

Planning Policy Comments by Warren Jackson-Hookins (Planning Policy Specialist)

Address: Land at Stoke Park Farm, Bishopstoke, Eastleigh

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

Application Reference: F/23/95844

Date of Comments: 4 September 2023

Planning Policy Comments

The Council adopted the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 on 25th April 2022. This document now forms the planning policy framework for the Borough to 2036.

The application seeks approval for the creation of an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) on approximately 20 hectares of land which constitutes part of the former Stoke Park Farm in Bishopstoke. The proposals form 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.

Key Local Plan Policies

Key policies which are relevant to consider with this proposal include:

- Strategic Policy S5, New development in the countryside
- Strategic Policy S9, Green infrastructure
- Policy DM33, Provision of recreation and open space facilities with new development

Key Issues

The field which is proposed to be utilised for the SANG was formerly used for farming operations which ceased in November 2021. It is designated as countryside under Strategic Policy S5, New development in the countryside. Criterion d is relevant to consider whereby planning permission will be granted for outdoor recreation and open space.

The site is 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 therefore an integral part of the wider green infrastructure network in this part of the Borough. Strategic Policy S9, Green infrastructure is therefore relevant to this proposal with regards to seeking to achieve the provision, retention and/or enhancement of various forms of multi-functional green infrastructure on the site. The wider principle of providing SANG on a strategic scale is considered to be applicable with this policy which seeks the strategic provision of green infrastructure.

Policy DM33, Provision of recreation and open space facilities with new development is also applicable with regards to criterion 4 whereby it is stated that proposals should help to create and enhance multifunctional green infrastructure in accordance with strategic policy S9.

Concluding Comments

The Planning Policy team fully supports the suitability of providing SANG on this site as part of its wider mitigation strategy 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.