The North Downs Scarp and Holmesdale

The prominent scarp slope of the North Downs provides a dramatic and dominant feature overlooking the farmed landscape of the Holmesdale Valley and wooded Greensand Hills to the south. The scarp comprises a rich mosaic of pasture, ploughed land, downland, woodland and scrub. The north facing dip slope is an open, undulating, large scale landscape, with wooded shaws, pasture, large arable fields, parkland, scattered small settlements, isolated farmsteads and narrow lanes. In contrast, the Holmesdale Valley is more densely settled with major road corridors, extensive industry and an agricultural landscape of mixed farming and dense hedges.

The key local AONB features identified

- Extensive species rich ancient semi natural woodland, beech woodland, shaws and coppice
- Tracts of open downland, heathland, wood pasture and commons (eg Limpsfield Chart, Headley Heath, Banstead Heath, Walton Heat
- Historic parkland, estates and parkland features (eg Marden Park, Gatton Park, Titsey Estate, Betchworth Park)
- Far reaching, expansive views from scarp viewpoints across Greensand Hills and Weald (eg Crookham Hill, Gravelley Hill, Colley Hill, Box Hill)
- Major road corridors (eg M23, M25, A22, A25, A217), but also network of narrow, winding, enclosed lanes
- Field patterns from large -scale arable (east) to small -scale pastures with boundaries of woodland, shaws and hedgerows (west)
- Recreational access via tracks and drove ways (eg North Downs Way) and attractions (i.e. Box Hill, Colley Hill, Gatton Park, Headley Heath, Epsom Downs)

The key local AONB issues identified	See proposed management plan policy
Impact of traffic on narrow and sunken lanes	TT1
Impact of the M23, M25, A22, and A217 corridors	TT4
Impact of urban fringe and suburban pressures	LU2
Decline in open downland, heathland and common	NC2
Fragmentation of farmland and increased horse grazing	F1
Decline in quality of hedgerows and hedgerow trees	F2
Impact of mineral extraction and landfill	LU3