

Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Boundary Review

Focussed Review of the Parishes of Normandy, Pirbright and Worplesdon
March 2022



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This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with ISO 9001:2015.

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Background and Context

The statutory framework for protected landscapes in England comprising Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Parks and the Broads was first established in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The legislation has been amended and added to many times since then.

Today, land to be included in an AONB or National Park must meet the statutory designation criteria that are set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended (for National Parks) or the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (for AONBs).

Section 82(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) defines an AONB in England as an area that is not in a National Park, but which appears to Natural England to be of such outstanding natural beauty that it is desirable that the protective provisions of Part IV of CRoW should apply to it for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty. Further clarification is provided in the legislation, in that reference to conservation of natural beauty includes the conservation of flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features (s.92(2) of the CROW Act); and that land is not prevented from being treated as of natural beauty by the fact that it is used for agriculture, or woodlands, or as a park, or that its physiographical features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape (s.99 NERC).

In June 2021¹ the Government announced proposals for new protected areas across England. Under the proposals, four areas will be considered for greater protections, with potential to deliver over 40% of the additional 4,000km² required to meet the Government commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030 for nature² and to safeguard more of England's beautiful and iconic landscapes for future generations, as outlined in its '10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution'³.

The four areas being considered for designation include the Yorkshire Wolds AONB, Cheshire Sandstone Ridge AONB and extensions to both the Chilterns and the Surrey Hills AONBs. With specific regards to the Surrey Hills AONB it states that the objective is "...to consider including areas of high scenic quality including chalk grassland, parkland and historic features adjacent to the existing AONB"⁴.

The June 2021 announcement also included reference to taking forward the recommendations of the major independent review of protected landscapes led by Julian

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natural-england-announces-landmark-new-programme-for-protected-landscapes> (accessed 26 January 2022)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-commits-to-protect-30-of-uk-land-in-boost-for-biodiversity> (accessed 26 January 2022)

³ HM Government, The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (November 2020)

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natural-england-announces-landmark-new-programme-for-protected-landscapes> (accessed 26 January 2022)

Glover. The ‘Landscapes Review’⁵ sets out a compelling vision for more beautiful, biodiverse and accessible National Parks and AONBs and also warns that challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and a changing, urban society mean that new approaches are needed to get the most out of England’s protected landscapes. The government has subsequently launched a consultation on how it intends to implement some aspects of its response to the ‘Landscapes Review’⁶.

Furthermore, and set against the backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient, the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty has made a series of pledges (known as the Colchester Declaration⁷) to respond to the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity decline. This is relevant as it places greater emphasis on the role of AONBs in mitigating and adapting to climate change, achieving net zero and helping nature to recover.

1.2. Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review

On 1 December 2021 Natural England launched its formal boundary review process for the Surrey Hills AONB⁸ and invited stakeholders to contribute evidence to allow Natural England to consider the case for extending the existing AONB. The press release for the launch of the consultation records that *“Evidence provided by the public will help contribute to Natural England’s assessment of the natural beauty of the area. Also its decision whether other areas in the vicinity of the existing boundary should form part of an extended Surrey Hills AONB.”*

Furthermore, the launch records that:

“If further areas are added to the Surrey Hills AONB, this could bring many benefits for the area. This includes boosting nature’s recovery, giving more people the opportunity to enjoy this beautiful area and safeguarding a nationally important landscape for future generations.

An extension to the Surrey Hills AONB could help preserve the natural environment and rural heritage, promote tranquillity and give more opportunity to support people’s health and wellbeing through access to nature, on the doorstep of London.”

The first stage in Natural England’s formal boundary review process, which concluded on 31 January 2022, was a ‘Call for Evidence’ on the potential for expanding the area of the AONB.

Organised through a dedicated website⁹, the Call for Evidence requested that local people gather information about the natural beauty of the landscape; its condition, scenery,

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review> (accessed 26 January 2022)

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response#since-publication-of-the-review> (accessed 26 January 2022)

⁷ <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/projects/colchester-declaration> (accessed 11 February 2022)

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surrey-hills-area-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-needs-you> (accessed 26 January 2022)

⁹ <https://www.surrey-hills-aonb-boundary-review.org/home> (accessed 26 January 2022)

wildness, tranquillity, and natural and cultural heritage. It added that the form it has designed to gather evidence provides an option for contributors to provide a location, photograph and comment on what makes a place special in terms of natural beauty and an option to provide further detail through additional written descriptions, photographs and other supporting files. It directed contributors towards the landscape in the 14 'Evaluation Areas' (excluding any significantly built-up areas), that form the Study Area, adding that it *"...will consider evidence where it is immediately next to the Evaluation Areas or where we determine that there is a particularly strong case for its consideration"*.

Contributions were invited to be made via the Survey123 mobile APP or a specially designed form¹⁰ (refer to **Appendix A**) which specifically requested evidence that supports the presence of one or more of the factors that have been accepted as contributing to natural beauty and invites additional supporting comments, documents, photographs and evidence that may also detract from the natural beauty factors. The form reiterates the request to provide evidence for land within the Evaluation Areas, but that Natural England would consider evidence related to areas immediately next to the Evaluation Areas or where it judges that there is a particularly strong case for its consideration.

The form specifically refers to gathering information about *"Natural Beauty and the associated factors"* and makes direct reference to Natural England's 'Guidance for Assessing landscapes for designation as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England' (updated June 2021). This includes details of Natural England's approach to designation and an 'Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion' which has been used as a basis for presenting the findings of this focussed review (refer to **Appendix B**). The factors being used to gather evidence of the natural beauty of the landscape are consistent with national guidance. However, the guidance also suggests that landscape character should be used as a starting point for establishing Evaluation Areas, which does not appear to have been the basis for the selection of the Evaluation Areas currently forming part of the Natural England consultation.

In addition to providing photographic evidence, participants were invited to describe the special qualities of the place in terms of one or more of the natural beauty factors experienced in a particular location.

The list provided¹¹ replicates the natural beauty factors identified in the 'Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion', which also provides example of sub-factors, example indicators and examples of evidence for each of the natural beauty factors listed.

Over the period November 2021 - June 2022 inputs will be shared through an interactive 'Story Map'.

Following the Call for Evidence Natural England will undertake the following activities¹²:

February - April 2022

- Evaluation of Natural Beauty.

¹⁰ <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/896091cc47194e3f99839c84a71cdde0> (accessed 26 January 2022)

¹¹ <https://www.surrey-hills-aonb-boundary-review.org/discover> (accessed 26 January 2022)

¹² <https://www.surrey-hills-aonb-boundary-review.org/discover> (accessed 26 January 2022)

May - June 2022

- Identification of Candidate Areas (an area which is considered to have a weight of evidence to support designation as AONB).
- Desirability Assessment (a review of areas which qualify for designation, to determine if the purposes of AONB designation should apply to the area).
- Final Reporting (presenting the case for extending the boundary of the AONB).

Natural England will then consider these reports and relevant evidence and decide whether or not a particular area is of such national significance that it should be designated as an AONB and managed to achieve the statutory purpose.

Reaching such a decision will involve two key stages:

- identification of a suitable boundary; and
- consultation on its final recommendations and carrying out the necessary formal procedures required for a formal legal Order to be made.

1.3. Purpose of this Report

The Parishes of Normandy, Pirbright and Worplesdon (the Parishes) are largely located outside the current Area of Search for the possible extension of the AONB, albeit Natural England's Evaluation Area 2: 'Wanborough Clayland' extends as far as the railway line between Aldershot/Farnborough and Guildford in the south of Worplesdon and Normandy Parishes. The Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review Story Map records for Evaluation Area 2: Wanborough Clayland that it "... includes the clayland farmland north of the Hog's Back...[and] abuts a number of settlements including Tongham, Ash Green, Flexford and Park Barn and comprises wooded rolling farmland."

Given the largely rural nature of the Parishes, local stakeholders via their respective Parish Councils, have commissioned LDA Design Consulting Ltd. (LDA Design) to undertake a focussed technical review of the landscape within the Parishes to identify areas that are assessed as displaying one, or a combination of several, of the natural beauty factors that Natural England should consider in the boundary review process. The three parishes form the Study Area for this report (see Figure 1, which is presented at A2 to include a legible 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey map as its base).

This report presents the findings of the focussed review undertaken by LDA Design. Its content and recommendations represent the views of the consultants and the Parish Councils, which have formed the Advisory Group overseeing its production.

The approach taken combines desk-based assessment of maps, geographical data and reports and field survey undertaken in January 2022 by qualified landscape professionals.

1.4. Structure of this report

Following this introduction, **Section 2** presents details of the approach taken to the assessment.

Section 3 presents an overview of the Evaluation Areas that are taken forward to detailed assessment against the appropriate technical criteria which is presented in **Section 4**. Conclusions and recommendations, including the identification of a Candidate Area is presented in **Section 5**, along with photographs illustrating the visual characteristics of the Candidate Area.

A list of figures have been produced to illustrate the analysis undertaken in this report. These are as follows:

- Figure 1. Study Area
- Figure 2. Topography
- Figure 3. Historic Landscape Character
- Figure 4. Landscape Character
- Figure 5. Access and Recreation
- Figure 6. Biodiversity Designations and Ancient Woodland
- Figure 7. Heritage Designations
- Figure 8. Candidate Area

Appendices provide supporting information as follows:

- Appendix A: Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence Form (sourced from Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review)
- Appendix B: Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion (Appendix 1 in Natural England’s Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England).
- Appendix C: Provides an overview of the Surrey Hills AONB and its natural beauty.
- Appendix D: Presents information from the Surrey Hills Management Plan related to the ‘implications of a ‘Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review’.

2.0 Methodology

2.1. Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that legislation contains no exhaustive definitions of natural beauty. In response Natural England has considered the way in which these concepts have been applied previously in designating National Parks and AONBs, including most recently the extension to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, and updated its previous guidance to ensure robust, rigorous and transparent assessment of landscapes for designation.

The approach to this assessment follows Natural England's 'Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England' (the Guidance) which was published in June 2021.

This records that in the simplest possible terms, the consideration of designating land [as an AONB] under the legislation raises the following questions:

- Does the landscape have sufficient natural beauty?
- Is it (especially) desirable to designate the landscape?
- Where should the detailed boundary be drawn?

It goes on to record that the main technique to answer these questions is landscape character assessment, the current best practice for which was published by Natural England in 2014.

2.2. Assessment Process

With regards to the process of assessment (for designation of an AONB), the Guidance records that once a broad area of land potentially suitable for designation has been identified (known as the Study Area or Area of Search) a sequence of practical steps should be employed as follows:

- A. Characterisation and Spatial Framework: This is undertaken at an appropriate scale resulting in:
 - a spatial framework of Evaluation Areas; and
 - a description of the character of these Evaluation Areas.
- B. Technical Criteria: Each Evaluation Area is evaluated against the following technical criteria:
 - natural beauty
 - an area that appears likely to be able to meet the technical criteria is included in a Candidate Area.
- C. Desirability to Designate: For each Candidate Area, consideration is given to whether it would be desirable to designate the area as part of an AONB.

- D. Assessment for designation under the statutory provisions: For a potential designation area, it is necessary to stand back and ask in relation to the area as a whole whether it meets the tests set out in statute for designation, both the technical criteria and the desirability of designation consideration.
- E. Definition of a Detailed Boundary: The areas identified for designation are examined to define a detailed boundary which encloses them.
- F. Formal Designation Procedures: Designation or Variation Orders are made and submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation.

This assessment addresses steps A-B and concludes with the identification of Candidate Areas for further consideration by Natural England in its formal boundary review.

With reference to the Guidance, further details of the stages in the process adopted in this assessment are provided below:

2.2.1. A. Characterisation and Spatial Framework

The Guidance records that in order to aid the practical evaluation of a broad area of land potentially suitable for designation and to make evaluation a more manageable process, the broad area is divided into units of an appropriate scale to provide a spatial framework of landscape units which are termed Evaluation Areas in the guidance. It adds that Evaluation Areas should normally be defined, at least initially, using recognised landscape character assessment techniques described in national guidance. Each Evaluation Area is characterised, resulting in character descriptions which provide a relatively objective and value-free evidence base for the next stage (evaluation). The characterisation covers not only landscape character (including the factors relevant to natural beauty) but also recreation.

It goes on to record that the starting point should be a broad character assessment (e.g. at National Character Area level), followed by local character assessments (such as Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisations prepared at County or District Council level), to inform more detailed evaluation. It is important that the most up-to-date and reliable character assessment information is used. Ideally the character assessment should also have been subject to stakeholder consultation, indicating that it is supported by a broad consensus of opinion.

In this assessment the Study Area is defined by the geographic extent of the Parishes of Pirbright, Worplesdon and Normandy.

There are two National Character Areas (NCAs) that are partly located within the Study Area: The Thames Basin Lowlands NCA located in a narrow band across the south of the Study Area and the Thames Basin Heaths NCA covering the rest of the Study Area. Within

the framework of NCAs, the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment¹³ identifies nine landscape character areas (LCAs) within the Study Area.

Drawing on desk and field survey (undertaken in January 2022) the following Evaluation Areas have been identified. Where a broad consistency in character and condition has been identified, Evaluation Areas have been identified that comprise several landscape character areas as follows:

Evaluation Areas within the Thames Basin Lowlands NCA

Evaluation Area 1: The Settled Wooded Claylands and Commons

- Wanborough Wooded Rolling Clayland LCA

Evaluation Area 2: The Slyfield Valley and Lower Wey Valley and Floodplain

- Slyfield River Valley Floor LCA
- Lower Wey River Floodplain LCA

Evaluation Areas within the Thames Basin Heaths NCA

Evaluation Area 3: Worplesdon, Normandy and Pirbright Settled Sandy Farmlands, Heaths and Commons

- Whitmoor Sandy Heath and Common LCA
- Wyke to Mayford Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland LCA
- Pirbright to Hook Heath Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland LCA

Evaluation Area 4: The Ash Ranges, Deepcut and Pirbright Forests, Open Heaths and Commons

- Ash Common to Cobbetthill Sandy Heath and Common LCA
- Deepcut Sandy Woodland LCA
- Westend and Pirbright Sandy Heath and Common LCA

An overview of the character of the four Evaluation Areas in the Study Area is presented in **Section 3**.

2.2.2. B. Technical Criteria

The technical criteria for designating AONBs relate solely to natural beauty.

The Guidance records that the systematic evaluation of natural beauty can be a complex exercise requiring careful assessment and judgment. It adds that Natural England has developed a list of factors that contribute to natural beauty providing a practical

¹³ Surrey Landscape Character Assessment: Guildford Borough, April 2015

framework for an evidence-base which assists in making judgments about natural beauty in a rigorous and transparent way.

The suggested factors are as follows:

- *Landscape quality. This is a measure of the physical state or condition of the landscape.*
- *Scenic quality. The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses (primarily, but not only, the visual senses).*
- *Relative wildness. The degree to which relatively wild character can be perceived in the landscape makes a particular contribution to sense of place.*
- *Relative tranquillity. The degree to which relative tranquillity can be perceived in the landscape.*
- *Natural heritage features. The influence of natural heritage on the perception of the natural beauty of the area. Natural heritage includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features.*
- *Cultural heritage. The influence of cultural heritage on the perception of natural beauty of the area and the degree to which associations with particular people, artists, writers or events in history contribute to such perception.*

The Guidance states that these are not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may be relevant in some circumstances. It adds that not all factors will be relevant in every case.

Each of these factors is divided into sub-factors, which are judged by indicators. The indicators are statements of the features, characteristics and qualities which tend to indicate whether a particular factor is present. Full details of the natural beauty factors, sub-factors, and indicators in the Guidance are presented in **Appendix B**. These are used as the framework for the assessment of the Evaluation Areas (presented in **Section 4** of this assessment).

In applying the criteria, the Guidance states that the sub-factors and associated indicators should be regarded as a 'menu' from which those appropriate to the character of the landscape under consideration should be chosen, adapted or added to. There is no 'scoring' involving accumulations of indicators and it is possible for a landscape to exhibit natural beauty even if a number of the indicators suggested are not present.

The Guidance also notes that:

- There is no need for an AONB to display a distinctive or coherent identity. A designation can contain different landscapes so long as the designation as a whole satisfies the natural beauty criterion. For reference and context, **Appendix C** presents an overview of the Surrey Hills AONB and its natural beauty.
- Not all factors or indicators have to be present across a designation. Different parts of a designation can satisfy the natural beauty criterion for different reasons, provided that overall, the area is of sufficient natural beauty to be designated as an AONB.
- The weight and relative importance given to different factors or indicators may vary depending on the geographic context. For example, in the South Downs, less weight

was given to relative wildness and more to relative tranquillity and natural and cultural heritage features, reflecting the area's lowland, settled character and proximity to major centres of population. It adds that comparisons are not to be made to other designated areas or adjacent areas but against 'wider countryside'.

- Natural beauty is assessed in terms of the current landscape, not some future potential for improvement. A rare exception may however apply where an existing initiative will deliver positive change of a standard which will meet the natural beauty criterion within the short term and for which there is a high degree of certainty that it will be achieved.
- The effect of settlements and other major developments are assessed on their individual merits by considering their particular character and qualities and their relationship to the adjoining landscape. It is recognised that many settlements have cultural heritage qualities that can make a positive contribution to natural beauty. While this could be said to be true regardless of settlement size, in some cases a settlement may detract from the landscape to such an extent that it should be considered an incongruous feature.
- The effects of incongruous features are assessed for the extent to which they detract from the natural beauty of an area under consideration. It is relevant to take into account whether a feature is temporary or transient. If an incongruous feature does not adversely affect natural beauty, it is not relevant that the feature does not in itself have natural beauty. It is a matter of judgment whether an incongruous feature has such an adverse effect that the whole potential designation fails to meet the natural beauty criterion (even though the area might, in the absence of the detractor, qualify) or whether it can be included. The cumulative impact of such features and the degree to which qualifying parts of the potential designation are fragmented may be relevant to the assessment.
- Where there is an area of non-qualifying land within a wider qualifying tract, there may be scope to apply the 'wash-over' principle. However, this principle should only be used in exceptional circumstances and particular care and scrutiny must therefore be given in such circumstances, particularly near the boundary. The decision to include land that does not itself meet the natural beauty criterion depends on the location of the non-qualifying land, its scale and the effect/benefit of including it within any prospective designation. The desirability of including non-qualifying land should also be considered in detail with reference to the factors set out in the guidance which relate to the assessment of whether it is 'desirable to designate'.

In undertaking the assessment, consideration has also been given to the Guidance which records:

- It is not necessary for the land to be included in a proposed designation to be of the same or similar character.
- Field-by-field evaluation is not appropriate.
- There is no requirement that every parcel of land must meet the criteria.

- The decision to include land that does not itself meet the technical criteria depends on the location, scale and effect of that land. Particular care is required at the margins of a designation. Within the main body of an AONB there is likely to be greater scope for the inclusion of sizeable areas of land which do not themselves meet the technical criteria.
- If an area is fragmented by land which does not meet the technical criteria to such an extent that it affects the ability of the area as a whole to meet the technical criteria, then the entire Evaluation Area is unlikely to qualify.
- Section 99 of the NERC Act clarifies that landscapes that are partly the product of human intervention can still have natural beauty and may be included in designations. This principle is very significant in the context of English landscapes.
- A designation can ‘wash over’ (i.e. include) a tract of land even though that land does not itself meet the designation criteria, even close to the boundary of a designated area.
- It is not necessary to identify a precise ‘hard’ boundary for an area in relation to which the technical criteria are considered at the initial evaluation stage. However, gradual or sudden changes in quality or character near the margin of an Evaluation Area should be recorded, as they may be important for subsequent detailed boundary setting.

The Guidance adds that the result of the initial evaluation stage of the assessment is that all or part of each Evaluation Area that appears likely to be able to meet the technical criteria (either by itself or with other areas as part of a larger designated area) is identified as a Candidate Area for potential AONB designation. In cases where the judgment is not clear cut one way or the other, the area may be identified for further and more detailed scrutiny.

In this assessment each of the Evaluation Areas identified is evaluated against the technical criteria. Where an area appears likely to be able to meet the technical criteria (either by itself or with other areas as part of a larger designated area) it is identified as a Candidate Area (refer to **Section 5**).

At a subsequent stage in the designation process, Natural England will consider whether the Candidate Areas identified along with the existing AONB form an extensive tract that satisfies the AONB designation criteria. This is noted in the Guidance as significant because the statutory criteria for designating land as an AONB apply to the extensive tract or the area in question. It is the AONB as a whole that must satisfy the relevant technical criteria.

As previously noted, with regards to evaluating the technical criteria in detail the Guidance refers to factors, sub-factors and indicators which taken together tend to show whether or not a criterion is satisfied. However, it adds that the assessment of a landscape against the technical criteria is not a simple ‘tick box’ exercise, adding that once appraisal in relation to the listed factors and indicators has been undertaken it will be necessary to stand back and ask whether, having regard to all relevant considerations, the land has sufficient natural beauty in line with the relevant statutory provisions. It goes on to record that the listed factors and indicators are not intended to alter or replace the statutory criteria but merely to provide practical guidance for the assessment of areas against the criteria.

3.0 Evaluation Areas

3.1 Evaluation Areas within the Thames Basin Lowlands NCA¹⁴

The Thames Basin Lowlands NCA is a low-lying plain within the London Basin. It stretches from the London suburbs of South Norwood in the east to Hale on the Surrey/Hampshire border in the west. The landscape is generally flat but in places is gently undulating. Within the Study Area the underlying geology is predominantly London Clay Formation.

To the north east, the NCA is highly urban, incorporating parts of Greater London and its suburbs. To the south-west, it is a small-scale farmed landscape dissected by the meandering river valleys of the Wey and Mole. The farmland consists of small-to-medium-sized fields interspersed with woodlands and shaws, villages and farmsteads as well as parklands. Less than 4 per cent of the NCA is designated for its biodiversity or landscape interest although there is a small section of the existing Surrey Hills AONB between Leatherhead and East Horsley, and at Hatchford End is the edge of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, which lies within the adjacent NCA.

The key characteristics of the Thames Basin Lowlands NCA relevant to the Study Area are:

- Gently undulating lowlands crossed by meandering rivers with broad and flat valley plains.
- Underlying geology of predominantly London Clay and small sand / clay bands; river terrace gravels and alluvium overlie the bedrock along the river valleys.
- A pastoral landscape interspersed with woodland and shaws, hedgerows and trees, remnant commons, villages and farmsteads.
- Increasing fragmentation of farmland character from spread of development, urban fringe influences and transport infrastructure.
- Modified and straightened rivers marked by riparian woodlands and meadows in more rural sections.
- Small-to-medium irregular fields bounded by hedgerows, often with gaps or replaced by wire fences close to urban areas.
- Sparser settlement in the west around Guildford (compared to the east around Greater London).
- Numerous major road and rail networks criss-cross the area.

An earlier study published in 1997¹⁵ confirms the presence of these key characteristics. The description for the Wanborough Regional Countryside Character Area, adds that there are a few small pockets of suburbia along with the general pattern of small and scattered settlements and that the landscape is generally well managed.

¹⁴ NCA Profile: 114 Thames Basin Lowlands (NE571), 2014

¹⁵ The future of Surrey's landscape and woodlands. Surrey County Council, 1997

With reference to the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment¹⁶ and Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation¹⁷, descriptions follow for the two Evaluation Areas that are located within the Thames Basin Lowlands NCA.

3.1.1. Evaluation Area 1: The Settled Wooded Claylands and Commons

The landscape within this Evaluation Area is a belt of land lying to the west of Guildford at the western end of the county. The boundaries are defined by the change in underlying geology from the London Clay to the chalk to the south or the sandy heathlands to the north. Areas of similar landscape character south of the Study Area and fringing the current northern extent of the Surrey Hills AONB are designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

The gently undulating lowland landscape is based mainly on the London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand geology. It is a predominantly pastoral area of cattle and some horse grazing with some arable farmland, with copses and woods particularly to the west. Varied field patterns are evident with large, medium and small scale fields bounded by hedgerows and fences, along with small streams and drainage channels with ponds and springs.

Mature hedgerow trees and occasional field trees are characteristic. Woodlands provide more enclosure to the west of the Evaluation Area and include ancient woodland of high biodiversity value, typically oak and ash with hazel coppice.

Commons lie in the east of the area, notably south and east of Wood Street Village. These are either heathlands or regenerated woodland and form a recreational resource as Open Access Land.

The Evaluation Area is a peaceful rural landscape fragmented in some areas by large scale recent settlements. Open areas allow views to the unsettled slopes of the Hog's Back to the south. Beyond the A323, there are few busy roads. The railway line between Aldershot/Farnborough and Guildford passes broadly east-west through the Evaluation Area, with Wanborough railway station located towards the centre. A fairly sparse pattern of scattered farmsteads, manors and historic villages is overlaid by more recent dense clusters of mainly 20th century settlement centred on the railway line and spreading along roads. Buildings are predominantly of red brick and render with clay tile roofs, sometime combined with flint in the south of the area. The Evaluation Area includes some areas of registered common land, including Broadstreet, Backside and Rydes Hill Commons. There are several Listed Buildings and the centre of Wood Street is designated as a Conservation Area.

The Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation records that the Evaluation Area displays various field patterns that represent different periods and types of enclosure. Evidence of assarting includes larger assarts, for example south of Ash Green and east of Wood Street Village, that are likely to be evidence of later woodland clearance perhaps in the late medieval or Tudor period or where boundary loss has occurred. More common, for

¹⁶ Surrey Landscape Character Assessment: Guildford Borough (April 2015)

¹⁷ Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation (March 2001)

example in the south of Normandy Parish, are smaller regular assarts with straight boundaries that are often associated with remnant ancient woodlands. South of Wood Street Village, evidence suggests fields are of parliamentary enclosure type, and west of the village there is evidence of extensive boundary loss. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of historic landscape character are the Commons¹⁸ comprising common heathland and wooded over commons.

3.1.2. Evaluation Area 2: The Slyfield and Lower Wey Valley and Floodplain

This Evaluation Area occupies a relatively small portion of the Study Area towards the northern edge of Guildford and encompassing parts of the Slyfield River Valley Floor LCA and Lower Wey River Floodplain LCA.

It covers the rural-urban fringe either side of the floodplain of the River Wey east of Jacobs Well and its boundaries follow the edge of the floodplain, built up areas, transport infrastructure, and woodland belts associated with Sutton Park to the north.

The landscape is formed by a narrow gravel terrace, slightly elevated above the flat, low lying Wey River floodplain. It is underlain by Thames Group Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel geology and superficial alluvium deposits in the floodplain.

The character area includes multiple channels of the River Wey and the Wey Navigation winding through areas of rough grassland and scrub which wrap around the eastern side of Slyfield Industrial Estate, as well as mainly pastoral farmland, which continues into the adjacent floodplain.

Linear belts of woodland are notable features east of Jacobs Well, including along the boundary with the floodplain, and which help to limit views of the nearby industrial estate from the Lower Wey River Floodplain. Woodland between Slyfield and Jacobs Well also maintains a sense of separation between the two settlements.

Although abutting urban areas on several sides, settlement within the character area is limited to farm buildings at Burpham Court Farm.

Enclosed wooded areas have a degree of intimate peacefulness. The busy roads and adjacent industrial estate and built-up areas are generally well screened from the surrounding character area. However, tranquillity and remoteness are tempered by occasional glimpses and obvious human influence.

The Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation records that the floodplain of the River Wey within the Evaluation Area forms part of extensive working water meadows along the river, with fringing areas showing evidence of field boundary removal.

¹⁸ Common heathland, whilst perceived as 'waste' as it was unproductive for growing crops, was valuable for its resources (fuel, stock grazing and materials such as sands and gravel) that was available to manorial tenants and those with commoners rights. Heaths were probably created in the prehistoric period as a result of over cultivation on the poor sandy soils and whilst some areas retain characteristic heathland habitat, others have become covered in trees and scrub due to the cessation of traditional management including grazing and turf cutting in the 19th and 20th centuries.

3.2. Evaluation Areas within the Thames Basin Heaths NCA¹⁹

The Thames Basin Heaths NCA stretches westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. West of London, the settlement pattern is a mix of dispersed hamlets, farmsteads and houses interspersed with villages, many of medieval origin, as well as larger towns such as Woking. Woodland accounts for a quarter of this NCA, reflecting the predominance of low-grade agricultural land. Only 20 per cent of this woodland is on ancient woodland sites, with the majority of it having grown up or been planted on former heathland – much of which is or was common land. Common land is found across the NCA, with the largest commons found on raised plateaux of Tertiary sands and gravels. On these deposits, farming is largely limited to rough pasture and there are large estates. Non-agricultural land uses are widespread, and include large plantations and military bases. Formal and informal greenspace is concentrated in the east of the NCA, and includes country parks, woodlands and golf courses. Semi-natural habitat is extensive on the plateaux, and includes mosaics of wet and dry heathland, woodland and acid grassland. These habitats (and bird populations of nightjar, Dartford warbler and woodlark) are of international importance; they are protected by the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), as well as being nationally designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In the east, the close proximity of semi-natural habitats to settlements gives rise to recreation and education opportunities. Agriculture in the valleys is mixed, and there are fragments of historic meadows and reedbeds.

The key characteristics of the Thames Basin Heaths NCA relevant to the Study Area are:

- Plateaux of Tertiary sands and gravels in the London Basin, with intervening river valleys floored by London Clay.
- High woodland cover, offering an array of colour in the autumn. Conifers and large plantations on former heathland are dominant features in the east.
- Acid, leached soils mean that farming on the plateaux is limited to rough pasture, and that alternative land uses (such as forestry, golf courses and horse paddocks) have emerged. Heather, gorse, oak and birch all thrive here. Arable land and improved pasture are found in the valleys.
- Beyond the large areas of heathland and woodland, there is a patchwork of small to medium-sized fields with woods.
- Historic meadows remain as fragments along watercourses.
- Archaeology is well preserved on historic heathland. Mosaics of open heathland and grassland with scrub, secondary woodland and plantation. Valley bogs, ponds and streams enhance diversity. Large, continuous mosaics are found in the east and include

¹⁹ NCA Profile: 129 Thames Basin Heaths (NE530), 2014

Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Chobham Common National Nature Reserve (NNR).

- Historic commons offer tranquillity and unenclosed views, while other rights of access are enjoyed across farmland, canals and downland. Ministry of Defence ownership restricts (but does not entirely prevent) public enjoyment.
- 'Churring' nightjars, dragonflies and purple heather are all readily identified with heathland. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA protects internationally important populations of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.
- Historic features include mills, relict water meadows, and canals.
- Winding lanes and historic dispersed villages and farmsteads of traditional, locally-made brick and tile.

An earlier study published in 1997²⁰ confirms the presence of these key characteristics. The description for the Western Surrey Regional Countryside Character Area, emphasises the contribution that open expanses of heathland contribute to local landscape character and allow for exhilarating views. It also documents the influence of large areas of land owned by the Ministry of Defence and areas with a suburban character close to built-up areas. Beyond the large areas of heathland, the fieldsapes defined by hedgerows, ditches and streams are also noted.

With reference to the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment²¹ and Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation²², descriptions follow for the two Evaluation Areas that are located within the Thames Basin Heaths NCA.

3.2.1. Evaluation Area 3: Worplesdon, Normandy and Pirbright Settled Sandy Farmlands, Heaths and Commons

This Evaluation Area occupies the rural, low lying and sparsely settled landscape with relatively intact tracts of heaths and commons, woodlands and farmland. It marks the transition between the suburban fringes of Guildford and the rolling claylands that lie below the northern slopes of the Hogs Back and Surrey Hills AONB (Evaluation Area 1) to the south and the expansive open heaths and military ranges to the north (Evaluation Area 4).

The landscape is flat or gently undulating and is underlain by Bagshot Formation Sand with areas of Camberley Sand Formation and Windlesham Formation Sand Silt and Clay geology with superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel along minor water courses in shallow valleys.

The prevailing land use is agricultural with a mosaic of largely intact arable and pastoral field patterns interspersed with frequent woodlands including 19th century plantations and

²⁰ The future of Surrey's landscape and woodlands. Surrey County Council, 1997

²¹ Surrey Landscape Character Assessment: Guildford Borough (April 2015)

²² Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation (March 2001)

copses and a number of wooded and heathland commons. Woodlands are typically mixed, with Oak, Scots Pine and Birch evident.

Farmsteads, agricultural buildings, dispersed low density dwellings and hamlets are scattered across the area and impart a rural character. The villages of Pirbright and Worplesdon are the largest settlements within the Evaluation Area. Both contain a fine collection of Listed Buildings and their historic cores are designated as Conservation Areas. Many are closely associated with historic commons, which are typically open access land and designated for their wildlife value. Whitmoor Common, east of Worplesdon is notable for containing two prehistoric sites – both designated as Scheduled Monuments. In the very north of the Evaluation Area is the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area, beyond which is Pirbright Camp and the southern extent of the Pirbright Ranges. Bisley Camp is a notable historic feature and designated as a Conservation Area.

Views are often obscured by tree cover in a largely enclosed landscape. However intermittent views from elevated areas and towards the Hogs Back are possible. A sense of tranquillity and remoteness is characteristic away from the main road corridors and in particular on areas of heathland and common where views to modern development are restricted.

The Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation records that the landscape displays varying field patterns, derived from different periods of enclosure. In the west of the Evaluation Area parliamentary enclosures predominate, along with areas where there has been extensive boundary loss. Around Pirbright field patterns derived from assarting are more common. Commons are also relatively extensive and distributed throughout the Evaluation Area, including wooded over commons and common heathland. Other notable landscape features include remnant parks and gardens, and recreational landscapes including golf courses and horse paddocks.

3.2.2. Evaluation Area 4: The Ash Ranges, Deepcut and Pirbright Forests, Open Heaths and Commons

This Evaluation Area is located in the north west of the Study Area and encompasses extensive tracts of generally intact open heathland, scrub, woodland and forestry.

This is an undulating landscape, rising to an elevation of over 100m AOD in some places towards the fringes of the Study Area. It is underlain by Camberley Sand Formation Sand and Windlesham Formation Sand, Silt and Clay geology and the marginal nature of the soils for agriculture and military land use have created the conditions for extensive heaths and woodland/forestry. There are also occasional areas of open water with springs, streams and brooks. Open heaths occupy the Pirbright and Ash Ranges which lie to the south and north of the Basingstoke Canal. The northernmost portion of the Evaluation Area forms part of more extensive tracts of continuous dense mixed woodland and plantations with small pockets of open heathland and pasture. As for the open heaths, large tracts are in military use with managed access.

The open heaths are largely devoid of settlement and transport infrastructure. As such, the area retains a semi natural character. Although there is a strong military presence in the

form of ranges, barracks and camps as well as suburban development towards the periphery of the Evaluation Area, woodland tends to obscure views to the urbanising effects and wide areas display a remote tranquil character. Contrasting experiences are possible from secluded and intimate landscapes within forested areas to a greater sense of expansiveness and exposure on the open heaths. Very few public rights of way cross the area, and whilst access is permitted when the ranges are not in active military use, they can often feel secluded and secret. Whilst visually contained by landform and tree cover, some extensive and panoramic views are possible. For example, from Crown Prince Hill on Ash Ranges, views extend southwards across a largely wooded foreground to the Hogs Back. Views eastwards extend to Guildford and Woking. Taller buildings in London are visible to the north east in clear weather conditions.

The Evaluation Area is covered by numerous ecological destinations. Intact heathlands represent one of Europe's most important and threatened habitats. The majority of the area is designated as a part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation.

The Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation records that the landscape comprises large and continuous tracts of unenclosed heathland and scrub. As for the smaller heaths and commons at Stanford Common and Cobbet Hill Common and in the neighbouring Evaluation Areas, the unenclosed heathland and scrub of the Ash and Pirbright Ranges were historically regarded as waste as they were unproductive for the growing of crops. However, they were of value for their resources for those with rights, for example to graze animals or collect fuel. These heaths were probably created in the prehistoric period as a result of over cultivation on the poor sandy soils, and whilst wide areas retain characteristic heathland habitat, some areas have become covered in conifers though the establishment of plantations in the 19th century to meet the need for quick growing cheap timber. The other distinctive and widespread land use are 20th century military structures and features. Many date to the First and Second World Wars, although more recent and modern facilities are provided for training and accommodation.

4.0 Technical Criteria

Since the Surrey Hills was designated an AONB there have been several assessments that map and describe the variations in character and special qualities of land within and surrounding the designated area, including within the Study Area. These landscape character assessments, along with other sources of information, including the Surrey Hills Management Plan, provide useful and relevant information to describing the natural beauty and special qualities of the Surrey Hills AONB and adjacent Evaluation Areas in this assessment.

Drawing on desk and field survey, the table below²³ sets out the factors which contribute to natural beauty for each of the Evaluation Areas identified in Section 3. Figures 1-7 provide baseline mapping that illustrates many of the points made. The information presented should not be taken to be exhaustive and it is anticipated that this would be expanded through the subsequent stages of evaluation by Natural England.

The table clearly demonstrates that several of the Evaluation Areas express a range of natural beauty factors which sets them above 'normal countryside' and which supports the recommendations in Section 5 for consideration as a Candidate Area in the Surrey Hills AONB boundary review.

The analysis also demonstrates that, of the six factors which contribute to natural beauty, Evaluation Areas 1, 3 and 4 are particularly valued for their landscape quality, scenic qualities and cultural and artistic associations. These factors are especially strongly expressed and give rise to the area's unique character.

²³ The table for each of the Evaluation Areas is based on 'Guidance for Assessing Landscapes of designation as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England', Natural England (updated June 2021)

Evaluation Area 1: The Settled Wooded Claylands and Commons		
Factor	Sub-factor	Natural Beauty Indicators
Landscape quality	Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives	This Evaluation Area is a largely peaceful, rural landscape fragmented in some areas by modern ribbon development. As for the whole of the Wanborough Wooded Rolling Clayland, the settlement pattern is either scattered farmsteads and small, nucleated villages, or substantial areas of largely 20th century dwellings clustered along the line of the railway and extending along rural roads. The Evaluation Area does, however, retain its characteristic pattern of woodland creating enclosure in the west of the area. Overall, the Evaluation Area retains a rural character and the combination of ancient woodland in the west of the area and common land in the east, create an unusual character, with strong physical and visual ties to the Hog's Back within the existing extent of the Surrey Hills AONB.
	The condition of the landscape's features and elements	Hedgerows and woodland throughout this Evaluation Area are mature and well managed, with settlement often fitted into the existing landscape pattern. New fencing associated with horse activities has had localised impacts on the condition of the landscape more broadly.
	The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether manmade or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area	The modern ribbon development and the presence of the railway line have introduced incongruous features into this otherwise small scale and in parts open landscape at the foot of the Hog's Back. Whilst the railway line is softened by trackside woodland and tree belts, some of the most

		<p>recent ribbon development does not have this benefit of established screening.</p> <p>The introduction of horsiculture in areas between some of the north-south roads to the north of the railway line has introduced elements into the landscape, such as fencing and horse training facilities, that were not previously present when more traditional grazing was predominant.</p>
Scenic quality	A distinctive sense of place	<p>The combination of areas of common in the east of the Evaluation Area and ancient woodland in the west create an unusual landscape that shows clear signs of how it has developed over time. The openness of some areas also allows an appreciation of how the landscape relates to the adjacent landform of the Hog's Back within the existing extent of the AONB, forming an important part of its setting.</p>
	Striking landform	<p>The gently undulating lowland landscape is located at the foot of the chalk ridge of the Hog's Back. The southern edge of the Evaluation Area forms part of the lower slopes of the ridge, with a high point of over 95m AOD in the south west of the Study Area, and open areas allow views to the striking landform of the Hog's Back to the south. Tributaries of Hoe Brook and Stanford Brook create shallow valleys within the area, flowing towards the eastern edge of the Evaluation Area and the River Wey at around 30m AOD.</p>
	Visual interest in patterns of land cover	<p>The relationship between ribbon development in a north-south orientation and the more organic, historic elements of the commons and ancient woodlands create variation and an interesting rhythm of landscape features when travelling through the Evaluation Area. The</p>

		containment of roads and many areas of built development by tree belts create a continuity between the wooded areas and the commons.
	Appeal to the senses	There is a contrast between the enclosure created in the west and parts of the east of the Evaluation Area by woodlands and the more open commons and farmland. In addition, the heathland areas demonstrate great seasonal variation in their appearance, from the wild and slightly barren in winter to the colourful heathers in the autumn. Views out from open areas allow views towards surrounding landmarks visible above the treeline, such as towards the Hog's Back and of Guildford Cathedral. As set out in Appendix C to this report, documentation relating to the history of the Surrey Hills AONB designation identifies that the boundary line was drawn some distance down the north facing slopes of the Hog's Back, despite there being recognition of the importance of the views southwards to the Hog's, which presumably includes from locations within the Study Area.
Relative wildness	A sense of remoteness	Within much of the Evaluation Area there are few roads. Where roads are present, they are relatively minor and of a rural character, frequently lined with mature tree belts. Development within the Evaluation Area is often relatively modern and can be very visible from roads given its ribbon development nature. However, the wooded edge to Guildford screens much of the town from view, creating a feeling of being remote from large settlements.
	A relative lack of human influence	Parts of this Evaluation Area have changed very little over time and retain the ancient balance between woodland, farmland and common. The commons and ancient woodlands retain large areas of semi-natural

		vegetation that is uninterrupted by built development, and visual intrusion of Guilford into the Evaluation Area is relatively low given the wooded edge to the settlement. However, settlement is evident throughout the Evaluation Area, along the north-south roads and adjacent to the railway line.
	A sense of openness and exposure	Within the more open commons and larger fields south of the railway line, the lack of enclosure by either vegetation or landform creates a sense of openness and exposure. These areas contrast to the enclosure of the ancient woodlands and wooded commons, allowing more expansive views than elsewhere in the Evaluation Area.
	A sense of enclosure and isolation	In contrast, the ancient woodlands (which frequently have Public Rights of Way passing through them) and wooded commons are much more enclosed. They create large areas of the Evaluation Area that are fully enclosed with limited visibility of the wider area, particularly during the summer months. Some of the larger areas feel particularly remote or isolated, given the scale of the wooded areas. In addition, most roads and settlements are enclosed by trees belts, limiting views into the landscape beyond.
	A sense of the passing of time and a return to nature	Much of the land use pattern within this Evaluation Area has remained unchanged by the passing of time. Although the level of development within the Evaluation Area has increased, the pattern of development within the landscape has remained broadly unchanged, along with the patchwork of woodland, farmland and common. Historic mapping indicates that the broad pattern of woodland and commons have remained largely unchanged since the late 19th century, although some

		commons have increased in woodland cover due to changes in management and land use.
Relative tranquillity	Contributors to tranquillity	<p>The Evaluation Area is a peaceful rural landscape with no main roads passing through it. The A323 follows the northern boundary of the Evaluation Area and cuts through the eastern part of it, but is generally lined by tree belts, which reduce its impact. Narrow rural roads run in a north-south orientation from the A323. Settlement within the Evaluation Area is generally small scale and much of the area is open countryside with many woodland blocks.</p> <p>The Evaluation Area abuts the north western edge of Guildford, but the presence of extensive areas of woodland and wooded commons along this edge largely screens the presence of the large settlement. Only occasional buildings, including the landmark feature of Guildford Cathedral, indicate the presence of the town. The National Character Area profile for the Thames Basin Lowlands identifies some of the most tranquil parts of the NCA occurring in this part of Surrey, between Guildford and Ash.</p> <p>Although the A31 runs along the top of the Hog's Back, to the south of the Evaluation Area, this is also generally lined by tree belts that reduce its effects on the Evaluation Area.</p>
	Detractors from tranquillity	The railway line between Aldershot/Farnborough and Guildford passes broadly east-west through the Evaluation Area, with Wanborough railway station located towards the centre.
	Geological and geomorphological features	A distinctive belt of London Clay Formation geology is located between the elevated chalk and greensand geologies to the south and sand

Natural heritage features		<p>formations to the north. The predominance of timber framed vernacular buildings (often clad or infilled in brick) perhaps indicates an absence of building stone locally and the abundance of timber.</p> <p>Gently undulating and extensively wooded clayland landscapes present contrast to the largely open steep slopes of the Hog's Back to south of Evaluation Area which is locally distinctive geomorphological feature.</p>
	Wildlife and habitats	<p>Mature hedgerow trees and occasional field trees are characteristic. Woodlands provide more enclosure to the west of the Evaluation Area and include ancient woodland of high biodiversity value, typically oak and ash with hazel coppice.</p> <p>A small area of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and corresponding SSSI falls within the east of the Evaluation Area, north of Jacobs Well and covering an outlier of Whitmoor Common. This area is a combination of woodland and a large pond called Brittens Pond, with birch and pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) forming the woodland. The Natural England SSSI citation²⁴ indicates that many unusual plant species have been recorded at Brittens pond.</p> <p>Broadstreet Common and Backside Common are also located within this Evaluation Area and designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. These open access sites support areas of unimproved acidic and mesotrophic grassland, as well as semi-improved grassland, broadleaved semi-natural woodland, scrub, ponds and a stream. The sites support a number of locally scarce species and a nationally scarce and</p>

²⁴ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1001865.pdf>

		declining plant. Although these commons do not form part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, they share many characteristics with the heaths and commons that form part of the SPA and provide important linkages between them.
Cultural heritage	Built environment, archaeology and designed landscapes	<p>The area displays a relatively dispersed historic settlement pattern with numerous Listed farmhouses, outbuildings and cottages, ranging in date from the 16th to 18th centuries and sharing a common vernacular of timber framed structures with brick infill or cladding and timber weatherboarding.</p> <p>The relatively intact historic field patterns are associated with clearance from woodland (assarting) during the medieval period and remnant areas of common land.</p> <p>Broad Street Common at Wood Street (designated a Conservation Area) is the site of a Roman villa discovered by labourers in the early 19th century. A nearby Scheduled Monument located 1.5km north west of Wanborough village is the site of two Romano Celtic temples and trackways.</p>
	Historic influence on the landscape	<p>Rural settlements are typically located on north west to south east orientated routes that climb onto the Hog's Back are set within a relatively well wooded landscape with evidence of assarting to create intact fieldscapes.</p> <p>Broadstreet, Backside and Rydes Commons are extensive remnants of common land that would have been a valuable asset to local communities for fuel, grazing and materials such as sand and gravel. The commons</p>

	<p>appear similar in extent to their extents in the late 19th century, despite local settlement expansion.</p> <p>In Worplesdon Parish, the Fairlands development began in the 1930s on farms and heath and woodland. It is distinctive in an area characterised by a dispersed pattern of settlement, such as the nearby Wood Street.</p> <p>Despite 20th century suburban and infill residential development, the area displays remnants of the ancient balance between woodland, farmland and common, developed through clearance and improvement for farming and retention of woodlands and marginal land for common grazing and access to fuel and materials.</p>
Characteristic land management practices	<p>The Commons remain a valued resource for local people, albeit their historic economic value for grazing, fuel and other materials has declined and they now represent important recreational spaces and wildlife areas. Changing priorities mean that grazing is less extensive, and woodland and scrub are more frequent on the commons.</p>
Associations with written descriptions	N/A
Associations with artistic representations	N/A
Associations of the landscape with people, places or events	<p>There is a memorial to Admiral James Stirling (1791-1865) at St Marks Church in Wyke. Stirling saw action in the Napoleonic Wars and was the first Governor and Commander in Chief of Western Australia. His father was a tenant at nearby Henley Park between 1818 and 1822 and his uncle had an estate at Woodbridge Park, Guildford.</p>

		<p>The Society of Friends, more commonly referred to as Quakers, flourished in this area (Guildford – Worplesdon – Godalming), between the early 17th Century and towards the end of the 18th Century. There was very much of an emphasis of presence at what is now Fairlands and Wood Street Village. A prominent Quaker was Stephen Smith who resided at Whites Farm, Fairlands and there held Friends Meetings. It was he who was persuaded by George Fox, the credited Founder of The Society of Friends, to donate a nearby farm (now Fairlands Farm) for a Friends Burial Ground. It is thought that the most probable site of the burial ground is beneath the present A323 somewhere near its junction with Holly Lane, Worplesdon.</p> <p>A memorial in Jacobs Well remembers an air accident which occurred locally. In 1944 during the Second World War the USAAF transport aircraft 'Lilly Bell II' crashed, killing all four crewmen.</p>
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Evaluation Area 2: The Slyfield and Lower Wey Valley and Floodplain		
Factor	Sub-factor	Natural Beauty Indicator
Landscape quality	Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives	Within the Study Area, this Evaluation Area retains much of the traditional floodplain grazing characteristic of the valley, along with woodland along the boundary of the floodplain. However, parts of the river in the vicinity of the Study Area have been canalised to form the River Wey Navigation, which contrasts in width and appearance to the river channels that pass through the centre of the Evaluation Area. These are narrower and more naturalistic in appearance.
	The condition of the landscape's features and elements	The floodplain grassland areas are maintained through grazing and other landscape elements are generally intact. Tree belts associated with Sutton Park to the north appear to be semi-mature and well managed.
	The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether manmade or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area	The adjacent Slyfield Industrial Estate and its large warehouses have a localised influence on the Evaluation Area, as do the busy A3 and settlement at Jacobs Well and Burpham. Although features associated with the River Wey Navigation are manmade elements, they are broadly in keeping with the rural character of the watercourse.
Scenic quality	A distinctive sense of place	Although river valleys and associated floodplains are not an extensive feature of the Study Area, making this Evaluation Area locally distinctive, parts of the area very much form the rural-urban fringe and are consequently characterised by the proximity to urban areas.

	Striking landform	The landscape is formed by a narrow gravel terrace, slightly elevated above the flat, low lying River Wey floodplain. At 25-30m AOD, this is some of the lowest lying land within the Study Area, contrasting with the higher ground in the south and west of the Study Area.
	Visual interest in patterns of land cover	The landcover within this Evaluation Area is relatively simple, comprising predominantly pastoral grassland and tree belts. The multiple channels of the River Wey add interest and variation to this pattern, and the proximity to areas of high biodiversity value adds to this diversity.
	Appeal to the senses	As identified in the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015, this is a generally peaceful, pastoral landscape with a secluded, rural ambiance with views across water meadows to historic buildings.
Relative wildness	A sense of remoteness	The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 indicates in relation to the Lower Wey River Floodplain that <i>“Human influences and glimpses of surrounding Built Up Areas temper the sense of remoteness”</i> . Although the Evaluation Area is largely free from built development, there are man-made influences surrounding it and passing through it in several places.
	A relative lack of human influence	The Evaluation Area covers the rural-urban fringe either side of the floodplain of the River Wey east of Jacobs Well and its boundaries follow the edge of the floodplain, built up areas, transport infrastructure, and woodland belts associated with Sutton Park to the north.

	A sense of openness and exposure	Although much of the floodplain grazing land is relatively open, the context of surrounding woodland and built development mean that the Evaluation Area does not appear open or exposed.
	A sense of enclosure and isolation	Woodland within the river valley, particularly along the boundary of the floodplain, create a degree of enclosure to this Evaluation Area. However, the regular glimpses of built development and noise associated with the A3 mean that the Evaluation Area does not feel truly isolated.
	A sense of the passing of time and a return to nature	Although the Evaluation Area is surrounded by settlement and road infrastructure, the river valley retains its function as part of extensive working water meadows along the river. Stretches of the river are relatively naturalistic and have retained their historic function.
Relative tranquillity	Contributors to tranquillity	This Evaluation Area is largely undeveloped, and although abutting urban areas on several sides, settlement within the Evaluation Area is limited to farm buildings at Burpham Court Farm. Woodland along the edges of the floodplain largely screens the adjacent settlement from view, and the enclosed wooded areas have a degree of intimate peacefulness.
	Detractors from tranquillity	<p>The adjacent Slyfield Industrial Estate and its large warehouses are a visible presence adjacent to the Evaluation Area, seen above and through existing vegetation.</p> <p>The A3, although largely screened by woodland planting along its length, has an audible presence within the Evaluation Area.</p>

Natural heritage features	Geological and geomorphological features	The influences of fluvial activity are evident in the predominantly flat and unsettled alluvial floodplain adjacent to the river. Burpham Court Farm and Clay Lane occupy a slightly raised area of fluvial sand and gravel deposits projecting into the meandering course of the river which is also present beneath the more recent development at Slyfield Industrial Estate.
	Wildlife and habitats	Linear belts of woodland are notable features east of Jacobs Well, including along the boundary with the floodplain and surrounding Sutton Place. Beyond the Study Area boundary, some of this woodland is ancient. Immediately to the south of the Study Area, areas of the floodplain of the River Wey form Riverside Park Local Nature Reserve, which consists of a mosaic of meadow, wetland, open water and woodland.
Cultural heritage	Built environment, archaeology and designed landscapes	Largely unsettled landscape. However, the Listed Burpham Court Cottages, which have their origins in the early 17th century, occupy the edge of the free draining sand and gravel above the adjacent alluvial floodplain.
	Historic influence on the landscape	The river corridor itself broadly retains an historic pattern of floodplain grazing alongside the main river channel, originating in the 18 th or early 19 th centuries. Other areas of the river valley have lost much of their historic pattern as a result of more modern development and farming practices.

	Characteristic land management practices	River Wey Navigation fringed by largely unenclosed floodplain pastures with settlement and arable farmland on adjacent higher and freer draining land reflects former patterns of land use locally.
	Associations with written descriptions	N/A
	Associations with artistic representations	N/A
	Associations of the landscape with people, places or events	N/A

Evaluation Area 3: Worplesdon, Normandy and Pirbright Settled Sandy Farmlands, Heaths and Commons		
Factor	Sub-factor	Natural Beauty Indicator
Landscape quality	Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives	<p>Heaths and commons are a distinctive feature throughout this Evaluation Area. The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 records that the area contains relatively intact tracts of heaths and commons, woodlands and farmland. Settlement relates to the pattern of commons, which would have historically been a resource for the villages, with the commons themselves largely unaffected by development over the last two centuries, as illustrated on historic mapping.</p> <p>Within Worplesdon parish, the commons are generally more open, with limited enclosure by fences or hedgerows, whereas in Pirbright parish, more boundary features are more frequent to contain grazing animals. Most of the commons within the Evaluation Area are covered by national or international ecological designations, demonstrating the level of intactness of the habitats present.</p>
	The condition of the landscape's features and elements	<p>The majority of SSSI units within this Evaluation Area, as recorded by Natural England, are favourable or unfavourable – recovering. Lowland heath is recorded across the areas of common and has increased in area since the designation of the SSSIs. Natural England have recorded appropriate active management across these areas, particularly within wooded areas, and management agreements are being put in place to</p>

		<p>restore areas that have previously been recorded as in an unfavourable condition.</p> <p>In the broader landscape of this Evaluation Area, hedgerows and tree belts generally act as field boundaries between agricultural fields, predominantly pastoral with some arable. Horse grazing has become a competing land use more recently, introducing additional fence lines into the underlying field pattern and altering the condition of the landscape as a result.</p>
	<p>The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether manmade or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area</p>	<p>The villages located within this Evaluation Area have retained a rural feel, even where modern infill development has taken place. The relationship between these villages and the surrounding countryside are part of the character of this landscape. Churches within these landscapes frequently act as landmark features.</p> <p>There are a small number of incongruous developments within the Evaluation Area, all of which have a relatively localised impact due to the wooded nature of the landscape. These include a business park near Henley Park, south of the A324, and the Pirbright Institute, south of Pirbright village.</p> <p>In the north of the Evaluation Area, Pirbright and Bisley Camps have a strong influence in their vicinity, to the north of the railway line and Basingstoke Canal. They contain extensive modern development, as well as the shooting ranges and associated military activity and infrastructure. However, the presence of both the railway and canal, along with extensive woodland along them, provides separation from the rest of the Evaluation Area.</p>

Scenic quality	A distinctive sense of place	<p>The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 describes the central part of this Evaluation Area, the Wyke to Mayford Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland, as a “<i>relatively consistent mix of farmland, woodland and settlement</i>”. Most of the larger areas of common are located outside this part of the Evaluation Area.</p> <p>The pattern of small scale agricultural fields enclosed by woodland and woodland belts, combined with the extensive presence of wooded and heathland commons, creates a unique character that has a very recognisable sense of place.</p>
	Striking landform	<p>The landform within this Evaluation Area is flat or gently undulating. High points can be found in the north, around Pirbright Ranges; to the west of Normandy, and towards the east at Worplesdon. The hill at Worplesdon is a distinctive local feature and allows elevated views from the vicinity of the Church of St Mary over Whitmoor Common and towards the distant high ground of the Hog’s Back, within the current extent of the AONB.</p>
	Visual interest in patterns of land cover	<p>Much of the landcover within this Evaluation Area is small scale and intimate, creating variety and visual interest. This contrasts markedly with the much more expansive commons, whether they are wooded or open. The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 describes the area as a “<i>mosaic of land uses including areas on intact pastoral and arable field pattern, frequent woodland, including 19th century plantations and copses, and a number of wooded and heathland commons</i>”.</p>

	Appeal to the senses	The heathland areas demonstrate great seasonal variation in their appearance, from the wild and slightly barren in winter to the colourful heathers in the autumn. Views out from elevated areas, such as the Church of St Mary at Worplesdon and higher ground at Merrist Wood Golf Club, allow elevated views towards surrounding landmarks such as towards the Hog's Back, within the current extent of the AONB, and of Guildford Cathedral. The contrast between open and enclosed areas and settled areas and more remote commons further add to the variation experienced within this Evaluation Area, within a framework of woodland, farmland and commons.
Relative wildness	A sense of remoteness	Although there are 'A' roads and railway lines through the Evaluation Area, the scale of some of the commons and other woodlands create separation from built development and lead to a feeling of remoteness, particularly during the winter months when visitor number may be lower.
	A relative lack of human influence	Human influence is evident throughout this Evaluation Area, but the pattern of settlement and its relationship to the areas of woodland and commons is part of what gives the area its unique character. The commons provide extensive tracts of semi-natural heathland and woodland, with further extensive woodland also found in the west of the Evaluation Area, although generally with much less public access.

	A sense of openness and exposure	Whilst much of the Evaluation Area is enclosed by woodland, heathland areas of Whitmoor Common in particular are very open and exposed. The vast central area of this common contains limited regenerated scrub, within a wider context of wooded commons.
	A sense of enclosure and isolation	Much of this Evaluation Area is wooded and has a strong sense of enclosure. Frequently these wooded areas are in close proximity to built development, but frequently this development is screened from view. Areas of some of the larger commons can feel remote and isolated, despite the open access to commons for recreation.
	A sense of the passing of time and a return to nature	Within the commons there is a general absence of human intervention, other than selective management of the habitats to retain optimum biodiversity. The relationship between the commons and settlement is part of the historical development of this Evaluation Area, retaining access, important habitats and associated biodiversity and historic connections in close proximity to surrounding villages that in part derive their Identity from this association.
Relative tranquillity	Contributors to tranquillity	A sense of tranquillity is characteristic away from the main road corridors and settlements and in particular on areas of heathland and common. In these locations, the presence of modern development is less noticeable due to the extent of woodland cover. The areas of common are generally accessible only on foot, increasing the feeling of tranquillity through the absence of traffic and associated noise and movement from large areas of the Evaluation Area.

	Detractors from tranquillity	<p>Two 'A' roads pass through the Evaluation Area, the A324 and the A322. These are both relatively rural in character and have a relatively localised effect on tranquillity.</p> <p>The London Waterloo to Weymouth railway line passes broadly east-west through the Evaluation Area, with a branch line to Aldershot and Farnham leaving the main line on the western edge of the Evaluation Area. The Woking to Portsmouth railway line also passes through the east of this Evaluation Area in a north-south direction. There is intermittent noise from passing trains along these lines and views to infrastructure.</p> <p>To the north of the railway line are the MOD Pirbright Camp and Bisley Camp Barracks and associated shooting ranges. These areas introduce extensive development into the northern part of the Evaluation Area, as well as the introduction of army activities when the ranges are in use.</p> <p>The villages of Pirbright and Worplesdon are the largest settlements within the Evaluation Area. They introduce a localised level of disturbance to the tranquillity of the Evaluation Area, as centres of activity, but are small scale rural villages.</p>
Natural heritage features	Geological and geomorphological features	<p>The flat or gently undulating landscape is underlain by Bagshot Formation Sand with areas of Camberley Sand Formation and Windlesham Formation Sand Silt and Clay geology with superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel along minor water courses in shallow valleys. The predominance of timber framed vernacular buildings (often clad or infilled in brick or with tile hangings) perhaps indicating absence of building stone locally and abundance of timber. The</p>

		<p>marginal nature of soils is evidenced in the predominance of woodland cover and commons.</p> <p>This is a gently undulating and extensively wooded and settled landscape which are a contrast to the adjacent and more elevated Ash and Pirbright ranges which retain a remote semi-natural character.</p>
	Wildlife and habitats	<p>There are a series of concentrations of sites of wildlife value within this Evaluation Area.</p> <p>In the north of the Evaluation Area, part of Pirbright Common and areas around Pirbright Camp fall within the Thames Basin Heath SPA, as well as the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC and the Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath SSSI. The SSSI citation²⁵ indicates that the SSSI as a whole contains a wide range of habitats that support a rich variety of plants and animals, as well as supporting characteristic heathland birds.</p> <p>The Pirbright Conservation Area Appraisal indicates that the Basingstoke Canal, to the north of the village of Pirbright, is designated as a SSSI because it is considered to be one of the most species rich aquatic systems in England. It supports a range of habitats for water based plants and insects. The waterbodies that exist alongside the Canal such as New Pond, just north east of Furze Hill, play an important role in providing shallow water conditions in contrast to the deeper waters of the canal. When the canal was created in the 18th century, hollows or undulations in the land alongside the canal filled with water. These ponds, known locally as</p>

²⁵ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1001957.pdf>

		<p>“flashes” act as mini reservoirs for the canal and are of significant ecological interest. The SSSI citation²⁶ indicates that the canal is nationally important for aquatic plants and invertebrates. The transition from calcareous spring water to slightly acidic conditions produces an extremely diverse flora, containing approximately half (87) of Britain’s native aquatic higher plant species, including 5 nationally scarce species.</p> <p>To the south east of Pirbright there is a further area of the Thames Basin Heath SPA and the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC. This area is covered by the Ash to Brookwood Heaths SSSI, although the larger area of this SSSI falls within Evaluation Area 4, and also includes the Fox Corner Local Nature Reserve. The citation for the SSSI²⁷ lists heathland at Brookwood Cemetery and Bullswater Common as extensive areas of heathland within the SSSI, and refers to important dry and wet heathland habitats, important mosses and liverworts, rare invertebrates, lizards, snakes and heathland birds being present.</p> <p>In the east of the Evaluation Area, Whitmoor Common is designated as the Whitmoor Common SSSI. The citation for the SSSI indicates that the site contains a range of heathland habitats, as well as areas of woodland, grassland, and both standing and running water. A mosaic of wet heath and acidic grassland dominates the open areas. There is also an extensive area of dry heath as well as smaller stands of bracken and neutral grassland. Approximately half the site is covered with woodland, which varies in its age and composition. This site is the location of a rare spider,</p>
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²⁶ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1006588.pdf>

²⁷ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000009.pdf>

		<p>a scarce beetle, and two plants which occur only rarely in Surrey. Whitmoor Common is also a habitat for the Window-winged caddis fly which is nationally confirmed as only occurring in Surrey and in the Shropshire mosses²⁸. It also supports many characteristic heathland birds, including a strong breeding population of nightjar. This area is also part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Whitmoor and Rickford Commons Local Nature Reserve.</p> <p>In the area between Worplesdon and Normandy, there are several wooded areas, many of which are ancient woodland and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.</p>
Cultural heritage	Built environment, archaeology and designed landscapes	<p>The historic villages of Pirbright and Worplesdon lie towards the edges of their respective parishes. Historic mapping illustrates that neither were particularly compact settlements, with properties relatively widely dispersed at the fringes of the commons and heaths, possibly occupying the more fertile land on and near the valley bottoms.</p> <p>Whilst more recent development has occurred they retain a rural character. Both are designated as Conservation Areas and contain several Listed Buildings, and notably the 13th century Grade I Church of St Mary (Worplesdon) and Grade II* Church of St Michael and All Angels (Pirbright). Pirbright is distinctive for its green which lies at the centre of the village.</p>

²⁸ Surrey Nature Partnership, The State of Surrey's Nature, 2017

Both Pirbright and Worplesdon are closely associated with areas of surviving common land, typically beyond the fields immediately surrounding the core village and outlying farms. Some are extensive, such as Whitmoor Common, whereas others are relatively small, with indications of woodland encroachment in many instances. Many are open access land and offer opportunities for recreation and wildlife watching.

Beyond these villages is a relatively dispersed historic settlement pattern (reflecting the areas poor agricultural soils) with numerous Listed farmhouses, outbuildings and cottages, ranging in date from the 16th to 18th centuries and sharing a common vernacular of timber framed structures with brick infill or cladding and timber weatherboarding. There are several Tudor Hall Houses throughout the area, although the original timber structures are sometimes clad in later brick and tile frontages.

More modern houses reflect the local vernacular, including the Grade II Listed Merrist Wood House, Worplesdon. This was originally a country house, and is now an Agricultural College. It was designed in 1875 by Richard Norman Shaw for Charles Peyto Shrubbs and displays close-stud half timber, brick and tile hung facades.

In 1875 the Army bought just over 1200 hectares of heathland on Pirbright Commons, about one third of the area of the whole parish. The National Rifle Association purchased land in 1890 at Cowshot Farm, now known as Bisley Camp (now a Conservation Area). There are numerous stones around the village which mark the extent of the MOD ownership and the boundary of the civilian village of Pirbright at the time. In the late 19th century, the population of the village grew and many new houses were

		<p>built by Lord Pirbright, who lived for a time at Henley Park. Many homes in Pirbright are marked with a “P” or “W” denoting his role in their construction.</p> <p>Basingstoke Canal is designated as a Conservation Area. It was opened in 1794 followed by the railway constructed adjacent to it in 1839. These effectively severed the Parish and to the north the military established its camps and ranges.</p> <p>Henley Park is a mid 18th century country house that replaced an earlier property. The old estate was one of eight Royal parks belonging to the Crown in Surrey and in the later C19 the house was closely connected with the Royal Family.</p> <p>Two Scheduled Monuments on Whitmoor Common are remnants of prehistoric settlement and land management. A linear boundary (comprising a ditch and two banks) may represent a territorial division and is associated with a burial mound that was excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in 1877. The Pirbright Conservation Area Appraisal also records that there are two Bronze Age hut circles at Bullswater Common.</p>
	Historic influence on the landscape	<p>Settlements and farms are typically surrounded by fields in sheltered locations on more fertile soils and tend to be surrounded by fields beyond which lie commons such as Whitmoor Common, Littlefield Common, Bullswater Common, Pirbright Common (Part). These would have been a valuable asset to local communities for fuel, grazing and materials such as sand and gravel. The commons appear similar in extent to their extents in the late 19th century, despite local settlement expansion.</p>

	<p>Some field patterns, notably around Pirbright, were created by assarting – the process of clearing woodland for farmland. Small hedged trees within a wooded setting are evocative of historic patterns of settlement and clearance in the more fertile and sheltered locations.</p> <p>Extensive tracts of common land in Pirbright parish were purchased by the army in the late 19th century. Little has changed in Pirbright since the rapid expansion of the village in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There have been modern infill developments but the presence of the army and the restrictions on building in the Green Belt has meant that Pirbright has remained much as it was in the 1950s.</p> <p>Despite 20th century suburban and infill residential development, and establishment of military ranges, the rural landscape and smaller settlements (notably using vernacular building materials) displays remnants of the ancient balance between woodland, farmland and common, developed through clearance and improvement for farming and retention of woodlands and marginal land for common grazing and access to fuel and materials.</p>
Characteristic land management practices	<p>The Commons remain a valued resource for local people, albeit their historic economic value for grazing, fuel and other materials such as gravel, has declined and they now represent important recreational spaces and wildlife areas. Changing priorities during the 20th century have meant that that grazing is less extensive, and woodland and scrub are more common than would have been the case historically.</p>

Associations with written descriptions	The Pirbright Conservation Area Appraisal records that in 1724 Daniel Defoe described a forbidding and dangerous area of scattered farmsteads hunkered down in the sandy wastelands. It is this pattern of development that can be seen today where remnants of these <i>“edge of heathland”</i> settlements are still apparent.
Associations with artistic representations	Crown Cottage, Perry Hill was the home of the artist and illustrator Sidney Herbert Sime (1865-1941) from 1904-1941. Often referred to as “Master of the Mysterious” Sime had work published in well known magazines and collaborated with the Irish writer and playwright Lord Dunsany and aristocratic polymath Lord Howard de Walden (for whom he worked on sets for plays in the Haymarket). In addition to his fantasy works, he sketched caricatures of local people and painted evocative landscapes. Sime’s landscapes make up a significant part of the overall collection. Many are believed to be local, but experts have yet to uncover their specific origins. Sime’s work is exhibited in a gallery in Worplesdon and he is buried in St Marys Churchyard in the village.

	<p>Associations of the landscape with people, places or events</p>	<p>William Cobbett (1763-1835) born in nearby Farnham was popular journalist and author of “Rural Rides”. He played an important political role as a champion of traditional rural England against the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution. His association with Normandy commenced in 1831 when he took on the lease of Normandy Farm, now The Manor House, Hunt’s Hill Road in Normandy.</p> <p>The Society of Friends, more commonly referred to as Quakers, flourished in this area (Guildford – Worplesdon – Godalming), between the early 17th Century and towards the end of the 18th Century. There was very much of an emphasis of presence at Perry Hill Worplesdon. A prominent Quaker was Stephen Smith. It was he who was persuaded by George Fox, the credited Founder of The Society of Friends, to donate a nearby farm (now Fairlands Farm), for a Friends Burial Ground. It is thought that the most probable site of the burial ground is beneath the present A323 somewhere near its junction with Holly Lane, Worplesdon.</p> <p>Lord Pirbright a government minister, formerly Baron Henri de Worms, who was elevated to the peerage by Queen Victoria following his distinguished legal career and later political life and appointment to the Privy Council, rented Henley Park and was a generous benefactor and built many homes in Pirbright. Lord Pirbright’s Grade II Listed tomb is located in the churchyard of St Mark’s in Wyke.</p> <p>Henry Morton Stanley, explorer and founder of the Congo Free State, was famous for finding Dr Livingstone at Lake Tanganyika in 1871. He later became an MP and lived at Furzehill Place in Stanley Hill where his carved initials can be seen above the gate. His grave in St Michael and All Angels churchyard. There are further connections with Africa. The</p>
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		<p>hunter naturalist Frederick Courtney Selous (1851-1917), said to be one of the first conservationists, lived at Worplesdon and built a special gallery at his home Heatherside.</p>
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Evaluation Area 4: The Ash Ranges, Deepcut and Pirbright Forests, Open Heaths and Commons		
Factor	Sub-factor	Natural Beauty Indicator
Landscape quality	Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives	The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 describes the area covering Ash Ranges as encompassing areas of generally intact heathland. This Evaluation Area is almost entirely covered by either open heathland that would historically have been commons (e.g. Wyke Common, Cleygate Common, Pirbright Common) or mixed woodland. This has resulted in the majority of the Evaluation Area being covered by a range of ecological designations, largely relating to the heathland areas.
	The condition of the landscape's features and elements	Over 90% of the SSSI units within this Evaluation Area, as recorded by Natural England, are in favourable condition. Lowland heath is recorded across the Evaluation Area. Natural England have recorded appropriate active management across much of the Evaluation Area in order to prevent encroachment by scrub species and to manage water levels in wet heath areas. Fires across some of the heathland areas have caused damage, but regeneration with appropriate species is being monitored.
	The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether manmade or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area	There are occasional manmade features within the Evaluation Area, largely linked to the military uses (although the main firing ranges are located outside the Study Area). The railway lines and canal passing through the north west of the Evaluation Area are also man-made features, but of the type more frequently found in rural locations. The majority of these features are integrated into the surrounding landscape

		by mature woodland, meaning that they do not visually intrude beyond their immediate vicinity.
Scenic quality	A distinctive sense of place	The mosaic of heathland, both wet and dry, and woodland across this Evaluation Area, combined with the military uses that restrict both other forms of development and the level of public access, create an area that is wild in its character and that feels unique. The scale of the heathland areas and their enclosure by woodland create a landscape that is highly unusual and very distinctive.
	Striking landform	This is an undulating landscape, rising to an elevation of over 100m AOD in some places towards the fringes of the Study Area. A series of hills at the centre of Ash Ranges, the highest of which reaches 118m AOD, contrast markedly with the lower lying commons below them to the east, reaching a low point of approximately 40m AOD at the east of the Evaluation Area. These hills allow panoramic views across the Evaluation Area and beyond, allowing intervisibility with the existing AONB.
	Visual interest in patterns of land cover	In describing the Defence Training Estates in the Home Counties (which covers much of this Evaluation Area) within a public information leaflet ²⁹ , the Defence Estates state “ <i>The beauty of our natural landscapes is diverse and includes heathland, chalk downland, light and dense woodland, and scrub</i> ”. When looking across the Evaluation Area from elevated locations or when walking through the landscape, the combination of different habitat types

²⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/43341/dte_info_leaflet_homecounties.pdf

	across different landforms creates a great deal of diversity and visual interest.
Appeal to the senses	<p>The seasonal changes to the landscape, through the flowering of heather in the autumn and the changes in leaf colours as the seasons change, create a further level of diversity across this Evaluation Area.</p> <p>Long distance, elevated views from hills such as Crown Prince Hill, Lookout Hill, Bastion Hill and Fox Hills within the north west of Ash Ranges include a range of features, varying from open heathland and wooded areas in close proximity, to the elevated Hog's Back to the south and landmark buildings in the east. Distant views of the London skyline are possible on a clear day, including the city of London, Canary Wharf and the Wembley arch.</p> <p>The reciprocal views from the Hogs Back encompass a heavily wooded foreground with the higher ground of the open and wooded heaths forming a backdrop. This is a view described by Defoe as he travelled along the Hogs Back on the road from Guildford to Farnham. He states that <i>"...from this hill is a prospect either way,...and one sees to the north, or N.W. over the great black desert, call'd Bagshot-Heath"</i>.</p> <p>As set out in Appendix C to this report, documentation relating to the history of the Surrey Hills AONB designation identifies that the boundary line was drawn some distance down the north facing slopes of the Hog's Back, despite there being recognition of the importance of the views southwards to the Hog's Back, which presumably includes from locations within the Study Area.</p>

Relative wildness	A sense of remoteness	The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 records <i>“This is a contained inward looking and secluded, ‘secret’ landscape”</i> . Large areas of the Ash Ranges are vast and remote, with long views from the elevated open areas in the north west of Ash Ranges. These views are only occasionally punctuated by built development, as lower-level development is frequently screened from view by woodland in the surrounding landscape. The limited degree of access and the scale of the area mean that few people are present in the landscape outside of military firing times.
	A relative lack of human influence	The majority of this Evaluation Area contains very little development. The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 records <i>“There is almost no settlement within the character area, although there is military presence in the form of use for ranges, nearby barracks and camps. Military fencing, gates and danger signs are highly visible around the periphery. There are masts and satellite dishes set within woodland at the communication centre on Cobbett Hill in the eastern end of the character area”</i> . The military presence using Ash Ranges exerts a large influence on the use of the area during live operations, but has also prevented other forms of development and preserved a range of natural habitats as a result.
	A sense of openness and exposure	Large areas of this Evaluation Area are very open and exposed. Both elevated and lower lying areas of heathland feel vast and unprotected, with only scattered scrub and occasional stands of woodland providing any interruption or shelter.
	A sense of enclosure and isolation	In contrast to the open heathland areas, the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 records <i>“Perimeter vegetation prevents views in and out of</i>

		<p><i>the character area from the majority of locations</i>". The open areas feel distantly enclosed by woodland, rising out of their wooded surroundings. Large areas of the Evaluation Area are wooded, and the large mixed woodlands are generally dense with a scrub layer adding to the degree of enclosure.</p> <p>The series of hills running across the north east of the Ash Ranges add to the sense of enclosure created by the woodland, creating a further barrier to views when observed from the south east.</p>
	A sense of the passing of time and a return to nature	<p>A project by Rewilding Britain³⁰ is being undertaken within Pirbright Ranges in the north of the Evaluation Area. Measures such as the introduction of red deer and control of invasive plant species, have been used to encourage natural regeneration and increased diversity in vegetation structure across woodland and heathland areas.</p> <p>Across Ash Ranges, evidence of both military activity and previous fires are evident through the recolonisation occurring in many areas, creating a variety of stages of regeneration across the site. This demonstrates the stages of heathland that would have occurred naturally over time across the commons and surrounding woodlands.</p>
Relative tranquillity	Contributors to tranquillity	<p>The majority of this Evaluation Area is undeveloped. The open heaths are largely devoid of settlement and transport infrastructure, and as a result of the limited access due to MOD Danger Areas there is a very remote and</p>

³⁰ <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding-projects/pirbright-ranges#:~:text=Pirbright%20Ranges%20is%20located%20in,an%20area%20of%20wildlife%20abundance.>

		<p>tranquil feel when crossing the Ash Ranges in particular at those times when access is possible.</p> <p>Whilst there are some views of taller buildings in Guildford and Woking, as well as very distant of the London skyline from elevated areas of Ash Ranges, these have a very limited effect on views and the feeling of tranquillity experienced throughout the majority of this Evaluation Area at times of no shooting.</p>
	Detractors from tranquillity	<p>As in Evaluation Area 3, the London Waterloo to Weymouth railway line passes broadly east-west through the Evaluation Area. The branch line to Aldershot and Farnham runs through the Evaluation Area, to the north west of Ash Ranges. There is intermittent noise from passing trains along these lines.</p> <p>Large parts of the Evaluation Area are formed by Ash Ranges and Pirbright Ranges and associated shooting ranges. These areas introduce army activities and the noise of the ranges when in use. The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 records <i>“the military use over the majority of the character area reduces the sense of tranquillity”</i>.</p>
Natural heritage features	Geological and geomorphological features	<p>The absence of cultural features is a direct result of the underlying geology. Whilst the extensive commons and heaths were valuable to communities living in farming in more fertile and sheltered locations at their fringes, the thin and unproductive soils have excluded all settlement and productive farming, which has dictated historic and contemporary patterns of land use.</p>

		<p>The open elevated and rolling heaths are striking and memorable geomorphological features that contrast to the more intimate, settled and enclosed areas nearby. On the open ranges the underlying geology is occasionally exposed where the overlying soils and vegetation are thin or absent.</p>
	Wildlife and habitats	<p>The MOD presence and limited access across much of this Evaluation Area has meant that habitats and associated species have been undisturbed by development and many types of human activity. In common with Evaluation Area 3, this Evaluation Area contains parts of the Thames Basin Heath SPA and the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC, as well as the Ash to Brookwood Heaths, Basingstoke Canal, and Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath SSSIs. There are also small areas of ancient woodland outside these designated areas. These designated areas cover the vast majority of this Evaluation Area, with Ash Ranges forming the majority of the Evaluation Area. Natural England identify Ash Ranges as the largest remaining continuous block of lowland heathland remaining in the Thames Basin and it is part of a wider complex of heaths.</p> <p>Pirbright Conservation Area Appraisal records that the heathland at Ash Ranges is enclosed by mixed woodland with some open areas, many of which are maintained for firing ranges. The use of the area by the army has meant that much of the area has been undisturbed and therefore supports a rich variety of wildlife and plant life. Much of the woodland has developed naturally on the heathland because the area is not grazed as it once traditionally would have been. Historically the</p>

		<p>area would have been grazed or used for turf cutting. There are some areas of cultivated woodland where the MOD has planted trees for commercial purposes.</p> <p>Surrey Wildlife Trust highlight that Ash Ranges is a haven for numerous rare heathland plant, invertebrate and reptile species such as sundews and the green tiger beetle. Ash Ranges is also home to the rare heath tiger beetle which is only found in Surrey and Dorset. Heath Tiger Beetles require a dry heathland mosaic of bare sand, different heights of heather and scrub for food and shelter.</p>
Cultural heritage	Built environment, archaeology and designed landscapes	<p>The general absence of settlements and associated field patterns is indicative of landscapes that have been marginal to settlement and farming for many hundreds of years.</p> <p>Occasional indications of military use are a reminder of the area's importance as a training area for over a century.</p> <p>There are no scheduled monuments on the open ranges. Investigations including those on the Ash Ranges indicate that field systems of some antiquity and other features may be present and potentially indicate settlement in prehistory. It is during this period that farming may have exhausted the thin soils to create the heathlands that have endured to this day.</p>
	Historic influence on the landscape	<p>The open heaths are an evocative remnant of once more extensive heathlands in this part of southern England. The general absence of settlement and features provide evidence of great time depth and landscape continuity.</p>

	When not in use for live firing and military training exercises, the open heaths retain a peaceful and timeless quality.
Characteristic land management practices	Parts of these vast and unsettled landscapes became the focus of hunting in the Middle Ages (as part of the Forest of Windsor) and so excluded local people. Communities were again excluded in the late 19th century when land was purchased by the army. Access to the 'Range Danger Area' is now permitted periodically when not in use by the military for live fire training. Whilst traditional management such as by grazing and cutting of furze has declined, contemporary management seeks to maintain some areas as traditional open heath which is a valuable habitat.
Associations with written descriptions	In Volume One of Daniel Defoe's 'Tour through England and Wales' he vividly describes the local landscape in the early 18th century. He wrote that the area was largely "... <i>wast and barren lands</i> " adding that this part of Surrey could be looked upon as "... <i>a foil to the beauty of the rest of England</i> ". He added that here was a "... <i>vast tract of land...which is not only poor, but even quite sterile, given up to barrenness, horrid and frightful to look on, not good for little, but good for nothing; much of it a sandy desert...</i> ". He also noted that the sand was "... <i>check'd by the heath or heather which grows on it, ... but the ground is otherwise so poor and barren, that the product of it feeds no creatures, but some very small sheep...</i> ". He goes on to record that it is largely unpopulated, with no villages "... <i>worth mentioning and but few houses or people for many miles far and wide...</i> ".
Associations with artistic representations	N/A
Associations of the landscape with people, places or events	N/A

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations for Candidate Areas

5.1. Evaluation

5.1.1. Evaluation Area 1: The Settled Wooded Claylands and Commons

Overall, many aspects of the natural beauty criterion are met across this Evaluation Area. There is a considerable weight of evidence in relation to landscape quality, scenic quality and natural heritage, with some evidence of relative wildness and tranquillity demonstrated in the areas of common. The historic pattern of commons and ancient woodland that has been retained across the Evaluation Area, combined with areas that have open views towards the Hog's Back contrasted with the enclosure provided by woodland and tree belts, give rise to high levels of natural beauty.

There are some areas within the Evaluation Area that have been subject to built development that is not in keeping with the historic pattern of settlement across the Settled Wooded Claylands and Commons. Although this development is modern in appearance and is experienced extensively when travelling through the area by road, the underlying field patterns have generally been retained and mature woodland belts create a degree of screening and integration when viewed from the wider landscape.

Localised additions of horse grazing into the existing field pattern have influenced the natural beauty of the Evaluation Area in some locations. These features are generally removeable and the landscape could be returned to the quality of the surrounding landscape.

5.1.2. Evaluation Area 2: The Slyfield and Lower Wey Valley and Floodplain

Given the small scale of this Evaluation Area, its fragmentation from wider landscapes that could provide connectivity to the existing AONB and its enclosure on two sides by extensive built development, it is not considered that the Slyfield and Lower Wey Valley and Floodplain meets the natural beauty criterion. Whilst it does exhibit some characteristics that can contribute to natural beauty, its peri-urban nature becomes an overriding consideration.

5.1.3. Evaluation Area 3: Worplesdon, Normandy and Pirbright Settled Sandy Farmlands, Heaths and Commons

Overall, many aspects of the natural beauty criterion are met across this Evaluation Area. In common with Evaluation Area 1, there is a considerable weight of evidence in relation to landscape quality, scenic quality and natural heritage, with some evidence of relative cultural heritage, wildness and tranquillity demonstrated in the areas of common. The historic relationship between settlement and commons has largely been retained across this Evaluation Area, with extensive areas of heathland protected by ecological designations. There are also cultural connections with written and artistic works, and people demonstrated across the Worplesdon, Normandy and Pirbright Settled Sandy Farmlands, Heaths and Commons, through the works of Sime, Dafoe and famous historic residents of

the area. The mosaic of heathland, woodland and farmland, with limited major development and areas demonstrating a level of wildness and tranquillity due to the contrast between open heathland and enclosing woodland on the commons, give rise to high levels of natural beauty. This is a unique landscape.

The proximity of the Evaluation Area to the town of Guildford and transport infrastructure is mitigated by the presence of extensive woodland that creates enclosure, integrates development into the wider landscape and provides visual screening.

The presence of the railway line, Basingstoke Canal and Pirbright Camp in the north of the Evaluation Area creates a man-made physical barrier to areas further north. These areas are more heavily influenced by Ministry of Defence development and infrastructure and consequently the natural beauty criterion is less strongly met.

5.1.4. Evaluation Area 4: The Ash Ranges, Deepcut and Pirbright Forests, Open Heaths and Commons

Overall, many aspects of the natural beauty criterion are met across this Evaluation Area. In common with Evaluation Area 3, there is a considerable weight of evidence in relation to landscape quality, scenic quality and natural heritage, as well as evidence of wildness and tranquillity demonstrated in the Ash and Pirbright Ranges. There are also cultural connections with written works, describing the wildness of the area over time. The large scale, open heathlands enclosed by woodland and protected from development by the military presence at Ash Ranges, presents a semi natural and wild landscape that exhibits evidence of its historic development through the ongoing regeneration of both heathland and woodland. This is aided by ongoing management regimes within the extensive areas protected by ecological designations. This combination of relative wildness, relatively tranquillity and the scenic and landscape quality, demonstrated through the range of habitats and extensive views, give rise to a high level of natural beauty.

The presence of the railway line and Basingstoke Canal in the north of the Evaluation Area creates a man-made physical barrier to areas further north. These areas are more heavily influenced by Ministry of Defence development and infrastructure and consequently the natural beauty criterion is less strongly met.

5.2. Recommended Candidate Area

Overall, it is considered that Evaluation Area 1: The Settled Wooded Claylands and Commons and the parts of Evaluation Area 3: Worplesdon, Normandy and Pirbright Settled Sandy Farmlands, Heaths and Commons; and Evaluation Area 4: The Ash Ranges, Deepcut and Pirbright Forests, Open Heaths and Commons that are located south of the London Waterloo to Weymouth and Aldershot/Farnborough to Guildford railway lines are suitable for inclusion within a Candidate Area. This area is illustrated on Figure 8.

There is a need for further scrutiny of the boundaries of the Candidate Area, particularly in relation to the boundaries with the settlement of Guildford. The drafted boundary of the Candidate Area has been drawn to exclude settlement connected to the built up area of Guildford.

In order for the land which meets the natural beauty criterion in parts of Evaluation Area 1 to be included in the proposed AONB variation, the principle of wash-over may need to be applied to localised areas of non-qualifying land i.e. areas of modern development. The principle of wash-over was established during the designation of the South Downs National Park where the Secretary of State accepted that parcels of lower quality land can be “washed over”, if they form part of a wider high quality tract, (i.e. are surrounded by higher quality land).

This report has focused on land within the Study Area of the parishes of Normandy, Pirbright and Worplesdon. In some areas, it may be possible that the Candidate Area could be extended outside the Study Area into adjacent areas of similar landscape character, quality and condition. Areas that may require further consideration would be on the eastern and western edges of the Study Area.

5.3. Visual Characteristics of the Candidate Area

View from the Hog's Back into the Study Area



Photograph © LDA Design

Extensive views are possible from the Hog's Back, within the existing extents of the Surrey Hills AONB, northwards across much of the Study Area and proposed Candidate Area. These views demonstrate the visual relationship between the AONB and the landscape within the Candidate Area, which is viewed as densely wooded, gently undulating and sparsely settled. Glimpses of open farmland and commons can be distinguished as part of the wider view.

View from Chapel House Farm towards the Hogs Back (Evaluation Area 1)



Photograph © Gaynor White

Within the south of the Candidate Area, views towards the Surrey Hills AONB are a distinctive feature from open areas. These open areas, whether farmland or heaths and commons, are enclosed by woodland, much of which is ancient. Settlement is relatively widespread within this part of the Study Area, but is frequently screened by woodland and tree belts.

Wood Street Knoll towards Hog's Back (Evaluation Area 1)



Photograph © Janet Ashton

Transport infrastructure within and adjacent to the Candidate Area is well screened by existing woodland and tree belts, and does not generally feature in views. This contributes to the feeling of relative tranquillity.

Whitmoor Common (Evaluation Area 3)



Photograph © LDA Design

Through the centre of the Candidate Area, extensive commons are characterised by a patchwork of heathland and woodland. Open areas of heathland are enclosed by woodland, creating a feeling of remoteness and wildness that changes in character and appearance throughout the seasons. These landscapes also have many cultural connections, and a strong sense of history and continuity.

Perry Hill, Worplesdon towards Shere (Evaluation Area 3)



Photograph © Janet Ashton

Settlements and commons are closely related through the centre of the Candidate Area, with the woodland around the edges of many of the commons located in close proximity to settlement edges. The elevated landform of Perry Hill, similar in height to other elevated locations within this undulating landscape, allows expansive views across the wooded landscape, including towards the Hog's Back.

Ash Ranges towards Hog's Back (Evaluation Area 4)



Photograph © LDA Design

Towards the north of the Candidate Area, Ash Ranges is wild and tranquil when open for public access. The open views over heathland from elevated locations are extensive, including intervisibility with the existing Surrey Hills AONB at the Hog's Back and views to landmarks in the landscape, including high rise development in London on clear days. Lower level built development, including the nearest town at Guildford, is largely screened from view by the extensive areas of woodland.

Dartford Warbler



Photograph © Malcolm Fincham

The semi-natural habitats within the northern and eastern part of the Candidate Area are extensive and very rich in habitats and rare species, due in part to the restrict access resulting from Ministry of Defence activities and the protection afforded by ecological designations. The landscape exhibits evidence of its historic development through the ongoing regeneration of both heathland and woodland. There are also cultural connections with written works, describing the wildness of the area over time.

Appendices

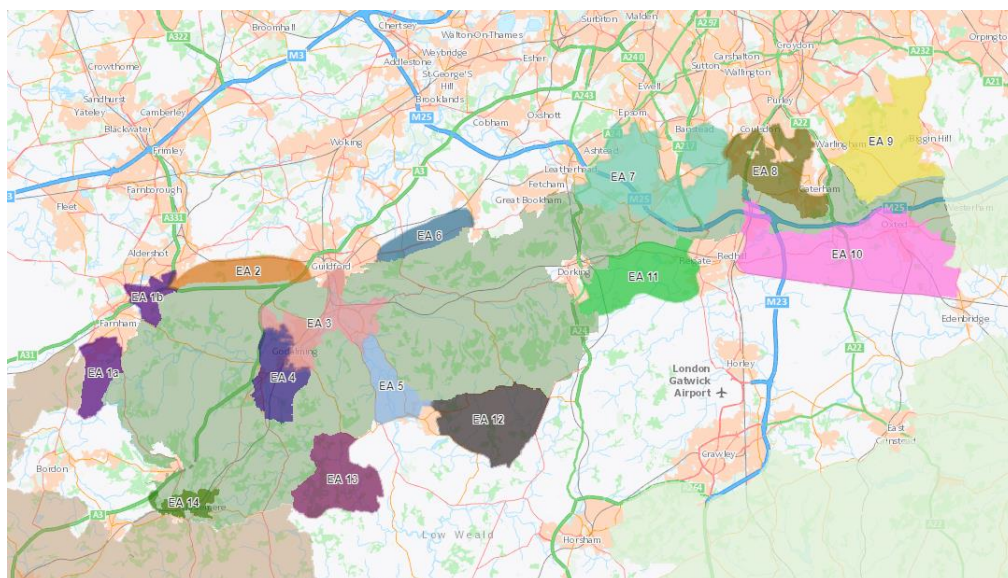
Appendix A: Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence Form (sourced from Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review)

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

Thank you for supporting the Call for Evidence on the potential for expanding the area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Using this form, please tell us about the **Natural Beauty** of your places of interest within the Evaluation Areas surrounding the AONB, which are shown as labelled and coloured areas around the edge of the AONB in the map below. More detail can be seen on the maps in the accompanying map-pack.

While we request that you provide evidence for land within the Evaluation Areas, we will consider evidence where it is immediately next to the Evaluation Areas or where we determine that there is a particularly strong case for its consideration.



For further information on **Natural Beauty** and the associated factors please consult Natural England Guidance: www.surreyhills.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Guidance-on-Assessing-Landscapes-for-Designation-Updated-2021_final-30.6.21_2ndtestpdf.pdf

You can also learn more about the boundary review process and keep up-to-date on progress via our website: www.surrey-hills-aonb-boundary-review.org

YES PLEASE - we do want...

Evidence that supports the presence of one or more of the natural beauty factors. As a minimum, we ask you to provide:

- Location (GPS coordinates)
- Photograph with descriptive text related to the Natural Beauty of the location

and optionally, if you can, and would like to provide more information:

- Additional supporting comments, documents, photos, etc.
- Evidence that may also detract from the natural beauty factors

NO THANKS - we do not want...

Evidence which is not related to the natural beauty factors. Please note that we cannot take account of:

- Evidence from significantly built-up areas
- Future potential of the landscape to express the natural beauty factors
- Pressure or threat of development
- Detailed surveys which do not have a direct bearing on an appreciation of the landscape e.g. species or archaeological surveys
- Photographs or documents with no explanation of why they are provided

COUNTRYSIDE CODE:

When out in the Surrey Hills and surrounding landscapes, please remember to follow the **Countryside Code**, and in particular to follow the signs that tell you where you can go and who can use the right of way.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code-advice-for-countryside-visitors

IMPORTANT: It is not possible for us to return any documents or forms which you submit, so please check you are happy to send us the documentation and will not need it returned.

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

About Your Place of Interest

Tell us about this location and take a photo or share an image that demonstrates the Natural Beauty of the place.

Indicate the location

Please Number Your Response:

You can give us location for your place of interest one or more ways:

- Provide a GPS location, e.g.: Lat: 51.23827, Lon: -0.39366
- Provide an OS Grid Reference, e.g. TQ 1223 5001
- Draw a numbered point on a map from the map-pack - *you can use one map to annotate multiple locations/responses*

Attach a photo / image of this location

Take and print a picture, then attach it to this page. Please label the photo with 'Place of Interest' and Response No.

Please be aware that any images submitted may be used in our technical reports on the Boundary Review.

Tell us why you think this landscape is special

Please try to describe the special qualities of the place in terms of one or more of the natural beauty factors as you experience them in this location:

- **Landscape Quality** - landscape condition, e.g. state of hedgerows, presence of litter
- **Scenic Quality** - extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses
- **Wildness** - degree to which the landscape feels wild
- **Tranquillity** - how peaceful is the place?
- **Natural Heritage** - influence of plants, wildlife and the shape of the land
- **Cultural Heritage** - influence of traditions, people, artists, writers or historical events

Not all these factors may be relevant to this location.

Can you provide more information on one or more of the natural beauty factors?

If you would like to provide more information on one or more of the natural beauty factors listed above, please complete the relevant pages (3 to 9) and return them together with the evidence labelled as instructed.

Please also see page 10 for details of how you can return your completed form(s) plus labelled attachments and any maps annotated with your response numbers.

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

Landscape Quality - Additional Information

A measure of the current physical state or condition of the landscape and its features. For example:

- What is the condition of the landscape? For example, are the hedges well managed, do the trees appear healthy, are the lane verges intact or damaged by traffic?
- Are there any incongruous features or elements which affect Landscape Quality in this area? For example, are there pylons or overhead masts, is there fly tipping or verge erosion?

Please describe how Landscape Quality contributes to Natural Beauty in this location

Additional Image

If you have a further image/photograph that demonstrates Landscape Quality, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Landscape Quality Image' and Response No.

Additional Document

If you have further material (e.g. document, presentation) that presents how Landscape Quality contributes to the natural beauty in this location, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Landscape Quality Doc' and Response No.

Incongruous Features

If relevant, please add a comment on any incongruous features (things that are not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings) or aspects of the location that otherwise detract from Landscape Quality.

Incongruous Features (Photo)

If relevant, please attach a photograph/image that demonstrates aspects of the location that detract from Landscape Quality, labelled with 'Landscape Quality Incongruous Features' and Response No.

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

Scenic Quality - Additional Information

The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses (primarily, but not only, the visual senses). For example:

- Is there a distinctive sense of place – something unique that tells you where you are? Please describe.
- Is there striking landform? Please describe.
- Are there visually interesting patterns of landcover? Please describe.

Please describe how Scenic Quality contributes to Natural Beauty in this location

Additional Photograph or Image

If you have a further image/photograph that demonstrates Scenic Quality, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Scenic Quality Image' and Response No.

Additional Document

If you have further material (e.g. document, presentation) that presents how Scenic Quality contributes to the natural beauty in this location, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Scenic Quality Doc' and Response No.

Incongruous Features

If relevant, please add a comment on any incongruous features (things that are not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings) or aspects of the location that otherwise detract from Scenic Quality.

Incongruous Features (Photo)

If relevant, please attach a photograph/image that demonstrates aspects of the location that detract from Scenic Quality, labelled with 'Scenic Quality Incongruous Features' and Response No.

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

Relative Wildness - Additional Information

The degree to which relatively wild character can be perceived in the landscape and makes a particular contribution to sense of place. For example:

- Is there a sense of remoteness?
- Is there a relative lack of human influence?
- Is there a sense of openness and expansion?
- Is there a sense of enclosure and isolation?
- Is there a sense of the passing of time and return to nature?

Please describe how Relative Wildness contributes to Natural Beauty in this location

Additional Photograph or Image

If you have a further image/photograph that demonstrates Relative Wildness, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Relative Wildness Image' and Response No.

Additional Document

If you have further material (e.g. document, presentation) that presents how Relative Wildness contributes to the natural beauty in this location, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Relative Wildness Doc' and Response No.

Incongruous Features

If relevant, please add a comment on any incongruous features (things that are not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings) or aspects of the location that otherwise detract from Relative Wildness.

Incongruous Features (Photo)

If relevant, please attach a photograph/image that demonstrates aspects of the location that detract from Relative Wildness, labelled with 'Relative Wildness Incongruous Features' and Response No.

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

Relative Tranquillity - Additional Information

The degree to which relative tranquillity can be perceived in the landscape. For example:

- Are the following contributors to tranquillity present? - Natural landscape, birdsong, peace and quiet, natural looking woodland, stars at night, natural sound and similar influences. Please describe.
- Are the following detractors from tranquillity present? - Traffic noise, large numbers of people, industrial urban development, overhead light pollution, low-flying aircraft, powerlines and similar influences. Please describe.

Please describe how Relative Tranquillity contributes to Natural Beauty in this location

Additional Photograph or Image

If you have a further image/photograph that demonstrates Relative Tranquillity, please attach to it to the form, labelled with 'Relative Tranquillity Image' and Response No.

Additional Document

If you have further material (e.g. document, presentation) that presents how Relative Tranquillity contributes to the natural beauty in this location, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Relative Tranquillity Doc' and Response No.

Incongruous Features

If relevant, please add a comment on any incongruous features (things that are not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings) or aspects of the location that otherwise detract from Relative Tranquillity.

Incongruous Features (Photo)

If relevant, please attach a photograph/image that demonstrates aspects of the location that detract from Relative Tranquillity, labelled with 'Relative Tranquillity Incongruous Features' and Response No.

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

Natural Heritage - Additional Information

The influence of natural heritage on the perception of the natural beauty of the area. Natural heritage includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features. For example:

- Is the geology expressed in vernacular architecture and does this make the place distinctive?
- Are there striking or memorable geomorphological features that make the place special?
- Is there wildlife and/or habitats that make a particular contribution to your appreciation and enjoyment of the area? Why?
- Does the presence of individual species contribute to the sense of place, relative wildness or tranquillity?

Please describe how Natural Heritage contributes to Natural Beauty in this location

Additional Photograph or Image

If you have a further image/photograph that demonstrates Natural Heritage, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Natural Heritage Image' and Response No.

Additional Document

If you have further material (e.g. document, presentation) that presents how Natural Heritage contributes to the natural beauty in this location, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Natural Heritage Doc' and Response No.

Incongruous Features

If relevant, please add a comment on any incongruous features (things that are not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings) or aspects of the location that otherwise detract from Natural Heritage.

Incongruous Features (Photo)

If relevant, please attach a photograph/image that demonstrates aspects of the location that detract from Natural Heritage, labelled 'Natural Heritage Incongruous Features' and Response No.

Cultural Heritage - Additional Information

The influence of cultural heritage on the perception of natural beauty of the area and the degree to which associations with particular traditions, people, artists, writers or events in history contribute to such perception.

For example:

- Are there settlements, buildings or other structures that make a particular contribution to your appreciation and enjoyment of the area? Please describe.
- Are there visible archaeological remains, parklands or designed landscape which provide striking features in the landscape contributing to your appreciation and enjoyment of the area? Please describe.
- Are there historic landscape patterns or features that help you feel connected to the past? Please describe.
- Is there a harmonious balance between natural and cultural elements in the landscape and does the area feel unchanged over decades? Please describe.
- Are there characteristic land management practices, industries or crafts which contribute to distinctiveness of the area for example traditional woodland coppice? Please describe.
- Are their descriptions of the landscape in notable literature, topographical writing, guidebooks or significant literature inspired by the natural beauty of the landscape? Please describe or provide references/attachments.
- Is the landscape depicted in art, photography or films, language or folklore or has it inspired music contributing to perceptions of natural beauty? Please describe or provide references/attachments.
- Is the landscape associated with notable people or events cultural traditions for beliefs which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty? Please describe or provide references/attachments.

Please describe how Cultural Heritage contributes to Natural Beauty in this location

Additional Photograph or Image

If you have a further image/photograph that demonstrates Cultural Heritage, please attach to it to the form, labelled with 'Cultural Heritage Image' and Response No.

Additional Document

If you have further material (e.g. document, presentation) that presents how Cultural Heritage contributes to the natural beauty in this location, please attach it to the form, labelled with 'Cultural Heritage Doc' and Response No.

Cultural Heritage continues on the next page...

Cultural Heritage - Additional Information (cont'd)

Incongruous Features

If relevant, please add a comment on any incongruous features (things that are not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings) or aspects of the location that otherwise detract from Cultural Heritage.

Incongruous Features (Photo)

If relevant, please attach a photograph/image that demonstrates aspects of the location that detract from Natural Heritage, labelled 'Cultural Heritage Incongruous Features' and Response No.

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Call for Evidence

And finally...

Why do you feel it would be beneficial for AONB designation to apply to this area of landscape?

If the area you are interested in does not qualify for designation, is there an alternative way in which the area can be managed to safeguard the qualities you have highlighted?

Thank you for taking time in responding to our Call for Evidence by completing this form.

Before sending us the form, please take a moment to check that you are happy with the content and that your attachments are labelled appropriately, including any maps annotated with your response numbers.

Please note: it is not possible for us to return any documents or forms which you submit, so please check you are happy to send us the documentation and will not need it returned.

Would you like to be kept informed about the boundary review process and be further involved at a later stage? YES | NO *(circle as appropriate)*

If you have answered “YES” and would like to be further involved in reviewing the evidence and to be kept informed about the boundary review process (including forthcoming workshops) please leave us your name and a preferred address for future correspondence. We will be back in touch with you in the next stage of the project in early 2022.

Contact Details (optional)

Name

Address

Please supply either:

an email address, or if you prefer, a postal address

Returning Your Response(s)

Please return your form(s) with labelled attachments and any maps that you have annotated with your response numbers, either by email to evidence@surrey-hills-aonb-boundary-review.org, or by posting it to:

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review

c/o Resources for Change

Cwrt Isaf Farmhouse, Llangattock, Crickhowell, Powys NP8 1PH

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Appendix B: Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion
(Appendix 1 in Natural England's Guidance for Assessing
Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of
Outstanding Natural Beauty in England).**

Appendix 1:

Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion

The sub-factors and associated indicators should be regarded as a menu of examples (developed from precedent and past designations) from which those appropriate to the character of the landscape under consideration should be chosen, adapted, or added to. There is no scoring involving accumulations of indicators and it is possible for a landscape to exhibit natural beauty or offer opportunities for open air recreation even if a few of the indicators shown in this appendix are not present. It is important to note that for each factor, it is not the presence or absence of a feature which is being recorded; but how a particular feature or indicator contributes to, or detracts from, perceptions of natural beauty in an area.

Factor	Example sub-factor	Example Indicator	Examples of Evidence
Landscape quality	Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives	Characteristic natural and man-made elements are well represented throughout	Landscape character assessment which goes beyond value-free description
	The condition of the landscape's features and elements	Landscape elements are in good condition	Hedgerow and tree surveys Field observations about intactness / condition SSSI condition assessments
	The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether manmade or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area	Incongruous elements are not present to a significant degree, are not visually intrusive, have only localised influence or are temporary in nature	Historic landscape characterisation Heritage at Risk Register Historic map regression analysis Countryside Quality Counts web archive Designation History Series Local Plans and Policies (eg Local Landscape Designation Descriptions) Agri-Environment History
Scenic quality	A distinctive sense of place	Landscape character lends a clear and recognisable sense of place	Landscape character assessments which go beyond value-free description
	Striking landform	Landform shows a strong sense of scale or contrast	Digital landform data sets
		There are striking landform types or coastal configurations	OS mapping Field observations about visual and sensory perception of scenic quality, landmarks and seasonal changes
	Visual interest in patterns of land cover	Land cover and vegetation types form an appealing pattern or composition in relation to each other and/or to landform which may be appreciated from either a vantage point or as one travels through a landscape	Protected views/view studies

Factor	Example sub-factor	Example Indicator	Examples of Evidence
	Appeal to the senses	Strong aesthetic qualities, reflecting factors such as scale and form, degree of openness or enclosure, colours and textures, simplicity or diversity, and ephemeral or seasonal interest	Conservation area appraisals Local Guidebooks and leaflets Designation History Series OS Mapping of viewpoints on Leisure Maps
		Memorable or unusual views and eye-catching features or landmarks	
		Characteristic cognitive and sensory stimuli (e.g. sounds, quality of light, characteristic smells, characteristics of the weather)	
Relative wildness	A sense of remoteness	Relatively few roads or other transport routes	Wildness mapping Field observations and perceptions OS mapping Habitat mapping and nature conservation designations Digital landform mapping Remote sensing data Open-access mapping of mountain, moor and heath Ancient woodland mapping
		Distant from or perceived as distant from significant habitation	
	A relative lack of human influence	Extensive areas of semi-natural vegetation	
		Uninterrupted tracts of land with few built features and few overt industrial or urban influences	
	A sense of openness and exposure	Open, exposed to the elements and expansive in character	
	A sense of enclosure and isolation	Sense of enclosure provided by (eg) woodland or landform that offers a feeling of isolation	
	A sense of the passing of time and a return to nature	Absence or apparent absence of active human intervention	
Relative tranquillity	Contributors to tranquillity	Presence and/or perceptions of natural landscape, birdsong, peace and quiet, natural-looking woodland, stars at night, stream, sea, natural sounds and similar influences	Landscape character assessment CPRE tranquillity mapping Dark Skies mapping Observations in the field OS mapping eg Open access (mountain, moor and heath), powerlines, development etc Ancient woodland mapping; Undeveloped coastline or lake shores
	Detractors from tranquillity	Presence and/or perceptions of traffic noise, large numbers of people, industrial or urban development, overhead light pollution, low flying aircraft, power lines and similar influences	

Factor	Example sub-factor	Example Indicator	
Natural heritage features	Geological and geomorphological features	Visible expression of geology in vernacular architecture contributing to a distinctive sense of place or other aspects of natural beauty	Landscape character assessment which goes beyond value-free description Solid and drift Geology mapping Soil mapping
		Presence of visually striking or memorable geomorphological features that make a particular contribution to natural beauty	Ecological and geological designations (international, national and local), including citations, descriptions and condition statements
	Wildlife and habitats	Presence of wildlife and/or habitats that make a particular contribution to natural beauty	Habitat surveys Priority habitats
		Presence of individual species that contribute to sense of place, relative wildness or tranquillity	Specialist ecological studies
Cultural heritage	Built environment, archaeology and designed landscapes	Presence of settlements, buildings or other structures that make a particular contribution to perceptions of natural beauty	Landscape character assessment which goes beyond value-free description Historic landscape characterisation
		Presence of visible archaeological remains, parkland or designed landscapes that provide striking features in the landscape contributing to perceptions of natural beauty	Historic environment and archaeological designations Historic Environment Record
	Historic influence on the landscape	Visible presence of historic landscape types or specific landscape elements or features that provide evidence of time depth or historic influence on the landscape	Conservation area appraisals SM, Historic Parks and Gardens and Listed Building citations
		Perceptions of a harmonious balance between natural and cultural elements in the landscape that stretch back over time	Historic maps Observation in the field Place names
	Characteristic land management practices	Existence of characteristic land management practices, industries or crafts which contribute to natural beauty	Specialist heritage studies Association including with art, literature and music
	Associations with written descriptions	Availability of descriptions of the landscape in notable literature, topographical writings or guidebooks, or significant literature inspired by the natural beauty of a landscape.	Historical accounts, cultural traditions and folklore Guidebooks

Factor	Example sub-factor	Example Indicator	
	Associations with artistic representations	Depiction of the landscape in art, other art forms such as photography or film, through language or folklore, or in inspiring related music contributing to perceptions of natural beauty	
	Associations of the landscape with people, places or events	Evidence that the landscape has associations with notable people or events, cultural traditions or beliefs which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty	

Appendix C: An overview of the Surrey Hills AONB and its natural beauty

Appendix C: Natural Beauty of the Surrey Hills AONB

Origins and History of the Surrey Hills AONB Designation¹

During the Second World War, John Dower was requested by the Coalition Government to study the establishment of National Parks in England and Wales. His Report (May 1945) did not include a proposal for the Surrey Hills as such, but considerable parts of the Hills were included in his Division C list 'Other Areas NOT suggested as National Parks', as the 'North Downs' and 'Hampshire Downs and Hindhead'.

The areas in the Division C list were put forward as areas of landscape beauty which merited some form of national protection in the future. Many of these 'Other Amenity Areas' provided the basis for the 52 conservation areas of high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value, listed in the July 1947 Report of the National Parks Committee, set up by Government following from the Dower Report, and chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse.

Parts of the conservation areas listed as Hindhead and the North Downs in the Hobhouse Report became the starting points for Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) in the Surrey Development Plan in the early 1950's. In landscape terms, the North Downs conservation area within Surrey included the chalkland ridges of the Hog's Back from east of Farnham to west of Guildford, and the Downs from east of Guildford to Titsey Hill on the Kent border and the parallel ridge of Lower Greensand to the south from Holmwood and Leith Hill. The Hindhead conservation area within Surrey included the wooded heathland of the Lower Greensand hills of the Hindhead/Devil's Punchbowl area.

Although the first priority of the National Parks Commission (NPC) established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 was to designate the National Parks in its programme, by 1954, that programme was so well advanced that the NPC was able to announce its intention to start the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). During the passage of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill through Parliament in 1949 it had been made clear that AONBs would be largely based (though not entirely) on the list of conservation areas contained in the 1947 Hobhouse Report.

In its 1955 Annual Report, the NPC referred to informal consultations already taking place on a proposed Surrey Hills AONB. However, Surrey County Council and a number of amenity societies in Surrey had already anticipated that the NPC would be working on considering the designation of the two Hobhouse conservation areas affecting Surrey as AONBs, and during the preparation of the County Development Plan in 1953 had suggested that the boundaries of these conservation areas could be used to define Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) on the Development Plan. This is regarded by Woolmore as clearly representing an expectation in the County that the existence of AHLV on the Development Plan would facilitate the eventual designation of these areas as AONBs by the NPC.

Following consultations, the Minister's (Mr Henry Brooke) confirmation of the AONB Designation Order came on 9 May 1958. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government press release at the time referred to the designation of about one hundred and sixty square [mile]s of the loveliest countryside in the Surrey Hills being established as an AONB. The press release described the area as follows -

¹ Ray Woolmore, Designation History Series Surrey Hills AONB (undated)

"In the north, the designated area includes the Hog's Back and the whole of the ridge of the North Downs in Surrey from Guildford to Titsey in the east. South of the Downs, it includes the major part of the Greensand ridges from Leith Hill through Bascombe to Hindhead Common and the Devil's Punch Bowl. The well-known villages of Abinger, Shere, Hambleton, Chiddingfold and Thursley, and many famous beauty-spots such as Frensham Ponds, Crooksbury Common and Box Hill are all within the area."

In a publication of 2018 celebrating the 60th anniversary of the designation of the AONB², a brief history of the designation is given, along with a short overview of how the boundaries were determined. It notes that in a report published in 1934, a map delineating Surrey's special areas was presented along with "*fine viewpoints*" including those from the Hog's Back. With specific reference to the delineation of the original AONB boundary, it is noteworthy that a "*...pragmatic approach*" was taken and that the boundary line was drawn some distance down the north facing slopes, despite there being recognition of the importance of the views southwards to the Hog's Back from the north, which presumably includes from locations within the Study Area.

The boundary of the Surrey Hills AONB has not been reviewed since its designation in 1958, despite repeated calls by local campaigners to reconsider the boundary. Some areas of countryside outside but adjacent to the AONB boundary are designated as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) by local authorities in recognition of their value at a county level. Following a series of landscape evaluation studies and a formal request by the Surrey Hills AONB Board, Natural England has now started the AONB boundary review process.

Natural Beauty

The Surrey Hills was one of the first landscapes to be designated as an AONB in 1958. It currently covers 422km² and encompasses parts of the North Downs and Greensand Ridge landscapes, including the ridge and south facing scarp of the chalk downlands and the greensand hills that fringe the Low Weald to the south of the North Downs. It is regarded as one of England's most accessible protected landscapes which is on the doorstep of a string of major towns, including Aldershot, Guildford, Godalming, Dorking, Leatherhead, Reigate, Caterham and Oxsted.

Section 1.9 of the 'Surrey Hills Management Plan 2020 – 2025' seeks to define the 'Natural Beauty' of the Surrey Hills AONB.

The Management Plan records that "*Natural Beauty is not just the look of the landscape but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries*³".

This definition reflects that natural beauty is not exhaustively defined in legislation but that over the years qualification and amendment to the legislation has made it clear that natural beauty is not just scenery but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, the historic environment and cultural heritage.

The definition is further expanded by stating that "*The term 'natural' in the designation title is a misnomer as no part of the Surrey Hills is 'natural' in the wild sense; rather it is less intensively managed compared with*

² The Surrey Hills Society, Surrey Hills AONB Our Changing Landscape, 2018

³ Countryside Agency, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A Guide for AONB Partnership Members, 2001 (CA 24) in Surrey Hills Management Plan 2020-2025

other parts of Surrey, retaining landscape features and semi-natural habitats which have a high ecological diversity and interest.⁴

It records the following which provides a strong indication of the character and qualities of the Surrey Hills AONB.

“Although the Surrey Hills is now one of the most wooded of the nationally protected areas in the country, it is still an intriguingly diverse landscape characterised by hills and valleys, traditional mixed farming, a patchwork of chalk grassland and heathland, sunken lanes, picturesque villages and market towns. It has associations with many of the country’s great artists, writers, musicians and designers. It is often regarded as the first real countryside south of London and is a rural retreat for many thousands of daily commuters. The Hills stretch across the chalk North Downs that run from Farnham in the west, above Guildford, Dorking and Reigate, to Oxted in the east. They contain a mosaic of woodland, scrub and open downland with coombs, spring lines, chalk pits, quarries and striking cliffs. To the south are the Greensand Hills that include Black Down, the Devil’s Punch Bowl and Leith Hill, with ancient sunken lanes and geometric fields that have been enclosed from heaths and wooded commons. In between are the valleys of the Wey, Tillingbourne and Mole rivers, and the heaths of Frensham, Thursley and Blackheath. The Low Weald forms the southern fringe of the AONB, with its extensive woodlands and small irregular fields, hedgerows and wooded shaws. Although geology, soils and climate have created the bones of the landscape, the appearance of the Surrey Hills has been shaped for centuries by the changing patterns of land use and settlement.”.

With specific regards to the natural beauty of the Surrey Hills AONB, the Management Plan records that consultation during its preparation helped identify the features that define the special character of the Surrey Hills. These features are listed as follows:

- Views
- Woodland
- Heathland
- Tranquillity
- Commons
- Country lanes
- Downland
- Historic buildings
- Dark skies
- Farmland
- Parkland

It is noted that the management plan does not directly expand on these ‘features’ or align them to the natural beauty factors set out by Natural England in its ‘Guidance for Assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ (as has been done for the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB⁵ and Dedham Vale AONB by example⁶).

The Surrey Hills Landscape Character Assessment (updated in 2012) broadly reflects the findings of the earlier study of the AONB landscape⁷. It was carried out to support evidence for a review of the

⁴ Nicola R Bannister, Surrey Hills A.O.N.B Historic Landscape Descriptions, July 2002 (unpublished) referenced in Surrey Hills Management Plan 2020-2025

⁵ LDA Design: Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Natural Beauty and Special Qualities, 2016 (referenced in Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan 2018-2023).

⁶ Alison Farmer Associates: Natural England (dedhamvalestourvalley.org)

⁷ Countryside Commission, The Surrey Hills Landscape, 1998 (CCP 530)

boundary of the AONB and describes 13 local landscape character areas. For each of these character areas, the annex to the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan includes a statement of significance, and identifies the key features and issues. In the original report⁸ the 'historic landscape statements of significance' for each of the landscape character areas were supplemented with information the components of the landscape, including 'views and hills' and tranquillity and sense of place' are described.

Section 2 of the Management Plan also provides information pertinent to understanding the character and special qualities of the Surrey Hills AONB. This presents the following 'Statement of Significance':

"The Surrey Hills AONB is one of England's finest landscapes, equivalent in beauty to a National Park and designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958.

Its landscape mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons has inspired some of the country's greatest artists, writers and architects over the centuries. The AONB includes internationally and nationally important priority habitats which support protected species.

The Surrey Hills attract millions of visitors every year who contribute to the economy of the area. The Hills are protected as part of London's Metropolitan Green Belt and provide an outstanding natural resource for London and Surrey residents to enjoy outdoor pursuits, taste local food and drink, and to explore market towns and picture-postcard villages."

Policies are also presented under eight themes. These are also helpful in understanding the character and qualities of the Surrey Hills AONB, albeit again these are not specifically identified as contributing to the areas natural beauty. Relevant extracts follow:

Agriculture:

"The beauty of the Surrey Hills is largely the result of the way the land has been shaped and maintained by farmers, landowners and estate managers over the centuries. This has created a beautiful landscape composed of a mosaic of small to large fields enclosed by hedgerows, shaws and copses, and farm buildings, many of which demonstrate building traditions dating back to medieval times and constructed of local materials."

Woodland, Hedgerows and Veteran Trees

"The Surrey Hills is one of the most wooded of all the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the country, with approximately 40% woodland cover. Its character varies from the patchwork of irregular woods, to old coppice and shaws of the Wooded Weald, to the conifer plantations of large estates on the Greensand Hills, to the ancient yew and box woodlands on the North Downs. The 1947 woodland census suggests that the Surrey Hills landscape has changed from a predominantly open landscape with coppiced woodland to a landscape with largely unmanaged secondary woodlands extending onto former commons, heathland and downland.

Hedgerows and veteran trees are an important landscape feature and important wildlife corridors linking woodland habitats. They are also important elements of the historic landscape."

Biodiversity and Water Resources

"The Surrey Hills is rich and diverse in wildlife due to its varied geology, landform and traditional land management. It contains internationally important sites for nature conservation ranging from the extensive

⁸ Nicola R Bannister, Surrey Hills A.O.N.B Historic Landscape Descriptions, July 2002 (unpublished)

lowland heaths on the Greensand to the chalk grassland and yew and box woodlands on the North Downs. The Surrey Hills landscape also contains an important matrix of smaller features like hedgerows, shelterbelts, woodland coppice and ponds.

Wetland habitats are important to the overall ecology of the AONB and the Wey and Mole and their tributaries are significant landscape features."

Cultural Heritage

"The beautiful landscape features of the Surrey Hills, particularly the historic buildings, settlements, country lanes, hedgerows, parkland, commons, heath and downland, provide evidence of a rich historic and cultural past. This is a landscape that has provided inspiration to many of the country's great artists, writers, designers and architects, particularly during and since Victorian times. Village greens and commons are highly favoured recreational areas for local people and visitors alike."

Recreation, Health and Wellbeing

"Some of the most familiar beauty spots in England are found within the Surrey Hills, including Box Hill, Leith Hill and the Devil's Punch Bowl. With the North Downs Way National Trail and the extensive rights of way, open commons, sunken lanes, easy access trails, picnic sites, attractive market towns and villages, it has been a favourite playground for local people and visitors keen to enjoy the fresh air and outstanding scenery."

Transport and Traffic

"The Surrey Hills has historically been an accessible landscape well served by rail, road and an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. Many of the important and distinctive features of the Surrey Hills are associated with transport. These include sunken lanes, traditional signs, boundary walls and fences, and the general use of local materials, such as ironstone paving and sandstone kerbs."

**Appendix D: Information from the Surrey Hills Management Plan
related to the 'implications of a 'Surrey Hills AONB
Boundary Review'**

Appendix D: Implications of a Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review

The 'Surrey Hills Management Plan 2020-2025' records the following

"Significant parts of the Surrey countryside adjacent to the AONB are designated at a County level as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). These areas have acted as a buffer to the AONB but they also have their own inherent landscape quality and are significant in conserving the landscape setting of some towns and villages.

Although AGLV land is not a national designation, previous Surrey Hills AONB Management Plans recognised the importance of AGLV land in protecting the integrity of the Surrey Hills AONB landscape, particularly views to and from the AONB. The application of the Management Plan policies and actions to AGLV land has been instrumental in helping to conserve and enhance the Surrey Hills.

In October 2013, the Surrey Hills AONB Board formally requested that Natural England consider modifying the AONB boundary. In 1958 the Surrey Hills AONB was the second landscape to be designated an AONB, and there has never been a review of the boundary. A purpose of the review will be to establish whether land designated at a County level as AGLV should be included in the AONB. Following a comprehensive landscape character assessment of the AONB and AGLV land, candidate areas that meet the AONB criteria have been identified.

In February 2014, Natural England agreed to progress a Modification Order, this is due to commence in 2020. The aim will be to generate a consensus on the land to be included in the AONB, particularly amongst the six AONB local authorities, in order to reduce any need for a lengthy and expensive Public Inquiry. The decision to pursue the modification of the AONB boundary will have a significant impact on the review process. It is therefore expected that the implications of a reviewed AONB will be consolidated within the next AONB Management Plan 2025 – 2030, but this will be kept under review during the course of this AONB Management Plan and Government advice."