



YOUR LONDON AIRPORT
Gatwick

Our northern runway: making best use of Gatwick

Preliminary Environmental Information Report
Appendix 8.6.1: County Landscape Character Assessments
September 2021

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1 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 This document forms Appendix 8.6.1 of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) prepared on behalf of Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL). The PEIR presents the preliminary findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the proposal to make best use of Gatwick Airport's existing runways (referred to within this report as 'the Project'). The Project proposes alterations to the existing northern runway which, together with the lifting of the current restrictions on its use, would enable dual runway operations. The Project includes the development of a range of infrastructure and facilities which, with the alterations to the northern runway, would enable the airport passenger and aircraft operations to increase. Further details regarding the components of the Project can be found in the Chapter 5: Project Description.

1.1.2 This document provides the Country Landscape Character Assessments for the Project. Figure 1.1.1 details the County Landscape Character Areas referenced in the below sections.

2 County Landscape Character Assessments

2.1 Landscape Character Baseline

2.1.1 County wide landscape character assessments have been prepared by West Sussex and Surrey County Councils, which coincide with the 5 km radius study area. However, as more detailed landscape and townscape character assessments have been prepared by the six district authorities within the 5 km radius study area and as many of the character areas are duplicated at county and district level, to avoid repetition only the district assessments are described in and form the basis for the assessment within the PEIR chapter. For completeness and to provide further context to the assessment, relevant extracts from the West Sussex County Council Landscape Character Assessment (2007) and the Surrey County Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) are included within this Appendix.

West Sussex County

2.1.2 The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex was prepared by West Sussex County Council in 2007. The study identifies four of the 42 unique character areas within the 5 km radius study area.

2.1.3 LW8 Northern Vales lies to the north and south-west of Crawley within the wider Low Weald landscape. Gatwick Airport forms a significant proportion of the overall character area although is not typical of the generally rural, albeit urban fringe landscape.

LW8 Northern Vales Key Characteristics

- *'Flat to gently undulating narrow clay vale, with floodplain and upper tributaries of the River Mole in the north east;*
- *Pattern of small, medium and large fields with a variable density of hedgerows;*
- *Predominantly pasture farmland in the north east....;*
- *Scattered tree cover, isolated woodlands and copses;*
- *Distinctive field trees and farm ponds;*
- *Major road and rail corridors and pylon lines;*
- *Strong suburban and urban fringe influences of Crawley, Horsham and Gatwick Airport;*
- *Some localities retain an enclosed rural character, for instance, west of Ifield;*
- *Large golf course near Ifield; and*
- *Visual intrusion in parts from retail and industrial areas, housing....'*

2.1.4 The study identifies a key issue for change as *'Visual and noise impact of Gatwick Airport'*.

2.1.5 Landscape and Visual Sensitivities are defined as *'Visual and noise intrusion of major traffic routes/minor and major road improvements'*.

2.1.6 Land Management Guidelines are defined as *'Encourage screen planting of native trees and woodland around roadside buildings and service areas, and industrial and commercial development, including Gatwick Airport'*.

2.1.7 The LW4 Low Weald Hills character area lies to the south-west of Gatwick Airport. Key characteristics of the area are as follows.

LW4 Low Weald Key Characteristics

- *'This area has a pastoral and densely wooded character. Low wooded ridges are dissected by steep wooded gills and narrow lanes;*
- *Interspersed between the woodland is a patchwork of mostly small to medium sized pastures enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws;*
- *Remnant parkland and field corner ponds are recurring features;*
- *Homes and farms are scattered throughout this area; and*
- *Despite the relative proximity of Gatwick Airport and Crawley to the east, the area retains a strong rural character.'*

2.1.8 The study identifies a key issue for change as *'Noise from Gatwick Airport'*.

2.1.9 Landscape and Visual Sensitivities are defined as *'Overall sensitivity to change is high. Despite the high degree of enclosure in many parts of the area, some ridgetops and slopes are prominent with distinctive long views to both North and South Downs and across the Crawley Vale to the High Weald Forests'*.

2.1.10 The HW1 High Weald character area lies to the east of Crawley and the M23. Key characteristics of the area are as follows.

HW1 High Weald Key Characteristics

- *'Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity partly within the High Weald AONB'*.
- *'Plateau, ridges and deep, secluded valleys cut by gill streams'*.
- *'Headwater drainage of the Rivers Eden, Medway, Ouse and Mole'*.
- *'Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge'*.
- *'Significant woodland cover, a substantial proportion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees'*.
- *'Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses'*.

2.1.11 Landscape and Visual Sensitivities are defined as *'Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity'* and *'Long views along valleys and ridges have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development and roads'*.

2.1.12 The HW2 High Weald Forests character area coincides completely with the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) so is not described in further detail. However, two characteristics which are particularly relevant to the assessment are as follows.

HW2 High Weald Forests Key Characteristics

- *'Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, but fewer long views north'.*
- *'Despite the closeness of large towns and roads, a secluded, tranquil nature exists in many parts of the forests'.*

Surrey County

2.1.13 The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment was prepared by Surrey County Council in 2015. The study divides the county into 23 separate Landscape Character Types. The study identifies two character types within the 5 km radius study area as Wooded Low Weald and Low Weald Farmland. The Wooded Low Weald extends along the southern edge of Surrey within Mole Valley District and Waverley District. At a more detailed level the character type within the study area comprises the Cranleigh to Charlwood LCA WW8 (within the Mole Valley District). Key characteristics are as follows.

Cranleigh to Charlwood Wooded Low Weald LCA WW8

- *'Relatively low lying, undulating landform, rising to meet slightly more elevated weald to the north, elsewhere the landform rises to localised high points.'*
- *The character area consists of small scale pastoral and arable fields, largely enclosed by intact hedgerows and tree belts. Field sizes become larger towards the south east corner of the character area. The concentration of woodland varies, however increases generally within the central and western parts of the character area.'*
- *Woodland is prominently broadleaved, including semi-natural Beech and Oak, but conifer plantations are also present.'*
- *Woodland and tree cover encloses the character area and limits long distance views.'*
- *The character area abuts Charlwood to the east. Elsewhere there are farmsteads and small groups of dwellings.'*
- *A network of rural lanes cross the character area; however a few areas have limited road access and rely on tracks and an extensive network of public rights of way. Open*

access land is very limited across the majority of the character area, with the main exception being Edolphs Copse, Hammond's Copse and parts of Glover's Wood, all three located at the eastern edge of the character area.

- *The character area adjoins the Conservation Area at Charlwood.*
- *A rural tranquil landscape, with a sense of remoteness and intimacy due to woodland/tree cover'.*

2.1.14 The study identifies Future Potential Forces for Change as *'Gatwick and associated development including noise and light intrusion'.*

Dorking to Hookwood Low Weald Farmland LCA WF1

2.1.15 This character area lies within the Mole Valley District. Key characteristics are as follows:

- *'Landform is gently undulating. The low weald farmland rises to meet the wooded low weald to the west at a maximum height of approximately 90 m AOD. Land drains to the north and east via the Gad Brook and Deanoak Brook into the River Mole.'*
- *The farmland landscape is an irregular pattern of medium, occasionally large scale, arable fields. The smaller pastoral fields are located along watercourses, and there are paddocks and small holdings associated with farmsteads and settlement.'*
- *There are well maintained hedgerows, but with fewer trees in the hedgerows than the wooded low weald to the west. Woodland blocks, including ancient woodland, are dispersed and relatively small.'*
- *There are unconstrained views, occasionally framed woodland, across the character area, with a more open fell than the less maintained and more treed wooded low weald to the west.'*
- *The road network consists of a network of hedge lined rural road and lanes.'*
- *There is a good network of public rights of way.'*
- *A generally peaceful and attractive landscape, providing an undisturbed setting to River Mole, with views across the Weald from more elevated areas. Although low-key, settlement and roads are obvious human influences and limit the sense of remoteness. The character area feels less wild and remote than the wooded low weald'*

2.1.16 The study identifies Future Potential Forces for Change as *'Gatwick and related pressures from development and noise'.* However, no reference is made to the adjacent Gatwick Airport

or any influence this large-scale development currently has on the LCA.

Flanchford to Horley Low Weald Farmland LCA WF2

2.1.17 This character area runs along the eastern side of the River Mole floodplain, north of Horley, within Reigate and Banstead District. Key characteristics are as follows:

- *Landform is very gently undulating, which rises up from the River Mole to meet the greensand hills to the north.'*
- *The character area includes a number of winding streams, and is characterised by drains and mill ponds.'*
- *The character area consists predominantly of medium to large scale arable fields with well-maintained hedges. There are a few isolated woodlands, the most significant of which is Slipshatch Wood ancient woodland and includes a small area of conifer plantation.'*
- *Rural lanes cross the majority of the character area.'*
- *Public rights of way link across the character area, from settlements to the east, to and across the River Mole.'*
- *Roads, settlement and adjoining Built Up Areas reduce the sense of tranquillity and of remoteness of the area. Although relatively peaceful, providing an undisturbed setting to River Mole.'*
- *The character area has less woodland, simpler topography and appears more maintained than the Wooded Low Weald to the west of the County, and consequently feels less wild and remote than the wooded low weald'.*

Horley to Swaynesland Low Weald Farmland LCA WF3

2.1.18 This is a large character area that lies immediately north-east of Gatwick Airport and extends from Horley and Redhill to Kent in the east, within Tandridge District. Key characteristics are as follows:

- *Landform is broadly undulating rising to the north to meet the greensand hills and to the south to meet the high weald.'*
- *The character area consists predominantly of medium-large, arable fields, along with occasional areas of smaller pastoral fields.'*
- *There is generally a consistent network of well-maintained hedges across the character area, dispersed blocks of woodland (often ancient woodland). The hedgerow pattern breaks down in a few places. There are a few, usually well vegetated, parcels of land, including paddocks, associated with dispersed farmstead and dwellings.'*

- There are views across the majority of the character area, although woodland occasionally obscures longer distance views.
- A network of minor roads and rural lanes, often lined with well-maintained hedges, cross the character area. There is a comprehensive network of public rights of way, including the Vanguard Way Recreational Path and the Tandridge Border Recreation al Path.
- Within the character area there are scattered farmsteads, attractive scattered settlements, church yards and mills, as well as dense areas of ribbon development along minor roads, but overall there is limited settlement across the area.
- There are some areas of registered common land within the character area including Outwood Common.
- A relatively peaceful landscape with limited settlement, particularly to the east, with a slightly higher sense of tranquillity than the low weald farmland west of the Mole floodplain. The character area has less woodland, simpler topography and overall appears more maintained than the Wooded Low Weald to the west.

2.1.19 The study identifies Future Potential Forces for Change as ‘Gatwick and related pressures from development and noise’.

2.1.20 The Landscape strategy for Low Weald Farmland is: ‘Conserve its peaceful, unsettled character, whilst promoting traditional management of woodlands and hedgerows including restoration of hedgerow trees’.

3 References

West Sussex County Council (2007) Landscape Character Assessment

Surrey County Council (2015) Landscape Character Assessment

4 Glossary

4.1 Glossary of terms

Table 4.1.1: Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GAL	Gatwick Airport Limited
LCA	Landscape Character Area
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report

