

Statement of Habitat Regulations Assessment for Proposed Modifications to the IAMP AAP

Introduction

Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations specifies that an assessment needs to be carried out by the plan making authority, before the AAP is given effect, to determine whether the AAP is likely to have a significant effect on any European site. In making such an assessment the plan making authority must consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any such representations made by the body within such reasonable time as the authority specifies. The authority must also, if they consider it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if they do so, take such steps for that purpose as they consider necessary. If the conclusion is reached that it will have a significant effect or such effects are likely, on a European site then an appropriate assessment must be carried out to assess the implications for any such site and its conservation objectives.

The purpose of a HRA is to determine whether or not significant effects on European sites are likely and to suggest ways in which they could be avoided. Under the provisions of the Habitats Directive, consent can only be granted for such a plan if, as a result of the HRA, it can be demonstrated that the integrity of the sites will not be adversely affected or, where adverse impacts are anticipated, there is shown to be no alternative solutions and imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to go ahead.

HRA Stage 1 Screening Report

In accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations, a HRA Stage 1 Screening Report (PSD4) for the Plan was undertaken. The HRA Screening Report was published for consultation alongside the Publication Draft IAMP AAP between 8th August and 26th September 2016. In response to this consultation Natural England concurred with the Councils' conclusion (consultation reference 290916/NATENG/038).

This process concluded that a Habitat Regulations Assessment was not required. As the proposed IAMP AAP (PSD01) was not considered likely to have any direct or indirect impact on European designated sites due to its distance from these; the proposed operational activities at the site; the nature of habitats present; and the designated features. Consideration of the policies in the IAMP AAP indicates that all likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on European Sites within the zone of influence of the AAP area, have been avoided. The AAP provides an appropriate framework for future development of the IAMP whilst avoiding the potential for likely significant effects on European Sites.

Proposed Modifications

During the examination in public the Councils have proposed a number of modifications to the Plan (PSD1). The Councils have undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal on these modifications and have taken into consideration the impact these Modifications on designated European Sites.

The Council do not consider that the Proposed Modifications would alter the conclusion of the HRA Screening Report (PSD4) as the assessment has already assessed the impact of the land safeguarded for development. Therefore the proposed modifications would unlikely to

have a significant impact on European Sites due to its distance from these; the proposed operational activities at the site; the nature of habitats present; and the designated features.

The Councils have submitted this statement to Natural England for their endorsement.