

**Minutes of a Meeting of the External  
Partnerships Select Committee held at  
Surrey Heath House on 15 September  
2015**

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- + Cllr Paul Deach (Chairman)
- Cllr Dan Adams (Vice Chairman)

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| + Cllr Ian Cullen             | + Cllr Adrian Page    |
| Cllr Ruth Hutchinson          | - Cllr Robin Perry    |
| - Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans | + Cllr Chris Pitt     |
| + Cllr David Lewis            | + Cllr Nic Price      |
| - Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper   | + Cllr Darryl Ratiram |
| + Cllr Alan McClafferty       | + Cllr John Winterton |
| + Cllr Max Nelson             |                       |

- + Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Jonathan Lytle (In place of Rebecca Jennings-Evans) and Cllr Ian Sams (In place of Dan Adams)

**7/EP Chairman's Announcements and Welcome to Guests**

The Chairman welcomed Mary Tomlinson and Elise Batelaan from Natural England, and James Adler and Ben Habgood from Surrey Wildlife Trust to the meeting.

**8/EP Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**9/EP Natural England**

The Committee received a presentation from Mary Tomlinson and Elise Batelaan from Natural England on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area.

The Special Protection Area (SPA) had been designated in March 2005 under the European Habitats Regulations. In 2005 the Thames Basin Heath SPA met the qualification as an SPA, namely having 1% of each of the special interest features population within its area, with 30% of the country's Dartford Warbler, 8% of the Nightjar, and 10% of the Woodlark populations. As ground nesting birds, they were susceptible to disturbance from people and dogs.

The SPA covered over 8200 hectares across 3 counties. 11 Local Planning Authorities were directly affected by the SPA and a further 4 had to consider it due to their close proximity. It was noted that the SPA was highly fragmented.

The Committee was informed that, when the area was designated, there were approximately 290,000 properties within 5km of the SPA. In 2006 a visitor survey

on the Thames Basin Heath had estimated that there were 5 million visits per year; the majority of people visiting the SPA were dog walkers, whilst the second most important type of visitor was those walking alone. The survey had also ascertained that most visitors drove to the site and 75% of visitors came from within 5km.

The impact the designation of the SPA had created on the planning system was noted, in particular as the Habitats Regulations required that any plan or project would need to demonstrate that there was no likely significant effect on the European Habitat. As a result, at the time of the SPA's introduction Natural England had objected to every net increase in housing within 5km of the site.

In response to this challenge, Natural England had developed a strategic way to assist with delivering housing development in the zones affected by the SPA. A three-part approach had been developed:

- **Offsite mitigation** – the provision of new or upgraded alternative greenspace for recreation. This was commonly known as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.
- **Onsite access management** – to mitigate for current and future use. This involved wardens working on site, education for people around the SPA, and responsible dog walking.
- **Onsite habitat management** – bringing the SPA into favourable condition.

It was reported that, in 2011 the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) project had commenced. The aim of the project had been to ensure there was no net increase of recreational disturbance on the SPA. As of March 2015 there were 4 full time SAMM wardens and 1 full time education officer, plus 10 seasonal wardens. Work was underway on creating a website and there had been activity on social media to promote public awareness. Other work included attending events and awareness sessions, a project to promote responsible dog walking and the importance of the SPA. Feedback on the project to date had been positive.

The Committee was informed that currently all 11 Local Planning Authorities affected by the SPA had a strategic approach in place, as outlined in Policy NRM6. This included providing for no new increase in dwellings within the 400m zone of influence of the SPA; a financial contribution to a strategic or bespoke SANG and a contribution towards SAMM for development within 5km of a SANG; and within 7km, larger developments would be required to consider providing mitigation. There were currently 41 SANGs, covering nearly 1000 hectares. £630 per dwelling was provided towards the SAMM project.

In 2012/13 an updated SPA visitor survey had been conducted, which had shown similar trends to the 2006 survey, although a higher percentage of visitors had dogs. There had been a 10% rise in visits, although the survey had shown this was not a statistically significant rise.

In June 2015 a SANG survey had been undertaken to determine how effective the alternative greenspace had been at mitigating recreational impacts upon the SPA. Initial findings indicated that the SANGs were providing effective mitigation: the larger SANGs were working very well in providing destination locations and the

smaller SANGs were working well at a local level. The survey had also provided a number of recommendations and would be agreed by the Joint Strategic Partnership Board.

Members were advised that data from 2003 onwards demonstrated that, although there were variations year on year, the bird populations had been successful in breeding.

Members recognised the need to increase education and awareness about the organisation's work and its objectives. It was agreed to further consider ways the Council could assist with promoting the organisation and its aims.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the presentation be noted; and**
- (ii) officers be asked to further investigate ways in which the Council could assist with promoting Natural England's work and objectives.**

**10/EP Surrey Wildlife Trust**

The Committee was informed that Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) had been founded in 1959. SWT was the only organisation concerned solely with the conservation of all forms of wildlife in Surrey. It focused on 3 main areas: land management, research and education. SWT was part of a network of 47 wildlife trusts across the UK.

SWT had acquired its first land in 1965. It had been working with the Council since 1988 in managing Brentmoor Heath, which the Council had purchased from the MoD the previous year. In 2002 SWT had taken on management of Surrey County Council's 3500 hectares countryside estate. In 2006 it had further expanded the land it managed when it signed an agreement with the MoD to manage its land for conservation within the county. It had also started a farming operation to sustainably manage the areas in 2007.

Members were advised that SWT was the largest land manager in the county, managing 8000 hectares of land, approximately 5% of the whole land area of Surrey. The land managed by SWT received millions of public visits per year, with 1000 volunteers providing 10,000 days' work per year. It was noted that SWT's work did extend slightly outside the Surrey boundary. It was also reported that the organisation was one of the major deliverers of conservation management on the Special Protection Area.

Members were informed about the organisation's work within the borough, which included

- Management of Brentmoor Heath reserve. Areas of work included tree removal to open up the areas of heath and work with volunteers to undertake scrub control across the area.

- The introduction of grazing on a range of sites in the borough, including Barossa Common.
- There was a high level stewardship scheme in place at Lightwater Country Park. Work included addressing an area of encroaching scrub and gorse; SWT had provided cattle and more recently introduced goats to address this problem.
- Making hay on Council land in Chobham
- The operation of some of its largest nature reserves were within the Surrey Heath area

The Committee was advised that SWT had carried out educational work for over 40 years. It had 2 education centres which were attended by over 15,000 children each year and was increasingly carrying out educational outreach work in schools and other areas beyond its 2 centres.

It was reported that SWT's research work was developing. It had recently published a paper in a journal on the effects of grazing on heathland. The organisation was also in the process of forming a partnership with the University of Surrey's Veterinary School.

The Committee was advised that SWT's future goals were to make the quality of its existing nature reserves as high as possible and maximise the bio diversity of these reserves. Members were further advised that SWT was always interested in discussing the possibilities of either physically managing more land or being involved in advice on how to manage areas. It also had a long term desire to stay involved in the management of Brentmoor Heath and would welcome opportunities to work with the Council further.

Members recognised the need to increase education and awareness about the organisation's work and objectives. It was agreed to further consider ways the Council could assist with promoting the organisation and its aims.

#### **RESOLVED that**

- (i) the presentation be noted; and**
- (ii) officers be asked to further investigate ways in which the Council could assist with promoting Surrey Wildlife Trust's work and objectives.**

Note 1: In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Cllr Chris Pitt declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a life member of Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Note 2: It was noted for the record that

- (i) Cllr Paul Deach declared that he carried out media work on behalf of Surrey Wildlife Trust, although and he had not received any payment from the Trust for his work; and
- (ii) Cllr John Winterton declared that Surrey Wildlife Trust managed a piece of land for which he was a Trustee.

**11/EP Committee Work Programme**

The Committee considered a proposed work programme for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

**RESOLVED, that the Work Programme for 2015/16, as attached at Annex A to these minutes, be agreed.**

Chairman

**External Partnerships Select Committee  
Work Programme 2015/16**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
<b>24 November 2015</b>	Enterprise M3 – The Local Enterprise Partnership	Geoff French ( <i>agreed to attend</i> )
	Surrey Chambers Of Commerce	Louise Punter ( <i>agreed to attend</i> )
	Collectively Camberley	Lucy Boazman ( <i>confirmation awaited</i> )
<b>19 January 2016</b>	Camberley Care	TBC
	LIVE	TBC
	Dementia Friendly Surrey	TBC
<b>29 March 2016</b>	Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Board	Tim Pashen
	Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group	Dr Andy Brooks
	Frimley Park Hospital	Andrew Morris

Potential First Item for 2016/17

- University of Surrey