

COMMITTEE:	Planning and Licensing Committee
DATE:	1 April 2003
SUBJECT:	Supplementary Planning Guidance: Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
REPORT OF:	Head of Planning
Ward(s):	All
Purpose:	To report back on the outcome of the re-survey of the proposed SNCI at Sovereign Harbour and seek formal adoption of the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.
Contact:	Dinah Elliott, Local Plan Officer Telephone 01323 415251 or internally on extension 5251.
Recommendations:	<p>1. To accept the biodiversity consultant's recommendation in respect of the designated site of nature conservation importance (SNCI) at Sovereign Harbour to include just a section of the eastern beach within the SNCI at the present time, subject to the caveat recommended by the expert panel.</p> <p>2. To agree to recommend that the Council adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Designated Sites of Nature Importance for planning purposes.</p>
1.0	<u>Background</u>

1.1	This Committee authorised consultation on draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in January 2001. The results of this consultation were reported back to this Committee in December 2001. At the December meeting the decision was deferred on two sites for further investigation: Site E1 (Langney Levels) and Site E118 (Sovereign Harbour).	
1.2	In February 2002 a further report was made to this committee on Site E1 (Langney Levels) and a revision to the boundary of the Site of Nature Conservation Importance was agreed, subject to further consultation with the owners of an area of land shown as "Area A". Subsequent consultation with the owners of "Area A" indicated that there was no objection to the inclusion of this area within site E1.	
1.3	This report considers the remaining site deferred for further investigation: Site E118 (Sovereign Harbour) and seeks agreement that the Supplementary Planning Guidance be recommended for adoption for planning purposes.	
2.0	<u>Site E118 (Sovereign Harbour)</u>	
2.1	In June 2002 the east and west beaches of Sovereign Harbour were resurveyed by the biodiversity consultant employed to undertake the Biodiversity Survey of the Borough in Summer 2000. Appendix A is his report. It is his recommendation that only one section of the beach is currently of nature conservation importance. The expert panel overseeing the biodiversity survey have agreed with this recommendation but seek a note to be added to the guidance to the effect that "With appropriate management measures the area of shingle beach to the west of this SNCI, extending as far as the harbour mouth, should recover significant wildlife value and should be reviewed for SNCI status in approximately five years ". It is proposed that the consultant's recommendation should be accepted but with the panel's note added to the guidance.	
3.0	<u>Supplementary Planning Guidance.</u>	
3.1	Provided Committee are satisfied with the outcome of the further investigation at Sovereign Harbour, it is possible to proceed to formally adopt the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance for planning purposes. A copy of the document as proposed for adoption is included as Appendix B.	

3.2	In light of the increasing importance that can be attached to policies and proposals in the emerging Replacement Borough Plan 2001-2011, and its anticipated adoption later this year, it is proposed that the guidance should no longer refer to policy within the adopted Borough Plan 1998. The text has been amended accordingly.	
3.3	The text has also been amended to reflect best practice as set-out in PPG12: Development Plans in respect of the status of the guidance. It is anticipated that all forthcoming supplementary planning guidance will need to reflect this best practice.	
4.0	<u>Consultations</u>	
4.1	This draft SPG was sent to individuals and companies with an interest in one or more of the sites or with an interest in land adjacent to a site of nature conservation importance. In addition letters were sent to 24 interested organisations. The comments received were reported to this Committee in December 2001.	
5.0	<u>Implications</u>	
5.1	There are no human resource, youth or anti-poverty implications as a direct result of this report.	
5.2	Financial Implications: the commitment to re-survey the western beach at Sovereign Harbour can be accommodated within further biodiversity survey work that will be necessary to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to keep under review all matters that are expected to affect the development of the Borough, or the planning of its development. Therefore, there are no direct financial implications stemming from adoption of the Supplementary Planning Guidance.	
5.3	Environmental Implications: maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of the designated sites of nature conservation importance will make a valuable contribution to the Borough's environment.	
5.4	Human Rights Implications: owners of land proposed for SNCI designation were consulted on the proposals and their views were taken into account. Therefore there are not considered to be any human rights implications.	

6.0	<u>Summary</u>	
6.1	This report considers the remaining designated site of nature conservation importance which was deferred for further investigation: Site E118 (Sovereign Harbour) and seeks formal approval to recommend to Council that the Supplementary Planning Guidance be adopted for planning purposes.	
Dinah Elliott Local Plan Officer		
Background Papers: The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows: <i>"Supplementary Planning Guidance: Sites of Nature Conservation Importance"</i> <i>Report to Planning and Licensing Committee: 23 January 2001.</i> <i>"Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance"</i> <i>Report to Planning and Licensing Committee: 11 December 2001.</i> <i>"Sites of Nature Conservation Importance"</i> <i>Report to Planning and Licensing Committee: 12 March 2002.</i> To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.		
(DME/Reports/Pand L-SNCI-1/04/03document reference)		