

Date: 17th January 2017

Our ref: 234566



Philip Reese

North Dorset District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Philip,

Screening consultation: Motcombe Neighbourhood Plan SEA

Location: Motcombe, North Dorset

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 7th December 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.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils), that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Natural England welcomes the proposed action of an ecological appraisal of all proposed site allocations prior to the plan's pre-submission draft stage and the proposal to obtain environmental data for the plan area from the Dorset Environmental Records Centre. It should be noted that, from our records, site 4 is within 500m of Fishy Mead SNCI which is not currently reflected in the information provided within the SEA screening request report.

The allocations in the neighbourhood plan do not pose significant concern for Natural England in terms of their impact on the environment, though we would like to highlight the need for any site over 0.1ha to produce a Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (BMEP). Natural England recommends that all BMEPs are approved by the Dorset County Council Environment Team (DCC NET) and submitted to the Local Planning Authority as part of the planning application. The production and adherence to the approved BMEP will provide the development with adherence to the additional requirements of biodiversity enhancement as set out in the NPPF paragraphs 7, 109 and 118.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals/allocations contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Emily Greaves on 020802 69986. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Emily Greaves

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