

# PLANNING STATEMENT

Stoke Park Farm, Stoke Common Road, Bishopstoke



**On Behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council**

**August 2023**

## CONTENTS

|           |                                                        |           |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>                              | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>THE APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS .....</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT .....</b>                  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK .....</b>                 | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>PLANNING ASSESSMENT .....</b>                       | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>                               | <b>27</b> |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council in support of a detailed planning application which seeks permission for the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at Stoke Park Farm, Bishopstoke.
- 1.2 This Statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against the national and local planning policies and other material considerations that are relevant to the application.
- 1.3 It concludes that the proposals accord with the overarching objectives of the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with the development delivering an attractive, natural area of open space for the local community in a tranquil countryside setting, and which contributes to the offsetting of the impact of additional recreational disturbance arising from new residential development in the Borough upon the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites.
- 1.4 The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development and should benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development that is at the heart of national planning policy. The application should thereby be approved without delay in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

## Description of Development

- 1.5 The description of development for which planning approval is sought is as follows:

*Use of land as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for recreational purposes, with associated access, car parking, paths, landscaping, infrastructure and other works.*

## Application Submission

- 1.6 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents which accompany the submission:
  - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Including Tree Survey Schedule and Tree Protection Plan) by Tyler Grange (31 July 2023, 15845\_R01a\_JP)
  - Application Form and Completed Certificate B
  - Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool – Stoke Park Farm SANG Eastleigh

- BNG UK Habitat Classification (Pre-Development) by Burton Reid Associates (July 2023, BR0813/EcIA/A Rev A)
- BNG Post Development Habitat Plan by Burton Reid Associates (July 2023, BR0813/EcIA/A Rev A)
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) Strategy (04/08/2023, StokeparkfarmCEMP/BJM04082023)
- Design and Access Statement by Eamonn Byrne Landscape Architects Ltd (3 August 2023, 23036-Design & Access Statement Revision 1)
- Desk Study Report by GESL (30/06/2023, GE21681/DSR/JUN23)
- Drainage Calculations by Clarkebond (B06275)
- Ecological Impact Assessment by Burton Reid Associates (August 2023, BR0813/EcIA/A)
- Flood Risk Assessment (Including Drainage Strategy) by Clarkebond (27/07/2023, B06275-CLK-XX-XX-RP-FH-1001)
- Great Crested Newt (GCN) eDNA Water Sample Results by SureScreen Scientifics (12/06/2023, E17820)
- Ground Investigation Report by GESL (24/07/2023, GE21681/GIR/JUL23)
- Heritage Assessment by Cotswold Archaeology (July 2023, AN0723\_1)
- Information to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment by Burton Reid Associates
- Technical Note (Car Park External Works and Earthworks) by Clarkebond (14/07/2023, B06275-TN01)
- Transport Assessment by Clarkebond (10/08/2023, B06275-CLK-XX-XX-RP-TA-001 Issue P4)

1.7 Accompanying the above supporting documents are a set of drawings that detail the development proposals and which are submitted for approval as part of this application:

- Access Road Intervisibility Layout (Sheet 1, 0200 Rev P02)
- Access Road Intervisibility Layout (Sheet 2, 0201 Rev P02)
- Access Road Remedial Works and Upgrading (Sheet 1, 0100 Rev P01)
- Access Road Remedial Works and Upgrading (Sheet 2, 0101 Rev P01)
- Car Park Levels and Contour Layout (0400 Revision P02)
- Cut and Fill Layout (0450 Rev P02)
- Fire Engineer Tracking SANG Parking (0300 Rev P02)
- Drainage Strategy Layout Plan (0600 Revision P02)
- Location Plan (23036-CO-LP-0-03-REV-0)
- Passenger Vehicle Tracking Entering SANG Parking (0301 Rev P02)
- Sections (23036-CO-LD-1-01-REV-0)
- Passenger Vehicle Tracking Exiting SANG Parking (0302 Rev P02)
- Signage and Build Up Detail Layout (0500 Revision P01)
- Site Boundary (23036-CO-LP-1-02-REV-1)
- Site Plan (23036-CO-LP-1-01-REV-4)
- Site Plan (North) (23036-CO-LP-1-02-REV-5)
- Site Plan (South) (23036-CO-LP-1-03-REV-5)

- Topographical and Utility Survey (EBC-STKPKFRM-1505/23 – Sheets 1-26)
- Tree Constraints Plan (15845\_P01)

## **Structure of the Statement**

1.8 The remaining sections of this Statement are structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** Describes the application site and the surrounding area and includes details of relevant planning history.
- **Section 3:** Summarises and explains the proposed development.
- **Section 4:** Sets out the relevant planning policy context.
- **Section 5:** Assesses the proposed development against the provisions of the Development Plan and considers other material considerations of relevance to the proposals.
- **Section 6:** Provides an overall assessment of the proposed development and concludes that it accords with the Development Plan and the provisions of the NPPF and thereby constitutes sustainable development for which planning permission should be granted.

## **2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

### **Site Location**

- 2.1 The application site comprises of an area of farmland of approximately 20 hectares in size which is part of the former Stoke Park Farm, which lies approximately 1 mile from the centre of the settlement of Bishopstoke. The field which is proposed to be utilised for the SANG was formerly used for cattle grazing on rotation as part of the dairy operations carried out at the farm. Farming operations at the site ceased in November 2021 and the site is now predominantly comprised of grassland with a wooded tree belt which runs along a drainage ditch and divides the site's northern portion. The site is gently undulating in terms of its topography, with a single high point in its south-eastern section with the land then falling to the northern, western and southern boundaries.
- 2.2 The field is served by a gated entrance accessed from Sewall Drive which, along the section adjacent to the proposed SANG, is designated as a public bridleway. The route is relatively narrow in places and is bounded by hedgerows, intermittent trees, as well as in part by a drainage ditch which runs along the site's northern perimeter. The route also serves Hampshire Carp Hatcheries (a fish farm) as well as the wider Stoke Park Farm complex which includes a collection of buildings situated to the north-east of the site. Moving westwards, Sewall Drive then passes through and serves a relatively recent housing development, along with Bishopstoke Cemetery, Stoke Park Farm Cottages, and an allotment site, before connecting onto Stoke Common Road.
- 2.3 The site is bordered by Stoke Park Woods which form the boundary of the site to the south and west and which are owned and managed by The Forestry Commission. There are fields to the immediate north and east of the site, with another area of woodland (Upper Barn Copse) further beyond. Both Stoke Park Woods and Upper Barn Copse are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and contain areas of ancient woodland.

### **Planning History**

- 2.4 There is no planning history specific to the field itself that is proposed to be utilised for the SANG, with previous planning applications for Stoke Park Farm being largely associated with the cluster of farm buildings which lie immediately to the north-east. These previous applications are summarised in the table overleaf.

Previous Planning Applications at Stoke Park Farm:

| <b>Reference</b> | <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Decision and Date</b>                       |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Z/31315/002      | Prior notification of intention to extend agricultural building                                                                                                                        | Raise No Objection to (28/02/1996)             |
| Z/31315/003      | Notification of intention to construct slurry store                                                                                                                                    | Planning Application Not Required (16/04/1996) |
| Z/31315/004      | Erection of agricultural barn                                                                                                                                                          | Permit (21/07/1997)                            |
| P/05/53267       | Prior approval for the construction of an agricultural storage building                                                                                                                | Prior Approval Not Required (08/03/2005)       |
| LDC/21/90775     | Lawful development application for existing use and occupation for vehicle repair, breaking, workshop, restoration and paint spraying and stone masonry for at least the last 10 years | Certificate Issued (03/11/2021)                |

### **3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 The application seeks approval for the creation of an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at the former Stoke Park Farm in Bishopstoke. The proposals are being brought forward to provide an alternative destination for informal recreation as part of the Council's wider mitigation scheme for offsetting the impacts of new residential development within the Borough on the internationally protected New Forest SPA (Special Protection Area), SAC (Special Area of Conservation) and Ramsar sites.
- 3.2 The SANG has been designed having regard to Natural England's Site Quality Checklist for SANGs (2021), and also seeks to enhance biodiversity at the site in line with national and local policy requirements. A detailed site plan has been prepared (see drawing number 23036-CO-LP-1-01-REV-4) for the scheme which shows the works to be undertaken on site. This includes a series of paths which incorporate a main circular walking route of 2.43km in length, complementary features including signage to assist with wayfinding around the site, seating and picnic areas at key locations, along with litter and dog bins at each main entrance point to the SANG.
- 3.3 Gated pedestrian and vehicular access will be available from Sewall Drive along the site's northern perimeter, with the SANG proposed to be open to the public between the hours of 0730 and 2000 during Spring and Summer months and 0730 to 1700 during Autumn and Winter. A designated car park for the SANG is to be provided on-site in close proximity to the main entrance point, with this incorporating 20 car parking spaces, including provision for disabled users. The scheme incorporates surface water drainage provisions to manage runoff from the car , with this being based on sustainable urban drainage principles (SuDS) and incorporating an attenuation pond to be sited to western side of the car park, as well as associated land ditches to direct water at greenfield run off rates to the adjacent existing ditch along Sewall Drive.
- 3.4 To ensure that vehicles accessing and egressing the site can pass one another in a safe manner, the scheme incorporates the addition of passing places to be constructed along Sewall Drive between the entrance point to the proposed SANG and the existing residential development to the west. A total of six passing places are to be provided, which includes the widening of the access route opposite the entrance to the SANG (to allow for vehicular turning) and the lengthening the existing area of widened tarmac opposite the entrance to Hampshire Carp Hatcheries.
- 3.5 A detailed landscaping scheme is proposed which includes species rich grassland planting, an additional section of hedgerow to the north of the new car park, as well as additional tree planting which will be focussed on the car park area along with the centralised picnic space at the pathway

junction in the southern section of the site. A range of ecological enhancements are also proposed including log piles, hibernaculum, bird and bat boxes, and 'flashes' which are shallow depressions which both hold standing water during wet periods as well as supporting a range of bird and invertebrate species once established through the development of damp grassland.

- 3.6 The site will be managed by the Council and will be subject to a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) to ensure the long-term management of the site. This will cover a range of management and monitoring provisions for existing and proposed landscape features, areas of woodland, the proposed sustainable drainage features along with the existing watercourse and pond, and specific habitat features.

## **4. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require a Local Planning Authority determining a planning application to do so in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 This section sets out the relevant planning policy context for the development proposals at both national and local level, with Section 6 then going on to explain how the proposals accord with these policies and guidance.

### **National Planning Policy and Guidance**

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3 The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021. The NPPF is a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF states that (as required by statute) applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para. 2).
- 4.4 The NPPF emphasises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (Para. 7), with a presumption in favour of sustainable development being at the heart of the Framework (para. 11). For decision-taking, this presumption means:
- c) Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - d) Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

#### Natural England Guidance

- 4.5 Natural England published guidelines in 2021 for the creation of Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG) which provides advice as to the type of site which should be identified as SANG, as well as measures which can be taken to enhance sites so that they may be used as SANG. The guidelines also

include a site quality checklist which sets out criteria against which potential SANG sites should be assessed. Natural England are a statutory consultee for development proposals that may affect statutorily protected sites and areas, including the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

## **Local Planning Policy**

4.6 The Development Plan for the Borough of Eastleigh is comprised of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted April 2022) and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted October 2013).

4.7 The Development Plan policies that are of relevance to the proposals are set out below:

### Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

#### *Strategic Policies*

4.8 The strategic policies of the Local Plan set out the overarching principles which should underpin future development within the Borough. Of relevance to this application are:

- Policy S1 (Delivering sustainable development) sets out the underlying principles of sustainable development within the Borough.
- Policy S2 (Approach to new development) explains the hierarchy of settlements and sets development targets for the plan period.
- Policy S5 (New development in the countryside) sets out the types of development for which planning permission will be granted in the countryside and the criteria that such development is required to meet.
- Policy S8 sets out the strategic approach to conserving and enhancing the Borough's historic environment.
- Policy S9 (Green infrastructure) sets out the ways in which the plan aims to protect, enhance, expand and connect green infrastructure and biodiversity networks.
- Policy S11 (Transport infrastructure) provides a strategy for delivering and improving new and improved transport infrastructure in the Borough and minimising transport emissions, pollution and congestion.
- Policy S12 (Strategic footpath, cycleway and bridleway links) sets out that the Council, in conjunction with the highway authority, will seek to

create new, and improve existing, footpath, cycle and bridleway links throughout the Borough.

### *Development Management Policies*

4.9 Chapter 5 of the Local Plan includes policies for managing development in the Borough, with the following being of relevance to the planning application:

- Policy DM1 (General criteria for new development) sets out a number of requirements that new development should achieve. These include that development: does not have an unacceptable impact upon and where possible should enhance residential amenity, biodiversity and the significance of heritage assets; should take full and proper account of the site including the character and appearance of the area; not involve the loss or damage to trees or other landscape features of value to the character of the area unless they can be replaced with features of equivalent or enhanced value; and, include a landscape scheme covering the design and layout of external space.
- Policy DM3 (Adaption to climate change) states that all development should be designed to adapt to the predicted climate change impacts for the Borough.
- Policy DM5 (Managing flood risk) sets out the criteria that development within areas at risk of flooding, now and in the future, are required to meet.
- DM6 (Sustainable surface water management and watercourse management) requires the incorporation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) into development schemes with these being proportionate to the size of the site.
- Policy DM8 (Pollution) states that development will not be permitted if it is likely to cause loss of amenity or impact on public health or have other unacceptable environmental impacts through air pollution, water pollution, noise or vibration, light intrusion, or land contamination.
- Policy DM11 (Nature conservation) seeks to protect, conserve and enhance all international, national and local nature conservation designations, and networks of habitats and features. It also requires the achievement of a net gain for biodiversity on all development sites.
- Policy DM12 (Heritage assets) seeks to protect buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest and sustain and enhance their special character and qualities.

- Policy DM13 (General development criteria – transport) requires that development has safe and convenient access to the highway, meets local and national highway standards and does not cause or increase danger to road users or impact on the safe operation of the highway network. It also requires provision to be made for access to, and by, sustainable modes of transport, and that, where required, development contributes to off-site highway improvements.
- Policy DM14 (Parking) states that new development will be required to provide off-highway parking which is adequate in terms of highway safety/traffic management.
- Policy DM34 (New and enhanced recreation and open space facilities) allows for the provision, extension or enhancement of public and private recreation and open space facilities or uses subject to a range of specified criteria.

#### Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan 2013

- Policy 3 (Protection habitats and species) requires that minerals and waste development should not have a significant adverse effect on, and where possible, should enhance, restore or create designated or important habitats and species.
- Policy 10 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) states that minerals and waste development should not cause public health and safety impacts, and unacceptable adverse amenity impacts.
- Policy 12 (Managing traffic) stipulates that minerals and waste development should have safe and suitable access to the highway network and where possible minimise the impact of its generated traffic through the use of alternative methods of transportation.
- Policy 15 (Safeguarding – mineral resources) seeks to safeguard mineral resources against needless sterilisation by non-minerals development, unless prior extraction takes place other than whereby it can be demonstrated that certain specified criteria are met.

#### Neighbourhood Plan

4.10 The application site does not fall within an area that is subject to an adopted or draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

#### Supplementary Planning Documents

4.11 The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provide guidance to accompany the policies of the Local Plan. Of relevance to this application are the following:

- Quality Places – November 2011
- Trees and Development – April 2022

## 5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The Development Plan for the Borough of Eastleigh is comprised of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted April 2022) and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted October 2013). At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration of significant weight in determining planning applications, with this being supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

### Principle of Development

- 5.2 The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan sets out policies and plans to guide future development to 2036. It defines the extent of development that is required and the key locations for it, as well as the infrastructure and services that will be needed to support development, and the areas that should be protected from it.
- 5.3 The application site lies within designated countryside as defined on the Local Plan Policies Map (North) where Strategic Policy S5 (New development in the countryside) applies to development proposals. This policy seeks to restrict inappropriate development in the countryside in order to maintain its rural character and limit urbanisation, whilst allowing for a limited range of development for which a countryside location is genuinely and justifiably required.
- 5.4 The development allowed by this policy includes that related to outdoor recreation and open space as is proposed in this case, with this being subject to a range of specified criteria being met. These criteria include avoiding adverse impacts on the character of the landscape, securing long-term beneficial management practices, avoiding sterilisation of mineral resources, safeguarding the best and most versatile land, and protecting soils during construction.
- 5.5 Policy DM34 also allows the provision of open space and associated facilities. This is again subject to specified criteria being adhered to, some of which replicate those contained within Policy S5, with additional requirements including that the development is appropriately accessible and avoids any buildings, structures or lighting that cause urbanisation or detract from rural character.
- 5.6 The principle of the provision of a SANG on the application site is therefore supported by the Development Plan, as well as within national policy and in particular paragraphs 93 and 98 which collectively require local planning authorities to plan positively for high quality open space and recreational facilities, in recognition of their importance of the health and wellbeing of communities.

## **Layout, Design and Impact on the Character of the Area**

- 5.7 The proposals will provide a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for recreational use. The application is supported by a Design & Access (D&A) Statement (July 2023, Eamonn Byrne Landscape Architects Ltd) which includes a detailed appraisal of the context and characteristics of the site and its immediate surroundings with this incorporating its landscape character, as well as its ecological and historic context, along with relevant designations that are applicable to the site.
- 5.8 The D&A Statement identifies that the site is ideally suited for use as open space due to its relatively undisturbed and open character, with few physical constraints, as well as notable opportunities to enhance its diversity and landscape quality. The proposals have been informed by this appraisal and the identified constraints and opportunities, with regard having also been had to Natural England's (NE) guidance and the criteria within its Site Quality Checklist for SANGS.
- 5.9 The proposals include a range of pathways for recreational use and which provide for a variety of legible walking options, with this including a main walking route of 2.43km in length. The pathways will be surfaced with self-binding gravel to provide a hard-wearing surface and maximise accessibility for its range of users, with mown strips of grassland either side in order to maintain visibility and surveillance. The route of the new pathways has been sensitively designed to respond to the natural contours of the site within a curvilinear and informal arrangement, in line with the semi-natural feel which is advocated within the aforementioned NE guidance.
- 5.10 The convergence of these pathways towards the centre of the site creates a natural focal point and provides an opportunity for benches and a picnic area, with this being complemented by appropriate planting. Map boards and waymarking features will also be provided in high quality materials that are appropriate for the setting and will assist with legibility and wayfinding. These features collectively serve to enhance the comfort and experience for visitors to the SANG.
- 5.11 A further picnic area will be provided adjacent to a new car park which will provide 20 spaces for visitors, with this including 4 disabled spaces. The main walking route within the SANG will start and finish from this car park, with a safe and direct route of access provided. The car park has been designed to be sensitively integrated into the SANG with the use of natural materials and planting. This includes tree planting within and adjacent to the car park, hedgerow planting to its northern side, timber post and rail fencing around its perimeter, as well as the use of timber log-dividers between parking spaces. The car park will also be surfaced with crushed aggregate in order to maintain an informal character.

- 5.12 The proposals include a detailed landscaping scheme which, as set out within the D&A Statement, seeks to maximise the opportunity to utilise native planting in various forms to improve landscape and habitat diversity, soften the interface between grassland and woodland, and provide islands of shade within the proposed public open space to further enhance the experience of visitors as they move through the site. Where boundary markers or fencing are required as part of the scheme to manage access to areas for safety or management purposes, these have been designed to minimise visual intrusion, respect the rural character of the site and its setting and minimise any environmental impacts.
- 5.13 With regards to the wider ranging landscape and visual effects associated with the proposals, the D&A Statement includes an appraisal of the site's landscape context as well as how the SANG will integrate and interact with this. The Statement, within Section 7, sets out that visibility into the site is limited to the Public Bridleway to the east and the Public Footpath to the south, as well as some areas of farmland within Stoke Park Farm to the north, with the open nature of the existing views from these areas to be unaffected by the proposals, with only minor natural additional features including a small area of tree planting and hedge planting proposed.
- 5.14 In terms of Sewall Drive to the north, the additional passing places to be provided along the route have been sited and designed to allow for vehicles to pass safely, whilst minimising their impacts upon adjacent trees and hedgerows, with surface treatments for the access route to be made suitable for equine use in recognition of the route being a designated public bridleway. In terms of views into the site from this route, visibility is notably limited by the existing tree belt and hedgerows along the site's northern boundary.
- 5.15 The break in the tree line for the entrance to the site and the minor additional clearance works which may be required to allow access to the car park, will however provide some visibility for this element of the scheme, although as noted above the car park has been designed to, as far as possible, minimise its visual impacts through the use of natural materials and planting, with additional hedgerow provision along its northern boundary serving to further strengthen the existing screening. Similarly, the creation of the new pedestrian entrance in the north-eastern corner of the site will allow glimpsed views into the SANG, however this will mainly comprise of grassland and trees. The appraisal concludes that the landscape and visual effects of the development are all minor in scale and, may in most cases, be considered positive in character.
- 5.16 Overall, the development will provide an area of high-quality open space which conserves the open character of the site whilst enhancing its landscape diversity and establishing the semi-natural feel which is advocated within the NE guidance for SANGs. The proposals include a

comprehensive and detailed landscaping scheme and appropriate management arrangements, with the development taking full and proper account of the context of the site and its setting and being compatible with and well-integrated into its surroundings. The application therefore complies with the requirements of Policies DM1 and DM34 of the Local Plan, as well as the provisions of parts 11 and 12 of the NPPF.

## **Access and Highways**

5.17 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) produced by Clarkebond (10/08/2023, B06275-CLK-XX-XX-RP-TA-001 Issue P4) which considers the existing highway conditions and accessibility of the site, access arrangements, parking provision, servicing arrangements, and the trip generation and resulting net impacts on the highway network associated with the development. The TA is supplemented by a range of drawings covering the access road intervisibility, a fire tender swept path analysis, as well as a passenger vehicle swept path analysis for both access and egress.

### Trip Generation and Highway Impacts

5.18 The TA assesses the trip generation and resulting highways impacts of the proposals based upon existing movements generated by Hampshire Carp Hatcheries, the commercial units within the Stoke Park Farm complex and by the activities associated with the farm itself, with each of these utilising Sewall Drive and the access road which will serve the SANG. This data provides a worst-case scenario estimate of 120 vehicle movements per day and 24 movements during the AM and PM peak period along this route.

5.19 The existing trip data is then compared with the trip generation for the proposed SANG in order to assess the traffic impacts of the development. The trip generation associated with the SANG has been predicted based upon figures from the TRICS database, with the category of Leisure / Country Parks being selected as the most relevant and comparable to this end use. To ensure that a robust sample is used, the TRICS database has been filtered to include samples of country parks from 2021 onwards for regions within England. This results in a total of 100 two-way trips across the day which would be in addition to the 14 generated by the fish farm which will still occur. The total of 114 movements is therefore lower than the existing 120 two-way trips referred to above.

5.20 The Transport Assessment also considers movements at the AM and PM peak periods to assess the traffic impacts on Sewall Drive during these times (Paragraph 6.4). This shows that existing traffic flows are low at these times of the day, with one vehicle movement every 62 seconds in a 'without-SANG' scenario and a reduced level of movements (one every 70 seconds) with the proposed SANG. The TA concludes that the development would, as a result,

have no impact on the operation, safety or capacity of the local road network.

#### Accessibility and Sustainable Modes of Travel

5.21 Section 4 of the TA describes the accessibility of the proposed SANG by sustainable modes of transport. This demonstrates that there is a network of good quality footways in the area surrounding the site, with an extensive public rights of way network in the vicinity of the proposed SANG which provide connections from Stoke Common Road to the west, Winchester Road to the east and Stoke Park Wood to the south. Access to public transport is beyond normal walking distance thresholds but is still possible. As set out within the TA however, this is not of concern as the expected demand for the SANG will mainly be generated from locations within walking or cycling distance, or by car.

#### Access and Servicing

5.22 The vehicular entrance to the proposed SANG will be via an existing field gate access point to the southern side of the public bridleway which leads to the site from Sewall Drive to the south-west. The proposed access point to the SANG will benefit from appropriate visibility splays of 2.4m x 70m in either direction, with the access road also providing adequate forward visibility along its length. The proposals include the provision of passing places at varying intervals along the access road and where localised narrowing occurs in order to ensure that vehicles can pass one another in a safe manner. Any surface treatment for the access route will be made suitable for equine use in recognition of the route being a designated public bridleway. The access arrangements and the proposed improvements to the access road from Sewall Drive are shown on Drawings 0200 Revision P02 and 0201 Revision P02, with the remedial and upgrading works proposed detailed on drawings 0100 Revision P01 and 0101 Revision P01 which accompany the submission.

#### Parking

5.23 Natural England's guidance on the creation of SANGs state that adequate parking should be provided for visitors with a best-practice standard of a minimum of 1 parking space per hectare of SANG being purported. In recognition of this, the proposals include a 20-space car park. The car park includes 4 disabled spaces and has been designed to appropriate standards in respect of bay sizes and aisle widths, with tracking having been undertaken to demonstrate the requisite access, egress and turning can be achieved. Further details on the parking provision can be found within Section 5.3 of the submitted Transport Assessment.

5.24 Overall, and as demonstrated within the submitted TA, the development will have safe and convenient access to the highway, meets local and national highway standards and will not cause or increase danger to road users or impact on the safe operation of the highway network. A sufficient level of on-site car parking will also be provided to serve the development. The application therefore complies with Policies DM13 and DM14 of the Local Plan and the provisions of Section 9 of the NPPF.

## **Amenity and Noise**

5.25 The scheme has been carefully designed to respect and not unduly impact upon the amenity of adjoining or nearby land uses. The proposed SANG focusses on providing access to and enjoyment of the countryside, with no significant infrastructure proposed which could generate noise, activity and potential disturbance.

5.26 There are several dwellings located to the west of the proposed SANG (within Sewall Drive, Gilbert Avenue and Woodford Close) as well as a single occupied dwelling located within the former Stoke Park Farm complex to the north-east. The latter lies in excess of 100 metres from the boundary of the SANG, with the closest dwelling to the west (within Gilbert Avenue) being approximately 80 metres away with a dense tree belt in between which provides screening for the site. Given the nature of the end use, the absence of any external lighting (see section on 'lighting' below), and the distances involved, the activity on the SANG site (including any management practices) is not considered to give rise to any harm to residential amenity.

5.27 The access arrangements to the SANG will take vehicles along Sewall Drive and they will thereby pass the properties along and adjacent to it. As demonstrated by the submitted Transport Assessment however, the level of movements generated by the SANG will be lower than the previous farm use of the site. The nature of the vehicles is also likely to be predominantly limited to domestic cars/vehicles, whereas a much wider range of vehicles including milk tankers, tractors and feed lorries (see Table 6.1 of the Transport Assessment) moved, to varying degrees, along this route to access the farm when it was in operation. In addition to this, the SANG is proposed to be open only between the hours of 0730 until 2000 during the Spring and Summer months and 0730 and 1700 during Autumn and Winter, whereas no such time limitations would have applied to the farm and thereby in effect vehicle movements associated with it could possibly have occurred during the night-time period where there is greater potential for disturbance to occur.

5.28 Taking account of the above factors, it is not considered that the vehicle movements associated with SANG during the operational phase will result in undue levels of noise or disturbance for the occupiers of nearby residential

properties and, indeed, the impacts in these regards are likely to be reduced relative to the former use of the site.

5.29 Any temporary noise related impacts arising from the limited construction works that are to be carried out can be managed to acceptable levels through a range of planning controls, with these being detailed within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the project which accompanies the application and which adherence to which can be secured by a planning condition.

5.30 The development thereby accords with the requirements of Policies DM1 and DM8 of the Local Plan, as well as Paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

## **Lighting**

5.31 The development includes no proposals for additional or altered lighting and, as such, there is no potential for any resulting urbanising effects on the character of the surroundings or landscape in this regard. Similarly, there will be no undue associated impacts upon residential amenity, ecology, or other sensitive receptors. The proposals thereby accord with Policies DM8, DM11 and DM34 of the Local Plan and paragraph 185 of the NPPF.

## **Trees**

5.32 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment produced by Tyler Grange (31 July 2023, 15845\_R01\_JP) which is based upon the principles of BS5837:2012 *'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations'*. The Statement includes a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a Tree Protection Plan. A Tree Constraints Plan also accompanies the submission.

5.33 As highlighted within the Assessment, trees and woodland are features of the site and the surrounding locality, with this notably including a single tree belt running from the northern boundary centrally into the site, as well as Stoke Park Wood which borders the western and southern boundaries of the proposed SANG and which is designated partly as Ancient Replanted Woodland and Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. There are also trees and hedging present along the access route to the site.

5.34 Works to trees and vegetation will be required to facilitate the provision of the SANG, with these being set out in detail within Section 3 of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and also identified on the Tree Protection Plan which accompanies the report. These works are predominantly associated with the provision of footpath and pedestrian links to the SANG, as well as the extension or installation of vehicular passing places along the access route to the site. Areas of stock proof boundary fencing are also

proposed to be installed at the boundary of the ancient woodland and to the eastern side of the central tree group mentioned above.

- 5.35 The works are considered to be minimal from an arboricultural perspective and the submitted Assessment concludes that they will not result in harm to arboricultural features of value, with compensation being provided through additional planting provisions (see site layout plan, drawing no: 23036-CO-LP-1-01-REV-4) which will serve to improve the site's overall arboricultural resource. In addition, the Assessment sets out a range of protection measures to be employed to ensure the safe and healthy retention of existing trees during the construction process and to prevent undue stress to their long-term health.
- 5.36 The submitted information therefore demonstrates that the development does not involve the loss or damage to trees or other landscape features of value to the character of the area and the application therefore complies with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 131 of the NPPF.

## **Minerals**

- 5.37 The site is situated within a Minerals Safeguarding Area for soft sand as identified on the Policies Map of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan 2013 (HMWP). Policy 15 (Safeguarding – mineral resources) of this Plan therefore applies. This policy seeks to safeguard mineral resources against needless sterilisation by non-minerals development unless prior extraction takes place, although it goes on to state that development may be permitted without prior extraction if certain criteria are met.
- 5.38 These criteria are a) it can be demonstrated that the sterilisation of mineral resources will not occur; or b) it would be inappropriate to extract mineral resources at that location, with regards to the other policies of the Plan; or, c) the development would pose a serious hindrance to mineral development in the vicinity; or d) the merits of the development outweigh the safeguarding of the mineral.
- 5.39 The proposals would provide for an area of public open space for recreational purposes in the form of a SANG. As demonstrated by the proposed site layout plan (drawing no: 23036-CO-LP-1-01-REV-4), the proposed SANG would seek to work with the existing landscape and topography of the site, with minimal excavation or earth works proposed. The mineral resource would therefore remain intact and sterilisation of mineral resources would not occur. As such, criterion a) of Policy 15 would be considered to apply.
- 5.40 Additionally, the overall working area for minerals extraction at or around the site would be constrained due to the presence of ancient woodland (which is protected under Policy 3 of the HMWP) within Stoke Park Woods which

borders the site to the south and west. Minerals extraction would also have significant environmental effects through the visual impacts of the excavation works themselves, as well as increases in noise, dust and notably traffic including by HGVs, which would have to access the site via Sewall Drive and the public bridleway (Policies 10 and 12 of the HMWP). The appropriateness of the extracting of mineral resources at the site would therefore be brought into question given its context and constraints and in light of the requirements of the other relevant policies of the HMWP (criterion b. of Policy 15).

- 5.41 Based on the above factors, prior extraction is unlikely to be viable or necessary due to a range of environmental factors, notwithstanding which the mineral resources would remain intact and sterilisation would not occur owing to the nature of the end use and the associated development works to be undertaken. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with Policy 15 of the HMWP.

## **Ecology**

- 5.42 The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) produced by Burton Reid Associates (August 2023, BR0813/EcIA/A) which provides details of survey methodology, baseline information on ecological features within the site's 'Zone of Influence', and an assessment of the effects on these ecological features, including measures to avoid, mitigate and compensate for significant ecological effects (where applicable). It also incorporates an assessment of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) associated with the proposed SANG based upon a recognised biodiversity metric.
- 5.43 The EcIA has been informed by a Desk Study, an updated walkover survey carried out in May 2023, as well as 4no. breeding bird surveys undertaken in June / July 2023. The EcIA describes the majority of the site area as being comprised of grassland (g3c – other neutral grassland) which is in a 'poor' condition, with a wooded belt in the northern part of the site which is comprised of "w1g – other woodland; broadleaved" in a 'moderate' condition.
- 5.44 The assessment identifies that the grassland on site is currently suboptimal for reptiles, although there is potential to support species such as European Hedgehog as well as foraging and commuting bats. The breeding bird surveys carried out identified assemblages typical of the habitat type with no ground-nesting activity recorded within the grassland habitats. Badger setts were also identified within the site boundary.
- 5.45 Section 4 of the EcIA sets out a range of avoidance and mitigation measures in light of the findings of the studies and surveys undertaken and taking account of the potential associated impacts of the development. These are summarised in Table 3 within the document and include measures for both the construction and operational phases of the development with this

covering matters such as, but not limited to, lighting, drainage, the installation of protective fencing, and a range of management practices, to where possible achieve positive residual effects. The site will also be subject to a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) which will cover a range of management and monitoring provisions for both existing and proposed landscape and habitat features, which will ensure their long-term management.

- 5.46 The EclA also includes a summary of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) resulting from the proposals, with the full calculation details having been separately provided as part of the submission. The BNG assessment uses a recognised biodiversity metric (DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation tool) to calculate the value of the site before and after development to establish the measurable net gain achieved. The results of this assessment are summarised within Section 5 of the EclA with the headline results demonstrating a 59.49% biodiversity net gain in respect of habitats and a 92.94% biodiversity net gain in respect of hedgerows.
- 5.47 The site is also identified as falling within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). As part of its duty under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 the Council, as competent authority under these Regulations, must assess the implications of development upon European protected sites. This includes considering whether the development is likely to have a significant effect on the designated site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and, if so, making an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.
- 5.48 To assist the Local Planning Authority with this process and in recognition of the requirements of Regulation 63(2) of the aforementioned Regulations, the application is accompanied by the document 'Information to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment' which takes the form of a 'shadow' HRA. This identifies that the qualifying features for the protected site could potentially be affected through an increase of sediments into the River Itchen by way of increased run-off water and chemicals / pollutants entering water ways linked to the SAC. The document however concludes that with the temporary and operational drainage provisions and mitigation that is proposed and which are detailed in the submitted Drainage Strategy and Construction Environmental Management Plan, the SAC qualifying features would not be adversely affected.
- 5.49 Taking account of the above, the development proposals therefore comply with the provisions of Section 15 of the NPPF and Policy DM11 of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan.

## **Contamination**

- 5.50 A Ground Investigation Report produced by GESL (24/07/2023, GE21681/GIR/JUL23) accompanies the application. The testing undertaken as part of this investigation identified no soil-based contamination and as such the report concludes that no remedial action would be warranted to protect end users of the proposed development. No risk mitigation measures are also identified as being necessary in respect of groundwater in the context of contamination or environmental considerations and topsoil within the site is considered representative of the naturally occurring topsoil in the area and is suitable for landscaping purposes.
- 5.51 The site is therefore considered suitable for its proposed use, with the development not being adversely affected by pollution or being likely to cause impacts upon public health or other unacceptable environmental effects through pollution or land contamination. The proposals therefore comply with the requirements of Policy DM8 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 183 of the NPPF.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 5.52 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (19 June 2023, B06275-CLK-XX-XX-RP-FH-1001) and Drainage Strategy Technical Note (18 July 2023, B06275-TN02) both produced by Clarkebond.
- 5.53 As set out within the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), based on EA fluvial floodplain mapping, the entire site is situated within Flood Zone 1, meaning that there is a less than 0.1% annual probability of fluvial/tidal flooding occurring. The FRA also demonstrates the impact of climate change will not significantly change the probability of flooding at the site and that other sources of flood hazards present negligible or low risk in this regard. The risk of flooding from the proposals elsewhere in the catchment (including to third-party land) is also assessed to be low.
- 5.54 Given the nature of the proposed use, there is no requirement for foul water drainage for the site. The design of the surface water drainage has had regard to Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) principles and to the drainage hierarchy set out within Part H of the Building Regulations and Paragraph 56 of the PPG. As set out within paragraph 1.3 of the submitted Drainage Strategy Technical Note, infiltration testing has demonstrated that this would not be a feasible option for the site and, therefore, the next option in the hierarchy is to discharge to a surface water body.
- 5.55 The principle of the surface water strategy is to therefore discharge to an existing watercourse via the land ditch situated to the north of the site, with this discharge being limited to greenfield runoff rates of 2.0l/s. The system incorporates an attenuation pond to achieve this. Surface runoff from the

car park will flow to the northern boundary where it will be collected in a land ditch which will divert water to this pond. A further land ditch will be constructed to the south of the car park to collect water that would run onto the car park surface, which will then headwall into the existing land ditch. Erosion protection is proposed for the outfall headwall, with the existing culvert to also be rebuilt for the construction of one of the new passing bays along the access route to the development.

- 5.56 Full details of the drainage strategy are set out within the Drainage Strategy Technical Note and this, along with the Flood Risk Assessment, demonstrate that the development will be adequately protected from flooding and will not unacceptably increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, and that the scheme incorporates appropriate surface water drainage provisions. The proposals accord with Policies DM5 and DM6 of the Local Plan as well as Section 14 of the NPPF in these respects.

## **Archaeology and Heritage**

- 5.57 A Heritage Assessment (HA) has been undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology (July 2023, AN0723\_1) which includes a review and appraisal of a comprehensive range of available sources in order to identify known and potential heritage assets of archaeological interest located within the site and its surroundings that may be affected by the proposals.
- 5.58 The Assessment has identified some evidence of archaeological remains within the Site. This includes the possible presence of a Bronze Age round barrow in the north-eastern part of the site following a review of aerial photographs, with another barrow in nearby proximity to the east of the site. These features indicate the potential for further Bronze Age remains to be found, although the HA highlights that the potential barrow within the site has been truncated and no upstanding earthworks survive and, it therefore concludes that whilst it would retain some evidential value, it would not be considered of the highest significance and it is unlikely that any prehistoric remains would present an absolute constraint to development (para. 4.10).
- 5.59 Additionally, the presence of an Iron Age / Roman rectilinear enclosure within the site has also been identified through aerial photographs, which indicates potential for further Iron Age / Roman remains to be found, although the HA highlights that these would be of limited archaeological significance due to them likely being related to small-scale settlement or agricultural activity. This would similarly be the case for any medieval features that may be identified within the site.
- 5.60 The HA also goes on to explain that the proposed development involves a limited amount of works across the site which could have sub-surface impacts. The majority of the proposed locations of the carpark, footpaths and landscaping avoid the recorded archaeological remains within the site,

and it is possible that any works associated with these activities would not extend to a depth that would have any impact on potential buried archaeological remains. Any buried archaeological remains which may be present within the Site are likely to be of limited archaeological significance. On this basis they are unlikely to present an absolute constraint on development.

- 5.61 The HA has also considered the potential impact of the proposed development on the setting of designated heritage assets within a 1km study area of the site. This area includes eight heritage assets comprising of seven Grade II Listed Buildings (six cottages/houses and one church), as well as Bishopstoke Conservation Area. The study concludes that there would be no non-physical harm to their significance due to there being no intervisibility and no discernible historical landscape associations between the assets and the site.
- 5.62 Accordingly, and taking account of the conclusions of the submitted Heritage Assessment, the proposals are considered to comply with policies S8 and DM12 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a detailed planning application for the provision of an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG, along with associated works, at the former Stoke Park Farm, Bishopstoke.

6.2 The application seeks full planning permission for the:

*Use of land as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for recreational purposes, with associated access, car and cycle parking, paths, landscaping, infrastructure and other works.*

6.3 The proposals have been subject to public engagement and consultation with a range of stakeholders including local residents, council members, local parish councils, adjacent landowners, and the Borough Council's landscape and design officers. The scheme has evolved and developed in response to the comments received during this process.

6.4 The principle of development on the site is supported by the Development Plan and specifically policies S5 (New development in the countryside) and DM34 (New and enhanced recreation and open space facilities) which collectively allow for the provision of outdoor recreational uses and open space within the countryside, subject to a range of specified criteria being adhered to.

6.5 It has been demonstrated that these criteria will be met and that the development will deliver a range of benefits, which notably include the provision of a high-quality, natural open space for recreational use by local residents, as well as a significant net gain for biodiversity which will be delivered on site through a detailed landscaping scheme and the provision of additional habitat features. The SANG will also make a significant contribution to the offsetting of the impact of additional recreational disturbance arising from new residential development in the Borough upon the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites, as part of the Council's wider mitigation strategy in this regard.

6.6 The suite of technical documents that support the planning application demonstrate that the development accords with all of the other relevant local and national planning policies including those in relation to amenity, transport and highways, noise, contamination, heritage considerations, trees, lighting, and drainage.

6.7 The assessment undertaken explains how the development accord with the overarching objectives of the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), having regard to all relevant material

considerations. The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development and should benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development that is at the heart of national planning policy.

- 6.8 The application should thereby be approved without delay in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 11 of the NPPF.