

Chapter 3

The Landscape Classification

This section of the report presents the classification of the South Downs into landscape character types and landscape character areas.

3.1 The physical and human influences, described in the previous chapter, have in combination created the unique and distinctive character of the South Downs. The South Downs National Park can be divided into landscape character types and landscape character areas.

Landscape character types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use, and settlement pattern.

Landscape character areas are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. Each will have its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other areas of the same type.

Changes to the 2011 Classification

3.2 In response to consultation comments, the following changes were made to the 2011 classification:

- The Itchen valley north and south of Winchester has been changed from 'E Chalk Valley System' to 'F Major River Floodplain' and 'G Major Valley Sides' to reflect the fact that it is one of Park's major rivers.
- A small amendment to the boundary between St Catherine's Hill and the Itchen Valley to take the dry valleys into the Open Downland landscape character type.
- A sub-type of 'floodplain' has been created within the 'Type E Chalk Valley Systems' to indicate the extent of the flood zone in these valleys.

- A new landscape character type (H) has been created called 'Wealden River Floodplains' to distinguish the floodplains that occur on Wealden geology from those that occur on chalk geology. This includes the River Rother Floodplain (H1) and the Wealden part of the Arun Floodplain (H2).
- The area of farmland that surrounds the Rother Floodplain has been renamed from 'Sandy Arable Farmland' to 'Valley Farmland' to emphasise its valley location.
- The land east of the Arun (Wealden) Floodplain north of Pulborough has been reclassified from floodplain to an extension of the Northchapel Basin (P2) and Rother Valley Farmland (N2) to better reflect its topography.
- Extended the 'Upper Coastal Plain' landscape type to more closely follow the boundary of the 'Upper Coastal Plain' in the landscape character classification for West Sussex⁵.

The 2019 Classification for the South Downs

3.3 The landscape has been divided into 19 landscape character types. Each of these landscape character types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover and historic evolution.

3.4 The landscape types are further subdivided into landscape character areas. The character areas are discrete geographic areas that possess the common characteristics described for the landscape type. Each character area has a distinct and recognisable local identity. Some of these landscape character areas have sub-areas identified, for example where LCT E Chalk Valley Systems has been divided into valley sides and floodplains or LCT D which has been divided into open and enclosed Downland Mosaic.

3.5 Table 3.1 below lists the relevant landscape character types, landscape character areas (and sub-types where relevant). These can be viewed on the South Downs LCA online map.

3.6 The classification and boundary mapping has been undertaken using GIS, with mapping at a scale of 1:25,000. A more detailed map showing an overview of the classification is provided as an annex to this report.

Table 3.1: Landscape Character Types and Areas

Landscape character type/ area	Sub-type
A Open Downland	
A1 Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs	
A2: Adur to Ouse Open Downs	
A3: Arun to Adur Open Downs	
A4: Mount Caburn	
A5: East Winchester Open Downs	
B Wooded Estate Downland	
B1 Goodwood to Arundel Wooded Estate Downland	
B2 Queen Elizabeth Forest to East Dean Wooded Estate Downland	
B3 Stansted to West Dean Wooded Estate Downland	
B4 Angmering and Clapham Wooded Estate Downland	
C Clay Plateau	
C1 Froxfield Clay Plateau	
D Downland Mosaic	
D1 South Winchester Downland Mosaic	a Enclosed b Open
D2 Hambledon to Clanfield Downland Mosaic	a Enclosed b Open
D3 Bramdean and Cheriton Downland Mosaic	a Enclosed
D4 Newton Valence Downland Mosaic	a Enclosed
E Chalk Valley Systems	
E1 Lavant Valley	a Floodplains b Valley Sides
E2 Ems Valley	a Floodplains b Valley Sides
E3 Meon Valley	a Floodplains b Valley Sides

⁵ <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/landscape-and-environment/landscape-character-assessment-of-west-sussex/> [accessed 26/11/2019]

Landscape character type/ area	Sub-type
E4 Itchen Valley	a Floodplains b Valley Sides
F Major Chalk River Floodplains	
F1 Cuckmere Floodplain	
F2 Ouse Floodplain	
F3 Adur Floodplain	
F4 Arun Floodplain	
F5 Itchen Floodplain	
G Major Chalk Valley Sides	
G1 Cuckmere Valley Sides	
G2 Ouse Valley Sides	
G3 Adur Valley Sides	
G4 Arun Valley Sides	
G5 Itchen Valley Sides	
H Wealden River Floodplains	
H1 Rother Floodplain	
H2 Arun (Wealden) Floodplain	
I Major Scarps	
I1 Ouse to Eastbourne Downs Scarp	
I2 Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp	
I3 Arun to Adur Downs Scarp	
I4 Burton to Arun Scarp	
I5 Saltdown to Butser Hill Scarp	
I6 Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp	
J Scarp Footslopes	
J1 Ouse to Eastbourne Scarp Footslopes	
J2 Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp Footslopes	
J3 Arun to Adur Scarp Footslopes	
K Greensand Terrace	
K1 East Hampshire Greensand Terrace	
K2 East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace	

Landscape character type/ area	Sub-type
L Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales	
L1 Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales	
L2 Kingley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales	
L3 Alice Holt Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vales	
M Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic	
M1 Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic	
M2 Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic	
M3 Woolmer Forest /Weaver's Down Farmland and Heath Mosaic	
N Valley Farmland	
N1 Rother Valley Farmland	
O Greensand Hills	
O1 Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills	
P Low Weald	
P1 Milland Basin Low Weald	
P2 Northchapel Basin Low Weald	
Q Wooded Claylands	
Q1 West Walk – Rookesbury Park	
R Upper Coastal Plain	
R1 South Downs Upper Coastal Plain	
S Shoreline	
S1 Seaford to Beachy Head Shoreline	
S2 Brighton to Rottingdean Shoreline	