

Date: 16 May 2018
Our ref: 243108



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Dear Ms Crawford

Planning consultation: Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Development Plan Draft Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 05 April 2018 which was received by Natural England on 03 April 2018.

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.

Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Development Plan in accordance with Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Urgent amendments needed

Natural England is of the opinion that the proposal is not in accordance with the emerging Local Development Plan, namely policy SINDP7 covering Stedham Sawmills, and SINDP13 covering Iping Common SSSI in the Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Plan.

Natural England is concerned that the policy does not mention SD92 within the emerging Local Development Plan contained in the South Downs Local Plan Submission – Schedule of Changes – Appendix 5 which has clear requirements for any development of the Stedham Sawmills site. The current wording does not reflect policy SD92 or refer to it and we advise that this will need to be urgently amended to ensure that it complies with this key policy and will not deteriorously affect the Iping and Stedham SSSI.

Other advice

In addition Natural England would advise on the following issues:

Green Infrastructure and Ecological Networks

The Neighbourhood plan should secure any potential to provide or strengthen multifunctional Green Infrastructure (G.I). We advise that Green Infrastructure is not limited to recreational fields and green spaces. This key resource includes footpaths, well-designed sustainable urban drainage systems, networks of natural habitats, allotments and green roves for example as well as watercourses and road and rail verges. Providing G.I through Plans provides a suite of benefits to both wildlife and people.

Green Infrastructure should be provided at a strategic landscape-scale. The emerging Local Plan for the South Downs National Park includes clear links to Green Infrastructure and Ecosystems Services. The inclusion of this resource within Stedham and Iping Neighbourhood Plan would be a valuable contribution to this resource.

The NPPF recognises the importance of providing strategic green infrastructure:

114. Local planning authorities should:

- *set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure;*

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Georgia Patt on 02080266681. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Georgia Patt
Kent and Sussex Team