

# **Biodiversity and Nature Conservation**

**Supplementary Planning Document**

**November 2014 Consultation Draft**

**Screening Document for Sustainability Appraisal,  
Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats  
Regulations Assessment**

**Chorley**  
Council



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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Councils are preparing a Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide further guidance on:
  - Core Strategy Policy 22: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
  - Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 Policy BNE9: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
  - Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 Policy BNE11: Species Protection
  - Preston Local Plan 2012 – 2026 Policy EN10: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
  - Preston Local Plan 2012 – 2026 Policy EN11: Species Protection
  - South Ribble Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document Policy G16: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation.
2. The Planning Act 2008 removed the mandatory requirement for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be prepared for SPDs. Local Planning Authorities are still however required to screen SPDs to ensure that the legal requirements for SA are met where there are impacts that have not been covered in the appraisal of the parent plan, or where an assessment is required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.
3. Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Council's must where appropriate carry out a SEA. The first part of the SEA process is to screen the relevant plan or programme to test whether SEA is required. The Council has a duty to consult with specified consultation bodies (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) when determining the need for SEA.
4. This screening report has been prepared in support of the SPD. It establishes whether there are impacts arising from the SPD that have not been covered in the higher level SA/SEAs of the Core Strategy and the Local Plans of the three authorities and if a full SA/SEA is required for the SPD.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED SPD**

5. The purpose of the Biodiversity and Nature Conservation SPD is to provide further guidance on the local biodiversity and nature conservation policies and what is required as part of the planning application process. Once adopted, this SPD should be afforded significant weight as a material consideration in determining planning applications. The SPD does not introduce new policies. This SPD will explain the Councils' approach towards conserving, protecting and enhancing biodiversity. This includes guidance in relation to ecological networks.
6. Planning can make an important contribution to protecting and improving biodiversity, which is defined as 'the variety of all life on earth'. Development can have a negative impact on biodiversity, both directly, through the destruction of habitat, and indirectly. These impacts can be significant and lead to the decline of biodiversity. Development can also have positive impacts for biodiversity for sites where there is little wildlife, by integrating new habitats with adjacent spaces. The main goal of this SPD is to ensure that there is no net loss of nature conservation assets, and where appropriate there is an improvement in them. It explains the Councils' approach as local planning authorities towards conserving, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ecological networks.

## **SCREENING OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**

7. The screening process considers whether the draft Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document gives rise to significant social, environmental or economic effects.

8. The Core Strategy, Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026, Preston Local Plan 2012 – 2026 and South Ribble Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document were subject to Sustainability Appraisal at a number of stages during their production and each individual policy has been assessed against a number of social, environmental and economic sustainability objectives.
9. The table below summarises the Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Policy 22 and Local Plan policies that are relevant to the SPD and identifies whether adoption of the SPD will result in any additional impacts on the sustainability objectives.

**Table 1: Summary of SA of Policies to which SPD Relates and Assessment of Additional Impacts**

Associated Policy	Summary of SA of Policy				Will the SPD further impact on SA objectives?
	Social Effects	Environmental Effects	Economic Effects	Comments	
Central Lancashire Core Strategy Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity	0	++	0	Policy will have little social effect. Policy will have significant positive environmental effects as it seeks to conserve, protect and enhance the biological and geological assets of the area. Policy will have little economic effect.	No. The draft SPD provides guidance for applicants in terms of understanding this policy and what is required as part of the planning process. It seeks to conserve, protect and enhance the biological assets of Central Lancashire. i
Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 Policy BNE9: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation	/	+	+	Policy has no link with any of the social objectives Policy will have positive environmental effects as it will ensure that biodiversity and local landscape character is protected and enhanced, preserve habitats and species which will benefit climate change and protect water resources of biodiversity and ecological value. Policy will have positive economic effects as it will protect designated sites of biodiversity and nature value which also provide leisure opportunities.	No. The draft SPD provides guidance for applicants in terms of understanding this policy and what is required as part of the planning process. It seeks to conserve, protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources in Central Lancashire.
Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 Policy BNE11:Species Protection	/	+	/	Policy has no link with any of the social objectives Policy will have positive environmental effects as it seeks to protect species. Policy has no link with any of the economic objectives.	No. The draft SPD provides further guidance for applicants to ensure that development will not have an adverse effect on a priority/protected species. .
Preston Local Plan 2012 -2026 Policy EN10 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation	+	++	+	Policy will have minor positive social effects through link between access to nature and health and wellbeing. Policy will have a positive environmental impact, because it will ensure new developments are designed to protect and enhance biodiversity and nature conservation. Policy will have positive economic effects as it will secure a high standard of design and in protecting sites it will also provide leisure opportunities.	No. The draft SPD provides guidance for applicants in terms of understanding this policy and what is required as part of the planning process. It seeks to conserve, protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources in Central Lancashire.

Associated Policy	Summary of SA of Policy				Will the SPD further impact on SA objectives?
	Social Effects	Environmental Effects	Economic Effects	Comments	
Preston Local Plan 2012 – 2026 Policy EN11 Species Protection	/	+	/	Policy has no link with any of the social objectives. Policy will have positive environmental effects as it will ensure habitats are protected or enhanced, and new habitats are created. The policy has no link with any of the economic objectives.	No. The draft SPD provides further guidance for applicants to ensure that development will not have an adverse effect on a priority/protected species.
South Ribble Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD Policy G16: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation	+	++	+	This policy will have a significant positive effect on SA Objective ENV1 through protecting, conserving and increasing biological diversity within the Borough. There is a wide range of statutory and non-statutory biodiversity designations in the Borough which the policy will now consider when planning applications are received. This policy will also be supplemented by a Biodiversity and Nature Conservation SPD which will provide greater clarification on how the policy will work and triggers for monitoring purposes. In terms of the other SA Objectives this policy will have a positive effect by maintaining open space and preserving habitats and species, this will positively benefit climate change, balance flood risk and be a positive economic contributor for leisure and tourism by protecting the green areas and the Borough's biodiversity value.	No. This policy has been specifically created to ensure that the borough's wildlife, at both individual sites and through ecological connectivity is safeguarded and protected throughout the plan period. The policy seeks to conserve sites of a hierarchical nature from international level through to a local level.

## SCREENING OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR SEA

10. In accordance with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the draft Biodiversity and Nature Conservation SPD must be screened to determine whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether a full SEA is required.
11. The Regulations advise that the likelihood of any significant environmental effects should be determined by a screening process which should use a specified set of criteria as set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. The appraisal of the SPD against these criteria is set out in Table 2 below.
12. The Core Strategy and Local Plan SAs incorporated the requirements of SEA and assessed environmental effects as well as social and economic effects; therefore as demonstrated in Table 1 above, the SPD would not have any additional environmental impacts. However, in order to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, the SPD has been screened against the SEA criteria.

**Table 2: SEA Screening**

Criteria	Assessment of SPD against criteria	Will the SPD have a significant environmental impact?
<b>1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:</b>		
a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The draft SPD provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document. It does not set a framework for projects or allocate resources.	No
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in the hierarchy.	The draft SPD does not influence other plans and programmes. SPDs are the lowest tier of the development plan hierarchy and their purpose it to provide further guidance on development plan policies.	No
c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The draft SPD contributes positively to the integration of environmental considerations and promoting sustainable development. It provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document, which aim to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources and protect species.	No
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	There are no specific environmental problems that are relevant to the draft SPD.	No
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The draft SPD is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.	No
<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The draft SPD does not itself lead to development. It provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document, which aim to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources and protect species.	No

Criteria	Assessment of SPD against criteria	Will the SPD have a significant environmental impact?
b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	The draft SPD does not itself lead to development. It provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document, which aim to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources and protect species.	No
c) The transboundary nature of the effects.	The draft SPD does not itself lead to development so will not result in any transboundary environmental effects.	No
d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example due to accidents).	The draft SPD will not result in any risk to human health or the environment. It provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document, which aim to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources and protect species.	No
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The draft SPD is applicable throughout the three Central Lancashire boroughs, but does not itself lead to development. It provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document, which aim to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources and protect species.	No
f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i) Special nature characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or iii) Intensive land use.	The draft SPD does not itself lead to development. It provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document, which aim to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources and protect species.	No
g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	In Central Lancashire there are a number of national and local environmental designations including SSSIs. These are protected by Core Strategy Policies 22, 21 and 18 and by the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document. The draft SPD will not itself lead to development. It provides further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies, which aim to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources and protect species.	No

### Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

13. The need for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended in 2007). An assessment is required to be undertaken of the 'likely significant effects' of a plan or project, on sites of international nature conservation importance.
14. HRA screening of the Core Strategy and the individual Local Plans was undertaken and concluded that it is unlikely that the documents would have a significant impact on any European site and therefore no further assessment was needed. As such the policies could be "screened out". Therefore it was not necessary to move to the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. Throughout their preparation the Core Strategy and Local Plans have been subject to HRA,

15. The SPD does not lead to any development itself and seeks to provide further guidance on Core Strategy Policy 22 and the Local Plan policies referred to in paragraph 1 of this Screening Document, that seek to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and nature conservation and to safeguard priority/protected species. The SPD is unlikely to have any significant effect on a SPA or SAC, above and beyond any significant effects that the Core Strategy or Local Plans are likely to have, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects. Therefore, the SPD will not trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment.

## **CONCLUSION AND SCREENING OUTCOME**

16. As a result of the above assessments it is unlikely that there will be any significant negative impacts arising from the SPD on social, environmental and economic matters that were not covered in the Appraisal of the 'parent' Core Strategy or individual Local Plans. Therefore, the SPD will not trigger the need for a SA/SEA or Appropriate Assessment.