

Date: 27th October 2014

Our ref: 135535

Your ref: -



designspd@winchester.gov.uk

Winchester City Council

Customer Services
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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: High Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Thank you for your letter consulting Natural England on the above.

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.

Biodiversity. In broad terms we welcome that the SPD encourages the taking of opportunities to incorporate features which are beneficial to wildlife into final proposals for development. However, the impression of this section is that biodiversity is an optional extra rather something that by policy should be enhanced where possible. For example, the section begins by saying: "There are various ways of respecting biodiversity when providing new development." The policy requirement regarding biodiversity is (crudely) to maintain and enhance it, rather than "respect" it. We suggest it would be more appropriate to begin this section by saying "Planning policy requires biodiversity to be maintained and where possible enhanced."

Similarly para para 5.31 does not set an expectation that the council expects that enhancement opportunities will be sought and taken. Alternative wording might read "Most development sites present enhancement opportunities. Typical examples include the inclusion of bird and bat next/roost provision within the built structure [current wording conjures images of externally mounted provision which has a much reduced life span], and new planting areas specifically designed to enhance biodiversity..."

Adopted policy CP16 says "new development will be required to show how biodiversity can be retained, protected and enhanced through its design and implementation." It may be appropriate within this section of the SPD to provide a reminder of this policy and the need to show how biodiversity has been considered.

Finally, we note that the NPPF says "*125. By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*". We suggest that it may be appropriate to cover this issue in this SPD.

For any correspondence or queries relating to this consultation only, please contact Charles Routh on 07990 773630. For any new consultations or issues, please contact consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Charles Routh

Lead Adviser, on behalf of Hampshire and Dorset Team, Natural England.