



East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Type 5: Mixed
Farmland and Woodland

East Hampshire District Council

Draft report

Prepared by LUC

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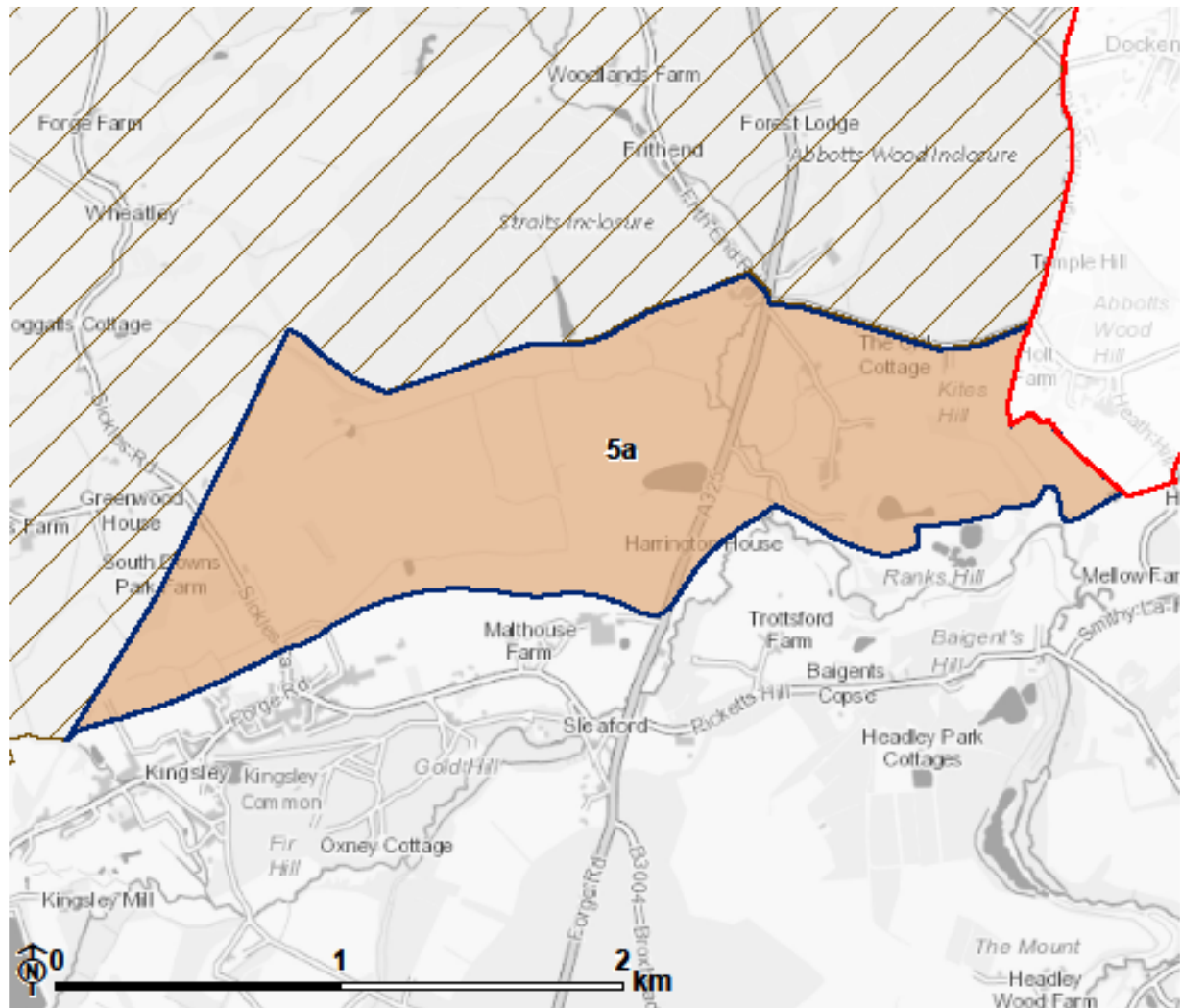
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Chapter 1




Introduction

Landscape Character Type 5: Mixed Farmland and Woodland

Figure 1.1: Location of the Mixed Farmland and Woodland LCT



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-  East Hampshire District boundary
-  South Downs National Park
-  Mixed Farmland and Woodland LCT
- LCA 5a: Kingsley**



Description

1.1 The Mixed Farmland and Woodland Landscape Character Type is found on the mudstones of the Gault Formation which are exposed to the north of the Greensand Terrace. It comprises a gently undulating lowland vale supporting fields of arable, pasture and woodland. Although part of a larger type (which occurs across East Hampshire) the LCT key characteristics are specific to the study area (i.e. the area of East Hampshire outside the South Downs National Park).

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform underlain by mudstones of the Gault Formation.
- Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils support mixed farmland and deciduous woodland copses dominated by oak, hazel and ash woodland.
- Drained by water courses, some of which are tributary streams of the River Slea.
- The wet and unproductive soils have given rise to a remote and marginal character.
- Thick hedgerows with spreading hedgerow oaks, or strips of woodland, provide a sense of enclosure.
- Ponds and meadows on the fringes of tributary streams provide biodiversity interest.
- Farmsteads of 18th-19th century date are situated within areas of later enclosure of marshland and parkland.
- The A325 locally affects the sense of tranquillity.

Landscape Character Areas

1.2 The Mixed Farmland and Woodland LCT contains one LCA:

- LCA 5a: Kingsley

Landscape Character Area 5a: Kingsley

Description

Location and Boundaries

1.3 This LCA occurs on the lower lying clays and sandstones that separate the Greensand Hills from the chalk downs of Hampshire and West Sussex. It extends west into the South Downs National Park where it forms an extension to the north of the Upper Rother Valley. The northern boundary is well defined by Alice Holt Forest, and the southern boundary coincides with a change in geology to the sandy landscapes of LCT 6: Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic.

Key Characteristics

- Open, low-lying clay 'vale' drained by several streams including tributaries to the River Slea and a number of ponds.
- Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils support mixed farmland, floodplain grazing meadows and fragments of woodland in which thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks create a lush, wooded character.
- Thick, high hedgerows, occasional small blocks of scattered woodland and wooded field boundaries contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- 18th-19th century enclosure generally comprising regular, medium sized fields overlay the medieval field pattern.
- Sparse settlement largely comprising farms and associated farm buildings.

- Generally, a strong sense of tranquillity and strong rural character away from the A325. There is some background noise but overall, it is a peaceful landscape.
- Recreational value of PRow providing connectivity to Alice Holt Forest and the South Downs National Park.

Figure 1.2: Low lying clay vale with the wooded back drop of Alice Holt Forest



Figure 1.3: PRow within pastoral farmland enclosed by thick mature hedgerows and mature trees bordering a stream



Natural Influences

Physical Landscape

1.4 The gently undulating landform is underlain by mudstones of the Gault Formation. The area is characterised by a mix of permanent pasture on heavy clay soils and arable cultivation, together with occasional small pockets of woodland. The LCA is drained by several unnamed streams, which flow south, towards the River Slea. As well as the streams, the vale contains a number of small ponds, some of which are former clay pits.

Biodiversity

1.5 Features of biodiversity interest include fragments of deciduous woodland, floodplain grazing meadow in the east, and dense mature hedgerows. A small part of Grooms Farm Sand Pit SINCR is within the LCA, but there are no further biodiversity designations.

Cultural Influences

Historic Landscape Character

1.6 This character area occupies the Gault Clay vale as it sweeps northwards at the western edge of the Weald, between Alice Holt Forest and Kingsley.

1.7 The area is characterised by 18th-19th century late enclosures comprising medium scale regular arable fields bound by dense mature hedgerows. Historic clay extraction is evidenced by small pits (now ponds).

1.8 The character area is relatively lightly wooded. Today woodland of pre-1800 (and probably medieval) origin survives as small blocks scattered across the character area but combines with the wooded field boundaries to give the landscape a much more wooded visual appearance.

1.9 Key historic characteristics are limited to:

- A small number of listed buildings; and
- Away from the A325, the absence of modern development provides a continuing sense of remoteness.

Settlement Form and Built Character

1.10 The area is characterised by the sparse settlement, which is limited to 18th and 19th century farmsteads, generally in the east, and occasional isolated houses.

1.11 There are views of the edge of the settlement in Kingsley to the south.

1.12 Building materials include sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.

Perceptual Influences

1.13 The character area has a generally strong sense of enclosure with fields bound by thick, high hedgerows and small scattered woodlands, as well as the large expanse of woodland at Alice Holt Forest to the north which form a backdrop to views.

1.14 Away from the A325, there is generally a strong sense of tranquillity and a remote in character due to the low density of settlement.

1.15 A network of public rights of way (PRoW) provides opportunities for countryside access, including connectivity with Alice Holt Forest to the north and the South Downs National Park to the west. National Cycle Network Route 22 passes through the east of the LCA.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Small watercourses and wetland habitats (including floodplain grazing meadow and ponds) are sensitive to increased seasonal flooding, increased temperatures and periods of drought associated with climate change.
- The network of mature hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small woodlands which create a strong sense of enclosure, a wooded character and provide visual unity across the and are vulnerable to loss/fragmentation and lack of appropriate management.
- The relatively high sense of tranquillity which persists in parts of this area due to sparse settlement but is under threat from increasing traffic on the rural roads and development.
- The network of PRoW connecting this LCA to Alice Holt Forest and the South Downs National Park which is sensitive due to recreational pressure.

Guidance

Landscape Strategy

1.16 The overall management objective should be to conserve this LCA as a peaceful, intimate landscape of farmland and woodland.

Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance areas of wetland habitat.
- Address potential for flooding issues with the implementation of natural flood management schemes along streams.
- Monitor water quality in the streams and seek to ensure high water quality and minimise water pollution.
- Ensure a joined-up, landscape scale approach towards changes to agricultural practice through ELMS and local initiatives at a landscape scale such as Landscape Partnerships.
- Promote appropriate management of farmland, including restoring buffer strips along field margins to minimise run off, maintain the biodiversity of wetland features including ponds and to create a wildlife-rich habitat supporting farmland birds.
- Conserve and manage small areas of woodland in line with Guidance on Managing ancient and native woodland in England [See reference 1]. Ensure a diverse species and age structure by thinning, coppicing, promoting natural regeneration and replanting as necessary, in line with District Wide Project 7: Enhance access and increase active management of existing woodland in the East Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2019 [See reference 2]. This will contribute to landscape resilience and also minimise the risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds.
- Conserve, connect and manage the network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Restore and create broadleaved woodlands surrounding the A325 to help reduce noise, light and air pollution, and to maintain and enhance the tranquillity experienced elsewhere in the LCA.
- Ensure new trees and woodlands are planted in line with relevant guidance, including District Wide Project 6: Increase woodland cover in the East Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2019, and have suitable management and maintenance plans to ensure their successful

establishment. Manage and monitor the threats posed by tree diseases and pests, and plan for climate change by researching appropriate species mixes to create robust and resilient woodlands.

- Maintain and enhance PRow and improve links to the long-distance footpaths within the LCA, as well as improving links with the South Downs National Park, in line with District Wide Projects 3: Connect with the South Downs and 4: Identify and enhance strategically important PRow in the East Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2019.

Development Management

- Maintain the essentially undeveloped character with limited settlement and regular farmland of 18th-19th century enclosure.
- Development should be carefully planned, and biodiversity considered from the outset in line with East Hampshire District Council's Biodiversity and Planning Guidance **[See reference 3]**.
- Conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness within this area.
- Avoid introducing large scale elements (such as pylons and masts) which are highly visible and disruptive within the more open areas of the vale.
- Avoid incremental linear development along the A325.
- Maintain the rural character of the roads and avoid use of excessive lighting, signage and 'suburban' features.
- Avoid a negative impact on the South Downs National Park's Dark Skies Policy by preventing and positively reducing artificial light pollution in line with the South Downs National Park Technical Advice Note Version 2 **[See reference 4]**.

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- 1** Forestry Commission (2010) Guidance: Managing ancient and native woodland in England. Available online: [Managing ancient and native woodland in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-ancient-and-native-woodland-in-england) (Accessed 05.06.2024)
- 2** LUC (2019) East Hampshire Green Infrastructure Study. Available online: <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-services/planning-policy/local-plan/emerging-local-plan/evidence-base/environment>
- 3** East Hampshire District Council (2021) Biodiversity and Planning Guidance. Available online: <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/media/6296/download?inline> (Accessed 22.03.2024)
- 4** South Downs National Park Authority (2021) Dark Skies Technical Advice Note (TAN) Version 2. Available online: [DNS-TAN-2021-Main-Document-External-Lighting.pdf \(southdowns.gov.uk\)](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/media/6296/download?inline) (Accessed 22.03.2024)