

THEME 2: LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

2.53 The People and Nature Network aims to achieve a strong environmental infrastructure network within which planned settlements, sustainable growth and landscape change can be positively managed to assist with the delivery of sustainable communities. Landscape provides the backdrop or setting for our lives. The role of landscape in green infrastructure planning is fundamental as it provides the spatial context and basic network for ecosystem services and green infrastructure.

2.54 The wide range of landscapes across the Network area provides varying patterns and scales of land-use and settlements. These landscapes range from the Greensand ridge with its spectacular views, the wide open Downland of the chalk plateau and extensive areas of parkland; the undulating landforms of the Wealden Greensand; patterns of dispersed farmsteads and springline settlements below the Downs; the low-lying, grazed pasture and drainage networks on the Pevensy Levels; the medieval landscape of the Low Weald and the varied coastline.

2.55 The historic environment is a key component of the landscape and an integral part of green infrastructure. Heritage assets may

be of archaeological, architectural, artistic or cultural interest; and some heritage assets can form key components of the landscape. These include significant areas of multi-functional open space such as parkland, gardens and battlefields. The rich cultural heritage of the landscape adds to the distinctiveness of a locality and its setting for development. However, some heritage features may be at risk of being lost or damaged by neglect, poor management, isolation, inappropriate development and the loss of expertise from local government due to lack of resources.

2.56 Pressures on the landscape are increasing. A continued high level of economic growth in the south-east brings new development, an increasing population and the associated impacts on the landscape of visual intrusion, noise, traffic and light pollution. Indirect impacts of development include intensification of farming and demands on already overstretched infrastructure; increased demand for water supply and processing and space for recreation.

2.57 The statutory planning network provides protection to designated landscapes in presuming against major developments. However, development outside and on the boundary of designated landscapes has the potential to affect

the character and quality of the landscape; and small-scale developments within designated areas could have a cumulative, erosive effect.

2.58 Climate change has the potential to alter the landscape and cultural heritage through changes to coastal land, habitats and land uses. The changing conditions and demands may provide opportunities as well as challenges, such as a move to renewable energy resources and new crops. Changes to precipitation, and geological shrink/swell will be impacted by intense rainfall and longer drier periods which are predicted as part of altered weather patterns due to climate change. These issues will impact on archaeological preservation in situ and potentially some permanent changes to the historic landscape.

2.59 A strategic approach to the development of a people and nature network helps develop more resilient landscapes which can adapt to change and retain character and distinctiveness.

HERITAGE

2.60 The present landscape has been heavily shaped by the interactions between people and places through time. The cultural heritage of the landscape is revealed by archaeology, historic features, buildings and settlements; it provides

amenity, educational and tourism value and adds to local distinctiveness.

2.61 Elements of the historic environment are recognised as heritage assets for their importance to society and are given a level of protection or consideration through designation. This can include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.

- The conservation of our heritage is fundamental to the principles of sustainable development. The NPPF makes provision for sustainable development to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.³³
- There is growing evidence for the value of traditional building materials and techniques when it comes to recovery and adaptation to climate change – a review of flood recovery approaches at Hebden Bridge and Appleby by Historic England has pointed to the potential for historic building materials to recover from flooding quicker by using simple techniques that work with the natural qualities of historic materials (such as ventilation), than situations

where professional drying companies and removal and replacement of plasterwork were utilised. Although heritage assets are at huge risk from climate change, there are also opportunities for us to embrace the strength of traditional buildings and materials.

Sustainable Development is defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'

UN Brundtland Commission (1983)

2.62 Historic England³⁴ recognises that the protection of heritage can contribute towards a range of other spatial planning goals through its influence on environmental character and sense of place, as a potential to be a catalyst for regeneration and as inspiration for high quality design.

2.63 Some heritage features may be at risk of being lost or damaged through neglect, poor management, the effects of isolation or inappropriate development; and the potential effects of climate change will make some heritage features particularly vulnerable to extreme weather

events or flooding. However, it is important to retain – and in some cases reinstate – the historic character of an area, as an essential component of the landscape.

2.64 Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA) identifies the time, depth and antiquity of the present day landscape. It sets out a more integrated, less site-based approach to heritage conservation and a link with wider environmental issues through identifying previous land uses and agricultural enclosures. HLCAs have been developed across the Network area³⁵ and seek to identify and understand the historic development of the landscape and place emphasis on the contribution that past historic processes make to the character of the landscape as a whole, not just selected 'special sites' and can contribute to wider landscape assessment, as well as guiding decisions on future change and management. HLCAs provide useful information and context for the development of strategic green infrastructure plans and ensure that heritage is considered alongside other land uses.

2.65 Green infrastructure can play a role in helping to enhance the setting of heritage features, bring in resources to invest in heritage

33 NPPF Paragraph 8

34 Officially known as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, Historic England is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

35 Across the Network area HLAs have been carried out by the county authorities of Hampshire, Sussex and Surrey, and the SDNPA as part of its South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (SDILCA).

projects and celebrate local heritage as part of an integrated and multi-functional approach to environmental enhancement. Green infrastructure can also help protect below ground archaeology and the settings of historic features from the pressures of development.

LANDSCAPE

2.66 The value and diversity of landscapes and the need to maintain and improve landscape quality is recognised at national and European level.

2.67 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes provision for local planning authorities to protect and enhance valued landscapes and the setting of criteria-based policies for judging the impact of development on landscapes. In particular the NPPF expects local planning authorities to protect the landscape of National Parks and AONBs³⁶

2.68 The European Landscape Convention (ELC)³⁷ aims to improve the quality of landscapes and gives strength to the recognition of landscapes in law and to integrate into all relevant policies.

“Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”

ELC, 2000.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.69 The ELC defines landscape character as ‘a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape.’

2.70 Landscape character and quality strongly influence our perception and enjoyment of green spaces as destinations, as settings to new and existing settlements and movement routes through the landscape.

2.71 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) data is the main point of reference for considering the landscape from a green infrastructure perspective, as it is a systematically interpreted appraisal of key landscape attributes. LCAs consider local landscapes townscapes, their unique sense of place and the effects of pressures for change.

2.72 Assessments can demonstrate the continuity of landscape character beyond administrative

boundaries and provide a sound basis for co-ordinated cross-boundary plans and strategies. They also provide the basis for developing guidance and policy on landscape change. This is a key issue for the Network area where the consequence of planning decisions in one area may impact on adjacent areas and landscapes.

2.73 At a national level Natural England has developed National Character Areas (NCAs)³⁸ (Plan 5). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making network for the natural environment. The NCA Profiles can help guide decision-making and support the planning of environmental initiatives at a landscape scale, for example in informing the delivery of NIAs and encouraging broader partnership working through LNPs and can help to inform choices about land management.

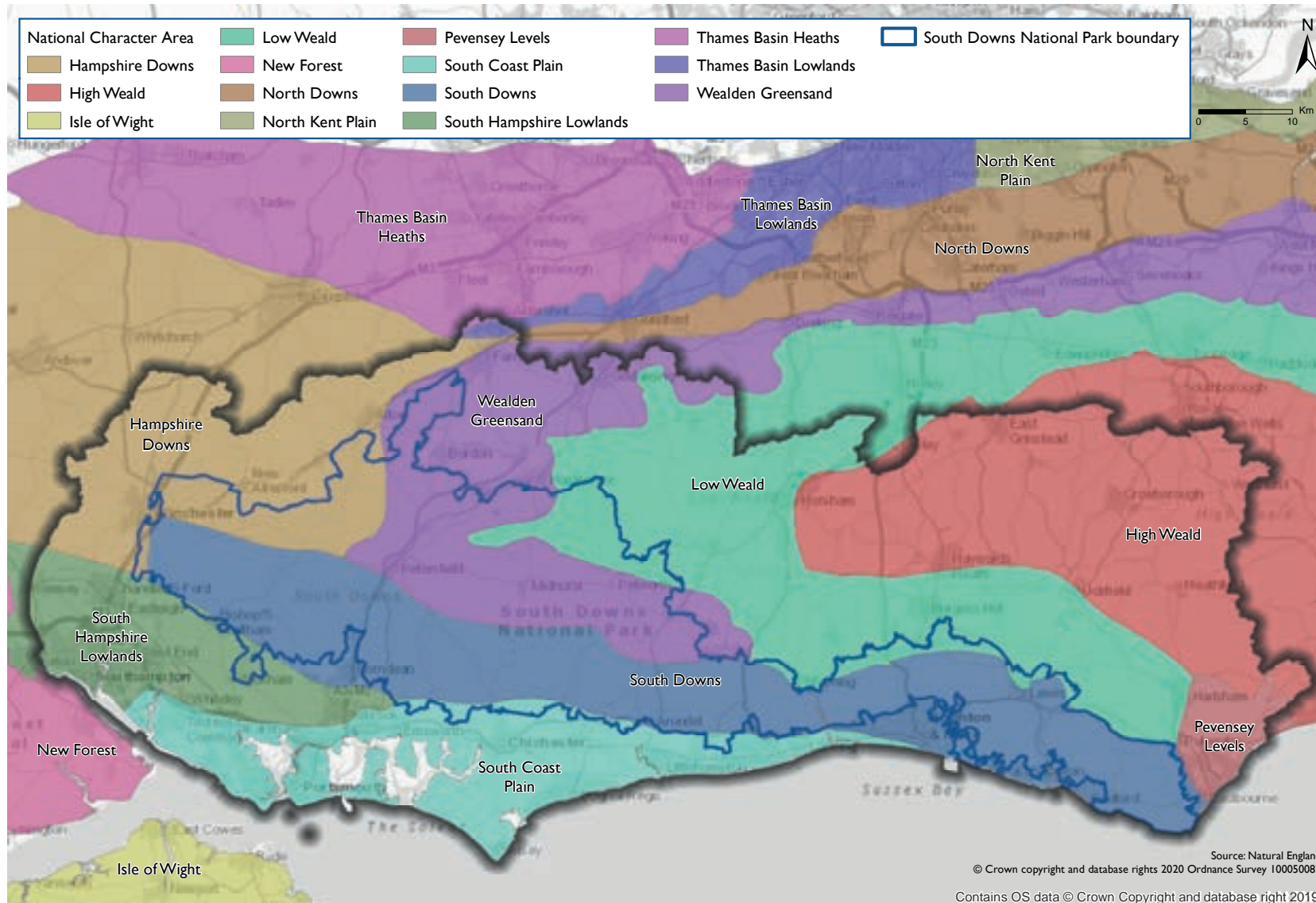
2.74 The eight NCA profiles in the Network area describe the features that have shaped and changed the landscape, the current key drivers for change and the potential opportunities for enhancing landscape and historic character.

36 NPPF Section 15, para 172.

37 The ELC is an international agreement, signed by 38 out of 47 Council of Europe Members, including Britain in 2007 coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/176

38 National Character Area profiles – Natural England 2014 gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making

PLAN 5: NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



2.75 The NCAs provide the background information for the more detailed Landscape Character Assessments which are in place at a County, Unitary and District level. This hierarchy of landscape characterisation from national to local level helps ensure that strategic heritage and landscape issues are reflected at a local level. Plan 6 describes each of the LCA units at a County level for the Network area.

2.76 In the Network area this work has been further developed to provide tools for use in

planning for change in the landscape. These tools include landscape guidelines and strategies and studies into local distinctiveness (see Sources at end of chapter).

VISUAL IMPACTS ON LANDSCAPE

2.77 Landscape Character Assessment is an objective, descriptive process and does not provide guidance on the potential visual impacts of change in the landscape, as this needs to be

assessed with reference to the type and extent of proposed change.³⁹

2.78 Guidance on potential visual impacts of proposed development – and visual impact assessment methodology – may be desirable as tools, particularly in designated or otherwise sensitive landscapes. In particular this could be useful in assessing the potential visual impact of smaller-scale or gradual changes and developments. A good example is the Viewshed Study by the SDNPA.⁴⁰

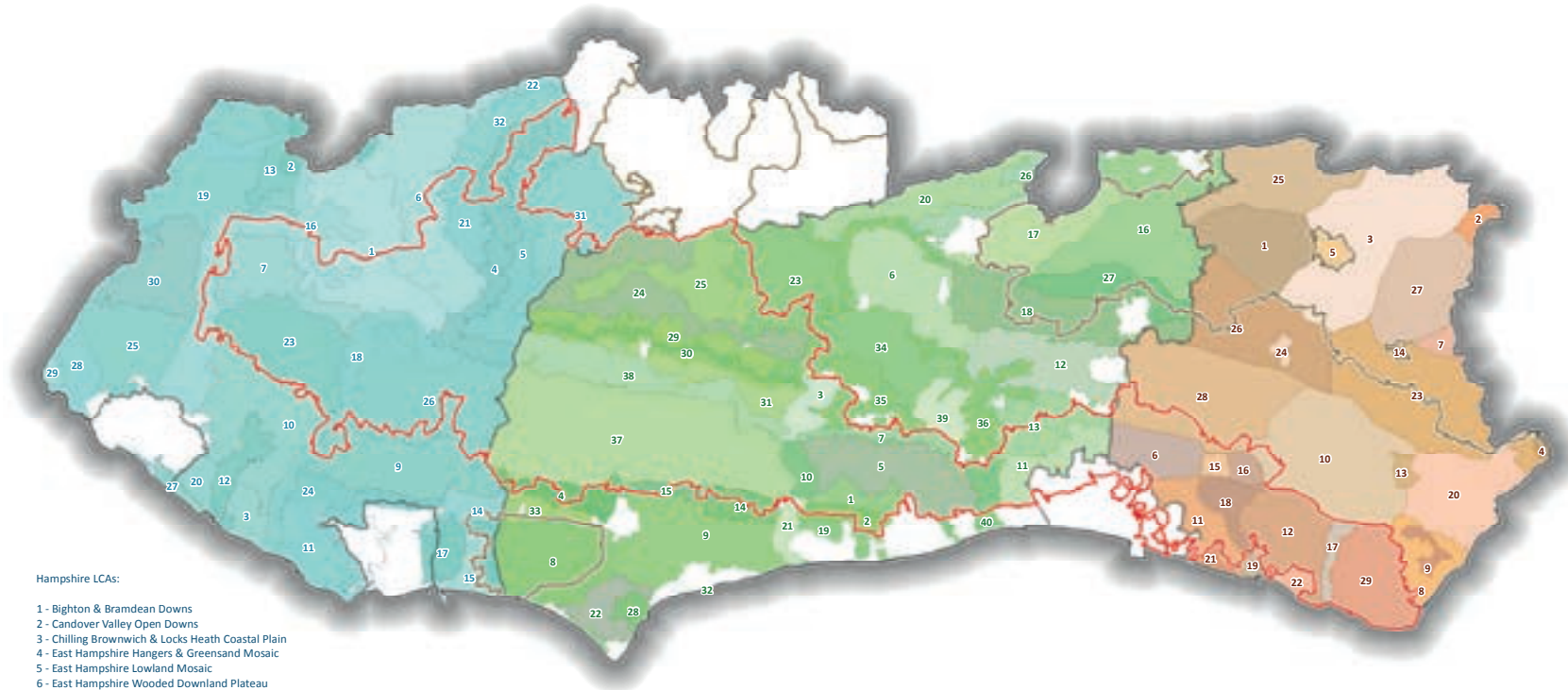


Viewshed image – Kingley Vale, West Sussex © SDNPA

39 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is required for any development that may have a significant effect upon landscape character, or have a significant visual effect within the wider landscape

40 southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan/evidence-and-supporting-documents/viewshed-analysis/

PLAN 6: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS – COUNTY LEVEL



Hampshire LCAs:

- 1 - Bighton & Bramdean Downs
- 2 - Candover Valley Open Downs
- 3 - Chilling Brownich & Locks Heath Coastal Plain
- 4 - East Hampshire Hangers & Greensand Mosaic
- 5 - East Hampshire Lowland Mosaic
- 6 - East Hampshire Wooded Downland Plateau
- 7 - East Winchester Open Downs
- 8 - Forest of Bere East
- 9 - Forest of Bere West
- 10 - Gosport & Coastal Plain
- 11 - Hamble Valley
- 12 - Hannington & Dummer Downs
- 13 - Havant & Emsworth Coastal Plain
- 14 - Hayling Island Coastal Plain
- 15 - Itchen Valley
- 16 - Langstone & Chichester Harbours
- 17 - Meon Valley
- 18 - Mid Hampshire Open Downs
- 19 - Netley Bursledon & Hamble Coastal Plain
- 20 - Newton Valance Farrington & East Tisted Downs
- 21 - North East Hampshire Open Downs
- 22 - Owslebury & Corhampton Downs
- 23 - Portsdown Hill Open Downs
- 24 - Romsey to Eastleigh Wooded Lowland Mosaic
- 25 - South East Hampshire Downs
- 26 - Southampton Water
- 27 - Test Valley
- 28 - Wellow & Awbridge Heath Associated Wooded Farmland
- 29 - West Winchester Downs
- 30 - Western Weald Forest & Farmland Heath
- 31 - Wey Valley

West Sussex LCAs:

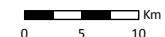
- 1 - Angmering Park
- 2 - Angmering Upper Coastal Plain
- 3 - Arun Wildbrooks
- 4 - Ashlings Upper Coastal Plain
- 5 - Central Downs
- 6 - Central Low Weald
- 7 - Central Scarp Footslopes
- 8 - Chichester Harbour
- 9 - Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain
- 10 - Downland Adur Valley
- 11 - Eastern Downs
- 12 - Eastern Low Weald
- 13 - Eastern Scarp Footslopes
- 14 - Fontwell Upper Coastal Plain
- 15 - Hainaker Upper Coastal Plain
- 16 - High Weald
- 17 - High Weald Forests
- 18 - High Weald Fringes
- 19 - Littlehampton & Worthing Fringes
- 20 - Low Weald Hills
- 21 - Lower Arun Valley
- 22 - Manhood Peninsula
- 23 - North Western Low Weald
- 24 - North Western Ridges
- 25 - North Western Valleys
- 26 - Northern Vales
- 27 - Ouse Valley
- 28 - Pagham Harbour
- 29 - Rother Farmlands
- 30 - Rother Valley
- 31 - Rother Woods and Heaths
- 32 - South Coast Shoreline
- 33 - Southbourne Coastal Plain
- 34 - Southern Low Weald
- 35 - Storrington Woods & Heaths
- 36 - Upper Arun Valley
- 37 - Western Downs
- 38 - Western Scarp Slopes
- 39 - Wiston Low Weald
- 40 - Worthing & Adur Fringes

East Sussex LCAs:

- 1 - Ashdown Forest
- 2 - Bewl Water Area
- 3 - Central High Weald
- 4 - Coombe Valley Haven
- 5 - Crowborough
- 6 - Ditchling-Mount Harry Downs
- 7 - Dudwell Valley
- 8 - Eastbourne
- 9 - Eastbourne Levels
- 10 - Eastern Low Weald
- 11 - Falmer-Telscombe Downs
- 12 - Firle Bishopstone Downs
- 13 - Hailsham
- 14 - Heathfield
- 15 - Lewes
- 16 - Lewes Downs
- 17 - Lower Cuckmere Valley
- 18 - Lower Ouse Valley
- 19 - Newhaven
- 20 - Pevensey Levels
- 21 - Saltdean-Peacehaven
- 22 - Seaford
- 23 - South Slopes of High Weald
- 24 - Uckfield
- 25 - Upper Medway
- 26 - Upper Ouse Valley
- 27 - Upper Rother Valley
- 28 - Western Low Weald
- 29 - Wilmington Heritage Downs

Key to Map:

- National Park boundary
- AONB
- County/Unitary Authority



Local Character Areas supplied by Hampshire, East and West Sussex County Councils, AONB, and National Park boundary supplied by Natural England. This map contains OS OpenData© Crown copyright and database rights 2015 Ordnance Survey.

Tennyson (of Black Down):

“You came and looked and loved the view, long known and loved by me, Green Sussex fading into blue with one grey glimpse of sea.”

LANDSCAPE CHANGE

2.79 The understanding of how the landscape is changing is linked closely with landscape character and is a useful tool in green infrastructure planning. NE’s Countryside Quality

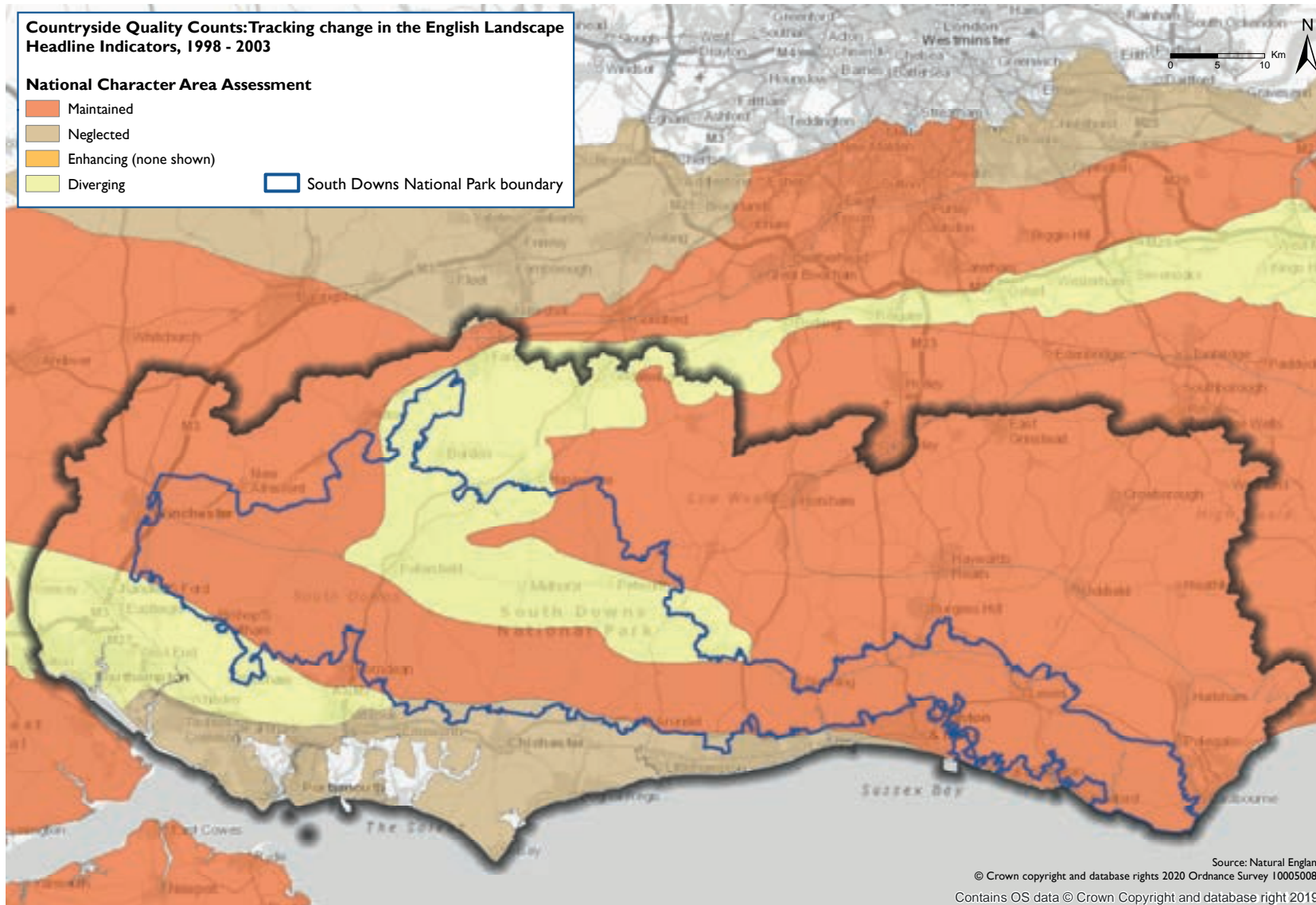
Counts (CQC)⁴¹ study monitored changes in the condition of the landscape at NCA level from 1990 to 2003. Among the issues identified in the study – and relevant to green infrastructure – were the degradation of the urban fringe, a deterioration in farmed character in areas close to urban centres in response to increased pressure for more recreational land uses and urbanisation of farmsteads and conversion of farm buildings to residential use with associated land uses (gardens and horse paddocks).

2.80 Plan 7 from Natural England shows the condition of the landscapes of the NCAs within the National Park. The maps show that across the Network area the landscapes along the coastal plain and particularly the areas within the South Coast Plain NCA along the southern boundary of the National Park (within Chichester and Arun districts) are considered ‘neglected’.⁴² This weakened landscape area lying between the coastal plain and the National Park may be more vulnerable to loss of character and quality.

41 Countryside Quality Counts – Tracking Change in the Character of the English Landscape, 1990-2003 (Countryside Commission). It is understood the work will be taken forward in the future by Natural England’s ‘Character and Quality of England’s Landscapes’ (CQuEL), an enhanced and updated assessment of landscape quality.

42 In relation to NE’s landscape vision

PLAN 7: LANDSCAPE CONDITION 1990-2003 COUNTRYSIDE QUALITY COUNTS



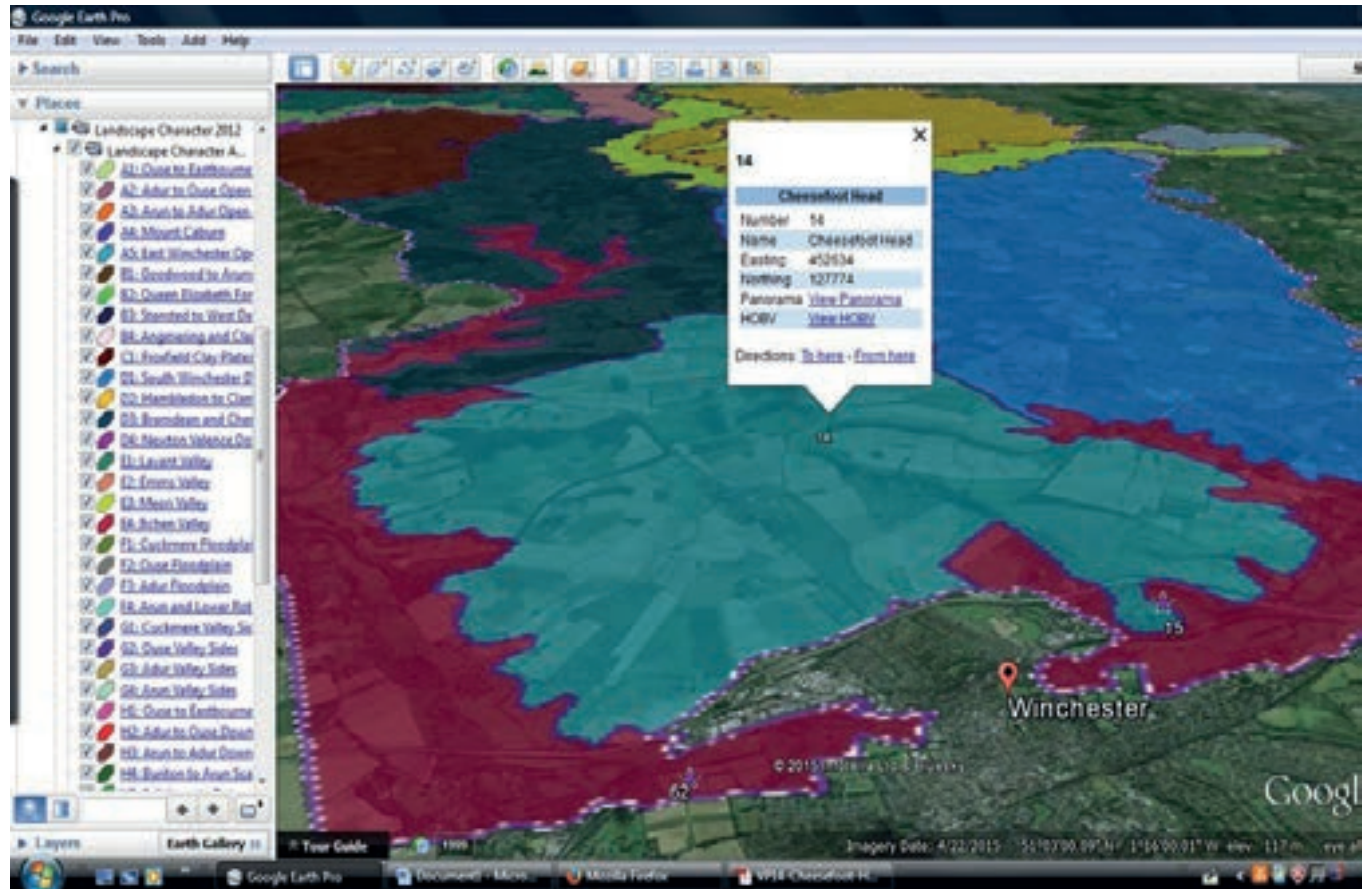
SDNPA VIEWSHED STUDY 2016

2.81 The SDNPA Viewshed Study was completed in 2016. The study provides evidence on the views structure of the National Park, mapping representative views within, to and from the National Park. Views are categorised into those which are representative of a range of views and landmark views of noted features, both man made and natural.

2.82 The study shows that the SDNP has a strong visual connection with the surrounding landscapes in the network area and the views both to and from the SDNP extend for many km in all directions. The study maps these views out to 35km (Plan 8). The project created individual pdfs of 120 viewshed points within and beyond the SDNP, and also created a downloadable google earth model of the SDNP.

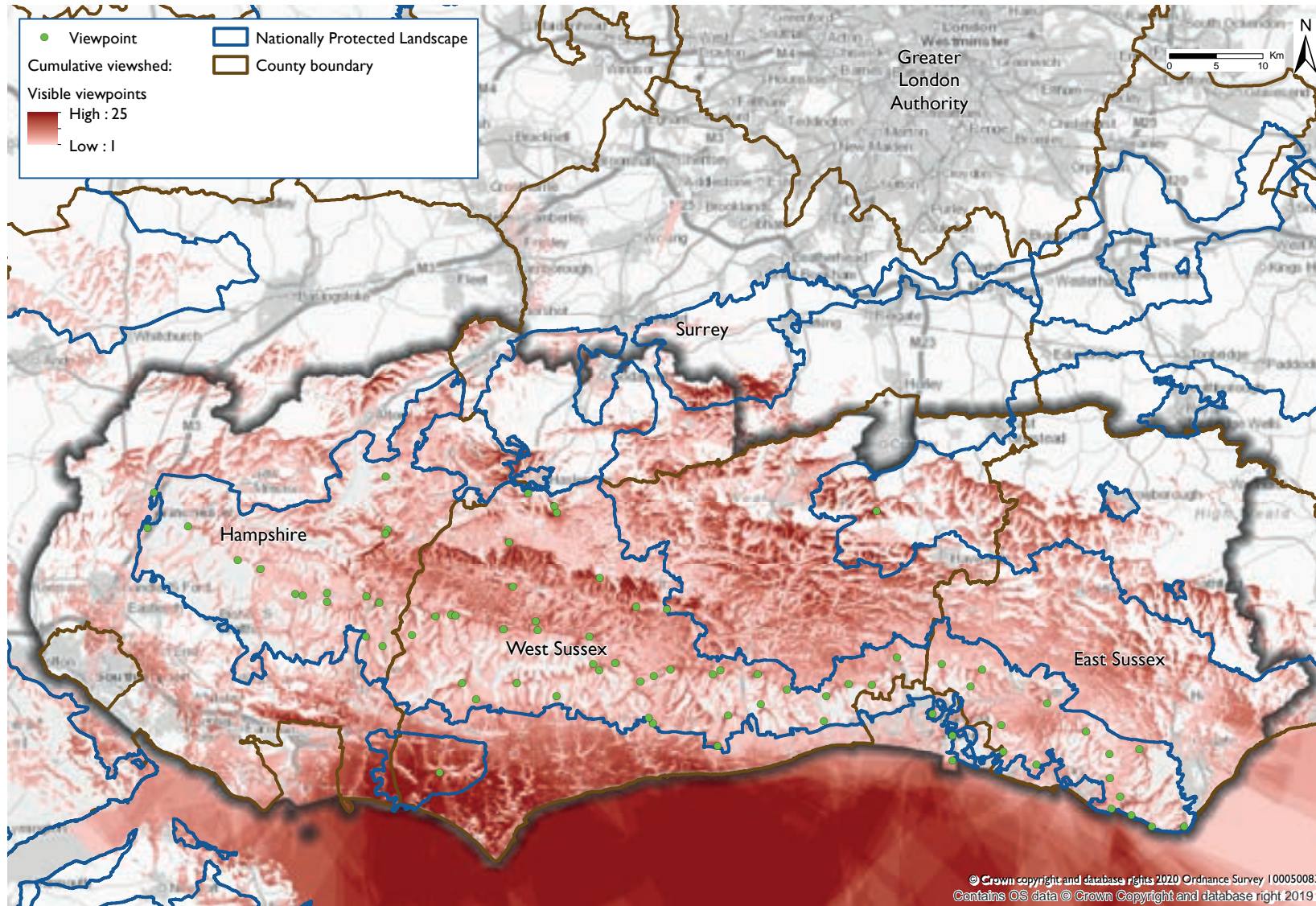
2.83 The following screenshot is the SDNP Viewshed model on Google Earth showing the Historic Landscape Character areas across the National Park. This is one of several evidence layers that can be used on the model to explore the National Park.

THE SDNP VIEWSHED MODEL ON GOOGLE EARTH



Plan, SDNPA Viewshed Study, cumulative Viewshed of the SDNP to 35km

PLAN 8: CUMULATIVE VIEWSHED MAP



RELATIVE TRANQUILLITY

2.84 In the crowded south-east, it is increasingly difficult to find quiet, natural areas which are not affected by the noise or visual intrusion from traffic, aircraft or other human activity. Tranquil areas can be defined by the analysis of noise levels, perceived naturalness, visible overt human impact, density of settlement/diffusion of people and artificial lighting in each character area.

In the South Hampshire National Character Area only 7% of the area was identified as remaining tranquil, and this was mostly within The Forest of Bere.

2.85 Tranquillity is one of the National Park's 'Special Qualities' and an important aspect of how people experience and value the landscape. In the South Downs a strong sense of tranquillity is associated with the open Downland combs and ridges and with the ancient woodland and beech hangers in the west. The least tranquil parts of the National Park are the areas that are close to the towns on the Coastal Plain. Pockets of tranquillity are associated with the central rural areas, the Manhood Peninsula and undeveloped harbours, including Chichester Harbour AONB. Relative tranquillity in the Network area is shown on Plan 9.

2.86 2.88 In the context of the most developed part of the South East, those areas of greatest tranquillity are especially important to protect. The decline in areas of tranquillity is due to the increasing developmental pressure and urbanisation. However some landscapes can provide a strong sense of tranquillity – the heavily wooded valleys of the Weald for example – even when they are close to built development, making these landscapes valuable for informal recreation and health and well being (see Plan 9).

DARK SKIES

2.87 The South East is the most light-polluted region of the UK, with only 1 per cent of the region defined as 'truly dark'. The SDNPA's work in mapping dark skies shows areas where skies may be viewed without the interruption of artificial lighting from urbanised areas.

2.88 CPRE have mapped areas of intrusion across the country (Plan 10).⁴³ A report for CPRE⁴⁴ maps the change in noise and visual intrusion across England. It is clear that in the south-east – and across the Network area in particular – there has been a significant increase and spread in urban areas and an increase in areas disturbed by noise and visual

intrusion. According to Defra's guidance⁴⁵ to help reduce light pollution and sky glow in the UK there is no statutory protection against light pollution; although there is guidance available to those planning and designing street and other lighting.⁴⁶

2.89 National Parks and AONBs have been called on⁴⁷ to lead the way in retaining and creating areas of dark skies, including the skies over urban areas.

2.90 The SDNP was designated as an International Dark Skies Reserve (IDSR) in 2016. More than 25,000 individual measurements had to be taken to map the night skies quality across the South Downs, 66 per cent of the National Park has Bronze Level Skies. The South Downs National Park is the second IDSR in England and one of only 13 in the world. With two million people living within five km of the National Park the reserve is one of the most accessible in the world. There are approximately 2,700 streetlights in the National Park. Local lighting authorities have been replacing these over time to comply with dark sky standards.

43 cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/1839-

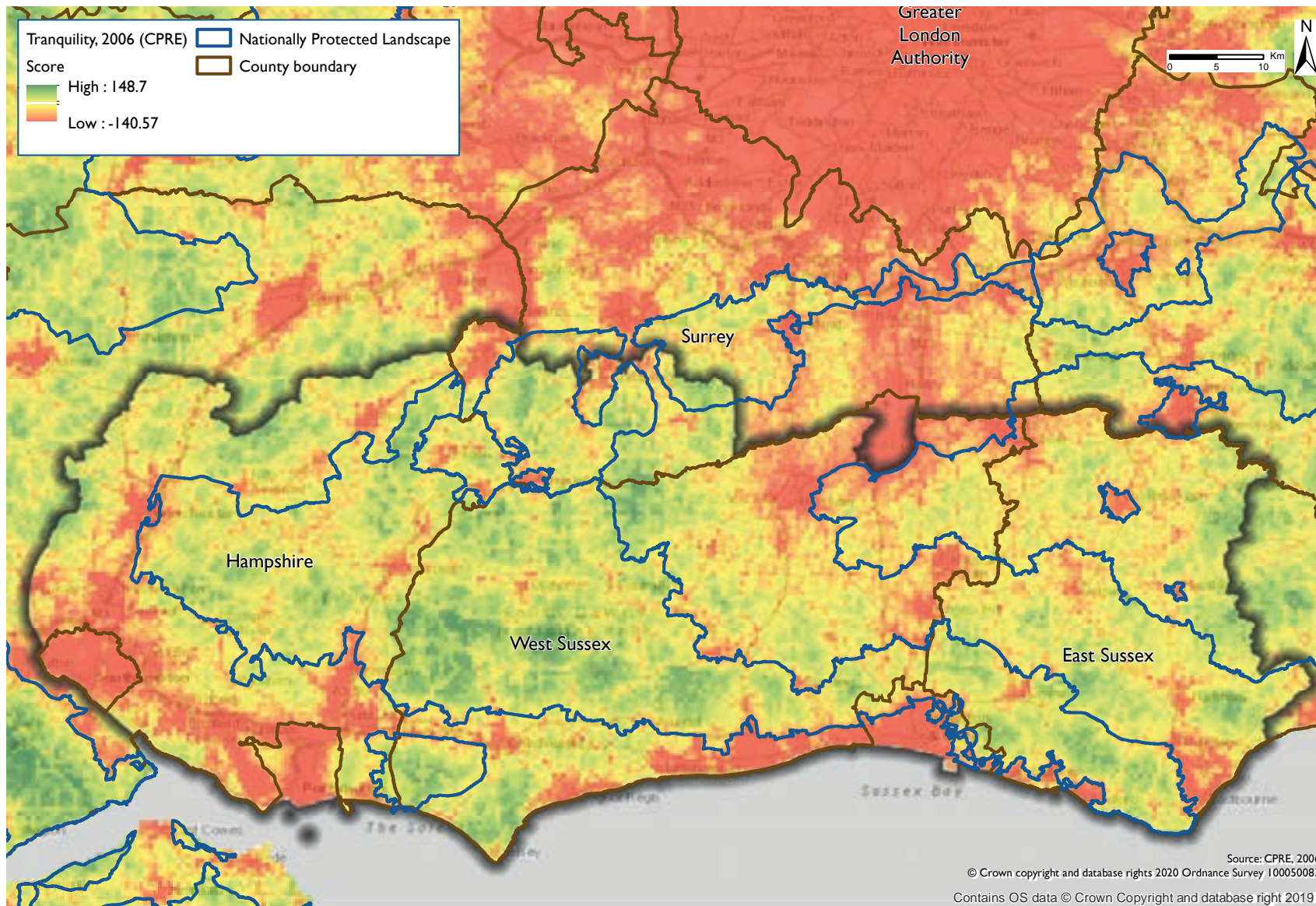
44 Developing and Intrusion Map of England – LUC (August 2007)

45 Defra's Guidance on Sections 101 to 193 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 – Statutory Nuisance from Insects and Artificial Light

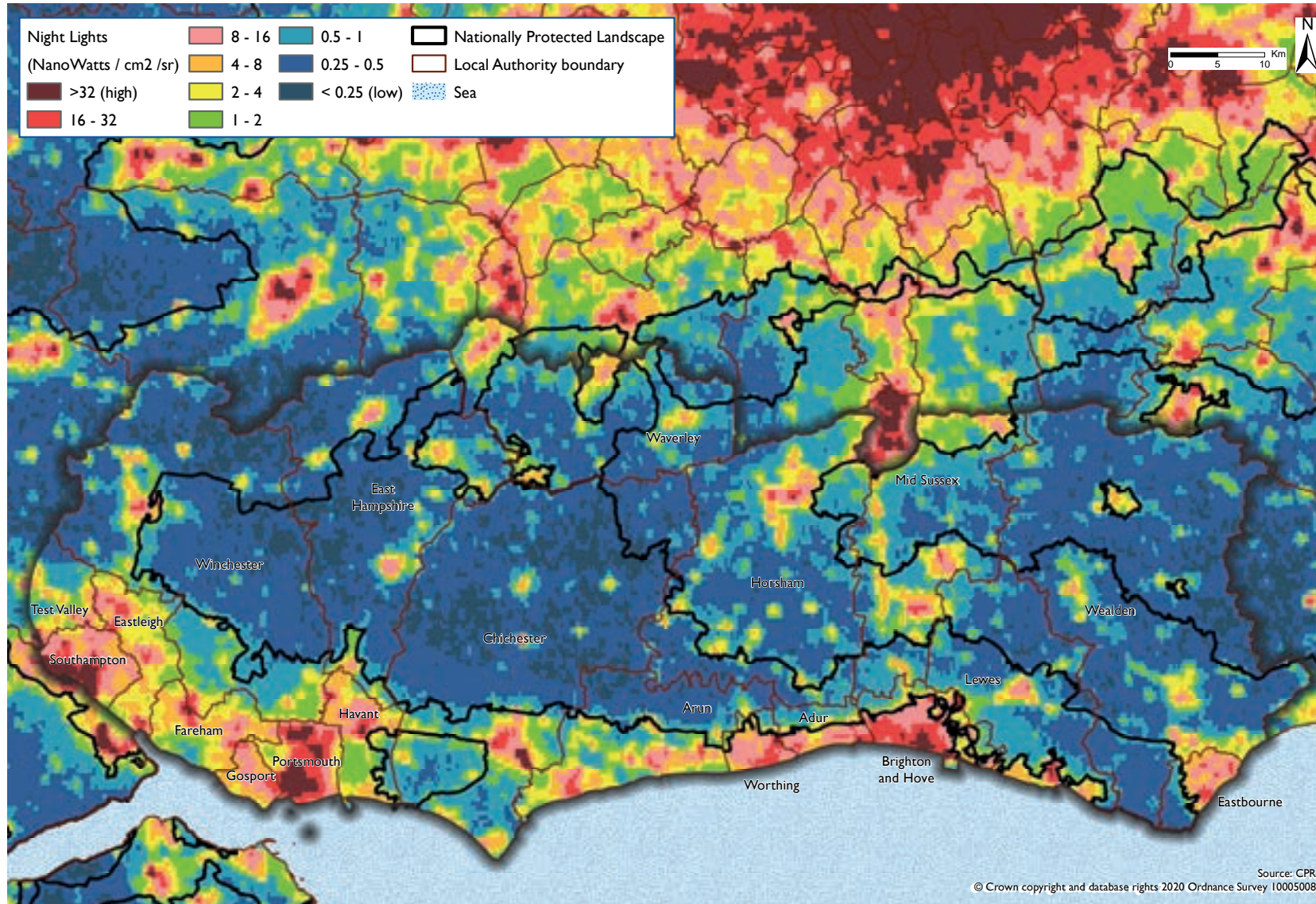
46 Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice – DCLG 1997

47 By the 2009 Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution report 'Artificial Light in the Environment' southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies/

PLAN 9: RELATIVE TRANQUILLITY



PLAN 10: DARK NIGHT SKY MAPPING



DESCRIPTION OF THE NETWORK AREA AND ANALYSIS

2.91 There is great variation in the landscapes of the Network area – from the ridges and valleys of the High Weald draped with small, irregular fields, ancient woods and hedges, the open Downland of the South Downs, to the tidal flats, inlets and creeks of Chichester Harbour.

2.92 The character and quality of the landscapes have developed and changed over time in response to a number of factors including the economic situation, advances in transportation and agriculture and the shifts in population.

2.93 The expansion in the size of the population of the south-east has had a major impact on the landscape and continues to do so today; growing from a population of 145,000 in 1801 to 1.24 million in 2001.⁴⁸ This population growth has led to the expansion of urban areas, the development of the coastal resorts and the growth of the railway and road networks. It has also placed increasing pressures and demands on the landscape.

2.94 Sitting alongside these expanded urban areas lie landscapes designated for their landscape quality, their rich biodiversity and

their heritage value. Table 2 lists the landscape designations across the network area.

2.95 These designated areas, representing 49% of the total area of land within the Network area, are testament to the high value placed on the quality of this area and its unique and historic places.

TABLE 2: DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN NETWORK AREA

Designation	Area (ha)	
South Downs National Park	1627km ²	
High Weald AONB	1461km ²	The largest AONB in south-east England
Surrey Hills AONB	422km ²	Adjoins the SDNP
Chichester Harbour AONB	74km ²	Land, sea and intertidal habitats

NETWORK AREA: HERITAGE

2.96 At the Network scale the assessment of cultural heritage is concerned with key sites and historic landscapes. This includes historic parks

and gardens, battlefields, archaeological features and monuments, remnants of an industrial and military past, as well as the grain of the historic landscape as reflected in its field patterns and land-use. For example the present day Sussex landscape and its structural elements can be traced back to early medieval times. Traces of medieval enclosure can be seen in the irregular pattern of fields; and the rich legacy of medieval and post-medieval landscapes of West Sussex includes the distinctive assart landscapes. The size and shape of fields and their boundaries are direct links to past uses and changes.

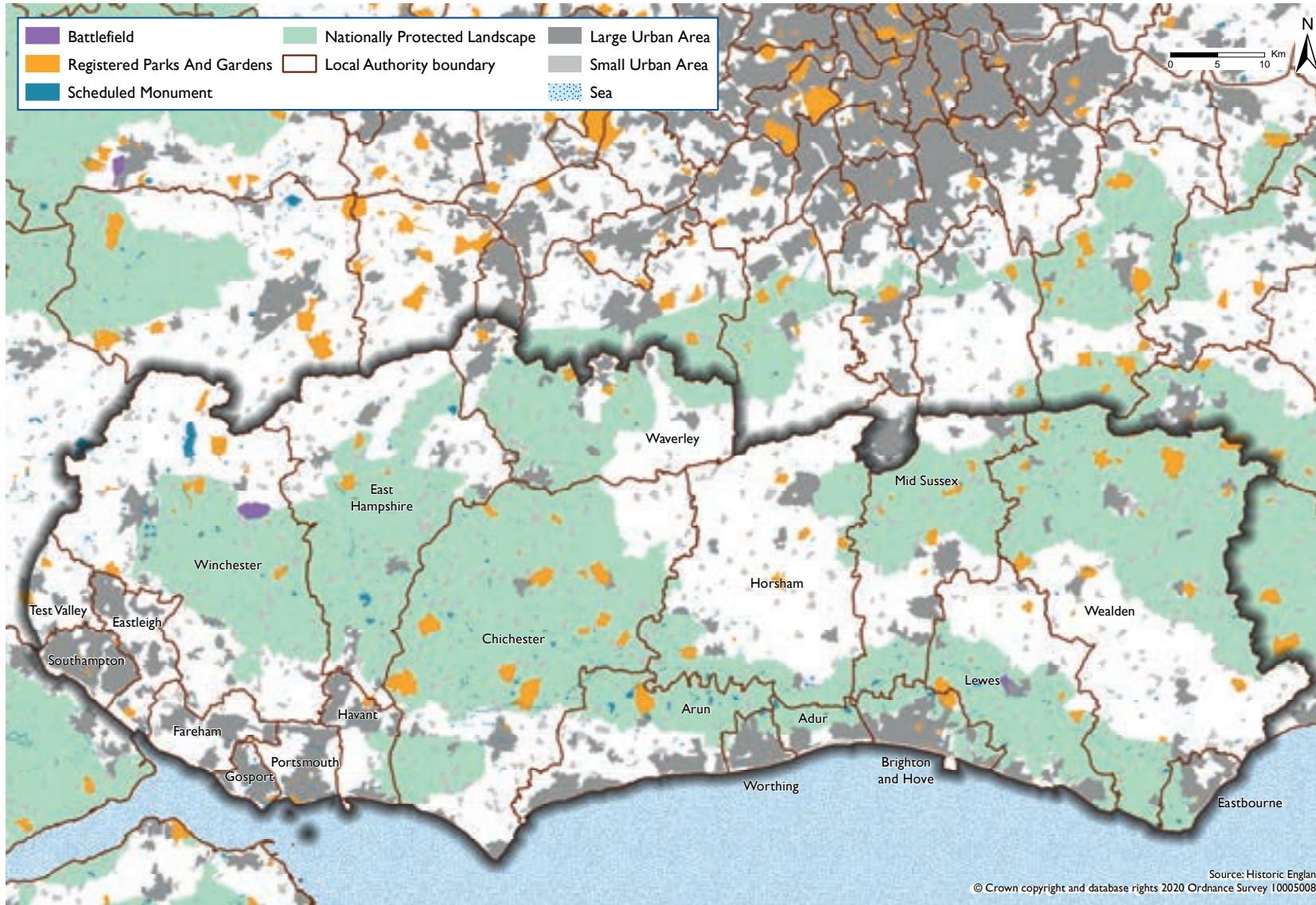
2.97 Unenclosed and unimproved landscapes include the commons, Downland, greens and heaths. Other links to the past include ancient woodlands and remaining areas of wood pasture and historic parklands.

2.98 Plan 11 shows the distribution of Registered Parks & Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) across the Network area⁴⁹. The background map indicates the designated landscapes. It is interesting to note the prevalence of SAMs within the National Park and other designated landscapes in comparison with non-designated areas.

48 Hampshire LCA (2010).

49 Other heritage assets including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are at a more detailed, local scale and of less relevance to a strategic approach

PLAN 11: SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AND BATTLEFIELDS



2.99 The coherence of the historic environment is at risk in places from increased development and infrastructure pressures. In some areas the distinctive historic character of settlements is being eroded, particularly the common-edge settlements on the Hampshire/Surrey border.

“The Cultural Landscape is held together by the commonplace and the rare, the ordinary and the spectacular” Common Ground

2.100 The National Park’s audit of cultural heritage⁵⁰ identified particular assets as having no overall management. These included disused railway lines, canals and Roman roads. These assets were considered to be at risk if they are not protected by planning policy or designation. The report also identified potential projects for development at Petworth Park and Stanmer Park. These flagship heritage sites make a major contribution to the quality and distinctiveness of the landscape and showcase heritage assets to their many visitors.

NETWORK AREA: LANDSCAPES

2.101 Across the Network area characteristic landscapes include the coast, Downs, river and chalk stream landscapes, wooded slopes and

valleys and an agricultural landscape with its variety of field patterns and enclosures.

COASTAL LANDSCAPES

2.102 The extensive coastline provides contrasting landscapes. Low-lying, open landscapes are found at Pevensey Levels; an area of wetland with few trees or hedges and long views to the backdrop of the South Downs and out over the sea; and further west along the coastal plain, where inlets and harbours contain a diverse landscape of narrow tidal creeks, mudflats, shingle beaches, dunes and grazing marshes. These include the internationally important Chichester, Langstone, Portsmouth and Pagham harbours. A history of sea defence is revealed by remaining structures including Napoleonic Martello Towers at Pevensey and a 19th-century ring of forts near Portsmouth.

2.103 These open, flat landscapes are vulnerable to tidal inundation as well as flooding from the rivers that flow through them and out to sea. As rising sea levels increase the probability of flooding for low-lying areas and the resulting ‘coastal squeeze’ reduces the area of coast; sea defences are constructed or natural processes alter the profile of the coastline. Defensive sea walls

have already altered some of the natural coastline landscape e.g. at Southsea and Brighton Marina. However, the Medmerry scheme on the Manhood Peninsula is a good example of managed realignment.⁵¹

2.104 Green infrastructure can play a positive role in protecting the landscape from unacceptable change and flooding, through the development of SUDS in new developments and in its integrated approach which helps ensure that heritage, landscape character and quality are valued in decision-making; for example in soft-engineering solutions e.g. to flood defences and re-naturalising river channels.

2.105 At Beachy Head and The Seven Sisters the chalk downs meet the sea. This is a 6 mile section of Heritage Coast; areas where the government places an expectation on local authorities to ‘maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as heritage coast and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.’⁵² The effects of climate change including sea level rise and more frequent rainfall in winter, could lead to increased erosion of this coastal heritage asset.

50 Report on the Audit of Cultural Heritage Assets to the South Downs National Park Authority – by Business of Culture (December 2014)

51 Managed realignment allows an area that was not previously exposed to flooding by the sea to become flooded by removing coastal protection

52 Paragraph 114 of the National Planning Policy Network (March 2012). The protection, management and enhancement of the Heritage Coast is guided by a partnership approach and a Sussex Heritage Coast Plan, which embeds the duty-to-cooperate and the seven qualities of the National Park.

2.106 Long stretches of developed coast are backed by landscapes pinched between towns and the slopes of the Downs. In these areas farming and recreation jostle for space with road and rail corridors. These peri-urban landscapes are vulnerable to further development pressure as the coastal conurbations continue to expand. However, through the development of green infrastructure these areas have the potential to provide a wide range of benefits and improvements to the landscape. Archaeology on the Edge (2019) has identified a number of sites along the Sussex Heritage Coast at risk of partial or total loss in the next 25 years (in addition to longer term impacts of full / partial loss) linked to coastal erosion.

THE DOWNS

2.107 The South Downs chalk ridge runs from east to west from the Hampshire Downs to the coastal cliffs and Heritage Coast at Beachy Head. Chalk grassland is the distinctive landscape of the South Downs; and is characterised as elevated, open land with sweeping views. There are areas of the Downs with dark skies and high levels of tranquillity. However this nationally-rare landscape is vulnerable to urban edge pressures. The South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area (NIA) took a landscape approach to improving and linking fragmented areas of chalk grassland habitat in a partnership project. This strategic approach to joining and extending habitats is crucial in building resilience and provides wider

benefits to biodiversity and the protection of water resources, as well as the enhancement of important landscapes and views.

RIVER LANDSCAPES

2.108 Rivers and streams feature prominently in the Network area landscape. The chalk ridge of the South Downs is dissected in the east by the Arun, Adur, Cuckmere and Ouse; and by the Meon in the west. In the Hampshire Downs the deeply incised straight-sided valleys of the Test and Itchen cut through the landscape. The Meon, Adur and Arun form wide alluvial flood plains as they flow towards the sea at the south coast. There are wide U-shaped valleys with steep sides and flat alluvial flood plains.

2.109 However, traditional river landscapes of water meadows and wet grasslands have disappeared as intensive farming, flood defence and built development have encroached into flood plains.

At a landscape scale the West Weald Landscape Partnership aims to improve biodiversity and ecological connectivity in woodlands across part of the Network area,* address fragmentation and improve management. There are other initiatives involved in woodland management, but this landscape-scale approach could be a model for other areas where a multi-functional green infrastructure approach could help improve landscape quality, recreational value and sustainability.

**Includes part of the SDNP in West Sussex, plus an area of Waverley (Surrey).*

WOODED LANDSCAPES

2.110 Woodland is a key feature of the landscapes in the Network area. From the wooded scarp of the East Hampshire Hangers and remaining areas of ancient woodland in the South Downs; the heavily wooded landscape of the High Weald with pits and hammer ponds from the iron-making industry; the shaws and ghylls of the Weald.

2.111 All these woodland types are characteristic of their landscapes.

Woodlands can be a source of inspiration. To the north of the Network area the Ashdown Forest has inspired Rudyard Kipling and William Robinson (who pioneered the English natural gardening movement) and is the 'home' of Winnie-the-Pooh.

2.112 However, woodlands are under pressure from fragmentation, a changing climate and poor management. In some areas ancient woodlands are suffering incremental damage and loss from lack of management, recreation and other factors including livestock damage and clay extraction (e.g. in the Low Weald).

- Woodlands are important elements in the landscape; they support biodiversity, provide fuel and building materials and can provide robust recreational facilities. In appropriate locations woodlands can help to screen development and filter-out noise from roads and industry. There are increased enquiries and projects emerging around tree planting, but there are notable impacts of not taking into account "right tree, right place" in the context of the historic landscape.

PRESSURES

2.113 In considering the landscape and cultural heritage across the Network area, a number of issues have emerged which highlight the challenges the landscape is facing and the impacts of some of the changes taking place. The landscape is under pressure from a range of

sources. These pressures are effecting changes in the landscape, some of which are readily apparent and others more subtle; but they include loss of character and distinctiveness, fragmentation and erosion of quality.

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

2.114 The pressure for housing in the south-east places the Network area under considerable development pressure. This could threaten settlement character and the sustainable development of smaller settlements. Plan 4 on Page 18 shows the locations of planned major housing developments in the current Local Plan period against a background of the National Park and the AONBS.

2.115 In these designated landscapes the planning system presumes against major development. As a result the main housing sites are located in areas outside and between the designated landscapes. Hence development is concentrated into areas to the north and south of the National Park, to the south of the Surrey Hills and High Weald AONBs and in the area surrounding the Chichester Harbour AONB. This in turn increases pressure on the coastal urban fringe and the other non-designated areas.

2.116 These areas are likely to experience further growth in future, as the drive to accommodate more housing and create more jobs in the south-east is further constrained by environmental and landscape protection.

2.117 The growing populations will need places for recreation and leisure and the destinations of choice are likely to be the superb landscapes of the National Park and the AONBs, or the coast.

2.118 Smaller-scale developments can bring about incremental change. For example, the conversion of traditional farm buildings to residential use has an impact on the surrounding landscape by introducing new, domestic uses, changing the surrounding farmland to garden or paddocks and bringing increased traffic into the area. Development and other associated uses (e.g. recreation) can also lead to fragmentation of the landscape and marginalisation of traditional land uses, leading to areas of neglect and poorer management.

2.119 Larger-scale developments will stamp their own character into the landscape, as well as bringing increased traffic and noise, other urbanising elements (e.g. street lighting, pylons) and demands on the landscape for recreation.

2.120 Urban-fringe landscapes are facing particular challenges. Along the coastal plain these landscapes are under pressure from development, recreation – including a growing trend for the keeping of horses – and fragmentation. These pressures are being exacerbated by the deficiency in recreational greenspace in the towns and eroding the quality and integrity of the boundary areas of the National Park.

2.121 The issues associated with development and growth have direct implications for the future of the designated landscapes across the Network area and pose questions regarding future sustainable development in this sub-region.

AGRICULTURAL CHANGE AND INTENSIFICATION

2.122 Agriculture is an important land use in the Network area and over 80% of the South Downs is farmed. However, the demand for food and energy crops brings agricultural intensification; drainage and 'improvement' of river valley flood plains; loss of wet pastures and historic boundary features; and a decline of traditional farming practices and associated skills.

CLIMATE CHANGE

2.123 Climate change is predicted to bring changes in temperature, resulting in warmer winters which could alter the species composition of existing woodlands, shaws and hedgerows. Changes in rainfall patterns could result in more frequent winter flooding and summer droughts. Higher temperatures and drought could put heathlands under stress and increase the risk of fires. Pastures will be vulnerable to summer drought and therefore it is possible that set-aside will be seen more frequently in the landscape as

a means of allowing pasture to recover from dry summers. Some crops will be unviable, allowing others, such as vines to be grown. Stormy, extreme weather could also damage fragile heritage features.

Inspiration: Landscapes provides the inspiration to writers, poets, artists and musicians. The South Downs has provided inspiration to Kipling, the Bloomsbury Set, Elgar, William Cobbet, WH Hudson, Richard Jeffries, Gilbert White, Edward Thomas and Hilaire Beloc

CONCLUSION

2.124 Change in the landscape cannot be halted, but it could be better accommodated in ways which reinforce and restore character and key features.

2.125 Landscape resilience may be strengthened through addressing fragmentation and developing strong landscape networks. Opportunities to make the most efficient use of land may have a negative effect on landscape character and quality.

2.126 Character Areas extend across boundaries and as such there is the potential for different approaches to planning for and dealing with landscape change across authorities. In order

to ensure the planned and sustainable future of these landscapes, development proposals and management guidelines should be based on landscapes. This will require joint working among the relevant authorities.

2.127 There are key differences between the designated landscapes (the National Park and the AONBs) and the areas beyond in terms of the level of protection afforded and in the approach to development.⁵³

2.128 However, across the Network area the proximity of designated and non-designated landscapes means that pressures on the landscape cannot easily be confined to one area and thus it could be argued that the non-designated landscapes require similar 'protections' or approaches in order to protect the integrity, future sustainability and functioning of these landscapes and the services they provide. Strategic planning is needed at a sub-regional scale to address both the immediate and longer-term pressures which may lead to changes in the character and quality of the landscapes across the network area.

2.129 In 2016 the National Park was designated as an International Dark Skies Reserve,⁵⁴ with a core dark skies area. A tranquillity mapping study was also undertaken which also mapped the local

53 NPPF Section 15, para 172

54 southdowns.gov.uk/planning-for-dark-night-skies/

evidence for tranquillity for the National Park.⁵⁵ An extension of this work to the wider Network area would help reveal where dark skies and tranquillity are being lost and provide a better understanding of the impacts on tranquillity in the network area. This would provide a foundation for a strategy to retain and create quieter areas for people to enjoy. Comprehensive and up to date landscape evidence (visioning, guidelines, and strategies) across the network area would help maintain landscape character and support decision-making. Studies should include generous buffer areas and involve joint working across administrative boundaries.

2.130 The scale of proposed new development across the Network areas has the potential to change the character and quality of the landscape across wide areas. Opportunities should be taken to enhance the landscape through development planning; ensuring that it fits with existing settlement patterns and character; conserves the local historic character; supports the maintenance and renewal of the agricultural landscape; maintains and enhances biodiversity; and promotes the celebration of the value and variety of the landscape.

2.131 Landscape Networks and green infrastructure planning can provide essential guidance in areas undergoing change.

2.132 Actions are needed to minimise the landscape impact of infrastructure associated with development such as transport corridors – the loss of tranquillity, noise and visual intrusion. Distinctive landscape character and historic landscape value could be reinforced by restoring, expanding and re-linking remnant areas of grassland, heathland, meadows, woodland and hedgerows. e.g. Forest of Bere in Urban South Hampshire. Linking remnants of ancient woodland and hunting forest and providing a valuable recreational resource for an area of urban growth. Also extending woodland around settlements and infrastructure developments to filter light pollution and reduce sound pollution and the visual impacts of further urbanisation.

2.133 In urban fringe areas the landscape should be a valued area with positive uses, combining a distinctive landscape character with well-managed land uses for the benefit of residents and visitors. The restoration of degraded landscapes in the urban fringe would help improve landscape character and value these important areas.

2.134 The targeted expansion of woodland where appropriate would help strengthen landscape character, improve biodiversity and provide recreational opportunities. This includes the restoration of hedgerow boundaries particularly in urban-fringe locations to restore

traditional field patterns. The maintaining or creation of woodlands around urban areas would help to filter views of development beyond and to provide robust alternative recreational space close to where people live. For example, there is an opportunity to plan new landscapes within and around development areas including Crawley and Horsham; to include high quality green infrastructure, drawing on existing strong landscape patterns e.g. traditional shaws and meadows within new development.

2.135 The Low Weald is a potential Forest District⁵⁶ and opportunities have been identified to create over 5000 Ha through connecting woodlands. Low Weald has been identified as an ‘outstanding’ priority for woodland conservation, particularly in relation to coppice restoration.

2.136 The restoration of river landscapes would improve landscape quality, help to conserve and enhance views over the surrounding landscape and provide a range of green infrastructure benefits.

2.137 There is a need to protect, interpret and celebrate the wealth of heritage present in the landscape. The coherence of the historic environment is at risk in places from increased development and infrastructure pressures. The distinctive historic character of some settlements

55 southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/13-04-17-South-Downs-National-Park-Tranquillity-Study.pdf

56 Preliminary Nature Conservation Objectives for Natural Areas – Woodland and Forestry, Reid, C.M. and Kirby, K.J., English Nature Research Report 239 (1997)

is being eroded, particularly the common-edge settlements on the Hampshire/Surrey border.

2.138 Heritage assets and their setting should be identified and protected as part of structured, integrated approaches including strategic green infrastructure plans.

2.139 Many of the issues documented are already being tackled through other schemes or at a more local scale through planning guidance and other initiatives. However, it may be necessary to find ways of continuing to support existing initiatives, in particular those that operate at the local level with landowners and local communities; and to develop new programmes or initiatives to address gaps in delivery. In addition to short term targeted support there is a need for a partnership to address the longer-term

challenges facing agriculture and forestry. Land uses must be financially viable in order for them to be sustainable in the longer term. For example, woodland and grassland management, both of which may need to look at alternative approaches such as tourism to ensure viability.

Examples of strategic and cross-sectoral partnerships include Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and the Coastal Partnerships – Solent Forum, Hamble Estuary Partnership, and Manhood Peninsula Partnership provide a platform to deliver strategic coastal management and provide a network for closer working relationships.

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