



Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project Second Consultation Document

Proposal to extend the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB)

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About Natural England

We are the government's adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide.

Within England, we are responsible for:

- Promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity
- Conserving and enhancing the landscape
- Securing the provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment
- Promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open-air recreation
- Contributing in other ways to social and economic wellbeing through management of the natural environment.

To find out more about our work visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

This document contains useful information that will help you to comment on our amendments to the proposed extensions to the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) following the 2023 Statutory Consultation.

We recommend that you read it before completing the response form.

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View south from Bramshott Common looking over Hammer Bottom into the South Downs National Park

Foreword

Landscape is how many people come to understand the scale and richness of the natural world around them, whether it is through the view from their window or the majesty of distant mountains. It helps them to appreciate nature's diverse habitats, distinctive species and a whole range of public benefits such as carbon storage, clean water and opportunities for recreation. But it is beauty in the landscape that draws and holds the eye. We are very fortunate to have some fantastic landscapes in the South East of England, many of which are already legally protected as National Parks and National Landscapes (previously known and still legally known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONBs).

Last year, Natural England published and consulted on proposals to extend the boundary of the Surrey Hills National Landscape. Natural England were pleased to have received over 1500 responses to the consultation, most of which supported the proposed extensions. Responses to the consultation have since been reviewed and further evaluation has been undertaken. The evidence provided through the consultation process presented an opportunity to include additional land. Natural England has now produced proposals which include these further additions and some minor deletions. This consultation seeks your views about these proposals. I'd like to recognise the amount of work that has been undertaken via the consultation last year and I thank all who participated and provided evidence.

We are keen to hear from everyone who has an interest in the area and cares about its future. If you would like to have your say please spend some time reading this consultation document and send us your views by completing the enclosed response form or completing the online form via the website: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/ne-landscape-heritage-and-geodiversity-team/surrey-hills-boundary-variation-2nd-consultation>.

The consultation ends on the 10th December 2024 and you can send us your comments any time before this date. If you would like to speak directly to the team working on this project then please drop in at one of the events we are holding locally in the area (see local press or visit the website for details: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/ne-landscape-heritage-and-geodiversity-team/surrey-hills-boundary-variation-2nd-consultation>). We will keep everyone informed of progress by publishing the results of this consultation next year. We look forward to receiving your responses to this important consultation.

Edel McGurk



Edel McGurk
Regional Director for the Southeast, Natural England

Introduction

Natural England is currently considering whether certain areas should be designated as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB). Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) were recently rebranded as National Landscapes; however, when designating, Natural England still legally designates an AONB. To avoid confusion, this document will refer to the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB). If additional land is subsequently designated, it would then be branded as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape.

In March 2023 we published our proposals to extend the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and began a consultation process to seek people's views on whether the proposed extensions have the qualities necessary to be designated and if they should be given national status.

We received a huge number of responses (over 1500). We have considered all responses, and have undertaken further evaluation work, including in East Hampshire. Our revised proposals include:

- 27 additional areas as a result of boundary reviews
- 13 deletions as a result of boundary reviews
- 3 additional areas within East Hampshire as a result of additional assessment

We now wish to hear your views on the proposed changes to the boundary and on the East Hampshire assessment we have undertaken, and are therefore carrying out a second consultation.

A response form is enclosed for you to express your views, but please read this Consultation Document first – it contains important information that you will find useful in making your comments.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek your views on proposed boundary changes and whether the proposed areas in East Hampshire have the qualities required for inclusion within an AONB, whether they should be designated and whether the proposed boundaries are appropriate.

Further information is available as separate supporting documents and includes:

- Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation **Project Consultation Analysis Report and associated appendices 1-21** July 2024. These documents contain a detailed analysis of responses and the reasons for our proposed changes;
- Index map and detailed maps - **Figures 12b-29b**;
- Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project **East Hampshire Evaluation** (Aug 2024). This document contains a detailed assessment of land in East Hampshire.

Copies of the Supporting Documents can be downloaded from <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-landscape-heritage-and-geodiversity-team/surrey-hills-boundary-variation-2nd-consultation> or copies can be requested by e-mailing us at: SurreyHillsAONBboundaryreview@naturalengland.org.uk

or by writing to:

Meg Johannessen, Natural England, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF

The closing date for comments to arrive is 10 December 2024.

Consultation Responses and Results

Over 1500 individuals and organisations submitted written responses to the 2023 consultation on the revised boundaries for the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB). The majority of responses were received via the on-line Citizen Space questionnaire. A relatively small number of responses (116) were received as paper copies of the questionnaire or as letter/e-mail responses.

The largest number of on-line responses came from respondents living outside of the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and outside of the proposed extensions (41%) followed by respondents living inside one of the proposed extension areas (32%). A smaller number of responses came from those living in one of the London Boroughs (12.5%) and those living within the existing designation (6%). The remainder came from beyond Surrey or did not provide any information (7.5%).

A summary of responses from Statutory Consultees is provided in the table below, and illustrates a broad level of in principle support for the proposed Extension Areas and a desire to see more land designated.

Table 1: Statutory Consultee Responses

Local Authority	Details
Surrey County Council	Supportive Suggests additional land in five areas
Guildford Borough Council	Fully Supportive Requests careful consideration of views of local communities
Waverley Borough Council	Fully Supportive Requests careful consideration of views of local communities
Mole Valley District Council	Supportive Suggests additional land in eight areas
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	Supportive Suggests additional land in five areas
Tandridge District Council	Supportive Suggests additional land in six areas and minor boundary refinement
Greater London Authority	Did not submit a consultation response
Croydon London Borough Council	Supportive Suggests an additional area
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	Supportive of study and land proposed for inclusion by others
East Hampshire District Council	Concern regarding lack of consideration of land in East Hampshire
City of London Corporation	Supportive of Farthing Down area and Happy Valley extension

Natural England is extremely pleased with the level of response. We have now completed our analysis of the views and comments received and a number of refinements to the proposals have been made.

Natural Beauty

There was a very strong consensus among statutory, individual, organisation and group consultees that the proposed Extension Areas as a whole satisfied the natural beauty criterion. Many consultees supported this by highlighting particular aspects of the areas' natural beauty.

Nevertheless, some consultees felt that the proposed extension areas did not meet the natural beauty criterion. The areas which attracted the greatest number of negative responses were Wey Valley Farmham (13 responses) and Hatchlands and East Clandon (14 responses). The former related to concerns regarding the inclusion of areas of built development and a planning appeal site while the latter related to the inclusion of the village of East Clandon and land adjacent to Blakes Lane. Detailed analysis of the responses for each of the Extension Areas can be found in the **Consultation Analysis Report (Appendices 3-21)**.

We have taken all consultation responses into account and made a number of refinements to the areas proposed for designation. We are satisfied that all the areas proposed for designation meet the natural beauty criterion.

Desirability to Designate

A range of different responses relating to desirability were submitted by respondents. Overall, they fall into three broad categories:

- Firstly, general comments both for and against designating all of the proposed Extension Areas in principle;
- Secondly, specific comments both for and against designating a specific Extension Area;
- Thirdly, comments in support of designating a much wider area beyond the proposed Extension Areas.

A very substantial majority of consultees who submitted their responses online (between 79% and 99% depending on which area is considered) agreed with the principle that the proposed Extension Areas should be designated as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB). As indicated in Table 1 above, there was also strong support amongst Local Authorities (although nearly all wished to see more land included).

In addition to the on-line responses, a number of separate paper responses were received which raised concerns regarding the designation of additional land as AONB, either in relation to a specific area or more fundamentally as an in-principle objection. These objections largely came from developers, business and land managers and their representative bodies.

A wide range of desirability issues were raised by consultees. For ease we have grouped these into broad themes and these are listed below. We have considered all of these in detail and a summary of consultees' views, together with our responses to these, can be found in supporting document **Appendix 2 Detailed Analysis of Desirability Responses**.

We are of the view that many of the valid concerns raised by consultees can be (and are being) addressed by the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and relevant Local Authorities. Overall, we have concluded that designation of the additional land as AONB and therefore part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape is especially desirable for all the areas under consideration. Nevertheless, we recognise that the Secretary of State will make any final decision on issues which remain as outstanding objections following the Notice Period (see What Happens Next? at the end of this document).

Desirability themes raised by consultees

The identified themes **in support** of designation of the proposed Extension Areas or wider areas, are as follows:

- Benefits from integrated management
- Benefits arising from additional resources
- Benefits from conservation and enhancement
- Benefits of improved access and visitor management
- Statutory protection in planning
- Proximity to centres of population and access
- Area of Greater Landscape Value (AGLV) status is uncertain and therefore should be designated as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Bringing in additional land to fulfil Government commitment to nature recovery and addressing climate change
- Bringing in additional land to improve access and wellbeing.

The identified themes **against** designation of the proposed Extension Areas either individually or in totality, are as follows:

- Current management of the land
- Areas are already protected in planning terms
- Increased regulations and restrictions
- Removal of permitted development rights
- Impact on housing supply
- Impact on the economy
- Impact on business
- Impact on agriculture
- Increased house prices



Waggoners Wells, Cooper's Stream valley

Detailed Boundary

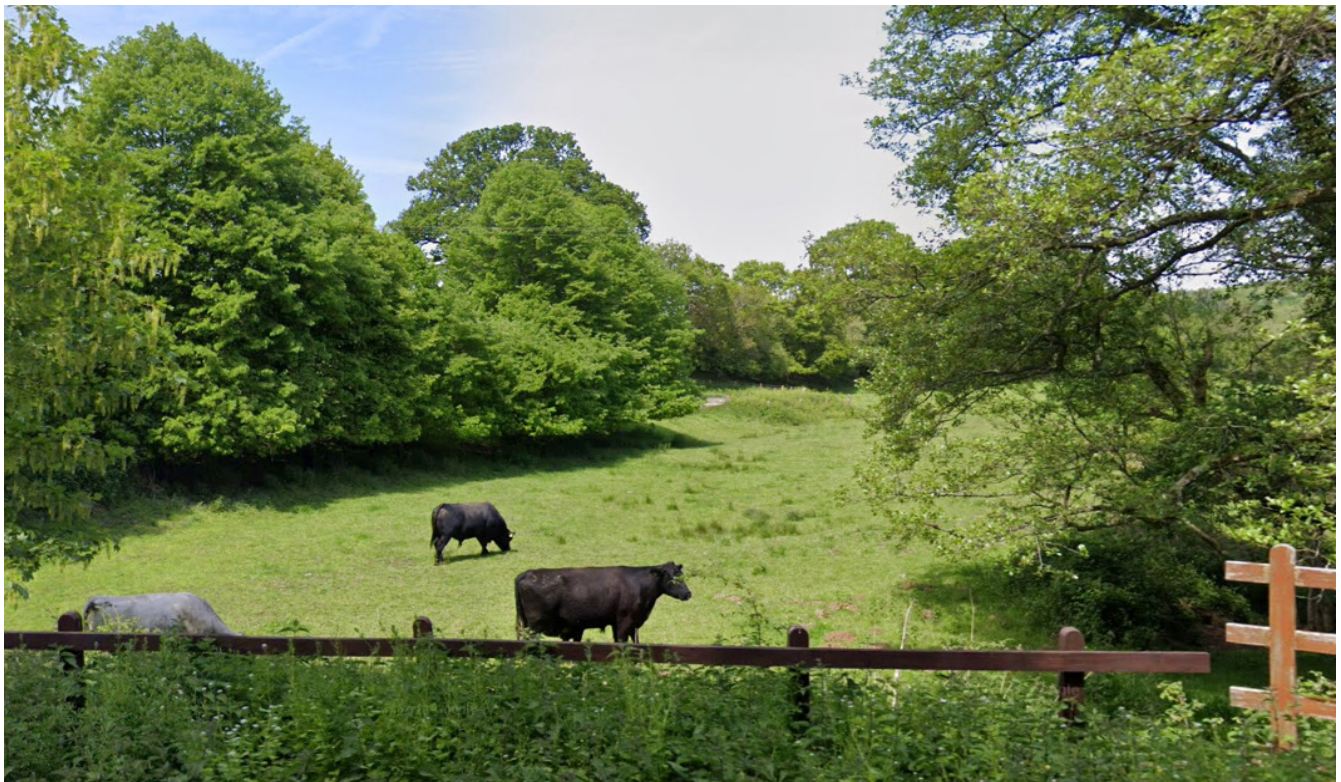
Many consultees, including those who agreed with the principle of designation, recommended changes to the proposed boundaries.

We considered all of these representations and have concluded that refinements to the proposals comprising 27 additions and 13 deletions should be made. These changes are summarised in Table 2 below in relation to each Extension Area, along with a map reference. Figure 12b below, provides an overview map to locate the proposed changes. Detailed boundary maps illustrating the proposed changes at 1:25,000 scale can be found on Citizen Space **Figures 13b-29b**.

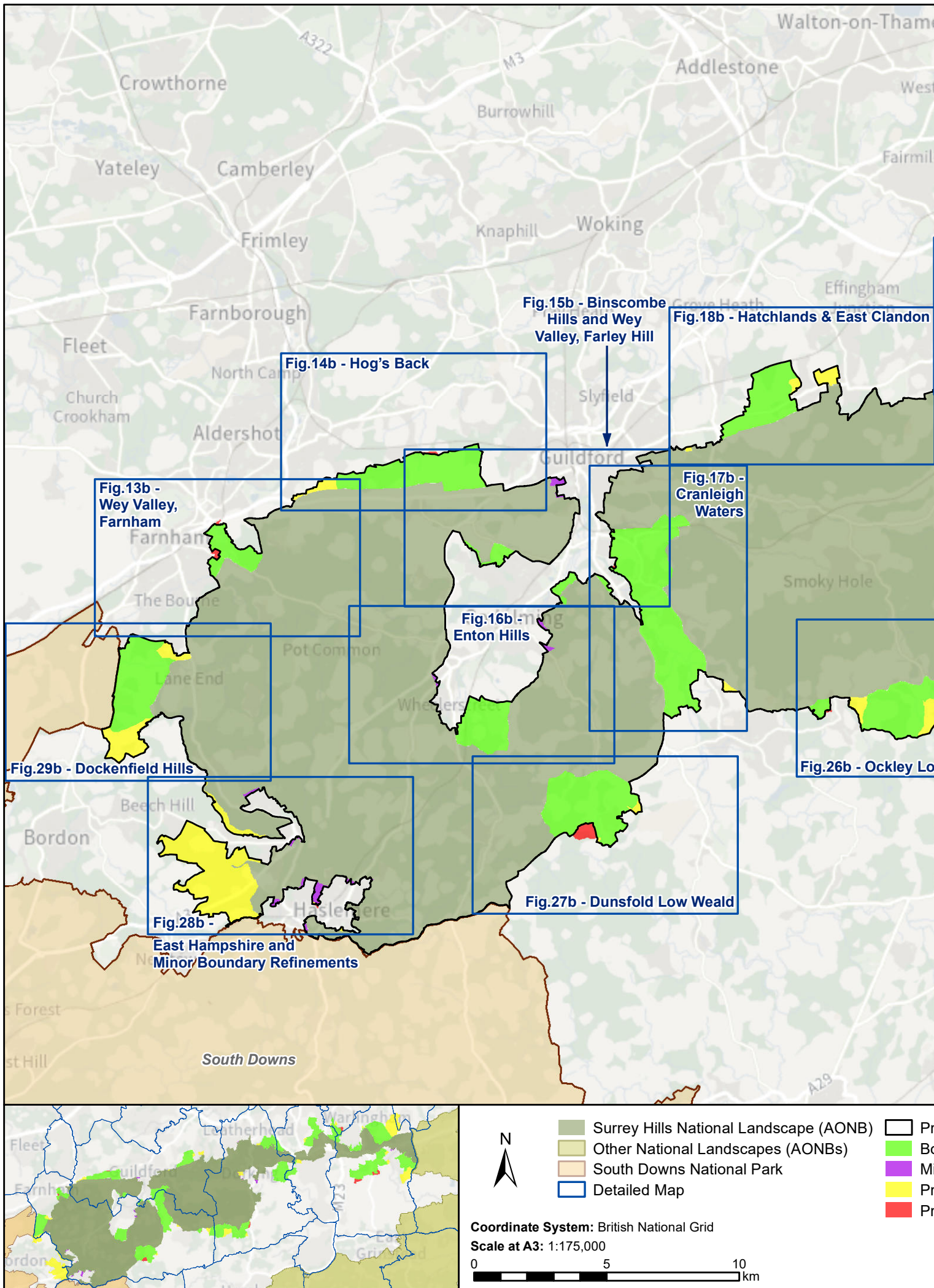
Table 2: Proposed changes in each Extension Area

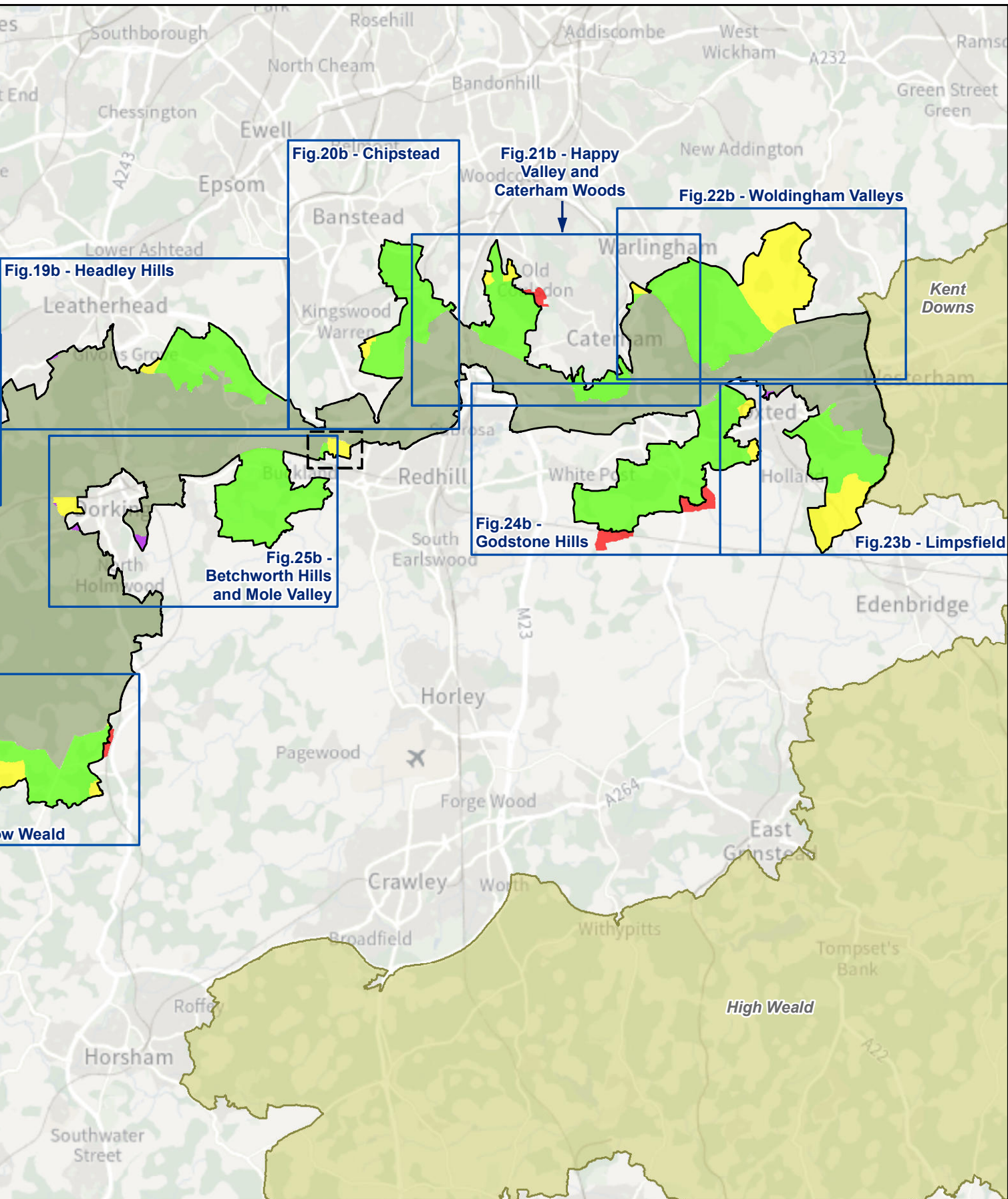
Extension Area	Additions and Deletions	Map Reference
Wey Valley, Farnham	Deletion 1: Land off Waverley Lane Deletion 2: Land at Rock House	13b
Hog's Back	Addition 1: Land at Tongham Deletion 3: Land north of West Flexford Farm	14b
Binscombe Hills	-	15b
Enton Hills	-	16b
Wey Valley, Farley Hill	-	15b
Cranleigh Waters	Deletion 4: Land at Drodges Close Addition 2: Land at Smithwood Common	17b
Hatchlands and East Clandon	Addition 3: Land at Guildford Golf Club SNCI Addition 4: Land at Upper Hammond Farm Addition 5: Land at West Horsley Place	18b
Headley Hills	Addition 6: Land at Beaverbrook	19b
Chipstead Valleys	Addition 7: Land at Hogden Bottom	20b
Happy Valley	Addition 8: Land west of Farthing Down Addition 9: Land east of Farthing Down Deletion 5: Land west of Coulston Common	21b
Caterham Woods	Deletion 6: Properties along Stanstead Road Deletion 7: Property east of Tupwood lane	21b
Woldingham Valleys	Addition 10: Western edge of Halliloo Valley Addition 11: Beddlestead Valley	22b
Limpsfield	Addition 12: Land south to Staffhurst Wood	23b

Extension Area	Additions and Deletions	Map Reference
Godstone Hills	Addition 13: Land at The Bogs Addition 14: Land at Oxted Mill Deletion 8: Land north of New Road Deletion 9: Land south of South Park	23b and 24b
Betchworth and Mole Valley	Addition 15: Land south of Colley Hill Addition 16: Land east of Shag Brook	25b
Ockley Low Weald	Deletion 10: Land west of railway Addition 17: Land at Ockley Court SNCI Addition 18: Land north of Vann Lake Road Addition 19: Land north of Pisle Lane Addition 20: Land west of Plough Lane Deletion 11: Land north of Thornhurst Brook Farm	26b
Dunsfold Low Weald	Addition 21: Land at Sayers Land Addition 22: Land at Loxley Bridge Deletion 12: Land north of Chiddingfold Road	27b
Dockenfield Hills	Addition 23: Land south of Old Lane Addition 24: Land at Shortfield Common	29b
Minor Boundary Refinements	Addition 25: Land west of Dorking Addition 26: Land at Red Court Deletion 13: Land at Weydown Road Carpark Addition 27: Land west of Bunch Road	25b 28b 28b 28b



Mellow Farm Meadows along the River Wey





Proposed Boundary
 Boundary Extension (March 2023)
 Minor Boundary Refinement (March 2023)
 Proposed Addition (2024)
 Proposed Deletion (2024)

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**Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB)
 Boundary Variation Project
 Consultation Analysis Changes 2024**



Fig.12b
 Proposed Boundary Extensions Index Map

Proposed Additions - Justification

The text below provides a brief justification for the proposed change to the boundary resulting in the inclusion of additional land.

- **Addition 1** - Land at Tongham: the addition of land within the zone of transition, in order to identify clear features on the ground and address existing AONB boundary anomalies.
- **Addition 2** - Land at Smithwood Common: the addition of land to include the whole of Smithwood Common.
- **Addition 3** - Land at Guildford Golf Club Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI): the addition of land to bring in all of the Guildford Golf Club SNCI and to ensure the proposed boundary follows a clear line on the ground.
- **Addition 4** - Land at Upper Hammonds Farm: the addition of land to include Upper Hammonds Farm and hillside to the west for reasons of consistency and in recognition of the positive contribution listed farm buildings and hillside backdrop make to the natural beauty of the area.
- **Addition 5** - Land at West Horsley Place: the addition of land at West Horsely Place to include the parkland landscape and associated buildings.
- **Addition 6** - Land at Beaverbrook: the addition of land at Breaverbrook to include the mansion house and sloping designed gardens.
- **Addition 7** - Land at Hogden Bottom: the addition of land at Hogden Bottom to include sloping fields and woodland which make a contribution to the natural beauty of the wider area.
- **Addition 8** - Land west of Farthing Downs: the addition of a continuous sweep of open downland west of Farthing Downs which contributes to natural beauty of the wider landscape.
- **Addition 9** - Land east of Farthing Downs: the addition of fields east of Farthing Down which form part of a wider sweep of landscape and contribute to the scenic composition of Happy Valley.
- **Addition 10** - Western edge of Halliloo Valley: the addition of land on the western edge of Hallaloo Valley to include the continuation of the distinctive and dramatic valley landform.
- **Addition 11** - Beddlestead Valley: the addition of land within the Beddlestead Valley which meets the natural beauty criterion as a result of its dramatic topography and scenic compositions.
- **Addition 12** - Land south to Staffhurst Wood: the addition of land at Staffurst Wood including areas of ancient woodland and higher quality undulating land to the west.
- **Addition 13** - Land at The Bogs: the addition of land south of Barrow Green Lane to include the natural heritage feature of The Bogs and sweep of arable land with dramatic views to the chalk scarp.
- **Addition 14** - Land at Oxted Mill: the addition of land and historic buildings at Oxted Mill, the river valley and associated meadows to the south, and Broadham Green Conservation Area.
- **Addition 15** - Land south of Colley Hill: the addition of land which forms the lower slopes of the chalk scarp and ancient woodland at Colley Copse and rural lanes of Coppice Lane and The Clears.
- **Addition 16** - Land east of Shag Brook: the addition of a narrow band of woodland flanking Shag

Brook.

- **Addition 17** - Land at Ockley Court Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI): the addition of land to include the whole of the Ockley Court SNCI comprising ancient woodland and Kit Brook.
- **Addition 18** - Land north of Vann Lake Road: the addition of land to include an area of remnant parkland and ancient woodland.
- **Addition 19** - Land north of Pisleigh Lane: the addition of land to include patches of ancient woodland and a number of listed buildings within the area of transition.
- **Addition 20** - Land west of Plough Lane: the addition of land to include Cobbler's Brook and associated small scale meadows.
- **Addition 21** - Sayers Land: the addition of woodland at Sayers Land and continuation of High Loxley Road.
- **Addition 22** - Land at Loxley Bridge: the addition of land at Loxley Bridge in order to refine the boundary to follow clear features on the ground.
- **Addition 23** - Land south of Old Lane: the addition of land south of Old Lane which meets the natural beauty criterion (ref to East Hampshire Extensions below - page 17).
- **Addition 24** - Land at Shortfield Common: the addition of land to include all of Shortfield Common SNCI, the settlements of Shortfield Common and Millbridge, and undulating pastures to the north.
- **Addition 25** - Land west of Dorking: the addition of land at the foot of the chalk scarp including Milton Court and environs and Milton Court Lane.
- **Addition 26** - Land at Red Court: the addition of land to refine the boundary to follow clear features on the ground and include prominent open land, ancient woodland and bridle way.
- **Addition 27** - Land west of Bunch Road: the addition of land in order to refine the boundary and ensure it is consistent with the settlement boundary and Area of Strategic Visual Importance.

For East Hampshire Additions please refer to page 17 below.

Proposed Deletions - Justification

The text below provides a brief justification for the proposed changes to the boundary resulting in the deletion of land previously included as part of an extension area.

- **Deletion 1** - Land off Waverley Lane: the deletion of land off Waverley Lane to take account of permitted housing development.
- **Deletion 2** - Land at Rock House: the deletion of land to exclude flatter land to the north of Wey Valley around Rock House.
- **Deletion 3** - Land north of West Flexford Farm: the deletion of land to exclude modern housing on the edge of Flexford.
- **Deletion 4** - Land at Drodges Close: the deletion of land to exclude development at Drodges Close.
- **Deletion 5** - Land west of Coulston Common: the deletion of land to exclude flatter areas and ensure the boundary consistently follows the break in slope to Happy Valley.
- **Deletion 6** - Properties along Stanstead Road: the deletion of land to exclude residential development and public house along Stanstead Road.
- **Deletion 7** - Property east of Tupwood lane: the deletion of land to ensure the consistent exclusion of property on the eastern side of Tupwood Lane.
- **Deletion 8**- Land north of New Road: the deletion of land to exclude lower quality land within the transitional landscape north of Miles Road and New Road.
- **Deletion 9** - Land south of South Park: the deletion of land in the vicinity of Bletchingley railway tunnel to ensure the boundary follows a more conservative line within an area of transition, and resolves complexities associated with the railway.
- **Deletion 10** - Land west of railway: the deletion of land to the west of the railway due to the transitional nature of the landscape, ensuring the adoption of a more conservatively defined boundary further to the west.
- **Deletion 11**- Land north of Thornhurst Brook Farm: the deletion of land at Thornhurst Brook Farm to ensure the boundary follows clear features.
- **Deletion 12**- Land north of Chiddingfold Road: the deletion of land north of Chiddingfold Road which is of lesser quality and to ensure the boundary is more clearly defined.
- **Deletion 13**- Land at Weydown Road Carpark: the deletion of land at Weydown Road Carpark to ensure the proposed boundary is consistent with the settlement boundary and Area of Strategic Visual Importance.



Rural track on southern edge of Ludshott Common

Proposed East Hampshire Extensions

Context

The 2023 Statutory Consultation responses included requests to consider land within East Hampshire as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary review project, which did not previously form part of the Area of Search defined by the Management Advisory Group and Natural England. Requests related to land which sits between the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and the South Downs National Park.

This area of search was refined following initial review. An Evaluation Area was defined which included land east of the A325, but excluded land to the west and the more developed environs of Borden, Headley, Bramshott and Liphook which were unlikely to warrant national landscape designation.

It was noted that the Evaluation Area shares similar qualities to the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape and is contiguous with the existing designation. Whilst the land is not recognised by local landscape designation, the Bramshott and Ludshott Commons were noted by the Inspector at the South Downs National Park Inquiry, as meeting the natural beauty criterion and expressing characteristics similar to the Surrey heaths.

Extent to which the natural beauty criterion is met

Three discrete areas are considered suitable for inclusion within the proposed extension to the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and include:

- **Bramshott and Ludshott Commons** noted for their extensive semi natural heathland habitat, and areas of ancient woodland within the incised valley of Cooper's Stream and Waggoners Ponds.
- **Southern valley slopes of Whitmoor Vale**, noted for its steep topography, tranquillity, ancient woodland and historic mill at Barford.
- **Slea and Wey Valleys**, noted for their gentle riparian character, meandering watercourses, sinuous lanes, vernacular buildings and peaceful ambience. This latter area forms a seamless addition to the proposed Dockenfield Hills extension area and is referred to as part of this area.



Braford Mill in Whitmoor Vale

Significance

The three discrete areas are significant for different reasons. The Bramshott and Ludshott Heaths are of significance for their extensive areas of former common - Ludshott Common is one of the largest

remaining areas of heathland in East Hampshire. The commons support a rich mosaic of rare and nationally valued heathland habitats, as well as ancient woodland and cultural heritage features. They have a group and collective value in association with other heathlands in the South Downs National Park and Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB)

The southern valley slopes of Whitmoor Vale are significant for their steep topography which forms a continuation of the Whitmoor Vale and is only partially included in the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB). This area is also significant for its ancient woodland at Whitmoor Hanger, vernacular buildings at Barford, which contribute to scenic qualities, and its rights of way network and walks from centres of population.

The addition to the proposed Dockenfield Hills Extension Area is significant for the narrow river valley pastures of the Slea and Wey, and rounded Greensand hills which are traversed by sinuous lanes, often incised into the underlying bedrock, and typical Surrey rural vernacular buildings. It is also significant for its tranquillity and intimate scale.

Key Issues affecting the area's special qualities

The following issues are currently experienced in these areas and are relevant to considering the difference AONB designation may make:

- Commons are currently managed by the National Trust and MOD. A Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Agreement covers part of the SSSI but not all of the common area.
- Significant resources are required to restore heath habitat including felling of conifer plantation and the reintroduction of grazing.
- Partnership working between conservation organisations coalesces around specific initiatives and may not continue in the longer term.
- Grazing pressure from equestrian use is evident in farmed areas and valley meadows.
- Suburbanisation of lanes as a result of residential development is evident closer to settlement.
- Pressure and management of the area for recreation is an ongoing concern given usage of the area and proximity to settlements.
- Decline in the active management of woodlands is evident in places.

The area is closely linked (in visual, natural and cultural heritage terms) with the continuation of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) beyond the County Boundary. Natural England considers that strategic management of the qualifying areas (given their natural beauty and special qualities), would be beneficial. This would ensure more consistent forward planning and decision making through the focus provided by the statutory duties and powers which would apply. The dedicated purpose of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan, the assistance that the AONB team can provide through partnership work, including support to land managers and others, and changes to permitted development rights, will all help to resolve issues affecting the landscape as noted above, and would provide greater certainty into the longer term. Inclusion of the Ludshott and Bramshott Commons would also address the unfinished business of giving recognition to this landscape as identified by the Inspector in his report on the South Downs National Park Inquiry.

Other relevant factors

Governance: Designation of qualifying land within East Hampshire will require the inclusion of Hampshire County Council and East Hampshire District Council on the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board. This will, in association with the existing six local authorities, Croydon Borough and Bromley Borough (as a result of proposed extensions), bring the total number of local authorities represented on the AONB Board to ten. 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). Furthermore, the qualifying areas in the Slea Valley and Whitmoor Vale are relatively small in extent and the more substantial area of Ludshott Common is owned and managed by the National Trust, an existing member of the Surrey Hills Board. Should

designation of land within East Hampshire, as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape 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 it may enable improved collaborative working between Local Authorities at a landscape scale.

Identity of the Surrey Hills National Landscape: 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.

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.

Washover of the A3: The designation of the Ludshott and Bramshott Commons in their entirety, as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB), would require the inclusion of the A3 corridor which runs between them. NE Guidance makes it clear that a designation can wash-over a tract of land even though that land does not itself meet the designation criteria...provided it sits within a sweep of qualifying land (para 5.4 bullet 9). The Natural Beauty assessment concluded that the influence of the A3 corridor was not so great as to adversely affect the ability of the whole area to qualify. NE Guidance at para 6.13 notes that the '*decision to include land that does not itself meet the natural beauty criterion depends on the location of the non-qualifying land, its scale and the effect/benefit of including it within any prospective designation.*'

The 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 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. Overall, the location of the A3 corridor within the tract of qualifying land is not considered to adversely affect the ability of both the common to the north and to the south from meeting the designation criterion. 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.

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.

The proposed boundary

The proposed boundary has been drawn to include extensive areas of former common comprising heathland mosaic, plantation and ancient woodland and the valleys of Hammer Bottom, Cooper's Stream and Whitmoor Vale as well as the gentle pastoral valleys of the Slea and Wey which form an addition to the proposed Dockenfield Hills Extension Area. Care has been taken to draw the boundary conservatively in areas of transition especially west of Ludshott and Bramshott Commons and south of the Wey Valley. Care has also been taken to exclude those areas most affected by fragmentation where linear settlement has affected the character and qualities of rural lanes, or changes in land use and boundary loss or subdivision have affected condition and scenic qualities. In the case of the land associated with the Slea and Wey Valley, the boundary has for the most part, followed rural lanes within the transition.



View south across buttercup meadows within Wey Valley

The boundary follows roads, tracks, hedgerows, fence lines and the edge of woodland, all of which form features on the ground. In some locations the definition of the edge of the common and woodland resulted in a more convoluted boundary, but this was considered acceptable in order to include qualifying areas of land and features of interest. The boundary does not include the whole of the Wey Valley Conservation Area but just the area within Hammer Bottom. This is not unusual where natural heritage designations cover significant areas or are linear and extend into areas of lesser quality land.

Extending the boundary to include part of the Slea and Wey Valleys, has removed the need to follow the County boundary where it did not follow any feature on the ground. For some sections of the boundary, the course of the River Wey has been used. Should the river change course as a result of natural processes, the boundary should follow the feature.

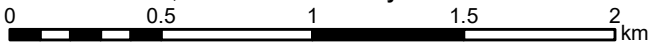
Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project East Hampshire Evaluation



Fig.EH8.1 - Proposed Boundary
Whitmoor Vale and
Bramshott & Ludshott
Commons

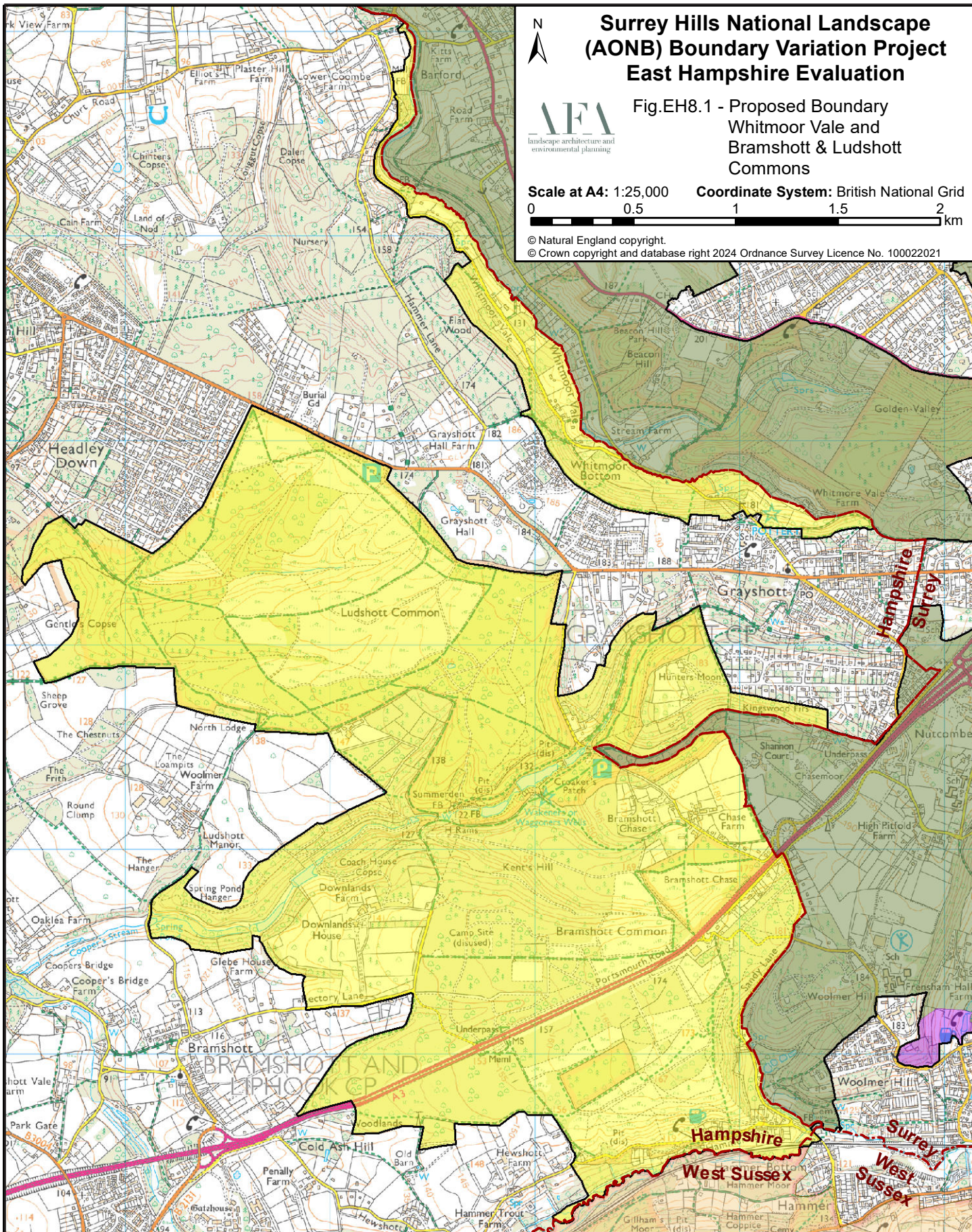
Scale at A4: 1:25,000

Coordinate System: British National Grid



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- Surrey Hills Natural Landscape (AONB)
- South Downs National Park
- County Boundary
- Proposed Boundary
- Minor Boundary Refinement (March 2023)
- Proposed Addition (2024)

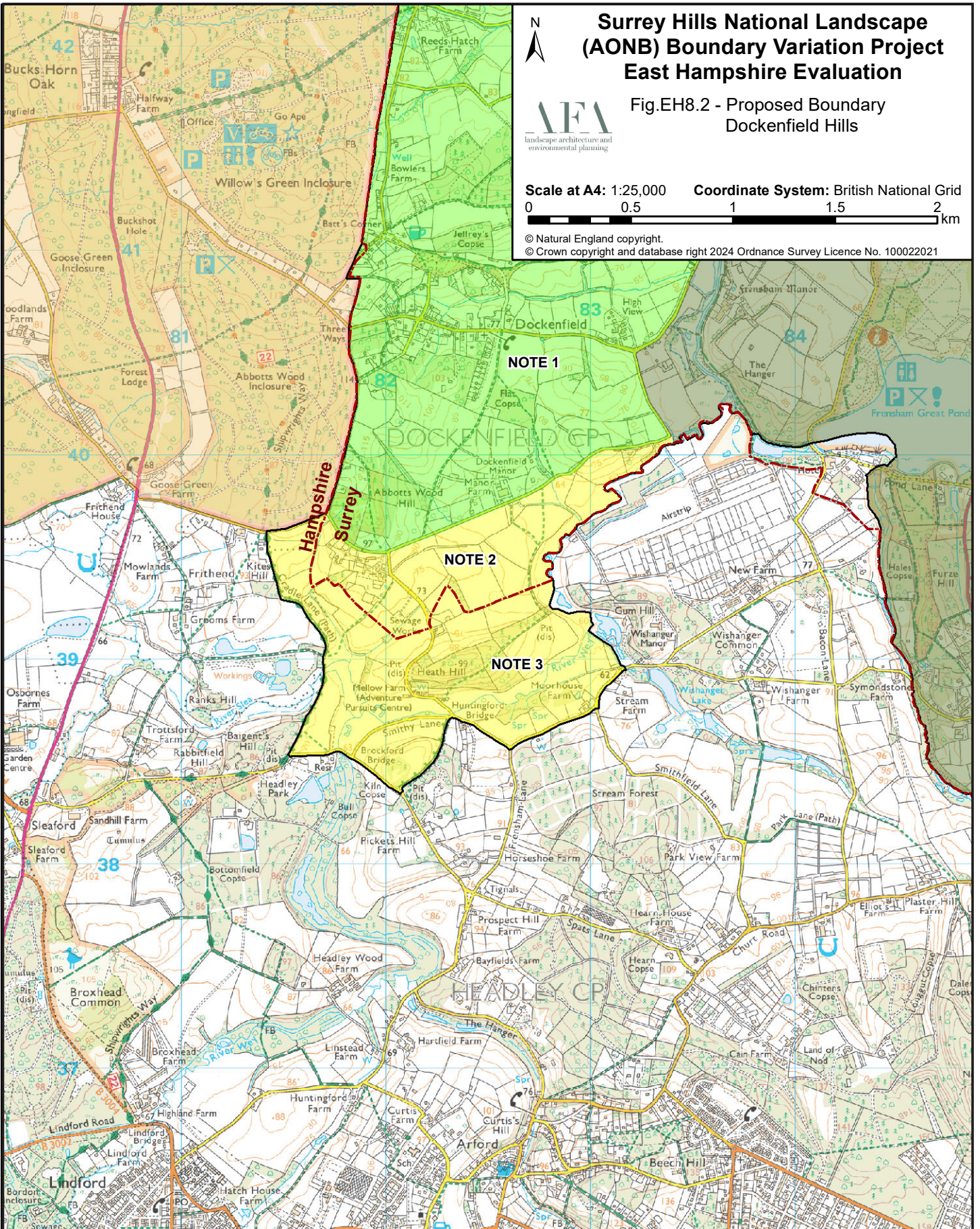
Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project East Hampshire Evaluation



Fig.EH8.2 - Proposed Boundary
Dockenfield Hills

Scale at A4: 1:25,000 Coordinate System: British National Grid
0 0.5 1 1.5 2 km

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- Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB)
- South Downs National Park
- County Boundary
- Boundary Extension (March 2023)
- Proposed Addition (2024)
- Proposed Boundary

Note 1 - Dockenfield Hills Extension as shown on Fig 29 (March 2023)
 Note 2 - Dockenfield Hills Extension post Statutory Consultation (Statutory Consultation Analysis Report July 2024 and Fig. 29a)
 Note 3 - Proposed Dockenfield Extension post East Hampshire Evaluation (August 2024)



Bramshott Common

Overall Changes

The net effect of the proposed changes set out above (additions and deletions) is a proposed enlargement of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) of 129.5 sq km (this includes the extensions within East Hampshire which equate to 9.2 sq km). This would give a total increase in the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) of just over 30%.

What Happens Next?

After the completion of this second consultation, we will analyse all responses in order to make a final recommendation to the Natural England Board in 2025. When Natural England endorse any National Landscape extensions, legal documents (“Variation Orders”) will then be prepared and a Notice of the Order published in the London Gazette and other papers as required by Section 83(2) of the CRow Act.

The Notice period allows anyone who wishes to do so to make representations to Natural England, objecting to, supportive of, or proposing amendments to the Order, and stating the grounds on which they are made. Natural England will make any further changes they see fit prior to submitting the final Order to the Secretary of State along with any outstanding objections. The Secretary of State has discretion to confirm the Order (with or without amendment), or call a Public Inquiry to consider outstanding objections before deciding whether or not to confirm the Order. This decision is not made to any specific timescale.

The Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) will only be extended if the Secretary of State confirms the Variation Order.

We will continue to make public all future steps in this project. In the meantime, we look forward to hearing your views.

Natural England

September 2024

Front cover image:
Bramshott Common looking west
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