

Greenspaces

Countryside

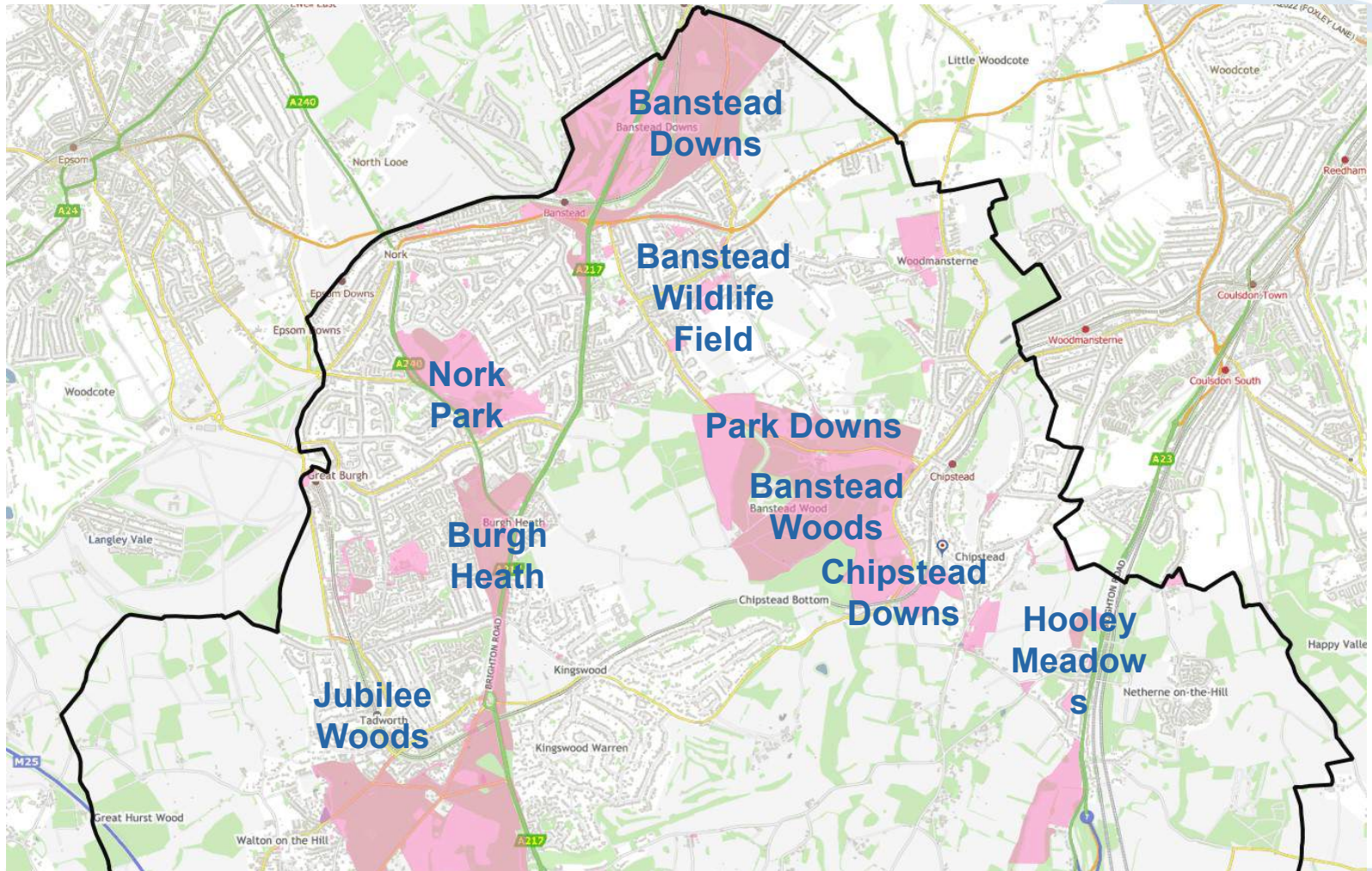
Countryside Sites



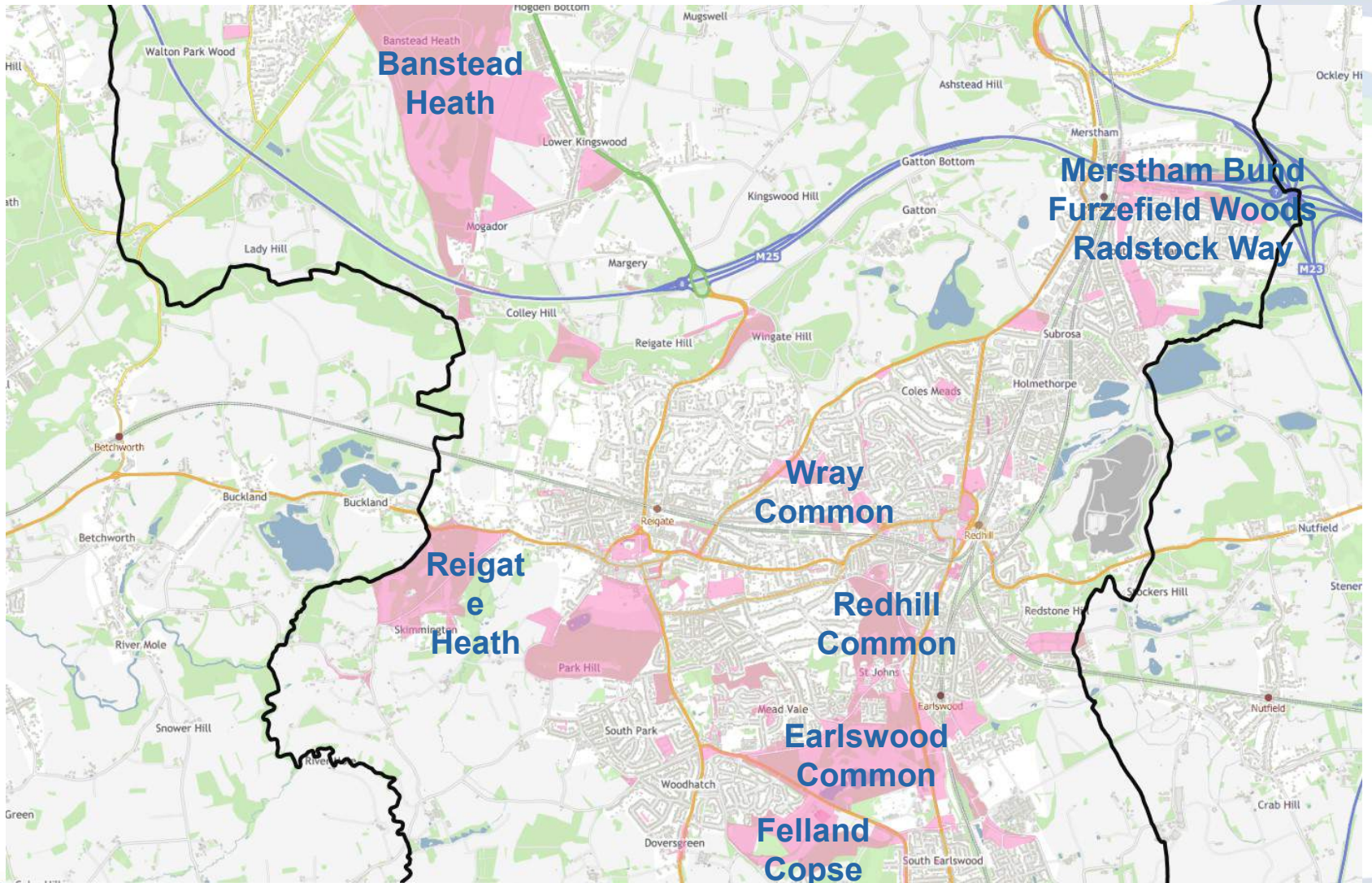
- 3 SSSI and AGLV sites, Reigate Heath, Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs
- 11 SNCI sites, including Petridge Common, Earlswood Common
- 3 Ancient woodlands, Banstead Woods, Furzefield Woods and Felland Copse. Langshott Woods, Jubilee Woods are also woodlands.
- Steering groups for Reigate Heath, Earlswood + Redhill Common and Jubilee Woods
- Mix of habitats e.g. woodland, grassland (acid and neutral), freshwater, wet woodland, heathland, meadows



North

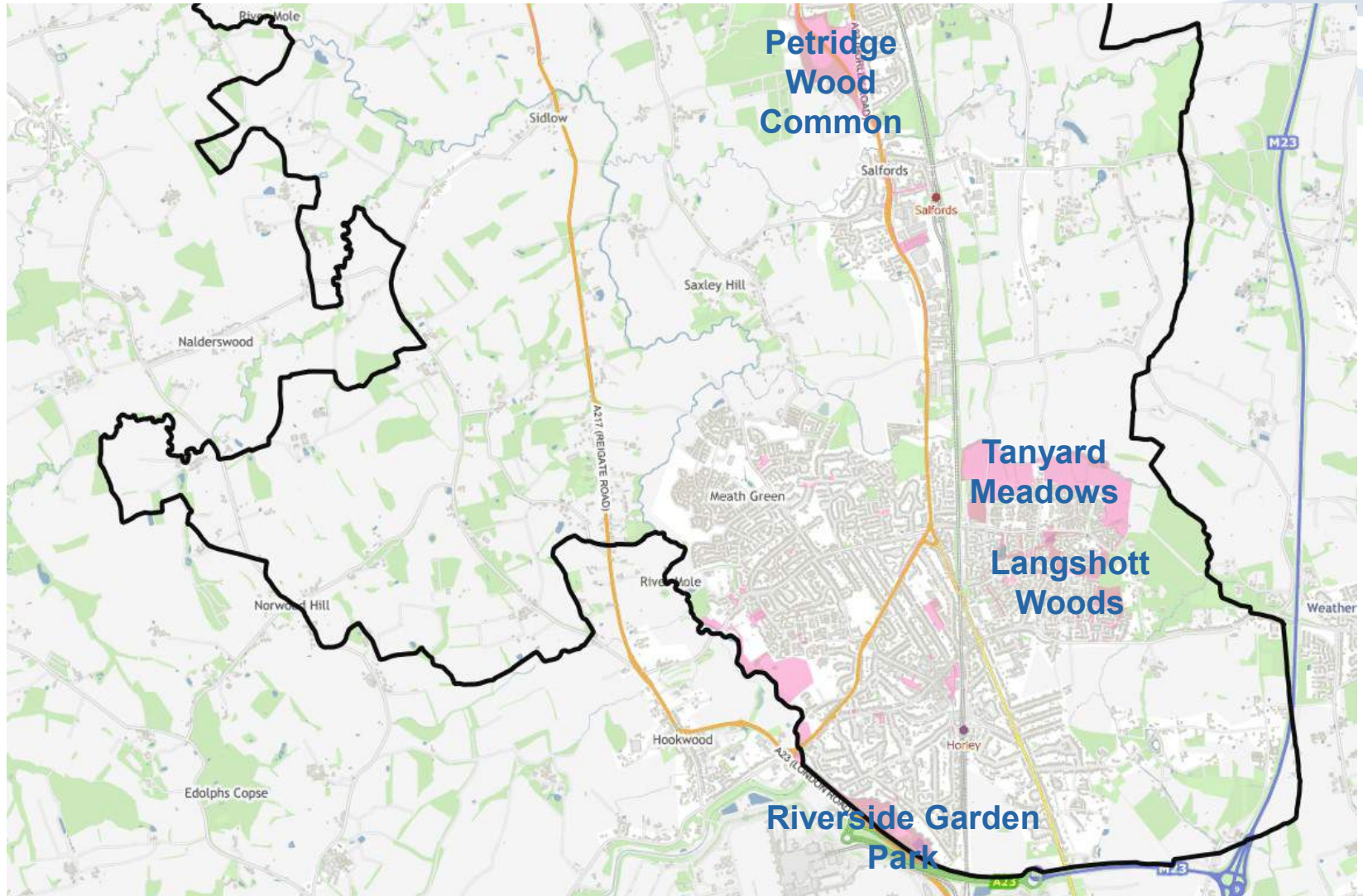


Central



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South



Environment, Social, Commercial

- Work programmes are drawn up seasonally to improve the environmental credentials for each site.
- Work is completed to gain or maintain favourable condition
- Recreation opportunities are identified across the sites to improve public health and wellbeing including trim trail at Nork Park, café at Earlswood Lakes
- Commercial activities operate on our land and use our assets, e.g. Angling club at Earlswood, golf club at Reigate Heath,
- Organising community events, such as carols at Jubilee Woods, education days, den building, bug hunting, pond dipping, sweep nets
- Orchard maintenance (Fieldings Orchard, Woodhatch group Orchard and Banstead Woods Orchard)



Historic Interest

- Nork Park has old estate ruins, historic Arboretum and historic views.
- Pictures show volunteer days at Nork Park



Higher Level Stewardship and Natural England

- Natural England outline the vision for an area and set targets to work towards.
- This is achieved through a mixture of techniques including scrub and brash control, grazing, mowing and creating bare ground
- Natural England conduct site visits periodically to assess the condition of the site.
- All work carried out on HLS sites need prior approval from Natural England
- HLS grazing sites: Chipstead Downs, Hooley Meadows, Nork Park



Aims and Objectives



- Manage HLS sites according to HLS prescriptions to ensure the sustainability, both environmentally and economically, of the sites.
- Manage countryside sites to preserve and enhance their value for wildlife.
- Look for opportunities to improve and manage the visitor's experience.
- Identify and manage pressures on the countryside sites.
- Engage the visitors through interpretation to provide educational resources.



Operational Targets

- Utilise resources effectively.
- Produce seasonal work programmes.
- Keep steering groups engaged
- Delivering work in line with management plans
- Undertake annual reviews of sites and ensure statutory obligations are met.



Key Achievements

- South East in Bloom award for Reigate Heath, Earlswood Common and Tanyard Meadows
- Work programmes for all countryside sites
- All sites that are overseen by Natural England are in favourable condition
- Positive working relations with external partners
- Fantastic visitor survey feedback 'clean green countryside areas'
- SNCIs are in positive management



Challenges and Constraints

- Anti-social behaviour
 - Litter
 - Dog fouling
 - Motorbikes
- Undertaking work on common land due to legal considerations
- Invasive species such as Laurel and Rhododendron need to be controlled and treated



Countryside Management



- Paths are cut back regularly to keep them clear for public access
- Bridleways are cut back 2m high for horse riders and cyclists
- Management plans and work programmes dictate the grass mowing
- Annual cut is used where biodiversity is to be encouraged
- Ash die back is a significant tree issue
- Where diseased trees are a risk to the public, the risk will be managed.
- Natural regeneration will be used to restock the affected areas
- Standing deadwood will be left where safe to do so



Countryside Approach

- Sites with a designations have appropriate management to meet biodiversity targets and aspirations
- Habitat surveys are carried out which will determine future maintenance.
- All of our sites are mixed use sites in someway, they provide for nature, recreation, community engagement and commercial opportunity
- Volunteer groups support work by carrying out conservation tasks
- Operational tasks are relaxed during bird nesting season
- The Countryside Officer is a member of the Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum where countywide issues are discussed



Operational Resources

- Staff: Countryside Officer, ranger, dedicated operative assisting when required, grounds maintenance team to support on larger tasks
- Reliable contractors
- Inhouse tools
 - Chainsaws
 - Chipper
 - Handtools
 - Winch
 - Brushcutter/ strimmer
 - Hedgecutter



Borough Volunteer Groups

- Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers: Redhill Common and Reigate Heath
- Woodchips: Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs
- Gatwick Greenspaces: Riverside Garden Park
- Horley Conservation Group: Tanyard Meadows
- Nork Park Volunteers: Nork Park
- Friends of Merstham: Furzefield Woods, Radstock Way, Merstham Bund
- Woodhatch Greenspaces preservation group





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Volunteers completing conservation tasks to improve the local area for wildlife and the community



Volunteers coppicing the woodland, removing Laurel and clearing reeds from a pond. Volunteers complete conservation tasks to improve areas for wildlife, visitors and the local community. They sometimes contribute towards the HLS agreements.

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Volunteers enjoy the tasks for both physical and mental health reasons. They enjoy the fresh air, exercise and contributing to improving their local areas and environment.