

NON PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

FOR 8Hiv & 8jiv

BY

THE PLANNING BUREAU LTD

ON BEHALF OF

McCARTHY & STONE (DEVS) LTD

APPENDIX 1



Thames & Chilterns Team

Foxhold House, Crookham Common, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 8EL

Tel 01635 268881 Fax 01635 267027

Email thames.chilterns@english-nature.org.uk

www.english-nature.org.uk

Mr R Scanlan
The Policy Partnership Ltd
for the Thames Valley New Homes Coalition
The Studio
51 Clauston Street
LONDON
SW1P 4AT

11 May 2006

Dear Mr Scanlan

Joint research projects on residential development and the Thames Basin Heaths

The purpose of this letter is to gauge your interest in funding and steering research which may help to resolve concerns about residential development around the Thames Basin Heaths or improve the information available to planning authorities and developers in development control.

Project 1

You may be aware that restrictive covenants on pet ownership have been raised in many cases as a measure to mitigate some of the potential effects of residential development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). We are concerned about the enforceability of such covenants and observe that no planning authority or applicant has yet put forward quantitative evidence on their likely effectiveness in reducing pet ownership. However, we are open minded on this issue. If evidence came forward to enable the effectiveness of restrictive covenants on pet ownership to be quantified, and this showed them to be effective, they could then be built in as part of the mitigation package for the SPA.

Project 2

Another research question which could straightforwardly enable progress relates to the proportion of visitors to the SPA who come from flats rather than houses. Visitor surveys suggest that only 2 or 3% of visitors to the SPA live in flats but we do not know what proportion of dwellings around the SPA are flats. If we had this information, we could estimate how likely residents of new flats would be to visit the SPA, compared to residents of new houses. This information would enable mitigation standards to be set proportionately to this likelihood.

These questions are straightforward and well researched answers to them could have an immediate effect on the mitigation arrangements put in place through development control. Other research projects which have been suggested include:

(Project 3) Comparison of the distribution of people and the three important birds species within the SPA, involving habitat mapping; and

(Project 4) Repetition of the Dorset work which compared urban extent around heathlands with the numbers of birds on them.

I would suggest that these projects, 3 and 4, are less likely to lead directly to solutions for development control. Nevertheless they would address areas of concern that we perceive amongst current appellants and could usefully inform decision making.

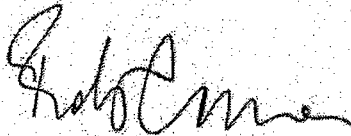
Project 5

Many current appeals are raising the same questions repeatedly. However, there is no easy means by which an applicant or potential appellant can find out whether the questions they might raise at appeal have already been scrutinised. Our research report entitled, *Urban impacts on Dorset Heaths: A review of authoritative planning and related decisions* (Tyldesley D, 2005 English Nature Research Report 622) collates relevant decisions, to give a factual record with minimal interpretation. To update this to the present and maintain it by adding records of new appeal decisions would be to make a useful tool for planning authorities in development control and potential appellants in deciding whether and how to appeal.

The value of each of these projects would be maximised if it was carried out in a manner agreed and owned by the main stakeholders in the issue of residential development around the SPA. If the results of the research were accepted this could provide a significant step forward in both enabling home building and protecting the SPA. Thus I would be grateful to receive your views on whether these projects address priorities and whether you have other ideas for joint working. I suggest that it would be useful for our organisations to meet to discuss this. We shall be in contact to arrange a meeting. If in the meantime you would like to nominate a particular representative for this meeting, or if you would like to have an initial discussion, please do contact me.

I am writing to all of those listed below on the same subject.

Yours sincerely



Robert Cameron
Team Manager

Correspondents:

Mr R Scanlan, The Policy Partnership, for the Thames Valley New Homes Coalition
Mr C Corrigan, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Chief Planning Officers:

Bracknell Forest Borough Council	Elmbridge District Council
Guildford Borough Council	Hart District Council
Runnymede Borough Council	Rushmoor Borough Council
Surrey Heath District Council	Waverley Borough Council
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	Woking Borough
Wokingham District Council	Mole Valley District Council
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	East Hampshire District Council