



Habitats Regulations Assessment

Fylde Local Plan to 2030: Part 1 Preferred Option

Screening Report

Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited

2212959

Firecrest Court
Centre Park
Warrington WA1 1RG
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1925 800 700

Fax: +44 (0)1925 572 462

www.hyderconsulting.com



Fylde Borough Council

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Preferred Option Local Plan

Screening Report

Author Kate Burrows and Jo
Pickard

Handwritten signature of Kate Burrows and Jo Pickard in black ink.

Checker David Hourd and Jon
Davies

Two handwritten signatures in black ink, one for David Hourd and one for Jon Davies.

Approver David Hourd

Handwritten signature of David Hourd in black ink.

Report No 004-UA004283-UE31-02-F

Date 14 June 2013

This report has been prepared for Fylde Borough Council in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment for Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the Preferred Option Local Plan dated 1 May 2013. Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited (2212959) cannot accept any responsibility for any use of or reliance on the contents of this report by any third party.

ABBREVIATIONS

cSAC	Candidate Special Area of Conservation
DPD	Development Plan Documents
FCS	Favourable Conservation Status
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
pSPA	Potential Special Protection Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCI	Sites of Community Importance
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Purpose of this Report.....	1
1.3	Background to Habitats Regulations Assessment	1
1.4	Legislation and Guidance	2
2	INTRODUCTION TO THE LOCAL PLAN	3
2.1	Background and Purpose	3
2.2	Strategic Objectives.....	3
2.3	Local Plan Policies	4
3	THE HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT PROCESS	6
3.1	Stages in HRA.....	6
3.2	Approach to Screening.....	7
3.3	In-Combination Effects	7
3.4	Mitigation Measures	8
4	IDENTIFYING THE EUROPEAN SITES.....	9
4.1	Approach to Identifying Sites.....	9
4.2	European Sites within Fylde	9
4.3	European Sites Outside of Fylde	9
4.4	Conservation Objectives of the European Sites	15
5	SCREENING	16
5.1	Context	16
5.2	Screening Approach taken for the Local Plan	16
5.3	Screening Summary / Recommendations	25
5.4	In-Combination Effects	26
6	CONCLUSION.....	29

Tables

Table 4-1 Summary of European Sites within or partially within Fylde	9
Table 4-2 Potential Impacts and Effects of the Local Plan on European Sites outside Fylde boundaries	10
Table 4-3 Relationship between Mobile Species and European Sites in Fylde and Surrounding Areas	10
Table 4-4 Summary of European sites outside Fylde Boundary	14
Table 5-1 Initial Screening of the Local Plan	18
Table 5-2 Detailed Screening of Fylde Local Plan Policies on European Sites within and outside of Fylde	21

Appendices

- Appendix A
European Sites within and surrounding Fylde
- Appendix B
Conservation Objectives
- Appendix C
Categories taken from Natural England draft guidance

Figures

- Figure 2-1
Map of Fylde Borough
- Figure 4-1
European Sites within and Surrounding Fylde

1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 Introduction

This Screening Report has been prepared by Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited on behalf of Fylde Borough Council as part of the statutory Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Fylde Local Plan to 2030: Part 1 Draft Preferred Options (hereafter referred to as the Fylde Local Plan).

Future development within Fylde up to 2030 will be guided by the plans and policies within the emerging Fylde Local Plan. The Fylde Local Plan will supersede the adopted Fylde Borough Local Plan (as altered) October 2005.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report is the first stage in the HRA process, commonly referred to as Screening. It identifies whether or not the Fylde Local Plan is likely to result in significant effects upon one or more European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or programmes, and subsequently whether or not an Appropriate Assessment will be required. If Appropriate Assessment is required this document will outline its proposed scope. Further details on the HRA stages are provided in Section 3.

1.3 Background to Habitats Regulations Assessment

Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon any Natura 2000 sites (also known as 'European sites'). Within Fylde there are four European sites; however, it is considered there are also a further five sites which form part of the Natura 2000 network that could potentially be affected by the Fylde Local Plan.

Natura 2000 is a network of areas designated to conserve natural habitats and species that are rare, endangered, vulnerable or endemic within the European Community. This includes Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), designated under the Habitats Directive for their habitats and/or species of European importance, and Special Protection Areas (SPA), classified under Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended) for rare, vulnerable and regularly occurring migratory bird species and internationally important wetlands.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process; furthermore, it is Government Policy that sites designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention for their internationally important wetlands (Ramsar sites) and potential SPAs (pSPAs) are also considered.

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into English and Welsh law by means of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2010¹ as amended.

Paragraph 3, Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that:

¹ SI 2010/490

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to paragraph 4 (see below), the competent national authority shall agree to the plan or project only having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public'.

Paragraph 4, Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that:

'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.'

The overarching aim of HRA is to determine, in view of a site's conservation objectives and qualifying interests, whether a plan, either in isolation and/or in combination with other plans, would have a significant adverse effect on the European site. If the Screening (the first stage of the process, see Section 3 for details) concludes that significant adverse effects are likely, then Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken to determine whether there will be adverse effects on a site's integrity.

1.4 Legislation and Guidance

This HRA screening report has drawn upon the following legislation and guidance:

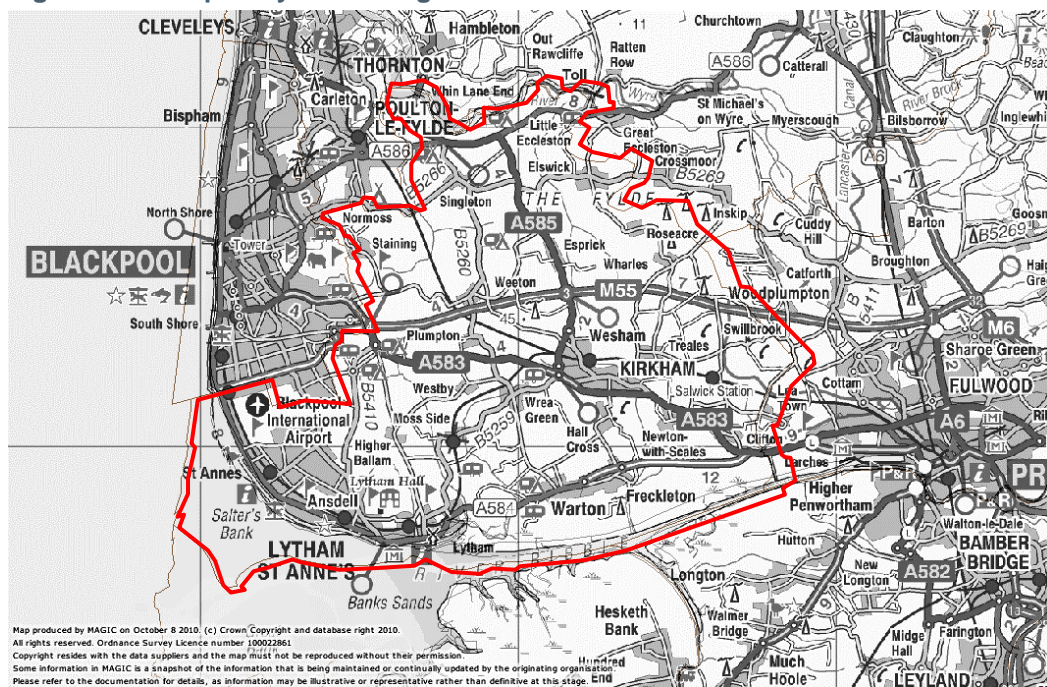
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2010. In 2012, these Regulations were amended to transpose more clearly certain aspects of the Habitats Directive. No fundamental changes to the Regulations were made;
- European Commission, Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- European Commission, Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents.
- Draft Guidance for Plan Making Authorities in Wales - The Appraisal of Plans under the Habitats Directive. David Tyldesley and Associates for Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) Bangor (November 2009, revised April 2010 and September 2012).
- Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE LOCAL PLAN

2.1 Background and Purpose

Fylde is a predominantly rural Borough occupying the southern part of the Fylde peninsula in western Lancashire. It is bounded to the north by Wyre Borough Council and the River Wyre, to the west by the densely populated urban area of Blackpool and the sea, by Preston City Council to the east and by the Ribble Estuary to the south (Figure 2-1).

Figure 2-1 Map of Fylde Borough



The Fylde Local Plan will provide the locally specific part of the development plan for Fylde, whilst the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the national framework against which all development in Fylde will be assessed. Once adopted it will supersede the adopted Fylde Borough Local Plan (as altered) October 2005.

The Fylde Local Plan contains a Vision and Strategy that sets out how the Council would like Fylde to develop over the Plan period. It will not only ensure that new homes, jobs and services required by communities are located in the most sustainable locations across Fylde, but will also provide the framework for delivering the necessary infrastructure, facilities and other development to make this possible.

2.2 Strategic Objectives

In order to achieve the Vision for Fylde, five strategic objectives have been produced. They express the purpose of the Local Plan and are important as they will be used as a measure of the success of the plan in delivering the Vision. These objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: To create sustainable communities

Objective 2: To improve the environment

Objective 3: To make services accessible

Objective 4: To diversify and grow the local economy

Objective 5: To develop socially cohesive, diverse and healthy communities.

2.2.1 Strategic locations for development

Four Strategic Locations for Development (employment and housing) have been identified in the Fylde Local Plan. These are:

Lytham and St Annes: 1,675 dwellings on four sites. Wastewater and/or water supply infrastructure investment is required at all of the sites. In addition, construction cannot begin at two of the sites until after completion of the M55 to St Annes link road. Investment in further primary and secondary school provision will also be required.

Blackpool Periphery: 1,085 dwellings at two mixed use sites and one allocated only for housing. In addition, 36ha of employment land at three sites (including 5ha at Blackpool International Airport). Water infrastructure investment is required at three sites, and improvements at junction 4 on the M55 will be required prior to development.

Warton: 1,160 dwellings on four sites. Issues surrounding water infrastructure, traffic congestion and the provision of primary school places all require addressing at this strategic location.

Kirkham and Wesham: 775 dwellings at two sites and one mixed use site, in addition to 13ha of employment at one mixed site and one site allocated for employment and leisure. Investment in water infrastructure, to deal with traffic congestion and the provision of primary school places will be required at this strategic location.

2.3 Local Plan Policies

There are 33 policies contained within the Fylde Local Plan which relate to the Strategic Objectives above. These are set out under the following chapter headings:

- General Development Policies
- The Fylde Economy
- Provision of Homes in Fylde
- Health and Wellbeing
- Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport
- Sustaining the Environment and Addressing Climate Change
- Preserving and Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment

2.3.1 Policies within the Fylde Local Plan

The policies within the Local Plan are listed below:

General Development Policies

GD1: Settlement Boundaries

GD2: Area of Separation

GD3: Promoting Mixed Use Development

GD4: Large Developed Sites in the Countryside

The Fylde Economy

- EC1: Overall Provision of Employment Land
- EC2: Managing Development of Employment Land
- EC3: The Rural Economy
- EC4: Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres
- EC5: Leisure, Culture and Tourism Development
- EC6: Leisure, Culture and Tourism Accommodation

Provision of Homes in Fylde

- H1: Density, Mix and Design of New Residential Development
- H2: Conversions and Change of Use to Residential
- H3: Affordable Housing
- H4: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's Sites
- H5: Isolated New Homes in the Countryside
- H6: Replacements of, and Extensions to, Existing Dwellings in the Countryside

Health and Wellbeing

- HW1: Health and Wellbeing

Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport

- INF1: Services Accessibility and Infrastructure
- INF2: Developer Contributions
- T1: Strategic Highway Improvements
- T2: Blackpool International Airport
- T3: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice
- T4: Parking Standards

Sustaining the Environment and Addressing Climate Change

- CL1: Flood Alleviation and Water Efficiency
- CL2: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Efficiency
- CL3: Decentralised Energy Networks and District Heating Systems
- CL4: Sustainability Statements

Preserving and Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment

- ENV1: Landscape and Biodiversity
- ENV2: Protecting Existing Open Space and Green Infrastructure
- ENV3: Provision of Open Space and Green Infrastructure
- ENV4: Management and Enhancement of Open Space and Green Infrastructure
- ENV5: Heritage Assets
- ENV6: Good Design in New Development

3 THE HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This section provides an outline of the stages involved in HRA and the specific methods that have been used in preparing this report.

3.1 Stages in HRA

The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

- 1 Screening** is the process which initially identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may have a significant effect on the integrity of the site's qualifying habitats and/or species. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect; if the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice case law to the effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, and adopting the precautionary principle, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.
- 2 Appropriate Assessment** is the detailed consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.
- 3 Assessment of alternative solutions** is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.
- 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** At Stage 4, an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI). If it is, this stage also involves detailed assessment of the compensatory measures needed to protect and maintain the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

3.2 Approach to Screening

This Screening Report takes into account the requirements of the Habitats Directive and relevant guidance produced by David Tyldesley Associates for Natural England² and the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales)³.

The following stages have been completed:

- Identification of all European sites potentially affected (including those outside of the Fylde Local Plan area);
- A review of each site, including the features for which the site is designated, the Conservation Objectives, and an understanding of the current conservation status and the vulnerability of the individual features to threats;
- A review of the policies which have the potential to affect the European sites, and whether the sites are vulnerable to these effects (this has included a categorisation of the potential effects of the Policy, in line with Natural England guidance);
- A consideration of any impacts in combination with other plans or projects;
- Where potential effects are identified, avoidance or mitigation measures have been considered in order to avoid significant effects.

3.3 In-Combination Effects

As outlined in Section 3.1, it is necessary for HRA to consider in-combination effects with other plans and projects. Plans under consideration may range from neighbouring authorities' planning documents down to sector-specific strategic plans on such topics as flood risk. A review has been undertaken of plans and projects with the potential for an in-combination effect with the Fylde Local Plan, and these are listed in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Plans and Projects Considered for In-Combination Effects

Authority	Relevant Plan/Project
Environment Agency	River Wyre Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009)
Environment Agency	Ribble Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009)
Environment Agency	Lune and Wyre Abstraction Licensing Strategy (2013)
United Utilities	Water Resources Management Plan (2009)
Lancashire County Council	Lancashire County Council Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 (2012)
Lancashire County Council	Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development framework Core Strategy (2009)

² Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

³ Draft Guidance for Plan Making Authorities in Wales - The Appraisal of Plans under the Habitats Directive. David Tyldesley and Associates for Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) Bangor (November 2009, revised April 2010 and September 2012).

Authority	Relevant Plan/Project
Wyre Borough Council	Local Plan (adopted 1999)
Blackpool Council	The Blackpool Local Plan 2001 - 2016 (adopted 2006)
Preston City Council, South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Borough Council	Central Lancashire Core Strategy (adopted Preston - 5 July 2012; Chorley - 17 July 2012 and South Ribble - 18 July 2012)
West Lancashire Borough Council	West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2001-2016 (saved policies) (adopted 2006)
Various	North West and North Wales - Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2011)
Blackpool Council	Blackpool Local Transport Plan Strategy 2011 to 2016 (2011)
Fylde and Wyre Borough Council	Safeguarding the line of the M55 Norcross link (the Blue Route) (implementation through Highways Agency)
National Grid	Proposals to upgrade the transmission system – one of the options would come onshore around Blackpool International Airport and underground to a converter station around at junction 4 of the M55, then overground to Penwortham substation
Centrica	Offshore wind turbine development
Dong Energy	Extension of offshore wind turbine development at Walney
Preston City Council	Preston City Council are looking to allocate around 4000 homes to the north west of Preston as part of their emerging sites allocations

It should be noted that in-combination effects only require consideration where the plan or project being assessed has an impact, whether significant or not. A conclusion of 'Zero Effects' negates the possibility of in-combination effects.

3.4 Mitigation Measures

In preparing this report, consideration has been given to potential avoidance and mitigation measures which would serve to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European sites, for example the provision of specific clauses within the strategy that may prevent adverse effects occurring.

4 IDENTIFYING THE EUROPEAN SITES

4.1 Approach to Identifying Sites

Fylde is a predominantly rural Borough occupying the southern part of the Fylde peninsula in western Lancashire. It is bound to the north by Wyre Borough Council and the River Wyre estuary to the north, to the west by the densely-populated urban area of Blackpool and the Irish Sea, by Preston City Council to the east and by the Ribble Estuary to the south.

There are European sites located within and on the Borough boundary which need to be taken into consideration in this assessment. In addition, European sites outside of the Borough may be affected by activities undertaken in Fylde if they are connected through an impact pathway, for example, hydrological links, or, if mobile species (i.e. birds) use land which is functionally linked to a European site, for example for foraging.

Given the Fylde Local Plan can only have a physical effect on the land in certain ways, it was not considered appropriate to identify all European sites within a set distance of the Borough boundary. Therefore, in addition to all sites within the Borough, European sites which may be affected by the Local Plan activities through an identifiable impact pathway have been considered, irrespective of the distance from the Borough.

The following approach to identifying sites to be included within the HRA Screening Report involved:

1. Sites within Fylde: Identify all sites within / partially within Fylde; and
2. Sites outside Fylde: Identify the likely impact pathways of the Local Plan and hence identify whether features of European sites outside of the Borough may be affected by the Local Plan. Give due consideration to the likely distances that mobile species from other European sites would travel to land within Fylde (or indeed to the distances people from Fylde might be likely to travel to a sensitive site outside the Borough).

4.2 European Sites within Fylde

Four European sites have been identified on the Fylde Borough boundary. These are listed in Table 4-1. Figure 4-1 also shows the locations of the European sites.

Table 4-1 Summary of European Sites within or partially within Fylde

Name of Site	Identification Number	Designation
Morecambe Bay	UK9005081	SPA
Morecambe Bay	UK11045	Ramsar Site
Ribble and Alt Estuaries	UK9005103	SPA
Ribble and Alt Estuaries	UK11057	Ramsar Site

4.3 European Sites Outside of Fylde

4.3.1 Impacts and Effects of the Local Plan

The Preferred Option Local Plan was reviewed and, in conjunction with the parallel Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the following potential impact types were identified that may have some effect on European sites and their qualifying species.

Table 4-2 Potential Impacts and Effects of the Local Plan on European Sites outside Fylde boundaries

Potential impacts and effects of the Local Plan	European sites and features potentially affected
Increased disturbance of species through increased recreational pressure as a result of population growth within Fylde.	Overwintering / migratory bird populations of Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar. Breeding populations of marsh harrier, merlin and lesser black-backed gull of Bowland Fells SPA.
Degradation of habitat due to increased recreational pressure as a result of population growth.	Coastal habitats (particularly sand dunes) of Sefton SAC and Morecambe Bay SAC.
Impacts on European sites outside the Borough boundary as a result of changes in air quality from increased traffic and development.	Blanket bog habitats that support the bird population of Bowland Fells SPA.
Direct loss of habitat within Fylde that is functionally linked to a European site outside the Fylde boundary.	Agricultural land used by foraging pink-footed goose, a feature of Martin Mere SPA, Ramsar.
Adverse impact on water quality through pollution of watercourses linked to European sites, by an increase in the number of potential pollution sources in Fylde.	Sefton Coast SAC and Morecambe Bay SAC have both been identified as being hydrologically linked to watercourses within Fylde.
Impacts on groundwater on those European sites that are hydrogeologically linked to aquifers under Fylde, for example through increased water abstraction as a result of development.	A review of aquifers has been undertaken. Much of Fylde is underlain by a Secondary B Aquifer; however, the east of the Borough is underlain by a Principal Aquifer. These are permeable layers capable of supporting water supplies at a local rather than strategic scale, in some cases forming an important source of base flow to rivers or otherwise yielding limited groundwater. Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar is underlain by the same broad aquifer.

Sites Outside Fylde Identified due to Mobile Species

The following mobile species have been identified as potentially using (non-designated) land within Fylde that could be affected by the Local Plan or use watercourses or areas downstream of Fylde which may be affected by hydrogeological changes.

Table 4-3 Relationship between mobile species and European Sites in Fylde and surrounding areas

Species	Relevant information about distribution	European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde	Reason for inclusion or otherwise
Little tern	A strictly coastal species found around the UK coastline at suitable	Morecambe Bay SPA within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA is already included.

Species	Relevant information about distribution	European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde	Reason for inclusion or otherwise
	breeding beaches.		
Herring Gull	Resident bird, found in habitats around coasts and inland around rubbish tips, fields, large reservoirs and lakes.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site in Fylde	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Resident bird, found on coastlines in summer and on some inland high moors.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde. Bowland Fells SPA outside the Borough boundary.	Features for which the Bowland Fells SPA is designated have potential to use land within Fylde.
Ringed Plover	Largely resident bird, that breeds on beaches around the coast, but has also now breeding inland in sand and gravel pits and former industrial sites. Nesting on the ground in open areas with little or no plant growth.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Golden Plover	Lowland fields.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Sanderling	Largely a winter visitor and passage migrant. Habitats include long, sandy beaches on the coast.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Curlew	Winter occurrence in coastal areas.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Dunlin	Coastal areas.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Grey Plover	Found only along coasts, preferring large muddy and sandy estuaries.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Knot	Many knots use UK estuaries as feeding	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and

Species	Relevant information about distribution	European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde	Reason for inclusion or otherwise
	grounds in winter, and therefore the population is vulnerable to any changes such as barrages, sea-level rises and human disturbance. Large numbers of birds visit the UK in winter from their Arctic breeding grounds.	Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Sandwich Tern	Coastal habitats – i.e. sandy seacoasts. Breed in dense colonies on coasts and islands and inland on suitable large freshwater lakes close to the coast,	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Pink-footed Goose	Large numbers of birds spend the winter in the UK on large estuaries or on surrounding farmland where birds go in the day to feed.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde. Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site outside of Fylde.	Features for which the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar is designated have potential to use land within Fylde.
Pintail	Pintails occur on sheltered coasts and estuaries over winter.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde. Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site outside of Fylde.	Features for which the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar is designated have potential to use land within Fylde.
Redshank	During largely seen on estuaries and coastal lagoons.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Shelduck	Common around coastlines where it frequents salt marshes and estuaries. Can also be found around inland waters such as reservoirs and gravel workings.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Turnstone	Found all around the UK coastline. Likes rocky shores as well as sandy and muddy ones. Particularly likes feeding on rocks covered with seaweed, and will feed	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site are already included.

Species	Relevant information about distribution	European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde	Reason for inclusion or otherwise
	along seawalls and jetties.		
Great cormorant	Found around the UK coastline on rocky shores, coastal lagoons and estuaries, it is increasingly being seen inland at reservoirs, lakes and gravel pits.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.
Common eider	Coastal areas.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.
Oystercatcher	Most UK birds spend the winter on the coast.	Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Great crested grebe	Found along coasts in winter.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.
Whooper swan	Estuaries and wetlands for winter roosts.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site both within Fylde. Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site outside Fylde.	Features for which the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar is designated have potential to use land within Fylde.
Bewick's swan / Tundra swan	Wintering bird, favoured lakes, ponds and rivers along with estuaries.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site within Fylde. Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site outside Fylde.	Features for which the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar is designated have potential to use land within Fylde.
Wigeon	Wintering bird, large numbers found on the coast.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site) and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde. Martin Mere Ramsar site outside Fylde.	Features for which the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar is designated have potential to use land within Fylde.
Goldeneye	Wintering bird in the area found on lakes, large rivers and sheltered coasts.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.
Red-breasted merganser	UK birds start to flock on the coast from July, reaching a peak in December.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.
Northern lapwing	In the breeding season prefer spring sown cereals, root crops,	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.

Species	Relevant information about distribution	European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde	Reason for inclusion or otherwise
	permanent unimproved pasture, meadows and fallow fields. They can also be found on wetlands with short vegetation. In winter they flock on pasture and ploughed fields.		
Bar-tailed godwit	Largest numbers occur on large estuaries – wintering bird.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site, Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site all within Fylde.	Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Black-tailed godwit	Estuaries and coastal lagoons though they also visit wetland sites inland.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site both within Fylde.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Teal	In winter birds congregate in low-lying wetlands.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site both within Fylde.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.
Common tern	Breeds along coasts with shingle beaches and rocky islands, on rivers with shingle bars, and at inland gravel pits and reservoirs, feeding along rivers and over freshwater.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA within Fylde.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA is already included.
Ruff	Grassy tundra, lakes, farmland.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA in Fylde.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA is already included.

4.3.2 Relevant European Sites Outside of Fylde

As a result of Table 4-1, the following European designated sites outside Fylde will be considered further in this Screening Report:

Table 4-4 Summary of European Sites outside Fylde boundary

Name of Site	Identification Number	Designation
Morecambe Bay	UK 0013027	SAC
Sefton Coast	UK 0013076	SAC
Martin Mere	UK 9005111	SPA
Martin Mere	UK 11039	Ramsar Site
Bowland Fells	UK 9005151	SPA

Appendix A provides further information regarding the European sites including current conservation status, threats and the results of the most recent condition assessments.

4.4 Conservation Objectives of the European Sites

Under Regulation 35(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 the appropriate statutory nature conservation body (in this case Natural England) has a duty to communicate the conservation objectives for a European site to the relevant/competent authority responsible for that site. The information provided under Regulation 35 must also include advice on any operations which may cause deterioration of the features for which the site is designated.

The conservation objectives for a European site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- Its natural range and the area it covers within that range are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and
- Conservation status of typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Guidance from the European Commission⁴ indicates that the Habitats Directive intends FCS to be applied at the level of an individual site, as well as to habitats and species across their European range. Therefore, in order to properly express the aims of the Habitats Directive for an individual site, the conservation objectives for a site are essentially to maintain (or restore) the habitats and species of the site at (or to) FCS.

Conservation Objectives for Morecambe Bay SPA / Ramsar site / SAC, Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site and Martin Mere SPA / Ramsar site, Bowland Fells SPA, Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site were obtained from Natural England's website and are provided in Appendix B⁵.

⁴ Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

⁵<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/sac/northwest.aspx>

5 SCREENING

5.1 Context

The Fylde Local Plan contains a vision and strategy that sets out how the Council would like Fylde to develop over the Plan period. It seeks to not only ensure that new homes, jobs and services required by communities are located in the most sustainable locations, but also that the framework for delivering the necessary infrastructure, facilities and other development will be provided to make this possible.

5.2 Screening Approach taken for the Local Plan

The screening process has been split into two distinct stages, initial screening and detailed screening. The initial screening stage (5.2.1 and Table 5-1, below) has provided a high level screening 'matrix style' assessment to determine if the Fylde Local Plan could possibly lead to significant adverse effects on European sites identified in Tables 4-1 and 4-2. The purpose of this was to eliminate those policies from the assessment which very clearly would not affect European sites in order to focus on those policies where there was potential for effects or uncertainty about potential effects. These policies were generally those that could not lead to 'direct development', or could have no impact pathway to any of the European sites identified. The policies that were identified as having potential impacts on the European sites or those policies for which impacts were uncertain, were carried forward into a more detailed screening assessment.

When identifying the elements of the Local Plan that could potentially affect European sites, it was important to focus upon those elements that would have the greatest likelihood of impacting the sites. Therefore, the definition of significance identified in Section 2.3 was very important for the detailed screening.

The potential effects considered included the following:

- Direct habitat and species loss;
- Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution and increased recreational pressure;
- Loss of habitat functionally linked to a European site (i.e. used by overwintering birds for foraging);
- Disturbance to species through increased recreational activity, during construction and operational stages;
- Hydrological changes and water pollution.

The Fylde Local Plan is intended to be read as a single document rather than a series of separate policies, and has been assessed as such. Proposals in one area of the Local Plan may mitigate potentially damaging activities promoted in another area and should be understood in the wider context of the Plan's aims and purposes.

The sections below outline the initial and detailed screening of the Fylde Local Plan, respectively.

5.2.1 Initial Screening of the Local Plan Policies

The initial screening of the Fylde Local Plan is presented in Table 5-1 below.

The policies within the sub-headings were initially examined to determine their need for further detailed assessment. The notations below were used to indicate if further detailed assessment is required:

- ✓ Further detailed assessment is required to determine the nature of effects on the European site.
- X No further assessment is required as no effects are predicted on the European site.

Table 5-1 Initial Screening of the Local Plan

European Sites	National, Regional and Sub-regional Policy	Spatial Development Framework	Strategic Locations	General Development Policies	Economy	Homes	Health and Wellbeing	Infrastructure, Services Provision and Transport	Environment	Preserving and Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment
Morecambe Bay SPA	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Morecambe Bay Ramsar	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Morecambe Bay SAC	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Sefton Coast SAC	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Martin Mere SPA	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Martin Mere Ramsar	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Bowland Fells SPA	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X
Comments	Policy NP1 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and does not lead directly to any impacts on European sites.	Policy SD1 provides the framework against which development in the Borough will be assessed. Therefore there are potential impacts on European sites as a result of the implementation of this Policy.	Policies SL1, SL2, SL3 and SL4 lead to development of housing and employment that could have impacts on the European sites through increased recreational pressure leading to degradation of habitats and disturbance of species. In addition, the loss of functionally-linked land to European sites outside of Fylde boundary.	Policies GD1 GD2, GD3 relate to issues such as settlement boundaries and maintaining an area of separation between settlements. There is no impact pathway from the implementation of these policies to the European sites. However, Policy GD4 concerns the redevelopment of large developed sites in the countryside. Such development has the potential to affect European sites.	Policy EC1 concerns the overall provision of employment land, the development of which may lead to impacts on European sites. Policy EC5 and EC6 relate to the promotion of leisure and tourism activities around the Ribble Estuary, which could impact on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar. The implementation of policies EC2 (managing development of employment land), EC3 (support for the rural economy) and EC4 (maintaining vibrant town and local centres) will not result in any impacts on the European sites.	Policies H1 to H6 relate to the design of housing developments, change of use, affordable housing, gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites, isolated new homes in the countryside and replacements and extensions to existing dwellings in the countryside. None of these policies are anticipated to have any effects on European sites.	Policy HW1 concerns the reduction of health inequalities through the integration of public health principles and planning. The implementation of this Policy is not expected to have any implications for European sites.	Policy INF1 relates to the provision of new infrastructure in relation to new developments. Construction of new infrastructure may have potential impacts on European sites. Policy INF2 concerns developer contributions to infrastructure development and has no direct impact on European sites. Policy T1 deals with strategic highway improvements including new highways. These have the potential to adversely affect the European sites. Further development of Blackpool International Airport (Policy T2) may have the potential to affect European sites. Policy T3 relates to enhancing sustainable transport choice and T4 parking standards, which will have no adverse impact on the European sites.	Policy CL1 concerns flood alleviation and water efficiency with no predicted impacts on any European sites. Policy CL2 relates to construction of renewable energy developments which have the potential to adversely impact on those European sites that are designated for mobile species such as migratory birds. Policy CL3 promotes small scale decentralised energy networks, and CL4 concerns sustainability statements. Neither of these policies is anticipated to have adverse impacts on the European sites.	Policy ENV1 provides for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Policies ENV2, 3 and 4 are concerned with the provision of open space and green infrastructure, whereas policies ENV5 relates to heritage assets and ENV6 to good design in new development. The implementation of these policies is considered to have no adverse impacts and possibly some beneficial effects on the European sites.

Following the initial screening of the Fylde Local Plan, policies contained within four of the sub-headings in the plan can be screened out completely from further assessment, on the basis that no identifiable impact pathway exists linking the policies with the European Sites and/or because there will be no foreseeable adverse impact on European sites through Policy implementation. In addition, several further policies under each of the sub-headings have been screened out of further assessment on a similar justification.

The policies screened out of further assessment area as follows:

National, Regional and Sub-regional Policy: NP1

General Development Policies: GD1, GD2 and GD3

The Fylde Economy: EC2, EC3 and EC4

Provision of Homes in Fylde: H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6

Health and Wellbeing: HW1

Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport: T3 and T4

Sustaining the Environment and Addressing Climate Change: CL1, CL3 and CL4

Preserving and Enhancing the Built Environment: ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV4, ENV5 and ENV 6.

Table 5-1 illustrates which policies under each chapter have been identified for further detailed screening assessment.

5.2.2 Detailed Screening of the Local Plan Policies

The detailed screening of the Local Plan policies in relation to the European Sites is presented in Table 5-2 below and is based on the findings of the initial screening exercise.

Policies have been selected for further screening on the basis that there may be potential impacts on European Sites if they are implemented without any mitigation or avoidance measures. This has also included a categorisation of the potential effects in line with Natural England Guidance.⁶ Further information regarding this assessment is found in Appendix C.

An assessment of possible mitigation or avoidance measures and the potential effects of the Policy in combination with other plans or projects has also been undertaken.

The policies selected for detailed screening are as follows:

Spatial Development Framework: SD1

General Development Policies: GD4

Strategic Locations for Development: SL1, SL2, SL3 and SL4

The Fylde Economy: EC1, EC5 and EC5

⁶ Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport: INF1, T1 and T2

Sustaining the Environment and Addressing Climate Change: CL2

Local Plan policies were examined in detail to determine the need for Appropriate Assessment.

In many cases, it is considered that the need for Appropriate Assessment of the final Policy may be avoided with the strengthening of the existing policies to include specific references to European sites and caveats regarding HRA through the development process.

Table 5-2 Detailed Screening of Fylde Local Plan Policies on European Sites within and outside of Fylde

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category *	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required?
<p>Spatial Development Framework SD1: This relates to the strategic locations for development and provides the framework against which development in the Borough will be assessed. This Policy aims to focus development in the most accessible and sustainable locations, i.e. around existing population centres.</p>	<p>This Policy is implemented through later policies in the Local Plan, in this case the Strategic Locations for Development policies. Therefore the implementation of the Policy itself would have no effect as the Strategic Locations for Development policies are more detailed and it is more appropriate to assess them for the potential effects on European sites (i.e. project-level HRA of the four sites).</p>	<p>Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Morecambe Bay SAC Sefton Coast SAC Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar Bowland Fells SPA</p>	E1	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifies a requirement to plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries. A strengthening of this strategic Policy to include reference to European sites and biodiversity may help avoid any significant effects.</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the Policy is implemented. An assessment of the Strategic Locations for Development policies is considered appropriate.</p>
<p>General Development Policies: The Policy below relates specifically to the redevelopment of sites in the countryside that are already developed GD4 Large Developed Sites in the Countryside</p>	<p>The potential impacts of this Policy will relate to how it is implemented through the development management process. Impacts on European sites outside Fylde are unlikely to be significant, given that there will be no loss of agricultural land associated with this Policy, and there should not be any additional road building or major infrastructure expenditure as a result of any proposals to redevelop these areas. Potential impacts on Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar relate to potential increases in pollution incidents if the sites are hydrologically-linked to proposed development areas and also an increase in recreational pressure.</p>	<p>Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar</p>	F	<p>May be appropriate to include a caveat relating to proposals being in accordance with Local Plan policies within Policy GD4 itself, and include a reference to European sites within point (a).</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the Policy is implemented. However, if the mitigation measures proposed are included in the final Policy, it is considered that there will be no requirement for Appropriate Assessment.</p>
<p>Strategic Locations for Development : The policies listed below identify the site-specific detail of where development is to be located within Fylde and, as the impacts are considered to be of a similar type, they have been considered together. SL1 Lytham and St Annes Strategic Location for Development SL2 Blackpool Periphery Strategic Location for Development SL3 Warton Strategic Location for Development SL4 Kirkham and Wesham Strategic Location for Development</p>	<p>The fact that the strategic locations for development are focussed towards existing areas of development is welcomed in line with sustainable development principles. The significance of impacts of development at these strategic locations is likely to be greater the closer the proposed development is to the European Site. For example, Policy SL2 includes a proposed allocation for 275 dwellings adjacent to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar. Potential impacts include increased disturbance (during construction) of any birds using adjacent designated habitats and also disturbance through increased recreational pressure when the development is complete. The southern extent of Morecambe Bay SAC/ SPA/Ramsar is situated on the northern boundary of the Borough and Sefton Coast SAC is located approximately 9.3km to the south. Although the potential exists for increased disturbance through a rise in visitor pressure as the housing developments are progressively completed, the risk is low that residents in Fylde will choose to visit the habitats of Morecambe Bay SAC, Sefton Coast SAC and/or the Bowland Fells SPA in preference to more local destinations. Similarly, it is not considered that increased visitor pressure will adversely affect Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar as this site is effectively managed by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Notwithstanding this, development in these strategic locations (in particular, Policy SL2, which includes an allocation of 20ha for mixed use development at Whyndyke Farm) does have the potential to adversely affect land which may be functionally linked to European Sites (e.g. agricultural land used by foraging pink-footed geese, a feature of Morecambe Bay SPA,</p>	<p>Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar Morecambe Bay SAC Sefton Coast SAC Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar Bowland Fells SPA</p>	C2	<p>Strengthening of these policies to include a caveat that prevents potentially damaging proposals from occurring (unless the potential effects on European sites have been resolved) may avoid the need to take the Policy to Appropriate Assessment. The policies should also state that project-specific HRA of the four strategic sites will be required, and that these HRAs will need to demonstrate that there will be no significant effect upon European Sites before they can be granted consent. A cross reference to Policy ENV1 and a strengthening of this Policy to make explicit reference to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, and its importance, particularly with regard to development of areas of open coastline, is also recommended.</p>	<p>Potential significant indirect effects cannot be ruled out at this stage, because these policies provide for development that is either very close to a European site (SL2 due to the proximity of the former Pontin's centre to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar) and/or may be ecologically or hydrologically connected to European sites, and may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures. Inclusion of suggested mitigation/avoidance measures may avoid the need to take the final Policy to Appropriate Assessment.</p>

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category *	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required?
	<p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Martin Mere SPA). Water quality may also be affected where there are hydrological links (to Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar) due to increased pollution from more development, although this is unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>It is considered that there will be no adverse impacts on groundwater links between Fylde and European Sites (Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar) as a result of increased abstraction for drinking water because all drinking water is sourced from outside the Borough, in the Lake District, with no impact pathway to the sites.</p> <p>Potential adverse impacts on air quality as a result of increased population and road traffic may affect habitats that are sensitive to increased nitrogen deposition. The Bowland Fells SPA, located approximately 15km to the north-east of Fylde, supports extensive blanket bog which provides suitable habitat for a diverse range of upland breeding birds. As the prevailing winds are from a south westerly direction, there is a risk that any increases in air pollution could eventually deposit on the Bowland Fells SPA. However, this is considered to be negligible given the distances involved.</p>				
<p>The Fylde Economy: EC1 Overall Provision of Employment Land</p>	<p>This Policy is implemented through other policies in the Local Plan, in this case the Strategic Locations for Development policies. Therefore, the implementation of the Policy itself would have no effect, as the Strategic Locations for Development policies are more detailed and it is more appropriate to assess them for the potential effects on European sites (see above).</p>	<p>Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar Morecambe Bay SAC Sefton Coast SAC Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar Bowland Fells SPA</p>	<p>E1</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifies a requirement to plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries. A strengthening of this strategic Policy to include reference to European sites and biodiversity may help avoid any significant effects.</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the Policy is implemented. An assessment of the Strategic Locations for Development policies is considered appropriate (see above).</p>
<p>The Fylde Economy: Both of the policies below promote tourism and recreational development in Lytham and St Annes. In addition, there is a reference to the improvement and enhancement of coastal defences. EC5 Leisure, Culture and Tourism Development EC6 Leisure, Culture and Tourism Accommodation</p>	<p>Potential impacts on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar relate to an increase in disturbance of bird species using the adjacent designated habitats, through increased visitor pressure and also a potential decline in water quality from more frequent pollution incidents.</p> <p>Improved coastal defences may exacerbate coastal squeeze and reduce the availability of foraging/roosting habitat for overwintering birds.</p>	<p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar</p>	<p>C2</p>	<p>Strengthening of these policies to include a caveat that prevents potentially damaging proposals from occurring (unless the potential effects on European sites have been resolved) may avoid the need to take the Policy to Appropriate Assessment. The policies should also state that project-specific HRA of any tourism/coastal defence development near to the SPA will be required, and that these HRAs will need to demonstrate that there will be no significant effect upon European Sites before they can be granted consent.</p> <p>A cross reference to Policy ENV1 and a strengthening of this Policy to make explicit reference to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, and its importance, particularly with regard to development of areas of open coastline, is also recommended.</p>	<p>Potential for significant indirect effects at this stage as these policies provide for development that is very close to a European site and may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures.</p> <p>Inclusion of suggested mitigation/avoidance measures may avoid the need to take the final Policy to Appropriate Assessment.</p>

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category *	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required?
<p>Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport: INF1 Service Accessibility and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Potential impacts of the implementation of Policy INF1 relate to the provision of water infrastructure, particularly the capacity of the combined sewer network in relation to the strategic locations for development. Impacts on water quality as a result of increased pollution from more development can adversely affect the habitats and species that support the qualifying bird features of both the Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, although this is unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>The construction of a new secondary school and community facilities within strategic locations for development is welcomed in line with sustainable development principles. However, the potential impacts of construction and operation on European sites will depend on how the Policy is implemented and may require a lower tier assessment (i.e. planning application be subject to an HRA).</p>	<p>Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar</p>	<p>F</p>	<p>A cross-reference to Policy CL1 should be included within Policy INF1.</p> <p>Strengthening of these policies to include a caveat that prevents potentially damaging proposals from occurring (unless the potential effects on European sites have been resolved) may avoid the need to take the Policy to Appropriate Assessment. The Policy should also state that project-specific HRA of any major infrastructure development near to the SPA/Ramsar sites will be required, and that these HRAs will need to demonstrate that there will be no significant effect on the qualifying features of these sites before they can be granted consent.</p> <p>Policy INF2 concerns developer contributions to infrastructure provision and, as such, the implementation of this Policy will have no direct impact on any European site. Notwithstanding this, the Policy could be strengthened by including within it a reference to ENV1 (in addition to ENV3 and ENV4) as this Policy relates to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the Policy is implemented.</p> <p>Inclusion of suggested mitigation/avoidance measures may avoid the need to take the final Policy to Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>In addition, it is recommended that Policy INF2 be strengthened as described.</p>
<p>Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport: This Policy relates to the support for three strategic highway improvements as described T1 Strategic Highway Improvements a) M55 to Norcross link road b) M55 to Heyhouses link road c) M55 junction 2 and Preston Western Distributor</p>	<p>The potential impacts as a result of new road construction to facilitate new development are closely linked to the impacts of the new development.</p> <p>Land-take has the potential to adversely affect land which may be functionally linked to European Sites (e.g. agricultural land used by foraging pink-footed geese, a feature of Morecambe Bay SPA, Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Martin Mere SPA).</p> <p>Water quality may also be affected where there are hydrological links (to Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar) due to increased polluted surface water run-off from roads, although this is very unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>Increases in recreational pressure as a result of road construction making it easier to reach the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar may also adversely affect the birds through increased disturbance. It follows that improved transport links could also have an impact on European sites further away, such as Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, Morecambe Bay SAC and Sefton Coast SAC. However these impacts are due more to a rise in population than as a direct result of road construction (see SD1-4).</p> <p>Potential adverse impacts on air quality as a result of increased population and road traffic may affect habitats that are sensitive to increased nitrogen deposition. The Bowland Fells SPA supports extensive blanket bog which provides suitable habitat for a diverse range of upland breeding birds. As the prevailing winds are from a south westerly direction, there is a risk that any increases in air pollution could eventually deposit on the Bowland Fells SPA. However, this is considered to be negligible given the distances involved.</p>	<p>Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Bowland Fells SPA</p>	<p>F</p>	<p>Strengthening of this Policy to include a caveat that prevents potentially damaging proposals from occurring (unless the potential effects on European sites have been resolved) may avoid the need to take the final Policy to Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>The Policy should also state that project-specific HRA of any major road development near to the SPA/Ramsar sites will be required, and that these HRAs will need to demonstrate that there will be no significant effect on the qualifying features of these sites before they can be granted consent.</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the Policy is implemented through the development process.</p> <p>Inclusion of suggested mitigation/avoidance measures may avoid the need to take the final Policy to Appropriate Assessment.</p>

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category *	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required?
<p>Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport: This Policy relates to future development of the airport T2 Blackpool International Airport</p>	<p>The proximity of Blackpool International Airport to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar means that any further development at this location has the potential to increase disturbance of birds using the designated habitats adjacent to the site, particularly if the proposals result in increased air traffic. An HRA of future development proposals is likely to be required.</p>	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar	C2	<p>Strengthening of this Policy to include a caveat that prevents potentially damaging proposals from occurring (unless the potential effects on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar have been resolved) may avoid the need to take the Policy to Appropriate Assessment. The Policy should also state that project-specific HRA of any future development of the airport will be required, and that this will need to demonstrate that there will be no significant effect on the qualifying features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar before it can be granted consent.</p>	<p>Likely significant effects at this stage as this Policy provides for development that is very close to a European site and may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures. Inclusion of suggested mitigation/ avoidance measures may avoid the need to take the final Policy to Appropriate Assessment.</p>
<p>Sustaining the Environment and Addressing Climate Change: This Policy relates to the significant potential for renewable energy generation in Fylde CL2 Renewable and Low Energy Carbon Generation</p>	<p>Potential adverse impacts on the migratory routes of birds that are a feature of Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar, Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar would need to be taken into account as individual wind farm development proposals are brought forward. Impacts could also result from direct loss of any functionally linked land used by the birds of these sites. HRAs of future development proposals are likely to be required.</p>	<p>Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar</p>	F	<p>Strengthening of this Policy to include a caveat that prevents potentially damaging proposals from occurring (unless the potential effects on European sites have been resolved) may avoid the need to take the final Policy to Appropriate Assessment. The Policy should also state that project-specific HRA of any wind farm developments near to the SPA/Ramsar sites will be required, and that these HRAs will need to demonstrate that there will be no significant effect on the qualifying features of these sites before they can be granted consent.</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the Policy is implemented. However, if with the mitigation measures proposed are included in the final Policy, it is considered that there will be no requirement for Appropriate Assessment.</p>

* see Appendix C for definition of the categories

5.3 Screening Summary / Recommendations

Following the initial screening of the Fylde Local Plan, a number of policies were screened out completely from further assessment on the basis either of no identifiable impact pathway linking the policies with the European Sites or that there will be no foreseeable adverse impact on European sites through Policy implementation.

Policies were selected for further (detailed) screening on the basis that there may be potential impacts on European Sites if they are implemented without any mitigation or avoidance measures. This has also included a categorisation of the potential effects in line with Natural England Guidance.⁷

Potential impacts identified included:

- Direct habitat and species loss;
- Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution and increased recreational pressure;
- Loss of habitat functionally linked to a European site (i.e. used by overwintering birds for foraging);
- Disturbance to species through increased recreational activity, construction and operational stages;
- Hydrological changes and water pollution.

The detailed screening of the Fylde Local Plan policies (Table 5-2) has identified that the potential exists for significant indirect effects on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and the Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar. Those effects with the potential to be significant are disturbance effects on birds (resulting from construction noise and increased visitor pressure associated with new housing, development of Blackpool International Airport, etc), possible mortality associated with wind farm developments, and the potential loss of important foraging habitat.

However, these effects are unlikely to be substantial and could only realistically be significant if combined with the pressures and threats exerted by other plans (see Section 5.4, below). It is considered that any air quality, water quality or hydrological effects are very unlikely to be significant, given the distance between the European Sites and the majority of the developments likely to arise from the Fylde Local Plan policies, as well as the standard mitigation measures that are required of such developments (such as pollution prevention).

In most cases, therefore, it is considered that the need for Appropriate Assessment of the final Policy may be avoided with the strengthening of the existing policies to include specific references to European sites and caveats regarding project-specific HRA through the development process. These will provide a further 'safety net' to help ensure that significant damage to European Sites is avoided.

⁷ Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

It is therefore recommended that the final Local Plan policies are strengthened in line with the recommendations included in the 'Avoidance and Mitigation' column in Table 5-2. As an added control, it is also recommended that the Local Plan includes text that ensures project-level HRA Screening is undertaken (if required) prior to development being undertaken that may have impacts on European sites (this especially applies to the four strategic sites). It should also be ensured that consent for any development should only be granted if the project-level HRA is able to demonstrate that adverse effects will not occur on the designation and its qualifying habitats / species.

5.4 In-Combination Effects

The HRA needs to consider not only the 'screened in' policies within the Fylde Local Plan that may lead to significant impacts upon European sites on their own, but also those that may have a significant impact in combination with other plans and projects within the local area. Table 3-1 outlines relevant plans and projects that were considered in-combination with the Fylde Local Plan.

Only the effects of other plans or projects which (like those of the plan under consideration here) alone would not be likely to be significant, need to be included in the in-combination assessment. If the effects of other plans or projects will already be significant on their own, they are not added to those associated with the Fylde Local Plan.

The detailed screening exercise has identified that the potential exists for indirect effects on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and the Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar associated with various elements of the Fylde Local Plan. Those effects with the potential to be significant are disturbance effects on birds, possible mortality associated with wind farm developments, and the potential loss of important foraging habitat. However, it is considered unlikely that these would have a significant effect upon the integrity of these European Sites except in combination with other developments.

To be relevant to the *in-combination* assessment, the residual effects of other plans or projects will need to either make the unlikely effects of the Fylde Local Plan likely, or insignificant effects of the plan significant, or both. An assessment has therefore been made of the 'other' plans and projects listed in Table 3-1 with a view to determining whether or not they would result in impacts which, in combination with the policies set out in the Fylde Local Plan could lead to significant disturbance, mortality or loss of foraging habitat for the birds associated with the two SPAs mentioned above.

Of the plans reviewed, Table 5-3 illustrates the plans/projects that have been identified as potentially having an in-combination effect.

Plan/project	Potential effect of plan/Policy	Conclusion
Ribble Catchment Flood Management Plan Environment Agency (2009)	Assesses the flood risk of the Ribble around the Lytham and St Annes area as relatively low and promotes the exploration of opportunities for habitat creation schemes adjacent to the River Ribble and estuary to provide some flood risk management benefits.	No adverse impacts predicted in combination with any proposals to improve coastal defences, as this plan promotes policies that should have a positive impact on the SPA/Ramsar through habitat creation schemes.
Lancashire County Council Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 Lancashire County Council (2012)	Priority 5 focuses on improving access into areas of economic growth and regeneration through, amongst other things, infrastructure investment in the Warton and M55	This plan promotes the same scheme as within Policy T1 of the Fylde Local Plan. Implementation of Policy T1 is how the Local Transport Plan

Plan/project	Potential effect of plan/Policy	Conclusion
	junction 4 area. Land-take has the potential to adversely affect land which may be functionally linked to European Sites. Increases in recreational pressure (as a result of road construction making it easier to reach the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar) may also adversely affect the birds through increased disturbance.	policies are also realised. Therefore, providing Policy T1 is strengthened in line with the recommendations in Table 5-2, there should be no significant in-combination impacts.
Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 (adopted 2006)	Policy DE1 concerns the promotion of Blackpool Business Park adjacent to Blackpool International Airport. The proximity of Blackpool International Airport to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar means that any further development at this location has the potential to increase disturbance of birds using the designated habitats adjacent to the site. This Policy may have in-combination impacts with Policy T2 (Blackpool International Airport) and Policy SL2 (Blackpool strategic location for development) of the Fylde Local Plan.	The in-combination impacts are currently unknown. However, providing policies T2 and SL2 are strengthened in line with the recommendations, and assuming any specific proposals being brought forward are subject to project level HRA, it is considered that any in-combination impacts are likely to be insignificant.
Central Lancashire Core Strategy (adopted July 2012)	Policies associated with the location of growth, housing development, economic development, retail development and leisure development were identified in the revised HRA Screening Report undertaken of the Core Strategy (March 2011) as potentially having adverse impacts on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar	The 2011 HRA Screening Report concluded that there would be no significant effects from any of the policies due to appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures, or because they did not lead directly to development. As a result, it is considered that there will be no significant adverse in-combination impacts with policies contained within the Fylde Local Plan
Blackpool Local Transport Strategy 2011 to 2016 (2011)	The Strategy promotes the reversal of the recent decline in use of Blackpool International Airport. The proximity of the airport to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar means that any further development at this location has the potential to increase disturbance of birds using the designated habitats adjacent to the site, particularly if the development results in an increase in passenger numbers. This Policy may have in-combination impacts with Policy T2 (Blackpool International Airport).	The in-combination impacts are currently unknown. However, providing PolicyT2 is strengthened in line with recommendations, and assuming any specific proposals being brought forward are subject to project level HRA, it is considered that any in-combination impacts are likely to be insignificant.
National Grid Proposals to upgrade the transmission system	One of the potential options associated with these proposals is to come onshore around Blackpool	The in-combination impacts are currently unknown. However, providing Policy T2

Plan/project	Potential effect of plan/Policy	Conclusion
	International Airport. The proximity of the Airport to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar means that any further development at this location has the potential to increase disturbance of birds using the designated habitats adjacent to the site. This Policy may have in-combination impacts with Policy T2 (Blackpool International Airport).	is strengthened in line with recommendations, and assuming any specific proposals being brought forward are subject to project level HRA, it is considered that any in-combination impacts are likely to be insignificant.
Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document Preston City Council	This included the allocation of 4000 homes to North West of Preston as part of Preston City Councils development plan. The Site Allocations Document specifically implements the vision and strategies of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy. Potential impacts of this allocation relate to increased recreational pressure and adverse effects on water quality of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA.	An HRA Screening Report was produced in May 2012 for the Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Development Plan. This concluded that there were no significant adverse effects as a result of any of the policies contained within it. As a result it is considered that there will be no significant adverse impact in-combination with policies contained within the Fylde Local Plan.

6 CONCLUSION

This HRA Screening of the Preferred Option Local Plan for Fylde Borough has considered the potential implications of the plan for European Sites within and near to the Borough boundary.

It is important to note that none of the policies set out in the Fylde Local Plan would lead to direct impacts upon European Sites. However, there is the potential for indirect effects, although it is considered unlikely that these would be significant in their own right.

There is the potential for one or more of the four Strategic Locations for Development that have been identified in the Fylde Local Plan to have an adverse effect on one or more European Sites, especially Policy SL2 which includes a proposed allocation for 275 dwellings adjacent to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar. However, with appropriate re-wording of the Policy and, specifically, the provision of a Policy assurance that no consent will be granted for any scheme that could have a significant effect on a European Site, an Appropriate Assessment would not be required.

Whilst the assessment has identified potential effects on both the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site and the Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar from increased disturbance to birds associated with both increased recreational activity and with works to coastal defences, it is considered that these effects can readily be mitigated, both at the plan stage (through minor modifications to the wording of relevant policies) and at the project-specific HRA stage.

The assessment of in-combination effects of various plans and policies revealed that, providing the policies are strengthened in line with recommendations, it is not considered that the Fylde Local Plan would contribute to significant in-combination effects.

It has therefore been concluded that, **assuming the above mitigation measures are implemented**, the Fylde Local Plan is unlikely to have any significant effects on the European sites identified, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. **As such, it is not proposed to undertake Appropriate Assessment.**

We seek Natural England's opinion and agreement or otherwise with this conclusion.

Appendix A

European Sites within and surrounding Fylde

Table 1 European Sites that could be adversely affected by the Local Plan

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
Morecambe Bay SAC	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estuaries ▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ▪ Large shallow inlets and bays ▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks ▪ <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand ▪ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) ▪ Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (‘white dunes’) ▪ Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (‘grey dunes’) * Priority feature ▪ Humid dune slacks <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sandbanks which are slightly 	<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> 	<p>There are a wide range of pressures on Morecambe Bay but the site is relatively robust and many of these pressures have only slight or local effects on its interests. Positive management is being secured through NGO reserve management plans, Natural England’s Site Management Statements and Coastal Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, the European Marine Site Management Schemes for the Duddon Estuary and Morecambe Bay, and the Duddon Estuary and Morecambe Bay Partnerships. These aim for sustainable use of the site, taking account of the potential threats including commercial fisheries, aggregate extraction, gas exploration, recreation and other activities.</p>	<p>Area favourable 94.23%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 5.77%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

⁸ Taken from Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms (SAC and SPA) and Ramsar Information Sheets.

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covered by sea water all the time ▪ Coastal lagoons * Priority feature ▪ Reefs ▪ Embryonic shifting dunes ▪ Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) * Priority feature ▪ Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) 			
Morecambe Bay SPA	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p>During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> ▪ Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>, <p>Over winter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ▪ Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p>During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> ▪ Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> <p>On passage;</p>	<p>The site is subject to a wide range of pressures such as land-claim for agriculture, overgrazing, dredging, overfishing, industrial uses and unspecified pollution. However, overall the site is relatively robust and many of those pressures have only slight to local effects and are being addressed through Management Plans. The breeding tern interest is very vulnerable and the colony has recently moved to the adjacent Duddon Estuary. Positive management is being secured through management plans for non-governmental organisation reserves, Natural England's Site Management Statements, European Marine Site Management Scheme, and the Morecambe Bay Partnership.</p>	See above.

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> ▪ Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> <p>Over winter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> ▪ Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> ▪ Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ▪ Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> ▪ Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>, ▪ Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> ▪ Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> ▪ Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> ▪ Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ▪ Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> <p>Assemblage qualification: A seabird assemblage of international importance</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 seabirds</p> <p>During the breeding season, the area regularly supports 61,858 individual seabirds (5 year peak mean for 1991/92 to 1995/96) including: Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>, Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>, Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>, Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>.</p> <p>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the</p>		

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		<p>Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl</p> <p>Over winter, the area regularly supports 210,668 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean for 1991/92 to 1995/96)</p>		
Morecambe Bay Ramsar site	N/A	<p>Ramsar criterion 4</p> <p>The site is a staging area for migratory waterfowl including internationally important numbers of passage ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 223709 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.</p> <p>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</p> <p>Species regularly supported during the breeding season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesser black-backed gull , <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>, ▪ Herring gull , <i>Larus argentatus argentatus</i> ▪ Sandwich tern , <i>Sterna (Thalasseus) sandvicensis sandvicensis</i> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p>	N/A	See above.

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great cormorant , <i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i> ▪ Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, ▪ Common eider , <i>Somateria mollissimamollissima</i>, ▪ Eurasian oystercatcher, <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i>, ▪ Ringed plover , <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, ▪ Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, ▪ Sanderling , <i>Calidris alba</i>, ▪ Eurasian curlew , <i>Numerius arquata arquata</i>, ▪ Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, ▪ Ruddy turnstone , <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i>, ▪ Lesser black-backed gull , <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>, <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great crested grebe , <i>Podiceps cristatus cristatus</i>, ▪ Pink-footed goose , <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> ▪ Eurasian wigeon , <i>Anas Penelope</i> ▪ Common goldeneye , <i>Bucephala clangula clangula</i>, ▪ Red-breasted merganser , <i>Mergus serrator</i> ▪ European golden plover , <i>Pluvialis</i> 		

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		<p><i>apricaria</i>,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northern lapwing , <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>, ▪ Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>, ▪ Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, ▪ Bar-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i>, 		
Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p>During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> ▪ Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>, <p>Over winter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ▪ Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> ▪ Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, ▪ Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p>During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> <p>On passage;</p>	<p>Overall, the dunes, intertidal flats and saltmarsh enjoy a relatively robust status and a favourable condition. However, the site is, in places, subject to pressure from recreation, built development (including coastal defence), wildfowling and industry, including sand-winning. Wildfowling is not considered to have a significant impact in terms of direct take; resulting disturbance is effectively managed through the provision of refuge areas and strict regulation on shooting activities. Military activities only take place at Altcar Rifle Range which is adjacent to the Alt Estuary. Recreation is informal and of relatively low intensity along most of the Sefton Coast and in the Ribble Estuary. There is no longer a registered beach airfield at Sefton, however occasional landing of pleasure craft may be requested during large events. Beach activities are managed by the Beach Management Plan. Sand-winning was addressed during a Public Inquiry in August 2001, with the result that detailed environmental monitoring will now be incorporated into the renewed planning</p>	<p>Area favourable 99.10%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0.90%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> ▪ Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> <p>Over winter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> ▪ Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> ▪ Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ▪ Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> ▪ Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>, ▪ Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> ▪ Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> ▪ Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> ▪ Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> ▪ Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ▪ Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> ▪ Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> <p>Assemblage qualification: A seabird assemblage of international importance</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 seabirds</p> <p>During the breeding season, the area regularly supports 29,236 individual seabirds.</p> <p>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly</p>	<p>permission. Much of the site attracts beneficial land management via the implementation of agreed plans for three NNRs, two LNRs and other initiatives developed by the Sefton Coast Partnership. These plans/initiatives are addressing a number of these pressures, whilst other pressures will be addressed following procedures under the Habitat Regulations. Wider land management issues are being developed via the neighbouring Ribble and Mersey Estuary Strategies. The issue of grazing pressure on the saltmarsh will be addressed through a management agreement to reduce the grazing pressure.</p> <p>Although there is little evidence of sea-level rise so far, the extent and distribution of habitats remains vulnerable to changes in the physical environment, either natural or man-induced. In contrast the coast at Formby Point and Ainsdale is suffering intense erosion which is being investigated through the Sefton Shoreline Management Plan, and beach management practices have effectively encouraged the creation of considerable areas of embryo dunes on the upper shore elsewhere. The Ribble Estuary is also evolving as sediment patterns are changing and saltmarsh continues to accrete following past land-claim and the closure of Preston Docks. The intertidal habitats are vulnerable to accidental pollution from the nearby Mersey Estuary and the Irish</p>	

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl	Sea oil and gas fields. Oil spill contingency plans are being updated to deal with such events. The Ribble in particular has failed to meet the requirements of the Bathing Waters Directive. Government Office North West and the Environment Agency are investigating likely sources of pollution that may have caused this.	
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site	N/A	<p>Ramsar criterion 2 This site supports up to 40% of the Great Britain population of natterjack toads <i>Bufo calamita</i>.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 222,038 waterfowl</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6 Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species regularly supported during the breeding season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesser black-backed gull , <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>, <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ringed plover , <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, ▪ Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ▪ Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> ▪ Sanderling , <i>Calidris alba</i> 	Coastal erosion is a factor at Formby Point with an estimated loss of 4 metres per year. It is a concern because pine woodland on the sand dunes is causing coastal squeeze and therefore preventing sand dune habitats from rolling back; as such dune slack habitats for natterjack toads are declining/being lost.	See above.

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> ▪ Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> ▪ Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, ▪ Lesser black-backed gull , <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>, <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tundra swan , <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> ▪ Whooper swan , <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> ▪ Pink-footed goose , <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> ▪ Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ▪ Eurasian wigeon , <i>Anas penelope</i> ▪ Eurasian teal , <i>Anas crecca</i> ▪ Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i> ▪ Eurasian oystercatcher , <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i> ▪ Bar-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i> 		
Sefton Coast SAC	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embryonic shifting dunes ▪ Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (‘white dunes’) ▪ Fixed dunes with herbaceous 	<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> 	The extensive sand dunes and intertidal areas attract large numbers of summer tourists. This impact is addressed in Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council's Beach Management Plan. Co-ordinated management of the coast is achieved through the long-standing Sefton Coast Management Scheme (now the Sefton Coast Partnership), in which all key landowners	<p>Area favourable 67.2%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 21.66%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 7.99%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 3.15%</p>

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
	<p>vegetation ('grey dunes') * Priority feature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) ▪ Humid dune slacks <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) * Priority feature 		<p>play a part. Golf course management achieves a positive balance between play areas and important habitats. Concerns have been raised regarding water abstraction on the coast. This is being addressed through detailed modelling of the dune aquifer by the Environment Agency. The coniferous plantations are also a source of debate, with a balance needed between restoration of dune habitats and public enjoyment of the woodlands.</p>	<p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>
Bowland Fells SPA	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p>During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> ▪ Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p>During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> 	<p>The expansive blanket bog and heather dominated moorland provides suitable habitat for a diverse range of upland breeding birds. Favourable nature conservation status of the site depends on appropriate levels of sheep grazing, sympathetic moorland burning practice, sensitive water catchment land management practices and on-going species protection. Since designation as an SPA, many localised problems of over-grazing have been controlled through management agreements or the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. To date approximately 20% of SPA is under Section 15 management agreements and Countryside Stewardship to stimulate heather regeneration in order to produce better moorland for grouse and raptors alike. Burning plans and stocking levels have also been agreed for all other areas of the SPA through Site Management</p>	<p>Area favourable 5.28%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 71.99%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 22.72%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
			Statements, whilst problems of raptor persecution continues to be addressed by the RSPB in conjunction with North West Water, Natural England and Lancashire Constabulary.	
Martin Mere SPA	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p>Over winter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> ▪ Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p>Over winter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> ▪ Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> <p>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl</p> <p>Over winter, the area regularly supports 46,196 individual waterfowl.</p>	<p>Since the sites designation as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and as an SPA in 1985 there has been a gradual increase in the usage of the mere by certain species of wildfowl and wading birds as a direct consequence of positive management. The refuge is vulnerable to water levels being adversely affected water abstraction for agriculture, but this is closely monitored /controlled by the Environment Agency in consultation with Natural England. Similarly the refuge is vulnerable to changes in farming practice. Grazing management is largely dependent upon cattle from surrounding farms. Water levels on the Mere are controlled to maintain optimum levels throughout the winter period, then lowered progressively in summer to expose marginal mud and the underlying damp pastures and maintain a mosaic of shallow pools. Ditches are regularly cut and dredged and all areas of pasture are positively managed under a Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Nutrients brought in with the water supply from the surrounding arable farmland and inadequate sewage treatment adds considerably to the large deposits of guano from wintering waterfowl. This results in</p>	<p>Area favourable 100.0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
			the refuge being highly eutrophic with extremely poor water quality conditions and creates the possible risk of water borne diseases which could affect waterfowl, although no such outbreaks have been recorded. Water quality issues have started to be addressed by WWT with the creation of reedbed water filtration systems and a series of settlement lagoons helps to reduce suspended solids of effluent water arising from waterfowl areas. Regular herbicide control of trifid burr marigold is necessary in order to prevent this plant from invading lake/scape margins to the detriment of bird populations.	
Martin Mere Ramsar Site	N/A	<p>Ramsar criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 25,306 waterfowl</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pink-footed goose , <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>, <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tundra swan , <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, 	N/A	See above.

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Vulnerability	Site Condition Assessment March 2013
	Habitats	Species		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whooper swan , <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, ▪ Eurasian wigeon , <i>Anas penelope</i>, ▪ Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, 		

Appendix B

Conservation Objectives

**European Site Conservation Objectives for
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area
Site Code: UK9005103**

With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ('the Qualifying Features' listed below);

Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The populations of the qualifying features;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

- A037 *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)
- A038 *Cygnus cygnus*; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)
- A040 *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)
- A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)
- A050 *Anas penelope*; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)
- A052 *Anas crecca*; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)
- A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)
- A130 *Haematopus ostralegus*; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)
- A137 *Charadrius hiaticula*; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)
- A140 *Pluvialis apricaria*; European golden plover (Non-breeding)
- A141 *Pluvialis squatarola*; Grey plover (Non-breeding)
- A143 *Calidris canutus*; Red knot (Non-breeding)
- A144 *Calidris alba*; Sanderling (Non-breeding)
- A149 *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)
- A151 *Philomachus pugnax*; Ruff (Breeding)
- A156 *Limosa limosa islandica*; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
- A157 *Limosa lapponica*; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
- A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)
- A183 *Larus fuscus*; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)
- A193 *Sterna hirundo*; Common tern (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Seabird assemblage

This is a European Marine Site

This site is a part of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries European Marine Site. These conservation objectives should be used in conjunction with the Regulation 35 Conservation Advice Package, for further details please contact Natural England's enquiry service at enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk, or by phone on 0845 600 3078, or visit the Natural England website at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/protectandmanage/mpa/europeansites.aspx>

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

European Site Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or competent authority is required to make an Appropriate Assessment under the relevant parts of the respective legislation.

These conservation objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site can be said to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and the site itself makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive for those features. On the first page of this document there may be a list of 'Additional Qualifying Features identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review'. These are additional features identified by the UK SPA Review published in 2001 and, although not yet legally classified, are as a matter of Government policy treated in the same way as classified features.

This document is also intended for those who are preparing information to be used for an appropriate assessment by either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority. As such this document cannot be definitive in how the impacts of a project can be determined. Links to selected sources of information, data and guidance which may be helpful can be found on Natural England's website. This list is far from exhaustive.

**European Site Conservation Objectives for
Morecambe Bay Special Area of Conservation
Site code: UK0013027**



With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ('the Qualifying Features' listed below);

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features:

H1110. Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Subtidal sandbanks

H1130. Estuaries

H1140. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats

H1150. Coastal lagoons*

H1160. Large shallow inlets and bays

H1170. Reefs

H1220. Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Coastal shingle vegetation outside the reach of waves

H1310. *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand

H1330. Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*)

H2110. Embryonic shifting dunes

H2120. Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes"); Shifting dunes with marram

H2130. Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"); Dune grassland*

H2150. Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*); Coastal dune heathland*

H2170. Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*); Dunes with creeping willow

H2190. Humid dune slacks

S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great crested newt

* denotes a priority natural habitat or species (supporting explanatory text on following page)

This is a European Marine Site

This site is a part of the Morecambe Bay European Marine Site. These conservation objectives should be used in conjunction with the Regulation 35 Conservation Advice Package, for further details please contact Natural England's enquiry service at enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk, or by phone on 0845 600 3078, or visit the Natural England website at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/protectandmanage/mpa/europeansites.aspx>

*** Priority natural habitats or species**

Some of the natural habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive and for which SACs have been selected are considered to be particular priorities for conservation at a European scale and are subject to special provisions in the Directive and the Habitats Regulations. These priority natural habitats and species are denoted by an asterisk (*) in Annex I and II of the Directive. The term 'priority' is also used in other contexts, for example with reference to particular habitats or species that are prioritised in UK Biodiversity Action Plans. It is important to note however that these are not necessarily the priority natural habitats or species within the meaning of the Habitats Directive or the Habitats Regulations.

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

European Site Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or competent authority is required to make an Appropriate Assessment under the relevant parts of the respective legislation.

These conservation objectives are set for each habitat or species of a [Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site can be said to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and the site itself makes a full contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for those features.

This document is also intended for those who are preparing information to be used for an appropriate assessment by either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority. As such this document cannot be definitive in how the impacts of a project can be determined. Links to selected sources of information, data and guidance which may be helpful can be found on Natural England's website. This list is far from exhaustive.



European Site Conservation Objectives for Morecambe Bay Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9005081

With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ('the Qualifying Features' listed below);

Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The populations of the qualifying features;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

- A040 *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)
 - A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)
 - A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)
 - A063 *Somateria mollissima*; Common eider (Breeding)
 - A130 *Haematopus ostralegus*; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)
 - A137 *Charadrius hiaticula*; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)
 - A140 *Pluvialis apricaria*; European golden plover (Non-breeding)
 - A141 *Pluvialis squatarola*; Grey plover (Non-breeding)
 - A143 *Calidris canutus*; Red knot (Non-breeding)
 - A149 *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)
 - A157 *Limosa lapponica*; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
 - A160 *Numenius arquata*; Eurasian curlew (Non-breeding)
 - A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)
 - A169 *Arenaria interpres*; Ruddy turnstone (Non-breeding)
 - A183 *Larus fuscus*; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)
 - A184 *Larus argentatus*; Herring gull (Breeding)
 - A191 *Sterna sandvicensis*; Sandwich tern (Breeding)
 - A193 *Sterna hirundo*; Common tern (Breeding)
 - A195 *Sterna albifrons*; Little tern (Breeding)
- Waterbird assemblage

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Additional Qualifying Features Identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review:

A144 *Calidris alba*; Sanderling (Non-breeding)
Seabird assemblage

www.naturalengland.org.uk

This is a European Marine Site

This site is a part of the Morecambe Bay European Marine Site. These conservation objectives should be used in conjunction with the Regulation 35 Conservation Advice Package, for further details please contact Natural England's enquiry service at enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk, or by phone on 0845 600 3078, or visit the Natural England website at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/protectandmanage/mpa/europeansites.aspx>

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

European Site Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or competent authority is required to make an Appropriate Assessment under the relevant parts of the respective legislation.

These conservation objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site can be said to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and the site itself makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive for those features. On the first page of this document there may be a list of 'Additional Qualifying Features identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review'. These are additional features identified by the UK SPA Review published in 2001 and, although not yet legally classified, are as a matter of Government policy treated in the same way as classified features.

This document is also intended for those who are preparing information to be used for an appropriate assessment by either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority. As such this document cannot be definitive in how the impacts of a project can be determined. Links to selected sources of information, data and guidance which may be helpful can be found on Natural England's website. This list is far from exhaustive.

www.naturalengland.org.uk



**European Site Conservation Objectives for
Bowland Fells Special Protection Area
Site Code: UK9005151**

With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ('the Qualifying Features' listed below);

Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The populations of the qualifying features;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

A082 *Circus cyaneus*; Hen harrier (Breeding)

A098 *Falco columbarius*; Merlin (Breeding)

Additional Qualifying Features Identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review:

A183 *Larus fuscus*; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

European Site Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or competent authority is required to make an Appropriate Assessment under the relevant parts of the respective legislation.

These conservation objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site can be said to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and the site itself makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive for those features. On the first page of this document there may be a list of 'Additional Qualifying Features identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review'. These are additional features identified by the UK SPA Review published in 2001 and, although not yet legally classified, are as a matter of Government policy treated in the same way as classified features.

This document is also intended for those who are preparing information to be used for an appropriate assessment by either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority. As such this document cannot be definitive in how the impacts of a project can be determined. Links to selected sources of information, data and guidance which may be helpful can be found on Natural England's website. This list is far from exhaustive.



**European Site Conservation Objectives for
Martin Mere Special Protection Area
Site Code: UK9005111**

With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ('the Qualifying Features' listed below);

Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The populations of the qualifying features;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

A037 *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)

A038 *Cygnus cygnus*; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)

A040 *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)

A052 *Anas crecca*; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)

A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

European Site Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or competent authority is required to make an Appropriate Assessment under the relevant parts of the respective legislation.

These conservation objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site can be said to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and the site itself makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive for those features. On the first page of this document there may be a list of 'Additional Qualifying Features identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review'. These are additional features identified by the UK SPA Review published in 2001 and, although not yet legally classified, are as a matter of Government policy treated in the same way as classified features.

This document is also intended for those who are preparing information to be used for an appropriate assessment by either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority. As such this document cannot be definitive in how the impacts of a project can be determined. Links to selected sources of information, data and guidance which may be helpful can be found on Natural England's website. This list is far from exhaustive.



European Site Conservation Objectives for Sefton Coast Special Area of Conservation Site code: UK0013076

With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ('the Qualifying Features' listed below);

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features:

H2110. Embryonic shifting dunes

H2120. Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes"); Shifting dunes with marram

H2130. Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"); Dune grassland*

H2150. Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*); Coastal dune heathland*

H2170. Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*); Dunes with creeping willow

H2190. Humid dune slacks

S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great crested newt

S1395. *Petalophyllum ralfsii*; Petalwort

* denotes a priority natural habitat or species (supporting explanatory text on following page)

www.naturalengland.org.uk

* Priority natural habitats or species

Some of the natural habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive and for which SACs have been selected are considered to be particular priorities for conservation at a European scale and are subject to special provisions in the Directive and the Habitats Regulations. These priority natural habitats and species are denoted by an asterisk (*) in Annex I and II of the Directive. The term 'priority' is also used in other contexts, for example with reference to particular habitats or species that are prioritised in UK Biodiversity Action Plans. It is important to note however that these are not necessarily the priority natural habitats or species within the meaning of the Habitats Directive or the Habitats Regulations.

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

European Site Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or competent authority is required to make an Appropriate Assessment under the relevant parts of the respective legislation.

These conservation objectives are set for each habitat or species of a [Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site can be said to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and the site itself makes a full contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for those features.

This document is also intended for those who are preparing information to be used for an appropriate assessment by either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority. As such this document cannot be definitive in how the impacts of a project can be determined. Links to selected sources of information, data and guidance which may be helpful can be found on Natural England's website. This list is far from exhaustive.

Appendix C

Categories taken from Natural England draft guidance

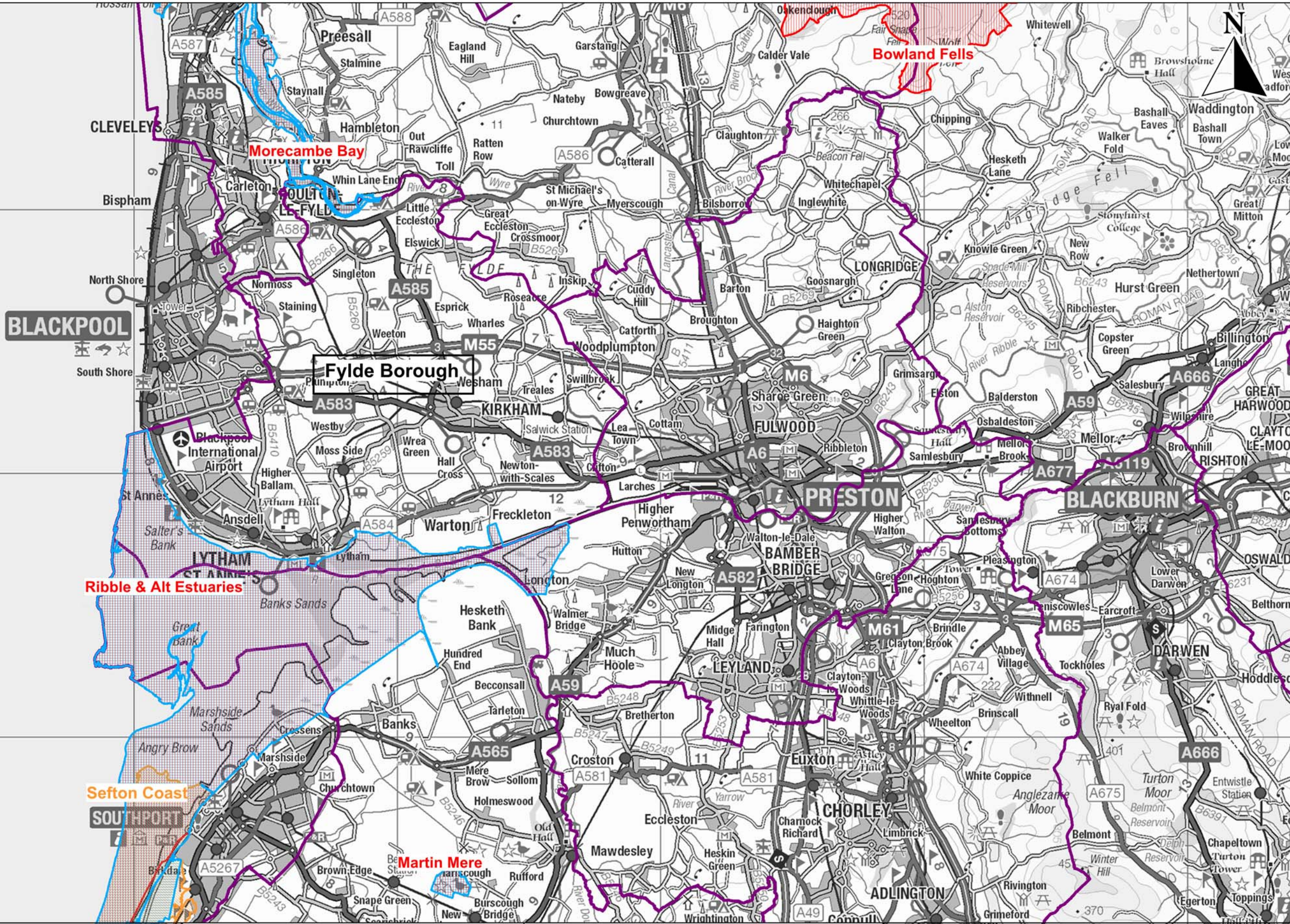
Potential Effect Categories

Category	Broad Effects	Conclusion for Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this Stage
Category A	Elements of the plan that would have no negative effect on a European site at all.	No LSE
Category B	Elements of the plan that could have an effect, but the likelihood is there would be no significant effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects.	No LSE
Category C	Elements of the plan that could or would be likely to have a significant effect alone and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted.	LSE
Category D	Elements of the plan that would be likely to have a significant effect in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted.	LSE
Category E	Elements of the plan the effects of which will be more appropriate for lower tier assessments	It cannot be concluded that there would be no LSE at this stage, therefore assume LSE
Category F	Elements of the plan the effect of which depends on how the plan is implemented.	It cannot be concluded that there would be no LSE at this stage, therefore assume LSE

Likely Effect Categories

Category	Sub category	Types of Policy for consideration
Category A: No negative effect	A1	Policies that will not themselves lead to development e.g. because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or they are not a land use planning Policy
	A2	Policies intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity.
	A3	Policies intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European site.
	A4	Policies that positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas.
Category B: No significant effect		Effects are trivial or ' <i>de minimis</i> ', even if combined with other effects.
Category C: Likely significant effect alone	C1	The Policy could directly affect a European site because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development onto a European site, or adjacent to it.
	C2	The Policy could indirectly affect a European site e.g. because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected to it or it may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures.
	C3	Proposals for a magnitude of development that, no matter where it was located, the development would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site.
	C4	Policies for developments or infrastructure projects that could block options or alternatives for the provision of other development or projects in the future, which will be required in the public interest, that may lead to adverse effects on European sites, which would otherwise be avoided.

Category	Sub category	Types of Policy for consideration
	C5	Any other policies that would be vulnerable to failure under the Habitats Regulations at project assessment stage; to include them in the plan would be regarded by the EC as 'faulty planning'.
	C6	Any other proposal that may have an adverse effect on a European site, which might try to pass the tests of the Habitats Regulations at project assessment stage by arguing that the plan provides the imperative reasons of overriding public interest to justify its consent despite a negative assessment.
Category D: Likely significant effects in combination	D1	The Policy alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if its effects are combined with effects of other policies or proposals provided for or coordinated by the LDD (internally) the cumulative effects would be likely to be significant.
	D2	Policies that alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if their effects are combined with the effects of other plans or projects , and possibly the effects of other developments provided for in the LDD as well, the combined effects would be likely to be significant.
	D3	Proposals that are, or could be, part of a programme or sequence of development delivered over a period, where the implementation of the early stages would not have a significant effect on European sites, but which would dictate the nature, scale, duration, location, timing of the whole project, the later stages of which could have an adverse effect on such sites.
Category E: Cannot conclude no LSE at this stage – lower tier assessment	E1	A Policy would have no effect where development could occur through the Policy itself, because it is implemented through later policies in the same DPD, which are more detailed and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European sites and associated sensitive areas. These kinds of policies may be found in the Core Strategy where a broad quantity of development may be specified as being delivered through a more specific Policy in a later chapter or section of the DPD.
	E2	A Policy that makes provision for a quantity/type of development (and may indicate one or more broad locations e.g. a particular part of the plan area) but the detailed location of the development is to be selected following consideration of options in later, more specific DPD. The consideration of options in the later DPD will need to assess potential effects on European sites.
Category F		<p>Policies depend entirely on how they are implemented in due course, through the development management process. There is a theoretical possibility that if implemented in one or more particular ways, the proposal could possibly have a significant effect on a European site.</p> <p>In these specific circumstances where there is uncertainty about the way in which aspects of a plan may be implemented, it may be appropriate for policies to contain restrictions or caveats in order to exclude support for potentially damaging proposals. It is advised that the caveat could be added during the screening stage whereupon the Policy could be reassessed and placed in Category A or B.</p> <p>Alternatively the Policy could be taken forward to appropriate assessment to check that the caveat, when added, would avoid an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p> <p>A caveat may relate to proposals not being in accordance with the development plan or may prevent the potentially damaging proposals from occurring unless the potential effect on the European site has been resolved. For example, the development cannot take place until related infrastructure is in place, having passed the tests of the Habitats Regulations.</p>



-  Ramsar Site
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Special Protection Area
-  District Boundary



Figure 4-1
European Designated Sites