

## Appendix O

### Landscape Character Type O: Greensand Hills

The *Greensand Hills* are steep, prominent hills formed by the resistant sandstones of the Hythe Formation. They form a horseshoe-shaped escarpment enclosing the Milland Basin, located in the northernmost part of the South Downs.

#### Description

##### Key Characteristics

- Prominent hills formed from sandstones and cherts of the Lower Greensand group with a steep escarpment at their inner edge.
- Streams drain the hills in deep ravine-like valleys.
- Significant woodland cover comprising an interlocking mosaic of different woodland types and structures - oak-birch woodland, beechwoods, mixed woodland and coniferous plantations on former commonland.
- Woodland clearings support heathy unenclosed commons including ecologically rich habitats - open heather heath, acid grassland, bracken, gorse, woody scrub, and oak-birch woodland.
- The irregular pattern of fields within clearings and woodland edges support rough grazing.
- Narrow, deeply sunken lanes wind up hillsides linking isolated farmsteads.
- Dispersed medieval settlement form with scattered early piecemeal enclosures around the edge of former commons.
- Extensive network of public rights of way and unenclosed commons open to public access.
- Hammer ponds along the foot of the hills associated with the former Wealden iron industry.
- Extensive panoramic views from open hill tops.
- Characterised by a sense of enclosure and remoteness.

#### Physical Landscape

**O.1** The *Greensand Hills* are created by the sandstones of the Hythe formation which form part of the Lower Greensand group. The rocks are a greenish grey sandstone with beds of chert which is resistant to erosion. The Hythe Beds are particularly thick along their northern and western limits where they give rise to a prominent ridge of hills with steep escarpments that enclose the Wealden Basin. A series of streams have eroded deep ravine-like valleys into the sandstone creating an undulating landform.

**O.2** The hills are unified by their dense tree cover in the form of conifer plantations, mixed woodland, oak-birch-chestnut broadleaved woodland, beech hangers and chestnut-hazel coppice. Irregular patterns comprising fields of pasture are found in woodland clearings where the acidic grassland is often used for horse grazing. Marshy grassland and ponds are also features of these clearings. The sandstone geology gives rise to well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils that are locally stony and support heathland.

**O.3** Steep, winding lanes accessing the hills have been eroded over many years to deep sunken lanes where tree roots as well as the underlying sandstones are exposed.

### Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

**O.4** The hills provide contrasting experiences. A strong sense of enclosure is provided by the high proportion of woodland and the deeply sunken lanes while a sense of openness and exposure is experienced on the open heaths, particularly where these occur on hill tops from where there are panoramic views, including views overlooking the Milland Valley and the Weald. The tree cover also contributes to the sense of remoteness that characterises the hills. At a detailed level the intimate winding lanes and narrow valleys form a contrast to the large scale swathes of woodland and open heathlands. The landscape is essentially tranquil, as a result of the low population density and lack of movement.

**O.5** The hills are highly tranquil and have a high level of perceived naturalness (due to the presence of native deciduous woodland, heathland and wetland habitats), lack of visible overt human impact, low density of settlement, low noise levels and associated dark skies  
[\[https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies/\]](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies/).

**O.6** Although the hills are highly rural, there is generally good access to the countryside provided by an extensive network of public rights of way, including woodland walks. There are also a large number of commons with open access as well as areas of land managed for recreation by the National Trust and Forestry Commission.

**O.7** Some of the earliest descriptive writings, by William Camden in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, describe the hills as an industrial heartland ‘a great deal of meadow ground is turned into ponds and mills for the driving of mills by the flashes, which, beating with hammers upon the iron, fill the neighbourhood about it, night and day with continual noise’. This clearly illustrates the changes that have occurred in the landscape.

**O.8** The Poet Laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson, lived in a house on the slopes of Black Down. The views from Black Down inspired his poem ‘View eastward over the Weald’ which was written in 1880. The poem celebrates the spacious vistas and scenic beauty of the landscape. Speaking of the Greensand Hills, Cobbett declared “I have never seen the earth flung about in such a wild way as round Hindhead and Black Down”.

**O.9** The landscape has also been a great source of inspiration to painters. William Turner (1775-1851) was a regular visitor to Petworth in the early 1800s, painting pictures of the house and its parkland. Ivon Hitchens (1893-1979) painted in West Sussex throughout the 1930s and returned to settle at Lavington Common where he continued to paint.

### Biodiversity

**O.10** This landscape is heavily wooded and supports large areas of ancient woodland, which together with remnant areas of open heath, acid grassland and meadow/pasture contribute to the rich and varied ecological character of the landscape. Many sites carry statutory and/or non-statutory wildlife designation including SSSI, LWS, LNR and SAC.

**O.11** The character of the woodland resource is varied and includes a range of semi-natural woodland types including those dominated by oak-beech, oak-ash, oak-birch, and sweet chestnut, as well as broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation. Of particular note are the large areas of ancient semi-natural woodland which support a diverse assemblage of flora and fauna, particularly invertebrates, bryophytes and lichens. The network of smaller woodlands, both ancient, secondary and plantation are also of significant ecological value and provide important corridors between core woodland areas. Much of the deciduous woodland across the landscape is a BAP Priority Habitat.

**O.12** There are also remnant areas of lowland heath and small patches of good quality semi-improved grassland (also BAP Priority Habitats) along with occasional areas of wet heath, acid grassland and secondary woodland. These heathland habitats are characteristic of the area and are particularly notable for their invertebrates and breeding birds such as woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.

Key Biodiversity Features	Importance
Significant deciduous woodland (a BAP Priority Habitat), much of it ancient woodland, with good connectivity, including examples of oak, beech, birch and sweet chestnut woodland.	These woodlands support a diverse range of flowering plants, and are particularly notable for their invertebrates, breeding birds, bryophytes and lichens.
Important areas of lowland heath (a BAP Priority Habitat) and occasional patches of wet heath, acid grassland, meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland (a BAP Priority Habitat).	Lowland heathland supports a characteristic invertebrate fauna and is important for breeding birds such as woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler. Semi-improved grassland is moderately species-rich but valued for its potential for habitat enhancement.

**O.13** The areas of BAP Priority Habitat lowland heathland across the Greensand Hills are identified as providing effective habitat networks in Natural England's National Habitat Networks Mapping Project. Adjacent to some of these lowland heathland habitats are areas identified as being suitable for restoration where they exist in a degraded or fragmented form (including at Black Down, Marley Common and the western

edge of Brinkshole Heath). The mapping project also indicates that work is underway to either create or restore these habitats at the southern edge of Black Down and Stanley Common.

**O.14** Network Enhancement Zones have also been identified across the landscape, where land connecting existing patches of these habitats are likely to be suitable for the creation of lowland heathland habitats. This will result in the joining up of existing habitats and subsequently improving the connections between them.

### Historic Character

**O.15** The generally low fertility and marginal character of the sandy soils is evident in a historic land-use which, for several millennia, has been dominated by woodland and heathy unenclosed commons, with earlier activity restricted to prehistoric exploitation of the woodland resources. The presence of an Iron Age hillfort at Hammer Wood indicates activity at this time in the vicinity, although the focus of any settlement is likely to have been the adjacent Rother valley. Evidence of Roman roads reinforces the marginal nature of the area as a landscape to traverse rather than settle.

**O.16** Extensive blocks of pre-1800 woodland are still evident within the landscape, largely, but not exclusively, grouped along the steep scarp slope overlooking the Low Weald. Much of this woodland is likely to be of medieval origin, classified as assart woods<sup>1</sup> having been left after the surrounding woodland was cleared and enclosed as farmland. They probably involved areas of coppicing, a practice that would have continued into the modern period.

**O.17** The areas of commonland were originally cleared in the prehistoric period and utilised for centuries by communities based on more favoured soils as pasture, wood pasture and as a source of fuel. Most of the commons have, since 1800, been appropriated for plantations, many of them coniferous, while some commons have been subject to scrub encroachment following a decline in traditional grazing management leading to the development of a mature wooded canopy. These, together with the earlier blocks of ancient woodland, produce the overwhelmingly wooded character. Some of the commonland was enclosed for agricultural use, with some early enclosures present around medieval settlement and in woodland clearings. This is in the form of regular piecemeal enclosure, identified by regular or semi-regular shaped fields with wavy or straight boundaries, creating a regular but informal field pattern. There are also modern enclosures (i.e. post-1910) which fall into two types.

The first type comprises modern fields derived from 20<sup>th</sup> century amalgamations of earlier field systems for arable cultivation which occur on the dip slope of the wooded ridge (the south-facing side of the Rother valley). The other type comprises areas of small-holdings associated with detached houses set within large gardens.

**O.18** The landscape supports a number of gentry houses and landscape parks, some of which are ‘anchored’ in adjacent character areas with richer natural resources.

Key Features of the Historic Environment	Importance
Marginal nature of the landscape	Provides a continuing sense of remoteness.
Survival of significant blocks of pre-1800 woodland on the steep scarp slopes overlooking the lower Weald	Provides evidence of medieval and early post-medieval woodland exploitation, e.g. coppicing and charcoal burning.
Remnant unenclosed common	Provides an indication of historic land use e.g. survival of small area of common.
Extensive areas of post-1800 woodland plantations covering areas of former commonland	Indicates the location of areas of former common which would have been open/less wooded.
Scattered early piecemeal enclosures around the edge of commons	Important evidence for early post-medieval use of marginal land in response to increasing competition for land resources.
Presence of designed landscapes	Provide evidence of gentry houses and landscape parks of the wealthy population of the past.

### Settlement Form and Built Character

**O.19** The settlement pattern in the *Greensand Hills* 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 comprises isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within areas of early enclosure surrounded by woodland.

**O.20** Post-medieval enclosure of the commons created new settlement types, represented by both straggling semi-nucleations/agglomerations of settlement and isolated farmsteads or small holdings, situated around the edges of the former commons.

<sup>1</sup> West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove Unitary Authority and English Heritage. 2010 *Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation*

**O.21** Modern (late 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century) settlement is characterised by the spread of small-holdings and detached houses with gardens.

**O.22** Building materials are typically local sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.

## Evaluation

### Ecosystem Services in the Greensand Hills

**O.23** Ecosystem services are the benefits people and society get from the natural environment. The *Greensand Hills* provides:

Provisioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Food provision – mixed farming producing cereals and arable crops, and livestock grazing.</li> <li>■ Timber provision– commercial plantations.</li> <li>■ Water availability – sandstone aquifer maintains springs and base flows into stream and rivers. Abstraction of surface water.</li> </ul>
Regulating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regulating water flows – soils and underlying geology are permeable and able to absorb and store winter rainfall, helping to avoid accelerated water run-off and flooding.</li> <li>■ Regulating soil erosion – fertile and versatile soils, though prone to compaction and erosion from wind and surface water run-off.</li> <li>■ Climate regulation - carbon sequestration and storage benefits in soils, woodland and heathlands.</li> <li>■ Air quality regulation – woodlands play an important role in regulating local air quality.</li> <li>■ Pollination – heathlands and unimproved or semi-improved grasslands are important nectar sources for pollinating insects.</li> </ul>
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sense of place – varied landscape character with prominent views from the greensand ridge, extensive areas of lowland heath, historic commons and ancient woodland.</li> <li>■ Tranquillity – high levels of tranquillity within the intimate rural landscape and areas of heathland and ancient woodland.</li> <li>■ Recreation – wide range of opportunities for recreation and access, particularly associated with the woodland and heathland areas.</li> </ul>
Supporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Biodiversity - Diverse range of habitats including ancient woodland, heathland, lowland acid grasslands and meadows that support an extensive range of species and ecosystem services.</li> </ul>

### Sensitivities

**O.24** 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.	Ancient deciduous woodland which provides a sense of enclosure, a high perceived naturalness, woodland walks, and rich biodiversity.
2.	Remnant areas of heathland which are important in providing a sense of time depth, a high perceived naturalness, opportunities for countryside access, and a rich biodiversity.
3.	Patterns of early enclosures which provide a sense of time depth and contribute to the intimate scale of the landscape.
4.	A dispersed settlement pattern which is important in maintaining a rural and tranquil character.
5.	High level of perceived naturalness and lack of visible overt human impact.
6.	The sense of remoteness arising from the low density of settlement with associated dark skies and low noise levels.
7.	Prominent undeveloped ridges and skylines that are visible from adjacent landscapes are visually highly sensitive.

## Change – Key Issues and Trends

### Past Change

**O.25** Past change includes:

Past Change	
1.	Planting of conifers on heathland after 1800 (this has now ceased) with areas now being bought forward for heathland re-creation.
2.	Encroachment of scrub onto remaining areas of heathland in areas of low grazing pressure.
3.	Spread of introduced invasive species such as rhododendrons and laurel, which thrive on the acidic sandy soils, within deciduous woodland.
4.	Decline in traditional woodland management techniques (coppicing) as forestry has concentrated on coniferous rotations.
5.	Expansion of built development in a woodland setting including suburban development along roads.
6.	Increasing recreational use of the area, indicated by the presence of horse riding centres and golf courses.
7.	Increase in hobby farming or private stables resulting in sub-division of fields with additional fencing, tracks, hardstanding, jumps and other paraphernalia.
8.	Hedgerow loss around field enclosures and replacement with fencing.

### Future Landscape Change

**O.26** The likely future changes are set out in the table below:

Future Change	
1.	An increase in the coverage of commercial forestry plantations with impacts from felling regimes and replanting.
2.	Increased rainfall could lead to high water flows of streams, and increased rates of soil erosion for the freely draining very acid sandy and loamy soils that cover the Greensand Hills landscape, contrasting with periods of drought and low flows.
3.	Increased temperatures may result in changes to the species composition of habitats particularly affecting the heathlands and ancient woodlands. This could also 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 possible issue in this wooded area - the predominance of the older age classes may increase the susceptibility of woodland to damage from droughts and storms.
5.	Beech is vulnerable to loss due to its drought sensitive nature and the potential impact of sun-scorch leading to bark-death. Increased winter temperatures could also lead to a reduction in beech due to reductions in bud initiation.
6.	In response to climate change, renewable energy may result in demand for wind energy development along the prominent sandstone hills which could alter the sense of tranquillity and remoteness associated with this landscape. Future improved management of woodlands for fuel may also be a positive benefit.
7.	Agricultural management will be driven by the changes in the world market and the agricultural policy. In this area of low fertility sandy soils, it is possible that marginal farms may cease active agricultural production and will be vulnerable to purchase as hobby farms or for horse grazing.
8.	Open access heathland is sensitive to trampling caused by increased visitor numbers resulting in increased erosion and flooding.
9.	Drier summers will also increase the risk of fires. This is of particular concern on open access sites that are at higher risk at times of dry weather due to high recreational use.

Future Change
10. Positive landscape change could result from regimes to promote enhanced environmental management of woodland and especially on-going work to restore, manage and link heathland sites.
11. Pressure for development outside the National Park may result in visual impacts from the boundary edge and affect general perceptual qualities including tranquillity / dark skies.
12. Small alterations to individual properties (such as lighting or introduction of suburban style fencing and boundaries), plus increased demand for leisure land uses such as horse riding and golf may cumulatively start to erode the perceived rural, remote character of the area, which is an especially sensitive and vulnerable characteristic.
13. Increasing traffic pressures may also have impacts on the narrow rural roads and sunken lanes with roadside trees that characterise the area.

## Broad Management Objective and Landscape Guidelines

**O.27** The overall management objective should be to conserve the rich mosaic of natural habitats, the sense of remoteness and history, and panoramic views over the surrounding countryside.

### Guidance for Landscape Management

- A.** Conserve pre-1800 woodland, monitor/ check the spread of introduced invasive species in ancient deciduous woodland, and plan for long term woodland regeneration. As conditions change, plant suitable species and manage woodlands to improve structure, health and diversity of habitat, improving the connectivity of woodland across the Greensand Hills.
- B.** Encourage re-introduction of traditional woodland management techniques, such as coppicing, and promote interest in, and marketing of, local wood products, including wood for fuel.
- C.** Reduce the impact of forestry by encouraging sensitive forestry practice, for example mixing different species and felling small coupes.
- D.** Manage existing heathland to prevent encroachment of scrub and assess potential for creating new, interconnected heathlands. Conserve the mix of ancient woodland, heathland and pasture on acidic grassland.
- E.** Reinstate former field boundaries in the pastoral clearings.
- F.** Safeguard early enclosures that represent post-medieval use of marginal land in response to increasing competition for land resources.
- G.** 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 ponticum* in woodland and lowland heath. Refer to the SDNP INNS Strategy.
- H.** Encourage and support the development of soil management plans to reduce soil erosion. Implement measures to increase vegetative cover and avoid over grazing, trampling, damage, poaching and compaction from both mechanised and recreational activities, especially on the fine, easily eroded soils.
- I.** Develop large scale habitat re-creation as part of enhancing the green infrastructure within the National Park, to provide greater recreation resource and allow the spread of potentially increased visitors across numerous sites.
- J.** Manage visitor pressure by, where necessary, directing people away from the most vulnerable areas at sensitive times. Where appropriate, develop new recreational routes to take pressure of those routes at risk from erosion.
- K.** Promote responsible recreation behaviour. This is particularly important during periods of heat wave, where there is increased risk to health as well as risks of fire in areas of open grassland / heathland and woodland.
- L.** Encourage sensitive integration of fencing, tracks, hardstanding, jumps and other paraphernalia that are associated with hobby farms or private stables and that fall outside planning control.
- M.** Seek to minimise water pollution from agriculture through sensitive land management practices, including restoration of buffer strips along watercourses to minimise run-off.

### Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

- A.** Conserve the low density of dispersed settlement which contributes to the tranquil rural character of the area.
- B.** Maintain the characteristic loose agglomerations of common-edge settlement and avoid infill or extensions which would create a more compact, solid settlement form along roads.
- C.** Ensure that any built development reflects the local vernacular - resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting. Conserve the remote rural character of the landscape.

- D. Ensure recreational facilities, such as horse riding centres and golf courses, do not erode sense of tranquillity. Avoid use of excessive lighting, signage and 'suburban' features.
- E. Minimise use of signage in this rural landscape. Where necessary, use signage that fits with the rural character of the landscape, drawing on vernacular designs.
- F. Conserve the character of the ancient sunken lanes – resist pressure for road improvements which would alter the experience of travelling through the landscape.
- G. Monitor the effects of incremental change to buildings and land, and minimise such change by providing design guidance and encouraging applicants to enter into discussions at an early stage in the preparation of their proposals.
- H. Consideration should be given to the potential impact of any proposals for wind turbines or communication masts. Particular attention should be paid to views from key viewpoints as well as impacts on the less tangible aspects of character such as the special sense of remoteness and tranquillity associated with this area.
- I. Conserve the tranquil, wooded and undeveloped character of the landscape and associated dark skies, taking account of the technical guidance note dark skies technical advice note: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/TLL-10-SDNPA-Dark-Skies-Technical-Advice-Note-2018.pdf>.
- J. Consider views to and from the Greensand Hills in relation to any change. Refer to guidance in the View Characterisation and Analysis.<sup>2</sup>

### Woodland strategy and suitable species

**O.28** The LCT contains 46.24km<sup>2</sup> of woodland, approximately 58% woodland cover, representing one of the most wooded parts of the National Park. The existing woodland cover, much of which is of ancient origin, includes a mosaic of different wood types including oak-birch, sweet chestnut and beech woodlands, as well as mixed woodlands and coniferous plantations. The aim should be to buffer, link and connect to existing ancient woodland, creating new areas of deciduous woodland cover using appropriate species mixes. Planting would be appropriate where these do not conflict with heathland conservation and enhancement of the unenclosed commons.

**O.29** Avoid the introduction of non-native plant and animal species and monitor occurrence and abundance of new pests and diseases. 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.

**O.30** 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	
The Greensand Hills occur as one geographical area in the north of the South Downs National Park - forming a horseshoe-shaped escarpment between Blackdown and Petworth.	
O1:	Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills

<sup>2</sup> LUC. 2015 *South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis*

## O1: Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills

### Location and Boundaries

The *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* form the westernmost extent of the Lower Greensand where it curves around to enclose the western end of the Weald. The *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* character area forms part of a larger complex of Greensand hills which extends northwards across the National Park boundary into Surrey. Contours which represent the base of the steep scarp slope define the inner boundary of the hills. The outer southern boundary represents a transition between the dip slope of the Greensand hills and the Rother Valley and is drawn along a combination of woodland edges, field boundaries and contour lines. There are panoramic views from the open hilltops over adjacent landscapes.

#### Key Characteristics

- Prominent hills formed from sandstones and cherts of the Lower Greensand group with a steep escarpment at their inner edge from where there are panoramic views.
- Sandstone geology has resulted in eroded deeply sunken lanes and deep ravine like valleys containing streams.
- Sandy soils have given rise to heathy unenclosed commons (many are open to public access).
- Rich biodiversity created by the mix of ancient woodland, heathland and pasture on acidic grassland.
- The settlement pattern is typically dispersed, and density of settlement is low – this contributes to the rural and tranquil nature of the hills.
- Scattered post-medieval piecemeal enclosures, present around the edge of former commons, represent use of marginal land in response to increasing competition for land resources.
- The hills contain an extensive network of public rights of way and the area provides good countryside access in the form of open access land and land managed by the National Trust and Forestry Commission.
- The significant amount of woodland cover, including both ancient woodland and plantations on former common and heath, contributes to the sense of enclosure and remoteness that characterises the hills.

### Specific Characteristics Unique to the Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills

**O.31** The *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* form a prominent ridge of hills with steep escarpments that enclose the Milland Basin. This ridge of hills includes Black Down which, at 280m, is the highest point in the South Downs. The prominence of the hills provides opportunities for magnificent panoramic views from open hills, such as Woolbeding Common. The thickness of the Greensand deposit reduces to the east and, correspondingly, the hills are less dramatic to the east. Here the hills are cut by tributaries of the River Rother which have formed breaks in the ridge, for example at Lodsworth and Petworth.

**O.32** There is evidence of Iron Age activity in the form of an Iron Age hillfort at Hammer Wood, on the southern edge of the character area. Evidence for Roman activity is in the form of a mansio (posting station) and two stretches of Roman road (all now Scheduled Monuments) which were built to service people passing through the area. These sites reinforce the

marginal nature of the area as a landscape to traverse rather than settle.

**O.33** The coarse loamy and sandy soils of the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* support some significant areas of commonland which were originally cleared in the prehistoric period and utilised for centuries by communities based on more favoured soils as pasture, wood pasture and as a source of fuel. These sites now support extensive areas of open heathland, together with mosaics of acid grassland, wet heath and oak-birch woodland, for example at Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI and Chapel Common SSSI. Many of the commons also provide open access, for example Blackdown Common, Chapel Common, and Woolbeding Common.

**O.34** This character area supports over 1500ha of ancient semi-natural woodland, although over 600ha of this, has been replanted. Of particular note are The Mens SAC (204ha) which falls partly within the character area, and Northpark copse to Snapelands copse SSSI (101ha). These sites

support a diverse assemblage of flora and fauna, and are particularly notable for their invertebrates, bryophytes and lichens.

**O.35** A potential network join has been identified (in Natural England's National Habitat Networks Mapping Project) between the Wick Wood, Hammer Wood & Pond Copse Complex LWS and Iping Marsh which would help link up existing heathland habitats.

**O.36** Typical of their type, the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* reveal some areas of early enclosures, most notably the linear block of fields around the hamlet of Henley which may represent Tudor enclosures at the edge of the former Great and Lord's Commons. Early enclosures are also seen around the medieval settlement of Linchmere, probably originating as assarts from the woodland.

**O.37** Although the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* are highly rural, they lie in close proximity to Haslemere, Liphook, Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth. They are therefore highly accessible by large populations who use the woodlands, heaths and commons for informal recreation. The settlement pattern in this area is typical of the landscape type (characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement). The proximity of Haslemere and Liphook means this area has seen a spread of small-holdings and detached houses with gardens, particularly in the north of the character area.

**O.38** An exception to the dispersed pattern of settlement is the medieval village of Linchmere, which may be related to the nearby monastic site of Shulbrede Priory, perhaps as a dependent settlement.

**O.39** The *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* contain a number of landscape parks, including Blackdown Park, Pitshill Park, King Edward VII Hospital ground, the grounds of Hollycombe House, and part of Petworth Park. These are all on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens. In addition, there are a number of parks that are recognised by West Sussex County Council as 'parksapes', for example Coldharbour Park.

### Sensitivities Specific to the Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills

**O.40** All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. In addition, specific sensitivities to this character area are included in the table below.

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The sense of remoteness and tranquillity despite its location close to centres of population.

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
2.	The large number of historic parkland and designed landscapes.

### Change Specific to the Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills

**O.41** In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific changes to this area are set out in the table below.

Force for Change	
1.	Pressures for additional built development close to Haslemere, Liphook, Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth.
2.	The spread of small-holdings and large detached houses with gardens, particularly in the north of the character area and along the B2070.
3.	Increased demand for leisure land uses and continued spread of smallholdings and use of land for horse paddocks.

### Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills

**O.42** 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 sense of remoteness and tranquillity of this character area, which is particularly valued in proximity to areas of dense settlement.
- b. Conserve the large number of historic parklands and designed landscapes. Recognise and protect locally important parks and gardens, such as Coldharbour Park, as well as those listed on Historic England's Register.

**O.43** The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- a. Consider the impact of any further built development, particularly on the outskirts of Haslemere, Liphook, Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth and ensure any expansion is integrated into its landscape context.
- b. Seek to limit the further spread of small-holdings and detached houses with gardens, particularly in the north of the character area, which could erode the sense of tranquillity and remoteness associated

with this area. Avoid 'suburbanisation' of the landscape.

- c. Seek to reduce fragmentation of farmholdings for leisure use and provide guidance to new landowners raising awareness of the special landscape characteristics of the area.