

Date: 09 December 2024
Our ref: 496052
Your ref: Sandwell Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation



Sandwell Local Plan
Planning Policy
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Sandwell Local Plan Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.- Addendum to response dated 11 November 2024.

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.

Further to our response to the Regulation 19 consultation on Sandwell Local Plan dated the 11 November 2024 we provide the following addendum to clarify our position.

Natural England advises that we consider the Local Plan to be legally compliant and sound.

Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Sandwell Local Plan Regulation 19 September 2024

Cannock Chase Recreational impacts

Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is being impacted by recreation. Current evidence from visitor survey data has established a 15km Zone of Influence (ZOI) for significant impacts on the SAC from recreation. Sandwell Council is 17km from Cannock Chase SAC and outside the 15km ZOI. Therefore we can advise that increases in housing and holiday accommodation within the Sandwell plan area are unlikely to impact on the SAC and that we agree with the conclusion in the HRA that likely significant effects from recreational on Cannock Chase SAC can be ruled out.

Air Quality

Natural England agree with the conclusion that adverse effects on site integrity can now be ruled out for air quality, but we advise the HRA is updated to reflect the reasons for concluding no adverse effect on site integrity as discussed in recent meetings with the wider air quality working group. This avoids the need for Natural England to rebut some of the reasoning in the current HRA.

Natural England has been working with Sandwell Council and other members of the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership on air quality and are currently in the process of finalising and signing a Statement of Common Ground.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact me on consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Ms Gillian Driver
Senior Adviser
Sustainable Development
West Midlands Area Team