



# Swale Local Landscape Designations

## Review and Recommendations

Final Report Swale Borough Council  
Prepared by LUC  
October 2018





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Final Report  
October 2018

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# Introduction & Method



# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council (SBC) adopted their Local Plan "Bearing Fruits 2031" in 2017. The plan is currently subject to review with a commitment to adopt the next Local Plan in 2022. As part of the Local Plan Review SBC commissioned LUC to undertake a review of local landscape designations across the borough to assist the local planning process. This report presents the results of the review and recommendations on local landscape designations.
- 1.2 This report does not consider other local designations such as settlement gaps/green wedges or countryside gaps which are subject to a separate process and different assessment criteria.

## Background





- 1.3 Swale contains some of our finest landscape with some 20% of the Borough nationally designated as part of the Kent Downs AONB. Its quality is furthermore represented by Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) Kent Level and Areas of High Landscape Value Swale Level which cover a further 39% of the area. These designations are illustrated on **Figure 1.1** and background provided below.
- 1.4 In 1980 Kent County Council recognised a series of landscapes that were considered to be important strategic assets at the County level. These were called Special Landscape Areas (SLA). In Swale these areas covered:
  - the lower dip slope to the north of the AONB and associated dry valleys - North Kent Downs SLA;
  - the marshlands along the Swale's coastal edge forming part of the North Kent Marshes SLA extending across the Borough boundaries;
  - Blean Woods SLA in the east forming part of the wider complex of ancient woodland in Canterbury District.
- 1.5 These SLAs were given formal protection in the Kent Structure Plan (1980) with boundaries first defined by the Kent Countryside Local Plan (1983). Their boundaries were refined by local authorities through their local plans. In the case of Swale this was first undertaken for the Swale Borough Local Plan 2000. The SLAs were based on defined criteria and have now been established for over 40 years with considerable support. In Swale, the Borough Local Plan of 2000 also identified a series of Local Landscape Areas. These were supplemented and amended and retitled Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) in the 2008 Swale Borough Plan. The 2017 Borough Local Plan renamed SLAs as Areas of High Landscape Value (Kent Level) whilst the remaining areas were renamed as Areas of High Landscape Value (Swale Level). The Swale Level local designations comprise:
  - Tonge and Luddenham;
  - Iwade, Newington and Lower Halstow;
  - Boughton Street, Hernhill, Dargate and Staplestreet;
  - Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes.
- 1.6 The local designations have been subject to reviews in 2003 (Babtie Group) and 2014 (SBC) which both recommended the retention of the two tier level of local designation, albeit with minor alteration to boundaries and additions of further areas. The reviews have been undertaken to varied criteria with some incremental addition of areas. The 2014 work recommended the need for a full and comprehensive review. This project will provide evidence to show the reasons why the landscapes have been locally designated (identified qualities) and why they are locally valued and robust definition of boundaries.



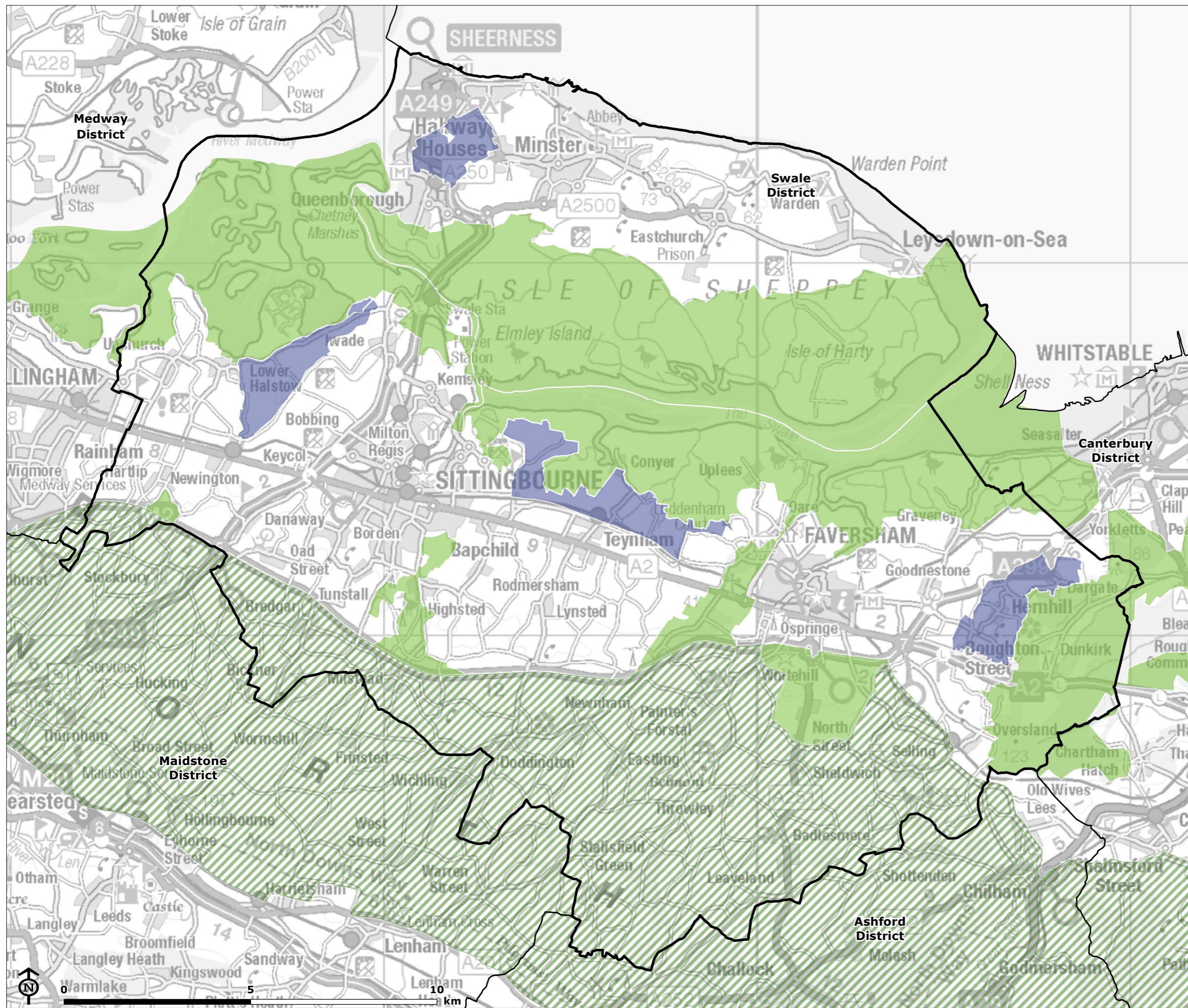
**Figure 1.1 Current National and Local Landscape Designations in Swale**

## Swale Local Landscape Designations Review

**Figure 1.1: Current National and Local Landscape Designations in Swale**

-  Swale District boundary
-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Areas Of High Landscape Value - Kent Level
-  Areas Of High Landscape Value - Swale Level

Map shows relationship with designations in adjacent districts



Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000



## This study

- 1.7 Swale Borough Council commissioned LUC in April 2018 to carry out a full review of the landscape across the borough to provide evidence to underpin a robust set of Local landscape Designations (LLDs) to inform landscape policies in the new Local Plan. In summary, the objectives of the study are to:
- review the two tiers of local landscape designation (Kent Level and Swale Level) and determine whether these remain appropriate;
  - develop appropriate criteria and examine all the existing locally designated landscapes in the borough and their boundaries and make recommendations;
  - assess the result of the Valued Landscapes consultation undertaken by SBC in 2017/2018 and use as part of the evidence to inform the review;
  - consider the designation of new areas, including those recommended in the Interim Review (2014) and others;
  - recommend a refined set and mapped boundaries of proposed LLDs within Swale;
  - describe and evaluate the special qualities and significance of the agreed LLDs through the production of Statements of Significance.

## A note on Valued Landscapes

- 1.8 A summary of current thinking on the meaning and terms relating to valued landscapes is set out below, with an indication of what this means for the Swale Review.

### The ELC – all landscape are of value

- 1.9 At the outset it is important to note that all landscape is of value. This principle was established by the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which came into force in the UK in March 2007. The ELC recognises that landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas. The ELC definition of 'landscape' considers that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding. It defines landscape as: "*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*".
- 1.10 The ELC establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. The 'all landscape' approach in Swale is represented by the comprehensive Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal SPD 2011.

### Valued landscape and the NPPF

- 1.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>2</sup> was re-issued in July 2018 recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services that it provides.
- 1.12 In paragraph 170 it states that: "*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: .....protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.....(in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*"
- 1.13 It goes on to say in paragraph 171 that "*Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.*"

- 1.14 The NPPF does not offer a definition of what constitutes a 'valued landscape'. However, case law has reached a broad consensus among planning, law and landscape professionals on issues around valued landscapes. While designated landscapes, including Local Landscape Designations, are likely to be considered 'valued' for the purposes of the para 170 of the NPPF, it is important to note here that non-designated areas can also be 'valued'.
- 1.15 Case law indicates that:
- Many areas of countryside are understandably valued by local residents, but to be considered "valued" in the context of NPPF, there needs to be something "special" or out of the ordinary that can be defined;
  - To be valued a site is required to show some demonstrable physical attributes rather than just popularity.

### **What does this mean for Swale's Local Landscape Designations?**

- 1.16 The retention of local landscape designations in Swale is in line with the NPPF. This review is therefore timely and will help:
- elucidate those 'special' landscapes within Swale that are valued;
  - define the attributes and identify the qualities (ref NPPF) that make them worthy of local designation;
  - ensure a robust and criteria based approach to defining locally designated landscapes;
  - provide a way to ensure local values as identified through the consultation exercise can help inform and strengthen the local landscape designations (not simply 'popularity').
- 1.17 It is relevant to note here that in Swale there will also be areas outside the local landscape designations that may also have a high landscape value, be locally valued and popular or possess features, attributes or qualities of value. This 'all landscapes' approach is the basis of the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (2011) which should be used to inform decisions and in due course will be subject to its own review.
- 1.18 The NPPF goes on to give detailed information on the great weight that should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In Swale, this is relevant to the Kent Downs AONB which has the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. This report is focussed on local landscape designations outside the AONB. Areas outside the AONB boundary may also form part of its setting and should be protected from change that would adversely influence the experience of the special qualities of the AONB.

## 2 Method

- 2.1 An essential element in reviewing and proposing areas for local landscape designation is the adoption of a systematic and transparent process.
- 2.2 There is no generally accepted methodology for reviewing or updating local landscape designations in England. Natural England recommended 'Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014) includes a definition of 'Landscape Value' in Annex 1, stated as:  
*"The relative value or importance attached to a landscape... which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues".*
- 2.3 The current Landscape Institute/ IEMA Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (third edition, 2013)<sup>1</sup> also includes a helpful summary of the range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These include landscape quality/condition, scenic quality, rarity, representativeness (important examples of characteristic features), conservation interests, recreation value, perceptual aspects and associations (set out in GLVIA Box 5.1).
- 2.4 Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland have published Guidance on Local Landscape Designations (SNH and Historic Scotland 2006), the revision of which (Draft – Guidance on Local Landscape Areas, SNH and Historic Environment Scotland, 2017) was being finalised at the time of this review. This includes recommendations on the key steps to follow and criteria to use when undertaking local landscape designation studies.
- 2.5 The methodology for this study of Swale draws from the above guidance as well as LUC's experience in undertaking designation reviews elsewhere in the UK.

### Geographic scope

- 2.6 The scope of the study includes a full review of the whole of the borough, including the existing LLD areas. It excludes land within the Kent Downs AONB, which is a nationally designated landscape. It does, however, consider relationships of the AONB with adjacent areas where they are relevant, for example having a distinct Kent Downs character or representing special qualities of the AONB and role as setting, as set out in the management plan.

### Links to the Swale Borough LCA

- 2.7 The review has been undertaken alongside the Swale Borough Landscape Character Assessment<sup>2</sup> referring to the framework of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), of which there are 42 within the Borough. However, it should be noted that the Landscape Character Assessment framework is based on broad variations in *landscape character* and not quality. There may, therefore, be differences in boundaries between the LCA and LLDs. In general where a LCA is indicated to merit designation the neighbouring LCA has also been reviewed to assess how it relates to the area and relevant qualities. All landscape character areas in Swale are likely to include some valued qualities or features.
- 2.8 **Figure 2.1** illustrates the landscape character framework and the existing landscape designations.

### Size and coherence

- 2.9 Local landscape designations should be of a sufficient size and form a coherent recognisable area. An important feature or site is not, on its own, enough to merit a local landscape designation. The following points are relevant:

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<sup>1</sup> This guidance is often referred to as 'GLVIA 3'

<sup>2</sup> Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, SPD, 2011, Jacobs

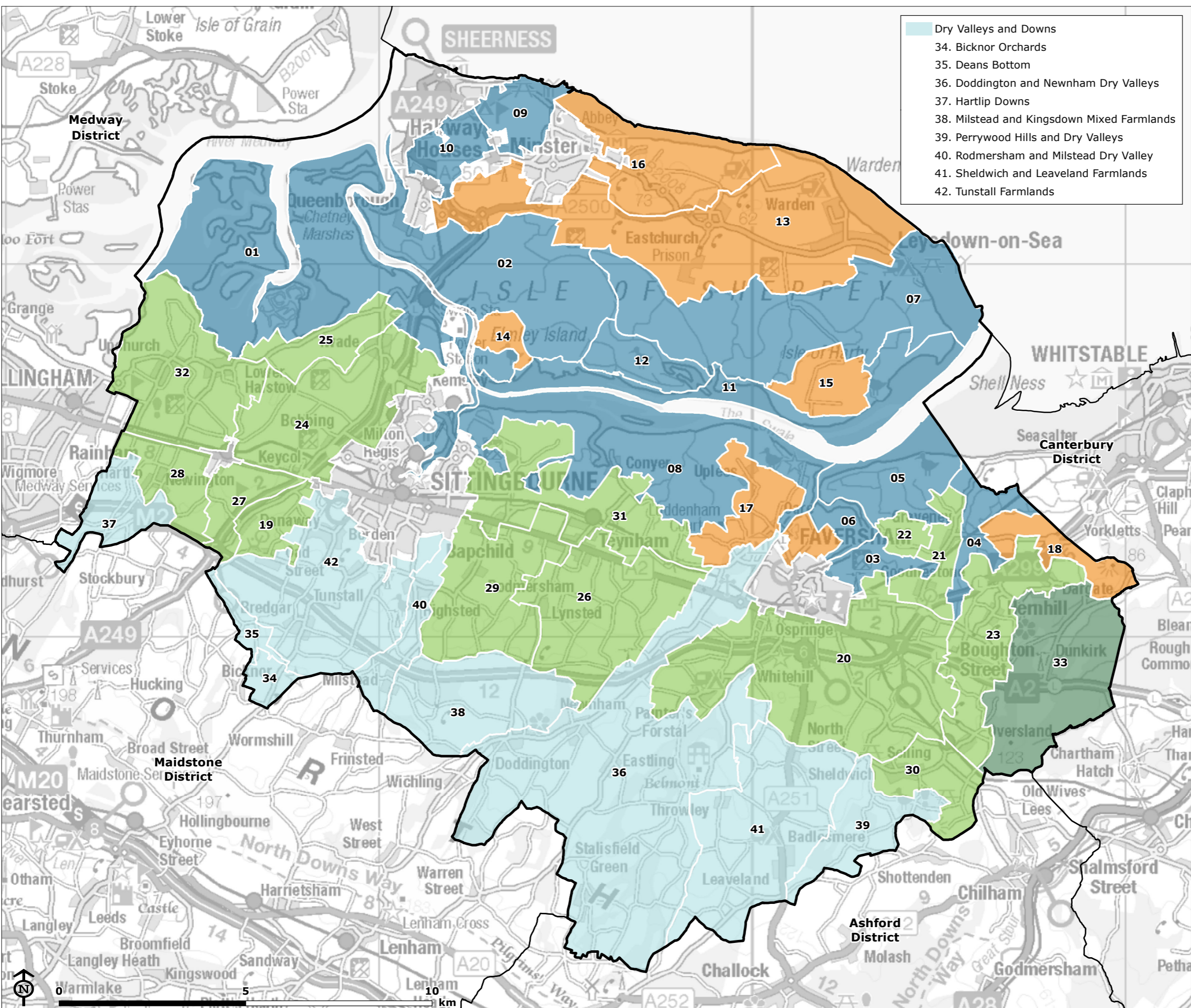
- Is the area of sufficient size to make it practical to develop policies for its protection, management and planning?
- Is the area recognisable as a cohesive place or entity (of consistent character)?

2.10 There will be many individual places, sites and features within the wider landscape of Swale which are of high quality but not within an LLD simply due to the reasons set out above.

## Figure 2.1 The Swale Landscape Character Framework

## Swale Local Landscape Designations Review

**Figure 2.1: The Swale Landscape Character Framework**



- Dry Valleys and Downs
- 34. Bicknor Orchards
- 35. Deans Bottom
- 36. Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys
- 37. Hartlip Downs
- 38. Milstead and Kingsdown Mixed Farmlands
- 39. Perrywood Hills and Dry Valleys
- 40. Rodmersham and Milstead Dry Valley
- 41. Sheldwich and Leaveland Farmlands
- 42. Tunstall Farmlands

- Swale District boundary
- Landscape Characterisation**
- Marshland
- 01. Chetney and Greenborough Marshes
- 02. Elmley Marshes
- 03. Goodnestone Grasslands
- 04. Graveney Grazing Lands
- 05. Graveney Marshes
- 06. Ham Marshes
- 07. Leysdown and Eastchurch Marshes
- 08. Luddenham and Conyer Marshes
- 09. Minster Marshes
- 10. Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes
- 11. South Sheppey Saltmarshes and Mudflats
- 12. Spitend Marshes
- Clay Farmlands
- 13. Central Sheppey Farmlands
- 14. Elmley Island
- 15. Isle of Harty
- 16. Minster and Warden Farmlands
- 17. Stone Arable Farmlands
- 18. Waterham Clay Farmlands
- Fruit Belt and Mixed Farmland
- 19. Borden Mixed Farmlands
- 20. Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt
- 21. Graveney Arable Farmlands
- 22. Graveney Fruit Farms
- 23. Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt
- 24. Iwade Arable Farmlands
- 25. Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands
- 26. Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands
- 27. Newington Arable Farmlands
- 28. Newington Fruit Belt
- 29. Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands
- 30. Selling Fruit Belt
- 31. Teynham Fruit Belt
- 32. Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt
- Woodlands
- 33. Blean Woods West

Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000

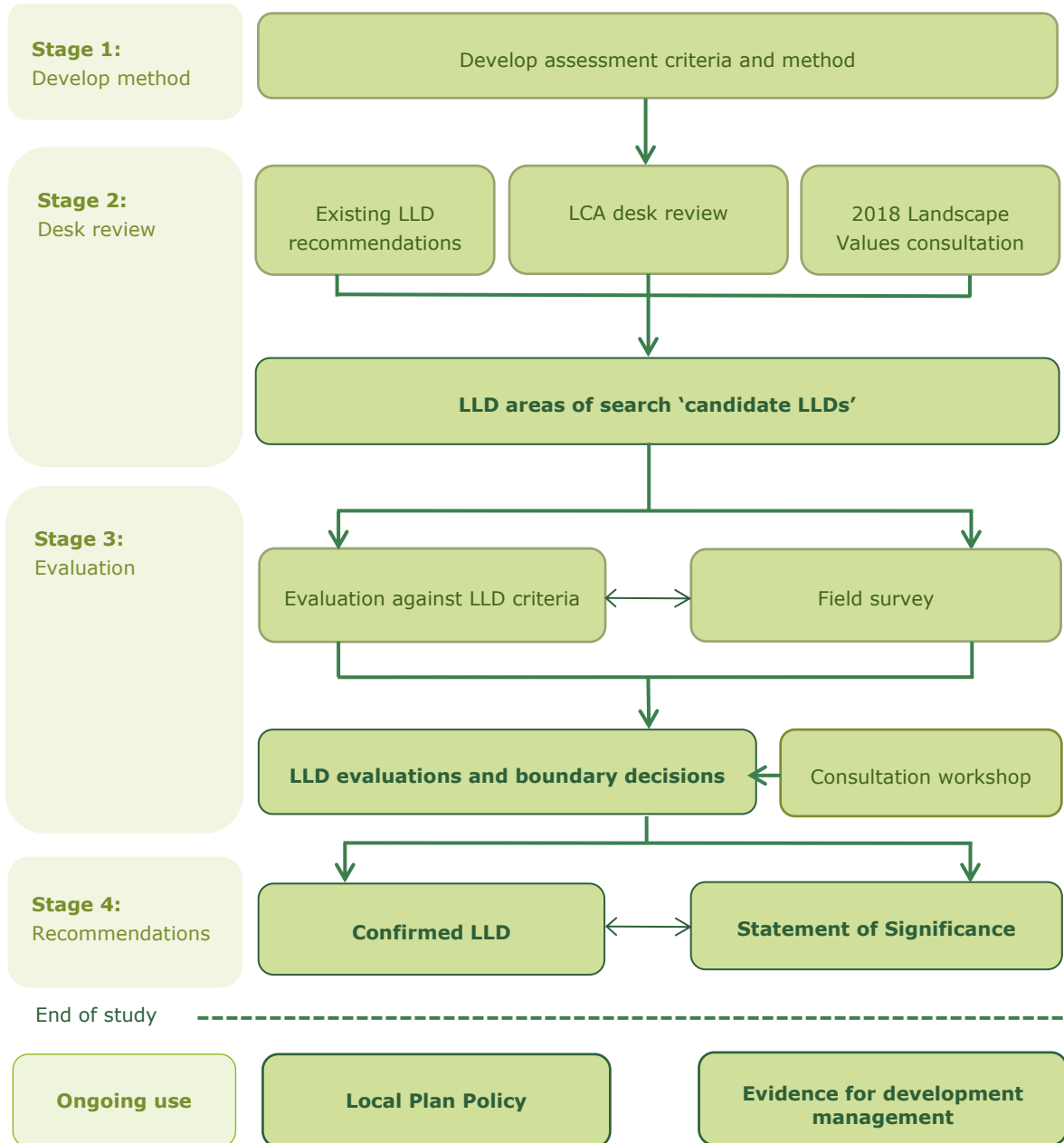




## Key stages and tasks

2.11 The review followed four main stages each focussing in at a more detailed level to develop the confirmed LLDs and Statements of Significance identifying their qualities.

**Figure 2.2: Flow chart - method for identifying Swale LLDs**



### Stage 1: Method development

2.12 This required a discussion with SBC to understand the background to local landscape designation and desired outcomes of the study. At this stage we also identified the assessment criteria as presented in Chapter 4. These draw on criteria identified in GLVIA3, Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural England and previous studies.

### Stage 2: Desk review

2.13 Stage 2 involved three main strands of work:

- Review of landscape values consultation – an analysis of the SBC 2017/2018 written consultation to review information and use as evidence in the LLD review (**Appendix 1**). The results of this exercise are presented in chapter 3.
- A rapid first sieve of the 42 Swale landscape character areas against the criteria to identify areas of search for the LLD areas. These are presented in a separate Annex report, previously provided to SBC.
- Review of existing LLDs and recommendations as contained in the 'Swale Landscape Assessment Recommended Amendments to Landscape Designations' (Babtie, 2003) and the 'Technical Paper 6, Interim review of Local Landscape Designations (SBC, 2014).

2.14 The result of Stage 2 was an identified 'area of search' for LLDs, consolidated as 13 'candidate LLDs' for evaluation.

### Stage 3: Evaluation and definition of boundaries

2.15 Stage 3 involved a bespoke field survey of candidate LLDs using a structured survey form (**Appendix 2**) to consider the criteria and identify appropriate and robust boundaries. As part of the field survey the current condition and quality of the landscape was judged against that identified at time of designation as set out in the 2003 and 2014 reports referenced above.

2.16 Landscape is a continuum and the LLD boundaries are generally drawn to identifiable features on the ground such as field boundaries or roads that provide a 'best fit' and often drawn to character area boundaries for ease of reference. There will therefore rarely be a perceptible change in landscape character and quality along boundaries.

2.17 The outputs of the evaluation exercise are presented in chapter 6 with recommendations on LLD areas to be confirmed and areas where decisions need to be made.

### Stage 4: Recommendations for Confirmed LLD Areas

2.18 The final stage included a stakeholder workshop to review the results and show how local values have been taken into consideration and confirm the LLDs for Swale. Decisions on areas of change were agreed with SBC.

2.19 Statements of significance for the confirmed LLDs are provided as a separate document and use the evaluation criteria to set out identified qualities for each LLD.

# Identifying LLD Areas of Search



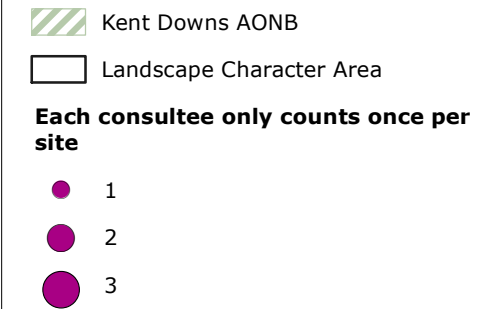
### 3 Understanding local landscape values

- 3.1 Swale BC has placed an emphasis on understanding the value placed on the landscape by local residents, for example as part of Local Plan consultations. In November 2017 Swale Borough Council requested the views of stakeholders, statutory and non-statutory organisations on the specific landscapes they value to provide information to inform the review of Local Landscape Designations.
- 3.2 Stakeholders were invited to identify the landscapes which they valued, pinpointing these on a map and linking these areas to criteria or reasons for valuing. The respondents were also asked to comment on the criteria used for assessing the value of landscapes. The consultation letter and map sent out to stakeholders are provided as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 A total of 29 responses were received and collated by SBC and provided to LUC. This section provides an analysis of responses to help inform the review of local landscape designations. It uses the landscape character framework to provide a spatial understanding of the distribution of responses. The responses received are also listed in the appendix.
- 3.4 Any consultation response which referred to areas within significant built up areas has not been analysed, as landscape designations relate only to rural areas. The Landscape Character Areas which are entirely within the Kent Downs AONB (LCAs 34, 35, 39 and 41) are also all excluded from this study, as the AONB is a national designation and is not being assessed as part of this study of local landscape designations.
- 3.5 The number of individual responses received for each character area are noted in **Table 3.1**, and illustrated in **Figure 3.1**. If more than one stakeholder identified the same valued landscape, feature these are still shown as each point on the map. Information on the number of responses per character areas is noted below.
- 3.6 Landscapes are valued throughout Swale, with particular clusters south of Sittingbourne, and around Eastchurch. There are fewer character areas with valued attributes in the centre of the Borough, between Sittingbourne and Faversham, and there are 11 character areas which are not identified with any particular values. However, some of the responses refer to a wider area than a single point on a map can illustrate, which may extend some of the valued characteristics into other character areas.

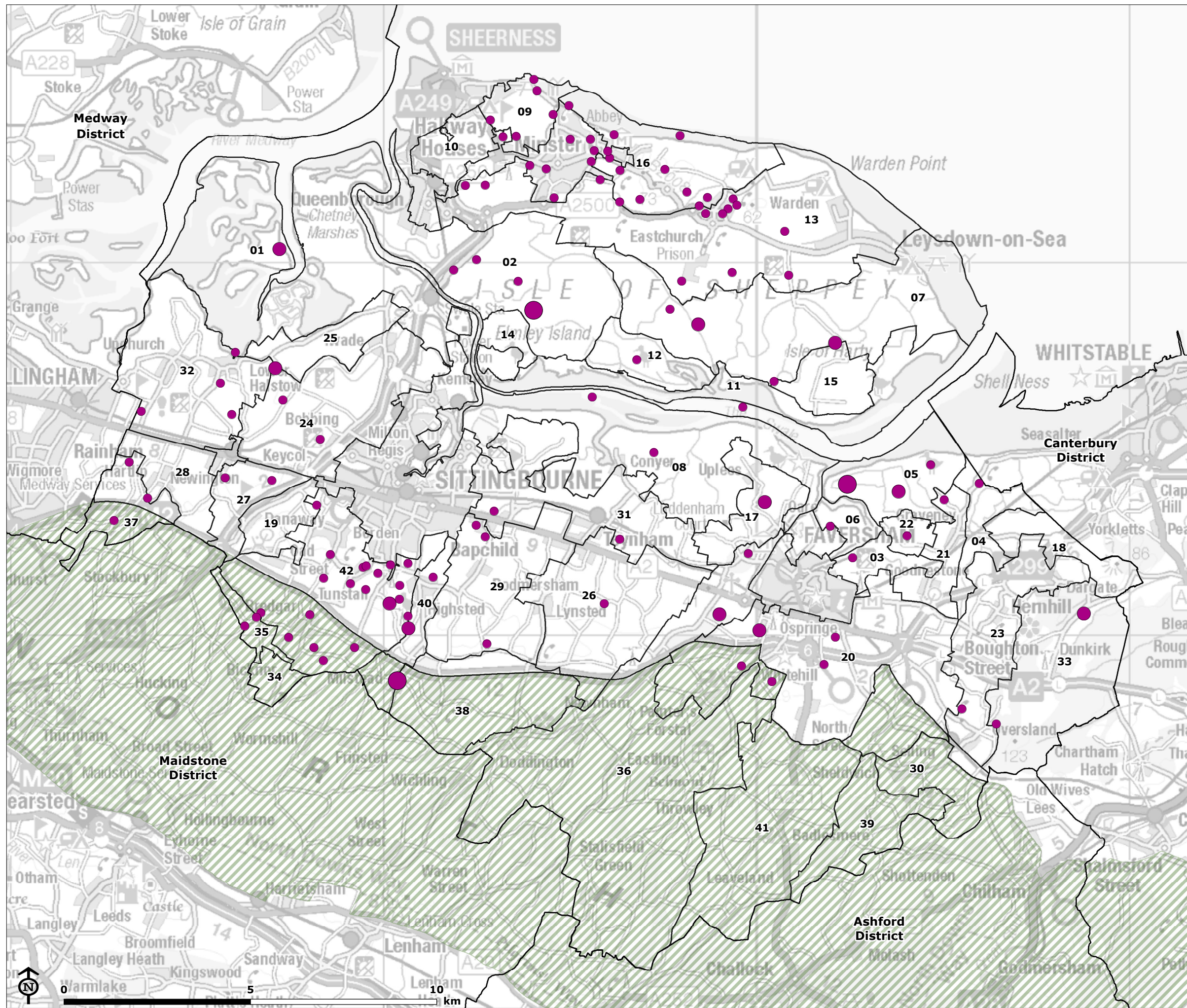
### Figure 3.1 Spatial Mapping of Local Landscape Values

## Swale Local Landscape Designations Review

**Figure 3.1: Spatial Mapping of Local Landscape Values**



Dots are representative of locations where responses on landscape value have been reported and are not intended to represent specific locations. In some cases responses refer to a whole character area.



Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000



**Table 3.1: Number of responses received by character area****(note that zero does not mean not valued, simply no specific responses received)**

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Number of specific responses</b>
42: Tunstall Farmlands	14
13: Central Sheppey Farmlands	13
16: Minster and Warden Farmlands	10
2: Elmley Marshes	6
9: Minster Marshes	6
7: Leysdown and Eastchurch Marshes	5
20: Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt	4
40: Rodmersham and Milstead Dry Valley	4
5: Graveney Marshes	4
24: Iwade Arable Farmlands	4
1: Chetney and Greenborough Marshes	3
17: Stone Arable Farmlands	3
29: Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands	3
32: Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt	3
33: Blean Woods West	3
36: Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys	3
37: Hartlip Downs	2
27: Newington Arable Farmlands	2
3: Goodnestone Grasslands	1
31: Teynham Fruit Belt	2
4: Graveney Grazing Lands	1
8: Luddenham and Conyer Marshes	1
12: Spitend Marshes	1
21: Graveney Arable Farmlands	1
22: Graveney Fruit Farms	1
23: Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt	1
26: Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands	1
30: Selling Fruit Belt	0

Character Area	Number of specific responses
6: Ham Marshes	0
10: Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes	0
11: South Sheppey Saltmarshes and Mudflats	0
14: Elmley Island	0
15: Isle of Harty	0
18: Waterham Clay Farmlands	0
19: Borden Mixed Farmlands	0
25: Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands	0
28: Newington Fruit Belt	0
38: Milstead and Kingsdown Mixed Farmlands	0

3.7 The respondents were asked not only which areas they valued, but also the reasons why they value that landscape. The respondents were given seven criteria to choose from:

- Landscapes which are regionally or nationally rare;
- Landscapes which provide important habitats for wildlife;
- Landscapes with important built heritage;
- Landscapes which have widely known cultural associations;
- Landscapes that have distinctive scenic qualities;
- Landscapes that have a strong sense of wildness and tranquillity; and
- Landscapes which are important for outdoor recreation.

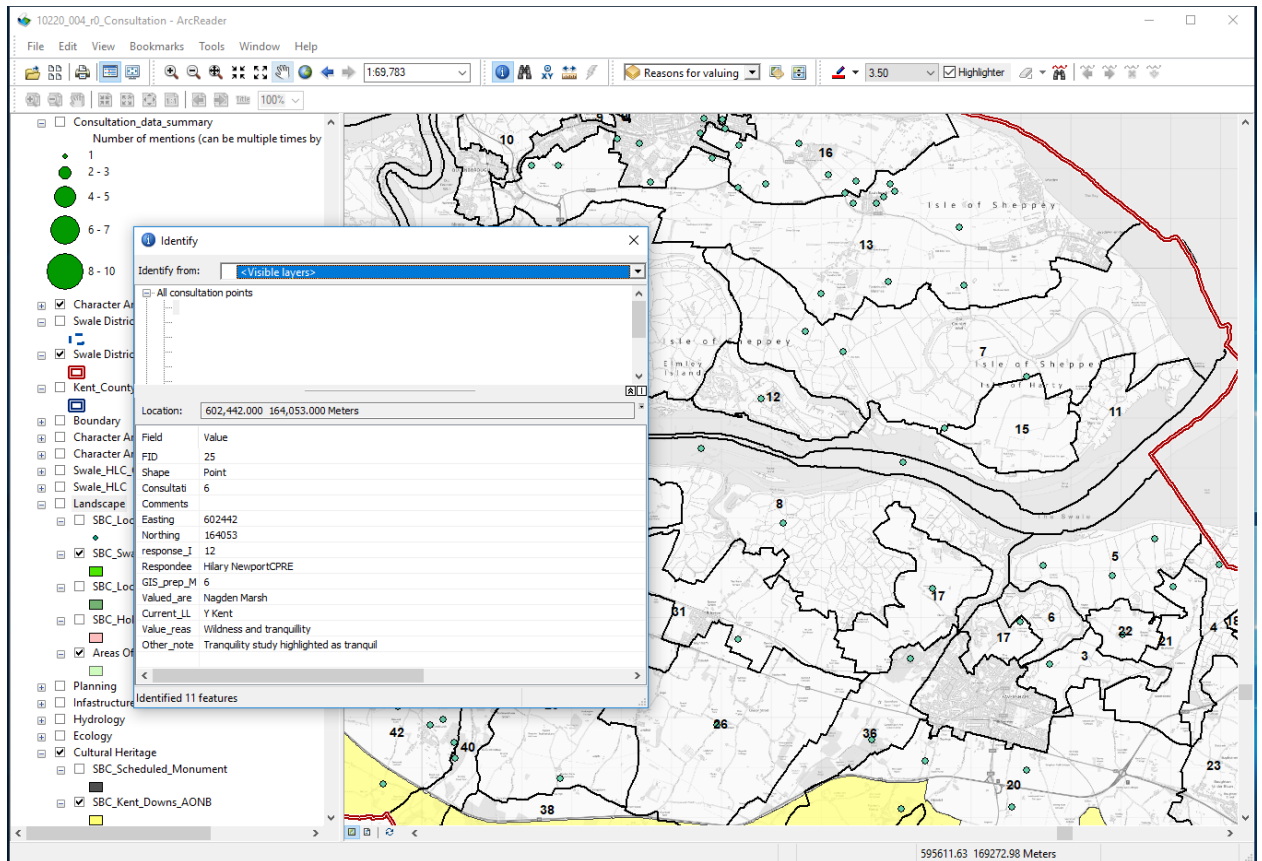
3.8 **Table 3.3** shows the reasoning for valuing each landscape.

3.9 Some consultees valued a landscape for more than one reason ie for both its wildlife habitats and outdoor recreation, and therefore the number of values recorded does not necessarily add up to the number of individual responses received. LUC digitised the consultation response data to use with GIS data. This allowed us to view all the consultation responses geographically, and on the GIS data each point can be clicked on to provide further details from the consultation. This also allows us to see areas which are valued by more than one stakeholder. An example screenshot of this is shown in **Figure 3.2**.

3.10 The data collated was used to highlight those features and qualities of the landscape that are especially valued by people and to investigate these as part of the field survey. It has been used to directly feed into the evaluation forming one of the 5 criteria.



**Figure 3.2 Screenshot from ArcGIS showing spatially mapped consultation response data**



**Table 3.2: Reasoning for valuing each landscape (listed in order of number of responses received)**

	Regionally or nationally rare	Wildlife habitats	Built heritage	Cultural associations	Scenic qualities	Wildness and tranquility	Outdoor recreation	No reason given	Other reason
42: Tunstall Farmlands		5	3	1	6	1	10		
13: Central Sheppey Farmlands		6	3	1	5	1	6		
16: Minster and Warden Farmlands	1	4		2	5	4	7		
2: Elmley Marshes	2	4	1	1	3	5	1		
9: Minster Marshes	2	3	1		3	3	5		
7: Leysdown and Eastchurch Marshes	2	3		1		4			
20: Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt		2	2	1	2		1	2	
40: Rodmersham and Milstead Dry Valley					2	1		1	
5: Graveney Marshes	3	2	1	1	2	6	2		
24: Iwade Arable Farmlands		1			4				
1: Chetney and Greenborough Marshes		1				3			
17: Stone Arable Farmlands		2	2	2	2	1	2		
29: Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands		1			2		1		
32: Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt				1	1		1	1	
33: Blean Woods West		1	1		1			2	
36: Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys		2	1	1	2		2	1	
37: Hartlip Downs			1		1				
27: Newington Arable Farmlands					1				1
3: Goodnestone Grasslands		1	1						
31: Teynham Fruit Belt					2				
4: Graveney Grazing Lands		1				1			
8: Luddenham and Conyer Marshes		2				1			
12: Spitend Marshes					1				
21: Graveney Arable Farmlands		1				1			
22: Graveney Fruit Farms		1			1				
23: Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt					1				
26: Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands					1				

## 4 The assessment criteria

4.1 The evaluation criteria are drawn from the source documents listed in chapter 2, including the SNH draft guidance and Box 5.1 in GLVIA3. They also draw on criteria developed by LUC in previous local designation studies that have been assessed as robust through the examination process. They have been refined to reflect the particular landscape of Swale. They are based on the following 5 factors:

- Local distinctiveness and sense of place;
- Landscape quality (condition and intactness);
- Scenic qualities;
- Landscape values (stakeholder);
- Natural and cultural attributes/associations.

4.2 The table below sets out the factors, indicators, and sources of information to reach a decision on whether an area is worthy of local landscape designation. The decision is based on professional judgement; not all factors need to be present; it is usually a combination and no weightings are applied. Natural and/or historic environment interest alone will usually be covered by other forms of designation and is unlikely to be sufficient for a local landscape designation unless it relates strongly to a distinctive sense of place and landscape and scenic quality. Professional judgement is used to evaluate factors and form a recommendation on designation as an LLD.

**Table 4.1: Swale Evaluation framework**

<b>Factor: Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>
A landscape which has a strong sense of place in the Swale context – either particularly representative/typical or rare
<b>Indicator:</b> <i>Landscape character lends a clear and recognisable sense of place</i>
<p>The area has a recognisable sense of place relating to eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive landscapes, part of recognised identity of Swale such as the marshes or the chalk downs</li> <li>• Distinctive landform such as valleys, large areas of flat land or key ridges forming a recognisable physical entity</li> <li>• Distinctive, rare or representative land cover/land use eg. patterns of fruit growing or extensive woodland cover, organic natural patterns, extensive natural habitats</li> <li>• An area representative of a particular phase in landscape history/development</li> </ul> <p>Source: LCA, Field Survey</p>
<b>Factor: Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>
A measure of the physical state of the landscape, including its intactness and condition of individual elements
<b>Indicator:</b> <i>Characteristic natural and human elements well represented throughout, and landscape elements and features are in good condition</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional attributes of the landscape e.g. ecological integrity visually coherent</li> <li>• Presence of well managed features in good condition</li> <li>• Absence of incongruous features/detractors or not visually intrusive</li> </ul> <p>Source: LCA, Field Survey, presence of other designations indicative of condition e.g. biodiversity</p>

### Factor: Scenic qualities

A landscape that appeals to the senses with particular sensory and aesthetic qualities relating to visual character or perceptual attributes such as sense of remoteness, tranquillity or wildness which are rare in SE England

**Indicator:** *Strong aesthetic/sensory qualities*

The area has strong aesthetic/sensory qualities e.g.

- Visual character – views, patterns of composition of vegetation/landform
- Expansiveness/openness, enclosure/seclusion  
Sense of relative remoteness/wildness/tranquillity
- Presence and/or perceptions of tranquillity natural landscape, birdsong, peace and quiet, dark skies/stars at night, stream, sea, natural sounds and similar influences
- Relative lack of human influence/ absence of incongruous features
- Uninterrupted tracks of land with few built features

Source: LCA, CPRE Night Blight/Dark Skies data, CPRE Tranquillity, Field Survey, Consultation comments

### Factor: Landscape values (stakeholder)

A measure of how the landscape is valued by stakeholders - residents, visitors/recreational users and where relevant, relationship to national landscape designations (Kent Downs AONB) through expression of special qualities or experience of the AONB.

**Indicator:** *Landscape indicated to be highly valued by people (resident, visitors) as well as recognised values for example expressing values and special qualities associated with the Kent Downs AONB*

- Evidence of recreational activity based on experience of the landscape (e.g. walking routes, activities such as birdwatching)
- Values expressed through SBC consultation which are considered to be 'more than' just popularity
- Special qualities or elements of landscape value relating to Kent Downs AONB e.g. setting of AONB expressed by demonstrating special qualities as outlined in the AONB management plan.  
Note that this factor is only relevant to those landscapes in proximity to the AONB.

Source: LCA, Field Survey, SBC Consultation, Kent Downs AONB Management Plan

### Factor: Natural and cultural attributes/associations

Presence of natural and cultural attributes or particular associations that contribute to the value of the landscape. These might include designations for biodiversity of historic environment value or cultural associations with the landscape.

Note that this criterion alone will not be enough in its own right for an LLD as likely to be covered under other designations in the Local Plan.

**Indicator:** *Visible expression of natural or cultural features/associations contributing to a distinctive sense of place and other aspects of scenic quality*

- Visible expression of geology creating distinctive sense of place
- Presence of wildlife and/or habitats, species that make a particular contribution to distinctive sense of place or other aspects of scenic quality
- Presence of settlements, buildings or other structures that make a particular contribution to distinctive sense of place or other aspects of scenic quality
- Visible presence of historic landscape types or specific landscape elements or features that provide evidence of time depth or historic influence on the landscape
- Associations with written descriptions, artistic representations, and associations of the landscape with people places or events

Source: Designations, HLC, LCA, local research

## 5 Desk study review and identifying LLD 'Areas of Search'

- 5.1 This chapter presents the results of stage 2 of the assessment. It sets out the findings of a 'first pass' desk study evaluation of the Swale Borough landscape character areas against the landscape value criteria. The purpose being to reach a rapid conclusion on whether a character area - meets, does not meet or partially meets criteria for local landscape designation (note partially may relate to a part of a geographic area or a whole area that has some value meriting designation). It is considered that this first principles approach is good practice as a starting point for identifying areas that are likely to be worthy of local landscape designation and scope out areas where further detailed work is not required. The desk assessment was only undertaken for those character areas falling outside or partially outside the AONB boundary, the remainder already being nationally designated.
- 5.2 The results of this rapid desk study assessment were provided in an initial report to SBC and set out in **Appendix 3** of this report.

### Desk review results

- 5.3 The desk study highlighted areas for more detailed review and evaluation as part of stage 3. They are set out in Table 5.1 below. All areas that are already designated or recommended for review in 2014 will go forward for detailed stage 3 evaluation and field survey. Only those areas not currently designated, proposed or recommended in the desk review are excluded at this stage. The results are illustrated in **Figure 5.1** and identified as 'Areas of Search' for LLDs.
- 5.4 The 'take forward' column includes the recommendation for inclusion as part of the 'area of search'. Some of the areas that do not meet the criteria as part of the stage 2 desk review are also taken forward for stage 3 evaluation and field survey, as indicated in the table, either because of their relationship to existing LLDS, previous proposals for designation or due to the high number of local values attributed. A justification is provided for any areas that are excluded at this stage.

**Table 5.1: Results of the desk assessment – identifying areas of search for LLDs (excluding LCAs wholly within the AONB)**

LCA no. (exc AONB)	Name	Current LLD	Take forward Stage 3 Evaluation	Notes to inform selection of 'areas of search' and field survey and justification for areas omitted
1.	Chetney and Greenborough Marshes	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation and check marsh extensions in surrounding character areas (32)
2.	Elmley Marshes	Y Kent level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation and consider: Small part of northern character area not currently in designation

LCA no. (exc AONB)	Name	Current LLD	Take forward Stage 3 Evaluation	Notes to inform selection of 'areas of search' and field survey and justification for areas omitted
				Field survey also to review western edge at Neatscourt marshes and Queenborough
3.	Goodnestone Grasslands	N	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation and consider for potential addition to local designation – part of wider marshland – asses boundary with 6
4.	Graveney Grazing Lands	Y (part) Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation including focus on areas covered by nature conservation designations and with special qualities extending north of the railway and small area to south of railway
5.	Graveney Marshes	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation as part of wider marsh landscape despite different condition/land use to other parts of the marshes
6.	Ham Marshes	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation and review boundary with area 3
7.	Leysdown and Eastchurch Marshes	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation and check boundary at Leysdown and with 13
8.	Luddenham and Conyer Marshes	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation and check LLD boundary in relation to area 17 and area 31
9.	Minster Marshes	N currently proposed for designation in 2014 study	Yes	Although this area does not meet the criteria in the desk review and has many detractors, it is locally valued. It is therefore taken forward for field survey as part of the stage 3 evaluation
10.	Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes	Y Swale	Yes	This area only partially meets the desk review criteria. It is currently designated and is therefore taken forward for the

LCA no. (exc AONB)	Name	Current LLD	Take forward Stage 3 Evaluation	Notes to inform selection of 'areas of search' and field survey and justification for areas omitted
		Level		stage 3 evaluation to assess current character and condition as part of the field survey
11.	South Sheppey Saltmarshes and Mudflats	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation.
12.	Spitend Marshes	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation.
13.	Central Sheppey Farmlands	N put forward for designation in 2014 study	Yes	This area does not meet the desk review criteria. It is taken forward for stage 3 evaluation and field survey due to its previous recommendation and extent of local values recorded.
14.	Elmley Island	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation.
15.	Isle of Harty	Y Kent Level	Yes	Area meets stage 2 desk review criteria. Field survey to provide full evaluation.
16.	Minster and Warden Farmlands	N put forward for in 2014 study	Yes	Area does not meet the desk review criteria, but is taken forward for stage 3 evaluation and field survey due to its previous recommendation and extent of local values recorded.
17.	Stone Arable Farmlands	N	No	Area does not meet the desk review criteria. It is not considered to be a locally distinctive landscape, and does not have high landscape and scenic qualities. It is representative of a rural landscape with some valued features. In defining boundaries for neighbouring marshland LLD consider role of this area in relation to Oare Creek and adjacent marshland including area at Uplees.
18.	Waterham Clay Farmlands	Y , small part to east in Blean Areas adjoining LCA 33 and 23 proposed	No	This area does not meet the desk review criteria. It partially meets some of the criteria and contains some locally valued elements. Field survey to review eastern part and boundary as part of Blean and Blean Edge LLDs (linking at Victory Wood).

LCA no. (exc AONB)	Name	Current LLD	Take forward Stage 3 Evaluation	Notes to inform selection of 'areas of search' and field survey and justification for areas omitted
		for designation in 2014 review		
19.	Borden Mixed Farmlands	N	No	<p>This area does not meet the desk review criteria.</p> <p>This area is representative of a rural landscape with small scale dry chalk valleys which are a locally attractive feature. It has a traditional built character which is protected through other designations. It does not meet the LLD criteria in the desk survey, although contains a number of valued elements and features (valleys and local vernacular). It is not taken forward as an area of search.</p>
20.	Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt	Y Part Kent Level	Yes (part)	<p>This area only partially meets criteria in the desk review.</p> <p>Stage 3 evaluation and field survey to concentrate on area south of M2, and interface with AONB where criteria may be met.</p>
21.	Graveney Arable Farmlands	Part Small part of marshlands to north = Kent Level	No	<p>This area as a whole does not meet the criteria in the desk review in terms of landscape quality and condition, although contains some locally valued features.</p> <p>The interface with the marshlands is considered further as part of the field survey.</p>
22.	Graveney Fruit Farms	N	No	<p>Area does not meet desk review criteria.</p> <p>Its importance as very small isolated area of traditional landscape is noted – however this is too small for designation a local landscape designation in its own right.</p>
23.	Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt	Part Part Swale Level Plus minor extension proposed north of	Yes	<p>Area meets the desk review criteria.</p> <p>Field survey to provide full evaluation and check LLD boundary. Consider whole character area LLD extending south of Boughton Street which appears to be similar character and quality.</p>



LCA no. (exc AONB)	Name	Current LLD	Take forward Stage 3 Evaluation	Notes to inform selection of 'areas of search' and field survey and justification for areas omitted
		Selling in 2014 review		
24.	Iwade Arable Farmlands	Y small part Swale Level and section east of Newington proposed for designation in 2014 review	Yes (part of area in relation to ridge)	Area as a whole does not meet the criteria for LLD in the desk review. Field survey to provide an evaluation of part area of LCA on ridge, in recognition of existing status and local landscape values attributed.
25.	Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands	Part Part Swale Level	Yes	This area partially meets the desk review criteria. Evaluation and field survey to assess potential role as backdrop and setting to the marshes and inherent scenic value as part of the ridge.
26.	Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands	N Section around Teynham, north of A2 proposed for designation in 2014 review	No	This area partially meets the desk review criteria and is on the whole representative of a good rural landscape. Part of the area is taken forward for stage 3 evaluation and field survey due to its previous recommendation. Consider area in relation to existing local designations adjacent.
27.	Newington Arable Farmlands	No	No	This area does not meet the criteria for LLD in the desk review. The landscape has lost much of its traditional character and is in a relatively poor condition, although contains locally valued elements.
28.	Newington Fruit Belt	No Area between Hartlip and Lower Hartlip proposed for designation in 2014	No	This area as a whole does not meet the criteria for LLD in the desk review, forming a moderate quality rural landscape with some locally valued elements. Note that the minor valley extending from the AONB at Hartlip will be considered as part of the stage 3 field evaluation.

LCA no. (exc AONB)	Name	Current LLD	Take forward Stage 3 Evaluation	Notes to inform selection of 'areas of search' and field survey and justification for areas omitted
		review		
29.	Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands	No  Section by Radfield/ Teynham proposed for designation in 2014 review	No	This area does not meet the desk review criteria for a LLD. It forms a rural landscape, much opened up for intensive arable farmland, although locally valued elements are present including a sense of openness and long views. The area will be considered in relation to the boundaries with area 40 as part of the field survey.
30.	Selling Fruit Belt	N  Area not in AONB identified as potential designation in 2014 review	Yes	Area meets desk review criteria  Stage 3 evaluation and field survey to assess the small area outside AONB boundary and relationship to possibly extended LLD south of Boughton.
31.	Teynham Fruit Belt	Y  Part at Swale Level	Yes	Area meets desk review criteria  Stage 3 evaluation and field survey to consider current character and boundary to west in relation to Sittingbourne, boundary south of rail line and to A2.
32.	Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt	Y  Very small part at Kent Level  Plus area south of Lower Halstow and north of Newington proposed for designation in 2014 review	Yes, part	This area does not as a whole meet desk review criteria.  Stage 3 evaluation and field survey to assess marsh areas and potential river creek from Lower Halstow.
33.	Blean Woods West	Y  Kent Level	Yes	Area meets desk review criteria  Full evaluation and field survey, also to

LCA no. (exc AONB)	Name	Current LLD	Take forward Stage 3 Evaluation	Notes to inform selection of 'areas of search' and field survey and justification for areas omitted
				check omitted areas in current LLD, adjacent to Canterbury.
36.	Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys (character area description largely relates to AONB)	Y Kent Level (outside AONB)	Yes	Area meets desk review criteria Full evaluation and field survey required to assess character and quality of dry valley area outside AONB north of M2.
37.	Hartlip Downs	Yes Very small area at Kent Level	Yes, part	The area partially meets criteria in the desk survey. Field survey and evaluation required to assess downland AONB character for parts of area north of M2.
38.	Milstead and Kingsdown Mixed Farmlands	Y Kent Level - very small area north of M2	Yes	The area partially meets criteria in the desk survey. Field survey to provide full evaluation and assess whether area north of M2 is of equal value as AONB and contiguous with larger dip slope dry valley landscape running down to Sittingbourne (LCA 40).
40.	Rodmersham and Milstead Dry Valley	Y Kent Level extending AONB	Yes	This area meets desk review criteria. Full evaluation and field survey to assess boundaries and relationship to surrounding character areas – minor dry valley in area 42.
42.	Tunstall Farmlands	Yes Small part forms part of Kent Level chalk valley system North east area proposed for review in 2014 study	Yes	This area only partially meets the criteria for LLD in the desk survey. However, it is taken forward for the stage 3 evaluation and field survey due to high no of local values attributed. Specific focus of field survey in relation to dry valley (area 40).

## Recommendations on 'Candidate Areas'

- 5.5 The results of the desk study review were discussed with SBC officers. The character areas were grouped up into 13 discrete 'Candidate LLD' areas of similar character for field review and detailed evaluation. The 'Candidate LLDs' are illustrated on **Figure 5.2**.
- 5.6 In the table below those grouped under the heading 'Swale' are those which only occur within SBC, unlike those which are part of wider marshland, downland and woodland landscapes that continue within adjacent Local Planning Authority areas in Kent.

### Candidate LLDs

#### North Kent Marshes

1. Medway marshes (Halstow Creek – Milton Creek)
2. North Swale (Sheppey) Marshes (Queenborough – Leysdown)
3. South Swale Marshes (Milton creek – Seasalter Marshes)

#### Kent Downs

4. Hartlip Downs
5. Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted Dry Valleys
6. Syndale Valley
7. North Street Dip Slope

#### The Blean

8. The Blean





#### Swale

9. Lower Halstow – Iwade Ridge
10. Tonge and Luddenham
11. Blean Edge Fruit Belt
12. Sheppey Court, Diggs and Minster Marshes
13. Eastchurch Uplands

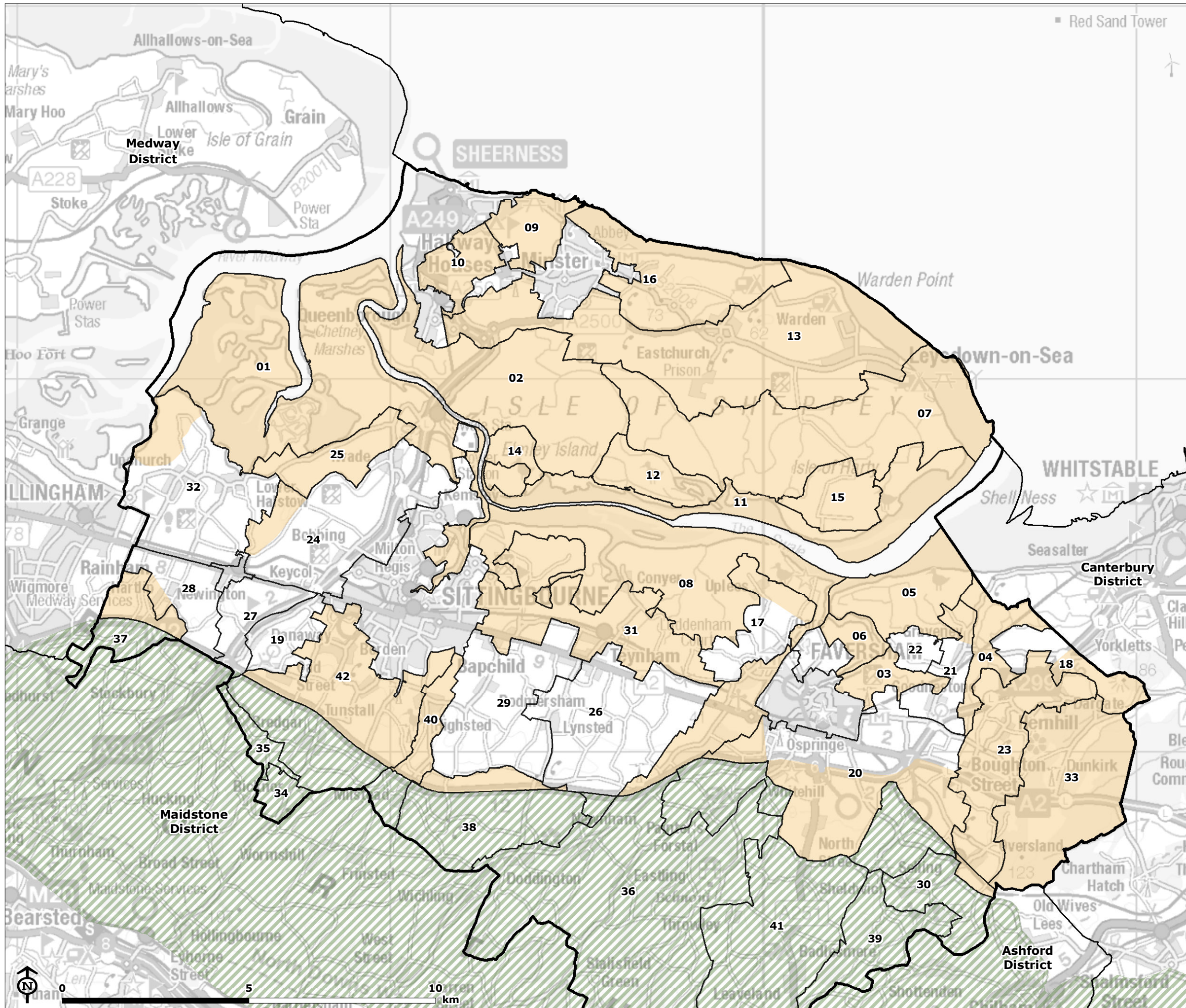
**Figure 5.1 Areas of Search for Swale LLDs (LCA context)**

# Swale Local Landscape Designations Review

**Figure 5.1 LCAs to take forward to Stage 2 Evaluation**

-  Swale District boundary
-  Landscape Character Areas
-  Kent Downs AONB
-  LCAs to take forward to Stage 2

Note  
Parts of areas 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28 and 32 included in relation to the edges and boundaries of potential LLDs



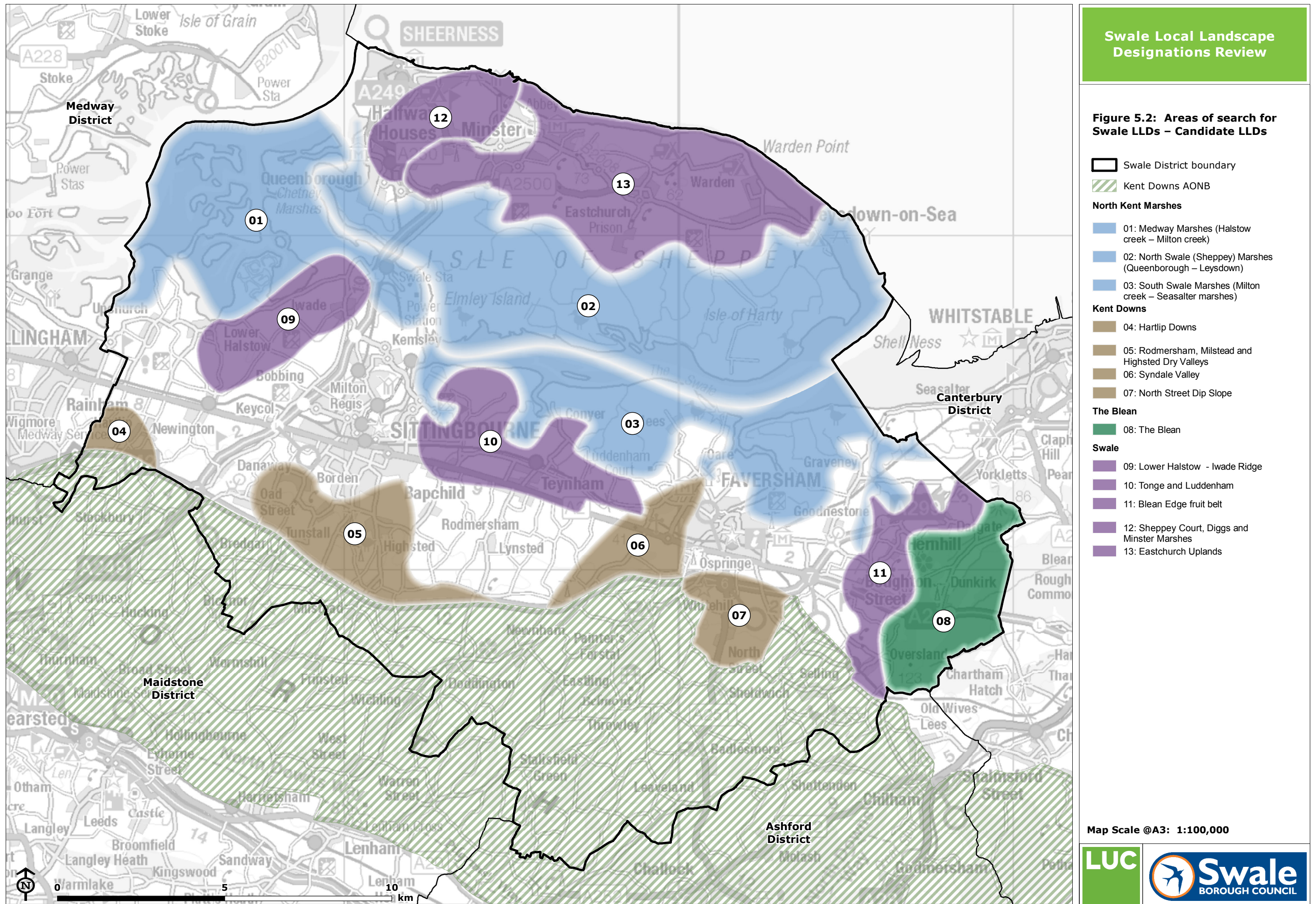
Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000



**Figure 5.2 Areas of Search for Swale LLDs – Candidate LLDs**

## Swale Local Landscape Designations Review

**Figure 5.2: Areas of search for Swale LLDs – Candidate LLDs**





# LLD Evaluation & Recommendations



## 6 LLD evaluation and recommendations

6.1 The following sections present the results of the evaluation for the 13 candidate LLDs.

6.2 Each LLD evaluation contains:

- A photo sheet illustrating representative character;
- Summary and recommendations including boundary decisions;
- Evaluation against the criteria;
- Map illustrating LLD and boundary recommendations.

### A note on boundaries

6.3 Landscape is a continuum and all boundaries will generally represent zones of transition. There will rarely be a sharp change in identified landscape qualities either side of an LLD boundary. For ease, boundaries are frequently drawn along best fit physical features including lanes and field boundaries and therefore may include areas of lesser or greater quality or areas of different character. In some cases, boundaries have been extended where an area for example adjoins an urban edge and would leave a small vulnerable gap. Likewise, there may be some areas within a local landscape designation encapsulated by the boundary that do not meet the criteria but are part of a wider 'whole'.

### Statement of significance and identified qualities

6.4 Following the evaluation and consultation, the final LLDs and boundaries have been confirmed and statements of significance will be prepared for each LLD area. These are based on the evaluations contained in this report and include a summary of identified qualities (in line with NPPF para. 170). They are provided as a separate document.

### Recommendation on level of local designation

6.5 It is recommended that one level of local designation is retained covering the former Kent Level and Swale Level areas. This would give an equal level of protection applied through planning policy and development management. The fact that the marshes, downland and the Blean are part of larger landscape areas that extend, and are protected, beyond the borough boundaries is relevant but does not justify a higher status of protection within Swale which is difficult to distinguish and apply in practice.

# North Kent Marshes: Medway Marshes

## Landscape character and quality



Thames Barge at Lower Halstow



Greenborough Marshes



Stangate Creek and Isle of Grain



Foreshore at Lower Halstow



Towards Bedlam Bottom



Chetney Marshes to Sheppey Crossing

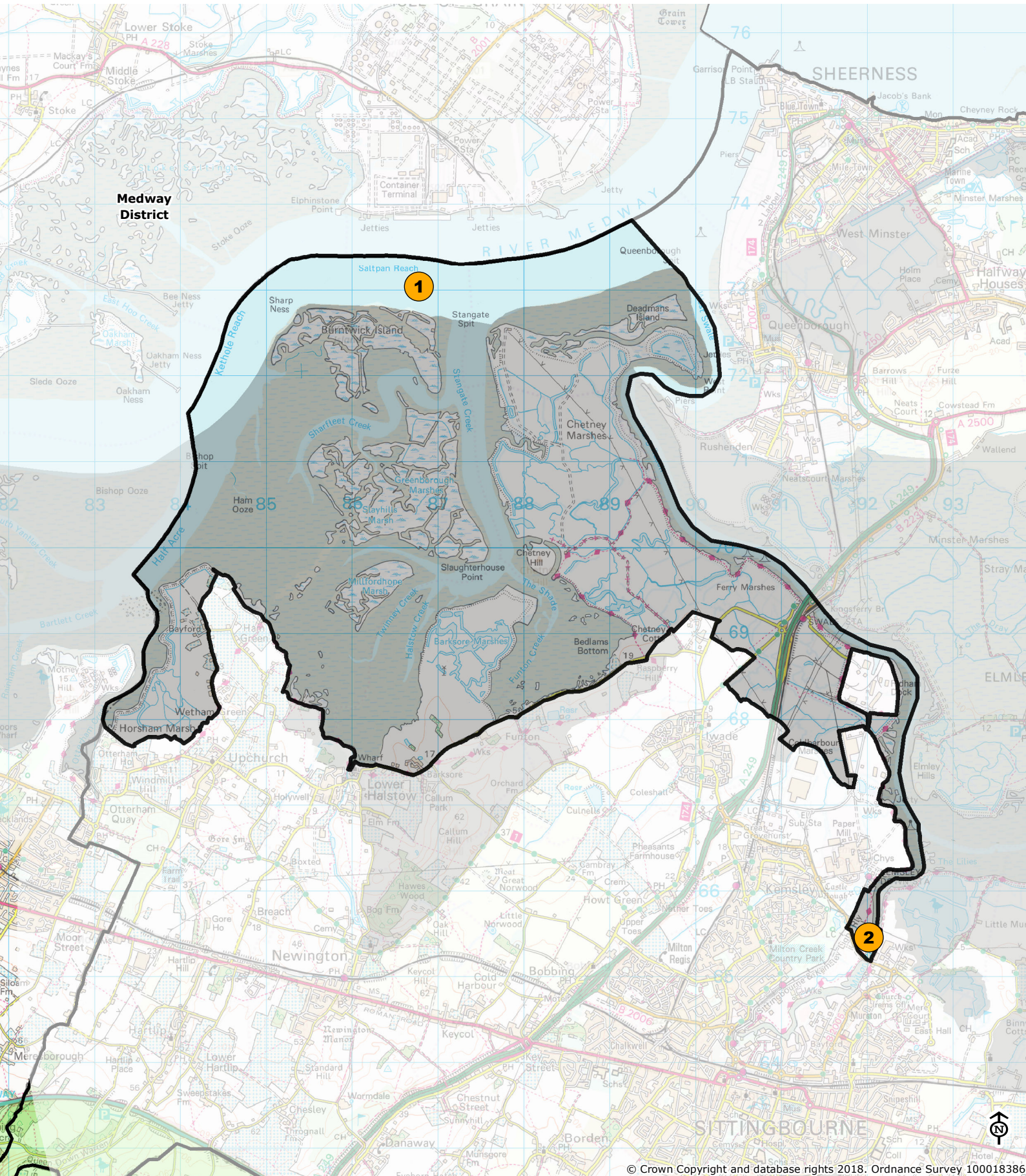
Candidate LLD name	North Kent Marshes: Medway Marshes
<b>Relationship to existing local landscape designation</b>	The North Kent Marshes - Existing AHLV –Kent Level For the purpose of this review the larger AHLV has been divided into three sections Medway, North Swale (Sheppey) and South Swale
<b>Extent of area</b>	The candidate LLD covers the entire area of coastal marsh extending from the Borough boundary in the west to Milton Creek in the east. It excludes the more urban developed parts of the character area of Ridham Dock, Kemsley Marshes on the edge of Sittingbourne. It is distinctive as an area of marsh adjacent to the River Medway.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	1: Chetney and Greenborough Marshes (all apart from the more developed areas adjacent to Milton Creek) 32: Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt – small part of the LCA at Horsham Marsh adjacent to Bartlett Creek on the Medway
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	1: Yes 32: No, partial area, marshes area to west likely to qualify
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Fully meets</i>
<b>Boundary commentary</b>	<b>See map</b> The boundary is almost entirely contiguous with the character area boundary (1) and the inclusion of the small area of marshes in area 32 is appropriate. It covers the entire area between the Mean High Water Mark and Mean Low Water Mark, including areas creeks, saltmarsh, the channels of the Medway and Swale and marshes protected from inundation by sea walls. It extends from the Borough boundary in the west to Milton Creek in the east, excluding the more urban developed parts of the character area of Ridham Dock, Kemsley Marshes on the edge of Sittingbourne. It is a robust and appropriate boundary.  <b>Additions</b> 1. There would be merit to extending the LLD boundary out to include the channel of the Medway currently not shown as part of the designation on the Borough Plan.  <b>Deletions/comments</b> 2. It is noted that the area east of the A249 contains some visual detractors and the A249 could provide the eastern LLD boundary. In this case this area is recommended to be retained as part of the LLD as it provides a contiguous landscape setting to the road. A robust boundary is formed by the B2005 Swale Way crossing of Milton Creek. This area of land is important as the marshland setting of the Swale and Milton Creek.
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	The Paper identified the area as intact, with no recommendations for boundary changes.
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	Retain as LLD, and provide a separate description and statement of significance to bring out particular character and unique qualities of the marshes adjoining the Medway as part of the wider North Kent Marshes.  Minor boundary amendments are proposed.

<b>Evaluation - North Kent Marshes: Medway Marshes</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>The area has a strong and recognisable sense of place as part of the North Kent Marshes forming an extensive area of estuarine grazing marsh, saltmarsh and mudflats, tidal creeks and channels. It is an isolated, remote and largely inaccessible area, almost wholly undeveloped – a rare and distinctive landscape in south east England.</p> <p>Barksore Marshes are distinctive for the presence of large areas of open water. Large areas of saltmarsh occupy the areas west of Stangate Creek at Greenborough, Burntwick Island, Millfordhope and Slayhills Marshes which are separated from the mainland. At high tide, the tidal creeks separate the area into numerous small islands. Chetney Marshes forms an extensive grazing marsh connected to the mainland at Rasberry Hill Lane/Old Ferry Road. Stangate Creek provides a sheltered haven for visiting yachts away from the busier Medway and Thames estuaries, with presence of boats, including traditional Thames barges a distinctive feature.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>The condition of the marshes is considered to be good. It has strong ecological integrity (largely designated) and visual coherence as a unique landscape.</p> <p>The A249, railway, Kingsferry Bridge and Sheppey Crossing are prominent in the context of the flat landscape, as are the overhead transmission lines on Chetney Marsh and east of the A249 at Ridham Marshes and Coldharbour Marshes, where industrial elements at Kemsley and Ridham Dock are visible intrusions. While these elements are locally intrusive, overall this is considered to be a high quality landscape.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The remoteness and inaccessibility of the marshes, along with the effects of the weather, light and tides create a unique and distinctive scenic quality. There are large, open and often dramatic skies and an overriding sense of remoteness and solitude, plus dark skies at night. The contrast at low and high tide between extensive mud flats and channels with open expanses of water creates a dynamic scenic quality, as experienced at Bedlams Bottom and Medway Saltings. This remote natural landscape is also juxtaposed with the ports and heavy industry on the Isle of Grain to the north and with industrial development at Sittingbourne. The area has a distinct isolated quality reinforced by presence of decaying hulks of boat in the mud and local history, myth and legends associated with this area.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The Saxon Shoreway promoted route allows through part of the marshes an access along Milton Creek to the urban area at Sittingbourne. Stangate Creek and Sharfleet Creek have long provided a haven for boats away from the estuaries of the Medway and Thames and are still busy with yachts.</p> <p>The area is identified in local consultation as being highly valued for its wildlife habitats, sense of wildness/remoteness and tranquillity. The EA notes the importance of this area for the implementation of the Medway Estuary and Swale Shoreline Management Plan allowing for managed realignment, allowing inter tidal habitats to migrate inland.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>

## Evaluation - North Kent Marshes: Medway Marshes

Criteria	Summary
<p><b>Natural and cultural attributes &amp; associations</b></p>	<p>Almost the entire area is designated as SSSI, Ramsar and SPA due to the richness of its bird, plant and invertebrate life. It is dominated by an extensive grazing marshes, mudflats and network of open water channels, with patches of reed and fen swamp.</p> <p>Historic buildings include the marsh edge Grade II listed: Church of St Mary of Antioch, Lower Halstow. There is evidence of extensive Roman salt workings and pottery industry in the area. Other features include counterwalls and medieval salt mounds.</p> <p>The area has a range of cultural associations and is rich in myth and legend. In the 18th and early 19th centuries the creeks and Burntwick Island were thought to have been used to quarantine ships returning to London. The bodies of those who died were reputedly buried on nearby Deadman's Island, where remains have subsequently been exposed by coastal erosion. The marshes are also associated with smuggling and the North Kent Gang, three of whom were hung for smuggling offences at Maidstone in the early 19th century. Views of isolated derelict buildings on the marshes further reinforce the unique atmosphere associated with this area.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p>The area fully meets the criteria for LLD. It is recommended that the area is retained as LLD with minor boundary adjustments. The key requirement for this area is to retain and enhance the special qualities and particularly sense of remoteness and isolation. Some detracting elements are present, particularly in the marshes east of the A249 corridor and in relation to development on the edge of Sittingbourne. The aim should be to avoid any deterioration/development that would lead to future boundary deletions in this area.</p>

# North Kent Marshes - Medway Marshes



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Kent Downs AONB  
 Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

**Boundary changes**

- 1 Extend to include river channels as essential part of character
- 2 A robust boundary is formed by the B2005 Swale Way crossing Milton Creek. This narrow area of land is important as the marshland setting of the Swale and Milton Creek





## North Kent Marshes: North Swale (Sheppey) Marshes

### Landscape character and quality



A vast flat landscape with panoramic views and big skies



A strong sense of remoteness at Elmley marshes



The Swale and Isle of Harty



Elmley Marshes



The Swale NNR towards Shellness



Isle of Harty

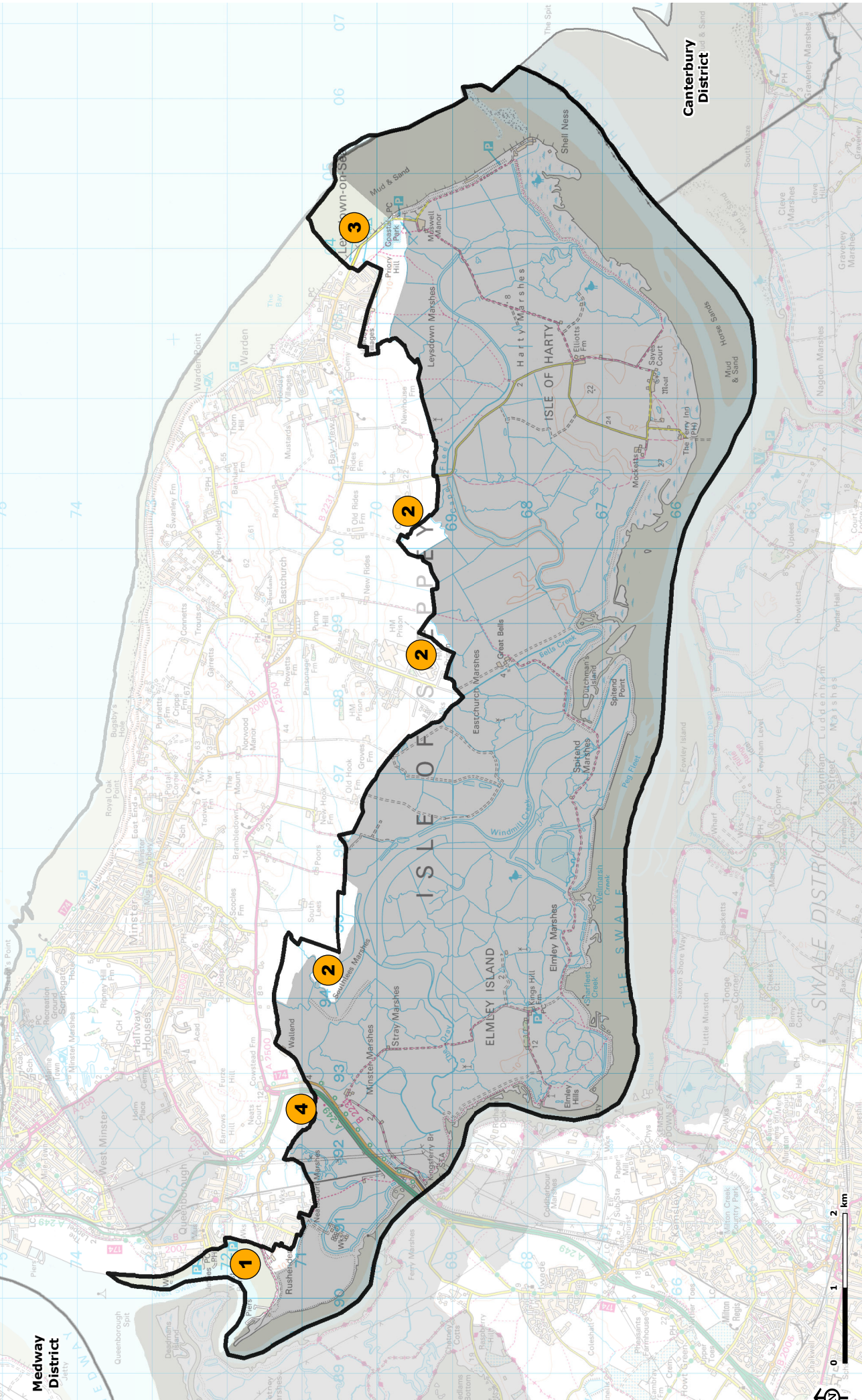
Candidate LLD name	North Kent Marshes: North Swale (Sheppey) Marshes	
<b>Relationship to existing local landscape designation</b>	The North Kent Marshes - Existing AHLV –Kent Level For the purpose of this review the AHLV has been divided into three sections Medway, North Swale (Sheppey) and South Swale)	
<b>Extent of area</b>	This large area covers all the coastal marshland bordering the Swale on the south of Sheppey extending from Rushenden Marshes at Queenborough in the west to Leysdown Marshes in the east.	
<b>Landscape character context</b>	2: Elmley Marshes (all) 7: Leysdown and Eastchurch Marshes (all except small area south of Leysdown-on-Sea and some minor areas along the northern boundary) 11: South Sheppey Saltmarshes and Mudflats (all) 12: Spitend Marshes (all) 14: Elmley Island (all) 15: Isle of Harty (all)	
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	2: Yes 7: Yes 11: Yes	12: Yes 14: Yes 15: Yes
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Fully meets</i>	
<b>Boundary commentary</b>	<p><b>See map</b></p> <p>The boundary is almost entirely contiguous with the character area boundaries representing the extensive low lying area of marshland abutting the Swale with the LLD extending out to include the intertidal areas and Swale channel.</p> <p><b>Additions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There would be merit to extending the LLD boundary to include the channel of the Medway at Queenborough and Swale within SBC.</li> <li>2. Northern boundary to be extended to meet base of the slope, represented by the change of topography and character area boundary at: Slatcreek Head Land at South Lees Marshes, west of Newhook Marshes SW of prisons at Stanford Low lying land west of Capel Hill Farm</li> <li>3. At Leysdown on Sea the land rises slightly to the settlement edge at Priory Hill, including the Coastal Park (golf course). Although this is not marshland, the existing urban edge and the low slopes at Priory Hill form a robust and appropriate boundary.</li> </ol> <p><b>Deletions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. A249 Cowstead Corner. The 2014 report notes the area at the A249/ A2500 intersection as forming part of the Queenborough and Rushenden regeneration area. This now contains substantial blocks of warehouse development and should therefore be excluded from the designation. This has since been partially excluded and it is recommended that the boundary is pushed further back to coincide with the Elmley Marshes character area boundary.</li> </ol>	

Candidate LLD name	North Kent Marshes: North Swale (Sheppey) Marshes
<p><b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b></p>	<p>The Paper identified the area as intact. It made the following recommendations for deletion and one area for review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) A249 Cowstead Corner (see above)</li> <li>ii) The northern boundary is recommended for review. Generally the northern boundary of the LLD is well related to the rising topography – a number of small extensions to tie in with character area boundaries are identified above.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b></p>	<p>Retain as LLD, and provide a separate description and statement of significance to bring out particular character and unique qualities of the marshes adjoining the Medway as part of the wider North Kent Marshes.</p> <p>Minor boundary amendments are proposed.</p>

<b>Evaluation - North Kent Marshes: North Swale (Sheppey) Marshes</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>A vast and complex area of marshes comprising a mix of saltmarsh and mud flats isolated by the sea wall, coastal grazing marsh drained by a network of dykes and ditches as well as small areas of higher ground such as the distinctive Isles of Harty and Elmley. It incorporates the channel of the Swale, including the shifting sand banks (Horse Sands) and mudflats of the Swale. The whole area has a strong sense of place, with high levels of remoteness, wildness and isolation, much only accessible on foot; these are all rare qualities in SE England. The presence of boats on the Swale adds to the dynamic character and contrast with the remote marshes.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>On the whole this is a landscape in good condition, has strong ecological integrity, and is largely intact with few detracting features. It has an open coherent visual character – a flat landscape with dramatic skies and vast panoramic views.</p> <p>Some area to the east of Sheppey have been reclaimed and converted to intensive arable farmland and have a more uniform character lacking diversity of the marshes although maintain visual integrity with the flat remote, low lying landscape. To the west, the A249, Kingsferry Bridge and Sheppey Crossing are prominent in the context of the flat landscape, as are the overhead transmission lines on Neatscourt Marsh, sewage works and industrial backdrop of Queenborough. The prisons at Standford Hill are a prominent feature particularly at night time when lighting impacts on the dark skies and a solar farm is a further visible development feature. While these elements are locally intrusive, overall this is an expansive isolated, remote natural area of high quality.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The area has strong scenic qualities: high levels of tranquillity, remoteness and relative darkness persist over the marshes on Sheppey in strong contrast to adjacent areas. It is an area of vast skies and panoramic views, including from more elevated areas such as Harty across the channel of the Swale to the mainland. Scenic qualities and sense of wildness are enhanced by the rich wildlife, sight and sounds of waders and wildfowl often in great numbers, relative absence of building and roads and limited access via rights of way and along the sea walls.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The area is identified in local consultation as being very highly valued and as a whole received a relatively large number of consultation responses (12).</p> <p>It is particularly valued for its sense of wildness and tranquillity, wildlife habitats, scenic quality including open character and views to the Swale, built heritage and cultural associations as well as opportunities for outdoor recreation.</p> <p>Access is provided to a number of the nature reserves (Elmley Marshes and Swale National Nature Reserves), which are valued sites for visitors and attract large numbers of bird watchers. A network of rights of way provides access along floodbanks and counterwalls, although a large part of the area remains isolated and inaccessible enhancing its sense of wildness and tranquillity.</p> <p>The EA notes the importance of this area of implementation of the Medway Estuary and Swale Shoreline Management Plan and its future role in managed</p>

<b>Evaluation - North Kent Marshes: North Swale (Sheppey) Marshes</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>realignment.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>Almost the entire area is designated as SSSI, Ramsar and SPA due to the richness of its bird, plant and invertebrate life and much is part of the National Nature Reserve (Swale and Elmley). The marshes of Sheppey as part of the wider North Kent Marshes are recognised for their birdlife. The extent of fresh water habitat alongside the expanses of salt marsh and mudflats of the Swale makes the area of immense importance for waders and wildfowl. Raptors, including common and marsh harrier, sparrowhawks and peregrines can frequently be seen as well as short eared owls. At low tide, seals hauled out on the sandbanks of the Swale are a further distinctive feature.</p> <p>The marshes are a historic landscape with a sense of timelessness. Historic features include medieval moated sites (one Scheduled Monument) and remnant salt works. Features of historic interest include the Grade II* listed: Church of St Thomas the Apostle, Harty Ferry (Late C11 or early C12 with additions and renovations through to early C15) which overlooks the marshes and is a landmark from the Swale. Sir John Betjeman remarked "<i>the church in its splendid isolation, with seabirds wheeling by the Thames so wide as to be open sea, and the air so fresh as to be healthier than yoghurt</i>". Grade II listed: Farmhouse and Barn at Kings Hill, in 1688 James II believed to have been captured while escaping to France, and incarcerated in the house.</p> <p>This part of Sheppey has a long association with aviation. Muswell Manor was the clubhouse for early experimental flights. In July 1909 the Short Brothers established Shellbeach Aerodrome.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The area fully meets the criteria for LLD. It is recommended that the area is retained as LLD, with some minor boundary extensions to follow the character area boundaries and take in the channel of the Swale.</p> <p>The key requirement for this area is to conserve and enhance identified qualities, notably sense of remoteness and wildness, particularly in relation to the A249 corridor avoiding further development/deterioration necessitating future deletions and boundary adjustments.</p>

# North Kent Marshes - North Swale (Sheppey) Marshes





## North Kent Marshes: South Swale Marshes

### Landscape character and quality



Oare – Harty Ferry



Ditches south of Denley Hill near Graveney



Long views across marshes at Luddenham



Oare Creek and the Swale



Moorings at Conyer Creek



Oare Marshes



Candidate LLD name	North Kent Marshes: South Swale Marshes	
<b>Relationship to existing local landscape designation</b>	The North Kent Marshes - Existing AHLV –Kent Level For the purpose of this review the AHLV has been divided into three sections Medway, North Swale (Sheppey) and South Swale	
<b>Extent of area</b>	The proposed LLD forms part of the North Kent Marshes south of the Swale, and covers an extensive area from Milton Creek in the west as far as the borough boundary at Graveney Marshes in the east where it joins Seasalter Marshes in Canterbury. It includes the Swale channel, areas of intertidal land, the flat coastal marshes extending inland to the point where the topography rises, marking the transition to the adjacent enclosed farmland.	
<b>Landscape character context</b>	3: Goodnestone Grasslands (not in current designation but closely related landscape) 4: Graveney Grazing Lands (area north of Monkshill Road) 5: Graveney Marshes (all) 6: Ham Marshes (all) 8: Luddenham and Conyer Marshes (all) 17: Stone Arable Farmlands (small section at Little Uplees, including gravel pits) 21: Graveney Arable Farmlands (small area north of Graveney) 31: Teynham Fruit Belt (small sections on edge of this landscape)	
<b>Stage 2: Desk Review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	3: Yes 4: Yes, field survey to review boundary 5: Yes (note condition) 6: Yes 8: Yes 17: Partial, only for area adjoining marshes around Oare)	21: No, field survey to consider marshes interface 31: Yes
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Fully meets – with minor boundary adjustments proposed</i>	
<b>Boundary commentary</b>	<p><b>See map</b></p> <p>The existing boundary is generally contiguous with the marshland character areas and follows a clear line on the ground representing the extent of contiguous low lying marshes abutting the Swale with the LLD boundary extending out to include the Swale channel itself. Where the boundary extends into adjacent character area this represents an area of low lying wetter character (e.g. former gravel pits) and this is appropriate.</p> <p><b>Goodnestone Grasslands:</b> The boundary revisions included a review of Goodnestone Grasslands – this is an area in good condition, distinctive, and largely undisturbed. It includes areas of grazed pasture and a number of small streams within sinuous ditches, and straight drainage ditches – similar in character to other areas of marshland and linked to the tidal creek at Faversham. The evaluation indicated that these are important features that deserve protection but that the area as a whole does not have a distinct marshland character and includes areas of polytunnels, rough unmanaged ground and development and so does not merit designation as part of the LLD although contains valued features and elements.</p> <p><b>Graveney Marshes:</b> - The 2014 report suggests a review of this area to reflect the deterioration in landscape quality. Graveney Marshes is a huge expanse of coastal marsh now improved for agriculture and almost entirely under intensive arable land use. Nevertheless, it remains an atmospheric and tranquil landscape with large open and often dramatic skies and is functionally linked to adjacent marshland habitats. It retains a strong sense of remoteness although clearly less 'wild' than the traditional grazing marshes and with the high voltage pylon line being a significant detractor. It is viewed from the Saxon Shore Way that runs on the elevated seawall. The positive attributes of this landscape outweigh the detractors and it is considered to be</p>	

Candidate LLD name	North Kent Marshes: South Swale Marshes
	<p>an integral part of the wider North Kent marshes landscape and should be retained as part of the LLD providing a link and continuity with Seasalter Marshes to the east, an LLD supported by Canterbury District Council. This area is also locally highly valued as demonstrated by the stakeholder consultation.</p> <p><b>Additions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Southern boundary extensions to follow the character area boundary at Wildmarsh and Luddenham – See note below (3) in relation to Tonge and Luddenham LLD.</li> <li>2. Graveney grazing marshes – despite having a much more enclosed, small scale ‘valley’ character compared to the extensive flat marshland along the coast it is recommended that the boundary is extended to include the two fingers of grazed marsh that continue south of Denly Hill (east of the village of Graveney) forming an area of distinctive ‘marsh’ character inland as far as the A299.</li> <li>3. The potential future removal of the Tonge and Luddenham LLD (due to small size of remaining qualifying area) suggests that the boundary of the marshes LLD could be extended to include part of this area. It is not ‘marshland’ but contains minor springs and streams draining to the marshes and is functionally linked. The extended area could incorporate Luddenham Church, a distinctive feature at the edge of the marshes and the wetland springs around Deerton Street and Teynam Street which drain to the marshes.</li> </ol> <p><b>Deletions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Graveney Hill – Cleve Hill (part of Graveney Arable Farmlands) – this is not part of the marsh landscape and is different in terms of landform and land use. It is acknowledged that there are ‘hill’ areas included in the Marshes LLD on Sheppey for example Isle of Harty, which is contained by the lower marshland landscape. In the case of Graveney Hill and Cleve Hill it is part of a larger arable landscape and includes the large substation development. It is therefore recommended that this small anomalous area is removed from the LLD.</li> <li>5. Stone Arable Farmlands -The existing boundary includes the area around Norman’s Hill/Harty Ferry Cottages, which is more similar to the open arable landscape typical of the character area. The hill does have an important role as the backdrop to the Oare Marshes, but to include it here would not be consistent with other areas of the marsh LLD. It is noted that the small area around Little Uplees including orchards and gravel pits is retained in the LLD and this is appropriate.</li> <li>6. Arable farmland area north of Bax which is recorded as part of character area 31 and does not retain any wetland/marshland characteristics noting that the adjacent minor tributary valley is included, although this is now largely under intensive covered fruit growing. Boundary consistent with character area.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b></p>	<p>The Paper identified the area as intact. It made three recommendations for future review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Graveney Arable Farmlands – recommended for deletion - see above</li> <li>ii) Graveney Marshes - the report suggests a review of this area to reflect the deterioration in landscape quality. This study indicates that it should be retained within the LLD designation in line with other large areas of improved marsh as qualities of openness, remoteness are dominant.</li> <li>iii) Stone Arable Farmlands area around Little Uplees – it is appropriate that the northern part of the character area which includes small areas of grazing marsh, minor hill with settlements and orchards and the former Oare gravel workings now open water/wetland habitats is included as part of the LLD. The LCA describes the ecological integrity in this area as strong. See above re proposal for redrawing</li> </ol>

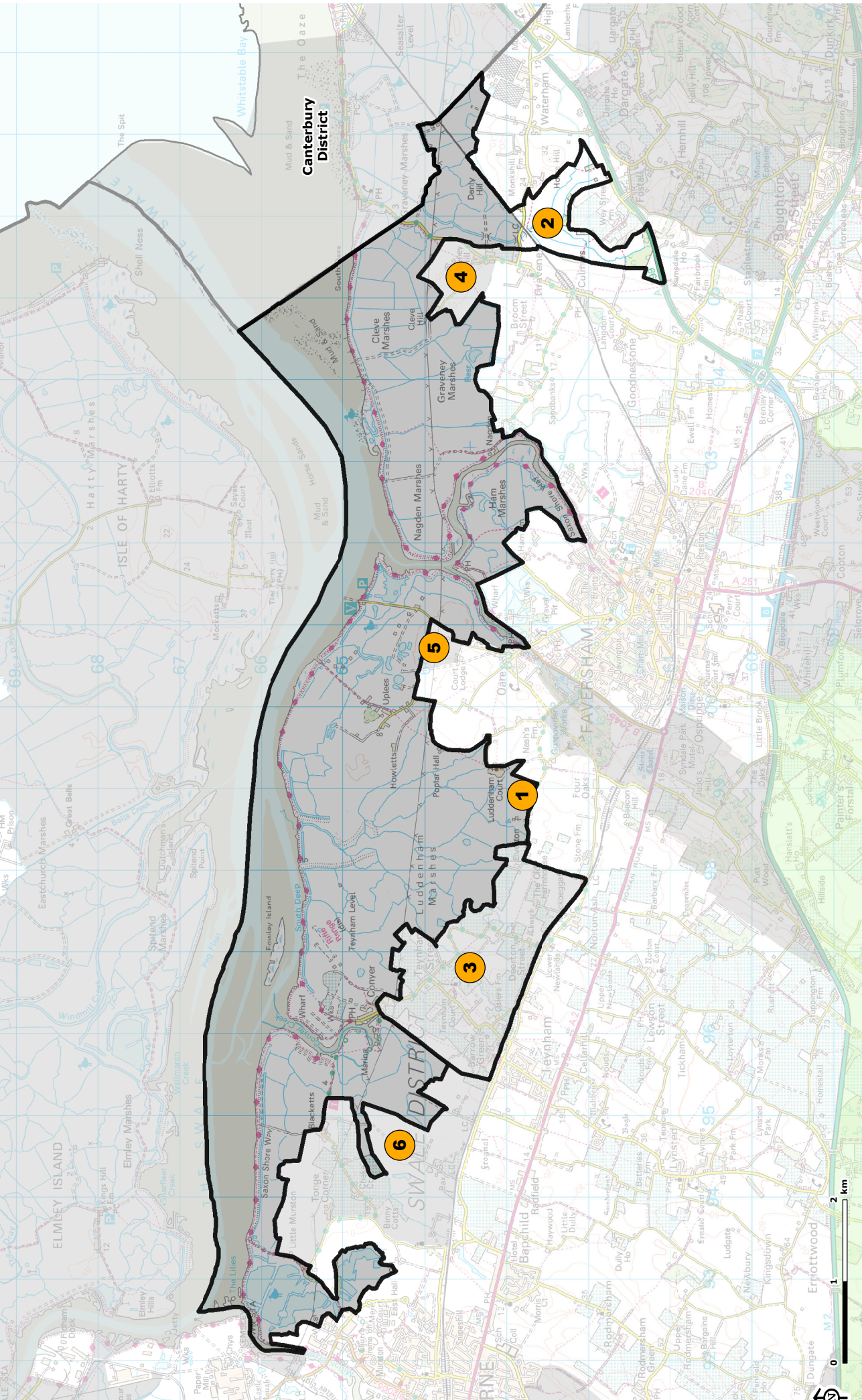
Candidate LLD name	North Kent Marshes: South Swale Marshes
	boundary to delete the area around Norman's Hill/Harty Ferry Cottages which is part of the open arable landscape that backs much of the marshes.
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	Retain as LLD with some minor boundary adjustments to provide a more robust inland edge reflecting the extent of this landscape including areas of marsh that extend inland. Provide a separate description and statement of significance to bring out particular character and qualities of the South Swale Marshes, part of the wider North Kent Marshes.

## Evaluation - North Kent Marshes: South Swale Marshes

Criteria	Summary
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>A highly distinctive landscape forming part of the wider North Kent Marshes - a vast and complex area of saltmarsh and mud flats isolated by the sea wall, coastal grazing marsh drained by a network of dykes and ditches as well as small areas of improved farmed marsh dissected by drainage channels. It incorporates the channel of the Swale, including the shifting sand banks and mudflats of Fowley Island joining the marshes on Sheppey. Tidal creeks at Milton, Conyer, Oare and Faversham are unique to this part of the Swale coast and the presence of boats and boatyards along the creeks, including traditional craft and Thames barges further enhances local distinctiveness. Faversham is a historic centre for boat building and repair.</p> <p>The whole area has a strong sense of place, with high levels of remoteness, wildness and isolation, much only accessible on foot; these are all rare qualities in SE England.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>On the whole this is a landscape in good condition, has strong ecological integrity, and is largely intact with few detracting features. It has an open coherent visual character.</p> <p>Some areas for example on Graveney/Nagden marshes and around Bax west of Conyer have been reclaimed and converted to intensive arable farmland with a more uniform character lacking diversity of the marshes although maintain visual integrity as part of a flat empty, low lying landscape. Other detractors include the overhead power lines which are prominent in the landscape, and to the west industry on the edge of Sittingbourne. Small areas of gravel working have been reclaimed and the open water at Little Murston and Uplees is a positive feature within the marshes, while at Conyer a former brickworks site is similarly reclaimed and used for recreation. The size and scale of the marshes as a whole means that the influence of detracting features is minimised.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The area has strong scenic qualities: high levels of tranquillity, remoteness and relative darkness persist over the marshes in combination with the marshes on Sheppey. A flat landscape with dramatic skies which reflect changes in climate and light provide reservoirs of darkness at night and vast panoramic views, backed by the rising slopes of The Blean and the downs to the south.</p> <p>The strong sense of wildness and remoteness is enhanced by the rich wildlife, sight and sounds of waders and wildfowl often in great numbers, relative absence of building and roads and limited access via rights of way and along the sea walls. Traditional boats add to the scenic quality along the tidal creeks, as do colourful displays of saltmarsh plants - golden samphire, sea-lavender and sea-purslane.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The area as a whole received a number (8) of consultation responses. It is clearly highly valued by stakeholders for a range of reasons. Graveney Marshes attracted a high number of responses relating to its wildlife habitats, built heritage, panoramic views across land and water to surrounding backdrop of the Blean, Downs and Sheppey, wildness and tranquillity. Luddenham and Conyer Marshes are similarly valued for their farming and biodiversity. The continuous right of way link along the sea wall</p>

<b>Evaluation - North Kent Marshes: South Swale Marshes</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>is particularly valued by stakeholders.</p> <p>The EA notes the importance of this area of implementation of the Medway Estuary and Swale Shoreline Management Plan and its future role in managed realignment.</p> <p>These marshes are important for recreation and are accessible via the Swale Heritage Trail and Saxon Shore Way promoted routes. The nature reserves at Little Muston, Oare Marshes, North and South Swale are valued for informal recreation opportunities and notably birdwatching. The tidal creeks include numerous moorings, marinas and boatyards and the waterways and adjacent coast are well used for sailing including traditional Thames barges based at Faversham.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes &amp; associations</b>	<p>The area is extensively designated as SSSI, Ramsar and SPA, with National Nature Reserves as well as a number of Local Wildlife Sites. These include areas of saltmarsh, mudflats, coastal grazing marsh, freshwater dykes and reedbeds. It is of international importance for migratory, overwintering and breeding wetland birds. At low tide the seals hauled out on Fowley Island are a further distinctive feature.</p> <p>The marshes have a many cultural association including defensive role in WWII and associations with smuggling. Oare Marsh was the site for the manufacture of gunpowder from 1787 until 1916. The remains of the jetty linking Oare to Harty on the Isle of Sheppey, are still visible. Historic buildings located at the edge of the Marsh are features including the Grade I listed church at Luddenham.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The area fully meets the criteria for LLD with some minor boundary adjustments to provide a more robust inland edge reflecting the extent of marshland landscape and potentially the small scale adjoining orchard landscape at Conyer/Teynham.</p> <p>The key requirement for this area is to conserve and enhance identified qualities, notably sense of remoteness and wildness avoiding further development/deterioration necessitating future deletions and boundary adjustments.</p>

# North Kent Marshes - South Swale Marshes



Kent Downs AONB

Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

### Boundary Changes

- 1 Southern boundary extensions to follow the character area boundary
- 2 Extension to include whole of Gravenev grazing marshes
- 3 Potential for larger boundary extension include part of former Tonge and Luddenham AHLV Swale Level
- 4 Deletion of Gravenev Hill – Cleeve Hill (part of Gravenev Arable Farmlands)
- 5 Deletion of Norman's Hill (part of Stone Arable Farmlands)
- 6 Deletion of area north of Bax (arable farmland, part of Tonge and Luddenham)



## Kent Downs: Hartlip Down

### Landscape character and quality



Large open arable field on dip slope



Remnant parkland in Hartlip Valley



Old orchards on lower slopes



Open arable landscape with views to AONB, cut by M2



Open arable landscape with views to AONB, cut by M2



Open arable landscape with views to AONB, cut by M2

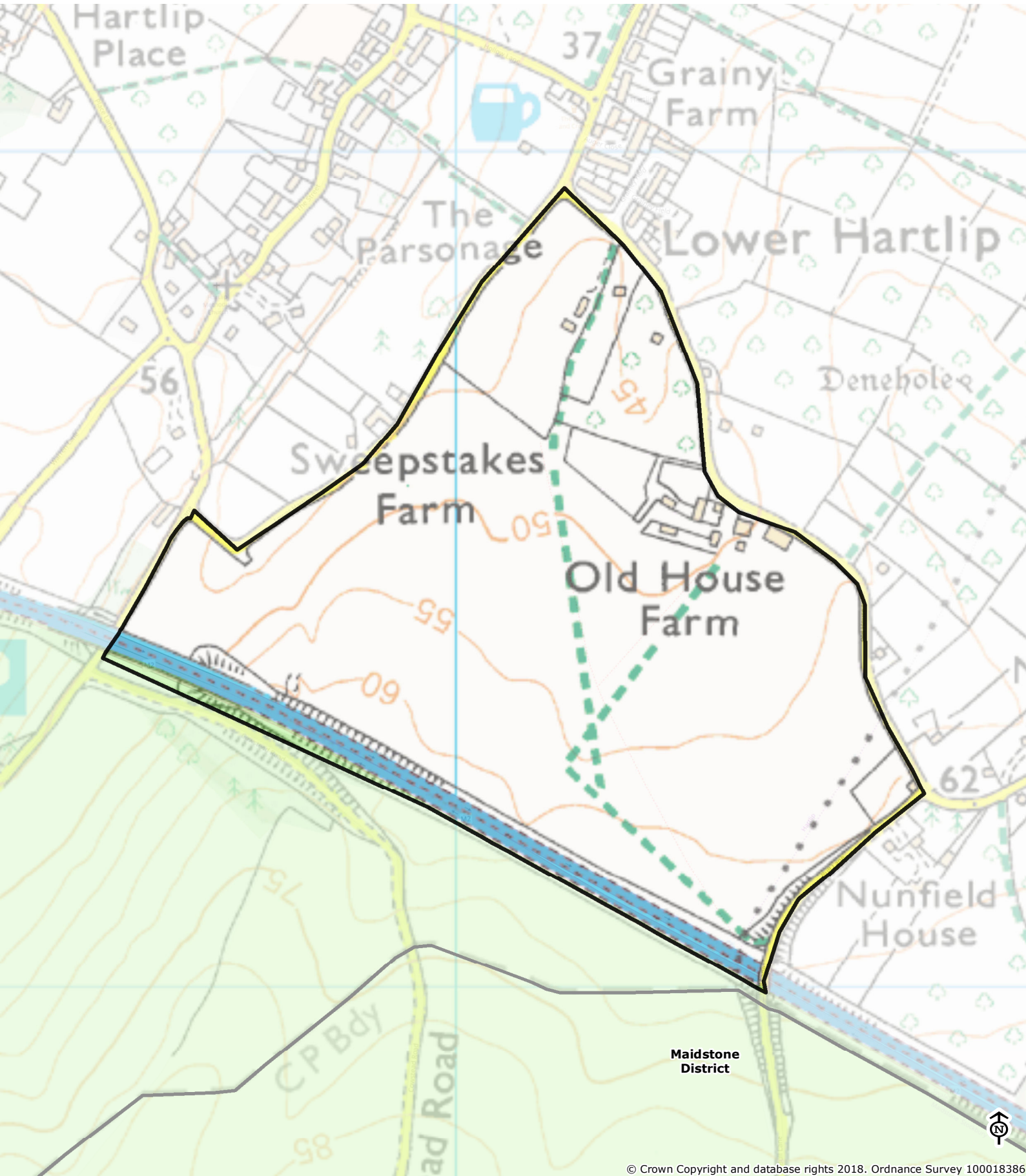


Candidate LLD name	Kent Downs: Hartlip Down
<b>Relationship to existing local landscape designation</b>	The Kent Downs - Existing AHLV –Kent Level For the purpose of this review the AHLV has been divided into the relevant spatial area on the edge of the Downs.
<b>Extent of area</b>	A very small area of downland dip slope extending north of the M2, bounded by minor roads (Lower Hartlip Road and Old House Lane) representing the transition to a minor valley to the west and the fruit belt landscape to the south.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	The northern part of small landscape character area 37 Hartlip Downs. The area south of the M2 is within the AONB and nationally designated. \the evaluation also considered a small part of character area 28 – the minor valley extending from the AONB through Hartlip.
<b>Stage 2: Desk Review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	37 - Yes, noting need to interpret these results for the small part of character area outside the AONB. 28 - No
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Does not meet</i>
<b>Boundary commentary</b>	N/a. This is a small area which is similar in character to much of the undesignated dip slope across Swale. The recommendation is not to include as an LLD and therefore no commentary on boundaries is provided. The evaluation and justification for this decision is provided in the table overleaf.
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	The 2014 review noted the potential for extending the local landscape designation to incorporate Hartlip Valley to the west. This minor valley extending from the AONB (Queen Down Warren) has some valued attributes including its distinct landform (dry valley) and scant remnant parkland character. However, the intensive grazing and extent of horse pasture plus poor boundaries mean that overall this very small area does not meet criteria for a local landscape designation.
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	The Hartlip Downs area does not qualify under the LLD criteria. It is considered to be similar in character to many others areas of the North Downs dip slope in Swale which are not locally designated. As noted in the 2003 designations report there is topographic and visual continuity with the AONB, however in our opinion this alone does not merit designation. It has a lower elevation and reduced landscape quality plus special qualities associated with the AONB (such as views to the Thames Estuary) are not especially apparent here, although it remains a farmed landscape. It has strong links with surrounding fruit belt landscapes. The area does have a role in providing part of the immediate rural setting of the AONB and provides a degree of continuity across the M2.  It is recommended to remove LLD status.

<b>Evaluation - Kent Downs: Hartlip Down</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>The area is distinctive as a very small area of open arable land enclosed by fruit growing to the south and a minor valley to the west. It has a relatively strong topographic unity as part of the dip slope. However, its small size (a few fields) means it is difficult to register a distinct sense of place as a landscape in its own right, although has a role as a buffer to the motorway.</p> <p><i>Does not meet</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>In general, the landscape is relative poor condition with areas of new building, land raising/development platforms, poorly maintained rights of way set within close board fences and an area of unmanaged/derelict orchard. The open arable field are intensively managed and field boundary networks are very fragmented with limited ecological connectivity. The M2 is a visible and detracting feature throughout the area. The valley to the west (not within existing local designation) contains valued elements including pasture and remnant parkland trees although is predominantly managed as horse paddocks.</p> <p>The small areas of open arable field are visually coherent with a strong relationship with the rising slopes of the AONB although severed by views to, and noise from, the M2.</p> <p><i>Does not meet</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The openness and views to the AONB are of value, although these are severed by the motorway, with moving traffic visibly and audibly dominant, notably where it bridges the minor valley. This area is not perceived as tranquil or peaceful.</p> <p><i>Does not meet</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The area provides visual continuity with the AONB, particularly looking south to the rising slopes, although noting that this connection is severed by the M2 and moving traffic. It does not have the elevation or extent of views of other parts of the dip slope and in terms of AONB special qualities, the only one relevant is as a farmed landscape.</p> <p>One right of way crosses the arable field linking Hartlip with the M2 crossing and into the wider downs landscape.</p> <p>The landscape values consultation did not result in any response for this small area outside the AONB.</p> <p><i>Does not meet</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes &amp; associations</b>	<p>No natural or cultural designations are noted within this small area. There are no known specific natural and cultural attributes that merit a local designation. There are some traditional farm buildings around Old House Farm.</p> <p><i>Does not meet</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>This area does not meet the criteria for LLD. Part of the area is clearly part of the arable dip slope and has a visual link across the motorway with the AONB. However, it is considered that this is similar to a number of other areas of undesignated dip slope areas in the Borough. It is considered to be too small for separate designation and a local landscape designation of the whole of the dip slope would not be practical as it is not possible to identify a discrete area. There are many valued features and elements along the dip slope but there is no cohesive entity that merits a separate designation.</p>

<b>Evaluation - Kent Downs: Hartlip Down</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	It recommended that this area is removed from the LLD. A key requirement is to conserve and enhance this area as part of the setting/context to the AONB.

# Hartlip Downs



Kent Downs AONB

**Note: This area does not meet criteria for LLD. It has a role as part of the setting to the AONB.**



## Kent Downs: Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted Dry Valley

### Landscape character and quality



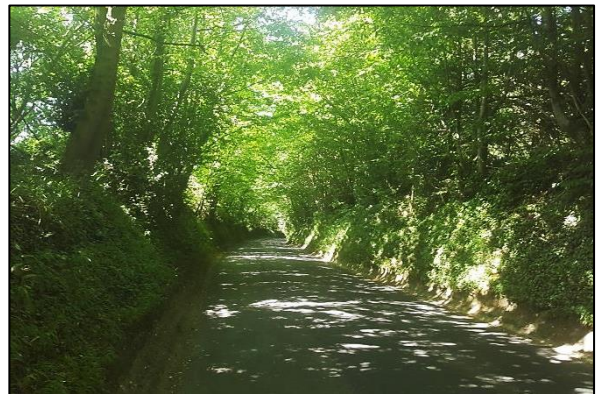
Dry valley with remnant parkland west of Kent Science Park



Open arable chalk valley extending to the edge of Sittingbourne



View south along valley, M2 marking AONB boundary



Sunken wooded lanes characterise the valley to the south



Coppice woodland at Mintching Wood extending north of AONB



Orchards along valley at Highsted

<b>Candidate LLD name</b>	<b>Kent Downs: Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted Dry Valley</b>
<b>Relationship to existing local landscape designation</b>	AHLV –Kent Level: Highsted Valley/Tunstall. Rodmersham and Milstead
<b>Extent of area</b>	A distinct dry valley extending from the AONB boundary along the M2 at Milstead and continuing north to the urban edge at Sittingbourne. Boundaries are formed by the topography along the enclosing ridge skyline and encompassing the adjacent connecting minor valley containing woodland/parkland running to the west of the Kent Science Park.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	38: Milstead and Kingsdown Mixed Farmlands - current LLD includes a small area of Mintching Wood and Kingsdown Wood providing continuity with woodland south of the M2. 40: Rodmersham and Milstead Dry Valley- current LLD largely formed by this character area but excluding the more settled landscape and open arable valley tops east of Highsted and Rodmersham 42: Tunstall Farmlands - small areas either side of Kent Science Park including the full extent of Cromer’s Wood, Highsted quarries and land on the south east of edge of Sittingbourne.
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	38: Yes, notably large tracts of ancient woodland 40: Yes 42: Partially area, evaluation required to assess area in relation to the dry valley and quality of the wider landscape and possible boundary adjustments
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Largely meets</i> Retain as LLD with boundary adjustments.
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	<b>See map</b> The boundary is robust largely following the dry valley that extends northwards from the AONB at Milstead. It is delimited by topography (contour approx. 80 AOD) and land cover, notably the extent of woodland on the valley sides. The boundary extends out from the valley to incorporate the extensive woodlands in the adjacent LCA at Mintching and Kingsdown Wood ( <b>Character Area 38</b> ) which provide an important link to woodlands south of the M2 and within the AONB. <b>Character Area 42: Tunstall Farmlands:</b> The designation takes in the full extent of Cromer’s Wood and includes the tributary dry valley (within character area 42) that runs to the west of The Kent Science Park. This area retains a pastoral, remnant parkland character and is appropriate to include in the designation. Given the high number of responses to the consultation on landscape values for the area north of Bredgar, consideration was given to extension of the LLD boundary further westwards. On balance, while there are features of high landscape quality in this area there is no justification for a larger LLD on this area of dip slope, although it is important as part of the setting of the AONB. The area south of Broad Oak Farm does not directly relate to the dry valley but the LLD boundary is retained at its current extent here representing the valley side setting. <b>Character Area 29: Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands:</b> The eastern boundary is largely confined to the dry valley (within character area 40). Consideration was given to further extension of this area onto the adjacent dip slope including towards Rodmersham and Rodmersham Green. This is an elevated area with long views out to the Swale and attractive settlements. It is predominantly large scale intensive arable farmland. While it contains a number of local landscape features, this area does not meet the criteria for designation as part of this dry valley LLD or an LLD in its own right. It is important as the setting of the AONB.

Candidate LLD name	Kent Downs: Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted Dry Valley
	<p><b>Edge of Sittingbourne:</b> In the north, the current boundary runs up to the urban edge of Sittingbourne with Highsted Road forming the western boundary and Swanstree Avenue to the north. This extends away from the dry valley landscape to include small areas of intensive fruit growing adjacent to the urban edge. The orchard landscape has some merit in its own right but is distinct from the chalk valley landscape that characterises the rest of the LLD. In this area there are numerous urban fringe influences including the extension of residential development onto the valley sides, metal and chain link fencing and traffic on the roads. While this difference in character and quality is noted, it is judged as appropriate for the boundary of the LLD to run to the urban edge rather than leave a very small gap of undesigned orchard landscape. The orchards also provide a rural setting to the valley landscape and the edge of Sittingbourne.</p> <p><b>Additions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extend northwards to take in Highsted Quarry – these areas of wooded quarries provide a setting to the valley, are important for local wildlife and create separation from residential development along Ruins Barn Road and Woodstock Road. At a site level the quarries are poorly presented with security fencing and ‘keep out and notices’ contributing to an urban fringe character. There are opportunities to enhance the function and presentation of these areas within the LLD and the interface with the urban area, and for this reason they are recommended as an addition.</li> <li>2. There is a strong argument for extending the boundary to the east of Highsted to include the steep slopes of the valley side, which have an important role as a green backdrop framing the valley bottom settlement. The existing LLD has been drawn to exclude the settlement along the road. Rodmersham Green is an attractive rural settlement based around a green, however, it sits within a wider open agricultural landscape (see character area 29 above) and the proposed boundary has therefore been drawn to take in the valley slopes to the crest and exclude the main areas of settlement.</li> </ol> <p>No deletions are proposed within this area.</p>
<p><b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b></p>	<p>The Technical Paper notes the option for including Highsted Quarries in the designation boundaries. This is accepted and covered above.</p>
<p><b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b></p>	<p>A revised and extended LLD to include the full extent of valley sides and Highsted Quarries. It is noted that there are opportunities to enhance landscape quality in the vicinity of the Sittingbourne urban edge.</p>

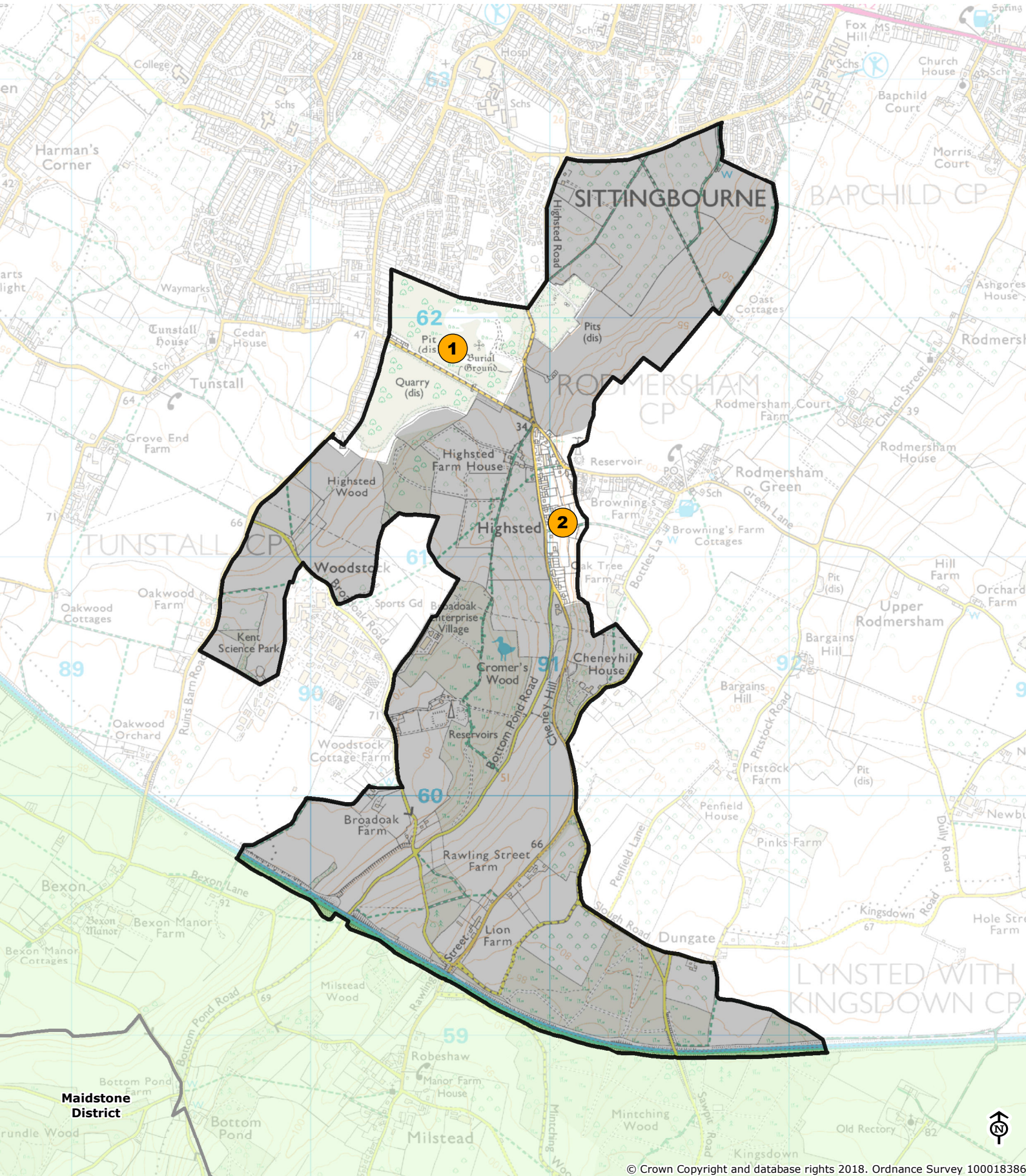


## Evaluation - Kent Downs: Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted Dry Valley

Criteria	Summary
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>A dry valley system contiguous with the AONB enclosed by steep slopes rising to open arable ridges. It is a topographically distinct landscape with a strong sense of place and rural character in close proximity to the urban edge of Sittingbourne. Features of interest include the ancient and semi-natural woodlands which occur across the valley, narrow sunken rural lanes, extensive orchards and areas of remnant parkland.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>The landscape character assessment (2011) describes the condition as moderate and it continues to be moderate, although has deteriorated to an extent since the LCA as noted below.</p> <p>There remains a good ecological network with areas of woodland linked by hedgerows and the valley is visually coherent as an entity with strong enclosing undeveloped skylines. Other parts are more degraded with fragmented field boundaries and vast arable fields. There is a greater degree of development compared to some other LLD areas with the linear settlement of Highsted along the lower valley road and more extensive development adjoining the area along Broadoak Road at Kent Science Park. The area on the immediate edge of Sittingbourne also has a more urban fringe character with chain/link and security fencing forming boundaries. Some areas are also managed as paddocks with an impact on the appearance of the rural landscape and there are locations where commercial/agricultural buildings are particularly prominent on the valley side. The M2 crosses the valley on a bridge and is a dominant feature to the south marking the boundary with the AONB.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The area retains a comparatively strong sense of tranquillity, despite proximity to the urban area. It is a visually coherent landscape enclosed by the valley landform with views channelled along the valley floor or to the open ridges which form the skyline. The subsidiary valley which runs to the west of Highsted has a strong rural character with areas of grazed parkland and pasture with a high scenic quality. These qualities are diluted in parts by presence of development including the linear settlement along the valley floor and Science Park and the 'fringe' character immediately adjoining the urban area.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The area of Tunstall Farmlands (LCA 42) received the greatest number of consultation responses (14) of all the character areas in Swale. Many of these relate to areas within the AONB and therefore already protected as a national landscape designation. However, a number of responses note the importance of the areas north of Bredgar as the setting of the AONB and buffer and identify qualities including tranquillity, scenic qualities including long views out, recreational value (gateway to the AONB) wildlife value (hedgerows and shaws) and built heritage.</p> <p>The valley (LCA 40) received 4 responses. The landscape is valued for its scenic qualities, sense of tranquillity, wildlife habitats and recreational use of the rights of ways and lanes by walkers and cyclists. Particularly valued features are Cromer's Wood, Highsted Wood, and the quarries which are described as havens for wildlife, wildness and tranquillity with potential for recreational use.</p>

<b>Evaluation - Kent Downs: Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted Dry Valley</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>The dry valleys are identified as one of the special characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB (dramatic landform and views) with their ribbons of permanent grassland (shaves along the valley sides (Farmed Landscape) as well as the broadleaf and mixed woodland cover (Woodland and trees) and chalk landform (geology and natural resources). These are all present within the area and the boundary of the LLD has been drawn to encompass these qualities.</p> <p>The landscape designation cannot cover areas solely for their role as good rural landscape and buffer to the AONB/Sittingbourne and therefore excludes the area around Tunstall and Borden.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>Cromer’s Wood is an extensive area of ancient semi natural woodland, designated as a Local Wildlife Site and managed by Kent Wildlife Trust. It is one of several small-medium scale woodland scattered across the slopes and valley floor. The boundary is justifiably drawn out to the east to include the extensive tracts of coppice woodland at Mintching and Kingsdown Wood which have continuity with the AONB landscape.</p> <p>Highsted Quarries is a further Local Wildlife Site. Although not currently included in LLD, the quarries provides a link to the chalk geology of the AONB, create a buffer with the residential development along the edge of Sittingbourne and provide a wooded backdrop and setting to the valley in some views.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>This area largely meets the criteria for LLD and it is recommended that it is retained with minor boundary changes to extend the designation. The deterioration in landscape quality is noted, and retention of the LLD should be aligned with measures to enhance quality particularly at the urban interface.</p> <p>It is recognised that there are many valued features and elements along the dip slope within the wider area (Tunstall Farmlands) but this is not a cohesive entity that merits a separate designation. The key requirement is to conserve and enhance this area as part of the setting/context to the AONB.</p>

# Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted dry valleys



Kent Downs AONB  
 Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

- Boundary changes**
- 1 Extend to include Highsted Quarry
  - 2 Extend to the east of Highsted



# Kent Downs: Syndale Valley

## Landscape character and quality



Distinct chalk valley landform with extensive woodland on slopes



The Stone Church Scheduled Monument



Woodland characterises valley crests and forms a connected ecological network



Open water at Oare gravel pits



Narrow sunken lanes at Bysing Wood



Mature parkland trees at Syndale

Candidate LLD name	Kent Downs: Syndale Valley
<b>Relationship to existing local landscape designation</b>	AHLV –Kent Level: Doddington and Newham Dry Valley
<b>Extent of area</b>	A distinct dry valley extending from the AONB boundary at the M2 northwards towards Oare.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	20: Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt very small area to the north of M2 (west of The Oaks, south of Coxett Wood) 36: Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys - majority of area north of M2
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	20: Partial – interface with AONB 36: Yes.
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Fully meets</i>
<b>Boundary commentary</b>	<p><b>See map</b></p> <p>The boundaries are largely contiguous with the character area which flows out from areas of similar 'dry valley' character within the AONB. Boundaries are determined by topography and follow suitable features such as woodland edges along the valley crest and continue along the valley northwards to capture important natural and historic assets at Syndale House, Bysing Wood and the Gunpowder Works.</p> <p>A small area on the western side of the existing designation at Telegraph Hill/Beacon Hill sits within the same character area and it is recommended that these are included on the basis of topography forming the enclosing upper valley sides.</p> <p>To the south east the LLD boundary is drawn along Abbots Hill Road, while this is essentially a more arable landscape on the upper valley crests, the road here provides a defensible and robust boundary and is therefore preferable to the character area boundary which runs along Coxett Wood/Judds Wood.</p> <p>Consideration has also been given to extending the eastern boundary to include the minor valley at Ospringe – an area locally valued as indicated by the consultation. This is an attractive area but it is not part of the distinct dry valley system at Syndale and is too small to be a LLD in its own right and has therefore been excluded.</p> <p>Further consideration was given to extending the boundary westwards into character area 26 (Lynstead Enclosed Farmlands) which is a traditional rural landscape and includes a number of valued features. It was not considered to meet the criteria for an LLD in its own right but is clearly important as part of the setting of the AONB.</p> <p><b>Additions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In conclusion, while the precise extent of the boundary could be debated in a number of locations, the existing boundary is considered to be a pragmatic and robust line and captures the main areas of interest, with a minor extension proposed at Telegraph/Beacon Hill.</li> </ol>
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	The Paper identified the area as intact and this remains the case.
<b>Stage 4:</b>	Retain as LLD at current extent, with minor extension to follow the character area boundaries at Beacon Hill.

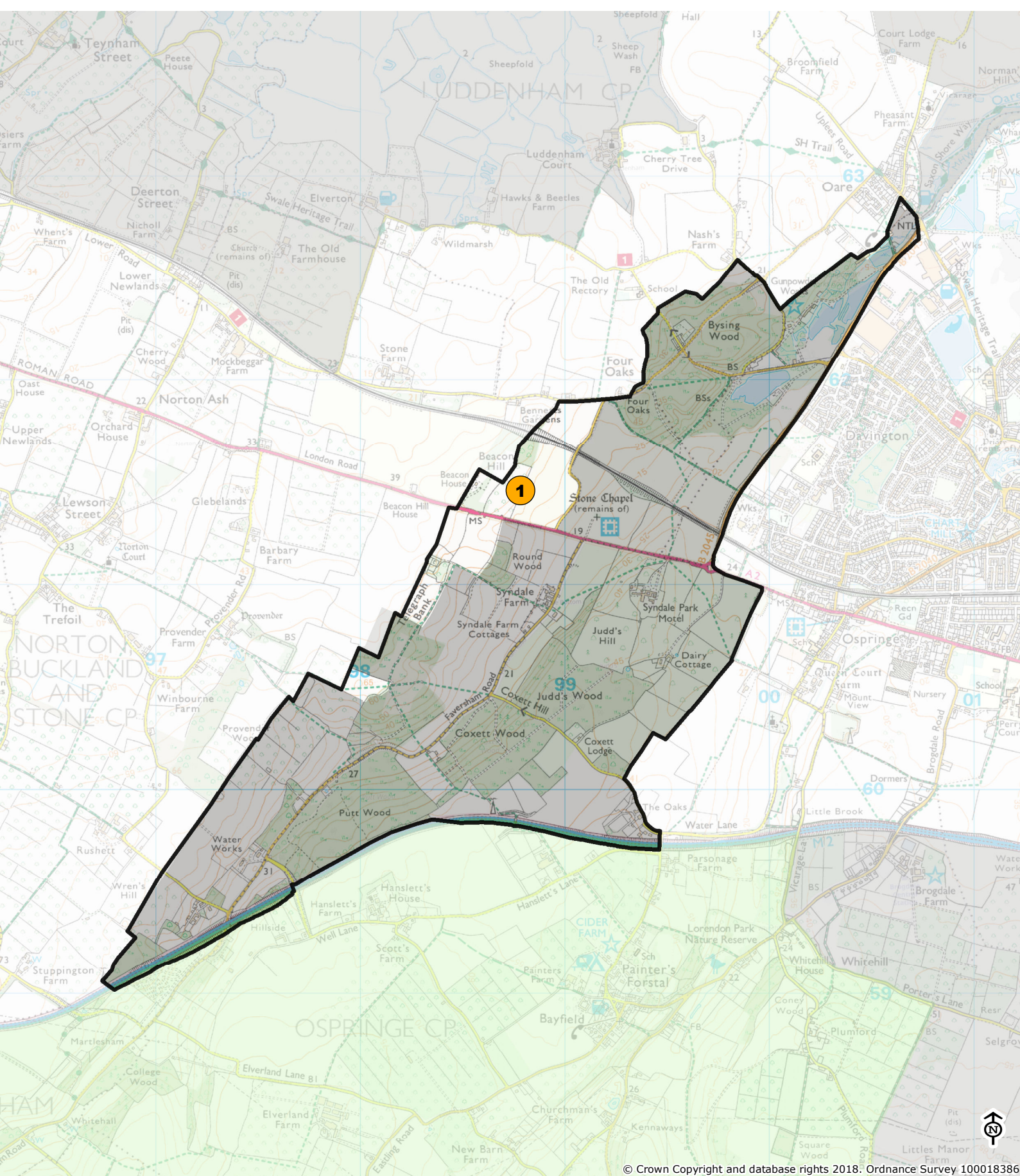
<b>Recommendation</b>	
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<b>Evaluation - Kent Downs: Syndale Valley</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>The area has the typical characteristics of a steep sided dry valley extending out from the AONB, with extensive woodlands and areas of sheep grazed pasture including steep chalk grassland bound by hanging woodland shaws. It is highly distinctive in terms of both landform and land cover with a strong sense of place and closely related to the dry valleys of the AONB. The local designation extends northwards across the A2 to encompass important landscape assets including Bysing Wood to meet the marshes at Oare and includes the Gunpowder Works, now a country park.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>A high quality, intact landscape identified as being in good condition in the LCA (2011) and still largely remaining in good condition. Much of the woodlands appear to be managed by traditional methods and the extensive blocks of woodland along the valley form a strong connected ecological network, with important orchid sites present plus remnant areas of chalk grassland. Areas of steep pasture on the valley sides are grazed or under arable land uses with a few local areas of hop production. Detracting features include the M2, A2 and rail line which cut across the valley but their influence is localised.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>This is a highly tranquil landscape typical of the AONB and deeply rural in character in close proximity to the edge of Faversham. The valley landform creates a distinctive enclosed character and links the town into the AONB. The mature parkland at Syndale is of high scenic quality. The strong rural character is emphasised by the absence of built features apart from occasional isolated rural dwelling and farms, many of which are historic/listed.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The area has considerable local value as recognised by the local designations and popular sites at Bysing Wood and Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park which are a recreational resource for Faversham and beyond.</p> <p>Syndale Park and Bysing Woods are both identified as locally valued places in the consultation exercise. The character area as a whole received three consultation responses recognising the wildlife habitats (Bysing Wood, Syndale Park and Coxett Wood), built heritage (Gunpowder Works) and outdoor recreation (country park, public rights of way) scenic qualities (views from Syndale Park).</p> <p>The area is contiguous with the AONB and represents many special qualities associated with the AONB including the hidden dry valley landform, intimate and enclosed vistas, biodiversity rich habitats including ribbons of chalk grassland on valley sides, and ancient semi-natural woodland, plus a rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes &amp; associations</b>	<p>An area with important natural and cultural associations. The valley includes many important historic features. The Stone Church north of the A2 is a scheduled monument and includes a Romano –British pre –Christian Mausoleum. Syndale Park contains mature parkland (non- registered) and is of considerable archaeological interest including the location of a Roman Fort, and to the north the former gunpowder works at Bysing Wood is a</p>





<b>Evaluation - Kent Downs: Syndale Valley</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>scheduled monument.</p> <p>Much of the woodland is locally designated for wildlife including the Ospringe Valley Local Wildlife Site, Bysing Wood and Oare Gravel Pits Local Wildlife Site. There is a Roadside Nature Reserve along the B2045.</p> <p>There are a number of Grade II listed buildings: The Oaks house and garden wall, Water softening plant, Putt Cottage, Lime Kiln, Syndale Cottages and Farmhouse.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The area fully meets the criteria. It should be retained as an LLD with some minor boundary changes. The key requirement is to conserve and enhance the deeply rural character and special qualities associated with the AONB that extends to the edge of Faversham.</p>

# Syndale valley




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 Kent Downs AONB

 Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

### Boundary changes

 Recommended extension at Telegraph/Beacon Hill to full extent of character area including upper valley slopes





## Kent Downs: North Street Dip Slope

### Landscape character and quality



Woodland marking the edge of the AONB at Sheldwich



Poplar shelterbelts



A gently rolling arable dip slope



Distinctive parkland landscape at Copton



Rows of fruit trees contrast with open arable land



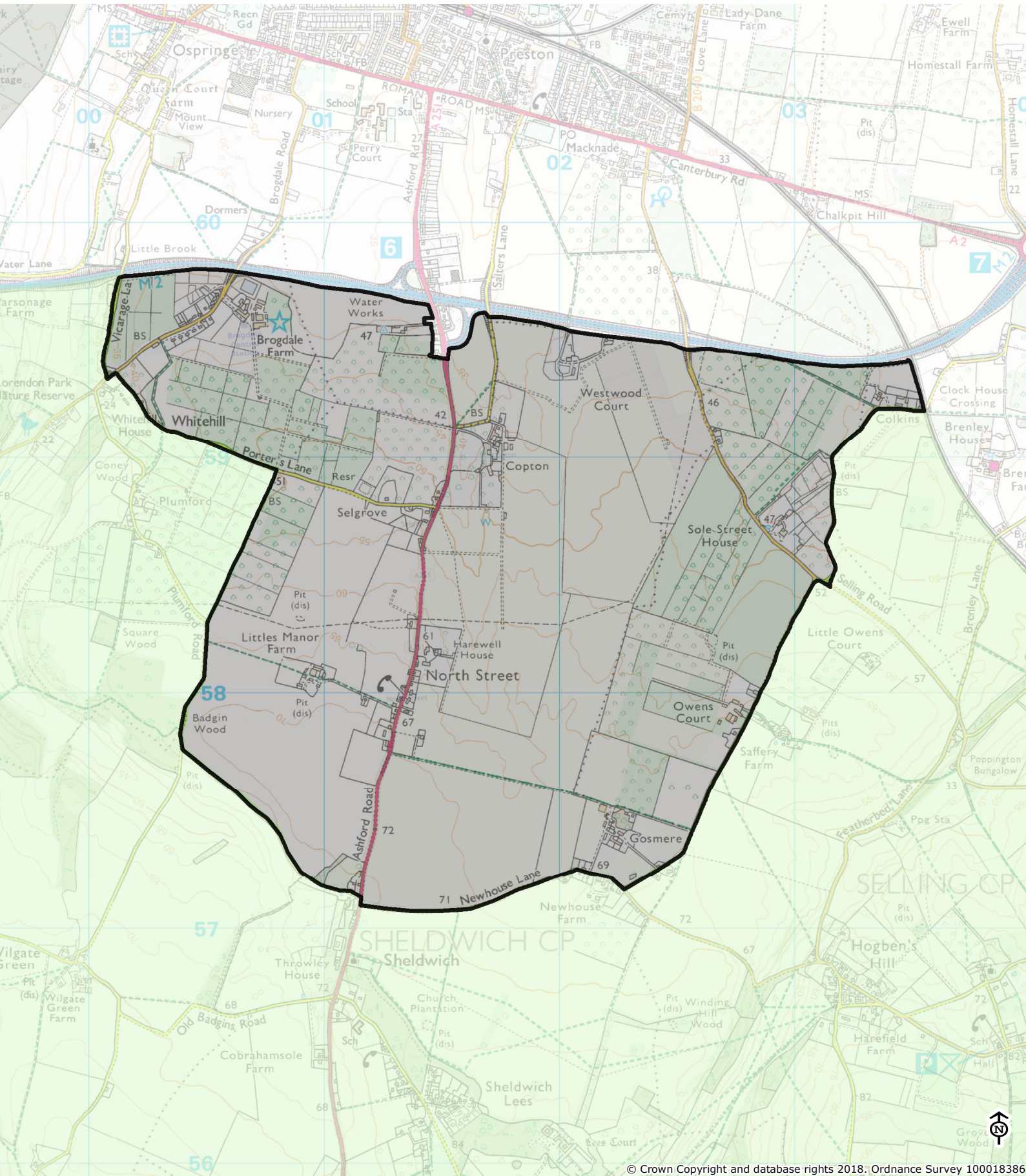
An enclosed orchard landscape towards Brogdale

Candidate LLD name	Kent Downs: North Street Dip Slope
<b>Relationship to existing local designation</b>	Existing AHLV –Kent Level
<b>Extent of area</b>	The local designation covers an area south of the M2 which is not designated as AONB. It is surrounded to the east, south and west by the Kent Downs AONB, and bounded by the M2 which runs to the north.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	20: Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt is a relatively large character area that extends into the AONB and north of the AONB containing an area of diverse character and quality.
<b>Stage 2: Desk Review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	20 – Partially. Field survey required to assess area encapsulated by the AONB.
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Partially meets some criteria</i> The North Street area only partially meets some criteria for local landscape designation. It shares few similarities with the adjacent AONB, which is characterised by the rising dip slope landform cut by dry valleys and presence of woodland. It is nevertheless a rural landscape marking the approach to and visual setting of the AONB. Valued and distinctive landscape features include the parkland at Copton and orchards at Brogdale.
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	<b>See map</b> Boundaries formed by AONB and the M2 are robust.
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	The Paper identified the area as intact. There are no recommendations for boundary changes.
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	The area partially meets some criteria for LLD. The case for its retention rests on basis of the role of the landscape as the rural approach and setting to the AONB and the fact that it is surrounded on three sides by the AONB and lies south of the M2, and is therefore relatively straightforward to define as distinct entity compared to other areas of the wider dip slope. The aim should be to seek to protect identified qualities and enhance elements where quality and condition has declined.

<b>Evaluation - Kent Downs: North Street Dip Slope</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>A gently sloping dip slope dropping away from the AONB in the south, comprising mainly arable crops and occasional orchards, as well top fruit under polytunnels. It is a rural landscape representative of the lower dip slope, but lacking a distinct sense of place. Relatively open, the landscape contains some large fields that have never been enclosed, plus occasional remnant poplar shelterbelts and hedgerows. The openness allows long views, including to the church and wooded backdrop at Sheldwich in the south which marks the boundary of the AONB and to the Thames Estuary in the north/east. While there are a number of buildings of architectural or historic interest within the area there is no overall unifying settlement or built character, comprising isolated rural buildings and linear development along the main road.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>The whole area is identified as being in good condition in the LCA (2011). In 2018, boundary loss and large areas of polytunnels are apparent in the landscape indicating a change in condition and intactness. The area is predominantly large arable fields with some fruit growing. The field boundary network is not intact with low/gappy hedgerows or open boundaries with occasional remnant standard trees and truncated lines of poplar around former fruit growing areas. It is acknowledged that historically this landscape was never fully enclosed and had an open character. Woodland is largely absent, apart from occasional tree groups around larger houses, although woodland within the AONB to the south forms a backdrop. There are few orchards and areas of fruit growing are now mainly within polytunnels, although dwarf fruit trees/orchards are a characteristic feature in the area around Porters Lane and Brogdale creating a more enclosed landscape in this area. Other detracting features are the busy main roads and sound/sight of traffic on M2/A251 and along some rural lanes and overhead power line.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The general absence of trees, woodland and hedgerows create a relatively open landscape with long views to the AONB and south east to the Estuary. These open views are occasionally punctuated by short lines of poplar.</p> <p>The area is crossed by the busy A251 linking Faversham and Ashford and bounded by the M2 to the north and as a consequence traffic is audible over much of the area and, within this exposed landscape traffic is visible on the A251. It cannot be described as tranquil or remote, although there are pockets that have a strong rural character.</p> <p>The area immediately south of the M2 has particularly distinctive quality with views over the parkland (unregistered) at Copton distinguishing this from the area north of the M2 which is characterised by development along the Ashford Road into Faversham. The rural landscape as a whole is important in providing separation and rural setting between Faversham and the AONB, which is of greater scenic quality.</p> <p>There are some small rural lanes which traverse and bound the area, some of which have heavy traffic use.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The character area as a whole received 4 consultation responses on landscape values relating to the following factors: wildlife habitats, built</p>

<b>Evaluation - Kent Downs: North Street Dip Slope</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>heritage, cultural associations, scenic qualities and outdoor recreation (although some of these are outside the LLD area or within the AONB). A number of these refer to Brogdale, an important centre for national fruit trials and a countryside recreation attraction. Attention is also drawn to Copton manor house and barn with its area of traditional grazed parkland and avenue of walnuts valued for its scenic qualities, built heritage and wildlife value. Other than Brogdale and an east – west right of way link, the area does not have a high recreational value.</p> <p>This area is unique in that it is encapsulated by the AONB on three sides. Special qualities identified in the Kent Down AONB Management Plan relevant are the views including those across the estuary from the plateau, the farmed landscape.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>The landscape does not have especially strong natural and cultural resonance or associations. There is one Roadside Nature Reserve on Plumford Road (boundary of AONB and LLD). There are clusters of Grade II listed farmhouses and cottages at North Street; Oast, farmhouse and dovecot at Gosmere; Copton windmill; Brogdale farmhouse. Copton Manor is Grade 1 Listed and is associated with an attractive area of parkland landscape. Historically, this area is considered to be unique because it has never been enclosed.</p> <p>The National Fruit Collection at Brogdale is one of the largest fruit collections in the world and includes over 3,500 named Apple, Pear, Plum, Cherry, Bush fruit, Vine and Cob Nut.</p> <p><i>Does not meet</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The North Street area partially meets some of the criteria for local landscape designation. It shares few similarities with the adjacent AONB, which is characterised by the rising dip slope landform cut by dry valleys and presence of woodland. Nevertheless, the area provides part of its visual setting and the rural context for the AONB. It is encapsulated on three sides by the AONB boundary and as such forms an identifiable geographical area.</p> <p>It is a rural landscape and distinct from the more developed area north of the M2. The open landscape, views to the estuary and the wooded backdrop of the AONB, presence of attractive features including the parkland at Copton and national fruit collection at Brogdale are identified landscape qualities which merit protection.</p> <p>For these reasons, it is recommended that an LLD is retained, aligned with proposals to conserve and enhance quality and condition.</p>

# North Street dip slope



- Kent Downs AONB
- Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

**Note: Retain as LLD at current extent**





# The Blean

## Landscape character and quality



View to woodland on slopes at North Bishopden Wood



Extensive recreational access at Blean Woods



Parkland trees and pasture at Courtenay Road



Deep sunken lane at Iron Hill south of Boughton Street



Areas of semi natural coppice woodland plus plantation forestry



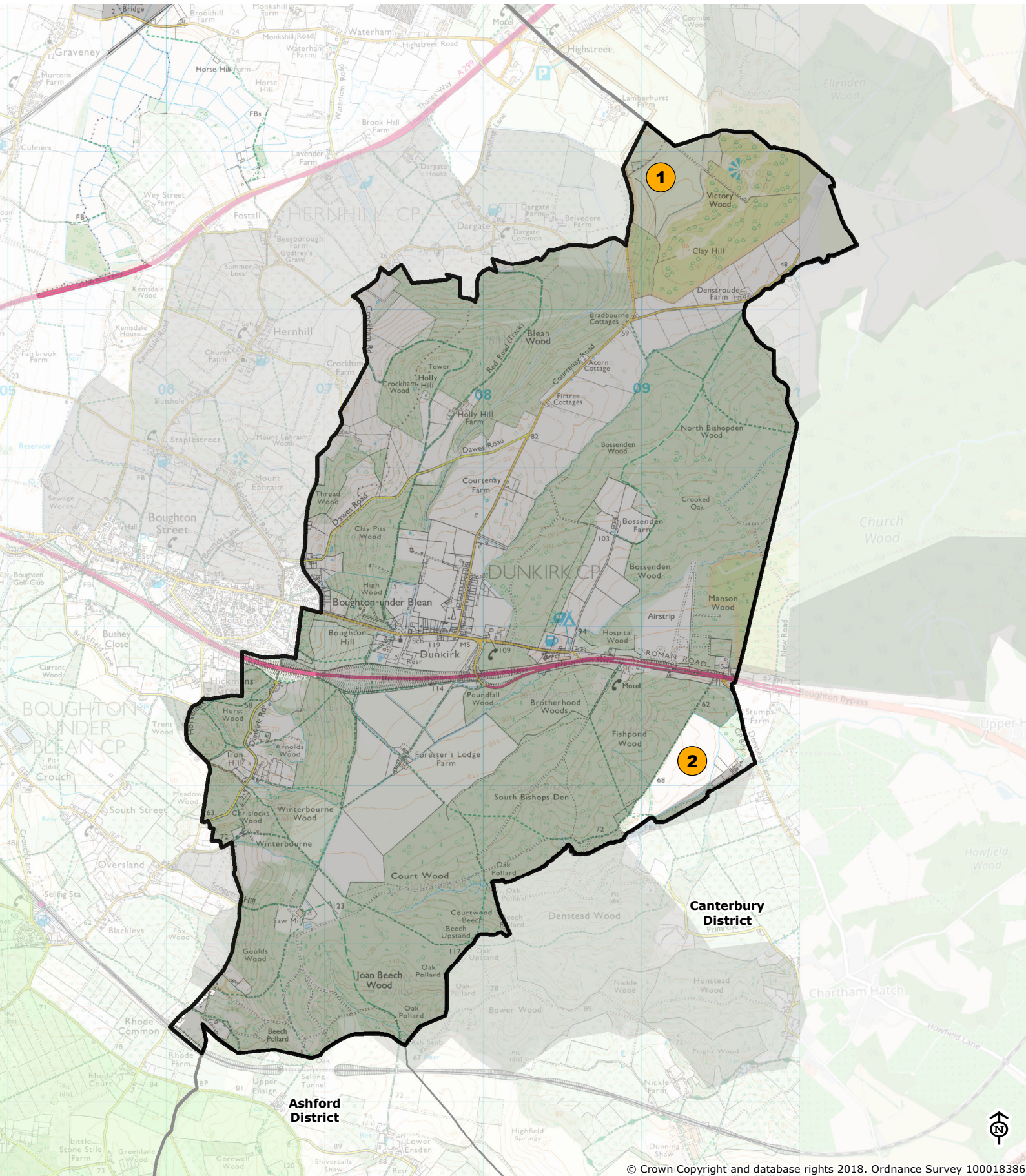
Heathland character persists on light sandy soils

Candidate LLD Name	The Blean
<b>Relationship to existing local designation</b>	Existing AHLV –Kent Level (Blean Woods)
<b>Extent of area:</b>	The area covers the distinct Blean Woods complex on the edge of Swale extending into Canterbury District to the east. The Blean is located on an area of elevated topography of London clay and gravel drift deposits. The heavy clay soils supports one of the largest areas of continuous semi-natural woodland in south east England. It is divided east west by the A2, partially in cutting.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	33: Blean Woods West (all)
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	33: Yes
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation</b>	Fully meets Retain as LLD at current extent, with minor boundary adjustments as recommended below.
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	<p><b>See map</b></p> <p>The boundary is robust largely following the edge of large woodland blocks representing the transition to the Blean Edge Fruit Belt LLD to the west and the Borough Boundary to the east.</p> <p><b>Additions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small area of land between Clay Hill and Lamberhurst Farm forming part of landscape restoration at Victory Wood.</li> <li>2. Open area joining Canterbury CC boundary and linking Fishpond Wood to local woodland wildlife site on edge of Swale (Denstead Lane) part of CCC Blean Local Landscape Designation.</li> </ol> <p><b>Deletions</b></p> <p>None proposed. A revised boundary with Blean Edge LLD based on woodland extent.</p>
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	<p><b>Land between Clay Hill and Lamberhurst Farm</b> – to be included within LLD (as noted above). This is an important area of restored linking woodland and provides continuity with CCC Blean LLD</p> <p><b>Meadow Wood, Scoggers Hill and Chrislocks Wood</b> – no boundary change proposed. The current LLD boundary follows the main woodland edge and is appropriate. It is recommended that the rural landscape to the west is considered as part of an extended Blean Edge LLD.</p> <p><b>Land from Trent Wood to Fox Wood</b> – no boundary change proposed. The current LLD boundary follows the main woodland edge and is appropriate. It is recommended that these areas are considered as part of an extended adjacent Blean Edge LLD.</p> <p><b>South Street/Oversland</b> – proposed to include within extended Blean Edge LLD – as this area is not part of the distinctive wooded landscape of the Blean.</p>

Candidate LLD Name	The Blean
<p><b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b></p>	<p>The Blean LLD is retained with minor boundary adjustments.</p> <p>The LLD shares a boundary with, but is separate and very different in character to the adjacent Blean Edge LLD and these are recommended to remain as two separate areas of LLD.</p>

<b>Evaluation - The Blean</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>Distinct sense of place created by large and continuous belts of deciduous woodland on elevated ground. The Blean forms a prominent wooded backdrop to the lower lying land in the eastern part of Swale, but offers a strong sense of containment and enclosure within the area. The extensive deciduous woodland blocks are divided by areas of farmland as at Courtney Farm, Bossenden Farm and Forester's Farm - some intensively managed and some with areas of grazed pasture and mature trees creating a parkland type landscape. It is a highly distinctive and unique wooded landscape within Swale.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>A landscape in good condition (LCA) evidenced by active management/coppicing of woodlands and well-managed farmland. There are some minor detracting features including more open arable farmland south of the A2, prominent mast at Dunkirk, and small wind turbine but these are not intrusive. Although the A2 dissects the area with local visual and audible impacts, the road is well contained within the wooded landscape. The area has strong ecological integrity.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>A strong sense of tranquillity and relative remoteness/insularity created by the continuous expanses of woodland linked to the wider Blean Woods complex extending beyond the Borough boundary. Much of the area is only accessible on foot with just two minor rural lanes (apart from the A2), with limited built development and consequently very dark skies at night. In more open elevated areas e.g. along Courtney Road, long views to the Thames Estuary provide a contrasting scenic quality to the densely wooded landscape.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>Blean Wood received three responses in the landscape values consultation. Denstroude valley is particularly noted for its wildlife habitats, built heritage (pill box) and scenic quality of open farmland set between the wooded hills. The area is highly valued for recreation; with sites including the Woodland Trust site at Victory Wood providing walking trails and open access land and the Blean National Nature Reserve (RSPB), plus an extensive rights of way network.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes/ associations</b>	<p>Part of one of the most extensive semi-natural woodland complexes in south east England containing many varied habitats of national and international importance (part of Blean Wood Complex SAC), including habitats supporting the rare heath fritillary butterfly and woodland birds including nightingales. The landscape provides a living record of past woodland management practices, with historic features including hedgebanks and extant coppice. Features of historic interest in addition to the ancient woodland include a Scheduled Monument: World War II Chain Home Radar Station and a number of Grade II listed buildings.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The area fully meets the criteria. It should be retained as an LLD with minor boundary adjustments at Victory Wood and the field at Denstead Lane.</p>

# The Blean



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- Kent Downs AONB
- Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

**Boundary changes**

- 1 Extend to include land between Clay Hill & Lamberhurst Farm
- 2 Extend to include land between Fishpond Wood to CCC Blean Local Landscape Designation at Denstead Lane

**Note: A revised edge with Blean edge LLD based on woodland extent. The two landscape designations are contiguous but of very different character and qualities.**



## Swale: Lower Halstow – Iwade Ridge

### Landscape character and quality



Mature orchard forming setting to Newington church



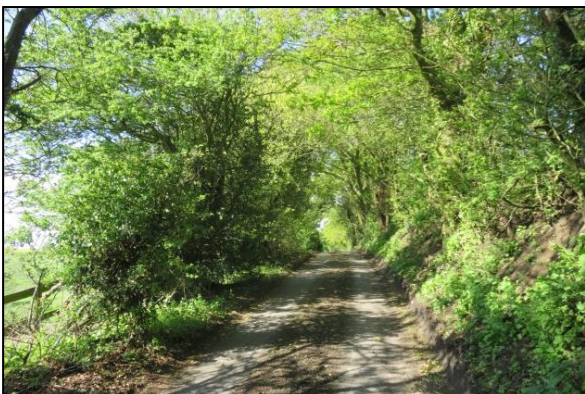
Ancient woodland at Wardwell Wood



Panoramic views over marshes, estuary and Isle of Grain



Remnant orchards along Raspberry Hill Lane



Wooded lane forming western boundary



Panoramic views from ridge top rights of way



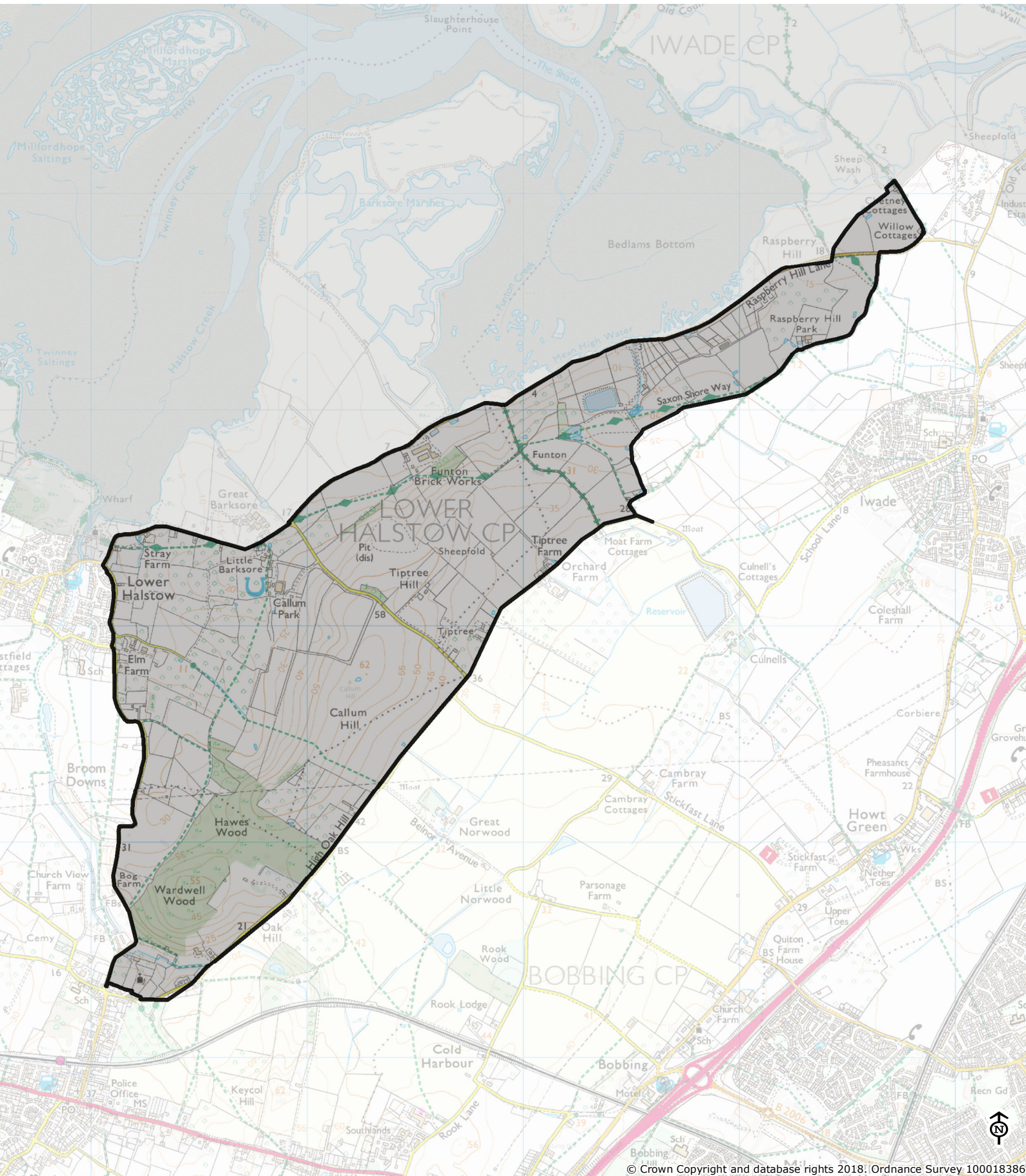
<b>Candidate LLD name</b>	<b>Swale: Lower Halstow – Iwade Ridge (Iwade, Newington and Lower Halstow)</b>
<b>Relationship to existing local designation</b>	AHLV –Swale Level (Iwade, Newington and Lower Halstow)
<b>Extent of area</b>	A distinct ridge extending east from Newington and Lower Halstow to Iwade providing a rural backdrop to the Barksore, Greenborough and Chetney Marshes. Boundaries are formed by minor rural roads.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	The LLD contains small part of three character areas: 24: Iwade Arable Farmlands (area north of Newington, west of High Oak Hill) 25: Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands (area west of Lower Saxon Shore Way, to Willow Cottages in the north) 32: Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt (area east of Lower Halstow to border with LCA 24)  It therefore has a diverse character partially unified by the ridge landform.
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	24: No. part of area included for field survey in relation to ridge 25: Partially meets , scenic values likely to relate to views out rather than area itself 32: Partially, fieldwork required to check creek extending inland from Lower Halstow
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Partially meets</i>  This area has deteriorated in quality since its original designation as an AHLV (Local Landscape Area). The 2003 Report states that it is the only area of foreshore within the marshland zone which is not designated. However; the marshlands themselves are, and will continue as, a LLD. Furthermore, there are other coastal foreshore areas in the Borough which are not designated including the low clay cliffs which are a distinctive feature along the north coast of Sheppey. The area has deteriorated in condition since designation – it is almost entirely in intensive arable or horse pasture with associated loss of boundaries as well as some intrusive developments.  Factors in favour of its retention are the distinctive landform, marshland views and backdrop, woodland and role of setting to Newington, as well as locally valued features including sense of separation it provides to more developed areas.
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	<b>See map</b> None proposed  This area only partially meets the evaluation criteria for a local landscape designation. The area within LCA 32 to the east of Lower Halstow on the lower slopes of the ridge is now almost entirely paddocks and of relatively low landscape quality. The boundary could equally be justified to exclude this area and only capture the ridge (LCA 24 and 25). The boundary has been retained on the Lower Halstow edge along existing roads as a pragmatic and robust line.
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	<b>Valley and stream to the east of Wardwell Lane</b> – this area was surveyed from the footpaths. The valley is a quiet rural landscape with natural qualities including the tree lined watercourse and areas of rush. The area south of Broom Down contains extensive horse grazing, some storage of industrial equipment and evidence of earth moving. The valley to the west

<b>Candidate LLD name</b>	<b>Swale: Lower Halstow – Iwade Ridge (Iwade, Newington and Lower Halstow)</b>
	<p>and north of Broom Down is more intact in places although inclusion of this area in the LLD would require the intervening area of Broom Down - a large arable plateau crossed by pylons which, itself does not merit LLD. The valley is a valuable landscape feature and demonstrates important qualities, including the enclosed valley landform, watercourse and associated riparian vegetation, plus history of former water cress beds, but as a whole does not merit inclusion in the wider LLD.</p> <p><b>Area between High Oak Hill, the railway and Calveshole Wood</b> – this small area is off the main ridge and does not share the same topographical distinction. It does provide the rural foreground to the church and Wardwell Woods from the railway line and includes an old orchard. It is concluded that while of local value this area does not merit inclusion in the LLD and would extend the existing LLD beyond the ridge.</p>
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	<p>Retain as LLD based on the distinctive landform, relationship with the marshes (views to and backdrop), role as an 'island' of rural character between Iwade/Sittingbourne and the Medway towns including relatively dark skies at night, and presence of valued features including ancient woodland. It is noted that the area only partially meets designation criteria and if retained as an LLD should be aligned with proposals to enhance landscape character and quality.</p>

<b>Evaluation - Swale: Lower Halstow – Iwade Ridge</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>A prominent ridge, notably at the western extent where the landform is accentuated by woodland (Wardwell Wood and Hawes Wood) flanking the slopes. The slope drops away from the ridge at Callum Hill/Tiptree Hill towards the marshes at Bedlams Bottom/Raspberry Hill Lane, and also includes the relatively low lying agricultural landscape east of Lower Halstow. Adjacent to Bedlams Bottom, where there are more fertile soils, a small area of orchards and associated windbreaks create a distinctive landscape feature set against the marshland. The views north over the marshes from higher ground and the rural/agricultural interface with the marshes along Raspberry Hill lane contribute to the local sense of place. Views and openness are accentuated by the large fields and absence of tree cover on the upper slopes. Wardwell Wood provides a setting to Newington and the church.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>Overall, this is a landscape in relatively poor condition (LCA 24 - Poor, 25 - Moderate, 32- Moderate) which has further declined in recent years with the loss of orchards. The area is primarily large fields given over to arable cultivation or horse/equine activities, often with denuded or poorly kept boundaries and associated clutter. An area of notable change is the slopes rising up to the ridge east of Lower Halstow which are now almost exclusively paddocks and have lost all the orchard land cover. Relatively few areas of orchards remain apart from one small area of dwarf fruit along Raspberry Hill Lane. A traditional grazed orchard at Newington which creates a rural setting to the church.</p> <p>Other intrusive/incongruous features include the Funton brickworks, disused brick earth pits, on farm reservoirs and some residential development. The rural lanes are relatively well used by local traffic detracting from the rural character in places.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The ridge provides a sense of elevation and openness with long views out over the marshes and the Medway. It is a rural area with relatively limited development within and as such offers some degree of tranquillity and is perceived as an undeveloped rural backdrop to the marshes with relatively dark skies at night, although it is not 'remote'. Within the area relatively intensive agricultural land use, loss of landscape features and structure (boundaries) and traffic on the rural lanes detract from scenic quality.</p> <p>The sunken wooded Wardwell Lane along part of the western boundary is a notably attractive feature, as is Raspberry Hill Lane at the marshland interface. Elsewhere the busy rural lanes are bounded by depleted hedgerows and occasional mature oaks.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The ridge attracted a number of responses (4) in the Local Values consultation. The ridge of higher land is particularly valued for its scenic qualities and views out over the estuary. It is considered to provide an undeveloped backdrop and scenic break to Iwade, Bobbing and Sittingbourne and conversely as a buffer between the rural villages of Lower Halstow and Upchurch from development extending from Sittingbourne and at Iwade. The adjacent valley south of Lower Halstow is also locally valued with evidence of former watercress beds.</p>

<b>Evaluation - Swale: Lower Halstow – Iwade Ridge</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>The shoreline and lower slopes are crossed by The Saxon Shore Way a regionally promoted route as well as a number of rights of way.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>Hawes Wood and Wardwell Wood form one of the few wooded areas in this part of Swale. It is ancient woodland designated as a Local Wildlife Site. However, there is no public access to the woodlands.</p> <p>Buildings of interest include the Grade I listed: Church of St Mary, Newington, for which this area provides a wooded backdrop. Grade II listed: Farmhouses at Little Barksore and Stray Farm.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>This area partially meets the criteria for LLD. It has deteriorated in quality since its original designation as an AHLV.</p> <p>Factors in favour of its retention are the distinctive landform, presence of relatively rare large block of ancient woodland in this part of the Borough and marshland views/backdrop. It is an area of relative dark skies at night, and the ridge is perceived as an important feature both for views out and the sense of separation and backdrop it provides, as highlighted by the Local Values consultation.</p> <p>For this reason it is recommended that it is retained as a LLD. This should be aligned to proposals to enhance landscape character and quality. Existing designation boundaries to be retained to encompass the ridge landform recognising that these include some areas of lower landscape quality on the edges.</p>

# Lower Halstow - Iwade Ridge



Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

**Note: Retain as LLD at current extent.**



## Swale: Tonge and Luddenham

### Landscape character and quality



Medieval houses raised on banks above the landform



Long views across the marshes to the Swale from Luddenham



Small scale landscape of orchards enclosed by shelterbelts



Rural lanes and orchards form an enclosed secluded landscape



Springs with minor streams drain to the marshes



Churches on the edges of the marsh at Luddenham, Teynham and Tonge are landmarks

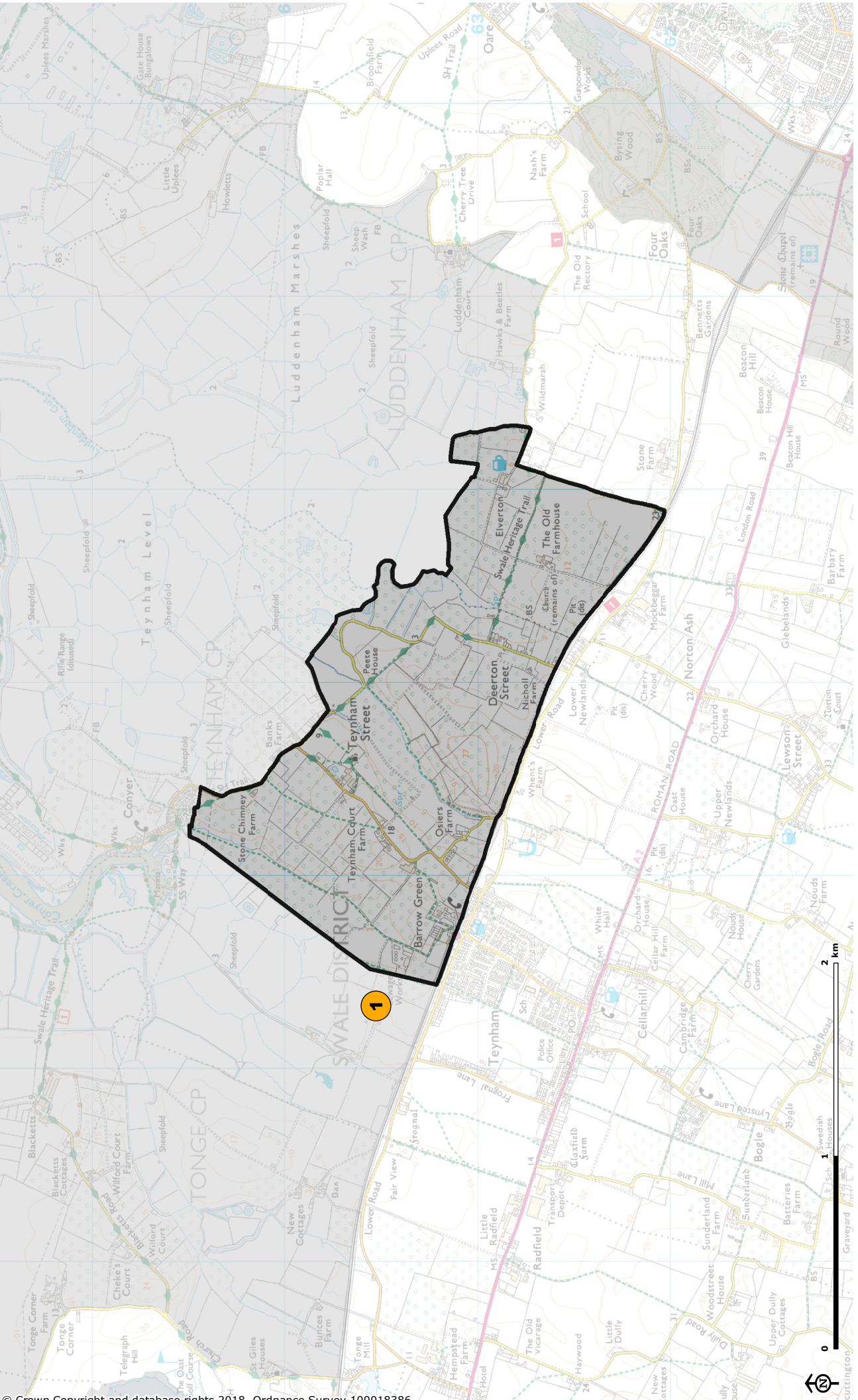
Candidate LLD name	Swale: Tonge and Luddenham
<b>Relationship to existing local designation</b>	Existing AHLV – Swale Level (Tonge and Luddenham)
<b>Extent of area</b>	A narrow, isolated area of fruit belt landscape between the railway line and the Luddenham and Conyer Marshes.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	The area is within and includes all of LCA 31: Teynham Fruit Belt north of the railway. It also extends to a small area to the east to incorporate Luddenham Court a historic complex of buildings on the edge of the marshes in LCA 17: Stone Arable Farmlands.
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	17: Stone Arable Farmlands - No, but noting pocket of traditional landscape and relationship to marshes. 31: Teynham Fruit Belt – Yes, due to highly distinctive character, but noting Sittingbourne urban fringe influences to the west
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Partially meets</i> Only part of the area south and east of Conyer meets the criteria and even within this area extensive loss of orchards, with large areas now in intensive arable land use mean that a LLD is difficult to justify.  The qualifying attributes include the small scale intimate secluded landscape of low hills and stream valleys, the remaining orchards, narrow winding lanes, historic buildings, often set on higher land, long views across the marshes and seemingly remote character in places, as well historic associations with the origins of commercial fruit growing.  The remaining area is very small and considered to be too small to form an LLD in its own right. The recommendation is to seek to link the small area of high quality landscape to the adjacent marsh LLD.
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	<b>See map</b> <b>Deletions</b> 1. The area to the west of Conyer – Teynham does not merit LLD (see evaluation) and a new boundary drawn to the east of and excluding the sewage works at Barrow Green, leaving a relatively small area with potential for LLD designation.  The northern boundary is contiguous with the South Swale marshes LLD.
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	The railway line to the south forms a clear boundary. Although there are some elements and features of high landscape quality south of the rail line there is no justification for extending the LLD into this area.
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	The area remaining that meets the criteria is distinctive and interesting but the size is such that it is difficult to justify as a landscape scale designation, despite containing numerous identified qualities.  The recommendation is to include part of this area within an extended South Swale Marshes LLD.



<b>Evaluation - Swale: Tonge and Luddenham</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>This is a narrow, isolated area of fruit belt landscape between the railway line and the Luddenham and Conyer Marshes. It is distinctive for its unusual topography of minor hills cut by springs and valleys draining to the marshes. The LCA describes the “quirky anomalies” unique to this area including places where roads and tracks are raised above the surrounding landform due to local areas of brick earth extraction, resulting in sunken arable fields and orchards. Throughout the area important buildings including historic Manor houses are built on mounds to avoid inundation in times of flooding. The area is distinctive for its isolated ‘hidden’ character accessed by twisting narrow lanes.</p> <p><i>Fully meets, with a less distinctive area to the west</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>The landscape condition is described in the 2011 LCA as moderate overall, visually coherent with a strong landscape pattern. In recent years the condition has deteriorated. Landscape condition is particularly degraded to the west where there are vast arable fields with denuded hedgerows, often replaced by security fencing and gates. Here, the landscape is strongly influenced by the edge of Sittingbourne and expanded settlements at Bapchild and Teynham. To the east, orchards have been replaced with arable land so that this area is now more similar in character to the adjacent area of Stone Arable Farmlands. Much of the area is now in intensive arable or horse pasture with associated deterioration in boundaries.</p> <p><i>Partially meets and does not meet in the west</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>Scenic qualities include the distinctive vernacular, patterns of land cover including orchards and its remote rural character.</p> <p>A particularly scenic and distinctive area persists at Tonge Mill and remains of Tonge Castle, which form a local landmark although these are outside the existing AHLV.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The Teynham Fruit Belt LCA received 2 responses in the Local Values consultation. It is valued for its scenic qualities including the open views to the downs and the Swale Estuary, wildlife habitats and built heritage. The area to the west is valued for its role as transitional space between the urban edge of Bapchild and the historic core of Tonge Mill and surroundings.</p> <p>The area has recreational value and is accessible via. The Swale Heritage Trail and National Cycle Route 1.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>There is local wildlife interest associated with the minor valleys and orchards.</p> <p>A relatively large number of listed farmhouses include Bax, Bunces farmhouse and barn; Cheke Farm; Fox Cottage; Tonge Corner farmhouse; Oziers farm, barn and stables. These historic buildings date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and are often highly visible in the landscape raised above the landform on banks. Teynham Church is a prominent landmark overlooking a minor stream valley with the backdrop of the marshes to the north.</p> <p>The area is known as the birthplace of commercial fruit growing from 16<sup>th</sup> century when Henry VIII’s fruiterer planted “the sweet cherry, the temperate pippyn and the golden reinette” at Oziers farm;</p>

<b>Evaluation - Swale: Tonge and Luddenham</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<i>Fully meets</i>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>This area partially meets the criteria for LLD. It has deteriorated in quality since its original designation as an AHLV and there are relatively few orchards remaining. The area to the west does not meet criteria for designation.</p> <p>Part of the area meets criteria by virtue of its unusual landform, remote and isolated character, distinctive historic buildings, presence of stream valleys and remnant orchards including cultural associations with the birth of commercial fruit growing. However, this is a relatively small area and is not considered to be of sufficient size to form a coherent LLD.</p> <p>The recommendation for this small area is to attach it to an extended South Swale Marshes LLD by virtue of the linked stream valleys. This should be aligned with proposals to conserve and enhance qualities and prevent further deterioration.</p> <p>There are opportunities to enhance the landscape to the west to provide a strong framework for the rural edge and role for recreation (Nature Reserve, Saxon Shore Way and Swale Heritage Trail).</p>

# Tonge and Luddenham



Local Landscape Designation (LLD) **Boundary Changes**

**1** The area to the west of Teynham does not meet criteria for designation

*Note: This small remaining area only partially meets criteria for LLD and area is likely too small for LLD. Please see recommendations for an extended South Swale Marshes LLD to include this small area.*



## Swale: Blean Edge Fruit Belt

### Landscape character and quality



A wooded right of way contrasting with more open agricultural areas



Orchards dominate many of the slopes



Elevation allows with long views including land mark features - church at Hernhill



Hop fields are features of the landscape



Rows of soft fruit form distinctive patterns



A rural enclosed landscape at Oversland

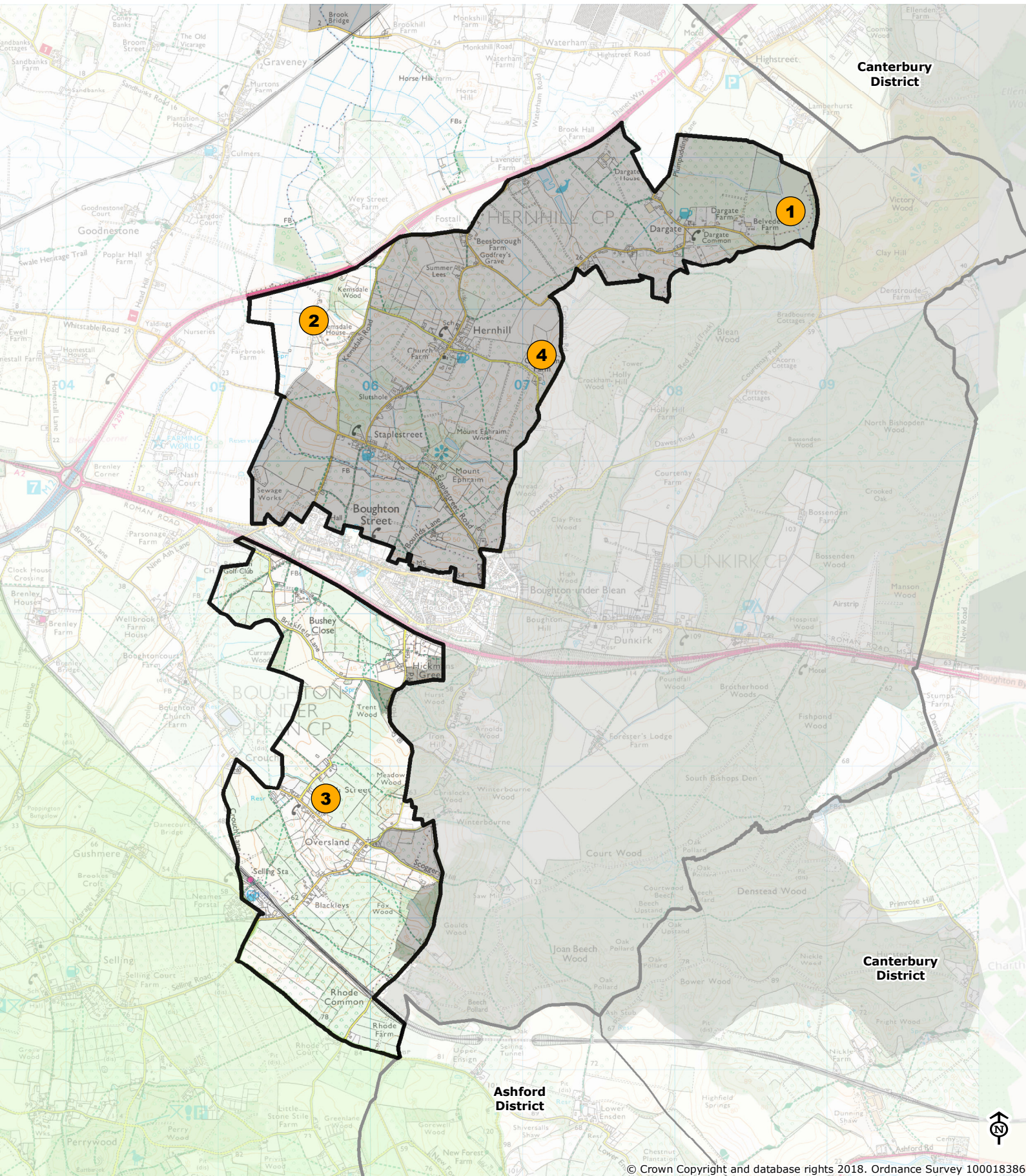
Candidate LLD name	Swale: Blean Edge – Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt
<b>Relationship to existing local designation</b>	Existing AHLV -Swale Level (Boughton Street, Hernhill, Dargate and Staplestreet)  Suggested extension south of the A2/Boughton Street to incorporate area of similar quality and character on the edge of the Blean complex and forming a rural setting to the AONB.
<b>Extent of area</b>	The proposed LLD covers the rolling agricultural landscape on the edge of the Blean woodlands complex in the eastern part of Swale Borough. It is contained and bounded by the A299 and Faversham-Canterbury railway and dissected by the A2.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	23: Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt, between northern edge of Boughton Street and A299, with recommendation for further extension south of A2 30 – Selling Fruit Belt – within suggested extension 33: Blean Woods West, very small section in west of LCA around Crockham Farm) although this is more similar in character to 23.
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	23: Yes 30: Yes 33: Yes
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Fully meets</i>  Retain as LLD and consider inclusion of remainder of character area 23 to south of A2 and part of character area 30.
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	<b>See map</b>  The boundary is robust largely following the edge of large woodland blocks representing the transition to The Blean LLD to the east, contours marking the lower lying land to the east and north, and potentially the AONB to the south (if recommended extension) or existing settlement boundary north of Boughton (if southern extension not included). <b>Additions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Extend north-east edge to take in valley area west of Belvedere Farm and join with extended area of Blean LLD at Clay Hill - Lamberhurst Farm. This links across an attractive minor valley and joins with the extended Blean LLD a Victory Wood. Boundary defined along edge of Victory Wood.</li><li>2. Include small area west of Kemsdale Road to A229– the small area around Kemsdale Wood and House is of similar character and topography to the fruit belt and part of character area 23, noting that valley to west is of a different character although of high quality and so boundary taken to lower slope.</li><li>3. Suggested larger extension south of the A2/Boughton Street to incorporate the rest of character area 23 which is of similar quality and character on the edge of the Blean complex and forms a rural setting to the AONB. This incorporates Oversland/South Street recommended as an extension to the Blean, and includes small additions of character area 30 in the gap at Rhode Common.</li><li>4. A revised boundary with Blean LLD based on woodland extent. The two landscape designations are contiguous but of very different character and qualities.</li></ol> <b>Deletions</b> None proposed
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	<b>Area between Clay Hill and Lamberhurst Farm</b> – included land west of Belvedere Farm, with further area included within the adjacent Blean LLD <b>The existing western boundary</b> is maintained at the break of slope roughly parallel to the A299 noting distinct change in character at this flatter low lying

Candidate LLD name	Swale: Blean Edge – Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt
	<p>area around Fairbrook Farm, with this low lying vale on the edge included plus small area of similar topography at Kelmsdale Wood is included</p> <p><b>Inclusion of very small area of similar character at Wey Street north of the A299</b> is not justified due to isolation and separation by road and lower quality</p> <p><b>Valley around west and north of Kemsdale Wood and extending to Graveney</b> is undoubtedly a distinctive area but very different to character of the wider fruitbelt landscape and is therefore excluded (option for consideration as part of extended marsh landscape LLD).</p> <p><b>Boundary between The Blean and Fruitbelt LLD</b> is transitional and broadly follows the edge of the main woodland blocks – option to include as one single LLD but they are very different in character and so recommended to be retained as two distinct LLDs</p> <p><b>Oversland - South Street</b> – potential for inclusion as part of proposed extended designation south of Boughton (see above). This is a highly rural landscape, intact, distinctive small villages and fruit belt similar to rest of LCA 23. Recommended to include all as extended LLD</p>
<p><b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b></p>	<p>An extended LLD to include areas of fruit belt landscape south of the A2 of similar distinctive character and high quality which form the setting to The Blean and the AONB (excluding developed area at Boughton).</p>

<b>Evaluation - Swale: Blean Edge Fruit Belt</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>Set on the foothills of The Blean, this area has a distinct sense of place created by the elevated undulating topography, overlaid with a complex land use pattern of orchards, hop fields and pasture within a patchwork of small fields enclosed by alder and poplar shelterbelts. These are set against the wooded backdrop of the Blean. Small nucleated traditional Kentish villages at Hernhill, Dargate, Staplestreet, South Street and Oversland are characterised by their vernacular of red stock brick, white weatherboard and tile.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>This is an intact and high quality rural landscape. It is recorded as being in good condition in the LCA. The area is actively farmed with a mix of orchards and occasional hop gardens. Orchards are mainly dwarf fruit arranged in lines along the slopes creating distinctive geometric patterns. In addition there are small areas of woodland, some arable and pasture bound by largely intact hedgerows creating a unified agricultural landscape. There is an absence of incongruous features and the main roads bound rather than infiltrate the area.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The elevated and undulating topography offers a contrasting sense of enclosure, enhanced by the backdrop of the Blean, and long views north out over the marshlands and the Swale. This is a strongly rural, secluded and tranquil landscape enclosed by, but not adversely impacted by the main roads of the A2 and A299.</p> <p>Textbook 'unspoilt' Kentish villages and vernacular buildings – red stock bricks, Kent peg tile roofs, weatherboarding add to the scenic quality.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>The area received one consultation response. This relates to the area south of the A2 which is described as "<i>contiguous with AONB boundary and exhibits similar landscape characteristics. Intact and coherent landscapes of high quality</i>". It represents special qualities identified in the AONB management plan.</p> <p>There is a relatively good network of rights of way which connects into routes within the extensive area of Blean Woods.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>A distinctive and high quality built character. Oasts and Manor Houses are further distinctive built features, with flint church towers such as that at Hernhill providing local landmarks on higher ground.</p> <p>Grade II listed buildings include Mount Ephraim with associated Registered Park and Garden; cottages and pub at Staplestreet; Hernhill Manor House and Cottages; Fostall House and Farmhouse.</p> <p>Habitat interest is represented by a small section of Blean Wood West and Holly Hill Local Wildlife Site.</p> <p><i>Fully meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Fully meets criteria. Retain as LLD and extend the LLD to include the high quality landscape that meets the criteria to south of A2 and to the AONB boundary.</p>



# Blean Edge fruit belt



Kent Downs AONB  
 Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

**Boundary changes**

- 1 Extend north east edge to take in valley area
- 2 Extend to include small area west of Kemsdale Road & associated valley
- 3 Suggested larger extension south of A2 to incorporate whole character area 23 & small addition of character area 30 in the gap at Rhode Common
- 4 Boundary with the Blean LLD aligned along Crockham Road

**Note: A revised edge with Blean LLD based on woodland extent. The two landscape designations are contiguous but of very different character and qualities.**



## Swale: Sheppey Court, Minster and Diggs Marshes

### Landscape character and quality



Drainage ditches and counterwalls are traditional features of the marsh landscape



Regeneration of marshland on Minster Marshes



The poorer quality marsh landscape west of the A249



Housing and development encloses this smaller remnant marsh area



A high quality marshland landscape at Barton's Point



Saltwater Lake at Barton's Point

Candidate LLD name	Swale: Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes
<b>Relationship to existing local designation</b>	AHLV -Swale Level (Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes) This evaluation also includes the adjacent area of Minster Marsh.
<b>Extent of area</b>	An area of grazing marsh south of Sheerness, and north of Minster/Halfway Houses and Queenborough. Sheppey Court and Minster Marshes are divided by the A250, while the A249 and rail line cross the western extent of Diggs Marsh. The marshes provide a rural backdrop and separation to the settlements between Sheerness, Queenborough and Halfway Houses.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	9: Minster Marshes (recommended in 2014 study) 10: Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes (all)
<b>Stage 2: Desk review (see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	9: No 10: No Both areas recommended for further field survey review to test desk study findings.
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation (see overleaf)</b>	<i>Partially meets – Sheppey Court Marsh only (area to the west on Diggs Marsh and Minster Marsh do not meet criteria)</i> Part of the area only partially meets the criteria for local landscape designation. Although it retains a traditional marshland character it is degraded and physically separate from the wider North Kent Marshes and is of a smaller scale and largely dominated by urban influences. It has a strong wildlife interest which is protected through the LWS designation. Some parts of the marshland are of higher quality with elements of tranquillity but it is considered that these are not extensive enough to merit a landscape designation.  The area performs an important function as an open gap creating visual and physical separation between Sheerness, Queenborough and Halfway Houses.
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	<b>Addition</b> 1. If the area is retained there is an opportunity to extend to encompass the whole of the Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument and the highly valued area of Barton’s Coastal Park.  <b>Deletion</b> 2. As this is a relatively small area the influence of the A249, railway, industrial infrastructure and pylons has a greater influence on quality than in larger areas of marshland. If it is retained as an LLD it is recommended that the area on the western edge of Diggs Marsh is removed as it does not meet criteria.
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	The extension of Queenborough School into the marshes is noted and this is part of a wider area proposed for deletion. Field survey was undertaken for the adjacent area of Minster Marshes which confirmed that it did not meet the criteria for local landscape designation, as described overleaf.
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	Retain the existing LLD and extend to include the highly valued area at Barton’s Point. Delete areas of lower quality that do not meet criteria.  This area performs an important function as an open gap creating visual and physical separation between Sheerness, Minster, Queenborough and Halfway Houses. There are opportunities to enhance the quality and improve the setting of the urban areas.

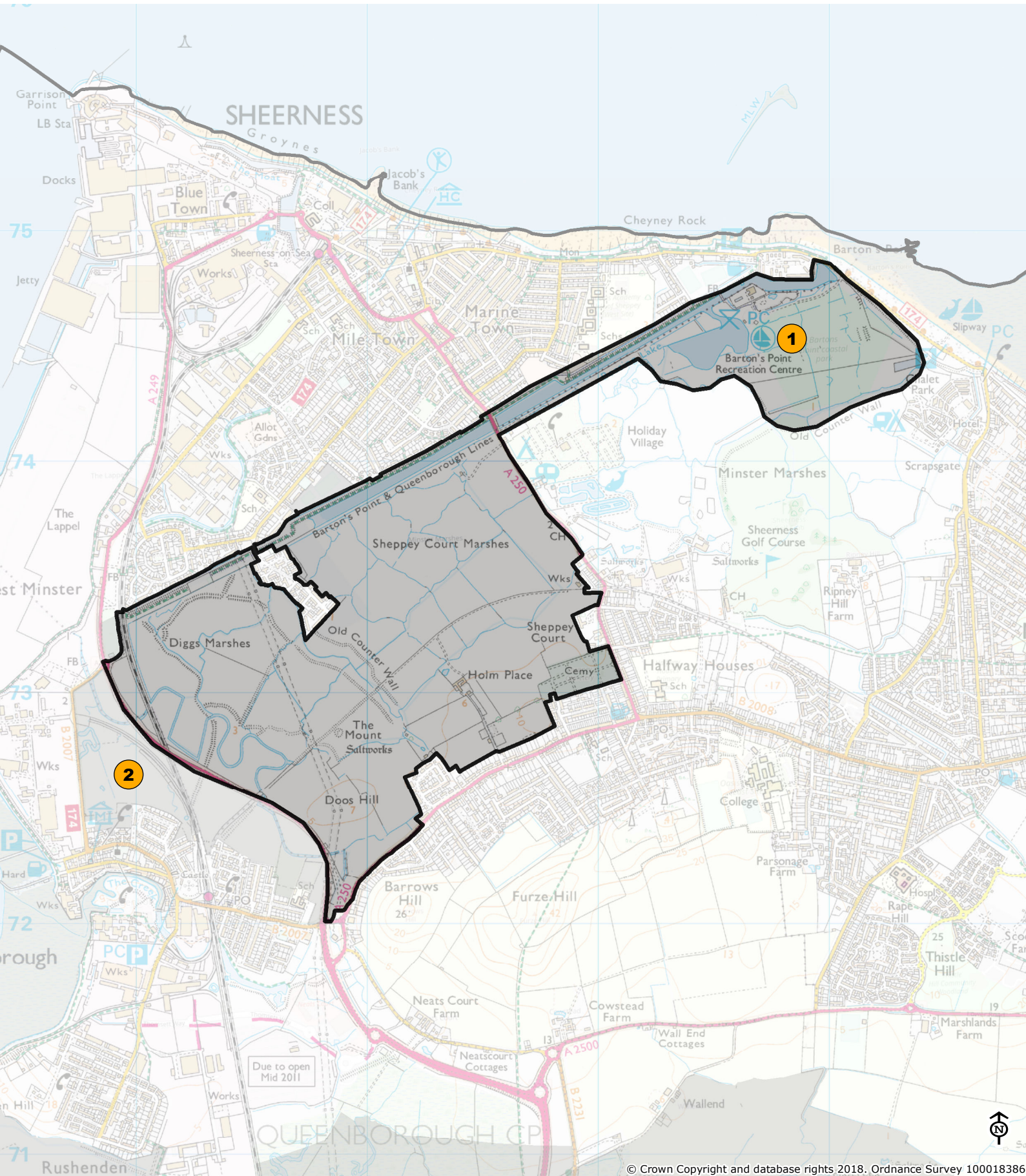
## Evaluation - Swale: Sheppey Court and Diggs Marsh

Criteria	Summary
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>The flat landform with traditional grazing marsh landscape including presence of meandering creeks and grazing animals is distinctive. Nevertheless, the sense of place is strongly related to the urban and industrial influences which are dominant through much of the area and surround the marsh edges. Minster Marshes (9) and Sheppey Court and Diggs Marsh (10) are both described in the LCA as having a weak sense of place.</p> <p>As a whole, the area lacks the scale and drama of other parts of the North Kent marshes.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>The LCA describes the condition of area 10: Sheppey Court and Diggs Marsh as moderate and area 9 Minster Marshes as poor, and this remains the case in 2018, with some further deterioration in condition noted.</p> <p>The marshes retain remnants of former character, including creeks, drainage ditches and counterwalls; it supports grazing animals and some typical marshland, flora and fauna with elements of ecological integrity (LWS). The area is substantially affected by adjacent urban and industrial land uses on each side. These influences are most extreme at the western end of Diggs Marsh where roads, railways and pylons cross the marsh and peripheral housing and industry are very visually intrusive, dominating the marshland character. Further east on the Sheppey Court Marshes the character is more typical of grazing marsh. Minster Marshes while retaining remnant areas of marshland is strongly influenced by land uses including holiday parks, garden centre, recreational facilities, industrial works, fishing ponds.</p> <p><i>Does not meet as a whole , although some areas are of higher quality</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The area has an open and exposed character with some extensive views, foreshortened by the transport embankments and urban edge so that all horizons are interrupted by built development. From within, the Sheppey Court Marshes some areas have a more tranquil and isolated character.</p> <p>Urban/industrial features/transportation corridors are detracting incongruous elements within the marshes or in views from the area, notably at Diggs Marshes and Minster Marshes.</p> <p>The marshes lack the scale and remoteness and tranquillity associated with the greater area of the North Kent Marshes, although there are localised areas of higher tranquillity which contrast with the adjacent urban areas. Unlike other parts of the North Kent Marshes these areas do not retain dark night skies being influenced by adjacent lit urban areas.</p> <p><i>Does not meet overall, but localised relative tranquillity in isolated areas contrast with urban land uses</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>Minster Marshes are valued by local residents/community, with 6 responses. These largely relate to Barton's Point Coastal Park on Minster Marshes which is valued for its local distinctiveness, landscape quality, scenic quality, heritage and recreational value.</p> <p><i>Barton's Point Coastal Park is highly valued and clearly does meet these criteria.</i></p>

## Evaluation - Swale: Sheppey Court and Diggs Marsh

Criteria	Summary
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>The area has considerable historic interest: Queenborough Lines, fortifications protecting Sheerness dockyard from land attack, built 1863-1868 is a Scheduled Monument.</p> <p>Diggs and Sheppey Court Marshes are a Local Wildlife Site.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The area only partially meets criteria for local landscape designation.</p> <p>Minster Marshes (LCA 9) as a whole does not merit designation and is recommended that this area is not included in the LLD, although an extended designation could include the Queenborough Lines and highly valued/ higher quality area around Barton's Point. Within LCA 10, the area west of the A249 and railway on Diggs Marsh is also of demonstrably lower quality and could be excluded.</p> <p>As a whole the area is vulnerable and performs an important function as an open gap creating visual and physical separation between Sheerness, Minster, Queenborough and Halfway Houses. It should be conserved, enhanced and protected from further development for reasons including biodiversity interest, function as a green wedge and rural separation and flood risk. There are opportunities to enhance the quality and improve the setting of the urban areas particularly those areas of the marsh that have deteriorated in quality and condition.</p>

# Sheppey Court Diggs and Minster Marshes



Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

## Boundary changes

- 1 Extend LLD to include Queenborough Lines and Barton's Point
- 2 Delete areas of lower quality on Diggs Marsh

**Note: The small area remaining only partially meets criteria for LLD. Remaining area is likely too small for LLD.**





## Eastchurch Uplands

### Landscape character and quality



Long views from the ridge over the marshes, Swale and mainland Kent to the North Downs



A rural backdrop to the marshes



Open landscape with occasional belts of poplar



Arable landscape forming a distinct ridge and skyline



Rolling landscape with new tree planting at Furze Hill



Long views to the Thames Estuary from the elevated ridge

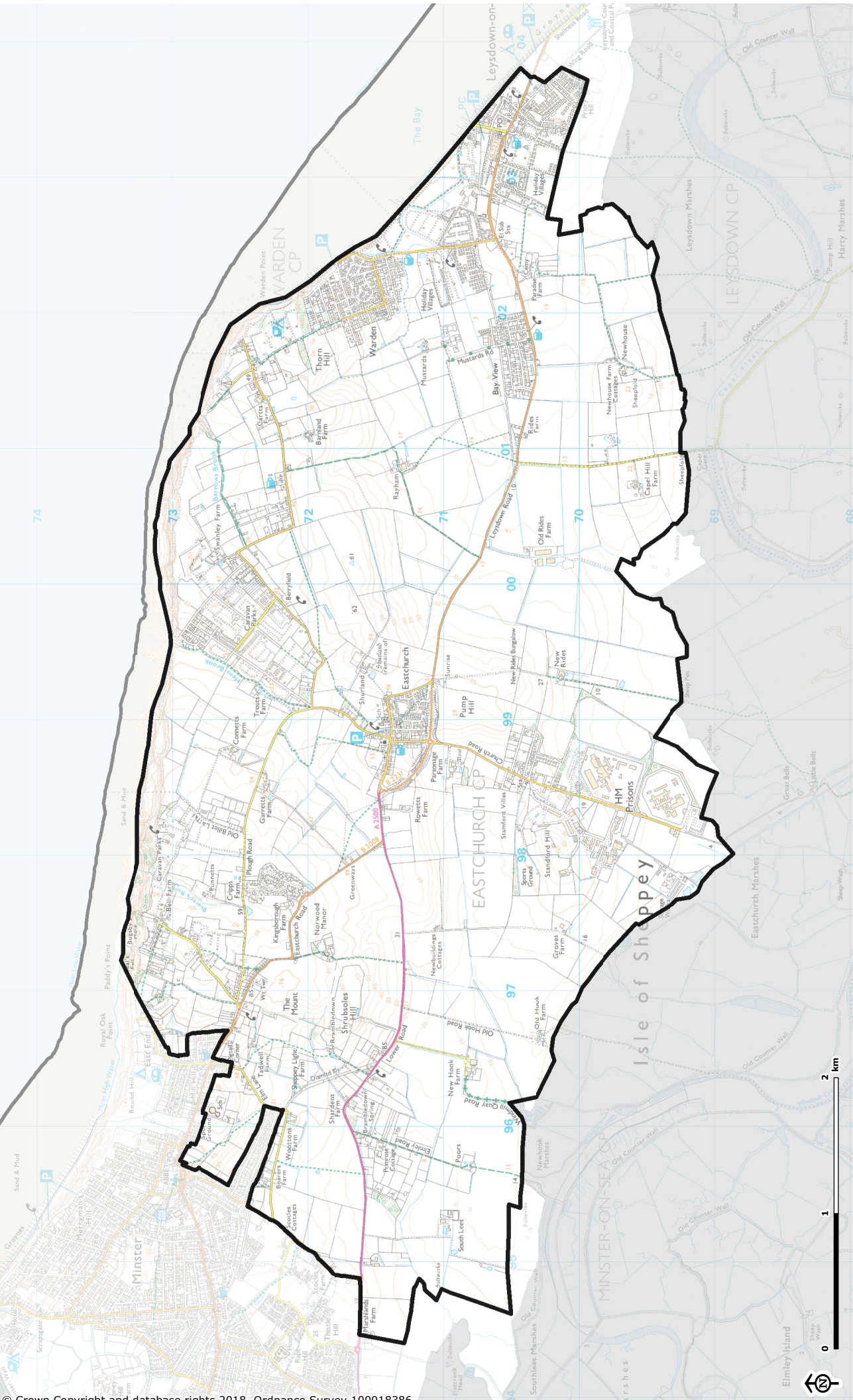
<b>Candidate LLD name</b>	<b>Eastchurch Uplands</b>
<b>Relationship to existing local designation</b>	There area does not currently have a landscape designation. It has been assessed on recommendation of the 2014 report, which noted a need for a review along the northern boundary of the marshes on Sheppey and as a result of consultation.
<b>Extent of area</b>	An area of elevated farmland forming the central ridge of Sheppey and backdrop to the marshes to the south and falling away to the slumped clay coastal cliffs to the north. It wraps around the southern and eastern edge of Minster and includes the settlement at Eastchurch plus HM prisons at Standford Hill and to the east the coastal development at Leysdown and Warden.
<b>Landscape character context</b>	13: Central Sheppey Farmlands 16: Minster and Warden Farmlands
<b>Stage 2: Desk review</b> <b>(see table 5.1 and Appendix 3)</b>	13: No 16: No Recommended for further field survey to test desk study and consider results of the consultation.
<b>Stage 3: Evaluation</b> <b>(see overleaf)</b>	<i>Does not meet</i>
<b>Boundary commentary (including suggested changes from existing designation)</b>	The area is not currently designed and is not proposed for designation.
<b>Commentary on Technical Paper 6 2014</b>	Some minor boundary changes along the northern boundary of the marshes are proposed to tie in with character area boundaries. These are set out in the evaluation for North Swale Marshes LLD.
<b>Stage 4: Recommendation</b>	No LLD proposed. It is recognised that this area performs an important role as the rural backdrop to the marshes and setting to the settlements and as part of the undeveloped coastline of north Sheppey. However in its own right it does not meet the criteria for a local landscape designation.

## Evaluation - Eastchurch Uplands

Criteria	Summary
<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	<p>The area is distinctive in terms of landform which forms a prominent clay ridge across the northern part of Sheppey and provides rural backdrop to the marshes. Distinctive topographical elements include hills such as Furze Hill and the complex folded landform dropping to the sea in the north. From places, such as Minster Abbey, the ridge offers panoramic views south over Sheppey, across the Swale Estuary to the mainland. The slopes are mainly under arable land use, forming a relatively common farmed landscape character/land cover pattern. To the north the slumped clay cliffs are a distinctive geomorphological feature and offer views across the Thames Estuary and towards the Essex Coast.</p> <p>Overall it is considered to be a fragmented landscape with limited coherence or identity.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Landscape quality (condition and intactness)</b>	<p>The LCA describes the condition of areas 13 and 16 as poor, and this remains the case. The field survey revealed an open, exposed and fragmented landscape with large arable fields where hedgerows and tree cover have frequently been removed and urban/urban fringe elements are often prominent. Incongruous and detracting elements include main roads, and lighting, extensive new urban developments (albeit partially softened by some woodland planting), the prominent prison developments at Eastchurch, plus large caravan parks along the coast.</p> <p><i>Does not meet as a whole , although small areas of higher quality are present</i></p>
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	<p>The key scenic quality associated with this area is the extensive views that can be obtained from the higher land and associated sense of openness and exposure. These include views out to the Thames Estuary and Essex coast to the north contrasting with views across the marshes and Swale/Kent mainland coast to the south. As a whole the area does not have particular qualities of wildness or tranquillity or dark night skies. Some areas with strong rural qualities persist, for example narrow hedgerow lined lanes along the north coast.</p> <p><i>Does not meet overall, but localised scenic quality relating to panoramic views.</i></p>
<b>Landscape values (stakeholder)</b>	<p>There is a particular concentration of local values recognised by Minster on Sea PC and Eastchurch PC associated with the areas around Minster and Eastchurch. A number of these values are associated with sites within the settlement boundary or are protected as local green space.</p> <p>The rural farmed landscape of the slopes is also highly valued and described as giving <i>wide open space and continuous coherence</i>.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Natural and cultural attributes and associations</b>	<p>The area has relatively limited natural and cultural interest.</p> <p>In the north the steep slumped clay cliffs are important for their botanical and geological interest (SSSI) and Local wildlife Site, plus areas of acid grassland/heathland. There are important cultural associations at Minster Abbey (within the urban area). Shurland Hall, Grade II* and a Scheduled Monument is a prominent building on the slopes at Eastchurch. It is part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century gatehouse of a medieval building lodge and has recently been</p>

<b>Evaluation - Eastchurch Uplands</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>restored. With its octagonal towers and battlements, Shurland is reminiscent of the great Tudor palace gatehouses at Hampton Court and St James's. It is known to have hosted Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn and associated with local myth and legend (Richard de Shurland and Grey Dolphin).</p> <p>Eastchurch is styled the "home of British aviation" as Eastchurch airfield saw the first controlled flight by a British pilot on British soil and many early test flights were undertaken in the area.</p> <p><i>Partially meets</i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Overall the area does not meet the criteria for local landscape designation. It is a rural landscape that contains has a number of valued features and attributes. However, it is not an especially distinctive or high quality landscape and does not form a cohesive area or physical entity.</p>

# Eastchurch uplands



Local Landscape Designation (LLD)

**Note: This area does not meet criteria for LLD. No local landscape designation proposed**



# APPENDICES



# **Appendix 1: SBC Landscape Values Consultation**



# Consultation documents sent to stakeholders

**Swale House, East Street,  
Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT**

DX59990 Sittingbourne 2

Phone: 01795 417192

[www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk)



1<sup>st</sup> November 2017

Dear Stakeholder

## **Swale Borough Council - Local Landscape Designation Review – Request for Stakeholder Input**

The Planning Policy team at Swale Borough Council are carrying out a review of local landscape designations within Swale Borough. As part of this review, we are seeking the views of relevant stakeholders, such as yourselves, and other statutory and non-statutory organisations.

Local landscape designations within Swale currently consist of Areas of High Landscape Value (Kent Level) and Areas of High Landscape Value (Swale Level) and are identified on the Proposals Map of the Council's Local Plan at [www.cartogold.co.uk/swale/](http://www.cartogold.co.uk/swale/). The purpose of these designations is to conserve and enhance valued landscapes (see Policy DM 24 of the Swale Local Plan [swale.gov.uk/local-plan-for-swale/](http://swale.gov.uk/local-plan-for-swale/)). Please note that the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a national designation and is not part of this review. Significant built up areas are also excluded, because landscape designations relate to rural areas.

Local landscape designations in Swale were reviewed in 2003 by Jacobs (Babtie) Ltd and an interim review was also undertaken by Swale Borough Council in 2014 (see CD/053 and CD/090 at [swale.gov.uk/examination-document-library/](http://swale.gov.uk/examination-document-library/)).

Within this 2017/18 review, we will be taking a fresh look at landscape designations in the borough. The purpose of the review is to examine the existing designations and make recommendations for any changes (extensions or deletions) and new areas that could be considered for designation. The review will be carried out using available technical guidance and following best practice. Areas of search will be identified and assessed against a set of criteria in order to establish areas of high landscape value that will be recommended for designation.

As part of the review, we are asking stakeholders to complete a survey that has two objectives:

1. To identify landscapes valued by stakeholders to use as a data source within this review
2. To receive feedback from stakeholders on the proposed assessment criteria that will be used to review and identify local landscape designations

The two survey sheets attached relate to valued landscapes and the proposed assessment criteria respectively:

**1. Valued Landscapes** - we would like to collate a map illustrating places valued by stakeholders. In the attached Valued Landscapes Table is a list of reasons as to why a landscape may be of value, to ensure the findings are relevant to landscape designations. The information gathered will be used as a data source when the assessment criteria are applied to the areas of search.

**2. Assessment Criteria** - The areas of search will be assessed against a set of criteria, which have been based on technical guidance. Information collected from stakeholders via the Valued Landscapes exercise above will be used as a data source when assessing areas of search against these criteria. We would like to receive any comments you may have on the proposed assessment criteria.

Details on how to complete these tasks are set out in the following pages.

Please note that we will be working with professional landscape consultants on the assessment of the results of this survey.

We would be grateful to hear your views and welcome a response by **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017**, by email to: [planningpolicy@swale.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@swale.gov.uk)

Alternatively, please post your response to:

**Planning Policy, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT** – please mark your envelope for attention of **Anna Stonor, Landscape Designation Review**.

We will be running a presentation on the findings of this review at the end of the designation review process in early 2018. Please indicate within your response whether you would like to be invited to attend this presentation.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

JCGStonor

Anna Stonor  
Senior Planner  
Planning Policy  
Swale Borough Council

Direct Line: 01795 417192

# Swale Borough Council - Landscape Designation Review - Survey Sheets

## Part 1 - Valued Landscapes

We would like to collate a map illustrating places valued by stakeholders. In the table on the following page (Valued Landscapes Table), we have set out a list of reasons as to why a landscape may be of value, to ensure the findings are relevant to landscape designation. The information gathered will be used as a data source when we consider search areas for designation against the assessment criteria presented below.

### Instructions:

- Please see attached a map illustrating Swale Borough.
- We would like you to tell us about the landscapes that are of particular value to you and to mark these locations on the attached map. Please apply a number (starting at 1, then 2, 3, 4 etc...) to locations on the map and add the corresponding numbers to the table on the next page (Survey Sheet 1) linking it to the most relevant reason the landscape is of value.
- Please add a brief description to your choices.
- Please also make sure you clearly name your map as well as the table below.
- You can propose more than one location for each reason in the table and not all rows need to be completed. However, please make sure your numbers and reasons correspond and your descriptions are set out clearly.
- If you have any questions or problems please call Anna Stonor at Swale Borough Council (Tuesdays and Wednesdays) on 01795 417192 or email her at [annastonor@swale.gov.uk](mailto:annastonor@swale.gov.uk)

### Example:

If, for instance, you particularly value Elmley Marshes on the Isle of Sheppey for its quietness and remoteness you should mark that location on the map with the number 1 and then in the Valued Landscapes Table, under 'Landscapes that have a strong sense of wildness and tranquillity' write something like 'due to its remoteness and distance from built development', as shown in this example here:

Reason Landscape is of Value	Numbers	Location and brief description of relevant feature or characteristic where applicable (e.g. note what the known cultural association is, what the distinctive scenic qualities are, or what type of outdoor recreation the landscape is important for)
Landscapes that have a strong sense of wildness and tranquility	1	Due to its remoteness and distance from built development

**Survey Sheet 1 - Valued Landscapes Table – TO BE COMPLETED BY STAKEHOLDERS**

Reason Landscape is of Value	Numbers	Location and brief description of relevant feature or characteristic where applicable (e.g. note what the known cultural association is, what the distinctive scenic qualities are, or what type of outdoor recreation the landscape is important for)
Landscapes which are regionally or nationally rare		
Landscapes which provide important habitats for wildlife		
Landscapes with important built heritage		
Landscapes which have widely known cultural associations		
Landscapes that have distinctive scenic qualities		
Landscapes that have a strong sense of wildness and tranquillity		

Reason Landscape is of Value	Numbers	Location and brief description of relevant feature or characteristic where applicable (e.g. note what the known cultural association is, what the distinctive scenic qualities are, or what type of outdoor recreation the landscape is important for)
Landscapes which are important for outdoor recreation		

**Please provide your name and the name of your organisation:**

**Please provide an email address if you would like to be invited to attend a presentation on the findings of this review:**

## Part 2 - Assessment Criteria

We would also like your views on the criteria we propose to use in the landscape designation review process.

Information collected from stakeholders via the Valued Landscapes exercise above will be used as a data source in this exercise.

The areas of search will be assessed against a set of criteria to determine landscape value and to inform the recommendations for local landscape designation. The criteria are based on technical guidance set out within *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014)* and *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013)*.

### Instructions:

- Please see (on the following page, Survey Sheet 2) a list of the Assessment Criteria we are proposing.
- Please look at these criteria and let us know whether:
  - you agree that these criteria and factors considered are appropriate for the review?
  - there any other criteria and factors that you think should be incorporated?
- Please add your comments to the table. If you have no comments please just add 'No comment'.
- Please make sure you add your name and your organisation's name to the table.
- If you have any questions or problems please call Anna Stonor at Swale Borough Council (Tuesdays and Wednesdays) on 01795 417192 or email her at [annastonor@swale.gov.uk](mailto:annastonor@swale.gov.uk)

**Survey Sheet 2 - Assessment Criteria – TO BE COMPLETED BY STAKEHOLDERS**

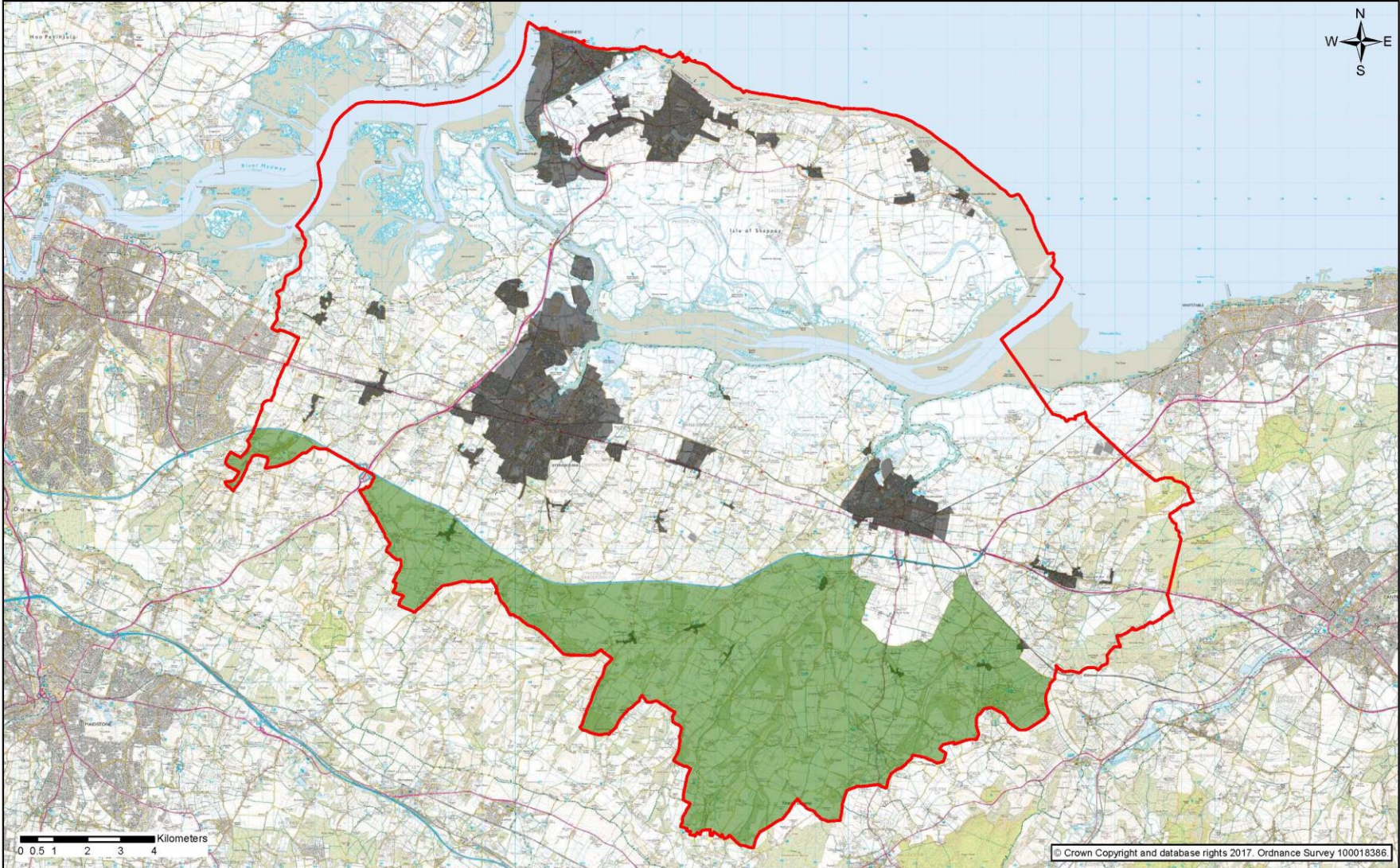
Criteria	Factors Considered
<b>Local distinctiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare landscape character type</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important or representative examples</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sense of place created by distinctive factors such as topography or field pattern</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conservation interests, for example marked through cultural heritage or ecological designation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cultural associations, such as with artists, writers or other media, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Intactness and coherency of the landscape</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Landscape condition</li> </ul>
<b>Scenic quality and perceptual aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Distinctive or promoted views</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual qualities including wildness, tranquillity and remoteness</li> </ul>
<b>Recreational value</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public recreational access opportunities within the countryside, such as public rights of way, common land, open access land, country parks</li> </ul>

**Please provide your name and the name of your organisation:**

**Do you agree that these criteria and factors considered are appropriate for the review?**

**Are there any other criteria and factors that you think should be incorporated?**

**Any other comments?**



**Legend:**

- Valued Landscape - Please complete alongside Valued Landscapes Survey Sheet
- ▭ Swale Borough Boundary
- ▭ Areas Excluded from Scope of Study:
  - ▭ Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - ▭ Significant Urban Areas

**SWALE BOROUGH: VALUED LANDSCAPES**

Please provide the name of your organisation:

## Consultation responses received

Stakeholder name	Stakeholder organisation
Vicky Ellis (Marketing and Office Manager)	CPRE and local resident
Hilary Newport (Director, Kent Branch)	CPRE
Katie Miller (Planning Manager)	Kent Downs AONB
Liz Cruise (Clerk)	Bapchild Parish Council
Graham Herbert (Chair)	Bobbing Parish Council
CLlr Mike Baldock	Borden Parish Council
Penny Twaites (Chair) and Brian Clarke (Vice Chair)	Bredgar Parish Council
Gerry Lewin (Councillor)	Swale Borough Council, Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch
Mike Whiting (Councillor)	Swale Borough Council, Teynham, Lynsted and surrounding villages
Jeff Tutt (Vice Chair)	Dunkirk Parish Council
Samantha Watts (Planning Advisor, Sustainable Places)	Environment Agency
Fiona Jackson (Clerk)	Eastchurch Parish Council
Gareth Fulton	Elmley National Nature Reserve
Harold Goodwin (Chair)	Faversham Society
Louise Bareham (Clerk)	Faversham Town Council
Oliver Merrony (caseworker)	Gordon Henderson MP for Sittingbourne & Sheppey
Kay Richardson (Historic Places Advisor)	Historic England
Steve Gates (Councillor)	Lower Halstow Parish Council
Mark Loos	Medway Swale Estuary Partnership
Brendan Doyle (Senior Landscape & Urban Design Officer)	Medway Planning Policy Team
Lena Jordan (Clerk)	Milstead Parish Council



# Appendix 2: Field survey form

# Swale Local Landscape Designations Field Survey

Date:	Weather:
Character Area(s) Potential Designations:	
Photo refs:	
Boundaries	
<i>FS to note LLD boundaries and where different to LCA boundaries</i>	
Notes on significance	
<i>Key points on values/significance of landscape</i>	
Criterion	Notes

<b>Local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>	
<b>Quality (condition/intactness)</b>	
<b>Scenic qualities</b>	
<b>Natural and cultural attributes/associations</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	

# **Appendix 3: Results of the Stage 2 Desk Review**

### Appendix 3: Results of the Stage 2 Desk Review

This evaluation is a rapid desk review of the 2011 Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal using the LLD evaluation criteria.

It is a first sieve approach to identify areas of search for LLDs. It contains a justification for any areas omitted and recommendations from the desk survey of any specific areas to focus on as part of the more detailed field survey and evaluation.

Note this is a broad brush approach, to scope out areas at an early stage to ensure that the field survey and detailed evaluation is proportionate.

#### Key

	LCA indicates that the character area is likely to meet this criteria
	LCA indicates that the character area may meet or could partially meet this criteria
	LCA indicates that the character area is unlikely to meet this criteria

#### Local values

At this stage the Local Values Consultation is only considered in terms of the number of response per character area, noting that 'no' responses does not mean a landscape is not valued. In considering whether an area should go forward to the next stage of detailed evaluation the consultation responses are taken into account and for some areas such as LCA42: Tunstall Farmlands, they are taken forward despite not meeting the other criteria at this stage.

The consultation responses are taken into account in the stage 3 evaluation.

	Name	Status	Local distinctive	Landscape quality	Scenic qualities	Landscape Values	Natural and	Meets desk review criteria ?	Take forward 'LLD area of search'	Notes to inform selection of areas of search and field survey and justification for area not taken forward
1.	Chetney and Greenborough Marshes	Y Kent Level				3		Y	Yes	Field survey to check marsh extensions in surrounding character areas (32)
2.	Elmley Marshes	Y Kent level				0		Y	Yes	Small part of northern character area not currently in designation  Field survey also to review western edge at Neatscourt Marshes and Queenborough

3.	Goodnestone Grasslands	N				1		Y	Yes	Field survey for potential addition to local designation – part of wider marshland – assess boundary with 6
4.	Graveney Grazing Lands	Y (part) Kent Level				1		Y	Yes	Field survey of areas covered by designations and with special qualities extending north of the railway and small area to south of railway
5.	Graveney Marshes	Y Kent Level				4		Y	Yes	Field survey to review as area forms part of wider marsh landscape despite condition/land use
6.	Ham Marshes	Y Kent Level				0		Y	Yes	Review boundary with area 3
7.	Leysdown and Eastchurch Marshes	Y Kent Level				5		Y	Yes	Check boundary at Leysdown and with 13
8.	Luddenham and Conyer Marshes	Y Kent Level				1		Y	Yes	Check boundary in area 17 and adjoining Sittingbourne and area 31
9.	Minster Marshes	N  Identified for review in 2014 study				6		N	Yes, take forward due to number of local values recorded	Small area. Desk review indicates it does not merit criteria local designation. However retains marshland character and local values indicates need for detailed evaluation
10.	Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes	Y Swale Level				0		Partially	Yes, take forward as is an existing LLD area	Field survey and evaluation to review in relation to marshland character

11.	South Sheppey Saltmarshes and Mudflats	Y Kent Level				0		Y	Yes	Field survey –to confirm any boundary adjustments and develop statement of significance
12.	Spitend Marshes	Y Kent Level				1		Y	Yes	Field survey entire area to confirm any boundary adjustments and develop statement of significance.
13.	Central Sheppey Farmlands	N Identified for review in 2014 study				13		N	Yes, take forward due to extent of local values recorded through consultation	Review and evaluation to understand qualities identified through local consultation
14.	Elmley Island	Y Kent Level				0		Y	Yes	Field survey entire area to confirm
15.	Isle of Harty	Y Kent Level				0		Y	Yes	Field survey entire area to confirm
16.	Minster and Warden Farmlands	N Identified for review in 2014 study				10		N	Yes, take forward due to extent of local values recorded through consultation	Field survey entire area to confirm
17.	Stone Arable Farmlands	N				3		N	No, part of area reviewed in relation to marshes	Note role in relation to Oare Creek and adjacent marshland and consider in relation to LLD boundary Remainder of the area is a representative of a rural landscape but does not meet LLD criteria although contains locally valued elements.

18.	Waterham Clay Farmlands	Y , small part to east in Blean Areas adjoining LCA 33 and 23 identified for review in 2014 study				0		N	No, part of area taken forward	Field survey to reviews eastern part and boundary as part of Blean LLD (linking at Victory Wood). Remainder of area does not meet LLD criteria although contains locally valued elements.
19.	Borden Mixed Farmlands	N				0		N	No	The area is representative of a rural landscape with small scale chalk valleys. Traditional built character is protected through other designations. It does not meet LLD criteria, although contains valued elements (the valleys and built vernacular)
20.	Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt	Y Part Kent Level				4		Partially	Yes, AONB interface and more rural area	Field survey to assess area south of M2, and interface with AONB.
21.	Graveney Arable Farmlands	Part Small part of marshlands to north = Kent Level				1		N	No, Review part of area in relation to existing designation	Evaluation to consider interface with marshlands as part of field survey Remainder of area is does not meet the criteria for LLD in terms of quality and condition although contains locally valued elements.
22.	Graveney Fruit Farms	N				1		N	No	The importance of this area as very small isolated area of traditional landscape is noted – however it is considered too small for designation in its own right as an LLD
23.	Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt	Part Part Swale Level				1		Y	Yes	Field check for LLD boundary. Consider whole character area LLD extending south of Boughton



		Plus minor extension identified north of Selling in 2014 review								Street which appears to be similar character and quality
24.	Iwade Arable Farmlands	N Section east of Newington identified with potential for review in 2014 study				4		N	Yes, part of area in relation to ridge identified in local values consultation	Assess re. part of LCA area on ridge. Review local values for this area.
25.	Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands	Part Part Swale Level				0		Partially	Yes, part	Assess potential role as backdrop and setting to the marshes, scenic value relates to views out rather than area itself
26.	Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands	N Section around Teynham, north of A2 identified for review in 2014 study				1		Partially	No	Partially meets criteria (2) but does not form a distinct entity – survey in relation to adjacent LLD (Syndale Valley).
27.	Newington Arable Farmlands	No				2		N	No	This area does not meet the criteria for LLD. The landscape has lost much of its traditional character and in a relatively poor condition, although contains locally valued elements.  Consultation responses note the important high land with uninterrupted views and role as a strategic gap. This is a valued characteristic but not a criteria for local landscape designation.
28.	Newington Fruit	No				0		N	No	This area does not as a whole

	Belt	Area between Hartlip and Lower Hartlip identified for review in 2014 study								meet the criteria for LLD forming a moderate quality rural landscape with some locally valued elements. Note minor valley extending from AONB at Hartlip will be reviewed as part of the field survey
29.	Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands	No Section by Radfield/ Teynham identified for review in 2014 study				3		N	No	This area does not as a whole meet the criteria for LLD forming a rural landscape much opened up for intensive arable farmland, but with some locally valued elements. The consultation notes its role as a buffer to the AONB and important wildlife habitats and routes for walkers and cyclists. These are valued elements but not in their own right a criteria for LLD.  Field survey to check any chalk valley characteristics and relationship with area 40
30.	Selling Fruit Belt	N Area not in AONB identified for review in 2014 study				0		Y	Yes	Field survey to check area small area outside AONB boundary and possible relationship to extended LLD
31.	Teynham Fruit Belt	Y Part at Swale Level				2		Y	Yes	Field survey evaluation to consider boundary to east and Sittingbourne urban fringe  Boundary south of rail line and to A2
32.	Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt	Y, very small part at Kent Level Plus area south of Lower Halstow and north of				3		N	Yes, part	Field survey to agree marsh areas and potential river creek from Lower Halstow.

		Newington identified for review in 2014 study								
33.	Blean Woods West	Y Kent Level				3		Y	Yes	Field survey to confirm and check omitted areas in current LLD, adjacent to Canterbury
36.	Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys (character area description largely relates to AONB)	Y Kent Level (outside AONB)				3		Y	Yes	Field survey to assess character and quality of dry valley area outside AONB north of M2
37.	Hartlip Downs	Y Very small area at Kent Level				2		Partially	Yes (LCA largely relates to AONB)	Field survey required to assess downland AONB character for parts of area north of M2
38.	Milstead and Kingsdown Mixed Farmlands	Y Kent Level - very small area north of M2				0		Partially	Yes	Field survey to assess whether area north of M2 is of equal value as AONB and contiguous with larger dip slope dry valley landscape running down to Sittingbourne (LCA 40)
40.	Rodmersham and Milstead Dry Valley	Y Kent Level extending AONB				4		Y	Yes	Field survey to assess boundaries and relationship to surrounding character areas – minor dray valley in area 42
42.	Tunstall Farmlands	Y, small part forms part of Kent Level chalk valley system North east area identified for review in 2014 study				14		N/Partially	Yes, take forward to area of search due to number of local values recorded	While this area only partially meets criteria for LLD it is considered in relation to local values. It is the LCA with highest no. responses including gateway to the AONB, far reaching views across the estuary, wildlife habitats, access for walkers

