

## WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### DRAFT NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP

#### HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2021 IN VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Councillor Simon Ashall  
Councillor Tahir Aziz  
Councillor Will Forster  
Councillor Adam Kirby  
Councillor Louise Morales

Ernest Amoako  
Daniel Ashe  
Stephanie Broadley

Absent: Councillor Steve Dorsett  
Councillor Gary Elson

#### Actions

#### 4. Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy

Ernest Amoako introduced the report and explained that a draft revised Avoidance Strategy was considered by the Working Group at its meeting on 21 July 2021 and approved by the Executive for consultation at its meeting on 9 September 2021. The public consultation took place between 27 September 2021 and 8 November 2021.

The report before the Working Group outlined the various responses to the consultation on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and requested the Working Group to recommend to Council to adopt the Avoidance Strategy for the purposes of avoiding harm to the SPAs as a result of development.

The Chairman asked whether it was possible to add GIS shapes of the ward boundaries to Map 3 and 4, so that it was clear which SANGS area this covered. This was also a request from the consultation. Ernest Amoako confirmed that he would ask Officers to add this if it was possible.

ACTION: S Broadley

On page 27, point 3.11, it stated a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain on most developments; the Chairman queried what was the definition of size for most developments. Ernest Amoako advised that when it had been agreed by Government and translated into legislation, then this would allow Officers to address this in principle, which was why the change had been applied. With regards to the details, Officers would need to wait until the regulations had been published. There was a lot of detail not yet known.

Page 41, the Chairman commented on the target group of visitors to the SPA, which stated they came via car and foot, there was no mention of visitors arriving via bike. If visitors came via bike then this would require connectivity to the town centre, which should be mentioned in the document. It was agreed a sentence would be added to clarify this. Consideration would also need to be given to cycle parking

ACTION: E Amoako

Page 53, the Chairman requested that on the Site Quality Checklist that cycle access and cycle parking was added as part of our essential criteria. Ernest Amoako would liaise with Natural England regarding this as they provide the quality checklist.

ACTION: E Amoako

Councillor W Forster questioned access when designating the SANGS and whether we were doing any work on looking at pedestrian access broadly – rights of way paths, roads etc. Ernest Amoako agreed that this was worth looking at and commented that this possibly went beyond this Strategy and was something the Council could look at further with regards to all SANGS and in partnership with the County Council.

Councillor W Forster questioned what the relationship was between SANG and the SSSI. Ernest Amoako commented that the SSSIs were environmental designations of national significance that are protected by policy. They generally overlapped with the SPAs and are identified on the Council's Proposals Map. The SANGs are alternative natural greenspace that are created to attract away from the SPAs and were there in the main to protect these sensitive environmental destinations. In these designated areas we wanted to avoid recreational activities which causes harm to the ground nesting rare birds and the SANGs was a mean to protect these.

Stephanie Broadly commented that in the Site allocations DPD, each SANG proposal policy stated that we would need to create a SANG Proposal and Management plan to guide use of the site. This would include accessibility to the site and any biodiversity opportunities.

Councillor W Forster added that he thought perhaps between the County and Borough Council jointly we should try to get a walking/cycling strategy revamped in light of the SANG proposal so that this does not fall solely on the SANG Policy. Councillor W Forster suggested an additional recommendation (iv) be added regarding this; the suggestion was supported by the Working Group.

RECOMMEND that

- i. the various representations to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy consultation together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- ii. The revised Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of avoiding harm to the integrity of the SPAs due to development pressures;
- iii. the requirements of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy should apply to all relevant decisions from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022; and
- iv. Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council work in partnership to ensure access to SANGs and other parts of the Borough, by all modes are considered, and this be added to the remit of the Infrastructure Task Group.