

St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 – Submission Draft

Habitats Regulations Assessment

St Helens Council

December 2018

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
0	02/12/16	Draft for comment	JR	James Riley	Associate Director (Ecology)
1		Amendments following comment	JR	James Riley	Associate Director (Ecology)
2	06/02/2018	Amendments following MEAS comments	JR	James Riley	Associate Director (Ecology)
3	14/09/2018	Updated Draft Policies	JR	James Riley	Technical Director (Ecology)
4	26/11/2018	Final Report	JR	James Riley	Technical Director (Ecology)
5	07/01/19	Final revisions	JR	James Riley	Technical Director (Ecology)

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Table of Contents

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Legislation.....	1
1.2	This Report	2
2.	Methodology	3
2.1	Introduction	3
2.2	A Proportionate Assessment	3
2.3	The Process of HRA	4
2.4	Task One: Test of Likely Significant Effect.....	5
2.5	Task Two: Appropriate Assessment.....	6
2.6	The Scope	6
2.6.1	Liverpool Bay SPA / Bae Lerwpl SPA with Marine Component and Extension to the SPA	8
2.7	The “In Combination” Scope.....	9
2.7.1	Projects.....	9
2.7.2	Plans.....	10
3.	Pathways of Impact.....	12
3.1	Recreational Pressure and Disturbance.....	12
3.1.1	Mechanical/abrasive damage and nutrient enrichment.....	14
3.2	Atmospheric pollution	15
3.2.1	Local air pollution.....	17
3.3	Water resources	17
3.4	Water quality	18
3.5	Loss of Functionally Linked Land Outside of the European Site Boundary	19
4.	Test of Likely Significant Effects	21
5.	Appropriate Assessment ‘Alone’	22
5.1	Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	22
5.1.1	Recreational Pressure	22
5.1.2	Reduction in Water Quality.....	23
5.2	Manchester Mosses SAC	23
5.2.1	Atmospheric Pollution.....	23
5.3	Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site	24
5.3.1	Recreational Pressure	24
5.3.2	Changes in Hydrology	24
5.3.3	Loss of Habitat/ Functionally Linked Land Outside The European Site Boundary	24
5.3.3.1	Employment Allocations (Policy LPA04):	25
5.3.3.2	Strategic Employment Site Allocations (Policy LPA04.1):.....	25
5.3.3.3	Residential Allocations (Policy LPA05):	25
•	8HA Land South Higher Lane and East of Rookery Lane, Rainford.	25
5.3.3.4	Safeguarded Land Site Allocations - Land for Housing (Policy LPA06):	26
5.4	Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site.....	28
5.4.1	Recreational Pressure and Disturbance.....	28
5.4.2	Atmospheric Pollution.....	28
5.4.3	Loss of Habitat/ Functionally Linked Land Outside The European Site Boundary	29
5.5	Liverpool Bay SPA, and SPA Extension	29
5.5.1	Water Quality	29
5.5.2	Recreational Pressure and Disturbance.....	30
5.6	Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site	30
5.6.1	Water Quality	30

5.6.2	Whilst this site has potential to be vulnerable to changes in water quality as a result of the Plan, due to the distances involved, this is not considered to be a realistic impact pathway ‘alone’. Recreational Pressure and Disturbance.....	30
5.7	Sefton Coast SAC.....	31
5.7.1	Recreational Pressure	31
5.7.2	Atmospheric Pollution.....	32
5.8	Conclusion of Appropriate Assessment of St Helens Local Plan “Alone”	32
6.	Appropriate Assessment “In Combination”	33
6.1	Projects and plans	33
6.1.1	Mersey Ports Masterplan and Liverpool Airport Masterplan	33
6.1.2	Peel Waters: Wirral and Liverpool Waters.....	33
6.1.3	Local Plans	33
6.2	Recreational Pressure	33
6.2.1	Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	33
6.2.2	Other European Designated Sites (Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA, Ribble & Alt Estuaries Ramsar site, Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar site, Liverpool Bay SPA and the Sefton Coast SAC).	35
6.3	Water Quality	35
6.4	Atmospheric Pollution.....	37
6.5	Conclusion of St Helens Local Plan HRA “In Combination” Assessment.....	39
7.	Overall Conclusion.....	40
	Appendix A : Figure A1 and Figure A2	41
	Appendix B : European Designated Sites.....	42
B.1	Dee Estuary SAC.....	42
B.2	Liverpool Bay SPA, and SPA Extension	43
B.3	Manchester Mosses SAC	45
B.4	Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site	46
B.5	Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	47
B.6	Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site	48
B.7	Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar site	50
B.8	Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar site	50
B.9	Oak Mere SAC.....	51
B.10	Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site	51
B.11	River Dee and Bala Lake SAC	54
B.12	Rixton Clay Pits SAC.....	55
B.13	Rostherne Mere Ramsar site.....	55
B.14	Sefton Coast SAC.....	56
B.15	West Midland Mosses SAC	57
	Appendix C : The Catchments of The Sankey Brook and Mersey Estuaries	58
	Appendix D : Likely Significant Effects Assessment of the Plan Policies Alone and In-Combination.....	60
	Appendix E : Likely Significant Effects Assessment of the Plan Site Allocations Alone and In-Combination.....	80

Plates

Plate 1: Traffic contribution to concentrations of pollutants at different distances from a road (Source: DfT)	17
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Tables

Table 1: Geographic Scope of the HRA	6
Table 2: European Designated Sites Considered at the Initial Evidence Gathering Stage, but which require no further discussion in the HRA	8

Table 3: Housing to be delivered within relevant neighbouring authorities under most recent published proposals (housing numbers may be subject to change)	10
Table 4: Main sources and effects of air pollutants on habitats and species.....	15
Table 5. Plan Policies with Likely Significant Effects both ‘alone; and ‘in combination’.....	21
Table 6: Sankey Brook Water Framework Direct Targets	36
Table 7: Assessment of St. Helens Local Plan Strategic Policies ‘Alone and In-Combination’	60
Table 8: Assessment of St. Helens Local Plan Employment Site Allocations (Policy LPA04) ‘Alone’ and ‘In-combination’	80
Table 9: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Strategic Employment Site Allocations (Policy LPA04.1) ‘Alone’ and ‘In-combination’	82
Table 10: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Residential Site Allocations (Policy LPA05) ‘Alone’ and ‘In-Combination’	83
Table 11:: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Strategic Residential Site Allocations (Policy LPA05.1) ‘Alone’ and ‘In - Combination’	85
Table 12: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople allocations (Policy LPC03) ‘Alone’ and ‘In-Combination’	87
Table 13: Likely Significant Effects Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Safeguarded Land Site Allocations (Policy LPA06) ‘Alone’ and ‘In – Combination’	88

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

AA	<p>Appropriate Assessment</p> <p>As established by case law, ‘appropriate assessment’ is not a technical term; it simply means whatever further assessment is necessary to confirm whether there would be adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites that have not been dismissed at Task One: “Test of Likely Significant Effects”.</p>
DCLG	<p>Department for Communities and Local Government.</p> <p>DCLG is now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.</p>
HRA	<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment</p> <p>Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is the process that competent authorities must undertake to consider whether a proposed development plan or policy is likely to have significant effects on a European site designated for its nature conservation interest.</p> <p>The need for HRA is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992. The ultimate aim of the Habitats Directive is to “maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest” (Habitats Directive, Article 2(2))</p>
LCR	<p>Liverpool City Region</p> <p>This is a Combined Authority led by a Metro Mayor and brings together Liverpool City Region’s six local authorities – Halton, Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.</p>
MEAS	<p>Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service.</p> <p>This is a specialist unit which provides advice on specific environmental matters to the six local authorities within the Liverpool City Region.</p>
Ramsar	<p>An internationally designated area of wetland and wildfowl importance designated under the agreement signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, which provides for the conservation and good use of wetlands. The UK Government ratified the Convention and designated the first Ramsar sites in 1976. Wetlands are defined as areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres. Ramsar sites may also incorporate riparian (banks of a stream, river, pond or watercourse) and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands.</p> <p>N.B. pRamsar is a proposed Ramsar site</p>
SAC	<p>Special Area of Conservation</p> <p>Site with statutory protection of international importance to biodiversity. Designated under EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Also covered by Natura 2000.</p> <p>N.B. cSAC is a candidate Special Area of Conservation</p>
SPA	<p>Special Protection Area</p> <p>Site with statutory protection of international importance to biodiversity. Classified under the EC Directive for the Conservation of Wild Birds. Also covered by Natura 2000.</p> <p>N.B. pSPA is a proposed Special Protection Area.</p>

1. Introduction

AECOM has been appointed by St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council (hereafter referred to as “the Council”) to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the potential effects of St. Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 – Submission Draft (hereafter referred to as the “Plan”) on the Natura 2000 network and Ramsar sites.

The HRA is required to evaluate the Likely Significant Effects of the Plan on internationally important wildlife sites within the zone of influence, and determine if there are any relevant connecting pathways.

The objectives of this assessment are to:

- Identify any aspects of the Plan that would cause a likely significant effect on Natura 2000 sites, otherwise known as European sites or internationally designated sites; and,
- Advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects are identified.

1.1 Legislation

The need for HRA is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (**Box 1**). The ultimate aim of the Habitats Directive is to “*maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest*” (Habitats Directive, Article 2(2)). This aim relates to habitats and species, not the European sites themselves, although the sites have a significant role in delivering favourable conservation status. European sites (also called Natura 2000 sites) can be defined as actual or proposed/candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA). It is also Government policy for sites designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) to be treated as having equivalent status to Natura 2000 sites.

The Habitats Regulations apply the precautionary principle to Natura 2000 sites (SAC and SPA). As a matter of UK Government policy, Ramsar sites are given equivalent status. For the purposes of this assessment candidate SACs (cSACs), proposed SPAs (pSPAs) and proposed Ramsar (pRamsar) sites are all treated as fully designated sites. In this report we use the term “European designated sites” to refer collectively to the sites listed in this paragraph.

The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to protected areas. Plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. This is in contrast to the SEA Directive which does not prescribe how plan or programme proponents should respond to the findings of an environmental assessment; merely that the assessment findings (as documented in the ‘environmental report’) should be ‘taken into account’ during preparation of the plan or programme. In the case of the Habitats Directive, plans and projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation would be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

There has also been a recent change (13th April 2018) as to which stage mitigation can be applied during a Habitats Regulations Assessment. The Court of Justice of the European Union published its ruling in the Case C323/17 (known as ‘People Over Wind’) with regards to the Habitats Directive. It has been the practice that mitigation or compensation measures that were part of the project/plan could be taken into account at the Likely Significant Effects stage of a Habitats Regulations Assessment. If such measures are seen as capable of avoiding or offsetting the adverse effects of development on a site protected by the Habitats Directive, then a finding of ‘no significant effects’ could be made at the Likely Significant Effects stage, and an appropriate assessment would not be required. However, the People Over Wind ruling states that the Habitats Directive “*must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an appropriate assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the Likely Significant Effects stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site*”. In light of this ruling, this new report has been created and contains both Likely Significant Effects (examining Likely Significant Effects)

and Appropriate Assessment sections. All avoidance and reduction measures are discussed in the Appropriate Assessment section.

All the European sites mentioned in this document are illustrated in **Appendix A, Figure A1** and the Site Allocation Plan is illustrated in **Appendix A, Figure A2**. The legislative basis for appropriate assessment is provided in Box 1 below.

Box 1: The legislative basis for Appropriate Assessment

Habitats Directive 1992

“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.”

Article 6 (3)

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

*“A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for a plan or project which -
a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and
b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the that site, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that sites conservation objectives”*

Regulation 63 (1)

1.2 This Report

Chapter 2 of this report explains the process by which the HRA has been carried out. **Chapter 3** explores the relevant pathways of impact. **Chapter 4** undertakes the Test of Likely Significant Effects of the policies and site allocations of the Plan considered ‘alone’ and in-combination. **Chapter 5** undertakes the Appropriate Assessment ‘alone’, examining in detail those policies ‘screened in’ and what impact pathways could lead to adverse significant effects ‘alone’. **Chapter 6** examines the ‘in-combination’ assessment resulting from the Plan policies and other project and plans. **Chapter 7** contains a summary of the HRA conclusion.

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out the approach and methodology for undertaking the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). HRA itself operates independently from the planning policy system, being a legal requirement of a discrete Statutory Instrument. Therefore there is no direct relationship to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the ‘Tests of Soundness’.

2.2 A Proportionate Assessment

Project-related HRA often requires bespoke survey work and novel data generation in order to accurately determine the significance of effects. In other words, to look beyond the risk of an effect to a justified prediction of the actual likely effect and to the development of avoidance or mitigation measures.

However, the draft DCLG guidance¹ (described in greater detail later in this chapter) makes it clear that when implementing HRA of land-use plans, the Appropriate Assessment (AA) should be undertaken at a level of detail that is appropriate and proportional to the level of detail provided within the plan itself:

“The comprehensiveness of the [Appropriate] assessment work undertaken should be proportionate to the geographical scope of the option and the nature and extent of any effects identified. An AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. It would be inappropriate and impracticable to assess the effects [of a strategic land use plan] in the degree of detail that would normally be required for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of a project.”

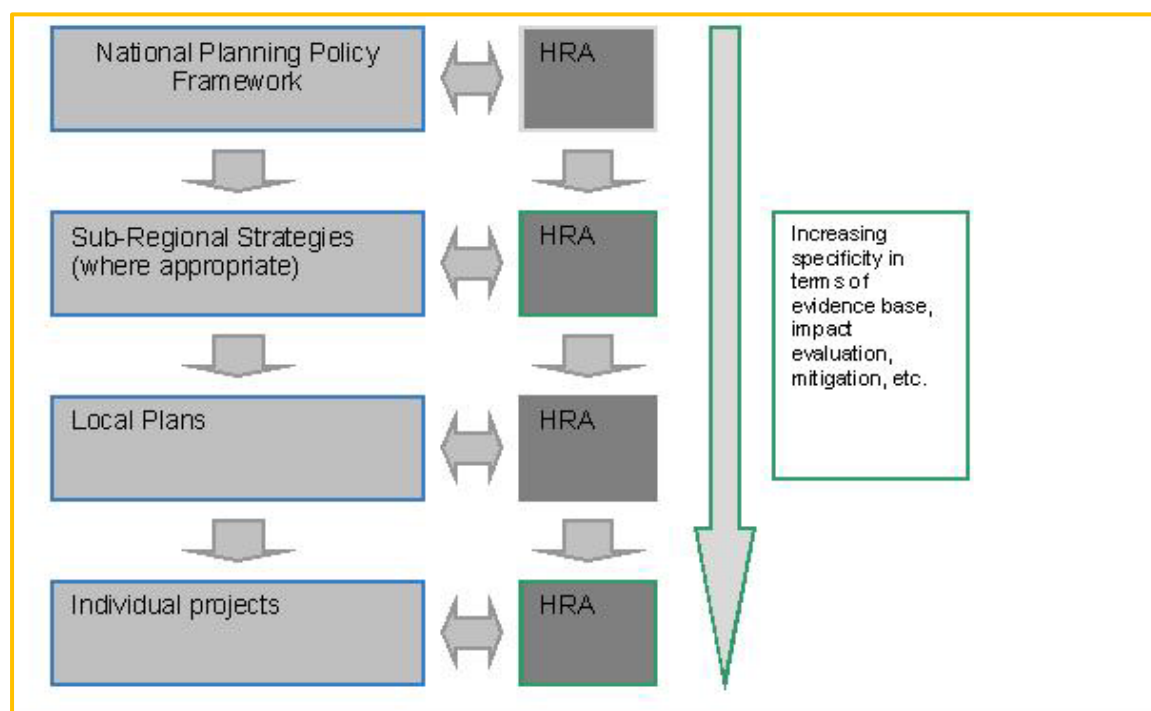
More recently, the Court of Appeal² ruled that providing the Council (competent authority) was duly satisfied that proposed mitigation could be “*achieved in practice*” to ensure that the proposed development would have no adverse effect, then this would suffice. This ruling has since been applied to a planning permission (rather than a Core Strategy)³. In this case the High Court ruled that for “*a multistage process, so long as there is sufficient information at any particular stage to enable the authority to be satisfied that the proposed mitigation can be achieved in practice it is not necessary for all matters concerning mitigation to be fully resolved before a decision maker is able to conclude that a development will satisfy the requirements of reg 61 of the Habitats Regulations*”.

In other words, there is a tacit acceptance that AA can be tiered and that all impacts are not necessarily appropriate for consideration to the same degree of detail at all tiers as illustrated in **Box 2**.

¹ DCLG (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites, Consultation Paper

² No Adastral New Town Ltd (NANT) v Suffolk Coastal District Council Court of Appeal, 17 February 2015

³ High Court case of R (Devon Wildlife Trust) v Teignbridge District Council, 28 July 2015



Box 2: Tiering in HRA of Land Use Plans

In any Local Plan, there are numerous policies for which there is a limit to the degree of assessment that is possible at this plan level. This is because either:

1. The policy in question does not contain any specific details describing what will be delivered or where so literally cannot be assessed in detail at the plan level. In these cases the appropriate assessment focusses on precautionary mitigation that can be included in the plan to ensure that whatever proposals come forward will not result in adverse effects on integrity; or
2. The nature of the potential impacts (notably lighting, noise and visual disturbance during construction, or loss of functionally-linked land) are very closely related to exactly how the development will be designed and constructed, or detailed development site-specific bird survey data, and therefore cannot be assessed in detail at the plan level. In these instances, the appropriate assessment focusses on the available mitigation measures, the extent to which such measures would be achievable and effective and whether an adequate protective framework exists to ensure that the policy would not lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally designated site(s).

On these occasions the advice of Advocate-General Kokott⁴ is worth considering. She commented that: *"It would ...hardly be proper to require a greater level of detail in preceding plans [rather than planning applications] or the abolition of multi-stage planning and approval procedures so that the assessment of implications can be concentrated on one point in the procedure. Rather, adverse effects on areas of conservation must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure"* [emphasis added]. This is the approach taken in the HRA.

2.3 The Process of HRA

The HRA is being carried out in the continuing absence of formal central Government guidance. The former DCLG (now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) released a consultation paper on AA of Plans in 2006⁵. As yet, no further formal guidance has emerged from MHCLG. However, Natural England has produced its own informal internal guidance and Natural Resources Wales has produced guidance for Welsh authorities on *"the appraisal of plans under the*

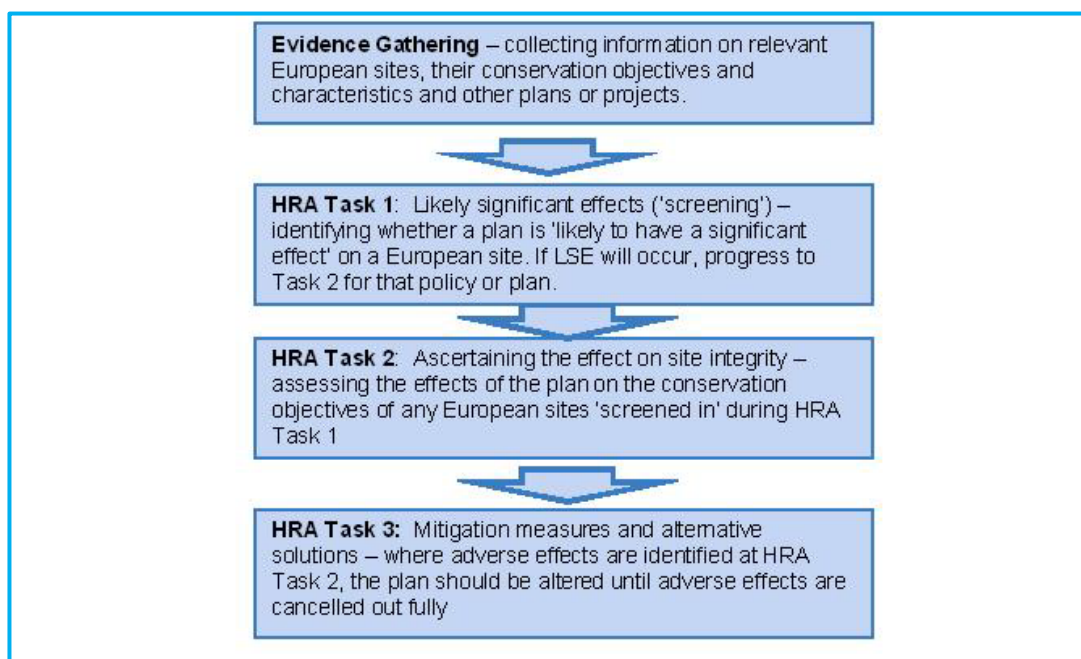
⁴ Opinion of Advocate General Kokott, 9th June 2005, Case C-6/04. Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, paragraph 49.

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=58359&doclang=EN>

⁵ DCLG (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites, Consultation Paper

Habitats Regulations” as a separate guidance document aimed at complementing and supplementing the guidance/advice provided within Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning⁶. Additionally DTA Publications have produced The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook which reflects available HRA guidance⁷. Although there is no requirement for an HRA to follow any guidance, it has been referred to in producing this HRA.

Box 3 outlines the stages of HRA according to current draft DCLG guidance (which, as government guidance applicable to English authorities is considered to take precedence over other sources of guidance). The stages are essentially iterative, being revisited as necessary in response to more detailed information, recommendations and any relevant changes to the plan until no likely significant effects remain.



Box 3: Four-Stage Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment

In practice, this broad outline requires some amendment in order to feed into a developing land use plan such as a Local Plan. The four staged approach shows for simplicity a basic progression from step to step, but it is quite usual for the process to be more iterative and cyclical, with each stage being fed back to the local authority to inform further amendments to the plan which are then re-assessed for implications on internationally designated sites. The following process has been adopted for carrying out the subsequent stages of the HRA.

2.4 Task One: Test of Likely Significant Effect

The first stage of any Habitats Regulations Assessment is a Likely Significant Effect test - essentially a high level assessment to decide whether the full subsequent stage known as Appropriate Assessment is required. The essential question is:

“Is the Plan, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon European sites?”

In evaluating significance, AECOM have relied on professional judgment and experience of working with the other Merseyside local authorities on similar issues. The level of detail concerning developments that will be permitted under land use plans is rarely sufficient to make a detailed quantification of effects. Therefore, a precautionary approach has been taken (in the absence of more precise data) assuming as the default position that if a likely significant effect (LSE) cannot be confidently ruled out, then the assessment must be taken to the next level of assessment Task Two:

⁶ Welsh Government. Technical Advice Note 5, Nature Conservation and Planning (2009) <http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan5/?lang=en> [accessed 01/12/2016]

⁷ DTA Publications (2017). The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook

Appropriate Assessment. This is in line with the April 2018 court ruling relating to ‘People Over Wind’ where mitigation and avoidance measures are to be included at the next stage of assessment.

2.5 Task Two: Appropriate Assessment

European Site(s) which have been ‘screened in’ during the previous Task will have a detailed assessment undertaken on the effect of the policies on the European Site(s) site integrity. Avoidance and mitigation measures to avoid adverse significant effects will be incorporated where necessary.

As established by case law, ‘appropriate assessment’ is not a technical term; it simply means whatever further assessment is necessary to confirm whether there would be adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites that have not been dismissed at Task One: “Test of Likely Significant Effect”. Since it is not a technical term it has no firmly established methodology except that it essentially involves repeating the analysis for the likely significant effects stage, but to a greater level of detail on a smaller number of policies and sites, this time with a view to determining if there would be adverse effects on integrity. For the air quality pathway the appropriate assessment is where detailed traffic and air quality modelling is reported.

One of the key considerations during appropriate assessment is whether there is available mitigation that would entirely address the potential effect. In practice, the appropriate assessment takes any policies or allocations that could not be dismissed following the high-level Likely Significant Effect analysis and analyse the potential for an effect in more detail, with a view to concluding whether there would actually be an adverse effect on integrity (in other words, disruption of the coherent structure and function of the European site(s)).

2.6 The Scope

There is no pre-defined guidance that dictates the physical scope of a HRA of a Local Plan. Therefore, in considering the physical scope of the assessment we were guided primarily by the identified impact pathways rather than by arbitrary “zones”, i.e. a source-pathway-receptor approach. Current guidance suggests that the following European sites be included in the scope of assessment:

- All sites within the St. Helens Metropolitan Borough boundary; and
- Other sites shown to be linked to development within the Borough boundary through a known “pathway” (discussed below).

Briefly defined, pathways are routes by which a change in activity within the Local Plan area can lead to an effect upon a European site. In terms of the second category of European site listed above, DCLG guidance states that the AA should be “*proportionate to the geographical scope of the [plan policy]*” and that “*an AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose*” (CLG, 2006, p.6⁸).

No European sites fall within the St. Helens boundary. Twelve European sites are considered to have pathways that link to development resulting from the Plan. These are identified in **Table 1**. Locations of European designated sites are illustrated in **Appendix A, Figure A1**, and full details of all European designated sites discussed in this document can be found in **Appendix B**. Note that the inclusion of a European site or pathway in the table below does not indicate that an effect is expected but rather that there is a pathway for investigation.

Table 1: Geographic Scope of the HRA

European Designated Site	Reason for Inclusion (Potential Impact Pathways Present)
Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	Located 4.8km south west of the borough ⁹ . Recreational pressure Reduction in water quality

⁸ Now DCLG.

⁹ Informed by reviewing the Formal Conservation Advice Package for the European site.

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK9005131&SiteName=mersey%20estuary&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAAra=> [accessed 05/02/2018]

	Loss of functionally linked land outside the site boundary
Manchester Mosses SAC (including Astley & Bedford Mosses, Holcroft Moss and Risley Moss),	Located 5.5km east of the borough. The SAC is located immediately adjacent to the M62 which forms a major route from eastern Merseyside (north of the river) and Greater Manchester. Other Merseyside HRAs have considered this site due to its air quality sensitivity where they may contribute (through the delivery of new housing and employment over the same period) to an increase in the use of the M62 and associated atmospheric nitrogen deposition. The M62 passes through the borough of St. Helens and it is conceivable that people from St. Helens would use this route on the way to Manchester.
Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site	Located 11.5km north of the borough. Recreational pressure Changes to hydrology Loss of functionally linked land outside the site boundary
Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA	Located 13.8km west of the borough ¹⁰ . Recreational pressure and disturbance to qualifying species Atmospheric pollution Loss of habitat/ functionally linked land outside the site boundary
Ribble & Alt Estuaries Ramsar site	Located 13.8km west of the borough. Recreational pressure and disturbance to qualifying species Atmospheric pollution Loss of habitat/ functionally linked land outside the site boundary
Liverpool Bay SPA (including SPA Extension (adopted 31 st October 2017)	12.9km west of the borough. Loss of water quality resulting in harm to benthic communities via waterborne pollution entering the Mersey Estuary (and later flowing into Liverpool Bay), in turn from the Sankey Brook catchment (e.g. increase in heavy metals from sewage and/or industry)/ sediments In-combination disturbance of birds through increase in recreational pressure
Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site	Located 14.3km west of the borough. ¹¹ Loss of water quality resulting in harm to benthic communities via waterborne pollution entering the Mersey Estuary (and later flowing into the Mersey Narrows), in turn from the Sankey Brook catchment (e.g. increase in heavy metals from sewage and/or industry)/ sediments In-combination disturbance of birds through increase in ship movements and recreational pressure
Sefton Coast SAC	Located 14.6km west of the borough. The SAC is vulnerable to increased recreational pressure and atmospheric pollution

¹⁰ Informed by reviewing the Formal Conservation Advice Package for the European site.
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK9005103&SiteName=ribble&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=#suppadvice> [accessed 05/02/2018]

¹¹ Informed by reviewing the Formal Conservation Advice Package for the European site.
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK9020287&SiteName=mersey%20narrows&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=> [accessed 05/02/2018]

River Dee and Bala Lake SAC	Whilst located more than 24km from St. Helens, this SAC is potentially vulnerable to changes in water flows as a result of a potential increased need for abstraction to accommodate new development as a result of the Plan
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2.6.1 Liverpool Bay SPA / Bae Lerwpl SPA with Marine Component and Extension to the SPA

In October 2017, Liverpool Bay Extension was formally adopted. The bay stretches from Anglesey in Wales to the Lancashire coast and was classified for its non-breeding aggregations of red-throated diver *Gavia stellata* and common scoter *Melanitta nigra*. For the most part the Extension to the SPA extends the SPA further out to sea. However, the Extension to the SPA also brings the physical area covered by the SPA up the River Mersey to the entrance to Birkenhead Docks. The Extension affords protection to little gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*, and cover important foraging areas for little tern *Sterna albifrons* (colony at Gronant) and common tern *Sterna hirundo* (colony at Seaforth). The Extension also adds red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* and cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* as named features of the assemblage for which the SPA is designated.

Table 2: European Designated Sites Considered at the Initial Evidence Gathering Stage, but which require no further discussion in the HRA

European Designated	Reasons for Exclusion
Rixton Clay Pits SAC	Located 7.6km south east of the borough. This SAC is surface water fed and managed for amenity indicating it is not vulnerable to increased recreational pressure or changes in hydrology as a result of the Plan. There are no impact pathways present linking to the Plan.
Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar site	Located 15.5km south of the borough. Whilst this site is vulnerable to invasive non-native species, due to the distances involved, there is no realistic impact pathway linking the Plan to this site. This site is also vulnerable to eutrophication from agricultural runoff, but again, due to the distances involved, there is no realistic impact pathway linking the Plan to the Ramsar site.
Dee Estuary SAC	Located 15.5km west of the borough. Whilst this site has potential to be vulnerable to the introduction of non-native invasive species, recreational pressure and changes in biotic and abiotic conditions from water pollution, the location of the site on the north west of the Wirral peninsula and its distance from St. Helens mean that the only possible linking impact pathway would be an increase in recreational pressure. However, given the distance involved it is considered unlikely (pending the results of the visitor survey work currently planned on behalf of the Liverpool City Region authorities) that St Helens lies within the core recreational catchment of Dee Estuary SAC. Based on surveys of other coastal European sites 15km would be expected to be beyond the core recreational catchment (i.e. the zone within which c. 75% of visitors originate) and the vast majority of St Helens is considerably more distant.
Rostherne Mere Ramsar site	Located 15.6km south east of the borough. This site is vulnerable to changes in water quality from agricultural runoff. Due to the distances involved, there is no realistic impact pathway linking the Plan to the Ramsar site, and this site can be scoped out from further consideration.
West Midland Mosses SAC (Abbots Moss)	Located 19.1km south of the borough. This SAC is vulnerable to changes in water quality and nutrient enrichment from its catchment. However, due to the distance of

	the SAC from the Plan area, there are no realistic linking impact pathways present.
Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar site	Located 19.7km south of the borough. Whilst this site is vulnerable to invasive non-native species, due to the distances involved, there is no realistic impact pathway linking the St. Helens Plan to this site. This site is also vulnerable to changes in hydrological conditions including water levels and water pollution. Whilst the reasons for these changes in hydrology are still under investigation, it is anticipated that the changes in water levels are due to local factors. This includes a nearby gravel pit resulting in a large water gradient in the groundwater levels resulting in a reduction in water levels and an outflow pipe. Existing changes to water quality are likely to be linked to eutrophication from agricultural runoff. Due to the distances involved and the nature of the Plan document, there is no realistic impact pathway linking the Plan to the Ramsar site.
Oak Mere SAC	Located 19.7km south of the borough. Whilst this site is vulnerable to invasive non-native species, due to the distances involved, it is considered that there is not a realistic impact pathway linking the Plan to this site. This site is also vulnerable to changes in hydrological conditions including water levels and water pollution. Whilst the reasons for these changes in hydrology are still under investigation, it is anticipated that the changes in water levels are due to local factors. This includes a nearby gravel pit resulting in a large water gradient in the groundwater levels resulting in a reduction in water levels and an outflow pipe. Existing changes to water quality are likely to be linked to eutrophication from agricultural runoff. Due to the distances involved and the nature of the Plan document, there is no realistic impact pathway linking the Plan to the SAC site.

2.7 The “In Combination” Scope

It is a requirement of the Regulations that the impacts and effects of any land use plan being assessed are not considered in isolation but in combination with other plans and projects that may also affect the European designated site(s) in question. In practice, “in combination assessment” is of greatest importance when a Plan would otherwise be scoped out because the individual contribution is inconsequential. It is neither practical nor necessary to assess the “in combination” effects of the Plan within the context of all other plans and projects within the region. The principal other plans and projects considered are set out below:

2.7.1 Projects

- Peel Waters: Wirral and Liverpool Waters – These projects would secure the re-development of currently run down dockland areas both on the Wirral and Liverpool sides of the River Mersey. They include the construction of dwellings, retail and commercial developments. The construction of these two developments will have a direct impact on the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA due to loss of habitat, barrier impacts for birds in flight and significant disturbance issues during construction. Liverpool Waters has planning permission and was subject to its own HRA. The first stage in housing delivery within Wirral Waters One (comprising 500 dwellings), was granted detailed planning permission in 2018. Since both Peel Waters and Liverpool Waters already have outline planning consents and are subject to agreed European site mitigation strategies they are not discussed further in this HRA.
- Whitemoss Landfill Western Extension – This project is for the construction of new waste management facilities, including landfill void. The HRSA (Habitats Regulations Likely Significant Effects Assessment) for the project (that has been granted planning permission) identified no further need for AA (as confirmed by Natural England). Therefore, this project is not considered further in this HRA.

2.7.2 Plans

- Mersey Ports Masterplan (Interim Consultation Report, 2012¹²);
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport Masterplan to 2050 (March 2018).
- Wigan Local Plan Core strategy (adopted 2013);
- Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (October 2016);
- Sefton Local Plan (adopted April 2017);
- Liverpool Local Plan (submitted to the Government for examination in 2018);
- Wirral Local Plan Core Strategy (currently emerging);
- Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted January 2016);
- Halton Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted April 2013) (NB a new Local Plan is also in development for Halton);
- Merseyside & Halton Joint Waste Local Plan (adopted 2013);
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan (updated 2015);
- West Lancashire Local Plan (adopted 2013);
- West Lancashire Local Plan Review - Preferred Options (August 2018);
- Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 2014) (NB a High Court Challenge removed elements of this Plan relating to housing in 2015);
- Salford Draft Local Plan (November 2016);
- Part 1 North West River Basin District River Basin Management Plan (updated 2015);
- Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management Plan (adopted 2009); and
- United Utilities Water Resources Management Plan (2015).

For the purposes of this assessment, we have determined that, due to the nature of the identified impacts, the key plans and projects that are likely to result in “in-combination” effects with the Plan relate to additional housing and commercial/industrial policy and allocations proposed for other Merseyside, West Lancashire, Warrington and Greater Manchester authorities over the lifetime of the Plan (see **Table 3**).

Table 3: Housing to be delivered within relevant neighbouring authorities under most recent published proposals (housing numbers may be subject to change)

Local Authority	Total housing under most recent published proposals
Knowsley	8,100 new dwellings between 2010 and 2028 ¹³
Halton	At least 10,718 new dwellings between 2014 and 2037 ¹⁴
West Lancashire	4,860 new dwellings between 2012 and 2027 ¹⁵ with a further 10,925 between 2027-2050 ¹⁶
Wigan	15,000 new dwellings between 2011 and 2026 (1,000 per year) ¹⁷
Warrington	10,500 new dwellings between 2006 and 2027 ¹⁸
Sefton	11,520 new dwellings during the period of 2012-2030 ¹⁹
Liverpool	34,780 new dwellings between 2013 and 2033 ²⁰
Salford	34,900 new dwellings between 2015 and 2035 ²¹

¹² <https://www.peelports.com/media/1535/interim-con-report.pdf> [accessed 29/11/2016]

¹³ Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted January 2016)

¹⁴ Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan Publication Document (including Partial review of the Core Strategy) January 2018 <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/newdalp/written.pdf> [accessed 05/02/2018].

¹⁵ West Lancashire Local Plan (adopted 2013)

¹⁶ West Lancashire Local Plan Review – Preferred Options August 2018

¹⁷ Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2013)

¹⁸ A High Court Challenge removed elements of the Warrington Local Plan: Core Strategy relating to housing in February 2015.

¹⁹ Sefton Local Plan (adopted April 2017)

²⁰ Liverpool Local Plan (as submitted in 2018)

²¹ Salford Draft Local Plan (November 2016)

Greater Manchester	55,300 new dwellings to 2035 ²²
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It should be noted that, while the broad potential impacts of these other projects and plans will be considered, we do not propose carrying out full HRA on each of these plans – we will however draw upon existing HRA that have been carried out for surrounding regions and plans.

²² Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: Draft for Consultation (October 2016)

3. Pathways of Impact

The following indirect pathways of impact are considered relevant to the HRA of the Plan:

- Recreational pressure and disturbance;
- Reduction in water resources;
- Reduction in water quality;
- Atmospheric pollution; and
- Loss of functionally linked land outside the designated sites.

3.1 Recreational Pressure and Disturbance

Concern regarding the effects of disturbance on birds stems from the fact that they are expending energy unnecessarily and the time they spend responding to disturbance is time that is not spent feeding (this will apply all year round)²³. Disturbance therefore risks increasing energetic output while reducing energetic input, which can adversely affect the “condition” and ultimately survival of the birds. In addition, displacement of birds from one feeding site to others can increase the pressure on the resources available within the remaining sites, as they have to sustain a greater number of birds²⁴. Moreover, the more time a breeding bird spends disturbed from its nest, the more its eggs are likely to cool and the more vulnerable they, or any nestlings, are to predators.

The potential for disturbance may be less in winter than in summer, in that there are often a smaller number of recreational users. In addition, the consequences of disturbance at a population level may be reduced because birds are not breeding. However, activity outside of the summer months can still cause important disturbance, especially as birds are particularly vulnerable at this time of year due to food shortages. Disturbance which results in abandonment of suitable feeding areas can have severe consequences for those birds involved and their ability to find alternative feeding areas. Several empirical studies have, through correlative analysis, demonstrated that out-of-season (October-March) recreational activity can result in quantifiable disturbance:

- Tuite et al²⁵ found that during periods of high recreational activity, bird numbers at Llangorse Lake decreased by 30% as the morning progressed, matching the increase in recreational activity towards midday. During periods of low recreational activity, however, no change in numbers was observed as the morning progressed. In addition, all species were found to spend less time in their ‘preferred zones’ (the areas of the lake used most in the absence of recreational activity) as recreational intensity increased;
- Underhill et al²⁶ counted waterfowl and all disturbance events on 54 water bodies within the South West London Water Bodies Special Protection Area and clearly correlated disturbance with a decrease in bird numbers at weekends in smaller sites and with the movement of birds within larger sites from disturbed to less disturbed areas;
- Evans & Warrington²⁷ found that on Sundays total water bird numbers (including shoveler and gadwall) were 19% higher on Stocker’s Lake LNR in Hertfordshire, and attributed this to observed greater recreational activity on surrounding water bodies at weekends relative to week days displacing birds into the LNR. However, in this study, recreational activity was not quantified in detail, nor were individual recreational activities evaluated separately; and

²³ Riddington, R. et al. 1996. The impact of disturbance on the behaviour and energy budgets of Brent geese. *Bird Study* 43:269-279

²⁴ Gill, J.A., Sutherland, W.J. & Norris, K. 1998. The consequences of human disturbance for estuarine birds. *RSPB Conservation Review* 12: 67-72

²⁵ Tuite, C. H., Owen, M. & Paynter, D. 1983. Interaction between wildfowl and recreation at Llangorse Lake and Talybont Reservoir, South Wales. *Wildfowl* 34: 48-63

²⁶ Underhill, M.C. et al. 1993. Use of Waterbodies in South West London by Waterfowl. An Investigation of the Factors Affecting Distribution, Abundance and Community Structure. Report to Thames Water Utilities Ltd. and English Nature. Wetlands Advisory Service, Slimbridge

²⁷ Evans, D.M. & Warrington, S. 1997. The effects of recreational disturbance on wintering waterbirds on a mature gravel pitlake near London. *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 53: 167-182

- Tuite et al²⁸ used a large (379 site), long-term (10-year) dataset (September – March species counts) to correlate seasonal changes in wildfowl abundance with the presence of various recreational activities. They found that shoveler was one of the most sensitive species to disturbance. The greatest impact on wildfowl numbers during these months was associated with sailing/windsurfing and rowing.

More recent research has established that human activity including recreational activity can be linked to disturbance of wintering waterfowl populations^{29 30}.

A study on recreational disturbance of the Humber Estuary SPA/Ramsar³¹ was commissioned following a decline in numbers of some bird species from the Humber. This was considered necessary within the context of a likely future increase in residential development and an identification of the requirement for improved coastal access in order to inform future policies/management plans. The study collated on-site visitor survey data, targeted interviews with user groups, driving transects, car park counts and vantage point counts to identify the most visited areas of the SPA/Ramsar. These data were correlated with bird data (i.e. key locations for particular qualifying bird species within the SPA/Ramsar and therefore those areas likely to be considered particularly sensitive). This information was used to identify potentially key areas where conflicts were considered likely to arise between key recreational activities and bird interest. Key activities which were found to be likely to cause disturbance to qualifying bird species (as already mentioned in this section) included: airborne activities; bait digging; beach activities; dog walking; fishing; horse riding; kite surfing; walking; wildfowling; and wildlife watching. This study serves to support the case of likely recreational disturbance on qualifying bird species through data collected on a relatively local and similar European Site, subject to similar pressures as the Sefton Coast. This is discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 5**).

Human activity can affect birds either directly (e.g. by causing them to flee) or indirectly (e.g. by damaging their habitat). The most obvious direct effect is that of immediate mortality such as death by shooting, but human activity can also lead to behavioural changes (e.g. alterations in feeding behaviour, avoidance of certain areas etc.) and physiological changes (e.g. an increase in heart rate) that, although less noticeable, may ultimately result in major population-level effects by altering the balance between immigration/birth and emigration/death³².

The degree of impact that varying levels of noise will have on different species of bird is poorly understood except that a number of studies have found that an increase in traffic levels on roads does lead to a reduction in the bird abundance within adjacent hedgerows - Reijnen et al (1995) examined the distribution of 43 passerine species (i.e. 'songbirds'), of which 60% had a lower density closer to the roadside than further away. By controlling vehicle usage they also found that the density generally was lower along busier roads than quieter roads³³.

A recent study on recreational disturbance on the Humber³⁴ assesses different types of noise disturbance on waterfowl referring to studies relating to aircraft (see Drewitt 1999³⁵), traffic (Reijnen, Foppen, & Veenbaas 1997)³⁶, dogs (Lord, Waas, & Innes 1997³⁷; Banks & Bryant 2007³⁸) and machinery (Delaney et al. 1999; Tempel & Gutierrez 2003). These studies identified that there is still relatively little work on the effects of different types of water based craft and the impacts from jet skis,

²⁸ Tuite, C.H., Hanson, P.R. & Owen, M. 1984. Some ecological factors affecting winter wildfowl distribution on inland waters in England and Wales and the influence of water-based recreation. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 21: 41-62

²⁹ Footprint Ecology. 2010. Recreational Disturbance to Birds on the Humber Estuary

³⁰ Footprint Ecology, Jonathan Cox Associates & Bournemouth University. 2010. Solent disturbance and mitigation project – various reports.

³¹ Helen Fearnley Durwyn Liley and Katie Cruickshanks (2012) Results of Recreational Visitor Survey across the Humber Estuary produced by Footprint Ecology

<http://humberems.co.uk/downloads/Footprint%20Ecology%20Humber%20Visitor%20Report%206th%20July%202012.pdf>

³² Riley, J. 2003. Review of Recreational Disturbance Research on Selected Wildlife in Scotland. Scottish Natural Heritage.

³³ Reijnen, R. et al. 1995. The effects of car traffic on breeding bird populations in woodland. III. Reduction of density in relation to the proximity of main roads. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 32: 187-202

³⁴ Helen Fearnley Durwyn Liley and Katie Cruickshanks (2012) Results of Recreational Visitor Survey across the Humber Estuary produced by Footprint Ecology

³⁵ Drewitt, A. (1999) Disturbance effects of aircraft on birds. English Nature, Peterborough.

³⁶ Reijnen, R., Foppen, R. & Veenbaas, G. (1997) Disturbance by traffic of breeding birds: evaluation of the effect and considerations in planning and managing road corridors. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 6, 567-581.

³⁷ Lord, A., Waas, J.R. & Innes, J. (1997) Effects of human activity on the behaviour of northern New Zealand dotterel *Charadrius obscurus aquilonius* chicks. *Biological Conservation*, 82,15-20.

³⁸ Banks, P.B. & Bryant, J.V. (2007) Four-legged friend of foe? Dog-walking displaces native birds from natural areas. *Biology Letters*, 3, 611-613.

kite surfers, windsurfers etc. (see Kirby et al. 2004³⁹ for a review). Some types of disturbance are clearly likely to invoke different responses. In very general terms, both distance from the source of disturbance and the scale of the disturbance (noise level, group size) will both influence the response (Delaney et al. 1999⁴⁰; Beale & Monaghan 2005⁴¹). On UK estuaries and coastal sites, a review of WeBS data showed that, among the volunteer WeBS surveyors, driving of motor vehicles and shooting were the two activities most perceived to cause disturbance (Robinson & Pollitt 2002)⁴².

Other disturbing activities are on a continuum. The most disturbing activities are likely to be those that involve irregular, infrequent, unpredictable loud noise events, movement or vibration of long duration. Birds are least likely to be disturbed by activities that involve regular, frequent, predictable, quiet patterns of sound or movement or minimal vibration. The further any activity is from the birds, the less likely it is to result in disturbance.

3.1.1 Mechanical/abrasive damage and nutrient enrichment

Most types of aquatic or terrestrial European site can be affected by trampling, which in turn causes soil compaction and erosion:

- Wilson & Seney (1994)⁴³ examined the degree of track erosion caused by hikers, motorcycles, horses and cyclists from 108 plots along tracks in the Gallatin National Forest, Montana. Although the results proved difficult to interpret, it was concluded that horses and hikers disturbed more sediment on wet tracks, and therefore caused more erosion, than motorcycles and bicycles.
- Cole et al (1995a, b)⁴⁴ conducted experimental off-track trampling in 18 closed forests, dwarf scrub and meadow & grassland communities (each tramped between 0 – 500 times) over five mountain regions in the US. Vegetation cover was assessed two weeks and one year after trampling, and an inverse relationship with trampling intensity was discovered, although this relationship was weaker after one year than two weeks indicating some recovery of the vegetation. Differences in plant morphological characteristics were found to explain more variation in response between different vegetation types than soil and topographic factors. Low-growing, mat-forming grasses regained their cover best after two weeks and were considered most resistant to trampling, while tall forbs (non-woody vascular plants other than grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns) were considered least resistant. Cover of hemicryptophytes and geophytes (plants with buds below the soil surface) was heavily reduced after two weeks, but had recovered well after one year and as such these were considered most resilient to trampling. Chamaephytes (plants with buds above the soil surface) were least resilient to trampling. It was concluded that these would be the least tolerant of a regular cycle of disturbance.
- Cole (1995c)⁴⁵ conducted a follow-up study (in 4 vegetation types) in which shoe type (trainers or walking boots) and trampler weight were varied. Although immediate damage was greater with walking boots, there was no significant difference after one year. Heavier trampers caused a greater reduction in vegetation height than lighter trampers, but there was no difference in effect on cover.

³⁹ Kirby, J.S., Clee, C. & Seager, V. (1993) Impact and extent of recreational disturbance to wader roosts on the Dee estuary: some preliminary results. *Wader Study Group Bulletin*, 68, 53-58.

⁴⁰ Delaney, D.K., Grubb, T.G., Beier, P., Pater, L.L.M. & Reiser, H. (1999) Effects of Helicopter Noise on Mexican Spotted Owls. *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 63, 60-76.

⁴¹ Beale, C.M. & Monaghan, P. (2005) Modeling the Effects of Limiting the Number of Visitors on Failure Rates of Seabird Nests. *Conservation Biology*, 19, 2015-2019.

⁴² Robinson, J.A. & Pollitt, M.S. (2002) Sources and extent of human disturbance to waterbirds in the UK: an analysis of Wetland Bird Survey data, 1995/96 to 1998/99: Less than 32% of counters record disturbance at their site, with differences in causes between coastal and inland sites. *Bird Study*, 49, 205.

⁴³ Wilson, J.P. & J.P. Seney. 1994. Erosional impact of hikers, horses, motorcycles and off road bicycles on mountain trails in Montana. *Mountain Research and Development* 14:77-88

⁴⁴ Cole, D.N. 1995a. Experimental trampling of vegetation. I. Relationship between trampling intensity and vegetation response. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 32: 203-214

Cole, D.N. 1995b. Experimental trampling of vegetation. II. Predictors of resistance and resilience. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 32: 215-224

⁴⁵ Cole, D.N. 1995c. Recreational trampling experiments: effects of trampler weight and shoe type. Research Note INT-RN-425. U.S. Forest Service, Intermountain Research Station, Utah.

- Cole & Spildie (1998)⁴⁶ experimentally compared the effects of off-track trampling by hiker and horse (at two intensities – 25 and 150 passes) in two woodland vegetation types (one with an erect forb understorey and one with a low shrub understorey). Horse traffic was found to cause the largest reduction in vegetation cover. The forb-dominated vegetation suffered greatest disturbance, but recovered rapidly. Higher trampling intensities caused more disturbance.

Walkers with dogs contribute to pressure on sites through nutrient enrichment via dog fouling and also have potential to cause greater disturbance to fauna as dogs are less likely to keep to marked footpaths and also tend to move in a more erratic manner. Motorcycle scrambling and off-road vehicle use can cause more serious erosion, as well as disturbance to sensitive species. Boats can also cause some mechanical damage to intertidal habitats through grounding.

3.2 Atmospheric pollution

The main pollutants of concern for European sites are oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), ammonia (NH₃) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). NO_x can have a directly toxic effect upon vegetation. In addition, greater NO_x or ammonia concentrations within the atmosphere will lead to greater rates of nitrogen deposition to soils. An increase in the deposition of nitrogen from the atmosphere to soils is generally regarded to lead to an increase in soil fertility, which can have a serious deleterious effect on the quality of semi-natural, nitrogen-limited terrestrial habitats.

Table 4: Main sources and effects of air pollutants on habitats and species

Pollutant	Source	Effects on habitats and species
Acid deposition	SO ₂ , NO _x and ammonia all contribute to acid deposition. Although future trends in Sulphur (S) emissions and subsequent deposition to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems will continue to decline, it is likely that increased Nitrogen (N) emissions may cancel out any gains produced by reduced S levels.	Can affect habitats and species through both wet (acid rain) and dry deposition. Some sites will be more at risk than others depending on soil type, bed rock geology, weathering rate and buffering capacity.
Ammonia (NH ₃)	Ammonia is released following decomposition and volatilisation of animal wastes. It is a naturally occurring trace gas, but levels have increased considerably with expansion in numbers of agricultural livestock. Ammonia reacts with acid pollutants such as the products of SO ₂ and NO _x emissions to produce fine ammonium (NH ₄ ⁺) containing aerosol which may be transferred much longer distances (can therefore be a significant trans-boundary issue.)	Adverse effects are as a result of nitrogen deposition leading to eutrophication. As emissions mostly occur at ground level in the rural environment and NH ₃ is rapidly deposited, some of the most acute problems of NH ₃ deposition are for small relict nature reserves located in intensive agricultural landscapes.
Nitrogen oxides NO _x	Nitrogen oxides are mostly produced in combustion processes. About one quarter of the UK's emissions are from power stations, one-half from motor vehicles, and the rest from other industrial and domestic combustion processes.	Deposition of nitrogen compounds (nitrates (NO ₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) and nitric acid (HNO ₃)) can lead to both soil and freshwater acidification. In addition, NO _x can cause eutrophication of soils and water. This alters the species composition of plant communities and can eliminate sensitive species.
Nitrogen (N)	The pollutants that contribute to	Species-rich plant communities with

⁴⁶ Cole, D.N., Spildie, D.R. 1998. Hiker, horse and llama trampling effects on native vegetation in Montana, USA. *Journal of Environmental Management* 53: 61-71

deposition	nitrogen deposition derive mainly from NO _x and NH ₃ emissions. These pollutants cause acidification (see also acid deposition) as well as eutrophication.	relatively high proportions of slow-growing perennial species and bryophytes are most at risk from N eutrophication, due to its promotion of competitive and invasive species which can respond readily to elevated levels of N. N deposition can also increase the risk of damage from abiotic factors, e.g. drought and frost.
Ozone (O ₃)	A secondary pollutant generated by photochemical reactions from NO _x and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These are mainly released by the combustion of fossil fuels. The increase in combustion of fossil fuels in the UK has led to a large increase in background ozone concentration. Reducing ozone pollution is believed to require action at international level to reduce levels of the precursors that form ozone.	Concentrations of O ₃ above 40 ppb can be toxic to humans and wildlife, and can affect buildings. Increased ozone concentrations may lead to a reduction in growth of agricultural crops, decreased forest production and altered species composition in semi-natural plant communities.
Sulphur Dioxide SO ₂	Main sources of SO ₂ emissions are electricity generation, industry and domestic fuel combustion. May also arise from shipping and increased atmospheric concentrations in busy ports. Total SO ₂ emissions have decreased substantially in the UK since the 1980s.	Wet and dry deposition of SO ₂ acidifies soils and freshwater, and alters the species composition of plant and associated animal communities. The significance of impacts depends on levels of deposition and the buffering capacity of soils.

Sulphur dioxide emissions are overwhelmingly influenced by the output of power stations and industrial processes that require the combustion of coal and oil as well as (particularly on a local scale) shipping.

Ammonia emissions are dominated by agriculture, with some chemical processes also making notable contributions. As such, it is unlikely that material increases in SO₂ or NH₃ emissions will be associated with Local Plans. NO_x emissions, however, are dominated by the output of vehicle exhausts (more than half of all emissions). Within a 'typical' housing development, by far the largest contribution to NO_x (92%) will be made by the associated road traffic. Other sources, although relevant, are of minor importance (8%) in comparison⁴⁷. Emissions of NO_x could therefore be reasonably expected to increase as a result of greater vehicle use as an indirect effect of the Local Plan.

According to the World Health Organisation, the critical NO_x concentration (critical threshold) for the protection of vegetation is 30µgm⁻³; the threshold for sulphur dioxide is 20µgm⁻³. In addition, ecological studies have determined "critical loads"⁴⁸ of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (that is, NO_x combined with ammonia NH₃). These are bespoke to particular habitats and are available on the Air Pollution Information System apis.ac.uk.

⁴⁷ Proportions calculated based upon data presented in Dore CJ et al. 2005. UK Emissions of Air Pollutants 1970 – 2003. UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory. <http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/index.php>

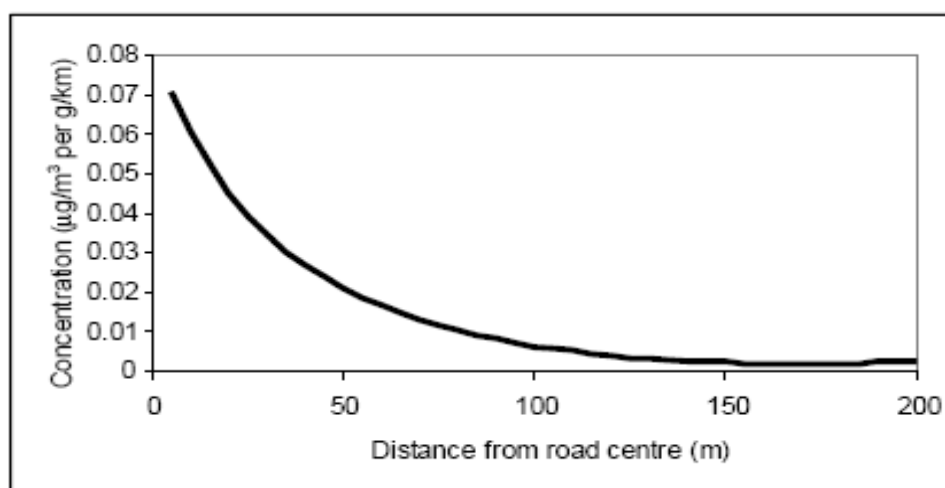
⁴⁸ The critical load is the rate of deposition beyond which research indicates that adverse effects can reasonably be expected to occur

3.2.1 Local air pollution

The majority of the proposed employment site allocations allow for Class B2 ‘General Industrial’ Uses. The uses of each site allocation are not specified at this stage. However, industrial developments that would constitute significant ‘point source’ emitters (e.g. pig farms, Energy from Waste facilities, smelting works, power stations etc.) are not allocated via the Local Plan process. Such facilities would need to obtain a permit from the Environment Agency before they were allowed to operate and could not obtain that permit if they posed a risk of an adverse effect on a European site. The Local Plan HRA thus focuses on vehicle exhaust emissions as this is the only potentially significant source of emissions from the type of development allocated in the Local Plan which would not be controlled by the Environment Agency permitting process.

According to the Department of Transport’s Transport Analysis Guidance, “*Beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roadside to local pollution levels is not significant*”⁴⁹. This is because traffic exhausts are situated only a few inches above the ground and are horizontal to it, such that the vast majority of emitted pollutants are never dispersed far and are very quickly deposited. This distance is also related to the mix of the exhaust gases, the small dimension of the exhausts and the velocity of the exhaust gases leaving the exhaust.

Plate 1: Traffic contribution to concentrations of pollutants at different distances from a road (Source: DfT)



This is therefore the distance that has been used throughout this HRA in order to determine whether European sites are likely to be significantly affected by traffic generated by development under the Plan.

3.3 Water resources

The North West is generally an area of low water stress as is North Wales, which is a major source of potable water for north-west England.

St. Helens is located within United Utilities’ Integrated Resource Zone which serves 6.5 million people in St. Helens, south Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and most of Cheshire. The Integrated Resource Zone constitutes a large integrated supply network that enables substantial flexibility in distributing supplies within the zone. The construction of the ‘west to east link’ further aids this flexibility and thus breaks the traditional division in which Greater Manchester received water from Cumbria and Merseyside received water from the River Dee (which lies partly in England and partly in Wales) and from purely Welsh sources (e.g. Lake Vyrnwy).

During earlier iterations of HRA work for St Helens, United Utilities identified that approximately 75% of potable water supply for St Helens was historically abstracted from the River Dee, 20% was historically abstracted from Lake Vyrnwy and 5% was historically abstracted from sites in Cumbria. The River Dee flows into the Dee Estuary which is also designated as an SAC as well as an SPA and Ramsar site. Four water companies abstract from sources that affect the River Dee including United

⁴⁹ www.webtag.org.uk/archive/feb04/pdf/feb04-333.pdf

Utilities (UU), Dee Valley Water, Welsh Water and Severn Trent Water. The potential for excessive abstraction from the Dee to result in sufficient drawdown of water to damage the interest features of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC has been considered in this HRA process. If this does occur, damage could occur through desiccation, fish entrainment or deterioration in water quality due to the lower proportion of freshwater to sediment. This, in turn, could reduce freshwater flows into the Dee Estuary to such a degree as to damage the interest features of that site through an increase in salinity. These risks are identified in the Environment Agency's Review of Consents process for these sites.

The United Utilities Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) (2015) indicates that without the reductions in demand from a free meter option programme and water efficiency programmes there would be a supply demand deficit in the Integrated Resource Zone of 107 Ml/d by 2040.

However, from reading the WRMP it appears that increased abstraction from the Dee or any other European sites beyond the current licensed volumes is not part of United Utilities' intended future supply strategy, which depends on a mixture of demand management and increased abstraction from groundwater. Further, the United Utilities HRA of the WRMP: Assessment of Feasibility and Preferred Options (2013)⁵⁰ identified that no likely significant effect would result from the WRMP.

In addition, risk of abstraction at inappropriate times of the year (such as periods of low flow) will be prevented within England by the Environment Agency's licencing regime and Review of Consents process and within Wales by Natural Resources Wales who hold the responsibility for abstraction licences within Wales. As such water resources as a pathway are not considered further in this HRA.

3.4 Water quality

The quality of the water that feeds European sites is an important determinant of the nature of their habitats and the species they support. Poor water quality can have a range of environmental impacts:

At high levels, toxic chemicals and metals can result in immediate death of aquatic life, and can have detrimental effects even at lower levels, including increased vulnerability to disease and changes in wildlife behaviour.

Eutrophication, the enrichment of plant nutrients in water, increases plant growth and consequently results in oxygen depletion. Algal blooms, which commonly result from eutrophication, increase turbidity and decrease light penetration. The decomposition of organic wastes which often accompanies eutrophication deoxygenates water further, augmenting the oxygen depleting effects of eutrophication. In the marine environment, nitrogen is the limiting plant nutrient and so eutrophication is associated with discharges containing available nitrogen.

Some pesticides, industrial chemicals, and components of sewage effluent are suspected to interfere with the functioning of the endocrine system, possibly having negative effects on the reproduction and development of aquatic life. Some male fish in UK rivers, for example, have demonstrated the physiological symptoms expected of oestrogen-mimicking chemicals - symptoms which have been linked to exposure to female hormones (synthetic and natural) in sewage effluent.

The Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) that serve the Plan area are Warrington North, St. Helens, Billinge South, and Widnes. Warrington North WwTW discharge into the Whittle Brook, St. Helens WwTW discharges into Sankey Brook, and Billinge South WwTW discharges into Black Brook; all of which are part of the Sankey Brook catchment that ultimately flows into the River Mersey. Widnes WwTW discharges directly into the River Mersey. All waste water from St. Helens will enter the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site, albeit some distance from the point of discharge. **Appendix C** includes illustrations of the Sankey Brook and Mersey River catchments.

Increased amounts of housing or business development can lead to reduced water quality of rivers and estuarine environments. Sewage and industrial effluent discharges can contribute to increased nutrients in European sites leading to unfavourable conditions. In addition, diffuse pollution, partly from urban run-off has been identified during an Environment Agency Review of Consents process, as being a major factor in causing unfavourable condition of European sites.

For sewage treatment works close to capacity, further development may increase the risk of effluent

⁵⁰ AMEC (2013). United Utilities Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Water Resource Management Plan: Assessment of Feasibility and Preferred Options

escape into aquatic environments. In many urban areas, sewage treatment and surface water drainage systems are combined, and therefore a predicted increase in flood and storm events could increase pollution risk.

However, it is also important to note that the situation is not always simple. For sites designated for waterfowl a STW discharge can actually be a useful source of food and birds will often congregate around the outfall. In addition, while nutrient enrichment does cause considerable problems on the south coast (particularly in the Solent) due to the abundance of smothering macroalgae that is produced, it is not necessarily a problem in other areas where the macroalgae are broken up by tidal wave action and where colder and more turbid water limit the build-up in the first place.

Coastal and estuarine sites rely on water of sufficient quality to support plant and invertebrate species that in addition to being of innate value in themselves, also support birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians and mammals for which such sites may be designated. The Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site is designated for bird species that are reliant on good quality water to support their existence. This site could be vulnerable to pollution arising from sewerage generated through development in St. Helens, if adequate infrastructure is not in place.

3.5 Loss of Functionally Linked Land Outside of the European Site Boundary

While most European sites have been geographically defined in order to encompass the key features that are necessary for coherence of their structure and function, this is not the case for all such sites. Due to the highly mobile nature of waterfowl, it is inevitable that areas of habitat of crucial importance to the maintenance of their populations are outside the physical limits of the European site for which they are an interest feature. However, this area will still be essential for maintenance of the structure and function of the interest feature for which the site was designated and land use plans that may affect this land should still therefore be subject to further assessment. This has been underlined by a recent European Court of Justice ruling (C-461/17, known as the *Holohan* ruling⁵¹) which in paragraphs 37 to 40 confirms the need for an appropriate assessment to consider the implications of a plan or project on habitats and species outside the European site boundary provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.

This topic has been subject to ongoing work by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service which is seeking to identify sensitive areas for Bewick's swan, whooper swan and pink-footed goose in relation to agricultural land in Merseyside and West Lancashire (these being the main SPA species that are known to extensively utilise fields outside the SPA boundary). The State of Lancashire's Birds (2013)⁵² identifies areas of sensitivity for Bewick's swan, whooper swan, pink-footed goose and lapwing among others. The State of Lancashire's Birds⁵³ identifies the presence of the following non-breeding designated bird features within St Helens borough: pink-footed goose, lapwing, whooper swan, golden plover, oystercatcher, wigeon, gadwall, teal, and pintail.

The State of Lancashire's Birds identifies⁵⁴ that within St Helens borough, pink-footed goose has the greatest abundance, with the core distribution within the borough being in the north and west. The abundance of pink-footed goose suggests that the borough could support significant roost sites for this species within functionally linked land located outside of the European site boundary. Lapwing has a wider distribution within the borough than pink-footed goose; however, in comparison its abundance is low. Therefore, whilst lapwing is more likely to be present within a given parcel, the population using that parcel is less likely to constitute a significant part of the European site population. Moreover, those locations where abundance of lapwing is higher tend to be the same areas that support pink-footed goose. The State of Lancashire's Birds identifies a low distribution and abundance of gadwall, wigeon and pintail, with a single location (Newton Lake) showing a higher abundance of gadwall that could support a significant population. Since gadwall, teal and pintail focus their use on water bodies within the borough (rather than terrestrial habitats) they are unlikely to be directly affected by housing and employment development in the borough. Whooper swan,

⁵¹ The *Holohan* ruling also requires all the interest features of the European sites discussed to be catalogued (i.e. listed) in the HRA. That is the purpose of Appendix B.

⁵² White, S.J. (Ed.), McCarthy, B., Dunstan, S., Martin, S.J., Harris, R.J., Hulme, G. and Marsh, P.J. (2013). *The State of Lancashire's Birds: An atlas survey of the breeding and wintering birds of Lancashire and North Merseyside, 2007-2011*. Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society, Rishton. <http://www.lacfs.org.uk/Lancs%20Birds.html> [accessed 01/02/2018]

⁵³ *Ibid*

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

oystercatcher, and golden plover are present within the borough but with very localised distribution and low abundance. Similar to lapwing, the atlas does not suggest that fields within St Helens borough are likely to provide roosts of fundamental importance to these non-breeding SPA bird species. In addition to data from the Lancashire Bird Atlas, MEAS has confirmed that a new roost site for pink-footed goose and whooper swan has been identified at Simonswood on the borough boundary.

Having regard to these factors, the rest of this report uses pink-footed goose as a general proxy for designated non-breeding birds when discussing use of farmland in St Helens. This is because this species has the widest distribution and abundance within the borough and it occupies similar terrestrial habitats (such as farmland, grassland and wetlands within the borough) to that of other non-breeding designated bird features. SSSI Impact Risk Zones were also referenced when undertaking the assessment. The Cheshire Bird Atlas was interrogated, but the area covered within this document did not overlap with that of the St Helens authority.

The following reports have also been referenced to inform this HRA:

- Natural England Commissioned Report NECR172. 2015. Waterbird population trend analysis of the Mersey Estuary SPA, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA;
- Natural England Commissioned Report NECR173. 2015. Review and Analysis of Changes in Waterbird Use of the Mersey Estuary SPA, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA;
- Assessment of Supporting Habitat (Docks) for Use by Qualifying Features of Natura 2000 Sites in the Liverpool City Region, Ornithology Report, TEP Version 3.0, Ref 4157 005. August 2015; and
- Where available, documentation to support planning applications for site allocations including Phase 1 habitat surveys, wintering bird surveys and consultation responses from Natural England.

The areas sensitive to Bewick's swan, whooper swans and pink-footed goose are located adjacent to the current urban areas of St. Helens and within the wider rural areas. These bird species utilise arable and grassland fields to graze in during the winter months. Therefore, any loss of these habitats could have a likely significant effect upon the features of the designated sites within functionally linked land.

4. Test of Likely Significant Effects

The full Test of Likely Significant Effects for the Plan policies both alone and in-combination is presented in **Appendix D**. Of the forty Plan policies, thirty-two have been screened out as having no likely significant effects and the remaining eight have been screened in as having likely significant effects either alone (primarily due to potential for loss of functionally-linked land for the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site) or because of the role they would play in any ‘in combination’ effect (particularly regarding recreational pressure on coastal European sites but also with regard to air quality and water quality pathways).

In addition to the table in Appendix D, **Appendix E** contains the assessment (alone and in-combination) for site allocations for Plan Policies LPA04, LPA04.1 LPA05, LPA05.1, LPA06 and LPC03 (refer to Appendix A, for Site Allocations Plan). All housing and employment sites are considered likely to have significant effects ‘in combination’ via the pathways of air quality and water quality and all housing sites are likely to have significant effects ‘in combination’ with growth across the Liverpool City Region via recreational pressure. The following housing or employment sites are likely to have significant effects due to the possibility that they contain land suitable for non-breeding birds associated with one or more of the Liverpool City Region SPAs and Ramsar sites: 6EA, 7EA, 8EA, 8HA, 1HS, 4HS, 5HS, 7HS and 8HS.

Table 5 below provides a list of the Plan policies found to have potential likely significant effects on one or more European designated sites either alone or in-combination. This table also lists the possible impact pathways leading to likely significant effects. The thirty-two policies that have been screened out do not present any pathways for likely significant effect.

The eight Plan policies that have been screened in as having likely significant effects on European designated site(s) are taken forward to Appropriate Assessment, along with their associated housing and employment site allocations.

Table 5. Plan Policies with Likely Significant Effects both ‘alone; and ‘in combination’

Policy Reference	Potential Impact Pathways ‘Alone’	Potential Impact Pathways ‘In-Combination’
LPA04 A Strong and Sustainable Economy	Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds (6EA, 7EA and 8EA).	Atmospheric pollution and water quality.
LPA04.1 Strategic Employment Sites	Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds (6EA, 7EA and 8EA).	Atmospheric pollution and water quality.
LPA05 Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs	Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds (8HA).	Recreational pressure, atmospheric pollution and water quality.
LPA05.1 Strategic Housing Sites	None	Recreational pressure, atmospheric pollution and water quality.
LPA06 Safeguarded Land	Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds (1HS, 4HS, 7HS, and 8HS).	Recreational pressure, atmospheric pollution and water quality.
LPA10: Parkside East	Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds (7EA).	Atmospheric pollution and water quality.
LPA11 Health & Wellbeing	None	Recreational pressure
LPB01 St. Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area	None	Atmospheric pollution, Water quality, and recreational pressure.

5. Appropriate Assessment ‘Alone’

This chapter presents a detailed assessment of the European designated sites, and the impact pathways associated with those policies screened in during the Test of Likely Significant Effects. This section determines any adverse effects that the Local Plan would have on the integrity of the European sites when considered ‘alone’ i.e. without considering the cumulative effects in combination with other plans and projects.

5.1 Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site

The initial scoping of European designated sites illustrated in **Table 1** identified that the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site is potentially vulnerable to:

- Recreational pressure; and
- Reduction in water quality.

5.1.1 Recreational Pressure

The following Plan policies have potential to result in an increase in recreational pressure:

- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs (provides for the quantum of new housing to be provided within St. Helens to 2035);
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA11: Health and Wellbeing; and
- LPB01: St. Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

In recent years a number of visitor surveys of coastal European sites in other parts of England have been undertaken. These cover a range of European sites in various situations and can therefore serve as a broad indicator for European sites around Merseyside, provided that they are used with care, until such time as visitor survey work undertaken specifically for the Liverpool City Region authorities is complete:

- Exe Estuary SPA/Ramsar site - visitor surveys were undertaken by Footprint Ecology⁵⁵. Most visitors (around 60%) had travelled by car and at least a further 29% travelled on foot. Foot visitors tended to be very local, whereas car-borne visitors were travelling considerable distances: 51% of those interviewed (taking only those visiting from home on a short visit/day trip rather than holidaymakers) had come from within a 10km radius. As such, this 10km zone has been adopted by local authorities as that within which mitigation must be provided.
- Humber Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site - Visitor survey work on the Humber Estuary has now been completed by Footprint Ecology⁵⁶. Eighty-eight percent of visitors interviewed were local residents visiting on a short trip or day trip from home. Most (70%) of interviewees arrived at sites by car. Home postcodes indicated people travelling from their home lived a median distance of 4.4km from the survey point. 50% of interviewed visitors on foot lived within 0.95km and 50% of visitors who travelled by car lived within 8.4km, after which points of origin became more dispersed.
- North Kent Estuaries – Surveys of the North Kent European sites (Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site, The Swale SPA/Ramsar site and Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site) by Footprint Ecology⁵⁷ identified that the majority of regular visitors to the sites live within 6km, after which points of origin became more dispersed.
- Solent Maritime SAC and overlapping Special Protection Areas – Data on visitor activity in the Solent complex was obtained through the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation

⁵⁵ Liley, D. & Cruickshanks, K. (2010). Exe Visitor Survey, 2010. Teignbridge District Council / Footprint Ecology

⁵⁶ Fearnley, H., Liley, D. & Cruickshanks, K. (2012). Humber Management Scheme Visitor Survey. Footprint Ecology, unpublished report for Humber Management Scheme

⁵⁷ Fearnley, H. & Liley, D. (2011). North Kent Visitor Survey Results. Footprint Ecology.

Project⁵⁸. Terrestrial (rather than water-based) visitors undertook a wide range of activities, with walking (without a dog) and dog walking the two most frequently recorded activities. Taking the data for non-holiday makers only, visitors were roughly evenly divided between those who arrived by car and those who arrived on foot. Ninety percent of all visitors arriving on foot lived within 2km. Almost eighty percent of all visitors arriving by car (excluding holiday makers) lived within 10km.

It can be seen that there is variation from site to site so the findings set out above cannot be directly transferred to the Mersey Estuary. They do however indicate that coastal estuarine sites typically have a fairly large core recreational catchment of up to c. 10km and potentially further. This is logical, since frequent regular journeys longer than 10km are likely to be off-putting to many recreational visitors.

At its closest the Plan area is located 4.8km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site and is therefore very likely to be located at least partially within the core recreational catchment of the site. It is unlikely that the Plan, considered alone, would result in adverse effects from increased recreational pressure; however the effect in combination with other projects and plans needs further consideration. This impact pathway is investigated further in **Chapter 6, section 6.2**.

5.1.2 Reduction in Water Quality

Prior to further analysis, the following Plan policies have potential to result in a decrease in water quality from treated wastewater discharges:

- LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy;
- LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites;
- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs;
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land; and
- LPB01: St. Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

The Mersey Estuary has a high load of nutrients mainly from diffuse sources, with levels for phosphate and nitrogen decreasing from point sources. Recent modelling has shown that due to the natural turbidity of the water, there is only a low risk of excessive algal growth. However, a conservation objective of the Mersey Estuary SPA is to maintain populations of qualifying species (see **Appendix B**), and in turn to maintain a reference level of benthic invertebrate communities. These aquatic invertebrates are dependent upon good water quality, as well as appropriate patterns of erosion and deposition and as such water quality requires further investigation. Water quality in the European sites is essentially an 'in combination' issue and is therefore investigated in **Chapter 6, section 6.3**.

5.2 Manchester Mosses SAC

The initial scoping of European designated sites illustrated in **Table 1** identified that the Manchester Mosses SAC is potentially vulnerable to:

- Atmospheric pollution.

5.2.1 Atmospheric Pollution

The following Plan policies have potential to result in atmospheric pollution through vehicle exhaust emissions:

- LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy;
- LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites;
- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs;
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;

⁵⁸Stillman, R. A., West, A. D., Clarke, R. T. & Liley, D. (2012) Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project Phase II: Predicting the impact of human disturbance on overwintering birds in the Solent. Report to the Solent Forum

- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA10: Parkside East; and
- LPB01: St. Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

Manchester Mosses SAC is designated for its degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration. The Critical Load for this habitat type is 5-10kg N/ha/yr. The current nitrogen deposition rate is 18.90-21.28 kgN/ha/yr⁵⁹. This indicates that the SAC is already subject to levels of nitrogen deposition in excess of the Critical Load for this habitat.

According to 2011 Census data half (51%) of residents of St. Helens travel less than 5km to work each day and three quarters (76%) of journeys to work by car or van arising within St Helens borough are to Warrington, Knowsley, Liverpool, Wigan, Halton, West Lancashire and Sefton, none of which would require use of the M62 past the SAC. In contrast, Trafford, Salford and Manchester (which might involve passing the SAC) collectively account for less than 8% of journeys to work by car or van⁶⁰.

Due to the distance of the relevant part of the SAC (Holcroft Moss) from the borough boundary (6.5km) and the evidence that the route plays a small role in journeys to work for Halton residents, it is therefore considered that the Plan will not result in adverse effects alone upon the integrity of the SAC as a result of atmospheric pollution. However, there is potential for impacts from the Plan's growth proposals, in combination with those of surrounding plans and projects (particularly those in the Greater Manchester area), to result in a likely significant effect. This 'in combination' pathway is subject to appropriate assessment in **Chapter 6, section 6.4**.

5.3 Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site

The initial scoping of European designated sites illustrated in **Table 1** identified that the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar sites are potentially vulnerable to:

- Recreational pressure;
- Changes in hydrology; and
- Loss of functionally linked land outside of the designated site.

5.3.1 Recreational Pressure

This European designated site is specifically geared towards attracting visitors and during discussion with Natural England over the St. Helens Core Strategy HRA⁶¹ there was a general view that recreation was sufficiently well managed on this site that recreational pressure was not an issue. Consultation with Natural England on an earlier draft of this HRA has not resulted in any change to that conclusion. As such this impact pathway in relation to Martin Mere SPA requires no further consideration. As there are currently no adverse effects on integrity through recreational disturbance, any increases in use from the St Helens Local Plan will not lead to adverse effects on integrity due to the embedded management measures already in place on the site.

5.3.2 Changes in Hydrology

The site is vulnerable to changes in hydrology. However, these changes stem from local activities such as agricultural activities and land drainage. There are no linking impact pathways present that could cause in the Plan to result in adverse effects alone, given the distance of the site from the borough.

5.3.3 Loss of Habitat/ Functionally Linked Land Outside The European Site Boundary

The Plan area is located 11.5km from the European designated site at its closest. However, the

⁵⁹ APIS <http://www.apis.ac.uk> [accessed 26/07/18]

⁶⁰ This does not include journeys to work which start and end in St Helens Borough. When those are included the percentage will be considerably less than 8%

⁶¹ Scott Wilson (2009). Appropriate Assessment of the St. Helens Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

Lancashire Bird Atlas⁶² identifies that parts of the borough are heavily utilised by interest features associated with the SPA/Ramsar site, particularly pink footed goose but including other qualifying birds: lapwing, oystercatcher, golden plover and whooper swan to a lesser degree. Additionally, SSSI Impact Risk Zones flag that some of the site allocations listed below are located within areas that may be utilised by designated non-breeding bird species. The Lancashire Bird Atlas indicates that the main focus of pink-footed goose in St Helens borough is north of the A580 and west of the A571, and particularly the areas north, west and east of Rainford, with an additional important roost for pink-footed goose and whooper swan at Simonswood on the western boundary of the borough. The birds are generally sparse elsewhere in the borough, notwithstanding the presence of suitable habitat. Wintering and passage Bewick's swan, grey plover, ringed plover, curlew, sanderling, ruff, oystercatcher, black-tailed godwit, dunlin and shelduck are rarely recorded in St Helens. Small flocks of redshank, golden plover, teal, pintail or wigeon are sometimes recorded, although the borough is clearly not a focal point for the Merseyside/West Lancashire populations of these species. Mallard, black-headed gull and lapwing are distributed across the whole of Merseyside and Lancashire during winter. All of these birds feature on the SPA citations for Martin Mere, Ribble & Alt Estuaries, or Mersey Estuary, either specifically named on the SPA citation or part of the general non-breeding assemblage.

Any loss of functionally linked land that supports a significant population of designated SPA birds (most likely to be pink-footed goose but could be other species) on a regular basis may result in an adverse effect on the SPA and Ramsar site features if unmitigated, and general roosting resources need preserving. The following Strategic Policies have potential to result in loss of functionally linked land:

- LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy;
- LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites;
- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land; and
- LPA11: Health and Wellbeing.

Strategic Policies LPA04, LPA04.1, LPA05 and LPA06 provide for the following site allocations that are located within areas identified in the Lancashire Bird Atlas to support populations of non-breeding SPA birds likely to be found in the borough and/or, based on desk analysis, appear to contain suitable habitat. Loss of this habitat due to development of these sites alone or in combination with other projects or plans could result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of the designated population, if the layout of the development would result in the loss of fields of importance for SPA/Ramsar birds:

5.3.3.1 Employment Allocations (Policy LPA04):

- 6EA Land West of Millfield Lane, South of Liverpool Road and North of Clipsley Brook, Haydock;
- 7EA Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows; and
- 8EA Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows.

5.3.3.2 Strategic Employment Site Allocations (Policy LPA04.1):

- 6EA Land west of Millfield Lane, south of Liverpool Road and north of Clipsley Brook, Haydock; and
- 7EA Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows; and
- 8EA Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows.

5.3.3.3 Residential Allocations (Policy LPA05):

- 8HA Land South of Higher Lane and East of Rookery Lane, Rainford.

⁶² <http://www.lacfs.org.uk/Lancs%20Birds.html> [accessed 05/02/2018]

5.3.3.4 Safeguarded Land Site Allocations - Land for Housing (Policy LPA06):

- 1HS: Land South of Leyland Green Road, North of Billinge Road and East of Garswood Road, Garswood
- 4HS: Land East of Newlands Grange, (former Vulcan works) and West of the West Coast mainline, Newton-le-Willows
- 5HS: Land West of Winwick Road and South of Wayfarers Drive, Newton-le-Willows
- 7HS: Land South of Elton Head Road (adjacent to St. John Vianney Primary School), Thatto Heath
- 8HS: Land South of A580 between Houghtons Lane and Crantock Grove, Windle

As a result consideration of mitigation is required.

The fact that the sites listed above have been specifically identified does not mean that SPA birds will not be found elsewhere and all allocated sites (or windfall sites) that are sufficiently large (e.g. at least 1ha) and with suitable habitat should be subject to appropriate levels of passage/wintering bird survey to support planning applications. However, the sites above are those which can be identified as most likely to act as functionally-linked land based on available data.

Since the original version of this HRA, St Helens Borough Council has updated Policy LPC06 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation to address this issue. This has been done by adding more specific wording to put stricter policy requirements in place. These require future development proposals both on allocated and non-allocated sites to adequately assess and mitigate loss of functionally-linked habitat, including the provision of alternative habitat where possible. The policy also states that project-level investigations for each of the sites listed above and on the preceding page (and any other relevant sites as they come forward) are required. The applicant will be required to provide evidence that the development will not result in an adverse effect on integrity. To prove this, a survey will be required to determine habitats and current use of the site to verify if the site is in fact suitable to support a significant population⁶³ of designated bird features. Where habitats are suitable, non-breeding bird surveys will be required to determine if the site and neighbouring land constitute a significant area of supporting habitat. In line with other Merseyside Authorities, surveys will be required to be undertaken during autumn, winter and spring. If it is identified that habitat within the site or adjacent land supports significant populations of designated bird features, avoidance measures and mitigation will be required. Any planning application would be likely to require a project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that the development does not result in adverse effects on integrity.

St Helen's Council also intends to update its current Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to encourage the preservation of functionally-linked land and to set out strategic proposals for working with relevant landowners in the borough to maintain and enhance the ability of the borough to provide functionally-linked land.

It is considered that allocating sites for development prior to full wintering bird surveys being undertaken is appropriate and legally compliant in this case. Firstly, the law accepts that ecological investigation to support plan development must be tiered, with more detailed investigation undertaken at each subsequent stage:

- The Court of Appeal⁶⁴ has ruled that provided the competent authority is duly satisfied that mitigation can be achieved in practice (in other words that solutions exist that are likely to be effective) this will suffice to enable a conclusion that the proposed development would have no adverse effect.
- The High Court⁶⁵ has ruled that for '*a multistage process, so long as there is sufficient information at any particular stage to enable the authority to be satisfied that the proposed mitigation can be achieved in practice it is not necessary for all matters concerning mitigation to be fully resolved before a decision maker is able to conclude that a development will satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations*'.

⁶³ A significant population is classified as a site that regularly used by 1% or more of the population of qualifying bird species

⁶⁴ No Adastral New Town Ltd (NANT) v Suffolk Coastal District Council Court of Appeal, 17th February 2015

⁶⁵ High Court case of R (Devon Wildlife Trust) v Teignbridge District Council, 28 July 2015

- Advocate-General Kokott⁶⁶ has commented that *‘It would also hardly be proper to require a greater level of detail in preceding plans [than lower tier plans or planning applications] or the abolition of multi-stage planning and approval procedures so that the assessment of implications can be concentrated on one point in the procedure. Rather, adverse effects on areas of conservation must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure’.*

Secondly, there is a low risk of any of these allocated sites proving undeliverable due to SPA bird issues. The functionally-linked habitats in question are common, widespread and easily recreated (or managed in a more favourable manner) and the species in question (particularly pink-footed goose) do not have highly specific habitat requirements and are sufficiently widespread in their use of this functionally-linked land that development is only likely to affect a small amount of their overall foraging resource.

As mentioned on the preceding page, the Council intends to update its Biodiversity SPD to provide more detail on natural conservation issues. This will cover the need to ensure the provision of functionally linked compensatory habitat for the loss of supporting habitat for pink-footed goose and other bird features of the SPA and Ramsar sites. This will include a strategic approach to providing alternative feeding habitat for pink-footed goose populations and other non-breeding SPA bird features. The SPD will detail:

- How habitat provision and site management could be delivered in order to maintain and enhance feeding habitat for pink-footed goose and other non-breeding SPA bird features, for example in, or offsite from allocations which are Green Belt sites and are supporting habitat for pink-footed goose and other non-breeding SPA bird features:
- How to deliver alternative feeding areas: Firstly applicants will consider options to secure mitigation areas on land in the control of the landowner or developer and land should be secured to provide feeding habitat for pink-footed goose and other non-breeding SPA bird features through amending farming practices (including no shooting within mitigation areas and amending crop types), arable reversion and/or supplementary feeding.
- If mitigation area(s) cannot be secured within the ownership of the developer/landowner then land within the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Nature Improvement Area (NIA) should be considered as follows:
 - Use of the NIA Focus Areas to provide improved management and mitigation – usually by the developer or landowner leasing land for this purpose or by managing the land in agreement or partnership with the landowner using an agreed legal or financial mechanism.
 - Benefit of a joint approach across the LCR to help meet development needs and HRA compliance land should be secured to provide feeding habitat for pink-footed goose and other non-breeding SPA bird features through:
 - Amending farming practices (including no shooting within mitigation area and amending crop types); and
 - Arable reversion and/or supplementary feeding.

Due to the above changes to Policy LPC06 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, and the Council’s firm commitment to update its current Biodiversity SPD to secure the preservation of functionally-linked land, it is concluded that appropriate mechanisms are in place to adequately assess and mitigate loss of functionally linked land and that the Plan would result in no adverse effects on the integrity of the Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site in respect of this issue.

It should be noted that, although this issue has been discussed at length in relation to Martin Mere, the same development sites could result in a similar effect on the other coastal Merseyside SPAs and

⁶⁶ Opinion of Advocate General Kokott, 9th June 2005, Case C-6/04. Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, paragraph 49.
<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=58359&doclang=EN>

the protective policy mechanism identified above would also address those European sites.

5.4 Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site

The initial scoping of European designated sites illustrated in **Table 1** identified that the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar sites were potentially vulnerable to:

- Recreational pressure and disturbance to qualifying species;
- Atmospheric pollution; and
- Loss of habitat/ functionally linked land outside the site boundary.

5.4.1 Recreational Pressure and Disturbance

The following Plan policies have potential to result in an increase in recreational pressure:

- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs (provides for the quantum of new housing to be provided within St. Helens to 2035);
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA11: Health and Wellbeing. and
- LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

The Ribble and Alt Estuaries are among the most popular holiday destinations in Britain, with Blackpool as the largest resort and Southport increasing in visitors. Leisure activities include water sports such as sailing and windsurfing; fishing and shooting; bird watching; land yachting; and generally relaxing at the coast. It draws tourists from across the country due to its proximity to Blackpool. These tourist activities are focused on the Ribble Estuary which is furthest from St. Helens. With regard to visitors from Merseyside the southern part of the site (i.e. that largely contiguous with the Sefton Coast SAC) is of greater relevance.

Both the key species and the habitats that support SPA and Ramsar site birds and natterjack toad are susceptible to recreational pressure arising both from the land (particularly dog walking) and from waterborne recreation. As a result the same policies described for impacts relating to recreational pressure for the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site (see **section 5.1.1**) also have potential to result in increased recreational pressure upon the avian features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar sites and the natterjack toads of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site.

The Plan area is located 13.8km east of the estuaries. The visitor surveys undertaken for other estuarine European sites suggest that core visitor catchments are often up to 10km and can sometimes be greater⁶⁷. Due to the distances involved it is considered unlikely that development and tourism proposed within the Plan will result in adverse effects on integrity alone; however, in combination effects are discussed in **Chapter 6, section 6.2**

5.4.2 Atmospheric Pollution

The following Plan policies have potential to result in atmospheric pollution:

- LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy;
- LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites;
- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs;
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA10: Parkside East; and
- LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

⁶⁷ A Visitor Management Strategy is currently in production and will cover all European sites in Merseyside. When the results of that survey are available specific distances for the Merseyside European sites can be cited. Until that time, the distances used in this report are in line with typical distances recorded on other coastal and estuarine European sites.

Some of the habitats within the SPA (notably saltmarsh and sand dunes at different successional stages) are vulnerable to botanical changes from atmospheric nitrogen deposition. However, substantial changes in habitat structure would be required before those habitats were rendered unsuitable for the birds for which the SPA was designated and such changes are very unlikely to result from atmospheric nitrogen deposition.

Moreover, due to the distances involved, it is concluded that there is no realistic impact pathway present, and therefore no adverse effects on integrity ‘alone’.

5.4.3 Loss of Habitat/ Functionally Linked Land Outside The European Site Boundary

Similar to Martin Mere, discussed in **section 5.3.3**, the Plan area is located some distance from the European designated site (13.8km at its closest). The Lancashire Bird Atlas⁶⁸ identifies that parts of the borough are utilised by pink footed goose and other non-breeding birds which are designation features of the site. Any loss of functionally linked land that regularly supports a significant population of designated pink footed goose or other designated bird feature could result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of the SPA and Ramsar site features. Strategic Policies and Site Allocations identified in **section 5.3.3** have potential to result in loss of functionally linked land.

As a result, a conclusion of no adverse effects on integrity cannot be drawn regarding this impact pathway without mitigation.

In response to this, the Council has updated Policy LPC06 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. This has been done by adding more specific wording to require future development proposals both on allocated and non-allocated sites to adequately assess and mitigate loss of supporting habitat, including the provision of compensatory habitat. It also states that project-level investigations for each of the sites listed on the preceding page (and any other relevant sites as they come forward) is required. The applicant will be required to provide evidence that the development will not result in an adverse effect on integrity. To prove this, a survey will be required to determine habitats and current use of the site to verify if the site is in fact suitable to support a significant population⁶⁹ of designated bird features. Where habitats are suitable, non-breeding bird surveys will be required to determine if the site and neighbouring land constitute a significant area of supporting habitat. In line with other Merseyside Authorities, surveys will be required to be undertaken during autumn, winter and spring. If it is identified that habitat within the site or adjacent land supports significant populations of designated bird features, avoidance measures and mitigation will be required. Any planning application would be likely to require a project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that the development does not result in adverse effects on integrity.

Given the updated Policy LPC06 and the Council’s commitment to updating the current Biodiversity SPD to secure the preservation of functionally-linked land (as detailed in section 5.3 above), it is concluded that the Plan will not result in adverse effects on integrity ‘alone’ or in combination with other projects or plans.

5.5 Liverpool Bay SPA, and SPA Extension

The initial scoping of European designated sites illustrated in **Table 1** identified that the Liverpool Bay SPA, and SPA extension is potentially vulnerable to:

- Changes to water quality via water pollution entering the Mersey Estuary, in turn from the Sankey Brook catchment (e.g. increase in heavy metals from sewage and/or industry)/ sediments; and
- Recreational pressure and disturbance.

5.5.1 Water Quality

The following Plan policies have potential to result in a decrease in water quality:

⁶⁸ <http://www.lacfs.org.uk/Lancs%20Birds.html> [accessed 30/11/2016]

⁶⁹ A significant population is classified as a site that regularly used by 1% or more of the population of qualifying bird species

- LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy;
- LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites;
- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs;
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land; and
- LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

Whilst this site has potential to be vulnerable to changes in water quality as a result of the Plan, due to the distances involved, this is not considered to be a realistic impact pathway 'alone'. As such, this impact pathway requires no further consideration.

5.5.2 Recreational Pressure and Disturbance

The following Plan policies have potential to result in an increase in recreational pressure:

- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs (provides for the quantum of new housing to be provided within St. Helens to 2035);
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA11: Health and Wellbeing (encourages outdoor recreational activities); and
- LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

The visitor surveys undertaken for other estuarine European sites suggest that core visitor catchments are often up to 10km. At its closest St. Helens is located 13.8km from Liverpool Bay SPA and SPA Extension and as such the potential for it to be located within the recreational catchment of the site cannot be dismissed. Whilst it is unlikely that the Plan would result in adverse effects on integrity from increased recreational pressure alone, the impact in combination with other projects and plans needs further consideration. This 'in combination' impact pathway will be subject to appropriate assessment in **Chapter 6, section 6.2**.

5.6 Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site

Similar to Liverpool Bay designated sites, the initial scoping of European designated sites illustrated in **Table 1** identified that the Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site is potentially vulnerable to:

- Changes to water quality via water pollution entering the Mersey Estuary, in turn from the Sankey Brook catchment (e.g. increase in heavy metals from sewage and/or industry)/ sediment; and
- Recreational pressure and disturbance.

5.6.1 Water Quality

The following Plan policies have potential to result in a decrease in water quality:

- LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy;
- LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites;
- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs;
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land; and
- LPB01: St. Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

Whilst this site has potential to be vulnerable to changes in water quality as a result of the Plan, due to the distances involved, this is not considered to be a realistic impact pathway 'alone'.

5.6.2 Recreational Pressure and Disturbance

The following Plan policies have potential to result in an increase in recreational pressure:

- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs (provides for the quantum of new housing to be provided within St. Helens to 2035);
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA11: Health and Wellbeing; and
- LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

The visitor surveys undertaken for other estuarine European sites suggest that core visitor catchments are often up to 10km and can be greater. At its closest the Plan area is located 14.3km from the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA/Ramsar. However, the only part of the SPA and Ramsar site on the north bank of the River Mersey is Seaforth Nature Reserve to which access is controlled such that recreational pressure can in fact be managed. The remainder of the Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore is 14km from St Helens on the opposite bank of the River Mersey. Moreover, to reach it, residents of St Helens must use either the ferry or the Kingsway/Queensway tunnels (these are both toll) or the new Mersey Gateway Bridge. All of these involve a significant detour and expenditure of money and effort and are likely to considerably reduce the proportion of visitors from St Helens compared to other sites both closer to home and where a similar experience can be gained (i.e. Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site or Sefton Coast SAC or Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA or the similarly named Ramsar site). On this basis it is considered that the Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and the Ramsar site (other than the Seaforth Nature Reserve component) are unlikely to form a significant recreational resource for residents of St Helens.

Nonetheless, a Recreation Mitigation Strategy (RMS) is being prepared for all the European sites in the Liverpool City Region and this will include Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and the similarly named Ramsar site. Wording is proposed in Chapter 6 for inclusion in the Local Plan to commit to participation in this RMS and that would enshrine protection of all European sites into Local Plan policy.

5.7 Sefton Coast SAC

The initial scoping of European designated sites illustrated in **Table 1** identified that the Sefton Coast SAC is potentially vulnerable to:

- Recreational pressure; and
- Atmospheric pollution.

5.7.1 Recreational Pressure

Sand dunes are vulnerable to recreational trampling in that excessive physical disturbance can retard or set back the dune development process and lead to a reduction in habitat diversity. However, at the same time some recreational trampling is beneficial in that it ensures that the dune vegetation does not all succeed to the same late stage of development and thereby actually helps to preserve diversity.

The following Plan policies have potential to result in an increase in recreational pressure:

- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs (provides for the quantum of new housing to be provided within St. Helens to 2035);
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA11: Health and Wellbeing; and
- LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

The visitor surveys undertaken for other estuarine European sites suggest that core visitor catchments are often up to 10km and can be greater. At its closest the Plan area is located 14.6km from the Sefton Coast SAC on the same bank of the Mersey Estuary and its sand dune habitat makes it recreationally attractive. As such the potential for it to be located within the recreational catchment of the site cannot be dismissed. Whilst it is unlikely that the Plan would result in adverse effects on integrity from increased recreational pressure alone, the impact in combination with other projects and

plans needs further consideration. This impact pathway will be subject to appropriate assessment in **Chapter 6, section 6.2.**

5.7.2 Atmospheric Pollution

The following Plan policies have potential to result in atmospheric pollution:

- LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy;
- LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites;
- LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs;
- LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites;
- LPA06: Safeguarded Land;
- LPA10: Parkside East; and
- LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area.

Whilst the SAC has been identified as being sensitive to atmospheric pollution, due to the distances involved (the SAC is located 14.6km from the Plan area), it is considered that there is no realistic impact pathway present, and therefore no adverse effects on integrity will arise 'alone'.

5.8 Conclusion of Appropriate Assessment of St Helens Local Plan “Alone”

Due to the distances separating St Helens from the closest European sites it is considered that adverse effects on integrity will not arise from the development set out in the St Helens Local Plan when considered on its own. An adverse effect from the Local Plan alone could arise with regard to potential loss of functionally-linked habitat for birds (particularly pink-footed goose but also other species) associated with the coastal European sites (Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site, Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA/Ramsar) and Martin Mere SPA. However, the plan contains a protective policy framework to ensure this will not arise, in addition to a commitment to produce an updated Biodiversity SPD.

However, the development proposed in the St. Helens Local Plan also needs to be considered “in combination” with other projects and plans and particularly with the development being proposed in the Local Plans of other local authorities in the Liverpool City Region. That is the subject of Chapter 6.

6. Appropriate Assessment “In Combination”

This chapter investigates in-combination effects. **Section 6.1** discusses pertinent projects and plans as identified in **section 2.7**. **Sections 6.2 to 6.4** investigate in-combination impact pathways.

6.1 Projects and plans

6.1.1 Mersey Ports Masterplan and Liverpool Airport Masterplan

It is acknowledged that these are large schemes with potential for far reaching in combination impact pathways. However, due to the distances involved and the locations of the individual schemes themselves (i.e. none are within the Plan area), it is considered that there are no realistic impact pathways with potential to interact with the St Helens Local Plan.

6.1.2 Peel Waters: Wirral and Liverpool Waters

The HRA for the Liverpool Waters development identifies recreational pressure on various European sites around Merseyside as an adverse effect without mitigation. As such mitigation measures have been identified for this development. There is potential for ‘in combination’ recreational pressure effects with growth in St Helens and elsewhere in Liverpool City Region.

6.1.3 Local Plans

The quanta of housing growth set out in the Local Plans across the Liverpool City Region listed in Table 2 of this report could operate cumulatively with growth in St Helens to result in recreational pressure across the European sites in the Liverpool City Region. Growth in the Halton, Wigan and Warrington Local Plans could also operate in combination with the St Helens Local Plan to affect water quality in the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site via the Sankey Brook. The potential for in combination air quality effects from housing and employment growth along the M62 corridor on Manchester Mosses SAC also requires investigation. These pathways are discussed below.

6.2 Recreational Pressure

The following European designated sites have potential for adverse effects from increased recreational pressure associated with the St Helens Borough Local Plan in combination with other projects or plans:

- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA;
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site;
- Liverpool Bay SPA and SPA Extension;
- Sefton Coast SAC;
- Mersey Estuary SPA; and
- Mersey Estuary Ramsar site.

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) authorities are working on a Recreation Mitigation Strategy which would mitigate the cumulative effects of development across their areas on recreational pressure at the European sites. They hope to complete this work in 2019. With this LCR authority wide approach to addressing issues relating to increased recreational pressure stemming from increased residential development across the LCR authorities, it can be concluded that the Plan will not affect European sites in isolation or in combination. However, that commitment needs to be reflected in Local Plan policy. This is discussed below.

6.2.1 Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site

As previously identified the Mersey Estuary has potential to be vulnerable to increases in recreational pressure resulting from the Plan proposals in combination with those of other projects and plans such as the Local Plan documents for Halton and Liverpool.

The following St Helens Local Plan policies have potential to divert some level of recreational pressure away from European designated sites:

- LPA09: Green Infrastructure. This policy provides for improvements to the borough's Green Infrastructure. This has potential to divert recreational pressure away from European designated sites. *'The Council will, work with other organisations, where necessary to (a) expand tree cover in appropriate locations across the Borough to improve landscape character, water and air quality and the value of trees to wildlife; (b) strengthen and expand the network of wildlife sites, corridors and stepping stone habitats to secure net gain in biodiversity; (c) improve and increase the connectivity of the Greenway network; (d) increase the accessibility of open space within walking distance of housing, health, employment and education establishments to promote healthy lifestyles.....'*
- LPC05: Open Space. This policy provides for open space, sports and recreation. Appropriate open space and recreational facilities have potential to divert recreational pressure away from sensitive European designated sites. *'The Council will seek to ensure that the Borough's network of open spaces is protected, managed, enhanced and where appropriate, expanded...'*
- LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development. A positive policy providing for open space and residential development. *'Proposals for new residential development of 40 dwellings or more will be required to make provision for new open space, or the expansion or enhancement of existing open space provision, where (a) there are existing deficiencies in the quantity, accessibility or quality of open space(s) in the area; or b) the development would generate a need for open space that cannot be satisfactorily or fully met by existing provision in the area...'*

Local greenspace has a limited effect on the 'visit to the coast' draw; it may be much more beneficial in providing alternative local space for the 'day to day' recreational use such as the morning and evening dog walk.

However, these policies do not provide the strategic framework to ensure that no adverse effect on integrity will result from the Plan alone or in combination as that is mainly associated with managing recreational activity within the European site. To provide this strategic framework a similar approach is being taken to that of Halton and Liverpool Councils for the European sites. The Council has made a commitment to work with the other Merseyside Authorities, MEAS, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and other partners to devise a framework for the delivery of enhanced access management to the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site, to be informed by the collation of visitor survey data.

The LCR districts (including St Helens) have commissioned a Recreation Mitigation Strategy for the European designated sites across the LCR which will provide further details of opportunities to avoid and mitigate the effects of additional recreational pressure. In broad terms measures may involve:

- Suitably located Green Infrastructure where this will prove effective – the most important such feature in St Helens is the Bold Forest Park, which is the subject of an Area Action Plan adopted in July 2017. Bold Forest Park occupies an area of 1,800 hectares (ha) in the southern-most part of St Helens Borough, such that residents would need to pass the Park in order to visit the SPA and Ramsar sites. The Forest Park is 2 miles from St. Helens Town Centre and well served by public transport, providing a sustainable and accessible recreational resource for residents to enjoy. This increases the likelihood of people visiting the Park instead of the SPA and Ramsar site for casual recreation. From a visitor economy perspective, the Forest Park is well located to draw visitors from across the region. The Manchester to Liverpool railway line runs to the north of the Forest Park with stations at Lea Green and St. Helens Junction allowing easy access from the two conurbations. The Forest Park straddles the M62 motorway between Junctions 7 and 8 allowing easy road access from Junction 7 and is within a 30 minute drive for 2,065,000 million people. The Park will provide walking, running, cycling routes and angling lakes.

- Enhanced access management to the European sites when it becomes necessary, to be informed by the collation of visitor survey data. Examples of measures that may be deployable include temporary footpath and/or access closures during sensitive periods (e.g. the winter, when wintering birds are a key feature), re-routing of footpaths away from key hotspots for waterfowl, introducing enhanced wardening, introducing improved signage to encourage dogs to be kept on a lead or walked in areas that are away from key waterfowl hotspots or screening of key locations for recreational activity.

It is understood that since the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar does not lie within St Helens, St Helens Council is not suitably positioned to lead on this strategy. However, as with the Sefton Coast Plan mentioned below, the Local Plan should commit the Council to participating in the delivery of the access management plan, commensurate with the scale of its contribution to visitor pressure in the SPA/Ramsar site.

Text to address this has been included in the reasoned justification for Local Plan policy LPC06 as follows: *'It has been identified that new housing development in the Borough, particularly when considered cumulatively, may cause ecological effects on the Sefton Coast SAC and other designated European sites around the Liverpool City Region due to increased recreational pressure. The Council is working with other local authorities and partner organisations in the City Region to quantify these effects and to identify a strategic and consistent approach to any mitigation that is required.'*

Given that a commitment to this framework has been incorporated within the Plan it is considered that recreational pressure from the Plan area will not result in adverse effects upon the integrity of the Mersey Estuary as a result of increased recreational pressure in combination with other plans and projects.

6.2.2 Other European Designated Sites (Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA, Ribble & Alt Estuaries Ramsar site, Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar site, Liverpool Bay SPA and the Sefton Coast SAC).

The Liverpool City Region authorities are working on a Recreation Mitigation Strategy which would mitigate the cumulative effects of development across their areas on recreational pressure at the European sites. They hope to complete this work in 2019. This LCR authority wide approach is intended to address issues relating to increased recreational pressure stemming from increased residential development across the LCR authorities.

Given the aforementioned text has been inserted into the Plan committing to this framework it is considered that recreational pressure from the Plan area will not result in adverse effects upon the integrity of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA, Ribble & Alt Estuaries Ramsar site, Liverpool Bay SPA and the Sefton Coast SAC in combination. This would also serve to protect those European sites that, based on the analysis in this HRA are not expected to encompass St Helens borough within their core catchments (the Dee Estuary and Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore European sites).

6.3 Water Quality

It has been found that both Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar sites have the potential to be vulnerable (in-combination with other projects and plans) to increased water pollution. Water resourcing acts across Council boundaries and therefore the Plan has the potential to result in in-combination effects with neighbouring authorities. Effects upon the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site via Sankey Brook have potential result in cumulative impacts from development in the neighbouring authorities of Halton, Wigan and Warrington.

Water pollution has been an issue for the Mersey estuary since at least the 18th century, with *"Increased wastes from [the] textile, tanning, metal processing, chemical... and petrochemical industries..., discharge of domestic waste water, sewage and surface runoff from a large populated area"*⁷⁰. The problem of water pollution *"was probably at its worst in the 1960's,"* and major

⁷⁰ Langston, WJ; Chesman, BS; Burt, GR (2006). Marine Biological Association. The Mersey estuary Special protected Area. Marine Biological Association Occasional Publication No. 18

improvements to water quality have been realised since the formation of the Mersey Basin Campaign in 1985⁷¹.

The Sankey Brook flows from St. Helens, Wigan and Warrington into the Mersey Estuary. The brook represents approximately 10% of the riverine water flow of the Mersey Estuary. Further, the St. Helens WwTW discharges into Sankey Brook. Any increase in effluent output as a result of increased employment and housing development has the potential to reduce water quality within Sankey Brook. Further, WwTW serving Wigan, Warrington and Halton also discharge into the brook.

The 2009 HRA for St. Helens Core Strategy⁷² identified that even with major infrastructure improvements, water quality in the Mersey estuary is still an issue, with pollution sources from industry, agriculture, shipping, treated sewage and contaminated runoff. The 2011 Water Cycle Study⁷³ identifies that the ecological status of Sankey Brook is ‘Poor’. The Environment Agency’s Catchment Data Explorer identifies the current and future Water Framework Directive (WFD) targets for the watercourses within the Sankey catchment (see **Table 6**).

Table 6: Sankey Brook Water Framework Direct Targets⁷⁴

Waterbody	Location	WFD 2015 Target	WFD 2027 Target
Millingford (Newton) Brook	Within St. Helens	Moderate	Good ⁷⁵
Blackbrook (Mersey Estuary)	Within St. Helens	Moderate	Good ⁷⁶
Rainford Brook	Within St. Helens	Moderate	Good ⁷⁷
Hardshaw (Windle) Brook	Within St. Helens	Moderate	Good ⁷⁸
Sankey Brook (Hardshaw Brook to Rainford Brook)	Within St. Helens	Moderate	Good ⁷⁹
Sankey Brook (Rainford Brook to Mersey)	Within St. Helens and downstream	Poor ⁸⁰	Not Available
Whittle Brook (Mersey Estuary)	Within St. Helens and downstream	Moderate	Good ⁸¹

Table 6 shows that in general the quality of the watercourses within the St. Helens Plan area are of Moderate condition and have targets of ‘Good’ by 2027. However, Sankey Brook (Rainford Brook to Mersey), has a WFD target of Poor for 2015, indicating that this watercourse remains in poor condition.

Plan policy LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management includes the following text that provides protection against deterioration in water quality: *Water Quality: “Development which would adversely affect the quality or quantity of water in any watercourse or of groundwater or cause deterioration in water body or element classification levels defined in the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (or in any national regulations covering this matter) will not be permitted. Any planning application for development which could (without effective mitigation) cause such harm must be supported by a Construction Management Plan which sets out how the water environment will be protected during the construction process”.*

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Scott Wilson (2009). Appropriate Assessment of the St. Helens Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

⁷³ Entec (2011). Mid Mersey Water Cycle Study (Outline Phase) On Behalf of Warrington Borough Council, St. Helens Borough Council and Halton Borough Council Final Report.

⁷⁴ Environment Agency. Catchment Data Explorer. Sankey. <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB112069060990> [accessed 30/11/2016]

⁷⁵ Achievability of 2027 target: Cause of adverse impact unknown (disproportionately expensive, technically infeasible), disproportionate burdens (disproportionately expensive, technically infeasible)

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Achievability of 2027 target: Disproportionate burdens (disproportionately expensive)

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Achievability of 2027 target: Cause of adverse impact unknown (disproportionately expensive, technically infeasible), disproportionate burdens (disproportionately expensive, technically infeasible)

⁸¹ Achievability of 2027 target: Disproportionate burdens (disproportionately expensive)

Further, this policy also states that with regards to SuDS “*The drainage proposals on all sites should be designed to address the drainage needs of the whole site. Where development would proceed in different phases or with multiple developers involved, the drainage proposals should cover all phases and the full construction period.*”

Policy LPA03: Development Principles includes text stating that the Borough’s natural resources such as water should be protected and enhanced. With the above policy text in place the Plan acknowledges that there are potential issues relating to reduction in water quality as a result of its proposals.

Ultimately it is the duty of United Utilities to provide sufficient infrastructure to treat waste water to appropriate levels and of the Environment Agency to implement statutory controls over the discharge from these sewage treatment works. However, the water company is obliged to service development once that development is consented within its catchment area. Therefore, local authorities have a key role to play in ensuring that the pace of delivery of new development is in line with the provision of any necessary infrastructure enhancements to treat wastewater to an acceptable standard.

To ensure no adverse effects result, the Plan acknowledges the outcomes of the Water Cycle Study 2011. In particular, the WCS identifies that further investigation by United Utilities (UU) is required to determine headroom availability within its existing WwTW now and looking forward to future growth levels (such as that identified within the Plan). Whilst it is acknowledged that Plan policy does contain reference to the requirement for phasing of development, it is pertinent to provide direct reference to the need for phased development with reference to waste water treatment. It is recommended that development is phased in line with headroom availability at the relevant WwTW and in line with the provision of any required new infrastructure required to treat waste water to an adequate standard to protect the coastal and estuarine designated sites. It is also recommended that the Plan includes reference to the fact the Council will work together with UU to ensure sufficient headroom exists in the locations required for the future levels and locations of development identified within the Plan.

To address this issue paragraph 4.30.8 of the supporting text for Policy LPA08: Infrastructure Delivery and Funding states that ‘*The Mid Mersey Water Cycle Study 2011 identified that further investigation is required to determine headroom capacity within the St Helens waste water treatment plant. United Utilities has a responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient water treatment capacity to accommodate the needs of the area in a way which protects environmental assets, including the coastal and estuarine designated European ecological sites (see Policy LPC06 for further details). The Council will continue to identify any development pressures at an early stage so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure that sufficient headroom is provided for the future levels and locations of development identified within the Plan*’. The supporting text and clause 3 of Policy LPA08 also confirms that ‘*where the suitability of development depends upon the provision of additional or improved infrastructure or service capacity, that development should be phased to coincide with the provision of such infrastructure or capacity*’.

It is understood that United Utilities have not raised issues with the emerging Local Plan in relation to WWTW, but the Council will continue to liaise with them.

With the above commitment in place, it is concluded that the Plan includes an appropriate policy framework to ensure that it will not, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA or the Mersey Estuary Ramsar site as a result of changes in water quality.

6.4 Atmospheric Pollution

In combination effects of increased atmospheric pollution upon Manchester Mosses SAC are considered.

One part of the Manchester Mosses SAC is located adjacent to the M62 (to the east of Junction 11 at Houghton Green). The M62 passes through the following authorities (west to east): Liverpool, Knowsley, St. Helens, Warrington, and Salford (in Greater Manchester). It is feasible that the St. Helens Local Plan employment and residential allocations could, in combination with similar allocations in the Local Plans of these other authorities, lead to an increased use of the M62. This could increase atmospheric pollution which may, in turn, affect the habitats within the SAC. The list below sets out the potential levels of housing development within the existing and emerging Local

Plans of local authorities along the M62 corridor (which must be considered alongside the proposals for employment and other development also set out in those Plans):

- Liverpool: 34,780 new dwellings between 2013 and 2033⁸²;
- Knowsley: 8,100 new dwellings between 2010 and 2028⁸³;
- Warrington: 10,500 new dwellings between 2006 and 2027⁸⁴;
- Salford: 34,900 new dwellings between 2015 and 2035⁸⁵; and
- Greater Manchester: 55,300 new dwellings to 2035⁸⁶

The SAC is located adjacent to the M62 and the Liverpool to Manchester rail line. Under Policy LPA10, at least 60ha of land within site 7EA (Parkside East) must be reserved to provide a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange or other rail enabled employment. The remainder of the site could be used for general employment. In general, increased rail freight would result in a reduction in HGV movements and thus a positive outcome for air quality. In 2004 the Department of Transport made the following comment on air quality issues as they relate to the transfer of freight movements from road to rail: *“It should be noted that in terms of total transport emissions, rail transport accounts for less than 1% of the total. Therefore, even with the most rail orientated transport options, perhaps doubling the rail kilometres, the potential for any significant impact on emissions will lie mainly with the saving in emissions from road transport brought about by modal transfer, rather than those generated by rail. Hence, it is suggested that emissions from rail sources can be scoped out in most cases.”*

Moreover, the following Plan policies aim to reduce atmospheric emissions via a variety of pathways:

LPD09: Air Quality: A positive policy dedicated to reducing atmospheric emissions from existing and future development.

“1. Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not: a) Impede the achievement of any objective(s) or measure(s) set out in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) Plan; b) Introduce a significant new source of any air pollutant, or new development whose users or occupiers would be particularly susceptible to air pollution, within an AQMA; c) lead to the a significant deterioration in local air quality resulting in unacceptable effects on human health, local amenity or the natural environment, that would require a new AQMA to be created; or d) Having regard to established local and national standards, lead to an unacceptable decline in air quality in any area;”

2. Major development schemes should demonstrably promote a shift to the use of sustainable transport to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality.”

LPA03: Development Principles: A positive policy ensuring that new development protects, conserves and enhances the natural environment and protects and enhances air quality.

“New development in St. Helens will support the following development principles where relevant: ... 5c)Protecting, conserving, and/or enhancing the Borough’s natural, built and historic environments; 5d)Protecting and enhancing the quality of the Borough’s natural resources including water, air, land and biodiversity; ...”

LPA07: Transport and Travel: A positive policy promoting the use of sustainable transport methods that have potential to reduce atmospheric pollution.

“2. All proposals for new development that would generate significant amounts of transport movement must be supported by a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement;

3. New development will only be permitted if it wouldb) be located and designed to enable a suitable level of access (having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal) to existing and/or proposed public transport services; c) provide appropriate provision of charging points for electric vehicles; d) enable good levels of accessibility by walking and cycling between homes, jobs and services; e) provide for safe and adequate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to, from and within the development...”

⁸² Liverpool Local Plan (as submitted in 2018)

⁸³ Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted January 2016)

⁸⁴ A High Court Challenge removed elements of the Warrington Local Plan: Core Strategy relating to housing in February 2015.

⁸⁵ Salford Draft Local Plan (November 2016)

⁸⁶ Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: Draft for Consultation (October 2016)

LPA11: Health and Wellbeing: Provides for managing air quality and pollution from a health point of view.

“The Council will work with its health and wellbeing partners to promote public health principles, maximise opportunities for people to lead healthy and active lifestyles, and reduce health inequalities for residents within the Borough. It will do so by seeking to ... Managing air quality and pollution.”

LPC13: Renewable and Low Carbon Development: A positive policy supporting use of renewable energy whilst providing protection for biodiversity, and air.

“1 Proposals for development that would produce and/or distribute decentralised, low carbon or renewable energy will be permitted provided that they would a) avoid causing unacceptable harm to the appearance or character of the surrounding landscape; natural resources; biodiversity; geodiversity; water or air quality; aviation or road safety; public amenity; or the living conditions of occupiers of any nearby dwellings..... When proposals are being assessed against these criteria, regard will be had to any environmental, social and/or economic benefits that the proposals would provide, and their number, scale, siting, design and any cumulative impact in conjunction with other proposals.”

LPC14: Minerals: Planning criteria relating to managing air quality and pollution.

“The criteria referred to in part 4(a) of this policy include ii): air and water quality...”

LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development:

“All proposals for development within the Borough will be expected, as appropriate having to their scale, nature and location, to meet or exceed the following requirements: criterion 2. Part b)...Minimise and mitigate to acceptable levels any effects that the development may have on: air quality; light and/or water pollution (including contamination of soil, surface water and groundwater resources); and levels of noise, vibration, smells, dust and electromagnetic fields in the area”

These are all positive measures that will help to protect and /or improve air quality and are in line with the policies set out in other Merseyside Local Plan HRAs to tackle the same issue. However, there is also the need to ensure that project-level analysis of potential air quality impacts (and if necessary, project-level mitigation) is required. This will require particular projects that are likely to result in a substantial increase in traffic flows to devise project-specific mitigation beyond the strategic ‘in combination’ air quality improvement measures being included in the Local Plan. If the change in flows on a relevant road due to a given scheme is likely to exceed 200 Heavy Duty Vehicles per day or 1,000 Average Annual Daily Traffic then this would be the trigger for project-level air quality modelling and, depending on the outcome of that modelling, the need for scheme-specific mitigation.

This is tackled in Policy LPD09 (Air Quality) which states that ‘*New development that would result in increased traffic flows on the M62 past Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of more than 1000 vehicles per day or 200 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) per day must be accompanied by evidence identifying whether the resultant impacts on air quality would cause a significant effect on ecological interests within the SAC. Where such effects are identified they would need to be considered in accordance with Policy LPC06*’.

Given these measures, and the small contribution growth in St Helens is likely to make to annual average daily traffic flows on the M62 past the SAC, it is concluded that an appropriate policy framework is in place to ensure that no adverse effects on integrity result from potential increased atmospheric pollution as a result of the Plan in combination with other projects or plans.

6.5 Conclusion of St Helens Local Plan HRA “In Combination” Assessment

This chapter explored ‘in combination’ impacts of recreational pressure, water quality and atmospheric pollution resulting from the Plan. It is concluded that the Local Plan contains an adequate policy framework to ensure that it would result in no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site when considered in combination with other plans or projects.

7. Overall Conclusion

It is concluded that the St Helens Local Plan contains a sufficient policy framework to ensure that no adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites arise, either from the Plan alone, or from the Plan in combination with other plans and projects.

Appendix A : Figure A1 and Figure A2

Figure A1 Illustrates the European sites discussed

Figure A2 Illustrates the Site Allocation Plan

Appendix B : European Designated Sites

B.1 Dee Estuary SAC

Introduction

The Dee Estuary is a large funnel shaped estuary which lies between the Wirral Peninsula, England and Flintshire, North East Wales. It was formerly much more extensive but large scale reclamation of intertidal land has occurred, principally at the head of the estuary. This followed the canalisation of the River Dee in the eighteenth century when an attempt was made to secure the continuation of Chester as a port. The estuary contains extensive areas of intertidal sand and mudflats, which support a variable but characteristic benthic fauna depending on the nature of the substrate. Large areas of saltmarsh also occur at its head and along part of its north-eastern shore. The estuary continues to accrete and further saltmarshes are developing, particularly on the English shoreline. Locally, on the Welsh shoreline, saltmarsh continues to erode, particularly between Greenfield and Flint. Within the estuary, the three small sandstone islands of Hilbre, Middle and Little Eye provide the only hard natural rock coast habitat along this section of coastline. A large shingle ridge occurs at the Point of Ayr. Although yellow embryo dunes occur at its western end, these are susceptible to erosion from wave action.

Qualifying Features⁸⁷

Designated for the following Annex I habitats

Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand

Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

Estuaries

Annual vegetation of drift lines

Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts

Embryonic shifting dunes

"Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes")"

"Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")" * Priority feature

Humid dune slacks

Coastal lagoons

Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*)

European dry heaths

Designated for the following Annex II species:

Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*

River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*

Petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*

Conservation Objectives⁸⁸

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

⁸⁷ <http://incc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/n2kforms/UK0030131.pdf> [accessed 24/11/2016]

⁸⁸ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6002788709433344> [accessed 24/11/2016]

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.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Recreational pressure

Invasive species

Changes in abiotic conditions

Changes in biotic conditions

B.2 Liverpool Bay SPA, and SPA Extension

Introduction

Liverpool Bay is located broadly between Morecambe Bay and the east coast of Anglesey. The sea bed comprises a broad bed of mobile sediment including muddy sand, gravel, sand, and sandbanks. The Bay has a large tidal range facilitating sediment deposition. The seabed supports internationally important populations of birds.

Qualifying Features

Designated as an **SPA** for the following Annex I species⁸⁹:

In any season:

Red throated diver *Gavia stellate*

Migratory species

Common scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Non-breeding waterbird assemblages

Little gull *Larus minutus*

Common tern *Sterna hirundo*

Little tern *Sterna albifrons*

Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Draft Conservation Objectives⁹⁰

*Feature 1: Non-breeding population of common scoter *Melanitta nigra**

The size of the non-breeding population should be stable or increasing, allowing for natural variability, and sustainable in the long term. The non-breeding population of common scoter should be stable or increasing. If approved the site would be classified for a mean of peaks of 56,679 individuals (2004/05 – 2010/11).

⁸⁹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5306888513126400> [accessed 18/11/2016]

⁹⁰ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5910991877963776> [accessed 18/11/2016]

There should be sufficient habitat, of sufficient quality, to support the non-breeding population in the long term. The marine foraging habitat of this species should not decrease significantly, and its quality should remain unaffected by anthropogenic factors.

Factors affecting the population or its foraging habitat should be under appropriate control. Actions or events likely to impinge on the sustainability of the non-breeding population are under control.

*Feature 2: Non-breeding population of red-throated diver *Gavia stellate**

The size of the non-breeding population should be stable or increasing, allowing for natural variability, and sustainable in the long term. The non-breeding population of red-throated diver should be stable or increasing. If approved the site would be classified for a mean of peaks of 1,171 individuals (2004/05 – 2010/11).

There should be sufficient habitat, of sufficient quality, to support the non-breeding population in the long term. The marine foraging habitat of this species should not decrease significantly, and its quality should remain unaffected by anthropogenic factors.

Factors affecting the population or its foraging habitat should be under appropriate control. Actions or events likely to impinge on the sustainability of the non-breeding population are under control.

Feature 3: Non-breeding waterbird assemblage⁹¹

The size of the waterbird assemblage should be stable or increasing, allowing for natural variability, and sustainable in the long term. The non-breeding population of component species should be stable or increasing. If approved the site would be designated for a mean of peaks of 69,687 individuals (2004/05 – 2010/11).

There should be sufficient habitat, of sufficient quality, to support the non-breeding population in the long term. The marine foraging habitat for component species should not decrease significantly, and its quality should remain unaffected by anthropogenic factors.

Factors affecting the waterbird population or its foraging habitat should be under appropriate control. Actions or events likely to impinge on the sustainability of the non-breeding population are under control.

*Feature 4: Non-breeding population of little gull *Hydrocoleus minutus**

The size of the non-breeding population should be stable or increasing, allowing for natural variability, and sustainable in the long term. The non-breeding population of Little gull should be stable or increasing. If approved the site would be designated for a mean of peaks of 319 individuals (2004/05 – 2010/11).

There should be sufficient habitat, of sufficient quality, to support the non-breeding population in the long term. The marine foraging habitat of this species should not decrease significantly, and its quality should remain unaffected by anthropogenic factors.

Factors affecting the population or its foraging habitat should be under appropriate control. Actions or events likely to impinge on the sustainability of the non-breeding population are under control.

*Feature 5: Breeding population of little tern *Sternula albifrons**

The size of the population should be stable or increasing, allowing for natural variability, and sustainable in the long term. The breeding population of little tern should be stable or increasing. If approved the site would be designated for 69 pairs (1995 – 1999).

The distribution of the population should be being maintained, or where appropriate increasing. The range and distribution of terns within the SPA and beyond is not constrained or hindered.

There should be sufficient habitat, of sufficient quality, to support the population in the long term. The extent of functionally linked land used by terns is stable or increasing. Functionally linked land is of sufficient quality to support the ecological requirements of breeding terns. There are appropriate and sufficient food sources for terns within access of the SPA.

⁹¹ The main components of the waterbird assemblage (i.e. a species exceeding 1% of the GB total or 2,000 individuals) include all of the non-breeding qualifying features (common scoter, red-throated diver and little gull) as well as red-breasted merganser and great cormorant. Other species contributing to the assemblage total in numbers less than 1% of their respective GB populations or less than 2,000 individuals include: black-headed gull, common gull, common eider, fulmar, great black-backed gull, great crested grebe, common guillemot, northern gannet, herring gull, black-legged kittiwake, lesser black-backed gull, great northern diver, Atlantic puffin, razorbill, shag and velvet scoter.

Factors affecting the population or its foraging habitat should be under appropriate control. Actions or events likely to impinge on the sustainability of the breeding population are under control.

*Feature 6: Breeding population of common tern *Sterna hirundo**

The size of the population should be stable or increasing, allowing for natural variability, and sustainable in the long term. The breeding population of Common tern should be stable or increasing. If approved the site would be designated for 180 pairs (2011 – 2015).

The distribution of the population should be being maintained, or where appropriate increasing. The range and distribution of terns within the SPA and beyond is not constrained or hindered.

There should be sufficient habitat, of sufficient quality, to support the population in the long term. The extent of functionally linked land used by terns is stable or increasing. Functionally linked land is of sufficient quality to support the ecological requirements of breeding terns. There are appropriate and sufficient food sources for terns within access of the SPA.

Factors affecting the population or its foraging habitat should be under appropriate control. Actions or events likely to impinge on the sustainability of the breeding population are under control.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Loss of water quality through sewage discharges

Dredging and disturbance of sediments/benthic habitats following port expansion

Disturbances to bird species through shop movements and recreational pressure.

B.3 Manchester Mosses SAC

Introduction

This site is made up of three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Astley & Bedford Mosses SSSI, Holcroft Moss SSSI and Risley Moss SSSI. Astley & Bedford SSSI represents one of the largest remaining fragments of Chat Moss, a lowland raised mire some 25 square kilometres in extent developed over tills and Late-glacial flood gravels overlying Triassic sandstones of the Sherwood Sandstones Group. The major habitats present are modified mire communities, heathland, woodland and acidic grassland, all developed over the cut peat surface and subject to variations of wetness according to the residual topography or drainage patterns. Holcroft Moss SSSI occupies several small depressions in the Upper Terrace of the Mersey Valley and is an isolated remnant of the once extensive area of mossland formerly associated with this valley. Risley Moss SSSI contains derelict mires, as well as intact lowland raised mires, are rare habitats and Risley Moor is one of only 2 examples in Cheshire where the water level has been raised and steps taken to encourage the regeneration of an active mire surface.

Qualifying Features⁹²

Designated as an SAC for its Annex I habitat:

Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration

Conservation Objectives⁹³

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

The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and,

The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

⁹² <http://incc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/n2kforms/UK0030200.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

⁹³ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5089863191756800> [accessed 18/11/2016]

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Hydrological changes

Atmospheric pollution

B.4 Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site

Introduction

Martin Mere is a low-lying wetland complex of open-water, marsh and grassland habitats overlying deep peat. It is situated to the north of Burscough and occupies part of the site of the old Martin Mere which, prior to drainage, was probably the largest lake in Lancashire. Following acquisition by the Wildfowl Trust in 1974, the rough-grazed pasture of a decade ago has been transformed by positive management techniques into a reserve of international importance for waterfowl.

Qualifying Features

Designated as an **SPA** for the following Annex II species⁹⁴:

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Pink footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Tundra swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*

Whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Waterfowl assemblage

Designated as a **Ramsar** site under the following criterion:

Ramsar criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 25306 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Pink footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Species with peak counts in winter:

Tundra swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*

Whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Conservation Objectives⁹⁵

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), 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

⁹⁴ <http://incc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SPA/UK9005111.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

⁹⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4654948105060352> [accessed 18/11/2016]

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

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources)

Invasive non-native species

Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions

B.5 Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site

Introduction

The Mersey Estuary is an internationally important site for wildfowl and consists of large areas of intertidal sand and mudflats. The site also includes an area of reclaimed marshland, salt-marshes, brackish marshes and boulder clay cliffs with freshwater seepages. The Manchester Ship Canal forms part of the southern boundary of the site and separates a series of pools from the main estuary. These pools together with Hale Marsh are important roosting sites for wildfowl and waders at high tide. Throughout the winter the estuary supports large numbers of wildfowl and waders. The birds feed on the rich invertebrate fauna of the intertidal sediments as well as plants and seeds from the salt-marsh and adjacent agricultural land. The estuary is also a valuable staging post for migrating birds in spring and autumn.

Qualifying Features

Qualifies as an **SPA** for the following Annex II species: ⁹⁶

Wintering:

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Concentration:

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Qualifies as a **Ramsar** site under the following criterion: ⁹⁷

Ramsar Criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance. Species with peak counts in winter:

89576 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar Criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

⁹⁶ <http://incc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SPA/UK9005131.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

⁹⁷ <http://incc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11041.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

Species with peak counts in spring/ autumn:

Common shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*

Common redshank *Tringa totanus totanus*

Species with peak counts in winter:

Eurasian teal *Anas crecca*

Northern pintail *Anas acuta*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*

Conservation Objectives⁹⁸

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), 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.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Invasive species

Recreational pressure

Water quality and sedimentation

B.6 Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site

Introduction

The Mersey Narrows is located at the mouth of the Mersey Estuary and comprises Seaforth on the north bank and Egremont Foreshore on the south. The two areas are separated by approximately 2 km, but considered to be an integral site on the basis of the constant interchange of bird populations. Whilst Egremont Foreshore is particularly important as a feeding site a low tide, Seaforth is particularly important as a high tide roost site, particularly during high spring tides when rocky shores and man-made structures closer to the feeding areas are submerged and not available as roosting sites.

Qualifying Features

Designated as an **SPA** for the following Annex I species⁹⁹:

Wintering:

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Oyster catcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Bar-tailed godwit *Limos lapponica*

⁹⁸ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5396006325714944> [accessed 18/11/2016]

⁹⁹ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SPA/UK9020287.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Concentration:

Little gull *Larus minutus*

Common tern *Sterna hirundo*

Reproducing:

Common tern *Sterna hirundo*

Designated as a **Ramsar** under the following criterion¹⁰⁰:

Ramsar Criterion 4: Regularly supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions: During 2004/05 - 2008/09 the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar site supported important numbers of non-breeding little gulls and common terns.

Ramsar Criterion 5: Regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds: During the winters 2004/05 - 2008/09, the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar site supported an average peak of 32,402 individual waterbirds

Ramsar Criterion 6: regularly supports 1% of the individuals in the populations of the following species or subspecies of waterbird in any season:

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Bar-tailed godwit *Limos lapponica*

Conservation Objectives¹⁰¹

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), 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.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Recreational disturbance

Invasive species

Climate change

Coastal squeeze

Water pollution

Fisheries

Inappropriate coastal management

Marine litter, predation

¹⁰⁰ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/UK11042.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

¹⁰¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6609347727589376> [accessed 18/11/2016]

Development

Physical modification

B.7 Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar site

Introduction

The Meres & Mosses form a geographically discrete series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 16 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats; reed swamps, fen, carr & damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites in the fringes of meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora & fauna.

Qualifying Features¹⁰²

Designated as a Ramsar site under the following criterion:

Ramsar criterion 1: The site comprises a diverse range of habitats from open water to raised bog.

Ramsar criterion 2: Supports a number of rare species of plants associated with wetlands including five nationally scarce species together with an assemblage of rare wetland invertebrates (three endangered insects and five other British Red Data Book species of invertebrates).

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Eutrophication

Invasive non-native species

B.8 Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar site

Introduction

The Meres and Mosses form a geographically diverse series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England and north-east Wales. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 18 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats, reed swamp, fen, carr and damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in the nutrient-poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites on the fringes of the meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora and fauna.

Qualifying Features¹⁰³

Designated as a Ramsar site under the following criterion:

Ramsar criterion 1: The site comprises a diverse range of habitats from open water to raised bog.

Ramsar criterion 2: Supports a number of rare species of plants associated with wetlands, including the nationally scarce cowbane *Cicuta virosa* and, elongated sedge *Carex elongata*. Also present are the nationally scarce bryophytes *Dicranum affine* and *Sphagnum pulchrum*. Also supports an assemblage of invertebrates including several rare species. There are 16 species of British Red Data Book insect listed for this site including the following endangered species: the moth *Glyphipteryx lathamella*, the caddisfly *Hagenella clathrata* and the sawfly *Trichiosoma vitellinae*.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Eutrophication

¹⁰² <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11043.pdf> [accessed 21/11/2016]

¹⁰³ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11080.pdf> [accessed 24/11/2016]

Invasive non-native species

Pollution from pesticides/ agricultural runoff.

B.9 Oak Mere SAC

Introduction

There are more than 60 open water bodies known as ‘meres’ or ‘pools’ within the north west Midlands which form a nationally important series of open water sites. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by the ice sheets which covered Cheshire and north Shropshire, with a small number of outlying in adjacent parts of Staffordshire and Clwyd. Oak Mere, a shallow lake formed where three kettle holes coalesced, is unique among the Midland Meres. The water is acidic (pH 4.5 approximately), but compared to other acidic lakes is slightly nutrient-rich (mesotrophic). Because of its unusual water chemistry it contains an outstanding assemblage of aquatic plants and animals, including species more typical of upland waters on acid rocks, a number of which are regionally and naturally rare.

Qualifying Features¹⁰⁴

Nutrient-poor shallow waters with aquatic vegetation on sandy plains

Very wet mires often identified by an unstable ‘quaking’ surface

Conservation Objectives¹⁰⁵

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

The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and

The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Pollution to ground water, point sources and diffuse sources

Air pollution, airborne pollutants

Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions

Introduction of non-native invasive species

B.10 Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site

Introduction

The site is of special interest for intertidal mud and sandflats, embryonic shifting dunes, mobile dunes, dunes with creeping willow *Salix arenaria*, humid dune slacks, fixed dunes, dune grasslands and dune heath. Small areas of saltmarsh are also present. Its assemblages of vascular and non-vascular plants, in particular the nationally rare grey hair grass *Corynephorus canescens*, nationally scarce liverwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii* and nationally rare moss *Bryum neodamense*, are also of special interest.

The site is of special interest for its populations of internationally important wintering waterfowl and its nationally and, in some cases, internationally important populations of individual waders. Its populations of sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*, natterjack toad *Bufo calamita* and great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus* are also of special interest, along with the populations of the Red Data Book species, sandhill rustic moth *Luperina nickerlii gueneei*

¹⁰⁴ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0012970> [accessed 29/11/2016]

¹⁰⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4577218189590528> [accessed 29/11/2016]

Qualifying Features

Designated as an **SPA** for its Annex II species¹⁰⁶:

Wintering:

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Teal *Anas crecca*

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Pink footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Bewick's swan *Columbianus bewickii*

Whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Oyster catcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*

Common scoter *Melinitta nigra*

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Common shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Common redshank *Tringa totanus totanus*

Concentration:

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Common redshank *Tringa totanus totanus*

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Reproducing:

Lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*

Black-headed gull *Larus ridibundus*

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Common tern *Sterna hirundo*

¹⁰⁶ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SPA/UK9005103.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

Designated under the following **Ramsar** Criterion¹⁰⁷:

Ramsar criterion 2:

Natterjack toads *Bufo calamita*

Ramsar criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter:
222038 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

Lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*

Lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*

Common redshank *Tringa totanus totanus*

Species with peak counts in winter:

Tundra swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*

Whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Pink footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Teal *Anas crecca*

Northern pintail *Anas acuta*

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus*

Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica lapponica*

Conservation Objectives¹⁰⁸

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), 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

¹⁰⁷ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11057.pdf> [accessed 18/11/216]

¹⁰⁸ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6685913048416256> [accessed 18/11/216]

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.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Recreational pressure

Fisheries

Invasive species

B.11 River Dee and Bala Lake SAC

Qualifying features¹⁰⁹

The site is designated for its Annex I habitats:

Watercourses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

The site is designated for its Annex II species:

Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*

Floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*

Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*

Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*

River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*

Bullhead *Cottus gobio*

Otter *Lutra lutra*

Conservation Objectives¹¹⁰

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

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Deterioration in water quality and changes in flow rates due to ex-industrial runoff, discharge of treated sewage effluent (which contains elevated nitrates) and agricultural runoff;

Risk of excessive abstraction resulting in a decrease in freshwater flows and an increase in sediment loading of water such that dehydration of interest features may occur;

¹⁰⁹ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030252> [accessed 01/12/2016]

¹¹⁰ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4781078349873152> [accessed 01/12/2016]

Fish entrainment through abstraction intakes;
Barriers to migration;
Overfishing of Atlantic salmon; and
Introduction of invasive species.

B.12 Rixton Clay Pits SAC

Introduction

The site comprises parts of an extensive disused brickworks quarry excavated in glacial boulder clay deposits east of Warrington. It is of importance for its calcareous grassland communities and because the site supports the county's largest known breeding population of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. The Clay pits are not fed by ground water but by surface water.

Qualifying Features¹¹¹

Designated as an SAC for its Annex I species:

Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*

Conservation Objectives¹¹²

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

The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species

The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely

The populations of qualifying species, and,

The distribution of qualifying species within the site

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Urbanisation

B.13 Rostherne Mere Ramsar site

Introduction

There are more than 60 open water bodies known as 'meres' or 'pools' within the north west Midlands which form a nationally important series of open water sites. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by the ice sheets which covered Cheshire and north Shropshire, with a small number of outlying in adjacent parts of Staffordshire and Clwyd. Rostherne Mere is the deepest and one of the largest meres. It lies in a deep hollow in glacial drift to the south-west of Altrincham. It is a natural lake of high fertility which over the years has been increased by the accumulation of nutrients received from the inflow streams and surrounding farmland.

Qualifying Features¹¹³

Ramsar criterion 1: The site contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within appropriate biogeographic region. Rostherne Mere is one of the

¹¹¹ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/n2kforms/UK0030265.pdf> [accessed 18/11/2016]

¹¹² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6329864151891968> [accessed 18/11/2016]

¹¹³ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11060.pdf> [accessed 29/11/2016]

deepest and largest of the meres of the Shropshire-Cheshire Plain. Its shoreline is fringed with common reed *Phragmites australis*.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Eutrophication

Introduction of non-native invasive species

B.14 Sefton Coast SAC

Introduction

The site is of special interest for intertidal mud and sandflats, embryonic shifting dunes, mobile dunes, dunes with creeping willow *Salix arenaria*, humid dune slacks, fixed dunes, dune grasslands and dune heath. Small areas of saltmarsh are also present. Its assemblages of vascular and non-vascular plants, in particular the nationally rare grey hair grass *Corynephorus canescens*, nationally scarce liverwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii* and nationally rare moss *Bryum neodamense*, are also of special interest.

The site is of special interest for its populations of internationally important wintering waterfowl and its nationally and, in some cases, internationally important populations of individual waders. Its populations of sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*, natterjack toad *Bufo calamita* and great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus* are also of special interest, along with the populations of the Red Data Book species, sandhill rustic moth *Luperina nickerlii gueneei*

Qualifying Features¹¹⁴

Designated as an SAC for the following Annex I habitats:

Embryonic shifting dunes

"Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes")"

"Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")"

Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*)

Humid dune slacks

Designated as an SAC for the following Annex II species

A petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*

Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

Conservation Objectives¹¹⁵

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

¹¹⁴ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/n2kforms/UK0013076.pdf> [accessed 18/11/216]

¹¹⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5485439221760000> [accessed 18/11/216]

The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Atmospheric pollution

Invasive species

Hydrological changes

Recreational pressure

B.15 West Midland Mosses SAC

Introduction

West Midlands Mosses SAC is made up of the component Abbots Moss, Chartley Moss, Clarepool Moss and Wybunbury Moss SSSI. The meres and mosses of the north-west Midlands form a geographically discrete series of nationally important lowland open water and peatland sites. They have developed in natural depressions in glacial drift (sands and boulder clays) left by the ice sheets as they retreat from the Cheshire-Shropshire Plain some 15,000 years ago. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming across the component sites with a range of successional habitats forming from open water to woodland formed on solid peat. In addition to this quaking bogs or schwingmoors have formed within some sites. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora & fauna.

Qualifying Features¹¹⁶

Designated for the following Annex I habitats;

Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds

Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface

Conservation Objectives¹¹⁷

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

The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and

The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.

Environmental Vulnerabilities

Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions

Hunting and collecting animals, including damage caused by game e.g. excessive density

Air pollution, airborne pollutants

Pollution to ground water, point sources and diffuse sources

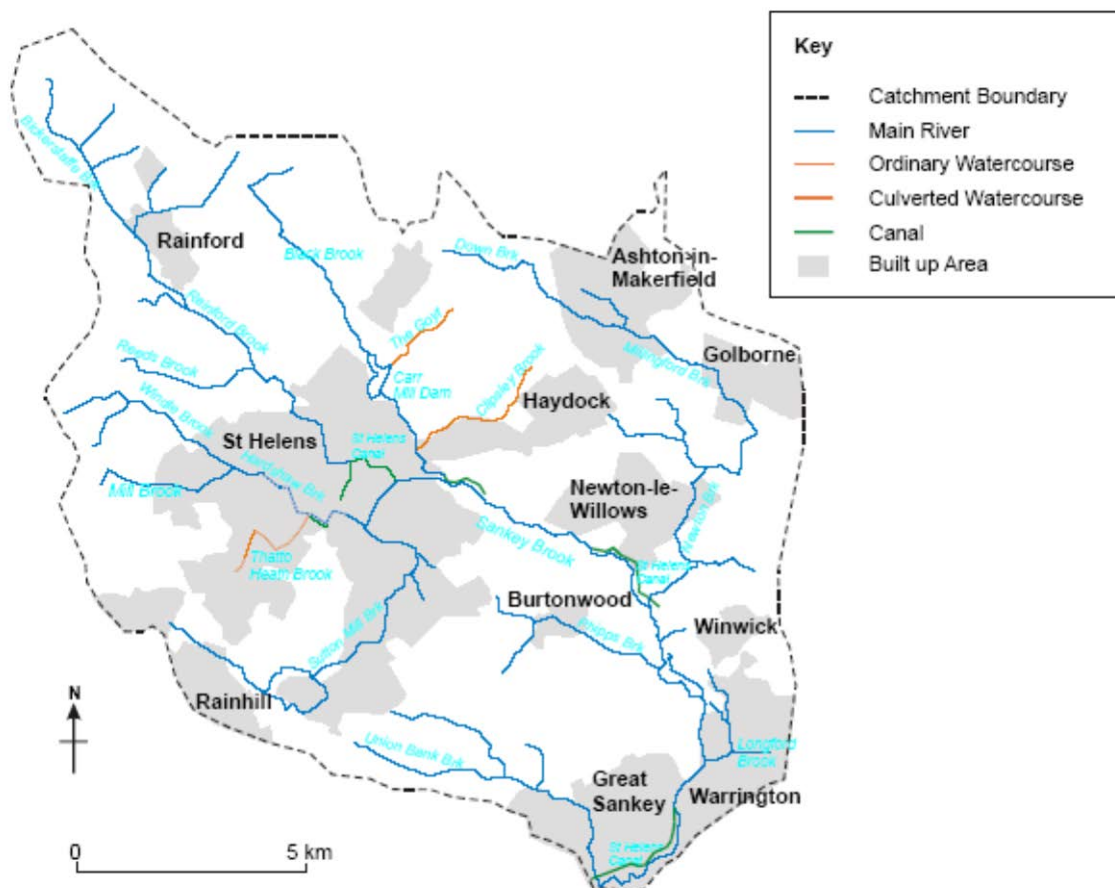
Biocenotic evolution, succession

¹¹⁶ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0013595> [accessed 29/11/2016]

¹¹⁷ <file:///C:/Users/ameken/Downloads/UK0013595-West-Midlands-Mosses-SAC-V2.pdf> [accessed 29/11/2016]

Appendix C : The Catchments of The Sankey Brook and Mersey Estuaries

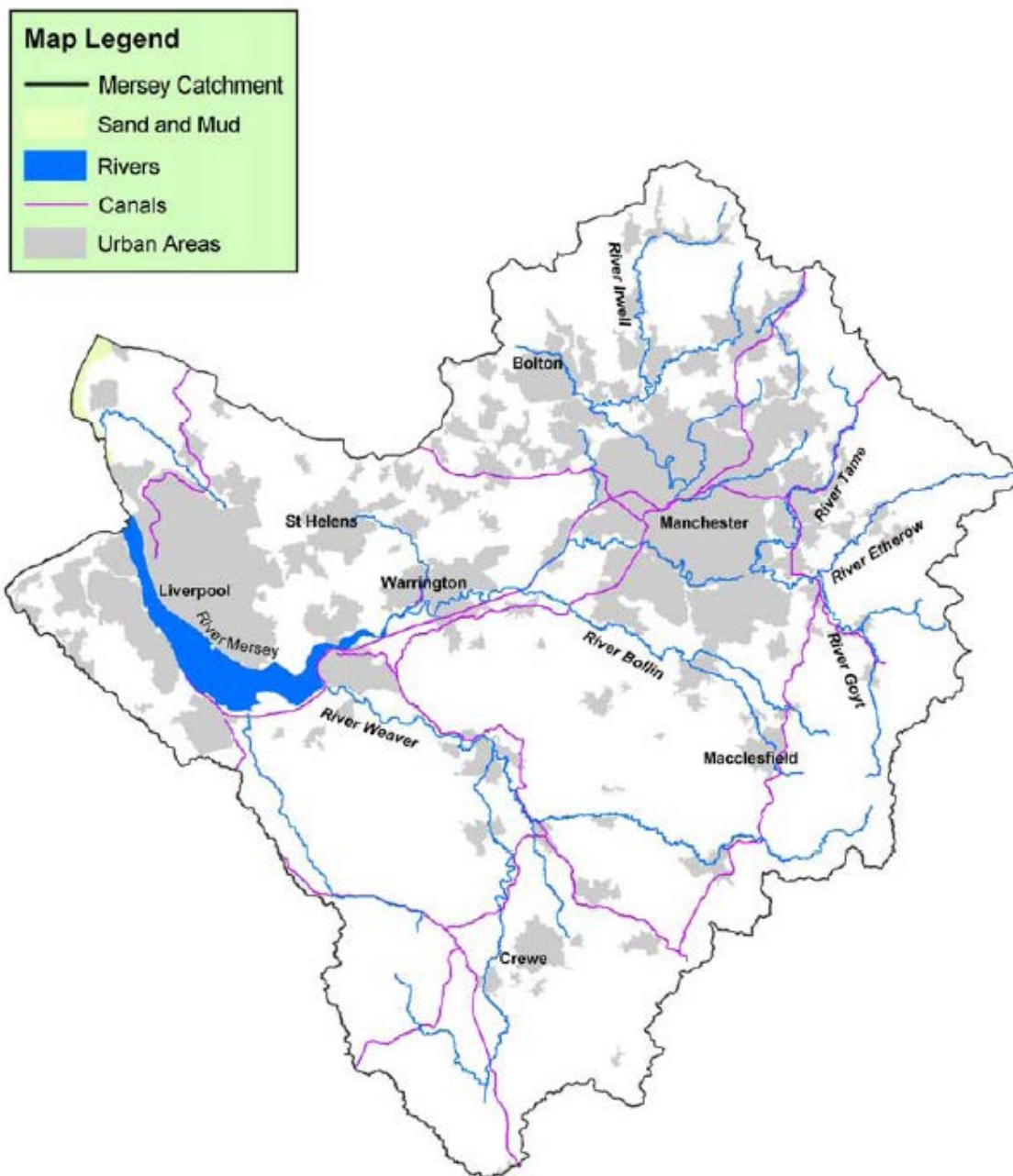
Sankey Brook Catchment



Source: Dunbar *Ed.*, 2002¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Dunbar, Michael *Ed.* (2002). *Heavily Modified Waters in Europe: Case Study on the Sankey Catchment.*

Mersey Catchment



Source: Mersey Basin Campaign, 2004¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Mersey Basin Campaign (2004). *River Mersey*.

Appendix D : Likely Significant Effects Assessment of the Plan Policies Alone and In-Combination

Policies identified in **green** in the “HRA outcome Alone” column do not provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site. Policies identified in **green** in the “HRA outcome In-Combination” column do not provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site in-combination with any other policies, Plans or Projects.

Policies identified in **orange** in the “HRA outcome Alone” column have potential to provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site. Policies identified in **orange** in the “HRA outcome In-Combination” column have potential to provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site ‘in-combination’ with any other policies, Plans or Projects. In both cases the policy/policies is/are taken forward to the next stage of assessment – Appropriate Assessment and discussed within this document.

Table 7: Assessment of St. Helens Local Plan Strategic Policies ‘Alone and In-Combination’.

Policy	Policy Summary	HRA outcome ‘Alone’	HRA outcome ‘In-Combination’
LPA01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	<p>In line with national planning guidance, there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Borough.</p> <p>Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and any relevant policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission would be granted unless to do so would be inconsistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in national policy</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. Sustainable development would by definition not result in likely significant effects upon European designated sites. There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
LPA02: Spatial Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The sustainable regeneration and growth of St. Helens through to 2035 and beyond will be focussed (as far as practicable having regard to the availability of suitable sites) on the Key Settlements, namely St. Helens Core Area, Blackbrook and Haydock, Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown, Rainford, Billinge, Garswood and Rainhill. New development will be directed to sustainable locations which are appropriate to its scale and nature and which will enable movements between homes, jobs and key services and facilities to be made by sustainable non-car modes of transport. The re-use of previously developed land in Key Settlements will remain a key priority. A substantial proportion of new housing throughout the Plan period will be on such sites. This will be encouraged by setting lower thresholds for developer contributions on previously developed sites to reflect the higher costs and lower sales values typically associated with redeveloping such sites. This Plan releases land from the Green Belt to enable needs for housing and employment development to be met in full over the Plan period from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2035 in the most sustainable locations. Other land is removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded to allow for longer term housing and/or employment needs to be met after 31 March 2035. Such Safeguarded Land is not allocated for development in the Plan period and planning permission for permanent development should only be granted following a full review of this Plan. Within the remaining areas of Green Belt (shown on the Policies Map) new development shall be regarded as inappropriate unless it falls within one of the exceptions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (or any successor document). Inappropriate development in the Green Belt shall not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial new employment development (set out in Policy LPA04 and excluding town centre uses) will take place on large sites which are capable of accommodating large employment buildings (over 9,000m²) and are close to the M6 and M62. High quality road, public transport and active travel links will be required between existing and proposed residential areas, particularly those with high deprivation levels, and areas of employment growth. Existing employment areas will be retained where they are suitable and viable for this use in order to maintain a diverse portfolio of accessible employment opportunities across the borough. Suitable development which would diversify the rural economy will also be supported. Parkside West and Parkside East form transformational employment opportunity sites that will make a major contribution to the economic development of St. Helens, the Liverpool City Region and beyond. Development that prejudices their development in accordance with Policies LPA04 and LPA10 will not be allowed. The preferred locations for new town centre development shall be within St. Helens Town Centre (as the Borough’s principal town centre), Earlestown town centre, and the Borough’s network of district and local centres, in line with Policies LPB01, LPB02 and LPC04. The quality of life, health and wellbeing of St. Helens residents, workers and visitors and the quality of the natural environment will be supported by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> taking steps to maintain, enhance, connect and/or expand the Borough’s network of ecological, open space and recreational sites and greenways in accordance with Policy LPA09 ‘Green Infrastructure’; seeking improvements to the quality of open space within and around new development; 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. This policy provides for broad locations of both residential and employment development within Key Settlements, the Green Belt, along the M6 and M62 corridors, and for the safeguarding of land for future transport infrastructure. Whilst this policy supports development, it is the spatial strategy and does not identify specific locations, quantum or type of development. There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>

- c) requiring new development proposals to mitigate their contribution to climate change and to adapt to its impacts;
 - d) supporting the delivery of landscape reclamation and improvement projects in locations such as the Bold Forest Park and Sankey Valley Park; and
 - e) requiring development to support healthy lifestyles in accordance with Policy LPD11.
9. The provision of a convenient, safe and sustainable transport network, and the delivery of improvements to the network, will be required in line with Policy LPA07.
10. Regeneration within the key settlements will be supported by (in addition to the measures set out above) focussing available resources on its effective delivery and preventing development which would adversely impact upon or jeopardise the delivery of regeneration proposals.

LPA03: Development Principles

New development in St. Helens will be required to support development principles where relevant :

- Create sustainable communities with a strong sense of place.
- Meet the challenges of population retention and growth by; providing for a mix of types and tenures of quality homes to meet the needs and aspirations of all existing and future residents in sustainable locations; maintaining and where possible enhancing accessibility to a good range of services and facilities; and providing and contributing to assessed infrastructure and service requirements where appropriate.
- Improve the economic well-being of the Borough's residents by: contributing to the creation and retention of a range of employment and training opportunities which are readily accessible by non-car modes of transport to St. Helens residents, including local unemployed and disadvantaged people; contributing to the reduction of socio-economic inequality including health inequalities within St. Helens, and between St. Helens and other parts of the UK; and contributing to and complimenting the regeneration of the Borough.
- Contribute to inclusive communities by seeking to address the requirements of an ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing; children, young people and families; people with special needs, including those with a disability; and needs of minority groups in the Borough, including Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- Contribute to a high quality design built and natural environment by: securing high quality design in all development and a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings by complying with relevant design requirements and best practice;; accounting for the Borough's landscape character and townscape, and the distinctive roles and settings of different areas in St Helens; protecting, conserving, and/or enhancing the Borough's natural, built and historic environments protecting and enhancing the quality of the Borough's natural resources including water, air, land and biodiversity; and making effective use of land, buildings and existing infrastructure (including through the remediation of contaminated land)..
- Minimise the need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable transport by: guiding development to sustainable and accessible locations or locations that can be made sustainable and accessible; encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport for people, goods and freight and encouraging the use of lower carbon transport; encouraging safe and sustainable access for all, particularly by promoting the use of public transport, walking and cycling between homes and employment; and supporting the provision and retention of shared space, community facilities and other local services (such as local shops, health facilities, education provision, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship).
- Promote healthy communities by improving access and opportunities for formal and informal recreation (including through the use of green infrastructure), improved cycling and walking routes; and minimising air, soil and water pollution.
- Lower St. Helens' carbon footprint and adapt to the effects of climate change by meeting appropriate standards for sustainability and energy efficiency and promoting the use of renewable energy and sustainable construction; assessing and addressing the impact of climate change through mitigation and/or adaption measures; using water, energy, minerals and waste resources in an efficient and effective way; ensuring that all new development addresses flood risk mitigation/adaptation; and making best use of existing building materials (including historic features and material) in order to reduce waste and lower energy consumption.

No Likely Significant Effects

This is a development management policy providing development principles. It does not identify any specific location, type or extent of development.

This is a positive policy. It provides the need to minimise the need to travel and to maximise sustainable transport use. This has potential to reduce contributions to atmospheric pollution. It also provides for the protection of the borough's natural environments including enhancing the quality of the borough's natural resources of water, air and biodiversity.

There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy

The Council will work with partner organisations to: a) help deliver the Liverpool City Region's needs for economic growth, job creation and skills development; b) maximise the economic opportunities presented by St. Helens' location in relation to strategic road and rail routes; c) ensure the necessary infrastructure is provided to support business needs (see LPA 08); and d) support the creation of and expansion of small businesses.

1. The Council will aim to deliver a minimum of 215.4 hectares of land for employment development between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2035 to meet the needs of St. Helens MBC.

2. The sites as shown in the table below and on the Policies Map are allocated for development for the employment uses indicated:

Proposals to develop or re-develop any of the allocated sites for uses not listed in the table below will be refused, unless it has been demonstrated that: a) the site is no longer both suitable and viable for an employment use identified in the table; and b)

Likely Significant Effects- Alone.

Provides for 265 ha of new Class B employment space at specific site allocations (see **Appendix E, Table 8** for assessment of individual sites). This policy is designed to result in an increase in economic activity.

Potential impact pathways are:

- Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds

Likely Significant Effects – In combination potential pathways include:

- Atmospheric pollution
 - Water quality
- Refer to **Appendix E, Table 8** for assessment of individual sites

the site has been offered for employment use on the open market at a reasonable price in a manner and for a period agreed with the Council; c) the results of the marketing exercise have been transparently shared with the Council; and d) no employment use can be delivered as part of a mixed use scheme on the site.

•Other sites and buildings which are currently or were last used for employment use (or for sui generis use generating employment), including those in the employment areas listed in the Local Plan (Appendix XX), will be protected from changes to other uses, unless justified. Changes of use of such sites and buildings will be justified and permitted where it is demonstrated either that: a) the land or building (or any part of it) is no longer suitable and economically viable for B1, B2 or B8 use in accordance with the Local Economy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD); or b) the land use planning benefits of the proposed development would outweigh the benefits of retaining the site or building in its existing use (including vacant buildings and sites).

3. Proposals for the re-use, re-configuration or re-development for B1, B2 or B8 uses of land or buildings used for B1, B2 or B8 uses (including where such proposals would lead to a more intensive use of the land or buildings) will be supported, subject to compliance with other policies in the Plan.

4 The Council will support proposals to help diversify the rural economy, including through the re-use of suitable buildings in rural areas for appropriate employment uses, subject to other policies in the Plan.

5. The Council will support the protection, creation, enhancement and expansion of tourism, cultural and visitor resources, facilities and attractions by favourably considering proposals which are appropriate to the local character and appearance of the area and which will:

- i) Increase the range and quality of the accommodation offer in the Borough; or
- ii) Enhance an existing tourist or visitor attraction; or
- iii) Attract investment to the Borough and create or safeguard jobs; or
- iv) Enable the economic or physical regeneration of a site or area; or
- v) Improve the quality and diversity of the Borough's visitor offer; or
- vi) Help to maintain existing natural, historical or cultural assets.

The Council will prevent the unjustified loss of existing tourism, cultural and visitor resources assets

1. The following sites as shown on the Policies Map are allocated for employment development in the Plan period up to 31 March 2015 for uses indicated.

Policies Map Site Reference Number	Site Name	Indicative Site Area (Hectares)	Appropriate Use(s) ¹²⁰
1EA	Omega South Western Extension, Phase 1, Land North of Finches Plantation, Bold	31.22	B2, B8
2EA	Land at Florida Farm North, Slag Lane, Haydock	36.67	B2, B8
3EA	Land North of Penny Lane, Haydock	11.05	B2, B8
4EA	Land South of Penny Lane, Haydock	2.16	B2, B8
5EA	Land to the West of Haydock Industrial Estate, Haydock	7.75	B2, B8

¹²⁰ B1 use = Business
 B2 use = General business
 B8 use = Storage and Distribution
 SRFI = Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

6EA	Land West of Millfield Lane, South of Liverpool Road and north of Clipsley Brook, Haydock	20.58	B2, B8
7EA	Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows	64.55 ¹²¹	(See policy LPA10)
8EA	Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows	79.57 ¹²²	B2, B8
9EA	Land to the West of Sandwash Close, Rainford	6.96	B2, B8
10EA	Land at Lea Green Farm West, Thatto Heath	3.84	B1, B2, B8
11EA	Gerards Park, Phases 2 and 3, College Street, St. Helens Town Centre	0.95	B1, B2, B8
TOTALS		265.3 (of which 230.24 will be to meet St Helens needs)	

LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites

Strategic Employment Sites

- The following sites allocated under Policy LPA04 shall constitute Strategic Employment Development Sites:
 - 1EA: Omega South Western Extension, Land North of Finches Plantation, Bold;
 - 2EA: Land at Florida Farm North, Slag Lane, Haydock¹²³;
 - 6EA: Land West of Millfield Lane, south of Liverpool Road and North of Clipsley Brook, Haydock;
 - 7EA: Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows; and
 - 8EA: Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows.
- Any planning application for development within a Strategic Employment Site must be informed by a comprehensive master plan covering the whole Site, to be approved beforehand by the Council, which must set out details of:
 - Amount of development and proposed uses;
 - phasing of development across the whole site;
 - Indicative layout and design details for the whole site, which must provide for an attractive built form with high quality landscaping when viewed from within the development or elsewhere;
 - Measures and layout features to provide good levels of accessibility to the whole site by public transport, pedestrian and cycling links;
 - A Green Infrastructure Plan designed to address, where appropriate, biodiversity, geodiversity, greenways, ecological network, landscape character, trees, woodland and water storage in a holistic and integrated way;
 - Measures to address any potential flood risk and surface water drainage issues in accordance with Policy LPC12;
 - Measures to promote energy efficiency and generation of renewable or low carbon energy, or use of a district energy network, in accordance with Policy LPC13;
 - A comprehensive strategy for the provision of all new, expanded and/or enhanced infrastructure which is required to serve the development of the whole site; and
 - How development of the site as a whole would comply with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.
- Detailed development proposals within a Strategic Employment Site should be accompanied by a comprehensive package of training schemes and/or other measures to help enable local residents (including unemployed and disadvantaged people) to benefit fully from the employment opportunities provided at the Site.
- Development within Strategic Employment Sites will be required, subject to compliance with policy LPA08, to provide or make financial contributions towards the provision, expansion and/or enhancement of transport and/or other infrastructure to serve the needs of the development. Such provision may be either on- or off-site and must be made in

Likely Significant Effects.

This policy provides for specific Strategic Employment Sites (see **Appendix E, Table 9** for Likely Significant Effects of individual sites)

Potential impact pathways are:

- Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds

Likely Significant Effects – In combination

- Atmospheric pollution
 - Water quality
- Refer to **Appendix E, Table 9** for assessment of individual sites

¹²¹ Further details of the Parkside East site, which has its own designation on the Policies Map, are set out in Policy LPA10. It is estimated that, within this site, 64.55ha of land will be available for employment uses (which must be of a nature which meet the requirements of policy LPA10) and a further 60ha will be required to deliver rail and road infrastructure and landscaping. A further 5.58ha of land is included (to the west of the M6) to facilitate the provision of rail access to the site from the north.

¹²² 79.57ha of land is allocated for employment use at the Parkside West site. This area excludes the 5.58ha of land which is required to facilitate rail access to site 7EA (see footnote 3) and a further 12.1 ha of spoil heap which is not considered developable.

¹²³ Site 2EA is the subject of an existing planning permission for employment related development granted in April 2017 (reference P/2016/0608/HYBR).

a timely manner to meet the needs of the development. Where the specific development proposal would only cover part of the Strategic Employment Site, the provision and/or contributions must be in accordance with the comprehensive master plan for the whole Site referred to in part 2 of this Policy.

5. The master plans for each Strategic Employment Site, and any planning application for development within any other allocated employment site, must address the site specific requirements set out in (Local Plan appendix XX) (in the case of sites 1EA,2EA,6EA and 8EA, and Policy LPA10 (in the case of site 7EA).

LPA05:Meeting St Helens Housing Needs

1. In the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2035 a minimum of - 9,234 net additional dwellings should be provided in the Borough of St. Helens, at an average of 486 dwellings per annum.
2. The housing requirement will be met from the following sources:
 - a) Completions;
 - b) Sites with planning permission;
 - c) Housing allocations shown on the Policies Map;
 - d) Sites with planning permission for housing development;
 - e) Sites without planning permission identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA); and
 - f) "Windfall" housing gains, including development on small sites not identified in the SHLAA, sub-division of dwellings, conversions and changes of use.
3. New development should, as a guideline, achieve the following minimum densities:
 - a) at least 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) on sites which are within or on the edge of St Helens or Earlestown Town Centre;
 - b) at least 30 dph (and in general preference which are higher than this) on sites which are within or adjacent to a district or local centre or in other locations which are well served by frequent bus or train services; and
 - c) at least 30dph on other sites which are within an existing urban area.

Densities of less than 30dph will only be appropriate where they are necessary to achieve a clear planning objective, for example to avoid causing harm to the character and appearance of the area.

The delivery of new housing development will be monitored to ensure that:

- a) an adequate supply of new housing is provided at all times in accordance with the Housing Delivery Test set out in national policy; and
- b) there is a deliverable supply of land which is sufficient to provide at least 5 years-worth of new housing development against the target in clause 1 of this Policy. The 5 year land supply to be maintained shall include any buffer which is required under national policy. If the deliverable land supply falls significantly below the required level a partial or full plan review will be considered to bring forward additional supply.

Likely Significant Effects

This policy provides for residential site allocations and new dwellings within the Plan period.

Individual site allocations are assessed in **Appendix E, Table 10**

Potential impact pathways are:

- Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds

Likely Significant Effects – In combination due to:

- Recreational pressure
- Atmospheric pollution
- Water quality

Refer to **Appendix E, Table 10** for assessment of individual sites

Sites allocated for new housing development up to 31 March 2035

Site ref.	Name	Area (hectares)	NDA	Minimum Density (units per hectare)	Indicative site capacity (new dwellings)		Total
					Before 31.3.2035	After 31.3.2035	
1HA	Land South of Billinge Road, East of Garswood Road and West of Smock Lane, Garswood	9.58	75%	30	216	0	216
2HA	Land at Florida Farm (South of A580), Slag Lane, Blackbrook	23.19	75%	30	400	122	522
3HA	Former Penlake Industrial Estate, Reginald Road, Bold	10.66	75%	42	337	0	337
4HA	Land bounded by Reginald Road/Bold Road/Travers Entry/Gorse Lane/Crawford Street, Bold (Bold Forest Garden Suburb)	132.86	75%	30	480	2,508	2,988
5HA	Land South of Gartons Lane and former St. Theresa's Social Club, Gartons Lane, Bold	21.67	75%	35	520	49	569
6HA	Land East of City Road, Cowley Hill, Town Centre	31.09	75%	35	540	276	816
7HA	Land West of the A49 Mill Lane and to the East of the West Coast Mainline railway line, Newton-le-Willows	8.03	75%	30	181	0	181
8HA	Land South of Higher Lane and East of Rookery Lane, Rainford	11.49	75%	30	259	0	259
9HA	Former Linkway Distribution Park, Elton Head Road, Thatto Heath	12.39	75%	38	350	0	350
10HA	Moss Nook Urban Village, Watery Lane, Moss Nook	26.74	75%	40	802	0	802
Totals					4,085	2,955	7,040

LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites

1. The strategic Housing Sites are the following sites allocated under Policy LPA05:

- 2HA: Land at Florida Farm South, (South of A580), Slag Lane, Blackbrook
- 3HA: Former Penlake Industrial Estate, Reginald Road, Bold
- 4HA: Bold Forest Garden Suburb (land bounded by Reginald Road/Bold Road/Travers Entry/Gorse Lane/Crawford Street, Bold)
- 5HA: Land South of Gartons Lane and former St. Theresa's Social Club, Gartons Lane, Bold
- 6HA: Land at Cowley Street, Cowley Hill, Town Centre
- 9HA: Former Linkway Distribution Park Elton Head Road, Thatto Heath
- 10HA: Moss Nook Urban Village, Watery Lane, Moss Nook

2. Any planning application for development within a Strategic Housing Site must be supported by a comprehensive masterplan covering the whole site, that must set out details of at least:

- Amount of development and proposed uses;
- phasing of development across the whole site;
- Indicative layout and design details for the whole site, that must provide for an attractive built form with high quality landscaping when viewed from within the development or elsewhere;
- Measures to provide good levels of accessibility to the whole site from the surrounding area by public transport, walking and cycling;
- A Green Infrastructure Plan designed to address, where appropriate, biodiversity, geodiversity, greenways, ecological network, landscape character, trees, woodland and water storage in a holistic and integrated way;

Likely Significant Effects

This policy provides for Strategic Housing Sites.

Individual site allocations are assessed in **Appendix E, Table 11**

Potential impact pathways are:

- Loss of functionally linked land

Likely Significant Effects – In combination due to:

- Recreational Pressures
 - Atmospheric pollution
 - Water quality
- Refer to **Appendix E, Table 11** for assessment of individual sites

- Measures to address any potential flood risk and surface water drainage issues in accordance with Policy LPC12;
- Measures to promote energy efficiency and generation of renewable or low carbon energy in accordance with Policy LPC13;
- A comprehensive strategy for the provision of all new, expanded and/or enhanced infrastructure that is required to serve the development of the whole site; and
- Details of how development of the site as a whole would comply with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

3. Detailed development proposals within a Strategic Housing Site will be required, subject to compliance with Policy LPA08, to provide or make financial contributions towards the provision, expansion and / or enhancement of transport infrastructure (including road, public transport, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure) and / or other infrastructure to serve the needs of the development. Such provision may be either on-site or off-site and must be provided in time to meet the needs of the development. Where a specific development proposal would only cover part of a Strategic Housing Site, the provision and / or contributions must be in accordance with the comprehensive masterplan for the whole site referred to in paragraph 2 of this Policy.

4. The masterplans for each Strategic Housing Site, and any planning application for development within any other allocated housing site, must address the indicative requirements set out in Appendix 5.

LPA06: Safeguarded Land

1. The sites identified as Safeguarded Land on the Policies Map have been removed from the Green Belt in order to meet longer term development needs well beyond the Plan period. Such safeguarded Land is not allocated for development in the Plan period. The future uses that the sites are safeguarded are listed in Tables 4.7 and 4.8.
2. Planning permission for the development of the safeguarded sites for the purposes identified in tables 4.7 and 4.8 will only be granted following a future Local Plan review that proposes such development. Accordingly, proposals for housing and employment development of safeguarded sites in the Plan period will be refused.
3. Other forms of development on Safeguarded Land will only be permitted where the proposal is:
 - necessary for the operation of existing permitted use(s) on the land; or
 - for a temporary use that would retain the open nature of the land and would not prejudice the potential future development of the land for the purposes stated for each site in tables 4.7 and 4.8.
4. Development on any other site that would prevent or limit development of Safeguarded Land for its potential future uses identified in tables 4.7 and 4.8 will not be permitted.

Table 4.7- Safeguarded Land for Employment

Ref Number	Site Name	Area (hectares)
1ES	Omega North Western Extension, Bold	29.98
2ES	Land North East of junction 23 M6, (South of Haydock racecourse), Haydock	55.90
Employment Total		85.88

Source: Housing Sites _2018.11.07

Likely Significant Effects

This policy provides for the safeguarding of sites for housing and employment use.

Individual site allocations are assessed in **Appendix E, Table 13**

Potential impact pathways are:

- Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds

Likely Significant Effects – In combination due to:

- Recreational Pressures
- Atmospheric pollution
- Water quality

Refer to **Appendix E, Table 13** for assessment of individual sites

Table 4.8 Safeguarded Land for Housing

Ref.	Site Name	Area (hectares)	NDA ¹²⁴ (indicative)	Density (dwellings per hectare)	Capacity (indicative) ¹²⁵
1HS	Land South of Leyland Green Road, North of Billinge Road and East of Garswood Road, Garswood	12.92	75%	30	291
2HS	Land between Vista Road and Belvedere Road, Earlestown	7.92	75%	30	178
3HS	Former Eccleston Park Golf Club, Rainhill Road, Eccleston	49	65%	30	956 ³
4HS	Land East of Newlands Grange (former Vulcan works) and West of West Coast mainline, Newton-le-Willows	9.76	75%	35	256
5HS	Land West of Winwick Road and South of Wayfarers Drive, Newton-le-Willows	7.29	75%	35	191
6HS	Land East of Chapel Lane and South of Walkers Lane, Sutton Manor	5.04	75%	30	113
7HS	Land South of Elton Head Road (adjacent to St. John Vianney Primary School), Thatto Heath	3.72	75%	30	84
8HS	Land South of A580 between Houghtons Lane and Crantock Grove, Windle	52.69	65%	30	1,027
				Total	2,641

Source LPA06_ Safeguarded Land V5DRAFT.doc

LPA07: Transport and Travel

1. The Council's strategic priorities for the transport network are to facilitate economic growth, enable good levels of accessibility between homes, jobs and services, improve air quality and minimise carbon emissions. To achieve these priorities it will seek to:

- Secure the delivery of new or improved road, walking, cycling, and / or bus infrastructure where required;
- Ensure that new development is sufficiently accessible by road transport, walking, cycling and public transport;
- Secure improvements to existing motorway capacity and infrastructure with particular priority being given to the M6 Junction 23 and M62 Junction 7;
- Improve the accessibility to jobs, homes and services by all modes of transport and protect opportunities to achieve such improvements
- Secure the delivery of:
 - a new station at Carr Mill;
 - any necessary improvements to local stations and rail lines;
 - the proposed Skelmersdale Rail Link; and

No Likely Significant Effects. This is a development management policy relating to transportation and travel. This policy does note specific development schemes, but no location or extent of development is identified. There are no impact pathways present. There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

¹²⁴ 'NDA' is the estimated 'net developable area' of each site

¹²⁵ The capacity of each safeguarded site would be assessed further prior to any decision to allocate it for development in a future Local Plan.

³ The capacity of 3HS may be capped in the region of 500 until highways capacity issues in the area are addressed.

iv) any infrastructure required to deliver HS2 or HS3 (Northern Powerhouse Rail);
 ... and
 f) Protect former railway lines and corridors from development that could hinder their future re-use for sustainable modes of transport.

2. All proposals for new development that would generate significant amounts of transport movement must be supported by a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement.

3. New development will only be permitted if it would:

- a) maintain the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network. Development proposals will not be permitted where vehicle movements would cause severe harm to the highway network;
- b) be located and designed to enable a suitable level of access (having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal) to existing and / or proposed public transport services;
- c) provide appropriate provision of charging points for electric vehicles;
- d) enable good levels of accessibility by walking and cycling between homes, jobs and services;
- e) provide for safe and convenient pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access and movement to, from and within the development;
- f) include adequate access arrangements for emergency, service and refuse collection vehicles; and
- g) provide sufficient on-site parking for persons of limited mobility, service vehicles, and cycles that must at least meet the Council's minimum standards, and adequate parking for all other vehicles.

4. To minimise air and noise pollution and carbon emissions, non-residential forms of development that would generate a significant amount of transport movement by employees or visitors must be supported by suitably formulated Travel Plans.

5. Development that would generate significant movement of freight must be located where there is a safe, convenient and environmentally acceptable access route to a suitable part of the Key Route Network. The part of the Network that is marked as 'Key Route Network – non freight' on the Policies Map shall not be regarded as suitable in this context. Access into a new development (of any land use) directly from the Key Route Network will only be allowed if this would not unduly restrict the capacity of the road or cause harm to highway safety, and where no more suitable alternative exists or would be provided by the development.

6. Direct access from new development on to the Strategic Road Network will only be permitted where agreed by Highways England.

7. Where rail facilities are available or would be made so as part of a development generating significant movement of freight, this will be regarded as a benefit.

8. Development proposals must not prevent or jeopardise the implementation of planned transport schemes unless it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that:

- a) the transport scheme is no longer required;
- b) there is a feasible and viable alternative to it; or
- c) the benefits of the proposed development would outweigh those of the planned transport scheme.

Planned transport schemes include, but are not limited to proposals for new or upgraded footpath, cycle path, bridleway, road, rail, bus and / or other public transport facilities that would be on the same site as, adjacent to or be otherwise affected by the development.

9. Further details of the operation of this Policy, for example those related to the Council's vehicle and cycle parking standards, standards for vehicle charging point provision, and to the requirements concerning transport assessments, transport statements and travel plans will be set out in a future review of the Council's Ensuring a Choice of Travel Supplementary Planning Document.

<p>LPA08: Infrastructure Delivery and Funding</p>	<p>Provides for the protection, enhancement and provision of all forms of infrastructure. Provides for funding via developer contributions where appropriate of the provision of infrastructure to meet the required needs arising from the development proposal/or serve the needs of the wider area. Where the suitability of development depends upon the provision of additional or enhanced infrastructure or service capacity. Provides for Economic Viability and a Hierarchy of Developer Contributions.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. This is a development management policy relating to the funding and delivery of infrastructure. It is a positive policy as it provides for phasing of development in line with the delivery of appropriate infrastructure. There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
<p>LPA09: Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>1. Green Infrastructure in St.Helens Borough comprises a network of multifunctional natural assets, including green space, trees, woodlands, mosslands, grasslands and wetlands, located within urban, semi-urban and countryside areas. This network is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities and forms an important element of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Ecological Network.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. This is a positive development management policy that provides for improvements to the borough's Green</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>

2. The Council will work with other organisations where necessary to:
- expand tree cover in appropriate locations across the Borough to improve landscape character, water and air quality and the value of trees to wildlife;
 - strengthen and expand the network of wildlife sites, corridors and stepping stone habitats to secure a net gain in biodiversity;
 - improve and increase the connectivity of the Greenway network;
 - increase the accessibility of open space within walking distance of housing, health, employment and education establishments to promote healthy lifestyles;
 - reduce the risk of flooding, improve river water quality and riverine and riparian habitats within the Sankey Catchment; and
 - ensure that development proposals on strategic employment and housing sites incorporate holistic Green Infrastructure Plans.
3. Developers will be required to provide long-term management arrangements for new and existing green infrastructure within development sites.
4. Development that would contribute to or provide opportunities to enhance the function of existing green infrastructure and its connectivity from residential areas, town, district and local centres, employment areas and other open spaces, will be encouraged. Development that would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of green infrastructure assets will be refused. The only exceptions to this will be where it has been demonstrated that: appropriate protection or retention of Green Infrastructure assets cannot be achieved; the development would bring benefits that would over-ride the resultant harm; and there are no realistic alternatives to the proposed development that would avoid such harm. In such cases, mitigation and / or as a last resort compensatory provision will be required.

Infrastructure. This has potential to divert recreational pressure away from European designated sites.
There are no impact pathways present.

LPA10: Parkside East

- The Parkside East site (identified as site 7EA in Policy LPA04) shall be considered suitable in principle for development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) with the primary purpose of facilitating the movement of freight by rail and its on-site storage and transfer between rail and other transport modes.
- The site is also considered suitable in principle for other forms of B2 and B8 employment use provided that they would:
 - bring significant inward investment, local employment and training benefits for the local community; and
 - (i) be rail served (i.e. requiring on-site access to a railway); or (ii) be of a layout and scale which would not prejudice the ability to develop an effectively laid out SRFI or other rail served employment development (including any necessary rail and road infrastructure, buildings and landscaping), on at least 60 hectares of the site, at any time in the future.
- Proposals for development within site 7EA will be required to:
 - Satisfy the masterplanning requirements set out in Policy LPA04.1
 -
 - Create safe and convenient access from junction 22 of the M6 for Heavy Goods Vehicles and other vehicles;
 - Mitigate any adverse impacts on the surrounding strategic and local road network;
 - Comply with Policy LPC11 in relation to the protection of designated heritage assets;
 - Achieve direct rail access to and from the Liverpool/Manchester ('Chat Moss') and the West Coast Main Line (unless agreed otherwise by the Council);
 - Be designed to minimise impacts onto residential amenity;
 - establish and implement a Travel Plan that incorporates measures to encourage travel to/from the development using sustainable transport modes, including access by public transport, cycle and foot, in accordance with Policy LPA07;
 - Make provision for the positive management of existing and new environmental assets; and
 - Put training schemes in place (where practicable) to increase the opportunity for the local population to obtain access to and employment at the site.
 -
- That part of site 7EA which falls to the west of the M6 is safeguarded from all forms of development so that it may provide future siding facilities in connection with the development of an SRFI or other rail enabled development within the part of the site which falls to the east of the M6 (see policies map).

Likely Significant Effects

This policy details the different categories of use for which the site can be developed and the requirements for development proposals.

Potential impact pathways are:

- Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds

Likely Significant Effects – In combination due to:

- Atmospheric pollution
- Water quality

LPA11: Health and Wellbeing

The Council will work with its health and wellbeing partners to promote public health principles, maximise opportunities for people to lead healthy and active lifestyles, and reduce health inequalities for residents within the Borough. Planning decisions and processes will be used to:

- Encourage improved access to a choice of homes and jobs that meet the needs of the area;

Likely Significant Effects

A development management policy relating to health and wellbeing. It provides attractive public areas, the management of air quality and pollution, and encourages outdoor recreation. Whilst generally a

Likely Significant Effects In-Combination due to

- Recreational pressure

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Make provision of easy-to-maintain, safe and attractive public areas and green spaces to serve new developments that minimise the opportunity for and fear of crime and that promote social cohesion and mental wellbeing; 3) Encourage people to be physically active by providing opportunities for walking, cycling, outdoor recreation and sport, including, where appropriate, the provision of opportunities for physical activity within the design of new development; 4) Guide the locations of food and drink uses such as hot food takeaways, drinking establishments, restaurants, cafes and other uses which may have negative health impacts having regard to their impact on other land uses in the local area; 5) maximise the levels of accessibility between homes, educational establishments, jobs, public transport services, health and other services, recreational opportunities and community, cultural and leisure facilities; 6) Encourage measures to achieve affordable warmth; 7) Promote active design principles as established by Sport England; and 8) Manage air quality and pollution. 	<p>positive development management policy, encouraging outdoor recreational activity could increase recreational pressure upon European designated sites.</p> <p>Potential impact pathways present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None alone 	
<p>LPB01: St Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area</p>	<p>Promotes and provides for the Central Spatial Area around St Helens Town Centre as an accessible and welcoming destination for suitable new developments in accordance with the Policy clauses 2-10 with an emphasis on creating a high quality built environment.</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effects. This is a development management policy. Whilst it does not identify any exact locations of development, it does promote and provide for shopping, leisure, tourism, employment and housing which have potential to create impact pathways linking to the Plan.</p> <p>Potential impact pathways present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None alone 	<p>Likely Significant Effects – In combination due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational pressure • Atmospheric pollution • Water quality
<p>LPB02: Earlestown Town Centre</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council will seek to safeguard the function and role of Earlestown Town Centre as the second town centre within the Borough. 2 Main town centre uses will be directed to suitable locations within the defined Town Centre first and then other sites in accordance with the sequential approach set out in Policy LPC04 and national policy. The preferred location for new retail development shall be within the defined Primary Shopping Area. 3. Development which would result in a significant adverse impact on the Town Centre's vitality and viability or planned investment within it will be resisted in accordance with Policy LPC04 and national policy. 4. The delivery and implementation of a Council-led strategy to provide a framework for the future regeneration and development of the town centre will be supported. 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. This is a development management policy relating to safeguarding the function of Earlestown Town Centre. There are no impact pathways present.</p> <p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>	
<p>LPC01: Housing Mix</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New market and affordable housing must be well designed to address local housing need and include a range of types, tenures and sizes of homes as informed by relevant evidence including the Borough's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). 2. Where a proposal for new housing would be on a greenfield site on which the site as a whole would deliver 25 or more new homes, the Council will apply optional standards as set out in Parts M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended) so that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) at least 20 % of the new dwellings across the whole site must be designed to the "accessible and adaptable" standard set out in Part M4(2); and b) at least 5% of the new dwellings across the whole site must be designed to the "wheelchair user" dwellings standard set out in Part M4(3). <p>If the standards in Part M4(2) or Part M4(3) are amended or superseded by new standards, the Council will apply the relevant amending or superseding provisions in the same proportions as set out above.</p> 3. At least 5% of new homes on greenfield sites that would deliver 25 or more dwellings should be bungalows. 4. Exceptions to paragraphs 1 to 3 of this Policy may be made where the applicant has submitted an independent viability assessment, prepared by a suitably qualified person, which clearly demonstrates that meeting the requirements would render the scheme un-viable. In such cases the Council will weigh any benefits of allowing the scheme in the form submitted against the extent of any failure to meet the requirements in full. 5. The Council will work with partners to facilitate the provision of specialist and supported housing for elderly and vulnerable people. Provision of sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement accommodation and residential care homes should be easily accessible by walking and public transport to a suitable range of services to meet the needs of future 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects This is a development management policy relating to housing mix. It does not provide for any location or quantum of development There are no impact pathways present.</p> <p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>	

occupiers.

6. The Council will support the delivery of suitably designed and located self-build and custom-build schemes in the Borough where they would conform with all relevant local and national policies.

7. Proposals for the change of use or sub-division of existing buildings to form flats or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) will be granted permission provided they would:

- a) retain a suitable mix of housing types to meet needs in the area;
- b) avoid harming the character and / or appearance of the area;
- c) avoid harming the amenities enjoyed by occupiers of neighbouring residential properties;
- d) provide satisfactory levels of amenity for their future occupier(s) in terms of outlook and natural light; and
- e) comply with parking standards referred to in Policy LPA07 and to be set out in the future review of the Council's Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD.

LPC02: Affordable Housing Provision

Supports the delivery of Affordable Housing.

No Likely Significant Effects
This is a development management policy relating to the delivery of Affordable Housing. It does not provide for any location or quantum of development
There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

LPC03: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Provides for the following site allocations:

Site ref	Site location	Size (Hectares)	Type of site	Indicative number of pitches
GTA01	Land north of Sherdley Road and west of Sutton Heath Road, Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath	0.39	Permanent	8
GTA02	Land adjacent to land east of Sherdley Road Caravan Park, Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath	0.09	Transit (limited length of stay)	3

Avoids the loss of Gypsy and Traveller site or pitches and Travelling Showpeople site or plots unless certain criteria are met. The remainder of this policy is development management policy

No Likely Significant Effects.
Whilst this policy provides for new residential site allocations, the level of development identified is small (a total of 11 pitches in total). The sites are assessed separately in **Appendix E, Table 12**.
There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

LPC04: Retail and Town Centres

Proposals for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses will be directed towards the Borough's defined centres as listed below and as shown on the Policies Map:

- Principal Town Centre: St. Helens.
- Town Centre: Earlestown.
- District Centres: Rainhill and Thatto Heath.
- Local Centres: Billinge; Chain Lane; Clipsley Lane; Denton's Green; Eccleston; Fingerpost; Marshall's Cross; Newton-le-Willows; Newtown; Rainford; and Sutton.

It also provides development management policy relating to retail and town centres with various thresholds to comply with.

No Likely Significant Effects.
This is a development management policy relating to retail and town centres as listed. It does not provide for any type, or quantum of development within these centres.
There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

LPC05: Open Space

1. The Council will seek to ensure that the Borough's network of open spaces is protected, managed, enhanced and where appropriate expanded. To achieve this, it will support the implementation of programmes and strategies to manage and enhance all forms of open space, including where applicable through the use of Green Flag or similar designations.

2. Development proposals that would result in the loss of open space will only be permitted where:

- a) it has been clearly demonstrated that the open space (having regard to the standards referred to in Table 6.9) is surplus to requirements; or
- b) the open space that would be lost would be replaced by new provision that is equivalent or better in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the proposed development is for alternative sports and / or recreational provision, the benefits of which would clearly outweigh the loss of the existing open space.

3. New residential development will be required to contribute towards the provision, expansion and / or enhancement of open space to meet needs in accordance with Policies LPA08 and LPD03.

No Likely Significant Effects.
This is a positive development management policy that provides for open space, sports and recreation. Appropriate open space and recreational facilities have potential to divert recreational pressure away from sensitive European designated sites.
There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

LPC06: Biological and Geological Conservation.

European sites

1. Development that is likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on one or more internationally important site(s), including any areas of supporting habitat which are functionally linked to the site(s), must be accompanied by sufficient evidence to enable the Council to make a Habitats Regulations Assessment. Adverse effects should be avoided, or where this is not possible, be mitigated to protect the integrity of the site(s). Development that would adversely affect the integrity of one or more internationally important site(s) will only be permitted where there are no alternative solutions or there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, and where suitable compensatory provision has been made. Any mitigation or compensatory provision must be assessed in a project-related Habitats Regulations Assessment and be fully functional before any likely adverse effect arises.

Other protected sites, habitats and species

2. Development that would cause significant harm to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve, Local Geological Site, Priority Habitat(s), legally protected species and/or Priority Species, which would not be adequately mitigated or as a last resort compensated, will be refused.
3. Development that would be likely to cause any harm to ecological or geological interests will only be permitted in:
 - (a) Sites of Special Scientific Interest where there are no alternatives and where the benefits of the development would clearly outweigh any harm to the nature conservation value of the site and its broader contribution to the Liverpool City Region (LCR) ecological network; and
 - (b) Local Sites (Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Local Geological Sites) and Priority Habitats: where the benefits of the development would clearly outweigh any harm to the nature conservation value of the site (or Priority Habitat) and its broader contribution to the LCR ecological network.

Mitigation, replacement or other compensatory provision

4. Where necessary to avoid harm, appropriate mitigation, replacement or other compensatory provision will be required. The location of such measures will be targeted, using the following sequential approach (with (a) being the preferred approach and (d) being the least preferred):
 - (a) On the development site;
 - (b) Locations within the immediate locality and /or supporting LCR Ecological Network;
 - (c) Locations that fall within the LCR Nature Improvement Area and within the Borough; and lastly
 - (d) Locations that fall within the LCR Nature Improvement Area but outside the Borough.

Evidence requirements

5. Development proposals that would affect a nationally or locally designated nature conservation site, Priority Habitat(s), legally protected species or Priority Species must be supported by an Ecological Appraisal and include details of any necessary avoidance, mitigation and /or compensation proposals, and of any proposed management measures.
6. Designated sites are shown on the Policies Map. Plan policies will also apply to any other sites which may be recognised during the Plan period as being of nature conservation importance, including land provided as compensation.

No Likely Significant Effects

This is a positive development management policy relating to biodiversity and geological conservation. Measures to protect European sites/International Sites are detailed in this Policy.

There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

LPC07: Greenways

1. The Council will work with other organisations to protect and enhance the strategic network of greenways shown on the Policies Map. Its objectives in this regard will be to:
 - a) provide a continuous off-road network of footpath, cycle and bridleway routes that will be publicly accessible and that will provide linkages between main urban areas and between urban areas and the countryside;
 - b) give additional definition and protection to the network of wildlife corridors and historic and archaeological resources;
 - c) contribute to the sub-regional network of cross boundary green infrastructure corridors; and
 - d) support economic development by improving the appearance of the area and helping people to travel sustainably between homes and workplaces.
2. Development proposals that would affect a Greenway will be refused if they would:
 - a) prejudice the continuity of public access to the greenway;
 - b) harm the integrity of the Greenway in terms of off-road linkages, character or amenity;
 - c) harm the appearance of the Greenway; or
 - d) impair the integrity of the Greenway as a wildlife corridor or its resilience to development pressures and climate change.

No Likely Significant Effects

This is a development management policy relating to greenways.

There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

LPC08: Ecological

1. The Council will, working where necessary with other organisations, seek to ensure greater resilience of the natural

No Likely Significant Effects.

There are no pathways present to

<p>Network</p>	<p>environment and secure a net gain in biodiversity. To this end it will seek to strengthen those elements of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Ecological Network, including wildlife sites, wildlife corridors, and 'stepping stone' habitats that fall within the Borough.</p> <p>2. The LCR Nature Improvement Area (NIA) is an area within which particular priority will be given to habitat management, enhancement, restoration, and creation. Development within the part of the NIA that lies within St.Helens Borough will be permitted where it would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) enable or contribute towards the effective functioning of the NIA; and b) contribute to the creation and / or management of habitats as set out in the NIA Focus Area Profiles. 	<p>A development management policy relating to the ecological network. There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>LPC09: Landscape Protection and Enhancement</p>	<p>1. Proposals for new development must, as appropriate having regard to their scale and nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) seek to conserve, maintain, enhance and / or restore any landscape features that are important to the character of the local area; b) demonstrably form the best option for meeting the aims of the development whilst minimising impacts on the landscape and appearance of the area and respecting local distinctiveness; c) be informed by relevant guidance including the St.Helens Landscape Character Assessment and the Merseyside Historic Character Study; and d) include assessments of the impact of the proposal on the landscape and appearance of the area, carried out in accordance with any relevant best practice guidelines. <p>2. Where a development would lead to harm to the landscape or visual character of the area, mitigation measures will be sought to reduce the scale of such harm. Where the development would (despite any such measures) cause significant harm but also bring significant benefits, suitable compensation measures may be sought. If significant harm cannot be avoided, suitably mitigated or compensated, planning permission will be refused unless the development would bring exceptional benefits that would outweigh the harm.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. A development management policy relating to landscape. There are no impact pathways present.</p> <p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
<p>LPC10: Trees and Woodland</p>	<p>Amongst other issues, the Council will seek to increase the overall extent of tree cover in the Borough and to protect and enhance the multi-purpose value of trees, woodlands and hedgerows.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects A development management policy relating to trees, woodlands and hedgerows. There are no impact pathways present.</p> <p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
<p>LPC11: Historic Environment</p>	<p>The Council will promote the conservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage assets and their settings in a manner which is appropriate to the significance of each asset. These include designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, and non-designated above ground assets and areas of archaeological interest.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects A development management policy relating to St Helen's historic environment. There are no impact pathways present.</p> <p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
<p>LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management</p>	<p><u>Flood Risk</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any development proposal that may either be at risk of flooding or cause a material increase in flood risk elsewhere will only be permitted if the flooding issues have been fully assessed and any identified risks would be appropriately mitigated. Any assessment and mitigation should have regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the St. Helens Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; b) advice and guidance from relevant bodies including the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority; and c) any relevant Surface Water Management Plan or local drainage strategy such as the Sankey Catchment Action Plan, Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management Plan or the North West River Basin Management Plan. 2. All development proposals must be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to their nature and scale where they would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) within flood zone 2 or 3; or b) on a site of 1 hectare or larger within flood zone 1; or c) on a site of 0.5 hectare or larger within a Critical Drainage Area; or d) in any area identified by the Council as being at intermediate or high risk of surface water flooding. 3. New development should be located in accordance with a sequential approach as set out in national policy. Development on sites located in flood zones 2 or 3 will only be allowed if: a) the Sequential Test has been applied and demonstrates that the development cannot reasonably be accommodated within an area at lower risk of flooding; b) any applicable Exception Test by national policy has been passed; and c) appropriate mitigation or adaption measures are proposed to satisfactorily reduce the likelihood or impact of flooding. 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects A positive development management policy relating to flood risk and water management including water quality and SuDS. Provides a mitigation measure for water quality and quantity effects raised in the HRA. There are no impact pathways present.</p> <p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>

4. Measures to manage or mitigate flood risk associated with or caused by new development must (as appropriate having regard to its scale and nature): a) be designed to contribute to the biodiversity of the Borough unless it has been demonstrated that this would not be technically feasible; b) protect heritage assets (such as buried archaeology); c) be fully described in the development proposal; and d) be funded by the developer, including long-term maintenance.
5. Any proposal for major development on a site which would abut, run alongside or straddle any watercourse in the Borough, must include measures to temporarily attenuate and filter flood water in order to: improve water quality; reduce peak flows during flooding; and reduce downstream flood risk, unless it has been demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable. In cases where measures are not currently feasible or viable, the development must not compromise the ability to implement such measures in the future.
6. The Floodwater Storage Safeguarding Areas as defined on the Policies Map shall be safeguarded for the provision of flood storage. Development within or adjacent to these areas which would have a negative impact on their function as a flood storage area or on their potential to be developed for flood storage infrastructure will not be permitted.

Water Quality

7. Development which would adversely affect the quality or quantity of water in any watercourse or of groundwater or cause deterioration in water body or element classification levels defined in the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (or in any national regulations covering this matter) will not be permitted. Any planning application for development which could (without effective mitigation) cause such harm must be supported by a Construction Management Plan which sets out how the water environment will be protected during the construction process.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

8. Major developments should incorporate drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. Surface water should be managed in accordance with the following hierarchy (with a) being the preferred option and d) being the least favourable option):
 - a) An adequate soakaway or other form of infiltration system.
 - b) An attenuated discharge to watercourse.
 - c) An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer.
 - d) An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.
9. Surface water management infrastructure within new developments should, where feasible, include above ground features designed to deliver benefits to biodiversity and/or landscape.
10. Discharge of surface water to a public sewer will not be permitted unless clear evidence has been submitted demonstrating why no suitable alternative option(s) exist. Development proposals should identify how any necessary surface water drainage infrastructure will be appropriately maintained. The drainage proposals on all sites should be designed to address the drainage needs of the whole site. Where development would proceed in different phases or with multiple developers involved, the drainage proposals should cover all phases and the full construction period.
11. If a development on a green-field site would discharge to a public sewer, the rates of proposed discharge (peak flow and overall volume) from the development must not exceed the existing green-field run-off rates. If a development on a previously developed site would discharge to a public sewer, the discharge rates (peak flow and overall volume) must be as close as reasonably practicable to those which would apply if the site were a green-field site. As a guideline, a reduction of at least 30% may be sought, rising to at least 50% in Critical Drainage Areas or in areas identified as having an intermediate or high risk of surface water flooding. Storm water storage capacity should normally include an allowance of 40% to address the likely future effects of climate change.
12. Proposals for the soft or hard landscaping of any development site should, where practicable, demonstrably reduce the expected rate of surface water discharge from the site, for example through the use of permeable surfaces.
13. Applicants for planning permission should have regard to the St. Helens Council Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidance.

Protection of water and waste water assets

14. Development that would compromise the physical integrity or the effective maintenance of any water or waste water infrastructure asset will not be permitted.

LPC13: Renewable and Low Carbon Development

1. Proposals that would produce and/or distribute decentralised, low carbon or renewable energy, will be permitted provided that they would:
 - a) avoid causing substantial harm to the appearance or character of the surrounding landscape; natural resources,

No Likely Significant Effects
This is effectively a positive development management policy. Whilst it encourages

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

<p>biodiversity, geodiversity, water or air quality, aviation or road safety; public amenity or the living conditions of occupiers of any nearby dwellings;</p> <p>b) comply with relevant national and local policies concerning new development in the Green Belt; and</p> <p>c) comply with Policy LPC11 'Historic Environment'.</p> <p>When proposals are being assessed against these criteria, regard will be had to any environmental, social and / or economic benefits that the proposals would provide, and their number, scale, siting</p> <p>2. Proposals that would otherwise result in an unacceptable impact under paragraph 1 of this Policy must be mitigated by appropriate measures agreed by the Council. All proposals must be accompanied by information that shows how the local environment will be protected, and how the site will be restored when energy production or distribution ends.</p> <p>3. Relevant evidence that will be taken into account in assessing the suitability of any proposals under paragraph 1 of this Policy will include (alongside any other relevant material): the Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study 2010; and any document(s) which may supersede this, the Merseyside Historic Landscape Characterisation study; the evidence base for the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan; and the St Helens Landscape Character Assessment..</p> <p>4. New developments for housing, employment or other uses should meet high standards of sustainable design and construction and minimise carbon emissions. To this end they should use energy efficiently and where feasible incorporate decentralised energy systems, using renewable and low carbon energy. Large scale schemes that would generate a significant source or demand for heat should also be supported by evidence considering the feasibility of serving the development by means of a district heating scheme. Proposals for new development within a strategic employment site or a strategic housing site (as defined in Policies LPA04.1 and LPA05.1) must, unless this is shown not to be practicable or viable, ensure that at least 10% of their energy needs can be met from renewable and / or other low carbon energy source(s).</p>	<p>wind energy developments, it also acknowledges potential ecologically sensitive receptors.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>LPC14: Minerals</p> <p>1. The Council will seek to ensure that the Borough of St.Helens provides a steady and adequate supply of minerals to contribute towards regional and national needs. To minimise the need for primary mineral extraction, provision of substitute, secondary or recycled sources will be encouraged in preference to land-won resources. This will include the provision of suitably designed and located temporary materials-recycling facilities on the sites of major demolition or construction projects and suitably designed and located permanent recycling plants for construction and demolition waste.</p> <p>2. A Mineral Safeguarding Area has been defined around deposits of coal, clay (including brick clay and fire clay) and sandstone, considered to be of current or future economic importance. Proposals for non-mineral related development will be permitted (subject to compliance with other Plan policies) within the Mineral Safeguarding Area where it has been demonstrated that:</p> <p>a) the mineral resource would be extracted satisfactorily prior to the non-mineral development taking place (in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5 of this Policy, and other relevant policies); or</p> <p>b) the minerals are either not present, are no longer of any economic value, or have already been fully extracted; or</p> <p>c) the prior extraction of minerals is not feasible, for reasons such as the depth of the deposit or because extraction would lead to or exacerbate ground instability; or</p> <p>d) the prior extraction of minerals would have unacceptable impacts on neighbouring uses, the amenity of local communities or on the environment; or</p> <p>e) the prior extraction of minerals would result in abnormal costs and / or delays that would jeopardise the viability of the development; or</p> <p>f) the need for the proposed development outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral resource; or</p> <p>g) the proposed development is compatible with the purposes of safeguarding the mineral; or</p> <p>h) the proposed development is of a temporary nature and can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit future extraction of the minerals; or</p> <p>i) the development is included on the list of exempt developments (as set out in the reasoned justification of this policy).</p> <p>3. Development for non-mineral related use(s) on or close to existing mineral workings or existing or planned mineral infrastructure will be permitted provided it would not have an unacceptable impact on the continuation of mineral workings or on the operation of the mineral infrastructure. Where the development is likely to have a significant impact on the continuation of mineral working or on the operation of the minerals infrastructure, the applicant will be required to clearly demonstrate that either:</p> <p>a) the mineral working and / or mineral infrastructure is no longer required to meet the current or anticipated future needs of the minerals, construction or waste management industries; or</p> <p>b) the need for the proposed development outweighs the need to continue the mineral working and / or the need to safeguard the mineral infrastructure; or</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>This is a development management policy relating to minerals. It does not provide for any location, quantum or type of development. This policy provides explicit protection for internationally important nature sites and the requirement for HRA.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p> <p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>

- c) an alternative site within an acceptable distance would be provided for the mineral working or infrastructure that is at least as appropriate for the relevant mineral working or infrastructure use(s) as the safeguarded site.
4. Proposals for the exploration, extraction, storage, processing and / or distribution of minerals will only be permitted if it has been demonstrated that:
- a) any adverse impacts relating to any of the criteria set out in paragraph 5 of this Policy would be avoided or appropriately mitigated;
 - b) the location of the proposed development would be suitable, taking into account all relevant environmental, geological and technical considerations; and
 - c) provisions for the restoration and aftercare of the site have been made and will be implemented at the earliest opportunity to an agreed timescale and to a standard and manner consistent with an agreed end use and the character, setting and landscape context of the surrounding area.
5. The criteria referred to in paragraph 4(a) of this Policy include:
- a) amenity (e.g., dust, noise, visual intrusion, vibration or other nuisance);
 - b) air and water quality;
 - c) lighting;
 - d) landscape character and setting;
 - e) traffic, including air and rail, and access;
 - f) risk of contamination to land;
 - g) soil resources and the impact on best and most versatile agricultural land;
 - h) flood risk and drainage;
 - i) disposal of mineral waste;
 - j) land stability, including subsidence and risk of damage to buildings, structures and land;
 - k) ecology, including habitats, species and designated sites (particularly the internationally important nature sites); and
 - l) heritage assets and their setting.
6. Proposals for the development of onshore oil and gas resources (including coal bed methane, coal mine methane, shale gas and oil) must clearly demonstrate that the highest levels of environmental, health and social protection and benefit consistent with prevailing national policy and regulation and industry best practice standards, including those relating to Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, will be provided.

<p>LPC15: Waste</p>	<p>The Council will promote the sustainable management of waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy (as defined in national planning policy). In accordance with the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan 2013 (or any Plan that may supersede or supplement this) it will work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify and safeguard (where appropriate) waste management sites in appropriate locations; b) assist in the implementation of a resource-recovery led strategy for sustainable waste management; c) ensure that the Borough contributes to meeting the identified sub-regional needs for waste management facilities and sites; d) encourage good design in new development in order to minimise waste, promote the use of reclaimed and recycled materials and to facilitate the storage, collection and recycling of waste; e) encourage the sustainable transport of waste and promote the use of mechanisms such as waste audits and waste management plans to minimise the generation of waste; and f) ensure that waste management facilities are developed whilst minimising any negative impacts on the environment and communities of the Borough. 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. This is a development management policy relating to waste. It does not in itself provide for any location, type or extent of development. It does provide for the minimisation of any negative impacts on environmental communities. This policy references the Joint Waste Local Plan which has been subject to HRA. There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
<p>LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development in St Helens</p>	<p>All proposals for development will be expected, as appropriate having to their scale, location and nature, to meet or exceed the following requirements:</p> <p>1. Quality of the Built Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the local environment, for example with regard to the siting, layout, massing, scale, design and materials used in any building work, the building-to-plot ratio and landscaping; b) Avoid causing harm to the amenities of the local area and surrounding residential and other land uses and occupiers; c) Ensure that the occupiers of new developments will enjoy an appropriate standard of amenity and will not be adversely affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa; d) Link in with surrounding movement patterns and not be prejudicial to the development of neighbouring land for example by creating landlocked sites; e) Be located and designed so as to minimise opportunities for crime, for example by maximising natural surveillance; f) Respect any existing natural features of the site by conserving, restoring or enhancing biodiversity and minimising any adverse impact on important natural features; 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. A positive development management policy that provides for the minimisation of atmospheric and water pollution and to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for sewage and effluent. There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>

- g) Provide landscaping as an integral part of the development, protecting existing landscape features such as trees, hedges and watercourses and enhancing the public realm;
 - h) Include or contribute to the provision of public art in appropriate circumstances (for example where the development would be of a substantial size and / or in a prominent gateway or town centre location);
 - i) Provide for the needs of special groups in the community such as the elderly and those with disabilities; and
 - j) Protect the setting, integrity and character of heritage assets in accordance with Policy LPC11.
2. Environmental Quality
- a) Ensure protection of watercourses and other water bodies from encroachment, modification and degradation and enable water bodies that are already modified or degraded to be improved to form sustainable, natural environments where feasible;
 - b) Minimise and mitigate to acceptable levels any effects that the development may have on: air quality; light, land and / or water pollution (including contamination of soil, surface water and groundwater resources); and levels of noise, vibration, smells, dust and electromagnetic fields in the area;
 - c) Ensure that any contamination or ground stability issues that exist on the site of the proposed development would be remediated to an appropriate standard, taking into account its intended use and making use of sustainable remediation technologies; and
 - d) Include satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of foul sewage, liquid waste, trade effluent and contaminated surface water.
3. Resource Management
- a) Ensure that development involving demolition and / or construction works minimises the generation of waste and promotes the use of recycled and / or locally sourced building materials in accordance with policy WM8 of the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan 2013 (or any equivalent policy in a successor document);
 - b) Avoid prejudicing the delivery/improvement of utility infrastructure;
 - c) Promote energy efficiency and the generation and use of low carbon and renewable energy in accordance with Policy LPC13; and
 - d) Avoid loss of or damage to high quality agricultural land and / or soils (except where clearly justified by wider public benefits) and minimise such loss or damage where this is shown to be unavoidable.

<p>LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing</p>	<p>Provides for requirements for new residential developments Be of a high quality design and use good architecture which respects and/or enhances the character of the surrounding area; enhance local distinctiveness by reflecting good aspects of the character and environment of the local area, maintaining a strong sense of place, improving any poorer aspects and adding new features that benefit the local environment over the full lifetime of the development ;provide appropriate landscaping using native tree and shrub species and where appropriate other boundary treatments, thereby providing a strong Green Infrastructure in line with Policy LPA09; provide a safe, secure, attractive, permeable, legible and useable environment for all users, which reinforces existing connections and creates new ones where necessary, including for pedestrians, cyclists, less mobile people and the elderly; promote safe living environments; avoid causing unjustified harm to the character or setting of any listed building(s), conservation area(s) or any other designated or non-designated heritage asset, having regard to the requirements of Policy LPC11; avoid causing harm to any important natural habitat, historic or other important landscape, mature trees, hedgerows, wildlife habitats, ponds or watercourses, and where practicable incorporate positive aspects of these features into its design and layout, in accordance with Policy LPC09; provide a satisfactory level of privacy, outlook and natural lighting for its future residents and for occupiers of neighbouring properties; Incorporate waste storage and recycling facilities, public transport infrastructure and car parking for residents and visitors (in line with Policy LPA07), and to be laid out and designed to ensure that the development is inclusive and accessible to all intended and future users, consistent with Policy LPC01.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. This is a development management policy relating to design and layout of new housing. It does not provide for any location or quantum of new housing. There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
<p>LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development</p>	<p>Provides for the need for high quality public open space and the amount required.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects. A positive development management policy providing for open space and residential development. Open space freely open to the public can divert recreational activity away from sensitive European designated sites. There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>
<p>LPD04: Householder Developments</p>	<p>Proposals for the alteration and / or extension of an existing dwelling will be approved where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They would respect and / or enhance the appearance and character of the existing dwelling and any other buildings within the site or the surrounding area in terms of scale, size, design, and facing materials; 2. There would be no adverse impact on the amenity of any occupier(s) of neighbouring properties caused by overlooking, loss of privacy or reduction of daylight in habitable rooms or garden areas; 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects A development management policy relating to householder developments. It does not provide for any type, location or quantum of development.</p>	<p>There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.</p>

	<p>3. They would not have an overbearing or over-dominant effect on the outlook from any habitable room(s) or gardens in any neighbouring dwelling;</p> <p>4. They would not cause harm to the safety of users of any highway (including drivers, cyclists or pedestrians) for example due to inadequate provision for off road parking, lack of visibility, or impact on the safety and free flow of traffic; and</p> <p>5. Any car parking or other features associated with the development would avoid causing harm in respect of visual appearance, character or any of the other factors set out above.</p>	There are no impact pathways present.	
LPD05: Extension, Alteration or Replacement of Buildings in the Green Belt	<p>Proposals for the alteration, conversion, extension or replacement of an existing building in the Green Belt will be allowed subject to the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal must not have a materially greater impact on the openness or purposes of the Green Belt than the existing building. As a general guideline, proposals should not extend an original building by more than 30% (by volume) either individually or cumulatively with other extension(s). A replacement building should generally be no more than 30% larger (by volume) than the original building it would replace; 2. Garaging, storage or other ancillary structures will not be allowed unless, in conjunction with the remainder of the existing and any other proposed development, they fall within the requirements set out above; 3. The proposal would not result in a need for any additional building(s) would have a harmful effect on the openness or purposes of the Green Belt; 4. Any existing building to be converted must be permanent and of substantial construction, capable of conversion without the need for major or complete reconstruction. As a guideline if the proposals would result in a need for more than 30% (by volume) of the existing structure to be replaced this is likely to contravene this requirement; 5. The curtilage of the development should relate appropriately to the size and form of the existing building(s) and landscape features, and avoid causing unnecessary further impact on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt; and 6. Vehicular access must be capable of being provided that is safe and does not lead to a need for highway improvements or other works that would have a harmful effect on the openness and purposes of Green Belt. 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>A development management policy relating to development within the Green Belt. Whilst this policy implies new residential development will occur, it is expected that this will be of a small scale.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>	There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.
LPD06: Development in Prominent Gateway Locations or Character Areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The prominent gateway corridors include the lengths of motorways, 'A' roads, waterways, and railway lines that cross the Borough. 2. Along the prominent gateway corridors, priority will be given as appropriate to the delivery of measures that will improve the visual appearance of the area (with particular priority to any areas that are of poor or mediocre visual quality, prominent road junctions and railway stations). Priority will also be given to delivering any necessary measures to improve access to railway stations. 3. All proposals for new development that would be within or visible from one or more prominent gateway corridor(s) must, as appropriate, having regard to its scale and nature: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) be of high architectural quality, ensuring that the density, design, height and layout of any building(s) respond positively to the site and its setting; and b) provide appropriate landscaping as an integral part of their design and layout. 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>This is a development management policy relating to Development in Prominent Gateway Locations or Character Areas.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>	There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.
LPD07: Digital Communications	<p>All new housing and employment development should make provision for the latest generation of information and digital communication (ICT) networks to a standard which is compatible with the infrastructure available, or is likely to become available, in the area in which the development would be sited. Subject to the requirements of Policy LPA08, contributions may also be sought from developers towards the cost of providing necessary off-site fast broadband infrastructure to serve the area.</p> <p>Proposals for development of new digital communications infrastructure will be supported where they meet the certain criteria.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>This policy does not identify any location for digital communications infrastructure and the term covers a range of types of infrastructure. .</p>	There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.
LPD08: Advertisements	Proposals for advertisement display will be granted consent provided they would not have an unacceptable impact upon amenity or public safety.	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>A development management policy relating to advertisements.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>	There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.
LPD09: Air Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Impede the achievement of any objective(s) or measure(s) set out in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) Action Plan; or b) Introduce a significant new source of any air pollutant, or new development whose users or occupiers would be particularly susceptible to air pollution within an AQMA. Or c) Lead to a significant deterioration in local air quality resulting in unacceptable effects on human health, local amenity or the natural environment, that would require a new AQMA to be created; or d) Having regard to established local and national standards, lead to an unacceptable decline in air quality in any 	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>A positive development management policy relating to air quality. Development proposals should not lead to a 'material decline in air quality'.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>	There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

- area.
2. Major development schemes should demonstrably promote a shift to the use of sustainable modes of transport to minimise the impact of vehicle impact of vehicle emissions on air quality.
 3. New development that would result in increased traffic flows on the M62 past Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of more than 1000 vehicles per day or 200 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) per day must be accompanied by evidence identifying whether the resultant impacts on air quality would cause a significant effect on ecological interests within the SAC. Where such effects are identified they would need to be considered in accordance with Policy LPC06.

LPD10: Food and Drink

Proposals for food and drink uses (including restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments and the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises) will only be permitted where certain criteria are met.

No Likely Significant Effects.
 A development control policy relating to hot food and drink uses.
 There are no impact pathways present.

There are no pathways present to provide an in-combination effect.

Appendix E : Likely Significant Effects Assessment of the Plan Site Allocations Alone and In-Combination.

Policies identified in **green** in the “HRA outcome Alone” column do not provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site. Policies identified in **green** in the “HRA outcome In-Combination” column do not provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site in-combination with any other policies, Plans or Projects.

Policies identified in **orange** in the “HRA outcome Alone” column have potential to provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site. Policies identified in **orange** in the “HRA outcome In-Combination” column have potential to provide for impact pathways that could link to a European designated site ‘in-combination’ with any other policies, Plans or Projects. In both cases the policy/policies is/are taken forward to the next stage of assessment – Appropriate Assessment and discussed within this document.

Table 8: Assessment of St. Helens Local Plan Employment Site Allocations (Policy LPA04) ‘Alone’ and ‘In-combination’

Site allocation number and name	Type of development	Distance to nearest European Designated site	Potential impact pathways ‘Alone’	Potential impact pathways ‘In- combination’
1EA Omega South Western Extension, Phase 1, Land north of Finches Plantation, Bold	31.2 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 9km from the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
2EA Florida Farm North, Slag Lane, Haydock	36.67 hectares B2, B8	Located more than 12km from Manchester Mosses SAC	No Likely Significant Effects This site is not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds and is subject to a planning permission for employment development. Further, a wintering bird survey undertaken to support the planning application did not identify a significant presence of designated non-breeding bird features. Natural England’s response to planning application P/2016/0608/HYBR stated that they did not have any objection to the planning application and that the ‘...proposal is unlikely to affect any statutory protected sites or landscapes.’ This policy does not provide for point source discharges, therefore atmospheric pollution is not considered.	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
3EA Land North of Penny Lane, Haydock	11.05 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/SPA	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. Furthermore, planning permission has been granted for this site allocation (P/2015/0571/HYBR) There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
4EA Land South of Penny Lane, Haydock	2.16 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/SPA	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
5EA Land to the West of Haydock Industrial Estate, Haydock	7.75 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 16km from Mersey Estuary SPA/SPA	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
6EA Land West of Millfield Lane, South of Liverpool Road and North of Clipsley	20.58 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 16km from Mersey Estuary SPA/SPA	Likely Significant Effects Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality

Site allocation number and name	Type of development	Distance to nearest European Designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In- combination'
Brook, Haydock			population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds.	Air quality
7EA Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows	64.55 See policy LPA10	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	<p>Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds.</p> <p>Potential impact pathway present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds 	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Atmospheric Pollution in-combination potential impacts to result from the Plan growth in combination with surrounding plans and projects (particularly large schemes within St Helens and other schemes in the surrounding areas)</p> <p>Water quality</p>
8EA Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows	79.57 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	<p>Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds.</p> <p>Potential impact pathway present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds 	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Atmospheric Pollution in-combination potential impacts to result from the Plan growth in combination with surrounding plans and projects (particularly large schemes within St Helens and other schemes in the surrounding areas)</p> <p>Water quality</p>
9EA Land to the West of Sandwash Close, Rainford	6.96 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds (pink-footed goose).</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>
10EA Land at Lea Green Farm, Thatto Heath	3.84 hectares of B1, B2 and B8	Located over 8.3km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds (pink-footed goose).</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>
11EA Gerards Park, Phases 2 and 3, College Street, Town Centre	0.95 hectares of B1,B2 and B8	Located over 12.7km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	<p>No Likely Significant Effects.</p> <p>Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds (pink-footed goose).</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>

Table 9: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Strategic Employment Site Allocations (Policy LPA04.1) Alone' and 'In-combination'

Site allocation number and name	Type of development	Distance to nearest European Designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In-Combination'
1EA Omega South Western Extension, Phase 1, Land north of Finches Plantation, Bold	31.2 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 9km from the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
2EA Florida Farm North, Slag Lane, Haydock	36.67 hectares B2, B8	Located more than 12km from Manchester Mosses SAC	No Likely Significant Effects This site is not located in an areas used by non-breeding SPA birds. Further, a wintering bird survey undertaken to support the planning application did not identify a significant presence of designated non-breeding bird features. Natural England's response to planning application P/2016/0608/HYBR stated that they did not have any objection to the planning application and that the ' <i>...proposal is unlikely to affect any statutory protected sites or landscapes.</i> ' At the time of writing (July 2017). This planning application had been granted Outline Permission This policy does not provide for point source discharges, therefore atmospheric pollution is not considered.	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
6EA Land West of Millfield Lane, South of Liverpool Road and North of Clipsley Brook, Haydock	20.58 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 16km from Mersey Estuary SPA/SPA	Likely Significant Effects. Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds.	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
7EA Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows	64.55 hectares for SRFI/rail enabled B2 or B8 uses (see policy LPA10)	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	Likely Significant Effects Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds. Potential impact pathway present: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Water qualityAtmospheric pollution from increased road traffic
8EA Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows	79.57 hectares of B2, B8	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	Likely Significant Effects Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds. Potential impact pathway present: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Water qualityAtmospheric pollution from increased road traffic

Table 10: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Residential Site Allocations (Policy LPA05) 'Alone' and 'In- Combination'

Site allocation number and name	Number of new dwellings before 31/03/2035	Distance to nearest European designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In- Combination'
Residential site allocations				
1HA Land South of Billinge Road, east of Garswood Road and west of Smock Lane, Garswood	216	Located more than 13km from Manchester Mosses SAC	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
2HA Land at Florida Farm (South of A580), Slag Lane, Blackbrook	400	Located more than 12km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
3HA Former Penlake Industrial Estate, Reginald Road, Bold	337	Located more than 9.5km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
4HA Land bounded by Reginald Road/Bold Road/Travers Entry/Gorse lane/Crawford Street, Bold (Bold Forest Garden Suburb)	480	Located over 8km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
5HA Land South of Gartons Lane and former St. Theresa's Social Club, Gartons Lane, Bold	520	Located 7.3km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
6HA Land at Cowley Street, Cowley Hill, Town Centre	181	Located approximately 13km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
7HA Land West of the A49 Mill Lane and to the East of the West Coast Mainline railway line, Newton-le-Willows)	259	Located 7.4km from Manchester Mosses SAC	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality

Site allocation number and name	Number of new dwellings before 31/03/2035	Distance to nearest European designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In- Combination'
8HA Land South of Higher Lane and East of Rookery Lane, Rainford	350	Located more than 15km from Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site	<p>Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds (pink footed goose).From aerial photography the site comprises arable land. At this desk study stage it is not possible to conclude that the site is unsuitable to support a significant population of non-breeding SPA birds. Further, the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) identifies that this site is within the IRZ of a SSSI designated for pink-footed goose and that this land is located within an impact zone that has potential to provide functionally linked land for pink-footed goose</p>	<p>Air quality</p> <p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Recreational pressure</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>
9HA Former Linkway Distribution Park, Elton Head Road, Thatto Heath	802	Located over 8.8km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	<p>No Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Not located in an area used by or suitable for non-breeding SPA birds</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Recreational pressure</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>
10HA Moss Nook Urban Village, Watery Lane, Moss Nook	216	Located over 10km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	<p>No Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Recreational pressure</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>

Table 11:: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Strategic Residential Site Allocations (Policy LPA05.1) 'Alone' and 'In - Combination'

Site allocation number and name	Number of new dwellings before 31/03/2035	Distance to nearest European designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In-Combination'
2HA: Land at Florida Farm South, Slag Lane, Blackbrook	400 dwellings	Located more than 12km from Manchester Mosses SAC	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
3HA Penlake Industrial Estate , Reginald Road, Bold	337 dwellings	Located more than 9.5km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
4HA Land bounded by Reginald Road/Bold Road/Travers Entry/Gorse lane/Crawford Street, Bold (Bold Forest Garden Suburb)	480 dwellings	Located over 8km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
5HA Land South of Gartons Lane and former St. Theresa's Social Club, Gartons Lane, Bold	520 dwellings	Located 7.3km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
6HA Land at Cowley Street, Cowley Hill, Town Centre	540 dwellings	Located approximately 13km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
9HA Former Linkway Distribution Park (Land North of Elton Head Road, Thatto Heath)	350 dwellings	Located over 8.5km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
10HA Moss Nook Urban Village, Watery Lane, Moss Nook	802 dwellings	Located over 10km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality

Air quality

Table 12: Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople allocations (Policy LPC03) 'Alone' and 'In-Combination'

Site allocation number and name	Number of pitches	Distance to nearest European designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In-Combination'
GTA01 Land north of Sherdley Road and west of Sutton Heath Road, Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath	8 permanent pitches	Located 9.8km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	No Likely Significant Effects. There are no impact pathways present.
GTA02 Land adjacent to land east of Sherdley Road Caravan Park, Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath	3 transitory pitches	Located 9.9km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	No Likely Significant Effects. There are no impact pathways present.

Table 13: Likely Significant Effects Assessment of St. Helen Local Plan Safeguarded Land Site Allocations (Policy LPA06) 'Alone' and 'In – Combination'

Site allocation number and name	Type of Development	Distance to nearest European designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In- Combination'
Safeguarded Lane for Employment				
1ES Omega North Western Extension, Bold	29.98ha of employment land	Located over 9km from the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
2ES Land North East of junction 23 M6, (South of Haydock racecourse), Haydock	55.9ha of employment land	Located over 9.5 km from Manchester Mosses SAC (Astley and Bedford Mosses SSSI)	No Likely Significant Effects. Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds. There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
Safeguarded Land for Housing				
1HS Land South of Leyland Green Road, North of Billinge Road and East of Garswood Road, Garswood	291 dwellings	Located over 13.5km from Manchester Mosses SAC (Astley and Bedford Mosses SSSI)	Likely Significant Effects Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land. The site is over 17km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar and most pink footed geese do not range far from the roost site mainly remaining within 5-10km ¹²⁶ however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Loss of potential functionally linked land for non-breeding SPA birds in-combination with other Local Plans which are committed to growth.
2HS Land between Vista Road and Ashton Road, Earlestown	178 dwellings	Located 9.7km from Manchester Mosses SAC	No Likely Significant Effects.	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Water quality Air quality
3HS Eccleston Park Golf Club, Rainhill Road, Eccleston	956 dwellings (the capacity may be capped in the region of 500 dwellings until highways capacity issues are addressed)	Located 8.4km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	No Likely Significant Effects Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality
4HS Land East of Newlands Grange, Newton-le-Willows	256 dwellings	Located over 13.5km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.	Likely Significant Effects Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds.	Likely Significant Effect- In-combination: Recreational pressure Water quality Air quality

¹²⁶ Mitchell, CR & RD Hearn. 2004. Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* (Greenland/Iceland population) in Britain 1960/61 – 1999/2000. Waterbird Review Series, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust/Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Slimbridge.

Site allocation number and name	Type of Development	Distance to nearest European designated site	Potential impact pathways 'Alone'	Potential impact pathways 'In- Combination
5HS Land west of Winwick Road and south of Wayfarers Drive, Newton-le-Willows	191 dwellings	Located over 13.5km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.	<p>Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds.</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Recreational pressure</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>
6HS Land East of Chapel Lane and south of Walkers Lane, Sutton Manor	113 dwellings	Located 6.9 km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	<p>No Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Not located in an area used by non-breeding SPA birds There are no impact pathways present</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Recreational pressure</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>
7HS Land south of Elton Head Road (from Nutgrove Road to St.John Vianney Primary School), Thatto Heath	84 dwellings	Located over 15km from Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.	<p>Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Aerial photography shows that this area is arable land, however, it is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds.</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Recreational pressure</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>
8HS Land South of A580 between Houghtons Lane and Crantock Grove, Windle	1027 dwellings	Located 7.8km from the Mersey Estuary SPA and Mersey Estuary Ramsar site	<p>Likely Significant Effects</p> <p>Located adjacent to an area used by non-breeding SPA birds (pink footed goose). From review of aerial photography the site comprises arable land. It is not possible to determine if the site is suitable to support a significant population of pink footed goose and other non-breeding SPA birds. Further, the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) identifies that this site is within the IRZ of a SSSI designated for pink-footed goose and that this land is located within an impact zone that has potential to provide functionally linked land for pink-footed goose.</p>	<p>Likely Significant Effect- In-combination:</p> <p>Recreational pressure</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Air quality</p>

