

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



Final Report
August 2024

Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project

East Hampshire Evaluation

Prepared for Natural England

By

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In association with Resources for Change
and South Coast GIS

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of Work

- 1.1.1 This report sets out the findings of a natural beauty evaluation of land adjacent to the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (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 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.
- 1.1.2 The assessment detailed in this report focuses specifically on land within East Hampshire. This area has been assessed following Statutory Consultation in relation to proposed boundary extensions to the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) which took place between March – July 2023. Consultation responses included requests to consider land within East Hampshire to determine if it also qualified for AONB designation.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 There has been a long-held desire to review the boundary of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB).
- 1.2.2 In September 2021, Natural England commissioned a consortium of specialist consultants to undertake a review of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary. The approach adopted included extensive early engagement activity, and the detailed technical assessments of natural beauty, desirability and boundary considerations.
- 1.2.3 The extent of the initial Area of Search was defined by Natural England and the Management Advisory Group and was widened following a ‘call for evidence’ in 2022. The initial Area of Search (shown in Appendix 1) did not identify land in East Hampshire for assessment. A couple of submissions made during the ‘Call for Evidence’ related to land in East Hampshire were noted in the Natural Beauty Assessment and earmarked for scrutiny at the boundary assessment stage on the basis they were likely to reflect minor boundary anomalies. However, at the boundary assessment stage, it was concluded that minor boundary variations which might involve small parcels of land within East Hampshire being brought into the designation, should not be pursued. The Boundary Considerations Report stated at paragraph 3.2.2:

‘Following discussion with Natural England, a decision was reached not to undertake minor boundary refinements where they would result in small parcels of land beyond the Surrey County boundary potentially being included in the designation. This decision was based on the potential for increased administrative complexity, but also because, where the existing AONB followed the County Boundary, it generally followed a clear feature on the ground. On this basis, areas such as land west of Sandy Lane, Haslemere and Whitmoor Vale, Grayshott were not considered further.’

1.2.4 The results of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project recommended a series of extension areas and alterations to the Surrey Hills boundary, although none involved East Hampshire. These results were the subject of the Statutory Consultation review in 2023.

1.2.5 During the Statutory Consultation responses were received from East Hampshire District Council (ANON-VUXE-W5MQ-J) and also respondent ANON-VUXE-WEW9-M. Both respondents set out their reasoning for why they felt land within East Hampshire should be assessed for designation as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) including:

- Land meets the natural beauty criterion due to rare heathland, open fields, deciduous and coniferous woodland, hangers and ancient woodland, wetland adjoining watercourses, important and rare landscape features.
- Conclusions reached by the Inspector at the South Downs National Park Inquiry (see designation history in Section 2 below).
- Boundary considerations in NE Guidance (Appendix 4) states that administrative boundaries whilst administratively convenient are often unsuitable in the majority of cases.

1.2.6 In particular respondents wished to see an assessment of the following areas (refer to Figure EH1):

- Land east of the A325 and south of EA14
- Broxhead Common
- Whitmoor Vale, Whitmoor Hanger and Whitmoor Bottom
- Ludshott and Bramshott Commons
- Land west of A325 and Bordon

1.2.7 These areas form land between the existing South Downs National Park and the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and form the starting point of the evaluation, set out in this report. These results should be read in association with previous technical reports for the wider Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project. These documents set out the legislative background and NE Guidance on which this work is based.

1.3 Format of the Report

1.3.1 The remainder of the report is laid out as follows:

- **Section Two** outlines the designation history and method including the definition of the study area and Evaluation Areas
- **Section three** contains the approach to evaluation
- **Section four** contains the detailed natural beauty evaluation
- **Section five** sets out desirability considerations
- **Section six** sets out the proposed boundary
- **Section seven** provides the conclusion of this assessment

2.0 Designation History

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section considers how the landscape has been valued in the past.

2.2 Designation History

2.2.1 A summary of the designation history for the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) is provided in Section 3 of the Natural Beauty Assessment Report Feb 2023 and is not repeated here. Historically the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) was defined along the Hampshire and Surrey boundary. This is not unusual in existing National Landscape Designations, although it is recognised that rarely does natural beauty stop at an administrative boundary. This is set out in Appendix 4 of Natural England's Guidance.

2.2.2 Land in the Bordon area within East Hampshire was assessed in terms of its natural beauty during the definition of the South Downs National Park. This considered the natural beauty of land west of the A325 and led to the definition of the boundary to the National Park along Oakhanger Road and the inclusion of Shortheath Common. The boundary was not extended further to the east due to declining natural beauty and the influence of the settlement of Bordon.

2.2.3 During the inquiry (which was held between November 2003 and March 2005) evidence was submitted by objectors to the proposed boundary who sought the inclusion of land in the Bramshott and Ludshott areas. The South Downs National Park Inspector's Report Part 2 records their objection as follows:

'The Bramshott and Ludshott area, indeed the whole Parish, satisfies the designation criteria and should be included in the National Park. This area probably contains more "conservation land" than anywhere else in the search area. In addition to the River Wey Conservation Area, large tracts are designated as SSSI and the area also benefits from a fine rights of way network. The heathland habitats have a sense of relative wildness and are linked to other commons to the south that are within the PSDNP¹.

2.2.4 The Inspector's Report goes on to record the Agency's² response as follows:

'Land beyond the AONBs is only included in the PSDNP where it has strong links to the chalk hills. Bramshott and Ludshott Commons and other land nearby is of high landscape quality and also offers superior recreational experiences but it has weak associations with the chalk outcrop and is more closely associated with the Surrey heaths to the north. Moreover, the area is largely separated from land that satisfies the designation criteria by the A3 and the sizeable settlement of Liphook.'

¹ PSDNP refers to the Proposed South Downs National Park as relevant at the time.

² Countryside Agency, now Natural England

2.2.5 The South Downs National Park Inspector³ concluded at pages 84-84 that:

'It is generally agreed that Bramshott and Ludshott Commons, the River Wey and other areas of land nearby, are all of high landscape quality and are able to offer a range of superior recreational experiences. But these areas have very weak associations with the chalk hills and I do not accept that they even benefit from indirect visual or other unifying links via the hanger landscapes to the west of the Upper Rother Valley. I agree with the Agency that the area is remote from the core Downs and is much more closely associated with the Surrey heaths.'

2.2.6 During the second re-opened South Downs National Park inquiry, the Inspector concluded that Alice Holt Forest to the north should also be included in the National Park Boundary and the boundary be drawn along the southern edge of the forest. However, the issue of Bramshott and Ludshott Commons was not reconsidered.

2.3 Call for Evidence

2.3.1 During the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project 'Call for Evidence', two representations were received in relation to the following areas:

- the southern side of Whitmoor Vale valley
- northern valley slopes of the Wey Valley and Bramshott Common (south of the A3)

2.3.2 Whitmoor Vale was described by the respondents as follows:

2.3.3 *'Whilst outside the review area, this landscape is adjacent to the Surrey Hills National Landscape, has the same landscape features and is an intrinsic part of the distinctive slopes and ridges leading up to Little Switzerland (Hindhead). It is a wildlife haven.....The majority of these ridges and valleys have been recognised as key geological features of the area but some were left out of very tightly drawn borders when the AONB was first created. This slope was over the adjacent county border - but these are arbitrary borders from a landscape point of view, and it should be professionally assessed.'*

2.3.4 The northern slopes of the Wey Valley and Bramshott Common were described by the respondents as follows:

'The land is an integral part of a network of heathlands – wild open spaces. It is covered in priority habitats that should be protected. More than that, it forms the hills and valleys that descend down to the border of the three counties of which Haslemere is an integral part.'

³ The South Downs National Park Inspector's Report, Volume 1, March 2006



Heathland mosaic on Bramshott Common (image submitted by respondent to Statutory Consultation)

3.0 Approach to Evaluation

3.1 Area of Search

- 3.1.1 The Area of Search for the East Hampshire Evaluation was defined based on the requests made by respondents following Statutory Consultation. This covered the broad area of land between the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and South Downs National Park boundary but excluding the major settlements of Bordon, Lindford, Arford, Headley and Liphook.
- 3.1.2 Closer consideration of this broad area (refer Figure EH1), through an initial site visit, and a review of the historical South Downs National Park assessment documents, resulted in a refinement to the Area of Search to exclude land west of the A325 which had previously, and was still, not regarded as meeting the natural beauty criterion.

3.2 Definition of Evaluation Area and Sub-division

- 3.2.1 The Natural England Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation suggests that, in order to aid the practical evaluation of a broad area of land and to make evaluation a more manageable process, the Area of Search should be divided into units of an appropriate scale to provide a spatial framework. These units are termed 'Evaluation Areas' and each is then subjected to the evaluation process.
- 3.2.2 The extent of the remaining area for review was defined with reference to the landscape character types set out in the Hampshire and East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessments (2012 and 2024 respectively). This area formed Evaluation Area 15.
- 3.2.3 The Evaluation Area comprises a range of different landscape character types as defined in the East Hampshire District Council Landscape Character Assessment and illustrated on Figure EH2. The Ludshott and Bramshott Commons form part of the Greensand Hills landscape type which is contiguous with the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) to the east and South Downs National Park to the south. The area in the north comprises Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated and Lowland Mosaic Small Scale landscape types, as well as Woodland and Plantation on Heath landscape type at Broxhead Common.
- 3.2.4 On this basis, Evaluation Area 15 was subdivided into two areas EA15a (Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons) and EA15b (Headley Lowland Mosaic and Broxhead Common), as shown on Figure EH1. Evaluations Areas do not have a hard outer edge as they are not intended to lead to the designation or exclusion from designation of land merely because of the way they are defined.

3.3 Natural Beauty Factors

- 3.3.1 Landscape evaluation for designation as AONB considers land specifically in relation to the technical criterion of outstanding natural beauty. Natural beauty is not exhaustively defined in legislation and is a subjective concept. Its assessment

involves making value judgements and, in order to make such judgements in a transparent and consistent manner, the Natural England Guidance sets out a framework of factors and sub-factors generally accepted as contributing to natural beauty. These factors and sub-factors have been tested through previous designation projects, public inquiries and court cases. The relevant natural beauty factors and indicators are set out in Appendix 1 of the Guidance and have been used in this evaluation.

3.4 Relevant Areas from Previous Evaluation

The results of this study have a bearing on the definition of the southern extent of the Dockenfield Hills Extension Area. The results of this study should therefore be read in association with technical assessments relating to this area.

3.5 Approach to Evaluation

3.5.1 Evaluation Area 15 and its sub areas 15a and 15b have been subjected to detailed evaluation, starting with land immediately adjacent to the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB).

3.5.2 The range of evidence collated for each of these factors is considered in detail and conclusions recorded in the evaluation table set out in Section 4 below. A review of evidence through desk study has been supplemented by field work. Aspects of the evaluation exercise are dependent on the quality and extent of the information available at the time. The overall weight of evidence and spatial distribution of natural beauty for each Evaluation Area/Sub-area is detailed in the evaluation tables in section 4 below.

3.5.3 For each Evaluation Area/Sub-area, a summary conclusion is provided as to whether part, or all, of the Evaluation Area should be taken forward as a Candidate Area, and any issues requiring further scrutiny are recorded. The Candidate Area defines land that appears likely to be able to meet the technical criterion (not all parts of the Candidate Area will meet the natural beauty criterion to the same degree). The Candidate Area does not have a hard boundary to its extent. For this reason, all mapping of the Proposed Candidate Area is shown as a hatched line and has no outward edge. Although a Candidate Area is taken forward to the desirability and boundary setting stages, this does not guarantee that all the area will ultimately be included in the designation.

3.6 Specific Issues

3.6.1 Where land is included in a Candidate Area, additional issues relevant to desirability and boundary setting stages, and which might affect the final extent of a qualifying area, have been recorded in the evaluation tables (Section 4 below). These include areas where the landscape is in transition, areas of fragmentation, the influence of incongruous features, and the influence of any settlements on natural beauty. In addition, the geographical extent and location of any qualifying land, relative to the existing National Landscape or other qualifying areas, may also be relevant. These issues are considered in more detail below.

- 3.6.2 **Landscapes with the same geology or character** as land within the existing National Landscape, does not automatically qualify in terms of its natural beauty. Land does not need to have particular characteristics in order to qualify for designation. Conversely landscape of a particular type may not express the same level of natural beauty across an area e.g. it may be in transition. The assessment of land for designation must focus on natural beauty and the factors which contribute to this and is not determined based on character.
- 3.6.3 **Areas of transition** occur where an element of landscape is changing either in terms of its character or qualities. Such changes may be sudden or gradual, though the boundaries of designated landscapes seldom follow a marked change in the level of natural beauty. The Natural England boundary setting considerations⁴ state that the boundary should be drawn conservatively, towards the high-quality end of areas of transition, excluding land of lesser quality. On this basis it is acceptable that transitional areas are included within a Candidate Area for further consideration at the boundary setting stage.
- 3.6.4 **Visual associations** (such as views back to distinctive landform within the National Landscape), may also be used to help define the extent of land for inclusion in transitional areas. The extent to which land within the National Landscape, influences scenic quality of land beyond, depends upon distance, elevation/drama and distinctiveness of the landform within the National Landscape, and the nature of other views in the round.
- 3.6.5 **Fragmentation** may occur for example, where a landscape is physically separated by major infrastructure or development, or where land use changes have occurred such that landscape patterns and features have lost integrity. Where fragmentation is present, the degree to which it affects natural beauty depends on the fragmenting features, their visibility and the type of connections which remain between fragmented areas. Where fragmentation is present but does not significantly affect natural beauty overall, such areas may be included within the Candidate Area and may require particular scrutiny if taken forward. Conversely, individual discrete sites may be regarded as meeting the natural beauty criterion but when considered in the context of a wider area, are in fact isolated pockets. A judgment must be reached as to the extent of the fragmentation of the landscape and whether the lower quality areas prevent qualifying pockets from being included.
- 3.6.6 **Incongruous features** of many kinds can have an effect on natural beauty, particularly factors such as scenic or landscape quality, tranquillity and relative wildness. The extent to which any incongruous feature affects an area will be dependent on its scale, height, distance, surrounding topography, vegetation and movement. Where incongruous features are present this is noted within the evaluation and a judgement reached as to their effect on surrounding land. Often

⁴ Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or AONB in England, June 2021, Appendix 4.

these issues will require further scrutiny at the boundary setting stage to ensure that only land which meets the natural beauty criterion is included within a designation.

- 3.6.7 **Settlements** can also have a significant effect on the surrounding area and their influence is thus recorded. Paragraph 6.11 of the Natural England Guidance states that settlements should be considered on their merits. This includes consideration of historic interest; whether there is extensive new development; whether there is a strong sense of place and whether the settlement lies within an area of qualifying land or is at the edge. Natural England Guidance also states that settlements should only be included if they lie within a wider tract of qualifying land and that settlements should not be split by a designation.

4.0 Natural Beauty Evaluation

4.1 Detailed Evaluation Table EA15 – Land in East Hampshire (refer to background data maps Figures EH2-6)

Landscape Context	
Location/Context	This Evaluation Area comprises land to the west of the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and is contiguous with the South Downs National Park to the north and south. This Evaluation Area was defined following responses received during the Statutory Consultation 2023.
Landscape Character	This area comprises a mix of the landscape character types defined in the Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment, including Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated and Lowland Mosaic Small Scale and Lowland Mosaic Small Scale in the north of the area; Woodland and Plantation on Heath associated with Broxhead Common; and Greensand Hills associated with Ludshott and Bramshott Commons in the south. The recently published East Hampshire LCA (2024) classifies the area as part of 7a Ludshott and Bramshott Commons and 6a Whitehill to Liphook landscape character areas.
Designation History	<p>None of this area was identified by Dower or Hobhouse for national landscape designation. It was also not considered during the review of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary by the Chirs Burnett Associates or Hankinson Duckett Associates assessments, presumably because it lies beyond the County boundary.</p> <p>None of this land has previously been designated as a valued landscape. Nevertheless, this land was considered during the South Downs National Park Inquiry in relation to defining the extent of the South Downs National Park. The Inspector in his report (page 84-85) commented that <i>'It is generally agreed that Bramshott and Ludshott Commons, the River Wey and other areas of land nearby, are all of high landscape quality and are able to offer a range of superior recreational experiences. But these areas have very weak associations with the chalk hills and I do not accept that they even benefit from indirect visual or other unifying links via the hanger landscapes to the west of the Upper Rother Valley. I agree with the Agency that the area is remote from the core Downs and is much more closely associated with the Surrey heaths.'</i></p>

Landscape Context	
Evaluation of Natural Beauty	<p>For evaluation purposes, EA15 has been sub-divided into the following two sub-areas, which are shown on Figure 1.</p> <p>EA 15a – Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons – this area comprises land to the west of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and Grayshott and to the north of the South Downs National Park. It includes Ludshott and Bramshott Commons as well as the southern half of Whitmoor Vale.</p> <p>EA 15b – Headley Lowland Mosaic and Broxhead Common – this area comprises land to the south and west of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and Dockenfield Hills proposed Extension Area. It extends as far as Broxhead Common in the southwest.</p>

EA 15a - Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
Landscape quality	<p>This sub-area comprises an extensive mosaic of heath and wooded common. The area is bisected by the A3 corridor, a split dual carriageway, and is a significant incongruous feature. On the fringes of the area, urban development impinges including large scale properties set in extensive grounds within Whitmoor Vale or on the edges of Grayshott. Furthermore, north of Headley Road, woodland is predominately conifer plantation and mixed woodland. Parts of this woodland are under Woodland Management Plans and Countryside Stewardship (Higher Teir) (refer to Figure EH6). The ancient woodland of Whitmoor Hanger is also under Countryside Stewardship (Higher Teir) and managed by the Woodland Trust. Along Hammer Lane, frequent access driveways to properties and non-native planting gives rise to a more settled character and lower landscape condition.</p> <p>Ludshott Common is actively managed by the National Trust, along with Bramshott Chase where annual forestry and scrub clearance work seeks to manage and restore heathland habitat and keep the landscape open. Whilst there are still notable areas of conifer forestry in the west, there is also evidence of the removal of conifers and heathland /common is starting to regenerate. As a result of this active management, Ludshott Common SSSI (refer to Figure EH3) is in unfavourable but recovering condition. In the past large parts of the common were suffering from high levels of common gorse invasion which resulted in the development of very large, even-aged stands and remaining areas of open heath were also mostly in poor condition dominated by tall, leggy heather.</p>

EA 15a - Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons	
Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
	<p>Bramshott Common SSSI (to the north of the A3 – refer to Figure EH3) is also in unfavourable but recovering condition due to the cover of bracken, trees and scrub and a need to improve wildflower species. The Common also extends to the south of the A3 (although not SSSI) and both areas either side of the A3 are under active management by the MOD including grazing by cattle as part of commoner’s grazing rights, although not part of a Stewardship Scheme (refer to Figure EH6). The Common comprises an area of mature pine plantation with some oak, birch and other broadleaved species with a mosaic of heather, grassland and bracken. Key issues with the condition of this area relate to the low age class diversity in heather stands. Much of the deciduous woodland is secondary woodland which has colonised areas of former heathland, although there are some notable areas of ancient woodland at Gentle’s Copse and along Cooper’s Stream.</p> <p>Much of this Evaluation Area forms part of the Bramshott and Liphook Neighbourhood Plan which highlights the value placed on the areas of common and Wey valley and its tributaries.</p> <p>In the west of EA15a, there are areas of former parkland and small-scale pastures. Here, the land is not currently managed under agri-environment schemes, and in places there is evidence that the land has been subdivided into smaller agricultural holdings and equestrian uses. This has disrupted historical enclosure patterns e.g. east of Bramshott and along Gentles Lane. In the area around Downlands House the combination of wood pasture, veteran trees, avenue planting and the mansion house and ancillary buildings (all of which are listed) form a relatively intact parkland landscape, although there have been some land uses change with the introduction of areas of arable. Similarly, the parkland qualities associated with Ludshott Manor have been eroded by land division and redevelopment of the mansion for residential use.</p>
Scenic quality	<p>The Bramshott and Ludshott Commons comprise extensive areas of heathland, coniferous woodland, broadleaf woodland, scrub and grassland and the mosaic of habitats and plant species gives rise to a distinctive landscape which is rich in seasonal colour and texture. Tree species on the common are predominately Scots pine, silver birch with some oak. The distinctive scent of pine trees and the coconut aroma of gorse in flower are distinctive qualities which delight the senses and reinforce perceptions of natural beauty. Further variation can be found at Waggoners Wells where mature beech woodlands flank the steep valley sides and contrast with the open expanse of ponds within the valley bottom. These ponds mirror the light and shade as well as the rich russet tones of autumn and offer a cool and shady retreat in summer. The stream which emerges from the ponds at Waggoners Wells is called Cooper’s</p>

EA 15a - Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons	
Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
	<p>Stream and flows west to join the River Wey. This watercourse weaves its way through ancient woodland. The wooded and incised character of the valley imparts a secretive and timeless quality.</p> <p>Rural lanes traverse the fringes of the area, including Hammer Lane in the south and Rectory Lane in the west. In the northeast the rural lanes through Whitmoor Vale are more influenced by dispersed residential development which impacts on their character with the introduction of access gateways and non-native vegetation as well as modern residential properties. This contrasts with the vernacular cottage buildings found within Hammer Bottom to the south, although along the western fringes of this lane and along the A3 corridor in the east, more modern development has crept in.</p> <p>The steep topography of Hammer Bottom and the Waggoners Wells valley, as well as undulations found on the commons, contributes to the variation and scenic quality of this landscape affording medium to long distance views across areas of heathland. In the south the elevated long-distance views into the South Downs National Park and across extensive expanses of forestry are exceptional.</p>
Relative wildness	<p>Where there are extensive areas of seminatural habitat and woodland the landscape has a strange emptiness and feels relatively remote. Over much of the area, development is not visible due to the high woodland cover. Perceptions of relative wildness decreases adjacent to settlement and the A3 and B3002 corridors where the sight and sound of traffic intrudes. In Whitmoor Vale the landscape has a more settled character but the conifer plantations which cloak the steep valley sides, along with areas of ancient woodland at Whitmoor Hanger, and the relatively quiet and narrow lanes which traverse the steep valley slopes, mean that even here there is a perceived remoteness.</p>
Relative tranquillity	<p>Much of this landscape has a high tranquillity and dark night skies due to the expansive commons which are undeveloped and unsettled. Even in Hammer Bottom where there is settlement, there is a tangible tranquillity. Nevertheless, the audible impact of traffic on the A3 undermines these perceptions along the A3 corridor. However, the effects diminish relatively quickly (within 250m) due to topography and vegetation.</p> <p>Perceptions of tranquillity are infrequently impacted by the use of Bramshott Common for army training.</p>
Natural heritage features	<p>This area includes the geologically distinct Greensand Hills which extend into the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and supports a significant mosaic of habitats associated with heathland and common (refer to Figure EH4).</p> <p>Ludshott and Bramshott Commons are designated as SSSI and form part of the Wealden Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the number of endangered species. These commons are particularly valued for birds such as</p>

EA 15a - Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons	
Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
	<p>Dartford warbler, stonechat, whitethroat and tree pipit and support a wide range of invertebrates and reptiles. The habitat mosaics include extensive tracts of mature heathland and acid grassland, and associated bracken stands as well as patches of bilberry.</p> <p>Other natural heritage features which are noteworthy, and contribute to the natural beauty of the landscape, include the linear ancient woodlands at Whitmoor Hanger, along Copper's Stream/Waggoners Wells and veteran trees in the parkland associated with Downlands House (refer to Figure EH4).</p> <p>The old trees around Waggoners Wells support a significant number of lichens, and the incised lane leading to Cooper's Valley is important for mosses, ferns and lichens.</p> <p>Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Wey Alderwood at Hammer Bottom • Bramshott Common (South East) • Bramshott Common (South West) • Bramshott Common Camp Ground • Spring Pond Meadow • Coach House Copse/Spring Pond Hanger • Whitmoor Hanger (located within Whitmoor Vale) • Dalen Copse • Longgut Copse
Cultural heritage	<p>The areas of common in this sub-area form one of the largest remaining areas of heathland in East Hampshire and date back to the 13th century where they formed part of an extensive area of manorial common land. However, it is likely that pastoral grazing of this land is much earlier, dating back to Anglo Saxon or even prehistory.</p> <p>The Hampshire Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that the landscape comprises pre 1810 hangers (scarp and steep valley side woodland), woodland over commons, common heathland and small patches of parkland associated with Ludshott Manor and Downlands House (refer to Figure EH5).</p> <p>The area contains several listed buildings associated with rural farms and associated barns with a particular concentration at Downlands House.</p>

EA 15a - Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons

Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence

Ludshott Manor may have been a hunting lodge and is one of a group of parks including Downlands, Bramshott Place and Foley Manor, however, as noted above its intactness is affected by its redevelopment for private residences.

The Wey Valley is a Conservation Area, designated for its eighteenth-century system of water meadows, and the southern part of this Conservation Area falls within Hammer Bottom.

Ludshott Common is a site of archaeological interest due to it being used for tank manoeuvre training in the 1940s. There is evidence of a camp for Canadian troops surviving in place names and its layout is evidence in earthworks. Furthermore, the A3 is flanked by a line of Canadian maple trees to commemorate those who lost their lives in the second World War. The dramatic spectacle of the flame red trees in autumn contributes to a sense of place.

Waggoners wells is the name given to a series of ponds created in the 17th century by the Hooke family of Bramshott. Their purpose is unknown but may have been as hammer ponds to serve the local iron industry.

The wishing well at Waggoners Wells is associated with Alfred Lord Tennyson who was inspired to compose a poem in 1863 `as follows:

*'Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, boot and all in my hand,
Little flower but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all and all,
I should know what God and man is.'*

This landscape has also inspired artists including contemporary local artists such as Clare Bowne who has captured the autumn colours and long-distance views from Bramshott Common.

There is also a memorial to Robert Hunter, one of the founders of the National Trust, who was involved in the acquisition of Ludshott Common.

EA 15a - Greensand Hills Ludshott and Bramshott Commons	
Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
	<p>Gentle's Copse woodland in the west of the area is ancient woodland which dates back to medieval times and comprises sessile oaks. It was used to provide fuel and charcoal to the iron industry and the stone-faced boundary to the copse is still evident which prevented commoner's animals which grazed the common from straying into the wood.</p> <p>Within Whitmoor Vale cultural heritage interest is concentrated at the northern end and associated with the former Barford Mills including listed buildings of The Old Mill and Barford Mill and Mill House as well as the three mill ponds which are currently split by the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary. A further listed building is located at Bowes House in the southern part of the vale.</p>
Evaluation	
Overall weight and spatial distribution of natural beauty evidence	<p>Overall, landscape and scenic qualities are high across much of this landscape with a weight of evidence supporting natural beauty. This is particularly the case for the extensive areas of Ludshott and Bramshott Commons and the dramatic valleys at Hammers Bottom/Wey Valley, Cooper's Valley (including Waggoners Ponds) and Whitmoor Vale (including Barford). On the fringes of the area busy roads and dispersed residential development has undermined the integrity of the landscape and areas of pasture are affected by equestrian uses or parkland landscape has been impacted by arable land use. Here the weight of evidence is less strong.</p> <p>The landscape within Whitmoor Vale also expresses natural beauty associated with the drama of the valley topography and its leafy enclosed character, along with the cultural heritage interest associated with Barford. Nevertheless, the more settled character comprising large individual houses and the domestication of lane character in places undermines special qualities. The southern half of the vale has been included within a Candidate Area but will require particular scrutiny at the boundary setting stage. Consideration should be given to the extent to which housing development undermines the qualities of the valley and whether a boundary can be drawn to exclude such development. It is recognised that similar development occurs on the northern half of the valley within the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB), but it is likely this was included so as to take the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary to the County Boundary rather than because the development merits inclusion of itself.</p>

EA 15b - Headley Lowland Mosaic and Broxhead Common**Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence****Landscape quality**

This sub-area comprises a small-scale pastoral landscape dissected by the River Wey and its tributaries. In the north of the area the valleys are more pronounced with a narrow flood plain and riparian vegetation. The area is topographically varied and has a strongly wooded character, much of which is conifer plantation woodland on former heath. The largest area of remaining heath habitat occurs in the southwest at Broxhead Common.

The majority of pastures in this landscape are improved or semi-improved and are contained by wavy field boundaries reflecting former assarts. In the area around New Farm, in the northeast, the enclosure pattern comprises Parliamentary fields and is extensively used for equestrian use and an airstrip. Here landscape quality and condition are lower.

In the southern fringes of the area towards Lindford, Arford and Headley the quality of the landscape is declining, affected by increased signage, dispersed residential development along lanes, some commercial development and equestrian land use e.g. Broxhead Farm, recreational land uses e.g. cricket pitch, and the presence of non-native invasive species in hedgerows e.g. bamboo. The proliferation of large properties along the rural lanes gives rise to a settled character and numerous access driveways and curtilage treatment has undermined the integrity of the area in places. Similarly in the east of the area there are equestrian centres and notable subdivision of fields, while in the southeast there are nineteenth Century plantations e.g. Stream Forest. Similarly, in the west an area of former pre 1810 parkland (Headley Park) has also been planted with conifers.

The derelict buildings at Headley Park, along with fringes of the sand and gravel extraction at Firth End Quarry also effect perceptions of condition and quality. This quarry has been worked for a number of years between Grooms Farm and Rabbitfield Hill. Restoration plans (reference numbers 30633/040 and 30633/041) set out proposals for the site to be restored by 2024 and land in the south at Rabbitfield Hill has already been restored. Nevertheless, post restoration, it will take time for the landscape to establish and mature and for evidence of past minerals working to recede.

At Broxhead Common the distinctive heath habitats are intact including heather, gorse, birch and bracken although the extent of the habitat is relatively small and is bisected by the B3004, the verges of which are notably littered. This area of common and the farmland to the north associated with the former Headley Park is managed as under Entry Level plus Higher-Level Stewardship, while land between Heath Hill and Gum Hill is managed under Countryside Stewardship (Middle Teir) and land south of Frensham Lane is Higher Teir. Nevertheless, much of EA15b is not managed under any stewardship agreement (refer Figure EH6).

EA 15b - Headley Lowland Mosaic and Broxhead Common	
Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
	<p>The areas of highest landscape quality and condition occur in the north of the area where the naturally meandering watercourses flow through narrow floodplains comprising flat valley floor pastures and buttercup meadows and riparian trees.</p> <p>The majority of Broxhead Common SSSI is in favourable condition, although the area to the north is in unfavourable but recovering condition due to lack of structural diversity within the heather, with little regeneration present and future tree and scrub management required.</p>
Scenic quality	<p>This area comprises an attractive lowland landscape comprising a mosaic of small pastoral fields and a patchwork of woodland and heath. It has a strongly wooded character, and small rural lanes lined by established and thick hedgerows. As a result, the area has an enclosed character with few longer views. Landform is undulating, and there are distinctive hills such as Heath Hill and Prospect Hill. Scenic quality is highest where there are medium distance views across the landscape and invariably down or across the narrow valleys which are most pronounced in the north. Here the rounded hills form interlocking slopes which channel vistas and lead the eye. The sinuous narrow lanes which traverse the area around the hills and along the valley sides contain wildflower verges and are frequently lined by tunnels of vegetation or, where they extend over the hills, are incised into the underlying greensand. Listed vernacular buildings in the north of the area, which occur at frequent intervals along these lanes, form focal points and are notable for their use of tile hanging and thatch, and contribute to scenic compositions. The population density is notably lower in the north.</p> <p>The distinctive heath vegetation on Broxhead Common also expresses high levels of scenic quality due to the varied colours and textures of its rich mosaic of habitats.</p> <p>Elsewhere scenic quality is reduced due to fragmentation from more modern dispersed residential development or the masking of landform or watercourses by areas of plantation woodland e.g. Stream Forest and Bottomsfield Copse. This tends to disrupt patterns, and the legibility of the landscape as well as limiting views and vistas.</p>
Relative wildness	<p>This landscape is well wooded and has a small scale and intimate character. Areas of open heath have a greater sense of relative wildness due to the extent of semi-natural habitats. Elsewhere the landscape appears managed and settled and relative wildness is not strongly expressed.</p>

EA 15b - Headley Lowland Mosaic and Broxhead Common	
Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
Relative tranquillity	<p>The area is rural and has a picturesque and peaceful ambiance – the wooded and typically small-scale fields with thick hedgerows provides intimacy and seclusion.</p> <p>The rural lanes which traverse this landscape are quiet and lightly trafficked. There is some noise intrusion from the busy A325 in the west of the area. However, for much of the area there is a strong sense of tranquillity as a result of natural habitat, water, birdsong and few overt man-made features.</p> <p>Overall, this area is a rural backwater, although the southern half of the area is affected by the fringes of Lindford, Arford and Headley in terms of linear development along lanes and increased traffic.</p>
Natural heritage features	<p>Broxhead Common is a SSSI (refer Figure EH3) and Local Nature Reserve valued for its mosaic of heather dominated heath and acid grasslands with small patches of wet heath associated.</p> <p>There are small patches of ancient woodland, but these are dominated by a predominance of conifer plantations across the area (refer Figure EH4).</p> <p>Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are scattered through the area with a greater concentration in the north and west. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Hearn Copse • Hearn Copse • River Wey at Headley Wood Farm • River Wey and adjacent wood on Headey Wood Estate • Wishanger Valley • Mellow Farm Alders • Mellow Farm Water Meadow • Wishanger Copse • Heath Hill • Mellow Farm Meadows • Grooms Farm Sand Pit, Frithend • Bordon Sandpit

EA 15b - Headley Lowland Mosaic and Broxhead Common	
Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
	<p>Evidence of the underlying greensand geology is reflected in vegetation including bracken and gorse as well as incised lanes which form hollow ways where they traverse the greensand hills and in places are draped in ferns and mosses e.g. Picketts Hill and Old Lane.</p> <p>Wetland meadows flanking the watercourses make an important contribution to the pastoral scene and important habitats for invertebrates. The natural meandering course of the Slea and Wey have resulted in a number of oxbow lakes within the floodplain which are evident.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>There are a number of listed rural buildings which comprise the dispersed settlement pattern and which contribute to the natural beauty of this sub-area e.g. Mellow Farmhouse and associated barn, as well as Huntingford Bridge over the River Wey. These buildings display the local vernacular styles including the use of ironstone, tiling hanging and thatch as well as dark stained weatherboarded barns.</p> <p>The former parkland of Headley Park in the west of the area is no longer evident due to Bottomsfield Copse and extensive regeneration of woodland along the valley floor to the east. Features such as the fishponds remain but are shrouded in woodland and do not make a significant contribution to natural beauty.</p> <p>Some historic routes are fossilised as green lanes such as Cradle Lane and the bridleway route between Huntingford Bridge and Picketts Hill. These routes retain a strong sense of time-depth flanked by areas of remnant hazel coppice and banks.</p>
Evaluation	
Overall weight and spatial distribution of natural beauty evidence	<p>There is a strong weight of evidence to support the inclusion of the northern part of this area as a Candidate Area for designation as AONB. This area lies adjacent to qualifying land within the Dockenfield Hills Extension Area (Boundary Considerations Report pages 56-58, Feb 2023). There is also a weight of evidence to support the designation of Broxhead Common. However, land between the common and the northern qualifying land is of lesser quality and lacks the distinct pastoral valley qualities found further north. Given the limited extent of Broxhead Common and its peripheral location, it is not recommended for inclusion within the Candidate Area.</p> <p>The western and southern fringes are declining in natural beauty and are fragmented by mixed land uses. At Firth End Quarry, as noted above, the restored land will take time to establish and is unlikely to express sufficient natural beauty suitable for national landscape designation.</p>

EA 15b - Headley Lowland Mosaic and Broxhead Common Natural Beauty Factors and Evidence	
	Particular care will be required when defining a boundary to the south of qualifying land, identifying clear features on the ground within the transitional landscape and ensuring the boundary is not overly convoluted.

Candidate Area – EA 15	
Recommendation as to land that should be considered a Candidate Area	<p>Three areas are recommended for inclusion within the Candidate Area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscapes of Ludshott and Bramshott Common are considered suitable for inclusion within the Candidate Area, along with parts of the Cooper’s Stream and Downlands House. Particular scrutiny will be required when defining the eastern and western extents of this area given the edge of settlements such as Headley and Grayshott and busy roads such as the B3002. • Southern slopes of Whitmoor Vale and Barford. • Slea and Wey valleys as an addition to the Dockenfield Hills proposed Extension Area
Need for particular scrutiny	
Issues which need particular scrutiny and further work	The extent of qualifying land will require particular scrutiny during the desirability and boundary setting stages due to transitional qualities and fragmentation. The A3 corridor will also need detailed consideration given it fragments the commons and impacts on tranquillity.
Issues to be Addressed in Defining Extent	
Transition	There is a transition in natural beauty on the fringes of the qualifying areas, especially west of the commons where residential development and changes in land uses have caused a decline in natural beauty. Similar issues arise to the south of the Slea and Wey valleys around Lindford, Arford and Headley.
Fragmentation	Land within Whitmoor Vale has suffered some fragmentation due to ad hoc development along the lanes within the valley and this will need to be given particular scrutiny at the boundary setting stage. Similarly, areas of development

Candidate Area – EA 15	
	along the A3 at Chase Farm, Waggoners Well Road and within Hammer Bottom will also need to be carefully considered at the boundary setting stage.
Incongruous features	The extent to which the A3 corridor fragments the commons and the extent to which it should be included (washed over) or excluded will need particularly scrutiny.
Settlements	The main settlements of Liphook, Headley, Bramshott and Grayshott have all been excluded. Where a detailed boundary is defined close to these settlements, reference should be made to Settlement Boundary Limits as defined in the East Hampshire Core Strategy.
Other Boundary Issues	Consideration will need to be given to the current long-term management of the Commons and the benefits which are likely to arise from designation, as well as the extent of the land worthy of designation within East Hampshire and the implications it may give rise to in terms of governance and identity.

4.2 Proposed Candidate Area

4.2.1 The evaluation process described above, and detailed in the tables, has identified three areas of land which have sufficient natural beauty to warrant further consideration for designation as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB). This does not mean that all areas meet the natural beauty criterion to the same extent. The tables above have highlighted that towards the southern fringes of the northern area the landscape is transitional, and the southern area is fragmented by the A3 corridor. These issues will require particular scrutiny at later stages of assessment.

4.2.2 The individual areas which will be taken forward, include:

- Ludshott and Bramshott Commons and Cooper's Stream
- Southwest valley side of Whitmoor Vale
- Slea and Wey Valleys and Hills (addition to the Dockenfield Hills Extension Area)

4.2.3 Taken together, these areas form a Candidate Area which is contiguous to the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and the previously proposed Dockenfield Hills Extension Area. This Candidate Area reflects land likely to be suitable for designation. The Proposed Candidate Area is shown on Figure EH7.

4.3 Satisfying the legislative test

4.3.1 The detailed evaluation process set out in this report, has led to the conclusion that there is a weight of evidence of outstanding natural beauty in the areas included within the Candidate Area and that, as required by the legislation, taken together with the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB), they form 'an area of land' of outstanding natural beauty, which may be considered further in relation to the desirability of AONB designation and within which a detailed boundary may be drawn.

5.0 Desirability

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 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. Designation does not follow automatically, simply because land meets the natural beauty criterion.

5.1.2 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 concerned⁵. 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.

5.1.3 Natural England has produced Guidance to assist in the assessment of whether designation is desirable⁶. 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?

5.1.4 In relation to the first question, the assessment of natural beauty (as set out above) has identified three areas which satisfy the AONB technical criterion. The text below considers the subsequent questions in more detail.

5.1.5 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 are therefore accorded less weight.

⁵ English National Parks and the Broads: Government Vision and Circular 201 (Defra, 2010), para 20

⁶ Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, Natural England, 2021.

5.2 Significance

5.2.1 The assessment of the national significance of the proposed area is set out below.

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 centers 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.

5.3 Issues

5.3.1 Issues affecting each of the qualifying areas and also matters arising from designation are set out below.

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 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 NT, 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>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</p>

	<p>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	<p>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 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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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 resources⁷ to tackle these issues. On balance designation is more likely to assist with managing access and visitor issues rather than exacerbate them.</p>

⁷ 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.

5.4 Management Mechanisms Powers and Duties

- 5.4.1 The Desirability Report for the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) Boundary Variation Project (February 2023) set out in detail the current mechanisms, powers and duties associated with the current Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) (Section 4) and the likely management arrangements which would apply post designation (section 5), and this is not repeated here. It also highlighted at paragraph 6.2.1 that where small parcels of land beyond the Surrey County boundary were identified as qualifying for designation they were not included where this would result in administrative complexity in terms of membership of the National Landscape (AONB). As a result of the further representations received during the Statutory Consultation this position has been reviewed and further consideration given to governance issues.

5.5 Governance of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB)

- 5.5.1 Designation of this land within East Hampshire will require the inclusion of Hampshire County and East Hampshire District Council on the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board. This will, in association with the existing six local authorities, and with the London Boroughs of Croydon and Bromley (following previous evaluation work and consultation responses), bring the total number of local authorities represented on the AONB Board to ten.
- 5.5.2 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). 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 (AONB) 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.

5.6 Identity of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB)

- 5.6.1 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.

- 5.6.2 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.

5.7 Washover of the A3

- 5.7.1 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. The Natural Beauty assessment has highlighted that the split dual carriageway causes physical fragmentation of the commons, with only one underpass between them and also has a significant audible influence on perceptions of tranquillity within a c.250m corridor from the carriageway, mitigated to some degree by vegetation and topography. 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 its sits within a sweep of qualifying land (para 5.4 bullet 9). The Natural Beauty assessment set out above, made it clear 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.'* These points are considered in turn below:

Location, scale and effect

- 5.7.2 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.

Benefit

- 5.7.3 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.

5.8 Conclusions

- 5.8.1 Each of the three qualifying areas have their own set of management issues. The qualifying area associated with the Wey and Slea Valleys and Whitmoor Vale are relatively small in scale. The former is transitional, and the latter focuses on the plantation and ancient woodland areas within the steep valley of Whitmoor Vale. The most extensive area for designation (Ludshott and Bramshott Commons) is owned and managed primarily by the National Trust and MOD. Both organisations work collaboratively and undertake active positive management and utilise volunteer support. Arguably designation of the area as AONB may bring only limited benefits with some parties concerned that it would exacerbate issues related to visitor pressure. However, on balance Natural England considers that the arguments in favour of proceeding with designation are strong. Proceeding would also address the unfinished business of giving recognition to this landscape as identified by the Inspector at the South Downs National Park Inquiry.

6.0 Boundary Considerations

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The boundary setting work was undertaken based on the Boundary Setting Considerations set out in Appendix 4 of the Natural England Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or AONB⁸ and other principles set out within the body of the Guidance. It also took account of precedents set out in landscape designation decisions by the Secretary of State and Planning Inspectors' reports regarding past landscape designation projects, where relevant. In addition, boundary mapping conventions applied by both Ordnance Survey⁹ and by Natural England during past landscape designation projects, have been taken into consideration.

6.2 Proposed Extension at Bramshott and Ludshott Commons

Bramshott and Ludshott Commons

(Boundary Map Figure EH8.1 and Evaluation Area 15a)

Boundary Description:

The boundary leaves the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 8743 3459. It follows the course of the River Wey in a southwesterly direction crossing Hammer Lane and continuing along the watercourse to the railway security fencing. It crosses the railway in a straight line to the southern security fence and follows this east for a short distance to intersect with the South Downs National Park boundary. It then follows the National Park boundary westwards along the River Wey. Before reaching the Hammer Trout Farm, the boundary turns northwards along a minor ditch and then turns 90 degrees along another ditch heading in a northeasterly direction. After approximately 200m it turns northwards to join a property boundary between Bradstones and Stone Quarry House.

On reaching Hewshott Lane the boundary crosses the road in a straight line and then follows the eastern side of Hewshott Lane leading to Upperfold, before adopting the curtilage boundary and continuing along a hedgerow adjacent to a public right of way. At the crossroads of paths, the boundary turns west along field boundaries and edge of woodland, including the footpath immediately to the north within the proposed extension.

At Old Barn Bungalow it turns north along the western edge of woodland as far as a mast. Just beyond the mast it turns west continuing along the edge of woodland for some distance. Where the boundary intersects with a north/south field boundary it turns northwards along the

⁸ Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, Natural England, updated June 2021.

⁹ An Illustrated Guide to Boundary Making, Ordnance Survey, 1986.

Bramshott and Ludshott Commons

(Boundary Map Figure EH8.1 and Evaluation Area 15a)

eastern curtilage boundary to Woodlands and from the northeast corner of the property it extends in a straight line to meet the southern edge of the A3. It crosses the carriageway in a straight line and then turns west along the northern edge of the carriageway. Prior to meeting Overstream, the boundary turns north and northeast to continue along the edge of woodland which marks the extent of Bramshott Common. In doing so, the boundary bends round to the east and then heads northwards to intersect with Rectory Lane. Here the boundary bends west to follow the southern edge of the lane. On reaching Clarksfield, the boundary turns northwards along the eastern property boundary and continues along a hedgerow before turning west and northwest along the southern edge of woodland. It continues to follow the edge of woodland extending into the Copper's Stream valley. Here the boundary follows the edge of the SINC, cutting across the valley slopes and connecting to another area of woodland, heading south and then west once again. It follows the southern edge of woodland as far as Woolmer Lane.

On reaching Woolmer Lane, the boundary continues northward along the eastern side of the lane and access to Ludshott Manor, past Spring Pond Lodge. On reaching the edge of the ancient woodland it turns southeast through the woodland and continues along the outer edge of the woodland, bending first to the southwest and then to the east, (along the upper slopes of the valley). It continues along the edge of woodland, following a fence line until it intersects with a public right of way. Here it changes direction heading northwest along a fence line on the edge of woodland and then the western side of a track. On reaching the edge of Ludshott Common the boundary turns westwards continuing along the fence line which marks the edge of the common, south of Ludshott Common Road, as far as North Lodge. Here it turns north along the western side of a track, before adopting the western and then southern edge of woodland and continuing in a westerly direction.

Where the woodland turns northwards the boundary follows its outer edge and fence line north and then west, before turning north again to intersect with a track and public right of way. Here the boundary turns to the west once again and follows the southern side of the track before turning north, northeast and north, following the outer edge of Gentle's Copse as far as the Parish Boundary. At the Parish Boundary it turns southwest for a short distance along the Parish Boundary marked by the edge of woodland, before picking up a fence line northwest and then a path leading into a wooded valley. The boundary follows this path as far as the parking area at the corner of Pond Road. From here the boundary turns southwest along the northern side of a track and then adopts the fence line boundary to Woodlands heading northwards and then southwest along curtilage boundaries to Stonedene Close and Furze Hill Road. At the southeast corner of development, the boundary turns northeast following the edge of property boundaries and then the eastern edge of Seymour Road, all the way to the B3002 Grayshott Road.

At the junction with Grayshott Road the boundary turns southeast and follows the southern side of the carriageway as far as the property boundary to Dunelm, including Ludshott car park within the proposed extension. At the property boundary to Dunelm the boundary changes direction heading south to intersect with the Parish boundary and access track. It follows the northern side of the track (which is also the extent of the SSSI) southeast and then east as far as the access to The Dower House. Here the boundary turns south along a fence line and property boundary to Yaffles. It then turns east along a further fence line to intersect with Waggoners Wells Road. It crosses the road in a straight line and then

Bramshott and Ludshott Commons

(Boundary Map Figure EH8.1 and Evaluation Area 15a)

continues southwards along the eastern side of the road. At the southern property boundary of Ladygate, the boundary turns east along the fence line and then north, following the edge of property boundaries and including the wooded steep slopes of Copper's Stream within the proposed extension. The boundary then turns to the south and intersects with the bridleway turning northeast along the northern side of the track. Where it intersects with another track the boundary turns south along the eastern side of the second track and then turns east along property boundaries at Kingswood Firs. On reaching the property boundary of 68 Kingswood Firs the boundary turns south and intersects with the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 8767 3557.

Boundary Considerations:

Issues Influencing the Boundary Line

During the assessment process concerns were raised regarding the transitional nature of the fringes of this area beyond Ludshott and Bramshott Commons where adjacent development and roads have caused some fragmentation of the landscape. On the edge of Headley, development is well defined and screened by mature vegetation. In other locations such as Hammer Trout Farm and west towards Liphook, as well as in the Bramshott and Woolmer Farm areas, ad hoc development, domestication of the landscape and proliferation of equestrian land uses has altered landscape patterns. Some areas of farmland have also seen improvement with the loss of woodland, removal of hedgerows and loss of parkland landscape e.g. east of Ludshott Manor. This area has also seen the redevelopment of the former Manor for residential use. These changes have a cumulative effect and undermine the integrity of the landscape, resulting in declining natural beauty. These issues have been carefully considered when defining the extent of the proposed extension area, where the core qualifying areas focus on the extensive semi natural habitats of woodland and heathland mosaic associated with the commons. The boundary has been drawn close to the areas of common and includes adjacent areas of woodland and the incised valley of Cooper's Stream where it lies adjacent to the commons and Downlands House and parkland.

In the Bramshott Chase area at Chase Farm and along the A3 there has been some linear residential and commercial development. Whilst this area is not regarded as meeting the natural beauty criterion it sits within a wider tract of qualifying land, and given that the desirability assessment concluded it was appropriate to include the A3 within any proposed extension area, a similar approach regarding wash over has also been applied to this small area of development.

Easily Distinguished Features

The boundary follows roads, tracks, hedgerows, fence lines and the edges of woodland all of which form features on the ground. West of Downlands House the boundary does not follow a clear feature on the ground but cuts across between two areas of woodland and adopts the SINC boundary. In some locations the definition of the edge of the common and woodland has resulted in a more convoluted boundary, but this was considered acceptable in order to include qualifying areas of land and features of interest.

Bramshott and Ludshott Commons

(Boundary Map Figure EH8.1 and Evaluation Area 15a)

Administrative Boundaries

The proposed boundary follows two sections of Parish Boundary – one in the vicinity of Gentle’s Copse and the other to the west and south of Grayshott Hall. In both cases the Parish boundary also follows the edge of woodland or tracks.

Settlements

The boundary line excludes adjacent development at Woolmer Hill, Liphook, Bramshott and Headley.

Development

There are no known planning allocations or permissions in this area which have affected the definition of the boundary.

Features of Interest

The proposed boundary enables part of the River Wey Conservation Area to be included within the Candidate Area where it falls within Hammer Bottom and is surrounded by qualifying land including the South Downs National Park to the south and Bramshott Common to the north.

It also enables the extensive areas of heathland mosaic associated with Ludshott and Bramshott SSSI to be included in its entirety along with a number of smaller SINCs (namely Coach House Copse/Spring Hanger Pond, Bramshott Common Camp Ground, Bramshott Common (Southwest) and River Wey Alderwood at Hammer Bottom, Stone Quarry Wood associated with Bramshott Common).

Features of cultural heritage interest which have been included are Waggoners Wells and the hammer ponds, Downlands House and associated buildings (all listed) and the wider 18th century parkland. This area also includes the Canadian memorial and maple avenue along the A3, as well as other WWII military sites associated with the commons including disused camp and former trenches and gun emplacements.

6.3 Proposed Extension at Whitmoor Vale

Whitmoor Vale (Boundary Map Figure EH8.1 and Evaluation Area 15a)
<p><u>Boundary Description:</u></p> <p>The boundary variation leaves the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 8536 3804. It follows the southern edge of a right of way along the edge of property boundaries (excluding settlement on the edge of Grayshott) and heads in a westerly direction as far as Whitmoor Vale Road. Here it continues in a northwesterly direction along the road for a short distance before skirting around Yew Tree Cottage which forms part of Grayshott. It then crosses Whitmoor Vale Road following the edge of the Settlement Boundary and property boundaries. On intersecting with a public right of way it adopts a footpath which heads west, to the north of Grayshott Playing Fields. It continues to head west following the path along the southern edge of Whitmoor Hanger woodland. It continues along the footpath for some distance and then on reaching an intersection with a bridleway it crosses the bridleway and adopts a hedgerow heading east and then north again along the edge of Whitmoor Hanger woodland for some distance. On reaching a track and public right of way it crosses the track and follows its northern edge in a northeasterly direction before adopting a field boundary which extends down to the Whitmoor Vale road. Here the boundary turns north along the western side of the road and follows the road all the way to its intersection with Hammer Lane.</p> <p>At the junction, the boundary crosses Whitmoor Vale road and continues northwards along the eastern side of Hammer Lane for a short distance. It then turns east along a field boundary and then north along the edge of woodland, at the break in slope. On reaching the Old Mill it follows the curtilage boundary north and then east to include Old Mill within the extension and extends northeast to rejoin the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 8536 3804.</p> <p><u>Boundary Considerations:</u></p> <p>Issues Influencing the Boundary Line</p> <p>During the assessment process, issues were raised concerning the definition of a boundary which enabled the inclusion of the valley sides whilst also excluding areas of housing development where it has become sufficiently influential on special qualities. These issues were considered in detail when defining the boundary, whilst also seeking to include features of interest and identifying a clear boundary which is not overly convoluted. These issues are discussed in turn below.</p> <p>The area where development has a cumulative effect occurs along the road called Whitmoor Vale, in the central part of the vale, as well as along Hammer Lane at the northern end of the vale. Consideration was given to defining a boundary which did not extend north of Cross Stream and followed the public right of way across the valley to Brook Cottage. However, this would have resulted in the middle section of the valley being excluded and would have split the SINC associated with Whitmoor Hanger ancient woodland. On balance the housing</p>

Whitmoor Vale

(Boundary Map Figure EH8.1 and Evaluation Area 15a)

development along Whitmoor Vale, whilst creating a more settled character and impacting the rural nature of the lane to some degree, was not considered sufficiently dominant to warrant the exclusion of the middle section of the valley. In areas of development, houses sit within established grounds and the steep valley slopes ensure they sit below or above the road, with the wider well wooded landscape context remaining dominant. A boundary was therefore sought along the upper slopes and the edge of the ancient woodland. In the northern part of the valley, where Whitmoor Vale and Hammer Lane come together, the density of housing increases. Here a boundary was sought which excluded this development on the margins of the valley, bringing the boundary closer into the steeper slopes, whilst still including the cultural heritage interest at Barford.

Easily Distinguished Features

The boundary follows a mixture of public rights of way, edges of woodland, field boundaries and rural lanes. Care has been taken to reduce the convoluted nature of the boundary, wherever possible balancing all boundary considerations as set out in Natural England Guidance.

Administrative Boundaries

The proposed boundary abuts the existing Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary which follows the course of the stream through the center of Whitmoor Vale and is also the County Boundary.

Settlements

The proposed boundary excludes the settlement of Grayshott which lies immediately to the south. For a small length, the boundary follows the Grayshott settlement policy boundary, as set out in the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy (adopted 2014) and proposed amendment to the settlement boundary in the Draft local Plan 2021-2040 policy maps (Regulation 18).

Development

There are no known allocations or planning permissions in this area which impact on the definition of a boundary.

Features of Interest

The proposed boundary includes a number of cultural and natural heritage features associated with Whitmoor Vale including the listed buildings and associated mill ponds at Barford, and ancient woodland and SINC at Whitmoor Hanger.

6.4 Proposed Extension at Slea and Wey Valleys

Slea and Wey Valleys (addition to Dockenfield Hills Extension Area)

(Boundary Map Figure EH8.2 and Evaluation Area 15b)

Boundary Description:

The boundary variation leaves the existing AONB at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 8340 4005 and follows the meandering course of the River Wey in a southwesterly and southerly direction. Southwest of Gun Hill the boundary departs from the River Wey and heads southeast along a hedgerow/treebelt to join Frensham Lane. Here it crosses the road at right angles and continues in a westerly direction along the southern edge of the road. At the junction with Smithfield Lane, it continues to head in a westerly direction along the southern edge of Frensham Lane. At the junction with Smity Lane, the boundary crosses Frensham Lane at right angles and continues in a northwesterly direction along the southern edge of Smity Lane. At the junction with Heath Hill the boundary turns due south along the eastern edge of a bridleway. At Picketts Hill it crosses the lane at right angles and heads in a northwesterly direction along the southern edge of Picketts Hill. It continues to follow this lane bending to the west until it reaches the bridleway along Cradle Lane. Here it crosses Picketts Hill in a straight line and adopts the western edge of the bridleway continuing northwards. Where the boundary reaches High Thicket Road, it crosses the road at right angles to join the South Downs National Park Boundary at Grid Reference SU 8142 3963. From here it heads west along the National Park boundary and then northwards, connecting to the Northern Boundary for the Dockenfield Hills Extension Area as set out on page 56 of the Boundary Considerations Report Feb 2023.

Boundary Considerations:

Issues Influencing the Boundary Line

During the assessment process, issues were raised relating to the transitional nature of the landscape and its fragmentation by development on the outskirts of Lindford, Arford and Headley. Concern was also raised regarding the potential for the boundary to be convoluted.

These issues are discussed in turn below.

Transitional landscape was noted south of Smity Lane and Frensham Lane as a result of a move away from the Slea and Wey valley floor and the prevalence of more notable plantation woodland e.g. Hopperty Copse and Twelve Acre Copse in Stream Forest. Furthermore, equestrian land uses with linear development along lanes (e.g. Frensham Lane) has influenced landscape patterns. These influences have resulted in some fragmentation of the landscape and declining quality. The boundary has been drawn within this transition and follows rural lanes and tracks in order to avoid a convoluted line.

Easily Distinguished Features

The boundary primarily follows rural lanes and green lanes/bridleways which were regarded as clear boundary features in a transitional landscape.

Slea and Wey Valleys (addition to Dockenfield Hills Extension Area)

(Boundary Map Figure EH8.2 and Evaluation Area 15b)

In the east, the proposed boundary follows the River Wey which has a meandering course. As noted in the Boundary Considerations Report (para 2.2.5), boundaries can follow watercourses and should change with future changes in the position of the feature. It is noted that the Hampshire and Surrey County Boundary in part follows this watercourse but where this has altered position over time, the County boundary has not moved with it. As a result, the County boundary no longer follows a clear feature on the ground in some locations.

Extending the southern boundary of the Dockenfield Hills Extension Area into East Hampshire has removed the need to follow the County boundary where it does not follow any feature on the ground.

Administrative Boundaries

The proposed boundary does not adopt the County boundary for the reasons given above, and because land to the south of the County boundary is also considered to qualify in terms of its natural beauty.

Settlements

Settlement within this area comprises isolated buildings and farmhouses, many of which are listed. Otherwise, the proposed extension area does not contain any notable settlement.

Development

As noted in the Natural Beauty assessment above, Grooms Farm sand extraction site is due to become exhausted in December 2024 and restored to wildlife habitat (planning reference 30633/040 & 30633/041). Although it is currently active it is not visible from Cradle Lane nor the wider extension area. Given that Cradle Lane is a feature of interest and forms a clear boundary it was concluded appropriate to extend the boundary up to but not include the sand extraction site.

There are no other known allocations or planning permissions in this area which impact on the definition of a boundary.

Features of Interest

The proposed southern extent of the area allows for the inclusion of the meandering course of the Wey and Slea rivers along with their meadow landscape and remnant oxbow lakes which form features of interest.

In the east of the area the boundary is defined to allow for the inclusion of the River Wey and River Wey – South SINC.

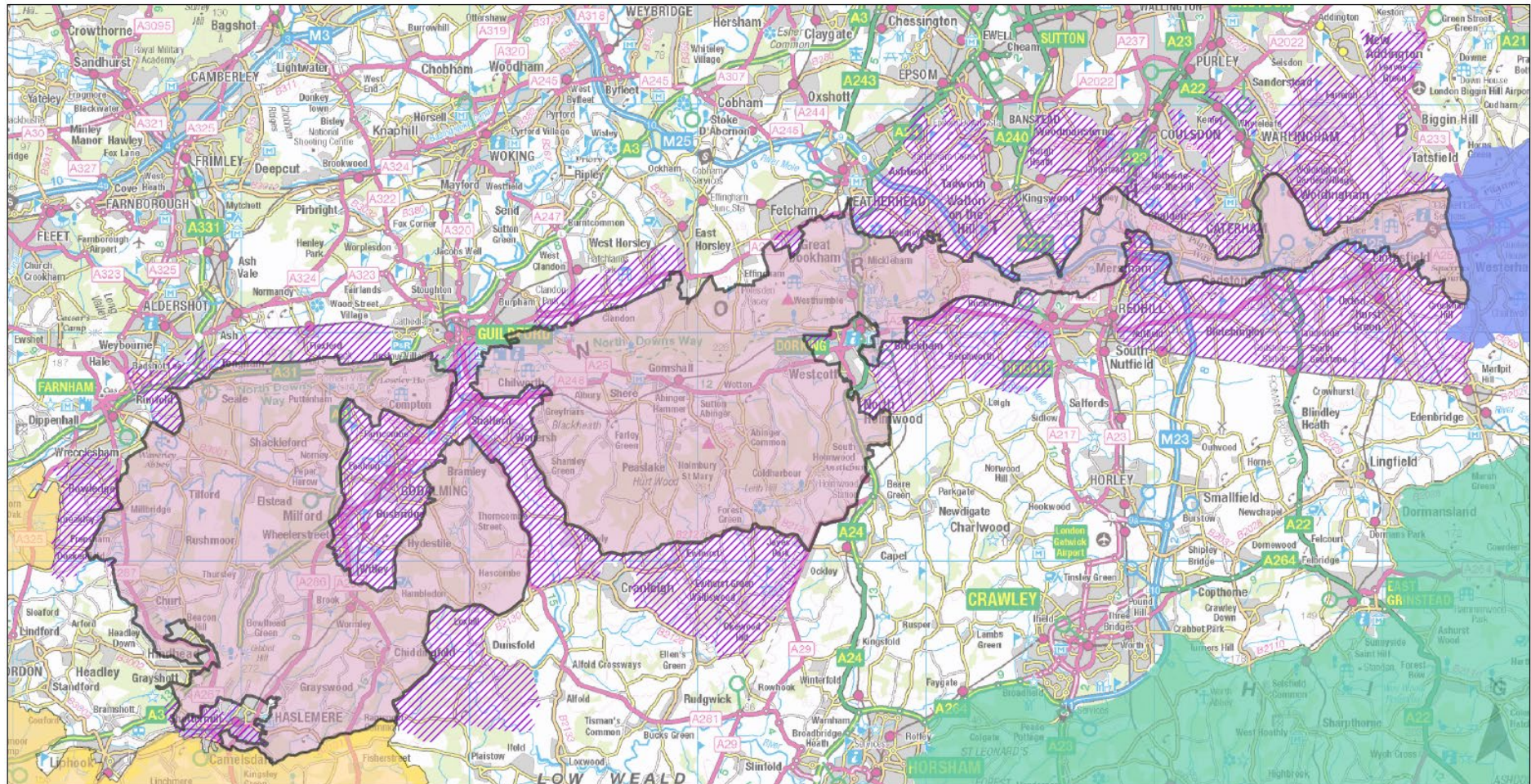
This proposed extension also allows for the inclusion of Great Holt and the listed buildings associated with Mellow Farm and Moorhouse Farm as well as Huntingford Bridge over the River Wey, all of which contribute to local distinctiveness. It also includes the distinctive hill of Heath Hill and historic lanes which make a particular contribution to natural beauty where they are incised such as on the western edge of Heath Hill and southeast of Brockford Bridge.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Conclusions

- 7.1.1 This assessment has concluded that three areas of land within Evaluation Area 15 meet the natural beauty criterion and that it is desirable to designate these areas as part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB).
- 7.1.2 It is concluded that the dedicated purpose of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) and the assistance provided by the National Landscape (AONB) team, through partnership and in supporting land managers as well as others, will help address the identified issues affecting these areas.
- 7.1.3 A detailed boundary has been drawn in accordance with Natural England Boundary Considerations (as set out in Guidance, Appendix 4) to include areas of qualifying land which connect seamlessly with the current Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) boundary.
- 7.1.4 These proposed extensions to the Surrey Hills National Landscape (AONB) within East Hampshire form part of wider proposals to extend the designation and should be considered alongside these wider proposals which are set out in the following documents:
- Surrey Hills Boundary Variation Project, Boundary Report 2023.
 - Surrey Hills Boundary Variation Project, Consultation Analysis Report, July 2024.

Area of Search as at August 2021
Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review



Appendix 2:

Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion, Appendix 1, taken from Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Natural England, June 2021.

The sub-factors and associated indicators should be regarded as a menu of examples (developed from past designations and subsequent consultation) from which those appropriate to the character of the landscape under consideration should be chosen, adapted or added to. There is no scoring process involving accumulations of indicators and it is possible for a landscape to exhibit natural beauty or offer opportunities for open air recreation even if a number of the indicators shown in this appendix are not present.

Factor	Example sub-factor	Example Indicator
Landscape quality	Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives	Characteristic natural and man-made elements are well represented throughout
	The condition of the landscape's features and elements	Landscape elements are in good condition
	The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether man-made or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area	Incongruous elements are not resented to a significant degree, are not visually intrusive, have only localised influence or are temporary in nature
Scenic quality	A distinctive sense of place	Landscape character lends a clear and recognisable sense of place
	Striking landform	Landform shows a strong sense of scale or contrast
		There are striking landform types or coastal configurations
	Visual interest in patterns of land cover	Land cover and vegetation types form an appealing pattern or composition in relation to each other and/or to landform which may be appreciated from either a vantage point or as one travels through a landscape
	Appeal to the senses	Strong aesthetic qualities, reflecting factors such as scale and form, degree of openness or enclosure, colours and textures, simplicity or diversity, and ephemeral or seasonal interest
Memorable or unusual views and eye-catching features or landmarks		
Characteristic cognitive and sensory stimuli (e.g. sounds, quality of light, characteristic smells, characteristics of the weather)		
		Relatively few roads or other transport routes

Appendix 2:

Relative wildness	A sense of remoteness	Distant from or perceived as distant from significant habitation
	A relative lack of human influence	Extensive areas of semi-natural vegetation
		Uninterrupted tracts of land with few built features and few overt industrial or urban influences
	A sense of openness and exposure	Open, exposed to the elements and expansive in character
	A sense of enclosure and isolation	Sense of enclosure provided by (e.g.) woodland, landform that offers a feeling of isolation
	A sense of the passing of time and a return to nature	Absence or apparent absence of active human intervention
Relative tranquillity	Contributors to tranquillity	Presence and/or perceptions of natural landscape, birdsong, peace and quiet, natural-looking woodland, stars at night, stream, sea, natural sounds and similar influences
	Detractors from tranquillity	Presence and/or perceptions of traffic noise, large numbers of people, urban development, overhead light pollution, low flying aircraft, power lines and similar influences
Natural heritage features	Geological and geomorphological features	Visible expression of geology in distinctive sense of place and other aspects of scenic quality
		Presence of striking or memorable geo-morphological features
	Wildlife and habitats	Presence of wildlife and/or habitats that make a particular contribution to distinctive sense of place or other aspects of scenic quality
		Presence of individual species that contribute to sense of place, relative wildness or tranquillity
Cultural heritage	Built environment, archaeology and designed landscapes	Presence of settlements, buildings or other structures that make a particular contribution to distinctive sense of place or other aspects of scenic quality
		Presence of visible archaeological remains, parkland or designed landscapes that provide striking features in the landscape
	Historic influence on the landscape	Visible presence of historic landscape types or specific landscape elements or features that provide evidence of time depth or historic influence on the

Appendix 2:

		landscape
		Perceptions of a harmonious balance between natural and cultural elements in the landscape that stretch back over time
	Characteristic land management practices	Existence of characteristic land management practices, industries or crafts which contribute to natural beauty
	Associations with written descriptions	Availability of descriptions of the landscape in notable literature, topographical writings or guidebooks, or significant literature inspired by the landscape
	Associations with artistic representations	Depiction of the landscape in art, other art forms such as photography or film, through language or folklore, or in inspiring related music
	Associations of the landscape with people, places or events	Evidence that the landscape has associations with notable people or events, cultural traditions or beliefs