

# East Hampshire District

## Landscape Character Assessment

### Final Report



by Land Use Consultants

on behalf of East Hampshire District Council

July 2006

**EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER  
ASSESSMENT**

**Prepared for East Hampshire  
District Council and Hampshire  
County Council  
by  
Land Use Consultants**

**July 2006**

43 Chalton Street  
London NW1 1JD  
Tel: 020 7383 5784  
Fax: 020 7383 4798  
[luc@london.landuse.co.uk](mailto:luc@london.landuse.co.uk)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Land Use Consultants (LUC) prepared this report on behalf of East Hampshire District Council and Hampshire County Council. The study was undertaken in conjunction with a landscape character assessment of the South Downs. LUC's team consisted of Kate Ahern, Rebecca Knight, Kate Milner, Holly Robinson, Robert Deane, Robert Hutchinson (authors) and Diana Graham (GIS and graphics). Specialist expertise on the historic environment was provided by Dominic Perring and Richard James of Archaeology South East. The study also draws on information provided by local stakeholders through a participatory workshop held at the draft stage of the report.

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# CONTENTS

<b>PART 1: Context</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Assessment Methodology.....	3
3. Physical Influences .....	7
4. Human Influences and the Historic Environment.....	11
5. Biodiversity .....	23
<b>PART 2: The Character of the East Hampshire Landscape</b> .....	<b>29</b>
6. The Character of the East Hampshire Landscape .....	31
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 1: WOODED ESTATE DOWNLAND</b> .....	<b>35</b>
1A: Queen Elizabeth Forest.....	37
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 2: CLAY PLATEAU</b> .....	<b>43</b>
2A: Froxfield Clay Plateau .....	45
2B: Four Marks Clay Plateau .....	53
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 3: DOWNLAND MOSAIC</b> .....	<b>61</b>
3A: Clanfield Downland Mosaic.....	63
3B: Bereleigh Downland Mosaic.....	71
3C: Newton Valence Downland Mosaic.....	77
3D: Lasham Downland Mosaic.....	83
3E: Ropley Downland Mosaic.....	89
3F: Horndean – Clanfield Edge.....	93
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 4: CHALK VALLEY SYSTEMS</b> .....	<b>97</b>
4A: Meon Valley .....	99
4B: Northern Wey Valley .....	105
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 5: MAJOR SCARPS</b> .....	<b>111</b>

<b>5A: Buriton Scarp .....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>5B: Meon Valley Scarp.....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>5C: Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp .....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 6: GREENSAND TERRACE .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>6A: Selborne Greensand Terrace .....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>6B: Ramsdean to Buriton Greensand Terrace.....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>6C: Worldham Greensand Terrace .....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 7: MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>7A: Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland.....</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>7B: Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland .....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>7C: Alice Holt.....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 8: WEALDEN FARMLAND AND HEATH MOSAIC .....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>8A: Rother Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic.....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>8B: Woolmer Forest/Weaver’s Down .....</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>8C: Whitehill to Liphook Farmland and Heath Mosaic.....</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 9: GREENSAND HILLS .....</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>9A: Hill Brow Ridge .....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>9B: Ludshott and Bramshott Commons .....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE 10: WOODED CLAYLANDS.....</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>10A: Havant Thicket and Southleigh Forest.....</b>	<b>201</b>

## TABLES

Table 5.1: Summary of sites with nature conservation designation within the East Hampshire District

Table 5.2: Summary area (ha) and % cover of some potential key habitats within the East Hampshire District

Table 6.1: The East Hampshire Landscape Classification

## FIGURES

Figure 1.1: East Hampshire and the Proposed South Downs National Park

Figure 2.1: South Downs Classification and the East Hampshire Boundary

Figure 2.2: Countryside Character Areas

Figure 3.1: Simplified Bedrock Geology

Figure 3.2: Topography

Figure 3.3: Drift Geology

Figure 3.4: Agricultural Land Classification

Figure 4.1: Historic Landscape Classification

Figure 4.2: Historic Landscape Designations

Figure 5.1: Natural Areas

Figure 5.2: Statutory Nature Conservation Designations

Figure 5.3: Non - Statutory Nature Conservation Designations

Figure 5.4: Distribution of Select Phase I Habitats

Figure 6.1: East Hampshire Classification

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Relationship to the South Downs Assessment

Appendix 2: Field Survey Sheet

Appendix 3: The Stakeholder Workshop

Appendix 4: References

Appendix 5: Glossary

# I. INTRODUCTION

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- I.1. East Hampshire District lies on the eastern boundary of Hampshire, bordering Hart, Basingstoke and Deane, Winchester and Havant Districts, and West Sussex and Surrey Counties. It is characterised by a wide diversity and contrast within its landscape with rolling chalk downs, often capped with clay to create a wooded character, and steep chalk slopes contrasting strongly with the Western Weald heaths and the wooded greensand escarpments. It is a relatively lightly populated area with the main market towns of Petersfield and Alton and a scattering of villages and hamlets of varying character.
- I.2. The central part of the District is designated as part of the East Hampshire AONB, and falls within the proposed South Downs National Park. The total area covered by East Hampshire District is 514.44 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 53% lies within the proposed South Downs National Park (refer to **Figure I.1**). This designation reflects the exceptional quality of the landscape.

## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- I.3. The purpose of this study is to produce a comprehensive, fully integrated assessment of all aspects of the landscape character of East Hampshire District. The report and associated GIS database provides a full LCA for East Hampshire which integrates with the existing detailed assessment of the South Down National Park<sup>1</sup>. This project develops a new updated assessment building on wide range of existing information and combining this with new work by specialists in landscape, archaeology and biodiversity to develop a fully integrated character assessment. The results of the study are presented as a report and GIS database.
- I.4. It aims to develop an understanding of the landscape character of East Hampshire, which can be used to influence and inform policy and planning management actions from the outset.

## Structure of the Report

- I.5. The structure of this report is as follows:

### Part 1: Context

The first section of the report sets out the context for the study, including a method statement. This is followed by an overview of the physical and human influences, which together have created the landscape of East Hampshire that is cherished and valued today.

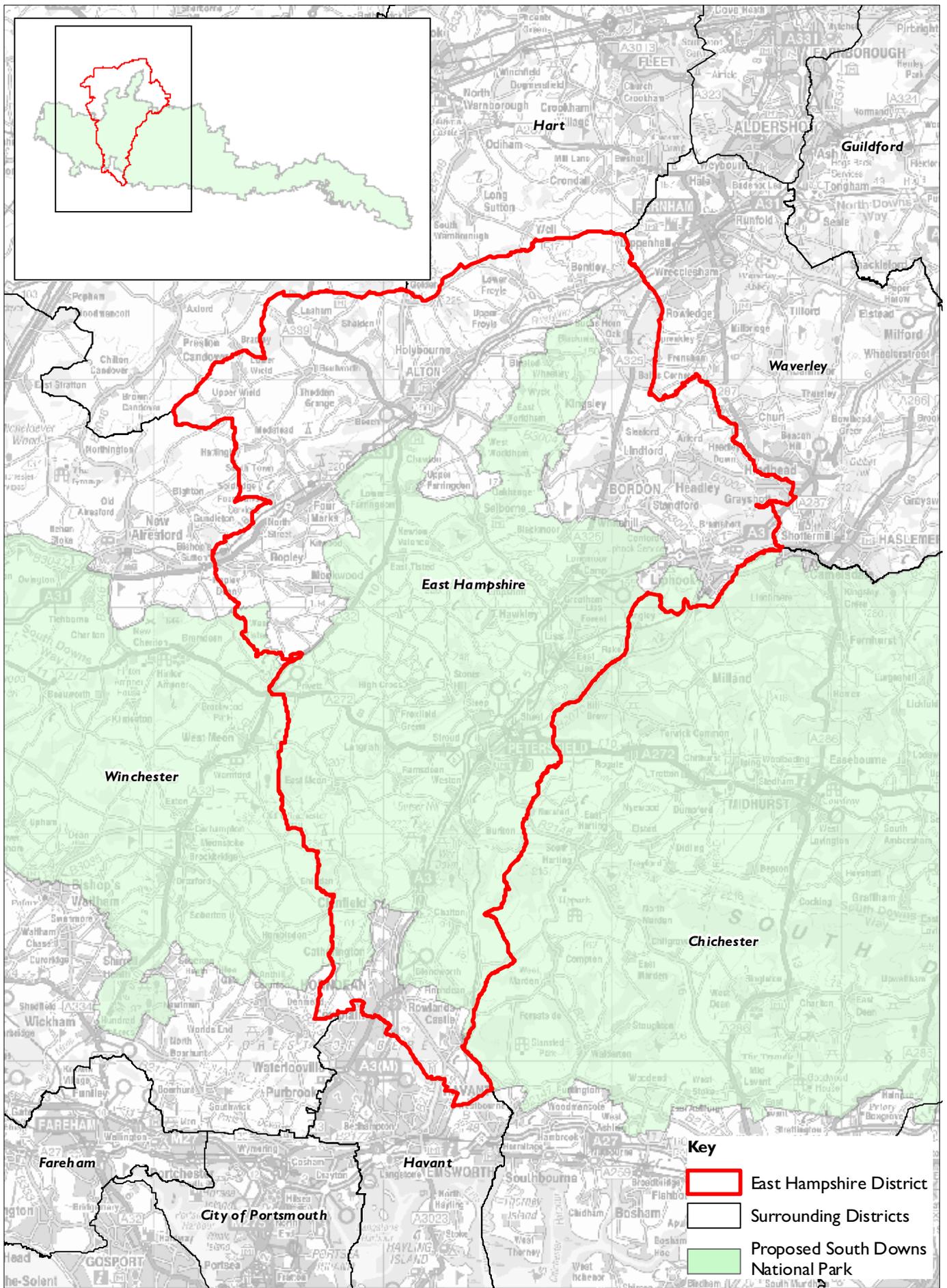
### Part 2: The Character of East Hampshire

The main part of the report comprises the detailed landscape character assessment of East Hampshire District. The landscape classification defines 10 generic landscape

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<sup>1</sup> South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment Technical Report prepared for the South Downs Joint Committee. LUC 2005.

types, which are sub-divided into 26 individual geographic character areas. A detailed description and evaluation is presented for each of the character areas.



**Figure I.1: East Hampshire and the Proposed South Downs National Park**

Source: Ordnance Survey, Countryside Agency

0 1 2 Km



## 2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

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- 2.1. The method for undertaking the landscape character assessment follows the current accepted method promoted by the Countryside Agency as set out in the document *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002)*.
- 2.2. The District-wide assessment has been prepared within the framework of the Countryside Agency and English Nature's Countryside Character Initiative as shown on the *Character of England Map*. It is also undertaken with the context and framework of the Hampshire county-wide LCA and the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment.
- 2.3. The process for undertaking the study involved five main stages, described below, namely:
  - Data Collation
  - Characterisation
  - Field survey
  - Evaluation
  - Consultation
- 2.4. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE SOUTH DOWNS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 2.5. The South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants 2005) provided a starting point for the East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment. 53% of East Hampshire District lies within the proposed South Downs National Park and therefore had already been assessed (refer to **Figure 2.1**). The East Hampshire assessment builds upon the South Downs work and assesses in detail the character of the landscape which lies outside the proposed National Park. The result is a seamless assessment of the character of East Hampshire District.
- 2.6. **Appendix I** shows the relationship between the South Downs and East Hampshire Classification. It should be noted that some of the South Downs character areas that lie within East Hampshire incorporate a much large area outside the boundary of the district. In these cases the South Downs character area descriptions/evaluations have been refocused to cover only the landscape which lies within East Hampshire district.

### DATA COLLATION

- 2.7. **Baseline Data:** This stage involved the collation and mapping of a wide range of existing information on the characteristics of East Hampshire from a variety of sources including baseline maps of geology, topography, soils and hydrology;

schedules of designated and protected areas and features; and a review of technical literature. It also included collation of information relating to the 'perceptual' characteristics of the landscape, such as literary references or as a source of artistic inspiration.

- 2.8. **National Context:** The context provided by the framework of the four joint Character Areas and boundaries mapped to place the county in the context of the national hierarchy. **Figure 2.2** indicates the National Character Area Context (Countryside Character Areas).
- 2.9. **South Downs Context:** This assessment has been integrated with the assessment for the South Downs to provide an assessment for the whole of East Hampshire District. The South Downs study sets out a clear hierarchy of assessment and notes the relationship to the Hampshire County assessment.

## CHARACTERISATION

- 2.10. The process of characterisation draws together all the information outlined above, to develop a draft classification of the landscape character of East Hampshire outside and within the Proposed South Downs National Park. The approach follows best practice as promoted by the Countryside Agency in the *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* (2002) in maintaining a distinction between landscape types and character areas, and developing a hierarchical approach as follows:
  - **Landscape Types** - which are generic and share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences, e.g. 'Mixed Farmland and Woodland' or 'Greensand Hills'
  - **Character Areas** - which are single and unique, discrete geographical areas of the landscape type, e.g. 'Alice Holt Forest' or 'Ludshott and Bramshott Commons'.
- 2.11. For the purposes of this District-wide assessment emphasis has been placed upon the definition and subdivision of the landscape at a scale of 1:25 000 and at the Landscape Character Area scale i.e. the identification of particular geographical areas of distinctive landscape.
- 2.12. The classification was informed by specialist studies, including an outline appraisal of the historic character of the landscape undertaken by South East Archaeology, the full Hampshire Historic Landscape Characterisation and tailored ecological studies. The emphasis has been on the integration of this information within the landscape character assessment.

## SURVEY

- 2.13. A field survey was undertaken to appraise the draft characterisation. This specifically focussed on:
  - verification and fine-tuning of the classification of the landscape character areas (and types) identified;

**Figure 2.1: South Downs Classification and the East Hampshire Boundary**

**Key**

 East Hampshire District

**Landscape Types**

 A: Open Downland

 B: Wooded Estate Downland

 C: Clay Plateau

 D: Downland Mosaic

 E: Chalk Valley Systems

 F: Major River Floodplains

 G: Major Valley Sides

 H: Major Scarps

 I: Scarp Footslopes

 J: Greensand Terrace

 K: Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale

 L: Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic

 M: Sandy Arable Farmland

 N: Greensand Hills

 O: Low Weald

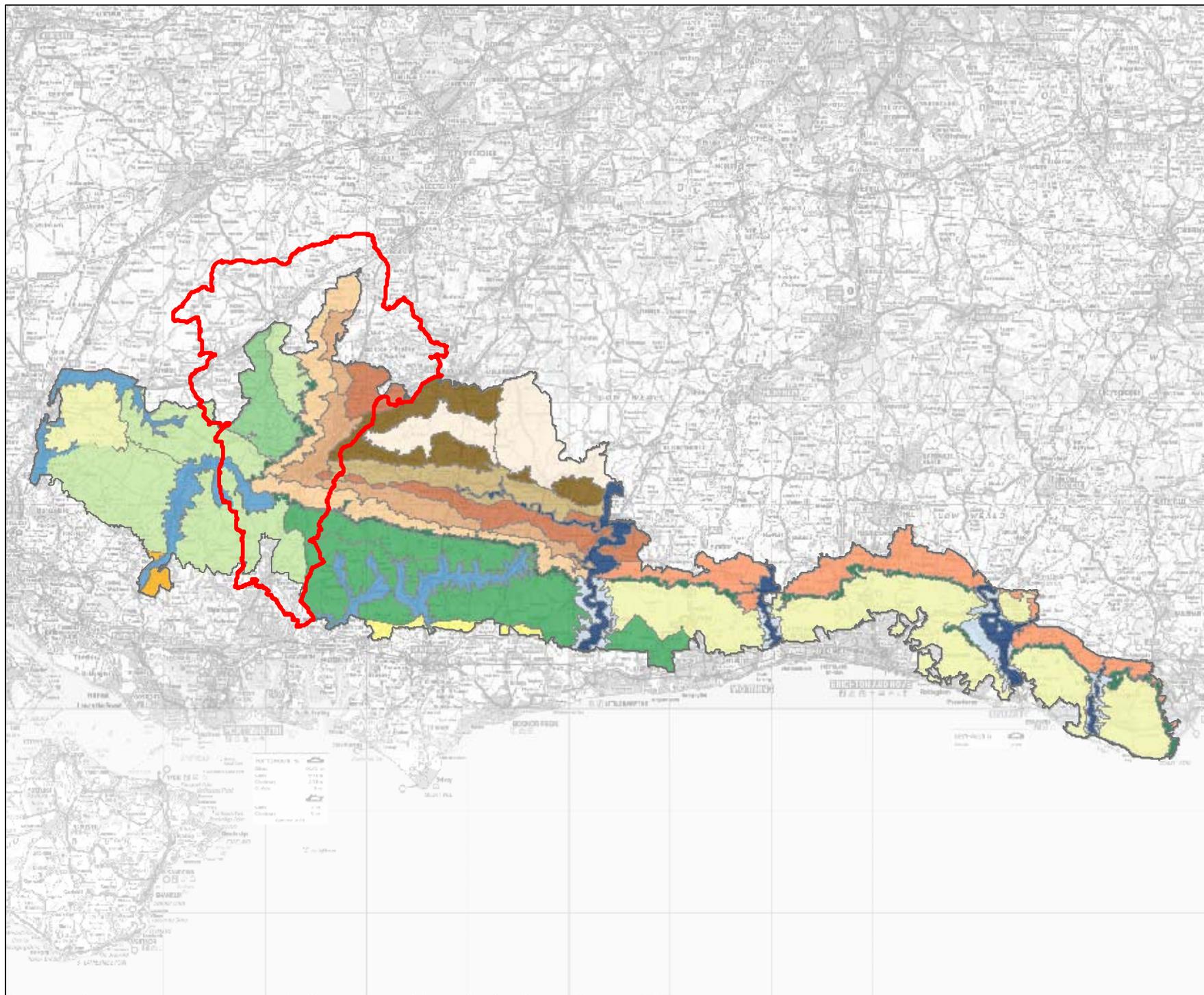
 P: Wooded Claylands

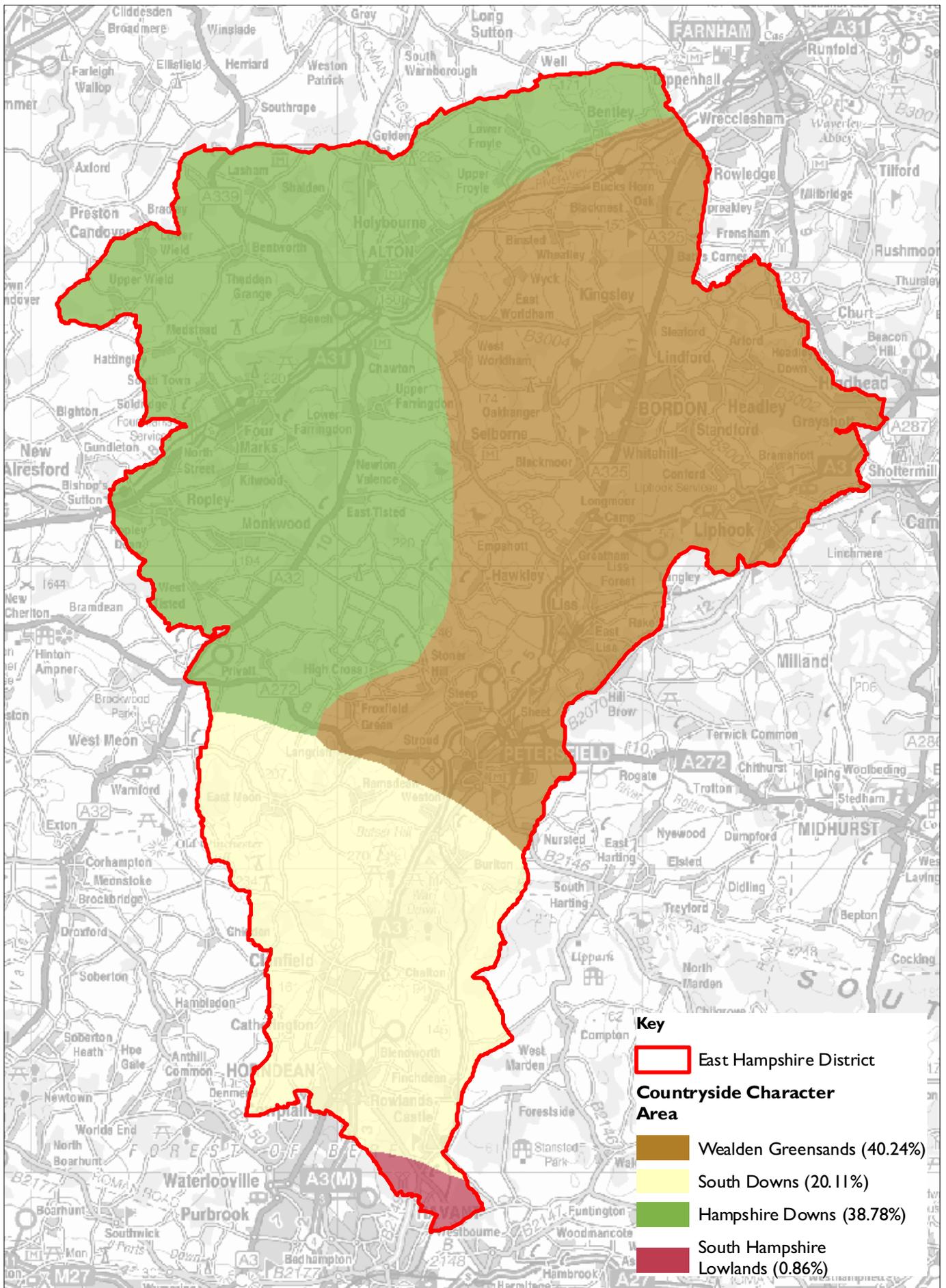
 Q: Upper Coastal Plain

 R: Shoreline

Source: Ordnance Survey, LUC

0 5 10 km





**Figure 2.2: Countryside Character Areas**

Source: Ordnance Survey, Countryside Agency

0 1 Km



- making refinements to landscape character area (and type) boundaries and names;
  - recording landscape character;
  - assessing condition, key trends and sensitivities to inform the landscape strategy and guidelines.
- 2.14. For those areas already assessed within the South Downs the field survey verified the appropriateness of the existing description and classification at the district level and make adjustments as necessary.
- 2.15. A systematic and rigorous approach was adopted for the survey, with information recorded on 1:25,000 scale maps and a Field Survey Sheet (see **Appendix 2**). A comprehensive photo record was also made. The final classification encompasses 10 landscape types, with a total of 26 character area subdivisions (**Figure 6.1**).

## NOTES ON THE CHARACTERISATION

- 2.16. **A note on boundary lines:** The precision of boundaries drawn around landscape character areas and types varies with the scale and level of detail of the assessment. This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which means that it is suitable for use at this scale.
- 2.17. In reality landscape character rarely changes abruptly and the boundaries indicated in the East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment therefore sometimes represent zones of transition in character relating to changes in topography, geology soils, cultural patterns, land use etc. rather than marked changes on the ground. In practice boundaries of this nature have frequently been drawn to follow physical or mappable features such as roads, lanes or field boundaries which provide 'best fit'.
- 2.18. **A note on character areas:** The Character Areas share generic characteristics with other areas of the same Landscape Type but have a particular 'sense of place'. Therefore Character Areas defined and described in this report have distinct patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern etc. which contribute to their particular character. However, it is important to be aware that Character Areas are not homogeneous and that there is variation within them.
- 2.19. **A note on built areas:** This is an assessment of the rural landscape. The land within the development limits of villages and settlements was not studied in detail as part of the LCA. The smaller villages have been considered and form part of the description on landscape character, with a particular emphasis on understanding settlement pattern and the relationship of settlements to their landscape setting. However, no specific townscape or urban character assessments were undertaken of the more built-up areas such as Alton, Petersfield, Bordon and Four Marks and where these occur within the boundaries of Character Areas it is the undeveloped area surrounding the settlement to which the description refers.

## METHOD FOR THE EVALUATION

### **Introduction**

- 2.20. The Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland states '*The use of Landscape Character Assessment in making judgements is a fast-moving scene amongst practitioners*'. The approach for the evaluation undertaken as part of the East Hampshire LCA aims to follow current best practice and is set out below.
- 2.21. The purpose of the East Hampshire Landscape Character Evaluation is to make judgements on the landscape highlighting key sensitivities and identifying future management needs.

**Key Sensitivities:** These are the key positive attributes that, if lost or changed, would change the character of the landscape. Where appropriate reference is made to key vulnerabilities – noting the main forces for change that are likely to affect sensitive attributes.

**Landscape Strategy:** Drawing on the information on landscape character and an understanding of the key sensitivities an overall strategy for the landscape is developed. Within the high quality landscape of East Hampshire, the main strategy is for **conservation** of existing character.

**Landscape Guidelines:** For each character area a set of guidelines has been developed, covering landscape management considerations and development considerations. The guidelines indicate the actions required, with reference to the overall landscape strategy in order to ensure that distinctive character is maintained.

## CONSULTATION

- 2.22. A stakeholder workshop was held in February 2006 with an invited audience of c.30 participants including representatives of local interest groups (wildlife groups, local history, local societies etc) plus parish and district councillors. The objectives of the workshop were to:
- explain the process and purpose of Landscape Character Assessment and relevance to East Hampshire;
  - validate the characterisation map – boundaries, names, key characteristics and perceptual experience;
  - understand what people value as important/special about the East Hampshire District and the reasons why.
- 2.23. The views and comments of participants were recorded and integrated into the relevant character area descriptions. A summary of the workshop is provided at **Appendix 3**.

## 3. PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

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### GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1. The East Hampshire District is of particular geological interest as it lies at the boundary of two units of geological structure, with the Hampshire Basin to the west and the Weald to the east. The geological range is confined to sedimentary rocks of the Cretaceous period, with the majority of the area being underlain by Upper, Middle and Lower Chalk of the Hampshire Basin. The outcrop limit of the chalk is represented by a steep escarpment which cuts north-south across the landscape. To the east of the scarp is a sequence of progressively older rocks of Upper and Lower Cretaceous ages. These comprise the Upper Greensand, followed by Gault Clay and then the Lower Greensand Series. The solid geology is shown in **Figure 3.1**. The different rock formations are considered in chronological order below. The description includes the development of each rock formation, its composition, and its influence on the topography and character of the East Hampshire District. A topographical map is presented in **Figure 3.2**.

#### **Cretaceous Rocks**

##### ***Lower Greensand Deposits***

- 3.2. Towards the end of the Weald Clay deposition, the salinity of the Weald Lake increased and the lake became a shallow marine bay in which sands were deposited. The sandy rocks also contain chert, ironstone and calcareous deposits. Three lithological divisions of Lower Greensand are exposed within the National Park - the Hythe Beds (greenish grey sandstone with beds of chert located to the north-east of Petersfield), Sandgate and Bargate Beds (yellow sandstones around Pulborough and Midhurst) and the Folkestone Beds (quartzose sands with seams of pebbles and clay found along the Rother Valley and at Woolmer Forest).
- 3.3. The Hythe Beds are particularly thick along their northern and western limits where they produce a prominent ridge of hills that enclose the Wealden Basin. These resistant cherts and sandy limestones form the high hills and steep escarpments to the north-east of Petersfield. The Sandgate, Bargate and Folkestone Beds are composed of less resistant lithologies and create lower landforms. The Sandgate Beds form rolling relief with well-drained, easily eroded soils which are almost exclusively used for arable farmland. The Folkestone Beds form a slightly elevated, flat-topped plateau which is associated with poor soils and extensive tracts of heathland. The sands are of economic value and these areas are frequently pitted with quarries.

##### ***Gault Formation***

- 3.4. The Gault was probably deposited in quiet water of the shallow seas and is composed of soft mudstones and silty mudstones which have weathered to yellow and brown clays. These rocks are exposed at the foot of the Chalk where they create a smooth 'vale' like landform, for example around West Liss. The clays of the Gault formation have been exploited for brick making.

### **Upper Greensand Formation**

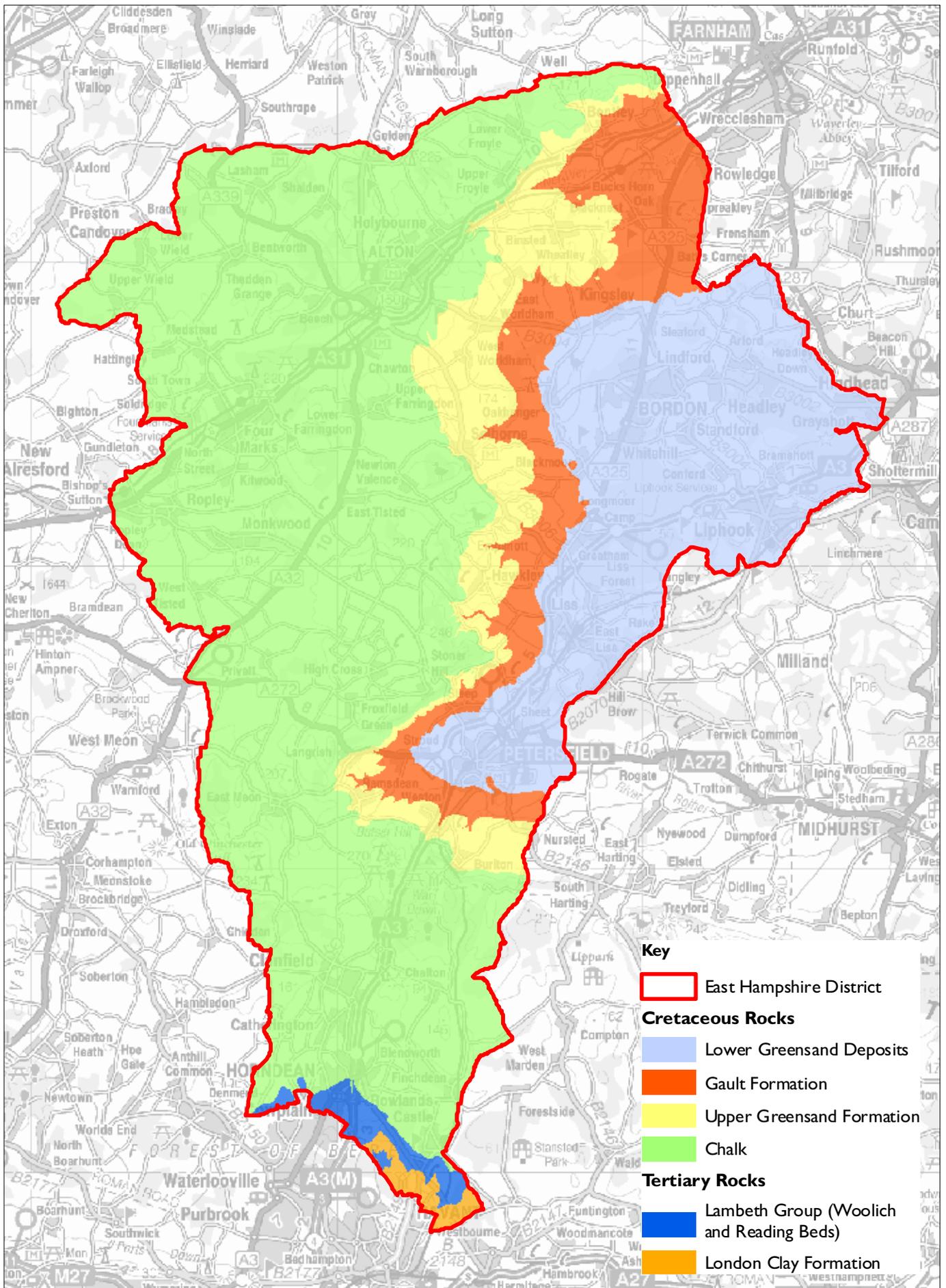
- 3.5. The Upper Greensand formation was deposited near the shorelines of the shallow Wealden sea during the Cretaceous period over 100 million years ago. The rock is composed of a series of sandy beds with small amounts of clay and silt which is more resistant to erosion than the neighbouring Gault. The Upper Greensand is thickest at the western end of the Weald, for example around Selborne, where it is exposed as a 'shelf' or 'terrace' at the foot of the chalk. Outcrops of solid rock are revealed in the sunken roads and lanes which cross the terrace.

### **Chalk**

- 3.6. The East Hampshire District is dominated by Chalk. The Chalk beds were laid down during the latter part of the Cretaceous period, some 100 million years ago, as a white calcareous mud when much of southern Britain lay under water. The Chalk is a soft, white limestone of organic origin containing microscopic calcareous bodies. Embedded within the Chalk are hard flints which are formed from silica. These flints remain long after the softer chalk has eroded and have been exploited by man as tools and as a building material, with the flint villages, walls and churches being one of the most distinctive features of the South Downs.
- 3.7. The Chalk formation is divided into Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk. The Upper Chalk gives rise to the extensive areas of gently undulating downland with Middle and Lower Chalk cropping out in the scarp slopes and in the bottoms of valleys.
- 3.8. The landform of the East Hampshire District is directly related to variations in the relative erosional resistance of the underlying rocks. The striking Chalk escarpment is formed by erosion, partly as a result of the water emitting from springs at the base of the Chalk. The comparatively hard chalk is underlain by Gault clay. Sub-aerial denudation cut down into the soft clay and gradually undermines the harder chalk and producing a steeply sloping escarpment. The escarpments are very consistent in their form due to the lithology of the chalk, and the variations in landform are due largely to tectonic causes.
- 3.9. The escarpments and dipslopes of the Chalk are characterised by coombes which are related to local joints in the chalk and were formed by spring sapping and stream erosion probably during and immediately after glaciation when the Chalk was impermeable as a result of permafrost. Spring action and intermittent 'bournes' or 'lavants' after heavy rain have continued to cause modifications in structure.

### **Geomorphological Processes**

- 3.10. The landscape and topography was substantially altered by the process of folding and faulting. East west folds form anticlines such as the Winchester Anticline which extends from Winchester almost to Petersfield, All the folds face northwards and this produces the distinctive north facing scarps that characterise the area. The area has also been acted on by hydrological processes (see below) that have shaped the landscape resulting in the distinctive wide U shaped valleys and hidden dry valleys, which are so characteristic of the chalk landscape and the narrow gorges and ravines that typify the Greensand.

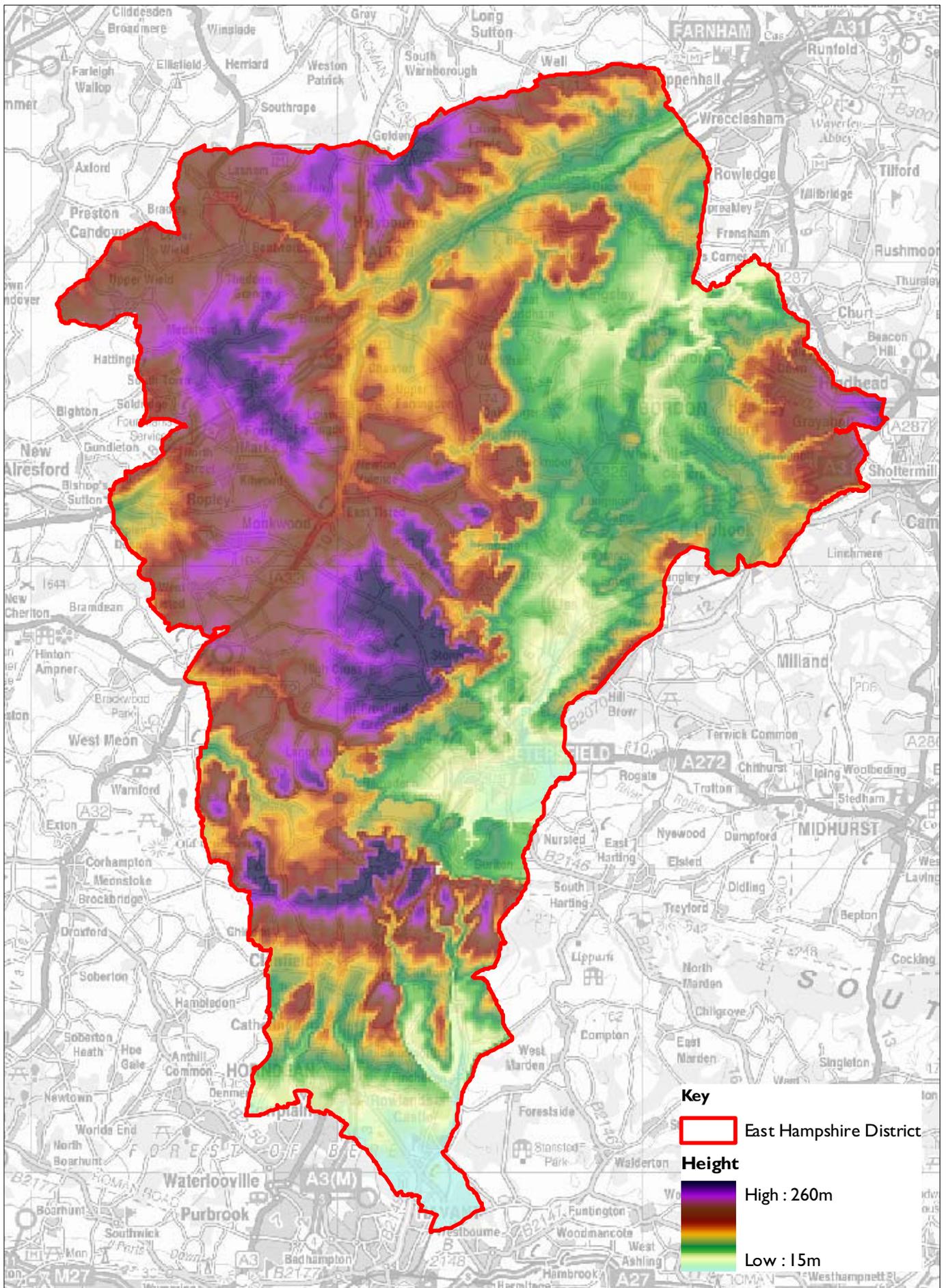


**Figure 3.1: Simplified Bedrock Geology**

Source: BGS data supplied by East Hampshire District Council

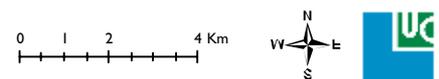
0 1 2 Km





**Figure 3.2: Topography**

Source: Hampshire County Council



## **Drift Geology**

- 3.11. The principal types of drift deposits in the study area are illustrated in **Figure 3.3** and summarised below.

### ***Clay-with-flints***

- 3.12. Clay-with-flints are accumulations of clay and embedded flints that reach up to 10m depth on the surface of the Chalk. This deposit is found on the higher elevations. The presence of clay with flint capping creates considerable variation in the chalk landscape with heavier soils frequently supporting areas of woodland, following a distinctive pattern on ridges and summits.

### ***River Terrace Deposits and Dry Valley Deposits***

- 3.13. Three major glaciations are recognised in Britain which were separated by periods of interglacial warming. During the interglacial periods, sea level rose and the valleys were flooded. When glaciation caused the sea level to fall again, material transported by the water, was deposited on the valley sides. The remnant deposits of these glacial/interglacial fluctuations are still found in terraces along the river valley. River terrace deposits line the valley sides up to 15m from the present valley floors. These are particularly noticeable along the River Rother.
- 3.14. Dry valley deposits are composed of sand and silt, and can be found along the bottom of valleys which have in the past been water filled. When water flowed through the valley, the sand and gravel was transported and deposited along the river's course. Since more recent drops in water levels, the valleys now run dry except for during periods of heavy rainfall. Dry valley deposits are typically found in the valley bottoms of the extensive dry valleys and coombes that characterise the dip slope of the chalk downland.

### ***Alluvium, Raised Marine Deposits and Peat***

- 3.15. Alluvium is the modern deposit of rivers, spread by the river during flooding, and occupies the low-lying marshy ground alongside rivers. Raised marine deposits are similar to river alluvium, but are spread by the sea rather than river. Raised marine deposits are seen along the valley sides of the River Wey.

### ***Head***

- 3.16. Head is weathered, broken-up material that has moved downhill by solifluction. It may also refer to downwash deposits that are still forming and is found on plateaux, hill slopes, and valley bottoms, for example in the coombes and valleys within the Chalk, Greensand and Low Weald.

## **HYDROLOGY**

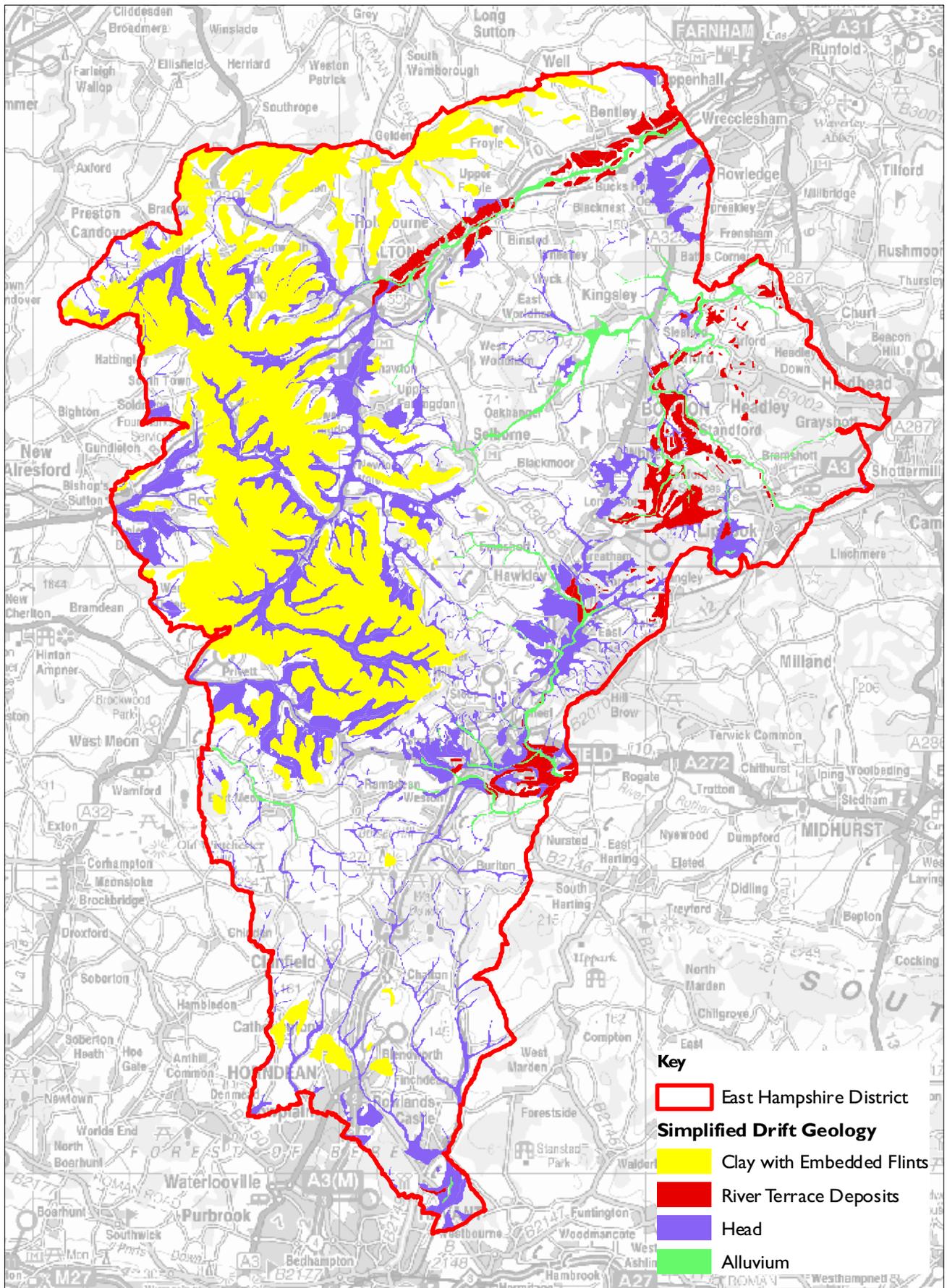
- 3.17. Three river valleys have an influence on the landform of the East Hampshire District. These are the River Itchen, River Meon and River Wey. Due to the water level in the chalk falling, the source of the River Itchen is now outside of the East Hampshire District, but its past extent has influenced the shape of the landform and a dry valley is visible. In its upper reaches the Meon follows an east-west course, with the

significant change in course alignment the result of headward erosion of the river exploiting the weakness of the meon anticline.

- 3.18. Coombes are features of the scarp slope which were formed by spring sapping and stream erosion probably during and immediately after glaciation when the Chalk was impermeable as a result of permafrost.
- 3.19. Folding, faulting, jointing and lithological variations have all played a part in governing the drainage pattern. The chalk valleys of the River Itchen and Meon all follow structural folds in the chalk.

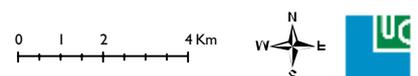
## **SOILS AND AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITY**

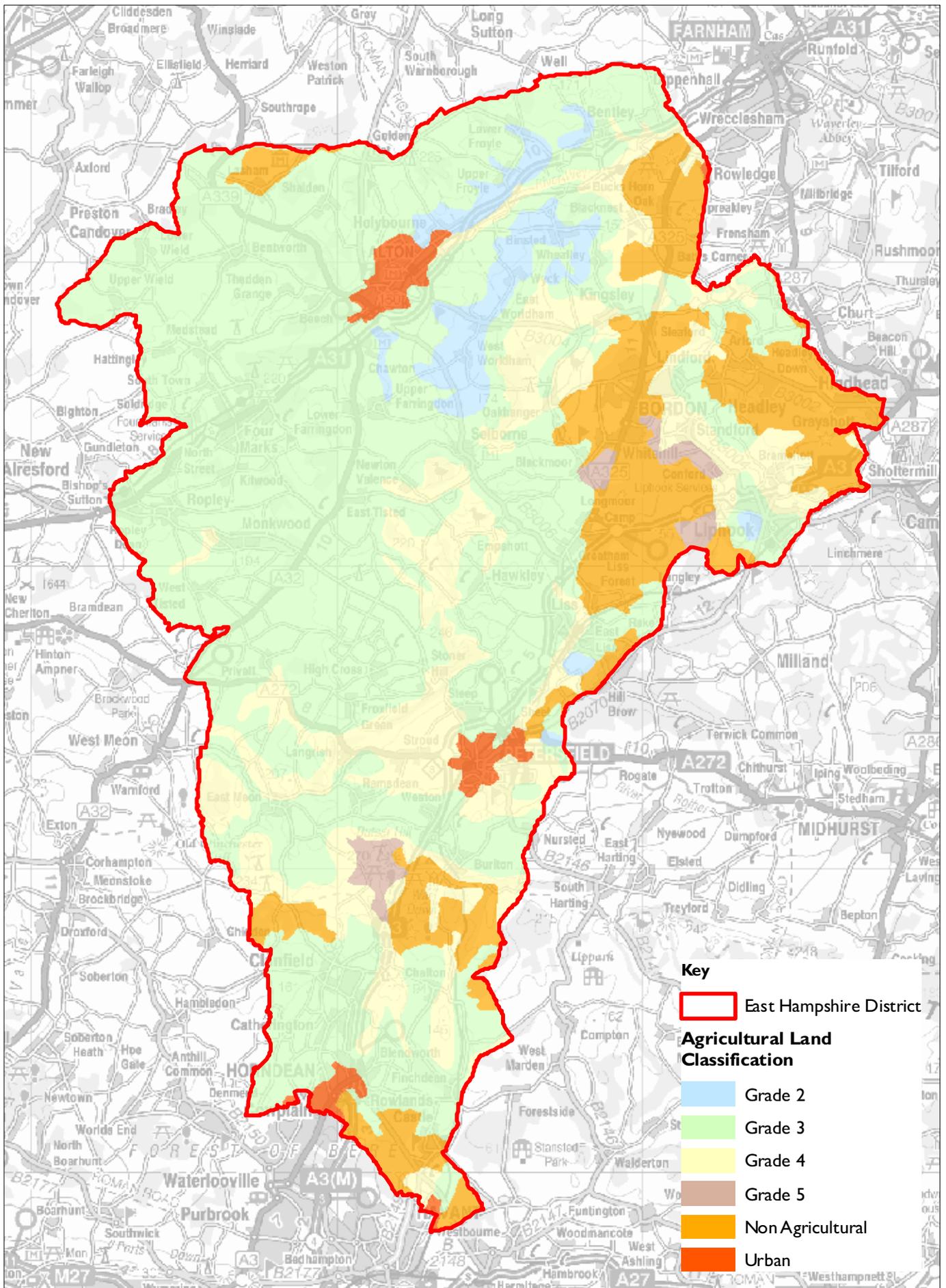
- 3.20. **Figure 3.4** illustrates the distribution of agricultural land quality throughout the study area. This indicates that, in common with most of lowland England and the South East Region, the majority of the area is Grade 3 (“good to moderate quality agricultural land” which is capable of growing a range of arable crops with relatively few restrictions). There are few areas of Grade 2 land (“very good quality agricultural land”) which occur in river valleys (e.g. River Wey) where there is a depth of alluvial soil. Grade 4 land is found mostly on the steeper land with thin chalk soils or heavy clay with flints.
- 3.21. The soil types represent the variability of the underlying solid and drift geology. The cretaceous chalk underlying the areas of downland developed mainly during the latter part of the Ice Age when overlying younger Tertiary sediments were stripped off to reveal the chalk surface. The resultant soils are calcareous, Brown and Grey Rendzinas. Due to the clay with flint drift geology, there are also significant blocks of clayey, typical paleo-argylic brown earths. Non alluvial clayey soils (Brown calcareous earths and Typical argylic brown earths) are found to the eastern Weald district.



**Figure 3.3: Drift Geology**

Source: BGS data supplied by East Hampshire District Council





**Figure 3.4: Agricultural Land Classification**

Source: DEFRA, Ordnance Survey

0 1 2 4 Km



## 4. HUMAN INFLUENCES AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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- 4.1. The landscape of East Hampshire District as we see it today is the product of an interaction between natural and human processes. The landscape bears the imprint of successive periods of human inhabitation and land use.
- 4.2. This chapter provides a narrative overview of the human history of East Hampshire District, examining the main trends that can be recognised in the development of the modern landscape from earliest prehistory up to the present day, and a broad overview of historical settlement patterns.

### OVERVIEW

#### Palaeolithic (c.500,000BC-c.10,000BC)

- 4.3. The Palaeolithic period was the earliest and longest phase of human history. A scatter of isolated finds of handaxes of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic date have been made from the chalk downs in the northern part of the District, around Alton (e.g. Holybourne Down) and the gravels of the Wey valley. These mostly represent secondary material, but they do suggest the presence of human groups exploiting the wider downland plateau of which the District forms part.
- 4.4. However, it is possible that deposits of Palaeolithic date may well survive within the pockets of Clay-with-Flint that survive in hollows across the chalk downland that forms the northern part of the District. These deposits have been shown elsewhere (the East Kent Downs) to contain in situ Palaeolithic material. Most of the known Palaeolithic material relates to the blade traditions of the Upper Palaeolithic, prior to the last glaciation.

#### Mesolithic (c.10,000BC-c.4300BC)

- 4.5. The Mesolithic saw the return of human communities to the area in response to improving post-glacial climatic conditions. The warming climate led to the spread of a succession of woodland types, culminating in a mixed broad-leaved forest dominated by oak but including elm, ash, alder, lime and hazel. Human communities exploited this woodland and the rich resources of the river valleys. Settlements comprised semi-permanent base camps occupied during the winter months and a series of seasonal hunting camps, although evidence for such settlements is scarce and tends to be restricted to the Greensand (e.g. Oakhanger) and heathlands. The bulk of the evidence for this period comprises flint scatters. Evidence for the later Mesolithic period is less forthcoming, although it is likely that small-scale clearance of the woodland, together with a certain level of manipulation of animal populations as part of an increasingly efficient hunting strategy laid the foundations for the adoption of agriculture.

#### Neolithic (c.4300BC-c.3000BC)

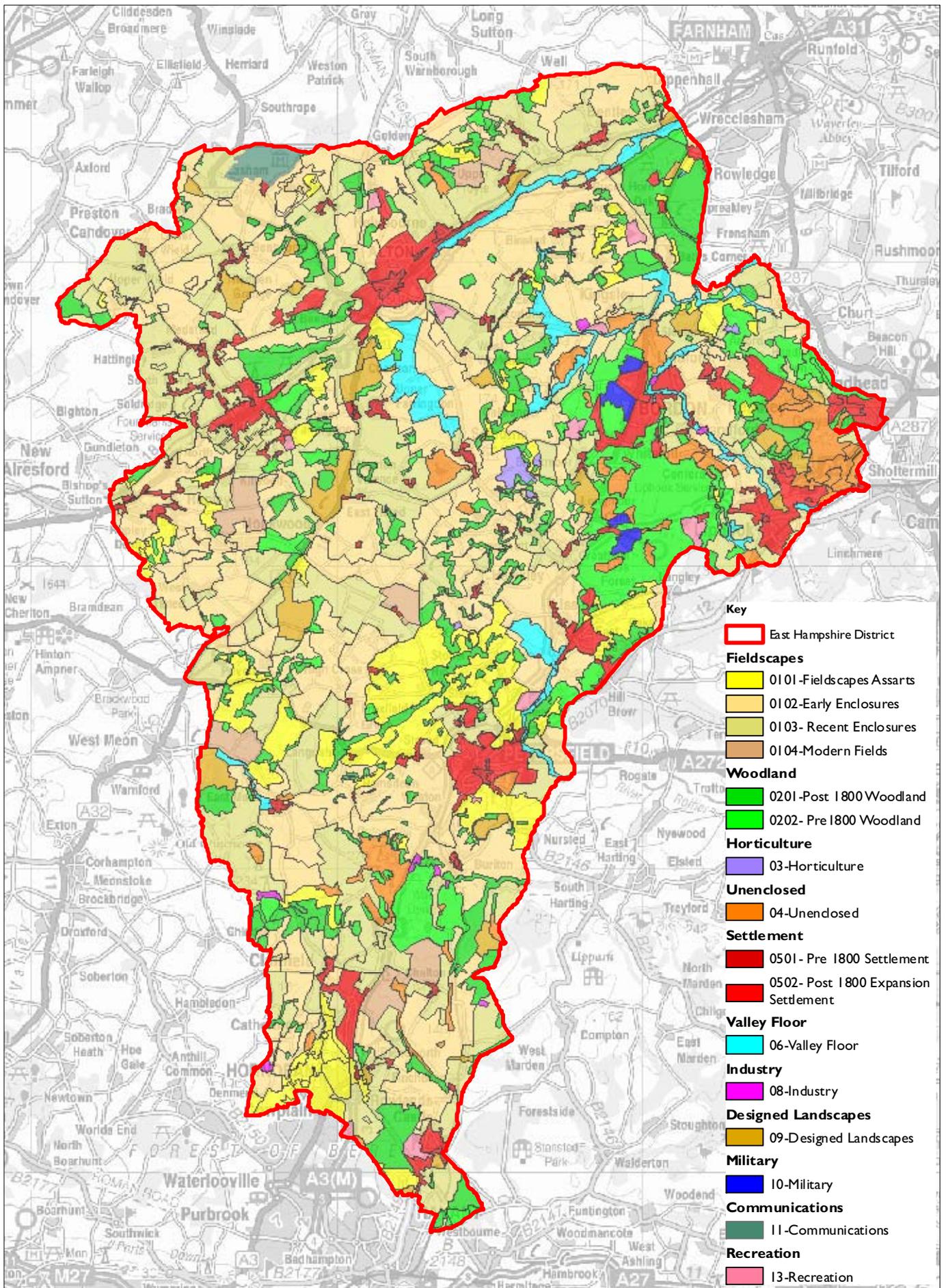
- 4.6. The Neolithic saw the development of agriculture and the first evidence for large-scale communal activity. New ideas relating to the domestication of animals and,

probably later, the cultivation of cereals, were adopted by indigenous human communities, together with new technologies such as pottery. Environmental evidence indicates a major phase of woodland clearance taking place at this time, as land was opened up to provide fields and sacred spaces. Evidence for Neolithic settlements is sparse. A much more extensive impression of Neolithic activity is gained from the numerous flint scatters and also the distribution of polished stone axes, both of which are concentrated on the chalk downlands, particularly in the northern part of the District around Alton. The absence of Neolithic material from the Greensand is surprising given the fertility of the soils, but this is likely to be the result of Neolithic sites being buried under deep colluvial deposits. Ironically, the soil erosion that caused this process was initiated by large-scale tree clearance during this period.

- 4.7. The most striking evidence for the period exists in the form of ceremonial monuments. The earliest examples comprise earthen long barrows, with an example known from Salt Hill near East Meon. These were both communal burial places and foci for social and ritual gatherings, serving to anchor the community in the landscape. Other early ceremonial sites from the period such as causewayed enclosures, flint mines and henges have not yet been found within the District, and are rare within the county as a whole.

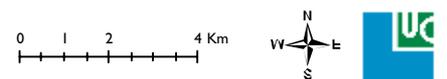
### **Bronze Age (c.3000BC-c.600BC)**

- 4.8. The Bronze Age is characterized by the introduction of metals, firstly gold and copper and later bronze. The earliest metals are generally associated with a new type of pottery, Beaker Ware, as well as the construction of a new type of ceremonial site, the round barrow. These monuments heralded a new way of thinking about society as they represented the burial of individuals rather than the communal burials of the preceding period. This is probably linked with the emergence of social elites. The barrows are found in large numbers across the chalk downland, concentrating in the southern part of the District, and also on the Greensand, often forming linear cemeteries on ridges.
- 4.9. The Middle Bronze Age (from c.1500BC) saw a dramatic change in emphasis away from the ceremonial and monumental landscape. Large-scale evidence for farming appeared with the creation of field systems defined by earthwork banks and ditches (and probably hedges). Small settlements of round houses representing farmsteads set within groups of paddocks are found across the chalk downs (e.g. Gravel Hill, Clanfield), although usually not surviving as upstanding landscape features (unlike the numerous contemporary stone settlements that survive in upland areas such as Wales).
- 4.10. The Late Bronze Age (from c.1000BC) saw further changes with the disappearance of the round barrow burial tradition, the development of a settlement pattern characterised by unenclosed settlements, the creation of major linear earthworks carving the landscape into territories (especially evident in the cross-ridge dykes found on the downland) and the appearance of large defended enclosures (hillforts). More evidence of settlement in the lowland areas, particularly the Coastal Plain, is evident, together with hoards of metalwork indicative of burgeoning trade networks. Environmental evidence indicates that tree cover remained more extensive on the



**Figure 4.1: Historic Landscape Classification**

Source: Archaeology South East, Ordnance Survey



downland parts of the District due to the prevalence of poorer clay soils capping the chalk.

### **Iron Age (c.600BC-AD43)**

- 4.11. The Early and Middle Iron Age (up to c.100BC) saw a continuation of trends developed in the Late Bronze Age, with increasing numbers of open settlements and defended enclosures evident, the latter perhaps representing focal points for a number of different activities rather than purely acting as military citadels or refuges.
- 4.12. The Late Iron Age saw the abandonment of many of the hillforts, with a handful of major sites dominating the landscape, none of which lie within the District. Increasing numbers of settlements are known from this period, including increasingly complex ditched enclosures and the distinctive 'banjo enclosures', many of which survive as cropmarks on aerial photographs. Increasing levels of trade with the Continent, both with native communities and with the expanding Roman Empire, brought a range of fine imports into the area, and the period saw the first evidence for centralized pottery production, including wheel-turned vessels based on the Greensand.

### **Romano-British Period (AD43-c.AD410)**

- 4.13. The Roman invasion of AD43 saw little immediate change to the landscape of the District. The area was occupied by the Atrebates tribe, whose largely pro-Roman sympathies spared them the ferocious assault suffered by the tribes further west at the hands of Vespasian's legions. In fact, ordinary life appears to have changed little for the bulk of the population, with the field systems, roundhouses and farmsteads continuing in use.
- 4.14. The process of Romanisation is largely evident further up the social scale, where people acquired those elements of the Roman lifestyle 'package' they felt most comfortable with, merging them with elements of their own culture to produce a Romano-British hybrid. This is manifested in the landscape in the appearance of rectangular stone or timber multi-roomed buildings, generally known as villas, and often developing on pre-existing settlement sites. A scatter of these sites is known, clustering along the Greensand (e.g. Wyck) and also in the fertile river valleys of the chalk, although the wider landscape setting is as yet poorly researched. Many of the villa estates appear to have been deliberately located where they could exploit several resource zones (i.e. river valley and downland). The villa estates lay within extensive arable field systems, many surviving as terraced earthworks, interspersed with sheepwalk, and further pressure was put on woodland resources by the increased need for fuel, both for domestic use and to supply an increasing number of industrial concerns such as the Alice Holt pottery kilns, an industry of national significance. The estates subsequently formed the basis of the later landscape, informing the boundaries and internal layouts of the Saxon and Medieval manorial and parochial landscapes.
- 4.15. Although much of the landscape history of the District in the Romano-British period is concerned with continuity, there were also a number of new elements. No major towns were established within the District, the nearest being at Winchester, Silchester and Chichester. However, a small nucleated settlement of unclear status

was established at Neatham near Alton. This settlement lay on the major road linking Chichester with Silchester. This major routeway has largely disappeared from the landscape within the District, and is ignored by existing trackways and roads and by hedgerow alignments.

### **Anglo-Saxon Period (ADc.410-AD1066)**

- 4.16. The decline of Roman authority created a power vacuum in which the local Romanised elites competed for power. The chaotic situation coincided with movements of people from the Germanic lands to the east (modern Germany and Denmark), who were able to settle in increasing numbers along the eastern and southern seaboard of England. Hampshire was targeted by the Jutes, penetrating via river valleys such as the Meon. Early Saxon settlements are rare, with most evidence for this period derived from cemeteries (e.g. Alton) although work at Chalton, in the southern part of the District, suggests that the earliest settlements were established on the upper reaches of the chalk dip slope. By the 9th century, the original settlements had been abandoned, or had shrunk to individual farmsteads, and new daughter settlements were established both in the valleys along the dip slope and as a string of villages along the Greensand, exploiting the spring line at the foot of the scarp slope. These villages were associated with an expanding system of common fields, and had become identified as manorial centres by the time of the Domesday Survey in the late 11th century. Their equidistant spacing possibly reflects an underlying pattern of Romano-British villa estates. From the late 10th century, these estates began to be formalised into a developing system of ecclesiastical parishes, many of which comprised long strips of territory extending from the chalk ridge down into the Weald.
- 4.17. Many of these manors exploited both the downland and the Weald. The downland portions were characterised by their complex and fragmented nature, resulting from competition for this vital resource. Numerous dependent hamlets were dispersed around areas of waste, including wood pasture as well as sheepwalk. Many manors also had outlying parcels of land in the wooded Weald, exploited mainly as summer pasture (pannage) for pigs (reflected in the numerous place-names ending in –fold). A network of parallel trackways developed linking the parent settlements on the Greensand with the Wealden outliers. These early settlements were established in the valleys (in contrast to the downland), with the ridges settled later. Charter evidence suggests permanent settlement by the 8th-9th centuries.
- 4.18. The later Saxon period also saw the return of urban life to Hampshire, although this is not reflected within the District. A late Saxon manorial centre replaced the small Roman town at Neatham. The District lacked urban foci until after the Norman Conquest.

### **Medieval Period (AD1066-1485)**

- 4.19. The Norman Conquest saw the imposition of a foreign nobility on England. Hampshire lay astride the strategic route linking London and Normandy and was subjected to tight royal control, with up to half the county covered by royal forests. Many of the major manors were retained in royal or ecclesiastical hands, particularly strategic locations like Winchester and Portchester. Winchester was already the effective capital of England. Smaller market towns such as Alton (established by St.

Peter's Abbey of Hyde, Winchester) and Petersfield (a royal manor granted urban status by the Earl of Gloucester in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century), the only urban centres within the District, grew wealthy on the proceeds of agriculture, particularly the wool trade, and were soon transformed by the construction of well-appointed houses for merchants. The medieval street patterns of both towns still dominate the present-day urban landscape.

- 4.20. Medieval settlement in the District comprised in essence nucleated settlements set within common arable, and situated on the fertile Greensand shelf and the dip slope of the chalk. The manors were divided into tithings or townships, and each subsidiary holding had its own field systems, some of which contained strip cultivation characterised by long narrow unenclosed strips. The system was based around sheep and corn husbandry, with communal sheep flocks grazing up on the downland sheepwalk (tenantry down) by day and brought down on to arable land at night for safety and, more importantly, to provide manure. The arable lands of the western Downs, on poorer soils derived from the Clay-with-Flints, comprised small irregular hedged fields, very different from the extensive open landscape of eastern Sussex. Sheep pastures in the District were of lesser quality, and the land saw a greater degree of multiple use, including hunting parks and wood pasture, the boundary banks of some of which (e.g. Rotherfield) survive in some woodland areas. Attempts were made to reclaim and enclose the floors of the major river valleys such as the Meon and the Wey. Some cattle were also reared in the river valleys.
- 4.21. Parts of the dip slope of the downs within the District lay within the Forest of Bere, while the north-eastern part fell within Woolmer Forest. These were areas of varied land-use (including settlements and agricultural land) over which the Crown had hunting rights.
- 4.22. Both downland and Weald experienced a contraction in settlement in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the result of a complex series of factors derived from deteriorating climatic conditions. The result was a series of crop failures and increased rates of stock disease (e.g. cattle murrain) that left a weakened and impoverished population vulnerable to threats such as the plague. Many of the downland settlements suffered desertion or shrinkage, surviving only as isolated farms or as archaeological earthwork sites (deserted medieval villages). Much farmland became derelict, and the period saw the beginnings of the enclosure movement as abandoned arable land was bought up by wealthier peasants and enclosed with hedges. The impoverishment of the area at this time is reflected in the absence of any local equivalent to the finely-decorated churches seen in other wool-producing areas (e.g. the Cotswolds). By comparison, the medieval churches of the District are small and archaic in nature, reminiscent of those found in other marginal areas.

### **Post-Medieval Period (AD 1485-present)**

- 4.23. The post-medieval period saw the emergence of a modern market economy. Major changes took place as a result of an increasing population and a more flexible land market, including the sale of former monastic land as a result of the Dissolution. The communal aspects of medieval agriculture began to be replaced by farms run by individuals. From 1650 onwards, the sheepwalks began to be ploughed up for arable cultivation, represented by extensive surviving areas of early enclosure. The increasingly wealthy occupiers of the Greensand began to enclose the common

waste. The downland within the District saw more diversification from an earlier date, with common fields enclosed from as early as the 15th century. The 16th and 17th centuries saw the enclosure of large expanses of common woodland, denying the local communities their traditional rights of exploitation. Much of the stimulus of this was the increasing demand for fuel for Wealden industries, notably ironworking. Improved techniques of water management in the valley bottoms led to the development of water meadows. Most of the arable land had been enclosed piecemeal by the end of the 17th century, resulting in a distinctive landscape of small irregular fields enclosed by planted hedgerows, similar to, but usually thinner than, those of the Weald (the 'shaws'). Many of the smaller farmsteads began to be amalgamated as landowners built up larger estates.

- 4.24. The later 18th century saw the development of 'New Farming'. This saw the heyday of the sheep-corn husbandry system, boosted by the buoyant economy resulting from the Napoleonic Wars, although the system was less prevalent than in eastern Sussex and occupied patches of downland set within a wider mosaic of arable land. The sheep were partly fed on new fodder crops, resulting in arable encroachment on the remaining downland, and producing regular grid-pattern field systems, often enclosed under Acts of Parliament (parliamentary enclosure) bounded by linear straight hedgerows comprising one or two species, usually hawthorn. A further period of prosperity followed in the 1840s, lasting for thirty years and often referred to as the period of High Farming. More downland disappeared under the plough, particularly on the areas of Clay-with-Flint.
- 4.25. The 18th and 19th centuries also saw the development of large landscape parks, although there are no major examples within the District. However, smaller parks such as Leigh and Rotherfield contain many of the elements associated with grander examples outside the District at Stansted and Goodwood, including large expanses of grassland interspersed with extensive tree planting. The initial schemes, dating from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, were usually of a formal nature reflecting French, Italian and Dutch influences brought back from the Grand Tour of Europe. These were replaced from the middle of the century by more naturalistic landscapes.
- 4.26. The onset of the agricultural depression in the 1870s saw a decline in the importance of sheep on the downland. More downland was again lost to the plough, and some small farms on marginal land were abandoned or downgraded to a cluster of farm buildings. Fortunes rose during the First World War, when home-grown food was required to replace foreign imports, but the inter-war period saw the onset of another period of depression. Much of this land was again reclaimed and converted to arable during the Second World War, but by 1942 the demands of military training became paramount and the arable was abandoned. A number of military relics of this period are still visible in the landscape (e.g. Bordon Camp, Lasham Airfield and the former Princess Louise Military Hospital, Alton). The years following the First World War also saw the planting of large coniferous forestry plantations by the Forestry Commission and private landowners, particularly in the Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down area.
- 4.27. The post-war period has seen fewer significant changes affecting the landscape of the District than the downland areas of Sussex to the east. Most of the downland was ploughed and fenced-off to create arable fields by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The wholesale removal of field boundaries to create vast prairie-fields, such a dominating

feature of the eastern Sussex Downs, and to a lesser extent the western Sussex Downs, is not a feature of the East Hampshire landscape, which retains an organic patchwork of field systems, representing irregular early enclosures of 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century date and regular recent enclosures of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century date, with a broadly equal coverage across the District. However, modern farming methods have still impacted, with extensive areas of archaeological features, surviving as earthworks, destroyed by the plough. This situation is now partly in reverse, with environmental and heritage-based grant schemes preserving surviving downland and restoring or sympathetically cultivating arable areas. Recognition of the importance of the landscape through the designation of the East Hampshire Downs AONB, and the subsequent designation of a new South Downs National Park (awaiting confirmation) that will include most of the southern and central parts of the District, and the preparation of an overarching Management Plan sets the scene for a further period of positive landscape change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **SETTLEMENT AND BUILDINGS**

### **Rural Settlement Character**

- 4.28. The English Heritage Atlas of Rural Settlement in England, records East Hampshire District falling within the South-Eastern Province, and is covered by the East Wessex Sub-Province. This covers the chalk downland and is described as exhibiting a low density of dispersion, with lines of nucleations evident on the fertile soils at the foot of the scarp and dip slopes, where they coincide with the spring-line, and in the river valleys. The nucleated settlements are predominantly large villages and market towns of medieval origin.

### ***Springline Villages***

- 4.29. The best land within the District boundary historically was along the Greensand shelf at the foot of the scarp slope of the Downs, coinciding with the spring line. A line of nucleated villages is found along this shelf, such as Buriton, situated at the centre of a parish which extends from the chalk ridge down onto the Greensand, thus giving the settlement access to the widest selection of resources. On the dip slope villages tended to be established on the drift deposits of the coastal plain to the south, or within folds and valleys in the chalk. The high density of settlement in these areas is particularly marked between Petersfield and Alton where the ribbon-like nature of the parishes is striking. Many of these villages contained farmsteads situated close to the village street. Large numbers of pre-1750 farmhouses survive, often no longer in agricultural use, although the contemporary farm buildings have usually disappeared.

### ***Dispersed Settlement***

- 4.30. The predominant settlement type within the infertile Lower Greensand area of the District is dispersed in nature. The core of this settlement pattern, situated along the tributary valleys of the Wey, comprises farmsteads of medieval origin, set within a mosaic of irregular fields enclosed in a piecemeal fashion from the woodland (assarts). Around this core, the establishment of settlements around the fringes of communal waste (i.e. commons) led to the development of irregular semi-nucleated agglomerations of common-edge settlement. A degree of later infill has also

modified the pattern with the creation of dormitory settlements such as Headley Down and Lindford.

### ***Downland Villages***

- 4.31. Nucleated settlement on the Downs is rare, and where present tends to be small, largely post-medieval in nature and forms linear bands in the shelter of valleys (e.g. settlements in the Wey valley).

### ***Deserted Medieval Villages***

- 4.32. Deserted settlements are not uncommon within the District, reflecting the ebb and flow of settlement. Many of the sites are better termed 'shrunken' or 'shifted' rather than deserted. The downland contains a number of sites that appear to have been totally deserted (e.g. Blendworth) or survive only as an isolated farm (e.g. Lomer).

### ***Medieval Market Towns***

- 4.33. Two market towns of medieval origin lie within the District – Petersfield and Alton. Both are largely new foundations of the 12th-13th century, representing planned settlements established in locations perceived as economically advantageous. The towns were incorporated as boroughs, held markets and fairs and were, and continue to be important centres for the surrounding countryside.

### ***Dispersed Farmsteads***

- 4.34. Dispersed farmsteads are the dominant settlement pattern across the chalk downland. Some of the sites are of medieval origin, sometimes representing shrunken hamlets, while others are of later date. Although forming a low-density settlement pattern, the farmsteads tend to be very prominent in the landscape, often due to the large threshing barns necessary to deal with the grain harvests and the presence of shelterbelts of trees. They can also appear quite bleak, as most buildings face into the yard.

### ***Vernacular Building Styles***

- 4.35. The geologically diverse nature of the District is reflected in the variety of building materials utilised. The majority of the District comprises chalk downland, and this area is characterised by the use of flint as a building medium. Often, the flint walling was dressed at the corners and around openings with stone or brick. In the north-eastern corner of the District, the Greensand areas were dependent on timber for construction, usually infilled with daub (a mix of mud, dung, animal hair and chopped straw) and later brick (nogging). The local Malmstone is a further distinctive material. Timber buildings were also present on the chalklands and in the river valleys. The timber-framing was mainly box-frame in style (roof trusses carried on a frame composed of posts, tie-beams and wall-plates), although a few cruck-framed buildings (roof carried on long curved timbers stretching from the ridge down to the ground) are known (at the eastern extremity of their range). Use was also made of the local Wealden sandstone, often cut into large regular blocks, and a hard type of chalk called clunch. Brick was used for building from the 16th century onwards, but only became widespread from the 18th century, and mainly in the towns where it

became fashionable. Where building in brick was not possible, for reasons of expense or practicality, a type of clay tile was developed which could be hung on to timber-framed buildings to resemble brickwork. These 'mathematical tiles' are less common than in Sussex, but are found occasionally on buildings of late 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century date within the District.

- 4.36. Roofing materials were mainly thatch and clay tiles. Wooden shingles were sometimes used, often on church belfries.
- 4.37. The vernacular architecture of East Hampshire District is not distinctive. Rather it exhibits the characteristics of a border area, incorporating elements common to Sussex and Surrey to the east (e.g. Wealden hall-houses) and central Hampshire to the west (e.g. cruck-built houses). The earliest building types comprised simple small cottages constructed of whatever materials were to hand. The earliest farmsteads were not architecturally distinctive, and the people, livestock and harvested crops occupied buildings largely identical in nature. Often people shared buildings with the livestock, usually (but not always) with a partition in between. These early buildings are reminiscent of the longhouse tradition of the upland regions of Wales and northern England. By the later medieval period, houses had become more sophisticated, with open halls flanked by two-storey private wings. Farm buildings were separate structures, and usually comprised barns and animal stalls. The post-medieval period saw the open halls roofed over to give more private accommodation. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the use of timber and stone for domestic building had been replaced by brick.

#### ***Historic Farmsteads***

- 4.38. The Hampshire Historic Farmstead and Landscape Characterisation project was intended to establish the feasibility of historic farmstead characterisation as a planning and research tool. The project concentrated on examining a number of pilot areas, including one that fell within the bounds of East Hampshire District. The following comments are derived from the project results.
- 4.39. Downland farmsteads are scattered across the landscape, with most concentrated in the villages on the Greensand, but with a low-density pattern of examples dotted around the chalk. Nevertheless, they tend to be large and prominent in the landscape, usually identifiable by their large barns and shelter belts of trees. The village farmsteads are usually of medieval date, and lie on the edge of the settlements, while those on the chalk date from after 1750, apart from a few medieval examples resulting from settlement shrinkage. The farmsteads usually form a loose courtyard plan, with one or more threshing barns, raised granaries and sometimes open-fronted cattle sheds. Regular planned farmsteads are evident from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Building materials comprise timber-framing with thatched and tiled roofs, with brick, flint and slate used from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and concrete from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4.40. The dipslope of the Downs comprises isolated farmsteads set in a traditionally wood pasture landscape (the Forest of Bere). Farmsteads are set in a landscape of small early enclosed fields and winding lanes, and are mainly of medieval origin. They usually form L- and U-shaped complexes, with larger farmsteads forming regular courtyard plans, with large barns, granaries, cattle sheds and pigsties. Building

materials comprise timber-framing with thatched and tiled roofs, with brick, flint and slate used from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and concrete from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- 4.41. The Western Weald (Woolmer Forest) comprises a dense scatter of isolated farmsteads of varying sizes, largely of medieval origin, set in a complex landscape of assorted fields and woodland. The farmsteads exhibit a wide variety of forms, often with no discernible pattern or planning, and consist of small barns, granaries and stables. Some later cattle sheds are found on some farmsteads, and a variety of distinctive buildings such as hop kilns. Building materials comprised timber-framing set on malmstone footings, with malmstone used extensively for smaller structures. Brick and some flint were used later. Roofing comprised thatch and tiles.

## **HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

- 4.42. As part of the background research for the assessment, Archaeology South East undertook a summarisation of the Hampshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) map within East Hampshire District, to create a broad-brush tool providing a clear visual impression of the development of the historic landscape. This was used in conjunction with the full HLC during the historical analysis work. The HLC was an important baseline layer contributing to the definition of a robust landscape classification and developing detailed historic environment information to assist the description and evaluation.
- 4.43. Many of the historic processes examined in this chapter are clearly expressed in the present landscape and, by extension, on the character map. Some of the more significant patterns visible on the map are discussed below.

### **Enclosures**

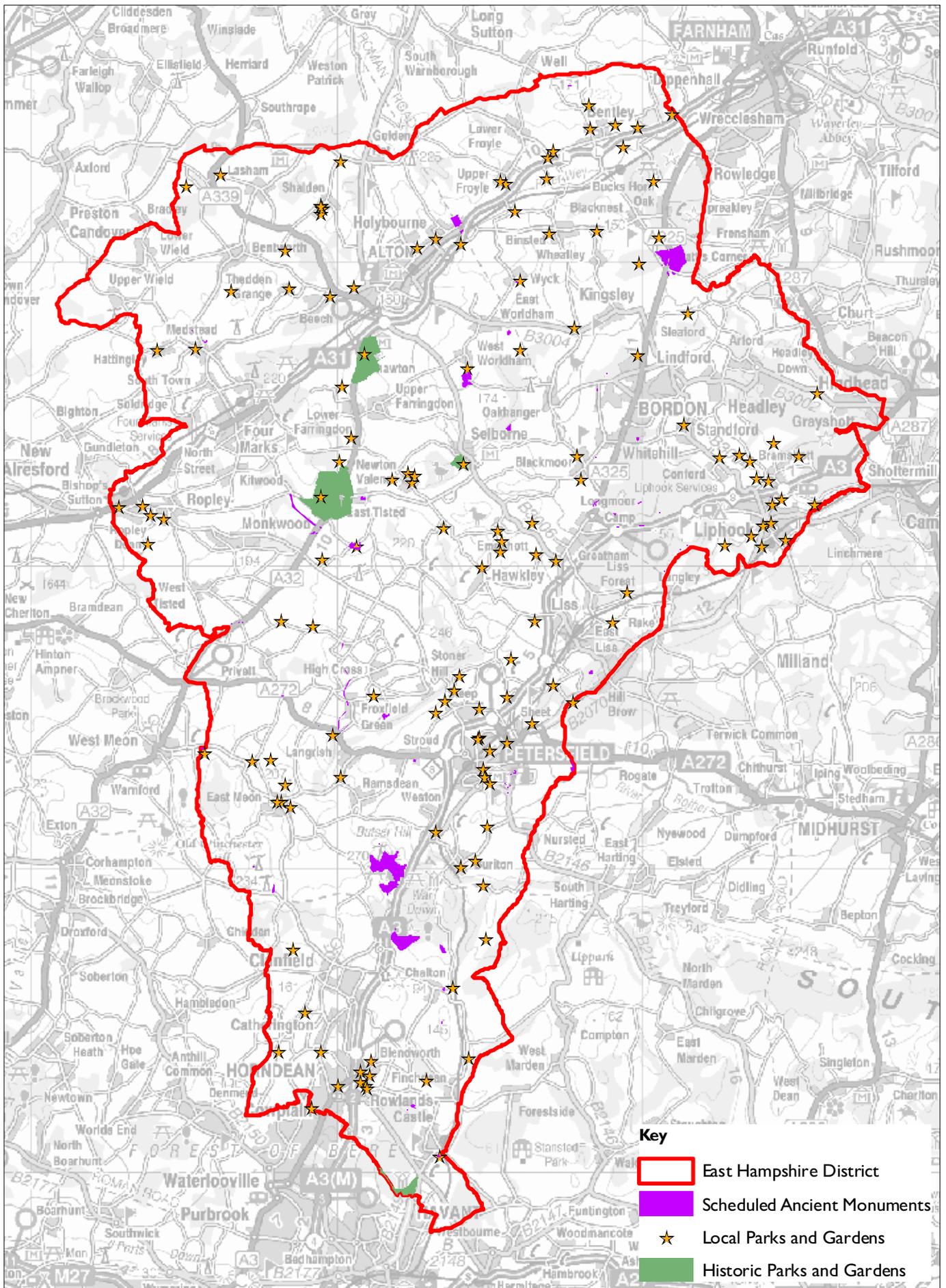
- 4.44. The pattern of field systems visible on the map reflects the complex and varied history of enclosure within the District. A number of striking patterns are evident, notably the equal dominance of early and recent enclosure across the downland, reflecting a land-use history within which early piecemeal enclosure was a significant element, and the absence of any large-scale modern modifications of this pattern. The two systems are differentiated by the irregular, wavy field boundaries of the early enclosures, forming an organic landscape contrasting with the regular rectilinearity of the recent enclosures, dominated by straight lines and stamped with the imprint of the professional surveyor. The scarpfoot zone and parts of the low Weald are dominated by early enclosures of medieval date, often bounded by thick sinuous hedgerows and retaining a medieval character to this day.

### **Woodland**

- 4.45. The map shows a scatter of woodland across the District, with concentrations of pre-1800 woodland evident in Alice Holt Forest, the downlands north and west of Alton, the hangers following the Greensand and the remnants of the Forest of Bere to the north of the Portsdown Ridge. This surviving woodland contrasts with both the wooded downland of West Sussex and the treeless downland of East Sussex, and illustrates that the apparently fruitful arable nature of the present landscape is to some extent an artefact of modern farming practices, and that in the past the downland within the District was peppered with surviving stretches of woodland

situated on acidic clay and used as common pasture. Large post-1800 plantations are generally absent from the downland portion of the District, with the exception of the Queen Elizabeth Forest near Petersfield, but cover large expanses of the poor quality Lower Greensand soils in the north-eastern corner of the District around Liss and Bordon. This land was utilised as common pasture for much of recorded history, but was subsequently recolonised by secondary woodland, much of it now in military ownership.

- 4.46. A map showing the historic land classification is shown in **Figure 4.1**, historic designations are shown in **Figure 4.2**.



**Figure 4.2: Historic Landscape Designations**

Source: English Heritage; Hampshire County Council

0 1 2 4 Km



## 5. BIODIVERSITY

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- 5.1. The Natural Areas (NAs) within the East Hampshire District are shown on **Figure 5.1**. NAs are sub-divisions of England identified by English Nature as being unique on the basis of their physical, wildlife, land use and cultural attributes. This approach provides a wider context for conservation action, and offers a framework for setting objectives relevant to nature conservation.
- 5.2. There are four NAs within East Hampshire, highlighting the rich variety of habitat types present in the area. These are the **Wealden Greensand**, which covers 40.2% of the District, the **Hampshire Downs** (38.8%), the **South Downs** (20.1%), and the **South Coast Plain and Hampshire Lowlands** (0.9%).
- 5.3. The northern part of the District is divided in a north-south direction. The eastern side is dominated by the Wealden Greensand NA, which follows the outcrop of the Upper and Lower Greensand and curves around the western end of the Wealden anticline in West Sussex, East Hampshire and Surrey. Lowland heath is particularly characteristic of the sandy soils, and a number of ancient woodlands occur.
- 5.4. The western side of this north-south divide comprises the Hampshire Downs NA. This area forms part of the broad-belt of chalk downland that runs through central southern England. In the east of the NA the chalk forms a dramatic escarpment at the western edge of the Weald. The Hampshire Downs has a strong identity, with a great sense of openness and space. It is a large scale landscape of open rolling country with a broad, gently domed undulating plateaux dissected by both steep and shallow valleys numerous distinct hilltops, ridges and scarps.
- 5.5. To the south of the Weald and Hampshire Downs is the South Downs NA. Its most dramatic feature is the narrow, steep, mostly northerly-facing scarp that supports extensive areas of chalk grassland. The more shallow, south-facing dip slope is more extensively farmed, although some areas of chalk grassland occur on steeper ridges and combine to create an ecological rich mixed farmland landscape. The Rivers Arun, Adur, Ouse and Cuckmere cut through the escarpment of the South Downs and give rise to a range of riverside habitats, including floodplain grazing marshes, ditches rich in aquatic plants and reedbeds.
- 5.6. A very small area of the South Coast Plain and Hampshire Lowlands NA occurs in the southern tip of the District, and contributes little to the overall ecological character.

### **Sites with nature conservation designation**

- 5.7. Digital data for all statutory and non-statutory nature conservation designations within East Hampshire has been obtained and is summarised in **Table 5.1**. The location of these sites are shown in **Figures 5.2** and **Figure 5.3**.
- 5.8. In summary, East Hampshire contains a total of 16 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), of which 4 sites carry additional designation as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 1 as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and 2 as National Nature Reserves (NNRs). The area contains a total of 525 non-statutory nature conservation sites

which includes Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), as well as 445 Ancient Woodlands (AWs).

**Table 5.1: Summary of sites with nature conservation designation within the East Hampshire District<sup>2</sup>**

Designation	Area within EH (ha)	Percentage of EH %
RAMSAR	0 (0)	0
SAC	1539 (4)	3.0
SPA	1752 (1)	3.4
NNR	358 (2)	0.7
SSSI	2705 (16)	5.3
LNR <sup>3</sup>	180 (8)	0.3
SINC	5929 (517)	11.5
AW <sup>2</sup>	4283 (445)	8.3

## Habitats

- 5.9. Phase I Habitat data (slightly modified by the Hampshire County Council) has been obtained for the East Hampshire District. A map of selected key habitats is shown in **Figure 5.4**, and an indication of the coverage of these habitats is shown in **Table 5.2**.

**Table 5.2: Summary area (ha) and % cover of some potential key habitats within the East Hampshire District**

Habitat type	Area within East Hampshire (ha)	% of East Hampshire District
Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	7083	13.8
Parkland	150	0.3
Calcareous grassland <sup>4</sup>	517	1.0
Heathland <sup>5</sup>	694	1.3
Neutral grassland <sup>6</sup>	1543	3.0
Marshy grassland	44	0.1
Mire or fen	14	0.03
Standing water	88	0.2

- 5.10. In summary, analysis of the Phase I Habitat data indicates that East Hampshire supports significant areas of a wide range of habitat types, particularly semi-natural broadleaved woodland (7083ha) and neutral grassland (1543ha).
- 5.11. With reference to local and national Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and wildlife data the most characteristic and valuable habitat types are considered to be:

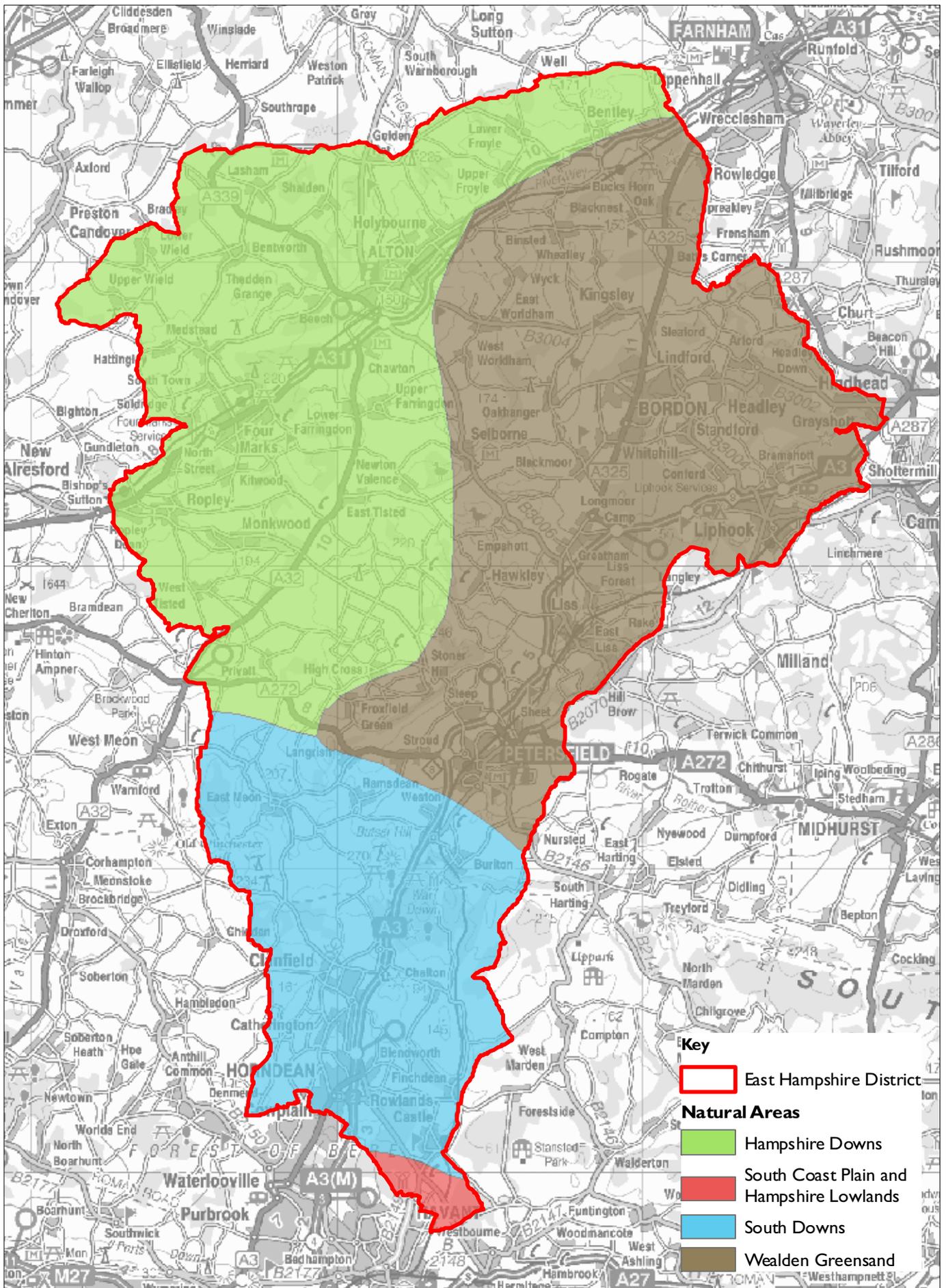
<sup>2</sup> Nature conservation sites often possess more than one designation type, and the data provided represents the total area of each designation within the study area.

<sup>3</sup> Ancient Woodland and LNR data is from English Nature, and should be seen as indicative rather than definitive.

<sup>4</sup> Calcareous grassland area figures include the following categories, (1) calcareous grassland semi-improved, (2) calcareous grassland unimproved, and (3) calcareous grassland.

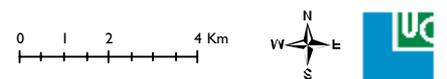
<sup>5</sup> Heathland area figures include the following categories, (1) dry dwarf shrub heath, (2) heath acid grass, and (3) wet dwarf shrub heath.

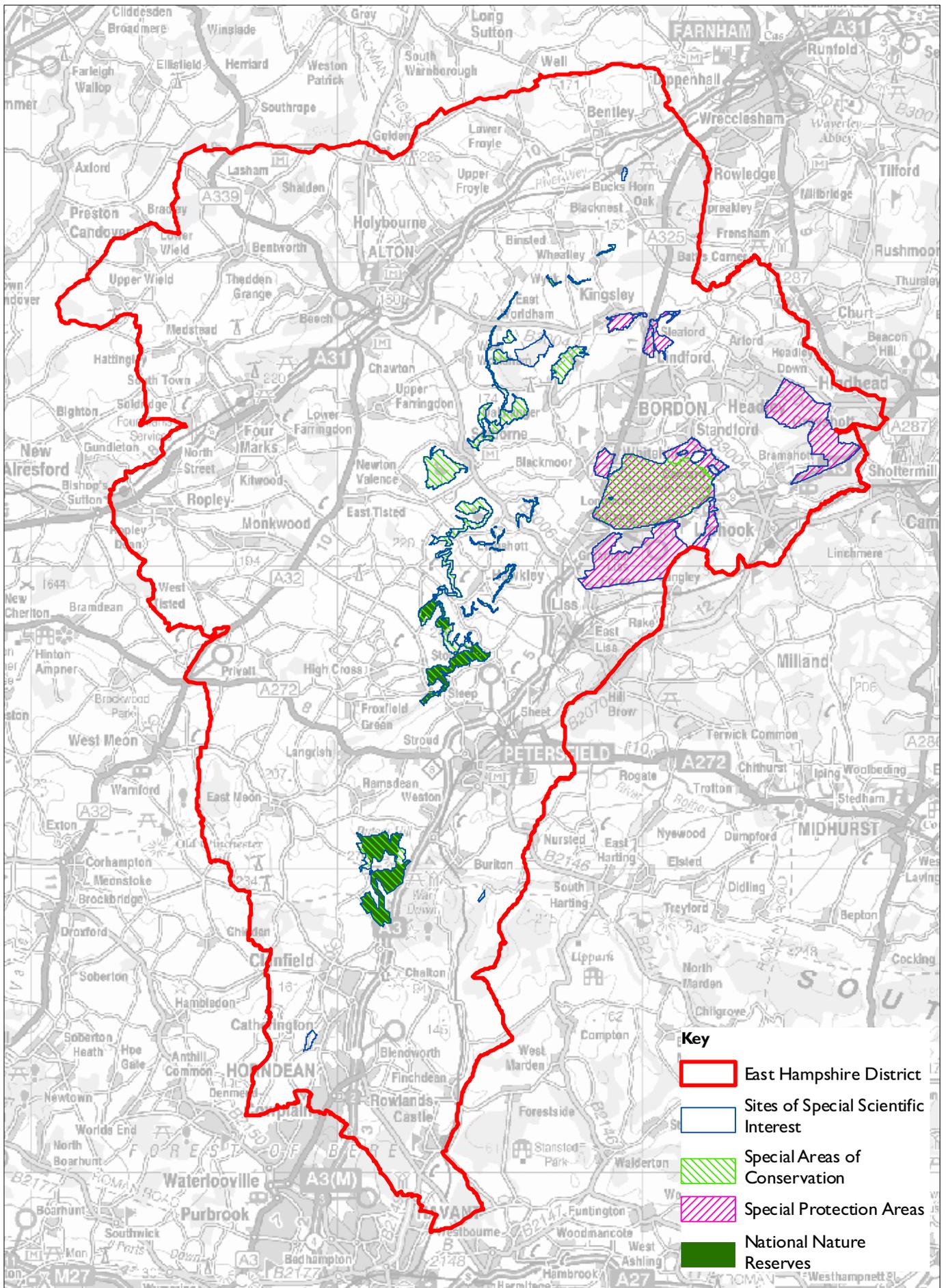
<sup>6</sup> Neutral grassland area figures include the following categories, (1) Neutral grass semi-improved, (2) Neutral grass unimproved, and (3) neutral grassland.



**Figure 5.1: Natural Areas**

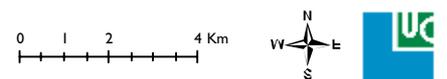
Source: English Nature, Ordnance Survey

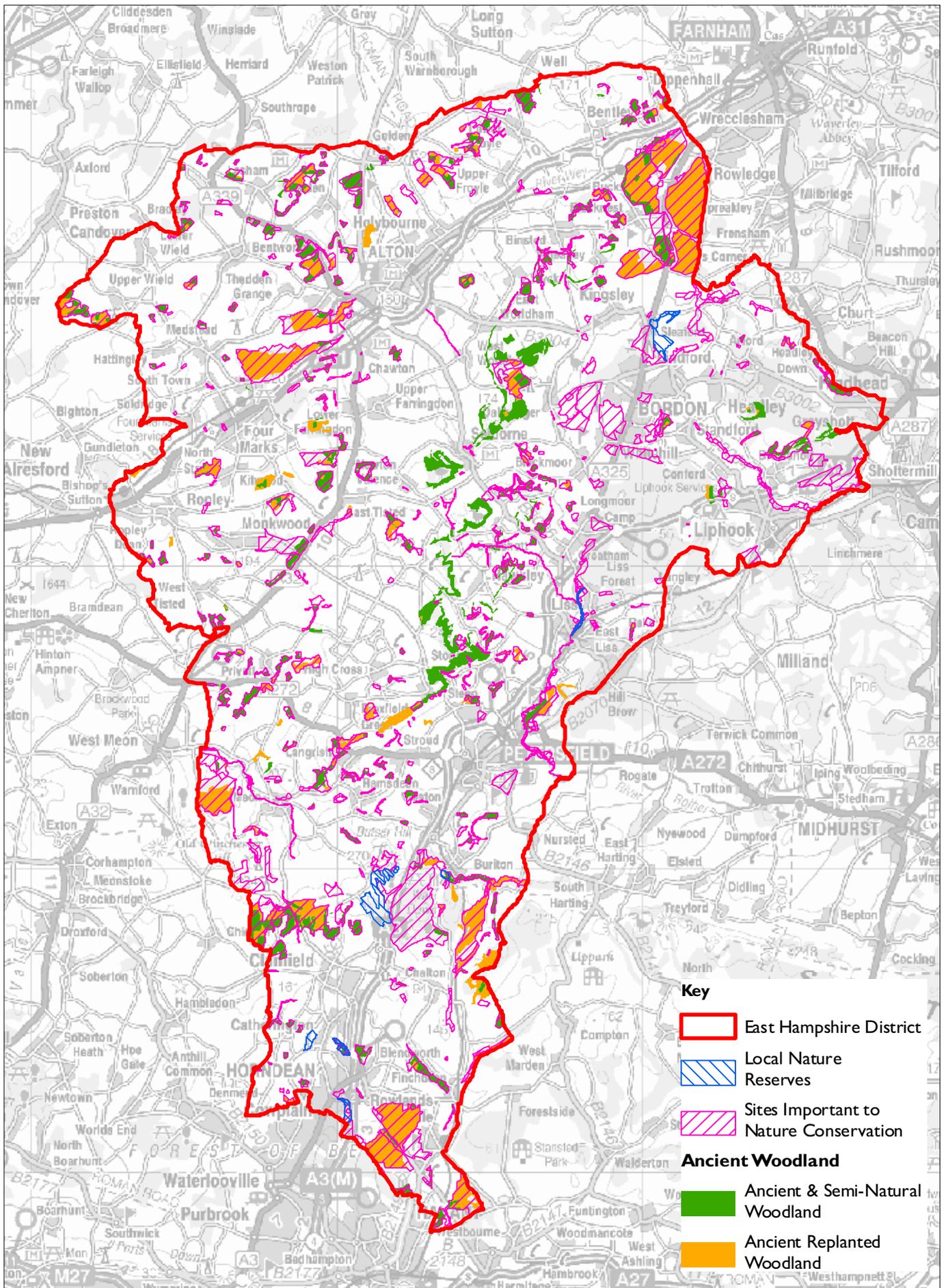




**Figure 5.2: Statutory Nature Conservation Designations**

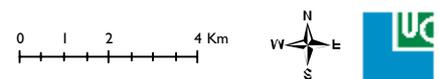
Source: English Nature, Ordnance Survey

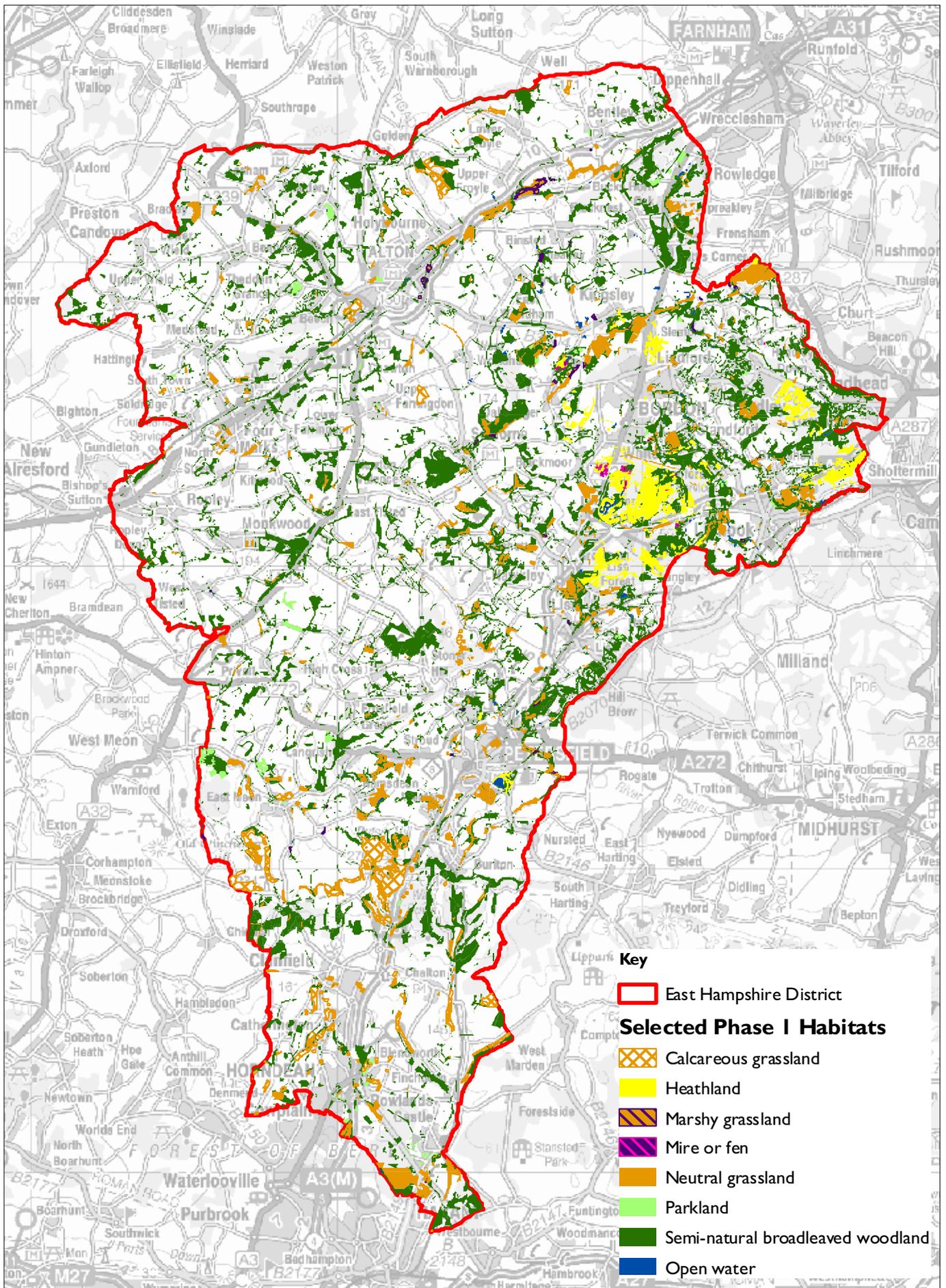




**Figure 5.3: Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Designations**

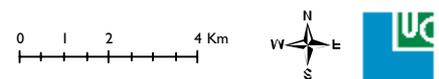
Source: English Nature; Hampshire County Council





**Figure 5.4: Distribution of Select Phase I Habitats**

Source: Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre



- Ancient semi-natural woodland;
- Chalk grassland and associated habitats;
- Rivers and floodplain habitat;
- Heathland and mire;
- Farmland and arable.

## **Woodland**

- 5.12. East Hampshire is well wooded and supports a range of woodland types that vary according to local geology, climate and management history. Many of the woodland areas are of ancient origin and have been traditionally managed under a coppice with standard regime. These ancient woodlands are of significant ecological interest providing important refuges for a range of characteristic woodland plant species, invertebrates and protected mammals such as bats and badgers.
- 5.13. Of particular importance are hanging woodlands, found in association with the steep slopes and deeply incised valleys that occur at the interface between the western Weald and the Hampshire Downs. These woodlands are of international importance and the majority fall under the East Hampshire Hangers SAC. A range of woodland types are represented, including beech, ash, yew, wych elm, field maple and mixed lime woods. The sheltered conditions also make these woodland important areas for mosses and liverworts.
- 5.14. The woodland ground flora is typically species-rich with dogs mercury, yellow archangel, ivy, herb Robert, lords-and-ladies, primrose, and a variety of ferns being particularly common. A number of notable plants occur including columbine, white helleborine, narrow-leaved helleborine, broad-leaved helleborine and birds-nest orchid.
- 5.15. Areas of broadleaved plantation woodland also occur throughout the District, with areas of mixed and coniferous plantation typical of the Greensand region, with extensive woodland plantations occurring, for example the Corsican pine dominated woodland at Alice Holt. Although these plantations are not of such high ecological value as semi-natural woodlands, they do provide valuable habitat for a range of plant and animal species, and many carry non-statutory nature conservation designation.

## **Chalk grassland and associated habitats**

- 5.16. Occasional areas of chalk grassland occur towards the south of the District on steep slopes which have escaped agricultural improvement. These grasslands support diverse plant communities, including many notable plant species, and important populations of invertebrates and breeding birds. Areas of open chalk grassland are usually found in association woody scrub and woodland, as well as neutral grassland and arable farmland. Where managed appropriately, this habitat diversity enriches ecological value at the landscape scale.
- 5.17. The largest of the chalk grassland sites within the District is Butser Hill NNR (231 ha) which has formed on a chalk massif with a discontinuous cap of clay-with-flints

forming a series of deep combs where the chalk has eroded. The site supports a range of vegetation types including chalk grassland, mixed scrub and yew woodland. The calcareous yew wood is an outstanding example of this uncommon habitat, and among the finest examples known on the English chalk. The downland flora is varied and rich, and includes a fragmentary example of chalk heath on south-facing slopes around Oxenbourne Down, where occasional plants of gorse and heather occur.

- 5.18. Other notable chalk grassland sites within the District include Coulters Dean SSSI, which comprises a small area of chalk grassland on a west facing fold in the South Downs escarpment, and Catherington Down SSSI.

### **Rivers, streams and floodplain habitat**

- 5.19. Sections of three main Rivers fall within the East Hampshire. To the north and east of the District are the northern and southern headwaters (including the River Slea tributary) of the River Wey, and the western tributary headwater of the River Rother. To the west of the District is the upper section of the River Meon.
- 5.20. The northern section of the River Wey receives its water from chalk springs near Alton, and flows through a largely agricultural landscape of low ecological interest. In contrast, the southern Wey arises mainly from the acid lower greensands around Woolmer Forest SSSI and its associated heathlands. The floodplain and valley sides of this southern tributary support ecological rich wetland habitats including wet heath and valley mire, for example Broxhead & Kingsley Commons SSSI (part of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA). A third, smaller tributary of the Wey, known as the Oakhanger stream flows from springs at the base of the upper greensand near Selborne, and is fringed by important areas of wet woodland (parts of the East Hampshire Hangers cSAC) and the well developed transition mire of Shortheath Common SSSI.
- 5.21. The western headwater the River Rother arises from the chalk and upper greensand as a series of springs at the base of the East Hampshire Hangers cSAC. However, the streams rapidly lose their chalk character as they flow over gault clay through a mainly agricultural landscape dominated by improved pasture of low ecological interest.
- 5.22. The River Meon, which is designated as a chalk stream SINC within East Hampshire, arises on the Hampshire Downs and flows south across the clays and sands of the Hampshire Basin to flow into the Solent at Hill Head. The area within the District is believed to contain good winterbourne sections and although the floodplain has largely been improved, occasional areas of chalk grassland and woodland occur along steep valley sides.

### **Heathland**

- 5.23. The sandy soils of the Wealden Greensand support important areas of heathland, including areas of dry and wet heath, acid grassland, mire and scrub. As a whole these heathland sites support an interesting flora, as well as being important for specialist invertebrates and for breeding birds such as woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.

- 5.24. Areas of dry heath are relatively plant species-poor, although they do support an interesting lichen flora and important populations of reptiles and specialist invertebrates. Areas of wet heath and valley mire also occur locally, and are of greater ecological interest. These habitats are more species rich, and support a number of locally notable plant species, for example marsh clubrush, oblong-leaved sundew and white beak sedge, and are rich in bryophytes, including Sphagnum bog mosses.
- 5.25. Significant heathland sites within the District include Bramshott and Ludshott Common SSSI, Broxhead and Kingsley Common SSSI and Woolmer Forest SSSI, with the most significant sites also falling within the Wealden Greensand Phase II SPA. Woolmer Forest SSSI has also been selected as a cSAC.

### **Farmland and arable**

- 5.26. Farmland (largely arable land) dominates the study area, and contributes significantly to the overall character and ecological value of the District. The majority is intensively managed under modern farming systems, however some areas of mixed farmland occur and are of particular ecological interest. Although the farmland of the East Hampshire District is not so ecologically rich as that found on the chalk in mid-Hampshire, the District does support a rich biodiversity, including a number of nationally declining plant and animal species.

## 6. THE CHARACTER OF THE EAST HAMPSHIRE LANDSCAPE

### INTRODUCTION

- 6.1. The unique character of East Hampshire has been created by a combination of the processes (physical, historic, natural, social and economic) described in the previous chapters. The diversity of the landscape is recognised by the identification of 10 landscape types. Each of these landscape types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover and historic evolution. The landscape types are further subdivided into component landscape character areas. The character areas are discrete geographic areas that possess the common characteristics described for the landscape type. Each character area has a distinct and recognisable local identity.
- 6.2. The landscape classification for the South Downs is set out in **Table 6.1** and illustrated on **Figure 6.1**. The classification and boundary mapping has been undertaken using GIS, with mapping at a scale of 1:25,000.

**Table 6.1: The East Hampshire Landscape Classification**

Landscape Type		Character Area	
<b>1</b>	<b>Wooded Estate Downland</b>	1a	Queen Elizabeth Forest
<b>2</b>	<b>Clay Plateau</b>	2a	Froxfield
		2b	Four Marks
<b>3</b>	<b>Downland Mosaic</b>	3a	Clanfield
		3b	Bereleigh
		3c	Newton Valence
		3d	Lasham
		3e	Ropley
		3f	Horndean -Clanfield Edge
<b>4</b>	<b>Chalk Valley Systems</b>	4a	Meon Valley
		4b	Northern Wey Valley
<b>5</b>	<b>Major Scarps</b>	5a	Buriton Scarp
		5b	Meon Valley Scarp
		5c	Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp
<b>6</b>	<b>Greensand Terrace</b>	6a	Selborne
		6b	Ramsdean to Buriton
		6c	Worldham
<b>7</b>	<b>Mixed Farmland and Woodland</b>	7a	Rother Valley
		7b	Kingsley/ Blackmoor

Landscape Type		Character Area	
		7c	Alice Holt
8	<b>Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic</b>	8a	Rother
		8b	Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down
		8c	Whitehill – Liphook
9	<b>Greensand Hills</b>	9a	Hill Brow Ridge
		9b	Ludshott and Bramshott Commons
10	<b>Wooded Claylands</b>	10a	Havant Thicket and Southleigh Forest

## FORMAT OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 6.3. Detailed information is provided for each of the landscape types and character areas.

### Landscape Types

- 6.4. Each section is initiated by a summary map illustrating the location of the landscape type area in relation to East Hampshire District as a whole, and identifying constituent character areas. A Historic Landscape Classification map is also provided. Each landscape type is summarised by bullet point setting out key generic characteristics.

### Character Areas

- 6.5. The majority of information is provided at the detailed character area level. Each area is initiated by a summary map illustrating the location of the character area in relation to East Hampshire District as a whole, and a sheet of illustrative photos. A detailed character area description and evaluation is then provided. The information is presented as follows:

#### Description

##### *Location and Boundaries*

- 6.6. A brief description of where the character area lies within East Hampshire District. It includes information about how the boundaries were defined and its relationship with adjacent areas and relationship to the South Downs assessment.

##### *Key Characteristics*

- 6.7. This section provides a summary of key characteristics of the character area.

##### *Physical Landscape*

- 6.8. This section provides background information on geology, landform, hydrology and land cover elements that contribute to character.

### ***Perceptual/Experiential Landscape***

- 6.9. This section covers perceptual characteristics, tranquillity, countryside access, and artistic and literary perceptions as follows:
- Perceptual characteristics include those defined in the landscape character assessment guidance i.e. scale, enclosure, diversity texture, form, line colour, balance, movement, pattern, etc. focussing on how specific elements contribute to the aesthetic characteristics.
  - Tranquillity is defined by analysis of noise levels, perceived naturalness, visible overt human impact, density of settlement/diffusion of people and artificial lighting in each character area. These criteria have been drawn from the University of Northumbria's method for defining tranquillity<sup>7</sup>.
  - Countryside access is defined by presence of publicly accessible landscapes, the extent of such landscapes, and the level of public access (as well as proximity to people) e.g. presence of open access land, density of public rights of way network, land managed for access.
  - Literary perceptions and cultural associations are drawn from existing published AONB assessments. Perceptions recorded through descriptive writings, visual arts and music can indicate how the landscape has changed over time, and communicate the special perceptual qualities of the landscape.

### ***Biodiversity***

- 6.10. This section includes a summary of the key biodiversity features and their relative importance using information from Phase I habitat maps, distribution of designated sites, and information contained in the designated site citations.

### ***Historic Character***

- 6.11. This section includes a summary of the key historic processes and features and their contribution to character using information from the historic landscape classification, and distribution of designated sites.

### ***Settlement Form and Built Character***

- 6.12. This section provides information on settlement types and patterns, building styles and local materials. The information is taken from fieldwork, historic research and existing assessments.

### ***Evaluation***

#### ***Sensitivity***

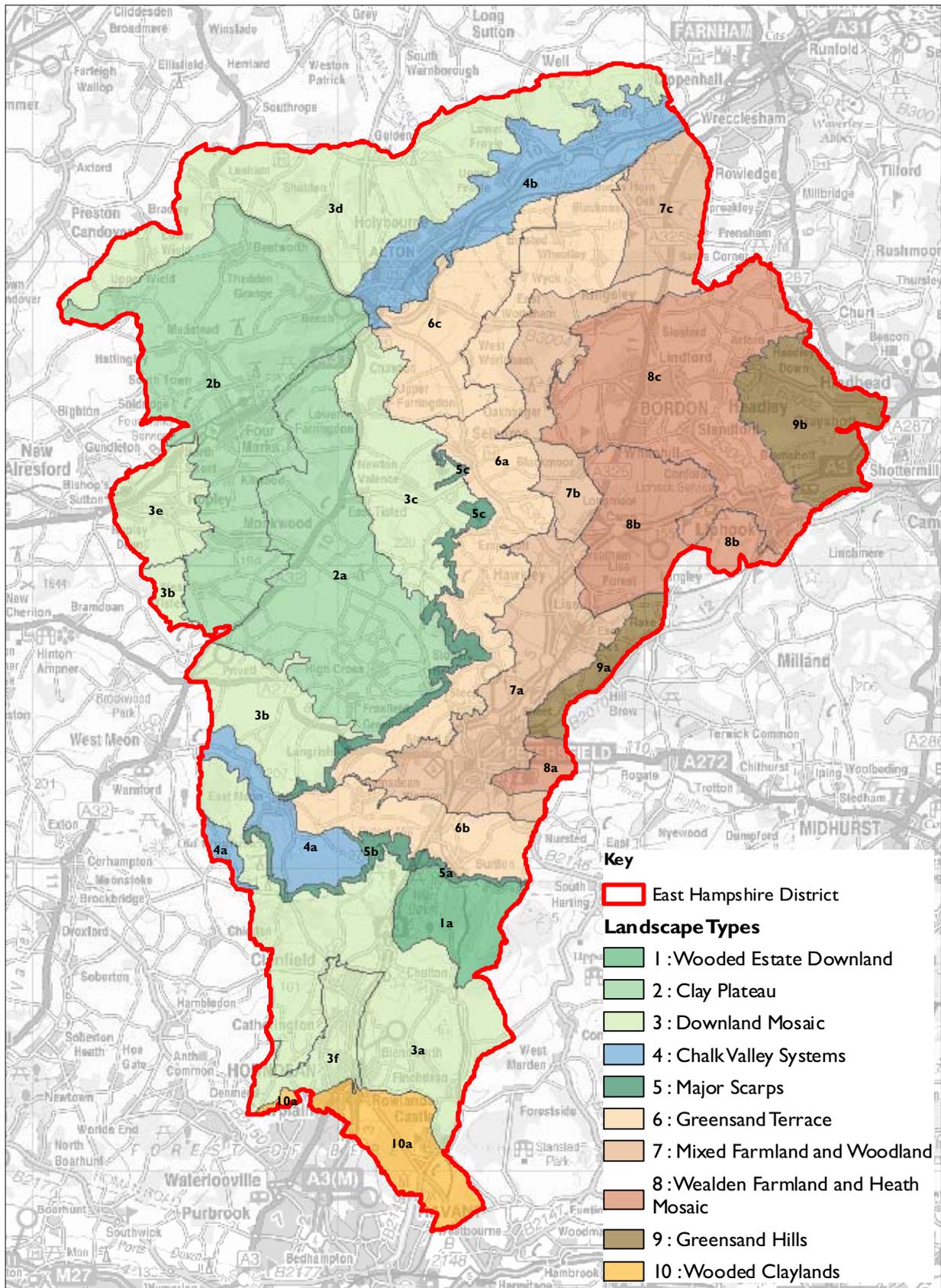
- 6.13. A subset of key characteristics - the key positive attributes that, if lost or changed, would change the character of the landscape. Information on threats and vulnerabilities are noted where appropriate. The study considers both landscape character and visual sensitivities.

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<sup>7</sup> Mapping Tranquillity: Defining and Assessing a Valuable Resource', co-commissioned by the Campaign to Protection Rural England and the Countryside Agency.

## **Landscape Strategy and Guidelines**

- 6.14. The overall landscape strategy may also be interpreted as a 'vision' for the landscape type. This is followed by bulleted guidelines separated into 'Landscape Management Considerations' and 'Development Considerations'.



**Figure 6.1: East Hampshire Classification**

Source: LUC 2006

