

**Tamworth Local Plan 2006-2031  
Examination**

**Statement of Common Ground**

**as agreed between**

**Tamworth Borough Council  
and Natural England**

**April 2015**

## Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared jointly between the parties consisting of Tamworth Borough Council (“the Council”) and Natural England.
- 1.2 The Statement sets out the confirmed points of agreement between the Council and Natural England with regard to the submitted Tamworth Local Plan 2006-2031, which will assist the Inspector during the examination of the Plan.

## Background

- 2.1 The Council and Natural England have been working together throughout the preparation of the Plan in respect of the natural environment, in particular the Habitats Regulation Assessment, the impact of Local Plan allocations on sites of biodiversity importance and soil protection/agricultural land.
- 2.2 Natural England (LP043) has maintained an objection to the lack of a policy on soil protection and agricultural land and the Council is proposing to make changes to two policies and supporting text to incorporate reference to these matters.
- 2.3 Natural England (LP044) has maintained concerns about the impact of the Golf Course SUE on the Alvecote Pools SSSI due to potential recreational disturbance, water quality and urban edge effects. The Council has met with Natural England to discuss their concerns and has made changes to Policies HG2 and EN4 to make specific reference to the SSSI. The planning application for the Golf Course SUE has subsequently been submitted and the agreed position is outlined below.

## Agreed matters

### 1. Proposed changes to Policies EN4 and SU5 and supporting text

- 3.1 In response to the Natural England representation the Council is prepared to make modifications to two policies EN4 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and SU5 Pollution, Ground Conditions and Minerals (new text shown in bold):

#### Policy EN4 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

Development will be supported that preserves designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites, **high quality agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a), termed as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land**, maintains the favourable conservation status.....

Supporting text addition to paragraph 6.28:

.....as a consequence of climate change. **If managed in a sustainable way, high quality agricultural land is important for its contribution to the wider benefits of ecosystem services such as food production and biodiversity.**

Policy SU5 Pollution, ground conditions, minerals and soils

.....coal reserves with cross boundary implications.

**When considering proposals for new development on greenfield land, areas of poorer quality land within the site should be developed in preference to higher quality land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land) where possible.**

Supporting text addition, new paragraph after 7.38:

**The countryside outside Tamworth's urban area is predominantly in agricultural use, most of this is lower grade but there are pockets of higher grade land (best and most versatile agricultural land). The safeguarding of valuable agricultural land as a resource for the future will be a consideration when considering applications for development.**

Supporting text addition, new paragraph after 7.40:

**High quality agricultural land is a finite resource which will be lost if it is developed. Retaining land of grades 1, 2 and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification either in food production or as other greenspace will safeguard its contribution towards sustainable food production and biodiversity.**

**2. Tamworth Golf Course Sustainable Urban Extension (Policy HG2)**


3.2 The outline planning application for the Golf Course (application reference number 0088/2015) was submitted in March 2015 and Natural England was consulted. Natural England's response was that there is no objection to the application subject to conditions being attached, consideration being given to sites of local importance, application of standing advice and biodiversity enhancements. Natural England has also expressed support for the extensive on-site green infrastructure indicated in the application. With a valid planning application currently being determined, Natural England is satisfied that Policy HG2 provides sufficient safeguard for the SSSI if alternative proposals are ever put forward for the site providing the following bullet point is retained:

- "Must avoid any impact on the nearby Alvecote Pools Site of Special Scientific Interest and mitigation should ensure that there is no impact due to waste, surface water run-off, predation or increased recreational use of the Alvecote Pools"

3.3 The Council will retain the bullet point in the policy.

**Statement of Common Ground**

Signed on behalf of Tamworth Borough Council		
Name and position	Signature	Date
Robert Mitchell Director		30/4/15

Signed on behalf of Natural England		
Name and position	Signature	Date
Roslyn Deeming Lead Adviser		27/04/2015