

Date: 18 February 2014
Our ref: 108679 /
Your ref: Y/99/13



Mr C. Cronin,
Arun District Council
Civic Centre
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
Sussex BN17 5LF

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

BY EMAIL ONLY

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Cronin,

**Planning consultation: Outline application for 10.5 hectares of residential development (comprising up to 250 dwellings (30% to be affordable) together with ancillary open space and landscaping), 14.9 hectares of public open space development to be laid out as public parkland and landscaped green corridors, vehicular access from Ford Lane (The means of access) - This is a Departure from the Development Plan
Location: Land to the North & East of St Marys Church Yapton**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 08 January 2014.

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.

This letter provides additional comments on soils and land quality to supplement our earlier response dated 28th January 2014.

Soils and Land Quality

Having considered the proposals as a consultation under the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended), and in the context of Government's policy for the protection of the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land as set out in paragraph 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Natural England draws your Authority's attention to the following land quality and soil considerations:

- Based on the information provided with the planning application, it appears that the proposed development comprises approximately 25.4 hectares of agricultural land which appears to be classified as 'best and most versatile' (Grades 1, 2 and 3a land in the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system).
- As the applicant has not undertaken detailed soil surveys of the site, an agricultural land classification and soil survey of the land should be carried out in accordance with the published MAFF, 1988 guidance <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/landmanage/land-use/documents/alc-guidelines-1988.pdf>. This should normally be at a detailed level, e.g. one auger boring per hectare, (or more detailed for a small site) supported by pits dug in each main soil type to confirm the physical characteristics of the full depth of the soil resource, i.e. 1.2 metres. Although the applicant has referred to the provisional soil grade map, this map is

not suitable for site specific decision as it is only accurate to the nearest 80ha, hence more detailed survey is required. The applicant can also refer to our [Technical Information Note on Agricultural Land Classification](#), TIN049.

- Government policy is set out in Paragraph 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that:

'Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.'

- The site is not identified in the allocations proposed in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for Yapton and falls outside of the built-up area boundary referred to in Policy BB1.
- It is recognised that a proportion of the agricultural land affected by the development will remain undeveloped as public open space and habitat provision. In order to retain the long term potential of this land and to safeguard soil resources as part of the overall sustainability of the whole development, it is important that the soil is able to retain as many of its many important functions and services (ecosystem services) as possible through careful soil management.
- Consequently, we advise that if the development proceeds, the developer uses an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on, and supervise, soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make the best use of the different soils on site. Detailed guidance is available in Defra [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#) (including accompanying [Toolbox Talks](#)) and we recommend that this is followed.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Sally Harries on 0300 060 2933. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours Sincerely

Sally Harries
Land Use Services