

Date: 04 December 2020
Our ref: 332264



Susan Heinrich
Breckland Council

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Heinrich

Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan (Reg. 16)

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 28 October 2020 .

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 is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

Natural England welcomes that the site allocations are outside the 1500m constraint zone around Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) put in place to protect Stone Curlews. However as stated in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Aecom, September 2020) land functionally linked to the SPA extends 3km from it. Built development has also been shown to impact on Stone Curlew up to a distance of 1.5km. Therefore if an ecological assessment of a site is required and historic Stone Curlew records are not available within 1.5km of the site, up to a distance of 3km from the SPA, 3 years of surveys may be required on potentially suitable areas of arable land. 3 years would account for spatial variation in the location of Stone Curlew nests due to crop rotations. We also advise that Stone Curlews may nest throughout the spring and summer so any survey should be for the period early April – end August, not mid-May as written in the supporting text of the policies.

The government has announced that that all developments will be required to demonstrate a 10% increase in biodiversity on or near development sites. This is outlined in the 2020 Environment Bill. Natural England therefore suggests that your authority may want to advise the applicant to take the opportunity to include this within policy 7D.

Policies around biodiversity net gain should propose the use of a biodiversity measure for development proposals. Natural England has recently published the [Biodiversity Metric 2.0](#) which can be used to calculate biodiversity net gain.

For any further consultations on this plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Richard Hack

Richard Hack
Norfolk & Suffolk Team