

## Surrey Landscape Character Assessment: **Elmbridge 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.

## CONTENTS

1	Introduction	page 1
2	Method Statement	page 2
3	The Surrey Landscape	page 4
4	Landscape Classification	page 8
5	Index of Landscape Types and Character Areas	page 11
6	Descriptions, Evaluation and Guidance of Landscape Types and Character Areas within Elmbridge Borough	page 19

## Figures

Fig 1	Natural England National Character Areas
Fig 2	Surrey Districts and Boroughs, AONBs and National Park
Fig 3	Natural England National Character Areas and Landscape Typologies
Fig 4	Solid Geology
Fig 5	Drift Geology
Fig 6	Flood Zones
Fig 7	Nature Conservation Designations
Fig 8	Ancient Woodland
Fig 9	Historic Features
Fig 10	Surrey Landscape Types
Fig 11	Surrey Character Areas
Fig 12	Elmbridge Borough Character Areas

## Appendix A

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 Elmbridge Borough. Written in context with the county-wide Landscape Character Assessment 2015, there are likely to be references to locations outside of Elmbridge 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 Elmbridge 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 Elmbridge 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	Ashtead 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 Elmbridge 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 Elmbridge 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 Catteshail 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>see page 20</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
LF1	Knowle Hill to Leatherhead Rolling Clay Farmland	see page 22
LF2	Claygate Rolling Clay Farmland	see page 24
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		see page 26

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE LR: WOODED ROLLING CLAYLANDS</b>		<b>see page 30</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
LR1	Wanborough Wooded Rolling Claylands*	
LR2	Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands	see page 32
Evaluation and guidance		see page 34

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE LW: CLAY WOODLAND</b>		<b>see page 38</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
LW1	Great Bookham Common Clay Woodland*	
LW2	Prince Coverts to Leatherhead Common Clay Woodland	see page 40
LW3	Ashted and Epsom Commons Clay Woodland*	
Evaluation and guidance		see page 42

\* These character areas are outside Elmbridge 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 44</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
RF1	Colne River Floodplain*	
RF2	Ash River Floodplain*	
RF3	Thames River Floodplain	see page 48
RF4	Northern Bourne River Floodplain*	
RF5	Windlebrook and Southern Bourne River Floodplain*	
RF6	Blackwater River Floodplain*	
RF7	Lower Wey River Floodplain	see page 50
RF8	Upper Wey River Floodplain*	
RF9	Wey and Arun Canal River Floodplain*	
RF10	Lower Mole River Floodplain	see page 52
RF11	Upper Mole River Floodplain*	
Evaluation and guidance		see page 54

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE RS: RESERVOIRS</b>		<b>see page 58</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
RS1	Thames Valley Reservoirs	see page 60
Evaluation and guidance		see page 61

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE RV: RIVER VALLEY FLOOR</b>	
<b>Character Areas:</b>	
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*
Evaluation and guidance	

\* These character areas are outside Elmbridge 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>see page 62</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	see page 64
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		see page 66

<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE SW: SANDY WOODLAND</b>		<b>see page 70</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	see page 72
SW6	Fairmile to Esher Sandy Woodland	see page 74
SW7	Deepcut Sandy Woodland*	
SW8	Bricksbury Hill to Rowhill Copse Sandy Woodland*	
Evaluation and guidance		see page 76

\* These character areas are outside Elmbridge 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 Elmbridge 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>see page 78</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
UE1	Heathside	see page 80
UE2	Walton Common	see page 82
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		see page 83

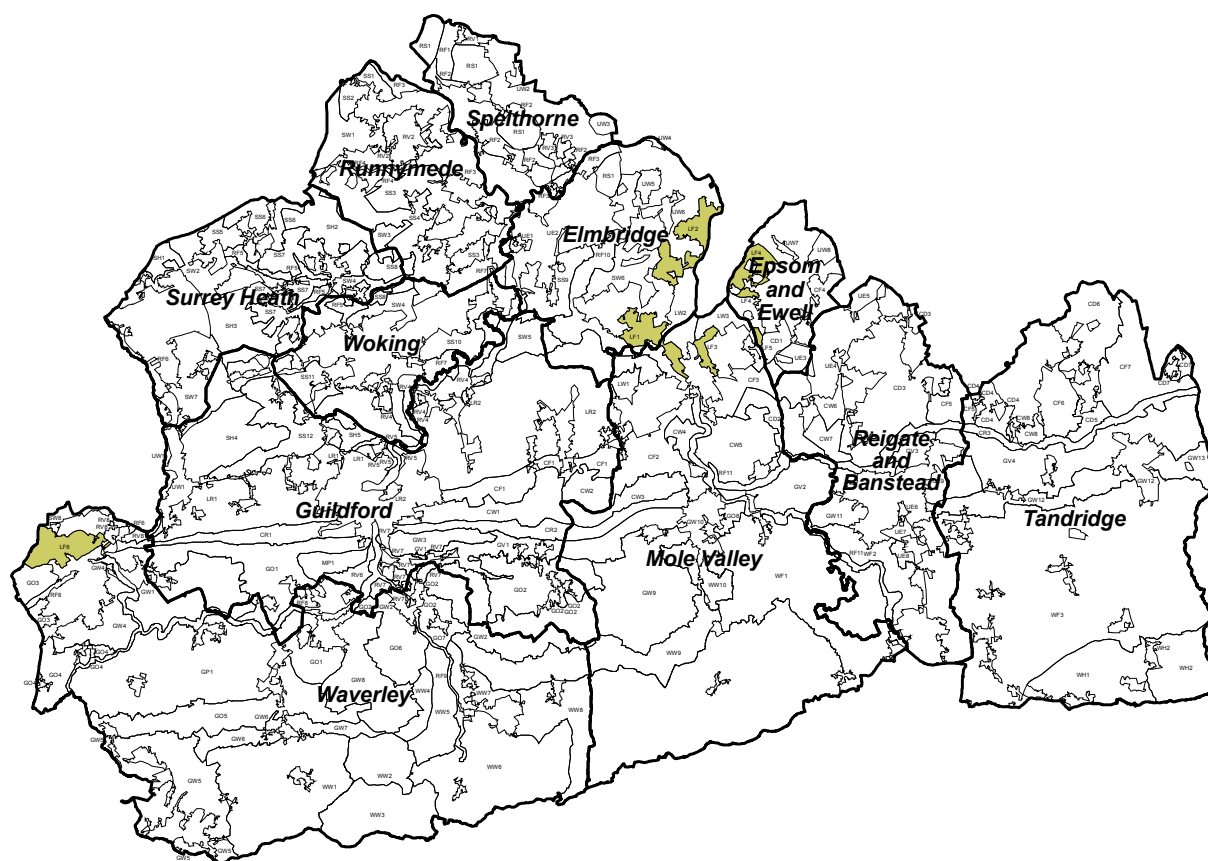
<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE UW: SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACES WITHIN URBAN AREAS</b>		<b>see page 84</b>
<b>Character Areas:</b>		
UW1	North Camp to North Town Lakes*	
UW2	Princes Lakes*	
UW3	Kempton Park*	
UW4	Hurst Park	see page 86
UW5	Island Barn Reservoir and River Ember	see page 88
UW6	Lower Green to Weston Green and Littleworth Common	see page 89
UW7	Ewell Hogsmill*	
UW8	Nonsuch Park*	
Evaluation and guidance		see page 91

\* These character areas are outside Elmbridge 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 ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH**

- 6.1 The following pages describe the landscape types and character areas located within Elmbridge 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 LF: ROLLING CLAY FARMLAND

### Landscape Character Areas

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*

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

## LANDSCAPE TYPE LF: ROLLING CLAY FARMLAND

### Location and Boundaries

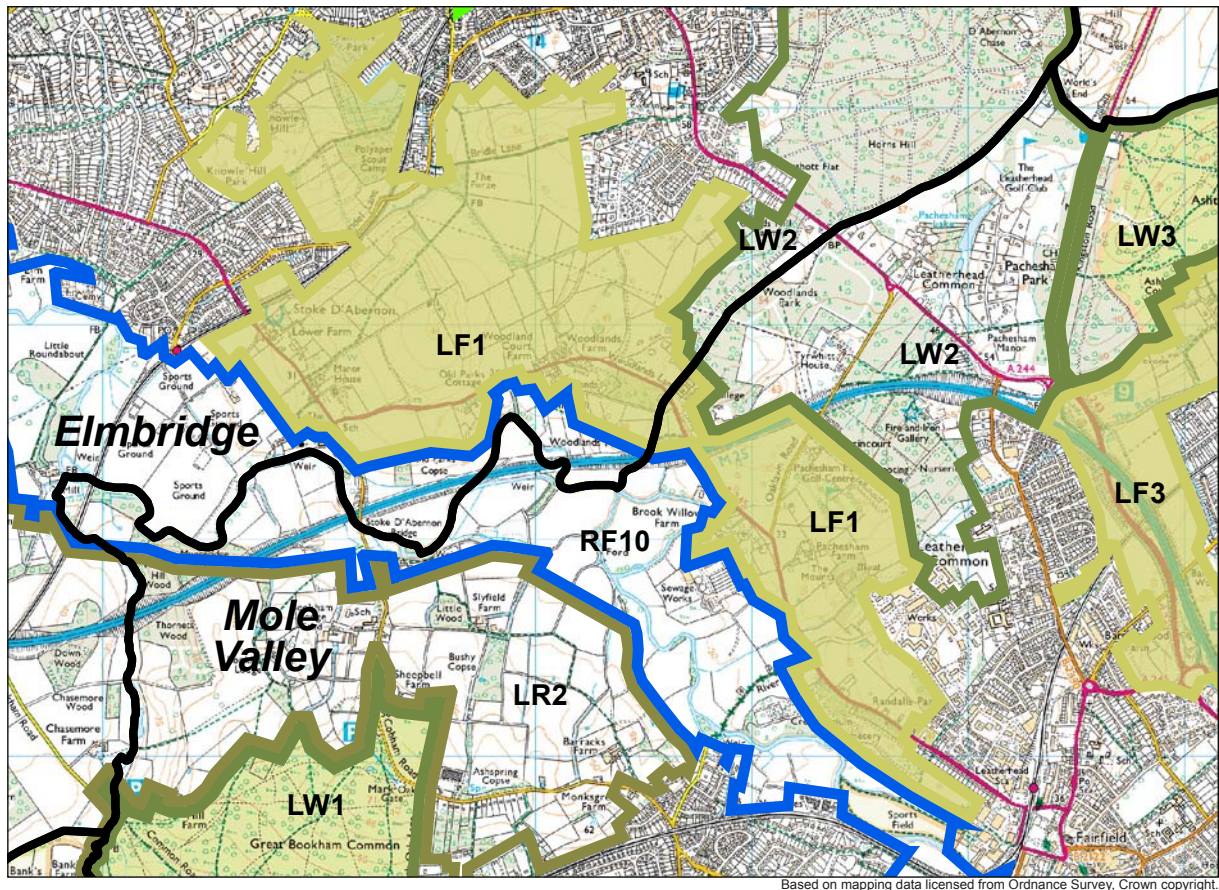
A group of relatively small Character Areas, at either end of the east-west band of Wooded Rolling Claylands (Type LR). Boundaries are based on the underlying geology marking the transition from the clay to the chalk associated with the higher ground to the south and the sand or gravel terraces to the north.



### Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling topography based on the London Clay Formation.
- Largely made up of arable and pastoral farmland, with paddocks, stables, and golf courses. Limited woodland cover generally, with small scattered blocks of woodland, substantially less woodland cover than is evident in the Wooded Rolling Clayland (Type LR).
- Settlement is relatively light, consisting mainly of scattered farmsteads, giving rise to a rural farmland character in some areas.
- Generally, the Character Areas within this Type are surrounded by Built Up Areas which encloses areas of landscape and results in urban influence limiting the sense of tranquillity and remoteness.





## LF1: KNOWLE HILL TO LEATHERHEAD ROLLING CLAY FARMLAND

### Location and Boundaries

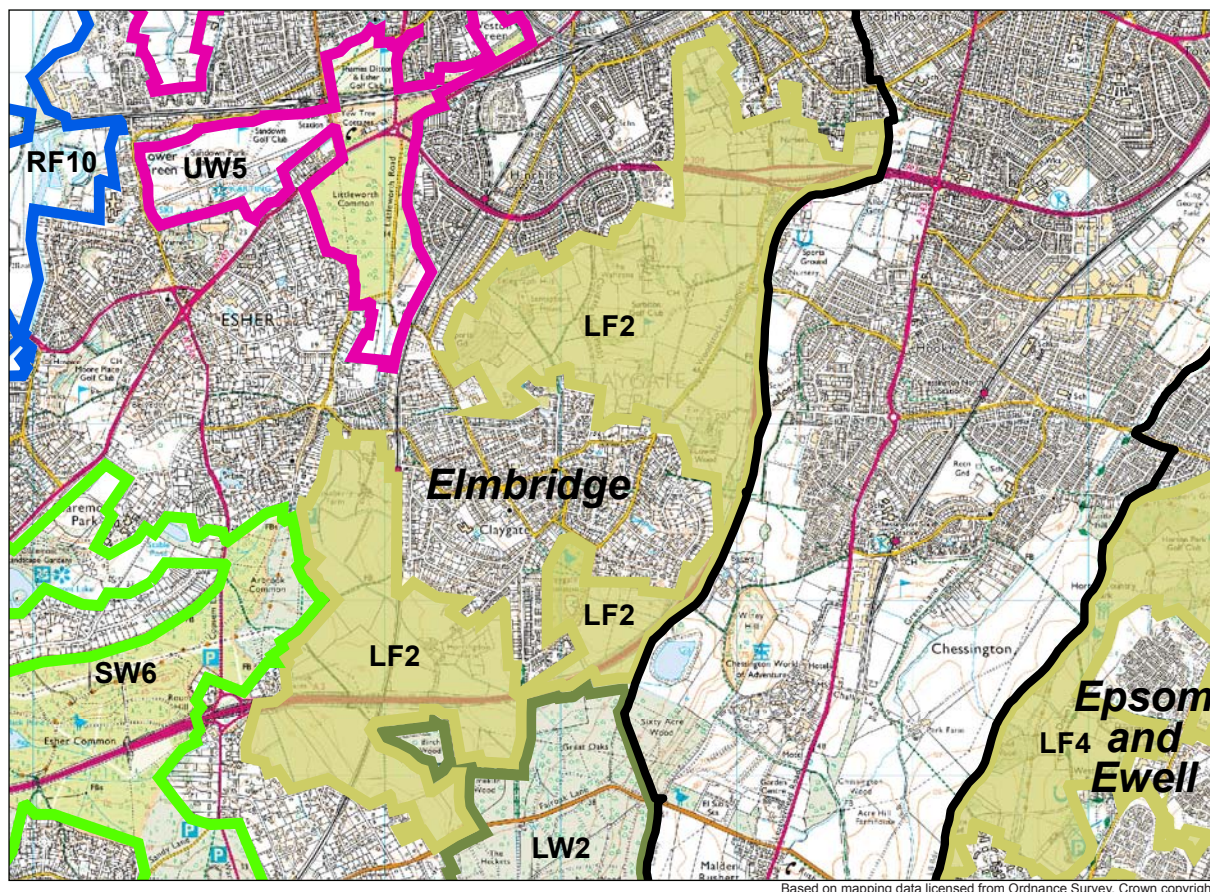
The Knowle Hill to Leatherhead Rolling Clay Farmland Character Area is located to the north-west of Leatherhead. The majority of the boundary follows the edges of woodland, settlement edges and field boundaries adjacent to the floodplain to the south-west. The character area is outside the Surrey Hills AONB.

### Key Characteristics

- Undulating clayland rising up from the River Mole to the south, underlain by the London Clay Formation Clay and Silt solid geology.
- The character area is defined by woodland and settlement to the north, the Mole river floodplain to the south and south-west and Leatherhead to the south-east. The northern part of the character area is surrounded by the Built Up Area of Fairmile.
- The character area consists mainly of arable and pastoral fields, with occasional smaller paddocks associated with farm estates, and a golf course.
- There are occasional blocks of woodland, some of which are recorded as ancient woodland. There is a network of hedgerows along field boundaries and roads, including mature hedgerow trees in places.
- Tree cover limits distant views, although elevated areas allow views across immediate landscape, such as views south from Bridle Lane. Views of adjacent settlement are filtered or obscured entirely by vegetation.
- There are public footpaths within the northern part of the character area, linking in to the surrounding Built Up Areas, but elsewhere rights of way are limited.

- The A245 and Oaklawn Road run through the central and southern parts of the character area. A short stretch of the M25 motorway cuts through the middle of the character area. The Waterloo to Guildford via Cobham railway line passes through the northern part of the character area, with Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon railway station nearby to the west.
- Although parts of the character area are surrounded by Built Up Areas, settlement within the character area is relatively limited, particularly within the northern part of the character area. There are a few individual dwellings, farmsteads, and building complexes including the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation training college, towards the centre of the character area.
- Wooded Fairmile Park at the northernmost corner of the character area is designated as Common Land. The western part of the character area contains the majority of Stoke D'Abernon Conservation Area, and to the south is a Medieval Moated scheduled monument at Patchesham Farm.
- The northern part of the character area is a pleasant rural farmland landscape with less urban influence than to the south, despite adjoining Built Up Areas to the north. Tranquilly and remoteness in the southern part of the character area is reduced by roads, settlement and the golf course.





## LF2: CLAYGATE ROLLING CLAY FARMLAND

### Location and Boundaries

The Claygate Rolling Clay Farmland Character Area surrounds the settlement of Claygate, to the east of Esher. The character area boundary follows the edges of woodland, settlement edges and the county boundary.

### Key Characteristics

- Undulating clayland, rising to high points in the northern part of the character area, underlain by London Clay Formation Clay and Silt, and Claygate Member Sand, Silt and Clay solid geology. The character area wraps around Claygate but is largely to the north and south of the settlement.
- The majority of the character area consists of arable fields. Fields become smaller to the north and include paddocks, nurseries and a golf course.
- Hedgerows of varying quality line field boundaries, although there are gaps in the hedge network. To the south there are a number of mature trees, such as large Oaks, within fields and on boundaries. Tree cover increases to the north to include small blocks of woodland (including some ancient woodland), tree belts and tree lines along roads.
- There are views across areas of larger, more open fields, but tree cover limits distant views generally. There are glimpses of nearby settlement and roads, but these are mostly filtered or obscured entirely by vegetation.
- The character area physically and visually separates Claygate from Oxshott to the south, as well as areas of settlement to the north and east.
- Settlement within the character area is limited to the occasional farmstead and associated complexes of agricultural buildings.



- The character area has a moderate number of public rights of way, although the larger scale landscape to the south has fewer routes than to the north.
- The A3 road runs along the eastern edge of the northern part of the character area, and through the middle of the southern part of the character area. Roads linking the A3 to the A309 form a junction within the northernmost part of the character area. Elsewhere there are relatively few roads within the character area, particular to the south.
- The Waterloo to Guildford via Cobham railway line crosses broadly north-south through the middle of the southern part of the character area.
- Claygate Common is registered as Common Land. Claygate Common and an area to the north are Local Nature Reserves. The character area includes a small part of Long Ditton Conservation Area to the north and abuts Claygate Foley Estate Conservation Area.
- Limited settlement and land use give the area a rural feel, particularly to the south. However, the A3, adjoining roads, and surrounding Built Up Areas, reduce the sense of remoteness and tranquillity in surrounding areas.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE LF: ROLLING CLAY FARMLAND 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:

- Areas of peaceful rural farmland.
- Network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field trees.
- Woodland blocks including areas of ancient woodland of high biodiversity value.
- Meadow pasture of high biodiversity value.
- Seasonally wet soils fed by small brooks and watercourses and naturally high groundwater.
- Limited settlement of scattered farmsteads.

#### Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

##### *Past change*

- Small scale infill and expansion of residential development.
- Loss of hedgerows.
- Decline in numbers of hedgerow trees and field trees.
- Introduction of horse paddocks.
- Expansion of settlement and roads.
- Fragmentation of structure of historic parklands through loss of original houses and key landscape features.
- Golf course development.

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

- Continued infill and expansion of residential development.
- Continued loss of hedgerows.
- Decline in numbers of hedgerow trees and field trees from loss of mature and over mature tree stock.
- Increase in demand for horse paddocks with associated infrastructure such as fencing and shelters.
- Pressure for additional residential development through edge of town and infilling development.
- Development of formal recreational, sport or community facilities associated with settlements.
- Upgrading of rural roads through additional kerbing and signage to accommodate increasing traffic volume, and pressure for further road infrastructure along 'A' roads.

### GUIDANCE

#### Landscape Strategy

The strategy for the Rolling Clay Farmland is to conserve the pastoral landscape with its network of hedgerows and frequent mature trees, woodland and commons of ecological and historic value and the scattered farmsteads including farmhouses and barns of traditional structure and local materials. Elements to be enhanced are the hedgerows, tree cover, meadows, and brooks.

#### 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 hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees, woodlands and meadows.

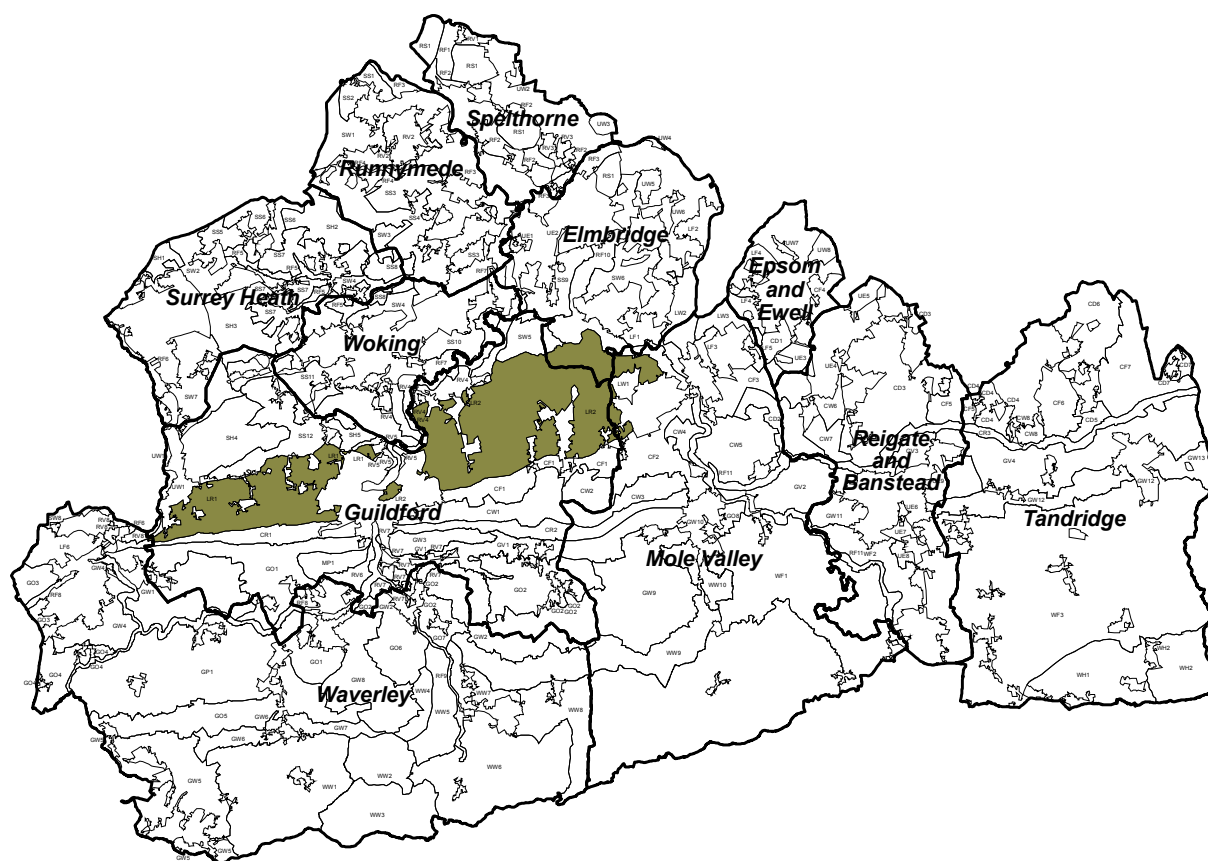
- Resist drainage or water management schemes which could disturb the characteristic land cover and vegetation patterns, adversely affecting the area's character or ecological value.
- Encourage sensitive management of brooks and meadows, to conserve and enhance habitats on seasonally wet soils. Character Area LF4 coincides with Surrey's Thames Basin Lowlands biodiversity opportunity area TBL04. Character Area LF3 contains the Rye Brook and associated meadows.
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension of the landscape to landowners including the field patterns, remnants of parkland and the woodlands, and underlying archaeology.
- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing with local landowners and the farming community.
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands.
- Promote the use of locally appropriate native species, within woodlands and hedgerows.
- Enhance the hedgerows by replanting and consistent management and resist development that will result in further loss/fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Protect and maintain new hedgerow trees.
- Conserve field trees (often oaks) through management of surrounding pasture by for instance avoiding over grazing and consider opportunities for planting new field trees.
- Raise awareness and conserve local historic dimension of the landscape , alongside local hydrology to encourage sustainable drainage.
- Conserve and where appropriate encourage repair of the historic parkland to maintain and restore key elements such as parkland trees and boundary features.
- Encourage traditional heathland management techniques on the common heathland
- Encourage appropriate siting and management of horse paddocks, for instance in utilising existing hedges or planting new native hedges as boundary treatments. Resist fencing small areas of land out of keeping with the scale of surrounding field patterns.
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.
- Avoid development of permanent exercise areas and siting of exercise equipment such as treadmills, pens, and jumps where this is visually intrusive on the landscape or detrimental to its character.

### ***Built Development***

- Seek to conserve fragmented landscapes including the surviving areas of open farmland with scattered farmsteads.
- Retain the individual settlements avoiding merging these through dense linear development along roads.
- Retain gaps in linear development particularly where these allow rural views over farmland.
- Conserve built features associated with historic estates and seek to conserve historic designed landscape.
- Encourage any new built development to respect local characteristics, including support of sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials. Refer to Surrey design guides; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).
- Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their form and relationship to landscape and landscape elements.
- Avoid the location of any new large development or bulky structures where these would be 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 area's rural context.

- Promote the use of appropriate plant species and boundary treatments at urban edges to better integrate development into the adjacent rural character.
- Improve the present understanding of the general pattern of settlements, with regard to their form and relationship to landscape and landscape elements.
- Resist further urbanisation of roads through encouraging appropriate surfacing of existing pavements, enhancing the immediate landscape setting and ensuring minimum clutter.
- Enhance the character of the settled roads through taking opportunities for rural planting of hedgerows and native trees.
- Ensure that lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' in the more rural unsettled sections of the area particularly to the south.
- Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.

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## LANDSCAPE TYPE LR: WOODED ROLLING CLAYLANDS

### Landscape Character Areas

LR1	Wanborough Wooded Rolling Claylands*
LR2	Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands

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

## LANDSCAPE TYPE LR: WOODED ROLLING CLAYLANDS

### Location and Boundaries

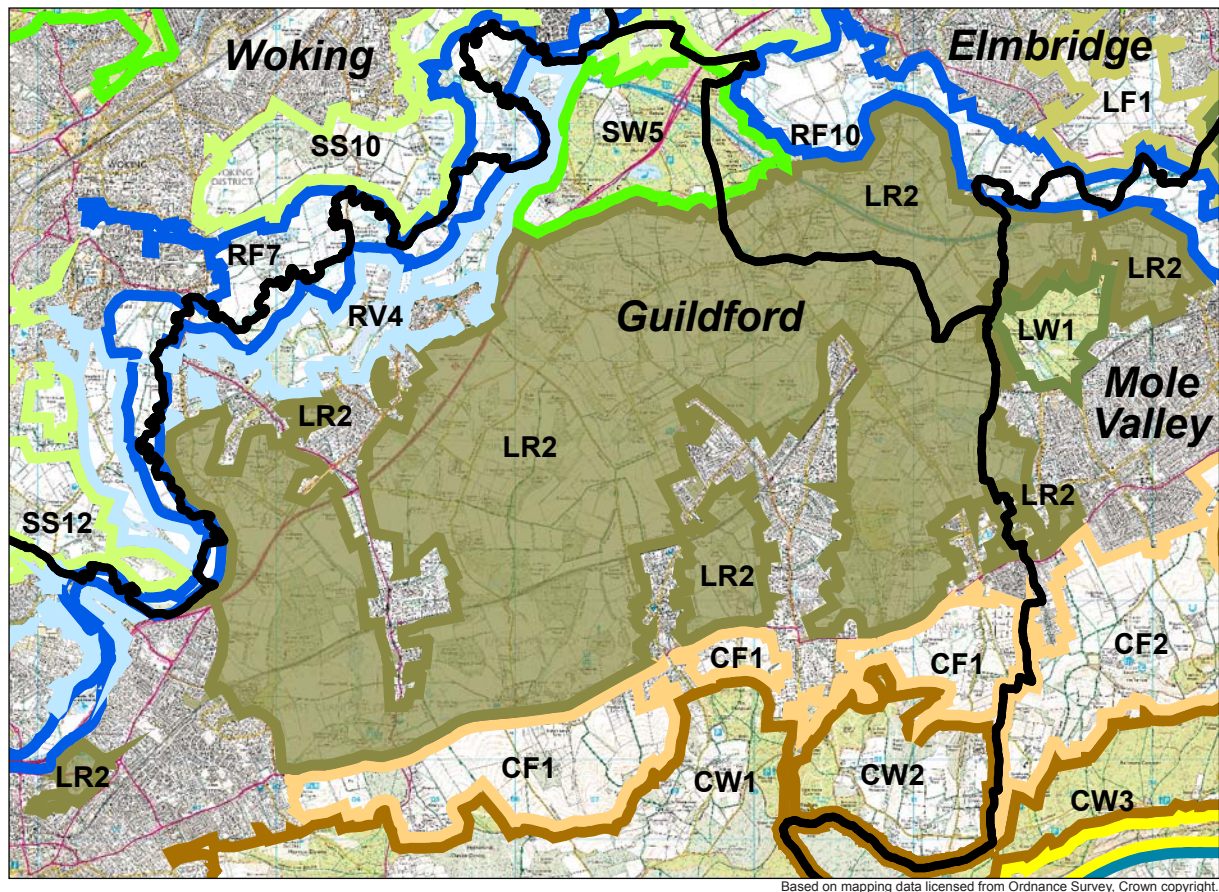
The two areas in the Wooded Rolling Claylands Landscape Type form a broad band running east-west, either side of Guildford. Boundaries are based on the underlying geology marking the transition from the clay to the higher ground of the chalk to the south and the sand or gravel to the north.



### Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling lowland based on the London Clay Formation.
- A mix of land uses with pastoral and arable farmland, woodland and historic parkland.
- Contains woodland blocks, occasionally relatively large. Woodland is dispersed unlike the continuous tracts of woodland within the Clay Woodland Type (LW).
- Settlement pattern is either scattered farmsteads and small, nucleated villages, or substantial areas of largely 20th century dwellings clustered along the line of the railway and extending along the rural roads.
- A largely peaceful, rural landscape fragmented in some areas by modern ribbon development.
- Historic landscape patterns associated with small farms and early human occupation.





## LR2: OCKHAM AND CLANDON WOODED ROLLING CLAYLANDS

### Location and Boundaries

Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands is a broad band of land lying to the east of Guildford. The boundaries are defined by the change in underlying geology from the London Clay to the rising chalk downs to the south (following the line of the A246) and to the gravel terrace and sand heath to the north. The character area continues eastwards until reaching the Lower Mole river floodplain. The character area is outside the Surrey Hills AONB, but adjoins it in small places to the south.

### Key Characteristics

- Gently sloping lowland based mainly on the London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand solid geology.
- The area supports a range of land uses; pastoral and arable farmland, woodland, parkland and leisure along with substantial settlements spreading along roads.
- Medium to large scale fields of pasture and some arable are bounded by hedgerows or fences.
- Parkland is prominent with a line of historic parks to the south of the area with open grassland, mature parkland trees (often oaks), woodland plantations, lakes, and views to grand houses.
- Blocks of woodland and plantations are often associated with the historic parks. Shaws are a common feature, and there is a significant, but dispersed, amount of ancient woodland.
- Horse paddocks are present particularly to the north where they fragment the field pattern by subdividing the large fields with fences, and attract associated buildings and facilities.
- Network of small streams, ponds and ditches.



- Dissected by major transport routes including the A3 (both old and new), London to Portsmouth Road, and a stretch of the M25 motorway along with the large recently constructed motorway service area. Elsewhere, there are narrow roads enclosed by hedgerows. The London-Portsmouth main railway line passes through the character area, including West Clandon railway station, and Effingham Junction railway station where the main line meet the Mole Valley railway line.
- Settlement consists of scattered farmsteads, grand houses in parkland and large extended villages, some with historic village cores, which expanded following the arrival of the railway, creating a strong suburban feel in some areas.
- Varied building materials include brick, timber frame, flint and weatherboard with tile and some thatch roofs.
- The character area contains a considerable number of Conservation Areas including West Clandon, East Clandon, West Horsley, East Horsley, Ockham, Effingham, Downside Village, Cobham Plough Corner, Little Bookham, and a small part of the Ripley Conservation Area.
- Clandon Park and Hatchland Gardens, towards the south of the character area are listed as historic parks and gardens, and there are scheduled monuments south of Boughton Mall and near Effingham.
- There are various Sites of Nature Conservation Importance across the character area, such as Cotts Wood, Clandon Woods, Lollesworth Woods, and Wisley Field. There a few small areas of Common Land, including Effingham Common, and the northern part of the character area includes a small part of the Ockham and Wisley Local Nature Reserve.
- A fragmented area, enriched by parklands and woodland but with rural views often obscured by settlement.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE LR: WOODED ROLLING CLAYLANDS

### 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 rural character.
- Network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field trees.
- Woodland blocks including substantial areas of ancient woodland of high biodiversity value.
- Commons with their heathland vegetation, Open Access Land and function as a rural setting to roadside development.
- Historic parklands and designed views.
- Historic villages and farmsteads.
- Sparse settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads in some sections especially to the south.
- Views to the unsettled rural backdrop of the chalk ridge to the south.

##### **Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures**

###### ***Past change***

- Small scale infill and expansion of residential development along roads and within small areas defined by roads (such as Flexford).
- Loss of hedgerows.
- Decline in numbers of hedgerow trees and field trees.
- Decline in active management of woodland.
- Encroachment of woodland onto open heathland of the commons.
- Introduction of horse paddocks.
- Expansion of settlement and roads, and development of plant nurseries.
- Fragmentation of structure of historic parklands through loss of original houses and key landscape features.
- Golf course development.
- M25, A3 and A246 corridors.

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

- Continued infill and expansion of residential development.
- Continued loss of hedgerows.
- Decline in numbers of hedgerow trees and field trees from loss of mature and over mature tree stock.
- Increase in demand for horse paddocks with associated infrastructure such as fencing and shelters.
- Further loss of open heathland due to regenerating woodland.
- Further loss of historic designed landscapes through conversion to modern use.
- Pressure for additional residential development through edge of town and infilling development.
- Development of formal recreational, sport or community facilities associated with settlements.
- Upgrading of rural roads through additional kerbing and signage to accommodate increasing traffic volume, and pressure for further road infrastructure along 'A' roads and motorway.

## GUIDANCE

### ***Landscape Strategy***

The strategy for the Wooded Rolling Clayland is to conserve the pastoral landscape with its partially intact network of hedgerows and frequent mature trees, its woodland and commons of ecological and historic value and the sparsely scattered farmsteads including farmhouses and barns of traditional structure and local materials. Elements to be enhanced are the hedgerows, tree cover, and the settlement pattern where this dilutes the rural character of the area.

### Landscape Guidelines

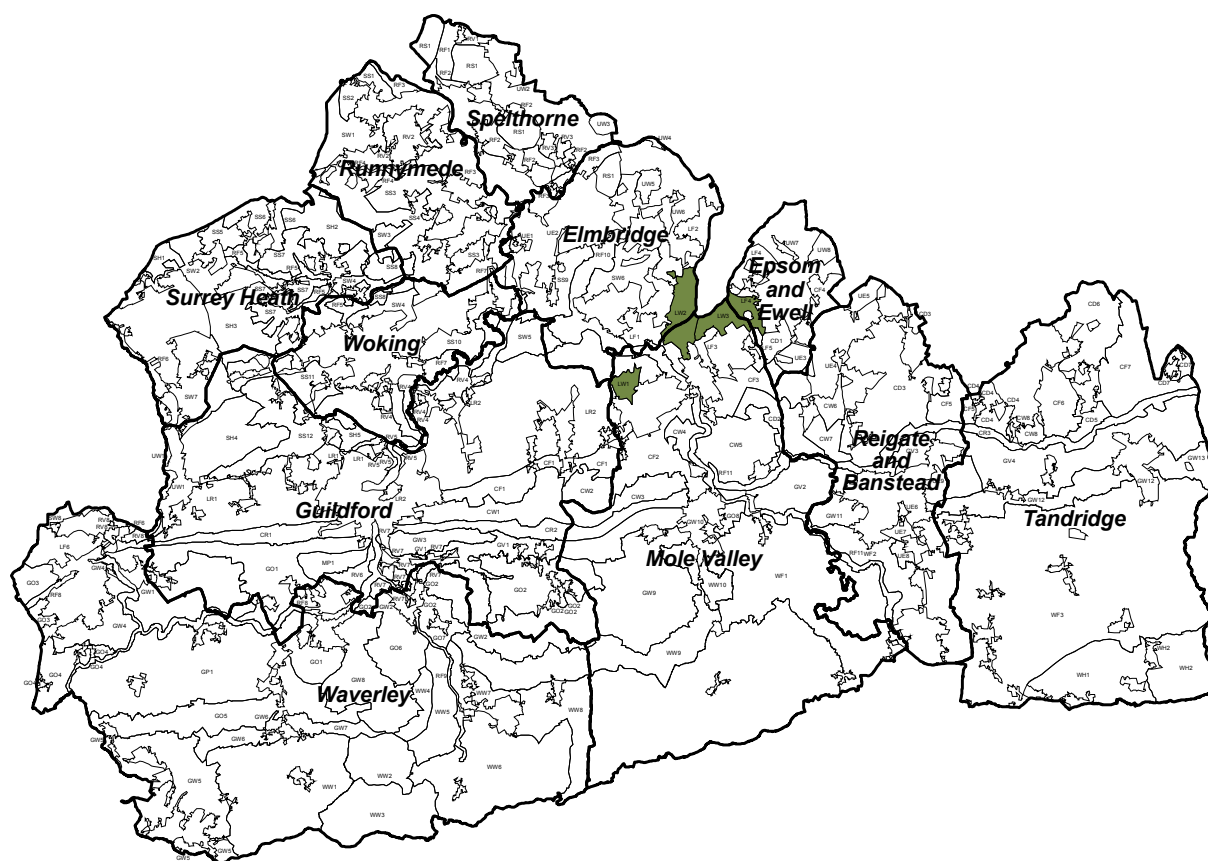
#### ***Land Management***

- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as the hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees and woodlands.
- Resist drainage or water management schemes which could disturb the characteristic land cover and vegetation patterns, adversely affecting the area's character or ecological value. This character area type coincides with Surrey's Thames Basin Lowlands biodiversity opportunity area, important for habitats associated with seasonally wet soils.
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape including the field patterns, remnants of parkland and woodlands. Conserve historic elements of the landscape.
- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing with local landowners and the farming community.
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands.
- Promote the use of locally appropriate native species within woodlands and hedgerows.
- Enhance the hedgerows by replanting and consistent management and resist development that will result in further loss/fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Protect and maintain new hedgerow trees.
- Conserve field trees (often oaks) through management of surrounding pasture by for instance avoiding over grazing and consider opportunities for planting new field trees.
- Raise awareness of local historic dimension and local hydrology to encourage sustainable drainage.
- Conserve and where appropriate encourage repair of the historic parkland to maintain and restore key elements such as parkland trees and boundary features.
- Encourage traditional heathland management techniques on the common heathland.
- Encourage appropriate siting and management of horse paddocks, for instance in utilising existing hedges or planting new native hedges as boundary treatments. Resist fencing small areas of land out of keeping with the scale of surrounding field patterns.
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.
- Avoid development of permanent exercise areas and siting of exercise equipment such as treadmills, pens, and jumps where this is visually intrusive on the landscape or detrimental to its character.

### ***Built Development***

- Seek to conserve fragmented landscapes including the surviving areas of open farmland with scattered farmsteads.
- Conserve the small roadside commons that form the rural setting for Wood Street Village.
- Consider creating similar small semi-natural public open spaces to enhance the rural character of settlement elsewhere in the area (for instance at Willey Green or Ash Green) and to integrate it with the rural landscape.
- Retain the individual settlements avoiding merging these through dense linear development along roads.
- Retain gaps in linear development (for instance between Great Westwood and Flexford) particularly where these allow rural views over farmland.
- Conserve built features associated with historic estates and seek to conserve historic designed landscape.
- Encourage any new built development to respect local characteristics, including support of sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials. Refer to Surrey design guides; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).
- Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their form and relationship to landscape and landscape elements.
- Avoid the location of any new large mass of development 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 area's rural context.
- Promote the use of appropriate plant species and boundary treatments at urban edges to better integrate development into the adjacent rural character.
- Improve the present understanding of the general pattern of settlements, with regard to their form and relationship to landscape and landscape elements.
- Resist further urbanisation of roads through encouraging appropriate surfacing of existing pavements, enhancing the immediate landscape setting and ensuring minimum clutter.
- Enhance the character of the settled roads through taking opportunities for rural planting of hedgerows and oak and ash trees.
- Ensure that lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' in the more rural unsettled sections of the area particularly to the south.
- Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.
- Conserve the views south to the rural, unsettled ridge of the Hog's Back for instance from the south side of Flexford.

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## LANDSCAPE TYPE LW: CLAY WOODLAND

### Landscape Character Areas

LW1	Great Bookham Common Clay Woodland*
LW2	Prince Coverts to Leatherhead Common Clay Woodland
LW3	Ashted and Epsom Commons Clay Woodland*

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



## LANDSCAPE TYPE LW: CLAY WOODLAND

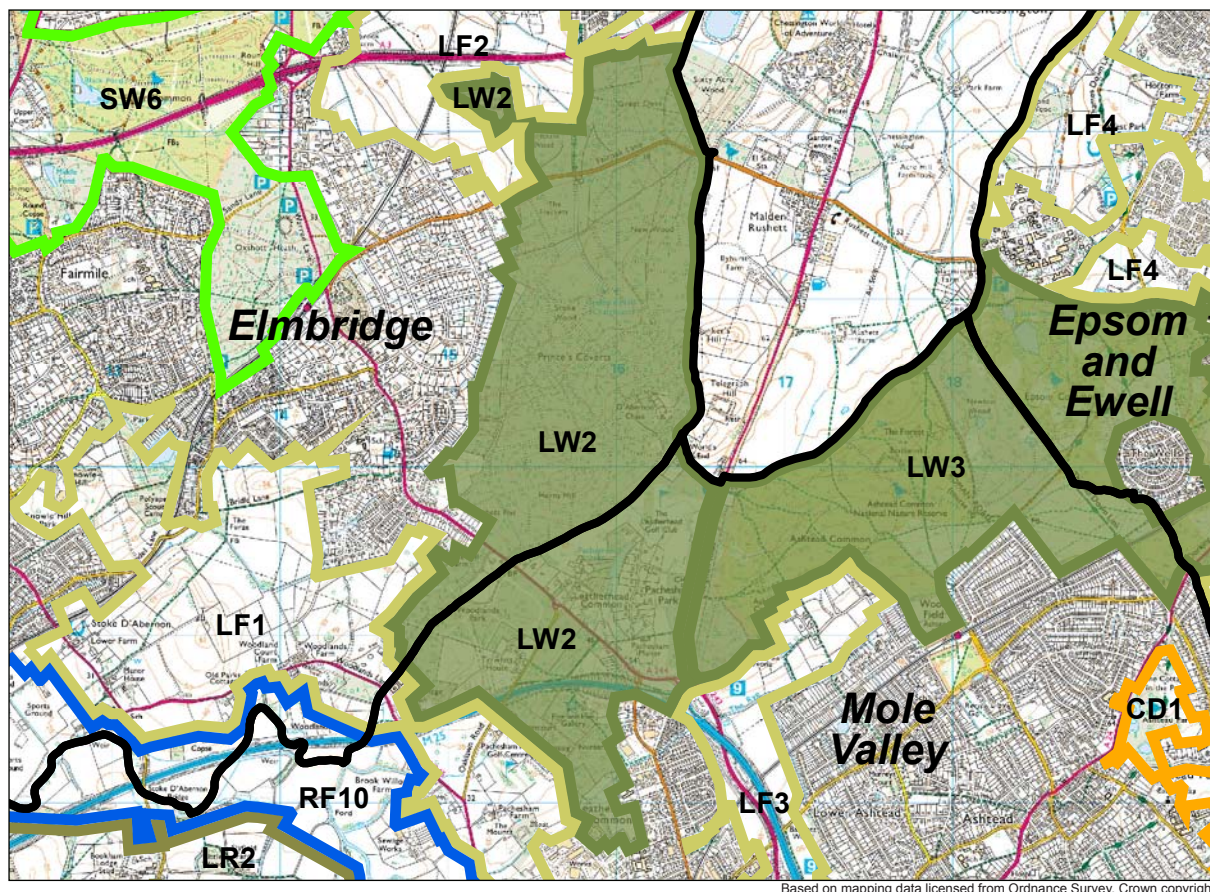
### Location and Boundaries

The Clay Woodland Type consists of three Character Areas, covering a relatively small area north of Leatherhead. The Type is towards the eastern end of a band of clayland located between sandy heathland to the north and Downs to the south.



### Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling lowland based on the London Clay Formation.
- Consists mostly of large tracts of wooded common.
- Contains limited settlement, the main exception being an area of low density dwellings and golf course located within the woodland north of Leatherhead.
- Abuts significant areas of built up settlement.
- A seclude, largely peaceful landscape, due to the extensive woodland cover.



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## LW2: PRINCE'S COVERTS TO LEATHERHEAD COMMON CLAY WOODLAND

### Location and Boundaries

The Prince's Coverts to Leatherhead Common Clay Woodland is located to the north of Leatherhead, and is largely defined by the county boundary and the edges of settlement. The boundary follows the edges of woodland, settlement, and roads.

### Key Characteristics

- Wooded Clayland, underlain by the London Clay Formation Clay and Silt solid geology.
- The majority of the character area faces to the north-west, rising to a high point at Horns Hill in the southern part of the character area. The character area is bounded by Oxshott to the west, Leatherhead to the south and the County boundary to the east.
- The northern and central parts of the character area consist of an extensive tract of woodland known as Prince's Covert, large parts of which are ancient woodland, along with areas of conifer and broadleaf plantation. The character area extends south to include Leatherhead Common and incorporates Leatherhead golf course.
- Teazle Wood and Therfield Playing field form a green finger of land south of the M25 adjacent to Leatherhead. Teazle Wood is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.
- Tree cover contains wider views, however there are impressive views along routes within the woodland.
- Prince's Coverts is owned and managed by the Crown Estates, with the majority of pedestrian and riding routes through the woodland open to the public by arrangement.



- A short length of the M25 motorway passes through the southern end of the character area, mostly in cutting. Access to large tracts of woodland is limited to low-key woodland tracks. There are a few public footpaths to the south, but not formal public rights of way through Prince's Covert.
- There are a small number of low density dwellings and a golf course around Patchesham but Prince's Coverts is almost entirely unsettled.
- The majority of the character area is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance for its, largely ancient, woodland.
- Human influence is evident through woodland management, but the woodland provides a high degree of tranquillity and sense of remoteness.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE LW: CLAY WOODLAND 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:

- Varied woodlands, including extensive tracts of ancient woods, distinctive old oaks, plantations and heath land, with high biodiversity and historic value.
- High proportion of natural greenspace designated for nature conservation.
- Peaceful, mostly secluded landscape with limited settlement.
- Roads through woodland forming corridor views overhung by trees.
- Immediate views, or more distant views largely framed by woodland.
- Large areas of Common land with extensive public right of way network.

#### Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

##### *Past Change*

- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Loss of broadleaf woodland and increase in conifer plantations.
- Increased use of the area for leisure leading to the creation of car parks and picnic areas (suffering problems with fly tipping), and golf courses.

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

- Further loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, including threat to distinctive old oaks from bracken and birch.
- Proximity of areas designated for high biodiversity value to urban areas.
- Pressure for further recreational facilities such as car parks and increasing use of footpaths, bridleways and Open Access Land.
- Pressure for further expansion of settlement.
- Increasing traffic on narrow rural lane including sunken lanes leading to damage to the structure of the lanes and urbanisation through kerbing, additional lighting and signage.

### GUIDANCE

#### Landscape Strategy

The strategy for Clay Woodland landscape is to conserve the peaceful, rural landscape with large tracts of ancient woodland. Opportunities for enhancement are restocking and replanting of hedgerows and ensuring appropriate management of varied woodlands to conserve their ecological and historic interest.

#### Landscape Guidelines

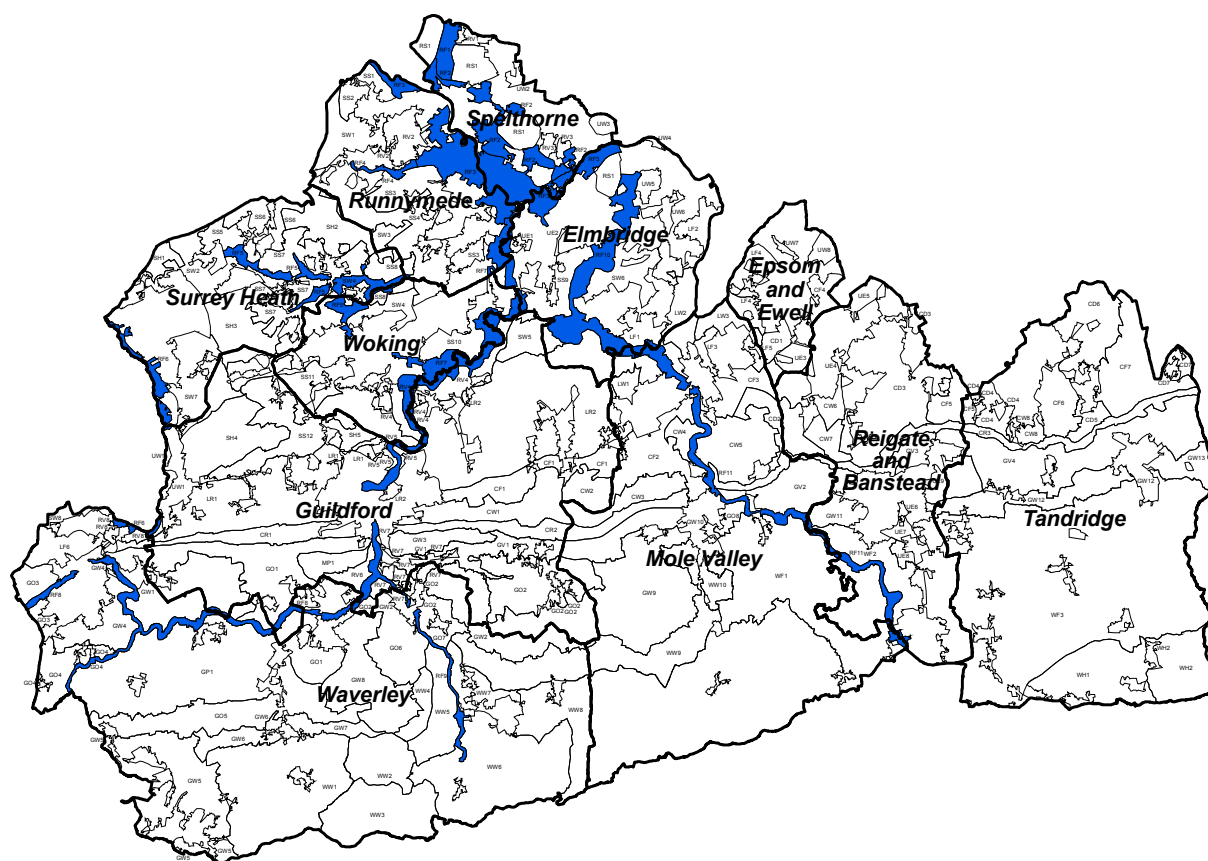
##### *Land Management*

- This character area type coincides with Surrey's Thames Basin Lowlands biodiversity opportunity area. Consisting of slowly permeable seasonally wet rich loam and clay soils which supports large areas of woodland.
- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing with local landowners and the farming community.
- Encourage sustainable woodland and the use of locally appropriate species.

- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows.
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension of the landscape to landowners including the field patterns and woodlands, and underlying archaeology. Conserve historic elements of the landscape.
- Seek appropriate siting of facilities for leisure and tourism through visitor management plan to predict and support appropriate levels of circulation and movement patterns.
- Resist the loss of rural character through the spread of urbanising features associated with leisure use such as car parks.
- Encourage appropriate surfacing, materials and signage for footpaths, bridleways and car parks to retain the rural, unsettled character of the landscape.
- Remove fly tipping as soon as possible.
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.
- Avoid development of permanent exercise areas and siting of exercise equipment such as treadmills, pens, and jumps where this is visually intrusive on the landscape.

### ***Built Development***

- Conserve the sense of seclusion with sparse settlement.
- Maintain the wooded and undeveloped skyline.
- Ensure lighting schemes are assessed for visual and biodiversity impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the ridge slopes and skyline.
- Promote the use of traditional materials and signage features with particular regard to local style and materials. Refer to Surrey design guides; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).
- Avoid urbanisation and ensure all types of surfacing are sympathetic to the rural and natural character of the landscape.



## 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 Elmbridge 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.



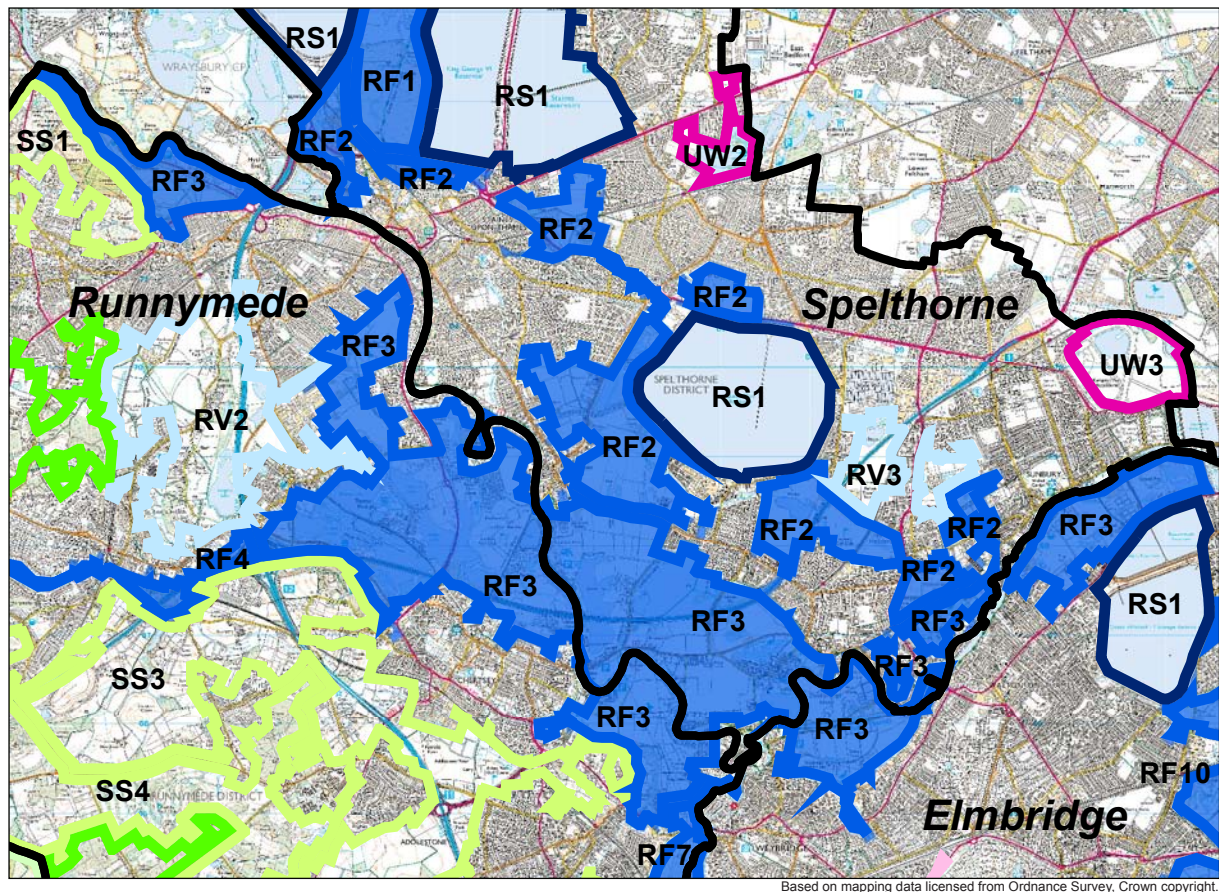
### Key Characteristics

- 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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## RF3: THAMES RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Boundaries

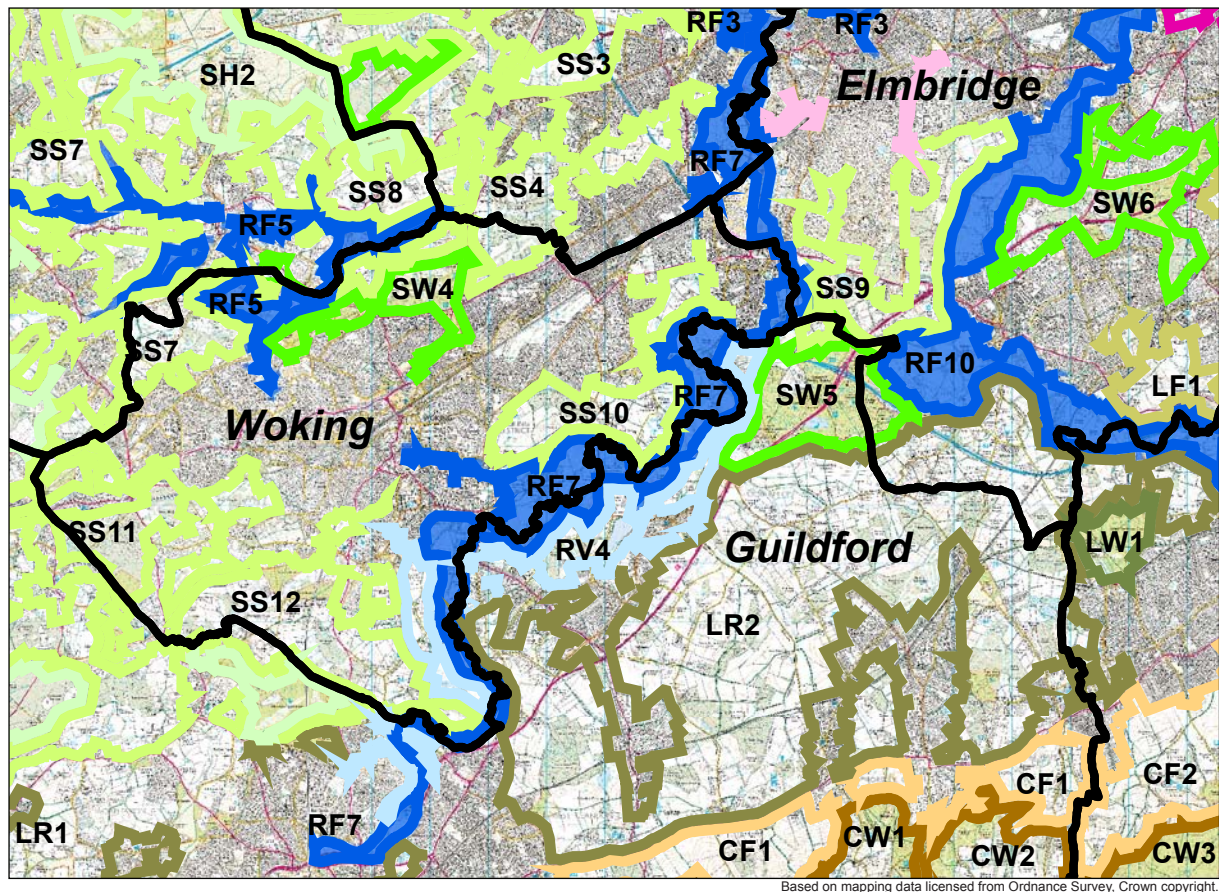
The Thames River Floodplain is a relatively broad character area stretching across the northern part of the county from north of Egham to West Molesey. The character area is made up of four areas, with the eastern and western ends of the character area separated by settlement. The boundary of the character 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.





## RF7: LOWER WEY RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Boundaries

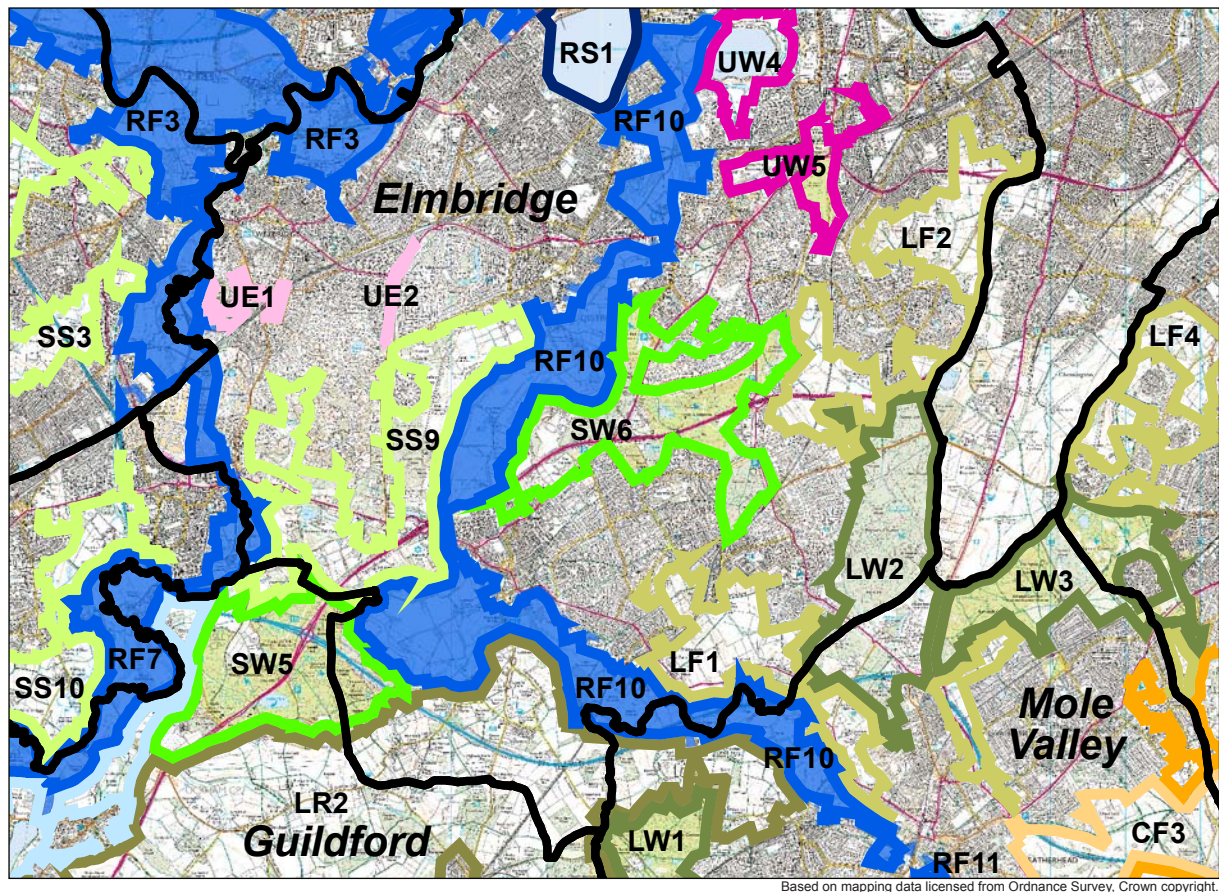
The Lower Wey River Floodplain extends northwards from Guildford until it reaches the Thames. The boundary of the character area broadly follows the edge of the flood zone, although it is taken to nearby easily recognisable features in places. This stretch of the Wey is outside the Surrey Hills AONB.

### Key Characteristics

- Flat, low lying flood plain of the River Wey, underlain by Bagshot Formation Sand, and London Clay Formation, Silt and Sand solid geology, with superficial Alluvium deposits.
- Presence of the River Wey in multiple channels, streams and open water bodies and the River Wey Navigation with its locks and towpath.
- A largely pastoral landscape, including meadows grazed by cattle. Includes other uses along its length, such as golf courses, sewage works, former quarry workings and the disused airfield at Brooklands.
- Irregular small to medium fields enclosed by ditches with ditch lined trees or by rural fences. There are blocks and belts of alder woods along the river plus willows and pollards lining the ditches. Occasional small areas of ancient woodland.
- Views at the southern and northern-most ends of the character area are enclosed by the adjoining Built Up Areas, but within the central part of the character area there are more distant views over the pastoral flood plain, except where the river is enclosed by riparian woodland.
- Very sparse settlement of a few farmsteads, buildings associated with the river and Wey Navigation, and occasional industrial buildings.
- The A3 road passes through the southern end of the character area. Elsewhere, rural lanes cross the river on small stone bridges but there is little road access overall.

- A triangle of railway lines cross the northern part of the character area. Byfleet and New Haw station on the Waterloo to Woking line is within the character area and Weybridge railway station, on the same line, is within walking distance of the character area. The elevated section of the M25 skirts the character area just to the west of the station.
- The character area is well served by public rights of way, including the Wey Navigation Long Distance Path, which are part of the varied leisure use of the character area including walking, boating and cycling.
- The ruins of Newark Priory form an important landmark in the level landscape of the flood plain, and there are several scheduled monuments associated with the river, such as Woking Palace moated site, fish ponds and ruins at Oldhall Copse. The character area contains a number of Conservation Areas including Brooklands, Ockham Mill, Wey and Godalming Navigations and Sutton Park. Significant lengths along the character area are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, including Roundbridge Farm with its drains, hedges and river banks, and acid grassland at Brooklands.
- This is a generally peaceful, pastoral landscape with a secluded, rural ambiance with views across water meadows to historic buildings such as chapels, churches and the Newark Priory. Human influences and glimpses of surrounding Built Up Areas temper the sense of remoteness.





## RF10: LOWER MOLE RIVER FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Boundaries

The Lower Mole River Floodplain Character Area widens from the Upper Mole River Floodplain near Leatherhead, and winds northwards until it reaches the River Thames near Hampton Court. The extent of the character area is largely defined by the flood zone, 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 or field boundaries. This stretch of the Mole is outside the Surrey Hills AONB.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation Clay and Silt, and Claygate Member Sand, Silt and Clay, Bagshot Formation Sand solid geology, with Alluvium superficial deposits.
- Flat, low lying flood plain of the River Mole.
- The southern part of the character area cuts through claylands, with the river meandering past the south-western edge of Cobham. The northern part of the character area forms a corridor through areas of settlement.
- The southernmost part of the character area separates Leatherhead and Fetcham. It winds roughly north-west and widens out around Cobham. It then turns northwards and runs between West End and Esher (which abut the character area to the east), from Hersham and Walton-On-Thames (to the west).
- River forms wide meanders, and multiple channels. The valley floor also contains small watercourses, streams, lakes and water bodies often linked to the river.

- Consists of a mixture of pastoral and arable fields, with riparian vegetation and occasional blocks of woodland. Incorporates occasional remnant parkland, including areas of large individual mature trees within fields. Landscape degrades towards the north and includes golf courses, recreation, horticulture, paddocks, and mineral works.
- Includes very limited areas of ancient woodland.
- Irregular, medium scale fields, with a moderate hedgerow network (particularly to the south), ditches and tree lines.
- The sense of enclosure varies along the character area, although vegetation helps reduce views of urban influence from adjacent settlement.
- Major roads, including the M25, A3 and A244, the Waterloo to Woking railway line, and the Waterloo to Guildford via Cobham railway line, cut across the character area. Public access into the character area and to the river are relatively limited, with only a small number of rights of way crossing the character area.
- Settlement within the character area is also limited, mainly consisting of the occasional farmstead.
- The character area includes small parts of a number of Conservation Areas including the Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham Plough Corner, and Cobham, Conservation Areas. The character area also borders the Cobham The Tilt, and the West End Conservation Areas. The character area contains the south-western park of the historic Painshill Park.
- Field Common/Hersham Pits, and Cobham Park are designated as a Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. River Lane Fields is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest and Local Nature Reserve, within the southern portion of the character area.
- The floodplain landscape has a high degree of distinctiveness as it passes through the wider landscape. The river forms wide meanders, creating a wide flat valley floor that increases the prominence of the river corridor and riparian vegetation beyond that of the river itself.
- Limited settlement and public access aid the sense of tranquillity, although the sense of remoteness is reduced by surrounding urban influence to the north. Some public paths cross the valley floor towards the south through the section from Cobham down to Fetcham, with good access at Fetcham.

## 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***

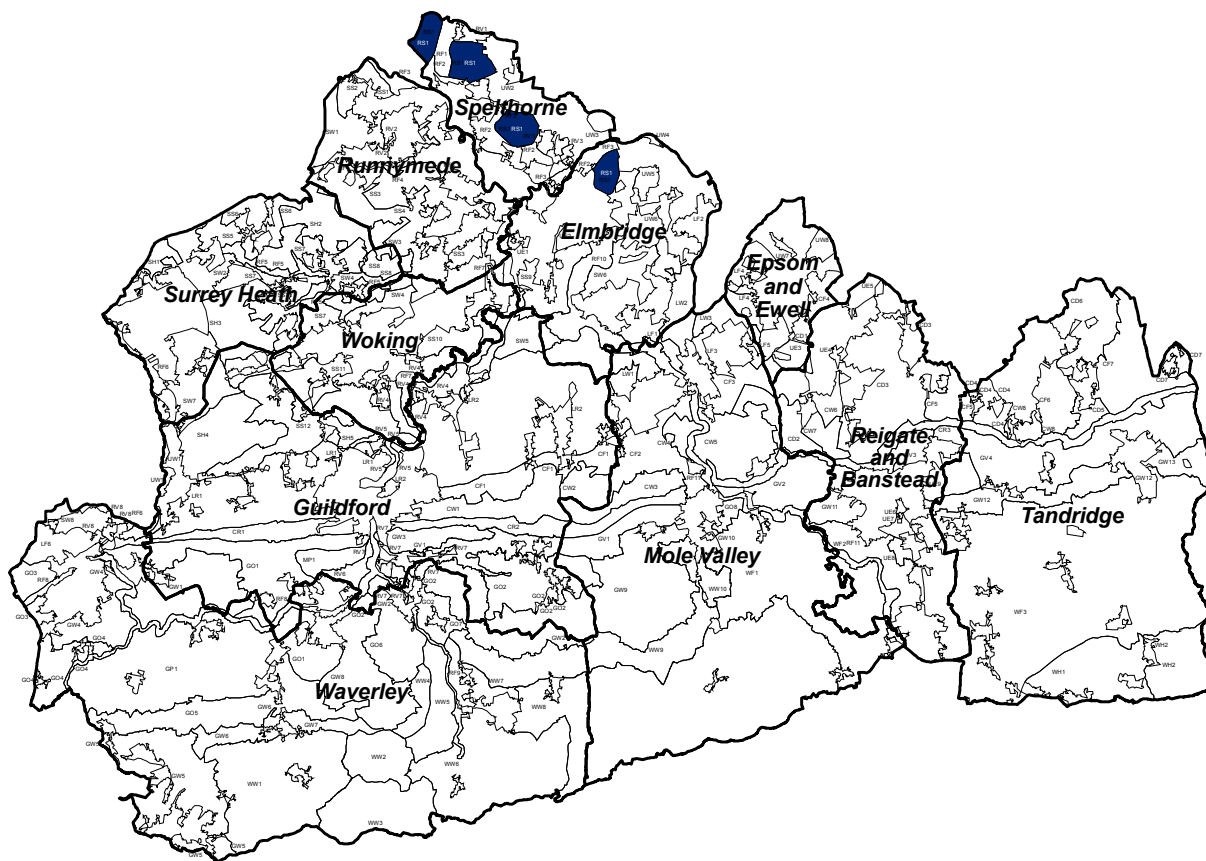
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques, to conserve and enhance key landscape features such as relatively small-scale irregular field pattern, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, ditches and ditchline willows, meadows and wetlands.
- Conserve 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.

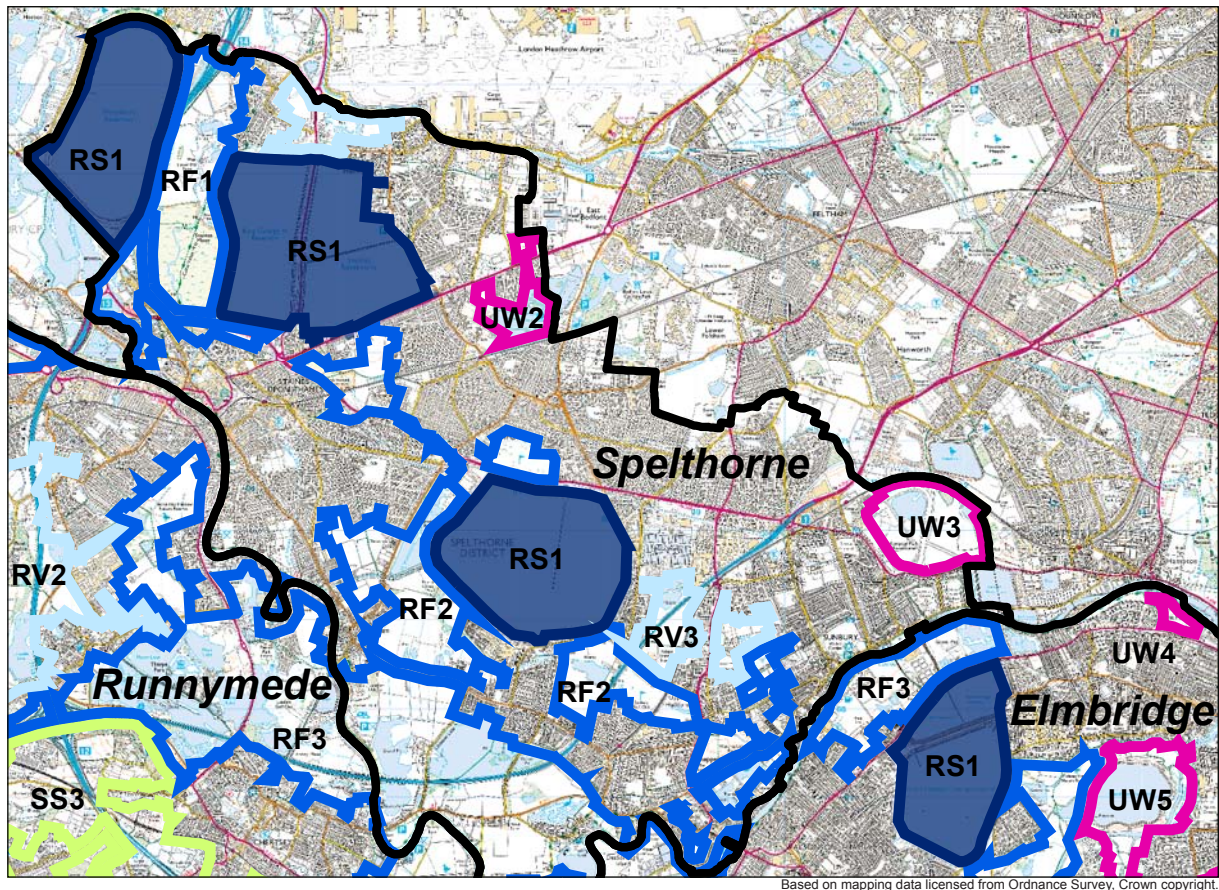


### Key Characteristics

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 lined 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

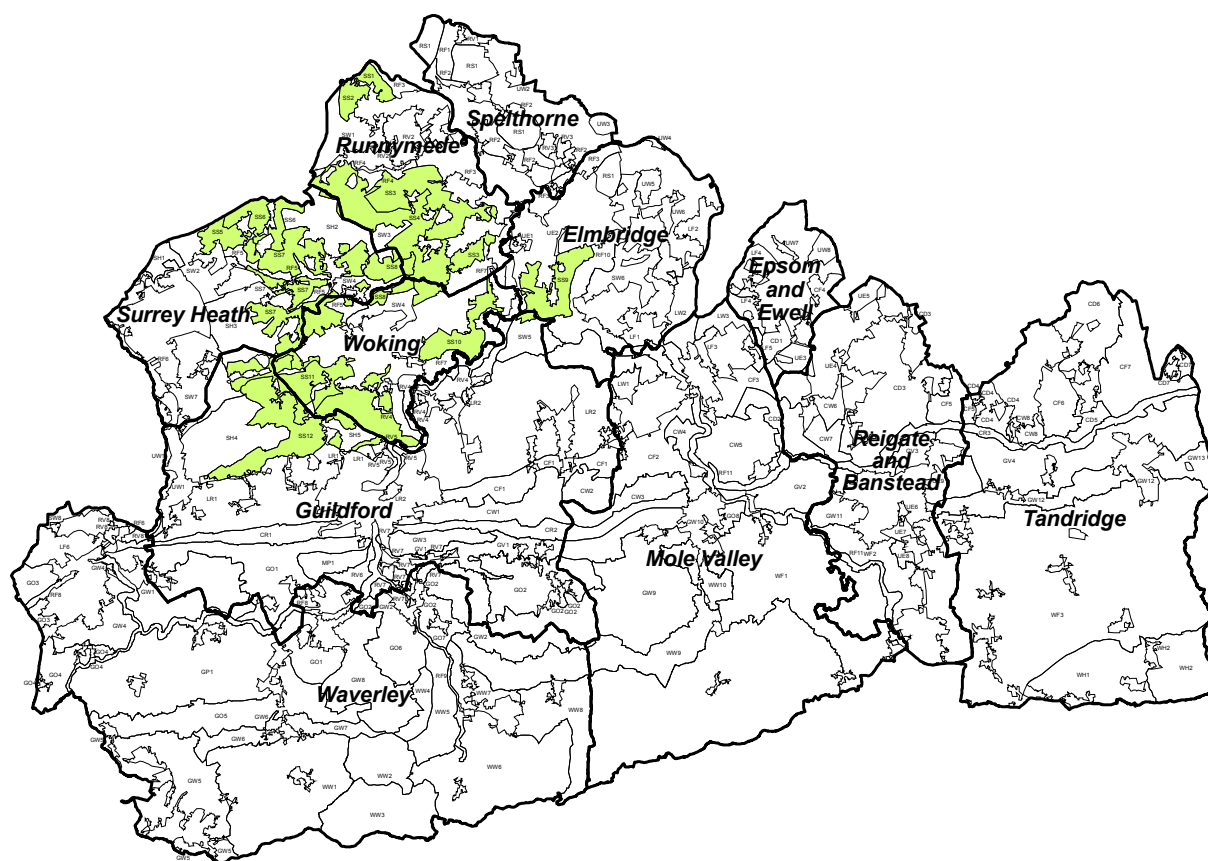
The overall management aim is to conserve the rural character of the reservoir embankments and provide opportunities to enjoy recreation activities, and nature observation.

#### 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 SS: SETTLED AND WOODED SANDY FARMLAND

### Landscape Character Areas

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*

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

## LANDSCAPE TYPE SS: SETTLED AND WOODED SANDY FARMLAND

### Location and Boundaries

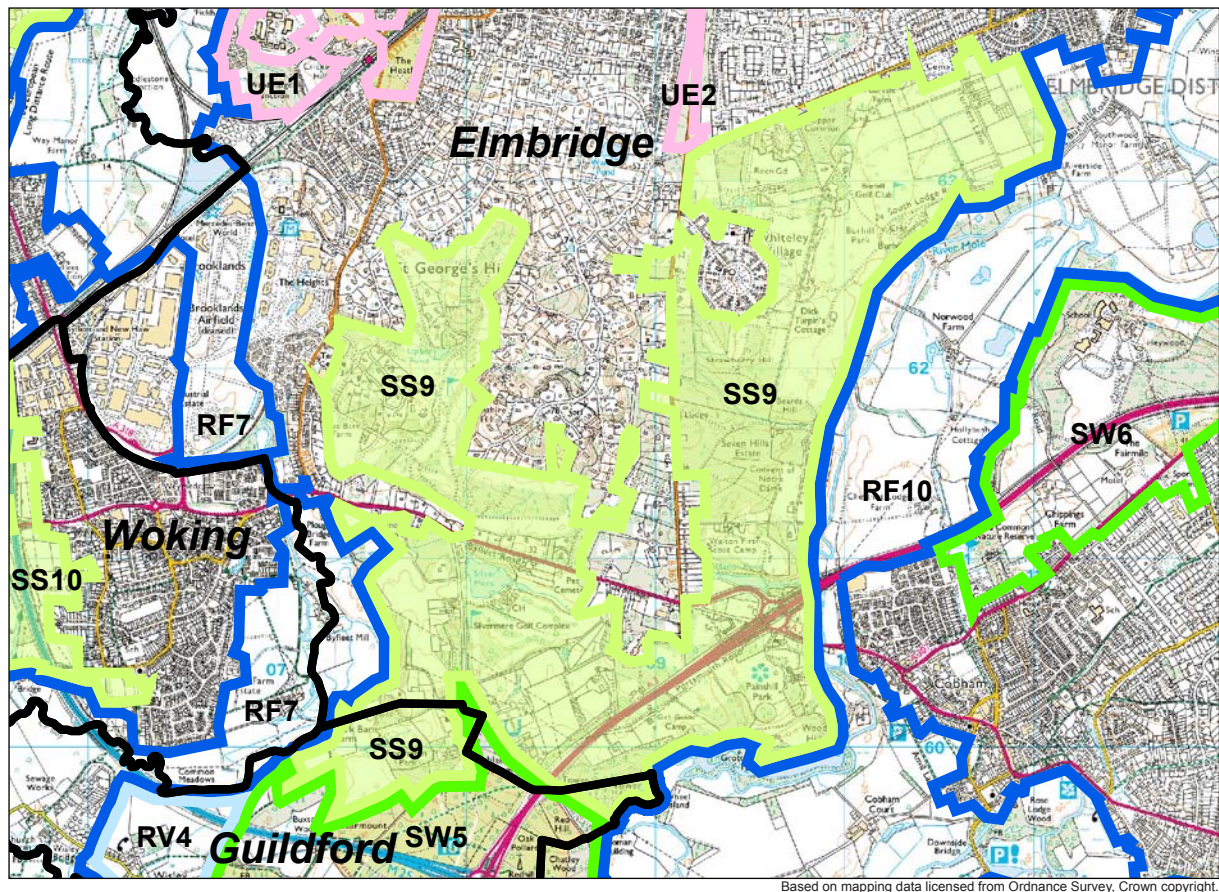
The Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland Landscape Type consists of a number of character areas, covering a wide area within the north-western part of the county, to the north of the Claylands. The boundaries of the areas are based on the underlying sandy geology and the land cover consisting of a mixture of farmland, woodland and settlement. Boundaries follow the edge of roads, tracks, field boundaries and woodland.



### Key Characteristics

- Rolling landscape based on the sand solid geology formations.
- Predominately farmland, with varying degrees of settlement and woodland, with the amount of these elements, along with varying field sizes, openness and the degree of other human influences including golf courses, horse paddocks, and nurseries, broadly defining the extent of each individual character area.
- Urban influence and activity from settlement and transport, increases to the north.
- To the south, settlement becomes more scattered, with dwellings often edging commons and rural roads.
- Heavily wooded in places, with heathland commons, now largely regenerated with secondary woodland, or plantation woodland creating an enclosed landscape with glimpses to pastures, open heathland and water bodies.
- A predominately intimate landscape, with intermittent views across farmland framed by woodland.
- Varied historical sites and designed landscapes including cemeteries and memorials with important local historic, architectural, cultural or military associations.





## SS9: WEYBRIDGE SOUTH SETTLED AND WOODED SANDY FARMLAND

### Location and Boundaries

The Weybridge South Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland Character Area is located to the south of Weybridge. The character area sits between the Lower Wey River Floodplain to the west and Lower Mole River Floodplain to the east. It is defined by settlement to the north and an area of more continuous woodland to the south.

### Key Characteristics

- Undulating landscape, underlain by Bagshot Formation Sand solid geology.
- Topography generally falls east and south towards the Mole and south-west towards the River Wey towards Byfleet.
- A largely wooded area, but with significant areas of golf course cut from the woodland to the north-west, north-east, and south-east. In between the golf courses is a pattern of small, mainly pastoral, rectilinear fields with thick boundary vegetation. A number of these fields are subdivided for paddocks or horticultural uses.
- There are a few small areas of ancient woodland, mainly towards the west of the character area, in particular to the north of Foxwarren Park.
- Views across this relatively low-lying landscape are highly constrained by woodland and vegetation along boundaries and roads.
- The A3 dual carriageway and A245 main road cross through the character area. There are few other roads, with vehicle access largely limited to private roads and tracks.
- There are no public rights of way or Open Access Land, limiting opportunity for recreational walking.

- There is limited ribbon development along the B365 and Byfleet Road, stables and occasional farm buildings are scattered more widely across the character area.
- The character area surrounds the purpose built retirement village of Whiteley. Whiteley Village is designed in the Arts and Craft style and contains more than 100 listed buildings.
- To the north, the character area borders the St. George's Hill, a restricted access residential area of large, very low density, houses. Part of this gated community is outside the Built Up Area, and included within the character area. These properties are enclosed by significant boundary vegetation.
- Painshill Park is located above the Mole Valley to the south, at the south-eastern end of the character area, and is an extensive grade I listed park, open to visitors. Whiteley Village and its surrounding grounds within the character area are a Conservation Area.
- The golf course to the south of St. George's Hill is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest for its heathland, acid grassland and woodland.
- An enclosed landscape with urban influence generally obscured by significant tree cover. Limited public access limits opportunity for public appreciation of the intimate landscape.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE SS: SETTLED AND WOODED SANDY FARMLAND 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:

- Areas of rural, intimate and peaceful character.
- Commons with their heathland vegetation of high biodiversity interest, Open Access Land which function as both a recreational resource for more built up areas to the north, and as a rural setting for villages and roadside settlement.
- Ponds and streams.
- Varied woodlands including 19th century plantations and small belts and copses giving an enclosed secret character to parts of the area.
- Areas of pastoral farmland with intact field patterns.
- Remnant historic parkland.
- Historic villages centred on greens or commons, particularly to the south of the Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland.
- Pattern of dispersed and small scale linear settlement facing onto commons or roads.
- Designed landscapes and buildings with important local historic, architectural or cultural associations, such as, Painshill Park, Foxwarren Park, Sutton Place, and those associated with the cemeteries and memorials.

#### **Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures**

##### ***Past change***

- Piecemeal linear settlement development associated with or along transport connections including railways and roads.
- Industrial developments including utilities, research centres, telecommunication establishments including masts etc.
- Increase in horse paddocks and golf courses.
- Conversion of fields for horse paddocks with consequent subdivision of the fields and installation of shelters.
- Loss of hedgerows.
- Secondary woodland encroachment onto pastures.
- Regeneration of scrub and woodland on heathland commons.

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

- Pressures for further conversion to horse paddocks.
- Increased leisure use of public rights of way network and Open Access Land.
- Increased traffic on rural road network leading to urbanisation through kerbing, lighting and signage.
- Pressure for expansion of settlement along rural roads leading to merging of villages and hamlets and loss of rural character.
- Further regeneration of woodland in more open areas, for instance where pastures are under grazed or on the surviving heathland.
- Further loss of hedgerow boundaries.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **Landscape Strategy**

The landscape strategy for the Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland is to conserve peaceful enclosed areas with their mosaics of heathland, woodland, and pastoral farmland, and to conserve historic villages and small scale settlement set around greens and commons, including careful consideration of the impact from any further development and enhancement of recreation opportunities. There are opportunities for enhancement include management of the open heathlands and pastures to prevent encroachment by woodland and restocking hedgerows, as well as reducing visual impact of transport corridors locally.

### **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 commons, woodlands and pastures.
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension of the landscape to landowners including the commons, parklands and woodlands.
- Conserve, manage and encourage the increase of the heathland habitats, continuing to promote local community and volunteer involvement, preventing further encroachment by woodland and taking opportunities to restore and extend these habitats.
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands and promote traditional woodland management techniques with local landowners and the farming community.
- Promote the use of locally appropriate species such as oak, birch and Scots pine.
- Conserve and, where appropriate, encourage repair of the historic parkland to maintain and restore key elements such as parkland trees, avenues and woodland blocks.
- Enhance the hedgerows by replanting and consistent management and resist development that will result in further loss/fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Encourage sensitive design and management of horse paddocks for instance in retaining hedges and resist development of other facilities such as manège that would affect the rural character of the area.
- Seek appropriate siting of facilities for leisure and tourism (such as car parks, play areas or picnic sites on the commons). Through active visitor management plans to predict and support appropriate levels of circulation and movement patterns. Ensure recreation use and facilities respect the low key rural character of the commons.

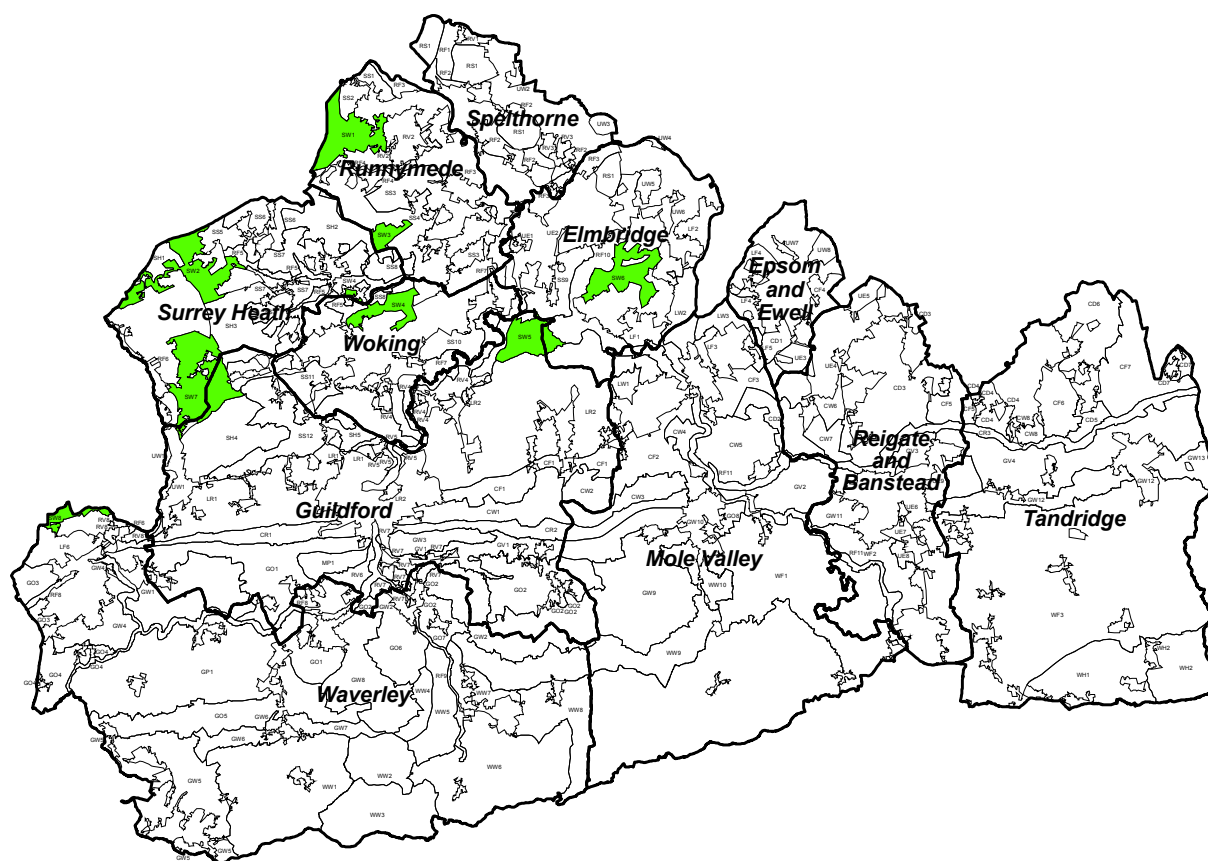
#### ***Built Development***

- Retain the pattern of villages, hamlets, isolated farmsteads and short rows of houses facing onto roads or commons set within the matrix of woodland, heathland and open farmland.
- Conserve the greens and commons that form the rural settings for villages.
- Retain the individual settlements avoiding merging these through linear development along roads.
- Ensure that new development is designed to retain tree cover that is essential to the character of this area and consider opportunities for new woodland planting to enhance existing and new development and integrate it within the landscape.
- Improve understanding of the general pattern of settlements and their relationship to the landscape and maintain development control to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the wider pattern of settlement.
- Conserve the rural roads 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 within settlement 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 existing areas of 'dark skies'.
- Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.
- Oppose the erection of new masts where they will be visually dominant and where they would adversely affect views of the wider landscape. Ensure sympathetic siting and design of any new tall features.
- Refer to Surrey design guidance: Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).

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## LANDSCAPE TYPE SW: SANDY WOODLAND

### Landscape Character Areas

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*

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

## LANDSCAPE TYPE SW: SANDY WOODLAND

### Location and Boundaries

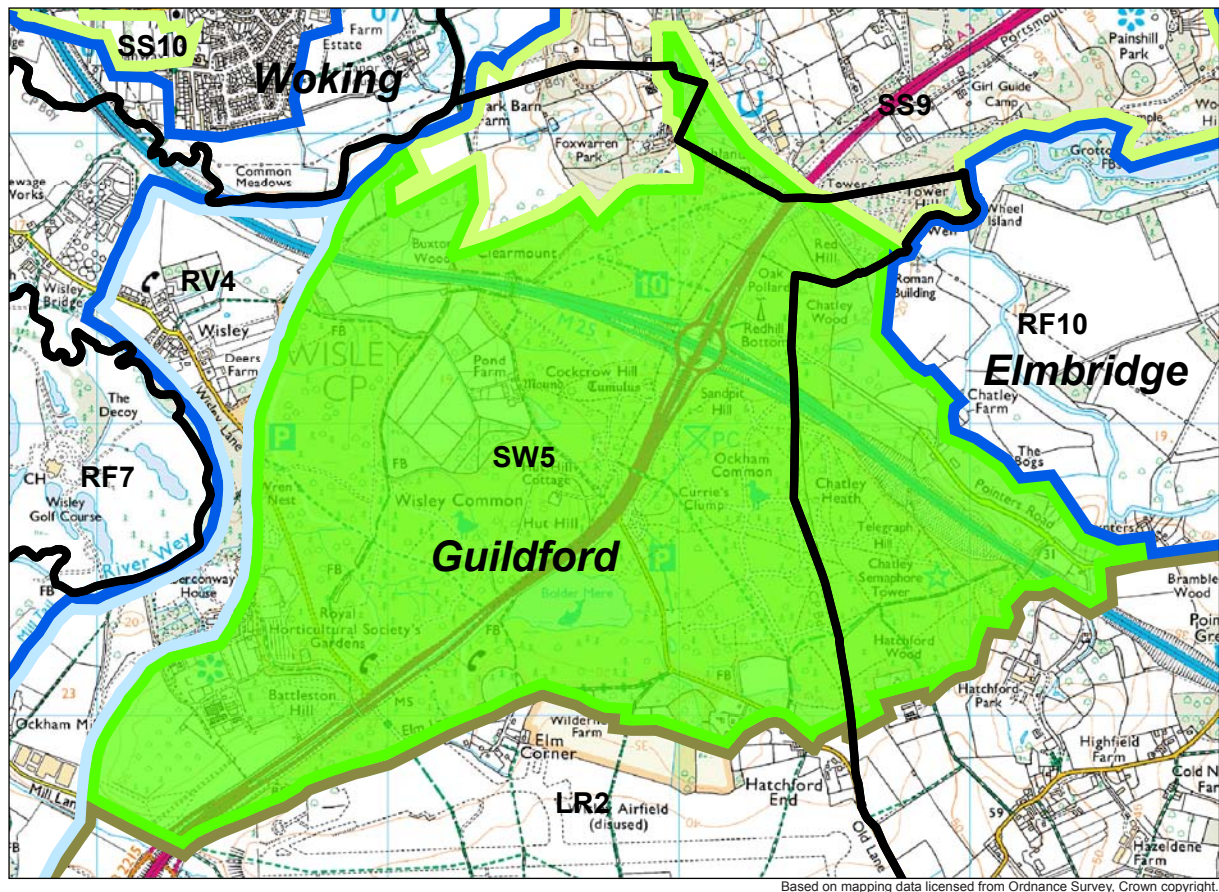
The Sandy Woodland Type comprises a number of dispersed character areas within the northern and western parts of the County, identified as relatively continuous tracts of woodland, with few interventions. The boundaries of the Type are based on land cover and the underlying geology.



### Key Characteristics

- An undulating landscape underlain by a solid sandy geology, and acid sandy loam soils.
- Predominately wooded with large mixed woodland blocks and plantations.
- Overall, a relatively limited amount of the woodland is recorded as ancient woodland.
- Large lakes often secluded and within woodland.
- Settlement is limited.
- In places, woodland is dissected by transport corridors, including motorways and major 'A' roads.
- An intimate, enclosed landscape, occasionally dark and oppressive within dense forest plantations.
- Designed landscapes, buildings and structures with important local historic, architectural or cultural associations.





## SW5: WISLEY SANDY WOODLAND

### Location and Boundaries

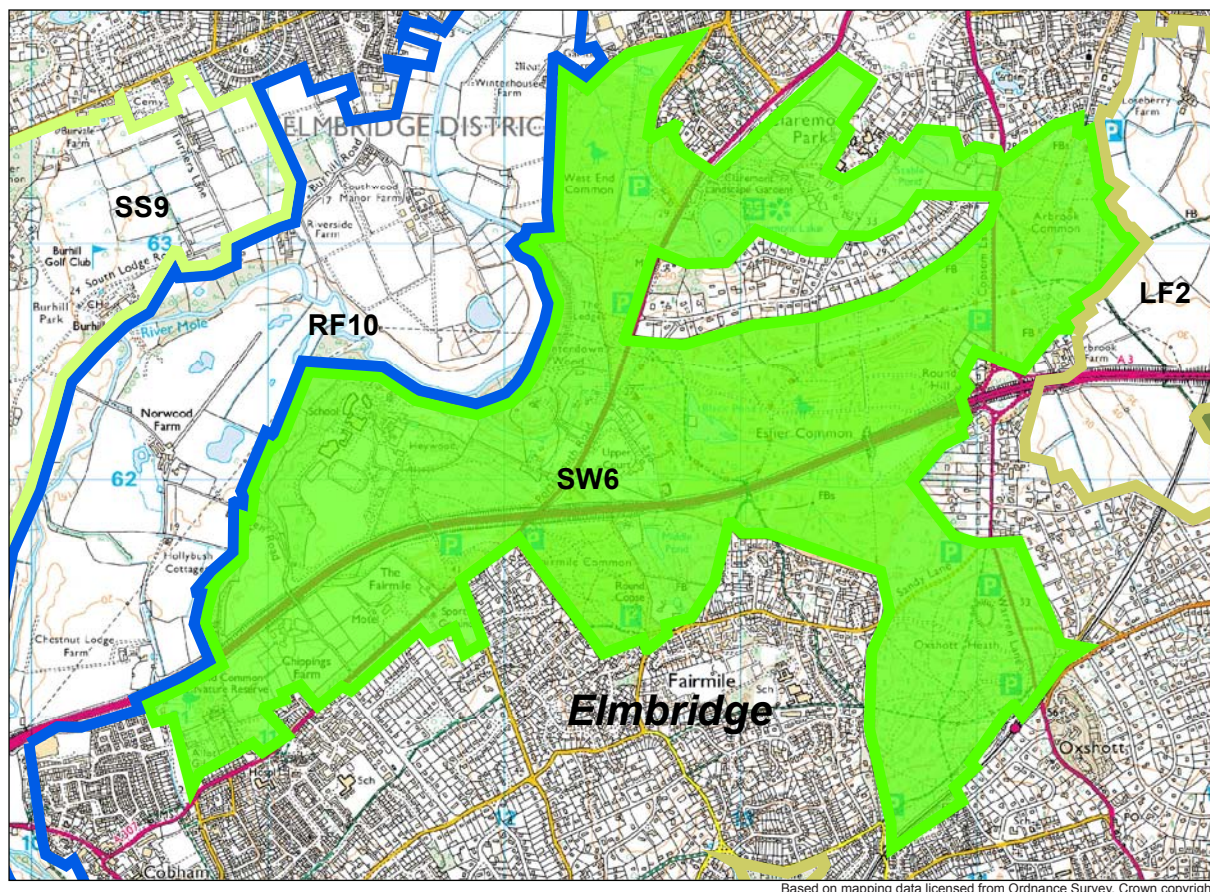
The Wisley Sandy Woodland Character Area is located south-east of Byfleet, between the Wey valley to the west and the Mole valley to the east. The boundary is largely defined by the edge of continuous woodland, as well as the change in underlying geology from sand to clay to the south.

### Key Characteristics

- Level landform based on Bagshot Formation Sand solid geology.
- Rises to Hut Hill in the centre of the character area, and falls to the Lower Wey to the north-west and to the Lower Mole to the north-east.
- A secluded, enclosed landscape of heathland commons lying between the Mole and Wey rivers, now largely overgrown by secondary woodland.
- The character area consist of extensive tracts of mixed woodland and scrub, some areas of common land, open water bodies, and a pocket of small pastoral fields.
- Includes a relatively large block of ancient woodland at the south-east corner of the character area. Felled plantation leaves large open areas within the woodland. Bolder Mere is a large lake secluded with the woodland. The Royal Horticultural Society gardens at Wisley are within the south-west corner of the character area, and Foxwarren Park is to the north.
- Tree cover confines views generally, however there are distinctive views through the woodland along tracks, clearings within the woodland and across Bolder Lake. Views of moving vehicles are possible within the vicinity of road corridors through the woodland.
- The M25 motorway and A3 cut through the woodland, and form Junction 10 of the M25 where they meet, towards the centre on the character area.

- Wisley and Ockham Commons are Open Access Land, with a number of informal tracks through the woodland connecting to a network of public rights of way, there are small car parks and other basic facilities for recreational use of the woodlands.
- There are a very limited number of isolated dwellings, including a few farmsteads, cottages and large houses at Wisley and Foxwarren, but the character area is mostly unsettled.
- Large tracts of the character area are registered as Common Land and Wisley is noted as a historic garden and centre of horticulture. There are a number of scheduled monuments within the woodland, including a bowl barrow and bell barrow near Cockcrow Hill, and a hengi-form monument at Red Hill. The well preserved Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower is located at Telegraph Hill at the south-east of the character area, and was part of the Royal Navy Semaphore line which operated between 1822 and 1847.
- There is high biodiversity value, with the majority of the character area covered by ecological designations, including Special Protection Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, and functions as a Local Nature Reserve.
- Busy roads, including the M25 motorway, fragment the character area and disturb the peace locally. But away from detracting activity, the majority of the wooded character area is peaceful, intimate, and has a sense of remoteness.





## SW6: FAIRMILE TO ESHER SANDY WOODLAND

### Location and Boundaries

The Fairmile to Esher Sandy Woodland Character Area is located between Fairmile and Esher, to the east of the Mole Valley. The boundary is largely defined by the edge of continuous woodland, and where it meets adjoining settlement.

### Key Characteristics

- Based mainly on Bagshot Formation Sand solid geology.
- The character area is undulating, rising up from the Mole valley to the west, to several highpoints. The area is bounded by the town of Esher to the north, and the towns of Cobham, Fairmile and Oxshott to the south.
- The character area is made-up of a collection of wooded commons, the largest being Esher Common. Other named commons within the character area are West End Common, Old Common, Fairmile Common, Oxshott Common and Arbrook Common. Occasional open areas within the woodland include large buildings, such as the Cobham International School complex. There are also a number of large ponds and lakes.
- There is a length of ancient woodland sloping down towards the River Mole from higher ground within the western edge of the character area, north of Cobham International School.
- Tree cover obscures views generally, however there are views across open areas of common and waterbodies.

- Large areas of common land are designated as Open Access Land, and there are some public footpaths to the south at Oxshott Heath, but elsewhere, particularly to the west of the character area, public rights of way are limited. There are approximately ten public car parks across the character area, aiding use of the common land as a recreational resource.
- The A3 cuts broadly east-west through the character area, while the A307 and A244 roads cross north-south. Elsewhere roads are relatively limited, with access by informal tracks. The
- Waterloo-Guildford via Cobham railway line and Oxshott railway station are at the southern end of the character area.
- There are very limited dwellings within the wooded commons. Beyond the woodland are a few large buildings such as Cobham School and a motel. Within the northern part of the character area is Claremont Park and gardens, which is a registered Grade II historic garden. The Belvedere at Claremont is one of the main listed buildings within the estate . The majority of the character area is designated as Common Land.
- The majority of the character area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a large part of which is also a Local Nature Reserve.
- Roads, and recreational activity are detracting elements, however there are areas within the wooded commons which provide a good degree of tranquillity and sense of remoteness.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE SW: SANDY WOODLAND 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:

- Varied woodlands, including some areas of ancient woods, with biodiversity and historic value.
- Areas of dense, dark, undisturbed woodland.
- Peaceful, mostly secluded landscape with limited settlement.
- Roads through woodland forming corridors with overhanging trees.
- Pockets of open heath and glades within the woodland.
- Sense of intimacy, with views contained by woodland.
- Significant open areas, tracks and public rights of ways combine to provide recreational resource.

#### Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

##### *Past Change*

- Loss of broadleaf woodland and increase in conifer plantations.
- Regeneration of scrub and woodland on heathland commons.
- Increased use of the area for leisure leading to the creation of car parks and picnic areas (suffering problems with fly tipping), and golf courses.

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

- Further regeneration of woodland in more open areas, where pastures are under grazed.
- Where surviving heathland is undermanaged.
- Pressure for further recreational facilities such as car parks and increasing use of footpaths and Open Access Land.
- Pressure for expansion of settlement and roads.

### GUIDANCE

#### Landscape Strategy

The strategy for the Sandy Woodland landscape is to conserve the peaceful, intimate landscape. Opportunities for enhancement requiring management of varied woodlands to conserve their ecological and historic interest, and maintain areas of heathland.

#### Landscape Guidelines

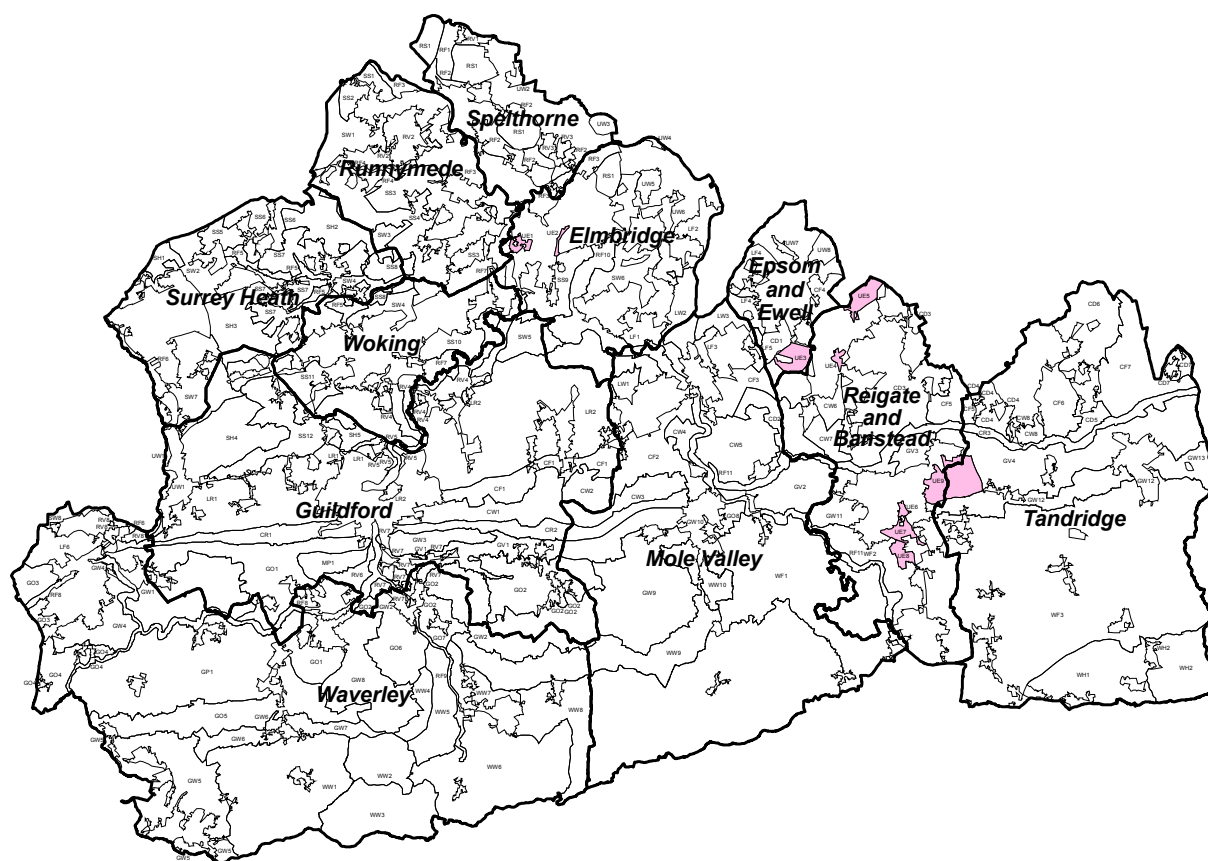
##### *Land Management*

- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners. Conserve the historic elements of the landscape.
- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands and heath where appropriate through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value. This character area type coincides with Surrey's Thames Basin Heaths biodiversity opportunity area. Character area SW1 links with Surrey's Thames Valley, and character area SW6 links with Surrey's Thames Basin Lowlands biodiversity opportunity areas.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing with local landowners and the farming community.
- Encourage sustainable woodland and the use of locally appropriate species.
- Seek appropriate siting of facilities for leisure and tourism through visitor management plan to predict and support appropriate levels of circulation and movement patterns.

- Resist the loss of rural character through the spread of urbanising features associated with leisure use such as car parks.
- Encourage appropriate surfacing, materials and signage for footpaths and car parks to retain the rural, unsettled character of the landscape.
- Removal of fly tipping as soon as possible.
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.
- Avoid development of permanent exercise areas and siting of exercise equipment such as treadmills, pens, and jumps where this is visually intrusive on the landscape.

### ***Built Development***

- Conserve the sense of seclusion with sparse settlement enclosed by woodland.
- Maintain the wooded and undeveloped skyline.
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the ridge slopes and skyline.
- Promote the use of traditional materials and signage features with particular regard to local style and materials. Refer to Surrey design guides; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).



## LANDSCAPE TYPE UE: DISTINCT AREAS ON THE EDGE OF URBAN AREAS

### Landscape Character Areas

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*

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



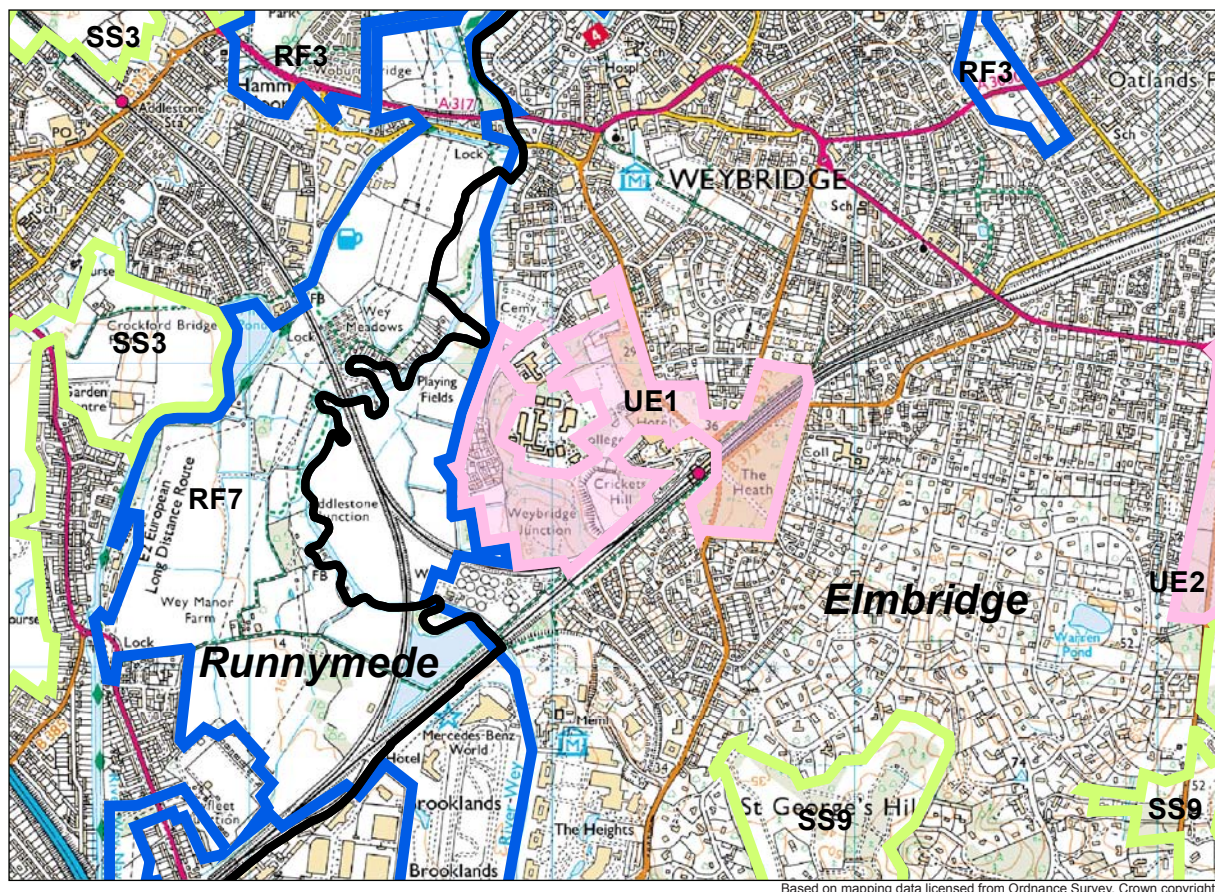
## **LANDSCAPE TYPE UE: DISTINCT AREAS ON THE EDGE OF URBAN AREAS**

### **Location and Boundaries**

A group of small individual areas on the edges of, or surrounded by, the Built Up Areas of towns across the County.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Unique areas, with a variety of characteristic and uses, which do not readily fall within the broader character types set out in the preceding sections of this document.
- On the edges of towns, often entirely enclosed by Built Up Areas, the majority of these areas have significant human intervention, and frequently provide outdoor amenity for the surrounding population.
- Although often enclosed by urban areas, they maintain physical and visual connections to the wider landscape.
- Provide landscape setting to adjacent urban areas and settlements.
- These areas are also characterised by having high biodiversity value and potential, close to Built Up Areas.



## UE1: HEATHSIDE

### Location and Boundaries

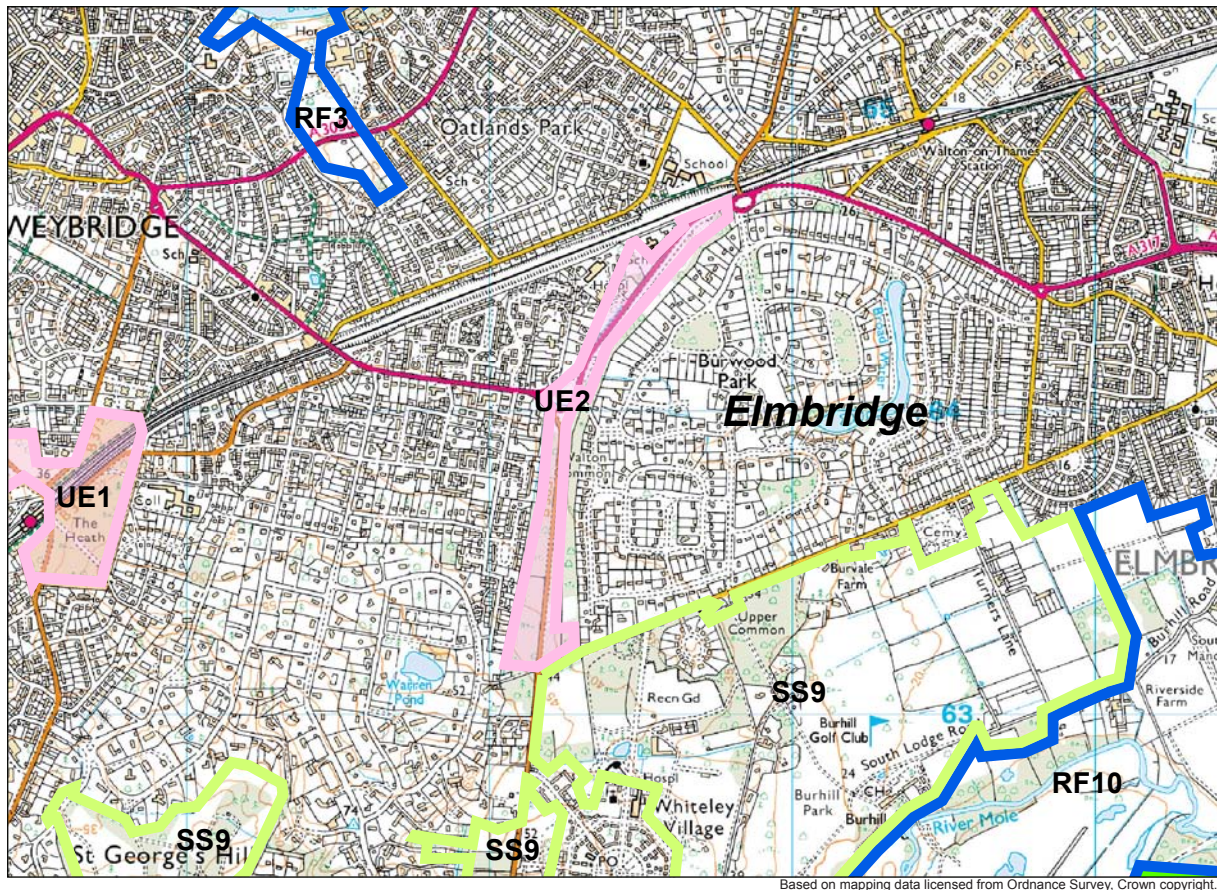
The Heathside Character Area is located to the south-west of Weybridge, towards the north of the county. It is surrounded by the Built Up Area of Weybridge, with the exception of the western edge which abuts the floodplain of the Lower Wey. The majority of the boundary follows the Built Up Area edge, but along the floodplain mostly follows field boundaries.

### Key Characteristics

- Landform rises up from the Wey valley to Cricket's Hill, underlain by Bagshot Formation Sand solid geology.
- The area consists predominately of wooded heathland, including 'The Heath'.
- A college campus and school (outside the character area), and a small areas of low density housing (within the character area) now occupy the heathland to the west.
- The eastern area penetrates deep into the surrounding Built Up Area, and includes an enclosed area of open heath surrounded by woodland.
- Views are contained by tree cover, giving an intimate feel to the area.
- The South West Mainline railway cuts through the eastern half of the area, in a wooded cutting, with Weybridge station nearby to the south.
- 'The Heath' in the eastern half of the character area is Open Access Land. There are no public rights or links to the Wey Valley through the western part of the character area.
- Roads cut through the tree cover and converge near the railway station.
- 'The Heath' is registered as Common Land and is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

- Woodland gives a semi-rural feel to the area and provides an attractive approach/departure when accessing Weybridge via the railway station. The Open Access Land provides a valuable outdoor resource for Weybridge. The area could act as a gateway to the Wey valley, but unfortunately there are no external links westwards from the Access Land.





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## UE2: WALTON COMMON

### Location and Boundaries

The Walton Common Character Area is a narrow strip of land to the west of Weybridge, towards the north of the county. It is surrounded by Built Up Areas, with its boundary following the settlement edge

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by Bagshot Formation Sand solid geology, rising very slightly to the south.
- The area consists of a strip of woodland running broadly north-south for over a mile, forming a 'green corridor' from the settlement edge towards the centre of Walton-on-Thames.
- The busy B365, a large roundabout, and then the A317, run down the centre of the woodland. Tree canopies on either side of the road often meet above the road, giving the impression of driving along a tunnel through the woodland.
- There is a pavement on the side of the roads, but no public rights of way.
- Long views are limited to views down trafficked roads enclosed by woodland on either side.
- Woodland successfully buffers the busy roads from nearby settlement and provides an attractive southern approach to Walton-on-Thames.
- Currently there is limited use as a recreation resource, although linear routes along its length could provide an attractive walking experience given the density of the woodland, and act as a starting point for links to the Mole Valley to the south-east.

## LANDSCAPE TYPE UE: DISTINCT AREAS ON THE EDGE OF 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, adjoining Built Up Areas or settlements. They provide open areas, often intensively managed for public access, recreation or sport, but still remain rural or natural in character. They provide a natural landscape setting to the adjoining settlements or Built Up Areas. They also provide a visual link or physical bridge to the wider landscape, and share many of the key characteristics of their respective surrounding landscapes. The natural character is in direct contrast to the adjoining dense urban areas of the adjoining settlements.

- **UE1:** This area could act as a gateway to the Wey valley, but unfortunately there are no external links westwards from the Open Access Land. However, this area coincides on the western edge with Surrey's Rivers biodiversity opportunity area R04 and provides potential as a biodiversity link to the Wey.
- **UE2:** Currently there is limited use as a recreation resource, given the density of the woodland, but provides an attractive finger of wooded common land extending through a dense urban area and linking to the Mole Valley to the south-east.
- **UE3:** Although intensively managed for the racing industry this area combines with adjacent Areas CD1 and CF3 to provide large open area of farmed downs landscape between settlements, with views out to the wider landscape. Fragments of a chalk grassland exist on the perimeter of the racecourse.
- **UE4:** An area of wooded common designated for a variety of habitats including woodland, grassland and ponds. Connects to the wider wooded landscape to the south. A direct formal link to the wider countryside to the east would further improve connectivity and further enhance local walking recreation.
- **UE5:** Although managed as a golf course and public open space Banstead Downs is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, important for chalk flora and plant species, including a number of locally rare plants.
- **UE6, UE7 and UE8** coincide with Surrey's Low Weald biodiversity opportunity area LWO7 which is a series of connected wooded commons extending as a wedge in to the south of Redhill. The acid soils supporting various types of woodland, including ancient woodland.
- **UE9:** This area coincides with Surrey's Wealden Greensand biodiversity opportunity area WG11 which is a mixture of floodplain grazing marsh, woodland and heathland.

#### 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 physical links and open views to the wider landscape.
- 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 elements of the landscape as remnants of an older landscape.





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*

84

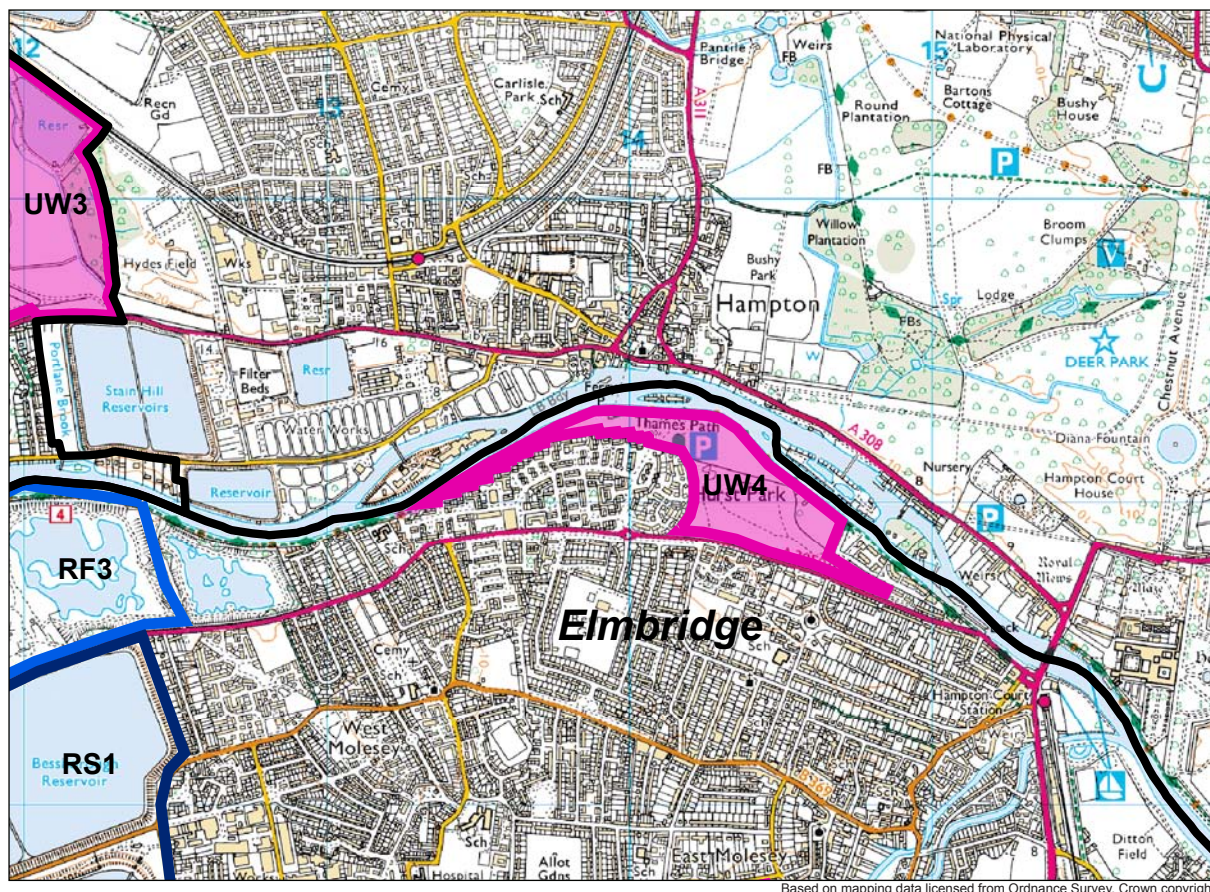
## **LANDSCAPE TYPE UW: SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACES WITHIN URBAN AREAS**

### **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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## UW4: HURST PARK

### Location and Boundaries

Located within the urban area to the north of East Molesey, at the northern edge of the county. The northern edge of the area is defined by the county boundary which runs along the River Thames.

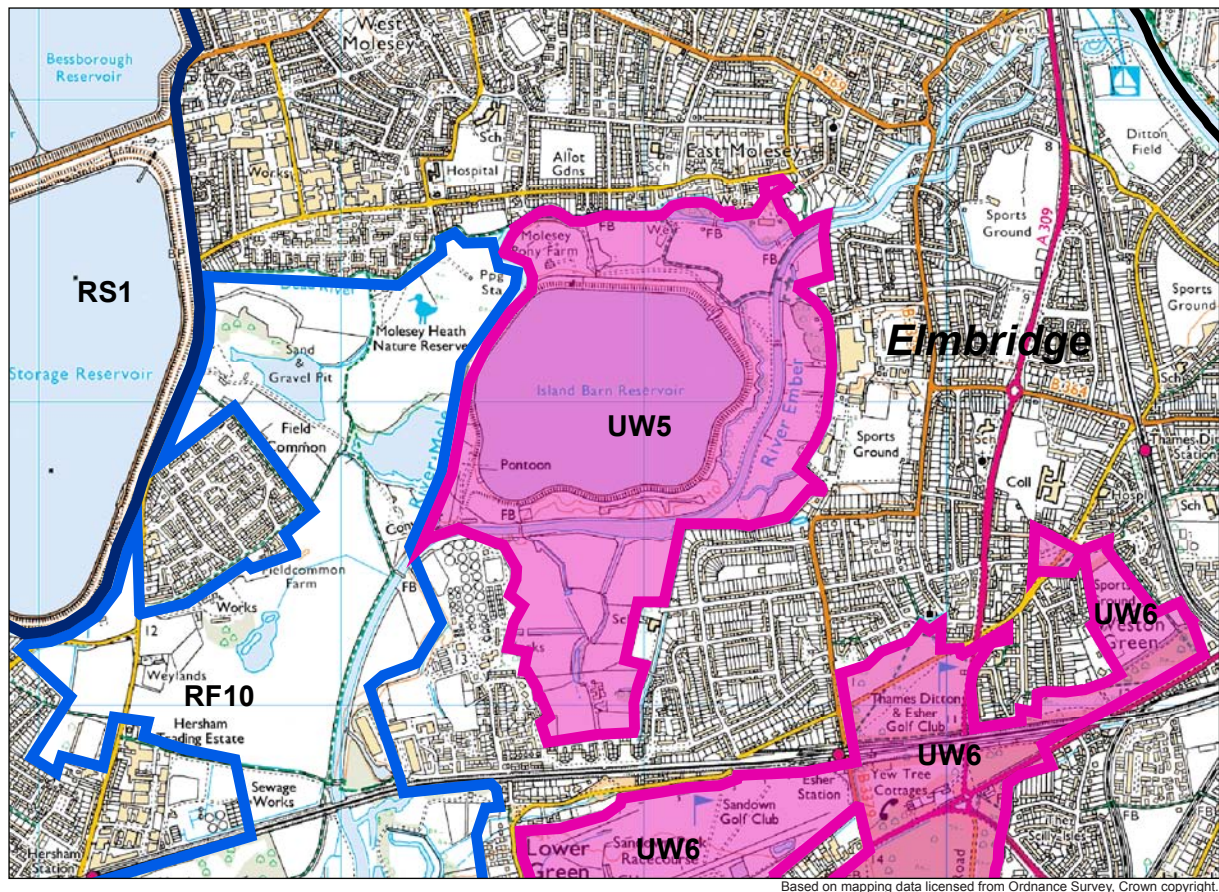
### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation, Clay and Silt solid geology.
- Part of the wider Thames river floodplain, but annexed by settlement.
- Bound to the north by the inside bend of Thames, for approximately 1 mile. Bounded by the A3050 road and houses beyond to the south-east. The narrowing western end of the park is bound to the south by residential back gardens.
- Southern and eastern parts of the park contain meadows with copses, a children's play area, a small car park, and East Molesey cricket ground. Northern and western parts of the park contain largely open amenity grassland, with occasional tree groups, a car parking area and a sports pitch.
- Although enclosed by Built Up Areas to the south, there are more open views north of the River Thames, including small islands with their small houses and permanently moored house boats. Historic buildings, including Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare, Hogarth Cottage and St. Mary's Parish Church are visible on the northern side of the river in Hampton. The south-western end of the large royal Bushy Park can also be seen across the Thames from parts of Hurst Park.
- The Thames Path National Trail runs along the length of the northern edge of the park. Hampton Court railway station, at the end of the Hampton Court branch line, is located within close walking distance to the south-east.
- The meadow areas are designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, as is the River

Thames to the north. The area borders East Molesey Kent Town Conservation Area to the south-east, on the opposite side of the A3050. Bushy Park to the north is a Grade I registered park.

- Urban influence limits the sense of tranquillity, but this is mostly a pleasant landscape which functions as an open riverside setting to both surrounding urban areas to the south and historically important buildings and landscape to the north, as well as providing a recreational resource.





## UW5: ISLAND BARN RESERVOIR AND RIVER EMBER

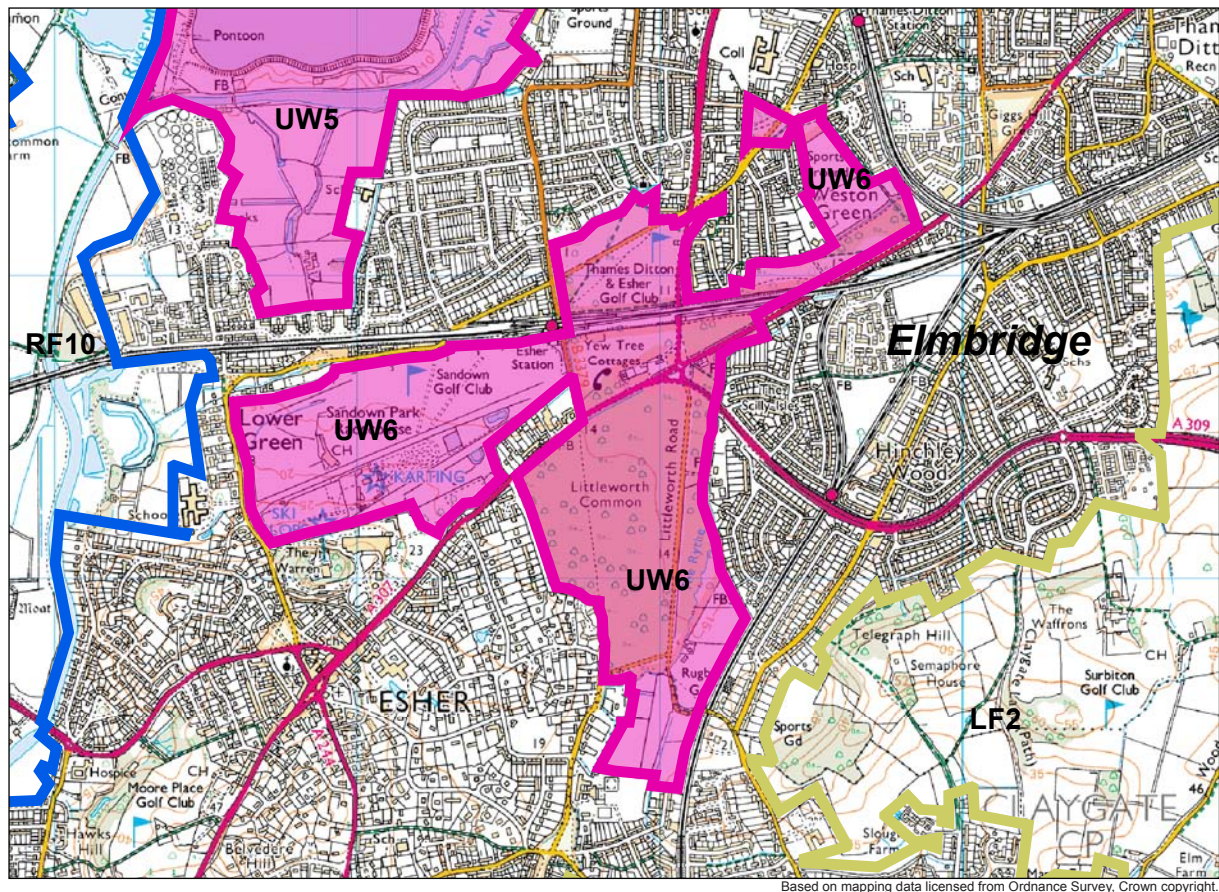
### Location and Boundaries

Located to the south of East Molesey, within the urban area at the northern edge of the county. The western boundary abuts the Lower Mole river floodplain.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand solid geology.
- Part of the wider river valley, through which the River Mole and River Ember flow before reach the Thames within the Built Up Area to the north-east.
- Contains Island Barn Reservoir, with its high grassed and fenced embankments. Either side of the River Ember, which flows to the east and south of the reservoir, are pastoral fields, sports pitches, and paddocks, along with streams, ditches, hedges and small tree groups.
- The reservoir encloses views from and towards the Built Up Area.
- There are footpaths to the north, but access along the River Ember is limited. There are no significant roads or settlement within the character area.
- The reservoir is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.
- Although within the Built Up Area and dominated by the reservoir, this is a pleasant landscape connected to the Mole Valley to the west. With better public access, the area could have the potential to act as a gateway from the Built Up Area into the wider Mole valley to the west.
- Coincides with Surrey's Thames Valley TV06 and Rivers R05 biodiversity opportunity areas.





## UW6: LOWER GREEN TO WESTON GREEN AND LITTLEWORTH COMMON

### Location and Boundaries

Located to the north-east of Esher, within the urban area at the northern edge of the county.

### Key Characteristics

- Underlain by Claygate Member Sand, Silt and Clay, and London Clay Formation Clay and Silt solid geology.
- A collection of areas which include Sandown Park Racecourse, areas of golf course, the wooded Littleworth Common, and other areas of common, plus sports pitches.
- There are busy roads and railway, converging toward the centre of the area.
- Sandown Park Racecourse and adjacent golf course are relatively private areas, but the majority of the remaining part of the area is a valuable recreational resource, with Open Access Land and public rights of way links. Esher railway station is adjacent to the area and connects to public rights of ways.
- Significant areas are registered as Common Land, including Littleworth and Ditton Commons, and the edge of Weston Green Conservation Area is to the north. The commons are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.
- Parts of Littleworth Common have a sense of remoteness due to dense woodland which screens the surrounding urban areas. However, roads and other urban influences limit tranquillity elsewhere, despite that, the area provides both open and enclosed green space as a contrast and relief to the surrounding Built Up Areas.

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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.