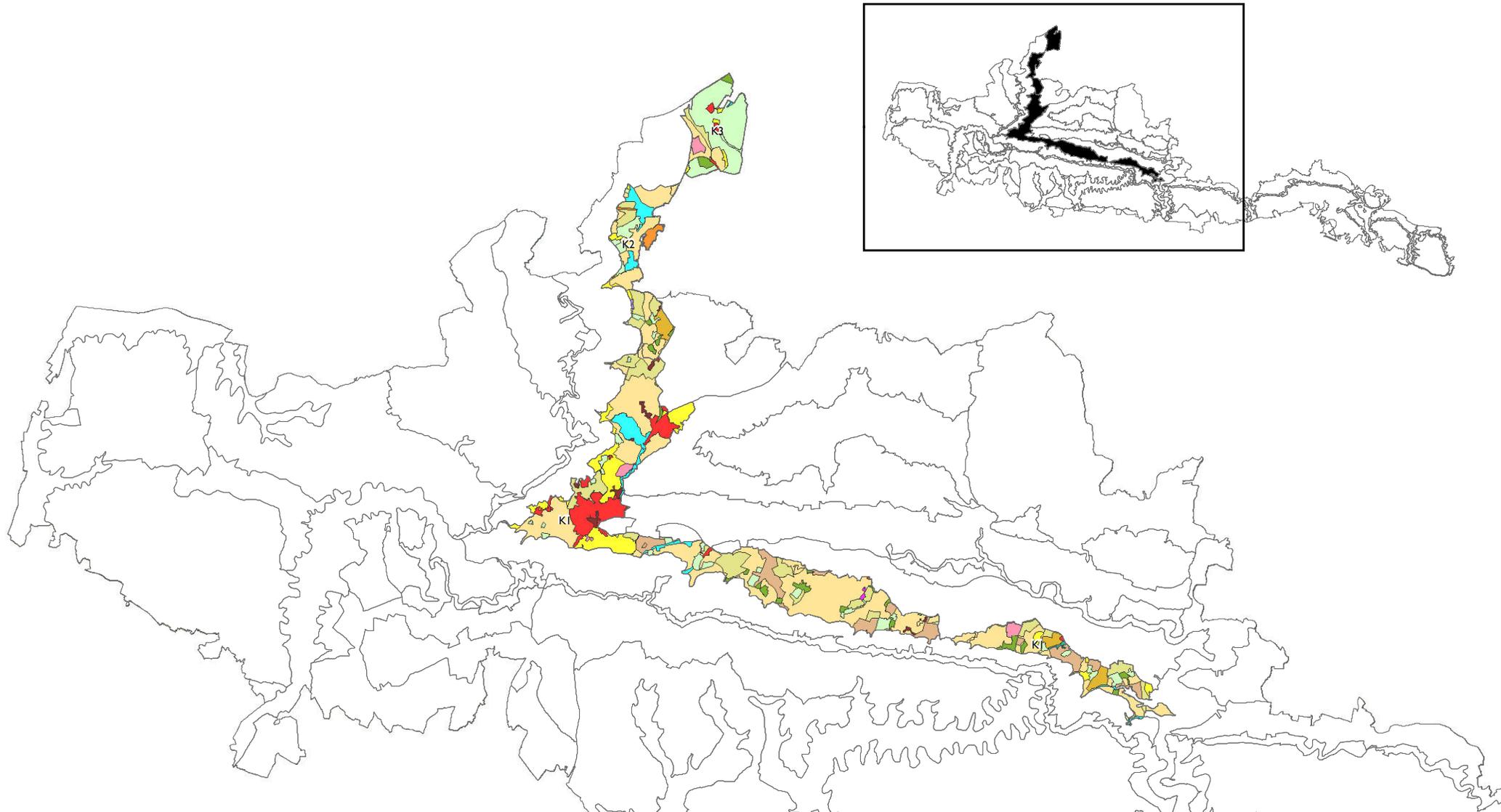


**Landscape Character Areas**

- K1 : Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales
- K2 : Kingsley / Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland
- K3: Alice Holt Mixed Farmland and Woodland

**K: Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales**





### Historic Landscape Character

<b>Fields</b>	<b>Woodland</b>	<b>Unenclosed</b>	<b>Valley Floor</b>	<b>Designed Landscapes</b>	<b>Water</b>
0101- Fields Assarts	0201- Pre 1800 Woodland	04- Unenclosed	06- Valley Floor	09- Designed Landscapes	12- Water
0102- Early Enclosures	0202- Post 1800 Woodland	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Coastal</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Recreation</b>
0103- Recent Enclosures	<b>Horticulture</b>	0501- Pre 1800 Settlement	07- Coastal	10- Military	13- Recreation
0104- Modern Fields	03- Horticulture	0502- Post 1800 Expansion Settlement	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Communications</b>	
			08- Industry	11- Communications	

# K: Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales



# LANDSCAPE TYPE K: MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND VALE

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K.1 The *Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* landscape type is found on the mudstones of the Gault Formation and the Lower Greensand beds which are exposed to the north and east of the *Greensand Terrace*, along the southern and western edges of the Greensand and the Weald. It comprises a gently undulating lowland vale supporting fields of arable, pasture and woodland.

## DESCRIPTION

### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- Gently undulating landform underlain by mudstones of the Gault Formation and sandstones of the Lower Greensand.
- Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils support mixed farmland and deciduous woodland copses dominated by oak, hazel and ash woodland.
- Drained by numerous water courses, many of which are tributary streams of the Rother or Wey.
- The wet and unproductive soils have given rise to a remote and marginal character.
- A largely medieval landscape of isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts providing a strong sense of historical continuity.
- Thick hedgerows with spreading hedgerow oaks, or strips of woodland (rews), provide a sense of enclosure.
- Ponds and meadows on the fringes of tributary streams provide biodiversity interest.
- Settlement is characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement across the clay comprising hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin with larger settlements on the sandstone beds.
- Later farmsteads of 18th-19th century date are situated within areas representing later enclosure of marshland and parkland.
- The presence of landscape parks indicates the recreational use made by wealthy landowners of this poor and unproductive landscape.
- This low lying landscape provides a convenient transport corridor, containing main roads (e.g. A3(T) and the mainline railway), which affect tranquillity.

## Physical Landscape

- K.2 The *Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* is underlain by Gault Clay, a formation of soft mudstones and silty mudstones which have weathered to yellow and brown clays, which create a low lying 'vale' like landform. Between Petersfield and Liss is an outcrop of Lower Greensand which gives rise to a much more undulating landform. Overlying the bedrock geology are drift deposits of alluvium (along the numerous streams) and 'head' (downwash deposits at the base of the *Greensand Hills* around Liss and Petersfield).
- K.3 The underlying clay geology has given rise to slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils, known as Pelo-stagnogley soils. The sandstones have given rise to well drained coarse loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils. These soils have retained a high proportion of woodland cover, interspersed with mixed pasture and arable farmland. Fields are enclosed by thick, high hedgerows with hedgerow oaks, and 'rews'.
- K.4 The vales are drained by streams and the underlying clay substrate supports a number of ponds. These lowland vales also provide a convenient route for communication routes.

## Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- K.5 The relatively small fields, high proportion of woodland cover and thick, high hedgerows contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure in this landscape. These features also contribute to the lush lowland character which contrasts with the adjacent open sandy landscapes and exposed chalk scarps. Although the *Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* is perceived as an organised landscape as a result of its division into fields, the fields are irregular in form.
- K.6 The presence of communication routes and settlements detract from the tranquil character of the landscape. The settlements and roads also contribute to visible human impact on the landscape (including artificial lighting) which reduces the perceived naturalness of the landscape. This is an area with a high density of scattered settlement as well as some larger villages/ towns.
- K.7 A relatively sparse network of rights of way and small areas of common land provide limited opportunity for countryside access.
- K.8 The lowland farmlands of this landscape type have not attracted artists and writers as have the adjacent Chalk downs and Greensand hills – there are therefore few recorded perceptions of this area through literature and art.

## Biodiversity

- K.9 Essentially this is a mixed farmland landscape dominated by arable agriculture, interspersed with permanent pasture grassland and frequent woodland. Arable and pasture grassland fields are typically bordered by intact and thick hedgerows, which together with mature boundary oaks provide important ecological features. Numerous ponds and tributary streams also form key ecological components of the landscape.

- K.10 Many of the woodlands are of ancient origin and support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates. Many of these woodlands carry non-statutory nature conservation designation such as SINC or LNRs. Two large nationally important areas of common land occur within this type - Binswood SSSI and Shortheath Common SSSI.
- K.11 Occasional small areas of unimproved neutral grassland also occur, together with man-made habitats, for example disused railway lines and ponds, which in some instances have developed significant ecological interest.

<b>Key Biodiversity Features</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Areas of ancient woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many of the ancient woodlands carry non-statutory designation, and support a range of characteristic woodland plant species and are valuable areas for breeding birds.</li> </ul>
Unimproved meadow grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasional meadows with non-statutory designation occur, and support a range of local uncommon plant species.</li> </ul>
Scattered woodland plantations, hedgerows, mature trees and ditches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within the largely arable landscape, the presence of additional habitat contributes significant to ecological value.</li> </ul>

### **Historic Character**

- K.12 The development of deciduous woodland cover following the last glaciation (c.8500BC) saw the exploitation of this lowland landscape by Mesolithic hunters. Later prehistoric and Romano-British communities, dependent largely on agriculture, were deterred by the thick woodland and heavy, wet clay soils. However, the lighter soils on the sandstone beds between Petersfield and Liss were settled from the bronze age (the recently discovered Roman Villa at West Liss has evidence of a Bronze Age settlement underneath).
- K.13 Little attempt to clear the land was made until the Saxon period, when communities situated on better soils elsewhere in the region began to exploit the landscape, initially as swine pastures within the woodland. By the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, piecemeal clearance of the woodland was in progress.
- K.14 The area is characterised by this largely medieval landscape of isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts, surrounded by woodland. Later blocks of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure represent later enclosure of marshland and parkland.
- K.15 Today the woodland of pre-1800 (and probably medieval) origin survives as small blocks scattered across the character area, but combines with the wooded field boundaries (rews) to give the landscape a much more wooded visual appearance.
- K.16 The presence of landscape parks indicates the recreational use made by past wealthy landowners of this poor and unproductive landscape.

<b>Key Features of the Historic Environment</b>	<b>Importance</b>

Marginal nature of the landscape	Provides a continuing sense of remoteness
Isolated farmsteads set within areas of early enclosure and surrounded by woodland	Landscape largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity
Designed landscapes	Provide evidence of the use of agriculturally marginal land by the wealthy strata of society for recreational use
Pre-1800 woodland	Landscape largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity

### **Settlement Form and Built Character**

- K.17 The settlement pattern in this area is characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement with some larger villages/towns on the sandstone outcrop. This conforms to English Heritage's rural settlement designation of Weald Sub-Province within the South-eastern Province. The settlement form typically comprises a scatter of hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within areas of early enclosure surrounded by woodland. Later farmsteads of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century date are situated within areas of recent enclosure.
- K.18 Building materials include sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Sensitivity**

- K.19 This landscape has many sensitive natural, cultural and aesthetic/perceptual features that are vulnerable to change. Key landscape sensitivities include:
- The rural, pastoral character of the landscape which results from the dominance of grazing as a land use. The unimproved neutral grasslands are particularly important ecological habitats.
  - Woodlands, rews, thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks which create a lush, wooded character and sense of enclosure which contrasts with the adjacent open downs. Woodlands of ancient origin are particularly important habitats.
  - The strong sense of historical continuity provided by the remnants of the medieval landscape including the hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin and irregular fields, particularly those that retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts.
  - The landscape parks (Burton and Bignor Parks) indicate historic recreational use of the landscape.
  - The unity of the built components of the landscape arising from a consistent palette of building materials including sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.
  - The remote and tranquil character of the landscape.
- K.20 The high proportion of tree cover and high hedges limit visual sensitivity of this landscape. However, the visibility of this landscape from the adjacent scarps and

downs to the south, the *Greensand Terrace* to the west, and the *Greensand Hills* to the north and east increases the visual sensitivity of this landscape, particularly as seen in plan form.

## **Change – Key Issues and Trends**

### **Past Change**

K.21 Observable changes in the past include:

- Development of horse paddocks, particularly on the edge of farms and settlements leading to introduction of inappropriate ‘ranch’ style fencing and overgrazing of pastures.
- Loss of some field boundaries due to decline in hedgerow management.
- Loss of meadows and river valley grasslands as a result of agricultural improvements.

### **Future Landscape Change**

K.22 In the short term (5 years) change is likely to be on a small-scale basis. Individual changes may not be immediately apparent or have a clear (visible) landscape impact. It is likely that there will be small scale incremental changes in relation to individual properties such as introduction of external lighting or (sub) urban style fencing and boundaries.

K.23 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 *Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* are outlined below.

**Climate Change:** Potential adverse change could include changes in the level and timing of water availability resulting in changes to the flow of the streams with high water flows and increased erosion contrasting with periods of drought and low flows. Periods of drought could affect the grass swards, with a decline in grazing and increased requirement for land to be ‘set aside’. The increasing temperatures may result in introduction of different crop types on mixed farms, such as sunflowers. In response to climate change, the pursuit of renewable energy may result in demand for growth of biomass crops. Future management of woodlands for fuel may be a positive benefit.

**Agricultural Change and Land Management:** Agricultural management will be driven by the changes in the world market and the CAP. In this area of heavy clay soils it is possible that some land may become marginal for farming and vulnerable to scrub encroachment or purchase as hobby farms or for horse grazing. These uses will require active management to ensure the rural character of the area is retained. Positive landscape change could result from regimes to promote enhanced environmental management of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodland and wet pastures alongside streams.

**Development:** It is likely that there will continue to be small scale incremental changes in relation to individual properties such as introduction of external lighting or (sub) urban style fencing and boundaries over the next 20 years as well as increased demand for leisure land uses such as horse riding, fishing and golf.

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

- K.24 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the lush pastoral character of the clay vales, the intact medieval landscape, and a rural setting to hamlets and villages.**

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

- Conserve ancient woodland and medieval rews, and plan for long term woodland regeneration.
- Consider re-introducing traditional woodland management techniques, such as coppicing, and encourage interest in, and marketing of, local wood products.
- Conserve and manage the network of thick hedgerows, hedgerow oaks and field oaks that characterise the landscape. Consider re-planting hedgerows that have been lost, encourage buffer strips along hedgerows and encourage new tree planting to maintain the tree population.
- Maintain the lush, pastoral character of the landscape and seek to manage and extend unimproved meadow grassland.
- Encourage sympathetic integration of horse paddocks through maintenance of hedgerow field boundaries and avoiding overgrazing of pastures and overuse of bridleways.
- Encourage reversion of arable land to grassland where possible.
- Encourage the retention and management of riverside trees and maintain an uncultivated corridor alongside streams.
- Safeguard early enclosures that are remnants of a medieval landscape.

#### ***Development Considerations***

- Integrate built development on the edges of villages into the rural landscape, through native planting, to maintain the rural setting to hamlets and villages.
- Monitor the effects of incremental change to buildings – develop design guidance to help resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting.
- Ensure careful siting of stables and ménages and avoid cumulative impact of horse paddocks.
- Take account of views from the adjacent greensand terrace, scarps and downs in relation to any change.

### **Character Areas**

There are three distinct areas of *Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* in the South Downs. One is located along the Rother Valley and is drained by the River Rother, while the other two are located further north within the catchment of the River Wey. The watershed between the two river catchments forms the boundary between the most southern character area and the two character areas located further north.

K1:	Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland
K2:	Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland
K3	Alice Holt Mixed Farmland and Woodland



# KI: ROTHER VALLEY MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND

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## DESCRIPTION

### Location and Boundaries

K1.1 The *Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland* occurs on the clays and sandstones that separate the *Greensand Hills* from the chalk downs of Hampshire and West Sussex. It contains the course of the upper Rother between Greatham Mill and Petersfield. The area's outer boundary (closest to the chalk) is well defined by the locally prominent Greensand scarp and the area's inner boundary (closest to the Weald) represents a transition to the sandier ridges of the *Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic* and the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills*. There are views over this landscape from surrounding high ground.

### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- Low lying clay and sandstone 'vale' containing numerous tributary streams and ponds. Contains the wooded course of the upper Rother valley which flows across the sandstone.
- Slowly permeable soils support mixed farmland, unimproved neutral grassland and woodland in which thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks create a lush, wooded character.
- Woodlands of ancient origin support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates.
- Thick, high hedgerows, small blocks of scattered woodland and wooded field boundaries (rews) contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- A medieval landscape of scatter of hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts, surrounded by woodland.
- Medieval market town of Petersfield, a planned settlement, and the modern dormitory development of Liss, which originated as a medieval hamlet, are located on the sandstone, linked by the A3(T) and mainline railway.
- Distinctive building materials including sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.
- Landscape parks (Burton and Bignor Parks) indicate the recreational use made by wealthy landowners of this heavy clay landscape.
- Views over this area from surrounding high land including the chalk downs and greensand hills.

## **Specific Characteristics Unique to the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K1.2 The underlying clay geology creates a flat landform across much of the vale. However, the sandstones around Liss and Petersfield result in a more undulating topography, for example at Steep Marsh. Although dominated by arable agriculture, this is interspersed with permanent pasture grassland and frequent woodland creating a mosaic of mixed farmland and woodland. Medieval assarted fields survive in the more undulating areas, which have not been subject to agricultural improvement. A well developed hedgerow network exists, which together with mature boundary oaks are an important landscape and ecological resource.
- K1.3 Many of the woodlands are of ancient origin and support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates. Many of these woodlands carry non-statutory nature conservation designation as SINC or LNRs, for example Paddock Wood SINC. In addition, occasional small areas of unimproved neutral grassland also occur (e.g. Sutton Meadow SINC), and man-made habitats for example disused railway lines and ponds have also developed significant ecological interest.
- K1.4 The valley is drained by the River Rother and its tributaries. The wooded course of the upper River Rother is a key component of this landscape character area, hidden amongst the undulating sandstone outcrop between Liss and Petersfield. The River Rother does not have a great visual influence on the landscape, but is of ecological importance for its associated fringing wetland habitats, including marshy grassland, willow and alder carr, and its associated bird interest. It is designated as a SINC from its source to the Hampshire/Sussex border. Burton Pond is notable for its wetland flora and breeding birds.
- K1.5 The settlement pattern in this character area is generally typical of its type (a high density of dispersed settlement). However, the exceptions to the dispersed pattern are the settlements of Liss and Petersfield on the sandstone. Petersfield is the medieval market town, a deliberately planned settlement established as a market town to serve the surrounding chalklands. Building materials characteristic of Petersfield include red and blue brick buildings (including distinctive red and blue brick chequer patterns) and timber framed buildings with flint infill. Liss originated as a Bronze Age settlement. A Roman Villa was then developed on the site that grew into a medieval hamlet. It subsequently developed as a railway village. Although it has expanded considerably it is hidden within the undulating topography of this part of the upper Rother valley. This area also forms a convenient route for communication infrastructure – in this case the A3(T) and the mainline railway. These major transport routes contribute to the visible human impact on the landscape of this character area (including artificial lighting) which reduces the perceived naturalness of the landscape. However, away from the main settlements and transport routes the landscape is relatively tranquil.
- K1.6 Two landscape parks exist at the eastern end of this character area (Burton and Bignor Parks), indicating the recreational use made by wealthy landowners of this poor and unproductive landscape. There are also a number of smaller historic parks and gardens around Petersfield which are listed on Hampshire's list of local parks and gardens of historic interest.

K1.7 Some parts of the landscape are accessible via a network of rights of way, particularly the upper Rother valley. Rights of way include the long distance Hanger's Way, which passes through Petersfield, the Royal Woolmer Way which starts from Liss, and the Sussex Border Path, which crosses the area just east of Harting Pond. There are cycle hire facilities at Petersfield and both on-road and traffic free cycle routes promoted by Sustrans between Petersfield and Liss. The disused railway line provides recreational opportunities and potential. The East Hampshire AONB cycle route also passes through Petersfield. The areas of common land at Goose Green, Three Cornered Piece, Didling Common, Bex Lane Waste, Fuller's Piece and Sware Lane offer little available access due to scrub encroachment.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

K1.8 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 small area of medieval assarts surviving at Steep Marsh, to the north-west of Petersfield.
- The two landscape parks of Burton and Bignor which indicate the recreational use of this relatively unproductive clay landscape.
- The relative tranquillity of the landscape in areas away from the A3(T), mainline railway, Petersfield, and Liss.

### **Change Specific to the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

K1.9 Past change specific to this area includes:

- the development and widening of transport corridors including the A3(T) which has fragmented fields, introduced lighting into the rural landscape and increased noise levels and visual clutter along the road corridor;
- development of scrub and woodland on formerly grazed commons;
- expansion of built development around Petersfield and Liss, including industrial developments on the outskirts of Petersfield which have produced a harsh urban edge.

K1.10 Although built development is limited by the area's designation as an AONB and, the final designation of the area as National Park, there may be continued pressure for built development and urban fringe land uses on the outskirts of Petersfield and Liss. This could result in increases in artificial lighting, new urban edges and increases in traffic pressures on the rural roads.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

K1.11 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 the field and woodland patterns associated with the area of assarts surviving at Steep Marsh, to the north-west of Petersfield.
- Conserve the setting of the landscape parks at Burton and Bignor, as well as the many small parks and gardens on Hampshire's register of local historic parks and gardens.
- Manage areas of common land to provide a balance of habitats and allow improved access.

K1.12 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- Integrate built development on the edges of Petersfield and Liss into the rural landscape and maintain the rural setting to these settlements.
- Consider opportunities to further mitigate the impact of the A3(T) on the rural character of the landscape through conservation of existing visual screening and noise attenuation.
- Consider the impact of development in this area in views from the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* and the *East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace* as well the chalk landscapes beyond.



The wet soils are marginal for agriculture.



Areas of unimproved grassland.



Thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks provide a sense of enclosure.



View across farmland showing pasture, field oaks, and hedgerow trees.



The presence of landscape parks indicates historic recreational use of the poor soils by wealthy land-owners.



A traditional road sign on a rural road.



## K2: KINGSLEY/BLACKMOOR MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

K2.1 The *Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland* occurs on the clays to the east of the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace*. The western boundary (closest to the chalk) is well defined by the locally prominent Greensand scarp and its eastern boundary is defined by the National Park boundary which coincides with a change in geology to the sandy landscapes of the *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic*. There are views over this landscape from the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* to the west.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- Low lying clay 'vale' at the foot of the East Hampshire Greensand 'terrace' containing the headwaters of the River Wey, numerous streams and ponds.
- Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils support mixed farmland, unimproved neutral grassland and woodland in which thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks create a lush, wooded character.
- Two large areas of common land at Binswood and Shortheath provide rich habitats for biodiversity (designated SSSIs) as well as providing open public access.
- Woodlands of ancient origin support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates.
- Thick, high hedgerows, small blocks of scattered woodland and wooded field boundaries (rews) contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- Essentially a medieval landscape of scattered hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within irregular fields, with two medieval deer parks located at East Worldham and Blackmoor House.
- Some areas of recent enclosures have overlaid the medieval field pattern, for example in the area east of the Selborne orchards.
- Distinctive building materials including sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.
- Blackmoor Park is a 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape park that indicates the recreational use made by wealthy landowners of this relatively unproductive landscape.
- Views over this area from the adjacent *Greensand Terrace*.

### **Specific Characteristics Unique to the Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K2.2 This landscape character area retains a medieval landscape structure – comprising an early enclosure pattern and the remnants of two medieval deer parks – one at East Worldham and the other at Blackmoor House. The majority of the area today is characterised by arable agriculture, together with scattered small woodland blocks, some of which are of ancient origin and also designated as county SINC, for example Blackmoor Wood SINC and Rookery Copse SINC. This area is drained by numerous streams which flow eastwards into the River Wey. As well as the streams, the vale contains a number of ponds, some of which are former clay pits.
- K2.3 Of particular note in this character area is the presence of common land. Binswood comprises an actively managed wood pasture, of acidic poorly-drained unimproved pasture with scattered old oaks and beeches, and areas of dense woodland. The site is particularly important for its invertebrate and lichens assemblages and is recognised for its contribution to biodiversity at a national level (being designated as a SSSI). Shortheath Common is located on an outcrop of Lower Greensand on the eastern edge of the vale - it is a distinctive feature of this character area, comprising ancient common land which supports bogs, marshes, water bodies, heath, grassland and woodland. This site is of international nature conservation value, particularly for its valley mire system and is designated as an SAC. Of particular note are the mire and bog communities which support a number of notable plants species, such as marsh cinquefoil, round-leaved sundew, cranberry and a many species of bog moss. These commons now provide open access as well as recreational opportunities for horse riding, dog walking and angling at Shortheath. The network of public rights of way provides further opportunities for countryside access, including the long distance Hanger's Way, which borders Binswood Common.
- K2.4 The area is particularly tranquil and remote as a result of the low density of settlement and absence of major transport routes.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K2.5 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 medieval deer parks at East Worldham and Blackmoor House;
  - The two large areas of common land at Binswood and Shortheath;
  - Blackmoor Park which indicates 18<sup>th</sup> century recreational use of this relatively unproductive clay landscape;
  - The high degree of tranquillity and remoteness within this area.

### **Change Specific to the Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K2.6 Past change specific to this area includes the introduction of pylons across the landscape, and the development of a communications mast and reservoir at

Hartleywood Farm, and the introduction of the MOD transmitting station (the white ‘golf balls’) at Oakhanger.

- K2.7 Current change includes increases in lorry movements associated with the clay pits at Selborne Brickworks (just outside the area) resulting in reduction of tranquillity and erosion of verges, and increases in traffic using area as a cut through to avoid Bordon.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K2.8 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:

- Safeguard the medieval deer parks at East Worldham and Blackmoor House that are remnants of a medieval landscape.
- Conserve the features and setting of Blackmoor Park – maintain pastoral character.
- Ensure management of areas of common land at Binswood and Shortheath support a balance of biodiversity, historic and recreational objectives.
- Conserve the high degree of tranquillity and remoteness within this area.
- Consider the impact of development in this area in views from the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* and the chalk landscape beyond.





A low lying clay 'vale' at the foot of the greensand 'terrace' in East Hampshire.



This landscape is tranquil and remote.



## K3: ALICE HOLT MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

K3.1 This small character area is located on Gault Clay and defined by the extensive woodland/plantation cover (Forestry Commission). The eastern edge of this character area is defined by the National Park boundary which also coincides with the edge of woodland cover. The northern and southern boundaries are also largely delineated by the extent of woodland cover and the transition to lower lying adjacent landscapes. A change in the underlying geology (to Upper Greensand) defines the western boundary.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- Underlain by mudstones of the Gault Formation which create a gently undulating landform and are prone to slippage.
- Predominantly seasonally wet acid and loamy and clayey soils support broadleaf and coniferous woodland. Over 100ha of original 19th Century oak dominated woodland occurs and is of particular ecological interest.
- A number of small fields of pasture are contained within the woodland.
- The forest supports a wide range of breeding birds, and a population of the purple emperor butterfly, a species which is now restricted to a limited number of broadleaved woodlands in Southern England.
- Drained by tributaries of the Slea and the Wey with a number of ponds (e.g. Lodge Pond).
- Small nuclear villages located along the A325 (such as Bucks Horn Oak) with some dispersed, linear settlement along rural roads.
- Extensive recreational opportunities associated with the forest, plus several recreation sites (e.g. Blacknest Golf Course).
- Cut north-south by the A325 with a number of rural roads separating woodland Inclosures.
- Away from the A325 a peaceful landscape.

#### Specific Characteristics Unique to the Alice Holt Mixed Farmland and Woodland

K3.2 The underlying mudstones of the Gault Formation creates a gently undulating landform. Drift deposits of head covering the north eastern half of the character area correspond to tributaries of the River Wey (South Branch). The geology gives rise to predominantly slowly permeable, seasonally wet acid and loamy and clayey soils. A

high proportion of semi-natural woodland cover has been retained (all of which is ancient) on these clay based soils. Woodland is divided into Inclosures which contain varying proportions of broadleaf and coniferous woodland with Corsican pine and oak as key species. For example Holt Pound is a predominantly coniferous, Abbots Wood is predominantly broadleaf and Lodge Inclosure is mixed woodland. A number of small areas of pasture are contained within woodland with field boundaries formed by the woodland edge (Halfway Farm and Woodlands Farm). The farmland to the west of the forest edge (e.g. Broadview Farm) is recent enclosure whereas the farmland enclosed by woodland exhibits assarted fields (Medieval: Post Medieval). The character area is drained by tributaries of the River Wey and Slea. A number of ponds occur within the landscape e.g. Lodge Pond.

- K3.3 The diversity in woodland provides a variety of texture and colour and offers different experiences, for example Abbots Wood has an impressive avenue of beech which lines one of the tracks. The open clearings of pasture contrast with the enclosure provided by tree cover. The area is dissected by the A325 with several settlements and a number of recreational opportunities, however away from the roads, within the forest enclosures this is a peaceful and natural landscape with a strong sense of seclusion. The forest is managed to produce timber, encourage wildlife and provide recreational opportunities. Access to the forest is good with a number of car parks, a comprehensive footpath network and is well used by off-road cyclists. Alice Holt visitor centre provides an important educational facility. Other recreational facilities include Blacknest Golf Course. Alice Holt is the home to one of the Forestry Commission's two main research stations. The Forest gives its name to coarse Roman period pottery produced at various sites in the area from the first to 4th Centuries AD. This is recognised by a Scheduled Ancient Monument listing which identifies the southern part of Goose Green Inclosure and part of Abbots Wood Inclosure as Kiln sites. Alice Holt Pottery is characterised as coarse grey sandy clay which has a very rough look. The forest is also famous for its oak trees, which once supplied timber for building navy ships.
- K3.4 The extensive forestry area includes a number of component SINC sites. The majority of the woodland is considered to be of ancient origin, although much has been replanted and now comprises coniferous forest dominated by Corsican pine. However, over 100ha of 19th Century oak dominated woodland also occurs and is of particular ecological interest. As a whole this site supports a wide range of breeding birds, and a population of the purple emperor butterfly, a species which is now restricted to a limited number of broadleaved woodlands in Southern England. Bentley Station Meadow on the edge of the Forest is dedicated to butterfly conservation.
- K3.5 This is a heavily wooded landscape of pre-1800 origin, although subsequently replanted. The unproductive Gault Clay was historically used as common woodpasture. Evidence of assarting, within the woodland, mostly regular in nature, for example south of Holt Pound suggests a post-medieval date. On the fringes of character area it is surrounded by an early enclosed landscape along the margins of the Upper Greensand. Occasional archaeological monuments include an important Roman pottery industry surviving in the landscape as a series of dumps of wasters (misfired pottery) forming mounds (SAM).

- K3.6 Settlement is largely post-1800 common-edge settlements (e.g. Bucks Horn Oak) forming linear patterns associated with regular small garden plots. Modern additions include scientific (Forestry Commission Research Station) and leisure (Blacknest Golf Course) facilities. Local building materials include sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the Alice Holt Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K3.7 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 large tracts of ancient woodland (particularly the 19th Century oak dominated woodland) and the important habitat it provides.
  - The small areas of medieval field assarts contained within woodland.
  - The sensitive balance between biodiversity, recreation and productive use of the forest.
  - The sense of peacefulness found within the woodland, away from the main road.
- K3.8 The high proportion of tree cover limits visual sensitivity of the landscape and provide opportunities for planting mitigation associated with development. Views within and to this landscape are contained by and restricted by woodland.

### **Change Specific to the Alice Holt Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K3.9 Past change specific to this area includes:
- Development of the A325 transport corridor, which has fragmented field and woodland and introduced lighting to a rural landscape, increased noise levels and created visual clutter along the road corridor.
  - Creation of Blacknest Golf Course and associated buildings in the 20th century, and other modern development additions such as the Forestry Commission Research Station.
  - Development and expansion of settlement such as small nuclear villages located along the A325 and dispersed, linear settlement along roads.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Alice Holt Mixed Farmland and Woodland**

- K3.10 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 the natural character of the woodland and the opportunities it provides for timber production, wildlife and recreation.
  - Conserve ancient woodland and ensure sensitive and sustainable management of the woodland/forestry resource.

- Consider the impact of any change (including felling) on the slopes which rise above the Wey Valley and are important in views from the valley.
- Protect the site which forms an important habitat for breeding birds, and a population of the purple emperor butterfly.
- Conserve the pattern of small pastoral fields and medieval assarts which survive within the woodland.

K3.11 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- Conserve the settlement pattern and avoid further incremental linear development along the A325.
- Maintain the rural character of the roads and avoid use of excessive lighting, signage and 'suburban' features



Rural lanes with heathy road side edges.



Small tracks leading to woodland plantations, which create a strong sense of enclosure.



Coniferous plantation forms a component of the heathland/woodland mosaic.



Densely vegetated landscape. Woodland/trees provide vertical accent.