

FARNHAM'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Newsletter - Farnham Town Council – Summer/Autumn 2015

STATUTORY CONSULTEES

The Town Council has consulted with statutory consultees such as Natural England, Surrey Highways, Surrey Education, Thames Water and South East Water throughout the development of the NP. The team is also in the process of consulting with local GPs.

Following the regulation 14 consultation at the beginning of 2015, the statutory consultees were asked if there would be provision and the ability for services to cope with the additional number of people in specific areas of the town, as a result of the proposed site allocations. This information, along with the public feedback received, will be used to determine changes to the plan. The discussions with statutory bodies will help to ensure that the plan is robust and evidence-based, which is key for when the Plan gets to examination by a planning inspector.

New to neighbourhood planning?

Farnham's Neighbourhood Plan will shape the development of the town up to 2031. Visit www.farnham.gov.uk/shapefarnham for more information.



Dealing with constraints: SANG

Farnham is constrained by two Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Thames Basin Heaths and Wealden Heaths. These areas of heathland are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species. Farnham is especially restricted by an area called the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection area (TBH SPA). This area sits behind the Sandy Hill area in Upper Hale.

“With the election of a new Council in May 2015, the Infrastructure Planning Group membership grew. The group now consists of Cllrs Carole Cockburn, Jill Hargreaves, Andy Mcleod, Paddy Blagden and John Ward. We are currently working with Waverley Borough Council and Natural England to ensure the provision of SANGs for the Neighbourhood Plan. We are currently rewriting the plan following comments received in the last consultation and hope to submit the next document to Waverley in November, following clarification on SANGs”.

**Carole Cockburn, Lead Member,
Infrastructure Planning Group
2015/16**



Dealing with constraints: SANG continued...

The Thames Basin Heath is one of the South East's most important natural assets with the lowland heath supporting important populations of vulnerable ground-nesting birds that are sensitive to visitors, such as the Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark.

Because of the buffer zones that surround SPAs, any new housing development in Farnham must provide sufficient alternative green space. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is a green open space provided and managed in perpetuity, to offer the community an attractive alternative place to visit, to alleviate the harmful effects of new development on the Special Protection Areas.

The most recent advice from Natural England is that in order for the Neighbourhood Plan to be acceptable and deliverable at submission stage, the plan needs to ensure SANG availability for all the allocated sites in the plan and describe where this is to be provided.

Waverley Borough Council has commissioned a report on SANG provision in Farnham as part of their ongoing work on the Local Plan. This report is understood to have been completed, but it has not yet been published by Waverley or made available to FTC.

At the Town Council's meeting with Natural England, the Infrastructure Planning Group was advised that some landowners had provisionally shown an interest in making their land available for SANG. Farnham Town Council, as part of their work in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan, decided to take a more leading role in facilitating discussions between landowners, in order to allocate SANG provision in the Neighbourhood Plan. Without SANG provision being allocated, the Draft Plan cannot be submitted.

What happens next?

In order to allocate any housing sites, including brownfield, further meetings and conversations have taken place with Natural England and Waverley Borough Council to arrange SANG land to support the housing proposals. If you have any questions in relation to the progress of the plan, visit www.farnham.gov.uk, email neighbourhood.plan@farnham.gov.uk or call 01252 712667.

The Neighbourhood Plan Lifecycle

