



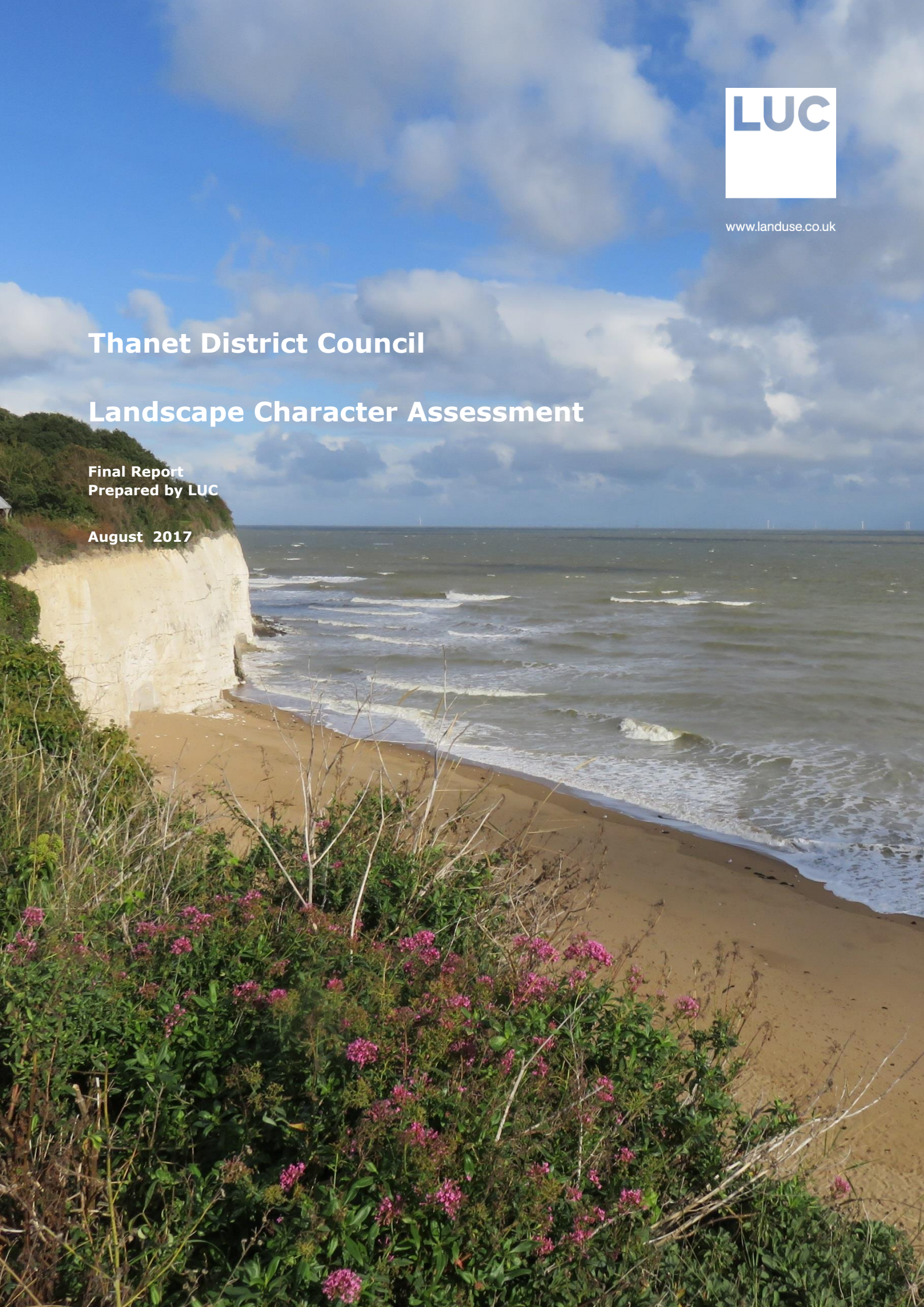
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**Thanet District Council**

# **Landscape Character Assessment**

**Final Report  
Prepared by LUC**

**August 2017**





**Project Title:** Thanet Landscape Character Assessment

**Client:** Thanet District Council

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Planning & EIA  
Design  
Landscape Planning  
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# Part 1: Introduction



# 1 Introduction

## The Landscape of Thanet

- 1.1 Thanet is located at the eastern extremity of Kent, with a unique and distinctive character associated with its historical legacy as an island. The island was cut off from the mainland by the former Wantsum Channel meeting the Dover Strait at Pegwell Bay in the south and the Thames Estuary at Reculver in the north – both forming strategic points in the defence and invasion of mainland England. The silted marshes of the former Wantsum Channel create a remarkable low lying landscape encircling the main part of Thanet – and so retaining its island quality and sense of separateness. The adjacent hill slopes rising from the channel contain historic villages at Sarre, St Nicholas-at-Wade, Minster and Monkton – former ports along the original shoreline. The central part of Thanet that rises up from the marshes is characterised by light soils and high quality agricultural land – valued for growth of arable and horticultural crops in vast open fields creating the sense of openness and ‘big skies’ so closely associated with the District. Unusually, this agricultural land frequently permeates the urban areas creating a sharp urban-rural juxtaposition. The island quality is enhanced by the views across to the Dover Strait and English Channel and Thames Estuary and North Sea from elevated locations on Thanet. The long low chalk cliffs of Thanet provide rich coastal environment supporting distinctive birds, which is reflected in its national and international designations. The long coastal edge is key to the character of Thanet, with its rich habitats, distinctive seaside vernacular, active ports and harbours, and the opportunities it provides for public access and recreation along the cliffs and beaches. This seascape provides a remarkable sense of remoteness and wildness in close proximity to the urban coast.

## Background & Purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment

- 1.2 Thanet District Council (TDC) commissioned LUC in 2016 to undertake a character assessment policy approach in the Local Plan. It will be used to inform future decisions relating to the planning, management and protection of Thanet’s landscape.
- 1.3 This character assessment follows good practice guidance to review and update the District’s Borough’s previous summary assessment as set out in the Local Plan, 2006 which identified six Landscape Character Areas (Pegwell Bay, the former Wantsum Channel, the Former Wantsum North Shore, the Central chalk Plateau, Quex Park and the Urban Coast). In recognition of the importance and valued landscape of the Thanet coastline it also extends the assessment to the seascape incorporating the chalk cliffs and bays as far as the low water mark. The Landscape Character Assessment provides a comprehensive and up to date evidence base for the whole District.
- 1.4 The need for a strong and clear landscape evidence base is vital in the context of the development pressures Thanet faces; primarily the need to increase the rate of housing delivery. Understanding the character of place and evaluating defining characteristics is a key component in managing growth sustainably and ensuring that the inherent quality of Thanet’s landscape is conserved and enhanced. It aims to help guide development to the right locations. It is not the intention to use the report to prevent acceptable development. A guide to using this report, for both developers, Members and LPA Officers is provided in Appendix 2.

## Structure of this report

- 1.5 This report is set out in two parts. **Part 1** provides an overview, comprising:
- Introduction, background

- Method and approach to the landscape character assessment.

1.6 **Part 2** presents the landscape character of Thanet comprising:

- The landscape classification
- Profiles for the 14 individual landscape character areas

1.7 The report is supported by the following appendices:

- **Appendix 1** provides the field survey sheet
- **Appendix 2** presents a 'User Guide' to help developers and decision makers make best use of the information in the assessment.
- **Appendix 3** presents the Bibliography and Reference list.



## 2 Landscape Character Assessment Method

### Approach

- 2.1 The method for undertaking this Landscape Character Assessment follows the approach promoted by Natural England through 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014)<sup>1</sup>, which embeds the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) within it. The 2014 document updates the 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland', published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage in 2002, though the methodology is broadly the same as the previous guidance.
- 2.2 The 2014 guidance lists the five key principles for landscape character assessment as follows:
- Landscape is everywhere and all landscape and seascape has character;
  - Landscape occurs at all scales and the process of Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at any scale;
  - The process of Landscape Character Assessment should involve an understanding of how the landscape is perceived and experienced by people;
  - A Landscape Character Assessment can provide a landscape evidence base to inform a range of decisions and applications;
  - A Landscape Character Assessment can provide an integrating spatial framework- a multitude of variables come together to give us our distinctive landscapes.
- 2.3 The process for undertaking the study involved five main stages, described below, namely:
- Desk Study;
  - Field survey;
  - Classification and Description;
  - Evaluation; and
  - Reporting and Consultation.
- 2.4 A Geographical Information System (GIS) was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data. The study has been undertaken at 1:25,000 scale as appropriate for a district scale assessment.

### Method

#### Desk Study

- 2.5 This stage involved the collation and mapping of a wide range of existing information on the characteristics of Thanet in GIS (Geographical Information System) and analysing information to generate a draft classification for verification in the field.

#### Data

- 2.6 Data used within the report, including data collated in the GIS database, is shown in **Table 2-1**. Other sources that were consulted are provided at **Appendix 3**.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf)  
[accessed February 2015]

**Table 2-1: GIS Data**

| Data                                     | Source                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Base OS mapping at 1:25K and 1:50K       | Ordnance Survey                                                                         |
| Terrain 50 Contour data                  | Ordnance Survey                                                                         |
| Bedrock geology 1:50K                    | BGS                                                                                     |
| Night skies and intrusion                | CPRE                                                                                    |
| Historic Landscape Character Types (HLC) | Archaeology Data Service                                                                |
| Rivers and flood zones                   | Environment Agency                                                                      |
| Agricultural Land Classification         | Natural England                                                                         |
| Heritage designations                    | Historic England (national datasets) and Thanet Council (local datasets)                |
| Nature conservation designations         | Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Natural England and Thanet District Council |

### Relationship to Published and Neighbouring Landscape Character Assessments

- 2.7 Landscape does not stop at administrative boundaries but continues seamlessly into surrounding authorities of Dover and Canterbury at the former Wantsum Channel and Pegwell Bay. Consultation was undertaken with officers at both Districts and relevant landscape character assessment information obtained. This is illustrated in **Figure 2.1 – Neighbouring character areas**
- 2.8 As well as joining up with the Landscape Character Assessments of adjacent authorities, this new assessment sits within the hierarchy of existing national and regional assessments (the National Character Areas published by Natural England<sup>2</sup>, Landscape Assessment of Kent, 2004 (noting that this new assessment for Thanet will now supersede the county scale work). It also refers to the Seascape Characterisation of the Dover Strait (Kent County Council, 2015).
- 2.9 Existing national and regional character areas are shown on **Figure 2.2 –Landscape Character Context**.

### Initial consultation

- 2.10 Initial consultation by telephone/letter was undertaken with the following organisations and agencies to inform them of the work and request additional information:
- Dover District Council
  - Canterbury District Council
  - Kent County Council
  - Kent Wildlife Trust
  - Arch Project
  - Natural England
  - Historic England
  - CPRE

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

## Field Survey

- 2.11 A field survey was undertaken to check the draft characterisation and collate detailed information. This specifically focussed on:
- verifying and fine-tuning the classification of the landscape types and areas identified;
  - recording information on landscape character and characteristics and noting local variations in character;
  - identifying key sensitivities and valued attributes;
  - assessing landscape quality (condition) i.e. the physical state of the landscape, its intactness, functional integrity, scenic quality; and
  - Identifying perceptual and experiential qualities.
- 2.12 Each of the character was visited and a series of survey points identified. A bespoke field survey sheet was used to record information (Appendix 2) and representative photographs taken. The field survey sheets are provided as a separate Appendix 4.

## Classification

- 2.13 Information collected in the field was incorporated into a revised classification. This describes the landscape types and character areas.
- **Landscape Character Types** - which are generic and denote broad landscape types based on common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences that cross Local Authority Boundaries e.g. **E: Marshes**.
  - **Landscape Character Areas** – which are discrete geographical areas of the strategic type e.g. **E1: Stour Marshes, E2: Wade Marshes**.

## Description

- 2.14 A full profile is provided for each landscape character area which is mapped, illustrated by representative photos and described in terms of:
- Location and boundaries (with reference to key places/settlements and adjacent landscape character areas, including the nature of boundaries with adjacent areas);
  - A summary of the character – written description;
  - Key characteristics (the combination of elements which give the area its distinctive sense of place – bringing elements together to 'paint a picture' of the place);

## Evaluation

- 2.15 The profiles for each landscape character area present a clear division between the characterisation and evaluation parts of the assessment. The evaluation covers:
- landscape quality/ condition i.e. the physical state of the landscape, its intactness, functional integrity, detractors and scenic qualities;
  - key sensitivities and valued attributes (i.e. the landscape attributes that are of value<sup>3</sup>, or particularly sensitive to change, covering what is important about the landscape and why);
  - a strategy/vision for the landscape to encapsulate the main direction of change;
  - Guidance to conserve and enhance character and achieve the strategy/vision.

## Consultation

- 2.16 A pilot assessment was circulated to Thanet District Council in autumn 2016 and comments taken on board to guide the scope and direction of the outputs. The draft report provided the basis for further consultation with local / relevant groups in summer 2017.

---

<sup>3</sup> This may be linked to 'valued landscapes' as referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012, DCLG, paragraph 109



2.17 Stakeholder consultation included:

- A presentation to members
- A presentation to stakeholders
- An online consultation managed by TDCI

2.18 A report of main consultation comments and how these have been incorporated into this report has been provided separately to TDC.

### **Policy development**

2.19 The landscape character assessment provides evidence for landscape policy for inclusion in the local plan. This is presented as a separate paper to Thanet District Council.

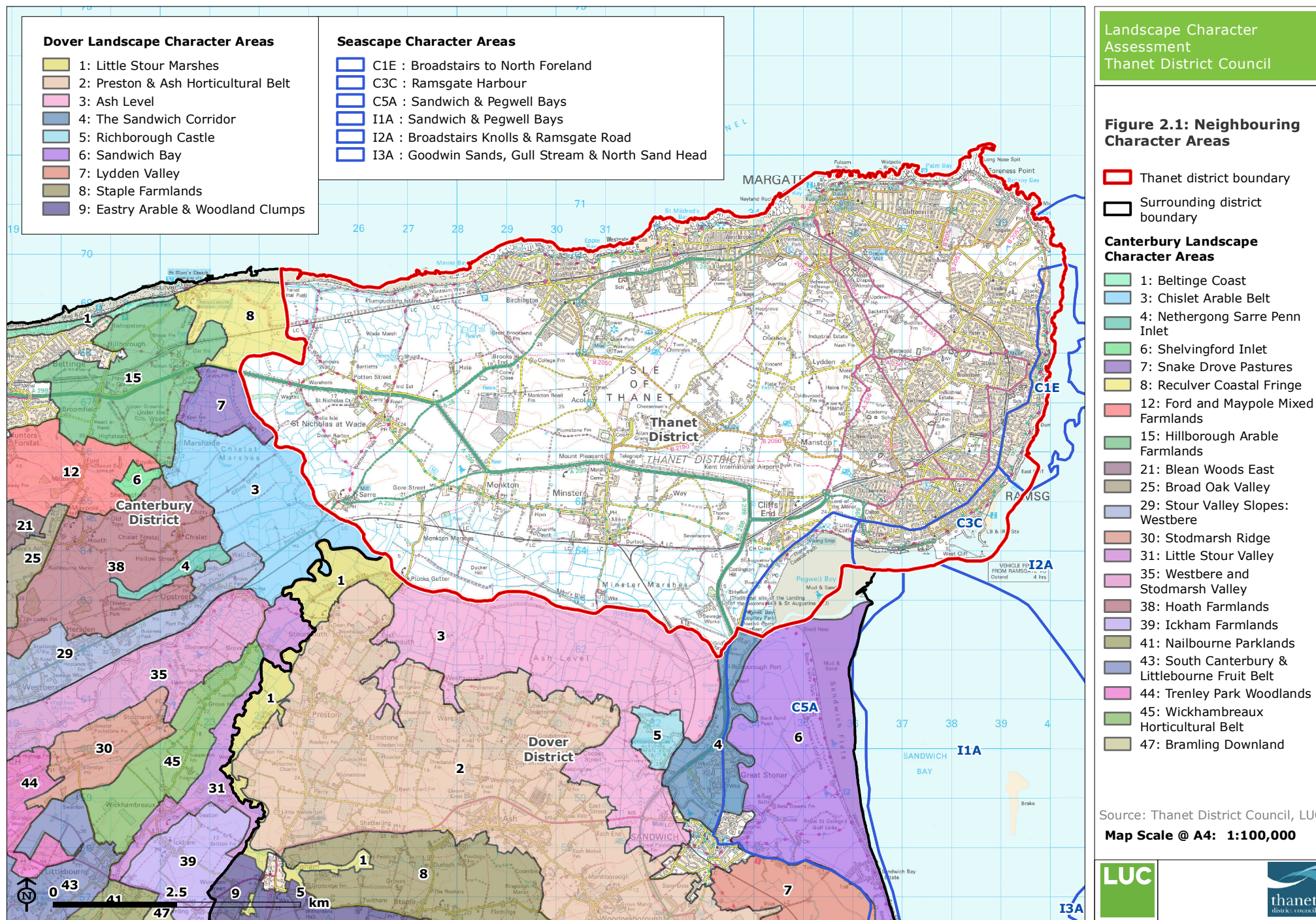


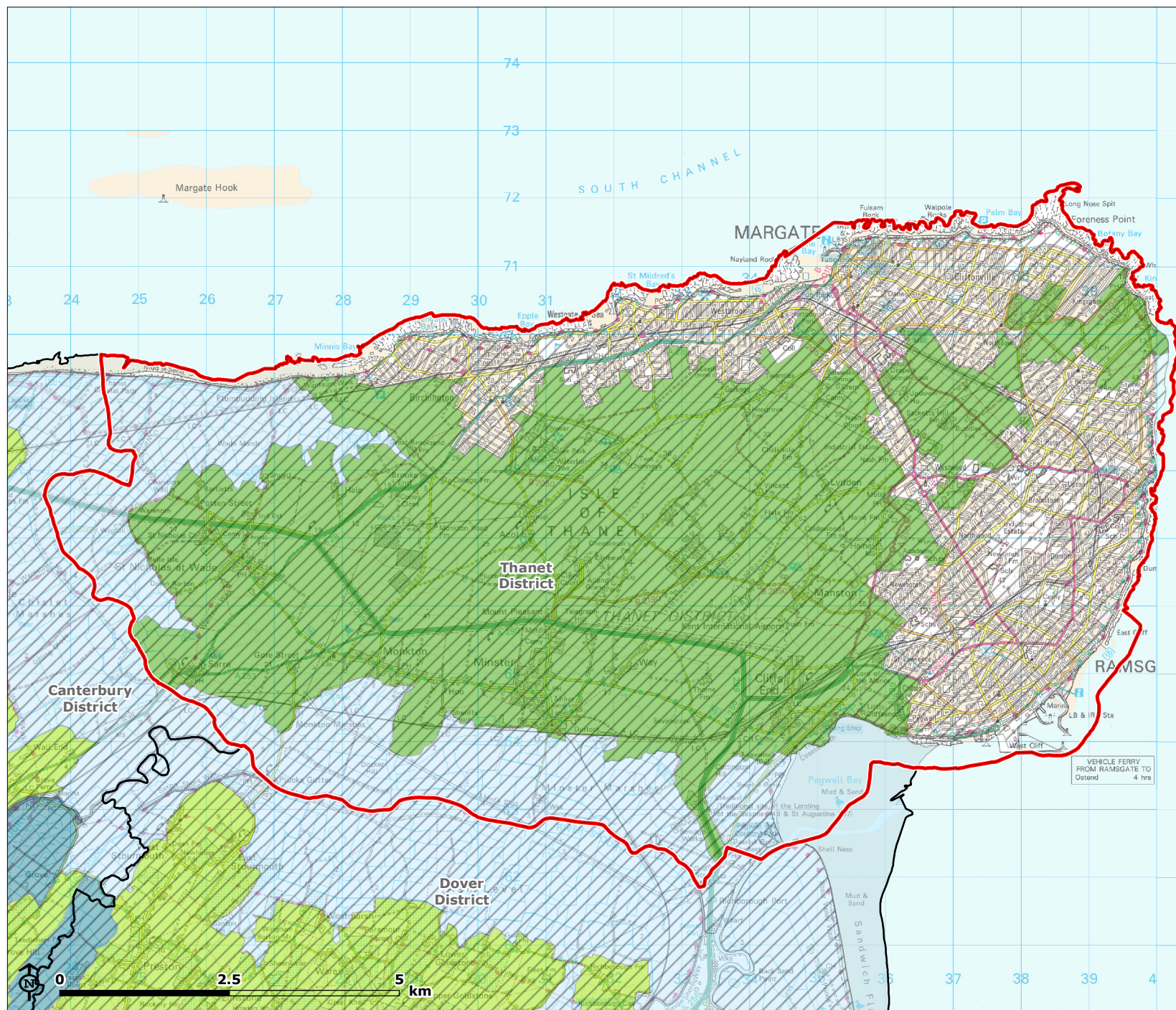
Figure 2.2 Landscape Character Context





**Figure 2.2: Landscape Character Context**

- Thanet district boundary
- Surrounding district boundary
- Kent Landscape Character Areas**
  - East Kent Horticultural Belt
  - Thanet
  - The Stour Valley
  - The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes
- National Character Area**
  - North Kent Plain



Source: Thanet District Council,  
Kent Downs AONB

**Map Scale @ A4: 1:80,000**





### 3 The Evolution of the Thanet Landscape

*"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"* **European Landscape Convention (ELC)**

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the natural and cultural factors that have shaped the character of the Thanet landscape and informed the classification set out in the following sections of the report.

#### Natural influences

##### Geology and Soils

- 3.2 Chalk of the Upper Chalk Beds forms the underlying rock throughout the Isle of Thanet, as can be clearly seen at the distinct low chalk cliffs forming the coastlines. The chalk determines the distinctive scenery in the area, but also, through the influence of geology on drainage patterns and soil types, it in turn affects vegetation patterns, land use and settlement patterns. Its influence on architectural and building practices is also seen in the use of flints extracted from the chalk as a building material. In the past, this layer was covered by a thin layer of younger rocks known as the Thanet Beds, which have since been eroded. In the southern and eastern areas of the district the chalk extends below areas of sand, silt and clay and alluvium marking the extent of the Wantsum Channel, while areas of brickearth are present throughout the district.
- 3.3 The geology gives rise to light, chalky soils which support large open arable fields consisting of some of the highest quality (Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grade 1) and most intensively farmed agricultural land in Kent and England.
- 3.4 The solid and drift geology of Thanet is shown in **Figure 3.1**, and ALC in **Figure 3.2**.

##### Topography and Drainage

- 3.5 Thanet was formerly an island separated from the rest of Kent by the Wantsum Channel. Over the course of the last millennium, the channel became silted up with silt from the River Stour and joined Thanet to the rest of Kent. The distinctive topography of the district is illustrated in **Figure 3.3**. This shows the elevated central chalk plateau which extends above 40m, flanked by a series of slopes dropping away to the Wantsum Channel and the coasts which lie between 40m and 5m. This topography helps reinforce the island character and allows long views out to the sea from many parts of the district.
- 3.6 The hydrology of the District is shown in **Figure 3.4**. The River Stour which flows to the English Channel at Pegwell Bay forms the boundary with Canterbury District, and is joined by a number of smaller streams which cross the Wantsum floodplain. To the north minor streams flow into the Thames Estuary near Minnis Bay. The chalk plateau is characterised by the absence of surface water in contrast to the Wantsum Channel which is crossed by multiple drainage ditches.
- 3.7 The chalk beds are not large aquifers but there are large areas of groundwater reservoirs that are used for mains water supply and agriculture.

##### Biodiversity

- 3.8 The underlying geology and soils have influenced the distribution of habitats across the District. Important habitats include dunes and grazing marsh, freshwater wetlands and reedbeds associated with the Stour. The distinctive chalk cliffs and sea caves plus intertidal and sub tidal habitats are of international importance. The Thanet coast incorporates 20% of UK and 12% of the European resource of intertidal chalk and the longest continuous stretch in the UK.
- 3.9 The Priority Habitats are shown in **Figure 3.5**.

### Designations

- 3.10 Most of the Thanet Coast (with the exception of Viking Bay, Broadstairs, and some areas around Ramsgate harbour) is covered by statutory nature conservation designations. It is important for its intertidal chalk reefs, caves, chalk cliffs, cliff top chalk grassland, dunes, mudflats, saline lagoons supporting diverse species including migratory and breeding birds. Specific designations include two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, one Site of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, one Special Protection Area (under EU Wild Birds Directive), and two Special Areas of Conservation (under the EU Habitats Directive).
- 3.11 The district contains substantial Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) covering the Thanet Coast and Shore and Lower Stour Wetlands. The BOAs indicate areas of focus for the delivery of Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets and are reflected in the individual LCA strategies in the following chapters of this report.
- 3.12 There are also a number of Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Roadside Nature Reserves, as well as three Regionally Important Geological sites (RIGS). These receive no statutory protection but are protected in the Local Plan.

Biodiversity designations are shown in **Figure 3.6**.

### Cultural\human Influences

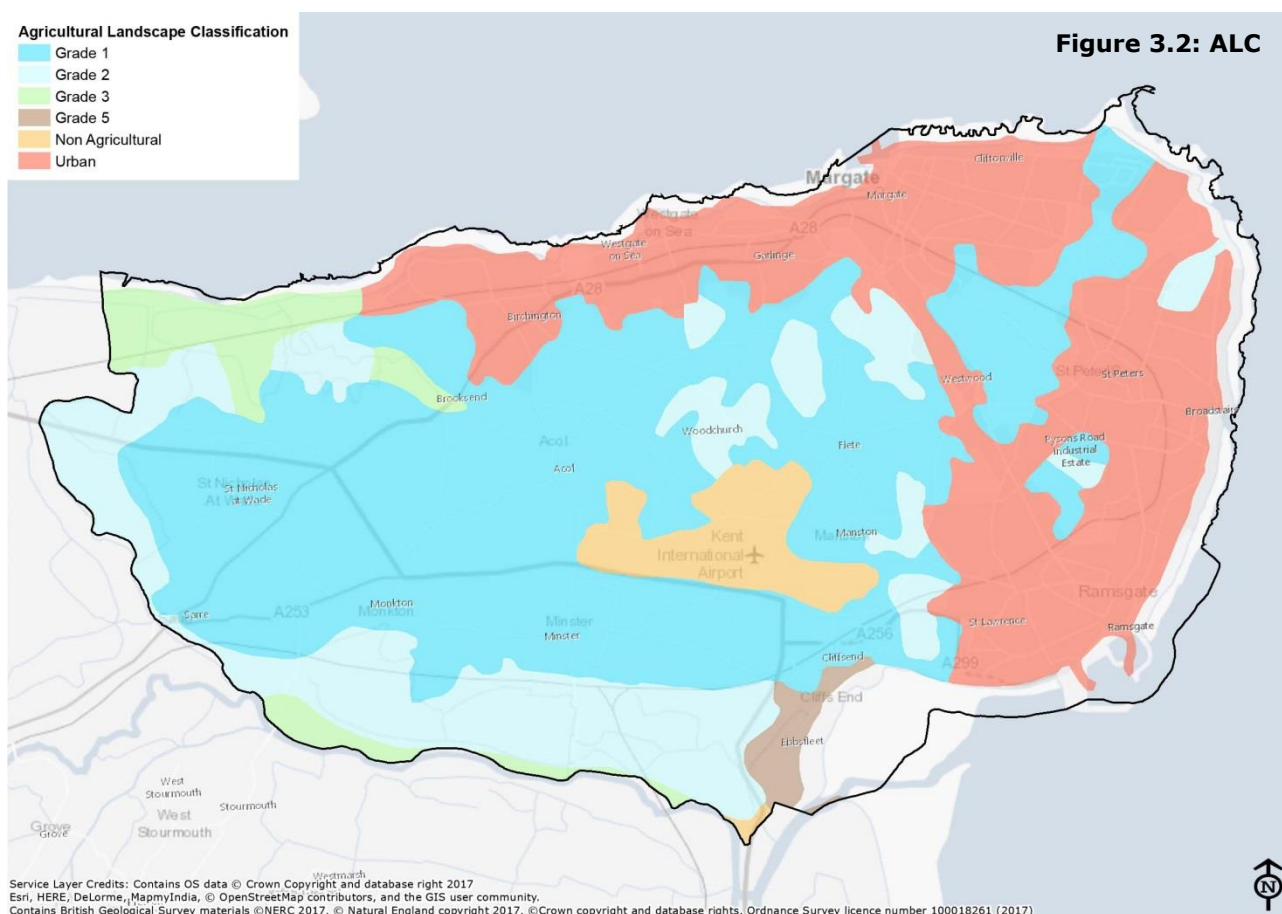
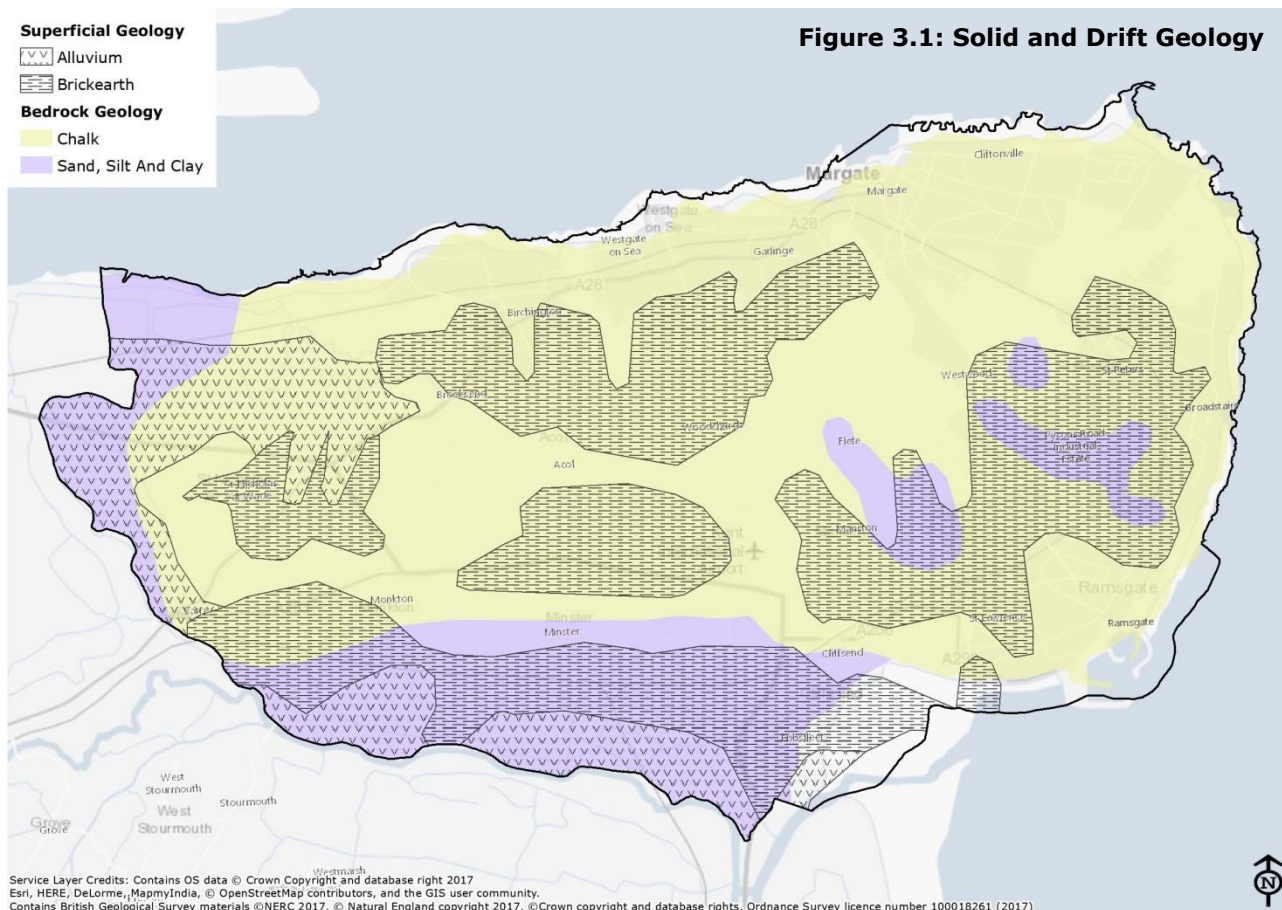
- 3.13 [Further work to provide a fuller interpretation of the historic evolution of the Thanet landscape and is currently being undertaken as part of the Heritage Strategy. A summary narrative is provided here, which should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Strategy]
- 3.14 The Thanet landscape today is a reflection of its varied geology and topography and a product of its use through history. This section provides a very brief summary of how humans have shaped and changed landscape character. Since prehistoric communities first cleared the native woodland to grow crops, each generation has inherited from its forebears an historic landscape and has, in turn, transformed it, in some cases subtly, in others more drastically. The character of today's landscape displays the indelible, if not always easily legible, imprint of past use. See **Figure 3.7** for cultural heritage designations and **Figure 3.8** which summarises the Historic Landscape Characterisation.
- 3.15 The Thanet coastline, close to Europe and has seen successive invasion and defence: The Romans landed here; the Jutes Hengist and Horsa battled for power; the early-Christian missionary St Augustine brought faith, all of which are commemorated in the landscape in features and monuments. The Normans brought countless fine churches that still survive today. Sarre was heavily defended in WW2 as a potential strategic entry point to England, and Ramsgate is renowned as the port where the little ships launched to Dunkirk.
- 3.16 Up to the mid 1800's, the Thanet area was predominantly a commercial arable farming community with some seafaring activities. In particular, the Margate docks monopolised the corn trade to London in the 1850's. Broadstairs in the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> century was known for its shipbuilding. Around this time, the popularity of saltwater bathing, along with the arrival of the railways sparked the seaside holiday boom. The legacy is the fine Georgian, Regency and Victorian buildings around the resorts of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. These small settlements have subsequently expanded forming the almost continuous urban coastal edge. Inland, rural Thanet, particularly along the Wantsum, includes a large number of Dutch and Flemish gabled buildings a legacy associated with immigrants from the Netherlands in the 17th century. The large villages of Minster, Monkton and Sarre originally operated as ports before the Wantsum channel silted up, and retain a distinctive character. The high quality of the built environment is reflected in the number of areas with Conservation Area designation.
- 3.17 The District contains 12 designated Scheduled Monuments, which include Anglo Saxon cemeteries, groups of ring ditches, former settlement sites, early enclosures which can be read as subtle imprints on the landscape, while others such as the Dent-de-Lion medieval gatehouse form a local landmark feature and link to the past.

- 3.18 Of particular note is the absence of any distinct historic pattern of agricultural land enclosure on Thanet, with the majority of the agricultural land classified in the HLC as comprising large open fields, bounded by tracks, roads and rights of way.

## The Future

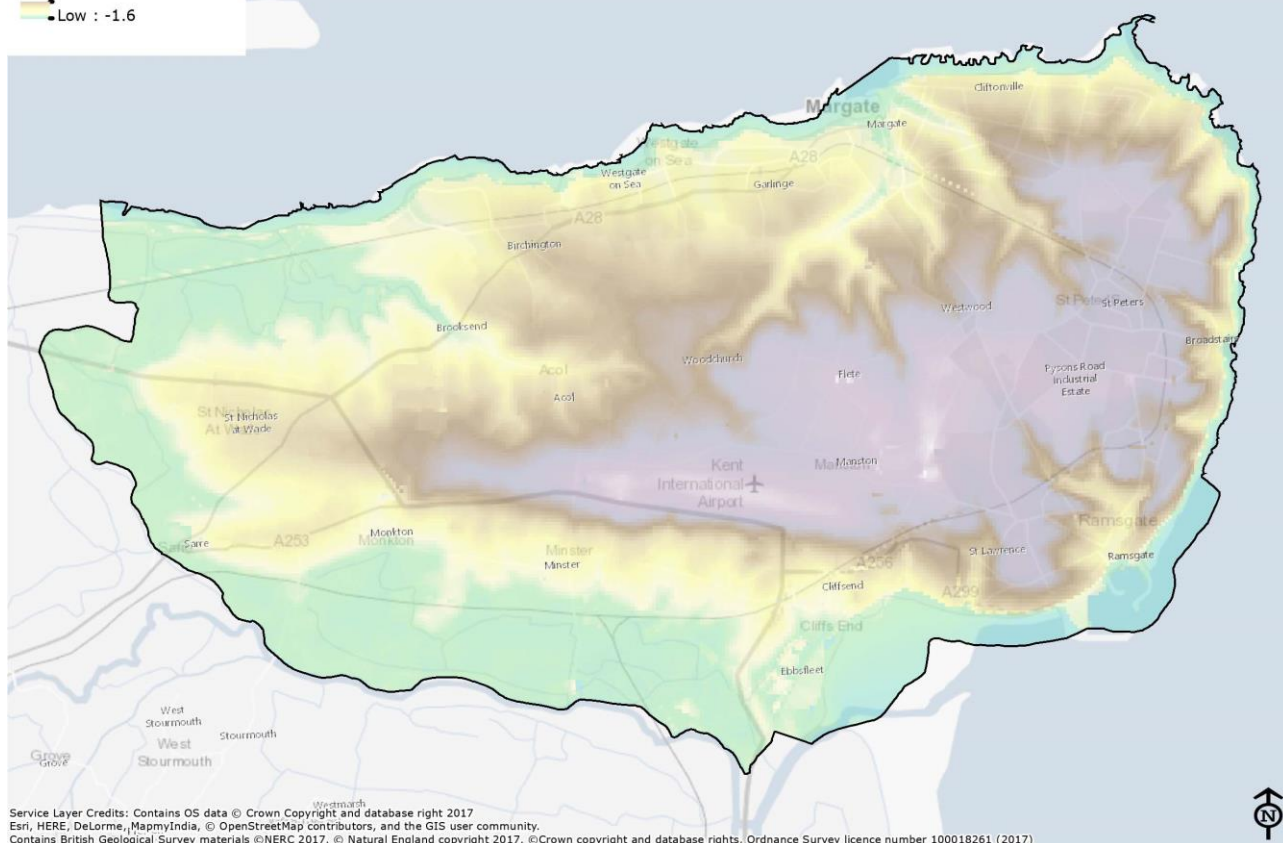
- 3.19 This chapter has illustrated that the Thanet landscape has evolved over time in response to physical and cultural influences. The landscape is not static and will continue to evolve in the future – although it is difficult to be precise about the effect of change. An understanding and recognition of intrinsic landscape character and qualities, articulated through this assessment, should help ensure that local distinctiveness is conserved and enhanced/restored and, where appropriate, encourage creation of new valued landscapes, in association with any future change.
- 3.20 Key current driving forces for change are:
- climate change
  - agriculture and horticultural change including new methods of production (e.g. large scale glasshouses)
  - development and particularly the need to accommodate new areas of housing
  - transport infrastructure
  - renewable energy including accommodating solar farms
- 3.21 The maps of Night Skies (**Figure 3.9**) and Tranquillity (**Figure 3.10**) show the effects of recent intrusions. The lights emitted at Thanet Earth makes this one of England's brightest areas at night time. While roads and urban areas mean this is not a tranquil landscape, pockets of greater tranquillity can be found particularly relating to the Wantsum Valley and parts of the coast which provide an important contrast.
- 3.22 Recognising differences in landscape character is essential to ensure that land management changes and decisions about new development proposals take every practical opportunity to respect and enhance Thanet's particular sense of place and local distinctiveness.





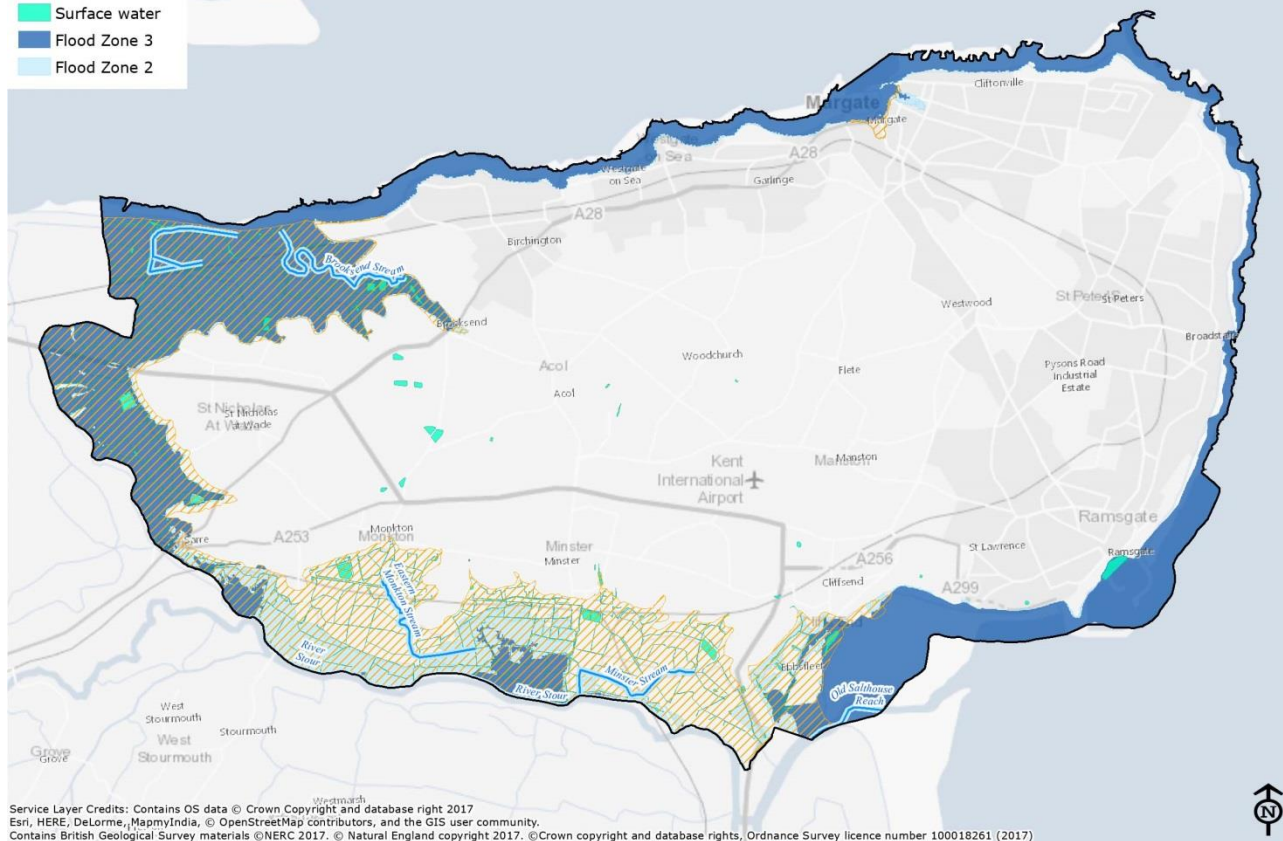
**Elevation - Metres (AOD)**  
 High : 58.7  
 Low : -1.6

**Figure 3.3: Topography**

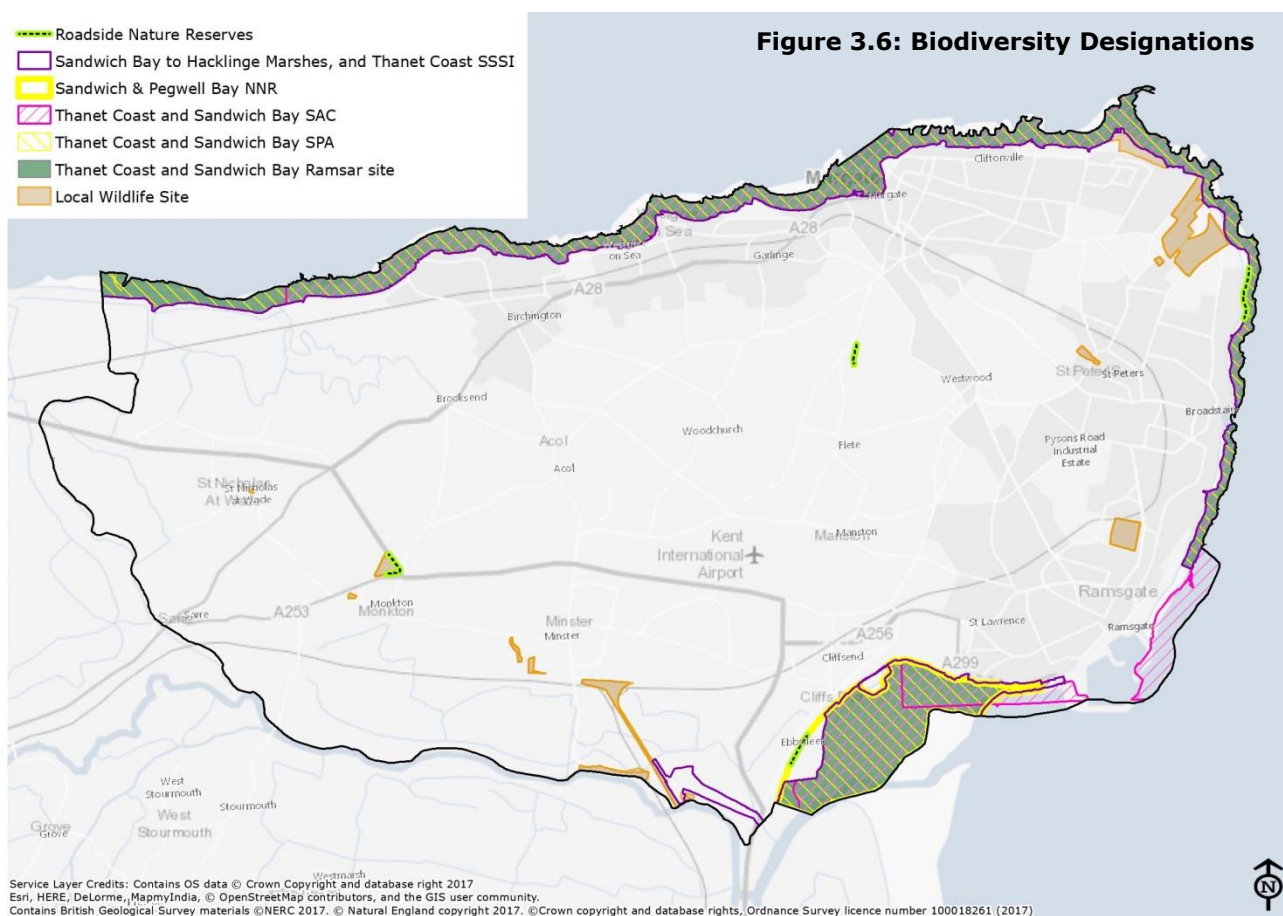
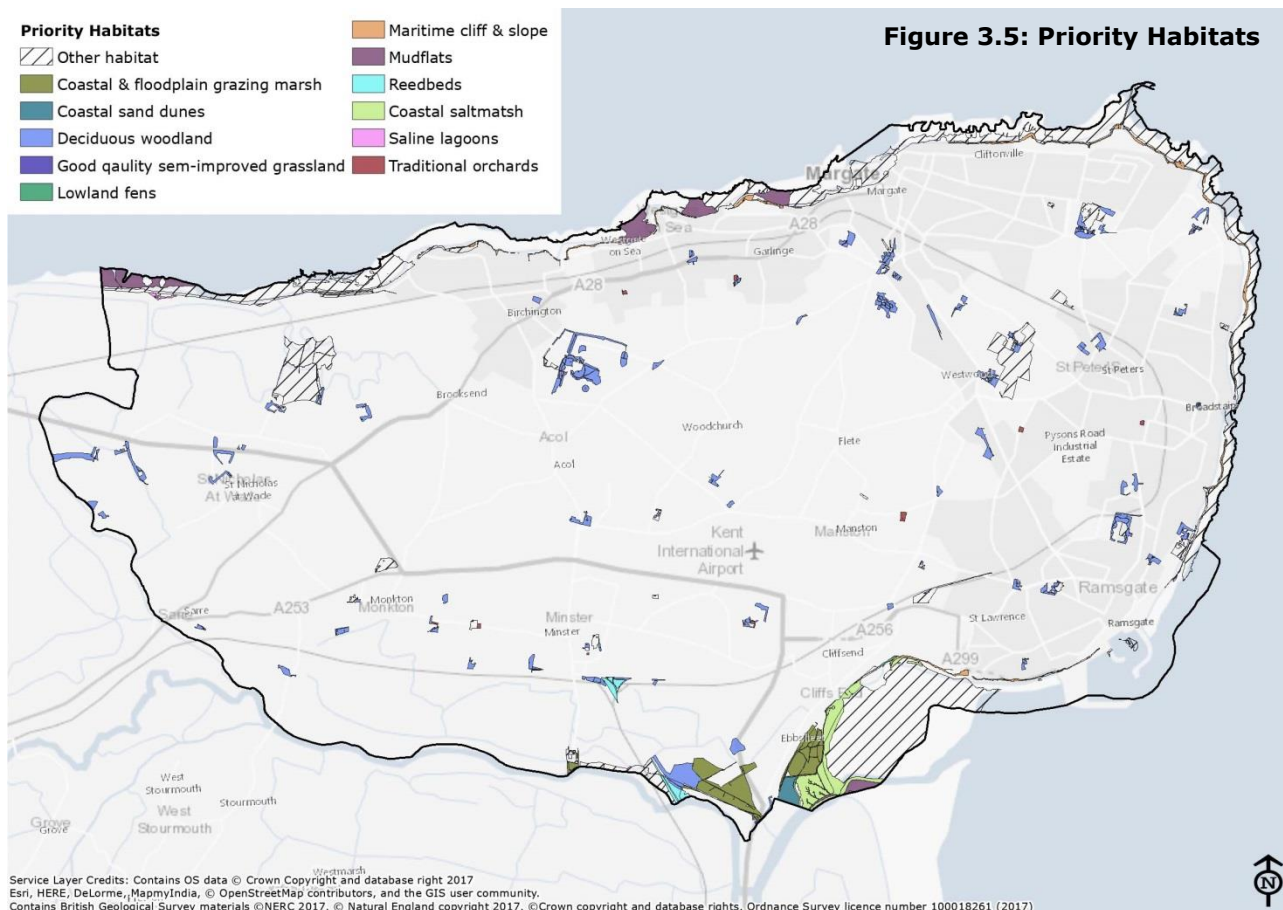


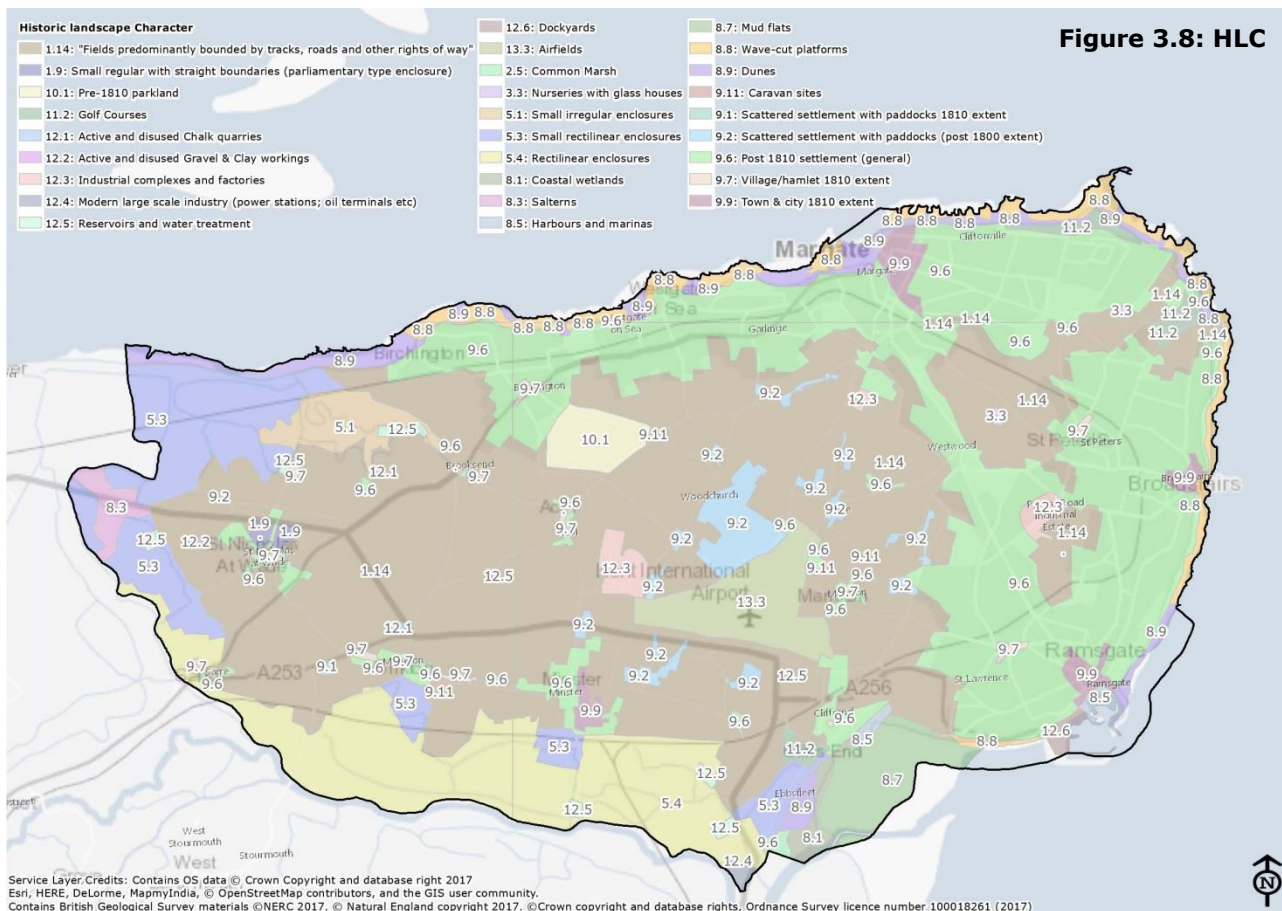
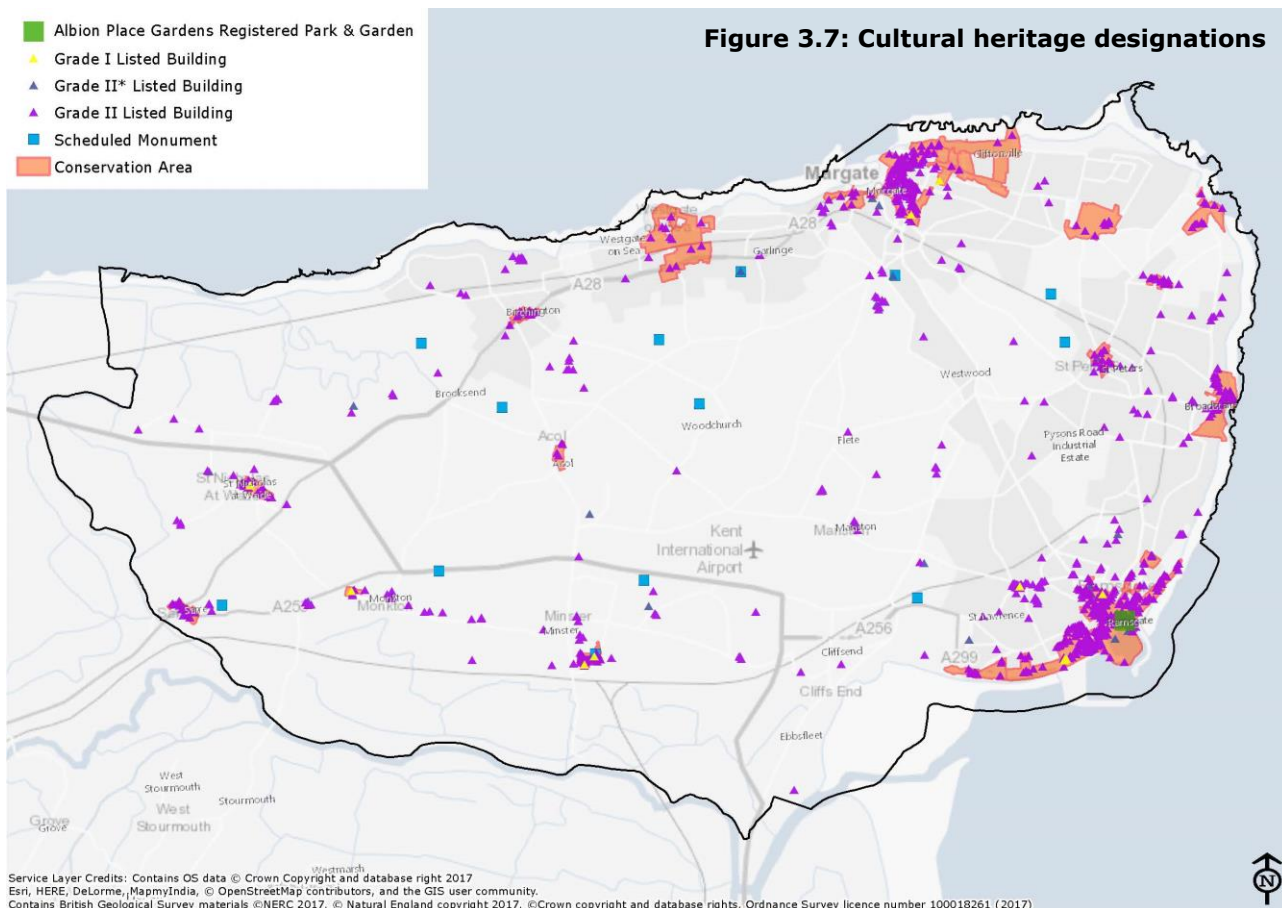
OS Open Rivers  
 Flood risk area  
 Surface water  
 Flood Zone 3  
 Flood Zone 2

**Figure 3.4: Hydrology**

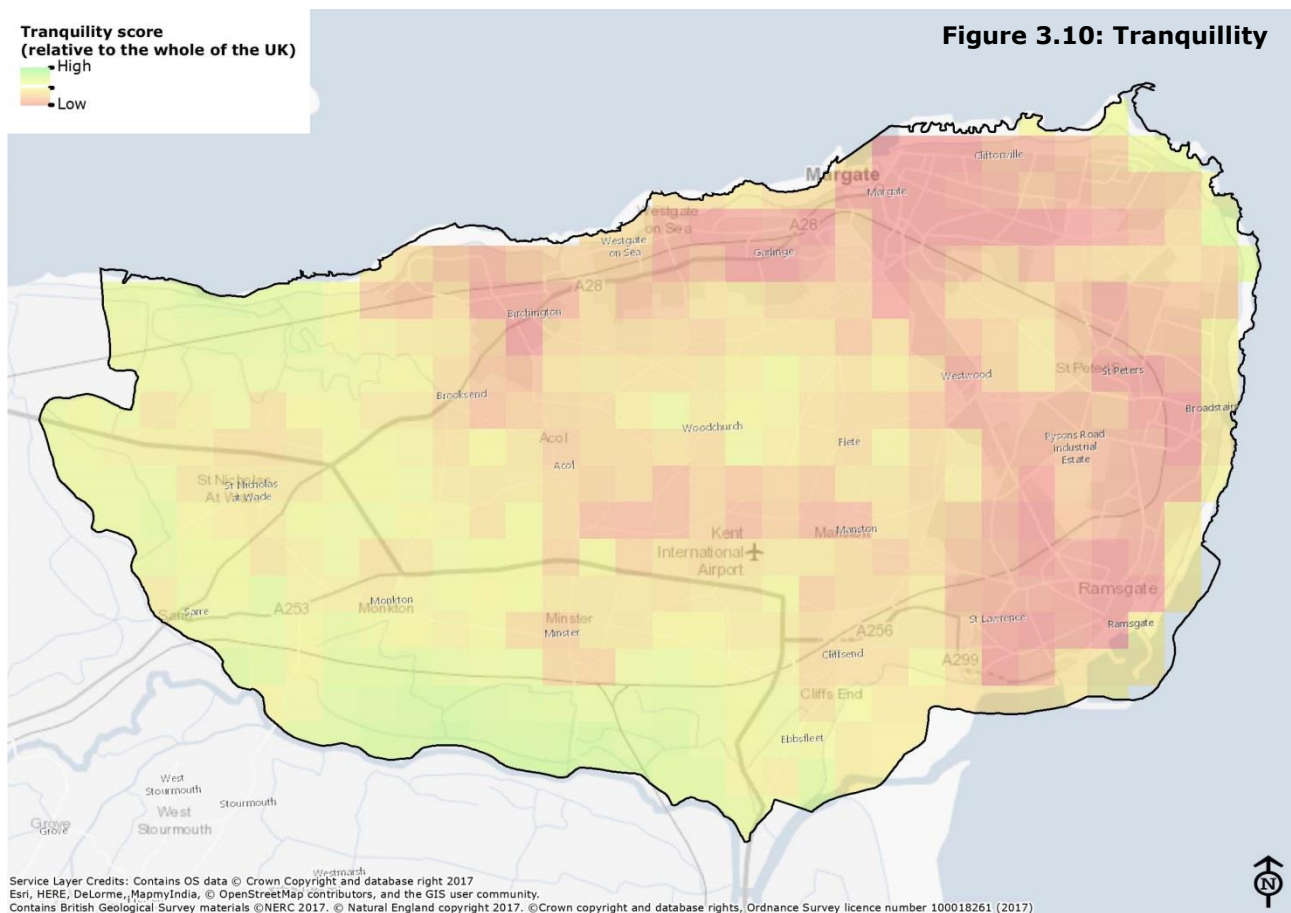
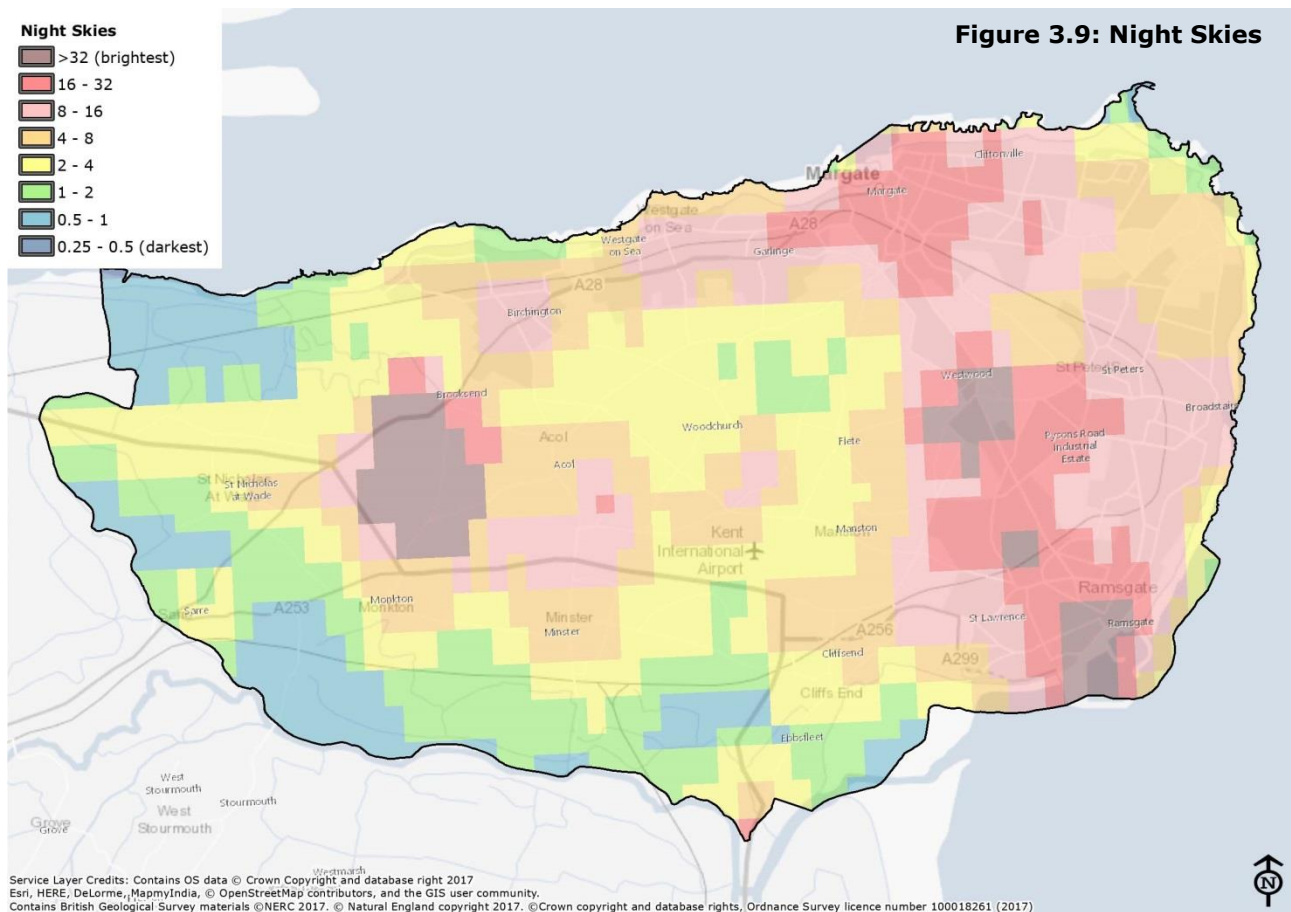














## **Part 2: The Landscape Character of Thanet**



## 4 Classification

- 4.1 The landscape classification for Thanet is presented in Table 4.1 below, which sets out the generic landscape character types and their constituent character areas. This is illustrated on **Figure 4.1: Landscape Character Areas**.

**Table 3.1: Thanet Landscape Classification**

| Landscape Character Type            | Landscape Character Area                    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>A: Chalk Plateau</b>             | A1: Manston Chalk Plateau                   |
| <b>B: Chalk Slopes</b>              | B1: Wantsum North Slopes                    |
| <b>C: Undulating Chalk Farmland</b> | C1: St Nicholas-at-Wade Undulating Farmland |
|                                     | C2: Central Thanet Undulating Farmland      |
|                                     | C3: St Peters Undulating Farmland           |
|                                     | C4: Newlands Farm                           |
| <b>D: Parkland and Estates</b>      | D1: Quex Park                               |
| <b>E: Marshes</b>                   | E1: Stour Marsh                             |
|                                     | E2: Wade Marsh                              |
| <b>F: Undeveloped Coast</b>         | F1: Pegwell Bay                             |
|                                     | F2: Foreness Point and North Foreness       |
|                                     | F3: Minnis Bay                              |
| <b>G: Developed Coast</b>           | G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs         |
|                                     | G2: North Thanet Coast                      |

### Character area boundaries

- 4.2 The precision of boundaries drawn around landscape character areas and types varies with the scale and level of detail of the assessment. This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which means that it is suitable for use at this scale. The scale of this classification will need to be taken into account whenever the assessment is used to ensure that the level of detail is compatible with the intended application.
- 4.3 In reality landscape character does not change abruptly at the boundaries and these often represent transitions rather than marked changes on the ground. In most cases boundaries have been chosen to follow actual physical features on the ground. Occasionally, features such as contours have been used to define character areas, selected where they represent a distinct change in landform and associated character. For locations close to the boundary of one character area information on the adjacent character areas will also be relevant.

### Relationship to urban areas and settlement in the rural area

- 4.4 The character area descriptions are focussed on the landscape and seascape of the rural areas of Thanet, and while it makes reference to adjacent urban settlements and villages for context, it should be noted that this is not a townscape character assessment. This is particularly relevant to



the character areas which relate to a narrow area of cliffs around the urban coasts, notably G1 and G2.

- 4.5 For the purposes of this landscape assessment boundaries have been drawn to the existing urban boundary, but recognising that this may change in relation to future extensions and development. In these cases the information contained in this report should provide outline guidance for master planning and landscape integration of new development.
- 4.6 Within the rural area, the landscape character assessment 'washes over' villages and small settlements, *i.e.* they are considered as part of the wider landscape.
- 4.7 The remainder of this section provides the Landscape Character Area Profiles. Note that the profiles also include the seascape and sea views, which are fundamental to the distinct character of Thanet.

Figure 4.1 Landscape Character Areas



**Figure 4.1: Thanet  
Landscape Classification**

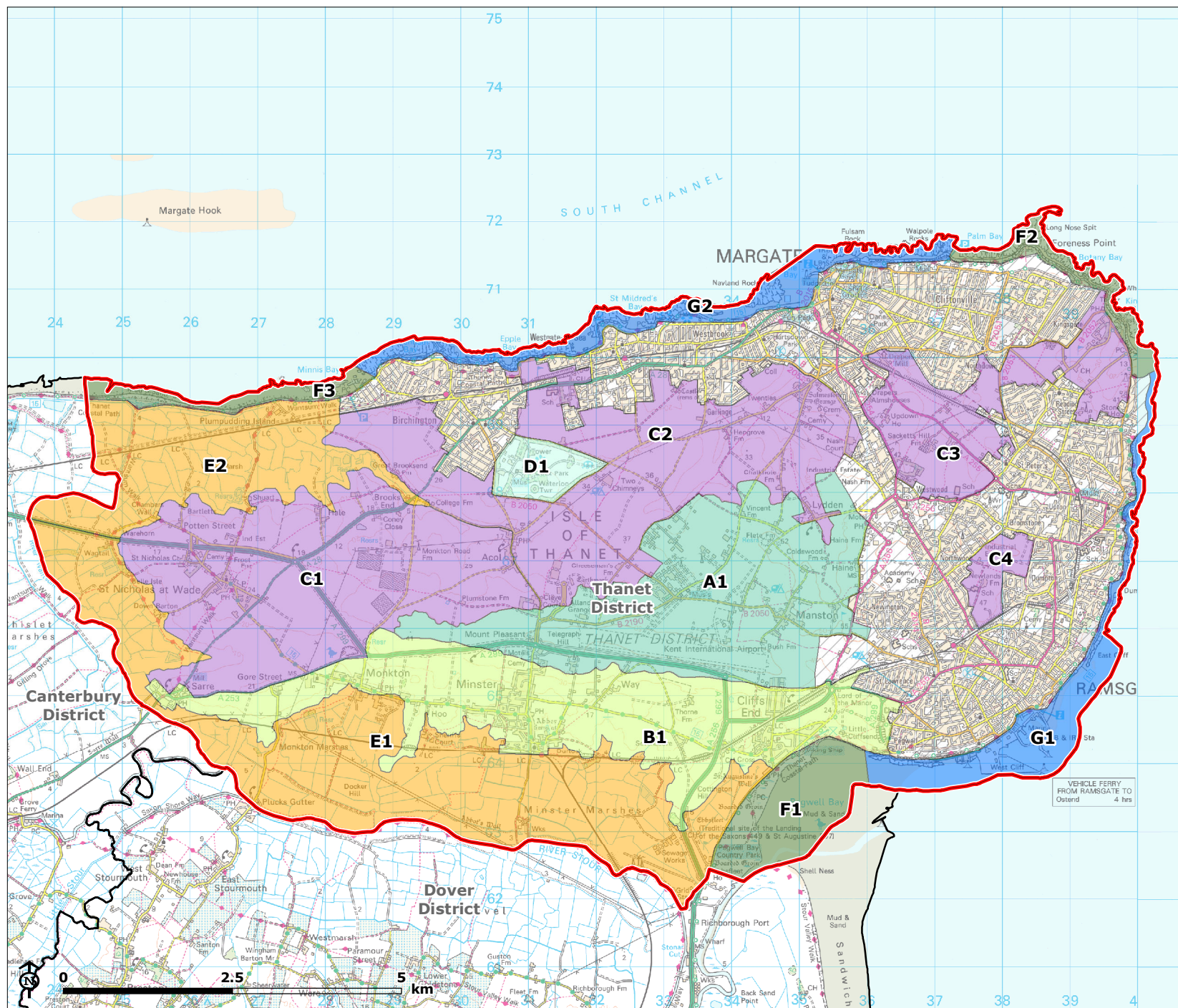
- Thanet district boundary
- Surrounding district boundary
- Urban area

**Landscape Character Areas**

- A. Chalk Plateau
  - A1: Manston Chalk Plateau
- B. Chalk Slopes
  - B1: Wantsum North Slopes
- C. Undulating Chalk Farmland
  - C1: St Nicholas at Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland
  - C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland
  - C3: St Peters Undulating Chalk Farmland
  - C4: Newlands Farm
- D. Parklands and Estates
  - D1: Quex Park
- E. Marshes
  - E1: Stour Marshes
  - E2: Wade Marshes
- F. Undeveloped Coast
  - F1: Pegwell Bay
  - F2: Foreness Point and North Foreland
  - F3: Minnis Bay
- G. Developed Coast
  - G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs
  - G2: North Thanet Coast

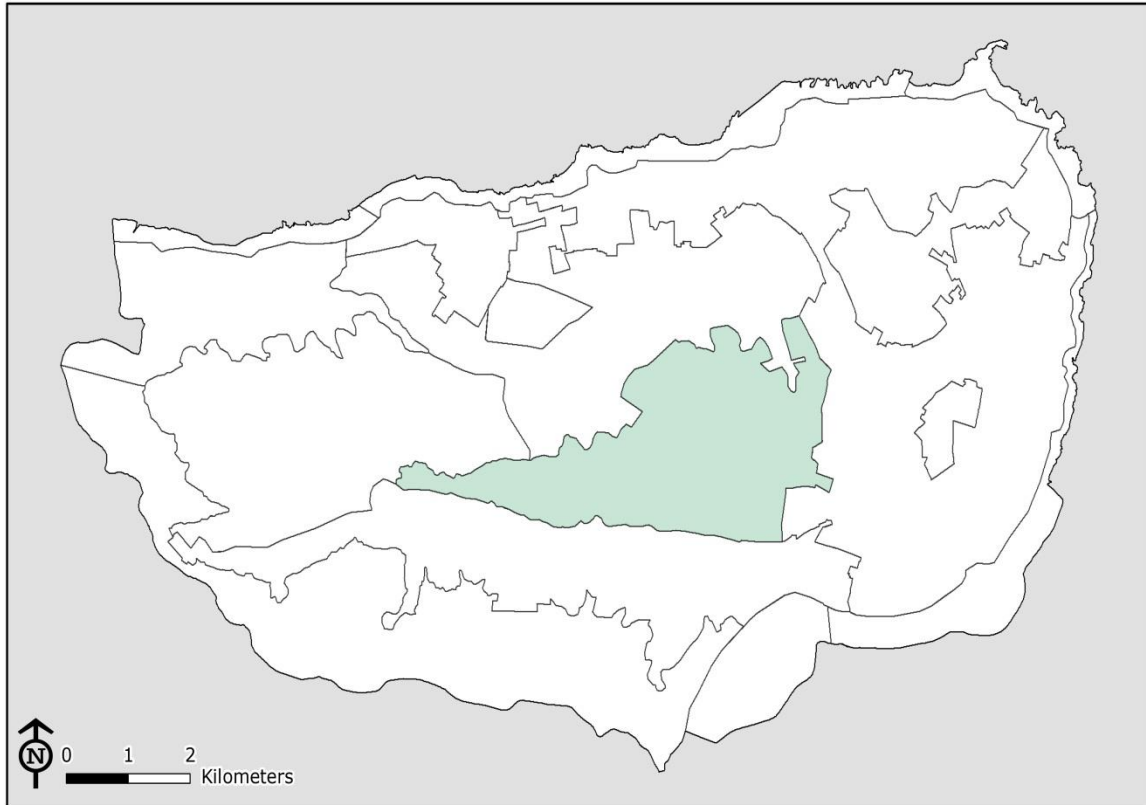
Source: Thanet District Council

**Map Scale @ A4: 1:80,000**





## Local Character Area A1: Manston Chalk Plateau



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.8 The Manston Chalk Plateau is located in the high land in the centre of Thanet. The boundaries are largely defined by the 40m contour, beyond which marks a distinct change in landform to the surrounding more undulating slopes. To the south the land slopes steeply forming the north shore of the Wantsum Channel (**LCA B1: Wantsum North Slopes**). To the north the topography is more undulating as part of **LCA C1: St Nicholas-at-Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland** and **LCA C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland**.

## Photos



Derelict building, harsh security fencing and rank grassland create a stark landscape on the southern edge of the plateau.

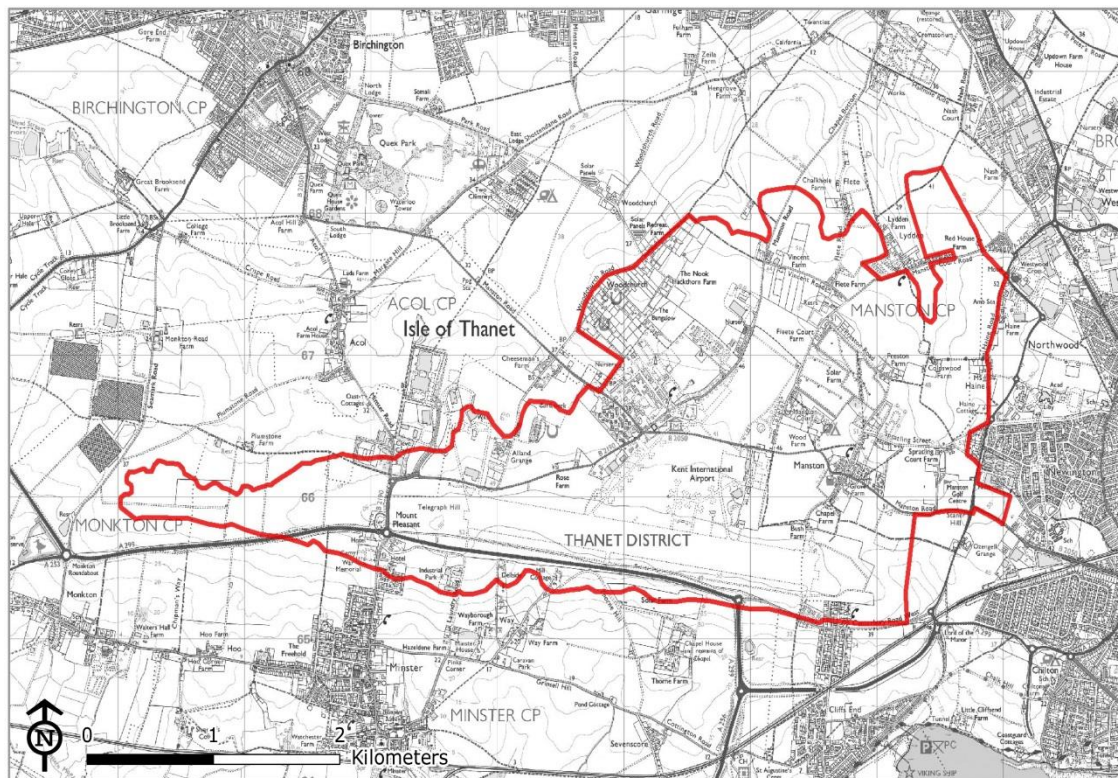


From the high open plateau there are long views, including to Pegwell Bay and the sea which contribute to scenic quality and 'island character'.



Large open fields with an absence of boundaries create a very open landscape, with occasional tree belts around settlement.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.9 This landscape comprises an elevated plateau of farmland with arable and horticultural crops (brassicas), former airport and runway interspersed with settlement at Manston and Woodchurch. The lack of defining features and field boundaries results in a disjointed pattern of large scale fields with an open character.
- 4.10 Settlement comprises the small villages of Manston and plotland development around Woodchurch, formed by low density, 1-2 storey detached properties, partially integrated into the landscape by mature trees. Paddocks and small scale pasture fields defined by post and wire fencing fringe the outer edges of settlements. Tree belts allow other less-characteristic land uses such as a solar farm and a golf course to partially assimilate into the landscape near to the edge of Manston. A network of roads and lanes cross the area including the A299 which provides a primary route into Thanet. The character area adjoins the urban edge of Newington in the east which is open in character and has urbanising influences on the adjacent fields and roads particularly at Westwood Cross Shopping Centre.
- 4.11 The former Kent International Airport covers a large portion of the southern area. The airport is no longer operational and comprises a barren landscape of derelict terminal buildings and unmanaged grassland bound by high security fencing. Despite the closure of the airport, aviation still has a presence in the area through the Spitfire and Hurricane Museum, a heliport and a helicopter dealership. The Defence Fire Training and Development Centre also occupies the former Royal Air Force base at Manston which is formed of several rectilinear blocks arranged in a grid pattern and interspersed with tree belts and small copses. The 1930's modernist Prospect Inn (now hotel) is located close to the airport at Minster, built in the Cunard style.
- 4.12 The landform is generally flat with minor undulations characterising the area around the airport including Telegraph Hill close to the junction at Mount Pleasant. The plateau marks the highest point within Thanet and this elevated position allows for long distance views over the surrounding landscape including sea views to Pegwell Bay and to the north.



## Key Characteristics

- Elevated, flat landform with gently rolling undulations between 40-55m AOD, characterised by an underlying chalk geology and an isolated area of Thanet sand formation in the east
- Predominantly regular, medium to large scale arable and horticultural fields on ALC Grade 1 and 2 soils with little defining features which create a very open landscape.
- Tree belts and linear woodland with localised areas of paddocks and pasture provide enclosure around small villages of Manston and Woodchurch as well as scattered farmsteads.
- The disused Kent International Airport consisting of dilapidated terminal buildings and neglected grassland defined by security fencing occupy the southern area.
- A road network of roads and lanes dissect the plateau and includes the A299 which provides a main connection into Thanet.
- Settlement comprises low density, 1-2 storey detached properties including the small village of Manston and buildings along minor roads. A variety of building materials including traditional flint, plus red brick, render and timber cladding. Area of former plotland at Woodchurch.
- Elevated plateau results in long distance panoramic views in the south over Minster Marshes and across Pegwell Bay and, in the west, across the Wantsum.
- The elevated central chalk plateau also forms a skyline in many views back from lower landscapes in Thanet, including the coast and marshlands;
- Other land uses include Manston Golf Club and a solar farm and are generally well integrated into the landscape due to the flat topography and bordering vegetation
- Urban influences in form of exposed adjoining settlement edges including large scale buildings at Westwood Cross Shopping Centre. Areas of cropping (brassicas) in stark contrast to adjacent urban areas.
- Military influences including the Defence Fire Training Centre and RAF Manston Spitfire and Hurricane Museum.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.13 Several archaeological finds indicate that Manston has been occupied for many centuries dating back to the Anglo-Saxon era. Manston Court is Grade II listed and was the seat of the Manston family who were in high office circa 1200. A number of other listed buildings are also situated throughout the character area.
- 4.14 In more recent history, RAF Manston established itself on the Isle of Thanet during the First World War after starting as an emergency landing strip. It operated from 1916 until 1996 and was instrumental in preventing German air raids. It continued to be used throughout World War II and the Cold War due to the hilltop site being usually free of fog and obstructions on take-off and landing. The airfield returned to RAF use when it became a joint civilian and RAF airport in 1960 before it was rebranded in Kent International Airport in 1989.
- 4.15 Fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way have long characterised the area around the airfield. Small villages developed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are also inset within the fields.

## Natural influences

- 4.16 The landscape lacks any considerable areas of valued habitat apart from a small area of deciduous woodland and occasional orchards within the villages. There are no natural designations, although these areas of inland arable farmland are likely to provide roosting sites for birds associated with the coast, including golden plover.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.17 The large arable fields with few defining features greatly reduce the intactness of the landscape and visual and biodiversity. Buildings are generally well-contained by planting although settlements are surrounded by small scale paddocks further fragmenting the landscape. The former airport including derelict buildings and expanses of unmaintained grassland has a barren character that interrupts the flow of the agricultural landscape, with large scale buildings, fencing and industrial uses creating a strong urban character in places. Main roads, notably the A299 with street lighting and signage also act as visual detractors, with night time lighting visible across much of the lower lying landscape to the south. Overall this a fragmented landscape with little coherence.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- High quality agricultural land and value for crops, and potential value for farmland birds.
- District sense of place as an island surrounded by sea.
- The low density and scattered settlement pattern of villages and isolated buildings mostly well- integrated by trees on the elevated and flat landform.
- The role of the southern edge of the plateau as the skyline and backdrop to the marshes (Wantsum Channel) and in views from other lower areas of Thanet and beyond including the coast;
- Tree belts provide enclosure around small villages of Manston and Woodchurch as well as scattered rural buildings.
- Some rural lanes with no verge or street lighting contribute to rural character before connecting with a wider road network of main roads including the A299.
- The RAF Manston, Spitfire and Hurricane Museum provide sense of history and time depth.
- Historic character of Manston village.
- Open elevated aspect and long distance panoramic views over Minster Marshes and across Pegwell Bay.
- A299 crossing the area and main route into Thanet and the Ramsgate/Broadstairs urban area and its potential role in creating a sense of place and arrival.

## Landscape Strategy

### Vision

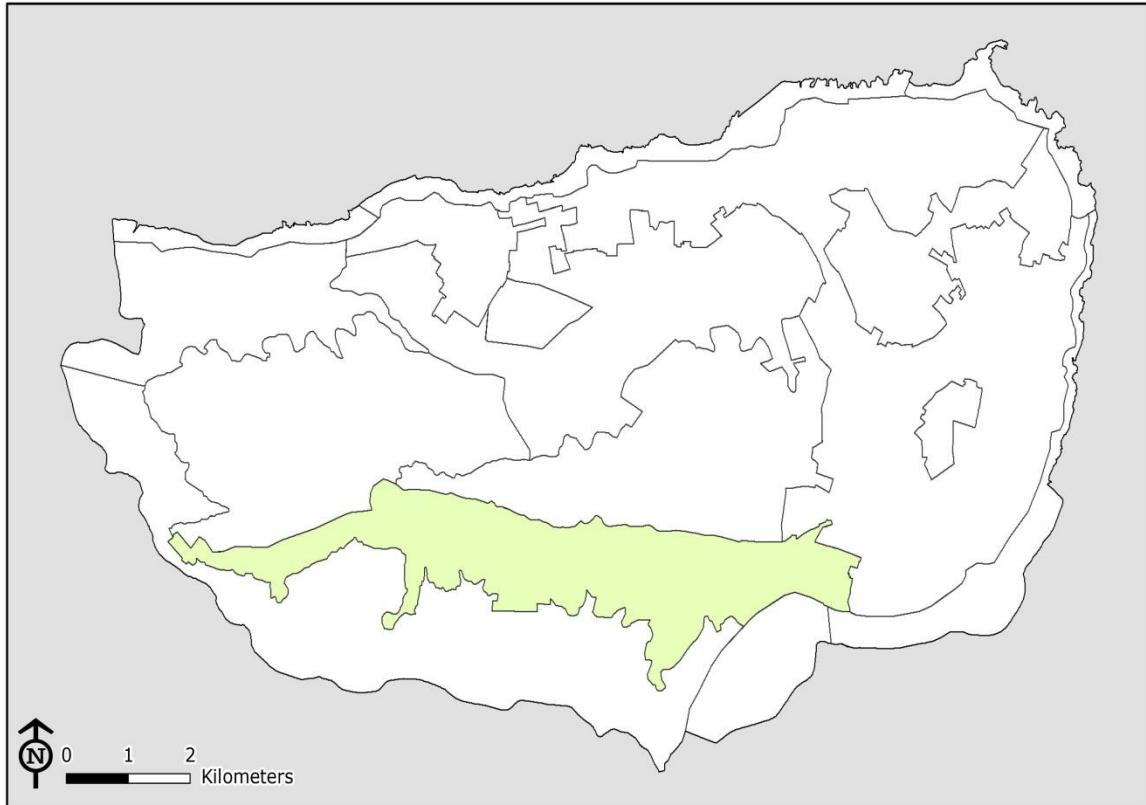
- 4.18 A coherent detailed landscape strategy is required for this area of change to provide a framework to tie together the diverse existing and new land uses. This is a pre requisite to guide major land use change such as the former airfield. The strategy should draw on the key sensitivities and qualities as identified through this assessment.
- 4.19 The Manston Chalk Plateau (A1) has a distinct sense of place as an island surrounded by sea. It should be a well-managed and actively farmed rural landscape with greater habitat diversity and enabling greater connectivity for recreation linking to adjacent urban areas. The reuse of the derelict airport should encourage permeability between areas of settlement and connections to existing routes including the Coastal Path. The area should continue to provide a natural skyline and backdrop in views from the marshes and coast.

### Guidelines

- Maintain the openness and panoramic views from key locations to the sea across a varied landscape.
- Conserve and restore field boundaries close to the urban edge and consider opportunities for buffer planting to adjoining urban edge and main A roads through the area to contribute to sense of place and arrival to Ramsgate and Broadstairs.
- Seek to manage arable land to enhance biodiversity notably for farmland birds through targeted interventions and management of arable margins.
- Conserve and restore the sense of tranquillity which persists in local areas and the dark skies, and minimise street lighting or design lighting to limit light spill and glare from the plateau which has the potential to be visible across a wide area of Thanet and beyond.
- Conserve and enhance the intact rural character away from the urban area and along rural lanes.
- Ensure new development and associated planting considers the flat landform and openness and conserves the open plateau skyline in views notably from the marshes and coast.



## Local Character Area B1: Wantsum North Shore



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.20 The Wantsum North slopes form a distinct area of sloping land on the north shore of the former Wantsum Channel. The slopes lie between the higher plateau (**LCA A1: Manston Chalk Plateau**) and the lower **LCA E1: Stour Marshes** to the north and south respectively. To the west it borders **LCA F1: Pegwell Bay** at the coast marked by the transition to chalk cliffs.

## Photos



The open fields with little structural vegetation allow long views across the marshes into adjacent districts, as well as sea views across Pegwell Bay to the east.

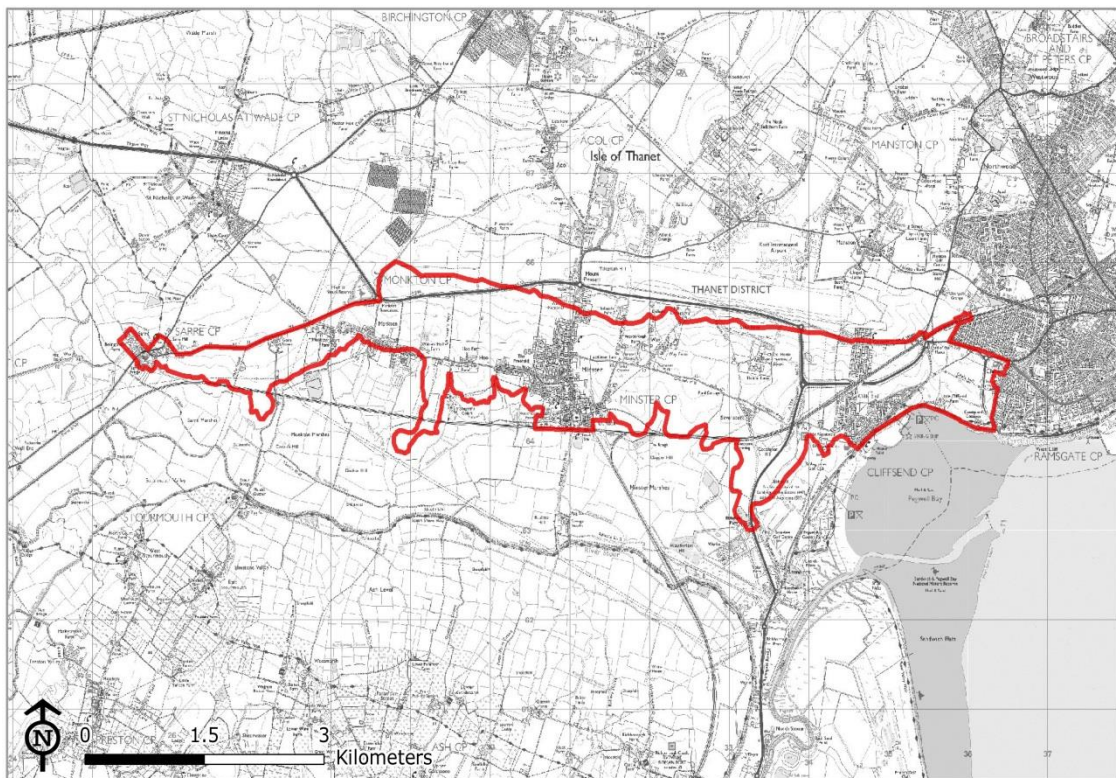


Flemish/Dutch gables, dating to the 17th and 18th century are a feature of buildings in this area, thought to be associated with protestant immigrants from Catholic Netherlands.



Former portside villages are set on the rising slopes at the edge of the channel. The slopes form a strong skyline in views from the marshes.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.21 This landscape is characterised by sloping topography, which forms fairly steep south facing slopes rising above and forming the North Shore of the Wantsum Channel. It comprises regular arable fields and the settlements of former 'port' villages.
- 4.22 A regular, rectilinear field pattern, with few defining boundary features between the fields creates a large scale, open landscape. Large field of asparagus on the eastern slopes create a distinctive seasonal landscape. Localised areas of trees occur around isolated farm buildings and roadside dwellings, and some hedgerows run along the straight roads that connect the villages.
- 4.23 The settlement pattern is of large villages of Minster, Monkton, Sarre that once operated as key gateway ports before the river silted over. Minster is arranged in a grid pattern, having expanded over the years in a linear character along the straight roads. The historic vernacular is flint, red brick, timber frame and clay tile roofs, with occasional Flemish/Dutch gables. Flint walls and evergreen trees are locally distinctive features. The settlement edges are irregular and have varying levels of containment by trees and woodland often appearing as wooded areas in views from the adjacent marshes. Settlements are connected by roads which run along contours above the floodplain, with some quiet rural lanes running up the slope connecting the channel to the plateau. To the east is the more modern 20<sup>th</sup> century settlement of Cliffsend.
- 4.24 Sarre located in the west at the narrowest point of the channel formerly provided a ferry crossing point followed by the island road (Roman Road) linking Margate and Canterbury, now the A28. Now landlocked Sarre, was formerly a Cinque Port. The road, referred to as Sarre Wall, is a former sea wall used in the reclamation of the marshland. Sarre was heavily defended in WW2, as a potential strategic entry point to England.
- 4.25 St Augustine's Cross, a stone memorial carved with religious images and events, is located near to Cliffsend, marking the landing of St Augustine from Rome in 597 AD.
- 4.26 Long views are obtained from the higher land across the marshes continuing into Dover District further south, whilst the slopes themselves provide a largely undeveloped backdrop in views from the marshes. Sea views of Pegwell Bay and the English Channel open out from the upper slopes and cliff tops around Cliffsend.



## Key Characteristics

- Sloping arable fields characterised by a transitional underlying geology formed of chalk and Thanet Sand formations.
- Former channel side 'port' villages of Minster, Monkton and Sarre evidencing the growth of settlement and commerce via the Wantsum – retaining strong historic character.
- Regular, rectilinear field pattern with few defining boundary features between fields creating a large scale and open landscape.
- Asparagus cultivation on the south facing sandy slopes creating a distinctive seasonal agricultural landscape.
- Localised areas of tree planting containing isolated farmsteads and roadside houses with intermittent hedgerows lining connecting roads and around settlements.
- Settlements with distinct local vernacular and historic cores arranged in a grid pattern with irregular settlement edges and modern additions comprising linear development rising up the landform, generally well contained by trees.
- St Augustine's Cross, a stone memorial with carvings of significant Christian figures and events near to the village of Cliffsend.
- Long views over the marshes into Dover and Canterbury Districts as well as sea views from the elevated ground and cliff tops over Pegwell Bay and the English Channel.
- Outside the villages there is relatively little development resulting in an undeveloped ridgeline and slopes interspersed with occasional woodland and tree belts. Some quiet rural lanes.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.27 The slopes are formerly the north shore of the Wantsum Channel – a historically important entry point to Britain. The villages on the slopes represent the former portside villages and their historic importance is reflected in the Conservation Area designations.
- 4.28 A Viking longship is located in the east of the character area close to Pegwell Bay and is a replica of the Hugin ship which sailed from Denmark to Thanet in 1949. This was gifted by the Danish government to commemorate the 1500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion of Britain and forms a coastal landmark in the local landscape.
- 4.29 St Augustine's Cross occupies a small area near to Cliffsend to commemorate the meeting between St Augustine and King Ethelbert of Kent, nearly 1500 years ago. It is said that Augustine had been sent by Pope Gregory to convert Anglo-Saxons to Christianity and what is now known as St Augustine's Well was where he carried out his first baptism of faith. The present day cross was erected in 1884, and is recognised through a Grade II listing.
- 4.30 A number of Scheduled Monuments highlight the national historic importance of the area. These include an Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Monastic Grange and an area of ring ditches. The historic interest of the village cores at Monkton and Minster are also recognised through Conservation Areas and several listed buildings including Minster Abbey and churches at Minster and Monkton which form prominent local landmarks. Buildings with distinctive Flemish/Dutch gables – are notable feature of villages associated with the Wantsum Channel, thought to be associated with 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Protestant immigrants from Catholic Netherlands.

## Natural influences

- 4.31 The landscape comprises predominantly ALC Grade 1 arable fields, with denuded boundaries and it generally lacks habitat diversity or ecologically rich areas. Small areas of deciduous woodland are located around the edges of villages and the churchyard associated with St Mary Magdalene at

Monkton is highlighted as a Local Wildlife Site for its importance assemblage of natural habitats and wildlife.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.32 This is a managed agricultural landscape, where villages have a strong historic character and are generally well integrated by tree cover, creating a relatively harmonious pattern of elements, although many field boundaries are denuded. The A299 and the A256 form visual and aural detractors on the boundaries of the area. The long distance views across the marshes and towards the sea contribute to the high scenic quality. It is still perceived as a North shore and has a strong sense of place.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- The long, uninterrupted views from the south facing slopes across the flat landscape of the adjacent marshes and over Pegwell Bay and the sea that contribute to the scenic quality.
- Intact historic character and setting of former channel side villages of Monkton, Sarre, Minster (Conservation Areas).
- The sparsely settled landscape (outside the villages) with trees situated around villages and farmsteads which provides a rural agricultural backdrop to the marshes.
- Strong cultural associations, including links to the historical landing sites of St Augustine in the adjacent Pegwell Bay (LCA F1) and Minster Abbey.
- Straight rural lanes running along the contours lined with some remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees allowing for sweeping views that contribute to the sense of place. Occasional quiet rural lanes connecting the channel to the plateau.
- Important historic sites including the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, monastic grange and ring ditches contribute to the sense of history.
- Role in providing a rural backdrop and largely undeveloped ridgeline and slopes to the adjacent marshes (LCA E1).



## Landscape Strategy

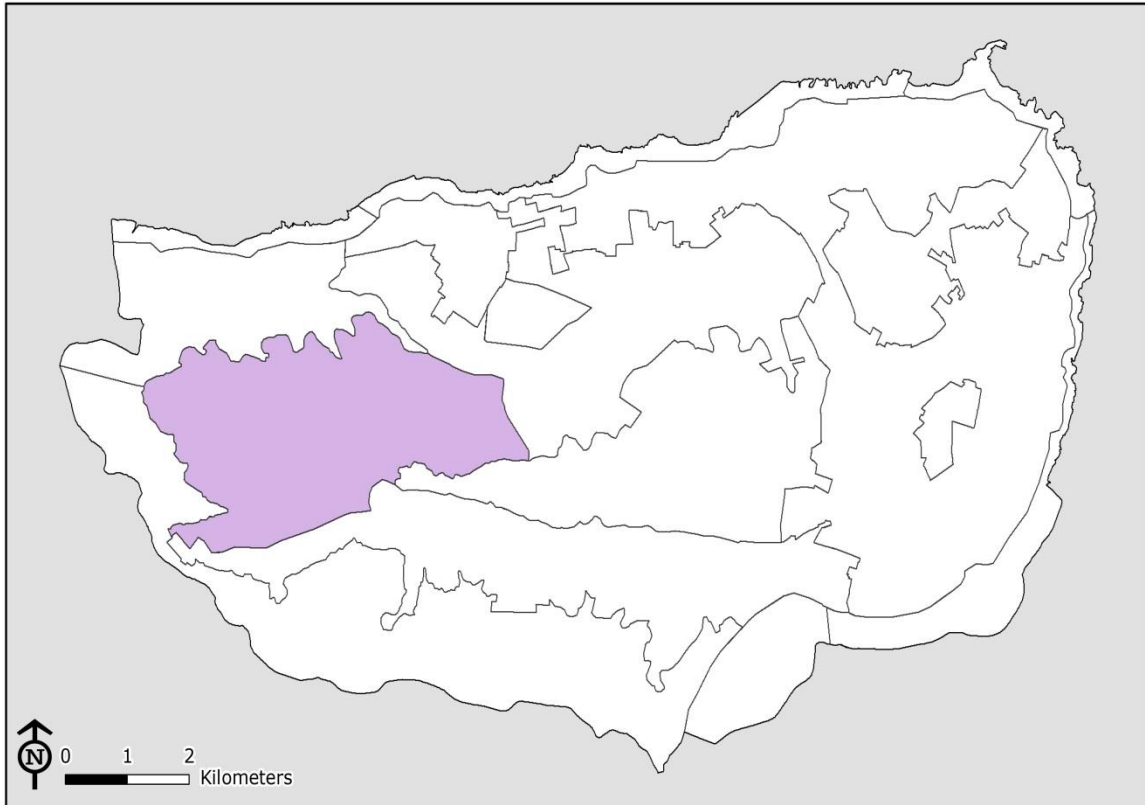
### Vision

- 4.33 The overall strategy for the Wantsum North Shore (B1) is that it should continue to be a rural area which is still perceived as the north shore and backdrop to the Wantsum with a clear largely uninterrupted skyline containing the lower lying marshes. Well integrated historic channel side villages are set within a distinctive rural landscape, celebrated for its historic and cultural features and associations.

### Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and assets including their landscape setting.
- Conserve the managed farmland character including opportunities to reinstate field patterns through hedgerow planting and enhance biodiversity.
- Enhance the public right of way network with better footpath connections between villages, areas of historic interest and with the wider landscape.
- Consider opportunities for integration of the major A roads that cut through on the boundaries of this landscape, including minimising night time light spill and boundary planting.
- Conserve the historic character of the former channel side villages and ensure they remain well integrated in their landscape setting by trees and woodland.
- Maintain the sense of separateness and identity of the distinct settlements resisting development that could result in physical/visual merger along connecting roads.
- Conserve the mostly open rural character and long uninterrupted views across the adjacent marshes and the role of this area as a rural backdrop and skyline to views from the marshes and beyond.

## Local Character Area C1: St Nicholas-at-Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.34 This character area is located to the west of Thanet and comprise the gently undulating farmland that rises above the lower lying marshes and slopes of the Wantsum Channel (E1) which surround it on three sides creating a 'island-like quality'. It includes the village of St Nicholas-at-Wade and the Thanet Earth greenhouse complex.
- 4.35 The boundaries to the north and west are defined by the 5m contour with the flat marshes of **LCA E1: Stour Marshes** and **LCA E2: Wade Marshes**. Minor roads and rural lanes mark the eastern extent and transition to **LCA C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland**. The southern boundary is broadly marked by the A253 along the ridge at the top of the slopes (**LCA B1: Wantsum North Slopes**).

## Photos



Busy roads and rural lanes with narrow grass verges and absence of roadside hedgerows dissect the undulating and open farmland.



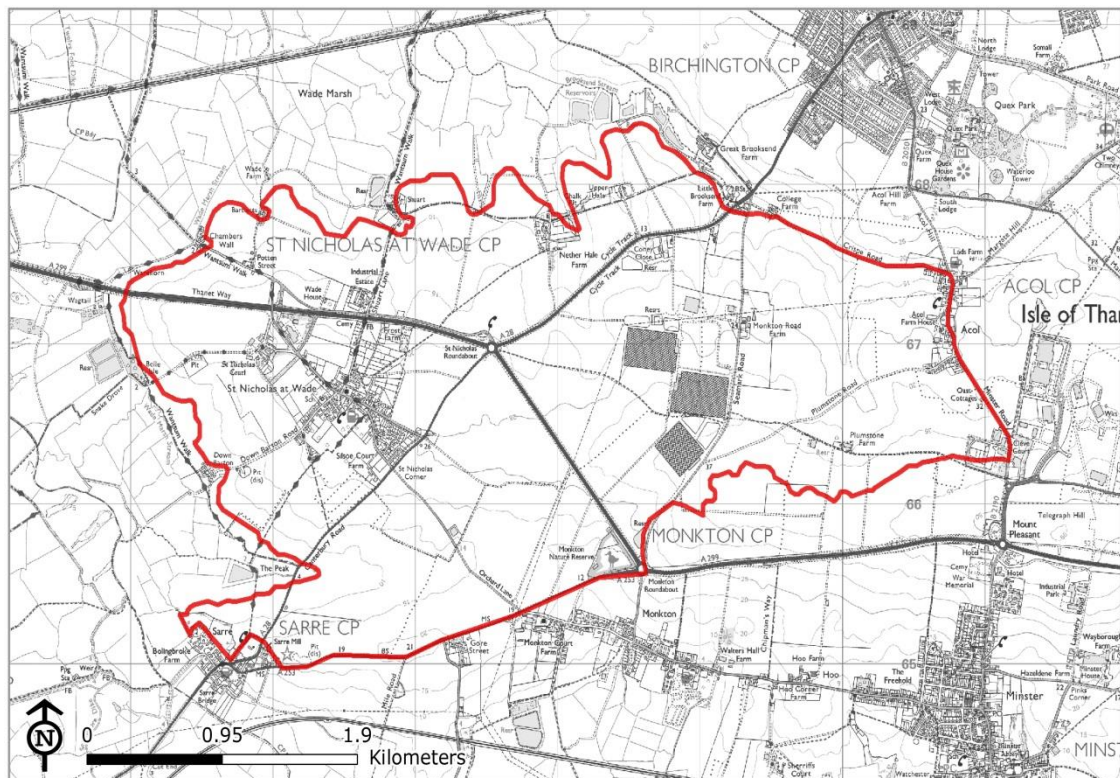
The trees around the village of St Nicholas-at-Wade form a distinct wooded horizon in view across the open landscape. The church tower is a landmark.



The long low bulk of Thanet Earth dominates the skyline in this open landscape. Here, seen rising above the chalk and wooded slopes of Monkton Nature Reserve.



## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.36 An open arable landscape of large regular fields on the chalk formation. It has a gently undulating topography that slopes towards the adjacent marshes. Undulations are particularly noticeable around Acol in the north east.
- 4.37 Agricultural fields are large scale with minimal defining features resulting in an open expanse of farmland, long views and big skies. Tree and woodland cover is limited, contributing to the sense of openness, with small areas of structural planting and tree belts around the villages at Acol and St Nicholas-at-Wade – the latter appearing as a wooded ridge in views from the marshes.
- 4.38 Monkton Nature Reserve occupies a former quarry and contains distinctive chalk exposures a (Regionally Important Geological Site), supports populations of butterflies and orchid, with regenerated woodland forming an unusual and highly distinctive feature in the open farmed landscape context. This rural enclosed quarry provides an important local site for astronomy, away from the main conurbations and light glow.
- 4.39 St Nicholas-at-Wade is a small nucleated village centred on the church, with the separate St Nicholas Farm complex lying north west of the village including an older Grade II\* listed building of St Nicholas Court with parkland style planting. Acol, by contrast is a small linear settlement. The historic built vernacular consists of flint and ragstone with more recent additions being built out of red brick and clay tiles. Flint is also evident in walling around the church and property boundaries. At St Nicholas-at-Wade, trees within the village and churchyard create the appearance of a wooded horizon in views from the marshes. Paddocks and small scale divided field characterise the edges of the village to the north and west.
- 4.40 The roads of the A299 and A28 (Roman Road) cross and divide the farmland as main routes into and out of Thanet, with moving traffic visible and audible within the open landscape contrasting with occasional quieter rural lanes.
- 4.41 The elevated topography and absence of enclosure allows long distance panoramic views across the agricultural landscape and sea views to the Thames Estuary and Channel. The landform does provide some containment where it slopes down in the north although the general area has a

strong sense of openness. The church tower at St Nicholas-at-Wade is a local landmark in a wooded village whilst the large massing of greenhouses at Thanet Earth dominates the skyline.

## Key Characteristics

- Agricultural fields on undulating landform characterised by chalk geology.
- Large scale arable fields with mostly denuded open field boundaries, with tree planting limited to a small number of copses and tree belts.
- The vast horizontal expanse of the greenhouses at Thanet Earth is a dominant feature on the skyline.
- Monkton Nature Reserve (LNR/RIGS) comprising a former quarry now regenerated, including distinct white chalk exposures and rich biodiversity, and use for astronomy.
- Larger ridge top village at St Nicholas-at-Wade, and smaller linear village at Acol both with historic cores (Conservation Areas), smaller surrounding fields and tree planting contrast with open arable farmland.
- Distinct built vernacular comprising flint and ragstone, red brick and clay roof tiles as well as some brick and render contributing to rural character. Flemish/Dutch gables and Oast houses are locally distinctive built form.
- Long distance panoramic views across the agricultural landscape and to the Thames Estuary and the Channel.
- The church tower within St Nicholas-at-Wade and woodland at St Nicholas Court form a distinct landmark appearing as a wooded ridge within views from the lower lying marshes.
- Main roads cross and divide the farmland - key routes into and out of Thanet, with moving traffic visible and audible within the open landscape, contrasting with quieter rural lanes.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.42 The A28 is part of a Roman Road. St Nicholas Court at St Nicholas-at-Wade contains a medieval underground chapel although its origins are not well known. It is located on private land with a parkland style landscape and is occasionally opened to the public for local events. The historic interest of the building is reflected in the Grade II\* listing. The historic interest of St Nicholas-at-Wade and Acol is recognised through their designation as Conservation Areas. St Nicholas-at-Wade contains a number of examples of buildings with Flemish/Dutch gables – a notable feature of villages associated with the Wantsum Channel. Oast houses are also a feature of the rural landscape although hops are no longer present.
- 4.43 Thanet Earth, built in 2008, is the largest greenhouse complex in the UK.

## Natural influences

- 4.44 Intensive arable land use and absence of trees and woodland limits habitat diversity, although the agricultural land is of value for farmland birds as well as coastal birds using the farmland for roosting.
- 4.45 Monkton Nature Reserve is a 16-acre disused chalk quarry with biodiverse assemblages supporting a range of protected species. The reserve contains two ponds, deciduous woodland and chalk cliffs as well as the UK's first artificial bat cave. The area forms part of the small network of natural habitat in Thanet and is designated as a Local Nature Reserve with Roadside Nature Reserves around the perimeter. It is used as a local site for astronomy with relatively dark night skies away from the coastal urban areas.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.46 The expansive arable fields and denuded field boundaries, absence of tree and woodland create a very open landscape with the large masses of greenhouses at Thanet Earth appearing incongruous. These large open fields contrast with the subdivided paddocks and horse grazing which create a more fragmented setting around villages. The area is dissected by main roads, A299, A28 and A253 which are highly visible and audible in the open landscape. Nevertheless, this is still an essentially rural landscape with small, rural villages integrated into the landscape. It has a distinct island quality, rising above and forming a landmark from the lower lying marshes.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- High quality agricultural land, of value for farmland birds and used for roosting by coastal birds.
- The openness and undeveloped character of the farmland that contributes to the essentially rural character and relatively dark skies.
- The role of this higher 'plateau' area in views from the surrounding marshes – appearing as an 'island' of higher ground.
- The intact historic rural villages and village cores at St Nicholas-at-Wade and Acol (including locally distinctive buildings) which are designated as Conservation Areas and provide a sense of history.
- Monkton Nature Reserve that provides a focal point in the landscape supporting a range of chalk habitats and species including one of the few woodland areas in Thanet, as well as opportunities for astronomy within relatively dark skies.
- Long distance panoramic views, big skies and uninterrupted sea views from elevated locations.
- Church of St Nicholas-at-Wade and St Nicholas-at-Wade Court provide distinctive landmarks in long views from the surrounding landscape and cultural link to the past.
- Occasional quiet rural lanes.



## Landscape Strategy

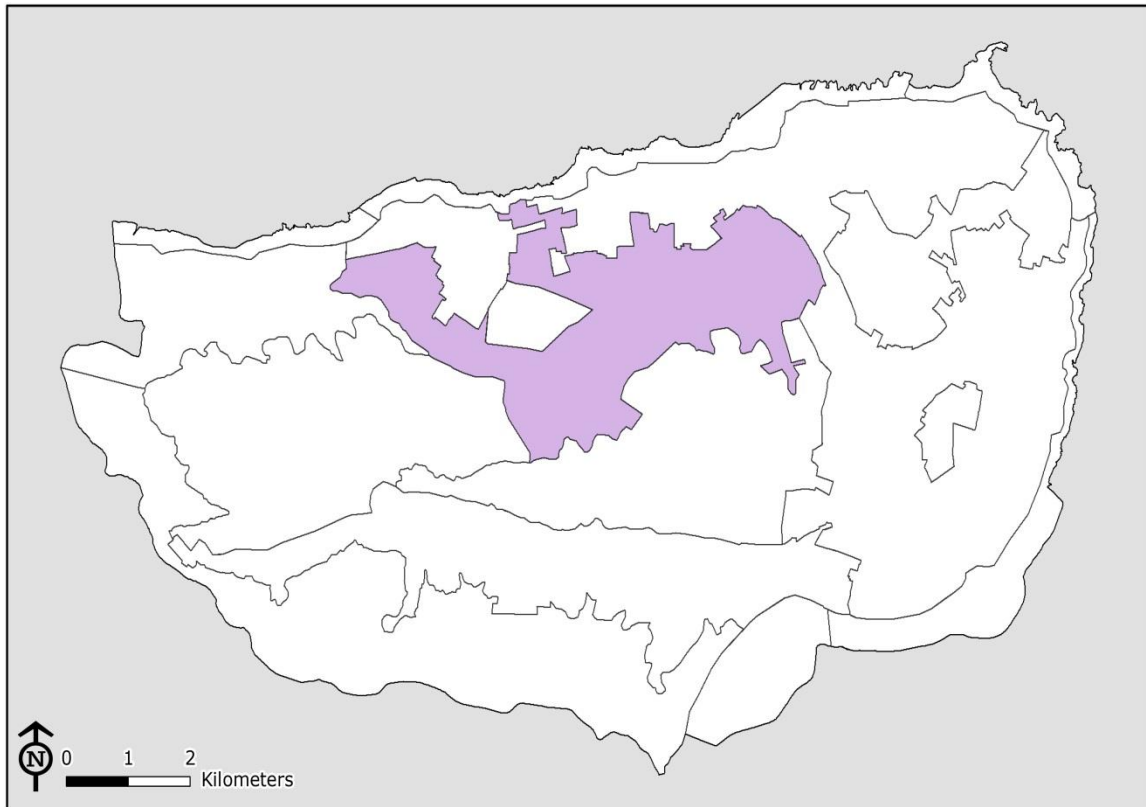
### Vision

- 4.47 The St Nicholas-at-Wade farmland (C1) should continue to be a managed agricultural landscape with an essentially rural character providing the backdrop to the lower lying marshes and retaining its 'island' quality with two historic villages. There are opportunities to enhance diversity and interest of the arable farmland through active creation of new habitats, including targeted hedgerow planting and management of verges, and to provide better integration of villages where farmland is fragmented. There is a key opportunity to enhance gateways to and presentation of the District in relation to the strategic road network into Thanet.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the open arable farmland with targeted interventions to enhance and habitat diversity including value for farmland birds, by hedgerow planting and management of arable margins.
- Consider opportunities for a strategic programme of hedgerow and woodland creation, for example in relation to main roads and greenhouses to help tie these interrupting features into the landscape – while retaining its essentially open character 'big skies' and long views. This applies around villages where paddocks have created a more cluttered, fragmented landscape.
- Conserve and enhance the rural character of the small villages and their integration into the landscape avoiding unsympathetic expansions which create a more urban interface, particularly on the edge of St Nicholas which is prominent above the marshes.
- Avoid new large scale/vertical/reflective development, where possible, which would affect the long open views within this area and be prominent in views from the adjacent marshes. Where such development is proposed consider opportunities for suitable mitigation measures including tree planting and hedgerow boundary thickening/reinstatement to provide screening.
- Consider opportunities for enhancement and improving presentation along the key transport gateways to Thanet (A2899, A28, and A253) including tree planting and minimising night time light spill.
- Consider opportunities to enhance green infrastructure connections with footpaths linking the farmland to the adjacent coast and marsh landscapes.

## Local Character Area C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.48 This area of undulating farmland is located at the centre of Thanet and extends southwards from the urban extent of Birchington and Westgate on Sea. This urban boundary defines much of the northern and eastern boundary of the character area although narrow strips of land penetrate into the settlements. To the south the land rolls down from the higher **LCA A1: Manston Chalk Plateau** which is defined by the 40m contour. The western edge is made up of minor roads and rural lanes around Acol forming a transition with **LCA C1: St Nicholas-at-Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland**.

## Photos



Mature tree planting around Quex Park (area D1) is a distinctive feature in this open landscape.

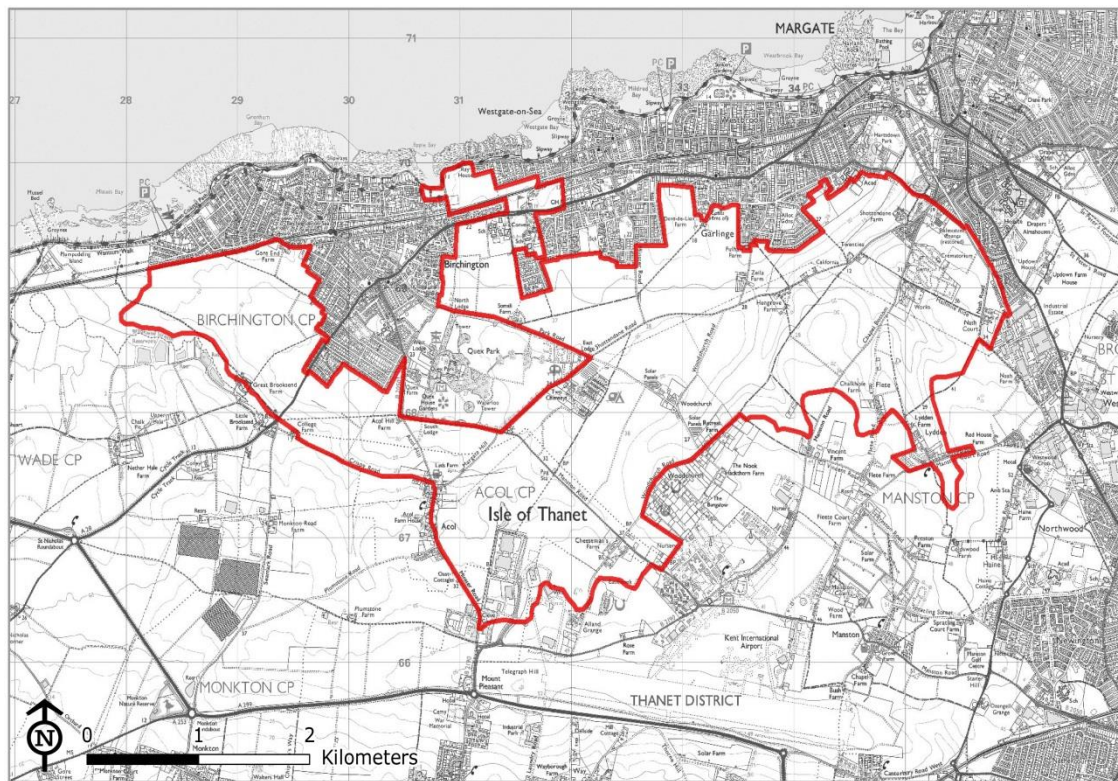


The stark built edge marks an abrupt transition from the farmland. The open landscape and long views mean that urban influences are experienced across much of the area.



Large industrial units dominate the skyline along Columbus Avenue extending from the plateau.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.49 The landscape is characterised by a gently undulating landform ranging from 5m to 40m AOD on the underlying chalk. The land generally slopes away from the chalk plateau in the south towards the coast.
- 4.50 The land cover is predominantly arable farmland and is classified as Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land. Fields are regular in shape but lack any defining features creating a large scale landscape with a strong sense of openness. Tree and woodland cover is concentrated in and around St John's Cemetery in the east and around the boundary of Quex Park in the west.
- 4.51 The area is predominantly agricultural with farm buildings located along the rural lanes. There are strong urban influences on the edges with an abrupt transition to the adjacent urban area, with stark exposed settlement edges punctuated by occasional views to the sea. A small triangular area of residential development extends between the road near Salmestone Grange, and a large scale corrugated steel warehouse is located in the south near to the old Kent International Airport. Westgate and Birchington Golf Club also occupies the area between the Margate and Birchington in the north.
- 4.52 The restored Salmestone Grange, a Scheduled Monument, is located close to the settlement in the east and consists of a 14<sup>th</sup> century monastic grange and associated chapel. It is formed of ragstone with clay roof tiles and is set within landscaped gardens. A series of ring ditches are also located within arable fields. The Dent-de-Lion medieval gatehouse on the urban edge is a significant landmark feature when seen from the open farmland of this area.
- 4.53 Views are generally contained by the adjoining urban edge to the north and east, and the plateau to the south. Urban edges are stark, although views are punctuated by church towers and spires which form landmark features. Glimpses of the sea can be seen on the skyline over the top of built development from the higher ground or through occasional gaps in development. Long distance views over the marshes and across the North Sea to off-shore wind farms can be obtained from the A28 in the north east.



## Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating, agricultural landscape underlain by the Chalk formation.
- Large, intensively farmed fields of arable and horticultural crops regular in shape and with few defining boundary features resulting in a large scale pattern and very open landscape.
- Limited structural planting in the landscape with concentrations of woodland at St John's Cemetery and around the perimeter of Quex Park forming key features in views across the open landscape.
- Isolated farm buildings along minor roads and rural lanes with some urban fringe influences development near to the built edge including paddocks, and occasional large scale industrial units.
- Stark exposed residential urban edges abut the farmland forming very visible urban boundaries, with fingers of farmland often penetrating the urban area and providing glimpses to the sea beyond. Church spires and towers within the urban areas are landmark features.
- Salmestone Grange, a 14<sup>th</sup> century monastic grange (Scheduled Monument) and chapel formed of distinctive ragstone and situated in gardens
- Largely open landscape with glimpsed sea views across the Margate skyline from the higher ground. Long distance views across the marshes and across to off-shore windfarms in the North Sea from the A28.
- Subdivided by a network of minor roads and lanes used as short cut routes and often busy with traffic, adding a further urban influence.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.54 Remains of Romano-British settlement are located adjacent to Quex Park and typically comprise enclosed farmsteads including wells, storage pits, corn-drying ovens and granary stores. These survive in the form of buried features mostly visible as crop and soil marks. Ring ditches are also located along Park Road and are visible as soil and crop marks. The historic importance of these sites is recognised through Scheduled Monument designations.
- 4.55 Salmestone Grange is a 14<sup>th</sup> century monastic grange (Scheduled Monument) that once functioned as place of respite for the abbot and monks from St Augustine's Abbey within Canterbury. It now serves as an events venue and function space. There are view to the Dent-de-Lion a medieval gatehouse.

## Natural influences

- 4.56 The landscape comprises almost entirely of ALC Grade 1 and 2 and is intensively farmed with limited opportunity for biodiversity, although with potential for farmland birds and inland roosting for coastal species. There are some small areas of deciduous woodland within and adjacent to St John's Cemetery in the east. There is also a Roadside Nature Reserve along Flete Road located a short distance from the cemetery.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.57 The open arable/horticultural fields, denuded boundaries, plus general absence of tree and woodland create a fragmented open landscape with views to the stark urban edges of Birchington, Westgate and Margate which bound this area to the north. It is an agricultural landscape with a visible urban influence.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- High quality agricultural land, with potential value for farmland and coastal birds.
- The small concentration of deciduous woodland associated with the cemetery and Quex Park, which contributes to the visual amenity of the landscape.
- Salmestone Grange which creates a sense of time depth.
- Glimpsed views across Margate/Westgate/Birchington skyline to the sea which contributes to the scenic quality. Urban skyline punctuated by church spires and towers including Dent-de-Lion.
- Fingers of actively managed agricultural land which permeate the urban edge and create sense of sharp change and contrast.
- Function as a rural setting and separation of urban areas for example between Birchington and Westgate on Sea helping to maintain the individual distinction and identity of the settlements.

## Landscape Strategy

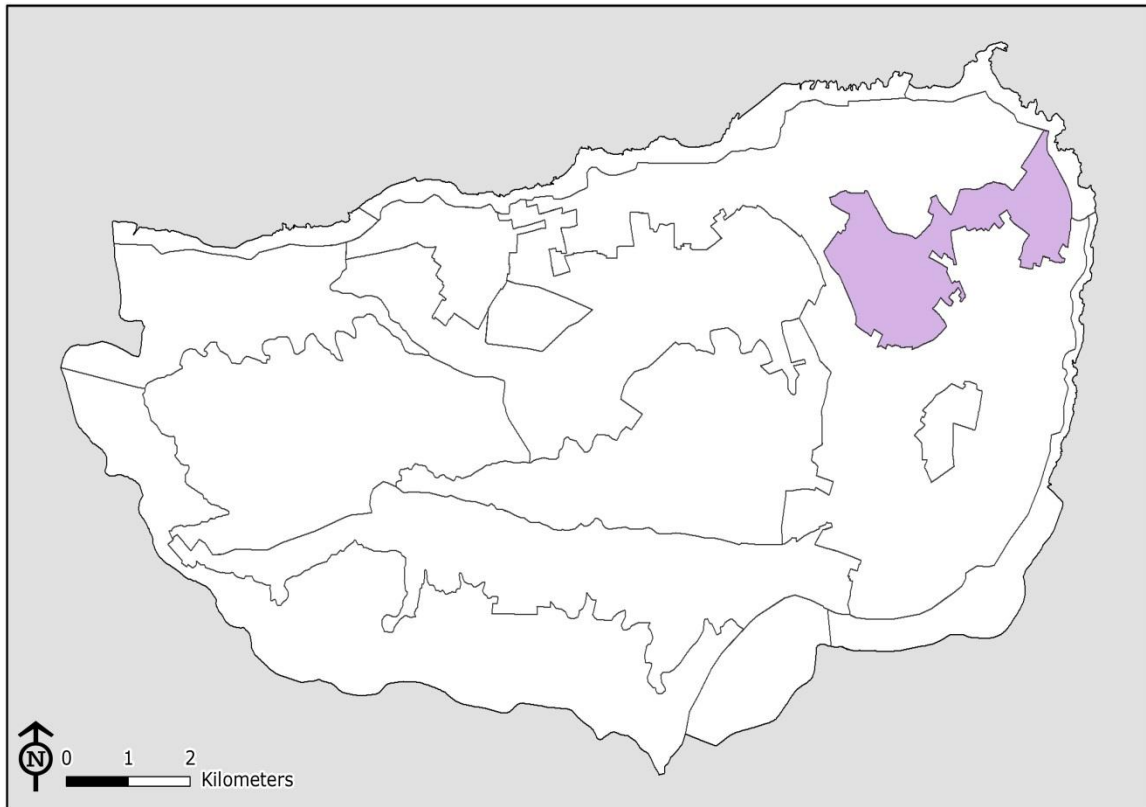
### Vision

- 4.58 The Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland (C2) should continue to be an actively managed agricultural landscape, with enhanced diversity. There are opportunities to enhance its role and function as a backdrop to the urban areas and opportunities to soften the stark urban-rural interface through tree and hedge planting to enhance visual amenity.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the open arable farmland with targeted interventions to enhance and habitat diversity including for farmland birds, through hedgerow planting and management of arable margins.
- Consider opportunities for a strategic programme of hedgerow and woodland creation, to soften the urban edges and in relation to any proposed new developments.
- Seek to reinstate hedgerow boundaries along the rural lanes that cross the landscape.
- Conserve long views to the coast and seascape and landmark features within the urban areas.
- Consider opportunities to enhance green infrastructure connections with footpaths linking the farmland to the urban and coastal landscapes to the north.
- Minimise further isolated urban/industrial developments within the rural area – which dilute the urban-rural contrast.
- Maintain the function of the landscape as a rural separation (green wedge) between the settlements of Birchington and Westgate-on-Sea – and seek to enhance landscape quality and condition of this area to help reinforce sense of place and distinction of individual settlements on this almost continuously developed coastal edge.
- Maintain the transition and connection between urban and agricultural land - a distinctive feature of Thanet.

## Local Character Area C3: St Peters Undulating Chalk Farmland



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.59 This area is located to the north east of Thanet, forming a rural landscape separating Broadstairs to the south and Cliftonville, Margate to the north. The boundaries are defined by the urban with the industrial estate at Westwood marking the western extent. To the east the area joins the coastal edge at Kingsgate within **LCA F2: Foreness Point and North Foreland**.



## Photos



The rural, farmed landscape forms a green wedge separating the urban areas of Margate and Broadstairs.

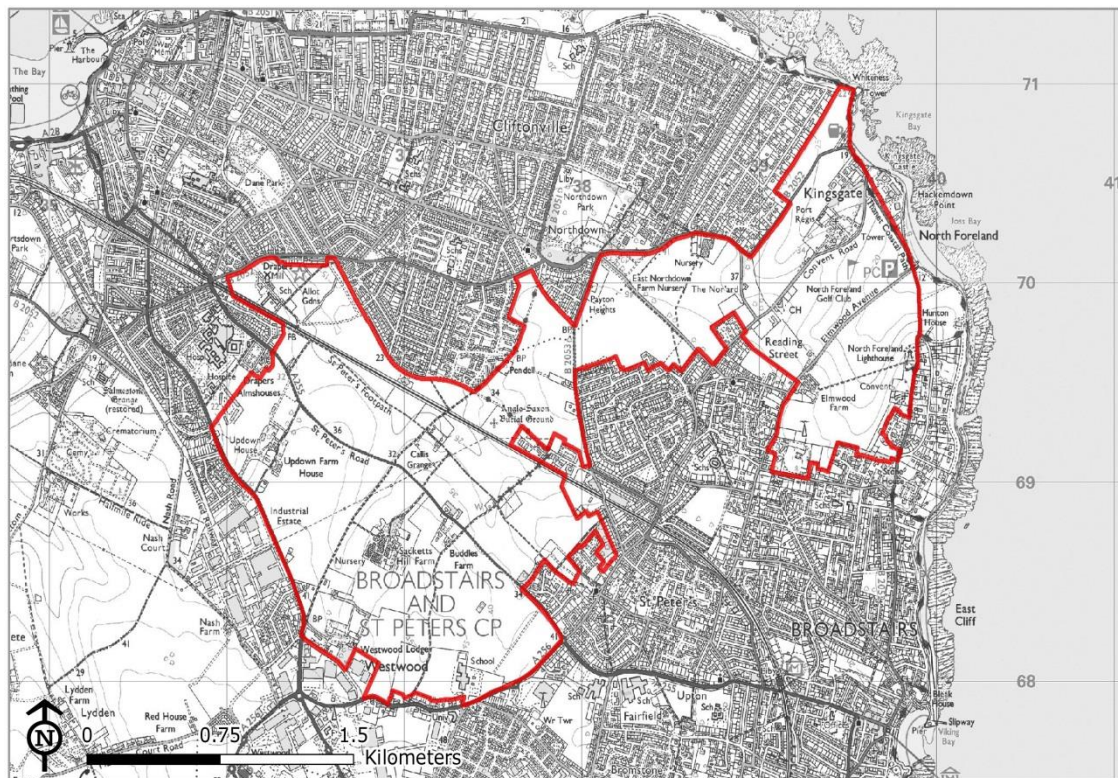


Large fields of brassicas contrast with the adjacent urban area. Busy road corridors dissect the rural landscape.



A distinctive landscape/seascape at the Kingsgate coastal gap.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.60 Gently undulating farmland on the chalk, on a landform sloping to towards the coast from about 45m AOD near to Westwood in the west to 20m AOD at the coastal edge.
- 4.61 The landscape is predominantly large scale, arable (brassica) fields regular in form and dissected by a number of busy roads and a railway. Several farms and small glasshouse/nursery complexes are scattered throughout. The North Foreland Golf Club occupies the coastal area around Kingsgate. Hedgerows to the roads are generally intact although internal field boundaries are largely denuded, with occasional hedgerow trees remaining, creating an open fieldscape. The openness allows views to the surrounding urban edge, primarily composed of residential development, mainly back gardens, with some schools.
- 4.62 The coastal edge is particularly distinctive at the transition to North Foreland, with narrow rural lanes contained by wind stunted hedges of holm oak creating green tunnels descending to the chalk cliffs and sandy bays at Kingsgate and Joss Bay. North Foreland Lighthouse is situated in the east near to Broadstairs and dates back to 1691. It has a key role in guiding passing ships into and out of the Dover Strait and was the last Trinity Lighthouse to be automated in November 1998. Kingsgate Castle, originally built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is also located on the coastal edge.
- 4.63 Views are generally limited by the extent of the urban edge and boundary vegetation, although include views across the urban area to St. Peter's Church at Broadstairs and tower blocks at Margate on the skyline. Open sea views can be obtained from the North Foreland Golf Club where the lighthouse and Kingsgate Castle are distinctive landmarks.

## Key Characteristics

- Undulating landform characterised by an underlying geology of chalk and an outcrop of sands, dropping in elevation to the east.
- Large scale, arable (brassica) fields, regular in form and dissected by a number of transport routes.
- Intact roadside hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees contrast with the open internal boundaries creating a generally open landscape.
- Well-treed farmsteads and nurseries/glass house complexes interspersed along the roads and throughout the landscape.
- Strong urbanising influences in the form of school buildings and fencing edge, views to the abrupt residential edge and roads.
- Open fieldscape allowing for views across the landscape but generally limited by the surrounding built edge. Sea views in the east at North Foreland.
- Distinctive landscape/seascape at Kingsgate/North Foreland, with rural lanes, flint walls, holm oak and sea views.
- Cultural associations including scheduled monuments and landmarks at North Foreland Lighthouse and Kingsgate Castle.
- An Anglo-Saxon cemetery and double ring ditch with enclosures provide cultural links to the past.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.64 The area contains the site of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery along Dane Valley Road. During its discovery in the 1970s, an abundance of imported Frankish ceramic was uncovered as well as grass-tempered pots. The structure of the graves was linked to the ritual preparation for burial ceremonies. The site today is buried beneath arable fields and woodland but the historic importance is recognised through its designation as a Scheduled Monument.
- 4.65 A double ring ditch and two enclosures are also located in the area discernible by vague ground markings and are designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- 4.66 The post 1810 settlement at Kingsgate was originally developed by Lord Holland, Henry Fox who built Holland House fronting on to Kingsgate Bay circa 1760 for his own residence. Other buildings include Hackemdown Tower, Captain Digby Public House and the remains of Neptune's Temple, all of which are Grade II listed. The area of Kingsgate is designated as a Conservation Area which recognises the architectural quality and historic interest.

## Natural influences

- 4.67 Deciduous woodland is scattered throughout the area, containing farmsteads and other dwellings, and there are mature trees within a number of the boundary hedges. The farmland is potentially of value for farmland and coastal birds. The Golf Course Roughs at North Foreland Golf Course includes cliff top chalk grassland and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.68 This is a semi-intact landscape, the roadside hedgerows with their mature trees create a rural character and pattern and the fields remain well managed for agriculture. The area is fragmented by numerous roads, with views to the urban edge. Landscape quality is higher in the coastal gap to the east which retains a distinctive features and strong seascape character. The area as a whole plays a key function in providing separation between Margate and Broadstairs, reinforcing the individual identity and distinction of these settlements.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- High quality agricultural land, with value for farmland and coastal birds.
- The mature hedgerow trees (ash and oak) which persist on former hedgerow lines and along roadside boundaries which create a mature landscape framework for the open arable fields.
- The rural landscape separation between the urban areas of Broadstairs and Margate, which helps to retain the individual distinction and identity of the two settlements.
- Distinctive character of the coastal gap at North Foreland and sea views that contribute to the sense of place and visual amenity.
- Managed farmland landscape which retains a rural character despite proximity of the urban edges.



## Landscape Strategy

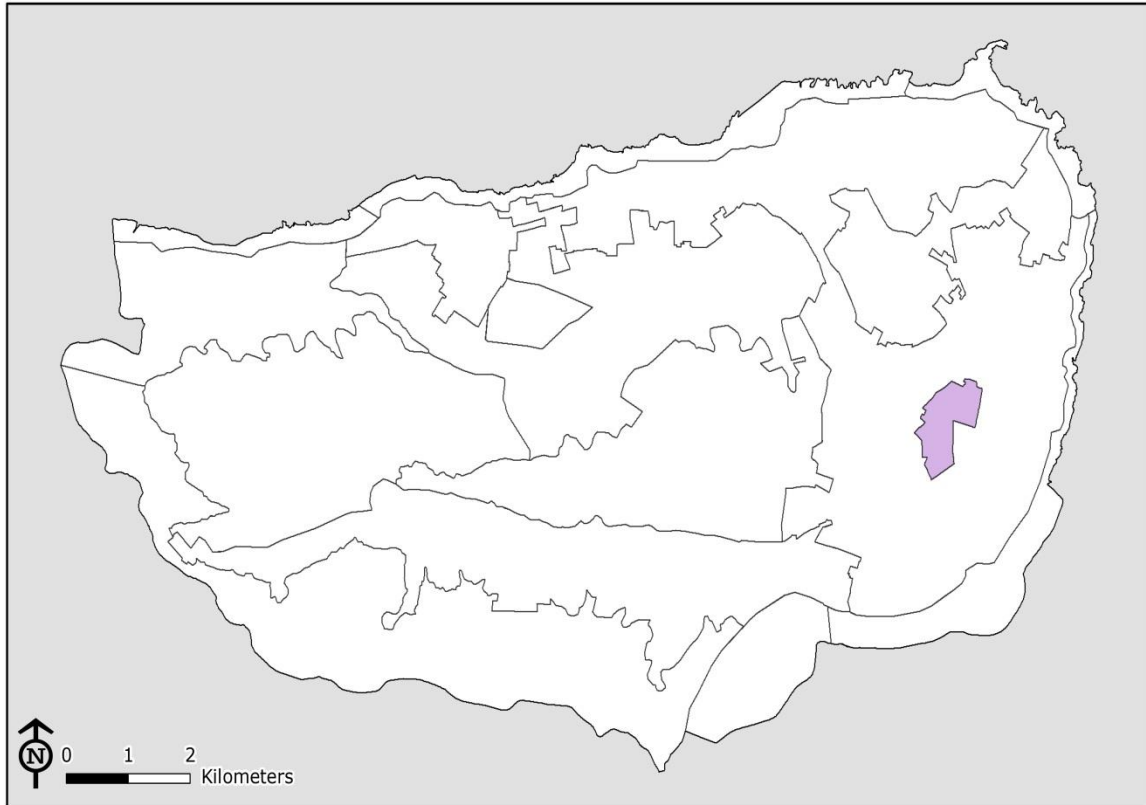
### Vision

- 4.69 The St. Peters Undulating Chalk Farmland (C3) should continue to be managed as a farmland landscape with an essentially rural character providing a visual and rural separation between Broadstairs and Margate. There are opportunities to enhance diversity and interest of the arable farmland through active creation of new habitats, including targeted hedgerow planting and management of verges. Retention and planting of hedgerow trees to create a stronger landscape structure and provide screening is a key opportunity.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the open arable farmland with targeted interventions to enhance and habitat diversity including hedgerow planting and management of arable margins.
- Consider opportunities for a strategic programme of hedgerow and woodland creation including retention/planting of mature trees, for example in relation to main roads (A255, A254) and urban edge boundaries (school and industrial estates).
- Maintain and enhance access and right of way connectivity with the adjacent urban areas and coast and role of this area as a 'green lung'.
- Conserve the area as an open rural gap between Margate and Broadstairs reinforcing the individual identity and distinction of the settlements.
- Conserve the distinctive landscape/seascape at Kingsgate with its rural character, flint walls, holm oaks, cliff top chalk grassland and sea views.

## Local Character Area C4: Newlands Farm



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.70 The Newlands Farm character area is an encapsulated area of farmland within the greater urban area of Broadstairs. The area comprises an isolated semi-rural landscape with strongly defined urban boundaries. The built edge and main roads run along the perimeter with a small stretch of railway forming the southern boundary. The Pysons Road Industrial Estate forms much of the northern boundary whilst back gardens of adjacent residential properties wrap around the area to the east and west.

## Photos



Limited structural vegetation in the landscape allows for long open views across to adjoining urban areas.



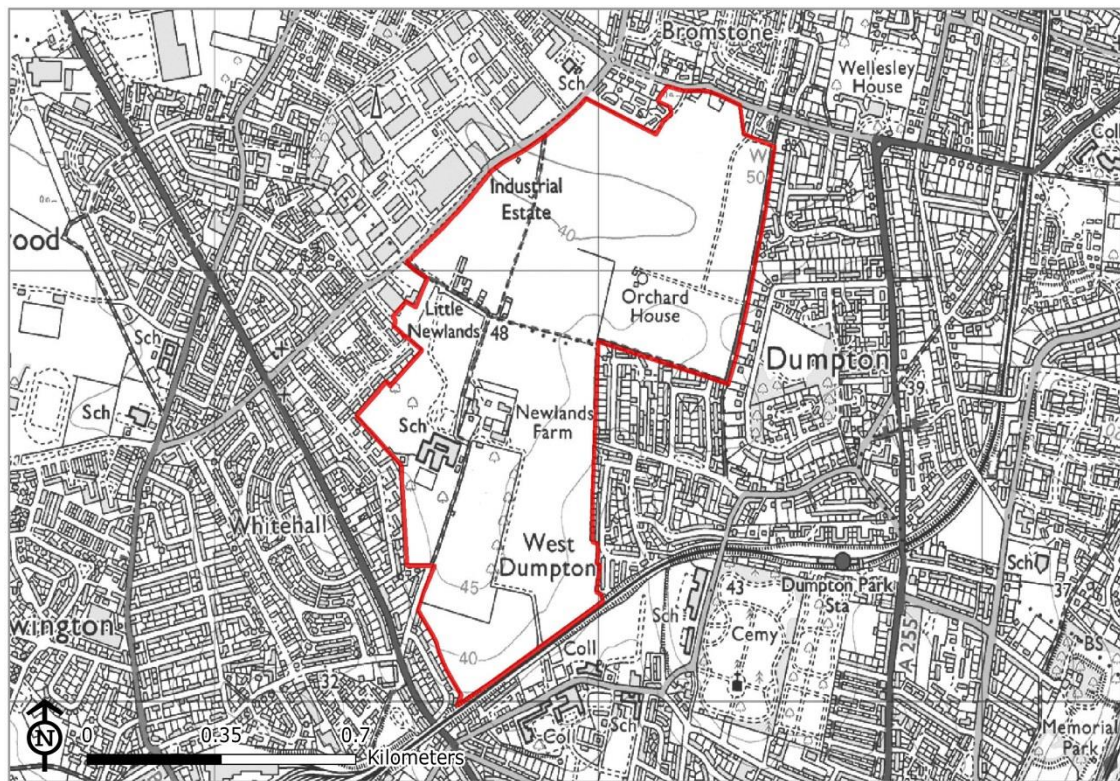
Large cropped fields dominate the landscape with few defining features between fields creating a mosaic of crop types.



Embankment around a recent extension to the school as well as shelter belts around the associated playing fields contrast with the flat and open expanse of farmland.



## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.71 This is an encapsulated farmland landscape of arable fields with The Royal Harbour Academy School and associated sports fields occupying the southern part of the character area. Fields are typically large scale with minimal defining features between different crop types. The absence of boundaries and limited structural vegetation creates a sense of openness
- 4.72 Newlands Farm is situated at the centre of the area adjacent to the school grounds, both of which are accessed off Newlands Lane from the north. Tree planting is concentrated in and around the farm buildings and continues along the perimeter of the school playing fields to the south.
- 4.73 The area is largely influenced by the proximity of the adjacent development. The buildings within the industrial estate comprise large scale warehousing and are a prominent feature due to their uncharacteristic scale and the openness of the northern boundary. Other boundaries are softer and comprise, often well vegetated, back gardens of properties.
- 4.74 Views can be obtained across the character area but are generally contained by surrounding development and tree planting. A few tall buildings such as St Lawrence College and Ramsgate Cemetery punctuate the skyline in the south whilst a water tower situated a short distance beyond the industrial estate forms a vertical element on the skyline.



## Key Characteristics

- Small area of arable farmland and educational playing fields encapsulated within the greater urban area of Broadstairs.
- Predominantly medium to large scale arable farmland over Grade 1 and 2 soils with few defining boundary features creating a patchwork of different crop types.
- Structural vegetation is largely limited with tree planting concentrated around Newlands Farm and the perimeter of the school playing fields.
- The Royal Harbour Academy and its recent expansion are delineated by bunding and security fencing.
- Strong urban influences from the adjoining settlement edge and in particular the industrial estate in the north.
- Views in and out are restricted by the surrounding development but the water tower along Rumfields Road and the church spire at Ramsgate Cemetery form landmark features in the north and south respectively.
- A number of public footpaths leading from the built edge dissect the landscape from north to south and east to west.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.75 The character area generally lacks historic designations.
- 4.76 Newlands Farm and associated farmland has occupied the area since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has remained open fields to the present day although an orchard once occupied the north eastern portion of the area. Development began to appear nearby in the turn of the following century and by the 1960s had totally enclosed the area. This included Ramsgate Municipal Airport which was opened in the 1930s and later closed and developed for industry 60 years later.

## Natural influences

- 4.77 The landscape is predominantly arable farmland and amenity grassland; it provides an important rural break in the townscape it lacks important habitats or ecological designations.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.78 This is an area of large open arable fields with few defining boundary features and relatively limited visual diversity. The school grounds with a recent expansion and stark boundaries introduce more development within the farmed landscape. This development is a visual detractor and combined with the industrial estate fronting the northern boundary results in a landscape with strong urban influences, albeit continues to provide a rural gap within the urban area and is a functioning agricultural landscape.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- High quality agricultural fields supporting a variety of crop types set within a wider context of urban development creates a relatively strong sense of place.
- Public footpaths connecting the adjoining urban areas and providing open space and a small breathing space inset within the settlement.
- Largely wooded skyline interspersed with housing rising up the landform at Dumpton, Bromstone edges.
- Newlands Farm and the associated arable fields have cultural associations linking to the past.
- Role in providing rural gap and separation within the urban area.

## Landscape Strategy

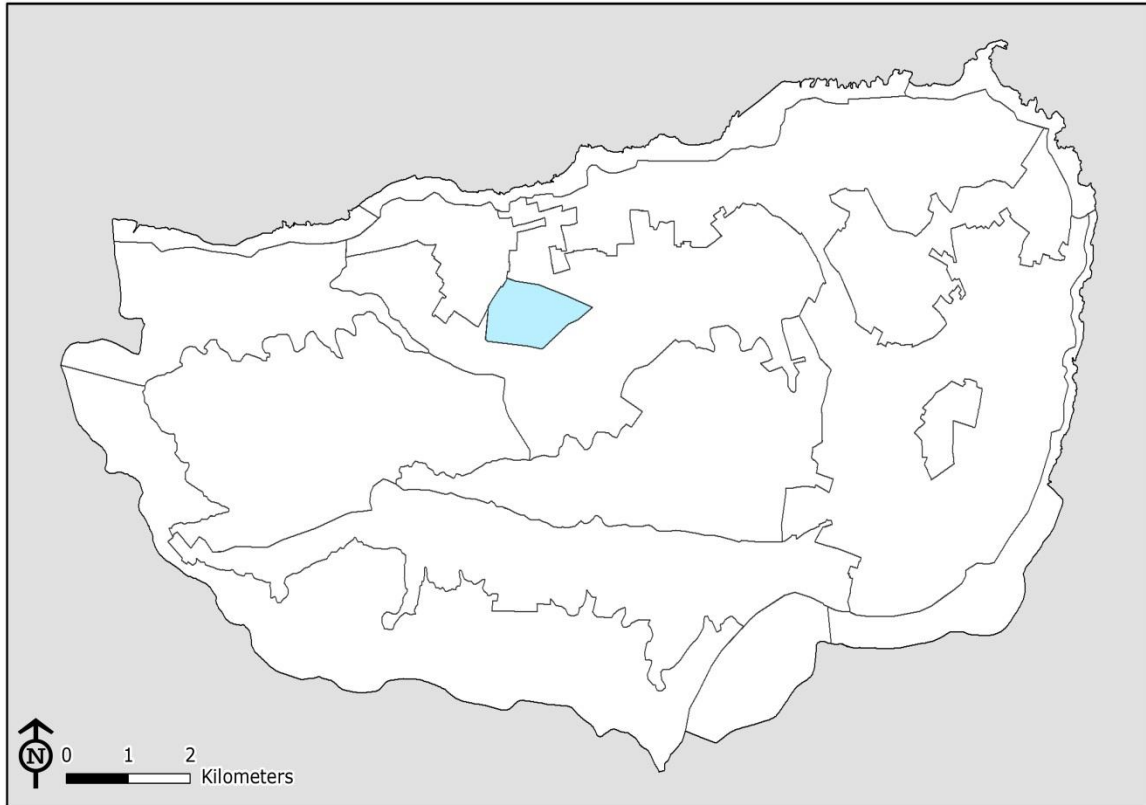
### Vision

- 4.79 This area (C4: Newlands Farm) should continue to be an actively managed farmland within the urban area. It should be a multifunctional landscape providing opportunities for access, with a more unified pattern of tree cover that provides screening to adjacent urban influences and helps create a stronger ecological network.

### Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the historically farmed landscape as a small breathing space within the urban extent.
- Consider opportunities for tree planting where The Royal Harbour School interfaces with the wider landscape as well as to outer boundaries.
- Maintain the permeability of the landscape and the connectivity with adjacent areas, and consider opportunities to enhance visual amenity.

## Local Character Area D1: Quex Park



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.80 Quex Park is located on the south eastern edge of Birchington within the surrounding undulating farmland. The boundaries follow minor roads and broadly correlate with the wooded area which distinguishes it from the more open surrounding farmland **LCA C2: Central Thanet Undulating Farmland** to the north, east and south.



## Photos



The regency-style mansion of Quex House occupies the centre of the park overlooking formal areas of parkland defined by estate fencing.

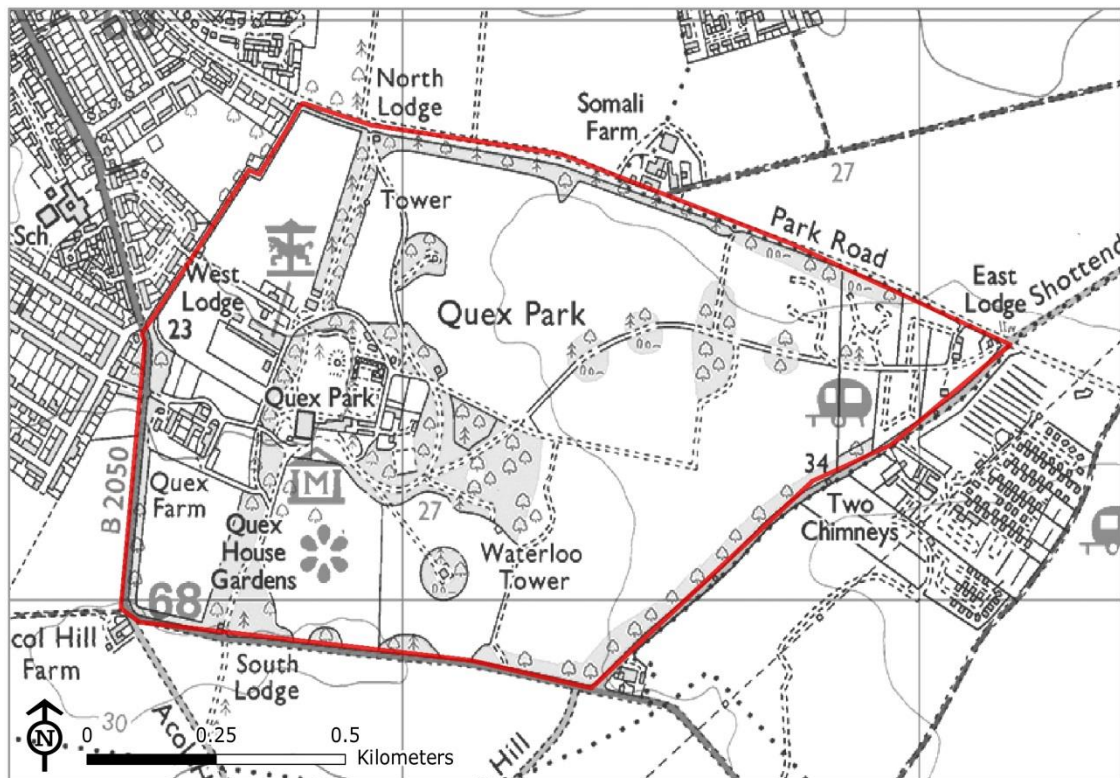


The woodland of Quex Park, plus Waterloo Tower with its distinctive spire are key features of the estate and highly visible in the surrounding landscape.



The parkland with its pasture and mature trees is a rare landscape within Thanet.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.81 Quex Park is a distinctive landscape on the chalk plateau. The nineteenth century parkland landscape comprises small scale arable fields interspersed with circular copses. Some specimen trees are also scattered within the southern fields and a small campsite occupies the most eastern fields. The field pattern is irregular and is well-enclosed by belts of trees.
- 4.82 Quex House is at the centre of the area and is situated within a smaller area of woodland and parkland defined by estate fencing. It comprises an early 19<sup>th</sup> century, regency-style mansion which remains as a residential property with a connecting museum and café. Ornamental gates signal the entrance into Quex Park, and a private winding track leading from the gates provide access to Quex Farm and West Lodge, located a short distance from the main house.
- 4.83 The estate contains three towers which includes the Guntower, built as a sea lookout post, a clock tower with a pre-formation hour bell as well as Waterloo Tower with its extremely rare peal of 12 bells. Waterloo Tower is located in the southern fields surrounded by a circular copse and was built shortly after the completion of Quex House and has a distinctive spire. Views in and out of the area are limited by the mature trees around the boundary and woodland around the main house although the towers are a local landmark from within the estate and adjacent landscape.

## Key Characteristics

- Flat, plateau landform at 25m AOD underlain by the chalk of central Thanet.
- An irregular pattern of small-scale arable fields interspersed with parkland pasture, small circular copses and some mature specimen oaks creating a formal landscape structure.
- Grade II Listed Quex House, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century regency-style mansion, contained by an area of deciduous woodland at the centre of the estate.
- A winding track provides the main access to Quex Park through ornamental gates which provide a sense of formality and grandeur.
- A well-enclosed and private landscape with limited permeability or intervisibility with adjacent areas, whilst Waterloo Tower, a distinctive bell tower is a local landmark.
- Other land uses include farm buildings at Quex Farm and a caravan park and Quex Park Holiday Park.
- Appear as a wooded enclosed landscape in contrast to the surrounding open intensively managed arable plateau.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.84 The name of the house and estate dates back to the 1500s when it was owned by Quekes family who had benefited from the Kent wool industry. John Powell purchased the house and farmstead in 1777 before his nephew, John Powell Powell, demolished the old house and rebuilt the current regency mansion in 1813. It was also John Powell Powell who built the Waterloo Tower in 1819. He installed a ring of twelve bells (the first of its kind in Kent) and named the tower in honour of Wellington's victory over Napoleon in 1815.
- 4.85 Quex House was later inherited by Henry Horace Powell Cotton in 1881 who combined 2 farms to form Quex Park and set about extending the premises to accommodate his family. When he died in 1894, his son Percy Powell-Cotton received the house and made further amendments.
- 4.86 Quex House was used as an Auxiliary Military Hospital in the First World War and the associated memorial ground was later gifted to the village for sport and recreational use by Mr H. A. Erlebach. The house now comprises a family home after a couple of centuries of structural changes and access is available to several rooms for guided tours.
- 4.87 The special interest of the buildings within Quex Park including Quex House and Waterloo Tower are recognised through Grade II listings.

## Natural influences

- 4.88 Much of the woodland within Quex Park is characterised by deciduous woodland. This is recognised as a UK BAP priority habitat. There are no nature conservation designations.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.89 The estate and associated fields at Quex Park are well-managed and the strong definition provided by the boundary trees creates a bold character distinctive from the surrounding open arable plateau. The unified pattern of irregular fields, semi-formal parkland, tree belts and woodland results in a cohesive landscape. This, together with the architectural and historic character of Quex House and associated monuments creates an area of high scenic quality. However, only sparse areas of grassland and pasture remain on the estate with the majority of the parkland under arable cultivation

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- Quex House and the associated estate at the centre of the area have strong cultural associations and create a sense of historic continuity.
- Well-managed, parkland with striking circular copses within fields and estate features contribute to the sense of place and create a landscape distinct from the surrounding arable farmland.
- Waterloo Tower contributes to the historic time depth and sense of place visible as a local landmark.
- Well-enclosed nature of the landscape with limited access routes through grand entrances creates a sense of arrival and adds to the sense of place.



## Landscape Strategy

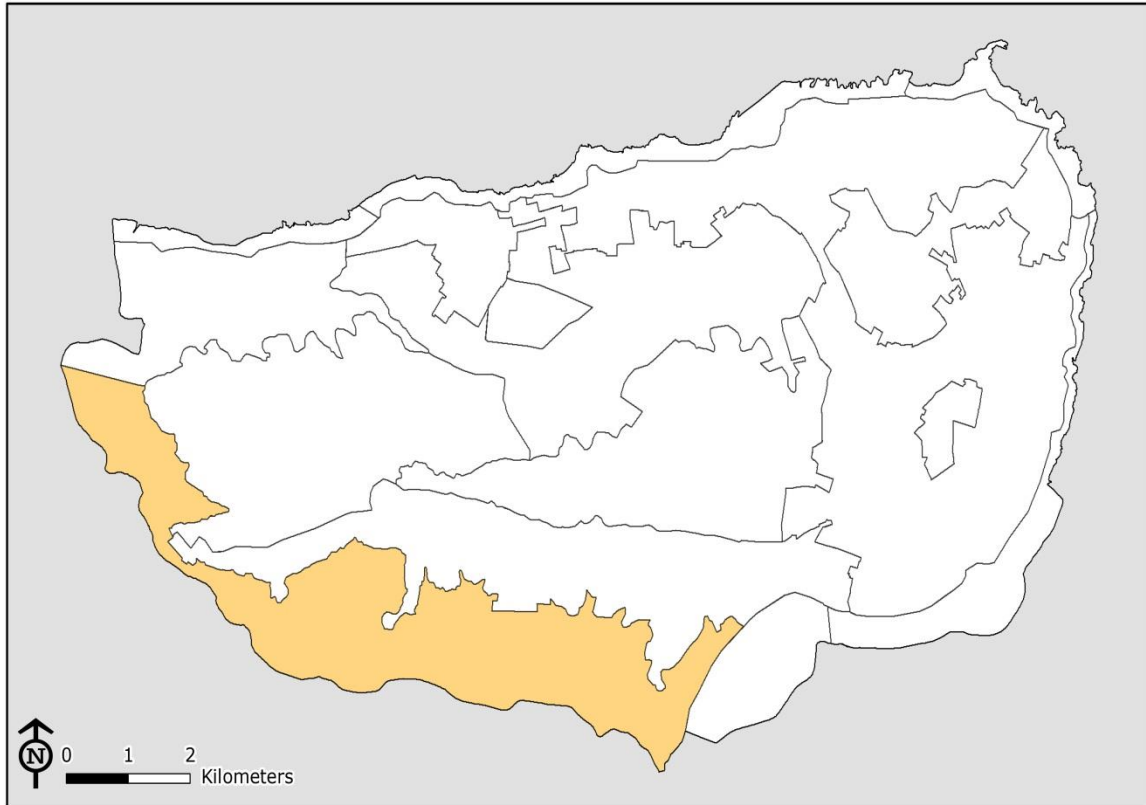
### Vision

- 4.90 Quex Park (D1) is a well-managed, multifunctional estate that incorporates parkland, farmland and mature woodland around Quex House. A historic parkland landscape with trees and woodland contained and distinct from the surrounding open arable plateau and providing opportunities for recreation and leisure.

### Guidelines

- Maintain the small scale of the landscape and features that contribute to the enclosure including the mature tree belts around the perimeter. Instigate a programme of tree planting to perpetuate the historic pattern.
- Maintain the essentially undeveloped character of the landscape providing the setting to Quex House.
- Maintain the formality and grandeur of Quex Park with stately entrances and limited intervisibility with adjacent areas, with the trees and enclosure creating contrast and distinction.
- Seek opportunities for restoration of the parkland character potentially with areas of grazing pasture and restoration of tree belts and clumps.

## Local Character Area E1: Stour Marshes



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.91 Stour Marshes is located to the south west of Thanet and continues across the administrative boundary between Dover to the south and Canterbury further west. The River Stour marks the southern extent of the district. The marshes formerly separated Thanet from the Kent mainland.
- 4.92 Character areas in adjacent districts include **LCA 1: Little Stour Marshes**, **LCA 3: Ash Level** and **LCA 6: Sandwich Bay** within Dover<sup>4</sup> and **LCA 3: Chislet Arable Belt** and **LCA 7: Snake Drove Pastures** within Canterbury<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.93 Within Thanet, the 5m contour defines the boundaries with the adjacent valley slopes **LCA B1: Wantsum North Slopes** to the north while the marshes open out onto Pegwell Bay (**LCA F1: Pegwell Bay**) to the east.

<sup>4</sup> Dover District Landscape Character Assessment (2006) Jacobs Babbie

<sup>5</sup> Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (2012) Jacobs

## Photos



Rectilinear drainage ditches defining arable fields are a key characteristic of the landscape.



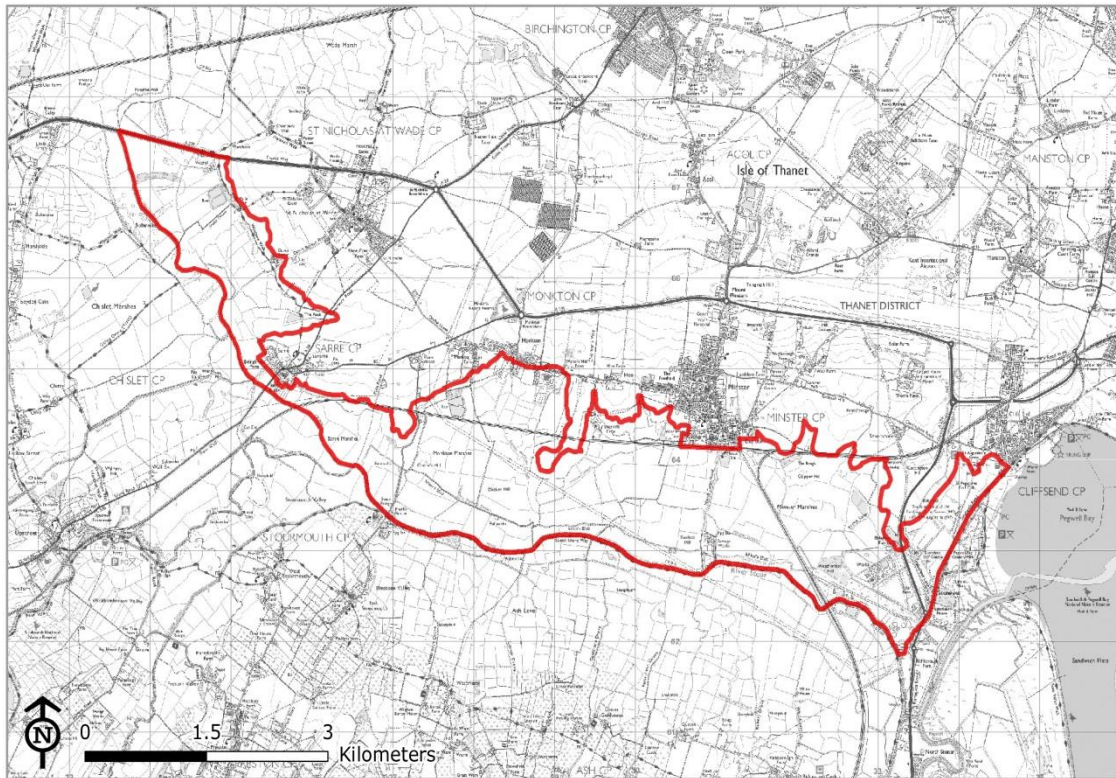
The River Stour is popular for boating. The marsh landscape continues beyond into neighbouring districts.



Flat topography with little structural vegetation results in long open views with big skies.



## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.94 This is a low-lying, vast flat open landscape on the Thanet Sands. It historically represents the former sea channel, the Wantsum Channel, which separated the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent. Its past strategic importance as a point of defence and invasion to the mainland is marked by the Romans forts located at either end of the channel (not in this character area). The channel silted up over several centuries despite attempts to keep it open during the Middle Ages, still visible in the form of Abbots Wall and Sarre Wall.
- 4.95 The area now comprises medium scale irregular arable fields defined by drainage ditches and small streams draining into the River Stour and River Wantsum to the south and west. Tree cover is largely limited to field boundaries with reeds lining some drainage ditches forming a distinctive pattern. Some small copses are occasionally found along field boundaries but this is generally a very open, horizontal landscape.
- 4.96 It is an undeveloped landscape with settlement concentrated on the adjacent slopes in former channel-side port villages. Limited development includes occasional isolated farm buildings and small reservoirs located throughout the area, generally assimilated in the landscape by embankments and vegetation. Towards the eastern end, sewage works, golf courses and a solar farm are associated with the Sandwich corridor. A network of public footpaths crosses the marshes including the Wantsum Walk, with minor roads at Marsh Farm Road and Plucks Gutter providing the only road access.
- 4.97 The open character allows for long uninterrupted views across the marshes with big skies and continuing southwards into the corresponding marshes within Canterbury and Dover Districts. In contrast views to the north are contained by the gently rising valley slopes and the former port villages provide a backdrop in views to the north (LCA B1 North Wantsum Slopes). Some sea views can be obtained from the east looking out over Pegwell Bay and the English Channel.



## Key Characteristics

- Low-lying and flat marshland landscape occupying the former Wantsum river channel.
- A vast, open landscape with huge skies, extensive views and a strong rural, even remote, character.
- Irregular arable fields defined by straight and meandering drainage ditches representing an ancient enclosure pattern, plus small tributaries of the River Stour and River Wantsum.
- Small embanked reservoirs are a feature within the arable fields highly visible by their banded topography and associated scrub /tree growth.
- Limited tree cover with occasional small wooded copses absence of enclosure.
- A largely undeveloped landscape, with few roads or buildings, crossed by the railway and two roads at Pluck's Gutter and Marsh Farm Road.
- Long uninterrupted views across the marshes and Pegwell Bay and into marshes of neighbouring districts (Dover and Canterbury).
- Contained to the north by the slopes of the north shore (LCA B1).

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.98 A historically rich area. The Wantsum Channel was once a wide strait of open water running between Reculver and Richborough separating Thanet from mainland Kent. Its strategic importance reflected in the location of the Roman forts each coastal edge of the channel. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Wantsum had almost entirely silted up despite several land reclamation efforts to manage the channel by Augustinian monks. These are still visible in the form of ancient earthworks including Abbots Wall and Sarre Wall. Other features of interest include the straight drove roads across the marshes.
- 4.99 A number of medieval saltworks are also scattered throughout the marshes.

## Natural influences

- 4.100 This landscape is predominantly arable agricultural land. Floodplain grazing marsh exists around Minster Marshes, a BAP Priority Habitat. Additionally, a small area of woods and grassland along the railway line Dover is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site.
- 4.101 The entire area falls within the Lower Stour wetlands Biodiversity Opportunity Area linking to Pegwell Bay to the east and the marshes within Canterbury District. The area contains some of Kent's most extensive water and wetland habitats.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.102 This is an open rural landscape without significant development. Large arable fields are defined by ditches which create a consistent pattern of elements. It is an intensively farmed arable landscape with few detracting features, although habitat quality is diminished. The open character and long views, drainage ditches and glimpses of water contribute to the scenic quality and it retains a strong sense of place as part of the former Wantsum Channel. There are opportunities to extend and restore areas of marshland, fens and floodplain grazing.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- Complex network of reed lined drainage ditches and channels, which provide ecological value and potential, as well as visual amenity.
- Small isolated areas of flood plain grazing marsh that remains within the wider arable context.
- The remarkable flat, open landscape with a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity and absence of development.
- Cultural associations and history as part of the Wantsum Channel.
- Recreational access opportunities with a large number of footpaths and the Wantsum Walk.
- Long, uninterrupted views including to and from the adjacent marshes in Canterbury District.
- Villages occupying the adjacent slopes, surrounded by trees creating a wooded backdrop.
- Views to the rising valley slopes to the north (LCA B1 and C1) and the sensitive undeveloped crest line which provides a rural setting that contains and provides a backdrop to the marshes.

## Landscape Strategy

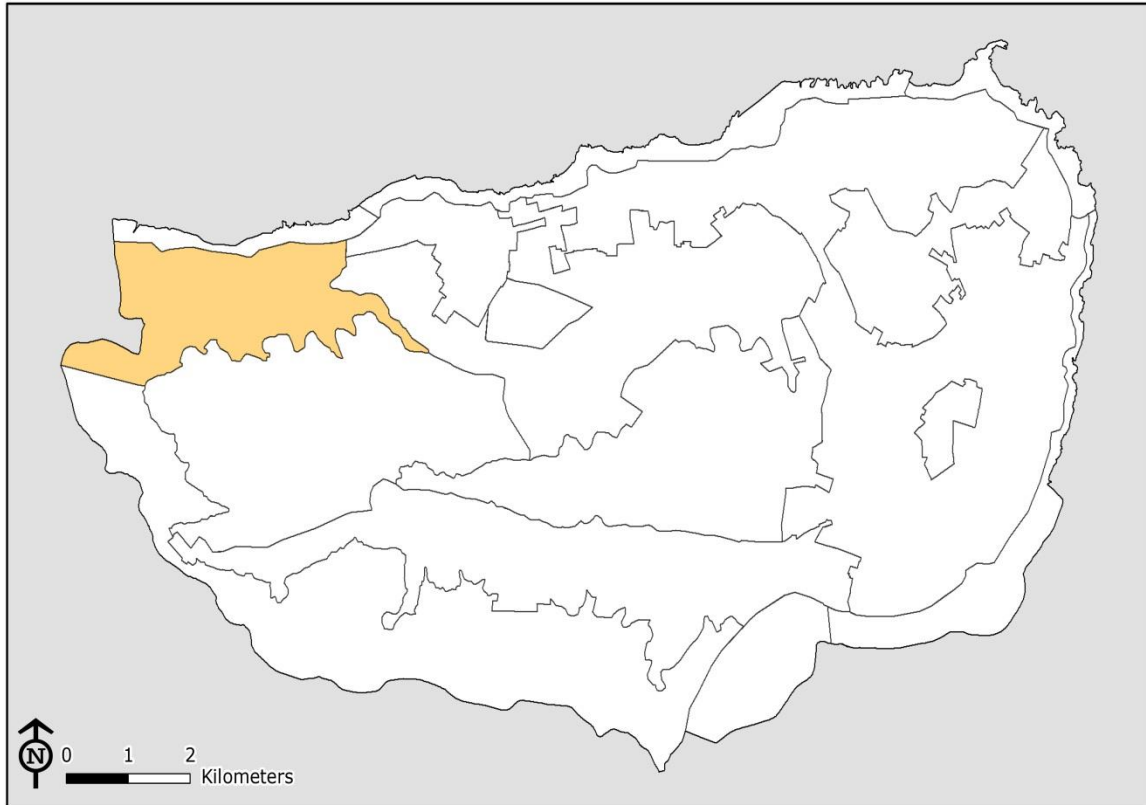
### Vision

- 4.103 The Stour Marshes (E1) is an area with an opportunity to restore and enhance its habitat potential and connectivity as part of the wider Stour/Wantsum Marshes connecting the national/international designations of the North Kent Coast with Sandwich Bay and Stodmarsh in Canterbury District. An area celebrated for its openness, sense of remoteness and lack of development that can be experienced from the connected recreational access network.
- 4.104 The targets outlined in the Lower Stour wetlands Biodiversity Opportunity Statement should form the vision and guidelines for this area.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the intact undeveloped rural character of the marshes as a breathing space between adjacent districts and as a setting to Thanet.
- Conserve and enhance the network of drainage ditches and streams and seek opportunities to reinstate and expand areas of floodplain grazing, fen and reedbed on a landscape scale with habitat connectivity linking with existing areas at Minster and Stodmarsh.
- Conserve the distinctive flat landform limiting further bunding or earth shaping which can appear incongruous in this flat, open landscape.
- Conserve the sense of tranquillity and relatively dark skies that persists on the marshes compared to other parts of the district.
- Conserve and enhance opportunities for recreation via rights of way and connect with existing routes in the wider landscape.
- Conserve the panoramic views across the open landscape including those to and from the adjacent district (Canterbury) restricting new detracting/vertical features that would interrupt views.
- Conserve the views to the undeveloped backdrop of the rising valley slopes to the north and the undeveloped crest line to the marshes (LCA B1 and C1) and consider potential impacts of changes in these areas on the marshes.

## Local Character Area E2: Wade Marshes



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.105 Wade Marshes forms part of the Wantsum Channel formerly separating Thanet from mainland Kent. The marshes are located to the north west of Thanet adjacent to Canterbury District to the west. The northern boundary follows the Northern Sea Wall with **LCA F3: Minnis Bay** beyond. The eastern and southern boundaries are mostly defined by the 5m contour with a distinct change in landform beyond rising as part of **LCA C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland** and **LCA C1: St Nicholas-at-Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland** which form the backdrop and hinterland to the marshes. The western boundary follows the River Wantsum which runs along the administrative boundary with Canterbury. The Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal<sup>6</sup> defines this area as **LCA 8: Reculver Coastal Fringe**.

<sup>6</sup> Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (2012) Jacobs



## Photos



The River Wantsum runs along the administrative boundary with the marsh character continuing beyond into Canterbury District. The Northern Sea Wall provides some visual containment in the area.

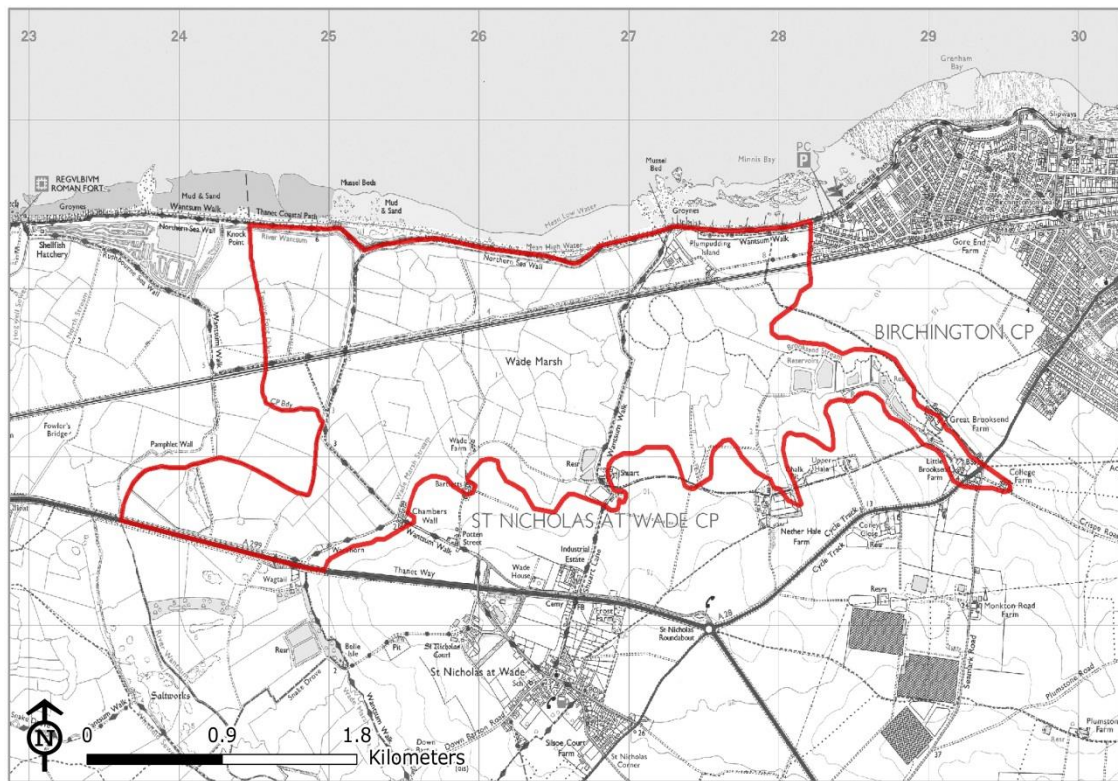


The railway cuts through the marshland landscape on embankment and with associated tree and scrub cover creating a prominent linear feature in this open landscape.



Reculver in Canterbury District is a distinct landmark standing guard over the low lying marshes and former strategic entry point to the mainland.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.106 This flat and low-lying landscape represents the northern part of the former Wantsum Channel where it joined the Thames estuary. Silting up of the channel created grazing marsh now improved and intensively managed as arable farmland. The large arable fields are sub divided by a complex network of reed lined drainage ditches and small streams connecting with the River Wantsum in the west.
- 4.107 The marshes are open and undeveloped apart from a small number of isolated farmsteads around the edges, which are accessed from rural lanes running down from the adjacent undulating farmland. The railway interrupts the large scale pattern of fields and the constant movement and sound of traffic, and lighting, associated with the A299 together with occasional high speed trains means that infrastructure is prominent. Despite this, the area is experienced as an isolated, remote landscape with a strong coastal influence.
- 4.108 A number of small reservoirs are located across the on the marshes. The Northern Sea Wall provides a sea defence and physically/visually contains this area from the coast. Trees are limited to buffers screening the A299, reservoirs and around edge-of-marsh farmsteads creating a windswept and open landscape.
- 4.109 The marshes offer long distance views with big skies and the distinctive towers at Reculver dominate the skyline to the west in views from this predominantly horizontal landscape. The church at St Nicholas-at-Wade also provides a landmark set within the wooded village whilst the rising topography of Thanet forms a generally undeveloped skyline and backdrop containing the marshes inland.

## Key Characteristics

- Flat and low-lying, open landscape with a coastal influence; underlying geology of Sussex White Chalk and Thanet Sands formations.
- Large intensively managed arable fields on former grazing marsh, defined by a complex network of drainage ditches.
- Unsettled apart from occasional isolated farmsteads on the marsh edges.
- Crossed by the A299 and railway both on embankment, which form prominent linear features. Embanked reservoirs are further structures in this otherwise flat landscape.
- Structural planting limited to tree buffers along the A299, railway and around the reservoirs resulting in a very open landscape.
- Strong sense of isolation and remoteness experienced within this open, windswept landscape.
- Long distance views with big skies across the marshes.
- The Northern Sea Wall providing some visual and physical containment from the sea within the marshes, but itself offering long sea views creating an element of contrast and surprise.
- To the west, the towers at Reculver create a distinct landmark overlooking the low lying marshes.
- Contained by the rising slopes inland, including the wooded horizon at St Nicholas-at-Wade, emphasising the island quality of Thanet.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.110 A distinct historic landscape forming part of the former Wantsum Channel. Reculver, a strategic site defending the entrance to the channel was the site of an early 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman fort after a Roman settlement had established in and around Reculver in the two preceding centuries. The area has been subject to coastal erosion and the southern half of fort now survives as only ruined walls and earthworks. This later became the site of an Anglo-Saxon monastery in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the church of St Mary was built. The church then became the parish church of Reculver and the existing towers date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the church underwent renovation works. The towers also function as a marker for ships at sea and are a distinctive landmark from across the marshes; they are captured in many local paintings.
- 4.111 By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Wantsum had almost entirely silted up despite several land reclamation attempts. These are still visible in the form of earthworks including Chambers Wall.

## Natural influences

- 4.112 The landscape is made up of predominantly ALC Grade 2 and 3 agricultural fields which are under intensive arable cultivation. Despite an absence of ecological designations inland the ditch network represent a considerable wetland habitat providing connectivity to the wider Stour Marshes. The adjacent coastal fringe is of high nature conservation value recognised by multiple national and international designations and coastal birds utilise the marshes and reed lined ditches.
- 4.113 The entire area of Wade Marshes falls within the Lower Stour wetlands Biodiversity Opportunity Area linking to Pegwell Bay to the east and the marshes within Canterbury District. The area contains some of Kent's most extensive water and wetland habitats.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.114 This is a landscape of intensively managed arable fields defined by the combination of straight and meandering drainage ditches which create a simple and unified pattern of elements but now with limited habitat diversity. The railway interrupts the flow of the agricultural landscape and the A299 running along the southern edge from an elevated position with associated traffic noise and night time lighting is a detracting feature. The area nevertheless has a remote, isolated character, strong cultural associations and a distinctive sense of place associated with the Wantsum Channel and the adjacent coast.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- Complex network of drainage ditches and channels highlighted by reeds provide ecological value and potential, as well as contributing to visual amenity.
- The Wantsum Walk, Viking Trail and Coastal Path that provide popular recreational access through the marshland landscape.
- Rare sense of isolation and remoteness experience in this open, expansive windswept landscape, with absence of development.
- Cultural associations and history as part of the former Wantsum Channel and current function as a gateway to 'island' Thanet, crossed by primary transport routes.
- Open, 'horizontal' character with absence of development and vertical structures.
- Flat, open landform which is vulnerable to further landform manipulation and embanked features which would disrupt the open landscape.
- Long distance views to and from the Reculver Roman Fort– with the towers forming a prominent landmark from the marshes.
- Long, open views including to the edges of LCA C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland and LCA C1: St Nicholas-at-Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland which form the backdrop and hinterland to the marshes. Plus the role of this area in views from Canterbury District.
- Open seascape horizons in views from the sea wall (LCA F3).



## Landscape Strategy

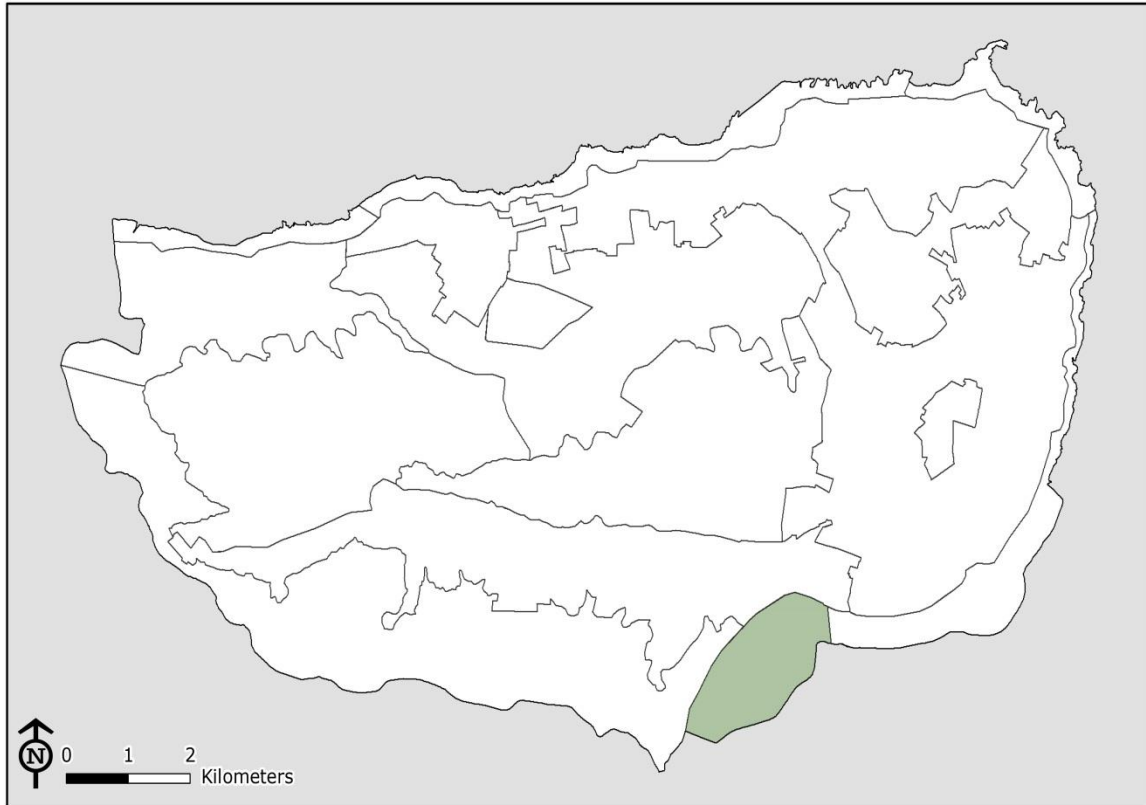
### Vision

- 4.115 The Wade Marshes (E2) is an area with opportunity to restore and enhance its habitat potential and connectivity as part of the wider Stour/Wantsum Marshes. The strategy for future management of the coast may provide opportunities for managed realignment, allowing breaching of the sea wall and potential for reinstatement of grazing marsh and wetland networks. The area should continue to be an isolated, undeveloped marshland landscape where rare qualities of remoteness, openness and 'big skies' can be experienced from the connected access networks.
- 4.116 The targets outlined in the Lower Stour wetlands Biodiversity Opportunity Statement should form the vision and guidelines for this area.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the open rural character of the area as a natural 'breathing space' between urban areas and as a setting to Reculver.
- Conserve and enhance the network of drainage ditches and streams through active management and seek to promote habitat connectivity with the wider Lower Stour Marshes.
- Seek opportunities for reinstatement of the marshland character on a landscape scale through arable reversion as part of a wider project, in association with future strategies for re alignment.
- Conserve the undeveloped character, sense of remoteness and dark skies which persists on the marshes;
- Resist new development, including vertical structures and embanked features (reservoirs) which would intrude within this open flat landscape.
- Conserve the panoramic long distance views to, from and across the area, including those across the marshes to Thanet from Canterbury District.
- Consider the potential impact of changes of the adjacent slopes and crests that contain and surround the marshes (LCA C2: Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland and LCA C1: St Nicholas-at-Wade Undulating Chalk Farmland)
- Seek to limit impact of detracting elements including lighting along the A299 and enhance the role of this area as a natural gateway into Thanet along primary transport corridors.

## Local Character Area F1: Pegwell Bay



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.117 Pegwell Bay is located in the south east part of Thanet at the point where the River Stour meets the Dover Strait, although only the mouth of the Stour itself is within Thanet, the main part of the River being in Dover District. This low lying bay and windswept coast of saltmarsh, mudflats and shallow waters.
- 4.118 The bay is covered by **SCA 20: Sandwich & Pegwell Bays** as defined by the *Seascape Character Assessment for the Dover Strait*<sup>7</sup>. **LCA 4: The Sandwich Corridor** adjoins the area to the south within Dover as classified in the respective Landscape Character Assessment<sup>8</sup>. Within Thanet, the lowland marshes of **LCA E1: Stour Marshes** adjoins Pegwell Bay to the west, with the chalk slopes of **LCA B1: Wantsum North Slopes** backing the bay in the north terminating at Cliffsend. Distinctive low chalk cliffs curve round the coast at Ramsgate (**LCA G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs**) and are a striking feature in views from the bay.

<sup>7</sup> Seascape Character Assessment for the Dover Strait (July 2015) LUC

<sup>8</sup> Dover District Landscape Character Assessment (January 2006) Jacobs Babbie

## Photos



Striking white chalk cliffs in uninterrupted panoramic views across the low-lying bay and the Dover Strait.

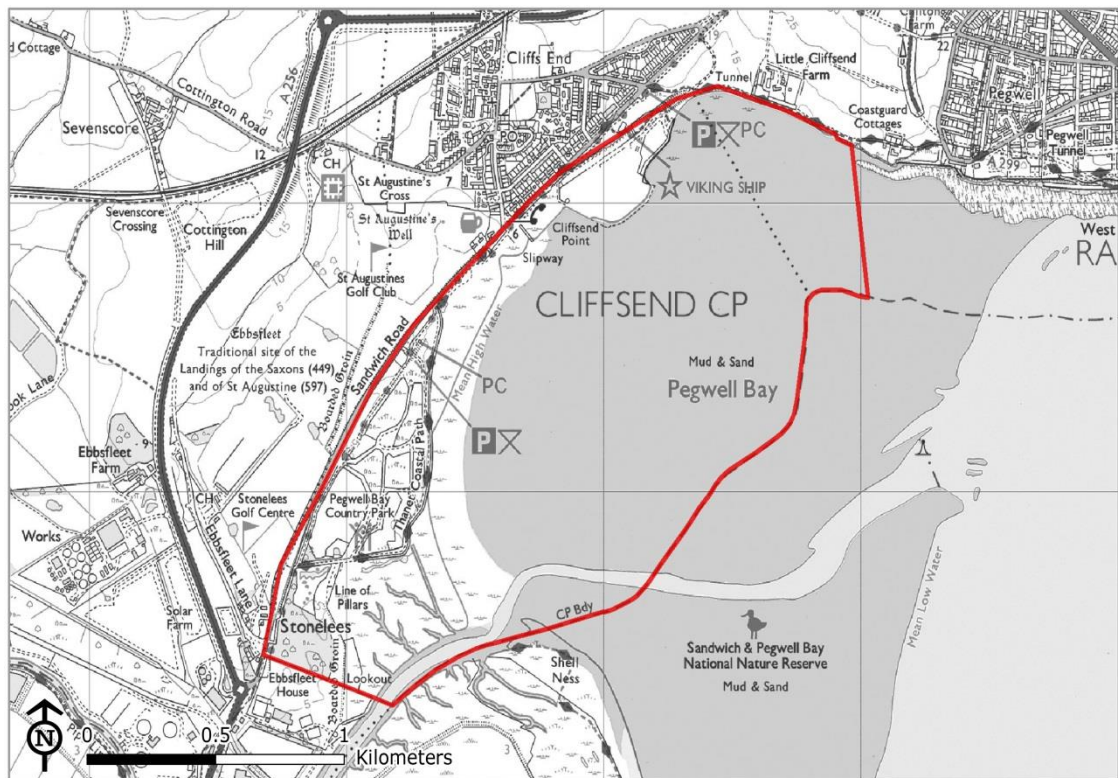


A dynamic intertidal landscape with rich ecological value.



Area provides a strong sense of naturalness and remoteness away from the main built up areas.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.119 Pegwell Bay is formed at the estuary of the River Stour where it enters the sea, formerly one end of the Wantsum Channel marking the separation of Thanet from the Kent mainland and long providing a strategic entry point to England. The area is based on sedimentary sandstone and mudstone and characterised by a complex mosaic of habitats including vast open marshes, intertidal area of mud and sand banks and shallow waters. It is an open and flat seascape with long views and big skies, although partially contained by the low chalk and flint cliffs at Ramsgate to the north. The extensive mudflats contrast with high tide, when the slow receding tide create a bay covered by water for a greater length of time.
- 4.120 Pegwell Bay Country Park occupies the western shoreline and comprises swards of grassland and an area of ancient dune pasture and provides an important recreational resource. The extensive intertidal mudflats, salt marsh, and shingle beach cover much of the bay and are important for migratory birds and seals. The whole of the bay forms part of the North East Kent Marine Protection Area and is designated as a Ramsar site, SAC, SPA and SSSI. To the north an area of hard standing marks the site of the former Cross Channel Hoverport site.
- 4.121 Pegwell Bay was recorded in a landscape painting by William Dyce in 1858 depicting the area as a popular resort. The area is largely undeveloped, apart from small scale recreational development with minimal urban influences from adjacent development. It has a strong sense of openness and remoteness. Winds roll off the sea to create a windswept and exposed landscape. Long, sweeping views across the Dover Strait can be obtained from the coast and the prominent white chalk and flint cliffs to the north form a focal point curving round towards Ramsgate and enclosing the bay. Large container vessels on the shipping lanes through the Strait are features of the long seaward views.



## Key Characteristics

- Shallow waters with underlying sedimentary sandstone and mudstone partially contained by low chalk and flint cliffs.
- Flat expanses of marshes and mudflats. Mudflats at low tides contrast with high tide waters with the slack tide keeping the bay full of sea water for longer.
- The estuary of the River Stour enters the Strait in the bay marking the former Wantsum Channel.
- Ancient dune pasture and swards of sandy grassland within Pegwell Bay Country Park as well as extensive intertidal mudflats, salt marsh and shingle beach.
- High biodiversity value, with internationally significant numbers of waders and wildfowl recognised by SSSI, Ramsar, SAC and SPA designations.
- River Stour/Wantsum Channel providing a strategic entry point for successive invasions and landings (Roman, Saxon and reintroduction of Christianity) – events celebrated and commemorated in the landscape today.
- Long, panoramic views seaward across the Dover Strait with container ships and ferries forming features on the skyline, with the low white cliffs at Ramsgate forming a distinctive feature in view to the north.
- A tranquil and natural area with a strong sense of remoteness prevailing. Exposed and windswept landscape created by sea winds channelled into the bay and across the coast.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.122 A strategic entry point to Britain, Pegwell Bay played a key role in the Roman landings in 43 AD prior to setting up a port at Richborough, located a short distance from the character area to the south. The legendary landing of Saxons Hengist and Horsa in 449 AD is also celebrated at Pegwell bay and marked by the gift of a replica longship that is now situated at Hugin Green in Cliffsend.
- 4.123 It also believed that St Augustine arrived at Pegwell Bay in 597 AD to meet King Ethelbert at Ebbsfleet which later led to the reintroduction of Christianity to England. A memorial to commemorate this event is located outside the character area at Cliffsend.
- 4.124 More recently, the bay formed the site for the Cross Channel hoverport, operating between 1969 and 1982.

## Natural influences

- 4.125 The cliff, foreshore and mudflats at Pegwell Bay are of national and international conservation interest due to their important geology, flora and the populations of migratory and over-wintering birds. Ancient dune pasture provides a habitat for rare orchids and intertidal mudflats support nationally and internationally significant numbers of waders and wildfowl. The ecological importance is recognised through multiple designations including a Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserve as well as Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation and a Ramsar site.
- 4.126 The entire area falls within the Lower Stour wetlands Biodiversity Opportunity Area linking to the Wantsum marshes and adjacent landscapes in Canterbury and Dover. The area contains some of Kent's most extensive water and wetland habitats.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.127 The undisturbed expanses of intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh marshes and dune pastures contribute a distinctive character, with a remarkable sense of remoteness. The undeveloped character and general absence of detracting features (apart from the former hoverport site) create an area of good condition and of high landscape quality.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- The extensive mosaic of coastal habitats including intertidal mudflats, salt marsh, ancient dune pastures supporting significant populations of migratory and over-wintering birds (nationally and internationally designated).
- Sights and sounds of large populations of waders and wildfowl.
- The low chalk cliffs which are an important visual feature as well as of geological interest.
- The dynamic landscape with contrast of open waters and exposed mudflats depending on state of the tides.
- The undisturbed nature of the area and strong sense of remoteness and wildness, experienced despite proximity of urban development.
- Sweeping open sea views and big skies across the bay partially contained by the white chalk cliffs that curve around the bay to the north.
- The estuary of River Stour marking the former extent of the Wantsum Channel which provides a cultural link to the past.
- Historically important landings and invasions commemorated in the landscape.

## Landscape Strategy

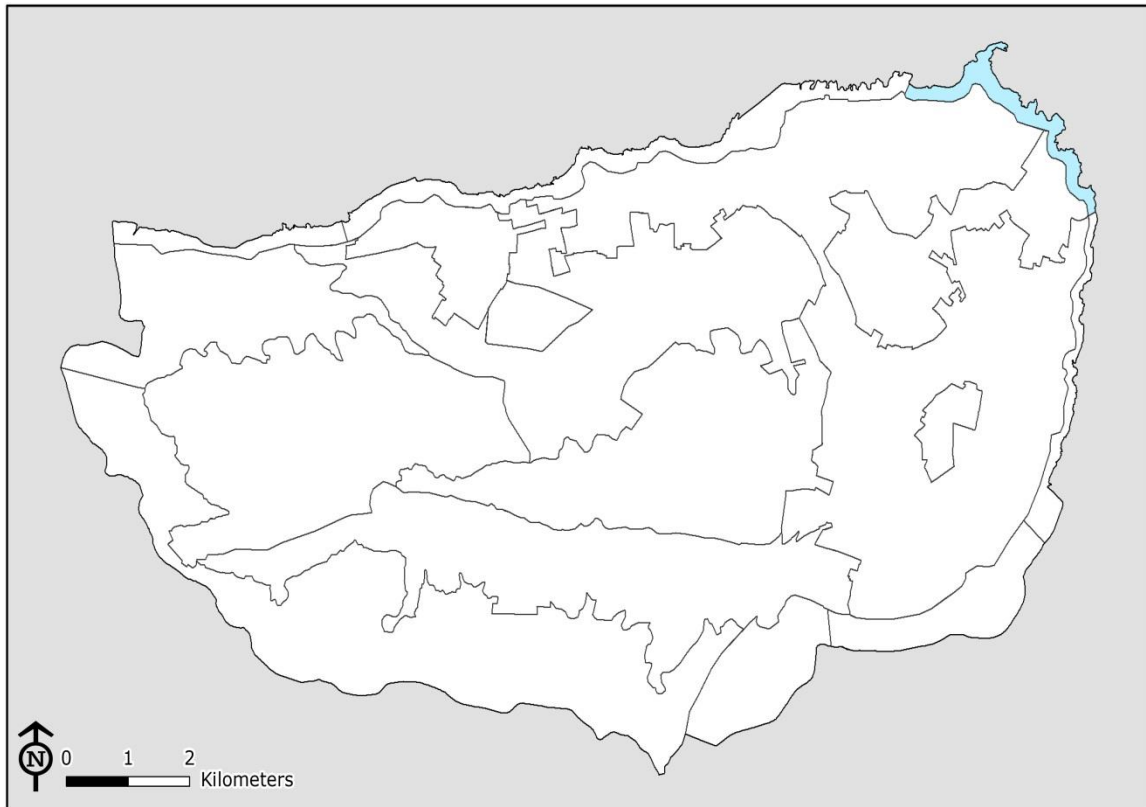
### Vision

- 4.128 The valued features and qualities of Pegwell Bay (F1) should be conserved and enhanced. The area should continue to provide diverse habitats supporting populations of breeding and migratory birds, and celebrate its rich history and culture. There is an opportunity to enhance the green infrastructure function and re use of the redundant Hoverport site, providing this reflects and respects the unique and special qualities of this area including its rare sense of remoteness and wildness.
- 4.129 The Management Scheme for the North East Kent Marine Protected Area and the targets outlined in the Lower Stour wetlands Biodiversity Opportunity Statement should provide the framework for future actions for this area. The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM), in respect of the Thanet Coast SPA, provides a mechanism to address recreational disturbance.

### Guidelines

- Conserve, enhance and manage the diversity of coastal, wetland and intertidal habitats to maximise their value for biodiversity.
- Conserve the open undeveloped character of Pegwell Bay avoiding any form of development that would interrupt panoramic views and big skies.
- Conserve the sense of remoteness and wildness experienced in the bay – a rare quality in close proximity to Ramsgate.
- Conserve and the sense of history and associations with the sea – notably, role in successive landings, invasion and defence.
- Consider opportunities for restoring and enhancing the Hoverport, respecting the character of the area and importance for biodiversity.
- Consider opportunities to enhance green infrastructure opportunities for recreation and green tourism (Regional Conservation Park, Thanet Coastal Park Initiative).
- Monitor and manage recreational disturbance in line with the recommendations in the SAMM.

## Local Character Area F2: Foreness Point and North Foreness



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.130 Foreness Point and North Foreness is located at the north eastern extremity of Thanet, forming an area of undeveloped coast between Cliftonville and Broadstairs. It contrasts with the adjacent areas of more developed coast with **LCA G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs** to the south and **LCA G2: North Thanet Coast** to the west.



## Photos



At Joss Bay the sandy beach is contained by low chalk cliffs, and fronted by a wave cut chalk platform.



Chalk arch and stacks are key features of this coastline.



Chalk grassland backs the cliffs at Foreness Point.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.131 Foreness Point is characterised by an irregular, curving coastline of white chalk cliffs forming the headland at Foreness Point and punctuated by small sandy bays. Chalk reefs, rock pools and mudflats, and an extensive intertidal chalk platform are revealed at low tide. At Botany Bay and White Ness unusual coastal geomorphological features include stacks, promontories, tunnel and arch, which also support rare algal communities. Part of this coast is undefended by the sea wall which characterises the urban coast to the west. The area is distinctive for being undeveloped forming a gap between Broadstairs and Cliftonville, backed by open areas of cliff top grassland and the North Foreland Golf Course, which also supports areas of chalk grassland. The approach to this part of the coast is rural *via* narrow lanes lined by flint walls and wind stunted holm oak contributing to the rural character.
- 4.132 The coastline between Foreness Point and North Foreland marks the point at the meeting of the Thames Estuary and English Channel and is renowned for treacherous waters with the lighthouse at North Foreland built to guide shipping around the point.
- 4.133 The series of bays have strong associations with smuggling. Joss Bay is named after the renowned 18<sup>th</sup> century smuggler, Joss Snelling, whilst Botany Bay is believed to be named after the Australian bay with the same name, where convicted smugglers were deported. The beaches are highly valued for seaside tourism and the area is also popular with watersports; Palm Bay is a well-used launch for jet skis, with opportunities for surfing at Joss Bay.
- 4.134 The white chalk cliffs provide a backdrop to views from the sea and create a sense of seclusion within the small inset bays, contrasting with the open panoramic views from the cliff tops across the North Sea, English Channel and to the Thanet offshore wind farm.

## Key Characteristics

- Distinctive low, white soft chalk cliffs rise from the sea divided by a series of sandy bays with pattern of chalk reefs, chalk platforms and flats revealed at low tide.
- Coastal chalk geomorphology including stack, arch and promontory, partially undefended by a sea wall and subject to erosion.
- Cliffs, backed by relatively wide areas of cliff top grassland and open rural landscape (golf course) beyond.
- Nationally and internationally designated marine and coastal habitats support a rich diversity of marine and terrestrial wildlife, notably over wintering birds/ waders.
- Accessible coastline with bays and beaches popular for recreation and tourism, including watersports, with a history of surfing at Joss Bay. An active, busy area in summer.
- Long unrestricted views across the Thames Estuary and North Sea from the cliff tops and beaches, Thanet wind farm, traffic on the shipping lanes of the Channel and North Sea.
- A number of distinct landmarks discernible along the coast including Kingsgate Castle and North Foreland lighthouse.
- Strong rural, coastal character and sense of exposure along the cliffs despite proximity of adjacent urban areas.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.135 North Foreland promontory is a chalk ridge on which some of Thanet's most significant prehistoric discoveries have been made. Cropmarks on the adjacent land indicate the site of prehistoric settlements and funerary monuments.
- 4.136 The smuggling trade on the North Thanet Coast started at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century but had turned into a large business by the end with professional gangs such as Hawkhurst gang bringing in large cargoes.
- 4.137 Foreness Point has seen a number of shipwrecks, most notably the Northern Belle in 1857. Foreness was also the location for a Chain Home Low radar station in World War II.

## Natural influences

- 4.138 The entire coastline is of great biodiversity importance and forms part of the North East Kent Marine Protected Area, designated as SSSI, part of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, Thanet Coast SAC, and Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), and as a Ramsar site. It also forms part of the Thanet Cliffs and Shore Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). It is particularly noted for its bird populations, supporting both internationally and nationally important numbers of wintering birds, notably turnstones and golden plover. There are outstanding assemblages of both terrestrial and marine plant species. Highly distinctive coastal geomorphological features include the extensive intertidal chalk platform revealed at low tide, plus the chalk stacks, promontories, tunnel and arch, which provide exposures of chalk and also support rare algal communities.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.139 This is a distinctive coastal landscape. The repetition of sandy bays enclosed by chalk cliffs, recognisable chalk stack and arch at Kingsgate, and prominent buildings at the lighthouse and Kingsgate Castle create a very strong sense of place and identity. The lack of built development, rural backdrop to the cliffs is rare in Thanet and the general absence of detracting features contributes to the high scenic quality.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- The distinctive pattern of sandy bays, contained by low chalk cliffs and undeveloped cliff top character and hinterland.
- Chalk ledges, reefs, platforms, flats and rock pools that provide valuable habitat for marine flora and fauna.
- Distinctive coastal geomorphology creating striking visual feature (stack, arch and promontory), chalk exposures as well as providing a habitat for rare algal communities.
- Ornithological interest including large numbers of wintering waders and wildfowl, including turnstones, sanderlings and golden plover.
- Relatively wide open grassy cliff tops, providing important habitats plus access to and views of the coast and North Sea/ English Channel seascape.
- The open rural gap to the coast at Kingsgate that provides separation between the built up areas of Cliftonville and Broadstairs.
- The rural character of the Kingsgate Gap including the narrow tree lined lanes that access the coast. Windswept, exposed coastal character despite proximity of adjacent urban areas.
- Opportunities for recreational access on the cliff tops *via* the Coastal path and Viking Trail and function of the beaches for tourism and recreation.



## Landscape Strategy

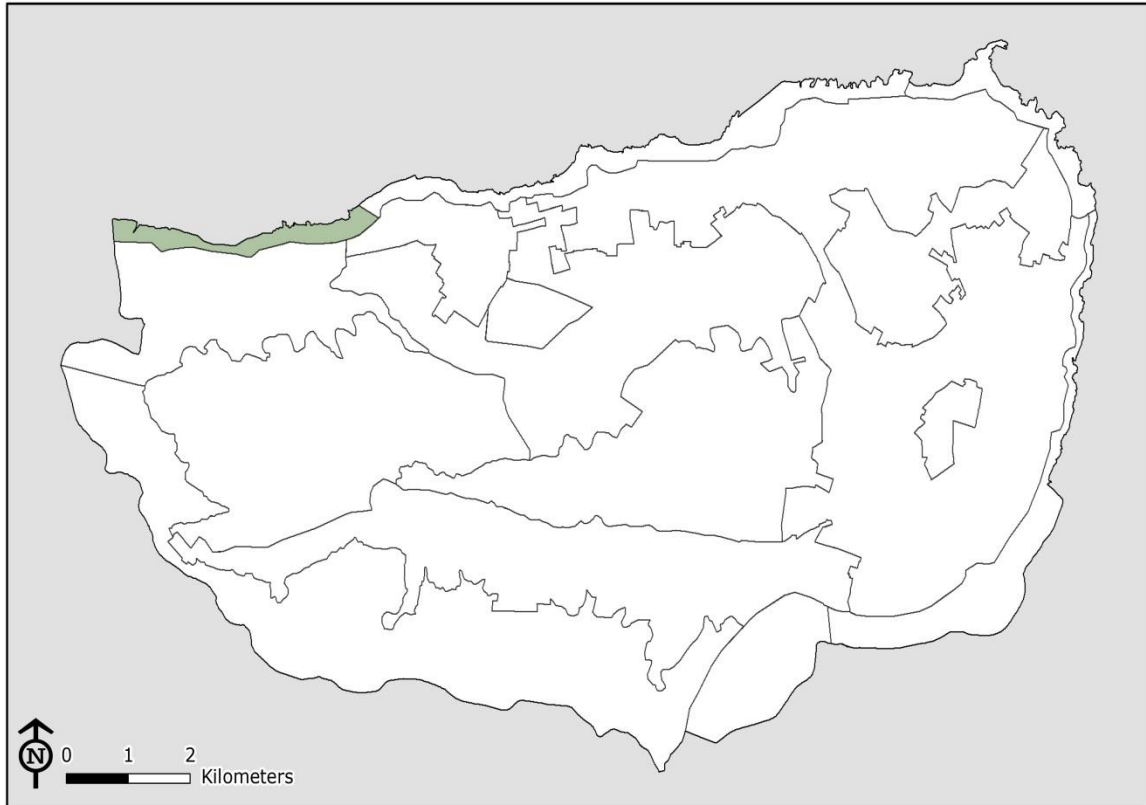
### Vision

- 4.140 The overall strategy for Foreness Point/North Foreness (F2) is to conserve and, where practical, restore and enhance the interest of the coastal and marine habitats and species as part of a wider programme of coastal habitat restoration and management within Thanet. This vision also recognises the function of the coast providing opportunities for access, recreation and tourism and its importance as a distinctive rural coastal gap between Margate and Broadstairs. The Management Scheme for the North East Kent Marine Protected Area and targets in the Thanet Cliffs and Shore BOA Statement should provide the framework to guide future actions.
- 4.141 The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM), in respect of the Thanet Coast SPA, provides a mechanism to address recreational disturbance.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the pattern of sandy bays, chalk cliffs and areas of open grasslands including opportunities to manage and enhance habitats for wildlife including cliff top chalk grassland.
- Maintain the essentially natural and rural character of the coast minimising clutter, fencing and signage.
- Conserve the rural character of the narrow lanes and associated boundary tree cover, which provide access to the coast and contribute to its sense of place.
- Conserve and enhance the relatively wide grassy cliff top strip including opportunities for restoration of chalk grasslands.
- Conserve the open and rural coastal gap between Cliftonville and Broadstairs which provides visual separation between the urban areas and is one of the few rural backdrops to the cliffs of Thanet's coast.
- Continue to manage the coast to provide opportunities for access and recreation, notably the coastal trails which provide wider connectivity around the Kent coast and manage recreational disturbance conflicts with wildlife (birds) according to the SAMM.

## Local Character Area F3: Minnis Bay



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.142 Minnis Bay is an area of open coastline located on the north eastern coast of Thanet. The administrative boundary with Canterbury District defines the western edge with **LCA 8: Reculver Coastal Fringe** within the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment<sup>9</sup>. The Northern Sea Wall marks the southern edge with **LCA E2: Wade Marshes** and the former Wantsum Channel lying behind the sea wall.

<sup>9</sup> Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (August 2012) Jacobs

## Photos



Minnis Bay is a wide sandy bay with beaches partitioned by groynes popular for water sports. Reculver Towers are a landmark on the coastline to the west.

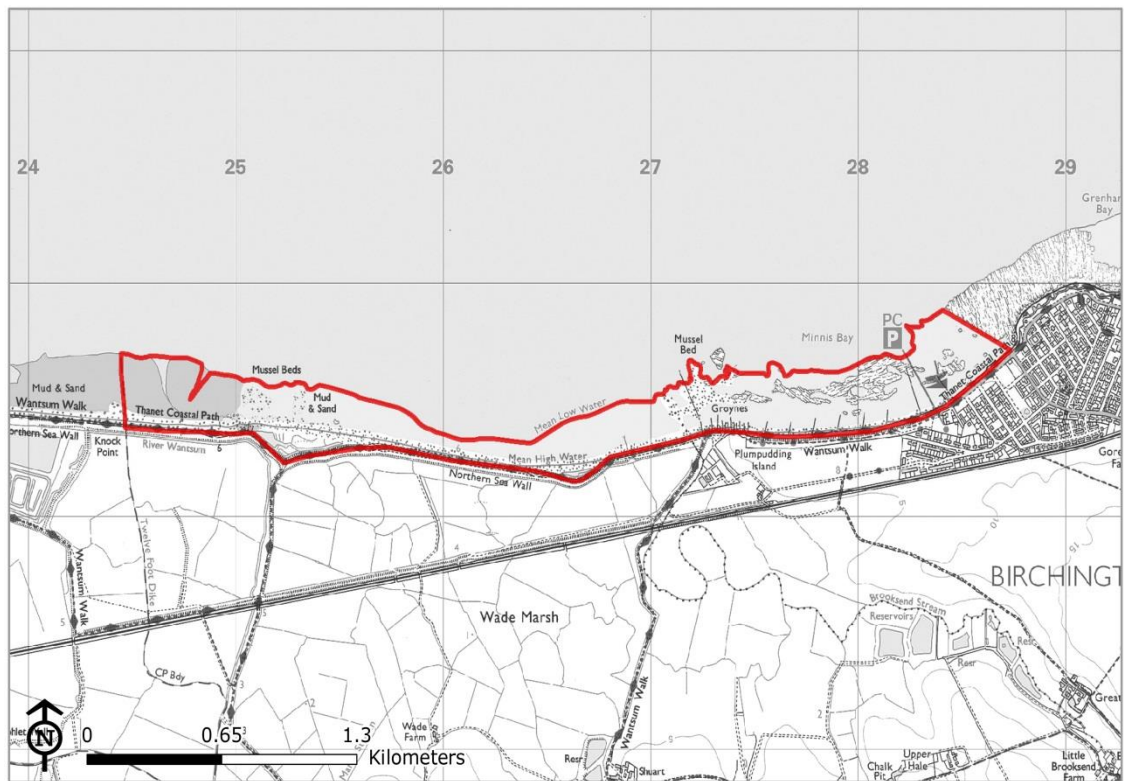


Off-shore windfarms in the Thames Estuary form features on the skyline. Small lagoons characterise the area in front of the sea wall.



The built up areas of Birchington and Margate provide a backdrop to the east across the flat and open landscape.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.143 Minnis Bay is a wide sandy bay with intertidal mudflats and chalk reefs. It is mostly flat and exposed and contained by the embanked Sea Wall to the south, which isolates the coast from its marshland hinterland. A small number of salt water lagoons have formed in front of the sea wall at Coldharbour and Plumpudding. The area forms part of the North East Kent Marine Protected Area, with SSSI, SPA and MCZ designations reflecting its high biodiversity value. It also forms part of the Thanet Cliffs and Shore Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). A colony of little terns breeds in nationally important numbers at Plumpudding Island.
- 4.144 The central part of the bay contains amenity grassland and a promenade lined with beach huts and provides an important resource for recreation and tourism, beyond this it is more open and exposed creating a remote and wilder coastal experience.
- 4.145 The whole area is popular for fishing, birdwatching and recreation. Water sports include windsurfing, kitesurfing and sailing making this a busy and colourful part of the Thanet coastline. The Coastal Path/Viking Coastal Trail runs along the top of the sea wall, providing access for walkers and cyclists.
- 4.146 The open and exposed nature of the landscape allows for long distance, panoramic views across the Thames Estuary and to the North Sea, as well as over the adjacent marshes from the sea wall. The Reculver Towers, which stands guard over the entrance to the Wantsum Channel, are a distinctive coastal landmark in the west. The offshore wind farms provide focal features on the skyline and together with container ships on shipping lanes create a dynamic working seascape.



## Key Characteristics

- Embayed coast of intertidal mudflats and chalk reefs backed by low-lying marshes (LCA E2) separated by embanked sea wall.
- Wide sandy beaches divided by groynes are uncovered at low tide.
- High biodiversity interest reflected in national and international designations, including important colonies of breeding birds.
- The Northern Sea Wall provides visual containment to the south and has allowed small salt lagoons to form in front. Access routes on top of the sea wall provide access for walking and cycle route (Viking Coastal Trail).
- A popular recreational area attracting for a range of watersports including windsurfing, kitesurfing and sailing.
- Extensive views across the Thames Estuary, North Sea and adjacent marshes.
- An exposed coast open to the full force of winds and tides from the North Sea.
- Distinct landmark in the west created by the towers of Reculver guarding the entrance to the Wantsum Channel.
- Offshore windfarms form focal features on the skyline and combined with shipping create a busy dynamic seascape.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.147 A historic landscape forming part of the northern entrance to the Wantsum Channel. Reculver, a strategic site defending the entrance to the channel was the site of an early 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman fort. The area has been subject to considerable coastal erosion and the southern half of fort now survives as only ruined walls and earthworks. This later became the site of an Anglo-Saxon monastery in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and was the same time as the church of St Mary was built. The church then became the parish church of Reculver and the existing towers date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the church underwent renovation works. The towers also function as a marker for ships at sea and are a distinctive landmark from across the marshes.
- 4.148 In the Second World War, when the sea along this stretch of coast was used for testing Barnes Wallis's bouncing bombs.

## Natural influences

- 4.149 Minnis Bay is part of the North East Kent Marine Protected Area, designated as SSSI, part of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, Thanet Coast SAC, and Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), and as a Ramsar site. It also forms part of the Thanet Cliffs and Shore Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). It is noted for its bird populations, supporting important numbers of wintering birds, notably turnstones and golden plover, as well as wading birds along the shoreline. There are outstanding assemblages of both terrestrial and marine plant species.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.150 The open expanse of intertidal mudflats and chalk deposits with sandy beaches creates a strong character with high biodiversity interest as recognised by the multiple designations. The seafront is popular for recreation and tourism but beyond this along the Northern sea wall the landscape is more exposed with qualities of remoteness and wildness with long views across the Estuary and marshes. It has a strong sense of place and can still be perceived as the mouth of the former Wantsum Channel.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- The natural form of Minnis Bay forming the visual setting of Reculver and entrance to the low-lying marshes.
- Mudflats, salt lagoons and chalk reef which provide rich marine habitats.
- Coastal grassland and lagoons providing habitat for breeding and overwintering birds.
- The strong sense of remoteness and wildness experienced on the undeveloped coast.
- Dynamic seascape views including open horizons between the wind farms.
- Value for recreation and tourism.

## Landscape Strategy

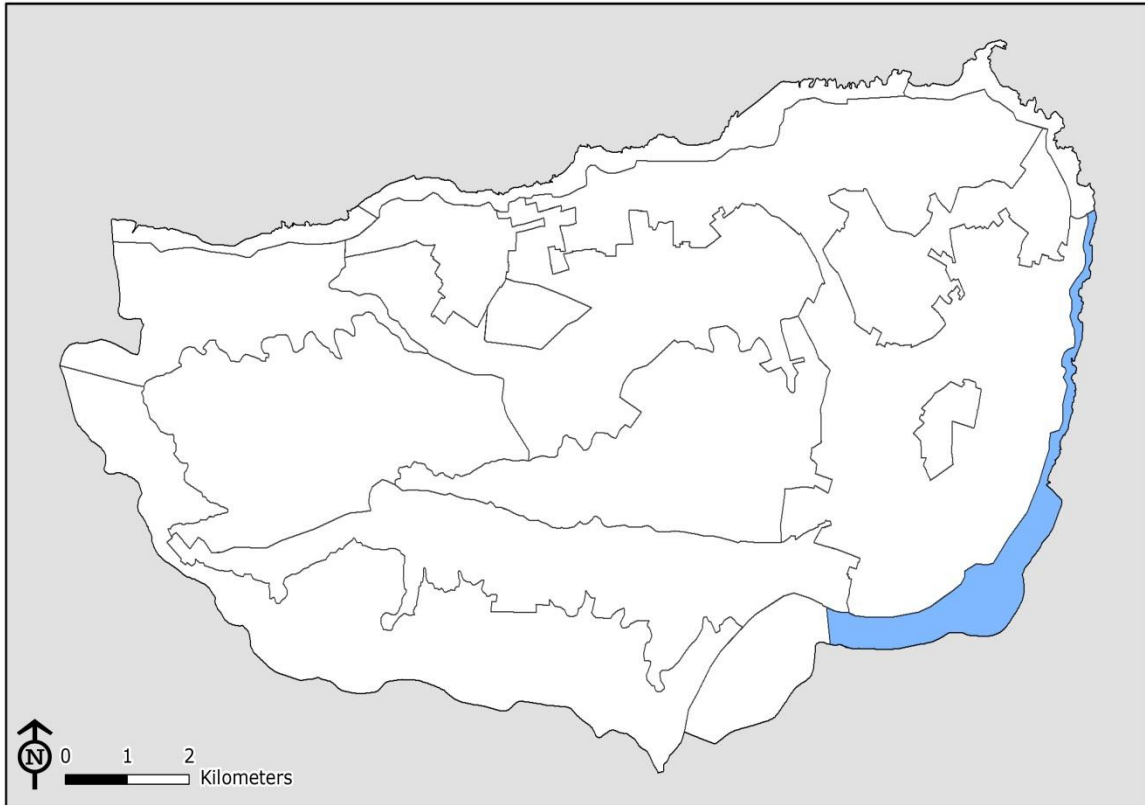
### Vision

- 4.151 The overall strategy for Minnis Bay (F3) is to conserve and, where practical, restore and enhance the interest of the coastal habitats and species as part of a wider programme of coastal habitat restoration and management within Thanet. The strategy for future management of the shoreline may provide opportunities for managed realignment, allowing breaching of the sea wall and potential for reinstatement of grazing marsh and wetland networks connecting with Wade Marsh (LCA E2). This vision also recognises the role of Minnis Bay in providing opportunities for access, recreation and tourism. The Management Scheme for the North East Kent Marine Protected Area and targets in the Thanet Cliffs and Shore BOA Statement should provide the framework for future action.
- 4.152 The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM), in respect of the Thanet Coast SPA, provides a mechanism to address recreational disturbance.

### Guidelines

- Maintain the essentially natural, remote character of the coast west of Minnis Bay minimising clutter, fencing and signage.
- Manage and enhance the areas of open grassland at Minnis Bay and Plum Pudding Island.
- Conserve the open sea views and notably the open horizons that exist between the offshore wind farms.
- Continue to manage the coast to provide opportunities for access and recreation, notably the coastal trails which provide wider connectivity to the Kent coast and manage recreational disturbance conflicts with wildlife (birds) according to the SAMM.
- Consider opportunities for managed realignment reuniting this area with the adjacent marshes and restoration of coastal and wetland habitats.

## Local Character Area G1: Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.153 The Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs extend along the south east facing coast of Thanet and comprise low chalk cliffs, containing small sandy bays including the historic port, harbours and resorts at Ramsgate and Broadstairs. This open seaward edge extends between the distinct undeveloped coast at **LCA F1: Pegwell Bay** to the south and **LCA F2: Foreness Point and North Foreland** to the north.
- 4.154 The area falls within **SCA C3C: Ramsgate Harbour** and **SCA C1E: Broadstairs to North Foreland** as defined by the *Seascape Character Assessment for the Dover Strait*<sup>10</sup>.
- 4.155 Note that this character area description is limited to the open coastline and, while it makes reference to adjacent urban settlements (Broadstairs, Ramsgate) as part of the context, it is not a detailed townscape assessment.

<sup>10</sup> Seascape Scahracter Assessment for the Dover Strait (July 2015) LUC



## Photos



Along the coast urban development is framed by sandy beaches and white cliffs.

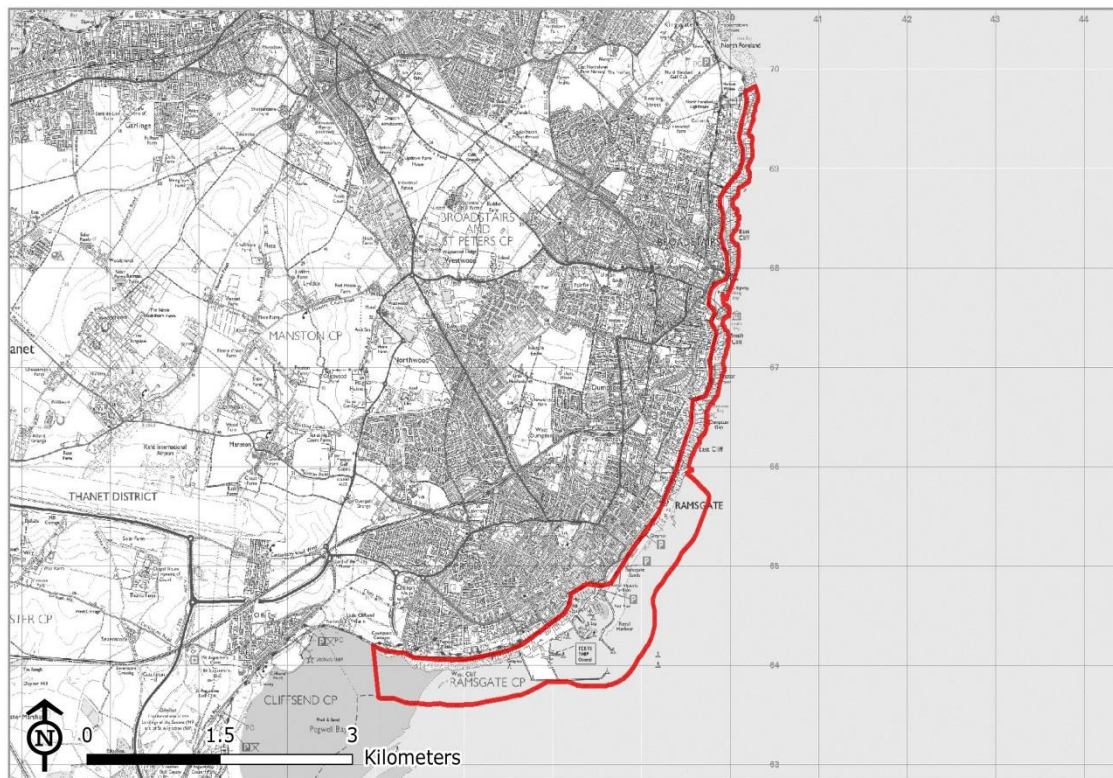


Ramsgate Marina creates a busy and lively coastal area with buildings at Ramsgate forming a backdrop.



Sandy bays intersperse the coastline, as at Broadstairs

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.156 The distinctive east facing low chalk cliffs of Thanet and the open seascape create a dramatic contrast to the almost continuous urban area of Ramsgate and Broadstairs located on the cliff top.
- 4.157 The chalk cliffs contain a series of sandy bays with chalk reefs, ledges, sea caves, platforms and rock pools backed by a line of low white chalk cliffs. The bays vary in character from wide sandy beaches at Viking Bay and Ramsgate Sands to the smaller bays of Dumpton Gap, Louisa Bay and Stone Bay providing important areas of open space for the urban area.
- 4.158 The entire coastline is of great biodiversity importance and forms part of the North East Kent Marine Protection Area, with multiple national and international designations. It is particularly noted for its bird populations, supporting important numbers of wintering birds as well as outstanding assemblages of both terrestrial and marine plant species. The cliffs are valued for their geological interest, including exposures of the Upper Chalk and support rare algal communities.
- 4.159 The cliff tops contain narrow area of amenity grassland, with residential development, often facing out over the seafront. Broadstairs and Ramsgate form part of the continuous urban area along the east Thanet coast, each town with a distinctive character and historic cores (Conservation Areas).
- 4.160 The harbour at Ramsgate was built in 1749 and remains the only Royal Harbour in the UK after it was granted royal status by King George IV in 1820. It has longstanding strategic importance due to its proximity to mainland Europe. The Harbour still serves as a base for fishing in the North Sea and has evolved to provide a marina and the commercial port is a construction and operational base for offshore wind farms. Broadstairs is focussed on Viking Bay, with its small working harbour and associated seaside attractions. Bleak House forms a landmark building on the cliff at Broadstairs.
- 4.161 The open beaches and elevated vantage points along the cliff tops allow for wide, sweeping views across the Dover Strait encompassing the offshore windfarms, plus container ships and tankers on the shipping lanes.

## Key Characteristics

- Continuous stretch of low white chalk cliffs containing small sandy bays and the historic harbours and resorts of Broadstairs and Ramsgate.
- Cliffs backed by narrow areas of amenity grassland and almost continuous urban development fronting the sea.
- Nationally and internationally designated coastal habitats support a rich diversity of marine and terrestrial wildlife.
- Popular beaches for recreation and tourism with seaside attractions creating a busy area in summer.
- Accessible coastline via the Coastal Path/Viking Trail and the numerous bays and beaches.
- Long views across the Dover Strait from the cliff tops and beaches, with inland views restricted by urban development.
- Offshore views include the Thanet wind farm and the busy shipping lanes of the Dover Strait.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.162 The harbour was bestowed the title of Royal Harbour by King George IV in 1820 and remains the only Royal Harbour in the UK. It is of strategic importance due to the relatively short distance from mainland Europe and was a chief embarkation harbour during the Napoleonic Wars and for the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940. A network of civilian wartime tunnels extends into the chalk cliff at Ramsgate. The Royal Harbour is part of the Ramsgate Conservation Area which recognises the special historic interest of the town.
- 4.163 The bays at Broadstairs also have strong cultural associations with the reputed landing of Hengist and Horsa in 449 AD. The town and harbour contains a wealth of architectural heritage and this is reflected within the Conservation Area around Viking Bay.

## Natural influences

- 4.164 The entire coastline is of great biodiversity importance and with the exception of Ramsgate Harbour and Viking Bay, forms part of the North East Kent Marine Protected Area, designated as SSSI, part of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, Thanet Coast SAC, and Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), and as a Ramsar site. It also forms part of the Thanet Cliffs and Shore Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). It is particularly noted for its bird populations, supporting important numbers of wintering birds, notably turnstones and golden plover, with wintering waders along the shores. There are outstanding assemblages of both terrestrial and marine plant species. The cliff themselves are valued for exposures of the Upper Chalk, while the area south and west of Ramsgate includes sea caves part of one of the most extensive chalk cave complexes in Britain and containing seaweed and other communities not found elsewhere.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.165 The chalk cliffs and sandy bays create a distinctive character and seascape setting to the cliff top conurbation of Broadstairs/Ramsgate, providing open views across the pattern of bays and cliffs and the Dover Strait. Broadstairs and Ramsgate contain intact historic cores of high quality and with a strong sense of place, recognised as Conservation Areas. The whole area functions as an important resource for tourism and recreation, as well as being highly valued for biodiversity.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- The continuous areas of low chalk cliffs and pattern of small sandy bays – with a strong open, seascape character contrasting with the immediately adjacent urban edge.
- Chalk ledges, reefs and platforms, sea caves, and rock pools that provide valuable habitat for marine flora and fauna.
- Low chalk cliffs, which are a striking visual feature as well as providing important exposures of the Upper Chalk, and habitat for rare algal communities.
- Terrestrial flora and fauna associated with the chalk coast including, importance for overwintering birds.
- Distinctive historic coastal cores of towns of Ramsgate and Broadstairs focussed around the harbour/marina and Viking Bay respectively
- Narrow open grassy cliff tops, which separate the coast from adjacent urban development, providing access to and views of the coast and seascape.
- Open sea views and sense of exposure despite proximity of the urban areas.
- Opportunities for recreational access on the cliff tops and sea wall *via* the Coastal path and Viking Trail.

## Landscape Strategy

### Vision

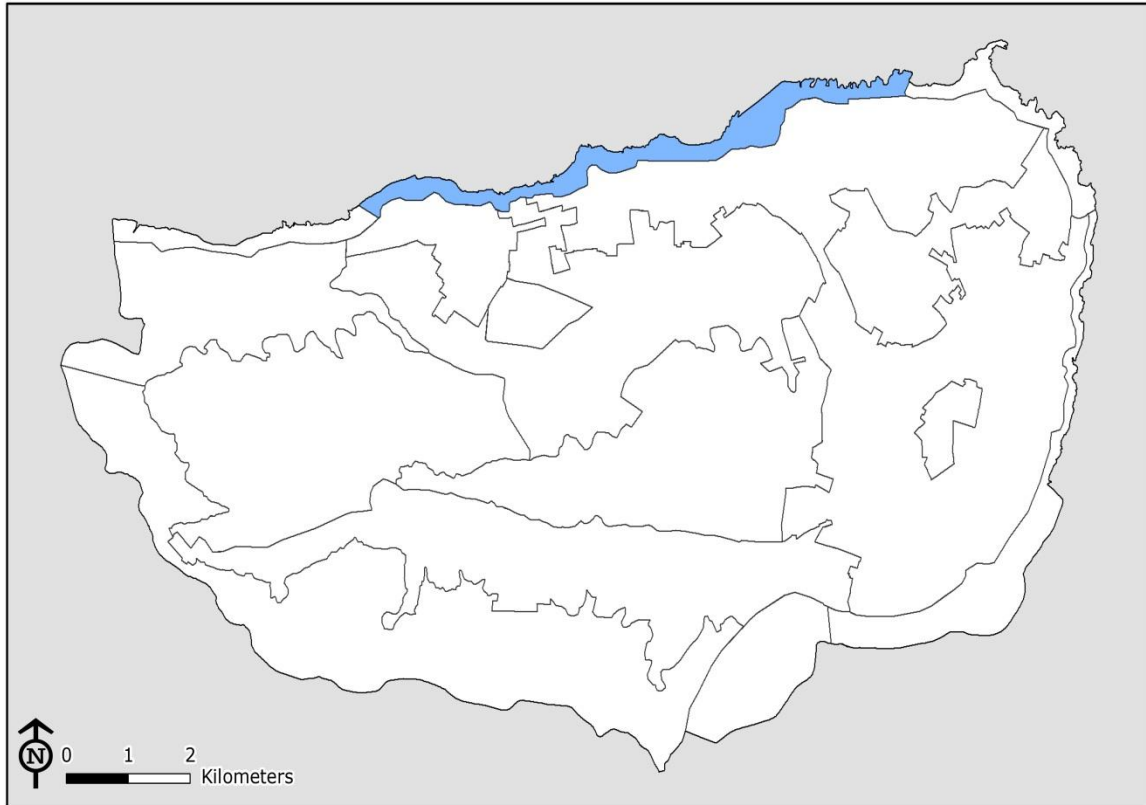
- 4.166 The overall strategy for the Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs (G1) is to conserve and, where practical, restore and enhance the interest of the coastal and marine habitats and species as part of a wider programme of coastal habitat restoration and management within Thanet. This vision also recognises the role of the coast as an important recreation and tourism resource with the beaches, bays, and harbours and marina associated with the historic coastal towns at Broadstairs and Ramsgate. The Management Scheme for the North East Kent Marine Protected Area and targets in the Thanet Cliffs and Shore BOA Statement should provide the framework for actions.
- 4.167 The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM), in respect of the Thanet Coast SPA, provides a mechanism to address recreational disturbance.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the pattern of sandy bays, chalk cliffs and areas of open amenity grasslands including opportunities to manage and enhance habitats for wildlife including restoration of cliff top chalk grassland where appropriate.
- On the immediate coastal edge seek to maintain the essentially natural character and contrast to the urban area minimising clutter, fencing and signage.
- Outside the main urban centres seek to retain the character of relatively low key, low rise seafront development and natural landscape setting.
- Conserve the open sea views and open horizons, in views from the beaches and cliff tops.
- Ensure any future coastal defence measures respect and enhance landscape and visual and biodiversity character.
- Continue to manage the coast to provide opportunities for access and recreation, notably the coastal trails which provide wider connectivity to the Kent coast and manage recreational disturbance conflicts with wildlife (birds) in accordance with the SAMM.



## Local Character Area G2: North Thanet Coast



### Location and Boundaries

- 4.168 The North Thanet Coast extends from the western edge of Birchington along the northern edge of Margate. It is joined by the undeveloped coasts of **LCA F2: Foreness Point and North Foreland** to the east and **LCA F3: Minnis Bay** to the west. The boundaries between the areas represent the zone of transition between urban and rural coastal influences.
- 4.169 Note that this character area description is limited to the open coastline and, while it makes reference to adjacent urban settlements (Birchington, Westgate and Margate) as part of the context, it is not a detailed townscape assessment.

## Photos



From the Turner Gallery in Margate there are views across the north Thanet coast terminating at the Reculver Towers on the skyline.

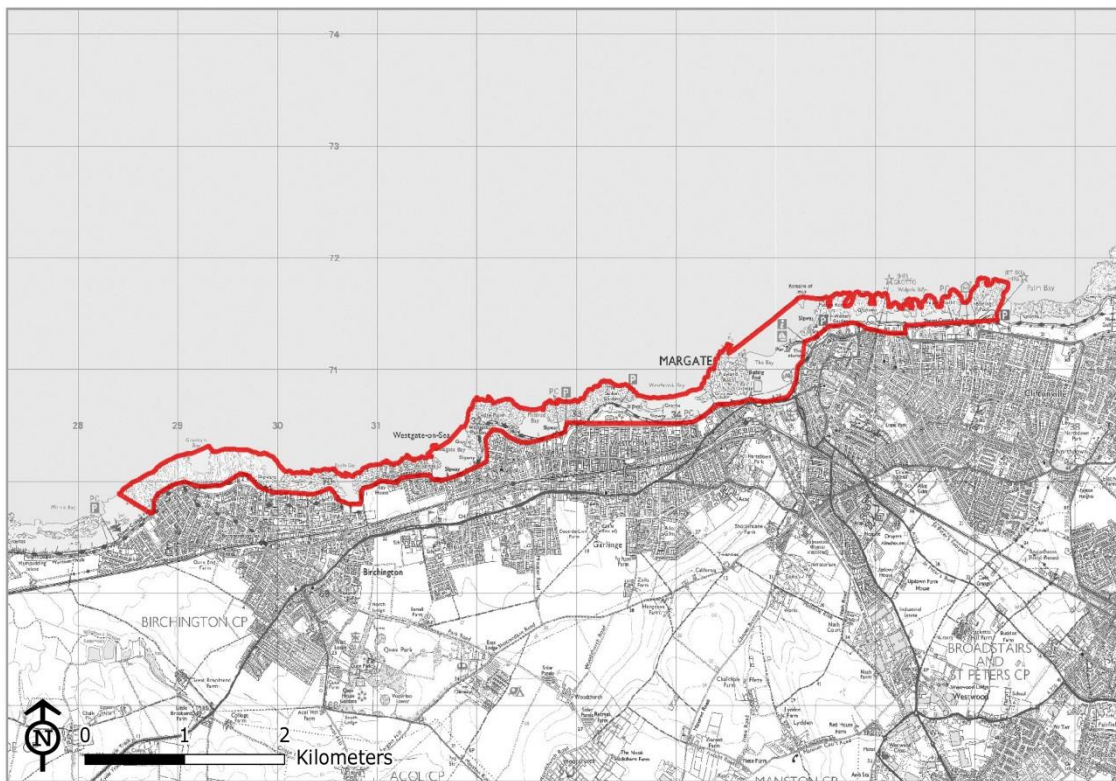


Distinctive low white chalk cliffs characterise the coast, defended by a concrete sea wall.



Breaks in the cliffs provide access to the shore. Cliff tunnels are associated with historic smuggling.

## Character Description



### Summary

- 4.170 The North Thanet Coast is characterised by a series of sandy bays with chalk reefs, mudflats and rock pools backed by a line of low white chalk cliffs. The bays vary in character from wide sandy beaches at Margate Sands, to the small shingle beach at Grenham Bay, and include Epple Bay and Walpole Bay. Some bays are fully submerged during high tide, and with extensive chalk reefs and mudflats being revealed during low tide. Tidal pools are also common and Walpole Bay includes one of the last tidal pools to be built.
- 4.171 The entire coastline is of great biodiversity importance, nationally and internationally designated and forms part of the North East Kent Marine Protection Area. It is particularly noted for its bird populations, supporting both important numbers of wintering birds and outstanding assemblages of both terrestrial and marine plant species. The cliffs are valued for exposures of the Upper Chalk and support rare algal communities.
- 4.172 The cliff tops support narrow area of amenity grassland, with residential development facing out over the seafront. The golf course at Westgate provides a break in the built up area at the coast with an open area separating Birchington from Westgate. Sea walls have been constructed around much of the north coast providing a concrete apron that protects the cliffs and also provides recreational access to the base of the cliffs. An undefended section of the cliff remains between Epple Bay and Westgate Golf course.
- 4.173 This entire coast area is popular for recreation and tourism and the beach at Westbrook Bay has a designated water ski area with beach chalets. The extensive sands at Margate, famous for their Turner sunsets, are a traditional seaside resort with a wide range of beach activities.
- 4.174 The built development provides a backdrop to views from the beaches. Open unrestricted views across the Thames Estuary and North Sea can be obtained from the cliff tops and beaches encompassing a number of large offshore wind farms as well as ships sheltering on the Margate Roads before entering the shipping lanes of the English Channel north. Development is discernible along the coast, notably the high rise development at Margate.

## Key Characteristics

- Distinctive low, white chalk cliffs divided by a series of sandy and shingle bays;
- Cliffs backed by narrow areas of cliff top amenity grassland and urban development of Margate, Westgate and Birchington.
- A dynamic area that changes with the tides with fully submerged bays contrasting with extensive areas of mudflats, chalk ledges and rock pools exposed at low tide.
- Nationally and internationally designated coastal habitats support a rich diversity of marine and terrestrial wildlife, notably over wintering birds including turnstones and golden plover;
- Popular beaches for recreation and tourism with seaside attractions creating a busy area in summer.
- Sea wall at base of the cliffs provides robust coastal defence, with only a small area of undefended coast.
- Accessible coastline via the Coastal Path/Viking Trail. Open and exposed to the sea and winds channelling in from the North Sea.
- Long unrestricted views across the Thames Estuary and North Sea from the cliff tops and beaches, with inland views restricted by urban development.
- Experience of stunning sunsets over the sea as depicted in Turner's paintings from this part of the coast, and commemorated in the Turner Contemporary Gallery at Margate.
- A number of distinct landmarks discernible along the coast including the Margate Pier Lighthouse and high rise development.
- Offshore views to numerous wind farms, traffic on the shipping lanes and ships sheltering on the Margate Roads before joining the shipping lanes of the Channel and North Sea.

## Historic and cultural influences

- 4.175 Limited historical information available on this area, although there are smuggling legends, and cliff tunnels, associated with the coastline. The area is distinctive for the development of the seaside vernacular including beach huts, seafront bungalow development, and cliff top amenity areas including the gardens and at Westgate.

## Natural influences

- 4.176 The entire coastline is of great biodiversity importance and forms part of the North East Kent Marine Protected Area, designated as SSSI, part of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, Thanet Coast SAC, and Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), and as a Ramsar site. It also forms part of the Thanet Cliffs and Shore Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). The cliffs are, support important numbers of wintering birds notably turnstone and golden plover as well as wintering waders along the shoreline. There are outstanding assemblages of both terrestrial and marine plant species. The cliff section at Epple Bay, for example is particularly notable for study of chalk cliff algal communities. The cliff themselves are valued for exposures of the Upper Chalk.

## Evaluation

### Quality and condition

- 4.177 This is a well-managed coherent coastal landscape. It functions as an important resource for tourism and recreation, as well as being highly valued for biodiversity. Despite the fact that this is an urban, developed coast, there are relatively few detracting features and the white chalk bays and beaches and narrow undeveloped cliff top create a high quality and distinctive seascape.

### Key sensitivities and qualities

- The distinctive pattern of sandy and shingle bays backed by low chalk cliffs and essentially 'natural' character on the edge of the urban area.
- The chalk ledges, reefs and platforms, mudflats and rock pools that provide valuable habitat for marine flora and fauna.
- Low chalk cliffs, which are a striking visual feature as well as providing important exposures of the Upper Chalk, and habitat for rare algal communities.
- Ornithological interest including large numbers of wintering waders and wildfowl, including turnstones, sanderlings and plovers.
- Narrow open grassy cliff tops, which separate the coast from adjacent urban development, providing access to and views of the coast and seascape.
- Open sea views, particularly the open horizons that exist between the wind farms, and opportunities to experience stunning sunsets over the sea.
- The open rural gaps to the coast that provide separation between the built up areas of Birchington and Westbrook.
- The generally low rise residential seafront development that fronts onto the cliffs (outside of Margate) which maintains the sense of an open undeveloped coast, particularly from the beaches and base of the cliffs.
- Opportunities for recreational access on the cliff tops and sea wall *via* the Coastal path and Viking Trail



## Landscape Strategy

### Vision

- 4.178 The overall strategy for the North Thanet Coast (G2) is to conserve and, where practical, restore and enhance the interest of the coastal and marine habitats and species as part of a wider programme of coastal habitat restoration and management within Thanet. This vision also recognises the role of the coast providing opportunities for access, recreation and tourism. The Management Scheme for the North East Kent Marine Protected Area and targets in the Thanet Cliffs and Shore BOA statement should provide the framework for actions.
- 4.179 The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM), in respect of the Thanet Coast SPA, provides a mechanism to address recreational disturbance.

### Guidelines

- Conserve the pattern of sandy bays, chalk cliffs and areas of open amenity grasslands including opportunities to manage and enhance habitats for wildlife including restoration of cliff top chalk grassland.
- Maintain the essentially natural character of the coast minimising clutter, fencing and signage.
- Retain the character of relatively low key, low rise seafront development along the coast and cliffs (outside Margate).
- Conserve the open coastal gap between Birchington and Westgate, which provides visual separation between the urban areas helping to retain their individual distinction and identity.
- Conserve the open sea views and notably the open horizons that exist between the offshore wind farms. The large number of wind farms in view from this coast may suggest that the area is reaching capacity.
- Maintain the sea wall and ensure any future coastal defence measures respect and enhance landscape and visual and biodiversity character.
- Continue to manage the coast to provide opportunities for access and recreation, notably the coastal trails which provide wider connectivity to the Kent coast and manage recreational disturbance conflicts with wildlife (birds) in accordance with the SAMM.

**Appendix 1: Field survey sheet (example)**

# FIELD SURVEY RECORD: THANET LCA

Draft Character Area.....

## General

|              |                                                                      |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Surveyors    |                                                                      |
| Date         |                                                                      |
| Time         |                                                                      |
| Weather      |                                                                      |
| Photo no's:  | <i>Also refer to separate photo ref sheet</i>                        |
| Adjacent LCA | <i>Note cross boundary classifications with Canterbury and Dover</i> |

## Location and boundaries

*Note boundaries and reasons why, + mark on OS base*

## Key words/summary of landscape character

Add key words for description- natural, cultural and perceptual/experiential factors

## Key Characteristics

|                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Key characteristics</b>                                                                                                                        |  |
| <b>Elevation and landform</b>                                                                                                                     |  |
| <b>Hydrology</b>                                                                                                                                  |  |
| <b>Visible cultural influences</b><br><br>(prompts: road, settlement, farm buildings, historic features, development)                             |  |
| <b>Land use/land cover</b><br><br>(prompts: farmland, crop types, trees and woodland types and pattern, paddock, parkland, natural habitats)      |  |
| <b>Field patterns and boundaries</b><br><br>(prompts: size, scale, boundary types/presence, pattern, hedgerow trees)                              |  |
| <b>Settlement</b><br><br>(prompts: pattern, density, style/materials, edge character and relationship to landscape)                               |  |
| <b>Perceptual and experiential</b><br><br>(prompts: scale, enclosure, diversity, texture, form, colour, balance, movement, pattern, tranquillity) |  |
| <b>Views and visibility</b><br><br>(prompts: views – extent, key features, intervisibility with adjacent landscapes and seascape)                 |  |

## Key sensitivities/ Valued Features

***Add notes on any key sensitivities /valued features/qualities observed on site.  
Consider:***

*Prompts: Scale, Landform, Landscape pattern and complexity, Settlement patterns, edge and form, Time depth and historic character, Inter-visibility with adjacent landscapes, Perceptual aspects (sense of remoteness and tranquillity), Habitats and Biodiversity, Functional attributes (e.g. role as setting, gap etc. )*

## Condition/Detractors

*Note fs observations on physical state of the landscape:*

- Typical character represented
- Intactness of the landscape (including land management/decline)
- Condition of individual elements
- Visual, noise intrusions
- Development – including settlement, roads and agricultural buildings which may be unsympathetic to existing character



## Landscape Strategy/Vision

### **Strategy**

*Add a short succinct statement to encapsulate the main desired direction of change (circle)*

Protection

Planning

Management

## Guidance

*Add fs observation notes on opps to contribute to the overall strategy*

## Additional Notes

## Appendix 2: User Guide

The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for Thanet can be used to ensure landscape character and context is given due consideration when planning any type of change.

It should be used by developers before submitting application and can be used as an evidence baseline for the local authority is making decisions and by the public in reviewing proposed changes to ensure that landscape is given due consideration both in terms of the potential impacts of change/development as well as opportunities and potential mitigation.

The flow chart presented overleaf aims to help use of the LCA in decision-making and is arranged around a number of key stages, setting out a series of questions as prompts to help ensure the information in the LCA is used to shape proposals / assist in planning decisions.

Note: This document will also underpin landscape policy, as set out in a separate note to the LPA.

## How to use the LCA (decision-making)

What type of change is proposed?



Which **Landscape Character Area (LCA)** is the proposal in [*refer to **Figure 3.1 or large scale map***]? *NB if a proposal is close to the edge of two or more LCAs all relevant profiles will need to be consulted. This is because boundaries are usually zones of transition with shared characteristics and because a change within one area can also affect neighbouring areas*



How will the proposal contribute to the **vision** for the landscape character area [***the vision is set out in the relevant LCA profile***]



Will any of the **key characteristics** be affected by the proposal [***key characteristics are set out in the relevant LCA profile***]

If so, which ones and how? And does this matter to overall character?



Will any of the **key sensitivities/ valued attributes** be affected by the proposal [***key sensitivities/ valued attributes are set out in the relevant LCA profile***]?]

If so, which ones and how?

Can these be avoided through better location or design?



Will the proposal contribute to or conflict with any of the **landscape guidance** [***guidance is set out in the relevant LCA profile***]?]

If so, which ones and how?



### **Summary**

- Can the proposal be altered in any way to avoid adverse effects on key characteristics, sensitivities or valued attributes?
- If not, can adverse effects be reduced or mitigated? How?
- Can the proposal contribute to achieving the vision and overall strategy for the landscape?

## Appendix 3: Bibliography and References

### Guidance

*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014) Natural England

*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (2004) The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage

*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84* (2002) The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage

### Thanet Landscape Evidence Base Documents

*Thanet Local Plan 2006* (June 2006) Thanet District Council

*Draft Thanet Local Plan to 2031 Preferred Options Consultation* (January 2015) Thanet District Council

*Thanet Natural Environment Topic Paper*, May 2013

*Preliminary report of the Isle of Thanet Landscape Assessment Survey*, Thanet District Council Planning Department, 1993

### Landscape Character Assessment Documents

*National Character Area 113: North Kent Plain* (October 2012) Natural England

*The Landscape Assessment of Kent* (October 2004) Jacobs Babbie for Kent County Council

*Seascape Character Assessment for the Dover Strait* (July 2015) LUC

*Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal* (2012) Jacobs

*Dover District Landscape Character Assessment* (January 2006) Jacobs Babbie

*Kent Historic Landscape assessment*, 2001

### Other Documents and Data Sources

*The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan* (2008) South East Coastal Group

UK Biodiversity Action Plan – Priority Habitat Descriptions, JNCC, 2008, Updated 2011

Historic England Listed Building Entries, Accessed November 2016

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

English Heritage Places to Visit, Accessed November 2016

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/>

Explore Kent Activities, Accessed November 2016

<http://explorekent.org/activities>