

Date: 1 September 2016
Our ref: 190783
Your ref: Leiston (Submission) Neighbourhood Plan



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Hillary,

Leiston Neighbourhood Plan - Publication draft submission to Suffolk Coastal District Council (Reg 16)

Thank you for your consultation on the above. 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.

Whilst in principle Natural England has no concerns with the proposed location and scale of development in Leiston, we refer you to our earlier comments (letter to Leiston Town Council dated 24 August 2015) about referencing the Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment in the Leiston NP.

Housing developments in Leiston would be expected to contribute to increased recreational use of designated sites, and suitable mitigation measures (provision of green space, wardening, monitoring, site management etc.) are outlined in the Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment.

The HRA for the Leiston NP correctly references the Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment, but this does not follow through clearly to the plan itself. Our earlier comments were as follows;

In taking forward housing development in Leiston, the NP should have regard to the need for these mitigation measures to be delivered [Through site specific Habitat Regulations Assessment] to ensure no adverse effects on the European sites.

Natural England is satisfied that the Leiston NP aims to deliver the 'on-site open space provision' element of the mitigation; however, to ensure certainty of delivery of this mitigation we advise that a requirement for the inclusion of open space should be specified within each of the relevant housing policies i.e. policies SA1 – SA4. We suggest that a map showing the location of open space within the Neighbourhood should be included in the NP; Aldhurst Farm habitat creation scheme can be included as this project includes public access and is in the process of being constructed.

We understand that the other elements of the mitigation identified through the Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment, including visitor management and recreational disturbance at Sandlings SPA, Minsmere-Walberswick SPA/Ramsar site and Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths & Marshes SAC, will be delivered through the emerging Suffolk Coastal District Council Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will include details and a timeframe for the implementation of the required mitigation and a funding mechanism for its delivery. We advise that the NP makes clear reference to this strategy, and the requirement for the mitigation to be delivered within an appropriate time-frame to ensure housing development in Leiston will not have an adverse effect on the European sites. Amendments to the NP in accordance with our advice above will enable the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to conclude that the NP is unlikely to have a significant effect on European sites.

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 me on

Yours sincerely

John Jackson

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