

Policy E9: Poole Harbour

Development will only be permitted where it would not lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, directly or indirectly of the Poole Harbour SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site.

Nutrient neutrality

Development proposals that would result in an increase in nutrient loading within the Poole Harbour catchment will need to demonstrate compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 or any equivalent relevant legislation or regulations. If required, this may include the provision of appropriate avoidance/mitigation measures to ensure development is 'nutrient neutral' and that the development would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Poole Harbour SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site due to increased nutrient loading.

Recreational effects

Development proposals for any net increase in homes, tourist accommodation or a tourist attraction around the edges of the harbour (as defined on the local plan policies map) will need to make provision for avoidance/mitigation measures to ensure that additional effects arising from recreational activity do not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

The impacts of other development proposals on Poole Harbour will be considered on a site by site basis and be subject to appropriate assessment in line with national legislation and the Habitats Regulations. Development proposals should, therefore, be accompanied by information reasonably required to undertake an appropriate assessment, and full details of any proposed site specific mitigation.

Policy I1 identifies how the mitigation will be secured.

Local biodiversity and geodiversity

- 115.** The Council has a specific duty set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to conserve biodiversity. Species of national importance are set out in Section 4.1 - List of Species of Principal Importance.
- 116.** Species and habitats of local importance are identified in the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy. Other local biodiversity interests lie within Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), Local Nature reserves (LNRs), and habitats and species of principal importance to biodiversity, including ancient woodland, veteran trees, reedbeds, coastal sand dunes, rivers and lowland heathland. A full list of principal habitats and species can be found on the Dorset Wildlife Trust website.

- 117.** Heath and forest areas outside of SPAs and SACs also support protected Annex 1 bird species. If they support more than 1% of the British population of a bird species, they are applicable for SPA status. In Purbeck, there are four areas that support nightjar and woodlark, at Rempstone, Hethfelton, Wareham Forest and Moreton, that are not yet protected. Any proposed development in these areas will have to adopt a risk based approach to ensure that there will not be any adverse impact on protected species. Any adverse effects identified should be avoided through considering the location of development on the site and the use of buffer areas or biodiversity corridors. If avoidance is not possible, then measures to reduce the impact as far as possible should be taken. This may involve modifying the development, reinstating lost habitat or the relocation of species/ habitat. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be assessed in terms of the potential implications for harm to land that may provide a supporting function to designated sites.
- 118.** In 2012, the Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area (NIA) was established to deliver large scale initiatives to improve connectivity and improve biodiversity. The original funded project came to an end in 2015 but the partnership continues to work on initiatives to deliver further improvements, for example using funding from the Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Enhancement Fund to deliver landscape, biodiversity and access projects.
- 119.** The restoration of former minerals sites will also contribute to improving biodiversity. The Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (2005) aims to promote the conservation and enhancement of geology, provide guidance and increase the appreciation and understanding of the geological heritage of the area. Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) are selected according to their value for education, scientific study, historic significance or aesthetic qualities. Purbeck has 17 regional sites of geological importance, several focused along the Purbeck Ridge
- 120.** Dorset Council with the Local Nature Partnership has produced the Dorset Ecological Network and potential Ecological Network which are available online. Natural England advise that that these constitute a firm basis for the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network locally. Sites of local importance such as SSCI and Local Nature Reserves etc form key part of the ecological networks.
- 121.** The Dorset Biodiversity Protocol and Dorset Biodiversity Compensation Framework provides guidance on the expected content of a biodiversity appraisal and requirements for compensation where there are protected or important species and habitat features on site or close by.