

Planning Committee

Application Address	Hicks Farm, Throop Road and land East of Lavender Road and Taylor Drive, Bournemouth
Proposal	Change of use to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) together with the formation of an associated car park, access and infrastructure - Regulation 3
Application Number	7-2019-7824-B
Applicant	BCP Council Parks Service
Agent	Chapman Lily Planning Ltd
Date Application Valid	18 November 2019
Decision Due Date	16 February 2020
Extension of Time date (if applicable)	TBC
Ward	Muscliff & Strouden Park
Report Status	Public
Meeting Date	15 th October 2020
Recommendation	GRANT
Reason for Referral to Planning Committee	<p>Referred to by Cllr Lisa Northover for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on a conservation area and listed buildings; • Impact on wildlife; • Concerns about aviation safety; • Loss of green space – open fields
Case Officer	Peter Burridge

Description of Development

- 1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of land to provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) together with the formation of an associated carpark, access and infrastructure.
- 2 The applicant has provided the following information:

	Existing	Proposed
Site Area	11.93ha	11.93ha
Use	pasture/ countryside/ floodplain	SANG/ associated carpark
Parking	n/a	20

Key Issues

- 3 The main considerations involved with this application are:
 - Principle of development including Green Belt;
 - Impact on character and appearance of the area including heritage;
 - Trees;
 - Ecology;
 - Flooding;
 - Residential amenity;
 - Highway safety.
- 4 These points will be discussed as well as other material considerations in the report below.

Planning Policies

5 Core Strategy (2012)

CS1: NPPF – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CS4: Surface Water Flooding
CS5: Promoting a Healthy Community
CS6: Delivering Sustainable Communities
CS16: Parking Standards
CS18: Increasing Opportunities for Cycling and Walking
CS30: Promoting Green Infrastructure
CS31: Recreation, Play and Sports
CS33: Heathland
CS35: Nature and Geological Conservation Interests
CS36: Stour Valley Project
CS37: Green Belt
CS38: Minimising Pollution
CS39: Designated Heritage Assets
CS41: Design Quality

6 Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan

KS3: Green Belt

7 District Wide Local Plan (2002)

3.6: Development in the Countryside

- 3.26: Rivers and Watercourses
- 3.28: Flooding
- 4.25: Landscaping
- 4.4: Conservation Areas
- 4.10: Conservation Areas – Roads and Footways
- 4.13: Throop Conservation Area

8 Supplementary Planning Documents:

Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD 2015 (live when application was submitted)
 Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD 2020 - 2025
 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) - PGN
 Bournemouth Parking – SPD
 Conservation Area Appraisal

9 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF.

Relevant Planning Applications and Appeals:

- 10 None relevant

Representations

- 11 14 site notices were erected on the 22 November 2019 with a consultation expiry date of 20 December 2019. 3 notices were displayed along Throop Drive, 7 notices were placed along Throop Road, 2 notices were displayed along the path between the Throop Mill and the weir with a further notice on the opposite side of the River Stour. A site notice was also displayed at the end of the path leading from Throop Road near where anglers gain access to the riverbank.
- 12 New site notices advertising amended plans were displayed in the same positions on 4 June 2020 providing 10 days for comments.
- 13 5 letters received in support of the proposals (summary):
 - Positive amenities for all/ community asset;
 - Covid19 has proved requirement for such a facility;
 - 'Excellent' Kingfisher Barn shows what can be achieved;
 - Nimbyism deplorable;
 - Monitoring of wildlife and traffic should ensure best outcome for all.
- 14 200 letters of objection and 28 comments received raising the following concerns (summary):

Policy:

- Contrary to NPPF;
- Contrary to Development Plan;
- Contrary to Climate Emergency generating car trips and losing natural environment;
- Carpark inappropriate development in the Green Belt and a departure;
- Does not meet SANG criteria (Natural England SANG Quality Guidelines);
- Non-compliant with the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework.

Proposed site:

- Not a Suitable Alternative;
- No evidence of due diligence in searching for suitable alternatives;
- Cherry Tree nursery would be more suitable;
- Closer sites to town should be considered- Meyrick Park/ Queens Park/ golf courses;
- Alternatives required away from properties, accessible by public transport and with parking;
- Not accessible by public transport (bus referenced is a school bus);
- No footpaths and inadequate street lighting;
- Regularly floods during the winter months and inaccessible;
- Unnecessary – the area is already used by many for recreation/ exercise;
- Will drive agricultural workers away;
- River walks along the Stour aren't well known/ signposted – visitors should be spread out;
- Unacceptable to residents.

Not SANG compliant:

- Berry Hill regularly omits 'unpleasant smells' and is visible;
- Land regularly floods during the winter months and is inaccessible;
- Paths are too short;
- Not readily accessible to local people;
- Small field pattern used to restrict grazing conflicts with a SANG being unrestricted.

Process:

- BCP Council not listening to residents;
- Inappropriate to be considered under Delegated Powers (must go to Planning Committee);
- Tick box exercise to facilitate Winter Gardens;
- Misleading drawings and documents;
- Many subtle changes sneaked in through amendments;
- Consultation process undertaken during Lockdown;
- Phase 1 should not be viewed in isolation/ phase 2 should be fully detailed before decision;
- Money should be spent on restoring Throop Mill;
- Correct notice has not been served on all relevant landowners.

Lockdown:

- Big increase in visitors post lockdown with big increase in anti-social behaviour/ problems;
- Increased activity shown proposals are not necessary – people already visiting;
- Mental health of residents has deteriorated since plans have been published.

Character/ Heritage issues:

- Adverse effects on listed buildings conservation area;
- Out of character;
- Throop older than Bournemouth and integrity should be maintained;
- Throop should not be turned into a tourist attraction;
- Overdevelopment of an overstretched area;
- Horses have been removed from paddocks – a long running feature of the area;
- Should remain unspoilt countryside;
- Loss of hedgerows and green fields replaced in part by a carpark;
- Throop should be retained as a village.
- Intrusive and inappropriate signage proposed in conservation area;
- Fields have been wild and unhindered;
- Small field pattern proposed is historically inaccurate and there are no other examples on the flood plain of the lower Stour Valley.

Area management:

- No management/ Rangers/ enforcement;
- No Police presence;
- Left to locals/ volunteers to pick up litter and keep tidy etc;
- Area subject to Stour Valley Bye Laws (1995) (not enforced at Kingfisher Barn);

Nature:

- Loss of wildlife, fauna and flora;
- Will destroy countryside – one of the few unspoilt places left;
- The number of dogs has already adversely impacted wildlife;
- Is a nature reserve and should be safeguarded from development and additional visitors;
- *Argiope bruennichi* (wasp spider) and *Melanargia galathea* (marbled white butterfly) inhabit area and are not found elsewhere in the locality;
- Nightingales, a declining species, foxes, badgers, bats (protected) resident in the area;
- Erosion of riverbanks accelerated by increased footfall.

Residential amenity:

- Carpark could be provided within Hicks Farm protecting residential amenity;
- Impact from dawn to dusk through noise/ intensified use/ traffic/ dog nuisance;
- Increased traffic detrimental to residents and wildlife;
- Will destroy peace and quiet of small village;
- Insufficient planting and fencing to protect residential amenity;
- Carpark will not be used, and people will park closer outside existing houses;
- Proximity of footpaths to boundaries will compromise privacy.

Proposed carpark:

- Contrary to planning policy;
- Loss of countryside for new carpark unacceptable;
- In addition to Throop Mill carpark, too many carparks for small village;
- Security/ anti-social behaviour concerns expressed;
- Inadequate security- commitment to gate and security personal dropped by amendments;
- Remote.

Kingfisher Barn:

- Highlights parking/ anti-social behaviour/ visitor problems;
- Not well managed;
- 'New' Kingfisher Barn not wanted.

Highways safety:

- Area not equipped for traffic proposal will generate;
- Unsafe access to carpark – road narrow with a slight bend and visibility restricted;
- Multiple traffic incidents along Taylor Drive near proposed access to carpark;
- No proposals to prevent parking along Taylor Drive;
- Wessex Water had to build an alternative access to avoid Throop;
- Nearby industrial estate has already increased traffic to limits;
- More traffic, pollution and congestion;
- Existing 20mph speed limit ignored;
- Area already used as a 'rat tun' to avoid Castle Lane;
- Existing roads are already in a poor state of repair;
- Carpark at the end of Broadway Lane is barely used and should be used instead.
- Roads are narrow country lanes dangerous for pedestrians, dog walkers and horse riders;
- Access for emergency vehicles will be hindered.

Non-planning issues:

- House prices will go down – premium prices paid;
- Greed of developers facilitated at expense of countryside and natural asset;
- Concerns raised regarding possible conflicts of interest/ Council links with those involved.

14 Holdenhurst Village Parish Meeting objection for the following reasons (summary):

- Throop village has been sensitively extended in latter times, but roads are over capacity;
- Development designed to attract thousands of visitors ‘totally incomprehensible’;
- Application labelled as phase 1 – should show the whole development;
- Council feedback forms at consultation events provided no room for objections;
- Publicity for proposal fails to acknowledge the amount of traffic generated;
- Proposed to mitigate town centre development that will force people into cars;
- No public transport and taxis will not carry dogs;
- Throop Road is in poor condition, has no pavements and not suited to extra traffic;
- Taylor Drive is not suited to extra pedestrians from carpark;
- Proposal contravenes Natural England advice;
- Alternatives sites such as Cherry Tree Nursery should be considered.

15 Dorset CPRE objections for the following reasons (summary):

- No additional green space is provided so practical mitigation does not occur;
- Car parking, access and infrastructure fail to safeguard natural amenity of Hicks Farm;
- No reference to public transport provision;
- Scale of necessary mitigation unknown (i.e. number of people displaced by Winter Gardens development and number of people willing to travel to the site);
- Climate Emergency should discourage more car trips;
- Public gardens, the foreshore or Cherry Tree nursery should be considered;
- Likely to comprise airport safety.

16 Throop Village Conservation Group objection for the following reasons (summary):

- Loss of Green Belt – other sites out of the Green Belt could be used;
- Flooding and future climate change – other more suitable sites with lower/ less flood risk;
- Track adjacent to river will have damaging ecological impact preventing species movement as water levels rise and fall;
- Dog pond not suited to water meadow;
- Access and Accessibility – remote and no public transport to the site;
- Not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Water meadows must by law be closed during the nesting season;
- Picnic benches and tables are not in keeping and will encourage food and litter;
- Will attract anti-social behaviour;
- Traffic;
- Conflict of Interest – applications have already been approved that re dependent on SANG;
- Community Engagement – concerns over process and response to information requests;
- Heritage – horse owners evicted with use and character of conservation area changed;
- Council have made no efforts to find a use for Hicks Farm;
- Phase 2 plans must be available, and the plans considered as a whole.

17 Dorset Area of Ramblers:

- Welcome opportunity to increase access to the countryside on paths that will be attractive to families and the less able;

- Paths should be dedicated as PROW rather than permissive paths to ensure perpetuity and depiction on the definitive map.

18 Bournemouth Civic Society:

'...The Civic Society fully supports the principal of these enhanced facilities in conjunction with the natural landscape park at Throop but is concerned that they must be carefully thought through by the Council so do not increase the traffic, parking and usage of the green belt and open space here at a detriment to its character and appearance.'

Comment:

19 The agent has checked the notices served having regard to issues of land ownership and the correct notices are understood to have been served. The application site area was reduced very slightly in response to this review.

Consultations

20 Planning Policy Officer: no objection

21 Tree Officer: no objection subject to conditions

22 Conservation Officer: harm identified in respect of carpark

23 Biodiversity Officer: condition requested

24 Highway Officer: no objection

25 Historic England: no comments

26 Natural England: no objection

'Natural England welcomes the proposal to make available land in the Councils ownership for new public access as the first phase of a new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace for local people and new residents in the authority area.'

27 Environment Agency: no objection subject to informatives

28 Bournemouth Airport: no safeguarding objection

29 Waste and Recycling Officer: plans show dog bins, waste bins will also be required

Constraints

30 The application site is located within the Green Belt. Much of the site also falls within flood zone 3. The site affects the setting of the Throop and Muccleshell Village Conservation Area and a small part of the site falls within the conservation area. Hicks Farm is Grade II Listed and there are further listed buildings within the vicinity.

Planning Assessment

Requirement for a SANG

- 31 The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of land from agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) together with associated parking, access and infrastructure.
- 32 SANG are designed with the specific purpose of displacing recreational pressures on areas that have internationally recognised ecological value such as the Dorset Heathlands. The Dorset Heathlands are an extensive network of lowland heath within south and east Dorset that are recognised for their national and international importance for nature conservation. Natural England advises that the cumulative effect of an increased numbers of dwellings up to 5 km from heathlands will have a significant adverse effect on the heaths, for example from recreation pressures, soil erosion, increased fire risk, pet predation of protected species.
- 33 The Dorset Heaths, as a European Wildlife site, are protected by the EC Birds and Habitats Directive, as transposed into UK Habitats Regulations. The Dorset Heaths are designated under EU and national regulations as a Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site. BCP Council is the competent authority and must have regard to the impacts on protected sites in making planning decisions.
- 34 As such, any application for development or strategic plan or policy that is likely to significantly affect a European site is subject to an appropriate assessment of the likely implications of the proposal for the sites conservation objectives. The Bournemouth Local Plan was subject to an appropriate assessment and this found that the impacts of development on the heathland site require mitigation. Local Plan Policy CS32 'International Sites' Policy CS33 'Heathland' and Policy CS36 'Stour Valley Project' set the response to the appropriate assessment findings.
- 35 The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD 2020 sets out the approach expanding on local plan policy, by which planning applications for proposals that are likely to have a significant effect on the Dorset Heathlands can be permitted so that any adverse effects on the integrity of the heathlands are avoided. The strategy deals with both larger developments which may affect the integrity of the sites alone and smaller developments that would be more likely to have an incremental impact. In respect of the former, the strategy includes Heathlands Infrastructure Projects (HIPS) such as the provision of a SANG or the enhancement of an existing greenspace to increase their attractiveness to visitors who might otherwise visit the Heathlands. Examples of existing SANGS are Upton Country Park, Canford Park, Bytheway Field and Frenches Farm. SPD Figure 5 'Proposed and implemented heathland mitigation' identifies Hicks Farm as a proposed SANG and Appendix A of the SPD (Possible Mitigation) identifies Hicks Farm as a possible future strategic SANG.
- 36 Most of the recent development in Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch has been relatively small scale and could not, in isolation, be reasonably expected to provide an on-site SANG; this is also true of large urban regeneration schemes in the town centres. However, Natural England have raised concerns about the type of mitigation being implemented in Bournemouth and in particular, in response to the planning application for major residential development on the Winter Gardens. The Local Planning Authority subsequently undertook an appropriate assessment that found that a SANG at Hicks Farm, or an alternative site, must be in place prior to the occupation of the development and that planning permission must be in place for a SANG prior to commencement of the Winter Gardens. As such conditions were attached to the Winter Gardens planning permission, as they are now for any residential development in Bournemouth of 50 or more units which includes the following:

No part of the residential development hereby approved shall be commenced prior to planning approval being given for Phase 1 of the change of use of Hicks Farm to a strategic SANG. Should planning approval not be granted at Hicks Farm, no part of the residential development hereby approved shall be commenced prior to planning approval being given

for the change of use to a strategic SANG at an alternative site to be proposed in consultation with Natural England.

Reason: In order to mitigate the impacts of the development on the Dorset Heathlands international designations in accordance with Policy CS33 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

- 37 The proposal would therefore provide mitigation not only for these schemes but also for help enable other future development proposals.

The Application: Site and Surroundings

- 38 Throop village, located predominantly to the south of Throop Road, was originally a farming community largely dating to the late 17th and early 18th centuries. There are several ancient thatched cottages, but the character of the village has evolved and now includes a large proportion of modern suburban development the more recent of which dates to the 1990's. The village character of Throop remains however, and it is distinct from the Bournemouth conurbation. The area of land to the north of Throop Road, which comprises much of the application site, is undeveloped and provides long views across the Stour valley.
- 39 The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment identifies this area as lying within the 'Valley Pasture' landscape character type, which is heavily influenced by the underlying geology. The site has some of the key "Valley Pasture" characteristics, namely its flat and open valley floor landscape, with distinctively meandering river channels. It is a typically grazed pastoral landscape, a mosaic of smaller fields, some of which abut the river edges.
- 40 The area falls within the Green Belt and Throop village is within the Throop and Muccleshell Village Conservation Area. Much of the undeveloped land between the River Stour and Throop village falls within flood zone 3 and flooding is common, particularly during the winter months.
- 41 Hicks Farm buildings date to around 1800 and are Grade II listed. The buildings comprise the farmhouse with its associated outbuildings and more recent functional farm buildings. A feasibility study was undertaken in 2018 following a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to look at options for restoration and re-use. There are further listed buildings in the locality which include Throop Mill Cottage, Throop Mill, River Farm and Barn and Muccleshell Farmhouse.
- 42 The Stour Valley Way (PROW29) follows Watery Lane running through Throop. This is a long-distance public right of way from Hengisbury Head to Stourhead in Wiltshire.

The Application Site

- 43 The application site forms 11.93ha of predominantly agricultural land identified as Hicks Farm to the north and east sides of Throop village. The site comprises two distinct parcels, the main part being to the north and east of the village and the second parcel, comprising a new carpark with space for 20 cars and footpath link to the east.
- 44 The north-western boundary of the main site area is delineated by an established field boundary, a combination of post and wire fence and hedgerow. The north-eastern boundary is delineated by the River Stour and mill pond. Much of the land is open grassland. The southern boundary is defined by a hedgerow following a farm track. There are two existing agricultural access points; one to Throop Road and the other to Watery Lane. A short section of footpath PROW E62/2 runs through the site between Throop Mill and the weir bridge. A shared path upgraded during 2017-2018 to promote public access runs between

Throop Road and the weir bridge providing an alternative route although most of the site is not accessible to the public. The Ringwood District Angling Association have access to the southern bank of the River Stour.

- 45 The eastern parcel runs parallel with a linear woodland copse that defines the eastern extent of the village. A field access lies at the northern end of Taylor Drive.
- 46 The application site forms part of the wider Stour Valley Park Vision; a concept to improve recreational opportunities, wildlife and landscape in the river corridor between Kingston Lacy and Hengisbury Head.

Consideration of alternative sites

- 47 The application details that alternative sites were considered which included:
- Golf courses such as Iford, Solent Meads, Queens Park or Meyrick Park;
 - A new Green Belt site;
 - Private sector sites such as Blue Roof Farm (Throop Road);
 - Land beyond Bournemouth but within BCP.
- Natural England have however consistently supported the principle of a SANG at Hicks Farm and this forms the basis of this planning application.
- 48 The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework was used to determine the scale and proposed configuration of the SANG which includes 'must have' and 'desirable' features recommended by Natural England. These criteria are as follows:

Must have's:

- Adequate parking on site;
- Carparks to be easily accessible and well signed;
- Easy to use and well-maintained paths but with most unsurfaced (to avoid urban feel);
- Circular walks starting and finishing at a carpark;
- It should be possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3km – 2.5km;
- Safe for visitors;
- Clearly sign posted or advertised and promoted by leaflets and websites;
- Perceived as semi-natural spaces with little intrusion or artificial structures;
- Variety of habitats;
- Largely unrestricted access/ space for dogs to exercise;
- Free from unpleasant intrusions.

Desirable:

- Easy access between the carpark and SANG where it is safe to let dogs off leads;
- Interpretation panels at access points showing layout and routes;
- Gently undulating topography;
- Open country character with areas of dense trees, scattered scrub or open water;
- Focal point.

- 49 The application details that careful consideration was given to access and the location of the carpark with other options considered. These included:
- Expansion of carpark on Broadway Lane – discounted due to distance from the SANG (via roads and housing) and difficulty in extending due to levels and enclosing woodland/ trees;
 - New carpark on land east of Broadway Lane – discounted due to distance from SANG (via roads and housing/ across Taylor Drive and through fields, tree/ hedge removal required, displacement of existing public open space and proximity to badger sett;

- New carpark with access adjacent to Hicks Farm – discounted due to its position directly opposite neighbouring properties, prominent in views across the river landscape and highway conflicts regarding pedestrian and vehicle movements.

The Proposed SANG

- 50 The SANG would provide a mix of circular walks, semi-natural spaces to explore and space for both people and dogs to exercise. The application includes creating a dog dipping pond, a series of paths some of which are to be surfaced, new hedgerows and copse planting, installation of fencing, dog litter bins, interpretation boards, signage and rustic furniture.
- 51 The application details that the configuration of the carpark and access has been carefully conceived to minimise the need to remove protected trees and retain the setting of the conservation area. However, some trees would need to be felled to facilitate construction of the access from Taylor Drive and these trees have been assessed by the applicant as being of low quality with there considered to be scope for replacement planting within the wider site. If permission is granted, the SANG would be laid out and managed by BCP Council Parks Service funded by contributions from new development. There would be no charge for using the SANG inclusive of the proposed carpark.

Key Issues

Principle of Development

Green Belt

- 52 The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 133 states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are openness and their permanence. Inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (paragraph 143). At paragraph 144, the NPPF makes clear that when considering any application in the Green Belt, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm in the Green Belt.
- 53 The construction of new buildings typically comprises inappropriate development in the Green Belt but with some exceptions; certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. As detailed by paragraph 146, these include local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location, material changes in the use of land (such as for outdoor recreation) and engineering operations. Associated to this, paragraph 141 also requires local planning authorities to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of green belt land, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity.
- 54 In essence, the current proposal comprises of three parts which are considered in turn:
- a) Material change of use;

As noted, paragraph 146 of the NPPF confirms that material changes in the use of land such as changes for outdoor recreation is not inappropriate development provided it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. There is a requirement for SANG to remain semi-natural spaces with little intrusion or artificial structures to retain the rural character and therefore, works are limited

predominantly comprising footpaths, cycle paths and landscaping with no new buildings or structures to provide accommodation. Therefore, having regard to the nature of these works, it is considered that the proposal would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. It would also reflect the provisions of paragraph 141 of the NPPF and accord with policy CS37 of the Local Plan.

b) Construction of carpark;

Concern has been raised that the carpark would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, would be harmful and should not be allowed. However, as noted, paragraph 146 confirms that local transport infrastructure that can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location is appropriate development provided it preserves its openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In this instance, the carpark would be small and encompassed by a landscaped bund and thus is considered to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Further, it would not be contrary to the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt and would accord with policy CS37 of the Local Plan.

c) Other infrastructure works;

The proposal would encompass further works inclusive of the pathways, signage boards, dog pond, signage boards and bunding. These would form engineering and other operations that would be small scale and would not be adjudged to have a harmful visual impact. In this regard, it is considered also that these aspects of the proposal would safeguard the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the five purpose of the Green Belt. In so doing, this aspect of the proposal would accord with the policy CS37. On this issue, whilst a condition is proposed to secure further details in respect of some of these aspects, this is to ensure an appropriate design quality and so is not considered to impact on this Green Belt assessment. Siting details are also shown on the plans provided.

Further Policies

56 In support of the application, the Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy 2012 includes various policies aimed at protecting designated habitat sites, namely:

- CS30: encourages a range of green infrastructure, including to increase access through walking, to enrich biodiversity and to promote a healthy population through increased access to open space.
- CS32: International Sites, refuse development which may adversely affect the integrity of protected sites;
- CS33: Heathland, no residential development within 400m and within 5km take all necessary steps to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on heathland integrity;
- CS36: Stour Valley Project, identifies the Stour Valley as having potential to act as a sub-regionally significant recreation and habitat resource where public access will be promoted through gateway points, habitat restoration, and creating a valley landscape that performs the function of a 'Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace' (SANG);
- CS37: Green Belt requires that development maintains the openness of the Green Belt.

Main SANG area: Impact on character and appearance of the area and heritage

57 This area predominantly lies outside of the Throop and Muccleshell Conservation Area albeit is considered to affect its setting. The Conservation Area was originally designated in 1975. On the conservation area, the Local Plan notes that *'The area to the north of Throop Road contains a mixture of agricultural land and farm buildings, and provides for long views across the Stour valley. A majority of buildings are listed in the northern part of the village and the setting of these buildings together with the remaining open areas, views, trees and*

hedgerows must be protected to retain the rural character of the area' (paragraph 4.38). To this extent, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out a general duty for the decision maker to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area (S72) whilst (S66) in respect of listed building sets out the requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. At a local level, policy CS39 states that the Local Planning Authority will seek to protect designated heritage assets from proposals that would adversely affect their significance.

- 58 In this instance, given the requirement for SANG to remain semi-natural spaces with little intrusion or artificial structures to retain the rural character, works are more limited and would focus on the creation of new cycle paths/ footpaths and landscape works. Regarding the former, a surfaced 2.5m – 3m wide cycle path/ path running from the Watery Lane entrance to the existing upgraded path running from Throop Road to the weir is shown and there is a 1.5m wide surfaced footpath that would also run from this upgraded path to provide a loop around the southern half of the site. Mown/ unsurfaced paths are also shown to provide a longer circular walk around the site.
- 59 New hedgerow planting is proposed which the submitted plans show to recreate the historical small-scale field pattern. On this issue, the Conservation Officer has highlighted that open views over fields are achieved from within the conservation area and from the listed Hicks Farm looking towards the River Stour. As such, there is a need to ensure that new hedgerow planting is historically accurate, to represent field divisions not drainage channels, and does not detract from the open views that are currently achieved. In reply, the agent advises that 1948 RAF aerial photos have been used to assess historic field patterns. The amended proposals have sought to balance the recreation of an historic field pattern (which may have existed at one point in time) and improving wildlife value, but not preventing flood water from draining the land;
- 60 Given the emphasis on retaining open field views, the Conservation Officer had suggested that, as a body of water, the dog pond be relocated further to the south east. This change has not been incorporated into the revised plans with the agent reasoning that the dog pond is small in scale, discreetly located and not considered to have a harmful impact upon the character and the appearance of the conservation area.
- 61 Concerns have also been expressed with regards to the new signage the number and size of which should be kept to a minimum. In this regard, it is considered that the detailed design of this signage could be reasonably conditioned if permission is granted but the nature of these items is not unknown.
- 62 Concerns have also been raised that hedgerows planted for screening should be relatively mature and allowed to grow up. Notwithstanding the submitted details, it is also considered that this issue can form the basis of a suitably worded condition if permission is granted.
- 63 Overall, having regard to the identified issues (exclusive of the carpark considered below), it is considered that whilst the change of use of land to a SANG would alter the character of the area to a degree, it would nevertheless retain its rural open character which contributes positively to the village characters of Throop and Muccleshell. In so doing, the proposal (excluding the carpark) would preserve the setting of the conservation area and listed buildings and would not be detrimental to the conservation of these assets having regard to the provisions of paragraph 193 of the NPPF (which states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation). The proposal is also considered to comply with CS39; to this extent, retention of the dog pond as submitted is adjudged to be acceptable.

64 Further, weight is attributed to the displaced recreational pressures on the Dorset Heathlands that are internationally recognised for their ecological value, the opportunities for outdoor recreation and given that the proposal would reflect the policy aspirations of policy CS36 that includes provision of a SANG as part of the Stour Valley project. Further benefits would be found in the additional planting in accordance with policy 4.25 and in this regard, paragraph 200 of the NPPF also states that Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. For these reasons, this aspect of the proposal is acceptable having regard to issues of heritage, character and appearance and in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and the relevant planning policies subject to appropriate conditions.

Carpark/ access: Impact on character and appearance of the area and heritage

65 The proposed carpark and access path occupy the smaller part of the application site to the south eastern side of Throop village. In so doing, it would be situated away from the historic core of the village and its associated listed buildings adjacent instead to the more recently built housing development. It would be located in the corner of an existing larger field that is subdivided by fencing and used for grazing and accessed via a vehicular entrance opposite 24 Taylor Drive the formation of which would require some tree/ vegetation removal. The carpark would provide 20 car parking spaces including two disabled spaces. The surface material is shown as hoggin/ crushed stone. The carpark would be encompassed by a new planted earth bund on two sides to screen it from the open views to the east. New tolerant edge planting is shown to the west (Taylor Drive) side of the carpark.

66 The linking footpath would run towards Throop Road on the Taylor Drive side of an existing field boundary but screened by a belt of tree/ hedgerow from Taylor Drive. The path would form a 3m wide shared path that would fall short of Throop Road and instead turn towards Taylor Drive with its entrance opposite 4 Taylor Drive.

67 The carpark is outside of the conservation area but adjoins the conservation area boundary; access to the carpark would be from within the conservation area. The footpath to the SANG would adjoin the boundary.

68 Nonetheless, the proposal would result in a degree of harm to a designated heritage asset comprising the Throop and Muccleshell Conservation Area, but that this harm would be less than substantial. Having regard to the provisions of the NPPF paragraph 196, this harm should be weighed against the benefits of the scheme which in this case, comprise the displacement of recreational pressures on the Dorset Heathlands that are internationally recognised for their ecological value.

69 The carpark and associated works would result in a degree of harm to the conservation area and its setting and the Council's Conservation Officer has raised an objection to this aspect of the scheme. This harm would include the creation of access points and associated works including the loss of important vegetation and green space to the south of Taylor Drive which contributes to the verdant and undeveloped setting of the conservation area. This setting is appreciated in views both from within and into the conservation area and helps to anchor the conservation area in its rural context. Regard is had again to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

70 Whilst this harm is acknowledged, it is considered that it would be less than substantial and, as above, needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme; paragraph 196 of the NPPF states '*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal...*' Paragraph 194 also states that any harm will require clear

and convincing justification'. In this instance, as noted, the public benefits are found in the displacement of recreational pressures on the Dorset Heathlands that are internationally recognised for their ecological value, the increased recreational opportunities that would be provided and the new planting that is proposed.

- 71 Notwithstanding the above, any harm should also be mitigated to reduce its impact and it is important to note that amended plans have been submitted to address some of the concerns raised. These amended plans have secured some improvements with additional planting shown and with the earth bund around the carpark reduced in size to no longer encompass the area beyond the carpark. It is also noted that the position of the carpark would be opposite a relatively modern housing estate and accessed via Taylor Drive enabling it to be reached without passing through the historic core of the conservation area and without having to negotiate its narrower roads.
- 72 Concerns were raised as to whether the carpark/ pedestrian entrances/ splays had been over-engineered and should be the minimum necessary to minimise impact. The Local Highway Authority advise that a minimum stopping sight distance of 22m is necessary in both directions to ensure adequate time for the driver of a passing vehicle travelling at 20mph to come to a stop should a vehicle/ pedestrian exit the site onto the highway. As such, no obstruction to visibility would be permitted from a point measured at 2m from the edge of the highway (into the site access) to a point 22m to the east and west of the access along the nearside carriageway. These are the minimum design requirements to achieve safe vehicular and pedestrian access/ egress, the 'x' distance already being reduced from the standard 2.4m to 2m. The proposal complies with these requirements.
- 73 Regarding the associated shared path, concern was raised as to why the path exits onto Taylor Drive rather than continuing to Throop Road. The agent advises that to exit straight onto Throop Road would require extensive regrading (there is around a 2m height difference) and tree/ vegetation loss to achieve a Disability Discrimination Act compliant ramp, resulting in more engineering works and greater visual impact. Moreover, the Local Highway Authority have confirmed that they would object to such a change. In this regard, formation of a potential pedestrian/ vehicle conflict point on a significantly sharp bend in a country lane environment would prejudice the condition of highway safety to an unacceptable level. Mitigation might include tree removal and further traffic calming measures, but these works would be extensive having regard to the size of the carpark and the result would be less safe than the scheme as proposed. Accordingly, changes to the route of the path have not be pursued.
- 74 Other than the above, it is noted the shared path would follow an existing clearing adjacent to this field boundary and would be well screened from Taylor Drive and the adjoining field to the east. For these reasons, overall, there are no associated objections to this aspect of the proposal. In this regard, whilst a slight conflict with policy CS39 is apparent in respect of the carpark and its impact on the setting of the conservation area (with no harm identified in respect of Listed Buildings), mitigation is proposed to minimise this harm and there are clear public benefits that weigh in favour of the scheme in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and CS1 that outweigh this limited harm. The mitigation proposed would also aid compliance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Trees

- 75 Much of the site is covered by an Area Tree Preservation Order. The amount of tree felling proposed is limited and no major harm has been identified by the Council's Tree Officer. A small amount of tree felling for the new access to the carpark would have a visual impact; notably for the properties facing this entrance on Taylor Drive. New landscaping would help

mitigate this change; it is considered that these details could be secured by condition if planning permission is granted.

- 76 The footpath from the new carpark runs alongside an existing hedgerow; it is not considered that the introduction of this footpath would have a detrimental impact on the hedgerow. The footpath would then re-join Taylor Drive with a small amount of tree felling proposed; again, additional soft landscaping to help mitigate this impact could be secured by condition.
- 77 Within the SANG no tree felling is proposed to accommodate the new footpaths although some sections of the paths pass over the root systems of a few trees and special surfacing of cell web is proposed to prevent tree root harm.
- 78 The changes and additional detailing shown by the amended plans received would need to be addressed by a revised arboricultural method statement. It is considered that this could form the basis of a suitably worded condition because the works appear feasible and not of any major tree harm.
- 79 The Council's tree officer concludes that in general there are many aspects of this scheme that would improve landscape value and its conservation and wildlife values and habitats. A detailed soft landscaping scheme with a long-term management plan and a maintenance scheme would be required which can again form the basis of suitably worded conditions. In this way, the application would policy 4.25 in respect of planting and landscaping.

Biodiversity

- 80 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal which considered potential impacts affecting bats, breeding birds, reptiles, badgers, otter and water vole, dormouse, great crested newts, invertebrates and consideration of different habitat with consideration also given to the potential for this area to act as a wildlife corridor.
- 81 With regards to the carpark area and proposed connecting path, no evidence of protected species such as badgers was seen albeit a badger sett was observed in an area surveyed beyond the application site. It is likely that bird's nest in the hedges and scrubby areas. Potential for reptiles was low; the longer grassland is a recent development on former arable land and lacks suitable structure for reptiles. Potential for protected amphibians, dormice, otters and water voles was assessed as negligible. No potential bat roost features were seen in any trees that might be removed and impact on bats through loss of a short section of hedgerow was assessed as negligible.
- 82 The main part of the proposed SANG was assessed as 'area 5' in the appraisal comprising horse grazed meadows along the river, open grassland and riverbank habitats. Forming the largest block of land, the habitat proved quite uniform with most of the land area comprising open grassland that has been heavily grazed by horses. The grassland is subdivided into a number of smaller fields and there is a broad grassland buffer between grazing units and the river. The riverbank has some willow scrub and marginal reedbeds; there are a few fishing swims where access is possible. The appraisal concluded that most of this area is of low ecological value but with the river bank a valuable habitat with the potential to be improved for wildlife and flowering plants. No evidence of use by protected species such as badgers was seen, potential for protected amphibians and dormice was assessed as low to negligible. The north west corner has good bat foraging habitat and trees with potential to hold roosting features; this would need to be considered but use of the land as a SANG with new planting is likely to improve the value to foraging bats. Otters are known from this stretch of the Stour, but water vole are not thought to be present on the lower reaches of the Stour.

- 83 The appraisal also considered 'Throop Island' comprising the eastern part of the application site. This area was noted to have a high potential for biodiversity which could be enhanced by a more varied management regime. In this regard, the areas close to the mill stream are dominated by thistles and taller ruderals, regular cutting might allow more diverse grassland to develop. The stream itself is probably too shaded and some cutting, and clearing might enhance the value of this area.
- 84 In summary, the appraisal concludes that areas surveyed included an active badger sett, bird breeding habitat in marginal scrub trees and possibly small areas of reptile habitat. Further survey work must be undertaken to assess potential impact on foraging and breeding otter but no other survey work for protected species within the SANG was recommended. The removal of vegetation should avoid bird nesting season, March to August inclusive; if this is not possible small areas can be examined for nesting birds by an ecologist immediately before work begins. The site of the carpark does not affect any habitat of ecological value with the possible exception of the older hedgerow to the west; creating an access may require the removal of some hedgerow plants and trees in order to ensure compliance with highway standards. This would be kept to the minimum possible and should not have a significant ecological impact.
- 85 The proposed public use of the site needs to balance the interests of users, particularly dog walkers, with the potential for biodiversity. Areas of ecological value or high potential such as the riverbank would need to have some areas that cannot be accessed by dogs at least during crucial periods such as peak bird nesting season in April to June. Proposals for planting and new hedge creation are generally welcomed; native species should be used wherever possible.
- 86 The Council's Biodiversity Officer has reviewed the application and documentation submitted whilst the application has also been considered by Natural England who have raised no objections. The former has expressed some concern that only a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been submitted which recommends further survey work in respect of otter and water vole; best practice is for all results and surveys to be presented as material facts as part of the application. However, this approach is accepted in this instance given that the majority of habitat stays, and the proposal would introduce additional planting and better management which should help to enhance the ecological value of the area.
- 87 Notwithstanding the above, a pre-commencement condition would be required in respect of otter and water vole. If this site is positive for water vole and/ or otter those areas of bank(s) should be avoided and protected from disturbance with fencing. This is because water vole is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and a priority conservation species. Otter is fully protected as a European protected species and is also protected under sections 9 and 11 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In this regard, a license from Natural England is more likely to be required but the Council's Biodiversity Officer is confident that this would be granted given knowledge of the site and the nature of works proposed.
- 88 In their comments, Natural England raise some concerns regarding the detailed points of the Management Plan but not the principle of the proposal. These concerns relate to a range of issues but generally comprise observations, comments, advice and in some cases, requests for slightly further detail. It is considered that these issues could be addressed through the submission of an updated Management Plan which could form the basis of a suitable worded condition.
- 89 Natural England offer some further advice which it is considered could be reasonably added as informatives to any planning permission that is granted.

- 90 In summary, paragraph 177 of the NPPF states *'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site'*. This is not the case in this instance with the proposal not adjudged to have any significant effect on habitat. Paragraph 175 states that *'development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity'*. In this regard, the proposed SANG is intended to relieve pressures on the Dorset Heathlands that are internationally recognised for their ecological value and this carries significant weight. The proposal is also fully compliant with policies CS35 and CS36 of the Local Plan and for all of these reasons, subject to suitable conditions as advised by the Biodiversity Officer, is acceptable.

Flood Risk

- 91 Most of the application site comprising the land to the north east side of Throop Road (but not adjoining Throop Road) lies within flood zone 3 having regard to the Environment Agency flood risk map. The NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 92 Flood zone 3a relates to an area where there is a high probability of flooding with the land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding; flood zone 3b relates to the functional floodplain. It is acknowledged that large parts of the site are subject to flooding and that typically the site floods (to an extent) each year. Nonetheless, having regard to the flood risk vulnerability classification as detailed with the NPPG, open amenity space and outdoor recreation is a water compatible use and therefore is appropriate development (as shown by table 3 of the NPPG (Flood risk and coastal change)). In this regard, the concerns raised regarding the site flooding are noted. However, this is usually in the months when sensitive species of birds and reptiles on the heath have finished nesting so displacement of people from the SANG onto heaths would have a lesser impact. It is also noted that SANGs are already located in floodplains e.g. Canford SANG adjacent to the Stour.
- 93 The Environment Agency raised an initial objection to the application on flood risk grounds albeit confirming that they had no objection in principle. Concerns related to the hedgerows proposed which were considered likely to impact on flood flows and the post and stock wire fencing which can collect significant amounts of debris during flooding. It was advised that hedgerows be reoriented and staggered to minimise the impact of flood conveyance and with wide breaks between the hedgerows. A more open style of fencing was recommended such as a post and rail fence.
- 94 Following submission of the updated scheme and site plans the Environment Agency have withdrawn their objection as the scheme has now provided routing for flood waters through the site. It is advised that the development must ensure that there is no destabilization of the bank and ensure disturbance of silt is minimized. An 8m buffer between the bank and any planting to avoid the need for a permit or any risk to existing habitats, species, sediment or damage to the bank is recommended. Planning informatives are proposed to cover this.

Residential Amenity

- 95 The proposals are remote from most dwellings and the perceived harm, having regard to the letters of objection received, are found in the intensified use of the site, the additional number of visitors and traffic, noise disturbance and concerns regarding anti-social behaviour.
- 96 Throop village has grown and evolved over time and many more people now live in Throop because of the relatively large areas of newer housing which has been provided. These changes will have had an impact and the proposal would also have an impact. Nevertheless, the area is already attracting walkers (including dog walkers), cyclists and car borne visitors and will continue to do so. It is not considered that the formation of a SANG per se which would formalise some of these activities would substantiate a refusal reason having regards to the impacts on residential amenity.
- 97 It is acknowledged that the creation of the carpark and associated pathway access would have a more direct impact on residents living close by on Taylor Drive. However, the carpark would be small and new planting is shown to help mitigate its impact and that of the footpath. It is considered that any associated refusal reason would be very difficult to sustain thus overall, there are no associated objections to the application. Security measures for the new carpark are advised and be secured through an updated Management Plan by way of a planning condition to help safeguard against anti-social behaviour/ unlawful use.

Highway Safety

- 98 Access to the northern parcel of land providing for the recreational walking routes would be via the existing pedestrian access onto Throop Road and via an additional pedestrian access formed from Watery Lane. Access to the southern parcel of land would be via the access to the new carpark and via a 3m wide pedestrian/ cycle access onto Taylor Drive. The two parcels of land would be connected by the footway along Taylor Drive; a road subject to a 20mph speed restriction and speed calming measures.
- 99 The design of the carpark, vehicular access and pedestrian/ cyclist access and parking is shown by the application and the applicant has commissioned a Transport Assessment. The Local Highway Authority note the following from the submitted details:
- 100 Traffic Flow:
- A 7-day radar survey undertaken in three locations in Throop concludes traffic flows are low with less than 2.5 vehicle movements per minute at peak times. Survey data from Taylor Drive recorded a total two-way Daily Traffic Flow of 1082 vehicle movements. As such, Taylor Drive is a lightly trafficked, slow-speed road;
 - Based on traffic flow and vehicle speed data and composition, the local highway network operates safely;
 - Personal Injury Collision data has been analysed using CrashMap which determined that there have been no collisions within the vicinity of the site within the last 10 years. Council records concur.
- 101 Trip Generation:
- To determine trip generation, analysis of survey data from other SANG locations similar in size and scope to Hicks Farm was undertaken, including Lytchett Fields, Poole. Although 25% smaller, visitor numbers were uplifted by 25% to account for this variation;
 - The assessment concluded that this proposal would generate 101 daily trips (both to and from) the site. With 65% of people estimated to arrive by car (per Upton Country Park modal split data) this proposal is forecast to generate 66 vehicle trip arrivals/ departures daily;
 - Peak hours for SANG use were identified as 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm, outside of traditional peak 'commuter' hours. During the traditional AM and PM peak hour the SANG could generate around 8 to 10 vehicle movements each hour with the peak one-hour

traffic generation would be 13 vehicles which equates to 1 additional vehicle every 4 and a half minutes;

- This level of impact would not be readily noticeable on the road network and would have no impact on highway operation or capacity.

102 Access:

- The vehicular access from the car park is of sufficient width to enable two vehicles to pass simultaneously minimising interference with the free-flow of traffic;
- Adequate visibility is available for drivers egressing the carpark. Speed surveys forming part of the Transport Assessment recorded 85th percentile speeds of 21.1mph northbound and 19.6mph southbound thus requiring a stopping sight distance of 26.6m and 24m respectively. Visibility splays incorporating these distances is achieved in both directions;
- Adequate visibility is available for cyclists and pedestrians exiting the shared use path onto Taylor Drive and the adjacent footway.

103 Car Parking:

- The carpark would provide 20 spaces, two of which will be for disabled users;
- The parking accumulation assessment of similar SANG sites recorded a peak occupancy rate of 39.6% which equates to 8 cars. If the necessary modal splits were applied, the car occupancy rates would be lower;
- The carpark layout and design are compliant with the Parking SPD. The design forms parking bays measuring 2.6m by 5m with 6m aisle widths and an extended turning area. Swept path analysis demonstrates that vehicles can comfortably manoeuvre within the car park.

104 Cycle Parking:

- The Transport Assessment anticipates 45 trips or 22.5 visitors likely arriving on foot or by bicycle. 10 sheffield stands are proposed across the site to provide 20 cycle spaces with these located directly north of the car park off Taylor Drive, and at either end of the new shared footpath/cycleway within the main SANG area to the north of Throop Road;
- The amount and type of cycle parking is appropriate.

105 On the basis of the above, there is no highway objection to the proposal subject to conditions if planning permission is granted.

Airport Safeguarding

106 The Airfield Operations Duty Manager has confirmed that the additional documents provided including the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan have been examined from an Aerodrome Safeguarding aspect and safeguarding criteria have been met. As such, Bournemouth Airport have no safeguarding objections to the proposal.

Summary

107 The proposed SANG would relieve recreational pressures on the Dorset Heathlands that are internationally recognised for their ecological value. It would also increase leisure and outdoor opportunities for all and would be provided in an area already used by walkers, cyclists and visitors. It would allow further planting and improvements in area management.

Planning Balance

108 The application relates to a sensitive rural site located within the Green Belt, which is prone to flooding and which impacts the Throop and Muccleshell Conservation Area and the areas listed buildings. It forms an intrinsic and important part of Throop village; a village which has retained its rural character and remains distinct from the built-up areas of Bournemouth. It is

already well used however providing opportunities for leisure and outdoor recreation. The proposal would help formalise this use providing a network of paths and infrastructure to help better accommodate and promote this use and in so doing, would also relieve recreational pressures on the Dorset Heathlands that are internationally recognised for their ecological value. The works would involve the creation of a carpark, provide associated infrastructure and would increase visitor numbers; these changes would impact on the areas character and have an impact on amenity. However, the scheme can be accommodated in a sensitive manner without causing any significantly harmful impacts so as to warrant refusal of planning permission. The more limited harm identified is adjudged to be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

- 109 Therefore, having considered the appropriate development plan policies and other material considerations, including the NPPF, notwithstanding the very limited conflict identified in relation to CS39, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions attached to this permission, the development taken as a whole would be in accordance with the Development Plan, would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area or the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience. The Development Plan Policies considered in reaching this decision are set out above.

Recommendation

- 110 **GRANT** planning permission with the following conditions, which are subject to alteration/ addition by the Head of Planning Services provided any alteration/ addition does not go to the core of the decision:

1. Development to be carried out in accordance with plans as listed

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Application Boundary; drg no. HI S 02 Rev E

Phase 1 – Proposed Layout Overall Concept; drg no. HI 03 Rev E

Phase 1 – Proposed Layout Main Area; drg no. HI S 06 Rev B

Phase 1 – Proposed Layout Car Park Area; drg no. HI S 07 Rev D

Typical Sections; drg no. HI S 08

Typical Fence Details; drg no. HI S 09

Typical Path Details; drg no. HI S 10 Rev B

Riverside Area; drg no. HI S 11

Gaps Plan; drg no. HI S 12

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. Additional Information

Notwithstanding the submitted details, prior to the commencement of development, full specification details to include size, design, materials, position and method of attachment to the ground in respect of the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

1. Waymarker signs;
2. Information boards and displays;
3. Carpark access barrier;
4. Benches;
5. Bins.

Development shall accord in full with these approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory design, to safeguard the rural character of the area and to safeguard the Throop and Muccleshell Village Conservation Area all to accord with Planning Policy 4.4 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (February 2002) and Planning Policies CS39 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

3. Updated Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of development, an updated Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall thereafter comply in full with these approved details.

Reason: To ensure the suitable long-term management and security of the site in the interests of nature conservation and amenity, all to accord with Planning Policies CS35 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

4. Arboricultural Method Statement

Notwithstanding the submitted details, prior to the commencement of development, a revised arboricultural method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved arboricultural method statement shall thereafter be implemented in full and in accordance with an agreed timetable forming a part of this arboricultural method statement.

Reason: To ensure that trees and other vegetation to be retained are not damaged during construction works and to accord with Policy 4.25 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (February 2002).

5. Soft Landscaping

Prior to the commencement of development, full details of soft landscape works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Soft landscaping details shall include: (a) planting plans; (b) existing trees, hedges and shrubs to be retained; (c) written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); (d) schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities; and (e) programme of implementation. The approved soft landscape scheme shall be implemented in full prior to the occupation use of the development commencing and permanently retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development includes a properly designed scheme of landscaping in the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy 4.25 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (February 2002) and Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

6. Hard Landscaping

Notwithstanding the submitted details, prior to the commencement of development, full specification details of all hard surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details should include where appropriate:

Proposed finished levels; Layout of car parking space(s); Surfacing materials; External fixtures; Vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation.

The approved hard landscape scheme shall be implemented in full prior in accordance with a timetable to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and permanently retained

and maintained as agreed unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development includes a properly designed and suitably landscaped amenity area in the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy 4.25 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (February 2002) and Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

7. Boundary /Subdivision Treatment (Location & Type to be approved)

Notwithstanding the submitted details, prior to the commencement of development, full specification details of all the fences, gates and further boundary treatments and means of subdivision shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include a plan showing: the positions, height, design, and materials. The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with a timetable to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter permanently retained and maintained as such unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory design, to safeguard the rural character of the area and to safeguard the Throop and Muccleshell Village Conservation Area all to accord with Planning Policy 4.4 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (February 2002) and Planning Policies CS39 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

8. Long-term landscape management plan and maintenance scheme

Prior to the commencement of development, a long-term landscape management plan and maintenance scheme, including long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The long-term landscape management plan and maintenance scheme shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: In the interests of the establishment and management of the landscaped areas and in accordance with Policy 4.25 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (February 2002).

9. Access/turning/parking

Notwithstanding details shown on the submitted plans, prior to the commencement of the development of the carpark, details of the specification (a typical cross-section of the surfacing is required) of the access, parking and turning areas shown on the approved plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. These areas shall be constructed and surfaced in accordance with the approved details and permanently retained and kept available for visitors at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policies CS16 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy (October 2012).

10. Visibility Splays

Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use and notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modifications) the visibility splays shall be provided on both sides of the vehicular and pedestrian accesses onto Taylor Drive in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA and shall be cleared of all obstructions over 0.6m above the level of the adjoining highway. Nothing over 0.6m in height shall be permitted to be erected within the splayed areas at any time.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policies CS16, CS18 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy (October 2012).

11. Design of Cycle Parking to be submitted

Notwithstanding the submitted plans, before the development hereby permitted is brought into use, details of secure cycle parking i.e. specification, dimensions and spacing of Sheffield stands and the associated 3m wide shared foot/cycle paths shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The construction/provision of the cycle parking shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and completed prior to the development hereby approved being brought into use. The cycle parking shall thereafter be retained, maintained and kept available at all times for visitors.

Reason: To promote the cycling mode of transport and in accordance with Policy CS18 of the Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy (October 2012).

12. Lighting

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no lighting shall be installed on the site.

Reason: To safeguard the rural character of the area and to safeguard the Throop and Muccleshell Village Conservation Area all to accord with Planning Policy 4.4 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (February 2002) and Planning Policies CS38, CS39 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

13. Vegetation Clearance

Any vegetation clearance on this site shall only be carried out outside the bird breeding season of 1st March to 31st August inclusive unless the area affected has been sufficiently checked by a suitably qualified ecologist to show that nesting birds are not present. These findings shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority on request.

Reason: To protect against the prevention of disturbance to birds' nests as protected under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and to accord with Policy CS35 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

14. Ecological Monitoring

Regular site monitoring of birds on the River Stour shall be to be carried out to monitor for any evidence that numbers of species and breeding has not been adversely affected by an increase in public and dog use. The scope, area and timing of this monitoring shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development with the monitoring result submitted to the Local Planning Authority. If a decline in breeding is detected, then suitable mitigation measures shall be proposed which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These mitigation measures shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of species protection and to accord with the NPPF paragraph 170 and to Policy CS35 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

15. Badgers

Prior to the commencement of development, an updated Badger Survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If badgers are found, suitable mitigation measures shall be prepared and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall thereafter strictly accord with these agreed details.

Reason: To safeguard a protected species and to protect the ecological interests of the site, all to accord with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and Policy CS35 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

16. Water Vole and Otter

Prior to the commencement of development, the application site shall be surveyed for water vole and otter and this survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any areas that these species are found to be using for resting place and breeding shall be avoided and protected from disturbance with fencing the details of which shall firstly be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall thereafter strictly accord with these approved details.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) re otter, and Policy CS35 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012).

17. Informative Note: TPO on site

INFORMATIVE NOTE: The applicant's attention is drawn to the existence of a Tree Preservation Order affecting this site.

18. Informative Note: Environmental Permit

INFORMATIVE NOTE: This development may require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency under the terms of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2016 for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 8 metres of the top of the bank of designated 'main rivers'. This was formerly called a Flood Defence Consent. Some activities are also now excluded or exempt. An environmental permit is in addition to and a separate process from obtaining planning permission. Further details and guidance are available on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>

19. Informative Note: Operational Access

INFORMATIVE NOTE: The Environment Agency requires operation access to maintain and manage the Throop Gauging Station. We have reviewed the plans and discussed this with the applicant, and understand that there will be no changes that impact on our operation access to maintain the asset in this location. It is important that the surfacing on the access route can accommodate large (up to 7.5 ton) machinery, as we would not be undertaking any repairs on surfacing impacted on by our operations.

Therefore, the applicant must ensure that we can maintain our operational access, so if the applicant needs access for maintenance of the SNAG from the same access point they must discuss with us the security and access arrangements to ensure that there is no impact on our operations.

20. Informative Note: Pollution Prevention during Construction

INFORMATIVE NOTE: Safeguards should be implemented during the construction phase to minimise the risks of pollution from the development. Such safeguards should cover:

- the use of plant and machinery
- oils/chemicals and materials
- the use and routing of heavy plant and vehicles
- the location and form of work and storage areas and compounds
- the control and removal of spoil and wastes.

We recommend the applicant refer to our Pollution Prevention Guidelines, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pollution-prevention-for-businesses>

21. Informative Note: Bio-security

INFORMATIVE NOTE: Biosecurity measures may be required to minimise the spread of non-native invasive species. These may consist of drying and disinfection procedures, a comprehensive visual check of equipment, materials, machines and PPE arriving and leaving the site. Control measures may also be required including herbicide treatment.

Further information is available from the GB Non Native Species Secretariat concerning NNIS in general, the Be Plant Wise campaign and more specifically the Check, Clean, Dry biosecurity procedures to help prevent the spread of problem non-native species. This guidance sets out simple instructions that can help prevent the accidental transfer of non-native species together with a number of useful leaflets and posters.

About biosecurity:

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/biosecurity-for-everyone.cfm>

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/index.cfm?>

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/biosecurity-for-anglers.cfm>

22. Informative Note: Natural England 1

Informative Note: Natural England advise that the authority establish a SANG infrastructure register so that replacement items can be fully considered at future points in time as replacements are needed. Some items may alter or be found to be un-necessary over time depending on SANG use patterns.

23. Informative Note: Natural England 2

Informative Note: Natural England advise it is good practice to set out clear objectives and parameters for each SANG parcel. These would include clear statements about the type of public activities appropriate and in-appropriate so that these can be kept under review as well as the basic parameters for the habitats present and infrastructure within each compartment.

24. Informative Note: Bournemouth airport

INFORMATIVE NOTE: Attention is drawn to the requirements of Bournemouth airport as specified by the Airfield Operations Duty Manager the comments of which are available as part this planning application.

25. Statement required by National Planning Policy Framework (APPROVALS)

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the revised NPPF the Council, as Local Planning Authority, takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. The Council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this instance the concerns raised in respect of the proposal were discussed with the agent, amended plans were submitted and planning permission was granted.

