

Date: 14 February 2018
Our ref: 235305



Philip Reese
Planning Policy Officer (North Dorset)
Dorset Councils Partnership

Customer Services



BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Philip,

Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Draft Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 03 January 2018 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.

Section 11 - Green and urban spaces, and avoiding flood risk

Natural England agree broadly with the conclusions of this section and have the following observations.

Natural England note that a Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC) search does not appear to have been conducted during the neighbourhood plan process. The DERC hold the most up to date information on environmental records for Dorset and as such should be used as an evidence base when assessing the potential impact on biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure network could also be made more comprehensive by reference to the recently published Ecological Network maps, published by the Dorset Wildlife Trust.

The 2031 target for Accessible Natural Green Space underlines the need for new developments in Gillingham to contribute to the provision of such space, which can often be combined with several other benefits such as providing space for flood waters and biodiversity. The protection and enhancement of the river corridors has the potential to provide a range of benefits and Natural England welcome the inclusion of policies associated with the use of these areas for recreation, flood management and biodiversity.

Dorset Biodiversity Mitigation Protocol

Gillingham is within the scope of the Dorset Biodiversity Mitigation Protocol, for which all developments of 0.1ha or greater in size, or where there are known protected species or important habitats/habitat features require a Biodiversity Mitigation Plan (BMP). This is to ensure mitigation for the effects on biodiversity are secured, as well as the necessary enhancements as required of development by the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 7, 109 and 118 (NPPF). We recommend that this is included within an appropriate policy, or a separate new policy, to ensure this requirement is captured in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposed Policies

Natural England have the below comments to make on specific proposed policies;

Policy 21; Recommend that any new development should be required to secure the management of these areas in perpetuity.

Policy 23; Recommend that any alternative/suitable replacement provision should be of equal or better recreational **and ecological** quality or value.

Policy 26; Recommend that all soft landscaping should be of native species and that new developments should incorporate trees into their design within the public realm in preference to trees within private gardens.

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 Emily Greaves on [REDACTED]. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Emily Greaves
Sustainable Development Adviser
Natural England - Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight

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