

Date: 01 March 2024

Our Ref: CH2024019



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Mr Rob Fairbanks and Kathy Atkinson

By email only: rob.fairbanks@surreycc.gov.uk

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for your letter to Tony Juniper of 19th February regarding the Surrey Hills National Landscape boundary review. I am replying, given that this is an operational matter.

You will be aware that the boundary review has generated over 1500 responses to the public consultation. That demonstrates the huge level of interest in the designation project, which is very positive. However, it does mean a delay in our work in analysing and preparing responses. The consultation responses will play a vital role informing decisions on any changes to the area of the proposed boundary extension and we do not therefore want to cut corners at this stage. We expect to publish a Consultation Analysis Report in May.

Please be assured though that we are fully committed to concluding the boundary review as soon as possible. But landscape designations are complex, with the processes largely laid out in statute and involving a series of consecutive stages, each of which must be completed before the next can be undertaken and in as thorough a manner as possible. This will minimise the risk of a public inquiry or legal challenges at the end of the process.

Stephen Rudd of Natural England will be attending the next Surrey Hills National Landscape Board meeting on 6th March. We won't then be able to present the final proposed extension areas to the Surrey Hills Board. However, we will be providing detail on the work undertaken to date, updated timelines, and next steps.

As you highlight in your letter, a huge amount of work has already been undertaken, including by public respondents, Local Planning Authorities, the Surrey Hills National Landscapes Team, and the Natural England team leading on this work. We are very grateful for the support from the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board and Unit. We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marian Spain".

Marian Spain
Chief Executive
Natural England