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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

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Dear Valerie

### **Chichester District Council Local Plan HRA Addendum**

Thank you very much for providing Natural England with the Air Quality Addendum provided in support of the Local Plan's Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Natural England confirms that for all pollutants except ammonia, we agree with the HRA's conclusion that an Adverse Effect on Integrity of The Mens SAC can be ruled out.

We note the predicted increase in ammonia, when assessed in combination, is 2% and agree that mitigation will be required in order to rule out an adverse effect on integrity (AEOI) for this pollutant. We note the suggested mechanisms within the Addendum which are specified as mitigation for the predicted increase in ammonia.

These include incentivising and advertising the benefits of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) and providing financial incentives such as free car parking spaces to encourage take up. We also note that car number plate recognition is proposed to provide data on fleet composition. We continue to advise however that in order to demonstrate that the mitigation will be effective and therefore meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, it needs to be sufficiently certain and quantifiable.

Our advice at this stage is that the current proposals do not demonstrate a sufficient level of certainty or efficacy. For example, it cannot be guaranteed that car owners will opt to convert to ULEV in sufficient numbers to reduce ammonia emissions and therefore cannot be relied upon to provide sufficient mitigation. In addition, although take up is proposed to be monitored through numberplate recognition, again sufficient quantity cannot be guaranteed and monitoring itself is not mitigation.

Therefore, at present, although we welcome soft measures such as EV charging points and encouraging ULEV as measures to tackle air quality and climate change through the Plan, they are not sufficiently certain to be used as mitigation for impacts to Habitats Sites.

Furthermore, the Addendum cites the low percentage of increased ammonia over the critical level. We advise that any increase over 1% is significant and cannot rule out that the Conservation Objectives of the Mens SAC will not be compromised. The Mens SAC has a 'Restore' Conservation Objective and therefore an increase in ammonia may retard the site meeting objective and needs to be considered as part of the assessment.

Therefore, at present Natural England cannot concur with the HRA's conclusion that an AEOI can be ruled out though the impact pathway of increased ammonia.

We will however continue to work closely with your authority in order to explore all options to resolve this complex matter as the local plan progresses. As ammonia is the pollutant, which is likely to

result in impacts, a quantifiable solution via mitigating agricultural impacts should be explored further as a means of allowing the Plan to proceed. Natural England will support your authority to explore these solutions to ensure that the Plan can be found sound.

I trust our comments in relation to this consultation are helpful, for any queries in relation to this letter please contact Luke Hasler at [luke.hasler@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:luke.hasler@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

**Luke Hasler**  
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