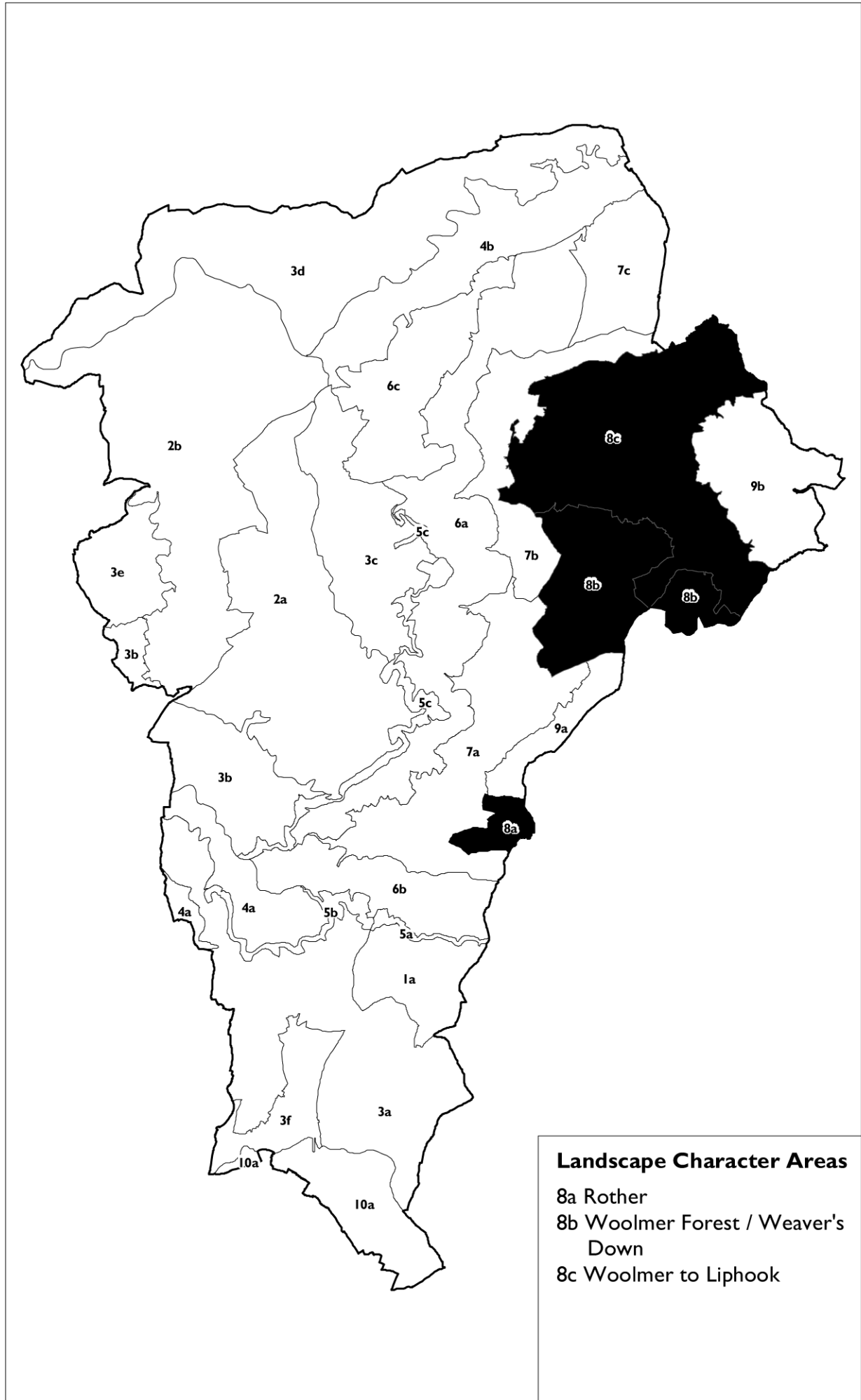
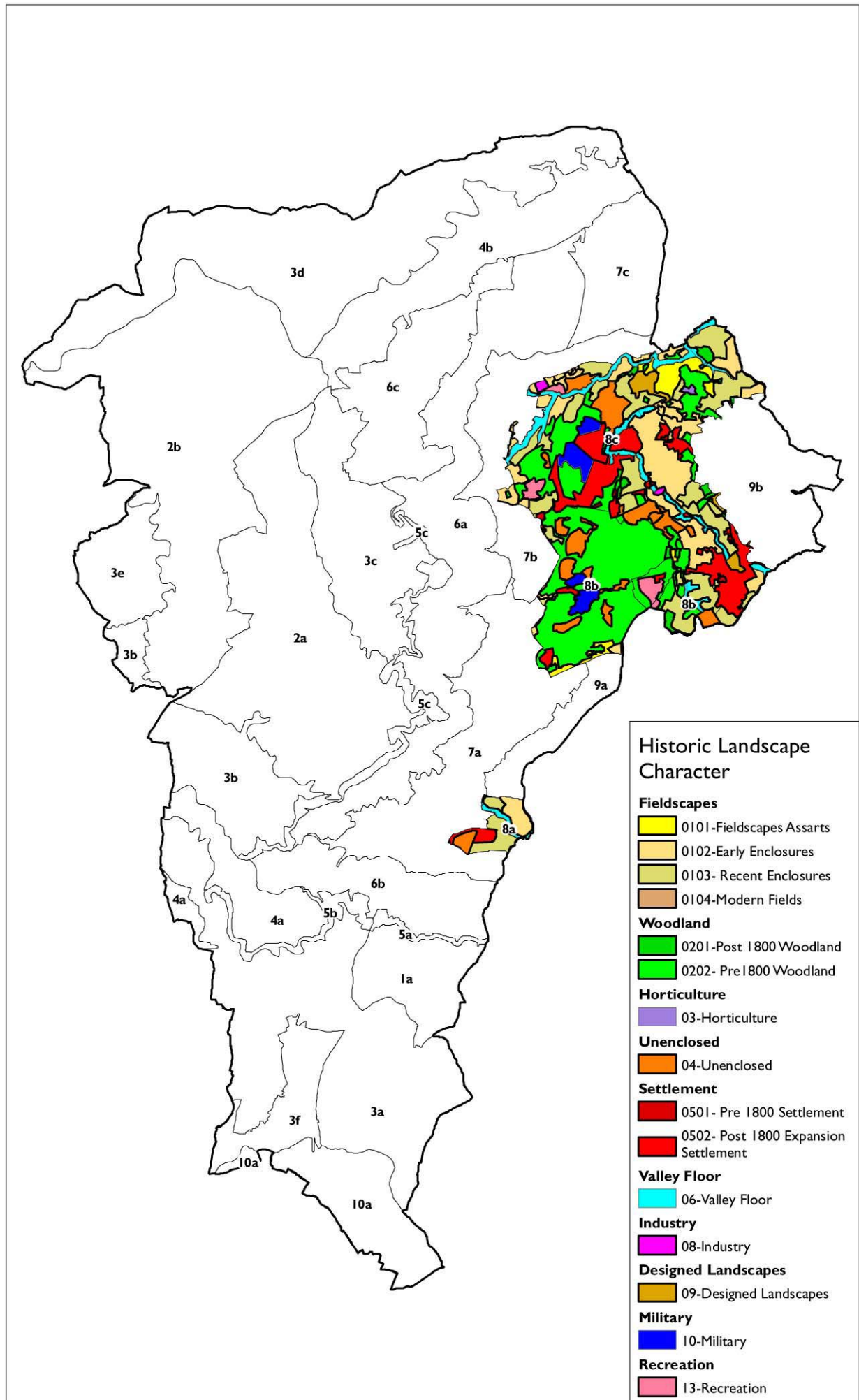


Landscape Type 8 : Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic



8 : Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic



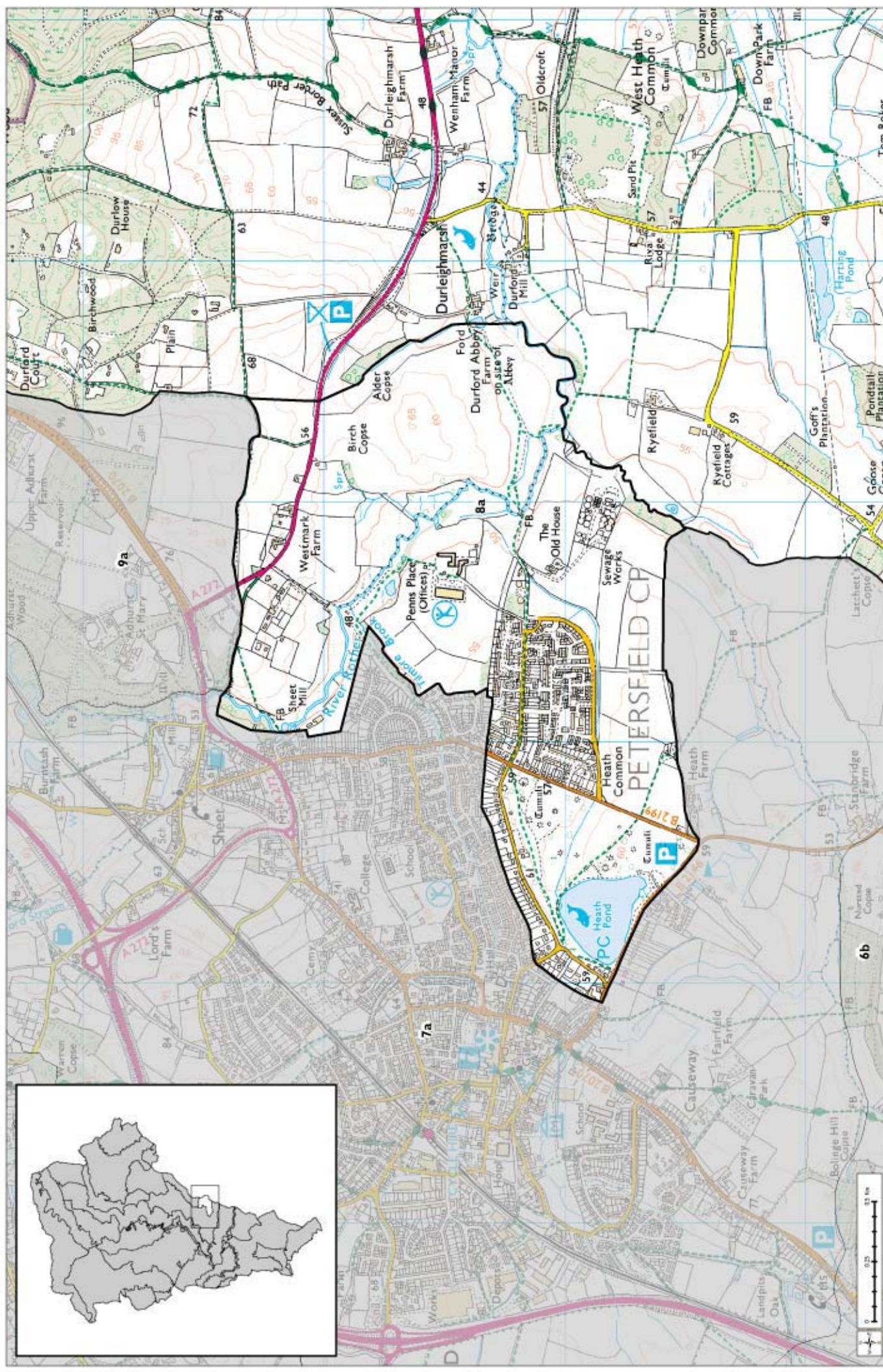
LANDSCAPE TYPE 8: WEALDEN FARMLAND AND HEATH MOSAIC

- 8.1 The *Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic* lies in the east of the district on the sandstones of the Folkestone Formation. The geology gives rise to a well drained, sandy lowland landscape supporting a mosaic of oak-birch woodland, conifer plantations, open sandy heaths, and rough grazed pasture.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Flat or gently undulating lowland 'plateau' landscape on outcrops of sandstones of the Folkestone formation.
- Well-drained sandy, acidic soils support a mix of nationally important heathland habitats including open heather heath, acid grassland, bracken, gorse, woody scrub, and oak-birch woodland.
- Small to medium sized fields of rough grazed pasture and horse paddocks bounded by hedgerows with gorse and bracken and hedgerow oaks. Clusters of oak trees and Scots pine trees form visual accents.
- An irregular and intimate mix of semi-natural habitats and agriculture creating valuable foraging and over-wintering sites for a range of bird species.
- Ponds, mires and wet grassland in low lying areas.
- Commons (traditionally used for rough grazing or heath-cutting) often covered by woodland plantations, but some remnant unenclosed commons providing open access.
- Settlement is relatively late, typically comprising isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure, and 'squatter' settlement on the edges of the common land. Building materials include local sandstones.
- Generally straight lanes and tracks provide access to heathland and heath edge settlements.
- Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries are signs of a prehistoric ritual landscape.
- Large number of sand pits indicating the economic value of the sands of the Folkestone Beds.
- Views limited by dense woodland cover.

Character Area 8a: Rother





8A: Rother Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic

Location and Boundaries

- 8A.1 This small character area lies to the immediate east of Petersfield and extends to the district boundary. It forms part of a much larger character area continuing to the east within the South Downs National Park. The area is encompassed to the south and west by the low lying sandstone and clay vale of the *Rother Valley*.

The character area is wholly within the South Downs National Park. It forms part of two larger character areas (Rother Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic and North Rother Valley Sandy Arable Farmland) which extend to the east beyond the district boundary.

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating sandstone valley enclosed to the north by the Greensand Hills of the Weald.
- Contains the course of the River Rother which flows east-west along a narrow floodplain, within a gently meandering course.
- Well-drained, easily eroded sandy soils are cultivated as arable farmland. The landscape is divided into geometric fields of, varying size, bounded by broken and gappy hedgerows.
- The large arable fields, denuded hedgerow boundaries and lack of woodland create an open character with long views. Standard oaks are a key ecological and visual feature in this predominantly open arable landscape.
- A collection of scheduled ancient monuments on Heath Common include a group of 21 Bronze Age barrows or burial mounds.
- Heath Pond, Heath Common and the River Rother are of ecological value.
- Settlement comprises the suburban edge of Petersfield at Heath Common and scattered farmsteads, many of medieval origin (Westmark Farm).
- Away from the A272 the landscape is calm and still, particularly by the river.

Physical Landscape

- 8A.2 The *River Rother Sandy Arable Farmland* character area is underlain by the Sandgate Beds, a formation of soft yellow sandstones, which are part of the Lower Greensand deposits that form part of the Greensand and the Weald. The Sandgate Beds create a gently rolling relief with well-drained, easily eroded sandy soils which are almost exclusively used for arable farmland. Fields vary in size but are generally geometric, bounded by broken gappy hedgerows. Mature hedgerow oaks are important visual features.
- 8A.3 The meandering course of River Rother flows south eastwards through this character area. The river is of significant ecological interest and is designated as a

SINC for its aquatic flora and associated faunal interest. Heath Common SINC is an expanse of grass and heathland incorporating Heath Pond.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 8A.4 The landscape has a large scale, open character as a result of the large arable fields, denuded hedgerow boundaries and limited woodland cover. The repetition of fields contributes to a uniform landscape pattern. A distinctive feature within this is the 'heath' at heath common and associated Heath Pond.
- 8A.5 The intensive agriculture, presence of built development on the edge of Petersfield and traffic on the A272 contribute to visible human impact. However away from these areas of heightened activity, the landscape is calm and still, particularly by the river.
- 8A.6 Common incorporating Heath Pond is an area of open access land lying in close proximity to Petersfield High Street which provides recreational opportunities. The pond is surrounded by the recently constructed Millennium Trail, a trail created especially to facilitate wheelchair access to the heath. Footpaths cross the area allowing access to the River Rother from Petersfield.

Biodiversity

- 8A.7 This character area comprises the narrow alluvial floodplain of the River Rother and its associated valley sides. The majority of the area is under intensive arable cultivation, with scattered although often defunct hedgerows, together with occasional woodland blocks (some of ancient origin) and standard oaks providing key ecological features in this predominantly arable landscape.
- 8A.8 The River Rother itself, however, is of significant ecological interest and is designated as a SINC for its aquatic flora and associated faunal interest. Heath Common SINC is an expanse of grass and heathland incorporating Heath Pond.

Historic Character

- 8A.9 A collection of scheduled ancient monuments is found on Heath Common representing a group of 21 Bronze Age barrows or burial mounds. This is one of the most important groups to be found anywhere in Britain. The presence of these Bronze Age barrow cemeteries indicates the marginality of this part of the character area is largely the result of human activity.
- 8A.10 Heath pond owes its existence to the 18th century farmers whose animals grazed the common and frequently drowned in the marsh that then occupied its centre.
- 8A.11 The changing economic and social conditions of the later medieval period saw the decline of the open field system, and many of the remaining open fields were enclosed on a piecemeal basis, often beginning with the lords' demesne lands.
- 8A.12 The character area now comprises blocks of early and recent enclosure (15th-17th and 18th-19th centuries respectively).

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 8A.13 Settlement in this character area comprises farmsteads of medieval origin (Westmark Farm) with modern offices and sewage plants along the western edge. Penns Place, the district council offices are located within the centre of the character area
- 8A.14 Building materials are typically local sandstone, flint and red and yellow brick, with clay tiles and thatch used for roofing.
- 8A.15 Durford Abbey lies partly within this character area.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- 8A.16 Key sensitivities include:
- The gently meandering course of the River Rother.
 - Long views across resulting from the open character and rolling nature of the landscape.
 - The network of public rights of way that and open access on Heath Common.
 - The recreational landscape of Heath Common.
 - The collection of Bronze Age barrows found on Heath Common which provide signs of a prehistoric ritual landscape.
- 8A.17 The low proportion of woodland cover and openness of the landscape makes this landscape visually sensitive. This landscape is visible from users of the A272 and from parts of the Greensand hills to the north. This inter-visibility with adjacent landscapes enhances its visual sensitivity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

- 8A.18 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the simple structure of the landscape centred on the meandering course of the River Rother and strengthen the hedgerow, woodland and tree network.**

Landscape Management Considerations

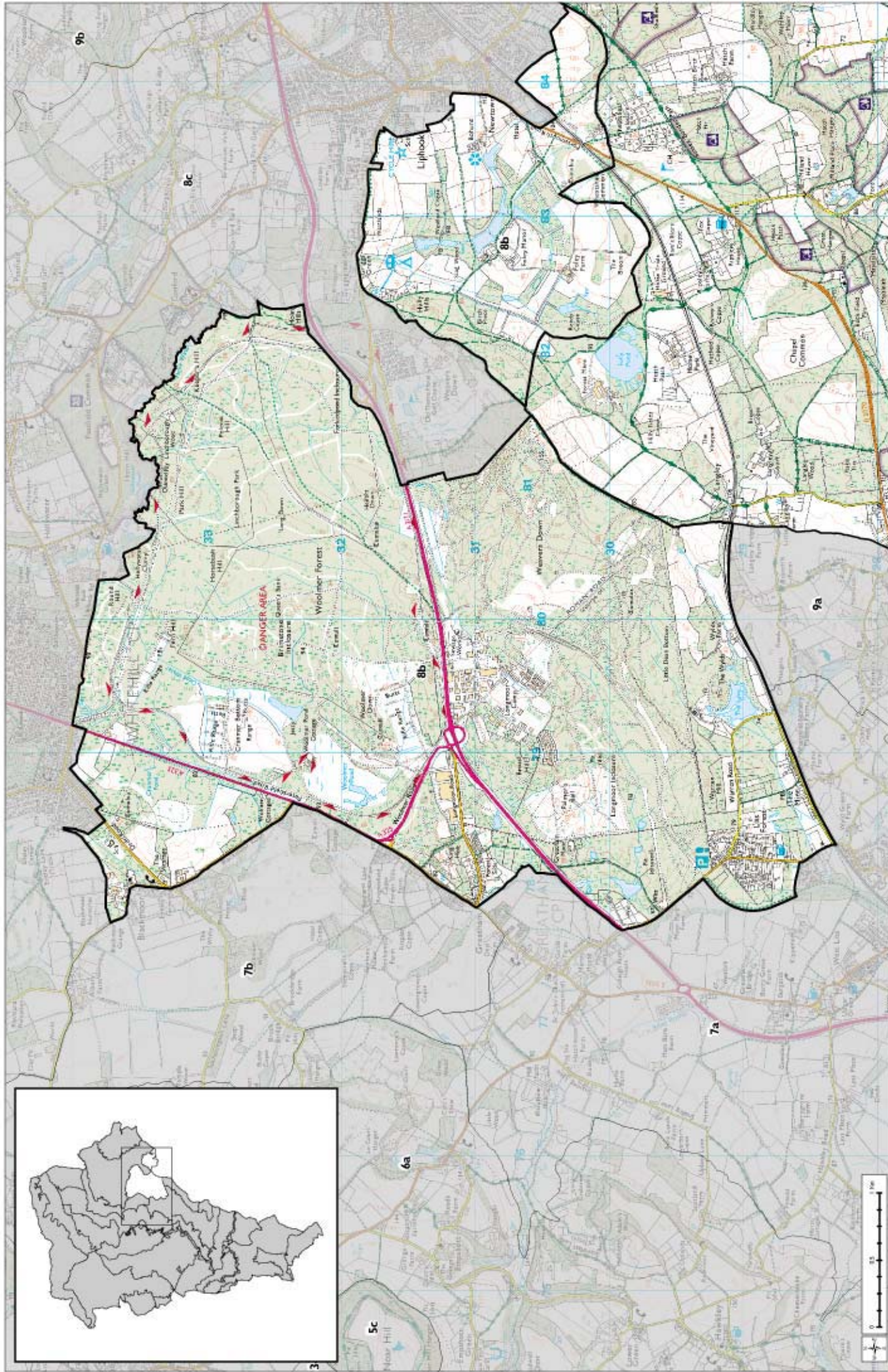
- Enhance biodiversity interest of riverside pastures and retain/extend rich wet woodland, marsh and wet meadow habitats.
- Control invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam along the river.
- Conserve areas of pasture and seek to ensure good management of horse grazing, including retention of hedgerow boundaries, management of the sward and avoiding proliferation of buildings/sheds etc.
- Consider opportunities to re-create waterside grassland along the Rother and tributary streams to increase landscape diversity and enhance biodiversity.

- Conserve and manage the network of hedgerows that give the landscape its structure - consider re-planting hedgerows that have been previously removed.
- Conserve and manage Heath Common for its landscape, biodiversity and archaeological interest.
- Encourage regeneration of hedgerow oak trees. Also consider new tree planting in hedgerows denuded of trees.
- Conserve the historic Bronze Age barrow cemeteries which provide a sense of time depth and evidence of a prehistoric ritual landscape. Maintain these sites free of trees and enhance their settings.

Development Considerations

- Consider opportunities to further mitigate the impact of the A272 on the rural character of the landscape through screening by planting native broadleaved species and removal of unnecessary signs.
- Take account of the sensitivity of views from the *Greensand Hills* to the north in relation to any change within the valley.
- Conserve the rural landscape setting to Petersfield.
- Ensure that any built development reflects the local vernacular - resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting.

Character Area 8b: Woolmer Forest / Weaver's Down





8B: Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down

Location and Boundaries

- 8B.1 The Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down character area lies on the eastern boundary of the district, forming an elevated undulating 'plateau' located to the west of Liphook. The western boundary of this area is quite clearly defined and has been drawn along the woodland edge. The southern boundary in part represents a transition to the Greensand Hills and has been drawn along the mainline railway. The northern edge is defined by the edge of the proposed South Downs National Park, which marks a change to a more settled landscape at Bordon, although the underlying landscape character is similar.
- 8B.2 The character area includes the more isolated area to the east around Foley Manor, which is similar in terms of underlying geology, but has a different land uses relate to it historic evolution. There is limited public access into this area.

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

Key Characteristics

- Undulating 'plateau' formed from sandstones of the Folkestone formation, reaching 155m at Weaver's Down.
- The area forms the watershed of two catchments with small streams flowing southwards into the River Rother and northwards into the River Wey.
- Well-drained sandy soils which support extensive tracts of conifer plantations, oak-birch woodland and within this areas of relic, lowland heath and bog.
- Internationally important ecological resource, represented by extensive area of lowland heathland habitats (e.g. Woolmer Forest SAC and Wealden Heaths SPA).
- Settlement is relatively late in origin, comprising isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure, and localised groupings of modern military buildings.
- Recent and modern enclosures around the edge woodlands are evidence that landuse history remained one of common grazing until relatively late in the post-medieval period.
- Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries are indicative of a prehistoric ritual landscape.
- Remnant of Royal Hunting Forest with unenclosed commons, formerly used for common grazing, are now used by the military as firing ranges.
- Extensive areas of post-1800 woodland plantations cover areas of former commonland and provide a strong sense of enclosure and containment.

- Strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity locally, but this is impinged on by the presence of the A3 (T), army camps and settlement.

Physical Landscape

- 8B.3 The Folkestone Beds underlying the *Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down* form an undulating 'plateau' reaching 155m at Weaver's Down. The areas around Polecat Hill, to the north-east, and The Wylds/Forest Mere to the south, are underlain by softer sandstones of the Sandgate Beds, a formation of soft yellow sandstones which form a gently rolling relief at slightly lower altitude. The far eastern part of the area, around Foley Manor, is underlain by the more resistant cherts and sandy limestones of the Hythe Beds. These underlying bedrocks give rise to some variety across the character area.
- 8B.4 The very well drained acid sandy soils of this character area support extensive tracts of common land, most of which have been appropriated during the 19th/20th century for coniferous plantations that make up Woolmer Forest. Extensive clearings in the Forest occur at Woolmer Pond, Palmer's Ball, and Weaver's Down where areas of oak-birch woodland, lowland heath, acid grassland, and low-lying bogs and pools are important features.
- 8B.5 The south eastern part of the area, overlying the Hythe Formation of the Lower Greensand, is a small area of recent and modern enclosures which represents better quality commonland enclosed for agricultural use. Although there are no traditional examples of designed landscapes, *i.e.* gentry houses and landscape parks, this area contains a number of small and lately established parks as at The Wylds, and Foley Manor.
- 8B.6 The plateau is drained by small streams which flow southwards into the River Rother and northwards into the River Wey. There are several large ponds, for example Woolmer Pond (created as a result of former peat cutting), Cranmer Pond and The Lake.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 8B.7 The presence of vast expanses of coniferous forest gives rise to a simple and unified landscape on a large scale. Tall conifers which cast dark shadows create an almost overpowering sense of enclosure, which is only broken by the presence of clearings at Woolmer Pond, Palmer's Ball, and Weaver's Down, which support extensive open areas of heathland providing a strong contrast to the forest. This can also be a colourful landscape – when swathes of heather turn purple in summer.
- 8B.8 The Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down character area is essentially a quiet landscape with a high sense of 'naturalness' deriving from the mix of woodland and heathland. The area is in close proximity to a large number of people, with the settlements of Bordon, Liphook and Liss on the margins, with the character area itself seemingly devoid of human settlement. However, the presence of the A3(T) and overt human impact due to the presence of army camps, and industrial buildings, impinge on the sense of remoteness and tranquillity in localised areas.
- 8B.9 A large proportion of Woolmer Forest, Longmoor Inclosure and Weaver's Down is designated as Open Access land. However, in practice public access is restricted to

some of these areas by the army who use Woolmer Forest as a training ground although access is permitted when not in use.

- 8B.10 Some of the earliest descriptions of the Forest came from Gilbert White, a naturalist who lived in Selborne in the late 18th Century. Flora Thompson (1876 – 1947) wrote of Weavers Down *‘Out in the lanes and upon the open heath the broom in flower is a glorious sight. Upon Peverel there are large, long established thickets of it.... All down the tough, dark stems the pea-shaped blossoms hang, like a myriad of golden butterflies poised for flight’*.

Biodiversity

- 8B.11 This extensive area of lowland heathland, supports three breeding bird species in numbers of European importance, namely nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler, as well as being of national value for its heathland flora, and invertebrates. Woolmer Forest SAC/SPA/SSSI is the best area of lowland heath outside the New Forest and is the largest area of heathland existing on Folkestone beds in southern England. Woolmer Forest is also the only site in Britain known to support all 12 species of native reptile and amphibian.

Historic Character

- 8B.12 The generally low fertility and marginal character of the sandy soils is evident in a historic land-use dominated by woodland and heathy unenclosed commons. The presence of a number of Bronze Age barrow cemeteries (all now Scheduled Ancient Monuments) indicates that the marginality of this landscape is largely the result of human activity. The original hazel ‘wildwood’ was cleared for farming, but the soils quickly became impoverished, leading to the creation of heathland.
- 8B.13 The landscape is characterised by large areas of commonland, originally cleared in the prehistoric period, and utilised for centuries by communities based on more favoured soils (generally to the south along the foot of the downland scarp) as pasture (particularly for sheep), wood pasture and as a source of fuel. Woolmer Forest formed part of a Royal Hunting Forest during the medieval period. Most of the commons have, since 1800, been appropriated for plantations, many of them coniferous. These, together with a scatter of earlier blocks of ancient (probably medieval) woodland, produce the overwhelmingly wooded character of the landscape. Relatively small areas of unenclosed common still survive.
- 8B.14 Some of the better land within the landscape was enclosed for agricultural use – these areas are evident today as medieval assarts or early enclosures, which occur along the southern fringes of the character area. The more isolated area around Foley Manor to the east is by comparison, with more open and dominated by recent enclosures, likely to be of 18th-19th century date enclosing former commonland.
- 8B.15 There are no traditional examples of designed landscapes, i.e. gentry houses and landscape parks, testifying to the lack of a wealthy population in the past and the traditional dependency of the area on the surrounding lowland zone.

Key Historic Characteristics

- Marginal nature of the landscape - provides a continuing sense of remoteness;

- Numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries providing evidence prehistoric ritual landscape indicating that marginal nature of the area is of some antiquity and caused by human action;
- Extensive areas of post-1800 woodland plantations covering areas of former commonland indicating the location of areas of former common which would have been open/less wooded;
- Remnant unenclosed common providing an indication of historic land use e.g. survival of small area of commons;
- Some recent and modern enclosures around woodlands - evidence that landuse history remained one of common grazing until relatively late in the post-medieval period.

Settlement Form and Built Character

8B.16 The area is characterised by the virtual absence of settlement, and the area does not conform to the typical pattern of isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure derived from former commonland. The only settlements are at Greatham (Forest Side) and Liss Forest which are irregular small-scale agglomerations of common-edge settlement representing 'squatter' settlement on the edges of the commonland. The area now also contains localised groupings of modern military buildings. Building materials are varied.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

8B.17 Key sensitivities include:

- Lowland heathland that supports populations of Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark of European importance. Lowland heathland requires active management.
- Rich biodiversity and perception of 'naturalness' provided by oak-birch woodland, lowland heath and pasture on acidic grassland. the woodland is especially vulnerable to increase in non-native ornamental species.
- Relative absence of settlement limited to 'squatter' settlement on the edges of the common land which. This pattern is especially vulnerable to infill and consolidation creating a more compact solid settlement character or linear extensions along roads.
- Ponds e.g. Woolmer Pond, Foley Manor and The Lake – and need to ensure high water quality.
- The numerous Bronze Age barrow cemeteries which provide signs of a prehistoric ritual landscape which are hidden in the landscape by woodland or have been covered by trees.

- The small parks at The Wylds and Foley Manor which provide a sense of historic continuity.
- Surviving areas of common at Weaver's Down, Griggs Green and Holly Hills which are important in providing a sense of time depth, a high perceived naturalness, opportunities for countryside access, and a rich biodiversity.
- The setting of the A3, which is vulnerable to incremental change creating a more urbanised character within the forest/heathland landscape.
- The area's inter-visibility with the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace*.

8B.18 The high proportion of woodland cover limits visual sensitivity. However, the landscape's inter-visibility with adjacent upland areas increases its visual sensitivity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

8B.19 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the distinct heathy character of the landscape and aim to create new-interconnected heathland within the overall woodland framework.**

Landscape Management Considerations

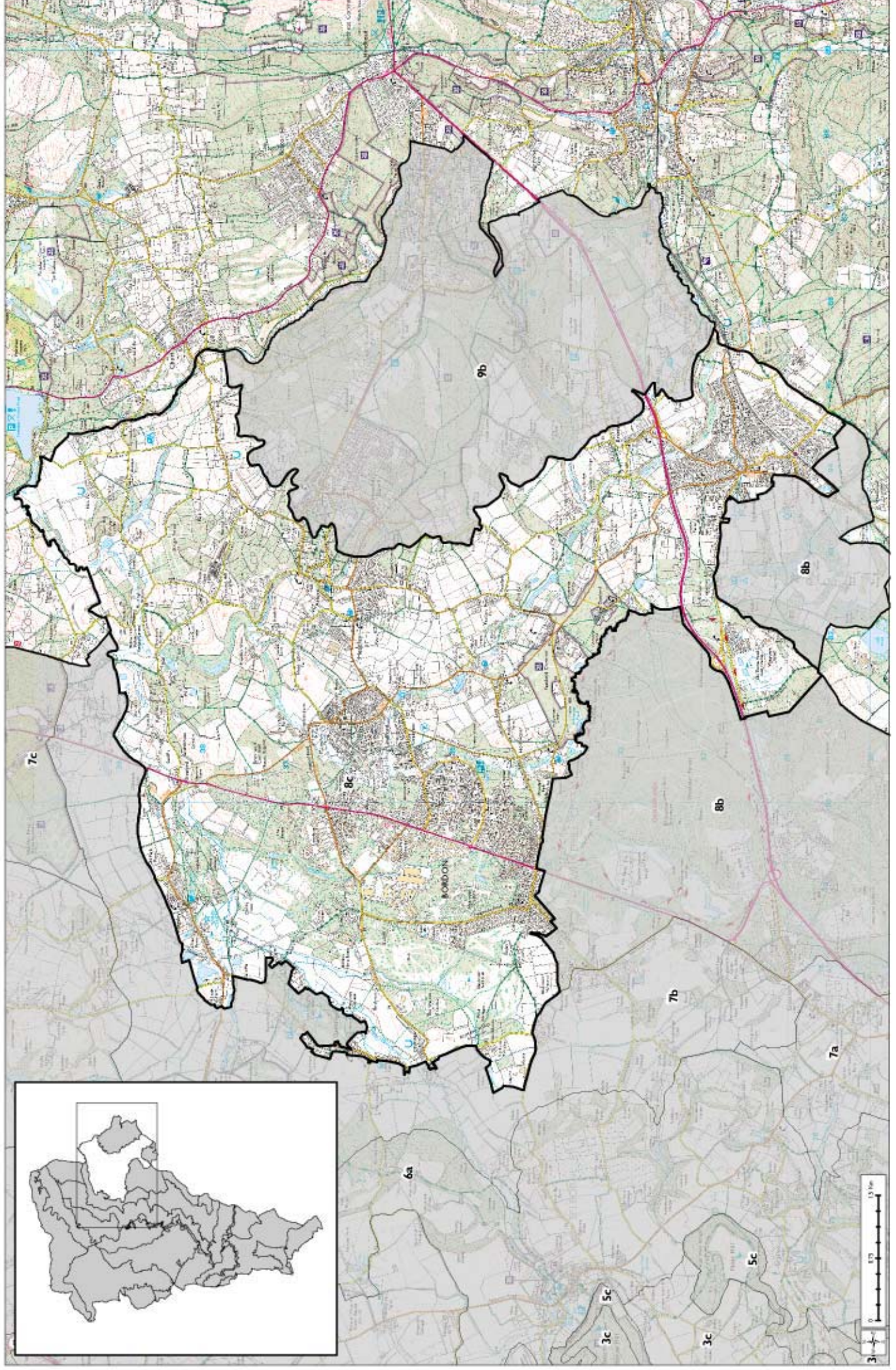
- I. Maintain the surviving areas of open commonland at Weaver's Down, Griggs Green and Holly Hills. Consider opportunities to re-instating common grazing to restore the historic and cultural character of the landscape and secure the ongoing management and conservation of the commons.
- Aim for diversification of plantation woodland by creating a more diverse age and species structure, and increasing open areas. Promote reversion of areas of coniferous plantation to heathland to create a suite of interconnected sites.
 - Manage existing heathland to prevent excessive encroachment of scrub and assess potential for creating new, interconnected heathlands, particularly on former common land. Restoration of coniferous plantations and sand quarries to heathland is a key opportunity.
 - Continue to manage the existing ponds e.g. Woolmer Pond, Folly Pond, Cranmer Pond and The Lake.
 - Conserve the landscape features of the small parks at The Wylds and Foley Manor.
 - Control invasive areas of rhododendrons and laurel where it poses a threat to semi-natural habitats
 - Encourage sensitive forestry practices, for example mixing different species and felling small coupes – this could also minimise risk of damage as a result of increased storms and high winds. Encourage replanting of conifer plantations with broadleaved species (where heathland recreation is not appropriate) and encourage re-introduction of traditional woodland management techniques.

- Conserve the historic Bronze Age barrow cemeteries which provide a sense of time depth and evidence of a prehistoric ritual landscape. Maintain these sites free of trees, enhance their settings and open up views to the sites.

Development Considerations

- Consider views from the Greensand Terrace in relation to any change in this area.
- Ensure heathland restoration programmes consider possible adverse visual impact resulting from the exposure of existing buildings, particularly industrial or military buildings.
- Ensure that redevelopment of Bordon and Whitehill (when released by the MOD) do not impact on the tranquil and rural character of this area.
- Conserve the characteristic settlement pattern of loose agglomerations of common edge settlement. Extensions and infill would change the historic pattern. Limit further linear development along roads.
- Ensure recreational facilities, such as horse riding centres and golf courses, do not erode the rural character of the landscape. Avoid use of excessive lighting, signage and 'suburban' features.
- Monitor change and incremental development along the A3(T) corridor and seek to conserve the woodland/heath setting to the road.

Character Area 8c: Whitehill to Liphook





8C: Whitehill to Liphook Farmland and Heath Mosaic

Location and Boundaries

- 8C.1 Located on Lower Greensand in the east of the district, the eastern boundary of the character area is defined by the 120m contour and a change in geology represented by the more resistant sandstone of the Greensand Hills. The western edge of the character area is defined by the transition to the lower lying clay vale of mixed farmland and woodland.
- 8C.2 This is a more developed and settled landscape compared to the Woolmer Forest/Weaver's Down Character area to the south and the southern boundary is formed by the boundary of the South Downs National Park.

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

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform formed on sandstone and cut by a number of watercourses (River Slea, Southern River Wey and Deadwater).
- Well-drained acidic sandy soils support tracts of woodland (e.g. around Bordon Camp) and heathland commons of international importance (Broxhead and Kingsley Commons).
- Small to medium fields of pasture, paddock and rough grazing, with a framework of ancient woodlands and wood pasture.
- Areas of settlement (Whitehill, Bordon, Lindford, Liphook and Headley) contained by woodland with smaller villages and farms found in the sheltered valleys.
- Dissected by the A325 and A3, otherwise winding rural lanes and deep sunken lanes are important features.
- Other land uses include golf courses, MOD land at Bordon.
- Remnant features relating to water management and agricultural/industrial use of the river, including mills and aqueducts (Headley Wood Farm and Bramshott Court - both SAMs), the latter probably associated with medieval watermeadows.
- There is a well developed footpath network particularly in the north of the area along Oxney Stream and Oakhanger Stream with access to Kingsley and Broxhead Commons.
- A tranquil, natural character is retained away from built up areas and busy roads.

Physical Landscape

- 8C.3 The flat to undulating landform of the *Whitehill - Liphook Farmland and Heath Mosaic* is informed by an east to west transition in the Lower Greensand geology from the

Bargate to Sandgate to Folkestone formation. The Bargate sandstone represents the gentle slope down from the more resistant Hythe Beds of the Greensand Hills to the less resistant and lower landform of the Sandgate and Folkestone formations.

- 8C.4 The narrow watercourses of the River Slea and Southern River Wey drain the landscape along with their tributary streams e.g. Oakhanger Stream, Kingsley Stream and Coopers Stream). A varied drift geology is associated with the water courses with head, alluvium and river terrace deposits. Ponds are a reoccurring feature in the landscape e.g. Spring pond and Oxney pool.
- 8C.5 The sandstone geology gives rise to freely draining sandy soils with small to medium sized fields predominantly pasture. Small paddocks are common throughout the area and there is some rough grazing. The western part of the area encompassing Bordon lies on more acidic sandy and loamy soils supporting woodland and heathy commons.
- 8C.6 Broxhead and Kingsley Common are areas of SSSI heathland supporting heather, bracken and birch. Passfield Common, part of Woolmer Forest SSSI comprises pasture woodland, wet grassland and dry heaths. A large area of commonland also occurs to the west of Bordon incorporating The Warren, Slab and Blackmoor Golf Course. Some hanging woodland occurs on valley sides.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 8C.7 This mosaic landscape provides varying levels of enclosure ranging from the small open pastoral fields and heathy commons, intimate river/stream corridors and large enclosing tracts of woodland. Heather, bracken, gorse and the woodland mosaic of coniferous and deciduous trees provide rich seasonally changing texture and colour.
- 8C.8 The busy A325 and A31 roads create local noise and visual intrusion and areas of MOD land around Bordon (Prince Philip Barracks) erode the rural character. However, the heathland/woodland mosaic provides a high level of rural naturalness and a strong sense of tranquillity is retained along the small river and stream corridors, particularly where they are wooded, with deep sunken lanes being a distinctive feature of these areas.
- 8C.9 In addition to the areas of heathy commonland, Blackmoor Golf Course is an area of open access. Golf courses also occur on Weavers Down and at Kingsley. Passfield Common is owned by the National Trust. There is a well developed footpath network particularly in the north of the area along Oxney Stream and Oakhanger Stream with access to Kingsley and Broxhead Commons. In the south of the area there is a concentration of locally important historic parks and gardens e.g. Bramshott Court and Radford Park.

Biodiversity

- 8C.10 This area supports extensive tracts of woodland and heathland habitat, including nationally important sites, such as Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI. The majority of the woodland comprises is of secondary or plantation origin, but as a whole the combination of woodland and heathland, together with areas of permanent grassland and pasture, provide a landscape of high ecological value.

8C.11 In addition, the character area is dissected by a number of linear water courses and lakes, which add further to the ecological diversity. A large number of woodland, heathland, grassland and wetland sites have been designated as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation.

Historic Character

8C.12 The generally low fertility and marginal character of the sandy soils is evident in a historic land-use dominated by woodland and heathy unenclosed commons. The presence of a number of Bronze Age barrow cemeteries (all now Scheduled Ancient Monuments) indicates that the marginality of this landscape is largely the result of human activity. The original hazel 'wildwood' was cleared for farming, but the soils quickly became impoverished, leading to the creation of heathland.

8C.13 The landscape is characterised by areas of commonland, originally cleared in the prehistoric period, and utilised for centuries by communities based on more favoured soils as pasture (particularly for sheep), wood pasture and as a source of fuel. Most of the commons have, since 1800, been appropriated for plantations, many of them coniferous. These, together with a scatter of earlier blocks of ancient (probably medieval) woodland, produce the overwhelmingly wooded character of the landscape. Relatively small areas of unenclosed common still survive.

8C.14 This is essentially a landscape of early enclosures in the valleys of the Wey and Oakhanger Stream, with recent planned enclosure of 18th-19th century date in the northern part of the character area and around Bramshott, Lindford and Bordon.

8C.15 Historic features associated with the rivers are apparent today. Remnant features relating to water management and agricultural/industrial use of the river, including mills and aqueducts (Headley Wood Farm and Bramshott Court – both SAMs), the latter probably associated with post-medieval watermeadows.

8C.16 Little Boarhunt is an example of a small designed landscapes (EH registered). There are also several small local parks (Hampshire Register).

Key Historic Characteristics

- Blocks of post-1800 woodland around Bordon Camp, mainly 19th century heathland plantations.
- Variety of archaeological monuments – Bronze Age barrow cemeteries; Civil War fortifications at Walldown, Bordon, forming part of Royalist defence line opposing Parliamentary garrison at Farnham; undated aqueducts at Headley and Bramshott, probably part of post-medieval watermeadow system (all SAM).
- Military occupation at Bordon – established as a training ground in the 1860s, with barracks built c.1900 to accommodate troops returning from the Boer War.

Settlement Form and Built Character

8C.17 The area includes a great diversity of settlement from army camps and modern suburban development to small villages of great charm set within the river valleys. There are in addition isolated farmsteads in the rural part of the character area, some possibly of medieval origin in the areas of early enclosure.

8C.18 The west of the area is dominated by the expanded settlement of Whitehill and Bordon which is contained by woodland, extending north eastwards along the A325 to join Lindford. Bordon and its neighbouring camp at Longmoor are two camps constructed to accommodate the British Army on its return from the Boer War. The settlements of Headley and Liphook are located in the west and south of the area respectively. Settlements are characterised by modern dwellings, with sandstone, red brick and clay tiles being the most frequent building materials. The villages of Passfield, Hollywater, Conford, Kingsley are located in the small river valleys.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

8C.19 Key sensitivities include:

- Nationally important heathland commons that provide a sense of time depth, a high perceived naturalness and opportunities for access.
- Rich biodiversity provided by the mosaic of woodland, lowland heath and grassland.
- Watercourses and their associated habitats (watermeadows) and features (aqueducts).
- The Scheduled Ancient Monuments including the Bronze Age barrow cemeteries that are hidden within woodland.
- The winding rural lanes and sunken lanes that cut through the stream valleys, characterised by steep sandstone banks with exposed tree roots and distinctive vegetation, which are vulnerable to increased traffic pressures.
- The individual character of the settlements and their rural setting which are vulnerable to further infill and expansion resulting in the linking up of settlements and perception of a much more urbanised areas (e.g. Lindford – Headley and Lindford- Bordon).
- The varied field pattern including the small early enclosures which characterise the stream valleys. Use of pasture for horse paddocks and associated boundary changes can impact on the character of these areas.

8C.20 The high proportion of woodland cover limits visual sensitivity of the landscape and provides opportunities for planting mitigation associated with development. However views into this landscape from the adjacent elevated Greensand Hills increases sensitivity.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

8C.21 **The overall strategy should be to conserve the mosaic of woodland, heathland and pasture land cover and ensure that this area provides a strong rural setting for existing areas of development. The distinctive landscape of the incised stream valleys should be conserved.**

Landscape Management Considerations

- Conserve and manage areas of unenclosed heathland commons (Kingsley Common and Broxhead Common). Consider opportunities to re-instating common grazing to restore the historic and cultural character of the landscape and secure the ongoing management and conservation of the commons.
- Aim for diversification of plantation woodland by creating a more diverse age and species structure, and increasing open areas. Where appropriate, consider reversion of areas of coniferous plantation to heathland to create a suite of interconnected sites.
- Control invasive areas of rhododendrons and laurel where it poses a threat to semi-natural habitats.
- 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.
- Promote an informal and irregular mosaic of oak-birch woodland, lowland heath, gorse and bracken scrub, and acid grassland.
- Manage recreational access to avoid damage to sensitive habitats and features.
- Conserve the intimate stream corridors and associated habitats and historic features. In particular conserve the field pattern of small pastures of early enclosures. Manage and restore hedgerow boundaries.
- Conserve the historic Bronze Age barrow cemeteries which provide a sense of time depth and evidence of a prehistoric ritual landscape. Maintain these sites free of trees and enhance their settings.

Development Considerations

- Consider views from the Greensand Terrace in relation to any change in this area.
- Ensure heathland restoration programmes consider possible adverse visual impact resulting from the exposure of existing buildings, particularly industrial or military buildings.
- Ensure that redevelopment of Bordon and Whitehill (when released by the MOD) do not impact on the tranquil and rural character of this area.
- Conserve the landscape setting of settlements, particularly woodland and hedgerow which provide enclosure and containment.
- Conserve the rural setting of settlements and control development along roads and the 'joining up' of settlements e.g. Headley and Lindford along the B3002.
- Ensure recreational facilities do not erode the rural character of the landscape.

- Conserve the sunken lanes which characterise the stream valleys. Monitor traffic impacts and seek to protect banks and verges from damage.
- Monitor incremental development and change along the main road corridors (A325) and seek to conserve a woodland/heath setting to the road.