Cottam Parkway Railway Station

Report to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment (Stage 1 - Screening)

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Lancashire County Council

Cottam Parkway Railway Station

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Document history and status

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P01.1	18th December 2020	Habitats Regulations Assessment (Stage 1 - Screening). First Draft for client comment	Ryan Knight	Stuart Macpherson	Kris Long	Katarzyna Skibinska
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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Jacobs UK Ltd (Jacobs) was commissioned by Lancashire County Council (LCC) to provide ecological services to inform the Cottam Parkway Railway Station scheme (hereafter referred to as the 'scheme'). The scheme will serve the North West Preston Strategic Housing Location. It will comprise a new road to the proposed railway station connecting from Cottam Link Road with a bridge over the Lancaster Canal and a car park to serve the railway station. This development is related to the permitted road schemes of Preston Western Distributor (PWD) and the East West Link Road (EWLR) including Cottam Link Road.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)[1] (herein referred to as "the Habitats Regulations") requires that all competent authorities must undertake a formal assessment of the implications of any new plans or projects that may be capable of affecting the designated interest features of European / International sites before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise such a plan or project. This assessment comprises several distinct stages which are collectively described as a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA).

This document provides all the necessary information to inform an assessment of implications for European sites (HRA Stage 1: Screening). The aim of this assessment is to provide the necessary information to enable the competent authority (LCC) to determine whether the scheme would potentially result in likely significant effects on qualifying interest features of European sites.

1.2 Requirement for a Habitats Regulations Assessment

In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, all competent authorities must undertake a formal assessment of the implications of any new plans or projects that may be capable of affecting the designated interest features of European sites before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise such a plan or project.

For all plans and projects which are not wholly directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the site's qualifying features, this will include formal screening for any likely significant effects (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

A precautionary principle is required where there is uncertainty or where harmful effects can be assumed in absence of evidence to the contrary. This means the conservation objectives of European Sites should prevail where there is uncertainty, or that harmful effects would be assumed in the absence of contrary evidence. Assessments must be objective and proportionate.

If significant effects are considered likely or uncertain, then the project should be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (HRA Stage 2), specifically required to inform the decision-making process where a project:

- is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site; and
- is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

Under the Habitats Regulations, an effect is "likely" if:

- it cannot be excluded, in that it is capable of having an effect, on the basis of objective information; and
- it is likely to undermine the sites conservation objectives.

[1] This HRA has taken into account the amendments to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) as derived from The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which came into force on 1st January 2021. This HRA has also accounted for the available HRA guidance following the implementation period completion day (31st December 2020). This guidance includes https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017 ; https://www.freeths.co.uk/2020/10/22/the-habitats-regulations-assessment-regime-after-31-december-2020-how-will-it-look/ ; and The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (Tyldesley and Chapman (2013).

1.3 European sites subject to assessment

European sites[2] subject to screening are shown in Appendix A, Figure 1, and include the following:

- Sites of Community Importance (SCIs);
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and potential SPAs (pSPAs);
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and candidate (cSAC) or potential (pSAC) sites; and
- Ramsar sites.[3]

1.4 Legislative background

The development of this screening assessment has been specifically influenced by:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); and
- Relevant case law (referenced within this report where relevant).

The Habitats Regulations is a piece of domestic legislation that transposed the land and marine aspects of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and certain elements of the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC). The Habitats Regulations were amended in 2018 and again on 1st January 2021 when the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) EU Exit) Regulations 2019 were adopted following the United Kingdom officially leaving the European Union. Under this legislation it is the competent authority's responsibility to protect the UK National Site Network (including SPA, SACs) and Ramsar sites and associated species.

1.5 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to document and present sufficient information to aid the competent authority (LCC) to determine whether the scheme is likely to have significant effects on European sites. This report is to be used as a consultation document with the relevant Statutory Environmental Body (SEB), Natural England in this case, in order to agree the outcome of the screening assessment.

[2] This HRA takes account of any SAC proposed to the EU Commission / SCI on the EU Commission's list prior to 31 December 2020; and any SAC / SPA designated / classified after 31 December 2020.

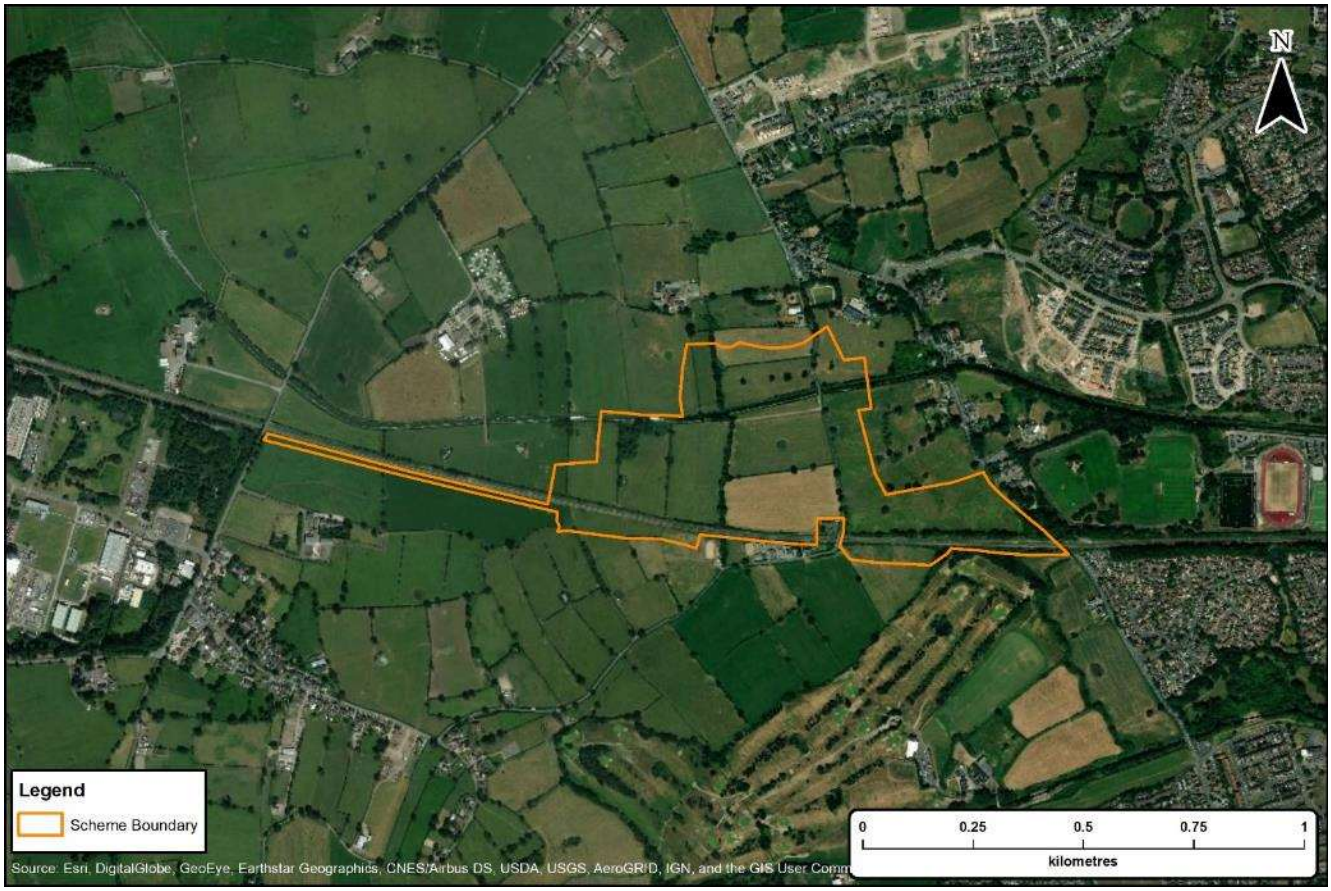
[3] Although not subject to the same legal protection as European sites, Ramsar sites are of international importance and it is UK Government policy that Ramsar sites should have the same level of protection as SPAs and SACs and thus are included within the HRA process under the umbrella of 'European sites'.

2. Project Description

2.1 Overview

The scheme comprises (but not exhaustively): a road connecting to Cottam Link Road at the Sidgreaves junction roundabout; a bridge over the Lancaster Canal connecting to the railway station; station platforms; buildings and associated structures; a footbridge over the railway; a 250/500 space car park; and bridge approach embankments and earthworks. This development is related to the permitted road scheme of PWD/EWLR. The PWD/EWLR scheme including the Cottam Link Road was under construction at the time of assessment (December 2020). Plate 1.1 provides an aerial image of the scheme location. A HRA report was submitted for the PWD/EWLR scheme as part of the supporting information for the planning application and to discharge statutory requirements (Jacobs, 2018).

Plate 1.1. Overview of scheme location



2.2 Project design

At the time of writing, the initial design option for the scheme had been proposed; however, finalised details on the in-depth design and construction were not available. Nonetheless, reasonable assumptions have been made relating to the likely construction and operational activities and conditions. This includes proposed structures; drainage; lighting; statutory undertaker requirements; construction impacts; discharges; pollution – emissions; and noise and vibration.

The screening assessment has concentrated on those issues upon which the integrity of habitats within the European sites or on which their designated qualifying features are dependent may be affected, as detailed below:

- Reduction in habitat area (habitat loss, modification);

- Habitat fragmentation;
- Disturbance (change in visual, lighting or acoustic stimuli);
- Reduction in species density/loss of individuals;
- Emissions to air (change in air quality); and
- Changes in hydrology (water quality, hydrological regime).

2.3 Good practice design and construction protocols

A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be submitted to prescribe and implement standard practice working measures with respect to pollution prevention (air and water), lighting protocols, noise and vibration control and water management control. These measures are to be implemented irrespective of any effects there may or may not be on European sites and this HRA has not taken into account any mitigation measures introduced to avoid or reduce an effect on a European site (also see Section 3.1). The Construction Industry Research and Information Association's (CIRIA) Environmental Good Practice Site Guide will be used as the basis for standard good practice measures (Charles and Edwards, 2010). Standard avoidance or alleviation measures contained within the CEMP would be implemented throughout the construction of the scheme with specific measures installed where required.

3. Assessment Methodologies

3.1 Screening

The development proposals for the scheme include the construction of a road to the railway station. Therefore, this screening assessment has been compiled using guidance set out within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Sustainability & Environment Appraisal publication 'LA115 Habitats Regulations Assessment' (Highways England, 2020a)) and the HRA guidance document 'The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook' (Tyldesley and Chapman, 2013).

The screening process involves consideration of the proximity of the European sites to the scheme; the features of the European sites (including primary reasons for selection and the Conservation Status of the qualifying interests); the vulnerability of the European sites; and the conservation objectives of the European sites. The process takes into consideration the nature of the scheme works, the (outline) scheme design; and the cumulative impacts that could arise from the scheme in combination with other plans and projects.

This screening assessment considers all relevant European sites identified using criteria in the guidance provided by LA115. Therefore, European sites are to be included for consideration within this screening assessment if the scheme:

- Is within 2km of a European site or functionally linked land;
- Is within 30km of a SAC, where bats are noted as one of the qualifying interests;
- Crosses or lies adjacent to, upstream of, or downstream of, a watercourse which is designated in part or wholly as a European site;
- Has a potential hydrological or hydrogeological linkage to a European site containing a groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystem (GWDTE) which triggers the assessment of European sites in accordance with LA113 (Road drainage and the water environment (Highways England, 2020b)); and/or
- Has an Affected Road Network (ARN) which triggers the criteria for assessment of European sites (LA 105 Air quality (Highways England, 2019).

Consideration has also been given to European sites within relevant Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) impact risk zones (IRZs) (in compliance with paragraph E/1.1.1 of LA115).

In addition, other European sites will be subject to screening where the existence of ecological connectivity between the scheme and European sites is identified beyond the above listed screening criteria. This includes potential functional linkages with European sites (i.e., SPAs and Ramsar sites) which list breeding, passage and wintering birds as qualifying features. The European sites under consideration with respect to birds were limited to those within 20km; a precautionary distance which takes into account the average mean-maximum foraging ranges for the majority of bird species (Scottish Natural Heritage 2016; Thaxter *et al*., 2012; Cramp and Simmons, 1977; Lack, 1986).

Consideration of hydrological connectivity between the scheme and European sites covers flood risk, hydrology, water quality, geomorphology and implications for compliance with the Water Framework Directive.

Localised air quality impacts from highway schemes are considered most likely to occur within 200m of major roads. Assessment of designated sites is only undertaken for any designated site located within 200m of the ARN in accordance with LA 105 Air Quality, as no likely significant effects can be concluded alone beyond 200m. It is acknowledged that whilst effects of air quality changes on European sites more than 200m from major roads would be considerably smaller, effects could occur at a wider geographical (regional) level in combination with air quality effects from other plans and projects. However, the potential to contribute significantly to any regional in-combination effect diminishes rapidly with distance from the ARN (Highways England, 2019).

Decommissioning is not considered within the assessment for the scheme as it is designed to have a material life-span of between 20 and 40 years before major maintenance and upgrading is required. It is considered

highly unlikely that the scheme would be decommissioned after this time, as the scheme is likely to have become an integral part of the infrastructure in the area. Decommissioning is therefore not an integral planned element of the scheme and therefore not subject to HRA.

Prior to April 2018, and the ruling in People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (Case C323/17)[4], it was widely accepted that the screening stage could incorporate mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a project on a European site. However, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that such measures could not be taken into consideration at the screening stage. This screening assessment has taken into account PINS Note 05/2018 (The Planning Inspectorate, 2018) which provided further guidance and interpretation of the actions to be taken following the People Over Wind and Sweetman ruling. Therefore, this screening assessment does not take into account any mitigation measures introduced to avoid or reduce an effect on a European site.

Where the project adopts construction good practice or measures required to avoid nuisance or to ensure wider legislative compliance these measures are to be reported as part of the project description (as outlined in Section 2.3).

In accordance with the The Holohan v An Bord Pleanála (Case C-461/17) [5], ruling (November 2018) 'the Holohan ruling', consideration of likely significant effects is extended beyond the boundary of European sites to include wider surrounding habitats and species that may also be impacted by development, where this would have implications for a site's conservation objectives.

3.2 Cumulative impacts

Any necessary in-combination effects assessment would be determined based on a review of the relevant district and borough council websites for details on policies and current planning applications within 2km. Any development considered within this in-combination assessment would be based on the following criteria (The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended):

- The development includes more than 1ha of development which is not for a dwelling house development.
- The development includes more than 150 dwelling houses.
- The area of the development exceeds 5ha.

In order for an in-combination effect assessment to be necessary or relevant, any plan or project (including the scheme being assessed here) would have to have a level of adverse impact on a European site when considered 'alone'. If the screening assessment concluded either no effect or a *de minimis* (inconsequential) effect, it is considered that no significant contribution to an in-combination effect would be possible, irrespective of what other plans and projects contributed (Tyldesley and Chapman, 2013).

3.3 Consultation

This initial HRA report will be issued to Natural England to facilitate comment and advice on the conclusions given. In accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and the Planning Act 2008, a formal opinion on the scope, content and conclusions of the HRA report in terms of screening and the requirement for further assessment (i.e., Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment) is required prior to application for consent.

[4] Court of Justice of the European Union, Case C – 323/17 People Over Wind, 12th April 2018.
[5] Court of Justice of the European Union, Case C – 461/17 Holohan and others v An Bord Pleanála, November 2018.

4. Initial Assessment

4.1 Initial screening for European sites

Table 4.1 presents the list of European sites which were identified under the screening criteria of this assessment (as set out in section 3.1 and shown in Appendix A, Figure 1). All European sites listed in Table 4.1 below qualify for consideration within the assessment as all list birds as qualifying features within a 20km radius of the scheme. No other European sites qualify for assessment under any other criterion.

Table 4.1 List of European sites selected under the screening criteria.

Screening Criteria	Names of Selected Sites	Distance[6] and Direction from Scheme
Scheme is within 2km of a European site or functionally linked land.	None	N/A
Scheme is within 30km of a SAC, where bats are noted as one of the qualifying interests.	None	N/A
Scheme crosses or lies adjacent to, upstream of, or downstream of, a watercourse which is designated in part or wholly as a European site.	None	N/A
Scheme has a potential hydrological or hydrogeological linkage to a European site containing a groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystem (GWDTE) which triggers the assessment of European sites in accordance with LA113.	None	N/A
Scheme has an Affected Road Network (ARN) which triggers the criteria for assessment of European sites (LA105).	None	N/A
Scheme is within 20km of a European site which lists birds as a qualifying feature.	The Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar	3.7km south-west
	The Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Morecambe Bay Ramsar	13km north-west
	Bowland Fells SPA	16km north-east
	Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar	17km south south-west
	Liverpool Bay SPA	17.5km south-west
Scheme is within relevant SSSI IRZs	No additional European sites identified using IRZs	N/A

4.2 Elimination of selected European sites

Of the European sites listed within Table 4.1, the following sites have been eliminated from further assessment:

- The Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Morecambe Bay Ramsar;
- Bowland Fells SPA;
- Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar; and

[6] Approximate distances only.

- Liverpool Bay SPA.

It has been considered that the scheme would not be capable of affecting the designated interest features of these European Sites due to:

- The intervening distance between the scheme and the European sites (13 to 17.5km);
- Consideration of potential flight paths and foraging distances of the qualifying features (as referenced in Section 3.1); and
- Consideration of the habitat types and land use within the scheme itself in terms of its favourability to regularly support significant numbers of the qualifying features of the European sites.

Further to the above, detailed desk study and site survey information has been obtained to further support this elimination process (see Section 4.4).

It should be noted that there is overlap between the bird species associated with The Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Morecambe Bay Ramsar and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar (English Nature, 2002). However, it has been assumed that due to proximity and potential connectivity of the scheme, any qualifying bird species listed on both citations are associated to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar (3.7km) rather than Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Morecambe Bay Ramsar.

4.3 Characteristics of the European site designations to be assessed

4.3.1 The Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA

The Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA[7] lies on the coast of Lancashire and Sefton in northwest England. The SPA encompasses all or parts of Ribble Estuary SSSI and Sefton Coast SSSI. It comprises two estuaries, of which the Ribble is by far the larger, together with an extensive area of sandy foreshore along the Sefton Coast, and forms part of the chain of west coast SPAs that fringe the Irish Sea. Indeed, there is considerable interchange in the movements of birds between this site and Morecambe Bay, Mersey Estuary, Dee Estuary and Martin Mere. A large proportion of the SPA is within the Ribble Estuary National Nature Reserve. The site consists of extensive areas of sand and mudflats and, particularly in the Ribble, large areas of saltmarsh. There are also areas of coastal grazing marsh. The intertidal flats are rich in invertebrates on which waders and some wildfowl feed. The highest densities of feeding birds are on the muddier substrates of the Ribble, though sandy shores throughout are also used. Saltmarshes and coastal grazing marshes support high densities of wildfowl and these, together with intertidal sand and mudflats throughout, are used as high tide roosts. The site supports internationally important populations of waterbirds in winter, including swans, geese, ducks and waders. It is also of major importance during migration periods, especially for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain. The larger expanses of saltmarsh and areas of coastal grazing marsh support breeding birds, including large concentrations of gulls and terns. These seabirds feed both offshore and inland, outside the SPA. Several species of waterfowl, notably pink-footed goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), utilise feeding areas on agricultural land outside the SPA boundary.**This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC[8]) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the directive:**

<u>During the breeding season;</u>

- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), 182 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count, as at 1996); and
- Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), 1 pair representing at least 9.1% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count as at late 1980's).

[7] Information from EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Citation for Special Protection Area (SPA) - Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA UK9005103 Compilation date: November 2002 Version: 0.7

[8] Council Directive 79/409/EEC has been codified (i.e. superseded) by Council Directive 2009/147/EC. However, the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA designations have not been updated since the new Directive was adopted; consequently, this citation makes reference to Council Directive 79/409/EEC in relation to SPA qualifying criteria.

Over winter

- Bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), 18,958 individuals representing at least 35.8% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Bewick's swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*), 229 individuals representing at least 3.3% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), 4,277 individuals representing at least 1.7% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6); and
- Whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), 159 individuals representing at least 2.9% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6).

This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:

Breeding season;

- Lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*), 1,800 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the breeding Western Europe/Mediterranean/Western Africa population (Count, as at 1993).

On passage;

- Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), 995 individuals representing at least 2.0% of the Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6); and
- Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), 6,172 individuals representing at least 6.2% of the Eastern Atlantic/Western & Southern Africa - wintering population (3 year mean May 1993 - 1995).

Over winter;

- Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*), 819 individuals representing at least 1.2% of the wintering Iceland - breeding population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpine*), 39,952 individuals representing at least 2.9% of the wintering Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), 6,073 individuals representing at least 4.0% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Knot (*Calidris canutus*), 57,865 individuals representing at least 16.5% of the wintering Northeastern Canada/Greenland/Iceland/Northwestern Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), 16,159 individuals representing at least 1.8% of the wintering Europe & Northern/Western Africa population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Pink-footed goose, 23,860 individuals representing at least 10.6% of the wintering Eastern Greenland/Iceland/UK population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Pintail (*Anas acuta*), 3,333 individuals representing at least 5.6% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), 2,708 individuals representing at least 1.8% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Sanderling, 2,859 individuals representing at least 2.9% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic/Western & Southern Africa - wintering population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), 4,103 individuals representing at least 1.4% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
- Teal (*Anas crecca*), 7,641 individuals representing at least 1.9% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6); and

- Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), 84,699 individuals representing at least 6.8% of the wintering Western Siberia/Northwestern/Northeastern Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6).

Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.

The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl.

- During the breeding season, the area regularly supports 29,236 individual seabirds including: black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), lesser black-backed gull, common tern;
- Over winter, the area regularly supports 301,449 individual waterfowl (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) including the following notable species (species which qualify individually are considered above): grey plover, whooper swan, golden plover, bar-tailed godwit, pink-footed goose, shelduck, wigeon, teal, Bewick's swan, oystercatcher, curlew (*Numenius arquata)*, knot, sanderling, dunlin, black-tailed godwit, redshank, cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and pintail;
- Seabird assemblage - in the breeding season, the area regularly supports over 29,000 individual seabirds including black headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), lesser black-backed gull, and common tern; and
- Water-bird assemblage – in the non-breeding season, the area regularly supports over 320,000 individual water-birds including several bird species listed above and additional water-birds such as cormorant, lapwing and curlew.

Conservation Objectives

The site's conservation objectives apply to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the "Qualifying Features"). The objectives are to ensure that, subject to natural change, the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and 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 populations of the qualifying features; and
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

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 (*Circus cyaneus*), merlin (*Falco columbarius),* peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) and short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*).

Vulnerabilities/Sensitivities

Overall, the dunes, intertidal flats and saltmarsh enjoy a relatively robust status and a favourable condition. In some locations, the SPA is subject to pressure from recreation, built development (including coastal defence), wildfowling and industry including sand-winning and grazing pressure. However, much of these pressures are under control through various agreements, provisions and initiatives.

The extent and distribution of habitats remains vulnerable to changes in the physical environment, either natural or man-induced. The coast at Formby Point and Ainsdale is suffering intense erosion and initiatives are in place to reduce impacts. The Ribble Estuary is evolving as sediment patterns are changing and salt marsh continues to accrete. Intertidal habitats are vulnerable to accidental pollution from the nearby Mersey Estuary and nearby gas

and oil fields. Oil spill contingency plans have been updated and other potential sources of pollution have been investigated (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2006).

4.3.2 Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar

Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar[9] qualifies under Ramsar criteria 2, 5 and 6. The site qualifies under Criterion 2 for its population of natterjack toads (*Bufo calamita).* Given the distance between the scheme and the Ramsar (3.7km) along with the absence of connective or suitable habitats, this qualifying feature of the Ramsar is not considered further within this screening assessment. Criteria 5 and 6 are listed as follows:

i. Ramsar criterion 5

Species with peak counts in winter:

- 222,038 waterfowl (5-year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003).

ii. Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

- Black-tailed godwit, Iceland/W Europe - 3,323 individuals, representing an average of 7% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3);
- Dunlin, W Siberia/W Europe - 38,196 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3 - spring peak);
- Grey plover, E Atlantic/W Africa - 11,021 individuals, representing an average of 4.4% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3 - spring peak);
- Red knot (*Calidris canutus islandica*), W & Southern Africa- 42,692 individuals, representing an average of 9.4% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Redshank - 4,465 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Ringed plover, Europe/Northwest Africa - 3,761 individuals, representing an average of 5.1% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3 - spring peak); and
- Sanderling, Eastern Atlantic - 7, 401 individuals, representing an average of 6% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3 - spring peak).

Species with peak counts in winter:

- Tundra swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*), NW Europe - 230 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Whooper swan, Iceland/UK/Ireland - 211 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Pink-footed goose, Greenland, Iceland/UK - 6552 individuals, representing an average of 2.7% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Common shelduck, NW Europe - 2944 individuals, representing an average of 3.7% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Eurasian wigeon, NW Europe - 69,841 individuals, representing an average of 4.6% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Eurasian teal, NW Europe - 5107 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);

[9] Information taken from Ramsar Information Sheet: UK11057 Ribble and Alt Estuaries.

- Northern pintail, NW Europe - 1497 individuals, representing an average of 2.4% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Eurasian oystercatcher, Europe & NW Africa wintering - 18,926 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3); and
- Bar-tailed godwit, W Palearctic - 13,935 individuals, representing an average of 11.6% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).

4.4 Baseline Information

This screening assessment has been informed by baseline information generated from a desk study and wintering and breeding bird surveys conducted between October 2019 and July 2020 (Jacobs 2019; Jacobs 2020). The survey area was defined as all land within the scheme and a 500m buffer radius from the scheme boundary.

Birds recorded in the survey area and listed within the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar designations, were considered significant if the population exceeded 1% of the species total population as cited within these designations. The methods for defining this threshold is provided in the winter and breeding bird survey reports (Jacobs, 2019; Jacobs 2020). Six species listed on the SPA and/or Ramsar citations were recorded during the bird surveys. Of these species, only teal were recorded in significant numbers i.e., numbers above the 1% threshold. It was not feasible to determine if this teal population was related to the SPA/Ramsar population; however, the association with the SPA/Ramsar population has been assumed as a precaution. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the survey results.

Table 4.2. Survey results in respect of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar qualifying bird species

Designated site	Qualifying feature species recorded	Period	Description
Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar	Black-headed gull	Breeding season	No breeding evidence recorded. Peak count of two recorded in April and May (loafing/flying over etc.) representing 0.02% of the Ramsar breeding population (4,108 pairs). No count data available for the SPA designation.
	Common tern	Breeding season	No breeding evidence recorded and no grounded birds recorded. Peak count of one recorded flying along Lancaster Canal in May and June representing 0.25 % of the SPA breeding population (182 pairs). No count data available for the Ramsar designation.
	Lesser black-backed gull	Breeding season	No breeding evidence recorded. Peak count of 17 recorded in June (loafing/flying over etc.) representing 0.5% of the SPA breeding population (1800 pairs).
	Oystercatcher	Over winter	Peak count of two birds recorded in March representing 0.01% of the total SPA population (16,159 individuals) and 0.01% of the Ramsar population (18,926 individuals).

Designated site	Qualifying feature species recorded	Period	Description
	Pink-footed goose	Over winter	Peak count of 80 recorded in high flight over the survey area in October 2019. However, no birds recorded grounded within the survey area.
	Teal	Over winter	Peak count of 102 on a field pond located 205m north of the scheme boundary. This peak count represented 1.33% of the total SPA population (7,641 individuals) and 2% of the Ramsar population (5,107 individuals).

In addition to the threshold calculations for bird species provided in Table 4.2, the 1% threshold relating to the assemblage qualification of the European site (Section 4.3) is highly unlikely to be exceeded due to the limited numbers of qualifying bird species and numbers within the bird survey area.

5. Assessment of Potential Impacts

5.1 Introduction

The proposal is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the conservation management objectives of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar and therefore, further consideration of the likely significant effect is required. This section considers whether the scheme will or will not have a likely significant adverse effect on the interest features of the European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

5.2 Potential impacts of proposed scheme

This section takes into account the scheme design requirements provided in Section 2 and consideration of the likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the scheme on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar. There is potential for habitats to be affected that are utilised as feeding areas by birds that may be part of the SPA and Ramsar populations. Therefore, this section focuses on the potential impacts regarding birds. Table 5.1 provides the detail of the sources of the potential impact, the phases of the scheme in which the impacts may arise, an assessment of the potential impacts of the scheme and conclusions of the assessment i.e., No likely significant effects / significant effects likely. A screening matrix for the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar is provided in Appendix B which takes account of all potential considerations included within LA 115 guidance (Highways England, 2020a).

Table 5.1. Assessment of potential impacts

Potential Impacts	Phase of Scheme	Impact Assessment	Conclusion
Reduction of habitat area	Construction and Operation	There would be no land taken from any of the European sites. Therefore, only the loss of functional land as a result of the scheme needs to be considered. In respect of the bird survey findings, only the teal population was considered significant. The location of teal was 205m north of the scheme boundary. This area will remain unaffected by the scheme.	No likely significant effects.
Disturbance to key species	Construction and Operation	Significant numbers of teal were all recorded in a field pond bound by willow (*Salix* sp.) scrub in an area of pasture land. Intervening land between the scheme and this pond includes pasture land, hedgerows, treelines and a farm access road. This pond is located 205m north of the scheme boundary. The distance and intervening features are considered sufficient to eliminate potential disturbance risks. In addition, a link road forming part of the PWD/EWLR scheme was also being constructed between this pond and the scheme at the time of writing (October 2020). This road construction is highly likely to negate any potential disturbance effects to teal.	No likely significant effects.

Potential Impacts	Phase of Scheme	Impact Assessment	Conclusion
		All other qualifying species were not recorded in sufficient enough numbers within the survey area to warrant consideration for likely significant effects.	
Fragmentation of species and habitat	Construction and Operation	There would be no habitat fragmentation within the European site as a result of the scheme. The bird survey did not record the presence of significant numbers of any qualifying bird species within the scheme itself. Given the mobility of the bird species, the construction and operational phases are unlikely to fragment the small populations of SPA/Ramsar qualifying species that utilise habitats within the immediate vicinity of the scheme. The habitat in which significant numbers of teal was recorded will remain unaffected by the scheme; therefore, there would be no fragmentation impacts to teal.	No likely significant effects.
Reduction in species density/loss of individuals	Construction and Operation	Significant numbers of teal were recorded utilising a pond 205m north of the scheme and none were recorded inside the actual scheme boundary. Very low numbers of other SPA/Ramsar qualifying birds were recorded within the scheme boundary or wider survey area. Any conceivable impact would therefore be negligible in the context of the existing bird use within the scheme. Given the distance between the European site and the scheme and intervening land use, the scheme is highly unlikely to result in an impact that would result in a reduction of species density or a loss of individuals.	No likely significant effects.
Resource requirements	Construction and Operation	The scheme would not require any resources from the European site or adjacent land.	No likely significant effects.
Emissions	Construction and Operation	Localised air quality impacts from highway schemes are considered most likely to occur within 200m of major roads. Assessment of European sites is only undertaken for any	No likely significant effects.

Potential Impacts	Phase of Scheme	Impact Assessment	Conclusion
		designated sites located within 200m of the affected road network in accordance with LA 105 (Air Quality) as no likely significant effects can be concluded alone beyond 200m. Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar is the closest European site to the scheme and located 3.7km south-west. There is a very remote hydrological connection between the scheme and the River Ribble which runs westwards into the designated SPA/Ramsar site. This comprises two minor streams which run into Savick Brook, approximately 450m south. Savick Brook meets the River Ribble 2.6km south. The nearest designated section of the River Ribble is 3.7km south-west. This remote hydrological connection is not related to the qualifying interests of the SPA and Ramsar and there are no GWDTE within the SPA and Ramsar. Whilst good practice pollution protocols are to be implemented by the scheme irrespective of the European site designation, the conclusion of no likely significant effects is made regardless of any such embedded mitigation.	
Changes in hydrology	Construction and Operation	The scheme will not result in any changes to the hydrological regime of the European site.	No likely significant effects.

5.3 In-combination effects

In order for an in-combination effect to be possible, the scheme would have to have some level of adverse impact that could contribute significantly to a combined effect. The alone assessment has concluded that adverse effects to European sites are absent or negligible and so any contribution to a combined effect is considered to be *de minimis* (inconsequential). As such, it is considered that the scheme could not contribute significantly to any in-combination effects, irrespective of what other plans and projects may or may not be planned or currently being undertaken.

It is therefore concluded that no assessment of local policies or reasonably foreseeable projects and plans is necessary to conclude there would be no likely significant effects from the scheme in combination with other plans and projects.

6. Conclusions

This initial stage of this HRA screening assessment identified the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar as the only European site for which the scheme was capable of affecting the designated interest features. Upon further review of desk and field-based information, the screening assessment of the scheme has shown that no likely significant effects on this European site are anticipated, when considered alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. This conclusion has been reached regardless of any embedded mitigation.

The conclusion of no likely significant effects is highly unlikely to change following the preferred option announcement scheme as this screening assessment reviewed the use of the land within the scheme along with a 500m survey radius around the scheme by qualifying bird species. However, any consultation representations will be factored into this screening assessment once the design and planning application stages are further advanced.

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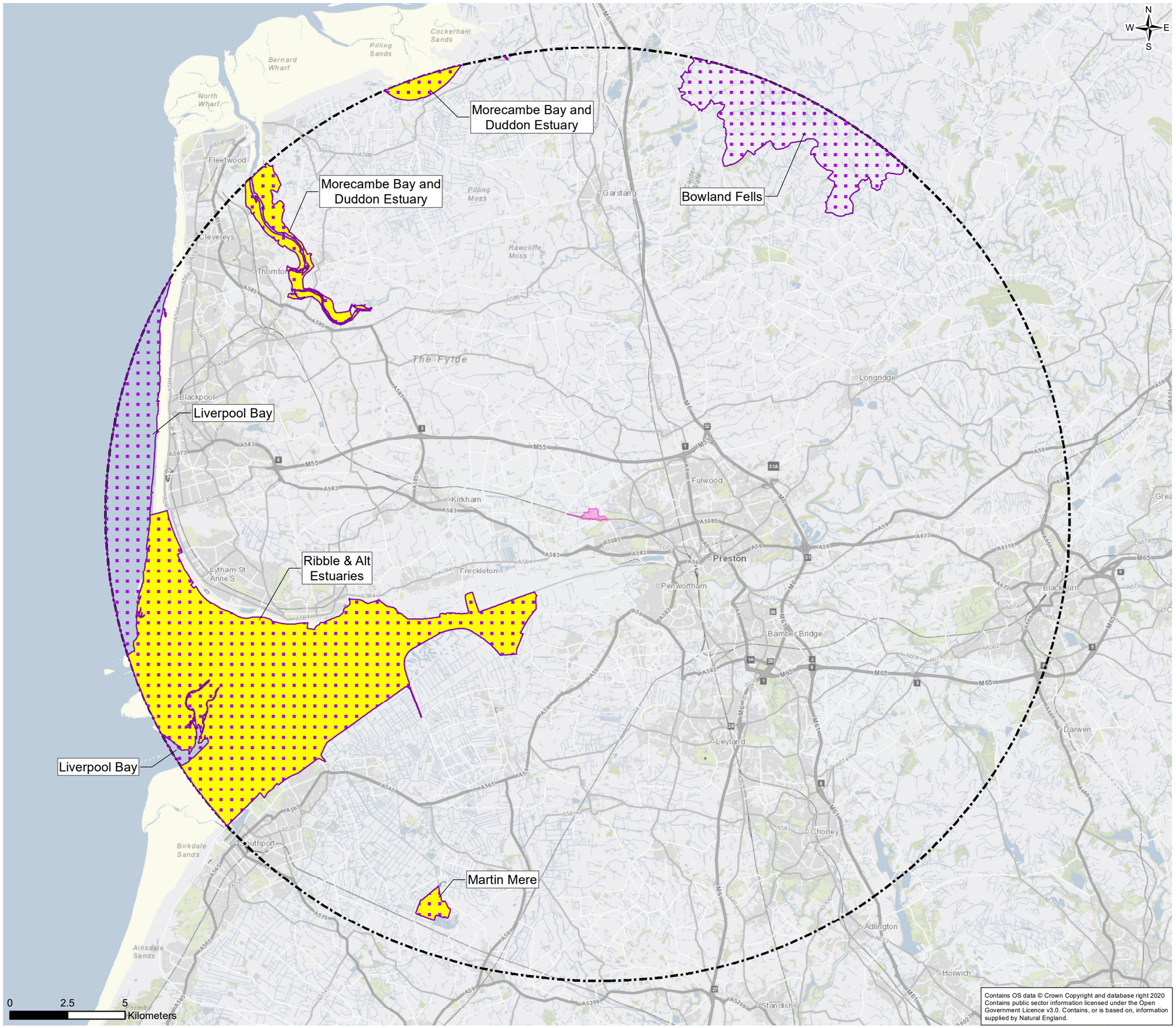
Appendix A. Figures

Figure 1 – Location of European sites assessed under the HRA screening criteria

FIGURE 1

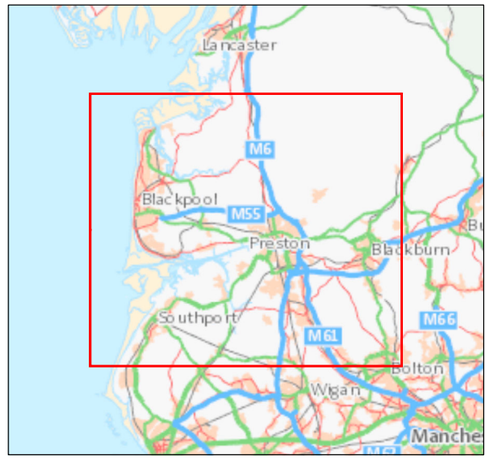


Legend

- Scheme Boundary
- 20km Buffer from Scheme Boundary

Statutory Designated Sites

- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Ramsar



Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Check'd	Rev'd	Appr'd
0	16/12/2020	Initial Issue	BP	RK	KL	KS

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Client: Lancashire County Council

Project: Cottam Parkway Railway Station

Drawing Title: LOCATION OF EUROPEAN SITES ASSESSED UNDER THE HRA SCREENING CRITERIA

FINAL

Scale @ A3	1:160,000	DO NOT SCALE
Jacobs No.	B2327FEF	

B2327FEF-JAC-EBD-00-DR-ENV-0022

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Appendix B.

Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar screening matrix

Project		Cottam Parkway Railway Station
European Site under consideration:		Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar
Date:	**Author (Name / Organisation):**	**Verified (Name / Organisation):**
26/01/2021	Ryan Knight MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist, Jacobs.	Kris Long CEnv MCIEEM, Associate Director of Ecology, Jacobs.
Description of project		
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European Site by virtue of:		
Size and scale (road type and probable traffic volume)		The scheme comprises (but not exhaustively): a road connecting to Cottam Link Road at the Sidgreaves junction roundabout; a bridge over the Lancaster Canal connecting to the railway station; station platforms; buildings and associated structures; a footbridge over the railway; a 250/500 space car park; and bridge approach embankments and earthworks. The road construction is intended for access to the railway station only. Traffic modelling was not available at the time of writing. Bird surveys undertaken for the scheme did not record significant populations of birds which are listed as qualifying features of the SPA and Ramsar within the scheme boundary. Significant numbers of teal (SPA and Ramsar qualifying species) were recorded 205m north of the scheme boundary. This area will remain unaffected by the scheme. Overall, no significant impacts relating to the size and scale of the scheme (e.g., land-take, pollution of air and/or water, disturbance and direct mortality as a consequence of traffic collisions) are envisaged.
Land-take		The project does not require any land-take from any European site.
Distance from the European Site or key features of the site (from edge of the project assessment corridor)		The Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar is located 3.7km south-west. This distance is considered highly likely to negate any potential impacts posed by the scheme. Potential functional linkages between the land within and adjacent to be scheme and the SPA and Ramsar have been assessed.
Resource requirements (from the European Site or from areas in proximity to the site, where of relevance to consideration of impacts)		The project would not require any resources from any European site or land adjacent to any European site.
Emissions (e.g. polluted surface water runoff – both soluble and insoluble pollutants, atmospheric pollution)		Air quality modelling has not yet been undertaken. However, guidance provided in LA 105 Air Quality, of the DMRB, recommends that air quality impact assessments need only be undertaken for assessment of likely significant effects on designated sites within 200m of the

	affected road network (ARN). This project and any ARN would be located over this threshold distance. There are potential hydrological connections (albeit remote) between the scheme and the River Ribble which runs westwards into the designated SPA and Ramsar site. This comprises two minor streams which run into Savick Brook, approximately 450m south. Savick Brook runs into the River Ribble which forms part of the SPA and Ramsar 3.7km south-west. This remote hydrological connection is not related to the qualifying interests of the SPA and Ramsar and there are no GWDTE within the SPA and Ramsar. Potential construction and operation emission sources such as contaminated surface water run-off, accidental spillage of contaminants, dust emissions and other potential pollutant / waste sources will be controlled via standard working practices and best practice designs. Overall, there is an absence of an effect pathway for significant emissions effects to occur between the European sites and the scheme; therefore, potential emissions present a negligible risk to qualifying features of the SPA and Ramsar.
Excavation requirements (e.g. impacts of local hydrogeology)	Details relating to excavations are not yet available. However, no excavation would be required within or adjacent to any European site.
Transportation requirements	Details relating to transportation requirements are not yet available. However, as no European sites are located within 200m of any ARN, impacts associated with air quality change arising from transportation requirements would not occur. Additional construction access tracks and associated vehicles and contractors would remain in excess of 200m away from any European site.
Duration of construction, operation etc.	At this stage, the construction and operation programme is not known. However, the duration of the project would not exacerbate any effects as any potential effect pathways are considered to be non-significant in scale.
Other	Construction works are likely to result in localised and short term noise, vibration and light emissions. Other operational impacts of the scheme are to include increased lighting levels and increased visual disturbance. Due to the distance between the scheme and the SPA and Ramsar (3.7km) along with an absence of functional connectivity, there are no potential effect pathways for such construction and operational impacts to occur.
Description of avoidance and/or mitigation measures *Describe any assumed (plainly established and uncontroversial) mitigation measures, including information on:*	

Nature of proposals	No site-specific avoidance or mitigation measures are deemed necessary as the project will not result in any likely significant effects on the SPA and Ramsar or functionally linked habitats. Good practice guidance measures have been incorporated into the project proposals as an operational function separate from the purpose of safeguarding the European site.
Location	N/A
Evidence for effectiveness	N/A
Mechanism for delivery (legal conditions, restrictions or other legally enforceable obligations)	N/A
Characteristics of European Site(s)	
A brief description of the European Site to be produced, including information on:	
Name of European Site and its EU code	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA - UK9005103 Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar - UK11057
Location and distance of the European Site from the proposed works	3.7km south-west of the scheme
European Site size	SPA area = 12,412.31 ha Ramsar area = 13, 464 ha
Key features of the European Site including the primary reasons for selection and any other qualifying interests	See Section 4.3
Vulnerability of the European Site – any information available from the standard data forms on potential effect pathways	See Section 4.3
European Site conservation objectives – where these are readily available	See Section 4.3
Assessment Criteria	
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European site.	
In-depth design and construction details are not currently available. However, reasonable assumptions have been made relating to the likely construction and operational activities and conditions. The screening assessment has concentrated on those issues upon which the integrity of habitats within the European sites or on which their designated qualifying features are dependent may be affected, as detailed below: ▪ reduction in habitat area (habitat loss, modification)	

- habitat fragmentation
- disturbance (change in visual, lighting or acoustic stimuli)
- reduction in species density/loss of individuals
- emissions to air (change in air quality)
- changes in hydrology (water quality, hydrological regime)

There are no other plans or projects with effects which could combine with those listed above to produce any significant adverse effect on the integrity of a site in combination. In this case, in-combination effects are taken into account by their elimination.

As per chapter E.3.8 (Step 2) of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA Publications Limited, 2019) this elimination of potential in combination effects takes account of "*the characteristics and specific environmental conditions and pressures at the site, and the lack of any credible evidence for a real risk of any damaging precedent whereby harmful effects on the site from similar proposals might accrue in a cumulative manner over the long term through proliferation*".

The initial assessment therefore only considers 'alone' impacts. No other plans or projects are considered or included in the assessment.

Initial Assessment

The key characteristics of the site and the details of the European site to be considered in identifying potential impacts. Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:

Reduction of habitat area	There would be no land taken from any of the European sites. Therefore, only the loss of functional land as a result of the scheme needs to be considered. In respect of the bird survey findings, only the teal population was considered significant. The location of teal was 205m north of the scheme boundary. This area will remain unaffected by the scheme. **No likely significant effects.**
Disturbance to key species	The SPA and Ramsar is located 3.7km south-west of the scheme. Aside from teal, the bird surveys undertaken in the breeding and wintering periods did not record significant numbers of qualifying bird species within the scheme or wider survey area. Significant numbers of teal were all recorded in a field pond bound by willow scrub in an area of pasture land. Intervening land between the scheme and this pond includes pasture land, hedgerows, treelines and a farm access road. This pond is located 205m north of the scheme boundary. The distance and intervening features are considered sufficient to eliminate potential disturbance risks. In addition, a link road forming part of the PWD/EWLR scheme was also being constructed between this pond and the scheme at the time of writing (October 2020). This road construction is highly likely to negate any potential disturbance effects to teal. All other qualifying species were not recorded in sufficient enough numbers within the survey area to warrant consideration for likely significant effects.

	No likely significant effects.
Habitat or species fragmentation	There would be no habitat fragmentation within the SPA and Ramsar as a result of the scheme. The bird survey did not record the presence of significant numbers of any qualifying bird species within the scheme itself. Given the mobility of the bird species, the construction and operational phases are unlikely to fragment the small populations of SPA and Ramsar qualifying species that utilise habitats within the immediate vicinity of the scheme. The habitat in which significant numbers of teal was recorded will remain unaffected by the scheme; therefore, there would be no fragmentation impacts to teal. **No likely significant effects.**
Reduction in species density	Significant numbers of teal were recorded utilising a pond 205m north of the scheme and none were recorded inside the actual scheme boundary. Very low numbers of other SPA and Ramsar qualifying birds were recorded within the scheme boundary or wider survey area. Any conceivable impact would therefore be negligible in the context of the existing bird use within the scheme. Given the distance between the SPA and Ramsar and the scheme and intervening land use, the scheme is highly unlikely to result in an impact that would result in a reduction of species density or a loss of individuals. **No likely significant effects.**
Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality, etc)	There are no anticipated changes to the key indicators of conservation value. Localised air quality impacts from highway schemes are considered most likely to occur within 200m of major roads. Assessment of European sites is only undertaken for any designated sites located within 200m of the affected road network in accordance with LA 105 (Air Quality) as no likely significant effects can be concluded alone beyond 200m. Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar is the closest European site to the scheme and located 3.7km south-west. There are potential hydrological connections (albeit very remote) between the scheme and the River Ribble which runs westwards into the designated SPA and Ramsar. This comprises two minor streams which run into Savick Brook, approximately 450m south. Savick Brook runs into the River Ribble which forms part of the SPA and Ramsar 3.7km south-west. This remote hydrological connection is not related

	to the qualifying interests of the SPA and Ramsar and there are no GWDTE within the SPA / Ramsar. Good practice pollution protocols are to be implemented by the scheme irrespective of the European site designation. **No likely significant effects.**
Climate change	The scheme will not result in the exacerbation of any climate change effects (e.g., increased risks of flooding) that could impact the SPA and Ramsar. **No likely significant effects.**
Describe any likely impacts on the European site as a whole in terms of:	
Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site	No effect pathways have been identified that would have anything other than absent or negligible effects on the SPA and Ramsar or functionally linked habitats for mobile species. There would therefore be no interference with the structure of the European site. **No likely significant effects.**
Interference with the key relationships that define the function of the site	No effect pathways have been identified that would have anything other than absent or negligible effects on the European site or functionally linked habitats for mobile species. There would therefore be no interference with the function of the SPA and Ramsar. **No likely significant effects.**
Indicate the significance as a result of the identification of impacts set out above in terms of:	
Reduction of habitat area	None. Absence of effect on the SPA and Ramsar and negligible effects on functionally linked habitats.
Disturbance to key species	None. Absence of effect on the SPA and Ramsar and negligible effects on functionally linked habitats.
Habitat or species fragmentation	None. Absence or negligible effect pathways that could lead to fragmentation.
Loss	None. No or negligible loss of habitat, species or connectivity.
Fragmentation	None. Absence or negligible effect pathways that could lead to fragmentation.
Disruption	None. Absence or negligible effect pathways that could disrupt achievement of conservation objectives.
Disturbance	None. Absence of effect on the SPA and Ramsar and negligible effects on functionally linked habitats.
Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality, hydrological regime, etc).	None. No changes to the water quality or hydrological regime are anticipated.

Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	
None of the anticipated elements of the project or combination of elements are expected to lead to a likely significant effect on any European site.	
Outcome of screening stage (delete as appropriate)	Not likely to be significant effects.
Are the appropriate statutory environmental bodies in agreement with this conclusion (delete as appropriate and attach relevant correspondence)	Lancashire County Council are to consult the statutory environmental body (Natural England) during the planning application process for the scheme.

Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar - finding of no significant effects report matrix

Project Name:	Cottam Parkway	
European Site under Consideration:	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar	
Date:	**Author: (Name / Organisation):**	**Verified (Name / Organisation)**
03/03/2020	Ryan Knight MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist, Jacobs	Kris Long CEnv MCIEEM, Associate Director of Ecology, Jacobs.
Name and location of European Site	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar – 3.7km south-west of the scheme.	
Description of the project	The scheme comprises (but not exhaustively): a road connecting to Cottam Link Road at the Sidgreaves junction roundabout; a bridge over the Lancaster Canal connecting to the railway station; station platforms; buildings and associated structures; a footbridge over the railway; a 250/500 space car park; and bridge approach embankments and earthworks. This development is related to the permitted road scheme of PWD/EWLR. The PWD/EWLR scheme including the Cottam Link Road was under construction at the time of assessment.	
Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site? (provide details).	The project is not connected with or necessary to the management of the SPA and Ramsar.	
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project being assessed could affect the site? (provide details).	The project is not considered likely to have any effects on the SPA and Ramsar sufficient to contribute significantly to any in-combination effects.	
The Assessment of Significance of Effects.		
Describe how the project (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the European site.	No significant effects, (e.g., disturbance, fragmentation, habitat loss, emissions) are anticipated on the SPA / Ramsar (alone or in combination) due to the following reasons: ▪ The scheme is located 3.7km from the SPA and Ramsar. ▪ Breeding and wintering bird surveys did not record any evidence of use of the land within scheme by significant numbers of any species associated with the SPA and Ramsar. ▪ Significant number of teal recorded were outside of the scheme boundary and within an area that would be unaffected by any direct or in-direct impacts from the construction and operation of the scheme. ▪ Good practice design and construction measures are to be followed throughout as standard, irrespective of the SPA and Ramsar.	
Explain why these effects are not considered significant.	No significant effects are anticipated as a result of the works as there are no pathways for adverse effects as detailed above.	

List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address.	To be confirmed and updated during the planning application process.
Response to consultation.	To be confirmed and updated during the planning application process.
Data Collected to carry out the Assessment	
Who carried out the assessment?	Jacobs – on behalf of Lancashire County Council
Sources of data	Jacobs, 2019. *Cottam Parkway Railway Station Wintering Bird Survey Report*. For Lancashire County Council. Jacobs, 2020. *Cottam Parkway Railway Station Breeding Bird Survey Report*. For Lancashire County Council. Details of the initial design acquired via collaboration with Jacob and Lancashire County Council. Data on nature conservation features: JNCC; Natural England; MAGIC. Accessed on numerous dates in December 2020.
Level of assessment	Screening: To assess likely significant effects from the project on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar.
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?	N/A