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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Tice

Bentfield Conservation Area Appraisal

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 25 August 2014 which was received by Natural England on 25 August 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.

Natural England does not wish to offer any substantive comments in respect of this consultation document, however, other bodies and individuals may make comments that will help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of the environmental value of this area in the decision making process.

Although Natural England does not wish to make any substantive comments, we welcome the reference to open land, open spaces under the Character Analysis paragraphs 1.86 to 1.88.

Biodiversity and the natural environment can lead to various opportunities, not just for wildlife activity and connection, but also health, recreation, contributing to climate change adaptation and improving quality of life. Natural England encourages the Council through its Local Plans and policies to ensure the borough's green infrastructure is designed to deliver multiple functions.

The Council should also look at the fragmentation of open spaces and the linking of them back to paths and other sites. This would protect and enhance green spaces and corridors, as well as providing opportunities to link sites and areas, whilst also offering sustainable transport options through walking and cycling, together with increasing and enhancing the green infrastructure network of the area. It may also help with reducing the gaps in quality as referenced under paragraphs 1.45 to 1.47 above together with the Management Proposals paragraph/section 2.10.

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

David Hammond
Lead Advisor Sustainable
Development and Regulation
For and on behalf of Beds, Essex, Northants, Cambs and Herts Team