



Fylde Local Plan to 2032: Revised Preferred Option Local Plan

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Screening Report

Arcadis (UK) Limited

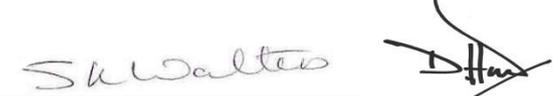
The Mill
Brimscombe Port
Brimscombe
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 2QG
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1453 423 100
Fax: +44 (0)1453 887 979
www.arcadis.com



Fylde Council

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Revised Preferred Option Local Plan

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Author | Michelle Robertson / Liz Turley |  |
| Checker | Lizzie Hall |  |
| Approver | Sam Walters/ David Hourd |  |
| Report No | 008-UA004283-EEC-02-F | |
| Date | 17 th November 2015 | |

This report has been prepared for Fylde Council in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment for Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the Revised Preferred Option Local Plan dated 29 June 2015. Arcadis (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 |
| 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..... | 4 |
| 2.3 | Strategic Locations for Development..... | 4 |
| 2.4 | Non-Strategic Locations for Development..... | 4 |
| 2.5 | Local Plan Policies..... | 4 |
| 2.6 | Policies within Fylde Local Plan..... | 5 |
| 3 | The Habitats Regulations Assessment Process..... | 8 |
| 3.1 | Stages in HRA..... | 8 |
| 3.2 | Approach to Screening..... | 8 |
| 3.3 | In-Combination Effects..... | 9 |
| 3.4 | Consideration of Effects..... | 12 |
| 3.5 | Potential Impacts Pathways..... | 14 |
| 4 | Identifying the European Sites..... | 16 |
| 4.1 | Approach to Identifying Sites..... | 16 |
| 4.2 | European Sites within Fylde..... | 16 |
| 4.3 | European Sites Outside of Fylde..... | 17 |
| 4.4 | Conservation Objectives of the European Sites..... | 22 |
| 5 | Screening..... | 24 |
| 5.1 | Context..... | 24 |
| 5.2 | Screening Approach taken for the Local Plan..... | 24 |
| 5.3 | Initial Screening of the Local Plan Policies..... | 24 |
| 6 | Detailed Screening of the Fylde Local Plan Policies and Sites..... | 29 |
| 6.1 | Potential Impacts..... | 29 |
| 6.2 | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential..... | 31 |
| 6.3 | Further Assessment..... | 32 |
| 6.4 | Screening Summary / Recommendations..... | 40 |
| 6.5 | In-Combination Effects..... | 41 |
| 7 | Conclusion..... | 45 |

Appendices

Appendix A
European Sites within and surrounding Fylde
Appendix B
Conservation Objectives

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 Arcadis Consulting UK (Ltd) (previously Hyder Consulting) on behalf of Fylde Council as part of the statutory Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032: Revised Preferred Option Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the Fylde Local Plan or the Plan).

Future development within Fylde up to 2032 will be guided by the plans and policies within the 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 (SACs), designated under the Habitats Directive for their habitats and/or species of European importance, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 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.

¹ SI 2010/490 : Explanatory memorandum to the conservation of habitats and species regulations 2010.

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

'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:

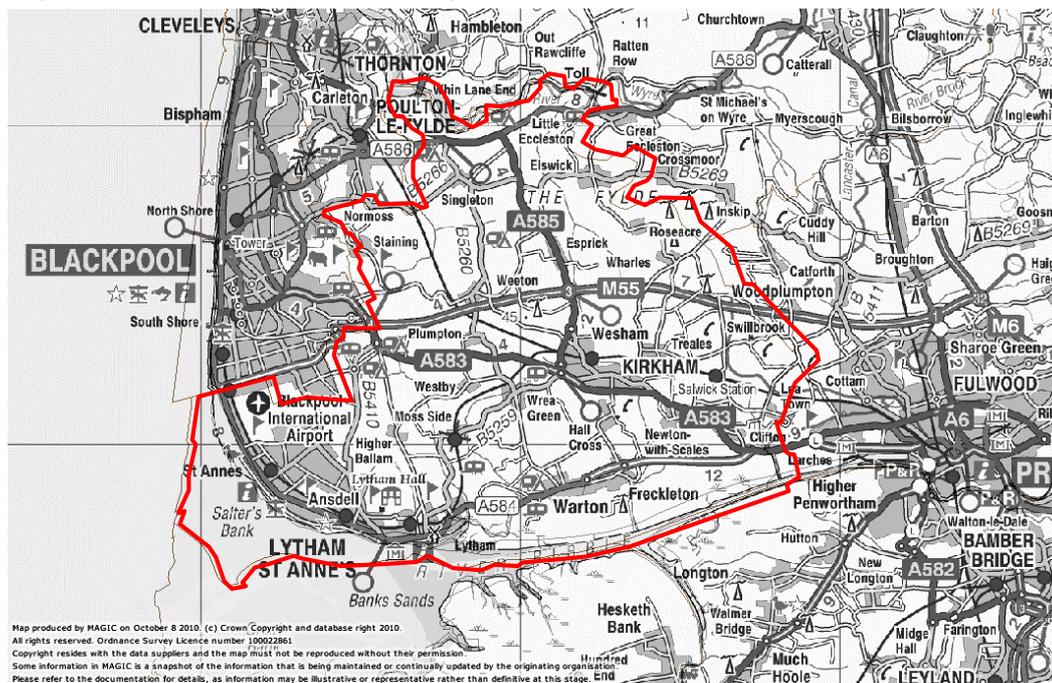
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended. In 2012, these Regulations were amended to transpose more clearly certain aspects of the Habitats Directive. No fundamental changes to the Regulations were made.
- European Commission, Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions 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.
- DTA Publications Limited, The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, accessed online September 2015.

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, the Fylde Local Plan will supersede the adopted Fylde Borough Local Plan (as altered) October 2005.

Future development within Fylde will be guided by the plans and policies within the Fylde Local Plan, which runs from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2032, to ensure a 15 year plan period from the date of adoption in 2017.

The Local Plan: Part 1 Preferred Option was prepared for consultation for an eight week period running from June to August 2013. The Preferred Option has informed the Revised Preferred Option of the Fylde Local Plan (on which this HRA Screening Report is based), which includes for the first time both strategic and non-strategic sites for new homes and employment land, sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people, leisure, retail, tourism and community use, or a mixture of such uses. The Fylde Local Plan also comprises Development Management policies, which will inform decisions on planning applications and appeals; together with policies to protect the natural and built environment and heritage assets.

2.2 Strategic Objectives

In order to achieve the Vision for Fylde, five strategic objectives have been produced. They express the purpose of the Fylde 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 maintain, improve and enhance the environment.

Objective 3: To make services accessible.

Objective 4: To diversify and grow the local economy.

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

2.3 Strategic Locations for Development

The Development Strategy within the Local Plan identifies the proposed Settlement Hierarchy and the Strategic and Non-strategic Locations for Development which will accommodate the level of growth in new homes, jobs and associated services, required across Fylde during the entire plan. The proposed Settlement Hierarchy by the end of the plan period, is set out in policy S1 and it provides the basis for sustainable communities.

Under Policy DFL1, the Local Plan will deliver a minimum of 7,700 new homes and land will be developed for 56.3 Ha of employment use over the plan period to 31 March 2032.

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

- Lytham and St Annes.
- Fylde-Blackpool Periphery.
- Warton.
- Kirkham and Wesham.

2.4 Non-Strategic Locations for Development

Non-strategic development sites (between 10 and 99 homes) are situated within the four Strategic Locations for Development. Non-strategic development sites also occur within and on the edge of the Tier 1: Larger Rural Settlements and the Tier 2: Smaller Rural Settlements (as defined in the Settlement Hierarchy – Policy S1).

2.5 Local Plan Policies

There are 49 policies contained within the Fylde Local Plan which relate to the Strategic Objectives above. These are set out under the following chapter headings:

- National and Sub Regional Policy.
- The Development Strategy.
- Strategic Locations for Development, Strategic Development Sites and Non-Strategic Development Sites.
- General Development Policies.
- The Fylde Economy.
- Provision of Homes in Fylde.
- Health and Wellbeing.
- Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport.
- Water Resource Management, Flood Risk and Addressing Climate Change.
- Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Historic and Built Environment.

2.6 Policies within Fylde Local Plan

The policies within the Fylde Local Plan are listed below:

National and Sub Regional Policy

Policy NP1- Presumption in favour of sustainable development

The Development Strategy

Policy S1 – The proposed settlement hierarchy

Policy DLF1- Development locations for Fylde.

Strategic Locations for Development, Strategic Development Sites and Non-Strategic Development Sites

Policy M1 Masterplanning the strategic locations for development

Policy SL1 Lytham and St Annes Strategic location for development

Policy SL2 The Fylde-Blackpool periphery strategic location for development

Policy SL3 Warton Strategic Location for Development

Policy SL4 Kirkham and Wesham Strategic Location for Development

General Development Policies

GD1: Settlement Boundaries

GD2: Green belt

GD3: Areas of separation

GD4: Development in the countryside

GD5: Large Developed Sites on Land outside settlement boundaries

GD6: Promoting Mixed Use Development

GD7: Achieving Good Design in Development

GD8: Demonstrating Viability

The Fylde Economy

EC1: Overall Provision of Employment Land and existing employment sites

EC2: Lancashire AEM Enterprise Zone, at BAE Systems, Warton

EC3: Employment Opportunities

EC4: Vibrant Town, District and Local Centres

EC5: Leisure, Culture and Tourism Development

EC6: Tourism Accommodation

Provision of Homes in Fylde

H1: Housing Delivery and the Allocation of Housing Land

H2: Density and Mix of New Residential Development

H3: Conversions and Change of Use to Residential

H4: Provision of Affordable Housing

H5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people's Sites

H6: Isolated New Homes in the Countryside

H7: Replacements of, and Extensions to, Existing Homes in the Countryside

Health and Wellbeing

HW1: Health and Wellbeing

HW2: Community Facilities

HW3: Provision of Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities

HW4: Contaminated Land

Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport

INF1: Services Accessibility and Infrastructure

INF2: Developer Contributions

T1: Strategic Highway Improvements

T2: Blackpool Airport

T3: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice

T4: Parking Standards

Water Resource Management, Flood Risk and Addressing Climate Change

CL1: Flood Alleviation, Water Quality and Water Efficiency

CL2: Surface Water Run-Off and Sustainable Drainage

CL3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

CL4: Decentralised Energy Networks and District Heating Systems

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Historic and Built Environment

ENV1: Landscape

ENV2: Biodiversity

ENV3: Development in the Nature Improvement Area

ENV4: Protecting Existing Open Space (the Green Infrastructure network)

ENV5: Provision of New Open Space (the Green Infrastructure network)

ENV6: Historic Environment

3 The Habitats Regulations Assessment Process

3.1 Stages in HRA

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

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 Associates².

The following stages have been completed:

- Identification of all European sites potentially affected (including those outside of the Fylde Local Plan area);

²DTA Publications Limited The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, accessed online October 2015.

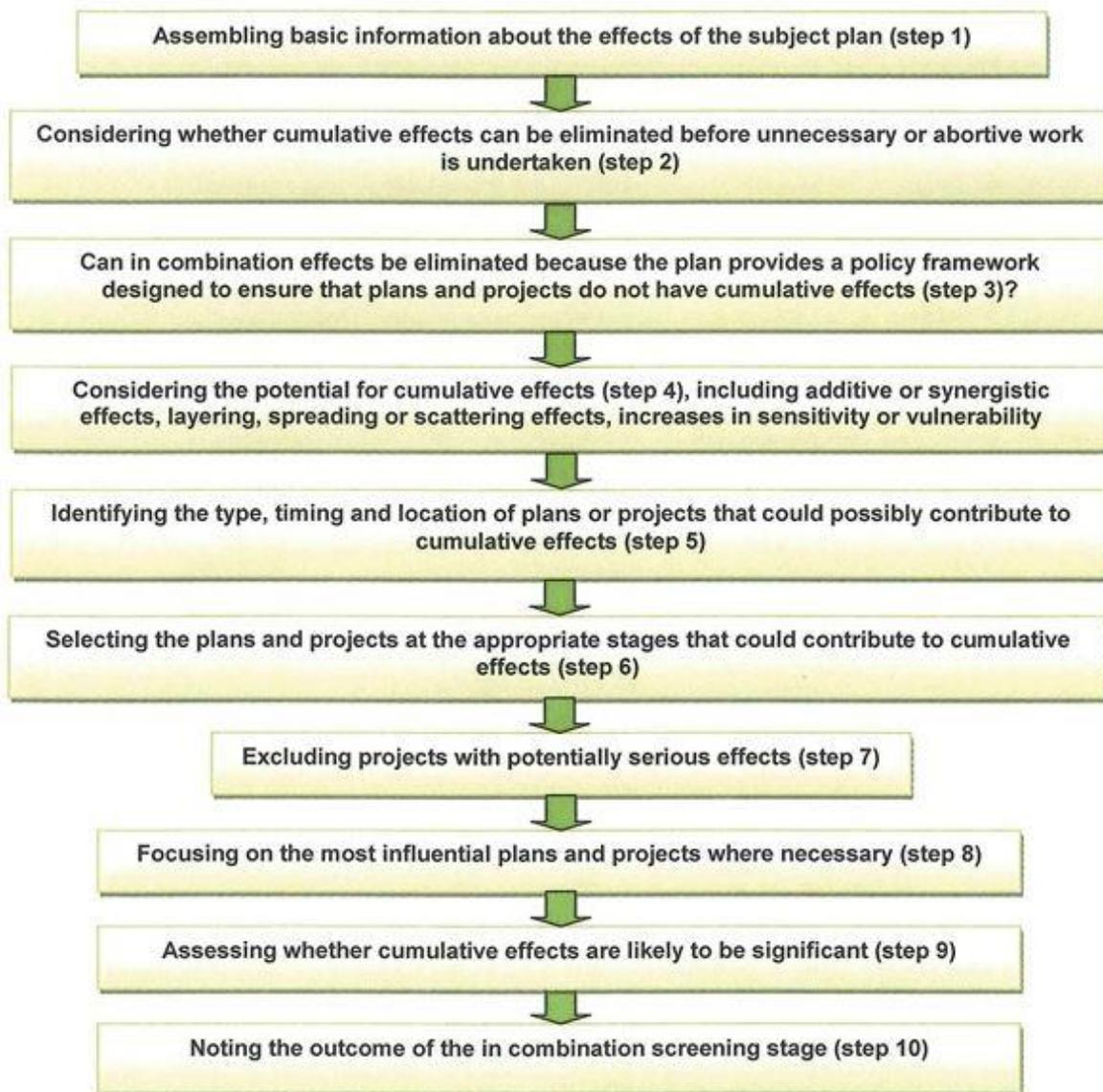
- A review of each site, including the features for which the site is designated, the Conservation Objectives, and an understanding of the current conservation status and the vulnerability of the individual features to threats;
- A review of the policies which have the potential to affect the European 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 current 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.

Where an aspect of a plan could have some effect on the qualifying feature(s) of a European site, but the effects of that aspect of the plan alone would not be significant, the effects of that aspect of the plan will need to be checked in-combination firstly, with other effects of the same plan, and then with the effects of other plans and projects.

The flow chart below is taken from DTA Publications Limited, The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (accessed online September 2015), and illustrates the outline methodology for the in-combination assessment.



If the prospect of cumulative effects cannot be eliminated in steps 2 and 3 in the figure above, it is necessary to consider how the addition of effects from other plans or projects may produce a combined adverse effect on a European site that would be significant. Taking the effects which would not be likely to be significant alone, it is necessary to make a judgement as to whether these effects would be made more likely or more significant if the effects of other plans or projects are added to them. Most cumulative effects can be identified by way of the following characteristics. Could additional effects be cumulative because they would:

- a) Increase the effects on the qualifying features affected by the subject plan in an additive, or synergistic way?
- b) Increase the sensitivity or vulnerability of the qualifying features of the site affected by the subject plan?
- c) Be felt more intensely by the same qualifying features over the same area (a layering effect), or by the same qualifying feature over a greater (larger) area (a spreading effect), or by affecting new areas of the same qualifying feature (a scattering effect)?

It will be necessary to look for plans or projects at the following stages:

- a) Applications lodged but not yet determined.
- b) Projects subject to periodic review e.g. annual licences, during the time that their renewal is under consideration.
- c) Refusals subject to appeal procedures and not yet determined.
- d) Projects authorised but not yet started.
- e) Projects started but not yet completed.
- f) Known projects that do not require external authorisation.
- g) Proposals in adopted plans.
- h) Proposals in finalised draft plans formally published or submitted for final consultation, examination or adoption.

Consideration of in-combination effects is included in Section 6.5.

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 1.

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

| Authority | Relevant Plan/Project |
|------------------------|--|
| Blackpool Council | Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 4200 dwellings to 2027. Also 180ha of employment land to 2027 Proposed Enterprise Zone at Blackpool Airport boundary, includes 144ha, 55ha are already developed, 89ha are available for development. 3000 jobs over 20 years. Fylde Highways and Transport Masterplan |
| Wyre Council | Wyre Local Plan Issues and Options (three options included in the plan, but the amount of housing/employment etc. not set out in detail). Objectively Assessed Need for 340-485 dwellings per annum (Strategic housing market assessment -SHMA 2014). Safeguarding the line of the M55 Norcross Link (Blue Route) implementation through the Highways Agency. A585 Skippool – Windy Harbour Improvements commence 2019 open 2021 (Issues and Options 2015, Preferred Option 2016, Development Consent Order 2017), commence 2019/20, open 2021/22 Fylde Highways and Transport Masterplan |
| Lancaster City Council | People, Homes, Jobs – how should we plan for the districts future? 2015 13,000 – 14,000 new homes, 9500 new jobs Heysham to M6 Link (under construction) |

| Authority | Relevant Plan/Project |
|--|---|
| | Lancaster District Highways and Transport Masterplan |
| Preston City Council | Total requirement of 8,637 dwellings from 2014 – 2026. 2,837 will be delivered after 2026. 99.52ha of employment land, 2.1ha at North West Preston Junction 2 on M55 plus Preston Western Distributor Road (commence 2017 open 2019) Cottam Parkway Railway Station accessed off Preston Western Distributor open 2022/23. Broughton Bypass (Inquiry recently into CPO). |
| West Lancashire District Council | The Local Plan 2012- 2027 identifies a need for 4,860 new dwellings and 75ha of employment land. |
| South Ribble Council | Duelling the A582 from Penwortham to Farington Completion of Penwortham By Pass |
| Sefton Council | A total requirement for 11,070 dwellings from 2012-2030 plus 84.5ha of employment land. |
| Lancashire County Council | Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan DPD adopted 2013 |
| Dong Energy | Walney Offshore Wind Farm - active Walney Extension – under construction West of Duddon Sands Offshore Wind –active |
| National Grid - North West Coastal Connections | The preferred option involves building a new nuclear power station at Sellafield. Power will be transmitted via a crossing under Morecambe Bay to the new Middleton substation at Heysham, Lancashire. |

3.4 Consideration of Effects

3.4.1 Definition of Significant Effects

A critical part of the HRA screening process is determining whether or not the proposals are likely to have a significant effect on European Sites and, therefore, if they will require an Appropriate Assessment. Judgements regarding significance should be made in relation to the qualifying interests for which the site is of European importance and also its conservation objectives. A useful definition of 'likely' significant effects is as follows:

'...likely means readily foreseeable not merely a fanciful possibility; significant means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that is potentially relevant to the site's conservation objectives³.

³ Welsh Assembly Government Annex to Technical Advice Note 5: Nature conservation and planning. The Assessment of Development Plans in Wales Under the Provision of The Habitats Regulations' (October 2006).

In considering whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, a precautionary approach must be adopted:

- The plan should be considered 'likely' to have such an effect if the plan making authority is unable (on the basis of objective information) to exclude the possibility that the plan could have significant effects on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- An effect will be 'significant' in this context if it could undermine the site's conservation objectives. The assessment of that risk must be made in the light of factors such as the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the European site in question.

3.4.2 Categorising Effects

All elements of the Fylde Local Plan, have been screened for likely significant effects on European sites and categorised in accordance with DTA Publications Limited The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (accessed online September 2015).

The effects associated with the Fylde Local Plan can be allocated into one of 12 categories according to the ways in which the option, policy or proposal could affect the European site. These are described in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Screening Assessment Categories

| Category | Description |
|-------------|---|
| Category A: | General statements of policy/general aspirations. Policies which are no more than general statements of policy or general political aspirations should be screened out because they cannot have a significant effect on a site. |
| Category B: | Policies listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals. These general policies cannot have any effect on a European site and should be screened out. |
| Category C: | Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan. Screen out any references to specific proposals for projects, such as those which are identified, for example, in higher policy frameworks such as the Wales Spatial Plan or National Policy Statements, relating perhaps to nationally significant infrastructure projects. These will be assessed by the Secretary of State or Welsh Ministers. A useful 'test' as to whether a project should be screened out in this step is to ask the question: 'Is the project provided for/proposed as part of another plan or programme and would it be likely to proceed under the other plan or programme irrespective of whether this subject plan is adopted with or without reference to it?' If the answer is 'yes' it will normally be appropriate to screen the project out in this step. |
| Category D: | Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies. These are policies, the obvious purpose of which is to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity, or to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any adverse effect on a European Site. They can be screened out because the implementation of the policies is likely to protect rather than adversely affect European sites and not undermine their conservation objectives. |
| Category E: | Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects. These types of policies or proposals will have the effect of steering |

| Category | Description |
|---------------------|--|
| | change away from European sites whose qualifying features may be affected by the change and they can therefore be screened out. |
| Category F: | Policies or proposals that cannot lead to development or other change. Policies that do not themselves lead to development or other change, for example, because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, such as materials for new development. They do not trigger any development or other changes that could affect a European site and can be screened out. |
| Category G: | Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site. Policies which make provision for change but which could have no conceivable effect on a European site, because there is no causal connection or link between them and the qualifying features of any European site, and can therefore be screened out. |
| Category H: | Policies or proposals the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects). Policies or proposals which make provision for change but which could have no significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan, or in combination with other plans or projects, can be screened out. These may include cases where there are some potential effects which (and theoretically even in combination) would plainly be insignificant and could not undermine the conservation objectives. |
| Category I: | Policies or proposals with a likely significant effect on a site alone. Policies or proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on a European site alone, should be screened in. |
| Category J: | Policies or proposals not likely to have a significant effect alone. These aspects of the plan would have some effect on a site, but the effect would not be likely to be a significant effect; so they must be checked for in-combination (cumulative) effects. They will then be re-categorised as either Category K (no significant effect in combination) or Category L (likely to have a significant effect in-combination), as explained below. |
| Categories K and L: | Policies or proposals not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination (K) or likely to have a significant effect in-combination (L) after the in-combination test. Where an aspect of a plan could have some effect on the qualifying feature(s) or a European site, but the effects of that aspect of the plan alone would not be significant, the effects of that aspect of the plan will need to be checked in-combination firstly, with other effects of the same plan, and then with the effects of other plans and projects. |

3.5 Potential Impacts Pathways

During the HRA screening stage, the likely nature, magnitude, frequency, timing, duration, location and spatial extent of changes resulting from implementation of the Local Plan will be assessed. As a part of this, mechanisms through which the Fylde Local Plan could impact upon European sites will be considered. Further details on the potential impact pathways are presented in Section 6.1.

The main impact pathways could be:

- Direct habitat and species loss within European sites.
- Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution.

- Loss of habitat functionally linked to a European site (i.e. used by overwintering birds for foraging).
- Disturbance to habitats and species through increased recreational activity, during operational stage.
- Changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to European sites.
- Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage.

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, within a 20km 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 Fylde Local Plan and hence identify whether features of European sites outside of the Borough may be affected by the Fylde 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). European sites within 20km of the boundary of Fylde were considered.

4.2 European Sites within Fylde

Four European sites have been identified on within the Fylde Borough boundary. These are listed in Table 3. Figure 4-1 also shows the locations of the European sites.

Table 3: 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 Revised Preferred Option Local Plan was reviewed and, in conjunction with the parallel Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the following potential impact types, shown in Table 4, were identified that may have some effect on European sites and their qualifying species.

Table 4: 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. |

4.3.2 Sites outside of Fylde identified due to mobile species

The mobile species listed in Table 5 are qualifying features of European designated sites outside of Fylde and have been identified as potentially using (non-designated) land within Fylde that could be affected by the Fylde Local Plan or use watercourses or areas downstream of Fylde which may be affected by hydrogeological changes.

Table 5: 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 breeding beaches. | Morecambe Bay SPA within Fylde. | Morecambe Bay SPA is already included. |
| 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. | Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included. Features for which the Bowland Fells SPA has been designated have potential to use land within Fylde. |
| Ringed Plover | Largely resident bird, that breeds on beaches around the coast, but has also now been recorded breeding inland in sand and gravel pits and former industrial sites. Nests 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. |

| Species | Relevant information about distribution | European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde | Reason for inclusion or otherwise |
|-------------------|--|---|--|
| 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 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. | 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. |
| 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. |

| Species | Relevant information about distribution | European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde | Reason for inclusion or otherwise |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| 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 along seawalls and jetties. | Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site within Fylde. | Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site are already included. |
| 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. |

| Species | Relevant information about distribution | European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde | Reason for inclusion or otherwise |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Wigeon | <p>Wintering bird, large numbers found on the coast.</p> <p>Wigeon is largely a coastal species, feeding on mud-flats, coastal flooded grassland and saltmarsh pastures. The species is also widespread on inland flooded grassland⁴.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site) and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site all within Fylde.</p> <p>Martin Mere Ramsar site outside Fylde.</p> | <p>Features for which the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar is designated have potential to use land within Fylde. Wet grassland may constitute functionally linked land in relation to this species.</p> |
| Goldeneye | <p>Wintering bird in the area found on lakes, large rivers and sheltered coasts.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.</p> |
| Red-breasted merganser | <p>UK birds start to flock on the coast from July, reaching a peak in December.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.</p> |
| Northern lapwing | <p>In the breeding season prefer spring sown cereals, root crops, 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.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site within Fylde.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site is included.</p> |
| Bar-tailed godwit | <p>Largest numbers occur on large estuaries – wintering bird.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site, Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site all within Fylde.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.</p> |
| Black-tailed godwit | <p>Estuaries and coastal lagoons though they also visit wetland sites inland.</p> | <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site both within Fylde.</p> | <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.</p> |
| Teal | <p>In winter birds congregate in low-lying wetlands.</p> | <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site both within Fylde.</p> | <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site are already included.</p> |

⁴<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/UKSPA/UKSPA-A6-28B.pdf> accessed 10/10/15

| Species | Relevant information about distribution | European sites supporting this species in and surrounding Fylde | Reason for inclusion or otherwise |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| 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. |

4.3.3 Relevant European Sites Outside of Fylde

As a result of Table 5, the following European designated sites outside Fylde will be considered further in this Screening Report.

Table 6: 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 (as amended) 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 Commission⁵ 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 B⁶.

⁵ Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

⁶ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/4582026845880320> accessed 10/10/15

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 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 Section 4. 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.

All strategic and non-strategic sites were carried forward into the detailed screening assessment.

When identifying the elements of the Fylde 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 3.3 was very important for the detailed screening.

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.

5.3 Initial Screening of the Local Plan Policies

The initial screening of the Fylde Local Plan is presented in Table 7 below.

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

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

Table 7: Initial Screening of the Local Plan

| European Sites | National, Regional and Sub-regional Policy | The Development Strategy | Strategic Locations for Development, Strategic Development Sites and Non-Strategic Development Sites | General Development Policies | The Fylde Economy | Provision of Homes in Fylde | Health and Wellbeing | Infrastructure, Services Provision and Transport | Water Resource Management, Flood Risk and Addressing Climate Change | Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Historic 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 |
| Sefton Coast SAC | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Martin Mere SPA | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Martin Mere Ramsar | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Bowland Fells SPA | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Policies Screened In | | S1, DLF1 | SL1, SL2, SL3, SL4, M1 | GD4, GD5 | EC1, EC4, EC5, EC6 | | | INF1, T1, T2 | CL3 | |
| Policies Screened out | NP1 | | | GD1, GD2, GD3, GD6, GD7, GD8 | EC2, EC3 | H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7 | HW1, HW2, HW3, HW4 | INF2, T3, T4 | CL1, CL2, CL4 | ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV4, ENV5, ENV6 |

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. Table 8 provide a justification for the policies screened out of further assessment.

Table 8: Policies screened out of further assessment

| Policy | Justification | Assessment Category |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| National, Regional and Sub-regional Policy: NP1 | Policy NP1 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and would not lead directly to any impacts on European sites. | D |
| General Development Policies: GD1, GD2, GD3, GD6, GD7, GD8 | Policies GD1 GD2, GD3 relate to issues such as settlement boundaries, retaining green belts and maintaining an area of separation between settlements. GD6 and GD7 relate to the requirement to provide mixed development. GD8 relates to demonstrating the viability of any development planned on existing premises. There is no impact pathway from the implementation of these policies to the European sites. | F |
| The Fylde Economy: EC2, EC3 | The implementation of policy EC2 provides for continued support of Lancashire AEM Enterprise Centre at BAE systems. Policy EC3 supports existing employment sites. As these sites already exist, impacts on European sites are unlikely. | G |
| Provision of Homes in Fylde: H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7 | Policies H1 to H7 relate to the allocation of housing, density and mix of residential developments, conversion of buildings to residential, providing 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 impacts on European sites. | G |
| Health and Wellbeing: HW1, HW2, HW3, HW4 | Policies HW1, HW2 and HW4 concern the reduction of health inequalities through the integration of public health principles and planning, the integration of community and health facilities and the use of contaminated land for development. The implementation of these Policies is not expected to have any implications on European sites. Policy HW3 concerns the provision of indoor and outdoor sport facilities, and the requirement for these to be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Therefore these facilities will be located near urban areas and therefore are unlikely to have an impact on European sites. | G |
| Infrastructure, Services Provision and Transport: | Policy INF2 concerns developer contributions to infrastructure development and has no direct impact on European sites. | G |

| Policy | Justification | Assessment Category |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| INF2, T3, T4 | T3 relates to enhancing sustainable transport choice and T4 parking standards, which will have no adverse impact on the European sites. | |
| Water Resource Management, Flood Risk and Addressing Climate Change: CL1, CL2, CL4 | Policy CL1 concerns flood alleviation, water quality and water efficiency. Policy CL2 relates to surface water run-off and sustainable drainage. Policy CL4 promotes small scale decentralised energy networks and district heating system. None of these policies are anticipated to have adverse impacts on the European sites. | D |
| Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Historic and Built Environment: ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV4, ENV5, ENV6 | Policy ENV1 is related to the protection of the landscape and its character, by reducing visual impact. Policy ENV 2 provides protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Policy ENV 3 restrict development in the Nature Improvement area unless opportunities for habitat management or creation are possible. Policies ENV4 and ENV5 are concerned with protecting (4) and new provision (5) of open space and the green infrastructure network. Policy ENV6 relates to heritage assets. The implementation of these policies is considered to have no adverse impacts and possibly some beneficial effects on the European sites. | D |

Table 9 provides a justification for the policies screened in for further assessment.

Table 9: The policies screened in for further assessment

| Policy | Justification |
|--|---|
| The Development Strategy: S1, DLF1 | Policy S1 and policy DLF1 provide a proposed settlement hierarchy for the district and development locations for Fylde respectively. These policies aim to focus development in key services centres as a top priority, followed by local service centres, tier 1 larger rural settlements and tier two smaller rural settlements consecutively. Some development will be located in rural areas, therefore, there are potential impacts on European sites as a result of the implementation of these policies. |
| Strategic Locations for Development, Strategic Development Sites and Non-Strategic Development Sites: SL1, SL2, SL3, SL4, M1 | Policies SL1, SL2, SL3, SL4 and M1 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. |
| General Development Policies: GD4, GD5 | Policy GD4 concerns development in the countryside, specifically restricting this to that needed for agriculture, horticulture or forestry, however this does included building of some new homes in the countryside. Policy GD5 concerns the redevelopment of large developed sites in the countryside. Such developments policies GD4 and GD5 has the potential to affect European sites. |

| Policy | Justification |
|--|---|
| <p>The Fylde Economy: EC1, EC4, EC5, EC6</p> | <p>Policy EC1 concerns the overall provision of employment land, the development of which may lead to impacts on European sites. Policy 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.</p> <p>Policy EC4 relates to maintaining town centres predominantly, however, edge of or out of town centres will be considered. This has the potential to impact upon European sites.</p> <p>Policy EC5 and EC6 are linked to encouraging tourism and therefore likely to have an impact on European sites through increased disturbance, despite development being focussed in towns.</p> |
| <p>Infrastructure, Services Provision and Transport: INF1, T1, T2</p> | <p>Policy INF1 relates to the provision of new sustainable infrastructure in relation to new developments. Construction of new infrastructure may have potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| <p>Water Resource Management, Flood Risk and Addressing Climate Change: CL3</p> | <p>Policy CL3 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.</p> |

6 Detailed Screening of the Fylde Local Plan Policies and Sites

The detailed screening of the Fylde Local Plan policies and sites (strategic and non-strategic) in relation to the European Sites is presented in Tables 10 to 12, and is based on the findings of the initial screening exercise.

In Table 10, where a policy is implemented through a later policy within the Fylde Local Plan (which specifies particular strategic sites), the potential for significant effects on European sites have been categorised in accordance with the classification for the later policy. For example, Policies S1 and DLF1 are implemented through the Strategic Locations for Development policies (presented in Table 11).

When assessing non-strategic sites (Table 12), the sites have been grouped into one of four categories (based on their type, size or location), in order to avoid unnecessary repetition in the table.

The detailed screening of the Fylde Local Plan policies and sites (strategic and non-strategic) comprised details of the potential impacts (refer to Section 6.1), avoidance and mitigation potential (refer to Section 6.2) and whether further Appropriate Assessment would be required (refer to Section 6.3). Each policy and site also included a categorisation of the potential effects in line with current guidance² (refer to Section 3.3).

6.1 Potential Impacts

The following potential impacts have been considered:

Direct habitat and species loss associated with European sites

Construction works could result in the direct destruction of habitats, leading to a net loss in the extent of habitat area. The southern extent of Morecambe Bay SAC/ SPA/Ramsar is situated on the northern boundary of the Borough, and the Ribble and Alt SPA/Ramsar site is located on the southern boundary of the Borough. None of the proposed strategic and non-strategic sites are within a designated site so direct habitat loss is not anticipated with new housing and employment sites. However, improving coastal defences (listed under Policy E5) could have a direct effect on coastal habitat, and may exacerbate coastal squeeze which could reduce the availability of foraging/roosting habitat for over-wintering bird species associated with the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site and Morecombe Bay SPA/Ramsar site.

Mortality of birds as a result of collision with new renewable energy projects (Policy CL3), including wind and solar farm developments, could also affect species associated with European Sites.

Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution

Changes in air quality from increased traffic and development could have impacts on European sites. For example, changes in air quality as a result of increased population and road traffic may affect habitats that are sensitive to increased nitrogen deposition. In addition, 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.

Any construction sites or routes used by construction vehicles within 50m of a European site⁷; and any European site within 200m of the main access roads used by HGVs accessing the site⁸ could lead to significant effects and would require assessment at the project level.

Loss of habitat functionally linked to a European site (i.e. used by overwintering birds for foraging)

Functionally linked land is considered to be any land outside of the European designated site which is used by species that are qualifying interest features of that designated site. In relation to this Screening Report, this includes land used by qualifying bird species during the wintering and on passage period for foraging or roosting, such as pink-footed geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*). In order to inform this assessment, information has been provided by Natural England on the distribution of feeding pink-footed geese in the area⁹. A five point scale has been used by Natural England to reflect the relative abundance of the geese recorded in a 1km square, called the 'Goose Index'. Each square, where geese have been recorded feeding, has been weighted according to how many times they have been recorded, as well as how many birds were actually counted. The draft map provided indicates that pink-footed geese have been recorded feeding in five 1km squares within the Fylde Borough; and have been recorded flying through within 15, 1km squares within the Borough.

A number of the proposed land allocations are within land which could potentially constitute functionally-linked land. These developments could lead to habitat loss for foraging birds associated with Morecombe Bay SPA/ Ramsar site, the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site and Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar.

Disturbance to habitats and species through increased recreational activity, during operational stage

An increase in population (as a result of new development and improved road infrastructure) could result in increased recreational pressure as a result of additional people in an area and the consequent increases in people visiting the European sites. A Recreational disturbance Study carried out by Footprint Ecology for the Morecambe Bay Partnership¹⁰ identified that visitors to Morecambe Bay who were on a day-trip/short visit from home travelled a median distance of 3.454km to get to the designated site.

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

⁷ Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM), Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction (2014)

⁸ Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Section 3, Part 1, HA 207/07 – Air Quality, Highways Agency, 2007.

⁹ Pink-footed geese Ribble and Alt Estuary Martin Mere. A draft map showing the distribution of pink-footed geese records using the 'Goose index' produced by Natural England (21/07/2015).

¹⁰ Liley, D., Underhill-Day, J., Panter, C., Marsh, P. & Roberts, J. (2015). Morecambe Bay Bird Disturbance and Access Management Report. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for the Morecambe Bay Partnership

visit Morecambe Bay SAC (approximately 9km from Fylde), Sefton Coast SAC (approximately 9km from Fylde) and/or the Bowland Fells SPA (approximately 15km from Fylde) 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. However, the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar is within close proximity for residents of Fylde. Therefore, increased disturbance to birds (as a result of recreational pressure) at this European site is thought to be most likely.

Changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to European sites

Changes in water quality as a result of new development could have impacts on European sites. For example, increased risk of potential pollution incidents, and potential increases in suspended sediments resulting in ecological effects, such as the direct loss of habitats caused by re-deposition of suspended sediment, and the consequential health or mortality effects on prey species, particularly invertebrates associated with the intertidal mudflats.

Although Sefton Coast SAC, Morecambe Bay SAC/SPA/ Ramsar site and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar site have all been identified as being hydrologically linked to watercourses within Fylde; adverse impacts on water quality are considered to be unlikely as all new developments would follow strict water quality/pollution prevention measures, such as the Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPG).

A review of aquifers has also 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. However, the likelihood is 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 as all drinking water is sourced from outside the Borough, in the Lake District, with no impact pathway to the European sites.

Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage

There is the potential to disturb species associated with European sites, in particular birds, during the construction and operational phases of new developments. Disturbance could occur as a result of increased visual, noise, vibration and lighting, with a resultant potential loss of fitness and the consequential health or mortality effects on birds and their prey species. Fragmentation effects could also cause a barrier to the movement and dispersal of species, thereby limiting access to foraging opportunities.

In addition, a number of the strategic and non-strategic sites are located adjacent to land which could potentially constitute functionally-linked land. These developments could lead to significant effects, in terms of noise and visual disturbance (during both the construction and operational phase of new developments). This could affect foraging birds, associated with Morecombe Bay SPA/ Ramsar site, the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site and Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar.

6.2 Avoidance and Mitigation Potential

The detailed screening included consideration of possible mitigation or avoidance measures.

The numbered mitigation measures presented in Tables 11 and 12 are as follows:

1. Include a clause stating that in order to avoid pollutants entering sensitive watercourses during maintenance and construction works, all operations should be undertaken in accordance with the current pollution prevention guidance, such as PPG Note 5 'Works in, near or over watercourses' and PPG Note 6 'Construction and Demolition sites.'
2. Carry out further desk study of proposed land allocations (such as MUS2 and HSS1) which are on, or adjacent to agricultural fields (which could constitute functionally linked land associated with designated sites) to determine the importance, or otherwise, of the proposed land allocation for birds.
3. Include a clause to the effect that development that results in significant adverse effects on European sites, shall not be permitted.
4. Include a clause to include reference to avoiding areas which could potentially constitute functionally linked land used by species associated with European sites, such as pink-footed geese.
5. Include a clause to indicate that new footpaths incorporated as part of the development should direct people away from areas which could potentially constitute functionally linked land, or European protected areas.

6.3 Further Assessment

The Fylde Local Plan policies and sites were examined in detail to determine the need for further Assessment.

In a number of cases, it was not possible to conclude that a policy has no likely significant effects. In these instances, it was considered that potential impacts would be more readily determined at a project level (rather than the plan level). At the project level, more detailed information about each site would be available, and therefore a more informed assessment could be made of the potential impacts on European sites.

Table 10: Detailed Screening of Fylde Local Plan Policies on European Sites within and outside of Fylde

| Local Plan Policy | Potential Impacts on European Sites | European Sites Potentially Affected | Potential Impacts on functionally-linked land associated with the European Sites | Assessment Category | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential | Appropriate Assessment Required? |
|---|---|---|--|---------------------|--|---|
| <p>S1: The proposed Settlement Hierarchy</p> <p>Policy DLF1 – Development locations in Fylde</p> | <p>Policy S1 provides details on the preferences of where development will ideally be focused and Policy DLF1 goes into further detail about the location of strategic locations for development, using the hierarchy laid out in Policy S1.</p> <p>These policies are implemented through later policies in the Local Plan, in this case the Strategic Locations for Development policies. The Strategic Locations for Development (as set out in Table 11 below) has the potential for significant effects on European sites and this policy is therefore classified in accordance with the classification for the Strategic Locations.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar</p> | <p>The main focus of the settlement hierarchy is concentrating development around key service centres and local areas that are already developed. However, the hierarchy does still include development in rural areas and some arable fields within close proximity to key service centres. As a number of the Strategic Locations for Development are located on arable land, impacts on species using land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites are possible.</p> | H | <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 land which could constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites and biodiversity may help avoid any significant effects.</p> | <p>No likely significant effect.</p> <p>Project level HRA has been undertaken for site HSS1 which confirmed no likely significant effect (with mitigation in place).</p> <p>A shadow HRA has been produced for MUS2 by the applicant which concluded no likely significant effect. On the basis of information provided, Natural England concurs with this view. Fylde Council have yet to produce an assessment, but it is likely that they too will conclude No Likely Significant Effect .</p> |
| <p>Policy M1 – Masterplanning the strategic locations for development</p> | <p>Policy M1 provides the criteria that the Fylde Local Plan requires developers to meet. A number of the considerations relate to the environment and ecology and are aimed at reducing the impact of development. However, the Strategic Locations for Development (as set out in Table 11 below) has the potential for significant effects on European sites and this policy is therefore classified in accordance with the classification for the Strategic Locations.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar</p> | <p>The criteria in this policy does not currently include consideration of land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites. As a number of the Strategic Locations for Development are located on arable land, impacts on species using land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites are possible.</p> | H | <p>A strengthening of this strategic Policy to include reference to land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites may help avoid any significant effects.</p> | <p>No likely significant effect.</p> <p>Project level HRA has been undertaken for site HSS1 which confirmed no likely significant effect (with mitigation in place).</p> <p>A shadow HRA has been produced for MUS2 by the applicant which concluded no likely significant effect. On the basis of information provided, Natural England concurs with this view. Fylde Council have yet to produce an assessment, but it is likely that they too will conclude No Likely Significant Effect.</p> |
| <p>General Development Policies:</p> <p>GD4 Development in the Countryside</p> <p>GD5 Large Development Sites on Land outside of Settlement Boundaries</p> | <p>Policy GD4 concerns development in the countryside. Policy GD5 allows complete or partial redevelopment of certain sites, outside of settlement boundaries, under certain criteria. It should be noted that redevelopment is not restricted to those sites listed in GD5. Impacts on European sites outside Fylde are unlikely to be significant, given the small scale nature of such development. There should not be any additional road building or major infrastructure expenditure as a result of any proposals to redevelop these areas.</p> <p>However, potential impacts on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar relate to potential increases in pollution incidents if the sites are hydrologically-linked to proposed development areas. There is also likely to be an increase in recreational pressure on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar associated with development on these sites.</p> | <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar</p> | <p>Given that there would be no loss of agricultural land associated with these policies, no significant effects on land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites, are anticipated.</p> | H | <p>Include a clause stating that in order to avoid pollutants entering sensitive watercourses during maintenance and construction works, all operations should be undertaken in accordance with relevant guidance.</p> <p>Also, include a clause to indicate that new footpaths incorporated as part of the development should direct people away from areas which could potentially constitute functionally linked land, or European protected areas.</p> | <p>No likely significant effect</p> |
| <p>The Fylde Economy:</p> <p>EC1: Overall Provision of Employment Land and existing employment sites.</p> | <p>This policy sets out the overall provision of employment land and existing employment sites. This policy is implemented through later policies in the Local Plan, in this case Lytham and St Annes (Policy SL1), Fylde-Blackpool periphery (Policy SL2), and Kirkham and Wesham (Policy SL4) Strategic Location for Development policies. These Strategic Locations for Development (as set out in Table 11 below) have the potential for significant effects on European sites and this policy is therefore classified in accordance with the classification for the Strategic Locations.</p> | <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar</p> | <p>Given that there would be no loss of agricultural land associated with this policy, no significant effects on land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites are anticipated.</p> | H | <p>Include a clause stating that in order to avoid pollutants entering sensitive watercourses during maintenance and construction works, all operations should be undertaken in accordance with relevant guidance.</p> | <p>No likely significant effect</p> |

| Local Plan Policy | Potential Impacts on European Sites | European Sites Potentially Affected | Potential Impacts on functionally-linked land associated with the European Sites | Assessment Category | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential | Appropriate Assessment Required? |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| <p>The Fylde Economy: EC5: Leisure, Culture and Tourism Development. Including physical regeneration and enhancement of the manmade coastal defences at The Island Sea Front Area, Fairhaven Lake and Church Scar. EC6: 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 potential for more frequent pollution incidents.</p> <p>Improved coastal defences may also exacerbate coastal squeeze and reduce the availability of foraging/roosting habitat for over-wintering bird species associated with the European site.</p> | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | Given that there would be no loss of agricultural land associated with these policies, no significant effects on of land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites are anticipated. | I | <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)</p> <p>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 Policies ENV1 and ENV2, 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>HRA Screening</p> <p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage.</p> <p>Potential for significant indirect effects, as these policies provide for development that is very close to European sites and may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures.</p> <p>Further HRA Screening would be required at a project level to confirm potential effects on European sites.</p> |
| <p>Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport:</p> <p>INF1 Service Accessibility and Infrastructure</p> | <p>Flood risk management and coastal defences form part of this policy. Any work on coastal defences have the potential to adversely affect the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar, through disturbance and an increased risk of pollution events where sites are hydrologically linked to the European site.</p> <p>Construction of transport infrastructure could make European sites more accessible and therefore increase disturbance. However, the risk is low that residents in Fylde will choose to visit Morecambe Bay SAC, Sefton Coast SAC and/or the Bowland Fells SPA in preference to more local destinations.</p> <p>The construction of a new community facilities within strategic locations for development is welcomed in line with sustainable development principles. However, adverse impacts on air quality as a result of increased population and road traffic may affect habitats in close proximity to the developments.</p> | Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar | <p>Developments under this policy could be located on arable fields. Therefore impacts on species using land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites are possible.</p> <p>In addition, road development has the potential to increase access to functionally linked land and therefore increase disturbance at such sites.</p> | I | <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)</p> <p>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>HRA Screening</p> <p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage.</p> <p>Potential for significant indirect effects, as these policies provide for development that is very close to European sites and may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures.</p> <p>Further HRA Screening would be required at a project level to confirm potential effects on European sites.</p> |
| <p>Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport:</p> <p>T1 Strategic Highway Improvements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a) The M55 to Heyhouses (St Annes) Link Road; 2. b) The M55 to Norcross Link Road (i.e. the Blue Route); and 3. c) The A585 Skippool – Windy Harbour Improvements. | <p>Policy T1 relates to new road construction to facilitate new development.</p> <p>Water quality may be affected where there are hydrological links 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.</p> <p>There is also the potential for adverse impacts on air quality as a result of increased population and road traffic, which may affect habitats in close proximity to the new roads.</p> | Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar | <p>The habitat lost through road development is likely to be arable or pastoral and as such is likely to be located on land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites.</p> <p>Road development also has the potential to increase access to functionally linked land and therefore increase disturbance at such sites.</p> | H (The M55 to Heyhouses (St Annes) Link Road) I (remaining schemes) | <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).</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>HRA Screening</p> <p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage.</p> <p>Potential for significant effects, as this policy provides for new road development that is located on land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites. It may also increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures.</p> <p>Further HRA Screening would be required at a project level to confirm potential effects on European sites.</p> <p>Further HRA has been undertaken for The M55 to Heyhouses (St Annes) Link Road. The HRA confirmed no likely significant effect (with mitigation in place).</p> |

| Local Plan Policy | Potential Impacts on European Sites | European Sites Potentially Affected | Potential Impacts on functionally-linked land associated with the European Sites | Assessment Category | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential | Appropriate Assessment Required? |
|---|--|---|---|---------------------|---|---|
| <p>Infrastructure, Service Provision and Transport:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>An HRA of future development proposals is likely to be required.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar</p> <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar</p> <p>Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar</p> | <p>The habitat lost through expansion of Blackpool Airport is likely to be arable or pastoral and as such is likely to be located on land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites.</p> | I | <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).</p> <p>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 European sites before it can be granted consent.</p> | <p>HRA Screening</p> <p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage.</p> <p>Potential for significant effects, as this policy provides for new development that could be located on land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites.</p> <p>Further HRA Screening would be required at a project level to confirm potential effects on European sites.</p> |
| <p>Sustaining the Environment and Addressing Climate Change:</p> <p>CL3 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation</p> | <p>This policy provides for development of renewable energy Schemes, such as wind and solar farms. 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. The risk of avian collision at solar farms (birds mistaking panels for water) should also be considered at the individual proposal stage.</p> <p>HRAs of future development proposals are likely to be required.</p> | <p>Morecambe Bay SPA/ Ramsar</p> <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar</p> <p>Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar</p> | <p>Renewable energy Schemes on arable land could result in the loss of land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites.</p> | I | <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).</p> <p>The Policy should also state that project-specific HRA of any wind farm or solar park 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>HRA Screening</p> <p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage.</p> <p>Potential for significant effects, as this policy provides for new development that could be located on land which could potentially constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites.</p> <p>Further HRA Screening would be required at a project level to confirm potential effects on European sites.</p> |

Table 11: Detailed Screening of Fylde Local Plan Strategic Sites on European Sites within and outside of Fylde

| Local Plan Strategic Site | European Sites Potentially Affected | Potential Impacts | | | | | | Assessment Category | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential | Appropriate Assessment Required? |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | Direct habitat and species loss within European sites | Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution | 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 operational stage | Changes in water Quality | Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage | | | |
| Strategic Locations for Development : | | | | | | | | | | |
| The policies listed below identify the site-specific detail of where development is to be located within Fylde. | | | | | | | | | | |
| SL1 Lytham and St Annes Strategic Location for Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| HSS1 - Queensway, St Annes | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | J | 2,3,4,5 | Project level HRA has been undertaken for this Scheme and confirmed no likely significant effect (with mitigation in place). |
| HSS2 - Heyhouses Lane, St Annes | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| HSS3 - Lytham Quays, Lytham (built/ under construction) | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | H | 1 | No likely significant effect |
| Strategic Locations for Development : | | | | | | | | | | |
| The policies listed below identify the site-specific detail of where development is to be located within Fylde. | | | | | | | | | | |
| SL2 Blackpool Periphery Strategic Location for Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| HSS4 - Coastal Dunes, Clifton Drive North, Blackpool Airport Corridor | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | H | 1 | No likely significant effect |
| MUS1 - Cropper Road East, Whitehills | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | 1 | No likely significant effect |
| MUS2 - Whyndyke Farm, Preston New Road, Whitehills | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | 1 | A shadow HRA has been produced for MUS2 by the applicant which concluded no likely significant effect. On the basis of information provided, Natural England concurs with this view. Fylde Council have yet to produce an assessment, but it is likely that they too will conclude No Likely Significant Effect |
| HSS5 - Cropper Road West, Whitehills | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| HSS6 - Land at Lytham St Annes Way, Whitehills (built/ under construction) | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| Strategic Locations for Development : | | | | | | | | | | |
| The policies listed below identify the site-specific detail of where development is to be located within Fylde. | | | | | | | | | | |
| SL3 Warton Strategic Location for Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| HSS7 - Highgate Park, Lytham Road, Warton | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |

| Local Plan Strategic Site | European Sites Potentially Affected | Potential Impacts | | | | | | Assessment Category | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential | Appropriate Assessment Required? |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | Direct habitat and species loss within European sites | Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution | 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 operational stage | Changes in water Quality | Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage | | | |
| Strategic Locations for Development : The policies listed below identify the site-specific detail of where development is to be located within Fylde. | | | | | | | | | | |
| SL4 Kirkham and Wesham Strategic Location for Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| HSS8 - The Pastures, Fleetwood Road, Wesham (built/ under construction) | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| HSS9 - Land North of Blackpool Road, Kirkham (built/ under construction) | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| HSS10 - Willowfields, Derby Road, Wesham (built/ under construction) | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| Fylde-Blackpool Periphery Strategic Location for Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| ES4 - Blackpool & Fylde Industrial Estate, Whitehills | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | x | x | ✓ | G | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| ES5 - Blackpool Airport, Squires Gate Lane, Blackpool Airport Corridor | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | x | x | ✓ | G | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| ES6 - ITSA, Brunel Way, Whitehills | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | x | x | ✓ | G | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| ES7 - Whitehills Business Park, Whitehills | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | x | x | ✓ | G | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| Kirkham and Wesham Strategic Location for Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| MUS3 - Mill Farm Sports Village, Fleetwood Road, Wesham (built/ under construction) | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| The Fylde Economy: EC1 Overall Provision of Employment Land and existing employment sites. The following sites are listed under this policy. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lytham and St Annes Strategic Location for Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| ES1 - Queensway Industrial Estate, Snowden Road, St Annes | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/ Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| ES2 - Dock Road, Lytham | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | x | ✓ | ✓ | H | 1 | No likely significant effect |

| Local Plan Strategic Site | European Sites Potentially Affected | Potential Impacts | | | | | | Assessment Category | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential | Appropriate Assessment Required? |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | Direct habitat and species loss within European sites | Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution | 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 operational stage | Changes in water Quality | Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage | | | |
| ES3 - Boundary Road, Lytham | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | x | ✓ | ✓ | H | 1 | No likely significant effect |

Table 12: Detailed Screening of Fylde Local Plan Non-Strategic Sites on European Sites within and outside of Fylde

| Local Plan Non-Strategic Sites (sites underlined are under construction/ built) | European Sites Potentially Affected | Potential Impacts | | | | | | Assessment Category | Avoidance and Mitigation Potential | Appropriate Assessment Required? |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|--------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | Direct habitat and species loss within European sites | Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution | 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 operational stage | Changes in water Quality | Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage | | | |
| Sites adjacent to coastal areas <u>HS-SA2</u> , HS-LY2, HS-SA6, HS-SA12, HS-SA13, HS-BP1, HS-BP3, ES8 | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | H | 1,5 | No likely significant effect |
| Sites associated with re-development of amenity grassland or small pastoral housing developments HS-LY3, HS-SA4, HS-SA5, HS-SA7, HS-SA8, HS-SA9, HS-SA10, HS-SA11, HS-LY4, HS-SA14, HS-BP2, <u>HS-WA1</u> , HS-WA3, HS-WS2, HS-WS3, <u>HS-WS4</u> , HS-KI4, HS-KI5, HS-FR1, HS-FR2, HS-FR3, HS-ST3, HS-ST4, <u>HS-WG1</u> , HS-WG3, HS-WG4, <u>HS-WG5</u> , HS-CL2, HS-NE2, HS-SI1, HS-WE1, HS-GR1, , HS-LY5, <u>HS-ST5</u> , HS-NE1, <u>HS-WS1</u> , HS-LS1 | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| Employment sites <u>2ld,2Ja, 2Jb, 2Jc,2J,14,16,22,26, 1W,2Jd,36, X1,X2,X3,X4</u> | Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | x | x | x | ✓ | G | N/A | No likely significant effect |
| Housing developments on land which could constitute functionally linked land associated with European sites <u>HS-WA2</u> , HS-LY6, <u>HS-WG2</u> , <u>HS-CL1</u> | Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | H | 4 | No likely significant effect |

6.4 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 (refer to Tables 7 to 9). All of the strategic and non-strategic sites were carried forward into the detailed screening assessment.

Potential impacts identified comprised:

- Direct habitat and species loss within European sites.
- Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution.
- Loss of habitat functionally linked to a European site (i.e. used by overwintering birds for foraging, in particular pink-footed geese).
- Disturbance to habitats and species through increased recreational activity, during the operational stage.
- Changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to European sites.
- Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage.

It is considered that any air quality, water quality or hydrological effects that may arise from the Fylde Local Plan policies are very unlikely to be significant, given the distance between the European Sites and the majority of the development. The implementation of standard mitigation measures that are required of developments (such as pollution prevention) to meet with National Policies and frameworks also provide a further 'safety net' to ensure that significant damage to European Sites is avoided.

6.4.1 Local Plan Policies

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 current guidance.¹¹ (refer to Table 10). Where a policy is implemented through a later policy within the Fylde Local Plan (which specifies particular strategic sites), the potential for significant effects on European sites have been categorised in accordance with the classification for the later policy. In this instance, policies S1, DLF1, M1 and EC1 are implemented through the Strategic Locations for Development policies (refer to Table 10).

No significant effects on European sites are considered likely as a result of the Policies GD4 and GD5 (General Development Policies). Potential impacts associated with these policies relate to air quality, water quality or hydrological effects, which as described previously, would be readily avoided through standard mitigation measures that are required of developments (such as

¹¹ The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2015).

pollution prevention).

For the remaining policies (EC5, EC6, INF1, T1, T2 and CL3), it is not possible to conclude no likely significant effects, as sufficient information to inform the assessment is not currently available at this early stage of the Fylde Local Plan. However, it is considered that any potential effects associated with the policies could be resolved through the recommended changes to the policies, set out in Table 10, and through further project level HRA Screening (where appropriate). At the project level, more detailed information about each site would be available, and therefore a more informed assessment could be made of the potential effects on European sites.

6.4.2 Local Plan (Strategic Sites)

The detailed screening of the Fylde Local Plan strategic sites (refer to Tables 11) has identified two Strategic Locations for Development (HSS1 and MUS2) that have the potential for significant effects on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, and the Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar. No significant effects on European sites were considered likely as a result of the remaining 19 strategic sites (either alone or in-combination with each other).

Both HSS1 and MUS2 are located on arable land. MUS2 is located within one of the 1km grid squares known to be used by foraging pink-footed geese¹² (refer to Section 6.1). HSS1 is also within fields which could constitute functionally linked land, and is directly to the west of a 1km grid square known to be used by foraging pink-footed geese. Both sites have undergone project-specific HRA. Project level HRA has been undertaken for site HSS1 which concluded that the Scheme would not have any significant effects on European sites alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects. A shadow HRA has been produced for MUS2 by the applicant which concluded no likely significant effect. On the basis of information provided, Natural England concurs with this view. Fylde Council have yet to produce an assessment, but it is likely that they too will conclude No Likely Significant Effect.

6.4.3 Local Plan (Non-strategic Sites)

Given their location (usually within or on the edge of urban settings) and small-size; no significant effects on European sites were considered likely as a result of the development of the non-strategic sites within the Fylde Local Plan (either alone or in-combination with each other).

6.5 In-Combination Effects

The HRA needs to consider not only the 'screened in' policies and sites (strategic and non-strategic) 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 13 outlines relevant plans and projects that were considered in-combination with the Fylde Local Plan.

In addition, it is also necessary to consider in-combination effects between the various elements of the Fylde Local Plan itself.

¹² Pink-footed geese Ribble and Alt Estuary Martin Mere. A draft map showing the distribution of pink-footed geese records using the 'Goose index' produced by Natural England (21/07/2015).

6.5.1 Fylde Local Plan

Policies

It is not possible to conclude no likely significant in-combination effects in relation to policies EC5, EC6, INF1, T1, T2 and CL3, as sufficient information to inform the assessment is not currently available at this early stage of the Local Plan. However, it is considered that any potential in-combination effects associated with the policies could be resolved through the recommended changes to the policies (refer to Table 10), and at the project-level. At the project level, more detailed information about each site would be available, and therefore a more informed assessment could be made of the potential in-combination effects on European sites. Therefore, assuming appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are put in place at the project-level, it is considered unlikely that there would be significant in-combination effects between the policies within the Fylde Local Plan on European sites.

Strategic and non-strategic sites

It is considered unlikely that there would be significant in-combination effects on European sites as a result of the development of the strategic and non-strategic sites listed with Fylde Local Plan. Further HRA at the project level has been undertaken of strategic sites (HSS1 and MUS2). In both instances, it was determined that there would be no significant effects on European sites in-combination and other plans or projects outside of Fylde.

6.5.2 Other plans or projects

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 effects on European sites, associated with various elements of the Fylde Local Plan. Those effects with the potential to be significant are disturbance effects on birds during the construction and operation of new developments, the potential loss of important foraging habitat (in particular loss of land which could constitute functionally linked land associated with strategic sites HSS1 and MUS2), and possible mortality associated with wind and solar farm 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 13 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 European sites.

Of the plans reviewed, Table 13 illustrates the plans/projects that have been identified as potentially having an in-combination effect.

Table 13: In-combination effects

| Plan/project | Potential effect of plan/Policy | Conclusion |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Blackpool Council Local Plan | Provides for 4,200 dwellings and 180ha of employment land. Also, proposed enterprise zone at Blackpool Airport. Land-take has the potential to adversely affect land which | Assuming policies T2 and SL2 are strengthened in line with the recommendations, and assuming |

| Plan/project | Potential effect of plan/Policy | Conclusion |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>any specific proposals being brought forward are subject to project level HRA, it is considered that any in-combination impacts are likely to be not significant.</p> |
| Wyre Council | <p>The Local Plan assessed the need for 340-485 dwellings per annum, and improvements to the A585 (Skippool – Windy Harbour Improvements). 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.</p> | <p>This plan promotes the same Scheme as within Policy T1 (c) of the Fylde Local Plan. Assuming policies S1,DLF1 and T1 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 not significant.</p> |
| Lancaster City Council | <p>The Local Plan assessed the need for 13,000 – 14,000 new homes, 9500 new jobs and the Heysham to M6 Link (under construction). 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.</p> | <p>Assuming policies S1,DLF1 are strengthened in line with the recommendations, and any specific proposals being brought forward are subject to project level HRA, it is considered that any in-combination impacts are likely to be not significant.</p> |
| Lancashire County Council | <p>Land-take associated with the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan has the potential to adversely affect land which may be functionally linked to European Sites.</p> | <p>Assuming policies S1,DLF1 are strengthened in line with the recommendations, and any specific proposals being brought forward are subject to project level HRA, it is considered that any in-combination impacts are likely to be not significant.</p> |
| Preston City Council | <p>The plan provides a total requirement of 8,637 dwellings, 99.52ha of employment land, and road improvements at Junction 2 on M55 plus Preston Western Distributor Road, Cottam Parkway Railway Station accessed off Preston Western Distributor; and Broughton By Pass.</p> | <p>Assuming policies S1, and DLF1 are strengthened in line with the recommendations, and assuming any specific proposals being brought forward are subject to project level HRA, it is considered</p> |

| Plan/project | Potential effect of plan/Policy | Conclusion |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| | 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. | that any in-combination impacts are likely to be not significant. |
| West Lancashire District Council | The Local Plan 2012- 2027 identifies a need for 4,860 new dwellings and 75ha of employment land. 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. | Assuming policies S1 and DLF1 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 not significant. |
| South Ribble Council | The plan includes the road improvements schemes for duelling the A582 from Penwortham to Farington and completion of Penwortham bypass. Possible land-take for the Penwortham bypass, however, this is currently under construction. Land-take for duelling of the A582 likely to be small. No significant impacts on European sites envisaged. | Assuming policies S1 and DLF1 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 not significant. |
| Sefton Council | A total requirement for 11,070 dwellings, plus 84.5ha of employment land. 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. | Assuming policies S1 and DLF1 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 not significant. |
| Dong Energy | Walney offshore wind farm and west of Duddon sands wind farm are already in use, and the extension to Walney is currently under construction. Wind farm developments have the potential to effect mobile species associated with European sites, such as qualifying features of Morecombe Bay SPA/Ramsar, Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar and Marin Mere SPA/ Ramsar site. | No in-combination effects of the offshore wind farm on land based developments are considered likely. Therefore, there would be no in-combination effects associated with the Dong Energy developments. |
| North West Coastal Connections | Proposal for new power connections. Power will be transmitted via a crossing under Morecambe Bay to the new Middleton substation at Heysham, Lancashire. Potential impacts on European sites through fragmentation effects, disturbance during construction, collision with power cables and loss of functionally linked land. However, the only potential in-combination effect with the Fylde Local Plan would be through loss of functionally linked land. | A project-level HRA is currently being undertaken for this Scheme. Sufficient mitigation/ compensation would be incorporated into the Scheme, therefore, any in-combination impacts are likely to be not significant. |

7 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.

For policies EC5, EC6, INF1, T1, T2 and CL3, it has not been possible to conclude no likely significant effects, as sufficient information to inform the assessment is not currently available at this early stage of the Fylde Local Plan. However, it is considered that any potential effects associated with these policies could be resolved through the recommended changes to the policies, set out in Table 10, and through further project level HRA Screening (where appropriate). At the project level, more detailed information about each site would be available, and therefore a more informed assessment could be made of the potential effects on European sites.

The detailed screening of the Fylde Local Plan strategic sites (refer to Tables 11) has identified two Strategic Locations for Development (HSS1 and MUS2) that have the potential for significant effects on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, and the Morecambe Bay SPA/Ramsar. However, the effects arising from these strategic site allocations are considered unlikely to be substantial, and would only realistically be significant if combined with the pressures and threats exerted by other plans (refer to Section 6.5). Further HRA Screening at the project level has been undertaken of strategic site HSS1 which concluded that the Scheme would not have any significant effects on European sites alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects. A shadow HRA has been produced for MUS2 by the applicant which concluded no likely significant effect. On the basis of information provided, Natural England concurs with this view. Fylde Council have yet to produce an assessment, but it is likely that they too will conclude No Likely Significant Effect. None of the remaining strategic and non-strategic designated sites were considered likely to have significant effects on European sites alone, or in combination with other elements of the Fylde Local Plan or with other plans and projects adjacent to Fylde. The assessment of in-combination effects of the Fylde Local Plan itself, and the various plans and policies revealed that, providing the policies are strengthened in line with recommendations, and project level HRA is carried out where potential for significant effects has been identified; it is not considered that the Fylde Local Plan would contribute to significant in-combination effects.

It has therefore been concluded that, assuming appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are implemented at the project level, 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.

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> | <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> |

¹³ 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"> ▪ Sandbanks which are slightly 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> | <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 thorough 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"> ▪ Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> ▪ Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> <p>On passage;</p> <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</p> | | |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| | | <p>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 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> | 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"> ▪ 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great cormorant , <i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i> ▪ Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, ▪ Common eider , <i>Somateria mollissima mollissima</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>Numenius 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> | | |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--|---|---|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| | | <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 apricaria</i>, ▪ 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> | 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 | <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"> ▪ 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> <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> | <p>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 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</p> | |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl</p> | <p>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 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.</p> | |
| Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site | N/A | <p>Ramsar criterion 2</p> <p>This site supports up to 40% of the Great Britain population of natterjack toads <i>Bufo calamita</i>.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>222,038 waterfowl</p> | <p>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.</p> | See above. |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|-----------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| | | <p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.</p> <p>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> ▪ 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> | | |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 vegetation ('grey dunes') * Priority feature ▪ 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>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> | <p>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 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 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> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p> |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|---|---|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| 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 Statements, whilst problems of raptor persecution continues to be addressed by the RSPB in conjunction with North West Water, Natural England and Lancashire Constabulary.</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> |
| 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> | <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</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> |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|-----------|---------------------|---|--|---|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| | | <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>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 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</p> | <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p> |

| Site Name | Qualifying Features | | Current Condition and Vulnerability | Site Condition Assessment March 2013 |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Habitats | Species | | |
| | | | 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</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>25,306 waterfowl</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.</p> <p>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>, ▪ Whooper swan , <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, ▪ Eurasian wigeon , <i>Anas penelope</i>, ▪ Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, | N/A | See above. |

Appendix B

Conservation Objectives



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

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

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- **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 population of each of the qualifying features, and,**
- **The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.**

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

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 SPA is a part of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries European Marine Site (EMS). These Conservation Objectives should be used in conjunction with the Regulation 35 Conservation Advice document for the EMS. For further details about this please visit the Natural England website at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/protectandmanage/mpa/europeansites.aspx> or contact Natural England's enquiry service at enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk or by phone on 0845 600 3078.

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These 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. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where available) will also provide a framework to inform the management of the European Site under the provisions of Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Wild Birds Directive and the prevention of deterioration or significant disturbance of its qualifying features under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.



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

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

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

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 maritimae*)

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

These 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. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment', including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where available) will also provide a framework to inform the measures needed to conserve or restore the European Site and the prevention of deterioration or significant disturbance of its qualifying features as required by the provisions of Article 6(1) and 6(2) of the Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each habitat or species of a [Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving Favourable Conservation Status for that species or habitat type at a UK level. The term 'favourable conservation status' is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive.

Publication date: 30 June 2014 – version 2. This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 29 May 2012 to reflect Natural England's Strategic Standard on European Site Conservation Objectives 2014.



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

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

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- **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 population of each of the qualifying features, and,**
- **The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.**

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

Qualifying Features:

- A040 *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)
- A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)
- A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)
- A130 *Haematopus ostralegus*; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)
- A137 *Charadrius hiaticula*; Ringed 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)

A191 *Sterna sandvicensis*; Sandwich tern (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Seabird assemblage

This is a European Marine Site

This SPA is a part of the Morecambe Bay European Marine Site (EMS). These Conservation Objectives should be used in conjunction with the Regulation 35 Conservation Advice document for the EMS. For further details about this please visit the Natural England website at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/protectandmanage/mpa/europeansites.aspx> or contact Natural England's enquiry service at enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk or by phone on 0845 600 3078.

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These 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. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where this is available) will also provide a framework to inform the management of the European Site under the provisions of Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Wild Birds Directive, and the prevention of deterioration of habitats and significant disturbance of its qualifying features required under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.



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

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

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- 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 population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

Qualifying Features:

A082 *Circus cyaneus*; Hen harrier (Breeding)

A098 *Falco columbarius*; Merlin (Breeding)

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These 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. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where this is available) will also provide a framework to inform the management of the European Site under the provisions of Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Wild Birds Directive, and the prevention of deterioration of habitats and significant disturbance of its qualifying features required under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

Publication date: 30 June 2014 (Version 2). This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 29 May 2012 to reflect Natural England's Strategic Standard on European Site Conservation Objectives 2014. Previous references to additional features identified in the 2001 UK SPA Review have also been removed.



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

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

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- 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 population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

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

These 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. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where this is available) will also provide a framework to inform the management of the European Site under the provisions of Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Wild Birds Directive, and the prevention of deterioration of habitats and significant disturbance of its qualifying features required under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.

These Conservation Objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#). Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

Publication date: 30 June 2014 (Version 2). This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 29 May 2012 to reflect Natural England's Strategic Standard on European Site Conservation Objectives 2014. Previous references to additional features identified in the 2001 UK SPA Review have also been removed.



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

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

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

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

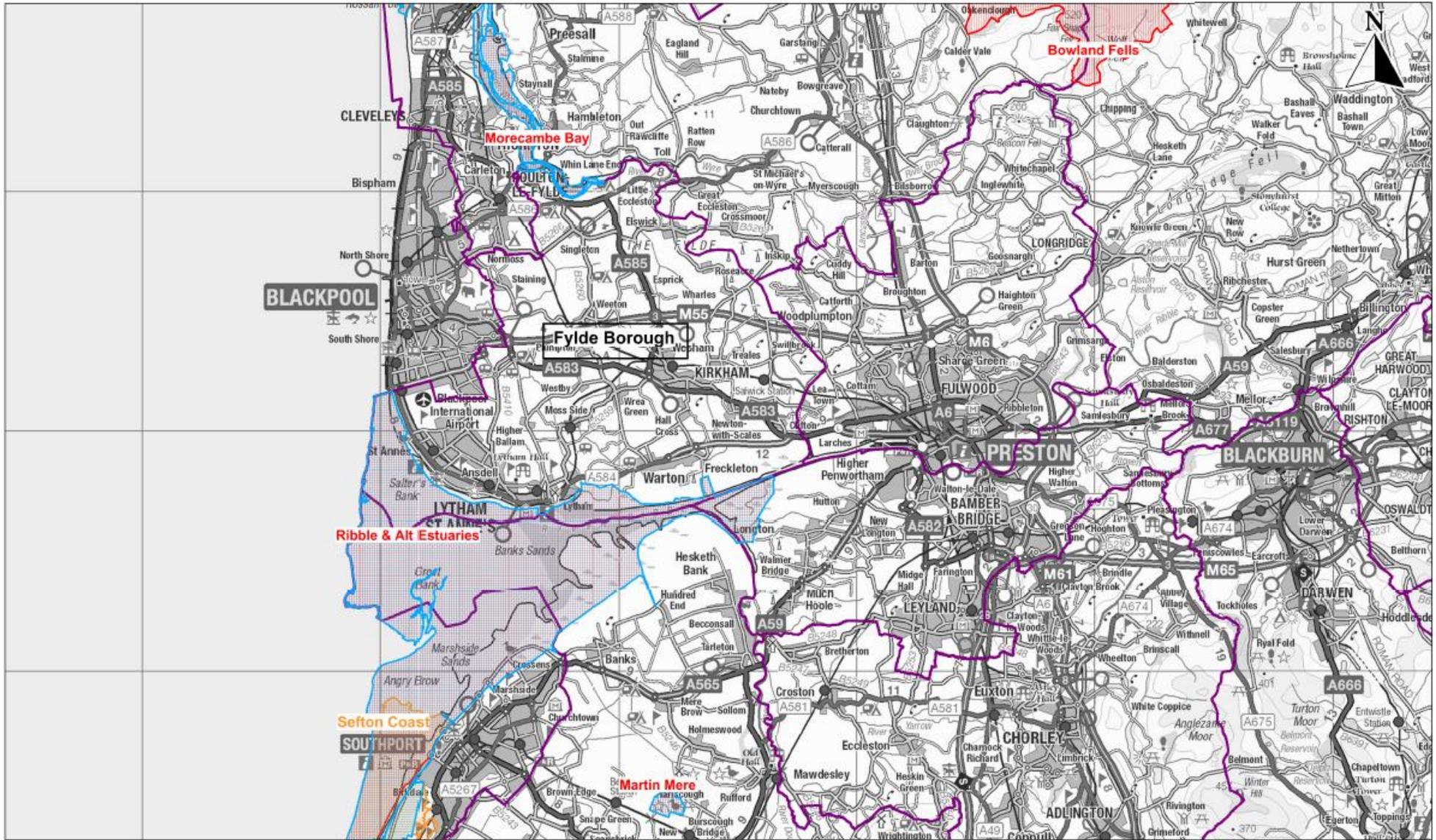
H2190. Humid dune slacks

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



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



Figure 4-1
European Designated Sites