

Date: 4 June 2013

Our Ref 85397

Your ref:

Mr James Doxford  
Strategic Planning Team  
South Hams District Council



**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Natural England  
Consultation  
Service  
Hornbeam House  
Electra Way  
Crewe Business  
Park  
CREWE  
CW1 6GJ

T: 0300 060 3900

Dear James,

**Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

**Localism Act 2011**

**Bickleigh, Ivybridge and Salcombe Neighbourhood Plans**

**Technical Advice**

Thank you for your consultation on the above, which was received by Natural England on the 25 April 2013.

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.

We acknowledge the intention to commence work on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and would like to draw your attention to the joint guidance issued by Environment Agency, English Heritage, Forestry Commission and Natural England which can be found at [http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/LIT\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf)

It is noted that a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), the Dartmoor Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Tamar Estuaries Special Protection Areas (SPA), Plymouth Sound SAC, South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Tamar Valley AONB and the Dartmoor National Park are in the vicinity of the neighbourhood planning areas.

Please note paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework that specifies that *'proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted.'*

All development likely to have a significant effect on European sites (SPAs, SAC and Ramsars) must be subjected to a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). This assessment should be undertaken "in combination" with other proposal likely to have a significant effect on the same site. Neighbourhood plans cannot be

Natural England  
Foundry House  
3 Millsands  
Riverside Exchange  
Sheffield S3 8NH

where they are likely to have significant effects on a European Site. It is noted that no residential development is already proposed in the Bickleigh Area in the South Hams Development Plan, so there are no mitigation measures in place to discount recreational impacts. Such measures are in place in the neighbouring authority of Plymouth. Any proposals where likely significant effects cannot be discounted will not be able to be permitted by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. This will include development within their setting which should not affect the Special Qualities of these areas. Policy 12 of the South Hams allocation document requires development to have a sense of place. This will include its setting adjacent to the Park. Similarly, at Salcombe should additional development be proposed for example at Bonfire Hill, as suggested in paragraph 8.26 of the Rural Areas Site Allocations document, then this should be sympathetic to its AONB and not conflict with its special qualities especially given its prominent location. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks.

In addition, significant areas of Ancient Woodland are located at Bickleigh such as Hatshill and Holt Woods. Although these woods have been replanted they are still considered to be of significant importance and paragraph 118 bullet point 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework will apply.

Green Infrastructure (GI) Plans and Strategies and the need for appropriate green infrastructure particularly the Plymouth GI strategy should be consulted in relation to any proposals.

There is a Geological Site of regional importance at Ivy Bridge centred upon the River Erne where they are most visible. This site is of importance because it displays a range of readily accessible geological/geomorphological features including the contact between the Dartmoor Granite and metamorphosed sediments and also significant glacial deposit features. Any proposed enhancement of the river frontage should maintain exposures and access to them.

I hope that these comments are helpful,

For any correspondence or queries relating to this consultation only, please contact Laura Horner on 0300 060 2018 [laura.horner@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:laura.horner@naturalengland.org.uk) For all other correspondence, please contact [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto: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

Laura Horner  
Lead Adviser, Forward Planning Network