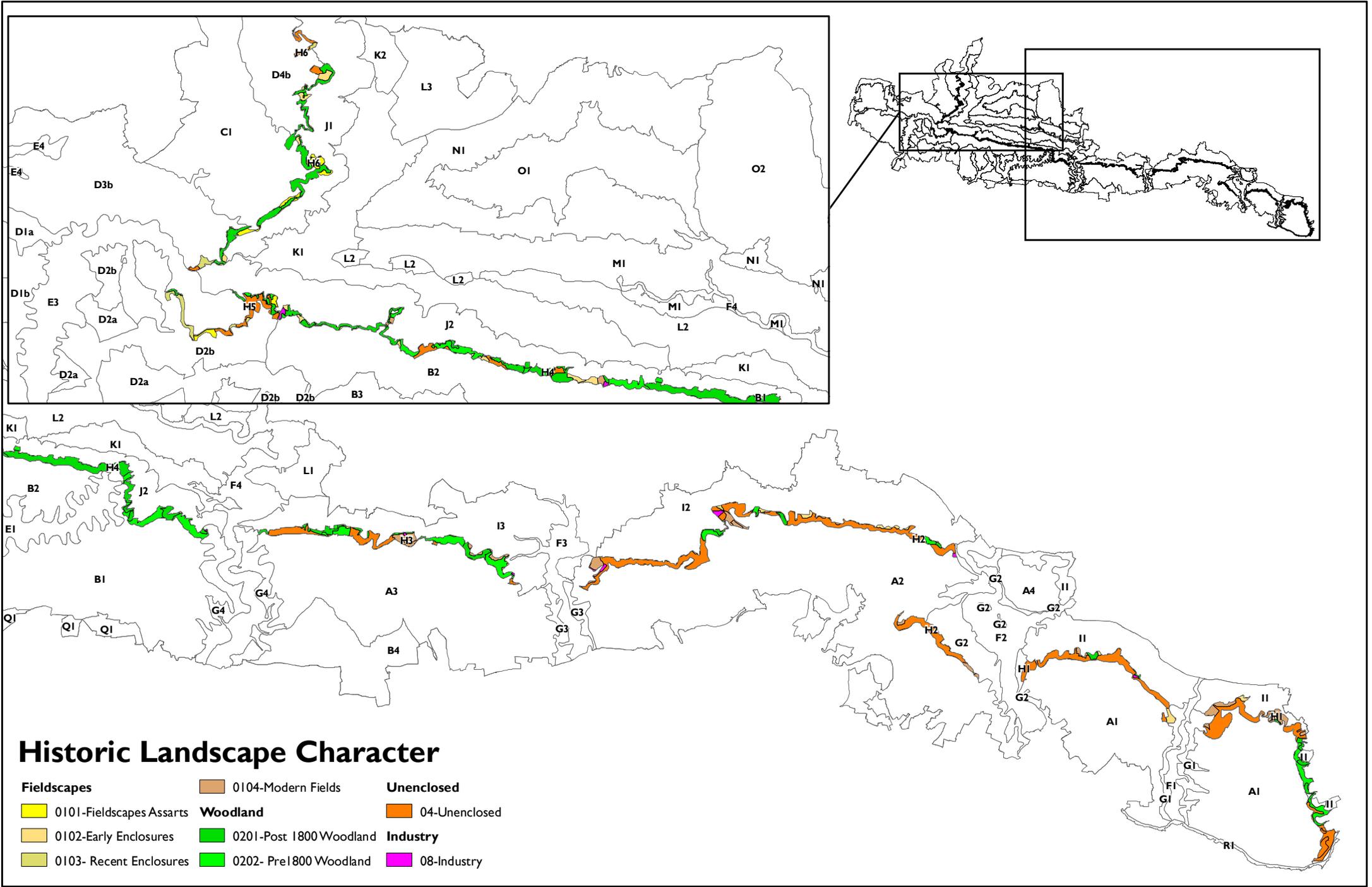


**H: Major Scarps**



# Historic Landscape Character

- |                        |                         |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Fields</b>          | 0104-Modern Fields      | <b>Unenclosed</b> |
| 0101-Fields of Assarts | <b>Woodland</b>         | 04-Unenclosed     |
| 0102-Early Enclosures  | 0201-Post 1800 Woodland | <b>Industry</b>   |
| 0103-Recent Enclosures | 0202-Pre 1800 Woodland  | 08-Industry       |

**H: Major Scarps**

# LANDSCAPE TYPE H: MAJOR SCARPS

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- H.1 The scarp is a visually distinct landscape type forming the northern edge of the chalk rising steeply from the lower lying land of the Greensand and the Weald. It forms a prominent backdrop, skyline and landmark feature for a wide area beyond the South Downs. The scarp is either open or wooded along its length.
- H.2 Note that there are a large number of internal scarps within the South Downs – these have been included as part of the chalk downland landscape and have not been identified separately.

## DESCRIPTION

### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A linear landscape forming the northern and eastern edge of the chalk - deeply indented winding belt, with a steep scarp faces and a high prominent ridgeline creating a strong skyline, although this is softened in areas of woodland cover.
- Occurs along the full length of the South Downs from the distinctive chalk hangers in Hampshire (Selborne) to meet the sea at the dramatic white cliffs of Beachy Head.
- Remarkably consistent in height and slope profile throughout its length as a result of the lithological uniformity of the chalk bedrock.
- From open summits there are panoramic views across the lowlands to the north. The scarp forms a distinctive backdrop ridgeline in views from this area – a symbolic feature of the South Downs.
- Precipitous upper slopes are grazed grassland, scrub or clothed in dense woodland 'hangers' - mixed farmland extends onto the shallower lower slopes in places.
- The scarp contains some of the most extensive areas of chalk grassland habitat within the South Downs.
- Notable for the absence of buildings on the slope itself.
- Deeply sunken lanes and tracks, known as bostal tracks, cut the escarpment and link the lower land to the chalk uplands. Some 'gaps' cut by valleys form important communication routes.
- Large number of recreational sites – frequently associated with hilltop historic monuments or panoramic viewpoints, plus areas of open access land (on chalk grassland).
- Occasionally marked by chalk pits on the scarp slopes and masts along the crest which are highly prominent in views.

## Physical Landscape

- H.3 The striking chalk escarpments form the northern and eastern faces of the South Downs. The steep landform typical of this landscape type is a result of erosion and undercutting of the chalk mass from its northern and eastern edges which reveals bands of upper, middle and lower chalk at the scarp edge. The scarps are gradually moving southwards and westwards as erosion of the adjacent softer beds to the north and east undermine the chalk scarp. The escarpment is remarkably constant in height and slope profile throughout its length as a result of the lithological uniformity of the chalk bedrock and forms a prominent visual feature within the landscape.
- H.4 The scarps are typically indented by deep dry valleys, or 'coombes' that were mostly formed by post-glacial stream erosion and subsequent erosional action from springs at the base of the chalk. The chalk bedrock has resulted in well drained calcareous soils, but the steep slopes have generally not been cultivated and extensive swathes of chalk grassland, scrub and hanger woodland characterise the scarp face.
- H.5 At the foot of the scarps where the slopes are less steep the land is often ploughed and arable fields have encroached up the slope in places. Soil creep is evident on the steepest slopes where the surface of the scarp is wrinkled into terraces – this is particularly evident on a sunny day when shadows highlight these terraces. Abandoned chalk quarries are a feature of the scarp revealing the exploitation of chalk in the past to produce lime for fertilising the acidic soils of the farmland in the Weald.

## Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- H.6 The dramatic scale of the landform and the large swathes of chalk grassland and woodland create a large scale exposed landscape which is dominant in views from an extensive area beyond the South Downs. The land cover elements provide a consistency across the scarps, resulting in a unified and harmonious landscape with a muted 'natural' character. Scattered scrub and hanger woodland provide texture and create dramatic shadows on the scarps. The scarps are also landscapes of contrast where the exposed scarp ridge contrasts dramatically with the deep, hidden coombes.
- H.7 The steepness of the scarps means there is little human activity in these landscapes. As a consequence they are quiet landscapes which, combined with the swathes of chalk grassland, scrub and woodland, are perceived as highly natural and tranquil.
- H.8 Countryside access is good with large areas of the scarps designated as open access land. There are also many rough sheep tracks and public rights of way that zig zag across the open scarps and ascend the coombes, providing good access on foot and horseback. Parascending and hang-gliding are popular recreational sports along the scarp.
- H.9 The dramatic character of the major chalk scarps have been a source of literary and artistic inspiration for centuries. Mrs Radcliffe, writing in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century admired how the scarps '*heaved up their high, blue lines as ramparts worthy of the sublimity of the ocean*'. The dramatic scarps have also featured in many postcards and paintings, their strong structural form providing an impressive composition.

## Biodiversity

- H.10 Almost unbroken tracts of unimproved chalk grassland, scrub and hanger woodland are present along the scarp slopes and these contribute to the outstanding ecological importance of the landscape type. Occasional areas of arable land, improved pasture grassland and semi-natural woodland occur on more shallow slopes along the scarps, extending into them from the intensively farmed footslopes and open downland which sandwich the major scarps.
- H.11 In places the scarps are relatively well wooded with extensive and unbroken oak, ash and beech hanger woodland. Species-rich woody scrub is also characteristic of the scarp. Of particular note is juniper, a UK priority BAP species. Occasional dew ponds and abandoned chalk quarries also occur and are characteristic and ecologically notable habitats.
- H.12 The scarps are highly valued for nature conservation and this is reflected by the large number of statutory and non statutory nature conservations sites they carry.

<b>Key Biodiversity Features</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Extensive and unbroken tracts of calcareous grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The areas of unimproved calcareous grassland are often designated as nationally important SSSIs.</li> <li>As a whole these grasslands support a wide range of characteristic plant species, breeding birds and invertebrates, including many species with a restricted national distribution.</li> </ul>
Abundant woodland, including scrub and hanger woodlands, together with occasional areas of arable land create an important habitat mosaic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hanger woodland is an internationally important habitat, and together with occasional areas of ecological rich woody scrub and arable land form a valuable mosaic of habitats along the escarpment.</li> </ul>

## Historic Character

- H.13 The steep scarps have always been a marginal zone - even at the height of arable cultivation of the downland, during the Romano-British period, the scarps were too steep for ploughing and remained usable only as sheep pasture. The value of the scarps, however, is clear from the fact that the original woodland cover was completely cleared in the eastern part of the South Downs. In the west the scarps are much more wooded, reflecting the more mixed farming economy.
- H.14 The main indication of human modification of the scarps comprises the numerous trackways, many of them sunken and terraced diagonally into the hillside, which traverse the slopes. These represent bostals, the routes by which sheep were herded between the downland pastures and the scarpfoot arable fields. These trackways were crucial elements in the sheep-corn husbandry regime which prevailed in the South Downs for much of its recorded history. There are also a number of small isolated chalk pits associated with the former agricultural lime-burning industry.

<b>Key Features of the Historic Environment</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Open scarps	Provides an indication of the value of the scarps for sheep grazing

Survival of significant blocks of pre-1800 woodland	Provides evidence of medieval and early post-medieval woodland exploitation, e.g. coppicing and charcoal burning
Small isolated chalk pits	Provide evidence of the former agricultural lime-burning industry
Sunken terraced trackways	Integral part of former agricultural system, linking downland pasture with scarpfoot arable

### Settlement Form and Built Character

H.15 There is no settlement on the steep slopes of the *Major Scarps* as a result of the steep topography. Springline settlements characterise the scarp foot and are described under landscape types I and J.

## EVALUATION

### Sensitivity

H.16 Due to the prominent position of the scarps within the overall landscape, they are highly sensitive to change. Key landscape sensitivities include:

- The open and undeveloped skylines which are highly visible and particularly sensitive to any form of built development or vertical structures such as telecommunication masts, power lines and wind turbines.
- The extensive views from the scarps, across adjacent landscape such as the Low Weald, that are vulnerable to change (development, lighting etc) which would affect the special remote character of the scarps.
- The distinctive smooth concave-convex slope profiles of the scarps which are vulnerable to further mineral extraction or erosion particularly in areas with no woodland cover.
- The large swathes of chalk grassland which are of national ecological value and are important in revealing the profile of the chalk. Without effective management strategies, undergrazing and encroachment of scrub will have a strong visual impact as well as an effect on biodiversity.
- The scrub and hanger woodland on the scarps which provide texture, create dramatic shadows, and are of great biodiversity interest. Hanger woodland is an internationally important habitat and is particularly vulnerable to storm damage.
- The subtle presence of rough sheep tracks and rights of way that zig zag across the open scarps, often representing historic 'bostals', the routes by which sheep were herded between the downland pastures and the scarpfoot arable fields. These are vulnerable to damage by intensive recreational use, notably off road vehicles.
- The sense of tranquillity, remoteness and space that results from the overall low incidence of human activity and absence of development.

H.17 The steep scarps are extremely prominent in views from adjacent landscapes making them very visually sensitive. Of particular sensitivity is the skyline of the scarp which is most often viewed in against an open sky.

## Change – Key Issues and Trends

### **Past Change**

H.18 Observable changes in the past include:

- Quarrying of chalk to produce lime to fertilise the farmland to the north of the downs.
- Encroachment of arable fields up the footslopes of the scarps where the land is less steep.
- Encroachment of agricultural fields onto the scarp crests from the dip-slope side of the downs.
- Aerial fertilisation of steep chalk downland resulting in loss of biodiversity.
- Invasion of scrub into areas of chalk grassland.
- Introduction of communication masts onto the skyline.
- Damage to tracks and rights of way across the scarp from intensive recreational use, including four wheel drive vehicles.

### **Future Landscape Change**

H.19 In the short term (5 years) it is likely that there will be continued positive change in the form of management of chalk grassland habitats as a result of ongoing policies and incentives. There may also be ongoing pressures for ploughing of the less steep scarp slopes and decline in the structure of hanger woodlands that are not in active management.

H.20 It is difficult to be prescriptive about long term change (20 years) as this will be dependent on prevailing policies and incentives. The South Downs Management Plan will be a key tool in managing change and ensuring a positive future for the area. Some potential changes and key vulnerabilities within the *Major Scarps* are outlined below.

**Climate Change:** Changes to precipitation and temperature could impact upon the species composition of habitats, particularly the chalk grasslands of the scarps. This could result in a greater abundance of species with a continental distribution, but the impact of extreme events and the spread of more competitive grasses could cancel out these benefits. Heavier winter rainfall could lead to increased soil erosion on the thin soils and steep slopes of the scarps.

Increases in temperature and drought conditions could put stress on the hanger woodlands and result in changes in species composition (including decline of beech) and increased storms could result in damage to the woodlands. The pursuit of renewable energy may result in demand for wind energy development, which could intrude into views of open skylines.

**Agricultural Change and Land Management:** Agricultural management will be driven by the changes in the world market and the CAP. In this landscape it is likely that there will be positive landscape change arising from regimes to promote enhanced environmental management of chalk grassland habitats. However, global agricultural competition continues to hamper efforts to reinstate sheep grazing. The

more marginal land of the steep slopes may come out of active management with a consequent increase in scrub and woodland cover.

**Development:** The prominent position of the escarpment means that it is likely that there will be continued pressure for the development of communication masts, as well as possible future pressure for wind turbines, along the scarp crest. There may also be demand for recreational facilities associated with the South Downs Way national trail. A key area for management are the track ways that cross the scarp.

### **Broad Management Objective and Landscape Guidelines**

H.21 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the dramatic landform and open skyline, with extensive areas of chalk grassland exposing the scarp profile, mixed with an irregular mosaic of hanger woodland and scrub.**

#### ***Landscape Management Considerations***

- Extend and link chalk grassland habitats to create unified swathes of open grazed grassland which enhance the dramatic profile of the scarp. Promote enhanced environmental management of chalk grassland habitats and control scrub invasion.
- Manage hanger woodland to ensure a diverse species and age structure by light thinning, clearance of some of the scrub, re-coppicing (especially hazel) and replanting as necessary. This will also minimise risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds. Consider opening up paths/rides for access.
- Seek to maintain a balance between the extent of open grassland and woodland.
- Avoid harsh woodland edges which are visually intrusive on the scarp slope. Woodland rides should be angled across the slope to minimise visual impact. Remove conifers when mature and replace with broadleaved species.
- Where boundaries are necessary, promote the use of visually permeable boundaries such as post and wire fencing to maintain a smooth and continuous scarp profile.
- Manage recreational use, particularly intensive uses, to respect the special character of the scarp and key features of chalk grassland, ancient trackways, sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Encourage the creative restoration of redundant chalk quarries, exploiting the potential for geological interest, nature conservation, and recreation, and ensuring they blend with their surroundings.
- Maintain the contrast between the grassland scarp and arable lowland - aim to revert arable fields back to pasture where they are encroaching on the scarp.
- Avoid encroachment of agricultural fields onto the scarp crest from the dip-slope side of the downs. Encourage restoration of arable and improved pasture to chalk grassland to eliminate the harsh lines on the scarp crest.

- Conserve the tranquillity of the scarp, resisting road improvements on the historic tracks and lanes that traverse the scarp – manage the verges to avoid erosion and encourage species diversity.

### **Development Considerations**

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character of the scarp.
- Maintain the open and undeveloped skyline of the dramatic steep north-facing chalk escarpment – avoid siting of buildings, telecommunication masts, power lines and wind turbines on the sensitive skyline and maintain the backdrop of open skyline.
- Consider opportunities to enhance skylines that are already affected by visually intrusive development by moving structures (for example the communication masts at Devil’s Dyke and Truleigh Hill) to less visually sensitive locations away from the skyline.
- Consider the impact of any change (development) in views from the scarp.

### **Character Areas**

There are six *Major Scarps* in the South Downs – these run the length of the South Downs, from Eastbourne in the east to Selborne in the west. Some are wooded and some are open.

H1:	Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp
H2:	Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp
H3:	Arun to Adur Downs Scarp
H4:	Buriton to Arun Scarp
H5:	Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp
H6:	Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp

# HI: OUSE TO EASTBOURNE DOWNS SCARP

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## DESCRIPTION

### Location and Boundaries

HI.1 The *Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp* wraps around the northern and eastern edges of the *Ouse to Eastbourne Downs*. It extends from Itford Hill in the west to Beachy Head, broken by the Cuckmere Valley in the middle. The boundaries of the *Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp* are defined predominantly by topography. The southern (top) boundary has been drawn along the crest of the scarp which is clearly defined by a change in density of contours. The northern (lower) boundary is less well defined has generally been drawn along the top edge of arable fields on the scarp footslopes. The scarp overlooks the Low Weald to the north and Eastbourne to the east.

### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A dramatic steep north and east-facing chalk escarpment marking the eastern extent of the South Downs and overlooking Eastbourne to the east.
- Exhibits a distinctive concave-convex slope profile, deeply indented by 'coombes' with a large number of barrows as well as some ancient field systems, for example at Windover Hill.
- Remarkably consistent in height and slope profile throughout its length as a result of the lithological uniformity of the chalk bedrock.
- The eastern edge above Eastbourne is well wooded with dense woodland cover, some associated with landscape parks such as Compton Park. Built development on the edge of Eastbourne encroaches onto the scarp in places.
- The scarp contains some extensive areas of chalk grassland habitat e.g. Firle Escarpment SSSI, Willingdon Down SSSI and Wilmington Downs SSSI.
- Deeply sunken lanes and tracks, known as bostal tracks, cut the escarpment and link the lower land to the chalk uplands.
- 'Gaps' cut by valleys form important communication routes, for example above Firle, at Filching Manor, Butts Lane and on the outskirts of Eastbourne where the A259 climbs the scarp.
- Large number of recreational sites – frequently associated with hilltop locations and viewpoints, such as Firle Beacon, Beachy Head, and the Long man of Wilmington.
- At the foot of the scarp where the slopes are less steep the land is ploughed for crops – here colours contrast with the muted grey-green colours of the scarp face.

- A number of small isolated chalk pits associated with the former agricultural lime-burning industry appear as white scars on the scarp e.g. at Bopeep Farm and Chalk Farm.
- The Long Man of Wilmington, a chalk-cut hill figure of possible 16<sup>th</sup> century date, is a visual landmark as well as being of historic importance.

### **Specific Characteristics Unique to the Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp**

- HI.2 The *Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp* exhibits physical characteristics typical of its type. One of the features most unique to this scarp is its proximity to Eastbourne. Built development lies at the foot of the scarp and, in places, encroaches up onto the lower scarp slopes. The eastern scarp overlooking Eastbourne has been colonised by post-1800 woodland. Some of this may be ornamental in nature, associated with landscape parks such as Compton Park, but most is encroachment due to neglect. Patches of gorse and mixed shrub communities occur throughout which provide an important component of the habitat mosaic, providing important habitat for a range of breeding birds and invertebrate species.
- HI.3 This character area supports extensive tracts of unimproved chalk grassland, together with areas of hanger woodland, scrub, arable and improved grassland. The majority of the escarpment carries SSSI designation, including the Firle Escarpment SSSI, Willingdon Down SSSI, Wilmington Downs SSSI and part of Seaford to Beachy Head SSSI. The chalk grassland supports a wide range of characteristic plant species, including many that have a restricted national distribution. There are also a number of small isolated chalk pits associated with the former agricultural lime-burning industry on this scarp.
- HI.4 The scarp at Wilmington is notable for the Long Man, a chalk-cut hill figure of possible 16<sup>th</sup> century date.
- HI.5 Countryside access is good in this character area with the majority of the scarp designated as open access land. There are also many rough sheep tracks and public rights of way that zig zag across the open scarp and ascend the coombes, providing good access on foot and horseback. There is particularly good access onto the scarp and adjacent downs from the urban edge of Eastbourne.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp**

- HI.6 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:
- The Long Man of Wilmington, a chalk-cut hill figure of possible 16<sup>th</sup> century date.
  - Panoramic views over the surrounding lowlands, particularly from the popular viewpoints at Firle Beacon, Beachy Head, and the Long Man of Wilmington.

### **Change Specific to the Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp**

- HI.7 Past change specific to this area includes:

- Invasion of exotic and ornamental species into the hanger woodland on the scarp above Eastbourne during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Introduction of communication masts onto the skyline at Beddingham Hill.
- The recent encroachment of built development up onto the lower scarp footslopes at the edge of Eastbourne.
- The recent encroachment of scrub and woodland onto the scarp slopes with patches of gorse and mixed shrub communities continuing to actively invade open grassland communities in the absence of grazing.

HI.8 As a result of the area's designation as an AONB and, if confirmed, the future designation of the area as National Park, there is unlikely to be further encroachment of built development onto the scarp above Eastbourne. However, the condition of woodland may continue to decline if it is left unmanaged and scrub continue to invade areas of low grazing pressure. The proximity to urban areas means there may be ongoing pressures for development of communication masts on the scarp crests.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp**

HI.9 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management and development considerations are specific to this character area:

- Conserve the Long Man of Wilmington as a visual landmark on the scarp.
- Monitor and control presence of exotic species in woodland on the scarp above Eastbourne. Manage to ensure a diverse species and age structure by light thinning, clearance of some of the scrub, re-coppicing (especially hazel) and replanting as necessary. This will also minimise risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds. Consider opening up paths/rides for access.
- Promote enhanced environmental management of chalk grassland habitats and control scrub invasion.
- Maintain panoramic views over the surrounding lowlands, particularly from the popular viewpoints at Firlie Beacon, Beachy Head and the Long Man of Wilmington.
- Ensure built development on the edge of Eastbourne does not encroach up the scarp face.



Pylons on the summit of the scarp are visible against the skyline.



Sheep grazing is characteristic of the steep scarp slopes.



The scarp is remarkably consistent in height and slope profile.



Tracks cut through the escarpment and link the lower land to the chalk uplands.



The scarp is largely unwooded.



The built edge of Eastbourne creeps up the lower elevations of the scarp.

## H2: ADUR TO OUSE DOWNS SCARP

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

H2.1 The *Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp* wraps around the northern edge of the *Adur to Ouse Downs*, to the north of Brighton. It extends from Beeding Hill in the west to Offham Hill, on the outskirts of Lewes, in the east. The boundaries of the *Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp* are defined predominantly by topography. The southern (top) boundary has been drawn along the crest of the scarp which is clearly defined by a change in density of contours. The northern (lower) boundary is less well defined has been drawn along field boundaries. There are panoramic views over the surrounding lowlands, particularly from the popular viewpoints at Ditchling Beacon, Devil's Dyke, and Edburton Hill.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A dramatic steep north-facing chalk escarpment with a distinctive concave-convex slope profile which provide opportunities for hang-gliding and para-gliding.
- Deeply indented by 'coombes', including the complex and well known coombe of Devil's Dyke, to form a locally sinuous scarp.
- Well drained calcareous soils covering the precipitous slopes support unbroken tracts of chalk grassland, scrub and hanger woodland of outstanding ecological importance which provide texture and create dramatic shadows on the scarp.
- Sunken terraced tracks and rights of way that zig zag across the open scarp, some representing historic 'bostals', the routes by which sheep were herded between the downland pastures and the scarpfoot arable fields.
- At the foot of the scarp where the slopes are less steep the land is ploughed for crops – here colours contrast with the muted grey-green colours of the scarp face.
- Abandoned chalk quarries, resulting from the exploitation of chalk in the past to produce lime, appear as white scars on the scarp and are now ecologically notable habitats.
- Elevated landform provides panoramic views over the scarp footslopes to the north and, in the distance, the Low Weald.

#### Specific Characteristics Unique to the Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp

H2.2 The *Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp* exhibits physical characteristics typical of its type. However, a unique physical characteristic is Devil's Dyke, a particularly complex landform and distinctive landmark that is formed from the intersection of a dip-slope valley and scarp-face coomb.

- H2.3 A further feature of this character area are the abandoned chalk quarries, for example at Offham and Pyecombe, which reveal the exploitation of chalk in the past to produce lime for fertilising the acidic soils of the farmland of the Low Weald to the north. These quarries contain ecologically notable habitats.
- H2.4 Almost unbroken tracts of unimproved chalk grassland, scrub and hanger woodland are present along the scarp slope and contribute to the outstanding ecology of the character area. Occasional areas of arable land, improved pasture grassland and semi-natural woodland occur on more shallow slopes along the scarp, extending into it from the intensively farmed footslopes and open downland which sandwich the escarpment.
- H2.5 A range of woodland and scrub types occur, including ash and beech woodland hangers, species-rich woody scrub which includes juniper, a UK priority BAP species. The majority of the scarp carries national nature conservation designation, including a total of four SSSIs that fall wholly or partly within the character area, as well as several individual chalk grassland and woodland sites with SNCI designation.
- H2.6 Countryside access is good in this character area with the majority of the scarp designated as open access land and an area of registered common on the scarp above Fulking. Many rough sheep tracks, rights of way, cattle tracks (marking the route of stock movement to the coast for export) and tank/military tracks zig zag across the open scarp and ascend the coombes, providing good access on foot and horseback. There are also a number of way marked walks at Ditchling Beacon and public access to both Ditchling Beacon and Devil's Dyke by bus from Brighton. The precipitous slopes are more difficult to access; two rural roads wind their way up the scarp – one at Devil's Dyke and the other at Ditchling Beacon. The A273 takes advantage of the slightly less steep scarp above Clayton where it ascends directly onto the downs, linking Hassocks with Brighton. Although this scarp is perceived as highly natural and tranquil, there are pockets of activity, particularly around Devil's Dyke where hang-gliding and para-gliding are popular sports.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp**

- H2.7 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:
- The complex landform and distinctive landmark of Devil's Dyke.
  - Species-rich woody scrub which includes juniper, a UK priority BAP species.
  - The distinctive oak, ash and beech woodland hangers.
  - Panoramic views over the surrounding lowlands, particularly from the popular viewpoints at Ditchling Beacon, Devil's Dyke, and Edburton Hill.

### **Change Specific to the Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp**

- H2.8 Past change specific to this area includes the encroachment of agricultural fields onto the scarp crest at Truleigh Hill and introduction of communication masts onto the skyline at Devil's Dyke and Truleigh Hill.

## **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp**

H2.9 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management and development considerations are specific to this character area:

- Conserve the distinctive coombe formation at Devil's Dyke – avoid activities that could affect the natural landform and maintain grazed grassland which exposes its dramatic valley form.
- Conserve species-rich woody scrub and seek opportunities to extend such habitats, particularly the occurrence of juniper which is a UK priority BAP species.
- Manage hanger woodland to ensure a diverse species and age structure by light thinning, clearance of some of the scrub, re-coppicing (especially hazel) and replanting as necessary. This will also minimise risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds. Consider opening up paths/rides for access.
- Promote enhanced environmental management of chalk grassland habitats and control scrub invasion.
- Maintain panoramic views over the surrounding lowlands, particularly from the popular viewpoints at Ditchling Beacon, Devil's Dyke, and Edburton Hill.



Elevated landform provides panoramic views over the scarp footslopes and beyond.



A variety of woodland types occur, including oak, ash and beech woodland.



The scarp is deeply indented by coombes and has an undulating skyline.



Devil's Dyke is a complex coombe, creating a locally sinuous scarp.



Springline villages located at the base of the scarp e.g. Poynings.



Chalk grassland on the steep scarp slope.

## H3: ARUN TO ADUR DOWNS SCARP

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

H3.1 The Arun to *Adur Downs Scarp* wraps around the northern edge of the Arun to *Adur Downs*. It extends from Amberley in the west to Steyning in the east. The boundaries of the *Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp* are defined predominantly by topography. The southern (top) boundary has been drawn along the crest of the scarp which is clearly defined by a change in density of contours. The northern (lower) boundary is less well defined has been drawn along field boundaries. There are panoramic views over the Low Weald to the north, particularly from the viewpoint at Chanctonbury Ring.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A dramatic steep north-facing chalk escarpment exhibiting a distinctive concave-convex slope profile, indented by 'coombes'.
- Remarkably consistent in height and slope profile throughout its length as a result of the lithological uniformity of the chalk bedrock.
- Relatively well wooded, some of which comprises ornamental planting.
- The scarp contains some extensive areas of chalk grassland habitat, for example the nationally important Amberley Mount to Sullington Hill SSSI;
- Deeply sunken lanes and tracks, known as bostal tracks, cut the escarpment and link the lower land to the chalk uplands e.g. Wiston bostal.
- 'Gaps' cut by valleys form important communication routes, for example the gap between Chantry Hill and Sullington Hill, and the gap south of Washington where the A24 ascends the scarp in cutting.
- At the foot of the scarp where the slopes are less steep the land is ploughed for crops – here colours contrast with the muted grey-green colours of the scarp face.
- A number of small isolated chalk pits associated with the former agricultural lime-burning industry are visible on the scarp, although many are now vegetated.
- Elevated landform provides panoramic views over the scarp footslopes to the north and, in the distance, the Low Weald.

#### Specific Characteristics Unique to the Arun to Adur Downs Scarp

H3.2 The extent of post-1800 woodland is relatively large in this character area. In between are some extensive tracts of species-rich unimproved chalk grassland, for example at Amberley Mount to Sullington Hill SSSI and Chanctonbury Hill SSSI (Chanctonbury hillfort is located on the adjacent *Arun to Adur Open Downland*

character area). As well as supporting diverse plant assemblages, these chalk grasslands also support ecologically notable woody scrub communities, including juniper scrub (a UK BAP species), and important populations of invertebrates.

- H3.3 Typical of the landscape type is the collection of abandoned chalk quarries on the scarp face, which reveal the exploitation of chalk in the past to produce lime for fertilising the acidic soils of the farmland of the Low Weald to the north.
- H3.4 This section of scarp is particularly tranquil due to the relatively low density of public rights of way. However, open access land at Amberley Mount and Chantry Hill, and Sullington Hill, allow public access. There are panoramic views from these areas across the scarp footslopes to the Low Weald to the north.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Arun to Adur Downs Scarp**

- H3.5 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are the panoramic views over the Low Weald to the north, particularly from the open access land at Amberley Mount and Chantry Hill, and Sullington Hill.

### **Change Specific to the Arun to Adur Downs Scarp**

- H3.6 Past change specific to this area includes the recent encroachment of scrub and woodland onto the scarp slopes with patches of gorse and mixed shrub communities invading open grassland communities in the absence of grazing is also likely to continue.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Arun to Adur Downs Scarp**

- H3.7 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management and development considerations are specific to this character area:
- Manage to ensure a diverse species and age structure by light thinning, clearance of some of the scrub, re-coppicing (especially hazel) and replanting as necessary. This will also minimise risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds. Consider opening up paths/rides for access.
  - Promote enhanced environmental management of chalk grassland habitats and control scrub invasion.
  - Conserve the character of views over the surrounding lowlands, particularly from the open access land at Amberley Mount and Chantry Hill, and Sullington Hill.



Well wooded, with some of the woodland comprising ornamental planting associated with parkland landscapes.



Narrow lanes with an enclosed character cut through the wooded scarp.



Rural road through Steyning continues up the scarp slope to the open downs.



At the foot of the scarp where the slopes are less steep the land is ploughed.



The elevated landform provides panoramic views over the scarp footslopes.

## H4: BURITON TO ARUN SCARP

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

H4.1 The *Buriton to Arun Scarp* is a length of continuous scarp that wraps around the northern edge of the *Wooded Estate Downland* in the central part of the South Downs. It extends from the A3 in the west to the Arun Valley in the east. The boundaries of *Buriton to Arun Scarp* are defined predominantly by topography. The southern (top) boundary has been drawn along the crest of the scarp which is clearly defined by a change in density of contours. The northern (lower) boundary is less well defined has been drawn along field boundaries. There are panoramic views over the Rother Valley to the north, and to the *Greensand Hills* beyond.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A dramatic steep north-facing chalk escarpment, much of it clothed by woodland to produce a soft, irregular texture and masking the slope profile.
- Remarkably consistent in height throughout its length as a result of the lithological uniformity of the chalk bedrock.
- A well wooded scarp, much of it of pre-1800 date, notably the unbroken pre-1600 ancient woodland clothing Duncton, Graffham and Heyshott Downs. The ancient beech and yew hangers e.g. Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC, are of particular visual, historic, and ecological interest.
- The scarp contains some extensive areas of chalk grassland habitat e.g. at Harting Downs SSSI and Heyshott Down SSSI;
- Deeply sunken lanes and tracks, known as bostal tracks, cut the escarpment and link the lower land to the chalk uplands e.g. between Linch Farm and Linch Down.
- Communication routes climb the scarp at Cocking and Duncton (the A286 and A285 respectively) where the scarp is lower.
- At the foot of the scarp where the slopes are less steep the land is ploughed for crops – here the open field contrast with the well wooded scarp face.
- A number of small isolated chalk pits associated with the former agricultural lime-burning industry are visible on the scarp, although many are masked by vegetation.
- Torberry Hillfort is an important Iron Age fort and distinctive landmark, forming an outlier to the main downland block.
- Elevated landform provides panoramic views over the Rother Valley to the north, and beyond to the *Greensand Hills* – the climb through dense woodland builds a sense of anticipation for the views from the open summits.

### **Specific Characteristics Unique to the Buriton to Arun Scarp**

- H4.2 This is a well wooded scarp, much of it of pre-1800 date, notably the pre-1600 unbroken ancient woodland clothing Duncton, Graffham and Heyshott Downs. The extensive woodland cover contrasts sharply with the largely open scarps east of the Arun, reflecting the generally more wooded nature of the central wooded downs and the more mixed farming economy. Gaps between the pre-1600 woodland blocks have been infilled by post-1600 woodland growth. Of particular note are the internationally significant ancient beech and yew hangers, for example at Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC, and the large-leaved lime dominated woodland at Rook Clift SAC, which is the largest known stand of its type in the south of England.
- H4.3 Extensive areas of unimproved chalk grassland are found along the escarpment, for example at Harting Downs SSSI. These grasslands support a diverse range of characteristic plant species, as well as providing important habitat for invertebrates and breeding birds.
- H4.4 Typical of the landscape type is the collection of abandoned chalk quarries on the scarp face, which reveal the exploitation of chalk in the past to produce lime for fertilising the acidic soils of the farmland of the Low Weald to the north. These quarries contain are ecologically notable habitats, for example Buriton chalk Pit LNR.
- H4.5 Hillforts and other defensive structures are located on the ridgeline, typically in the adjacent downland landscape type. However, this section of scarp includes a prominent hill fort at Torberry Hill, forming an outlier to the main downland block.
- H4.6 This section of scarp is particularly tranquil due to the relatively low density of rights of way and high density of woodland. However, the presence of Open Access land at Harting Down and Heyshott Down provides good access in these areas.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Buriton to Arun Scarp**

- H4.7 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are;
- Torberry Hillfort, an important Iron Age fort and distinctive landmark forming an outlier to the downland block adjacent to South Harting;
  - The unbroken ancient beech and yew woodland clothing Duncton, Graffham and Heyshott Downs which is of international ecological value.
  - The extensive area of large-leaved lime dominated woodland at Rook Clift SAC.
  - Unimproved chalk grassland, for example at Harting Downs SSSI, which supports a diverse range of characteristic plant species, as well as providing important habitat for invertebrates and breeding birds.
  - The panoramic views over the Rother Valley to the north, and beyond to the *Greensand Hills*, particularly from key viewpoints at Harting Hill, Beacon Hill, and the viewpoint on the A285 above Duncton.

### **Change Specific to the Buriton to Arun Scarp**

- H4.8 Past change specific to this area includes the invasion of exotic and ornamental species into the hanger woodland on the scarp, particularly sycamore. This is likely to continue if left unchecked. The recent encroachment of scrub and woodland onto the scarp slopes with patches of gorse and mixed shrub communities invading open grassland communities in the absence of grazing is also likely to continue.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Buriton to Arun Scarp**

- H4.9 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management considerations are specific to this character area:

- Conserve Torberry Hillfort as a prominent landmark.
- Monitor and control presence of exotic species in ancient woodland clothing Duncton, Graffham and Heyshott Downs. Manage to ensure a diverse species and age structure by light thinning, clearance of some of the scrub, re-coppicing (especially hazel) and replanting as necessary. This will also minimise risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds. Consider opening up paths/rides for access.
- Avoid straight, harsh woodland edges, especially directly up and down the slope and maintain woodland blocks in proportion to the scale of the landform.
- Support conservation programmes for ancient beech and yew hangers and lime woodland.
- Promote enhanced environmental management of chalk grassland habitats and control scrub invasion.
- Maintain panoramic views over the surrounding lowlands, particularly from the key viewpoints at Harting Hill, Beacon Hill, and the viewpoint on the A285 above Duncton.



Arable fields are found on the more shallow slopes of the scarp.



Woodland and chalk grasslands associated with the higher and steeper elevations.



A well wooded scarp, with much of the woodland pre-dating 1800.



The wooded scarp provides a sense of enclosure to Buriton in the scarp footslopes.



The scarp landform is a visually prominent feature from the adjacent, lower lying land.



## H5: SALTDOWN TO BUTSER HILL SCARP

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

H5.1 The *Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp* is a short length of open scarp that wraps around the northern edge of the *Hambledon and Clanfield Downs*, between Saltdown in the west and Butser Hill in the east. The boundaries of the *Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp* are defined predominantly by topography. The southern (top) boundary has been drawn along the crest of the scarp which is clearly defined by a change in density of contours. The northern (lower) boundary is less well defined has been drawn along field boundaries. There are panoramic views over the Meon Valley and Rother Valley to the north - the *Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp* forms a backdrop to the view.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A dramatic steep north-facing chalk escarpment exhibiting a distinctive concave-convex slope profile, indented by coombes, and enclosing the head of the Meon Valley.
- The scarp is particularly prominent around Butser Hill where the crest of the scarp reaches 250m AOD.
- The scarp supports little woodland, revealing its open smoothly eroded form and supporting extensive areas of chalk grassland habitat and some chalk heath e.g. Butser Hill SAC.
- The open character of the scarp indicates its value as sheep pasture – the chalk grassland now coincides with areas of Open Access land.
- The steep slopes at Ramsdean Down contain numerous earthworks, including cross-dykes, and the shallower slopes reveal prehistoric field systems.
- Deeply sunken lanes and tracks cut the escarpment and link the lower land to the chalk uplands e.g. linking Tegdown Bottom and Tegdown Hill. These now form public rights of way up the scarp and onto the downs.
- Coombes form important communication routes between the top and bottom of the scarp containing minor roads and lanes, for example Harvesting Lane.
- At the foot of the scarp where the slopes are less steep the land is ploughed for crops – here colours contrast with the muted grey-green colours of the scarp face.
- Elevated landform provides panoramic views over the Meon Valley and Rother Valley to the north - the *Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp* forms a backdrop to the view.

### **Specific Characteristics Unique to the Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp**

- H5.2 This is a short section of open scarp enclosing the head of the Meon Valley - the scarp is particularly prominent around Butser Hill where the crest of the scarp reaches 250m AOD. This character area is notable for its open character and extensive chalk grassland habitats, particularly on the slopes of Butser Hill where some rare chalk heath is found. Butser Hill SAC is of international importance for both its yew woodland, and its terricolous lichen flora, which is thought to be the richest of any chalk grassland site in England. The open character indicates its value in the past as sheep pasture. The slopes Ramsdean Down exhibit cross-dykes and prehistoric field systems which have been preserved by the grazing land use.
- H5.3 Typical of its type, this character area supports a large area of Open Access land which coincides with the areas of chalk grassland. This section of scarp away from the A3(M) is particularly tranquil due to the relatively low density of public rights of way, high proportion of natural habitat and few roads. However, close to the A3(M) traffic noise is present. There is a notable absence of chalk quarries in this character area.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp**

- H5.4 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:
- Cross-dykes and prehistoric field systems on the slopes of Ramsdean Down which have been preserved by the grazing land use.
  - Chalk grassland habitat at Butser Hill is international ecological importance.
  - The tranquillity of the scarp, which is impinged upon in places by the A3(M).
  - The panoramic views over the Meon Valley and Rother Valley to the north, particularly from the car park viewpoint on the scarp crest at Butser Hill.

### **Change Specific to the Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp**

- H5.5 Observable changes in the past have included the planting of coniferous woodland on the scarp below Butser Hill, the upgrading of the A3(M) and increased traffic noise levels, and the impact of Petersfield (particularly the industrial building to the west) in views from Butser Hill.
- H5.6 Future change is likely to relate to the extent and type of woodland on the scarp below Butser Hill.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp**

- H5.7 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management considerations are specific to this character area:
- Conserve cross-dykes and prehistoric field systems on the slopes of Ramsdean Down by continuing to graze the sites.

- Protect and continue to manage (graze) the existing chalk grassland and support the continued creation of chalk grassland creating large continuous areas of grassland, which reveal the smoothly rolling landform.
- Support proposals to restore chalk grassland habitat in specific areas affected by coniferous plantations.
- Maintain panoramic views over the Meon Valley and Rother Valley to the north, particularly from the viewpoint on the scarp crest at Butser Hill.
- Consider use of techniques, such as use of whisper tarmac, to reduce traffic noise from the A3(M).



The scarp supports little woodland, revealing its open, smoothly eroded form with extensive areas of chalk grassland habitats.



A north facing chalk escarpments exhibiting a distinctive slope profile.



A very gentle scarp with pasture being the predominant landcover.

## H6: SELBORNE HANGERS TO EAST MEON SCARP

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

H6.1 The *Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp* is comprised of two sections of densely wooded east-facing scarp. The first is a continuous scarp extending from the slopes above East Meon Village in the south to Noar Hill in the north. The second is a short section of wooded scarp that wraps around the eastern edge of Selborne Hill. The boundaries of *Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp* are defined predominantly by topography. The western (top) boundary has been drawn along the crest of the scarp which is clearly defined by a change in density of contours. The eastern (lower) boundary is less well defined has been drawn along field boundaries. There are panoramic views over the lowlands to the east.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A dramatic steep east-facing chalk escarpment, much of it clothed by hanger woodland to produce a soft, irregular texture that masks the slope profile.
- Remarkably consistent in height throughout its length as a result of the lithological uniformity of the chalk bedrock.
- Clothed in ancient beech and lime dominated hanger woodlands which are of particular visual, historic, and ecological interest.
- The scarp contains some small areas of nationally important chalk grassland habitat e.g. at Noar Hill (which includes juniper scrub) and Selborne Common.
- Deeply sunken lanes and tracks cut the escarpment and link the lower land to the chalk uplands e.g. Button's Lane, Warren Lane, Old Litten Lane. Many of these are now public rights of way onto the Downs.
- Communication routes climb the scarp in coombes, for example the A272 at Limekiln Copse.
- At the foot of the scarp where the slopes are less steep the land is ploughed for crops – here the open field contrast with the well wooded scarp face.
- A number of small isolated chalk pits associated with the former agricultural lime-burning industry are visible on the scarp, although many are masked by vegetation. Vineyard Hole is a particularly prominent feature in views of the scarp.
- Forms a dramatic backdrop to the undulating lowlands to the east.
- Panoramic views over the lowlands to the east, and beyond to the *Greensand Hills* – the climb through dense woodland builds a sense of anticipation for the views from the open summits.

### **Specific Characteristics Unique to the Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp**

- H6.2 This is the only section of exclusively east-facing scarp in the South Downs. It forms the edge of the Hampshire Downs, and is extremely well wooded throughout its length.
- H6.3 The extensive woodland cover reflects the generally more wooded nature of the western downs and the more mixed farming economy that resulted. The East Hampshire Hangers are a major feature of this east facing scarp and are of international value (notified as a SAC), particularly for the beech and lime dominated woodlands which have a very rich woodland ground flora.
- H6.4 The scarp also supports a large area of species-rich chalk grassland, most notably at Noar Hill and Selborne Common – these sites are of national importance and notified as SSSI. There are a number of abandoned chalk quarries on the scarp face, which reveal the exploitation of chalk in the past to produce lime for fertilising soils of the adjacent farmland. Some of these are hidden by woodland, for example the former quarries at Limekiln Copse, while others are highly visible on the scarp, for example Vineyard Hole above Frogmore.
- H6.5 This section of scarp is particularly accessible due to the good network of public rights of way, including the Hangers Way. However, it retains a remote and tranquil character due to the high incidence of semi-natural habitats and absence of built features. Land in National Trust ownership at Selborne Hanger provides further opportunities for countryside access.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp**

- H6.6 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:
- The hanger beech and lime woodland which is of international ecological significance and forms part of the East Hampshire Hangers SAC.
  - The small areas of species-rich chalk grassland at Noar Hill (which includes juniper scrub) and Selborne Common.
  - The lanes and tracks on the scarp which are vulnerable to erosion.
  - The tranquillity of the scarp, as a result of the presence of semi-natural habitats and absence of human influences, which contrasts with the lowlands to the east.
  - The panoramic views over the lowlands to the east, and beyond to the *Greensand Hills*.

### **Change Specific to the Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp**

- H6.7 Past change specific to this area includes:
- Decline in coppice management as it has become uneconomical.
  - Planting of conifers and beech.

- The invasion of exotic and ornamental species into the hanger woodland on the scarp, particularly sycamore. This is likely to continue if left unchecked.
- Storm damage (in 1987) to beech at Noar Hill.
- The changes in grazing pressure seen over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but including recent encroachment of gorse and mixed shrub communities onto chalk grassland in areas of low grazing pressure.

H6.8 In the future increases in temperature and drought conditions could put stress on the hanger woodlands and increased storms could result in damage to the woodlands.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp**

H6.9 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management considerations are specific to this character area:

- Support conservation programmes for ancient beech, yew and lime woodlands which is of international ecological significance and forms part of the East Hampshire hangers SAC. Control deer and grey squirrel.
- Monitor and control presence of exotic species in ancient hanger woodland. Manage to ensure a diverse species and age structure by light thinning, clearance of some of the scrub, re-coppicing (especially hazel) and replanting as necessary. This will also minimise risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds. Consider opening up paths/rides for access.
- Avoid straight, harsh woodland edges and rides, especially directly up and down the slope and maintain woodland blocks in proportion to the scale of the landform.
- Manage trees and control erosion on the narrow lanes that ascend the chalk scarp.
- Maintain a balance between wooded and open areas - protect and continue to manage (graze) the existing chalk grassland, for example at Noar Hill and Selborne Common, and support the continued creation of chalk grassland between the wooded areas. Conserve, and extend, sites supporting juniper scrub e.g. at Noar Hill.
- Conserve the tranquillity of the scarp, minimising the presence of human influences, which contrasts with the lowlands to the east. Protect the character of the narrow lanes that ascend the chalk scarp.
- Consider opportunities to create additional viewpoints from where visitors may appreciate the spectacular views over the lowlands to the east, and beyond to the *Greensand Hills*.



A panoramic view across the Ashford Hangers.



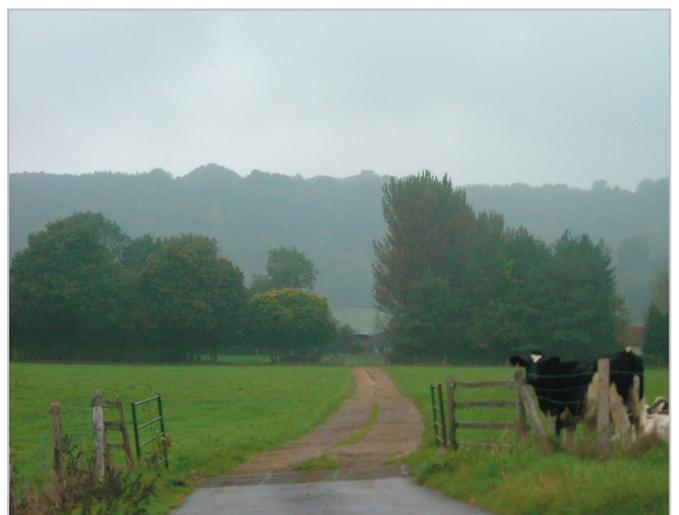
Woodland of key high biodiversity value.



Open summits provide expansive views across the lowland to the east.



Ploughed fields at the base of the scarp contrast with the precipitous wooded scarp.



The Hangers form a dramatic edge to the chalk downland.