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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Planning Policy Team,

Regulation 16 consultation for the Ilminster Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 18 May 2022 which was received by Natural England on the same date. Apologies for the delay in responding, due to resourcing issues and high workloads in the team.

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.

Natural England has no further comments to make on the Ilminster Neighbourhood Plan as all of our previous comments have been addressed.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

Our understanding is that the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer proposing to allocate sites for development. On this basis, Natural England has no significant concerns with the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that have been undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Should this position change and the potential allocations (outlined in the SEA) be used, wording would need to be added to ensure that it was clear that nutrient neutrality was required. Furthermore, there may be opportunities for the Neighbourhood Plan in providing strategic mitigation projects that align with achieving nutrient neutrality, within the parish.

With regards to further opportunities for environmental gain, we commend the Ilminster Local Plan for incorporating multiple policies relating to biodiversity, sustainable development and climate change (e.g. Policies ILM1, ILM2, ILM3, ILM14, etc.) and support the implementation of these.

Yours sincerely


Sustainable Development Lead Adviser
Wessex Team
Natural England