

The Hampshire **LANDSCAPE**

a Strategy for the Future



Hampshire County Council

ENVIRONMENT

The Hampshire **LANDSCAPE** *a Strategy for the Future*



FOREWORD



The English landscape is a by-product of the way we have chosen to develop and manage the land. We are fortunate in having a refined and reasonably successful planning system in this county which has both controlled poorly conceived development and encouraged high quality in new design.

However, in the statutory planning system there has been little or no place for influencing the way the land is managed. Decisions about the way we manage the land can have a profound impact on the quality of the environment, as profound as new development. Devastating loss of wildlife in the countryside, erosion of the sense of place and destruction of historic landscapes (as physical evidence of human activities over thousands of years) have mainly happened without being noticed by society, and outside the scope of the planning system.

Society's agenda has changed as a result of these losses, and those who manage land have shown that they are capable of rising to new challenges. There is a need for us, therefore, to be clear what the long-term objectives are for the countryside so that they can be conveyed to those who manage and develop land.

Hampshire County Council has published this Landscape Strategy which will now sit beside the County Structure Plan and set out our ambitions for the way the countryside should be managed. It will inform both Strategic Management Plans and individual whole farm plans.

As Chairman of Hampshire County Council's Planning and Transportation Committee I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed towards making this an effective and pertinent document which will help secure the sustainable management of Hampshire's landscape.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dudley A. Keep". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Dudley Keep
Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee,
Hampshire County Council

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SUMMARY

Introduction

This Landscape Strategy is the first strategic land management plan for Hampshire. It is based on the county landscape assessment *The Hampshire Landscape* produced by the County Council in 1993. The Strategy, like the assessment, covers all countryside areas throughout the county but urban areas are outside its scope.

The Strategy sets out three main aims: to maintain and enhance the distinctive sense of place and great diversity of Hampshire's different landscapes; to support and complement the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire; to support planning policies and guide policy decisions ensuring that new development recognises and respects the character of the landscape including scarce and irreplaceable landscapes.

It is aimed at those with a policy, advisory or design role and those who have an interest, influence or concern about the future of the landscape. To raise public awareness, a non-technical summary is published with the Strategy.

The Strategy supports and complements the Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) in its commitment to promote the conservation and enhancement of Hampshire's countryside and coast, wildlife and historic heritage. It also sets out a comprehensive framework for other strategic and local plans and strategies and provides a focus for harnessing and directing the environmental initiatives and actions of all those involved in shaping the Hampshire landscape in the future.

Landscape change and public concern

Before the twentieth century, the landscape had evolved and developed to reflect changing human needs over several thousand years. Since then the speed of change has transformed the landscape.



The intensification of agriculture and increasing pressures for many different forms of development have eroded the character of the landscape and brought the loss of many wildlife habitats. These changes, and the growing awareness of the overall impact of human action on the natural environment have led to widespread public concern about environmental matters. In reversing environmental damage, the power of public opinion is central to bringing about action to achieve change.

It is recognised that landscape change is both necessary and inevitable, and that the countryside of the future will serve many different purposes. Conservation and change are not alternatives but different interests which need to be accommodated in an integrated way.

Sustainable landscape management

The value of the landscape as a fundamental social, economic and environmental resource is inestimable. Its sustainable management is crucial for future generations, and this can only be achieved by substantial investment and new mechanisms which integrate environmental conservation and economic policy.

It is recognised that behind ambitious ideas for the restoration and enhancement of a healthy landscape lies the awkward reality of its cost. Most of the countryside is managed by farmers and landowners. The realities of farm economics, particularly in an increasingly competitive global market mean that the successful management of a rich and healthy landscape is threatened. Radical new mechanisms and solutions involving reforms of agricultural policy are required.

The sustainable management of the traditional English landscape, rich in wildlife and characterised in the public mind as a patchwork of woods, fields and hedgerows, will require substantial investment if this concept is to be achieved and maintained.

The open Hampshire Downs contrast with the small fields and woodlands of the North Hampshire Lowlands beyond



Landscape diversity

Hampshire has a very diverse landscape. The Strategy describes 11 distinctive Character Areas, each with its own particular sense of place. The Character Areas correspond broadly with the regional Character Areas identified by the Countryside Agency in their landscape character assessment of England, although the county areas are at a more detailed level.

Landscape issues and guidelines

The Strategy sets out in detail the issues which have contributed towards the decline in the quality of the landscape. It identifies a number of guidelines addressing the issues and detailing the actions needed to help restore and enhance the distinctive sense of place of the county’s different landscapes. It also reviews issues such as climate change and disease although these are outside the scope of the Strategy’s framework for action.

Many of the issues and guidelines apply widely throughout Hampshire, but those applicable to particular Character Areas are identified separately. The countywide issues and guidelines are dealt with under the following headings:

Land Management	Land Use and Development
Landscape Character and Diversity	Landscape Character and the Planning System
Agriculture	Urban Expansion
Woodlands, Trees and Forestry	Recreation, Tourism, Access and Diversification
Hedgerows	Transport
Biological Diversity	Minerals and Waste
Historic Landscapes	
Urban Fringe	

Implementation

Significant environmental improvements are already being carried out by numerous agencies, organisations, voluntary groups and individuals. The Strategy is an overall framework which is intended to be a focus for directing and complementing these ongoing environmental improvements. It identifies the range of organisations from national agencies to local groups whose different roles, including the provision of funding, can be combined in working partnerships to implement the guidelines. The Strategy also sets out a framework for action and the mechanisms through which implementation can be achieved.



INTRODUCTION

The Strategy

This Landscape Strategy is the first strategic land management plan for Hampshire. It also addresses the different ways in which development issues affect the landscape.

The Strategy sets out a comprehensive framework for other strategies and plans and provides a focus for harnessing and directing the environmental actions, advice and policies of numerous organisations which are already achieving significant improvements throughout Hampshire. This countywide framework is intended for all those directly or indirectly involved in shaping the Hampshire landscape in the future. In particular it is intended to provide a framework for District Authority strategies and other plans and local action initiatives. Additionally, it is intended for those with a policy, advisory or design role, and those who carry out action and change on the ground. It is also for all those who have an interest, influence or concern about the future of the landscape.

It supports and complements the *Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review)* in its commitment to promote the conservation and enhancement of Hampshire's countryside and coast, wildlife and historic heritage, and to respect the diversity of character in Hampshire. The Strategy provides practical advice in support of the landscape policies of the *County Structure Plan (Review)*. These include policies E6, E7, E8, E9 and E15 which are listed in Appendix E.

Scope of the Strategy

The Strategy is based on the landscape assessment *The Hampshire Landscape* produced by the County Council in 1993. Like the assessment, it covers all countryside areas throughout the county but urban areas are outside its scope. However, the important and seamless inter-relationship between urban areas, the urban fringe and rural areas is acknowledged. A high quality urban environment with good facilities and attractive residential and employment opportunities not only helps to revitalise towns and cities but will also help to reduce the pressure on rural areas.

Aims, guidelines and implementation

The Strategy sets out three main aims to enhance the character, quality and diversity of the landscape throughout the whole county. A number of advisory rather than prescriptive guidelines and a long-term framework for action are set out to help translate the aims into effective action on the ground.

Aim 1 Landscape character and diversity

To maintain and enhance:

- the overall quality and diversity of landscape character across the whole county*
- the distinctive sense of place and individual identity of each particular area*

Aim 2 Biological diversity

To support and complement:

- the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire, enhancing biological diversity throughout the wider countryside*

Aim 3 Development

To support and complement planning policies by helping to ensure that:

- new development respects and where practicable contributes towards enhancing the character and local sense of place of the landscape*
- scarce and irreplaceable landscapes are recognised and respected when development proposals are being considered*



Public awareness

Raising awareness and understanding and building on the steady growth of public concern for the environment are vital elements in the success of the Strategy. Public benefit is central to the aims of the Strategy, and public support is an essential and powerful ingredient in stimulating the economic changes needed to more closely integrate environmental and economic interests. The environment is an economic resource needing long-term investment and sustainable management.

Funding

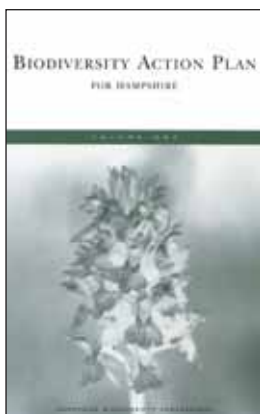
It is hoped that the strategy with its coherent and long-term approach to landscape management and enhancement can be used as a means of attracting financial support to help towards implementing the guidelines.

Relationship with the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire

The *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire* translates national objectives for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity into effective action at county level. The *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire* consists of two volumes : *Volume One* sets out a framework and the main courses of action, and *Volume Two* consists of detailed Action Plans for habitats and species of conservation concern in the county, as well as topic plans for issues influencing biodiversity such as water management.

As the strategic land management plan for the county, the Landscape Strategy complements and supports the Biodiversity Action Plan. They are both strategies for action, aiming to conserve and enhance Hampshire’s countryside and coast. Both guide and direct other plans, strategies and programmes for local action which help to deliver particular environmental objectives.

The Biodiversity Action Plan uses the county Landscape Character Areas identified in this Strategy to illustrate the geographical occurrence of the Key Habitats as a guide to targeting action. The county Character Areas relate closely to the regional Character Areas identified by the Countryside Agency and English Nature.



The Biodiversity Action Plan and this Strategy share many common goals although each has its own emphasis. The geographical distribution and location of particular habitats and species are closely related to the county Landscape Types and Character Areas identified in this Strategy. A Landscape Type may encompass several of the Key Habitats of nature conservation concern identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan. Detailed Habitat Action Plans are being drawn up for each of the Key Habitats and the other topic plans which aim to enhance biodiversity throughout the wider countryside. These Action Plans are supported and augmented by this Landscape Strategy, which sets out guidelines for the conservation and enhancement of the character of all countryside areas throughout the county.

The Need for a Strategy

The landscape

The landscape is important for many different reasons. It is a place to live, to work and a place for recreation. It offers a sense of freedom and space, and the extremes and subtleties of the seasons. It contains a record of culture and history, and it is a social, economic and environmental resource on which both human life and wildlife depend.

Landscape change

The landscape has slowly evolved and changed over several thousand years to reflect human needs. It is the result of an ongoing interaction between the natural world and human activity. Landscape change is both necessary and inevitable, and it will continue.

In the last 50 years a rapid increase in the speed of change has transformed the landscape. Change has brought about both new and flourishing landscapes. It has also reduced the quality, character and diversity of the traditional English landscape. To meet the needs of society, the intensification of agriculture and increasing pressures for various forms of development have urbanised and eroded the character and biodiversity of many rural and coastal landscapes. A landscape which took several hundred years to develop can be destroyed by modern technology in a day.

The widespread use of similar building materials and design styles, and the use of fast-growing non-indigenous tree species have brought an increasing uniformity to both settlements and the countryside. The features which make places different and give a community its local identity have been eroded by this spreading uniformity.

Public concern

Increasing media coverage on the impact of human action on the natural environment has led to greater awareness and public concern about environmental matters.

Global pollution and its effects, including holes in the protective ozone layer of the earth's upper atmosphere, and changes to the climate brought about by greenhouse gases are a source of international concern and co-operation.

The pollution of city streets from vehicle emissions, the quality of the air and water generally, and the effects of some farming methods have brought considerable public concern for both human health and the state of the environment.

Along with other issues, the declining populations of both rare and common species of birds including skylarks and song thrushes has drawn public attention to agricultural practices. The impact and consequences of BSE on both farmers and the public as consumers, has perhaps led to particularly close scrutiny on the introduction of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and other agricultural practices such as the use of antibiotics in livestock management.

Sustainable Land Management

Conservation and change

Landscape change is inevitable particularly in a rapidly changing world. The global economy is likely to bring many difficulties for agriculture and the rural economy in the years ahead, with consequences for the landscape. Changing patterns of housing need, work, mobility and recreation will also result in pressures on the landscape for new development. Landscape conservation and enhancement are central aims of this strategy, but it is recognised that the countryside of the future will serve many different purposes. Conservation and change are not alternatives, but different interests which need to be accommodated in an integrated way.

Sustainable land management - an overview

This strategy aims to enhance the character, quality and diversity of the landscape throughout the whole county. Numerous agencies, organisations, voluntary groups and individuals continue to contribute significantly towards environmental improvements of all kinds throughout Hampshire.

The guidelines in this strategy set out some of the measures considered necessary to help achieve these aims. However, such words serve little purpose without effective action on the ground. As a

means of making progress, the implementation programme sets out ways in which the guidelines can be translated into effective action through policy, advice or change on the ground by all those involved in shaping the landscape.

The awkward reality which lies behind ambitious ideas for the creation or restoration of a diverse and healthy landscape is its cost. This is a significant factor in the present and future condition of the landscape. In many areas, the landscape is more or less a by-product of a countryside dominated by agricultural production and the realities of farm economics. Landowners and farmers are in business and need to make their land viable and profitable. Additionally, the acute difficulties in the agricultural economy, brought about recently by a variety of factors, are threatening the viability of many farm businesses, particularly those with smaller holdings.

The importance of agriculture and its crucial role in maintaining the character of different landscapes in the future can not be underestimated. The economic viability of the livestock sector for example has a direct relationship with the continuity of the character of pastoral landscapes. Cereal growers in Hampshire are likely to become more vulnerable to increased trading in world markets. Financial difficulties brought by changing circumstances will make maintenance of the fabric of the landscape increasingly difficult. All these issues raise questions about the long-term future of the landscape and highlight the importance of finding ways of integrating economic viability with environmental objectives.

The landscape meets many human needs. It is a basic social, economic and environmental resource needing sustainable management. This can only be achieved by substantial investment and new mechanisms which integrate environmental conservation and economic policy. Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the evolving pattern of global markets create opportunities for the emergence of a radically different system.

Such a system should aim to ensure that the quality of the landscape is not an incidental by-product of agriculture but a major objective of sustainable land management having equal status to food production. The integration of these different interests would make a significant contribution towards economic prosperity, public appreciation and a healthy landscape.

The value of the landscape as a fundamental social, economic and environmental resource is inestimable. Its sustainable management is important for future generations. Its value suggests that it should be treated as a whole and that the 'ordinary countryside', as well as those areas protected for their international or national landscape or wildlife importance, should be well managed, carefully conserved and treated as environmentally sensitive.

Farmers and land managers have frequently expressed their readiness to maintain and conserve valued landscapes and habitats, and enhance areas in decline providing the work is adequately funded. The sustainable management of the traditional English landscape, characterised in the public mind by an attractive patchwork of woods, fields and hedgerows, is unlikely to be funded from the proceeds of agricultural products in an increasingly competitive global market. If there is public reluctance to part with this concept of the traditional landscape, and if it is to be maintained as an attractive, healthy and biologically diverse environment, substantial changes will be needed to the package of controls and incentives which are currently influencing agriculture.

Background

From the early 1950s, the most valued areas of countryside were selected for protection and designation as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Such areas represented the best areas of landscape and it was implicit that the wider rural landscape, the 'ordinary countryside', was not special in the same way - 'the best and the rest'.

There are five AONBs either partly or totally in Hampshire: East Hampshire AONB (designated in 1962); Chichester Harbour AONB (1964); South Hampshire Coast AONB (1967); North Wessex

Downs AONB (1972); Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB (1983). Additionally, in 1999 the Government outlined a proposal to designate the New Forest and the South Downs as National Parks. The South Downs extend west from West Sussex into the East Hampshire AONB.

The rapid changes in the landscape in the decades since the 1950s showed that a more comprehensive approach to understanding and assessing the whole countryside and how it was changing was necessary. This led to the concept of landscape character assessment which was developed during the 1980s by the Countryside Commission, now the Countryside Agency. The Countryside Commission produced guidelines on character assessment in 1987, 1991 and 1993, with a further refinement in 1999. By the end of the 1990s the majority of English County Councils had completed character assessments.

The process of landscape character assessment

Landscape character assessment is a consistent and systematic means of identifying, describing, classifying and mapping the character of different rural landscapes without making judgements about their relative worth. It takes account of physical, cultural and historical aspects of the landscape including smaller settlements within the countryside. Landscape assessment identifies and describes the features and characteristics which influence and contribute towards the distinctive identity and sense of place of a particular landscape and its contribution to the diversity of the wider area. Assessments can be undertaken at a range of scales from national to local. At the more local scale, account can be taken of the condition of the landscape and the need for conservation or enhancement. Assessments can also demonstrate the continuity of landscape character beyond administrative boundaries and provide a sound basis for co-ordinated cross-boundary plans and strategies.

The uses of landscape character assessment

Landscape assessment can be useful in raising awareness and furthering the understanding of the landscape, but it is best used as a mechanism for achieving action, identifying priorities and allocating resources. It creates the opportunity to set out guidelines which can help to guide and direct landscape change, and assist with aspects of countryside planning and management.

National and local landscape assessments

The Countryside Agency has published a landscape character assessment of the whole of England. This is entitled *Countryside Character: The character of England's natural and man-made landscape* and is published in eight volumes. Hampshire is included in *Volume 7: South East and London* published in 1999. The County Council assisted in the identification and mapping of the character areas covering Hampshire to achieve consistency with the county landscape assessment.

The County Council published the countywide landscape character assessment *The Hampshire Landscape* in 1993 using Countryside Commission guidelines. This Landscape Strategy is based on that assessment.

The 11 District Authorities in Hampshire published local landscape character assessments during the 1990s. Using the county assessment as a framework, these finer grain assessments also used Countryside Commission guidelines and were co-ordinated by the County Council.

The *Hampshire Historic Landscape Assessment* was published in 1999. The County Council commissioned consultants Oxford Archaeological Unit and Scott Wilson Resource Consultants to produce this countywide assessment covering the historic and archaeological aspects of the landscape not covered by *The Hampshire Landscape*.

The *Forest of Bere Project* and the *Forest of Eversley Project* landscape character assessments were published by the County Council in 1998. These fine-grain assessments are at a more detailed level than the District Authority assessments.

Landscape Diversity

The Hampshire landscape has great diversity of character.

In a regional context the chalk downs extend across central Hampshire linking Salisbury Plain to the South Downs. This high and extensive tract of mainly rural landscape physically separates the lowland areas of north, south and east Hampshire.

Overall, five entirely different landscapes contribute to Hampshire's diversity:



The large-scale, high and sweeping landscapes of the mostly rural chalk downs



The small-scale, well-wooded and generally enclosed landscapes of the low-lying clay lowlands



The extensive heaths and woodlands of the New Forest and Hampshire's other heathland areas, associated with the clay lowlands



The large-scale and open landscapes of Hampshire's coast



The distinctive low-lying but varied character of Hampshire's main river valleys