Comments

Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan - Publication Plan Consultation (18/12/19 to 12/02/20)

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Consultation Point 8 Natural Environment and Heritage (View)
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Representation

Please use a separate form for each representation.

Which part of the Publication Plan does your representation relate to?

8. Natural Environment and Heritage

Tests of Soundness

Do you consider the Local Plan is sound in terms of being:

Justified
Effective
Positively prepared
Consistent with National Policy

Reasons

Please give the reason(s) why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

We are very concerned that the SSP2 Local Plan is trying to replace Policy 10 with NEH2. Policy 10 was designed to give extra protection to two very significant natural habitats in our area, Cransley and Thorpe Reservoir. Policy 10 has been in place since 1995 and has stood the test of time. It has been widely respected by local people and planning committees. NEH2 is a more general policy and it doesn't even mention the two reservoirs as natural assets at all! There is a picture of Cransley Reservoir inferring its significance but it is not listed in any of the tables or in the text. Policy 10 should be retained.

Table 8.1 lists SSSIs, Local Geological Sites, Protected Wildflower Verges and Pocket Parks but no County (Local) Wildlife Sites. Kettering General Hospital is listed but not Cransley Reservoir which has been a County (Local) Wildlife Site since 1994 (and a Prime Site before that). Both Cransley and Thorpe Reservoir provide essential habitats to some important wetland birds including little grebes,
great crested grebes, pochard, gadwall, shoveler and wigeon. Very rare visitors including the Great White Egret have also been spotted. The marshland on the NW arm of Cransley Reservoir is home to other rare birds including reed warblers, sedge warblers, reed buntings, willow warblers, black caps and yellow hammers. These are all declining species in the UK. The wetland vegetation is a very important resource according to the Northants Wildlife Trust. Yet these two habitats are considered less important than that found at Kettering General Hospital? This makes no sense! At the very least the County (Local) Wildlife Sites should be listed in Table 8.1. Just because there are 60 of them is no reason to leave them out of the list of green assets completely. They could be listed as an appendix to Table 8.1 and put immediately below the table.

And where would this leave Thorpe Malsor Reservoir? It is a significant wetland habitat that may not at present be a County Wildlife Site but is still a beautiful wildlife reserve that is an integral part of a green infrastructure corridor that stretches from Mawsley Marsh to Cransley Reservoir and on to Thorpe Malsor Reservoir. Wildlife, particularly wetland birds benefit enormously from this interconnecting resource. It is also a habitat which was considered important enough to have its own Policy in the past. What has changed? It doesn’t even get a mention in the new NEH2. Habitats like this should get more protection now than in the past not less.

In Appendix 2 table 17.1 it lists Policy 10 Cransley and Thorpe Malsor Reservoir being replaced by NEH2 - this is inaccurate as neither are covered in NEH2!!

To conclude:

- Policy 10 should be retained as it has been since 1995.
- Table 8.1 in the NEH2 should list all County (Local) Wildlife Sites otherwise it is simply an inaccurate list of green assets in the Borough.
- Thorpe Malsor Reservoir should get a mention in the text of NEH2 as an important wetland habitat which is interrelated and connected to a local SSSI and County Wildlife Site.

Notifications

Do you wish to be notified?