

Landscape Character SPD



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1 Introduction

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1.1 The aim of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to promote regard for the landscape and to ensure new development makes a positive contribution to the landscape, including its key characteristics and features in which it is located. This SPD should therefore be utilised in conjunction with Core Strategy policy CS9: Design Quality, which has been produced to promote improved design standards in the Borough and other available Supplementary Planning Documents, for example the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (July, 2009) and the Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD, due early 2011.

1.2 This SPD supports paragraphs 6.28 to 6.37 of the Core Strategy (2008) and policies TRS17 and TRS18 (reproduced below) of the adopted Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD (October, 2010). These policies require development in the rural areas to be designed in a way which protects and enhances the landscape character area within which it is located. It is also intended for this SPD to support a landscape policy in the proposed Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD.

Policy TRS17 - Landscape Character and Design

Development in the rural areas shall be designed in a way which protects and enhances the particular landscape character area within which it is located, and, where relevant, any adjacent landscape character area.

Proposals shall have particular regard to the following:-

- a) Landform, topography and natural patterns of drainage
- b) The pattern and composition of trees and woodlands
- c) The type and composition of wildlife habitats
- d) The pattern and composition of field boundaries
- e) The pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths
- f) The presence and pattern of historic landscape features
- g) The setting, scale, layout, design and detailing of vernacular buildings and other traditional man made features
- h) Any relevant guidance given in an AONB Management Plan or in a Landscape Character SPD

Existing features that are important to the local landscape character shall be retained and incorporated into the proposed development.

For the purpose of this policy, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are to be treated as landscape character areas.

Policy TRS18 - Important rural features

Development in the rural areas shall protect and where possible, enhance the following features:

- a) ancient woodland and semi-natural woodland;
- b) river corridors and tributaries;
- c) rural lanes which have a landscape, nature conservation or historic importance;
- d) public rights of way.

2 Policy Context

2

National Policy:

2.1 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) ensures that the countryside is protected for its intrinsic value. This is further reiterated by PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004), which promotes the protection of the countryside and the landscape. PPS7 (paragraph 21) outlines nationally designated areas of landscape importance, in addition to outlining that Local Authorities should protect and continue to ensure the quality and character of the wider countryside (paragraph 15).

2.2 There are some areas which have been have been acknowledged by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the Borough and these areas are afforded national protection through PPS7, but also through part IV of the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act.

2.3 The Government also acknowledges that there are landscape areas outside the nationally designated areas that are particularly highly valued locally and a local approach to their protection could be acceptable. It states that tools such as Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) can provide sufficient protection for these areas without having to label areas with rigid designations, which may be unduly restrictive. It suggests that criteria-based policies in Local Development Documents could therefore be an acceptable approach that provides sufficient protection (PPS7, paragraphs 24-26). Ashford Borough Council has decided on a criteria-based approach based on an LCA to protect the areas of local landscape importance within its boundary.

Local Policy:

2.4 The Core Strategy encourages the protection of the landscape through paragraphs 6.28 to 6.37. This is supported by the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD policies TRS17-Landscape Character and Design and TRS18 - Important rural features. It is also intended to include a policy in the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD to ensure landscape protection and promote good design in areas of landscape importance around the urban fringe areas of Ashford. These criteria-based policies are based on the LCA approach, which is set out in the following chapter.

3 Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

3.1 Landscape character is defined by English Nature as ‘a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one place different from another, rather than better or worse’. Put simply, it is what makes an area unique.’⁽¹⁾

3.2 Landscape is therefore about people and places, a landscape's uniqueness contributes to society, the economy, the environmental value of the area and a persons perceptions. For example, an area can play an important role in people's lives, contributing to a sense of identity and well-being, or it may be home for a particular type of habitat or wildlife species. Figure 1 below outlines what makes a landscape.

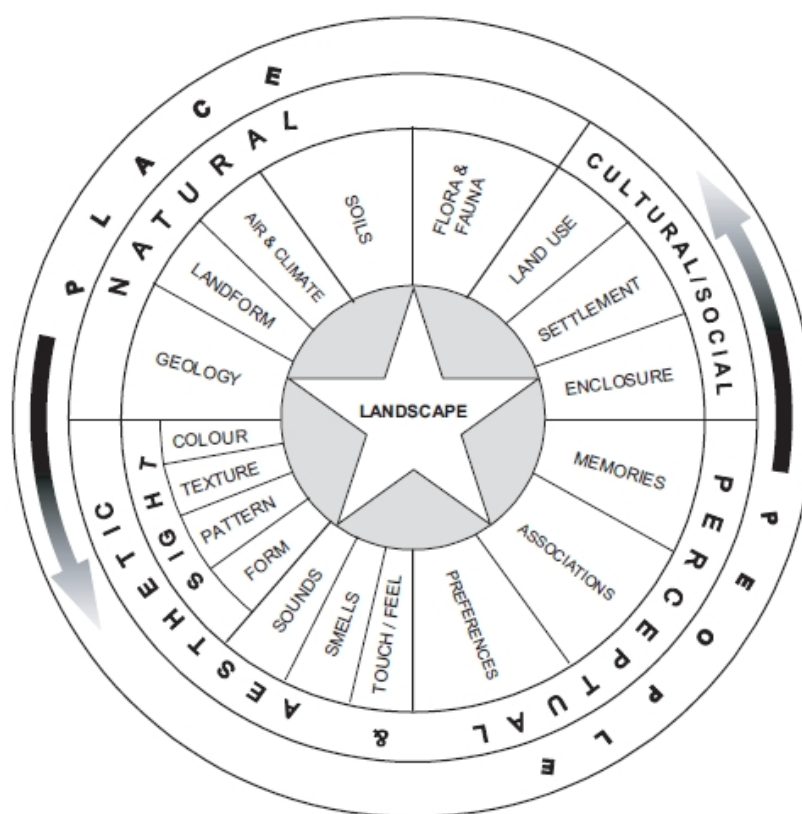


Figure 1: What is Landscape? Reproduced from, the Countryside Agency, LCA Guidance (2000)

1 Further detail available from the Natural England website
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/default.aspx>

Landscape Character Assessments in the Borough

3.3 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is an approach used to understand the differences in landscapes; it respects local distinctiveness and can be used as a framework for decision-making. LCAs identify the characteristics that make a particular landscape unique or distinct, and by using this information, help to understand how to plan and manage landscape change. The main role of the LCA is to promote the protection and enhancement of what is valued or distinctive about the landscape.

3.4 The former Countryside Agency (now Natural England) have produced guidance on how to conduct an LCA and outlined below are the two main stages.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) comprises of two stages:

Characterisation:

The characterisation stage defines the scope of the assessment, involves a desk study and field survey, and then a description of the landscape, dividing it into areas of common character, mapping them and describing their character and key issues.

Making Judgements:

Land management decisions ultimately lie with society - owner, politicians, land managers, local communities and many other stakeholders. But their decision will be sounder if they are based on information assembled through the LCA process.

The Countryside Agency (2002) 'Making Sense of Place, Landscape Character Assessment: Summary Guidance for England and Scotland'

3.5 The two most recent Landscape Character Assessments that cover the Borough are:

- the StudioEngleback (2005) 'Ashford Landscape Character Study', which provides an assessment of the urban fringe areas of Ashford; and,
- the Jacobs (2009) 'Ashford Landscape Character Assessment', which provides a landscape assessment of the rural parts of the Ashford Borough (excluding the AONBs).

3.6 The LCAs provide a detailed assessment of areas with similar characteristics and features which are divided into different 'landscape character areas' and provide an assessment of the sensitivity and current condition of these areas. The coverage areas of the LCAs are shown at Appendix 1.

3.7 The two AONBs, although not covered by the LCA studies, should be considered as separate landscape character areas. Therefore, between the two LCAs and the two AONBs, a complete landscape assessment has been achieved in the Borough.

3.8 It is not the intention of this SPD to replicate the work of the two LCAs or reproduce guidance on the AONBs and therefore, where required, detailed information and guidelines should be obtained from the relevant LCA study. The tables outlined in Chapters 5 and 6 of this SPD can be used to find the appropriate reference in the relevant LCA and chapter 7 provides links to guidance available on the two AONBs

Jacobs (2009):

3.9 Jacobs were commissioned by Ashford Borough Council to undertake a landscape character assessment of the Ashford Borough rural areas, excluding the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the High Weald AONB and the urban fringe landscape which was covered by the StudioEngleback (2005) Landscape Character Study. The main purpose of this document was to ensure the continued protection of the countryside and its special landscape features and it will achieve this by providing the background evidence for policies TRS17 and TRS18.

3.10 The Jacobs Landscape Character Assessment identified 33 landscape character areas within its coverage area.

StudioEngleback (2005):

3.11 StudioEngleback were commissioned by English Partnerships and Ashford Borough Council in August 2004 to produce a Landscape Character Assessment of the hinterland of the Ashford urban area. This was produced to inform the preparation of the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF) and the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. It therefore includes a landscape analysis of the proposed urban extension areas, in addition to more sensitive urban-rural fringe locations.

3.12 Consequently, the StudioEngleback study covers areas now identified for new development within the Core Strategy. The conclusions of the study should not be regarded as a way of preventing or restricting development in these areas but instead used as a means of aiding the design and form of new development proposals that come forward in those areas.

3.13 The StudioEngleback study identifies 12 landscape character areas surrounding the Ashford urban area although one of these has been excluded from this SPD as it falls within the Kent Downs AONB. Additionally, because of the changeable nature of the urban-rural fringe environment, the StudioEngleback study has sub-divided the landscape character areas into district landscape types. This is in order to provide a more detailed analysis and description of the smaller land units on the edge of the urban area. **In areas covered by the StudioEngleback study, the information and descriptions contained within the individual district landscape types should be used for the purposes of this SPD.**

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

3

3.14 For the purpose of implementing local landscape character policies, the areas of land designated as AONB in the Borough will be treated as separate landscape character areas and guidance material on these AONBs should be obtained from the relevant AONB Unit.

4 How to use this SPD

Please use the following step by step guide:

4

I) Identify which Landscape Character Assessment study you should use by identifying the area where the proposed development is located. This can be identified from the Map at Appendix 1 or via the LDF Map Viewer available on the Council's website.

Ashford Urban Fringe areas - Landscape Character Study, Studio Engleback (2005)

Rural Area - Ashford Landscape Character Assessment, Jacobs (2009)

Within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB Management Plan (see chapter 7)

II) Identify which landscape character area (or if within the StudioEngleback study area, in addition, which district landscape type) the proposed development falls within, This can be identified from the Map at Appendix 2 or via the LDF Map Viewer available on the Council's website. In accordance with policy TRS17, the AONBs should be considered as individual landscape character areas.

III) Once you have selected the landscape character area or district landscape type, find the description relevant to that area. The key characteristics of each area are identified in the tables in Chapters 5 and 6 and detailed descriptions can be found in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment document. For sites that fall into an AONB, please refer to Chapter 7.

IV) Ensure development proposals demonstrate regard for this area of landscape in accordance with policies TRS17 and TRS18 and the relevant Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD landscape policy. This will include ensuring that the development is appropriate to its location, character and designed following the principles set out in policy CS9 of the adopted Core Strategy and the relevant Landscape Character Assessment. If the the development requires a design and access statement this could be contained within this work.

5 Ashford Landscape Character Assessment, Jacobs (2009)

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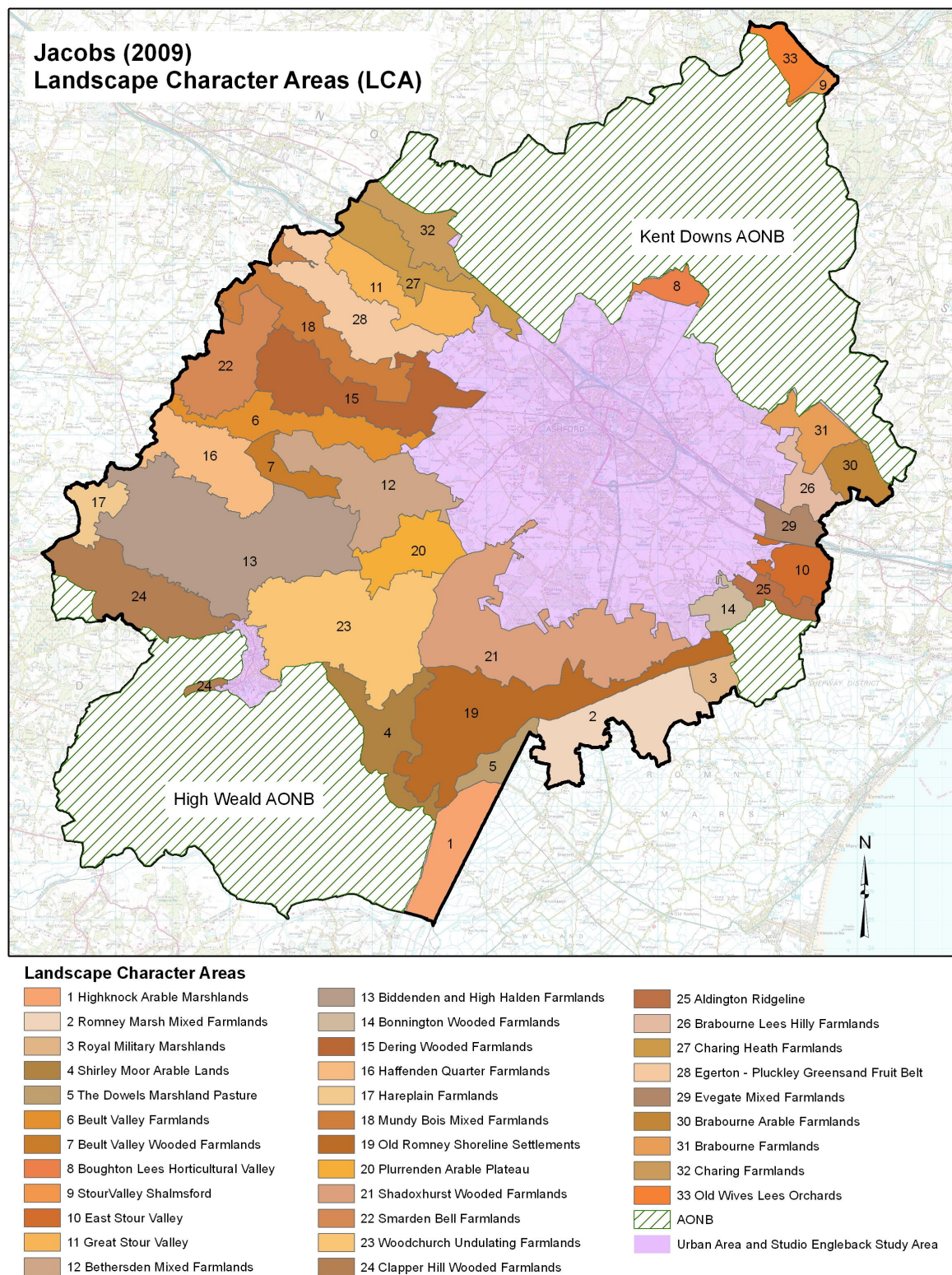


Figure 3: Landscape Character Areas (Jacobs, 2009)

Landscape Type	Study	Key Characteristics
1. Highnock Arable Marshlands	Jacobs (2009), p34	• Flat and low lying marshlands, which forms part of the immediate foreground to visible rising ground of the High Weald AONB • Arable farmland set within depressions between channels • Large, irregularly shaped fields • Infrequent tree and shrub vegetation • Wide embanked drainage channels and a network of reed filled drainage ditches • Meandering Highknock Channel runs through the plain, with parallel courses of Royal Military Canal and the Five Watering Sewer running either side • Large agricultural buildings at isolated farms • Recent development along the busy B2080
2. Romney Marsh Mixed Farmlands	Jacobs (2009), p37	• Flat, low lying marshland • Extensive arable land comprising mostly oil seed rape and wheat • Irregular field pattern informed by winding network of reed filled drainage ditches • Pasture enclosed by a variety of fencing types, ditches and some scrubby hedgerows • Willow groups and remnant pollard willow • Tree clusters around buildings • Native hedgerows occasionally line ditches and roads • Royal Military Canal lines the northern extent of the area, often open and unvegetated • Farmsteads dispersed across the marshland • Recent, isolated houses along narrow winding and ditch lined roads • Concrete and brick pill boxes structures from World War II • Busy A2070, which runs between Ashford and the Marsh
3. Royal Military Marshlands	Jacobs (2009), p40	• Flat, low lying marshland which forms part of the immediate foreground to the AONB which rise to the east • Rising Downs to the east, and higher ground to the north provide enclosure to the marsh • Large irregularity shaped arable fields divided by a network of reed filled drainage ditches • Sporadic clumps of scrubby vegetation • Open and unvegetated Royal Military Canal • Recent, large scale agricultural buildings at Bridge Farm • Narrow, unenclosed lane skirts the edge of the marsh to the east • Transmission towers
4. Shirley Moor Arable Land	Jacobs (2009), p43	• Flat, open arable land • Views extend to higher ground within the High Weald AONB to the west • Ditch lined fields, with reed heads visible above the edge of the banks • Varied, irregular field pattern • Willow stands and lines of windswept willow along lanes • Old farmsteads located on the edge of the Marsh • Most roads skirt the edge of the plain, and those which cross the Marsh are narrow with open views out across the marshland

Landscape Type	Study	Key Characteristics
5. The Dowels Marshland Pasture	Jacobs (2009), p46	• Low lying marshland • Small scale, irregular field pattern, divided by drainage ditches • Pastoral landscape with dark green sedges and surface water • Traditional timber sheep fencing angled down to meet the water • Scattered clumps of scrubby shrubs • Royal Military Canal and roads defined by native vegetation belts • Little development • Rhee Wall historic earthwork adjacent to the B2080 to the south
6. Beult Valley Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p50	• Flat, low lying floodplain of the River Beult • Well vegetated river banks and distinctive lines of willow • Numerous small field ponds • Pastoral land use with dark patches of sedges • Varied field pattern with shapes dictated by meandering river • Small clusters of trees and shrubs • Few, ditch lined, narrow roads • Scattered settlement with some converted traditional buildings and permanent mobile homes • Picturesque settlement of Smarden with an abundance of distinctive vernacular properties
7. Beult Valley Wooded Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p53	• Flat, low lying floodplain of the River Beult • Broadleaf and coppice woodland blocks along the river corridor • Pollard willow • Numerous small field ponds • Intensive arable land use • Small area of hop production • Varied field pattern with shapes dictated by meandering river • Lack of built development and roads • Narrow ditch lined roads skirt the periphery of the floodplain • Scattered traditional buildings along peripheral lanes
8. Boughton Lees Horticultural	Jacobs (2010), p56	• Sloping landscape towards the Great Stour River • Dramatic, panoramic views out of the area of the Kent Downs AONB • Large arable fields • Horticultural land use with polytunnels and orchards • Tall poplar shelter belts • Frequent conifer belts • Settlement of Boughton Lees situated around a cricket pitch • Busy highways and the contrasting narrow and ancient Pilgrims Way • Recent development extends out from Wye.
9. Stour Valley Shalmsford	Jacobs (2009), p59	• Flat valley landscape containing the Great Stour River • North Downs rise to the south and to the west, visually enclosing the flat valley floor • Grazed valley floor with isolated oak trees • Large lakes used for fishing • Native woodland to the south • Equestrian grazing and facilities off the A28 • Recent housing and light industrial/commercial development along the A28 • Fragmentation caused by the A28 and railway line

Landscape Type	Study	Key Characteristics
10. East Stour Valley	Jacobs (2010), p62	• Well vegetated East Stour River cuts through valley with land rising to Bested Hill in the north • Mosaic like pastoral field pattern • Mixed and broadleaf woodland blocks • Mature isolated oak trees within pasture • Narrow lanes follow the undulations of the landscape, often hedgerow and ditch lined • Some recent individual housing sporadically located along the lanes • Scattered farmsteads set back from the lanes
11. Great Stour Valley	Jacobs (2010), p65	• Valley containing the Great Stour River • Willows, some pollarded along river • Mature oak trees set within hedgerows and isolated within mixed farmland • Subtle heathland characteristics including gorse and bracken • Narrow lanes and ragstone bridges • Well vegetated, species rich road verges • Pastoral land use with dark patches of sedges • Rectilinear field pattern divided by alder shelter belts to the east • Ragstone and chequered brickwork • 'Dering' windows • Converted farm buildings • Mills along the river
12. Bethersden Mixed Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p69	• Undulating landscape • Wealden pattern of small pastoral fields • Dense native hedgerows with oak hedgerow trees • Frequent extensive broadleaf woodland blocks • Frequent field ponds punctuate the landscape • Strong sense of enclosure provided by well treed and undulating landscape • Scattered farms • Much 20th century housing development around Bethersden
13. Biddenden and High Halden Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p72	• Undulating landscape • Mixed farmland with agricultural intensification providing loss of hedgerows and small scale field pattern • Equestrian land use • Frequent field ponds, narrow streams and sedges • Busy A roads with ribbon development provide an urbanising effect • Historic settlements of Biddenden and High Halden situated around distinctive churches • Frequent scattered farms and manors
14. Bonnington Wooded Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p75	• Undulating landform which forms part of the immediate foreground to the Kent Downs AONB which rises to the east • Mixed farmland with small fields • Deciduous and evergreen enclosing woodland blocks • Native hedgerows with large standard oak trees • Isolated oaks trees set within pasture • Strong sense of enclosure • Equestrian grazing and land use • Narrow and hedge lined roads • The non nucleic settlement of Bonnington with traditional houses and stone farm buildings • Recent housing development arranged around closes

Landscape Type	Study	Key Characteristics
15. Dering Wooded Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p78	• Gently undulating landform • Strong tree cover with large blocks of broadleaf, mixed and evergreen woodland • Scatterings of chestnut coppice • Scattered isolated oak trees • Intensively farmed land • Railway line cuts through the landscape but is not easily discernible within the wooded landscape • Series of red brick hump back bridges cross the railway • Ragstone buildings and round topped 'Dering' windows • Converted barns and oast houses • Evidence of mineral extraction and former land fill
16. Haffenden Quarter Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p81	• Flat to gently undulating landform • Low visibility • Mixed land use • Varied field pattern • Hedgerow enclosed pasture with oak hedgerow trees • Field ponds • Traditional timber framed buildings • Converted farm Buildings
17. Hareplain Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p84	• Flat to gently undulating landform • Low visibility • Small hedgerow enclosed pastoral fields • Oak hedgerow trees • Little arable land • Field ponds and well vegetated Hammer Stream • Traditional timber framed buildings • Converted farm Buildings
18. Mundy Bois Mixed Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p18	• Gently undulating landform which forms part of the foreground to the steep Greensand Ridge • Fields set within a regular framework of native hedgerows • Regular, frequently spaced hedgerow trees • Narrow hedge and ditch lined lanes • Large, traditional and often converted buildings scattered along lanes and clustered around junctions
19. Old Romney Shoreline Settlements	Jacobs 2009, p90	• Undulating landform slopes southwards towards Romney Marsh • Open views out of the area across the Romney Marsh to the south • Mixed land use • Higher wooded ground to the west, which would have been an island prior to reclamation of the surrounding marshes • Numerous small settlements along the former shoreline • Distinctive stone churches are prominent landmark features
20. Plurrenden Arable Plateau	Jacobs 2009, p93	• Gently sloping plateau • Large arable fields • Hedgerow and subsequent field pattern loss • Small scattered blocks and belts of broadleaf woodland • Remnant tree lines where hedgerow loss has taken place • Small ponds scattered across the farmland • Large vernacular style manor houses and scattered farms

Landscape Type	Study	Key Characteristics
21. Shadoxhurst Wooded Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p96	• Undulating landscape • Mixed farmland with little intensive land use • Field pattern influenced by extensive woodland framework • Strong sense of enclosure provided by mixed woodlands and hedgerows • Broadleaf and evergreen mixed woodland • Field ponds and narrow stream corridors along narrow wooded valleys • Recent development and many bungalows within Shadoxhurst and Stubbs Cross • Trefoil windows in traditional buildings • Narrow ditch lined roads enclosed by woodlands and hedgerows
22. Smarden Bell Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p99	• Flat to gently undulating landform • Low visibility • Mixed land use • Varied field pattern • Hedgerow enclosed pasture with oak hedgerow trees • Remnant orchards • Plantations • Large arable fields • Field ponds • Traditional timber framed buildings • Converted farm buildings • Recent housing and static caravans
23. Woodchurch Undulating Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p102	• Undulating landscape • Mixed farmland with little intensive land use • Varied field pattern, with smaller fields adjoining Redbrook Street • Strong sense of enclosure provided by mixed woodlands and hedgerows • Broadleaf and coppice woodland with mixed ground flora • Field ponds and narrow stream corridors • Historic settlement of Woodchurch situated around a village green • Traditional converted buildings • Narrow roads enclosed by woodlands and hedgerows
24. Clapper Hill Wooded Farmlands	Jacobs 2009, p106	• Undulating topography • Drainage ditches and numerous field ponds • Species rich hedgerows with a large amount of holly • Extensive tracts of broadleaf and mixed woodland across the slopes • Pastoral land use • Vineyard with vines and hops • Narrow, winding, enclosed lanes • Scattered traditional buildings and farmsteads

Landscape Type	Study	Key Characteristics
25. Aldington Ridgeline	Jacobs (2009), p110	• High ridgeline topography • North Downs frame the views to the north • Mixed farmland with enclosed pasture immediately surrounding settled areas • Loss of historic field pattern where land is intensively farmed • Small woodland copses, tree belts and native hedgerows • Very distinctive ragstone church and remains of Archbishops Palace isolated from main settlement of Aldington • Strong use of ragstone and locally distinctive chequered brick • Farm building conversions • Recent development within Aldington situated along a Roman road
26. Brabourne Lees Hilly Farmlands	Jacobs (2009), p113	• Hilly topography • Strong sense of enclosure provided by woodland blocks, hedgerows, landform and settlement • Pasture for horses and livestock • Chestnut coppice and evergreen woodland blocks • Recent development within Brabourne Lees • Large, historic farm houses to the south amid a parkland landscape of pasture and isolated trees
27. Charing Heath Farmlands	Jacobs (2009), p116	• Mixed farmland • Varied field pattern • Small woodland copses and plantations of chestnut coppice • Pine woodland • Mature isolated trees across pasture • Heathland character with a significant amount of gorse and silver birch • Sand extraction and reed filled ponds post extraction • Major transport links
28. Egerton - Pluckley Greensand Fruit Belt	Jacobs (2009), p119	• Greensand Ridge • Pasture within sheltered valleys and arable land on higher, more open ground • Scarp face of the Greensand Ridge encloses the landscape to the south • Mosaic field pattern with fields of different shapes and sizes • Fruit orchards enclosed by shelterbelts within small and regular fields • Scattered pockets of broadleaf woodland and chestnut coppice • Historic hilltop settlements of Pluckley and Egerton centred around ragstone churches • Distinctive architectural detailing with 'Dering' windows and chequered brickwork
29. Evegate Mixed Farmlands	Jacobs (2009), p122	• Undulating topography • Intensively farmed landscape with small pockets of pasture • Comprehensive network of tree cover provided by highway planting, hedgerows and a block of broadleaf ancient woodland • Ponds and vegetation lined water courses • Fragmentation caused by major infrastructure routes • Large electricity sub station • Converted oast houses at Evegate Business Park

Landscape Type	Study	Key Characteristics
30. Brabourne Arable Farmlands	Jacobs (2009), p126	• Intensive arable land • Large, open, extensive fields • Extensive hedgerow loss and limited tree cover • Dramatic panoramic views of the Kent Downs AONB • Narrow water courses originating from a series of springs along the foot of the Downs • Isolated farms
31. Brabourne Farmlands	Jacobs (2009), p129	• Gently undulating landform which forms part of the immediate foreground to the Kent Downs AONB • Series of narrow streams run perpendicular to the Downs • Mature pollard ash trees mark woodland boundaries • Isolated oak trees set within arable fields • Series of parallel narrow lanes run perpendicular to the Downs • Clusters of vernacular style buildings • Traditional and more recent residential development is strewn along the lanes
32. Charing Farmlands	Jacobs (2009), p132	• Gently undulating landform • Open views across arable landscape to the west with hedgerow loss • Small woodland clumps and scattered farmsteads • Narrow and deeply set streams, often marked by streamside native vegetation • Railway line disturbs field pattern • Use of local ragstone and flint within vernacular village centre of Charing • Ragstone and flint Archbishop's Palace, and associated buildings and walling • Recent development spreads out from the historic core of Charing • Scattered farmsteads and large agricultural buildings • Evidence of former quarrying activity • Infrastructure routes of the A20 and railway line
33. Old Wives Lees Orchards	Jacobs (2009), p135	• Very undulating landform as part of the immediate foreground to the Kent Downs AONB • Extensive orchards, segregated into small, regular fields separated by tall poplar shelterbelts • Traditional hop production • Diverse species range within hedgerows and vegetation belts • Small scattered broadleaf woodland shaws and chestnut coppice plantations • Small hamlets and farmsteads • Use of black weather boarding and chequered brickwork • Recent housing development within Old Wives Lees and along Pilgrims Lane • Lanes often enclosed by hedgerows and steep banks • Audible but not highly visible railway line which passes through a wooded cutting and a tunnel in part

6 Landscape Character Study, Studio Engleback (2005)

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Ashford Borough Council Local Development Framework Landscape Character SPD - April 2011

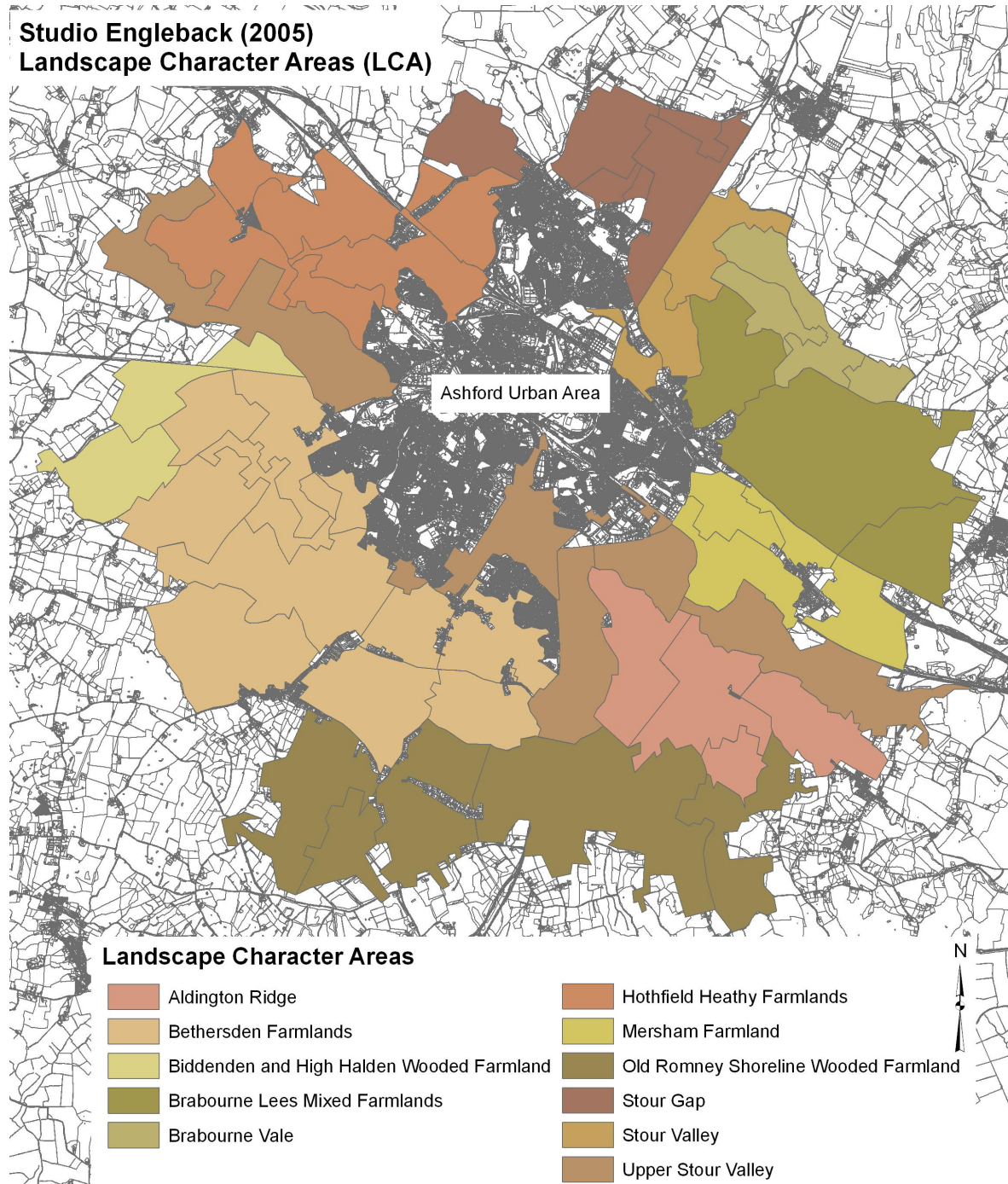


Figure 4: Urban Fringe Landscape Character Areas, Studio Engleback (2005)

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Aldington Ridge	34. AR1 Cheesemans Green	Studio Engleback (2005): Aldington Ridge, p22	• Generally open, mainly flat arable land with cluster of farms around Cheeseman's Green and small hamlet at South Stour • Captain's Wood, an ancient oak and ash woodland with some hornbeam coppice and associated semi-improved grassland/rush • Hedgerows are variable, and generally high to lanes, but where arable there is evidence of hedgerow and ditch clearance, river and dyke dredging. • Rising ground between the Stour floodplain with distant views to Ashford
Aldington Ridge	35. AR2 Colliers Hill	Studio Engleback (2005): Aldington Ridge, p23	• Predominantly arable farmland rising to distinctive knoll at Collier's Hill and extending to East Stour river at Swanton Mill. • Large fields intensively farmed and evidence of hedgerow clearance. • Mature hedgerow to Roman Road and tree cover limited to farmsteads and pollarded willows at Swanton Mill. • Broad Oak on the Roman Road is a mix of bungalows and traditional farm cottages.
Aldington Ridge	36. AR3 Clap Hill	Studio Engleback (2005): Aldington Ridge, p24	• Large open arable fields along the Aldington Ridge. • Traversed by Bank Road – a Roman Road with high hedges and localised tree cover. • Extensive views north to Mersham, west and north west to Ashford and the North Downs and south to Dungeness.
Aldington Ridge	37. AR4 Aldington Frith	Studio Engleback (2005): Aldington Ridge, p25	• A close grained landscape of gentle folds and sunken lanes contained with high hedges and trees which absorbs much of the development of Aldington Frith. • Frith Road/ Priory Road crossroads has a collection of traditional Kentish style buildings, with newer properties to the lanes and scattered farmsteads. • Mixed farmland with paddocks and hedges, and more open arable farmland
Bethersden Farmlands	38. BF1 Kingsnorth Arable	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p24	• Open gently undulating mixed farmland of medium sized fields with sheep grazing and arable land. • Remnant hedges and intermittent hedgerow trees • Open views to the north and west; to the south and east are linear settlements along Magpie Hall Lane and Ashford Road. • The vegetated lane of Long Length lies to the north west.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Bethersden Farmlands	39. BF2 Kingsnorth Wooded Pasture	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p25	• Open undulating mixed farmland with arable and sheep grazing with a mix of gappy and strong hedgerows with intermittent trees. • Woodlands of neglected hornbeam coppice with oak standards which include Isacc Wood, Park Wood, Stumble Wood, Sticket Wood and Park Lane Wood. • The area between Park Farm and Kingsnorth is designated as a country park with new planting and pond, and is well-used by dog walkers • The oast at Finn farm is locally prominent. • The A2070 bounds the eastern edge and the urban fringe of Ashford is visible to the north.
Bethersden Farmlands	40. BF3 Homelands Recreation	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p26	• Gently undulating landscape of variable landuse and mixed character comprising mixed farmland of arable and grazing enclosed with high hedgerows and hedgerow trees which give a wooded quality and distinct enclosure pattern of rectilinear fields. • To the east is Broadhembury Holiday Park (caravan park) and to the south Homelands Golf course. • Off Ashford Road is the Old Stacians Crickey Club recreation and a brick and tile depot and former iron works.
Bethersden Farmlands	41. BF4 Stubbs Cross Woodland	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p27	• Mixed generally level farmland of small to medium sized pasture, paddocks and arable fields with scattered woodland blocks. • Mix of stock fencing, indicating some loss of hedgerows and in other places strong hedgerows with trees to external boundaries. • The woodlands such as Coldblow Wood and Coxland Wood comprise oak/ ash woodland and former hornbeam coppice.
Bethersden Farmlands	42. BF5 Chilmington Open Arable	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p28	• Large open prairie style arable fields with gentle slopes rising to Coleman's Kitchen Wood • Extensive loss of hedgerows, particularly between Chilmington Green and Long Length leaving remnant hedgerow trees isolated in the middle of vast fields. In other places there are continuous ancient laid hedges with oak, however this is rare. • Pollarded willows along the B-road near Great Chilmington. Willow Wood is a remnant hornbeam coppice isolated within the large fields. • The area is crisscrossed by a network of footpaths – the Greensand Way and two byways. • Expansive views, especially around Coleman's Kitchen Wood but these are contained in proximity to Long Length.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Bethersden Farmlands	43. BF6 North Shadoxhurst Bocage	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p29	• Undulating mixed farming with pasture and arable in medium to small size fields generally bounded by strong pattern of high hedgerows with mature trees interspersed with woodland blocks, streams and ditches. • The southern part with windy lanes has a wooded and intimate quality.
Bethersden Farmlands	44. BF7 Barton Farm to Goldwell Bocage	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p30	• Large to medium sized arable fields, intensively farmed with hedgerows removed to make way for deep ditches. • Some pasture and paddocks enclosed by tall roadside hedges around Sandy Lane with a cluster of widely spaced bungalows in garden plots. • Bayley Wood a former hornbeam coppice with oak standards lies to the south of Old Surrenden Manor Road.
Bethersden Farmlands	45. BF8 Goldwell Lane Farmsteads	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p31	• Scattered pre 20th Century farmsteads and medieval houses (some with moats) along a winding country lane. Generally the properties have retained their local vernacular style and garden settings, however Blue Barn Farm is now a small business enterprise and Little Moat Farm has been converted to modern residential dwellings. • Purchase Wood of hornbeam/ hazel coppice with rides is a notable feature in the surrounding flat farmland.
Bethersden Farmlands	46. BF9 Great Chart Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p32	• Gently sloping large fields of predominantly arable land with some pasture and mixed use around Great Chart and Singleton with horse paddocks, recreational areas and community woodland. • The land rises along Mock Lane which is well vegetated and sunken in places and gives elevated views southwards towards Chilmington Green. Around Great Chart there are elevated views eastwards towards Ashford. • The railway and recycling depot lie to north of the area. • Coleman's Kitchen Wood to the south is a distinctive hornbeam/ hazel coppice on an outlying knoll of greensand.
Bethersden Farmlands	47. BF10 Mock Lane Knoll	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p33	• A plateau comprising a working gravel/ sand quarry, travellers site (with dumping) and former landfill site (now grazed by horses) bisected by Mock Lane
Bethersden Farmlands	48. BF11 Goldwell	Studio Engleback (2005): Bethersden Farmlands, p34	• Large arable fields, intensively farmed with loss of hedgerows. • Land gently rises to ridgeline and prominent knoll and oast at Goldwell. • Extensive views from the ridgeline and Goldwell Lane to the west, south and east.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Biddenden & High Halden Farmlands	49. BHH1 Yardhurst Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Biddenden & High Halden Farmlands, p22	• Gently sloping mixed farmland within the Beult Valley with some ponds, but generally open enlarged arable fields. Enclosure pattern is smaller scale to the north with pasture, paddocks, hen farm and continuous unmanaged hedgerows with trees, especially Park Lane which adjoins Etchden Wood. • Daniel's Water is an eclectic mix of farms interspersed with paddocks, modern agricultural sheds, bungalows and modern ranch style house, partly enclosed by high mature hedges. Some distinctive farmsteads – medieval half timbered building at Yardhurst and the oast house and moat at Etchden Farm.
Biddenden & High Halden Farmlands	50. BHH2 Etchden Woodlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Biddenden & High Halden Farmlands, p23	• Extensive area of pre 19th century coppiced woodlands with good mix of trees, scrub and field layer and particularly over mature hornbeam coppice with oak standards. • An ancient bank lies to both sides of the Etchden Lane (probable old drove road) enclosed by the tree canopy • The southern extent has a high proportion of conifers interspersed throughout. • Small fields of improved grassland to the north.
Biddenden & High Halden Farmlands	51. BHH3 Worten Home Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Biddenden & High Halden Farmlands, p24	• Rising land from Worten Home Farm on the edge of the Great Stour Valley in the north and bounded by railway line to south. Area bisected by sunken lane with rough grazing (probable old landfill site) and arable fields. • Belt of mature oak woodland along the railway track and small mixed woodland to west. • Long distance views to the north and Ashford to the east.
Brabourne Lees Mixed Farmlands	52. BL1 Hinxhill North Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Brabourne Lees Mixed Farmlands, p22	• The southern part is steeply sloping with series of mixed woodland containing some plantation conifers and sweet chestnut coppice with wet woodland and pasture on the valley floor. • Hedgerows and streams provide a good field pattern and link to adjoining woodlands and marshes. • Sales Wood is sited on a knoll in the central part surrounded by open arable fields with long views to the North Downs and fringes of Ashford.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Brabourne Lees Mixed Farmlands	53. BL2 Game Rearing Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Brabourne Lees Mixed Farmlands, p23	• Undulating farmland with scattered farmsteads and distinctive pattern of linear treecover and copses. Large productive arable fields have lost some internal field boundaries. • Woodlands comprise various mixed plantation woodlands with notable mature oak, ash and beech, wet alder coppice, sweet chestnut and hornbeam coppice. Many are managed for pheasant rearing and game. • Lanes are sunken and winding in places bounded by species rich mature hedgerows. • Series of springs and associated streams with flushes of willow and wet meadows with rough pasture. • M20 in cutting to southern edge.
Brabourne Lees Mixed Farmlands	54. BL3 Hatch Park	Studio Engleback (2005): Brabourne Lees Mixed Farmlands, p24	• Deer park with woods, springs, lakes and pasture – some conversion to arable to south. • Veteran trees remain – north of park is designated SSSI • M20 in cutting to southern edge – noise impacts onto area
Brabourne Vale	55. BV1 Naccolt Higher Fields	Studio Engleback (2005): Brabourne Vale, p22	• The land gently falls to the floodplain and lies on Gault Clay. The soils are easily waterlogged and have been drained by a series of dykes creating large fields predominantly for sheep pasture but with some arable. The dykes are marked by flushes of crack willow and ash. • There is a good network of hedges to lanes. • Old brick works at Naccolt with lake. • Long views to north across the Wye Valley and to east to North Downs
Brabourne Vale	56. BV2 Bourne Dyke Wet Pastures	Studio Engleback (2005): Brabourne Vale, p23	• Valley floor with series of sheep pastures enclosed by good network of dykes, streams and ditches with mature hedgerows and scrub. • Blocks of wet willow woodland are linked to surrounding network of wetland habitats and species rich wet meadows.
Brabourne Vale	57. BV3 Nackholt Wood	Studio Engleback (2005): Brabourne Vale, p24	• A mixed use woodland with tall stand of poplars and pond to west, mature wet woodland with ditches and dense hazel coppice, veteran oaks adjoining lane to south and open wet flower meadows. Designated SNCI • The conifer plantation within is well screened. • Good hedgerow corridors to north west and southern boundaries.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	58. HHF1 Kingsland	Studio Engleback (2005): Hothfield Heathy Farmlands, p24	• Large rolling arable fields bordering the linear settlement of Sandyhurst, with open elevated views to Ashford to the southwest • A thick hedgerow borders the lane, but some internal field boundaries have been lost. • Noise from the M20 is apparent
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	59. HHF2 Sandyhurst Farm	Studio Engleback (2005): Hothfield Heathy Farmlands, p25	• Bowl topography with mix of open space, business park, farmland and recreational areas including a golf course. • The open space associated with the business park has a typical gardenesque landscape with ornamental fishing ponds and non-native planting. • The farm, with neglected barns is mixed with arable land, wet woodland and pasture, landscaped fishing ponds and naturalising grassland. The farm is overlooked by the business park. • A wooded golf course lies adjacent to the M20 and recreation ground and playing fields to north of the area.
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	60. HHF4 Godinton Woodlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Hothfield Heathy Farmlands, p26	• An extensive area of broadleaf woodland on steeply undulating ground comprising sweet chestnut coppice with rides and oak/birch woodland. • The sunken Godinton Lane cuts through the woodland and clearing. • Wet woodland around Lady's Weir with associated marginal planting. • Small extent of ribbon development associated with Maidstone Road. • Some dumping around Hoads Wood and pressure from recreational use especially at The Warren. • Noise from the M20 and CTRL impacts on the northern area.
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	61. HHF5 Godinton Park	Studio Engleback (2005): Hothfield Heathy Farmlands, p27	• A gently sloping English parkland landscape with pasture, mature trees (some veteran), mixed mature plantations and coppice. • Fine views to the North Downs north of Godinton Lane and to the south from within the Park. • The CTRL is audible to the north

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	62. HHF6 Hothfield Wooded Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Hothfield Heathy Farmlands, p28	• Gently sloping farmland around Hothfield with a mix of medium sized arable fields and pasture with scattered linear woodland blocks (some wet) • South of Waterfall Road which is sunken in places, is an area of rough pasture dotted with mature trees. • Some isolated farmsteads with traditional pre 19th century houses and notably Hothfield Manor with medieval church, walled garden and extensive estate wall. There is an oast at Paddocks Farm. • Crossed by byway and the Greensand Way. • Glimpsed views to the North Downs and south to the Great Stour valley.
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	63. HHF7 Hothfield Common	Studio Engleback (2005): Hothfield Heathy Farmlands, p29	• A valley bog at the junction of sandstones and clayey Sandgate Beds, comprising heathland with acid grassland, birch woodland and scrub. The area is a nature reserve and is well used for dog walking.
Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	64. HHF8 Hothfield Open Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Hothfield Heathy Farmlands, p30	• Gently sloping mixed farmland around Hothfield of predominantly large arable fields with some isolated woodland blocks and associated small ponds. • Crossed by byway and the Greensand Way. • Open views to the North Downs and south to the Great Stour Valley. • Detractors are the CTRL and M20 on embankment
Mersham Farmlands	65. MF1 Sevington High Fields	Studio Engleback (2005): Mersham Farmlands, p22	• Open arable farmland on gentle rise crossed by Highfield Lane (bounded with hedgerows) and dominated by Sevington Church. • A line of poplars delineate the brook. • The noise from the M20, CTRL and bypass is very apparent.
Mersham Farmlands	66. MF2 Mersham Paddocks	Studio Engleback (2005): Mersham Farmlands, p23	• Steep valley with sheep pasture and bog, poached gappy hedges, woodland plantation and edge planting to M20 in cutting.
Mersham Farmlands	67. MF3 Bower Road Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Mersham Farmlands, p24	• Large open arable fields with some pasture around Bower Farm on the steeper slopes. • Adjacent to Mersham the landscape is more intact with high hedgerows and trees, streams, poplar windbreak and fine block of alder coppice. • Bower Road has fine hedgerow in places. • M20 and CTRL in cutting with new planting are well screened, but noise is apparent. • Business Park at Wembden Farm is a local detractor. • Long views south to Aldington Ridge but very restricted to west by woodland and poplars.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Mersham Farmlands	68. MF4 West Mersham Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Mersham Farmlands, p25	• A group of farms with gentle open undulating arable fields with gappy hedgerows and some paddocks adjacent to the farm buildings. • The sunken lanes, such as Blind Lane have high mature hedges and the area to the west has a wooded feel with small mixed woodland adjacent to the CTRL. • The CTRL is on embankment in places and is particularly prominent.
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	69. ORS1 Shadoxhurst Woods	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p22	• Pre 1801 coppiced woodlands comprising hornbeam with oak standards (over mature), ancient banks and ditches at boundaries. • Bambridge Wood has remnants of former conifer plantation colonised by birch with glades • A byway divides the two woodlands • The woodland has been encroached upon in places by adjacent housing, gardens and paddocks and there is evidence of biking use and dumping.
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	70. ORS2 Bromley Green Farm	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p23	• Area of pasture with thick hedges and hedgerow trees enclosed by woodland • Views restricted
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	71. ORS3 Bromley Green Woods	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p24	• Extensive woodland of former hornbeam coppice with oak standards, part cleared for the suburban settlement of Bromley Green. • At Long Hurst the oak/birch woodland is of varied quality and divided into linear small holdings with varied use such as builders' yards, paddocks and abandoned polytunnels. • Within Capel Wood there are patches of Scot's pine plantation, encroachment by gardens and dumping to the north. • Views are contained by the woodland.
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	72. ORS4 Golden Wood - Stone Cross Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p25	• Undulating farmland with isolated farms and scattered woodlands. • Patchwork of small to medium sized intensively farmed arable fields and pasture enclosed by thick thorn hedges which have few hedgerow trees, whereas to the south there are more trees and the backdrop of the adjacent woodland gives a wooded feel. • Golden Wood and Bliby Wood are notable woodlands, the latter mature hornbeam coppice with oak standards. There are scattered small ponds throughout. • The area is crisscrossed by a network of lanes and footpaths and the Greensand Way. • Detractors include the railway and A2070 to the west, power lines and localised dumping. • Long distance views towards the North Downs.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	73. ORS5 Aldington Frith Wooded Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p26	• Rolling wooded mixed farmland to the south of Aldington Frith with grazing/ arable and variable field boundaries. • Tilelodge Wood is extensive former hornbeam coppice with oak standards set within a steep valley with streams. • Saxon Shore Way footpath cuts through Tilelodge Wood • Some rhododendron invasion.
Stour Gap	74. SG1 Wilmington Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Gap, p22	• Large open arable fields gently sloping towards the Great Stour Valley. • Remnant hedges with continuous hedges to north and west, ditches and shelter belts. • Local railway line to east. • Extensive panoramic views to North Downs. • Oast House at Park Barn Farm
Stour Gap	75. SG2 Kennington Place	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Gap, p23	• Stately Kennington Hall and parkland grounds with mature parkland trees, topiary hedgerows and ornamental gardens and enclosed to north and east with mixed plantations. • Cattle grazed pasture with stream and willow scrub, alders and poplars. Remnant orchard.
Stour Gap	76. SG3 Ulley Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Gap, p24	• Undulating mixed farmland with open arable fields, pasture and linear woodland strips (hornbeam), wet woodland and hedges which give a wooded character. • Long distance views to the North Downs • Oast House at Ulley Farm
Stour Gap	77. SG4 Nursery	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Gap, p25	• Large scale plant nursery with glass houses, polytunnels and mature poplar shelter belts. • Gently sloping ground with views to North Downs and south towards Ashford.
Stour Gap	78. SG5 Broughton Lees Farmland	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Gap, p26	• Large sloping prairie style open arable fields with remnant hedgerow trees. • Discrete woodland block with stream • Open long distance views to North Downs to north and east.
Stour Gap	79. SG6 Eastwell Farmlands	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Gap, p27	• Rolling arable and pasture with medium sized fields generally divided by mature thick hedges, but which have in places disappeared leaving remnant mature oaks. • Small hornbeam coppice (part pre-1810 woodland) and poplar plantation give a wooded feel to the valley. • Noise from the M20 evident. • Long distance views from elevated parts to Ashford to south.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Stour Valley	80. SV1 Bybrook	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Valley, p22	• Floodplain between housing and the sewage works of parkland character with recreational fields and pond with new planting.
Stour Valley	81. SV2 Longport Bridge	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Valley, p23	• Gently rolling farmland with distinctive edge to floodplain and wet meadow adjacent to the Campbells Factory. • A steep stream cuts through the area, lined with alders and some willows and ash. The M20 is screened by trees, but is audible. • The Stour Valley Walk crosses the area. • Long distance views to the North Downs.
Stour Valley	82. SV3 North of Conningbrook	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Valley, p24	• Flooded gravel pits with gently sloping rough grass/ meadow edges that are important for over wintering birds and mammals. • Wide open arable fields within the floodplain of the great Stour which is delineated in places by isolated willows. • Many hedgerows have been lost. • Open views to the Campbell's Factory, Julie Rose Stadium and North Downs
Stour Valley	83. SV4 Wye Stour Valley	Studio Engleback (2005): Stour Valley, p25	• The wide open floodplain of the Great Stour Valley with large arable fields extending to the meandering river which is delineated in places by mature willows or discrete areas of alder carr. • The fields are intensively cultivated drained by deep dykes and hedgerows have been cleared. Areas of pasture to the northwest of the river. • Flooded gravel pit with damp alder woodland, willows and white poplar. • The railway bounds the north western edge. • Expansive views towards Ashford and the North Downs.
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	84. USV1 Court Lodge Farm	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p26	• Area of improved grazing crossed by dykes, dry ditches and gappy hedges with Court Lodge Farm and moated farmhouse with mature trees and poplars. • Long Length forms a think linear woodland to the road. • The Greensand footpath cuts through the area. • Housing at Stanhope overlooks the area to the north and east
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	85. USV2 Willesborough Dykes	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p27	• Low lying area within the floodplain crisscrossed by dykes, the East Stour and dominated by the A2042 road/ junction network and CTRL to the east. • Mix of farmland, predominantly grazing and regenerating scrub surrounded by new housing, industry and retail development to the south of Ashford.

Landscape Character Area	District Landscape Type	Report Reference	Key Characteristics
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	86. USV3 Waterbrook	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p28	• Gently undulating open valley floor with extensive tree, hedge and ditch clearance with mix of arable land, neglected grazing, gravel workings, freight depot and former railway sidings. • Some remnant hedgerows, ditches and ponds.
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	87. USV4 East Stour Valley	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p29	• Intensively farmed land of predominantly large arable fields within the East Stour river valley floodplain. • The area is bisected by tributaries, often delineated by willow pollards and carr such as around Swanton Mill, Evegate Mill and Flood Street. • The area has undergone extensive clearance of hedges and ditches. • Around the Forstal and Flood Street the scale is more intimate with smaller fields of improved grassland and remnant orchards. • The CTRL bounds the northern edge and is for the most part in cutting.
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	88. USV5 Ruckinge Dyke	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p30	• The area is predominantly arable farmland within the floodplain with some smaller paddocks and grazing with gappy relic hedges and scattered hedgerow trees. • The land rises to a distinctive knoll to the east of Finn Farm which was extensively wooded during the late 19th century and has since completely disappeared. • Adjacent at Steeds Lane are a series of fishing ponds. • Around Bilham Farm the hedgerows are intact and the proximity to Captain's Wood gives a more wooded character. • The A2070(T) dual carriageway on wooded embankment bounds the western edge and is prominent.
Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements	89. USV6 Great Stour Valley	Studio Engleback (2005): Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Settlements, p31	• Extensive valley floor farmland of arable and pasture with scattered woodlands, including numerous discrete poplar plantations. • The Great Stour and tributaries meandering through the landscape are often delineated by flushes of willows or wet alder woodland. • Localised flood berms and embankment at Worten Mill. • Swinford Manor and Bucksford Manor (now school and complex of private houses) have notable mature trees. • The area is crossed by a number of local lanes with strong hedgelines and footpaths, including the Greensand Way and Stour Valley Walk.

7 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

7

7.1 The Borough of Ashford contains two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); the Kent Downs AONB in the north and east of the Borough and the High Weald AONB located in the south-west. The two AONBs are afforded the highest level of protection under the Countryside Rights of Way Act and national planning policies PPS1 and PPS7. Furthermore, the adopted Core Strategy (Paragraph 6.33) identifies that the conservation of the landscape in the AONBs should be a priority, which is supported by policy TRS17 of the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD. Policy TRS17 identifies the AONBs as landscape character areas in their own right, ensuring the particular characteristics of their landscapes are protected through the criteria-based policy approach.

7.2 The AONBs in the Borough were not surveyed as part of the Landscape Character Assessment work, but the landscape of these areas has been assessed extensively by the AONB management plans, produced by the respective AONB units. Due to the AONBs being treated as separate landscape character areas, it is considered that the information for the protection of these nationally important areas should be obtained from the relevant AONB unit. A number of toolkits and advisory documents have been written by the AONB units and the documents available at the time of this SPD going to print can be found below:

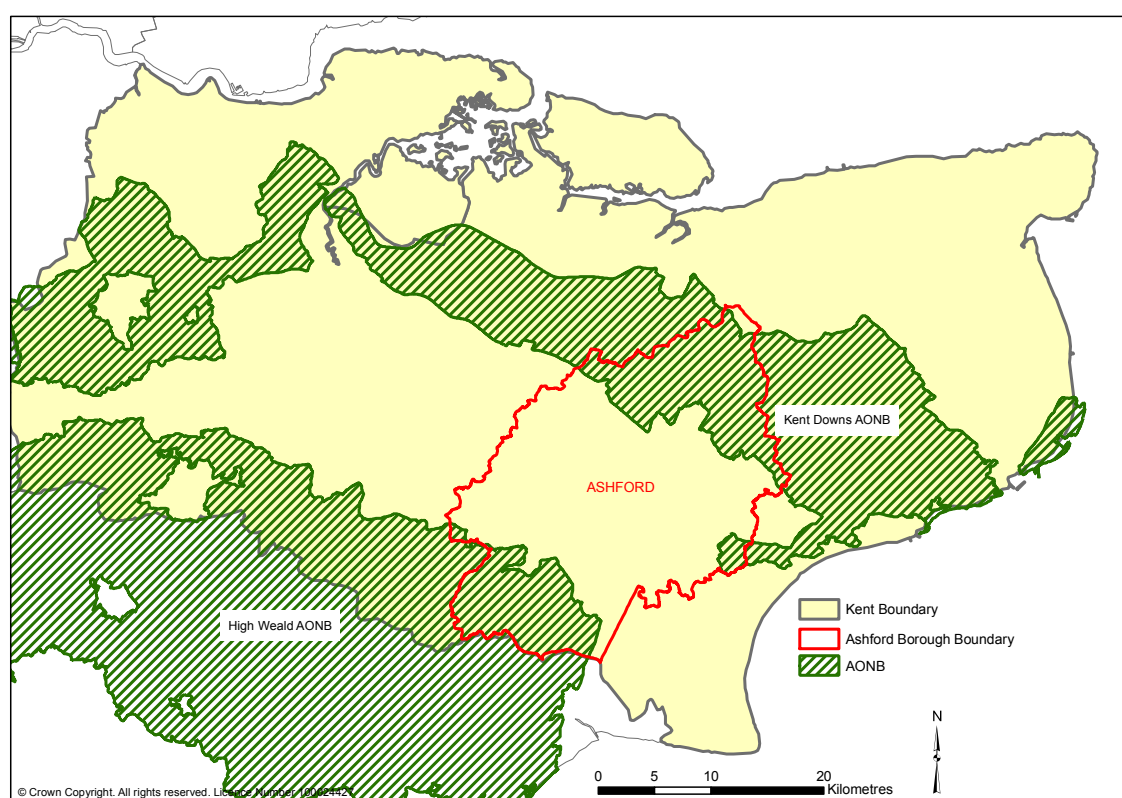


Figure 5: Location of AONBs in Kent

AONB Management Plans:

7.3 AONB management plans are written under the regulations set out in the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 part IV. Management plans have the primary purpose of protecting the landscape as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the conservation and enhancement of the landscape features that represent its natural beauty and ensuring that people can learn about it and preserve its unique character. AONB management plans are therefore designed as a guide for local authorities, statutory bodies and agencies, businesses and individuals who are interested in the AONB. Both the management plans that cover the two AONBs in the Borough were adopted in 2004 and a 5 year review was undertaken in 2009.

7.4 The management plan is supported by an Action Plan, which outlines how the vision of the management is going to be achieved, including information on tasks that need undertaking, priorities and milestones. The Management Plan and Action Plan can be used by anyone who wants to get to know the landscape and learn how it can be better managed.

Kent Downs AONB:

7.5 The following additional resources and documents have been produced by the Kent Downs AONB. All documents can be found on the Kent Downs AONB website unless otherwise stated

Publications	Description:
Kent Downs Management Plan 2009-2014	See above
Kent Downs Management Plan 2009-2014 Action Plan (2009) -available from the Kent Downs AONB unit.	See above
Kent Downs Landscape Design Handbook January 2005 reprinted March 2006	Design guidance based on the 13 landscape character areas in the Kent Downs. Guidance on fencing, hedges, planting, gateways etc. to help in the conservation and enhancement of all corners of the AONB.
Kent Downs Renewable Energy Position Statement March 2008	The purpose of this statement is to provide a clearly articulated position for the Kent Downs AONB partnership with regards to renewable energy technologies. It recognises that each Local Planning Authority must balance the impact of proposals for renewables on the AONB with all the other material planning considerations.
Rural Streets and Lanes A Design Handbook Draft July 2009	Guidance on the management and design of rural lanes and streets that takes the unique character of the Kent Downs into account. This document discusses the

Publications	Description:
	principle of shared space and uses examples from around the UK and Europe. The Rural Streets and Lanes Design Handbook has been adopted as policy by Kent County Council.
Kent Rural Advice Service Farm Diversification Toolkit (1st Revision 2010)	Guidance on taking an integrated whole farm approach to farm developments leading to sound diversification projects that benefit the Kent Downs.
Kent Downs Land Manager's Pack	Detailed guidance on practical land management from how to plant a hedge to creating ponds and enhancing chalk grassland.
Kent Farmstead Guidance and Kent Downs Farmstead Guidance (DRAFT)	Guidance on the conservation, enhancement and development change of heritage farmsteads in the Kent Downs based on English Heritage's Kent and National Character Area Farmstead Statements. It includes an Assessment method and Design Guidance.
Good Practice Horse Pasture Management (DRAFT)	National guidance providing information on equine development covering grassland management, fencing, trees and hedges, waste management and basic planning information.

High Weald AONB

7.6 The High Weald AONB management plan uses a unique approach to landscape by defining its natural beauty through 5 essential 'components' which have survived over its history and the landscape patterns and extent which are most prevalent in the AONB. These are: Geology, landform, water systems and climate; Settlement; Woodland; Routeways; and Field and heath. These components can be used as a decision making framework for assessing impacts on the landscape by reference to both detailed mapping of these features, and additional research supporting and informing that approach.

7.7 The AONB management plan should be consulted in the first instance and can be found on the High Weald AONB website -

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>. Digital map data of the components is available from the AONB Unit on request (email: info@highweald.org), and a Cultural Landscape Advisor is available to offer free visits to give on site assessment of natural beauty, and management advice.

7.8 Additionally, research and documents have been produced by the High Weald AONB Unit and these provide understanding and guidance on applying and interpreting the components of the Management Plan.

Publications	Description:
Historic Farmsteads & Landscape Character in The High Weald AONB (2008)	This report details how farmsteads have been mapped and categorised in the High Weald, including providing guidance on their reuse.
The sustainable development of dispersed settlement in the High Weald AONB (2007)	This report looks at how the High Weald has developed its distinctive and unusual pattern of dispersed and scattered farms and hamlets and compares this to other countries in the EU. It summarises how this pattern influences the way we live, and how we can be sustainable in the High Weald today.
Medieval Deer Parks and Designed Landscapes in the High Weald AONB (2009)	Significant areas of the High Weald were managed in medieval times as a deer park and later as formal 'designed' estates and gardens. Using detailed map regression, this report helps to uncover the lost history of these formal elements of the landscape.
Additional detailed advice on land management can be found at http://www.highweald.org/look-after/property-management.html	

8 Glossary

8

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): A landscape whose distinctive character and beauty is in the nation's interest to protect. AONBs are given special legal status to ensure their preservation and the designation is of equal value to that of the National Parks.

AONB Management Plan: All AONB's have to have a management plan, a statutory (legal) requirement set by the CROW Act Part IV, 89. The management plan formulates how the AONB should be managed and how the functions relating to it should be carried out.

AONB Unit: A strategic body that works with partners to achieve the conservation and enhancement of the AONB which they represent. It undertakes a number of core functions and is also a source of expertise. AONB units are supported by a Joint Consultative Committee (JAC). The JAC includes officers and members from the Boroughs contained within the AONB boundary area.

Core Strategy: Sets out the overall vision and objectives for the delivery of Ashford's Local Development Framework between 2006 and 2021. The Core Strategy is the principle Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Borough and all other documents within the Local Development Framework (LDF) must conform to it.

Development Plan Document: A key local planning document forming an essential part of the Local Development Framework. DPDs include the Core Strategy, site-specific allocations of land, Area Action Plans (where needed), and the Proposals Map. DPDs form part of the statutory development plan. All DPDs are subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination. Once adopted, development control decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Growth Area: The growth area is the urban areas of Ashford, the Town Centre and the proposed urban extensions. It does not apply to Tenterden and the rural areas.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA): Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is an approach to understanding the differences between landscapes. It provides a method to identify and assess landscapes, landscape change, and a framework for developing landscape quality objectives. LCAs can be used to inform criteria-based policies in LDDs.

Landscape Character Area: Produced as part of an Landscape Character Assessment. An area of landscape that has identifiable key characteristics and features.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS): A series of statements issued by central government to replace the existing Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes.

Proposals Map: An essential component of a Local Development Framework, showing the location of proposals in all current Development Plan Documents, on an Ordnance Survey base map.

Special Landscape Area (SLA): Special Landscape Area (SLA): An alternative approach to criteria-based policies protecting areas of locally sensitive landscape. SLAs are not supported at the higher Government levels and PPS7 favours the use of Landscape Character Areas.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): A Local Development Document that adds further detail to policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document. Unlike Development Plan Documents, SPDs do not form part of the statutory development.

9 Bibliography and Useful Websites

9

'Ashford Landscape Character Assessment', Jacobs (June 2009)

'Ashford Local Development Framework: Landscape Character Study for Ashford Borough Council and English Partnerships', StudioEngleback (November 2005)

'Core Strategy', Ashford Borough Council (Adopted October 2010)

'Landscape: beyond the view', Parts 1-3, The Countryside Agency (September 2006)

'Making Sense of Place, Landscape Character Assessment: Summary Guidance for England and Scotland', The Countryside Agency (2002)

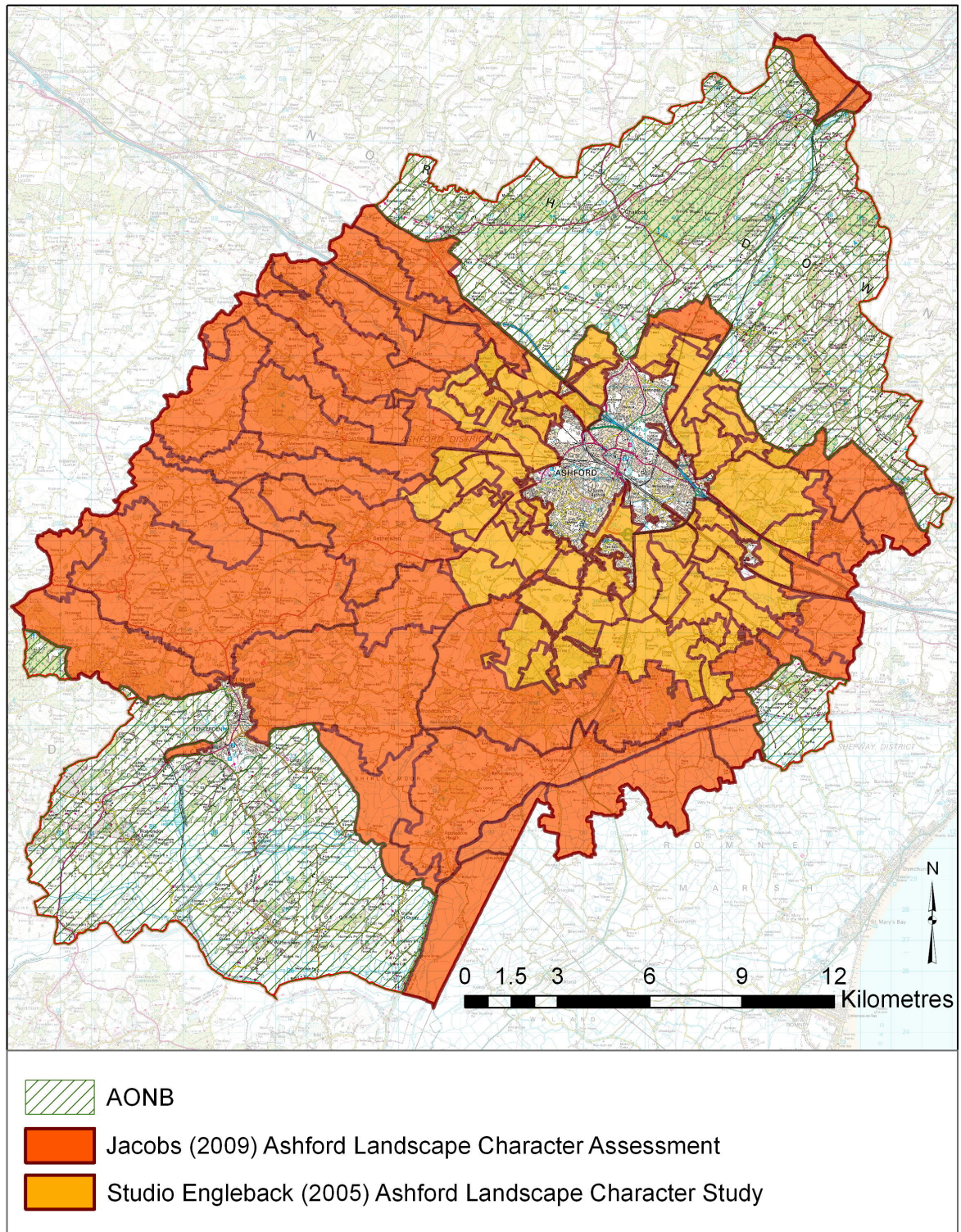
'Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document (DPD)', Ashford Borough Council (Adopted October 2010)

'Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan Document (DPD)', Regulation 27 publication version, Ashford Borough Council (November 2010)

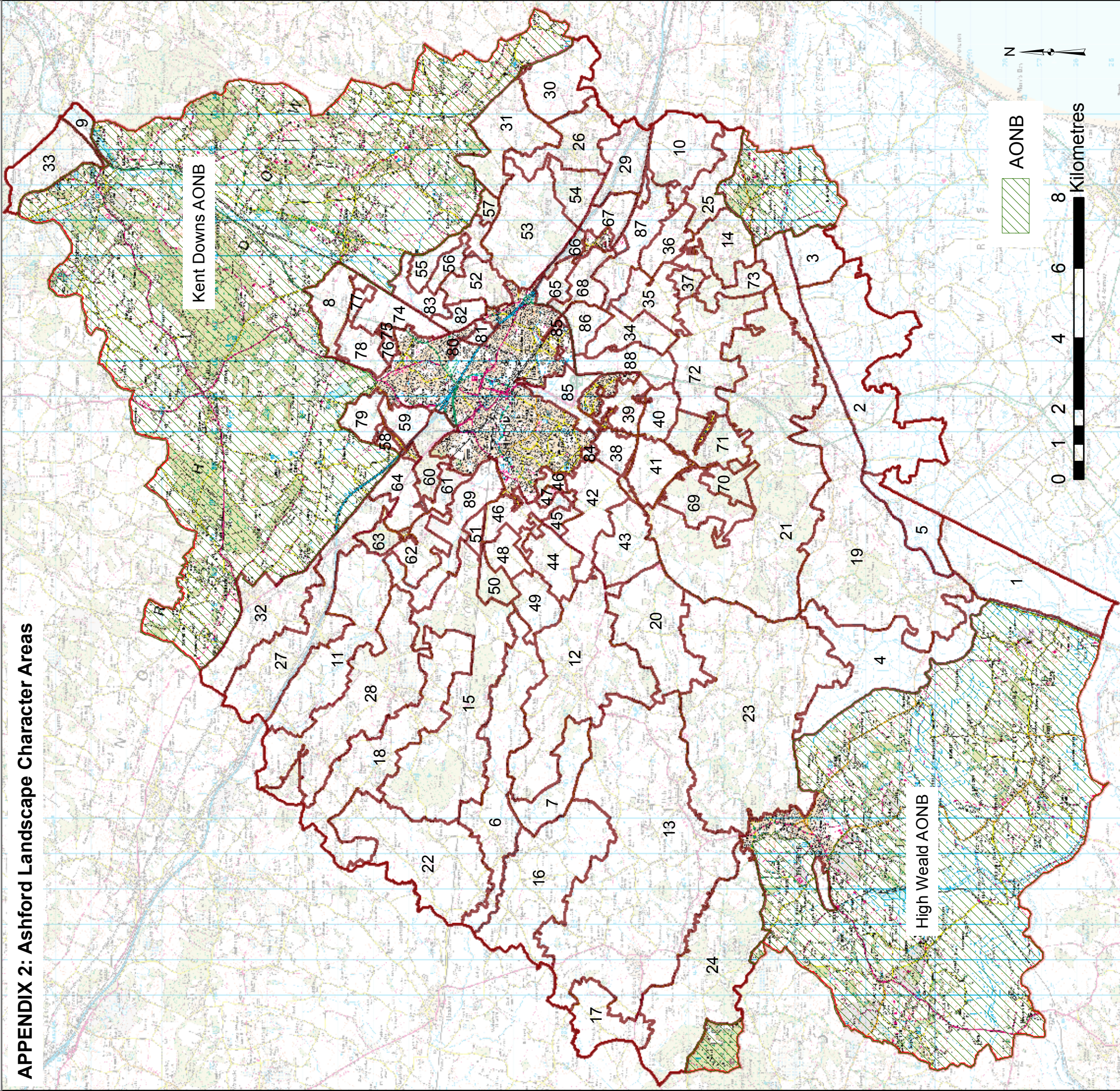
Useful Websites (correct as October 2010)	
Natural England http://www.naturalengland.org.uk	Natural England is the Government's statutory adviser on landscape. They have specific responsibility for National Parks, AONBs and Heritage Coastlines.
Landscape Character Network (LCN) http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk/	Landscape Character Network (LCN) is an informal network that focuses on both Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and the European Landscape Convention (ELC). The network is open to anyone with an interest in landscape.
National Association for AONBs http://www.aonb.org.uk	Website outlining the policy and context of all 47 AONBs found in the UK. It includes a reference library with useful information regarding landscape interest
Kent Downs AONB Unit http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/	The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) website includes information and news about the area, including events and activities. It also outlines the work of the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee and includes a link to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan
High Weald AONB unit http://www.highweald.org/	The High Weald AONB website outlines how the AONB needs to be looked after and how to explore the area. It promotes events and activities being undertaken in the area and includes a background

Useful Websites (correct as October 2010)	
	to the Joint Advisory Committee, including links to the High Weald AONB management plan.
Kent Landscape Information System (K-LIS) www.kent.gov.uk/klis	The K-LIS website provides detailed information on Kent's landscape and biodiversity. It contains details on countryside access, identifies opportunities for habitat creation and landscape restoration, the physical environment including soils and geology, the Kent habitat survey as well as areas designated for their conservation value.

Appendix 1: Coverage areas of the Jacobs and Studio Engleback LCA



APPENDIX 2: Ashford Landscape Character Areas



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| 1. Highknock Arable Marshlands | 31. Brabourne Farmlands | 61. HHF5 Godinton Park |
| 2. Romney Marsh Mixed Farmlands | 32. Charing Farmlands | 62. HHF6 Hotfield Wooded Farmlands |
| 3. Royal Military Marshlands | 33. Old Wives Lees Orchards | 63. HHF7 Hotfield Common |
| 4. Shirley Moor Arable Land | 34. AR1 Cheesmans Green | 64. HHF8 Hotfield Open Farmlands |
| 5. The Dowels Marshland Pasture | 35. Colliers Hill | 65. MF1 Sevington High Fields |
| 6. Beult Valley Farmlands | 36. AR3 Clap Hill | 66. MF2 Mersham Paddocks |
| 7. Beult Valley Wooded Farmlands | 37. AR4 Aldington Frith | 67. MF4 Bower Road Farmlands |
| 8. Boughton Lees Horticultural Valley | 38. BF1 Kingsnorth Arable | 68. MF4 West Mersham Farmlands |
| 9. StourValley Shalmsford | 39. BF2 Kingsnorth Wooded Pasture | 69. ORS1 Shadoxhurst Woods |
| 10. East Stour Valley | 40. BF3 Homelands Recreation | 70. ORS2 Bromley Green Farm |
| 11. Great Stour Valley | 41. BF4 Stubbs Cross Woodland | 71. ORS3 Bromley Green Woods |
| 12. Bethersden Mixed Farmlands | 42. BF5 Chilmington Open Arable | 72. ORS4 Golden Wood - Stone Cross Farmlands |
| 13. Biddenden and High Halden Farmlands | 43. BF6 North Shadoxhurst Bocage | 73. ORS5 Aldington Frith Wooded Farmlands |
| 14. Bonnington Wooded Farmlands | 44. BF7 Barton Farm to Goldwell Bocage | 74. SG1 Wilmington Farmlands |
| 15. Dering Wooded Farmlands | 45. BF8 Goldwell Lane Farmsteads | 75. SG2 Kennington Place |
| 16. Haffenden Quarter Farmlands | 46. BF9 Great Chart Farmlands | 76. SG3 Ulley Farmlands |
| 17. Hareplain Farmlands | 47. BF10 Mock Lane Knoll | 77. SG4 Nursey |
| 18. Mundy Bois Mixed Farmlands | 48. BF11 Goldwell | 78. SG5 Boughton Lees Farmlands |
| 19. Old Romney Shoreline Settlements | 49. BHH1 Yardhurst Farmlands | 79. SG6 Eastwell Farmlands |
| 20. Plurenden Arable Plateau | 50. BHH2 Etchden Woodlands | 80. SV1 Bybrook |
| 21. Shadoxhurst Wooded Farmlands | 51. BHH3 Worten Home Farmlands | 81. SV2 Longport Bridge |
| 22. Smarden Bell Farmlands | 52. BL1 Hinxhill North Farmlands | 82. SV3 North of Conningbrook |
| 23. Woodchurch Undulating Farmlands | 53. BL2 Game Rearing Farmlands | 83. SV4 Wye Stour Valley |
| 24. Clapper Hill Wooded Farmlands | 54. BL3 Hatch Park | 84. USV1 Court Lodge Farm |
| 25. Aldington Ridgeline | 55. BV1 Nackholt Higher Fields | 85. USV2 Willesborough Dykes |
| 26. Brabourne Lees Hilly Farmlands | 56. BV2 Bourne Dyke Wet Pastures | 86. USV3 Waterbrook |
| 27. Charing Heath Farmlands | 57. BV3 Nackholt Wood | 87. USV4 East Stour Valley |
| 28. Egerton - Pluckley Greensand Fruit Belt | 58. HHF1 Kingsland | 88. USV5 Ruckinge Dyke |
| 29. Evegate Mixed Farmlands | 59. HHF2 Sandyhurst Farm | 89. USV6 Great Stour Valley |
| 30. Brabourne Arable Farmlands | 60. HHF4 Godinton Woodlands | |

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