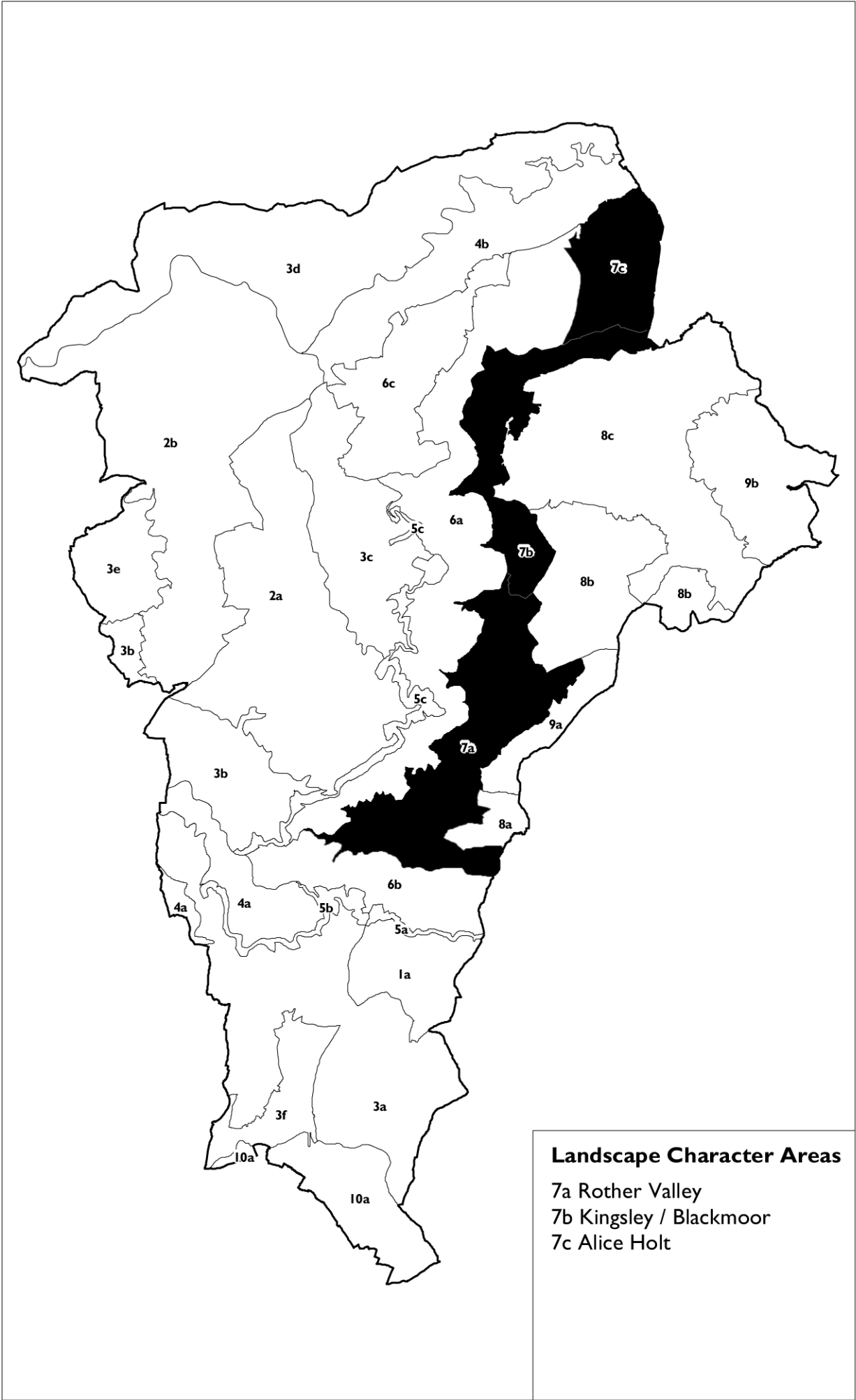
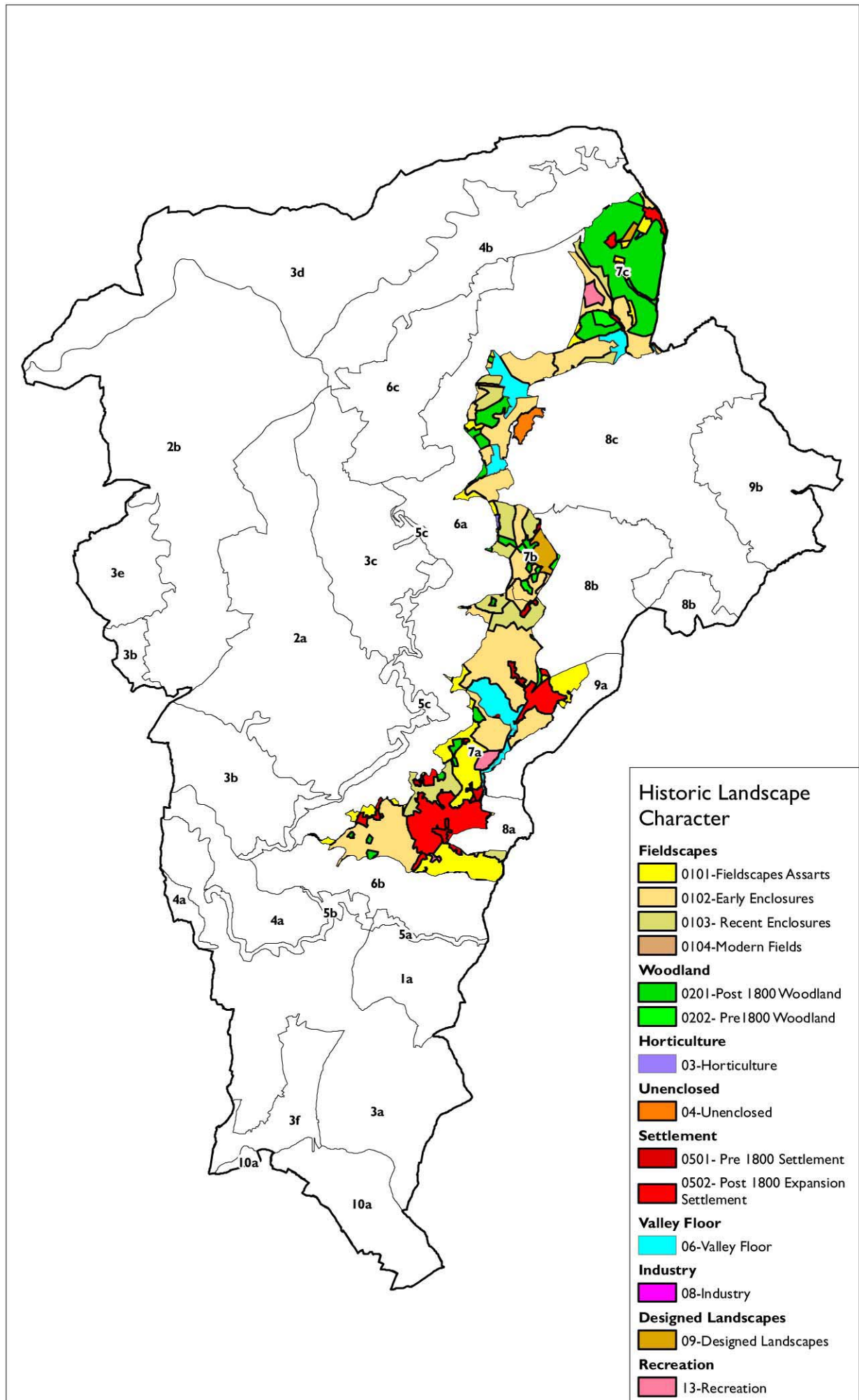


Landscape Type 7 : Mixed Farmland and Woodland



Landscape Type 7 : Mixed Farmland and Woodland



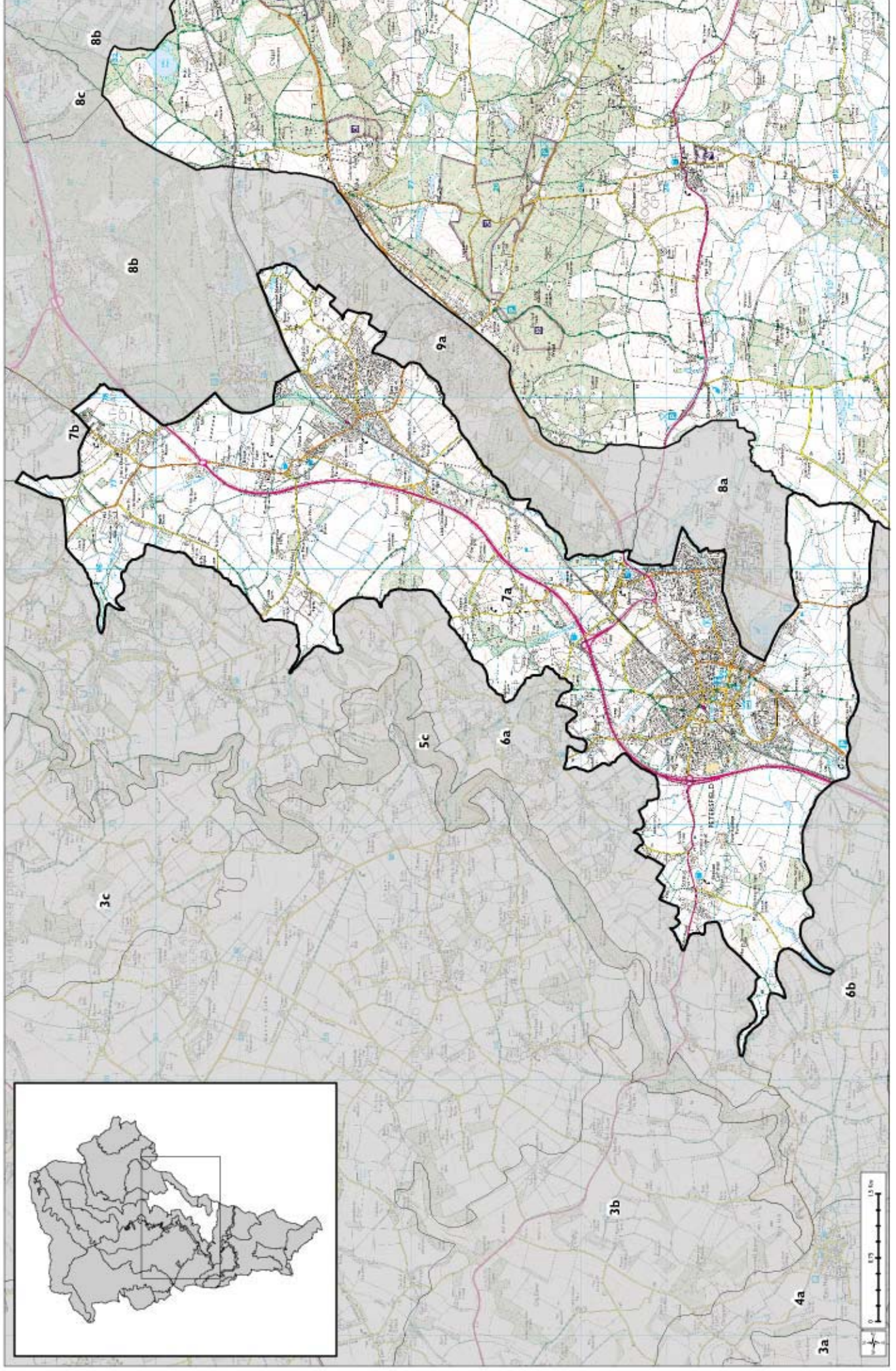
LANDSCAPE TYPE 7: MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND

- 7.1 The *Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* landscape type is found on the mudstones of the Gault Formation and the Lower Greensand beds which are exposed to the north and east of the *Greensand Terrace*, along the southern and western edges of the Greensand and the Weald. It comprises a gently undulating lowland vale supporting fields of arable, pasture and woodland.

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform underlain by mudstones of the Gault Formation and sandstones of the Lower Greensand.
- Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils support mixed farmland and deciduous woodland copses dominated by oak, hazel and ash woodland.
- Drained by numerous water courses, many of which are tributary streams of the Rother or Wey.
- The wet and unproductive soils have given rise to a remote and marginal character.
- A largely medieval landscape of isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts providing a strong sense of historical continuity.
- Thick hedgerows with spreading hedgerow oaks, or strips of woodland, provide a sense of enclosure.
- Ponds and meadows on the fringes of tributary streams provide biodiversity interest.
- Settlement is characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement across the clay comprising hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin with larger settlements on the sandstone beds.
- Later farmsteads of 18th-19th century date are situated within areas representing later enclosure of marshland and parkland.
- The presence of landscape parks indicates the recreational use made by wealthy landowners of this poor and unproductive landscape.
- This low lying landscape provides a convenient transport corridor, containing main roads (e.g. A3(T) and the mainline railway), which affect tranquillity.

Character Area 7a: Rother Valley





7A: Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland

Location and Boundaries

- 7A.1 The *Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland* occurs on the lower lying clays and sandstones that separate the Greensand Hills from the chalk downs of Hampshire and West Sussex. It contains the course of the upper Rother between Greatham Mill and Petersfield. The western boundary (closest to the chalk) is well defined by the locally prominent Greensand scarp, with the eastern boundary (closest to the Weald) represented by a transition to the sandier ridges of the *Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic* and the *Hill Brow Greensand Hills*. There are views over this landscape from surrounding high ground.

The character area is wholly within the South Downs National Park. It forms part of a much larger character area extending to the east beyond the district boundary.

Key Characteristics

- Low lying clay and sandstone 'vale' containing numerous tributary streams and ponds. Contains the wooded course of the upper Rother valley.
- Slowly permeable soils support mixed farmland, unimproved neutral grassland and woodland in which thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks create a lush, wooded character.
- Woodlands of ancient origin support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates.
- Thick, high hedgerows, small blocks of scattered woodland and wooded field boundaries contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- A medieval landscape of scattered hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts, surrounded by woodland.
- Medieval market town of Petersfield, a planned settlement, and the modern development of Liss, which originated as a medieval hamlet are linked by the A3(T) and mainline railway creating a dominant urbanised character in places.
- Distinctive building materials including sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.
- Views over this area from surrounding high land including the chalk downs and Greensand Hills. Conversely, this higher land forms a strong backdrop and enclosing element in views from the vale.

Physical Landscape

- 7A.2 The *Rother Valley* is underlain by Gault Clay, a formation of soft mudstones and silty mudstones which have weathered to yellow and brown clays. This underlying

geology creates a flat, low lying, 'vale' like landform. Between Petersfield and Liss is an outcrop of Lower Greensand which gives rise to a much more undulating landform for example at Steep Marsh. Overlying the bedrock geology are drift deposits of alluvium (along the numerous streams) and 'head' (downwash deposits at the base of the *Greensand Hills* around Liss and Petersfield).

- 7A.3 The underlying clay geology creates slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils, known as Pelo-stagnogley soils. The sandstones have given rise to well drained coarse loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils. These inform a mixed farming landscape which although dominated by arable agriculture is interspersed with permanent pasture grassland and frequent woodland (e.g. Coldhayes Wood and Little Wood). Medieval assarted fields have survived in more undulating areas. A well developed hedgerow network exists, which together with mature boundary oaks are an important ecological resource.
- 7A.4 The valley is drained by the River Rother and its tributaries. The wooded course of the upper River Rother is a key component of this landscape character area, hidden amongst the undulating sandstone outcrop between Liss and Petersfield. The River Rother does not have a great visual influence on the landscape, but is of ecological importance for its associated fringing wetland habitats, including marshy grassland, willow and alder carr, and its associated bird interest.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 7A.5 The relatively small fields, high proportion of woodland cover and thick, high hedgerows contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure in this landscape. These features also contribute to the lush lowland character which contrasts with the adjacent open sandy landscapes and exposed chalk scarps. Although the *Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale* is perceived as an organised landscape as a result of its division into fields, the fields are irregular in form.
- 7A.6 The low-lying area forms a convenient route for communication infrastructure – in this case the A3(T) and the mainline railway. These major transport routes (including artificial lighting) are a visible feature and reduce the perceived naturalness of the landscape. However, away from the main settlements and transport routes the area remains relatively tranquil.
- 7A.7 Some parts of the landscape are accessible via a network of rights of way, particularly the upper Rother valley. Rights of way include the long distance Hanger's Way, which passes through Petersfield and the Royal Woolmer Way which starts from Liss. There are cycle hire facilities at Petersfield and both on-road and traffic free cycle routes promoted by Sustrans between Petersfield and Liss. The disused railway line provides recreational opportunities and potential. The East Hampshire AONB cycle route also passes through Petersfield.
- 7A.8 There are a number of smaller historic parks and gardens around Petersfield which are listed on Hampshire's list of local parks and gardens of historic interest including Petersfield Physic Garden and Dragon House. The life of Petersfield and its surroundings in the early 20th century is captured in the paintings of Flora Twort (1893 – 1985).

Biodiversity

- 7A.9 Many of the woodlands are of ancient origin and support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates. Many of these woodlands carry non-statutory nature conservation designation as SINC, for example Coldhayes Wood and The Paddock Wood SINC. In addition, occasional small areas of unimproved neutral grassland also occur (e.g. Hay Meadow, Snailing Lane and Seven Stars Meadow South). Human-made habitats for example disused railway lines and ponds have also developed significant ecological interest.
- 7A.10 The River Rother is designated as a SINC in this character area and is of ecological importance for its associated fringing wetland habitats, including marshy grassland, willow and alder carr, and its associated bird interest.

Historic Character

- 7A.11 The development of deciduous woodland cover following the last glaciation (c.8500BC) saw the exploitation of this lowland landscape by Mesolithic hunters. Later prehistoric and Romano-British communities, dependent largely on agriculture, were deterred by the thick woodland and heavy, wet clay soils. However, the lighter soils on the sandstone beds between Petersfield and Liss were settled from the bronze age (the recently discovered Roman Villa at West Liss has evidence of a Bronze Age settlement underneath). A further Roman Villa is located at Stroud near Petersfield.
- 7A.12 Little attempt to clear the land was made until the Saxon period, when communities situated on better soils elsewhere in the region began to exploit the landscape, initially as swine pastures within the woodland. By the 12th-13th centuries, piecemeal clearance of the woodland was in progress.
- 7A.13 The area is characterised by this largely medieval landscape of isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts, surrounded by woodland. Blocks of 18th-19th century enclosure represent later enclosure of marshland and parkland.
- 7A.14 Today the woodland of pre-1800 (and probably medieval) origin survives as small blocks scattered across the character area, but combines with the wooded field boundaries to give the landscape a much more wooded visual appearance.
- 7A.15 The area contains a number of parks of local importance as at Lyss Place, Stodham Park and Broadland House (all on the Hampshire Register) but no major designed landscapes.

Key Historic Characteristics

- Away from the modern urban development and the A3(T), the essentially marginal nature of the landscape provides a continuing sense of remoteness
- Much of the rural landscape is largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity
- Scattered blocks of Pre-1800 woodland occur.

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 7A.16 This settlement pattern in this character area is generally a high density of dispersed settlement. However, the exceptions to the dispersed pattern are the settlements of Liss and Petersfield on the sandstone. Petersfield is the medieval market town, a deliberately planned settlement established as a market town to serve the surrounding chalklands. Building materials characteristic of Petersfield include red and blue brick buildings (including distinctive red and blue brick chequer patterns) and timber framed buildings with flint infill.
- 7A.17 Liss originated as a Bronze Age settlement. A Roman Villa was then developed on the site that grew into a medieval hamlet. It subsequently developed as a railway village. Although it has expanded considerably it is hidden within the undulating topography of this part of the upper Rother valley.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- The rural, mixed farming landscape which although dominated by arable agriculture is interspersed with permanent pasture grassland and frequent woodland.
 - Woodlands, thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks which create a lush, wooded character and sense of enclosure which contrasts with the adjacent open downs. Woodlands of ancient origin are particularly important habitats.
 - The strong sense of historical continuity provided by the remnants of the medieval landscape including the hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin and irregular fields, particularly those that retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts e.g. the small area of medieval assarts surviving at Steep Marsh, to the north-west of Petersfield.
 - The relative tranquillity of the landscape in areas away from the A3(T), mainline railway, Petersfield, and Liss.
 - The unity of the built components of the landscape arising from a consistent palette of building materials including sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.
 - Views to surrounding higher land (notably the Greensand Terrace and Chalk scarps which provide a sense of containment and form a dominant backdrop.
- 7A.18 Tree cover and high hedges limit visual sensitivity of this landscape. However, the visibility of this landscape from the adjacent scarps and *Greensand Terrace* to the south and west and *Greensand Hills* to the east increases the visual sensitivity of this landscape.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

- 7A.19 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the mixed farming character, the intact medieval landscape pattern, and the rural setting to hamlets and villages.**

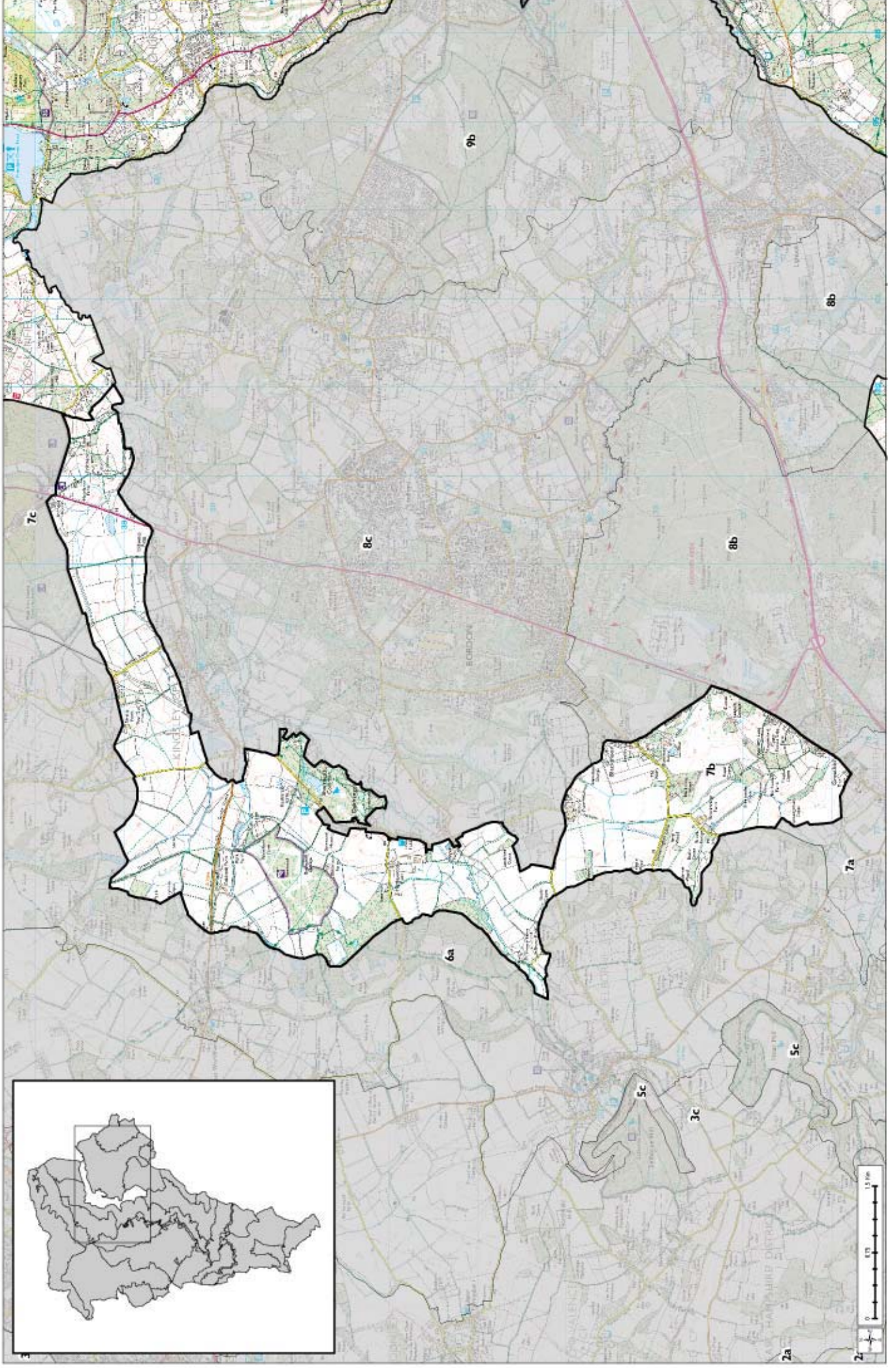
Landscape Management Considerations

- Conserve ancient woodland and plan for long term woodland regeneration.
- Consider re-introducing traditional woodland management techniques, such as coppicing, and encourage interest in, and marketing of, local wood products.
- Conserve and manage the network of thick hedgerows, hedgerow oaks and field oaks that characterise the landscape. Consider re-planting hedgerows that have been lost, encourage buffer strips along hedgerows and encourage new tree planting to maintain the tree population.
- Conserve the pastoral character of the landscape and seek to manage and extend unimproved meadow grassland.
- Conserve areas of pasture and seek to ensure good management of horse grazing, including retention of hedgerow boundaries, management of the sward and avoiding proliferation of buildings/sheds etc.
- Encourage sympathetic integration of horse paddocks through maintenance of hedgerow field boundaries and avoiding overgrazing of pastures and overuse of bridleways.
- Encourage the retention and management of riverside trees and maintain an uncultivated corridor alongside streams.
- Safeguard early enclosures that are remnants of a medieval landscape.
- Conserve the field and woodland patterns associated with the area of assarts surviving at Steep Marsh, to the north-west of Petersfield.

Development Considerations

- Integrate built development on the edges of Petersfield and Liss into the rural landscape and maintain the rural setting to these settlements.
- Consider opportunities to further mitigate the impact of the A3(T) on the rural character of the landscape through conservation of existing visual screening and noise attenuation.
- Consider the impact of development in this area in views from the *Greensand Terrace* as well the chalk landscapes beyond.
- Conserve views out to rural ridgelines (the *Greensand Terrace* and *Chalk Scarps*).
- Integrate built development on the edges of villages into the rural landscape, through native planting. Seek to maintain the rural setting to hamlets and villages.
- Monitor the effects of incremental change to buildings – develop design guidance to help resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting.

Character Area 7b: Kingsley / Blackmoor





7B: Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland

Location and Boundaries

- 7B.1 The *Kingsley/Blackmoor Mixed Farmland and Woodland* occurs on the lower lying clays and sandstones that separate the Greensand Hills from the chalk downs of Hampshire and West Sussex. It forms an extension to the north of the Upper Rother Valley. The western boundary (closest to the chalk) is well defined by the locally prominent Greensand scarp, with the eastern boundary is defined by the designated National Park boundary, which coincides with a change in geology to the sandy landscapes of the *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic*.
- 7B.2 There are views over this landscape from the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* to the west. To the east there are views out to the farmland and heath mosaic around Bordon including the MOD transmitting station (white 'golf balls') at Oakhanger.

The character area is wholly within the South Downs National Park. The boundaries are contiguous with the South Downs LCA.

Key Characteristics

- Open, flat Low lying clay 'vale' at the foot of the East Hampshire Greensand 'terrace' containing numerous streams and ponds.
- Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils support mixed farmland, unimproved neutral grassland and woodland in which thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks create a lush, wooded character.
- Two large area of common land at Binswood and Shortheath provide rich habitats for biodiversity (designated SSSIs) as well as providing open public access. Binswood comprises an actively managed wood pasture and Shortheath Common comprises ancient common land which supports bogs, marshes, water bodies, heath, grassland and woodland.
- Occasional woodlands of ancient origin support characteristic ancient woodland plant species, as well as providing important habitat for a range of breeding bird species and invertebrates.
- Thick, high hedgerows, small blocks of scattered woodland and wooded field boundaries contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- Essentially a medieval landscape of scattered hamlets and isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within irregular fields, with two medieval deer parks located at East Worldham and Blackmoor House.
- Some areas of recent enclosures overlay the medieval field pattern, for example in the area east of the Selborne orchards.
- Building materials including sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles. Bargate stone and decorative beading are a distinctive feature.

- Blackmoor Park is a 19th century landscape park that indicates the recreational use made by wealthy landowners of this relatively unproductive landscape.
- Views over this area from the adjacent *Greensand Terrace*, plus views back to the steep escarpment and hangers marking the edge of the terrace.

Physical Landscape

- 7B.3 The gently undulating landform is underlain by mudstones of the Gault Formation and sandstones of the Lower Greensand. The area is characterised by a mix of permanent pasture on heavy clay soils and arable cultivation, together with scattered small woodland blocks, some of which are of ancient origin, as at Binswood. The is drained by numerous streams, which flow eastwards, for example Oakhanger Stream and Kingsley Stream, towards the River Wey. As well as the streams, the vale contains a number of small ponds, some of which are former clay pits.
- 7B.4 Of particular note in this character area is the presence of common land at Binswood Common and Shortheath Common.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 7B.5 The character area has a varying sense of enclosure with more open large fields contrasting with areas where thick hedgerow cover and scattered woodland provides a greater degree of enclosure. There are some long open views across the vale and up to the Greensand escarpment.
- 7B.6 It is particularly tranquil and remote in character as a result of the low density of settlement and absence of major transport routes, with minor roads providing access across the vale but little road access within the character area. In some cases these roads are heavily used as cut-throughs.
- 7B.7 The commons now provide open access as well as recreational opportunities for horse riding, dog walking and angling at Shortheath. The network of public rights of way provides further opportunities for countryside access, including the long distance Hanger's Way, which borders Binswood Common. A 19th century landscape park at Blackmoor (former deer park) indicates the recreational use made, by wealthy landowners, of this heavy clay landscape.
- 7B.8 Clay extraction is evidenced by small pits (now ponds) and at Selborne Pit a distinctive tall brick tower. Current extraction activities, (just outside the character area), are more disruptive introducing noise and movement (lorries) into the area. Pylons are a further disruptive feature in the landscape.

Biodiversity

- 7B.9 The area contains a range of features of biodiversity interest. Of particular note are the scattered small woodland blocks, some of which are of ancient origin and also designated as county SINC, for example Blackmoor Wood SINC and Rookery Copse SINC.
- 7B.10 Binswood comprises an actively managed wood pasture, of acidic poorly-drained unimproved pasture with scattered old oaks and beeches, and areas of dense

woodland. The site is particularly important for its invertebrate and lichens assemblages and is recognised for its contribution to biodiversity at a national level (being designated as a SSSI). Shortheath Common is located on an outcrop of Lower Greensand on the eastern edge of the vale - it is a distinctive feature of this character area, comprising ancient common land which supports bogs, marshes, water bodies, heath, grassland and woodland. This site is of international nature conservation value, particularly for its valley mire system and is designated as an SAC. The mire and bog communities support a number of notable plants species, such as marsh cinquefoil, round-leaved sundew, cranberry and a many species of bog moss.

Historic Character

- 7B.11 This character area occupies the Gault Clay vale as it sweeps northwards at the western edge of the Weald, between Greatham and Kingsley.
- 7B.12 The development of deciduous woodland cover following the last glaciation (c.8500BC) saw the exploitation of this lowland landscape by Mesolithic hunters. Later prehistoric and Romano-British communities, dependent largely on agriculture, were deterred by the thick woodland and heavy, wet clay soils. Little attempt to clear the land was made until the Saxon period, when communities situated on better soils elsewhere in the region began to exploit the landscape. By the 12th-13th centuries, piecemeal clearance of the woodland was in progress.
- 7B.13 The area is characterised by this largely medieval landscape of isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields. In addition there are areas of recent enclosures and more modern fields. Two medieval deer parks remain at East Woldham and Blackmoor House (recorded on the Hampshire Register). One landscape park exists at the southern end of the character area (Blackmoor Park).
- 7B.14 The character area is relatively lightly wooded. Today woodland of pre-1800 (and probably medieval) origin survives as small blocks scattered across the character area, but combines with the wooded field boundaries to give the landscape a much more wooded visual appearance.

Key Historic Characteristics

- The absence of modern development provides a continuing sense of remoteness
- Parts of the rural landscape is largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity
- Scattered blocks of Pre-1800 woodland and common land are important features – representative of historic land uses.

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 7B.15 The area is characterised by the absence of villages and hamlets with the settlement form typically comprising a scatter of isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within areas of early enclosure surrounded by woodland. Later farmsteads of 18th-19th century date are situated within areas of recent enclosure.

- 7B.16 On the edge of the character area the linear ‘settlements of Blackmoor and Oakhanger are associated with the commons of the adjacent commons (part of character area 8c)
- 7B.17 Building materials include sandstone extracted from the local Greensands, red brick formed from local clays, and clay tiles.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

7B.18 Key sensitivities include:

- The medieval deer parks at East Worldham and Blackmoor House;
- The two large areas of common land at Binswood and Shortheath;
- Blackmoor Park which indicates 18th century recreational use of this relatively unproductive clay landscape;
- The high degree of tranquillity and remoteness which persist in part of this area, but is under threat from increasing traffic on the rural roads and activities (development and extraction) in adjacent character areas.
- Open views across the vale and to the Greensand escarpment to the west and Greensand Hills to the east.
- Woodlands, thick hedgerows and spreading hedgerow oaks which create a lush, wooded character and sense of enclosure. Woodlands of ancient origin are particularly important habitats.

7B.19 The tree cover and hedges limit visual sensitivity in parts of this landscape, although other areas are more open, within which any change is likely to be highly visible. The visibility of this landscape from the adjacent scarps and downs to the south, the *Greensand Terrace* to the west, and the *Greensand Hills* to the north and east increases the visual sensitivity of this landscape.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

7B.20 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the Vale as peaceful landscape of farmland, unimproved grassland, commons and woodland.**

Landscape Management Considerations

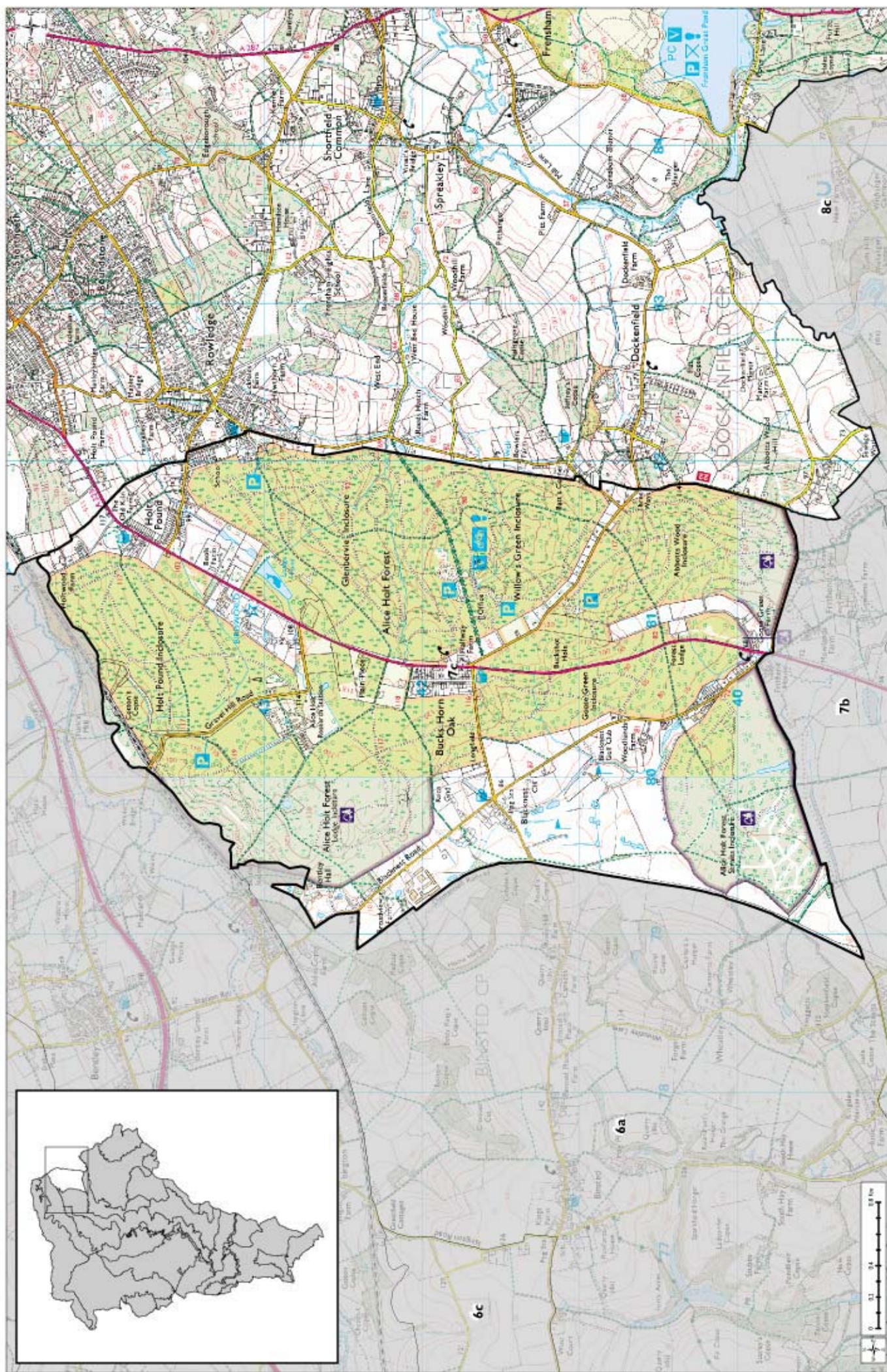
- Safeguard the medieval deer parks at East Worldham and Blackmoor House that are remnants of a medieval landscape.
- Conserve the features and setting of Blackmoor Park – maintain pastoral character.
- Ensure management of areas of common land at Binswood and Shortheath support a balance of biodiversity, historic and recreational objectives.

- Conserve and manage ancient woodland and plan for long term woodland regeneration. Consider re-introducing traditional woodland management techniques, such as coppicing, and encourage interest in, and marketing of, local wood products.
- Conserve and manage of riverside trees and maintain an uncultivated corridor alongside streams.

Development Considerations

- Conserve the high degree of tranquillity and remoteness within this area.
- Maintain the essentially undeveloped character with settlement limited to a scatter of isolated farmsteads of medieval origin and later farmsteads of 18th-19th century date.
- Consider the effect of change within the adjacent character area (8c) on the tranquil undeveloped character of this area, notably activities associated with extraction.
- Avoid introducing further large scale elements (such as pylons and masts) which are highly visible and disruptive within the more open areas of the vale.
- Consider the effect of any change on views from the adjacent Greensand and chalk landscapes.

Character Area 7c: Alice Holt





7C: Alice Holt

Location and Boundaries

- 7C.1 Located in the north east of East Hampshire this small character area is located on the Gault Clay. It is defined as a separate character area as a result of the extensive woodland/plantation cover (Forestry Commission). The eastern edge of this character area is defined by the district boundary which also coincides with the edge of woodland cover. The northern and southern boundaries are also delineated by the extent of woodland cover and the transition to lowerlying adjacent landscapes. A change in the underlying geology (to Upper Greensand) defines the western boundary.

The character area is not in the South Downs National Park.

Key Characteristics

- Underlain by mudstones of the Gault Formation which create a gently undulating landform and are prone to slippage.
- Predominantly seasonally wet acid and loamy and clayey soils support broadleaf and coniferous woodland. Over 100ha of original 19th Century oak dominated woodland occurs and is of particular ecological interest.
- A number of small fields of pasture are contained within the woodland.
- The forest supports a wide range of breeding birds, and a population of the purple emperor butterfly, a species which is now restricted to a limited number of broadleaved woodlands in Southern England.
- Drained by tributaries of the Slea and the Wey with a number of ponds (e.g. Lodge Pond).
- Small nuclear villages located along the A325 (Bucks Horn Oak and Holt Pound) with some dispersed, linear settlement along rural roads.
- Extensive recreational opportunities associated with the forest, plus several recreation sites (Blacknest Golf Course and Birdworld).
- Cut north-south by the A325 with a number of rural roads separating woodland Inclosures.
- Away from the A325 a peaceful landscape.

Physical Landscape

- 7C.2 Alice Holt Forest is underlain by the mudstones of the Gault Formation which create a gently undulating landform. Drift deposits of head cover the north eastern half of the character area corresponding to tributaries of the River Wey (South Branch). The geology gives rise to predominantly slowly permeable, seasonally wet acid and loamy and clayey soils. A high proportion of semi-natural woodland cover has been retained (all of which is ancient) on these clay based soils.

- 7C.3 Woodland is divided into Inclosures which contain varying proportions of broadleaf and coniferous woodland with Corsican pine and oak as key species. For example Holt Pound is a predominantly coniferous, Abbots Wood is predominantly broadleaf and Lodge Inclosure is mixed woodland. A number of small areas of pasture are contained within woodland with field boundaries formed by the woodland edge (Bools Farm, Halfway Farm and Woodlands Farm). The farmland to the west of the forest edge (e.g. Broadview Farm) is recent enclosure whereas the farmland enclosed by woodland exhibits assarted fields (Medieval: Post Medieval).
- 7C.4 The character area is drained by tributaries of the River Wey and Slea. A number of ponds occur within the landscape e.g. Lodge Pond.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 7C.5 The diversity in woodland provides a variety of texture and colour and offers different experiences, for example Abbots Wood has an impressive avenue of beech which lines one of the tracks. The open clearings of pasture contrast with the enclosure provided by tree cover.
- 7C.6 The area is dissected by the A325 with several settlements and a number of recreational opportunities, however away from the roads, within the forest enclosures this is a peaceful and natural landscape with a strong sense of seclusion.
- 7C.7 The forest is managed to produce timber, encourage wildlife and provide recreational opportunities. Access to the forest is good with a number of car parks, a comprehensive footpath network and is well used by off-road cyclists. Alice Holt visitor centre provides an important educational facility. Other recreational facilities include Blacknest Golf Course and Bird World.
- 7C.8 Alice Holt is the home to one of the Forestry Commission's two main research stations. The Forest gives its name to coarse Roman period pottery produced at various sites in the area from the first to 4th Centuries AD. This is recognised by a Scheduled Ancient Monument listing which identifies the southern part of Goose Green Inclosure and part of Abbots Wood Inclosure as Kiln sites. Alice Holt Pottery is characterised as coarse grey sandy clay which has a very rough look. The forest is also famous for its oak trees, which once supplied timber for building navy ships.

Biodiversity

- 7C.9 The extensive forestry area includes a number of component SINC sites. The majority of the woodland is considered to be of ancient origin, although much has been replanted and now comprises coniferous forest dominated by Corsican pine. However, over 100ha of 19th Century oak dominated woodland also occurs and is of particular ecological interest. As a whole this site supports a wide range of breeding birds, and a population of the purple emperor butterfly, a species which is now restricted to a limited number of broadleaved woodlands in Southern England. Bentley Station Meadow on the edge of the Forest is dedicated to butterfly conservation.

Historic Character

- 7C.10 This is a heavily wooded landscape of pre-1800 origin, although subsequently replanted. The unproductive Gault Clay was historically used as common wood-pasture. There is evidence of assarting, within the woodland, mostly regular in nature, for example south of Holt Pound suggests a post-medieval date. On the fringes of character area it is surrounded by an early enclosed landscape along the margins of the Upper Greensand.
- 7C.11 Occasional archaeological monuments include an important Roman pottery industry surviving in the landscape as a series of dumps of wasters (misfired pottery) forming mounds (SAM).

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 7C.12 Settlement is largely post-1800 common-edge settlements (Holt Pound, Bucks Horn Oak) forming linear patterns associated with regular small garden plots. Modern additions include scientific (Forestry Commission Research Station) and leisure (Birdworld) facilities. Local building materials include sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- 7C.13 Key sensitivities include:
- The large tracts of ancient woodland (particularly the 19th Century oak dominated woodland) and the important habitat it provides.
 - The small areas of medieval field assarts contained within woodland.
 - The sensitive balance between biodiversity, recreation and productive use of the forest.
 - The sense of peacefulness found within the woodland, away from the main road.
- 7C.14 The high proportion of tree cover limits visual sensitivity of the landscape and provide opportunities for planting mitigation associated with development. Views within and to this landscape are contained by and restricted by woodland.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

- 7C.15 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the natural character of the woodland and the opportunities it provides for timber production, wildlife and recreation.**

Landscape Management Considerations

- Conserve ancient woodland and ensure sensitive and sustainable management of the woodland/forestry resource.
- Consider the impact of any change (including felling) on the slopes which rise above the Wey Valley and are important in views from the valley.

- Protect the site which forms an important habitat for breeding birds, and a population of the purple emperor butterfly.
- Conserve the pattern of small pastoral fields and medieval assarts which survive within the woodland.

Development Considerations

- Conserve the settlement pattern and avoid further incremental linear development along the A325.
- Maintain the rural character of the roads and avoid use of excessive lighting, signage and 'suburban' features.