

West Lancashire Local Development Framework

Skelmersdale Town Centre SPD / Masterplan

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening - Consultation Statement

SEPTEMBER 2008

Introduction

This consultation statement relates to the responses which have been received in regard to the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report published for consultation between 13th March 2008 and 24th April 2008. Responses were invited from any consultees and was made available both online at the District Council website and a local information centres within Skelmersdale, all statutory consultees were contacted for comments on both the SPD Document and accompanying documents, including the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report.

Responses to the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report were received from the following consultees, whose comments are listed in more detail within the attached Schedule.

1. Julia Scott, Government Team, Natural England.

Name of Contact and Organisation Represented	Comments made on the Scoping Report	District Council Response
<p>Julia Scott, Government Team, Natural England.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Features of the Plan</u> – Welcome the clear introduction to the document that explains the purpose of the plan in terms of legislation. However, we recommend the inclusion of a full summary of the SPD, including objectives, so that the Assessment is clearly understood as a stand-alone document. The screening report would also benefit from a map showing the proposed development site. The features of the plan would also benefit from additional and clearer details on the size, scale, area and land take and cover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed to include a full summary of the SPD and include objectives. ▪ Agreed to include plan of the SPD area. ▪ Agreed to add further information as identified.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Description of the European Site</u> – The information under stage 1 and 2 is confusing and there do not feel it is relevant to include site selection criteria in the report. It is felt that it would be more useful to include details of the criteria used to select the sites to be assessed in this screening report rather than the criteria for the designation of the site for an SPA. ▪ Overall Natural England are satisfied with the selection / descriptions of European sites, and welcome the interpretation of the site information to pick out the key points. However, it has not been demonstrated the criteria used to select these sites or their distance and any pathways from the development sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed to include the criteria used to select sites to be assessed within the Report. Details relating to the designation criteria.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Cumulative Effects : Alone</u> – The risks and pathways of risk do not seem to have been assessed up front. Natural England suggest that by identifying the risks and pathways of risk to a site, both in combination / cumulative and individually, the report will be better able to demonstrate the likely significant effect. ▪ Natural England disagree with the statement that as this plan is only concerned with creating new residential / commercial development it will not be environmentally hazardous. The development could still have damaging impacts on European sites (e.g. size and scale, land take, distance from designated sites and key features of sites, resource requirements (water abstraction), emissions, excavation requirements, duration of construction, decommissioning etc. It is recommended to think about the source, pathway and receptor relationships between the proposal and European Site(s). ▪ It is important that where no significant impacts are predicted on the European 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further discussion to take place with Natural England as to what further assessment work is required

	<p>site, a finding of no significant impacts statement is provided which clearly sets out why this conclusion has been drawn.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Cumulative Effects : In Combination</u> – Natural England are of the opinion that the consideration of in-combination effects have not been fully addressed in the report. There needs to be clear evidence in the documentation that sufficient account and assessment have been taken of the possibility of cumulative impacts in combination with other projects or plans from within the Local Authority or neighbouring Authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further discussion to take place with Natural England as to what further assessment work is required