

Date: 09 December 2021
Our ref: 376873
Your ref: F/21/90597



Clare Martin
Eastleigh Borough Council

Customer Services
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Clare

Planning consultation: Demolition of existing industrial buildings followed by the erection of 7 dwellings with associated parking & use of existing commercial access to serve site.

Location: Land to the rear of Fairways & Homefield Winchester Road, Boorley Green SO32 2DH

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 07 December 2021 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.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

OBJECTION

Natural England objects to this proposal.

As submitted we consider it will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site.

Natural England's advice on natural environment issues is set out below.

Recreational impacts – The New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site

Appropriate Assessments (AA) cannot have lacunae (areas of uncertainty or conditionality) but must contain complete, precise, and definitive findings and conclusions which are capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the effects of the proposal on the protected site/s concerned. Sufficient, complete information is required to ensure that the proposal will not affect the integrity of the international sites.

Your AA concludes the development would not have a significant effect on the New Forest internationally designated sites via increased recreational disturbance. The Council's view in this conclusion is based on the location of the development and the number of local green spaces/country parks within close vicinity to the application site. No in-combination assessment of impacts appears to have been carried out from the development with other plans/projects.

As you may be aware, [recent research and analysis](#) by Footprint Ecology (a national leader in this area of expertise) identified that planned increases in housing around the New Forest designated sites will result in a marked increase in use of the sites and exacerbate recreational impacts. It found that the majority of visitors to the New Forest designated sites on short visits/day trips from home originated from within a 13.8km radius of the site.

This development site falls within the 13.8km zone and we consider it is likely to contribute to recreational impacts on the sites in-combination with other development coming forward. It is advised your authority's AA is updated to include an in-combination assessment of the development with other plans/projects either within the authority area or in neighbouring areas. Competent authorities will be aware of recent CJEU decisions regarding the assessment of elements of a proposal aimed toward mitigating adverse effects on designated sites and the need for certainty that mitigating measures will achieve their aims.

Natural England is aware that your authority, in partnership with other local authorities within and surrounding the New Forest designated sites are committed to help prepare a more strategic, cross-boundary approach to habitat mitigation for the New Forest SPA/SAC/Ramsar.

While this work progresses, it is Natural England's advice that the Council implements an interim approach to ensure current development coming through is able to address residual impacts from visitors to the designated sites, including from small developments that contribute to an in-combination effect. It is considered a financial contribution directed towards the New Forest National Park Authority's [Habitat Mitigation Scheme](#) is a means that will enable the Authority to deliver site specific mitigation measures on behalf of the applicant. Natural England advise such a contribution is agreed with the New Forest National Park Authority and calculated with the use of a robust agreed methodology. Some further detail on how this money will be used as part of the Scheme is advised to ensure you as competent authority can be satisfied the recreational impact from this development will be appropriately addressed and secured in perpetuity.

Natural England welcome the joint working approach taken by the authorities and is committed to continue working with Eastleigh Borough Council and other affected local authorities to develop a strategic approach to addressing recreational impacts from new development on the New Forest designated sites.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact Natural England via the case officer: Mary.Andrew@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Mary Andrew
Sustainable Development Lead Adviser
Natural England- Thames Solent Team