

Date: 08 August 2013
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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Lisa Jackson

Planning consultation: Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy

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.

Site CN1 – New Neighbourhood North Christchurch Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG) Provision

Following discussions, and a request for Natural England's advice from the Meyrick Estate Management Ltd (MEM), I am writing to confirm Natural England's position on the appropriate heathland mitigation requirements for site CN1 as set out in the pre-submission draft of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy.

During the progress of the Core Strategy towards examination Natural England has considered a number of options for avoidance/mitigation necessary to deliver the development of site CN1. It is necessary to demonstrate that recreational pressure, from new residents in the approximately 950 dwellings proposed by CN1, on nearby European and international heathland sites can be avoided. It is agreed that physical provision of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) will be necessary to provide such avoidance/mitigation requirements. Having considered with the authority and the landowner the options it is clear that the only location available to provide an appropriate SANG solution for CN1 will be on land to the north of the Bournemouth railway line. Alternative land south of the railway is not acceptable for a proposal of the scale provided by CN1 due to inherent locational and physical limitations such as area of land required, over looking and road noise. Our discussions have confirmed that the SANG measure agreed has the capacity to mitigate for site CN1 at Roeshot and the western element is of a location and scale which could support a number of dwelling units at land south of Burton over and above the allocation currently proposed. Natural England will be able to offer further advice to the authority should they confirm that additional allocation be required.

Our discussions at present confirm the acceptability of a SANG composed of three substantial areas with effective linking green corridors as one possibility for the provision of SANG north of the railway. The SANG measures must be coupled with works to manage the potential increase in recreational use of Burton Common SSSI by the new residents.

Natural England is able to advise you that the proposed minerals workings and SANG provision may be operated without detriment of either given careful management, planning and phasing. Pre-extraction of minerals for land that is later phased as SANG could be acceptable if the area and quality of SANG is commensurate with the needs of the new population as it develops to an agreed

phasing plan.

Natural England welcome the proposal made by the landowner to work with the authorities and Natural England to consider future revisions to the SANG provision if it is clearly demonstrated through evidence that the original SANG land is not successfully providing the SANG function intended.

I confirm that Natural England are intending to submit a statement of common ground with MEM and Christchurch Borough Council to the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Examination in Public that sets out our agreed position with regard to SANG. It is hoped that both New Forest District and New Forest National Park Authorities, and the two mineral planning authorities will also be signatories along with the developer. Natural England advise that such a statement will provide a clear demonstration of the confidence the parties are affording the measures proposed and the close joint working needed to deliver them.

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 Nick Squirrell.

Yours sincerely

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