

## **MITIGATION FOR RECREATIONAL IMPACTS ON NEW FOREST EUROPEAN SITES: DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Cabinet agree that the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) “Mitigation for Recreational Impacts on New Forest European Sites” be published and subject to a six-week period (or equivalent) of public consultation.
- 1.2 That prior to publication, the final editing of the draft document (attached in Appendix 1 to this report) be agreed by the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval, for the purposes of public consultation, of the publication of a draft supplementary planning document (SPD) in support of the adopted Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy (July 2020), and in particular Policy ENV1: Mitigating the impacts of development on international nature conservation sites. The document is a guidance document. The policies it relates to have already been adopted by the Council when adopting the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In June 2014 the Council adopted its ‘Mitigation Strategy for European Sites: Recreational Pressure from Residential Development. This provide additional guidance to the implementation of Policy DM3 of the Local Plan Part “: Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document adopted in 2014. This policy has now been superseded by Policy ENV1 in the recently adopted Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy (July 2020). While the approach to mitigating the recreational impacts of new development on the New Forest’s internationally designated nature conservation sites was confirmed in the local plan review, some changes were required to the Council’s strategy for mitigation of recreational impacts. These can be summarised as:
  - The requirement for at least 8 hectares of alternative natural recreational greenspace (ANRG) was to be made wholly additional to the public open space requirements of Policy CS7; and
  - Recognition that occupiers of new dwellings would also visit the New Forest protected sites and these visits would need to be mitigated by access and visitor management measures.
- 3.2 The context of the original mitigation strategy was one of much lower levels of new development than now being planned for in the district than previously. Higher levels of overall development now need to be addressed. The changes in the mitigation strategy set out above, and agreed through the Local Plan process, are a response to these higher levels of growth. These changes, together with the experience gained from implementing a recreational mitigation strategy over a six-year period, have informed the revised Recreational Mitigation Strategy SPD.

- 3.3 The purpose of the SPD is to give additional guidance on the implementation of Policy ENV1. It will assist the development industry in understanding the Council's requirements and expectations, and the measures that will need to be secured to satisfy the local planning authority, as the competent decision-making authority for planning applications, and which will need to be in place for development that is 'permitted development' under the General Permitted Development Order', to meet the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The SPD also sets out the ways in which the Council will monitor the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.
- 3.4 A preliminary draft of this SPD was published for public consultation in June 2018 to accompany the publication of the pre-submission Local Plan 2016 -2036: Part 1: Planning Strategy. The comments made during that earlier consultation have been taken into account as part of the preparation of this revised draft SPD, together with the outcome of the Local Plan Examination and results of the recently published New Forest Visitor Study (2020).

#### **4. OUTLINE OF THE SPD CONTENT**

- 4.1 The SPD includes the following matters:
- Background information, including highlighting the wider planning benefits to health, wellbeing and access to nature for local residents, and to the environment in respect of climate change, improved ecological value and water quality
  - Legislative and Policy Requirements
  - The type of development required to mitigate recreation impacts
  - Calculating the mitigation requirement
  - Mitigation measures for sites of 50 or more dwellings, including guidance on the design of 'Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspaces' (ANRGs)
  - Mitigation measures for sites of 49 or less dwellings, including enhancement of existing greenspaces and recreational walking routes
  - Access and visitor management measures
  - Monitoring arrangements
  - Implementation Arrangements
  - Funding and contributions
- 4.2 Unlike the previous SPD, the document does not include a full programme of off-site mitigation projects for the full plan period. It is intended to separately agree and publish a five-year programme of off-site mitigation projects, which will be reviewed annually. This will allow off-site project delivery to be more responsive to changing needs and opportunities. To avoid duplication, the SPD is now focused solely on the recreational impacts on the New Forest European Sites. Addressing the impacts of local resident's recreational use of on the Southampton Water and Solent Coast European Sites is dealt with by the separate Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, adopted by the Council in December 2017.

## **5. NEXT STAGES**

- 5.1 The exact dates for the period for public consultation on this draft document will need to take account of the Christmas/New Year holiday period and may therefore be slightly extended beyond the normal six-weeks. All comments made during the consultation period will be considered and taken into account in the preparing the final version of this document for consideration by Cabinet.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The measures set out in this report will be funded by Developers' contribution requirements set out in the Supplementary Planning Document. This will help ensure that new development funds the necessary infrastructure to achieve a sustainable development in accordance with the Local Plan, without being a burden on public finances.

## **7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are none.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Supplementary Planning Document aims to ensure that all new development is achieved to a high standard of design, is sustainable, and can be achieved without an adverse impact on European Nature Conservation sites.

## **9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are none.

## **10. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are none

## **11. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS**

- 11.1 I am supportive of the recommendations for the reasons outlined within the report, and look forward to the outcome of the consultation.

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### **Background Papers:**

Published documents