



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Jacobs

Preston and South Ribble FRMS

HRA Stage 1 Assessment

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November 2020

Environment Agency

In partnership with:





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Revision	Date	Description	Author	Checked	Reviewed	Approved
01	11/11/2020	Draft for comment	RC	SK	SK	SM
02	26/11/2020	Final	RC	SK	SK	SM

Stage 1 Habitats Regulations Assessment

Environment Agency record of screening for likely significant effects

This is a record of the screening for likely significant effects required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), undertaken by Jacobs on behalf of the Environment Agency in respect of the permission, plan or project (PPP) detailed in Section 1, for the following relevant site(s):

- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA (UK9005103)^.
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar (UK11057).

Version 2: 23/11/2020

The original of this record was sent to Natural England for Information in December 2019. **This version has been updated and assessed in line with the scheme changes. These changes were presented to NE on 9th October 2020. NE were represented at that meeting by Stephen Aycliffe and Dave Ottewell.**

1. Permission, plan or project details

Type of PPP: Capital Schemes

Environment Agency reference: Preston & South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme

National grid reference: Central SD 54460 28394; Upstream SD 55904 28226;
Downstream SD 52813 28850

Site/project name or reference: Preston & South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS)

2. Description of proposal

This proposal involves approximately 9 km of replacement or refurbishment of linear defences (walls and earth embankments) adjacent to the River Ribble which includes 1.5 km of new defences on the River Darwen.

At present, there are various lengths of flood defences in-situ, but they do not provide a high Standard of Protection (SoP) (e.g. 1 in 75 year return period or greater) and this will worsen with climate change. Existing defences provide a relatively low SoP, typically at 2 to 3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP), but worse than 5% AEP on sections of the Darwen, with no existing defences in Higher Walton. This low SoP, the widescale impact of a more extreme flood event and implications of climate change makes Preston worthy of improved flood risk management. Sections of aging existing Flood Risk Management (FRM) assets are also worth noting, as their failure would reduce the SoP significantly.

The objective of the proposed Scheme is to increase the existing SoP to approximately 4800 including 500 business in and around Preston. The existing SoP is circa 2.5% AEP and is associated with the River Ribble, River Darwen and several smaller tributaries. The proposed solution is a combination of raised linear defences including embankments, solid walls and glass panels. Several potential areas have been identified within the Scheme study area, for the creation of wetland habitat.

The heights of the existing defences range from 0.5m to approx. 1.4m, the maximum height of the proposed defences is around 3m. We are proposing to install glass panels above 1.4m in locations where there will be significant visual impacts.

This FRMS is divided into 5 Areas which are set out below (see figure 1):

- Area 1: Riversway & Broadgate
- Area 2: Lower Penwortham
- Area 3: Frenchwood & Walton-le-Dale on the Ribble
- Area 4: Walton-le-Dale on the Darwen
- Area 5: Higher Walton

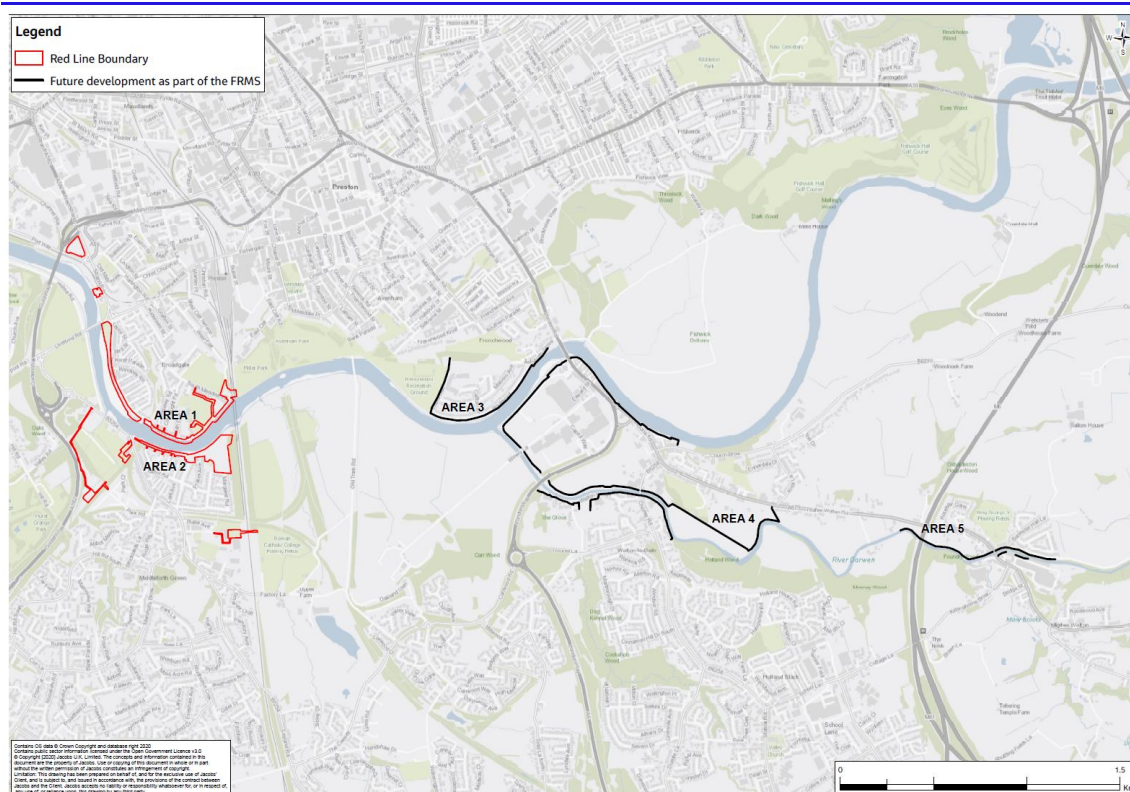


Figure 1: showing Areas 1 and 2 (redline boundary) and potential areas 3, 4 and 5.

Following on from further investigations restrictions have been identified in the form of existing services together with river bank instability. This has led to a design change to sections of the proposed defences in Areas 1 and 2. See figures 2, 3 and 4

In those areas a 'Redi Rock' block wall solution is being proposed to replace the failing river revetment. This solution will provide the stability needed for the new flood defence wall. It will consist of a stepped profile with a recess in each ledge for vegetation to establish, with further planting along the toe, using Coir Rolls. This solution will encroach into the river channel beyond the existing revetment which will result in the loss of small areas of intertidal mud. We have calculated the loss of this habitat as 1560m² and also investigated the potential change in flow rates. The modelling found no significant change in flow rates. See Table 1.

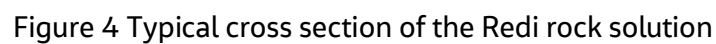
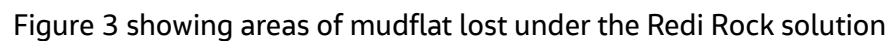
Maximum Flow (m ³ /s)	Scenario 1: 1:10 fluvial, 1:10 tidal	Scenario 2: 1:10 fluvial, MHWS tidal	Scenario 3: 1:75 fluvial, MHWS tidal	Scenario 4: 1:10 fluvial, 1:75 tidal
Existing	955	953	1348	955
With scheme	948	946	1357	949

Difference	-6.6	-7.1	+9.0	-6.9
Percentage Change	-0.7%	-0.7%	+0.7%	-0.7%

Table 1. flow Rates

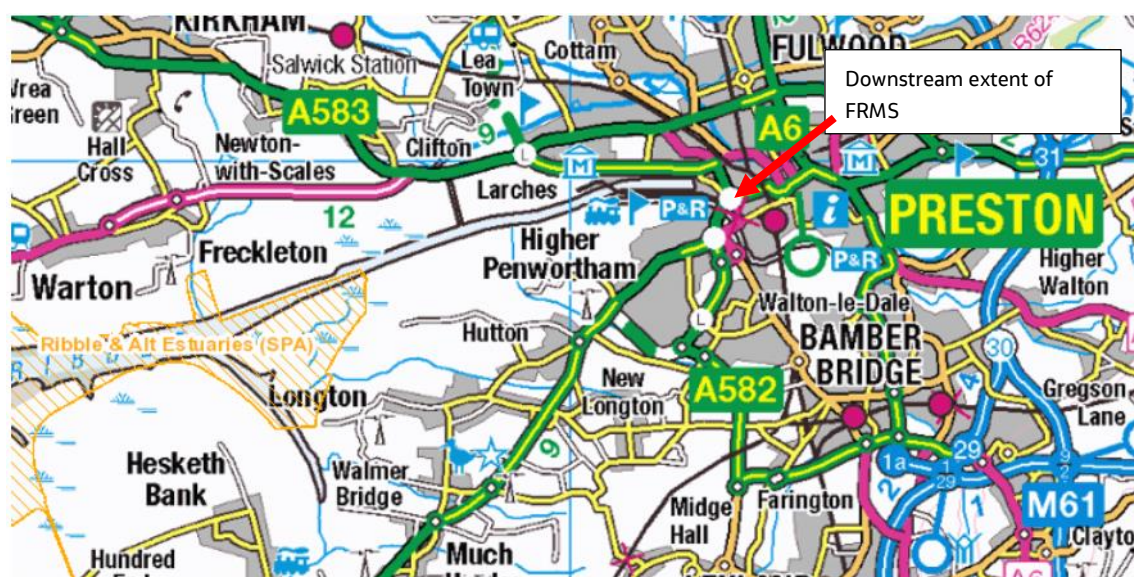


Figure 2 Areas 1 and 2 showing the proposed works and the red line boundary for planning



3. Map showing PPP location and European site

The downstream extent of the scheme is over 6 km from the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA boundary, see figure 5, below. There are no significant areas of functionally linked land between the SPA / Ramsar and the project along the river as the river only supports very narrow fringes of saltmarsh and mud in this stretch. Due to European funding constraints the construction of Areas 1 and 2 will commence towards the end of 2021 and complete at the start of 2023, Areas 3-5 will commence early 2023 and complete in 2024.



4. European sites requiring assessment¹

European site	Complete list of qualifying features
Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA (UK9005103) [^]	Bar-tailed godwit (non-breeding)

¹ This is based on screening criteria the Environment Agency consider appropriate to identify possible significant risk.

European site	Complete list of qualifying features
	Bewick's swan (non-breeding)
	Black-tailed godwit (non-breeding)
	Common tern (breeding)
	Dunlin (non-breeding)
	Golden plover (non-breeding)
	Grey plover (non-breeding)
	Knot (non-breeding)
	Lesser black-backed gull (breeding)
	Oystercatcher (non-breeding)
	Pink-footed goose (non-breeding)
	Pintail (non-breeding)
	Redshank (non-breeding)
	Ringed plover (non-breeding)
	Ruff (breeding)
	Sanderling (non-breeding)
	Seabird assemblage
	Shelduck (non-breeding)
	Teal (non-breeding)
	Waterbird assemblage
	Whooper swan (non-breeding)
	Wigeon (non-breeding)

European site	Complete list of qualifying features
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar (UK11057)	Bar-tailed godwit (wintering)
	Bewick's swan (wintering)
	Black-tailed godwit (wintering)
	Dunlin (wintering)
	Grey plover (wintering)
	Knot (wintering)
	Lesser black-backed gull (breeding)
	Natterjack toad
	Oystercatcher (wintering)
	Pink-footed goose (wintering)
	Pintail (wintering)
	Redshank (wintering)
	Ringed plover (passage)
	Sanderling (wintering)
	Shelduck (wintering)
	Teal (wintering)
	Waterbird assemblage (breeding)
	Waterbird assemblage (wintering)
	Whooper swan (wintering)
	Wigeon (wintering)

^ Protected area under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017

* Priority natural habitat/priority species

Feature information sourced from Natural England

5. Conservation objectives

The screening for likely significant effects (and appropriate assessment, if required) will consider the implications of the proposal in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA (UK9005103)^		Version: Date:
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4868920422957056?category=4582026845880320		
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar (UK11057)		Version: 4 Date: 21 February 2019
There are currently no conservation objectives for Ramsar sites. The SAC/SPA conservation objectives will be used when the qualifying features are the same, and advice sought from Natural England in other cases if necessary.		

European Site Conservation Objectives for Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area : Site Code: UK9005103

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

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.

Risks (pressures) relevant to the type of PPP being assessed

- Change in flow or velocity regime
- Changed water chemistry
- Changes in physical regime
- Changes in surface water flooding
- Disturbance

- Habitat loss
- Habitat/community simplification
- Physical damage
- Turbidity

7. HRA Stage 1 screening table²

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA (UK9005103)^					
<p>Birds of lowland wet grasslands (Teal)</p> <p>Birds of lowland freshwaters and their margins (Teal)</p> <p>Birds of coastal habitats: Bar-tailed Godwit, Bewicks Swan, Black-tailed godwit, Common Tern (breeding), Dunlin, Golden plover, Grey plover, Knot, Lesser black-backed gull, Oystercatcher, Pink-footed goose, Pintail, Redshank, Sanderling, Scaup,</p>	Change in flow or velocity regime	<p>The provision of raising the flood walls through the city would retain higher flows within the channel resulting in an increase in velocity and stream power.</p> <p>The Redi Rock solution in Areas 1 and 2 will potentially change the flow regimes by encroaching into the riparian zone. We have modelled this change in cross section and found it has a marginal change in flows with a worst case of less than 1 % increase. (see Table 1)</p> <p>This change in flow regime and velocities is not significant in relation to the impacts on the designated site as it would not lead to changes in habitat availability for qualifying features of the site either within the</p>	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	No

² Only features the Environment Agency consider likely to be sensitive to the type of PPP being assessed are included, see ['Habitats Regulations Assessment: Risk definitions and matrices'](#)

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
Shelduck, Teal, Whooper swan, Wigeon. Birds of estuarine habitats: Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed godwit, Common scoter, Cormorant, Curlew, Dunlin, Golden plover, Grey plover, Knot, Lapwing, Lesser black-backed gull, Oystercatcher, Pink-footed goose, Pintail, Redshank, Sanderling, Seabirds (>20, 000), Teal, Waterfowl(>20, 000), Wigeon.		SPA/Ramsar or in significant areas of functionally linked land.			
	Changes in physical regime	The primary physical change will be associated with the increased heights of the linear defences along the top of the riverbanks and the replacement of failing	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		<p>revetments with the Redi Rock Solution in Areas 1 and 2. We will retain existing functioning floodplain and seek opportunities to set back the earth embankments where infrastructure allows.</p> <p>Increased stream power could alter the sediment dynamics through the area, though this change in physical regime is not significant.</p> <p>Changes in the physical regime will not be significant in relation to the SPA / Ramsar due to the distance between the Project and the Site or significant areas of functionally linked land.</p>		distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	
	Changes in surface water flooding	The extent and frequency of surface water flooding is unlikely to significantly alter either positively or negatively as a result of the scheme. The linear defences will include drainage features to ensure that water can reach the river.	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for the Project to	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		As there would be no change, there would be no significant effect on the SPA / Ramsar or functionally linked land.		contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	
	Disturbance	<p>The proposals will involve some localised temporary physical and acoustic disturbance. The scheme will deploy acoustic barriers as part of the proposed plans.</p> <p>We have considered whether there is potentially functionally linked habitat for the SPA / Ramsar interest features within close proximity to the works.</p> <p>There are exposed mudflats on the margins of river bank at low tide. In Areas 1 and 2 1560m² will be lost to the Redi Rock solution.</p> <p>There are no exposed mudflats present in the location of the Area 4 works and we do not intend to encroach into the water course in Areas 3, 4 and 5.</p>	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		<p>The mudflat features could conceivably provide functionally linked habitat for the SPA / Ramsar interest features but there are no significant areas of suitable habitats between the SPA / Ramsar and the project along the river as the river only supports very narrow fringes of saltmarsh and mud in this stretch and significant numbers of birds could not be supported in these areas. Furthermore, the scale of our proposed works to the mudflats is not significant in relation to the habitat available to the SPA / Ramsar interest features.</p> <p>Access to the river bank in Area 3 is severely compromised by residential properties in the Victoria Road area, Walton-le-Dale. We therefore anticipate some in river working in this location from a temporary platform / pontoon due to the access constraints. However, due to the existing levels of disturbance and lack of suitable habitat for the interest features of the SPA / Ramsar,</p>			

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		<p>there would be no effect on the European site.</p> <p>There is arable farmland over 400m upstream of Area 2 works on the south bank (and opposite the Area 3 works at Frenchwood Boulevard). This habitat could conceivably be suitable for some interest features of the SPA / Ramsar such as geese, but at 400m, it would be beyond any zone of influence of disturbance from the project.</p> <p>We have gathered survey data from an Area 1 Habitat Survey (2016) for Preston Junction LNR which is a linear reserve adjacent to the West Coast Mainline (Ribble Viaduct). The viaduct bisects the land between the upstream extent of Area 2 and the LNR. The species survey data provides baseline information and the only bird species recorded during these surveys were woodland species.</p>			

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		<p>We have accessed data from the Fylde bird club, the closest recording site to our proposed works is at Avenham Park and the only records are of Goosander, Flycatchers, Warblers and Kingfisher.</p> <p>Given that the works will be over 6 km from the SPA / Ramsar boundary; in an urban environment and that there are no records of the interest features occupying the local area, it is considered that there would be no significant effects on the SPA / Ramsar interest features.</p>			
	Habitat loss	<p>There will be some loss of Intertidal habitat 1560m² due to the replacement of the failing banks with the Redi Rock solution in Areas 1 and 2.</p> <p>The mudflats could conceivably provide functionally linked habitat for the SPA / Ramsar interest features but there are no significant areas of suitable habitats</p>	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		between the SPA / Ramsar and the project along the river as the river only supports very narrow fringes of saltmarsh and mud in this stretch and significant numbers of birds could not be supported in these areas. Furthermore, the scale of mudflat loss is nugatory in relation to the habitat available to the SPA / Ramsar interest features.		the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	
	Habitat/community simplification	<p>There could conceivably be some very localised minor change to habitat quality within the river and mud fringes due to the project.</p> <p>The mudflats could conceivably provide functionally linked habitat for the SPA / Ramsar interest features but there are no significant areas of suitable habitats between the SPA / Ramsar and the project along the river as the river only supports very narrow fringes of saltmarsh and mud</p>	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		in this stretch and significant numbers of birds could not be supported in these areas. Furthermore, the scale of any mudflat change is nugatory in relation to the habitat available to the SPA / Ramsar interest features.			
	Physical damage	<p>Some loss of Intertidal habitat (1560m²) due to the replacement of the failing banks with the Redi Rock solution in Areas 1 and 2</p> <p>There will be some requirement for in channel works during Area 3 to facilitate the construction of the linear defences. The scale of this will be minor. There will not be any encroachment within the river in this</p>	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		<p>location as a result of the raised linear defences.</p> <p>The mudflats and river could conceivably provide functionally linked habitat for the SPA / Ramsar interest features but there are no significant areas of suitable habitats between the SPA / Ramsar and the project along the river as the river only supports very narrow fringes of saltmarsh and mud in this stretch and significant numbers of birds could not be supported in these areas. Furthermore, the scale of damage to mudflat and river habitats is nugatory in relation to the habitat available to the SPA / Ramsar interest features.</p>			
	Turbidity	<p>The change in velocities and sediment movement as a result of the proposed raised linear defences may result in some increased turbidity at the higher flows. This is not expected to be a significant increase from current levels given the tidal nature of the River Ribble in this location and is</p>	No	<p>The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean</p>	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
		therefore not likely to have a significant effect.		that it would be impossible for the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar (UK11057)					
Bar-tailed godwit, Bewick's swan, Black-tailed godwit, Grey plover, Knot, Lesser black-backed gull, Oystercatcher, Pink-footed goose, Pintail, Ringed plover, Sanderling, Shelduck, Teal, Waterbird assemblage, Whooper swan, Wigeon,	Change in flow or velocity regime	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
	Changed water chemistry	It is not expected that there will be any change in water chemistry as a result of the proposals	No	The phasing and nature of the works will ensure the potential for PPPs to act in combination is significantly reduced. The distance of the SPA / Ramsar or significant areas of functionally linked land mean that it would be impossible for the Project to contribute significantly to any in-combination effect.	No
	Changes in physical regime	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No
	Changes in surface water flooding	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No
	Disturbance	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No
	Habitat loss	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No
	Habitat/community simplification	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No

Qualifying feature	Risk (Pressure)	Likely significant effect alone	Yes or No	Likely significant effect in combination	Yes or No
	Physical damage	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No
	Turbidity	SPA conclusions apply.	No	SPA conclusions apply.	No
Natterjack toad	Change in flow or velocity regime	N/A species not present in the location of the study area	No	N/A	No
	Changed water chemistry	N/A species not present in the location of the study area	No	N/A	No
	Changes in physical regime	N/A species not present in the location of the study area	No	N/A	No
	Changes in surface water flooding	N/A species not present in the location of the study area	No	N/A	No
	Habitat loss	N/A species not present in the location of the study area	No	N/A	No
	Habitat/community simplification	N/A species not present in the location of the study area	No	N/A	No
	Physical damage	N/A species not present in the location of the study area	No	N/A	No

^ Protected area under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017

* Priority natural habitat/priority species

8. Alone assessment (further details)

The impacts of the scheme will be primarily related to the morphological changes that occur as a result of the raised linear defences and the minor change in flow regime associated with this work. These changes may result in higher velocity and stream power and minor impacts on the sediment dynamics within the channel.

Given the localised nature of the works and the distance from the designated site or any significant areas of functionally linked land, we conclude that this FRMS would not result in a significant effect on the SPA / Ramsar or the interest features.

9. In combination assessment (further details)

Given that the project alone will have no (or nugatory) effects on the European sites, the project could not contribute significantly to any likely significant effect in-combination.

We are not aware of any other PPPs that could act in combination with the proposed FRMS.

We have received our first consultation on the new Local Plan for Central Lancashire (Preston CC, South Ribble BC, Chorley BC). This is the first stage in preparing a new strategic plan for this combined area. The Environment Agency will use this opportunity to flag up key issues and opportunities relevant to our remit, or put forward policy ideas or suggestions that will help new development over the next 15 years contribute to addressing some of the environmental challenges we face. We will be looking to safeguard functioning floodplain from development as part of this consultation.

10. Information / Advice

This section summarises the information and or advice requested / received during the screening.

Environment Agency internal advice and consultation (if applicable)

Internal discussions with the wider project team on the extent of the scheme

Natural England information / advice (if applicable)

Informal consultation with Natural England (Stephen Ayliffe) since Feb 2019.

Face to face meeting with Natural England: Hannah Birtles and Stephen Ayliffe 14/11/19

Telecon with Stephen Ayliffe 20/11/19

Submission of shadow HRA 19/12/19

Email Stephen Ayliffe 18/02/20

Face to face meeting Nick Godden 26/02/20

Email Stephen Ayliffe 17/04/20

Telecon and email with Stephen Ayliffe 02/06/20

Email Stephen Ayliffe 03/09/20

Telecom Stephen Ayliffe 11/09/20

Email Stephen Ayliffe 16/09/20

Email Stephen Ayliffe 24/09/20

A further meeting to discuss the updated scheme was held with NE on 9th October 2020. NE were represented at that meeting by Stephen Aycliffe and Dave Ottewell.

Third party advice (if applicable)

Gathered species and habitats survey data from South Ribble Borough Council for Preston Junction LNR and this information provided a baseline to inform this assessment.

11. References

Ecological Surveys and Assessment of Central Park, South Ribble, June 2016.

Fylde Bird Club Website: www.fyldebirdclub.org

12. Decision

The Environment Agency:

Concludes there is no likely significant effect

Name of Environment Agency officer: Russell Cryer (Jacobs) for Environment Agency

Job title: Ecologist

Date: 11/11/2020

13. Consultation (if applicable)

Original version Sent to Natural England for Information Only

Invited Stephen Ayliffe to comment on the assessment

Date sent to Natural England for **Information**: 07/12/2019

Date response received from Natural England: NE responded 03/06/2020 to say although it was not a statutory consultation they agreed with the conclusions.

Natural England advice on the screening for likely significant effects (if applicable)

Do Natural England have concerns about the assessment? **Yes/No** *[delete as appropriate]*

Do Natural England have concerns about the decision? **Yes/No** *[delete as appropriate]*

Name of Natural England officer:

Job title:

Date:

