

Appendix A

Landscape Character Type A: Open Downland

The *Open Downland* type comprises the distinctive upland landscape on the south facing dip slope of the South Downs. The chalk downs extend east from the Arun Valley to the sea at the Seven Sisters, and rise above the Itchen Valley east of Winchester. This is Kipling's classic 'blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs' (Sussex, 1902). This type contains some of the highest and most remote parts of the South Downs National Park.

Description

Key Characteristics

- Large scale open elevated landscape of rolling chalk downland, with distinctive dry valleys and 'mini-scarps' that relate to faults in the chalk.
- Underlain by solid chalk geology with very occasional surface clay capping and windblown sand creating local pockets of variation in the landscape.
- Large scale geometric arable fields, resulting from 20th century field amalgamation or 19th century enclosure in Sussex with a greater variety of historic field pattern of 17th to 19th century origin in Hampshire.
- Visually permeable post and wire field boundaries. Few hedgerow boundaries and woodland cover limited to small deciduous woodland blocks and distinctive hilltop beech clumps.
- Strong seasonal variation in the landscape with ploughed arable fields scattered with flints contrasting with swathes of arable crops at other times of year.
- General absence of surface water due to the porosity and permeability of the chalk bedrock, although the ephemeral winterbournes and dew ponds are distinctive features.
- Fragments of chalk downland grassland and rare chalk heath, together with associated scrub and woodland habitats are confined to steep slopes where arable cultivation has proved difficult.
- Use of the land for sport (shooting and game rearing) in some part of the *Open Downland* has created a distinct land cover pattern of open downland interspersed with small woodlands.
- Ancient earthworks and flint mines, including visually dominant Iron Age hillforts which crown the highest summits. Many ancient routeways, including the South Downs Way National Trail, rise and cross the downs following historic pilgrimage, trading and farming routes.
- Sparse settlement, with occasional isolated farms and barns. Blocks of modern farm buildings punctuate the open landscape. At a more detailed level flint sheepfolds, barns and shepherds' cottages are a visual reminder of the former extent of sheep grazing.
- Large open skies and distant panoramic views – creating a dramatic and dynamic landscape changing according to prevailing weather conditions.

- A tranquil landscape, often seemingly remote and empty, with a windswept exposed character. The type, alongside parts of LCT B, C and D contains some of the highest and most remote part of the National Park.
- The elevated landform and open character enable panoramic views, including long views along the downland and out to the sea.
- Strong artistic and literary associations.
- Good access opportunities associated with areas of chalk downland, plus extensive areas of land in public ownership – with high recreational use, including sports such as paragliding. Access is more limited on the downs east of Winchester.

Physical Landscape

A.1 The *Open Downland* is formed from a solid geology of undivided Upper and Middle Chalk. It is the consistent physical qualities of this chalk that gives rise to this extensive area of gently undulating dip slope chalk descending southwards from a prominent escarpment ridge. Some of the highest points in the South Downs occur along this ridge, for example Ditchling Beacon which reaches 248m.

A.2 The surface of the chalk dip slope is furrowed by extensive branching dry valley systems and winterbournes which are most likely early natural drainage patterns that retreated as the level of the water table in the chalk fell. In the east, where these dry valleys meet the sea this results in a dramatic undulating cliff line, for example at the Seven Sisters. The cliffs provide a cross-section through the chalk – the cliffs of Beachy Head provide excellent exposures of Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk formations.

A.3 There are also steep 'mini-scarps' within the downs that relate to faults in the chalk and the formation of a secondary escarpment. These form asymmetrical dry valleys. Embedded within the chalk are hard flints which are formed from silica. These flints remain long after the softer chalk has eroded and have been exploited by man as tools and building materials.

A.4 The underlying chalk geology has given rise to Brown and Grey Rendzina soils which are characterised by their shallow, well drained, lime-rich (calcareous) nature and are easily eroded. Veins of sand and gravel (dry valley deposits) are found along the bottom of the dry valleys and in these areas the soils tend to be deeper, slightly acid and loamy.

A.5 Accumulations of clay and embedded flints are located on the higher ridges of the downs where they give rise to the more clayey Paleo-argillic brown earths. All of these soil types give the land a generally good agricultural capability, with the majority being classified as Grade 3 in Defra's Agricultural Land Classification (good-moderate quality agricultural soils). The landscape is characterised by vast arable fields, plus areas of pasture, bounded by post and wire fencing or sparse thorn hedgerows.

A.6 The steeper slopes of the dry valleys and minor scarps are more difficult to farm and these areas often support an irregular mosaic of chalk grassland, scrub and hanger woodland.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

A.7 The sense of scale in this landscape is vast owing to the expansive, rolling topography, the extremely large fields, and the relatively low presence of vertical features which reveals expansive open skies. These large skies ensure that weather conditions are a dominant influence and create a dynamic, landscape varying with the seasons. The rolling topography gives rise to constantly changing views. Field boundaries, that are geometric in form, appear to curve as they cross the undulating landscape. The general absence of hedgerows and woodland creates a strong sense of openness and exposure – this is particularly evident on the coast where the on-shore winds have sculpted hawthorns into contorted, stunted shapes. However, in other inland areas beech clumps create focal features in the open landscape. This is a homogenous, organised landscape as a result of the consistent scale and form of the rolling topography and field patterns.

A.8 The low noise levels, sense of naturalness arising from the presence of chalk grassland, elevation and views combined with low presence of overt built human influences, and low density of roads, settlement and people all contribute to a sense of remoteness and tranquillity across the majority of the downs. This is interrupted only by the presence of occasional car parks and signage related to recreational use. The most elevated 'plateau' areas of the downs and the secluded dry valleys which lack visibility of main settlements, enjoy the darkest skies and provide the greatest sense of remoteness.

A.9 The proximity of the *Open Downs* to many local centres of population mean that there are a large number of potential users of the area. East of the Arun, there are considerable areas of downland in public ownership plus areas of open access land which coincide with areas of chalk grassland. A good network of public rights of way and car parking facilities

has resulted in a landscape which is very accessible for recreation. However, the presence of roads reduces accessibility of the open countryside from urban areas on foot, by bicycle or on horseback, particularly from Winchester.

A.10 The dramatic landscape of the *Open Downs* has been a source of literary inspiration throughout the centuries, but the perception of their aesthetic value has changed significantly. As early as 1772 the naturalist Gilbert White, described the ‘*broad backs*’ and ‘*shapely figured aspect*’ of the open rolling downs. Vast flocks of sheep once roamed the downs and these inspired many writers. In 1813 the Reverend Arthur Young wrote ‘*the whole tract of the Downs in their full extent, is stocked with sheep, and the amazing number they keep, is one of the most singular circumstances in the husbandry of England*’.

A.11 In the 19th century the open chalk landscapes were often described unfavourably. William Gilpin described the landscape of the open downs as ‘*ugly*’, Cobbett found the downs ‘*all high, hard, dry, fox-hunting country*’ and Samuel Johnson described the landscape as being ‘*so desolate that if a man had a mind to hang himself in desperation he would be hard put to find a tree on which to fix a rope*’.

A.12 The downs stirred Kipling to write his poem ‘Sussex’ in 1902 in which he describes the ‘*blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs*’. He also described the intangible elements of the downs such as the voice of the shepherd, the cries of sheep, clamour of sheep bells, jingling of harnesses, sounds of the sea and absence of mechanical noise. This is now hard to find and illustrates how the downs have changed. Virginia Woolf was apparently rendered speechless by the beauty of the downs writing, ‘*One is overcome by beauty more extravagantly than one could expect.... I cannot express this.*’¹

A.13 Many painters have also been inspired by the dramatic landscape including Copley Fielding who painted atmospheric watercolours of the downs in the 19th century, Philip Wilson Steer who painted his watercolour ‘Sussex Downs’ in 1914, and Eric Ravilious whose 20th century paintings depict the chalk downlands and agricultural landscapes.

Biodiversity

A.14 This arable dominated landscape has retained significant ecological interest in the form of areas of unimproved chalk grassland, together with associated scrub and woodland. The majority of these semi-natural habitats are confined to steep slopes where arable cultivation has proved difficult – here significant areas of lowland calcareous grassland, scrub and deciduous woodland (all BAP habitats)

are retained along with pockets of rare chalk heath (the most significant at Lullington Heath NNR,SSSI). The chalk grassland habitats are recognised through extensive national and international designation (e.g. the Lewes Downs SSSI, SAC, NNR). Areas of arable land, particularly those managed less intensively, also provide valuable habitat and support a range of farmland bird species, arable weeds and invertebrates. Along the coast, maritime cliff and slopes (also a BAP habitat) support a range of birds and coastal flora and the most significant areas are designated as SSSI.

A.15 In the wider landscape, the character type supports small scattered blocks of secondary and plantation woodland, together with occasional boundary hedgerows. Although these are largely gappy and defunct, they could provide opportunities for enhancement.

Key Biodiversity Features	Importance
Significant areas of lowland calcareous grassland and lowland heath (both BAP Priority Habitats).	Chalk grassland and heathland is a nationally scarce habitat highly valued for important populations of vascular plants, birds and invertebrates. Chalk heath is a particularly rare habitat.
Mosaic of arable and permanent pasture.	Provides habitat diversity at a landscape scale and is particularly notable for supporting a range of farmland bird species.
Occasional areas of scrub and deciduous woodland (BAP Priority Habitat).	The presence of occasional scrub and woodland adds to the overall diversity of chalk grassland habitats and provides additional ecological interest within the agricultural landscape. Some significant blocks notified as LWS.
Areas of vegetation on cliffs and sloping ground adjacent to the sea (BAP Priority Habitat).	Coastal habitats are particularly important in supporting populations of breeding seabirds.

A.16 Extensive areas of BAP Priority Habitats, particularly calcareous grassland, are identified as providing effective habitat networks in Natural England’s National Habitat Networks Mapping Project². Many adjacent areas are identified as being suitable for restoration and in others work is already underway to restore habitats, including chalk grassland. Network Enhancement Zones extend across the *Open Downs* type and identify where land is suitable for the creation of connecting habitats.

¹ Woolf, Virginia. (1927) ‘Evening over Sussex – Reflections in a Motor Car’

² Natural England (2018). National Habitat Networks Mapping Project

Historic Character

A.17 Open chalk downland has been favoured for settlement throughout early history, although largely devoid of settlement today. Finds of flint hand axes within the remnant clay-with-flint deposits indicates the presence of Palaeolithic hunters, while the fertile and thick deposits of loessic soil which formerly capped the chalk attracted Neolithic farmers, who farmed within clearings in the wildwood. Agricultural communities continued to clear the tree cover and farm the downland on an increasing scale until the Romano-British period, leaving extensive traces of their field systems and settlements across the character area. The land was also valued as a ritual landscape, with a number of different monuments constructed, including causewayed enclosures, long barrows and round barrows. Many of these sites were prominently located on, or just below, the ridgeline and are still visible in the modern landscape, many of them used since the early medieval period as significant markers on parish boundaries.

A.18 Anglo-Saxon settlers initially settled the dipslope of the downland, but later communities settled along the river valleys and the greensand shelf, with some of the original settlements surviving into later centuries as isolated farms on the downland. By the medieval period, centuries of arable cultivation had exhausted the downland soils, and the character area was given over to pasture. A sheep-corn husbandry system developed, with huge communal sheep flocks pastured on the downland during the day, and brought down onto the arable lands at night to provide valuable manure. This system was put under pressure in the 13th century as rising population pressure saw the spread of arable land back up onto the downland, but the economic downturn of the 14th century, exacerbated by climatic change and pestilence (affecting animals and humans), saw the downland returned to sheepwalk. The arable lands of the *Open Downs*, tended to be unhedged common fields creating a 'prairie'-like landscape, operating a highly developed form of arable farming based around crop rotations within several large fields and continuous cultivation (i.e. no fields left as fallow).

A.19 Downland near Winchester was mostly enclosed during the 17th -19th centuries and is still characterised by planned enclosure from this period. The area east of the Arun was characterised by open sheepwalk until the middle of the 20th century, with some areas of 18th-19th planned enclosure associated with new farmsteads established at this time. Some of the downland was ploughed during the Second World War, but the landscape was transformed from the 1950s onwards when modern farming techniques and political pressure allowed vast areas of the downland to be ploughed and converted to arable production.

A.20 The character of the landscape is now one of large and regularly shaped 20th century fields, often bounded by wire fencing but with hedgerows and tracks surviving from the medieval manorial downland landscape, although their historic character is largely subdued by more recent agricultural change.

A.21 Slopes too steep to plough survive as isolated blocks of unenclosed downland, often neglected and overgrown with regenerated scrub, but often preserving ancient terraced field systems. A narrow belt of downland also survives along the top of the escarpment, and it is here that many of the prehistoric and later monuments survive as earthworks. Scattered farmsteads, some of medieval origin representing shrunken hamlets, exist in some of the sheltered dipslope valleys, sometimes with isolated outfarms (small groups of barns and animal shelters). Woodland cover is generally very scarce, comprising isolated shelter belts of post-1800 date associated with farmsteads, or occasional game coverts.

Key Features of the Historic Environment	Importance
Preservation of prehistoric and later earthworks in unploughed areas.	Provides strong sense of historical continuity – many are protected as Scheduled Monuments.
General absence of woodland.	Indicates extent of past land clearance.
Low level of surviving settlement, with earlier settlements existing as earthworks/archaeological sites.	Reflects the fluctuations in settlement patterns through time due to changing environmental/cultural conditions.
Scattered post-medieval farmsteads.	Indicates the changing nature of farming practice following decline of traditional manorial system.
Modern enclosures.	Evidence for complete reorganisation of landscape.

Settlement Form and Built Character

A.22 The settlement pattern in this area is characterised by a low density of dispersed settlement and an almost complete absence of nucleated settlement. This conforms to Historic England's rural settlement designation of East Wessex Sub-Province within the South-eastern Province, where the dominant settlement form comprises nucleated villages situated beyond the downs. The typical settlement form is relatively late in origin, and comprises isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure derived from former sheepwalk where they are often visually prominent. However, some of the farmsteads are of medieval

origin and represent former dependent hamlets which have subsequently shrunk. Aisled barns are an iconic feature of the open downland landscape, contained by distinctive flint boundary walls which are critical to their setting.

A.23 Building materials are typically flint, red brick, clay tiles and Welsh slate, with some modern materials including concrete, corrugated iron and asbestos used in farm buildings. Flint is particularly characteristic of the agricultural barns and walls.

Evaluation

Ecosystem Services in the Open Downland

A.24 Ecosystem services are the benefits people and society get from the natural environment. The *Open Downland* provides:

Provisioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food provision – the dip slope is a major producer of cereals, including wheat and barley. ■ Water availability – chalk aquifers, which underly the dip slope, are the principle source of water for the surrounding area, acting as a storage reservoir for agricultural practices and drinking water.
Regulating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Water quality – the chalk which underlies the dip slope acts as a natural filter system, helping to maintain the chemical and ecological status of the water. Diffuse pollution from agriculture can raise the levels of pesticides in watercourses, as well as accelerating erosion causing excess sediment. ■ Water flow – groundwater from the underlying chalk feeds the watercourses of the area, regulating their base flow. ■ Soil quality – well-drained, good quality soils are easily worked, making them productive for arable practices. ■ Soil erosion – woodland on the steep slopes, as well as low tillage can reduce the risk of soil erosion by wind and water which pose a risk to soil structure on the exposed <i>Open Downland</i>. ■ Climate – the thin chalk soils are under fairly intensive arable production and therefore have a limited capacity for storing carbon. ■ Pollination – the unimproved and semi-natural grassland habitats within the <i>Open Downland</i> provide important nectar sources for pollinators, therefore supporting food production.
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sense of Place – the elevated rolling downland and numerous dry valleys with expansive views provide a strong sense of place. The dramatic chalk cliffs of Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters, defined as part of the Sussex Heritage Coast, are particularly distinctive. The downs have been a source of literary inspiration for generations of writers and artists. A wealth of prehistoric and other heritage assets and historic chalkland tracks reflect the long history of human land use. ■ Tranquillity – away from major roads and settlements, the <i>Open Downland</i> has a strong sense of tranquillity, particularly associated with secluded downland combes and the upper reaches of the dip slope. They provide a sense of remoteness within close proximity of urban centres and an experience of dark night skies. ■ Recreation – the <i>Open Downland</i> hosts an extensive network of public rights of way, as well as open access land and promoted routes, such as the South Downs Way which runs along the crest of the scarp slope, on the northern boundary of the character type. The high parts of the downs are amongst the most important recreational assets of the National Park. The route also runs along the undeveloped ‘heritage coast’ where the iconic chalk sea cliffs are a major draw to the area.
Supporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Biodiversity – a variety of BAP Priority Habitats, including lowland calcareous grassland, lowland heathland, maritime cliff and slope and deciduous woodland, support an extensive range of important flora and fauna species. The extent, variety and species composition of the chalk grassland and heath within the South Downs makes it an internationally important resource.

Sensitivities

A.25 This landscape type has many sensitive physical and aesthetic/perceptual features that are vulnerable to change, as set out in the table below:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The open uninterrupted skylines and exposed undeveloped character resulting from the rolling topography and absence of enclosing or vertical features. These are especially vulnerable to interruption by development or clutter.
2.	The strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness, with areas of deep ‘remoteness’ associated with the hidden dry valleys and the highest reaches of the downs which have no visibility of adjacent settlements and experience the darkest skies. This quality is being affected by traffic pressure on the roads and tracks that cross the downs and development on the edge of the National Park.

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
3.	The dark skies associated with the South Downs International Dark Skies Reserve, which are vulnerable to light sources, particularly in the 'Dark Sky Core' to the west of the LCT. The night time glow of the adjacent urban areas is already discernible, and prominent in some places.
4.	Areas of unimproved chalk grassland, chalk heath and pasture, which are vulnerable to changes in management and require consistent grazing regimes.
5.	The mosaic of habitats, including arable land and pasture that supports arable weeds and farmland birds and could be vulnerable to further intensification of farming methods.
6.	The sense of unity and cohesion given by the repeated use of flint, brick and clay tile building materials. This is vulnerable to unsympathetic additions, extensions or conversions, which would disrupt the intact built character. The distinctive isolated barns are especially vulnerable.
7.	The high number of historic monuments and earthworks that form significant landmarks and a strong sense of historical continuity, and their historic landscape settings.
8.	The more subtle features of the historic landscape, such as hedgerows and tracks, ancient field systems and tumuli, which are not protected and are vulnerable to change and loss.
9.	The vast, open character (resulting from the uniform land cover of grassland and crops and sparse hedgerow/woodland cover) and consequent lack of screening opportunities generally makes this landscape type highly sensitive visually. Areas that appear hidden from one viewpoint are likely to be exposed from another. In contrast, the enclosed nature of the steep dry valleys and the plateaued tops of the downs, means they lack intervisibility with adjacent landscapes, and are especially valued for their strong sense of seclusion and remoteness.
10.	The elevated landform typical of this landscape type and open character permits long views to and from a wider area, particularly from the top of the dip slope. The landscape is therefore visually sensitive to changes within or beyond the National Park boundary, for example within the adjacent urban areas.

Change – Key Issues and Trends

Past Change

A.26 Past change includes:

Past Change	
1.	Conversion of the pasture, which formed the downs' open and unified character, to large arable fields in the 1950s.
2.	More recently, conversion of arable land back to pasture with restoration of sheep grazing and management of chalk grassland slopes as a result of agricultural policy.
3.	Introduction of large steel framed agricultural buildings over the last 70 years which negatively affects the remote character of the <i>Open Downland</i> .
4.	Destruction of archaeological sites as a result of post-war ploughing.
5.	The post-war creation of areas of significant land in public ownership (National Trust and Local Authority) resulting in increased recreation opportunities.
6.	Development within adjacent urban areas or out to sea which is prominent in views from parts of the <i>Open Downs</i> , except for the remotest areas.
7.	The introduction of golf courses on the edges of the adjacent urban areas in the second half of the 20 th century which have eroded the rural character of the landscape and diluted the sharp transition between the towns and downs, although improved understanding of sympathetic management has started to address this (e.g. Hockley Golf Course LWS/SNCI).
8.	The appearance of apparently abandoned land which has an impact on the 'managed' character of the landscape.

Past Change	
9.	Increased traffic on the few rural roads that cross the downs, which has affected the sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
10.	Conversion of historic farm buildings, particularly to residential use, creating a domestic and suburban character to their settings.
11.	Erosion, parking problems and conflicts of interests arising from diverse recreational use of the downs, including activities such as paragliding.
12.	Over-abstraction of the chalk aquifer resulting in drying of winterbournes.

Future Landscape Change

A.27 The likely future changes are set out in the table below:

Future Change	
1.	Climate change could impact the species composition and condition of semi-natural habitats, particularly chalk grasslands and chalk heathlands as some species are more sensitive to drought and heat stress leading to a decline in overall species diversity.
2.	The risk of wildfires will increase with climate change as summers become hotter and drier. This is of particular concern on chalk grassland and heathland and open access sites which are at higher risk at times of dry weather and high recreational use.
3.	Climate change could impact species type and composition of the small deciduous woodlands, particularly the hilltop beech clumps which are susceptible to water stress.
4.	Higher temperatures could lead to incidence of different livestock pests and possible increased use of pesticides if pests and pathogens increase.
5.	Agricultural land use will be driven by the changes in the world market and agricultural policy. In the <i>Open Downs</i> agricultural incentives may encourage creation and management of chalk grassland habitats. Perpetuation of sustainable grazing will be critical to the success of such schemes. However, sheep grazing, particularly on more marginal areas, notably the steeper slopes and dry valleys, may be unsustainable.
6.	Demand for wind energy development, which could intrude into open skylines.
7.	If Net Zero commitments are implemented it is likely that there will be key changes to land use or soil management systems. This could include a reduction in grazing land to free up land for other uses such as bioenergy crop planting (and low-grade biomass production), or a change in the patterns of arable crops. Alterations to land cover and no-tillage systems could alter the visual character of the landscape or alter the open character of the downs. Some crops can have a sudden impact e.g. oil seed rape adds bright splash of yellow to an otherwise muted landscape.
8.	Increased interest in viticulture due to the suitability of the soils and elevation as climate change is likely to increase the elevation at which vines can be grown in the future. There is potential for wine making to impact the rural character of the landscape due to potential for associated diversification, such as statement buildings, glamping and weddings.
9.	Agricultural production will continue to intensify in some parts of the area, with amalgamation of farms and potential for further new large scale farm buildings. This could result in some other buildings becoming redundant and pressure for conversion or insensitive change.
10.	Further intensification in crop production and more regular droughts on the light chalk soils, could result in greater soil erosion and run off with resultant soils loss and siltation of rivers and streams in adjacent valley landscapes. Further pollution of groundwaters through leaching of nitrates in excess of crop needs is also a concern. On the other hand, drought could result in withdrawal of arable land from cropping and reversion to natural grassland, particularly in areas of thin soils such as this.
11.	Hotter drier summers may result in drying up of winterbournes in their upper courses with impacts upon associated wetlands. Increases in seasonal rainfall has the potential for sudden peaks of flow and an increase in soil erosion on steep scarp slopes.
12.	Pressure for built development outside the National Park, particularly since the <i>Open Downland</i> lies adjacent to urban areas, could result in visual impacts, increases in artificial lighting, increases in traffic through the area, as well as demand for abstraction with associated effects on the chalk aquifer. This may affect general perceptual qualities including tranquillity and dark skies.

Future Change
13. Infrastructure projects, including upgrades associated with the M3 and major trunk roads which lie adjacent to or cut through the landscape, which may affect the perceived tranquillity of the area and offshore windfarm development in the English Channel which may impact views to and from the <i>Open Downland</i> .
14. Recreational pressure may have an impact on the downlands landscape, particularly ecologically sensitive sites, with increasing visitor numbers and demand for facilities altering the sense of tranquillity.
15. Pressure for new woodland planting on the open downs as part of climate change afforestation schemes or biodiversity offsetting.

Broad Management Objective and Landscape Guidelines

A.28 The overall management objective should be to conserve the vast open rolling upland character of the *Open Downs* and the strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies.

Guidance for Landscape Management

- A.** Protect and continue to manage (graze) the existing chalk grassland and chalk heath habitats while enabling an increase in species diversity.
- B.** Maintain and increase the species diversity of areas of semi-improved grassland, which act as a reservoir for more common chalk downland species. Monitor species composition in relation to climate change.
- C.** The continued conversion of arable land to grassland would be a beneficial change, particularly on upper hillsides and summits – creating large continuous areas of grassland linking to chalk downland sites, which reveal the smoothly rolling landform and reduce the risk of soil erosion. The aim should be to create a habitat mosaic of pasture and arable land and protect archaeological sites and their setting.
- D.** Ensure planning for wildfires is incorporated into downland grassland and heathland management plans. Promote responsible recreation behaviour particularly during heatwaves, when there is an increased risk of fire in areas of open grassland and heathland.
- E.** Consider the potential landscape and visual effects of different land uses, such as pig farms, and crop types such as viticulture, maize, soya and biomass crops – conserve the open character and visual unity of the downland landscape by retaining permanent landcover rather than rotational crops, particularly on hill summits.
- F.** Increase the biodiversity of arable land and promote appropriate management of arable farmland to create a wildlife-rich habitat supporting farmland birds, including retaining areas of fallow land, maintaining over winter stubbles, maintaining an unploughed margin around arable land.
- G.** Manage existing hedgerows and replant hedgerows in key locations where habitat connectivity is a priority and iconic views would not be affected.
- H.** Protect and manage all existing archaeological earthwork sites for their contribution to understanding and recognising the historic continuity in the landscape.
- I.** Manage areas of scrub on steeper slopes to vary the age and species structure and to enhance the distinctive landform.
- J.** Increase the mosaic of habitats, including grasslands, scrub and woodland. Maintaining vegetative cover on steep slopes can reduce the risk of soil erosion. Where possible, transitional habitats should be created between woodland and grasslands to increase the diversity of microclimates and habitats for species, an important feature for climate change adaptation.
- K.** Manage areas of deciduous hanger woodland to maintain these as a feature of the steeper slopes and the distinctive hilltop beech clumps providing contrast with open rolling downland.
- L.** Be alert to potential new pests and diseases and plan for their management.
- M.** Continue to monitor native species to assess changes in numbers and distribution. Monitor and control the spread of invasive species which are a cause of decline in native habitats, such as Cotoneasters *Cotoneaster spp* on chalk grasslands. Refer to the SDNP INSS Strategy.
- N.** Monitor water abstraction of the chalk aquifer to and seek to restore flows to the winterbournes. Avoid ploughing out winterbournes to reduce the risk of soil erosion.
- O.** Seek to minimise water pollution from agriculture through sensitive land management practices which reduce surface run-off and reduce nutrient surplus.
- P.** Manage visitor and recreation pressure, where necessary, by diverting people away from particularly sensitive sites and habitats, particularly visitor numbers associated with the South Downs Way. Develop new coastal recreational routes in areas which are at greatest risk of erosion.

Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

- A. Maintain the essentially open undeveloped character. Opportunities for built development are severely restricted in this remote and tranquil landscape.
- B. Maintain the settlement form of isolated farmsteads which often sit prominently in the landscape. Encourage the use of materials characteristic of the downs landscape, typically flint, red brick, clay tiles and Welsh slate, and the use of boundary features using local methods and materials, typically flint walls.
- C. Conserve the open skylines which are particularly sensitive to any type of built development. The crest of the northern escarpment is especially important in relation to long views from the low lying landscape beyond.
- D. Conserve the unique and remote character of the *Open Downs* and associated dark skies, particularly the most remote upper reaches of the downs which have no visibility of main settlements. Pay attention to the introduction of any new lighting into the landscape, particularly the 'Dark Sky Core' of the International Dark Sky Reserve, taking into account the technical guidance advice note³ : <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/TLL-10-SDNPA-Dark-Skies-Technical-Advice-Note-2018.pdf>.
- E. Encourage sympathetic re-use of any traditional farm buildings that may become redundant (such as the flint barns) so as to maintain their external fabric, appearance and setting. Refer to guidance contained in the Historic Farmsteads study.⁴
- F. Consider opportunities for planting to soften the existing urban fringes, using species typical of the chalk downland, for example within Lewes and Truleigh Hill. Planting should recognise and reveal the subtleties in the landscape and avoid a standardised approach. Woodland is usually confined to lower slopes while isolated woodland clumps are features of some ridgetops.
- G. Manage recreational use and ensure recreational facilities and signage are well integrated into the landscape by means of siting, materials and design.
- H. Consider effects of any development beyond the National Park boundary. In addition to being visible in views from the South Downs, secondary effects such as light spill, noise and increased traffic will all have an impact on the special qualities of remoteness and tranquillity associated with the *Open Downland*.
- I. Consider views to and from the *Open Downland* in relation to any change. Refer to guidance in the View Characterisation and Analysis report⁵.

Woodland strategy and suitable species

A.29 The LCT is predominantly open arable land and grassland with 28km² of woodland, mostly broadleaved, covering 9% of the LCT, mostly as broadleaf woodland on steeper slopes. Extensive woodland creation is not appropriate for this area as openness and views are important features of this landscape, however small areas of planting to link and extend existing woodland on steeper slopes would be beneficial, where these do not conflict with grassland conservation and enhancement.

A.30 Appropriate plant species may be informed by the National Biodiversity Network Gateway, relevant Biodiversity Action Plans and biological records from the relevant Biological Records Centre.

A.31 Ensure any purchased plant stock is through reputable nurseries, operating the Plant Health Assurance Scheme (once it has been trialled) to protect against the risk of *Xylella fastidiosa* and other plant health risks.

³ South Downs National Park Authority (2018) *Dark Skies Technical Advice Note*

⁴ Forum Heritage Services (2005) *Historic Farmsteads & Landscape Character in Hampshire, Pilot Project*. Report by Bob Edwards for Historic England.

⁵ LUC. 2015 South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis

Character Areas	
There are five <i>Open Downland character areas</i> located within the National Park.	
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

A1: Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs

Location and Boundaries

The *Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs* occurs at the eastern end of the spine of chalk that forms the South Downs. The area extends from the deep U-shaped Ouse Valley in the west to Eastbourne/ Beachy Head in the east. The crest of the steep scarp defines the northern and eastern extent of the character area. To the south the boundary is defined by the coastline where high, chalk cliffs mark a sharp transition to the shore. The character area is divided into two parts by the Cuckmere Valley. This is the only character area that meets the sea, with associated strong maritime influences and extensive sea views.

Key Characteristics

- Vast open rolling upland chalk landscape of blunt, whale-backed downs reaching 217m at Firle Beacon.
- Furrowed by extensive branching dry valley systems which results in a dramatic undulating cliff line where the downs meet the sea at the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head. Here, there are strong maritime influences and connections with the seascape and Sussex Heritage Coast.
- Straight sided, irregular fields of 20th century date bounded by post and wire fencing or sparse thorn hedgerows, form a mosaic of arable and permanent pasture. This habitat is particularly notable for supporting a range of farmland bird species.
- Hedgerows and tracks surviving from the earlier manorial downland landscape are important historic landscape features.
- Remnants of unimproved chalk grassland and scrub on steeper slopes, some of which reveal ancient terraced field systems, plus the large area of rare chalk heath at Lullington Heath.NNR.
- Friston Forest, a large 20th century conifer and beech plantation is located in the centre of the area and is an unusual feature in the otherwise open landscape.
- Large open skies ensure that weather conditions are a dominant influence creating a dynamic landscape, particularly on the windswept coastal edge.
- Strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity across the area with pockets of 'deep' remoteness associated with hidden dry valleys and higher reaches of the downs, which without intervisibility with the main settlements, experience the darkest skies. At the same time an accessible landscape with high levels of public access.
- Generally, a low density of dispersed settlement, characterised by scattered farmsteads – most of 18th-19th century origin, with some of medieval origin representing shrunken hamlets. Traditional flint barns are a feature; large modern agricultural buildings are now prominent.
- Turn of the century garden estates at East Dean, centred around a medieval core – an unusual feature of the *Open Downland* landscape.
- Large number of prehistoric and later earthworks providing a strong sense of historical continuity; causewayed enclosures, long barrows and round barrows situated on the ridge-line form important landmark features.
- Panoramic views across adjacent landscapes – particularly notable are seascape views from the coastal cliffs and views over the scarp footslopes and Low Weald from the crest of the northern escarpment.

Specific Characteristics Unique to the Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs

A.32 The landscape is typical of the type with expansive, open rolling downland. It is the only character area to meet the sea – here the cliffs provide a cross-section through the chalk with exposures of Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk formations.

Chalk grassland and heath habitats of the Seaford to Beachy Head SSSI are therefore subjected to coastal influence. This character area also supports one of the largest areas of chalk heath remaining in Britain at Lullington Heath (SSSI/NNR) containing rare chalk heathland and chalk grassland communities.

A.33 Prehistoric occupation of the clifftop zone is particularly evident in the character area as it retains its traditional use as sheepwalk. The lack of extensive modern ploughing has preserved many earthworks that have been destroyed further inland, although many of these are now being encroached by scrub. The most prominent prehistoric features comprise hillforts (Seaford Head and Belle Tout) and barrows (Crowlink), many of which may well have been visible from the sea, thereby informing travellers that this fertile land was already occupied. The commanding nature of this cliff top area has resulted in specific features on the coastal edge with the erection of coastal beacons, coastguard barracks (to combat smuggling) and a range of military sites from Napoleonic batteries through to Second World war pillboxes.

A.34 Friston Forest, a large plantation woodland, is an unusual and somewhat incongruous feature of the *Open Downs*. This forest was first planted in 1926 and is dominated by beech, although pine was planted as a nursery crop and is slowly being removed. The site has developed significant ecological interest and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It is also a valuable recreational resource - it offers way marked routes for walkers and mountain bikers and two car parks service the forest. A further feature of this character area is the Seven Sisters Country Park, which provides a popular location for walking, cycling and canoeing. Access to Lullington Heath NNR is limited to public rights of way, but guided walks organised by Natural England allow wider access.

A.35 The sense of tranquillity, that is typical of this landscape type, is vulnerable to intrusion, particularly at Beachy Head, where car parks and visitor signage in the recreation areas are a strong influence. The presence of communication masts at Beachy Head and Beddingham Hill, and the golf courses at the edges of Seaford and Eastbourne also affect the perception of tranquillity and remoteness. Areas of 'deep' remoteness with the darkest skies are associated with the higher reaches of the downs, and in the hidden dry valleys known as 'bottoms' (e.g. Jerry's Bottom, Tilton Bottom) which lack visibility of adjacent settlements.

A.36 The area exhibits the typical low density dispersed settlement pattern of the landscape type. Exceptions to this pattern are found within sheltered low-lying areas near the edge of the character area where small nucleated settlements of medieval origin are located, such as Bishopstone, Jevington and East Dean. East Dean which was built as a private garden estate at the turn of the 19th century introduced a built suburban element into the landscape. It has grown into a

modern dormitory settlement – an unusual feature of the open downland landscape. The 19th century coastal edge settlement is also unique to this character area. Here, small nucleated groups of terraced cottages were established at Cuckmere and Birling by the Blockade Service/Coastguard to house officers engaged on anti-smuggling duties and modern bungalows have encroached at Birling.

A.37 The downs provide a sense of openness with panoramic views into adjacent landscapes which are identified in the View Characterisation and Analysis report.⁶ From the north there are panoramic views out over the scarp footslopes and the Low Weald beyond the National Park boundary, while to the south there are celebrated views along the coastal cliffs at Seven Sisters, Birling Gap and Beachy Head. There are views to the east over Eastbourne which abuts the scarp, and to the south over the suburban area of Seaford (beyond the National Park boundary) which extends into the chalk landscape.

Sensitivities Specific to the Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs

A.38 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The vast open downlands with their ecological rich habitats of chalk grassland and heath, including nationally important habitats in the Seaford to Beachy Head SSSI and Lullington Heath SSSI/NNR.
2.	The role of the clifftops in providing a setting for prominent prehistoric features and traditional land uses.
3.	High recreational value, particularly along the Heritage coast, at the Seven Sisters Country Park and Friston Forest.
4.	Expansive sea views along the cliffs, including iconic views from Seven Sisters, Birling gap and Beachy Head.
5.	The strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness across the downlands with pockets of 'deep' remoteness, particularly associated with the highest slopes below the scarp and hidden dry valleys such as those below Blackcap Hill and Bostal Hill, at Tilton Bottom and Bostal Bottom.

Change Specific to the Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs

A.39 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes to this area are set out in the table below.

⁶ LUC. 2015 South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis – Views 1,3, 20, 25

Forces for Change	
1.	Erosion of the distinctive chalk cliffs on the coastal edge of this character area. The rate of erosion is one of the highest in Europe (30-40cm per year on average) and climate change is expected to increase this due to rises in the incidence and severity of storm events. Continued erosion will result in the loss or change to cliff top habitats and cliff top paths and other recreational and cultural assets, for example the Bronze Age round barrow on Baily's Hill.
2.	Pressure for development outside the National Park and associated increases in traffic, particularly on the edge of Eastbourne and Seaford and upgrades to the A27 (T) which can affect general perceptual qualities, including tranquillity and dark skies.
3.	Visitor pressure often leading to use of urban design solutions– car parks, signage, footways and the expansion of visitor facilities to cope with increasing numbers of visitors
4.	Pressure for offshore wind farms affecting views of and from the chalk cliffs.
5.	Increased recreational pressure and demand for leisure land uses, particularly along the coast.
6.	The risk of wildfires will increase with climate change as summers become hotter and drier. This is of particular concern due to the extent of coniferous and beech plantation at Friston Forest.

- particularly during heatwaves when the risk of fire is increased.
- f. Consider the effect of any change on the setting of the National Park particularly where there are extensive views over the surrounding landscape. Refer to guidance in the View Characterisation and Analysis.
- g. Consider the impact of offshore wind farms on views from the *Open Downland*, particularly on the Heritage Coast.

Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs

A.40 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:

- a. Consider sensitive approaches to manage coastal erosion. Support the development of naturally evolving coastlines, which reduce the loss of coastal habitats.
- b. Conserve the earthworks, such as hillforts (Seaford Head and Belle Tout) and barrows (Crowlink), along the coastal edge and manage scrub encroachment.
- c. Manage recreational use, making recreational infrastructure more resilient, particularly in areas of high pressure such as at Beachy Head.
- d. Continue to manage Friston Forest for its ecological and recreational value and seek opportunities for better integration with the downland setting in association with future felling of the beech crop.
- e. Ensure planning for wildfires is incorporated into forest management plans, particularly for Friston Forest. Promote responsible recreation behaviour

A2: Adur to Ouse Open Downs

Location and Boundaries

The *Adur to Ouse Open Downs* extend between the two river valleys and wrap around the northern and eastern edge of Brighton. To the east they abut the edge of Lewes, which has extended up onto the downland from the Ouse valley. The area is defined to the north by the crest of the north facing scarp, the *Adur to Ouse Downs Scarp*, and to the south largely by the National Park boundary approximately along the line of the A27 (T) and forming the urban edge of Peacehaven, Brighton, Hove, Southwick and Shoreham.

To the south there is an abrupt boundary between the lower slopes of the downs and the urban area on the coastal plain and frequent views across development. This is a particularly dramatic part of the *Open Downs* with the prominent northern scarp reaching 248m at Ditchling Beacon.

Key Characteristics

- Vast open rolling upland chalk landscape of blunt, whale-backed downs reaching 248m at Ditchling Beacon.
- Furrowed by extensive branching dry valley systems which produce deep, narrow, rounded coombes. The main dry valleys contain transport routes, for example the A23 (T) in the Pyecombe Gap.
- Large scale irregular fields (of 20th century date) of arable and pasture bounded by visually permeable post and wire fencing or sparse thorn hedgerows creating a very open landscape supporting a range of farmland birds. Hedgerows and tracks survive from the earlier manorial downland landscape.
- Significant areas of unimproved chalk grassland, for example at Castle Hill, which supports nationally scarce plant species.
- Occasional scrub and woodland on steeper slopes add to the overall diversity of chalk grassland habitats, contributing to biodiversity and providing visual texture in the landscape.
- A landscape managed for country sports (game shooting) which preserves the shape and form of the landscape and creates a distinctive landcover including small woodlands and game cover plots.
- Large open skies ensure that weather conditions are a dominant influence creating a dynamic landscape, with considerable seasonal variation.
- A strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity in close proximity to the south coast urban area. Pockets of deep remoteness associated with hidden dry valleys.
- A large number of prehistoric and later earthworks providing a strong sense of historical continuity; a concentration of Iron Age hillforts which form prominent features on the skylines, three overlooking the Weald (Devil's Dyke, Ditchling Beacon and Wolstonbury) and one commanding the coastal plain (Hollingbury).
- Includes the site of the registered battlefield of Lewes, fought in 1264 with cavalry action as a dominant theme.
- Stanmer Park with areas of original parkland surviving around Stanmer House, including 18th century plantations, smaller clumps and trees belts. Stanmer village is a good example of an estate village.
- Good public access with a network of public rights of way and open access land.
- Severe cuttings and ridges associated with the A27 (T) around Brighton.
- The Jack and Jill windmills at Clayton and the communication masts at Truleigh Hill are prominent features of the skyline.
- The typical settlement form is relatively late in origin and comprises isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century. The individual farmsteads are often prominent features in the landscape.
- Building materials are typically flint, red brick and clay tiles, with more modern materials used in farm buildings.

- Extensive views from the top of the downs out across the scarp footslopes and Low Weald to the north beyond the National Park boundary and south across the rolling dip-slope to the coast.

Specific Characteristics Unique to the Adur to Ouse Open Downs

A.41 This character area exhibits open rolling upland chalk scenery typical of the *Open Downs* landscape type. The blunt, whale-backed downs reach a dramatic 248m at Ditchling Beacon and are furrowed by extensive branching dry valley systems which produce deep, narrow, rounded coombes. The deep coombes and the higher reaches of the downs create pockets of 'deep' remoteness with the darkest skies.

A.42 Three Iron Age hillforts overlook the Weald (Devil's Dyke, Ditchling Beacon and Wolstonbury) and one commands the coastal plain (Hollingbury). This character area also contains the battlefield of Lewes, on which a battle was fought in 1264 and a 20th century Chattri, an Indian military cemetery and war memorial. The Jack and Jill windmills at Clayton are skyline features revealing the power of the wind in this exposed landscape and associated with its long history of arable cultivation.

A.43 The location of Brighton to the south of this character area means that it is influenced, on its edges, by urban fringe features such as road cuttings and traffic associated with the A23(T) and A27(T) roads, views of built development, electricity pylons and golf courses which dilute the sharp transition between the urban area and *Open Downs* and a cluster of communication masts at Truleigh Hill. Light pollution already impacts on dark skies.

A.44 The proximity of Brighton also means that there are a large number of potential users of the area. The networks of open access land (which tend to coincide with the steeper slopes and areas of chalk grassland), the extensive network of public rights of way and car parking facilities, particularly around Devil's Dyke, make this a highly accessible landscape. Public transport routes between Brighton and Devil's Dyke, Ditchling Beacon and Stanmer Park enhance countryside access further. The South Downs Way National Trail follows the ridge of the northern scarp along much of its length and provides magnificent panoramic views - Sustrans' cycle route 89 also shares part of this route. The Sussex Border Path also provides north-south access across the downs.

A.45 Nationally important chalk grasslands are found within the area, including Beeding Hill to Newtimber Hill SSSI, Clayton to Offham escarpment SSSI and Wolstonbury Hill

SSSI. Castle Hill SSSI/SAC is an internationally important chalk grassland site and supports a particularly rich orchid flora which includes the national scarce early spider orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*.

A.46 An 18th century landscape park at Stanmer (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) is an important feature of the *Adur to Ouse Open Downs*. Although large parts of the park are now converted into modern arable fields, parts of the original parkland pasture survive around Stanmer House, with 18th century plantations occupying the south-western flanks of the park, and further smaller clumps and belts of trees contributing to the diversity to the landscape. The original boundary is still evident in the landscape, particularly where it is formed by a high stone wall. Stanmer village is a typical estate village.

A.47 The highest points on the downs provide panoramic views north across the scarp footslopes to the Low Weald beyond the National Park boundary and south to the coast. Further south there are wide views over the Ouse Valley to the east or across the coastal settlements. Representative views are identified in the View Characterisation and Analysis report⁷.

A.48 The turbines of the Rampion Wind Farm form dominant vertical structures 13-20km off the Sussex coast. These large-scale turbines affect views from the downs.

Sensitivities Specific to the Adur to Ouse Open Downs

A.49 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The open rolling upland landscape with its ecologically rich habitats of chalk grassland, recognised through nationally and international designation, including several SSSI and Castle Hill SAC.
2.	Changes in the urban area beyond park boundary due to the proximity to and views over development on the coastal plain at Brighton.
3.	Iconic views north across the scarp to the Low Weald or over the dip-slope to the coast which are sensitive to change.

⁷ South Downs National Park Authority (2015) South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis – Views 2,4,13,43, 51,52, 53,74

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
4.	Extensive recreational value due to the network of public rights of way and open access land in close proximity to a large urban population at Brighton.
5.	The Iron Age hillforts and the role the downs play in the setting of these and other historic features.
6.	The strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness across the downs with pockets of 'deep' remoteness and associated dark skies away from the coastal settlements. This is particularly associated with the highest slopes below the scarp, such as those between Ditchling Beacon and Stanmer Down, or Edburton Hill and Beeding Hill and the hidden dry valley between them, including Big Bottom, Home Bottom and North Bottom.

- b. Consider the effect of proposed changes on the urban fringes of Brighton on views to and from the South Downs. Refer to guidance in the View Characterisation and Analysis report.⁸
- c. Consider the effects of further offshore wind farm development in the English Channel and its affect on views from the open downs.
- d. Manage recreational use, making recreational infrastructure more resilient, particularly in areas of high pressure near coastal settlements.

Change Specific to the Adur to Ouse Open Downs

A.50 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes to this area are set out in the table below.

Forces for Change	
1.	Pressure for development and the associated increases in traffic on the adjacent coastal plain which can erode level of perceived tranquillity and remoteness as well as dark skies.
2.	Infrastructure upgrades, including for the A27 (T) and A23 (T), which could erode tranquillity.
3.	Pressure for additional offshore wind farm development in the English Channel affecting views from the <i>Open Downland</i> .
4.	Increased recreational pressure on the National Park due to rising populations in Brighton and other coastal settlements.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Adur to Ouse Open Downs

A.51 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- a. Seek opportunities to reduce the visual impact of existing visually intrusive elements on the downs. These include the severe cuttings and traffic associated with the A23 (T) and A27 (T) roads, the prominent urban fringes of Brighton, the large electricity pylons, golf courses, and cluster of communication masts at Truleigh Hill.

⁸ LUC. 2015 South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis

A3: Arun to Adur Open Downs

Location and Boundaries

The *Arun to Adur Open Downs* character area occupies the open downland between the Arun and Adur river valleys to the north of Worthing. The area is defined to the north by the crest of the north facing scarp, the *Arun to Adur Downs Scarp*. To the west of the A24 the southern boundary is defined by a minor scarp which forms a clear transition to the wooded landscape of the Angmering and Clapham Woods, while to the east of the A24 the southern boundary is formed by the boundary of the National Park which follows the urban edge of Worthing/Lancing.

Key Characteristics

- Vast open rolling upland chalk landscape of blunt, whale-backed downs reaching 238m at Chanctonbury Hill.
- Furrowed by extensive branching dry valley systems which produce deep, narrow, rounded coombes - the main dry valley (the Findon Valley) contains the A24.
- Dominated by large scale irregular fields of arable and pasture (of 19th and 20th century date) bounded by visually permeable post and wire fencing or sparse thorn hedgerows creating a very open landscape supporting a range of farmland birds. Hedgerows and tracks survive from the earlier manorial downland landscape.
- Significant areas of unimproved chalk grassland, for example at Cissbury Ring and Lancing Ring, which support nationally scarce plant species.
- Occasional scrub and woodland on steeper slopes and beech clumps on hill tops contribute to biodiversity and provides visual texture in the landscape.
- A landscape managed for country sports (game shooting) which preserves the shape and form of the landscape and creates a distinctive landcover including small woodlands and game cover plots.
- Large open skies ensure that weather conditions are a dominant influence creating a dynamic landscape, with considerable seasonal variation.
- A strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity with pockets of deep remoteness associated with hidden dry valleys and higher reaches of the dip slope.
- Large number of prehistoric and later earthworks, including causewayed enclosures, long barrows and round barrows, providing a strong sense of historical continuity. Iron Age hillforts at Cissbury Ring and Chanctonbury Ring form prominent features on the skyline.
- Four flint mines of Neolithic date (Cissbury, Harrow Hill, Blackpatch and Church Hill, Findon) are associated with minor scarps.
- Good public access with a network of public rights of way and open access land.
- The typical settlement form is relatively late in origin and comprises isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin. The individual farmsteads are often prominent features in the landscape. The village of Findon is the exception.
- Building materials are typically flint, red brick and clay tiles, with more modern materials used in farm buildings.
- Extensive views from the north out across the scarp footslopes and Low Weald beyond the National Park, and over the coastal plain to the south.

Specific Characteristics Unique to the Arun to Adur Open Downs

A.52 This character area exhibits chalk scenery typical of the *Open Downs* landscape type. Within this, Findon valley is a distinctive dry valley which contains the major infrastructure associated with the A24 (which links London to the south

coast) as well as the village of Findon. Although this village settlement is atypical of the dispersed settlement pattern that characterises the *Open Downs* landscape type, it is built of materials typical of the downs and is characterised by high flint walls. Secondary scarps are prominent in this character area,

for example those seen on the slopes of Cissbury Ring, Church Hill and Burpham Hill.

A.53 The proximity of this area to local centres of population such as Worthing and Lancing mean that parts of the landscape are influenced by urban edge features such as golf courses and car parks, eroding the rural character of the landscape and diluting the sharp transition between the urban area and *Open Downs*. The introduction and upgrading of the A24 (which acts as one of the main routes between London and the south coast) through the Findon Gap and the expansion of housing in Findon village have also introduced urban elements into the landscape. Other areas, without any visibility of adjacent settlements, including the higher reaches of the dip slope particularly to the east of the area and the deep coombes (such as Buddington Bottom), create pockets of 'deep' remoteness with the darkest skies.

A.54 In common with other parts of the *Open Downs*, this area has high levels of recreational use with a network of open access land. The South Downs Way National Trail follows the ridge of the northern scarp along much of its length and provides panoramic views across the downs and the low lying landscapes to the north. The Monarch's Way long distance footpath also crosses the area, passing through the village of Findon

A.55 In ecological terms the character area supports a number of important chalk grassland sites. This chalk grassland is largely restricted to steep slopes, and is especially notable for its rich plant assemblages, which includes many species with a restricted distribution, together with invertebrates such as butterflies. Several sites carry SSSI designation, for example Cissbury Ring SSSI, Amberley Mount to Sullington Hill SSSI and Chanctonbury Hill SSSI.

A.56 The character area was valued as a ritual landscape and is particularly notable for its Neolithic flint mines at Cissbury, Harrow Hill, Blackpatch and Church Hill. The Iron Age hillforts at Cissbury Ring and Chanctonbury Ring are also important historic and prominent visual features.

A.57 The elevated and open character of the landscape of the downs provides expansive views both north across the scarp footslopes and Low Weald and south over the coastal plain. Representative views are identified in the View Characterisation and Analysis report⁹.

Sensitivities Specific to the Arun to Adur Open Downs

A.58 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The vast open rolling upland landscape with its ecologically rich habitats of chalk grassland on the steeper slopes which are recognised through national designation
2.	This area is especially sensitive to development change beyond the park boundary given the proximity to and views over development on the coastal plain.
3.	Expansive views across adjacent landscapes.
4.	Extensive recreational value due to the network of open access land as well as the long-distance South Downs Way and Monarch's Way, located in close proximity to an urban population.
5.	The role of the downs in providing a setting for prehistoric features including Neolithic sites and Iron Age hillforts.
6.	The strong sense of tranquillity across the downs with pockets of 'deep' remoteness and dark skies associated with the slopes below the scarp, such as those extending from Chanctonbury Ring and the hidden dry valley below, including Well Bottom, Valiers Bottom and Buddington Bottom.

Change Specific to the Arun to Adur Open Downs

A.59 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes to this area are set out in the table below.

Forces for Change	
1.	Pressure for development within the adjoining urban areas, including Brighton City Airport, could erode levels of perceived tranquillity and remoteness.
2.	Pressure for change on the urban fringe of Worthing and Lancing including golf courses and garden centres which could dilute rural character on the edge of the National Park.
3.	Pressure for additional offshore wind farm development in the English Channel affecting views from the open downs.
4.	Infrastructure upgrades and new proposals, including for the A24, could erode tranquillity.
5.	Increasing recreational pressure on the National Park due to the rising population on the coastal plain.

⁹ LUC. 2015 South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis – Views 21,23,33,72

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Arun to Adur Open Downs

A.60 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following development considerations are specific to this character area.

- a. Seek opportunities to reduce the visual impact of existing intrusive elements on this landscape. These include infrastructure and traffic associated with the A24, and prominent built elements on the coastal plain (particularly industrial structures).
- b. Soften urban edges through sensitive native planting including scrub, informally spaced groups of broadleaved trees and hedgerow planting. Bold new planting schemes may be appropriate in some locations.
- c. Avoid linear planting along roads. In particular maintain an open landscape along the A24 between Findon and the northern edge of Worthing.
- d. Maintain the open and undeveloped skyline of the secondary scarps – avoid siting buildings or vertical features such as telecommunication masts or power lines on these sensitive skylines.
- e. Consider opportunities for landscape enhancement on the edge of Findon village and avoid further extension of development into the *Open Downland*.
- f. Consider the effect of proposed changes on views to and from the South Downs, particularly iconic views from Cissbury Ring and to Chanctonbury Ring. Consideration should also be given to the effect of proposed wind farm development in the English Channel on views from the open downs. Refer to guidance in the View Characterisation and Analysis report¹⁰.
- g. Seek opportunities for undergrounding electricity pylons that cross the *Arun to Adur Open Downs*.

¹⁰ LUC. 2015 South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis

A4: Mount Caburn Open Downs

Location and Boundaries

Mount Caburn is a small isolated outlier of open downland located between Lewes and Glynde. It is separated from the *Ouse to Eastbourne Open Downs* and the *Adur to Ouse Open Downs* character area by the broad floodplain of the River Ouse. Its boundaries with the floodplain are clearly defined by a break in slope which corresponds to the extent of underlying river alluvium. The northern and eastern boundaries of are less clearly defined and form a transition to the scarp footslopes.

Key Characteristics

- Open rolling upland chalk landscape of blunt, whale-backed downs reaching 164m at Cliffe Hill. Chalk slopes are pitted with disused chalk quarries.
- Furrowed by dry valley systems which produce deep, narrow, rounded coombes as at Malling Down and Bible Bottom.
- Vast irregular fields of arable and pasture (of 20th century date) bounded by visually permeable post and wire fencing or sparse thorn hedgerows creating a very open landscape supporting a range of farmland birds.
- Significant areas of unimproved chalk grassland, for example at Malling Down and Mount Caburn, which support nationally scarce plant species.
- Occasional scrub and woodland on steeper slopes contribute to biodiversity and provides visual texture in the landscape.
- Large open skies ensure that weather conditions are a dominant influence creating a dynamic landscape, with considerable seasonal variation.
- Roads skirt around the edge of the downs – with no access into the downs by car. This produces a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity with pockets of deep remoteness associated with hidden dry valleys.
- Large number of prehistoric and later earthworks, including causewayed enclosures, long barrows and round barrows, providing a strong sense of historical continuity.
- Iron Age defensive sites occupy commanding positions at the southern edge of the downs at Ranscombe Camp and The Caburn.
- Good public access with a large proportion of open access land and public rights of way. The slopes are especially popular for para/hang-gliding.
- Scattered farmsteads, some of medieval origin representing shrunken hamlets, exist at the foot of the downland slopes, sometimes with isolated outfarms (small groups of barns and animal shelters). The typical settlement form is relatively late in origin and comprises isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century.
- Extensive views from the north and east out across the scarp footslopes to the south, and across Lewes and the Ouse Valley to the south and west.

Specific Characteristics Unique to Mount Caburn Open Downs

A.61 This character area exhibits chalk scenery typical of the *Open Downs* landscape type. However, it is unique in that it is a small, isolated 'island' of downland. The area includes a rather discontinuous, and partially wooded, north-east facing scarp which extends from Malling Hill to Glynde Holt. There is a particularly high density of chalk quarries on the scarp, with extensive white scars highly visible from surrounding areas.

Urban edge features such as the Lewes Golf Club, which extends onto the *Open Downs*, erodes the rural character of the landscape diluting the sharp transition between the urban area and the National Park.

A.62 The location of this area adjacent to Lewes makes it potentially accessible by a large number of users with high recreational use evident. Considerable areas of chalk downland provide open access land. In addition, parts of the

downs are popular for paragliding. However, the absence of roads ensures that the landscape retains a remote character.

A.63 This character area is no exception in terms of its rich biodiversity. Particularly characteristic are areas of unimproved chalk grassland, which include the extensive and nationally important Lewes Down SSSI/SAC which contains a nationally-rare orchid. The area also supports two small chalk pits (Southerham Machine Bottom Pit SSSI and Southerham Grey Pit SSSI), which are designated as SSSI for their geological importance.

A.64 The large number of prehistoric and later earthworks are typical of the landscape type – particularly distinctive features in this character area are the Iron Age defensive sites at Ranscombe Camp and The Caburn that occupy commanding positions at the southern edge of the downs. The elevated and open character of the landscape provides expansive views from over adjacent areas, including panoramic views from Mount Caburn over the Ouse Valley and to Lewes. Representative views are identified in the View Characterisation and Analysis report¹¹.

Sensitivities Specific to Mount Caburn Open Downs

A.65 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The open downlands with their ecological rich habitats of chalk grassland, including nationally important habitats in the Lewes Downs SSSI/SAC.
2.	Given the proximity to and views over Lewes, this area is sensitive to changes in the urban area and on the settlement edge.
3.	Expansive views over the Ouse Valley and to Lewes.
4.	High recreational value due to open access land in close proximity to Lewes.
5.	The strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness across the downs with pockets of 'deep' remoteness and dark skies associated with the ridgeline and highest slopes on The Caburn.

Change Specific to Mount Caburn Open Downs

A.66 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes to this area are set out in the table below.

Forces for Change	
1.	Pressure for development on the urban edge of Lewes and the associated increases in traffic on the adjacent roads which skirt the character area, which can affect general perceptual qualities, including tranquillity and dark skies.
2.	Pressure for development of communications masts or other vertical features on the skyline.
3.	Increases in recreational pressure and recreational land use due to the proximity to Lewes.
4.	Upgrades to the A27 (T) leading to changes in perceptual qualities and views from Mount Caburn.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to Mount Caburn Open Downs

A.67 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:

- a. Avoid further quarrying operations that are highly visible on the scarp slope and encourage the creative restoration of redundant chalk quarries, exploiting the potential for geological interest, nature conservation, and recreation, and ensuring they blend with their surroundings.
- b. Maintain the open and undeveloped skyline of the scarp slopes – avoid siting of buildings, telecommunication masts, power lines and wind turbines on the sensitive skyline.
- c. Seek opportunities to reduce the visual impact on visually intrusive elements on the downs including traffic associated with the A26(T) and A27(T), and the urban fringes of Lewes.
- d. Consider the effects of proposed changes on the edge of Lewes on views to and from the downs, particularly from Mount Caburn.
- e. Manage high levels of recreational use of the area making recreational infrastructure more resilient and encouraging the use of sustainable access into and around the National Park.

¹¹ South Downs National Park Authority (2015) South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis – Views 49

A5: East Winchester Open Downs

Location and Boundaries

The *East Winchester Open Downs* is located to the east of Winchester - parts of the downland boundary are shared with the built edge of Winchester. To the north the boundary is defined by the crest of the Itchen Valley, to the west the boundary is clearly defined by the A31 ring road and built edge of Winchester. The eastern and southern boundaries are defined by a change in field pattern and density of woodland cover – this represents a transition to the Downland Mosaic landscape.

Key Characteristics

- Open rolling upland chalk landscape of rolling downs reaching 176m at Cheesefoot Head.
- Furrowed by extensive branching dry valley systems which produce deep, narrow, rounded coombs – for example at Chilcomb and the Devil's Punchbowl.
- Dominated by large 18th and 19th century fields of arable and pasture, bounded by sparse thorn hedgerows creating a very open landscape supporting a range of farmland birds.
- Modern fields at Longwood Warren indicate late enclosure of this area that was set apart from the surrounding fieldscape (for the farming of rabbits).
- Hedgerows and tracks surviving from the earlier manorial downland landscape are important historic landscape features.
- Occasional areas of species rich unimproved chalk grassland occur, for example at Cheesefoot Head and St Catherine's Hill, Magdalene Hill and Matterley Bowl.
- Occasional scrub and woodland on steeper slopes, and game coverts, linear tree features and beech clumps on hill tops (notably at Cheesefoot Head and Deacon Hill) contribute to biodiversity and provide visual texture in the landscape.
- A landscape frequently managed for country sports (game shooting) which preserves the shape and form of the landscape but also creates a distinctive landcover including small woodlands and game cover plots, which can be incongruous when rectilinear in layout and planted with non-native species.
- Large open skies ensure that weather conditions are a dominant influence creating a dynamic, moody landscape, particularly on higher ground e.g. at Cheesefoot Head.
- A strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from the major transport routes (M3, A31, A272) which cross the landscape.
- Large number of prehistoric and later earthworks, long barrows and round barrows, providing a strong sense of historical continuity. St Catherine's Iron Age hillfort occupies a commanding position overlooking Winchester.
- The typical settlement form is relatively late in origin and comprises isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century with more modern buildings along the B3404 on the edge of Winchester.
- Chilcomb village is located in a dry valley, surrounded by an area of small-scale irregular enclosures dating back to the medieval period.
- Expansive views over Winchester and the Itchen Valley due to the open character of the landscape, including panoramic views from Cheesefoot Head and from St Catherine's Hill.

Specific Characteristics Unique to East Winchester Open Downs

A.68 This character area exhibits chalk scenery typical of the *Open Downs* landscape type. However, the composition of

soil types is more varied than is typical of the type in East Sussex. Although the majority of the area comprises well drained calcareous soils, there are some localised areas of clay-with-flints which cap the chalk in the north of the character area and this gives rise to more clayey soils that

support areas of woodland, including the relatively large and ancient Hampage Wood (designated locally as a LWS). Woodland across the remainder of the area is limited to game coverts, secondary regrowth on uncultivated slopes, and clumps of beech on hill tops. Notable tree clumps are located at Cheesefoot Head and Deacon Hill.

A.69 The main difference between this character area and others in the *Open Downland* landscape type is the date of the fields. This character area is dominated by large fields which reflect 18th-19th century planned enclosure of what was probably open downland. There is a small area of modern fields at Longwood Warren, indicating the late enclosure of this area that was set apart from the surrounding fieldscape (for the farming of rabbits), but modern fields are relatively scarce compared to the areas of *Open Downs* east of the Adur Valley.

A.70 Occasional areas of species rich unimproved chalk grassland occur, including Cheesefoot Head SSSI, which is located on a predominantly north-facing horseshoe-shaped dry valley. The St Catherine’s Hill SSSI also falls within the character area. Hedgerows and tracks which survive from the earlier manorial downland landscape are important historic landscape features and a late medieval landscape survives around the village of Chilcomb.

A.71 Transport routes cause severance within the area – the M3 runs along the western boundary and the A31/A272 cut across the character area in an east-west direction. The sense of tranquillity and remoteness of this character area is diminished in the vicinity of these major transport routes. Also associated with the major transport routes out of Winchester is ribbon development, as seen along the B3404 and peripheral development encroaching the edge of the National Park from the eastern edge of the city.

A.72 The settlement type is predominantly scattered farmsteads constructed from red brick and flint and clay tiles. The exception to this is the nucleated village of Chilcomb. This village, located within a dry valley, has a Norman church and is surrounded by fields that were enclosed during the medieval period. Within this domestic settled area there is evidence of well-tended grass verges.

A.73 The location of this area close to Winchester, and the proximity of the M3, A31 and A272, makes it potentially accessible to a large number of users. However, these same roads are barriers to movement on foot/ horseback into the National Park. There is a relatively sparse network of public rights of way, and opportunities for circular walks from

Winchester are limited. Car parking facilities at Cheesefoot Head provide access to two important recreational routes – the South Downs Way National Trail, which provides access onto the downs from Winchester, and the King’s Way which crosses Longwood Warren. The safety area for the Chilcomb firing range restricts access to rights of way when the ranges are in use.

A.74 The area's large number of prehistoric and later earthworks are typical of the landscape type – of particular note is the Iron Age hillfort at St Catherine’s Hill which occupies a commanding position overlooking Winchester. The downs provide panoramic views into adjacent landscapes, particularly over the Itchen Valley from Cheesefoot Head and St Catherine’s Hill which is noted in South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis report¹². Part of Avington Park extends into this character area, although the main house is located in the Itchen Valley below.

Sensitivities Specific to East Winchester Open Downs

A.75 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area, although there may be a greater potential for mitigation of change due to some existing woodland cover. Specific to this character area are:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The open downlands with their ecologically rich habitats, including unimproved chalk grassland, most notably at Cheesefoot Head SSSI and St Catherine’s Hill SSSI and the large deciduous woodland at Hampage Wood LWS.
2.	The remote and tranquil character of the <i>East Winchester Open Downland</i> is threatened by its proximity to numerous transport routes.
3.	Given its proximity to, and views over, Winchester, the area is sensitive to changes in the urban area beyond the National Park boundary.
4.	The intact 18 th -19 th century planned enclosure landscape is relatively rare within the <i>Open Downs</i> landscape type and is sensitive to change.
5.	The historic parkland of Avington Park, which extends into the <i>Open Downland</i> , and the hill fort at St Catherine’s Hill are both historically significant features which are sensitive to change.
6.	The role of the downs in providing a setting for historic features, such as the hillfort at St Catherine’s.
7.	High recreational value due to promoted recreational routes located in close proximity to the urban population at Winchester.

¹² South Downs National Park Authority (2015) South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis (View 14)

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
8.	The prominent scarps and open undeveloped skylines are particularly sensitive to change, with pockets of 'deep' remoteness and dark skies associated with the downs around Cheesefoot Head in the south east of the area, including Gander Down, Longwood Warren and Temple Valley.
9.	Open views across the undeveloped <i>Open Downs</i> .

Change Specific to East Winchester Open Downs

A.76 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes relevant to this character area are:

Forces for Change	
1.	Pressure for development within the adjoining urban area affecting popular viewpoints within the National Park.
2.	Pressure for change on the urban edge of Winchester encroaching into the <i>Open Downland</i> which could dilute rural character on the edge of the National Park.
3.	Infrastructure upgrades to major roads which cross or skirt the character area eroding tranquillity, e.g. improvements to Junction 9 of the M3, which adjoins the western boundary of the area.
4.	Increasing recreational pressure on the sparse public rights of way network due to the proximity of the urban population in Winchester. The severance caused by the M3 concentrating recreational use in the highly sensitive areas of St Catherine's Hill SSSI and along the River Itchen.
5.	Changes in agricultural management eroding historic field patterns or the setting for historic features.
6.	Pressure for the development of communications masts or other vertical features on the skyline.
7.	Nutrient Neutrality requirements for housing development in this area, may force a change of use from farmland to woodland, biomass or pasture.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to East Winchester Open Downs

A.77 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:

a.	Encourage landowners to soften rectilinear blocks of woodland, particularly where they occur on prominent escarpments, by selective felling and the planting of indigenous edge species. Remove
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	inappropriate game coverts i.e. those that occur on prominent escarpments or hill tops or contain non-native species.
b.	Avoid field expansion and hedgerow boundary loss that would erode the intact 18 th -19 th century planned enclosure landscape pattern.
c.	Conserve and enhance the historic parkland at Avington Park through management of woodland features, replacement tree planting and the conservation/restoration of parkland pasture.
d.	Provide appropriate management for significant skyline tree groups e.g. The Clump at Cheesefoot Head. Support limited planting of new landmark tree groups at carefully selected key locations as landmark features.
e.	Preserve the hillfort at St Catherine's Hill and manage scrub encroachment.
f.	Seek to link areas of chalk downland through the creation of headlands and arable reversion.

A.78 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

a.	Prevent further fragmentation of the East Winchester Open Downs by roads and development, avoiding ribbon development encroaching on the downs from Winchester.
b.	Seek opportunities to reduce the impact of visually intrusive elements such as the infrastructure and traffic associated with the M3, A272 and A31, and prominent built elements on the edge of Winchester.
c.	Consider use of whisper tarmac on major routes such as the M3 to reduce traffic noise.
d.	Maintain the open and undeveloped scarps and skylines – avoid siting of buildings, telecommunication masts, power lines and wind turbines on the sensitive skyline.
e.	Encourage use of traditional building styles and materials when expanding/ modernising farm buildings and encourage sympathetic re-use of any traditional farm buildings that may become redundant (such as the flint barns) so as to maintain their external fabric, appearance and setting. Refer to guidance contained in the Historic Farmsteads study ¹³ .

¹³ Forum Heritage Services (2005) *Historic Farmsteads & Landscape Character in Hampshire, Pilot Project*. Report by Bob Edwards for Historic England.

- f.** Take account of views from this area when considering change in adjacent areas beyond the study area, such as in Winchester. Pay particular attention to popular viewpoints at Cheesefoot Head and St Catherine's Hill. Refer to guidance in the View Characterisation and Analysis report.
- g.** Manage large recreational events in order to minimise incremental impacts on the landscape, including access tracks, storage and temporary structures, which can erode the remote character of the downs