

## **Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening of Aldcliffe with Stodday Neighbourhood Plan**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Lancaster City Council has prepared this screening report to support Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council in determining whether or not the contents of the proposed Aldcliffe with Stodday Neighbourhood Plan is likely to require a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).
- 1.2 Habitats and species of European nature conservation importance are protected by the European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (The Habitats Directive). The Habitats Directive establishes a network of internationally important sites designated for their ecological value. These sites are often referred to as Natura 2000 sites or European sites and comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. This is translated into UK law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.3 Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (and Regulation 61 of the Habitats Regulations), an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon a European site.
- 1.4 The overarching aim of HRA is to determine, in view of a site's conservation objectives and qualifying interests, whether a plan or project, either in isolation and/or in combination with other plans would have a significant adverse effect on a European site. If the screening concludes that a significant adverse effect is likely, then Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken to determine whether there will be adverse effects on site integrity.
- 1.5 There are three European site within the proposed neighbourhood boundary, a further 5 sites are noted to be within a 15km radius of the boundary and could potentially be affected by the Aldcliffe with Stodday Neighbourhood Plan. Further information on these designations is provided below.

### **2. HRA process**

- 2.1 The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprises four distinct stages:

#### *Stage 1: Screening.*

This is the stage which initially identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may have a significant effect on the integrity of the site's qualifying habitats and/or species. Where a significant effect is identified the assessment moves onto stage 2.

#### *Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.*

This provides the detailed consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any potential impacts.

#### *Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions.*

This examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan or project that would avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.

*Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.*

In such circumstances it must be demonstrated that the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Planning gives local communities the opportunity to prepare planning documents for their area, enabling them to shape the future of where they live and giving them greater ownership of the plans and policies that affect them. Introduced under the Localism Act in 2011 Neighbourhood Plans provide a new tier of planning policy.
- 3.2 Planning policy for the district is established in the Lancaster District Local Plan. This currently consists of policies contained in the now adopted Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), the Development Management DPD, The Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) DPD and the Morecambe Area Action Plan.
- 3.3 The Neighbourhood plan area for Aldcliffe with Stodday was formally designated on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018. This confirmed the Parish Council's commitment to preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and identified the proposed Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 3.4 Following on-going discussions with the city council Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council have prepared a Draft Neighbourhood Plan Document (November 2020). Lancaster City Council have used this information to undertake initial HRA screening of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### 4. Relevant European Sites

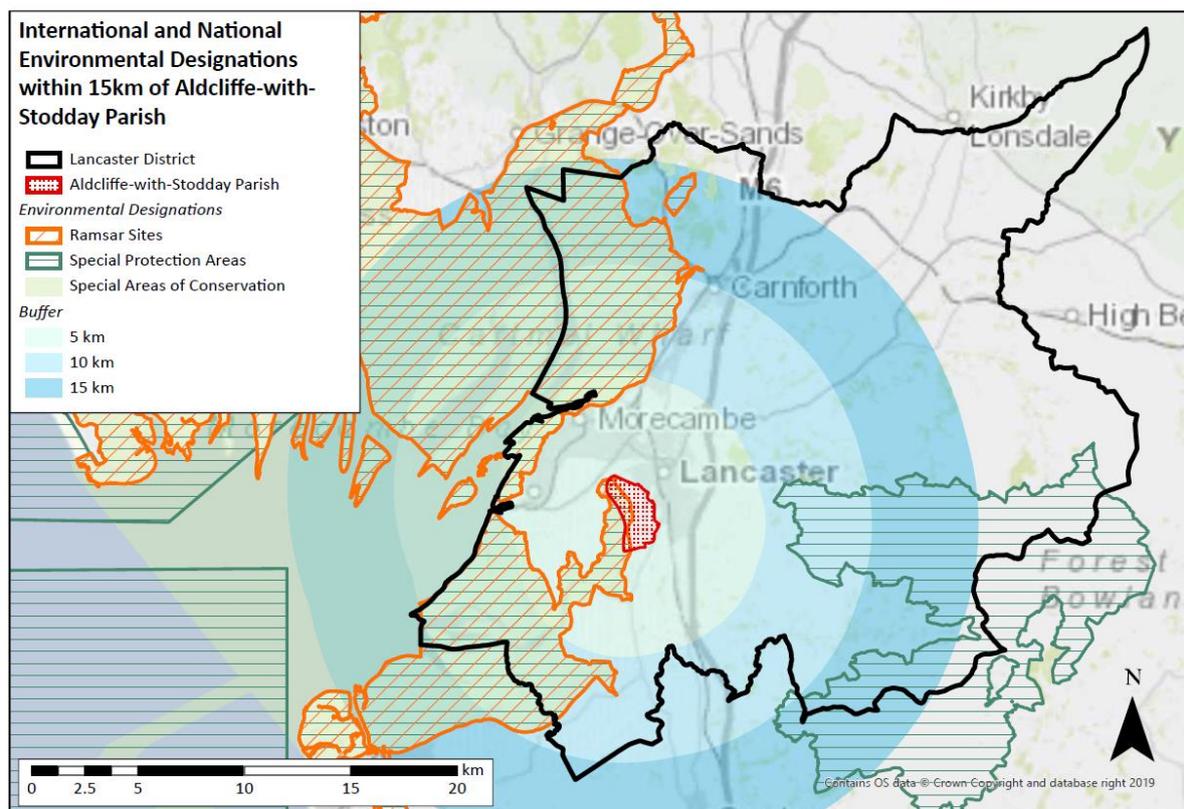
- 4.1 There are a number of European designated sites that could potentially be affected by the Aldcliffe with Stodday Neighbourhood Plan. This includes three European sites within the boundary of the plan area as well as European sites which whilst outside of the boundary could potentially be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan. As a general rule of thumb best practice indicates that sites with pathways of 10-15km of the plan/project should be included within a HRA.

Table 1 – Summary of European Sites

Site Name	Natural England's Code	Distance from the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary (km)
Special Protection Areas		
Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary	UK9020326	Within the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
Bowland Fells	UK9005151	5.5
Leighton Moss	UK9005091	12.6

Special Areas of Conservation		
Morecambe Bay	UK0013027	Within the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
Calf Hill & Cragg Woods	UK0030106	6.8
Morecambe Bay Pavements	UK0014777	13.7
RAMSAR sites		
Morecambe Bay	UK11045	Within the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
Leighton Moss	UK11035	12.6

**Figure 1** – International and national environmental designations within 15km of Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish



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4.2 Further details on the description and character of the European sites is provided below (appendix 1). The conservation of objections for the designations are also provided in appendix 2. This information was obtained from Natural England’s website and also informed by the wider Local Plan HRA assessment.

## 5. HRA Screening

5.1 The location of three European sites within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary together with the proximity of other European sites within 15km indicate that there could be potential for the plan, depending on its content, to have a significant adverse effect on a European site.

5.2 The draft Neighbourhood Plan has been screened for likely significant effects on European sites. During the HRA screening stage, the likely nature, magnitude, frequency, timing,

duration, location and spatial extent of changes resulting from implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan was assessed. As part of this, mechanisms through which the plan could impact upon Designated sites were considered.

- 5.3 The main impact pathways could be:
- Physical loss of habitat/damage to habitat
  - Non-physical disturbance
  - Recreational pressure
  - Contamination
  - Biological disturbance
  - Loss of functionally linked land
  - Changes in water quality
- 5.4 The conclusions of the initial assessment are described in table 2 below.
- 5.5 Policies that were screened out were generally those that could not lead to a direct pathway to any of the identified designated sites. These were generally policies that looked to protect and enhance the natural environment, protection of historic assets, promotion of sustainable transport and the design of new development.
- 5.6 The document places a strong emphasis on the protection of the natural environment recognising the location of several designated sites within its boundaries and the need to ensure that its policies offer opportunity to protect and enhance the environment. No allocations are proposed within the document and only very limited growth with high environmental and design standards are proposed. Importantly no allocations are proposed as part of the Plan with development limited to small scale proposals linked to the existing urban form of the settlement.
- 5.7 Of the eight designated sites, five can be ruled out completely on the basis that there are not considered to be any potential impact pathways which are likely to give rise to significant effects on these sites. These are:
- Bowland Fells SPA
  - Leighton Moss SPA
  - Calf Hill and Craggs Wood SAC
  - Morecambe Bay Pavements SAC
  - Leighton Moss Ramsar

Table 2 – Initial screening assessment							
Designated Site	Policy						
	AS1	AS2	AS3	AS4	AS5	AS6	AS7
<b>Bowland Fells SPA</b>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Leighton Moss SPA</b>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA</b>	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
<b>Calf Hill and Craggs Wood SAC</b>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Morecambe Bay SAC</b>	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
<b>Morecambe Bay Pavements SAC</b>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Morecambe Bay Ramsar</b>	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
<b>Leighton Moss Ramsar</b>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

- 5.8 Whilst considered unlikely effects on the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA, Morecambe Bay SAC and Morecambe Bay Ramsar cannot be ruled out at this stage.
- 5.9 Initial screening identifies three policies that cannot be ruled out at this stage:
- Policy AS2 ‘Supporting Walking and Cycling’
  - Policy AS5 ‘Housing’
  - Policy AS6 ‘Community Energy Schemes’
- 5.11 A more detailed assessed of the screened in policies is provided in table 3.

Table 3 – Detailed screening of policies

Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Designated Site Potentially affected	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance Potential	Recommendation/Conclusion
Policy AS2	Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA, Morecambe Bay SAC and Morecambe Bay Ramsar	Policy AS2 seeks to support and encourage sustainable transport within the neighbourhood plan area encouraging specifically walking and cycling. Whilst this is supported it is recognised that there is potential for increased recreational pressure.	<p>The Plan as a whole has a strong environmental focus emphasising the protection of the natural environment and recognising the location of several designated sites within its boundaries.</p> <p>It is also noted that any new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area will need to be compliant with the wider Local Plan for the District. This includes a range of mitigation measures for new development within protected environments. These were identified by the Local Plan HRA. Any new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area will need to incorporate such measures.</p> <p>On this basis it is considered that sufficient measures are in place to avoid likely significant effects on the identified designated sites.</p>	No likely significant effects on designated sites are predicted as a result of implementation of this policy.
Policy AS5	Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary	Policy AS5 states that limited small scale housing development will be supported where it contributes to the	The Policy is concerned with meeting the development needs of the parish and on that basis is	No likely significant effects on designated sites are predicted as a result of implementation of this

	SPA, Morecambe Bay SAC and Morecambe Bay Ramsar	<p>identified needs of the Parish, is in accordance with other policies and where it enhances the vitality of the local community.</p> <p>New development has the potential to impact on designated sites through increased recreational pressure, loss of habitat, disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/operational stage, changes in water quality where there are hydrological links to the Designated Site.</p>	<p>unlikely to lead to significant levels of development. That said development of any level does have the potential to impact on designated sites.</p> <p>Compliance with the wider Local Plan ensures safeguards for protecting designated sites.</p>	<p>policy. Sufficient cross-reference to other policies is included.</p>
AS6	Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA, Morecambe Bay SAC and Morecambe Bay Ramsar	<p>The policy sets out the approach to new small-scale community led renewable energy schemes. It states that small scale schemes will be supported where any adverse impacts on biodiversity and landscape character are avoided or mitigated by siting, design and landscaping.</p> <p>Development has the potential to impact on the designated site through loss of habitat, disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/operational stage and potential impact on functionally linked land.</p>	<p>The policy has a strong environmental focus recognising the need to avoid impacts and where necessary mitigate through siting, design and layout.</p> <p>Compliance with the wider Neighbourhood Plan and District wide Local Plan ensures safeguards for protecting designated sites.</p>	<p>No likely significant effects on designated sites are predicted as a result of implementation of this policy.</p>

## **6. Screening Conclusion**

- 6.1 The HRA Screening Report of the Aldcliffe with Stodday Neighbourhood Plan has considered the potential implications for European designated sites within and near the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary.
- 6.2 The document places a strong emphasis on the protection of the natural environment recognising the location of several designated sites within its boundaries and the need to ensure that its policies offer opportunity to protect and enhance the environment. No allocations are proposed within the document and only very limited growth with high environmental and design standards are proposed.
- 6.3 On this basis the City Council are satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have any likely significant effects on the designated sites identified either alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects.
- 6.4 The views of the three statutory bodies is required to confirm this conclusion.



Appendix 1 - Description and character of identified European Sites

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of SSSI Condition Survey
	Habitats	Species		
Morecambe Bay Ramsar site	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar criterion 4: The site is a staging area for migratory waterfowl including internationally important numbers of passage ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>.</li> <li>• Ramsar criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance with peak counts in the winter: 223709 waterfowl</li> <li>• Ramsar criterion 6 Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance during the breeding season: Lesser black-backed gull , <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i> Herring gull, <i>Larus argentatus argentatus</i> Sandwich tern, <i>Sterna (Thalasseus) sandvicensis sandvicensis</i> Species with peak counts in spring/autumn: Great cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i> Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> Northern pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i> Common eider, <i>Somateria mollissima mollissima</i> Eurasian oystercatcher, <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i> Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></li> </ul>	No factors reported adversely affecting the sites ecological character (past, present or potential).	<p>Area favourable 94.31%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 5.69%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

		<p>Grey plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>  Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i>  Eurasian curlew, <i>Numenius arquata</i>  <i>arquata</i>  Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus</i>  <i>totanus</i>  Ruddy turnstone, <i>Arenaria interpres</i>  <i>interpres</i>  Lesser black-backed gull, <i>Larus fuscus</i>  <i>graellsii</i>  Species with peak counts in winter:  Great crested grebe, <i>Podiceps</i>  <i>cristatus cristatus</i>  Pink-footed goose, <i>Anser</i>  <i>brachyrhynchus</i>  Eurasian wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i>  Common goldeneye, <i>Bucephala</i>  <i>clangula clangula</i>  Red-breasted merganser, <i>Mergus</i>  <i>serrator</i>  European golden plover, <i>Pluvialis</i>  <i>apricaria apricaria</i>  Northern lapwing, <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>  Red knot, <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>  Dunlin, <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>  Bar-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa lapponica</i>  <i>lapponica</i></p>		
Morecambe Bay SPA	N/A	<p>The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:  During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i></li> <li>• Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i></li> </ul>	<p>The site is subject to a wide range of pressures such as land-claim for agriculture, overgrazing, dredging, overfishing, industrial uses and unspecified pollution. However, overall the site is relatively robust and</p>	<p>Area favourable 94.31%  Area unfavourable but recovering 5.69%  Area unfavourable no change 0%  Area unfavourable declining 0%  Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

		<p>Over winter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i></li> <li>• Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i></li> </ul> <p>The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p>During the breeding season;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i></li> <li>• Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i></li> </ul> <p>On passage;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></li> <li>• Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Over winter;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐☐ Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i></li> <li>☐☐ Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i></li> <li>☐☐ Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i></li> <li>☐☐ Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i></li> <li>☐☐ Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i></li> <li>☐☐ Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i></li> <li>☐☐ Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i></li> <li>☐☐ Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i></li> <li>☐☐ Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i></li> <li>☐☐ Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i></li> </ul> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 seabirds.</p>	<p>many of those pressures have only slight to local effects and are being addressed through Management Plans. The breeding tern interest is very vulnerable and the colony has recently moved to the adjacent Duddon Estuary. Positive management is being secured through management plans for non-governmental organisation reserves, Natural England, Site Management Statements, European Marine Site Management Scheme, and the Morecambe Bay Partnership.</p>	
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		The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl.		
Morecambe Bay SAC	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>• Large shallow inlets and bays</li> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes')</li> <li>• Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey</li> </ul>	<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i></li> </ul>	<p>There are a wide range of pressures on Morecambe Bay but the site is relatively robust and many of these pressures have only slight or local effects on its interests. The interests depend largely upon the coastal processes operating within the Bay, which have been affected historically by human activities including coastal protection and flood defence works. Current pressures include fisheries, aggregate extraction, gas exploration, recreation and other activities.</p>	<p>Area favourable 94.31%  Area unfavourable but recovering 5.69%  Area unfavourable no change 0%  Area unfavourable declining 0%  Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

	<p>dunes`)*Priority feature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humid dune slacks</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time</li> <li>• Coastal lagoons <b>*Priority feature</b></li> <li>• Reefs</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>• Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) <b>*Priority feature</b></li> <li>• Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>)</li> </ul>			
Bowland Fells SPA	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></li> <li>_ Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i></li> </ul>	<p>The expansive blanket bog and heather dominated moorland provides suitable habitat for a diverse range of upland breeding birds. Favourable nature</p>	<p>Area favourable 5.29% Area unfavourable but recovering 85.39% Area unfavourable no change 0% Area unfavourable declining 14.61% Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

		<p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <p>_ Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i></p>	<p>conservation status of the site depends on appropriate levels of sheep grazing, sympathetic moorland burning practice, sensitive water catchment land management practices and ongoing species protection. Since designation as an SPA, many localised problems of over-grazing have been controlled through management agreements or the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. To date approximately 20% of SPA is under Section 15 management agreements and Countryside Stewardship to stimulate heather regeneration in order to produce better moorland for grouse and raptors alike. Burning plans and stocking levels have also been agreed for all other areas of the SPA through Site Management Statements, whilst problems of raptor persecution continues to be addressed by the RSPB in conjunction with North</p>	
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			West Water, Natural England and Lancashire Constabulary.	
Calf Hill and Cragg Woods SAC	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: _ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: _ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) <b>*Priority feature</b>	N/A	Currently there is limited intervention in landuse/ management terms. There is also no immediate need for woodland management in order to safeguard the interest of the site. However, in the long-term it would be desirable to repair some of the walls/fences at the far eastern most end of Calf Hill Wood in order to control sheep grazing from the adjacent fell. In addition, since the canopy of the oak woodland is fairly dense and natural regeneration is quite limited, it would be desirable over the long-term to instigate small-scale selective fellings/silvicultural thinning, whilst felling a small stand of planted larch/pine (<0.5 ha) and replacing it with oak/birch.	Area favourable 100% Area unfavourable but recovering 0% Area unfavourable no change 0% Area unfavourable declining 0% Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%
Leighton Moss Ramsar site	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ramsar criterion 1</li> </ul> An example of large reedbed habitat characteristic of the biogeographical	The site is currently vulnerable to sedimentation /	Area favourable 0% Area unfavourable but recovering 100% Area unfavourable no change 0% Area unfavourable declining 0%

		<p>region. The reedbeds are of particular importance as a northern outpost for breeding populations of great bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>, Eurasian marsh harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> and bearded tit <i>Panurus biarmicus</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar criterion 3</li> </ul> <p>The site supports a range of breeding birds including great bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>, Eurasian marsh harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> and bearded tit <i>Panurus biarmicus</i>. Species occurring in nationally important numbers outside the breeding season include northern shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i> and water rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i></p>	<p>siltation and pollution – pesticides / agricultural runoff.</p>	<p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>
<p>Leighton Moss SPA</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i></li> <li>_ Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Over winter;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i></li> </ul>	<p>Leighton Moss is vulnerable to changes in water quality and water levels. The maintenance of a high quality spring fed water supply is important and although there are few opportunities for this to become polluted within the catchment agricultural run-off from land immediately adjacent to the reserve has been identified as a potential hazard in recent years. Initiatives are currently being initiated to</p>	<p>Area favourable 0%  Area unfavourable but recovering 100%  Area unfavourable no change 0%  Area unfavourable declining 0%  Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>

			reduce/remove this threat by the EA. The Moss is also susceptible to saline intrusion upstream of its tidal sluice from Morecambe Bay. This is potentially one of the most damaging threats to the reserve, there having been three inundations since 1964 caused by gales pushing in unusually high 10 metre tides	
Morecambe Bay Pavements SAC	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of the site: _ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara spp.</i> _ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands _ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco-Brometalia</i> ) _ Limestone pavements * Priority	Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site _ Narrow-mouthed whorl snail <i>Vertigo angustior</i>	The under-grazing of grasslands and decline of traditional cattle grazing is leading to the loss of sward diversity and scrub encroachment problems. Localised overgrazing (sheep-dominated) has impoverished the pavement flora on one of the component sites. A decline of traditional coppice management has reduced the interest of some of the woodland sites. The planting of non-native conifer crops on some of the sites has led to localised declines in condition.	Further details on this can be found in appendix 2.

	<p>feature _ <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, scree and ravines * Priority feature _ <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles * Priority feature Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of the site: _ European dry heaths _ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium</i></p>			
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## European Site Conservation Objectives for Morecambe Bay Special Protection Area and potential Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9005081

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

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

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

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

### Qualifying Features

- A040 *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)
- A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)
- A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)
- A130 *Haematopus ostralegus*; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)
- A137 *Charadrius hiaticula*; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)
- A141 *Pluvialis squatarola*; Grey plover (Non-breeding)
- A143 *Calidris canutus*; Red knot (Non-breeding)
- A149 *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)
- A157 *Limosa lapponica*; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
- A160 *Numenius arquata*; Eurasian curlew (Non-breeding)
- A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)

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A169 *Arenaria interpres*; Ruddy turnstone (Non-breeding)

A191 *Sterna sandvicensis*; Sandwich tern (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Seabird assemblage

**Additional Qualifying Features\***

A026 *Egretta garzetta*; Little egret (Non-breeding)

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

A140 *Pluvialis apricaria*; European golden plover (Non-breeding)

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

A151 *Philomachus pugnax*; Ruff (Non-breeding)

A156 *Limosa limosa islandica*; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)

A176 *Larus melanocephalus*; Mediterranean gull (Non-breeding)

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

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

A184 *Larus argentatus*; Herring gull (Breeding)

A193 *Sterna hirundo*; Common tern (Breeding)

A195 *Sterna albifrons*; Little tern (Breeding)

\*Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for the classification of these additional features as part of this Special Protection Area (SPA).

### **This is a European Marine Site**

This SPA is a part of the Morecambe Bay European Marine Site (EMS). These Conservation Objectives should be used in conjunction with the current Conservation Advice document for the EMS. For further details about this please visit the Natural England website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conservation-advice-packages-for-marine-protected-areas> or contact Natural England's enquiry service at [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk) or by phone on 0845 600 3078.

### **This is a potential Special Protection Area (pSPA)**

This is also a site on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for the classification of additional qualifying features as part of this Special Protection Area (SPA). As a matter of Government policy, potential SPAs and their features are treated as if they are formally classified. The provisions of the Habitats Regulations therefore apply to them (see below).

If classified as a SPA, this site will merge with Duddon Estuary SPA (UK9005031).

### **Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives**

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

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

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

**Publication date:** 29 January 2016 (Version 4). This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 7 August 2015 in order to include the additional qualifying features ('pSPA features') listed above.



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

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

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

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

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

### Qualifying Features:

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

H1130. Estuaries

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

H1150. Coastal lagoons\*

H1160. Large shallow inlets and bays

H1170. Reefs

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

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

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

H2110. Embryonic shifting dunes

H2120. Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes"); Shifting dunes with marram  
H2130. Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"); Dune grassland\*  
H2150. Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*); Coastal dune heathland\*  
H2170. Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*); Dunes with creeping willow  
H2190. Humid dune slacks  
S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great crested newt

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

## This is a European Marine Site

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

### \* Priority natural habitats or species

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

## Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment', including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

### Qualifying Features:

A082 *Circus cyaneus*; Hen harrier (Breeding)

A098 *Falco columbarius*; Merlin (Breeding)

## Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

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

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

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



## European Site Conservation Objectives for Calf Hill and Cragg Woods Special Area of Conservation Site code: UK0030106

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
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

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

### Qualifying Features:

H91A0. Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles; Western acidic oak woodland

H91E0. Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*); Alder woodland on floodplains\*

#### \* Priority natural habitats or species

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

#### Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment', including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

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

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

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



## European Site Conservation Objectives for Morecambe Bay Pavements Special Area of Conservation Site Code: UK0014777

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

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

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

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

### Qualifying Features:

H3140. Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.; Calcium-rich nutrient-poor lakes, lochs and pools

H4030. European dry heaths

H5130. *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands

H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone

H7210. Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)\*

H8240. Limestone pavements\*

H9180. *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines; Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes\*

H91A0. Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles; Western acidic oak woodland  
H91J0. *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles; Yew-dominated woodland\*  
S1014. *Vertigo angustior*; Narrow-mouthed whorl snail

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

#### \* Priority natural habitats or species

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

#### Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment', including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

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

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

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



## European Site Conservation Objectives for Leighton Moss Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9005091

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

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

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

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

### Qualifying Features:

A021 *Botaurus stellaris*; Great bittern (Breeding)

## Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

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

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

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