



Planning Policy Committee – 26 January 2015

Draft Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Purpose of report

For the Committee to endorse the 'Draft Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)' for public consultation in February 2015.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: Draft Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area – Supplementary Planning Document (November 2015)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA)/ Ramsar site was formally classified by the UK Government in 2011. It covers 1358 hectares and spans across four local authorities areas: East Northamptonshire, South Northamptonshire, Northampton and Wellingborough.
- 1.2 The key threats to the SPA are noted to be recreational disturbance to water birds and poorly designed or located development. Therefore it was considered that a guidance document was needed to enable a robust and consistent approach, in order to safeguard the site's nature conservation interest, while also bringing through new sustainable development.
- 1.3 A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has therefore been produced by Natural England and the RSPB in order to help Local Planning Authority's, developers and others to ensure that, in accordance with the Habitats Regulations, development has no significant effect on the SPA.

2.0 Draft Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA SPD

- 2.1 In summary, the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) outlines an approach for consulting Natural England on new plans and development proposals, as well as advice on identifying potential significant effects on the Special Protection Area.
- 2.2 The document firstly provides information as to why the area qualifies as a Special Protection Area by explaining that the area is used by 1% or more of the countries populations of a number of different bird species. Figure 1 of the document also shows a detailed location plan of the SPA.
- 2.3 Table 2 of the SPD then specifies which types of plans and development applications require consultation with Natural England. This is in order to allow potential impacts to be identified at an early stage, to allow survey works to be undertaken and mitigation agreed where necessary. The document also provides a mapped layer of consultation zones for different types of development, as displayed in Appendix 4 of the SPD.
- 2.4 The SPD then continues with a section on Appropriate Assessments which provides details of how to identify potential significant effects on the SPA's qualifying features. The document

then proceeds with information on the impact recreational disturbance can have on the SPA, including details on the affects at different times of year, distribution of birds, screening and species tolerance of disturbance. The SPD then includes a section on collecting information and surveys with details provided in Appendix 2 on survey methodologies. Detail is then presented on the information required for outline applications. Finally the SPD includes detail on when mitigation could be appropriate and types of mitigation that could be used in the Special Protection Area.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 It is aimed to release the draft SPD for public consultation in February 2015 when the consultation on the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the Draft Northamptonshire Biodiversity SPD are taking place. This is in order to allow consultees to evaluate the SPD within the context of the draft Core Strategy (Part 1 Local Plan) biodiversity policies and guidance.
- 3.2 Officers from East Northamptonshire Council will be reviewing this document during that consultation period to consider if they have any comments to make. Any proposed draft response will be submitted for approval to a future Planning Policy Committee (subject to the consultation timeline). Members are therefore advised to submit any comments they may have directly to the Planning Policy and Conservation Team, or alternatively they can submit in their own right, once consultation details have been published.
- 3.3 Once all comments have been received and reviewed by those running the consultation, a final draft SPD will be prepared, which will then be put before Planning Policy Committee for adoption. It should be noted that the SPD covers a number of council areas, therefore each Local Authority will need to adopt the SPD separately.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the proposals.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There is a legal requirement to protect the SPA area. This is not a new requirement, however the SPD will help the Council fulfil its responsibilities in relation to protecting the SPA.

6.0 Risk Management

- 6.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposals.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

- 8.1 The proposal would not require an amendment to the Council's Constitution.

9.0 Corporate Outcomes

- 9.1 The Relevant Corporate Outcomes are:
- Good Quality of Life – the proposal will ensure suitable access to and the preservation of areas of particular environmental value.
 - Effective Partnership Working –the document has been produced at a strategic North Northamptonshire level, including three other Councils and covers a Special Protection Area which spans across the county.
 - High Quality Service Delivery – endorsement of the plan will ensure that the Special Protection Area is considered as part of new development proposals in the area.

10.0 Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the 'Draft Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA SPD' for the purposes of public consultation.

(Reason: To enable to SPD to be widely considered before adoption by the Council to ensure that the Special Protection Area (SPA) is appropriately considered as part of new development proposals)

Legal	Power: Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 767) 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act				
	Other considerations: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010				
Background Papers: North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (2008)					
Person Originating Report: Jennie Johnson Planning Policy Officer ☎ 01832 74(2337) ✉ jjohnson@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
Date: 7 January 2015					
CFO		MO		CX	