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Our ref: 140544 & 144332



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Dear Ms Allen

### **Planning consultation: Matterdale Neighbourhood Plan, Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening reports**

Thank you for the consultation received on 18 December 2014.

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

Natural England made detailed comments at the previous consultation stage via correspondence dated: 13 November 2014, reference: 134017, the comments were particularly around designated sites and BAP habitat, it does not appear that these comments have been incorporated into the plan. Therefore Natural England would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the points made in the previous response and ask that these be incorporated.

We would specifically like to take this opportunity to reiterate: *We advise that the neighbourhood plan includes criteria based policies for the protection and enhancement of the international, national and locally designated sites present. This is in line with para 113 of the NPPF which makes it clear that distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological network. The neighbourhood plan should always seek to avoid environmental impacts by directing development away from the most sensitive areas with mitigation considered only when this is not possible.*

#### **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion**

The screening opinion does not sufficiently detail the possible environmental effects that may occur as a result of development. A more robust and thorough screening is required to determine if an SEA may be required where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- a neighbourhood plan contain sensitive natural assets that may be affected by the plan
- a neighbourhood plan may have significant effects that have not already been considered and dealt with in the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan.

The screening opinion needs to consider the designated sites, detailed below before reaching a conclusion.

#### **Designated sites**

The neighbourhood plan falls entirely within the Lake District National Park. This is a nationally important landscape and Natural England is pleased to see this has been considered as part of the neighbourhood plan. However there are other internationally, nationally and locally designated sites

that are found within the boundary of the neighbourhood plan that have not been referenced and that need to be considered as part of the neighbourhood plan process.

The following Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are triggered by Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs). Therefore an assessment to clarify whether there are any potential impacts on these SSSIs interest features is recommended. The IRZs can be viewed on the MAGIC website (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>). Further information on these SSSIs can be found using the following link <http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/search.cfm>

- Thornsgill Beck, Mosedale Beck and Wold Crag – An impact risk has been identified for any rural, remote housing developments needing their own water supply within 1km and any development within 50m of these nature conservation site.
- River Derwent and Tributaries SSSI - An impact risk has been identified for any rural, remote housing developments needing their own water supply within 1km and any development within 50m of this nature conservation site. This site is also part of River Derwent & Bassenthwaite Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- Blackdike Bog SSSI – An impact risk has been identified for any rural, remote housing developments needing their own water supply within 1km and any development within 50m of this nature conservation site.
- Little Mell Fell Quarry SSSI – An impact risk has been identified for any development within 50m of this nature conservation site.
- River Eden and Tributaries SSSI - An impact risk has been identified for any rural, remote housing developments needing their own water supply within 1km, any residential developments outside of existing settlements/urban areas with a total net gain in residential units within 500m and any development within 50m of this nature conservation site. This site is also part of River Eden SAC.
- Gowbarrow Park SSSI - An impact risk has been identified for any development within 50m of this nature conservation site.

Gillhead Meadows, Troutbeck Station Embankment, Gillsrow Meadow, Highgate Grassland, Binks Moss, Matteredale Mosses, Douthwaite Head Grassland, Douthwaite Grassland, Aira Beck Grassland, Glencoyne Beck Wood, Spying How Wood, Glencoyne Park, Aira Force, Aira Point, Parkhouse Gill Wood (Ullswater), Birk Crag Wood, Knotts Hill Wood, Watermillock Meadow and Heskett Wood Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are located within the neighbourhood plan boundary. You should ensure you have sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the plan on the LWSs. Cumbria Wildlife Trust or Cumbria County Council may be able to provide further information in relation to these sites. Local environmental record centres also hold a range of information on the natural environment. A list of local records centre is available at: <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion**

Natural England agrees with the conclusions in the HRA screening opinion that a full assessment is not required. Natural England has reached this decision on the basis that the Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity with the higher tier Lake District Core Strategy and Allocations Development Plan Document.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Kate Wheeler on 07769 918711. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).



Yours sincerely

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Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire Area

