

# THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA JOINT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Thursday 27 March 10.30-1.00

## NOTE OF MEETING

### **Attendance:**

#### Board Members:

Cllr Jenny Wicks (Vice Chair)

Cllr Jonathan Glen

Cllr James Radley

Cllr David Hilton

Cllr Geoff Woodger

Cllr Roland Dibbs

Cllr Moira Gibson (Chair)

Cllr Graham Cundy

Cllr Angus Ross (for Cllr Cowan)

#### Advisory Board Members:

Stuart Hylton

Charlotte Cordy-Redden

Hayley Fry

Stan Abbott

Lesley Creedon (for Howard Ewing)

Pete Errington

Rob Cameron

Kristoffer Hewitt

Kate Ashbrook

Samantha Dawes

Ian Hepburn

#### Apologies:

Cllr Mary Ballin

Cllr Barry Cheyne

Cllr Peter Martin

Cllr Stewart Stevenson

Cllr Brian Ellis

#### Officers/Observers:

Bev Hindle

Martin Parker

Lesley Waddell

Phil Allen

Stuart Roberts

Roger Hutton

P Norrington-Davies

Richard Hawkey

Carrie Temple

Karen Merredew

Tim Richings

Cath Rose

David Payne

Martin Tugwell

Jenny Rickard

Guildford Borough Council

Hampshire County Council

Hart District Council

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Runnymede Borough Council

Rushmoor Borough Council

South East England Regional Assembly

Woking Borough Council

Wokingham Borough Council

Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit

Defence Estates

Federation of Master Builders

Forestry Commission

GOSE

HBF

Natural England

Natural England

Open Spaces Society

RSPB

Wildlife Trusts in the South East

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Elmbridge Borough Council

Surrey County Council

Surrey Heath District Council

Waverley Borough Council

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Elmbridge Borough Council

Guildford Borough Council

Hampshire County Council

Hampshire County Council

Howard Hutton Associates

MoD

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

RSPB

Runnymede Borough Council

Rushmoor Borough Council

South East England Regional Assembly

South East England Regional Assembly

South East England Regional Assembly

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Geraldine Molony  
Kathy O'Leary  
Nick Griffin  
Graham Ritchie  
Stephen Miles

Waverley Borough Council  
Woking Borough Council  
Woking Borough Council  
Wokingham Borough Council  
Member of Public and British Entomological and  
Natural History Society

## **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Stewart Stevenson from Surrey Heath Borough Council, Cllr Brian Ellis from Waverley Borough Council and Cllr Peter Martin from Surrey County Council, along with Howard Ewing from GOSE. Cllr Angus Ross from Wokingham Borough Council was substituting for Cllr Gary Cowan.

## **2. Minutes and Matters arising**

- 2.1 Para 3.3 of minutes, bullet point 1 - Cllr Cundy felt that the Board should not lose sight of the likely need for Counsel's opinion. This matter was discussed further under Agenda Item 5.

## **3. Dorset Heaths**

- 3.1 Heather Tidball, the Dorset Urban Heaths Partnership Manager gave a presentation to the Board about the work being undertaken on and around the Dorset Heaths.
- 3.2 The presentation included:
- A summary of the pressures being faced, and the history of joint working between local authorities and other partners to overcome these.
  - an update about the Interim Planning Statement, which has been agreed by all the affected authorities as a short term solution to the provision of avoidance measures, and how this is being delivered and taken forward into a joint Development Plan Document.
  - A summary of the work of the Dorset Urban Heaths Partnership, including in relation to wardening, education, fire risk management, access management, provision of new recreation land and monitoring.
- 3.2 Heather and Cllr Spencer Flower from East Dorset District Council then addressed Board members questions, including in relation to:
- The scale of development pressures compared to the TBH, and the need to consider the overall capacity and threshold of areas to accommodate growth.
  - Dorset's tariff levels and the balance of funding for specific schemes vs management.
  - The detail of how funding is collected and allocated in Dorset and the powers and accountability of the Executive Body.
  - The progress being made on monitoring and a joint DPD and the need to share information between Dorset and the TBH.

- 3.3 An electronic version of the presentation is available on the Regional Assembly's website at [www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our\\_work/planning/sust\\_nat\\_res/tbh-jsp.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/sust_nat_res/tbh-jsp.html).
- 3.4 Further information about the Dorset Joint DPD can be found at <http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=372002>. For further information please email Heather Tidball at [H.Aj.Tidball@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:H.Aj.Tidball@dorsetcc.gov.uk).

#### **4. Draft ISDP – Results of Consultation**

- 4.1 Cath Rose provided a brief summary of the consultation process and results.
- 4.2 Ian Hepburn raised concerns that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the ISDP may be needed if the Government's AA on the Proposed Changes to the South East Plan did not cover adequate levels of detail. He also reiterated concerns about a threshold of 10 dwellings being applied for provision of avoidance measures.
- 4.3 Cllr Ross supported the need for some flexibility at the local level to take account of local circumstances. Cllr Hilton highlighted the outstanding need for clarification about how 'perpetuity' should be defined.
- 4.4 Cllr Glen raised concerns that elected members had not been present at the stakeholder workshop held as part of the consultation, and questioned the weight that had been given to the outcomes of this workshop in the consultation process. His suggestion that elected members should be invited to similar workshops in the future was noted by the Board.
- 4.5 The recommendation that the Board use the outcome of the consultation to inform the development of the delivery framework was **agreed**.

#### **5. ISDP – Next Steps**

- 5.1 Martin Tugwell introduced the proposed delivery framework, in particular:
- The need for this strategic document to enable variation at a local level to take account of particular local circumstances.
  - The importance of consistent approach, and of joint working building on the progress that has already been made on 'mini-plans'.
  - That there was still a need for further work to fully understand and refine the access management and monitoring proposals.
  - The role of the Board as 'guardians' of the standards within the delivery framework.
- 5.2 The Board discussed the proposals for the delivery framework at length. Points raised included:
- General support for the one dwelling threshold to take account of the cumulative impact of development, although Cllr Dibbs considered that the threshold should be 10 dwellings in line with the Assessor's report.

- The legal need to demonstrate a clear link between a development and how the tariff was spent.
- Whether the delivery framework should be applied to affordable housing.
- The need to ensure that developments of less than 10 were clearly 'allocated' to particular SANGs to avoid 'double counting' of SANG.
- The principle of using of new housing as a proxy for new population, which was rejected by Cllr Dibbs, and the difficulties in expanding the delivery framework to cover household extensions.
- What was implied by the term 'flexibility', including the need for certainty about avoidance of impact, but also the need to take account of local circumstances and evidence base?
- The definition of 'exceptional circumstances' and 'large development'.
- Whether the role of the Board as 'guardians' of the framework was sufficient and the need for clear roles, responsibilities and milestones for decision making. RSPB and HBF considered that the Board should take on greater powers, however Cllr Ross felt that the decision making power should remain with individual local authorities.
- The need to consider how the proposed tariff structure would sit within the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy.
- The need to secure SANG in perpetuity, the mechanisms for this including designation as a 'village green', and the need for a clear legal definition of perpetuity.
- Concern about the provision of avoidance measures for large town centre developments and the need for clarification around this.
- The opportunities provided by cross-boundary working to ensure the most sustainable use of potential SANG, the need for continued joint working at an officer level, and the opportunities provided by existing groupings such as the Blackwater Valley Partnership.
- The balance that should be struck between SANG provision on existing and new open space. Kate Ashbrook felt that there should be a presumption in favour of new open space, in addition that public rights should not be restricted and access restriction should be a last resort.
- The balance between SANG and AM provision. Charlotte Cordy Redden considered that site management is vitally important; and that the functionality of SANG is more important than rigid standards.

5.2 A Board majority **agreed** to endorse the delivery framework as providing that approach to be adopted for ensuring measures to avoid the impact of new housing delivered in the vicinity of the Thames Basin Heaths, and that the key principles be recommended to GOSE for inclusion in the RSS, subject to the following:

- That Counsel's opinion should be sought on the following aspects of the delivery framework: the definition of perpetuity for use in legal agreements and the legality of proposals for the application and pooling of tariff collections.
- The addition of an additional objective about monitoring.
- That the use of the term 'flexible' should be reviewed by officers to avoid any apparent confusion.

- Revision of para 8.2 to include the ability of large developments to offer their own mitigation; and to clarify the situation with regard to town centre developments.
- Revision of para 8.3 to clarify the need to demonstrate a direct relationship between developments of less than 10 dwellings and particular SANG, for 'accounting' purposes.
- Revision of para 12.6 to reflect the improvement and availability of SANG and the process for works on common land
- Revision of para 12.10 to refer to sufficient quantity and quality SANG
- Revision of para 13.4 to include reference to access restriction as a last resort, and to clarify the differing purposes of access restriction
- Revisiting para 16.1 once a detailed monitoring framework is on the table.
- The need for officers to look further at dates / milestones for Section C. Cllr Dibbs **did not agree** the above recommendation because of reservations about the 1 dwelling threshold, the assumption that new houses mean new population, and the lack of explicit exclusion of affordable housing.

5.4 The Board then **agreed** to seek the commitment of individual Local Planning Authorities to use the delivery framework as the basis for the preparation of new or revised mini-plans, SPDs and / or DPDs where those documents are required to address the implications of new housing development in the vicinity of the SPA.

5.5 The Board **agreed** to invite expressions of interest to host the strategic access management and monitoring resource.

**Post meeting note – Expressions of interest to host the strategic access management and monitoring resource, and oversee the collection and distribution of contributions, are invited. Please contact Cath Rose at [catherinerose@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:catherinerose@southeast-ra.gov.uk).**

5.6 Finally, the Chairman updated the Board on the recommendation from the Regional Planning Committee that the member steering group membership should be widened to include representation from a County and Unitary authority. She sought expressions of interest.

**Post meeting note – could interested members please contact Cath Rose at [catherinerose@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:catherinerose@southeast-ra.gov.uk).**

5.7 Cllr Glen reminded the Board about the provision in the terms of reference for Board members to send nominated alternates to meetings if they are unable to attend, to ensure all authorities and advisory members are represented.

## **6. Progress on Access Management Measures**

6.1 Rob Cameron provided the Board with an update about progress since the last meeting, including the new Access Management Partnership, which to date had provided a joint response to the draft ISDP consultation, been involved in an event on dog awareness, and would be working up a list of access management schemes before the next Board meeting.

- 6.2 Ian Hepburn outlined work that is underway by the Wildlife Trusts - working with other partners – on working up proposals for access management measures.
- 6.3 Kate Ashbrook questioned how stakeholders and local access groups were involved in the Access Management Partnership. Kristoffer Hewitt agreed to look into this.
- 6.4 The Board **agreed** to note the formation of the Access Management Partnership and the initiatives taken thus far; and **agreed** to support the proposal for the production of a report from the Access Management Partnership on access management proposals for consideration by the Board.

## **7. Progress on Monitoring Strategy**

- 7.1 Kristoffer Hewitt gave a brief presentation updating the Board on monitoring currently being undertaken by Natural England and other partners and on work Natural England have commissioned to develop a monitoring strategy for the SPA.
- 7.2 Cllr Glen expressed an interest in the proposed monitoring workshop in May and requested that all Board members be invited. Ian Hepburn questioned the timing of the workshop in feeding into the next Board meeting, and considered that developing a strategy should be the first priority.
- 7.3 An electronic version of the presentation is available on the Regional Assembly's website at [www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our\\_work/planning/sust\\_nat\\_res/tbh-jsp.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/sust_nat_res/tbh-jsp.html).
- 7.4 The Board **agreed** to consider the progress that has been made to date on preparing a monitoring strategy, and **agreed** to support the production of a draft monitoring strategy by a working group based on the two Natural England reports and to consider the detailed monitoring strategy at the next JSP Board meeting.

## **8. Items for Information**

- 8.1 The summary of planning permissions and completions was noted.

## **9. AOB**

- 9.1 No additional items were raised.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

- 10.1 The next meeting will be held on 3 June 2008 from 10.30-1.00 at the Mandolay Hotel in Guildford.