



PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

at 7.45pm on

Monday 11 November 2019

at Loughton Library, Traps Hill, Loughton, IG10 1HD

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT FOR AGENDA ITEM 5

Mark Squire
Town Clerk
8 November 2019

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Agenda item 5

Appendix 1

Paper by the Leader of the Council for consideration under Agenda item 5 - Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

D R A F T

Paper by Loughton Town Council concerning

The Protection of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation within Loughton

The paper by Jeremy Dagley in May 2018 identified the following factors for consideration:

... Additional recreation pressure – the Habitats Regulations Assessment needs updating to reflect 6.2km Zone of Influence (a conservative estimate) - mitigation possible – strategic and site-specific - delegated approval for CoL officers to work on an interim mitigation strategy & tariff [one was later suggested as an interim measure]

In the view of Loughton Town Council, the interim mitigation strategy for recreational pressure is insufficient, poorly and improperly defined, and unsatisfactory. Loughton is pre-eminently *the* Forest town. Many significant areas of the SAC **directly** border its built-up area. The forest edge is a sensitive and delicate meeting of SAC and built environment. In Loughton, three Conservation areas directly abut the SAC. There are approximately 5,000 dwellings and retail establishments (plus D class uses) which are within fifteen minutes' walk of the SAC.

It is an obvious truth that more damage and recreational pressure on the SAC will be evident and more grievous within this distance than in most of the 6.2KM (approx 3.9 miles) zone identified in the interim strategy. This is because of the immediacy of human activity in the 15-minute walk zone – the ease of dog walking, the pleasant stroll to avoid walking in streets or to find shade, children's play, jogging, cycling, the churning up of unmade paths, picnics, lighting of fires and barbecues, litter, rowdiness, drug taking, drinking, etc. Those living (working, using places of assembly/public resort/shopping/dining...) in the 15 minute zone (the Inner zone) are able easily to access the Forest, those on the outer zone will do so less frequently.

15 minutes fairly brisk walk is one mile (1.61KM)

LTC contends that the impost of a figure of some £350 per new dwelling (or 0.1% of the average value of each new house) in the inner zone is totally insufficient to mitigate the extra burden of human activity on places in Loughton such as Staples Hill (with its thousand-year-old pollard hornbeams), Drummaids (now degenerated to scrub), the Loughton Brook Valley (torn up by cycling), Warren Hill and Strawberry Hill pond (heathland), Loughton Camp (iron age earthwork eroded by cycling and walking). We believe that the pressure on the ecology of the Forest renders the present urban area incapable of absorbing *any* extra development without serious and irreversible pressure on the SAC.

New developments in this zone cannot be guaranteed not to have an adverse effect on the SAC, as various inspectors have recently ruled. By judgements of the ECJ, improvement, not limited deterioration, of the SAC must be assured, or at least, no adverse effect.

Therefore, we respectfully call on the Corporation of London, and the Essex County Council, as major players in the spatial development of the area, to press for, and for EFDC, as the author of the Local plan, and for the Planning Inspector, as the adjudicator of its lawfulness, to institute an Inner Zone Exclusion Area, where no new dwellings, conversion of existing houses, new places of assembly or entertainment or significant additions thereto, within one mile (1.61KM) of the boundary of the Special Area of Conservation.