

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

15 October 2024

Item 8 - Wiltshire Local Plan Review - Submission of Draft Plan

From William Mulholland

**To Cllr Nick Botterill - Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management,
and Strategic Planning**

Preamble

To paraphrase my previous q70 to cabinet (8th Oct), I believe there is a need for the Local Plan to make an allocation of SANG in Trowbridge to satisfy the historic requirements that are still extant.

It seems to me that the TBMS is a document which enables development to occur, through providing suitable recreational mitigation to the Bechstein bat populations in the Trowbridge area. The first part of this has been a success with all allocations having at least outline planning and some building out presently. The response I was given is that; it is not a concern that a SANG allocation is not in place because work is underway including Southwick Country Park enhancements.

Question (P24-26)

Please could the enhancements and work in progress which has been carried out to Southwick Country Park be itemised? As I live next to the Park and am not aware of anything of this nature being carried out.

We know the Bechstein bat populations here are internationally important. Wiltshire has been receiving CIL payments for delivery of SANG in Trowbridge and £500,000 from Bellway Homes on Elizabeth Way due to the fact that they could not deliver no net loss to biodiversity on site.

The answer I was previously given as to why there has not been an allocation of SANG made to satisfy the present obligations is that: "Development has not taken place at the pace anticipated and appropriate measures are being pursued to mitigate impacts."

All WHSAP2020 sites (c.1050 homes) have been granted at least outline permission. This is considerably more advanced than just a site allocation which this plan gives. Yet

this local plan does set out a large SANG allocation for Trowbridge, for considerably fewer homes than the number allocated in the WHSAP 2020.

Response

The improvements that have been delivered at Southwick Country Park include -

- Four interpretation boards installed in 2023.
- Self-guided walkway marker posts / waymarked trail posts installed in 2023.

Other works at Southwick LNR / Country Park in progress include -

- Increasing car parking capacity, such as by increasing the size of the car park off Frome Road.
- Options for tree planting.

Land has been purchased close to woodlands that are important for Bechstein's bat populations. Woodland will be planted this autumn on this land to offset the impacts from development that have not achieved no net loss of biodiversity on site.

Question (P24-27)

Does this approach not seem very inconsistent, and why is this laid back attitude deemed acceptable when the issue and bat population are acknowledged by Wiltshire to be so important, and to have such considerable requirements associated with?

Response

No, the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy delivers a package of mitigation measures designed to ensure no adverse impact on the important bat populations associated with the Trowbridge landscape as a result of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan.

Improvements at Southwick Country Park have already been delivered, hedgerows and new woodlands planted, and a warden has been funded to help manage visitor pressure in the sensitive woodlands. This delivery will continue as new development in and around Trowbridge comes forward.