

**THAMES BASIN HEATHS JOINT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP  
TERMS OF REFERENCE  
Agreed at the inaugural meeting on 16 October 2007**

**1. Objectives**

- 1.1 The Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership (The Partnership) will provide a vehicle for joint working, liaison and exchange of information between the local authorities and other organisations affected by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and related planning or land management issues.
- 1.2 The Partnership will address matters relating to the 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.
- 1.3 The Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board (The Board) will act as an advisory body for local planning authorities affected by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. 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. Partnership Composition and Relationships**

- 2.1. The Partnership will consist of three bodies:
  - a Board, comprising elected Member representatives from the affected planning authorities with voting rights, and representatives of key stakeholder interests without voting rights.
  - an Officer Support Group, consisting of senior officers or representatives from the member organisations and
  - a Stakeholders' Forum, consisting of representatives from organisations with an interest in the management of operations and / or land within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA or areas affected by this.
- 2.2. The Board may receive reports produced by the Officer Support Group and the Stakeholders' Forum and may instruct the Officers' Support Group, who will report to, support and advise The Board.
- 2.3. The Officer Support Group will be represented at meetings of The Board and the Stakeholders' Forum.
- 2.4. The Stakeholders' Forum will be represented at Officer Support Group meetings and may be invited to be represented at meetings of The Board.

- 2.5. Mechanisms will be introduced to enable and encourage flow of information and discussion amongst and between the three bodies outside the formal structure of meetings.

### **3. Board Membership**

- 3.1. The following Planning Authority organisations will be invited to be full members of The Board with full voting rights at meetings of the Board:

- Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council\*<sup>1</sup>
- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- East Hampshire District Council\*
- Elmbridge Borough Council
- Guildford Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Hart District Council
- Mole Valley District Council\*
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Runnymede Borough Council\*
- Rushmoor Borough Council
- South East England Regional Assembly
- Surrey County Council
- Surrey Heath Borough Council
- Waverley Borough Council
- West Berkshire Council\*
- Woking Borough Council
- Wokingham Borough Council\*

and such other planning authorities who may be affected by matters connected with the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

- 3.2. The following will be advisory members of The Board with rights of attendance and participation in discussions at all meetings of The Board but shall not have voting rights.

- Natural England
- Government Office for the South East
- Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit<sup>2</sup>
- A representative of the housebuilding industry
- A representative of non-governmental nature conservation interests
- Ministry of Defence (as a major landowner)
- Forestry Commission (as a major landowner)
- A representative of non-governmental recreation and access interests

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<sup>1</sup> N.B: Authorities marked \* do not include SPA classified land within their boundaries but are either directly affected by falling within the 5 km Zone of Influence surrounding the SPA boundaries or by being within an area that may contribute to the provision of SANG land.

<sup>2</sup> N.B. it is anticipated that the interests of this body in respect of its mineral and waste planning responsibilities will generally be served via representatives from the constituent member unitary planning authorities

- 3.3. At the discretion of the Chairman, representatives of other stakeholder organisations that have recognised legitimate interests in the planning or management of land affected by the TBH SPA may be invited to attend, advise and / or speak at meetings of the Board, but shall not have voting rights. A list of prospective stakeholder organisations is included at Appendix A.

#### **4. Board Structure and Procedures**

- 4.1. The Board will comprise one nominated elected member or a nominated deputy<sup>3</sup> from each of the full member organisations. One senior officer from each planning authority may attend meetings of the Board in support of each elected member from a full member organisation. One senior representative from each of the advisory member organisations may attend in support of their member. Additional representatives may attend at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 4.2. A Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board will be elected annually from amongst the nominated representatives of member organisations with voting rights.
- 4.3. Meetings of the Board will be held three times per year, or more if required. The venue will be set by the Chairman and will normally be fixed for at least one year. At least 6 full (elected) members must be present for meetings to be quorate.
- 4.4. The Board shall have the power to approve the issue of public statements and press releases on behalf of the full (voting) members (but not advisory members) of the Board on matters within its remit.
- 4.5. Officer support and secretariat services will be provided initially by the South East England Regional Assembly and thence by the organisation chairing the Board or as otherwise agreed.
- 4.6. Meetings will be held in public. Agendas, reports and minutes of meetings will be circulated to relevant stakeholders and the minutes of meetings will be made publicly available.

#### **5. Board Functions**

- 5.1. The Board shall have the following functions:
- 5.1.1. To act as a point of contact and to disseminate information between member organisations and other stakeholders relating to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and associated land management and planning issues.

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<sup>3</sup> In the case of the Regional Assembly this should be a member of the Regional Planning Committee who is also a member of the Assembly but may also be a designated member substitute.

- 5.1.2. To act on behalf of the member organisations in commissioning studies, surveys and reports or other work on relevant matters, including making bids for joint funding and grants relating to the objectives of the body.
- 5.1.3. To raise funds from member organisations or other sources as may be required to operate and carry out the agreed functions of the Partnership and to maintain and publish accounts relating to the allocation and expenditure of these. (Detailed arrangements will be need to be agreed before this function can be implemented).
- 5.1.4. To instruct the Officer Support Group or such other parties as may be appropriate to undertake work in accordance with an agreed brief or project plan and an agreed work programme or as may otherwise be decided and to fund such work as appropriate.
- 5.1.5. To approve and publish documents representing the joint or majority position of the member organisations in relation to the long term protection of the SPA and the delivery of development in affected areas and associated land management and planning issues and to publish minority statements or reports concurrently where requested by voting members.
- 5.1.6. To publish guidance and provide advice to member and stakeholder organisations, including making non-binding recommendations for a course of action or policy for adoption.
- 5.1.7. To liaise with stakeholders to monitor and review the effectiveness of measures taken to protect the SPA, and report on this as necessary, and at least annually, to the Government Office for the South East.
- 5.1.8. To review its terms of reference as may be appropriate.

## **6. The Officer Support Group**

- 6.1. The Officer Support Group (OSG) will comprise:
  - Relevant senior planning, environmental and / or leisure officers of the member authorities and senior representatives of key stakeholder organisations, including the lead representative or deputy of the Stakeholders' Forum and
  - Officers or technical / professional representatives of stakeholder organisations, by invitation.
- 6.2. The OSG shall meet at least every 2 months or as considered necessary at a venue to be fixed for a period of at least one year.
- 6.3. A lead officer and deputy shall be elected annually by The Board. Administrative support will be provided by the lead authority or as otherwise agreed.

- 6.4. Agendas, papers and minutes will be prepared and maintained for all meetings and circulated to all representatives.
- 6.5. The OSG shall be responsible, with external support where agreed, for undertaking the following:
  - 6.5.1. Providing technical support to the Board, preparing reports for the Board's consideration and carrying out such actions as may be instructed by the Board.
  - 6.5.2. Preparing an annual Work Programme for the year beginning 1st April, for agreement by the Board.
  - 6.5.3. Undertaking work identified in the annual Work Programme or as otherwise prioritised.
  - 6.5.4. Preparing an annual monitoring report for the year ending 31st March, together with regular updates on progress for the Board.
  - 6.5.5. Preparing and maintaining a three year rolling project plan, based upon the objectives of the Partnership.
- 6.6. The Group may establish small project or working groups, resourced as necessary, to progress issues related to delivering the agreed Work Programme.

## **7. The Stakeholder Forum**

- 7.1. The Stakeholder Forum (SF) will comprise one representative from each of those organisations with a recognised interest in the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and land management and planning issues relating to this. Forum membership will be by invitation of the Board, and additional representatives may be included at the discretion of the Chairman of the Forum.
- 7.2. The Stakeholder Forum will:
  - 7.2.1. Provide, through its representatives, a first line of consultation for documents or proposals approved by the Board for this purpose.
  - 7.2.2. Provide a vehicle for discussion and debate on the views and concerns of its members on relevant issues
  - 7.2.3. Ensure that relevant information concerning the SPA and related matters is disseminated to the stakeholders' organisations as required and that relevant matters of concern to the stakeholder organisations are reported to the OSG and / or The Board of the JSP.

- 7.2.4. Liaise with the OSG and the Board to contribute to the preparation and implementation of the Partnership's annual work programme and three year rolling project plan.
- 7.3. The Stakeholder Forum shall meet at least annually and will use online communications as necessary to ensure effective flow of information.
- 7.4. A lead representative and deputy will be elected from amongst its members for an agreed period and shall be entitled to one seat at meetings of the OSG to represent stakeholder views.
- 7.5. The lead representative of the Stakeholder Forum will be responsible for liaising with the lead officer of the OSG, for arranging meetings, for ensuring agendas, reports and minutes are prepared, circulated and recorded and that information is provided to or obtained from representatives of member organisations, as necessary. Administrative support may be provided for this with the agreement of the Board.

## **Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership**

### **List of Stakeholder Organisations<sup>4</sup>**

(in addition to those represented on the Board or Officer Support Group)

Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust  
Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership  
Communities and Local Government  
Country Land and Business Owners Association  
County Wildlife Trusts  
CPRE  
Crown Estate  
Defence Estates / Ministry of Defence  
DEFRA  
Federation of Master Builders  
Forest of Eversley  
Forestry Commission / Forest Enterprise  
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Hampshire / Surrey British Horse Society  
Home Builders Federation  
Horsell Common Preservation Society  
Lower Mole Countryside Management Project  
National Farmers Union  
National Trust  
Open Spaces Society  
Oxshott Heath Conservators  
RSPB  
Society for the Preservation of Ascot and its Environs  
Surrey Heathland Project  
Surrey Wildlife Trust  
The Crown Estate Office  
The Heathland Conservation Society  
Wildlife Trusts in the South East

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<sup>4</sup> Additional organisations may be added at the discretion of the Board