

## Appendix 7: Wey Valley Farley Hill

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 Wey Valley, Farley Hill Extension Area have Sufficient Natural Beauty to be Designated as AONB?

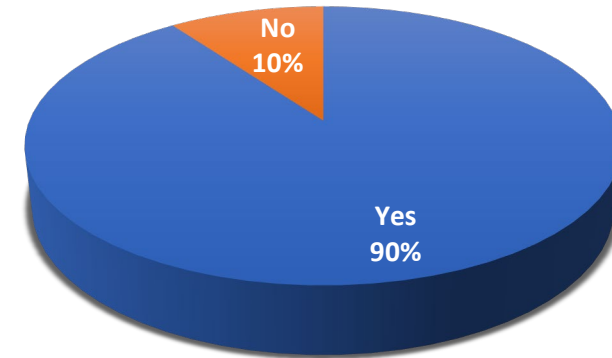
Natural Beauty	Responses
Yes	9
No	1
Not sure	0

Of the 10 respondents who answered Question C1, 9 respondents (90%) felt that the Wey Valley, Farley Hill 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.

Arguments setting out the desirability of designating this land focused around protecting the area from inappropriate development and the benefits the area provides in terms of access to open countryside close to centres of population and conservation of natural heritage. These issues are addressed in Appendix 2.

Wey Valley, Farley Hill - Sufficient natural beauty to be designated



Question C5: Do you agree with the proposed boundary for the Wey Valley, Farley Hill Extension Area?

Boundary	Responses
Yes	3
Yes, but I wish to suggest an alternative	6
No	1
Not sure	0

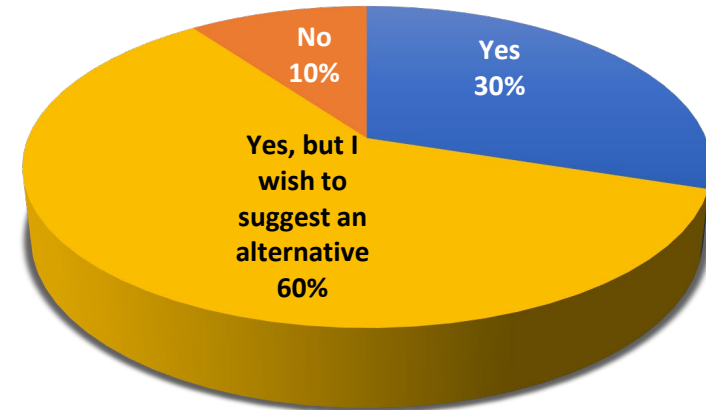
This area attracted a small number of responses. Of the 10 respondents who answered Question C1, 3 respondents (30%) agreed with the proposed boundary for the Wey Valley, Farley Hill and 1 respondent (10%) did not. 6 respondents (60%) agreed but wished to suggest an alternative boundary, many providing supporting evidence.

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

- Wey Valley between the existing AONB and Guildford
- Land at Broadwater Park.

There are no requested exclusions.

Wey Valley, Farley Hill - Agreement with the proposed boundary



Natural Beauty		
<u>Theme</u>	<u>Representations</u>	<u>Natural England Commentary</u>
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><b>ANON-VUXE-WS1W-T (Waverley Borough Council)</b>  <i>'Waverley 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><b>ANON-VUXE-WSK1-E</b>  <i>'[Anon] welcomes the proposed expansion of the Surrey Hills AONB...We welcome the inclusion of what is currently a valley gap south of Guildford.'</i></p> <p><b>ANON-VUXE-WS1K-E</b>  <i>'I support the main thrust of the changes set out in the Consultation Report....'</i></p> <p><b>ANON-VUXE-WSQY-V</b>  <i>'The [Anon] welcomes and strongly supports the draft extensions of the AONB within the Parish of Shalford.'</i></p> <p><b>ANON-VUXE-WEV7-H</b>  <i>'We support your reasons for justification.'</i></p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>Natural England agrees that land within the proposed Extension Area meets the natural beauty criterion for designation as AONB.</p>
The proposed extension does not meet the Natural Beauty Criterion	<p><b>ANON-VUXE-W5T8-Z</b> considered the area did not meet the Natural Beauty Criterion, although no justification was given.</p>	<p><u>Commentary</u></p> <p>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.</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
<b>General agreement with proposed boundary</b>	<p>Two respondents agreed with the proposed boundary simply answering yes on the survey form.</p> <p>A general comment was made by <b>ANON-VUXE-WS1W-T (Waverley Borough Council)</b> <i>'Waverley 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><b>Commentary</b></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>
Requests for Additional Areas		
<b>Inclusion of all of the River Wey Valley Floor</b>	<p><b>A number of respondents requested inclusion of the River Wey valley floor.</b></p> <p>These included:  <b>ANON-VUXE-WSQY-V, ANON-VUXE-WS12-N, ANON-VUXE-WS1K-E, ANON-VUXE-WSK1-E and ANON-VUXE-WEAP-N</b></p> <p><b>ANON-VUXE-W5US-V</b> requested inclusion of the narrow section of valley floor immediately south of Guildford but noted that it was not clear if it could be linked to the proposed extension further south. Reasons to include more of the valley floor include:</p>	<p><b>Commentary</b></p> <p><b>Natural Beauty:</b>  The Hankinson Duckett Associates study identified the River Wey Valley floor south of Guildford as an area having 'some potential' for designation but it was not recommended for designation.</p> <p>Natural England agrees that it is not unusual for transport infrastructure to be included within an AONB designation. However, Natural England also considers that it is not the presence or absence of road infrastructure which is important but rather the nature of the infrastructure and any cumulative effects it may have, in association with other road and rail routes and built development, as well as effects on tranquillity and fragmentation. This section of the valley floor is traversed by a number of busy road</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
	<p><b>Natural Beauty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation of the 2015 Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) LCA to further assess this area for inclusion in the AONB.</li> <li>• Not unusual for transport infrastructure to be included in the AONB.</li> <li>• When looked down on from the Downs, or when experienced from the open or wooded valley floor, the screening of the mixed woodland hides much of this infrastructure (A281 and A31).</li> <li>• Views, either across the meadows of the extended valley floor, backdropped by the North Downs hills...bringing striking contrast and have strong aesthetic appeal.</li> <li>• Tree coverage masks much of the nearby development and roads.</li> <li>• Water infrastructure (canalised elements of the River Wey) and railway embankments (both current and disused) do not detract from the quality of the land.</li> <li>• Wonderful sense of relative wildness and tranquillity.</li> <li>• The centre of the area forms a tranquillity of reduced traffic noise, instead orchestrated by bird song and the sounds of water over the various weirs, locks &amp; sluices.</li> <li>• Appreciation by cyclists, walkers and water-borne users of the area, and do not accept that this detracts from its natural feeling.</li> </ul>	<p>routes and rail corridors which fragment the valley floor and (in association with built development) separate the valley floor from the wider AONB. Furthermore, the canalised nature of the watercourse, coupled with signage and footpaths, reinforces a more managed peri-urban context.</p> <p>Natural England agrees that there is some intervisibility from the valley floor landscape to adjacent hills (already within the AONB). Nevertheless, from the valley floor, these views are constrained by woodland and development and distance to surrounding hills. The contribution of views to the hills on natural beauty is therefore limited. Views from the surrounding hills across the valley, and limited visibility of roads in these views, is not relevant to decisions to include the valley floor, as these hills are already designated as AONB. Similarly, views from transport infrastructure and the urban edge cannot be a justification for including an area which, of itself, is influenced by these incongruous features.</p> <p>The sense of relative wildness and tranquillity is reduced by road and rail noise and proximity of urban areas. Natural England has not marked the area down based on the number of people who use it but rather highlights that its high use can, along with other factors, impact on perceptions of remoteness and tranquillity and is a reflection of its context.</p> <p>Natural England agrees that Shalford has a distinctive historic core comprising the open green which is typical of villages in this area. However, as the Natural Beauty Assessment highlighted, Shalford also contains significant areas of more modern housing development. Any comparison with the inclusion of Chilworth is not considered appropriate and issues relating to the inclusion of Chilworth are addressed in the analysis table for Cranleigh Waters (Appendix 8).</p> <p>Natural England acknowledges that this area is already actively managed by National Trust and Guildford Borough Council and the Environment Agency. The Natural Beauty Assessment acknowledged the qualities of these meadows. Nevertheless, they form a linear landscape and are not physically connected to the wider AONB landscape. They do not, therefore, form an area or sweep of land connected to the wider AONB. Where</p>

Boundary		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area conveys a great sense of relative wildness, which contributes to its popularity for relaxation.</li> <li>Historic village of Shalford with its ample green space, a traditional village green and vernacular architecture (and which arguably provides a much higher quality environment than that of Chilworth).</li> <li>Dominated by quality landscape (traditionally managed meadows and mixed woodland) rather than this being relatively small in extent.</li> <li>Active land management (National Trust, Guildford Borough Council and Environment Agency) is creating an ever more diverse water meadow environment.</li> <li>Water meadows SSSI show evidence of medieval fields and important for wading birds.</li> <li>Riverside Nature Reserve is a stronghold for harvest mice.</li> <li>Classic girder bridge over the River Wey forms a cultural heritage feature.</li> <li>Guildford – Redhill railway as it emerges from tunnels and traverses the flood meadow on its embankment and reveals the scenic beauty of the valley, with the copper-covered spire of Shalford Church rising amongst the trees and a backdrop of the Downs.</li> <li>The railway embankment for the never-used Peasmarsh junction to Shalford spur forms another important feature, and the</li> </ul>	<p>they are connected, and of high quality, they have been included in the AONB boundary extension (e.g. the area to the south).</p> <p>Natural England recognises that this area forms an important wildlife and recreational corridor as confirmed in the 'Vision for Guildford Borough's Countryside sites 2017-2027.' It also acknowledges that this area contains sites of nature conservation interest and cultural heritage interest but when making judgements on natural beauty, it is necessary to consider all factors in the round, including the effects of incongruous elements. Natural England notes that Shalford Mill is already included within the AONB boundary.</p> <p><b>Desirability:</b> Designation of land as AONB to improve understanding is a not one of the boundary setting considerations set out in the Natural England Guidance (Appendix 4). Natural England does not agree that the inclusion of this area will help public understanding, given the extent to which it would either require the inclusion of non-qualifying land or result in a complex boundary.</p> <p>Natural England Guidance is clear that the ability of a settlement to act as a gateway to a designated area is not dependent on its inclusion within a designation. Similarly, the ability for the Wey Valley floor corridor to act as a gateway to the wider AONB is again not dependent on its inclusion within the designation. Areas can act as gateways and remain outside of the designation boundary.</p> <p>The protection of views is not a reason for designation and this valley floor landscape is already under active management for conservation by a range of conservation bodies and AONB designation would not alter this positive activity.</p> <p><b>Boundary:</b> Natural England accepts that, given the complexities in this area, there is no ideal or easy solution in defining a boundary; this is reflected in the various boundary options proposed.</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
	<p>dismantled Horsham line provides a reminder of the Beeching cuts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The various WWII “GHQ Stopline” defences (pill boxes, dragon’s teeth, defence blocks) adjacent to the rivers / railways / roads complement the area’s cultural heritage.</li> <li>Shalford Mill would be brought into the AONB with this wider extension.</li> <li>Importance of area is recognised in ‘Vision for Guildford Borough’s Countryside sites 2017-2027.’</li> </ul> <p><b>Desirability:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of the area will help public understanding.</li> <li>Important gateway to the Surrey Hills.</li> <li>Provides protection for views from these more urban environments.</li> <li>The existing gap in the AONB between the downs is anomalous, and bridging this by extending the AONB would reflect and help protect the important wildlife corridor across the gap.</li> <li>Inclusion of recreational assets including North Downs Way and Wey South Path.</li> </ul> <p><b>Boundary:</b> Three boundary options were presented: 1. The inclusion of the whole of the valley between the existing AONB and including the washing-over of the settlements of Shalford and Peasmarsh (as</p>	<p>The first boundary option put forward by respondents would require the application of wash-over to include non-qualifying land and development. Natural England does not consider this to be appropriate and highlights the risk of it also being used elsewhere as a justification for including land which does not qualify for designation.</p> <p>The second boundary option is described as resulting in a ‘somewhat fragmented extension’ – Natural England agrees. The effects of sewage works, conifer screening etc is acknowledged by the respondent. Furthermore, it results in a boundary which leaves holes in the designation and splits a settlement – historic Shalford is included but the modern development in the village is not.</p> <p>The third boundary option excludes the valley floor west of the navigation as well as the areas of built development. Whilst this option most closely reflects the landscapes of greatest natural and cultural interest, it emphasises the narrow corridor of the valley and its disconnection from the surrounding AONB.</p> <p>The range of differing boundary options put forward by respondents indicates that, even if it was concluded that the valley floor pastures met the Natural Beauty Criterion, defining a boundary in this location is complex and difficult. The adoption of a simple boundary would require the inclusion of a substantial area of wash-over and would be contrary to Natural England Guidance, and the alternatives create a complex and convoluted boundary which serve to illustrate the physical separation of this landscape from the wider tract of qualifying land.</p> <p>For all of the above reasons Natural England is of the view that this area of the Wey Valley should not be included in the AONB and the existing AONB boundary remains robust.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b> No change.</p>

Boundary		
Theme	Representation	Natural England Commentary
	<p>well as Bramley) and other areas of development/infrastructure.</p> <p>2. The inclusion of the central river corridor and meadows/woodland and exclusion of areas of built development either side.</p> <p>3. Extend from the existing AONB at Foxborough Hill (but excluding the Peasmarsh Sewage Treatment Works) northwards up to and including Shalford Park, the west boundary following the Wey Navigation and east boundary, the A281.</p>	
<b>Inclusion of Broadwater Park</b>	<p><b>ANON-VUXE-W5TX-Z</b></p> <p>Reasons given include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously part of an estate and contains some very old trees.</li> <li>Substantial lake important for wildlife.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Commentary</b></p> <p>This area was considered as part of EA3a. The Natural Beauty Assessment noted the urbanising influences around Broadwater Park and Lake where there is a more organised recreational focus. Natural England acknowledges the former historic parkland context of this area and the presence of old trees which reflect this history. Natural England also notes that the former estate has become fragmented – the northern parts now form part of the Godalming Leisure Centre and Broadwater School and grounds, and the northern area forms the Guildford Rugby Club Ground. The central lane and land to the south does have a more nature conservation focus with nature walks and interpretation and natural beauty is more strongly expressed, but it is located in a peripheral location and flanked to the south by the A3100 and development. Natural England therefore considers that the area as a whole relates more strongly to the adjacent urban areas, and is not of sufficient natural beauty to warrant designation as part of the wider AONB.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>No change.</p>