The future of Surrey’s landscape and woodlands
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PREFACE

Many parts of Surrey possess extremely beautiful landscapes. A quarter of the whole county lies in nationally recognised Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Yet other areas of Surrey face some of the severest pressures for new development of any part of the United Kingdom.

Surrey is the most densely wooded county in England, with approaching 20% woodland cover. Woodland is therefore the most critical element of the character of much of the Surrey landscape.

Both the landscape and woodlands of Surrey have been changing rapidly in the twentieth century - due to development of urban areas and roads, but also due to changing farming practices and changing land and woodland management.

This book, the culmination of five years' preparation, describes the results of the most comprehensive survey of Surrey's landscape and woodlands ever undertaken. It discusses the main issues facing the landscape and woodlands of the county, including: rapid landscape change; erosion of local distinctiveness; loss of heathland, downland and open views due to natural regeneration; neglect of woodlands; and lack of timber markets.

Launched at a conference on 17 October 1997 at the Dorking Halls, the book describes some of the action programmes which the County Council, together with Surrey's other local authorities, the national agencies, local voluntary bodies, and many other individuals and organisations, will aim to undertake over the next 10 years to address these challenges.

The County Council will organise a further conference in October 2001 to review and discuss progress on these programmes and the whole programme will be reviewed in its entirety in 2007.

The material in this book is supported by three technical reports, also available from the County Council, which set out the detailed background work, proposals and guidelines. These reports are:

- The Future of Surrey's Landscape and Woodlands
  - Part 1: Assessment
  - Part 2: Landscape Strategy
  - Part 3: Woodland Strategy

The County Council welcomes the participation of all Surrey communities and organisations in the implementation of the action programmes. Only through the widespread involvement of everybody in the county will the future of Surrey's immensely valuable landscape and woodlands be secured.

Mrs Heather D. Hawker
Chairman of Surrey County Council