

Dorset Council
Planning & Community Services
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1UZ

Our ref: WX/2019/133651/OR-
03/IS1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 13 March 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above Neighbourhood Plan. I am responding on behalf of my colleague Michael Holm.

We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment. We focus our detailed engagement where the environmental risks are greatest, therefore we offer the following advice on your Neighbourhood Plan.

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: [Planning for the Environment at the Neighbourhood Level](#).

Flood Risk

National and Local Plan Policy approach is to ensure that areas at little or no risk of flooding from any source are developed in preference to areas at higher risk. The aim should be to keep development out of medium and high flood risk areas, and other areas affected by flooding.

We would remind you that Local planning authorities' [Strategic Flood Risk Assessments](#) (SFRAs) should be the primary source of flood risk information in considering whether particular neighbourhood planning areas may be appropriate for development. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should make available to the Parish Councils any reports or information relating to the SFRA, and share any other information relevant to flood risk (such as the application of the [Sequential](#) and [Exception Tests](#) to the Local Plan). With regard to any development in flood risk areas, the [Sequential Test](#) should be demonstrated and if necessary, the [Exception Test](#) for the Local Plan.

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Other important sources include the [interactive maps of flood risk](#) available on the Environment Agency's web site. It is also encouraging that within your site selection consultation process, there is recognition of local knowledge pertaining to flood risk issues within the Parish, other than those identified on National Flood Maps. The Lead Local Flood Authority should be consulted regarding this matter.

We support Policy MA10: Site 5 and MA11:Site 6 in terms of your selection of sites and understand that detailed Flood Risk Assessments will be conducted. The Lead Local Flood Authority would need to review any application for planning permission.

Further guidance on the approach to [individual development proposals](#), or where a [Neighbourhood Development or Community Right to Build Order is proposed, in an area at risk of flooding](#) can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change>

Biodiversity

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.

Similarly the [Government's 25 Year Environment Plan \(February 2018\)](#) has policy for embedding an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.

We are pleased that Policy MA1 : Spatial Strategy makes reference to new residential development needing to avoid giving rise to any adverse impacts on the integrity of Poole Harbour European site and we support your position regarding this nutrient neutrality.

Neighbourhood Plans have the potential to affect biodiversity or geodiversity therefore they should seek opportunities to work collaboratively with other partners, including [Local Nature Partnerships](#), to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local priorities and evidence. Equally, they should consider the opportunities that individual development proposals may provide to enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity in the wider area.

Biodiversity enhancement in and around development should be led by a local understanding of ecological networks, and should seek to include:

- habitat restoration, re-creation and expansion;
- improved links between existing sites;
- buffering of existing important sites;
- new biodiversity features within development; and
- securing management for long term enhancement.
- Green/blue infrastructure and recreational opportunities

Further guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

Water Quality and Resources

Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development. A healthy water environment will also deliver multiple benefits, such as helping to enhance the natural environment generally and adapting to climate change.

