

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This section introduces the study and presents the generic guidance for accommodating built development into the landscape of the High Weald AONB

1.1 LUC was commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2021 to prepare a number of evidence base studies to inform the Local Plan making process. This included a Landscape Character Assessment, a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development, and a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions.

1.2 In tandem with this, LUC was also commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential development sites located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that had been submitted for the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The aim of the appraisal is to ascertain the potential for the sites to accommodate development (in landscape and visual terms), as well as determine any site specific constraints and design considerations, with reference to their designation within the High Weald AONB.

1.3 32 potential development sites, located on the fringes of eleven settlements (and within assessment units identified within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development), have been appraised, in addition to seven potential development sites located within the wider landscape.

1.4 The overall findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal for each of the potential development sites is set out in **Appendix A**.

1.5 Specific guidance for each site is set out within the Landscape and Visual Appraisals. This includes measures to avoid/minimise any potential landscape and visual effects that could arise from the introduction of development, as well as potential landscape enhancement measures. This should be

read in conjunction with the vision, objectives and proposed actions within the High Weald AONB Management Plan¹.

1.6 The following summarises guidance that is more generic across all potential development sites, including:

- Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage²; the buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
- Retain, protect, and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding a site, including woodlands, trees, and hedgerows.
- Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
- Enhance the connectivity of the local habitat network through tree planting and hedgerow corridors, in line with any relevant Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.
- Conserve, protect and enhance priority habitat; development should avoid such areas and retain areas of open space to provide a buffer to development.
- Retain areas of historic field pattern (e.g. assarts) where practicable, particularly where they are a defining component of character.
- Consider the character and setting of any heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings or registered parks and gardens).
- Screen development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider assessment unit and landscape.
- Avoid development in the more open and elevated areas of the site.
- Consider intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB in the siting and design of development; include corridors to retain and frame any existing views.
- Retain and enhance public access across the site and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding countryside and woodlands.
- Locate development to fit with the existing settlement pattern and respect any features that define the existing settlement edge nearby (e.g. river valleys, crests of higher ground etc.).
- Development should be sited to minimise the perception of coalescence between distinct settlements/areas of a settlement.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.
- Consider opportunities to integrate development with recent development in the vicinity, to ensure a cohesive character to the expanded settlement.
- Intersperse green open space and tree planting within the development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape.
- Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular.
- Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'³, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'⁴ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan⁵.
- Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance⁶ and use dark sky-friendly lighting.

Structure of the report

1.7 This report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a non-technical summary (this chapter).

Chapter 2 presents an introduction and policy context.

Chapter 3 sets out the methodology for the landscape and visual appraisal.

¹ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

² See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>

³ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

⁴ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

⁵ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

⁶ See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/>

Appendix A contains the landscape and visual appraisals.

Appendix B contains the sources of information used in the appraisal.

Appendix C contains a glossary of terms.

Chapter 2

Background and purpose of the study

This section sets out the background and purpose of the study and presents the national planning policy context

Background and purpose

2.1 Wealden's rural landscapes have a distinctive character and are a valuable resource for the district. A large proportion (60%) of the district is located within nationally protected landscapes, including the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the north and the South Downs National Park to the south⁷.

2.2 At the same time the district is facing the need to accommodate substantial housing and employment growth and will be required to allocate growth in its Local Plan which will set out a growth strategy for the Plan period to 2040. It will be important to deliver future growth in a way that protects and enhances valued landscapes and their defining components of character, as well as contributing to and enhancing the natural local environment.

2.3 To help inform the Local Plan making process, LUC was commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2021 to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential development sites located within the High Weald AONB that had been submitted for the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).

2.4 The aim of the study was to produce a landscape and visual appraisal of the potential development sites within the High Weald AONB in relation to accommodating growth, as well as to determine any site specific constraints, opportunities and design considerations.

National planning policy context

High Weald AONB

2.5 AONBs exist within a legal framework based on the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, which provided AONBs with protection under planning law against

⁷ South Downs National Park is the Planning Authority for the area of the National Park that sits within Wealden District.

inappropriate development, and gave local authorities permissive powers to take action for 'preserving and enhancing natural beauty'.

2.6 This was subsumed and strengthened under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which provides a firm legislative basis for the protection and management of AONBs. Relevant sections are:

- **Section 82** reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty.
- **Section 84** confirms the powers of local authorities to take 'all such action as appears to them expedient' to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of an AONB.
- **Section 85** places a statutory duty on all relevant authorities '...in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect land [in an AONB] to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty...'.
The purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.
- **Section 92** makes clear that the conservation of natural beauty includes the conservation of 'flora, fauna and geological and physiological features.'

2.7 In November 2023, all AONBs were rebranded as 'National Landscapes'. However, the legislative framework still refers to AONBs, rather than National Landscapes. It is therefore referred to as the High Weald AONB within this report.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.8 The UK Government published an updated and revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021, which sets out the environmental, social and economic planning policies for England. Central to NPPF policies is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; that development should be planned for positively and individual proposals should be approved wherever possible.

2.9 However, one of the overarching objectives that underpins the NPPF is set out in **Paragraph 8**: "an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment."

2.10 Paragraph 174 states that "planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes**" and **'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'**."

2.11 Paragraph 20 states 'Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:

a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;

b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);

c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and

d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation'.

2.12 Paragraph 130 states 'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience'.

2.13 Paragraph 175 states 'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries'.

2.14 Paragraph 176 states 'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in

these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas’.

2.15 Paragraph 177 states ‘When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development⁸ other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- (a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- (b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- (c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

2.16 Paragraph 185 contains one reference to sensitivity as follows:

‘Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, **as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development...**’

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

2.17 Further guidance is provided in the NPPG. Paragraph 037⁹ which notes the following under the heading of ‘How can the character of the landscape be assessed?’

“...Landscape sensitivity can inform policy development and appropriate locations for development and can also be one of the considerations to be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.

To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed. To demonstrate the likely effects of a

proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used.

⁸ Whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined, as set out in

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/15-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment - footnote60>

⁹ Reference ID: 8-037-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019

Chapter 3

Methodology and summary

This section presents the scope of the study and the approach to landscape and visual appraisal

Approach to landscape and visual appraisal

3.1 The approach to this study was informed by the above planning policy context and current good practice guidance in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)¹⁰ and Natural England's 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management'¹¹. The approach also draws on best practice in recent assessments completed by LUC and others.

The 'defining components of character' and 'other qualities' of the High Weald AONB

3.2 The appraisal assesses sites located in and around settlements within the High Weald AONB, and therefore also includes a consideration of the 'five defining components of character' and 'other qualities', as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. The five defining components of character are as follows:

- 1. Geology, landform and water systems** – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.
- 2. Settlement** – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.
- 3. Routeways** – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).
- 4. Woodland** – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.
- 5. Field and Heath** – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used

¹⁰ Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition

¹¹ Natural England, An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management, 2019

for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.

3.3 The 'other qualities' are defined as:

"Other qualities and features that are connected to the interaction between the landscape and people and which enrich character components. Such qualities and features enhance health and wellbeing, and foster enjoyment and appreciation of the beauty of nature. These include locally distinctive features which enrich the character components such as historic parks and gardens, orchards, hop gardens, veteran trees, along with their rich and varied biodiversity, and a wide range of appealing and locally distinctive historic buildings including oast houses, farm buildings, Wealden Hall houses and their associated features such as clay-tile catslide roofs. People value the wonderful views and scenic beauty of the High Weald with its relative tranquillity. They appreciate the area's ancientness and sense of history, its intrinsically dark landscape with the opportunity to see our own galaxy – the Milky Way – and the ability to get close to nature through the myriad public rights of way."

3.4 For the purpose of this appraisal, the 'other qualities' are referred to as 'perceptual qualities' and focus on those qualities important to landscape character, including views, tranquillity and dark skies. They have been considered alongside the 'defining components of character'.

3.5 Spatial data relating to the 'defining components of character' was provided by the High Weald AONB and has informed this appraisal. The dataset includes information relating to:

- Water systems data (watercourses, ponds, reservoirs and openwater);
- Geology data (bedrock geology and sandstone outcrops);
- Settlement data (historic settlement pattern and historic farmsteads);
- Historic routeways data;
- Woodland data (ancient semi-natural woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland site); and
- Field and heath data (historic field boundaries, heathland, and wildflower grassland).

3.6 The High Weald AONB are redrafting their Management Plan, due for publication in 2024. Covering the period from 2024-2029. The consultation draft, published in autumn 2023¹², set out eight components of character, which are very

similar to the current components of character and 'other qualities'. These are:

- Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate);
- Settlement;
- Routeways;
- Woodland;
- Fieldscapes and heath;
- Dark night skies;
- Aesthetic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; and
- Land-based economy and rural living.

The process of appraisal

3.7 The process for undertaking the study involved the following main stages:

Part 1: Desk based assessment

3.8 The initial stage of the study involved a desk-based assessment drawing on descriptions and evaluations in the Landscape Character Assessment for Wealden¹³ and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development¹⁴.

3.9 The five-point scale from 'low' to 'high' landscape sensitivity used for the judgements is as follows:

Table 3.1: Landscape sensitivity

Sensitivity judgement	Definition
High	Landscape and visual constraints mean the site is unlikely to be suitable for development.
Moderate-high	Great care is required with design, and substantial mitigation likely to be needed, to avoid landscape and visual constraints and sensitivities.
Moderate	Site (or part of the site) has landscape and visual constraints and sensitivities – care with design and mitigation required.

¹² <https://highweald.org/aonb-management-plan/management-plan-public-consultation-2023/>

¹³ LUC, 2022 Wealden Landscape Character Assessment

¹⁴ LUC, 2023 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development

Sensitivity judgement	Definition
Low-moderate	Site has some landscape and visual constraints and sensitivities, careful design and awareness needed.
Low	In landscape and visual terms the site has few constraints.

3.10 Information from relevant documents and available GIS data were reviewed to understand the wider landscape context for the potential development sites. Key sources of information used to inform the appraisal are listed in **Appendix B**.

Part 2: Field verification

3.11 A structured process of field survey verification was undertaken in summer 2022 by landscape professionals from LUC in order to verify and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each potential development site was visited to record information and take photographs.

Part 3: Analysis

Potential effects of developing the site

3.12 For each potential development site, or groups of sites where sites are located adjacent to one another, an analysis of the potential effects of development was undertaken. This included identification of the potential effects of development on:

- Landscape character and features – how potential development could affect key landscape qualities/ sensitivities or conflict with relevant guidance (as identified in the Wealden Landscape Character Assessment or the Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment)
- Existing settlement form and setting – how potential development could affect settlement pattern (including potential for coalescence between settlements and existing separation between them).
- Visual amenity – how potential development could affect sensitive visual receptors (including important views from or across the High Weald AONB)

- The High Weald landscape – how potential development could affect the ‘defining components of character’ of the High Weald AONB

Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities

3.13 For each development site, advice is provided on potential mitigation measures to avoid or minimise adverse effects and opportunities to enhance the landscape.

Summary and recommendations

3.14 The suitability of the landscape across the potential development site or group of sites was summarised highlighting the key recommendations for accommodating development.

3.15 For sites or groups of sites with potential development of 20 residential dwellings or more are illustrated with a constraints / opportunities plan, as agreed with Wealden District Council. These provide further guidance on locations within the site(s) where development could best be accommodated in landscape and visual terms.

Part 4: Reporting

3.16 The findings of the assessment were updated following field survey, and a draft and final report submitted.

3.17 The assessment profiles for each site are organised by the assessment units considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development¹⁵, and each assessment unit has its own report. These are collectively contained in **Appendix A**. Each report is structured in a common format as follows:

Assessment unit overview

3.18 For each assessment unit the following is provided:

- **a list of the potential development sites** located within the assessment unit (which is also illustrated on a map);
- **the settlement location, evolution and pattern;**
- **mapped information for the ‘defining components of character’ of the High Weald AONB** within the assessment unit;
- **the landscape sensitivity context** of the relevant assessment unit including the overall landscape sensitivity rating, key sensitivities, guidance for the assessment unit (as described in the Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment: Residential and Employment Development).

¹⁵ LUC, 2023 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development

Baseline analysis of potential development site(s)

3.19 For each potential development site the following is provided:

- **Site details and constraints** including the type and amount of potential development proposed, and the site location. A map showing the location of the site in relation to the settlement and constraints is provided.
- **Representative site photos;**
- **Baseline landscape character** for each potential development site, including key landscape features and qualities of the site and how these relate to the character of the wider assessment unit; and the relation of the site to the existing settlement form and edge;
- **Baseline visual character** identifying potential visual receptors, and considering the extent of visibility from or across the High Weald AONB;
- **Expression of the ‘defining components of character’ of the High Weald AONB on the site** – identifying if any of the features/qualities of the site are representative of the ‘defining components of character’ of the AONB;
- **A summary of how the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.** This is provided using the same levels of landscape sensitivity as for the wider assessment unit, as set out in **Table 3.1**.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

3.20 An analysis of the potential effects of development in landscape and visual terms, including effects on:

- landscape character and features (including the ‘defining components of character of the High Weald AONB’) on the site;
- settlement form edge and setting; and
- visual amenity.

3.21 The potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities are also provided against each potential effect.

Summary and recommendations

3.22 A summary of the key issues and recommendations is provided, along with a constraints/ opportunities plan for the larger sites (with the potential for 20 or more residential dwellings).

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in each assessment unit

3.23 The cumulative effects of all the potential development sites within each assessment unit are analysed.

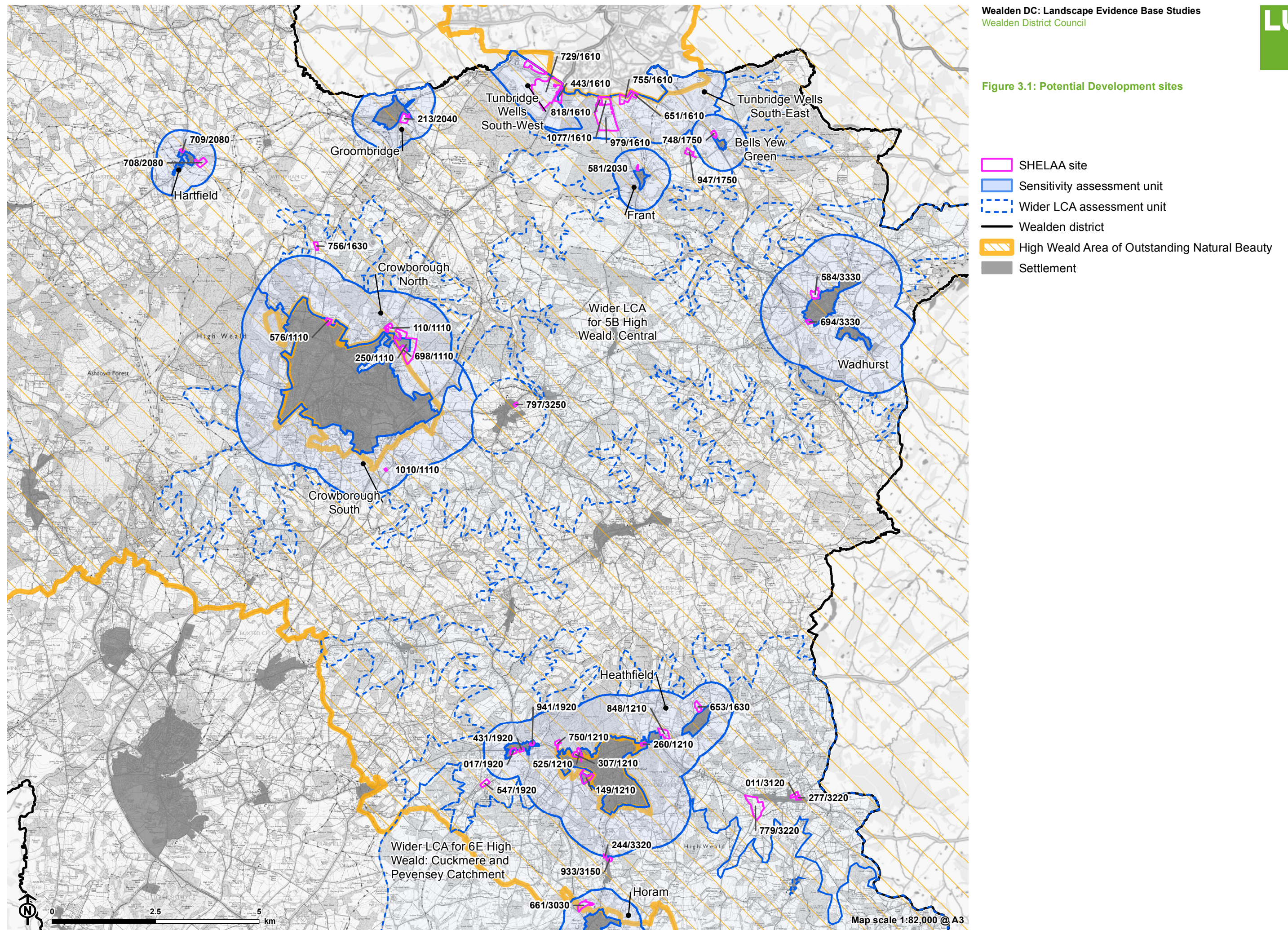
The potential development sites

3.24 This study assessed the landscape and visual sensitivity of 39 sites identified by Wealden District Council for potential development within Wealden District and the AONB. A number of individual sites are located either adjacent to other sites or are in close proximity to each other and have therefore been considered together. These potential development sites are mapped on **Figure 3.1**

3.25 The Council provided an indication of the quantum of potential development on each site for the purposes of testing through the assessment process. The numbers do not amount to the Council’s agreement or determination that the sites are suitable for housing or indeed the level of housing indicated. The suitability of sites for development will be determined through the local plan process taking into account all relevant information and local plan evidence.

3.26 Each potential development site was assessed in relation to the type of development (housing or employment) proposed within the Wealden Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). These sites vary in size and most are proposed to accommodate between 5-550 residential dwellings. Four of the sites are proposed for accommodating employment (i.e. small business parks / industrial estates).

Figure 3.1: Potential Development sites



Summary

3.27 The full assessment of each site or groups of sites are found in **Appendix A**. A summary of the overall sensitivity rating for each site is shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.2: Summary of sensitivity of SHELAA sites in the High Weald AONB

SHELAA number	Site name	Overall landscape sensitivity
LCA 5B Bells Yew Green assessment unit		
748/1750	Land between Court Lodge and Bells Yew Industrial Estate	Moderate
LCA 5B Crowborough North assessment unit		
110/1110	Land at Hodes, Steel Cross Road	Moderate
250/1110	Land at Steel Cross Farm Green Lane	Moderate
698/1110	Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane	Moderate
576/1110	Land to the rear of Cooks Corner Farm and to the north of London Road	Moderate
LCA 5B Crowborough South assessment unit		
1010/1110	Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road	Moderate
LCA 5B Frant assessment unit		
581/2030	The Glebe Land, Church Lane	Moderate
LCA 5B Heathfield assessment unit		
653/1630	Land adjacent Street End Lane, Broad Oak	Moderate-high
848/1210	Collins Field, Burwash Road	Moderate-high
260/1210	Land south of Burwash Road and east of Tower Street	Moderate
149/1210	Land south-west of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore	Moderate-high
525/1210	Land to the rear of Rothershaw, High Street	Moderate-high
307/1210	Land at Tilsmore Nurseries, off Nursery Way	Moderate-high
750/1210	Land at Snatchells Farm, A256	Moderate
941/1920	Land at Sunnyside, A267, Cross in Hand	Moderate
431/1920	Land to rear of Brenton House (north)	Moderate-high
017/1920	B2102 Cross in Hand	Moderate-high

SHELAA number	Site name	Overall landscape sensitivity
	Field to the east of Burnetts Farm, Firgrove Road, Cross in Hand	
LCA 5B Rotherfield assessment unit		
797/3250	Land at Station Road	High
LCA 5B Tunbridge Wells South East assessment unit		
443/1610	Strawberry Hill Farm, Eridge Road	Moderate
651/1610	Land at Bayham Road	Moderate
755/1610	Land off Bayham Road	Moderate
818/1610	Land at Whinlatter, St Mark's Road	Moderate-high
1077/1610	Land lying to the west side of Frant Road	Moderate-high
979/1610	Pinewood Farm, Frant Road	Moderate-high
LCA 5B Wadhurst assessment unit		
584/3330	Land adjacent to Jonas Drive	High
694/3330	Land at Windmill House, Windmill Lane	Moderate
Wider LCA 5B assessment unit		
756/1630	Land at Royal Mires Nursery, London Road, Lye Green	Moderate
947/1750	Land at Stubby Grove Business Park, Bells Yew Green Road	Moderate-high
527/1920	Land to the north-west side of Fir Grove Road Cross in Hand	Moderate-high
779/3220	Land adjoining Owlsbury, Chapel Cross Lane, Chapel Cross	High
011/3120	Land adjacent to Little Home Farm, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town	Moderate-high
277/3220	Scots Paddock, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town	Moderate-high
LCA 6A Groombridge assessment unit		
213/2040	Land south of Back Lane and to the west of railway line, Groombridge	Moderate-high
LCA 6A Hartfield assessment unit		
708/2080	Land at Castle Farm, Withyham Road, Hartfield	High

SHELAA number	Site name	Overall landscape sensitivity
709/2080	Land at Old Crown Farm, Edenbridge Road, Hartfield	Moderate-high
LCA 6E Horam assessment unit		
661/3030	Land at Linda House, Little London Road, Horam	Moderate-high
Wider LCA 6E assessment unit		
244/3320	Land adjacent to Funnell's Farm, Maynards Green Road, Maynards Green	Moderate
933/3150	Land at Oast Lodge, Maynards Green Road, Maynards Green	Moderate

Appendix A

Landscape and visual appraisals

A.1 The landscape and visual appraisals are presented as separate reports based on assessment units, as follows:

LCA 5B - Bells Yew Green assessment unit

- Land between Court Lodge and Bells Yew Industrial Estate (748/1750)

LCA 5B - Crowborough North assessment unit

- Land at Hodes, Steel Cross Road (110/1110)
- Land at Steel Cross Farm Green Lane (250/1110)
- Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane (698/1110)
- Land to the rear of Cooks Corner Farm and to the north of London Road (576/1110)

LCA 5B - Crowborough South assessment unit

- Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road (1010/1110)

LCA 5B - Frant assessment unit

- The Glebe Land, Church Lane (581/2030)

LCA 5B - Heathfield assessment unit

- Land adjacent Street End Lane, Broad Oak (653/1630)
- Collins Field, Burwash Road (848/1210)
- Land south of Burwash Road and east of Tower Street (260/1210)
- Land south-west of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore (149/1210)
- Land to the rear of Rothershaw, High Street (525/1210)
- Land at Tilsmore Nurseries, off Nursery Way (307/1210)
- Land at Snatchells Farm, A256 (750/1210)
- Land at Sunnyside, A267, Cross in Hand (941/1920)
- Land to rear of Brenton House (north) B2102 Cross in Hand (431/1920)

- Field to the east of Burnetts Farm, Firgrove Road, Cross in Hand (017/1920)

LCA 5B - Rotherfield assessment unit

- Land at Station Road (797/3250)

LCA 5B - Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit

- Strawberry Hill Farm, Eridge Road (443/1610)
- Land at Bayham Road (651/1610)
- Land off Bayham Road (755/1610)
- Land at Whinlatter, St Mark's Road (818/1610)
- Land lying to the west side of Frant Road (1077/1610)
- Pinewood Farm, Frant Road (979/1610)

LCA 5B - Wadhurst assessment unit

- Land adjacent to Jonas Drive (584/3330)
- Land at Windmill House, Windmill Lane (694/3330)

Wider LCA 5B assessment unit

- Land at Royal Mires Nursery, London Road, Lye Green (756/1630)
- Land at Stubby Frove Business Park, Bells Yew Green Road (947/1750)
- Land to the north-west side of Fir Grove Road Cross in Hand (527/1920)
- Land adjoining Owlsbury, Chapel Cross Lane, Chapel Cross (779/3220)
- Land adjacent to Little Home Farm, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town (011/3120)
- Scots Paddock, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town (277/3220)

LCA 6A - Groombridge assessment unit

- Land south of Back Lane and to the west of railway line (213/2040)

LCA 6A - Hartfield assessment unit

- Land at Castle Farm, Withyham Road (708/2080)
- Land at Old Crown Farm, Edenbridge Road (709/2080)

LCA 6E - Horam assessment unit

- Land at Linda House, Little London Road (661/3030)

Wider LCA 6E assessment unit

- Land adjacent to Funnell's Farm, Maynards Green Road, Maynards Green (244/3320)
- Land at Oast Lodge, Maynards Green Road, Maynards Green (933/3150)

Appendix B

Sources of information

Data	Data source
Background mapping	
■ Aerial Imagery	ESRI
■ OS MasterMap ■ OS 25k ■ OS 50k	Wealden District Council
Boundary	
■ Local Authority boundary	Ordnance Survey
Landscape Character Assessments	
■ Wealden Landscape Character Assessment (2022)	Wealden District Council / LUC
Cultural heritage	
■ Listed Buildings ■ Scheduled Monuments ■ Registered Parks and Gardens ■ Heritage at risk ■ WHS	Historic England
■ Conservation Areas ■ Conservation Area Appraisals (including draft Appraisals) ■ Locally listed buildings (including any interim date being prepared for the new Local Plan) ■ Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)	Wealden District Council
Natural Heritage	
■ Local Nature Reserves (LNR) ■ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ■ National Nature Reserves (NNR) ■ Ancient Woodland Index (AWI) ■ Priority habitats ■ Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Natural England

Data	Data source
■ Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) ■ Ramsar / Proposed Ramsar	
■ National Forestry Index (NFI)	Forestry Commission
■ Important Bird Areas (IBA)	RSPB
■ Regional Important Geological Sites (RIGS) / Local Geological Sites ■ Broad Habitat Types ■ Wildlife Verges ■ Green Infrastructure areas ■ Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	Wealden District Council
Landscape	
■ Light pollution ■ Tranquillity	CPRE
■ National Character Areas ■ High Weald AONB ■ South Downs National Park ■ Heritage Coasts	Natural England
■ Topography	Ordnance Survey
■ Flood zone 2/3 ■ Areas that benefit from flood defences ■ Flood storage areas (FSA) ■ Spatial flood defence (SFD) ■ Source protection zone (SPZ)	Environment Agency
■ Lakes	Ordnance Survey (meridian)
■ Flood Zones 3a and 3b ■ Land at risk from groundwater flooding ■ High Weald AONB components of character	Wealden District Council
■ High Weald AONB character component data, including: — Water systems data (watercourses, ponds, reservoirs and openwater) — Geology data (bedrock geology and sandstone outcrops) — Settlement data (historic settlement pattern and historic farmsteads) — Historic routeways data	High Weald AONB

Data	Data source
– Woodland data (ancient semi-natural woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland site) – Field and heath data (historic field boundaries, heathland, and wildflower grassland)	
Access and recreation	
■ National Cycle Network	Sustrans
■ National Trails ■ Common Land ■ Country Parks	Natural England
■ National Trails	National Trust
■ Green Space	Ordnance Survey
■ Accessible Natural Greenspace ■ Public rights of way/Promoted Routes ■ Brownfield land	Wealden District Council
Planning	
■ Settlement boundaries ■ Consented sites / committed sites / allocations ■ Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) sites	Wealden District Council
Agriculture	
■ Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)	Natural England
■ CORINE landcover 2018	EEA

Appendix C

Glossary

Table C.1: Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
Aesthetic	Concerning the visual appeal of a feature or landscape.
Agricultural Land Classification	The classification of agricultural land in England in Wales
Alluvium	Loose soil or sediments, which have been eroded, reshaped by water in some form, and redeposited.
Analysis	The process of breaking the landscape down, usually in descriptive terms, into its component parts in order to understand how it is made up.
Ancient trees and veteran trees	Individual trees or groups of trees with wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, park, and other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. irreplaceable habitats with some or all of the following characteristics: <i>Ancient trees</i> An ancient tree is exceptionally valuable. Attributes can include its great age, size, condition, biodiversity value (as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process), cultural and heritage value. <i>Veteran trees</i> A veteran tree may or may not be very old, but it has decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.
Ancient Woodland	Woodland which the evidence shows has had had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and has only been cleared for underwood or timber production. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
Approach	The stepwise process by which a landscape assessment is undertaken.

Term	Definition
Arable	Land used for growing crops.
Assessment	An umbrella term used to encompass all the many different ways of looking at, describing, analysing, and evaluating landscape.
Assart	A piece of land converted from forest to agricultural use. Most such piecemeal enclosures date to the medieval or early post-medieval period and are bounded by species rich hedgerows, an indicator of land assarted from woodland.
Assarting	The act of clearing forested lands for use in agriculture or other purposes (in English land law, it was illegal to assart any part of a Royal Forest).
BAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. The original lists of UK BAP priority habitats were created between 1995 and 1999 and were subsequently updated in 2007. See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155 for further information.
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems.
Brownfield site	A development site which is re-using previously developed land.
Built form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Characteristic	An element that contributes to local distinctiveness (e.g. narrow winding lanes, vernacular building style).
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types, each with a distinct, consistent, and recognisable character.
Combe	A small dry valley, without a permanent watercourse.
Condition	A judgement on the intactness and condition of the elements of the landscape.
Coppicing	The traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down to near the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots, which can subsequently be harvested.
Description	Verbal description of what a landscape looks like. This is usually carried out in a systematic manner, but it may also include personal reactions to the landscape.

Term	Definition
Designated landscape	Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents.
Dispersed settlement	A settlement where individual dwellings are scattered, in comparison to a linear or nucleated settlement.
Drift	The name for all material of glacial origin found anywhere on land or at sea, including sediment and large rocks.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
Element	A component part of the landscape (e.g. hedges, roads, woods).
Enclosure (field pattern)	The placing in private hands of land to which there were previously common rights; the merging of commonly held strip fields to form a block surrounded by hedges.
Equine development	A term used to describe areas on the fringes of settlements which are dominated by horse paddocks, stable buildings, and associated paraphernalia.
Feature	A prominent, eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop, church spire).
Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks, or if high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas.
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
Grassland	Land used for grazing. Grassland can be improved (by management practices) semi-improved (modified by management practices and have a range of species less diverse than unimproved grasslands), or unimproved (not treated with fertiliser, herbicide or intensively grazed and consequently species diversity is high).
Greenfield site	A development site, usually on the fringes of a settlement, which has not previously been used for built development.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation; a method of identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area that looks beyond individual heritage assets to help understand the whole landscape and townscape into repeating HLC Types.

Term	Definition
Hydrology	The science dealing with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth and its atmosphere.
Innings	From verb 'to inn' meaning to reclaim (often from wetlands or floodplains).
Intact	Not changed or diminished.
Land cover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.
Landscape	The term refers primarily to the visual appearance of the land, including its shape, form, and colours. However, the landscape is not a purely visual phenomenon; its character relies on a whole range of other dimensions, including geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture, and cultural associations.
Landscape character	A distinct pattern or combination of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape.
Landscape character area (LCA)	A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.
Landscape character type (LCT)	A generic term for landscape with a consistent, homogeneous character. Landscape character types may occur in different parts of the county, but wherever they occur, they will share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation, or human influences.
Landscape condition	Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It reflects the state of repair or intactness of individual features or elements (relating to that feature's primary condition or ultimate <i>desire</i>).
Landscape strategy	Principles to manage and direct landscape change for a particular landscape type or character area including identification of any particular management needs for specific elements.
Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for

Term	Definition
	example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.
Landscape and Visual Appraisal	An appraisal of the suitability of a site in landscape and visual terms to accommodate development, as well as to determine any site specific constraints and design considerations.
Linear settlement	A settlement that is built along a road, in comparison to a nuclear or dispersed settlement.
Listed Building	A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest.
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities.
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
Martello towers	Small defensive forts that were built across the British Empire during the 19th century.
Natural character	Character as a result of natural or semi-natural features such as woodland, grassland, hedgerows etc.
National Character Areas (NCAs)	National Character Areas are defined within the <i>National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013)</i> . NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNR	National Nature Reserve
Nucleated settlement	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement.
Open-field system	An area of arable land with common rights after harvest or while fallow. The fields date from the Medieval period and are usually without internal divisions (hedges, walls, or fences).
OS	Ordnance Survey
Parliamentary fields / enclosure	Fields formed by a legal process of enclosure (or inclosure), typically during the 18 th and 19 th centuries – by passing laws causing or forcing enclosure to produce fields for use by the owner (in place of common land for communal use).

Term	Definition
Pastoral	Land used for keeping or grazing sheep or cattle.
Pollarding	A traditional woodland management practice in which the branches of a tree are cut back every few years to encourage new long, straight shoots for harvesting. Differs from <i>coppicing</i> because the cuts are made at sufficient distance from the ground to prevent them from being eaten by animals.
Potential development sites	Potential growth areas that have been submitted for assessment in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
PRoW	Public right of way
Ramsar	Wetlands of international importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
RPG	Registered Park and Garden; included in Historic England's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England'.
Remediation	Process by which a contaminated or damaged site is repaired and brought back into more general use, or for a specific purpose (e.g. wildlife conservation).
Remnant	A part or quantity left after the greater part has been used, removed, or destroyed.
Riparian habitat	Riverbank habitat.
RNR	Roadside Nature Reserve
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (EC Directive 92/43/EEC Habitats Directive)
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Green Space
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change.
Semi-natural vegetation	Any type of natural vegetation which has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly.
Sense of place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.
Sensitive	The response to change or influence.
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.

Term	Definition
SPA	Special Protection Area (EC Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface.
Transhumance	The seasonal movement of people and animals between grazing grounds, typically lowlands in the winter and highlands in the summer.
Valued landscape attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape.
Vernacular	Buildings constructed in the local style, from local materials. Concerned with ordinary rather than monumental buildings.
Visual amenity	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.