

THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA JOINT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Tuesday 16 October 10.30-1.00

NOTE OF MEETING

Attendance:

Board Members:

Cllr Barry Cheyne
Cllr Jenny Wicks (Vice Chair)
Cllr James Radley
Cllr David Hilton
Cllr Geoff Woodger
Cllr Roland Dibbs
Cllr Moira Gibson (Chair)
Cllr Stewart Stevenson
Cllr Graham Cundy
Cllr Angus Ross (for Cllr Cowan)

Elmbridge Borough Council
Guildford Borough Council
Hart District Council
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Runnymede Borough Council
Rushmoor Borough Council
South East England Regional Assembly
Surrey Heath Borough Council
Woking Borough Council
Wokingham Borough Council

Advisory Board Members:

Stuart Hylton
Charlotte Cordy-Redden
Stan Abbott
Lesley Creedon
Pete Errington
Rob Cameron
Kristoffer Hewitt
Samantha Dawes
Ian Hepburn

Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit
Defence Estates
Forestry Commission
GOSE
HBF
Natural England
Natural England
RSPB
Wildlife Trusts in the South East

Apologies:

Cllr Mary Ballin
Cllr Jonathan Glen
Cllr Brian Ellis
Kate Ashbrook

Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Waverley Borough Council
Open Spaces Society

Officers/Observers:

Bev Hindle
Paul Haynes
Lesley Waddell
Lucy Sheffield
Jeff Clarke
Cllr David Neighbour
Ian Bellinger
Babatunde Adebutu
Tim Richings
Cath Rose
David Payne
Martin Tugwell
Fiona Cullen
Matt Beale-Collins
Jenny Rickard
Geraldine Molony
Nick Griffin
Graham Ritchie
Ian Phillips

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South East England Regional Assembly
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Surrey County Council
Surrey County Council
Surrey Heath Borough Council
Waverley Borough Council
Woking Borough Council
Wokingham Borough Council
Consultant

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Jonathon Glen from Hampshire County Council and Kate Ashbrook from the Open Spaces Society. Cllr Angus Ross was substituting for Cllr Gary Cowan from Wokingham Borough Council.

2. Membership and Terms of Reference

Nomination of Chair and Vice Chair

- 2.1 Nominations for Chair were invited. Cllr Jenny Wicks nominated Cllr Moira Gibson, who sits on the Joint Strategic Partnership (JSP) Board as the Regional Assembly member, but is also Leader of Surrey Heath Borough Council. Cllr Geoff Woodger seconded the nomination. Cllr Gibson was elected as Chair (6 votes for, 0 votes against, 2 abstentions).
- 2.2 Nominations for Vice Chair were invited. Cllr Geoff Woodger nominated Cllr Jenny Wicks, seconded by Cllr Cundy. Cllr Wicks was elected unanimously as Vice Chair.

Joint Strategic Partnership Terms of Reference

- 2.3 Martin Tugwell introduced the terms of reference and explained the informal consultation that had taken place on earlier drafts. He highlighted the need for flexibility within the terms of reference given that the JSP, and reminded members that there is provision in paragraph 5.18 for the Board to review them should this be required.
- 2.4 A proposed alternative form of wording for paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 was introduced by Charlotte Cordy-Redden of Defence Estates to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board in relation to those of major land owners. The following amendment was **agreed**:

Para 1.2 'The Partnership will address matters relating to the ~~management and long term~~ protection of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA arising from planning permissions for new residential development, and associated land management and planning issues that are of joint interest to the member organisations'

Para 1.3 '...For the avoidance of doubt, the Strategic Partnership Board cannot exercise any of the functions of a planning authority, nor can it fetter any decisions made by such bodies nor the rights and responsibilities of the landowners of the SPA. The Joint Strategic Partnership will recognise and take account of the interests, rights and responsibilities of landowners, users and other stakeholders.'

- 2.5 Ian Hepburn considered that paragraph 4.4 should be amended to clarify that any public statements or press releases approved by the Board would be on behalf of full members (with full voting rights) but not advisory members. This point was **accepted**.

- 2.6 Ian Hepburn also sought clarification that the membership of the Stakeholder Forum would be agreed by the Board. This was **agreed**.
- 2.7 Cllr Graham Cundy requested that Annex I be amended to include reference to 'Horsell Common Preservation Society'.
- 2.8 Cllr Roland Dibbs pointed out that paragraph 5.1.5 should also be updated to reflect the amendment agreed to paragraph 1.2.
- 2.9 Pete Errington requested clarification as to the status of Board meeting documents. Para 4.6 confirmed that agendas, reports and minutes are public documents. It was also agreed that meetings should be open to the public.
- 2.10 Cllr David Hilton requested that the Society for the Preservation of Ascot and its Environs be included in the Stakeholder Forum. This proposal was endorsed.
- 2.11 The Terms of Reference and proposals for stakeholder engagement were **agreed**, subject to the amendments and clarifications set out above.
- 2.12 It was **agreed** that a working group with member input be set up to consider detailed delivery and resourcing issues. Cllr Gibson, Cllr Wicks, Cllr Radley and Cllr Dibbs will sit on the working group.

3. Interim Strategic Delivery Plan (ISDP)

- 3.1 Ian Phillips gave a presentation to members about the draft ISDP. A copy of the presentation accompanies these minutes.

Content

- 3.2 Cllr Gibson explained that the Board was being asked to endorse the draft ISDP for consultation purposes. There would be the opportunity for members to raise detailed comments during the consultation, but the Board's discussion needed to focus on issues of principle set out within the document over which they may have a concern.
- 3.3 A number of issues were discussed including:
 - Whether Counsel's opinion should be sought on the draft ISDP.
 - The principle of a standard tariff.
 - The need to make clear that the document is a consultation draft and that its publication by the Local Authorities should not necessarily be taken as inferring that they agreed with its contents.
 - The implications of the proposals for town centre developments some distance from readily available SANG land, and small scale developments in rural settlements closely bounded by the SPA.
 - The availability, quality and capacity of SANG land

- Uncertainties about some of the inputs in to the standard tariff calculation and whether an indicative quantitative standard tariff should be included in the consultation document.
- Joint working – that the Board’s role may need to be reviewed in order to deliver some of the recommendations in ISDP13.

3.4 The draft ISDP was **endorsed** for consultation purposes, with the following amendments:

- A caveat, to be agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair, will be included at the front of the document explaining the status of the document as a consultation draft and setting out that its publication by the local authorities should not be taken as inferring that individual authorities agree with its contents.
- A figure for the proposed standard tariff will not be included in the consultation draft ISDP but the principle for one will be set out.

3.5 In addition, a number of additional actions for officers were identified:

- The Assembly secretariat would liaise with Surrey Heath officers on matters relating to the legal opinion received to date on the draft ISDP. In the light of this, further discussion may be required about whether to commission a joint Counsel opinion.
- Officers would continue to develop the proposals for a standard tariff, including looking in detail at how it would be implemented.
- Officers would work with the member working group to consider the future joint working arrangements that might be required to implement the ISDP.

Consultation

3.6 The proposals for ISPD consultation were introduced. It was considered that in order to allow time for the consultation document to be fully considered by local authority members, the close of the consultation period should run from mid-November to mid-February, which should enable a better fit with committee cycles. [Post meeting note – the consultation on the draft ISDP will run from 19 November until 15 February].

3.7 With the above amendment, the overarching consultation principles were **agreed**, and it was **agreed** that the results of the consultation should be presented to the next Board meeting.

3.8 It was **agreed** that implementation arrangements would be explored further by the member working group.

4. Work Programme

4.1 Ian Phillips gave a short presentation on the proposed future work programme for the JSP. A copy of the presentation accompanies these minutes.

4.2 This was noted by members.

5. Items for information

a. Update on conservation objectives

5.1 Rob Cameron introduced the paper on Conservation Objectives produced by Natural England - provided for members' information in the light of the Technical Assessor's recommendations – and explained the rationale for using visitor numbers and distribution on the SPA as a proxy measure for assessing bird disturbance.

5.2 It was agreed that a representative from Dorset should be invited to the next meeting to talk about their experiences in delivering solutions to avoid or mitigate pressures of development on the Dorset Heaths.

b. Update on availability of mitigation land

5.3 David Payne updated members on the interim results of work being undertaken for the Assembly by Land Use Consultants looking at the availability of possible mitigation land over the next 5 and 10 years. A copy of the presentation accompanies these minutes. The final report from LUC will be made available on the Assembly website (www.southeast-ra.gov.uk) in early November.

c. Update on SPA monitoring

5.4 Kristoffer Hewitt provided members with a short update on Natural England's monitoring work in relation to the SPA. There are a number of strands to this monitoring work. It was suggested that a written summary should be provided for members.

6. Dates of future meetings

6.1 Meetings will be held 3 times a year.

6.2 Post meeting note: Members are requested to diarise the following dates:

- Thursday 27 March - am;
- Tuesday 8 July - am;
- Tuesday 21 October – am.

7. AOB

7.1 Ian Hepburn circulated a Joint Position Statement on 'The mitigation of development in the vicinity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area', produced by Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Surrey Wildlife Trust. An electronic copy of the position statement accompanies these minutes.