

Date: 2 October 2013
Our ref: 93549
Your ref:



Planning Policy Team
Brentwood Borough Council
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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Brentwood Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 Preferred Options Consultation

Thank you for your correspondence in respect of the above consultation document, seeking the views and comments of Natural England on the above dated.

Natural England is the Government agency that works to conserve and enhance biodiversity and landscapes, promote access to the natural environment, and contribute to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and by future generations

Natural England has previously commented on the Sustainability Appraisal of this Consultation document. This response will be in response to the issues raised in respect of this phase of the consultation, and will be in respect of the areas affecting Natural England's remit.

References to the various Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) – Thorndon Park, Curtis Mill Green and the Coppice Kelvedon Hatch are welcomed and acknowledged, as are the references to Thames Chase community Forest and Hutton Park Local Nature Reserve.

There is clear reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as the Habitats regulation Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal and this is welcomed and acknowledged.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Context

Environment and Resources, this section lists eleven Strategic Objectives which can be broadly supported.

Chapter 2: Spatial Strategy

Under Sustainable Development they Council may wish to consider reference to green infrastructure provision, helping to alleviate fragmentation and link existing green and open spaces. Biodiversity and the natural environment can lead to various opportunities, not just for wildlife activity and connection, but also health, recreation, contributing to climate change adaptation and improving quality of life. Natural England is pleased to see this recognition and encourages the Council to promote green infrastructure in new developments to help deliver multiple functions.

Chapter 3: Core Policies

CP1: Sustainable Development - Natural England welcomes and acknowledges the links and references to Neighbourhood Plans, and would refer to our previous comments, under Chapter 2 Spatial Strategy, above.

CP2: Managing Growth – Natural England will comment on individual sites as appropriate, as they are brought forward for potential development, especially in respect of any sites within or adjacent to our areas of interests, such as the SSSI's mentioned above.

Opportunities to enhance and or increase biodiversity as art of sustainable development should be encouraged and promoted – as per our comments under Chapter 2 above.

CP9: Protecting the Historic and Natural Environment and Landscape Character – This policy is broadly supported, especially in respect of (d) “conserving and enhancing biodiversity and habitats through creation of new habitats” – clear links to the relevant section of the NPPF and acknowledged.

CP10: Green Belt – This policy is broadly supported.

CP 13: Sustainable Transport – Walking and cycling schemes provide opportunities to link into the green infrastructure network though green chains and corridors.

CP16: Enjoyable and Quality Public Realm – The Council and developers should consider the provision of ‘soft landscaping’ as part of new development proposals, providing multifunctional benefits as mentioned above.

CP 17: Provision of Infrastructure and Community Facilities – Broadly supported and Natural England welcomes the inclusion and reference to environmental enhancements.

Chapter 4 Development Management Policies

DM 17: Wildlife and Nature Conservation - Natural England broadly supports this policy

DM 18: Landscape Protection and Woodland Management - This policy is also welcomed and broadly supported.

DM19: Thames Chase Trust Community Forest – The inclusion of this policy is welcomed and to be encouraged.

DM 30: Provision of Open Space within New Development – There is a good link to CP 17 and the Council may also wish to consider linking/referring to Policy CP 9(d).

DM 31: Protection and Enhancement of Open Space, Community Sport and Recreational Facilities – Policy broadly supported.

DM32: Provision of Green Infrastructure – Welcomed and supported, can be linked to various other policies where appropriate.

The Council having identified areas of deprivation and potential for improvement, should seek to link green spaces, alleviating fragmentation and enhance where possible green/open space provision. This will help reduce potential for impact on designated sites and help strengthen as well as be in line with the Council's policies.

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.

For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact David Hammond on 0300 0601373. For any new consultations or issues, please contact consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

David Hammond
Lead Advisor
Land Use Ops Team