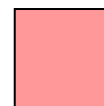


LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE:

Chalk Scarp



Present in specific locations at the boundaries between the chalk landscapes and lowland landscapes.

SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT AND BOROUGH LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

Basingstoke:	Scarp face: open pasture, Scarp face: wooded mosaic, Scarp face: wooded.
East Hampshire	Major Scarps
Eastleigh	N/a
Fareham	Downland Scarp
Gosport	N/a
Hart	N/a
Havant	N/a
New Forest	Part of Arable Downs
Rushmoor	N/a
Test Valley	N/a
Winchester	Scarp (many more local scale examples defined than County level)

SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES IN NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY ASSESSMENTS

Dorset	
West Berkshire	Chalk Scarp
West Sussex	Wooded Downs (scarps not separately identified as a LCT – the South Downs scarp becomes well wooded east of the A3(M))
Wiltshire	Low Chalk Plain and Scarp (scarps not separately identified as a LCT)

KEY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS AND BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

- The highest and steepest slopes in Hampshire and predominantly open but with significant areas of ancient and semi natural woodland.
- Precipitous upper slopes with grazing land, scrub or clothed in dense hanger woodland.
- Linear relatively narrow landscapes.
- Almost exclusively very shallow rendzina soils.
- Key landscape type for chalk grassland creation opportunity.
- Associated with important public access assets such as open access areas, long distance PRoW.
- Narrow and deeply sunken lanes.
- Small spring line settlements at the foot of the scarp otherwise no development on the scarp face.
- Extremely prominent skylines, of remarkably consistent height.
- Panoramic views across lowland mosaic landscapes

PHYSICAL

GEOLOGY, LANDFORM, ELEVATION:

Bedrock and Superficial Geology:

Exposed bed rock of chalk, including the Holywell and zig-zag formations associated with East Hampshire scarps. The Newhaven formations associated with the South Downs and Portsdown scarps. The Holywell chalk member associated with the Watership Down scarp. Thin fingers of Head deposits in the occasional coombes on the scarp.

Landform and Elevation: Steep to very steep sided varying from 30 to 100m and typically at least 70m between the top and bottom of the scarp and over short distances. Often averaging steeper than 1:4. The steepest and largest slopes tend to be associated with the East Hampshire Hangers and north facing scarp of the South Downs, especially the eastern most section in the County.

SOILS TYPES:

Typical soil type pattern: Almost exclusively type 342a. Shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk. Deeper finer silty calcareous soils in coombes. Occasionally type 581 at the top of the scarp where the slope is less steep. Well drained fine silty clay, often very flinty.

FUNCTIONS:

Hydrological function: Often coincides with moderate to areas of low grade source protection zones, and major groundwater vulnerability zone. Considered to have high hydrological function.

Food and Biomass: Typically of low agricultural grade and often classed under 'other' category. Varied biomass potential, generally moderate.

Biodiversity potential: Very high for chalk downland opportunity.

LANDCOVER AND LAND USE PATTERN:

Predominantly open landscape, with notable exceptions of the East Hampshire Hangers, east of the A3 and west of the A34 where there is a preponderance of ancient and semi-natural woodland. High proportion of unimproved and chalk downland related landcover. Hedges are rare blocks of scrub and woodland, divide up the scarp face. There is a much lower proportion of arable land than in other chalk based LCTs reflecting the fact these areas are historically easier to sheep graze than plough. Occasional chalk pits now derelict with ecologically rich regeneration.

HYDROLOGY: No standing or surface water streams. Chalk fed streams often emerge from close to the foot of the scarp, but rarely within the boundary of this type.

EXPERIENTIAL

ACCESS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES (Resource and users):

Much of the land comes under the downland category of the CROW Act 2000 and therefore open access. Associated with long distance footpaths and national trails.

Major trunk roads cut through the scarp in several locations in Hampshire. Narrow sunken lanes with overhanging vegetation sometimes referred to as bostal tracks in the north downland landscape.

TRANQUILLITY:

The commanding elevated positions away from development and often fairly isolated tend to make these areas quiet and peaceful with a great sense of prospect. The presence of semi-natural habitat in the form of relic downland and scrub enhance the perception of tranquillity.

BIODIVERSITY

The Chalk Scarp landscape character type has a varied character: in the north west of Hampshire, it is open, comprising a mosaic of habitats, including arable land, broadleaved woodland, coniferous and broadleaved plantations and, improved and unimproved chalk grasslands. In places there are patches of scattered and dense scrub, possibly related to a reduction in grazing of chalk grasslands, enabling taller scrub species to develop.

Further west, the Chalk Scarp landscape character type supports extensive broadleaved woodland, most of which is ancient and semi-natural woodland. In the east, on Broughton Down, unimproved calcareous grassland dominates with some agricultural land including arable land and improved grassland. There is a significant broadleaved woodland element along with some mixed plantation woodland. None of the woodland resource here is ancient and semi-natural woodland. To the South, the scarp supports improved grassland, calcareous grassland, both improved and unimproved, and broadleaved woodland; much of this is ancient and semi-natural woodland.

Chalk grassland on the scarps can support a range of species, including orchids and the steep sloping character helps to maintain relatively undisturbed habitats in places. On north facing slopes, scarps support a wider range of lower plant species such as lichens and mosses. Due to pressures for productive land, chalk grassland is now most prolific on the steeper slopes, such as here within the Chalk Scarp landscape character type where topography has made cultivation too demanding.

Four BOAs exist within this landscape character type:

- Northern Escarpment: West Woodhay to Watership Down BOA
- The East Hampshire Hangers BOA.
- The South Downs (East Hampshire) BOA
- Broughton Downs BOA

All of these identify opportunities for lowland calcareous grassland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland habitat creation and enhancement.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT (*leave to Historic. Specialist*)

ARCHAEOLOGY

The higher parts where there are commanding views of this type lends itself to monumental archaeological sites, such as burial mounds. Portsdown Hill has particularly varied range of sites including Neolithic, Bronze Age, Roman and Saxon burial sites, in addition to the dominant defensive sites. The scarp overlooking the upper reaches of the Meon has a strong correlation with Bronze Age burial mounds. There is little settlement on the scarp except in the north where is series of Iron Age Hillforts, including Beacon Hill, perch on the scarp edge

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Remnant areas of former vast areas of common downland persist to the present day in this type. Sometimes characteristic funnelling, marking the interface between common and fields associated with a former drove route can be discerned in the landscape. Sometimes the slopes are covered in ancient hanger woodland.

HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Settlement types by form:

As well as historic monument remains mentioned above, telecommunication masts tend to be sited close to the scarp crest.

Building materials and type;

N/a

VISIBILITY

Prominency: Extremely prominent from the scarp side which are often the lowland mosaic landscapes.

Enclosure: Predominantly exposed – apart from the hangers in East Hampshire

Public perceptions: Often associated with view points and good access as mentioned above making these areas popular/ honeypot sites.