

Date: 07 August 2015  
Our ref: 160804



Heather Suggate  
Leeds City Council  
Thoresby House  
2 Rossington Street  
Leeds LS2 8HD  
[Heather.Suggate@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Heather.Suggate@leeds.gov.uk)

Customer Services  
Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Heather Suggate

**Consultation:** Collingham Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Opinion

Thank you for your consultation on the above which we received on the 23 July 2015.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Where Neighbourhood Plans could have significant environmental effects, they may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans/>

The authority should seek their own legal guidance on the application of the SEA Directive and take into account the responses of other statutory consultees at the screening stage, before making a decision on the requirement to prepare an SEA.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that the development plan will be in close proximity to Linton Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is designated for its lowland calcareous grassland habitat and rare plant species. However, based on the information provided and the policies and proposals outlined in the draft plan we do not consider that the plan is likely to impact on this site.



We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies and proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

Where a neighbourhood plan could potentially affect a European protected site, it will be necessary to screen the plan in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010), as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations'). One of the basic conditions that will be tested at Examination is whether the making of the plan is compatible with European obligations and this includes requirements relating to the Habitats Directive, which is transposed into the Habitats Regulations.

In accordance with Schedule 2 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, a neighbourhood plan cannot be made if the likelihood of significant effects on any European Site, either alone (or in combination with other plans and projects) cannot be ruled out. Therefore, measures may need to be incorporated into the neighbourhood plan to ensure that any likely significant effects are avoided in order to secure compliance with the Regulations. A screening exercise should be undertaken if there is any doubt about the possible effects of the plan on European protected sites. This will be particularly important if a neighbourhood plan is to progress before a local plan has been adopted and/or the neighbourhood plan proposes development which has not been assessed and/or included in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the local plan.

We note that the Plan area is around 3km from Kirk Deighton Special Area of Conservation (SAC) however, based on the information provided and the policies and proposals outlined in the draft plan we do not consider that the plan is likely to impact on this site.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us. For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Merlin Ash on 0300 060 4271 or via email at [merlin.ash@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:merlin.ash@naturalengland.org.uk). For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Merlin Ash  
Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Team, Natural England  
Natural England

