

THE WEST SUSSEX LANDSCAPE

Character Guidelines

Local Distinctiveness

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local distinctiveness is the essence of what makes a place special to us. It is the sum of the cultural landscape, wildlife, archaeology, history, geology, topography, traditions, buildings, materials, crafts – everything that makes somewhere unique.

2. Aims of the Local Distinctiveness Guidelines

- 2.1 The main objective of the West Sussex Character Project is to provide information which helps to improve the quality of development in West Sussex, and ensure that it reflects the county's sense of place. Character and design are important considerations in protecting and enhancing the quality of life and the natural and built environment in West Sussex
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Section [7] Requiring Good Design, paragraph [60] states, 'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. *It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness*'.
- 2.3 The five new Local Distinctiveness guidance sheets complement and expand upon WSCC's existing Land Management Guidelines. They aim to improve the understanding of local distinctiveness within the county and provide information on the distinct vernacular character of the five regional character areas, High Weald, Low Weald, Wealden Greensand, South Downs and South Coast Plain.
- 2.4 The guidance is intended to provide information and advice for a range of stakeholders, for example, developers, planning authorities, architects and designers, landowners, land managers, parish, town and borough councils, other organisations, and members of the public. The guidance can be used in various aspects of their work building local distinctiveness into the heart of development and land management decisions.