

# Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty needs you

- Local knowledge is being sought to help decide on the extension of Surrey Hills Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) boundaries
- Natural England is calling for everyone with an interest to contribute
- Whether you live in the Surrey Hills AONB, run a local business, enjoy visiting, care about landscapes and biodiversity, or represent an organisation – your evidence could be crucial in helping determine whether an extension is merited

The Surrey Hills is an iconic and beautiful landscape encompassing rare habitats, from chalk grassland to extensive ancient woodland and is enjoyed by millions of residents and visitors.

There has been a desire locally over many years for a review to decide whether additional areas adjacent to the existing AONB boundary should also be designated.

Earlier this year Natural England announced that the Surrey Hills AONB will be considered for boundary expansion.

A formal [boundary review](#) is now underway, which will consider the case for extending the existing AONB.

Members of the public are urged to take part and contribute to Natural England's decision making process. This stage is a 'call for evidence' to gather a range of data and information in a structured way. This will help to address the specific technical requirements of the formal assessment process.

Frensham Ponds in Surrey

From today people can take part easily online, through a digital app and other means. Evidence provided by the public will help contribute to Natural England's assessment of the natural beauty of the area. Also its decision whether other areas in the vicinity of the existing boundary should form part of an extended Surrey Hills AONB.

Allison Potts, Area Manager for Natural England, said:

It is very important that people who live in and around the Surrey Hills have the opportunity to participate in this review process. Your local knowledge is our starting point.

We are urging members of the public to help Natural England build evidence – to gather information about the natural beauty of the landscape. Also the condition, natural and cultural heritage,

scenic qualities, relative wildness and tranquillity. Evidence that you provide for these factors could be particularly important for our assessments.

If further areas are added to the Surrey Hills AONB, this could bring many benefits for the area. This includes boosting nature's recovery, giving more people the opportunity to enjoy this beautiful area and safeguarding a nationally important landscape for future generations.

An extension to the Surrey Hills AONB could help preserve the natural environment and rural heritage, promote tranquillity and give more opportunity to support people's health and wellbeing through access to nature, on the doorstep of London.

Visit [Surrey Hills](#) to find out how you can help Natural England to decide.

- Natural England is government's statutory advisor on landscapes in England, with duties and powers that include conserving and enhancing landscapes through the designation of National Parks and AONB.
- The decision whether to extend the Surrey Hills AONB will be made by Natural England's Board, having undertaken the required assessments and considered the results of a statutory consultation. Which will follow this 'call for evidence' later in 2023.
- If a legal order extending the boundary of the Surrey Hills AONB is approved by the Board, it will not take effect until it is confirmed by the Secretary of State (Defra). Prior to making this decision, the Secretary of State has the power to call a Public Inquiry.
- The designation process is likely to take several years and will be a collaborative process working with the Surrey Hills AONB and local stakeholders.
- More detail about the Surrey Hills AONB can be found here on the [website](#)
- Visit [Surrey Hills](#) page to find out more about how to participate in providing evidence to support the assessments
- Further details about the proposed expansion can be found by visiting GOV.UK
- This area of landscape designation has been selected through an evidence-based shortlisting of proposals that have been made to Natural England over the last 10 years.
- This project is 1 of 4 areas that Secretary of State (Defra), George Eustice, announced in June that Natural England would be considering for designation, the others are:

## **An extension to the Chilterns AONB**

To consider many special features including chalk streams, magnificent beechwoods, native woodland and wildflower-rich hills, bringing nature closer to populations in North London.

## **Cheshire Sandstone Ridge AONB**

A diverse, distinctive, and celebrated landscape located in the heart of Cheshire, in close proximity to the large populations of North West England, rich in heritage, archaeology, wildlife and culture.

## **Yorkshire Wolds AONB**

A tranquil landscape of rolling hills, valleys and open plateaux interspersed with ancient woodland, chalk streams, farm holdings and historic villages, extending north from the River Humber.