

**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006
mapping out the future**

**Supplementary Planning
Guidance SPG1**

Landscape Character

July 2006



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Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG1): Landscape Character

Preface

- i. The purpose of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is to supplement the policies and proposals of adopted development plans. It elaborates policies so that they can be better understood and effectively applied. SPG should be clearly cross-referenced to the relevant plan policy or policies which it supplements and should be the subject of consultation during its preparation. In these circumstances SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration in planning decisions.
- ii. A number of elements of SPG supplement certain policies in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006. This SPG supplements the following policies:
 - **Policy EN3: Protecting and Enhancing Countryside Character**
 - **Policy EN4: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Heritage Coast**
 - **Policy EN5: Special Landscape Areas**
- iii. This SPG has been prepared by Kent County Council working in partnership with a range of stakeholders drawn from Kent local authorities and other relevant agencies¹
- iv. A draft of this SPG was subject to public consultation alongside public consultation on the deposit draft of the Kent and Medway Structure plan in late 2003. It has been subsequently revised and updated prior to its adoption. A separate report provides a statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the response to these representations.
- v. This SPG was adopted by Kent County Council on July 13th 2006.

¹ English Heritage, Canterbury City Council, Countryside Agency, Dover District Council, Government Office for the South East, Maidstone Borough Council, Medway Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Swale Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

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1. OVERVIEW

The Landscape Character SPG contains the following:

- Section 1: An overview of the contents of the Landscape Character SPG.
- Section 2: An introduction to **WHAT** landscape character is and the threats and opportunities that development provides.
- Section 3: An explanation for **WHY** landscape character needs to be considered and an outline of the legislation and policy that drives the need to consider landscape character in the context of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.
- Section 4: An overview of **HOW** landscape character should be considered through the development process.
- Section 5: An outline of **WHO** can help planners and developers and other stakeholders to further consider landscape character in the development process and what resources are available.

2. WHAT IS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER?

- 2.1 Landscape is an increasingly recognised and valued resource. We all want to preserve our heritage, both natural and cultural, whilst finding ways to manage change within the landscape.
- 2.2 Landscape character assessment is an acknowledged tool that helps identify landscape character, enabling judgements to be made in managing change. It is defined as the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. Particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, field patterns and human settlement create character, making each part of the landscape distinct and giving each its particular sense of place.²
- 2.3 Kent's landscape has evolved over thousands of years. It has been created by the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, in particular the combination of physical (geology, landform, settlement pattern and land use), biological and cultural influences.
- 2.4 The inclusion of landscape character policies in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan will help to ensure decisions on the rural landscape are underpinned by a robust and widely accepted assessment of the landscape character. This will ensure better quality applications and developments that respect the character of the countryside.
- 2.5 **The Landscape Assessment of Kent and Medway's Landscape and Urban Design Framework** have created frameworks that will help ensure the continued distinctiveness of the Kent landscape through forward planning strategies, land management schemes and development control.
- 2.6 They identify important landscape characteristics and provide guidance to inform change where this is desirable and practicable, helping to ensure links with the past and the natural environment. Respecting the grain, pattern and diversity of the landscape will help maintain landscape character and local distinctiveness at a scale appropriate to an area.
- 2.7 This is not about keeping the landscape as it is but ensuring that the character of the land is distinctive. Landscapes should be visually and culturally satisfying and give enjoyment to those who visit them and those who live and work in them.
- 2.8 The **Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Study** complements this work. Historic landscape characterisation defines the historic and archaeological dimension of the present day landscape. It explains how and why the landscape looks as it does and identifies the landscape's 'time-depth'. This work further informs landscape assessment.

2.9 Threats to Landscape Character

The key factors posing a threat to the landscape character of Kent are:

- Pressures from new development for housing, employment, transport and energy infrastructure, their design and location within the landscape;
- Changes in agricultural and forestry practices;
- Recreational use of the countryside;
- Changes in property ownership, management and unsympathetic improvements to property.

² Countryside Agency, Landscape Assessment Guidance, April 2002.

2.10 Opportunities to Enhance Landscape Character

Development should, where possible, provide opportunities to enhance landscape character. For example by:

- Ensuring that new built development maintains and, if appropriate, enhances distinctive landscape character;
- Encouraging the use of existing building styles and materials in new built development;
- Seeking to maintain characteristic land cover, vegetation patterns, contours and textures of the landscape and its ecological and cultural value; encouraging the creation, restoration and management of “mosaic landscapes” through the restoration of a variety of semi natural habitats.
- Ensuring that development and structures in the landscape are subject to a visual impact assessment appropriate to the scale of the development proposed and carefully designed to minimise their impact on the landscape character.
- Supporting improved land management through sustainable farming techniques.

3. WHY? – DRIVERS FOR CONSIDERATION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1 The importance of landscape character is reflected in a raft of measures provided through European and domestic law and policies, and other international conventions to which the UK is signatory. Generally, these set out measures that must or should be adopted to conserve landscape character relevant to land-use planning. The key drivers are listed below, and discussed in relation to the relevant policies within the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

Driver	Relevance to Landscape Character
<p>PPS1 :Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)</p>	<p>Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside, with a high level of protection given to most valued landscapes (para 17)</p> <p>They should take account of environmental issues such as the protection of the wider countryside and the impact of development on landscape quality (para 20);</p> <p>In preparing development plans, planning authorities should seek to enhance as well as protect landscape character (para 27 (ix)).</p>
<p>PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)</p>	<p>Local planning authorities should prepare policies and guidance that encourage good quality design throughout their rural areas utilising tools such as Landscape Character Assessments (para 13)</p>
<p>PPG15 : Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)</p> <p><i>(N.B PPG15 is shortly to be combined with PPG 16 Archaeology as a revised Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15 Historic Environment).</i></p>	<p>“The physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity...Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside.” (para 1.1)</p> <p>“in the countryside the detailed patterns of fields and farms, of hedgerows and walls, and of hamlets and villages, are among the most highly valued aspects of our environment.” (para 6.2)</p> <p>Registers of historic parks and gardens and of battlefields are referred to and work on the identification and components of the wider historic landscape are described. PPG15 notes, “The whole of the landscape, to varying degrees...is an archaeological and historical artefact...much of its value lies in its complexity, regional diversity and local distinctiveness.” (para 6.40)</p>

Driver	Relevance to Landscape Character
Habitat Regulations (1994)	Regulation 37 states “policies in respect of the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land shall be taken to include policies encouraging the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. Such features are those, which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems of marking field boundaries) or their functions as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.”
Hedgerow Regulations (1997)	The objective of the Hedgerow Regulations is to protect hedgerows of historic and ecological value, and those that are identified as key landscape characteristics.
Rural White Paper: Our Countryside: The Future – A Fair Deal for Rural England (2000)	Section 9.3 deals with the importance of understanding, evaluating and protecting countryside diversity and character. In particular, it stresses the need to find ways of “ensuring that the valued features and attributes of the whole countryside are conserved and enhanced.” It cites the Countryside Agency’s Landscape Assessment Guidance as a means “to help those interested in carrying out character assessment at a sub-regional level” using the national character map as a starting point and guide, and as a tool for local authorities “to seek ways to enrich the countryside as a whole...and maintain its distinctive local features.”
European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe 2000)	Signatories to the Convention undertake to encourage public authorities to adopt policies to protect, maintain and improve landscape quality including the need to consider landscapes in public decision making.
Countryside and Rights of Way (CroW) Act, 2000	Part IV of the CRoW Act 2000 highlights the need for the positive and active management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Part VI of the Act requires authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB. The CRoW Act 2000 requires relevant local authorities to produce an AONB Management Plan, bringing a new approach to the conservation and protection of AONBs.

4. HOW SHOULD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BE CONSIDERED?

Relevant policies of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 are referred to in sections 4.1 to 4.3. Further explanation and background is given to each policy to amplify their meaning and importance in relation to landscape character.

4.1 Landscape Character

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006

Policy EN3: Protecting and Enhancing Countryside Character

Where a need for development in the countryside is justified important features and characteristics will be retained. Proposals should reflect the need for conservation, reinforcement, restoration or creation of countryside character and provide for the appropriate management of important features and the wider landscape.

Kent's landscape and wildlife habitats will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development will not be permitted if it would lead to the loss of features or habitats which are of landscape, historic, wildlife or geological importance, or are of an unspoilt quality free from urban intrusion unless there is a need for development which outweighs these considerations.

Where formal assessments of landscape character and quality identify landscapes of local significance, they should be designated in Local Development Documents.

- 4.1.1 Landscape is important as it provides the setting for our everyday lives. It is not confined to places of special interest or an area that has been designated. Nor does it refer solely to the countryside. Landscape can be a small area of parkland, an expanse of ancient woodland or an urban open space. It is the result of how people have interacted with the natural, social and cultural components of their environment and how they then perceive these. It is not just about the visual perception of the land but how we hear, smell and feel our surroundings and the feelings, memories or associations invoked.
- 4.1.2 Landscape character refers to the overall sense of place that derives from combining the various components that form a landscape.
- 4.1.3 Landscape character is important in many different ways and for many different reasons. It has a social and community value as well as an aesthetic value and contributes to an overall sense of well being. It is home to wildlife as well as being a cultural record of how people have lived in the past. Landscape also has a strong economic value, often influencing the tourism and business in an area.
- 4.1.4 Assessing landscape character is a useful tool that ensures that development and change in the future does not undermine characteristic values of the landscape.
- 4.1.5 Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland has been developed by the Countryside Agency as a tool to achieve sustainable development in the countryside (refer to Annex 3 for further details).

4.1.6 The Kent County Council Landscape Assessment of Kent, Medway Council Landscape and Urban Design Framework, and the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Study provide guidance and information to assist in the implementation of Policy EN3. These resources are discussed in more detail in Section 5.0.

4.2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Heritage Coast

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006

Policy EN4: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Heritage Coast

Protection will be given to the nationally important landscapes of:

- The Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- Kent's Heritage Coast between Kingsdown and Dover and between Dover and Folkestone.

The primary objective in these areas will be to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character and natural beauty.

Major commercial, mineral or transport infrastructure developments will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- (i) There is a proven national interest;
- (ii) There are no alternative sites available or the need cannot be met in any other way; and
- (iii) Appropriate provision can be made to minimise harm to the environment

Other development which would be detrimental to the natural beauty, quality and character of the landscape and quiet enjoyment of the area will not be permitted. Development that is essential to meet local social or economic needs should be permitted provided that it is consistent with the purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

4.2.1 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 legislated for the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks. Within Kent there are two AONBs, the Kent Downs AONB and the High Weald AONB. The primary purpose of an AONB designation is to conserve and enhance components of natural beauty. In this context the term 'natural beauty' is all-embracing and refers not only to the aesthetic and scenic qualities of AONBs but also their wildlife, archaeological and cultural heritage which contribute immeasurably to their special character and sense of place.

4.2.2 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 places a new duty of regard on all 'relevant authorities', namely all statutory undertakers, government departments and public bodies. These bodies need to demonstrate that they have taken account of the AONB in their actions and decision making. In order to fulfil statutory requirements under the CRoW Act, relevant local authorities must also jointly produce a management plan for each AONB. These have now been published for the Kent Downs AONB (www.kentdowns.org.uk/plan.html) and for the High Weald (www.highweald.org/caring/future/future_development.asp). Published in April 2004

they will be periodically reviewed. The Kent Downs AONB Unit has also published a Landscape Design Handbook (January 2005). This provides practical guidance to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB as a whole, and the distinctiveness of individual character areas. It should be referred to alongside the Structure Plan and other development plan documents for the area including this SPG.

Heritage Coast

- 4.2.3 In England and Wales, 45 stretches of the finest, undeveloped coastline have been defined as 'Heritage Coast'. The only stretches of Heritage Coast recognised within Kent fall wholly within the Kent Downs AONB. These are: the coastline between Dover and Folkestone comprising 7.2 km (4.5 miles); and South Foreland covering 6.9 km (4.3 miles) of coast between Dover and Kingsdown near Deal. The purpose of Heritage Coast definition is not simply to identify them for protection purposes but rather to focus attention on the management needs of the coast and the relationship between different, and sometimes conflicting issues. PPG 20 on Coastal Planning provides advice for local planning authorities on the protection of Heritage Coasts through policies in the Development Plan.

4.3 Special Landscape Areas

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006

Policy EN5: Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

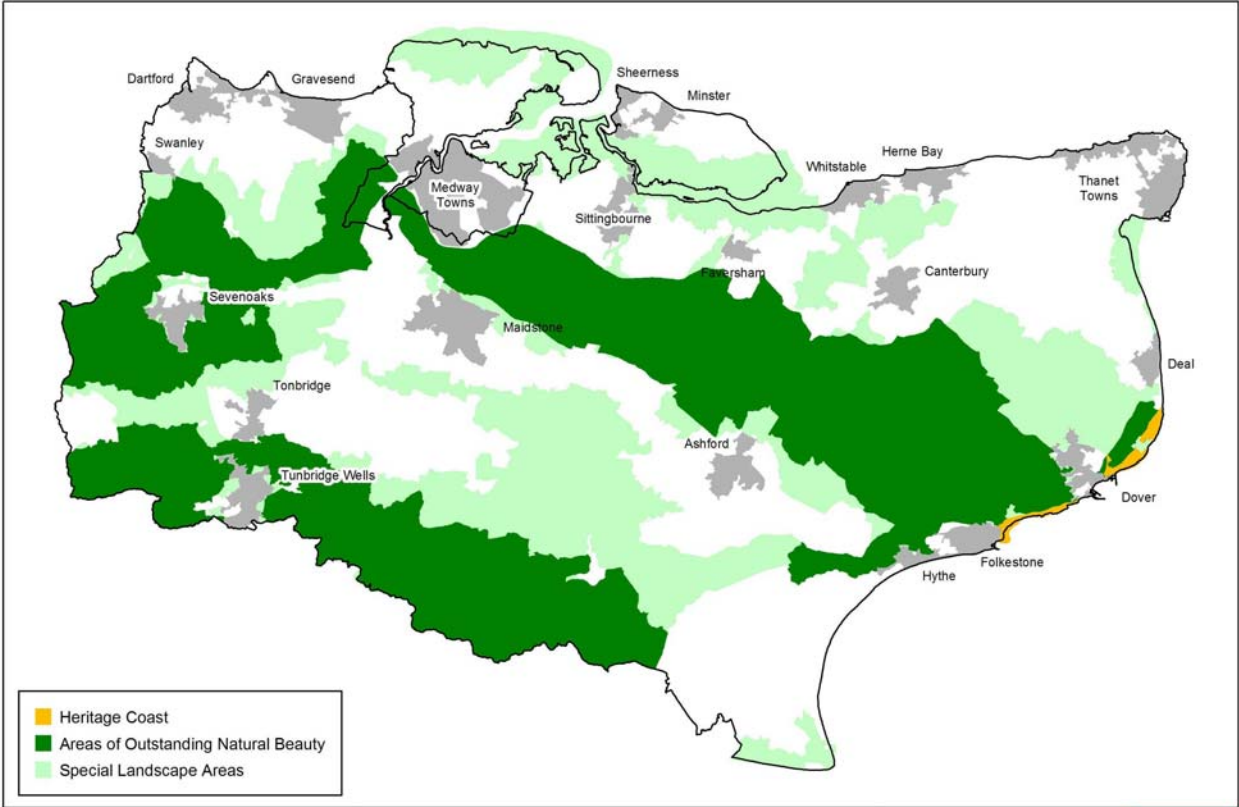
Special Landscape Areas are defined as follows and indicated on the Key Diagram. Detailed boundaries of the SLAs will be reviewed and defined in local plans/local development documents.

North Downs
Greensand Belt
High Weald
Eastern Low Weald
Western Low Weald
Old Romney Shoreline
North Kent Marshes
Sandwich Bay/Pegwell Bay
Dungeness
Blean Woods

The primary objective of designating Special Landscape Areas is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the quality of their landscapes, whilst having regard to the need to facilitate the social and economic well-being of the communities situated within them.

Special Landscape Areas (SLA) are not national designations but they have been identified in successive Structure Plans because of their strategic landscape importance and scenic significance in a countywide context.

Map: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast & Special Landscape Areas



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5. THE TOOLS – WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO CONSIDER LANDSCAPE CHARACTER?

The following tools will assist in preparing or assessing a development proposal that has the potential to impact on the character of the landscape in Kent and Medway. Each is explained in more detail below:

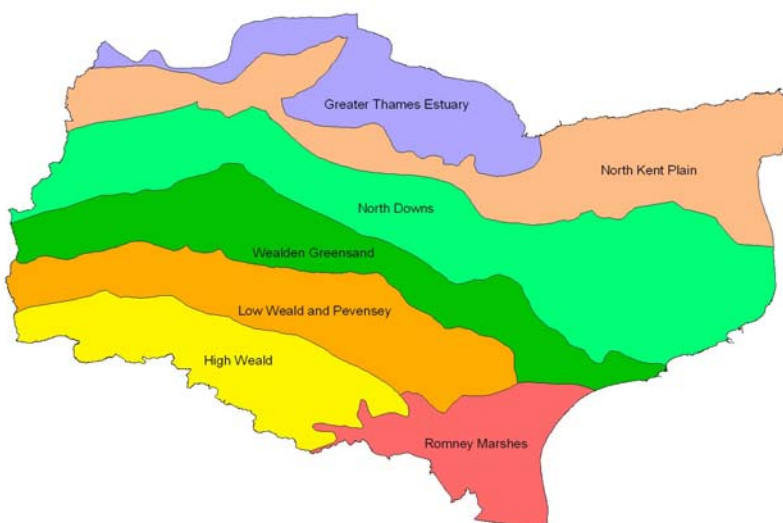
- Landscape Assessment Guidance (refer to section 5.1)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (refer to section 5.2)
- Landscape Policy Objectives (refer to section 5.3)
- The Range and Scale of Landscape Character Assessments (refer to section 5.4)
- Published Information Resources (refer to section 5.5)
- Relevant Contacts/Organisations (refer to section 5.6)

5.1 Landscape Assessment Guidance

5.1.1 Alongside the evolution of planning guidance the Countryside Agency has been developing and promoting landscape assessment guidance and techniques. In 1994 the Countryside Agency launched its Countryside Character Initiative followed by the publication in 1996 of *The Character Map of England: wildlife and natural areas*. This map was published jointly with English Nature and identified seven main natural character areas, wholly or partly, in Kent. These are:

Greater Thames Estuary
North Kent Plain
North Downs
Wealden Greensand
Low Weald
High Weald
Romney Marshes

Map: Natural Areas of Kent



Source: Countryside Commission/English Nature (1996)

- 5.1.2 Each area has a unique make-up of geology and soils, biodiversity, appearance, settlement and land use patterns, history, locally distinctive architecture, and degree of tranquillity. A profile of each national Landscape Character Area was also published, with complementary Natural Area Profiles published by English Nature.
- 5.1.3 Each national Landscape Character Area is divided into Landscape Description Units (LDUs). These are smaller and relatively homogenous tracts of land characterised by repeating patterns of physical, ecological and cultural attributes. LDUs are the building blocks of the landscape and they form the underlying spatial framework on which all-subsequent character evaluation and decision making is based. They are derived from a desk based analysis of nationally available data sets.
- 5.1.4 The countywide Landscape Assessment of Kent divides Kent into more than a hundred character areas (see Map 1 – County Landscape Character Areas). A description of the characteristic landscape features of each landscape character area is provided along with an evaluation of the character area's condition and sensitivity. Broad priorities for the conservation, restoration, reinforcement or creation of the landscape are identified for these areas, along with guidance on appropriate actions for each landscape character area to help achieve the objectives (refer to Annex 3 for further details).
- 5.1.5 The Landscape Assessment of Kent is an illustrative and advisory tool, offering guidance on a Kent wide approach to landscape protection and enhancement, priorities for landscape action and, in circumstances where development is otherwise justified, how the type, scale and form of development might respect countryside character. Map 2 demonstrates how landscape actions have been represented spatially as a broad strategic guide to future decisions on land use and management.
- 5.1.6 This countywide countryside assessment is to be used to inform strategic decision making, to guide land management strategies and as a development control tool. It also provides an overview for district councils to set the context for more detailed district assessments and offers an interim framework for those districts that do not have a local landscape assessment in place. Figure 1 provides a sample landscape character checklist to aid assessment of the impact of proposed development on landscape character, mitigation proposals and the contribution made to the landscape policy objectives for individual landscape character areas.
- 5.1.7 Developers will need to appreciate the grain of the landscape against which proposals should be assessed. This will include demonstrating an understanding and appreciation of the rarity and value of historic landscapes. The landscape policy objectives for the Landscape Assessment of Kent are to **conserve, reinforce, restore or create** landscape character. These terms are defined below (para 5.3.1) and are mirrored in the terms of Structure Plan Policy EN3.
- 5.1.8 It may be common for more than one of these actions to apply to a character area, to reflect the varying condition or sensitivity within a landscape. For example, a distinctively homogenous area such as the Wantsum Channel and Lower Stour Marshes will contain within it areas that are of better or poorer condition, greater or lesser sensitivity. The action summarises the whole area and the detailed text within the Landscape Assessment: Condition and Sensitivity Study gives guidance on its interpretation for any one individual area.
- 5.1.9 Developers will be expected to demonstrate, through their own landscape character assessment and/or by reference to a local landscape character assessment, that

proposals have taken due account of the existing landscape character and policy objectives identified by the Landscape Strategy Map (see Map 2).

5.2 Historic Landscape Characterisation

- 5.2.1 A programme of English Heritage funded work on historic landscape characterisation started in the early 1990s. Its aims were to find a better way of incorporating historic depth and character into the process of general landscape assessment work and to seek ways of extending the successful management of sites to their wider landscape context.
- 5.2.2 The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Study (refer to Annex 3 for details) was commissioned by Kent County Council and English Heritage and designed to inform the overall landscape characterisation of Kent. It comprises a digital map of Kent's Historic Landscape Types together with an explanatory text. In total, 34 Historic Landscape Character Areas have been defined through analysis of distinctive patterns and groupings of Historic Landscape Types. The study was entirely desk-based, using historic maps as the primary reference source. Such an approach tends to give greater attention to broader temporal and spatial factors resulting in a picture of wider changes and subtler variations in the landscape rather than localised patterns.
- 5.2.3 The study is designed to be used at a strategic level. Its application at a local level should be treated with caution (see Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Final Report Annex 2001). The study allows an appreciation of how the processes of long-term change have varied from area to area, resulting in variations in local distinctiveness and historic character. One way in which the analysis could be used is in guiding the form of future housing provisions, thereby maintaining or enhancing the diversity of different settlement patterns across the county. Different scales of development, or patterns of concentration or dispersal, may suit some areas better than others, in terms of sustaining the historic landscape character of an area.
- 5.2.4 To be fully effective in local planning and development control at District level the Historic Landscape Characterisation should be backed up by more detailed case-by-case analysis, to add greater detail through secondary sources. In its present form, it is likely to be most useful in development control in providing an initial indication of whether a development proposal is likely to be sensitive, in terms of the historic character of the environment, and in deciding whether a more detailed study should be sought from the applicant.
- 5.2.5 'Time depth' is a particularly important aspect of historic landscape in Kent. Kent, unlike many landscapes nationally, was not subject to the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the 18th century (see Annex 1). As a result much of the structure of the Kentish landscape pre-dates this period and there are still numerous ancient character elements within the landscape.
- 5.2.6 Map 3 (Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation) illustrates the intricacy and complexity of the historic landscape. The map can also be viewed in greater detail on the Kent Landscapes Information System (www.kent.gov.uk/klis). Further information on the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation can be obtained from the Heritage Conservation Team, Environment and Regeneration, Kent County Council. Potential developers are encouraged to contact the team (tel. 01622 221534 or 221535) for initial discussion before submitting a planning application.

5.3 Landscape Policy Objectives

- 5.3.1 The landscape actions should be applied to each character area to ensure that its unique character is maintained. Often more than one option may be the appropriate solution to achieving the ultimate objective. For example the improvement of a degraded urban edge with the landscape objective identified as 'create', could be through the creation of new woodland to screen the poor edge or the creation of a new urban edge through appropriate development. As most landscape character areas experience local variations in their condition and sensitivity, a combination of policy objectives may be appropriate. Details of how these might be applied are given in the Landscape Assessment of Kent.

Definitions of the landscape policy objectives are as summarised below:

Conserve - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition.

Conserve and reinforce - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, and strengthen and reinforce those features that may be vulnerable.

Reinforce - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape.

Conserve and restore - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst restoring elements or areas in poorer condition and removing or mitigating detracting features.

Conserve and create - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Restore - actions that encourage the restoration of distinctive landscape features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features.

Restore and create - actions that restore distinctive features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Reinforce and create - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Create - actions that create new features or areas where existing elements are lost or in poor condition.

Please refer to the following separate maps:

Map 1: Landscape Character Areas: County Wide Assessment

Map 2: Landscape Strategy: Action Priorities

Map 3: Historic Landscape Characterisation Map (plus Key)

5.4 Range and Scale of Landscape Character Assessments

- 5.4.1 Table 1 summarises the relationship between the different levels of landscape assessment, with examples of assessments and typical character areas. Generally, for development proposals, the most detailed/local landscape assessment should be referred to in the first instance. For example for a site-specific proposal a district/unitary level assessment should be used, if this is not available then the countywide study will offer guidance. Conversely, when developing land based strategies at a regional/sub regional scale a top down approach may be more appropriate.

Table 1: Spatial Hierarchy of Landscape Assessments in Kent

Level of Assessment	Spatial Resolution	Hierarchy of Assessments for Kent
Level 1	NATIONAL	
National Landscape Character Areas (1:250,000)		The Character Map of England (Countryside Agency/ English Nature)
Landscape Description Units (1:50,000)		
Level 2	REGIONAL/COUNTY	
County Landscape Character Areas (1:25,000)		The Landscape Assessment of Kent. (KCC) The Kent Downs AONB Landscape (Countryside Agency) Exploring the Landscape of the High Weald AONB (Countryside Agency)
Level 3 (typically at 1:10,000)	LOCAL/DISTRICT	District Local Landscape Assessments (see Table 2)

- 5.4.2 It should be noted that countywide studies offer a broad-brush, strategic approach and are written with the intention that detailed local studies should be undertaken to assess site specific proposals.
- 5.4.3 This broad-brush approach means that judgements made on individual areas will not necessarily focus on detail. For example, a character area may have pockets that are in better or worse condition, or higher or lower sensitivity. Judgements as to landscape action priorities are therefore a summary of the overall picture.

Local Landscape Assessments

- 5.4.4 Local landscape assessments undertaken at a district scale or for specific sites and areas can focus on a greater level of detail and therefore give more targeted information.

- 5.4.5 In the case of the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, the broad-brush approach identifies and categorises field types. Local studies can build on this information to provide detail on the boundaries of, and features and elements within, the field types. Local studies can also add judgements on the condition, sensitivity and rarity of the historic landscape.
- 5.4.6 Some districts within Kent have local landscape assessments in place, many have been, or are in the process of being, adopted as supplementary planning guidance. Those currently published (September 2005) are shown in the following table:

Table 2: Kent Districts: Landscape Character Assessments

Organisation	Title	Published	SPG or SPD	Date of Adoption	Comments
Kent County Council	Landscape Assessment of Kent	Oct-2004	Supports SPG	July 2006	
Medway Council	Medway Landscape and Urban Design Framework	Not formally published or adopted, but information available from Urban Design & Rural Strategy Section, Development & Transport Division, Regeneration & Development Directorate, Medway Council (Tel: 01634 332168)			
Ashford Borough Council					
Canterbury City Council	Canterbury Landscape Appraisal	Nov-1998	SPG		Only covers areas outside the AONB and SLA
	Herne Bay & Whitstable Landscape Appraisal	Jun-2000	SPG		
	Blean Woods and Great & Little Stour Valleys Landscape Appraisal	Jul 2001	SPG		
Dartford Borough Council					
Dover District Council	Dover District Landscape Character Assessment	Jan 2006			
Gravesham Borough Council					
Maidstone Borough Council	Maidstone Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment & Landscape Guidelines	2000	SPG	2000	
Sevenoaks District Council	Sevenoaks District Countryside Assessment	2004	SPG	October 2004	
Shepway District Council					
Swale Borough Council	Swale Landscape Character Assessment	March 2005	SPD	March 2005	
Thanet District Council	District landscape Assessment Survey				To inform Local Plan work along with Landscape Assessment of Kent
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council					
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment	Aug 2002	SPG	Aug 2002	

5.5 Published Information Resources

For more information on relevant references and resources, refer to Annex 3.

5.6 Relevant Contacts/Organisations

For more information on useful contacts and organisations, refer to Annex 4.

Figure 1: Sample Landscape Character Checklist

Planning Officer:		Date:	
Application Number:			
Applicant:			
Type of Development:			
Size of development		1 ha – 10 ha	10 – 50 ha over 50 ha
Location:			
What documents have been consulted?			
Kent landscape Assessment <input type="checkbox"/>		Medway Landscape and Urban Design Framework <input type="checkbox"/>	
Local/District landscape assessment <input type="checkbox"/>		Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Study <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other.....			
Kent Landscape Condition and Sensitivity Report.....			
Adjacent land use: Rural/Urban/other.....			
County Landscape Character Area:		County Landscape Character Area:	
Aldington Ridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kingsdown: West Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aldington: Lympe	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knockholt Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alkham: East Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knockholt: Darent Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ash Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leeds-Lenham Farmland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bayham: Central High Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low Weald Fruit Belt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bethersden Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower Darent Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beult Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Luddesdown: West Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bewl & Bedgebury Kentish High Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medway Marshes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bicknor: Mid Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medway Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biddenden High-Halden Wooded Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medway Valley – Medway Valley Lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bodiam: Lower Rother Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medway Valley – Medway Valley Upper	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boxley Vale: Medway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mereworth Woodlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bradbourne Lees Mixed Farmland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mersham Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bradbourne Vale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nashenden Valley: Mid Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brookland Farms	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Darent: Darent Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capstone Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Kent Fruit Belt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Challock Mid Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Sheppey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chatham Outskirts: Mid Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chilham: Stour Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oxney: Lower Rothey Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cobham: West Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pembury: Central High Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coxheath Plateau Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	Penshurst: Central High Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cranbrook: Kentish High Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>	Petham: East Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Darenth Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romney Marsh Mixed Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dartford & Gravesend Fringes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romney Marsh Settlements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dungeness Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romney Marsh: Lympe	<input type="checkbox"/>
East Kent Arable Belt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Saltwood: Postling Vale	<input type="checkbox"/>
East Kent Horticultural Belt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sellindge Plateau Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eastern Fruit Belt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shirley Moor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eastern Low Weald: The Low Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shorne	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eastern Swale Marshes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sissinghurst Wooded Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eastern Thames Marshes	<input type="checkbox"/>	South Foreland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eden Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Southfleet Arable Lands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elham: East Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staplehurst – Headcorn Pasturelands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faversham Fruit Belt: Mid Kent Downs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stowting: Postling Vale	<input type="checkbox"/>
Folkestone Outskirts: Postling Vale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sutton Valence to Pluckley Mixed Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit Belt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swale Marshes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greensand Fruit Belt – Egerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swanley Fringe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greensand Fruit Belt – Maidstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teise Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greensand Fruit Belt – Malling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thanet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greensand Fruit Belt – Wateringbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Blean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greensand Ridge – Plaxtol	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Eastern Scarp: Medway	<input type="checkbox"/>

Greensand Ridge: Maidstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Romney Coast	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hampton: Stour Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Stour – Stour Gap	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highknock Channel and Dowels	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Stour – Stour Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hildenborough-Leigh Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Stour Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hollingbourne Vale	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Wantsum & Lower Stour Marshes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hollingbourne Vale East	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Western Scarp: Medway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hollingbourne Vale West	<input type="checkbox"/>	Upper Stour Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hoo Peninsula	<input type="checkbox"/>	Valeside Farms and Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walland marsh Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hythe Escarpment: Lympne	<input type="checkbox"/>	West Darent: Darent Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ightham Greensand: Sevenoaks Ridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Westerham Greensand: Sevenoaks Ridge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemsing Vale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Western Low Weald: The Low Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemsing Vale: Kent Downs AONB	<input type="checkbox"/>	Western Thames Marshes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kent Downs – Medway, Western & Eastern Scarp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Western Wooded Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kent Fruit Belt: Kentish High Weald	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wrotham Heath – Ryarsh Gap	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kent Water: Upper Medway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wye: Stour Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>

How has landscape character informed the proposals?

How do the proposals take account of the character, condition and sensitivity of the landscape?

What is the impact with respect to the defined characteristic features and elements?

To what extent will the development be visually intrusive?

How will the development contribute to the landscape policy objective(s) for the character area(s), as shown on the Kent Landscape Strategy Map?

What mitigation is proposed to offset the negative impacts of the proposals?

Annex 1 Glossary of Terms

Character

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Characteristics

Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

Elements

Individual components that make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

Features

Particularly prominent or eye catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

Characterisation

The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Condition

The assessment of condition evaluates the pattern of the landscape and the presence of incongruous features on the unity of the landscape. It also evaluates how well the landscape functions as a habitat for wildlife and the condition of cultural or 'man-made' elements such as enclosure, built elements and roads.

Sensitivity

This is a measure of the ability of a landscape to accept change without causing irreparable damage to the essential fabric and distinctiveness of that landscape. The term change refers to both beneficial changes such as a new woodland as well as change that may be brought about by new land uses. Landscape assessment considers sensitivity on an areas sense of place and its visibility.

Sense of Place

Sense of place is the term used to describe the individuality and distinctiveness of a particular place or area. It is about the common identity and perception of a particular place to groups or individuals.

Time depth

Time depth reflects how long that landscape has taken to establish. Ancient landscapes are uncommon in Kent but include those that have had very little intervention by man or contain ancient or prehistoric features. Historic landscapes are generally from the medieval period onwards. This is when the pattern of most landscapes in Kent was established and is generally discernible today (although overlain with modern features). Recent landscapes are those where historic elements have been replaced with new elements or land management. They include reclaimed landscapes.


Enclosure

Enclosure is the term applied to the joining of strips of open field systems to make larger compact units of land. These were then fenced or hedged off so that farmers had land in one farm rather than in scattered strips. Prior to 1740 most land was enclosed by agreement which often meant larger farmers buying off smaller farmer to get rid of opposition. In areas where there was sufficient opposition or a number of smaller farmers an Act of Parliament to enclose that land had to be obtained. This became the accepted procedure after 1750.

Kent differs from other parts of England in its lack of open field systems. It is not clear whether this is due to pastoral traditions and a distinct inheritance custom or to the complexities of Kent's peninsular geology. Whatever the reason the Enclosure Acts did not affect Kent and the field systems found in today's landscape maintain their medieval origins.

Annex 2 Sample Landscape Assessment Report Sheet

(Example of a typical landscape assessment report sheet from the countywide landscape assessment and condition and sensitivity database)

CHILHAM: STOUR VALLEY																	
<p>PHOTOGRAPH:</p> 	<p>CONTEXT:</p> <p>Regional : Kent Downs AONB</p>																
<p>CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES:</p> <p>Gentle, enclosed valley sides, wooded skyline. Sinuous riverside pastures, sweeping parkland. Shaws, game cover plantations and riverside trees on valley bottom. Chalk scarp to NE.</p>	<p>Condition</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>good</td> <td>REINFORCE</td> <td style="background-color: #cccccc;">CONSERVE & REINFORCE</td> <td>CONSERVE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>moderate</td> <td>CREATE & REINFORCE</td> <td>CONSERVE & CREATE</td> <td>CONSERVE & RESTORE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>poor</td> <td>CREATE</td> <td>RESTORE & CREATE</td> <td>RESTORE</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>low</td> <td>moderate</td> <td>high</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Sensitivity</p>	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE		low	moderate	high
good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE														
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE														
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE														
	low	moderate	high														
<p>LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS:</p> <p>Condition:</p> <p>The area incorporates the river valley and upper flood plain which have a unified pattern of elements and some small scale visual detractors associated with remnant fruit growing and the management of landscape features. Estate houses, historic farmsteads and local building materials (including flint) have a positive impact on the area. Rural heritage features of woodland and hedgerow are considered to be poor, but the diversity of the land-use and the strong ecological corridor of the river itself result in a strong ecological base.</p>	<p>SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS</p> <p>Condition: Good.</p> <p>Pattern of elements Unified. Detracting features Some. Visual Unity: Unified. Cultural integrity Poor. Ecological integrity Coherent. Functional Integrity: Coherent.</p>																
<p>Sensitivity:</p> <p>This area has a characteristic historic time depth. It includes notable features such as the parkland at Godmersham. Vegetative features within the river valley tend to be recent, such as poplar plantations, or contribute little to the local sense of place, such as hedgerow and remnant orchards. The sensitivity of the area is considered to be moderate.</p>	<p>Sensitivity: Moderate.</p> <p>Distinctiveness: Characteristic. Continuity Historic. Sense of Place: Moderate. Landform Apparent. Extent of tree cover Intermittent. Visibility: Moderate.</p>																
<p>LANDSCAPE ACTIONS:</p> <p>Conserve and reinforce the distinction between valley floor and the upper flood plain by conserving managed hedged boundaries on the higher land, and the copse/pasture/arable pattern on the valley floor. Conserve and reinforce historic parkland features. Reinforce the river corridor with selected areas of riparian vegetation and plantations.</p>	<p>SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:</p> <p style="background-color: #cccccc;">CONSERVE AND REINFORCE.</p> <p>Conserve and reinforce small scale woodland plantation and riparian vegetation on the valley floor Conserve historic parkland Reinforce hedgerow in the upper valley</p>																

Annex 3 Published Information Resources

Title	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans – A Guide
Copyright / ISBN	Countryside Agency
Published by	Countryside Agency 2001
Source	Can be ordered or downloaded from the Countryside Agency website: www.countryside.gov.uk
Summary	The purpose of this guide is to assist local authorities, AONB staff units, AONB partners and others concerned with the production and implementation of AONB Management Plans.

Title	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A Policy Statement 1991
Copyright / ISBN	Countryside Commission / ISBN: 0 86170 317 0
Published by	Countryside Commission 1991
Source	Can be ordered from the Countryside Agency website: : www.countryside.gov.uk
Summary	The Countryside Commission's policies for improving the administration and management of AONBs, prior to the 1997 consultation on funding and management of AONBs.

Title	High Weald
Copyright / ISBN	Countryside Agency / ISBN: 0 86170 438 X
Published by	Countryside Agency 1994
Source	Can be ordered from the Countryside Agency website: : www.countryside.gov.uk
Summary	A landscape assessment of the High Weald

Title	High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004 – A 20 year Strategy
Copyright / ISBN	High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Published by	High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee 2003
Source	Can be ordered or downloaded from the Kent Downs AONB website: www.highweald.org
Summary	The management plan is primarily for all local authorities, statutory undertakers, utilities and public bodies who have a new duty of regard for the purposes of the AONB designation in their functions and operations.

Title	Heritage Coasts: A Guide for Councillors and Officers
Copyright / ISBN	Countryside Commission / ISBN: 0 86170 456 8
Published by	Countryside Commission 1995
Source	Can be ordered from the Countryside Agency website: www.countryside.gov.uk
Summary	This advisory booklet provides information on all aspects of Heritage Coasts. It is invaluable to local authority councillors, officers on committees involved in the running of Heritage Coast management services, and anyone with a general interest in Heritage Coasts.

Title	Heritage Coasts in England: policies and priorities
Copyright / ISBN	Countryside Commission / ISBN: 0 86170 353 7
Published by	Countryside Commission
Source	Can be downloaded from the Countryside Agency website: www.countryside.gov.uk
Summary	The Countryside Commission's policy on Heritage Coasts. It also includes statements of commitment to Heritage Coast objectives by the Government and interested organisations.

Title	The Kent Design Guide
Copyright / ISBN	Copyright Kent Design Initiative
Published by	Kent County Council 2005
Source	Can be downloaded from the KCC website: www.kent.gov.uk (search for Kent Design)
Summary	The Guide aims to encourage well-considered contemporary schemes that fit into the existing landscape.

Title	Kent Downs
Copyright / ISBN	Countryside Agency / ISBN: 0 86170 477 9
Published by	Countryside Agency 1995
Source	Can be ordered from the Countryside Agency website: www.countryside.gov.uk
Summary	A landscape assessment of the Kent Downs

Title	Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland
Copyright / ISBN	Countryside Agency
Published by	Countryside Agency 2002
Source	Can be ordered from the Countryside Agency website: www.countryside.gov.uk
Summary	This guidance document provides advice on how to identify the different components of landscape character that makes it unique, for example, woodlands, hedgerows, moors, mountains and farmland, building styles, and historic artefacts.

Title	Landscape Assessment of Kent
Copyright / ISBN	Kent County Council
Published by	Kent County Council 2004
Source	Website: www.kent.gov.uk/kllis
Summary	The condition and sensitivity study of the Kent landscape has been produced to provide character-based strategies ensuring the continued distinctiveness of the Kent landscape.

Title	Management Plan for the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 2004-2009
Copyright / ISBN	Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Published by	Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee 2003
Source	Can be ordered or downloaded from the Kent Downs AONB website: www.kentdowns.org.uk
Summary	The management plan is primarily for all local authorities, statutory undertakers, utilities and public bodies who have a new duty of regard for the purposes of the AONB designation in their functions and operations.

Title	Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Design Handbook
Copyright / ISBN	Kent Downs AONB Unit
Published by	Kent Downs AONB Unit 2005
Source	Can be ordered in hard copy or CD version from the Kent Downs AONB website: www.kentdowns.org.uk
Summary	To guide the design of new landscape works and development to help ensure that it respects the distinctive landscape setting and does not undermine the purpose, high quality and special distinctiveness of the different landscape character areas and buildings within the Kent Downs AONB.

Title	Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Final Report Vols. 1-4 2001
Copyright / ISBN	Oxford Archaeological Unit, Kent County Council, English Heritage
Published by	Oxford Archaeological Unit
Source	Available on K-LIS www.kent.gov.uk/klis or to consult at KCC, Invicta House
Summary	An assessment of the historic landscape character of Kent based on analysis of historic maps. It comprises a digital map of Historic Landscape Types together with an explanatory text. Assessment of the distinctive patterns and groupings of different Historic Landscape Types has led to the definition of 34 Historic Landscape Character Areas. The study also allows an appreciation of the considerable and visible 'time-depth' of the Kentish landscape, which is regarded as ancient countryside.

Title	Kent Landscapes Information System (K-LIS)
Copyright / ISBN	
Published by	Kent County Council
Source	www.kent.gov.uk/klis
Summary	The K-LIS website aims to enable better informed decision-making by providing detailed information on Kent's landscape and biodiversity. Primarily aimed at landowners, farm advisors and those involved in land use planning, the website also acts as a useful information source to members of the public. It contains details on countryside access, landscape character, identifies opportunities for habitat creation and landscape restoration, the physical environment including soils and geology, the Kent habitat survey as well as areas designated for their conservation value.

Annex 4 Relevant Contacts/ Organisations

Organisation	Countryside Agency (from October 2006 Natural England)
Relevance to Planning Process	The Countryside Agency is the statutory agency responsible for improving quality of life in the countryside.
Phone	01242 521381
Fax	01242 584270
Email	Info@countryside.gov.uk
Website	www.countryside.gov.uk

Organisation	DEFRA
Relevance to Planning Process	The Government Department primarily concerned with creating a better environment
Phone	08459 33 55 77
Fax	020 7238 21 88 address faxes to Customer Contact Unit
Email	Helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Website	www.defra.gov.uk

Organisation	District Councils in Kent
Relevance to Planning Process	Determine most planning applications and prepare Local Development Documents. Ensure that development conforms to the plans and policies for the district and takes into account the effects of proposals on the surrounding area.
Phone	
Fax	
Email	
Website	http://www.kent.gov.uk/ (links to Borough, District & City Councils)

Organisation	Environment Agency
Relevance to Planning Process	Public body responsible for protecting and enhancing the environment in England.
Phone	01732 875587 08708 506506 – general enquiries
Email	Enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
Website	www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Organisation	High Weald AONB Unit
Relevance to Planning Process	Provides landscape design guidance in partnership with local authorities represented in the AONB, comments on forward / strategic planning issues and major planning applications by virtue of their scale, precedence etc.
Phone	01580 879500
Email	Info@highweald.org
Website	www.highweald.org

Organisation	Kent County Council
Relevance to Planning Process	Determines Minerals and Waste planning applications and other proposals for County Council development. Statutory consultee on planning applications of strategic significance. Prepares Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks Jointly responsible with Medway Council for the Kent and Medway Structure Plan
Phone	01622 221537
Fax	01622 221636
Email	Biodiversity@kent.gov.uk Planning.policy@kent.gov.uk
Website	www.kent.gov.uk/environment/planning-and-land-use/minerals-and-waste www.kent.gov.uk/environment/our-environment/natural-environment/biodiversity www.kmsp.org.uk

Organisation	Kent Downs AONB Unit
Relevance to Planning Process	Provides landscape design guidance in partnership with local authorities represented in the AONB, comments on forward / strategic planning issues and major planning applications by virtue of their scale, precedence etc.
Phone	01303 815170
Fax	01303 815179
Email	Kentdowns@kent.gov.uk
Website	www.kentdowns.org.uk

Organisation	Kent High Weald Countryside Project
Relevance to Planning Process	The Kent High Weald Project was established in 1991 to: <i>conserve and enhance our natural heritage, providing opportunities for people to become actively involved in practical conservation.</i>
Phone	01580 715918
Fax	01580 712064
Email	Kenthighweald@kent.gov.uk
Website	www.kenthighweald.org

Organisation	Kentish Stour Countryside Project
Relevance to Planning Process	The Kentish Stour Countryside Project works closely with landowners and local communities to promote both landscape and nature conservation, and develop opportunities for appropriate countryside access and informal recreation.
Phone	01233 813307
Fax	01233 812532
Email	kentishstour@kent.gov.uk
Website	www.kentishstour.org.uk/

Organisation	Medway Valley Countryside Project
Relevance to Planning Process	The Medway Valley Countryside Project aims to: maintain and enhance the Medway Valley from Tonbridge to Rochester as a green corridor for the benefit of wildlife and the local community, through the promotion of community awareness and action.
Phone	01622 683695
Email	Caroline.drewett@kent.gov.uk
Website	www.medwayvalley.org

Organisation	North West Kent Countryside Project
Relevance to Planning Process	The North West Kent Countryside Project works to: <i>conserve and enhance the wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage of the countryside in both a rural and urban context.</i>
Phone	01322 294727
Email	Nwkentcp@kent.gov.uk
Website	www.kentdowns.org.uk/north_west.html

Organisation	Romney Marsh Countryside Project
Relevance to Planning Process	The Romney Marsh Countryside Project aims to: <i>care for the special landscape and wildlife of the Romney Marsh and Dungeness, encouraging people to enjoy and understand the countryside through guided walks, cycle rides, countryside events and children's activities.</i>
Phone	01797 367934
Fax	01797 367934
Email	mail@rmcp.co.uk
Website	www.rmcp.co.uk

Organisation	White Cliffs Countryside Project
Relevance to Planning Process	The White Cliffs Countryside Project was launched in 1989 to: <i>help care for the special coast and countryside of Dover and Shepway districts.</i>
Phone	01304 241806
Email	Tourism@doveruk.com
Website	www.whitecliffscountry.org.uk