

Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Boundary Review Project

Assessment of whether it is desirable to vary the boundary of the AONB in order to conserve and enhance Natural Beauty

Prepared for Natural England

By

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**Updated Report Post Consultation
September 2025**

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review
Desirability Assessment
Updated Report September 2025

Preface

This report has been updated to take account of changes to the natural beauty assessment as a result of Statutory Consultation.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of Work

1.1.1 This report sets out issues associated with the desirability of extending the Surrey Hills AONB and including additional areas of land which meet the natural beauty criterion. It does not consider the desirability of designating the Surrey Hills as a National Park.

1.2 Rationale

1.2.1 Once an area has been identified as qualifying for inclusion in a landscape designation, it is necessary to determine whether designation of the area is desirable. This report has been prepared by specialist consultants to assist Natural England in reaching its decision on whether it is desirable to proceed with an extension to the Surrey Hills AONB (SH AONB). Designation does not follow automatically, simply because land meets the natural beauty criterion.

1.2.2 The objective of AONB designation is to ensure that the purpose of AONB designation is achieved, i.e. the conservation and enhancement of an area's natural beauty. The Government considers that designation confers the highest level of protection as far as landscape and natural beauty is concerned¹. Natural England applies a high threshold in relation to designation and considers that areas should be nationally significant in order for it to be considered desirable to designate them and that there should be confidence that the mechanisms, powers and duties resulting from designation are necessary to ensure the delivery of the AONB purpose.

1.3 Natural England Guidance

1.3.1 Natural England has produced Guidance to assist in the assessment of whether designation is desirable². This sets out a series of questions that can usefully be posed. These are:

- Is there an area which satisfies the AONB technical criterion?
- Is the area of such significance that the AONB purpose should apply to it?
- What are the Issues affecting the area's special qualities?
- Can AONB purposes be best pursued through the management mechanisms, powers and duties which come with AONB designation?

1.3.2 The Natural England Guidance also provides additional guidance on factors to consider in making these judgements. It should be noted that the more directly or substantially a factor bears upon the achievement of the AONB purpose, the more

¹ English National Parks and the Broads: Government Vision and Circular 201 (Defra, 2010), para 20

² Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, Natural England, 2021.

weight Natural England will give it in the decision whether or not it is desirable to designate.

- 1.3.3 It should also be noted that designation may have other potential impacts beyond the statutory purpose. Common issues raised include the potential for impacts on housing markets and local economies. Natural England in designating must bear in mind that Parliament has put in place the basic framework for AONBs which already address some of these issues. In addition, Government policy influences how AONBs operate in relation to wider policy issues such as housing, the economy and planning. Any such matters beyond those relevant to the purpose of designation as outlined in Section 1.2.1 above are therefore accorded less weight.

1.4 Broader Background

- 1.4.1 As part of the Government's 25-year Plan for the Environment, an independent review of designated landscapes in England (National Parks and AONBs) was led by Julian Glover and published in 2019. This review set out a compelling vision for more beautiful, biodiverse and accessible National Parks and AONBs and also warned 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. In January 2022, the Government published its response to this independent Landscape Review, highlighting the issues of nature loss, climate change adaptation and the role of protected landscapes in addressing these issues. In its response the Government cited its commitment to protecting 30% of land by 2030 for nature³.
- 1.4.2 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 Declaration⁴) 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.
- 1.4.3 In the context of the AONB boundary review, the designation of additional land as AONB will no doubt facilitate conservation work to address the pressing agendas of nature recovery and climate change adaptation. These may be important benefits arising from designation, however, they are not of themselves, a justification for proceeding with designation, or designating land which does not meet the natural beauty criterion. It is important when framing the argument for designation (i.e. desirability), that consideration is given specifically to the questions set out in the

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-commits-to-protect-30-of-uk-land-in-boost-for-biodiversity>

⁴ <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/projects/colchester-declaration>

Natural England Guidance. In other words, the focus should remain on natural beauty and factors affecting identified special qualities.

2.0 Areas Satisfying the Natural Beauty Criterion

2.1 Findings of the Natural Beauty Assessment

2.1.1 The detailed assessment of whether there is an area which meets the natural beauty criterion is included in a separate report titled *Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review – Natural Beauty Assessment, Updated Report September 2025*. This concluded that there is an area which satisfies the natural beauty designation criterion, and a Candidate Area has been identified, suitable for further consideration as to whether its designation as AONB is desirable. The Candidate Area is made up of the twenty separate areas, although not all areas meet the natural beauty criterion to the same degree, and some are finely balanced as noted in the natural beauty assessment. The areas are listed below (in a clockwise direction starting at Farnham) and include the relevant Evaluation Area (EA) reference in brackets.

- Wey Valley, Farnham (EA 1a)
- Hog's Back (EA 2a)
- Binscombe Hills (EA 4a)
- Enton Hills (EA 4b)
- Wey Valley, Farley Hill (EA 3a)
- Cranleigh Waters (EA 3b and 5)
- Hatchlands and East Clandon (EA 6a)
- Headley Hills and Langley Vale (EA 7a)
- Banstead Heath (EA 7c)
- Chipstead Valley (EA 7d)
- Happy Valley (EA 8a)
- Caterham Woods (EA 8c)
- Woldingham and Beddlestead Valleys (EA 9a)
- Limpsfield (EA 10c)
- Godstone Hills (EA 10a and 10b)
- Betchworth Hills and Mole Valley (EA 11a and 11b)
- Ockley Low Weald (EA 12)
- Dunsfold Low Weald (EA 13) East Hampshire (EA 15)
- Dockenfield Hills (EA 14)

2.1.2 A full justification is contained in the Natural Beauty Assessment, and the extent of the Candidate Area is indicated on Figures 10 and EH7 (bound separately). Importantly the Candidate Area is closely related to the existing Surrey Hills AONB, forming largely contiguous areas which connect with the existing designation (i.e. there are no outliers). However, it should also be noted that not all parts of the Candidate Area meet the natural beauty criterion to the same degree. Variations are highlighted in the natural beauty assessment and are reviewed during the desirability assessment and again at boundary setting stage.

3.0 The Significance of the Proposed Candidate Area

3.1 Is the area of national significance?

3.1.1 To answer this question Natural England Guidance sets out a number of factors which should be taken into account. These include:

- **Special qualities** - i.e. those aspects of the area's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, which make the area distinctive and valuable, particularly at a national scale.
- **Consensus** - where there is a consensus of opinion that an area meets the statutory criterion or should be designated. This helps in determining whether the land in question is accorded a special value that should be recognised. The opinions of stakeholders and the public can be strong indicators as to whether there is consensus about the value of a landscape.
- **Rarity and Representativeness** - if a landscape, or an element within it, is rare or representative of a particular type of landscape, it may add weight to the judgement that an area should be represented within the AONB, although this is not an essential requirement.

3.1.2 In order to understand the first of these (**special qualities**) it is helpful to consider the special qualities of the existing AONB. These are set out in the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan 2020-2025. In paragraph 1.9 (page 17) it states that:

“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.

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.....

Over much of the Surrey Hills the historic settlement pattern remains largely intact: small, picturesque villages of Saxon and medieval origin in the valleys; isolated farmsteads on chalk slopes; valley bottoms and in clearings won from the woodland; large country houses with designed landscapes, including parkland; market towns; and remnants of seventeenth and eighteenth century industry”.

- 3.1.3 The Management Plan sets out a statement of significance for the Surrey Hills AONB as follows:

‘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.’

- 3.1.4 At Appendix 1 of the Management Plan is an extract of a Landscape Character Assessment for the AONB (dating to 2000). Although this has now been superseded by the more recent Surrey Landscape Character Assessment, it nonetheless provides a statement of significance for the primary landscape types within and adjacent to the AONB, and provides useful background information regarding the special qualities of each landscape. This has been used in the assessment tables below to provide context.
- 3.1.5 In relation to **consensus**, it is helpful to review the designation history of the proposed Candidate Areas, including past evaluation work relating to the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).
- 3.1.6 In relation to **rarity and representativeness**, it is again helpful to understand the character and qualities of the existing AONB. If a landscape, or an element within it, is rare or representative of a particular landscape type, it may add weight to the judgement that an area should be represented within an AONB. All of the Candidate Areas share the same geology as the wider AONB, comprising chalk and greensand landscape as well as river valleys and clay landscapes. The Candidate Areas are thus representative of these existing designated landscapes, sharing many of their qualities.

3.2 Significance Tables for Proposed Candidate Area

3.2.1 The assessment of the national significance of each of the proposed areas is set out below. The special qualities of each area are articulated in detail in the Natural Beauty Assessment. The tables below provide a summary.

Candidate Area: Wey Valley, Farnham	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	Special qualities are derived from the meandering watercourse, traditional meadows and wetlands which combine with deciduous wooded slopes and pasture to create a landscape which is textured and colourful through the seasons, intimate in scale and is perceived as separate from adjoining areas of denser built development. Views across the valley floor to wooded slopes are framed and sometimes contain historic buildings which add to scenic qualities, while along rural tracks and lanes through the wooded slopes, there are historic features of interest and natural habitats which enhance perceptions of tranquillity and contact with nature.
Consensus	This area's landscape value is reflected in its designation as AGLV and the recommendation to designate the valley floor as AONB by Hankinson Duckett Associates (HAD) in 2013. The Farnham Neighbourhood Plan also identifies the area as High Landscape Sensitivity and Historic Value (Policy FNP 10) and South Farnham Arcadian Areas (Policy FNP8).
Rarity/ Representativeness	This area shows clear and consistent expression of some of the typical elements of the Wey Valley which extends south into the AONB. It is considered to be rich in natural and cultural heritage features. It includes the continuation of the Waverley Abbey Conservation Area (split by the current AONB boundary), and includes Mother Ludlam's Cave (associated with the abbey), five listed buildings and Grade II Registered Park and Garden, which reflect the history and land use patterns of the area, and a deep-water alder swamp within Moor Park SSSI, which is nationally rare and the only habitat of this type in Surrey.

Candidate Area: Hog's Back	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The special quality of this area derives from its open farmland slopes that form an immediate and uninterrupted fringe to the Hog's Back from which the smooth and undulating chalk slopes can be appreciated at close range. The area contains features of heritage interest including the historic spring line village of Wanborough, notable blocks of rich, ancient semi-natural woodland and historic tracks/routes which contribute to its scenic qualities.

Consensus	An area immediately adjacent to the Hog's Back was consistently requested for inclusion in the AONB prior to formal AONB designation in 1958 but excluded on the basis of its ' <i>lack of any special landscape value</i> '. Nevertheless, the majority of the area went on to be designated AGLV and was recommended for AONB designation by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This landscape is representative of the Hog's Back, in that it forms the immediate foreground and lower slopes to this iconic topographic feature within the Surrey Hills AONB. It also contains rich ancient woodlands (c. 15% of the area) situated on clay, and which form a particularly important habitat for bats.

Candidate Area: Binscombe Hills	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The significance of this area relates to its association with Eastbury Park, the wooded scarp slopes comprising areas of ancient woodland namely Fox Hanger, Eastbury Copse and Kiln Copse) which define and enclose the parkland. These woodlands extend eastward along the steep slope including Glebe Wood SNCI. Beyond this are open arable slopes across the Glebe Conservation Area and Compton Common, both of which are split by the current AONB boundary. The open slopes afford uninterrupted views across the AONB to the Hog's Back, and include the brick farmhouse and surrounding farmland associated with the artist and potter Mary Wondrausch.
Consensus	Inclusion of the area of Compton and Loseley was considered by the National Parks Commission, prior to AONB designation, but the area south of Compton Common was ultimately excluded - the boundary following the B3000. Subsequently this area was designated as AGLV, although none was recommended for designation by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This landscape is representative of the landscape within the existing AONB to the north and west including a continuation of the Compton Conservation Area and boundary woodland to Eastbury Park.

Candidate Area: Enton Hills	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	This proposed extension forms a continuation of the intimate, enclosed and secretive landscape typical of the greensand hills. This area has a high concentration of woodland, with notable linear hanging woodlands, and historic interest expressed in its vernacular listed buildings, registered parkland and incised winding lanes which, combined with complex and sometimes steep slopes and hills, give high landscape and scenic quality. This is an inward-facing, traditional pastoral and small-scale

	landscape which has local visual complexity, and a tranquil, remote character.
Consensus	This area's landscape value is reflected in its designation as AGLV and the recommendation to designate much of the area as AONB by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This area reflects a continuation of the pattern of hills, woodland and small patches of lowland heath within the Surrey Hills AONB and includes the continuation of the Hambledon Conservation Area which is currently split by the existing AONB.

Candidate Area: Wey Valley, Farley Hill

Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	This area forms a small section of valley floor which is physically and visually connected to the wooded slopes of Farley Hill. Its special qualities are derived from the juxtaposition of flat open and textured meadow with the rising wooded greensand hills. The meandering course of the River Wey through this section retains its natural character and there is little visual intrusion from surrounding built up areas. As a result, this section of the Wey Valley forms a seamless extension to the AONB, comprising unspoilt traditional valley floor meadows.
Consensus	This area's landscape value is reflected in its designation as AGLV. The HDA study in 2013, identified this area as having ' <i>some potential for designation</i> ' as AONB.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This area forms a relatively rare, intact area of lowland meadow where the combination of greensand hills, floodplain and natural river course combine, and are uninterrupted or fragmented by infrastructure or development.

Candidate Area: Cranleigh Waters

Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The area forms undulating and richly wooded farmland through which the meandering course of Cranleigh Waters weaves, past former commons on gravel terraces and between greensand hill outliers such as Chinthurst and Barnet Hills. Ericaceous vegetation in road verges and woodlands, along with mixed arable and pasture farming, gives rise to a mosaic of land uses, colour and texture through the seasons, that delight the senses. Historic settlement, including that of Wonersh, Birtley Green and Shamley Green, nestle in this landscape, surrounded by the rising greensand hills. The intact historic buildings on the high street in Wonersh, or the historic buildings that cluster around the green at Shamley Green, contribute strongly to natural beauty and are accompanied by the ever-present backdrop of wooded greensand hills. This is a settled and sometimes busy landscape, but areas of tranquillity can be found on the
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	elevated hills and within the ancient woodlands that impart a timeless and established feel.
Consensus	This area's landscape value is reflected in its designation as AGLV (excluding settlement) and the recommendation to designate the area around Chinthurst Hill and Chilworth Gunpowder Mills as AONB by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This landscape contains many representative features of the AONB including an exceptionally high concentration of listed buildings, notable historic features including the former Wey and Arun Canal, rural lanes, former commons and actively managed ancient semi-natural woods and shaws. It also includes the continuation of the Chilworth Gunpowder Mills and Shamley Green Conservation Areas (which are split by the existing AONB) as well as the Birtley Green Conservation Area.

Candidate Area: Hatchlands and East Clandon

Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	This section of the dip slope and associated lower-lying clay landscapes, is significant for its historic buildings and designed landscape, which make a strong contribution to the natural beauty of the area. It includes the spring line village of East Clandon with its knapped flint vernacular buildings and landmark church, and associated parkland of Hatchlands both of which connect to the chalk dip slope historically and visually.
Consensus	Land between the existing AONB and the A25/246 is designated as AGLV. Similarly, this land was recommended for designation as AONB by HDA in 2013. North of the A25/246 the value of the landscape is recognised in its Registered Park and Garden.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This landscape contains a rare combination of intact parkland estate and estate village at the foot of the chalk dip slope.

Candidate Area: Headley Hills and Langley Vale

Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	<p>The Headley Hills area comprises undulating pastoral farmland with areas of ancient woodland and narrow lanes that impart an established feel and express many of the special qualities of the adjacent AONB. Its special qualities relate to its vegetation patterns and enclosed character which frame and reveal wider views across the folds in landform to wooded horizons. Vernacular buildings unified by the use of red brick and knapped flint, along with the landmark spire of Headley Church, combine with the sometimes steep topography to give high landscape and scenic quality. This is a small-scale landscape which has local visual complexity, and a tranquil character.</p> <p>To the north of the M25 is the landscape of Langley Vale. The special qualities of this landscape relate to its management as</p>
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	a First World War Centenary Woodland. Here the combination of its ancient woodland, new establishing woodland, swathes of poppy fields in summer and works of art, create a strongly evocative landscape which is accessed only on foot.
Consensus	All of this area, with the exception of Nower Wood, is designated as AGLV. A small part of the Headley area (including Nower Wood) and extending south to the existing AONB was recommended for designation as AONB by HDA in 2013. Langley Vale was not recommended for designation as AONB.
Rarity/ Representativeness	<p>This landscape is representative of the rolling wooded chalk landscape found to the south within the AONB including stands of box scrub and areas of orchid rich chalk grassland (c.2%) as well as areas of good quality semi-improved grassland (c.7%) and broadleaved woodland (c.36%), the majority of which is ancient. Oyster Wood supports an important Dormouse population.</p> <p>The Langley Vale is the only national Commemorative Woodland in the Surrey Hills AONB and one of only 4 within the UK. It includes c. 21% deciduous woodland, much of which is ancient, and significant new areas of new deciduous broadleaved woodland.</p>

Candidate Area: Banstead Heath	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The special quality of this area derives from its expansive character which is uninterrupted by roads and development and imparts a strong sense of space. Cloaked in acid grassland and secondary woodland on former common, this landscape creates uncluttered simple compositions.
Consensus	Almost all of this area is designated as AGLV and the majority was subsequently recommended for designation as AONB by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	The open expanses of lowland dry acid grassland over chalk are rare within the context of the Surrey Hills AONB. The extensive nature of accessible greenspace close to conurbations is also rare in the context of the northern fringes of the Surrey Hills.

Candidate Area: Chipstead	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The area forms a series of steep sided chalk valleys and extensive areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and open downland, valued for its grass swards and rare orchids, which collectively give rise to scenic landscape compositions. Here elevated open views contrast with the intimate enclosure of the ancient woods, carpeted in bluebells and wild garlic in spring. The scale of the valleys, matrix of open and wooded slopes and

	integrity of this area, exudes a deeply rural character where the dispersed pattern of historic rural buildings and narrow, tree lined lanes add interest.
Consensus	All of this area is designated as AGLV and the majority was subsequently recommended for designation as AONB by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	Chalk landscapes are an important component of the Surrey Hills AONB. This landscape contains significant areas of lowland calcareous grassland (8% of the area) valued for their grass swards/rare orchids and butterflies and invertebrates, along with extensive areas of deciduous woodland (28% of the area). Its strong topography and habitats are representative of chalk landscapes.

Candidate Area: Happy Valley	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	Special qualities are derived from the scale and drama of the valley and its areas of chalk grassland and ancient woodland which create scenic compositions and unfolding views. This landscape has smooth, rounded convex slopes, emphasised by linear woodland shaws, and expresses a range of colours and textures throughout the seasons. The water tower of Netherne-on-the-Hill and Chaldon church, punctuate the skyline and add interest, reflecting the history of the area. This landscape abuts areas of significant population, but retains a high degree of tranquillity, especially where access is only possible on foot.
Consensus	Only land which falls within the County of Surrey was designated as AGLV (i.e. the southern area) and only a very small area south of Rook Lane was subsequently recommended for designation as AONB by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	Chalk grassland landscapes are an important component of the Surrey Hills AONB. The AONB as currently designated includes significant areas of chalk grassland on the steep scarp slopes but little land within the incised valleys of the North Downs. This area contains a dry chalk valley system which supports areas of species rich chalk grassland containing rare plant species such as greater yellow rattle and over 11 species of orchids (including national rarities), as well as semi-natural ancient woodland which supports important invertebrate populations. Parts of this landscape have recently been designated a National Nature Reserve.

Candidate Area: Caterham Woods	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	Special qualities relate to the drama and scale of the topography, elevated and glimpsed views across wooded slopes, extensive areas of intact semi-natural habitat close to built-up areas and historic features, which add interest and contribute to the natural beauty of the area. This is an inward-looking landscape but one which seamlessly connects to the existing AONB to the south.
Consensus	The majority of this area was designated as AGLV. The eastern half of the area subsequently recommended for designation as AONB by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This area comprises some of the steepest and most complex chalk slopes within the North Downs.

Candidate Area: Woldingham and Beddlesstead Valleys	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	This area contains some of the most intact and dramatic North Downs chalk valley landscapes. Views across valley slopes and along the sinuous valleys, combined with woodland and contrasting open slopes, creates a range of scenic compositions and visual interest which exude drama. The scale of the landscape means that land uses, such as golf courses, remain subservient set within a high quality and visually dominant landscape. This area offers tranquil rural countryside.
Consensus	The majority of this area was designated as AGLV. The HDA Study recommended part of the Woldingham Valley and the Beddlesstead Valley for designation as AONB but not the Halliloo Valley, land south of Woldingham or land within the London Borough of Bromley.
Rarity/ Representativeness	These areas reflect typical dry chalk valley systems and support notable areas of deciduous woodland and small patches of good quality semi-improved grassland.

Candidate Area: Limpsfield	
Special qualities reflected in candidate Area	This is a relatively small scale and intimate landscape, with a richly textured and colourful mosaic of small-scale medieval field patterns, woodland shaws, former common and remnant heath. The sometimes steep and complex topography of the greensand hills afford occasional longer distance views southwards which add to scenic quality, along with historic farmsteads and manor houses which form local focal points. Whilst this is a settled landscape, it is one in which tranquillity and connection to nature can easily be found.
Consensus	This area was designated as AGLV but only a very small area south of the B269 was identified as suitable for AONB

	designation by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	The interconnected network of habitats throughout this area has a high biodiversity value and is a continuation of similar habitats within the existing AONB.

Candidate Area: Godstone Hills	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The special quality of this area derives from its distinctive undulating topography across which is a diverse, and interconnected mosaic of deciduous woodland including shaws, fields, farmsteads and parklands. These hills comprise a sequence of summits which are visually connected to the dramatic chalk scarp to the north, and afford views southwards across the Low Weald farmland.
Consensus	During the original designation of the Surrey Hills AONB this area was requested for inclusion, however it was rejected by the National Parks Commission because the area formed 'islands', separate from the wider AONB. The western part of the area was subsequently designated as AGLV, forming a contiguous area with the AONB and including the settlement of Bletchingley. A narrower outlier of land was recommended for designation as AONB by HDA in 2013 focusing on the Greensand Hills character type.
Rarity/ Representativeness	The Greensand Hills are representative of the other greensand landscapes in the west of the existing AONB.

Candidate Area: Betchworth Hills and Mole Valley	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The special quality of this area derives from the combination of undulating hills, River Mole valley floor, and superb views towards the dramatic chalk scarp to the north and west. These qualities have supported the establishment of parklands which have taken advantage of the scenic qualities, and historic settlements and key landmark buildings which add a rich layer of cultural significance. The underlying sandstone geology is reflected in the topography, heathland habitat and incised lanes.
Consensus	Land between the AONB and A25, as well as land in the east of the area and south of Wonham Lane is designated as AGLV. The eastern half of the area was also identified as suitable for AONB designation by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	Reigate Heath contains areas of lowland dry acid grassland and lowland heathland which are rare within the context of the Surrey Hills AONB. This Candidate Area also includes good quality semi-improved grassland along the River Mole. The combination of river meadow landscape, parkland and vistas

	to the chalk escarpment are rare in the context of the Surrey Hills AONB as a whole.
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Candidate Area: Ockley Low Weald	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	This proposed extension is a gently undulating pastoral landscape comprising small-scale fields, species rich meadows, ancient woodlands (including linear shaws) where close proximity views to the rising greensand hills to the north, lift scenic quality. It is a settled landscape with a high concentration of traditional rural farm buildings, connected by a series of minor lanes and tracks which form a grid of greenways. Water is an important component of this landscape including incised ghyll valleys cloaked in woodland and numerous water bodies including those at Forest Green and Vann Lake. This landscape has a tranquil and long-established feel.
Consensus	Land west of the A29 was designated as AGLV but none of this area was identified as suitable for AONB designation by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This intact and high-quality Low Weald farmland is representative of the historically important land management connections between the Greensand Hills and the Low Weald. This area includes a significant number of vernacular buildings including 2 Grade II* and over 50 Grade II, areas of deciduous woodland and is likely to be particularly important for species rich meadows.

Candidate Area: Dunsfold Low Weald	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The area forms a small scale, undulating, pastoral landscape which has a settled and established character, cloaked in ancient woodland and traversed by narrow lanes flanked by hedges and mature trees. This part of the Low Weald affords close proximity framed views to the rising hills to the north, across the undulating landform. These scenic qualities are complemented by the intimacy of the incised wooded ghylls which support significant populations of mosses and liverwort. There is a strong local vernacular of red brick, hanging tiles and pantile roofs which provide visual unity and interest, and the area has a high tranquillity with a rural backwater quality.
Consensus	This area was designated as AGLV and also identified as suitable for AONB designation by HDA in 2013.
Rarity/ Representativeness	This part of the Low Weald landscape is unique in its position nestled at the foot of the Greensand Hills, and contained by rising land within the existing AONB both to the north and west. This area is representative of the glassmaking areas within the existing AONB, it is also valued for its unimproved neutral grassland habitats.

Candidate Area: East Hampshire	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The special quality of the qualifying areas derives from the combination of narrow river valley pastures and rounded greensand hills which are traversed by sinuous lanes, often incised into the underlying bedrock, as well as extensive areas of former common supporting a rich mosaic of rare and nationally valued heathland habitats, as well as areas of ancient woodland and cultural heritage features. These qualities are also common with the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) as set out in the Surrey Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2020-2025, page 17.
Consensus	The areas of Ludshott and Bramshott common were identified as having high scenic quality by the South Downs National Park Inspector. The area in the north and within Whitmoor Vale has no known consensus regarding natural beauty, although the latter is highly regarded for its rights of way and walks from centres of population.
Rarity/ Representativeness	Ludshott Common is one of the largest remaining areas of heathland in East Hampshire. In association with Bramshott Common and the heaths/commons within the northern part of the South Downs National Park, and with the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB), it forms an exceptional collection of heathland habitats supporting rare species. The Candidate Area is representative of other greensand landscapes found within the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and includes landscape and built features typical of the area including hollow ways, valley floor pastures and vernacular buildings.

Candidate Area: Dockenfield Hills	
Special qualities reflected in Candidate Area	The special qualities of this landscape relate to its tranquil and rural backwater ambience. The pattern of mature hedgerows and ancient woods, majestic oaks and rural winding lanes impart an established character, where settlement (including oast houses) nestle in gentle folds and where higher ridges afford long distance views.
Consensus	This area's landscape value is reflected in its designation as AGLV and the recommendation to designate the majority of the area as AONB by HDA in 2013.

Rarity/ Representativeness	This area contains the tributary stream valleys that feed into the Wey Valley within the AONB. This landscape is a natural extension to the existing AONB and expresses many similar qualities including local vernacular buildings, meadow habitat and ancient woodland.
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3.3 Conclusion

- 3.3.1 The above analysis demonstrates that the Candidate Areas comprise a combination of chalk and greensand landscapes, river valleys and Low Weald farmland. As a group they have special qualities which are representative of the existing AONB and /or rare in the national context, and for which a local consensus regarding the desirability of designation as AONB, or as a valued landscape, has existed for many years. In addition, the relative national rarity of areas of downland, chalk heath and wetland, adds further weight to this conclusion.
- 3.3.2 Taken individually, each area offers special qualities which complement and contribute to the wider outstanding qualities of the existing AONB. Many of the areas identified for designation as part of the AONB have additional value due to their juxtaposition with the existing AONB and urban conurbations. This coupled with their contribution to building landscape resilience for the AONB, through physical widening of the designation (especially where it is currently narrow) and scope to enhance and connect priority habitat (both of which directly bear upon the achievement of the AONB purpose), means that they form very important steppingstones and corridors. In this context, and in accordance with Natural England guidance, a conclusion has been reached that the Candidate Area in association with the existing AONB, has special qualities which are of national significance.

4.0 Current Mechanisms Powers and Duties

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section describes the mechanisms, powers and duties which operate within the existing Surrey Hills AONB and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The following topics are addressed:

- Legal powers and duties
- Management structure staff resources and initiatives
- Planning
- Funding

4.1.2 The statutory framework for protected landscapes in England was first established in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside (NPAC) Act 1949. The legislation has been amended and added to many times since then. Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 consolidates much of the legislation in relation to AONBs, bringing it together and updating various references.

4.1.3 The local authorities whose area wholly or partly includes land currently designated as AONB, to which the statutory powers and duties relating to AONBs apply, are Surrey County Council (SCC), Waverley Borough Council (WBC), Guildford Borough Council (GBC), Mole Valley District Council (MVDC), Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (R&BBC), and Tandridge District Council (TDC) as shown on Figure 1 (bound separately).

4.2 Current Powers and Duties related to AONBs

Powers

4.2.1 Sections 82 and 83 of the CRoW Act 2000 relate to the designation process. Section 84 clarifies that some further provisions apply to AONBs including powers to make access agreements and access orders, as well as consultation in connection with the development plan.

4.2.2 Section 84 (4) specifically provides for a local authority whose area consists of or includes the whole or any part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to *'have the power to take all such action as appears to them expedient for the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.'*

Duties

4.2.3 Section 85 (1) confers a general duty of relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of AONB designation as follows:

“In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.”

- 4.2.4 Section 85 (2) defines ‘relevant authorities’ for this purpose as encompassing any Minister of the Crown, any public body, any statutory undertaker and any person holding public office. This legislation also stipulates that ‘public body’ includes:
- a. a county council, county borough council, district council, parish council or community council;
 - b. a joint planning board within the meaning of section 2 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
 - c. a joint committee appointed under section 102(1) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 4.2.5 The Section 85 (1) duty requires all public bodies, statutory undertakers (such as water and electricity companies) and holders of public office to have regard to the AONB purpose when carrying out functions in relation to or affecting land within the Surrey Hills AONB. A Government paper⁵ provides guidance on how public bodies should exercise this duty and highlights that the duty applies to all decisions (not just those that might narrowly be seen as ‘countryside’ issues), and that compliance with the duty should be capable of being demonstrated. The focus provided by this duty does not apply in areas which are not designated as AONB, such as in the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) or undesignated land.
- 4.2.6 Examples of how this duty is put into effect within the Surrey Hills AONB include
- planning matters (considered in more detail below);
 - Environment Agency formally consulting with the AONB Board on flooding and other projects;
 - Electricity distribution network companies and telecommunications companies consulting the AONB at the pre-application stage on proposals for infrastructure and other work.
- 4.2.7 Although this duty does not override the particular obligations or considerations which must be taken into account by relevant authorities in carrying out their core functions, it does require relevant authorities to ensure that the AONB purpose is recognised as an essential consideration in reaching decisions and when undertaking activities that impact on a designated area.

⁵ Duties on Relevant Authorities to have regard to the Purposes of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, Defra, 2005

Management Plan

- 4.2.8 Section 89 (2) of the CRoW Act 2000, places a duty on relevant local authorities to prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of an AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it and a further duty to review the plan at "intervals of not more than five years". An AONB Management Plan sets out the policy for the management of an AONB and includes an action plan for carrying out activity in support of the purpose of designation. The production of a Management Plan on a statutory basis is a major benefit that flows from designation; allowing as it does for an integrated and place-specific approach to ensuring that the natural beauty of the area is conserved and enhanced.
- 4.2.9 The current Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan covers the period 2020 to 2025 and sets out the management objectives for the AONB as agreed by the relevant local authorities and supported by the organisations that make up the Surrey Hills AONB Board. The Management Plan plays an important role in supporting and co-ordinating the action of the organisations that make up the AONB Board, including setting the work programme of the AONB team. It also supplements local plans and is a key tool in the decision-making process of all districts and boroughs that share the AONB and whom also have a role in its protection. The Management Plan is a material consideration in determining planning applications within and adjacent to the AONB.
- 4.2.10 The current Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan also refers to the Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). This locally defined valued landscape includes land on the margins of the AONB. This area is not designated as AONB and the AONB statutory powers and duties outlined above do not apply within it. However, the policies set out in the Management Plan have been applied to the AGLV areas. Specifically, the Management Plan states that the AGLV has '*acted as a buffer to the AONB*' and has been '*significant in conserving the landscape setting of some towns and villages.*' It goes on to state that '*the application of the Management Plan policies to AGLV land has been instrumental in helping to conserve and enhance the Surrey Hills*'.
- 4.2.11 This is significant given the wording of the NPPF para 176 which now makes specific reference to setting (refer to Section 4.4 below).

4.3 Current Management Structure, Staff Resources and Initiatives

- 4.3.1 For the Surrey Hills AONB, the powers and duties noted above are overseen by a Board whose role encompasses the management of the staff team and its finances. It was originally formed in 1998 as a Joint Advisory Committee and later in October 2013 it was reviewed with a new Constitution and the creation of a Board. The Board acts as a catalyst and facilitator, preparing and leading the implementation of the AONB Management Plan on behalf of its constituent bodies and other organisations. It also acts as an advisory body, particularly with regard to policies and the allocation of resources in relation to the protection and enhancement of the AONB.

4.3.2 The Board has an independent chair. Its core funding members comprise elected members from the six local authorities with land in the Surrey Hills AONB (as noted in para 4.1.3 above) plus the National Trust and Natural England (which represent Defra and are co-opted members). A rolling Memorandum of Understanding is agreed by the local funding partners.

4.3.3 The Surrey Hills Board also comprises advisory members including Surrey Wildlife Trust, National Farmers Union, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Country Land and Business Association, Surrey Association of Local Councils, Surrey Hills Society, Surrey Hills Trust Fund and Surrey Hills Enterprises. There is also a wider partnership which includes Surrey Archaeology Society, Forestry Commission, RSPB, Ramblers Association and British Horse Society.

4.3.4 These latter three organisations reflect the '*Delivery Partners*' known as the '*Surrey Hills Family*' and are facilitated by the Surrey Hills AONB Board.

- ***The Surrey Hills Society*** is an independent charity that acts as a membership organisation to recruit and inform individuals with an interest in the Surrey Hills by running a range of walks, talks and awareness raising activity. The Society is a strong membership organisation which provides a vehicle for increasing the knowledge and enjoyment of the area by members. The Trustees and Management Team are all unpaid volunteers. The Society has recently recruited a volunteer coordinator.
- ***The Surrey Hills Trust Fund*** is a dedicated fund established under the umbrella of The Community Foundation for Surrey (an independent charitable trust) to attract donations from individuals and companies to ensure the continued success of the AONB Unit. The funds help to conserve and maintain the fragile environment of the Surrey Hills through a programme of projects and activities. Examples of funded projects include 'Inspiring Views'. This initiative seeks to open up viewpoints and install artworks along the Greensand Way.
- ***The Surrey Hills Enterprises*** is a separate Community Interest Company whose mission is to promote the Surrey Hills as a national asset for the benefit of local businesses in order to enhance the community and conserve the unique heritage. Controlled by a Board of Directors, including representatives of the AONB Board, it offers membership to commercial partners to use the Surrey Hills Trademark on behalf of the Surrey Hills AONB Board. It works with businesses within the AONB but is also open to businesses within 6 miles of the current AONB boundary. Member businesses have to show sustainability practices and pledge to support the Surrey Hills.

4.3.5 The role of the Surrey Hills AONB Board is set out in their Constitution which is provided in appendix 1 of this report. Its primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. However, it also:

- promotes sustainable development and appropriate enjoyment of the AONB
- promotes public and political awareness and support for the AONB both locally and nationally
- makes the AONB relevant to the people who live and work in and around the Surrey Hills and to visitors to the area
- oversees the use of the Surrey Hills trademark and the development of the Surrey Hills brand
- ensures the effective delivery, monitoring and review of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan, and
- seeks sources of permanent funding that secure the financial future of the AONB Unit

4.3.6 The Surrey Hills AONB Team co-ordinates, facilitates and delivers in partnership the priorities set out in the Management Plan. The AONB team is hosted by Surrey County Council. Individual full-time posts on the team include an AONB Director and Marketing and Communications Officer, along with a full time Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme Manager. The AONB team is also supported by a Finance and Office manager, Surrey Hills Working Group and Grants Administrator, and Planning Advisor. It currently has no funds to support volunteer placements for students or graduate trainees.

4.3.7 A Surrey Hills Arts Officer is part funded by the AONB. Although employed by Surrey Arts, this post is considered to be an integral part of the Surrey Hills AONB team and draws heavily on the beauty of the Surrey Hills to engage people in the landscape, especially the young and those with mental health issues. The work of the Arts Officer builds partnerships to deliver art programmes.

4.3.8 Importantly the Surrey Hills Team does not include any rangers or land managers dealing directly with management issues on the ground. Nevertheless, the AONB Team have been instrumental in setting up three Farm Land Management Clusters including:

- West Surrey Greensand – this aligns with Natural England’s Heathland Connections nature recovery project and applies west of the A3 between Haslemere, Farnham and Guildford
- Greenscapes – this has a woodland focus in the south Surrey Hills (Godalming/Bramley area but has potential to extend across the Greensand Hills)
- North Downs – this includes land between Guildford and Dorking with the intention to extend east, linking strategically to the Big Chalk initiative.

4.3.9 These farm clusters cover about 40% of the AONB. This initiative was funded by Defra/RPA under the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund and will in future continue to be funded by the FiPL initiative.

4.3.10 One of the main practical benefits of AONB designation is to foster an integrated approach to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty. This integrated approach to the management of the AONB means in practice that actions taken or encouraged by the AONB team and the wider Partnership, are designed to deliver several relevant objectives at the same time. This means they have multiple benefits for the AONB's purpose, the wider environment and the economic and social well-being of local communities, so that maximum value for money is derived from the resources employed.

4.3.11 Integrated management is achieved within the AONB through adopting a strategic, targeted approach, with the AONB team developing a leadership role with Surrey County Council and other local bodies, businesses, community organisations and environmental bodies. Examples of some of the initiatives the AONB works with include:

- Surrey Local Nature Partnership (LNP)
- Surrey Land Management Framework
- The Surrey Countryside Access Forum

4.3.12 Furthermore, the AONB have published Environmental Design Guidance for Country Lanes and Villages within the AONB and have also adopted the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) position statement - the Colchester Declaration. This includes a commitment to preparing a Nature Recovery Plan and to meeting targets for favourable condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), wildlife rich habitats outside of protected sites, and new woodland planting.

4.3.13 The Surrey Hills Family Delivery Plan, details how the strategic objectives in the AONB Management Plan will be delivered through partnership working and facilitation. The strategic targets are themed in accordance with the Management Plan Pillars and include:

- Pillar 1: Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination.
- Pillar 2: Landscape Conservation and Enhancement
- Pillar 3: Access, Enjoyment and Understanding
- Pillar 4: Growing the Surrey Hills Economy
- Pillar 5: Planning

4.3.14 Initiatives under each of these themes are set out in more detail below.

Pillar 1: Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination.

4.3.15 The focus of this theme is to improve communication through an enhanced AONB website, social media such as Twitter, press releases and articles. It also includes updating a Surrey Hills Communications Strategy to ensure protection of the brand, and ensuring sound governance including securing financial contributions, budget managing, high performance and a revised constitution. Furthermore, it includes the

development of a Trust Fund Strategy to deliver initiatives such as:

- 'Into the Wild' programme
- Full time post for a Greening Communities project manager
- Promoting conservation work by disadvantaged youth groups
- Parish and community biodiversity projects
- Inspiring Views initiative

4.3.16 Focus is also placed on delivering a new Management Plan (2023) and developing policy and strategy including nature recovery such as 'Big Chalk' and 'Farming in Protected Landscapes', and monitoring landscape change.

Pillar 2: Landscape Conservation and Enhancement

4.3.17 Engagement in agricultural issues is of particular importance and relevance to the Surrey Hills AONB. Such activity ranges from the strategic to the specific and practical. Examples include supporting farm clusters, facilitating collaboration and advice to farmers and land managers with regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity; and hosting a series of workshops with land managers and advisors.

4.3.18 The AONB also has a focus on the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (which runs from June 2021 to March 2024) and through which farmers and land managers can be supported to carry out projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and cultural heritage, or support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses. This is a programme of funding for one-off projects covering these areas of work, not an agri-environment scheme. This is open to all farms and landscape management within the Surrey Hills AONB but it can also support activity on other land where projects can demonstrate benefit to the Surrey Hills.

4.3.19 The AONB Team works together with other organisations on the Partnership to help ensure that land management initiatives contribute to the statutory AONB purpose and to manage situations where potential conflict can occur, for example, between people and wildlife. Examples of the types of recent activity undertaken by the AONB include:

- Take-the-Lead campaign
- Hedgerow Heroes initiative
- Surrey Strategic Greenway Network working with Cycling UK – a study looking at creating active transport links from centres of population, across the AGLV to the AONB

4.3.20 The AONB can also bring experience of leading Heritage Fund projects that include Scheduled Ancient Monuments and parkland landscapes including Holmbury Hill Iron Age Fort, historic 17th Century features in the Tillingbourne Valley and the Capability Brown Gatton Park restoration.

Pillar 3: Access, Enjoyment and Understanding

4.3.21 Many of the activities organised and promoted by the AONB are designed to enable both local people and visitors to appreciate and enjoy the AONB's special qualities. These activities are often also directly beneficial to the local economy and particularly the tourism sector. Specific examples of the type of activity that the Candidate Areas could also benefit from in the future include:

- Production of a range of publications such as the quarterly newsletter and walking and cycling guides which promote the AONB
- Walking guides promoting routes which connect into the wider AONB
- Community signage within towns and villages on the edge of the AONB, welcoming visitors at the 'gateway' e.g. Cranleigh and Shalford
- Opening up and promoting new Inspiring Views
- Wide ranging events programme and establishing artisan trails

Pillar 4: Growing the Surrey Hills Economy

4.3.22 This focuses on supporting local businesses ensuring sustainable development, increased markets and improved customer base for Surrey Hills products and services through establishing Trademark Members. It also seeks to host conferences and events which promote sustainable economies as well as seeing funding opportunities to promote tourism and increase investment.

4.3.23 In particular the assistance offered to local businesses via the Surrey Hills Enterprises extends within 6 miles of the current AONB boundary. Any extension to the AONB would increase this reach.

Pillar 5: Planning

4.3.24 This focuses on influencing planning policy and decisions through advice and engagement on the development of relevant plans and Supplementary Planning Documents, ongoing advice in relation to planning applications, raising awareness of the pressures on the AONB, need for changes which furthers the purpose of designation and support to Local Planning Authorities, by providing evidence in relation to planning appeals. This is considered in more detail below.

4.4 Planning

4.4.1 The Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) with responsibility for planning⁶ within the AONB are Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council, Guildford Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, and Tandridge District Council.

4.4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the underpinning principles and policies for the operation of the planning system in England, and is pertinent to

⁶ The term planning in this context includes National Planning context, Local Plan process and development control.

all authorities in England, including in relation to AONBs. Paragraph 176 refers specifically to AONBs as follows:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads”.

4.4.3 It goes on to state in relation to development:

“The scale and extent of development within all of these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

4.4.4 In terms of major development, it states at paragraph 177:

“When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.”

4.4.5 As a result of the NPPF, Local Plans produced by local authorities with land in AONBs, contain specific policies in relation to AONBs which give effect to NPPF paragraphs 176 and 177 and other relevant sections of the NPPF. In any circumstance where an existing local development plan diverges from the NPPF, decision making authorities are required to afford great weight to the provisions in the framework. This serves to limit the influence of any out-of-date local policy.

4.4.6 In terms of current relevant Local Plan policies, all the Local Planning Authorities which contain AONB landscape associated with the Surrey Hills, already have extant AONB policies in place. Furthermore, the majority of the proposed AONB Candidate Areas which are AGLV have benefited from specific planning policy associated with the AGLV designation. The local plan policy for the AGLV recognises, in general terms, the special qualities of the landscape, although it is not accompanied by any assessment document which sets these out.

4.4.7 Local Authorities with existing AONB/AGLV policies include Waverley, Guildford, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge (these policies are set out in detail in Appendix 2). Many of the Local Authorities with AGLV areas, make reference to a suspension of the decision to remove the AGLV until such time as the Surrey Hills AONB boundary has been reviewed. This boundary review assessment therefore has implications for all remaining AGLV landscapes which are not identified as falling within the Candidate Area and suitable for AONB designation. This in turn may have

an implication for the AONB which up until this point has benefited from the AGLV which Local Plan documents acknowledge has formed a 'buffer' and supported the 'integrity' of the AONB. This is also implied in the AONB Management Plan as noted in paragraph 4.2.10 above.

- 4.4.8 Permitted Development Rights are also relevant considerations in relation to development control in the area proposed for designation. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (the GPDO) sets out thresholds below which permitted development can occur subject to various limitations and conditions. These are referred to as Permitted Development Rights (PDRs). Within AONBs, Conservation Areas, National Parks, the Broads and World Heritage Sites, certain PDR's are withdrawn. These areas are referred to as 'Article 2(3) land' within the GPDO. Schedule 2 sets out the specific PDRs which do not apply on Article 2(3) land including AONBs in England, or where restrictions to specific PDRs apply in such areas. These are summarised in Appendix 4.
- 4.4.9 With the exception of the listed exclusions and restrictions set out in Appendix 4, the remaining PDRs generally apply equally within AONBs as elsewhere. In the circumstances where PDRs do not exist or are withdrawn, the standard planning application process applies. The PDRs that are withdrawn within AONBs are withdrawn in the context of the statutory AONB purpose, namely the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. The restriction on PDR's does not prevent the types of development listed in Appendix 4, but it does provide an opportunity for local authorities to seek to ensure that such developments take into account the special qualities of the AONB, in line with current planning policy.
- 4.4.10 As noted above in paragraph 3.3.6 this process is assisted by the dedicated focus of the AONB Planning Advisor which is a part time post dealing with approximately 300 planning applications per year. The Planning Advisor provides comments primarily on development control casework within the Surrey Hills AONB and may become involved in appeals. Comments on planning applications set out the duties of the planning authority in relation to the AONB purpose, and importantly, highlight where a proposed development may affect the natural beauty of the AONB. This process of consultation therefore enables the special qualities of the AONB to be brought to the fore in planning decisions within the AONB.
- 4.4.11 This consultation process is, however, less formalised where development may be proposed outside of the AONB, such as within the AGLV/setting of the AONB. In these situations, the Planning Advisor works with partners to ensure awareness of relevant development proposals which lie beyond the AONB but which nonetheless may have an effect on it. In some cases, the land immediately adjacent to the AONB makes a significant contribution to the natural beauty and special qualities of land within the AONB.

4.5 Funding

4.5.1 AONB funding comes from a number of sources and is negotiated with funding partners each year. Central government is the major financial contributor to the AONBs' core costs. Defra provides 75% of the core funding which in 2021/22 equated to £c.190k. The local authorities currently contribute as follows:

- Surrey County Council – 12.5%
- 5 Districts and Boroughs – 12.5% (with Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge District Councils making a smaller contribution, reflecting the smaller extent of AONB land within their area).

4.5.2 Core funding is provided for the AONB Team's direct costs employing staff, with specialist skills and expertise relevant to the delivery of the AONB's statutory purpose and providing skills, expertise, focus and leadership.

4.5.3 The Surrey Hills AONB is also very successful at securing and managing other financial resources and grants for work in the area. This may be from other government bodies and charitable organisations which help to fund initiatives directly managed by the AONB, or provide grants to others which indirectly benefit the Surrey Hills AONB. In 2021/22 for example, rounded estimates for externally funded project work equate to c. £105,300, broken down as follows:

- North Downs Facilitation Fund c. £12,800
- Greenscape Facilitation Fund c. £15,500
- West Surrey Greensands Facilitation Fund c. £17,000
- Defra ELMS work c. £35,000
- Surrey Hills Arts c. £7,500
- Inspiring Views c. £17,500

4.5.4 Between 2021 and 2025 the AONB has secured c. £760K through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Scheme equating. The AONB is also looking to develop a prospectus with the Surrey Hills Trust Fund for being part of Big Chalk expansion. Furthermore, the AONB can access funds not available to non-designated landscapes such as The Visual Impact Provision project by National Grid.

4.5.5 Despite these funding streams which the AONB is able to tap into, it is openly acknowledged by the AONB that resources are the single most limiting factor for the AONB team.

4.6 Conclusions

4.6.1 This analysis provides an overview of the current management and mechanisms, powers and duties which operate within the Surrey Hills AONB. It demonstrates that the AONB has a considerable reach despite general perceptions of being under resourced, and that it achieves its work principally through partnership working.

5.0 Management Arrangements Which Would Apply Post Designation

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section considers the arrangements that would apply in the Candidate Area should designation take place. In doing so, the following topics are addressed:

- Legal powers and duties
- Regulation
- Planning
- Resources and certainty
- Integrated management

5.2 Legal Powers and Duties

5.2.1 Once an Order varying the boundaries of an AONB comes into effect, the powers and duties outlined in section 4.2, including Sections 84(4) and Section 89(2) of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, would immediately apply within the areas concerned. In short, designation would formally extend the responsibilities of the AONB team, AONB Board and Delivery Partners to the areas now being proposed for designation.

5.2.2 If a legal Order varying the boundary of the AONB was to include land beyond the Surrey County Boundary, the relevant powers and duties in relation to the Surrey Hills AONB would extend to these additional Local Authorities. These Local Authorities would also become AONB Board members, increasing the number of core members and potentially increasing administrative complexity. Designation of the Candidate Areas would also extend the Section 85 (1) duty placed on these relevant authorities to have regard to the statutory purpose of the AONB in the area.

5.2.3 The majority of the land within the Candidate Area is currently AGLV and has therefore benefitted from this local planning policy. However, the AGLV has no statutory basis, and designation as AONB would provide the security, permanence and strength of protection that statutory national designation affords. This would apply to chalk, greensand hills, low weald and river valley landscapes. Furthermore, including some areas which have not previously been designated AGLV, such as Happy Valley and land east of Betchworth, would also provide increased security, permanence and strength of protection for those areas.

5.3 Regulation

5.3.1 Designation of any area as AONB does not represent an increase in regulation

beyond differences in policy and permitted development relevant to the planning management functions of the local authorities, and which are referred to above in section 4.4. The existing regulatory functions of the local authorities for example, remain with these local authorities and would operate in exactly the same way, albeit taking into account their duties and powers under s84 and s85 of the CRoW Act. The differences in planning, as provided for by the NPPF and local planning policy, would however assist with the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty in a way which would not necessarily happen if it were not designated.

- 5.3.2 Designation as AONB does not impose additional bureaucracy on agriculture. Environmental regulations (e.g. pollution control and waste), protected areas (such as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones) and other agricultural regulations are the same inside and outside AONBs and cannot be changed.
- 5.3.3 Activities which further the AONB purpose are generally achieved through partnership and persuasion, rather than by regulation. Local authorities do not have power to, for example, compel a particular type of land management on farmland, and the AONB Team cannot work on land without the permission of the landowner. Work is undertaken by agreement (sometimes with financial incentives) or by advising and persuading others to act in a manner which contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the area. Financial incentives for farmers and land managers to undertake work beneficial to the environment, through agri-environmental schemes have historically given some priority to AONBs and National Parks, in recognition of the national importance of these areas. The FiPL Scheme is an example of this.
- 5.3.4 Although it is not possible to predict how such schemes will operate in the longer term, it is reasonable to assume that land within an AONB may be given some priority relative to undesignated areas in future, even if future agri-environmental schemes contain multiple objectives that may not be specifically relevant to the AONB purpose. The land within the Candidate Area for designation would benefit from this.

5.4 Planning

- 5.4.1 AONB designation would also help address some of the significant planning issues affecting the area, for example pressures associated with road infrastructure developments, minerals extraction and housing, through clarifying and articulating the wider context of the nationally important landscape within which they are located. As previously noted, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places great weight on conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, giving them the highest status of protection. Designation of an extension to the Surrey Hills AONB would mean that this provision applies to areas which are not currently protected in this way. Furthermore, bringing the Candidate Area into the AONB would also ensure that these areas benefit from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that planning proposals do not conflict

with the purpose of AONB designation.

- 5.4.2 Designation of the Candidate Area would also enable greater clarity regarding how development within the wider landscape may affect the special qualities of the existing AONB. This adds to the case for designating the qualifying areas so that the AONB duties can be applied effectively in these circumstances.
- 5.4.3 Furthermore, the Local Authorities are currently reviewing their approach to landscape policy across the whole county which has previously supported the AGLV and with a possible move to a different policy approach based on the county-wide landscape character assessment. This has created a degree of uncertainty. In future some Local Authorities may adopt to define Local Landscape Designations while others may not. This would mean that areas currently afforded special protection as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) may lose this status, since the specific policies which currently afford these areas a higher level of protection than wider countryside, would be removed. Designation as AONB of parts of the AGLV which meet the natural beauty criterion⁷ would enable additional planning policy and development control protection to be applied, ensuring that the special qualities of qualifying areas are conserved and enhanced into the future and thus would provide greater clarity. It is not the purpose of this study to determine what should happen to the remaining areas of AGLV, however the wording in paragraph 189 of the NPPF (Dec 2024) highlights the importance of the setting of nationally protected landscapes. Post designation much of the remaining AGLV, and indeed some areas of wider countryside, will form the setting to the AONB. The outcome of the Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review may provide an opportunity for a review of the AGLV by local planning authorities taking account of:
- Attractive, valued landscape which contribute to the immediate setting (and therefore the natural beauty) of the AONB; and
 - Other attractive, valued landscapes which are not part of the AONB setting but are nonetheless locally valued.
- 5.4.4 The technical assessment of natural beauty has considered AGLV land and collates evidence against natural beauty factors. This provides an evidence base for the qualities of AGLV land which has previously not existed, again providing greater clarity in decision making.
- 5.4.5 Where land proposed for AONB designation falls within planning authorities which have had no previous experience of AONB designation (e.g. Borough of Croydon), there will be a need for local plan documents to be updated to include relevant AONB landscape policy.
- 5.4.6 In conclusion, much of the area proposed for designation is already recognised as sensitive landscape by the local planning authorities. Designation would, however,

⁷ The Candidate Area comprises 76% AGLV.

ensure that the statutory duties and powers of an AONB apply, and particular account is thus paid to, special qualities and natural beauty when planning for the sustainable development of the areas concerned, adding weight to the case for designation. All the relevant local planning authorities, with the exception of the London Borough of Croydon and Epsom and Ewell, already have experience of and expertise in, determining planning casework within nationally protected landscapes.

5.5 Housing Need and the Growth Agenda

- 5.5.1 Designation of the proposed Candidate Area as part of the Surrey Hills AONB offers a strategic solution to growth in an area where there is high development pressure. Designation as AONB helps to guide it so that areas of higher natural capital are conserved, whilst allowing development to take place. The Surrey Hills AONB published resources and guidance to support appropriate development include a 'Building Design into the Surrey Hills' which provides guidance on the preparation of Design Statements for new development and the Surrey Landscape Character assessment sets out a landscape strategy and recommendations for built development.
- 5.5.2 Importantly, the vast majority of the proposed Candidate Area does not include land that would naturally be the focus of major development. This is because c.70 percent of the proposed Candidate Area already falls within Green Belt, a specific planning policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and as a result a greater barrier to development in these areas than AONB designation, the purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. AONB designation would not alter existing Green Belt.
- 5.5.3 Similarly, over half of the proposed Candidate Area is already highly constrained as a result of existing designations for nature/historic environment or land use type which is unsuitable for development, such as floodplain/priority habitat. Major development is unlikely to be permitted in these areas as a result.
- 5.5.4 In addition, a significant portion of the Candidate Areas include land which is relatively rural and away from existing settlements. Sustainable development best practice often recommends focussing development around existing settlement to promote more compact and efficient growth patterns. Within the Surrey councils, East Hampshire, and the London boroughs of Bromley and Croydon, pressure for development and future allocations are focussed around existing settlements. In Surrey for example, 9 towns (including Epsom, Farnham, Guildford, Reigate and Redhill) have been identified for the focus of significant development. Whilst in some cases, the Candidate Areas extend towards these towns, this is only in one direction and often includes land already designated for other natural heritage features.
- 5.5.5 For the reasons above, the designation of land within the Candidate Areas is not considered to represent a significant impediment to the delivery of the Government's

Growth Agenda. In fact, designation is likely to bring greater clarity in decision making, providing an evidence base (which has not existed for areas of AGLV hitherto), assisting expedient decision making. Furthermore, the relevant local planning authorities affected by the proposals were consulted during the Statutory and Public Consultations and did not raise concerns regarding their ability to meet housing demand.

5.6 Resources (Finance and Volunteers) and Certainty

- 5.6.1 Any Defra funding for a new AONB would be determined via government spending review processes. It is anticipated that 75% of the baseline core funding for an AONB Unit and its work would come from Defra, matched by 25% from the local authorities. The degree of core funding is in the gift of Defra; but has historically been based on the size of the AONB and the degree of complexity of the Governance arrangements. Local authorities with land within an AONB may contribute funding to the AONB although they are under no legal obligation to do so. They may also identify additional funding for specific local priorities.
- 5.6.2 It is estimated that for every £1 of Defra funding a further £1.88 of additional income is generated to an AONB and that this compares favourably with other public bodies including National Park Authorities. Furthermore, income can be generated from other sources such as the use of volunteers and grants administered by other bodies but secured by the AONB unit. A detailed assessment by the Cotswolds Conservation Board showed that in 2012/13, the Board converted core grants from Defra of £490,000 and from Local Authorities of £155,000 into a total income to the AONB from Board activity of £2.8 Million (a gearing of Defra and LA funding of 4.3 times).
- 5.6.3 Through the AONB Management Plan, AONB designation provides a clearly defined set of objectives and outcomes within a geographically focused area which significantly facilitates the targeting of resources, including specific Government funding for protected landscapes. This is also assisted by the practical administration of grants by the AONB Team, as well as the targeting of other funding initiatives. These funding advantages can be difficult to replicate in the wider countryside. Designation of the Candidate Areas would provide greater certainty to these landscapes than would otherwise exist, both in terms of the future focus on conservation and enhancement, and of the likely financial commitments available to undertake this work.
- 5.6.4 The future potential for the Surrey Hills AONB to generate other funds from charitable sources is also likely to benefit the areas proposed for designation. This is demonstrated by an independent review of the activities of charitable bodies supporting AONBs in England and Wales (Rural Focus Ltd, May 2017) which concludes that over half of the 38 AONB's in England and Wales now have charities which are working to safeguard and support the designation and its purpose. This is

particularly the case for the Surrey Hills AONB which benefits from the work of the Surrey Hills Trust Fund and Surrey Hills Society, which are held in the Community Foundation for Surrey.

- 5.6.5 Extending the Surrey Hills AONB to include the Candidate Area would help to ensure that such resources are secured in the future and available to the AONB Partnership and Team for the benefit of natural beauty and local communities throughout the proposed area. This includes access to a significant number of volunteers through the Surrey Hills Society.
- 5.6.6 In terms of the work of the Surrey Hills Enterprises (SHE), which currently operates up to 6 miles beyond the existing AONB boundary, an extension to the AONB would allow SHE to consider operating in a wider area including new administrative areas such as the London Borough of Croydon, potentially providing local producers with greater opportunities to market.

5.7 Integrated Management

- 5.7.1 AONB designation ensures that policies and objectives set out in the AONB Management Plan, apply to the designated land. As noted in paragraph 4.3.10 above, integrated management is achieved through the AONB team developing a leadership approach and working in partnership utilising FiPL and ELMs. The Surrey Hills AONB makes a difference on the ground through working in partnership, channelling resources to a range of conservation bodies and partnerships who are involved in active management on the ground including:
- Surrey Wildlife Trust
 - Woodland Trust
 - National Trust
 - Surrey Countryside Partnerships
 - Surrey Nature Partnership
- 5.7.2 These organisations are not restricted to working within the AONB, but also extend activity across the AGLV and wider countryside, nor is their focus primarily on natural beauty. The AONB designation however provides a specific focus for initiatives and activity, ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape.
- 5.7.3 Enlarging the Surrey Hills AONB to encompass the Candidate Areas would help to ensure a focus on the special qualities of these areas (as set out in the tables above) both for their own sake and in the context of the wider AONB. Without designation it would be unlikely this integrated focus would be achieved. This is important given the linked agendas of nature recovery and climate change adaptation both of which require operating at a landscape scale and where linking habitats can improve resilience. It is particularly relevant to the existing AONB where it is narrow in extent and where the inclusion of adjoining landscapes could provide a broader landscape

and natural beauty focus to existing sites primarily valued for recreation, nature and heritage.

- 5.7.4 Furthermore, extending the AONB boundary to connect to and be contiguous with existing landscape designations such as the South Downs National Park and Kent Downs AONB, presents further opportunities for shared resources and expertise within the Nationally Protected Landscapes family.
- 5.7.5 Designation would also formalise activity which has for many years been undertaken by the AONB team in relation to the AGLV where it forms part of the setting of the AONB. Designation is therefore desirable to further stimulate integrated management initiatives which address forces for change which impact on the natural beauty of the AONB, even beyond its boundaries. This is particularly important in relation to threats of fragmentation and loss of tranquillity due to transport infrastructure, visual intrusion from development and mineral extraction, recreational pressures and small hobby farming and horsiculture.

5.8 Governance of the Surrey Hills National Landscape

- 5.8.1 Designation of this land beyond the Surrey County Boundary to include land within East Hampshire and the London Boroughs, will require the inclusion of Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council, Croydon Council and Bromley Council, on the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board. This will, in association with the existing six local authorities, bring the total number of local authorities represented on the AONB Board to ten.
- 5.8.2 This would make the Surrey Hills one of the more complex National Landscape Designations, crossing a relatively high number of administrative areas. However, it would still be less than the Kent Downs National Landscape (12 Local Authority members) and High Weald National Landscape (15 Local Authority members).
- 5.8.3 Qualifying areas in East Hampshire comprising the Slea and Wey Valley and Whitmoor Vale are relatively small in extent and the more substantial area of Ludshott/Bramshott Common is owned and managed by the National Trust, an existing member of the Surrey Hills Board.
- 5.8.4 The extent of the proposed boundary would result in a relatively small area of land (c. 1.26sq km) falling within the London Borough of Bromley. A small area of the Kent Downs National Landscape (878sq km) already lies within this local authority area and therefore the London Borough of Bromley already has experience of AONB and associated policy (Policy 76) within its current Local Plan (January 2019). This is not the case for the London Borough of Croydon, which has no previous experience of AONB designation.
- 5.8.5 Should designation of land beyond the Surrey County Boundary be approved by the Secretary of State, it will be for the relevant parties to determine the extent of their

involvement in the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board. Either way, increasing the membership of the Board is unlikely to result in governance issues when similar arrangements exist successfully for the Kent Downs and High Weald. On the contrary the inclusion of land beyond Surrey may enable improved collaborative working between Local Authorities at a landscape scale. This benefit was noted by the existing Surrey Hills Unit in discussions during the designation project. Furthermore, Statutory Consultees did not raise any specific concerns during the Statutory Consultations in relation to an increase in members.

5.9 Identity of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB)

5.9.1 The inclusion of land within East Hampshire in the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB), raises issues of identity and sense of place. Past public inquiries and designation projects including extensions to the Yorkshire Dales National Park which included land within Cumbria and the extension of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB which included land within Essex, have raised similar issues. However, in each case these issues have not been considered to outweigh the benefits of designating the additional land. In the case of the extension to the Yorkshire Dales National Park, care has been taken to call the additional area the ‘Westmoorland Dales’, in order to conserve the unique sense of place this area expresses.

5.9.2 In the case of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) there is no clear distinction in the land either side of the County Boundary with similar types and qualities evident both within Hampshire and Surrey. Furthermore, the relatively small areas proposed for designation would not warrant a separate name, not least because they include heathland landscapes which are already collectively viewed as part of a family of ‘Wealden Heaths’ across Surrey and Hampshire. It is highly likely that designation would bring significant benefits to landscape conservation of this wider area, in terms of partnership working, strategic initiatives and for the long term.

5.10 Conclusions

5.10.1 The analysis above demonstrates the specific statutory responsibilities and duties and the resource opportunities that would follow designation as AONB and which, in combination, would enable an integrated approach to be developed with a specific focus on the natural beauty of the areas concerned. In addition, the existing management arrangements and initiatives briefly described above provide an indication of the integrated and collaborative working and focused management which could formally apply. Furthermore, the designation of additional land as AONB in an area which is under pressure from development, would not be an additional impediment to development and the Government’s Growth Agenda. This is because the majority of the land proposed for designation is already constrained by Green Belt and over 50 percent is constrained by other natural and cultural designations. Moreover, designation may provide clarity in terms of evidence supporting landscape value, which can assist in effective decision making.

6.0 Issues and Pressures Affecting Candidate Areas

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Having understood the current arrangements associated with the existing AONB and what difference AONB designation may make to the Candidate Area, a further and important aspect of determining whether designation is desirable is to consider the issues and pressures that have the potential to impact negatively on the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty of the Candidate Areas. This is considered in relation to each of the Candidate Areas in the tables below. However, there are three more general issues which also inform whether designation is desirable and these are considered first. They include:

- dealing with qualifying land where it extends beyond the Surrey County Boundary
- the application of ‘wash-over’
- dealing with areas where natural beauty is finely balanced.

6.1.2 These considerations have a bearing on the land which goes forward to the boundary setting stage of assessment.

6.2 Land at the Surrey County Boundary

6.2.1 During the course of the natural beauty assessment, it became apparent that qualifying land may extend for a short distance into adjoining administrative areas e.g. Hampshire in the Dockenfield area and Kent in the Limpsfield area. Following discussion with Natural England it was concluded that it was not desirable to include small parcels of land in adjoining administrative areas where this would result in increased administrative complexity in terms of membership of the AONB Board.

6.3 Application of Wash-over

6.3.1 Wash over is a specific term which comes into play where there is an area of qualifying land which is separated from the main body of the AONB by non-qualifying land. Where wash-over is applied it avoids the need for outliers.

6.3.2 Wash-over does not apply where small areas of non-qualifying land or settlements sit within a wider sweep of qualifying land. In these circumstances a small patch of non-qualifying land may be regarded as forming part of a wider tract of qualifying land, or if at the edge, may be brought in when defining a boundary for pragmatic reasons in order to achieve a clear boundary line.

6.3.3 In contrast, wash-over applies 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.

6.3.4 AONBs are national designations formally assessed as being the country's most important areas of outstanding natural beauty, as confirmed by the Secretary of State. AONBs are of exceptional quality in terms of their natural beauty. It follows therefore that it can only ever be in particularly exceptional circumstances that areas assessed as not qualifying are considered for inclusion in an AONB. Very particular care and scrutiny must therefore be given in circumstances where use of this discretion is being considered.

6.3.5 Natural England's Guidance provides practical interpretation of the legislation and reflects 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.
- Particular care is required at the margins of a designation.
- In principle a designation can wash-over (i.e. include) land even though that land does not itself meet the designation criteria, including when located close to the boundary of a designated area.

6.3.6 Importantly no distinction is made in Natural England's Guidance between the application of the concept of wash-over in relation to National Parks or AONBs.

6.3.7 This approach was originally confirmed in the Secretary of State's decision on the South Downs National Park. The Second Inspector's Report (IR2) summarised the implications of the earlier Meyrick Court Judgement, including the principle that a designation could 'wash-over' a tract of land in certain circumstances. The Inspector clarified in IR2 that for any area to be washed over, it should be surrounded by higher quality land and particular care and discretion should be taken at the margin of a proposed designation:

"Parcels of lower quality land can be 'washed over' if they are part of a wider high-quality tract but care should be taken when using this discretion on land at the margin of a designation" (IR2, para 4.87).

"Where lesser quality land at the margins of the National Park is surrounded by higher quality land, its inclusion might be justified on the basis of the 'wash-over' concept but not necessarily so" (IR2, para 7.123).

6.3.8 Where necessary, this understanding of 'wash-over' has been applied when determining if it is desirable to proceed with each of the Candidate Areas for the Surrey Hills. Relevant details are recorded in the tables below and also in the later boundary setting stages as required.

6.4 Dealing with Areas Which are Finely Balanced

- 6.4.1 During the course of the natural beauty assessment, two areas were identified as marginal in terms of their natural beauty, namely Langley Vale and Banstead Common.
- 6.4.2 In these locations the natural beauty criterion was not decisively met and the decision to include these areas in the Candidate Area was finely balanced. These areas have therefore been reviewed in light of the desirability to designate and to determine if there is a strong case for proceeding with designation despite their marginal quality.

6.5 Issue Tables for Proposed Candidate Areas

- 6.5.1 Not all landscape and management issues can necessarily be directly addressed by the management arrangements and mechanisms that follow from AONB designation. However, as set out in sections 5.0 above, the scope for an integrated landscape-led and joined-up approach to the stewardship of the area is an important justification for the variation of the AONB boundary. The tables below explore issues affecting each of the proposed Candidate Areas. These include both current issues known to affect the areas generally and also issues which may arise in the future. These have been drawn from existing material such as landscape character assessments as well as relevant management, strategy and Local Plan documents as well as discussions with key stakeholders, desk study and site work.

Candidate Area: Wey Valley, Farnham	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Management issues relate to the domestication of valley slopes where back gardens extend from low density housing either side of the valley, and where wooded slopes that frame the valley are at risk. The lanes are vulnerable to suburbanisation as a result of residential development and signage, while the meadows and pastures are susceptible to a decline in active management. Invasion of non-native vegetation along the watercourse and wetland areas may affect biodiversity interest.
Matters arising from designation	Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of the valley as a whole, extending close to the settlement of Farnham, ensuring consistent forward planning and decision making with AONB partners. AONB designation may also bring additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and the encouragement of landowners to take up environmental stewardship schemes focusing on management of valley floor meadows and wooded valley sides for enhanced biodiversity. Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation. Inclusion of the valley would improve access to the AONB from adjacent communities.

Candidate Area: Hog's Back	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Management issues relate to the establishment of leisure plots and ad hoc development which fragment landscape patterns; neglect of woodland and loss of structure and diversity; visual intrusion of future adjacent development at Blackwell Farm; and risk of loss of simplicity and unity of the Hog's Back as a distinctive topographic feature, due to change in its immediate vicinity.
Matters arising from designation	The conservation and enhancement of the Hog's Back is dependent on the retention of the open slopes and intactness of the lower slopes. Inclusion of this landscape in the AONB would enable the purposes of designation to be more effectively delivered in relation to this iconic landform, through integrated management and decision making. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF highlights the importance of the setting of nationally protected landscapes and designation of this area will place a duty on decision makers to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area where adjacent development is proposed. Inclusion of this area would also ensure greater support to Local Authority planning enforcement in relation to ad hoc development and further support for the implementation of the Nature Recovery Strategy including opportunities to connect ancient woodland sites.

Candidate Area: Binscombe Hills	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Management issues relate to significant ash dieback within woodlands along the scarp slope and recreational pressure on landscape due to proximity of adjacent conurbations. Inappropriate tree and woodland planting which can disrupt patterns and suburbanisation of lanes, including changes to hedgerows and property boundary treatment, are also issues.
Matters arising from designation	Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of this area which forms a context to landscapes already within the existing AONB e.g. Eastbury Park. Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.

Candidate Area: Enton Hills	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Management issues relate to the potential loss of vegetation and land use patterns due to recreation use, loss of woodland and field boundaries and lack of uptake of agri-environment schemes, as well as ad hoc development and gradual urbanisation of rural lanes.
Matters arising from designation	Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of this area which forms a context to landscapes already within the existing AONB and ensure that the area benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring

	<p>that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.</p> <p>It would also enable the inclusion of the hamlet of Hambledon in its entirety, so that it is no longer split by the AONB boundary.</p>
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Candidate Area: Wey Valley, Farley Hill	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>The issues in this area relate to wider river catchment issues including high phosphate levels which affect water quality and declining invertebrate populations. Some of the pastoral slopes to the south are affected by equestrian land uses. This area is also affected by development to the west including the curtilage treatment along the tow path and noise intrusion from traffic on the A3100.</p>
Matters arising from designation	<p>AONB designation may bring additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and further up take of environmental stewardship schemes. There are opportunities for conservation work focusing on the juxtaposition of valley floor wetlands and greensand hills habitats and the retention of highly valued views.</p> <p>Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.</p>

Candidate Area: Cranleigh Waters	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>This area experiences pressure from future housing development which does not respond to local vernacular styles, settlement form, or visually intrudes into the landscape. It is also susceptible to the urbanisation of road and lanes, through kerbing, signage and new junction arrangements and commercial development. There is limited up take of stewardship schemes and signs of lack of management of field boundaries, and former commons and pressure from equestrian land uses.</p>
Matters arising from designation	<p>AONB designation may bring additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and the encouragement of landowners to take up environmental stewardship schemes. There are opportunities for conservation work focusing on wetland restoration (including increased survey), restoration and monitoring as well as management of hedgerows, commons and woodland shaws as part of the existing Biodiversity Opportunities Area.</p> <p>Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.</p>

Candidate Area: Hatchlands and East Clandon	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	The Hatchlands estate is managed by the National Trust as an area of parkland open to the public. Beyond the parkland is arable and pasture farmland where management issues relate to loss of hedgerows and a lack of woodland management. Other management issues relate to ad hoc development along lanes and improvements to the A246 corridor which increased urbanising influences.
Matters arising from designation	The management of the Hatchland Estate is already the focus of the National Trust and includes active conservation of the parkland and ancient woodland, as well as parkland features. The benefits of designation would therefore be most readily felt beyond the parkland in adjacent farmland, this may include additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and the encouragement of landowners to take up environmental stewardship schemes. Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.

Candidate Area: Headley Hills and Langley Vale	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>Headley Area: Nower Wood is managed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust and Oyster Hill by the National Trust. As a result, this landscape is managed by a number of different organisations, along with private landowners. Management issues include risks of urbanisation through ad hoc development, hedgerow and woodland management, traffic on narrow lanes and scrub encroachment. There is also pressure for equestrian use of the area.</p> <p>Langley Vale: This area is managed primarily by the Woodland Trust as part of the Commemorative Woodland and by Epsom Downs Conservators in relation to Walton Heath. Issues affecting this landscape include equestrian land use and associated development, as well as fly tipping and influence of surrounding development. Langley Vale is separated from the wider AONB by the M25 and significantly affected by road noise.</p>
Matters arising from designation	<p>Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of the Headley area which forms a context to landscapes already within the existing AONB to the south. Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation. Furthermore, it would enable coordination and partnership working between existing conservation bodies facilitated by the AONB, in order to deliver multiple benefits such as the connecting of existing sites for recreation and biodiversity. It could also bring targeted advocacy work with regards to equestrian use of the area.</p> <p>The natural beauty assessment for the Langley Vale area, noted that it</p>

	<p>was borderline and the decision to include it in the Candidate Area was finely balanced. As noted above, this landscape forms part of the national Commemorative Woodland and is already managed by the Woodland Trust. It is therefore the focus of conservation and enhancement activity at a landscape scale, through the focus of a single organisation. Whilst the work of the Woodland Trust may benefit from access to increased resources through the AONB such as volunteers, as well as to increased funding, these benefits could be achieved through joint working with the AONB even if this area was excluded from the proposed Candidate Area. Given the transitional nature of the fringes of this area, the presence of adjacent non-qualifying land, and the effects of traffic noise on natural beauty, (as set out in the natural beauty assessment), it is concluded that there is no strong desirability reason which strengthens the argument in favour of taking this land forward for designation. This should be taken into account at the boundary setting stage (refer to Headley Hills writeup in Boundary Considerations Report).</p>
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Candidate Area: Banstead Heath	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>This landscape is currently managed by the Banstead Common Conservators and is owned by Reigate and Banstead Council. Management issues relate to the high usage of the common resulting in ground compaction, effect of dogs on ground nesting birds, scrub invasion especially hawthorn and lack of resources for conservation work including access to volunteers.</p>
Matters Arising from Designation	<p>This area was noted in the natural beauty assessment as borderline and the decision to include it in the Candidate Area was finely balanced. As noted above, this landscape is already managed by the Banstead Common Conservators and therefore the focus on landscape scale conservation and enhancement through a single organisation is already in place. Nevertheless, it is noted that the work of the Banstead Common Conservators may benefit from access to increased resources including volunteers, as well as to increased funding. However, it is also acknowledged that these benefits could be achieved through joint working with the AONB even if this area was excluded from the proposed Candidate Area. Given the poor connection of this land to the wider AONB due to non-qualifying land at Walton Heath golf course and Lower Kingswood, as well as the effects of road noise on the natural beauty of this landscape, it is concluded that there is no strong desirability reason which strengthens the argument in favour of taking this land forward for designation. This should be taken into account at the boundary setting stage (refer to Headley Hills writeup in Boundary Considerations Report).</p>

Candidate Area: Chipstead Valleys	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>This area is vulnerable to high recreational usage, resulting in ground compaction, disturbance of ground nesting birds by dogs, scrub invasion especially hawthorn and lack of resources for conservation work, including access to volunteers. There is also evidence of fly tipping,</p>

	erosion of rural lane verges, ad hoc development, intrusion of golf courses into the valley landscapes disrupting landscape patterns, and urbanisation of rural lanes.
Matters Arising from Designation	<p>Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of this area. It would enable coordination and partnership working between existing conservation bodies facilitated by the AONB to deliver multiple benefits. This may include the connecting of existing sites for recreation and biodiversity as well as targeted advocacy work with regards to equestrian use of the area. In particular, there may be opportunities to support chalk grassland restoration initiatives, providing additional funding and volunteer resources.</p> <p>Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.</p>

Candidate Area: Happy Valley	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>Much of this landscape is currently managed by private landowners and the South London Downs NNR by the City of London Corporation and Croydon Council. Management issues relate to high usage of the area resulting in ground compaction, conflict between livestock grazing and dog walkers, scrub invasion especially hawthorn, lack of woodland management, lack of resources for conservation work including access to volunteers and erosion of rural lanes. Land to the south west is intensive arable farmland and show some signs of boundary loss and fragmentation.</p>
Matters Arising from Designation	<p>The current focus of management of Happy Valley and Farthing Down relates to its nature conservation associated with the status of Farthing Down as a Scheduled Monument and more widely the area as part of a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and SSSI. The NNR status established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 ensures the land is managed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the purpose of research and study of flora and fauna or geological and physiographical features; and/or • for the preservation of such special features. <p>However, this landscape is also valued for its natural beauty, as set out in the Natural Beauty Assessment. Its scenic qualities are therefore also deserving of conservation and enhancement. Furthermore, the current designations do not extend across to the farmland to the west and south of Happy Valley, which is also considered to qualify for designation, although transitional to the southwest. Designation as AONB of the whole area would enable strategic management with a focus on the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty as well as natural and heritage interest. It would bring additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and the encouragement of land owners to take up</p>

	environmental stewardship schemes.
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Candidate Area: Caterham Woods	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	This area has been vulnerable to lack of management resulting in a loss of chalk grassland over many decades and the establishment of secondary woodland which lacks structural diversity. It has also suffered a lack of management of core areas of ancient woodland. There is evidence of heritage at risk such as the Whitehill Tower at Tower Farm (non-designated heritage asset) and pressure from development on the fringes of Caterham.
Matters Arising from Designation	Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of this area and access to additional resources to assist with active management of woodland as well as providing opportunities to enhance and connect habitats north of the chalk scarp, at one of the narrowest points in the existing AONB. It would also ensure that the area benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.

Candidate Area: Woldingham and Beddlestead Valleys	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Management issues relate to the intrusiveness of telecommunication masts on higher land surrounding this area, and loss of tranquillity along the ridge and Limpsfield Road. Urban fringe influences are also evident in places. Much of this area is intensively farmed and used for recreation, although there is scope for habitat restoration of chalk grassland and woodlands.
Matters Arising from Designation	Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of this area as well as targeted advocacy work with regards to equestrian use of the area. In particular, there may be opportunities to support chalk grassland restoration on the steepest slopes or on golf courses through additional funding resources such as FiPL as well as furthering priorities set out in the Biodiversity Opportunity initiatives and Surrey Wildlife Trust Grazing Project. Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.

Candidate Area: Limpsfield	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Management issues relate to the urbanisation of rural lanes due to ad hoc development and intensification of areas of existing development along with road and rail improvements such as widening, lighting and signage which can impact on tranquillity and rural character. This area

	is also vulnerable to the loss of woodland through Ash dieback and loss of heath habitat due to scrub encroachment and fragmentation. The close proximity of the area to major conurbations also means it is under recreational pressure.
Matters arising from designation	Bringing this area into the AONB would ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation. Furthermore, it would enable coordination and partnership working between existing conservation bodies (including the National Trust who manage Limpsfield Common) and access to additional resources in order to deliver multiple benefits and the connecting of existing sites in terms of recreational access and wildlife habitats.

Candidate Area: Godstone Hills	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	This area is susceptible to fragmentation caused by transport infrastructure and land use change which may also undermine perceptions of tranquillity. Woodlands are vulnerable to a lack of active management, while the loss of ancient/veteran trees and parkland boundary features diminish vistas and views which contribute to sense of place. This landscape is also potentially affected by land use change in the area of non-qualifying land between the chalk escarpment and greensand hills. Land use change (including mineral extraction and restoration) in this intervening landscape, may impact on the special qualities of the area and valued views between the scarp and hills.
Matters arising from designation	Bringing this area into the AONB would ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF highlights the importance of the setting of nationally protected landscapes. Designation of this area will place a duty on decision makers to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area where development and land use change in the land between the scarp and hills is proposed. Furthermore, designation as AONB would enable strategic management of this area and access to additional resources to assist with active management of woodland as well as providing opportunities to enhance and connect habitats through access to additional funding such as FiPL especially where they support the Wealden Greensand biodiversity opportunity area.

Candidate Area: Betchworth Hills and Mole Valley	
Management Issues affecting	Management issues in this area relate to recreational pressures,

special qualities	equestrian land use and commercialisation of the landscape along the A25 corridor. Furthermore, it is vulnerable to the loss of parkland landscape including veteran trees and erosion of rural lanes due to heavy traffic. This landscape is also potentially affected by land use change in the area of non-qualifying land between the chalk escarpment and greensand hills. Land use change (including mineral extraction and restoration and development) in this intervening landscape may impact on the special qualities of the area and valued views between the scarp and hills.
Matters arising from designation	<p>Designation as AONB would enable strategic management of this area through access to additional funding such as FiPL and partnership working. This would assist with active management of woodland, heathland and floodplain meadows as well as conservation of landscape features such as veteran trees and parkland. In addition, designation as AONB would support existing conservation work undertaken by the Mole Catchment Landscape Partnership including improving water quality and management of meadows, waterbodies, wet woodland and natural meandering course of the river as well as sensitive flood risk management.</p> <p>Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.</p> <p>Paragraph 176 of the NPPF highlights the importance of the setting of nationally protected landscapes. Designation of this area will place a duty on decision makers to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area where development and land use change in the land between the scarp and hills is proposed.</p>

Candidate Area: Ockley Low Weald	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Management issues relate to declining coppiced woodland and ghyll woodlands and increased conifer plantations, suburban development along lanes and equestrian land uses. There is also evidence of intensification of agriculture including loss of pasture to arable and loss of unimproved neutral grassland/meadows and the introduction of non-native and invasive species along wooded ghylls.
Matters arising from designation	AONB designation would bring additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and the encouragement of landowners to take up environmental stewardship schemes focusing on management of unimproved neutral grassland habitats, and ghyll valleys for enhanced biodiversity. Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.

Candidate Area: Dunsfold Low Weald	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>Management issues relate to the erosion of rural lanes due to increased traffic and curtilage treatment associated with new and existing development, including the loss of hedgerows and grass verges, and the introduction of close board fencing and gated access. Ad hoc development may also undermine vernacular building styles. This area is also vulnerable to loss of tranquillity due to increased levels of activity and development in adjacent areas including increased night lighting. More broadly management issues relate to a lack of woodland management and historical replanting of ancient woodland with mixed or conifer plantations.</p>
Matters arising from designation	<p>AONB designation would bring additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and the encouragement of landowners to take up environmental stewardship schemes focusing on management of unimproved neutral grassland habitats, and ghyll valleys for enhanced biodiversity. Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.</p> <p>Paragraph 176 of the NPPF highlights the importance of the setting of nationally protected landscapes. Designation of this area will place a duty on decision makers to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area, given the change which is proposed on land to the east, associated with the Loxley well site and garden village on the Dunsfold Aerodrome.</p>

Candidate Area: East Hampshire	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	<p>Bramshott and Ludshott Commons</p> <p>A significant part of Ludshott and Bramshott Commons north of the A3 is designated as SSSI and subject to a Countryside Stewardship Higher Teir Agreement. Much of this land (although not all) is managed by the National Trust (Ludshott Common and Bramshott Chase) through two rangers (one part time and one lead full time ranger). The Trust have over recent years felled areas of conifer plantation to help re-establish heathland - lowland heath is an endangered yet ecologically vital habitat. Management has included forestry and scrub clearance and most recently the reintroduction of cattle grazing following the fencing of the common.</p> <p>There is a National Trust advisory committee which includes the National Trust (NT) along with the Ludshott Commons Committee (dedicated group of local individuals who support the NT to manage and enhance the local countryside sites) and the Friends of Ludshott and Passfield Commons. They raise funds, use funds to make</p>

	<p>improvements, advise local rangers, provide local eyes for the NT and send out a newsletter. This committee helps to balance the management and biodiversity of the area with the needs of local communities who live adjacent and frequently use the area. A key issue is the pressure on the landscape associated with high visitor numbers including dog walkers, joggers and mountain bikers, and concerns that designation as AONB might exacerbate this issue.</p> <p>Bramshott Common is owned and managed by the Ministry of Defense (MOD) in accordance with the SSSI Stewardship Agreement noted above. The MOD also owns and manages Bramshott Common to the south of the A3 into Hammer Bottom which falls outside of the SSSI Stewardship Agreement.</p> <p>The National Trust, Natural England, South Downs National Park Authority and the MOD work collaboratively across the area. The SDNPA are currently engaged in the Heathlands Reunited (HeRe) Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) project and are already involved with the delivery on part of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA and SSSIs, of which Bramshott and Ludshott Commons are a part. This initiative has required close working with the National Trust and MOD as well as the general public. Monitoring work looks at visitor pressures as well as breeding bird surveys and the initiative as a whole benefits the South Downs National Park and Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB).</p> <p>Whilst there is evidently positive management within this area the current arrangements do not address the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current stewardship agreement associated with the SSSI does not cover the whole of the Candidate Area and does not necessarily focus on management which conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the area. • Small landholdings which abut the commons and form part of the Candidate Area are not included in partnership management. Management issues in these areas include grazing pressure from equestrian use, domestication of farmland and ad hoc development. • The Surrey and Hampshire County boundary does not reflect a change in the natural beauty of the landscape and follows a watercourse along much of its length. As a result, it does not reflect the wider valley landscape as a perceived unit, furthermore it results in a convoluted boundary especially north of Bramshott Chase. • Partnership management of the commons does not address development pressures in the surrounding rural areas. • Current partnership working coalesces around a specific initiative and may not continue beyond this in the longer term. <p>The A3 is located towards the southern end of the commons on elevated land between the two. To the north land drops away into a dry tributary</p>
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	<p>valley to Cooper's Stream before rising again and then descending into the steep sided valley of Cooper's Stream at Waggoners Wells. To the south the land drops into the steep sided valley of the River Wey at Hammer Bottom. The A3 corridor therefore affects the relatively flat land adjacent and has much less effect on land which drops into adjacent valley landscapes. The physical presence of the road corridor limits accessibility between the two areas of common but the extent of high-quality heathland habitat both to the north and to the south means that this severance does not diminish perceptions of an extensive area of high quality semi-natural habitat, and scenic qualities on both sides of the corridor. This is not dissimilar to Witley Common which forms part of the Thursley, Hankley and Frensham SSSI within the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and which is also split by the A3 corridor.</p> <p>The benefit of including the A3 corridor would ensure the consistent application of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Management Plan across the whole area of common which, given the heathland mosaic extends up to the edge of the road corridor, is considered to be beneficial. Designation as AONB may also enable opportunities for improved pedestrian access across the A3 corridor.</p> <p>Whitmoor Vale.</p> <p>Issues associated with this area include woodland management although the Whitmoor Hanger ancient woodland is currently under active management by the Woodland Trust. There is also pressure for intensification of residential development along the rural lanes (including house extensions and new ancillary development), and visitor pressure as a result of the popularity of the area for walking and horse riding.</p> <p>Wey and Slea Valleys.</p> <p>Much of this farmland is under stewardship agreements and actively managed. Similar to land further north within the Dockenfield Hills extension, there is evidence of a lack of woodland management, increased grazing of pastures for horses and diversification of farming including tourism. This area is also under pressure from ad hoc development including residential development along the rural lanes which may be visually prominent or create suburban character through curtilage treatment (especially use of close board fencing) and new access.</p>
Matters arising from designation	AONB designation would bring additional funding for conservation work through Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) and the encouragement of landowners to take up environmental stewardship schemes as part of Environmental Land Management, focusing on management of hedgerows, woodlands and watercourse margins. It would also bring opportunities for the National Landscape (AONB) to support the work of the Wey Catchment Landscape Partnership

	<p>including improving water quality and to work collaboratively with the South Downs National Park across designation boundaries over the longer term (when current initiatives have run their course), enabling engagement with adjacent smaller landowners and broadening the focus to include scenic qualities which are also deserving of conservation and enhancement.</p> <p>Bringing this area into the National Landscape (AONB) would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation. Designating this land would also address the convoluted nature of the current National Landscape (AONB) boundary which does not reflect the natural beauty of the area.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised regarding a possible increase in visitor numbers should this land be designated as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB). Although AONBs do not have the second statutory purpose ascribed to National Parks (i.e. promoting understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public), it is apparent that activities designed to help people understand and enjoy the special qualities of the landscape are a very high priority locally, as reflected within the Surrey Hills Management Plan (Section 2.8). It is probable that visitor numbers will continue to increase regardless of this designation process and that management issues will be ongoing. As evidenced elsewhere, designation can result in the availability of increased resources⁸ to tackle these issues. On balance designation is more likely to assist with managing access and visitor issues rather than exacerbate them.</p>
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Candidate Area: Dockenfield Hills	
Management Issues affecting special qualities	Issues relate to the lack of management of woodlands and hedgerows resulting in a loss of landscape structure and the loss of landscape features such as hazel coppice along lanes. There is also evidence of some pressure for farm diversification including introduction of recreational development such as glamping. This landscape is susceptible to ad hoc development, including the introduction of large-scale individual dwellings, which may be visually prominent or alter lane character through curtilage treatment and the introduction of gated access.
Matters arising from designation	AONB designation would bring additional funding for conservation work through FiPL and the encouragement of landowners to take up

⁸ In recent years Defra has provided National Landscapes with specific funding via the Access for All Scheme with the aim to make National Landscapes more accessible to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds. This funding has been used by National Landscapes to improve signage, infrastructure and address land management and access issues that arise from visitor pressures.

	<p>environmental stewardship schemes focusing on management of hedgerows, woodlands and watercourse margins. It would also bring opportunities for the AONB to support the work of the Wey Catchment Landscape Partnership including improving water quality and to work collaboratively with the South Downs National Park across designation boundaries.</p> <p>Bringing this area into the AONB would also ensure that it benefits from the additional protection the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) restrictions afford, e.g. by ensuring that planning officers have the opportunity to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with the purpose of AONB designation.</p>
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7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Is it desirable to proceed with designation?

7.1.1 Designation as AONB provides formal statutory recognition of the national importance of the natural beauty of the areas concerned, and as a consequence, provides the basis for a more coordinated and integrated approach to management which would give specific focus and priority to the natural beauty of the area. Areas which are designated would formally come within the ambit of the statutory AONB Management Plan and benefit from the incentives, powers, duties, responsibilities and resources that designation brings.

7.1.2 The extent that designation as AONB would enable the effective management of issues, over and above current mechanisms, is considered to exist. This is because designation as AONB brings the following:

- Greater certainty regarding a coordinated response to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. This is reflected within the track record of positive management and working within the existing AONB and beyond its boundaries
- Access to additional resources particularly where they are targeted at designated landscapes such as FiPL, the Surrey Hills Trust Fund and Access Funds⁹
- Greater statutory weight which comes from AONB designation in terms of National Planning Policy Framework and subsequent Local Plan Policy
- A more robust and defensible recognition of the special qualities of the qualifying areas which is greater than that which currently exists for the AGLV.
- A conservation and enhancement focus on landscape issues which has continuity and longevity.

7.1.3 The issues affecting the Candidate Area set out above, are considered to be of a scale and significance to merit active management intervention. They include effects from large-scale development through to *ad hoc* changes which may occur in a piecemeal fashion over time. These types of issues and pressures present a real threat to the special qualities of these landscapes.

7.1.4 Designation as AONB would bring positive benefits and help to address the issues affecting special qualities in the majority of areas. However, the case is less strong for Langley Vale and Banstead Heath, given their natural beauty is borderline, and the current management arrangements for these areas already address the issues

⁹ This is funding from Defra comprising an uplift in its core grant in order to make National Landscapes more accessible to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds.

affecting them.

- 7.1.5 On this basis, it is proposed that the Candidate Area is taken forward to the boundary setting stage but that further scrutiny is given to the Langley Vale and Banstead Heath areas.

7.2 Assessment for designation under the statutory provisions

- 7.2.1 Undertaking its statutory duty, Natural England has assessed the outcome of both the Natural Beauty Report and this Desirability assessment and has made the evidence-led decision that the whole area meets the statutory provisions and that the boundary review project should progress to the next stage of the designation process, which is to identify a detailed proposed boundary to be subject to statutory consultation.

Appendix 1: Surrey Hills AONB Board Constitution

Appendix 2: Local Plan Landscape Policies

Local Plan Landscape Policies

Local Authority	AONB/AGLV Policy
<p>Guildford Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (Adopted 2019)</p>	<p>Policy P1: Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value</p> <p><i>(1) The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Map, will be conserved and enhanced to maximise its special landscape qualities and scenic beauty.</i></p> <p><i>(2) In accordance with the NPPF, there will be a presumption against major development in the AONB except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.</i></p> <p><i>(3) Great weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB and development proposals must have regard to protecting its setting.</i></p> <p><i>(4) Development proposals will also be assessed against the provisions of the current Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan.</i></p> <p><i>(5) The AGLV, as designated on the Policies Map, will be retained until such time as there has been a review of the AONB boundary. Development proposals within the AGLV will be required to demonstrate that they would not harm the setting of the AONB or the distinctive character of the AGLV itself.</i></p> <p>Once the AONB boundary review is completed, the AGLV designation within the borough is likely to subside. However, the landscape character of the countryside remaining outside the AONB boundary will be protected and enhanced through criteria-based policies, and if appropriate, local designations included within the Development Management Policies DPD.</p>
<p>Waverley Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites (Feb 2018)</p>	<p>Policy RE3 Landscape Character</p> <p><i>New development must respect and where appropriate, enhance the distinctive character of the landscape in which it is located.</i></p> <p><i>i. Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</i></p> <p><i>The protection and enhancement of the character and qualities of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that is of national importance will be a priority and will include the application of national planning policies together with the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan. The setting of the AONB will be protected where development outside its boundaries harm public views from or into the AONB.</i></p> <p><i>ii. The Area of Great Landscape Value</i></p> <p><i>The same principles for protecting the AONB will apply in the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), which will be retained for its own sake and as a buffer to the AONB, until there is a review of the Surrey Hills AONB boundary, whilst recognising that the protection of the AGLV is commensurate with its status as a local landscape designation.</i></p> <p>However, as a local designation, the AGLV holds less weight than the AONB in policy terms. Once the AONB review is completed any remaining parts of the</p>

	<p>AGLV not included in the AONB will have less status. However, the landscape character of the countryside outside the AONB will be protected through criteria-based policies and local designations in Part 2 of the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, where evidence demonstrates that this would be appropriate.</p> <p>It is important that there is a consistent approach to the AONB and AGLV across the local authorities that are affected by the existing AGLV designation. Three of these (Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead and Mole Valley) have adopted Core Strategies containing policies applying the same principles to protecting the AGLV as the AONB, pending a review of the AONB boundary. Guildford also proposes this approach in its submission Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (June 2016). Those plans also support government policy to protect the setting of AONBs from development outside their boundaries which impact upon views from and into the AONB.</p>
<p>Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2039 (Adopted Oct 2024)</p>	<p>Policy EN8: Landscape Character</p> <p>Landscape Principles</p> <p>1. To achieve a strategic approach to the conservation and enhancement of local landscape character, the Council will: a. Encourage developments, where appropriate, that are sensitive to their landscape and cultural context; b. Work with partners within the Surrey Hills National Landscape Management Board to fulfil the statutory purposes of the National Landscape designation to conserve and enhance its natural beauty and implement the statutory management plan; c. Work with partners in the Catchment Partnership to conserve and enhance the Mole Catchment and raise the quality of wetland landscapes in line with the Water Framework Directive; d. Encourage access to and appreciation of the local landscape; e. Support the countryside management partnerships in initiatives to manage the landscape and engage with volunteers in doing so;</p> <p>Require applicants for development that has the potential to impact adversely on local landscape character and its cultural significance to include with their proposals a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, a reasoned justification of their proposals, with any mitigation measures set out clearly.</p> <p>The Surrey Hills National Landscape (NL)</p> <p>2. The Surrey Hills NL as shown on the Policies Map, is a nationally important landscape designation and development proposals that fail to conserve and enhance the landscapes and scenic beauty within the NL, their cultural significance and wildlife habitats will be refused.</p> <p>3. The scale of development within the NL should be limited and any development within its setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts. Proposals for major development within the NL will be refused unless there is an overriding public interest. Proposals will be judged in line with the exceptional circumstances tests set out in national policy, namely the need for the development; the cost or scope for meeting the need in another way and the extent of the detrimental effect on the landscape after moderation.</p> <p>4. When determining development proposals within the NL or affecting its setting, regard must be had to the Surrey Hills (National Landscape) Management Plan, as a statutory document, and account will be taken of the Environmental Design Guidance published by the Surrey Hills Board.</p>

	<p>5. Development proposals lying outside the NL but which would spoil its setting by harming public views into or from the NL will be refused. The</p> <p>Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)</p> <p>6. Development proposals falling within the AGLV, as shown on the Policies Map, will be required to demonstrate they would not harm the distinctive character and scenic beauty of the AGLV and/ or the setting of the adjacent National Landscape.</p> <p>Non-designated Landscapes</p> <p>7. Proposals that have an impact on the distinctive landscape character in which they are set will be required to demonstrate that they have taken into consideration the key characteristics, attributes and sensitivities of the landscape type in which the proposed development is to be located. Regard should be had to the landscape guidelines set out in the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment for Mole Valley.</p> <p>8. New development will be required to reinforce the scenic quality and distinctiveness of the landscape in which it is located and to be influenced by the local landscape context. Development proposals will be assessed in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Visual impact from public roads, footpaths and viewpoints; b. Integration into the landscape setting so as to sit comfortably within the topography, trees and woodlands, field boundaries and the settlement pattern; c. Cumulative impact in relation to other built development; d. Scale and design, including the choice of external materials; e. Visual impact of associated infrastructure such as car parking and access roads; f. Additional noise that will intrude on the tranquillity of the area; g. Lighting that would be visually intrusive, disrupt wildlife or result in a diminution of dark skies in remoter locations; h. Design of hard and soft landscaping around buildings and structures, including any screening measures and boundary treatments; i. Retention of visual linkages between settlements and their landscape setting; j. Restoration of landscape features, including wetlands and woodlands, and the removal of eyesores; and, k. Safeguard or enhance the existing network of statutory bridleways and footpaths or create new links in the network to facilitate access to into the landscape
<p>Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Core Strategy (July</p>	<p>Policy CS2: Valued landscapes and the natural environment</p> <p><i>1. In considering the allocation of land and /or proposals for significant development, the Council and developers will be required to protect and enhance the borough's green fabric.</i></p> <p><i>a. The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a landscape of national importance and therefore will be provided with the highest level of protection. The same principles will be applied to protect the AGLV as an</i></p>

2014)	<p><i>important buffer to the AONB and to protect views from and into the AONB, until such time as there has been a review of the AONB boundary.</i></p> <p><i>b. All areas of countryside have their own distinctive landscape character. The landscape character of the countryside outside the current (or revised) AONB boundary will be protected and enhanced through criteria-based policies in the DMP including, if and where appropriate, new local landscape designations. In those areas of countryside allocated for development, policies will be included in the DMP in relation to the design and siting of development to minimise the impact on landscape character.</i></p> <p><i>c. The borough's commons will be maintained and enhanced for the benefits of farming, public access and biodiversity.....</i></p>
<p>Tandridge e Core Strategy (Oct 2008)</p>	<p>Policy CSP 20: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p> <p><i>The conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape is of primary importance within the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, reflecting their national status. The principles to be followed in the area are to:</i></p> <p><i>a) conserve and enhance the special landscape character, heritage, distinctiveness and sense of place of the locality;</i></p> <p><i>b) conserve and enhance important viewpoints, protect the setting and safeguard views out of and into the AONB;</i></p> <p><i>c) protect prominent locations on skylines and slopes and for development to take advantage of existing landscape features and tree screening;</i></p> <p><i>d) support suitable located sustainable development necessary to facilitate the environmental, economic and social wellbeing of the AONBs and their communities;</i></p> <p><i>e) promote access to, particularly by means other than the car, recreation within and enjoyment of the area;</i></p> <p><i>f) apply the highest environmental design standards to development.</i></p> <p>The same principles will be applied in the associated Area of Great Landscape Value which will be retained for its own sake; as a buffer to the Surrey Hills AONB and to protect views from and into the AONB. The AGLV will be retained until such time as there has been a review of the AONB boundary</p> <p>The Council believes that the AGLV designation, in Tandridge, covering parts of the North Downs dip slope and parts of the Greensand ridge, is important in its own right and acts as a “buffer” to protect the integrity of the AONB, in particular that many views from the AONB are into the AGLV..... Because of the importance of the AGLV and the aim of including much of it within the AONB a criteria based approach alone would not be adequate. Therefore this strategy proposes the retention of the AGLV until such time as a review of the AONB boundary has been undertaken by Natural England</p>
<p>Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy (2007)</p>	<p>Reference is made to protecting the most valued landscapes and built environment including Polices CS2, CS3 and CS4. However, none of these polices specifically relates to AGLV.</p>
<p>Croydon</p>	<p>Reference is made to protecting and safeguarding Metropolitan Green Belt and</p>

Local Plan (2018)	<p>Metropolitan Open Land – these areas are recognised as areas of countryside and landscape (historic, recreational or biodiversity) interest and value.</p> <p>There are no specific landscape policies.</p>
<p>Bromley Local Plan (adopted Jan 2019)</p>	<p>Policy 77 Landscape Quality and Character</p> <p>In considering development proposals and in the management of its own land and operations, the Council will: Seek to safeguard the quality and character of the local landscape; and Seek the appropriate restoration and enhancement of the local landscape through the use of planning obligations and conditions</p> <p>Policy 76 Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p> <p>Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty The Council will protect, conserve and enhance the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its setting, from development considered to have a detrimental impact on the landscape of the area.</p>
<p>East Hampshire District Council Joint Core Strategy (adopted May 2014)</p>	<p>Policy CP Landscape</p> <p>The special characteristics of the district’s natural environment will be conserved and enhanced. New development will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) conserve and enhance the natural beauty, tranquillity, wildlife and cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park and its setting, and promote the opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, and be in accordance with the ambitions within the emerging South Downs Management Plan; b) protect and enhance local distinctiveness sense of place and tranquillity by applying the principles set out in the district’s Landscape Character Assessments, including the Community/Parish Landscape Character Assessments; c) protect and enhance settlements in the wider landscape, land at the urban edge and green corridors extending into settlements; d) protect and enhance natural and historic features which contribute to the distinctive character of the district’s landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, soils, rivers, river corridors, ditches, ponds, ancient sunken lanes, ancient tracks, rural buildings and open areas; e) incorporate appropriate new planting to enhance the landscape setting of the new development which uses local materials, native species and enhances biodiversity; f) maintain, manage and enhance the green infrastructure networks (see Policy CP28 Green Infrastructure). <p>Priority will be given to working with landowners and others in order to ensure that land management practices improve public access to the countryside, conserve and enhance valued landscapes of major importance for wild flora and fauna, and restore landscapes where valued features have been lost or degraded.</p>

<p>Hampshire County Council Minerals Plan (2013)</p>	<p>Policy 4: Protection of the designated landscape</p> <p>Major minerals and waste development will not be permitted in the New Forest or South Downs National Parks, or in the North Wessex Downs the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs, and Chichester Harbour Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), except in exceptional circumstances. In this respect, consideration will be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations; b. the impact of permitting, or refusing the development upon the local economy; c. the cost and scope for meeting the need outside the designated area, or meeting the need in some other way; and d. whether any detrimental effects on the environment, landscape and/or recreational opportunities can be satisfactorily mitigated. <p>Minerals and waste development should reflect and where appropriate enhance the character of the surrounding landscape and natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the designated area.</p> <p>Minerals and waste development should also be subject to a requirement that it is restored. In the event it is no longer needed for minerals and waste uses.</p> <p>Small-scale waste management facilities for local needs should not be precluded from the National Parks and AONBs, provided that they can be accommodated without undermining the objectives of the designation.</p>
<p>Surrey County Minerals Plan (2011)</p>	<p>Major mineral development within these designated areas will be subject to the most rigorous examination in accordance with the public interest test set out in MPS1.</p> <p>It is not just the designated Surrey Hills area but also its setting that should be safeguarded, parts of which are designated as Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Its topography provides a number of significant viewpoints over both the Weald to the south and the London Basin to the north, particularly from the North Downs Way and Greensand Ridge. The use of viewpoints and the landscape character within areas visible from such viewpoints either in the AONB or beyond should be conserved and managed.</p> <p>The plan has a presumption against new workings of soft sand within the AONB and this policy should extend to the AGLV to safeguard it until such time as a review of the AONB boundary has been completed. Development for clay, building stone and oil and gas is covered by policies MC9, MC10, 12 and 13.</p>
<p>Surrey Waste Local Plan (Dec)</p>	<p>Protected landscapes situated within or close to Surrey include the Surrey Hills AONB, the High Weald AONB, and the South Downs National Park. Wherever possible, development of new waste management facilities should take place outside those protected landscapes.</p>

2020)	Proposals for major development, including waste management facilities, within protected landscapes must be subject to rigorous examination. They should not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and only where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest before being allowed to proceed.
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Appendix 3: Surrey Hills AONB ‘Statement of Significance’

Surrey Hills AONB ‘Statement of Significance’ (Taken from Surrey Hills Website 13/8/2018)

“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 Surrey Hills attract millions of visitors every year who contribute to the economy of the area in sectors as diverse as wine production and wood fuel. 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 explore market towns and picture postcard perfect villages.”

Hills and Views: Visitors to the Surrey Hills can enjoy a remarkable range of changing scenery and diversity of landscape through the panoramic views obtained from the many vantage points spread throughout the AONB. The best known include Gravelly Hill, Colley Hill, Box Hill, Merrow Downs, Leith Hill and The Devil’s Punch Bowl. There are numerous other locations along the North Downs and Greensand Hills that afford a view over surrounding countryside. The view from Newlands Corner is possibly the best in Southern England overlooking the delightful Tillingbourne Valley and St Martha’s Church on its sandy ridge. On a clear day it is claimed that 13 counties can be seen from Leith Hill, which at 290m is the highest point in South East England.

Woodland: Woods have a big impact on the Surrey Hills landscape. Woodlands are equally important for the people that live and work in and around them and to the wildlife they support. Well-managed woodlands can produce a mosaic of habitats capable of supporting light demanding and shade tolerant species. In fact it is this management of light which help to determine the abundance, or otherwise, of a wide variety of species. Management is particularly needed where a long history of rotational coppicing has suddenly stopped. The Surrey Hills has over four and a half thousand hectares of ancient woodland, which is an irreplaceable resource, which once lost, can never be restored.

(Note: No ‘statement of significance’ is provided for woodland, but the website refers to a separate page about woodland, which includes the above text).

Heathland: Heathland is a significant component in the Surrey Hills landscape, covering some 18% of the AONB as heaths and commons. Extensive areas of heathland occur in southwest Surrey at Thursley, Frensham and Hindhead, and unusually at Headley on acid soil overlying chalk. Heathland also survives in numerous small pockets, as at the Hurtwood, Leith Hill, Blackheath and Crooksbury. These heathlands represent one of Europe’s most important and threatened habitats which is reflected in the designation of Thursley as a National Nature Reserve.

Commons are familiar features throughout the Surrey Hills. They include vast open tracts of heathy common at Thursley, Puttenham and Frensham, and wooded commons at Ranmore, Hurtwood, Ockley and Witley. Traditional village greens have usually evolved from common land. Many commons particularly those with views, such as Ranmore, are popular visitor destinations.

Chalk grassland is an internationally important habitat and is identified as a priority in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Only 1% of the Surrey Hills has remnant chalk grassland cover. These chalk grasslands support a diversity of flora and fauna, including wild flowers, herbs and mosses, together with a myriad of associated insects, particularly butterflies. At White Downs and Box Hill there are wonderful examples of chalk grassland managed by the National Trust.

Rivers and Ponds: The Surrey Hills boasts a rich diversity of natural and man-made features associated with water, including springs, ponds, canals and wooded ghylls. Most are quite small, although larger ponds such as Frensham and Silent Pool are prominent features and visitor attractions. Ponds have featured in the landscape for centuries, often created to satisfy the needs of industry (mill ponds and hammer ponds such as Thursley), agriculture (field ponds), sport (duck decoys), and to act as a focus for communities (village ponds). There are also lots of ponds that can be seen on heathlands and commons derived from bomb craters and from mineral extraction.

Farmland: The Surrey Hills landscape is made up of a patchwork of different character areas each one distinctive with its own identity and set of features. Farming has played a central role in shaping this landscape, although only 40% of the Surrey Hills is designated as agricultural land. Traditional mixed farming creates a beautiful and forever changing landscape. The seasonal cycle of ploughing, drilling seeds and harvesting provides a valuable habitat for many species of farmland birds like the lapwing, skylark and barn owl.

Boundary Features: Farm boundaries, principally shaws and hedgerows, some of which have considerable antiquity and historical interest, are important features in the Surrey Hills. They provide wildlife corridors and have considerable influence on the pattern, scale and character of the landscape. Their protection and management is key to sustaining the diversity and distinctiveness of the AONB.

Parkland and Historic Features: Historic landscape features are found throughout the Surrey Hills and, together with landscaped parks, create distinctive local landscapes. Parkland contributes significantly to the landscape character of the Surrey Hills, as with the Wotton and Albury Estates, and as much as 6% of the AONB is registered as parkland.

Country Lanes and Rights of Way: The Surrey Hills has numerous attractive, winding, often enclosed, country lanes. A large number are 'sunken' lanes, particularly in the Greensand. Sunken lanes are often former drove ways, formed by erosion of sand and chalk. They have characteristically high banks with tree cover, and some, with their emergent tree roots, are spectacular features. Roads, bridleways and footpaths can be as much a part of the landscape as hedges and fields. The Surrey Hills enjoys an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways, including the North Downs Way National Trail, the Greensand Way and the Downs Link, which provide ready access throughout the AONB.

Settlements and Built Heritage: The Surrey Hills has a rich and diverse built heritage featuring many small farmsteads, pleasant hamlets with village greens, and grand houses set in parkland. Local materials like stone, flint, tile, brick and timber are featured throughout the Surrey Hills defining the sense of place. Many villages are picturesque and many feature 'Surrey Style' architecture, inspired by Lutyens and the Arts and Crafts Movement, whose designs sought to reflect local vernacular traditions. Many villages evolved around village greens creating picturesque scenes and are often designated as Conservation Areas.

Tranquillity and Inspiration: The Surrey Hills is greatly valued for its scenic beauty and provides a wonderful inspiration. It is a resource for historical, cultural, ecological, archaeological and literary interest. The area has influenced some of the country's finest writers, poets, artists and musicians. That inspiration continues today with millions of visitors attracted to its beauty spots and viewpoints to seek recreation and relaxation. The area's abundance of natural features, local landmarks,

attractive villages and breathtaking views means the Surrey Hills is valued as an area that is pleasant to live, work and visit. Many areas of the Surrey Hills still retain a feeling of remoteness, isolation and tranquillity, including dark skies at night.”

Appendix 4: Permitted Development Rights

Permitted Development Rights

List of Permitted Development Rights in GDPO 2015 (as amended) which apply to Article 2(3) land including AONBs.

This document was updated in February 2018 to take into account amendments to GPDO made in 2016 and 2017. Please note only the 2016 amendments make reference to Article 2(3) land. The 2017 legislation, which is primarily focussed on the provision of temporary schools and drinking establishments, makes no reference to Article 2 (3) land and no further changes are required. Furthermore some PDRs require prior approval from the local planning authority. The relevant parts of Schedule 2 to the GPDO set out the procedures which must be followed when [advance notification is required](#).

Part 1: Development within curtilage of a dwelling house

Class A enlargement and improvement of a dwelling house: restrictions to particular works to a dwelling house set out at A2.

Class B additions etc to the roof of a dwelling house: exclusion specific to B1(f)

Class E buildings incidental to the enjoyment of a dwelling house: more restrictive conditions with specific regard to E2.

Class G Chimneys etc on a dwelling house: more restrictive conditions with specific regard to G1(c)

Class H microwave antenna on a dwelling house: restriction with specific regard to H1(e) particular siting of installation.

Part 3 Changes of Use

Class J retail/betting office/payday loan shop to assembly and leisure- specific exclusion to J1 (d)

Class M, retail/betting office/payday loan shop to dwelling houses-specific exclusion at M.1

(g) (i)

Class N, amusement arcade/centre/casino to dwelling houses-specific exclusion at N.1 (e)

Class P, storage/distribution to dwelling houses-specific exclusion at P.1 (g)

Class Q, agricultural buildings to dwellings and associated building operations-specific exclusion at .Q. 1 (j)

Part 4 Temporary Buildings and Uses

Class E temporary use of buildings/land for film making- specific exclusion to E1 (a)

Part 7: Non-domestic extensions, alterations etc

Class A extensions of shops or financial premises: A1(a) (i) (aa) specifies smaller thresholds applying on Article 2(3) land

Class C click and collect facilities-exclusion specific to C1 (f) (i)

Class D modification of shop loading bays: exclusion specific to D1(i)

Class F extension or alteration of an office building; specific restrictions set out in F1(a),(d) and F2(b)

Class H extensions etc of industrial and warehouse: out in specific restriction set H1(a) (i)

Class L development at waste management facilities: exclusion specific to L1(g)

Class M erection, extension or alteration of a school, college, university or hospital building:

includes additional conditions at M2(c) and (d)

Part 14 Renewable energy

Class H Microgen wind turbines on dwelling houses etc: exclusion specific to H2(l)

Class I Stand-alone wind turbine on domestic premises etc: exclusion specific to I.2(l)

Class J Installation or alteration of solar equipment on nondomestic premises: specific restrictions set out in J.1.(d) J.2 (c)

Class K Installation or alteration of stand-alone solar equipment on nondomestic premises: specific restriction set out in K1 (b) (ii)

Class N installation etc of a flue for a biomass heating system: specific restriction set out in N 1(e)
Class O installation etc of a flue for a combi heat and power etc: specific restriction set out in O.1(e)

Part 16: Communications

- Class A antennas-exclusions specific to A1(5) (a) and (b)
- Class A ground/building based apparatus (2016 amendment)- **exclusions specific to A1 (c) (d) (f) and A 1 (4)**
- Class A radio equipment housing-additional conditions at A1(8) (c)
- Class A radio equipment housing (2016 amendment)- **exclusions specific to A1 (9)**
- Class A antennas on dwellings-additional conditions at A1(9) (b) and exclusion specific to A1 (10) (a)
- Class A antennas on dwellings (2016 amendment)- **exclusions specific to A1 (5)**
- Class A Subject to specific conditions and prior approval.
- Class B and C: **exclusions specific to B1(i) and C1(g)**

Part 17 Mining and minerals exploration

- Class J, temporary use for mineral exploration-**exclusion specific to J1(c)**
- Class JA, temporary use of land for petroleum exploration- **exclusion specific to J A.1 (b)**
- Class JA (temporary use of land in respect of petroleum exploration) (2016 amendment) development not permitted in AONBs.
- Class PA - A new PDR is introduced on a temporary change of use (change of use of light industrial to dwellinghouse) and applies in AONBs as elsewhere. Conditions apply as set out in PA.2 and such schemes require prior approval.

Part 19 Crown Development

Class A operation of crown buildings - additional conditions at B1 (c) (i)

Class T (a) installation of electronic communications apparatus –additional conditions at T2