wood.

The area is undeveloped, with no roads or built development. Its importance for wildlife is reflected in its designation as a National Nature Reserve (NNR), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the northern half and Local Wildlife Site (LWS) within the southern half.

Habitat Network Opportunity

This character area already forms an important part of the Blean Woodland habitat network with its extensive oak, hornbeam and chestnut woodland combined with smaller areas of heath cover. Therefore the strategy here would be to maintain this vital biodiversity resource through active coppice management where appropriate and removal of non-native conifers and invasive shrubs where appropriate. Coppice management should be targeted at key species such as heath fritillary and dormouse which require sufficient quantity of coppiced woodland patches.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

19. Blean Woods: Thornden

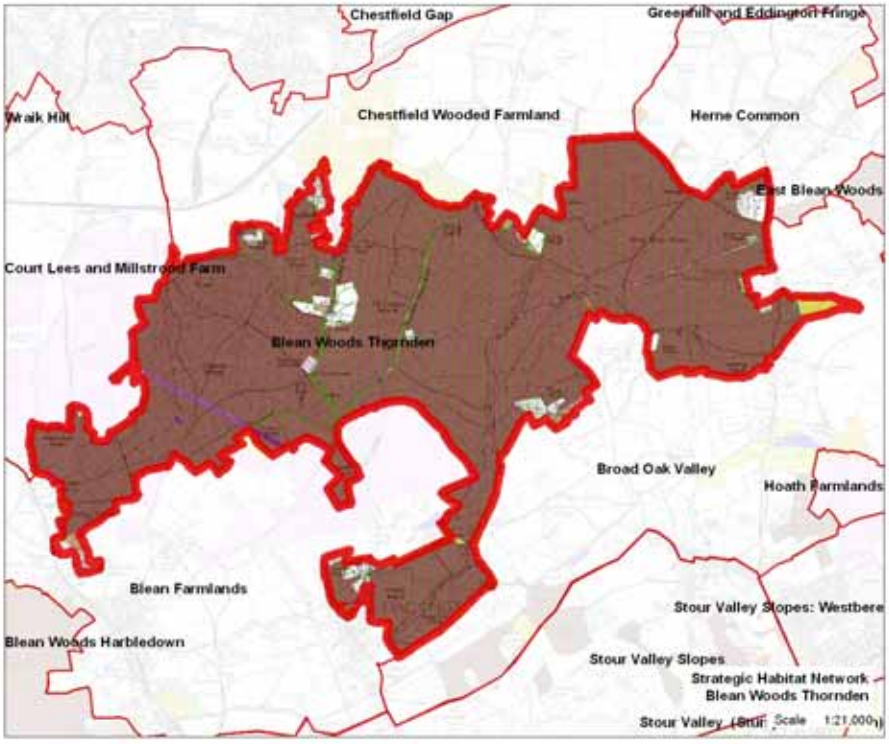
Landscape Description

Blean Woods Thornden is an extensive area of woodland located south of Radfall. The landscape is characterised by the Blean Woodland, and comprises an amalgamation of a number of named woods including Thornden Wood, Clowes Wood, Cripps Wood, Cole Wood, Honey Wood, and West Blean Wood. Views are contained by the dense woodland, although a network of cleared paths run throughout the area. 'The Radfall' forms an evident linear earthwork, historically used as an early road system to herd pigs and cattle which were once raised within the woodland.

Its importance for wildlife is reflected in its designation as a SSSI within the eastern portion and LWS within the western portion. In places, pockets of woodland have also been cleared to make way for grazing livestock and dairy farming. Mature standard oak trees are scattered across the coppice clearings.

Although there is little development within the area, there are small pockets of development on the periphery of Radfall, along Radfall Road and along New Road - a track running through the area. Development is mostly modern housing, set within cleared areas of woodland, and Mill Farm along Radfall Road comprises some large scale agricultural buildings. Wildwood Animal Park and Wealden Forest Park consists of a collection of large scale modern buildings, which add little to local distinctiveness. However, development is well absorbed by the wooded setting and the landscape has an undeveloped and remote character. There are few roads running through the area, with Radfall Road and Thornden Wood Road providing the only official routes which dissect the area, although the A291 Canterbury Road runs along the eastern edge.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

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- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Blean Woods

This character area already forms an important part of the Blean Woodland habitat network with its extensive woodland and heath cover. Therefore the strategy here would be to maintain this vital biodiversity resource through active coppice management and removal of non-native conifers and invasive shrubs.

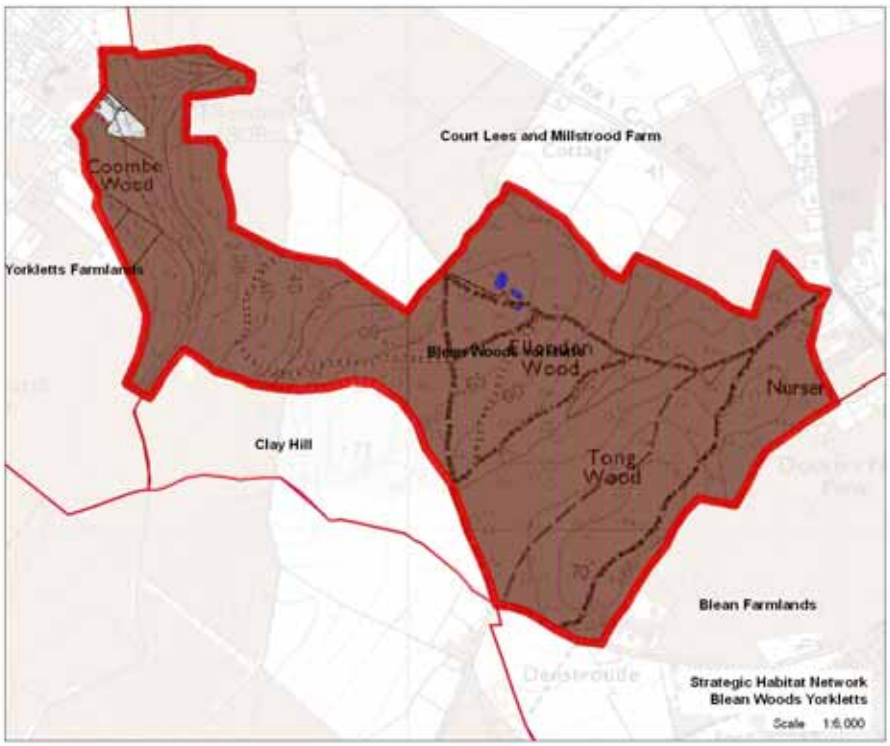
20. Blean Woods: Yorkletts

Landscape Description

Blean Woods Yorkletts is located to the east of Yorkletts. The woodland comprises an amalgamation of woodlands including Ellenden Wood and Tong Wood. Its importance for wildlife is reflected in its designation as a SSSI and SAC. Sessile oak and beech dominate the eastern and central parts of the wood. Hornbeam with pedunculate and sessile oak on the clay soils to the west. The wood has a diverse plant, invertebrate and bird communities. The area is undeveloped and there are no roads, providing a distinctly remote character.

Habitat Network Opportunity

This character area already forms an important part of the Blean Woodland habitat network with its extensive woodland and heathland cover. Therefore the strategy here would be to maintain this vital biodiversity resource through protection, sensitive management and enhancement such as removal of non-native conifers where appropriate.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

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- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Blean Woods

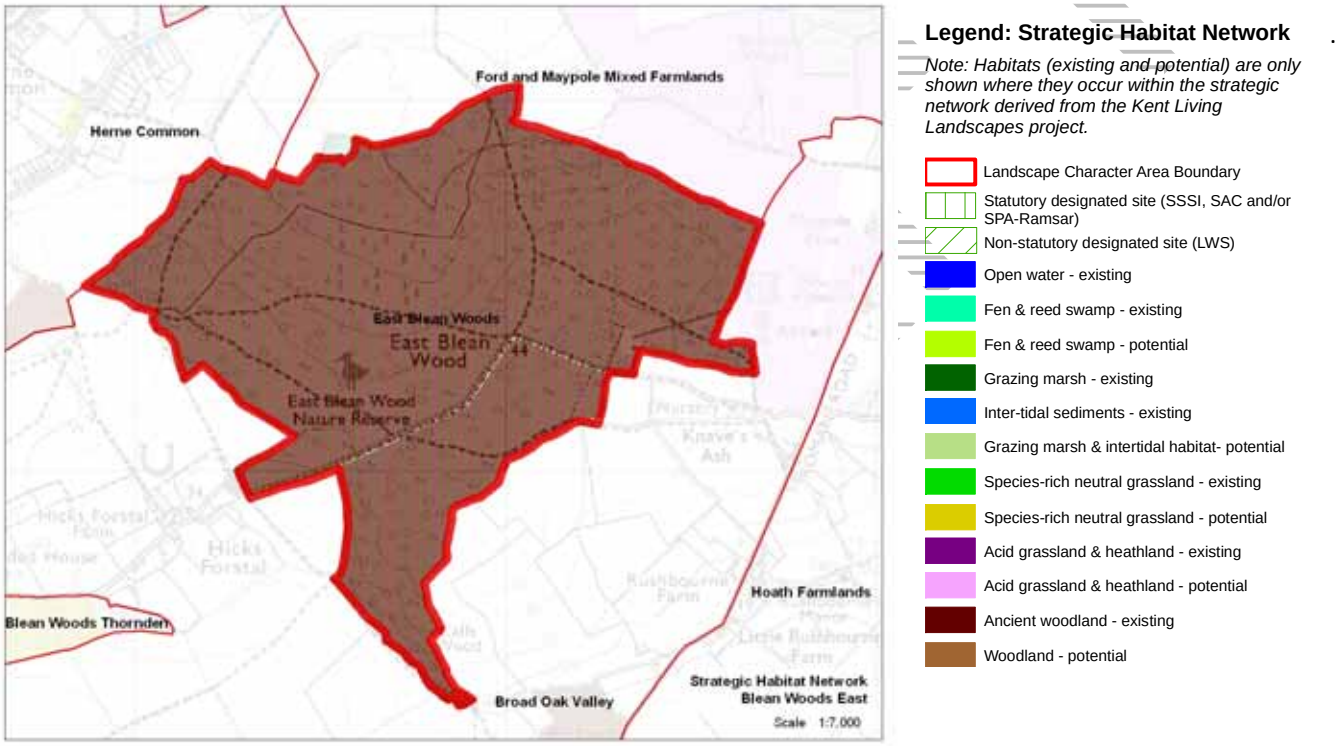
21. Blean Woods: East

Landscape Description

Blean Woods East is located to the west of Maypole. The area is undeveloped, although there is a car parking area which is located along Hicks Forstal Road which runs through the woodland. Hicks Forstal Road is narrow and enclosed by woodland on either side, providing a distinctly remote character. The area is heavily designated as a SSSI, NNR and SAC and is a key habitat for the heath fritillary butterfly. Many parts are managed specifically to increase numbers of heath fritillary butterflies by opening up glades and rides and encouraging heathy vegetation.

Habitat Network Opportunity

East Blean Woods SSSI, SAC and NNR is a nationally important wildlife site and a vital part of the Blean Woodland network, and therefore there should continue to be a strong focus on conservation of the existing habitat here through continued removal of non-native conifers and appropriate coppice management.



22. Bigbury Hill

Landscape Description

Bigbury Hill is an outcrop of high ground to the west of Canterbury that is separated from the main Blean Woods complex. It is dominated by a portion of the Blean Woods South Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which comprises a large woodland complex; a southern extension of the ancient Blean Forest.

Much of the woodland is well maintained sweet chestnut coppice. There are some areas of cleared woodland supporting semi-natural grassland that is often used for horse grazing. There are also some fragments of dry and wet heath, plus No Man's Orchard LNR, one of the few surviving traditional orchards in the area. Surrounding and interspersed with this designated site are fields of both arable and pasture, some of which is indicated as neutral unimproved or semi-improved.

Blean Woods

Bigbury Fort was an Iron Age settlement prior to the growth of Canterbury itself. With its dominant hill top location this was an important strategic stronghold prior to the Roman occupation. The site is a Scheduled Monument.

There are a few roads across the hill. The most significant is the Pilgrim's Way which crosses the ridge, marking what is widely believed to be a prehistoric trackway. Its name originates from the Middle Ages when it was the route for pilgrims travelling from Winchester Cathedral to Canterbury Cathedral. Other roads on Bigbury Hill are typically narrow with woodland tight to their edges. Winding sunken lanes with trees sprouting from steep sandy banks reinforce the character of the area.

Bigbury Hill remained largely unsettled until later this century. This settlement consists of a few detached modern homes cut into the woodland and generally scattered along the Pilgrim's Way. The area is largely enclosed although recent, piecemeal clearance of small areas of woodland for orchards, housing and horse paddocks has introduced often unsympathetic fencing to the area.

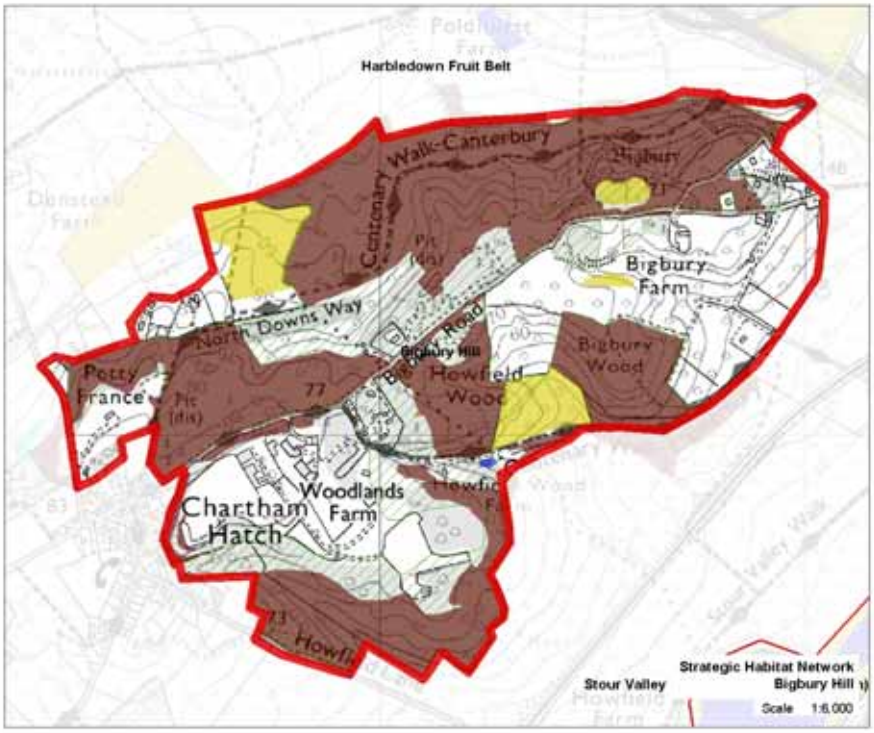
Views of the City

There are fine views out over the Canterbury and the Cathedral is visible from parts of the Pilgrim's Way on Bigbury Hill. This vantage point also allows extensive views of the Stour Valley and over the agricultural landscape to the south east. Views off the hill tend to be contained by the extensive dense woodland cover and the views out are therefore generally limited to the edges.

In addition to the views off the hill, Bigbury Hill also plays an important role in containing the City from views in the broader landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The detailed habitat network potential for Bigbury Hill shows that amongst the existing ancient woodland interest there are opportunities to develop and enhance the species-rich neutral grassland network. In addition, linkage of the woodland blocks and wildlife-friendly management of both woods, hedges and traditional orchards will benefit the habitat network in this area. Kent Wildlife Trust proposals for their Blean landholdings include the gradual removal of non-native tree species, the restoration of ancient semi-natural woodland based on native tree species, the restoration of wooded and open heathland and the erection of fencing and introduction of grazing across bog and heathland areas.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

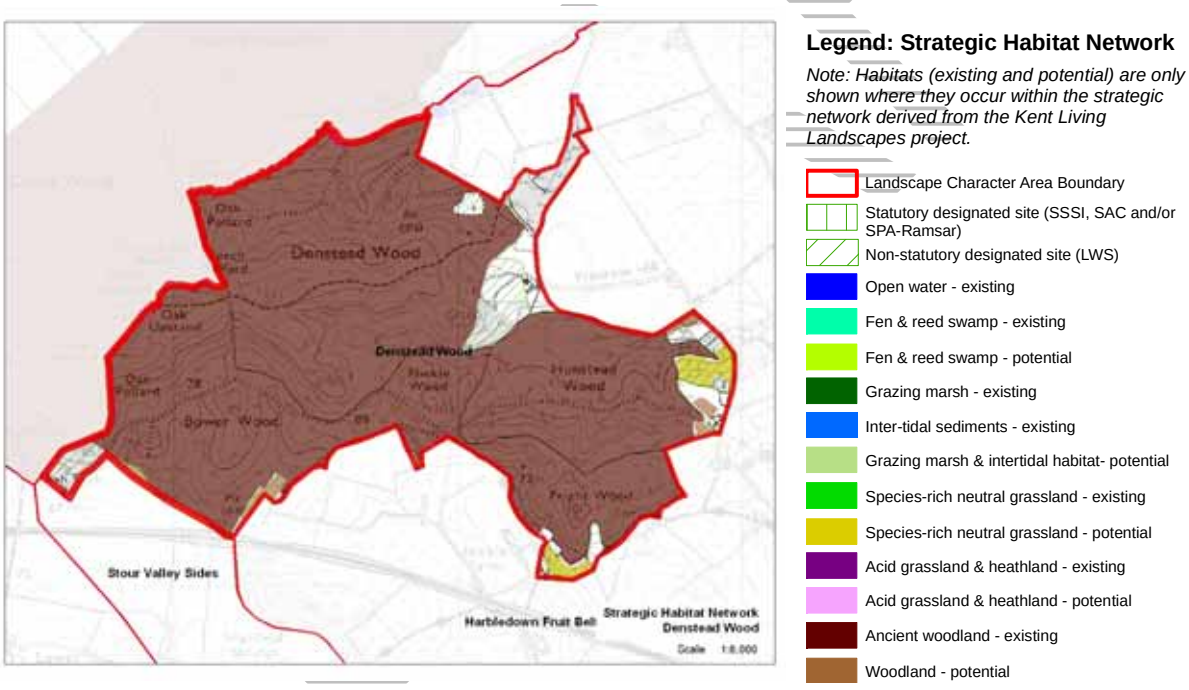
23. Denstead Woods

Landscape Description

Denstead Woods are a wooded hill top landscape. They have a complex mixed geology with the Tertiary Deposits making up the majority of the area and the edge of the London Clay cap on the highest ground. The landform climbs steeply by 40 metres from the periphery to the centre of the woodland. Soils vary from poorly drained clay to well drained fertile silts supporting both natural and plantation woodland. Tree species include hazel and sweet chestnut coppice, oak, beech, aspen, pine and cherry. There are areas of heathlands and bogs reflecting the varied geology.

Denstead Woods character area falls almost entirely within the Blean Woods South LWS. This southern extension of the ancient Blean Forest is a large woodland complex most of which is commercially managed with large areas of chestnut coppice with oak standards plus some conifer plantations. There are areas of heathlands and bogs reflecting the varied geology. Narrow muddy tracks allow restricted access to vehicles working in the woodland.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Denstead Wood's designation as a LWS and its extensive woodland habitat points to a strategy of conservation and enhancement of the existing habitat resource. There may be localised opportunities here to replace non-native conifer plantation with broadleaf woodland over time and this would help to contribute to the quality of the wider woodland network in The Blean.

Blean Woods

Condition of The Blean

The condition of Blean Woods is very good. This is a coherent landscape with signage for the woodland providing the only very slight visual detraction to the area. The woodland provides a strong base for wildlife and ecological integrity is strong, as highlighted by the areas designated status. The ancient woodland provides good cultural heritage value, and active woodland management and removal of non-native and invasive species promotes condition and provides a varied age structure. Some areas of woodland have been shown to be in unfavourable condition due to the presence of the invasive cherry laurel and rhododendron plus a lack of active coppice management. Some areas also contain a significant portion of non-native conifers

Sensitivity of The Blean

This is a moderately sensitive landscape, although the woodland edge is more sensitive because of the prominent ridgeline location and subsequent views out towards the coast to the north and across the landscape to the south. The Blean has one of the largest areas of ancient woodland within Kent and retains a very strong time -depth. The woodland is very distinct and ancient and there is a strong sense of place, although the enclosed woodland provides low visibility except towards the edges.

Guidelines

The guidelines for each of the areas within the Blean Woods are to conserve and reinforce.

- Conserve the woodland and enhance through continued appropriate woodland management, including appropriate coppicing, conifer and invasive shrub removal, and new planting.
- Conserve and manage the woodland in line with guidelines set out within the various management plans available.
- Conserve the distinct and tranquil landscape character of the ancient semi–natural woodland complex, including heath, ditches, streams and ponds.
- Encourage an integrated approach to land management to promote biodiversity, heritage and recreation, as promoted through The Blean initiative.
- Improve style of existing and any new barriers which restrict vehicular access.
- Resist pressure to over-engineer any minor highway improvements to retain rural lane character.
- Reduce fragmentation of the woodland by linking existing woodlands and resisting any further woodland losses.
- Where fencing is necessary encourage the use of local materials and sympathetic styles.
- Encourage the development of species-rich grassland on open ground where this does not conflict with the preservation of existing woodland habitats.
- Development within Blean Woods should be of local scale and character, and relate to existing settlements only. There should be no loss of woodland as a result of new development.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Very Good**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Very Strong

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Unique/rare
Continuity:	Ancient
Sense of place:	Very Strong
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: Moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

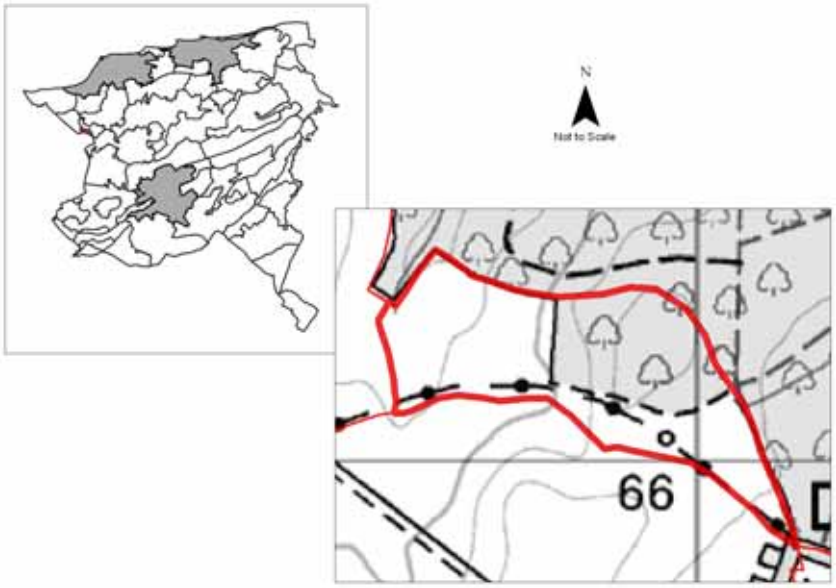
Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

24. Clay Hill

Key Characteristics

- Ridgeline and domed topography continuous with The Blean.
- London Clay geology with heavy soils.
- Cleared of woodland in mid 20th century and managed intensively for cereals but now replanting of trees has been undertaken.
- Extensive views over Seasalter Levels to coast.
- Key designations comprise a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Landscape Description



Clay Hill is a continuation of the Blean ridgeline. It shares the same London Clay geology and heavy soils. The character area continues into Swale District although only that part within Canterbury District is shown on the landscape character area map accompanying this report. Its elevated position and characteristic domed topography are emphasised by the low lying Seasalter Levels to the north west and there are extensive and distinctive views over the marshes and to the coast.

This area was originally a prominent woodland site within the Blean complex, but in the 20th century the hill was stripped of its woodland and intensively farmed for cereals. Maps from the mid 19th to mid 20th centuries indicate it was not cleared of woodland until the latter half of the 20th century. For this reason it is unclassified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food although the land is in productive use. Now the land is no longer used for farming, the crops have been replaced by young, planted trees as part of a wider Woodland Trust scheme to create a natural link, known as 'Victory Wood', between the Blean Woods complex. When established, Victory Wood will bridge the gap between Blean Wood and Ellenden Wood.

Although bounded to the north and east by Ellenden Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), this area does not contain any designated biodiversity sites itself.

There is no visible boundary on the ground between Canterbury and Swale Districts. Ellenden Woods to the east of Clay Hill forms a distinct wooded and enclosing boundary. Hawkins Hill Drain defines the northern boundary, and provides ecological interest and a wildlife corridor.

24. Clay Hill

Condition

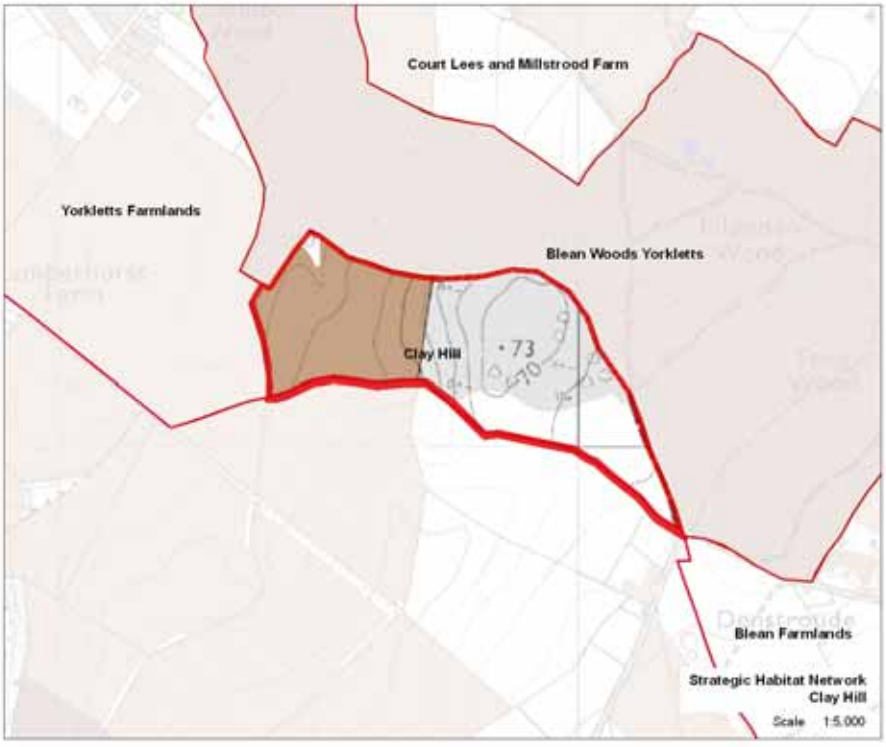
Clay Hill is in moderate condition. The pattern of the landscape is coherent and there are few detracting features. However the functional integrity of this landscape is low as its cultural and ecological interest has been eroded by the woodland clearance.

Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The recent changes in the landscape have eroded many of the areas distinctive features and weakened its sense of place.

The dominant landform, characteristic of the clay dome of The Blean is the strongest landscape element. Combined with the lack of mature tree cover this creates a highly visible landscape. On the north west face where the hill rises above the Seasalter Levels the visibility is very high and locally more sensitive. As woodland matures visibility will reduce within the area.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

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- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
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- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

24. Clay Hill

There is network potential in this character area to extend the woodland habitat of the neighbouring Ellenden Wood which would not only provide additional habitat but also help to buffer this designated site. Efforts to replant trees/woodland have already take place across the open parts of the area, and this is to be encouraged as long as appropriate native tree stock is used and properly managed into the future.

Guidelines

Actions appropriate to Clay Hill are those that encourage its restoration to reflect the character of the Blean Woods.

- Encourage establishment and management of native broadleaf woodland to link with Ellenden Woods.
- Avoid inappropriate large scale or obtrusive elements on the visually sensitive ridgeline.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Very few
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Very weak

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Very weak
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

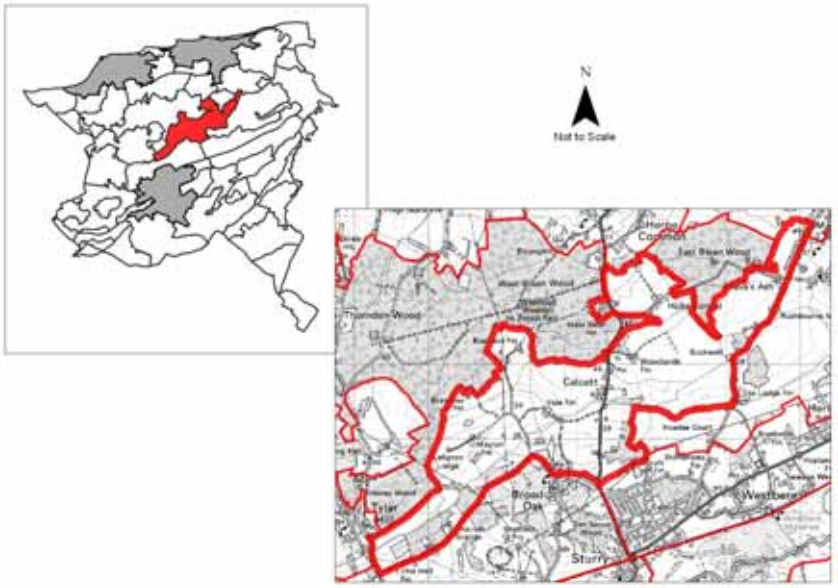
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

25. Broad Oak Valley

Key Characteristics

- Rolling arable landscape divided into long valleys by the Sarre Penn and other narrow streams.
- Fringed by ancient woodland to the north.
- Heavy clay soils with distinct narrow bands of Head Brickearth following valley floors.
- Small scale irregular field pattern.
- Strong hedgerow network and mature dense tree corridors flanking valley streams.
- Long views to east and south from higher ground across distant farmland.
- Mature deciduous woodland located along southern valley slopes.
- Scattered residential properties and plant nursery sited along main roads.
- Isolated farmsteads
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape Description



Broad Oak Valley is a rolling arable landscape with rounded slopes, divided into a series of long valleys, where narrow streams cut west to east across the area. The most notable of these is the Sarre Penn. The area stretches from Tyler Hill in the west, north of Broad Oak and Sturry and is bounded by West and East Blean Woods to the north with a small area located in between the two woods. It is an area of simple geology where blue-grey London Clay is overlain with drift of Head Brickearth, Head Gravel and alluvium. The drift and alluvium run in distinct narrow bands along valley floors, whilst small isolated patches of gravel are located on higher ground. It should be noted that some of this area has been identified as geologically suitable for a reservoir.

The field pattern is small scale and irregular with a strong network of hedgerows and dense mature tree corridors along valley streams. Arable farming is the primary function, with small isolated valley fields of rough grassland, east of Tyler Hill. Small scale mixed deciduous and coniferous woodlands, containing sweet chestnut and hazel coppice stands are scattered across the slopes. The networks of woodlands and hedgerows create a strong pattern and are valuable for wildlife. The stream itself is ecologically important for riparian species.

There is a strong sense of enclosure due to the dense mature woodland corridors and rolling topography and the edge of Blean Woods to the north. Thus views tend to be restricted. However, from higher points there are long views to the east and south over adjacent farmland.

The designated sites within this character area reflect its position within The Blean ancient woodland complex. There are two fragments of the larger Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI): West Blean and Thornden Woods and East Blean Woods. Two separate parcels of the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pastures Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are also situated here; the western parcel providing an extension to the West Blean SSSI section mentioned above.

The A291 cuts north-south through the centre of the area, along which are scattered mixed style residential and commercial developments. Elsewhere vehicular access is very limited with minor rural lanes and tracks leading to isolated farmsteads.

25. Broad Oak Valley

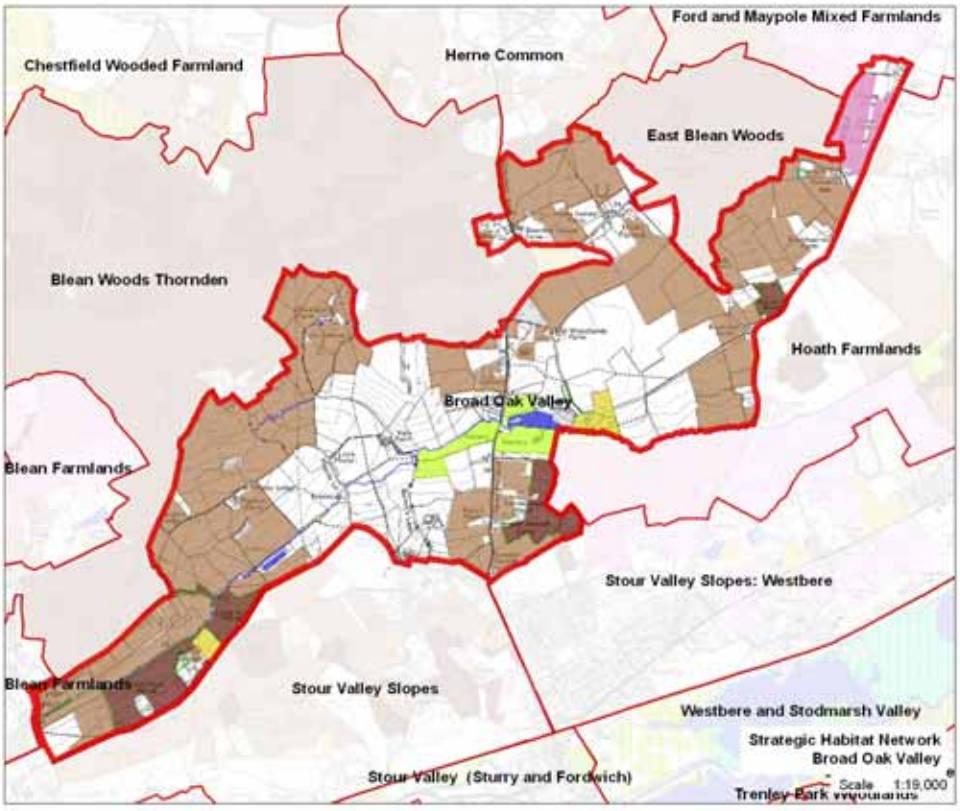
Condition

The Broad Oak Valley is a landscape in good condition. It is a unified arable landscape with a good network of mature hedgerows. Some of these hedgerows are fragmented along the lanes and have been supplemented with chestnut pale and post and wire fencing. There are few detracting features in the area. Electricity pylons are prominently located crossing valleys and ridgelines. Modern agricultural barns are built in unsympathetic materials, but generally well sited in valleys. Other buildings are limited to a few farms and scattered houses. These are mixed age and built from traditional red brick and have a low impact on the landscape. Some of the designated woodland currently appears to suffer from a lack of active coppice management.

Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The small scale pattern of fields and hedgerows is characteristic of the area with historic origins dating back to medieval times. The rolling landscape and enclosure from the hedgerow network restrict views to the higher ground and overall the visibility is moderate.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

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- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

25. Broad Oak Valley

There is significant strategic habitat network opportunity here, largely reflective of the area's position on the edge of The Blean. The Living Landscapes model shows large swathes of land throughout this character area to have potential for woodland habitat networking. Such habitat creation would help to extend and link the significant resource of ancient woodland situated north of Broad Oak Valley and the smaller blocks of woodland on the southern side of the valley. In addition there are also some smaller patches of wetland and grassland network opportunity in the centre of this character area, adjacent to the Sarre Penn. Also, to the north east, near Maypole, there is network opportunity for acid grassland/heath habitat adjacent to East Blean Woods.

Guidelines

Guidelines for the Broad Oak Valley are those that conserve and reinforce the landscape.

- Conserve rural character.
- Avoid visually dominant elements within the open landscape.
- Conserve and reinforce traditional hedgerow pattern.
- Conserve and reinforce the historic small scale, irregular field pattern.
- Ensure management of the streams to improve water quality and levels and manage riparian vegetation sensitively to balance nature conservation and landscape issues.
- Promote active coppice management where appropriate in designated woodland habitats.
- Resist proposals for development within the area.
- Develop woodland habitat where indicated as appropriate in the strategic habitat network model.
- Explore opportunities for wetland habitat creation near the Sarre Penn.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Good**
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition				
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	High
	Sensitivity		

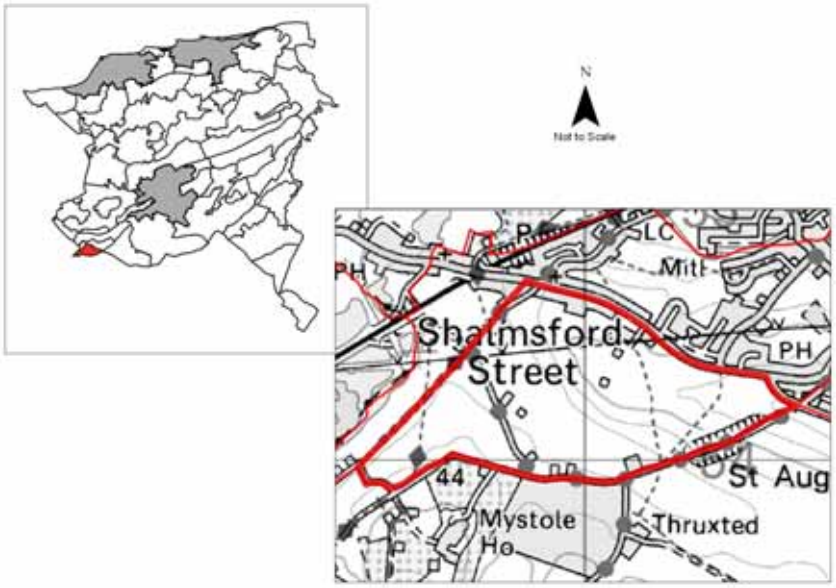
Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

26. Shalmsford Slopes

Key Characteristics

- Undulating topography, rising to the north.
- Large arable fields.
- Gappy roadside hedgerows with a distinct loss of elm.
- Narrow hedge lined lanes.
- Modern development along Shalmsford Street.
- Traditional small rural settlement of Underdown.
- Key designations comprise a Conservation Area.

Landscape Description



Shalmsford Slopes is located south of the Stour Valley on the chalk dip slope of the downs, and is bordered by Shalmsford Street to the north and Mystole Road to the south. The topography is undulating, with panoramic open views across the Kent Downs AONB to the south from higher ground to the north made more apparent by the open arable land use. Although there are no woodland blocks within the area, tree cover is apparent in the form of native hedgerows which line the narrow roads, and mature vegetation around properties. The silty soils are intensively farmed, with hedgerow loss contributing to expansive and irregularly shaped open arable fields. Some smaller scale pockets of pasture are located around Underdown Farm to the south, providing a localised but more intimate character.

There are no designated biodiversity sites within this small character area and existing land use is largely arable and improved grassland.

Recent development along the southern edge of Chartham contrasts with the traditional clustered settlement at Underdown to the south where properties are traditional and isolated. The few roads are narrow and hedge lined, although Shalmsford Street along the northern boundary has been widened to accommodate the volume of traffic through Chartham.

26. Shalmsford Slopes

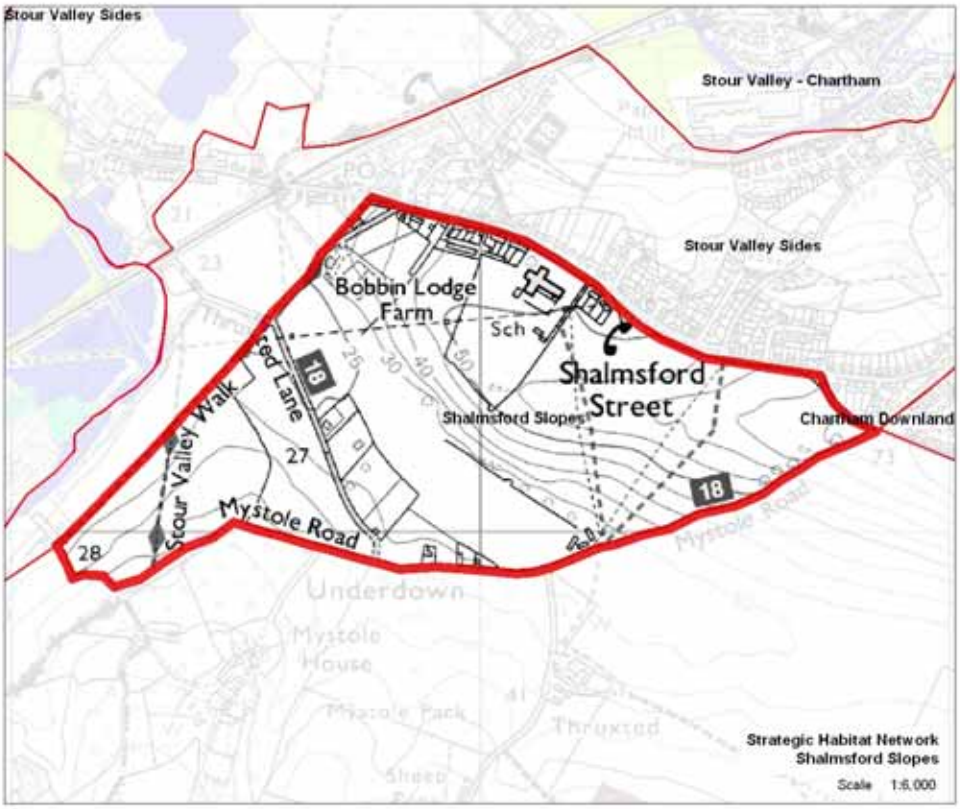
Condition

Shalmsford Slopes is in moderate condition. The overall pattern of elements is coherent with few visual detractors. Visual detractors comprise a derelict large scale agricultural barn to the south, pylons and poorly maintained fencing. However, there has been hedgerow, and therefore field pattern, loss and there is no evidence of recent planting. The land is intensively farmed and tree cover is limited, with evidence of gaps in remaining roadside hedgerows caused by loss of elm. Ecological integrity is weakened as a result of intensive land use and hedgerow loss, although hedgerows along roads provide corridors for wildlife.

Sensitivity

Overall this is a highly sensitive area. The dominant landform provides a strong downland character and high visibility, although loss of hedgerows and historic field pattern is evident. The impact of built development is moderate. Modern development at Chartham contrasts with traditional oast houses and the use of Kent peg tiling at Underdown to the south where there is strength of character and a unique sense of place.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

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- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

26. Shalmsford Slopes

This character area falls outside of the strategic habitat network identified by the Living Landscapes model. Any existing habitats are too small or too isolated from the major clusters to qualify under the parameters of the model. However, these small habitats remain important for maintaining the local area's wildlife interest and would benefit from greater connectivity through, for example, hedgerow restoration and sensitive road verge management.

Guidelines

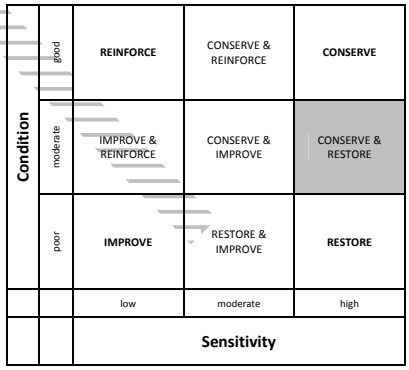
Shalmsford Slopes is a landscape which should be conserved and restored.

- Reinstate traditional field boundaries where they would have a function, particularly alongside roads.
- Conserve traditional buildings and use of traditional materials.
- Improve the condition/remove derelict farm buildings.
- Resist further development off Shalmsford Street to the north.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High



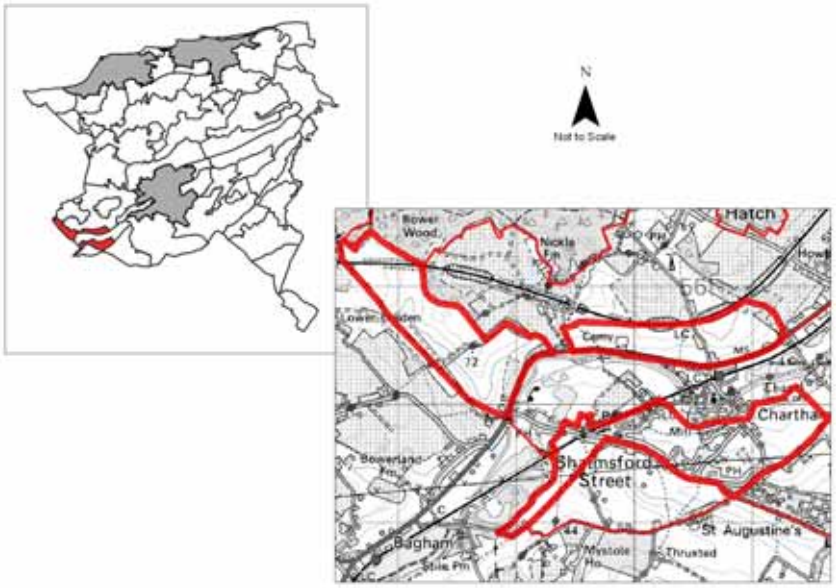
Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

27. Stour Valley Sides

Key Characteristics

- Undulating chalk slopes with well drained chalky loam soils with narrow seams of silty deposits.
- Agricultural land classifications mainly Grade 2 and 3 with small pockets of Grade 1.
- Open ploughed fields provide for long views across the Stour Valley.
- Mature hedgerows and small blocks of mature trees help to maintain field structure.
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows.
- 20th century development built in prominent position along Shalmsford Street ridge.
- Key designations are the peripheries of a Conservation Area and a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This is an area divided into three parts, lying on the chalk slopes, either side of the Stour Valley, north and south of Chartham. The undulating northern slopes rise steeply from 20-80 metres and more gently from 15-40 metres in the south. The distinct chalk slopes provide well-drained, chalky loam soils, with narrow seams of silty drift deposits in the dry valley depressions. These good quality soils support cereals and grassland in rotation. The agricultural land classifications are Grade 3 on the lower slopes, improving to Grade 2 on the higher ground, with small pockets of Grade 1 on the highest points.

Within this three-part character area there is little in the way of designated biodiversity interest apart from the southern portion of Langdane Wood, a small ancient woodland site which falls within the wider Blean Woods South Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Elsewhere in this character area, there are mature hedgerows and occasional small blocks of undesignated woodland.

The open ploughed fields provide for long views, south across the Stour Valley, to the rural landscape beyond. Mature hedgerows and small blocks of mature tree and scrub planting help to maintain field structure and enclose the narrow winding lanes. The village of Shalmsford Street has been expanded during the 20th century with small residential estates of standardised social housing. Built along the ridge line, these are accompanied by telephone pylons and large modern mixed function buildings. Elsewhere scattered farmsteads and older cottages are hidden along rural lanes. The road network comprises narrow hedge-lined lanes and suburban style streets.

27. Stour Valley Sides

Condition

The Stour Valley Sides at Chartham are in moderate condition. The agricultural landscape is generally coherent with fragmented hedgerows and small woodland blocks creating some unity in the landscape. The main detractor from this landscape is the residential development on the southern side which is often poorly sited along valley sides and ridges and makes no reference to local vernacular style.

The ecological interest of the area is moderate. In places there are strong hedgerow corridors linked to small clusters of woodland. Elsewhere internal boundaries have been removed for intensification of farming.

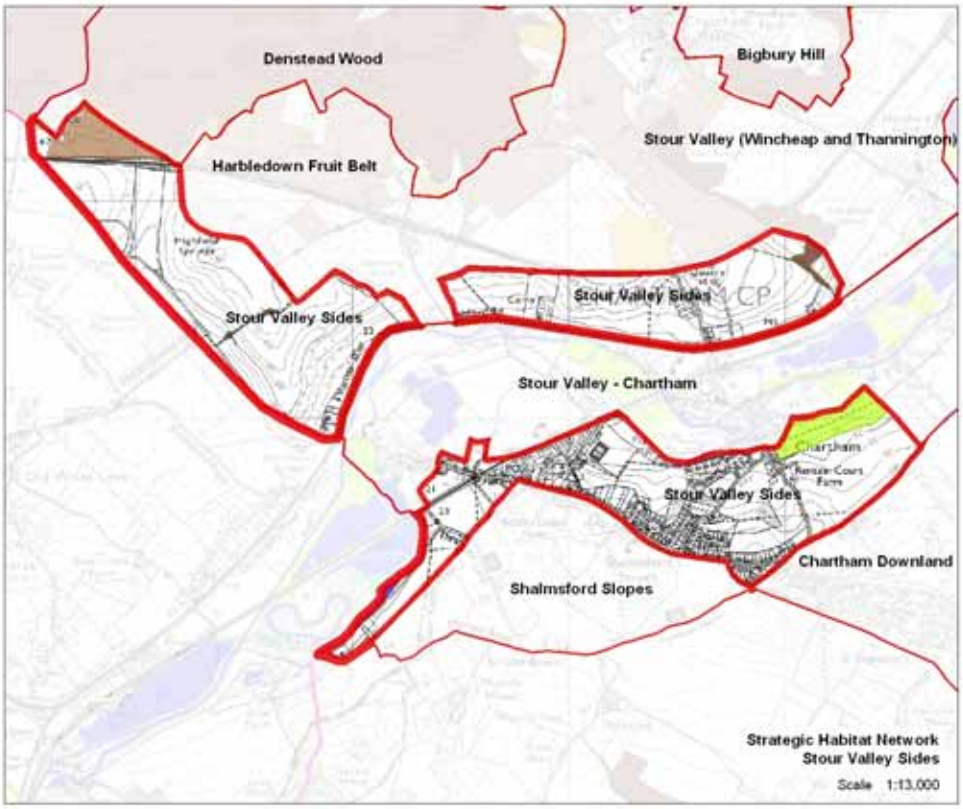
Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The rural landscape maintains its distinct character reflecting its historic origins, although this has been eroded through village expansion in the 20th century.

In general terms the visibility of this landscape is moderate. However this varies from high on the open elevated farmlands to low on the more enclosed lower slopes. The valley side location allows distant views of the area from outside of the character area.

Habitat Network Opportunity

An area of land north of the railway, next to Denstead Wood has network opportunity for woodland habitat. Elsewhere there is little network opportunity in this character area.



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- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

27. Stour Valley Sides

Guidelines

Guidelines for the Stour Valley Sides at Chartham focus on conserving the rural environment whilst improving the built environment.

- Conserve rural landscape through continued agricultural practice.
- Conserve landscape pattern through retention and management of existing hedgerows and woodlands, and buffering Denstead Wood to the north with new planting.
- Resist proposals to develop on ridgeline locations, and on the open visually sensitive valley sides to the north of the Stour.
- Where development is appropriate it should be of local scale and character, and relate to existing settlements.
- Improve and soften new development using characteristic landscape elements such as woodland blocks and hedgerows.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

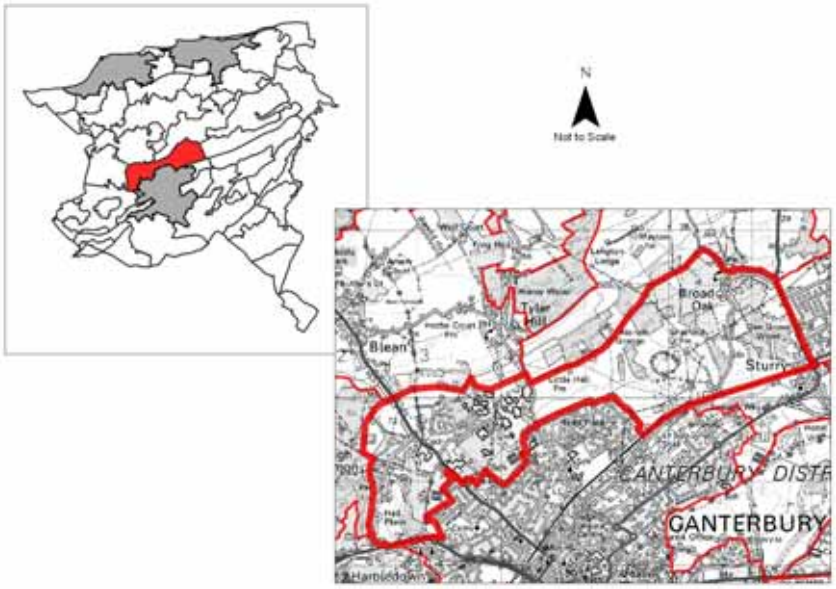
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

28. Stour Valley Slopes

Key Characteristics

- Complex geology and soils.
- South facing grassed slopes containing the City on its north side.
- Small blocks of semi-natural broadleaved woodland.
- Remnants of former parkland are evident at Hales Place but in decline.
- A fragmented landscape some of which has been absorbed into the City and other parts which have been disturbed by landfill and quarrying.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Area of High Landscape Value, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The Stour Valley Slopes rise above the Stour Valley forming a very definite ridge which contains Canterbury along its north western flank. The area stretches from Rough Common in the west to beyond Broad Oak in the east. It is an area of complex geology formed from the sandstones of the Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds overlain with River Terrace Gravels, reaching up to the London Clay cap of The Blean to the north. Mixed soils reflect the underlying geology. To the north is fine silty drift over London Clay. These soils are seasonally waterlogged and are generally not cultivated due to their wetness. In the Rough Common area the soils form a complex pattern of flinty coarse loams over gravely brown earths which are mostly under grass. The lower slopes towards Broad Oak have the same deep, well-drained, often stoneless soils as the fruit belts areas.

Where the Stour Valley Slopes are undeveloped these slopes are usually grassed as either playing fields, amenity land or pasture. The agricultural land classification is mostly Grade 3 with a small pocket of Grade 2 on the lower slopes towards Broad Oak where soils are of better agricultural quality. This area supports arable crops and there are also areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland throughout the area.

Part of the West Blean and Thornden Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies within the eastern part of this character area, reflecting the area's position on the edge of the ancient Blean Forest. In addition, Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) is an area of locally designated woodland with some species-rich pasture, also once part of the Blean Woods complex. Whilst most of the Blean Woodlands lie to the north and west of here, these smaller woodland parcels represent the most notable biodiversity interest in this character area. Elsewhere, the area consists of mainly arable, orchard and improved pasture land.

Hedgerows are often fragmented and only form a loose network of ecological corridors linking the woodland blocks.

28. Stour Valley Slopes

It is likely that this area once formed part of the Blean Woodlands and that much of the woodland clearance may be the result of the thriving 9th century pottery and ceramics industry and subsequent medieval brick and tile manufacture that relied upon the use of local clay and charcoal. The brick and tile industry which was centred on Tyler Hill continued until the 19th century. The road network was also established in medieval times as drove roads to the north Kent coast. The landscape structure today is essentially medieval.

Immediately to the east of St. Stephen's Hill is the site of the former Hales Place estate built in 1758 by Sir Edward Hales. It lies to the north of the site of a previous residence originally built in 1227 for Archdeacon Simon Langton by his brother Archbishop Stephen Langton. For 300 years it remained a favourite place for visiting Archbishops until it was surrendered to the Crown at the Dissolution. In 1562 Elizabeth I granted the estate to Sir Roger Manwood who rebuilt much of the old house. The estate was bought by the Hales family in 1675 that held it for 200 years and developed the house and parkland. Hales Place was acquired by Jesuits as a college in the late 19th century. When they left in 1928 the house and estate were taken over for housing development. There are a few remnants of the former parkland at Hales Place today. These comprise of some groups of scattered parkland trees and, most notably, a group of trees known as 'The Square' to the north of the housing area.

The growth of the City over the last century has resulted in extensive areas of the slopes being developed and, as a result, considerable fragmentation of the landscape has occurred. The western parts of the Stour Valley Slopes are backed by woodland on the ridgeline behind Rough Common. Along the northern edge of Canterbury there are areas of open space overlooking the City at Neal's Place and at the University of Kent. The University buildings along with the water tower at Neal's Place are striking elements on the ridgeline visible in many views around the City. The campus is set within an infrastructure of trees and with generous areas of open space.

From St. Stephen's Hill to Broad Oak the slopes are largely undeveloped and hence more rural in character. This is a mixed area of mostly grazed land adjacent to the urban edge, with larger arable fields and orchards towards Broad Oak village on the more fertile soils. Woodland cover increases as the valley sides approach Broad Oak. This breaks up the landscape and helps integrate more intrusive land uses such as the mineral extraction and landfill at Shelford Quarry. The areas of pasture backed by woodland on the ridge contain the City and form a backdrop for views from the City and the eastern side of the Stour Valley.

Views of the City

There are extensive views over the City from the south facing slopes with the Cathedral as a notable focal point. The best vantage points for these views are the slopes beneath the University, Neal's Place and across the grazed pastures of St. Stephens Hill. Many of these views are important local viewpoints away from traditional tourist and traffic routes, such as at Neal's Place where the view is framed by the shallow dished landform of the open space.

From the University and Neal's Place mature vegetation softens the suburban edge to give a view of the Cathedral surrounded by the clustered roof tops of the City. More recent housing at Hales Place lacks this vegetative cover and forms a harsher edge. Following the valley side towards Broad Oak, views of the historic City diminish although there are views down to the more industrial landscape of the Stour Valley along the Sturry Road.

28. Stour Valley Slopes

Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is poor. Traditionally the Stour Valley Slopes would have been a pastoral landscape divided by hedgerows and woodland blocks. The pattern of this landscape is still evident although today often fragmented by recent changes in land use.

To the west of the Stour Valley Slopes, pasture has been replaced by numerous playing fields particularly around the University of Kent and St. Edmund's school. Where they respect the historic field patterns these playing fields sit most comfortably in the landscape and some fields still remain that are more traditionally managed for pasture. Inappropriate species in more recent plantings around the playing fields and scattered ornamental trees in amenity areas such as at the University erode the traditional vegetation patterns and fragment wildlife corridors. The playing fields and amenity grasslands are regularly mown and are of relatively low ecological value.

Moving eastwards the land is more traditionally managed as pasture. Large areas of grassland remain with some hedgerows and small blocks of woodland. However the hedgerows are often fragmented and only form a loose network of ecological corridors linking the woodland blocks. Some of the designated woodland suffers from a lack of appropriate coppice management. There is some arable farming towards Broad Oak but overall the area is not intensively farmed.

Throughout the area there are detracting features including quarrying and landfill at Shelford, electricity pylons and telecommunications masts on the ridgeline above Rough Common. These downgrade local views but are not always apparent in the broader landscape.

The exposed urban edge downgrades views of the City, particularly around the Hales Place area, where the vegetation cover is weak. At Hales Place the housing is modern terraces and blocks built in the 1960s and '70s. It creates a stark edge with its low pitched or flat roofed buildings and white boarded details. The remnants of the former parkland at Hales Place and the traditional hedgerow enclosure across the area are barely evident. Further west below the University, at Neal's Place and at Rough Common there are detached and semi detached red brick suburban houses. The tiled pitched roofs set amongst mature trees and gardens create a softer urban edge.

The University of Kent is sited along the ridgeline and was initially built in the 1960s. It is a campus style development with medium to large blocks of buildings set within generous amounts of open space. The site is well maintained although more recent planting adds little structure to the landscape.

The Stour Valley Slopes is a landscape that has been under considerable pressure from the growth of the city during the later half of the 20th century. Many of its distinctive features have been lost to development or have become eroded through neglect. The decline of the traditional structure and pattern of the landscape poses the greatest threat to the future character of this landscape.

28. Stour Valley Slopes

Sensitivity

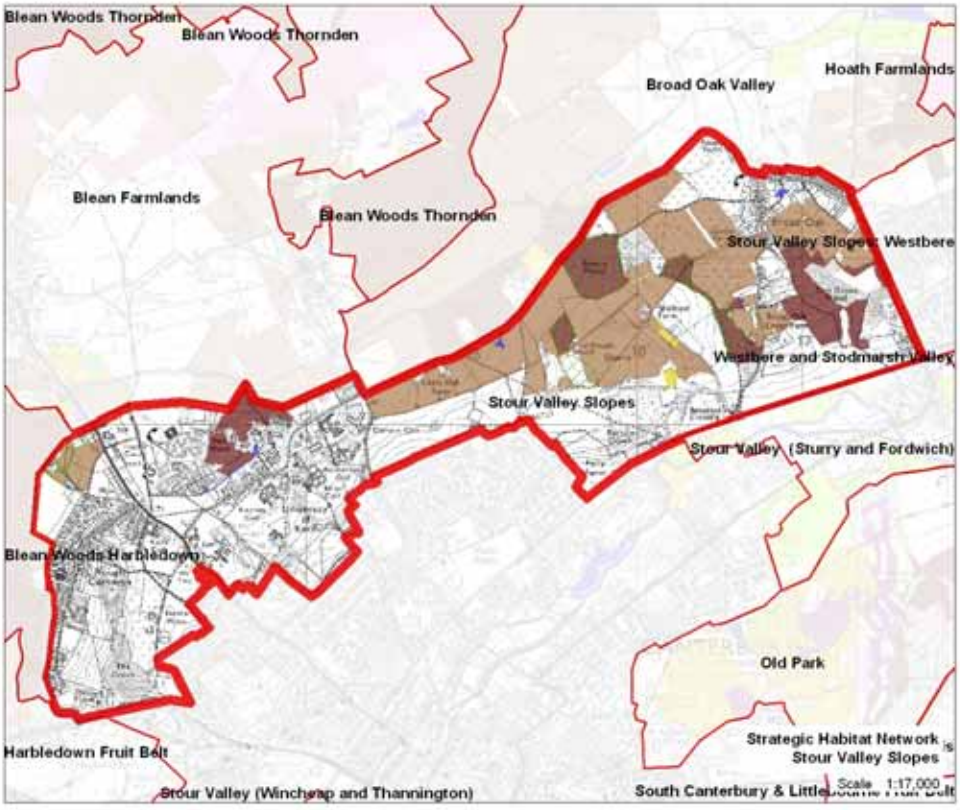
The traditional landscape of the Stour Valley Slopes is still evident despite the recent changes which have greatly modified this area. It has a moderate sense of place and retains many distinctive features such as the striking views over Canterbury, the remnant parkland features and elements of the former enclosure pattern.

The dominant south-facing grassed slopes combined with the filtered tree cover from small blocks of woodland and other trees gives a highly visible landscape overall. Where the tree cover is more broken the visibility and sensitivity of the landscape is greatest. The ridgeline plays an important role for viewing the City. It also is particularly important as a backdrop to views out from the City and from the landscape to the east.

Where the gradient is less steep the enclosure from woodlands and buildings restricts all but local views in and out. This occurs to the north of Rough Common and above the University beyond the steepest part of the slope as the landform starts to level and form The Blean. These areas are less visually sensitive at a very local level, although they exhibit many of the other distinctive features. However, their ridgeline location makes them particularly sensitive when viewed in the broader landscape. This is demonstrated by the high visibility of the existing water tower and telecommunications mast.

Habitat Network Opportunity

There is significant opportunity in this area to extend and buffer the woodlands of The Blean southwards into the Stour valley, towards Canterbury. This would also link the small blocks of woodland scattered throughout this area between the University of Kent and Broad Oak.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

28. Stour Valley Slopes

Guidelines

Appropriate actions for the Stour Valley Slopes are those which encourage its conservation and restoration. These actions include:

- Encourage the restoration of the historic parkland planting.
- Strengthen the boundary on the edge of Hales Place housing estate in a manner that reflects the historic connections.
- Strengthen and recreate the traditional field pattern.
- Conserve and restore open grass slopes overlooking the City.
- Promote active coppice management of designated woodland habitat where appropriate.
- Resist further fragmentation and seek to create new woodland or woodland corridors where significant opportunity exists between the University and Broad Oak village.
- Strengthen the structure of the field pattern on the slopes beneath the University resisting the further introduction of scattered ornamental planting.
- Resist the introduction of dominant features on the visually sensitive ridgeline.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Poor**
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Varied
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

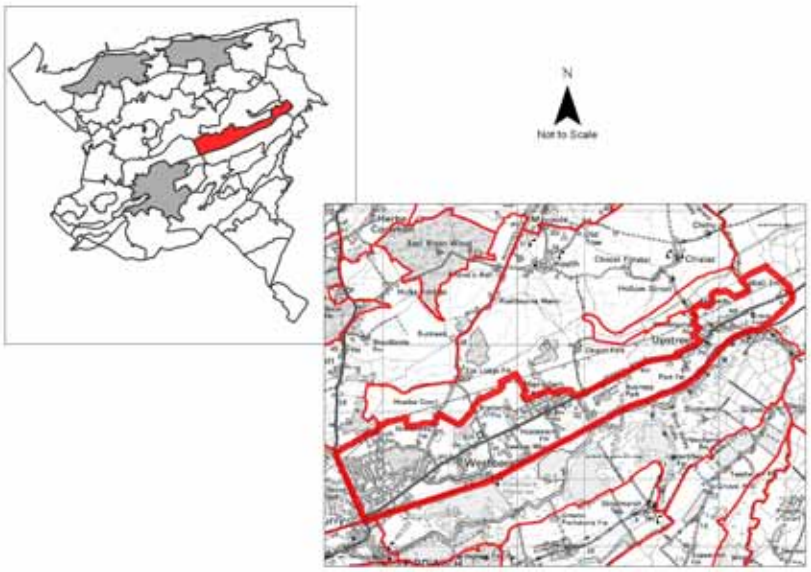
Guidelines: Restore and Improve

29. Stour Valley Slopes: Westbere

Key Characteristics

- Substantial ridge above the Stodmarsh Valley.
- Complex geology of sandstones and clay overlain with silts and gravel.
- Agricultural land classification of Grades 2 and 3 used mainly for arable production.
- Isolated settlements of diverse character.
- Much unsympathetic 20th century commercial and industrial development along the A28.
- Mixed field pattern of large and small scale.
- Scattered small deciduous woodlands.
- Urban fringe activities such as horsiculture and playing fields.
- Views mainly enclosed by vegetation and built development, but wide open from parts of the A28 ridge.
- `A' roads and narrow, enclosed country lanes.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Area of High Landscape Value and a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The Stour Valley Slopes rise above the Stour Valley forming a distinct ridge. The character area stretches from Sturry to Upstreet along the A28, with the railway forming the southern boundary. The geology in the area is complex, formed from the sandstone of the Thanet, Woolwich and Oldhaven Beds and London Clay overlain with fine silty drift of head brickearth and gravel. Until 1969 deep coal measures were mined from this area, although surface evidence of Chislet Colliery is now gone. To the north of the area the clay is cultivated for arable production, as are the large clay fields between Hersden and Upstreet which drop down to the Stodmarsh Valley. The agricultural land classification is Grade 2 and 3.

The Former Hersden Colliery Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is a designated site situated in the centre of this character area, and is noted primarily for the lichen heath community that has established on the consolidated colliery waste. This is fragile habitat that is easily lost by change in use or colonisation by higher plants. Parcels of woodland and scrub habitat to the west of the character area, north of Sturry and Westbere, are locally designated as LWS.

Small areas of mixed deciduous woodland are scattered across the area. Many hedgerows have been removed to create large arable fields across the upper slopes. Smaller scale fields enclosed by mature fragmented hedgerows, are located around built up areas. These are mainly farmed for crop production, but some are used for urban fringe activities such as horsiculture and playing fields.

The historic village of Westbere is isolated by topography from other residential areas and has therefore retained its character, although some late 20th century fringe development has expanded the village outskirts. Within the village are many examples of building in local vernacular style. Flint, brick and weatherboarded properties are in good condition. Elsewhere older properties have been engulfed by 20th century development, uncharacteristic of the area.

Hersden is a former mining village that was developed as part of Abercrombie's Regional Plan for East Kent to provide housing for miners at Chislet Colliery in the early 1900s. It was originally designed for 1000 homes by architect J Skipper. It was to include a village green, church, institute, rectory, school, swimming pool, shops and inn. Chislet Colliery closed in 1969 and the planned village was only partially realised.

29. Stour Valley Slopes: Westbere

Recent housing development has been built on the western outskirts of Hersden, increasing the built development within the landscape. Two buildings of notable interest are Port Farmhouse and The Vision House at Upstreet. The former is a timber framed Grade II listed 15th century building with associated farm buildings such as the early 18th century brick built barn and granary both of which are listed Grade II. Other noteworthy buildings in this complex are the single storey brick stable and extension, also Grade II, dating from the late 18th to 19th century and the red brick walls which form the walls to an out-building with a 19th century roof.

Views tend to be enclosed by vegetation and built development around urban areas but there are broad views across the large arable fields which stretch across the landscape towards Hoath. The area is bisected by the Roman road which linked Canterbury to Richborough, and is now the A28. This runs east west across the top of the ridge and provides some of the best views since it is open on either side. The A291 lies along the western boundary. Elsewhere the lanes are narrow, winding and enclosed by dense mature hedges.

Condition

The Stour Valley Slopes at Hersden and Westbere are in poor condition. It is an incoherent landscape with many detracting features. Residential areas are vastly different in character and are interrupted by a large modern car showroom and industrial units of individual character, particularly along the A28. There are scattered farms with land fragmented by areas of residential development. At Hersden, institutional style housing is located on the ridge and is highly visible. Without its original function of serving the colliery it now sits isolated in the landscape. Light industrial units occupy the former colliery site, and some shale remains on former spoil heaps.

Throughout the area there are fragmented hedgerows in varying condition. In places they are strong and mature, often along lanes. Small to medium scale woodlands are scattered and isolated in the landscape. Overall the ecological value of the area is considered to be moderate. The cultural integrity of the area is variable. Traditional hedgerow boundaries are in decline, supplemented by post and wire fencing or lost to agricultural intensification or development pressure.

Sensitivity

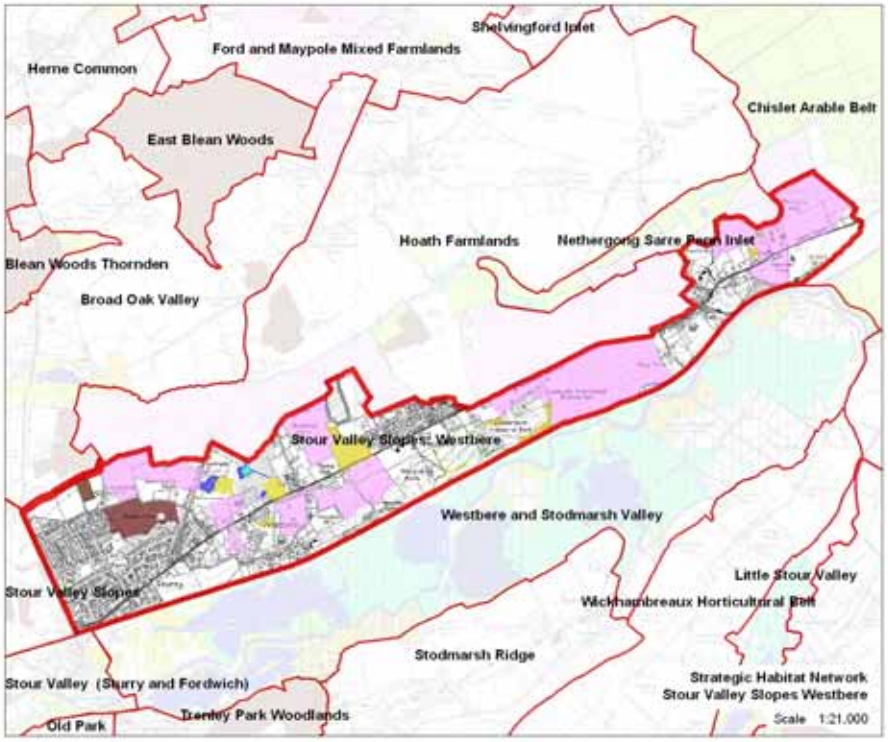
This is an area of low sensitivity. It has a weak sense of place. The landscape has been eroded to such an extent, particularly over the latter half of the 20th century, that it now has little identity of its own.

The visibility of the area is high although views within the area are sometimes contained by the fragmented tree cover and development. However the valley side location means that there are views into and out of the area across the valley floor over Stodmarsh Ridge and along the Great Stour Valley at Grove Ferry.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The Living Landscapes/KLIS model reveals that this area has very extensive opportunity for developing part of the acid grassland/heath network due to the underlying soils and the proximity to existing and potential heath habitats within the nearby Blean complex. Smaller areas of neutral species-rich grassland opportunity also exist here.

29. Stour Valley Slopes: Westbere



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Detracting features:	Many
Visual unity:	Slightly interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	Low
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Very weak
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	low	moderate	high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Sensitivity

Guidelines: Improve

Guidelines

The Stour Valley Slopes: Westbere are in need of improvement.

- Improve landscape structure through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along roadsides.
- Improve the damaged landscape associated with the former colliery site, whilst maintaining existing biodiversity interest, and encouraging species-rich, low fertility grassland and heath creation.
- Consider ways to integrate new and existing development into the landscape using traditional landscape elements such as woodland blocks and hedgerows.
- Improve ecological networks by creating and linking acid grassland/heath habitats across the area.
- Improve design standards for new developments in the area.
- Resist proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements on the visually sensitive valley sides and ridgeline.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

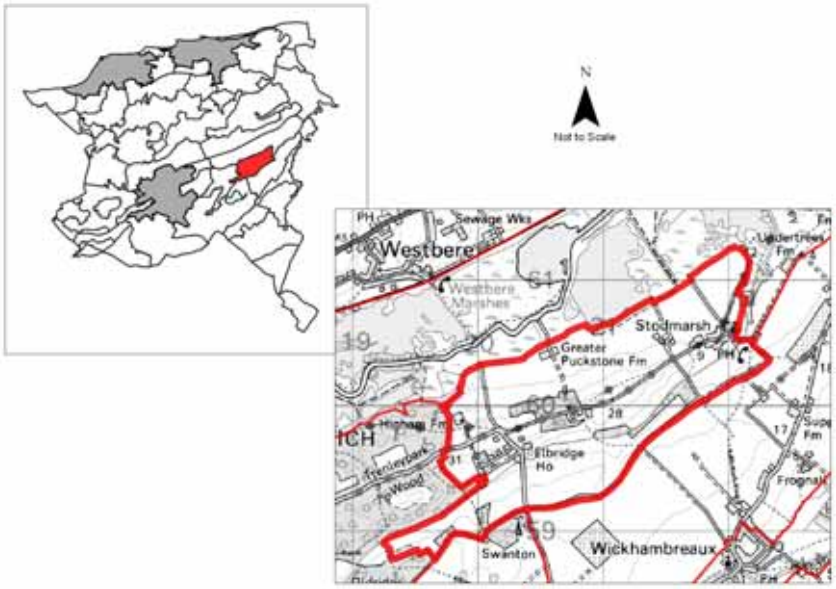
- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

30. Stodmarsh Ridge

Key Characteristics

- An isolated undulating landscape composed of a ridge that drops steeply into the valley of the Lampen Stream.
- Complex geology of sandstones overlain by silty soils and gravels.
- Grade 1 agricultural land over the silty brickearths support cereal production, whilst the wetter Grade 3 land along the ridge and valley are used for cattle grazing and pasture.
- Fragmented mature hedgerows with standard oaks.
- Isolated settlement, scattered residential properties and farmsteads of historic interest.
- Small to medium scale, square and rectangular field pattern.
- Views tend to be restricted by topography and vegetation.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This area is situated to the south of the Westbere and Stodmarsh valley. It comprises the ridge north of Lampen Stream and the Lampen Stream river valley. It stretches from the edge of Trenley Park Wood on the western boundary to Stodmarsh village in the east. The southern boundary follows Hollybush Lane. The geology is a complex pattern of sandstone derived from the Thanet and Oldhaven beds, overlain with the fine silty drift deposits of head brickearth and river terrace gravels. The lower lying land to the north is Grade 1 agricultural land classification with poorer quality Grade 3 along the ridge and river valley.

The area is characterised by the central ridge that runs east west and drops down steeply to the Lampen Stream. Narrow winding hedge lined lanes lead into this isolated area. Hedgerows are well maintained or fragmented and contain standard oaks. The field pattern is generally on a smaller, more intimate scale within the Lampen Stream Valley and along the ridge, where the land is classified as of poorer quality. Here pasture and meadows are used for grazing cattle. To the north the larger cereal fields are located on the better quality land made up of silty soils. Small areas of mature, mixed, historic woodland have been retained and recently increased along the dense riparian corridor, which follows Lampen Stream. Even from the highest points of the ridge, views tend to be restricted by topography and vegetation, although there are some long views to the south over the adjacent fruit belt.

The only designated habitat represented here is a very small parcel of woodland and acid grassland in its south west corner known as Swanton Aerial Site Littlebourne Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Elsewhere this area is a mixture of arable land with smaller parcels of improved pasture and woodland. The Lampen Stream flows through the valley below the ridge, upstream of where it enters Stodmarsh Nature Reserve. This gives this watercourse particular conservation value due to its influence on internationally important wetland habitat downstream.

30. Stodmarsh Ridge

Settlement is restricted to the linear village of Stodmarsh, isolated historic farmsteads and infrequent scattered cottages. Stodmarsh is known to have been settled since Saxon times with earliest documentary evidence dating from 678AD. Its name has its origins in the Saxon word 'stode' or mare when the area was devoted to breeding horses. A Saxon barrow in the in the area has revealed a number of antiquities. Many of the buildings in Stodmarsh are of great character, built in vernacular materials such as weatherboard, brick and half tile hung and flint. Elbridge House and its former parkland date back to the 15th century and includes a small lake. Evidence of former hop production is indicated by the immaculately maintained oasthouses of Elbridge Farm.

Condition

The Stodmarsh Ridge is a landscape in good condition. It is a unified, arable landscape with small to medium scale fields. The hedgerows generally remain intact along the lanes, although fragmented and lost across the valley. Where they have been lost they tend to have been replaced by uncharacteristic post and wire fencing.

It is an area that functions well. There are small areas of isolated, mature mixed deciduous woodland. These are managed by coppicing; however, they are not well linked due to hedgerow loss and intensive arable farming. The Lampen Stream corridor has mature trees and good riparian vegetation, supplemented by some recent mixed deciduous planting.

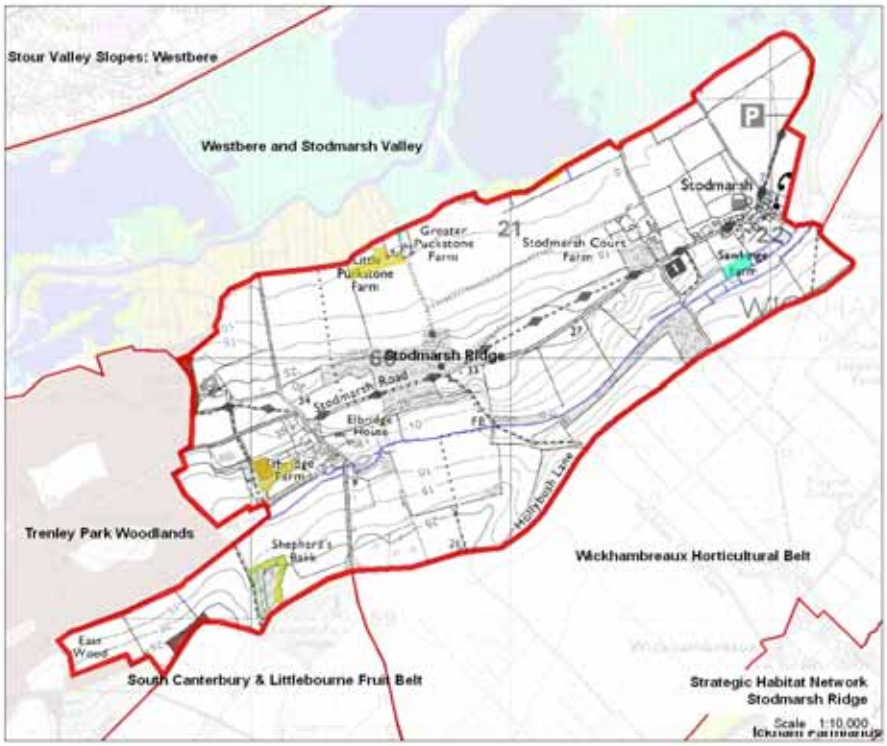
Sensitivity

Overall this is a highly sensitive area. It is an historic and distinct landscape of woodland and mixed farmland, with narrow lanes enclosed by high hedgerows. Stodmarsh itself is a village of great charm and character. The dominant ridge and intermittent vegetation create a highly visible landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity

There are very few habitat-specific network opportunities here apart from a few scattered parcels of land with species-rich grassland network potential. However, any habitat creation that would buffer adjacent designated sites at Stodmarsh to the north or Trenley Park Woodlands to the west would be of benefit to the overall habitat network. Enhancement of the Lampen Stream riparian corridor is also recommended.

30. Stodmarsh Ridge



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Good
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Detracting features:	Very Few
Visual unity:	Strongly unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Strong

Sensitivity:	High
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Guidelines

Stodmarsh Ridge is a landscape that should be conserved.

- Conserve and manage woodland blocks.
- Conserve the riparian habitats of the Lampen stream.
- Conserve and maintain characteristic narrow lanes and high lane side hedgerows.
- Restore hedgerows where gappy.
- Resist the introduction of visually intrusive elements on the ridgeline.
- Assess development proposals within the area to maintain the character of the built development.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

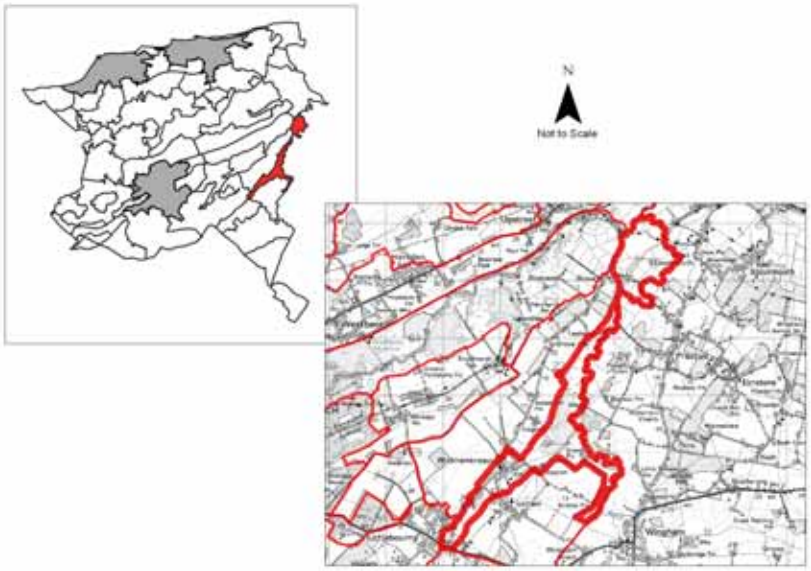
Guidelines: Conserve

31. Little Stour Valley

Key Characteristics

- Low lying and waterlogged, flat alluvial flood plain of the Little Stour river.
- Often poor quality grassland of agricultural land classification Grade 3, managed for grazing.
- Large man-made lakes formed as a result of gravel extraction.
- Distinctive riparian landscape character borne from historic functions.
- Small picturesque historic villages and buildings of unique character.
- Narrow winding lanes frequently cross the river.
- Views restricted by large areas of mature vegetation, occasionally long across valley floor and areas of open water.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The Little Stour Valley character area extends in a narrow corridor along the length of the river from Littlebourne to the grassland fields north east of Grove. The geology is Thanet Beds to the north, with Upper Chalk to the south, overlain with alluvium drift. Soils are clay to loam. The river forms the eastern boundary to Canterbury District and the characteristics described here are generally mirrored to the east of the river in Dover District. The area is characterised by the flat alluvial flood plain of the Little Stour river and continues to be managed in the traditional manner for grazing. Large areas have also been used for gravel extraction during the 20th century. To the north east of Wickhambreaux the resultant large man-made lakes are an important feature of the landscape and have been designated as Seaton Pits and Wenderton Manor Woods Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This is a high quality wetland site containing a rich flora with some rare plant species. Open water formed from flooded gravel pits here contain large reedbeds and is important for wetland birds. The site also includes woodland and pasture.

Preston Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) contains the last significant area of fen vegetation in the Little Stour valley, mostly consisting of reedbed and scattered willow scrub. There is a diverse plant community here, and the habitat attracts many breeding and wintering birds. Water voles are present at a number of sites along the river, and brown hare, water shrew and harvest mouse are recorded in the area.

The Little Stour is a good quality small river with a strong chalk river influence. Chalk rivers are a UK BAP priority habitat, and although the habitat is greatly influenced by a series of mill structures, the river provides an important wildlife corridor through this area.

The low-lying and waterlogged nature of this area means that arable crops are not typical on the valley floor. Grassland is often poor and the agricultural land classification is Grade 3. To the north grazing fields are divided by a network of wide ditches. This characteristic continues beyond the Canterbury District boundary.

31. Little Stour Valley

The valley has largely retained its traditional character. The distinctive wetland vegetation of marginal and aquatic species of the river corridor, the overgrown mill ponds and mill races associated with the tall weatherboarded mill houses, all add to the unique quality of this landscape and the tranquillity felt here.

The Little Stour winds its way across the meadow landscape, which is crisscrossed by minor lanes that follow the valley floor, linking the small picturesque historic villages and buildings found along its length. Buildings are a mixture of well maintained vernacular style properties. They include rare examples of weatherboarded water mills, large Georgian red brick properties, small Victorian red brick terrace cottages, occasional thatched cottages and ancient flint churches. Despite the variation in building styles the village of Wickhambreaux and outlying farmsteads and scattered residential properties, provide the area with a strong and unified identity. Wickhambreaux has a rich history with connections to the Church and Crown dating back to Saxon times. Most notably it was home to the Fair Rosamund Clifford in the 12th century and Joan Plantagenet, wife of the Black Prince, in the 14th century.

Condition

The Little Stour Valley is a coherent landscape in good condition. There is a strong corridor of mature riparian vegetation along the Little Stour and large areas of dense vegetation around the open water and marshland to the north. Land use is mainly pastoral with much of the area used for the promotion of wildlife.

The mature vegetation along the river corridor and gravel lakes is generally in good condition, however many of the hedgerows are fragmented and are being replaced by post and wire fencing and there are some over mature parkland trees. Occasional hedgerows are intact around actively grazed pasture. The built environment is particularly well integrated into the landscape. The older buildings sit comfortably in their rural setting and new development is limited in extent and well integrated. Overall the landscape is in good condition.

Sensitivity

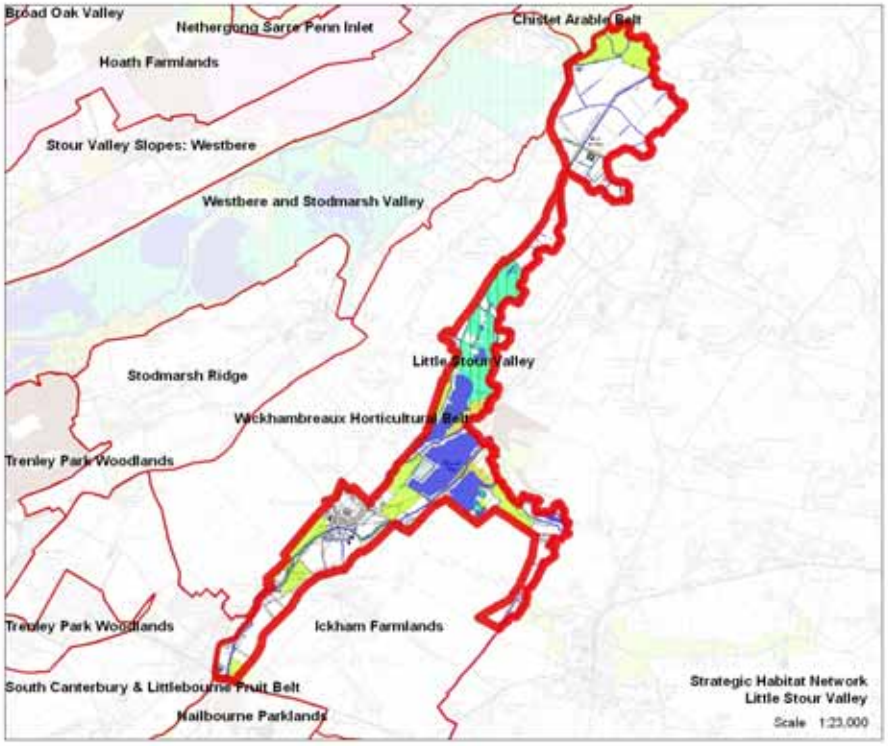
The Little Stour Valley is a moderately sensitive area. It is a very distinct landscape with riparian vegetation and pastures lending the area a strong and unique character. The historic village of Wickhambreaux has distinctive properties clustered around the village green, whilst traditional buildings and watermills scattered along the Little Stour reinforce the riparian character.

Visibility within the Little Stour Valley is low, contained by the valley itself and the intermittent vegetation.

Habitat Network Opportunity

There is potential identified for extending the wetland habitat within this area's designated sites southwards along the Little Stour floodplain, and along the Wingham River. There is a further area of wetland network opportunity at the northern limit of this character area near Grove Ferry. Elsewhere, conservation of existing wetland interest is appropriate. For example, Natural England's most recent condition assessment of Preston Marshes SSSI indicates that grazing could be better managed in the southern part of the site to reduce impacts on water-margin vegetation.

31. Little Stour Valley



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Very Strong

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Very Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Strong
Landform:	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Low

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines

The character of the Little Stour Valley should be conserved and reinforced.

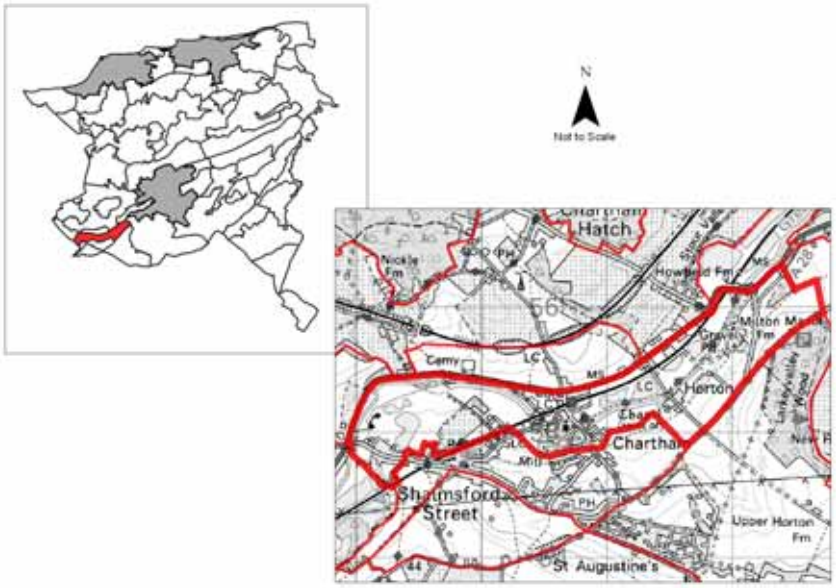
- Conserve and reinforce native riparian vegetation and riverbed sediment diversity along the river corridor through sensitive management.
- Conserve bodies of standing water and seek opportunities to extend and enhance shallow vegetated margins.
- Conserve traditional pastoral setting to Wickhambreaux, resisting pressure to over develop the popular village.
- Reinforce character of built environment reflecting the pattern, and design of traditional elements.
- Promote traditional grazing and maintenance and reinforcement of hedgerows for enclosure.

32. Stour Valley - Chartham

Key Characteristics

- Flat alluvial floodplain of the Great Stour.
- Small areas managed for grazing, grassland is poor quality and the agricultural land classification is largely Grade 3 with Grade 2 classification on isolated pockets of river terrace gravels above the floodplain.
- Gravel workings and industrial activities have despoiled large areas of the valley.
- Important transport link, through which run the A28 and railway embankment of the Canterbury to Ashford line.
- Small scale landscape with a strong sense of enclosure.
- Nucleated village of Chartham has a strong historic core with 20th century infill and peripheral expansion.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This area extends along the length of the valley from west of Thanington, along the A28 to just east of Chilham. It is characterised by the flat alluvial floodplain of the Great Stour river and clayey soils affected by groundwater. Traditionally this area was managed for grazing, just as small pockets are today. Grassland is poor quality and the agricultural land classification is largely Grade 3. Where isolated pockets of river terrace gravels are found on the higher ground above the floodplain of Shalmsford Street, the land has Grade 2 classification.

This landscape remained largely unchanged until the introduction of the railways in Victorian times. During the 20th century, gravel extraction and large scale industrial works have destroyed much of this historic landscape. The Stour Valley is an important transport corridor. The A28 and railway link Canterbury with Ashford, crossing the valley floor on embankments. These embankments and the assortment of railway architecture are significant features in the valley, subdividing the area.

This character area is inherently small scale and has a strong sense of enclosure, which is emphasised by the small blocks of mature vegetation located around water bodies, along the river corridor and scattered across the higher ground. This is further distinguished by the valley sides that rise dramatically around Chartham and Shalmsford Street away from the valley floor.

The River Great Stour and its associated wetland corridor is the key biodiversity interest within this character area. This is recognised by its designation as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This designated riverine habitat extends from Ashford to Fordwich, and so the section within this character area is an important habitat link through the District for aquatic and wetland species.

This section includes not only the river itself, which is of good water quality and well vegetated, but also floodplain ditches and some notable open lakes, resulting from previous gravel excavations.

32. Stour Valley - Chartham

Although this character area lies downstream of the true chalk geology, the River Stour here has a strong chalk influence. Chalk rivers are a UK and Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat. Riverine UKBAP species such as the otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish are known to be, or have been, present in this part of the Stour. The river and artificial lakes also have a notable fisheries interest.

Settlement is mostly limited to the nucleated village of Chartham sited within the floodplain and buildings on the outskirts of Shalmsford Street. Many of the properties are of historic interest, dating from the 17th century to the 20th century and in various vernacular styles. The remains of the flint Horton Chapel, thought to have been built in the 13th or 14th century, are a Scheduled Monument. Buildings at Milton Manor Farm are traditional, including a timber framed barn and a small church.

Recent quarrying and restoration activity at Milton Manor Farm, west of Cockering Road, has resulted in a localised manicured landscape with the landform appearing slightly unnatural along Cockering Road. Current excavation is, however, well screened from the surrounding landscape by mature vegetation belts.

Condition

Overall the condition of the Stour Valley at Chartham can be described as moderate. The pattern of elements is generally coherent with its small scale pasture and water bodies. However the development of the large industrial and commercial units built along the A28, east of Chartham has caused some significant degradation. The railway, road corridors, a sewage works and quarrying activity also interrupt this landscape.

The floodplain landscape of meadows, the river, hedgerows and wooded areas hold valued ecological interest. Where land is not in commercial use it is used for grazing. The historic buildings within the valley are mostly in good condition. At Chartham peripheral 20th century development and infill detracts from the historic core of the village. Mill housing along the river at Chartham and the paper mill are in a poor state of repair.

Sensitivity

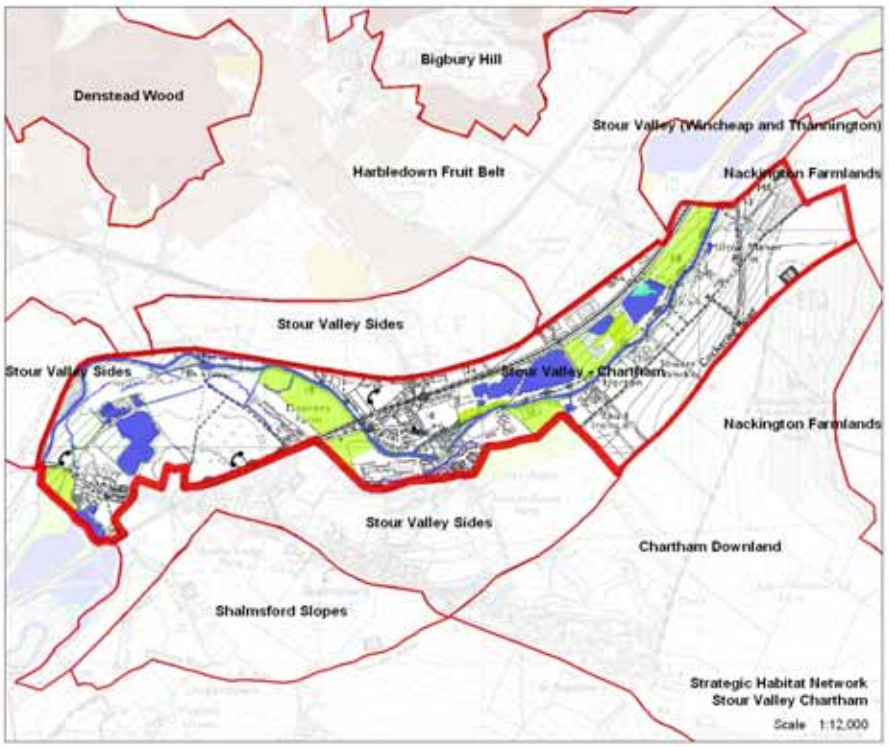
This is a highly sensitive landscape. Small areas of broadleaved woodland are essential in helping screen the built environment and maintain landscape continuity.

Trees along the river banks are a distinct feature of the valley floor and provide a strong character. Building styles and materials vary greatly, so that even in older buildings there is little continuity of style although in isolation numerous buildings are considered to be distinct in character. The dominant flat floodplain with intermittent vegetation creates a highly visible landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity

There is significant wetland habitat network opportunity along the Stour floodplain in this area. Ponds, scrapes, reedbeds and wet grassland are all habitats that would be appropriate to create or restore in this context. Opportunities for such habitat creation may arise from any future gravel extraction and should be carefully explored.

32. Stour Valley - Chartham



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Moderate
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Many
Visual unity:	Intermittent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Moderate

Sensitivity:	High
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Condition		low	moderate	high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
		Sensitivity		

Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

Guidelines

The guidelines are to conserve and restore.

- Conserve and restore traditional drainage pattern where it is in decline.
- Conserve and restore traditional extensive wetland grazing to enhance the pastoral valley floor setting of the river.
- Seek to create new wetland habitat features within the floodplain.
- Remove detracting features from the valley where practicable.
- Soften the impact of the built development by using planting appropriate to the landscape.
- Conserve and restore historic buildings and their settings.
- Resist built development in the floodplain, particularly near to the river.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

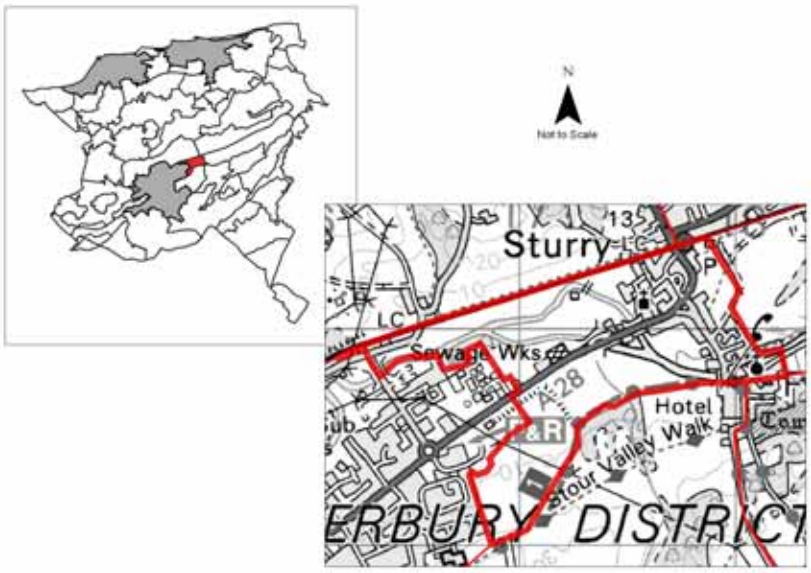
- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

33. Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich

Key Characteristics

- Flat alluvial floodplain with deep waterlogged soils divided by river channels and ditches.
- Grade 3 agricultural land mostly managed as wet meadows.
- Clumps of wetland tree species along channels.
- Traditional buildings with weatherboarding and local brick and tile at Fordwich and Sturry.
- Dominant commercial and retail units on valley floor forming the urban edge.
- Key designations are a Conservation Area, Area of High Landscape Value, Local Wildlife Site and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Landscape Description



The Stour Valley extends beyond the City to the north east along the Sturry Road. It is characterised by the flat alluvial floodplain and waterlogged soils. The land use is mainly improved pasture with some amenity grassland. The character area forms a green gap between the periphery of Canterbury and Sturry and Fordwich to the north east, although a garden nursery is situated along the A28. The nursery comprises a typical collection of large scale structures, and weakens the perception of open landscape in between the built up areas.

The River Great Stour and its associated wetland corridor is the key biodiversity interest within this character area. This is recognised by its non-statutory designation as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This designated riverine habitat extends from Ashford to Fordwich, and so the river corridor within this character area is the most downstream part of the LWS and an important aquatic and wetland habitat link into the Stodmarsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR). This area includes not only the river itself, but also floodplain grassland, which to the west of the area is less improved.

Riverine UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species such as the otter and water vole are known to be, or recently have been, present in this part of the Stour and although immediately downstream of the urban area, a good variety of aquatic plants and invertebrates are present.

Over the centuries this area has seen many changes. Canterbury's earliest port was in the vicinity of Sturry on the north west of the Stour. Sturry itself was originally a Roman settlement, probably with a quayside, located at the meeting point of two Roman roads (Canterbury to Upstreet and the road to Reculver). It was also an important focus for early Anglo-Saxon settlement. Its importance continued in medieval times when the manor at Sturry was held by St. Augustine's Abbey and was frequented by royal and archiepiscopal visitors. Fordwich has possibly been settled since prehistoric times and is first mentioned as an Anglo-Saxon settlement in 675 AD. It replaced Sturry as a port in Saxon times.

33. Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich

The Abbot of St. Augustine's was granted the right by Edward the Confessor to levy a toll on all merchandise brought by water to Fordwich. At this time the quay used to import Caen stone, wine and oil. The Stour remained navigable at Fordwich well into the 18th Century despite a constant battle to prevent silting up since the 15th Century. It was particularly valuable for the import of coal.

The Sturry Road itself is also of historic interest. In Roman times, when access from Thanet was probably by ferry across the Wantsum Channel where the Sarre Wall now runs, the road to Canterbury ran almost in a straight line to Sturry. It passed to the north of the church and then continued directly to Northgate. The Sturry Road has remained an important route into Canterbury. Its use intensified in the early 19th century with the growth of the Thanet towns and Herne Bay. The road from Sturry to Herne was turnpiked in 1814.

The landscape adjacent to Fordwich has largely escaped the pressures of the 20th and 21st centuries and the Stour retains its traditional character threading its way across low-lying pasture. In contrast this character is almost lost around the Sturry Road and Broad Oak Road which exhibit typical urban fringe characteristics such as out of town retail, car dealerships, park and ride and recent housing developments. Here the River Stour and the valley floor are largely lost from public view.

The area of land around the park and ride off the Sturry Road is difficult to place in a particular character area because of its history of disturbance and lack of boundaries on the ground. Historically it was part of an ancient deer park at Old Park although its geology and soils are split between the Stour Valley and Old Park character areas. It is included within the Stour Valley because the open flat characteristics it exhibits today, although it could not be restored to this character as it has lost its wetland character to a former landfill site. The Sturry Road Community Park (south of Sturry Road and the park and ride) comprises a public park with extensive young planting, created from community led green space regeneration of former wasteland.

Views of the City

Views of the City are limited from the Sturry Road area due to the scale of the buildings blocking views along the valley floor. At Fordwich the buildings diminish and there are attractive views across meadows in the floodplain towards the City. The intrusive urban fringe elements are lost behind groups of wetland trees, creating a tranquil, pastoral quality to the landscape. However large scale retail and commercial buildings block many views of the City. Beyond Fordwich to the north east there are views back towards the City from across the water bodies created by former gravel workings at Westbere.

Condition

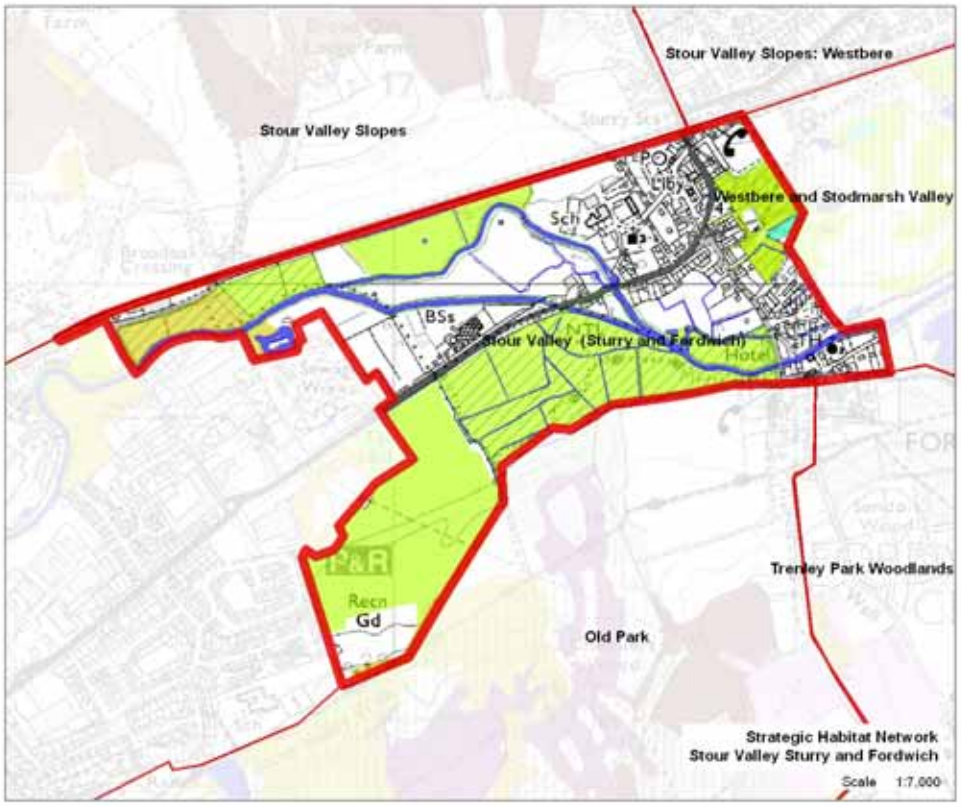
The issues affecting this area of the Stour Valley are similar in may ways to the Thanington and Wincheap area. Whilst much of the landscape is in poor

condition, the visual unity and pattern of elements around Fordwich are strong. The most damaged area is along Sturry Road towards Canterbury where the pattern is almost completely lost and detracting features include roads, railways, pylons, areas of former landfill and particularly out of town retail development. Overall, the condition of the landscape is moderate.

Sensitivity

Where the valley has remained undeveloped and the traditional pattern of ditches and meadows is distinct the strength of character is strong. However the pattern is not consistent over the entire area due to the decline in ditch network. Overall the strength of character if this area is considered to be moderate. The flatness of the valley floor combined with its limited tree cover creates a highly visible landscape. Overall the Stour Valley is assessed as a highly sensitive landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
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- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

There are significant areas of wetland and wet meadow network opportunity here as shown in the detailed habitat network potential map above. This includes floodplain fields north of the river, and to the south of the river and A28. Much, but not all, of this opportunity already falls within the designated sites. Examples of potential habitat creation might include flood-meadows (wet grassland), reedbeds, scrapes, lagoons and ponds.

33. Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich

Guidelines

The analysis of this part of the Stour Valley identifies many common issues with the Wincheap to Thanington area. Most notably is the sensitivity of the area to the impact of built development. Guidelines should encourage the conservation and restoration of the open valley landscape.

- Reconstruct the urban edge developing riparian belts of trees and shrubs to soften the impact of the built up area on this open and highly sensitive landscape.
- Manage watercourses for biodiversity and to maintain landscape pattern where they are in decline.
- Encourage traditional grazing pattern on wetland pasture.
- Resist further piecemeal erosion of the character area.
- Soften the impact of the built development by using planting appropriate to the local landscape.
- Enhance the visual characteristics and quality of the Sturry Road approach drawing upon its historic connections.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very High

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good		**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
moderate		IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor		**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

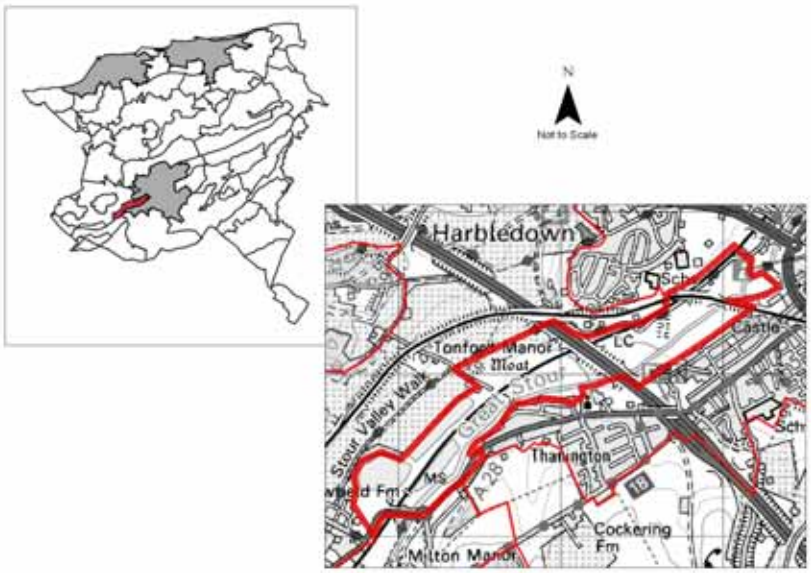
Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

34. Stour Valley – Wincheap and Thanington

Key Characteristics

- Flat alluvial floodplain with deep waterlogged soils divided by the channel of the River Stour and associated ditches.
- Grade 3 agricultural land managed as wet meadows.
- Lakes created from former gravel pits enclosed by mature wetland vegetation.
- Transport corridor containing railway and road embankments enclosing views and subdividing the area.
- Clumps of wetland tree species associated with river and ditches with mature trees established on the railway embankments.
- Key designations are an Area of High Landscape Value and a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The broad character area of the Stour Valley extends along the length of the valley from Ashford to the Chislet Marshes. It is characterised by the flat alluvial floodplain of the River Stour and clayey soils affected by groundwater. Traditionally this area was managed for grazing. Its low lying and waterlogged nature mean that settlement and arable crops are not typical on the valley floor. Grassland is often poor and the agricultural land classification is Grade 3. Meadows around Canterbury are noted in the Domesday survey in 1086. This landscape remained largely unchanged until the introduction of the railways in Victorian times.

In the 20th century gravel extraction, modern agricultural practice and the growth of the City have destroyed much of this historic landscape. It is these recent developments that have brought about local changes particularly in land use that subdivide in the Stour Valley. This section describes the section of the Stour Valley to the south west of the City from Thanington to the urban edge.

To the west of Thanington areas of former gravel workings form large water bodies surrounded by mature wetland vegetation. The River Stour passes the western extent of the urban area of Thanington, with the floodplain extending to the west. There are attractive views of the higher ground around Harbledown from the valley floor.

The River Great Stour and its associated wetland corridor is the key biodiversity interest within this character area. This is recognised by its non-statutory designation as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

Although this character area lies downstream of the true chalk geology, the River Stour here has a strong chalk influence. Chalk rivers are a UK and Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat. Riverine UKBAP species such as the otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish are known to be, or have been, present in this part of the Stour. The river and artificial lakes also have a notable fisheries interest.

The Stour Valley is an important link between the City and the countryside and throughout history it has been an important transport corridor.

34. Stour Valley – Wincheap and Thanington

Today the A2 cuts across it and the A28 from Ashford, the Ashford to Canterbury railway and the Faversham to Canterbury railway all follow the valley into the City. The Ashford to Canterbury line and the disused Elham Valley Railway both cross the valley floor on embankment. These embankments and railway architecture are significant features in the valley, enclosing views and subdividing the area. The brick viaduct over the Stour creates a focal point in the landscape and allows glimpses of the floodplain beyond.

Approaching the City north of the A2 the valley feels more enclosed as the land rises steeply above Whitehall Road to the north and the built environment tightens around the valley. Dominant commercial buildings and the gasometer at Wincheap encroach onto the valley floor. Along with playing fields and allotments these introduce an urban fringe character to this area. In contrast these playing fields and allotments also have an important role of bringing the green space into the heart of the City.

The Stour winds its way across the meadows creating a passive landscape despite the introduced features in the valley.

Views of the City

To the south west the valley narrows and is contained by the North Downs. This, combined with the screening effect of dense vegetation around the gravel pits, restricts views along the floodplain. Views of the City start to the east of the A28 crossing of the Stour and increase on the approach to Thanington.

There are intermittent views along the valley floor of the City and the Cathedral. To the south of the A2 these views are partly blocked by the road on embankment although Bell Harry Tower rises above this providing a strong focal point. North of the A2 there are views of Bell Harry Tower rising above the vegetation but the clutter of the built development tends to distract from the valley setting.

Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is moderate. The visual unity of the Stour Valley is interrupted by the introduction of elements within the valley. It is also strongly influenced by features on the edges of the valley and on the valley sides. Detracting features in the valley include the gas holder and mobile homes, with educational and commercial establishment on fringes. In addition the A2 and railway embankments are contrasting introduced elements in the landscape.

The ecological integrity is strong. There is a good network of ditches, floodplain pasture and scrub. The extent of semi-natural habitat is good but stops abruptly at the urban edge. The tree cover associated with the ditches and railway embankments has a diverse age structure and the ditch field boundaries are generally regularly managed although some are in decline. This retains the traditional pattern of enclosure and encourages ecological diversity. Recent industrial

archaeology in the form of railway heritage is evident in the valley floor, particularly where the remnant embankment of the disused Elham Valley Line curves across the floodplain.

Settlement is not traditionally characteristic of the floodplain; however there is a significant impact from recent commercial and retail development encroaching into the valley floor.

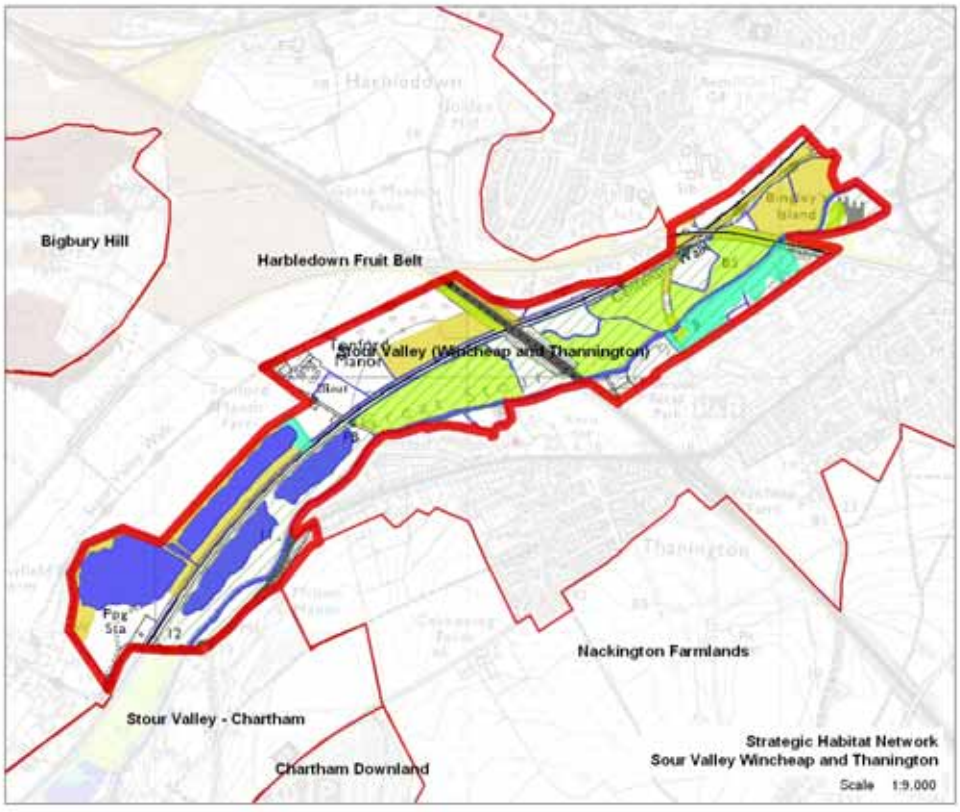
Sensitivity

The sense of place of this landscape is considered to be moderate. The traditional pattern of ditches and meadows is distinct over much of this part of the Stour Valley, although some is lost to gravel extraction and recent development. Where it is intact the intrinsic pattern of the landscape has remained largely unchanged for many centuries.

The flat valley floor with its limited tree cover creates a very highly visible landscape. Overall the Stour Valley is a highly sensitive landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity

This character area has excellent potential for developing the wetland habitat network within the Stour floodplain (refer to the detailed habitat network map below). Examples might include flood-meadows (species-rich wet grassland), reedbeds, scrapes/lagoons and ponds. Opportunities for such habitat creation may arise from any future gravel extraction decommissioning and should be carefully explored. On slightly higher ground, north of the railway, there are some network opportunities for species-rich neutral grassland.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
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- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
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- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

34. Stour Valley – Wincheap and Thanington

Guidelines

The analysis shows that this part of the Stour Valley is sensitive to the introduction of new features. This sensitivity has not been given due respect in the past and the condition of the valley has deteriorated. Guidelines that encourage the restoration of the open valley landscape are required.

- Manage watercourses for biodiversity and to maintain landscape pattern where they are in decline.
- Restore traditional field pattern between the Ashford to Canterbury Railway and the urban edge. Soften the impact of the retail and industrial development to the east by encouraging a seasonally wet woodland buffer.
- Conserve and restore traditional extensive wetland grazing on the east side of the Stour to enhance the pastoral valley floor setting of the river.
- Restore green links into the heart of the City.
- Remove detracting features within the valley where practicable.
- Restore the quality of views of the Cathedral by mitigating the impact of the built up areas and protect from further intrusion.
- Soften the impact of the built development by using planting appropriate to the local landscape.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Very High

Condition		low	moderate	high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
		Sensitivity		

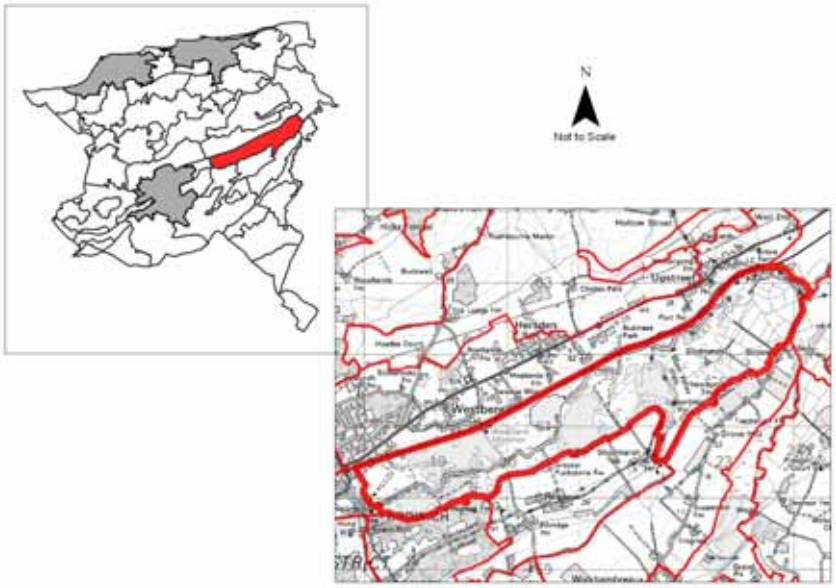
Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

35. Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley

Key Characteristics

- Flat alluvial plain with grazing meadows, extensive areas of reedbed and man made lakes.
- Inaccessible to vehicles, but limited access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Long open views interrupted by blocks of mature riparian vegetation.
- Grade 3 agricultural land classification.
- Key designations are the peripheries of Conservation Areas, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation and National Nature Reserve.

Landscape Description



This character area extends along the Great Stour Valley from Sturry in the west to east of Grove Ferry Road where the Great Stour meanders south east. To the north, the site is bordered by the Canterbury to Ramsgate railway line. It is a flat alluvial plain of unique quality, with the mix of grazing meadows and extensive areas of open water and reedbed supporting a diverse range of flora and fauna. Mostly undesignated in terms of agricultural land classification, some areas have been given Grade 3 status.

The Great Stour meanders across the area, which is inaccessible to vehicles, but where pedestrians and cyclists can travel across a limited number of paths. The low lying grazing meadows to the east are separated by a series of ditches and dykes, which are very rich in flora and invertebrate fauna.

Gravel extraction and flooding following mining subsidence have resulted in the creation of numerous large lakes. This site holds the most extensive area of reedbeds in South East England. To encourage breeding Bittern, which is now in decline and reliant for its survival on large areas of undisturbed reedbed, an area of grazed farmland has been purchased for conversion to reedbed.

The habitat interest in this character area is entirely covered by the Stodmarsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) part of which is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR), a Special Protection Area (SPA) for birds, Ramsar (important wetland) site and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This is an internationally important wetland site consisting of extensive reedbed, scrub, alder carr, floodplain pasture and open water. This makes it important for a range of scarce plants, invertebrates (such as Desmoulin's whorl snail), mammals and particularly wetland birds (such as bittern, gadwall, northern shoveler and hen harrier).

The River Great Stour and its tributary, the Lampen Stream, both flow through this area, providing aquatic connectivity between the chalk influenced river sections upstream and the marshland sections downstream.

35. Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley

Views across the site are long and open from certain points but limited by mature riparian vegetation, which is dense around areas of open water and to the north along the river and railway corridors. Across the marshland and open reedbed areas, trees are limited to small mature pockets and patchy areas of scrub.

Condition

This part of the Stour Valley is in very good condition. There are large areas of marshland, reedbed and open water that are semi-enclosed by areas of mature riparian vegetation. There are no significant detracting visual elements in the area and, characteristically no built elements.

The area is renowned for its extensive ecological value. Habitats include marsh and scrub with wooded margins to lagoons, dykes and ditches in addition to the Great Stour. The intensity of land use is low, mainly for the promotion of wildlife with limited access for pedestrians and cyclists. In the western part of this area, Natural England have highlighted some issues with disturbance from leisure activities and a lack of scrub control which may be reducing some of the biodiversity interest. However, overall it is well managed with some areas of farm grazing land to the north east being allowed to flood to increase the wetland habitat.

Sensitivity

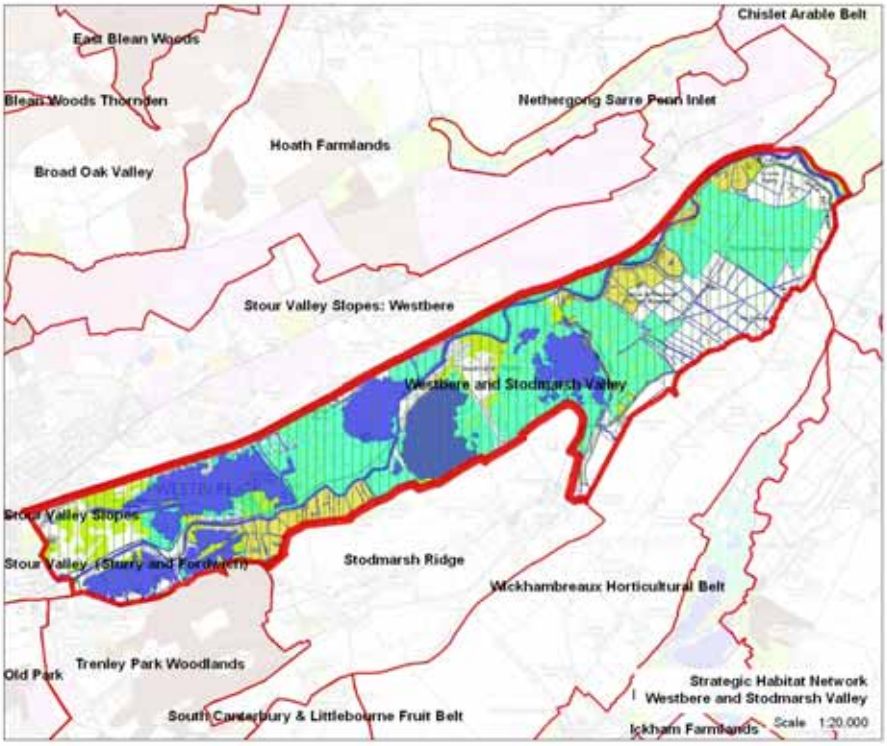
It is a highly sensitive and very distinct landscape, unique to this area. Much of the present landscape is of recent origin. The result of gravel excavation, subsidence and careful water level management. The maintenance of this balance between open water, reedbed and scrub requires careful management to be sustained.

Visibility is also high in this landscape. Locally areas of vegetation and the height of the reeds enclose views but where these open out there are views across the flat landscape and open water.

35. Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley

Habitat Network Opportunity

This area is almost entirely covered by national and international designations and as such, its role in the wider habitat network is best served by conservation of its existing interest. Priorities for conservation include: minimising recreational disturbance, maintenance of an appropriate grazing and reed cutting regime, maintenance of water levels, and maintenance of water quality.



Guidelines

Conservation is the priority for the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley.

- Conserve the diversity and quality of habitats through appropriate recreation, water and vegetation management.
- Seek opportunities to enhance and extend wetland habitats.
- Conserve and maintain the introduced elements such as waterways, footpaths and signs resisting pressure to over develop public access.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Very Good
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Detracting features:	Very Few
Visual unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Very Strong

Sensitivity:	High
Distinctiveness:	Very Distinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Condition	low	Moderate	high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
	Sensitivity		

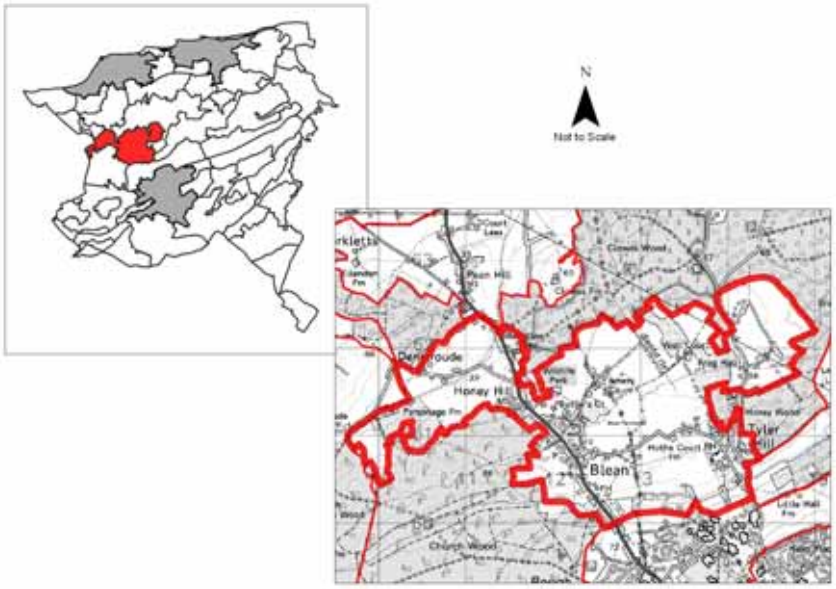
Guidelines: Conserve

36. Blean Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating farmland.
- Silty and loamy soils over clayey base soils, better drained on the slopes.
- Views limited by woodland, settlement and hedgerows.
- Small to medium scale arable fields and numerous orchards divided by hedgerows and mature shelterbelts.
- Dismantled railway line crossing north south across the area.
- Occasional small remnant woodlands located at field edges.
- Small drainage channels and streams, including the Sarre Penn.
- Residential expansion of Blean Village during mid 20th century accompanied by ornamental vegetation.
- Isolated farmsteads/ cottages.
- Modern development at Tyler Hill.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monument and Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape Description



The Blean Farmlands are located to the north of Canterbury and west of Tyler Hill. The area includes the village of Blean and the network of arable and fruit fields which are enclosed to the north by Blean Woodlands and the areas around the hamlets of Denstroude and Honey Hill. The Sarre Penn, flanked by mature trees and small grazing fields in valleys, flows across the southern part of the area. It is sometimes referred to as the Fishbourne in this area.

The landform is gently undulating, declining southwards to the outskirts of Canterbury. The geology is predominantly London Clay overlain with Head Brickearth and Head Gravel drift. The better drained drift soils tend to be found on the slopes and higher areas. The area supports a network of productive orchards, but many of the fields have been opened up to arable production. There is a strong but irregular field pattern created by windbreaks, small areas of remnant woodland and a strong network of mature hedgerows.

This character area is enclosed on three sides by designated woodland habitats of The Blean. The area is a largely farmed landscape that separates two large woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), namely Church Woods to the south west and West Blean and Thornden Woods to the north east. To the north lies Clowes Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Within the character area two small designated sites exist. The first, Blean Pasture LWS, consists of a series of damp meadows sloping down to the Sarre Penn stream. The other, Tyler Hill Pastures LWS, comprises a series of small, unimproved pastures and meadow, with winter wet ponds, scrub and woodland on damp soils.

Elsewhere, there are networks of mature hedgerows and shelterbelts and dense self-sown woodland along the dismantled railway track. Amongst this network the land is intensively managed for arable and fruit production.

36. Blean Farmlands

There is limited vehicular access to the centre of this area. Blean village has developed along the A290 which runs through the west of the area from Canterbury to Whitstable. To the eastern boundary and across the site, winding rural hedge lined lanes link Blean and Tyler Hill villages. Cutting north south across the east side of the area, part of the dismantled Crab and Winkle Railway Line has recently been developed as part of the national cycle network. Parts are not accessible being densely vegetated with self sown woodland and are valuable as a wildlife corridor.

The settlement pattern is restricted to the villages of Blean and Tyler Hill, the hamlets of Denstroude and Honey Hill and scattered isolated farmsteads. Despite the parish being of some antiquity the village of Blean itself is mostly of recent origin and has only a limited number of historic properties, scattered around the core and fringes. Tyler Hill also comprises mostly modern development, which is generally well integrated and absorbed into the surrounding wooded setting.

Condition

The Blean Farmlands are a coherent landscape with open cereal fields and orchards enclosed by a network of hedgerows. There are some detracting features, mostly poor quality mid 20th century housing. The village of Blean has been enveloped by late 20th century residential development which makes up the bulk of the settlement. The latter are generally of similar visual quality, poorly detailed in buff coloured brick or rendered and painted. Ornamental planting is associated with the settlement.

Ecologically the networks are strong with mature hedgerows and shelterbelts and dense self sown woodland along the dismantled railway track. Within this network the land is intensely managed for arable and fruit production. Overall the landscape is in moderate condition.

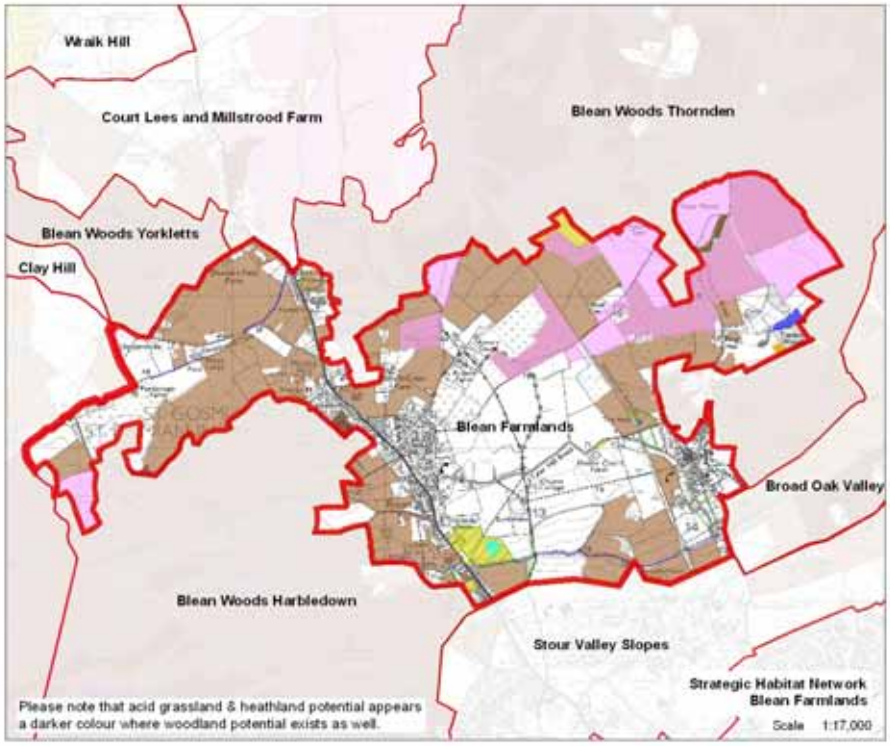
Sensitivity

The landscape is distinct with mixed land use including woodland, traditional orchards and shelterbelts. The Sarre Penn provides a further characteristic landscape element. The Blean Farmlands have a moderate sense of place and the overall sensitivity is moderate.

36. Blean Farmlands

Habitat Network Opportunity

There is great woodland habitat network opportunity in this area, mainly around the periphery, as shown on the detailed habitat network potential figure below. In addition, to the north east, there is a significant zone highlighted as having acid grassland and heath network potential.



Guidelines

The Blean Farmlands are a landscape that need to be conserved and improved. The condition of the landscape is generally moderate, however its distinctiveness is being eroded by the suburbanisation of the village and decline in the traditional field pattern associated with fruit and hop growing.

- Conserve grazed pasture.
- Maintain and improve the traditional character of hedgerow planting along lanes and roads.
- Reinforce and conserve the hedgerow and shelterbelt networks.
- Encourage suitable planting around visually prominent farm buildings (particularly large, modern sheds) to soften the visual impact.
- New development should be of local scale and character, and relate to existing settlements.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Moderate
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Very strong

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Moderate
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: Moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

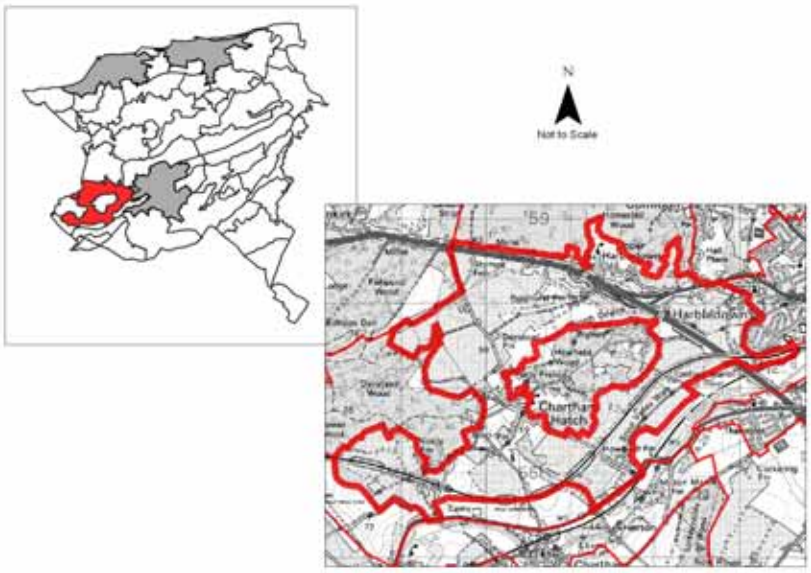
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

37. Harbledown Fruit Belt

Key Characteristics

- Distinctly folded landscape with deep loamy soils.
- Mostly Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land supporting intensive fruit production.
- Deep silty drifts of Brickearth and deep, better-drained good quality and silty soils.
- Irregular field pattern.
- The village of Harbledown is clustered on south facing slopes with a diverse mix of Kentish vernacular buildings.
- Largely unsettled landscape with scattered farmsteads and many oast houses.
- Cereal production to the south where chalk soils dominate.
- Isolated long views to south western horizon, from upper areas.
- Small scattered areas of mixed deciduous woodland containing coppice stands of hazel.
- Newly planted orchards.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Area of High Landscape Value and Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape Description



The Harbledown Fruit Belt describes the area to the west of Canterbury around Harbledown that extends to the north, south and west of Chartham Hatch village and southwards along the western slopes of the River Stour. It is part of a much larger fruit belt area that covers a substantial part of North East Kent.

This is an area of mixed geology that is predominantly Thanet Beds overlain with River Gravel Terraces. The deep well drained often stoneless soils support a mosaic of productive orchards covering a distinctly folded topography. There is a strong but irregular field pattern created by windbreaks and thick belts of natural vegetation. This pattern is exaggerated by the straight rows of orchard trees and hops. The agricultural land classification is Grade 1 and 2, with a small patch of Grade 3 along the southern boundary.

The Harbledown Fruit Belt contains relatively little designated wildlife habitat, with only small portions of designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) extending into the area's periphery (i.e. the bulk of these sites fall within neighbouring character areas). In fact, this character area is notable in the extent to which it is surrounded by designated woodland habitats of The Blean. Thus it represents something of an 'island' of agricultural and horticultural land amongst the more biodiverse landcover in the south western part of The Blean.

The vast majority of this character area is dominated by commercial orchard, which is limited in terms of biodiversity. There is a stream corridor to the north of the area which emerges from Denstead Wood and contains linear open water and scrub habitat.

Apart from the A2 that cuts across this landscape, roads are limited to narrow winding enclosed lanes which lead into and out of Chartham Hatch village. The settlement pattern comprises a nucleated rural village and scattered farmsteads and clusters of historic cottages dotted throughout the landscape. Numerous oasthouses indicate a once thriving hop growing area.

37. Harbledown Fruit Belt

Harbledown is an attractive village that has grown up along the former main road to Canterbury. Buildings are irregularly grouped to accommodate the slope of the landscape and vary in scale and density. The use of local vernacular materials and building styles is abundant, including brick and tile and numerous weatherboarded houses. Ornamental tree species are associated with settlement throughout the area and particularly at Harbledown where parkland style trees are found in the gardens of larger properties. Thomas Sidney-Cooper, the famous local artist, built a small gabled cottage at Vernon Holme in 1848. Later he extended the property and purchased adjoining land to create a large house surrounded by thirty-two hectares of gardens laid out in a picturesque style. The gardens were developed by Sidney-Cooper's son Nevill Cooper who planted a great number of specimen trees. The buildings and gardens retain much of their original character today. The Victorians also introduced new features in the landscape. In the 1880s he built another house called Allcroft Grange to the north of the city where he established Littlehall Pinetum, transporting trees for hundreds of miles across India by horse and cart.

Chartham Hatch is an isolated rural village of mixed quality that has developed over a long period. Buildings are irregularly grouped, vary in scale and style. Whilst the use of local vernacular materials and building styles is abundant along the lanes, many of the houses within the village are indistinct and inappropriate in style. These and the large unattractive retail units found along the southern boundary, have to a degree, despoiled the landscape.

Ornamental tree species are associated with settlement throughout the area and particularly at Chartham Hatch. The overall picture of this area is typical traditional Kentish countryside, rolling hills with an abundance of orchards and scattered traditional buildings.

Views of the City

Due to the screening effect of the undulating landform views of the City from the Harbledown Fruit Belt are largely dependent on aspect and height. The most extensive views are from the east facing slopes beneath Bigbury Hill that overlook the Stour Valley. Here there are broad views across the Stour from Thanington through to the City centre. Direct views of the Cathedral are intercepted by high ground at Golden Hill.

At Harbledown the increasing urbanisation and scale of the road network indicates the proximity to the City although there are no direct views. Once within the folds of the broader landscape the containment creates a distinctly rural feel that could be miles from anywhere.

Condition

This is a landscape in good condition. The fruit belt landscape is very strong throughout the area with an almost continuous cover of orchards. In places the unity of the orchards is fragmented by arable fields and small strips of woodland. Post and wire fencing, modern houses and untidy areas on the edge of Chartham Hatch downgrade the rural landscape. Recent windbreaks of inappropriate fast growing conifers and the loss of orchards to horse paddocks, particularly on the lower slopes of Bigbury Hill, threaten to gradually erode the traditional pattern. Dominant introduced elements such as the A2 sit uncomfortably in the landscape.

The Harbledown Fruit Belt is a landscape that functions well. It is a fertile and productive fruit growing landscape with strong associations with the image of Kentish landscapes. Overall the ecological value of

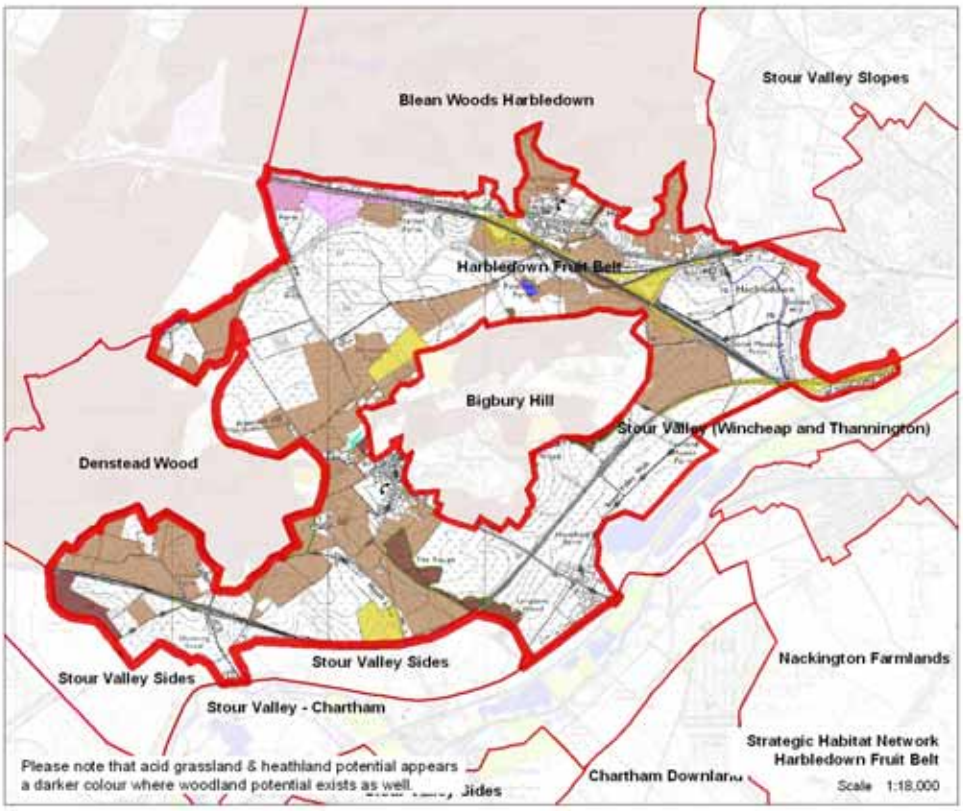
the area is moderate, although this is often the combination of two extremes. The intensive fruit growing over improved pasture or bare ground is of little ecological value. The windbreaks and hedgerows that enclose these orchards often have little or no understorey and are also of limited value to wildlife. There are richer belts and clusters of native vegetation in some areas and these have a greater ecological value especially where they link together to form a loose network connecting to adjacent woodland areas. The cultural heritage of this landscape is apparent from the traditional buildings such as oasthouses which indicate its former use for hop growing. More recent buildings particularly those from the early and mid 20th century make no reference to the local vernacular.

Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape with a strong pattern and many distinctive features, such as orchards, shelterbelts, traditional farmsteads and buildings. The field pattern of the area is essentially historic although there has been a change of emphasis from hop growing to fruit and, more recently, from traditional orchards to dwarf trees and increased use of herbicides and mechanisation. Despite these changes the area retains its great sense of place.

The rolling landform combined with the framing effect of the numerous windbreaks, hedgerows and tree belts creates a very contained landscape with low visibility and overall this is a moderately sensitive landscape. Any changes in this landscape that result in the loss of tree and hedge cover, opening up views would increase the visibility of this landscape. This would in turn increase the sensitivity. The Harbledown Fruit Belt's character is so directly related to its land use that it is particularly sensitive to changes in farming practice.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

The detailed habitat network map shows an arc of potential woodland habitat opportunity surrounding three sides of the Bigbury Hill character area, starting near Hatch Lane to the south, and spreading north of Chartham around to the A2 near Harbledown in the east. In addition, there is woodland network opportunity in the west, adjacent to Denstead Wood. The area also contains smaller areas of land with network opportunity for neutral grassland and, near Stumps Farm to the north west, acid grassland/heathland.

37. Harbledown Fruit Belt

Guidelines

The analysis identifies guidelines for the Harbledown Fruit Belt that encourage the conservation and reinforcement of the strong landscape pattern. To achieve this the following actions should be considered:

- Encourage top fruit production.
- Wherever possible, conserve old orchards for their biodiversity value.
- Seek opportunities to develop woodland linkage between Bigbury Hill and surrounding woodlands within the Blean complex (in particular Denstead Wood).
- Resist the introduction of inappropriate coniferous windbreaks.
- Conserve the scattered, clustered settlement pattern.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Good**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Strong

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Enclosed
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		low	moderate	high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**
		Sensitivity		

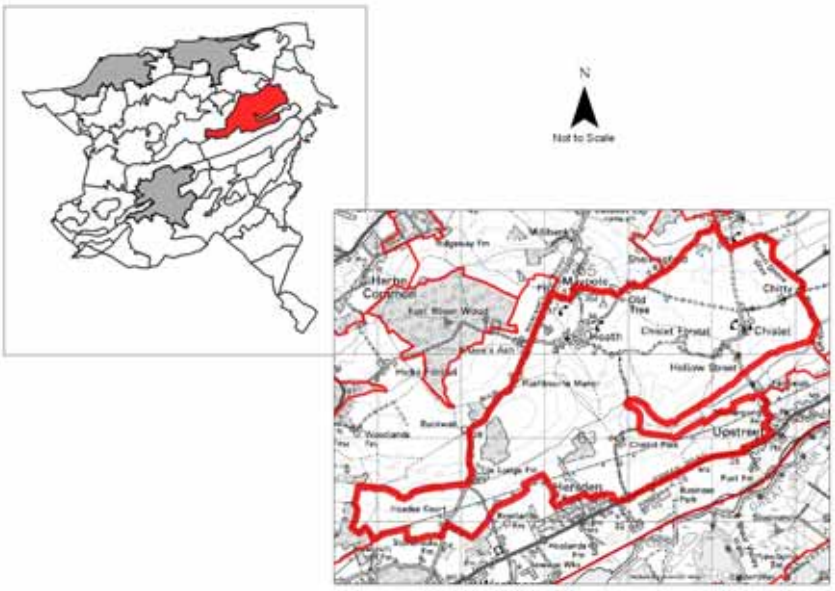
Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

38. Hoath Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Open arable landscape with medium to large scale fields.
- Low lying undulating area falling to the north.
- Extensive areas of Head Brickearth and alluvium along river valleys and low lying areas. London Clay and gravel on adjacent slopes.
- Long views across open fields from higher points.
- Grade 1 agricultural land associated with Head Brickearth. Grade 2 and 3 land found over clay and gravels.
- Small isolated woodlands.
- Isolated blocks of mature hedgerows along lanes.
- Small isolated villages, properties of historic interest, scattered farms and groups of cottages.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Area of High Landscape Value, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This rolling landscape of river valleys and rounded slopes, gently falls away from a southern ridge, north east towards Hoath. The area stretches from north of Sturry in the west to Upstreet in the east, encompasses Chislet, and stretches to Boyden Gate at the northern most point. It is an area of complex geology, formed from the sandstones of the Oldhaven, Woolwich and Thanet Beds; with large areas of blue-grey London Clay across the southern slopes, overlain with fine silty drift of Head Gravel and Brickearth. The Sarre Penn stream flows from west to east across the south of the area flowing onto the low lying Chislet Marshes.

The soils are intensively cultivated almost exclusively for arable production. The agricultural land classification is Grade 1, within the large area of silty drift deposits, found in the far north. Here agricultural intensification has led to the most extreme treatment of the landscape with loss of all internal hedgerows. Elsewhere Grade 2 and 3 land is found over clay and gravels, where cereal production is also intensive, but removal of hedgerows has been less extreme. As well as the fragmented network of hedgerows scattered along the lanes and across some internal field boundaries, there are also small isolated blocks of semi-natural woodland. These are of great value to wildlife, Clangate and Buckwell Woods being included within the East Blean Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The mainly large scale field pattern and loss of many of the vegetative boundaries provide for wide open views across the internal scene.

This character area contains two small portions of larger designated sites that mainly fall outside its boundaries. One of these is Clangate Wood, an ancient woodland, which is part of the larger East Blean Woods SSSI. The other is an area north and west of Chislet Park which is an extension of the Sarre Penn section of Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This includes areas of open stream, wetland and a small ancient woodland known as Park Rough. Elsewhere this is predominantly arable land with small linear strips of woodland and fragmented hedgerows.

38. Hoath Farmlands

Many narrow hedge lined lanes make for good vehicular access to the lower lying areas, however, this is restricted in the south, to the narrow Roman road passing from Sturry to Reculver and another which winds from Upstreet to Boyden Gate. Scattered along these lanes are small nucleated and linear villages, scattered isolated farmsteads and groups of isolated cottages. There are many examples of properties of historic importance within this area, built in local vernacular materials such as brick and weatherboarding. Whilst the core of these residential areas are generally of historic value, 20th century development has meant the expansion of and degradation of some peripheral areas. One of the most impressive buildings overlooking the former channel is Chislet Church. The earliest reference to the church is 605AD when King Ethelbert gave the manor of Chistelet to the newly founded St Augustine's Abbey. The Church is dominated by its Norman tower measuring 17 feet square and has a Norman nave with 13th century chancel and nave aisles. It is built of coursed rubble with Caen stone dressings and is Grade I listed. The historical associations with the Church are still in evidence today with Chislet Court adjacent to the Church still being owned by the Church Commissioners and the Church primary school. Chislet Court is a Grade II listed 18th century house probably built by Thomas Jones or his successor. At Chislet Forstal, the Tudor House is a hall-house of Wealden form dating back to the late 14th century although the present house has been built in several phases during the 15th and 16th centuries. It is Grade II* listed and is recorded as having exceptional interior features and is a most impressive building.

Condition

The Hoath Farmlands are in poor condition. The pattern of the landscape is coherent although there has been extensive loss of hedgerows as a result of agricultural intensification. Modern housing, caravan sites and large agricultural barns detract from the traditional landscape, whilst pylons are sited across the southern slopes.

The area functions moderately well ecologically where small isolated mature woodlands are present. However the hedgerow network which links them is fragmented. The built development in the area has a low impact and is of variable quality. There are numerous examples of historic buildings although much of the 20th century building is neutral in character.

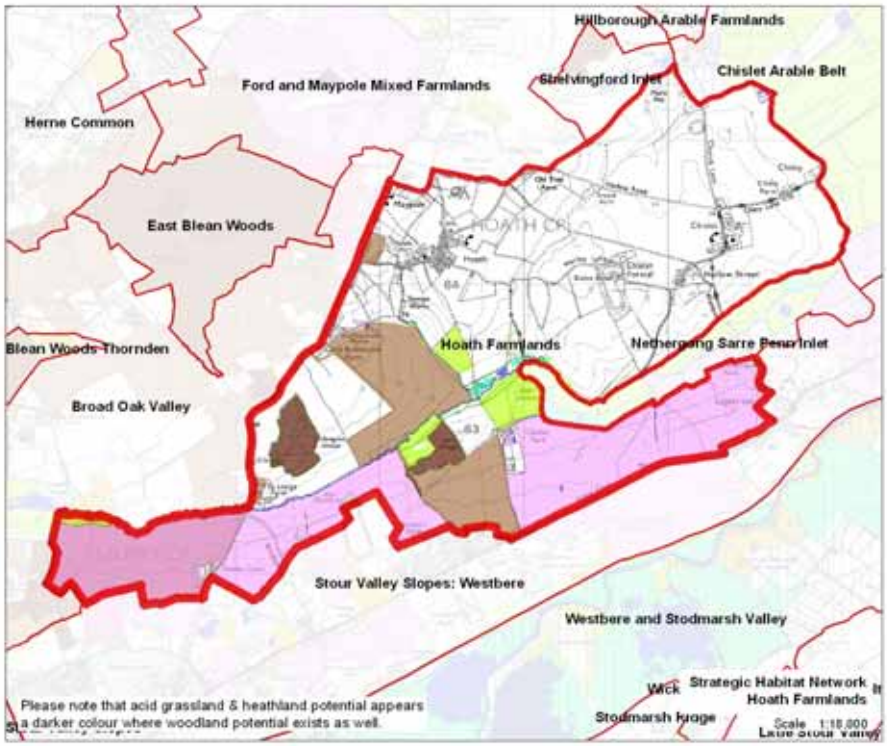
Sensitivity

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The isolated woodlands and fragmented hedgerows retain the distinctiveness of the area and are likely to be of historic (medieval) origin. The intermittent tree cover these create, when coupled with the rolling topography creates a moderately visible landscape.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The southern strip of this character area, between Broad Oak and Upstreet contains a mosaic of habitat network potential. On the south side of the valley there is extensive opportunity for acid grassland/heath network development, interspersed with woodland opportunity on higher ground, and wetland opportunity near the Sarre Penn.

38. Hoath Farmlands



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Guidelines

Guidelines for the Hoath Farmlands aim to restore the elements in poor condition, whilst improving the landscape where the traditional elements have been lost.

- Avoid visually dominant elements within the open landscape.
- Conserve and restore field boundaries where they still have a function- particularly along roads and lanes.
- Conserve distinct and historic built form.
- Improve design standards/criteria for new buildings, resisting suburbanisation of countryside.
- Conserve and restore woodland planting, seeking opportunities to link existing blocks and hedgerows.
- Focus habitat creation efforts in the southern part of the area with an emphasis on its acid grassland/heathland potential.
- Seek to create new wetland features near the Sarre Penn.

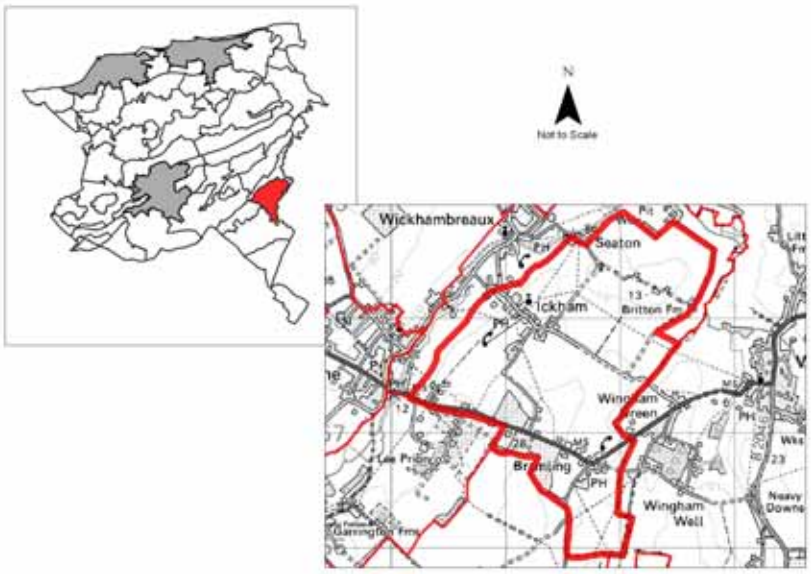
Guidelines: Restore and Improve

39. Ickham Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Low lying, very gently rounded landscape.
- Fertile, well drained soils of Grade 1 agricultural classification.
- Large scale open arable fields, cereal crops, field vegetables and small areas of fruit production.
- Long open views.
- Narrow lanes, generally open to adjacent landscape due to loss of hedgerows.
- Historic village and scattered cottages with many vernacular buildings and impressive mature specimen trees.
- Key designations comprise Conservation Areas.

Landscape Description



This is a low lying, very gently rounded landscape, with a slight incline to the south and north east. It is located around the village of Ickham and extends from the north across Bramling in the south. It is largely sited on silty drift of Head Brickearth with small areas of River Terrace Gravels adjacent to the alluvial soils of the Little Stour. These are fertile, well drained soils of Grade 1 agricultural classification. This is reflected in the large scale open arable fields, where hedgerows have been almost entirely removed. As well as cereal crops, field vegetables and small areas of fruit are produced here. As a result of agricultural intensification and subsequent loss of native tree planting, views are long and open.

There are no designated habitats within this character area. It is comprised primarily of intensive arable and fruit farming with few hedgerows. Semi-natural vegetation is largely limited to mature trees and hedgerows around settlements.

Lanes are narrow and straight with occasional right angle bends. They are generally open to the adjacent landscape, due to the removal of hedgerows. Ickham is a linear village of historic significance, located centrally within this area. It houses many distinctive vernacular buildings typical in this part of Kent. These include weatherboarded, red brick and timber framed buildings, oasts and a beautiful flint church set well back from the main street. Many of the properties are indicative of a traditional function that has been long since lost. Many of these buildings have however, been sensitively restored, converted to residential or commercial functions. Outside the village of Ickham, scattered groups of cottages and isolated farms are spread across the rural landscape. The small settlement of Bramling clusters around the A257 and adjoining minor roads. Buildings are mostly traditional although large scale agricultural barns, to the east of and at Bramlingcourt Farm, contrast in terms of scale and design.

39. Ickham Farmlands

Condition

The Ickham Farmlands are in moderate condition. It is a coherent landscape of large, uniform open fields with few hedgerows. There are few detracting features and these are mostly limited to large modern concrete or corrugated metal agricultural barns. Polytunnels and inappropriate conifer screen planting detract from the landscape in places.

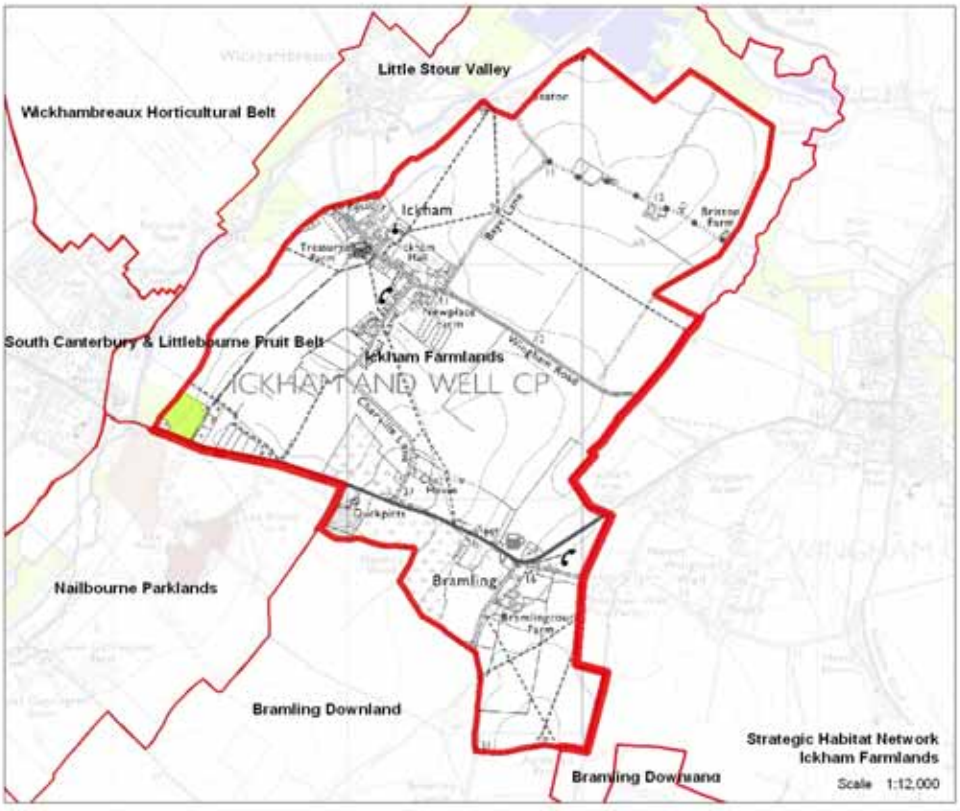
Ecologically the area is weak due to the intensive arable, hedgerow removal and fruit farming. Semi-natural vegetation is largely limited to mature trees and hedgerows around settlement. Those around Ickham are in good condition and are well managed. Elsewhere there are dispersed fragments of hedgerows. Ickham is the focal point in this landscape. The built environment here is in particularly good condition.

Sensitivity

Overall the sensitivity of the area is moderate. The quality of the built environment is high, although the agricultural landscape is unremarkable. The historic village of Ickham and cottages within the landscape have a distinct vernacular style, their setting enhanced by mature specimen trees in and around the settlement.

The topography is insignificant and the lack of tree cover in the open arable landscapes coupled with the more enclosed settlement creates an area which has moderate visibility.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

39. Ickham Farmlands

The vast majority of this character area falls outside of the strategic habitat network identified by the Living Landscapes model. Its existing habitats are too small or isolated from the major clusters to qualify under the parameters of the model. However, these habitats are vitally important for maintaining the local area's wildlife interest and would benefit from greater connectivity. This could be achieved through species-rich hedgerow restoration and sensitive road verge management.

Guidelines

Guidelines for the Ickham Farmlands aim to conserve the distinctive features whilst improving the general landscape within which they sit.

- Conserve the traditional built form, paying particular attention to the role of planting and creating the setting.
- Conserve mature tree and hedge planting, improving the extent and diversity of these where appropriate to farming practice.
- Consider ways to improve the appearance of large agricultural buildings possibly using tree planting to soften harsh lines and materials.
- Use traditional hedgerows and shelterbelts to help integrate new built elements, including polytunnels, into the landscape and strengthen the fruit belt landscape character.
- Encourage species-rich hedgerow restoration and sensitive road verge management.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Very Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Insignificant
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

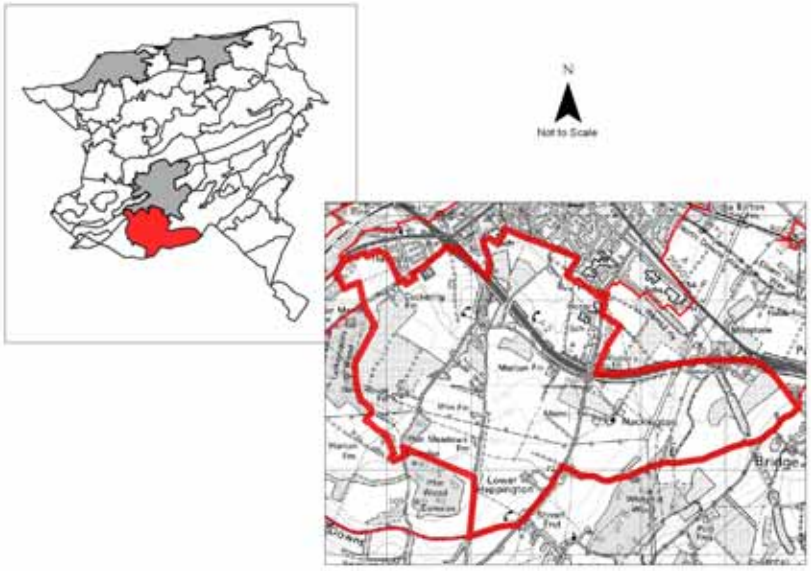
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

40. Nackington Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling landscape with broad dry valleys. reaching towards the City.
- Simple, smooth open arable landscape.
- Grade 2 agricultural land with deep, calcareous soils intensively farmed for cereals.
- Settlement focused along roads and former trackways located on ridges.
- Remnant shelterbelts, parkland trees and hedgerows.
- 18th and early 19th century farmsteads and remnants of former estates.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Area of High Landscape Value and Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape Description



The Nackington Farmlands are a local subdivision of the extensive East Kent Arable Belt. This landscape is formed where the chalk dip slope of the North Downs diminishes. The underlying geology of this area is Upper Chalk overlain in places with River Gravel Drift. There is a very gently rolling topography with dry valleys reaching northwards towards the City.

The deep calcareous fine silty soils in the valley bottoms are easy to work and consequently this area is intensively farmed. Cereals are generally the main crop in the dry valleys. Some top fruit is grown but this tends to be less productive in the valley bottoms. Typically there are large arable fields broken by groups of parkland trees. Hops and orchards have generally been lost to arable although remnant shelterbelts are still occasionally apparent. The agricultural land classification is predominately Grade 2. There are some local pockets of Grade 1 where the soils are deeper in the valley bottoms close to the City and other areas of Grade 3 where the soils start to thin as the dip slope rises to the south.

Nackington Farmlands only contains two small extensions of larger Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) that fall mainly beyond its boundaries. These two ancient woodland sites are located on the area's southern periphery and are known as Iffin Wood and Whitehill Wood. Whitehill Wood has been known to support pearl-bordered fritillary, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) butterfly species that has become very rare in Kent. Apart from these two small habitats, the rest of the character area is dominated by intensive agriculture/horticulture, with any significant habitat interest limited largely to field boundaries. The remainder of the character area is dominated by intensive agriculture, and there is a significant amount of horsiculture around New House and Iffin Lane.

40. Nackington Farmlands

The disused Elham Valley Railway runs through the area.

The name Nackington is believed to derive from 'Nating dun' which is Old English for Nata's Hill and was first recorded in 993 AD. Nackington itself is a remarkably unspoilt 19th century agricultural settlement with very little 20th century building. The farmlands around Nackington mostly originate from the 18th and early 19th centuries with many of the farm and estate buildings dating from this period.

Older buildings comprise farmsteads and remnants of estate properties. These are typically of a soft coloured red brick and tile construction. Large detached suburban houses are built on the former park and garden land of Nackington House in a modern traditional style. Post war housing has developed along Iffin Lane and New House Lane. Recent housing on the edges of the urban area around Nackington Road breaks up traditional enclosure boundaries.

A small area of remnant parkland characterised by mature beech and ash in pasture abuts Nackington Road. This is a remnant from Nackington House that occupied this site until it was demolished after the First World War. The house dated from the reign of Charles I and in 1796 Jane Austen noted in her diary that she had 'dined at Nackington, returned by moonlight, and everything in stile'. By the 1880s the holding comprised of farms, woodlands and 18 acres of gardens. These gardens were developed by Margaret Helen Waterfield whose family resided here until the house was occupied by soldiers in 1914. The house fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1919. Groups of parkland trees are still found within the large arable fields to the west of Nackington Road and large detached properties with mature gardens have been built on the former park and garden land along Nackington Road. These give this area a suburban feel. There is also some ribbon development along the New House Lane and Iffen Lane. However, despite the proximity to the City the agricultural landscape dominates.

Views of the City

To the south of the A2 there are good views along the open arable dry valleys of the North Downs dip slope towards the City and the Cathedral, particularly from New House Lane and Iffin Lane. Bell Harry Tower creates a powerful focal point that distracts the eye away from the more intrusive elements in the view. Also dominant in these views are the water tower on higher ground to the west at Neal's Place, the gasholder at Wincheap and the chimney at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

The Cathedral can also be seen from the A2 across the arable landscape particularly in winter. This is one of the few views for passing motorists and as such the Cathedral is a notable landmark when travelling across the county. The A2 itself is in deep cutting and therefore is largely hidden from the wider views.

Condition

The scale, topography and simplicity of this open arable land creates a coherent landscape despite the lack of enclosure pattern. There are very few detracting features. Occasional telegraph poles and pylons march across the open landscape and there are some urban fringe influences. The rough pasture in these areas and the irregular topography of the landform contrasts to the otherwise smooth landscape. The A2 cuts across the landscape to the south. However overall the Nackington Farmlands are considered to be a unified landscape.

The ecological integrity of this area is low. There are only a few areas of semi-natural habitat and these are limited in to clusters of native vegetation and fragmented hedgerows, usually associated with roads. Most of the area is intensively managed for arable crops. Tree cover is poor although there are some remnant parkland trees within arable fields and mature trees associated with housing. These tend to be even aged and in decline.

The Nackington Farmlands can be described as in moderate condition. Despite its modification by changes in agricultural practice and its relatively low ecological interest this has to be balanced against the visual unity of the open landscape.

40. Nackington Farmlands

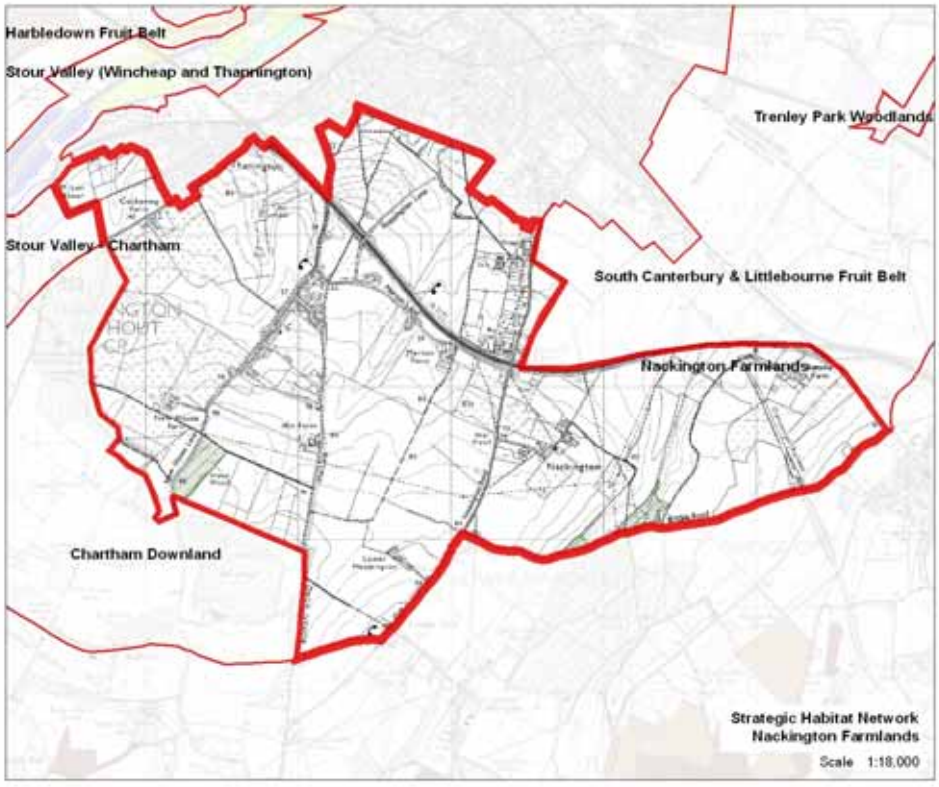
Sensitivity

The Nackington Farmlands is a simple landscape with few distinctive features. Its character is derived from the scale and consistency of the landscape and although reasonably attractive, the strength of character is considered to be weak. The North Downs dip slope is likely to have been cleared of woodland for many centuries, however more recent loss of enclosure has been no doubt partly due to increased arable intensification. The limited tree cover and the broad open topography creates a highly visible landscape.

Balancing this high visibility against the weak strength of character results in a landscape of moderate sensitivity. The landscape is most sensitive where it is most open, such as within the dry valleys where the introduction of new features would be most visible.

Habitat Network Opportunity

This character area falls outside of the strategic habitat network identified by the Living Landscapes model. Its existing BAP habitats are too small or too isolated from the major clusters to qualify under the parameters of the network model. Nevertheless, these habitats are vitally important for maintaining the local area's wildlife interest and would benefit from greater connectivity. This could be best achieved by restoring hedgerows and tree belts, particularly where this connects to the locally designated woods to the south (Iffin Wood and Whitehill Wood).



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

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- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

40. Nackington Farmlands

Guidelines

Guidelines that are appropriate to the Nackington Farmlands are those that encourage the conservation and improvement of the landscape.

- Conserve the open character of the dry valleys and views of City.
- Improve the quality and number of features associated with residual parkland at Nackington House.
- Improve the definition of and strengthen the boundary with the urban edge respecting the contribution from the traditional field pattern.
- Conserve the sense of scale avoiding separation and further subdivision of field parcels.
- Improve the quality of the existing boundaries and restore hedgerows and tree belts where necessary.
- Improve the continuity of the green link afforded by the disused Elham Valley Railway.
- Resist the introduction of contrasting visual elements such as pylons, telecommunications masts etc.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Very Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

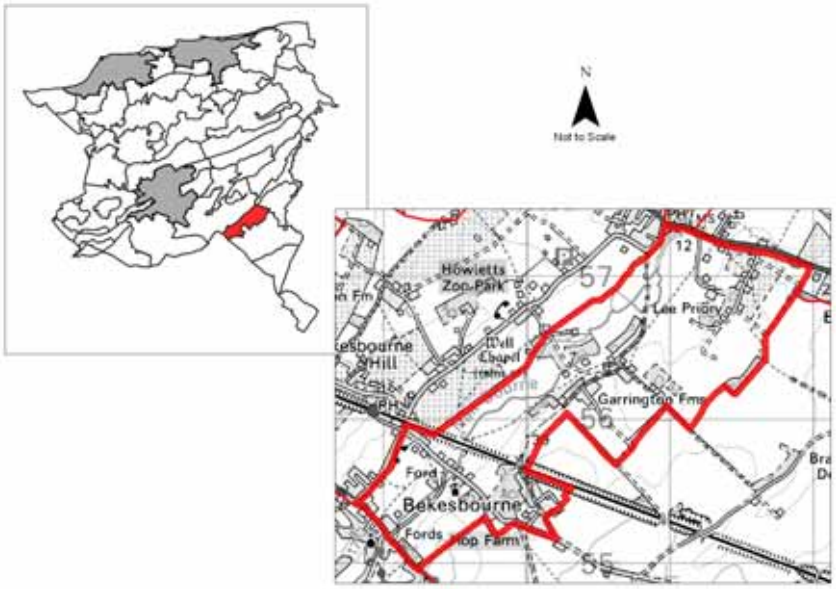
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

41. Nailbourne Parklands

Key Characteristics

- The southern extension of the Little Stour Valley of mixed geology and agricultural land classification.
- Mixed field pattern.
- Littlebourne Pastures LWS to the north.
- An unspoilt secluded landscape with a strong sense of enclosure.
- Numerous fine examples of traditional vernacular buildings protected by Conservation Area status.
- Isolated farmsteads with some large scale agricultural barns.
- A string of historic parklands along the Nailbourne.
- Key designations are Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



This section describes the valley corridor of the Nailbourne south of Littlebourne and north of Patrixbourne. It is the southern extension of the Little Stour Valley. The area has a mixed geology dominated by the alluvial soils along the river valley, Chalk beds to the south and overlying Brickearth drift and pockets of River Terrace Gravel. The agricultural land classifications reflect the nature of the underlying soils. The most fertile silty soils of brickearth drift support fruit and hop production on the north side of the valley, although these practices are not extensive. The land here is classified as Grade 1. The chalk slopes on the eastern side of the river and alluvial river valley soils support a mixture of cereal crops and grazing pasture. These are Grade 2 and 3 classification.

The field pattern is mixed, with small scale irregular enclosed fields to the south and more open areas towards Littlebourne, broken down into smaller parcels by drainage ditches. The small-scale fields and vertical structure of the shelterbelts, orchards, hedgerows and scattered mature field Poplars, provide for an unspoilt secluded landscape with a strong sense of enclosure. To the west of School Lane at Bekesbourne a hop farm, open to visitors, supports linear formations of hop poles. Enclosure is further emphasised by the densely vegetated Victorian railway embankment that cuts across the south of the site. Views are enclosed by the mature corridors of vegetation and the topography, which gently rises away from the flat bottomed valley floor. There are however longer views across the grazing meadows along the valley corridor.

The Nailbourne Parklands contain one locally designated site: Littlebourne Stream Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This consists of the River Little Stour and floodplain scrub, damp pasture and fen habitat. These support a good range of wetland plants and attract some notable birds. The river itself is of good quality and represents the headwater section of the Little Stour which itself becomes the downstream extension of the Nailbourne Stream, a winterbourne stream with ephemeral flows. In the east of this character area at Lee Priory, there is a small area of ancient woodland.

There are numerous fine examples of traditional vernacular buildings that are indicative of the history of the area and are protected by the Conservation Areas within which they are located.

41. Nailbourne Parklands

These buildings include oasts, large 18th century parkland properties and buildings associated with Lee Priory. Lee Priory was unfortunately demolished in the 1950s. The parkland remains with open pasture and fine mature trees. Isolated farms, including Upper Garrington Farm, Lower Garrington Farm and Lee Priory Farm, comprise clusters of buildings including some large agricultural barns which are out of scale with the surrounding landscape.

Bekesbourne is the site of the Old Palace. The current buildings date from 18th century although the first palace was built here in 1552 by Thomas Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury 1535-54. This palace was enlarged over the years by subsequent archbishops. A small remnant of parkland remains south of the railway line. A limited number of modern bungalows, alien to the local character of the area are sited within Bekesbourne. Patrixbourne is part of the estate village associated with Bifrons Park and is particularly notable for its fretwork barge board gables that adorn many of the buildings. A string of other historic parks are sited along the Nailbourne, but located outside the study area and within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Condition

The landscape of the Nailbourne Valley is generally in good condition. There are broad areas of pasture, indicative of the former parklands with some areas of arable production along the valley floor. Modern bungalow infill housing and post and wire fencing detract from the rural scene. To the south east, large scale agricultural barns at Upper Garrington Farm are out of scale with the surrounding landscape, although the vegetation they are set within integrates them to an extent. The ecological integrity of the area is strong with extensive pasture, mature hedgerows and small woodland areas. The area retains a strong cultural identity. Although much of the parkland is now in mixed farming use, parkland trees, estate buildings and features such as bridges indicate the heritage of the landscape.

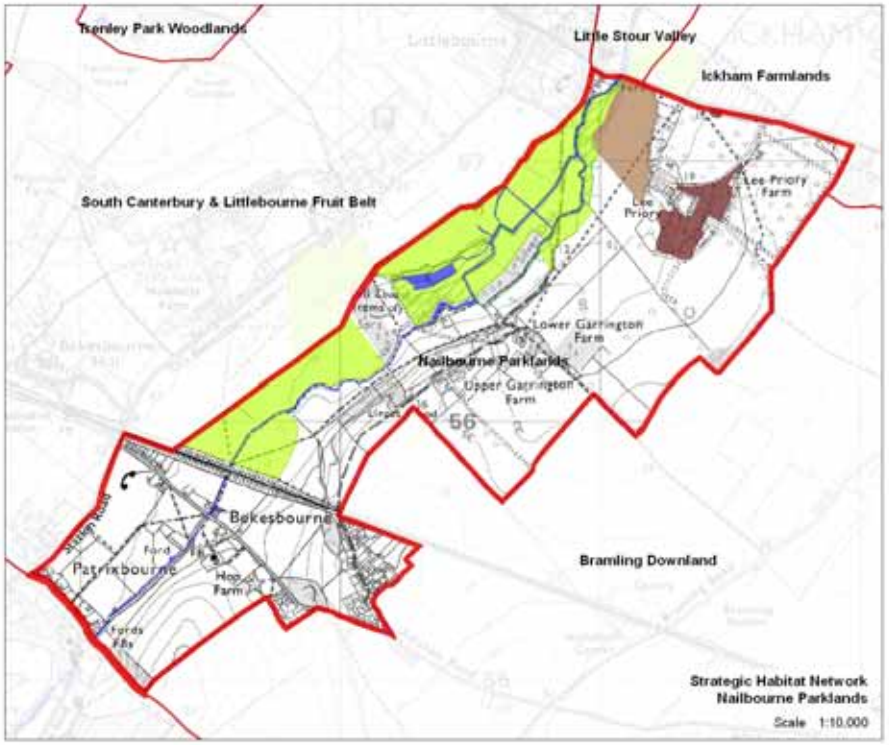
Sensitivity

The Nailbourne Parklands are a distinct and historic landscape. Traditional estate cottages and buildings with fretwork barge boards are characteristic, particularly at Patrixbourne. Other traditional Kentish buildings such as oasts and cottages add to the charm of the valley. The valley floor gently rises to the sides, containing the landscape. Along with the intermittent tree cover provided by the hedgerows and woodland, there is a moderate level of visibility.

41. Nailbourne Parklands

Habitat Network Opportunity

The Living Landscapes model highlights network opportunity for wetland habitat along the Little Stour/Nailbourne floodplain here at Garrington Farm. There is also a parcel of land indicated between Lee Priory and Littlebourne road bridge as having potential for adding to a woodland habitat network.



Guidelines

Guidance for the Nailbourne Valley include the conservation and reinforcement of the distinctive features.

- Conserve and reinforce the landscape to reflect its parkland heritage.
- Conserve and reinforce local building styles.
- Reinforce landscape pattern and enclosure.
- Conserve and enhance wet grassland habitat and consider the creation of wetland features within the floodplain.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
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- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Very Strong

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	low	moderate	high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
	Sensitivity		

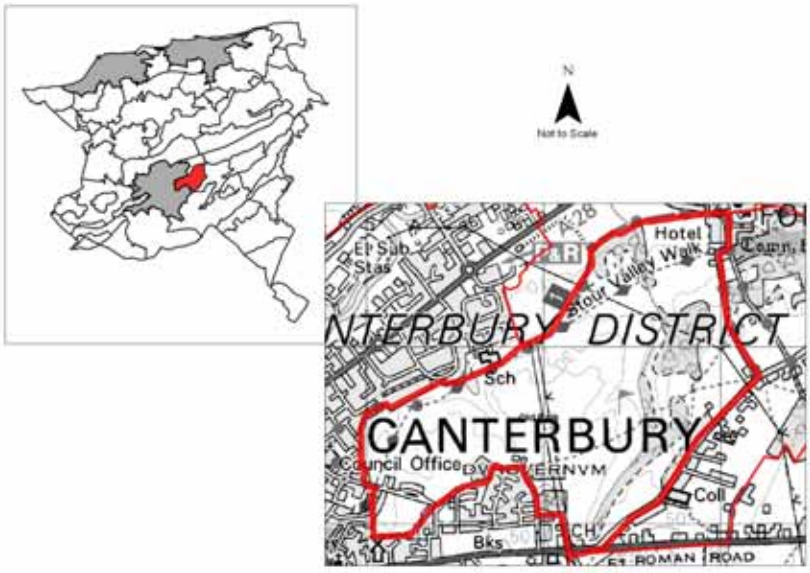
Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

42. Old Park

Key Characteristics

- Thin soils and irregular landform supporting a rich mixture of open acid grassland and wet woodlands.
- Former ancient royal deer park and military training ground resulting in a historically unenclosed landscape with low intensity use.
- Golf course landscape to the east.
- Key designations are Conservation Area, Area of High Landscape Value and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Landscape Description



Old Park lies to the east of Canterbury and stretches from the urban edge at St. Martin's to near Fordwich. It is an area of stony coarse textured, well drained soils over Thanet Beds and River Terrace Gravels. The mixed geology creates an undulating and irregular topography which is quite distinct from the adjacent fruit growing areas and the River Stour floodplain. Old Park comprises one of the few areas of landscape surrounding Canterbury which extends into the core of the city.

Generally the area has a poor heathy quality as a result of the thin acid soils. It is mostly open on the higher ground with wet woodland or carr associated with the streams, ponds and wet flushes in the low lying areas. Chequers Wood and Old Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) dominates the biodiversity interest of this character area. It contains a valuable mosaic of acid grassland, scrub and woodland which is further diversified by the contrast of the acidic sandy soils of the plateau with the base-rich peaty soils of the valley bottom. This is reflected in the floristic diversity of the site. The site supports a diverse breeding community of birds including the three British woodpeckers, cetti's warbler and nightingale. The whole area is almost entirely contained by a belt of woodland which screens views into and out of the area. Old Park generally is an area of significant ecological value which is recognised by its designation as a SSSI.

Old Park is one of three ancient deer parks to the east of Canterbury. It was established as a Royal Park in Henry VIII's reign about 1538 and was probably only used for about a century. The original park also included marshy areas in the Stour Valley and it is likely that it has never been intensively managed. The park is still largely owned by the Crown and much of it is a military training ground associated with the barracks. Military paraphernalia scattered across the park is evidence of its use.

The eastern part of Old Park is managed as a golf course. Here the smooth green managed grass and a few introduced ornamental tree species contrast with the tussocky rough grassland and native woodlands.

42. Old Park

Views of the City

From public footpaths, fine views of the Cathedral are available from the higher ground to the west of Old Park. To the east the undulating topography and more wooded character contains views out. There are good views of the Cathedral rising above Old Park to the west. Views over the housing estates and the industrial landscape of the Stour Valley from the public footpath to the north of Old Park. Views out are limited from within the park due to the woodland enclosure.

Condition

The traditional pattern of elements is largely intact, although a strong enclosure pattern is not typical of this landscape type. There are some detracting features including military paraphernalia, fly-tipping and graffiti close to the urban edge, intrusive housing estates on the edges of the park and lines of pylons and overhead cables crossing the park. Despite these influences it is a coherent landscape.

This is an historic landscape that has not had a great deal of disturbance and has a strong cultural identity. Ecologically it is of high value, although the grassland in the western part of the SSSI has been noted in recent condition assessments as suffering from under grazing. It has extensive and diverse grassland areas, strong woodland blocks, wet flushes, streams and ponds. There is a low intensity of land use and low-key management. Overall this is a landscape that functions very well and is in good condition.

Sensitivity

Old Park is a very distinctive landscape. Its pattern is consistent and it has many distinctive features, such as the rough open grasslands and the wet woodlands. It is an ancient landscape that has escaped intensification for agricultural use or development. Its sense of place is considered to be very strong.

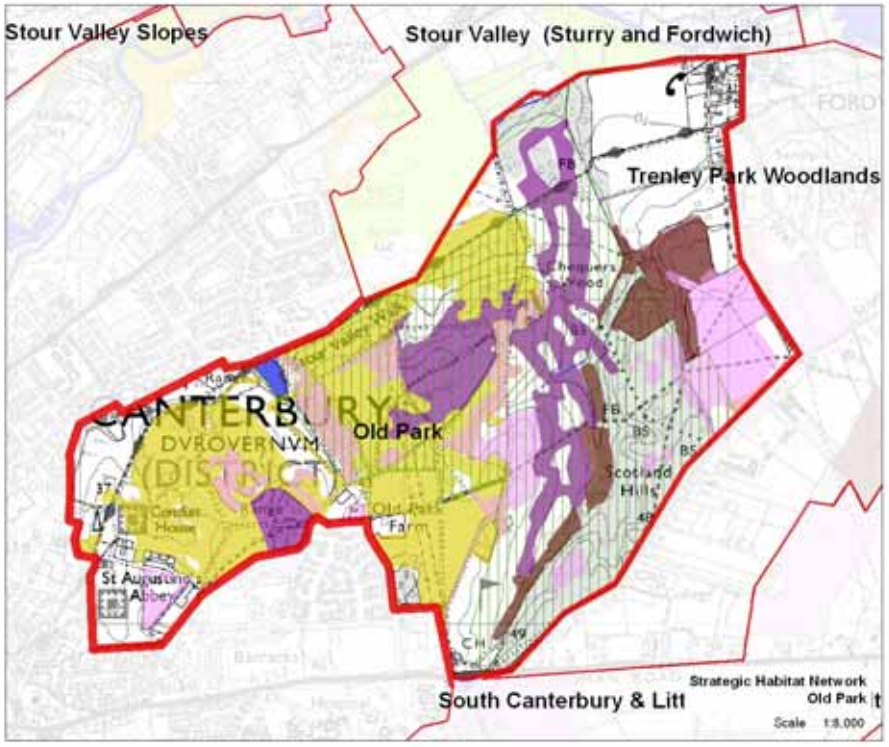
The landform of Old Park is apparent and the tree cover varies from open to contained. Visibility is moderate, although this varies with the extent of woodland cover.

The combination of a very distinct, strong landscape character with moderate visibility identifies a landscape of high sensitivity.

Habitat Network Opportunity

As this area is well covered by the SSSI designation, much of the land's strategic priority is conservation of existing interest through good management. This would include encouraging an appropriate intensity of grazing in the acid grassland swards. The Living Landscapes model does identify areas of habitat network potential, notably a mosaic of acid grassland/heath with species-rich neutral grassland, particularly east of the SSSI near Moat Lane, and to the west around the military barracks and range. There are also likely to be benefits to extending and buffering existing woodland where this does not conflict with opportunities for high quality open habitat described above.

42. Old Park



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Strong

Sensitivity:	High
Distinctiveness:	Very Distinct
Continuity:	Ancient
Sense of place:	Very Strong
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Guidelines: Conserve

Guidelines

Old Park is a landscape that is sensitive to change. Guidelines for the area are those that encourage its conservation. Prepare a management plan for Old Park to:

- Encourage management practices designed to conserve the mosaic of habitats including low intensity grazing of semi-natural grassland.
- Maintain open habitats.
- Remove detracting features.
- Encourage phased replacement of non-native species.
- Explore potential for wider public access from the heart of the City.
- Conserve the function of this area as a green wedge to enhance and support biodiversity value.
- Resist proposals for development and maintain open character reaching into the heart of the city.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

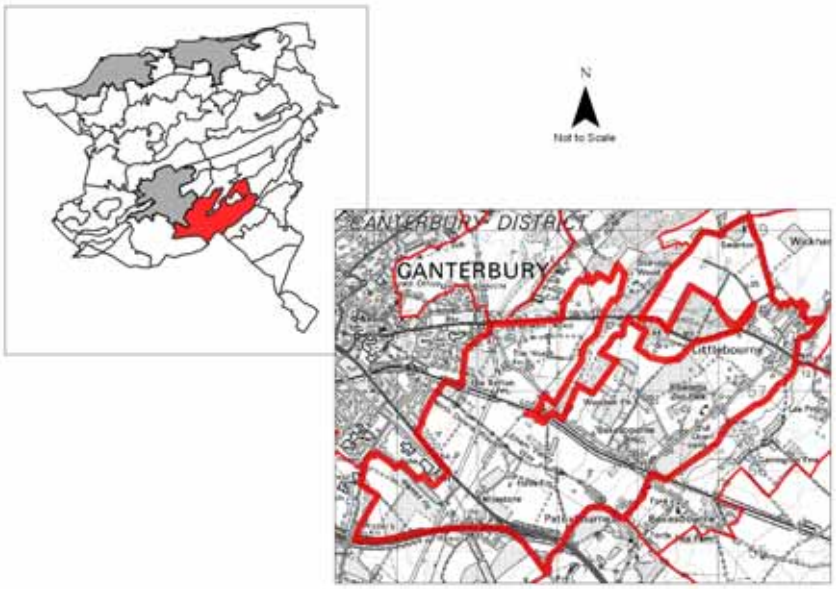
- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

43. South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling landform with deep loamy soils.
- Grade 1 agricultural land intensively farmed traditionally as orchards and hops but giving way to arable.
- Strong field pattern created by windbreaks and crops.
- Scattered clusters of oast houses and traditional farm buildings and cottages.
- Close proximity to urban edge with localised urban fringe influences and some suburbanisation.
- Communication and transport network of historic origin.
- Key designations are Conservation Area, Area of High Landscape Value and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



The South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt is part of an extensive fruit belt area that covers a substantial part of East Kent. The area has a mixed geology dominated by Thanet Beds overlain with silty drift of Head Brickearth and outcrops of River Terrace Gravels which creates an undulating, gently rounded topography. The soils are deep, well drained and often stoneless loams of a type which is only found in north and east Kent. These soils are traditionally fertile supporting top and soft fruit, although arable farming has replaced fruit production in recent years and cereals are now the main crop.

The fertility is reflected in the agricultural land classification which is mainly Grade 1 with pockets of Grade 2 at the margins. The traditional intensive agricultural use is characterised by orchards, high hedgerows and shelterbelts, with remnant shelterbelts indicating where orchards and hop gardens have been lost to arable.

This character area has limited existing biodiversity interest by comparison with surrounding areas. The only designated habitat represented here is a very small parcel of woodland and acid grassland in its north east corner known as Swanton Aerial Site, Littlebourne Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Elsewhere, the area is dominated by intensive arable and fruit production, with any significant habitat interest limited to field boundaries and occasional small parcels of woodland and scrub within farms, at Howletts Zoo Park and along the railway line.

The agricultural land abuts tightly to the southern and eastern perimeters of the urban area. Here there are some urban fringe issues that create an unkempt appearance to the immediate edge of the City. These areas include small pastures, playing fields and allotments and all add clutter to this otherwise simple but highly structured landscape. The park and ride, on the fringes of the city along the A2050 New Dover Road, provides another example of urban fringe use.

Throughout the area there are clumps and belts of native and naturalised trees. These are fragmented but tend to follow the pattern of the topography in a generally south west to north east direction, almost linking with the fingers of Trenley Park Woods stretching south along the valleys. Other trees in the area are a mix of ornamental trees associated with houses and school grounds.

43. South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt

Throughout the area are fragmented clumps and belts of native and naturalised trees. Other trees in the area are a mix of ornamental species associated with houses and amenity areas. Mobile telephone masts are sited centrally within the rural landscape. The A257, partially following the line of the Roman Road from Canterbury to Sandwich cuts through the centre of Littlebourne, elsewhere roads are narrow winding lanes and residential streets. Pylons and overhead cables are dominant in many views particularly to the east of the area. The A2 cuts through the area to the south, although the road is mostly in cutting and not generally visible. The historic core of Littlebourne village contains many buildings of historic interest, including weather boarded, half tile and brick. Littlebourne barn is an important historic building adjacent to the church. Despite the urban influences and modern housing development, the agricultural character of this area is still dominant.

The estate and house at Howletts is now established as a zoo. The zoo, despite high visitor numbers, has a very local impact on the landscape. The park is surrounded by dense vegetation that screens the essential high security fences. The car parks are contained within the high hedgerows and windbreaks of former orchards.

The historic development of the transport and communication network is of particular interest in this area. The North Downs Way from Dover to the City centre crosses the area. This is widely believed to have prehistoric origins. Old Dover Road, the section of Roman road into the City, was superseded in 1791 by the New Dover Road built by the Canterbury to Barham Turnpike Trust. It was described by Hasted in 1800 as '... in a straight line from that [St. George's] gate for more than a mile and a half through Barton-field, on each side of which several genteel houses are already built...' The remains of the turnpike gatehouse can be found at the Old Gate public house. This was the main route to Dover until the A2 Canterbury Bypass was built in 1977. The Littlebourne Road was an important Roman Road to the port at Richborough and is almost certainly the route St. Augustine first took to Canterbury. It was also a valued trade link with Sandwich that grew in importance as the Stour silted up and Fordwich declined. It was turnpiked in 1802. The area is also crossed by the London to Dover railway line and the disused Elham Valley Railway that opened in 1889 and closed soon after the Second World War in 1947. Both railway lines are distinctly marked by mature vegetation and, together with roads that radiate from the City, they subdivide this area. Despite the urban fringe influences, the agricultural character of this area is still dominant.

The historic pattern of this landscape has been broadly similar since the 1800s when hops were introduced to the area. Tree cover has a generally even age structure within areas of recent planting although there is a more diverse vegetation structure in the native tree belts. The field pattern remains quite strong over most of the area despite more recent clearance for arable farming, most notably at Little Barton Farm. The older buildings in the landscape are typically farmsteads and remnants of estate properties again probably dating from the 1800s. Oasthouses are also a feature. These traditional buildings are typically of red brick and tile construction and sit comfortably in the landscape. Modern developments are limited in extent and are less sympathetically located and designed.

43. South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt

Views of the City

Views in the north are enclosed by dense oak woodland which surrounds the north and western boundaries. However there are Isolated long views to the east, over the undulating rural landscape. The North Downs Way from Dover cuts across this area although views of the City and the Cathedral are not evident until reaching the top of the ridge at Little Barton Farm. There are also direct and imposing views of the Cathedral along the New Dover Road to the west of this ridgeline and from near the junction with the A2.

To the east of this ridge the open agricultural character dominates but is contained by a wooded effect created by numerous hedgerows, groups of trees and the vegetated railway cuttings. The gentle folds of this area obscure many views of the City. The area approximately to the east of the overhead power lines and Bekesbourne Lane has much stronger links to the broader rural landscape beyond. To the west of this line there is a feeling of approaching the City, despite its absence in many views and the distinctly agricultural landscape.

Condition

The visual unity of the South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt is generally coherent. There is some interruption caused by the change to arable farming in some areas as well as the loss of hedgerows and shelterbelts. This is particularly evident in the Little Barton Farm area where the intensification of arable farming has resulted in the loss of shelterbelts and opened up large fields. Other areas have lost their orchards but the retained shelterbelts provide a trace of the former structure and pattern. A line of overhead cables cross the area from the A2 in the south, following the valley feature to the east of Little Barton Farm and then turning to cross the caravan park to the north.

A further line of cables run parallel to this line before changing direction north east towards Trenley Park Woods. These pylons are a detracting feature in many views within this area. Other features that detract from the view are the dominant school buildings along the New Dover Road and the A2 Canterbury Bypass. To the north, away from the influence of Canterbury's urban fringe there are fewer detracting features and these tend to be limited to uncharacteristic fencing and housing within and around Littlebourne. Fields enclosed by intact hedgerow networks give continuity to agricultural areas.

Although largely an intensively farmed arable landscape the ecological interest is moderate. Land use is generally intensive arable or commercial orchards over bare ground or improved grassland which is of limited value to wildlife. Whilst some wildlife corridors are fragmented and the understorey of hedgerows and shelterbelts is poor, there are strong hedgerow and woodland corridors, and streams leading into naturalised reservoirs and associated riparian vegetation. These small wetland areas are surrounded by dense mature planting. Hedgerows are generally in good condition, dense and mature, although in places they have been grubbed out for agricultural intensification. The woodlands are well managed with mature coppice. There is some evidence of storm damage with occasional fallen trees in some places. There are a few belts of native vegetation to the east which are likely to have once linked to Trenley Park Woods to the north. These belts are declining in ecological value due to the intensive land uses that surround them. The network is further fragmented by the roads and railways that divide the area.

The condition of the landscape changes across the area. Although variable throughout it is generally in poorer condition nearer the City, improving towards the east. Overall the condition of this landscape is moderate.

43. South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt

Sensitivity

There is a distinct consistency of pattern over most of the area formed by the shelterbelts associated with existing and lost orchards and hop gardens. There are also many distinctive features such as the strong enclosure pattern, shelterbelts and scattered farmsteads. Mature oak woodland is characteristic to the north, and so are the hedgerows that emphasis the field pattern. There are some strong ornamental hedges around residential areas and mature specimen trees within the recreation ground add character to this otherwise indistinct central open space.

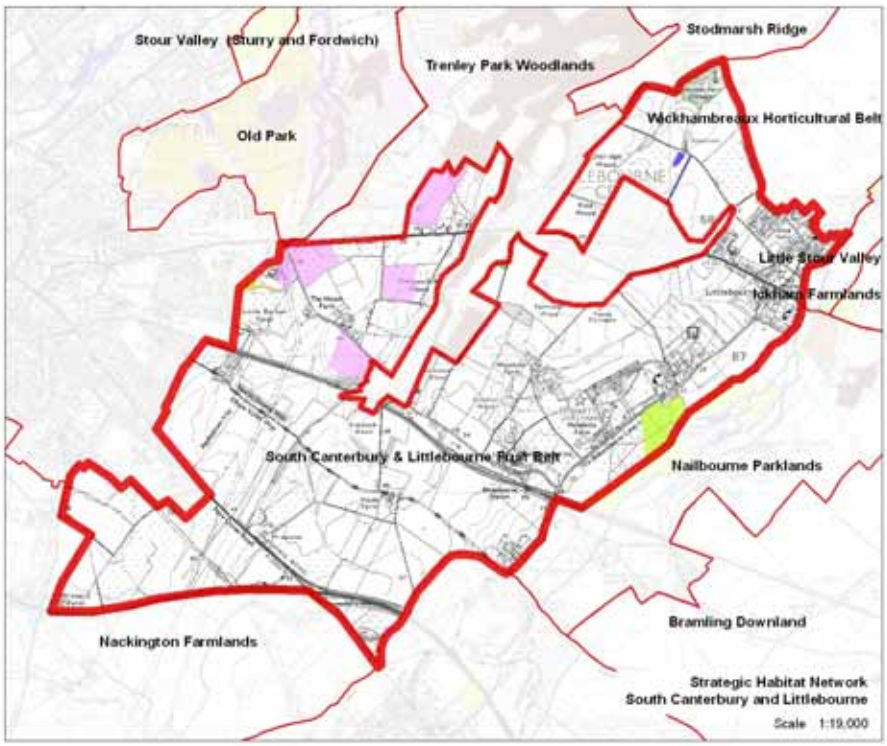
Traditional buildings have great character particularly in the historic village core. More recent development is less distinct and varies greatly in style and character. Where the pattern is lost the Sense of place is weakened creating tracts of unremarkable landscape within the broader area.

The gently rolling landform creates a series of ridges and valleys running generally south west to north east across the character area. Visibility on the ridges increases creating good views of the City and the Cathedral. These ridges are particularly sensitive at Little Barton Farm. In addition to creating vantage points allowing views of the City, the higher ground plays a role in containing views from the City and forming an important break between the urban and rural areas. Conversely the valley areas are less sensitive due to their reduced visibility.

Where windbreaks, orchards and tree belts are present, they give a filtered tree cover and enclose views which, combined with the topography, gives these areas a moderate sensitivity. The arable areas are generally more visually sensitive due to their lack of screening vegetation. Where these open areas coincide with the ridgelines the sensitivity is the greatest.

To summarise, the South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt is a moderately sensitive landscape overall, comprising sensitive exposed ridgelines and less sensitive enclosed valleys.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

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- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

43. South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt

Within this character area, the principal parcels of land with habitat network potential lie within the north west section adjacent to Old Park and Trenley Park Woodlands. Here a number of fields currently used for improved pasture, orchard or arable are identified as having potential for acid grassland and heathland habitat linkage. South of Bekesbourne Lane, opposite Howletts Zoo there is a parcel identified for wetland network opportunity. This is an extension of the network opportunities within the Nailbourne Parklands character area.

To the north east of this character area there may also be some benefit in buffering and extending the neighbouring Trenley Park's woodland habitat toward the Swanton Aerial LWS.

Guidelines

Appropriate guidelines for the South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt are those that encourage the conservation of the strong landscape pattern and improvement for those areas that are in poor condition, whilst respecting the most sensitive areas.

- Encourage the traditional farming practice of top fruit production.
- Encourage the maintenance of rectilinear farming pattern.
- Wherever possible conserve old orchards for their biodiversity value.
- Improve continuity of hedgerow and windbreak features.
- Resist unsympathetic land uses on visually sensitive ridgelines.
- Resist the introduction of contrasting visual elements such as pylons.
- Conserve and respect the character of traditional built form and its association with farming practice.
- Explore ways of enhancing the approach to the City along the North Downs Way and Watling Street in sympathy with their historic significance.
- Conserve and improve the green link into the City along the disused Elham Valley Railway.
- Conserve and improve belts of native vegetation to help re-establish ecological corridors linking to Trenley Park Woods.
- Avoid urban fringe uses which detract from the otherwise simple pattern of the landscape, and improve boundary treatments with the use of native hedgerows to help screen inappropriate fencing and to filter views of urban fringe uses.
- Seek opportunities to develop acid grassland/heath habitat in areas near to Old Park and Trenley Park.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Moderate
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: High
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

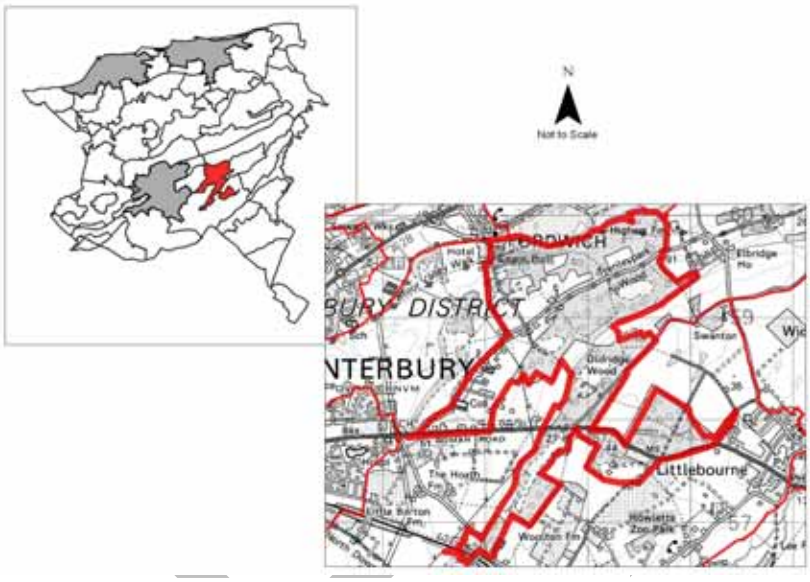
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

44. Trenley Park Woodlands

Key Characteristics

- Thin soils and irregular landform supporting coppice woodland.
- Former ancient deer park resulting in a historically unenclosed landscape with low intensity use.
- Key designations are the peripheries of Conservation Areas and a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



Trenley Park Woodlands is an extensive woodland area on stony coarse textured, well drained soils over Thanet Beds and River Terrace Gravels. The mixed geology creates an undulating and irregular topography. Fingers of woodland point south west along valleys, emerging from the adjacent fruit belt. The most distinctive of these is the Lampen Stream valley.

The woodlands are part of Trenley Park, the oldest documented deer park in Kent, as well as one of the oldest in the country. It was created by Odo of Bayeux and was first mentioned in a charter dating 1071-82. It is one of two deer parks in Kent mentioned in Domesday Book. The exact location on the ground is not known, however it was a detached part of the parish of Wickham (later Wickhambreaux) located within Littlebourne parish. The shape is typical of medieval deer parks with rounded banks and in places remains of the external ditch can be seen. It ceased to be enclosed around 1425 when 200 acres of the wood were sold when the last Earl of March, and Lord of the Manor of Wickham, died.

Today Trenley Park has lost its open character and is managed as chestnut coppice woodland with oak standards and some coniferous plantation.

This character area is partly designated as the Trenley Park Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS). It consists of a large ancient woodland complex on acid soils together with some former sand pits. The woods are somewhat fragmented by roads, agricultural land and sand pits. Some are under active coppice management, with others being unmanaged. The flora is varied and there are notable populations of woodland birds. Outside of the predominant woodland, the landcover is mostly improved grassland.

44. Trenley Park Woodlands

Condition

Trenley Park Woodlands are a landscape in good condition. The continuous woodland cover creates a coherent landscape, although detracting features include recent housing, suburban land use pressures, woodland clearance for equestrian grazing, fly-tipping and security features.

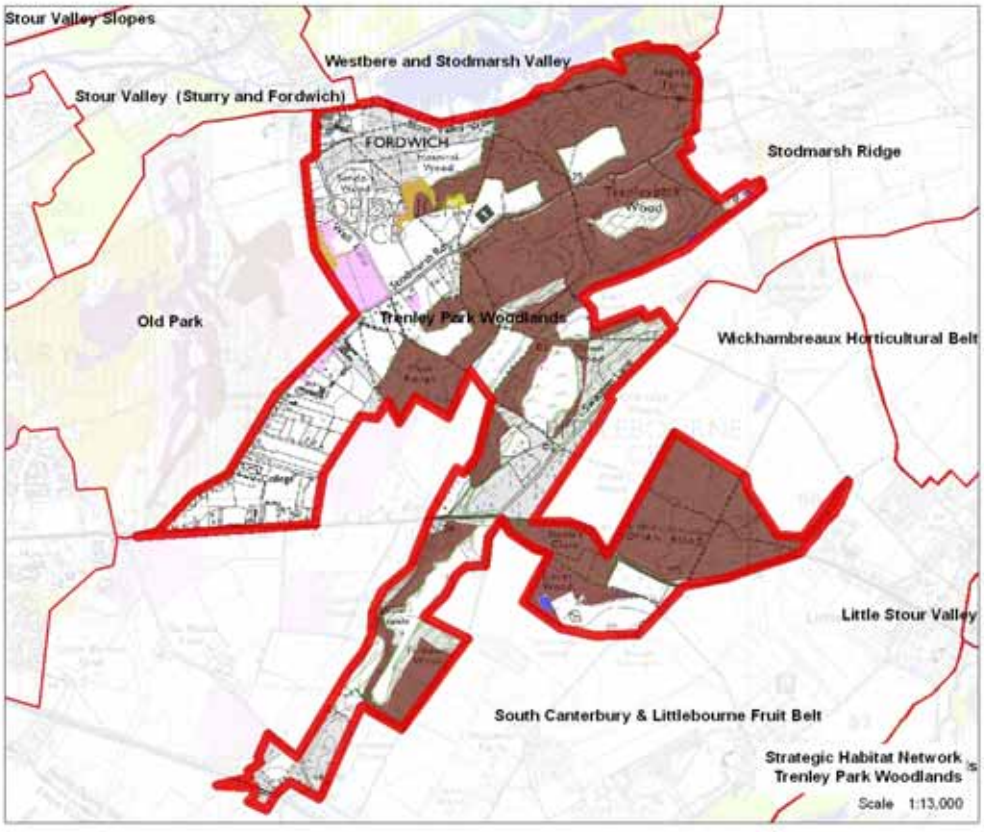
It is strong both ecologically and culturally. The site is designated as a Local Wildlife Site and its historical origins as a deer park is well documented.

Sensitivity

It is a moderately sensitive landscape. It is very distinct and historic in origin with a strong sense of place. However visibility is low due to the degree of enclosure afforded by the woodland cover.

Habitat Network Opportunity

Most of this area is dominated by existing woodland that would benefit from improved long-term coppice management and improved woodland linkage via hedgerows and shelter-belts where feasible. There are some smaller areas of land near Well Lane that have potential for acid grassland/heath development and species-rich grassland as part of the wider networks for these habitats.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
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- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

44. Trenley Park Woodlands

Guidelines

The wooded character of the Trenley Park Woodlands should be conserved and reinforced.

- Reinforce wooded character by continued and improved coppice management.
- Resist proposals to increase access or develop within the woodland.
- Encourage the replacement of coniferous or introduced species with native deciduous species within the woodland.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Good**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Strong

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Very distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Strong
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Enclosed
Visibility:	Low

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

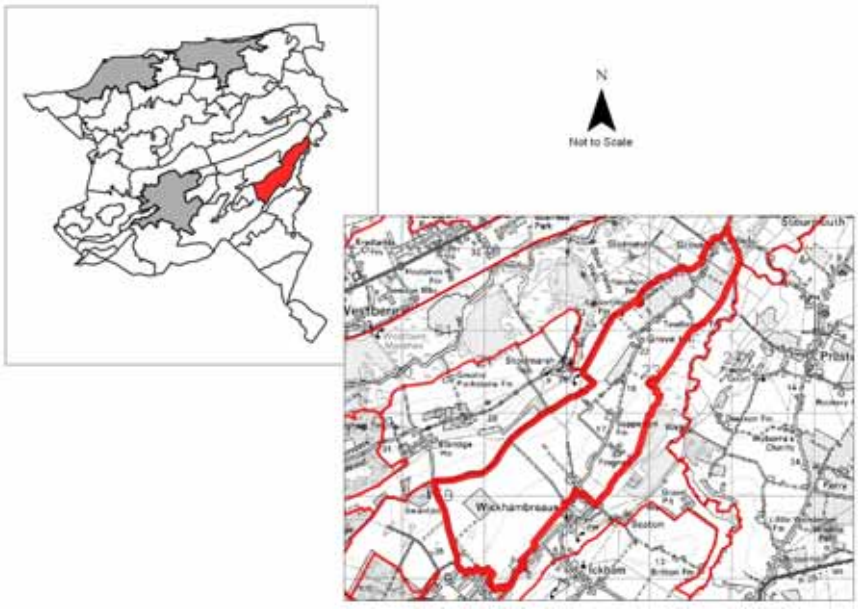
Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

45. Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt

Key Characteristics

- Gently rounded agricultural landscape with deep, well drained loamy soils.
- Intensive fruit production, field vegetables and cereals.
- A highly structured landscape, with a strong network of hedgerows and shelterbelts.
- Isolated farmsteads and occasional groups of cottages.
- Enclosed views.
- Key designations comprise a Scheduled Monument.

Landscape Description



This gently rounded agricultural landscape is derived from the Tertiary Beds, most notably the Thanet Beds, overlain by river terrace gravels and head brickearth. The soils are deep, generally well drained and often stoneless loams. These soils are fertile, supporting the production of soft and hard fruit, potatoes, field vegetables and cereals. The fertility is reflected in the agricultural land classification which is mainly Grade 1, with one small pocket of Grade 2 at Grove Hill.

The traditional intensive agricultural function is characterised by significant areas of orchard, high hedgerows and shelterbelts. It is a structured landscape, with numerous narrow twisting lanes enclosed by the hedgerow network.

Situated on the higher ground between the River Little Stour and the Lampen Stream at Stodmarsh, this character area is dominated by arable and fruit farming. There are no designated nature conservation sites here. Biodiversity interest is therefore primarily limited to hedgerows and field margins.

Settlement is limited to isolated farmsteads and occasional groups of cottages scattered along Grove Road. Views are restricted by the dense mature vegetation, although occasional glimpses across adjacent landscapes are seen through hedgerow gaps.

45. Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt

Condition

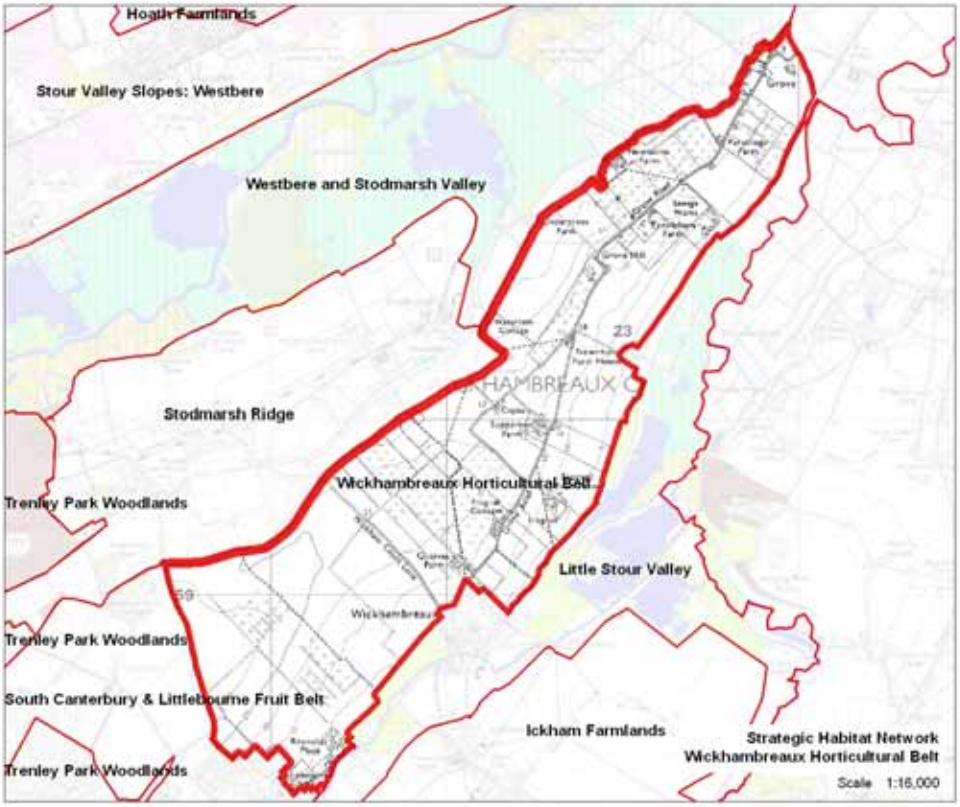
The Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt is in moderate condition. There is a coherent field pattern generally held together by a strong network of mature hedgerows and windbreaks. Where cereal and vegetable production are the primary functions, larger fields with fewer hedgerows have developed as fruit and hop production has declined. Visual detractors comprise agricultural barns, sheds and stores in corrugated iron and concrete. A degree of hedgerow loss is evident, and there is an increasing amount of equestrian grazing throughout the area with inappropriate fencing types. Polytunnels and inappropriate conifer screen planting detract from the landscape in places.

The ecological integrity of the area is moderate. The hedgerow network is mature and often intact although the value of the single species windbreaks is limited to their ability to shelter wildlife rather than their diversity of habitats. Land within this network is intensely farmed. There are no large areas of woodland. Built development has a moderate impact on the landscape, much of it is 20th century. Houses are prominently sited along lanes, whereas agricultural structures are sited off road. Buildings tend to be in scattered groups throughout the landscape, with simple brick or concrete construction, unsympathetic to local vernacular.

Sensitivity

This is a distinct and highly structured landscape. It is a working landscape which, although of historic origin, contains a number of recent built elements. Narrow lanes, sunk between grass verges are characteristic and are generally enclosed by high hedgerows. The topography is gentle and combined with the filtered enclosure of the hedgerows creates a moderate visibility. Where the traditional enclosure is in decline there are areas of high visibility that are more sensitive.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

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- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

45. Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt

The Living Landscapes model does not reveal any network opportunity in this character area, but as it is situated between two important designated wetland sites there may be opportunity to buffer these sites through sensitive land management at the margins of this character area. Elsewhere, linear habitats such as road verges and hedges should be sympathetically managed for biodiversity.

Guidelines

The distinctive character of the Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt should be conserved and improved.

- Conserve and improve the landscape structure.
- Where it is necessary to introduce new elements, they should respect and enhance the landscape pattern.
- Conserve characteristic narrow lanes and verges.
- Encourage wildlife-friendly management of hedges and road verges.
- Conserve the sparse settlement pattern, reinforcing building styles to conform with local vernacular.
- Conserve and improve agricultural land use by encouraging local markets for produce.
- Use traditional hedgerows and shelterbelts to help integrate new built elements, including polytunnels, into the landscape and strengthen the fruit belt landscape character.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
	good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

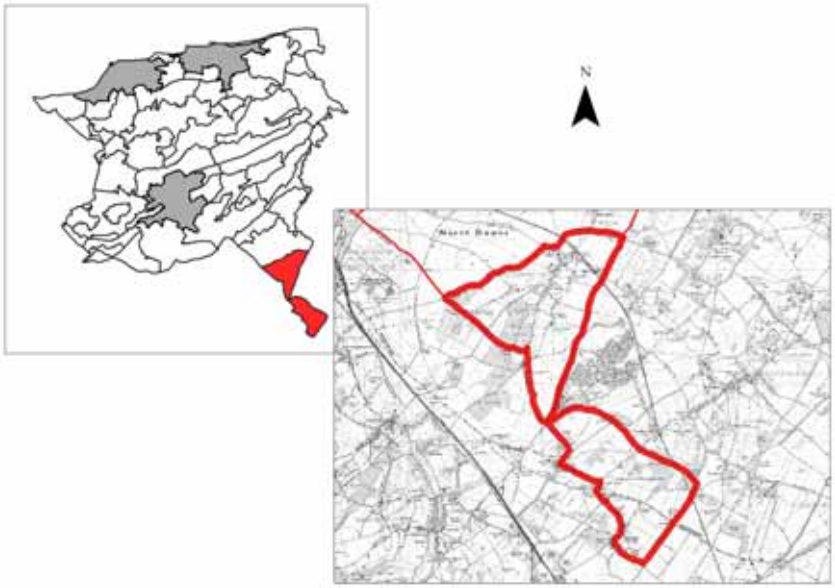
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

46. Adisham Arable Downland

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landscape.
- Chalk geology.
- Large arable fields interspersed with large broadleaf woodland blocks.
- Small settlements, with modern buildings occasionally interspersed with traditional flint and thatch materials.
- Loss of traditional field boundaries and hedgerows due to intensive arable farming.
- Open views, partially obscured by woodland blocks in places.
- Narrow highways.
- Small scale mineral extraction.
- Key designations are Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monument, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape Description



As part of the chalk dip slope of the North Downs, the landscape is gently undulating with dry valleys, allowing open views across arable farmland. The drift geology comprises areas of Head, with strips of Dry Valley and Nailbourne Deposits along the valleys. The solid geology consists of upper chalk and soils are silty. Although there has been some loss of traditional field boundaries and field pattern, woodland blocks and belts, distinctively located on higher ridges, enclose the large fields and restrict far reaching views in places. Woodland is mostly native broadleaf, with some integration of pine and chestnut coppice and non native sycamore and Turkish oak trees. Intermittent native hedgerows have been replaced along some boundaries by post and wire fencing, although clumps and belts of native trees in between fields are remnant of the traditional field boundaries. Remaining hedgerows are thin in places and are regularly supported by post and wire fencing. Pockets of derelict fruit orchards reflect previous land use in places. The land is intensively used, although areas of enclosed grazed pasture, comprising a smaller and more traditional field pattern, is situated within the valley to the east of Woolage Green and around the periphery of Adisham. The arable land use and woodland blocks provide seasonal variation with crop cycles and winter leaf loss. There is some evidence of past mineral extraction, with small quarried areas clearly displaying the underlying chalk. South west of Adisham village lies part of the Ileden and Oxenden Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This site is representative of east Kent plateau woodland on chalk, with a variety of stand types and a diverse ground flora. It also contains a rich breeding bird community.

46. Adisham Arable Downland

A series of woods to the north of Womenswold and Woolage are designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Woolwich Wood is a remnant of a larger woodland destroyed in the 1960s made up of a variety of coppice trees with oak standards. Chalk Wood is mainly sweet chestnut coppice with fewer standards. The Woods south of Snowdown LWS, which include Oxney and Cony Wood, also comprise ancient coppice-with-standards. A rich flora is present, and the woods are also noted for their butterfly and bird assemblage. There is also a locally designated site at Holy Innocents' Churchyard, Adisham, which is a small site that is rich in lichens and also contains unimproved chalk grassland.

To the north the settlement of Adisham is predominantly modern, but features some traditional buildings and use of locally distinct materials including a flint church, timber framed barn barns, Kent peg tiles and vernacular Georgian housing and Victorian school. Adisham lies within a gentle valley on the edge of the old coal mining area of east Kent, which is based within the adjoining Dover District. The settlement is linear and housing is densely positioned along 'The Street'.

The small settlements of Womenswold, Woolage Green and Woolage Village are located to the south west. These villages comprise a significant amount of modern housing, although traditional properties with flint walls and thatched roofs are scattered throughout the more recent development. Woolage Green and Womenswold are Conservation Areas, recognising the historic merit of the settlements and numerous listed buildings. However, large agricultural barns and silos at Woolage Farm detract from the small scale of surrounding residential properties and settlements. Amenity playing fields to the north of Woolage Village provide a slightly suburban character alongside the high density and modern housing. Isolated farmsteads are scattered across the countryside surrounding Adisham, with clusters of large agricultural barns and outbuildings. Few roads cross the area, providing links between the small scale settlements, with the road through Adisham running through a valley. Views from the roads are generally open as a result of hedgerow loss. The railway passes through the landscape to the north, lined by distinctive linear vegetation belts.

46. Adisham Arable Downland

Condition

The condition of the landscape is moderate. This is a coherent landscape with few visual detractors, consisting of poor fencing, moving traffic visible on the roads, small pylons, modern housing and large agricultural buildings. Whilst the woodland blocks form strong ecological bases the overall ecological network is weak, comprising poor corridors for wildlife in the form of gappy hedgerows. The intensity of agricultural use is high, but slightly lessened by the woodland blocks. In general the built developments have a high impact on the character of the landscape, although some traditional properties strengthen the sense of place and their materials respect the local vernacular.

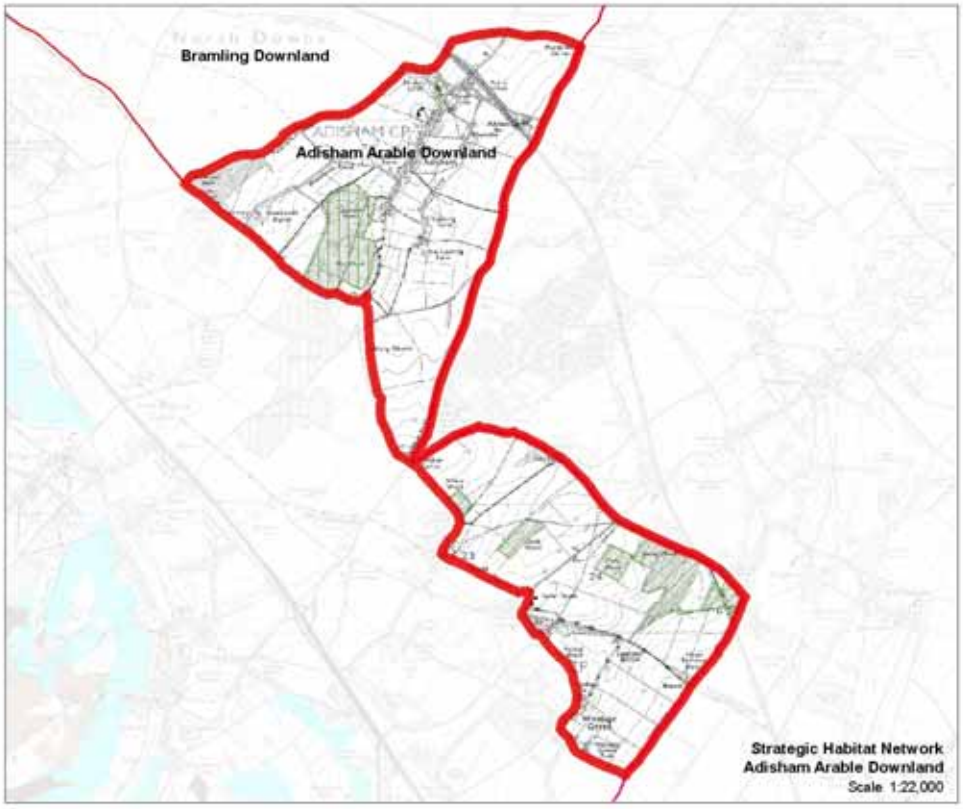
Sensitivity

The overall sensitivity of the landscape is moderate. The woodland blocks, vegetation belts and orchards are all distinct features within the landscape. The historic core of Adisham and some traditional buildings within the settlement contribute to local distinctiveness, although much of the development is recent and does not contribute to the sense of place. Visibility is open to the east and north, although it is hindered to the south by the large woodland blocks.

Habitat Network Opportunity

This character area falls outside of the strategic habitat network identified by the Living Landscapes model. Its existing BAP habitats, in particular its ancient woodlands, are too isolated from the major clusters to qualify under the parameters of the model. However, these habitats are vitally important for maintaining the local area's wildlife interest and would benefit from greater connectivity and appropriate management for biodiversity benefits.

This could be achieved through the reinstatement of native, species-rich hedgerows and tree-belts, and improved coppice management.



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

46. Adisham Arable Downland

Guidelines

The guidelines for the area are to conserve and improve.

- Conserve traditional buildings.
- Assess the biodiversity value of old orchards and conserve any high value sites.
- Conserve woodland blocks and belts and gradually replace non-native species with native trees.
- Improve the condition of fencing and reinstate native hedgerow field boundaries where possible along roads.
- Encourage the use of traditional materials in new development, such as flint, Kent peg tiles and timber frames.
- Any further development should be concentrated around existing settlements.
- Avoid development proposals in prominent locations such as on higher ground.
- Encourage suitable native planting around visually prominent farm buildings (particularly large, modern sheds) to soften the visual impact.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Moderate**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition	Sensitivity: low	Sensitivity: moderate	Sensitivity: high
good	**REINFORCE**	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	**CONSERVE**
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	**IMPROVE**	RESTORE & IMPROVE	**RESTORE**

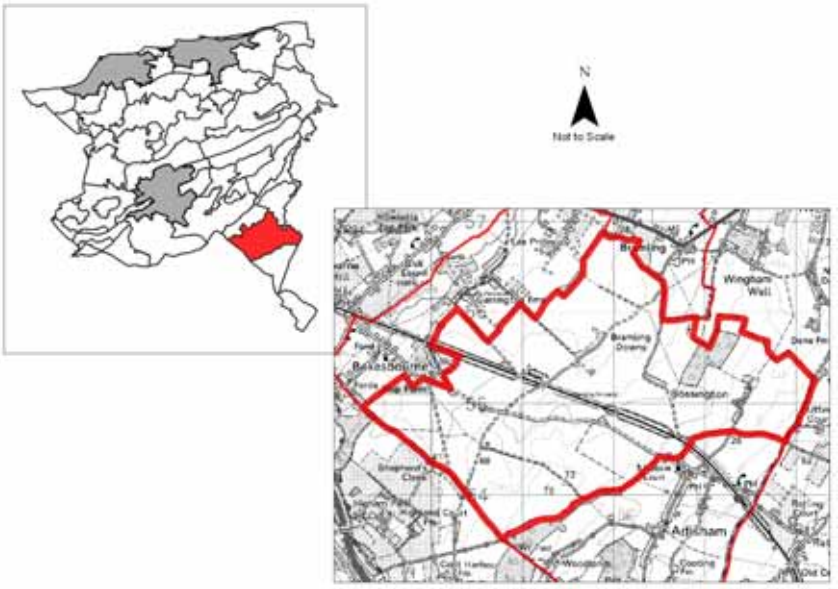
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

47. Bramling Downland

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform.
- Chalk geology.
- Intensive arable farming with very large fields.
- Pockets of pasture around Bossington.
- Intermittent hedgerows.
- Limited tree cover with some woodland blocks with recent plantations in places.
- Open views across the landscape to distinct landmark features.
- Sparsely scattered development.
- Isolated properties and large agricultural barns.
- Narrow roads along field boundaries.
- Key designations comprise a Conservation Area.

Landscape Description



The Bramling Downland character area lies to the north of Adisham. The dip slope topography is gently undulating and the geology is pockets of Head Brickearth overlain with Upper Chalk. The land is used primarily for intensive arable farming. Some pockets of pasture populate smaller, more enclosed, fields around Bossington to the east. The arable fields are very large to maximise crop production, and as a consequence there has been an extensive loss of native hedgerows and traditional field boundaries and pattern. The remaining hedgerows are thin and intermittent, and post and wire fencing has replaced hedgerows in places. Small blocks of woodland, some coniferous and some of which comprise recent plantations, are sparsely scattered across the arable landscape, providing some visual variation. Crop cycles provide seasonal variation, with open expanses of ploughed earth during the winter months. Poplar shelterbelts are evident in the north, remnant of historic soft fruit production. However tree cover is generally limited, allowing open views across the landscape to distant landmark buildings including Canterbury Cathedral.

A small amount of nursery planting is evident, with rows of intensely coloured plants contrasting with the surrounding arable fields, and there is small scale evidence of quarrying activity which highlights the underlying chalk geology.

Significant habitat interest is confined largely to Frith and Broome Woods near Bossington, a small, undesignated area of relatively isolated ancient woodland that falls outside of the Living Landscapes habitat network.

47. Bramling Downland

Development is sparsely scattered, with the traditional small scale settlement of Bossington to the east forming the only major settlement. Although the area is largely unsettled, isolated properties and large scale agricultural barns are sporadically scattered across the landscape. Narrow roads run along field boundaries and linear vegetation belts distinguish the railway line, which dissects the landscape.

Condition

The overall condition of the landscape is moderate. This is a coherent landscape and there are few visual detractors in the area, although the open character of the landscape accentuates the visibility. Small pylons, electricity poles and large agricultural buildings are extensively visible because of the limited tree cover and undulating topography. The lack of hedgerow network and replacement with fencing creates a weak ecological base, although there is some evidence of new tree planting. Field boundaries are in poor condition with a mixture of poorly maintained fencing and thin, gappy hedgerows. Large agricultural buildings have a significant impact on the landscape, although some have been painted green in an attempt to integrate them visually.

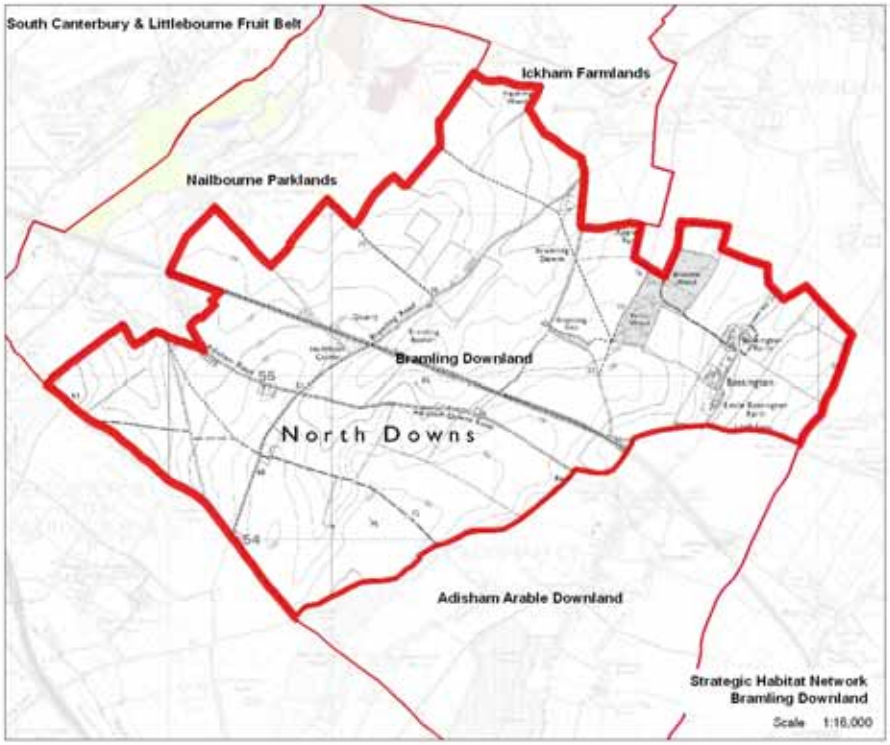
Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape is moderate. The open landscape with intermittent tree cover allows for moderate visibility. Whilst the downland topography and dominant arable land use is distinctive, many landscape features, such as hedgerows, have been removed or are in poor condition. Whilst buildings within Bossington are traditional, scattered modern housing and large agricultural barns do not contribute to the local distinctiveness.

Habitat Network Opportunity

The woodland habitat in this area is relatively isolated from other significant blocks of woodland. Although the Living Landscapes model shows no significant potential to develop the strategic habitat network here, a strategy of conservation and enhancement of the existing ancient woodland of Broome and Frith Woods is appropriate, together with the linking of such habitats through hedgerow restoration.

47. Bramling Downland



Landscape Analysis

Condition:	Moderate
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Very Weak

Sensitivity:	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Condition		low	moderate	high
	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
		Sensitivity		

Guidelines

The guidelines are to conserve and improve.

- Conserve and improve the remaining hedgerows and vegetation belts.
- Increase the extent of tree cover with further woodland planting.
- Conserve the limited impact of the landfill and quarry site, and seek opportunities to enhance old quarries for biodiversity.
- Avoid development proposals in prominent locations such as on higher ground.
- Encourage suitable planting around visually prominent farm buildings (particularly large, modern sheds) to soften the visual impact.

Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

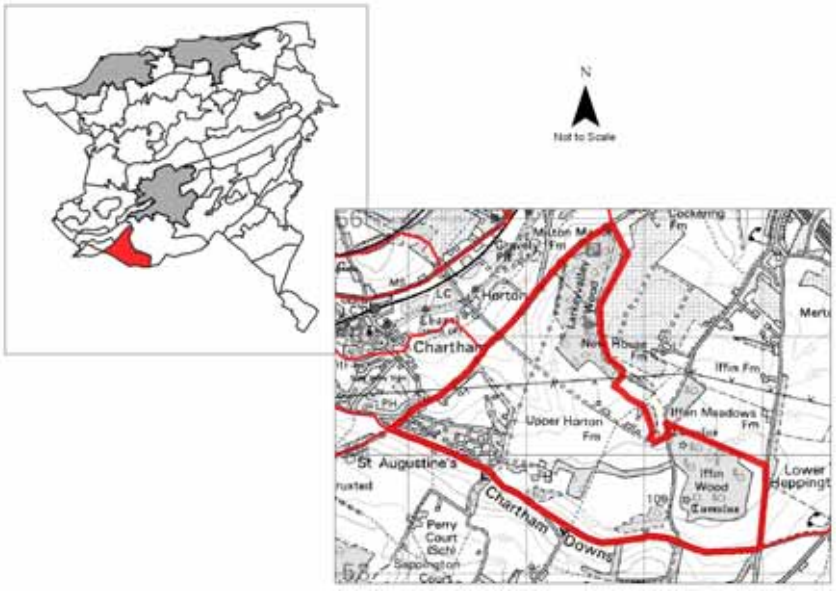
Guidelines: Conserve and Improve

48. Chartham Downland

Key Characteristics

- Undulating downland topography with panoramic views across Kent Downs AONB to the south.
- Modern, densely populated housing as part of Chartham to the south west.
- Modern housing development on former hospital site to the south.
- Mixed woodlands blocks with beech as a dominant species.
- Native hedgerows with beech as a dominant species.
- Poplar shelterbelts, remnant of fruit farming areas.
- Some hedgerow loss to post and wire fencing.
- Key designations are a Scheduled Monument, the periphery of a Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Description



As part of the chalk dip slope of the North Downs, the landscape is undulating with dry valleys. The landform becomes higher to the north, providing extensive panoramic views to the south across the Kent Downs AONB where vegetation allows. Beneath the Chalk, the drift geology comprises ribbons of Dry Valley and Nailbourne Deposits. Soils are silty and land is used predominantly for intensive arable agriculture. Tree cover is significant in the form of mixed woodland blocks and mature hedgerows. Beech is a common species throughout woodland and hedgerows, and there is some chestnut coppice. Iffin Wood, located on higher ground to the east, supports a strong proportion of coniferous species. Small scale soft fruit farming remains in places, and linear poplar shelterbelts enclose fields in parts, remnant of more extensive fruit farming practices. Enclosing woodland blocks and hedgerows provide a reasonably regular field pattern. Some small pockets of pasture used for horse grazing are located around Hillside Farm and Chartham View Farm.

Two designated sites are located in this character area. Larkey Valley Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Nature Reserve is dominated by ash-maple coppice which grades into beech high forest on the thin calcareous soils on the upper slopes, with hornbeam coppice on the deeper soils of the valley bottom. The variety of plants and many breeding birds are notable here, and the wood benefits from ongoing coppicing and reinstatement work. Iffin Wood and Little Iffin Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is made up of ancient and secondary broadleaved woodland, mostly converted to chestnut coppice, but includes some areas of hornbeam, hazel and ash coppice. Oak standards occur throughout. A good variety of plants and birds are noted here.

The south east section of Chartham extends into the character area and is predominantly modern, with recent expansion across the former hospital site.

48. Chartham Downland

An avenue of mature beech trees, characteristic of the area, form a dominant feature to the north of the slightly high density housing area, although some amenity land comprising a cricket ground and playing field provide a localised but suburban character. Several traditional farmsteads are scattered across the area, promoting the rural and predominantly undeveloped character of the landscape. Few highways cross the area, although Chartham Downs Road to the south provides a historic route which follows the contours of the Downs. One distinctively narrow and tree lined highway runs against the steep contours in a north south direction west of Iffin Wood.

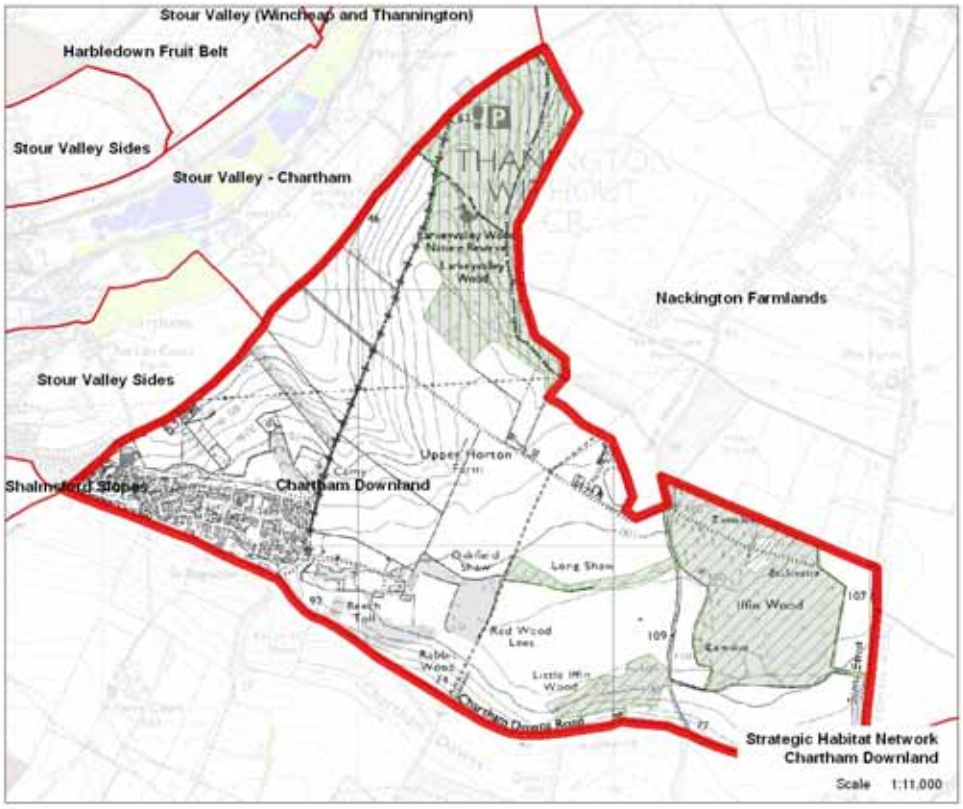
Condition

The condition of the area is good. There are few visual detractors, which comprise the modern high density housing, large agricultural barns, pylons and a small amount of 'horsiculture'. There is a moderate ecological network, provided by the large historic woodland blocks and hedgerow network. Although much of the land has been converted to arable use, the intensity of land use is not high because it is interspersed by areas of pasture land and woodland blocks. Although the field boundaries vary, these are mostly native hedgerows with some loss to post and wire fencing. The impact of recent development is high, but is localised and therefore not extensive.

Sensitivity

Overall, this is a highly sensitive landscape. The dominant downland topography gives way to a highly visible landscape and woodland blocks and native hedgerows are distinctive, historic features. The predominance of beech as a key species within woodland and hedgerows is distinct and provides continuity throughout the area. Historic earthworks within Iffin Wood, remnant poplar shelterbelts from historic fruit farming along with pockets of remaining soft fruit farming also add to local distinctiveness.

Habitat Network Opportunity



Legend: Strategic Habitat Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network derived from the Kent Living Landscapes project.

- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Statutory designated site (SSSI, SAC and/or SPA-Ramsar)
- Non-statutory designated site (LWS)
- Open water - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - existing
- Fen & reed swamp - potential
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Inter-tidal sediments - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat- potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Ancient woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential

48. Chartham Downland

Despite the significant presence of designated woodland habitats here, this character area falls outside of the strategic habitat network, due to the woodlands' isolation from other significant ancient woodland blocks. Therefore, the key focus here is to conserve and enhance existing habitat, although local opportunities for woodland extension or linkage should not be overlooked. Linkage can be achieved in part through hedgerow restoration and extension around field boundaries.

Guidelines

Chartham Downland is a landscape which should be conserved.

- Avoid development proposals in prominent locations such as on higher ground.
- Conserve woodland cover and native hedgerows, reinstating and extending where possible.
- Conserve pastoral land use and resist further intensive land use.
- Conserve highway characteristics of narrow cross contour and ridgeline roads.

Landscape Analysis

Condition:	**Good**
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Detracting features:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

Sensitivity:	**High**
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Extent of tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Condition	low	moderate	high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
	Sensitivity		

Guidelines: Conserve

Summary and Recommendations

13.1 The landscape assessment identifies 48 landscape character areas throughout the Canterbury District. Each of these areas has physical and cultural characteristics that are distinct and identifiable from the others. Some of the differences between character areas are not immediately apparent until they are broken down to their basic landscape components. The transition between the areas on the ground may be quite gradual in some places but the essential characteristics are quite distinct from each other. Some character areas appear to change quite dramatically within themselves. These changes may be due to either very local variations or more typically due to changes in condition.

13.2 It is not appropriate to categorise landscapes merely on their condition particularly when generating guidance for their future management. The condition of a landscape needs to be balanced against its sensitivity. The combination of condition and sensitivity assessments has generated appropriate actions for each character area.

13.3 Table 1 provides a summary of landscape condition and sensitivity and the overall landscape issues and landscape guidelines for each area. Figure 14 provides an illustration of the landscape guidelines. Although conclusions have been reached for each of the character areas it is not the purpose of this study to rank one character area against another. For example some landscapes may be sensitive to change but are sensitive in different ways and different actions are appropriate. Likewise this study is not intended to identify in detail areas suitable for development. It may however offer guidance to both the local planning authority and developers when deciding the type and scale of development that may be appropriate in the Canterbury District.

Summary and Recommendations

Table 1: Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Character Area	Condition	Sensitivity	Guidelines
1. Beltinge Coast	Good	High	Conserve
2. Swalecliffe Coast	Poor	Moderate	Restore and Improve
3. Chislet Arable Belt	Moderate	High	Conserve and Restore
4. Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet	Good	High	Conserve
5. Seasalter Marshes	Good	High	Conserve
6. Shelvingford Inlet	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
7. Snake Drove pastures	Moderate	High	Conserve and Restore
8. Reculver Coastal Fringe	Moderate	High	Conserve and Restore
9. Chestfield Gap	Poor	Moderate	Restore and Improve
10. Chestfield Wooded Farmland	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
11. Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
12. Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
13. Greenhill and Eddington Fringe	Poor	Low	Improve
14. Herne Common	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
15. Hillborough Arable Farmlands	Poor	Moderate	Restore and Improve
16. Wraik Hill	Poor	Moderate	Restore and Improve
17. Yorkletts Farmlands	Poor	Moderate	Restore and Improve
18. – 23. Blean Woods: Harbledown, Thornden, Yorkletts, East, Bigbury Hill and Denstead	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
24. Clay Hill	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
25. Broad Oak Valley	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
26. Shalmsford Slopes	Moderate	High	Conserve and Restore
27. Stour Valley Sides	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
28. Stour Valley Slopes	Poor	Moderate	Restore and Improve
29. Stour Valley Slopes: Westbere	Poor	Low	Improve
30. Stodmarsh Ridge	Good	High	Conserve
31. Little Stour Valley	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
32. Stour Valley Chartham	Moderate	High	Conserve and Restore
33. Stour Valley: Sturry and Fordwich	Moderate	High	Conserve and Restore
34. Stour Valley: Wincheap and Thanington	Moderate	High	Conserve and Restore
35. Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley	Good	High	Conserve
36. Blean Farmlands	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
37. Harbledown Fruit Belt	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
38. Hoath Farmlands	Poor	Moderate	Restore and Improve
39. Ickham Farmlands	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
40. Nackington Farmlands	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
41. Nailbourne Parklands	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
42. Old Park	Good	High	Conserve
43. South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
44. Trenley Park Woodlands	Good	Moderate	Conserve and Reinforce
45. Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
46. Adisham Arable Downland	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
47. Bramling Downland	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve and Improve
48. Chartham Downland	Good	High	Conserve

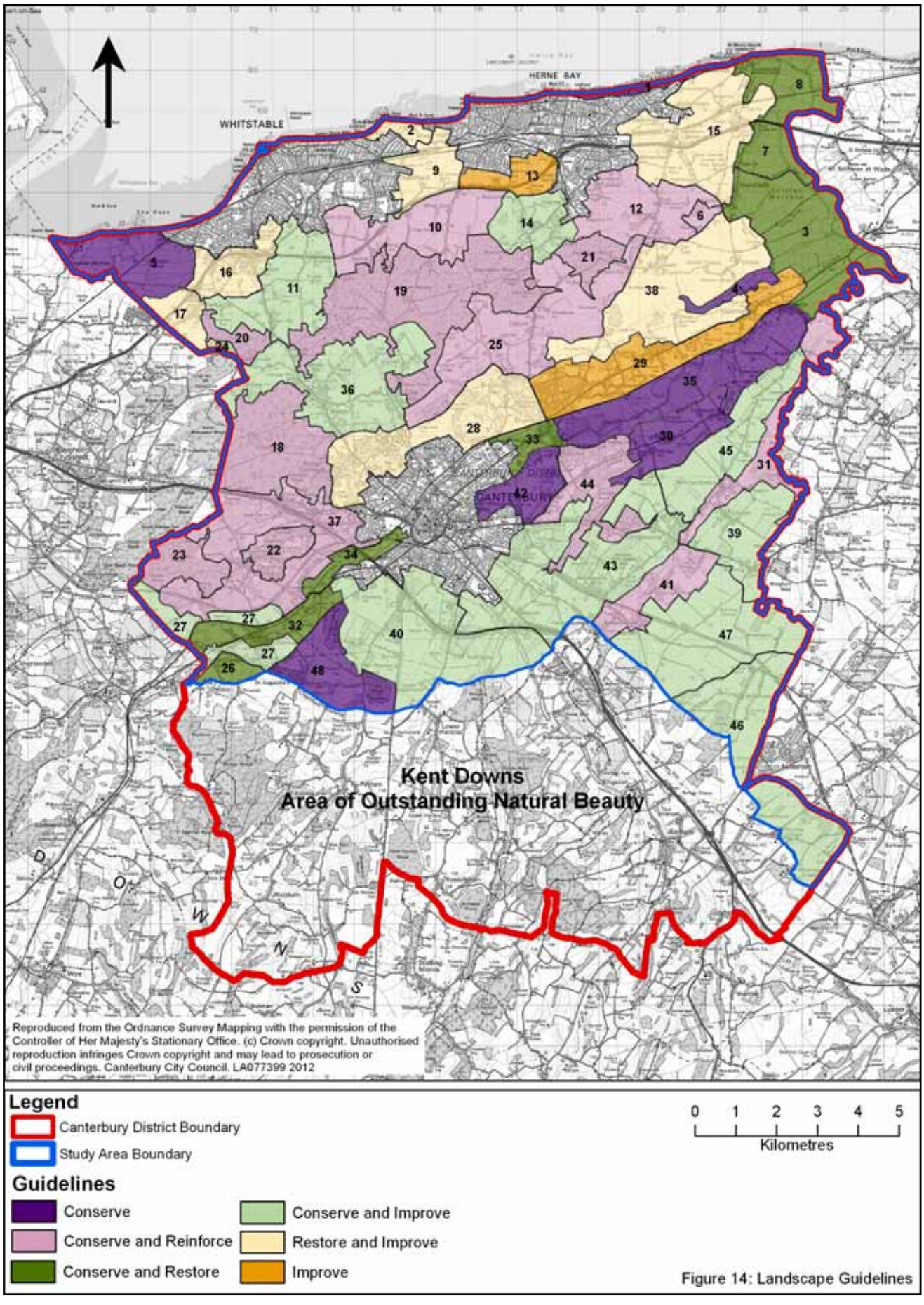


Figure 14: Landscape Guidelines

Summary and Recommendations

14.1 The countryside within the study area is marked by its diversity. Distinctive characteristics range from large tracts of ancient woodland, rich in ecological and cultural significance to river valleys providing a diverse range of habitats and an unspoilt open landscape. Many of these landscapes are also of international importance for their nature conservation interest. There are also many attractive villages with historic and delightful buildings and parklands which complement the natural environment. The priority is to conserve and reinforce these attractive and valuable landscape resources.

14.2 Elsewhere many farming landscapes are under pressure for change, with the intensification of arable cultivation resulting in the loss of hedgerows and woodlands. However there are still several areas of landscape with a well developed and attractive patchwork of hedgerows and woodland which are worthy of conservation. Elsewhere the restoration and extension of hedged field boundaries and small copses in the landscape should be encouraged.

14.3 For biodiversity, the conservation of the existing resource must be done in concert with the creation of new areas of habitat, where such creation can provide district and county-wide linkage. As an adaptation to climate change and to rectify past losses, the development of well-connected habitat networks at the landscape scale should be given a clear priority, and the mapping presented in this document provides a valuable starting point for doing this. Such mapping will help to focus habitat creation/restoration effort where it will have greatest effect for trans-regional biodiversity, although it is recognised that area's outside of this strategic network also have important habitats and designated sites that are worthy of preserving.

14.4 The active involvement of local landowners, farmers, national and local government, special interest groups and all those who live in, work in and visit the countryside will be vital to secure these measures to protect and enhance the countryside around Canterbury.

14.5 The results of the assessment can also be used to highlight issues common across the landscape character areas.

Farmland Landscapes

14.6 A number of issues are common to the farmland landscapes. To retain their rural character there is a need for continued productive agricultural use and guidelines that encourage this should be promoted and supported. Likewise proposals should be resisted that could undermine the viability of agricultural management through fragmentation or the reduction of landholdings to a point where their economic threshold is exceeded.

14.7 Where these landscapes are in poor condition opportunities should be sought to enhance natural features such as the enclosure pattern. The open nature of these landscapes means that the built environment is often very obvious. Care should be taken in the planning and design of proposals both within built areas and the landscape character areas to enhance these edges. There is also the opportunity to create distinct identities to both the landscape and built areas by sympathetic planning.

14.8 Where grazing of grasslands is prevalent, consideration should be given to managing grazing for enhanced biodiversity. Conservation grazing is particularly important in areas of existing or potential grazing marsh, floodplain meadows, acid grassland/heath and species-rich neutral grassland. Mechanisms for the enhancement of the landscape include the application of appropriate design through the normal planning process and land management initiatives such as woodland and environmental stewardship grant schemes.

Fruit Belt Landscapes

14.9 With the possible decline in U.K. fruit production, these areas are landscapes in transition. The use of dwarf stock for fruit trees has already changed the character. The conservation of the pattern of existing small woodlands, hedgerows and windbreaks is important in maintaining pattern in the landscape and in providing habitats and dispersal corridors for biodiversity. Where traditional old orchards still remain, a strategy of conservation and sympathetic management should be adopted to preserve their biodiversity value.

14.10 Polytunnels are a common feature in many fruit belt landscapes. Many polytunnel structures can be erected without the need for planning permission as they are deemed to be temporary structures. Important considerations for the location of polytunnels are long distance views and their prominence in the landscape, particularly where development is proposed in designated landscapes or close to a listed building or other sensitive area. In open landscapes with limited topography, traditional hedge or shelterbelt planting can be used to break up views of the polytunnels.

Valley and Wetland Landscapes

14.11 Important wetland conservation sites are of great significance for wildlife and their conservation is vital. They may also prove to be the greatest casualties of climate change. Proposals on the valley sides and in the floodplain should be carefully considered as they are visually and biologically sensitive. Built development within the floodplain should be resisted, but if unavoidable, should be set back from watercourses to maintain a natural riparian corridor. Further mineral workings for gravel should be resisted where they conflict with landscape and nature conservation interests. In contrast, road and railway corridors and the presence of large scale industrial and commercial buildings near Chartham and Hersden detract from the rural character and would benefit from screening using native species which reflect the wetland character.

Parklands

14.12 In many areas the parkland character has been eroded and existing historic parkland woodland and veteran trees should be conserved and reinforced as a priority. Consideration should be given to replacement planting to ensure successors as the existing trees decline with old age.

Historic Villages

14.13 There are many historic villages of great charm and antiquity and their conservation is of great importance to the landscape. Any proposals for new development need to be most carefully considered to ensure that they are compatible with both landscape and townscape. Building materials, layout and style should reflect the local vernacular. Landscape proposals should also reflect local character, using native tree species where practical.

Blean Landscapes

14.14 The improvement of the condition of these areas should be encouraged through the appropriate retention and management of areas of woodland, heath and pasture. The long term aim for The Blean is to bring the different parts of The Blean together. This will be achieved through The Blean Initiative, which is a partnership of landowners, local authorities, conservation bodies and community groups working together to look after this unique landscape for both wildlife and people. Particular objectives include improving access and enabling people to explore the landscape on both foot and by bike.

Green Gap

14.15 The report recognises the important role of the green gap in separating the urban areas of Herne Bay and Whitstable and the surrounding villages. However the analysis indicates that the landscape character areas within this area, the Swalecliffe Coast and Chestfield Gap, are in poor condition. It is recommended that these areas are considered together to develop an improvement strategy to provide a more positive image by creating a distinct and attractive landscape.

Coastal and Marshland Landscapes

14.16 Guidelines for the coastal landscapes point to the need to conserve and improve the internationally important ecological resource of these areas whilst enhancing or improving their visual qualities. The sympathetic use of

signs, barriers, fences and other elements is important to conserve and create simple uncluttered coastal landscapes.

14.17 The coastal and marshland scenery mainly consists of a maze of winding, shallow creeks, mudflats and broad tracts of tidal saltmarsh with sand and shingle beaches along the coast edge. Branching, meandering creeks that dissect the saltmarshes fill and empty with the tide and provide an interesting temporal and colour variation within the marsh landscape. Contrast is often provided by the extensive areas, usually lying between coastal edge and rising ground, of former marshland where draining, levelling and improvement of the soil structure has formed grazing marsh, predominantly inhabited by sheep, cattle and wildfowl. Other areas have been further improved to support arable crops such as wheat and barley. This 'improvement' process has altered many of the characteristic features of the marsh landscape such as through the creation of straight dykes and ditches in arable areas. The draining and ploughing of much former grazing marsh has reduced its biodiversity, and opportunities to restore such land to wet, unimproved grassland with extensive grazing should be sought. Farms and larger settlements are located on the higher, drier pockets of land within the marshes, usually surrounded by stunted and windswept trees and hedges which are particularly prominent vertical features in the flat, open landscape. There are also some areas of more mixed agriculture including some grazing marsh. Trees are rarities here and the small clumps that do exist help to mark the location of development on higher land.

14.18 Where the Shoreline Management Plan identifies areas for managed realignment of coastal defences, opportunities may exist for the creation of new inter-tidal habitat such as saltmarsh and mudflats between the existing defences and the new.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

AHLV	Area of High Landscape Value
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BOA	Biodiversity Opportunity Area
DEFRA	Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
CCC	Canterbury City Council
KCC	Kent County Council
KLIS	Kent Landscape Information System
LLD	Local Landscape Designation
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LDF	Local Development Framework
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods
NIA	Natural Improvement Area
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Appendix A: Living Landscapes Methodology

Living Landscapes Model Methodology – an extract from: "A model for an ecological framework for Kent and Medway"

Richard Moyse, Kent Wildlife Trust
Ed Rowsell, Kent County Council

1. Introduction

1.1. The concepts of large habitat areas and of ecological networks are becoming increasingly popular, and are being seen as being particularly important in the restoration of biodiversity at the landscape scale, in driving spatial planning for biodiversity, and as a critical part of adaptation to climate change. Recent planning policy has recognised the importance of ecological networks, so that PPS9 states that 'Local authorities should aim to maintain networks by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats through policies in plans. Such networks should be protected from development, and, where possible, strengthened by or integrated within it.'

1.2. The current, draft South East Plan includes a map showing areas where strategic biodiversity enhancement should be targeted, and tasks Local Planning Authorities to pursue 'opportunities for biodiversity improvement, including largescale [*sic*] habitat restoration, enhancement and re-creation' within these areas. In addition, the recently adopted Kent and Medway Structure Plan includes, as policy, that 'Wildlife habitats and species will be protected [by] identifying, safeguarding and managing existing and potential land for nature conservation as part of development proposals, particularly where a connected series of sites can be achieved'.

1.3. If these planning objectives are to be achieved and if there is to be co-ordinated action to deliver habitat networks and landscape-scale habitat restoration, then there is a need for an agreed model to underpin and inform action by the various agencies and authorities likely to be involved. This paper attempts to present an approach to developing a model ecological network for Kent based on the high quality habitat data available for the county, and using some simple and defensible assumptions.

1.4. It must be understood that there is no single, 'right' approach to landscape-scale habitat restoration in the county. The ability to increase or connect areas of habitat will have to be based as much on opportunity as on any network model. It will also be the case that any action which creates new areas of habitat or makes links between existing areas will change the basis upon which the original model was formulated. Therefore this must be seen as an evolving process, and any initial model will need to be revaluated over time.

1.5. It will also be the case that our understanding will improve over time, as will the availability of data, and the tools available to analyse that data. Currently we are not in a position to incorporate species data in the network model, nor are we at present in a position to carry out the kind of least-cost analysis set out by Catchpole (2006).

1.6. These constraints on the reliability of early network models are important ones, but they should not prevent the development of such models. The pace of development in the South East is rapid, and the pace of climate change is likely to be rapid also. It is better to have a basis for taking action at the earliest possible opportunity, rather than to wait until we are satisfied that we know all that it is necessary to know.

Appendix A: Living Landscapes Methodology

2. The argument for ecological networks and large habitat areas

2.1. Much has been written on the subject of ecological networks and large habitat areas, and it is not intended to repeat this here. However, it is generally agreed that

- Small, isolated areas of habitat are likely to hold proportionately fewer species than larger areas, and the populations of these species are likely to be more vulnerable to local extinction.
- Functional connectivity between areas of wildlife habitat is likely to make it easier for populations of species to shift in response to climate change.
- The small and isolated nature of most areas of wildlife habitat in the UK poses a significant risk to biodiversity, particularly in the face of likely climate change.

2.2. However, when discussing the 'isolation' of patches of habitat, care must be taken to avoid confusing physical isolation with functional isolation. Species differ substantially in their ability to cross the 'matrix' of built or cultivated land between habitat patches: for example, a woodland plant, such as dog's mercury, might find it impossible to cross a 100m gap between two blocks of woodland, while a woodland bird might treat both blocks as effectively part of the same woodland.

2.3. In addition, the quality of the matrix has an impact on the functional isolation of a patch of habitat. The 'softer' and more 'wildlife-friendly' the matrix, the easier it is for species to cross. Therefore habitat isolation should be seen as a question of degree, and increases both with distance between habitat patches and with the 'hardness' of the matrix between those patches.

2.4. Methods for reducing the vulnerability of species within patches of habitat include:

- Enlarging the area of available habitat by habitat creation around or immediately adjacent to the original patch.
- Creating a functional ecological link between the original patch of habitat and other nearby patches.
- Softening or improving (for biodiversity) the 'matrix' of built or cultivated land around the original habitat patch.

2.5. Clearly, creating larger habitat blocks by linking existing habitat patches involves less cost and effort (and is likely to be more effective) than creating large areas around isolated patches. This is the implicit assumption underlying the ecological network concept. It does, however, raise a key issue which has been the subject of considerable study and debate. For a long time, there has been promotion of the idea of 'wildlife corridors', that is, the physical linking of patches of habitat with linear habitat strips. However, the effectiveness of such corridors has been questioned, as:

- If species are able to cross the matrix between habitat patches, then corridors as such may be relative ineffective; and
- Linear blocks of habitat are strongly influenced by edge effects, which may limit their usefulness to many species.

2.6. Nonetheless, if habitat isolation is a function of both the distance between blocks and the quality of the matrix, there needs to be action to reduce both the distance between habitat patches and to improve the quality of the matrix between patches (it is for this reason that

action to soften the matrix on its own is unlikely to be sufficient to reconnect habitat patches). This may involve creating physical connections between habitat patches or it may involve creating 'stepping stone' patches of habitat: these 'corridors' and 'stepping stones' and are sometimes referred to collectively as 'ecological links'. Whether a particular link should be a corridor or one or more stepping stones will depend on the species for which the link is intended to be effective.

3. Implications for a Kent ecological network

3.1. When modelling an ecological network at a county scale, the result is generally a map showing solid patches and networks, whereas, as indicated above, an ecological network might, on the ground, be gappy but still effective. However, the reality is that the network model is intended to – and can only – indicate those areas where action should or could be directed to achieve the greatest benefits in reconnecting existing habitat patches or in the creation of large habitat areas. It is, in effect, an opportunity map, presenting all the greatest opportunities and indicating where care should be taken to avoid closing opportunities down.

3.2. With this in mind, the current modelling exercise was based on identifying

- Existing habitat patches.
- Locations where new habitat of the same type might most appropriately be restored or recreated within a threshold distance of an existing habitat patch.

4. Modelling the network

4.1. The intention in coming up with the current model for an ecological network for Kent has been:

- To use data to drive the model, and to make particular use of the Habitat Opportunity modelling developed for KLIS.
- To use a 'bottom-up' approach will builds a larger network from smaller blocks, so as to allow easy 'drilling down' to smaller scales.
- To establish a way of presenting the model both as habitat survey field polygons and as Landscape Description Units.
- To tie the model closely to higher level plans and policies by using as its starting point UK BAP habitat types, designated and protected sites, and ancient woodland.

4.2. For each key habitat type, for ancient woodland, and for designated/protected sites a separate network was established: the methods and assumptions underlying each of these networks are set out below. Figures 3 to 7 show the individual networks generated.

4.3. The different networks were then amalgamated and any overlapping or contiguous polygons combined. This gave the map shown in Figure 1. This does not present a clear and coherent network, and includes a lot of 'noise' in the form of small and/or isolated polygons.

4.4. Two methods were considered eliminate this noise. The first was to place a buffer of 20m or 50m around each polygon, and combine any overlapping or contiguous polygons which resulted. The aim would be to identify those blocks more than 40m or 100m from any other blocks, and to absorb smaller blocks within larger, adjacent ones. Unfortunately this was effectively beyond the capability of the computers available.

Appendix A: Living Landscapes Methodology

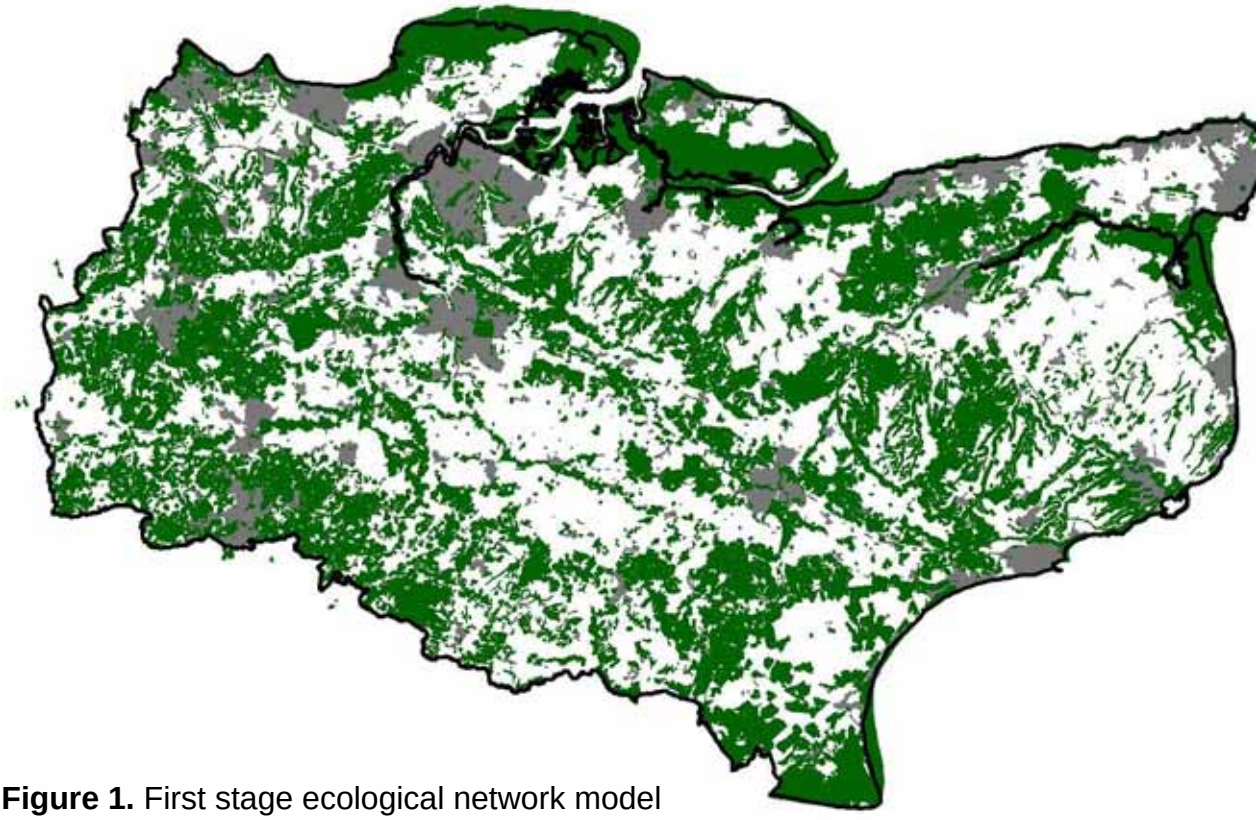

Figure 1. First stage ecological network model

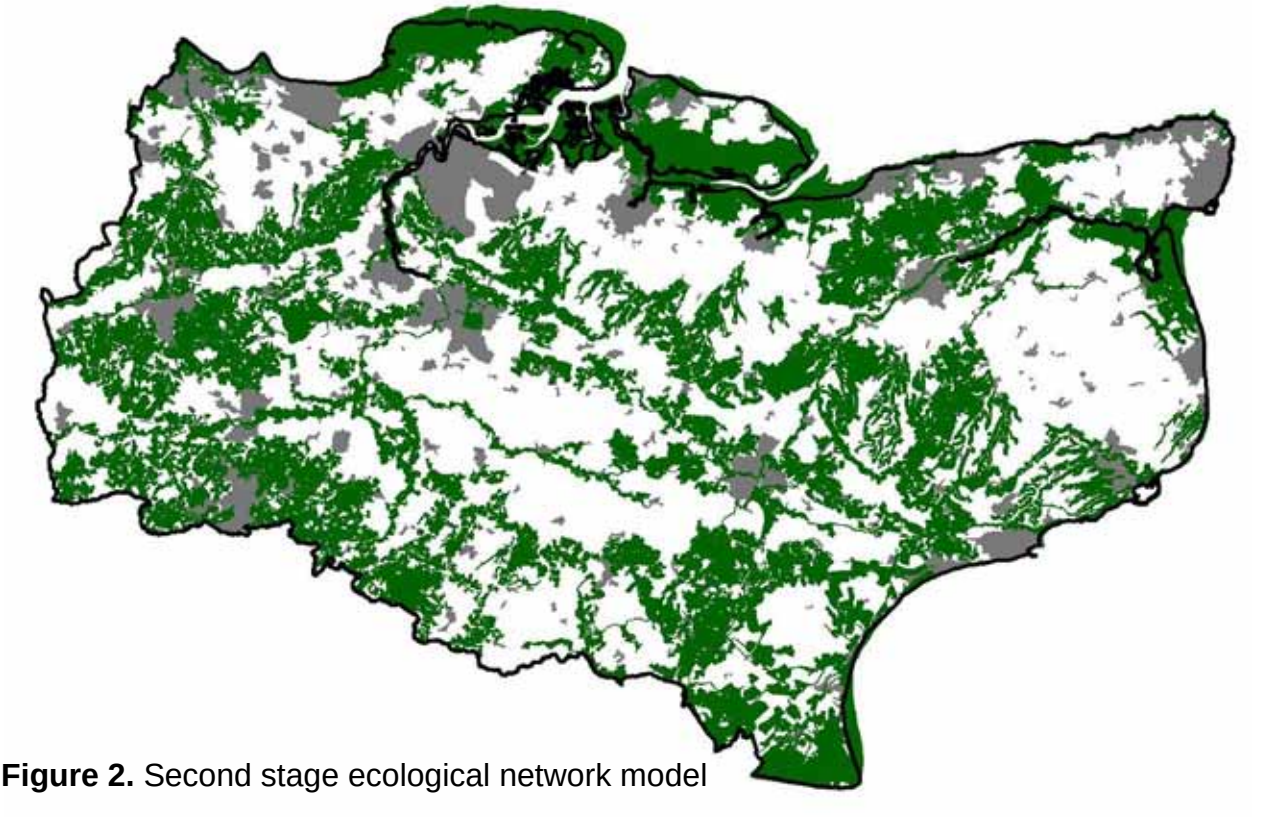

Figure 2. Second stage ecological network model

4.5. The second method was to identify the largest blocks in the network, then select additional blocks based on their proximity to these. All polygons of 100 ha or more were therefore selected. Then all those polygons within 100m of the selected polygons were themselves selected. Further polygons were then selected if they were within 100m of any of the previously selected polygons. This was repeated until no further polygons could be added in this way. The initial distance threshold chosen was 10m, so that blocks would not be isolated simply by being each side of a main road. However, this did result in blocks each side of the CTRL appearing to be isolated from each other, so that the CTRL distorted the network in a particular way. The 100m threshold eliminated this distortion, though clearly habitats either side of CTRL would be functionally isolated for some species and not for others.

4.6. Application of the second method produced the network shown in Figure 2.

4.7. The methodology used for each element of the network is given below. A discussion of the assumptions used in deriving the individual habitat networks is given in the appendix.

5. Woodland

5.1. Identifying those parts of the county which offer the greatest opportunity to establish large woodland areas presents challenges because of the large extent of the existing ancient woodland in Kent and the fact that there is virtually no part of the county without the capability of becoming or being developed as woodland.

5.2. It was therefore decided to work only with ancient woodland and to apply a lower size threshold for inclusion. Therefore the starting point was to identify all blocks of existing ancient woodland over 5ha in extent; 5ha is the minimum size threshold for selection of ancient woodlands for Local Wildlife Site designation.

5.3. To identify potential new areas of woodland, those KLIS polygons of High or Medium Opportunity for woodland (of any type) were selected where they were within 200m of an existing ancient woodland block. The 200m distance limit was also based on the Local Wildlife Site designation criteria. This is a relatively short distance, on the assumption that woodland species tend to have a fairly low ability to cross non-woodland habitat.

6. Acid grassland and heath

6.1. The Habitat Capability data and KLIS group heathland and acid grassland together, and so the same approach was taken here.

6.2. It was considered that, so far as possible, all acid grassland and heathland should be considered for inclusion. However, a 1 ha lower size limit was eventually used in order to remove large numbers of very small areas which might add unnecessary ‘noise’ to the exercise.

6.3. All existing blocks of acid grassland and heathland of at least 1ha in extent were therefore selected. Then those KLIS polygons showing High or Medium Opportunity for creation of these habitats, and within 1000m of a selected, existing habitat, were added. The distance threshold of 1000m was fairly arbitrary, but was chosen to represent the kind of distance over which some movement of even the less mobile grassland species might be expected.

7. Neutral grassland

7.1. Neutral grassland posed something of a problem, as the extent of this habitat of Biodiversity Action Plan quality (effectively those areas identified by the Kent Habitat Survey as Lowland Meadow, plus those areas identified by the Habitat Survey as species-rich neutral grassland) is very small, and separated into small, isolated blocks.

7.2. It was therefore determined that, in order to provide a reasonably ambitious model for the establishment of large areas of neutral grassland, that other areas of neutral grassland (i.e. all GN polygons in the Kent Habitat Survey) should also be used, but, order to avoid noise, a 2ha lower size limit was imposed.

7.3. The geology and soils of Kent are such, however, that there is a widespread capability for the recreation of this habitat. Therefore only the High Opportunity KLIS polygons were used to identify potential new areas; again, polygons were selected were they were within 1000m of one of the identified blocks of existing neutral grassland.

8. Chalk grassland

8.1. The basis for identifying a network of chalk grassland sites was to identify all existing blocks of chalk grassland of at least 2ha; this is based on the lower size threshold for Local Wildlife Site designation.

8.2. The 1000m distance threshold was again selected, and an attempt was made to identify all High and Medium Opportunity polygons within this distance of an existing, selected block. This signally failed to identify a meaningful network. It was considered that this might have been a result of the way in which chalk geology is arranged (i.e. often linearly) and because KLIS Opportunity determinations already include a distance parameter (although this did not appear to significantly affect the other grassland types).

8.3. It was therefore considered appropriate to use the Habitat Capability data which underlies the Opportunity polygons, rather than the derived KLIS data. The ‘most preferred’ chalk grassland Habitat Capability polygons were therefore selected and were clipped to remove existing habitats or built areas. From this new layer, polygons within 1000m of the selected chalk grassland blocks were then identified.

9. Wetland

9.1. The two BAP wetland habitats in Kent are Reedbed and Lowland Fen. All areas of these habitats were selected, because of the very small area of each within the county. All KLIS polygons with opportunity for creation of Wetland or River Floodplain Wetland and were selected where they were within 1000m of a block of fen or reedbed.

9.2. In addition, it was considered important to include river corridors as important linking elements within a wetland ecological network. Therefore the channels of all Environment Agency main rivers were therefore added, and given a nominal 20m buffer around their centre lines. In addition, Wetland or River Floodplain Wetland opportunity polygons were selected where they were within 20m of the centre line of any main river.

10. Coastal habitats

10.1. The identification of potential large coastal habitat areas was based on existing saltmarsh and grazing marsh. All existing blocks of both these habitats were selected.

10.2. The Habitat Capability layer for coastal habitats was then clipped to include only those areas currently either arable land or improved grassland. Of these blocks, those within 1000m of the existing habitats were selected.

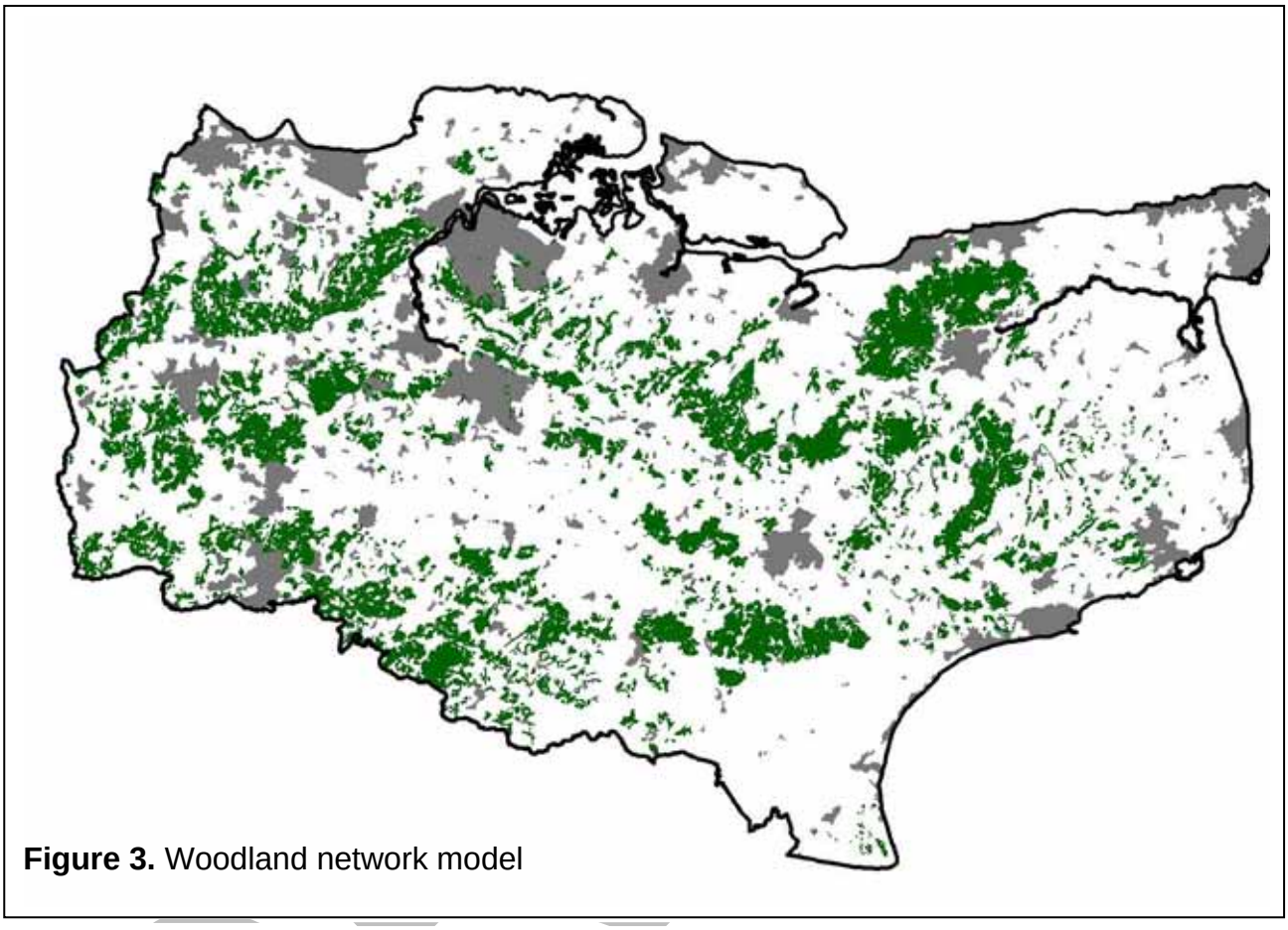

Figure 3. Woodland network model

Appendix A: Living Landscapes Methodology

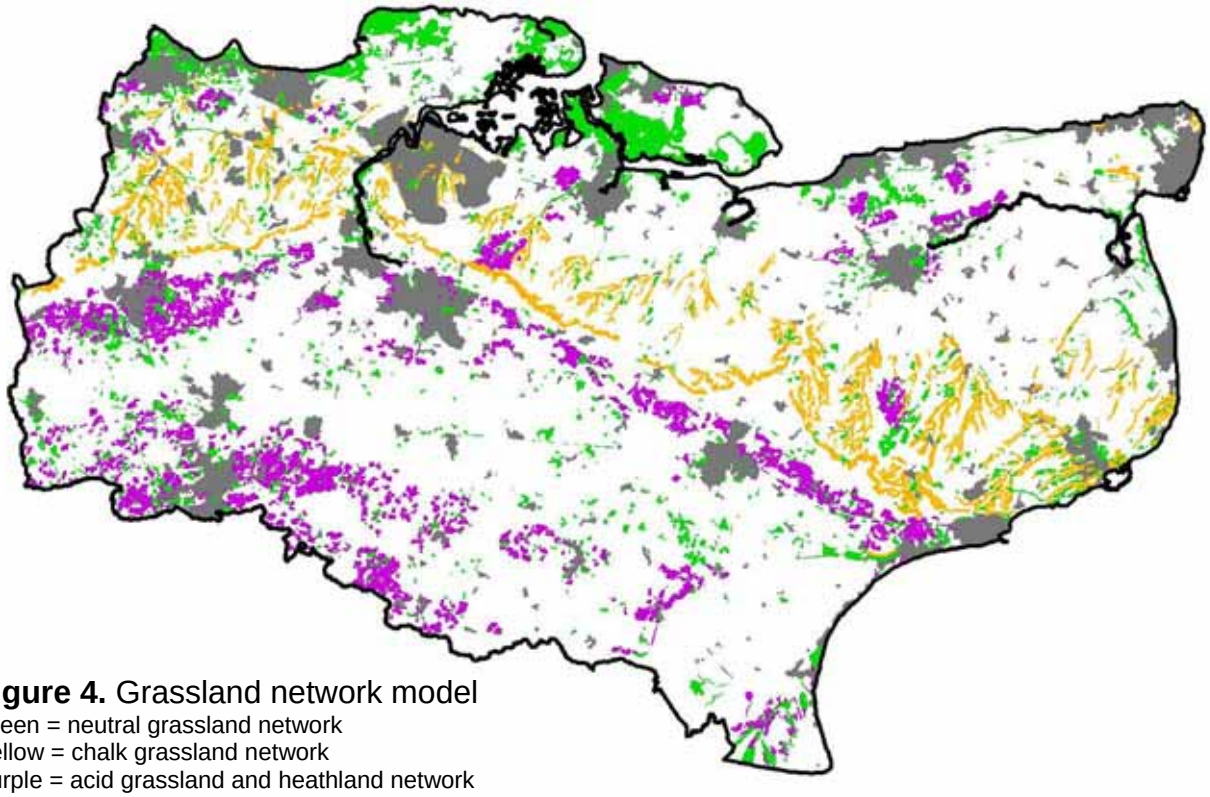

Figure 4. Grassland network model
Green = neutral grassland network
Yellow = chalk grassland network
Purple = acid grassland and heathland network

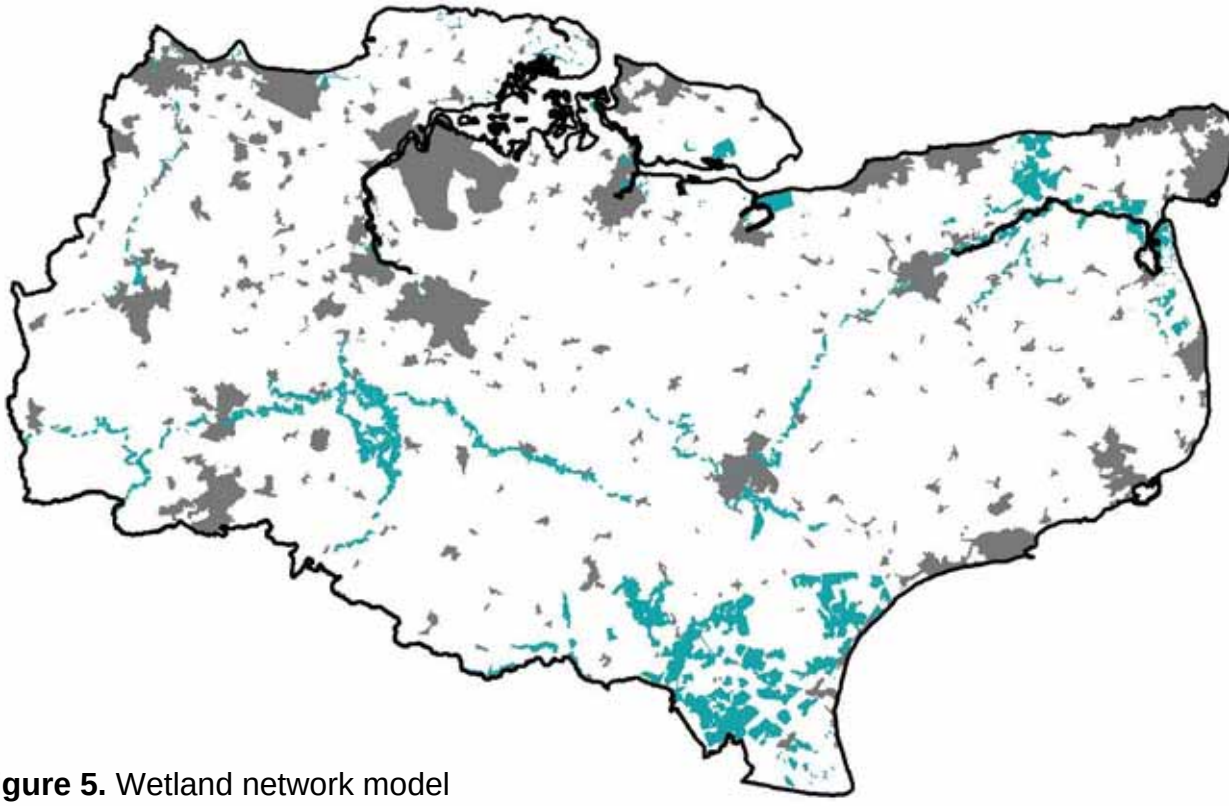

Figure 5. Wetland network model

Appendix A: Living Landscapes Methodology

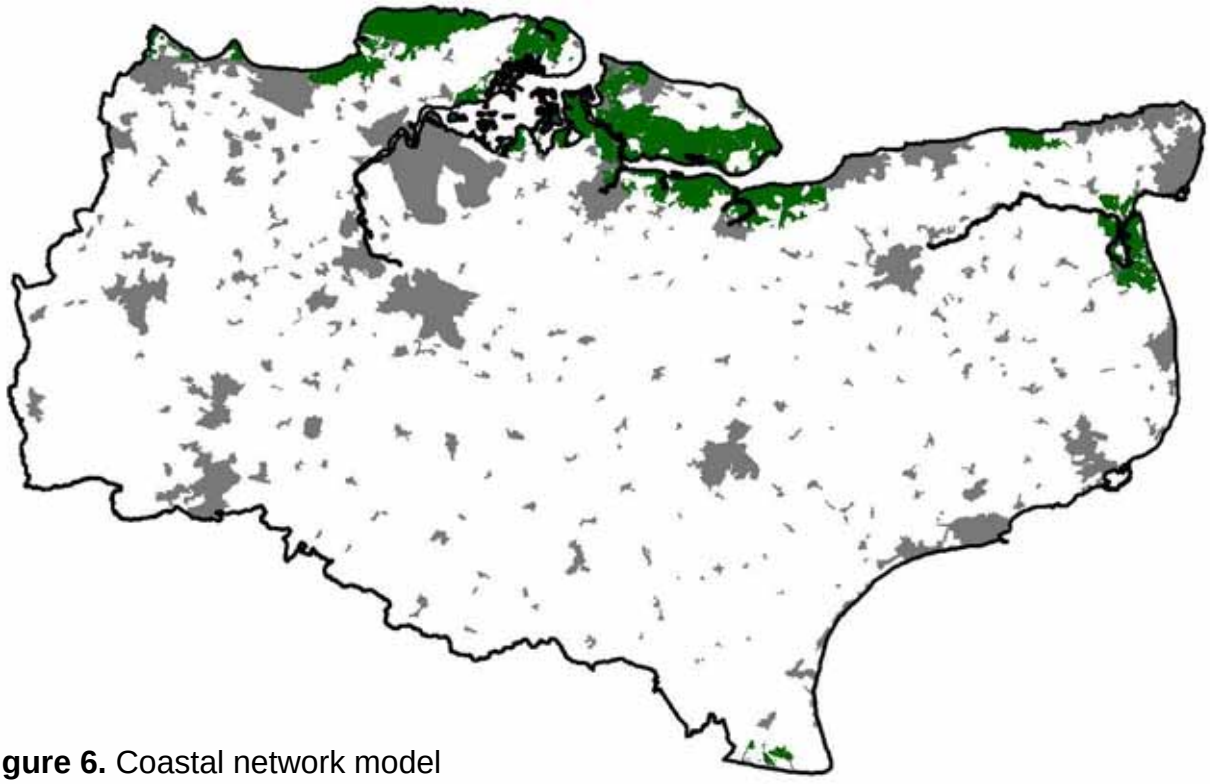

Figure 6. Coastal network model

Appendix A: Living Landscapes Methodology

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Appendix A: Living Landscapes Methodology

Appendix

The ecological network concept is predicated upon the idea of ecological continuity. However, functional habitat continuity/isolation is very difficult to assess, and varies with:

- The distance between patches of habitat.
- The quality of the matrix between patches of habitat.
- The response of the individual species to the habitat patch and to the matrix.

It is also the case that different degrees of isolation may provide different 'levels' of connectivity. For example, two small blocks of chalk grassland might each support the adonis blue butterfly, with neither supporting a population large enough to be self-sustaining. If the two blocks are sufficiently close (and the intervening matrix does not present an impermeable barrier), then sufficient interchange of individuals might occur that the two patches effectively support a single population. It has been suggested that, for the adonis blue, there would need to be less than 100m of cultivated land between the two patches for this to occur (Bourn et al, 2002).

However, should each of the habitat patches be of sufficient size and/or quality to support a larger, self-sustaining population, then movement of individuals might only be needed every few generations to ensure a minimum level of genetic interchange or two recolonise one of the sites after a local population decline/extinction. In such a case, the two populations would each be part of a local metapopulation, and the distance between the two patches could be much greater provided that it was not outside the movement range of the species. Data given in Bourn et al (2002) suggests that sites isolated by less than 1000m may support adonis blue even when habitat quality is relatively low, suggesting that movement over this sort of distance may occur with reasonable frequency. Further, in Asher et al (2001) movements by Adonis blue over 10-15km are reported.

In setting distance parameters for modelling the Kent ecological network, we have borne these sorts of issues in mind, but have also erred on the side of conservatism. Therefore:

- For grassland networks, the threshold distance has been set at 1000m, based in part on the understanding of the response of the adonis blue (generally considered a sedentary species), though erring very much on the safe side.
- For the woodland network, a much shorter threshold of 200m has been set, reflecting the assumption (valid, we believe) that many woodland species have very low mobility. This is probably conservative, since woodland birds may regularly cross such distances (see, for example, Creegan & Osborne, 2005). One study has suggested that, given a sufficiently 'friendly' matrix, even a gap of up to a mile between woods might not result in functional isolation for dormice.
- For the coastal network, a threshold of 1000m was set; this was purely nominal, and cannot be said to have a basis in understanding of the behaviour of coastal species.
- Other thresholds have been set at 20m, which has been used as an approximation for 'immediately adjacent' but taking into account roads or watercourses.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Adisham

The rich heritage and importance of this area is recognised by the numerous Conservation Areas which have been designated. These are scattered across the district, mostly centred around small settlements.

Adisham is a linear settlement situated along the bottom of a chalk valley under the Downs. The north end of the village is the most interesting, both historically and visually. Here there are a collection of older buildings with the parish church and Adisham Court set on the hill among trees. The street undulates gently from north to south and there are several bends which add interest to the views up and down the road. The meadows and hedgerows behind the houses form quite a strong visual link to the southern end of the Street, producing an attractive landscape setting. The Lindens is set in a mature garden with some fine trees. Oxenden Wood, which forms the backdrop to the southern end of the village, is a SSSI.

Amery Court

The Amery Court Conservation Area lies to the north east of Blean in what was originally a clearing in the forest. Much of the forest has now been felled and the landscape is fairly flat and open. However, the original field pattern has survived together with most of the boundary hedges and ditches. Many of the hedges are well grown with mature trees and contain a good range of indigenous species although there are some examples of recent hedge planting with single species, mainly poplars. These hedged meadows form an important part of the setting of the hamlet. A wedge of orchard and arable land runs south eastwards from Amery Court and is enclosed by two very ancient tracks, a salt track and a drove. Amery Court was the Court of the almonry land of Christchurch in The Blean and derived its name from this connection. The original court or sub-manor has gone but the moat still survives adjacent to the present house which is a fine red brick building with wooden eaves cornice and tiled roof dating from the 18th century (listed Grade II). The house is set in a fine site with many mature trees. The granary, a weatherboarded building with a tiled roof, is of similar age and is locally listed. Cutballs Farm (renamed Arbele) occupies a very old site. Its name is derived from the Cotebold family who farmed here during the 13th and 14th centuries. The present house is largely 15th and 16th Century in origin of timber-framed construction with later additions. The traditional local building materials are red stock bricks and clay tiles. The older buildings were timber framed and there are quite a few examples of painted or tarred weather-boarding and some slate roofs within the vicinity.

Bekesbourne

The Conservation Area is centred around the Old Palace, a house built by Robert Packham in the late 18th century (Grade II and a Scheduled Ancient Monument). Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1535-1554, built a palace here in 1552, which was enlarged by Archbishop Matthew Parker later in the 16th century. This was demolished during the Civil War and only the gatehouse remains which is now a cottage adjoining the house. (The gatehouse is Grade II). The Church of St. Peter is Grade I and is built of flint with stone dressings. The nave and tower are 12th century, the chancel 13th century. The round-arched doorway is Norman with zig-zag mouldings. The transept dated 1715 has the south wall faced with mathematical tiles. The building was much restored in 1881-90. The churchyard contains some interesting 18th century skull, cherub, hourglass and spade headstones, chest tombs and oval bodystones. Cobham Court dates from the late medieval period and was a court house of the manor. Bekesbourne was a limb of the Cinque Ports and the Court of the Deputy Mayor of Hastings took place here in a large panelled room. Originally L-shaped of two storeys in red brick with tiled roof the earlier portion of the house was extended in the early 19th century. The brick bridge spanning the Nailbourne just south of the Church is dated 1776 and carries an inscription now indecipherable. The Old Vicarage in School Lane is dated 1729 but appears later in style. Of red brick with grey headers it has a doorcase with flinted pilasters. Parsonage Farmhouse is a 16th century or earlier timber-framed building.

The conservation are was extended in 1994 to include the landscape setting particularly the tree-covered railway embankment which forms a natural northern limit and the former small park to the Old Palace links Bekesbourne to Patrixbourne with the Nailbourne flowing along its eastern edge.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Bekesbourne Hill and Woolton Farm

This area includes Woolton Farmhouse and, to the south, an attractive house and gardens called Mudhole. Woolton Farmhouse is timber framed, refaced in red brick dating from the 17th century or earlier. It is surrounded by ornamental grounds which are included in Kent County Council's supplementary list of Historic Parks and Gardens 1985. There are a chain of ponds to the north and a small park to the south with further ponds. The modern farm buildings are unsympathetically designed but screened. At Bekesbourne Hill there is a pleasing group of buildings including Star Cottage, dated 1728 and the Unicorn Public House. Some modern development west of the public house is less attractive but overall the area is considered to be of sufficient importance to be designated.

Bifrons Park

Bifrons Park lies to the south of Patrixbourne and, other than the northernmost section, lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Nailbourne runs through the park and the woodland along the ridge to the east is a very important landscape feature, which marks the eastern edge to the park. Despite the park being divided by the A2, but both halves are of considerable landscape value. It has many fine trees and forms an important part of the setting of the villages of Bridge and Patrixbourne.

Blean

The Blean Conservation Area is centred on the 13th Century Church of St Cosmus and St Damian. The church was at the centre of a medieval settlement located on the site of a Roman-British Villa. Earthworks and hollows remain but this settlement was deserted in the 15th Century, possibly as a result of the Black Death.

Areas of the Blean Forest were gradually cleared and colonised. However, until the 19th Century development was limited to a series of `clearances' creating arable farms. The Ecclesiastical land owners retained much of the Blean Woodland for economic purposes. The forest was divided into a series of `dennes' (woodland pastures) and commons connected by a network of droves. This pattern remains with the droves now in the form of bridleways or roads. Blean Common was enclosed in the 19th Century and in the late 19th and early 20th Century was developed to form the modern village.

There are a number of interesting buildings along Blean Hill mostly on the east side. Tyler Hill Road, a drove, runs along the top of the ridge to the north of the Church. This is mainly hedge and tree lined with pastures and the recreation ground to the north. At the western end of the road are a scattering of houses several of which are of some interest. The former Vicarage is situated within an attractive garden containing many fine, mature trees. The character of School Lane has changed since the land to the west was developed but the properties on the eastern side are of considerable interest, some being listed or locally listed. The new buildings within this area are mainly neutral in character.

Blooden

The hamlet of Blooden is set on a ridge to the east of Adisham and contains several buildings of interest, including Megetts Cottage, a small thatched building with a 18th century thatched barn. The buildings are interlinked by paddocks, gardens, hedges and small trees. There are interesting views of the village from Cooting Lane.

Bossington

Bossington, north of Adisham, is an attractive hamlet situated on a gentle slope with a string of older, listed properties and 19th century cottages and farm buildings, linked trees, hedgerows and meadows. Great Bossington Farmhouse dates from 17th century, Bossington house is 18th century and Little Bossington farmhouse is 17th century . There are several modern farm buildings which form a fairly obtrusive group on the hillside, however as part of the wider landscape which has extensive views, the impact is very modest.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Bourne Park

Bourne Park House is a brick built, two storey, Grade 1 listed building set in the wide valley of the Nailbourne. The extensive parkland stretches up to the skyline on both sides of the valley, with many specimen trees, clumps and belts of woodland. Although once a formal parkland, the park is now mainly meadow. Redhill Wood and Warren Wood define the western boundary, which is naturally continued northwards with the tree-clad former railway embankment running northwards towards Canterbury.

Boyden Gate

Boyden Gate is one of the larger settlements in the Chislet Parish. It is on what would have been the western bank of the Wantsum Channel (that used to run between Kent and the Isle of Thanet) in earlier times and now sits along the western edge of the plain that is the Chislet Marshes. The hamlet still contains a large number of ponds, ditches and waterways, which are probably some of the remains of the early ditch system used to drain the Wantsum Channel. The most prominent of these is North Stream.

The Conservation Area consists of a collection of larger homes and farm buildings, centred around the public house and the church. The built form is generally larger detached homes and semi-detached cottages, 10 of which are listed. Of particular note is the collection of 17th century barns and the Farmhouse at Home Farm, all Grade II listed, Endeavour and Kosi Kot a pair of 18th century cottages, Shersby Cottage and Boyden Gate House.

The hamlet has a slightly more urban feel than some of the other settlements in this parish with a small amount of footpaths. However, this is softened by the large number of hedgerows and trees that make a major contribution to the character of the area.

Bramling

Bramling is a hamlet lying on the eastern edge of the study area on the main road from Canterbury to Sandwich. Bramling House occupies the site of a former residence built in the 1700's. The present house was built in 1869 by a wealthy local banking family and is set within a modest park created in the 19th century.

Bramling Court Farmhouse dates from the 17th century and the tarred weatherboarded stables are late 18th century. The Haywain Public House dates from the early to mid 19th century. There are also a number of cottages within the hamlet mostly dating from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Broomfield

Broomfield is centred around a pond. The properties mostly date from the 18th and 19th century, although the original part of Parsonage Farmhouse and a long aisled barn north of the house were built in about 1650. Most notably the Conservation Area contains the Huntsman and Horn Public House (circa 1800), Pond Cottages (end 18th century), Goldfinch Farm (18th century), Broomfield House and Spicers House (both early 19th century). Other notable buildings include Hoopers Farmhouse, Rose Cottage and Chapel Cottages. Traditional building materials include red and brown brick, render and some weatherboarding with clay roofing tiles and slates.

Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (Hackington and Blean) Conservation Area

The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway, known locally as 'The Crab and Winkle', was the first passenger railway in the south of England and the first in Great Britain to regularly carry fare paying passengers in trains hauled by steam power.

The railway opened on 3 May 1830 and closed to goods traffic on 29 November 1952, having ceased to carry passengers in December 1931. In more recent times much of the existing track bed through the Conservation Area has

become part of the 'Crab and Winkle Way' cycle path, a new use that helps preserve the course by allowing public access.

The conservation area is one of five that follow the line of this historic railway between Canterbury and Whitstable. The others being The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway and Whitstable Station Conservation Area, The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (St Stephen's) Conservation Area, The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (Hackington) Conservation Area and The Canterbury (West Station) Conservation Area.

The southern end of the conservation area includes the northern tunnel portal in a tree lined cutting, below the hilltop campus of the University of Kent at Canterbury. Heading north, the track bed gradually comes out onto an embankment that crosses the Sarre Penn Stream. The conservation area follows the course of the line on an easy gradient northwards and abuts the south west boundary of the Tyler Hill Conservation Area. The views on either side are across cultivated fields, orchards and pastures to distant woods in the gently undulating countryside.

The summit of the line is within Clowes Wood which has a mixture of dense woodland, more open woodland and some areas of scrub. Oaks predominate with strands of Scots pine and spruce with a scattering of other species including yew and birch. The conservation area boundary includes the circular pond for the winding engine that once stood here. The attractive grassy clearing around the pond is used as a picnic area associated with the cycle path. Continuing northwards, the conservation area follows the course of the railway out of the wood on a steep descent and onto a tree covered embankment that crosses a small bridge, beneath which, runs a farm track. A little way beyond this point, evidence of the railway ends abruptly, obliterated by agricultural works and the Thanet Way. This marks the northern end of the conservation area.

Chartham

Chartham is a downland parish situated within a loop of the Great Stour. The main settlement with the Parish Church and the Green lies just to the north of the river.

The name Chartham probably means a settlement in rough pasture. The village was a manor in 970 and Saxon and Roman relics have been found in barrows and tumuli in the area. The paper mill was established on the river in the 17th century becoming an important industry. The Church of St. Mary was built between 1285 and circa 1305 except for the tower which is late 14th century. The Kentish tracery to the windows is particularly fine. De L'Angle House dates from the early 18th century and is thought to have been built by John Maximilien de L'Angle, a Huguenot refugee and Rector of Chartham between 1696 and 1724. The house has a round headed niche containing a half-length stone statue of Charles II which originally stood in the garden. Other notable properties around the Green include Bedford House, a 16th century or earlier timber-framed building, The Forge, a 18th century two-storey red brick house with attics, and The Old Kings Head, 16th century or earlier and timber-framed refaced with brick and tile. The majority of buildings around the village green are listed or are of local architectural interest. At Rattington Street there is a fine group of historic buildings including The Artichoke Inn, a late 15th century timber-framed building and Rentain Farmhouse, an 18th century red brick building of two stories with attics.

The conservation area covers a wide diversity of features including the water meadows contained within the spacious loop of the A28 Ashford Road, the agricultural landscape to the south of the meadows, the open development around the greed and the Parish Church, the compact settlement at Rattington Street, the linear development at Shalmsford Street and the tree-topped downland which forms a backdrop to the south. Trees are a special feature of the riverside meadows and there are other important groups at Deanery Farm, around the paper mill and along the top of the ridge to the south. The hop-garden at Deanery Farm is the last survivor of a once-common crop. There is a considerable contrast between the flat landscape alongside the river at the northern edge of the conservation area and the downland at the southern edge.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Chestfield

Chestfield is located 2.5 km to the south east of Whitstable between the old Thanet way to the north and the new Thanet way to the south. The irregular shape of the conservation area is determined by the historic road structure and open spaces. Originally developed as low-density suburb, only 10% of the built urban form is actual buildings, which gives a general indication of how much of the area is set aside for the landscape setting. The overall character of the area is of a 'leafy' verdant suburb set in a relatively flat topography.

Chislet and Chitty

The Chislet Conservation Area is centred on the St Mary's Church (Listed Grade I), Chislet Court and Oasts. St Mary's includes a Norman nave and tower and is set in attractive grounds surrounded by mature trees. Chislet Court is a substantial home probably built by Thomas Jones in the 18th century. The school dating from 1864, the cemetery and model farm buildings at Chislet Court are also important features. Chislet is located on a wide flat plateau on the western edge of the Wantsum Channel. There are also many mature trees, which make an important contribution to the landscape setting of the area.

Chitty Lane is a hamlet to the east of Chislet and contains four listed buildings together with significant trees and landscaping. The boundary includes the Farm Cottages, Chitty Farm and Homleigh, the Old School House, Invicta Cottages and Lower Chitty Farm, together with the trees and orchards and is linked to Chislet via Chitty Lane and its hedgerows.

The landscape importance of Chislet and Chitty is their location on the edge of the Chislet marshes marking the edge of the Wantsum Channel. The hamlets nestle amongst many mature trees and hedgerows, particularly those around Lower Chitty Farm, making a prominent and very attractive contribution to the landscape. The principle landmark is St Mary's, which can be seen from miles around.

Cooting

At Cooting to the south east of Adisham is Cooting Farmhouse dated 1837. It is set in a large garden with mature trees. Cooting Farm Cottages have a 19th century exterior and are surrounded by trees, which acts as a screen and provides an attractive visual part of the landscape in this area.

Court Lees Manor

The name Court Lees was recorded over 400 years ago. The estate came into the hands of the Hyder family and William Hyder almost certainly built the present house in 1839.

Court Lees Manor is a square stuccoed two storey building with a slate roof. There is a small private garden with mature trees, shrubs and lawns. The original small park is still intact and used mainly for grazing and partly for arable. Although some of the trees have been felled the perimeter tree belt is intact. The red brick farmhouse is of considerable interest, although the appearance of the farmyard has been spoiled by a range of large modern farm buildings.

Court Lees Manor features in Somerset Maugham's book 'Mrs Craddock', where it is called Court Ley. The author often stayed as a guest at Court Less Manor when he was a pupil at Kings School in Canterbury, and describes the manor and its park in some detail in the book. He also mentions the house in other works.

Eddington

Eddington lies to the south of Herne Bay, approximately 1.5 kilometres from the seafront, with the Canterbury to Herne Bay road cutting through the middle of the conservation area. The old and new Thanet Ways run east-west at

the south of the conservation area, cutting the settlement off from its rural hinterland. The old Thanet Way cuts across the southern part of the conservation area forming a hard 'urban' feature and the new Thanet Way physically severs Eddington from its setting to the south. The new road is a major work of engineering and although in a cutting has a negative affect both visually and aurally. Views across to Underdown Lane are disrupted by a new development at St Augustine's Court, although the immediate setting of listed buildings remains relatively unchanged.

Elbridge and Lampen Stream House

The whole of this conservation area has an unspoiled rural atmosphere. The landscape is punctuated by hedgerows, areas of woodland, shelterbelts and specimen trees. Much of this planting was designed to compliment and set off Elbridge House and to improve the views from within the house. The woodland along the ridges to the north and south is very important. The conservation area includes the former park to Elbridge House, the ornamental grounds north of Elbridge farm and wooded areas to the north, south and west.

Elbridge Farmhouse is a 15th century, timber-framed hall house of Wealden Plan. The 18th century weatherboarded oasthouse with 19th century cylindrical red brick kilns and the 18th century weatherboarded granary on 16 saddle stones form an important group with the farmhouse. The house is listed Grade II and the farm buildings Grade II.

Lampen Stream creates interest along the valley floor. The small artificial lake created as part of The Elbridge House park provides a focus in the centre of the conservation area. There are particularly attractive views from the north-south road which dips into the valley and from Hollybush Lane and Swanton Lane across the valley.

The Lampen Stream leaves the Elbridge Conservation Area and flows through the valley between Stodmarsh Road and Hollybush Lane. An attractive belt of woodland runs along the southern bank of the stream as far as Burnt House Hill. The meadowland on the slopes within the suggested boundary is particularly fine. From this point onwards the land becomes more marshy and below Waterham cottage there are many willows. Waterham Cottage (Grade II) has a very attractive well-treed garden and Undertrees Farmhouse and a barn are attractive although unlisted. The land at this point is a nature reserve.

The conservation area is of particularly high scenic value and a large part of the streamside meadowland to the south of Stodmarsh is an important part of the setting to Stodmarsh Conservation Area. The trees within the valley are also particularly important.

Ford, Maypole and Oldtree

This conservation area includes the settlements of Ford, Maypole and Oldtree and their landscape setting. Ford is the site of the manor of Archbishop Morton which it is believed he constructed at the end of 15th century. It was an important residence for many years and it is noted that Henry VIII was entertained here in 1544. A deer park of around 166 acres extended to the north of the house. Little now remains of the house and deer park except a barn, a number of standing walls, part of the old gateway and depressions marking the location of fishponds. Today a farm occupies the site and it is believed this was established soon after the principal residence was taken down. The park survived until the 19th century. There is also a group of historic buildings in Maypole Road. Designated surrounding land which contributes to the setting of the settlements includes Beacon Wood and Shelving Wood, agricultural land and other features including a shave, pond, hedgerows and the stream that runs through Ford.

Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling

This area, assisted with landscaping improvements and tree planting forms an attractive setting for Kenfield Hall, Swarling Manor and the hamlet of Garlinge Green. The park at Kenfield Hall contains many specimen trees and Walk Wood forms a natural boundary to the conservation area. Rabbit Bank Wood forms the northern boundary, but because Kenfield Hall is sited on rising ground, there are views towards Chartham Downs. Similarly there are views of Garlinge Green, Kenfield Hall and Swarling Manor. Both Kenfield Hall and Swarling Manor have attractive landscaped gardens.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Harbledown and Upper Harbledown

The Harbledown Conservation Area includes the village itself, Vernon Holme, its parkland and the orchards that probably formed part of the original 32 acre land holding purchased by Thomas Sydney Cooper. It also includes part of the North Downs Way and the lower slopes of Golden Hill. Hall Place to the north of the village and its park which forms part of the setting for the house and the village are also included.

The settlement of Upper Harbledown was originally a series of scattered farms and houses along Watling Street, centres loosely upon Harbledown Lodge and Park. Harbledown Lodge is a good quality large 19th century building, surrounded by a park which seems to be the site of an earlier house. The park contains many fine mature trees and Church Wood, Willow Wood and Homestall Wood form a natural background to both the park and the settlement as a whole.

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Hawe Farm

This conservation area protects the setting of Hawe Farm and its barn. The site was the house of Sir John Fyneux, Chief Justice of the Kings Bench in the reign of Henry VII. Fragmentary remains of his 15th century brick built house remain, but the house was largely rebuilt in the 16th century. The large aisled barn adjoining is 18th century or earlier.

Herne

In the 18th century Herne was a principal settlement with Strode House as the main residence set within a landscaped park stretching southwards towards Herne Common. The conservation area includes the older parts of the village, Strode Park and its parkland, sections of the Common and the former Herne Hospital.

The main buildings within the conservation area are St. Martin's Church, Strode Park and the former Herne Hospital. The church is 14th century, constructed from flint and ragstone. Herne Hospital was formerly the Workhouse of the Blean Poor Law Union. It was erected in 1836 on Herne Common and served 16 neighbouring parishes, housing 420 inmates. In 1879 the Workhouse was extended with the construction of a hospital for 'infectious cases'. It is currently being redeveloped for housing.

Strode Park is a mid 19th century Italianate house set within formal gardens with a lodge and stable block. Its former parkland is now used partly as pasture where it retains its original character and partly as arable farmland. Most of the wooded areas and tree belts remain but many of the specimen trees have been lost. There are several ponds.

The conservation area includes parts of Herne Common to the south and east of Canterbury Road. Part of this area is a continuation of Strode Park and fragments of the Common remain.

Herne Windmill

This is a small area separate from the main conservation area of Herne and includes the Windmill and adjoining Mill House. The smock Windmill was built in 1781 and the house is of similar date. The Windmill has unfortunately been surrounded by bungalows and much of the setting has been eroded. The immediate surroundings, including the old dairy are of interest.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Highstead (Chislet)

This hamlet lies 1 1/2 miles north west of Chislet. The hamlet is strongly defined by the trees and hedgerows that enclose it. Among the buildings there are a number or mature trees and two ponds, which together make an attractive, prominent feature. It contains three listed buildings, Highstead Farmhouse, Walnut Tree Farmhouse and thatched Cottages. The most prominent of these is Highstead Farmhouse, which is probably a late medieval timber building with a 19th Century brick exterior. Other attractive buildings include Bay Tree and White Hall Cottage. The ponds, pasture, trees and hedgerows enhance the rural setting of this hamlet.

Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge

The Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge conservation area, located adjacent to what was the Roman road from Reculver to the city, includes the village of Hoath, together with the smaller settlements, or farmsteads, of Knave's Ash, Rushbourne Manor, Buckwell farm and Tile Lodge.

Hoath village is sited towards the edge of a gravel terrace below which London Clay beds drop south into the little valley of the Rushbourne Stream. At the foot of the clay, alluvial deposits follow the course of the stream and beyond these an expanse of fertile brickearth, topped by more clay and then again gravel, rises up to Clangate Wood. South from the wood, from Buckwell down to Tile Lodge Farm in the next valley, the sequence of gravel, clay, brick earth and alluvium is reversed.

Hoath village is largely developed along a single main street which divides around the school site at its north east end and off which there is one 'T' junction some two thirds of the way along its length on the south side. The street within the conservation area is the main focus of the village. There are no back lanes or serious cross routes, though there is a short alleyway running off at right angles on the north side.

Rushbourne Manor's site is concealed from the southern approaches and to a degree also from the north. It is on both sides of the main road, the section to the west completely hidden from public view by hedges and trees. The Manor House's setting to the south is the modern farmyard and beyond that the tree belt along the Rushbourne closes the view. On the north east a rather arbitrary modern fence line defines the extent of domestication there. Westward the house and front garden face across the road up the large arable field beyond. Views north east towards Hoath from the roadside north of Rushbourne Manor are entirely closed by the hedgerows and mature trees lining the road into Hoath and growing within the former Rectory garden.

The complex of buildings at Tile Lodge is partly surrounded by tree screening and hedges on two sides and is hidden by hedges and falling ground on a third, making it a visual 'surprise' element from whichever direction it is approached. This limited area including the screen planting can thus be said to be its landscape setting. The set back cottage on the right, a little up the hill from Tile Lodge Farm itself, forms part of the group. Tile Lodge Cottages over the road on the left have a wider visual backdrop that extends beyond the conservation area boundary and forms a good group with the bridge, the open space between, and the stream. Tile Lodge Farm's farmhouse and oast-house with the open planted and landscaped space between them and the road, and the adjacent garden areas and trees and hedges, are the site's character elements. This whole site, low in the valley of the Nethergong, is concealed from Hoath village to the north by rising ground crowned by Clangate Wood.

Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal

Hollow Street is a hamlet to the west of Chislet School. It contains the Hollow Street Cottages and Ivydene (a fine early C19 house set in mature and attractive gardens) and the former vicarage which includes a screen of mature trees and planting. The group of buildings at Hollow Street form an attractive landscape group from a distance.

This settlement is highly visible across the agricultural plateau from both Hersden and Upstreet. There are prominent skyline trees at the top of Sandpit Hill and within the grounds of the Old Vicarage. These trees are very important for the setting of the important buildings at the top of Sandpit Hill.

Hollow Street and its hedgerows link Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal. Chislet Forstal is centred on the half-timbered, listed Tudor house, now known as Clayhanger Hall. The hall, dated 1440, is typical of a well-preserved Wealden timber framed house with large curved braces and exceptional internal features. A two-storied inserted bay in the centre is decorated with rustic scrollage and dated 1637. It is set in substantial grounds, which include a number of modern farm buildings and lines of Cypress trees. There are two other pleasant small farm buildings and a good 19th century house. There are also ponds, watercourses and other natural features of interest. Although presently surrounded by lines of cypress trees. The new farmhouse just to the north has a number of specimen trees growing in the gardens and is bounded by mature hedgerows. There is an old orchard adjoining the farm, which may suggest that the site pre-dates the current farmhouse.

As with Hollow Street, this settlement is prominent on the skyline especially when viewed from the south. The trees make an important contribution to its setting, as does the pond to the north and the stream course to the south of Clayhanger Hall.

Hothe Court (Blean)

Hothe Court is situated at the junction of the Salt Road and Whitstable Road in an area known in the 14th century as le Hothe suggesting an area of heathland. The present house is essentially a 14th century building with an 18th century veneer. There is also a fine barn to the north. The University of Kent development is now very close to the house although the house and its immediate surroundings and farm building still retain much of their former character.

Moat House is a building of about 1800 on an early moated site. It is now rather hemmed in by modern housing developments but the house and moat are well screened by mature trees. Some farm buildings survive.

Blean House is early 19th century and is located along Rough Common Road. Pre-war houses fronting the road are typical of their period and form an important backdrop to the open area in front of Blean House. There is also a group of interesting mid and late 19th century cottages somewhat confusingly also known as Hothe Court. The playing field to the rear forms part of the setting of the group.

Ickham - Wickhambreaux and Seaton

The conservation area follows the route of the Little Stour from Littlebourne to Seaton and includes the settlements of Wickhambreaux, Ickham and Seaton. Wickhambreaux Conservation Area is centred on the village green and St. Andrew's Church. The approach to the church is by an avenue of pleached limes from the north west corner of the village green. The green contains several mature lime trees and several buildings of great character; Wickham Court and Wickham House. The most picturesque corner is to the south east with the Post Office and Wickham Mill adjoining the river. Much of the village housing comprises of small cottages along The Street with the Quaives at the eastern end.

Ickham is a linear village. St. John's Church and large houses and farms (The Rectory, Ickham Court and Ickham Court Farm) lie on the north east side of The Street. To the south west are more humble cottages in brick or weatherboarding. Although The Street is quite long, it has a distinctive shape, swelling and then contracting to the south west. The black barns of Ickham Court Farm form a view of the church which is set back from the street. The landform is virtually flat and mature trees form an important part of the rural character of the village.

Seaton is a small hamlet based around a watermill on the Little Stour, which was used to grind India rubber.

Lee Priory and Garrington

This conservation area lies to the south of Littlebourne and follows the Little Stour valley between Bekesbourne and Littlebourne. Lee Priory was a Gothic house of 1783 designed by James Wyatt and said by Horace Walpole to be "a child of Strawberry Hill, prettier than the parent". Regrettably it was demolished in the 1950s but the park and grounds remain. The Stables by Sir G G Scott of C1865 in red brick with blue-grey diaper patterns remain and have

been converted into residential use. Other fragments survive including a Wyatt archway dated 1783. All are listed Grade II. The former park is still of significant historic value with open pasture and many fine mature trees and contributes to the setting of the remaining listed buildings, as well as the village of Littlebourne.

To the west of Lee Priory is an area of meadowland and trees through which flows Silver Dike and The Little Stour. This is a very attractive area and forms part of the historic setting of the south eastern edge of Littlebourne. The land along much of the ridge at Garrington has a park-like quality as does the pasture just north of the railway line. The trees along the ridge are of considerable landscape value and the setting of Well Chapel is attractive. Part of this has been declared a site of Nature Conservation Interest by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation and it is judged to be of countywide ornithological importance.

On the east side of the valley within an area of wooded slopes and old meadows are two 17th century houses; Lower and Upper Garrington Farms. Both are listed Grade II together with the oast at Lower Garrington. The ruins of Well Chapel are a scheduled Ancient Monument. The combination of these features creates an attractive historic landscape.

Little Barton Farm

The house at Little Barton Farm dates from the 17th century with 18th century additions. The outbuildings, which include a small thatched structure, are also of considerable interest. The group is located within a miniature park like setting with mature trees, gardens and several ponds.

Littlebourne

The conservation area includes the majority of the historic settlement. To the east is the Church of St. Vincent, Littlebourne Court and the 14th century barn. To the west is the recreation ground and 19th century properties on Littlebourne Hill. The junction of Nargate Street, High Street and The Green is another attractive group of buildings; containing Littlebourne House, the oast and cottages to The Green, together with the Anchor Inn and the Vicarage. North of the parish church are some attractive meadows with mature trees which contribute considerably to the character and setting of the conservation area of the Church (Grade I).

There are eight listed and three locally listed buildings on Littlebourne Hill as well as other properties of architectural interest. Together with the trees these form an attractive area of interest. However, there are a number of modern buildings along the Hill and several of these tend to spoil the character of this area. However, the new housing estate has been designed to give a `vernacular' appearance and it should blend in well with age. As one approaches Littlebourne from the west, turning the corner at the top of the hill one is presented with a fine view of the High Street right into the historic core of the village. The Recreation Ground which forms a green link with the rest of the conservation area and the Old School. Visually it gives the impression of a Village Green providing the setting for the surrounding buildings, many of which are of architectural interest.

Lower Hardres and Street End

Lower Hardres is a well spread settlement, greatly enhanced by the large number of trees, particularly along Hardres Court Road and School Lane. The Church and Rectory are set slight apart from the remainder of the village on a slight rise with a good view along the valley to North Court Farm. This valley, with its ornamental tree planting and woodland background is an important part of the setting of this part of Lower Hardres.

Street End, to the north west of the conservation area marks the end of the Roman road, Stone Street. Street End Place, a large modern, but traditionally designed house, is set within a landscaped park on the edge of the village. While it is now mainly used for grazing, much of the planting still remains, creating a landscape of great interest and quality, forming a fine setting for the village. The garden is included in the KCC list of Historic Parks and Gardens in Kent.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Marshside

Marshside is at the edge of Chislet marshes on the upper edge of Wantsum Channel, which separated the Isle of Thanet from the Kentish mainland. The Wantsum Channel gradually silted up and was actively drained by the 12th Century although this was on going until the last gap in the North Sea Wall was closed in 1808. Records show that the dominant uses of the Chislet Levels/Marshes were seasonal grazing and hay making. Some arable cultivation took place during the Second World War but the land reverted to pasture. It is only during the last 30 years that a transformation to arable has been taking place following improved drainage stimulated by the 1953 floods.

Many of the original drainage ditches remain and there are eight brick bridges that cross the stream at Marshside giving access to the droves and fields of Chislet Marshes. One is dated 1793 and the rest, probably of similar age, were put in by the Flemish engineers who were responsible for the waterways.

The conservation area consists of a strip of houses, gardens, small paddocks and hedgerows between the flat pastureland of the Chislet Marshes and gently rolling pasture and orchards towards Hoath. The predominant natural feature of the area is the North Stream and a small strip of trees, and marshland that runs down the eastern side of the conservation area. Across the road from North Stream there are three collections of buildings that appear to have been associated with farms. The large farmhouses and converted barns set in well-landscaped gardens overlook North Stream and what is now drained pasture. The conservation area contains six listed buildings all Grade II listed. Of particular note are the cottages at Poors Farm, which are a pair of 16th century cottages refaced in red brick in the 18th century.

At the northern end of the conservation area, the A299 has become a prominent feature from the conservation area, both visually and in terms of noise.

Nackington

There are a number of buildings and groups of interest. The house known as Sextries and its traditional farm buildings are particularly important as the group has changed little since the time of the 1840's tithe map.

The prevalent and traditional building materials are red stock bricks, tarred weatherboarding and clay tiles with slate on more recent buildings. The church is flint and the older barns were originally thatched.

Nailbourne

The Nailbourne Conservation Areas are a group of neighbouring villages and parklands each of which has its own listing. They include the Bifrons Park, Bridge, Renville Farm and Bridge Railway Station, Bourne Park, Highland Court, Bishopsbourne, Charlton Park, Patrixbourne and Bekesbourne Conservation Area. The last two of these lie within the study area.

Patrixbourne

The Patrixbourne Conservation Area is centred upon the village street. The Church of St. Mary, a flint and Caen stone building (Grade I), contains an especially fine Norman south door and a good Norman Priests door. The east wheel window is a rare example and the tower with its ground floor forming a porch has a broached spire. The Old Vicarage (Grade II) is a 15th century timber-framed building with mid-late 19th century additions. An armorial plaque of the Marquess Conyngham is located over a side doorway in the garden wall. Waterfall Cottages and Bifrons Cottage are two of the cottages ornes dated from the 19th century estate of Bifrons, the Marquess Conyngham's seat. Another prominent estate building is the ornate former oasthouse dated 1869 (Grade II).

Sondes House at the western end of the village is a red brick house with many 17th century features including a shaped Dutch gable and chimney stacks. In Station Road is a house dated 1707 but remodelled in the mid 19th century with

fretted bargeboards. Another unusual characteristic of this village is the number of buildings that are built of field flints, reflecting the local geology here.

The main street is particularly attractive and many of the houses are set back behind brick walls. Although there are some modern properties these are not overpowering. The belt of woodland to the south forms an important backdrop to the village. Several of the properties which were part of the estate village of Bifrons were altered in the cottage orne style in the mid 19th century and were given carved or fretted bargeboards, lean-to porches and other features.

The small fields to the north of the village form a natural link to Bekesbourne and form part of the setting of Patrixbourne.

Reculver

Early records indicate an Iron Age settlement at Reculver. In the third century the Roman Fort of Regulbium was built to defend the northern end of the Wantsum Channel. At that time it was located around a mile and half from the sea and extending to around eight acres. In AD 668 Egbert King of Kent granted Reculver for the foundation of a Benedictine monastery and the first Saxon Church was probably built around this time within the walls of the Roman fort, reusing the Roman materials. This early church was enlarged and the two towers, known as 'the Two Sisters', were added in the 12th century.

By the 17th century it was reported that the fort walls were being rapidly washed away. Much of the stonework was sold to the Margate Pier Company at the beginning of the 19th century and permission was granted by the Bishop to demolish the church and build a new church at Hillborough, using material from the old building. The twin towers, a valuable navigational aid were retained. The remains of the church encircled by the remains of the Roman fort wall were scheduled as an ancient monument in 1925. In addition to these the conservation area includes the King Ethelbert Public House and Reculver House dating from the 18th and 19th century. Both are locally listed.

Renville Farm and Bridge Railway Station

This area comprises the former Bridge Station on the old Elham Valley Lane and the course of the railway as far north as the A2. Adjacent to this area is Renville, a good mid 19th century house. There is an oast of the same period at Renville Farm. Renville is set in a miniature parkland and approached from Watling Street along an avenue. The house is not listed but is of local architectural interest. It is constructed of yellow bricks with a slate roof with a wide overhang.

St Martin's Hospital

The conservation area was designated to protect the historic parkland setting of the hospital (dating from the 18th century) and the hospital buildings (dating from 1903). The parkland dates from before 1538 when it belonged to St Augustine's Abbey. It then became the Grounds of Stone House and now the grounds of St Martin's Hospital cover almost exactly the original grounds of the Old Park as shown 1600's maps. The present site retains many of the features of the original park that once surrounded Stone House. The park remains a beautiful place with rolling open fields, meadows and areas of woodland and arboreta, with many exotic trees.

The hospital complex has an historic character, which is attractive in its own right and forms a significant feature of the local landscape, although there have been some unsympathetic alterations and new buildings, with the northern end suffering some damage during the last war. The oldest buildings are located in the west of the site and are constructed from red brick with slate roofs in a Victorian style. These buildings have tall windows and on the frontages there are two–storey bay windows with pitched roofs. The larger buildings have tall chimneys and copper vents along the roofline.

The parkland setting of the buildings and the boundary tree lines are one of the key features of the wider area.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Stodmarsh

The village of Stodmarsh lies in the shallow valley of the Lampen Stream which flows into the Great Stour a mile to the north. Stodmarsh is a place of great antiquity with a recorded documentary history dating back to 678. In Saxon times Stodmarsh was devoted to breeding mares, "Stode" being the Saxon word for mare. There is an ancient pattern of fields, boundaries and shaves about the Lampen Stream Valley and a number of antiquities were unearthed in 1854 in a Saxon barrow. The Parish Church of St. Mary is of 13th century dated and is Listed Grade I. Other listed buildings within the village include Cornerways, Old Post Office Stores, Ivyhouse, Sawkinge Farm Cottage and the 17th century barn at Sawkinge Farm. Poplar Farm House, Poplar Farm barn and stables are Grade II. There are several locally listed buildings within the conservation area. Around the parish church the houses are grouped fairly closely together and the gaps which do exist are of considerable significance, some containing important trees. Around the periphery of the village core and along the valley bottom there is little development.

Sturry and Fordwich

Sturry and Fordwich are adjoining conservation areas. Sturry Conservation Area includes many parts of the old village, Mill Road and Fordwich Road and the meadows to the south west which form part of the setting of the village. Fordwich Conservation Area includes almost all the built up area of Fordwich and the riverside area beyond the church. To the west there remains the largest example of the Stour valley meadows east of Canterbury. Preserved deposits in the meadows are potentially of regional or national significance as a paleo-environmental resource.

The Bridge Conservation Area

Bridge is part of a group of neighbouring conservation areas that encompass villages and parkland along the Nailbourne valley. They include Bifrons Park, Bourne Park, Highland Court, Charlton Park, Bishopsbourne, Renville Farm and Bridge Railway Station, Patrixbourne and Bekesbourne.

The village, approximately 3 miles south of Canterbury, is situated on the old Roman road (Watling Street) from Dover to London and almost certainly takes it name from the bridge over the River Nailbourne which traverses the southern end of the High Street.

Bridge is characterised by its agricultural and parkland setting that encircles the entire village. The historic built form is along the main through-route at the floor of the valley with later development occupying low-lying, former farmland behind.

Mature trees make a significant contribution to the setting of the conservation area with a large number of individual trees in gardens and along the roadside. Trees also line field boundaries and the route of the Nailbourne. Other important areas of tree planting can be found at Conyngham Lane, St Peter's Church and along Bourne Park Road. Many of the village roads are lined with hedgerows that contribute to the rural character of the conservation area.

Tyler Hill and Allcroft Grange

Tyler Hill is located on a ridge originally within a clearing in Blean Forest. The medieval boundaries of this clearing are still well preserved. The area includes a series of small fields and paddocks within the built up area and there are a substantial number of buildings of architectural interest that contribute to the overall character. Oakwell-in-the Blean was originally laid out in 1834 and contains an attractive group of farm buildings. Traditional local building materials are red stock bricks and clay tiles. There are also examples of yellow stock brickwork, slate and weatherboarding.

The site of the former Canterbury to Whitstable Railway passes through this area with fine mature trees forming a natural boundary to the conservation area. In addition there are a number of interesting structures and engineering features. Tyler Hill Engine House hauled trains up from Canterbury in the early days. There was also a large pond to provide water for the steam engine and a cottage for the man in charge. Later a halt was added.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Allcroft Grange is sited on the ridge between the Stour Valley and Sarre Penn Valley. Much of Littlehall Wood adjacent to the house was replanted as a pinetum in the late 19th century. To the south is the site of the park associated with Hales Place. The house is now demolished and most of the park built over. Although the remaining area is mostly pasture the majority of the trees have been lost. The Sarre Penn Valley is archaeologically rich, containing two prehistoric settlements.

There are some damaging features within the area including unsympathetically altered buildings and some modern properties built in unsympathetic materials and inappropriate styles. However within the conservation area these are outweighed by the good traditional buildings and attractive landscape features.

Under-the-Wood

This area consists of a small group of buildings located in a dry valley with old pasture and a small wood, Dane Shave, rising behind. Documentary evidence suggests that a lost hamlet called 'Dane' was located north of Dane Shave. At the head of the valley a farm known as Upper Grounds is defined by prominent hedgerows and mature oaks. The field pattern suggests that Upper Grounds and the hamlet of Under-the-Wood were once part of the same farming unit.

Upstreet

Upstreet is a linear roadside settlement that sits astride the Canterbury to Ramsgate and Richborough Road. The conservation area is characterised by a sequence of buildings of varying sizes and styles together with areas of mature landscape. Vision House, Upstreet Farmhouse, Grove Court and the Nursing Home are all buildings of interest. Grove Court contains several mature trees which form part of the historic 18th century parkland. This landscape setting is particularly important on the eastern edge of the village formed by Grove Ferry Hill.

Westbere

Westbere Conservation Area lies to the south of the Roman Road (Canterbury - Richborough). The `bere' probably relates to a "passage for swine", i.e. a wooded Wealden type hinterland rather than an arable area. The conservation area remains very well wooded and has an arcadian feel. The location of the village means that there is no through traffic and thus creates an air of rural seclusion. This characteristic is reinforced by the narrow country lanes which wind through a rather haphazard arrangement of houses. The village contains a fine group of medieval hall houses notably Ashby Cottage, the Yew Tree Inn, Yew Tree Cottage and White Cottage. All Saints Church dates from the 14th century. Being part of the manors of Chislet and Rushbourne, Westbere did not grow into a large village and never had a court lodge. Westbere House was built about 1730 and has been enlarged and altered to become a `very grand house'. The village contains 19 listed buildings.

Womenswold

The name Womenswold means Forest of the Wimelingas, or active men, a name which was given to a tribe of warriors who held the forest in this area. The village is located on a slight ridge and is largely surrounded by agricultural land. There are a considerable number of trees in the settlement and Well Wood and part of Willow Wood (a good example of wet woodland), together with the meadowland around Nethersole Farm form part of the setting of the village. Planting within and adjacent to the settlement provide a sense enclosure. The landscaped grounds to Tall Firs and the meadows south of the village are equally important and form a notional link to Denne Hill Park.

There are numerous listed building of interest, including prominently, the flint built Church of St. Margaret at Womenswold, the tower, chancel and nave of which are probably Norman. Most of the older houses date from the 17th and 18th century. Although there are a few unattractive modern developments, none of these are too obtrusive or damaging.

Appendix B: Conservation Areas

Woodlands Park

Woodlands Manor is set on the edge of a small park, complete with perimeter shelterbelts of trees and a selection of specimen trees set within open parkland. The house is set in old walled gardens containing a rockery and rose garden, a lime walk, gardens and woodland walks with good vistas. The park is included on the register of Kent Parks and Gardens.

Woodlands Cottage is set within well-treed grounds, with a belt ornamental planting and Scot's pines which surround the meadow to the west of the manor. The conservation area extends westwards beyond the water tower as far west as Oxenden Shaw.

Woolage Green

The name Woolage Green derives from Wolf Heath – heathland where wolves roam. The village has a greater feeling of enclosure than Womenswold, due to trees and woodland in and around the built-up area. There are a scattering of listed and locally building within the village, including the Two Sawyers public House (1791), and Woolage Farmhouse and small village green.

The Woolage Green Conservation Area includes the green, the surrounding properties and gardens as well as land at Woolage Farm and the meadows to the east, that provide a rural setting for the built form.

Despite the potential attractiveness of the settlement and its setting, there are several inappropriate and unattractive modern developments and some of the earlier buildings have been altered or extended in an unsympathetic way.

Appendix C: Example Field Sheet

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
FIELD EVALUATION SHEET

CHARACTER AREA:			
County context:		**Photograph no.**	
Regional context:		**Map reference:**	
National context:		**Date of Survey:**	

AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
Topography	Dominant Apparent Insignificant	Landform	Views out
Tree cover	Dominant Apparent Insignificant	Key visual elements	Views within
Enclosure Pattern	Dominant Apparent Insignificant Unenclosed	Key visual elements	Pattern
Settlement & Land use	Dominant Apparent Insignificant Unsettled	Key visual elements	Seasonal variation

KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?
Woodlands: Species associations Heritage features
Hedgerow & hedgerow trees: Species associations Heritage features
Other vegetation: Species associations Heritage features
Field boundaries: Species associations Heritage features
Settlements: Villages/farmsteads Heritage features
Buildings: Species associations Heritage features
Highways: Species associations Heritage features
Other features: Species associations Heritage features
BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Appendix C: Example Field Sheet

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
FIELD EVALUATION SHEET

CONDITION

VISUAL UNITY - assess the overall unity of the landscape and note the significance of any detracting features:	
Pattern of Elements: Describe the extent of uniform or unifying features / coherent or incoherent pattern of elements, are these intact, interrupted or fragmented?	Unified Coherent Incoherent
Visual Detractors:	Many Some Few

FUNCTIONAL INTEGRITY	
Ecological Integrity How does this area function as a habitat for wildlife?	
Extent and type of semi-natural habitat	Strong Moderate Weak
Ecological Bases: Corridors, Clusters, strong or weak networks?	
Intensity of Land use	
Cultural Integrity: **Condition of Heritage Features -** assess current condition and note vulnerability to change	
Tree Cover Extent Age Structure	Good Variable Poor
Field Boundaries	Good Variable Poor
Other Features	Good Variable Poor
Impact of Built Development: Does built development demonstrate or respect the local vernacular, character and sense of place?	
	High Impact
	Moderate Impact
	Low Impact

SENSITIVITY

SENSE OF PLACE (strength of character):		
How do the Key Characteristics contribute to local distinctiveness and continuity?	**Distinctiveness**	**Continuity**
Woodlands:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient
Hedgerow & hedgerow trees:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient
Other vegetation:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient
Field boundaries:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient
Settlements:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient
Buildings:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient
Highways:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient
Other features:	Very Distinct Distinct Indistinct	Recent Historic Ancient

VISIBILITY: assess the interaction of and relative dominance of elements in the landscape view.			
Landform:	Dominant	Apparent	Insignificant
Tree Cover:	Enclosed	Intermittent	Open

Appendix C: Example Field Sheet

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