

Date: 25 March 2020
Our ref: 307042
Your ref: APP/19/01226



Havant Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning consultation: APP/19/01226 - Construction of 44 dwellings with access, open space, landscaping and associated works

Location: Land west of Coldharbour Farm Road, Emsworth PO10 7XA

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 23 January 2020 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IMPACTS ON DESIGNATED SITES

As submitted, the application could have potential significant effects on Portsmouth Harbour SPA/Ramsar; Solent Maritime SAC; Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA/Ramsar; Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar; Solent and Dorset Coast SPA; Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoon SAC and all underpinning SSSIs. Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

The following information is required:

- A recalculation of the nutrient budget calculation

Without this information, Natural England may need to object to the proposal.

Please re-consult Natural England once this information has been obtained.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other issues is set out below.

Deterioration of the water environment

There is existing evidence of high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the Solent water environment with evidence of eutrophication at some designated sites. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), Natural England (NE), and Environment Agency (EA) have been jointly

working to develop an Integrated Water Management Strategy (IWMS). This examines the potential for the PUSH region to accommodate future housing growth without having a detrimental effect upon the water environment. A Water Quality Working Group has been set up to identify and analyse the existing evidence gaps and evaluate the need for strategic mitigation measures. However, there is currently uncertainty as to whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the new housing growth.

The proposal comprises new housing development and has inevitable waste water implications. It is Natural England's view that these implications, and all other matters capable of having a significant effect on designated sites in the Solent, must be addressed in the ways required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

It is Natural England's view that there is a likely significant effect on the internationally designated sites (SPA, SAC, pSPA) due to the increase in waste water from the new housing. As you are aware, where there is a likelihood of significant effects (excluding any measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on the European site), or there are uncertainties, a competent authority should fully assess (by way of an "appropriate assessment") the implications of the proposal in view of the conservation objectives for the European site(s) in question. Appropriate assessments cannot have lacunae and must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the effects of the works proposed on the protected site concerned. Complete information is required to ensure that the proposal will not affect the integrity of the international sites.

Natural England advises that the waste water issue is examined within the appropriate assessment and that the existing nutrient and conservation status of the receiving waters be taken into account. LPAs will be aware of recent CJEU decisions regarding the assessment of elements of a proposal aimed toward mitigating adverse effects on designated sites and the need for certainty that mitigating measures will achieve their aims. The achievement of nutrient neutrality, if scientifically and practically effective, is a means of ensuring that development does not add to existing nutrient burdens. Natural England has prepared a methodology setting out how this can be achieved and this is attached for your information. It is appreciated that this may be difficult for smaller developments or developments on brownfield land. Natural England is aware that your authority has adopted an interim strategy using Grampian conditions to address nutrient impacts from developments currently in the planning system and we have been working with the Council to develop this approach. Natural England can also provide further advice to the applicant on mitigation options under our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

The Planning Statement contains a Position Statement on Nutrient Neutral Development. However, the nutrient budget calculation appears incorrect. Please could the applicant rerun the calculation to inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment/Appropriate Assessment.

In particular, please could the applicant provide clarification on:

- Which wastewater treatment works (WWTW) the foul sewage from the development would be going to. Different WWTWs have different environmental permits, which should be reflected in the budget calculation.
- The planning application form claims the current use of the site is vacant pasture. When was the last time this land was used as pasture? As noted in sections 4.51 and 4.52 of the *Advice on Achieving Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Solent Region* Version 4 (March 2020) document, it is important that farm type classification is appropriately precautionary. It is recommended that evidence is provided of the farm type for the last 10 years and professional judgement is used as to what the land would revert to in the absence of a planning application. In many cases, the local planning authority, as competent authority, will have appropriate knowledge of existing land uses to help inform this process. There may be areas of a greenfield development site that are not currently in agricultural use and have not been used as such for the last 10 years. In these areas as there is no agricultural input into the land a baseline nitrogen leaching value of 5 kg/ha should be used. This figure covers nitrogen loading from atmospheric deposition, pet waste and nitrogen fixing legumes.

Please ensure usage of the updated Version 4 (March 2020) of the *Advice on Achieving Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Solent Region*.

Please note we advise that the competent authorities to whom Natural England gives its statutory advice on the environment will need to seek and rely upon their own legal advice on the interpretation of the Habitats Regulations and case law.

Solent recreation mitigation partnership

The application site is within 5.6km of the Solent Special Protection Areas and will lead to a net increase in residential accommodation. To address any potential significant effects, any forthcoming planning application will need to comply with adopted planning policy to mitigate against adverse effects from recreational disturbance on the Solent SPA sites, as agreed by the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) Definitive Strategy.

Provided there is commitment to this mitigation early in the process and an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any forthcoming planning permission to secure this measure, this will ensure this potential effect has been appropriately addressed. Our advice is that this needs to be confirmed by the Council, as the competent authority, via an appropriate assessment to ensure there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

The above impacts to European sites could also impact SSSIs. Please note that if your authority is minded to grant planning permission contrary to the advice in this letter, you are required under Section 281 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, your authority has taken account of Natural England's advice. You must also allow a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.

In addition, Natural England would advise on the following issues.

Designated Landscapes- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Chichester Harbour AONB and Surrey Hills AONB

The proposed development is for a site within the setting of nationally designated landscapes namely the Chichester Harbour AONB and Surrey Hills AONB. Natural England advises that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide your decision and the role of local advice are explained below.

Your decision should be guided by paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework which gives the highest status of protection for the 'landscape and scenic beauty' of AONBs and National Parks. For major development proposals, paragraph 172 sets out criteria to determine whether the development should exceptionally be permitted within the designated landscape.

Alongside national policy you should also apply landscape policies set out in your development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We also advise that you consult the relevant AONB Partnership or Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the AONB's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to this type of development and its capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose. Relevant to this is the duty on public bodies to 'have regard' for that statutory purpose in carrying out their functions (S85 of the Countryside and

Rights of Way Act, 2000). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals-outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Species and Biodiversity Enhancement

Natural England does not hold locally specific information relating to protected species, local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species, local sites (biodiversity and geodiversity) and local landscape character. These remain material considerations in the determination of this planning application and we recommend that you seek further information from the [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre](#) and other appropriate bodies. In some instances, further surveys may be necessary through an ecological appraisal to be agreed by council ecologist.

Natural England has published [Standing Advice](#) on protected species. Please note Standing Advice is a material consideration in the determination of applications in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation. If you have any specific questions not covered by our Standing Advice, or have difficulty in applying it to this application please contact us at consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

In order for your authority to be assured that the proposal meets the requirements of the standing advice and the additional requirements for biodiversity enhancement and net gain as set out in National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 8, 118, 170, 174 and 175d, Natural England recommends that the application is supported by a Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (BMEP), or equivalent, that has been agreed by the district ecologist or biodiversity officer.

The submission of a council ecologist approved BMEP will help ensure your authority meets the requirements of Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), which states that 'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. Section 40(3) also states that 'conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'. Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services and Making Space for Nature (2010) also provide strong drivers for the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements through the planning process.

Please note that provided the district ecologist or biodiversity officer is satisfied with the submitted biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures and the measures are secured by any permission then no further consultation with Natural England on this aspect of the proposal is required.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact me on 02080 267824.

Should the applicant wish to discuss the further information required and scope for mitigation with Natural England, we would be happy to provide advice through our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

Please consult us again once the information requested above, has been provided.

Yours sincerely

Milena Petrovic
Lead Adviser, Sustainable Development
Thames Solent Team, Natural England