

# **Thames Basin Heaths: Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What is it?**

The Thames Basin Heath SPA is home to three rare species of ground nesting birds - the Dartford Warbler, Skylark and Woodlark. In order to protect these, the Government has designated the 'Thames Basin Heaths' as a special protection area (SPA) under the European Commission Birds Directive and placed mitigation zones around the heaths to lessen the impact of human activity on them. Visit the [European Commission Birds Directive website](#) for more details.

## **Where is it?**

Parts of the southern part of the Wokingham Borough are within the SPA. A map showing this area is on the right hand-side of this page, whilst the boundaries of the SPA can also be found on our [interactive mapping system](#) or on the map at the end of this document.

## **How does it affect me?**

If you are intending to submit a planning application in the south of the Wokingham Borough, you will need to check to see if your property is within one of the mitigation zones (5km and 7km from the SPA).

If your property is within one of these zones, there is a chance that you might be asked to make a contribution towards providing towards [suitable alternative natural greenspace \(SANG\)](#). For more information see the [submitting a planning application in a Special Protection Area mitigation zone](#) page.

## **What is Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)?**

[Suitable alternative natural green spaces](#) (SANGs) are areas of existing open space that have been identified for enhancement so that they can be made more accessible and attractive to visitors. The hope is that by providing alternative areas for the general public to use for outdoor recreation, it will help lessen the impact on the Thames Basin Heaths as new households can use the SANG instead of the protected heathland.

