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Our ref: 143344  
Your ref: n/a



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## BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Hilary

### **Planning consultation: Proposed Neighbourhood Areas Location: Martlesham; and Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham)**

Thank you for your consultation on the above which was received by Natural England on 26 January 2015.

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.

Natural England is a statutory consultee on Neighbourhood Plans where these are likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or 20 hectares or more of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. We must also be consulted where proposals require Environmental Impact Assessment or screening for Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA).

#### **Martlesham**

We note that the proposed Martlesham Neighbourhood Area partly encroaches Deben Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a component of Deben Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required to demonstrate that the Plan will not have an adverse effect on the qualifying interest features of these internationally designated sites. In addition, the proposed Neighbourhood Area boundary includes Waldringfield Pit SSSI and borders Ipswich Heaths SSSI. The Parish Council should ensure that these nationally designated sites will be protected, and ideally enhanced, through relevant Plan policies.

The proposed Neighbourhood Area also incorporates part of Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); the AONB Unit should therefore be consulted for its views on the proposed designation of the Martlesham Neighbourhood Area.

#### **Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham)**

We note that the proposed Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) Neighbourhood Area partly encroaches Deben Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a component of Deben Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required to demonstrate that the Plan will not have an adverse effect on the qualifying interest features of these internationally designated sites. In addition, Ferry Cliff, Sutton SSSI borders the proposed Neighbourhood Area. The Parish Council should ensure that nationally designated sites



will be protected, and ideally enhanced, through relevant Plan policies.

The proposed Neighbourhood Area also incorporates part of Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); the AONB Unit should therefore be consulted for its views on the proposed designation of Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) Neighbourhood Area.

### **Additional information**

The following is offered as advice to assist the Parish Councils in preparing their Neighbourhood Plans. Natural England, together with the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Forestry Commission has published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into development proposals. This is available at: <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/PDF/GEHO0212BWAZ-E-E.pdf> Local environmental record centres hold a range of information on the natural environment. A list of local records centre is available at: <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

### **Protected species**

You should consider whether the plans are likely to have any impacts on protected species. To help you do this Natural England has produced standing advice to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected or Biodiversity Action Plan species should they be identified as an issue. The standing advice also sets out when, following receipt of survey information, you should undertake further consultation with Natural England: <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals#standing-advice-for-protected-species> .

The Plans should ensure that protected and/or biodiversity habitats and species are protected, and ideally enhanced, through its policies.

### **Opportunities for enhancing the natural environment**

Proposals may provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment; use natural resources more sustainably; and bring benefits for the local community, for example through green space provision and access to and contact with nature. Opportunities to incorporate features into new build or retro-fitted buildings which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes should also be promoted through development policies where possible.

The lack of specific comment from Natural England should not be interpreted as a statement that the Plans will have no impacts on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may make comments that will help the Parish Councils to fully take account of the environmental value of these areas in their Plan making process.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us. For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Alison Collins on 01284 735236. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk). We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

*AJ Collins*

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