

Dowbridge, Kirkham, Lancashire, PR4 3RD

SHADOW HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

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[Fylde Borough Council reference: 15/0547]

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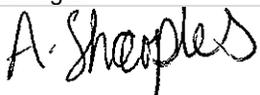
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

- 1.1.1 ERAP Ltd (Consultant Ecologists) was commissioned by Hollins Strategic Land to carry out wintering bird surveys at Dowbridge, Kirkham, PR4 3RD (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SD 4365 3184.
- 1.1.2 The survey was requested in connection with a planning application to develop the site to housing. The results of the Phase 1 Habitat survey carried out in 2014 are presented at *Land at Brook Farm & Environs, Dowbridge, Kirkham, PR4 3RD: Ecological Survey & Assessment* (Ribble Ecology Ltd, 2015). The report was used as part of the planning application with Fylde Borough Council (planning application reference number 15/0547)
- 1.1.3 As part of the consultation process, Fylde Borough Council requested comment from Natural England in respect of the planning application. The Natural England response makes reference to the presence of statutory designated sites within the wider area, namely:
- a. Newton Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - b. Ribble Estuary SSSI;
 - c. Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA);
 - d. Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar Site; and
 - e. Wyre Estuary SSSI (which forms part of the Morcambe Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC), SPA and Ramsar Site).
- 1.1.4 The following comments are repeated from the Natural England Consultation Response:

In Combination

When your Authority undertakes the necessary Habitats Regulations Assessment consideration also needs to be given to the in combination effects with other plans and projects (if it can be determined that the project itself would not result in likely significant effect).

The following need to be considered:

- a) The incomplete or non-implemented parts of plans or projects that have already commenced;*
- b) Plans or projects given consent or given effect but not yet started;*
- c) Plans or projects currently subject to an application for consent or proposed to be given effect;*
- d) Projects that are the subject of an outstanding appeal;*
- e) Ongoing plans or projects that are the subject of regular review;*
- f) Any draft plans being prepared by any public body;*
- g) Any proposed plans or projects published for consultation prior to the application.*

Natural England recommends that any information gaps should be met by the formal submission of the information, so that the project as a whole, i.e. as submitted with all information and measures to protect the European site, can be screened to check whether the likelihood of significant effects can be ruled out.

Your Authority should consider work being carried out in relation to the Fylde Draft Local Plan. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan has highlighted potential impacts on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, including loss of habitat and increased disturbance to pink footed geese associated with the SPA and Ramsar. As the Local Plan is still emerging there are no mitigation measures to deal with these effects at present and therefore all development management consultations relating to proposed allocations in the draft Fylde Plan should refer to the HRA

of the Plan and consider potential effects on pink footed geese as a result of in-combination effects from increased housing. Any necessary mitigation measures to ensure no adverse effect on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries, either alone and in-combination, will need to be agreed before planning permission is granted.'

1.2 Site Location and Relevant Information Relating to the Designated Sites

1.2.1 The location of the application site in relation to the designated sites is presented at **Figure 1**, appended. The site lies within a four kilometre radius of Newton Marsh SSSI, the Ribble Estuary SSSI and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar Site. The Wyre Estuary SSSI (which forms part of the Morecambe Bay SAC, SPA and Ramsar site) lies 9.2 kilometres from the site.

1.2.2 The sites are designated for their importance to overwintering and passage migrants, and the Natural England consultation specifically mentions impacts upon pink-footed geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*).

1.3 Scope of Survey

1.3.1 The proposals must be viewed in combination with other relevant proposals in the wider area, as the farmland in the wider area to the designated sites contributes to their nature conservation value. A widespread reduction in the available area of farmland to foraging geese (and other wildfowl) would lead to a negative impact on the ability of the designated sites to provide habitat for wintering birds. Further, a significant increase in the amount of housing within the wider area would lead to an increase in the public pressures on the designated sites.

1.3.2 Therefore, in order that a clear assessment of whether the proposals will (in combination with the other proposed developments), lead to a significant loss of habitat / increase in disturbance of the designated sites, the proposals cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be considered in combination with further developments within the local area.

1.3.3 As such, the following assessment has been undertaken within a four kilometre radius (a total of 5,528,600 ha) of the site to determine whether further proposals within the wider area must be taken into account when assessing the likely impacts of the proposed development. The following sources of information have been accessed:

- a. Assessment of Fylde Borough Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2012;
- b. Fylde Borough Council Planning Application Portal; and
- c. Information provided directly from Fylde Borough Council.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Fylde Borough Council provided information on all relevant planning applications within the study zone.

2.2 Searches were made via each local planning authorities' planning portal to confirm the status of the planning applications.

2.3 All relevant planning applications have been shown on **Figure 2** (appended), and the proposals are briefly outlined below.

2.4 The proposals have been assessed to determine whether they (in combination) are likely to have any significant ecological impacts on the designated sites in the wider area, and thereby determine whether any in-combination effects will result as a consequence of the proposed development.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

- 3.1.1 It should be noted that inclusion on the SHLAA does not allocate land for development, nor does it mean that will obtain planning permission; the 2012 SHLAA is a technical study and has been used to determine likely future developments within the study area.
- 3.1.2 As detailed on **Figure 2**, the site is designated as developable for housing within the SHLAA, with a further 27 sites within a four kilometre radius considered developable and a further three sites are considered deliverable.
- 3.1.3 All of the sites lie adjacent to existing settlements, and in total comprise approximately 2,334,000m² (234 hectares). The total area highlighted as potentially suitable for development by Fylde Borough Council within the four kilometre radius of the site represents approximately 0.004% of the total area studied.
- 3.1.4 Three sites within the four kilometre radius are considered 'deliverable' by the SHLAA.
- 3.1.5 A further 513 hectares within the study area has been considered unsuitable for development.
- 3.1.6 Only sites with current or ongoing planning applications have been considered further, as noted above the inclusion of land in the 2012 SHLAA does not guarantee that the site will go forward for development. The search for planning applications within the area located the presence of sixteen relevant and ongoing planning applications and four enquiry sites, listed below and presented at **Figure 2**.

Table 3.1: Planning Applications within Four Kilometres of the Proposed Development Site.

Planning Ref	Site Name	Details	Area (approx.)
15/0763	Land off Preston Old Road	74 dwellings (outline), approved subject to 106 agreement	2.85 ha
13/0786	Marconi	254 dwellings, under construction	7.82 ha
15/0303	Warton East	375 dwellings, appeal submitted	12.78 ha
11/0816	Meadows View	66 dwellings, nearing completion	2.66 ha
13/0674	Blackfield End Farm	360 dwellings, appeal allowed	13.2 ha
13/0097	Richmond Avenue	54 dwellings, nearing completion	2.48 ha
13/0507	North View Farm, Wrea Green	49 dwellings (outline), appeal allowed	2.9 ha
15/0308	Little Tarnbrick Farm	180 dwellings (reserved matters), approved	7.4 ha
15/0177	St George's Park	291 dwellings (full), application submitted	9.97 ha
14/0613	Little Tarnbrick Farm	117 dwellings (reserved matters), under construction	4.8 ha
13/0655	Mill Farm	6000 capacity football stadium, 11,432m ² of B8, 1,518m ² retail store (full application), 8 outdoor football pitches, petrol filling station, 785m ² non-food retail unit, hotel, restaurant, drive-thru restaurant and 492 space car park (outline), approved under construction	12.6 ha
14/0779	Mowbreck Lane	264 dwellings, outline	14.7 ha
15/0679	Oakfield Farm, Station Road, Clifton	Solar, approved	3.36 ha
14/0811	East of Clifton Lane, Clifton	Solar 8Mw, approved	11.3 ha
ENQ/14/0162	Opposite Dobbies, Blackpool Road, Clifton	Solar, enquiry	12.2 ha
ENQ/15/0169	Clifton Marsh Farm, Preston New Road	Solar, enquiry	13 ha
ENQ/14/0205	Dingle Farm, Vicarage Lane, Newton	Solar, enquiry	44 ha

ENQ/14/0444	Newton Grange Farm, Grange Lane, Newton	Solar 22Mw, enquiry	45 ha
15/0329	Cooper House Farm, Freckleton	Solar, approved	12.2 ha
15/0501	Newfold Farm, Browns Lane, Newton	Solar 5Mw, approved	11 ha
Total			246.22 ha

3.1.7 The sum of the proposed developments comprises approximately 0.004% of the total area surveyed¹.

In-combination

3.1.8 The Fylde Local Plan and Wyre Local Plan are not considered within the in-combination assessment. This is due to the assumption that subsequent policy wording will ensure that prior to planning approval all proposed allocation development with the potential to affect the supporting habitat of wintering bird species of interest will be subject to their own Habitat Regulations Assessment.

3.1.9 From the projects listed at **Table 3.1** the following are screened out of the in-combination assessment due to the absence of Likely Significant Effects:

- Land off Preston Old Road (15/0763)
- Marconi (13/0786)
- Meadows View (11/0816)
- Blackfield End Farm (13/0674)
- Richmond Avenue (13/0097)
- North View Farm (13/0507)
- Little Tarnbrick Farm (15/0308)
- St George's Park (15/0177)
- Little Tarnbrick Farm (14/0613)
- Mill Farm (13/0655)
- Mowbreck Lane (14/0779)
- Opposite Dobbies (ENQ/14/0162)
- Clifton Marsh Farm (ENQ/15/0169)
- Dingle Farm (ENQ/14/0205)
- Newton Grange (ENQ/14/0444)

3.1.10 Projects which may result in the direct loss of supporting habitat include:

- Warton East (15/0303) 12.78 ha
- Oakfield Farm (15/0679) 3.36 ha

¹ Please note: The proposals listed in **Table 3.1** comprise a mixture of developments listed under the SHLAA and developments not listed under the SHLAA.

- East Clifton Lane (14/0811) 11.3 ha
- Cooper House Farm (15/0329) 12.2ha
- Newfold Farm (15/0501) 11 ha

- 3.1.11 A cumulative total of 63.64 ha of agricultural land with the potential to be used by wintering bird species of interest will be lost as a result of the proposed developments.
- 3.1.12 The estimated area of farmed area in the Blackpool and Fylde region is 11,183 ha representing an estimated 10,719 ha of agricultural cereals, arable and grassland area.
- 3.1.13 63.64 ha represents 0.57% of the total farmed area and 0.59% of the agricultural cereals, arable and grassland area.
- 3.1.14 An approach taken by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) was to calculate the loss of the application site in the context of the total potentially available area (10,719 ha of agricultural cereals, arable and grassland area). The results of this assessment for the site are presented at **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Loss of Application Site in Context of the Total Potentially Available Area

Potentially Available Supporting Habitat	Habitat Loss of Site (13 ha) as a % of the Potentially Available Supporting Habitat	Cumulative Habitat Loss (63.64 ha) as a % of the Potentially Available Supporting Habitat
10,719 ha (100% available)	0.12%	0.59%
5,356 ha (50% available)	0.24%	1.19%
2,680 ha (25% available)	0.49%	2.37%

- 3.1.15 The number of projects considered for in-combination effects is small and unlikely to result in a significant accumulative loss of potential habitat for the wintering bird species of interest. Therefore it is considered that the proposed development will not cause in-combination LSEs with any of the currently proposed projects.

4.0 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

- 4.1 It is accepted that the proposals, by themselves, will not impact upon the nature conservation value of the designated sites within the wider area. The site is of insufficient size and is sufficiently distant from the designated sites that they will not provide significant suitable forage habitat for wildfowl that the designated sites would be impacted. Further, the proposals will not, by themselves, lead to a significant increase in the amount of public disturbance to the designated sites.
- 4.2 An assessment of the site's use by birds associated with the designated sites in the wider area (including pink-footed geese) is presented at *ERAP Ltd (April 2016) Dowbridge, Kirkham, Lancashire, PR4 3RD, Wintering Bird Survey Results 2015/2016*.
- 4.3 It is considered that proposals will have no in-combination effects upon the statutory designated sites in the wider area, for the following reasons:
- a. Few locations within the wider area have been designated as suitable for use for residential development by the local planning authority;
 - b. Large areas within the wider area have been deemed unsuitable for residential development by the local planning authority;
 - c. The further proposed housing developments will not (in combination) remove a significant amount of suitable foraging habitat for the wildfowl and passage migrants associated with the designated sites in the wider area; and

- d. The relevant planning applications within the wider area comprise only a small area (in total). The proposed developments are typically located adjacent to existing developments.
- 4.4 Few development proposals / planning allocations have been identified for the majority of the habitats which surround the site and may contribute to the nature conservation value of the statutory designated sites. The proposed development areas and relevant planning applications make up a relatively small area.
- 4.5 As such, it is considered that the proposed development will have no impact upon the statutory designated sites present within the wider area, either by itself or in combination with the other known development proposals within the wider area. The proposed development will not contribute to any wider impacts on the designated sites present in the wider area as a consequence of any in-combination effects.

5.0 REFERENCES

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6.0 APPENDIX 1: FIGURES

Figure 1: Plan to Show Site's Location in Respect of Statutory Designated Sites within the Wider Area



Figure 2: Plan to Show Areas Designated Under the SHLAA and Planning Applications within a Four Kilometre Radius of the Site

