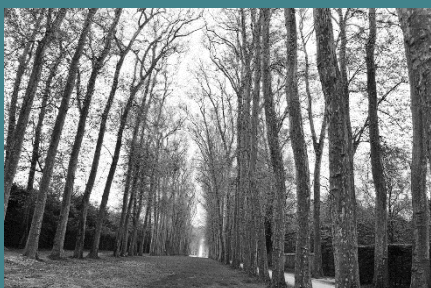


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& design



Information to Inform a Habitat Regulations Assessment and Shadow Appropriate Assessment

Client

Hallam Land Management Limited

Project

Land east of Knowsley Lane, Knowsley

Date

August 2025

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Figure 7.1: Site Location and Consultation Results Plan – Designated Sites

Rev	Issue Status	Prepared/Date	Approved/Date
-	Issue	SH / 13.08.25	GP / 14.08.25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following report has been prepared by FPCR Environment & Design Ltd. (FPCR) on behalf of Hallam Land Management Limited and provides an information to inform a Habitat Regulations Assessment and shadow Appropriate Assessment of a site to the south of Home Farm Road and east of Knowsley Lane, in Knowsley, Prescot (Central OS Grid Ref: SJ43739466) herein referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.2 The aim of this report is to provide Knowsley Council with the required information to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in their duty as the competent authority in relation to nearby sites on the national network. A shadow Appropriate Assessment (sAA) is also included within this document for consideration by the Competent Authority.
- 1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the Ecology and Biodiversity ES chapter (FPCR, 2025).

Comments Received

- 1.4 Comments received from the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) on 29th November 2024 stated that:

Habitat Regulations Assessment

14. The development site is near to the following national and international sites and farmland on site and adjacent to the site may provide functionally linked habitat for qualifying bird species of these sites. These sites are protected under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Local Plan Core Strategy policy CS8 applies:

- *Sefton Coast SAC;*
- *Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA;*
- *Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site;*
- *Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA;*
- *Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar site;*
- *Martin Mere SPA;*
- *Martin Mere Ramsar site;*
- *Mersey Estuary SPA;*
- *Mersey Estuary Ramsar site;*
- *Liverpool Bay SPA*

15. I have considered the proposals and the possibility of likely significant effects on sites using the source-pathway-receptor model. There are pathways between the proposals and the national and international sites, therefore, the proposal requires Habitats Regulations Assessment for likely significant effects. Local Plan Core Strategy policy CS8 applies. The Assessment of Likely Significant Effects must be carried out prior to determination of any future planning application.

16. The ecological survey has identified this ecological issue and has recommended non-breeding bird survey to assess the area as functionally linked land. I advise that this survey

along with data search with the County bird recorder is required to inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

17. Recreational pressure from residential development has been identified as a Likely Significant Effect alone and in-combination within the Liverpool City Region and in the Knowsley Local Plan Regulation 19 HRA. Recreational pressure is recognised in the formal statutory Conservation Advice Packages and Site Improvement Plans^{1 & 2} as Medium-High risk to qualifying features of the national and international sites.

18. The proposed development is over 10km from the national and international sites listed above. However, the M57 directly connects the proposed development with the Sefton Coast designated sites. In line with recent large SUEs in Knowsley and due to increasing pressure around coastal designated sites from large Knowsley developments I advise the MEAS informative leaflet³ be distributed within sales packs to promote a responsible user code when using the coast. This is in line with mitigation secured for recent large residential development in Knowsley (ref. 19/00521/HYB). Should non-breeding bird survey identify use of the site and surrounding farmland by qualifying bird species further mitigation measures may be required to avoid disturbance to these species during recreational use by residents. These mitigation measures will need to be submitted with any future planning application to allow completion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

2.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Site Location and Context

- 2.1 The Site is located on the southern border of Knowsley village and approximately 680m northeast of Stockbridge village. It is approximately 33.75ha and comprises an arable field to the east, four areas of modified grassland fields. Large areas of scrub were also present across the Site. A small area of broadleaved woodland was present along the north eastern boundary. Two areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland were present in the centre of the Site each with a small number of water bodies.
- 2.2 The north of the Site is bordered by the residential area of Knowsley village. To the east there are commercial areas, within young woodland, as well as arable land to the north-west. The M57 motorway runs north to south, 280m from the site to the west. The east and south boundary adjoin woodland areas within Knowsley Park - an extensive area of woodpasture and parkland - a BAP priority habitat. Multiple ponds and a large lake 850m to the east are also within the Park. Other priority habitat noted within the locality of the Site include areas of good quality semi-improved grassland 1.1km to the east, a traditional orchard 900m to the south and small areas of lowland fens 800m and 1km south-east of the Site.

Site Proposals

- 2.3 Proposals involve an outline application (including details of access to, but not within the site) for the erection of up to 700 dwellings together with public open space, landscaping, new

¹ [Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation Objectives for European Sites](#)

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/irish-sea-marine-area-index-map-and-site-packages

³ [lcr_leaflet_knowsley.pdf](#)

vehicular access junctions, active travel links, sustainable urban drainage systems and other associated infrastructure ('the Proposed Development').

3.0 THE HRA PROCESS

- 3.1 The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) requires that appropriate steps are taken to avoid deterioration of habitats and species, for which sites on the national network are designated. A plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of a site, but likely to have a significant effect upon it, either individually or in combination with other projects, must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (AA).
- 3.2 The HRA process has developed into a four-stage process summarised as follows:
- Stage One: Screening – also known as the Test of Likely Significant Effect (TOLSE). If the Competent Authority cannot screen out a likely significant effect, an Appropriate Assessment is required.
 - Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment – the Competent Authority will only agree to plans or projects that will not affect the integrity of a European site also known as the "Integrity Test".
 - Stage Three: Alternative Solutions – assesses any alternative solutions of a potentially damaging plan or project that failed the Integrity Test, and if it is determined there are no alternative solutions, the project cannot be agreed to, and it will either need to be changed or refused.
 - Stage Four: IROPI – The final stage may allow a plan or project to proceed if after failing stage three if it is for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, and only if suitable compensatory measures are secured.
- 3.3 In accordance with the "People Over Wind" ruling (High Court Justice for European Union Case 323/17)⁴, the screening of likely significant effects takes place in the absence of any mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce any effects on Sites on the National Network.
- 3.4 This report identifies and considers ecological pathways between the application Site and each National Network Site within the zone of influence. Each was screened (Stage One) for a likely significant effect alone and in-combination with other plans/projects. If there are any ecological pathways that could not be screened out without mitigation, alone or in-combinations, a Stage Two Appropriate Assessment would be conducted and included in this document.

4.0 STAGE 1 – SHADOW HRA SCREENING

Sites on the National Site Network Considered

- 4.1 There are 12 internationally designated sites identified as being near to the Site, these form part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) European Sites. A summary of the designated features, conservation objectives and threats and pressures are presented in Appendix B, and the

⁴ The Planning Inspectorate (2018) PINS Note 05/2018 Consideration of avoidance and reduction measures in Habitats Regulations Assessment: People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta. Available at: <https://pinslibrary.org.uk/vufind/Record/22547>

location of the sites are shown on Figure 7.1. The sites included within this assessment comprise:

- Liverpool Bay SPA (10.7km west)
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA (11.6km north west);
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar (11.6km north west);
- Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA (11.2km west);
- Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar (11.2km west);
- Martin Mere SPA (18.8km north);
- Martin Mere Ramsar site (18.8km north);
- Mersey Estuary SPA (10.7km south south-west);
- Mersey Estuary Ramsar site (10.7km south south-west);
- Dee Estuary SAC (12.1km west);
- Dee Estuary SPA (22km west);
- Dee Estuary RAMSAR (22km west); and
- Sefton Coast SAC (12.3km north-west).

Impact pathways scoped out

- 4.2 Any positive or negative impacts which are solely concerned with the management of the designated sites or directly impact from within it such as mowing / cutting of grassland are scoped out of further assessment. Given the nature of the development any impacts from commercial fisheries, marine consent and permits, transportation and service corridors, are also scoped out. Given the distance from- and location of the Site, impacts from coastal squeeze are scoped out.
- 4.3 The habitats on Site are not considered suitable for the breeding bird qualifying features listed on the LCR sites. Given the spatial distance between nesting sites within the LCR sites and the Site, it is not expected that these species would use the Site for foraging during the breeding season. Therefore, effects on qualifying breeding birds of the LCR sites are scoped out.

Impact pathways considered

- 4.4 Given the similarities of the qualifying species for the SPA and RAMSARs within the zone of influence, these have been combined in order to undertake the screening of impact pathways.
- 4.5 The table below sets out the impact pathways on the designated sites and the assessment of likely significant effect both alone and where/if appropriate, in combination.

Table 1: Impact pathways and assessment of effects on designated sites.

Liverpool Bay SPA, Mersey Estuary SPA/RAMSAR, Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore RAMSAR/SPA, Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR/ SPA, Dee Estuary SPA, Martin Mere SPA/RAMSAR				
Is any part of the plan or project "directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European / Ramsar sites"?				No
Qualifying features	Impact Pathway	Assessment of likely Significant Effect	Alone	In combination
Water bird assemblage, passage	Direct habitat Loss	There will be no direct loss of habitats within any of the designated Sites as a result of the project.	No effect	Not required
	Loss of functionally linked land	Development of the Site has the potential to result in a loss of suitable habitat used by qualifying features of nearby designated sites and therefore may be considered functionally linked land. Surveys/further assessment needed.	Risk of Likely Significant Effect	Not required
	Disturbance from Construction on SPA/RAMSAR habitats on which qualifying features rely	The closest international designated site is located over 10km from the Site. The Site is also spatially separated from all of them by major development.	No effect	Not required
	Disturbance from construction on functionally linked land	Development of the Site has the potential to result in disturbance of suitable habitat used by qualifying features of nearby designated sites, if surveys show the Site is functionally linked land.	Risk of Likely Significant Effect	Not required
	Recreational Disturbance	Development of the Site has the potential to result in disturbance of qualifying features of nearby designated sites.	Risk of Likely Significant Effect	Not required
	Recreational Disturbance of Functionally Linked Land	Development of the Site has the potential to result in disturbance of qualifying features using functionally linked land, if surveys show the Site is functionally linked land.	Risk of Likely Significant Effect	Not required
	Pollution (Light, Air, and Noise)	The closest international designated site is located over 10km from the Site, it is also spatially separated from all of them by major development.	No effect	Not required

Dee Estuary SAC & RAMSAR, Sefton Coast SAC and Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR				
Is any part of the plan or project "directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European / Ramsar sites"?				No
Habitats of the Dee Estuary SAC and the Sefton Coast SAC	Direct habitat loss and physical changes to the sites	There will be no direct loss of habitats or physical changes within any of the designated sites as a result of the project.	No effect	Not required
	Pollution (hydrological impacts)	There are no hydrological links from the Site to the designated sites.	No effect	Not required
	Recreational disturbance	Development of the Site has the potential to result in disturbance of qualifying features of nearby designated sites.	Risk of Likely Significant Effect	Not required
	Invasive non-native species	The invasive non-native rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> was recorded on Site during FPCR's habitat surveys. Given the reproductive nature of this species and the distance between the Site and the designated sites there is considered to be no likely significant effects from the proposals.	No effect	Not required
Sea and River lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> and <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> present as a qualifying species in the Dee Estuary	Direct habitat Loss	There will be no direct loss of habitats within any of the designated Site as a result of the project.	No effect	Not required
	Recreational disturbance	Given the that these species reside in the channel of the river and are mobile, potential effects from an increase in recreational disturbance is not anticipated.	No effect	Not required
Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> present as a qualifying species in the Dee Estuary and Sefton Coast SAC	Direct habitat Loss	There will be no direct loss of habitats which contain petalwort within the designated site as a result of the project.	No effect	Not required
	Recreational disturbance	An increase in recreational activities such as dog walking may increase damage to individual plants. However, it is noted that on at some sites the species is increasing as a result of trampling. On the Sefton Coast the plant is often associated with the lightly	No effect	Not required

		trampled edges of footpaths as this helps to keep the vegetation sparse ⁵		
Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> in Sefton Coast SAC	Direct habitat loss	There will be no direct loss of habitats which contain great crested newts within the designated site because of the project.	No effect	Not required
	Recreational disturbance	The great crested newts in the Sefton Coast SAC are located within the Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR and Ainsdale and Birkdale Hills LNR. These are located approximately 27km from the Site and are located nearby to several holiday parks. The NNR and LNR the site is currently managed for recreational purposes. Given that and the distance from the Site, any increase in recreational pressure would be negligible.	No effect	Not required
Natterjack toad <i>Bufo calamita</i> in Dee Estuary RAMSAR and Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR	Direct habitat Loss	There will be no direct loss of habitats which contain natterjack toads within the designated sites because of the project.	No effect	Not required
	Recreational disturbance Dee Estuary RAMSAR	The HRA for the Sefton Coastal path determined that there would be no likely significant effect from recreational activities including nutrient enrichment from canines in relation to the Dee Estuary. It states: <i>Impacts are usually seen at the edge of paths close to the main arrival points to a site where deposition is concentrated (car parks particularly) [7].</i> These areas are distance from the location of ponds containing natterjack toads. It goes on to state; <i>Beyond these locations nutrients are more widely dispersed and unlikely to have a significant impact.</i> This could lead to a reduction in the population size.	No effect	Not required

⁵ <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/species/S1395/>

		It is also spatially distance from the Site at 22km.		
	Recreational disturbance Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR	The Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR is located approximately 11.9km from the Site, therefore there is a risk of likely significant effect from recreational disturbance.	Risk of Likely Significant Effect	Not required

In-combination

- 4.6 A key requirement of the Habitats Directive is to assess whether the proposal is likely to have a significant impact when considered alongside other plans and projects. The main focus is on ensuring that cumulative effects are taken into account.
- 4.7 A risk of likely significant effects may arise from (1) an increase in recreational disturbance and (2) through loss of and/or disturbance to functionally linked land. These effects have been identified alone, and possibly in-combination with other plans and/or projects.

Screening Conclusions

- 4.8 The screening assessment identified no likely significant effects from the following impact pathways:
- Direct habitat loss for any qualifying features
 - Disturbance from construction on SPA/RAMSAR habitats
 - Pollution (light, air and noise)
 - Invasive non-native species
 - Recreational disturbance of sea and river lamprey, petalwort, great crested newts and the population of natterjack toads on the Dee Estuary RAMSAR.
- 4.9 The screening assessment has identified that there could be a likely significant effects from:
- Loss of functionally linked land for waterbird assemblage and passage birds
 - Disturbance from construction on functionally linked land for waterbird assemblage and passage birds
 - Recreational disturbance on waterbird assemblage and passage birds
 - Recreational disturbance on habitats of Dee Estuary SAC and the Sefton Coast SAC
 - Recreational disturbance of natterjack toads in the Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR
- 4.10 These pathways will therefore be taken through to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

5.0 STAGE 2: (SHADOW) APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The scope of the shadow Appropriate Assessment (sAA) is to consider the effects of the project on the integrity of the designated sites in light of their conservation objectives. Unlike stage 1, mitigation measures can form part of the Appropriate Assessment, however these should be securable and expected to succeed.
- 5.2 This Appropriate Assessment has been informed by the Ecology and Biodiversity chapter of the ES, which was informed by wintering bird surveys, as summarised below.

Winter Bird Surveys

- 5.3 The methodology employed was broadly based on the non-breeding survey methodology as per the bird survey guidelines⁶. A total of 17 surveys (13 diurnal and 4 nocturnal) were undertaken between September 2024 and March 2025. Surveys were conducted during suitable weather conditions.
- 5.4 During these surveys, only six species considered as qualifying features or within the waterbird assemblage of the Liverpool Bay SPA, Mersey Estuary SPA/RAMSAR, Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore RAMSAR/SPA, Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR/ SPA, Dee Estuary SPA, Martin Mere SPA/RAMSAR were recorded within the Site boundary. These are listed below along with their peak count and the number of occasions they were recorded:
- Mallard (peak count of 2/3 survey occasions); within waterbird assemblage(s)
 - Moorhen (1/1); within waterbird assemblage(s)
 - Snipe (1/1); within waterbird assemblage(s)
 - Teal (3/1); named qualifying species
 - Lapwing (6/2); within waterbird assemblage(s)
 - Heron (1/1); within waterbird assemblage(s)
- 5.5 A peak count of 7 waterbirds was recorded during survey 12, carried out on the 5th March 2025. On a precautionary basis, this peak count will be used for the assessment in relation to the assemblage qualifying features of the designated sites provided below. Information on the latest peak mean counts of birds in the designated sites was taken from the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) data⁷, unless otherwise specified.
- 5.6 Given the results in the Table below (Table 2), the Site is not considered functionally linked to any of the designated sites.

⁶ Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group (2025). Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org> [04.06.25]

⁷ Calbrade, N.A., Birtles, G.A., Woodward, I.D., Feather, A., Hiza, B.M., Caulfield, E.B., Balmer, D.E., Peck, K., Wotton, S.R., Shaw, J.M. & Frost, T.M. 2025. Waterbirds in the UK 2023/24. BTO/RSPB/JNCC/NatureScot

Table 2: Assessment of Winter Bird Results

Designated Site	Designated Features	Assessment
Liverpool Bay SPA	Waterbird assemblage – The latest peak count 2015 to 2020 was 157, 952 birds ⁸	Birds on Site represent only 0.004% of the SPA population and therefore the Site is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.
Mersey Estuary SPA and RAMSAR	Waterbird assemblage: The latest peak count from 2019/20 to 23/24 was 92406 birds	Birds on Site represent only 0.008% of the SPA and Ramsar population and therefore the Site is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.
	Teal (wintering) The latest five-year average from 2019/20 to 23/24 was 4312 birds	Peak count of 3 birds on site, which represent only 0.07% of the SPA/Ramsar population and therefore it is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.
Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore RAMSAR, SPA	Waterbird assemblage The latest peak count from 2004/05 to 2008/09 was 32, 366 ⁹ birds.	Birds on Site represent only 0.02% of the population and therefore it is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.
	Waterbird assemblage The latest peak count from 2019/18 to 23/24 was 204,080 birds.	Birds on Site represent only 0.003% of the population and therefore it is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.
	Teal (wintering) The latest five-year average from 2019/20 to 23/24 was 7009 birds	Peak count of 3 birds on site, which represent 0.04% of the population and therefore it is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.
Dee Estuary SPA and RAMSAR	Waterbird assemblage The latest peak count from 2019/20 to 23/24 was 161, 985 birds	Birds on Site represent only 0.004% of the population and therefore it is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.
	Teal (wintering) – The latest 5 year average from 2019/20 to 23/24 was 4755 birds	Peak count of 3 birds on site, which represent only 0.06% of the population and therefore it is not considered functionally linked land for this feature.

Mitigation by Design

- 5.7 The iterative design process has sought to minimise ecological effects. Use has been made of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal process, whereby ecological receptors have been taken into account throughout the design process. This iterative approach has ensured that the layout and plans have, as much as possible, been ecology-led to achieve a sympathetic scheme which avoids the occurrence of likely significant effects where possible and seeks to minimise effects, where avoidance is not possible.
- 5.8 Mitigation relevant to this documents focuses on the provision of greenspace. Approximately 40% of the Site will comprise greenspace post-construction, including a network of footpaths and 4.1ha of open space which will provide alternative recreational opportunities within the

⁸ HiDef Aerial Surveying Limited 2022. In Preparation. Densities of qualifying species within Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA: 2015 to 2020. Natural England Commissioned Report, Natural England. Available at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/>

⁹ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5360161602404352>

Site to minimise the potential for significant adverse effects on designated sites and sensitive habitats arising from recreational pressure.

Additional Mitigation

- 5.9 The requirement for additional mitigation measures above the intrinsic mitigation has been considered for each of the IEFs where they can reduce the scale of negative effects or where they can result in a positive effect.
- 5.10 During the operational phase, in order to address the potential risk of an increased recreational pressure on the above Sites and to comply with MEAS' pre-application guidance, it is recommended that a copy of MEAS' informative leaflet "Respecting Nature in Knowsley" is distributed in the sale pack of the properties. The leaflet:
- Sets out the value, importance and sensitivity of the European protected sites;
 - Identifies the potentially damaging operations;
 - includes measures residents should take to minimise or prevent impacts i.e. advising the need to keep dogs on leads and keeping to the footpaths for example;
 - Identifies particularly sensitive times of year; and
 - Identifies alternative locations for recreation / dog walking, away from the sensitive areas.

Appropriate Assessment

- 5.11 The table below outlines the results of the appropriate assessment.

Liverpool Bay SPA, Mersey Estuary SPA and RAMSAR, Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore RAMSAR, SPA, Ribble and Alt estuaries RAMSAR, SPA, Dee Estuary SPA, Martin Mere SPA/RAMSAR			
Qualifying features	Impact Pathway	Appropriate Assessment - Alone	Outcome
Water bird assemblage and passage	Loss of functionally linked land	The farmland habitat on Site provides suitable habitats for qualifying birds species. However, FPCR's wintering bird surveys have shown that the Site does not constitute FLL.	No adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites.
	Disturbance from Construction on Functionally linked land	The Site does not constitute FLL and so there will be no impacts from construction on FLL.	No adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites.
	Recreational disturbance on designated sites and functionally linked land	Once operational, the development has the potential to result in disturbance of qualifying features of the designated sites from recreational activities. Dog walking and walking are the main activity undertaken by visitors to the Liverpool City Region European Sites ¹⁰ . Therefore, the focus of assessing recreational impacts on the designated sites will be on these activities.	No adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites.

¹⁰ Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, Towards a Liverpool City Region European Sites Recreation Mitigation & Avoidance Strategy –Evidence Report (Version 24) , 2021, https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/LCR_RMS_EvidenceReport_v24_Optv2.pdf

		The likely size of the population generated by the new development will be 1540 based upon 700 dwellings and an occupancy rate of 2.2¹¹. This will see a population increase of 1.00% based upon the population size of Knowsley in the 2021 census (154, 500)¹². The latest data from UK Pet Food Surveys (2024) states that 36% of UK households own dogs. This would see an increase of 252 households in Knowsley with dogs, from 25282 households with dogs in Knowsley to 25534 households. Given the distance between the designated sites and the Site, residents would likely drive to them for any recreational activities occasionally (i.e. not regularly). The designated sites most likely to be visited would be the Liverpool Bay, Ribble & Alt Estuaries or the Mersey Estuary, due to the distance and ease of access. Given that these would require a 30 minutes to 1 hour return trip car journey this is not likely to form part of their daily dog walk routine. Visitor surveys undertaken in 2021-22¹³ by Footprint Ecology at the LCR sites reported the average travel distance of visitors to the sites of just 5.3km. Therefore, it is not expected that residents from this project would visit the LCR site regularly. Embedded mitigation to minimise the effect of recreational pressures will be achieved as part of the design of the Proposed Development. The provision of defined open space areas and footpaths through and around the Site will provide alternative opportunities for (dog) walking. The landscape plan (DWG P21-3399_EN-1002 Rev E) shows c.3 km of defined and maintained footpaths on Site, which will provide opportunities for dog walking for residents. As recommended in the pre-app response, MEAS' informative leaflet "Respecting Nature in Knowsley" will be distributed with the sales packs. The leaflet highlights the importance and sensitivities of the coastal sites and what residents can do to protect them. The designated sites cover a vast area of 33,850 ha (discounting Liverpool Bay due to its marine status and overlap with other sites), the majority of which is not accessible to the public, such as operational area of the Port of Liverpool, Halton's coast, Sefton dunes system around the NNR, Hesketh marshes and Marshside, and the southern	
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11 English Housing Survey 2023 to 2024 available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/chapters-for-english-housing-survey-2023-to-2024-headline-findings-on-demographics-and-household-resilience/chapter-1-profile-of-households-and-dwellings>

12 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E08000011/>

13 Footprint ecology, 2023, Liverpool City Region and West Lancashire Visitor Surveys 2021-2022, <https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/LCR-and-West-Lancs-visitor-survey-report-final-v3-Report-Body.pdf>

		Mersey shoreline ¹⁴ . As such, given the above, it is not considered that the proposals will lead to appreciable levels of disturbance on the designated sites, following mitigation.	
	Recreational disturbance on functionally linked land	The Site does not constitute FLL and so there will be no impacts from recreational disturbance on FLL.	No adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites.
Dee Estuary SAC & RAMSAR, Sefton Coast SAC and Ribble and Alt Estuaries RAMSAR			
Habitats of the Dee Estuary SAC and the Sefton Coast SAC	Recreational disturbance of designated Sites	See section above on recreational disturbance of designated sites.	No adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites.
Natterjack Toads	Recreational disturbance Ribble and Alt estuaries RAMSAR	See section above on recreational disturbance of designated sites.	No adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites.

Integrity Test Conclusion

Effect of the Proposals Alone

- 5.12 Given the above, it is considered that the proposals would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any of the Liverpool City Region European Sites.

Effect of the Proposals In-Combination

- 5.13 As there is no adverse effect on the integrity of any of the Liverpool City Region European Sites alone, an in-combination assessment is not required.

¹⁴ Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, Towards a Liverpool City Region European Sites Recreation Mitigation & Avoidance Strategy –Evidence Report (Version 24) , 2021, https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/LCR_RMS_EvidenceReport_v24_Optv2.pdf

APPENDIX A KEY CASE LAW IN RELATION TO TEST OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

The following are some relevant case law judgement quotes in relation to “likely Significant Effect” which are of relevance for a Stage 1 screening.

EC Case C-127/02 - Waddenvereniging and Vogelsbeschermingvereniging – the “Waddenzee Judgement” (paras 45, 47 and 48)

“...any plan or project ... is to be subject to an appropriate assessment ... if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.”

“Where plan or project has an effect on that site but is not likely to undermine its conservation objectives, it cannot be considered likely to have a significant effect on that site.”

“In assessing the potential effects of a plan or project, the significance must be established in the light, inter alia, of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned by that plan or project”

Boggis v Natural England [2009] EWCA Civ 1061 20th October 2009 (para 36 and 37)

“Notwithstanding the word “likely” ...is not that significant effects are probable, a risk is sufficient.”

“...a claimant who alleges that there was a risk which should have been considered by the authorising authority so that it could decide whether that risk could be “excluded on the basis of objective information”, must produce credible evidence that there was a real, rather than a hypothetical, risk which should have been considered.”

R (on application of An Taisce) v SoS [2014] EWCA Civ 1111 1st August 2014 (paras 38 and 39)

“The word “likely” ...implies at least some degree of flexibility. There comes a point when the probability...of a significant effect is so remote that it ceases to be “likely”, however broad the concept of likelihood.”

“The competent authority does not have to be satisfied that there is no risk, however remote...”

Ec Case C-258-11 Reference for a preliminary Ruling, Opinion of Advocate General Sharpston ‘Sweetman’ (Para 48)

“The requirement that the effect in question be “significant” lays down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on the site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by article 6(1), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill.”

Bagmoor Wind Ltd v Scottish Ministers [2012] CSIH 93 7th December 2012 (para 45)

“The requirement for objective information at the preliminary examination is not to be equated with a need for scientific knowledge. The Court only refers to “the best scientific knowledge” in the context of the appropriate assessment (para [61]). “Objective”, in this context, means information based on clear verifiable fact rather than subjective opinion.”

R (Hart District Council) v Secretary of State for the Communities and Local Government [2008] EWHC 1204 (Para 55 and 76)

"If the competent authority does not agree with the proponents' view as to the likely efficacy of the proposed mitigation measures, or is left in some doubt as to the efficacy, then it will require an appropriate assessment because it will not have been able to exclude the risk of a significant effect on the basis of objective information ..."

"The competent authority is not considering the likely effect of some hypothetical project in the abstract. The exercise is a practical one which requires the competent authority to consider the likely effect of the particular project for which permission is being sought. If certain features ...have been incorporated into that project, there is no sensible reason why those features should be ignored at the initial, screening, stage merely because they have been incorporated into the project in order to avoid, or mitigate, any likely effect...."

Note of Functional Linkage

"Functional linkage" is a term that refers to the potential for habitat away from the designation boundaries of a site on the national network, that is considered to have a "role" or "function" for a qualifying feature "beyond the boundary". This is covered in the Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC 2007. Paragraph 7 states:

"Assessing and evaluating the conservation status of habitats and species within the Natura 2000 network is therefore not always enough, especially when the occurrences of habitats or species are only partly covered by the network, maybe even in some cases only to a relatively small extent."

A case law example of where the concept of Functionally Linked Land (FLL) has been applied was RSPB and others v SoS and London Ashford Airport Ltd [2014] EWHC 1523 16th May 2014 (paras 27):

"There is no authority on the significance of the non-statutory status of the FLL. However, the fact that the FLL was not within a protected site does not mean that the effect which a deterioration in its quality or function could have on a protected site is to be ignored. The indirect effect was still protected. Although the question of its legal status was mooted, I am satisfied, as was the case at the Inquiry, that while no particular legal status attaches to FLL, the fact that land is functionally linked to protected land means that the indirectly adverse effects on a protected site, produced by effects on FLL, are scrutinised in the same legal framework just as are the direct effects of acts carried out on the protected site itself. That is the only sensible and purposive approach where a species or effect is not confined by a line on a map or boundary fence. This is particularly important where the boundaries of designated sites are drawn tightly as may be the UK practice."

Note on the Sweetman ruling "People over Wind" and definition of "mitigation"

The *People Over Wind* judgement (Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)), in April 2018, changed the way mitigation is viewed during the HRA Stage One screening i.e. the Test of Likely Significant Effect. The ruling was based on the view that allowing mitigation measures to be considered at the screening stage allows projects to avoid an Appropriate Assessment (Stage Two), when is meant to be fuller and more detailed analysis of any proposed mitigation measure and whether or not there would be an effect on the integrity of the European site. The ruling stated:

"Taking account of such measures at the screening stage would be liable to compromise the practical effect of the Habitats Directive in general, and the assessment stage in particular, as the latter stage would be deprived of its purpose and there would be a risk of circumvention of that stage, which constitutes, however, an essential safeguard provided for by the directive." (paragraph 37 of the judgment)"

This has made what constitutes "mitigation" in relation to the European site and what would be considered integral to the scheme. The PINNS Notes 05/2018 *Consideration of avoidance and reduction measures in Habitats Regulations Assessment: People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* provides some clarification as follows:

"The implication of the CJEU judgment is that competent authorities cannot take account of any integrated or additional avoidance or reduction measures when considering at the HRA screening stage whether the plan or project is likely to have an adverse effect on a European Site.

The screening stage must be undertaken on a precautionary basis without regard to any proposed integrated or additional avoidance or reduction measures. Where the likelihood of significant effects cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information the competent authority must proceed to carry out an AA to establish whether the plan or project will affect the integrity of the European site, which can include at that stage consideration of the effectiveness of the proposed avoidance or reduction measures."

PINS Notes 05/2018 It does on to further explain:

"It should be noted that there is no authoritative definition of what constitutes an integrated or additional avoidance or reduction measure and this should be considered on a case by case basis. If a measure is being introduced to avoid or reduce an effect on a European site then it can be viewed as mitigation. It may be helpful to consider whether a proposal could be considered integral to a plan or whether it is a measure to avoid harm. For instance, the HRA report could identify European sites whose designated features are vulnerable to disturbance caused by people visiting the site. If evidence presented in the HRA report and during the examination demonstrates that the housing allocation is too far from the European site to lead to increased visitor numbers then it could be concluded that there is no pathway for likely significant effects to occur. However if the HRA report determines that the housing allocation would be likely to increase visitor use of the European site and relies on measures which reduce visitor pressure (such as securing land to provide a buffer to the European site or ensuring footpaths and car parks are located away from the site) to avoid or reduce likely significant effects an AA will be required to assess whether the plan will affect the integrity of the European site."

The interpretation of the above being taken by legal professionals appears to be that if it can be argued that mitigation, whether integrated or additional, is an "avoidance or reduction" measure directly due to an ecological pathway to a site on the national network, then an Appropriate Assessment is required. If it is truly integrated into the proposals for other reasons, for example green space due to an unrelated protected species mitigation licence, as was the case with UK High Court ruling in August 2018 (*R (on the application of Langton) v Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Natural England* [2018] EWHC 2190 Admin) in relation to migration within a badger cull licence, then the mitigation is fully integrated and would not automatically trigger the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment.

APPENDIX B**Details of designated sites.**

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Liverpool Bay SPA (10.7km from the Site)		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
Species referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC: • A001 Red-throated diver <i>Gavia stellata</i> (non-breeding) • A177 Little gull <i>Larus minutus</i> (non-breeding) • A065 Common scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i> (non-breeding) • A195 Little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> (breeding) • A193 Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> (breeding) Other important species of flora and fauna: waterbird assemblage¹⁵	The conservation objectives for the Liverpool Bay SPA are listed in the Liverpool Bay SPA Conservation Advice Package¹⁶ are divided into attributes and targets for each interest features However, the overarching objective is to: • Subject to natural change, maintain or restore the interest feature, distribution and its supporting habitats in favourable condition.	The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan¹⁷ are: • Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine (pressure) • Transportation and service corridors (threat) • Fisheries: Recreational marine and estuarine (threat) • Extraction: non-living resources (threat) • Siltation (threat) • Water Pollution (threat) • Threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the site on the Standard Data Sheet comprise: • H01 Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) (inside and outside the SPA) • G01 Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (both) • I01 Invasive non-native species (both) • J02 Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions (both) • C01 Mining and quarrying (both) • C02 Exploration and extraction of oil or gas (both) • D03 Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions (both) • D04 Airports, flightpaths (outside) • D02 Utility and service lines (both) • H03 Marine water pollution (both) • D01 Roads, paths and railroads (both) • F02 Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources (inside) • C03 Renewable abiotic energy use (inside)

¹⁵ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/3233956>¹⁶ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4591112403812352>¹⁷ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5321001921413120>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Mersey Estuary SPA & RAMSAR (10.7km)

Under pinned by the Mersey Estuary SSSI (11 active features, 8 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR, condition status not recoded) and New Ferry SSSI (3 active features monitored, two of which are SPA/RAMSAR designated features, non-breeding black tailed godwit whos condition status was not recorded, and non-breeding pintail is unfavourable recovering)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
SPA¹⁸ The SPA qualifies under article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season: • A140 Golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> (3,040 individuals – wintering 5 year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98) The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season: • A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> (3.5% passage, 3.8% wintering) • A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> (2.2% wintering) • A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> (2.9% wintering) • A054 Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> (1.9% wintering) • A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> (3.7% wintering) • A156 Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> (2.8% wintering) • Waterbird assemblage Non-qualifying species of interest include (non-breeding) • Bewick's swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, • Whooper swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, • Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>, • Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>, • Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>, • Bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> • Short-eared owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	SPA²⁰ 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. The vision of the RAMSAR Convention is is; <i>To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their</i>	SPA The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan²² are: • Changes in species distributions (pressure) • Invasive species (pressure/ threat) • Public Access/Disturbance (pressure) Threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the site identified on the standard data sheet are²³: • G01 Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (inside) • M01 Changes in biotic conditions (both) • I01 Invasive non-native species (both) RAMSAR²⁴ No factors adversely affecting the RAMSAR were recorded on the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands²⁵.

¹⁸ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6485318211469312>

²⁰ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5759726675820544>

²² <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6470778514046976>

²³ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9005131.pdf>

²⁴ <https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB785RIS.pdf>

²⁵ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11041.pdf>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Mersey Estuary SPA & RAMSAR (10.7km)

Under pinned by the Mersey Estuary SSSI (11 active features, 8 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR, condition status not recoded) and New Ferry SSSI (3 active features monitored, two of which are SPA/RAMSAR designated features, non-breeding black tailed godwit whos condition status was not recorded, and non-breeding pintail is unfavourable recovering)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
All Annex I species occur in non-breeding numbers of less than European importance (less than 1% of the GB population). <u>RAMSAR</u>¹⁹ Ramsar criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance of 20000 or more - wintering waterfowl (89576, 5 year mean peak 1998-2002/03) Ramsar criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance during wintering (5 year mean peak 1998/9/20002/3):: - Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> (10613) - Northern pintail <i>A. acuta</i> (565) - Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> (48364) Ramsar criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance during spring (5 year mean peak 1998/9/20002/3): - Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> (12676) - Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> (2011) - Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> (6651) Noteworthy fauna in spring and autumn includes (5 year mean peak 1998/9/20002/3): - Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> (429) - Eurasian curlew, <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i> (2010) - Spotted redshank, <i>Tringa erythropus</i> (3) - Common greenshank, <i>Tringa nebularia</i> (6) Species with peak counts in winter: - Wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i> (8268)	<i>ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services</i>²¹ The RAMSAR Strategic Framework sets out five objectives to achieve this; - To establish national networks of Ramsar Sites in each Contracting Party which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions - To contribute to maintaining global biological diversity through the designation and management of appropriate wetland sites - To foster cooperation among Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local stakeholders in the selection, designation, and management of Ramsar Sites - To use the Ramsar Site network as a tool to promote national, supranational/regional, and international cooperation in relation to complementary environment treaties - To use of national Ramsar Site networks to provide essential ecosystem services/benefits,	

¹⁹ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11041.pdf>

²¹ Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) 2018 update available at [xi.8_annex2_framework_for_new_rsis_e_revcp13.pdf](#)

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected**Mersey Estuary SPA & RAMSAR (10.7km)**

Under pinned by the Mersey Estuary SSSI (11 active features, 8 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR, condition status not recoded) and New Ferry SSSI (3 active features monitored, two of which are SPA/RAMSAR designated features, non-breeding black tailed godwit whos condition status was not recorded, and non-breeding pintail is unfavourable recovering)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
	especially related to water, that contribute to human health, livelihoods and well-being	

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore RAMSAR & SPA (11.2km)

Underpinned by Mersey Narrows SSSI (6 active features, 1 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR condition status not recorded). North Wirral Foreshore SSSI (6 active features 3 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR, non-breeding dunlin and knot in favourable condition and bar-tailed godwit in unfavourable declining condition)

The site is also part of the Dee Estuary SAC

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
<u>SPA²⁶</u> The SPA qualifies under article 4.1 of the Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season: • A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> (6.6% non-breeding) • A193 Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> (1.8% Breeding, No national population estimate non breeding) • Little Gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i> (No national population Estimate, non-breeding) The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season: • Knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> (2.4% non breeding) • Waterbird assemblage <u>RAMSAR²⁷</u> Ramsar criterion 4	<u>SPA²⁸</u> 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. The above objectives are achieved through targets set out in the supplementary advice on the conservation objectives.	<u>SPA</u> The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan include³⁰ • Public Access/Disturbance (pressure/threat) • Changes in species distributions (pressure) • Invasive species (pressure/threat) • Climate change (pressure/threat) • Coastal squeeze (pressure/threat) • Inappropriate scrub control (pressure) • Water pollution (pressure/threat) • Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine (pressure/threat) • Inappropriate coastal management (pressure/ threat) • Overgrazing (pressure/ threat) • Direct impact from third party (threat) • Marine litter (pressure/threat) • Predation (threat) • Planning Permission: general (threat) • Marine consents and permits (threat) • Wildfire/ arson (threat) • Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (pressure)

²⁶ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5360161602404352>

²⁷ <https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB2202RIS.pdf>

²⁸ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ConservationAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UK9020287&SiteName=Mersey%20Narrows%20and%20North%20Wirral%20Foreshore%20&SiteNameDisplay=Mersey%20Narrows%20and%20North%20Wirral%20Foreshore%20SPA&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&HasCA=1&NumMarineSeasonality=5&SiteNameDisplay=Mersey%20Narrows%20and%20North%20Wirral%20Foreshore%20SPA#hlco>

³⁰ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5140799320752128>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore RAMSAR & SPA (11.2km)

Underpinned by Mersey Narrows SSSI (6 active features, 1 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR condition status not recorded). North Wirral Foreshore SSSI (6 active features 3 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR, non-breeding dunlin and knot in favourable condition and bar-tailed godwit in unfavourable declining condition)

The site is also part of the Dee Estuary SAC

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
- important numbers of non-breeding little gulls and common terns. Ramsar criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance of 20000 or more - Wintering waterbirds (32,402 five year mean peak 2004/5-2008/9) Ramsar criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance during winter. - knot and 2.4% - bar-tailed godwits 2.8% The Ramsar also supports nationally important non-breeding numbers of: - Knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> - Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> - Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> - Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> - Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> - Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> - Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	The vision of the RAMSAR Convention is is; <i>To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services</i>²⁹ The RAMSAR Strategic Framework sets out five objectives to achieve this; - To establish national networks of Ramsar Sites in each Contracting Party which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions - To contribute to maintaining global biological diversity through the designation and management of appropriate wetland sites - To foster cooperation among Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local stakeholders in the selection, designation, and management of Ramsar Sites	- Transportation and service corridors (threat) - Physical modification (pressure/threat) Threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the site identified on the standard data sheet are³¹, - G01 Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (inside) - M01 Changes in biotic conditions (both) - I01 Invasive non-native species (both) - M02 Changes in biotic conditions (both) <u>RAMSAR</u>³² Factors adversely affecting the RAMSAR were recorded on the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands³³ and comprise: - Unspecific development urban use (both) - Recreation/ tourism disturbance (both) - Vegetation succession (inside)

²⁹ Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) 2018 update available at [xi.8_annex2_framework_for_new_rsis_e_revcp13.pdf](#)

³¹ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9020287.pdf>

³² <https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB2202RIS.pdf>

³³ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11041.pdf>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected**Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore RAMSAR & SPA (11.2km)**

Underpinned by Mersey Narrows SSSI (6 active features, 1 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR condition status not recorded). North Wirral Foreshore SSSI (6 active features 3 relating to the SPA/RAMSAR, non-breeding dunlin and knot in favourable condition and bar-tailed godwit in unfavourable declining condition)

The site is also part of the Dee Estuary SAC

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
	- To use the Ramsar Site network as a tool to promote national, supranational/regional, and international cooperation in relation to complementary environment treaties - To use of national Ramsar Site networks to provide essential ecosystem services/benefits, especially related to water, that contribute to human health, livelihoods and well-being	

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Ribble and Alt estuaries RAMSAR & SPA (11.6 km)		
Underpinned by the Ribble Estuary SSSI (25 active features 21 relate to the SPA/Ramsar, 8 are in favourable condition and the condition assessment of the rest are not recorded)		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
<u>SPA³⁴</u> The site qualifies under article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season: • A151 Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> 9.1% (breeding) • A193 Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> 1.5% (breeding) • A037 Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> 3.9% (wintering) • A038 Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> 3.3% (wintering) • A140 Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> 1.4% (wintering) • A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> 37.9% (wintering) The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season: • A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i> 1.5% (breeding) • A137 Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> 3.3% (passage) • A144 Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> 6.5% (passage) • A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> 2.2% (passage) • A040 Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> 5.2% (wintering) • A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> 1.6% (wintering) • A050 Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> 6.8% (wintering) • A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> 1.8% (wintering) • A054 Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> 4.6% (wintering) • A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> 2.1% (wintering) • A141 Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> 6.2% (wintering)	<u>SPA³⁶</u> 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. The above objectives are achieved through targets set out in the supplementary advice on the conservation objectives³⁷. The vision of the RAMSAR Convention is is; <i>To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of</i>	<u>SPA³⁹</u> The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan comprise; • Coastal squeeze (threat) • Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (threat) • Inappropriate scrub control (pressure/threat) • Invasive species (threat) • Hydrological changes (threat) • Public Access/Disturbance (threat) • Inappropriate coastal management (pressure/threat) • Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine (pressure) • Change to site conditions (pressure) • Inappropriate coastal management (pressure) • Shooting/ scaring (pressure) • Invasive species (pressure/threat) • Feature location/ extent/condition unknown (pressure) Threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the site identified on the standard data sheet are⁴⁰: • H04 Air pollution, air-borne pollutants • I01 Invasive non-native species • K02 Biocenotic evolution, succession • J02 Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions • M01 Changes in abiotic conditions

³⁴ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4937627014791168>

³⁶ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5617578676584448>

³⁷ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ConservationAdvice/SupplementaryAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UK9005103&SiteName=&SiteNameDisplay=Ribble+and+Alt+Estuaries+SPA&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAAarea=&NumMarineSeasonality=20>

³⁹ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6387486347493376>

⁴⁰ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9005103.pdf>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Ribble and Alt estuaries RAMSAR & SPA (11.6 km)		
Underpinned by the Ribble Estuary SSSI (25 active features 21 relate to the SPA/Ramsar, 8 are in favourable condition and the condition assessment of the rest are not recorded)		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
- A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> 19.7% (wintering) - A144 Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> 2.9% (wintering) - A672 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> 2.8% (wintering) - A616 Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> 1.8% (breeding) - A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> 1.7% (wintering) The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by over 20,000 waterbirds (waterbirds as defined by the Ramsar Convention) in any season. The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by over 20,000 seabirds in any season. Non-qualifying species of interest: The following Annex 1 species occur in non-breeding numbers of less than European importance (less than 1% of the Great Britain population): - Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> - Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> - Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i> - Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> <u>RAMSAR</u>³⁵ Ramsar criterion 2 - This site supports up to 40% of the Great Britain population of natterjack toads <i>Bufo calamita</i>. - Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Conservation status: European Red List: Vulnerable; EC Habitats Directive: Annex II)	<i>their ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services</i>³⁸ The RAMSAR Strategic Framework sets out five objectives to achieve this; - To establish national networks of Ramsar Sites in each Contracting Party which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions - To contribute to maintaining global biological diversity through the designation and management of appropriate wetland sites - To foster cooperation among Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local stakeholders in the selection, designation, and management of Ramsar Sites - To use the Ramsar Site network as a tool to promote national, supranational/regional, and international cooperation in relation to complementary environment treaties - To use of national Ramsar Site networks to provide essential ecosystem services/benefits, especially related to water, that	<u>RAMSAR</u>⁴¹ Factors adversely affecting the RAMSAR were recorded on the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands and comprise: erosion

³⁵ <https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB325RIS.pdf>

³⁸ Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) 2018 update available at [xi.8_annex2_framework_for_new_rsis_e_revcomp13.pdf](#)

⁴¹ <https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB325RIS.pdf>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Ribble and Alt estuaries RAMSAR & SPA (11.6 km)

Underpinned by the Ribble Estuary SSSI (25 active features 21 relate to the SPA/Ramsar, 8 are in favourable condition and the condition assessment of the rest are not recorded)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
Ramsar criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance: - Species with peak counts in winter: 222,038 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 regularly supported during the breeding season: Species with peak counts in spring/autumn (5 year mean peak 1198/9-2002/3): - Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> (3323) - Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> (4465) - Dunlin, <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> (38,196) - Grey plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> (11,021) - Red knot, <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> (42,692) - Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> (3716) - Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i> (7401) Species with peak counts in winter: - Bar-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i> (13,935) - Eurasian oystercatcher, <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> (18,926) - Eurasian teal, <i>Anas crecca</i> (5107) - Eurasian wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i> (68, 841) - Northern pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i> (1,497) - Pink-footed goose, <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> (6,552) - Tundra swan, <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> (230) - Whooper swan, <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> (211) Noteworthy fauna Species currently occurring at levels of national importance: Species regularly supported during the breeding season: - Black-headed gull, <i>Larus ridibundus</i> (14888 in seabird census of 2000)	contribute to human health, livelihoods and well-being	

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Dee Estuary SAC (12.1 km)		
Underpinned by the Dee Estuary SSSI (25 active feature, habitat features in favourable condition, condition of all other features was not recorded) North Wirral Foreshore SSSI (6 active features, Habitat features in favourable condition, other features do not relate to the SAC)		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: • 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site • 1130 Estuaries • 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines • 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts • 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes • 2120 "Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes")" • 2130 "Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes") * Priority feature • 2190 Humid dune slacks Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:	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 restoring⁴²: • 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. The Dee Estuary EMS Regulation 33 Conservation advice package⁴³ identifies conservation objectives in	The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan include⁴⁴: • Public Access/Disturbance (pressure/threat) • Changes in species distributions (pressure) • Invasive species (pressure/threat) • Climate change (pressure/threat) • Coastal squeeze (pressure/threat) • Inappropriate scrub control (pressure) • Water pollution (pressure/threat) • Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine (pressure/threat) • Inappropriate coastal management (pressure/ threat) • Overgrazing (pressure/ threat) • Direct impact from third party (threat) • Marine litter (pressure/threat) • Predation (threat) • Planning Permission: general (threat) • Marine consents and permits (threat) • Wildfire/ arson (threat) • Air Pollution: nitrogen deposition (pressure) • Transportation and service corridors (threat) • Physical modification (pressure/threat) Threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the site identified on the standard data sheet are⁴⁵:

⁴² <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5834949009866752>

⁴³ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/3947690>

⁴⁴ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5140799320752128>

⁴⁵ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030131.pdf>

• 1095 Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> • 1099 River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> • 1395 Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>	order to maintain the interest features in favourable condition.	• G01 Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (inside) • M01 Changes in biotic conditions (both) • I01 Invasive non-native species (both) • M02 Changes in biotic conditions (both)
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European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Dee Estuary SPA and RAMSAR (22 km SW)

Underpinned by the Dee Estuary SSSI (25 active features 18 related to the SPA, condition status not recorded) and Inner Marsh Farm SSSI (3 active features all related to the SPA, all in favourable condition)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
<u>SPA</u> The SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season⁴⁶: • A157 Bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> 2.2% (wintering) • A193 Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> 2.3% (breeding) • Little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> 2.9% (breeding) • A191 Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>; (autumn passage) The SPA qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season: • A162 Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> 5.9% (passage) • A048 Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> 2.6% (wintering) • A052 Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> 1.3% (wintering) • A054 Northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> 9.0% (wintering) • A130 Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> 2.5% (wintering) • A141 Grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> 1.1% (wintering)	<u>SPA</u> 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 restoring⁴⁸: • 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. The Dee Estuary EMS Regulation Conservation advice package⁴⁹ identifies conservation	<u>SPA</u> The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan include⁵¹: • Public Access/Disturbance (pressure/threat) • Changes in species distributions (pressure) • Invasive species (pressure/threat) • Climate change (pressure/threat) • Coastal squeeze (pressure/threat) • Inappropriate scrub control (pressure) • Water pollution (pressure/threat) • Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine (pressure/threat) • Inappropriate coastal management (pressure/ threat) • Overgrazing (pressure/ threat)

⁴⁶ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6220652663013376>

⁴⁸ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5008539580104704>

⁴⁹ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/3947690>

⁵¹ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5140799320752128>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Dee Estuary SPA and RAMSAR (22 km SW)

Underpinned by the Dee Estuary SSSI (25 active features 18 related to the SPA, condition status not recorded) and Inner Marsh Farm SSSI (3 active features all related to the SPA, all in favourable condition)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
- A143 Red knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> 3.5% (wintering) - A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> 2.0% (wintering) - A156 Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> 2.5% (wintering) - A160 Eurasian curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> 3.5% (wintering) The SPA qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by over 20,000 waterbirds (waterbirds as defined by the Ramsar Convention) in any season. Non-qualifying species of interest: - Leach's Petrel <i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>, - Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i> - Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> - Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> - Smew <i>Mergellus albellus</i> - Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> - Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> - Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i> - Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> - Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> - Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i> - Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> - Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i> <u>RAMSAR</u>⁴⁷ Ramsar criterion 1:	objectives in order to maintain the interest features in favourable condition. The vision of the RAMSAR Convention is is; <i>To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services</i>⁵⁰ The RAMSAR Strategic Framework sets out five objectives to achieve this; - To establish national networks of Ramsar Sites in each Contracting Party which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions - To contribute to maintaining global biological diversity through the designation and management of appropriate wetland sites - To foster cooperation among Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local stakeholders in the selection, designation, and management of Ramsar Sites - To use the Ramsar Site network as a tool to promote national, supranational/regional, and international cooperation in relation to complementary environment treaties	- Direct impact from third party (threat) - Marine litter (pressure/threat) - Predation (threat) - Planning Permission: general (threat) - Marine consents and permits (threat) - Wildfire/ arson (threat) - Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (pressure) - Transportation and service corridors (threat) - Physical modification (pressure/threat) Threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the site identified on the standard data sheet are⁵²: - G01 Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (inside) - M01 Changes in biotic conditions (both) - I01 Invasive non-native species (both)

⁴⁷ <https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB298RIS.pdf>

⁵⁰ Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) 2018 update available at [xi.8_annex2_framework_for_new_rsis_e_revcp13.pdf](#)

⁵² <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030131.pdf>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Dee Estuary SPA and RAMSAR (22 km SW)		
Underpinned by the Dee Estuary SSSI (25 active features 18 related to the SPA, condition status not recorded) and Inner Marsh Farm SSSI (3 active features all related to the SPA, all in favourable condition)		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
Extensive intertidal mud and sand flats (20 km by 9 km) with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary. Habitats Directive Annex I features present on the pSAC include: • H1130 Estuaries • H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines • H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • H1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand • H1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • H2110 Embryonic shifting dunes • H2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes") • H2130 Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes") • H2190 Humid dune slacks Ramsar criterion 2: • supports breeding colonies of the vulnerable natterjack toad <i>Epidalea calamita</i>. Ramsar criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance: Non-breeding season regularly supports 120,726 individual waterbirds (5 year peak mean 1994/5 – 1998/9). Ramsar criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: Species with peak counts in spring: • Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> Species with peak counts in winter: • Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> • Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	To use of national Ramsar Site networks to provide essential ecosystem services/benefits, especially related to water, that contribute to human health, livelihoods and well-being	• M02 Changes in biotic conditions (both)

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Dee Estuary SPA and RAMSAR (22 km SW)

Underpinned by the Dee Estuary SSSI (25 active features 18 related to the SPA, condition status not recorded) and Inner Marsh Farm SSSI (3 active features all related to the SPA, all in favourable condition)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
• Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> • Northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> • Grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • Red knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> • Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> • Bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i> • Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> • Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> Nationally important species present on site include; Higher plants • Limonium britannicum subspecies celticum (endemic) • Euphorbia portlandica • Vulpia membranacea • Centaureum littorale • Equisetum variegatum • Bupleurum tenuissimum • Marrubium vulgare Lower plants • Petalophyllum ralfsii Other species (invasive and/or non-native species) • Spartina anglica (invasive non-native species) • Hippophae rhamnoides • Rosa rugosa • Clematis vitalba Bird species with peak counts in summer • Little tern, <i>Sterna albifrons</i> • Common tern, <i>Sterna hirundo</i> • Sandwich tern, <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> • Redshank, <i>Tringa totanus</i> Bird species with peak counts in spring/autumn • Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected

Dee Estuary SPA and RAMSAR (22 km SW)

Underpinned by the Dee Estuary SSSI (25 active features 18 related to the SPA, condition status not recorded) and Inner Marsh Farm SSSI (3 active features all related to the SPA, all in favourable condition)

Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
Bird species with peak counts in winter • Wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i> • Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i> • Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i> • Great Crested Grebe, <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> Birds Directive Annex 1 species which occur in less than 1% of the GB population include • Leach's petrel <i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i> • Little egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i> • Bewick's swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> • Whooper swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> • Smew <i>Mergellus albellus</i> • Hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> • Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> • Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i> • Golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> • Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> • Wood sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i> • Short-eared owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> • Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i> Other faunal information 1. Invertebrates including- (a) terrestrial- the following Red Data Book species occur • sandhill rustic moth <i>Luperina nickerlii gueneei</i> • sand wasp, <i>Podalonia affinis</i> • mining bee, <i>Colletes cunicularis</i> (b) marine • thumbnail crab, <i>Thia scutellata</i> • honeycomb worm <i>Sabellaria alveolata</i> • white piddocks <i>Barnea candida</i> 2. Fish • River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> • Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Habitats Directive Annex I species) 3. Mammals		

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Dee Estuary SPA and RAMSAR (22 km SW) Underpinned by the Dee Estuary SSSI (25 active features 18 related to the SPA, condition status not recorded) and Inner Marsh Farm SSSI (3 active features all related to the SPA, all in favourable condition)		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
- Grey seal <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Habitats Directive Annex II, Annex IV species (S1364)) 4. Reptiles including - sand lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i> (Habitats Directive Annex IV species) Other species (invasive and/or non-native species) - Mitten crab <i>Eriocheir sinensis</i>		

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Sefton Coast SAC (12.3 km) Underpinned by the Sefton Coast (21 features – only 1 feature is in favourable condition, 1 is unfavourable recovering, 2 are unfavourable no chance, 2 are unfavourable declining and 15 have not been recorded).		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
The qualifying features of the Sefton Coast SAC are: - Embryonic shifting dunes - Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes') - Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes') - Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) - Humid dune slacks Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection: - Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection: 1395 Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection 1166 Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	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 restoring⁵³: - 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. - The above objectives are achieved through targets set out in the supplementary advice on the conservation objectives⁵⁴.	The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan include⁵⁵: - Coastal squeeze (threat) - Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (threat) - Inappropriate scrub control (pressure/threat) - Invasive species (threat) - Hydrological changes (threat) - Public Access/Disturbance (threat) - Inappropriate coastal management (pressure/threat) - Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine (pressure) - Change to site conditions (pressure) - Inappropriate coastal management (pressure) - Shooting/ scaring (pressure) - Invasive species (pressure/threat) - Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown (pressure)

⁵³ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5246658212528128>

⁵⁴ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0013076.pdf>
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ConservationAdvice/SupplementaryAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UK9005103&SiteName=&SiteNameDisplay=Ribble+and+Alt+Estuaries+SPA&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=20>

⁵⁵ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6387486347493376>

European/Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected		
Martin Mere SPA & RAMSAR (18.8km N)		
Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives	Threats and Pressures
<u>SPA</u>⁵⁶ Species referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC: • A037 <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>; Bewick's/Tundra swan (Non-breeding) • A038 <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>; Whooper swan (Non-breeding) • A040 <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding) • A052 <i>Anas crecca</i>; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding) • A054 <i>Anas acuta</i>; Northern pintail (Non-breeding) • Waterbird assemblage <u>RAMSAR</u>⁵⁷ Ramsar criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance of 20000 or more 25306 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003) Ramsar criterion 6: species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: Species with peak counts in spring/autumn: • Pink-footed goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> 3.4% • Species with peak counts in winter • Tundra swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> 0.7% • Whooper swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> 6.3% • Eurasian wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> 0.7% • Northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> 1.4%	<u>SPA</u> 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 restoring⁵⁸; • 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. The above objectives are achieved through targets set out in the supplementary advice on the conservation objectives⁵⁹	<u>SPA</u> The threats and pressures identified within the Site Improvement Plan include⁶¹; • Hydrological changes (threat) • Invasive species (threat) • Water Pollution (threat) Threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the site identified on the standard data sheet are⁶²: • I01 Invasive non-native species • H02 Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources) • J02 Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions <u>RAMSAR</u> No factors adversely affecting the sites ecological character were identified on the Ramsar Information Sheet⁶³

⁵⁶ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9005111.pdf>

⁵⁷ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11039.pdf>

⁵⁸ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4604885249294336>

⁵⁹ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK9005111.pdf>

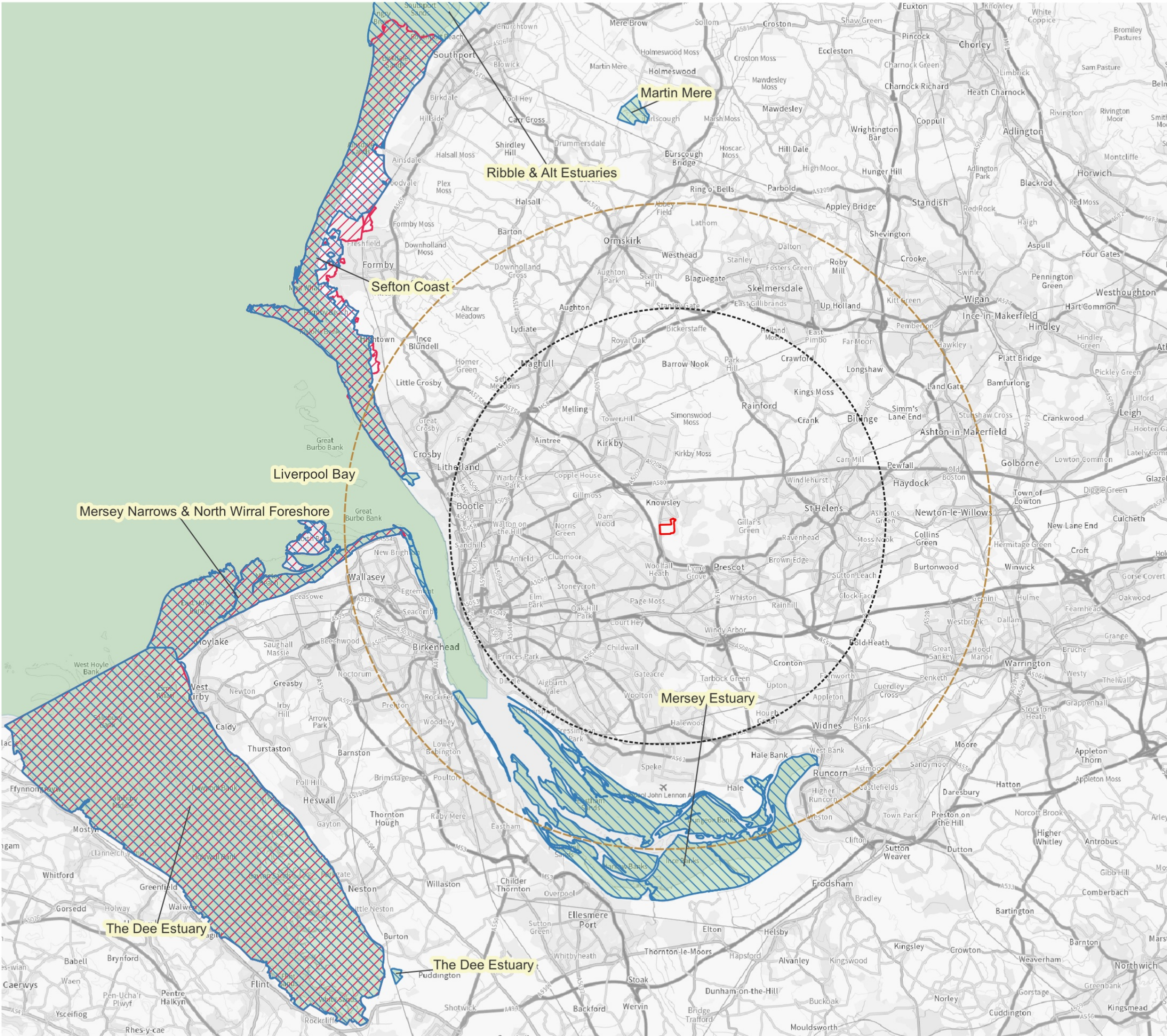
⁶¹ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6280619046731776>

⁶² <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9005111.pdf>

⁶³ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11039.pdf>

Nationally important species occurring on the site. Higher Plants. • <i>Carum verticillatum</i>, • <i>Rumex maritimus</i>, • <i>Oenanthe fisulosa</i>, • <i>Oenanthe aquatica</i>, • <i>Lemna gibba</i> Lower Plants. • <i>Leucagaricus serenus</i> Species currently occurring at levels of national importance: Species with peak counts in spring/autumn • Eurasian teal, <i>Anas crecca</i> Species with peak counts in winter • Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • Common pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i> • Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> • Spotted redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>	The vision of the RAMSAR Convention is is; <i>To develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services⁶⁰</i> The RAMSAR Strategic Framework sets out five objectives to achieve this; • To establish national networks of Ramsar Sites in each Contracting Party which fully represent the diversity of wetlands and their key ecological and hydrological functions • To contribute to maintaining global biological diversity through the designation and management of appropriate wetland sites • To foster cooperation among Contracting Parties, the Convention's International Organization Partners, and local stakeholders in the selection, designation, and management of Ramsar Sites • To use the Ramsar Site network as a tool to promote national, supranational/regional, and international cooperation in relation to complementary environment treaties To use of national Ramsar Site networks to provide essential ecosystem services/benefits, especially related to water, that contribute to human health, livelihoods and well-being
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⁶⁰ Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) 2018 update available at [xi.8_annex2_framework_for_new_rsis_e_revcp13.pdf](#)



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Site Boundary

Buffers

10km Buffer

15km Buffer

Statutory Designated Sites

RAMSAR

SAC

SPA

date

07/08/25

drwn/chkd

DV / ET

client

Hallam Land Management Ltd

project

Land east of Knowsley Lane,
Knowsley

title

SITE LOCATION AND CONSULTATION 1:180,000 @ A3

RESULTS PLAN - DESIGNATED SITES

number

FIGURE 7.1

rev

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