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Your ref: APP/21/01434



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear David

Planning consultation: Outline application for 300 dwellings public open space; children's play areas; SuDS; a new vehicular access and associated ancillary works.

Location: Rook Farm, land off St Marys Road, Hayling Island

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 14 November 2023 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 Chichester & Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA). Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

The following information is required:

- An updated nutrient budget and details of mitigation proposals in order to demonstrate nutrient neutrality.
- A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), or equivalent management document, setting out details for the implementation and management of the proposed bird refuge site.
- The above should inform an updated Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

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.

Additional Information required

Habitat Regulations Assessment

It is noted that the application is supported by the document titled 'Information to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment' (CSA Environmental, October 2021).

Natural England notes that the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has not been produced by your authority, but by the applicant. As competent authority, it is your responsibility to produce the HRA and be accountable for its conclusions. We provide the advice enclosed on the assumption that your authority intends to adopt this HRA to fulfil your duty as competent authority.

Having considered your assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for any adverse effects, Natural England's advice is that your assessment is not sufficiently rigorous or robust to justify this conclusion and therefore it is not possible to ascertain that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the sites in question.

We advise that the following additional work on the assessment is required to enable it to be sufficiently rigorous and robust:

- The HRA should be informed by an updated nutrients budget, and evidence of the effectiveness of any nutrient mitigation in perpetuity.
- The HRA should be informed by the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), or equivalent management document for the proposed bird mitigation area.

Nutrient Neutrality

As advised in our letter dated 10th July 2023, a nutrient budget and suitable mitigation proposals should be submitted to support this application, to inform a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). We note that the Summary of Consultee Responses & GDL Response (27th October 2023) references the requirement for this development to demonstrate nutrient neutrality.

We note that the Information to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment document (CSA Environmental, October 2021), Appendix E contains a nutrient budget dated 27th October 2021.

In March 2022 we wrote to your authority about the availability of an updated package of tools and guidance in relation to nutrient impacts. An updated nutrient budget calculator for the Solent was released on 20 April 2022. We recommend that your authority moves to using the updated generic Nutrient Neutrality Methodology and the updated catchment calculators in preference to existing methodologies whether produced by Natural England or your own authority. Further updates have subsequently been issued, with the latest guidance and nutrient calculators published on Gov.UK in February 2024. These are available here: [Tools and resources for calculating nutrient neutrality - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tools-and-resources-for-calculating-nutrient-neutrality)

Your authority will be best placed to consider how it transitions to the new tools and guidance. Natural England recognises that for some existing catchments where nutrient neutrality is being implemented and mitigation is being actively progressed, authorities may need to consider the associated practicalities of moving to the new guidance whilst recognising their role as Competent Authority.

Where offsite mitigation via land-use change is proposed, we advise that this is considered under a separate nutrient calculation to that of the development site.

The breakdown of land use types within the calculator should equal the total site area considered, for both stages 2 and 3. In light of these comments, we advise that an updated nutrients budget is provided to support this application.

Natural England will be happy to review this aspect of the proposal in due course.

Nutrient Mitigation

The nutrient budget dated 27th October 2021 indicates that the proposed offsite bird mitigation site (please see details below) would provide some offsetting of the nutrient burden for the development proposals. It is understood that this land would be secured as permanent grassland habitat, with management responsibilities passed to an appropriate conservation body. Should this still be the case, please see our comments below.

It is important that you, as competent authority, are satisfied beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed nutrient mitigation strategy will remain effective for the lifetime of the development. This should include assurance that positive management of the site will be delivered over this period, that monitoring can demonstrate ongoing effectiveness, and enforcement measures can be effected where necessary.

We recommend that a nutrient mitigation management plan includes details of the appropriate funding, responsibilities and mechanisms to ensure mitigation compliance for the development's lifetime. We advise you consider site checks, monitoring, and corrective measures, where necessary. As such, we advise the management plan covers the following:

- **Management:** supporting documents should clearly set out how management would ensure no exceedance of the grassland nitrogen leaching rate in perpetuity e.g. [as applicable] no application of fertiliser/re-seeding/increase in any stocking rates/ploughing etc. Confirmation of management delivery body over the lifetime of the development, and appropriate legal and other mechanisms to ensure this management occurs.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** a suitable monitoring regime that ensures the mitigation land is functioning as intended over the mitigation period. Detail regarding frequency of visits and monitoring indicators (e.g. check no unauthorised grazing/agricultural practices etc.) and how this will be reported. An outline of possible remedial measures where required.
- **Funding:** relevant costings for the management of the site and funding mechanisms that will guarantee the full delivery of the agreed management and monitoring plan for the mitigation period.
- **Caveat(s) regarding future changes in land use:** to ensure any change in management will not exceed the grassland nitrogen leaching rate. Any proposed new management options should come forward with detailed management and monitoring plans that clearly outline how the nutrient mitigation will not be compromised.

These management actions should be designed with due consideration of this site as a bird mitigation site.

It will be crucial to demonstrate additionality between measures proposed to mitigate for any nutrient burden, and for measures designed to mitigate for impacts to SPA functionally linked land.

SPA Functionally Linked Land

The proposals would affect SPA functionally linked land, which forms part of a network of terrestrial sites located outside of the Solent SPAs boundaries used by SPA species (including qualifying features and assemblage species) as alternative areas for roosting and foraging. These sites support the functionality of the designated sites and are therefore protected in this context.

The development proposals would result in the loss of a Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS) site H46B, given the highest classification of a 'core' site within the network. The [SWBGS mitigation guidance](#) states that the Core Areas are considered essential to the continued function of the Solent waders and brent goose ecological network and have the strongest functional-linkage to the designated Solent SPAs in terms of their frequency and continuity of use by SPA features.

Securing the long term protection and appropriate management of the Core Areas is a key objective for the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy. The unmitigated loss of these sites would impact on the integrity of the SPA over the long term.

The applicant has undertaken eight wintering bird survey visits were carried out at the development site between November 2021 and March 2022. These confirmed that this is an important parcel of functionally linked land, providing a food source for brent geese (paragraph 4.1.4 of the Brent Goose mitigation strategy, CSA Environmental Ltd). Brent geese regularly feed in the northern field at the proposed development site, with 500-600 recorded during three surveys in December and January.

Proposed Mitigation Site

To mitigate for the loss of the SWBGS Core site H46B, it is proposed that two fields to the west of Hayling Island are secured in perpetuity as a bird reserve. These fields already form part of the SWBGS network, as Core sites H48C and H48D respectively.

In our previous response dated 10th July (our ref: 438844) we requested further detail on these mitigation proposals, including detail on and enhancements, a fully costed management plan, and detail on who would manage the site in perpetuity.

An updated Brent Goose mitigation strategy has been submitted to support this application (Revision F, 23rd October 2024, CSA Environmental Ltd).

At 14.6ha, the proposed refuge site is approximately 24% larger than the loss at the development site (11.7ha) and could provide permanent refuge for birds. Survey data provides evidence of the existing use of these fields by Brent geese, found to regularly feed in the northern field (H48C) with 200-1000 geese in December, February and March.

The updated mitigation strategy document reports on likely functional linkage between the development site and the proposed mitigation area. It indicates that large flocks of geese were recorded at either site but not at both simultaneously, with a single pale-bellied brent goose recorded with the flock at both locations.

The refuge/mitigation site is also adjacent to the coast, providing a variety of habitat types, and is less likely to be impacted by disturbance events.

The proposed mitigation site is currently farmed on rotation, and therefore provides variable foraging resource over time dependent on agricultural practises. The mitigation site would be secured in favourable management for brent geese and other SPA waders in the form of permanent grassland (perennial rye grass with white clover, or similar) to provide a food source for the foraging geese, representing an enhancement of these existing SWBGS network sites.

Additionally a series of shallow, seasonably wet scrapes would be provided as habitat enhancement for wader species.

Supplementary screening is proposed along the western boundary to reduce visibility from the Hayling Billy trail, and stock proof fencing is proposed along the eastern boundary.

It is noted that the Council's [Biodiversity Strategy](#) (January 2019) indicates H48C and H48D as Sites 1 and 2 as potential bird refuge sites and states that these sites routinely support large numbers of SPA bird species and, due to their adjacent coastal location, are ideally suited to become permanent refuges.

The strategy states that the formation of bird refuges at these sites could present an additional opportunity to enhance the Hayling Billy Trail, for example via improved surfacing or relocating this inland. We recommend that should any plans come forwards to enhance the Hayling Billy Trail, impacts to any mitigation measures implemented at this site should be considered as part of those

proposals. For example, additional screening may be required along any new trail alignment. If any changes are made, the monitoring and management documents for the mitigation site should be suitably updated to reflect this.

Provided that the council as competent authority are satisfied that the above mitigation can be secured in perpetuity (further details below), then Natural England raise no further comments on the principle of these mitigation proposals.

Coastal Strategy

We note that the proposed mitigation site is deemed to be at no risk of flooding in the 1 in 200 year flood event, with minimal risk of erosion at the western boundary. We understand that the applicant has considered these proposals in light of the Draft Hayling Island Coastal Management Strategy (2022) and indicate that this mitigation will not impact the strategy.

Under the draft Hayling Island Coastal Management Strategy [Short List to Leading Option Appraisal Report](#) (Sept 2022) the location of the proposed bird mitigation site is adjacent to the 'ODU 14' coastline stretch from Newtown to Stoke. The leading option in this strategy, and the leading Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) option for this stretch is indicated as 'do nothing'. This coastline is also part of the West Hayling Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) which was assigned a policy of No Active Intervention (NAI) with localised 'Hold the Line' at Newtown in the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan NSSMP (2010). The above report states that there are several undefended areas and areas with failing and failed defences (AECOM, 2018). It is an area that is currently susceptible to erosion where the defences have failed. Therefore clarification that this does not apply to the coastline next to the proposed bird mitigation site (i.e, increased susceptibility due to any failed sea defences) would be welcome.

As noted above, we advise any future proposals to move the alignment of the Hayling Billy Trail alignment, due to coastal processes or other reasons, should give due consideration to this proposed bird mitigation site, if implemented.

Monitoring and Maintenance

Any mitigation proposal must meet the basic tests of certainty of delivery, enforceability and the need for securing the adopted measures for perpetuity to ensure it is effective mitigation.

The Brent Goose mitigation strategy sets out a number of management requirements for the proposed mitigation site, the details of which will be set out in a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), or equivalent management document.

It is understood that the HMMP will include detail on the following management requirements:

- Establishment phase
- Access and Infrastructure
- Management
- Monitoring (which may influence the future management details for the site)

We advise that the detail of costing and management for the refuge site is provided at the earliest opportunity to provide certainty of deliverability. Natural England would be happy to review such documents in due course, and would additionally recommend a sign-off visit on completion of the mitigation site via our Discretionary Advice Service.

Costings

The Brent Goose mitigation strategy document (CSA Environmental Ltd) indicates that capital works and funding for the in-perpetuity management of the mitigation site will be provided by the developer. The HMMP will include full costings for these works. These costings will make provision for ongoing monitoring to ensure the success of the refuge site, and a budget allocation for remedial

actions should the monitoring ascertain this to be necessary. This is welcome, although we advise that further details are provided to ensure certainty of deliverability.

Management Responsibilities

The Brent Goose mitigation strategy document states that the freehold or in-perpetuity lease of the proposed mitigation site will be passed to an appropriate conservation body. Provided these measures can be secured Natural England would welcome this approach.

We advise that a named management body is elected and agreed in writing to provide certainty of the ongoing management of this refuge. If this is not the Local Planning Authority then step-in-rights also need to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority to provide confidence that the site will be appropriately managed in perpetuity.

Construction Impacts

The proposed bird mitigation area forms part of the mapped SWBGS network, and is adjacent to the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA, and other SWBGS network sites. We therefore advise that any construction works required to establish the bird mitigation site are undertaken, where possible, outside of the overwintering season (October to March inclusive).

Any percussive piling or works with heavy machinery (i.e. plant resulting in a noise level in excess of 69dbAmax – measured at the sensitive receptor) should be avoided during the bird overwintering period. If such a condition is problematic to the applicant than Natural England will consider any implications of the proposals on the SPA bird interests on a case-by-case basis through our Discretionary Advice Service.

We recommend including a commitment for a qualified ecologist to be on site during construction to ensure that all features of the proposed mitigation site are constructed or installed correctly, with a sign off visit from Natural England (and any other appropriate parties) upon completion via our Discretionary Advice Service.

The proposed mitigation site is adjacent to the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, Solent Maritime SAC, Langstone Harbour SSSI and other SWBGS network sites. Therefore we advise that measures to avoid impacts during any construction phase (and/or subsequent maintenance) are set out in a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP should include consideration of the following, as applicable:

- A list of defined potential impacts on the adjacent protected sites
- Details of methods for pollution control to ensure that no pollution (such as debris from dust or surface run off) is able to enter the water.
- Details on the storage and disposal of waste on site
- Details on how sediment/concrete/other debris that may be accidentally released during construction will be captured to prevent entering the water
- Details of Biosecurity to ensure that all equipment brought onto site does not bring any contaminants such as invasive species onto the site and into the waters.

We advise this is produced prior to start of the works and submitted and approved in writing by your authority. This should be secured by an appropriate planning condition or obligation.

Timings

We would advise that the HMMP is agreed by your ecologist and biodiversity officer, and the implementation of the bird refuge should be delivered prior to the loss of SWBGS site H46B. These timings & provisions should be secured via an appropriate mechanism such as a planning condition.

Summary

As noted above, we advise that details of the implementation and ongoing management of the proposed mitigation site for the Solent SPA birds is provided. Natural England will be happy to review these in due course.

Provided that the above can be secured with adequate certainty to satisfy yourselves as competent authority that the proposed bird mitigation site will be effective for the lifetime of the proposed development, we raise no further comment on these mitigation proposals in principle.

Recreational disturbance - Solent Special Protected Areas (SPAs)

This application is within 5.6 km of the Solent Special Protection Areas and may lead to an increase in residential accommodation through additional bedrooms in the construction of the new dwelling. Natural England is aware that your authority has 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), also known as Bird Aware Solent.

Provided that the applicant is complying with the policy and the Bird Aware Definitive Strategy, Natural England are satisfied that the Applicant has mitigated against the potential adverse effects of the development on the integrity of the European site(s) and has no objection to this aspect of the application. Please note, your authority's appropriate assessment should reflect the current developer contribution rates, which are updated every April in line with the Retail Price Index.

Surface water drainage

We welcome the commitment to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) at the proposed development site. Best practice SuDS at the development site should be designed and installed in accordance with the requirements in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753).

Please note, the pollution hazard indices in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753) relate to 'protected waters' with regards to drinking water supply. Step 3 under Section 26.7.1 of the SuDS manual outlines that the requirement for extra treatment should be considered in relation to discharge to environmentally protected sites. It states that 'an additional treatment component (i.e. over and above that required for standard discharges), or other equivalent protection, is required that provides environmental protection in the event of an unexpected pollution event or poor system performance'.

We recommend that a detailed design of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) should be submitted and agreed with Havant Borough council. This should include evidence to show that the proposed SuDS scheme will ensure there will be no deterioration in water quality (or changes in water quantity) in discharges from the site. Information on the long term management and maintenance (including funding) of the SuDS for the lifetime of the development should also be secured prior to the commencement of any works.

Further general advice on the protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A. If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. 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,

Mary Bell
Thames Solent Sustainable Development Team, Natural England

Annex A –Natural England general advice

Protected Landscapes

Paragraph 182 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (known as National Landscapes), National Parks, and the Broads and states that the scale and extent of development within all these areas should be limited. Paragraph 183 requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated to justify major development within a designated landscape and sets out criteria which should be applied in considering relevant development proposals. [Section 245](#) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities (including local planning authorities) to seek to further the statutory purposes of a National Park, the Broads or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England in exercising their functions. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

The local planning authority should carefully consider any impacts on the statutory purposes of protected landscapes and their settings in line with the NPPF, relevant development plan policies and the Section 245 duty. The relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board may be able to offer advice on the impacts of the proposal on the natural beauty of the area and the aims and objectives of the statutory management plan, as well as environmental enhancement opportunities. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to development and its capacity to accommodate proposed development.

Wider landscapes

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. This application may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes, including any local landscape designations. You may want to consider whether any local landscape features or characteristics (such as ponds, woodland, or dry-stone walls) could be incorporated into the development to respond to and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness, in line with any local landscape character assessments. Where the impacts of development are likely to be significant, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be provided with the proposal to inform decision making. We refer you to the [Landscape Institute](#) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for further guidance.

Biodiversity duty

The local planning authority has a [duty](#) to conserve and enhance biodiversity as part of its decision making. Further information is available [here](#).

Designated nature conservation sites

Paragraphs 186-188 of the NPPF set out the principles for determining applications impacting on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and habitats sites. Both the direct and indirect impacts of the development should be considered. A Habitats Regulations Assessment is needed where there is a likely significant effect on a habitats site and Natural England must be consulted on '[appropriate assessments](#)'. Natural England must also be consulted where development is in or likely to affect a SSSI and provides advice on potential impacts on SSSIs either via [Impact Risk Zones](#) or as standard or bespoke consultation responses.

Protected Species

Natural England has produced [standing advice](#) to help planning authorities understand the impact of particular developments on protected species. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on protected species where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances. A protected species [licence](#) may be required in certain cases.

Local sites and priority habitats and species

The local planning authority should consider the impacts of the proposed development on any local wildlife or geodiversity site, in line with paragraphs 180, 181 and 185 of the NPPF and any relevant development plan policy. There may also be opportunities to enhance local sites and improve their connectivity to help nature's recovery. Natural England does not hold locally specific information on local

sites and recommends further information is obtained from appropriate bodies such as the local records centre, wildlife trust, geoconservation groups or recording societies. Emerging [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) may also provide further useful information.

Priority habitats and species are of particular importance for nature conservation and are included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. A list of priority habitats and species can be found on [Gov.uk](#).

Natural England does not routinely hold species data. Such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found [here](#).

Biodiversity and wider environmental gains

Development should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the NPPF paragraphs 180(d), 185 and 186. Major development (defined in the [NPPF glossary](#)) is required by law to deliver a biodiversity gain of at least 10% from 12 February 2024 and this requirement is expected to be extended to smaller scale development in spring 2024. For nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs), it is anticipated that the requirement for biodiversity net gain will be implemented from 2025.

Further information on biodiversity net gain, including [draft Planning Practice Guidance](#), can be found [here](#).

The statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) should be used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and intertidal habitats and can be used to inform any development project. For small development sites, the [Small Sites Metric](#) may be used. This is a simplified version of the [Biodiversity Metric](#) and is designed for use where certain criteria are met.

The mitigation hierarchy as set out in paragraph 186 of the NPPF should be followed to firstly consider what existing habitats within the site can be retained or enhanced. Where on-site measures are not possible, provision off-site will need to be considered.

Development also provides opportunities to secure wider biodiversity enhancements and environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 74, 108, 124, 180, 181 and 186). Opportunities for enhancement might include incorporating features to support specific species within the design of new buildings such as swift or bat boxes or designing lighting to encourage wildlife.

Natural England's [Environmental Benefits from Nature tool](#) may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside the [Biodiversity Metric](#) and is available as a beta test version.

Further information on biodiversity net gain, the mitigation hierarchy and wider environmental net gain can be found in government [Planning Practice Guidance for the natural environment](#).

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees

The local planning authority should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 186 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland [Inventory](#) which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced [standing advice](#) for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It should be taken into account when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

Best and most versatile agricultural land and soils

Local planning authorities are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) information to apply NPPF policies (Paragraphs 180 and 181). This is the case regardless of whether the proposed development is sufficiently large to consult Natural England.

Further information is contained in [GOV.UK guidance](#) Agricultural Land Classification information is available on the [Magic](#) website and the [Data.Gov.uk](#) website

Guidance on soil protection is available in the Defra [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#), and we recommend its use in the design and construction of development, including any planning conditions. For mineral working and landfilling, separate guidance on soil protection for site restoration and aftercare is available on [Gov.uk](#) website. Detailed guidance on soil handling for mineral sites is contained in the Institute of Quarrying [Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings](#).

Should the development proceed, we advise that the developer uses an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on, and supervise soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make the best use of soils on site.

Green Infrastructure

Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) provides evidence-based advice and tools on how to design, deliver and manage green and blue infrastructure (GI). GI should create and maintain green liveable places that enable people to experience and connect with nature, and that offer everyone, wherever they live, access to good quality parks, greenspaces, recreational, walking and cycling routes that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all. GI provision should enhance ecological networks, support ecosystems services and connect as a living network at local, regional and national scales.

Development should be designed to meet the [15 Green Infrastructure Principles](#). The GI Standards can be used to inform the quality, quantity and type of GI to be provided. Major development should have a GI plan including a long-term delivery and management plan. Relevant aspects of local authority GI strategies should be delivered where appropriate.

GI mapping resources are available [here](#) and [here](#). These can be used to help assess deficiencies in greenspace provision and identify priority locations for new GI provision.

Access and Recreation

Natural England encourages any proposal to incorporate measures to help improve people's access to the natural environment. Measures such as reinstating existing footpaths, together with the creation of new footpaths and bridleways should be considered. Links to urban fringe areas should also be explored to strengthen access networks, reduce fragmentation, and promote wider green infrastructure.

Rights of Way, Access land, Coastal access and National Trails

Paragraphs 104 and 180 of the NPPF highlight the important of public rights of way and access. Development should consider potential impacts on access land, common land, rights of way and coastal access routes in the vicinity of the development. Consideration should also be given to the potential impacts on the any nearby National Trails. The National Trails website www.nationaltrail.co.uk provides information including contact details for the National Trail Officer. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated for any adverse impacts.

Further information is set out in Planning Practice Guidance on the [natural environment](#)