



**Sussex**  
Wildlife Trust

Contact: Conservation Policy Department  
Direct Dial: 01273 479511  
E-mail: [swtconservation@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:swtconservation@sussexwt.org.uk)  
Date: 17 April 19

Ms Charlotte Glancy  
c/o Banks Solutions,  
80 Lavinia Way,  
East Preston,  
West Sussex,  
BN16 1DD  
Email: [bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com](mailto:bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com)

Dear Ms Glancy

The attached position statements are made on behalf of the Sussex Wildlife Trust (Rep No. 6372) in relation to the Rother Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan.

The following comments are made in relation to the questions raised by the Inspector (ID-04). Comments from our previous consultation responses still stand.

This statement contains responses to Matters 4 and 7.

The Sussex Wildlife Trust wishes to participate in the hearing sessions for the all Matters listed above. We are not yet certain which members of staff will appear at each session.

Yours sincerely,

Jess Price  
Conservation Policy Officer

Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SD  
01273 492 630 | [enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk) | [sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk)

#### Matter 4 – Development Policies

**Issue: Are the development management policies sound, compliant with the Core Strategy, national policy and evidence?**

##### Policy DRM1 Water Efficiency

- Is there sufficient evidence to justify a policy requirement of 110 litres per day as opposed to the mandatory national standard of 125 litres per day, in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance?

The Planning Practice Guidance on Water Efficiency Standards (Ref ID: 56-013-20150327 to ID: 56-017-20150327) states that local planning authorities can set out policies requiring new dwellings to meet the tight optional requirement where there is a 'clear local need'. This is further explained as referring to the 'existing sources of evidence' and consulting with the EA, catchment partnerships and the local water company, along with considering the impact on viability.

The south east of England is classed by the Environment Agency as an area of serious water stress. This is acknowledged by South East Water, the main water supplier for Rother District, in their business plan (2020-2025) which states: *'We operate in a region that, compared to the rest of the UK, is relatively affluent with higher water use by customers and will continue to see significant population growth – and yet is also the most water-stressed region in the UK. Meeting the demand for water over the next few decades with what water is available to supply will be our biggest challenge'*.

South East Water has recently adopted a more ambitious target for water efficiency in their Water Resources Management Plan<sup>1</sup> due to representations made on their draft plan and feedback from Defra. Given the large amount of investment being made by South East Water, it would be counterintuitive and damaging to reduce the efficiency requirement of the new houses which will become their responsibility in terms of water supply.

In addition, the South East River Basin Management Plan recommends that *'Local government sets out local plan policies requiring new homes to meet the tighter water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day as described in Part G of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010'* in order to improve the way water resources are managed to make sure there is enough good quality water for a healthier water environment and secure supplies of water for people, businesses and agriculture.

It should also be noted that the adopted or proposed development plans of the neighbouring authorities of Wealden District Council, Ashford Borough Council and Folkestone & Hythe District Council have also included the tighter optional requirement (or less) in their policies for water efficiency.

It is therefore clear to the Sussex Wildlife Trust that the evidence justifies the policy requirement of 110 litres per day as required by the Planning Practice Guidance.

##### Policy DHG11 Boundary Treatments

- Is the policy consistent with Paragraph 109 of the Framework?

The Sussex Wildlife Trust submitted comments during the Regulation 19 consultation for the DaSA to highlight that the policy could be more ambitious in playing its part in ensuring permeability in the landscape.

Paragraphs 109 of the 2012 NPPF and 170 of the 2019NPPF look for planning policies and decisions to contribute to the establishment of coherent ecological networks. Connectivity and permeability are key components of a coherent ecological network. We therefore asked that the following amendment was made to criterion (ii) of the policy to ensure that permeability is maintained and where needed increased.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://corporate.southeastwater.co.uk/about-us/our-plans/water-resources-management-plan-2019>

*'(ii) the proposed boundary treatment, by virtue of design, height and materials or species, is consistent with the character of the locality and ensures permeability for biodiversity'*

The Sussex Wildlife Trust acknowledges the response of RDC in the document entitled Initial Response to Representative (RDC-DaSA-004). Although RDC suggests that this policy will relate to areas that do not have significant implications for biodiversity, we remind them that section 118 of NPPF 2012 states that opportunities to encourage biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Ensuring any applications that may result in impermeable boundaries, such as gravel boards or closed board fencing, include a small gap for small mammals such as hedgehogs and or amphibians and reptiles is simple, but potentially important measure for biodiversity. Additionally, given the wide availability of 'wildlife friendly' boundaries, we cannot see that this policy requirement would be onerous for applicants.

**Matter 7 – Selection of sites allocated for development**  
**Issue: For each area, are the individual sites selected sound?**

Policy BEX3 Land at North Bexhill – Infrastructure

a) Kiteye Farm and adjoining land

b) Land west of Watermill Lane

c) Land east of Watermill Lane

- Are the sites viable with required contributions towards infrastructure?

We acknowledge the comments from RDC in the Initial Response to Representatives (RDC-DaSA-004) which suggest that criteria (v) is sufficient. SWT supports the inclusion of an overarching criteria on infrastructure but remain concerned about the level of development proposed for Bexhill is too high.

We take this opportunity to highlight that allocations BEX1 and BEX2 are functionally linked with allocations BEX3a, b and c. In particular, the area for housing in the south part of BEX3c appears to be directly adjacent to BEX2. The NPPF is clear that Local Planning Authorities should take a strategic approach to the creation of ecological networks and green infrastructure and as such this policy should apply more widely.

We understand that BEX1 and BEX2 have planning permission, however we do not see this as a barrier to a holistic approach to the provision of green infrastructure within the Land at North Bexhill development area. The Sussex Wildlife Trust believes that policy BEX3 should acknowledge what is already permitted through BEX1 and BEX2 and encourage applicants try to complement this.

Policy BEX6 Land adjacent to 276 Turkey Road, Bexhill and Policy BEX7 Land at Moleynes Mead, Fryatts Way, Bexhill

- Are the policies sufficiently robust in terms of assessing impact of development on the Pevensey Levels?

The Sussex Wildlife Trust notes the proposed change to criteria (v) of Policy BEX6 and criteria (vii) of Policy BEX7 proposed by Rother District Council in the Initial Responses to Representations (RDC-DaSA-004). We feel that the proposed wording is sufficient to ensure that the correct information to demonstrate no adverse impact on the Pevensey Levels is provided at the application stage. However, we note that whilst the modification to BEX6 is included in the Schedule of Proposed Modifications (RDC-DaSA-005), this is not the case for BEX7. In order to be effective, BEX7 must also include the same modification as proposed for BEX6.

Policy CAM1 Land at the former Putting Green Site, Old Lydd Road, Camber

Policy CAM2 Land at the central Car Park, Old Lydd Road, Camber

- Are the policies sufficiently clear in terms of how they are expected to contribute to the implementation of the SARMS?

RDC have suggested a modification to both these policies in the Schedule of Proposed Modifications (RDC-DaSA-005) which Sussex Wildlife Trust supports. However, we feel it is still not clear what form the 'contribution to implementation' will take. We note that the Initial Responses to Representations (RDC-DaSA-004) for CAM1 and CAM2 states '*the SARMS is currently in draft form, so specific "contributions" are uncertain*'. The Sussex Wildlife Trust is therefore unclear how effective these policy requirements can be at avoiding impacts.

It appears vital that the SARMS is adopted before these sites are progressed. Additionally any implementation of the SARMS should including monitoring the success of the SARMS measures at avoiding recreational impacts. If the measures are not successful at avoiding recreational impacts then it cannot be said to be preventing an adverse effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites.

#### Policy FAC1 Land at the Former Market Garden, Lower Waites Lane, Fairlight Cove

- What is the impact of the evidence of protected species on the site in terms of deliverability and viability?

We note that the information within the supporting text and policy refers to the presence of protected species. The Sussex Wildlife Trust suggests that without recent ecological surveys of the site it is not feasible to give a detailed response in relation to the impact on deliverability and / or viability of the site in terms of future development. The extent of the use of the site by protected species and the type of species present will impact on the likelihood that adverse effects from a proposal can be avoided and if necessary successfully mitigated.

We highlight that this identifies the importance of planning applications being supported by up to date ecological information, in order for this data to inform the design of the development at an early stage.

#### Policy RHA1 Land at Stoneworks Cottages, Rye Harbour

- Does the policy sufficiently address the issues of adequate surface water protection measures in ensuring that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of the Dungeness Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SPA/Ramsar site?

The Sussex Wildlife Trust notes the proposed modifications to this policy and the supporting text in the Schedule of Proposed Modifications (RDC-DaSA-005). We support the addition to the supporting text and the inclusion of a new criterion (vii) to the policy which stipulates that the development must not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the adjacent Natura 2000 sites. We feel that this is sufficient to ensure that the correct information to demonstrate no adverse impact is provided at the application stage.