

Planning Policy Team
Epping Forest District Council
Forward Planning
323 High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

Our ref: NE/2014/121176/OR-03/PO1-L01

Your ref:

Date: 22 June 2018

Dear Planning Policy Team

Thank you for your consultation on the above Neighbourhood Plan. We received your consultation on 15th May 2018.

We are a statutory consultee in the planning process providing advice to Local Authorities and developers on pre-application enquiries, planning applications, appeals and strategic plans. Together with Natural England, 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: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>.

We do not have any substantial input to make to the plan as many of the wider environmental issues concerning the Environment Agency will be covered by Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan. We do however have some brief comments to make regarding Policy CHG6 'Supporting Local Shops' as proposed in the plan.

Policy CHG6: Supporting Local Shops

The neighbourhood plan designates the Brook Parade as a village centre. The Chigwell Brook, identified as a main river, runs in a culvert through this site. We would expect all opportunities to be taken to open up the culvert and provide a more naturalised section of watercourse with any further development at this location. By opening up the culvert, we identify this as a great opportunity to provide both aesthetically pleasing amenity space and biodiversity enhancements.

With any development alongside watercourses, consideration should always be given to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), which includes causing no overall deterioration in water quality or the ecological status of any waterbody. Opening up the culvert here would help to improve the ecological status of the Chigwell Brook. This will contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures, as outlined in paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Article 10 of the Habitats Directive also stresses the importance of natural networks of linked habitat corridors to allow the movement of species between suitable habitats, and promote the expansion of biodiversity. River

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corridors are particularly effective in this way. Such networks and corridors may also help wildlife adapt to climate change.

All future development at this location must also comply with the requirement to provide an 8 metre undeveloped buffer zone measured from the centre line of the culvert. However, there may be potential for this to be negotiated if the channel is opened up.

Any development within eight metres of the Chigwell Brook may also require a permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 from the Environment Agency. This permit is separate to and in addition to any planning permission granted. Any development taking place within this proximity of the watercourse without a permit could be breaking the law.

Should you have any queries regarding this response, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

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