

Date: 13 July 2015
Our ref: 155583/155561
Your ref: **Pt2 Local plan**



Stafford Borough Council

For the attention of Alex Yendole

BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Alex

Planning consultation:

- 1. Stafford Borough Local Plan – Consultation on Part 2 of the plan (Part 2 proposal document)**
- 2. Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 Proposal – Sustainability Appraisal**
- 3. Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 Proposal – Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 02 June 2015 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

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.

Stafford Borough Local Plan – Consultation on Part 2 of the plan (Part 2 proposal document)

Natural England acknowledges the context for this consultation as set out in the introduction to the consultation document (paragraphs 1.1-1.5) and defined in paras 1.6-1.8. We have considered the content of the Part 2 proposal document (including the questions posed by the Council) in relation to those themes within our remit and taking account of the adopted 'Plan for Stafford Borough' (PfSB - effectively the Part 1 document). As the PfSB has addressed those themes in our remit in a strategic way our consideration of the Part 2 proposals has focused on clarifying any aspects of detail that warrant further advice. Taking account of the adopted PfSB we are pleased to advise that we have identified no aspects that need further clarification and we have no objections to the proposed policy wordings set out in the document.

Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 Proposal – Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Natural England acknowledges and agrees with the SA report conclusion and recommendations.

Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 Proposal – Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Thank you for your separate consultation letter of 4 June 2015 on this subject.

Natural England notes the local plan circumstances described in your letter:

“...the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (June 2014) was subject to the Habitat Regulations Assessment process. The adopted Plan contains specific Environmental policies to address issues raised in the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

The Borough Council have now prepared the Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 document. This document sets out settlement boundaries for Stafford, Stone and the Key Service Villages, together with boundaries for recognised industrial estates. However, as a result of recent planning consents in these areas and progress on a number of Neighbourhood Plans, which have individually addressed Habitat Regulations Assessment requirements, no significant new development is proposed within these boundaries.”

We agree with the Council’s conclusion that at this ‘Part 2 – Proposals’ stage of the Stafford Borough Local Plan the need for further Habitats Regulations Assessment can be screened out i.e. no further HRA is required. The Council should keep a record of this correspondence to evidence its thought process and our advice.

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 me on 0300 060 1640. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to 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

Antony Muller
Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development and Wildlife Team – North Mercia Area