

ISSUES RAISED BY THE PLANNING POLICY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP AND FARNHAM MEMBERS AT THE SIG MEETING ON 30TH APRIL 2009 ON THE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

What is the position on national and regional policy ?

National policy relates to the Habitat Regulations and requires local authorities to safeguard the Special Protection Area. This is not discretionary. Regional policy is included in the South East Plan which should be approved shortly, (see policy NRM6 in Appendix 1 of the Avoidance Strategy).¹

How do we discourage people from visiting the Special Protection Area?

A three pronged strategy of visitor management, habitat management and offering an attractive alternative place for people to walk (SANG) such as Farnham Park. These alternatives should include educational facilities, adequate parking and a natural environment similar in character to the SPA.

What monitoring has been done to date?

A visitors survey was carried out May 2007 which provided baseline information against which changes in visitor use of the Park over time could be measured through further surveys.

Was the visitor survey carried out on a scientific basis?

The survey was carried out by consultants who used a methodology devised by Natural England.

If the monitoring shows SANGS is not working where do we go from here?

It will take a number of years to identify if the SANGS (together with the other elements of the Delivery Framework) is working. If monitoring shows that development is having an adverse effect on the SPA then the Council will need to review the Mini Plan and consider alternative solutions. However the Mini Plan is only an interim position and a longer solution will need to be set out in the Local Development Framework.

¹ The South East Plan was published on 6 May 2009

Are we giving the right priority to the Special Protection Area compared other Council priorities?

The Council has a statutory duty to consider the effect of development on the SPA and it has implications on new development in Farnham - Waverley's largest town.

What does the reference to development of less than 10 dwellings not having to be within a specified distance of SANGS mean?

This is a reference to the advice set out in the draft South East Plan (see appendix 1)

There hasn't been much progress on investigating other potential SANG ?

The report sets out potential alternatives to Farnham Park and the consultation exercise may reveal further potential sites.

Do people from south Farnham go to the Park?

The visitor survey will provide information on this.

We should pursue the use of Bourne Woods with the Forestry Commission?

This will be carried out as part of the proposed consultation

What is the Section 106 money being spent on?

(see Appendix 3 of Avoidance Strategy).

Could we not buy land for new SANGS?

If the money is available the Council could buy new land perhaps in partnership with other local authorities. This is a longer term solution.

Could we use the Waverley Abbey area as SANGS?

Waverley Abbey is a conservation area and Scheduled Ancient Monument so consultation with English Heritage would be required. It also has limited parking but further analysis will be carried out of its potential

Could we use the SANGS allocated for East Street for other development, as it is not approved yet?

The Council has resolved to grant planning permission for the East Street redevelopment. The development makes a contribution towards SANG at Farnham Park in the same way as all other relevant planning permissions and its SANG allocation cannot be transferred to other developments.

How do we persuade people to use Farnham Park rather than the Special Protection Area?

By a range of measures set out in the Mini Plan including education and enhancing the facilities in the Park.

