

**Planning**

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Susan Heywood and Gareth  
Wildgoose  
Inspectors  
The Planning Inspectorate  
**By e-mail only**

**Date:** 4 May 2023  
**Ref:** Purbeck Local Plan  
**Officer:** Mike Garrity  
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Dear Ms Heywood and Mr Wildgoose,

**The Purbeck Local Plan**

We are writing following our letter of 17 March 2023 and a meeting between the Council, the Department Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Natural England. The meeting was arranged following the Council's letter sent on 1 February 2023 to the Secretary of State on the scope of improvements to wastewater treatment works (WWTW) in Poole Harbour's catchment that are proposed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB).

We have previously (in our letter of 17 March) outlined how we intended to respond to issues relating to the Council's Position Statement on nutrient pollution in Poole Harbour. The issues included:

- a) The scope of nutrient mitigation measures considered in our Position Statement.
- b) Drafting of a restrictive condition to limit the commencement of qualifying development. (Including a revision to reference site specific mitigation measures and a check to ensure compliance with the tests for planning conditions).
- c) Updates on addendum to Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Following our meeting with government we have reviewed and re-considered our position on nutrient pollution in the Poole Harbour catchment. We welcome and support the government's proposals in LURB alongside the measures it is putting in place for the delivery of nutrient mitigation projects. Despite this, in the specific and unique case of Poole Harbour the current drafting of LURB creates uncertainties as to whether the need for developments to demonstrate phosphorus neutrality will remain in place or whether the phosphorus load arising from development will be sufficiently limited through the improvements to WWTW proposed through the LURB.

We anticipate that we are unlikely to receive clarification on the scope of improvements to WWTW in the Poole Harbour catchment until after LURB receives Royal Assent which is scheduled for later this summer.

We will continue to push for improvements to the additional WWTW within the Poole Harbour catchment whilst recognising that government will take the final decision on this issue taking account of alternatives and the knock on effects of these options. In these circumstances we feel that publication of our Position Statement might prove redundant and create confusion on the issue over an area wider than just that applying to the Purbeck Local Plan.

Irrespective of the final content of LURB we have committed to review and update the strategy in Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (April 2017). If LURB's requirements did not extend to the additional WWTW (serving 1,000+ population equivalents) we would have the opportunity to finalise and update the draft Position Statement, which would in turn support delivery of nutrient neutral development in the Poole Harbour catchment (covering both phosphorus and nitrogen). If the LURB's requirements are applied to those smaller WWTW we will continue to deliver nitrogen mitigation projects in accordance with the existing strategy (outlined in the adopted SPD) pending its review.

After taking account of the uncertainties created by the progression and scope of LURB we have decided not to pursue work on the Position Statement at the current time pending clarification on the extents of the requirement for upgrade of WWTW being finalised through the bill.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Garrity  
Head of Planning