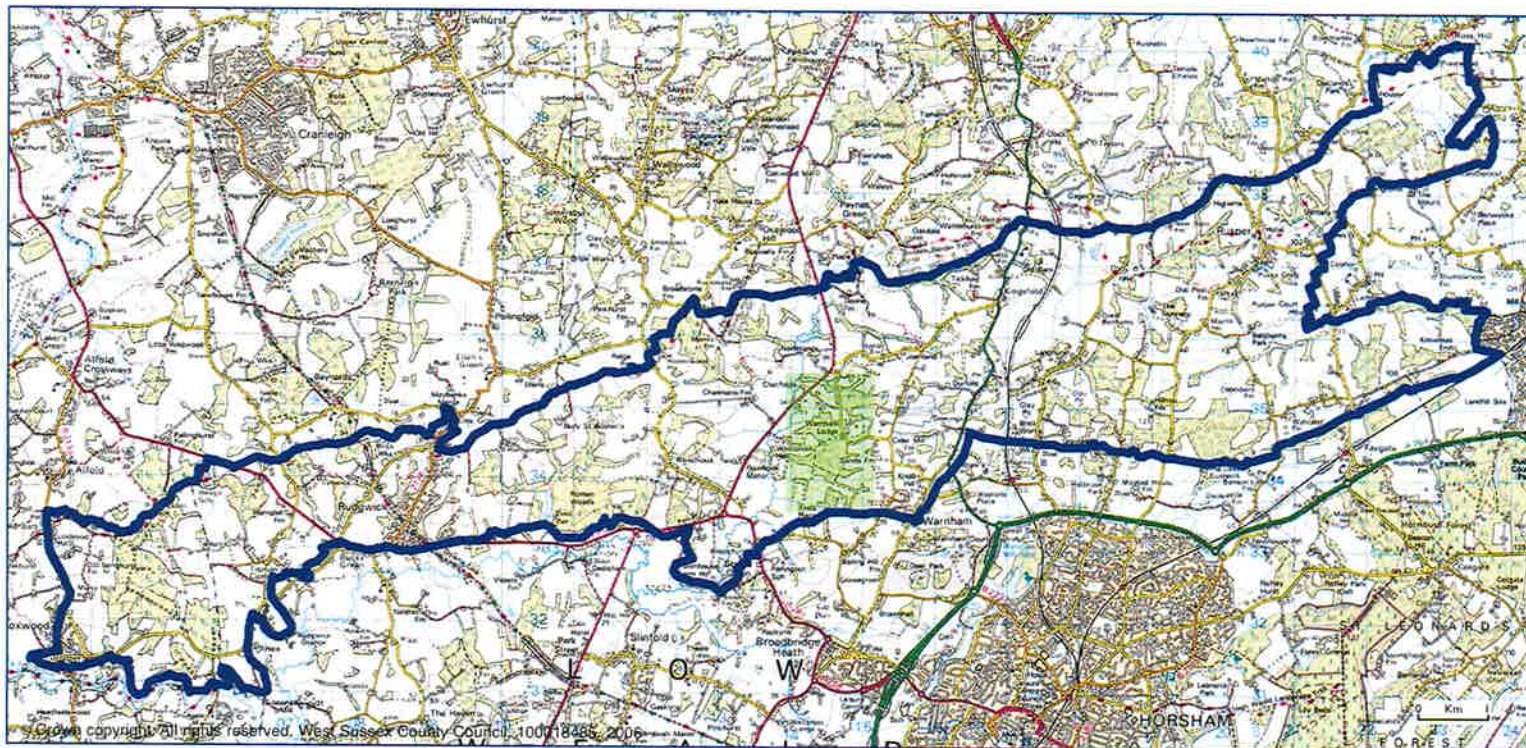


## Overall Character

Bordering Surrey in the north of the county, this area has a pastoral and densely wooded character. Low wooded ridges are dissected by steep wooded gills and narrow lanes. Interspersed between the woodland is a patchwork of mostly small to medium sized pastures enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws. Homes and farms are scattered throughout this area. Remnant parkland and field corner ponds are recurring features. Despite the relative proximity of Gatwick Airport and Crawley to the east, the area retains a strong rural character.

### Key Characteristics

- Undulating, low and densely wooded ridges running mostly east-west. Distinct escarpment to the north of Horsham and low escarpment at Rowhook.
- Blocks and strips of interconnecting woodland, including a large number of blocks of ancient woodland. Western area characterised by woodland of some size.
- Mostly rural character with intricate patchwork of small to medium size pasture fields with a combination of sinuous and straight boundaries. Larger, more open, field patterns in the east.
- Strong pattern of shaws and hedgerows enclosing fields with mature single oaks in hedgerows and fields.
- Network of narrow lanes, sometimes sunken, cross the area with strong definition north-south. Many of them are former droveways for cattle, pigs and sheep.
- Steep, secretive wooded gills.
- Hidden hammer ponds near Roman Woods with characteristic narrow form.
- Remnant parkland in the north east, north of Warnham.
- Includes the main tributaries of Arun; North River and Boldings Brook which meander through mostly narrow valleys with undulating valley sides, dissecting area north to south.
- Dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farms, cottages, hamlets and linear villages. Linear ridgetop villages such as Rudgwick and Rusper are set on higher ground. Farm cottages dispersed along lanes. Rusper forms a particularly attractive area with a traditional core. Some suburban development on village edges.
- Strong historic vernacular of sandstone, half timber and plaster/brick, tile hanging and weatherboarding. Rich collection of timber frame buildings in Rudgwick and surrounding area. Local landmark of Rudgwick Church spire.
- Occasional clay quarries/pits and brickworks. Notably in Kingsfold Valley.
- Suburbanisation along the A281.



### Sheet LW4

## Low Weald Hills

### Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Upper Arun Valley (Area P1), the Rowhook and Rudgwick Wooded Ridge (Area I1), and the Warnham and Rusper Wooded Ridge (Area I2) Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (October 2003).





## Historic Features

- Path of the Roman road, Stane Street.
- Moated sites.
- Small to medium-sized linear fields associated with old droveways.
- Small and large irregular fields carved out of woodland (assarts).
- Many historic farmsteads and cottages.
- Hammer ponds and remains of iron workings.
- Ancient woodland.



Narrow lanes

## Biodiversity

- Extensive semi-natural broad-leaved woodlands linked by hedgerows and shaws particularly on the heavy clay hill tops and alongside gill valleys. Inter-connected woodland of special value.
- Many ancient semi-natural woodlands, but some coniferised.
- Woodland important for tree species such as small-leaved lime and wild service tree.
- Gill woodland.
- Mosses and liverworts in the gill woodlands are of national significance.
- Field corner ponds add to habitat interest. Support amphibian populations.
- Upper tributaries of the river Arun contain marginal vegetation and wetland trees.
- Many shaws.
- Unimproved pasture with a concentration south of Kingsfold valley.



Remnant parkland features

## Change - Key Issues

- Noise from Gatwick Airport.
- Localised development pressures for urban development.
- Localised intrusion from suburban features.
- Localised loss of hedgerows and shaws.
- Expansion of horse paddocks.
- Increasing development on narrow historic lanes.
- Increasing traffic pressures on narrow lanes and minor roads due to proximity of urban areas of Horsham, Crawley and around Gatwick.
- Poor woodland and hedgerow/shaw management.
- Poor pond management.
- Loss of parkland features and introduction of high fences in the Rudgwick and Rowhook area.



Small scale field patterns

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

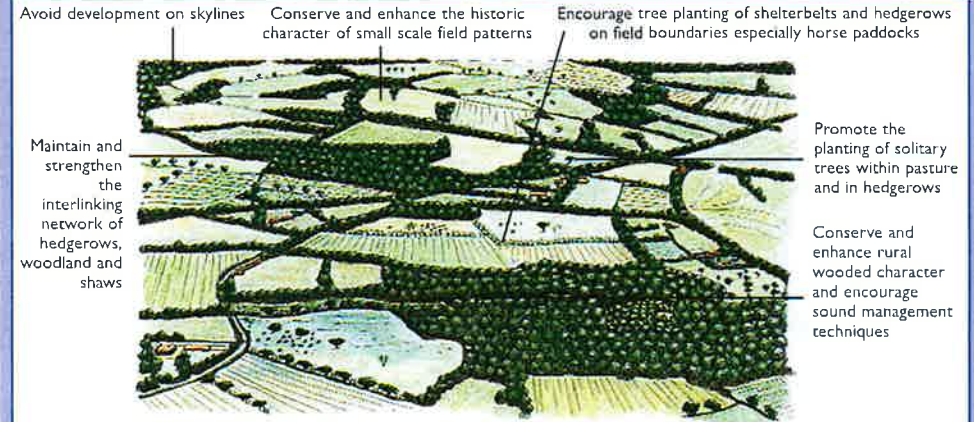
Overall sensitivity to change is high. Despite the high degree of enclosure in many parts of the area, some ridgetops and slopes are prominent with distinctive long views to both North and South Downs and across the Crawley Vale to the High Weald Forests. Key sensitivities are:

- Loss of woodland along ridgetops and valley slopes.
- Cumulative impact of small scale change.
- Any large scale housing/commercial development.
- Cumulative impact of vertical structures on ridge slopes and ridgetops.
- Small scale incremental land management change, e.g. expansion of horse paddocks.
- Erosion of the narrow country lanes.
- Loss of parkland features, e.g. parkland specimen trees/tree belts etc in Rudgwick and Rowhook.
- Any development that would damage the integrity of gills or river valleys.
- Unsympathetic flood defences or works to hammer ponds.



Interlinking hedgerows, woodlands and shaws

## Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve the rural quality of the area including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the intricate patchwork of small scale fields, and linked woodland, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.**

- Conserve and enhance rural wooded character, including the distinctive form of ridgetop woodlands and gill woodlands. Encourage positive management and long term woodland regeneration.
- Maintain and strengthen the interlinking network of hedgerows, woodland and shaws. Restore shaws/hedgerows and single hedgerow trees throughout pasture land.
- Ensure any development respects historic settlement pattern and form, and building materials.
- Conserve and enhance the historic character of small scale field patterns, scattered development, and moated sites.
- Respect the historic character of rural roads and lanes notably those with sunken profiles. Consider appropriate traffic management strategies to reduce traffic pressures on the narrow lanes
- Conserve the integrity and characteristic narrow form of hammer ponds.
- Conserve and replant parkland and garden features such as avenues and designed vistas, parkland trees and estate boundary features.
- Manage the upper tributaries of the Arun to retain nature conservation interest. Ensure any development respects the form, aspect and natural features of river valleys and watercourses.
- Maintain and manage field and woodland ponds, for landscape and nature conservation value.
- Consider the cumulative impact on landscape character of small developments and land-use change, and avoid the introduction of suburban styles and materials.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure any new development is well integrated into the wider landscape. Use new woodland, shaw and hedgerow planting as appropriate.
- Pay particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plant new woodland and hedgerows around village fringes and along busy urban routes such as the A281. Promote the planting of amenity trees throughout new housing development.
- Establish screen planting around claypits and brickworks notably around the Kingsfold valley.
- Encourage more sympathetic management of horse paddocks. Avoid unsightly fencing. Encourage new hedge and tree planting outside unsightly fence lines. Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and tree belts around paddocks.

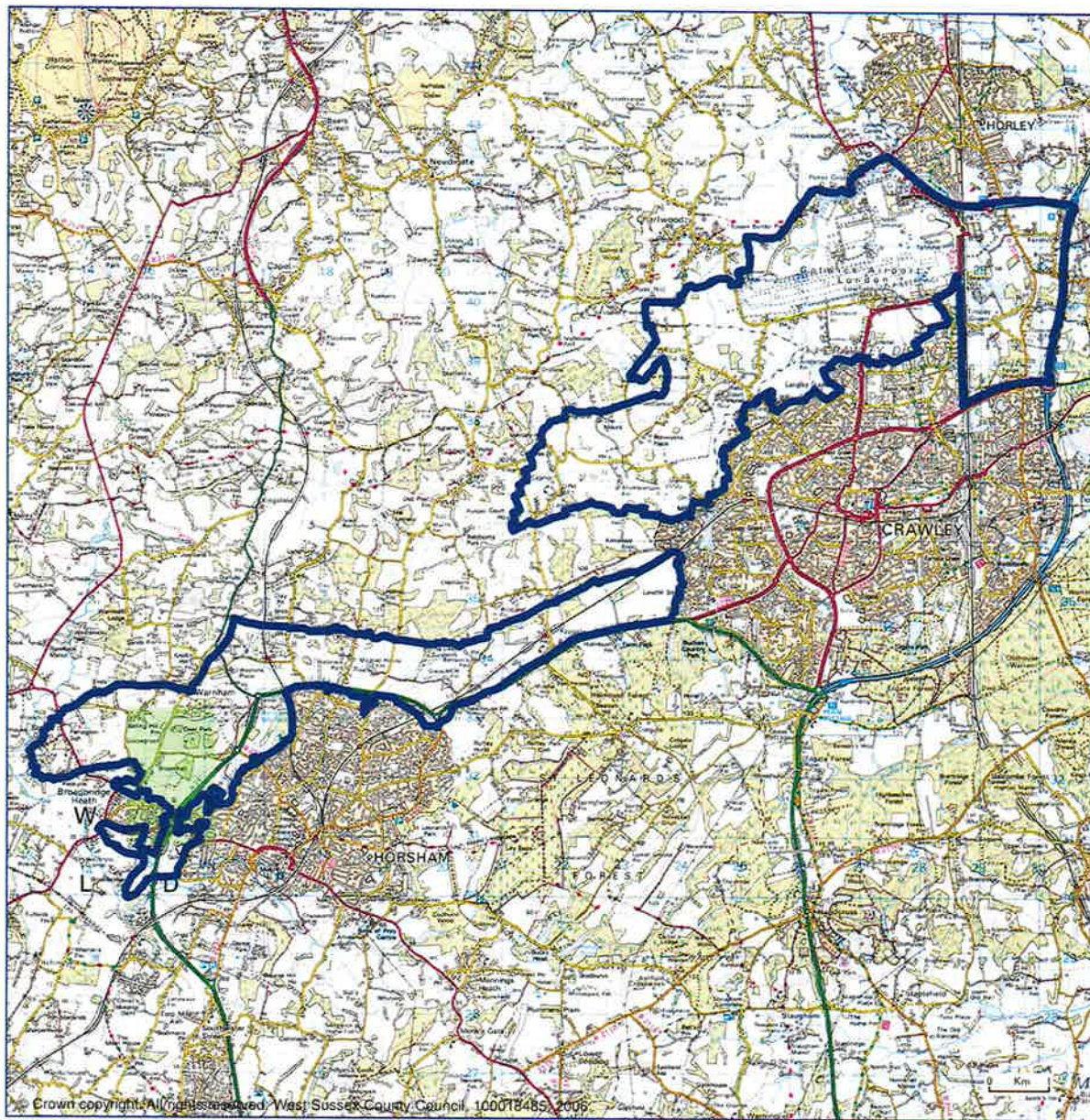
The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in A *Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.



## Overall Character

In the north of the county, this character area comprises a narrow clay vale running north east/south west between low wooded ridges to the north, and the higher wooded ridges of the High Weald to the south. It contains a mixed landscape of woodland, shaws and hedgerows, pasture, and low lying areas, overlain by road and rail corridors, and pylon lines. The towns of Horsham and Crawley New Town have a dominant influence, as do the dual carriageways of the A24 and the A264, which cut through the landscape.



### Key Characteristics

- Flat to gently undulating narrow clay vale, with floodplain and upper tributaries of the River Mole in the north east.
- Crossed by the upper reaches of the River Arun in the south west including one of its main tributaries, Boldings Brook.
- Pattern of small, medium and large fields with a variable density of hedgerows.
- Predominantly pasture farmland in the north east changing to arable farmland with smaller areas of pasture around Warnham and Faygate to the south west.
- Scattered tree cover, isolated woodlands and copses.
- Distinctive field trees and farm ponds.
- Major road and rail corridors and pylon lines.
- Strong suburban and urban fringe influences of Crawley, Horsham and Gatwick Airport.
- Some localities retain an enclosed rural character, for instance, west of Ifield.
- Significant area of historic parkland of Warnham Court.
- Large golf course near Ifield.
- Visual intrusion in parts from retail and industrial areas, housing, and sand and gravel workings.

## Sheet LW8

## Northern Vales

### Low Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Upper Mole Farmlands (K1), the Warnham and Faygate Vale (K2), the Upper Arun Valley (P1) Landscape Character Areas defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).





## Historic Features

- Occasional moated farmsteads such as Ifield Court Farm.
- Motte and bailey castle and other medieval earthworks.
- Historic parkland at Warnham.
- Mix of small irregular field pattern and more recent, straighter field boundaries.
- Historic Mills.
- North-south drove roads.

## Biodiversity

- Fragmented woodland and hedgerow habitats.
- Small areas of ancient woodland and unimproved pasture.
- Small isolated field corner copses and pockets of streamside woodland.
- River Mole and River Arun.
- Warnham Millpond Local Nature Reserve.
- Field ponds and lakes.

## Change - Key Issues

- Visual and noise impact of Gatwick Airport.
- Pressure of traffic on rural lanes eroding road verges and hedge banks.
- Potential pressure for further road improvements.
- Potential for increased recreational pressure around Horsham and Crawley.
- Localised visual impact of urban fringe uses, including development of horse paddocks, smallholdings and small scale industrial uses.
- Pressure for further urban development.
- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees due to agricultural intensification.
- Localised loss of hedgerow boundaries often replaced by post and wire fencing.
- Pressures for engineered flood defences on river valley and floodplain.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Overall sensitivity to change is moderate. Thick hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional woodlands to some extent reduce its visual sensitivity. However, those parts that retain a stronger rural character and the remaining woodlands, hedgerows, unimproved grasslands and historic lanes, are particularly sensitive to change.

Key sensitivities are:

- Large scale commercial and residential development.
- Small scale incremental changes eroding rural character.
- Unsympathetic flood defences.
- Pasture improvement and land drainage.
- Expansion of horse paddocks.
- Visual and noise intrusion of major traffic routes.
- Minor and major road improvements.
- Loss of existing woodlands and hedgerow boundaries.



Horsham District - Scattered tree cover and hedgerows



Historic Park - Warnham

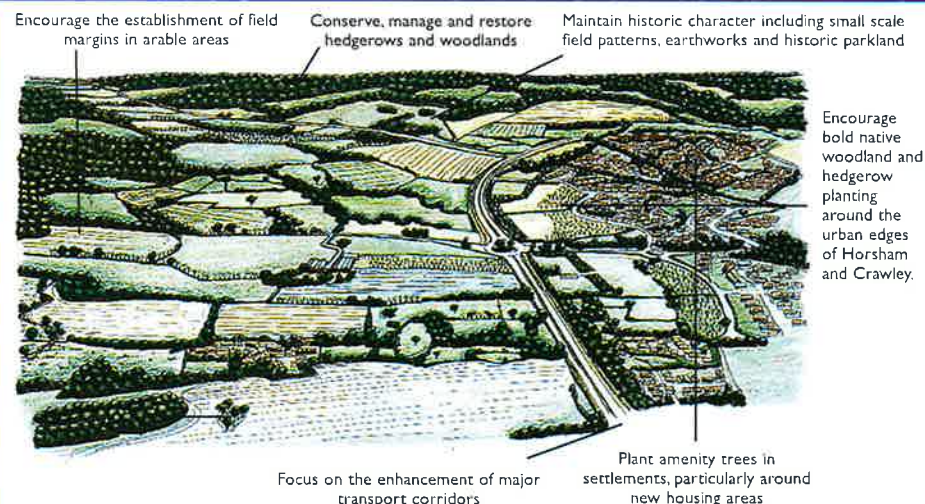


Pasture at Ifield



Crawley - Urban Fringe

## Land Management Guidelines



### Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.

- Conserve, manage and restore woodlands, hedgerows, hedgerow trees, field ponds, species rich grassland and meadows, unimproved grassland and meadows.
- Maintain historic character including small scale field patterns, earthworks and historic parkland.
- Establish a framework of new woodland and hedgerow planting.
- Promote the establishment of field margins in arable areas.
- Conserve the open character of the floodplain and promote natural floodplain management avoiding the introduction of engineered flood defences.
- Conserve, enhance or restore marginal vegetation along the River Mole and River Arun tributaries.
- Conserve historic lanes with their ancient oaks and unimproved roadside verges.
- Focus on the enhancement of the major transport corridors, seeking better integration into the existing field pattern of the wider landscape.
- Ensure any small scale development responds to the historic dispersed settlement pattern and local design and materials.
- Seek to reduce the intensity and visual impact of horse grazing.
- Ensure any new development around the urban edges, in particular Horsham, Crawley and Southwater, is well integrated with the wider landscape pattern. Encourage bold native woodland and hedgerow planting. Buildings should also blend in with the landscape in scale, form, colour and design.
- Plant amenity trees in settlements, particularly around new housing areas.
- Encourage screen planting of native trees and woodland around roadside buildings and service areas, and industrial and commercial development, including Gatwick Airport.
- Support any initiative to create community woodland for multi purpose objectives including active and passive recreation, timber production and coppicing.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.