

THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA AVOIDANCE STRATEGY REVIEW 2016

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1. BACKGROUND TO THE 2016 REVIEW

- 1.1 The original Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) Avoidance Strategy was adopted by Waverley Borough Council in December 2009. Its purpose is to provide guidance to developers when making planning applications for new housing which may have an effect on the conservation interests of the SPA. The Strategy sets out the Council's approach in seeking to avoid the effect of a net increase in population within 5 km of the SPA, and how it proposes to discharge its legal obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations").
- 1.2 Under the Habitats Regulations, the Council is the "competent authority" to consider whether applications for development "are likely to have a significant effect" on a designated European site, such as the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. On completion of an Appropriate Assessment of such proposals, the Council can agree to a plan or project (such as an application for housing) only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site. Any significant effect on the SPA (with the consequence that an Appropriate Assessment is required) must be ascertained by considering the proposal both alone and in combination with other plans or projects. In practice, Natural England advises that any application for residential development that results in an increase in the number of dwellings within 5 km of the SPA will, without avoidance measures, be likely to have a significant effect within the meaning of the Habitats Regulations.
- 1.3 This Avoidance Strategy provides guidance to developers on the level of avoidance measures that the Council expects to see incorporated within planning applications in the light of Natural England's advice. In this instance, "avoidance measures" means providing or contributing towards **Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace** (SANG) and contributing towards a programme of **Strategic Access Management and Monitoring** (SAMM) of the SPA. As this is a fundamental part of the avoidance principle, all avoidance and mitigation proposed in the form of SANG and SAMM should be in consultation and agreement with Natural England.
- 1.4 The Strategy relates only to proposals for residential development, i.e. Use Class C3 [Dwellinghouses] (excluding householder development), as well as staff accommodation in Classes C1 [Hotels] and C2 [Residential Institutions]. There are likely to be cases where non-residential development would have a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA, but the Strategy does not provide guidance in relation to such development. In order to meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, proposals for such development may therefore require an Appropriate Assessment in consultation with Natural England.
- 1.5 The Avoidance Strategy will be taken into account for development control purposes as a material planning consideration. An update of the strategy in May 2013 reflected the results of the Council's monitoring of its effectiveness since its adoption in 2009. This current review arises out of more recent information on visitor capacity at Farnham Park, along with that from the monitoring of the occupancy rates of approved housing (Section 6).

2. THE THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

- 21 The SPA was designated on 9th March 2005 and has since been protected by the Habitats Regulations. It has several conservation objectives, but in particular it is a European designation for rare wild birds, and provides specific protection for three species - *Dartford Warbler*, *Nightjar* and *Woodlark*. Because these birds nest on or near the ground, they are particularly prone to disturbance from walkers, dog walking and cat predation.
- 22 Only a small part of the SPA (about 80 ha) lies within Waverley, north of Sandy Hill, Farnham. However, for the purposes of the Avoidance Strategy, a “Zone of Influence” affects most of Farnham. This zone is defined as the area between 400 metres from the SPA perimeter (measured as a straight line to the nearest part of the curtilage of the dwelling) and 5 km from the perimeter (a straight line from the primary point of access to the curtilage of the dwelling). These ‘buffer zones’ are shown on **Plan A** (page 12).

SPA Delivery Framework

- 23 The Delivery Framework (2009) was produced by the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board (JSPB) on behalf of the member local authorities and other stakeholders. It is a non-statutory document within the context of the South East Plan (see 3.1), and has an important bearing on the way the Council deals with applications that may have a significant effect on the SPA. It gives guidance to all the affected local authorities on how to deal with development proposals within the Zone of Influence. Its objectives and key principles are to recommend –
- a consistent approach to the protection of the SPA from the effects of residential development;
 - the type and extent of residential development that may have a significant effect alone or in combination on the SPA; and
 - key criteria for the delivery of avoidance measures.
- 24 The following key principles of the Framework summarise the overarching context for its recommendations:
- All net new residential development - when considered alone or in combination with other plans and projects - is likely to have a significant effect on the SPA and should therefore provide or contribute to the provision of avoidance measures.
 - Development can provide, or make a contribution to, measures to ensure that they have no likely significant effect on the SPA. In doing so, residential development will have to undertake a Habitats Regulations screening assessment and, where necessary, a full Appropriate Assessment (AA) to demonstrate that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA.
 - A focus on the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and access management, considered as the most appropriate avoidance measures.

- Consistent standards for the application and provision of avoidance measures. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where a more or less prescriptive approach needs to be taken, or greater local specificity is needed. Such circumstances should be carefully justified.
- 25 The JSPB has no formal control over planning decisions made in respect of the SPA, nor does it set any formal planning policy. However, it does retain an overview of local authorities' avoidance strategies and other planning policy guidance, and seeks to ensure that a consistent approach is being applied and sufficient avoidance measures are being provided.
- 26 The Delivery Framework states that the recommended avoidance measures should be applied within the Zone of Influence. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to make small-scale modifications to the zone to account for physical obstructions to cat or human movement or access. Large-scale residential proposals (more than 50 dwellings) within the 5 km – 7 km zone (Plan A) may also be capable of affecting the SPA and may require an Appropriate Assessment. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may be required to provide mitigation.
- 27 Within 400 metres of the perimeter of the SPA, the impact of additional residential development is likely to be such that it is not possible to conclude no adverse effect on the SPA. There is, therefore, a presumption against development in this 'exclusion zone'.**
- 28 Avoidance measures should be sought in relation to development for one or more net new dwellings, including staff residential accommodation (see 1.4).
- 29 The Delivery Framework also provides guidance on the type and size of land suitable as SANG, the amount of SANG needed and the broad principles of the access management of the SPA. The measures set out in this Avoidance Strategy are consistent with that guidance.

3. POLICY BACKGROUND: THE SOUTH EAST PLAN

- 31 The *Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East* (the 'South East Plan') was formally revoked in March 2013. Policy NRM6 that deals with the Thames Basin Heaths SPA was one of only two policies that were retained. The policy recognises the implications of new residential development on the ecological integrity of the SPA and forms the basis for the Avoidance Strategy and Delivery Framework.
- 32 The policy identifies the same Zone of Influence as that defined in the Delivery Framework. It states that where development is proposed within the zone, mitigation measures will be delivered prior to occupation and in perpetuity. It adds that these measures will be based on a combination of access management and provision of SANG, and sets out the respective standards and arrangements for these measures (**Appendix 1**; page 14).

4. PROVIDING SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE (SANG)

- 4.1 The Council's role in enabling avoidance measures is crucial. There are very few areas of informal open land in the Farnham area that are potential SANGs, and only one significant area that is within the Council's ownership¹.
- 4.2 **Farnham Park** is a 130 ha medieval deer park associated with Farnham Castle (**Plan B**; page 13). Of the total area, around 85 ha of semi-natural grassland, woodland and scrub has been confirmed by Natural England as meeting the site quality criteria for an individual SANG (**Appendix 2**; page 15). Its nearest entrance is 200 metres north of the town centre and its northern boundary is about 800 metres from the SPA perimeter. It lies wholly within the Zone of Influence and is well placed to provide avoidance measures for developments in the Farnham area. The park is Waverley's only SANG resource, although opportunities to provide new areas of SANG in the future are being investigated (Section 6 below).
- 4.3 The overall size and location of Farnham Park means that it can serve a development catchment of 5 km from its boundaries covering all of the Zone of Influence in Waverley. However, the (notional) amount of SANG that can be effectively enhanced and linked to development contributions in accordance with Natural England's green space standards is only a proportion of the park's total area. This is a function of (i) existing visitor capacity; and (ii) the range of potential enhancement measures that, if implemented, would serve to attract potential SPA visitors to Farnham Park. Users of the park are well distributed over its area, due in part to its overall extent, but also because the access points are well located all around the perimeter.

Visitor Capacity

- 4.4 The Council's first estimates of the visitor capacity of the park were based on visitor surveys and long-term observation of its usage. Originally set at 50%, this was raised to 75% in response to a recommendation from Natural England (NE) for a more precautionary approach. Whilst this initially yielded a potential SANG capacity of 21.25 ha, NE, when agreeing to the earlier SPA "Miniplan", further required a reduced capacity to 10.9 ha, taking account of the situation at the time and potential future improvements, including car parking.
- 4.5 Since then, some of the car parks have seen improvements to the surfaces and layout and by signing, and by the provision of information boards and leaflets. In 2009, with the agreement of Natural England, further access was provided from a parking area at Hale Road outside the park on its eastern side. The effect was to increase the SANG area by 3.45 ha. In March 2013, the Council released the remaining 6.9 ha, reinstating the overall area of SANG to its original 21.25 ha.

¹ Most of the **Rowhill Copse Local Nature Reserve** lies within Waverley, but is owned by Rushmoor Borough Council and is used as SANG to mitigate developments in its own administrative area.

Improvement and Enhancement

- 46 The scope to improve and enhance Farnham Park enables it to contribute as avoidance space. Whilst it is a Local Nature Reserve, Site of Nature Conservation Importance and a Historic Park and Garden, Natural England accepts that it has the capacity to divert recreational use of the SPA during the bird nesting season, and to cope with an increase in use without environmental damage. Since the original Avoidance Strategy was adopted in 2009, a number of initiatives have been developed, including -
- **A full-time ranger**, who manages the impact of additional visitors; provides reassurance and security for users; and delivers the park's long-term management plan, including monitoring and responding to biodiversity and landscape changes.
 - **Improved interpretation and education**: leaflets, walks and talks enhance visitors' understanding of the importance of the site.
 - **Public access points** with orientation maps and park information direct users to appropriate areas to meet their recreational needs and ensure appropriate behaviour.
- 47 These measures have enhanced the role of Farnham Park as SANG, and the ongoing programme of improvements will continue the process.
- 48 SANGs are expected to be provided on land that is, or could be, owned and managed by organisations that will exist in law to all intents and purposes "in perpetuity", and so will provide enduring ownership. Natural England's preference is for the SANG to be on land owned and managed by local authorities, by charities with a dedicated land management function or by similar bodies. Where developers bring forward bespoke SANG on privately owned land, this will be required to be transferred into enduring ownership as set out above (see also 8.3).

5. STRATEGIC ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING (SAMM)

- 51 In February 2009, Natural England reported to the JSPB on SAMM arrangements for the SPA. This was in response to the three-prong approach referred to in the Delivery Framework, namely avoidance and mitigation from SANG and SAMM, and the habitat management of the heaths. The second of these is referred to as 'access management' in the document, but it also includes monitoring. Provision of both SANG and SAMM are required in order to satisfy the Habitat Regulations.
- 52 The SAMM project aims to limit the damage caused by visitors to the SPA. This can include "hard" measures, such as limiting car parking or providing pathways, and "soft" measures such as -
- a wardening service;
 - monitoring of visitors, providing bird surveys, planning applications;
 - education and communication with key organisations; and
 - working with landowners.

- 53 The SAMM measures are funded by the affected local authorities that collect 'Section 106' payments in addition to any contributions for providing or enhancing SANG. This is based on an assumption about the amount of new housing to be built within the Zone of Influence, set against a detailed programme of works. The additional tariff was agreed by the JSPB.
- 54 All affected authorities have also signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Natural England that formalises the arrangements for collecting the additional tariff. Natural England acts to host the SAMM project and the collection of funds is managed by Hampshire County Council.
- 55 Developer contributions agreed and/or collected by Waverley towards the provision of SANG and the SAMM project have totalled over £980,000 since 2007². **Appendix 4** (page 18) gives examples of further planned improvements at Farnham Park.
- 56 The monitoring of housing permissions and site improvements is an integral part of the Avoidance Strategy and is a vital part of the process of assessing the effectiveness of SANG. This review of the Strategy has been triggered, and will be informed, by the results of the Council's monitoring practices.

Monitoring SANG capacity

- 57 The standard for providing SANG (at 8 ha per 1000 population) is derived from the original Natural England Delivery Plan which preceded the Delivery Framework. The same standard was carried through into the Delivery Framework and the South East Plan Policy NRM6. To convert the population numbers into an equivalent number of dwellings, the Framework assumed an occupancy rate of 2.4 persons per dwelling (ppd). This was derived from the Surrey Planning Collaboration Project work on Section 106 agreements and was based on the 2001 Census outputs for Surrey.
- 58 Using this standard, the total area of SANG available as mitigation at Farnham Park (21.25 ha) was converted to a figure of 1,104 dwellings and which has been used as the basis for monitoring the take-up of the SANG. While there remains sufficient SANG capacity, the Council can continue to discharge its duty as local planning authority in granting planning permission for new housing within the 5 km zone.
- 59 The monitoring of residential permissions is an integral part of the Delivery Framework and Avoidance Strategy. By mid-2015, the unallocated SANG capacity at Farnham Park had been reduced to fewer than 200 dwellings: if permissions were to continue at the same rate, this would be exhausted within two years. Alternatively, it would only take a small number of large-scale consents to effect the same outcome.
- 510 In August 2015, the Council undertook a detailed examination of all planning permissions that have been liable for contributions since monitoring began in 2007. Each permitted dwelling was attributed an occupancy rate according to the

² As at 31st December 2015 (excluding Natural England monitoring fees)

number of bedrooms, using the same data as the Surrey Planning Collaboration Project (above). The various occupancy rates are those which are routinely used for the Council's SANG/SAMM tariff that determines the scale of contributions arising from a development. Payments are calculated on a per person basis.

- 5.11 This particular monitoring exercise showed that the total number of dwellings permitted had achieved an average occupancy rate, at the time, of 1.97 ppd. At February 2016, it stood at 1.99 ppd (Table 1 below).

Table 1: Permissions for New Dwellings (SPA 5 km zone) 2007 – 2016

Dwelling size	Nos. of dwellings permitted*	Occupancy rate (ppd)	Total persons
1 bedroom	217	1.31	284.3
2 bedrooms	497	1.76	874.7
3 bedrooms	203	2.51	509.5
4 bedrooms	104	2.86	297.4
5/+ bedrooms	36	3.73	134.3
Total	1,057	1.99	2,100.2

* Includes expired permissions

- 5.12 The SANG capacity of Farnham Park is now determined, and monitored, according to the evolving average occupancy rate.

Enhanced SANG capacity

- 5.13 Visitor surveys in 2007 and 2009 provided baseline data against which changes in use of the Farnham Park SANG could be measured over time. In accordance with the monitoring strategy, a new visitor survey was carried out in May/June 2014³. This showed that Farnham Park is at 52.7% capacity, compared with the prevailing (precautionary) figure of 75% used as a basis for monitoring SANG capacity.
- 5.14 Natural England has reviewed the Footprint report and, whilst it agreed with the study's methodology and general conclusions, it put the capacity figure slightly higher at **59.3%**. This would leave 40.7% available for SANG, equivalent to an area of **34.6 ha**, an increase of 63% over the previously assumed area. Converting this figure using the 8 ha/1000 population standard alongside the monitored occupancy rate (1.99 ppd; February 2016) gives a revised total dwelling capacity of **2,173**, almost double the original figure. This will vary over time by virtue of adjustments to the occupancy rate as a result of the Council's monitoring of the size of permitted new dwellings. Any significant changes to the occupancy rate would trigger further updates of the Avoidance Strategy.
- 5.15 For the purposes of calculating the revised SANG/SAMM tariff (Section 8 below), the unallocated dwelling capacity of Farnham Park, based on the enhanced total capacity, has been calculated as follows –

³ *Farnham Park Visitor Survey*, Footprint Ecology (September 2014)

▪ Enhanced SANG area (base date: June 2014)	34.6 ha
▪ Total capacity @ 1.99 ppd	2,173 dwellings
▪ Permissions granted (at June 2014)	761 dwellings
▪ Completed and occupied dwellings (at June 2014)	317 dwellings
▪ 'Net' permissions (at June 2014) [761 – 317]	444 dwellings
▪ Unallocated capacity (June 2014) [2,173 – 444]	1,729 dwellings
▪ Permissions granted June 2014 to February 2016	267 dwellings
▪ Unallocated capacity (February 2016) [1,729 – 267]	1,462 dwellings

5.16 This method of re-assessment has been verified by Natural England and represents a significant increase in the amount of SANG available as an avoidance measure. This will not only enable the Council to continue to approve appropriate planning applications for new housing in the Farnham area, but will also provide mitigation for the housing allocations that will come forward through the Waverley Local Plan and the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan.

5.17 The enhanced capacity also has financial implications for the future funding of access and management measures for SANG. The monitored occupancy rate means that there has been mitigation for fewer people than originally anticipated. This has meant lower income levels from developer contributions than forecast and, along with the increased capacity, a need to review the developer tariff (Section 8 below).

6. POTENTIAL NEW SANG SITES

6.1 As part of the process of preparing its new Local Plan, the Council appointed consultants to undertake an assessment of potential opportunities for new SANG in the Farnham area⁴. The search for, and analysis of, potential sites included –

- A re-assessment of sites identified in the 2009 Avoidance Strategy
- Sites in the Farnham area that were considered unsuitable for development in the Council's 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), but which could be suitable for SANG
- Sites within adjoining districts (Rushmoor, Guildford, Hart and East Hampshire) that were considered unsuitable for development by those authorities' SHLAAs, but which could be suitable for SANG
- 'Call for SANG Land' undertaken for the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan
- Past and current quarry/sandpit sites with potential to be restored to a favourable final form for SANG
- Offers by site promoters for bespoke SANG (on- or off-site)
- A map review of suitably-sized land that would not require total habitat creation from first principles and that lay within 5 km of the SPA.

6.2 A total of 45 sites were assessed against the site quality criteria for an individual SANG (Appendix 2). Several were discounted because of their inadequate size, existing habitats, location, unwilling landowner and/or generally not meeting

⁴ *Analysis of Potential SANG Sites for Farnham for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy*, AECOM (April 2015)

enough of the site quality criteria (even with enhancements). Apart from existing areas of SANG (at Farnham Park and Rowhill Copse), only part of the restored Farnham Quarry site was considered *be “suitable and with good potential to be brought forward as strategic SANG”*, i.e. part of a ‘pool’ of SANG to mitigate housing development.

63 Several sites and locations that were *“suitable, but with unknown potential to be brought forward as strategic SANG”*, were also identified -

- Tongham Pools (in conjunction with Farnham Quarry)
- Runfold North and South Sandpits
- Bishop’s Meadow
- Land off Hale Road (extension to Farnham Park)
- Homefield and Jolly Farmer Sandpits
- Alton Road Sandpit
- Waverley Lane (if not appropriate for housing)

64 The ‘Hop Fields’ off Crondall Lane was also identified as potentially suitable, but has subsequently been discounted by virtue of the planning permission for housing on the site granted in September 2015. In a bespoke agreement with the developer, the SANG identified as mitigation for this scheme is an existing site in the developer’s ownership at Church Crookham in Hart District.

65 The Council has commenced discussions with some of the landowners to determine whether their sites are genuinely suitable, available and, importantly, deliverable as SANG. The outcome of these discussions will be reflected in future reviews of the Avoidance Strategy.

7. OPTIONS TO MEET AVOIDANCE REQUIREMENTS

7.1 In terms of providing SANG, developers have three options:

- buy into ‘strategic’ SANG through S106 agreements;
- contribute to the upgrading of an existing SANG site; or
- provide new (bespoke) SANG themselves.

72 **Regulation 61** of the Habitats Regulations sets out the Council’s obligations as the “competent authority” -

61(1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which -

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site ... (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.

.....

61(5) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment... the competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site...

- 73 Proposed avoidance measures will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, i.e. relating to those set out at 7.1 above, and assessed against any concerns of adverse effect on the SPA identified by Natural England. Any new residential development between 400m and 5 km of the SPA boundary will have an adverse effect from recreational pressure unless appropriate mitigation is undertaken, and this will always be in the form of SANG avoidance and SAMM mitigation.
- 74 When submitting an application for residential development, applicants need to consider how the impact of their proposal can be avoided or mitigated. If developers are not providing their own land (on- or off-site) to avoid significant effect on the SPA, they will be required to make a financial contribution based upon the (revised) tariff set out in this Avoidance Strategy. Contributions made in line with the Strategy are deemed to mitigate the effect on the SPA and development proposals will still be required to undertake an Appropriate Assessment.
- 75 Because SANG/SAMM contributions are based upon occupancy levels (number of bedrooms), the Strategy does not differentiate between types of residential development, e.g. flats or houses. Furthermore, on legal advice, the Council cannot reserve SANG capacity to give priority to previously-developed ('brownfield') sites over proposed greenfield sites. The remaining capacity is allocated strictly according to when permissions are granted, including Council resolutions to grant consent subject to S106 agreements. Where developers are able provide bespoke SANG, they are still required to make the appropriate SAMM payment.
- 76 Outline planning applications must provide details of the number and size of bedrooms for each proposed dwelling to enable the contributions to be calculated. Without this information the Council cannot be satisfied that the SPA contribution is adequate and, legally, would be unable to grant planning permission. For the purposes of this requirement, a bedroom is as defined in the Council's *Supplementary Planning Guidance on Density and Size of Dwellings: Policy H4 in the Waverley Local Plan 2002*⁵. Any room shown as a study, nursery, bonus room or other name, but which could effectively be considered as a bedroom for the purposes of Policy H4, shall be regarded as a bedroom.
- 77 Financial contributions will be secured through a Section 106 Unilateral Undertaking. Payment is normally due within 28 days of the commencement of the development, but may vary according to the terms of the agreement. Interest will be charged for overdue payments in accordance with the Council's procedures.
- 78 If developers are unable, or unwilling, to make such contributions, the expectation remains, on the basis of Natural England's advice, that the proposed development will be likely to have a significant effect on the SPA and the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment will arise in accordance with Habitats Regulation 61 (see 7.2).

⁵ Adopted 14th October 2003

8. THE REVISED CONTRIBUTIONS TARIFF

81 As a result of the increase in SANG capacity in Waverley, the developer tariff for SANG/SAMM contributions has also had to be reviewed. It has been calculated with the following assumptions –

- (i) A base date of 3rd February 2016, being the date of the latest update on SANG capacity reported to the Council's Western Planning Committee.
- (ii) A current average occupancy rate of 1.99 persons per dwelling, as reported to the committee.
- (iii) The enhanced capacity for the Farnham Park SANG arising from the findings of the 2014 visitor survey.
- (iv) For the purposes of determining current (unallocated) SANG capacity, a new base date of June 2014 (that of the new visitor survey).

82 On the basis of these assumptions, the unallocated (enhanced) SANG capacity at February 2016 stood at 1,462 dwellings (see 5.15).

83 The review of the Council's costs associated with managing and maintaining Farnham Park as SANG has resulted in some minor additional works being identified and included in the amount to be recovered. Also, when the SANG tariff was first calculated, it was based on the prevailing interest and inflation rates. These are important factors in the calculation because they ensure that the Council has sufficient funds generated from developer contributions for the running and upkeep of the park 'in perpetuity'. In that respect, regard will be had to the statutory definitions of 'in perpetuity' for the purpose of calculating future management costs. Furthermore, the funding mechanism must be reliable, workable and enforceable to ensure the proper long term management of the SANG.

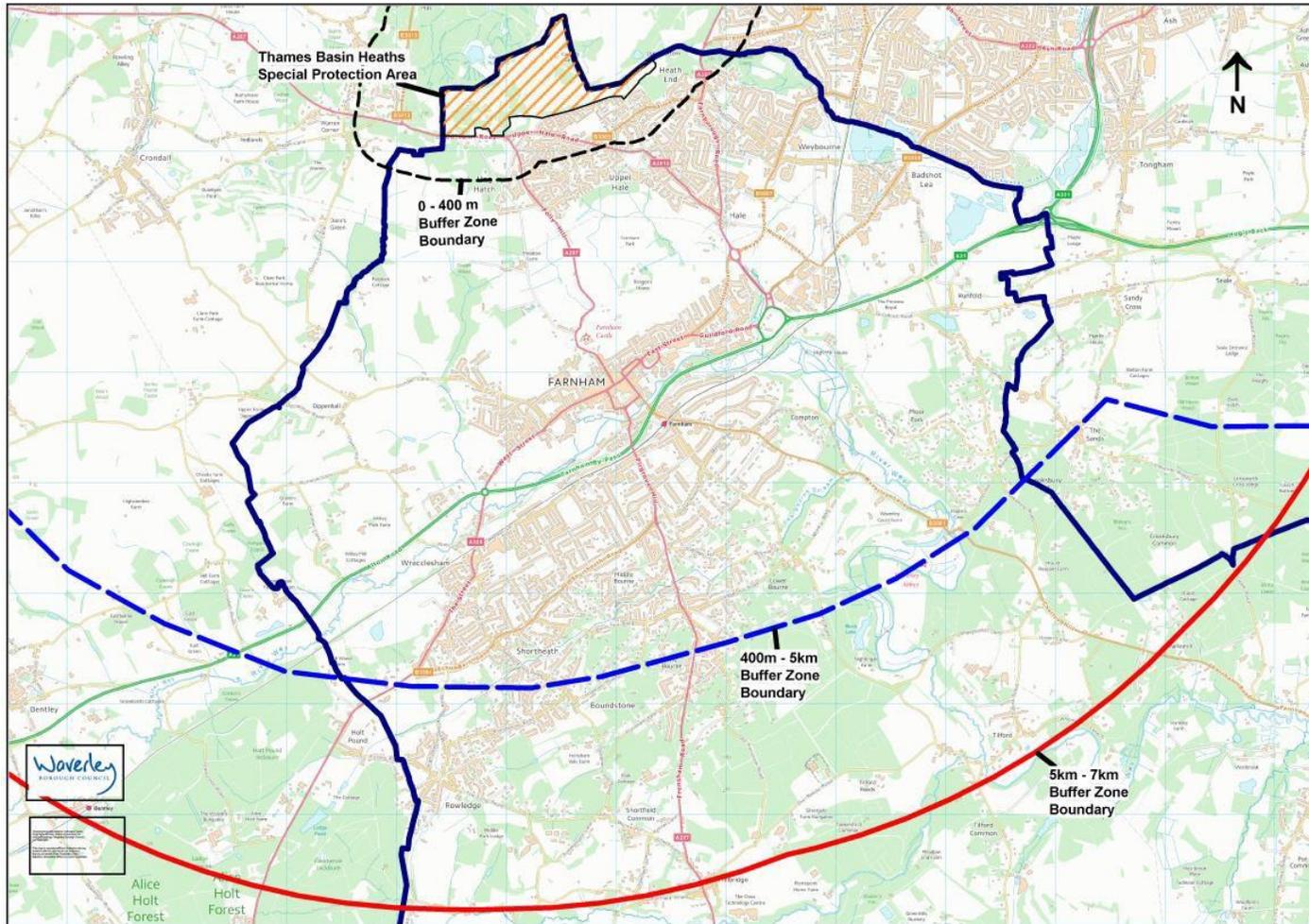
84 There have been significant movements in interest and inflation rates in recent years, and the current levels and projections for the future have now been taken into account. The net result is that the tariffs (per person) have been recalculated at a similar level to the current rate (as summarised below and detailed in **Appendix 3**; page 16). They will, however, be kept under review to ensure that sufficient funding is available to fulfil the Council's obligations in avoiding significant impact on the SPA.

Tariff *	2013 update	2016 Review
SANG	£1,086	£1,060
SAMM	£263	£317

* Per person costs

PLAN A

THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPA BUFFER ZONES



PLAN B

FARNHAM PARK



APPENDIX 1

SOUTH EAST PLAN POLICY NRM6 – THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPA

New residential development which is likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Such measures must be agreed with Natural England.

Priority should be given to directing development to those areas where potential adverse effects can be avoided without the need for mitigation measures. Where mitigation measures are required, local planning authorities, as Competent Authorities, should work in partnership to set out clearly and deliver a consistent approach to mitigation, based on the following principles:

- i. a zone of influence set at 5 km linear distance from the SPA boundary will be established here measures must be taken to ensure that the integrity of the SPA is protected
- ii. within this zone of influence, there will be a 400m “exclusion zone” where mitigation measures are unlikely to be capable of protecting the integrity of the SPA. In exceptional circumstances, this may vary with the provision of evidence that demonstrates the extent of the area within which it is considered that mitigation measures will be capable of protecting the integrity of the SPA. These small locally determined zones will be set out in local development frameworks (LDFs) and SPA avoidance strategies and agreed with Natural England
- iii. where development is proposed outside the exclusion zone but within the zone of influence, mitigation measures will be delivered prior to occupation and in perpetuity. Measures will be based on a combination of access management, and the provision of Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG).

Where mitigation takes the form of provision of SANG the following standards and arrangements will apply:

- iv. a minimum of 8 hectares of SANG land (after discounting to account for current access and capacity) should be provided per 1,000 new occupants
- v. developments of fewer than 10 dwellings should not be required to be within a specified distance of SANG land provided it is ensured that a sufficient quantity of SANG land is in place to cater for the consequent increase in residents prior to occupation of the dwellings
- vi. access management measures will be provided strategically to ensure that adverse impacts on the SPA are avoided and that SANG functions effectively
- vii. authorities should co-operate and work jointly to implement mitigation measures. These may include, inter alia, assistance to those authorities with insufficient SANG land within their own boundaries, co-operation on access management and joint development plan documents
- viii. relevant parties will co-operate with Natural England and landowners and stakeholders in monitoring the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures and monitoring visitor pressure on the SPA and review/amend the approach set out in this policy, as necessary
- ix. local authorities will collect developer contributions towards mitigation measures, including the provision of SANG land and joint contributions to the funding of access management and monitoring the effects of mitigation measures across the SPA
- x. large developments may be expected to provide bespoke mitigation that provides a combination of benefits including SANG, biodiversity enhancement, green infrastructure and, potentially, new recreational facilities.

Where further evidence demonstrates that the integrity of the SPA can be protected using different linear thresholds or with alternative mitigation measures (including standards of SANG provision different to those set out in this policy) these must be agreed with Natural England.

The mechanism for this policy is set out in the TBH Delivery Framework by the TBH Joint Strategic Partnership and partners and stakeholders, the principles of which should be incorporated into local authorities' LDFs.

APPENDIX 2

SITE QUALITY CRITERIA FOR AN INDIVIDUAL SANG

‘Must/Should have’s

1. For all sites larger than 4 ha there must be adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local use, i.e. within easy walking distance of the developments linked to it. The amount of car parking should be determined by the anticipated use of the site and reflect the visitor catchment of both the SANG and the SPA.
2. It should be possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3 – 2.5 km around the SANG.
3. Car parks must be easily and safely accessible by car and should be clearly sign posted.
4. The accessibility of the site must include access points appropriate for the particular visitor use the SANG is intended to cater for.
5. The SANG must have a safe route of access on foot from the nearest car park and/or footpaths.
6. All SANGs with car parks must have a circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park.
7. SANGs must be designed so that they are perceived to be safe by users: they must not have tree and scrub covering parts of the walking routes.
8. Paths must be easily used and well-maintained but most should remain unsurfaced to avoid the site becoming urban in feel.
9. SANGs must be perceived as semi-natural spaces with little intrusion of artificial structures except in the immediate vicinity of car parks. Visually sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.
10. All SANGs larger than 12 ha must aim to provide a variety of habitats for users to experience.
11. Access within the SANG must be largely unrestricted with plenty of space provided where it is possible for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.
12. SANGs must be free from unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment works smells, etc.).
13. SANGs should be clearly sign-posted or advertised in some way.
14. SANGs should have leaflets and/or websites advertising their location to potential users. It would be desirable for leaflets to be distributed to new homes in the area and be made available at entrance points and at car parks.

‘Desirable’

15. The ability of owners to take dogs from the car park to the SANG safely off the lead.
16. Where possible, choose sites with a gently undulating topography.
17. Access points to have signage outlining the layout of the SANG and the routes available to visitors.
18. To provide a naturalistic space with areas of open (non-wooded) countryside and areas of dense and scattered trees and shrubs. The provision of open water on part, but not the majority of sites is desirable.
19. Where possible, to have a focal point such as a viewpoint, monument etc. within the SANG.

The wording in the lists above is precise and has the following meaning:

- Requirements referred to as “must” or “should have’s” are essential
- SANGs should have at least one of the “desirable” features.

APPENDIX 3

REVISED SANG/SAMM TARIFF FOR DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

	WBC budget £	WBC input £	Balance needed £	Replacement (years)	Annual Replacement / Depreciation £
Capital costs of improvements [1]					
• Improvements to access points					
Main entrance	20,000	10,000	10,000	20	1,000
Pedestrian entrances	45,000	10,000	35,000	20	2,250
Car parking (Main, Ranger, Upper Hale)	65,000	0	65,000	20	3,250
Path surface improvements	18,500	0	18,500	10	1,850
Signage	5,000	0	5,000	10	500
Access from eastern car parking (purchase 0.4 ha)	20,000	0	20,000	-	-
(& fencing/hedging)	3,500	0	3,500	10	350
• Management improvements					
Fencing & gates	7,500	0	7,500	10	750
Conversion of park lodge to ranger office/interpretation area	150,000	50,000	100,000	30	5,000
Interpretation panels at key park entrances	20,000	0	20,000	5	4,000
Park leaflets	8,000	0	8,000	5	1,600
Ranger van & mini tractor	17,500	0	17,500	7	2,500
Office equipment & tools	5,000	0	5,000	5	1,000
Professional fees	58,000	0	58,000	-	-
To replace the ageing sleeper footbridges across the Nadder stream and its tributaries	2,000	0	2,000	20	100
To replace five smaller footbridges similar to above	2,000	0	2,000	20	100
Install scalplings/grass-crete matting for two main entrance gates	1,000	0	1,000	15	67
Car park re-landscaping at the park café/golf club entrance	3,000	0	3,000	20	150
Bench replacement Hampton road entrance	2,000	0	2,000	20	100
Vehicle bridge repair	750	0	750	10	75
Culvert/bridge replacement eastern boundary path	5,000	0	5,000	25	200
Install new oak barway	750	0	750	20	38
Total capital costs	459,500	70,000	389,500	-	24,879

Annual costs [1]			
Park ranger (current cost including on-costs)	38,000	11,000	27,000
Park management	55,000	27,500	27,500
Visitor surveys & monitoring (annual average)	4,500	0	4,500
Total annual costs	97,500	38,500	59,000
Annual Depreciation/Replacement Allowance			24,879
Increased Annual Requirement			83,879
Capital Sum required to provide above (£83,879) at 2%			4,193,950
Capital Costs (Net)			389,500
Total Required though Section 106 Agreements			4,583,450
Cost/ha (based on SANG capacity of 34.6 ha) [2]			132,469.65

Predicted utilisation of avoidance capacity - 11 years [3]	No. of people	Standard [4]	Avoidance space needed	Tariff / person
Zone B: 1,462 dwellings at 1.99 persons per dwelling	2,909	8 ha per 1000	23.28 ha	£1,060

Dwelling size	Occupancy rate (ppd) [5]	Tariff per person (subject to annual inflationary increase)	Delivery Framework Tariff (SAMM) [6]	Total Tariff [7]
1 bedroom	1.31	£1,389	£415	£1,804
2 bedrooms	1.76	£1,866	£558	£2,424
3 bedrooms	2.51	£2,661	£796	£3,457
4 bedrooms	2.86	£3,032	£907	£3,939
5/+ bedrooms	3.73	£3,954	£1,182	£5,136

Notes

[1] Based on costs from Farnham Park Historic Landscape Survey & Restoration Management Plan 2004.

[2] Increased capacity demonstrated by 2014 Farnham Park Visitor Survey.

[3] Based on permissions granted in Zone B (January 2007 to February 2016) = 1,057 dwellings (average 116 / year).

[4] From SPA Delivery Framework (2009).

[5] Based on Surrey wide census data.

[6] Based on £630 per dwelling at average occupancy of 1.99ppd giving tariff of £317 per person (rounded up).

11 year projection: 1462 dwellings x £630 = £921,060; 2909 people x £317 = £922,153.

[7] New tariff rate from 1.4.12 based on RPI of 204.4 at 1.4.2007 and 240.8 at 1.4.2012 (an increase of 17.8%).

APPENDIX 4

IMPROVED VISITOR EXPERIENCE AT FARNHAM PARK: FUTURE PROJECTS

Item	Cost
<p>To replace the ageing sleeper footbridges across the Nadder Stream and its tributaries. Many of these are in a poor state of repair and their lifespan is running out. The two largest ones are being undermined by the erosion of the stream bank and need re-siting.</p>	£2,000
<p>To replace five smaller footbridges similar to above.</p>	£2,000
<p>Install scalplings/grasscrete matting for two main entrance gates. The two entrance gates off the main car park get a lot of vehicle use and are rutted, unsightly and difficult to walk over.</p>	£1,000
<p>Car park re-landscaping at the park café/golf club entrance. This area was not improved when the car park was re-laid in 2009. A large old tree stump needs grinding out and a new gate/fence installed to prevent run-over from cars. There is potential for the golf club to contribute to improved signage at the entrance.</p>	£3,000
<p>Bench replacement, Hampton Road entrance. This iconic 'cross bench' (four 6ft benches at right angles) is the highest point of the park. It is reaching the end of its life and needs replacing with an appropriate large sculptural bench structure.</p>	£2,000
<p>Vehicle bridge repair. The surface of the large vehicle/pedestrian bridge across the Nadder Stream is being badly eroded by water run-off and the concrete sandbag edging is part collapsed</p>	£750
<p>Culvert/bridge replacement eastern boundary path. The culvert over a seasonal ditch is partly collapsed. This forms part of the proposed 'shared use' tarmac path on the eastern boundary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ £600 to repair ▪ £5,000 to replace to 'shared use' standard
<p>Install new oak barway. Folly Hill upper entrance to replace ageing metal gate.</p>	£750