

## Surrey Landscape Character Assessment: **Spelthorne Borough**



**April 2015**

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The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 incorporates parts of the Guildford Landscape Character Assessment prepared in January 2007 by Guildford Borough Council and Land Use Consultants, modified as appropriate.

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Surrey Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) Map

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Surrey County Council commissioned a review of the Landscape Character of Surrey, to provide a consistent landscape character assessment across the county of Surrey, that accords with current best practice and published guidance for the Landscape Character Assessment. This document contains the parts of the Surrey wide assessment which cover Spelthorne Borough. Written in context with the county-wide Landscape Character Assessment 2015, there are likely to be references to locations outside of Spelthorne Borough within this document.

### **Background**

- 1.2 In 1997, a landscape assessment was carried out entitled 'The Future of Surrey's Landscape and Woodlands', which covered the Surrey County Council administrative boundary. The approach adopted was based on the 1995 landscape assessment guidance and the Countryside Character map of England (1997), and therefore predates the current guidance on character assessment. The assessment identified 25 County Landscape Areas nesting inside 7 of the National Countryside Character Areas (figure 1). Within the study, each national area was broadly described, with more detail provided for each County Landscape Areas grouped within the National Countryside Character Areas.
- 1.3 The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally protected landscape which covers 422km<sup>2</sup> of the county (figure 2). It includes part of the North Downs and stretches from Farnham, in the west, around Guildford, Dorking, and Reigate, to Oxted, in the east. In 1998, a landscape character assessment was carried out for the Surrey Hills AONB. The character assessment drew upon the 1997 Surrey County Landscape Assessment and the landscape assessment 'The Surrey Hills Landscape' published by the Countryside Commission in 1998. It identified 13 local landscape character areas, the boundaries of which were derived from the earlier county assessments.
- 1.4 Since the county assessment and Surrey Hills AONB assessment have been completed, a National Landscape Typology has been developed (see figure 3) and was published in 2001 by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England). In some parts of the county, the 1997 Surrey county-wide assessment fits comfortably within the national landscape typology, for example in the North Downs, in other areas there are anomalies which result from the greater level of detail provided by the national typology assessment.
- 1.5 In 2002, the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and Scottish Natural Heritage published its 'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland'. The assessment methodology contained within the 2002 guidance was subsequently reaffirmed by National England in October 2014 with publication of 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', which incorporates the assessment processes set out in the 2002 guidance.
- 1.6 The county of Surrey is made up of 11 Districts and Boroughs. Individually, some districts and boroughs have undertaken landscape character assessments, employing various methodologies, a number of which pre-date the current guidance. Guildford Borough has recently published a series of comprehensive studies in line with Natural England's guidance, which was originally set out in 2002.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Study**

- 1.8 The landscape character assessment presented in this study, sits within the framework provided by the national landscape character areas and the national landscape typologies. The assessment draws on existing baseline information contained in the previous county assessment, the 1998 AONB assessment and management plan, and the existing District and Borough-wide landscape character assessments.
- 1.9 Landscape character assessment is a process by which the key characteristics of an area of landscape can be identified and which contribute to the sense of place of a locality. It is also a tool by which one can achieve an understanding of the landscape today and how it has changed over time. It is as an aid to decision making and the future management of the landscape.
- 1.10 Government guidance requires that Plans, including Local Development Frameworks should be “objective led”. To this end Landscape Character Assessment provides a clear statement of the landscape resource within a Plan area. The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment forms part of the evidence base from which development and management strategies can be derived, with particular reference to the conservation, enhancement or restoration of the landscape. This fulfils one of the core principles in national planning policy to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the requirement for Local Plans to include policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape.

## **2. METHOD STATEMENT**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 The approach to this study followed best practice promoted by Natural England, as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002), and reaffirmed by Natural England’s 2014 ‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’.
- 2.2 Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has been used to collate and present the graphical data provided as paper mapping within this study. This data will be maintained by Surrey County Council. Public access to the landscape character assessment will be available electronically through county and relevant District/Borough websites.

### **Stage 1: Desk Study/Review**

- 2.3 The initial desk study reviewed the existing landscape character assessments that cover the county. The national framework provided by the Character of England Map (Joint Character Areas) and the National Landscape Typology (landscape character types) set the overall context for the study.
- 2.4 The desk study also reviewed the physical and human influences that have shaped the landscape of the county. Physical influences (natural factors) include geology, soils, landform, drainage, and land cover, which, in turn, have a strong influence on patterns of human occupation and activity. The study also reviewed cultural/social factors such as patterns of settlement and land use, enclosure, and socio-economic and cultural traditions and influences and looked at current change in the landscape and the pressures for change acting on the landscapes of the county.

### **Stage 2: Local Landscape Characterisation**

- 2.5 Overlays of baseline information were produced using GIS mapping for geology, soils, landform, drainage, land cover, environmental designations, land use and historic landscape types/areas

(figures 4-9). Analysis of this range of data, covering both natural and cultural attributes of the landscape, were utilised in the development of draft characterisation prior to field testing.

- 2.6 The draft characterisation stage mapped draft landscape types and landscape character area boundaries and established a detailed methodology for the assessment across the county, in advance of the fieldwork.
- 2.7 The approach taken followed best practice as promoted by Natural England in maintaining a distinction between landscape types and character areas, and developing a hierarchical approach as follows:
- **Landscape Types:** generic, often extensive areas of landscape that share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences, e.g. 'Wooded Greensand Hills' or 'Chalk Ridge'.
  - **Character Areas:** which are unique, discrete geographical areas of the Landscape Type, e.g. 'Hindhead Wooded Greensand Hills' or 'Box Hill to Tatsfield Chalk Ridge', which exhibit all, or the majority of, the recognisable characteristics of the Type, depending on the location of the Character Area.

### **Stage 3: Field Survey**

- 2.8 Field survey was used to verify draft landscape type classifications, to identify landscape character area subdivisions and define precise boundaries. The survey was systematic, using written observations, map annotations, and photographs. Standard survey checklists were used to ensure that landscape features and characteristics were recorded in a consistent and objective way. Photographs were used to record general landscape character, key characteristics and specific attributes.
- 2.9 The field survey assessed and recorded each area in terms of the extent and combination of its key characteristics and features as well as the perceptual characteristics of each area. It noted a description of landscape character, a list of landscape elements and characteristics, e.g. settlement form, landmarks and building style and assessed the aesthetic and perceptual factors e.g. pattern, scale, unity, remoteness and tranquillity of the landscape.
- 2.10 The field assessment also reviewed the current condition and management of the landscape.

### **Stage 4: Classification and Description**

- 2.11 A final review of the draft area boundaries was undertaken having regard to the desk research findings, field maps and field record sheets and the guidance on current best practice. Summary descriptions of each landscape type and landscape character area were compiled in accordance with the guidelines.
- 2.12 The landscape character assessment has been mapped at the scale of 1:25,000 and the boundaries to specific areas defined using the level of detail available at this scale. The boundaries selected for landscape types and landscape character areas are firm and recognisable features on the ground and represent a 'best fit' to the change in landscape type or character within an area. Boundaries to landscape character areas are defined but field observation often identifies a gradual transition in landscape character, it seldom changes abruptly.

### **Stage 5: Evaluation and Guidance**

- 2.13 The current status of the elements and features of the landscape was recorded and forces for change noted as examples of past change and the potential pressures for future change. Information from the desk study, fieldwork and consultation with the relevant Local Authorities was used to determine the forces for change. This evaluation identified a number of factors that may have an effect landscape character in future.
- 2.14 An outline landscape strategy was prepared for each landscape type. The strategy addresses the landscape area as a whole and identifies broad objectives for each landscape type. The aim is to set out broad objectives and principles to manage and direct landscape change in order to protect the highest quality and most sensitive landscapes from adverse change and to encourage positive change in weak or degraded landscapes.
- 2.15 For each landscape type there are a set of broad objectives; where individual character areas highlight specific issues of local importance more specific prescriptions are identified. The guidelines indicate the actions required, with reference to the overall landscape objective in order to ensure that distinctive character is maintained. To aid ease of reference the guidelines have been divided into prescriptions related to land management and prescriptions specifically related to development.

## **3. THE SURREY LANDSCAPE**

### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 Stretching from the Thames Valley in the north, to the edge of the High Weald in the south-east, the county of Surrey contains a wide variety of landscape types. The county includes significant areas of high quality and attractive landscape, with a quarter of the county designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The county includes six of England's National Character Areas: the Thames Valley, Thames Basin Heaths, Thames Basin Lowlands, the North Downs, Wealden Greensand, the Low Weald and High Weald (see figure 2). The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies at the heart of the Surrey countryside, incorporating parts of the North Downs, the Wealden Greensands and the Wooded Low Weald. The south-eastern corner of the county includes a small section of the High Weald AONB.
- 3.1.2 To the north, the Surrey Hills give way to the Thames Basin, which includes a band of rolling claylands, areas of sandy heath and farmland, and river valley floor and floodplain. Bordering Greater London to the north, some of these areas have undergone significant change, and continue to face considerable pressure from the capital and its immediate hinterland.
- 3.1.3 To the south, between the Surrey Hills AONB and the High Weald AONB, the landscape is dominated by the Low Weald. The Low Weald is deeply rural, sparsely populated and to the west a heavily wooded landscape. Decreasing amounts of woodland are present in the south-east of the county, where the landscape turns to more open Wealden farmland.
- 3.1.4 Watercourses, mostly notably including the Wey and Mole rivers, transverse the county, flowing northwards from the Low Weald, and crossing the Surrey Hills, until eventually reaching the River Thames.
- 3.1.5 Surrey is one of the most densely wooded counties in England, with around 20% woodland cover. A significant proportion of the woodland is identified as ancient (see figure 8). Many areas



of the county are protected by nature conservation designations, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which require decision making authorities to consider the effects of development on the habitats of migratory and threatened birds found within the SPAs (see figure 7). SPAs are composed of many individual Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and within Surrey include parts of the South West London Water Bodies SPA, the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, and the Wealden Heaths SPA. Large areas of Surrey are also protected for their habitats as Special Areas of Conservation, and these are Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham, the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment, and Windsor Forest & Great Park.

### **3.2 Surrey Hills AONB**

- 3.2.1 The Surrey Hills AONB was one of the first landscapes in the country to be designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958. It stretches across the county, meeting with the Kent Downs AONB to the east and the 'South Downs' National Park to the south and west. It includes three of England's National Character Areas: the North Downs, Wealden Greensand and Low Weald (see figure 2).
- 3.2.2 The Surrey Hills AONB lies within one of the most impressive geological features in the British Isles, the wealden uplift. Between 130-65 million years ago the landscape of South-East England was gradually inundated by the sea with the deposition of 800-1000m of sedimentary material. Layers of sand, silt, clay and chalk were laid down and compacted into what is now the wealden clays, the upper and lower greensands and gault clay and chalk. Following a period of uplift (commensurate with the formation of the Alps) the wealden dome was raised above the sea. The dome, some 215km long and up to 80km wide and lying on an east-west axis covered large parts of Kent, Sussex and Surrey. In the succeeding 20 million years the centre of the dome has been eroded to reveal the structure of the present day landscape (see figures 4 and 5).
- 3.2.3 All the rock types found in the wealden dome, with the exception of the Hasting Beds, occur in the Surrey Hills AONB and all have a profoundly different effect on the fabric of the landscape. There is a strong correlation between the geology and the landscape that has developed, which has been accentuated by the relative resistance to weathering of the various rock types.
- 3.2.4 The Surrey Hills has been shaped and used by man for thousands of years. The poor sandy soils of the Greensands and the Heavy clays of the Weald have been difficult to cultivate productively and the area has seen limited settlement. The towns around the AONB, Guildford, Godalming, Haslemere, Dorking and Reigate have all had an influence on the landscape. New roads, rail links and canals cross the Surrey Hills and the demands of growing populations in local towns and London require food, homes and recreation.
- 3.2.5 The countryside has gone through successive phases of agriculture, woodland management and quarrying and the fluctuating fortunes of rural communities has left their mark on the landscape. Although much of the archaeological evidence of early intervention lies undiscovered beneath the woodlands the history of the Surrey Hills can be seen in the architecture and settlement pattern of the area which makes a significant contribution to the landscape character of the AONB and its environs.
- 3.2.6 The most prominent feature of the Surrey Hills AONB is the chalk escarpment which marks the edge of the North Downs along the Chalk Ridge (Type CR) and provides a dramatic backdrop to the Weald to the south. The escarpment runs the length of the AONB, forming The Hog's Back

in the western section. It is generally consistent in height but the steepness of the scarp varies. On the south-facing scarp there is a mosaic of dense woodland, scrub and open downland, the woodland cover being more extensive along the eastern end of the scarp. The escarpment has been eroded by the River Mole to form the impressive and striking chalk cliffs of the Mole Gap above Dorking.

- 3.2.7 To the north of the escarpment, on the chalk dipslope, lies areas of Chalk Down with Woodland (Type CD), Open Chalk Farmland (Type CF), and Wooded North Down (Type CW). Dry valleys and coombes have been formed, set within open rolling farmland interspersed with woodland, whilst elsewhere significant later deposits of clay with flints have produced acid conditions, such as at Ranmore Common and Headley Heath, which contrast markedly with the surrounding chalk farmland.
- 3.2.8 To the south of the escarpment, the relatively soft Folkstone and Sandgate Greensands Beds form the Wooded Greensand Plateau (Type GP) south of Farnham, and also occur in the shallow and low lying Greensand Valley (Type GV) along the Tillingbourne and Pipp Brook. Harder and more resistant Greensand deposits, the Hythe Beds, form the high hills of the Greensand escarpment including the Wooded Greensand Hills (Type GW) at Hindhead, Hascombe and Leith Hill, and Open Greensand Hills (Type GO) to the south of Puttenham. Extensive woodlands cover substantial parts of the Greensand, along with important heaths, such as Thursley Heath. Fields have been carved out of the woodland and heaths fragmenting the landscape in some areas. The settlement within the Greensand Hills is sparse and road access limited to the distinctive sunken lanes which traverse the hills. The lack of access and ancient and tranquil character of the hills provides a tangible sense of remoteness within the area.
- 3.2.9 The weald clays lie at the southern foot of the greensand escarpment as a gently undulating plain. It comprises a mixture of sandstone and clays and mudstones. The soils associated with the weald are heavy and more difficult to work than the lighter soils of the adjacent greensands. The Wooded Low Weald (Type WW) is heavily wooded, much of it Semi Natural Ancient Woodland. The farmland is typically small scale with irregular field patterns and densely hedged with mixed hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

### **3.3 High Weald AONB**

- 3.3.1 The High Weald AONB was designated in 1983. It covers only a small part of Surrey at its south-east corner. The High Weald AONB stretches far into Kent to the east, East Sussex to the south-east, and West Sussex to the south-west.
- 3.3.2 The high weald is underlain by bands of sandstone and clay. Following the wealden dome uplift, the soft clay has been worn away creating a rolling landscape, with the clay forming the low valleys and the harder sandstone forming the high ridges. Elevated sandstone underlays the Wooded High Weald (Type WH) within the south-east corner of Surrey.
- 3.3.3 The high weald is an historic landscape with a mosaic of small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes. Steep-sided, wooded gills are a distinctive feature of the area, having been created by streams carving deep, steep sided, channels through the area's hillsides.

### **3.4 Northern Surrey**

- 3.4.1 To the north of the Surrey Hills AONB, lies the broad Thames Basin, occupying the north-western quarter of the county. The North Downs are located both within the Surrey Hills AONB, to the north of Dorking and Reigate and outside the AONB, to the north-east of the county, where urban influences of London increase. Fingers of development, including Leatherhead, Tadworth and Kingswood, Caterham, and Woldingham penetrate southwards into the Downs from the northern edge of the county, and transport routes, in particular the M25 motorway, cut through the downland landscape. Exposed elevated locations within the downs afford extensive views of London to the north, with landmark buildings in the city discernible in the distance.
- 3.4.2 The Thames basin to the north-west of the county, is centred on the floodplains and valley floor associated with the River Thames, the basin is underlain by London Clay with superficial deposits of alluvium and river terrace gravels. The wider Thames Basin rises slightly to the south-west onto sand and gravel terraces, the flood plain being replaced by sandy heaths, woodland and farmland which surround Camberley, Woking and Weybridge. London Clays become exposed to the south to form the rolling claylands which rise to meet the dip slope of the North Downs to the south.
- 3.4.3 The River Thames itself occupies only a small part of the wide flat floodplain. Bordering London to the north, the areas of River Floodplain (Type RF) and adjacent River Valley Floor (Type RV) are characterised by heavy urban influence, including Built Up Areas, roads and gravel workings. A number of large elevated reservoirs, with high, steep and engineered embankments are also a distinctive feature in the area, and as such warrant their own landscape Type (Type RS).
- 3.4.4 Extensive areas underlain by sand and gravel drift geology which is found to the south and west of the River Thames floodplain. The extensive areas of intact heath and common, and large tracts of woodland define the distinct landscape types of Sandy Heath and Common (Type SH), and Sandy Woodland (Type SW). Areas of Sandy Heath and Common include extensive 'secret' areas of heathland used exclusively by the Ministry of Defence, but also popular recreational resources such Chobham Common. The large tracts of Woodland often consist of plantation and can be dark and secluded. Remaining areas underlain by sand are less intact and have a significantly greater human influence upon them. They are predominately farmland, with varying degrees of settlement and woodland, and as such are classified as Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland (Type SS).
- 3.4.5 Further south, undulating clay lowlands rise up towards the north facing dipslope of the North Downs. Either side of Guildford, there is an extensive band of Wooded Rolling Clayland (Type LF), which comprises a somewhat fragmented mosaic of land cover, including dispersed woodland blocks, pastoral and arable farmland, and parkland. Land cover at the eastern end of the clay lowlands becomes more defined, with either continuous tracts of Clay Woodland (Type LW) or Rolling Clay Farmland (Type LF). Areas of Clay Woodland are largely common land, such as Epsom Common, and their proximity to significant areas of settlement make them valuable recreational resource. Although generally rural, areas of Rolling Clay Farmland have limited woodland cover, and therefore the surrounding settlements exert urban influence upon them.

### **3.5 Southern Surrey**

- 3.5.1 Between the Surrey Hills AONB, to the north, and High Weald AONB to the south-east, the landscape is dominated by the Low Weald. The Wooded Low Weald (Type WW) is an extensive area, stretching east from within the southern parts of the Surrey Hills AONB, along the southern part of the county as far east as Charlwood. The area is underlain by a mixture of sandstone and clays, siltstone and mudstones, and generally has heavy, poorly drained soil, which is nutrient poor and better suited to pasture than arable farming. The area is heavily wooded with small scale farmland of irregular field patterns and densely vegetated boundaries of mixed hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The landscape is sparsely settled, remote and deeply rural in character.
- 3.5.2 The wealden landscape become less wooded and more open towards the east to give way to the larger scale and more regular field patterns of the Low Weald Farmland (Type WF). Towns and transportation routes are set in the landscape, but both the Wooded Low Weald and Low Weald Farmland are predominantly rural landscapes.
- 3.5.3 The river Mole and Wey, wind their way northwards across the county, cutting through the Surrey Hills, including at the dramatic 'Mole Gap', until reaching the Thames. In contrast to the Thames River Floodplain, the upper reaches of these rivers, which run through the low weald, are peaceful and bordered by a narrow floodplain of rural pastoral landscape.

## **4. LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION**

- 4.1 Landscape types reflect the dominant influences on landscape character, often combining, geology, landform and landcover. In all cases the name conveys some sense of the character of the landscape.
- 4.2 A single landscape type (excluding Types UE and UW) has broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern in every area where it occurs. This does not mean that it will be identical, rather that there is a common pattern, which can be discerned. The landscape types are further sub-divided into landscape character areas.
- 4.3 Landscape character areas are discrete geographic areas that possess the common characteristics described for the landscape type. Each character area has a distinct and recognisable local identity, and is therefore named to reflect the geographically specific qualities based on a place name or established locality.
- 4.4 The landscape types and character areas for the county are set out as follows. The areas are illustrated on figure 11, which has been prepared on a Geographic Information System (GIS), with mapping undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000.

- 4.5 The twenty one landscape types which create the unique and distinctive character of the Surrey landscape are listed below, (see figure 10):

CD	Chalk Down with Woodland
CF	Open Chalk Farmland
CR	Chalk Ridge
CW	Wooded North Down
GO	Open Greensand Hills
GP	Wooded Greensand Plateau
GV	Greensand Valley
GW	Wooded Greensand Hills
LF	Rolling Clay Farmland
LR	Wooded Rolling Clayland
LW	Clay Woodland
MP	Mudstone Plateau
RF	River Floodplain
RS	Reservoirs
RV	River Valley Floor
SH	Sandy Heath and Common
SS	Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland
SW	Sandy Woodland
WF	Low Weald Farmland
WH	Wooded High Weald
WW	Wooded Low Weald

- 4.6 The landscape types listed above frequently adjoin or encircle, but do not include, the Built Up Areas within settlement boundaries. The following landscape type is a group of small individual areas on the edges of, or surrounded by, the Built Up Areas of towns across the county. These are unique areas, with a variety of characteristic and uses, which do not readily fall within the landscape types set out above:

UE	Distinct Areas on the Edge of Urban Areas
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- 4.7 Additionally, this study has identified and briefly considered, several significant individual green space areas within the county's Built Up Areas of towns across the county. These areas are entirely within the Built Up Areas of settlements and are grouped as the following landscape type:

UW	Significant Greenspaces Within Urban Areas
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## 5. LANDSCAPE TYPES AND CHARACTER AREAS

(See figure 11. For more detail of Spelthorne Borough only, see figure 12.)

- 5.1 For contextual completeness, every landscape type and character area identified in the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015 is listed below. However, landscape types and character areas which are outside Spelthorne Borough are not described in this document, refer to the Surrey countywide document for these areas.

LANDSCAPE TYPE CD: CHALK DOWN WITH WOODLAND	
Character Areas:	
CD1	Ashted and Woodcote Parks Chalk Down with Woodland*
CD2	Tyrrell's Wood to Walton Oaks Chalk Down with Woodland*
CD3	Courtlands to Margery Chalk Down with Woodland*
CD4	Chaldon Chalk Down with Woodland*
CD5	South Woldingham Chalk Down with Woodland*
CD6	Forestdale to Woldingham Chalk Down with Woodland*
CD7	Tatsfield Chalk Down with Woodland*
Evaluation and guidance	

LANDSCAPE TYPE CF: OPEN CHALK FARMLAND	
Character Areas:	
CF1	Clandon Open Chalk Farmland*
CF2	Ranmore to Hawk's Hill Open Chalk Farmland*
CF3	Leatherhead to Epsom Downs Open Chalk Farmland*
CF4	North Looe Open Chalk Farmland*
CF5	Hooley to Chaldon Open Chalk Farmland*
CF6	Caterham to Woldingham Open Chalk Farmland*
CF7	Woldingham to New Addington Open Chalk Farmland*
Evaluation and guidance	

LANDSCAPE TYPE CR: CHALK RIDGE	
Character Areas:	
CR1	Hog's Back Chalk Ridge*
CR2	Albury to Ranmore Chalk Ridge*
CR3	Box Hill to Tatsfield Chalk Ridge*
Evaluation and guidance	

\* These character areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE CW: WOODED NORTH DOWN</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
CW1	Merrow and Clandon Wooded North Down*
CW2	Effingham Forest Wooded North Down*
CW3	Oaken Grove to Ranmore Common Wooded North Down*
CW4	Norbury Park Wooded North Down*
CW5	Box Hill to Oyster Hill Wooded North Down*
CW6	Banstead Heath Wooded North Down*
CW7	Chussex Plain Wooded North Down*
CW8	South Caterham Wooded North Down*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE GO: OPEN GREENSAND HILLS</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
GO1	Shackleford Open Greensand Hills*
GO2	Godalming to Sutton Abinger Open Greensand Hills*
GO3	West Farnham Open Greensand Hills*
GO4	Dockenfield to Millbridge Open Greensand Hills*
GO5	Churt to Hascombe Open Greensand Hills*
GO6	Bramley West Open Greensand Hills*
GO7	Shamley Green Open Greensand Hills*
GO8	Betchworth and Chart Parks Open Greensand Hills*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE GP: WOODED GREENSAND PLATEAU</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
GP1	Frensham to Witley Common Wooded Greensand Plateau*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE GV: GREENSAND VALLEY</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
GV1	Tillingbourne and Pipp Brook Greensand Valley*
GV2	Pixham to Reigate Greensand Valley*
GV3	Gatton Greensand Valley*
GV4	Merstham to Clacket Lane Greensand Valley*
Evaluation and guidance	

\* These character areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.



<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE GW: WOODED GREENSAND HILLS</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
GW1	Puttenham Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW2	Chinthurst to Hurt Wood Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW3	St Martha's Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW4	Rowledge to Tilford Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW5	Hindhead Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW6	Wormley West Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW7	Wormley East Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW8	Loxhill to Catteshall Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW9	Leith Hill to Bury Hill Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW10	Dorking Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW11	Skimmington Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW12	Earlswood to Oxted Wooded Greensand Hills*
GW13	The Chart Wooded Greensand Hills*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE LF: ROLLING CLAY FARMLAND</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
LF1	Knowle Hill to Leatherhead Rolling Clay Farmland*
LF2	Claygate Rolling Clay Farmland*
LF3	Lower Ashted Rolling Clay Farmland*
LF4	Horton Rolling Clay Farmland*
LF5	Ashted East Rolling Clay Farmland*
LF6	North Farnham Rolling Clay Farmland*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE LR: WOODED ROLLING CLAYLANDS</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
LR1	Wanborough Wooded Rolling Claylands*
LR2	Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE LW: CLAY WOODLAND</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
LW1	Great Bookham Common Clay Woodland*
LW2	Prince Coverts to Leatherhead Common Clay Woodland*
LW3	Ashted and Epsom Commons Clay Woodland*
Evaluation and guidance	

\* These character areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE MP: MUDSTONE PLATEAU</b>		
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
MP1	Loseley Mudstone Plateau*	
Evaluation and guidance		

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE RF: RIVER FLOODPLAIN</b>		<b>see page 20</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
RF1	Colne River Floodplain*	see page 24
RF2	Ash River Floodplain*	see page 26
RF3	Thames River Floodplain*	see page 28
RF4	Northern Bourne River Floodplain*	
RF5	Windlebrook and Southern Bourne River Floodplain*	
RF6	Blackwater River Floodplain*	
RF7	Lower Wey River Floodplain*	
RF8	Upper Wey River Floodplain*	
RF9	Wey and Arun Canal River Floodplain*	
RF10	Lower Mole River Floodplain*	
RF11	Upper Mole River Floodplain*	
Evaluation and guidance		see page 30

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE RS: RESERVOIRS</b>		<b>see page 34</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
RS1	Thames Valley Reservoirs	see page 36
Evaluation and guidance		see page 37

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE RV: RIVER VALLEY FLOOR</b>		<b>see page 38</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
RV1	Colne River Valley Floor	see page 40
RV2	Thames River Valley Floor*	
RV3	Ash River Valley Floor	see page 42
RV4	Send River Valley Floor*	
RV5	Slyfield River Valley Floor*	
RV6	Peasmarsh River Valley Floor*	
RV7	Shalford River Valley Floor*	
RV8	Badshot River Valley Floor*	
Evaluation and guidance		see page 44

\* These character areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE SH: SANDY HEATH AND COMMON</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
SH1	Deer Rock Hill Sandy Heath and Common*
SH2	Chobham Sandy Heath and Common*
SH3	Westend and Pirbright Sandy Heath and Common*
SH4	Ash Common to Cobbetthill Sandy Heath and Common*
SH5	Whitmoor Sandy Heath and Common*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE SS: SETTLED AND WOODED SANDY FARMLAND</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
SS1	Cooper's Hill Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS2	Englefield Green West Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS3	Trumps Green to New Haw Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS4	Wentworth to Sheerwater Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS5	Bagshot to Windlesham Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS6	Windlesham Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS7	Windlesham to Knaphill Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS8	Chobham East Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS9	Weybridge South Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS10	Woking to Byfleet Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS11	Pirbright to Hook Heath Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
SS12	Wyke to Mayford Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE SW: SANDY WOODLAND</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
SW1	Virginia Water Sandy Woodland*
SW2	Bagshot and Lightwater West Sandy Woodland*
SW3	Foxhill Sandy Woodland*
SW4	Horsell Sandy Woodland*
SW5	Wisley Sandy Woodland*
SW6	Fairmile to Esher Sandy Woodland*
SW7	Deepcut Sandy Woodland*
SW8	Bricksbury Hill to Rowhill Copse Sandy Woodland*
Evaluation and guidance	

\* These character areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE WF: LOW WEALD FARMLAND</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
WF1	Dorking to Hookwood Low Weald Farmland*
WF2	Flanchford to Horley Low Weald Farmland*
WF3	Horley to Swaynesland Low Weald Farmland*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE WH: WOODED HIGH WEALD</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
WH1	Domewood to Dormansland Wooded High Weald*
WH2	Dormansland East Wooded High Weald*
Evaluation and guidance	

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE WW: WOODED LOW WEALD</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
WW1	Chiddingfold Wooded Low Weald*
WW2	West Dunsfold Wooded Low Weald*
WW3	Tugley to Sidney Wood Wooded Low Weald*
WW4	Pinks Hill to Park Hatch Wooded Low Weald*
WW5	Grafham to Dunsfold Wooded Low Weald*
WW6	Dunsfold to Pollingfold Wooded Low Weald*
WW7	Rowly Wooded Low Weald*
WW8	Cranleigh to Charlwood Wooded Low Weald*
WW9	Shamley Green to Holmwood Wooded Low Weald*
WW10	Holmwood Common Wooded Low Weald*
Evaluation and guidance	

\* These character areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE UE: DISTINCT AREAS ON THE EDGE OF URBAN AREAS</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
UE1	Heathside*
UE2	Walton Common*
UE3	Epsom Downs*
UE4	Burgh Heath*
UE5	Banstead Downs*
UE6	Redhill Common*
UE7	Earlswood Common*
UE8	Petridgewood Common and Woodland*
UE9	Holmthorpe Pits and Mercer's Park*
Evaluation and guidance	

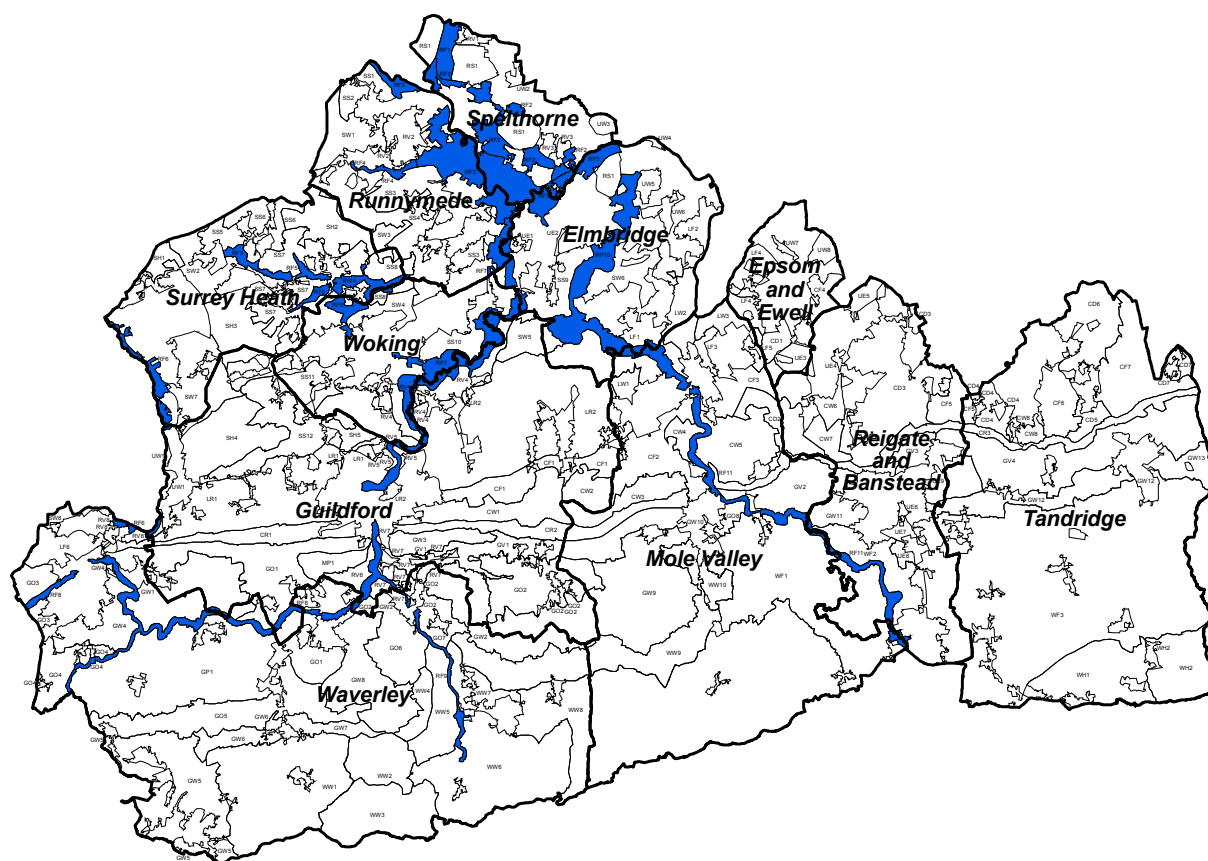
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE UW: SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACES WITHIN URBAN AREAS</b>		<b>see page 48</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
UW1	North Camp to North Town Lakes*	
UW2	Princes Lakes	see page 50
UW3	Kempton Park	see page 51
UW4	Hurst Park*	
UW5	Island Barn Reservoir and River Ember*	
UW6	Lower Green to Weston Green and Littleworth Common*	
UW7	Ewell Hogsmill*	
UW8	Nonsuch Park*	
Evaluation and guidance		see page 53

\* These character areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.

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## **6. LANDSCAPE TYPES AND CHARACTER AREAS WITHIN SPELTHORNE BOROUGH**

- 6.1 The following pages describe the landscape types and character areas located within Spelthorne Borough. The location and boundaries, and the key characteristics, of each type and area are set out, followed by evaluation and guidance for the type.



## LANDSCAPE TYPE RF: RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Landscape Character Areas

RF1	Colne River Floodplain
RF2	Ash River Floodplain
RF3	Thames River Floodplain
RF4	Northern Bourne River Floodplain*
RF5	Windlebrook and Southern Bourne River Floodplain*
RF6	Blackwater River Floodplain*
RF7	Lower Wey River Floodplain*
RF8	Upper Wey River Floodplain*
RF9	Wey and Arun Canal River Floodplain*
RF10	Lower Mole River Floodplain*
RF11	Upper Mole River Floodplain*

\* These Character Areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.



## LANDSCAPE TYPE RF: RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Boundaries

The River Flood Plain Landscape Type consists of low lying river terraces and valley bottoms following the courses of the rivers throughout the county. To the north, these include the wide floodplain of the Thames, along with associated tributaries including the Colne and Ash. The Wey and Mole have narrower floodplains snaking south towards the southern corners of the county. Boundaries are generally determined by the edge of the floodplain, as defined by the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 2, which equates to land having between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding. The boundaries are generally taken to the nearest recognisable identifiable feature such as field boundaries and roads, however in some limited instances, such as where there are no nearby recognisable features on the ground, the boundaries follow a contour.

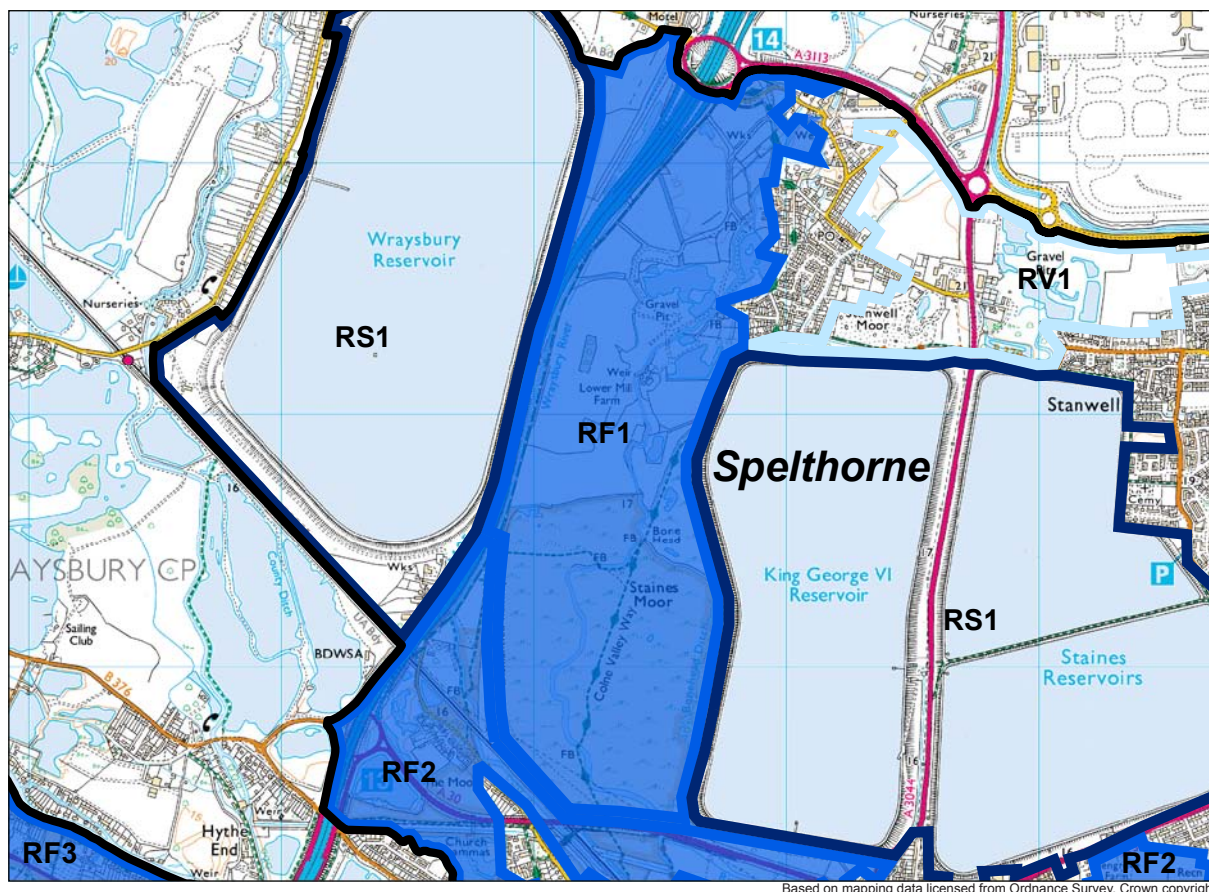


### Key Characteristics

- Low lying level areas of flood plain situated on alluvial deposits.
- Presence of water in the form of rivers, with channels, open water bodies and drainage ditches.
- Pastoral land use often with meadows grazed by cattle.
- In character areas to the north, in particular the Thames River Floodplain (Area RF3), there are significant internal and surrounding urban influences including Built Up Areas, roads and utilities.
- character areas to the south of the Thames, have few buildings apart from those associated with the river, such as mills and lock keepers cottages, plus some encroachment by large industrial units in urban areas. There is a rich ecology with areas of wetland, unimproved meadows, riparian woodland and ditch line willows.
- Historical defence lines with associated World War II structures.
- Historic importance of the Wey Navigation built in the 17th century and central to the development of Guildford, now owned by the National Trust and designated as a Conservation Area.

- River floodplain character areas are also important for preserved underlying archaeology. Evidence for early settlement has been found on the terrace gravels of the valleys of the Thames, Colne, Blackwater and Wey.
- The River Mole forms the dramatic 'Mole Gap' which cuts through the North Downs of the Surrey Hills AONB and is bounded by Box Hill to the east and Norbury Park to the West.
- The Wey and Mole have a peaceful semi-enclosed landscape with a largely secluded, rural ambience enlivened in some instances by the movement and colour of boats navigating the waterways.

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## RF1: COLNE RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Boundaries

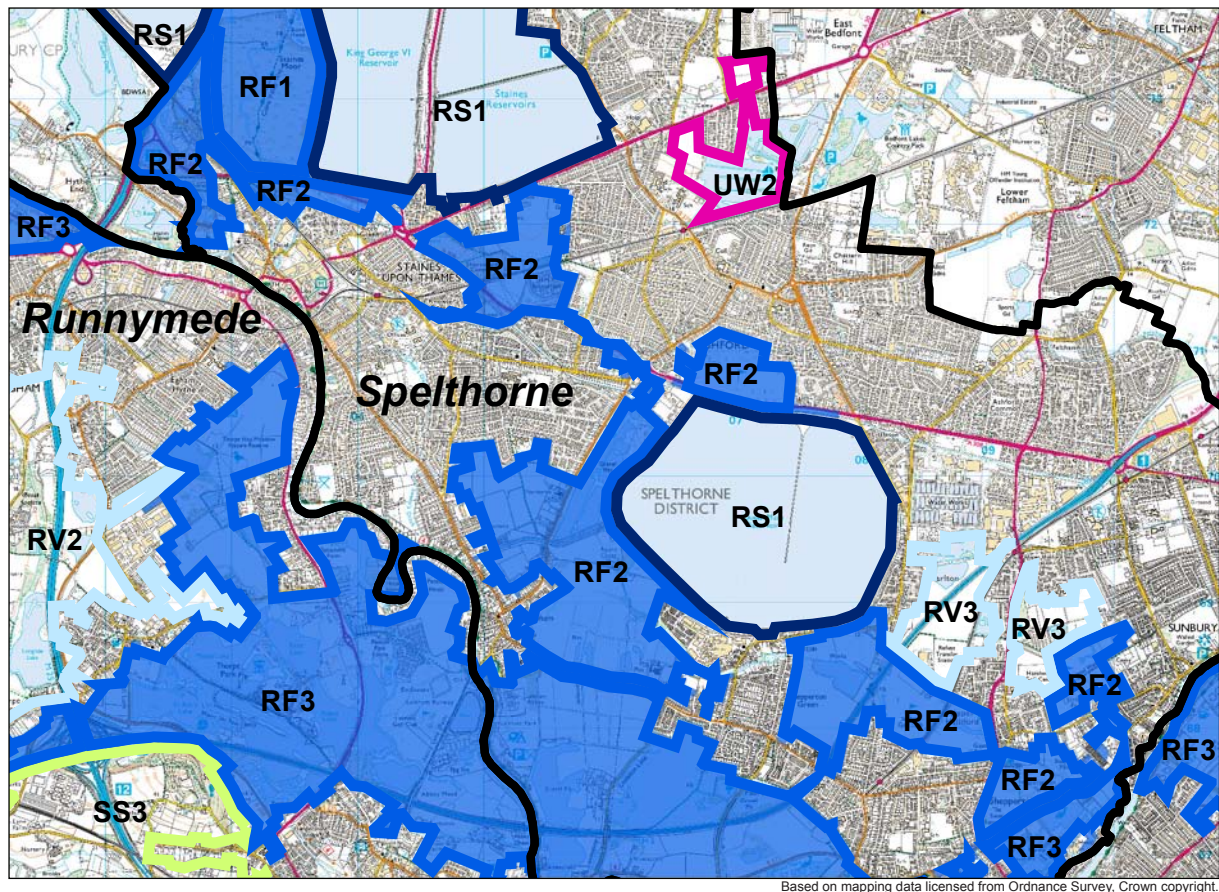
The Colne River Floodplain is a relatively small character area at the north-west corner of the county, south-east of Stanwell Moor, and to the north of Staines-upon-Thames. The character area is centred on the Colne River, which flows south into the nearby River Thames. The area is defined by embankments of the King George VI reservoir to the east, the M25 and embankments of Wrybury reservoir to the west, and a combination of settlement, roads and railway to the north and south. The character area extends out to the reservoir embankments and the settlement edge to form a logical boundary to the area.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand solid geology, with alluvium and gravel superficial deposits.
- Flat, low lying floodplain of the Colne valley, as it meets the wider Thames Valley, contained by surrounding urban infrastructure.
- The southern portion of the character area is formed by Staines Moor, while to the north there are lakes from previous gravel workings, earth works and a few pastoral fields.
- Tree cover across the main body of the character area is limited, although there are irregular tree belts around the edges of Staines Moor. Trees along the Colne within Staines Moor are very limited, but riparian vegetation increases to the north. No ancient woodland is recorded.
- The open nature of Staines Moor allows long, expansive views across the character area and to elevated areas beyond. There is intervisibility with elevated roads and motorway to the south and east, although filtered by perimeter tree cover.

- The M25 runs through the eastern part of the character area. The A30 and Windsor railway line abut the character area to the south.
- There are few rights of way, particularly to the north. However, the Colne Valley Way Recreational Path runs through the area; a bridleway runs along the western edge of the character area and connects to the Colne Valley Way via a public footpath. Staines Moor is Open Access Land, allowing access to the river.
- Apart from a farmstead in the centre of the character area, and an area of mobile homes and a few light industrial buildings to the north, the character area is free of settlement.
- Staines Moor is designated as Common Land and forms part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Colne River is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest to the north of Staines Moor, for its macroinvertebrate fauna.
- Perimeter tree cover reduces impact of surrounding urban influences on tranquillity to a degree, but surrounding urban infrastructure is clearly apparent in places. Staines Moor provides a relatively expansive, valuable 'oasis' within its urban context.





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## RF2: ASH RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Boundaries

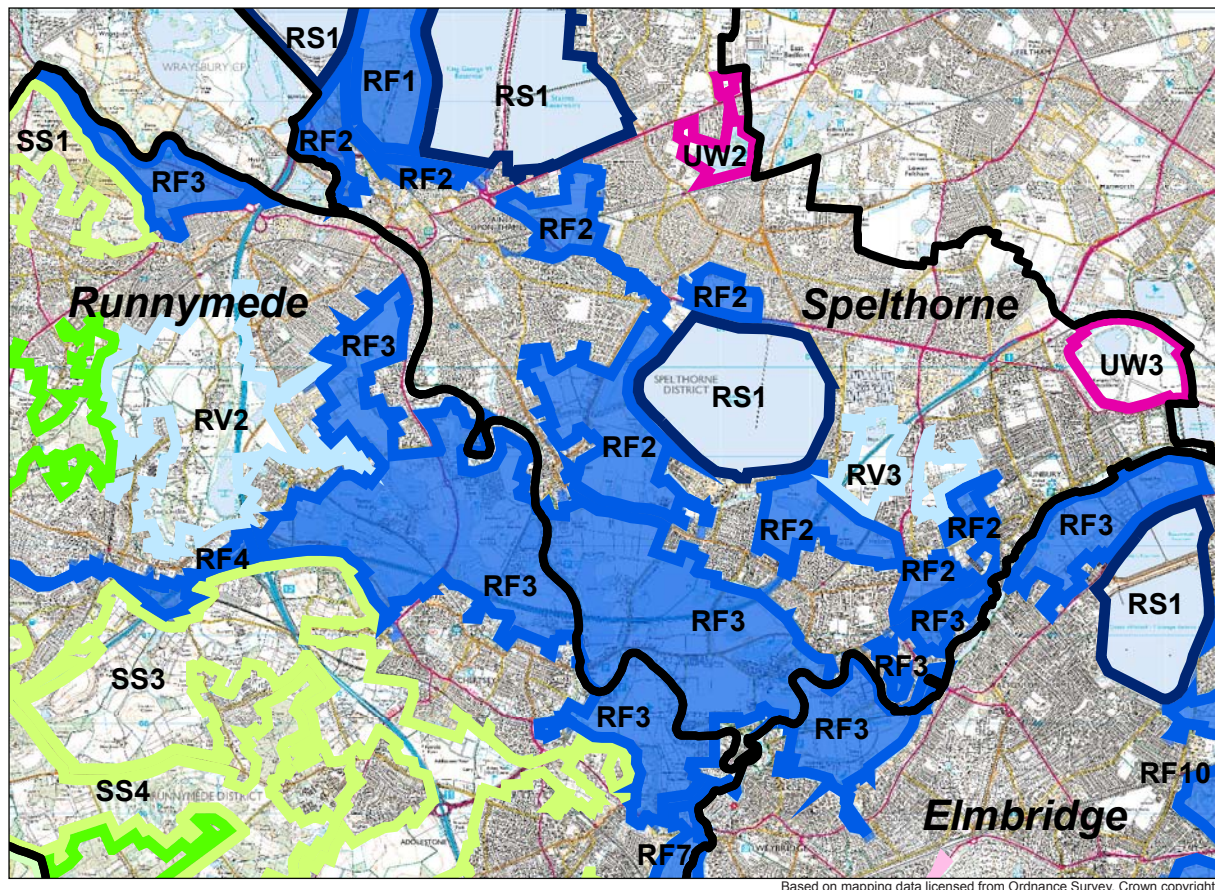
The Ash River Floodplain is a disjointed character area, to the north of the wider Thames Floodplain. The character area extends from north of Staines-upon-Thames, to the River Thames near Shepperton. The extent of the character area is largely defined by the flood zone associated with the River Ash, but incorporates some small adjacent areas of land annexed from the wider landscape by settlement. Where possible, the boundary is taken to nearby easily recognisable features such as roads, field boundaries or settlement edges.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand solid geology, with silt and gravel superficial deposits.
- Flat, low lying floodplain associated with the River Ash, to the north of the wider Thames Floodplain, contained and disjointed by surrounding settlement and urban infrastructure.
- The character area is made up of small to medium scale pastoral fields, occasional arable fields, lakes and earth works from gravel extraction. There are a number of other uses, including golf courses, nurseries, recreation, common land, horse paddocks, and a prison.
- There is tree cover mainly associated with water bodies and a golf course, with no significant blocks of woodland. There is a partial hedgerow network bounding fields in places. A small area of ancient woodland is recorded to the west of Shepperton film studios.
- There are some long views across open areas of the floodplain, but distant views are largely contained by surrounding settlement and urban infrastructure.

- There are a number of busy roads through the character area, including the A30 and A308. The M3 and the Shepperton branch railway line cross through the southern part of the character area. The Windsor railway line and the Waterloo to Reading railway line cut through the character area to the north.
- This is a relatively limited number of public rights of way within the character area, mainly located to the north near The Moor and Shortwood Common, which are Open Access Land. A short length of the Colne Valley Way Recreational Path crosses through the character area just before it reaches the Thames to the south. There is limited formal access to the River Ash.
- There are a limited number of small groups of low density dwellings, but otherwise the character area is relatively unsettled.
- The Moor and Shortwood Common are registered as Common Land. A number of the lakes are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance for their important wetland habitat, including lakes to the west of Queen Mary Reservoir. Shortwood Common is part of the Staines Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Open aspect and limited internal settlement allows a degree of rurality compared to the surrounding urban areas, but tranquillity and sense of remoteness are limited compared to more rural areas of the County.





## RF3: THAMES RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Boundaries

The Thames River Floodplain is a relatively broad character area stretching across the northern part of the county from north of Egham to West Molesey. The character area is made up of four areas, with the eastern and western ends of the character area separated by settlement. The boundary of the character area broadly follows the edge of the flood zone, and where possible is taken to nearby easily recognisable features such as roads or field boundaries. The character area extends to settlement boundaries beyond the floodplain in places, to form a logical boundary.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand, Claygate Member Sand, Silt and Clay, and Bagshot Formation Sand solid geology, with alluvium, silt, and gravel superficial deposits.
- Flat, low lying, wide floodplain of the Thames valley, surrounded by Built Up Areas. Adjoins a number of other floodplain character areas associated with Thames tributaries, including the River Ash, River Wey and River Mole.
- Significant parts of the character area are dominated by large lakes formed from gravel workings. Remaining land includes an irregular pattern of pasture, horse paddocks, occasional arable fields and horticulture, as well as light industry, and recreational uses such as golf. There are occasional riverside meadows, including a significant area of common land at Runnymede in the western end of the character area. The River Thames itself forms a small part of the character area. Small tree groups line the Thames in places, but tree cover across the character area in general is very limited.
- Relatively open, with some long distance views, particularly across large water bodies towards surrounding settlement.



- Major roads, elevated above the floodplain cross through the character area, including a significant stretch of the M3 motorway. A network of other roads criss-cross the character area linking settlements beyond.
- The Thames Path National Trail runs along or near the River Thames, and connects with a number of other public rights of way across the character area, although there are some areas with limited formal public access.
- There are scattered villages and hamlets, some quite significant in size, across the character area, such as at Dockett Eddy , and an area of park homes at Penton Park, along with other urban influences such as light industrial works and utilities buildings, mobile homes and marinas, recreation buildings and the Thorpe Park theme park complex.
- The western end of the character area, associated with historically significant Runnymede, is registered as Common Land. The character area contains Shepperton Conservation Area, and small parts of Laleham, Chertsey, and Thorpe Conservation Areas. It is adjacent to Lower Halliford Conservation Area. There are scheduled monuments west of Runnymede Bridge, at Chertsey Abbey and at Laleham Burway. Part of the Laleham Burway meadow was a famous venue in the 18th century.
- Oatland Park, a Grade II registered park is sited on the escarpment between Walton and Weybrige and overlooking the Thames floodplain. The historic park includes the 18th century lake, the Broad Water which was designed to look as if it was part of the River Thames.
- There are numerous ecological designations across the character area, in particular Sites of Nature Conservation Importance covering the lakes, designated for their wildfowl habitat and wet meadow. St. Ann's Lake, to the south-east of Thorpe is designated as a Ramsar, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Important for a number of alluvial grassland SSSIs. Dumsey Meadow and Chertsey Meads area remnants of the original Thameside grazing meadows
- The Wey Navigation Conservation Area and associated locks links with the Thames character just adjacent to this character area.
- There are a few areas isolated by lakes and waterways where there is a degree of remoteness, but most of the character area has limited tranquillity due to internal and surrounding urban influence including Built Up Areas and roads. The River Thames does however exert a strong influence on the character of the area, adding colour and interest to its immediate environs, for instance, the pastoral meadows at Runnymede, attractive river islands and moorings.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE RF: RIVER FLOODPLAIN EVALUATION AND GUIDANCE

### EVALUATION

#### Key positive landscape attributes

The key positive features that contribute to the character of the area and that should be conserved and enhanced are:

- Peaceful, often secluded, pastoral landscapes, along meandering watercourses of the Mole, Wey and canals, contrast with the suburban and urban character of The Thames and its tributaries.
- Wide river valleys associated with their meandering watercourses.
- Dramatic landscape along the River Mole where it cuts through the downs.
- Riparian vegetation and land use, such as waterside meadows, wet woodland (eg Alder), varied grassland and occasional marsh of biodiversity interest.
- River Wey, River Wey Navigation, restored sections of the Wey and Arun Canal, River Mole, and multiple channels and waterbodies.
- Areas of intact pattern of ditches with ditchline willows.
- Often grazed by cattle, particularly the Upper Wey River Floodplain (Area RF8).
- Largely unsettled, undisturbed ambiance with woodland belts screening development on the edges of the area particularly directly to the south of Guildford.
- Historic pattern of development and infrastructure linked to the waterways, particularly infrastructure of the Wey Navigation and restored parts of the Wey and Arun Canal (locks and connected buildings).
- Rural roads with narrow stone bridges.
- Attractive islands, moorings and riverside settlement within the Thames River Floodplain area
- Setting to the historically significant Runnymede.
- Provides amenity space for urban areas within the northern part of the County and major settlements of Dorking and Guildford through which they flow.
- Provides recreation opportunities for rural access through the river valleys.

#### Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

##### *Past change*

- Decline in active management of meadows and pasture on the floodplain and conversion to improved grassland.
- Fragmentation and decline of agricultural holdings.
- Extensive gravel extraction with restoration to open water.
- Encroachment by scrub into meadows.
- Lack of pollarding and loss of boundary willows.
- Introduction of horse grazing.
- Abandonment and infilling of the Wey and Arun Canal.
- Impact of development in adjacent areas.
- Encroachment of development on to valley floor.
- Development of transport corridor along River Mole through gap in the North Downs.
- Urbanisation and fragmentation within more urban areas to the north of the County.

##### *Future potential forces for change*

- Decline in active or traditional management of meadows and pastures.
- Decline in active or traditional management of meadows and pastures.
- Further fragmentation of agricultural land.
- Loss of over-mature willows and field trees.
- Pressure for intensification of horse grazing with further horse paddocks and consequent subdivision of fields and installation of shelters.
- Pressures for tourism/leisure infrastructure, including that generated from continuing restoration of the Wey and Arun Canal, which would affect the peacefulness of the character area.

- Pressures for development at the margins of the area, particularly near Guildford, Godalming, Farnham, Bramley, Cranleigh, Leatherhead and Dorking, where views of development would affect the rural, secluded character of the flood plain and from adjacent high level topography.
- Pressure for further development within the Thames and Blackwater floodplains.
- Potential for intensification of transport related activity along the River Mole where it forms a corridor through the downs.
- Pressure to upgrade rural roads and replace narrow stone bridges due to increase in traffic.
- Activities around sand and stone extraction in the Thames and Ash floodplains, and restoration of landscape.
- Abstraction, or reduced rainfall patterns creating more frequent water shortages throughout river catchment area.
- Increasing pressure for urbanisation of areas to the north of the County and along river valley sides.
- Intense rainfall patterns causing rivers to rise suddenly.
- Schemes to alleviate flood risk.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **Landscape Strategy**

The strategy for River Floodplain is to conserve the rural, secluded areas of landscape with its river channels, pastures, wetlands and woodland, along with historic infrastructure and buildings associated with the Wey Navigation and the Wey and Arun Canal, and resist further development within the Thames and Blackwater floodplains. Elements to be enhanced are the management of the pastures, woodlands and ditchline willows associated with the river corridors, and continued restoration of the Wey and Arun Canal.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

#### ***Land Management***

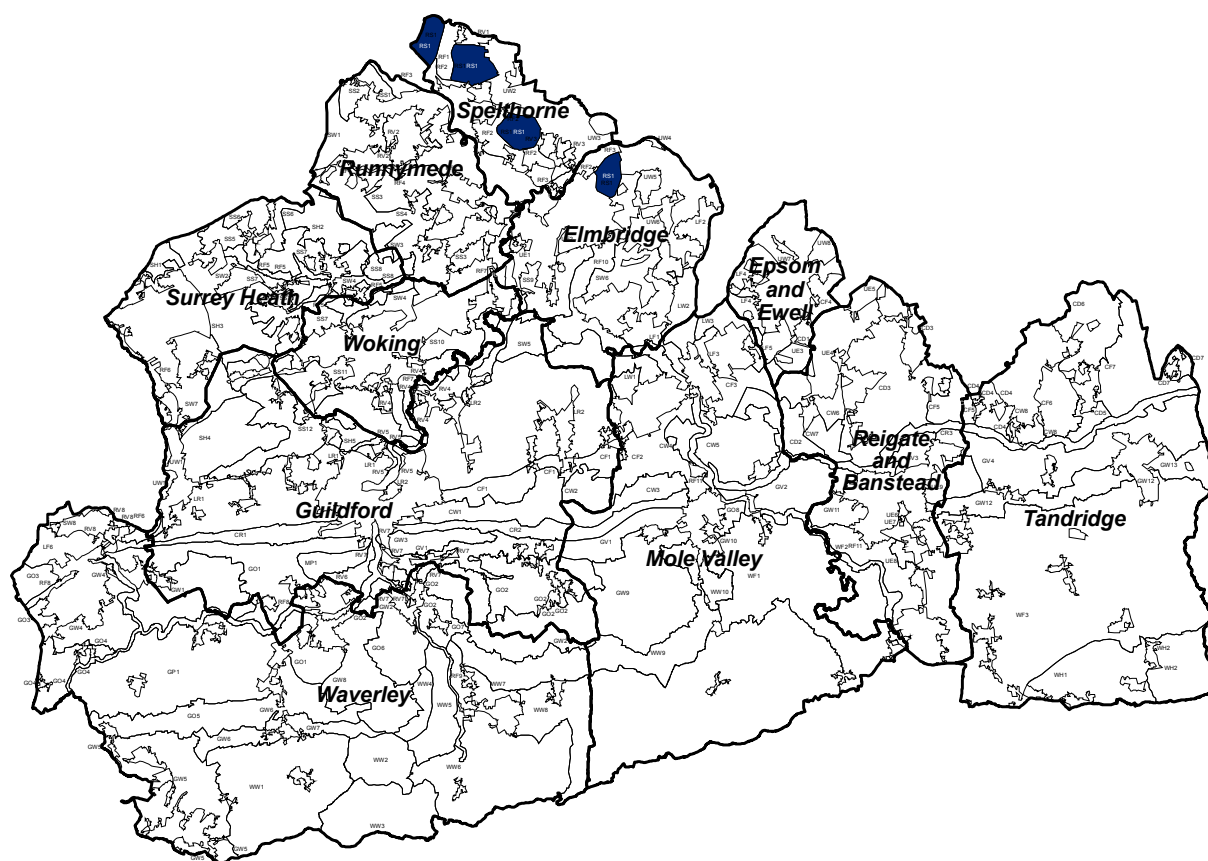
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques, to conserve and enhance key landscape features such as relatively small-scale irregular field pattern, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, ditches and ditchline willows, meadows and wetlands.
- Conserve and enhance the waterside meadows and pastures with cattle grazing management, and resist the improvement of grasslands and drainage schemes which could disturb the characteristic landcover, vegetation or adversely affect ecological value.
- Protect the course of the Wey and Arun Canal to allow full restoration.
- Restoration and enhancement of worked out gravel pits. This character area type coincides with the Surrey's Rivers and Thames Valley biodiversity opportunity areas.
- Enhance A24 landscape through the Mole Gap. This area coincides with the Surrey's Rivers and North Downs biodiversity opportunity areas with potential to enhance or link together areas of high biodiversity in these areas.
- Promote strategies for the Thames and Blackwater floodplains avoiding inappropriate increase in development.
- Conserve and enhance the natural corridor and the rural setting of the Rivers Wey, Mole and Blackwater, particularly where they extend through urban areas. Ensure physical and biodiversity links to river valley character areas (Type RV) are maintained.
- Seek to ensure infrastructure associated with horses is sympathetic to the landscape character, e.g. sensitively designed fencing, and resist intensification of paddocks within the area.
- Conserve, enhance and restore riparian woodland, the stock of individual field and riverbank trees, and the blocks and bands of woodland at the edge of the area that screen development.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques with local landowners and the farming community.
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands and the use of locally appropriate species such as willows, alder and oak trees.

- Seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive low key, rural character of leisure facilities such as the North Downs/Pilgrims Way, the Downs Link, the Wey Navigation towpath, Mole Gap Trail and other public footpath/bridleways or cyclepaths which cross the area, through the encouragement of appropriate surfacing, materials and signage.
- Seek appropriate siting of facilities and new access links for leisure and tourism through visitor management to support appropriate levels of circulation and movement patterns of different user groups.
- Encourage conservation of historic landscape pattern of meadows and waterways, and understanding of underlying archaeology.

### ***Built Development***

- Ensure any new development is sensitively sited and designed with, scale, form and detailing, including materials, which conserve the historic character and settlement pattern of the area. Refer to Surrey design guides; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association) and Building Design in the Surrey Hills (Surrey Hills AONB) where rivers flow through the greensand hills and chalk downs.
- Retain the largely undisturbed, rural character of the Wey and Mole valleys.
- Avoid any development on the course of the Wey and Arun Canal which would hamper full restoration.
- Avoid intensification of transport related development along the River Mole where it forms a corridor through the downs.
- Avoid inappropriate increase in development within the Thames and Blackwater floodplains.
- Avoid the location of any new large mass or bulky structures where overly visually intrusive on this character area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context.
- Encourage the continuing provision of suitable native boundary tree belts to existing adjacent large scale development to reduce adverse impact on this sensitive character area and reduce glare and mass from long-distance viewpoints.
- Resist potential mineral workings on the plateau adjoining the Upper Wey River Floodplain (Area A2) which could adversely affect the landscape character
- Promote appropriate scale and form of boundary treatment to avoid negative visual impact of inappropriate boundaries on the rural character of the flood plain.
- Encourage the retention of woodland planting that screens settlement and roads adjacent to the area and consider additional planting to screen existing or new development that intrudes in rural views.
- Conserve the rural roads and small bridges minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network or bridges which would change their character.
- Resist urbanisation of roads through encouraging appropriate surfacing of existing pavements, enhancing the immediate landscape setting and ensuring minimum clutter.
- Ensure that lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' in the largely unsettled floodplain.
- Promote the use of traditional or rural signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.

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## LANDSCAPE TYPE RS: RESERVOIRS

### Landscape Character Areas

RS1	Thames Valley Reservoirs
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## LANDSCAPE TYPE RS: RESERVOIRS

### Location and Boundaries

A series of large elevated reservoirs to the north of the county, bordering Greater London. Boundaries follow the foot of the embankments surrounding the reservoirs, although in places are extended slightly to the nearest Built Up Area edge or road.

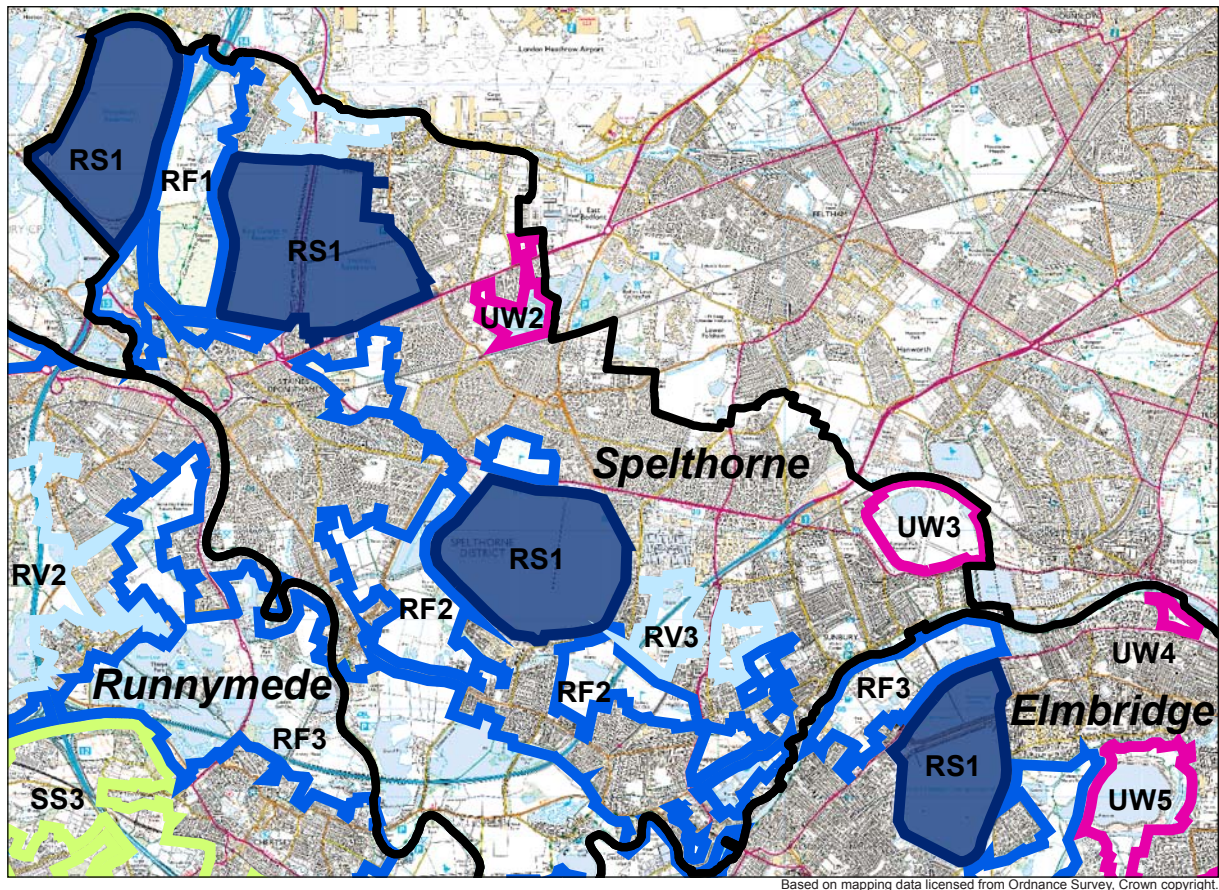


### Key Characteristics

The following large elevated reservoirs within Surrey are grouped into a single Character Area, with key characteristics set out on next pages:

- Wraysbury Reservoir, to the north of Egham.
- King George VI Reservoir and Staines Reservoirs, to the north of Staines.
- Queen Mary Reservoir, to the south of Ashford
- Knight Reservoir, Bessborough Reservoir, and Queen Elizabeth II Storage Reservoir, to the north-east of Walton-on-Thames.





## RS1: THAMES VALLEY RESERVOIRS

### Location and Boundaries

A series of large elevated reservoirs to the north of the County, bordering Greater London. Boundaries follow the foot of the embankments surrounding the reservoirs, although in places are extended slightly to the nearest Built Up Area edge or road.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by Thames Group Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel sedimentary bedrock geology.
- Manmade features within the wider River Valley Floor and Floodplain areas. Large raised reservoirs, surrounded by embankments approximately 15m high above surrounding ground level.
- Embankments, ringed by chainlink fencing, are grassed and often grazed by sheep. Some areas have tree planting at the foot of the embankments which break up views of the lower slopes, but the slopes themselves are largely without planting.
- Roads, often line with trees or hedgerows, pass between or adjacent to the embankments, with the steep slopes closing in the view.
- The water bodies contained within the embankments have high ecological value, with numerous designations including Ramsar, the South West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, in particular for their importance to wildfowl.
- Recreational facilities for both waterborne and bird watching activities.
- The unplanted, steep embankments dominate the skyline, forming the backdrop to local views. The embankments do however screen Built Up Areas, and particularly when grazed by sheep, provide a contrast and relief to the surrounding urban areas.



## LANDSCAPE TYPE RS: RESERVOIRS EVALUATION AND GUIDANCE

### EVALUATION

#### Key Positive Landscape Attributes

- Embankments screen views of built development.
- Sheep grazing on embankments in an urban setting.
- Provide open areas with rural contrast and visual break in built development.
- Tree and hedgerows lines along adjacent roads and boundaries.
- Dramatic scale of water bodies and supporting structures.
- Reservoirs internationally important for 'non-flocking' waterfowl including wintering populations.
- Facilities for bird watching, and waterborne recreation activities.
- Public rights of way network connected with surrounding Built Up areas or river floodplain (Type RF) or river valley floor (Type RV) character areas.
- Connection with Colne Valley Way long distance footpath.

#### Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

##### *Past change*

- Water provision and gravel extraction for London and surrounding urban expansion.
- Construction of large reservoirs with high featureless embankments which dominate the skyline.
- Major road corridors and infrastructure.
- Thames Water management practices and requirements for management of reservoirs.
- Proximity to Heathrow and within bird strike restricted area.
- Overriding safety regime to keep grass short.
- International designations for specific bird species.

### GUIDANCE

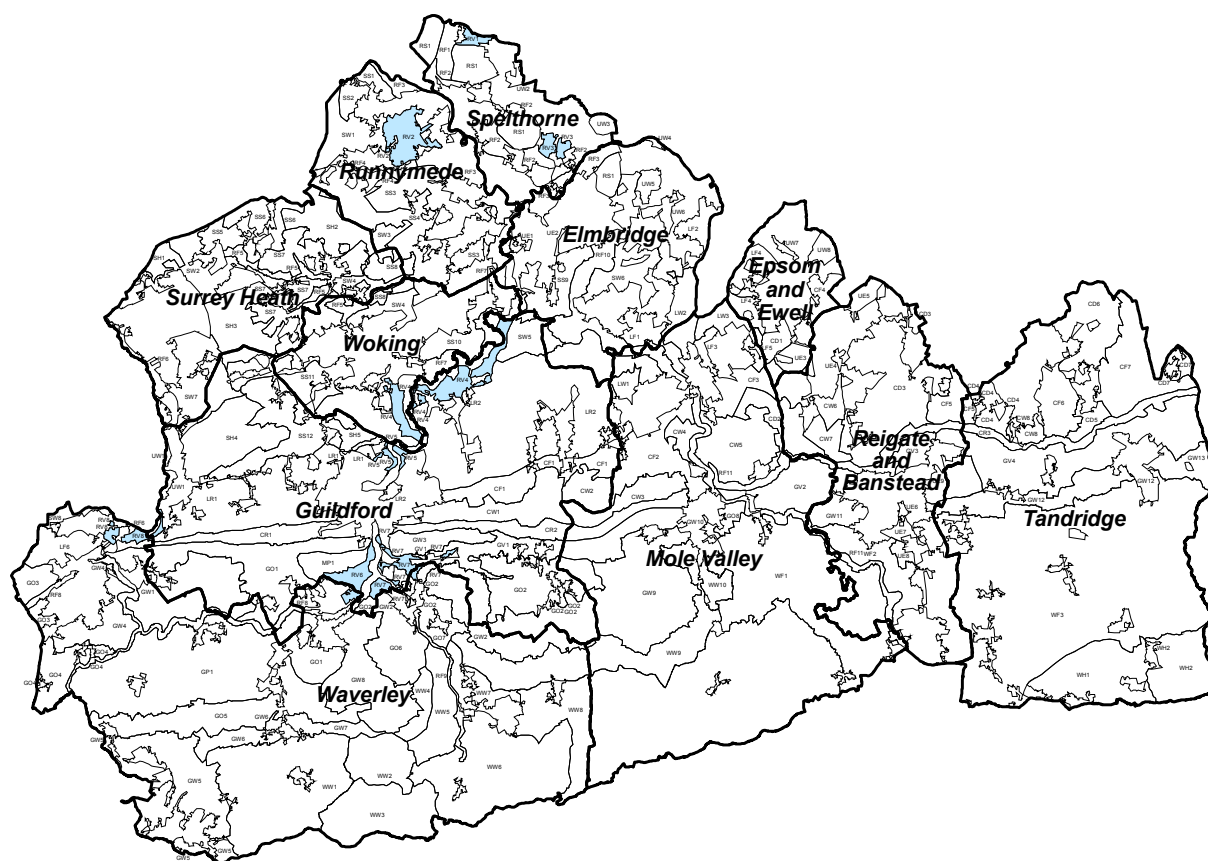
#### Landscape Strategy

The overall management aim is to conserve the rural character of the reservoir embankments and provide opportunities to enjoy recreation activities, and nature observation.

#### Landscape Guidelines

##### *Land Management*

- Be aware of Thames Water management practices and requirements.
- Develop planting in areas adjacent to reservoirs, including along roads, to filter views and reduce visual impact of embankments.
- Conserve hedgerows and trees along boundaries and adjacent roads, in areas which do not conflict with Thames Water requirements.
- Maintain visual connectivity with vegetation in surrounding character areas (RV/RF) to enhance rural character of grassed embankments.
- Maintain sheep grazing as a sympathetic means of keeping grass short on embankments.
- Maintain and encourage biodiversity associated with maintenance by sheep grazing where species do not conflict with Thames Water requirements. This area coincides with the Surrey's Thames Valley biodiversity opportunity areas TV03, TV04, and TV05.
- Land management regime required to encourage specific types of waterfowl only, which do not 'flock'. Birds of flocking type specifically discouraged.
- Encourage and support facilities for bird watching, and waterbourne recreation.
- Conserve and enhance the quality and connectivity of the public rights of way network.



## LANDSCAPE TYPE RV: RIVER VALLEY FLOOR

### Landscape Character Areas

RV1	Colne River Valley Floor
RV2	Thames River Valley Floor*
RV3	Ash River Valley Floor
RV4	Send River Valley Floor*
RV5	Slyfield River Valley Floor*
RV6	Peasmarsh River Valley Floor*
RV7	Shalford River Valley Floor*
RV8	Badshot River Valley Floor*

\* These Character Areas are outside Spelthorne Borough and therefore are not described in this document. See the Surrey Countywide document for these areas.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE RV: RIVER VALLEY FLOOR

### Location and Boundaries

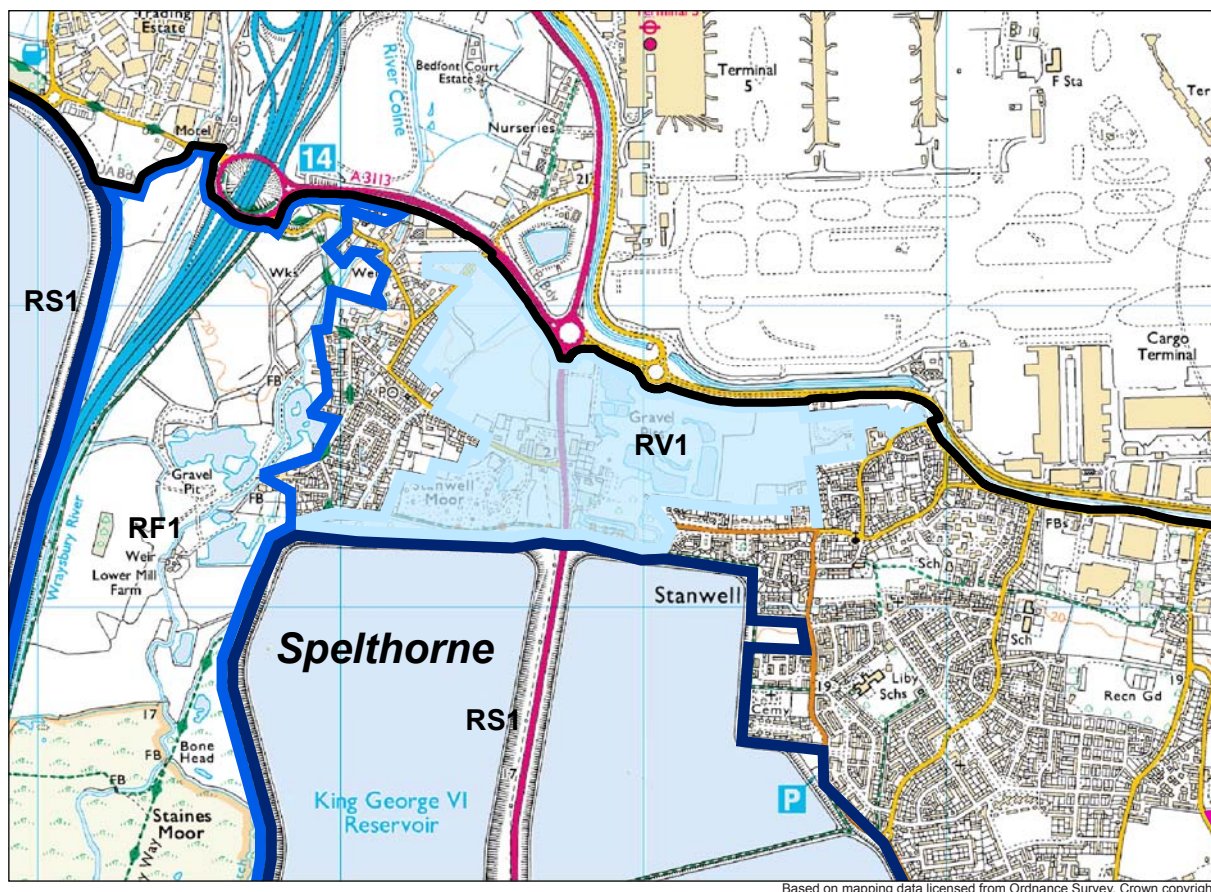
The River Valley Floor Landscape Type comprises a number of separate areas of elevated river terrace fringing the floodplain which runs through the county. Boundaries are based on the change from the gravel terrace to the alluvium of the floodplain or to the surrounding sands, clays and greensand.



### Key Characteristics

- Level or gently shelving areas underlain by river terrace gravel and elevated above the floodplain.
- Diverse landscape including pastoral and arable farmland, mixed woodland, industrial, and commercial land uses, and sports complexes.
- Variety of water bodies, developed by modification of naturally occurring water sources, including rivers, canals, streams, excavation of sand and gravel to form lakes and ponds.
- Settlement predominantly in the form of medium to large villages often expanded along transport corridors, becoming more urban to the north.
- Semi-enclosed areas with intermittent views over pastures and waterbodies, views of surrounding urban influence increase to the north, with the presence of gravel pits, and utilities such as sewage works.
- Gravel and alluvium areas important for preserving underlying archaeology. Evidence for early settlement has been found on the terrace gravels of the valleys of the River Thames, Colne, Blackwater and Wey.





## RV1: COLNE RIVER VALLEY FLOOR

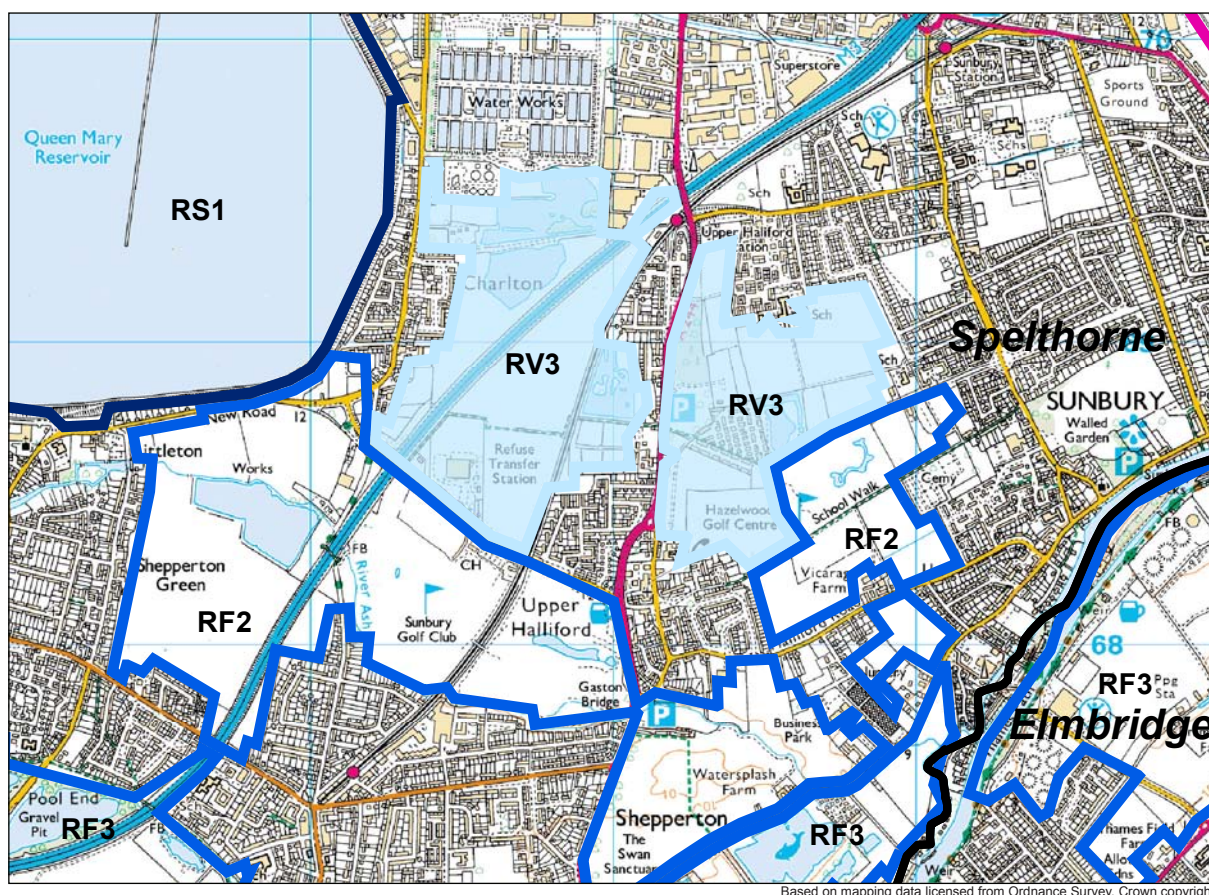
### Location and Boundaries

The Colne River Valley Floor Character Area lies to the north-west of Stanwell. It is a small area contained by Heathrow Airport to the north, large bunded reservoirs to the south, Stanwell to the east and the village of Stanwell Moor to the west.

### Key Characteristics

- A level area underlain by Thames Group Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel solid geology.
- Consists of gravel pits, rough pasture and industrial buildings. There are few residential dwellings in the character area.
- There are areas of woodland surrounding lakes formed from gravel extraction, and thick lines of vegetation and mature trees along roads and boundaries.
- Views, including views across gravel workings and lakes, are restricted by woodland and boundary vegetation.
- The A3044 road cross north-south through the centre of the character area, and other busy roads border the character area to the north.
- A public right of way skirts the southern edge of the character area and connects to the Colne Valley Way Recreational Path, but formal public access to the majority of the character area is very limited.
- Two areas of gravel pits are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance for their range of marginal vegetation including fen.

- Although there is good tree cover along roads and surrounding lakes, which filters views of built form to a degree, and helps separate Stanwell from the village of Stanwell Moor, there is heavy human influence in the form of internal land uses and surrounding urban infrastructure.
- Proximity to edge of Heathrow and its Terminal 5.
- Forms rural setting and open area between two edges of settlements and Heathrow to north.
- Gaps in tree cover provide views to grassed embankments of adjacent reservoir character area (Area RS1).



## RV3: ASH RIVER VALLEY FLOOR

### Location and Boundaries

The Ash River Valley Floor is a small character area at the northern edge of the county, located either side of the Built Up Area along the A244 road, to the north of Shepperton. The majority of the character area boundary follows the edges of the adjacent Built Up Areas.

### Key Characteristics

- A level area underlain by Thames Group Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel solid geology., on the northern edge of the Ash River floodplain.
- Consists of rough pasture, some informal paddocks, a golf course, school playing fields and a mobile home park.
- Forms rural setting and open areas around edges of settlement.
- There are some small areas of woodland, tree lined roads, boundaries and lakes.
- Individual mature trees, and hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- There are some open views across rough ground to the nearest tree cover, but boundary vegetation limits views elsewhere and helps filter settlement edges.
- Some gaps provide views to grassed embankments of adjacent reservoir (Area RS1) or more open river floodplain character areas (Areas RF2 and RF3).
- The M3 motorway and the Shepperton branch railway line cross through the western portion of the character area. A3044 road cross north-south through the centre of the character area, and other busy roads border the character area to the north.
- A public footpath passes roughly east-west through the character area.
- There is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest located in the north-western part of the character area, with eutrophic lakes and trees.

- Tree cover filters views of built form and infrastructure to a degree, but there is heavy human influence in the form of Built Up Areas, road and internal land uses, which prevents a sense of remoteness in this small character area.



## LANDSCAPE TYPE RV: RIVER VALLEY FLOOR EVALUATION AND GUIDANCE

### EVALUATION

#### Key positive landscape attributes

The key positive features that contribute to the character of the area and that should be conserved and enhanced are:

- Commons and other open areas which provide a rural setting for settlements and a recreational resource as areas of Open Access Land, amenity land or via public rights of way.
- Mixed blocks of open areas, or areas with a rural character providing attractive visual break to large Built Up areas in the north of the county.
- Characteristic pattern of settlement of houses facing onto commons or open areas, in the south of the County.
- Natural open areas along the rivers Blackwater and Wey, which provide attractive edge to Built Up areas.
- River Ash corridor.
- Blocks of mature trees, hedgerows and hedgerow trees creating intimate areas of landscape
- Tree lined roads and boundaries, and small blocks of woodland or mature trees.
- Role as rural setting for the adjacent flood plains.
- Public rights of ways links to the adjacent wider river corridors.
- Views to wider unsettled or rural areas.

#### Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

##### *Past Change*

- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Regeneration of woodland and loss of mature trees on commons.
- Intensification of edge of settlement.
- Road and rail corridors.
- Encroachment of car parking by residents, workers and commuters onto the common land.
- Spread of settlement out from villages, including along rural roads, resulting in loss of agricultural land.
- Standardisation of main roads.
- Mineral extraction and restoration.
- Urbanisation of areas to the north of the County.
- Proximity of Heathrow to the north of the County.
- Development of adjacent reservoir infrastructure in the north of the county.

##### *Future potential forces for change*

- Further requirements for mineral extraction and activities around restoration.
- Encroachment on valley floor from settlement edges and transport infrastructure.
- Further loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Further encroachment of car parking on common land and land restored for access.
- Pressures which will lead to urbanisation of commons and open areas such as for placing facilities like recycling centres or car parking.
- Pressures for further residential and industrial development.
- Sub-division of agricultural plots and piecemeal settlement extension impacting on the historic form of settlement and further fragmentation of open areas.



## **Landscape Strategy**

The landscape strategy for the River Valley Floor is to conserve the commons, open areas and pastoral farmland, the historic village centres and a positive relationship between buildings and settlements edging the rural landscape.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

### ***Land Management***

- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as the pasture fields, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodlands and maintain rural character.
- Encourage understanding of historic dimension of the landscape including underlying archaeology. Conserve historic elements of the landscape.
- Conserve and manage areas of common land.
- Conserve remaining intact areas of agricultural or open land surrounding settlement.
- Encourage restocking and consistent management of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree lined roads and boundaries.
- Encourage sensitively placed tree planting to maintain stock of trees on open areas and common land.
- Conserve, enhance and restore riparian woodland, and blocks and bands of woodland at the edge of the area that screen development.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques with local landowners and the farming community.
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands.
- Consider opportunities for new tree and woodland planting to enhance the setting of settlements and for screening large scale development.
- Promote the use of locally appropriate species such as oaks and, close to the floodplain, willows poplar and alder.
- Conserve and enhance the rural setting of the River Wey, River Blackwater, and River Ash, particularly where they extend through urban areas.
- Ensure physical and biodiversity connections between river valley floor (Type RV) and river floodplain (Type RF) character areas are maintained and enhanced. These areas coincide with Surrey's Rivers and Thames Valley biodiversity opportunity areas.
- Conserve and enhance connectivity of key landscape attributes, paying particular attention to their positive contribution to the character of adjoining character areas (Types RF and RS).

### ***Built Development***

- Retain the distinct character of settlements and avoid merging these through linear development along roads, and by retaining the rural gaps between them.
- Maintain and enhance vegetated boundaries to transport corridors and adjacent infrastructure.
- Retain open space along the A331 corridor between Aldershot and Ash.
- Conserve the distinctive pattern of houses facing onto commons and open areas.
- Ensure that any new large scale development does not impact adversely on rural views. Maintain relationship and quality of views to adjoining river floodplains and valleys, commons or to wider surrounding areas.
- Improve understanding of the general pattern of settlements and their relationship to the landscape and to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the wider pattern of settlement.
- Resist urbanisation of the open areas and common land through the addition of inappropriate facilities such as car parking. Consider screening and enhancement of existing facilities to strengthen rural character.

- Protect landscape character and quality from negative impact of transport networks including the introduction of signs, gantries and lighting columns that impact on local distinctiveness.
- Work to foster local distinctiveness around settlements, where standard design criteria creates a lack of variation and 'urbanisation' of rural roads. Seek opportunities to 'downgrade' main roads through settlements, enhancing the immediate landscape setting and ensuring minimum clutter through encouraging appropriate surfacing of existing pavements, quality signage and reduced speed limits where possible.
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact, and impacts on biodiversity particularly where these may affect open areas, commons or the adjacent river floodplains.
- Promote the use of traditional materials and signage features with particular regard to local style and materials. Refer to Surrey design guidance; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).
- Consider function of the area as a setting to the river corridors of the Wey, Blackwater and Ash and ensure that development does not impinge on setting of the river valleys.

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UW1	North Camp to North Town Lakes*
UW2	Princes Lakes
UW3	Kempton Park
UW4	Hurst Park*
UW5	Island Barn Reservoir and River Ember*
UW6	Lower Green to Weston Green and Littleworth Common*
UW7	Ewell Hogsmill*
UW8	Nonsuch Park*

Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015: **Spelthorne Borough**

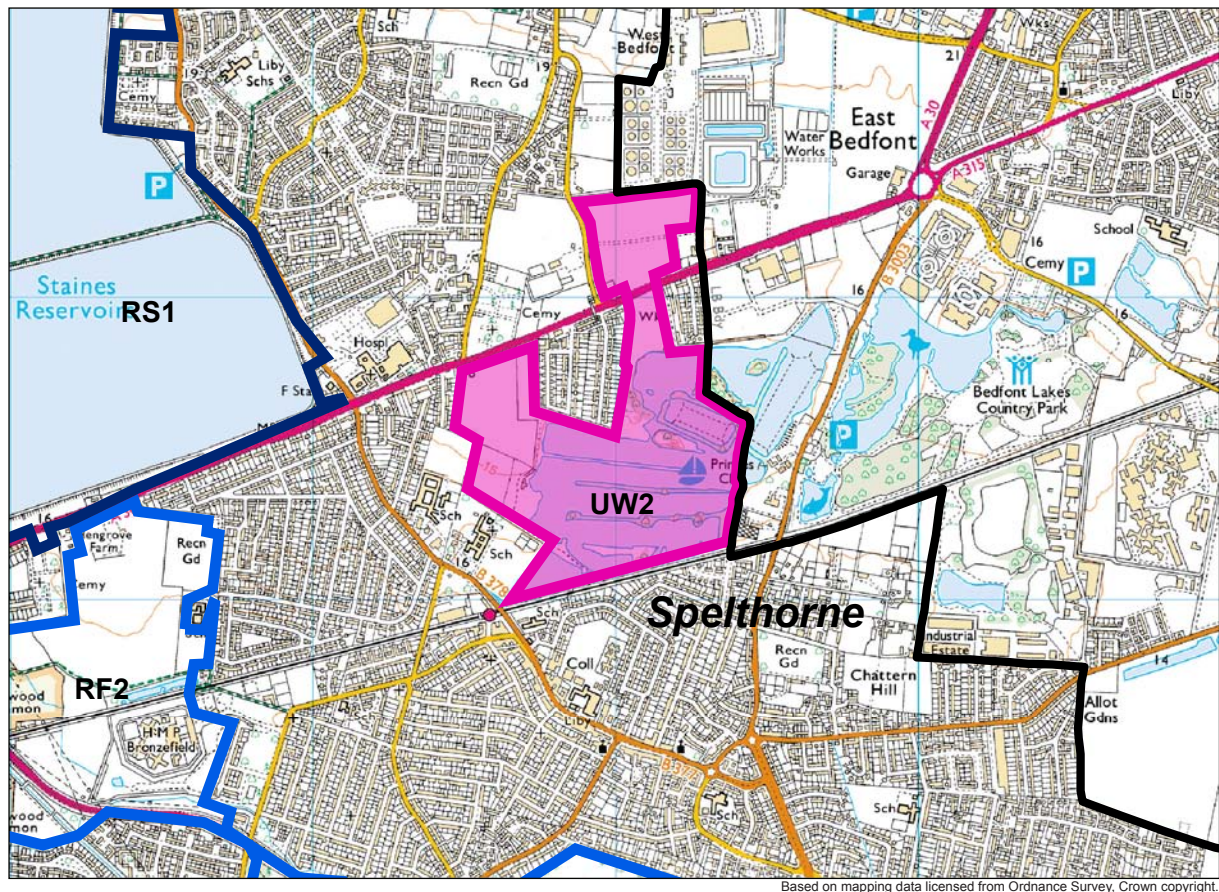
## **LANDSCAPE TYPE UW: SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACES WITHIN URBAN AREAS**

### **Location and Boundaries**

A group of individual areas within the Built Up Areas of towns across the County.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Individual areas, with a variety of characteristic and uses, within the Built Up Area.
- Entirely enclosed by urban areas, the majority of these areas have significant human intervention, and provide outdoor amenity for the surrounding population.
- These areas are of high biodiversity value and potential within the Built Up Area.
- Provide visual and physical break of rural or natural open character within the Built Up Area.



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## UW2: PRINCES LAKES

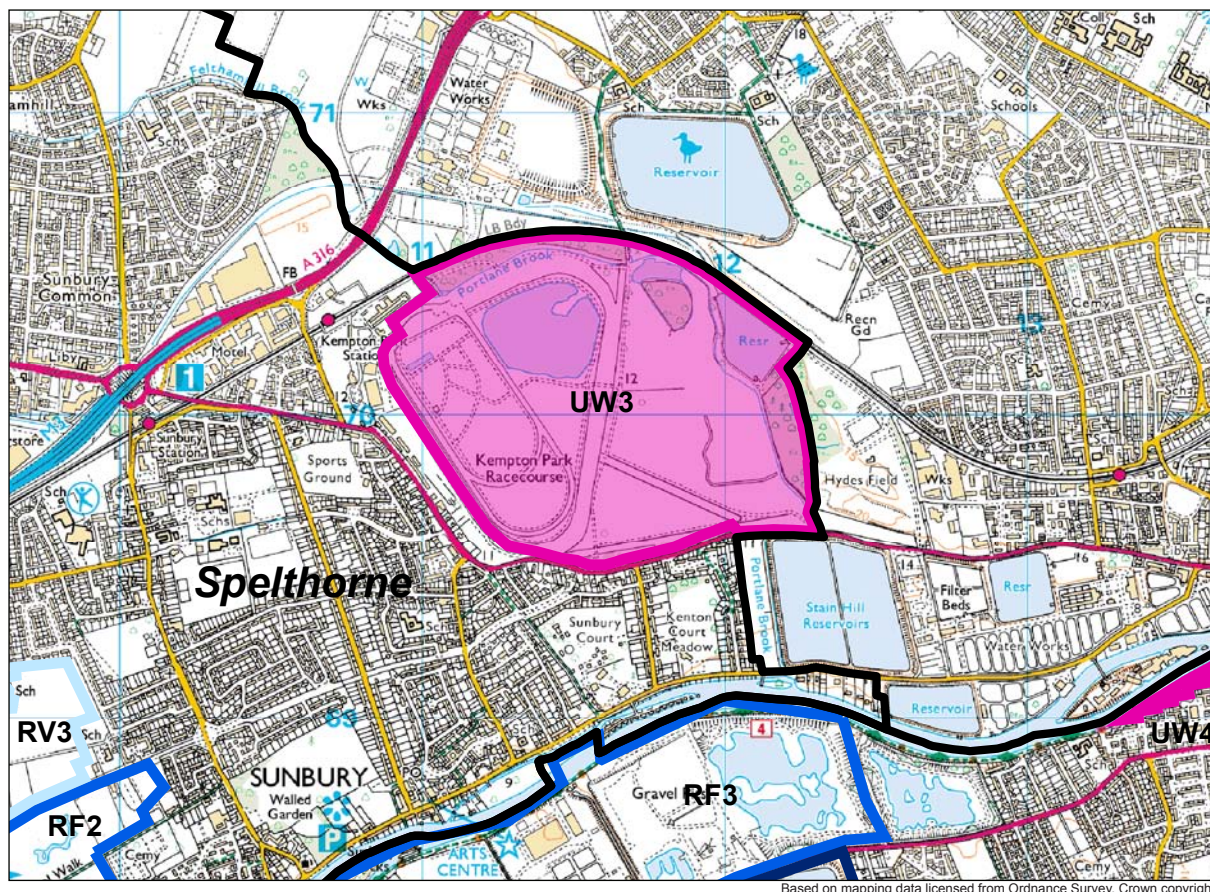
### Location and Boundaries

Located within the urban area between Ashford to the south and Heathrow Airport to the north, at the northern edge of the County. The eastern edge of the area is defined by the county boundary.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand solid geology.
- Part of the wider Thames valley, but annexed by settlement.
- Contains large lakes formed from gravel extraction, plus adjacent fields and sports pitches.
- There are roads and rail routes towards the perimeter of the area.
- There are no public rights of way, but there is a focus on recreation in the form of sports pitches and use of the lakes for water sports.
- The lakes are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.
- Provides a significant area of open water and relief from surrounding Built Up Areas.
- Bedfont Lakes to the east (within Greater London) have been restored from gravel workings to a successful country park, and could be used as a role model for further restoration of Princes Lake to enhance the areas use as a recreational resource.





## UW3: KEMPTON PARK

### Location and Boundaries

Located to the north of Sunbury within the urban area at the northern edge of the county. The northern and eastern edges of the area are defined by the county boundary.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand solid geology.
- Part of the wider Thames valley, but annexed by settlement.
- Contains Kempton Park Racecourse, plus fields, water bodies and woodland to the east.
- Although there are glimpses of the Grandstand buildings, perimeter vegetation and buildings filter views into the race course. Elsewhere the grounds are ringed by a variety of fencing and walls.
- There are no public rights of way or roads through the area.
- Parts of the grounds are covered by a variety of ecological designations, including a small part of the South West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area. Kempton Lake and Half Moon Covert SNCI was selected for its importance for birds, including heron, but also its important grassland and swamp habitats.
- Although providing a visual relief from surrounding Built Up Areas, this is a private landscape. Although not readily accessible physically to the residents of the surrounding urban area, long open views across the site are available from the southern frontage along Staines Road East.



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## **LANDSCAPE TYPE UW: SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACES WITHIN URBAN AREAS EVALUATION AND GUIDANCE**

### **EVALUATION**

Although varied, all these character areas provide pockets of quality landscape, of historic importance or importance for existing biodiversity and biodiversity potential, embedded within the Built Up Areas. They provide open areas that are rural or natural in character in direct contrast to the surrounding dense urban areas of north Surrey, and between Aldershot and Ash.

### **GUIDANCE**

- Conserve and enhance biodiversity value of remnant habitats, and key landscape characteristics that are identified as priority habitats.
- Seek opportunities to link existing habitats through habitat restoration.
- Protect and enhance the landscape setting to adjacent settlements and urban areas.
- Maintain and enhance the network of public access, whilst ensuring significant biodiversity value and resource of these areas is sensitively managed and protected.
- Encourage understanding of the biodiversity and historic elements of the landscape.
- Conserve the historic landscapes, such as along the Hogsmill and around Nonsuch Park.