Appendix M
Landscape Character Type M: Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic

The *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* lies on the sandstones of the Folkestone Formation, to the north of the chalk escarpment of the South Downs. The geology gives rise to a well-drained, sandy lowland landscape supporting a mosaic of oak-birch woodland, conifer plantations, open sandy heaths, and rough grazed pasture.

Description

Key Characteristics

- Flat or gently undulating lowland 'plateau' landscape on outcrops of sandstones of the Folkestone Formation.
- Well-drained sandy, acidic soils support a mix of nationally important heathland habitats including open heather heath, acid grassland, bracken, gorse, woody scrub, and oak-birch woodland.
- Small to medium sized fields of rough grazed pasture and horse paddocks bounded by hedgerows with gorse and bracken, and hedgerow oaks. Clusters of oak trees and Scots pine trees form visual accents.
- An irregular and intimate mix of semi-natural habitats and agriculture creating valuable foraging and over-wintering sites for a range of bird species.
- Ponds, bogs and wet grassland in low lying areas.
- Commons (historically used for rough grazing or heath-cutting) often covered by 19th or early 20th century woodland plantations, but some remnant unenclosed commons providing open access.
- Settlement is relatively late, typically comprising isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure, and 'squatter' settlement on the edges of the common land. Building materials include local sandstones.
- Generally straight lanes and tracks provide access to heathland and heath edge settlements.
- Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries are signs of a prehistoric ritual landscape.
- Large number of sand pits indicating the economic value of the sands of the Folkestone Beds.
- Views limited by dense woodland cover.

Physical Landscape

M.1 The *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* is underlain by sandstones of the Folkestone and Sandgate Beds, which form slightly elevated, flat topped plateaux with undulating sides. The plateaux are drained by small streams along which are deposits of river terrace gravels and downwash deposits ('Head') which mask the underlying bedrock.

M.2 The plateaux are associated with free-draining, acid sandy soils which support an irregular patchy mosaic of open heathland, oak-birch woodland, coniferous plantation, acidic grassland, gorse and bracken scrub, and rough grazing land.

M.3 A number of water bodies are present – many of these are former mill ponds, decoy ponds or sand pits. The sands of the Folkestone Beds are of economic value and the landscape is therefore pitted with active and disused quarries.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

M.4 This is a distinctive landscape with a mix of various elements juxtaposed to form an organic mosaic. The presence of many trees, including tall conifers which cast dark shadows, gives the landscape an almost overpowering sense of enclosure in places. However, this can also be a colourful landscape, particularly when swathes of heather turn purple in summer.

M.5 The *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* is essentially a quiet landscape with a high sense of 'naturalness' deriving from the mix of woodland and heathland. There is very little overt human impact, although there are some active sand pits hidden within the woodland. Settlement tends to be located around the edges of the heaths and commons and these areas are perceived as remote and tranquil.

M.6 The *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* typically has good public access as a result of a number of registered commons, open access land, and a good public rights of way network.

M.7 The sandy heaths have received less attention than the neighbouring downland landscapes by writers and artists. However, Gilbert White, a naturalist who lived in Selborne in the late 18th century wrote about the area, and Flora Thompson (1876 – 1947) wrote of Weavers Down '*Out in the lanes and upon the open heath the broom in flower is a glorious sight. Upon Peverel there are large, long established thickets of it... All down the tough, dark stems the pea-shaped blossoms hang, like a myriad of golden butterflies poised for flight*'. In her guide to the Liphook area (1925) she articulates the views from this landscape, sandwiched between the chalk downs and Greensand hills: '…*a perfect panorama of beauty. Forestmere Lake (Folly Pond) lies like a mirror in the woods directly beneath; to the south is the blue ridge of the South Downs; to the north the heathery heights of Hindhead*'. Hilaire Belloc noted the '*bunches of pine trees, making a peculiar note in the landscape'* in his book *The County of Sussex* (published in 1936).

Biodiversity

M.8 The sandy soils have given rise to a diverse mix of heathland habitats including open heather heath, acid grassland, bracken, gorse, woody scrub, oak-birch woodland, some sweet chestnut coppice and conifer plantation. These often extensive areas of lowland heathland, lowland dry acid grassland and lowland fens (all BAP Priority Habitats) support a range of characteristic plant species, and important invertebrate and bird populations, including uncommon species such as woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler. Woolmer Forest SAC/SPA is the best area of lowland heath outside the New Forest and is the largest area of heathland existing on Folkestone Beds in southern England.

M.9 Occasional areas of acid bog also occur, for example at Hurston Warren SSSI, and provide additional ecological interest. This quaking bog is considered to be to be one of the best examples of its type in the southeast and supports many locally notable plant species, such as cranberry and hare's tail cotton grass.

M.10 Good quality semi-improved grassland and some traditional orchards also occur scattered within the heavily wooded landscape (much of which is deciduous woodland and a BAP Priority Habitat).

M.11 The ecological importance of these varied habitats is reflected in the significant number of local and national designations across the character type, including numerous LWS and SSSI and international protection of Woolmer Forest SAC/SPA. Areas of open arable land create valuable foraging and over-wintering sites for a range of bird species, particularly when managed appropriately e.g. over-wintering stubble.

Key Biodiversity Features	Importance
Significant areas of heathland habitat, with a mosaic of associated habitat types including dry and wet lowland heathland, lowland dry acid grassland, scrub, woodland, and lowland fens with bog (all BAP Priority Habitats) and open water	Extensive areas of lowland heath, recognised as a nationally important habitat, support populations of Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark of European significance. Many plant species associated with heathland habitat have a locally restricted distribution.
Intimate mix of semi-natural habitats and agriculture	Provides important habitat mosaics of benefit to a wide range of faunal species,

Key Biodiversity Features	Importance
	including foraging and over-wintering birds.
Significant woodland cover including BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland	Extensive areas of plantation woodland form an important component of the heathland/woodland mosaic, and buffer sensitive heathland habitats. Areas of semi-natural deciduous woodland are recognised as nationally important habitats.

M.12 Areas of BAP Priority Habitat lowland heathland across the *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* are identified as providing effective habitat networks within Natural England's National Habitat Networks Mapping Project. Adjacent to these heathland habitats are areas identified as suitable for restoration where they exist in a degraded or fragmented form (such as areas adjacent to the SSSI at Parkham Park, Hurston Warren, Lavington Common, Ambersham Common, Iping Common or within Woolmer Forest). The project also indicates that work is underway to improve or restore these habitats in some areas (such as at Graffham Common and Fir Toat LWS or Woolmer Forest SAC/SPA).

M.13 Network Enhancement Zones are identified across the landscape type, where land connecting existing habitats are likely to be suitable for the creation of heathland habitats, and subsequently improve connections between them. A number of potential 'network joins' have been identified stretching across the *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic*, including networks extending across Woolmer Forest and around Iping Common, or connecting Ambersham and Lavington Commons, Parkham Park and Huston Warren.

Historic Character

M.14 The presence of a number of Bronze Age barrow cemeteries (all Scheduled Monuments) indicates that the marginal nature of the area is of some antiquity. The original hazel 'wildwood' would have been cleared for farming.

M.15 The landscape is characterised by large areas of commonland, originally cleared in the prehistoric period, and utilised by communities based on more favoured soils (generally to the south along the foot of the downland scarp) as pasture (particularly for sheep), wood pasture and as a source of fuel. Woolmer Forest formed part of a Royal Hunting Forest during the medieval period.

M.16 The soils became impoverished, leading to the creation of heathland. Most of the commons have, since 1800, been appropriated for plantations, many of them coniferous. These, together with a scatter of earlier blocks of ancient (probably medieval) woodland, produce the wooded character of the landscape. Relatively small areas of unenclosed common still survive.

M.17 Some of the more fertile areas of land within the landscape were enclosed for agricultural use – these areas are evident today as medieval assarts or early enclosures. However, most of the enclosures are either recent enclosures (18th-19th century) of former commonland scattered in and around the extensive woodland, or large areas of modern fields, which themselves represent modifications of pre-existing field systems (both early and recent enclosures, with the latter probably predominant). These enclosures represent a fundamental change in the last few centuries, with several millennia of communal use and access to the heathlands being replaced by private ownership.

M.18 Features such as 'hammer ponds', large ponds formed by damming streams, are evidence of the Wealden iron industry in the 16-18th century.

M.19 There are limited traditional examples of designed landscapes, i.e. gentry houses and landscape parks, although there are remnants of a medieval deer park at Burton Park (Registered Park and Garden) and a deer park at Coates Castle. This testifies to the lack of a wealthy population in the past and the traditional dependency of the area on the surrounding lowland zone.

Key Features of the Historic Environment	Importance
Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries	Prehistoric ritual landscape indicating that marginal nature of the area is of some antiquity and caused by human action.
Remnant areas of unenclosed commons	Evidence of the communal use of land in the past.
Assarts and other early enclosures	Represent historic agricultural use of more fertile areas.
18-19th century field enclosures	Represent the change from communal use of land to private ownership.
Hammer and mill ponds	Remaining features of former iron smelting industry now valuable for wildlife.

Settlement Form and Built Character

M.20 The settlement pattern of the *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* is characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement. This conforms to Historic England's rural

settlement designation of Weald Sub-Province within the South-eastern Province. 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 commonland, together with irregular small-scale agglomerations of common-edge settlement representing 'squatter' settlement on the edges of the commonland.

M.21 Building materials are typically local sandstones which vary in colour from light yellow to dark purple-browns. Also typical is red brick detailing, particularly around windows and doors. Locally distinctive Cowdray Estate yellow window sills and doors feature in parts of this area. Timber boarding is frequently used on agricultural buildings. Clay tile is the most typical roofing material.

Evaluation

Ecosystem Services in the Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.22 Ecosystem services are the benefits people and society get from the natural environment. The *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* provides:

Provisioning	■ Food provision – from grazing of livestock, although other food production is limited due to the low fertility of the sandy soils. ■ Timber provision – large areas of commercial plantation, predominantly coniferous with smaller portions of mixed and deciduous woodland. ■ Water availability – this area forms part of the sandstone aquifer which plays an integral role in maintaining the base flow of the region's rivers and streams.
Regulating	■ Regulating water quality – the sandstone substrate acts as a natural filtering system helping to maintain water quality. ■ Regulating water flow – permeable sandy soils allow groundwater levels to recharge easily. Significant canopy cover allows for rainfall interception which aids recharge as well as reducing surface water flow and the risk of flooding downstream. ■ Climate regulation– woodlands and heathlands play an important role in carbon sequestration and storage. ■ Air quality regulation – trees in this landscape play an important role in the removal of pollutants from the air. ■ Soil erosion – much of the land is uncultivated and dominated by semi-natural vegetation such as woodland and heathland, which plays an important role in maintaining soil structure and reduce soil erosion. ■ Pollination – heathland is a particularly important nectar source for pollinators.
Cultural	■ Sense of place – a distinctive and varied landscape of lowland heath, historic commons and woodland which creates a strong sense of place. ■ Tranquillity – little overt human impact on the landscape results in a tranquil and remote nature, particularly associated with areas of heathland and common land. ■ Recreation – generally well served by PRoWs, open access land and commons.
Supporting	■ Biodiversity – extensive areas of lowland heathland and deciduous woodland form a network of BAP Priority Habitats which supports a wide range of species.

Sensitivities

M.23 This landscape has many sensitive physical and aesthetic/perceptual features that are vulnerable to change. Key landscape sensitivities include:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	Nationally important lowland heathland that requires active management.
2.	Rich biodiversity and perception of 'naturalness' provided by oak-birch woodland, lowland heath and pasture on acidic grassland.
3.	The intimate mix of semi-natural habitats and agriculture creating valuable foraging and over-wintering sites for a range of bird species, including extensive areas of lowland heathland which support important invertebrate and bird populations including uncommon species such as Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark of European importance.
4.	Relative absence of settlement limited to isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin and 'squatter' settlement on the edges of the common land which form a distinctive settlement pattern and indicate the late settlement of the area. This low settlement is especially vulnerable to infill and consolidation creating a more compact solid settlement character.
5.	The consistent use of building materials - local sandstones, red brick detailing, particularly around windows and doors, timber boarding on agricultural buildings and clay tile.

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
6.	The numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries which provide signs of a prehistoric ritual landscape which are hidden in the landscape by woodland or have been covered by trees.
7.	Remnant unenclosed commons which are important in providing a sense of time depth, a high perceived naturalness, opportunities for countryside access, and a rich biodiversity.
8.	The dark skies associated with the South Downs International Dark Skies Reserve which are vulnerable to light sources, particularly in the 'Dark Sky Core' of the International Dark Sky Reserve (concentrated in LCA M2).
9.	The landscape's visibility from adjacent upland areas increases its visual sensitivity (although this is tempered by the high proportion of woodland cover).

Change – Key Issues and Trends

Past Change

M.24 Past change includes:

Past Change	
1.	Enclosure of former common land for agricultural use in the 18th-19th century.
2.	Modifications of pre-existing field systems into larger modern enclosures as well as more recent sub-division of fields associated with horse grazing.
3.	Planting of coniferous plantations on former common land in the 19th and 20th centuries. These large-scale areas of monoculture have had a negative effect on biodiversity, although in recent years plantations have become more diverse.
4.	Quarrying of sand which has had a negative effect on tranquillity.
5.	Invasion of scrub and bracken onto remaining areas of heathland in areas of low grazing pressure which has affected ecological value.
6.	Decline in traditional woodland management techniques as forestry has concentrated on coniferous rotations and the spread of introduced invasive species such as rhododendrons and laurel which thrive on the acidic sandy soils, within deciduous woodland.
7.	Increase in hobby farming or private stables resulting in sub-division of fields with additional fencing, tracks, hardstanding, jumps and other paraphernalia.
8.	The military base located at Longmoor Camp.

Future Landscape Change

M.25 The likely future changes are set out in the table below:

Future Change	
1.	Increased temperatures may result in changes to the species composition of habitats, including heathland and acidic grassland, although lack of management/ under-grazing is a bigger threat to these heathlands. Warmer and wetter winters may result in spread of bracken on lowland heaths. Positive landscape change could result from ongoing work to restore, manage and link heathland sites.
2.	Open access land, particularly heathland, is vulnerable to erosion and compaction of soil leading to waterlogging caused by increased visitor numbers.
3.	Increased temperatures could lead to the formation of pathogens which in time could result in the decline in ability of woodland to regenerate and the loss of mature/significant landscape trees.
4.	Wind damage, due to increases in severe gales, is another concern for areas of deciduous woodland.

Future Change	
5.	Enhanced environmental management of woodland, changes to tree cover, particularly in relation to commercial forestry plantations and improved management for fuel may all result in positive landscape change.
6.	If Net Zero commitments are implemented, it is likely that there will be a key changes to land use, including a reduction in grazing land to free up land for other uses such as woodlands related to afforestation initiatives.
7.	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 plantations and lowland heathlands which are at higher risk.
8.	Agricultural management will be driven by the changes in the world market and agricultural policy. In this area of low fertility sandy soils, key changes to land use may include a reduction in grazing land and it is possible that marginal farms may cease active agricultural production. The land is likely to be vulnerable to purchase as hobby farms, for horse grazing, or for other uses such as golf courses and these uses could change the rural character of the area.
9.	Pressure for built development may result in expansion and infill of the loose common edge ‘squatter settlements’ and over ‘gentrification’. This would change the original character of settlement and could result in increases in artificial lighting, expansion of villages, and increases in traffic pressures on the rural roads.
10.	Continued pressure for sand extraction may lead to a loss of landscape features and a negative impact on surface water quality. However, strict environmental assessments are required before proposals for sand extraction can go ahead and restoration of former sites can be a positive landscape change.

Broad Management Objective and Landscape Guidelines

M.26 The overall management objective should be to conserve the distinctive heathy character of this landscape and aim to create new inter-connected open heathlands, within a mixed mosaic of pasture and woodland.

Guidance for Landscape Management

A. Manage existing heathland to prevent excessive encroachment of scrub and promote the restoration and creation of new, interconnected heathlands, particularly on former common land. Restoration of coniferous plantations and sand quarries to heathland is a key opportunity.

B. Consider opportunities to re-instate common grazing to restore the historic and cultural character of the landscape and secure the ongoing management and conservation of the commons which are important in providing a sense of time depth, perceived 'naturalness', opportunities for countryside access, and a rich biodiversity.

C. Promote an informal and irregular mosaic of oak-birch woodland, lowland heath, gorse and bracken scrub, and acid grassland which contribute to a rich biodiversity and the perception of ‘naturalness’.

D. Where arable land exists, aim to create a wildlife-rich habitat supporting farmland birds, including retaining areas of fallow land, maintaining an unploughed margin around arable land, and management of existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

E. Encourage active management of land which is no longer farmed to ensure the rural character of the area is maintained.

F. Encourage replanting of conifer plantations with appropriate broadleaved species (where heathland re-creation is not appropriate). Mixing different species could also minimise the risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds.

G. Conserve, and consider planting of new, clusters of oak trees and Scots pine trees as visual accents.

H. Encourage re-introduction of traditional woodland management techniques. Promote interest in, and marketing of, local wood products, including wood for fuel and timber for construction.

I. Ensure planning for wildfires is incorporated into forest and heathland management plans. Promote responsible recreation behaviour. This is particularly important during periods of heat wave, where there is increased risk of fire in areas of open grassland/heathland and woodland.

J. Be alert to potential new pests and diseases and plan for their management. 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 Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* and Yellow azalea *Rhododendron luteum* in the lowland heathlands. Refer to the SDNP INNS Strategy.

K. Encourage and support the development of soil management plans to prevent soil erosion.

L. Encourage the creative restoration of redundant sand quarries, exploiting the potential for geological interest, nature conservation, and recreation.

M. Conserve the historic Bronze Age barrow cemeteries which provide a sense of time depth and evidence of a prehistoric ritual landscape. Maintain these sites free of trees and open up views to the sites.

Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

A. Conserve the characteristic settlement pattern of dispersed isolated farmhouses and loose agglomerations of common edge settlement. Extensions and infill would change the historic pattern.

B. Ensure recreational facilities, such as horse riding centres and golf courses, do not erode the rural character of the landscape. Avoid use of excessive lighting (see separate point on lighting below), signage and ‘suburban’ features.

C. Use woodland to screen unsightly developments and quarries. Ensure heathland restoration programmes consider possible adverse visual impact resulting from the exposure of existing buildings, particularly large-scale industrial or military buildings.

D. Maintain a consistent palette of building materials including local sandstones, which vary in colour from light yellow to dark purple-browns, red brick detailing (particularly around windows and doors), timber boarding, and clay tile.

E. Conserve the rural character of the villages and their setting through design guidance to discourage the introduction of suburban features such as artificial lighting, concrete kerbs, Leylandii hedges, and suburban style fences.

F. Consider views towards the chalk escarpment from open and elevated land, including those representative views identified in the View Characterisation and Analysis report[1].

G. Pay particular attention to the introduction of any new lighting into this landscape, particularly in the 'Dark Sky Core' of the International Dark Sky Reserve, taking account of the technical guidance advice note: https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/TLL-10-SDNPA-Dark-Skies-Technical-Advice-Note-2018.pdf.

Woodland strategy and suitable species

M.27 The LCT is a mix of pasture, open sandy heathland, and woodland covering 32.88km^2, including oak-birch woodland and extensive conifer plantations. With approximately 45% woodland cover, the type is one of the more wooded parts of the National Park. The woodland strategy for this area is to seek to replant conifer plantations with appropriate broadleaved species, extending oak-birch woodland to provide a buffer to open sandy heathland. Woodland planting is appropriate where is does not conflict with the restoration and creation of new, interconnected heathlands.

M.28 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.

M.29 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.

Character Areas There are three distinct areas of *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic*. These are all located on the Folkestone and Sandgate Beds of the Lower Greensand.	
M1:	Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic
M2:	Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic
M3:	Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down Farmland and Heath Mosaic

[1] LUC. 2015 South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis

M1: Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic

Location and Boundaries

The *Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic* forms two elevated undulating 'plateaux' divided by the River Stor. It is a small area which is separated from the *Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic* (LCA M2) by the River Arun – its western boundary is therefore clearly defined by the floodplain of the River Arun. The southern boundary is defined by a public right of way which represents a transition to the scarp footslopes to the south. The northern and eastern boundaries are defined by the National Park boundary which also coincides with a change of character to a much more settled landscape.

Key Characteristics

- Slightly elevated plateaux formed from sandstones of the Folkestone and Sandgate Formations, rising to 35m at Northpark Wood.
- Well-drained sandy soils support a mix of nationally important heathland habitats, including open heather heath, acid grassland, bracken, gorse, woody scrub, and oak-birch woodland.
- Areas of lowland heath and wetland including lowland bog, for example at Parham Park SSSI, Hurston Warren SSSI, and Wiggonholt Common LWS support many locally notable plant species.
- Large areas of woodland plantations and enclosures are of 18th-19th century date covering areas of former commonland illustrating the change from communal use to private ownership.
- Open canopied mature oak woodland supports one of the richest epiphytic lichen floras in southeast England.
- Surviving early enclosures around Wiggonholt on better agricultural land located on an outcrop of Gault Clay.
- An intimate mix of semi-natural habitats and agriculture create valuable foraging and over-wintering habitat for a range of bird species.
- Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries at Rackham Plantation are signs of a prehistoric ritual landscape.
- Settlement is relatively late, comprising isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure and modern recreational buildings associated with West Sussex Golf Club.
- The plateau is drained by small streams which flow into the River Stor and River Arun – a large pond, Wassell Pond, is located close to Wiggonholt Common.
- Sand pits on the edge of the Arun Valley indicate the economic value of the sands of the Folkestone Beds.

Specific Characteristics Unique to the Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.30 The Folkestone and Sandgate Beds underlying the *Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic* form an undulating plateau reaching 35m at Northpark Wood. In this character area most of the commons have, since 1800, been appropriated for plantations or enclosed for agricultural use in the 18th-19th century. This illustrates the change from communal use to private ownership that has occurred in this landscape - there are no unenclosed commons with open access remaining. Opportunities for countryside access are therefore more restricted in this character area than others of the *Farmland and Heath Mosaic* type.

M.31 The character area is well wooded, although much of this woodland is mixed plantation and has suffered from replanting with exotic species. The planting of plantations during the 20th was accompanied by development associated with forestry e.g. the sawmill at Northpark Wood. However, the area also contains ancient oak *Quercus robur* woodland, most notably at Parham Park SSSI. The open canopied mature oak woodland within this medieval deer park is particularly notable for supporting one of the richest epiphytic lichen floras in southeast England. Some of the dilapidated wooden fencing in the area also supports rare lichens.

M.32 Although most of the enclosures are of 18th-19th century date, a block of medieval enclosures survive around Wiggonholt, indicating an area of better agricultural land

located on an outcrop of Gault Clay. The plateau is drained by small streams which flow into the River Stor and River Arun. The character area also contains a large pond, Wassell Pond, close to Wiggonholt Common as well as other notable habitats, including bog and alder carr. Areas of arable agriculture and improved pasture grassland, together with semi-natural habitats are important areas for foraging and over-wintering birds.

M.33 To the north of the character area is Hurston Warren SSSI, a site that comprises a range of heathland habitats including wet and dry heath, open water and bog. The quaking bog is considered to be to be one of the best examples of its type in the southeast and supports many locally notable plant species, such as cranberry and hare's tail cotton grass. However, part of the area is now used as a golf course at Hurston Warren and public rights of way. Elsewhere public access is limited.

M.34 The settlement form in this character area is typical of the landscape type, being relatively late in origin, and comprising isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure derived from former commonland. However, there are no common edge squatter settlements or registered Common Land is this character area. The northern part of the character area contains localised groupings of modern recreational buildings associated with the golf course at Hurston Warren.

Sensitivities Specific to the Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.35 Most of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific sensitivities relevant to this character area are included in the table below:

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	Former commons surviving only as place names.
2.	Surviving early enclosures around Wiggonholt.
3.	The network of small streams that flow into the River Stor and Wassell pond and other smaller ponds which support aquatic and marginal plants and have associated invertebrate interest.
4.	Areas of wetland and lowland bog, for example at Parham Park SSSI and Hurston Warren SSSI.
5.	The area's inter-visibility with the Chalk scarp to the south.

Change Specific to the Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.36 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:

Forces for Change	
1.	Pressure for development outside the National Park boundary, particularly associated with Pulborough, West Chiltington Common or development associated with the A283.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Parham Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.37 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. Conserve the area of early enclosures around Wiggonholt.

b. Continue to manage the network of streams that flow across the area into the Stor and existing ponds e.g. Wassell Pond.

c. Protect and manage wetland and lowland bog at Parham Park and Hurston Warren SSSIs.

M.38 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

a. Consider the impact of any further built development outside the National Park boundary or associated with the A283 on this area and ensure that it is integrated into its landscape context using native vegetation.

b. Ensure any change in this area takes account of views from the Chalk scarp to the south.

M2: Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic

Location and Boundaries

The *Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic* forms a long, elevated 'plateau' located between the Wealden landscapes to the north and the main chalk ridge of the South Downs to the south. The northern boundary adjoins the *River Rother and the River Valley Farmland* that surrounds the Rother while the southern boundary adjoins the *Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* on Gault clay. The boundaries of this area form transitions with adjacent farmland landscapes and therefore areas on the edge may share characteristics with adjacent landscapes but boundaries have been drawn to follow the nearest convenient field boundary or woodland edge.

Key Characteristics

- Slightly elevated, flat topped plateau formed from sandstones of the Folkestone formation, reaching 65m at Ambersham Common.
- Well-drained sandy soils support a mix of nationally important heathland habitats including open heather heath, acid grassland, bracken, gorse, woody scrub, and oak-birch woodland.
- Large areas of woodland plantations covering areas of former commonland and earlier blocks of ancient (probably medieval) woodland.
- An intimate mix of semi-natural habitats and agriculture creating valuable foraging and over-wintering sites for a range of bird species.
- Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries are indicative of a prehistoric ritual landscape.
- Roman roads and a posting station at Hardham reinforce the historic function of the area as a landscape to traverse rather than settle.
- Settlement is relatively late, comprising isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure, and 'squatter' settlement on the edges of the common land.
- Includes the planned medieval market town of Midhurst, constructed from local sandstones.
- Remnant unenclosed commons are of cultural and historic significance and provide open access for recreation.
- Features including a large pond at Burton, formed by damming a stream, are evidence of the Wealden iron industry in the 16-18th century.
- Large number of sand pits indicating the economic value of the sands of the Folkestone Beds.

Specific Characteristic Unique to the Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.39 The Folkestone Beds underlying the *Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic* form a slightly elevated, flat topped plateau in this area. The highest points are at Ambersham Common (65m AOD), Trotton Common (63m AOD), and West Heath (60m AOD). The plateau becomes fragmented to the west with outliers such as West Heath and Heath Common standing as 'islands' amongst the lower lying farmland. This character area contains surviving areas of unenclosed common at Iping, Heyshott and Lavington.

M.40 The well-drained sandy soils of this character area support an irregular, organic mosaic of open heathland, oak-birch woodland, acidic grassland, gorse and bracken scrub, and rough grazing land – this intimate mix of semi-natural habitat and agriculture contributes to the overall ecological value of the character area. In total five nationally important heathland sites occur in this character area, at Ambersham Common SSSI, Burton Park SSSI, Coates Castle SSSI, Iping Common SSSI and Lavington Common SSSI. These sites support a range of characteristic heathland communities, such as wet and dry heath, bog and scrub, and provide important habitats for a number of notable plant and animal species. Coates Castle SSSI, for example, supports the only known native British population of field cricket *Gryllus campestris* (field crickets have been and are planned to be introduced to a number of other sites within the area). These habitats are set

within a context of coniferous plantation which casts dark shadows and gives the landscape an almost overpowering sense of enclosure in places.

M.41 Areas of arable land also occur throughout, and within the heavily wooded landscape. These open areas create valuable foraging and over-wintering sites for a range of bird species, particularly when managed appropriately e.g. as over-wintering stubble. Although most of the enclosures are of 18th-19th century date, some of the better land within this character area, typically along the margins of the Rother valley, was enclosed for agricultural use at a much earlier date. Examples include a block of characteristically lobate medieval assarts north west of Coldwaltham and west of Coates Castle, and an extensive area of surviving early enclosures south of Fittleworth.

M.42 This is essentially a quiet landscape with a high sense of 'naturalness' deriving from the mix of woodland and heathland and dark skies identified as the 'Dark Sky Core' of the South Downs International Dark Sky Reserve. Opportunities for countryside access are provided by a number of Registered Commons and an extensive network of public rights of way.

M.43 The plateau is drained by small streams which flow into the Rother – plus a large pond at Burton, formed by damming a tributary stream, associated with the former Wealden iron industry. It later fed an 18th century mill for corn milling (no longer operational).

M.44 The settlement pattern in this character area is generally typical of the landscape type (a high density of dispersed settlement comprising farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin and irregular small-scale agglomerations of common-edge settlement). The exception to the dispersed pattern is the medieval market town of Midhurst. This was a deliberately planned settlement established at a strategic location after the Norman Conquest by the new Norman overlord, Roger de Montgomery. Its location seems to have been determined mainly by military considerations (it had a suitable knoll upon which to site a castle) rather than any pre-existing locational factors. During the 20th century the town expanded rapidly.

M.45 Two small and lately established landscaped parks occur at Coates Castle and Nyewood House. The northern part of Burton Park also lies within the character area and is listed on Historic England's Register.

M.46 This character area contains evidence of Roman activity, comprising a mansio (posting station) at Hardham and two Roman roads – the Chichester to London Road and the Chichester to Silchester Road. These sites reinforce the marginal nature of the area as a landscape to traverse rather than settle. Active and disused quarries occur, hidden within the woodland, indicating the economic value of the sands of the Folkestone Beds.

Sensitivities Specific to the Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.47 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. Surviving areas of unenclosed common at Iping, Trotton, Heyshott, and Lavington.
2. The medieval assarts at Coldwaltham and Coastes Castle, and an extensive area of surviving early enclosures near Fittleworth.
3. Burton mill pond (associated with the former Wealden iron industry) and 18th century mill.
4. The wet and dry heath, bog and scrub, of Ambersham Common SSSI, Burton Park SSSI, Coates Castle SSSI, Iping Common SSSI and Lavington Common SSSI which support a range of characteristic heathland communities.
5. The small parks at Coates Castle and Nyewood House, and part of Burton Park, which provide a sense of historic continuity.
6. The mansio (posting station) at Hardham two stretches of Roman road which provide evidence for Roman activity in the area.
7. The area's inter-visibility with the Greensand hills to the north and the Chalk scarp to the south. Representative views are identified in the View Characterisation and Analysis report[2].

Change Specific to the Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.48 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes to this area include:

Forces for Change
1. Pressure for built development, particularly on the outskirts of Petersfield, Midhurst, Coldwalham and Fittleworth. Pressure for expansion could threaten historic field patterns around these settlements.

[2] LUC. 2015 South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis – View 71

Forces for Change
2. Increased traffic and upgrades to roads, particularly in relation to a potential bypass around Midhurst.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic

M.49 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.** Maintain the surviving areas of unenclosed common at Iping, Trotton, Heyshott, and Lavington, and consider opportunities for creating further unenclosed commons within the area.
- **b.** Conserve the medieval assarts and extensive area of surviving early enclosures, such as those near Fittleworth.
- **c.** Conserve Burton mill pond and its 18th century mill and their landscape setting. Ensure that the impressive views of South Downs across the pond are maintained.
- **d.** Manage heathland sites at Ambersham Common, Burton Park, Coates Castle, Iping Common, Trotton Common and Lavington Common, and aim to link these sites through new heathland creation.
- **e.** Conserve the landscape features of the small parks at Coates Castle and Nyewood House, and the northern part of Burton Park which falls within this LCA, to ensure these parks continue to provide a sense of historic continuity.
- **f.** Conserve the mansio (posting station) at Hardham and stretch of Roman road as features in the landscape.

M.50 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- **a.** Consider the impact of any further built development, particularly on the outskirts of Petersfield, Midhurst, Coldwalham and Fittleworth on historic field patters around these settlements. and ensure any expansion is integrated into its landscape context using native vegetation.
- **b.** Conserve the early enclosures under threat of development on the edge of settlements.
- **c.** Seek to minimise use of excessive lighting and signage on road improvement, particularly in relation to a potential bypass at Midhurst.
- **d.** Ensure any change in this area takes account of views from the Greensand hills to the north and the Chalk scarp to the south.

M3: Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down Farmland and Heath Mosaic

Location and Boundaries

The *Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down* landscape character area forms an elevated undulating 'plateau' located to the west of Liphook. The western boundary of this area is quite clearly defined and has been drawn along the woodland edge. The southern boundary represents a transition to the Greensand hills and has been drawn along the mainline railway. This landscape character area continues northwards beyond the National Park boundary at Bordon.

Key Characteristics

- Undulating 'plateau' formed from sandstones of the Folkestone formation, reaching 155m at Weaver's Down.
- Well-drained sandy soils which support extensive tracts of conifer plantations, oak-birch woodland, lowland heath and bog.
- Extensive area of lowland heathland habitat represents an internationally important ecological resource.
- Settlement is relatively late in origin, comprising isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure, and localised groupings of modern military buildings.
- Recent and modern enclosures in and around the woodland edge are evidence that landuse history remained one of common grazing until relatively late in the post-medieval period.
- Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries are indicative of a prehistoric ritual landscape.
- Remnant unenclosed commons, historically used for common grazing, are now used by the military as firing ranges.
- Extensive areas of post-1800 woodland plantations covering areas of former commonland indicate the location of areas of former common (now open access land) and contribute to a great sense of enclosure.

Specific Characteristic Unique to the Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down

M.51 The Folkestone Beds underlying the *Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down* form an undulating 'plateau' reaching 155m at Weaver's Down. The areas around Polecat Hill, to the north-east, and The Wylds/Forest Mere to the south, are underlain by softer sandstones of the Sandgate Beds, a formation of soft yellow sandstones which form a gently rolling relief at slightly lower altitude. The eastern part of the area, around Foley Manor, is underlain by the more resistant cherts and sandy limestones of the Hythe Beds. These underlying bedrocks give rise to some variety across the character area.

M.52 The very well drained acid sandy soils of this character area support extensive tracts of common land, most of which were appropriated during the 19th/20th century for coniferous plantations that make up Woolmer Forest. During the 20th century there was an increase in invasive species in these woodlands, such as rhododendrons and laurel which thrive in the acidic sandy soils. The presence of vast expanses of conifer forest gives rise to a simple and unified landscape on a large scale. The presence of tall conifers also gives the landscape a strong sense of enclosure, which is only broken by the presence of clearings at Woolmer Pond, Palmer's Ball, and Weaver's Down where areas of oak-birch woodland, lowland heath, acid grassland, and low-lying bogs and pools occur. This extensive area of lowland heathland supports three breeding bird species in numbers of European importance, namely nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler, as well as being of national value for its heathland flora and invertebrates. Woolmer Forest SAC/SPA is also the only site in Britain known to support all 12 species of native reptile and amphibian.

M.53 Typically of the *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* landscape type, this character area has good public access as a result of a number of Registered Commons, open access land, and public rights of way. A large proportion of Woolmer Forest, Longmoor Inclosure and Weaver's Down is designated as open access land, and there are also a number of Registered Commons including Weaver's Down, Griggs Green, Holm Hills and Holly Hills, which allow open public access. However, in practice public access is restricted to some of these areas by the army who use Woolmer Forest as a training ground although access is permitted when not in use. Access to Wheatsheaf Common is restricted to users of the golf course.

M.54 The south eastern part of the area, overlying the Hythe Formation of the Lower Greensand, is a small area of recent and modern enclosures which represents better quality commonland enclosed for agricultural use. Although there are no traditional examples of designed landscapes, i.e. gentry houses and landscape parks, this area contains two small and lately established parks at The Wylds and Foley Manor. The plateau is drained by small streams which flow southwards into the River Rother and northwards into the River Wey. There are several large ponds, for example Woolmer Pond (created as a result of former peat cutting), Folly Pond (forms part of Forest Mere SSSI), Cranmer Pond and The Lake.

M.55 Although the settlement pattern is typical of the landscape type (characterised by dispersed farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin), the area now contains localised groupings of modern military buildings. The area is in close proximity to the larger settlements of Bordon, Liphook and Liss. Despite this the landscape is seemingly devoid of human settlement. However, the presence of the A3(T) and overt human impact due to the presence of army camps and associated built development, and industrial buildings, particularly along the A3 corridor, impinge on the sense of remoteness and tranquillity in localised areas.

Sensitivities Specific to the Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down

M.56 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.	Surviving areas of common at Weaver's Down, Griggs Green, Holm Hills, Holly Hills, and Wheatsheaf Common.
2.	The small parks at The Wylds and Foley Manor which provide a sense of historic continuity.
3.	Ponds e.g. Woolmer Pond, Folly Pond (part of Forest mere SSSI) and The Lake.
4.	The area's inter-visibility with the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace.*

Change Specific to the Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down

M.57 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes to this area include:

Forces for Change	
1.	Pressure for development due to the location of this character area close to the settlements of Bordon, Liphook and Liss, and its location along the A3 corridor.
2.	The redevelopment of MOD sites at Bordon and Whitehill.
3.	Increases in traffic pressures particularly in relation to the A3(T), leading to road improvements or widening.
4.	Pressure for recreational use of the land e.g. golf courses and equine holdings which affect land management and extend urbanising features into the undeveloped landscape.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down

M.58 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. Maintain the surviving areas of commonland at Weaver's Down, Griggs Green, Holm Hills, Holly Hills, and Wheatsheaf Common, and maintain through grazing.

b. Conserve the landscape features of the small parks at The Wylds and Foley Manor to ensure these parks continue to provide a sense of historic continuity.

c. Continue to manage the existing ponds e.g. Woolmer Pond, Folly Pond, Cranmer Pond and The Lake.

M.59 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

a. Consider views from the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* in relation to any change in this area.

b. Consider the impact of any further built development outside the National Park boundary or associated with the A3(T) on this area and ensure it is integrated into its landscape context.

c. Ensure that on going and future redevelopment of MOD sites do not impact on the tranquil and rural character of the area and its dark skies.