NATIONAL AND LOCAL DESIGNATIONS IN WEST HORSLEY

GREEN BELT

THE METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

The village and parish of West Horsley is currently designated as being 'washed over' by the Metropolitan Green Belt, which specifically limits the expansion of the village settlement area. This may only be amended 'under exceptional circumstances', as stated in the NPPF.

Evidence Base: Map 2 - National & Local Environmental Designations in West Horsley

The settlement has been identified as a free-standing village surrounded by countryside, which is of a sufficient size to contain a number of supporting services such as shops and community facilities. The settlement may also be capable of accommodating limited development without detriment to the character of the landscape or the settlement as specified by Guildford Borough Council.

When previously defining the settlement the boundaries were drawn to limit the areas within which development may take place within the settlement, that is to say that any development will not affect the scale or appearance of the village or impinge on the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The existing boundaries have been drawn to exclude low density residential areas and isolated or loose knit groups of houses.

Evidence Base: Map 1A – West Horsley Settlement Boundaries (Local Plan 2003)

Guildford Borough Council's Proposed Submission Local Plan (2017) proposes to change this designation so that an expanded, less tightly constrained 'village settlement area' is to be removed from the Metropolitan Green Belt and 'inset' into the same.

The Government formerly set out its policies and principles towards Green Belts in England and Wales in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts. This planning guidance was, however, superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012.

Planning Authorities are strongly urged to follow the NPPF's detailed advice when considering whether or not to permit additional development in the Green Belt.

In the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to show that the benefits of the development will outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt. The NPPF sets out what would constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt.

According to the NPPF, there are five stated purposes for including land within the Green Belt:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

The International Habitats Directive provides protection from adverse effects of increasing the local population close to the heathland and associated increased pressures for recreation. Development is currently subject to a local Interim Avoidance Strategy.

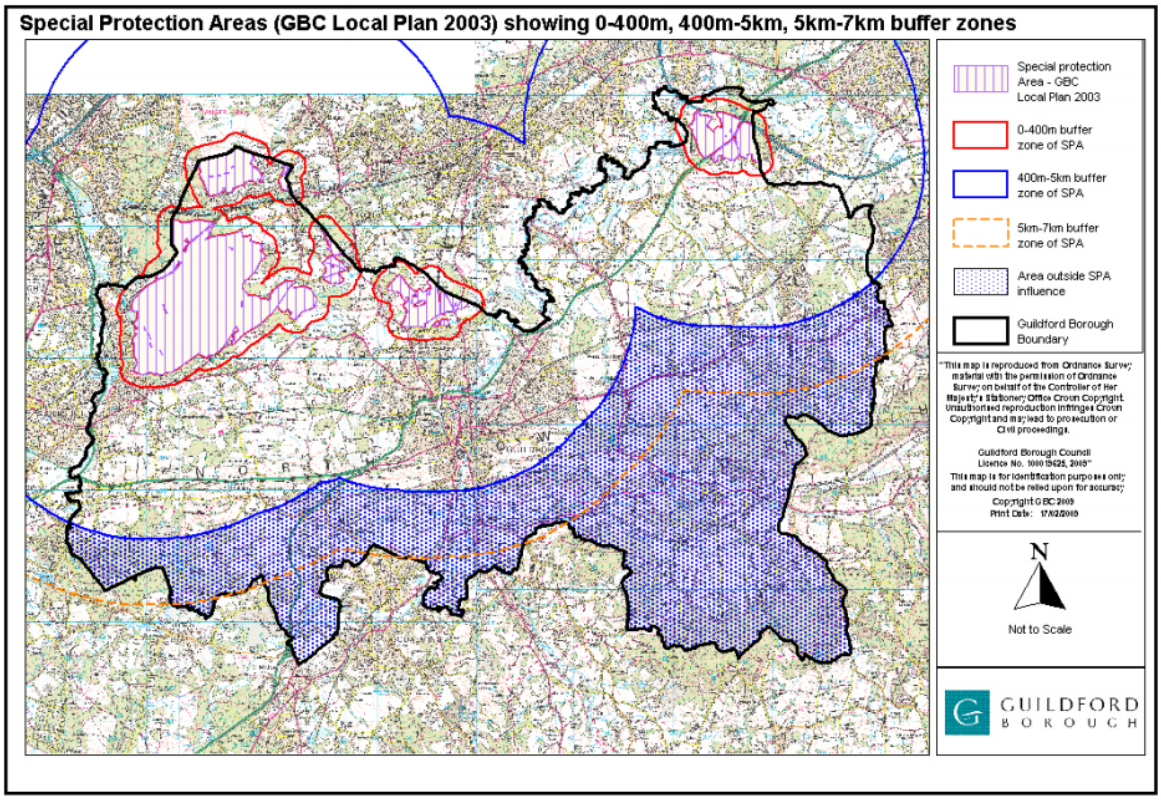
THAMES BASIN HEATHS

The northern part of the parish (a line approx. between West Horsley Place and Dene Place) lies within the SPA buffer zone (400m to 5km). It is situated in GBC Landscape Character Assessment area E2 – Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands.

The central part of the parish (a line just south of The Sheepleas SSI) lies within the SPA buffer zone (5km to 7km). It is situated part in GBC Landscape Character Assessment area D1 – Clandon Open Chalk Farmland and part in area C1 – Merrow and Clandon Wooded Chalk Downs.

Any development situated within the SPA buffer zone (400m to 5km) must contribute towards the creation of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) so as to reduce the pressure on the SPA from users of new development .

Thames Basin Heath SPA



AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (ANOB)

This is a designation for the national quality of its landscape. Subject to the most rigorous protection, development inconsistent with the primary aim of conserving the existing landscape character will not be permitted.

The southern part of the parish lies within the Surrey Hills ANOB which, in 1958, was one of the country's first landscapes to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in recognition of its natural beauty.

APPROX. 80% OF THE PARISH SOUTH OF THE A246

This area is within the Surrey Hills ANOB and includes The Sheepleas SSSI and Upper Weston Wood SNCI.

It is largely situated in GBC Landscape Character assessment area C1 – Merrow and Clandon Wooded Chalk Downs and part in area D1 – Clandon Open Chalk Farmland.

The AONB is also designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)

Approx. 95% of West Horsley NP area falls within the SSSI impact risk zones for either The Sheepleas SSSI or Ockham and Wisley Commons SSSI

THE SHEEPLEAS

Situated largely in GBC Landscape Character Assessment area C1 – Merrow and Clandon Wooded Chalk Downs and part in area D1 – Clandon Open Chalk Farmland.

This area has been designated for its range of habitats including pedunculated oak-ash-beech woodland and chalk grassland, both of which are nationally rare habitats. The combination of woodland, scrub and grasslands habitats is ecologically rich. It is also within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Large parts are also designated Ancient and semi-natural woodland or, a small part at Weston Wood, as Ancient replanted woodland and all is included on the Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous woodland.

The Sheepleas includes the 'Cowslip meadow', which was designated Surrey's Coronation Meadow in 2013 by HRH Prince Charles.

WOOD TO THE WEST OF BRIDLE PATH NUMBER 104

Situated in GBC Landscape Assessment area D1 – Clandon Open Chalk Farmland.

This is a contiguous area with The Sheepleas, albeit crossing into the neighbouring parish of East Horsley in part. It has been designated for the same reasons.

SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE (SNCI)

LOLLESWORTH WOOD

Situated in GBC Landscape Character Assessment area E2 – Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands.

This woodland area is immediately to the north of the main London – Guildford railway line, opposite Parkrow Copse, and a further area beyond Parkrow Copse to the south of the railway line. The vast majority of the area is also designated as Ancient and semi natural woodland and all is included on the Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous woodland.

The area excluded from the Ancient and semi natural woodland designation is adjacent to the historic fish ponds.

PARKROW COPSE

Situated in GBC Landscape Character Assessment area E2 – Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands.

This woodland area is immediately to the south of the main London – Guildford railway line, between the two sections of Lollesworth Wood. All is also designated as Ancient and semi natural woodland and included on the Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous woodland.

GREAT WIX WOOD

Situated in GBC Landscape Character Assessment area E2 – Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands.

This wood is situated part in the parish of West Horsley and part in the parish of Clandon. The area is also designated as Ancient and semi natural woodland and is also included on the Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous woodland. Furthermore it forms part of the National Trust estate at Hatchlands Park and is designated an integral part of its 'Historic park and garden'

UPPER WESTON WOOD

Situated in GBC Landscape Character assessment area C1 – Merrow and Clandon Wooded Chalk Downs.

It is also wholly within the Surrey Hills ANOB, Area of Great Landscape Value and is a Woodpasture & Parkland B.A.P. (Biodiversity Action Plan) Priority Habitat.

AREA OF GREAT LANDSCAPE VALUE (AGLV)

This is a local landscape designation. It highlights the landscape deemed of county importance where current planning policy provides that development should have regard to the conservation and enhancement of the existing landscape character. At this present time the AGLV policy is saved within the GDF although it should be noted that local landscape designations may be phased out in the emerging spatial planning system (*24. Local Landscape Designations; PPS7: Sustainable development in Rural Areas, ODPM, 2004)

THE ENTIRE PARISH SOUTH OF THE A246

This area is part (approx. 50%) situated in GBC Landscape Character assessment area C1 – Merrow and Clandon Wooded Chalk Downs and part (approx. 50%) in area D1 – Clandon Open Chalk Farmland.

The area includes The Sheepleas SSSI and Upper Weston Wood SNCI.

SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE (SANG)

There are currently no designated areas within West Horsley NP area, however the latest draft of the proposed Guildford Local Plan (2017) indicates that two might be appropriate. One would be situated at Ben's Wood and the other in fields adjacent to Long Reach.

Details of each can be found within the Guildford Borough 'Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016', under Section 4 – Green Infrastructure.

BEN'S WOOD

No specific designation but created in 1991 by landowner for community benefit and is included on the National Inventory of woodland and trees. Part funded by EU & DEFRA via Woodland grant scheme 3.

LONG REACH FIELDS

Formerly agricultural land, this 24-hectare site has recently been approved for change of use to public open space and nature reserve to facilitate a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

NATIONAL TRUST (NT) - HATCHLANDS PARK

A large part of the Hatchlands Park estate is situated within the parish on its western boundary. Part of the estate is designated as 'Historic Park and gardens'.

The National Trust also own two small adjacent parcels of land at each end of Pincott Lane.

For the location of each area mentioned refer to Map 2 - National and Local Environmental designations in West Horsley.