



Friends of Ringwood Forest

Press Release: RSPB Strongly Object To Purple Haze

Dated: 24th May 2012

RSPB Strongly Object To Purple Haze



Purple Haze Site

Weighing it up at Moors Valley..

RSPB has responded with vigour to the soundness of Hampshire County Council's draft Mineral & Waste Plan and find it **unsound** because it is NOT Justified, Effective, Consistent with National Policy or Legal. The Plan would see Moors Valley Country Park reduced by one third, with the loss of Single Track Cycle Ways, Orienteering Courses, Woodlands and Heath. This opinion is at odds with Natural England's approach that mitigation and policy, although not scientifically proven, will be enough.

RSPB remains seriously concerned by the proposed allocation of the Purple Haze site. Records from their last national survey indicate that the site, and the immediate surrounding area, supports a number of nightjar territories and at least one woodlark territory. Of further concern is the potential displacement effect of recreational visitors to sensitive heathland.

RSPB also does not consider that the approach to the consideration of less damaging alternatives is adequate, nor that it is formed on a robust and credible evidence base and therefore the allocation of Purple Haze is not justified. They conclude that the plan has not satisfied the tests of the habitat regulations. In addition there is a strong chance that Purple Haze could fail to demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of a European protected site and therefore they consider the Plan may not be effective, failing a further test of soundness. Ebblake Bog, which adjoins Purple Haze – previously understood *incorrectly* by Hampshire Planning to be protected by a Golf Course - is protected internationally by a RAMSAR designation.

Natural England considers the plan sound, but has said the process could have been improved by a better evidence base, greater discussion and clarification of the weight given to different objectives within the report that screened out other sites from the plan, so driving the choice of site allocations.[1]

TARMAC has suggested, in an additional report to the inquiry, that the Kingsley Quarry Extension offers a better quality of sand than Purple Haze as a percentage of the sand at Purple Haze is too fine and silty to meet industry standards. [2] An industry expert has said that the uneven distribution of land won sand and gravel sites is not in accord with HCC's policy regarding climate change and that it will result in greater distances being travelled by delivery vehicles and therefore greater carbon emissions, transport and cost.



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This would also mean HGVs loaded with sand from Purple Haze delivering to market demands in East Hampshire and London impacting the already congested A31 with slow heavy lorries.[1] [2] A 'steady' supply of soft sand will be jeopardised. Similarly there is no margin or flexibility within HCC's Plan if sites do not come forward or if they don't provide as much mineral as expected. [1]

The report from Quarryplan indicates that a considerable percentage of the sand at Purple Haze does not meet industry standards for construction and sports and would require washing at a washing plant.

Friends of Ringwood Forest (FoRF) Chair, Sarah Sumner, said "We are pleased with RSPB's objection to the plan and are in full agreement with their understanding of the Habitats Assessment which requires a local authority to provide a scientific and a robust evidence base to raise no doubt that there will be any impact to a European protected sites. We cannot understand why Natural England had such a difference of opinion with RSPB, and have requested that our MP asks Natural England for an explanation"

[1] <http://consult.hants.gov.uk/file/2186253> FROM PAGE 160 Soundness Responses NE, RSPB & FoRF

[2] <http://consult.hants.gov.uk/file/2176332>

Additional information for editors:

- "Friends of Ringwood Forest" (FoRF) is the umbrella group with over 2,600 members which runs the No to Purple Haze campaign.
- Purple Haze is a 70 Hectare site linked with Moors Valley Country Park in terms of bike trails, orienteering courses and footpaths. The land is owned by the Somerley Estate and leased to the Forestry Commission. Hampshire County Council's proposal is to turn this site into a quarry and landfill site.
- Moors Valley Country Park is the third most visited park in England and has recently been accredited with the Green Flag award.
- Friends of Ringwood Forest Chair for quotes: Sarah Sumner - email sarahno2ph@hotmail.co.uk tel: 01202 828953
- Documentary evidence published ahead of the HCC M&WP Public Inquiry is available from <http://consult.hants.gov.uk/portal/pdpp/>
- For more information about the campaign please visit www.no2purplehaze.co.uk
- Any pictures available directly from the above website may be used in press publications
- Any queries regarding this press release can be made to the Campaign Office at info@forf.org.uk

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