Appendix P
Landscape Character Type P: Low Weald

The *Low Weald* comprises a gently undulating lowland vale landscape found on the dense Weald clays that are located in the north of the South Downs. This landscape type forms only a small part of the area known as the Low Weald that extends north and east well beyond the boundary of the South Downs.

Description

Key Characteristics

- Mixed geology of dense Wealden clays with limestone and sandstone bands gives rise to a gently undulating lowland vale.
- Drained by numerous branching streams, which have carved narrow valleys into the Weald clay. Ponds, marshes and damp, low-lying meadows alongside streams are key ecological features.
- Small-scale patchwork of irregular fields of arable and pasture divided by a well-developed historic hedgerow network with hedgerow oaks or bordered by sinuous woodland edges.
- Deciduous woodland copses are a feature, including ancient, species-rich and ecologically important woodlands that were traditionally intensively managed for fuel and timber.
- Linear strips of remnant woodland (shaws) are distinctive between field and along the narrow valley streams - this tree cover means watercourses are often indiscernible within the wider landscape.
- A number of large ponds, representing hammerponds associated with the Wealden iron industry or later mill ponds, add to the historic time depth and ecological diversity.
- Settlement pattern is characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement – comprising isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within areas of early enclosure surrounded by woodland, often assarted fields.
- Later encroachment around the edge of the commons has resulted in common edge settlement around a 'village green'.
- A deeply rural, tranquil and enclosed landscape with an essentially medieval pattern.

Physical Landscape

P.1 The *Low Weald* is underlain by dense Wealden clays interspersed with more resistant bands of limestones and sandstones. This geology forms gentle ridges and high points and is responsible for the gently rolling and undulating landform. Erosional processes have exposed this area as a low lying area or 'basin' which lies at the foot of the Greensand escarpment. Streams have carved narrow valleys into the Wealden clay. Although these water courses are often indiscernible in the wider landscape, hidden by tree cover, they are important to its structure and provide ecological interest. Ponds, formed historically by damming of the stream network and often associated with the former Wealden iron industry, are a feature throughout the character area.

P.2 The underlying clay gives rise to clayey or loamy soils over clay which are better drained than much of the *Low*

Weald and this is reflected by the presence of arable farmland as well as pasture, paddock and some ungrazed grassland. Fields are of varying size with irregular boundaries defined by dense, mainly intact hedgerows and sinuous woodland edges. Sandstone outcrops are indicated by the presence of acidic vegetation including bracken.

P.3 Woodland features prominently throughout the character area, interspersed with the farmland to form an intricate mosaic. Hedgerow trees (predominantly oak) add to the wooded character. Linear shaws (remnant strips of cleared woodland) are feature of this landscape, retained along the narrow steep valley sides. These add to the sense of enclosure and also provide an important wildlife corridor linking larger blocks of woodland.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

P.4 This is a landscape of varying scale with areas of openness associated with farmland and more intimate enclosure provided by the woodland cover. The encompassing Greensand hills provide further containment and, where woodland permits, provide a dark imposing backdrop to views.

P.5 There are relatively few elements to this landscape but they combine to form a textured and colourful mosaic with a contrast between the light in open areas and the dappled shade of the woodland and wooded stream valleys. Visual unity across the character area is maintained by the consistent occurrence of farmland and woodland.

P.6 The presence of deciduous woodland and the small streams which cut through this area contribute to its perceived naturalness. Some contrast is provided by the large arable fields which have a more tamed and managed character. Overall this landscape has a rural and tranquil character created by the absence of main roads, presence of narrow winding lanes, the dispersed sparse settlement and the perceived naturalness of the woodland, pasture and small stream valleys.

P.7 The area is well served by public rights of way connecting places of interest including a Capability Brown's landscaped deer park at Petworth. However, the Wealden landscape has to an extent avoided public notice with more attention paid to other landscapes within the South Downs. The feeling that it has been 'undiscovered' enhances its medieval, rural character.

Biodiversity

P.8 This landscape comprises a well wooded agricultural landscape, and includes several extensive and ecologically important woodland sites, some of which are recognised internationally for their lichen, invertebrate and breeding bird communities. Many ancient woodland sites occur through the landscape, many of which have been designated as LWS and are identified as a BAP Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland) reflecting their ecological importance. Large areas of more recent mixed plantation provide additional habitat diversity.

P.9 Fields of arable land and improved grassland are generally small and are typically bordered by well-developed hedgerows, narrow woodland belts and/or woodland edges. Mature oak trees occur both as hedgerow trees and as individual features within fields, and ponds and streams provide additional ecological diversity. Occasional areas of marshy grassland and meadow also occur and provide habitat for a range of declining plant species. There are a small number of areas that are identified as BAP Priority Habitat lowland meadow and good quality semi-improved grassland.

Key Biodiversity Features	Importance
Significant deciduous woodland cover (a BAP Priority Habitat), including many ancient woodlands, with good connectivity	Deciduous woodland and ancient woodland provide an important habitat for woodland plant species, lichens, fungi, breeding birds and invertebrates. Their importance is recognised through designation at county, national or international level.
Good quality semi-improved grassland and lowland meadows (both BAP Priority Habitats).	Lowland meadows contain specialist group of scarce and declining plant species and are important habitats for farmland birds. Semi-improved grassland is moderately species-rich and valued for its potential for habitat enhancement.
Well-developed hedgerow network, mature standard trees, ponds and streams	These features provide additional ecological diversity.

P.10 The BAP Priority Habitats (deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland and lowland meadows) are identified as providing effective habitat networks in Natural England's National Habitat Networks Mapping Project. Adjacent to some of these habitats are areas identified as being suitable for restoration where they exist in a degraded or fragmented form (including at the Lurgashall Mill Pond & Old Mill Farm Meadows LWS and adjacent to the Ebernoe Common SSSI / NNR). The mapping project also indicates that work is underway to either create or restore these habitats at areas including Ebernoe Common, The Mens SSSI, Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI and Lurgashall Mill Pond & Old Mill Farm Meadows LWS.

P.11 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 deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland and lowland meadow habitats. This will result in the joining up of existing habitats and subsequently improving the connections between them. A potential 'network join' has been identified at the northern edge of the Lurgashall Mill Pond & Old Mill Farm Meadows LWS, and another at The Mens SSSI, between the Blackhouse Copse Complex & Meadows LWS and Wisborough Green Pastures LWS, which would help link up existing clusters of these priority habitats.

Historic Character

P.12 The development of deciduous woodland cover following the last glaciation (c.8500BC) saw the exploitation of the area by Mesolithic hunters. However, later prehistoric communities, dependent largely on agriculture, were deterred by the thick woodland and heavy, wet clay soils.

P.13 Little attempt to clear the land was made until the Saxon period, when communities situated on better soils elsewhere in the region began to exploit the Wealden interior, initially as swine pastures within the woodland. By the 12th-13th centuries, piecemeal clearance of the woodland was in progress, evident today from the large proportion of cohesive assart field systems that are scattered throughout the landscape.

P.14 A distinctive element of the medieval landscape, particularly on less productive soils, was the deer park, providing food, recreation and status for the landed elite. Former medieval deer parks are recognisable as compact islands of recently enclosed regular fields surrounded by irregular early enclosures. The boundaries (pales) are often still visible in the modern landscape as curvilinear field boundaries.

P.15 During the post-medieval period, the character area became partly industrial in nature. This process began in the 16th century with the exploitation of the local iron ores and sands in the ironworking and glassmaking industries. These industries were manifested in the landscape as small-scale concerns, often set apart from the farmsteads and worked by non-local specialists (especially the glassworks), with the main effects on the landscape comprising extensive tree clearance and coppicing to provide fuel, and the damming of small valleys through the construction of earthen dams (pond bays) to create hammerponds, which fed water-powered machinery. Many of the pond bays still survive.

P.16 The area today is characterised by a largely medieval landscape of isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts, surrounded by woodland with evidence of the Wealden iron industry in the form of hammerponds. There is also evidence of more regular piecemeal enclosure (originating from late medieval or Tudor times) as well as modern field amalgamation that occurred throughout the 20th century.

Key Features of the Historic Environment	Importance
Isolated farmsteads set within areas of early enclosure and surrounded by woodland	Landscape largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity and an indication of the marginal nature of the landscape.
Extensive pre-1800 woodland	Landscape largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity.
Designed landscapes - medieval deerparks and post-medieval landscape parks	Provide evidence of the use of agriculturally marginal land by the wealthy strata of society for recreational use.
Archaeological remains of industrial activity	Provides evidence of a short-lived but important industrial component of the rural landscape.

Settlement Form and Built Character

P.17 The settlement pattern in this area 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, often assarted fields. Some of these farmsteads clustered around an area of common waste (generally used to pasture livestock), forming small agglomerations of 'less dispersed' farmsteads. Later encroachment around the edge of the commons has increased the amount of buildings around the perimeter in a 'common edge' settlement style. Many of these commons now appear as 'village greens'.

P.18 Building materials are typically timber, local sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.

Evaluation

Ecosystem Services in the Low Weald

P.19 Ecosystem services are the benefits people and society get from the natural environment. The *Low Weald* provides:

Provisioning	■ Food provision– mixed farming producing cereals and arable crops, and livestock grazing. ■ Timber provision – from deciduous woodlands which were historically managed for fuel and timber, as well as more recent mixed plantations. ■ Water availability – sandstone aquifer maintains springs and base flows into rivers and streams. The well drained clayey / loamy soils are important as winter rainfall is readily absorbed, recharging aquifers and making an important contribution to water supplies.
Regulating	■ 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. ■ Regulating soil erosion – fertile and versatile soils though prone to compaction and erosion from wind and surface water run-off. ■ Climate regulation - carbon sequestration and storage benefits woodland. ■ Air quality regulation – woodlands play an important role in regulating local air quality. ■ Pollination – unimproved/semi-improved grasslands are important nectar sources for pollinating insects.
Cultural	■ Sense of place – absence of main roads, presence of narrow winding lanes, the dispersed sparse settlement and the perceived naturalness of the woodland, pasture and small stream valleys. ■ Tranquillity – intimate enclosure provided by the woodland cover provides high levels of tranquillity. ■ Recreation – served by public rights of way connecting places of interest including a Capability Brown's landscaped deerpark at Petworth.
Supporting	■ Biodiversity – significant woodland cover providing important habitats for woodland plant species, lichens, fungi, breeding birds and invertebrates.

Sensitivities

P.20 This landscape 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 irregular landscape mosaic of fields, hedgerows, woodland blocks and shaws which provide continuity and unity throughout the landscape, conforming to a medieval landscape pattern.
2. The hedgerow network with mature oaks occurring as hedgerow trees.
3. The small stream corridors and ponds (including hammerponds surviving from the Wealden iron industry) which are important features in the landscape but are often hidden from view by vegetation cover.
4. The original lobate form of medieval assarts that surround isolated farmsteads.
5. Extensive and ecologically important areas of ancient woodland and wood pasture.
6. The settlement form of a medieval agglomeration of farmsteads set around a central green.
7. The consistency in building materials - typically timber, local sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.
8. The enclosure provided by the Greensand Hills which accentuates the low-lying character of the vale and forms a dramatic backdrop in views.
9. The secret 'undiscovered' tranquil, rural character.
10. Visibility of the area from the higher adjacent landscape of the Greensand Hills.

Change – Key Issues and Trends

Past Change

P.21 Past change includes:

Past Change	
1.	From the medieval period woodland was intensively managed for fuel and timber by a combination of coppicing, thinning and wood pasture. There has been a decline in woodland management in the past century.
2.	Field expansion and hedgerow loss since the middle of the last century.
3.	Expansion of villages and common edge settlements with modern infill which has added a suburban character to the villages

Future Landscape Change

P.22 The likely future changes are set out in the table below:

Future Change	
1.	Increased rainfall could lead to high water flows of streams, and increased rates of soil erosion, contrasting with periods of drought and low flows. The slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils are sensitive to increased wetness and risk of soil compaction, diffuse pollution and increased local flooding.
2.	Increased temperatures may result in changes to the species composition of habitats particularly affecting the ancient woodlands and remnant shaws. 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. Future improved management of woodlands for fuel may be a positive benefit.
3.	Wind damage, due to increases in severe gales, is another possible issue for the wooded areas - the predominance of the older age classes may increase the susceptibility of woodland to damage from droughts and storms.
4.	Agricultural management will be driven by the changes in the world market and the agricultural policy and in areas of the Low Weald where soils are lighter and better drained, it is possible that there will be pressure for increases in field size and hedgerow removal.
5.	The pastures are vulnerable to summer drought and it is possible that set-aside will be seen more frequently in the landscape as a means of allowing pasture to recover from dry summers. Decline in grazing as a result of global competition may also see some areas become marginal to farming, with pastures being put to new uses such as horse paddocks. Positive landscape change could result from regimes to promote enhanced environmental management of pasture, woodland and hedgerows.
6.	Boundary removal or incongruous new planting having an effect on the organic landscape pattern of hedgerows, shaws, pastures and ancient woodland.
7.	If Net Zero commitments are implemented, it is likely that there will be key changes to land use, including a reduction in grazing land to free up land for other uses, including new woodlands related to afforestation initiatives.
8.	In this area the tranquil, rural character and intact medieval landscape pattern is vulnerable to adverse change. Development pressures could be high given the proximity of the area to a number of towns beyond the National Park boundary which may result in further suburbanisation of the villages. 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.
9.	Increasing traffic pressures may have impacts on the narrow winding rural roads that characterise the area.

Broad Management Objective and Landscape Guidelines

P.23 The overall management objective should be to conserve the rural, tranquil, 'medieval' character of the landscape created by historic fields, hedgerows, shaws, and ancient woodland and dispersed settlement.

Guidance for Landscape Management

A. Conserve the organic landscape pattern with its diversity in field and woodland size. Avoid establishment of regular field patterns and woodland blocks which would have a detrimental impact on the visual structure of the landscape.

B. 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 *Low Weald.*

C. Conserve and manage the linear shaws which are of historical, of ecological importance and contribute significantly to the visual structure of the landscape.

D. Continue to manage woodland and plan for long-term woodland regeneration. Consider re-introducing traditional management techniques such as coppicing, thinning and wood pasture where these have been lost.

E. Encourage the planting of indigenous species woodlands which support local biodiversity, water objectives and climate change mitigation as part of afforestation programmes.

F. Manage the network of hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees. Conserve veteran oaks and re-plant new trees to eventually become veteran trees.

G. Consider linkages between woodland blocks, shaws and hedgerows to enhance green corridor network which is particularly valuable for nature conservation.

H. Conserve and maintain ponds (particularly hammer ponds associated with the Wealden iron industry) and small stream valleys and their associated landscape.

I. Seek to minimise water pollution from agriculture through sensitive land management practices, including restoration of buffer strips along watercourses to minimise run-off. Encourage buffer strips of permanent pasture in arable areas or areas of intensively managed grassland.

J. Encourage and support the development of soil management plans to reduce soil erosion. Minimise soil structural deterioration and improve water infiltration and drainage.

K. 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* in woodlands. Refer to the SDNP INNS Strategy.

L. Maintain and develop the rights of way network and creation of new green infrastructure to better link communities with their surroundings.

M. Maintain views to the enclosing wooded ridges of the Greensand Hills.

Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

A. Soften the built edges of villages by introducing small scale planting schemes using native broadleaved species. Planting should integrate with the surrounding landscape pattern.

B. Consider the impact on views into the valley from the surrounding higher land in relation to any proposed change – refer to the View Characterisation and Analysis report.[1]

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

- **C.** Maintain the dispersion of settlement at its current level and prevent infilling.
- **D.** Conserve the settlement form of a medieval agglomeration of farmsteads and later buildings set around a central 'village green'. Avoid infilling of these greens.
- **E.** Conserve the isolated farmsteads of medieval origin and their setting within areas of early enclosure.
- **F.** Ensure that any built development reflects the local vernacular – seek to resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting.
- **G.** Monitor the effects of incremental change to buildings 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.** Encourage sympathetic integration of horse paddocks and associated stables through maintenance of existing field boundaries.
- **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.

Woodland strategy and suitable species

P.24 The LCT contains 34.35km^2 of woodland, majority broadleaved, approximately 34% woodland cover, representing one of the more wooded parts of the National Park. The strategy for this wooded agricultural landscape is to create new areas of woodland, perpetuating the existing pattern of well-connected blocks of woodland, sinuous linear 'shaws' and well-developed hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees (predominantly oak).

P.25 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.

P.26 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 two character areas representing the *Low Weald* landscape type within the South Downs National Park. These are both located in the northern extremity of the study area – the *Milland Basin* is a distinct area that is enclosed by the Greensand Hills and falls entirely within the National Park while the *Northchapel Basin* is a more extensive area that stretches beyond the National Park boundary to the north and east.	
P1:	Milland Basin Low Weald
P2:	Northchapel Basin Low Weald

P1: Milland Basin Low Weald

Location and Boundaries

The *Milland Basin* comprises a lowland clay vale at the western extremity of the *Low Weald.* It is enclosed to the north, south and west by the steep scarp slope which defines the inner boundary of the Greensand Hills. The enclosure provided by the scarp landform accentuates the low-lying character of the vale and distinguishes it from the adjoining *Northchapel Basin*.

Key Characteristics

- Lowland clay vale encompassed and enclosed by the steep scarp slopes of the Greensand Hills.
- Cut by a number of streams (e.g. Hammer Stream) which have carved narrow valleys into the Weald clay – some dammed to form hammer ponds or mill ponds (e.g. Cook's Pond).
- Areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland add to the ecological and visual diversity of the landscape.
- An organic mosaic of predominantly pasture fields interspersed with woodland and shaws, much of which is ancient and of ecological importance.
- Small-scale to medium sized irregular fields defined by intact dense hedgerows and sinuous woodland edges.
- Mature hedgerow oaks are a feature within hedgerows and also as specimen trees (remnant field boundaries) within pasture.
- Fernhurst and Milland, both of which are mostly post-1800 in date, represent modern infill around an original dispersed medieval core.
- Where woodland permits, the Greensand Hills provide a prominent, dark backdrop in views.
- A deeply rural, tranquil landscape with an essentially medieval pattern.

Specific Characteristics Unique to the Milland Basin

P.27 This landscape character area is a low lying vale lying at the foot of, and encircled by, the Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills. This undulating basin is cut by a number of streams (e.g. Hammer Stream) which rise from the springline at the foot of the Greensand escarpment. These are often associated with dammed ponds, which are related to the former Wealden iron industry which once dominated the area, and occasional areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland, for example at Woolhouse Farm Meadows LWS and Sewards Meadow LWS.

P.28 Historically, the traditional farming regime in this character area has been wood pasture, dairying and cattle rearing. This is reflected in the land cover which is composed of a mosaic of pasture fields interspersed with fragments of woodland of varying size. There are also horse paddocks, a more recent introduction to the landscape.

P.29 Fields are generally small in size with irregular boundaries defined by dense, mainly intact hedgerows and sinuous woodland edges. Both field and woodland size increases towards the foot of Greensand escarpment and this is generally where the ancient woodland occurs, forming extensions of larger woodlands located on the escarpment of the Greensand Hills, for example parts of Northpark copse to Snapelands copse SSSI, Rake Hanger SSSI and Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI. Shaws (remnant strips of cleared woodland) are present as linear belts particularly on the sides of the small stream valleys. These have an important role as 'green corridors', connecting the larger blocks of woodland and providing a habitat for wildlife. Mature oak trees are a feature in hedgerows and also occur in isolation within fields as specimen trees or indicating lines of former hedgerows (e.g. at New Farm Barn).

P.30 Small areas of modern enclosure are scattered through the character area, reflecting the modification of areas of former early enclosure to allow modern farming methods to be adopted (particularly around the Verdley Place Horticultural Research Station), and perhaps also woodland clearance. However, these small pockets of modern fields do not affect the essentially medieval appearance of the landscape. The wooded nature of the countryside is reflected in the place-name Fernhurst, first recorded in 1195 and meaning 'wooded hill with bracken'.

P.31 Two nucleated settlements exist within the character area, Fernhurst and Milland, both of which are mostly post-1800 in date, representing modern infill around an original dispersed medieval core. Fernhurst grew as a dormitory town following the arrival of the railway in 1859, while Milland comprises a cluster of houses set around the church, which was a dependant chapelry of Trotton until the mid-19th century.

P.32 Evidence for Roman activity comprises a mansio (posting station) at Weston's Farm which was built to service people passing through the area. This site reinforces the marginal nature of the area as a landscape to traverse rather than settle. In fact, little attempt to clear the land was made until the Saxon period, when communities situated on better soils elsewhere in the region began to exploit the Wealden interior, initially as swine pastures within the woodland. By the 12th-13th centuries, piecemeal clearance of the woodland was in progress. The industrialization of this area from the 16th century resulted in extensive tree clearance and coppicing to provide fuel. Much of the woodland in this area is therefore post 1800 in date.

Sensitivities Specific to the Milland Basin

P.33 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this area. Specific sensitivities relevant to this character area are included in the table below.

Key Landscape Sensitivities	
1.	The former hammerponds, associated with the historic use of the Weald for iron production.
2.	The occasional areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland which are high biodiversity interest, for example at Woolhouse Farm Meadows LWS and Sewards Meadow LWS.
3.	The ancient woodlands which form part of larger woodlands located on the escarpment of the Greensand Hills, for example Northpark Copse to Snapelands Copse SSSI, Rake Hanger SSSI and Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI.
4.	Views of the area from viewpoints in the adjacent Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills, including representative views identified in the View Characterisation and Analysis report.[2]

Change Specific to the Milland Basin

P.34 The generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation are all relevant to this area, and there are no specific changes relevant to this character area.

Forces for Change	
1.	Modern infill and expansion of Milland and Fernhurst and Verdley Place Horticultural Research Station and 'suburbanisation' of the landscape.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Milland Basin

P.35 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 former hammerponds, associated with the former Wealden iron industry, as features of the landscape and manage for habitat biodiversity.
- **b.** Conserve, and seek to extend, areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland, particularly along stream corridors.
- **c.** Conserve the areas of ancient woodlands which form part of larger woodlands located on the escarpment of the Greensand Hills, for example Northpark Copse to Snapelands Copse SSSI, Rake Hanger SSSI and Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI.

P.36 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- **a.** Soften the built edges of Milland and Fernhurst by introducing small scale planting schemes of native broadleaved species that are in proportion with the surrounding landscape pattern. Avoid 'suburbanised hedges' containing exotic species.
- **b.** Improve the setting and identity of villages and developments (e.g. Verdley Place Horticultural Research Station) through appropriate planting which is in keeping with the existing landscape pattern.
- **c.** Consider impact on views into the valley from the surrounding higher land, e.g. popular viewpoints in the adjacent Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills, in relation to any proposed change.

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

P2: Northchapel Basin Low Weald

Location and Boundaries

The *Northchapel Basin* character area lies along the northern boundary of the South Downs. The *Northchapel Basin* adjoins the Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills at its western and southern extents where the boundaries have been drawn along the bottom of the Greensand escarpment. The north and eastern boundaries of the *Northchapel Basin* are defined by the National Park boundary. However, the landscape of this character area forms part of a wider landscape which extends beyond the National Park boundary into the *Low Weald.*

Key Characteristics

- Lowland clay vale enclosed by the rising slopes of the Greensand Hills to the south and west.
- Lighter soils derived from sandstone on the higher ground supports arable farming.
- Intricate mosaic of arable/pasture farmland and deciduous woodland plus areas of parkland and common land.
- Rich in ponds and small streams (although often hidden in the landscape by vegetation) which have carved narrow valleys into the landform, including hammerponds associated with the former Wealden iron industry.
- A heavily wooded landscape with an abundance of ancient woodland and linear strips of remnant woodland along the narrow valley streams.
- Large wooded commons at The Mens and Ebernoe Common supporting important ecological assemblages including ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Medieval deer parks at Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park, and 19th century parkland landscapes at Petworth and Shillinglee, add to the historic time depth of the landscape.
- High density of dispersed settlement typically comprising isolated farmsteads of medieval origin.
- Villages, for example Lurgashall and Hampers Green, represent modern infill around an original dispersed medieval core.
- Restricted views due to woodland cover but, where woodland permits, the Greensand Hills form a strong backdrop.

Specific Characteristics Unique to the Northchapel Basin

P.37 This landscape character area is a low-lying vale located to the north-east of the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills*. This undulating basin is better drained than much of the Low Weald and this is reflected by the presence of arable farmland as well as pasture, paddocks and some ungrazed grassland. Fields are medium to large in size with some smaller fields occurring around settlements.

P.38 Although much of the original managed medieval woodland was cleared or coppiced in the 16th-17th centuries (to provide fuel for the ironworking and glassmaking industries), the character area is still heavily wooded. There are some notable areas of wooded commonland and ancient wood pasture at The Mens and Ebernoe Common. These sites are of significant ecological value, for example Ebernoe Common and The Mens have developed from ancient wood pasture and are of international importance (designated as SSSI's) for their lichen, invertebrate and breeding bird communities, with Ebernoe as the most important bat area. There is also a brick and tile works on Ebernoe Common. These commons now provide opportunities for countryside access as a result of their status as registered common land.

P.39 Streams, ponds and lakes are important features, some are hammerponds associated with the former iron industry or later mill ponds, although many of the hammerponds have silted up to form distinctive flat-bottomed valleys. Shillinglee Lake SSSI is notable for its aquatic plants, which includes cut-grass which is confined to only 10 sites in the UK. Mudwort, which is equally as rare, appears on the shore of Shillinglee in dry summers. Some of these water bodies also provide opportunities for fishing. There are also a number of unimproved meadows, for example at Old Orchard Meadows LWS and Furnace Meadow LWS, which support a number of locally notable plant species.

P.40 A distinctive characteristic of this area is the presence of deer parks which provided food, recreation and status for the landed elite during the medieval period. There are three medieval deer parks that formerly existed within the character

area (Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park). These have subsequently been enclosed but are recognisable as compact islands of recently enclosed regular fields surrounded by irregular early enclosures. The boundaries (pales) are still visible in the modern landscape as curvilinear field boundaries. A further deer park at Petworth, situated at the boundary of the character area, was developed in the 18th century as a major designed landscape park (notably by Capability Brown), and is now owned by the National Trust. A smaller 18th century landscape park exists at Shillinglee, part of which is used as a golf course.

P.41 Lurgashall and Hampers Green are villages that are typical of the settlement form in this landscape type, originating as a medieval agglomeration of farmsteads set around a central green. Petworth is a separate case, representing a deliberately planned settlement established around the medieval manor house and Northchapel is first recorded in the 16th century as a dependant chapelry of Petworth.

P.42 The A283 runs north-south down the spine of the character area and pylon lines cut east-west across the area in two locations. The sense of rural tranquillity is therefore affected locally in these areas. Aside from these elements there is little overt human impact in this landscape. The high perceived naturalness and dispersed settlement also contribute to the sense of rural tranquillity.

Sensitivities Specific to the Northchapel Basin

P.43 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this area. In addition, specific sensitivities to this character area are:

Key Landscape Sensitivities
1. The former hammer ponds, associated with the former Wealden iron industry, and wetlands including Shillinglee Lake SSSI.
2. The occasional areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland which are high biodiversity interest, for example at Old Orchard Meadows LWS and Furnace Meadow LWS.
3. The areas of wooded common land and ancient wood pasture at The Mens and Ebernoe Common which are of significant ecological value.
4. The former medieval deer parks - Petworth Park, Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park.
5. The 18th century designed landscapes at Petworth and Shillinglee.
6. The sense of rural tranquillity that is already affected by the A283 and electricity pylons.
7. Views of the area from viewpoints in the adjacent Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills.

Change Specific to the Northchapel Basin

P.44 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, changes to this character area include:

Forces for Change
1. Road 'improvements' and widening associated with the A23.
2. Modern infill and expansion of Lurgashall, Northchapel and Hampers Green and general 'suburbanisation' of the landscape.

Landscape Management / Development Considerations Specific to the Northchapel Basin

P.45 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 former hammerponds, associated with the former Wealden iron industry, as features of the landscape and manage for habitat biodiversity.

b. Conserve, and seek to extend, areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland, particularly along stream corridors and protect existing meadows at Old Orchard Meadows LWS and Furnace Meadow LWS.

c. Conserve the areas of wooded commonland and ancient wood pasture at The Mens and Ebernoe Common which are of significant ecological value. Consider re-introducing traditional management of wood pasture.

d. Conserve the park pales and remnant features of the former medieval deer parks at Petworth Park, Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park.

e. Conserve historic 18th century designed landscapes at Petworth and Shillinglee and their settings, encouraging the management/restoration of permanent pasture, parkland trees, avenues and clumps of trees.

f. Seek to conserve the sense of rural tranquillity, despite the presence of the A283 and electricity pylons. Seek to mitigate impacts of the A283 through planting.

P.46 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

a. Ensure any new development is integrated into its landscape setting by introducing small scale planting schemes of native broadleaved species that are in proportion with the surrounding landscape pattern. Avoid 'suburbanised hedges' containing exotic species.

b. Avoid ribbon development on the edge of Petworth and in association with the A283.

c. Maintain the typical settlement form of villages such as Lurgashall, Northchapel and Hampers Green – maintain the pattern of farmsteads and later buildings set around a central 'village green' and avoid infilling of these greens.

d. Consider impact on views into the valley from the surrounding higher land, e.g. popular viewpoints in the adjacent Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills, in relation to any proposed change.