

16<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
*Our Reference: 47070949*

Local Plan Team  
Knowsley Council  
1st Floor Annexe  
Municipal Buildings  
Archway Road  
Huyton  
Merseyside  
L36 9YU

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Letter to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document, Consultation Version October 2015**

The submitted Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy<sup>1</sup> was subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in 2012<sup>2</sup>, assessing a variety of impact pathways (including disturbance from recreational pressure and other activities causing disturbance, mechanical/abrasive damage and nutrient enrichment to habitats, loss of supporting habitat, atmospheric pollution, water resources, and water quality) linking the Plan to the following internationally designated sites:

- Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar Site
- Manchester Mosses SAC
- River Dee & Bala Lake SAC
- Sefton Coast SAC
- Dee Estuary SAC SPA & Ramsar site
- Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar and SPA
- Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site
- Liverpool Bay SPA
- River Eden SAC
- Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site

Subsequent HRAs were undertaken of modifications to the Plan, the most recent being August 2015. It is the Plan that sets out the spatial strategy for housing and development within the Knowsley Council area. Following the HRAs of the Plan, it was concluded that the Plan would not result in likely significant effects upon internationally designated sites alone or in combination with any other project or plan.

This document is the HRA for the Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Consultation Version October 2015 only. Background on internationally designated sites and potential impact pathways is not repeated within this document, but can be found within the 2012 Plan HRA document<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For ease, the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy and modifications documents are referred to as the 'Plan' throughout this document.

<sup>2</sup> URS (October 2012). Knowsley Borough Council Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment. [http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/SD11\\_CoreStrategyHabitatsRegulationsAssessment.pdf](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/SD11_CoreStrategyHabitatsRegulationsAssessment.pdf) [Accessed 17/09/15]

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

This SPD is a supporting document to the Core Strategy and is to be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy. It provides additional guidance on how to fully consider and justify development proposals with regards to trees and hedgerows. It does not contain policies, but a narrative for how to approach trees and developments within Knowsley, explaining “*the Council’s approach in relation to Trees and Development setting out guidance relating to:*

- *Promoting best practice for proposals incorporating trees and landscaping within new developments;*
- *Development proposals affecting existing trees, woodlands and other vegetation;*
- *Requirements for detailed survey of all existing trees; and*
- *Requirements for provision of replacement trees”*

In the absence of policies, the SPD will be subject to assessment per chapter.

#### *Chapter 1: Introduction*

This chapter outlines the background and purpose of the SPD, including that the SPD is a supplementary document to support the Plan. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within this chapter.

#### *Chapter 2: Policy Context.*

This chapter explains the consultation process involved in preparing and adopting the SPD. It contextualises the SPD in relation to existing policy such as National Planning Policy, Local Planning Policy, the Plan, Saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies and other relevant plans and policies such as saved policies DQ4 and ENV10, incorporating requirements for Trees and Development and Protection of Species, and the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan Policies WM0, WM8 and WM9. Whilst not referring directly to internationally designated sites, this is a positive chapter. Paragraph 2.1 includes reference to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as detailed within the NPPF. By definition, sustainable development will not result in likely significant effects upon any internationally designated site. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within this chapter.

#### *Chapter 3: Existing Trees*

This chapter outlines the policy framework relating to and supporting the detail within the SPD. This chapter often refers to British Standard (BS) 5837:2012 which is positive. It encourages consideration of existing trees and hedgerows at the earliest possible design stage to allow successful integration of any proposed development. It references saved UDP Policy DQ4 and Local Plan: Core Strategy Policy CS8. This chapter includes text relating to existing trees on development sites, the need for tree survey and tree schedule undertaken by a professional arboriculturalist, topographical survey, tree categorisation for retention and removal, tree constraints plan, tree protection plan, new landscaping, street tree planting, new tree planting, replacement tree planting and permitted development. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within this chapter.

#### *Chapter 4: Tree Protection on Development Sites*

This chapter provides the information needed for considerations at each stage of the planning process. It details that from the earliest stage of the planning process trees and landscaping must be given high priority in order that they are appropriately integrated into the proposed development. This includes considerations such as their relationships to buildings, existing natural features and linkages to wider greenspaces. This chapter outlines ways that trees and hedges can be damaged during construction and outlines tree protection methods during the construction process to prevent damage, including reference to BS 5837:2012. This is a positive chapter. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within this chapter.

*Chapter 5: Landscape Schemes*

This chapter provides information regarding the Council's requirements to protecting existing trees and vegetation during development. This includes text relating to the importance of landscape design, the consideration of development within a wider landscape, consideration of public green space within a development site and landscape design and the planning process. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within this chapter.

*Chapter 6: Consultancy Services*

This chapter details where further help can be found relating to arboricultural and ecological services. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within this chapter.

In conclusion, the Trees and Development SPD for Knowsley is essentially a guide offering advice on how to proceed with trees and hedgerows where development; both permitted and that which requires planning permission is occurs. There are no impact pathways present within this SPD that could result in likely significant effects upon any internationally designated sites.

Yours faithfully  
for **AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Riley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'y' at the end.

**Dr James Riley**  
Associate Director