

Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation Strategic Access and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Taplow Parish Council makes the following response to the consultation on this SPD.

The content of the current version is generally acceptable but we consider that the scope is insufficient.

Planning matters in general have been placed under great stress recently by successive changes in government policy leading to difficulties in keeping Local Plans current, exacerbated by the stresses on local authorities arising from Covid-19.

We think this is in danger of inadvertently leaving the protection of Burnham Beeches seriously deficient in areas that would affect Taplow and that this deficiency could be rectified by amendment to the SPD.

Specifically the draft Local Plan contains provisions for “Suitable Alternate Natural Greenspace” (SANG) provision in the 5.6km area around Burnham Beeches should any development be proposed, which is excellent and is referred to in the SPD. However the draft Local Plan is currently in Inspection and the Inspectors have indicated that they are minded to reject it. A Bucks County appeal may well be successful and the Local Plan may be approved.

A responsible council must consider the effectiveness of the SPD should the Local Plan be rejected. The current Local Plan for this area (revised at 2011) contains no SANG support, so if the SPD is approved in current form the 5.6km area would have no SANG provision which would be unacceptable.

We strongly suggest that this situation is considered with a view to ensuring that if the Local Plan is rejected that appropriate SANG provision is included in the SPD, either by immediate inclusion or by inclusion of the need for a future amendment should the Local Plan subsequently fail.

Roger Worthington, Planning Committee Chairman, Taplow Parish Council