



More information: Natural England's Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation

Information around Process: Satisfying the Legislative
Test

Date: Dec 2024

Summary

This clarification note outlines a specific stage in the process of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Review, as required by Natural England’s Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation (2021).

Stage D requires an assessment for designation under the statutory provisions and is described in Natural England’s Landscape Designation Guidance as:

‘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.’

Stage D sits between Stages C (consideration of desirability to designate an AONB (or National Park)) and stages E (definition of a detailed boundary), as shown in figure 1.

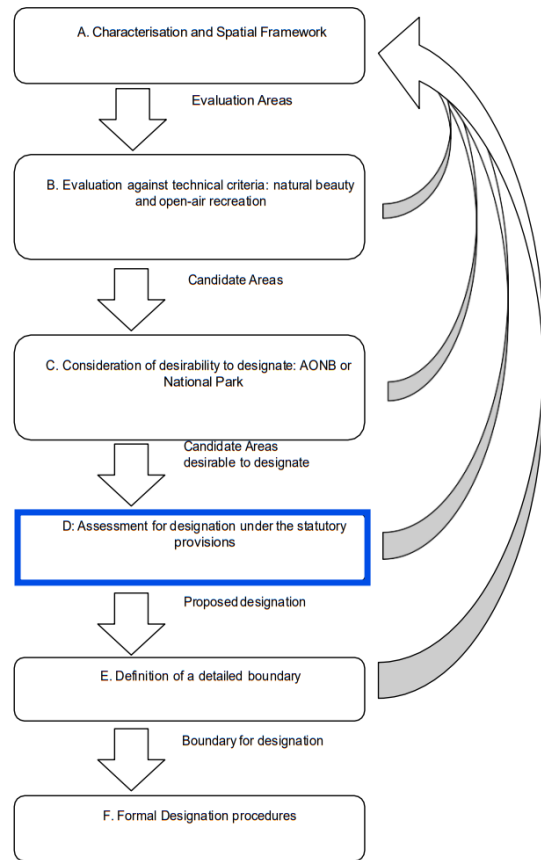


Figure 1. Landscape designation process diagram, taken from Natural England’s Guidance for Assessing Landscape for Designation (2021).

Undertaking its statutory duty, Natural England assessed the outcome of stage B (Natural Beauty Evaluation) and stage C (Desirability Assessment), before making the evidence-led decision that the whole area meets the statutory provisions and that the boundary review project should progress to the next stage, E, where a detailed boundary could be defined. A new contract was then entered into with specialist landscape consultants in order to undertake the boundary setting stage.

Further details regarding the Stage D process are outlined in the 1st Consultation Document, pages 47 and 48.

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