**Extraordinary Full Council – 5 October 2022**

**Written question from Mr Huw Jenkins to the Chairman**

Natural England stated that the application to build 474 houses at Westridge Farm is harmful to designated protected sites *'a portion of the designated supporting habitat would be lost under the footprint of the development, whilst the majority would become the SANG [Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space]. The site supports a number of Curlew. I would suggest it is unlikely that the use of the site as SANG would be sympathetic to the ongoing suitability of the site for the qualifying features of the SPA'.*

Notwithstanding Natural England's concern, Westridge remains in DIPS as an allocated site.

Natural England is also concerned that the Case Officer appeared unaware of this when they recommended approval.

Are other protected sites allocated for development in DIPS? If so, what harm will this do to the environment?

# *Response*

*The harm identified in the Westridge Farm application can be appropriately mitigated for and the principle of mitigation has been agreed by Natural England, based on guidance produced by the Solent Waders and Brent Geese Steering Group. Natural England were also unaware of the issue when they agreed and signed off the Appropriate Assessment and raised no objection to the planning application prior to the original Planning Committee meeting.*

*Natural England have, and continue to be, engaged in all the preparation stages of the DIPS and currently have no in principle objections to any of the proposed allocations within it, none of which are on protected sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar, SINC, SSSI, Local Nature Reserve, National Nature Reserve). No other sites are proposed for allocation that form part of the Solent Wader & Brent Geese network.*

*Publishing the draft plan will provide the opportunity for all to make representations on the content of the plan, and for an independent Planning Inspector to consider the merits of the content of the draft plan and the issues raised by the representations received.*