

Land to the south of Fawley Power Station

7.19 The Fawley Power Station closed in 2013. The 49-hectare brownfield site is within the New Forest District Council Local Plan area, but uniquely it is entirely enclosed by the New Forest National Park. The site is dominated by the former power station building, chimney and associated structures. Re-use of the existing structure appears unlikely to be practicable or viable so the site represents a major brownfield redevelopment opportunity. Redevelopment of the site involves a number of challenges.

- The foreshore, estuarine and coastal areas adjoining the site are internationally and nationally designated for their ecological value (Hythe to Calshot Marshes SSSI, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar)
- Parts of the site are in Zone 3 for flood risk.
- The northern part of the brownfield site area (14.5 hectares) lies within the Health and Safety Executive's middle hazard consultation zone for the Fawley refinery complex and also includes National Grid infrastructure which is expected to remain operational for the next 20 years.
- Land adjoining the site within the National Park is designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Chambers Copse, Tom Tiddler's Ground).

7.30 National planning policy includes a long-standing major development test for National Parks. This confirms that [planning permission should be refused for major developments in these areas except major development should only be permitted](#) in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. The assessment of such proposals should include:

- The need for the development, [including in terms of any national considerations](#), and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, [or meeting the need in some other way](#); and
- Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated

7.31 The major development test rightly sets a very high bar and any proposals should be carefully considered against these criteria. The circumstances around the brownfield Fawley Power Station site are unique. The former Power Station buildings are vast in their scale and visually dominate the relatively flat terrain of the New Forest and the National Park coastline. The redevelopment of the site presents an opportunity to remove these dominant industrial structures and replace them with an attractive development that enhances this part of the National Park. In terms of the major development tests:

- The former Power Station buildings were removed from the boundary of the National Park during its designation process due to the visual impact they have on this part of the New Forest. Redevelopment of the site provides the

opportunity to positively remove this harmful impact, which is in the public interest.

- The comprehensive redevelopment of the site would deliver significant new jobs and services for the communities in the New Forest and adjacent Waterside areas. The site also provides a strategic opportunity for the marine industry.
- The scope for developing outside the National Park is restricted by the Health & Safety Executive exclusion zones around Fawley Refinery and the existing National Grid sub-station. Viability work commissioned by the Authority and New Forest District Council concludes that without some limited development in the National Park, this major brownfield site could only come forward with a very high-density development on the brownfield site outside the National Park – development that in itself would have a detrimental impact on the surrounding National Park.
- Significant landscape, habitat and public access benefits can be delivered over and above the levels required from the development given the single land-ownership in the area. This enables any impacts to be fully mitigated.

7.32 Given these unique, site-specific circumstances, the Authority has concluded that the comprehensive development of the Power Station site to include a limited area of adjoining land within the National Park can be justified against the major development tests. As outlined above, to inform this decision the Authority and New Forest District Council jointly commissioned a detailed viability assessment of a wide range of redevelopment options for the former Power Station site, including focusing all of the built development outside the National Park. This viability assessment concluded that the redevelopment could not come forward without some development on adjacent National Park land. The viability assessment also concluded that the Authority's Local Plan policy restriction on the size of dwellings could not be met in full if the development in the National Park was to be kept to a minimum.

7.33 Consequently the Authority and New Forest District Council have worked together under the 'duty to cooperate' on aligned Local Plan policies to enable the delivery of a comprehensive and coordinated redevelopment of the former Fawley Power station brownfield site and the enhancement of the surrounding area. The comprehensive redevelopment of the site enables the largest brownfield site in the New Forest to deliver around 1,500 homes, together with a package of environmental and community benefits to mitigate or compensate for environmental impacts and achieve an overall net public benefit. These wider benefits to the National Park are, in part, deliverable due to the land ownership in the area. Policy SP25 therefore supports the production of a whole-Estate Plan to demonstrate how the major redevelopment of the Power Station site will be integrated into the wider management of the surrounding National Park in terms of habitats, landscape character and access improvements.

- 7.34 The respective planning policies for the Fawley Power Station site prepared by the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council have been prepared to be applied together. The District Council's Local Plan policy addresses the elements within their Plan-area (including the majority of the housing and employment elements) and the Authority's Local Plan addresses the elements within the National Park.

Policy SP25 – Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station

As part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to regenerating the Fawley Power Station site within the New Forest District Local Plan area, the use of land adjoining the former Power Station site within the National Park to provide habitat mitigation, supporting infrastructure and community facilities (including a primary school) that cannot reasonably be achieved within the District Council area will be supported.

Support is subject to an exceptionally high standard of design and layout being secured across the whole of the Power Station site with clear net positive public benefits being demonstrated in relation to the landscape and setting of the National Park; public access improvements; the provision of suitable greenspace for recreation; and habitat enhancements to ensure net gains in biodiversity. To further demonstrate these benefits, the Authority will require the submission and approval of a whole-Estate Plan to show how the proposals integrate with the wider area.

Proposals for new provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) within the National Park must deliver significant benefits for the landscape character, biodiversity and internationally designated sites of the New Forest. Based on the scale of development proposed in the respective Local Plans, at least 30 hectares of new SANG provision must be provided. The Authority will also require details of how the SANG areas will be managed suitably in perpetuity, to be agreed with Natural England.

As part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the adjacent brownfield Power Station site, adjoining land to the south of the site within the National Park is allocated for around 120 dwellings. Detailed proposals for the site must meet the following site-specific requirements:

- (a) ~~The provision of on-site affordable housing for local people in housing need in accordance with the target of 50% affordable housing; 50% of the dwellings in the Southern Quarter of the development site must be affordable housing to meet local needs;~~
- (b) ~~At least 50% of the dwellings~~ ~~The majority of the dwellings~~ provided within the National Park must be smaller dwellings (less than 100 square metres) to meet the identified local housing need for smaller dwellings;
- (c) Proposals must be implemented as an integral and contiguous part of the redevelopment of the whole Power Station site pursuant to an approved comprehensive redevelopment master plan **and an integrated transport**

strategy for the entire Fawley Power Station site. Housing on the land within the National Park will not be supported in isolation; ~~and~~

- (d) Any loss of the designated SINC must be kept to an essential minimum and compensated through the enhancement of the biodiversity value of the remaining habitat and/~~or~~ the compensatory provision of alternative habitats of equivalent or higher value to achieve a net gain for biodiversity; **and**
- (e) **A site-specific flood risk assessment will be required and measures put in place to address any flooding issues identified to ensure that the development will be safe for its lifetime.**

Prior to the submission of the outline planning application for the site, the applicant must undertake site-specific bird surveys to confirm the status of SPA/Ramsar species at the site (particularly merlin, hen harrier and Dartford Warbler), to inform appropriate mitigation requirements as part of the site-specific development and masterplanning.

To ensure redevelopment is brought forward in a coordinated manner and fully mitigates its impacts, the promoter will prepare a master plan and supporting technical assessments for the entire Fawley Power Station site redevelopment, for submission as part of a redevelopment planning application. Future development phases will be brought forward pursuant to the approved master plan, updated as necessary.

