

“Houghton Green”

A Supplementary Planning Document

Habitats Screening Opinion

Screening opinion on the impact of the Houghton Green Supplementary Planning Document

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Introduction

Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive dealing with the conservation of European protected sites states that:

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'

The purpose of Habitats Regulations Assessment of land use plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European sites is a part of the planning process at a regional and local level. Habitats Regulations Assessment can be seen as having a number of discrete stages:

Stage 1 – Screening

Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternatives

Stage 4 – Assessment where no alternatives are available

This document comprises Stage 1 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and contributes to the fulfilment of the Councils statutory duty as regards Article 6(3); that is, it is a Screening Opinion on whether or not the Haughton Green Supplementary Planning Document (hereafter referred to as 'the SPD') will have an impact on the special interest of any European site and therefore needs to undergo further Screening Opinions or a full Habitats Regulations Assessment as the SPD develops.

A small part of the South Pennine Moors SAC / SPA falls within the borough boundary and has therefore been covered in this screening opinion. Although it is considered that the SPD will not have effects outside of the borough's boundaries, the Rochdale Canal SAC is approximately 1.5km from the borough boundary and has also been covered in this screening opinion to ensure that the SPD will not adversely affect this SAC.

Brief Description of the Haughton Green SPD

The policies within the Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in November 2004, have been 'saved' following Direction from the Secretary of State on 18 September 2007. The current UDP policies therefore continue to be the policies upon which any new SPD are based.

The Haughton Green SPD to which this Habitat Screening report is associated with is designed particularly to support saved UDP policy C1 Townscape and Urban form, for the distinct geographical area of Haughton Green surrounding Meadow Lane, which sets out that urban design frameworks will be produced for particular areas and corridors in the

borough, as supplementary planning guidance, detailing fundamental principles which should be followed and from which detail design may be interpreted. The policy furthermore highlights the importance when considering proposals for built development of distinct settlement patterns, open space features, topography, townscape and landscape character.

Screening Opinion

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit considered the scope of the Haughton Green SPD in January 2016 and provided the following opinion in relation to Habitat Regulations Screening.

“Given that:

- *The SPD is location specific around Meadow Lane,*
- *That Meadow Lane is more than 8km from the Rochdale Canal SAC and more than 10km from the boundary of the South Pennine Moors SAC, and*
- *The implementation of the SPD is unlikely to influence developments that will be subject to EIA,*

*It is concluded that the probability of the implementation of the SPD requirements causing harm to the special interest of European sites is negligible, and therefore the SPD can be **screened out** of the need for further Assessment under the term of the EU Habitats Regulations.”*