



## Adur Landscape Study Update

Local Green Gap & Built-Up Area Boundary policy checks for the emerging Adur Local Plan

January 2016

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## 1.1 Policy context

### Policy development

This report has been commissioned to inform the emerging Adur Local Plan. It is part of a set of two reports which includes an update to the assessment of overall landscape sensitivity which was presented in the technical annex to Sheils Flynn's 2012 landscape and biodiversity surveys report.

Sheils Flynn's 2012 study assessed the landscape and ecological value of six greenfield sites that were then under consideration as potential strategic allocations for development. These site specific assessments were informed by the assessment of overall landscape sensitivity, which was structured by the local landscape character areas identified in the district's earlier Urban Fringe Study<sup>2</sup>.

The spatial planning policies contained in Adur District Council's Proposed Submission Local Plan<sup>3</sup> have been informed by these studies and by the evidence from a range of other assessments, including for instance economic viability, transport planning and flood risk. Policy formulation is an iterative process, as each new piece of evidence is taken into account. The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should

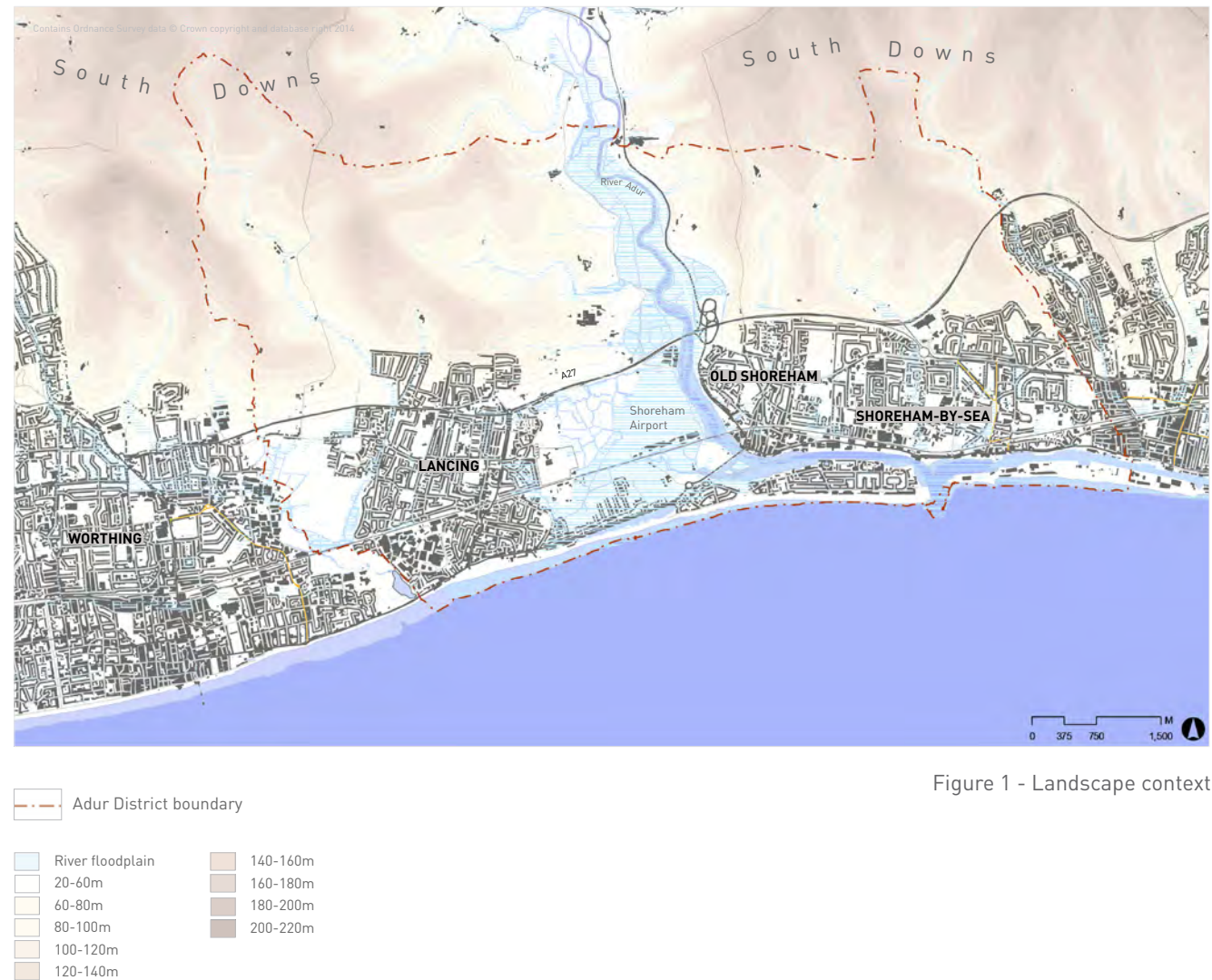


Figure 1 - Landscape context

<sup>1</sup> Landscape and ecological surveys of key sites within the Adur District, Sheils Flynn, Nov. 2012

<sup>2</sup> Urban Fringe Study, Adur District Council, Baker Associates and Enderby Associates, Dec. 2006

<sup>3</sup> Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan, 2014





*contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes* (paragraph 109) and, in paragraph 170, considers that this process should be informed by assessments of landscape character and landscape sensitivity.<sup>4</sup>

This Adur Landscape Study Update is prepared as part of this process, which involves testing the validity of the draft policies in the emerging Local Plan and cross-checking that all the evidence submitted to support and justify the Local Plan has been developed in response to the current set of draft policies.

The process is further complicated by recent and planned development in the form of the Brighton and Hove Football Academy, which has been implemented on the eastern fringes of Lancing, and the planned Adur Tidal Walls flood defence scheme, which is proposed as part of a wider flood risk management strategy to protect existing and proposed development and infrastructure in Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea.

The pattern of Adur's settlements and fields is laid out clearly in views from the South Downs National Park

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<sup>4</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn

## Landscape setting of Adur's settlements

Given the compact nature of Adur's Local Plan area (Figure 2), the extremely limited open areas between its settlements and Adur's location within the wider Brighton conurbation, there is considered to be a strong need to protect and enhance the remaining areas of open countryside and green space between the principal settlements of Worthing, Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea. These gaps within the loose belt of urban development, which stretches along the south coast between Bognor Regis in the west and Seaford in the east, are a critically important component of the landscape setting of these three towns, contributing to their individual, distinctive character and local identity.

In Adur, the two principal gaps are between the settlements of Worthing and Sompting/Lancing in the west of the district (the 'Worthing-Sompting Gap') and Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea in the east (the 'Lancing-Shoreham Gap'). The distinctive landscape character and sensitivity of the countryside and open spaces within these two gaps is described in the Adur Landscape Sensitivity Assessment<sup>5</sup>, which demonstrates that the tracts of open space between the settlements are composed of a mosaic of local landscape character areas (LCAs) with distinctive landscape characteristics. It is these contrasts in landscape character which form the landscape setting of Adur's settlements,

<sup>5</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn

contributing unique combinations of landscape elements, features, views and landmarks. For a landscape to provide an effective landscape setting for a settlement, it must:

- have distinctive landscape characteristics, which have sufficient depth and interest to provide unique views to and from the fringes of settlements; and
- enable an experience of travelling through open undeveloped countryside or 'green' open space, as part of the gateway sequence of approach and arrival at a settlement.

It is this vital sense of space around a settlement that enables us to take stock, assess and understand its relationship to its surroundings. The scale and extent of the space required for an effective landscape setting involves subjective judgement, but it is a judgement that can be informed by objective analysis and evidence from studies of landscape character and sensitivity. Key factors are the length of publicly accessible views to the edge of a settlement and the character of those views. For instance, a settlement in a flat, open landscape is likely to have a more extensive landscape setting than one sited in a winding, partially wooded valley.

By defining and describing the characteristic views to and from the fringes of a settlement and the sequence of views along the principal gateway approaches, we can understand how it is perceived within its landscape setting. We can also define the extent of the undeveloped area that is required

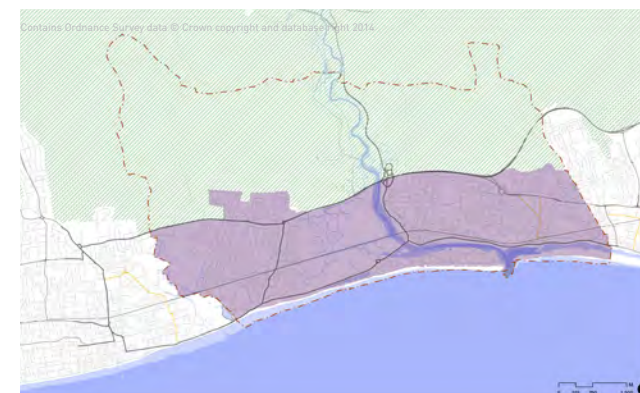
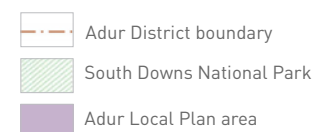


Figure 2 - Adur Local Plan area



The Adur Local Plan area does not include land within the South Downs National Park, which is subject to separate planning policies.

to conserve its characteristic landscape setting and distinctive sense of place. Such areas merit protection from land uses which would result in a loss of their green, undeveloped character. New development within this critical landscape setting would result in a feeling of encroachment and, in a situation where two separate settlements are relatively close (as in Adur), there is a risk of coalescence.

The emerging policies within Adur's Local Plan have been developed to balance the need for new development with the need to maintain and enhance local landscape character and the individual identity of Adur's settlements. Within this context, the issue of coalescence is an important consideration in judging the potential landscape and visual effects of development that is sited within either the Worthing-Sompting Gap or the Lancing-Shoreham Gap as the towns of Worthing, Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea are already relatively close. There is a risk that such development could erode the character and distinctive identity of Adur's principal settlements.

## 1.2 Study objectives

Working within this developing policy context, the Adur Landscape Study Update is concerned with checking and updating the evidence in relation to two draft policies in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan<sup>6</sup>:

- Policy 13: Adur's Countryside and Coast,

which addresses the management of land outside the Built Up Area Boundary and the enhancement of landscape character; and

- Policy 14: Local Green Gaps, which seeks to retain the separate identities and character of the settlements of Worthing, Lancing, Sompting and Shoreham-by-Sea by protecting the remaining countryside areas that separate them and ensuring any permitted development does not (individually or cumulatively) lead to the coalescence of settlements.

The two policies are complementary but have specific purposes and separate boundaries. The Built Up Area Boundary defines the boundary between the built up areas and countryside; while the Local Green Gap boundary defines the area of undeveloped landscape between settlements that is required to retain their separate identity and character. This study analyses what this means spatially and considers that the landscape setting of a settlement is an integral component of its individual character and identity. It follows that the Local Green Gap is the area required to provide an effective landscape setting for the settlements on either side of the gap.

The criteria used for defining the Built-Up Area Boundary and the Local Green Gaps are set out in the

<sup>6</sup> Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan 2014, Appendices, Adur District Council

### BOX 1

#### Criteria used for defining Local Green Gaps

A number of criteria have been used to define the gaps in the Revised Draft Adur Local Plan; these are similar to that used by the West Sussex Structure Plan (2005) as they remain relevant and appropriate. Land identified as Local Green Gaps should have the following properties:

- Open and undeveloped character of land (this does not relate to landscape quality although some areas of gaps may happen to be of good quality)
- Form a visual break between settlements – actual and perceived (from physical development or level of activity)
- Create a sense of travelling between settlements
- Boundaries to follow physical features on the ground taking account of the need to accommodate development requirements of the Plan
- Only include land necessary to secure the objectives of gaps on a long term basis.



Background Evidence Document<sup>7</sup> for the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (see also Box 1); the proposed boundaries for these two policy areas are shown in Appendix 6 to the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan<sup>8</sup> and on Figure 3.

In Adur, the boundaries of the two policy areas are very similar because almost the entire remaining area of undeveloped land is judged to contribute to the landscape settings of Worthing, Lancing and/or Shoreham-by-Sea. This study tests this judgement.

Figure 3 also shows areas allocated for built development in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan. The location of these Strategic Site Allocations has been informed by the landscape capacity and sensitivity studies undertaken in 2012, which demonstrated that the development of land at New Monks Farm and West Sompting would have less damaging landscape, visual and ecological impacts than in other locations within the Lancing-Shoreham and Worthing-Sompting Gaps<sup>9</sup>.

The Local Plan aims to strike the best possible balance between providing new development to meet the needs of Adur, while at the same time avoiding coalescence in order to maintain and enhance the local character and individual identity

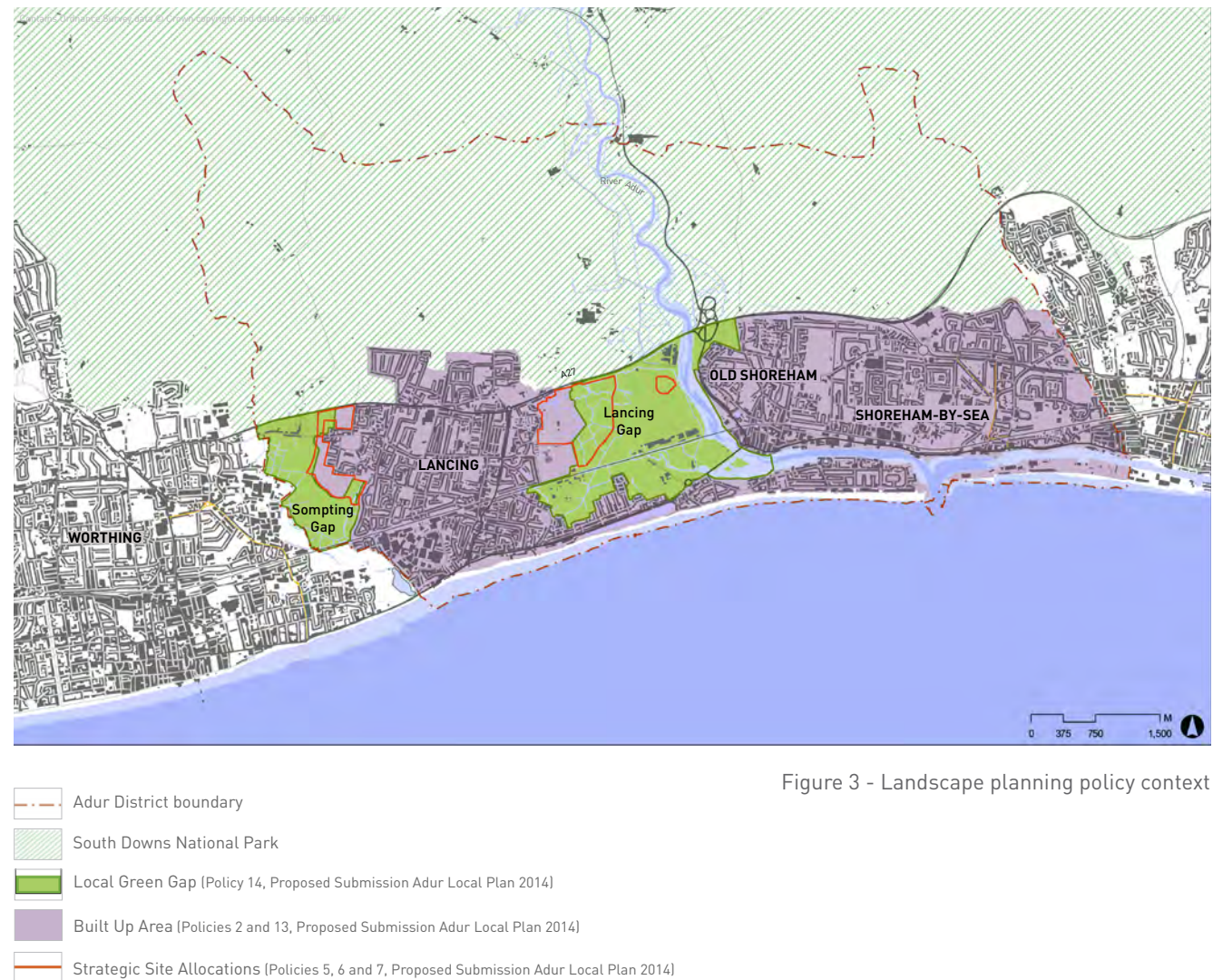


Figure 3 - Landscape planning policy context

<sup>7</sup> Revised Draft Adur Local Plan 2013, Background Evidence Document, Adur District Council

<sup>8</sup> Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan 2014, Appendices, Adur District Council

<sup>9</sup> Landscape and ecological surveys of key sites within the Adur District, Sheils Flynn, Nov. 2012

of Adur's settlements.

The land allocated for development that lies within the Local Green Gaps is either allocated for recreational use (as public open space) or, in the case of the Shoreham Airport development site, is considered to be one of the few opportunities in the Local Plan area for high quality employment space, in an area already popular with businesses. There are three relatively small areas of existing development within the Local Green Gaps - the Ricardos employment area, Sompting village (the part that lies outside the built up area) and the buildings of Shoreham Airport. All are within the countryside and Local Green Gaps (rather than within the Built-Up Area) because they are considered to be physically separate from the built-up area.

Specific tasks for this Adur Landscape Study Update are to:

- check that the draft boundaries shown on the Policies Map for the Built-Up Area Boundaries (BUAB) and Local Green Gaps are consistent with the objectives of policies 13 and 14
- consider the findings of the overall landscape sensitivity study in relation to the specific criteria and objectives of policies 13 and 14; and
- consider the impact of the Brighton and Hove Football Academy and Adur Tidal Walls developments on the character and sensitivity of landscapes within the Lancing – Shoreham Local Green Gap.

The assessment of overall landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area has been updated<sup>10</sup> to take account of the new/planned developments and the findings of the review of the Local Green Gaps. This report also forms part of the evidence for the Local Plan.

### 1.3 Report structure

The remainder of this report is subdivided into two sections:

- Section 2 describes the landscape character, features and edges which define the landscape setting of Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea and tests the application of Policy 14 within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap
- Section 3 describes the landscape character, features and edges which define the landscape setting of Worthing and Lancing and tests the application of Policy 14 within the Worthing-Sompting Gap

For each of these Local Green Gap landscapes, the report considers:

- the character of the landscapes which form the landscape setting for the settlements of Worthing, Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea within the Adur Local Plan area

- how these landscapes are perceived, in terms of important landscape features, landmarks, views, edges and the relationships between these component aspects of local landscape character

- the contribution that each part of the Local Green Gap landscape makes to the landscape setting of Adur's towns

- the alignment of the BUAB and Local Green Gap boundaries, checking that the boundaries shown in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan document are correct.

Reference is made to the criteria set out in the Background Evidence Document, the proposed amendment to the Built-Up Area Boundary (as a result of development of the Brighton and Hove Football Academy), the proposed Adur Tidal Walls scheme and the findings of fieldwork.

<sup>10</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn





Sompting Gap from the summit of The Nore



### 2.1 Local landscape character

The gateway view across the Lancing-Shoreham Gap from the A27 bridge over the River Adur is a unique, dramatic vista. The River Adur meanders loosely across a wide floodplain, flanked by the open green turf of Shoreham Airport and backed by the rising folds of the South Downs. The over-scaled nave of Lancing College Chapel is silhouetted against the sky on the edge of the Adur valley at the point where the river cuts through the Downs.

Rolling back 100 years, this landscape between the foot of the chalk downlands and the south coast was a disjointed, oddly scaled network of fields, dykes and marsh, broken by the broad, winding River Adur. Figure 4 is part of the 1879 Ordnance Survey map which shows the villages of Old Shoreham and Lancing sited along the spring-line, close to the foot of the downs and the historic port of Shoreham-by-Sea, which developed at the natural harbour at the mouth of the River Adur.

A rush of built development associated with the advent of the railways and the popularity of the south coast holiday resorts transformed this landscape from the 1880s, but the key structuring landscape elements of chalk downland, river and angular fields remain distinctive components of local landscape character. They are also important aspects of the landscape setting of Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea.

Figure 5 shows the variations in present-day landscape character across the Lancing-Shoreham

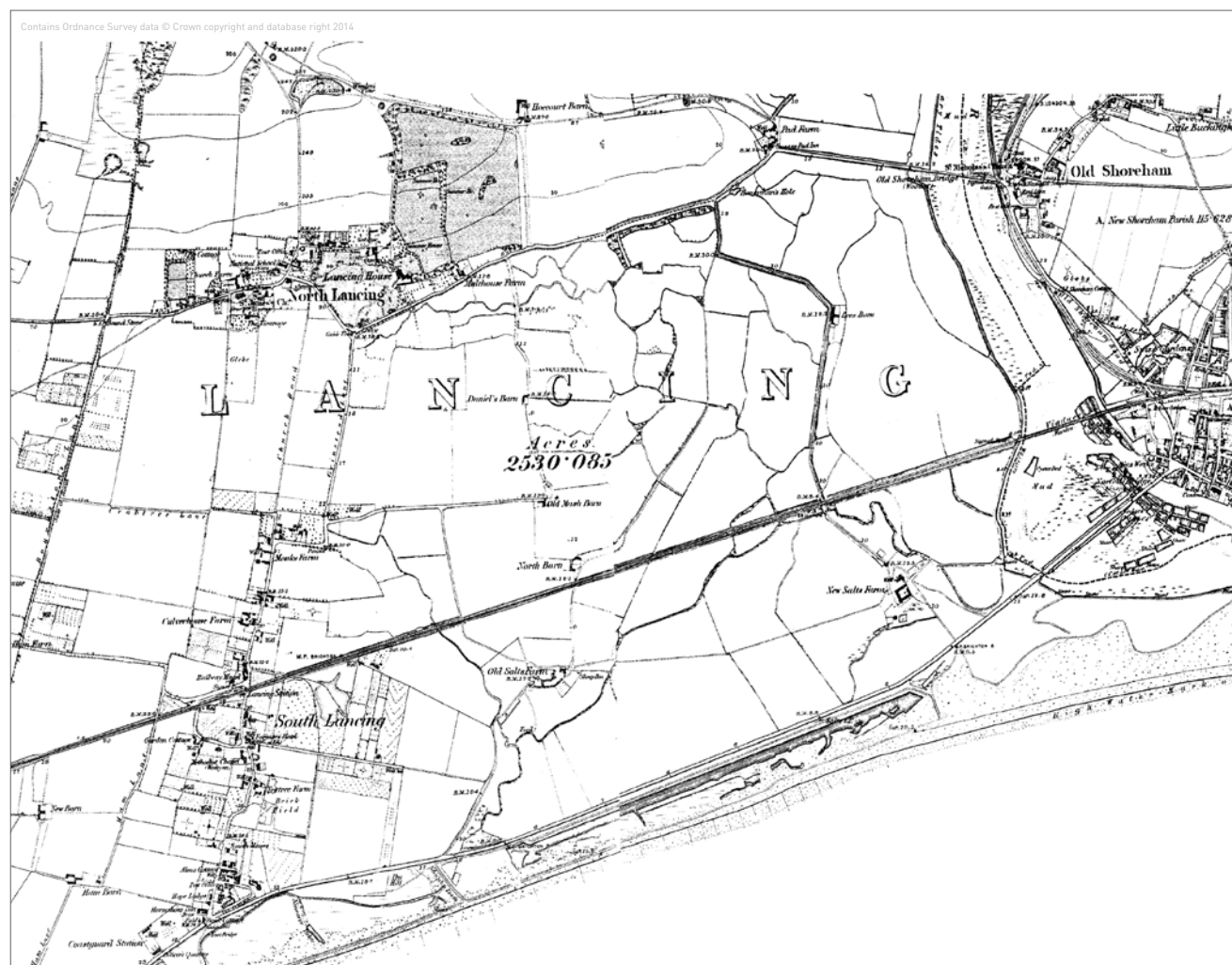


Figure 4 - 1879 OS map - Lancing

Gap. The nine local landscape character areas (LCAs) are described in the assessment of overall landscape sensitivity<sup>11</sup> that accompanies this study. The principal divisions between LCAs are generated by the River Adur, the railway line, the pattern of built development and major land uses such as Shoreham Airport. Historic patterns of land ownership, structured by physical boundaries of drainage and soil type, are still apparent.

There is a broad transition between the relatively small-scale landscape of farms, smallholdings and scrub to the south of the railway to the busy riverside/harbour zone towards the mouth of the Adur in the south west. North of the railway, the Lancing-Shoreham Gap is dominated by the open grassland of Shoreham Airport, with a change at the western edge of the airport to the hummocky scrub of an area that has been reworked and tipped with aggregates (Saltworks) and the farmland of the New Monks Farm development site. The River Adur curves along the east margin of the airport within a broad channel of water, mudflats and marsh.

To the north of the Tollbridge the landscape of the chalk downs becomes the dominant influence; the north-west fringes of Old Shoreham are bordered by the massive A27/A283 junction and the slopes of Mill Hill. Lancing College Chapel is a focal point for local views here, and throughout the Lancing-Shoreham Gap.



Figure 5 - Local landscape character areas in the Lancing-Shoreham Gap (extract from the Adur landscape sensitivity assessment)

<sup>11</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn



## 2.2 Landscape settings of Lancing and Shoreham

Figure 6 (and its component Figures 6a and 6b) shows the key landscape features, landmarks, and views which are distinctive within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. Importantly, it also shows the 'landscape edges' which structure the way we perceive the landscape in views from the principal gateway approaches via roads and the railway and from publicly accessible footpaths and viewpoints.

This analysis shows the importance of the River Adur as a key landscape feature within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. The majority of the publicly accessible viewpoints within the gap are from the bridges across or paths alongside the river and the sinuous river corridor provides a striking and distinctive focus for local views.

The skyline of the chalk downs is the 'landform edge' and a backdrop to northward views across the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. The banks of the River Adur are 'water edges' that snake across the eastern margins. At a local scale, the margins of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap are defined by the 'built edges' of roads, bridges and urban development and/or the 'green edges' of tree belts.

The views along the River Adur and across the Lancing-Shoreham Gap from the A27 road bridge contribute to the landscape settings of Shoreham and Lancing because they are part of a dramatic sequence of views from the Downs to the Adur



valley and coastal plain. The road bridge is at the point where the view suddenly opens up from the rolling, relatively enclosed landscape of the South Downs to reveal the meandering tidal waters of the River Adur, the town of Shoreham to the south east and the flat green sweep of Shoreham Airport and the green spaces of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap which form the landscape setting of the town of Lancing to the west. Lancing Chapel is a striking landmark on the flank of the chalkland valley slopes. Although these views are from a road, they are relevant considerations within a landscape and visual impact appraisal because they are from a scenic route within the South Downs National Park and because they contribute to a landscape setting (of the National Park and the settlements

The meandering water channels, mudflats and saltmarshes of the River Adur are a striking landscape feature within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap

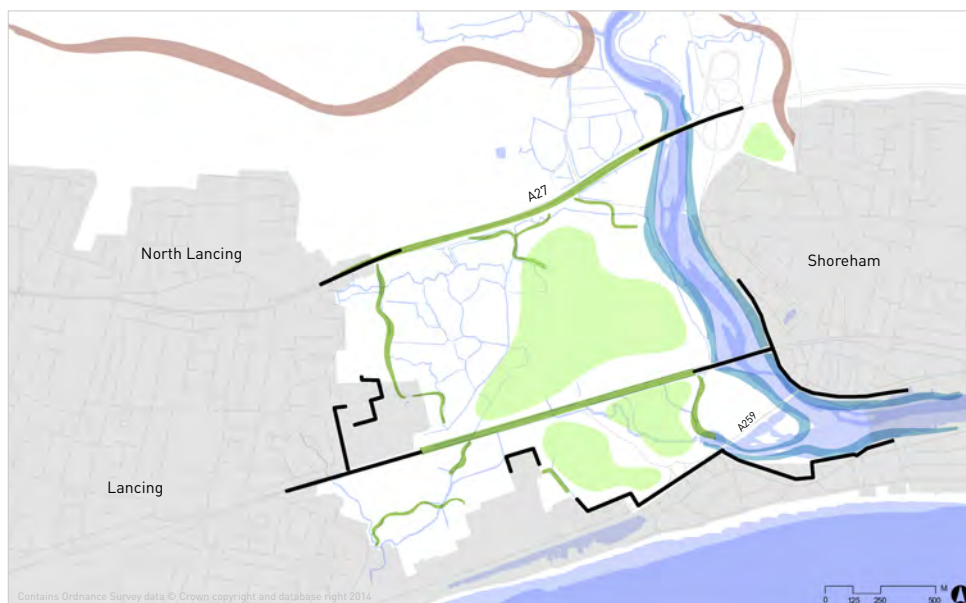


Figure 6a - Lancing-Shoreham Gap landscape analysis: perceived edges and spaces

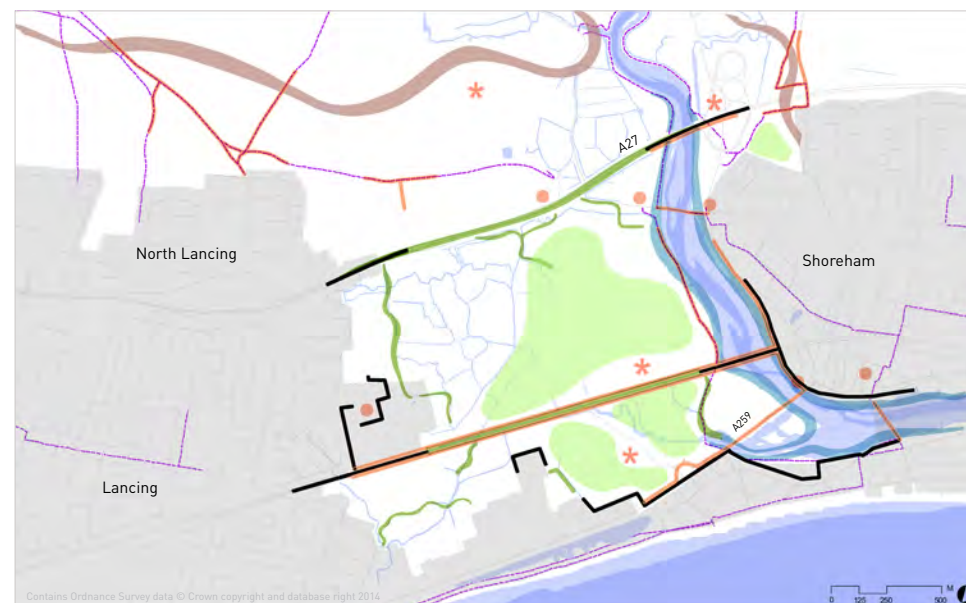
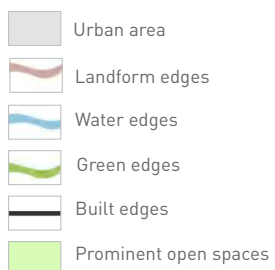
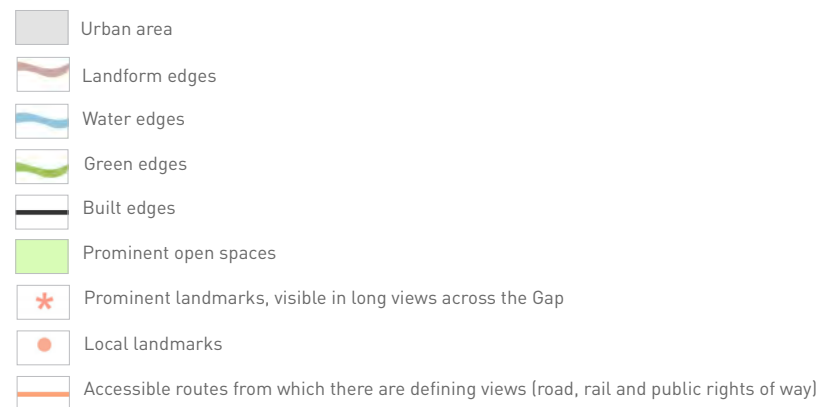


Figure 6b - Lancing-Shoreham Gap landscape analysis: visual clues












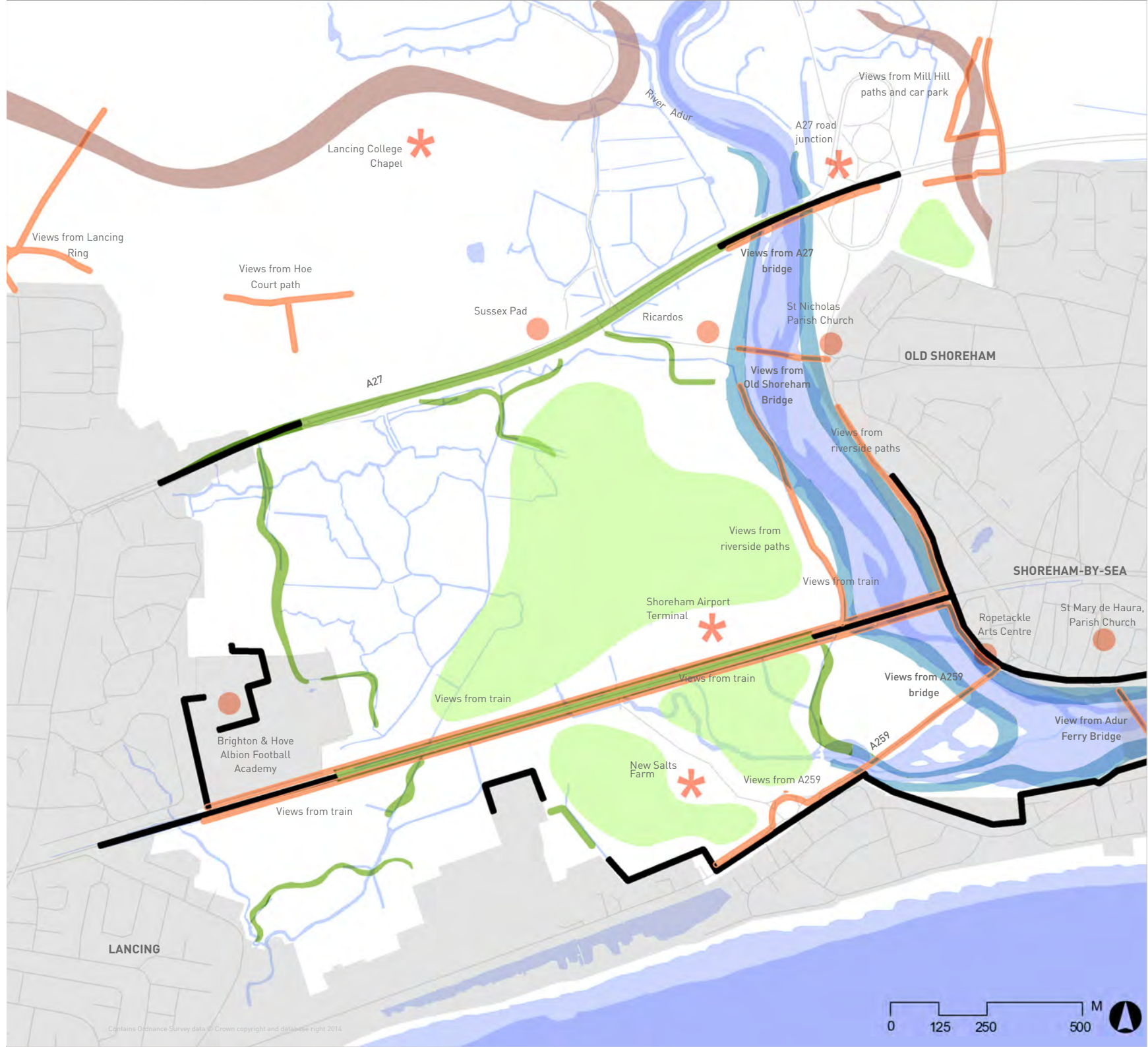
-  Urban area
-  Landform edges
-  Water edges
-  Green edges
-  Built edges
-  Prominent open spaces
-  Prominent landmarks
-  Local landmarks
-  Accessible routes from which there are defining views (roads, rail and public rights of way)

Figure 6  
Lancing-Shoreham Gap -  
landscape analysis





of Shoreham and Lancing) that is enjoyed by local residents and visitors to the area<sup>12</sup>.

Other key views are from the elevated footpaths and open access land within the South Downs National Park, from which there are long views across the Lancing-Shoreham Gap, the railway line, which slices across the centre of the Gap, and the A259 near New Salts Farm. It is notable that there are very few opportunities for views across the Lancing-Shoreham Gap from local roads as views from the A27, A283 and A259 are typically constrained by built development (which provides a permanent screen) and/or vegetation (which may change with the seasons and could be removed). Within this context, the long, open views from the A27 Adur road bridge and the railway are particularly important.

The centre of Shoreham Airfield, the fields either side of New Salts Farm and the slopes of Mill Hill on the northern fringes of Shoreham are highlighted as prominent open spaces on Figure 6 because they are visible in these defining views and because they enhance our appreciation of the physical, natural landscape elements that structure this landscape.

The juxtaposition of the open green turf of the airfield and the River Adur brings emphasis to the natural curve of the river. Similarly, the sweeping concave skyline of the open fields on the flank of Mill



<sup>12</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013, paras 6.32 - 6.35.

Figure 7 - Visibility analysis: Lancing-Shoreham Gap (extract from the Adur landscape sensitivity assessment)



Figure 8 - Landscape settings for Lancing and Shoreham

Hill, enhance our perception of the wider chalkland setting. The views southward from the popular South Downs open access land at Lancing Ring show the importance of the fields at New Salts Farm in 'lengthening' the view to green space beyond the railway line and so enhancing the perception that the gap extends from the Downs almost to the sea. Similarly, there are views to the north-west from the A259 which give the impression of the landscape extending to the foot of the Downs. The slopes of Mill Hill form a backdrop to views to the north-east from the A259.

The centre and south west part of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap (to the west of Shoreham Airfield and the Old Salts Farm area) can only be seen at close quarters in views from the train, yet the visual analysis of the Lancing Gap that is set out in the landscape sensitivity assessment<sup>13</sup>, shows that these areas are visible in the most sensitive Lancing-Shoreham Gap views, such as the elevated views from the South Downs National Park - from Lancing College Chapel (view 10), Lancing Ring (view 8) and Mill Hill (view 11) - and views from the path along the west bank of the River Adur (views 12 and 13). Figure 7 is an extract from this analysis, which illustrates the variation in visibility of areas within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. Areas with the darkest orange tone are visible from more of these sensitive viewpoints than areas with a lighter tone.

<sup>13</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn

It is important to recognise that the visual analysis within the landscape sensitivity assessment describes only the most sensitive views - from the SDNP and recreational paths, which are likely to be used by relatively high sensitivity receptors. This study also placed emphasis on demonstrating how the landscapes of these two gaps are perceived from the protected landscapes of the National Park. It does not take account of views across the gap from local roads. However, these are also important in the context of the landscape settings of the settlements of Lancing and Shoreham in the Lancing-Shoreham Gap - the views from the A27 bridge over the River Adur provides a sweeping view of the river corridor and the airfield alongside and is a gateway view to Lancing and Shoreham. Similarly, the open views across the gap from the A259 in the New Salt's Farm area provide the only direct views onto and across the open green fields of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap and so make an important contribution to our perception of the Gap, both as an open 'green' landscape and as part of the sequence of views on the approach to Shoreham-by-Sea from the west.

Figure 8 shows how the 'landscape edges' (described in figure 6) 'define the landscape setting for Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea in the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. These landscape edges 'contain' the key views across the gap to the edges of these two settlements.

It is relevant that the planned new Adur Tidal Walls scheme, which is already shown on the drawings in

this report, will form an elevated causeway along the west bank of the Adur corridor and as a result will provide longer, clearer views eastwards towards the edge of Shoreham-by-Sea and westwards towards Lancing.

Figure 8 loosely defines the landscape settings of Lancing and Shoreham, based on the broad zones of visual influence of accessible local views and the character of the landscape edges.

There are variations in the character and strength of the landscape edges. The line of houses along the east bank of the Adur is a strong, distinctive edge, while the groups of trees and dispersed farm holdings in the Old Salts Farm area form a more blurred transition. The landscape setting of both settlements extends beyond the Adur Local Plan area into the SDNP as the elevated chalk downland is a backdrop to views.

Figure 8 shows that the landscape setting of Lancing extends right across the entire width of the gap to the east bank of the River Adur, and that the landscape setting of Shoreham extends right across the centre of the gap to Mash Barn Lane and the new football academy. The new football academy and the tall lighting columns around the sports pitches associated with this facility, are visible in views from the riverside at Shoreham-by-Sea; the eastern fringes of Lancing are also visible in the view across the Lancing-Shoreham Gap from Mill Hill, to the north-west of Shoreham.

There is an extensive overlap between the landscape



settings of Shoreham and Lancing, which covers the central part of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap, demonstrating the value of this zone in contributing to the landscape settings of both towns.

While the Lancing-Shoreham Gap clearly does provide a critically important visual break between these settlements, these views, and the continuous urban edge along the coast, suggest that the gap is already critically narrow. There is a risk that further development within the gap, in addition to that allocated in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan, would contribute to the coalescence of Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea.

The landscape sensitivity assessment<sup>14</sup> provides a detailed analysis of the contribution that each of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap landscape character areas makes to the landscape settings of Shoreham and Lancing.

## 2.3 Relevant Local Plan policies

Comparison between the boundary of the Local Green Gap shown in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan and Figure 8 (describing the landscape settings of Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea) suggests that the Local Green Gap boundary is correct because the entire area within the Lancing-Shoreham Local Green Gap contributes to

the distinctive landscape setting of either Lancing or Shoreham-by-Sea (or both towns).

Figure 8 shows the perceived landscape settings of Lancing and Shoreham. The boundaries are loosely drawn to reflect the conceptual nature of a landscape setting, which seeks to capture the distinctive identity of a town and the way it is perceived in its local landscape. The landscape setting overlaps the urban area in some places, for instance where the north eastern edge of North Lancing is prominent in views to the Downs. The boundaries of the Local Green Gap shown in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan have been drawn to show the landscape settings (Figure 8) in a way that aligns with physical features which can be easily identified 'on the ground' such as roads, hedges, field boundaries and existing property lines.

Given the extremely limited open areas remaining between these two settlements, the boundaries of the BUAB and the Local Green Gaps are generally contiguous. There is only one area, east of Lancing Leisure Centre and north of the A27, where the BUAB and the Local Green Gap boundary differ and this is because this small area of countryside is to the north of the A27, which defines the northern boundary of the Lancing-Shoreham Local Green Gap. Most of the land to the north of this road is within the SDNP, but this small area is an exception. It forms part of the landscape setting for Lancing, but is not critical to the prevent of coalescence between Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea and so it

is outside the gap.

<sup>14</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn





Church of St Nicolas, Old Shoreham, from the Tollbridge



### 3.1 Local landscape character

It is interesting to compare the historic map in Figure 9 with the present-day field pattern in the Worthing-Sompting Gap, as shown in Figure 10. There is remarkably little difference. However, the wider landscape context has been transformed with the development of Worthing to the west and Lancing to the east. Worthing does not even appear on this viewport, but the village of Broadwater is now part of Worthing and is on the north west margins of the Worthing-Sompting Gap. To the east, the villages of Upper Cokeham, Lower Cokeham, North Lancing and South Lancing have been absorbed within the urban area of Lancing. The village of Sompting remains in the centre of the gap, but has been subdivided by the A27.

The long straight lanes/tracks leading up onto the Downs (Dankton Lane and Lambley Lane) and down to the coastal marshes (Loose Lane) are clearly shown on the 1879 map. Teville Stream arises from a group of springs near Lyons Farm (now Sainsburys at the Broadwater Retail Park) and winds across the farmland. This stream is now little more than a loose network of drainage ditches, which fills during wetter weather, but its course is marked by ribbons of trees and scrub which soften views to the housing and industrial estates on the eastern margins of Worthing.

Figure 10 shows the variations in landscape character across the Worthing-Sompting Gap. The six local LCAs are described in the assessment of

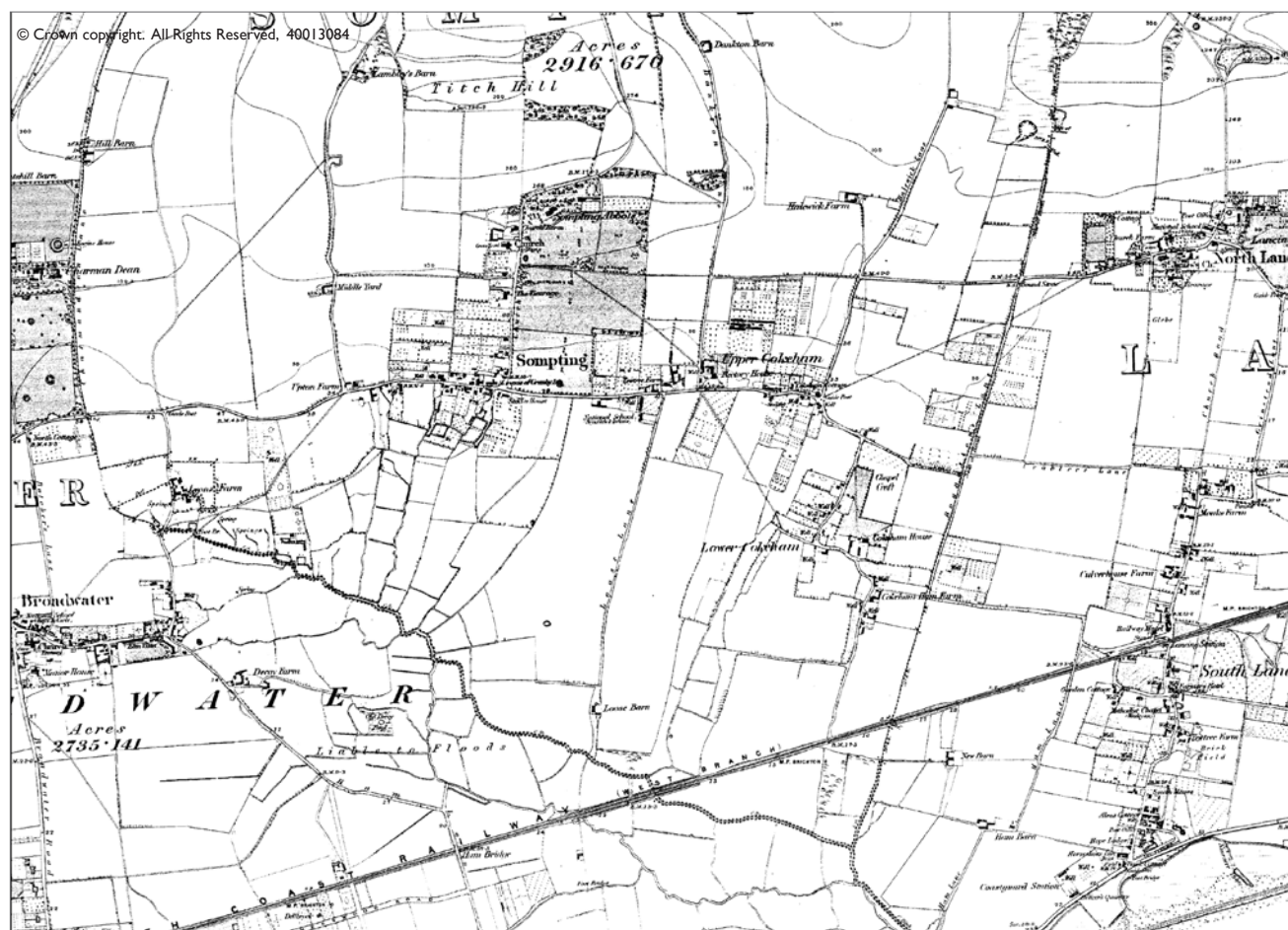


Figure 9 - 1879 OS map - Sompting



overall landscape sensitivity<sup>12</sup> that accompanies this study.

There is a transition from the small pastures and orchards on the fringes of Sompting village to the large scale arable fields in the centre of the gap and the relatively wet landscapes of Lower Cokeham Fen on the western fringes of Lancing.

The boundaries of the LCAs reflect local field patterns and the way this landscape is perceived from local roads and the related limited network of public rights of way.

A combination of stone walls, hedgerows and roadside tree planting typically restricts views from the A27 and from West Street, but there are long views across the Worthing-Sompting Gap from public rights of way within the SDNP on the elevated chalk downs to the north.

It should be noted that, in this report, references to Sompting village apply to the historic village, which is designated as a conservation area and which lies outside the Built-Up Area Boundary.



<sup>12</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn

Figure 10 - Local landscape character areas in the Worthing-Sompting Gap (extract from the Adur landscape sensitivity assessment)

### 3.2 Landscape settings of Worthing and Sompting

The Worthing-Sompting Gap forms part of the landscape setting for the principal settlements of Worthing to the west and the urban area that comprises Sompting to the north-east and Lancing to the south-east. It is also the setting for the small village of Sompting in the centre of the gap, which is subdivided by the A27.

Figure 11 (and its component Figures 11a and 11b) highlights the key landscape features, landmarks, and views which are distinctive within the Worthing-Sompting Gap. It also shows the principal 'landscape edges', which structure the way we perceive the landscape in views from the principal gateway approaches via roads and the railway and from publicly accessible footpaths and viewpoints.

The large, open arable fields surrounding Loose Lane in the centre of the gap make an important contribution to the sense of space and scale in the Worthing-Sompting Gap. These fields give the impression that the gap is expansive, particularly as they are fringed by hedgerows and hedgerow trees which partially screen the surrounding urban edges. The layering effect of hedgerows and trees increases towards the village of Sompting to the north, where the historic field pattern of small paddocks and orchard is partially intact.

There are relatively few upstanding landmarks, not least because views from local roads are contained



by roadside vegetation, but the church tower of St Marys Church is a local landmark in views from the edge of Sompting and from the A27 (eastbound).

Other key views are from the elevated footpaths and open access land within the SDNP from which there are long, views across the Worthing-Sompting Gap, the railway line, which crossing the southern part of the Gap, and the small sections of footpath to the east and west of Sompting Village. The long, open views from the railway and from the summit of The Nore, which is a short, steep walk up the slope of the downs from Sompting village church (in the northern part of the village, north of the A27) are particularly important.

The small group of mature trees along Loose Lane, in the centre of the open arable fields is a local landmark and means of orientation in views from the chalk downs to the north.

The small pastures and orchards to the south of Sompting Village are partially enclosed by hedgerows and flint stone walls





Figure 11a - Worthing-Sompting Gap landscape analysis: perceived edges and spaces

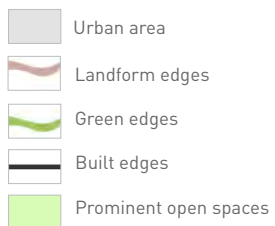


Figure 11b - Worthing-Sompting Gap landscape analysis: visual clues

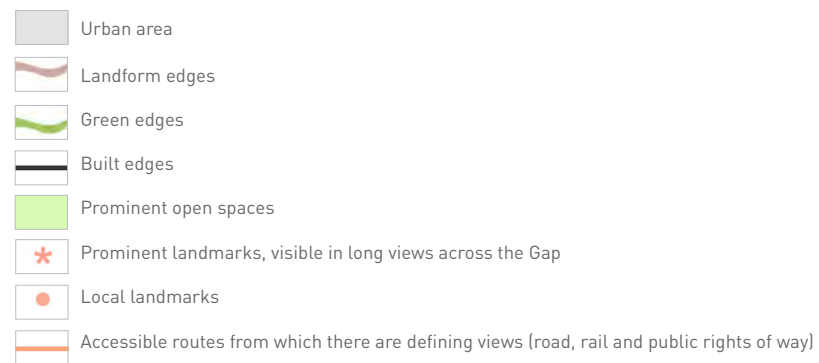






Figure 11  
Worthing-Sompting Gap -  
landscape analysis

The visual analysis that is set out in the landscape sensitivity assessment<sup>13</sup>, shows that the central arable fields and the southern parts of the Worthing-Sompting Gap are the most visible in the sensitive elevated views from the SDNP. These are from Cissbury Ring (view 1), Hill Barn Golf Course (view 2), Tennant Hill (view 3), The Nore (View 4), Steep Down (view 5) and the footpath to the west of Lancing Ring (view 6). Figure 12 is an extract from this analysis, which illustrates the variation in visibility of areas within the Worthing-Sompting Gap. Areas with the darkest orange tone are visible from more of these sensitive viewpoints than areas with a lighter tone.

Figure 13 shows how the 'landscape edges' (described in figure 11) define the landscape setting for Sompting/Lancing, Worthing and Sompting Village. These landscape edges 'contain' the views across the Worthing-Sompting Gap to the edges of these three settlements.

The skyline of the chalk downs is the 'landform edge' and a backdrop to northward views (often with the distinctive tower of St Marys Church as a landmark on the lower slopes of the downs. At a local scale, the margins of these landscape settings are defined by the belts of trees and hedgerows that enclose the fields on the fringes of Worthing, Lancing and Sompting Village. Some parts of Broadwater and the built up part of Sompting are defined by houses



Figure 12 - Visibility analysis: Worthing-Sompting Gap (extract from the Adur landscape sensitivity assessment)

<sup>13</sup> Assessment of landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn



and (on the edge of the East Worthing industrial estate) by industry.

Figure 13 loosely defines the landscape settings of Lancing and Shoreham, based on the broad zones of visual influence of accessible local views and the character of the landscape edges.

Figure 13 shows that the landscape setting of Sompting/Lancing extends northwards to the chalk downlands at Steep Down and The Nore and westwards to the fringes of Sompting Village. It includes the whole of the 'prominent open space' in the centre of the gap. The landscape setting of Broadwater/Worthing extends northwards to the downs at Tennants Hill and the Nore. It includes parts of Sompting Village and the arable fields which are shown as 'prominent open space' on Figure 11. The landscape setting of Sompting Village includes the backdrop of the down and the historic pastures and orchards to the south of the village. It extends westwards to the fringes of Broadwater.

There are extensive overlaps between the landscape settings of Worthing, Sompting Village and Sompting/Lancing, which demonstrate the valuable role these landscapes have in contributing to the landscape settings of three settlements.

While the Worthing-Sompting Gap clearly does provide a critically important visual break between these settlements, the overlaps between the landscape settings of the three settlements suggests that the Worthing-Sompting Gap is already critically narrow. There is a risk that



Paddocks to the north-east of Sompting Village, with partial views to the industrial buildings in East Worthing.



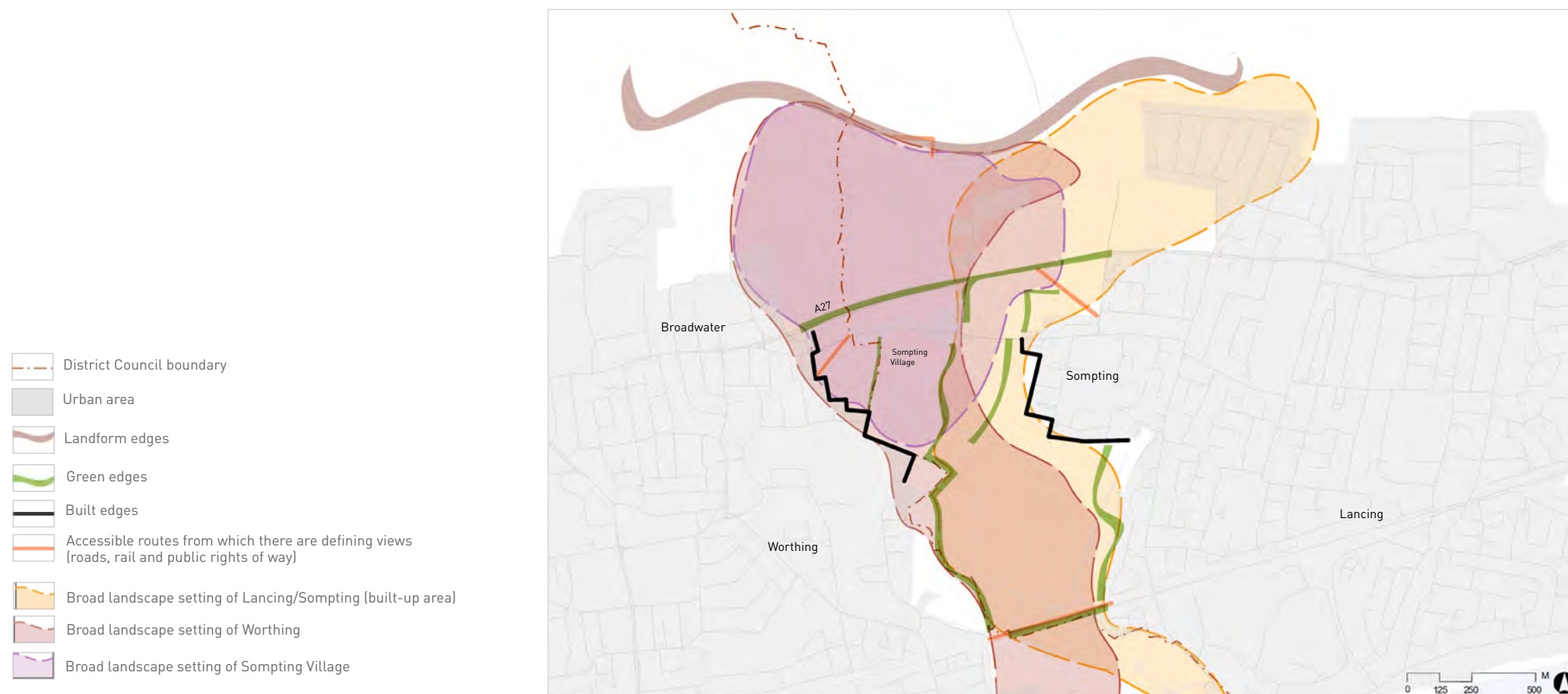


Figure 13 - Landscape settings for Worthing, Sompting and Sompting Village

further development, in addition to that allocated in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan, within the gap would contribute to the coalescence of Worthing, Sompting Village and the urban area of Sompting/Worthing.

The landscape sensitivity assessment<sup>14</sup> provides a detailed analysis of the contribution that each of the Worthing-Sompting Gap landscape character areas makes to the landscape settings of Worthing, Sompting and Sompting Village.

### 3.3 Relevant Local Plan policies

Comparison between the boundary of the Local Green Gap shown in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan and Figure 13 (describing the landscape settings of Worthing, Sompting and Sompting Village) suggests that the Local Green Gap boundary is correct because the entire area within the Worthing-Sompting Local Green Gap contributes to the distinctive landscape setting of either Worthing, Sompting or Sompting Village (or parts of all three settlements).

Figure 13 shows the perceived landscape settings of Worthing, Sompting/Lancing and Sompting Village. The boundaries are loosely drawn to reflect the conceptual nature of a landscape setting, which seeks to capture the distinctive identity of a town

and the way it is perceived in its local landscape. The landscape setting overlaps the urban area in some places, for instance where the north western edge of north Sompting (the part that lies within the built up area) is prominent in views to the Downs. The boundaries of the Local Green Gap shown in the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan have been drawn to show the landscape settings shown on Figure 13 in a way that aligns with physical features which can be easily identified 'on the ground' such as roads, hedges, field boundaries and existing property lines.

Given the extremely limited open areas remaining between the principal settlements of Worthing and Sompting/Lancing, the boundaries of the BUAB and the Local Green Gaps are generally contiguous. Given the rural character of Sompting Village, and its location within the centre of the gap, this small rural settlement has been classified as 'countryside.'

<sup>14</sup> Assessment of overall landscape sensitivity for the Adur Local Plan area, 2016, Sheils Flynn



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