

APPENDIX 9

Landscape character assessment of West Sussex - Sheet SC11/SC13 Littlehampton and Worthing Fringes/Worthing and Adur Fringes

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on behalf of

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Overall Character

The urban fringes associated with sprawling coastal resorts are particularly obvious to the east of the County with sporadic urban development in many areas. Rows of large light reflective glass houses, equestrian facilities, horse paddocks and industrial buildings are strong suburban elements. Littlehampton and Worthing Fringes and Worthing and Adur Fringes form two groups to the east and west of Worthing, separating the coastal resorts of Littlehampton, Worthing, Lancing and Shoreham.

Key Characteristics

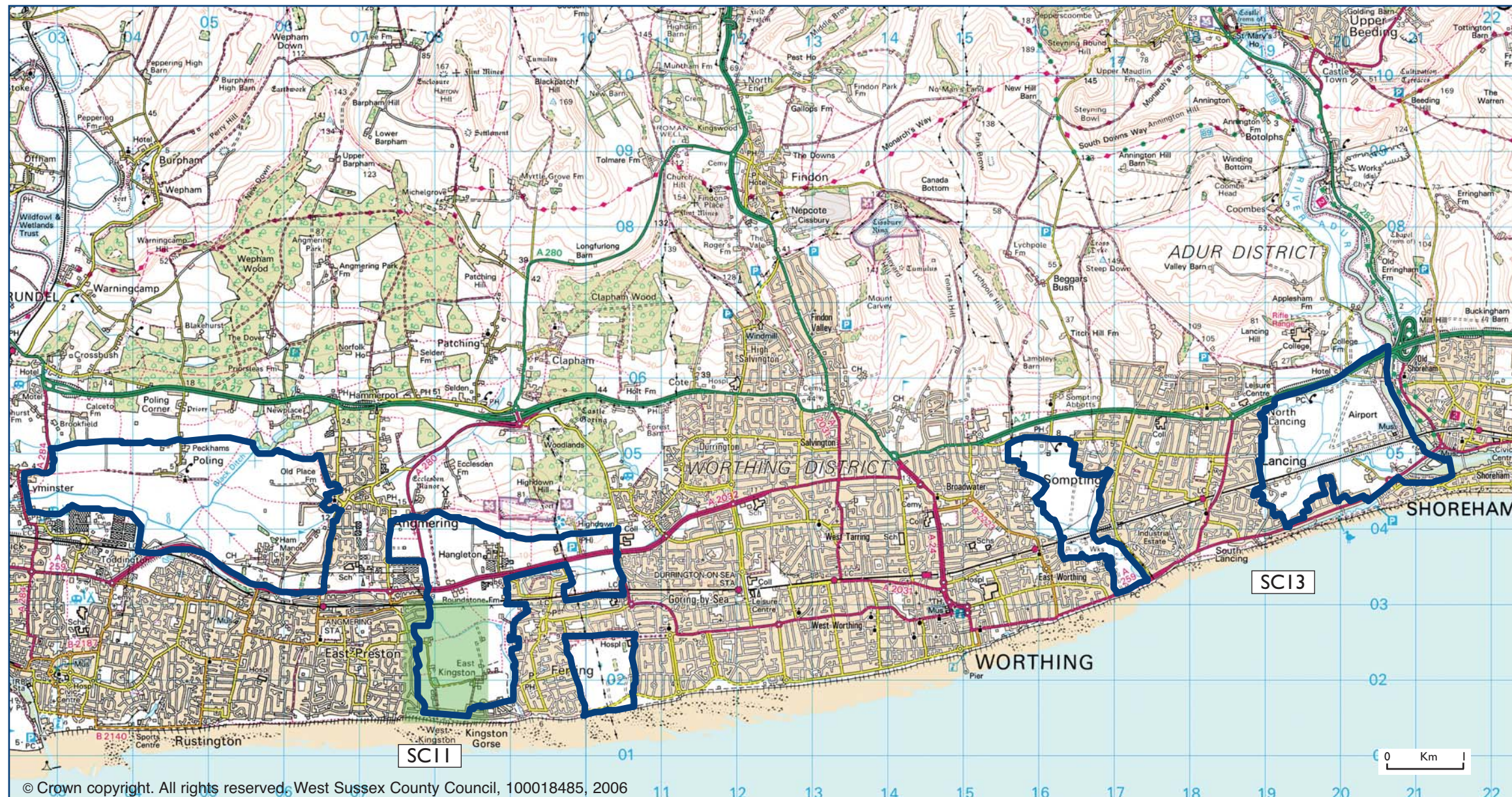
- Low lying flat open landscape.
- Dominant urban fringe with major conurbations of Littlehampton, Worthing, Lancing and Shoreham. Settlement edges often sharply contrast with adjacent open countryside.
- Frequent urban fringe influences of horse paddocks, light industry, airport, and recreational open space.
- Narrow gaps of open land at Kingston, Ferring, Sompting, and Lancing provide views to the sea and separation between the urban areas.
- Medium scale arable farming and market gardening, with clusters of greenhouses.
- River estuary at Shoreham with numerous houseboats moored along its reaches.
- Meandering rifes and straight drainage ditches.
- A low density of native hedgerows and hedgerow trees, interspersed with shelterbelts, single species hedges or individual standards planted using tall trees such as Poplar, Monterey Pine and Tulip trees.
- Clusters of windblown trees.
- Nucleated villages such as at Poling and Sompting Abbots scattered across the area. Mixed building materials of flint, brick, half timber and stone.
- Occasional farmsteads along roads, and on dead-end tracks.
- Long views to the Downs.
- Busy minor and major roads.
- Industry in the countryside.
- South Coast railway line links the areas.

Littlehampton and Worthing Fringes/Worthing and Adur Fringes

South Coast Plain

The area covered by the Sheet is derived from:

Chichester to Shoreham Coastal Plain (C1) Landscape Character Area as defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment** (November 2003).



Historic Features

- Few visible prehistoric monuments apart from crop marks, some Roman/Prehistoric remains around Sompting.
- Flint working at Goring by Sea.
- Medieval church at Poling.
- Site of a Roman-British Villa at Angmering, Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).
- The Black Ditch, a significant former waterway.
- Large regular fields, mostly the product of Parliamentary enclosure.
- Adur Floodplain was used for salt production in medieval times.
- Shoreham Airport has a collection of historic features, including World War II installations and Shoreham airfield Dome Trainer which is a SAM. The airport is Britain's oldest licensed airport with 1930's Art Deco Terminal Building, Visitor Centre and Archive.

Biodiversity

- Semi-natural habitats are scarce due to intensive arable agriculture and market gardening.
- Small area of unimproved grassland at Sompting Meadows.
- Hedgerow pattern is fragmented with the occasional isolated small wood or copse, such as The Plantation at Ferring.
- Occasional species-rich meadows along rifes, e.g. Kingston Manor meadows, Runcton and Ferring Rife, Site of Nature Conservation Importance, (SNCI).
- Wetland reed bed and tall fen habitat at Lower Cokeham, near Lancing (SNCI).
- Occasional village ponds and greens provide local havens for wildlife.
- Salt marsh and mud flats of estuary at Shoreham, Site of Special Scientific Interest, (SSSI).
- Ditch systems.

Change - Key Issues

- Extension of coastal conurbation.
- Recreational pressures from urban population.
- Loss of mature elm trees in the 1970's and 1980's due to Dutch elm disease.
- Loss of tree and hedgerow cover from agricultural intensification since World War II.
- Conversion of agricultural buildings to light industrial uses.
- Farm diversification and garden centres leading to introduction of signs and fencing.
- Introduction of large scale glasshouses with distribution sheds.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Key sensitivities are:

- Urban development pressures, especially in the gaps between settlements.
- Closing of open views between settlements.
- Industrialisation of agricultural areas due to changes in farm practices.
- Major existing road improvements and the possibility of new ones.
- Derelict glasshouses and farmland.
- New field divisions and changes to field boundary types from farm diversification and horseculture.
- Loss of tree and hedgerow cover due to wind, salt desiccation and drought.
- Planting of hedge and tree boundaries with unsympathetic exotic species such as Leyland Cypress.



Arable and market gardening with views to the sea - Ecclesden



Horse paddocks - Hangleton



Valley floor - Shoreham

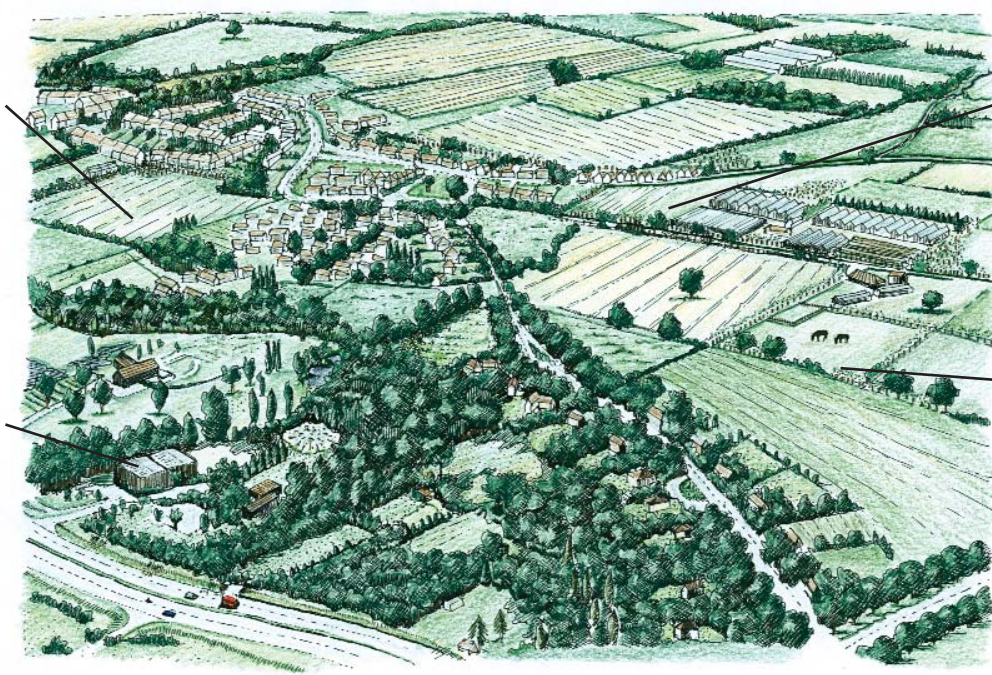


Mudflats and houseboats at Shoreham

Land Management Guidelines

Filter views of urban edges through planting of woodland, tree and shrub belts and groups

Carry out colour and design studies for industrial and large farm buildings



Conserve and link existing hedgerows and trees with new planting

Restore field boundaries through shelterbelt planting, especially around horse paddocks

Restore and strengthen the landscape of the gaps between settlements.

- Strengthen the landscape framework and filter views of the urban edge through planting of woodland, tree and shrub belts and groups. Use these to screen and unify disparate suburban elements especially along roadside verges, village edges and around glasshouses.
- Establish landscape management plans for urban edges.
- Maintain and strengthen existing field boundaries such as hedgerows and shelterbelts. Conserve and link existing hedgerows and trees with new planting.
- All new planting to be of coastal tolerant plants which are adapted to the maritime winds.
- Establish new areas of planting through the creation of sheltered areas using sympathetic measures, such as low stone walls and earth mounds, and nurse species for wind protection.
- Create a new large scale tree and hedgerow framework to complement the open, intensively farmed landscape, whilst maintaining important views.
- Restore field boundaries through shelterbelt planting, especially around horse paddocks.
- Maintain and enhance the landscape and biodiversity of rifes and other existing wetland habitats such as salt marsh, mud flats and water meadows.
- Encourage and promote land management schemes to increase species rich grassland areas.
- Carry out colour and design studies for industrial and large farm buildings.
- Encourage landscape enhancements around villages and on their approaches.
- Conserve, manage and enhance existing village ponds.
- Encourage the creation of new suburban woodlands, preferably with community involvement, for recreation and to link up with existing woodlands.
- Encourage bold tree planting adjacent to roads to enhance both the visual and wildlife value of these areas.
- Encourage conservation and community involvement in urban spaces and village greens.

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.