

Sandwell_LocalPlan@sandwell.gov.uk

Your Ref

Our Ref CRTR-POL-2025-44402

Monday 9 June 2025

Dear Andy Miller (Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager),

Consultation on Sandwell Council's proposed main modifications to the Sandwell Local Plan (Regulation 19)

Thank you for your consultation on the above document.

We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process, and as such we welcome the opportunity to input into planning policy related matters to ensure that our waterways are protected, safeguarded and enhanced within an appropriate policy framework.

The Trust have reviewed the proposed changes contained within the consultation documents and based on the information available we have the following **general observations and advice:**

The proposed allocation of part of Rowley Regis Golf Course, Tippity Green, Rowley Regis, B66 9EJ for housing development

The Trust has no waterways, assets or land interests within the area covered by this proposed allocation and as such we have no comment to make.

Changes to the wording of Policy SCC4 – Embodied Carbon and Waste

The Trust has no comments to make on this matter.

The removal of Hill House Farm as a potential Habitat Bank for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and its replacement with Ray Hall Pastoral Land

The Trust notes that the Ray Hall Pastoral Land site borders onto our asset, the Tame Valley Canal, to the east.

Canal & River Trust Spatial Planning Team

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Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain was introduced into the planning system in Autumn 2023 for major developments and Spring 2024 for other qualifying developments. The Defra Biodiversity Metric requires that planning applications that include land within the site boundary that is within 10m of a canal or river and/or 5m of a ditch are supported by an assessment of the baseline condition of the watercourse. Paragraph 10.1.3, figure 10-1 and table 10-1 of the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User Guide explain these requirements. It is the Trust's understanding that, unless exemptions apply, in these circumstances developers will need to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in watercourse biodiversity units. Development may also affect other habitat types on land owned by the Trust, including but not limited to, grassland, woodland, scrubland and hedgerows.


Ecologists working on behalf of developers should obtain, and comply with, consents from the Trust to undertake any necessary habitat condition assessments and ecological surveys on our land, consistent with our Code of Practice. Further detail of this process can be obtained here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/business-and-trade/undertaking-works-on-our-property-and-our-code-of-practice>

The Trust will consider proposals from developers to deliver net gains on our land (be these watercourse units or other habitat types) on a case-by-case basis. In doing so, we will have regard to Defra's 'Sell biodiversity units as a land manager' guidance. The Trust's agreement to habitat enhancement activities being undertaken on our land will be subject to operational, management and commercial considerations. We are happy to discuss this further and Developers wishing to discuss opportunities to secure biodiversity units on Trust land should contact bngenquiries@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Tracy Humphreys MRTPI
Area Planner


<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design>

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