BEDFORD, Karen

From: Acton Parish Council Clerk <clerk.actonpc@googlemail.com>
Sent: 15-Apr-2019 07:19
To: BEDFORD, Karen
Subject: Fwd: Acton, Edleston and Henhull Neighbourhood Plan - NE response
Attachments: Acton Edleston and Henhull NP Reg 14 Notice.pdf; NP Annex 1.docx

Sent from myMail for iOS

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: SM-Defra-Consultations (NE)
: clerk.actonpc@googlemail.com <clerk.actonpc@googlemail.com>
Date: Tuesday, 5 March 2019, 15:31 +0000
Subject: Acton, Edleston and Henhull Neighbourhood Plan - NE response

Our ref. 275653

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your consultation regarding the Acton, Edleston and Henhull Draft Neighbourhood Plan dated 5th March 2019.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals.

We have reviewed the attached plan however **Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.**

If the Neighbourhood Plan changes and there is the potential for environmental impacts, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening exercises may need to be undertaken.

Yours faithfully

Consultations Team

Natural England

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

In an effort to reduce Natural England's carbon footprint, I will, wherever possible, avoid travelling to meetings and attend via audio, video or web conferencing.

Natural England offers two chargeable services - the Discretionary Advice Service, which provides pre-application and post-consent advice on planning/licensing proposals to developers and consultants, and the Pre-submission Screening Service for European Protected Species mitigation licence applications. These services help applicants take appropriate account of environmental considerations at an early stage of project development, reduce uncertainty, the risk of delay and added cost at a later stage, whilst securing good results for the natural environment.

For further information on the Discretionary Advice Service see here

For further information on the Pre-submission Screening Service see here

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The Magic[1] website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map)** and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available here[2].

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found here[3]. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites.** Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found here[4].

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the Magic[5] website and also from the LandIS website[6], which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The National Planning Policy Framework[7] sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Planning Practice Guidance[8] sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Landscape

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[1] http://magic.defra.gov.uk/
[2] http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php
[3] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http:/www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making
[5] http://magic.defra.gov.uk/
[6] http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm
[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
[8] http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed here[9]), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Ancient woodland[10]. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed here[11]) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice here[12] to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see our publication Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land[13].

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

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[9] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http:/www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx

[10] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences

[11] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http:/www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx

[12] https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals

[13] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see Planning Practice Guidance on this [14]).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

[14] http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/