

## Agenda Item

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date: **1 May 2007**

Title: **Scrutiny Review of Countryside Management**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Purpose: **To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to comment on the report of the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

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### **RECOMMENDATION –**

**To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

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#### 1. Background Information

1.1 The Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee has completed its scrutiny review of countryside management.

1.2 The Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 22 May and a copy is attached. The Cabinet now has an opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on the agenda is a separate report by the Director of Transport and Environment commenting on the Scrutiny Committee's report.

ANDREW OGDEN

Director of Law and Personnel

# Scrutiny review of countryside management

## Report by the Project Board:

Councillor Godfrey Daniel (Chairman)  
Councillor Christopher Dowling  
Councillor Jon Harris

### March 2007

(Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee – 20 March 2007)  
(Cabinet – 1 May 2007)  
(County Council – 22 May 2007)



## Scrutiny Review of countryside management in East Sussex

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## Scrutiny Review of countryside management in East Sussex

### 1 Recommendations

These recommendations support the Review Board's conclusion that the Countryside Management Service should be retained; they address a range of resource and sustainability issues.

	Recommendations	Proposed timescale
1	If a countryside site is acquired by the County Council in mitigation for any development or highway, then financial and management provision for both the immediate and ongoing environmental management must be in place at the outset (paragraphs 3.1, 3.4).	Immediate
2	The Environment Division and its Countryside Management Service should fully explore the scope to expand income generation activity at countryside sites including: introducing or increasing car parking charges, promoting commercial enterprises at sites such as cafés and shops, and reviewing leases of properties to maximise income (paragraph 3.3).	6 – 12 months
3	The Countryside Management Service should aim to ensure that sites it manages on behalf of external landowners are at worst 'cost neutral' to the County Council (paragraph 3.4).	6 months
4	The County Council should not designate any further local nature reserves unless the full resource and other implications for the Council are identified and resources are in place in advance (paragraph 3.7).	Immediate
5	The Environment Division and its Countryside Management Service should include effective marketing and publicity as an integral part of its work to ensure that the public are aware of the County Council's involvement in countryside management and to promote active use of the sites to those who would benefit (paragraph 3.10).	6 months
6	Countryside site management functions should be consolidated within the Countryside Management Service rather than lying under different management heads within the Environment Division (paragraph 3.15).	6 months
7	Where a local site demonstrates exceptional success in generating local volunteer support and funding, the Council should consider negotiating a reduction in its direct support and redirect resources elsewhere; care must be exercised so as not to threaten the sustainability of the site nor to give the impression that the status of the site is being downgraded (paragraphs 3.4, 3.19).	12 months
8	Wherever possible, an appropriate County Council member or officer representative should be appointed to external bodies managing countryside sites; and the list of delegates to outside bodies should be made fully accessible to members and the public (paragraph 3.22).	May 2007
9	The national 'Green Flag' criteria should be used informally to help assess progress and identify action needed on all sites managed by the Countryside Management Service; formal 'Green Flag' status should be sought for the most appropriate sites (paragraph 3.26).	12 months / ongoing
10	Site management should actively try to be representative of as many open space user groups as possible. In line with the 'Green Flag' criteria, management should pursue an understanding of users and levels and patterns of use; active community involvement in site management and the right level of facilities to suit all sectors of the community	12 months

	(paragraphs 3.4, 3.27).	
11	A sharply focussed audit of countryside sites should be undertaken by the Environment Division to result in: clear standards for countryside management regardless of who provides the service; a clear idea of activities that should be specifically undertaken by the Countryside Management Service to ensure its future sustainability and an indication of where site ownership or management should be transferred to other bodies (paragraphs 3.16, 3.29, 4.4).	6 months
12	The mission for the Rights of Way and Countryside Management Service should be: <i>To enable the safe and informed enjoyment of the East Sussex landscape by residents and visitors, through ensuring that the land and rights of way for which East Sussex County Council is responsible are accessible, maintained, enhanced and promoted</i> (paragraph 4.3).	Immediate

## 2 Background

- 2.1 East Sussex County Council's Countryside Management Service is a team of 13 staff in the Environment Division of the County Council's Transport and Environment Department. It currently spends £333,000 on staffing and £188,000 on its working budget and overheads. The service receives an income of £122,000. The net budget (2006/07) for the service is £399,000.
- 2.2 The service is responsible for 15 sites (see table at appendix 2 for the location of countryside sites in East Sussex) covering an area of 1,200 hectares, less than 1% of the total area of East Sussex. These sites comprise four local nature reserves (LNRs) (Weir Wood, West Park, Chailey Common and Hempstead Meadows) and two country parks (Forest way and Ditchling Common). Four of the sites are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Weir Wood, Ditchling Common, Chailey Common and Camber) and Park Wood is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).
- 2.3 The service enables the training and involvement of some 300 volunteers in its work and a trainee ranger scheme takes on six new trainees per year. Officers also support parishes with small scale countryside improvements.
- 2.4 The current spread of countryside sites and their management arrangements by the County Council have arisen from a range of historical 'ad hoc' decisions over many years. These decisions may well have been appropriate at the time, however the net result is a Countryside Management Service which does good work but lacks a clear strategy.
- 2.5 The team was formed some 30 years ago on a small scale within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In common with similar approaches in other local authorities, the Countryside Management Service was developed to manage rural sites owned by the County Council for recreation, wildlife conservation, landscape enhancement, and also to assist private landowners and County Council managers in managing public access to their land. Its role extended to promoting public understanding and enjoyment of the countryside.
- 2.6 The service developed slowly over the years, gradually taking on responsibility for some key sites including Seven Sisters, Ditchling Common and Forest Way Country Park. The service also began to provide management services for sites owned by others such as Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve and Park Wood, Hellingly.
- 2.7 With the establishment of the Sussex Downs Conservation Board in 1992 a considerable chunk of the Countryside Management Service was transferred to the new Board along with day-to-day management of Seven Sisters Country Park. Ashdown Forest is owned by the County Council and has separate management arrangements.
- 2.8 In 1996, alongside the merger of the former Planning & Highways and Transportation departments, the Countryside Management Service was combined with the Rights of Way Team. However, to a large extent, these services still retain their separate identities.

- 2.9 In recent years, arising from developments at Shinewater (Eastbourne Park), Riverside and Ouse Estuary (Newhaven Eastside), the Countryside Management Service has acquired new land management responsibilities as part of the environmental compensation for these schemes. However, these sites lacked adequate revenue funding at the time the service acquired them. The Countryside Management Service is therefore now unable to cope effectively with any new demands without adequate funding and is stretched to capacity.
- 2.10 Over the last decade, the Countryside Management Service has experienced relative 'stagnation' primarily due to an increasingly restricted County Council base budget impacting directly on the service. The lack of clear focus for the service has been reflected in low staff morale at times. Despite all these pressures, Countryside Management Service officers clearly demonstrate enormous commitment and enthusiasm for their work and to making a positive contribution to countryside management in East Sussex.
- 2.11 Over the last 18 months and with a change of manager, the work of the Countryside Management Service has been aligned with the ambitions contained within County Council and departmental plans: *to protect and enhance the county's environmental assets and improve access to the countryside for the benefit of all with an emphasis on people with disabilities*. To achieve these ambitions, the Countryside Management Service also supports a Local Access Forum; co-ordinates an extensive programme of guided walks, cycle rides and events; and produces a number of publications to promote responsible access to the countryside.
- 2.12 The fundamental question posed by this review is how to address the ongoing lack of sustainability of the Countryside Management Service. There are just two options: either retain the service and address the outstanding resource and sustainability issues, or reduce the service and broker alternative partnerships to take on the service's responsibilities.
- 2.13 The terms of reference and scope of this review are detailed on page 13.

### **3 Key findings of the review**

#### Sustainability of the Countryside Management Service

- 3.1 Historically, some sites have been transferred into the Countryside Management Service without accompanying ongoing maintenance budgets. There appears to have been a Council expectation that the service could simply absorb these additional sites and their associated responsibilities (recommendation 1). A major or 'flagship' site, Seven Sisters, has previously been transferred out of the service along with associated staffing and resources.
- 3.2 The staffing and budget resources for the Countryside Management Service are now so stretched that it can no longer take on new unfunded responsibilities without disposing of other sites. The net result is that the service, in its current form, is unsustainable.
- 3.3 There is significant scope to expand income generation activity at a number of sites: introducing or increasing car parking charges, promoting commercial enterprises at sites such as cafes and shops, reviewing leases of properties to

maximise income are just a few ideas that need to be explored systematically. It is likely that some capital investment will be required if these benefits are to be realised (recommendation 2).

- 3.4 The aim should be for each countryside site to be as self financing as possible. As well as maximising income generation and ensuring that no sites without identified funding are adopted in future, this will require:
- Reducing financial and staffing support to sites that have demonstrated successful local support and real potential for increased local fundraising (recommendation 7)
  - Increasing community engagement to help access external sources of funding (recommendation 10)
  - Aiming for sites managed on behalf of external landowners to be, at worst, 'cost neutral' to the County Council (recommendation 3)
  - Enabling and managing an efficient volunteer service and using the most appropriate systems to improve operations
  - Ensuring adequate financial provision for both immediate and ongoing environmental management at the outset for any new countryside sites acquired by the County Council in mitigation for a development or highway (recommendation 1).

#### Designated sites

- 3.5 Several countryside sites managed by the Countryside Management Service are designated as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) – see definitions on page 15. Given that East Sussex countryside sites are valuable assets that help to meet recreation and conservation goals, it would not be appropriate to seek the de-designation of any of these sites.
- 3.6 Designating a site confers additional management and maintenance responsibilities. The Environment Division spends a significant amount of its budget on two LNRs in particular: Chailey Common and Rye Harbour Nature Reserve (RHNR) which are both owned by third parties. In the absence of a strategy for the Countryside Management Service it is difficult to justify this level of expenditure because there are several Council owned sites that are not meeting targets as successfully as many of the externally owned sites.
- 3.7 LNRs in themselves can often attract external funding and local support and this should be built into any future impact assessment when considering whether or not to declare an LNR. The County Council should not declare any more LNRs unless the full resource implications for the Council are clearly identified in advance (recommendation 4).

#### Marketing and publicity

- 3.8 In times of limited resources, marketing and publicity inevitably has had to accept a lower priority than site maintenance and safety. The Board considered that insufficient attention has been given to marketing and publicising of both the work of the Countryside Management Service and the benefits to people of using

countryside sites. Where the County Council clearly provides financial or active support to a site then this fact should be clearly promoted. Unfortunately site signing and clear East Sussex County Council 'badging' of services is currently lacking or limited on many sites.

- 3.9 Marketing and publicity are essential in ensuring that the public and other partners are clearly aware of the County Council's work, and in promoting the specific value of individual sites. Without this, it is hard to envisage how the service will be able to contribute fully to the key department ambition of promoting access to the countryside.
- 3.10 Marketing and publicity therefore need to become key components of the management of countryside sites and should be integrated into future plans and strategies for the Countryside Management Service (recommendation 5). The resources to carry this out will need to be contained within the service's future budgets and should arise from savings and income gained from several recommendations on improving service sustainability within this report.

Who should manage countryside sites

- 3.11 Some districts and boroughs have no LNRs in their areas whilst others allocate significant resources to supporting them. No clear arguments are obviously apparent on whether it is better for the county, district, borough or town councils to manage countryside sites.
- 3.12 In areas where there are different management arrangements on adjacent sites there is evidence of effective working on the ground between districts and county but little regular communication at higher management levels. This was observed first hand at Camber Sands, Johnson's Field and Shinewater. For these sites there appears to be no clear, long term joint strategy between the managing organisations.
- 3.13 Camber Sands is a particularly complex site, not least because it is managed in partnership with three other bodies: Rother District Council, the Environment Agency and there is a conservation management arrangement with Natural England. There is a need here for a larger area plan to take into account other local authorities' activities, highways, flood defence, beach safety, car parking, toilets, and landscape issues.
- 3.14 Rye Harbour Nature Reserve (RHNR) is supported by County Council staff and resources managed under the Environment Group within the Environment Division and not the Countryside Management Service. Consequently there is no evidence of structured joint working locally between RHNR staff and nearby Countryside Management Service staff working at Camber. Indeed there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that both groups have been represented at the same meetings resulting in possible confusion by partners and the public.
- 3.15 It seems likely that efficiency savings and other benefits would be identified if adjacent sites are managed by a single body. Streamlining the management of countryside sites within the Environment Division alone would be a sound first step and is recommended for the Rye Harbour/Camber area (recommendation 6).

## Disposal of sites

- 3.16 Some of the current sites may not fit in the Countryside Management Service's portfolio in future because, for example, they are predominantly local in nature and without county wide or greater importance. For others there may be benefits of disposal to consolidate management under a single body as described above. A required outcome of the sharply focussed audit (recommendation 11) is to identify which sites should be transferred to third parties and which should be retained within the Countryside Management Service.
- 3.17 It may be particularly difficult for the County Council to dispose of sites where there is no clear asset or readily accessible revenue source. Whilst not impossible, disposal may be difficult to achieve for sites such as Camber Sands which incorporates an SSSI and expensive sand dune management responsibilities.
- 3.18 The recent disposal of Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum by the County Council demonstrates that the transfer of ownership of a facility with an associated asset can result in significant financial savings for the County Council and, very importantly, no loss of amenity for the public. This success offers some hope for successful disposal of even complex sites where it is considered appropriate.
- 3.19 Sites managed by independent management committees can access sources of funding that a local authority might not have access to, and vice versa. Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, for example, has demonstrated exceptional success in generating local volunteer support and funding. Where this happens the Council should consider negotiating a reduction in its input and redirect resources elsewhere. But care must be taken so as not to threaten the sustainability of the site nor to give the impression that the status of the site is being downgraded (recommendation 7).

## Council representation on management committees

- 3.20 The County Council appoints representatives to sit on external management committees including those bodies that manage countryside sites. This results in valuable support to those organisations and can help to raise their profile both locally, regionally and within the County Council. Ultimately, in common with many other Council activities, the Countryside Management Service will thrive better in the longer term if assisted by Member champions actively supporting countryside sites across the county.
- 3.21 However, in a small number of cases, representatives nominated by the County Council are neither council officers nor members, for example on the management committee of Chailey Common LNR. In such cases it may be difficult to ensure appropriate liaison with those individuals or to persuade them to comply with the guidelines governing such appointments.
- 3.22 Wherever possible, an appropriate member or officer representative should be appointed to external bodies managing countryside sites, and the list of delegates to outside bodies should be made more accessible to members, the public and partners to help publicise these beneficial links (recommendation 8).

## Measuring success

- 3.23 During November 2006 County Council officers carried out a mock assessment of all 15 sites managed by the Countryside Management Service against the Civic Trust's criteria for the 'Green Flag' award which is a national standard for parks and green spaces. The key criteria are: *a welcoming place; healthy, safe and secure; clean and well maintained; sustainable; conservation and heritage; community involvement; marketing and management.*
- 3.24 Most sites, in particular those owned by the County Council, would fail to meet the standard on a number of criteria, including not being particularly welcoming or safe or having low community involvement. Site management plans were also not available for many of these sites and some sites such as Camber Sands do not fit in easily with the 'Green Flag' criteria.
- 3.25 Third party sites appear to have greater potential to meet the 'Green Flag' criteria because they tend to have greater resources for direct work and staff time. Sites with a higher Ranger presence are more successful at engaging with the local community.
- 3.26 These conclusions were consistent with the Board's observations during its visits to the various sites. Therefore the Board endorsed the approach of using the 'Green Flag' criteria to assess informally all sites from time to time and to apply for actual Green Flag status for those where the criteria are particularly appropriate. As discussed above, the effectiveness of marketing and publicity should feature highly in such assessments (recommendation 9).
- 3.27 The community involvement 'Green Flag' criterion is particularly important in measuring the success of all sites. Site management should actively try to be representative of as many open space user groups as possible. In line with the 'Green Flag' criteria, management should pursue:
- An understanding of users and levels and patterns of use
  - Active community involvement in site management
  - The right level of facilities to suit all sectors of the community (recommendation 10).

## Audit of countryside spaces in East Sussex

- 3.28 It is clear that some sites managed by the County Council are of greater value and significance than others both environmentally and in visitor numbers. In the absence of a strategy it is difficult to determine which sites should be managed by whom.
- 3.29 A sharply focussed audit of countryside sites (recommendation 11) is needed to provide a strategic framework for county open space services. Any strategy should cast its eye across the whole of East Sussex and draw upon previous work and information held by county, district and borough councils. The outcome of such an audit should include:
- Clear standards for countryside management regardless of who provides the service

- A clear idea of what services specifically need to be provided by the County Council, in particular the Countryside Management Service
- A basis to ensure future financial sustainability for the Countryside Management Service
- A plan for increasing community involvement in supporting and managing sites.

## 4 Conclusions

4.1 The Countryside Management Service is a key element of the Transport and Environment service. It works alongside other teams and specialities within the department and together they have the potential to support a range of critical roles in developing a sustainable countryside management strategy in East Sussex which:

- Promotes and provides quality open spaces and opportunities for leisure and recreation to enable all sections of the community to enjoy the East Sussex countryside
- Contributes towards achieving national, regional and local health targets under the Local Area Agreement, particularly by promoting physical activity and mental wellbeing.
- Initiates new schemes that would otherwise not happen by bringing together different partners and using its expertise in site management, landscape and design, ecology, waste management and bidding for resources.
- Actively encourages and enables others to manage their own and Council owned sites.
- Promotes the local economy by encouraging tourist opportunities.
- Contributes to conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

4.2 The Countryside Management Service itself contributes to key Council ambitions of protecting and enhancing the county's environmental assets and improving access to the countryside for the benefit of all. Importantly, its hands-on approach and committed, enthusiastic staff and volunteers help to promote good practice amongst other landowners face to face.

4.3 The following mission (recommendation 12) for the Countryside Management Service is therefore endorsed:

*To enable the safe and informed enjoyment of the East Sussex landscape by residents and visitors, through ensuring that the land and rights of way for which East Sussex County Council is responsible are accessible, maintained, enhanced and promoted.*

4.4 A sharply focussed audit of sites and resulting open space framework should identify which sites are best managed by the Countryside Management Service. These should include only those of county or national significance together with sites which generate income. Disposal of other sites should be vigorously pursued (recommendation 11).

- 4.5 In order to be financially and operationally sustainable in the long term and to continue to benefit from the volunteer workforce and trainee rangers' scheme the service needs to be a critical minimum size. To achieve this, its portfolio may need to include one or more major or 'flagship' sites.
- 4.6 The Countryside Management Service will need to take further steps to move towards 'cost neutral' operations and to afford additional investment in marketing and publicity by:
- Reducing or sharing financial and staffing support to sites that demonstrate successful local support and potential for increased fundraising
  - Maximising income generation activities
  - Increasing income from third party landowners where the Countryside Management Service manages those sites
  - Managing an efficient service by: demonstrating good practice in volunteer management and maintenance of the countryside, and using the most appropriate systems to improve operations and ensure accountability
  - Enabling active community engagement to help access external sources of funding.

## 5 Objectives and scope of the review

5.1 The Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 8 March 2006 established this scrutiny review board with the following scope and terms of reference. To consider and make recommendations on:

- The aims and purpose of the current approach to countryside management in East Sussex and the vision for the future for countryside management.
- What countryside sites the Council owns and manages and justification in the context of the Council Plan and key service targets.
- The strategy, including funding, for the acquisition and disposal of sites.
- The effectiveness of non-site specific work including guided walks and publications.
- Current and historical income and expenditure; and the prospects for increasing income and making savings.
- The effectiveness of partnership working and the implications for sites managed by other parts of the Transport and Environment department including Rye Harbour Local Nature Reserve (RHLNR).

## 6 Membership and evidence

6.1 The review Board comprised:

- **Councillor Godfrey Daniel (Chairman)**
- **Councillor Chris Dowling**, and
- **Councillor Jon Harris.**

6.2 The Project Manager was Paul Dean (Scrutiny Manager) with logistics and support being provided by Margaret Fuller (Democratic Services Officer).

6.3 Vicky Lawrence and Sandy Williamson provided ongoing technical support to the board throughout its work.

6.4 The Board is grateful to all the witnesses who provided evidence to this review. The following County Council officers provided oral or written evidence:

**Vicky Lawrence** Head of Rights of way and Countryside Management

**Steve Ankers**, Assistant Director Environment Division, Transport and Environment

**Sandy Williamson**, Countryside Sites Officer

**Alex Tait**, County Ecologist

**Richard Partridge**, Assistant Director Law and Personnel

**Simon Fathers**, Rye Bay & Eastern High Weald AONB Countryside Officer

**Nigel Marshall**, Principal Landscape Architect

**Steve Diserens**, Countryside Access Officer

**Simon Hickmott**, Group Manager, Environment Division

**Jessie Leamy**, Countryside Ranger

**Richard Rattle**, Land and property Manager

**Daryl Major**, Rye Bay Countryside Ranger

6.5 The Board also received written or oral evidence from:

**Councillor Pat Ost**, East Sussex County Council  
**Hew Prendergast**, Superintendent and Clerk, Ashdown Forest  
**Andrew Tilney**, Park Ranger, Eastbourne Borough Council  
**Alwyn Roebuck** - Head of Amenities, Rother District Council  
**Steve Benn**, Coastal Officer, Rother District Council  
**Tony Lloyd**, Chairman of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Committee  
**John Gooders**, Chairman of Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve  
**David Burton**, External business planning consultant

6.6 The Board visited the following sites:

**Shinewater Park, Eastbourne**  
**Camber Sands and Dunes**  
**Rye Harbour Nature Reserve**  
**Broomhill Sands**  
**Johnson's Field**

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***Background papers and other written evidence for this review are available in the Members' Room from Margaret Fuller, Committee Services. Telephone: 01273 481685 or e-mail: [scrutiny@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@eastsussex.gov.uk)***

## 7 Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Areas designated by the Government under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, solely on account of their natural beauty and with the aim of conserving and enhancing it.
Country park	Country Parks are areas designated for people to visit and enjoy recreation in a countryside environment. There are around 250 recognised Country Parks in England and Wales. Most were designated in the 1970s, under the Countryside Act with the support of the former Countryside Commission. The majority are owned and run by local authorities.
Countryside site	A green open space which may be in an urban or rural area managed for a combination of recreation and conservation purposes.
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	<p>English Nature defines LNRs as being for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.</p> <p>It is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. Parish and Town Councils may declare LNRs but only if the powers to do so delegated to them by a principal local authority.</p>
Natural England	<p>Formed by bringing together English Nature, the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service.</p> <p>“Works for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and in the future.”</p>
Special Protection Area (SPAs)	Strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds, also known as the Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. Classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species.
Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)	Locally important sites of nature conservation adopted by local authorities for planning purposes and identified in the local development plan.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	English Nature has responsibility for identifying and protecting SSSIs in England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). Notification as a SSSI gives legal protection to the best sites for wildlife and geology in England.

## 8 Appendix 2: Sites managed by East Sussex Countryside Management Service

	Site	Designations	Owned by	Area (Hectares)
1	Ditchling Common Country Park	Country Park, SSSI	East Sussex County Council	78
2	Chailey Common LNR	LNR, SSSI	Chailey Parish Council / North Common Freeholders	182
3	Shinewater Park (Eastbourne)	None	East Sussex County Council	43 (part water)
4	Riverside Park	SNCI	East Sussex County Council	18
5	Ouse Estuary LNR	SNCI, intended LNR	East Sussex County Council	43
6	Forest Way Country Park	Country Park, part of National Cycle Network route 21 (NCN21)	East Sussex County Council	30
7	Cuckoo Trail (Wealden)	Part of NCN21	East Sussex County Council / Wealden DC	39
8	Camber Dunes & Broomhill Sands / Johnson's Fields	SSSI, SNCI, SPA	East Sussex County Council	27
9	Weir Wood Reservoir LNR	LNR, SSSI	Southern Water	152 (mostly water)
10	Park Wood (between Hailsham and Hellingly)	SNCI	Environment Agency	60
11	West Park LNR (Uckfield)	LNR, SNCI	Uckfield Town Council	11
12	Boothlands Wood	None	Uckfield Town Council	5
13	Nightingale Wood (Uckfield)	None	Uckfield Town Council	2
14	Hempstead Meadow LNR (Uckfield)	LNR	Uckfield Town Council	2
15	Harlands Pond (Uckfield)	None	Uckfield Town Council	1