

27/01/16

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 Prescot Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

The submitted Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy¹ was subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in 2012², 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 Prescot Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 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 document³.

The SPD is a supporting document to the Core Strategy and is to be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy. It provides guidance on how to interpret policies within the Plan relating to the use of town

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

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

³ Ibid

centres. It is a narrative for how to approach developments that relate to the use of the town centres within Knowsley, with the inclusion of policies. The purpose of this SPD is to 'set out Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's strategy for the development of Prescott Town Centre in the period to 2028. The masterplan seeks to promote the regeneration of the town centre and ensure that its future development delivers the Council's wider objectives for the sustainable development of the Borough'. The Supplementary Planning Document will support policies contained within other Development Plan Documents and specifically the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy.

The SPD document contains policies as well as chapters. To keep in line with the HRA for the emerging SPD's, both chapters and policies will be assessed.

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: Baseline Summary

This chapter places the context of the SPD in relation to the existing conditions within Prescott Town Centre based on the findings of the Baseline Report. Specifically, the performance of:

- the town centre's retail and leisure sectors that play a crucial role in attracting visitors and trade to Prescott;
- the local property market, the performance of which is key to the viability of
- future development in the town centre;
- the town centre environment which has an important role in making Prescott a distinctive and attractive destination for visitors; and
- transport infrastructure in the town centre, including ease of access for visitors.

Since this sets out pure baseline, there are no impact pathways present within this chapter linking to any internationally designated sites.

Chapter 3: A Vision for Prescott Town Centre

This chapter summarises the options that were considered for the regeneration vision and presents the strategic option which has been used to create an overall vision for the town centre and the masterplan. This option is 'Strategic Reorientation'. The final strategic option envisages the reorientation of the town centre's existing offer to allow it to serve different markets and encourage new uses that are currently absent or under-represented within the town centre. The focus here would be on leisure and culture uses that would help to establish Prescott as a distinctive destination, changing perceptions of the town centre and allowing it to provide something different to competing town centres and out-of-centre retail parks. This is a broad vision and there is nothing inherent within it that presents impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites.

Chapter 4: The Town Centre Strategy

This chapter sets out the overall strategy and includes policies. Prescott Town Centre is approximately 8.8km from the closest internationally important wildlife site (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site). Note that the overall quantum of development to be delivered at Prescott has already been addressed in the HRA of the Local Plan. The purpose of this SPD is to set out the layout for that development and how the development will be delivered and designed. The policies are assessed within the following text.

TCS1 - Creating a Critical Mass of Leisure Development	The following interventions will be supported in order to create a critical mass of new leisure development within Prescott Town Centre: 1. The delivery of significant new leisure and cultural facilities, potentially
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including a new theatre and major leisure led developments.

2. Facilitating linked trips between Cables Retail Park and the town centre, including through the development of land along Sewell Street to create physical and functional links between the two destinations.
3. Locating these key developments around Eccleston Street, Sewell Street and Market Place in order to maximise their potential to transform the town centre.

This policy relates primarily to delivering leisure development in such a way as to attract people into the town centre. Since the quantum of development at Prescott has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescott town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within Policy TCS1.

TCS2 - Reinforcing Retail To reinforce retail activity in Prescott Town Centre, the following measures will be supported:

1. Concentrating retail activity on High Street, Eccleston Street and the Prescott Shopping Centre to support trade and footfall within this area.
2. Encouraging new residential development within the town centre to regenerate key sites and create additional demand for shops and services.
3. The promotion of independent retailers, building on new opportunities arising from the development of an improved visitor offer in the town centre.

This policy relates primarily to delivering retail development in such a way as to attract people into the town centre. Since the quantum of development at Prescott has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescott town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within Policy TCS2.

TCS3 - Creating a Stronger Sense of Place In order to achieve an enhanced sense of place in Prescott future development within the town centre should:

1. Ensure that new developments and activity enhance the character and setting around the historic core formed by St Mary's Church, Church Street, Market Place and the conservation area.
2. Use the town centre's topography as an asset and point of interest to reveal and protect key views where appropriate.
3. Encourage high quality design that complements the historic environment.
4. Create new and enhance existing public spaces for outdoor events that will add vitality to the town centre.

This policy sets out some design-related criteria for regeneration of Prescott Town Centre. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within Policy RCS3.

TCS4 - Supporting New Investment Improvements to the town centre's environment also have a role to play in supporting new investment. This will be achieved by:

1. Setting a standard for high quality new development including public realm.
2. Using public investment to improve the setting of key development sites

and encourage high quality private development.

3. Facilitating the delivery of new investment through the targeted use of public sector resources.
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This policy relates to the quality of the public realm and the facilitation of new investment. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within Policy TCS4.

TCS5 - Creating New Gateways and Linkages	<p>To create new gateways and linkages in Prescott Town Centre, the following interventions will be supported:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New outer and inner gateways to give a sense of arrival. 2. Improved connections from the town centre to the railway station and Knowsley Safari Park. 3. Improved public transport services. 4. New signage for the town centre. 5. Supporting the development of the St Mary's Churchyard and Prescott Cemetery Masterplan in recognition of its Green Flag status.
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This policy is focused inwards on Prescott Town Centre and making it an easier and more attractive place to visit, such as by creating 'gateways'. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within Policy TCS5.

TCS6 - Town Centre Management	<p>Future management of Prescott Town Centre will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create an appropriate mix of uses, by supporting the retail core. 2. Provide the capacity for effective events management. 3. Support investment in transport infrastructure to support local services and businesses. 4. Encourage the use of new technology to create heritage trails and new links with Knowsley Hall. 6. Review the supply and operation of town centre car parking
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This policy relates to ensuring that the investment, infrastructure and mix of uses continues to be appropriate. This policy provides for the protection of watercourses via the inclusion of grease traps. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within Policy TCS6.

It can be concluded that there are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within this Chapter 4.

Chapter 5: Town Centre Masterplan

This chapter sets out a number of key sites throughout the town centre whose redevelopment will help to transform its visitor offer, create landmark developments and introduce new residential development that will support local shops and services. Each key site is assessed within the following text:

Public Realm Strategy	<p>The strategy concentrates on three key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the enhancement of the historic environment through public realm • improvements along a north-south corridor from High Street to Sewell Street; • the creation of a new town centre heart at Market Place; and • significant improvements to town centre gateways on the A57 including at the junctions with Church Street, the A58 and Ackers Street.
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This policy relates primarily to qualitative improvements to the public realm in Prescott Town Centre to make the area more appealing and enhance its historic environment. Since Prescott town centre is

over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites from the Public Realm Strategy.

Movement Strategy

The focus of the town centre’s movement strategy will be a new multi-modal transport corridor to be created between High Street and Steley Way on the western side of the town centre.

The key elements of the Movement Strategy are:

- improved links between bus stops to Warrington Road and Eccleston Street;
- the creation of a new pedestrian and cycle route between the railway station, town centre and Knowsley Safari Park. This will support emerging proposals to provide a pedestrian crossing of the A58 from Knowsley Park Lane and to improve the Safari Park’s offer to non-car visitors;
- signing of this new route and the introduction of wayfinding signage elsewhere including to link the town centre with Eaton Street Park;
- new advance signage to town centre car parks including those at Mill Street, Cyprus Street and High Street; and
- the introduction of new gateway signage welcoming visitors to the town centre at four inner gateways.

The Movement Strategy is focused inwards on Prescott Town Centre and making it an easier and more attractive place to visit, such as by creating ‘gateways’. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites.

WAA1 - Land at Sewell Street

Preferred Uses

1. Mixed use, leisure led development, supported by food and drink units.
2. Small-scale retail uses and hotel or residential accommodation to upper levels.

Key Design Principles

1. High quality development that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area with the creation of a corner feature at the junction of Sewell Street and Kemble Street.
2. Active frontages to Sewell Street to add interest to the street scene.
3. Multi-level development that responds to the topography of the site.
4. Retention of the existing frontage to the former picture house on Kemble Street.
5. Pedestrian entrances located to create links with the shopping centre and retail park.
6. Parking and service areas concealed to the rear of the site.

This policy relates primarily to the design principles for this site. Since the quantum of development at Prescott has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescott town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within site WAA1.

WAA2 - Mill Street West

Preferred Uses

1. New landmark theatre development that would meet the aspirations of the Shakespeare North Trust.
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2. The theatre may also include educational facilities and ancillary food and drink uses.

Key Design Principles

1. High quality, landmark building that respects the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the setting of St Mary's Church/ other listed buildings in terms of its scale, massing and design.
2. Active frontages to the bus station, the Mill Street pedestrian route and, if feasible, the A57.
3. Improve the appearance of rear elevations of properties fronting Eccleston Street and Church Street.

This policy relates primarily to the design principles for this site. Since the quantum of development at Prescot has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescot town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within site WAA2.

WAA3 - Land at Church Street

Preferred Uses and Key Design Principles

- New 3 storey residential or commercial development, stepping down to 2 storeys on West Street.
- Active frontage to the corner with High Street including potential small
- commercial units at ground floor.
- Layout and design of new development to complement future redevelopment of opportunity site to the south at Deanes House.

This policy relates primarily to the design principles for this site. Since the quantum of development at Prescot has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescot town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within site WAA3.

WAA4 - Other Opportunity Sites

Deanes House Car Park

The car park to the rear of The Deanes House on West Street has the potential to accommodate new, high quality residential development that would enhance the setting of the town centre's historic core. Alternatively, and subject to the delivery of the theatre at Mill Street West, the car park could be upgraded and re-landscaped to provide well-located car parking for theatergoers.

Knowsley Registry Office

The registry office currently performs important civic a range of functions and is located on High Street in an attractive building with rear gardens. If the site were to become available in the longer term then the existing building should be retained. Appropriate new uses would include a small hotel (to take advantage of its location opposite the proposed theatre site) or residential uses.

Greenall Court

In the short term, opportunities should be sought to improve the external appearance of Greenall Court, a large social housing development at the top of Sewell Street. The existing building is dated and would benefit from modest refurbishments to its fenestration that would improve the

street scene. Over the longer term redevelopment of the site for new residential or commercial uses will be encouraged, where this respects and enhances the conservation area and the setting of St Mary's Church.

Garage to the West of Sewell Street

Redevelopment of the vacant garage site to the west of Sewell Street for residential or non-retail commercial uses will be encouraged. New development here should help to improve the setting of the inner gateway at the junction of Sewell Street and Steley Way.

This policy relates to a series of individual buildings. Since the quantum of development at Prescot has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescot town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within these other opportunity sites.

WAA5 – Public Realm & Movement

Market Place

The identified opportunities for public realm and movement improvements within the Market Place and the surrounding area include:

1. Reviewing the operation and design of the bus station to increase patronage, account for the potential redevelopment of land at Mill Street West, and to reduce the scope for vehicular conflict in this area.
2. An improved western entrance to Eccleston Street including possible gateway features.
3. The redevelopment of the elevated square at Market Place to provide a new space for outdoor events including performances associated with the proposed theatre.
4. Resurfacing and soft landscaping around Market Place, and the creation of spill-out spaces to commercial properties on its eastern boundary.
5. Improved links to green spaces to the west of the town centre.
6. The continuation of a dedicated cycle route from Sewell Street to the A57 via Market Place and Church Street.

WAA5 – Public Realm & Movement

Sewell Street

The identified opportunities for public realm and movement improvements within the Sewell Street Action Area include:

1. Maintaining wide pavements and using suitable hard and soft landscaping to create a more appealing pedestrian route.
2. Where appropriate, the creation of spill-out spaces to potential new food and drink units on the Sewell Street development site to add interest and vitality to the street scene.
3. The continuation of a dedicated cycle route from Manchester Road to Market Place.
4. Retaining residents' parking to the western side of the road.

This policy is focused inwards on the Market Place and Sewell Street areas of Prescot Town Centre and making it an easier and more attractive place to visit and to better connect people with green spaces in the Market Place. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within Policy WAA5.

CAA1 - Prescot Shopping Centre

Preferred Uses

1. Retail-led mixed-use development.
2. Complementary leisure uses.
3. Office and service uses.

Key Design Principles

1. Better integrating the site with surrounding sites to help increase footfall.
2. Refurbishing the prominent elevations of the shopping centre.

This policy relates primarily to the design principles for this site. Since the quantum of development at Prescott has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescott town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within site CAA1.

CAA2 - Land at Aspinall Street Preferred Uses and Key Design Principles

- New residential development creating a strong frontage to Aspinall Street.
- Buildings of up to 3 storeys set an appropriate distance from existing
- residential dwellings to Cyprus Street to protect amenity.
- Car parking concealed to the rear of the new buildings.

This policy relates primarily to the design principles for this site. Since the quantum of development at Prescott has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescott town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within site CAA2.

EAA1 - Eccleston Street East Preferred Uses

1. Mixed use development to support footfall along Eccleston Street.
2. New or refurbished ground floor commercial space with residential units at upper levels.
3. Active frontages should be encouraged to the eastern corner of the site to identify the entrance to Eccleston Street, and to a new public space that would be formed to the north of the site.

Key Design Principles

1. The creation of a strong corner feature to the junction of Warrington Road and Eccleston Street through the building design or a feature frontage, as appropriate.
2. New buildings of two to three storeys to fit with the existing urban grain.
3. Setting back new buildings at the A58 junction to create small public space with high quality landscaping opposite Prescott Town Hall and at town centre gateway. This will provide a sense of arrival for visitors arriving from the north and help to raise the prominence of the town centre at this busy junction.
4. Narrowing the existing one way route to Eccleston Street to widen pavements and create a more attractive pedestrian route.

This policy relates primarily to the design principles for this site. Since the quantum of development at Prescott has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescott town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within site EAA1.

EAA2 - Other Opportunity Sites Land between Atherton Street and Chapel Street

The Methodist church on Atherton Street is still in use but is partially vacant. The attractive main church building should be retained and re-used for appropriate town centre uses. Ancillary church buildings to the

rear of the site could also be redeveloped for appropriate uses. It is possible that the Methodist Church site could be redeveloped in a comprehensive manner together with other buildings between Atherton Street and Chapel Street, or with the key opportunity site at Eccleston Street East.

Cyprus Street Car Park

The small public car park at the northern end of Cyprus Street is adjoined by a two-storey commercial block dating from the mid twentieth century. Whilst the commercial units are largely occupied, there is potential here to redevelop all or part of this site in the longer term for residential or appropriate commercial uses.

This policy relates to a series of individual buildings or car parks. Since the quantum of development at Prescott has already been assessed in the HRA of the Local Plan and Prescott town centre is over 8km from the nearest European sites, there are considered to be no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites within these other opportunity sites.

EAA3 – Public Realm and Movement

The identified opportunities for public realm and movement improvements within the Ackers Street Action Area include:

1. Resurfacing of Ackers Street with high quality materials to improve links with Cyprus Street car park and the setting of the 'Flat Iron' building.
2. Rationalisation of car parking to the Beaconsfield housing development to create clear pedestrian links between Warrington Road and Eccleston Street.
3. Improved bus stop facilities to Warrington Road.
4. Widening of pavements to the eastern end of Eccleston Street and Chapel Street.
5. The improvement of 'pocket parks' located between Eccleston Street and Cyprus Street, and between Warrington Road and Beaconsfield.

This policy is focused inwards on the Ackers Street area of Prescott Town Centre and making it an easier and more attractive place to visit and to better connect people with green spaces. There are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within Policy EAA3.

It can be concluded that there are no impact pathways linking to any internationally designated sites present within Chapter 5.

There are no impact pathways present within the policies or chapters of this SPD that could result in likely significant effects upon any internationally designated sites. Since the SPD does not present any impact pathways, there is no scope for a likely significant effect on any European sites either alone or in combination with other projects and plans.

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



Dr James Riley
Associate Director