



Epping Forest & Commons Committee

Date: THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2022
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 3 - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Benjamin Murphy (Chairman) Andrew McMurtrie (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Graeme Doshi-Smith Deputy Philip Woodhouse
(Deputy Chairman) Verderer Michael Chapman DL
George Abrahams Verderer H.H. William Kennedy
Alderman Prem Goyal Verderer Paul Morris
Deputy Madush Gupta Verderer Nicholas Munday
Caroline Haines
Jaspreet Hodgson
Gregory Lawrence
Alderman Lord Elect Mayor
Nicholas Lyons

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Accessing the virtual public meeting

Members of the public can observe this virtual public meeting at the below link:
< <https://youtu.be/1nchUjO-Y w> >

A recording of the public meeting will be available via the above link following the end of the public meeting for up to one civic year. Please note: Online meeting recordings do not constitute the formal minutes of the meeting; minutes are written and are available on the City of London Corporation's website. Recordings may be edited, at the discretion of the proper officer, to remove any inappropriate material.

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

NB: Certain items presented for information have been marked * and will be taken without discussion, unless the Committee Clerk has been informed that a Member has questions or comments prior to the start of the meeting. These for information items have been collated into a supplementary agenda pack and circulated separately

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

3. **MINUTES**

To agree the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on 11th July 2022.

For Decision
(Pages 7 - 14)

4. ***RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

5. ***LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION BILL**

Report of Remembrancer.

For Information

Epping Forest

6. ***EPPING FOREST - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE FOR JUNE - JULY 2022 (SEF 26/22)**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

7. **EPPING FOREST DEER SANCTUARY (SEF 29/22)**

Report of Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 15 - 24)

8. **DEER MANAGEMENT ON BUFFER LAND**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 25 - 34)

9. **CREATION OF UNRESTRICTED DESIGNATED RESERVE FUND FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE ANCIENT TREES AT EPPING FOREST**

Report of Interim Charity Project Accountant, Chamberlains.

For Decision
(Pages 35 - 38)

10. **EPPING FOREST FORWARD AGENDA PLAN 2022 (SEF 27/22)**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Discussion
(Pages 39 - 42)

11. ***EPPING FOREST ANNUAL REVIEW 2021-22 (SEF 28/22)**

Report of Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

The Commons

12. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE FOR THE COMMONS**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

13. **CHILTERN AND SURREY HILLS AREA OF NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) BOUNDARY REVIEWS**

Report of Executive Director, Environment.

For Decision
(Pages 43 - 88)

14. ***SENIOR OFFICER RECRUITMENT**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

15. ***NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITY REVIEW REPORT**

Report of Executive Director, Environment.

For Information

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: The following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

For Decision

19. ***CHARITIES REVIEW UPDATE**

Report of Managing Director, Bridge House Estates.

For Information

20. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To agree the non-public minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on 11th July 2022.

For Decision
(Pages 89 - 92)

21. **NON PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

22. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

Part 3 - Confidential

23. **TARGET OPERATING MODEL PHASE II SCHEDULE**

Presentation of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Discussion

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EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE **Monday, 11 July 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 11 July 2022 at 11.00 am and available to view at www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEqaLC-Y2E.

Present

Members:

Benjamin Murphy (Chairman)
Deputy Graeme Doshi-Smith (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Gregory Lawrence
Alderman & Sheriff Nicholas Lyons
George Abrahams
Alderman Prem Goyal
Jaspreet Hodgson
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Paul Morris
Verderer Nicholas Munday

Officers:

Sally Agass	- Director of Natural Environment
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent
Richard Holt, Clerk	- Town Clerk's Department
Christopher Rumbles	- Town Clerk's Department
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Sally Gadsdon	- Environmental Stewardship Officer
Jo Hurst	- Business Manager, Epping Forest
Elizabeth Lucas	- Principal Surveyor
Amba Nkundo	- Natural Environment
Tristian Veta	- London Agent & Planning Officer
Nicholas Welland	- Senior Principal Surveyor

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Verderer Paul Morris, Alderman Prem Goyal and Madush Gupta.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. EPPING FOREST HERITAGE TRUST

The Chairman welcomed Peter Lewis, Chief Executive of Epping Forest Heritage Trust (the Trust) to the meeting. The Chairman confirmed that he thought formal introduction would be beneficial, given he is new in the role and is to begin looking at partnership working with the City Corporation and at where opportunities may exist to partner on specific projects moving forwards,

whilst also allowing an opportunity to understand the work currently being done by The Trust in developing a new strategy.

The Chief Executive talked the Board through the work he had been mandated to undertake, looking at the impact of the Trust and provided Members with an overview of the Trust's strategy due for launch next week. He also highlighted a quick win through continuing the strong partnership working with the City Corporation that had already contributed to making the Trust's strategy stronger and also talked about engagement with Members and the importance of putting the Forest at the heart of decision making.

The Chief Executive confirmed the Trust were committed to protecting the Forest for everyone's enjoyment now and for generations to come and remarked on how it was important for everyone to work together to achieve maximum impact.

The Chief Executive responded to points raised and highlighted the work that was already taking place looking to improve diversity among Forest visitors through ongoing partnership work with the City Corporation, neighbouring London Authorities and the voluntary community. Work was also taking place with relevant organisations looking to bring people into the Forest from across different age ranges and through a targeted approach.

The Chairman welcomed the presentation commenting on how he considered it very helpful to give everyone an overview of the work that had been taking place to date, and how it is important to understand the overlap in areas of work, making sure it was seen by the public that we were talking with one voice and highlighting areas of joint working e.g., volunteering and the Visitor Centre at High Beach. There is a need to think about education, tying it all together and with this being a really important area going forward.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Epping Forest Heritage Trust's new strategy as outlined would be launched within the next week.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive for allowing time in his diary to come in and present to the Committee today.

4. **MINUTES**

- a) The public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on 9th May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

A Member referred to the size of the agenda pack for the meeting today and suggested certain items could be circulated separately in advance e.g., consultative group minutes. The Chairman confirmed that going forward he would be holding an agenda setting meeting in advance of circulation of the pack, which he would anticipate helping to address the issue raised.

b) * Minutes of Consultative Groups - The Commons

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment providing minutes of the most recent meetings of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, West Wickham, Spring Park, the Coulsdon Commons and Ashtead Common Consultative Groups.

RECEIVED

5. * EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE DATES 2022

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk providing a schedule of relevant committee, meeting and visit dates.

RECEIVED

6. COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP 2023 APPLICATIONS PROPOSALS (SEF 17/22B)

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment seeking approval of new financial initiatives not currently included in the Epping Forest Local Risk budget.

Members were supportive of a need to make the applications. It was explained that certain areas would require additional support as the grant applications, if successful would not cover 100% of the funding required. As part of the final proposal, additional areas would need factoring in when considering the Target Operating Model, staffing resource and money. Members noted that proposals would be worked up and brought back to Committee giving a clearer idea of staff resources.

A Member remarked on there being no reference to inclusion within the proposals and it was clarified that the Government grant does not score in terms of involving the community and it was focussed on numbers and national habitat targets, however there will be an opportunity to build wider engagement, inclusivity and accessibility into delivery proposals at a later stage. .

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Approve the preparation and consultation upon the three Countryside Stewardship applications for Epping Forest Part II, Wanstead Park and Epping Forest Buffer Land, subject to further final approval of the final applications.

7. COPPED HALL PARK PROPOSALS (SEF 18/22B)

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Environment providing more detail and updated proposals relating to the Copped Hall Parkland Management Plan.

The Chairman remarked on this being one of the most exciting projects he had seen for some time when considering what it would mean on the ground and it would be a great step forward.

RESOLVED: That Members;

- Approve the preparation and consultation upon the revised Copped Hall Park Countryside Stewardship proposals, subject to further final approval of the application by your Committee.

8. **EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS - REQUEST TO USE CO-OPTION POWERS (SEF25/22)**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment seeking approval of the appointment of Co-opted Members on to the Epping Forest Consultative Committee.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Approve the co-option of the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers as the fourth Friends/Voluntary application for the remaining period within the Group's three-year term.

9. *** EPPING FOREST - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE FOR APRIL - MAY 2022 (SEF 20/22)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment summarising the Epping Forest Division's activities across April and May 2022.

Members noted that total visitor numbers to the High Beach Visitor Centre for April had not been included within the update and these were confirmed as 1052 for April, 798 for May and 767 for June.

The Committee were reminded of an approval in principle that had been granted some time ago for a concert on Chingford Plain on 10th and 11th September. A proposal had now been to London Borough of Waltham Forest for a premises licence, which had been agreed in principle subject to the general conditions of that licence with detail on health and safety, transport planning etc. There was an outline programme for the event, with a link also being included on the City Corporation's website.

The Chairman remarked on a risk of wildfires at this time, acknowledging the significant work taking place around this, whilst also stressing the importance of Members of the public reporting any incidents they may be witness to, with no fires being allowed across any of the Open Spaces, Epping Forest or Commons land during this period.

RECEIVED

10. *** NATURAL ENVIRONMENT EPPING FOREST FORWARD AGENDA PLAN 2022 (SEF 19/22B)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment providing them with an Epping Forest Agenda Plan cover the next six meetings of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

RECEIVED

11. * **EPPING FOREST TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director Environment providing the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2021 for Epping Forest.

The Chairman highlighted that there were reports were on the agenda relating to the Commons strategies and he referred to his previous comments that he did not consider the way in which financial reporting was produced for this collection of charities was sufficient to allow for rigorous challenge as delegated trustees of the City Corporation.

The Chairman added how he was pleased to report that there had been some good progress on this with the Chamberlain appointing an individual with charitable expertise in financial accounting and dedicating them to Open Spaces initially to make sure there is standardised financial reporting at each meeting going forward. The Chairman referred to there being some errors within the report that he had picked up on and would reference to Audit and Risk Management Committee, with a Member referring to similar errors picked up in reporting of Markets Board.

A Member highlighted a need for ongoing expertise and of taking a long-term view on financial reporting and questioned how this would be achieved through appointing someone on a 12 month contract. The Chairman responded confirming there was certainly a desire to improve the expertise long term, but on occasions there was a benefit in having someone senior come in for a shorter period of time to make changes needed before handing back for including as part of due process. Chamberlain's Department had also been quite radical in responding to the Target Operating Model and it was difficult to comment on what the long term objectives were for this.

The Chairman assured the Committee that there remained an ongoing discussion, with a follow up meeting planned next week to understand the Chamberlain's position in terms draft reporting.

The Committee Chairman concluded the discussion and stated his intention to write to the Chairman of Audit and Risk Management Committee highlighting his concerns. A Member asked for the letter to be shared with the Committee, remarking on how there were other Committees with similar issues in relation to reporting.

RECEIVED

12. **DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLANS AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULTS - FARTHING DOWNS, RIDDLEDOWN, KENLEY COMMON & COULSDON COMMON**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment presenting draft management plans for Farthing Downs, Riddlesdown, Kenley Common and Coulsdon Common and seeking approval of them.

A Member commented on the huge number of volunteers and asked that congratulations be passed to the team involved, with it being really important for the local communities be involved in these areas and to understand the value they offer. The Chairman concurred with the comment, adding how there was a very well informed group of stakeholders that were all trying to pull in the right direction and they were adding real value to the plans.

The Chairman asked that the Committee's thanks be passed on to all those involved.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Approve the 4 final, draft management plans (Appendices 1 - 4) and associated consultation reports (Appendices 5 - 8) so that they can be submitted to Natural England for ratification and implementation as of 1st April 2022 (NB. to be backdated due to cancellation of March 2022 meeting of this committee and technical challenges in May)

13. *** ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE FOR THE COMMONS**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment providing a general update on issues across the nine sites within 'The Commons' division that may be of interest to Members and that was supplementary to the monthly email updates.

RECEIVED

14. *** ASHTEAD COMMON TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director Environment providing the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2021 for Ashtead Common.

RECEIVED

15. *** BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE COMMON TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director Environment providing the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the Year ended 31 March 2021 for Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common.

RECEIVED

16. *** WEST WICKHAM COMMON AND SPRING PARK WOOD, COULSDON AND OTHER COMMONS TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director Environment providing the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial

Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2021 for West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, Coulsdon and other Commons.

RECEIVED

17. *** REVENUE OUTTURN 2021/22 - EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director Environment comparing revenue outturn for the service overseen by the Committee in 2021 / 22 with the final agreed budget.

A Member referred to their recent email correspondence in which they had been told Epping Forest had no overspend and their challenge of this. The Chairman stressed a need for consistent reporting and confirmed he was planning to hold a one off deep dive session to go through the detail properly so that everyone can have complete transparency and the position was understood.

RECEIVED

18. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

19. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Open Spaces Awayday – The Chairman referred to the awayday that had provided an opportunity to look at the strategy of Open Spaces, allowing for a constructive conversation with officers and consider any gaps, structure, key themes and what it was the City Corporation wanted to achieve from investing in the Open Spaces going forward.

Wanstead Park Ponds – The Committee noted there were very complicated issues that needed working through in detail at the next meeting, with the item a red risk and the ponds likely to start drying up in the coming months.

Risk Management Report – Members noted that a risk management update had been omitted from the pack providing a year end update and management update report. Members were given an assurance that all Committee business was being risk managed in line with the City Corporation's approach to risk management, with a full risk review due to take place shortly looking at the protocol for the whole department to ensure appropriate processes were in place and a report to follow in the autumn.

20. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business. The following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to

consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act)

21. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting on 9 May 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

22. **SEF 21/22 MACHINERY FUND - RENEWAL OF EQUIPMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment relating to machinery fund renewal of equipment.

23. **SEF 22/22 LEASE OF BUILDING**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment relating to lease of a building.

24. **SEF 23/22 GRANT OF EASEMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment relating to granting of easement.

25. **SEF 24/22 GRANT OF EASEMENT AND DEED OF RELEASE**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment relating to grant of easement and deed of release.

26. *** EPPING FOREST HERITAGE TRUST**

The committee received a non-public appendix to be read in conjunction with the public presentation at item 3)

27. **NON PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee received two questions in non-public session.

28. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no additional items of business.

The meeting ended at 1.08pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Chris Rumbles
christopher.rumbles@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Committee: Epping Forest & Commons – For Decision Epping Forest Consultative – For Information	Dated: 13 October 2022 19 October 2022
Subject: Epping Forest Deer Sanctuary (SEF 29/22)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	Yes
Report of Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment Department	For Decision: EF&CC For information: EFCG
Report authors: Paul Thomson, Epping Forest	

Summary

This report details and seeks approval for the proposed deer culling activity to be undertaken at the Birch Hall Park Deer Sanctuary across the 2022-23 deer season in line with the independent review of deer management at Epping Forest. The review’s recommendations were incorporated into the Epping Forest Deer Management Strategy 2021-2031, which was adopted by your Committee on 8 March 2021.

Deer management, activity during the August 2021 to April 2022 season saw a reduction in deer numbers from approximately 280 deer, by 172, to approximately 100 deer, in order to maintain a sustainable stocking rate of below 1.5 deer per acre (3.7 deer per hectare), Now that a sustainable population has been re-established, the report proposes a 2022-23 season reduction of between 34-40 deer across the herd age structure, broadly mirroring the population increase of thirty fawns across June 2022.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the option for the 2022/23 season reduction of 34 - 40 deer, to maintain a sustainable stocking rate of 1.5 fallow deer/acre (3.7 deer acre) across 66 acres.
- Approve the creation of an Epping Forest Deer Oversight Group comprising of Members and Officers to report to Committee on the annual management of deer.

Main Report

Background

1. Epping Forest was maintained as a Royal Forest from 1217 to 1878 providing Hunting Chases for the pursuit of deer and wild boar. Following a long public campaign between 1850 and 1871 to secure Epping Forest for public benefit, the City Corporation purchased the Forest between 1875 and 1878. The subsequent Epping Forest Acts of 1878 and 1880 disafforested or removed Royal Forest rights, from Epping Forest in favour of wider public benefits including management and regulation for public recreation; the retention of commoning for pasture, pannage and mast, landscape and heritage conservation, alongside a requirement to manage deer as a '*natural ornament of the Forest*'.
2. The Conservators of Epping Forest have maintained and operated a fenced deer sanctuary of 66 acres, without public access, on what has become Buffer Land at Birch Hall Park, Theydon Bois since 1959. The establishment of the sanctuary was in response to post-war research which predicted that increased urbanisation, a growth in motor vehicle numbers and an anticipated 'wave' of public leisure centred on countryside visiting would be detrimental to wild deer numbers, and especially the dark coated fallow deer at Epping Forest.
3. There was also an ancillary objective to maintain a reputed link to the Royal Danish Dyrehaven herd reputed to be associated with a wedding gift of fallow deer to King James I from his father-in-law. This gift was thought to explain the melanistic or dark pelage, or coat variety, of Fallow deer regularly seen in and around Epping Forest.
4. Traditionally, the preponderance of particular pelage, or coat, colour in deer herds was thought to reflect the emergence of particular strains or races which are genetically stable. Recent research suggests pelage colour does not breed true and that genetic isolation through imparking and the culling preferences of the landowner may play a more significant role in the emergence of a dominant pelage colour.
5. In 1962 byelaws relating to the deer sanctuary were made by the Conservators of Epping Forest under Section 17 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act, 1959. Additional Byelaws were made in 1965 using the City of London (Various Powers) Act, 1963.

2021/2022 Season Management activity

6. The 2021/22 season's target was set to manage the size of the herd back to a sustainable level. Due to restrictions on management activity during the 2019-2020 and 2020-21 seasons, the population was reduced by 172 animals. This significant reduction carefully considers the longer-term welfare and health of the Park herd.
7. Staff have continued to manage deer numbers to the deer sanctuary over the past 30 years. It is estimated that deer culling activity requires

0.5 staff days per deer culled within the sanctuary. With an annual cull of approx. 40 deer in 2021/22 this equates to a minimum of 20 staff-days. Another 15-20 staff days are required for other management tasks such as movement of high seats, welfare inspections of the herd and planning meetings with contractors carrying out works during 2022/2023.

8. The current staff recruitment restrictions associated with the City Corporation's Target Operating Model (TOM) has restricted the Charity's ability to replace specialist deer staff with permanent contracted roles. The Charity has been fortunate to recruit a number of casual deer management staff with extensive deer management experience as an interim measure. The current arrangements allow certain costs to be mitigated by the Charity, such as, cost of ammunition, specialist equipment, including rifles, specialist clothing, courses for qualifications and training, which is all met by the individual staff.
9. The wages for the group members are partly offset by income from carcass sales. This season the sale of 172 carcasses raised £3,828.27 to offset employment costs. The venison industry has been adversely affected by COVID-19 and there continues to be a low demand amongst UK consumers, consequently venison prices are low and look to remain so for the foreseeable future. The sale of venison therefore tends to only offset some of the costs of the deer management group.
10. Two Verderers have attended feedback sessions with deer management staff to reflect on the challenges facing the future deer management across the deer sanctuary and the Buffer Land. The last session provided opportunities to inspect the venison handling facility and management records. Verderers have indicated a willingness to serve on an oversight body regarding the management of deer and wider engagement with neighbouring landowners.

Current Position

Deer Strategy

11. The Birch Hall Park deer sanctuary has always been directly managed by Epping Forest staff, and this approach was reiterated in the Deer Management Strategy 2021-2031 adopted by your Committee in March 2021. Staff members undertake counts, welfare checks, perimeter fence checks and supplementary feeding and the provision of mineral supplements in the winter.
12. In line with wider grassland management objectives for the Buffer Land, the Park is not subject to improvement works through fertiliser applications or underseeding of the sward. To reduce the risk of deer losses due to insufficient grass natural feed a stocking rate of 1.5 deer/acre (3.74 deer/hectare) is currently used to determine the optimum herd size that the Park can maintain.

1.

13. Putnam & Langbein's assessment of 15 UK deer parks suggests that the best way to avoid deer losses or reductions in welfare is to maintain a low herd levels using a stocking rate of below 2 deer per hectare. Where there is good grazing with supplementary fodder to support the herd's overwintering. good nourishment. The Park grazing has not been improved reflecting wider Buffer Land nature conservation objectives and a strategy to further reduce the population in future years to being considered for recommendation to your Committee.
14. Currently the Park herd in the Park is approximately 128 head, plus an expected fawn drop of approximately 40. It is difficult to obtain an accurate count as the herd tends to form into a large group whenever approached making reliable counting difficult. Drones with infrared technology will be used to photograph the sanctuary this winter to provide more accurate data.
15. It is also noted that the District Surveyors Engineering Team will be leading ground, and Small Raised Reservoir (SRR) works carried out within the Park during late August and September 2022. Site visits with District Surveyors team, contractors and Epping Forest staff have been agreed upon measures for guaranteeing the health and safety of the deer and other animals and insects are carefully catered for. Of note was the opening of Red Oak and Gaunt Wood to the deer.
16. The Deer Review also suggested an alternative educational use of the Park around the management of wild deer in the modern countryside. Work is underway to assess future visitor access to this highly constrained site.

2022-23 Deer Management

17. The herd numbers currently stand at approximately 130, with about 30 being of 2021/22 season fawns. The intention is to maintain a post-reduction herd of approximately 100 animals comprising of 60 does, 30 fawns, 5 prickets and 5 bucks. Now the herd has been reduced to a sustainable level future management will only require an approximate reduction of 34 - 40 for the 2022 / 2023 and subsequent seasons.

Options

18. Your Committee has a range of options regarding the future management of fallow deer within the Birch Hall Park estate.
 - i. Approve a reduction of 34 - 40 deer across the 2022/23 to maintain a sustainable herd of 100 animals that are able to maintain high welfare assessments within a restricted fenced area of 66 acres of unimproved grassland. **This option is recommended.**

- ii. Consider the sale or transfer of excess deer to other Parkland herds that require increased numbers. The capture and transport of wild animals is not without the risk of mortality to captured deer and was not recommended in the Deer Management Strategy adopted by your Committee in 2021. **This option is not recommended.**
- iii. Allow the captive Park population to continue to grow to higher levels. This populations would be beyond the recommended stocking density and would incur more cost in supplementary feeding and greater pressure on the productivity and condition of the unimproved grass sward. **This option is not recommended.**
- iv. Consider the release of higher deer numbers to the wider countryside. Given the current size of the south-west Essex wild deer herd this option is considered to be unrealistic. The Deer Management Strategy argues against the intentional release of parkland deer into the wider landscape. **This option is not recommended.**

Proposal

19. The proposal is to continue to manage in-house a sustainable deer herd of around 100 individuals within the Park that is designed to provide an appropriate population structure and sufficient genetic diversity to provides a healthy population that is able to live in balance with the productivity of the unimproved grassland site.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

20. This report supports the Business Plan objectives:
- Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced
 - Our habitats are flourishing, biodiverse and resilient to change
 - Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood.

Financial implications

21. The reduced numbers of deer will equate to a considerable financial saving for the Charity in terms of amount of feed required during the winter, number of salt licks, vitamin tubs and the ecological impact on the environment within the fence line.
22. There will continue to be a reduced income stream from venison sales due to the current reduced market value. However, this is offset by the feed and supplement savings highlighted above.

Resource implications

23. The cost to local risk of operating under the long-standing deer management arrangements for the sanctuary are £17,395.40. The cost is met by Local Risk and is likely to rise to reflect the increased scientific assessment of deer impacts undertaken in line with the independent review's recommendations.

Legal Implications

24. Under section 4 of the Epping Forest Act 1878, deer on Forest Land are the property of the Conservators 'to be preserved as objects of ornament in the Forest'. Given the wider restrictions of the Epping Forest Act, it was not possible to establish a sanctuary within the Forest and hence land was purchased with the support of the Buxton family at Birch Hall Farm, forming the first parcel of Buffer Land.

25. Outside the Forest, deer are wild animals, or *ferae naturae* under common law, and are not owned by anyone. In England and Wales, the landowner has the right to kill or take game on his or her land. The landowner may also extend authority, known as 'permission', to other people without restriction provided they observe the law in terms of close seasons.

Charity implications

26. Epping Forest is a registered charity (number 232990). While Birch Hall Park is outside the Forest on Buffer land, the objectives of herd conservation are closely related to the Charity's objectives and its reputation. Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to the Charity must be taken in the best interests of the Charity.

Risk implications

27. The deer management staff provide all their equipment and are obliged to follow policies laid down by the Charity in respect of numbers of deer culled, times/days when management activity is permitted, areas allocated to each deer manager and records to be kept. All deer management staff are suitably qualified and familiarised with all vehicles and equipment utilised for deer operations and work in a team to mutually support each other from a health and safety perspective.

28. All of the deer management staff are fully qualified to the minimum of Deer Stalking Certificate 2 (DSC2) and hold all necessary firearms and food hygiene certificates to legally carry out the control measures. They all have suitable insurance cover to indemnify the City of London and operate under annually reviewed risk assessments in conjunction with dynamic risk assessments whilst conducting activities which cover all tasks involved with culling the deer as humanely as possible.

Climate implications

29. Significant research has highlighted the negative impact of high deer numbers on the regeneration of trees and shrubs which negatively impacts on the Forest's ability to sequester atmospheric carbon.

Equalities implications

30. None.

Security implications

31. None.

Conclusion

32. Deer management activity over the previous season has stabilised the deer population at a sustainable level which reflects the limited grazing potential of the unimproved grassland. Working to appropriate stocking levels a modest management reduction will be required over the coming season which will benefit the welfare of the remaining herd, reduce pressure on the grassland and minimise the costs of supplementary feeding.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Deer Management Costs

Paul Thomson

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DEER SANCTUARY 2021-22

		April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total	Projected cost 2022-23	
Deer Culled		0	0	0	0	0	41	11	116	4	172	40+	
Feed		£266.00	£900.00	£1,350.00	£950.00	£925.00	0	£940.00	£940.00	0	£5,419.00	£1,550.00	
Anatomical Waste	Bywater	0	0	0	0	0	£3,455.80* (see note 5 below)	0	0	0	£3,455.80	0	
	Imperial Game	0	0	0	0	0	£849.75	£113.3	£2,432.50	0	£3,395.55	£700	
Casual Staff Hours		0	0	0	0	0	0	28.75	269.75	10	308.5	240.00	
Cost per Casual hour per month		0	0	0	0	0	0	£488.75	4,585.75	£170	£5,244.5	£4,080.00	
Ammunition		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	£100	
New rifles		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	£2,607.98	0	
Uniform		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Training		K1 Did Induction Training for all Casuals during normal working day.										0	
Chiller Maintenance		0	0	0	0		£702.84				£702.84	£250	
Vehicle Costs		0	0	0	0	0	£4.80	£4.80	£4.80	£4.80	£19.20	£28.80	
Deer Income		0	0	0	0	0	£500.62	£386.00	£2,721.65	£130.00	-£3,738.77	£1,200.00	
											Total Costs	£21,134.17	£6,708.80
											Total Costs including Income	£17,395.40	£5,508.80

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Agenda Item 8

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For Decision Epping Forest Consultative – For Information	Dated: 13 October 2022 19 October 2022
Subject: Epping Forest Buffer Lands - Deer Management proposals 2022-23 (SEF 30/22)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£24,000 (after income)
What is the source of Funding?	Epping Forest Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed upon with the Chamberlain’s Department?	Y
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment	For Decision: EF&CC For Information: EFCG
Report author: Paul Thomson, Epping Forest	

Summary

This report details and seeks approval for proposed deer management activity to be undertaken across 1,800 acres of Epping Forest Buffer Lands during the 2022-23 fallow deer season, in line with the independent external review of deer management of Epping Forest, incorporated into the Epping Forest Deer Management Strategy 2021-31, which was adopted by your Committee on 8 March 2021. The independent review indicated that the wild Fallow and Reeves Muntjac populations both in Epping Forest, and its associated Buffer Land, continue to increase with implications for the viability of the Forest’s and Buffer Land’s tree and shrub regeneration, continued commercial crop damage and the high number of Deer Vehicle Collisions.

Deer management activity during the January to March 2022 element of the August to April fallow deer season saw a reduction by 182 deer against estimated Fallow deer numbers of 1,500, and Reeves Muntjac, numbers of 350 as a phased approach to realise a sustainable stocking rate of 6-8 deer per square kilometre providing a total sustainable herd size on the Buffer Land of 150-200 deer. As part of the phased reduction in herd size recommended by the independent review, this report proposes a further 2022-23 season reduction of approximately 250 deer as a further step to providing a sustainable Fallow deer population.

Work on managing the deer population will be undertaken in full cooperation with neighbouring landowners and seeks trial approval for limited management activity on Forest Land at the Warren Plantation to address deer populations feeding on adjacent tenanted farmland.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Support continued progress towards a further reduction in Buffer Land deer numbers by 250 individual, to an eventual recommended stocking rate of 6-8 deer/square kilometre to support positive improvements in habitat regeneration, crop viability and safety on the public highway.
- Promote continued engagement with local landowners to work collaboratively to further understand and control the deer population.
- To trial carefully risk assessed deer management operations on Forest Land at Warren Plantation to reduce crop damage on adjacent tenanted farmland.
- Approve the creation of an Epping Forest Deer Oversight Group comprising of Members and Officers to report to Committee on the annual management of deer.

Main Report

Background

1. There is a widespread scientific consensus that wild deer populations continue to increase in both number and geographic range throughout the UK. The two truly native deer species - Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) - are no longer present in Epping Forest and its associated Buffer Land. Both the northern areas of the Forest and the 1,800 acres (700 hectares) of Buffer Land estate primarily consisting of Warlies Park; Woodredon and Copped Hall currently provide habitat for two non-native species of deer – the widely naturalised southern European Fallow deer (*Dama dama*) and the relatively recently introduced Reeves' Muntjac deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*) originating from China.
2. Deer numbers have fluctuated dramatically over the last century. Around 200 fallow deer were present in the Forest in 1900 with a further 50 in adjoining copses. Numbers in the Forest fell to 50 during the 1950s, whereas the 1990s saw a dramatic increase in the number of wild Fallow deer, particularly in the Buffer Land Estates. Increasing deer populations caused significant damage through the browsing, grazing and trampling of both crops and woodland regeneration and have caused a growing number of Deer-Vehicle Collisions.
3. The 6,500-acre area encompassing Epping-River Lee-Nazeing-Harlow area has seen wholesale population growth of both Fallow and Muntjac deer species since 2017 with circa 1,500 Fallow and 350 Reeves Muntjac identified during the 2021-2022 season utilising several survey tools. A reduction of both species is recommended, such a reduction would reduce damage to crops and woodland regeneration while minimising the incidence of Deer-Vehicle Collisions (DVCs) on local roads. Over the 26 years since the introduction of the strategy, the target Fallow deer population of 200 has not always been achieved with deer numbers in recent years thriving at circa ten times that rate.

4. Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVCs) incidents were previously monitored by the Deer Initiative, a broad partnership of statutory, voluntary and private organisations seeking to sustainably manage wild deer and Essex County Council as the Highways Authority. DVCs provide both a valuable insight into the risks posed to motorists and can provide qualified confirmation of overall local deer populations. DVCs between 2002 and 2007 showed a steady decline in numbers both for Essex and the Epping Forest area. Between 2003 and 2005, 26 DVCs were recorded in the area of the Forest. Since 2008, the number has increased and has remained relatively constant, averaging 64 DVCs annually, which suggests annual counts may be underestimating the overall size of the deer population. This notion is further supported by the upward trend in DVCs since 2015 averaging over 230 reported incidents per annum. It is of note that these are only the incidents reported to the on-duty Epping Forest Charity and Essex Police who are tasked to deal with such incidents, a further study would need to take place to establish more conclusive figures. Fallow deer continue to be the primary animal involved in DVCs throughout the region. It is widely accepted that this is due in part to the severity of a collision involving a Fallow (40kg) in comparison to that of the much smaller Muntjac (14kg) which is far more likely to immobilise a vehicle and cause injury to its occupants.

Current Position

5. The independent review that established the Deer Management Strategy 2021-31 assessed the deer control, not just in terms of deer numbers, but in terms of the measurable impact on woodland vegetation. The consultant's field assessments indicate that the current level of deer, and deer distribution, are causing a high level of damage to the Forest, Buffer Land woodlands and neighbouring crops. In particular, the condition of the ancient semi-natural woodlands requires that new cull targets for both Fallow deer and Reeves Muntjac need to be set at a much higher level than in the past. It is also recognised that the deer populations range more freely beyond the 1996 assessment area and consideration should be given to coordination over a wider Epping-River Lee-Nazeing-Harlow area.
6. The initial findings by Epping Forest deer staff are that there is a much higher level of damage to woodlands than at first thought by both Fallow and Muntjac deer and that cull targets should be set much higher than in the past.
7. In Initial surveys conducted between 2010-2015 it was assessed that very low numbers of mature male Fallow deer had been recorded. A suitable suggestion for this would be based on the over-emphasis of culling immature Fallow deer males since 2006/7 and perhaps the excessive culling of mature male fallow Deer. The 2021/22 survey results indicate that this is no longer the case with mature Fallow bucks being observed ubiquitously throughout Epping Forest, Buffer lands and neighbouring estates.
8. The chiller unit which is located in The Warren compound has encountered several issues with maintaining the required temperature to chill significant

numbers of deer carcasses. There is currently in place a plan to modify the unit further for future employment.

9. The current staff recruitment restrictions associated with the City Corporation's Target Operating Model (TOM) has restricted the Charity's ability to replace specialist deer staff with permanent contracted roles. The Charity has been fortunate to recruit a number of casual deer managers with extensive deer management experience as an interim measure. The establishment of the deer manager group has seen certain costs have been mitigated by the Charity, such as, ammunition, cost of specialist kit and equipment including rifles, specialist clothing, courses for qualifications and training, this is all financed by the individual staff.
10. The paid wages for the group members are partly offset by income from carcass sales. This season the sale of 182 carcasses raised £3,828.27 which leaves a predicted future income of £1,500 for the 40 deer to be managed over the next season. The venison industry has been adversely affected by COVID-19 and there continues to be a low demand amongst UK consumers, consequently venison prices are low and look to remain so for the foreseeable future. The sale of venison therefore tends to only offset some of the costs of the deer management group.
11. Two Verderers have attended feedback sessions with deer management staff to reflect on the challenges facing the future deer management across the deer sanctuary and the Buffer Land. The last session provided opportunities to inspect the venison handling facility and management records. Verderers have indicated a willingness to serve on an oversight body regarding the management of deer and wider engagement with neighbouring landowners.

Options

12. Your Committee has a range of options regarding the future management of fallow deer on the Buffer Land estate.
 - i. Approve a reduction of 250 deer across the 2022/23 to maintain a sustainable herd of 150-200 fallow deer across the Buffer Land estate, while reducing Reeves Muntjac as low as possible. **This option is recommended.**
 - ii. Consider a reduced deer management figure which will increase the number of years taken to achieve a sustainable herd figure of 150-200, resulting in the overall reduction of larger aggregate deer numbers and increased damage to the Forest, Buffer Land woodland and commercial crops, while potentially increasing the number of DVCs. **This option is not recommended.**
 - iii. Withdraw from active deer management control altogether resulting in potential herd welfare issues, increased damage to the Forest, Buffer land

woodland and commercial crops, while increasing the number of DVCs.
This option is not recommended.

Proposals

13. In line with the independent review, it is proposed to continue with a stepped active deer management working at a high tempo to achieve a sustainable deer herd that will reduce ecological, commercial and public safety impacts.

Key Data

14. The existing Southwest Fallow deer herd is estimated at 1,500 individuals ranging between the Epping-River Lee-Nazeing-Harlow area... The population saw a reduction of 182 individuals, representing 12% of the existing population at a cost of 17,395.40 after income from venison sales of £3,602.10. Detailed data gathered from the 2021/22 season is contained in the appended review report including cull statistics, wage bill, Income generation from venison sales, and area of cull impact.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. The venison industry is a product of deer management and recreational stalking, reflecting continuing low demand amongst UK consumers, currently, venison prices are low and stand in real terms, at circa 50% of the price in 2019, although prices have tentatively improved recently with the release of covid restrictions. The sale of venison, therefore, tends to only defray some of the costs of deer management, rather than provide a positive cost incentive for active management.

Financial Implications

16. Deer culling is a surprisingly labour-intensive activity. It is estimated that deer control activity can be estimated at 0.5 staff days per deer. Taking a management figure of 182 which equates to 645.45 hours costing £26,860. The provision of rifles and ammunition is born by the individual at a significant saving to the organisation. Specialist clothing, vehicles, high seats, training and game larder facilities all are additional but necessary items for conducting deer activities at a cost to the organisation.

17. Currently, casual deer staff carry out the deer management activity. All carcasses remain the property of Epping Forest. Deer can be purchased at the rate of £1.10 per kilo which is in line with wholesale game dealer rates.

Resource implications

18. All of the licensed stalkers are fully qualified to the minimum of DSC2 and hold all necessary firearms and food hygiene certificates to legally carry out the control measures. They all have suitable insurance cover to indemnify the City of London and operate under annually reviewed risk assessments in

conjunction with dynamic risk assessments whilst conducting activities which cover all tasks involved with culling the deer as humanely as possible.

19. The Deer Managers provide all their equipment and are obliged to follow policies laid down by the Charity in respect of numbers of deer culled, times/days when stalking is permitted, areas allocated to each deer manager and records to be kept. All stalkers are suitably qualified and familiarised with all vehicles and equipment utilised for deer operations and work in a team to mutually support each other from a health and safety perspective.

Legal Implications

20. Under section 4 of the Epping Forest Act 1878, Deer on Forest Land are considered to be the property of the Conservators 'to be preserved as objects of ornament in the Forest'. Outside the Forest, Deer are wild animals, or *ferae naturae* under common law, and are not owned by anyone. In England and Wales, the landowner has the right to kill or take game on his or her land. The landowner may also extend authority, known as Page 75 'permission', to other people without restriction provided they observe the law in terms of close seasons.
21. **Risk implications** - There is an increased risk of vandalism to deer management infrastructure, particularly in more remote areas. High seats are regularly safety inspected under the Working at Height Regulations 2005 and secured to ensure no unlawful removal.
22. As lead-free ammunition is phased out; deer managers will have to pursue a non-lead option to continue conducting culling activities. It is widely accepted that at present, the non-lead variant ammunition requires a larger calibre firearm to achieve an effective and humane cull. Whilst initial research is positive from the industry, further research is currently being carried out by group members to establish the ideal minimum calibre and ammunition for achieving the task.
23. **Charity implications** - Epping Forest is a registered charity (number 232990). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take concerning the Charity must be taken in the best interests of the Charity.

Conclusion

24. The deer management reductions undertaken during the 2021/22 season have made a positive contribution to implementing the Deer Review recommendations of a stocking rate of 6-8 fallow deer per square kilometre in the Buffer Land. Following careful survey, a recommendation of a further cull of 250 deer is recommended for the 2022/23 season, to continue to reduce the negative browsing pressure placed on the regeneration of Forest habitats and Buffer Land woodlands, alongside damage to commercial crops and the public health, animal welfare and insurance considerations associated with Deer Vehicle Collisions.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 2021/2022 Wild deer management statistics and cost breakdown.

Background Papers

- Deer Management SEF 80/96
- Ueckermann and Hansen 'Der DamWild' (The Fallow Deer) (1983)
- Conservation and Management of Deer in Epping Forest and its Buffer Land. Estates. Dr J Langbein (April 1996) (2007) & (2009)
- Epping Forest Management Plan 1998/2003 & 2004/ 2010
- Epping Forest Buffer Land Action Plan 1998/2003
- The Deer Initiative 'Epping Forest and Buffer Lands Deer Management Strategy Review Summary' (2020)

Paul Thomson. Superintendent of Epping Forest & Wanstead Park.

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WILD DEER 2021-22

Wild Deer Cull started mid-January 2022

	January	February	March	Total	Projected Cost 2022-23
Deer Culled	71	0	49	182	200-300
Anatomical Waste	£2,716.00	£2,905.00	£1,190.00	£6,811.00	£3,500.00
Casual Staff Hours	238.5	235.7	171.25	645.45	1580
Cost per Casual hour per month	£4,054.50	£4,006.90	£1,912.5	£10,972.65	£26,860.00
Ammunition	0	0	0	£2,722.00	0
New rifles	0	0	0	0	0
Uniform	£2,223.43	0	0	£2,223.43	0
Training	0	£150	£150	£300.00	0
Chiller Maintenance	0	£144	£553.51	£697.51	£500.00
Vehicle Costs	£36.00	£36.00	£36.00	£108	£1,920.00
Deer Income	£1,414.00	£995.35	£1,192.75	£3,602.10	£9,000.00
	Carcass loss (see note 4 below)		£900.00		
			Actual Total Costs	£24,718.59	£32,780.00
			Total Costs including Income	£21,116.49	£23,780.00
			Cost including carcass loss	£20,216.49	0

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Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee	Dated: 13 October 2022
Subject: Creation of unrestricted designated reserve fund for the maintenance of the ancient trees at Epping Forest	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3
Report of: Interim Charity Project Accountant, Chamberlains	For Decision
Report author: Neil Chambers, Interim Charity Project Accountant, Chamberlains	

Summary

This report is necessary to seek your committee’s approval for the proposed creation of an unrestricted designated fund for ancient tree maintenance at Epping Forest.

- Epping Forest will receive an initial £15,000 for the maintenance of the ancient trees from the Lord Mayor under a new scheme which replaces the usual trinkets scheme for foreign and domestic dignitaries.
- These trees are numbered and photographed, allowing an opportunity to expand fundraising for this purpose to the public and businesses.
- Under the current funding model these funds would need to be spent each year and cannot be carried over.
- To be able to carry forward this money and allow it to be spent over multiple years for the ongoing maintenance of the ancient trees, it’s proposed to set up an unrestricted designated fund.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve on behalf of the Trustee the creation of an unrestricted designated fund for the maintenance of the ancient trees at Epping Forest (55,000 ancient trees).

Main Report

Background

1. Under the current funding model, the funds used for the maintenance of the ancient trees in Epping’s Forest need to be spent within the current financial year and if not spent, there is no mechanism to carry the unspent funds across to the new financial year.

Current Position

2. In this financial year 2022/23, there has been an agreed proposal with the Lord Mayor to replace the usual trinkets scheme the Lord Mayor issues to foreign and domestic dignitaries with an annual scheme which recognises the environmental importance of the ancient trees in Epping Forest. The new scheme is estimated to generate £15,000, which has been calculated based on approximately 150 such meetings at £100 per gift.
3. The ancient trees are numbered and photographed which also creates an opportunity to expand fundraising to allow members of the public or businesses to contribute to the maintenance of these trees.
4. Under the current funding model, the contributions from the Lord Mayor or from members of the public or businesses needs to be spent within the 2022/23 financial year for the maintenance of the trees or will get absorbed into general expenditure, because there is currently not a mechanism for any unused income to be carried over into future years.

Options

5. The option to create an unrestricted designated fund for the maintenance of the ancient trees allows this money to be ringfenced for it's intended purpose and allows any unspent balance to be carried forward into the next financial year.
6. Being able to ringfence this money for the maintenance of the ancient trees would strengthen the proposed expansion of the fundraising to members of the public and businesses as they would then be confident that any contributions would be used as intended for the ancient trees.

Proposals

7. This proposal is for the creation of an unrestricted designated fund for the maintenance of the ancient trees at Epping Forest which has an initial contribution of £15,000 agreed from the Lord Mayor.
8. The initial contribution from the Lord Mayor has come from replacing the usual trinkets scheme the Lord Mayor issues to foreign and domestic dignitaries with a scheme which recognises the environmental importance of the ancient trees in Epping Forest.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Financial implications

9. The fund will be able to carry forward any unspent funds from the initial £15,000 contribution received from the Lord Mayor for use in future financial years.

Legal implications

10. Under Charity SORP rules, as the contributions remain an unrestricted income fund for the upkeep of the ancient trees, the funds should be applied within a reasonable time, say 1-2 years. If the funds were required to be spent over a longer period, then a clear plan and timeline would need to be in place as to

when the funds will be spent, and this will need to be a disclosure in the annual accounts per SORP 7.46, which requires disclosure of the likely timing of expenditure of designated funds in the annual accounts.

Conclusion

11. This year the Lord Mayor has replaced the usual trinkets scheme for foreign and domestic dignitaries which will generate £15,000 annually for the purpose of the maintenance of the ancient trees at Epping Forest.
12. The ancient trees are numbered and photographed which creates an opportunity for further fundraising from the public and businesses.
13. Under Epping Forest's current funding model these funds need to be spent each year and cannot be carried over.
14. To carry forward any unspent funds for their original purpose in future years it is proposed that an unrestricted designated fund be created.

Appendices

- None

Neil Chambers

Interim Charity Project Accountant

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Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee Epping Forest Consultative Group	Dated: 13 October 2022 19 October 2022
Subject: Natural Environment Epping Forest and Commons Forward Agenda Plan 2022 (SEF 27/22)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	n/a
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	Y/N
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director, Environment	For Discussion
Report author: Paul Thomson and Andy Barnard, Epping Forest and Commons	

Summary

In order to help guide members expectations regarding the content of each Committee Agenda and to facilitate improved engagement with the Committee Report process, the Chairman has requested that an Agenda Plan covering the next six meetings of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee is published as part of each Committee Agenda.

The same plan will be provided to the Epping Forest Consultative Group with the intention of providing the potential for the Consultative Group by agreement to request a report to each Committee on a subject not already addressed through the forward Agenda Plan.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to

- note the report and the recommended option for the provision of an Agenda Plan
- consider proposals for Committee Reports of interest to the Consultative Group in addition to those outlined on the Agenda Plan

Background

1. The business of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee is currently managed through an internal Agenda Planning process which coordinates the

production of Committee Reports by Epping Forest and Commons Officers alongside reports provided by Chamberlains, City Surveyors and Town Clerks Departments.

2. The Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest 2020-2030 approved by your Committee on 18 November 2019 also includes a timetable for the production of additional Policy and Strategy documents for Committee consideration proposed over the next three years.

Current Position

3. Given the size and complexity of Epping Forest, the administration of Forest business often governs the majority of the agenda and limits time for the discussion of matters associated with The Commons. Members have also raised concerns about the volume of business, size of reports and attachments and the regular need to exceed the two hours normally allotted for Committee business.
4. The Agenda Plan is designed to help regulate the overall number of Committee Reports considered by each bimonthly Committee and to provide the opportunity for members of both the Service and Consultative Groups to make reasonable requests for additional reports to address matters of policy, risk, and funding.

Options

5. The provision of an Agenda Plan is seen as a helpful guide to future Committee business which will endeavour to regulate the overall flow of Committee Reports to enable business to be properly discussed and enacted within the two-hour time period allotted to the Committee. **This option is recommended.**

Proposals

6. That a Committee Agenda Plan for the forthcoming next six Committees is provided as part of each Committee Agenda with the intention of managing the Committee's overall workload to facilitate reasonable debate and decision making within the two hours' time allotted for Committee business.
7. The Agenda plan should also allow Service Committee and Consultative Group Members to request subject to Officer capacity a reasonable level of additional reports to address matters of general interest and concern.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

8. Financial – no implications
9. Legal – Standing Orders provide the Committee Chairman with the opportunity to request Officers to bring forward reports on matters of concern.

Conclusion

10. The publication of a regularly updated Epping Forest and Commons Forward Agenda Plan as part of each Committee Agenda should help to manage future business ensuring that the consideration of items is conducted within the two hours allotted to the Committee, while regulating the overall volume of business presented for consideration. The process should also allow, subject to officer capacity, requests for additional reports to address matters of general interest and concern.

Appendix

Committee Agenda Plan – March 2022 – January 2023

Joint Report

Paul Thomson & Andy Barnard

Assistant Director, Natural Environment, Environment

Appendix Updated 23.08.22	
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - EPPING FOREST FORWARD AGENDA PLAN March 2022 - January 2023	
March EF&CC	
NO MARCH COMMITTEE	
May EF&CC	
Epping Forest - Superintendent's Update for December 2021 to March 2022	DMT
Epping Forest Work Programme 2022/2023	GS
Rent Reviews	TV
Epping Forest Car Park Charging Phase 3	JE
Platinum Jubilee Celebrations 1952-2022 Queen's Green Canopy – Proposed Tree Planting Projects report v	GS
Natural Environment Epping Forest Forward Agenda Plan 2022	PAT
Application to Natural England for recognition as a National Nature Reserve	PAT
Cyclical Works Programme Bid (was Provisional Additional Works Programme)	City Surveyor
June EFCG	
Assistant Director Update December 2021 - March 2022	DMT
Natural Environment Forward Plan	JEH
Epping Forest Work Programme 2022/2023	GS
Countryside Stewardship 2023 Application Proposals	SG
Copped Hall Proposals	SG
July EF&CC	
Assistant Director Update April - May 2022	DMT
Copped Hall Proposals	SG
Chingford Golf Course Machine Renewal	LR
CSS Application Preview	SG
Capel Road - Leasing	TV
Woodredon Easement	TV
Green Acres Easement	TV
Year End Business Plan Update	NED
Revenue Outturn 2021/22 - Epping Forest and Commons	Chamberlain/NED
Epping Forest Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021	Chamberlain
EF and the Commons Risk Management Update	NED
September EF&CC	
Assistant Director's Update June - July 2022	DMT
NE Agenda Plan (to be combined with Commons)	JEH/AB
Deer Management on Buffer Lands	PAT
Deer Sanctuary	PAT
Epping Forest Annual Review	JE
Risk Report Update	Jo Hill
Kenley Revival project G6	AT
Assistant Directors Update	AB
Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONB Boundary Reviews	AB
Finance Report - Reserve	Chamberlain
Charity Review	SA
Assistant Director - The Commons Retirement	SA
October EFCG	
Assistant Director's Update April - May 2022	DMT
Assistant Director's Update June - July 2022	DMT
Buffer Lands PDN	GS
Deer Management on Buffer Lands	PAT/MW
Epping Forest Annual Review	JE
Sustainable Visitor Strategy	JE
Wayleaves Policy	PAT
November EF&CC	
Assistant Director Update August - September Epping Forest	DMT
Assistant Director Update Commons	TBC
Buffer Lands PDN	GS
Gateway 2 Path Repair Project	GS
Sustainable Visitor Strategy	JE
Aldersbrook Riding School request to ride in Wanstead Park November	JE
Litter and Waste Management Strategy	JE
Wayleaves Policy	PAT
Historic Encroachment	TV
Business Plan 6 month Progress Report	JHill
Epping Forest and Commons Revenue and Capital Budgets 2023/24	Chamberlain
Draft Ashted Common Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022	Chamberlain
Draft Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022	Chamberlain
Draft Epping Forest Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022	Chamberlain
Draft West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood, Coulsdon and Other Commons Trustees and Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year Ended 31 March 2022	Chamberlain
January EF&CC	
Assistant Director Update - October - November	DMT
Natural Department Business Plan - Six month Performance Update: April to September 22/23	Chamberlain/NED
Epping Forest and Commons Committee 2023 Dates	TC's
Natural Department Business Plan 2022/23	NED
Licences, Sports, Wayleaves and Produce Fees and Charges	JE

Committee(s)	Dated:
Committee name. Epping Forest and Commons	13 October 2022
Subject: Chilterns and Surrey Hills AONB boundary reviews	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	4, 9, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director Environment.	For Decision
Report author: Assistant Director. The Commons.	

Summary

In January 2022, the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published its response to The Glover Review, 2019 of National Parks (NPs) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), commonly referred to throughout as ‘Protected Landscapes’.

In its response DEFRA committed to ensuring that Protected Landscapes *boost biodiversity; recognise their role in delivering Net Zero, protect from flooding; store carbon; help communities adapt to the effects of climate change; improve the quality of people’s lives and support rural economies.*

In its Nature Recovery Green paper, the Government have committed to protecting 30% of UK for nature by 2030. Protected Landscapes are the lynch pin to that ambition.

DEFRA’s vision for England’s NPs and AONBs sits comfortably with many of the outcomes sought by the City Corporation as contained in its Corporate Plan, Climate Action Strategy and the Environment Department’s draft strategy for Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience. The vision also meets the general aspirations of the City Corporation’s Open Spaces Act, 1878 and supports delivery of the charitable objects to preserve the open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Natural England (NE) are charged with delivery of DEFRA’s programme, via their new ‘Landscape Designation’ Programme. This includes considering extensions to the boundaries of the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs.

Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve/Special Area of Conservation (NNR/SAC) and Stoke Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are currently outside of but close to, the current Chilterns AONB boundary. The West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons SSSI’s forming the South London Downs

National Nature Reserve are in the London Borough of Corydon outside of but close to, the current boundary of the Surrey Hills AONB. Both may be considered for inclusion within the new AONB boundaries.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Approve further involvement in the AONB boundary revision consultation process with the current intention being 'inclusion within their boundaries' as follows:
 - a) Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common within an extended Chilterns AONB boundary.
 - b) The Coulsdon Commons within an extended Surrey Hills AONB boundary.

Main Report

Background

1. An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); is an area of countryside in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland that has been designated for conservation due to its significant landscape value. Areas are designated in recognition of their national importance by the relevant public body e.g. for Natural England or equivalent. AONBs enjoy levels of protection from development like those of UK National Parks (NP), but unlike NPs the responsible bodies do not have their own planning powers (although they do comment on planning matters).
2. The idea for what would eventually become the AONB designation was first put forward by John Dower in his 1945 Report to the Government on NPs in England and Wales. Dower suggested there was need for protection of certain naturally beautiful landscapes that were unsuitable as NPs owing to their small size and lack of wildness.
3. The purpose of an AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscape. There are two secondary aims: meeting the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and having regard for the interests of those who live and work there. To achieve these aims, AONBs rely on planning controls and practical countryside management.
4. There are currently 46 AONBs in Britain (33 wholly in England, four wholly in Wales, one that straddles the Anglo-Welsh border and eight in Northern Ireland). The first AONB was designated in 1956 in the Gower Peninsula, South Wales. The most recently confirmed is the Tamar Valley AONB in 1995.
5. AONBs vary greatly in terms of size, type, and use of land, and whether they are partly or wholly open to the public. The AONBs of England and Wales together cover around 18% of the countryside in the two countries.

Legal status and organisation

6. AONBs in England and Wales were originally created under the same legislation as the National Parks, the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Unlike AONBs, NPs have special legal powers to prevent unsympathetic development. AONBs in general remain the responsibility of their respective local authorities by means of special committees that include members appointed by the minister and by parishes.
7. Only very limited statutory duties were imposed on local authorities within an AONB by the original 1949 Act. However, further regulation and protection of AONBs in England and Wales was added by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, under which new designations are now made and the government stated in paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) that in considering planning applications, great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs and NPs which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Current Position

8. The Government commenced consideration of the future of Protected Landscapes in 2018 and continues to the present day as follows:

2019. The Glover Review

9. The Glover Report (**Background Paper 1**) made various recommendations regarding the future of AONB's. It also sets out some general aspirations for Protected Landscapes i.e. a better resourced connected and managed landscape with enhanced biodiversity, education, and volunteering opportunities, whilst ensuring landscapes are protected from harm by over visiting and development. This closely aligns with the City Corporation's aspirations for its rural open space Charities across The Commons.

2022. DEFRA - Landscapes Review (NPs and AONBs policy paper)

10. In this paper the Government confirmed its commitment to many of the Glover reports proposals and states as a general principle:
Integrating protected landscapes (such as AONB's) into the design and development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Environmental Land Management Schemes. Alongside boosting biodiversity, improving public access is a priority whilst also stating Equally, where people do not respect our protected landscapes, we will ensure strengthened enforcement powers, address antisocial behaviour and damage. This would more closely align AONBs to the City's local byelaws and use of Public Spaces Protection Orders. The role of Protected Landscapes in achieving net zero carbon emissions are also recognised. **See Background Papers 1 and 2.**
11. **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the main proposals from the Glover Report. Each is followed by a brief description of how the proposal match or otherwise might impact upon the City of London's own strategic vision for its natural environments.

12. Natural England (NE) are charged with delivery of DEFRA's Protected Landscapes, via their new 'Landscape Designation' Programme. This includes considering extensions to the boundaries of the Surrey Hill and Chilterns AONBs. **Background Paper 3.**

Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review Status

13. The Surrey Hills AONB boundary review commenced early 2022 as a 'call for evidence' at which point the Assistant Director sought Chairman's approval to provide supporting material for the inclusion of the four Coulsdon Commons within the AONB boundary i.e. Coulsdon Commons, Farthing Downs, Kenley Common and Riddlesdown, all of which are included in the recently created South London Downs National Nature Reserve. A Map indicating the current and potential boundaries following the review (the 'possible area of search') is shown as **Map 1.**
14. Natural England's Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review *Frequently Asked Questions* is attached as **Appendix 2.** The letter received by the MP for Croydon South outlining the opportunities the Surrey Hills AONB present to the area is attached as **Appendix 3.**
15. **Boundary Review Timetable.** Natural England is currently in the process of appointing consultants experienced in this area of work who will assist in undertaking the technical assessment of natural beauty, working with local stakeholders to ensure that we have access to the best available evidence. The following is indicative timescale for each necessary step:
 - **July 2022.** Review all available evidence relevant to the assessment of natural beauty and to the desirability of designation, engaging with stakeholders regarding evidence gathering and consideration of relevant issues; prior to undertaking the technical assessment of natural beauty; determining the desirability of designating any qualifying areas and to identifying proposed revised boundaries.
 - **September – December 2022.** Work continues to consider which of the qualifying areas it is desirable to designate and to draft proposed boundaries to include relevant technical input. By end of November 2022, submission to Natural England Director for approval to undertake statutory and public consultation.
 - **December 2022. Draft Boundaries presented to Board workshop.** Preparation of documentation for statutory and public consultation.
 - **January 2023.** Launch statutory and public consultation to complete by end of March 2023.
 - **May 2023.** Assess responses to statutory and public consultation, by end of month.

- **June 2023.** Draft a paper to seek NE Board approval of a draft Order regarding amending the boundary of an existing AONB and approval to proceed to a formal period of Notice.
 - **July 2023.** Formal period of Notice.
 - **August 2023.** NE Board approval sought for the making and submission of an Order to the Secretary of State varying the boundary of the Surrey Hills AONB.
16. Assuming the above timetable is followed, and Natural England determines that a boundary variation should be made following the technical assessments and statutory consultation, Natural England would expect to submit a variation Order to the Secretary of State for a decision by August 2023. It is not possible to say how long the Secretary of State's decision will take following submission or whether a Public Inquiry would be called.
17. With the Chairmans approval the Assistant Director met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Surrey Hills AONB, at their request, in June 2022. At the meeting, the Chair indicated that the Surrey Hills Board:
- a. Recognised the beauty and importance of the wooded and downland landscapes across the Coulsdon Commons and the high standards of conservation management and public access delivered by the City Corporation.
 - b. Wished to encourage the City Corporation to continue contributing evidence and comment in support of the inclusion of the Coulsdon Commons within the revised boundary.
18. The Chair of the Surrey Hills AONB also indicated that the boundary review timetable was making good progress and expressed a desire to meet the Epping Forest Committee in pursuance of the above.

Chilterns AONB Boundary Review Status

19. In 2021 the local MP for Beaconsfield speculatively contacted the Assistant Director to ascertain any previous involvement the City may have had in discussions to include the area to the South of Beaconsfield in the recently announced proposal to extend the Chilterns AONB.
20. The Assistant Director informed that he and other local officers had last liaised with the Chilterns AONB Conservancy Board in 2013 and had met on site at that time to evaluate landscape quality issues. These meetings generally concluded that the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common area to the south of Beaconsfield and westwards towards Marlow bounded by the Thames, was of sufficient quality to merit inclusion within the AONB should a review of its boundary ever be carried out.
21. In 2018 the Chilterns AONB drew up an independent case for a boundary review of the AONB. **Appendix 4.** Whilst the 2018 boundary review suggested that part of South Buckinghamshire be included within the AONB (covering both

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common), AONB Officers have since confirmed that the Conservancy Board is being careful not to suggest a favoured option at the present time.

22. The Government's 2022 review sits independently of the above and does not appear to be progressing at the same pace as for the Surrey Hills AONB. No timetable is presently available however, it might be assumed that the process will be like that currently being pursued by Surrey Hills AONB albeit running to a set of later dates.

Proposal

23. It is proposed that the City Corporation supports the inclusion of its properties in London Borough of Croydon, Surrey and Buckinghamshire, within the boundary extension proposals for the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs, as and when the respective consultation programmes require.
24. The Government's aims for its Protected Landscapes, including AONB's, supports the following Corporate strategies, aims and outcomes:
- a) Corporate Climate Action Strategy.
 - b) Corporate Plan ***Shape Outstanding Environments.***

We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.

Our spaces are secure, resilient, and well maintained.

- c) Environment Department's Draft Strategic Vision for Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience. **Appendix 5.**
- d) Open Spaces Act, 1878. *The duty to preserve the natural aspect, keep all Commons, commonable land and open spaces unbuilt upon for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.*
- e) Provides further protection/influence within planning law. This would be particularly beneficial for the LBC/Surrey sites as they are currently the most vulnerable to the impact of housing and other development.
- f) Potentially improved opportunities for grants to support the work of the Coulsdon Commons and Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common Charities.
- g) Clearer links with neighbouring landowners to facilitate sympathetic management of land around the City's properties across The Commons.
- h) Enhanced reputation – AONB inclusion reflects the regional and national importance of The Commons.
- i) Clearer alignment with the Government Policy and its ambition for England's natural environment.
- j) Members may consider that E-I above represent the best interest of the West Wickham and Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common Charities.

Option 1. Members approve further involvement in the boundary revision consultation processes for the Surrey hills and Chilterns AONBs with the current intention being inclusion within their boundaries. **Recommended.**

Option 2. Members approve further involvement in the consultation process and considers its position and responses as progress is made along NE's timetable

Option 3. Members do not approve further involvement in the consultation process. **Not recommended.**

25. **Option 1** is the recommended approach; however, Officers recognise that members may wish to take a more cautious approach.

Implications - See also Appendix 3 and Background Paper 1.

26. There will be some short-term costs, mainly Officer time, associated with pursuance of the favoured option i.e. additional reliance on grants and work associated with applications. These can be accommodated within existing local risk budgets. The Government's Spending Review 2021, announced a new target to leverage at least £500,000 a year for nature's recovery by 2027 and more than £1 billion a year by 2030. Inclusion within AONBs may allow the City Corporations natural environment charities improved access to these additional funds.
27. No additional long-term costs are anticipated should the sites be included in either or both AONBs. Inclusion may offer greater opportunities for external funding in support of both charities' aims and objectives. This new 'joined up, bigger, better' style of landscape management is likely to require a new strategic mindset. DEFRA are restructuring their grant schemes to support and encourage such strategic thinking so long-term inclusion within the AONBs should prove to be cost neutral.
28. No loss of direct or indirect management control is foreseen nor threat to the recently agreed management plans for the sites under consideration.
29. Planning Comment contributions to the AONB - The Commons has limited resources to make further comment than present concerning planning applications concerning the protection of its Charitable sites. Much of that expertise currently sits with the Assistant Director and will be lost on his retirement. However, the Environment Department now houses the City's planning section so expert resources could be re-aligned.

Charity implications.

30. Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common and the Coulsdon Commons are registered charities (numbers, 232987 and 232989 respectively). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to the Charity must be taken in the best interests of the Charity.

Conclusion

31. DEFRA are currently exploring plans to expand the boundaries of the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs.
32. It is possible that the Coulsdon Commons and Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common could be included within the new boundaries
33. Both AONBs appear keen to expand their boundaries to include the City's open spaces in LBC/Surrey and Buckinghamshire
34. With the Chairman and Executive Directors approval, the Assistant Director has held early discussions with both AONB Boards and submitted early evidence in support.
35. This report seeks further involvement in the AONB boundary revision consultation processes with the current intention being inclusion within their boundaries.

Appendices

- Appendix 1. Main Glover Report proposals and potential impact on The Commons.
- Appendix 2. Natural England 'FAQ' re Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review.
- Appendix 3. Member of Parliament, Croydon South, letter to Ass't Director.
- Appendix 4. Chilterns 2018 Reviewing the Boundary of the Chilterns AONB.
- Appendix 5. Draft Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience Strategy.
- Map 1. Surrey Hills AONB Possible Area of Search.

Background Papers

1. **Government's response to the Glover Report January 2022.**
<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwizpeHp-Mr5AhXPIFwKHUPeCyAQFnoECBYQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Flandscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response&usq=AOvVaw1rr5sUulAxclBMhss3soJQ>
2. **England Trees Action Plan.**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-trees-action-plan-2021-to-2024>
3. **Natural England 'Landscape Designation Programme' announcement.**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natural-england-announces-landmark-new-programme-for-protected-landscapes>

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Appendix 1.

Main proposals (having an impact on The Commons) from the Glover Report, 2019. Full document provided as Background paper

Glover proposal 3: Strengthened Management Plans *should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law National Park and AONB Management Plans need to be strengthened to lead natural recovery.*

Links to the City's work. The City's natural environments understand the role they play in the wider landscapes and the need to link more closely with them.

The important role that the City's open spaces to protect biodiversity and assist the govts plans to reduce carbon emissions is already established. Already of high nature conservation value the City's current management plans for its natural environments closely match this proposal. No additional resources required

Cons. None

Glover Proposal 4: National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – *joining things up within and beyond their boundaries - a recommendation of the earlier 'Lawton' review.*

Links to the City's work This supports the work The Commons are pioneering in Buckinghamshire to enhance the biodiversity and natural beauty of the landscape surrounding the SAC in partnership with the National Trust, Buckinghamshire Council and other landowners. This work will attract DEFRA and other grant funding

Cons. This new 'joined up, bigger, better' style of landscape management will require a new mindset and different way of working. It may require additional resources. DEFRA are restructuring their grant schemes to support this, so should be cost neutral. **See proposal 5 below.**

Glover Proposal 5: A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).

Links to the City's work ELMS is currently being piloted across England and is expected to replace the current Countryside Stewardship Scheme from 2024/25. AONB 'membership' could strengthen the case for further income VIA ELMS

Cons. Additional reliance on grants and associated applications but in reality no major resource implications.

Glover Proposal 6: A strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Links to the City's work – supports the extensive partnership work between City Corporation Officers, Natural England and the local authorities surrounding The Commons and potentially adds a further layer of protection.

Cons. The Commons has limited resources to make further comment than present concerning planning applications with regard to the protection of its Charitable sites. Much of that expertise currently sits with the Assistant Director and will be lost on his retirement. However, the Environment Department now houses the City's planning section so expert resources could be re-aligned.

Glover Proposal 27: A new financial model – *more money, more secure, more enterprising.*

Links to the City's work. The Government's Spending Review 2021, announced a new target to leverage at least £500,000 a year for nature's recovery by 2027 and more than £1 billion a year by 2030. Inclusion within AONBs may allow the City Corporations natural environment Charities access to these additional funds.

Frequently Asked Questions at September 2021

Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Boundary Review Project



Introduction

It is Natural England's statutory responsibility to designate National Parks and AONBs.

In July 2021 Natural England announced a new programme for landscape, working with stakeholders, communities and government. This includes determining four proposals for either new AONBs, or extensions to existing AONBs. One of these is to consider a proposal for an extension to the Surrey Hills AONB. This project is now underway.

The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions document is help inform about AONBs and the Surrey Hills AONB in particular; the designations process and Natural England's role; as well as some of the implications for any area that is designated as an AONB.

1. Background

Q. What is an AONB?

A. An [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) (AONB) is land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Section 82(1) of the CRoW Act defines an AONB as "an area which appears to Natural England to be of such outstanding natural beauty that it is desirable that the protective provisions of Part IV of the Act should apply to it for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty." There are currently 34 [AONBs in England](#).

The Surrey Hills AONB was first designated in 1958 under legislative provisions originally set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (<https://www.surreyhills.org>).

Q. Who makes decisions with regard to new landscape designations?

A. Natural England has a discretionary power under S.82 of the CRoW Act, to designate Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or to vary the boundary of an existing AONB by a subsequent Order (a variation Order).

Q. What is Natural England's remit?

A. Natural England is the government's independent adviser on the natural environment, with special responsibilities for creating National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and reviewing their boundaries. We also have a wide range of other responsibilities for the natural environment. More information about our work is at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england.

Q. Who makes the final decision?

A. It is Natural England's responsibility to decide whether to designate an area as AONB. Any decision will be made by Natural England's Board, having considered the evidence and

the results of the statutory consultation. The Orders do not take effect however unless and until they are confirmed by the Secretary of State (Defra), after the draft legal Orders have been placed on deposit. The Secretary of State has the power call a Public Inquiry if minded to do so.

Q. How does Natural England decide which areas should be designated as AONBs?

A. In deciding whether to designate an AONB, or to vary an existing AONB boundary, Natural England must first consider whether the land has outstanding natural beauty and then whether designation is desirable for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the area’s natural beauty. This decision requires Natural England to address three broad questions:

1. Does the landscape have sufficient natural beauty to be considered outstanding?
2. Is it desirable for the purpose set out above, to designate this landscape as AONB?
3. Where should the boundary be drawn?

Q. How is the Surrey Hills AONB managed?

A. The management of the Surrey Hills is overseen by the Surrey Hills AONB Board as an independent partnership that leads on the preparation, monitoring and review of the AONB Management Plan on behalf of its constituent bodies and other partner organisations. The AONB Board also plays a leading role in developing an image and sense of identity for the Surrey Hills AONB, and developing and supporting initiatives that implement the AONB Management Plan policies.

The work of the AONB Board is achieved through the Surrey Hills AONB Unit taking forward a range of initiatives that promote the special character of the Surrey Hills, establish partnerships, secure funding, ensure implementation and monitor effectiveness. In recognition that the Surrey Hills AONB is a nationally important landscape, 75% of the Unit’s core costs are funded by central government through DEFRA with 25% of core costs from the six local authorities to reflect their statutory responsibilities towards the AONB.

2. Review of the boundary Surrey Hills AONB

Q. What areas are currently within the Surrey hills AONB?

A. The Surrey Hills AONB stretches across Surrey’s North Downs, from Farnham in the west to Oxted in the east of the county. It also includes the Greensand Hills which rise in Haslemere and stretch eastwards to Leith Hill, the highest point in Southern England.
www.surreyhills.org

Q. Why is the boundary of the Surrey Hills AONB being reviewed

A. The Surrey Hills AONB partnership has long considered that the AONB should be extended into adjacent areas that are locally designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Representations to this effect have been made to Natural England and predecessor bodies over a number of years.

Q. Why is this work starting now?

A. George Eustice, Secretary of State (Defra), made a Written Ministerial Statement on the 24th June 2021 which included reference to Natural England taking forward the government's commitment to designate additional protected landscapes with specific reference considering the designation of the following four new areas.

- Yorkshire Wolds AONB
- Cheshire Sandstone Ridge AONB
- An extension to the Surrey Hills AONB
- An extension to the Chilterns AONB

This followed the publication of the government commission Landscapes Review, in September 2019 (the 'Glover Review').

Q. What are the next steps and expected timescales?

A. Natural England is currently in the process of appointing consultants experienced in this area of work who will assist in undertaking the technical assessment of natural beauty, working with local stakeholders to ensure that we have access to the best available evidence.

The following is a summary of the practical steps to be followed in order to fulfil the legislative requirements (with indicative timescales for each):

- Review all available evidence relevant to the assessment of natural beauty and to the desirability of designation, engaging with stakeholders with regard to evidence gathering and consideration of relevant issues; prior to undertaking the technical assessment of natural beauty; determining the desirability of designating any qualifying areas and to identifying proposed revised boundaries **by end of July 2022**
- Informal consultation on any proposals to extend the Surrey Hills AONB and revision of proposals as required following the informal consultation **by end of November 2022**
- Papers draft prior to submission to NE Board for approval for the assessments of whether Natural England should vary the boundary of the existing Surrey Hills AONB and approval to undertake a statutory and public consultation: **by end of December 2022**
- Preparation of documentation for and subsequent undertaking of the statutory consultation: **by end of March 2023**
- Review responses to the statutory consultation prior to drafting a paper to seek NE Board approval of a draft Order with regard to amending the boundary of an existing AONB and approval to proceed to a formal period of Notice: **By end of June 2023**
- Formal period of Notice: **July 2023**
- NE Board approval sought for the making and submission of an Order to the Secretary of State (Defra) varying the boundary of the Surrey hills AONB: **by end of August 2023**

Q. When is the boundary review expected to be completed?

A. Assuming the above timetable is followed and the Natural England Board determines that a boundary variation should be made following the technical assessments and statutory consultation, Natural England would expect to submit a variation Order to the Secretary of State for a decision by August 2023. It is not possible to say how long the Secretary of State's decision will take following submission or whether a Public Inquiry will be called.

Q. How will local people be able to engage?

A. Natural England will work collaboratively with local partners to ensure there are good engagement opportunities throughout the process. This could include opportunities to contribute to evidence gathering as well as through informal consultation.

Q Could the review result in the designated area being reduced?

A. No. Natural England is only considering whether there are further areas that might have potential to be designated as extensions to the existing area designated as Surrey Hills AONB.

3. The Designation Process in more detail

Q. How does Natural England go about fulfilling this statutory responsibility?

A. Natural England has produced a guidance document which sets out how we evaluate natural beauty as well as the desirability of designation and the criteria we use to identify detailed boundaries: [{hopefully this can be linked on S Hills website}](#)

Q. How is the assessment of Natural Beauty undertaken?

A. Once an area has been selected for consideration for designation, it will be considered in detail, using the guidance referred to above. This guidance explains how Natural England normally expects to apply the statutory designation criteria in practice when assessing landscapes for designation.

Natural beauty is not exhaustively defined in the legislation. It is also a very subjective characteristic of a landscape and ultimately involves a value judgment. In deciding whether an area has natural beauty, Natural England must therefore make a judgment as to whether people are likely to perceive a landscape as having sufficient natural beauty.

In order to make these judgments (some of which are subjective) in a transparent and consistent way, the Guidance sets out which criteria Natural England intends to use. These include landscape and scenic quality, relative wildness, relative tranquillity and Natural and cultural heritage features

Q. How does Natural England decide whether it is desirable to designate land as an AONB?

A. It is an important principle in designation however just because an area is assessed as meeting the natural beauty criterion, it does not mean that it will necessarily be designated. Natural England must also deem it to be *desirable* to designate it.

Factors that are considered with regard to the 'desirability' of designation (for any area which satisfies the AONB technical 'natural Beauty' criterion include:

- Is there an area which satisfies AONB technical 'natural Beauty' 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 and understanding and enjoyment?
- Can AONB purposes be best pursued through the management mechanisms, powers and duties which come with National Park or AONB designation?
- Are there other relevant factors which tend to suggest whether it is or is not desirable to designate the area?

The more closely that any issue raised, relates to the statutory purpose (the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty), then the greater its relevance and importance.

Q. How does Natural England identify new boundaries for areas that are assessed as being desirable to propose as extensions to the AONB?

A. If Natural England decides that an area has sufficient natural beauty and that it is it desirable to designate, the last step prior to statutory consultation is to identify a possible suitable detailed boundary. Landscape and scenic quality rarely change suddenly and one of the criteria states that where there is an area of transition in landscape or scenic quality, a boundary should be drawn towards the high quality end of the area of transition, to include areas of high quality land and exclude areas of lesser quality. In other words the boundary should be drawn conservatively.

Q. Who are the statutory consultees?

A. The CRoW Act requires that Natural England undertakes a statutory Local Authority consultation prior to reaching a final decision but in practice Natural England will open this consultation to anyone with an interest in the project.

4. The Implications of Designation

Q. What will change as a result of designation as an AONB?

- A.** The provisions of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act will immediately apply i.e.:
- S84 (4) specifically provides for a local authority whose area consists of or includes the whole or any part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to have the power to take all such action as appears to them expedient for the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.
 - S85(1) confers a General Duty to have regard to the purpose of AONB designation as follows: "In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty."
 - S85(2) defines 'relevant authorities' for these purposes as encompassing any Minister of the Crown, any public body, any, statutory undertaker and any person holding public office.

- S89 (2) places a duty on relevant local authorities to prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it with a further duty to review the plan at "intervals of not more than five years". An AONB Management Plan sets out the policy for the management of an AONB and includes an action plan for carrying out activity in support of the purpose of designation. The Management Plan plays an important role in supporting and co-ordinating the action of the organisations that make up the AONB Partnership, including setting the work programme of the AONB team.

Q. What are the wider implications if designation goes ahead?

A. Any areas that become a part of the Surrey Hills AONB will have the benefit of the national status that designation brings and the statutory protection this provides. They will be fully reflected in future AONB Management Plans and benefit from the resources and skills of the AONB Management Unit. There are no changes to access rights over and above those that already exist.

Q. How will AONB designation affect planning?

A. All planning decisions will continue to be made by the existing local planning authorities, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework which provides the highest level of planning protection for AONBs and any specific local development plan policies.

In an AONB, great weight would be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty, the scale and extent of development would be likely to be limited and planning permission refused for major development unless in exceptional circumstances where it is in the public interest. Some Permitted Development Rights are however withdrawn, requiring affected proposals to be subject to the full planning application process.

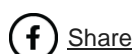
Q. How will designation affect landowners and other land managers?

A. Ownership of land remains unchanged within an AONB, and there is no restriction on how land can be farmed. There is also no impact on public payments to farmers.

Q. How will designation affect nature conservation?

A. The natural beauty of an AONB encompasses both its natural and cultural heritage features. Future management of the area will thus seek to ensure that the internationally important wildlife and habitats that are so intrinsic to its natural beauty, are conserved and enhanced. The integrated management approach taken by the AONB Partnership will also assist with the management of any potential conflicts which may arise between wildlife and recreation.

Consultation to Expand the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Dear all,

You may be aware that the Government's advisor on the natural environment, Natural England, is running a public consultation to expand the boundaries of four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). These proposals have the potential to deliver over 1600 additional square km of protected land. This is part of the Government's commitment to protect 30% of our land by 2030 for nature. The boundaries of the Surrey Hills AONB are included in this review and I am delighted that potential candidates for areas of outstanding natural beauty include Farthing Downs, Happy Valley, Coulsdon Common and Riddlesdown.

The Surrey Hills AONB boundary has not been reviewed since its original designation in 1958 and I know that there have been repeated calls by local campaigners to reconsider the boundary. Including parts of our local area in the Surrey Hills AONB could help preserve the natural environment and heritage while providing an opportunity to support people's health and wellbeing through access to nature. The consultation is considering areas of high scenic quality including

chalk grassland, parkland, and historic features.

The first stage of the public consultation is running until 31st January 2022. After this, further field work and evaluation will take place, followed by the identification of candidate areas by June 2022. The Call for Evidence is asking for locations accompanied by a photograph and description of the special qualities of the location, such as the landscape quality and tranquillity, as well as any additional supporting comments. You can read more about the consultation and how to respond by post here: <https://www.surrey-hills-aonb-boundary-review.org/discover>. If you would like to fill in the consultation online, you can access an online form here: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/896091cc47194e3f99839c84a71cdde0>.

This is a fantastic opportunity for our area, and I hope that you take part in the consultation. Please do also forward this to friends and family in our area who may be interested.

Best wishes,

Chris



Chris Philp
Member of Parliament for Croydon South



 Forward

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The Case for Reviewing the Boundary of the AONB





AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The Case for Reviewing the Boundary of the Chilterns AONB

Summary

1. The core of the Chiltern Hills is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It covers only half of the area commonly accepted to be The Chilterns. That part of the Chilterns not currently designated lies on the dip slope of the Chilterns escarpment which falls south eastwards to the Thames Valley and the Colne Valley, a tributary of the Thames. The Chiltern Hills National Character Area (110) covers most of the wider Chilterns, the area also covered by The Chiltern Society.
2. A review of the AONB boundary provides a welcome opportunity to reconsider whether more of the Chiltern Hills should be designated as AONB.
3. The Chilterns Conservation Board requests that Natural England consider reviewing the boundary of the Chilterns AONB in four areas covering a total of 331 sq.kms (Map 1);
 - North Hertfordshire - an area to the south of Hitchin and east of Luton. (Area1- 92 sq.kms)
 - South Buckinghamshire - the area between the River Thames, Slough and Chalfont Common (Area 2 – 81 sq.kms)
 - Thames Valley – the area bordered to the north by the Thames and between Cookham (north of Maidenhead) and Caversham (north of Reading) (Area 3 – 78 sq.kms)
 - Eastern Area – the area between Chesham, Amersham, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead (Area 4 – 80 sq.kms)
4. It is the view of the Conservation Board and relevant partners that these areas are worthy of consideration for designation as part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as they meet the criteria for designation, including the primary justifications of landscape quality. They also are important as they: link local towns and surrounding countryside; provide extensive opportunities for recreation and environmental education, and contain significant numbers of designated sites and areas of environmental and cultural heritage.

5. In selecting areas to be, potentially, considered for designation as AONB the Board and its partners are confident they meet the criteria given in the guidance issued by Natural England in March 2011, in particular that weight must be given to:
 - Landscape Quality
 - Scenic Quality
 - Relative wildness
 - Relative tranquillity
 - Natural heritage features
 - Cultural heritage

6. The Board is aware that recreational opportunities are not a reason for designation of an AONB. However, the Conservation Board does have a statutory purpose to promote enjoyment and understanding of its special qualities. The reality is that the importance and popularity of the Chilterns for recreation is considerable. It is already one of the most visited protected landscapes in Europe with 55 million visits per annum. All four of the proposed areas are in themselves important for their recreational opportunities and are an integral part of the wider access networks and appeal of the Chiltern Hills. For example, both the Chiltern Way and Chiltern Cycleway link the AONB and the proposed areas.

7. It is proposing these four areas the requirements set out in the letter from Natural England of 20th June 2013 have been given considerable weight.
 - Ecological connectivity
 - Climate Change
 - Public Engagement with nature
 - Public benefits from a healthy natural environment.

Landscape Character

8. Areas 1, 3 and 4 fall within the Chilterns National Character Area and Area 2 lies in the Thames Valley NCA. All four exhibit the typical landscape character of the Chiltern Hills - a chalk escarpment facing north-west with a dip slope to the south east running into the Thames Valley. The four areas proposed for possible inclusion in the AONB fall in the transition zone of dip slope to the Thames Valley (including the River Colne). This is an area where the boundary is currently convoluted and long thought to have excluded areas that should have been included at the time of the last boundary review in 1984-1990.

9. It is notable that they are all encompassed by the area covered by The Chiltern Society.

10. Area 2, in South Bucks, although not in NCA 110, is the original ancient designation of Chiltern Hundred and culturally is very much part of the

Chilterns including the renowned Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve. It represents the transition between the Chilterns escarpment and the Thames Valley.

11. The Thames is currently the boundary for a considerable part of the AONB but only includes one side of the river and the river valley. Inclusion of Area 3 will ensure that a more comprehensive landscape approach can be countenanced.

Evidence Base

12. The Board, and its partners, have based the case on the evidence provided by the following data sets:
 - Natural Character Area Profiles
 - Landscape Character Assessments for; Buckinghamshire; Hertfordshire; Wokingham Borough; and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
 - Geology and soils maps
 - Historic Landscape Characterisation
 - Woodland including Ancient Woodland
 - Common land
 - SSSIs, NNRs and SACs
 - Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Conservation Areas
 - Listed Buildings (Grade I and Grade II*)
 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments
 - National Trust Property
 - Public Rights of Way, National Trails and promoted routes
 - Open Access Land
 - Priority Habitats
13. To support the four proposed areas the Board and its partners have compiled the same supporting evidence base for each.
14. The Board is conscious that, whilst all 4 areas exhibit, strongly, various typical characteristics of the Chilterns, they are also distinct in many ways. Whilst the Board requests that the merits of including all four areas as a group are taken into account, it wishes them to be considered on their individual merits too.

The Boundary

15. The Board notes the advice in page 10, of the Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or AONB - March 2011, where Natural England states that, "It is not necessary to identify a precise 'hard' boundary for an area in relation to which the technical criteria are considered at the initial stage." This accords with our own view of the process as it would be both impractical and undesirable to do so at this formative stage.
16. Accordingly, the Board has deliberately not identified a precise boundary for each area. Whilst a potential AONB extension has been identified with a possible boundary, usually in line with the boundary of the landscape character area units, a more in depth assessment is needed to determine the most appropriate boundary should the Chilterns be selected as an AONB for further boundary review work.

Consultation and Support

17. The Board has also faced a dilemma on the extent to which it consults at this formative stage to identify support for a review. From past experience of sensitive geographical issues, a lesson has been not to consult too widely too early until all the evidence has been compiled and there is a solid case to be argued that is capable of withstanding interrogation. To consult too widely too early, inevitably raises either expectation or fear. The review of the boundary can be expected to exercise such emotions with camps developing both for and against, the latter generally from landowners and developers.
18. Those bodies consulted to date, both formally and informally, primarily the local authorities have been supportive in principle. They too need to be party to a much more in depth examination of the precise boundary, not least as there are few obvious and well defined natural features to use - such is the nature of an escarpment dip slope.
19. The Conservation Board has assessed all areas which it wishes to be considered for designation as AONB. This includes the councillors from relevant local authorities who have been appointed to the Board by those councils. This doesn't apply to Area 4 (Thames Valley) as nearly all of it lies within Wokingham Borough and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead which do not currently appoint to the Conservation Board.

Full length boundary Review and de-designation

20. This submission is based on four relatively large areas which could, potentially, be designated as AONB. There are a number of much smaller areas that the Board would like to be considered. It is not clear for the purposes of the current exercise if it is appropriate to also put them forward.
21. Two small areas the Board request should be considered for possible designation as AONB are Totternhoe Knolls to the west of Dunstable in Bedfordshire (Central Bedfordshire). This is an area of approx. 100 hectares

immediately adjacent to the AONB which contains common land, a Scheduled Ancient monument (Norman motte) and medieval chalk quarry which is now a county wildlife trust reserve.

OS Map Sheet 165: Aylesbury & Leighton Buzzard
Grid Reference SP986218

<http://www.chilternsaonb.org/explore-enjoy/interactive-map.html#705>

22. A second area is Chorleywood Common near Chorleywood in Hertfordshire (Three Rivers District) which extends to 76 hectares immediately adjacent to the AONB. It supports rare lowland heath.

<http://www.chilternsaonb.org/explore-enjoy/interactive-map.html#367>

OS Map 172
Grid Reference TQ033964

23. Both of these areas were inexplicably left out of the last boundary review. They contain a wealth of wildlife and historical sites with excellent public access. They provide ideal places for quiet recreation and environmental education. Totternhoe Knolls is owned by the National Trust, Central Bedfordshire Council and the Bedfordshire, Wildlife Trust. Chorleywood Common is owned by Chorleywood Parish Council.
24. In view of the difficulties experienced when the Chilterns boundary was last revised (1984-1990) the Board would not wish the full existing boundary to be reviewed. Currently the Board's aspiration is simply to request that Natural England consider the possibility of including four adjacent areas for designation as AONB. Neither is it the Conservation Board's wish that there is any consideration of de-designating existing parts of the AONB.

Benefits of Designation

25. The location of the Chilterns in the south east, only a few miles from London inevitably means the AONB is popular as a place to live and to visit with all the attendant pressures of traffic and development. It is also a place where the wider landscape is a composite of small and large land holdings often with relatively small fragmented land management units and landscape features. This is typified by the woodland cover which, at 21%, makes the Chilterns one of the most wooded parts of England, and yet the typical woodland is less than 50 hectares in extent with a large number less than 10 hectares.
26. Similarly the agricultural land is generally Grade 3, which is not particularly productive and thus there is a mixture of arable and pastoral farming, changing as the agricultural economic climate fluctuates. The result is that farms are generally small with many hobby farmers - 61% of farm holdings are less than 50 hectares and only a small number exceed 300 hectares. There are still a number of larger estates with a traditional approach to land management (farming, forestry, shooting etc.) but they are not large by

comparison with other parts of the country. Only a small number exceed 2,000 hectares.

27. There are over 2,000 hectares of common land providing a valuable and special resource for wildlife, the historic environment, environmental education and recreation, but are scattered across 200 sites.
28. The aspiration to manage on a landscape scale needs a relatively high input because of the fragmented nature of ownership and the landscape and habitat mosaic.
29. The desire to maintain the landscape character and special qualities enjoyed by so many visitors requires a robust and clear stance on development and the design of buildings. One effect of the AONB designation is to deflect development into surrounding areas. This is both eroding the quality of those areas and the setting of the AONB itself.
30. Designation as AONB will confer on the proposed areas a much better prospect of managing on a landscape scale and by ensuring development is more appropriate in terms of scale, setting and design will conserve and enhance the landscape of the proposed areas and the existing AONB.

Area 1 – North Hertfordshire

Total Area – 92km²

Currently the southern boundary of the AONB follows the A505, a dual carriageway which runs north eastwards in a more or less straight line from Luton to Hitchin. This road does not follow any natural feature and must be considered an arbitrary boundary. The natural landform and landscape character runs across the line of the road from north to south following the dip slope of the Chiltern escarpment towards the River Colne, a tributary of the Thames.

Despite the A505 being a major road it sits down in the landscape and does not unduly affect longer views. The area put forward for consideration lies to the south of this road. There is no discernible difference in the landscape on either side of the road. This is borne out by a series of considerations including the: geology; soils; landscape character, and Historic Landscape Characterisation.

The area falls between the growing towns of Luton and Hitchin and forms part of the setting of both. All of the proposed area lies within Hertfordshire; in fact all of it lies within North Hertfordshire district.

Landscape Quality

A relatively large area is owned by three estates which have maintained, what could be called, a traditional approach to estate management. In addition to extensive areas of mixed farmland there is a good network of field boundaries and woodland. Shooting for game birds remains a high priority for each landowner. There are relatively large areas of land in stewardship including HLS.

The extent of the area proposed for consideration as AONB is based on the boundary of the landscape character units.

Scenic Quality

This is one of the most unspoilt parts of Hertfordshire and, whilst adjacent to Hitchin and Luton, there are no large towns or villages within the area under consideration. It is typified by a well-managed area of lowland mixed farming and woodland and a network of ancient lanes. Running through the heart of the area is the Mimram Valley, which in the southern part of the area includes the River Mimram (chalk stream flow is erratic and often doesn't flow the full length of the valley) . This is a typical chalk stream and has working watercress beds at Whitwell.

Many of the villages and houses display architectural features and styles showing their origin as estate holdings.

Relative Wildness

This has been a well-managed area for centuries largely due to the dominance by traditionally managed estates, including the Bowes-Lyon family (the Queen's mother's family). There is a notable absence of discordant features and activity

giving a sense of getting away from it into an area of farmland still relatively rich in wildlife .It has a timeless quality which is rare in this part of the county.

Relative Tranquillity

In the busy south east and east of England all such assessments are based on relative perception. Compared to surrounding areas this is a haven of peace and tranquillity. It has no large settlements or busy roads. There is an extensive network footpaths, bridleways, cycleways and promoted routes allowing those who are seeking the quiet enjoyment of the countryside plenty of opportunities.

Luton airport lies to the west of the area and this inevitably disturbs that sense of tranquillity. That affects all of the existing AONB as it lies under the flight paths and holding stacks for Luton and Heathrow airports.

Cultural Heritage

The area is notable for a number of extensive registered parks and gardens. Close to the boundary of the proposed area is the Grade 1 Luton Hoo mansion and its Capability Brown landscape.

Support

Support for consideration of the area as AONB is provided by a cabinet resolution (28/09/2010) of North Herts DC; Cllr Richard Thake, Herts CC; Cllr Ian Reay appointed to the Conservation Board by Herts CC and Liz Hamilton, chairman of the CPRE Hertfordshire.

Area 2 - South Bucks

Total Area - 81 sq km

Landscape Character

1. To the north of the M40, the AONB boundary currently skirts the northern edge of Beaconsfield and then follows minor roads to the East as far as Chorleywood. The existing boundary cuts across the transition zone between the Chilterns dipslope and Thames Valley.
2. The majority of the proposed area lies within the Thames Valley NCA, with a small area to the north being within the Chilterns NCA.
3. The proposed area shares much of the landscape character of adjacent areas currently within the AONB.
4. Most of the area proposed is described in the Bucks Landscape Character Assessment as mixed use terrace/ wooded terrace – undulating terrace landforms formed on river terrace deposits, forming a transition zone between the Chilterns dipslope and the Thames Valley landscapes.
5. Inclusion of the rural northern stretch of the Lower Misbourne Valley (East of Gerrards Cross) would provide opportunity to enhance ecological connectivity along the river valley, linking to the Upper Misbourne Valley within the AONB to the north. The River Alderbourne is another important chalk stream of Chilterns character which would be included.
6. The area to the north of the M40 (Bulstrode/ Seer Green/ Chalfonts) is a classic 'dipslope' landscape which links the area to the south of the M40 to the existing AONB.
7. Agriculture and woodland are the predominant land uses, along with high level of recreational land use – particularly along the urban edge (e.g. horseculture, golf courses) – together with Country Parks (Black Park and Langley Park).

Landscape quality

8. There are significant areas of high quality, well managed landscape with the inevitable pockets where management is less evident and quality has suffered as a result. All such statements are relative. This area retains a remarkable extent of important designated sites including ancient woodlands, lowland heath, registered parks and gardens and common land.
9. The landscape quality varies across the area, however significant areas of high quality landscape remain. Inevitably the M40, as a major transport corridor has a significant impact in places on the landscape quality and intactness. However, away from the M40 corridor the high level of woodland cover helps to limit the extent of the impacts and create more intimate views.

Some areas of high historic and landscape value - for example around Jordans - are fragmented and would benefit from more co-ordinated management.

Relative wildness

10. The area is bisected by the M40 and close by the M25 to the east, with Slough to the south. Nonetheless there remain tracts of semi-natural habitat and woodland and scenic beauty where it is possible to get a sense of relative wildness, all the more important for being adjacent to busy urban areas.

Relative tranquillity

11. The M40 corridor and proximity of the M25 inevitably have an impact on levels of tranquillity in parts of the area. Away from the transport corridors there are however more tranquil areas, enhanced by the highly wooded nature of the landscape.

Geology

12. The underlying bedrock is primarily white chalk or sedimentary bedrock deposits (Lambeth Group) – this is the same underlying geology as most of the AONB. To the south around Stoke Poges/ Slough the area extends onto London Clay.

Historic Landscape Characterisation

13. The proposed area would extend the AONB to take in the historic area known as the Chilterns Hundreds. References to the Chilterns Hundreds can be found as far back as the mid-13th century when the term was used to refer to the three hundreds of Desborough, Burnham and Stoke.¹
14. Particular features - common land, wood pasture, historic woodlands, designed parkland.

Historic sites

15. The area has a significant number of historic sites, notably 9 historic parks and gardens including Cliveden (grade 1) and Bulstrode Park Camp - the largest British encampment in Bucks.

Woodland: - including ancient woodland

16. The Chilterns is one of the most heavily wooded areas of the country, with a particularly high proportion (56%) of the woodland in the AONB being ancient. The proposed extension is a continuation of this well-wooded ancient

¹ 'The three hundreds of Chiltern: Introduction and map', A History of the County of Buckingham: Volume 3 (1925), pp. 32-34

landscape, with over 4,700 hectares of woodland (58% of the area) of which 39% is ancient. Important areas of woodland include Burnham Beeches and Stoke Wood.

Biodiversity - SSSIs/ SACs/ priority habitat

17. The area has a high concentration of good quality priority habitat including particular lowland mixed deciduous woodland, lowland beech and yew woodland, and lowland heathland. There are also a number of traditional orchard sites to the north of the M40 between Beaconsfield and Chalfont St Giles. Statutory sites include Burnham Beeches (SAC), Stoke Common (SSSI), Black Park (SSSI) and Littleworth Common (SSSI).
18. Chalk river habitat is also an important feature along the Misbourne and Alderbourne valleys.
19. These are classic Chilterns habitats and opportunities to enhance ecological connectivity would be increased by their inclusion within the AONB.

Support

20. Support for consideration of this area as AONB has been provided by Alan Goodrum, the Chief Executive of the Council, Cllr Alan Walters, appointed by South Bucks DC to the Conservation Board and the local MP, Rt.Hon Dominic Grieve MP

Area 3 - Thames Valley

Total Area - 78 km²

Landscape Character

1. This area lies wholly within the Thames Valley NVCA, immediately to the south of the Chilterns NCA .
2. This area lies to the south of the River Thames. The river itself doesn't provide a boundary to the Chilterns which it may seem to do at first sight. The chalk and clay cap with flints is typical of the Chilterns and extends some way south of the Thames. It supports land uses and a landscape that demonstrates all the typical characteristics of the Chilterns, which has been borne out by the more detailed landscape character assessments. An examination of the geology and soils maps shows that the river Thames doesn't flow to the south of the Chilterns escarpment but incises it
3. The Berkshire LCA (identifies a number of discrete areas that are in keeping with the Chiltern AONB character – all of which are within the Chilterns NCA. These include:
 - Open chalk lowland
- this “forms the southern edge of the chalk dip slope of the Chilterns”
 - Elevated wooded chalk slopes - “...mirroring the nearby landscape of the Chilterns
 - “...Chiltern Hills, of which this landscape type could be considered an outlier..”
4. Long expansive views across the Thames Valley highlight the strong landscape character of both sides- that lying within the designated AONB to the north and the area to the south of the river

Landscape Quality

5. The Berkshire LCA identifies a “very distinctive landscape with an overall strong landscape character” (18.27). The condition is described as ‘good’ though landscape integrity is subject to threats similar to those of the rest of the Chilterns (design and siting of rural buildings, new woodland, hedgerow decline and recreational pressures).
6. Landscape strategy calls for conservation (restoration) and enhancement.

Scenic Quality

7. The combination of steep, wooded chalk slopes rising from the Thames floodplain gives rise to high scenic value highlighted in the popular National Trust owned Winter Hill which affords views across the Thames to Marlow and into the heart of the AONB. In the opposite direction, views south from

Cookham Dean take in the wooded escarpment of Cliveden Estate, Windsor Castle and beyond.

Relative Tranquillity

8. Despite being in the busy south east, beneath the Heathrow flight path, with the A4 and M4 to the south and the A404 Marlow by-pass to the east, this area enjoys surprising zones of tranquillity. Possibly the contrast between these busy transport corridors serves to emphasise the tranquillity found by entering areas such as the Wargrave Marshes adjacent to the Thames, the numerous mature woodland or by using the historic rights of way that cross the chalk plateau slope.
9. As a result, the area is popular for recreational use by residents and visitors from the surrounding urban areas.

Geology

10. Chalk geology dominates- the same Seahaven and Newhaven Chalk Formations as underlie the existing AONB.
 - Thames cuts through chalk escarpment – vagaries of the last ice age resulted in this area being cut off from the main part of the Chilterns.
 - Steep slopes to Thames Valley
 - Dry valleys

Historic Landscape Character and Cultural Heritage

11. Particular features include
 - common land, wood pasture, historic woodlands, designed parkland.
12. The Thames provided an important transport and trade route with riverside settlements developing as a result (include Cookham, Bourne End, Marlow, Wargrave and Sonning). Henley, at one time, was the highest navigable port with trade then passing over the Chilterns to rejoin the Thames at Wallingford. Similarly the Thames provided the route to London for the Chiltern firewood, furniture and fruit trades.
13. Many settlements have been important throughout early Church history - Bisham Abbey, Hurley Priory, while Reading, to the west, grew up around Reading Abbey.
14. Pinkneys Green is a large NT owned common (2 km²) to the east of the area bordering Maidenhead.
15. Buildings – many of the villages have characteristic brick and flint buildings. The clay with flints deposits on the dip slope running down through the A4

supported an active brick and tile industry that existed well into the 20th century (e.g. Knowl Hill and Kiln Green).

16. Historic Parks – widely spread across the area include Park Place, Yeldall Manor and Hall Place (now home to Burchett's Green agricultural college).
17. Other cultural connections include the Hennerton Backwater north of Wargrave (featured in Jerome's 'Three Men in a boat'), the hamlet of Dunsden Green (Wilfred Owen).

Natural Heritage

18. SSSIs include Bisham Woods (also part of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC) and Cock Marsh.
19. The area contains significant priority habitats including:
 - Deciduous woodland;
 - Traditional orchards;
 - Lowland calcareous grassland;
 - Lowland fen;
 - Flood plain grazing meadow;
 - Quality semi-improved grassland.

Woodland

20. Important areas of ancient woodland include Remenham Woods and Bisham Woods SSSI As one of the 9 sites which together form the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, Bisham Woods is the only site currently outside the AONB boundary.

Area 4 – Eastern Area

Total Area – 80km²

Landscape quality

1. Currently the boundary of the AONB runs to the north and west of Berkhamsted and then around the towns of Amersham, Chesham, Little Chalfont and Chorleywood. The area between Chesham and Chorleywood follows much of the valley of the River Chess.
2. Much of the gently sloping plateau that forms the dip slope from Chesham and Berkhamsted towards the M25 is not included in the current boundary. The proposed area forms much of the setting for Berkhamsted, Chesham, Hemel Hempstead, Chorleywood and Rickmansworth and includes as part of the proposed boundary the Rivers Gade and Bulbourne and Grand Union Canal as they flow from north west to south east towards the River Colne. The northern and eastern banks of the rivers and their associated valley sides are generally built up throughout the area.
3. The extent of the area proposed for consideration as AONB is generally based on the boundary of the local landscape character units.

Scenic Quality

4. There is no discernible difference in the landscape between the current boundary and the proposed area. This is borne out in particular by the geology and soils with most of the area forming part of the Chilterns NCA. It lies within Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, principally covering parts of Dacorum BC, Three Rivers DC and Chiltern DC.
5. Many of the villages and houses display materials use and architectural features and styles very similar to those found in the AONB.

Relative wildness

6. The area is relatively well settled, though does include some areas of mixed farmland, woodland, a good network of field boundaries and significant amounts of common land. There are no truly remote parts of the area though there are many places where a sense of isolation does occur and this is helped by there generally being a lack of discordant features.

Relative tranquillity

7. Despite the area being bounded by main roads and a number of towns and large villages, and being interspersed with other smaller settlements there remains a sense of peace and quiet in much of the area because there are no main settlements and roads within the area itself. With some of the more minor routes it is possible to feel isolated with the advantage that the

tranquillity of the area is not affected. The area is also criss-crossed by numerous rights of way including part of the Chilterns Cycleway.

Natural heritage features

8. The area has many sites which contain priority habitats, including extensive areas of deciduous woodland (much of it Ancient Woodland), semi-improved grassland and traditional orchards.

Cultural heritage

9. Though the area does not exhibit extensive numbers or areas of cultural importance, it still has a significant area of common land on a great number of sites, as well as important numbers of scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens.

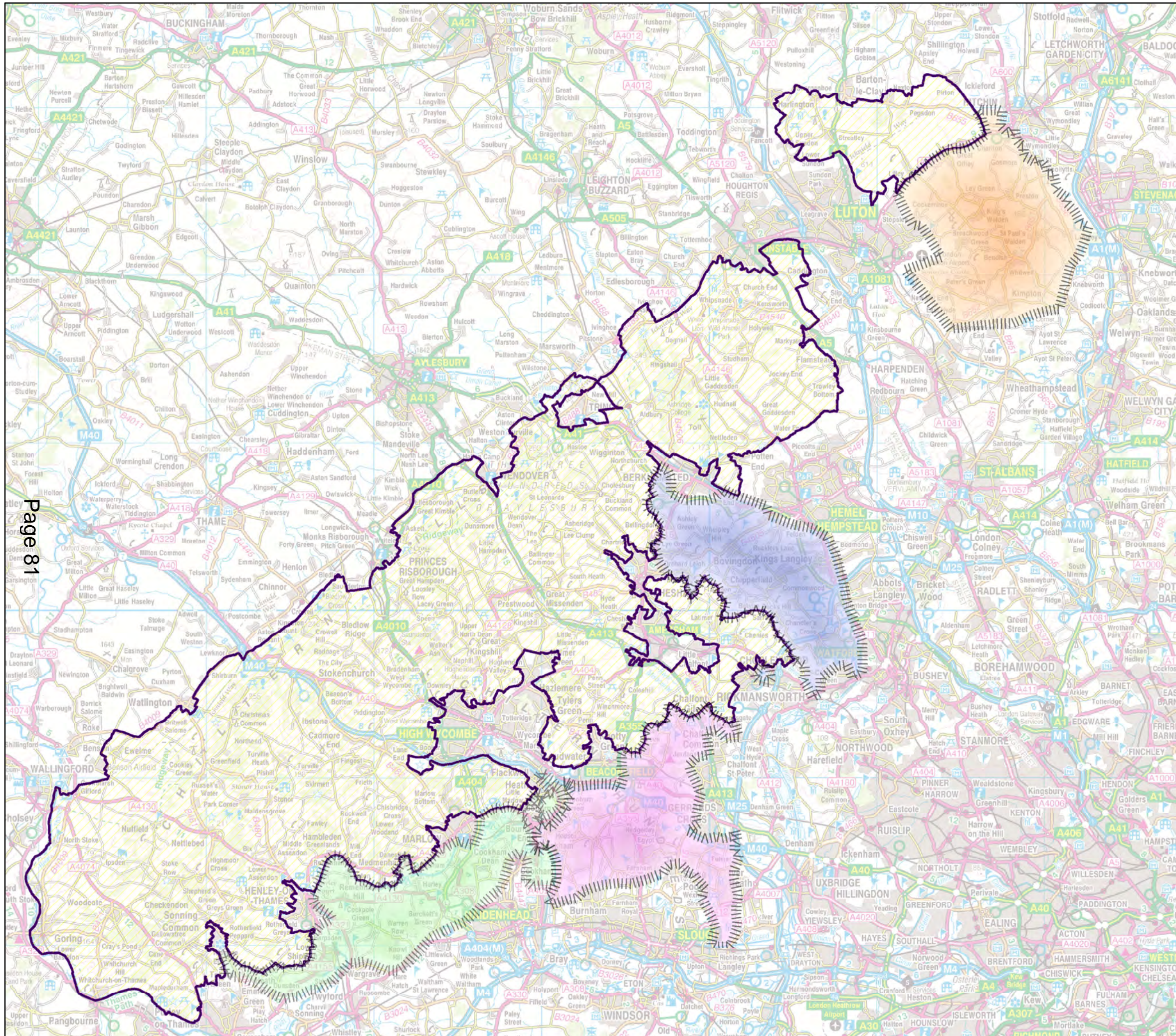
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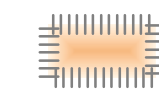
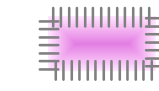
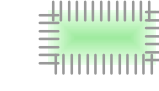
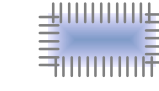

10. Cllr Ian Reay appointed to the Conservation Board by Herts CC; and the CPRE Hertfordshire

Appendix 1

Schedule of Maps

1. Chilterns AONB + proposed extensions
2. National Character Areas for Chilterns and Thames Valley
3. Area 1 – North Hertfordshire
4. Area 2 – South Buckinghamshire
5. Area 3 – Thames Valley
6. Area 4 – East Chilterns
7. Geology- Chilterns
8. Geology- Area 1
9. Superficial Geology – Area 1
10. Geology – Area 2
11. Superficial Geology- Area 2
12. Geology – Area 3
13. Superficial Geology – Area 3
14. Geology – Area 4
15. Superficial Geology- Area 4
16. Landscape Character Assessment- Area 1
17. Landscape Character Assessment – Area 2
18. Landscape Character Assessment- Area 3
19. Landscape Character Assessment – Area 4
20. Nature Conservation- SSSI/NNR/SAC
21. Priority Habitats – Area 1
22. Priority Habitats – Area 2
23. Priority Habitats – Area 3
24. Priority Habitats – Area 4
25. Woodland
26. Ancient Woodland
27. Water Catchments
28. Historic Environment; SAMS/Registered Parks and Gardens
29. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas – Area 1
30. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas – Area 2
31. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas – Area 3
32. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas – Area 4
33. Access- National Trails and CRoW Open Access Land
34. Access – Public Rights of Way – Area 1
35. Access – Public Rights of Way – Area 2
36. Access – Public Rights of Way – Area 3
37. Access – Public Rights of Way – Area 4



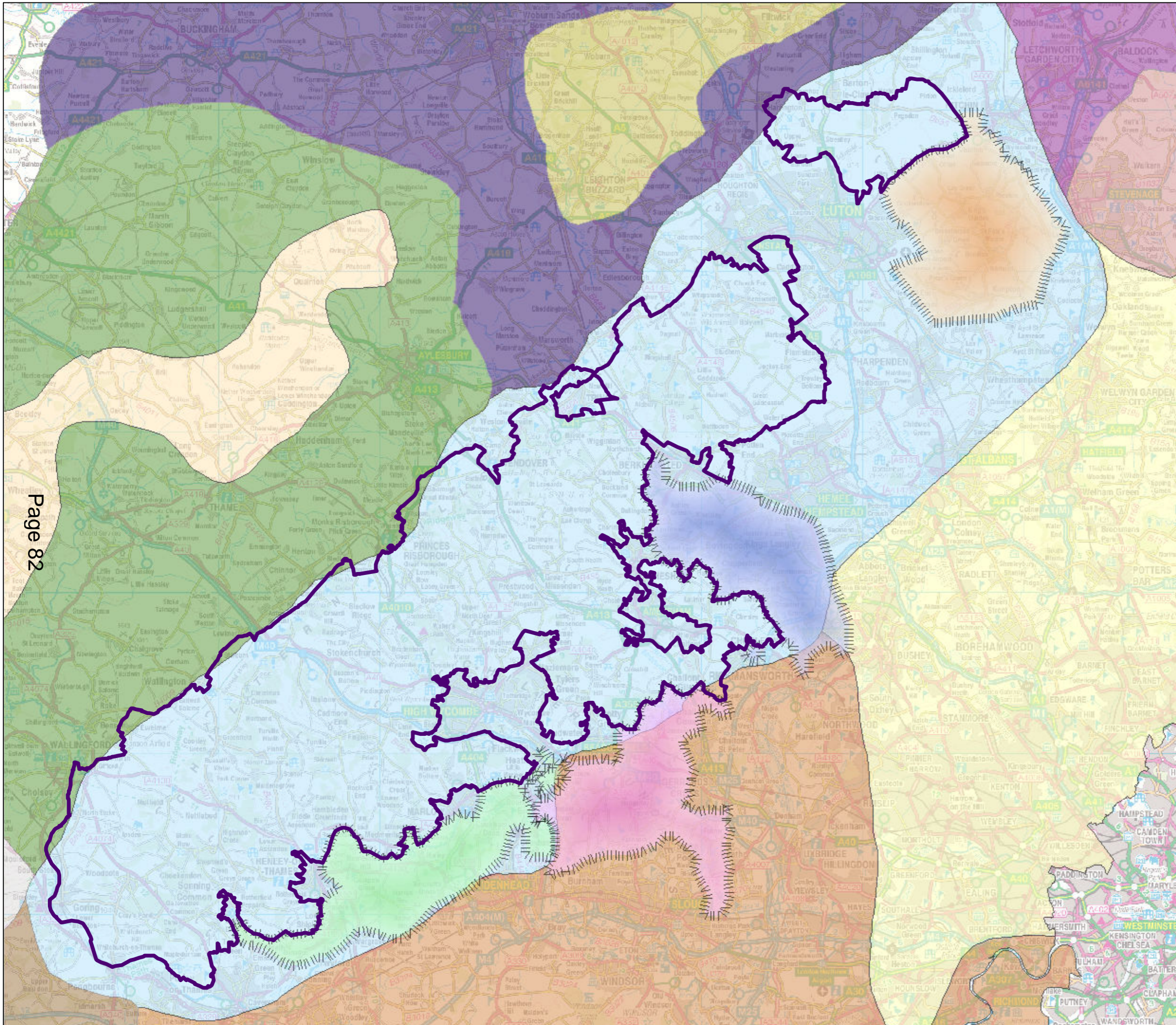
-  Area 1: North Hertfordshire
-  Area 2: South Buckinghamshire
-  Area 3: Thames Valley
-  Area 4: Eastern Area
-  Chiltern AONB

Page 81

















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Potential Chiltern AONB Boundary Variations

Drawing 1: All Areas



National Character Areas

-  Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge
-  Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands
-  Berkshire and Marlborough Downs
-  Chilterns
-  East Anglian Chalk
-  Midvale Ridge
-  Northern Thames Basin
-  South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
-  Thames Basin Heaths
-  Thames Valley
-  Upper Thames Clay Vales
-  Area 1: North Hertfordshire
-  Area 2: South Buckinghamshire
-  Area 3: Thames Valley
-  Area 4: Eastern Area
-  Chilterns AONB Boundary

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Potential Chiltern AONB Boundary Variations

Drawing 2: National Character Areas

Natural Environment

Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience Strategy. 2022 – 2032

Executive Summary

1. Background and Strategic context.

The Open Spaces Department ‘shapes outstanding environments’ by long-term, expert custodianship of its open spaces and their particular biodiversity, across 4,500 hectares of open space within London and beyond. Every year millions of people visit our award-winning open spaces including the National Nature Reserves of Burnham Beeches in Buckinghamshire, Ashted Common and the South London Downs in Surrey, Epping Forest in Essex and Hampstead Heath. Two of these sites, Burnham Beeches and Epping Forest carry Special Area of Conservation status (SAC) recognising their international importance for rare and specific habitat types. All share common charitable and legislative objectives: *to preserve the open spaces for the recreational benefit of their users.*

In a country that has, over recent decades, recorded a devastating decline in once common species of flora and fauna, opportunities to experience the full spectrum of biodiversity once found in the English landscape, are rapidly diminishing. In that same time frame our appreciation and understanding has grown of the ‘hidden services’ the natural landscape provides such as clean air, water, carbon sequestration and storage, upon which all existence is based. There is a pressing need to better understand, value and protect these natural services to reflect their intrinsic worth.

Our open spaces have become sanctuaries for some of the UK’s rarest and most threatened species, which in itself is a lamentable reflection of the wider state of our environment. More positively each site can and must, play an important role in reversing the current ‘biodiversity loss crisis’, a challenge set out by the Environment Act, 2022. This can only be achieved by agreement of a clear and determined strategic approach thereby ensuring that future generations of all species, including our own, can thrive.

The strategic framework for the City’s open spaces is highlighted in the Open Spaces business plan 2021-22. [PowerPoint Presentation \(cityoflondon.gov.uk\)](https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk). The strategy has wider objectives but lacks the detailed strategic approach identified above. The strategic approach should drive existing and future site specific management plans.

The City Corporation has recently set out its commitment to net zero carbon emission by 2027 for its operations, net zero by 2040 across the City Corporation’s ‘full value chain’, net zero by 2040 in the Square Mile and climate resilience in our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure. The City Corporation has publicly committed to do this through major investment in energy efficiency at our investment and corporate properties, aligning its investment portfolio with the Paris Agreement, enhancing carbon removal in our open spaces, protecting our shared natural resources, driving net zero through our supply chain and integrating climate considerations into all our decision. [Climate Action Strategy 2020-2027 \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

Whilst the City has produced a Biodiversity Action Plan for those Parks and Gardens within its local authority function a truly open spaces wide strategic approach to nature recovery and climate resilience is needed to provide a golden thread with other Corporate and Natural Environment strategies.

2. Vision/Commitment.

We will protect and ~~preserve~~ **conserve**, thriving rural and urban green spaces at the heart of wider, interconnected natural landscapes, maximising their potential to ~~permanently~~ enhance

permanently their biodiversity value, and ecosystem services, are sequestration and storage of carbon and climate change resilience and remove/sequester carbon.

3. Who we are.

The Natural Environment Division forms part of the City of London Corporation's Environment Department. Comprising 3 core open spaces (sub- Divisions) covering around ~~11,000 acres~~ 4,500 hectares. Each is of immense and growing local, regional and national importance for biodiversity.

4. Why us.

We are required to protect the green spaces through a variety of Acts and regional/national designations such as Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regs, 2017), Metropolitan Open Land & Greenbelt, Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 as well as our own founding Open Spaces Acts. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, places upon the City (as a local authority) the duty to have regard for conserving biodiversity. The Environment Act 2021, seeks to halt the decline of species by 2030 and will set clear targets for land managers to achieve this.

Our geographic spread around London and the Home Counties and diverse range of natural assets, affords a wide sphere of influence with those who manage land around us. Our ability to sequester and store carbon places us at the heart of City's Climate Action Strategy.

Our lands, purchased under various Acts of Parliament, are protected in perpetuity and play key roles as nuclei of biodiversity and potential inoculum of wider landscapes. Buffer lands whilst not protected in the same manner, have scope to generate additional income to support our vision and will play an essential, long term role in our future carbon reduction and nature recovery activities.

5. Who we will work with (and how we will complement others efforts)

We recognise the importance of working with common aims across the portfolio of open spaces and with a wide range of national, regional and local partners to maximise (our) efforts to address the regional, national and global biodiversity and climate crises.

6. Aims

a) Spaces under the Act

- i. Protect and enhance existing biodiversity within our current ownership boundaries, in perpetuity
- ii. Look beyond existing ownership boundaries and:
 - i. Forge clear links between the CoL Climate Action Strategy and 'wider' Nature Recovery and Climate Action Plans.
 - ii. To the greatest extent possible, seek partnerships with external bodies to support their strategies, policies and plans' for local nature recovery' and the restoration of wider, wilder landscapes
 - iii. Seek additional funding to achieve the above e.g. ELMS, S106 etc.
- iii. Balance biodiversity net gain against competing green space strategies such as visitor access, commercial activity, health and wellbeing, heritage, learning and information.
- iv. Use (where possible) minimum intervention techniques, including extensive grazing, to enhance biodiversity, reduce our carbon footprint and use of resources.

b) Buffer lands

Use existing/acquire additional buffer lands to:

- i. Protect existing ('designated'?) sites and provide opportunities for habitats and species to expand via permeable boundaries into the wider landscape

- ii. Provide visitor gateways to our protected landscapes thereby reducing pressures on biodiversity
- iii. Sequester carbon balanced with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement
- iv. Provide additional support to the City's Climate Action strategy and associated targets
- v. Generate additional income through potential change in use to mitigate the ownership costs of buffer lands and our wider nature recovery and climate action ambitions

c) All Land

- i. Strengthen the strategic approach strategy to nature recovery within the Corporate Plan and Environment Dept – **a golden thread to Corporate and Natural Environment strategies**
- ii. Work with Local Planning Authorities, Natural England and other external bodies to mitigate the impact of urban development on the biodiversity of the green spaces.
- iii. Use outcomes of planned development to financially support the wider ambitions of this strategy

7. What needs to change to achieve this strategy?

- i. Our ambition, confidence and influence
- ii. Corporate plan – to fully reflect biodiversity and climate crises
- iii. Funding and resources - to refocus or increase capacity
- iv. Reduce introspection/silo working
- v. Increase outreach to other organisations (with similar ambitions?)
- vi. Public understanding of the Biodiversity and Climate Change crises and the changing/conflicting purposes of the open spaces
- vii. **An effective, 'softer' communications strategy that reflects the aims of each charity and their roles to combat climate change and biodiversity loss**

8. How does this strategy balance against competing strategies

The Natural Environment Division is developing a series of separate strategies to lead its main service delivery activities. These will sometimes complement each other but there will be occasions when they compete. Each strategy needs to acknowledge the existence of and link to, the others and seek balanced solutions to potential conflicting needs.

9. Outcomes (of the strategy showing the intended impact we want to make)

- i. Permanently conserved and protected green spaces.
- ii. Improved links with other organisations (etc)
- iii. Monitoring programmes including carrying capacity studies, visitor numbers, biodiversity data, soil, ecosystem services etc
- iv. Permeable, linked landscapes beyond our boundaries with shared management principles enabling species migration across ownership frontiers
- v. Richer, resilient more biodiverse open spaces
- vi. Enhanced carbon sequestration and storage
- vii. Stabilised and improving ecosystem services **whose value is understood financially**
- viii. Creation/acceptance of minimal intervention landscapes where deemed appropriate i.e. reliant on natural processes to deliver biodiversity, ecosystem and carbon management services
- ix. **An expanded land ownership portfolio where necessary**

- x. Guiding policies and a portfolio of 'local' projects to attract funding such as BNG, S106, CIL, ELMS, Voluntary Giving etc.
- xi. **A code of ethics**

10. Corporate Plan links

This strategy supports the following Corporate Aim:

'Shaping Outstanding Environments'

11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving natural environment

Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained

11. What success looks like

- i. **This strategy links clearly to wider Corporate and Natural Environment strategies so that** the organisation understands the long term value/benefits of supporting ~~this strategy~~ **Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience activities.**
- ii. All designated sites are protected by an active land acquisition policy providing buffers and where necessary, visitor gateways
- iii. **Each open space contributes to the strategy in a manner that reflects their different opportunities, challenges and potential**
- iv. We have effective communications - our sites and management activities are understood by its various audiences.
- v. We have a robust data set to inform consistent management decisions
- vi. We have clear hierarchy of strategic need
- vii. We have access to the skills/expertise we need **and the resources to support them**
- viii. We have sufficient resources to meet our new ambitions.
- ix. Additional income generation directly funds those ambitions
- x. Detailed aims, targets, outcomes and measures within local management plans
- xi. Biodiversity is flourishing across ownership boundaries and able to adapt to climate change
- xii. **Members have access to strategic information in a form that ensures progress can be reviewed easily and effectively**

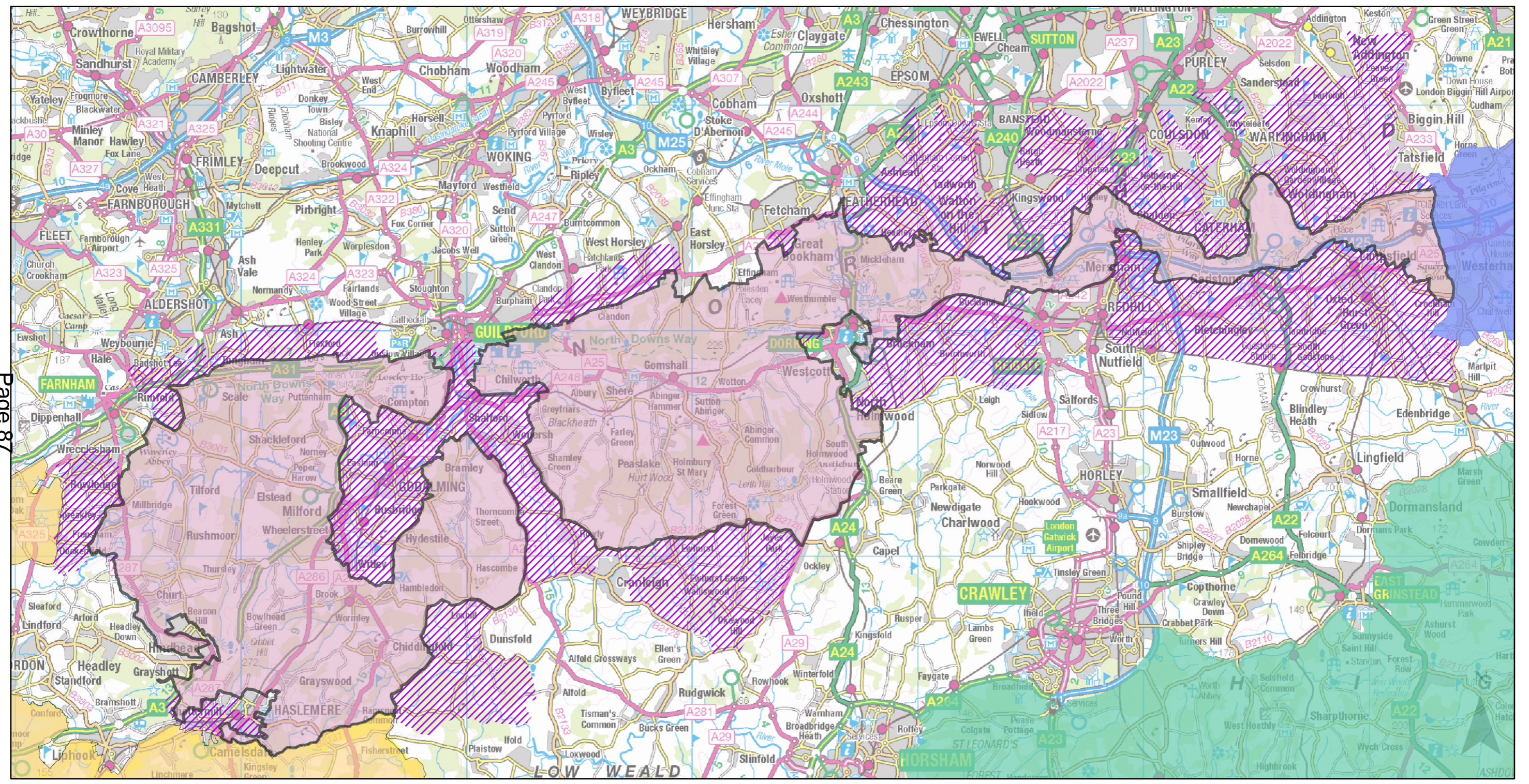
12. Resource needs and other implications

- i. **Funding for:**
 - i. Acceleration of existing biodiversity enhancement work programmes
 - ii. Land acquisitions
 - iii. Partnership work 'contributions'
 - iv. New skills/expertise within teams (or access to external expertise)
 - v. Establishment of improved baseline data
 - vi. Extensive data gathering and long term monitoring programmes
- ii. **People**
 - i. Strengthened ecological expertise – currently very thinly spread
 - ii. Strengthened planning/development expertise
 - iii. Strengthened climate change knowledge
 - iv. **Strengthened income generation expertise**
- iii. **Communications**
 - i. Improved, **charity focussed**, marketing and comms to enhance funding and mitigate public issues/concern e.g. due to competing strategies
 - ii. Clear links to competing strategies and hierarchy of need
 - iii. A fit for purpose web site and social media freedoms.

DRAFT

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

DRAFT



Page 87

- Surrey Hills AONB Current Boundary
- Possible Areas of Search
- South Downs National Park
- Kent Downs AONB
- High Weald AONB

Map Ref NE210618-1246-055
Mapped by - Carrie Payne (2021)
GI and Analysis Team 1, Natural England



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