

Appendix 5: Binscombe Hills

Please refer to Figure 15b

No responses were received in relation to this Extension Area during the second (2024) statutory consultation.

Overview

Question C1: Does the Binscombe Hills Extension Area have Sufficient Natural Beauty to be Designated as AONB?

Natural Beauty	Responses
Yes	13
No	1
Not sure	0

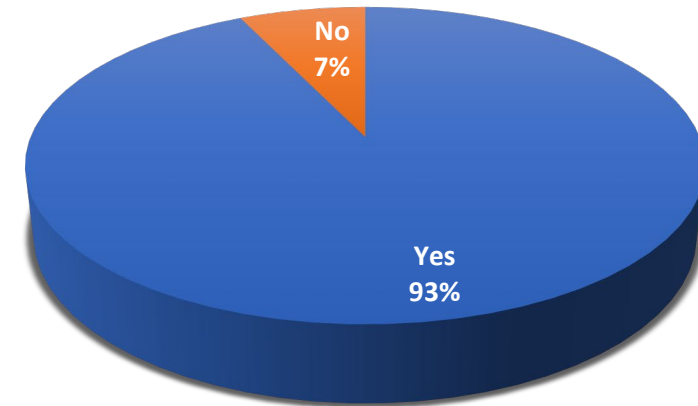
This area attracted a relatively small number of responses.

Of the 14 respondents, 13 (93%) felt that the Binscombe Hills Extension Area has sufficient natural beauty to be designated as AONB.

Only 1 respondent answered no, this respondent answered no to this question for all Extension Areas.

Desirability reasons for including and excluding land within the proposed extension focused on access and development. These issues are addressed in Appendix 2.

Binscombe Hills - Sufficient natural beauty to be designated



Question C5: Do you agree with the proposed boundary for the Binscombe Hills Extension Area?

Boundary	Responses
Yes	4
Yes, but I wish to suggest an alternative	11
No	1
Not sure	0

This area attracted a small number of responses.

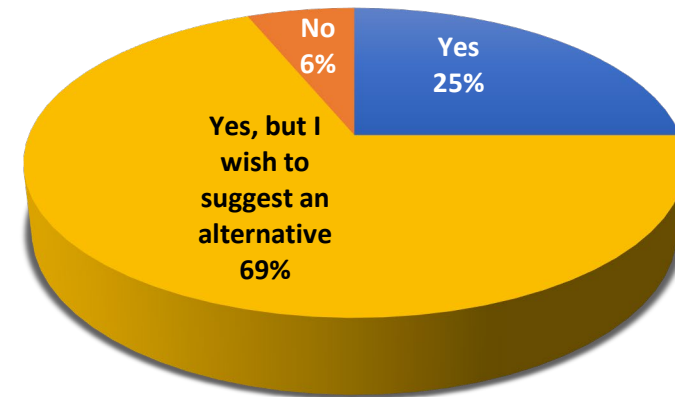
Of the 16 respondents, 4 respondents (25%) agreed with the proposed boundary for the Binscombe Hills Extension Area and 1 respondent did not. 11 respondents (69%) agreed but wished to suggest an alternative boundary for the Extension Area, many providing supporting evidence.

The additional areas of land that respondents wish to see included within the proposed extension are:

- Historic village of Eashing, Wey corridor and Lammas Lands at Godalming
- Fields to the south east – Farncombe Bowl
- Godalming and Farncombe
- Include Binscombe village and land up to urban edge including Loseley Fields Primary School and playing fields
- Include parkland adjacent to Fox Hanger

There are no requested exclusions.

Binscombe Hills - Agreement with the proposed boundary



Natural Beauty		
Theme	Representations	Natural England Commentary
The proposed extension meets the Natural Beauty Criterion	<p>The majority of respondents agreed that the proposed extension met the Natural Beauty Criterion.</p> <p>ANON-VUXE-W5UR-U (Surrey County Council) <i>'Surrey County Council Supports all the proposed extension/refinement areas being designated as part of the Surrey Hills AONB/National Landscape.'</i></p> <p>ANON-VUXE-WS1W-T (Waverley Borough Council) <i>'Waverley [Borough Council] also broadly supports the specific areas within Waverley proposed for inclusion in the AONB. The Council agrees with the accompanying assessment that the quality of the proposed areas is of sufficient natural beauty to be included in the AONB.'</i></p> <p>ANON-VUXE-WSK2-F (Guildford Borough Council) <i>'GBC agrees with the accompanying assessment that the quality of the proposed areas is of sufficient natural beauty to be included in the AONB. For clarity, within Guildford borough these comprise the following areas:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hog's Back – Fig 14 • Binscombe Hills and Wey Valley, Farley Hill – Fig 15 • Cranleigh Waters – Fig 17 • Hatchlands and East Clandon – Fig 18' <p>ANON-VUXE-W52Z-Z <i>'Binscombe Hills most definitely have enough natural beauty to be designated as AONB. They are beautiful woods and sloping fields that can be seen from miles around on a long, high hillside that faces towards the hills of Guildford. These hills are without question part of the Surrey Hills, with the Pilgrim's route lying in the Compton</i></p> </p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England agrees that land within the proposed Extension Area meets the natural beauty criterion for designation as AONB and that additional evidence provided by respondents supports the findings of the Natural Beauty Assessment.</p>

Natural Beauty		
Theme	Representations	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>valley below. The footpaths on Binscombe Hills have glorious views of the Hog's Back, the Chuntries, St Martha's Hill, Chinthurst Hill and beyond. In return there are lovely views of Binscombe Hills in the other direction, for example from the benches on Pyramid Hill, a field at the top of the Chuntries en route to St Martha's.</i></p> <p><i>Binscombe woods are full of wildlife, owls, badgers, foxes, deer; and woodland plants, wild garlic, anemones, bluebells, lamium ... to name but a few. '</i></p> <p>ANON-VUXE-W5PF-A <i>'An outstanding landscape with much of it visible from far around and which should be protected for that view, as well as protecting nature in its broadest form in the AONB and adjacent areas.'</i></p> <p>ANON-VUXE-W5JZ-R <i>'Diversity of species, tranquillity and amazing views. I walk in the woods every day - it is an asset to the community and should be preserved, maintaining the space and views.'</i></p> <p>ANON-VUXE-WMYQ-P <i>'Beautiful rural land at the edge of the village with open fields and mixed woodland around borders. Rolling hills with spectacular views. Used daily by many walkers. Supports wildlife including deer, badgers, foxes, rabbits. Rolling hills with spectacular views.'</i></p> <p>ANON-VUXE-W5XB-E <i>'This is a little known area but it has very distinctive features within the general area of the upper Wey valley.'</i></p>	

Natural Beauty		
<u>Theme</u>	<u>Representations</u>	<u>Natural England Commentary</u>
	<i>The attractive contrasts between the Wey valley and the surrounding hills of the Surrey- Hampshire border country. The area encompassed includes the area now being looked after by a fairly new Conservation Group linked to the local Parish Council. They have confirmed the richness of the biodiversity in their area.'</i>	
The proposed extension does not meet the Natural Beauty Criterion	ANON-VUXE-W5T8-Z considered the area did not meet the Natural Beauty Criterion. No justification was given.	<u>Commentary</u> Natural England disagrees that the land identified for designation does not meet the Natural Beauty Criterion for the reasons set out in the Natural Beauty Assessment Report.

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
General agreement with proposed boundary	<p>A number of respondents agreed with the proposed boundary simply answering yes on the survey form while some provided reasons for their view. Examples include:</p> <p>ANON-VUXE-WS1W-T (Waverley Borough Council) <i>'Waverley [Borough Council] also agrees that the proposed boundaries for extending the AONB are logical and adhere to the principles for setting an AONB boundary. However, this view is based on a high-level assessment of the proposals and therefore it is appreciated that our local communities will have more detailed knowledge of their areas. As such, where our local communities have some concerns about the details of the boundaries on the ground or that in some cases, feel that additional land should be proposed for inclusion in the AONB, we would urge Natural England to carefully consider their representations.'</i></p> <p>ANON-VUXE-WSK2-F (Guildford Borough Council) <i>'GBC also agrees that the proposed boundaries for extending the AONB are logical and adhere to the principles for setting an AONB boundary. Whilst GBC provides high level support for the process and findings, it acknowledges that other stakeholders and residents will have more detailed views based on their in-depth local knowledge. It therefore requests that Natural England carefully considers any comments that are made by any of its residents in determining whether any variations to the proposed boundary are justified, including</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>Natural England notes the support for the proposed boundary and has provided a detailed commentary to the boundary issues raised by other respondents, which can be found below.</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
	<i>whether further areas meet the criteria for inclusion within the AONB.'</i>	
Requests for Additional Areas		
<p>Include Eashing village, Wey corridor and Lammas Lands</p>	<p>ANON-VUXE-WEAP-N requested that the whole of the Wey corridor between Eashing and Godalming Lammas Lands is included.</p> <p>Reasons given include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong evidence for outstanding scenic beauty extending across the A3, linking to the AONB • Historic village of Eashing • Grade 1 listed medieval bridge • High natural heritage value of Wey corridor linking to Lammas Lands in Godalming • Intrusive impact of A3 on tranquillity should be given less weight. <p>A map was provided showing a proposed extension but excluding the A3.</p> <p>ANON-VUXE-WS1U-R also requested the inclusion of this area citing the same reasons as above. It also stated:</p> <p><i>'Natural England ['s] concerns over urban fringe, intensive agriculture, development and A3 noise have been addressed (where possible) by removing Hurtmore golf course, Hurtmore and parts of Eashing where there are currently poly</i></p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>This area was considered in the Natural Beauty Assessment as part of EA4a and is detailed on pages 63-67.</p> <p>The assessment acknowledged the natural and cultural interest within the Wey Valley and at Eashing and that in terms of the areas as a whole the Wey Valley had a higher level of natural beauty than surrounding landscapes stating:</p> <p><i>'Natural beauty is higher along the Wey Valley, however even here, this landscape is affected by detracting features and loss of tranquillity due to road noise. Although it contains features of natural heritage interest and historic interest at Lower Eashing, these are not sufficient to raise the natural beauty of the area as a whole. Furthermore, the valley and settlement of Upper and Lower Eashing sit within a wider landscape of non-qualifying land. On balance, the weight of evidence is not sufficiently strong for these areas to meet the natural beauty criterion. '</i></p> <p>As a result this area was not included in a Candidate Area for designation.</p> <p>Natural England has reviewed this evidence presented by respondents and especially maps submitted by respondents which show a level of agreement that the land to the south of the Wey Valley does not meet the natural beauty criterion.</p> <p>However, respondents consider that the Wey Valley itself 'scores highly in terms of natural beauty'. Natural England has reviewed this and considers that the area of natural beauty lies along the valley between Hurtmore and the edge of Godalming, including Milton Wood. Here there are some longer range views through woodland to pastures on the valley floor and sides, and the natural meandering watercourse, which increases scenic quality. Here tranquillity is high, with limited noise intrusion from the A3. East of this area the valley floor has a less managed character (areas of scrub,</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
	<p><i>tunnels. Lower Eashing and Wey Valley score highly and we are keen to try to bring them within the AONB.</i></p> <p><i>'[Anon] are supportive of this new Candidate Area.'</i></p> <p>A map was submitted which defined a new Candidate Area. It is assumed that this is a proposed boundary defining an additional Extension Area to the AONB.</p> <p>ANON-VUXE-WS1A-4 also supported the inclusion of this area commissioning a technical assessment. Reasons given are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intact field boundaries and roads • Dramatic wooded gorge which is a valued natural feature • Low voltage powerlines are not intrusive due to woodland • Coherent, natural undeveloped and undisturbed landscape • Intimate qualities • Occasional dramatic views from upper slopes • Features of historic interest – 1 conservation area, 1 scheduled monument, 20 listed buildings and registered park and garden • SSSI, 200 species of wildflowers and 21 species of butterfly 	<p>bamboo invasion) and is impacted by the line of pylons and adjacent housing development which are more apparent. Nevertheless, Natural England notes higher natural beauty along the course of the river and the steep sided southern valley slopes which are cloaked in ancient woodland. In the section of the valley between Hurtmore and Eashing the gorge is heavily wooded, masking the drama of the topography and or is used for equestrian purposes and the noise levels associated with traffic on the A3 are more pronounced. The ancient woodland on the western valley slopes (Eashing Wood) is noted as unfavourable condition and no current signs of recovery in 2022 due to soil erosion and gamebird fencing (SSSI Citation). Where the road noise begins to reduce, the valley is affected by the double line of pylons which are evident as they pass through from west to east.</p> <p>Therefore, Natural England is of the view that only a relatively small part of the valley has sufficient natural beauty for designation, and that to the southwest and east of this area, the qualities of the valley are declining such that the natural beauty criterion is not decisively met. Any decision to include this area is therefore finely balanced.</p> <p>Natural England agrees with respondents that there is heritage interest including listed buildings and structures associated with Eashing including vernacular farm buildings, mill buildings and packhorse bridge as well as the scheduled monument and that in the west there is the Registered Park and Garden at Westbrook. Natural England considers that the scheduled monument and designed parkland make only a limited contribution to natural beauty and lie at the margins of the valley. The listed buildings/structures make a more significant contribution to natural beauty and in particular scenic qualities (reflecting the local geology with the use of Bargate stone), but lie within an area significantly impacted by road noise from the A3. The hamlet of Eashing is c.100m from the road and the mill buildings and bridge c. 350m. The rural vernacular buildings comprising Upper Eashing are further away at c. 700m but given their elevation are also significantly exposed to the noise. Again, Natural England is of the view that the natural beauty in this landscape is not decisively met. Any decision to include this area is also finely balanced.</p> <p>Natural England notes that respondents do not present evidence to demonstrate that land to the north/west between the A3 and the Wey Valley meets the Natural Beauty</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A3 road noise is not as intrusive as judged in the Natural Beauty Assessment, wind direction not always from southwest, effects only felt within 25m of corridor A3 is not visible High voltage pylons were removed in 2021 Non-qualifying land including intensive agriculture, Hurtmore, Charterhouse and Hurtmore Golf Course are excluded. <p>Boundary: A revised boundary is proposed which is continuous with the AONB and includes the incised Wey Valley. It does not extend into Lammas Lands within Godalming.</p>	<p>Criterion. Natural England is of the view that this land does not express high levels of natural beauty comprising open elevated arable farmland with limited/no intervisibility with the Wey Valley. Although the A3 is not significantly visible, the area is nonetheless significantly impacted by traffic noise. This is confirmed in the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment which states on page 22 in relation to Shackleford Open Greensand Hills (GO1) <i>'the A3 creates a physical barrier and traffic noise where it runs north-south through the centre of the area.'</i></p> <p>Taking these factors into account, Natural England has reviewed the boundary options presented by various respondents. Natural England agrees that any boundary extension in this area should exclude Hurtmore Golf Course and parts of Eashing where there are polytunnels (i.e. land to the south). Natural England also considers that it should not extend into the urban area of Godalming, for the reasons given above.</p> <p>Given this context, Natural England is of the view that the inclusion of the Wey Valley and features of interest on the edge will require the wash-over of non-qualifying land (including the A3 corridor) and inclusion of lesser quality land within the valley.</p> <p>The Desirability Assessment Report set out at para 6.3.3 that wash-over can be applied <i>'where there is a tract of non-qualifying land which separates an area of qualifying land, such that the qualifying land sits as an outlier or is narrowly connected. A decision to apply wash-over ultimately affects the definition of a boundary.'</i></p> <p>Natural England's Guidance provides practical interpretation of the legislation and reflects the precedent established during previous designations. The Guidance highlights that the decision to include land that does not itself meet the technical criteria depends on the location, scale and effect of that land.</p> <p>These are considered in turn below.</p> <p>Location This section of the Wey Valley is a steep-sided wooded gorge which is a linear feature within a wider area of non-qualifying landscape. The area of the Wey Valley considered to express sufficient natural beauty lies between Hurtmore and Godalming. It is</p>

Boundary		
<u>Theme</u>	<u>Representation</u>	<u>Natural England Commentary</u>
		<p>separated from the wider AONB by open elevated farmland and the A3 corridor and is accessed along sections of the Wey Valley affected by the cumulative effect of equestrian land use, pylons and road noise.</p> <p><u>Scale</u> The extent of qualifying land is relatively small compared with the area which would need to be designated in order to include this topographic feature and adjacent cultural and heritage features.</p> <p><u>Effect</u> The Wey Valley is already under active management as part of the River Wey Trust. (established in 1984) and forms part of the wider River Wey Catchment. This charity organisation works within the AONB to manage the Wey Valley both inside and outside of the AONB. The positive management of the Wey Valley would be able to continue without AONB designation, and the retention of the AONB boundary along the A3 does not prevent the AONB from working beyond its boundaries, supporting conservation work, where it can be shown to contribute to the purposes of the wider AONB designation.</p> <p>It is notable that the AONB boundary, which was defined in 1958, did not include this land but, rather, stopped the boundary at the A3 (which was upgraded to a full separated dual carriageway between the Hogs Back and Milford by the Compton to Shackleford Improvement Scheme opening in 1989-90). Furthermore, the HDA study did not identify this land for designation.</p> <p>On balance, Natural England concludes that the merits of this area are not sufficiently high enough to warrant inclusion within the AONB boundary and that the boundary should remain along the A3. This conclusion is consistent with other areas where landscapes are impacted by major transport corridors and are borderline in terms of their natural beauty e.g. Langley Vale.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u> No change.</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
<p>Include fields to the south east – Farncombe Bowl</p>	<p>ANON-VUXE-W52Z-Z, ANON-VUXE-W5PF-A and ANON-VUXE-W5TX-Z wished to see the fields to the southeast included – Farncombe Bowl. Reasons included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entire area is lined with beautiful woodland • Fields with paths offer beautiful views • Area is very much appreciated • Protect the hillside from overdevelopment • Extensive views towards the northeast to the North Downs • Hill is entirely rural • Very little sight of housing and roads. <p>Boundary suggestion follows the edge of development and roads.</p>	<p>Commentary</p> <p>The Natural Beauty Assessment noted on page 64 that <i>‘Landscape quality is higher in two areas, namely around Binscombe.....however, the wider context of this area has changed, with the encroachment of modern housing estates associated with Farncombe, such that the southern parts of this area have a more urban context, and show signs of heavy use adjacent to urban areas.’</i></p> <p>It concluded that <i>‘the influence of modern housing development on the fringes of Farncombe will require particular scrutiny when defining the extent of land to be included in the Candidate Area around Binscombe.’</i></p> <p>The Boundary Considerations Report considered this in detail stating: <i>‘During the assessment process, issues associated with defining a boundary included the extent to which wooded and arable slopes between built development at Binscombe/Farncombe and north of Charterhouse should be included. Here the landscape extends as a narrow finger into the urban area and becomes increasingly influenced by proximity to development. A boundary was drawn within this landscape to include arable slopes which form an uninterrupted sweep of landscape with the wider AONB, and which are unaffected by adjoining housing development. In order to ensure the boundary follows a clear line on the ground, it was brought northwards to adopt a mature hedgerow, which also defines the boundary of the Waverley Borough administrative area.’</i></p> <p>The evidence provided following Statutory Consultation has been reviewed and the area revisited. Natural England remains of the view that the steep-sided bowl, known locally as Farncombe Bowl, provides a distinctive area of dramatic topography and natural greenspace close to local communities. From the upper slopes, there are long distance views northwards to the Hog’s Back. However, these views are across areas of housing development at Farncombe and are rapidly lost at slightly lower elevation,</p>

Boundary		
<u>Theme</u>	<u>Representation</u>	<u>Natural England Commentary</u>
		<p>and there is no visual connection to wider qualifying land further to the northwest. The narrow width of the area, perceived adjacent built development and its popularity for dog walking, give rise to a more urban fringe character rather than forming part of a nationally important landscape.</p> <p>Natural England Guidance (Appendix 4) is clear that land should not be included merely to seek to protect it from specific development pressures.</p> <p>On balance, therefore, Natural England considers that the proposed boundary remains appropriate.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u> No change.</p>
Include Godalming and Farncombe	<p>ANON-VUXE-W5MF-7 wished to see Godalming and Farncombe included. Reasons given include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17th and 18th century heritage • Wey Canal. <p>No boundary was proposed.</p>	<p><u>Commentary</u> The initial area of search was defined collaboratively between Natural England and the Management Advisory Group as set out in Appendix 4 of the Natural Beauty Assessment. This was refined and divided into initial Evaluation Areas, and areas of significant built development were excluded. The settlements of Farncombe and Godalming were considered unlikely to qualify for national landscape designation due to their size and extent of modern development. They were therefore excluded from further study and the Evaluation Area drawn around the outside of the settlement boundary (as defined in the Waverley Local Plan).</p> <p>Natural England acknowledges that these settlements contain features of heritage significance dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries including the Wey Canal. Nevertheless, Natural England remains of the view that the settlements of Farncombe and Godalming would not qualify for designation as AONB given their size and the extent of more recent development, which significantly influences their character and qualities. It is not unusual for AONB boundaries to be drawn around larger conurbations e.g. Sevenoaks in the Kent Downs AONB.</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
		<p>Conclusion No change.</p>
<p>Include Binscombe village and land up to urban edge including Loseley Fields Primary School and playing fields</p>	<p>ANON-VUXE-WE5Q-A and ANON-VUXE-W5SQ-R requested the inclusion of Binscombe village and land on margins of built-up area. Reasons given included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village is ancient • It includes a manor farm and attractive farm labourers' cottages • Village is visible from the surrounding area • Village is a conservation area and other listed buildings include Rose Tree Cottage • This land is the visual approach to Binscombe. <p>Suggested boundary includes the use of footpath FP1 that separates Binscombe village from the 20th century housing to the south-east.</p>	<p>Commentary The Natural Beauty Assessment noted the conservation area status of Binscombe village at page 66, describing its traditional character and timber framed cottages and barns. It went on to state <i>'However, the hamlet has merged with the outskirts of Farncombe and is included within the settlement boundary as defined in the Waverley Borough Local Plan.'</i> It was included within the Candidate Area but noted as an area requiring particular scrutiny at the boundary setting stage (page 72).</p> <p>The Boundary Considerations Report went on to state <i>'Detailed consideration was given to the inclusion of the village of Binscombe, which is a Conservation Area and, valued for its historic vernacular buildings. This village has become conjoined with Farncombe, such that it no longer forms a separate settlement. Furthermore, the Waverley Borough Local Plan includes Binscombe within the Farncombe settlement boundary. On this basis, and to avoid the splitting of a settlement, it was concluded that Binscombe should be excluded in its entirety and the boundary drawn around its outer edge.'</i></p> <p>This area was reviewed in the field. Natural England acknowledges that the buildings on the outskirts of the hamlet, when approaching from the north, make a positive contribution to natural beauty, with the rising land beyond. Nevertheless, the use of the proposed footpath would result in the splitting of the settlement, contrary to Appendix 4 of the Natural England Guidance. It would also result in the inclusion of rough ground which lacks distinction between the footpath and road.</p> <p>Natural England therefore considers that the proposed boundary, along the road and around the settlement edge, remains the most appropriate.</p> <p>Conclusion</p>

Boundary		
<u>Theme</u>	<u>Representation</u>	<u>Natural England Commentary</u>
		No change.
Inclusion of parkland adjacent to Fox Hanger	<p>ANON-VUXE-WEV7-H requested the inclusion of parkland adjacent to Fox Hanger.</p> <p>Reasons included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistency with justification for the area. 	<p><u>Commentary</u> No map showing an amended boundary was provided.</p> <p>Natural England has reviewed this area and considers that all areas of parkland landscape adjacent to Fox Hanger have been included within the proposed boundary.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u> No change.</p>