



Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Publication Core Strategy  
Habitats Regulations Assessment

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Screening Report

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# Ribble Valley Borough Council

## Publication Core Strategy

### Habitats Regulations Assessment

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#### Screening Report

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# Abbreviations

cSAC	Candidate Special Area of Conservation
EC	European Community
FCS	Favourable Conservation Status
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IROPI	Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LDF	Local Development Framework
pRamsar	Possible Ramsar
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCI	Site of Community Importance
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

## 1.1 Introduction

Ribble Valley Borough Council is currently preparing its Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is the central document of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and is produced under 'The Planning and Compulsory Act 2004'. The Core Strategy, once adopted, will be used to inform the determination of planning applications and decisions will be made in accordance with it.

Within Ribble Valley there are two sites that form part of the Natura 2000 Network and 13 sites within 15 kilometres (km) of the borough boundary. Natura 2000 is a network of areas designated to conserve natural habitats and species that are rare, endangered, vulnerable or endemic within the European Community. The sites forming part of the network are frequently referred to as 'European sites' and include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EC Habitats Directive 1992 (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) for their habitats and/or species of European importance and Special Protection Areas (SPA) classified under the EC Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) for rare, vulnerable and regularly occurring migratory bird species. There are also Ramsar Sites which are wetlands of international importance designated under the Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971.

This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening document has been produced during the preparation of the Publication Core Strategy. This approach will ensure that the options, objectives and core policies in the Core Strategy will avoid significant adverse impacts on protected sites of international importance which lie within a 15 km radius of the borough boundary.

## 1.2 Background to the Habitats Regulations Assessment

Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (and Regulation 61 of the Habitats Regulations), an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon a Natura 2000 site (also known as 'European site').

In addition to SACs and SPAs, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process; furthermore, it is Government policy that sites designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention for their internationally important wetlands (Ramsar sites) and potential SPAs (pSPAs) are also considered.

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into UK law by means of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010<sup>1</sup>.

Paragraph 3, Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 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 or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the*

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<sup>1</sup> SI 2010/490

*implications for the site and subject to paragraph 4 (see below), the competent national authority shall agree to the plan or project only having 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’.*

Paragraph 4, Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that:

*‘If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.’*

The overarching aim of HRA is to determine, in view of a site’s conservation objectives and qualifying interests, whether a plan, either in isolation and/or in combination with other plans, would have a significant adverse effect on the European site. If the Screening (the first stage of the process, see section 2.1 for details) concludes that significant adverse effects are likely, then Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken to determine whether there will be adverse effects on site integrity.

## 1.3 Legislation and Guidance

This HRA has drawn upon the following pieces of legislation and guidance:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents.
- European Commission, Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission, Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

## 2 THE HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This section provides an outline of the stages involved in HRA and the specific methods that have been used in preparing this report.

### 2.1 Stages in HRA

The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

**Stage 1: Screening** is the process which initially identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may have a significant effect on the integrity of the site's qualifying habitats and/or species. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect; if the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice case law to the effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, and adopting the precautionary principle, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.

**Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** is the detailed consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.

**Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions** is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.

**Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** At Stage 4, an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI). If it is, this stage also involves detailed assessment of the compensatory measures needed to protect and maintain the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

### 2.2 Applying HRA to the Core Strategy

The HRA process should be applied to all aspects of the Core Strategy which could have potential impacts upon a European site. This includes the Key Statements and the Development Management Policies.

The SA process which is being undertaken in parallel to this HRA will also consider the effects of the alternative options on European sites in order to avoid potential damaging options being brought forward.

A screening of the likely significant effects of the options developed to-date is provided in Section 4.

## 2.3 Definition of Significant Effects

The critical part of the HRA screening process is determining whether the Core Strategy is likely to have a significant effect on European sites and, therefore, if it will require an Appropriate Assessment. Judgements regarding significance should be made in relation to the qualifying interests for which the site is of European importance and also its conservation objectives. A useful definition of significant effects is provided in Welsh planning guidance<sup>2</sup> which can be drawn upon in this case:

*'...likely means readily foreseeable not merely a fanciful possibility; significant means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that is potentially relevant to the site's conservation objectives'.*

## 2.4 In Combination Effects

As outlined in section 2-1, it is necessary for the HRA to consider not only the strategy and policies within the Publication Core Strategy that may lead to significant impacts upon European sites on their own, but those that may have a significant impact in combination with other plans. These may be general spatial planning documents produced by neighbouring planning authorities, or sector specific strategic plans on such topics as waste, water resources or transport. Table 2-1 presents details of the plans and projects considered.

**Table 2-1 Plans and Projects Considered for In Combination Effects**

Authority	Relevant Plan/Project
United Utilities	Water Resources Management Plan (2009)
Lancashire County Council	Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2021: A Strategy for Lancashire May 2011
Lancashire County Council	Local Transport Plan 2011-2021: Delivering our Priorities A Draft Implementation Plan for 2011/12 – 13/14 August 2011
North Yorkshire County Council	North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-16
Lancashire County Council	Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development framework Core Strategy (2009)
Lancashire County Council	Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2009 - 2014
North Yorkshire County Council	North Yorkshire Waste Local Plan (Adopted 2006)
Lancaster District	Core Strategy (Adopted July 2008)
Craven District Council	Craven District Council (Outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park) Adopted Local Plan (1999)
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	The Yorkshire Dales Local Plan 2006
Pendle Borough Council	The Replacement Pendle Local Plan (Adopted 2006)

<sup>2</sup>[http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/epc/planning/403821/403827/40382/860788/Final\\_Copy\\_Consultation\\_Doc1.pdf?lang=en](http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/epc/planning/403821/403827/40382/860788/Final_Copy_Consultation_Doc1.pdf?lang=en)



<b>Authority</b>	<b>Relevant Plan/Project</b>
Burnley Borough Council	The Burnley Local Plan (adopted 2006)
Hyndburn Council	Hyndburn Core Strategy (Adopted 2012)
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Core Strategy (Adopted 2011)
Preston City Council	Preston Local Plan 2004
South Ribble Borough Council	South Ribble Local Plan (Adopted 2000)
Wyre Borough Council	Wyre Local Plan (Adopted 1999)

It should be noted that in-combination effects only require consideration where the plan being assessed has an impact, whether significant or not. A conclusion of 'Zero Effects' negates the possibility of in-combination effects.

## 2.5 Mitigation Measures

In preparing this HRA Screening Report, consideration has been given to potential avoidance and mitigation measures which would serve to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European sites, for example the provision of specific clauses within the policies that may prevent effects occurring.

### 3 THE EUROPEAN SITES

Fifteen European sites have been identified within the Core Strategy area and 15km from Ribble Valley’s boundary. A list of the sites together with their status and location is presented in Table 3-1. Figure 1, Appendix B also shows the locations of the European sites identified in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1 European Sites Located within Ribble Valley and within 15km of Ribble Valley**

Name of Site	Identification Number	Status
North Pennine Dales Meadows (in borough)	UK0014775	SAC
Bowland Fells (in borough)	UK9005151	SPA
Ingleborough Complex	UK0012782	SAC
Craven Limestone Complex	UK0014776	SAC
Malham Tarn	UK11038	Ramsar
North Pennine Moors	UK0030033	SAC
North Pennine Moors	UK9006272	SPA
South Pennine Moors Phase 2	UK9007022	SPA
South Pennine Moors	UK0030280	SAC
Ribble and Alt Estuaries	UK11057	Ramsar
Ribble and Alt Estuaries	UK9005103	SPA
Morecambe Bay	UK11045	Ramsar
Morecambe Bay	UK9005081	SPA
Morecambe Bay	UK0013027	SAC
Calf Hill and Cragg Woods	UK0030106	SAC

Table 3-2 provides further information regarding the European sites including current conditions, threats and the results of the 2011 condition survey.

The boundaries of the sites are located on Figure 1, presented in Appendix B.

#### 3.1 Conservation Objectives of the European Sites

Under Regulation 35(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 the appropriate statutory nature conservation body (in this case Natural England) has a duty to communicate the conservation objectives for a European site to the relevant/competent authority responsible for that site. The information provided under Regulation 35 must also include advice on any operations which may cause deterioration of the features for which the site is designated.

The conservation objectives for a European site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to ‘favourable conservation status’ (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as ‘favourable’ when:

- Its natural range and the area it covers within that range are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and
- Conservation status of typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Guidance from the European Commission<sup>3</sup> indicates that the Habitats Directive intends FCS to be applied at the level of an individual site, as well as to habitats and species across their European range. Therefore, in order to properly express the aims of the Habitats Directive for an individual site, the conservation objectives for a site are essentially to maintain (or restore) the habitats and species of the site at (or to) FCS.

Natural England has provided the Conservation Objectives for the North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC and the Bowland Fells SPA. These are summarised in Appendix A.

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<sup>3</sup> Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

Table 3-2 European Sites that could be adversely affected by Ribble Valley's Core Strategy

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
<b>Morecambe Bay Ramsar site</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ramsar criterion 4: The site is a staging area for migratory waterfowl including internationally important numbers of passage ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>.</li> <li>▪ Ramsar criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance with peak counts in the winter: 223709 waterfowl</li> <li>▪ Ramsar criterion 6 Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance during the breeding season: Lesser black-backed gull , <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i> Herring gull, <i>Larus argentatus argentatus</i> Sandwich tern, <i>Sterna (Thalasseus) sandvicensis sandvicensis</i> Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</li> </ul>	No factors reported adversely affecting the sites ecological character (past, present or potential).	<p>Area favourable 93.81%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 6.19%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	12.3 km west of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<p>Great cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i></p> <p>Common shelduck, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i></p> <p>Northern pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i></p> <p>Common eider, <i>Somateria mollissima mollissima</i></p> <p>Eurasian oystercatcher, <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i></p> <p>Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></p> <p>Grey plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i></p> <p>Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i></p> <p>Eurasian curlew, <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i></p> <p>Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i></p> <p>Ruddy turnstone, <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i></p> <p>Lesser black-backed gull, <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i></p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p>			

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<p>Great crested grebe, <i>Podiceps cristatus cristatus</i></p> <p>Pink-footed goose, <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i></p> <p>Eurasian wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i></p> <p>Common goldeneye, <i>Bucephala clangula clangula</i></p> <p>Red-breasted merganser, <i>Mergus serrator</i></p> <p>European golden plover, <i>Pluvialis apricaria apricaria</i></p> <p>Northern lapwing, <i>Vanellus vanellus</i></p> <p>Red knot, <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i></p> <p>Dunlin, <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i></p> <p>Bar-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i></p>			
<b>Morecambe Bay SPA</b>	N/A	<p>The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p>	<p>The site is subject to a wide range of pressures such as land-claim for agriculture, overgrazing, dredging, overfishing, industrial uses and unspecified pollution. However, overall the site is relatively robust and many of those pressures have only slight to local effects and are being addressed through</p>	<p>Area favourable 93.81%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 6.19%</p>	12.3 km west of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i></li> <li>▪ Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Over winter;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i></li> <li>▪ Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i></li> </ul> <p>The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i></li> <li>▪ Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i></li> </ul> <p><b>On passage;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></li> <li>▪ Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Over winter;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i></li> <li>▪ Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i></li> <li>▪ Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i></li> </ul>	<p>Management Plans. The breeding tern interest is very vulnerable and the colony has recently moved to the adjacent Duddon Estuary. Positive management is being secured through management plans for non-governmental organisation reserves, English Nature Site Management Statements, European Marine Site Management Scheme, and the Morecambe Bay Partnership.</p>	<p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i></li> <li>▪ Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i></li> <li>▪ Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i></li> <li>▪ Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i></li> <li>▪ Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i></li> <li>▪ Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i></li> <li>▪ Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i></li> </ul> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 seabirds.</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl.</p>			
<b>Morecambe Bay SAC</b>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Estuaries</li> <li>▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> </ul>	<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i></li> </ul>	<p>There are a wide range of pressures on Morecambe Bay but the site is relatively robust and many of these pressures have only slight or local effects on its interests. The interests depend largely upon the coastal processes operating within the Bay, which have been affected historically by human activities including coastal protection and</p>	<p>Area favourable 93.81%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 6.19%</p> <p>Area</p>	<p>12.3 km west of Ribble Valley</p>



Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large shallow inlets and bays</li> <li>▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks</li> <li>▪ <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>▪ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>▪ Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (`white dunes`)</li> <li>▪ Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (`grey dunes`) <b>*Priority feature</b></li> <li>▪ Humid dune slacks</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time</li> </ul>		<p>flood defence works.</p> <p>Current pressures include fisheries, aggregate extraction, gas exploration, recreation and other activities.</p>	<p>unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coastal lagoons <b>*Priority feature</b></li> <li>▪ Reefs</li> <li>▪ Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>▪ Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) <b>*Priority feature</b></li> <li>▪ Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>)</li> </ul>				
<b>Bowland Fells SPA</b>	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></li> <li>▪ Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i></li> </ul> <p>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:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <p>Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus</i></p>	<p>The expansive blanket bog and heather dominated moorland provides suitable habitat for a diverse range of upland breeding birds. Favourable nature conservation status of the site depends on appropriate levels of sheep grazing, sympathetic moorland burning practice, sensitive water catchment land management practices and ongoing species protection. Since designation as an SPA, many localised problems of over-grazing have been controlled through management agreements or the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. To date approximately 20% of SPA is under Section 15 management agreements and Countryside Stewardship to stimulate heather regeneration in order to produce</p>	<p>Area favourable 5.50%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 94.50%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	Located within Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<i>fuscus</i>	better moorland for grouse and raptors alike. Burning plans and stocking levels have also been agreed for all other areas of the SPA through Site Management Statements, whilst problems of raptor persecution continues to be addressed by the RSPB in conjunction with North West Water, English Nature and Lancashire Constabulary.		
<b>Calf Hill and Cragg Woods SAC</b>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) *<b>Priority feature</b></li> </ul>	N/A	Currently there is limited intervention in land-use/management terms. There is also no immediate need for woodland management in order to safeguard the interest of the site. However, in the long-term it would be desirable to repair some of the walls/fences at the far eastern most end of Calf Hill Wood in order to control sheep grazing from the adjacent fell. In addition, since the canopy of the oak woodland is fairly dense and natural regeneration is quite limited, it would be desirable over the long-term to instigate small-scale selective fellings/silvicultural thinning, whilst felling a small stand of planted larch/pine (<0.5 ha) and replacing it with oak/birch.	<p>Area favourable 100%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	8.4 km north-west of Ribble Valley
<b>North Pennine Dales and</b>	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection	N/A	These grasslands are dependent upon traditional agricultural management, with hay-	N/A	Located within Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
<b>Meadows SAC</b>	<p>of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mountain hay meadows</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)</li> </ul>		cutting and no or minimal use of agrochemicals. Such management is no longer economic. Management agreements and ESA payments are being used to promote the continuation of traditional management. The refining of the prescriptions underpinning these schemes in the light of the findings of monitoring programmes is an important, continuing, part of delivering favourable condition.		
<b>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA</b>	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i></li> <li>Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Over winter;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i></li> <li>Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i></li> <li>Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i></li> </ul>	Overall, the dunes, intertidal flats and saltmarsh enjoy a relatively robust status and a favourable condition. However, the site is, in places, subject to pressure from recreation, built development (including coastal defence), wildfowling and industry, including sand-winning. Wildfowling is not considered to have a significant impact in terms of direct take; resulting disturbance is effectively managed through the provision of refuge areas and strict regulation on shooting activities. Military activities only take place at Altcar Rifle Range which is adjacent to the Alt Estuary. Recreation is informal and of relatively low intensity along most of the Sefton Coast and in the Ribble Estuary.	<p><b>Ribble Estuary SSSI</b></p> <p>Area favourable 99.10%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 0%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 0.90%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed</p>	14.7 km south-west of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i></li> </ul> <p>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:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i></li> </ul> <p><b>On passage;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></li> <li>▪ Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Over winter;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i></li> <li>▪ Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i></li> <li>▪ Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i></li> <li>▪ Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i></li> <li>▪ Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i></li> <li>▪ Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i></li> <li>▪ Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i></li> </ul>	<p>The issue of grazing pressure on the saltmarsh will be addressed through a management agreement to reduce the grazing pressure.</p> <p>Although there is little evidence of sea-level rise so far, the extent and distribution of habitats remains vulnerable to changes in the physical environment, either natural or man-induced. The intertidal habitats are vulnerable to accidental pollution from the nearby Mersey Estuary and the Irish Sea oil and gas fields. Oil spill contingency plans are being updated to deal with such events. The Ribble in particular has failed to meet the requirements of the Bathing Waters Directive. Government Office North West and the Environment Agency are investigating likely sources of pollution that may have caused this.</p>	<p>/ part destroyed 0%</p> <p><b>Sefton Coast SSSI</b></p> <p>Area favourable 67.20%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 21.66%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 7.99%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 3.15%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i></li> <li>▪ Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i></li> <li>▪ Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i></li> <li>▪ Teal <i>Anas crecca</i></li> <li>▪ Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i></li> </ul> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 seabirds</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl.</p>			
<b>Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar</b>	N/A	<p>Ramsar criterion 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This site supports up to 40% of the Great Britain population of natterjack toads <i>Bufo calamita</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 222038 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</li> </ul> <p>Ramsar criterion 6</p>	Coastal erosion is a factor at Formby Point with an estimated loss of 4 metres per year. It is a concern because pine woodland on the sand dunes is causing coastal squeeze and therefore preventing sand dune habitats from rolling back; as such dune slack habitats for natterjack toads are declining/being lost.	<b>Ribble Estuary SSSI</b> Area favourable 99.10% Area unfavourable but recovering 0% Area unfavourable no change 0.90%	14.7 km south-west of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<p>Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance supported during the breeding season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lesser Black-backed gull, <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i></li> </ul> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></li> <li>▪ Grey plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i></li> <li>▪ Red knot, <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i></li> <li>▪ Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i></li> <li>▪ Dunlin, <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i></li> <li>▪ Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i></li> <li>▪ Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i></li> <li>▪ Lesser black-backed gull, <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i></li> </ul> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tundra swan, <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i></li> </ul>		<p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p> <p><b>Sefton Coast SSSI</b></p> <p>Area favourable 67.20%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 21.66%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 7.99%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 3.15%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whooper swan, <i>Cygnus cygnus</i></li> <li>▪ Pink-footed goose, <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i></li> <li>▪ Common shelduck, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i></li> <li>▪ Eurasian wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i></li> <li>▪ Eurasian teal, <i>Anas crecca</i></li> <li>▪ Northern pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i></li> <li>▪ Eurasian oystercatcher, <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i></li> <li>▪ Bar-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i></li> </ul>			
<b>South Pennine Moors SAC</b>	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ European dry heaths</li> <li>▪ Blanket bogs * Priority feature</li> <li>▪ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a</p>	N/A	The South Pennine Moors SAC is largely enclosed on two sides by large industrial urban areas, which means that large numbers of people use the area for recreational activities. There are a number of key pressures upon the site; these include overgrazing by sheep, burning as a tool for grouse moor management and inappropriate drainage through moor-gripping. All these issues are being tackled, and an integrated management strategy and conservation action programme has been produced as part	<p>Area favourable 1.13%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 92.59%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 6.28%</p> <p>Area unfavourable</p>	9 km south-east of Ribble Valley



Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
	<p>primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>▪ Transition mires and quaking bogs</li> </ul>		<p>of an EU funded LIFE project for the area to the north of the National Park. Within the Park, the MAFF (now Defra) - funded North Peak and South West Peak Environmentally Sensitive Areas are important mechanisms in attempts to achieve balanced management. MAFF's Countryside Stewardship Scheme and English Nature's Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES) are also being used to achieve favourable management.</p> <p>Management of the site, especially north of the National Park, is further complicated by the large number of commons. Atmospheric pollution over the last few hundred years has depleted the lichen and bryophyte flora and may be affecting dwarf-shrubs. The impact has arguably been greatest on blanket bog, wet heath and transition mire where the bog-building Sphagnum mosses have been largely lost. Combined with historical overgrazing, burning (accidental and deliberate), drainage and locally trampling, large areas of blanket bog have become de-vegetated and eroded.</p> <p>There is no woodland included in the site to the north of the National Park. Remaining woods are often unfenced and open to</p>	<p>declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
			grazing which restricts tree regeneration. In some Rhododendron has invaded, choking out native flora. These issues are being tackled through the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme and Challenge Fund for creating new native woodland, MAFF's North Peak ESA and English Nature's WES though more incentive and resources are needed. As well as restoring existing stands of woodland there is an emphasis on re-creation to expand and link fragments which inevitably involves changing existing habitats. This will raise questions over the balance of vegetation types NE wish to see on the site but given woodland would naturally have covered much of the area NE need to treat its expansion seriously. The flora of woodlands, quality as with bog and heath, has suffered from poor air quality. Again, it is less clear what can be done to reverse this situation other than to try and ensure continued improvements in air quality to allow affected species to recolonise if they can.		
<b>South Pennine Moors Phase 2</b>	N/A	This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting bird populations of	The South Pennine Moors SPA (Phase 2) is flanked two sides by large industrial urban areas, which means that large numbers of	Area favourable 1.13%	9 km south-east of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
SPA		<p>European importance listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Short eared owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> 0.3% of the GB breeding population Count as at 1990</li> <li>▪ Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> 2.2% of the GB breeding population Count as at 1995</li> <li>▪ Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> (North-western Europe - breeding) 1.3% of the GB breeding population No count period specified.</li> </ul> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of internationally important bird assemblages:</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Actitis hypoleucos, Calidris alpina schinzii, Carduelis flavirostris, Gallinago gallinago, Numenius arquata, Oenanthe oenanthe, Saxicola rubetra, Tringa totanus, Turdus torquatus, Vanellus</i></li> </ul>	<p>people use the area for recreational activities. Maintenance of the ecosystems on which the birds depend relies on appropriate grazing levels and burning regimes, and overgrazing by sheep is a key pressure on the site. Management of grazing is further complicated by the presence of a large number of commons within the SPA. Pressures outside the site, in particular the loss of bird feeding areas through agricultural intensification, increase the vulnerability of the bird populations. All these issues are being tackled through the production of an integrated management strategy and conservation action programme as part of EU-funded LIFE project, which has brought together statutory and voluntary bodies and the private sector in a wide-ranging partnership.</p>	<p>Area unfavourable but recovering 92.59%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 6.28%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<i>vanellus.</i>			
<b>North Pennine Moors SAC</b>	<p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>▪ Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i></li> <li>▪ Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands</li> <li>▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)</li> <li>▪ Alkaline fens</li> <li>▪ Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladanii</i>)</li> <li>▪ Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> </ul>	<p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marsh saxifrage <i>Saxifraga hirculus</i></li> </ul>	<p>All interest features have been affected by excessive livestock grazing levels across parts of the site. These have been, and are still, encouraged by headage payments, but agreements with graziers and moorland owners, including those in Wildlife Enhancement and Countryside Stewardship schemes, are starting to overcome the problems of overgrazing. In places, the difficulty of reaching agreements on commons, which cover much of the site, means that successes are limited at present, and continues to prevent restoration.</p> <p>Drainage of wet areas can also be a problem; drains have been cut across many areas of blanket bog, disrupting the hydrology and causing erosion, but in most parts these are being blocked and the habitat restored under agreements. Over-intensive and inappropriate burning is damaging to heath and blanket bog and further agreements are needed with the landowners to achieve sympathetic burning regimes. Restoration, to some degree, of a mosaic of more natural habitats across parts of the site is desirable. Acid and nitrogen</p>	<p><b>West Nidderdale, Barden and Blubberhouses Moors SSSI</b></p> <p>Area favourable 31.02%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 67.84%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 1.01%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0.13%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	11.8 km north-east of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
			deposition continue to have damaging effects on the site.		
<b>North Pennine Moors SPA</b>	N/A	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting bird populations of European importance listed on Annex I of the Directive</p> <p><b>During the breeding season;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, 1,400 pairs representing at least 6.2% of the breeding population in Great Britain</li> <li>▪ Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>, 11 pairs representing at least 2.2% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Estimated population)</li> <li>▪ Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>, 136 pairs representing at least 10.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain</li> <li>▪ Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>, 15 pairs representing at least 1.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain</li> </ul>	<p>The North Pennine Moors covers nearly 150,000 hectares and is largely heather moorland, either as blanket bog or drier heathland, with smaller associated areas of wetland, grassland, bracken, scrub, woodland and cliff. The habitats and qualifying breeding bird populations are mostly dependant upon stock grazing and burning at sympathetic levels. The continuation of these practices relies on their profitability, including any subsidy or incentive payments. Over-grazing, over-burning and other forms of intensive agricultural or sporting management (e.g. drainage) may be damaging. These issues are being partly addressed through management agreements and related incentives. Further legislation relating to Common land and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy would achieve sustainable solutions. Recreational activity may be problematic but is addressed through Site Management Statements and through continuing working with Local Authorities to manage access.</p>	<p><b>West Nidderdale, Barden and Blubberhouses Moors SSSI</b></p> <p>Area favourable 31.02%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 67.84%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 1.01%</p> <p>Area unfavourable declining 0.13%</p> <p>Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%</p>	11.8 km north-east of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
		<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>, 3,930 pairs representing at least 3.3% of the breeding Europe - breeding population (1992/3/4 survey)</li> <li>Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina schinzii</i>, 330 pairs representing at least 3.0% of the breeding Baltic/UK/Ireland population (Estimate based on 92-94 counts)</li> </ul>	<p>There is evidence that acidic and nitrogen deposition are having damaging effects on the vegetation and hence on the bird populations. Such issues are being addressed through existing pollution control mechanisms. Within this large site there is scope to enhance many of the more natural habitats and species whilst maintaining the core SPA interests.</p>		
<b>Malham Tarn Ramsar Site</b>	<p><b>Ramsar Criterion 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains the highest marl lake in Britain, along with acidophilous bog, calcareous fen and soligenous mire.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ramsar Criterion 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports the nationally rare alpine bartisia <i>Bartsia alpina</i> and narrow small reed <i>Calamagrostis stricta</i> and seven nationally scarce species. Supports five listed British Red Data Book invertebrates including the caddis fly <i>Agrypnia crassicornis</i>.</li> </ul>	No issues reported	<p><b>Malham-Arncliffe SSSI</b></p> <p>Area favourable 12.23%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 82.92%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no</p>	13.2 km north-east of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
				change 4.66% Area unfavourable declining 0.19% Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%	
<b>Craven Limestone Complex SAC</b>	Annex I Habitats that are the primary reason for site selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hard <i>oligo-mesotrophic</i> waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara spp.</i></li> <li>▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)</li> <li>▪ <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)</li> <li>▪ Active raised bogs * Priority feature</li> <li>▪ Petrifying springs with tufa</li> </ul>	Annex II species that are a primary reason for site selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i></li> <li>▪ Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i></li> <li>▪ Lady`s-slipper orchid <i>Cypripedium calceolus</i></li> </ul>	The diversity of interest of the limestone pavements, grasslands and springs is dependent on there being a range of grazing intensities, from moderate to light to areas with no livestock grazing. Heavy livestock or rabbit grazing has been damaging and the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme and other forms of agri-environmental agreement are being used, successfully, to promote appropriate management. Removal of limestone pavement for sale as rockery stone and limestone quarrying have both caused problems in the past but are now well controlled through Limestone Pavement Orders and the development planning process. The raised bog has suffered some past drainage but the hydrology has been made secure and the site is carefully managed. Malham Tarn is vulnerable to	<b>Malham-Arncliffe SSSI</b> Area favourable 12.23% Area unfavourable but recovering 82.92% Area unfavourable no change 4.66% Area unfavourable declining 0.19% Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%	10.4 km north-east of Ribble Valley

Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
	<p>formation (Cratoneurion) * Priority feature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alkaline fens</li> <li>▪ Limestone pavements * Priority feature</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines * Priority feature</li> </ul>		nutrient enrichment in the catchment and action has been taken to minimise such inputs.		
<b>Ingleborough Complex SAC</b>	<p>Annex I Habitats that are the primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands</li> <li>▪ Alkaline fens</li> <li>▪ Calcareous rocky slopes with chasophytic vegetation</li> </ul>	N/A	The diversity of interest of the limestone pavements, juniper and limestone rock habitats is dependent on there being a range of grazing intensities, from moderate to light to areas with no livestock grazing. Heavy livestock or rabbit grazing has been damaging and the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme and other forms of agri-environmental agreement are being used, successfully, to promote appropriate management. Removal of limestone pavement for sale as rockery stone	<p>Area favourable 19.57%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering 78.10%</p> <p>Area unfavourable no change 2.32%</p> <p>Area</p>	7.7 km north of Ribble Valley



Site Name	Qualifying Features		Current Conditions and Threats	Results of September 2011 SSSI Condition Survey	Distance from Ribble Valley's borough boundary (approximate km)
	Habitats	Species			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limestone pavements *priority features</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)</li> <li>▪ Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)</li> <li>▪ Blanket bogs * Priority feature</li> <li>▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) * Priority feature</li> <li>▪ <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines * Priority feature</li> </ul>		and limestone quarrying have both caused problems in the past and are now addressed through Limestone Pavement Orders, the development planning process and the provisions for review of existing permissions under the Habitats Regulations.	unfavourable declining 0% Area destroyed / part destroyed 0%	

## 4 SCREENING

### 4.1 Context

The Core Strategy will be the prime document setting out key elements of the planning framework, key objectives, and core planning policies for development needs such as housing, employment, retail and community infrastructure.

The Core Strategy is the most important document under the LDF which sets out the long term vision for the whole of Ribble Valley.

### 4.2 Elements of the Core Strategy

Elements of the Core Strategy used in the screening assessment are listed in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Elements of the Core Strategy

Elements of the Core Strategy	Description
Spatial Strategy	<p>4000 houses will be required over a 20 year period (2008-2028), with 3007 residual units still required to be approved and constructed. The majority of new housing development (34.6%) will be concentrated within an identified strategic site located to the south of Clitheroe towards the A59 and the main urban areas of the borough. Strategic employment opportunities will be promoted through the development of the Barrow Enterprise Site as a main location for employment, and the Salmesbury Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>11.6% of development will be promoted in Clitheroe itself with a further 18.6% in Longridge and 8% in Whalley. The remaining 27% (816 units over the plan period) will be spread amongst other settlements where there is an identified local need and planning policy allows.</p>
Key Statements	Fourteen overarching statements of approach covering a range of environmental, social, economic and access topics.
Development Management Policies	Twenty two policies which build upon the Key Statements covering a similar range of topics. These will be used to help determine planning applications in the future.

### 4.3 Screening of the Preferred Options

We have split the screening process into two distinct stages, initial screening and detailed screening. The initial screening stage provides a high level screening 'matrix style' assessment to determine if the Core Strategy would lead to adverse effects to the integrity of the European sites identified in Table 3-1. Those European sites that were identified to be potentially at risk or an uncertainty was identified due to the proposals and policies of the Core Strategy, were carried forward into a more detailed screening 'matrix style' assessment.

The sections below outline the initial and detailed screening of the preferred options within the Core Strategy.

### 4.3.1 Initial Screening of the Preferred Options

Initial screening of the Core Strategy is presented in Table 4-2 below.

The spatial strategy, Key Statements and Development Management (DM) Policies set out in the Core Strategy were initially examined to determine their need for further detailed assessment. The notations below were used to indicate if further detailed assessment is required:

- ✓ Further detailed assessment is required to determine the nature of effects on the European site.
- ✗ No further assessment is required as no effects are predicted on the European site.

Table 4-2 Initial Screening of the Core Strategy

European Sites	Core Strategy Element (Further assessment required: ✘/✔)			Comments
	Spatial Strategy	Key Statements	DM Policies	
North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC	✔	✔	✔	<p>The spatial strategy identifies that 27% of housing developments is to be delivered in 'other' settlements according to local needs. The settlements are unspecified and may include Slaidburn, adjacent to the European site. Further investigation is required to determine if significant effects are likely.</p> <p>A number of Key Statements have potential to enable significant effects to occur within the European site and further investigation is required. These are: Housing provision; Gypsy and traveller accommodation; Business and employment development; and, Visitor economy.</p> <p>A number of DM Policies have potential to enable significant effects to occur within the European site and further investigation is required. These are: DMH3: dwellings in the open countryside; DMB1: supporting business growth and the local economy; and, DMB3: recreation and tourism development</p> <p>Potentially beneficial elements may include protection offered in:  <a href="#">Key statement: Biodiversity and geodiversity</a>  <a href="#">Key statement DME2: Landscape protection</a>  <a href="#">Key statement DME3: Site and species protection and conservation</a></p>
Bowland Fells SPA	✔	✔	✔	<p>The spatial strategy identifies that 27% of housing developments is to be delivered in 'other' settlements according to local needs. The settlements are unspecified and may occur within the European site. Further investigation is required to investigate if significant effects are likely.</p> <p>A number of Key Statements have potential to enable significant effects to occur within the European site and further investigation is required. These are: Sustainable development and climate change; Housing provision; Gypsy and traveller accommodation; Business and employment development; and, Visitor economy.</p> <p>A number of DM Policies have potential to enable significant effects to occur within the European site and further investigation is required. These are: DME5: Renewable energy; DMH2: Gypsy and traveller accommodation; DMH3: Dwellings in the open countryside; DMB1: Supporting business growth and the local economy; DMB2: The conversion of barns and other rural buildings for employment uses; and, DMB3: Recreation and tourism development.</p> <p>Potentially beneficial elements may include protection offered in:  <a href="#">Key statement: Biodiversity and geodiversity</a>  <a href="#">Key statement DME3: Site and species protection and conservation</a></p>

European Sites	Core Strategy Element (Further assessment required: ✘/✔)			Comments
	Spatial Strategy	Key Statements	DM Policies	
Ingleborough Complex SAC	✘	✘	✘	The site lies 7.7 km north of the Ribble Valley boundary. It is designated for habitats and there are no elements of the Core Strategy which are likely to affect these over this distance.
Craven Limestone Complex SAC	✘	✘	✘	The site lies 10.4 km north-east of the Ribble Valley boundary. It is designated for a range of habitats, white-clawed crayfish, Bullhead and the Lady's slipper orchid. There are no elements of the Core Strategy which are likely to affect these over this distance. In particular, Ribble Valley is not hydrologically connected to the aquatic species listed.
Malham Tarn Ramsar Site	✘	✘	✘	The site lies 13.2 km north-east of the Ribble Valley boundary. It is designated for a range of habitats, invertebrates and plant species. There are no elements of the Core Strategy which are likely to affect these over this distance.
North Pennine Moors SAC	✘	✘	✘	The site lies 11.8 km north-east of the Ribble Valley boundary. It is designated for a range of habitats, and plant species. There are no elements of the Core Strategy which are likely to affect these over this distance.
North Pennine Moors SPA	✔	✔	✔	There is the possibility of a functional link with Bowland Fells SPA for Hen Harrier and Merlin. As such, it has been taken forward for further investigation on the same grounds.
South Pennine Moors SPA Phase 2	✔	✔	✔	There is the possibility of a functional link with Bowland Fells SPA for Merlin. As such, it has been taken forward for further investigation on the same grounds.
South Pennine Moors SAC	✘	✘	✘	The site lies 9 km south east of the Ribble Valley boundary. It is designated for habitats and there are no elements of the Core Strategy which are likely to affect these over this distance.
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar Site	✔	✔	✔	There is the possibility of a functional link with Bowland Fells SPA for Lesser Black-Backed Gull. As such, it has been taken forward for further investigation on the same grounds.
Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA	✔	✔	✔	There is the possibility of a functional link with Bowland Fells SPA for Lesser Black-Backed Gull. As such, it has been taken forward for further investigation on the same grounds.

European Sites	Core Strategy Element (Further assessment required: ✘/✔)			Comments
	Spatial Strategy	Key Statements	DM Policies	
Morecambe Bay SAC	✘	✘	✘	The site lies 12.3 km west of the Ribble Valley boundary. It is designated for coastal habitats and Great crested newts (which have a maximum range of up to 1.3km <sup>4</sup> ). There are no elements of the Core Strategy which are likely to affect these over this distance.
Morecambe Bay Ramsar Site	✔	✔	✔	There is the possibility of a functional link with Bowland Fells SPA for Lesser Black-Backed Gull. As such, it has been taken forward for further investigation on the same grounds.
Morecambe Bay SPA	✔	✔	✔	There is the possibility of a functional link with Bowland Fells SPA for Lesser Black-Backed Gull. As such, it has been taken forward for further investigation on the same grounds.
Calf Hill and Cragg Woods SAC	✘	✘	✘	The site lies 8.4 km north west of the Ribble Valley boundary. It is designated for habitats and there are no elements of the Core Strategy which are likely to affect these over this distance.

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<sup>4</sup> Natural England (2001) Great crested newt mitigation guidelines

Following the initial screening of the Core Strategy seven of the European sites have been screened out of the remainder of this assessment. Table 4-2 demonstrates that the distance of the European sites from proposed areas of development in Ribble Valley mean that significant effects are highly unlikely. The distance of Ribble Valley's borough boundary from the seven European sites screened out means that any pollution linkages are highly unlikely and no direct land take within the areas are required.

## 4.3.2 Detailed Screening of the Preferred Options

Detailed screening of the Core Strategy is presented in Tables 4-3 and 4-4 below based on the findings of the initial screening exercise.

The spatial strategy, Key Statements and Development Management Policies set out in the Core Strategy were examined in detail to determine the need for Appropriate Assessment. To aid clarity, only those elements identified as possibly having potential to have an effect have been listed in the table. The tables also consider whether any of the alternative options developed would be more or less likely to result in significant adverse effects than the preferred options. Eight alternative spatial options were developed and preliminary text was developed for each of the Key Statements and Development Management policies.

It was clear that the remaining elements would not have any potential to affect the European Sites either directly or indirectly due to the focus of their proposals. These would either be focussed on an irrelevant subject (e.g. heritage protection or proportion of affordable housing), would be focussed directly on protection of nature conservation sites or would be focussed on a discrete geographical location a considerable distance from the sites and where there would be a negligible risk of indirect effects occurring.

The notations below were used to indicate if the policy should be taken forward to the Appropriate Assessment stage:

- ✓ Appropriate Assessment required
- ✗ No further assessment required

Table 4-3 Screening the Core Strategy: Bowland Fells SPA

Bowland Fells SPA					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (x/✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
<b>Relevant Aspects of Preferred Spatial Strategy</b>					
27% of housing (816 units) developments is to be delivered in 'other' settlements according to local needs.	Potential for new housing to occur within or adjacent to the SPA in locations which could affect blanket bog habitat either directly or indirectly. This in turn may damage the habitat used by Merlin, Hen Harrier and Lesser Black-Backed Gulls.  However, there are no settlements within the SPA that could fall within the 'other settlements' category. The nearest is Dunsop Bridge which lies outside the site boundary.	None required  Policy DMG1 explicitly ensures that the integrity of European Sites must not be adversely affected either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	x	Options C, D and E include provisions for Borough-wide housing in unspecified locations. In the absence of supporting policy this could mean within the SPA and would therefore be worse. Other options are no better or worse than the preferred.
<b>Relevant Key Statements</b>					
Sustainable development and climate change	Larger schemes will be required to deliver a proportion of renewable energy on site. This could include wind turbines. If the scheme is located in or near to the SPA this has potential to adversely affect Merlin, Hen Harrier or Lesser Black-Backed Gulls.  It should be noted that no large scale developments are allocated in the SPA and only development for local needs would be allowed in	Provisions of DMG1.  Policy DME5 provides further detail to the effect that renewable energy proposals within or close to the SPA will not be allowed unless it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	x	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.



**Bowland Fells SPA**

Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
	<p>nearby Dunsop Bridge (i.e. not large scale). As such it is not considered that this Statement poses a risk to the SPA. Further assurance is provided in other policies and statements identified in the adjacent column.</p>	<p>compromised by the development. DME3 states that developments adversely affecting the SPA will not be allowed unless benefits can outweigh these impacts in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity reiterates that the council is bound by these regulations when it comes to considering applications.</p>			
<p>Housing provision</p>	<p>An annual average of 188 residual dwellings per year will need to be constructed. If these are in or immediately adjacent to the SPA this may result in damage to the blanket bog habitat, if present.</p> <p>However, it also identifies that land will be identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which does not identify land within or immediately adjacent to the SPA.</p>	<p>The plan should be read as a whole and the distribution of development is determined by the spatial strategy above which indicates that there would be no new housing in the SPA. Policy DME3 and Key Statement Biodiversity and Geodiversity also add weight to this. Also DMG1.</p>	<p>No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.</p>	<p>✘</p>	<p>The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.</p>

Bowland Fells SPA					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
Gypsy and traveller accommodation	If a gypsy and traveller site were to be located in or adjacent to the SPA it may cause damage to any blanket bog habitat if present (either directly or indirectly) and may result in disturbance to qualifying breeding bird interests. Sites will not be identified until the Housing and Economic Development DPD is produced.	Whilst it is unlikely that areas within the SPA would be suitable for gypsy and traveller accommodation, the statement does state that proposals must not conflict with other policies in the plan (and hence protection policy on European Sites). Specifically this would include DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity. This is considered to remove the risk of adverse effects occurring as a result of this Statement. Also DMG1.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect, albeit very unlikely. This has since been rectified.
Business and employment development	An additional 9ha of employment land will be allocated. If this were to occur in or immediately adjacent to the SPA it may cause damage to any blanket bog habitat if present (either directly or indirectly) and may result in disturbance to qualifying breeding bird interests. However, the Core Strategy must be read as a	In addition to the provisions of the spatial strategy, policy DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity are considered to add sufficient weight to this statement to rule out	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect, albeit very unlikely. This has since been rectified.

Bowland Fells SPA					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
	whole and the spatial strategy identifies the employment land in locations at distance from the SPA.	potential adverse effects on the SPA. The statement also refers to the need to develop brownfield sites in preference to greenfield. Also DMG1.			
Visitor economy	A significant increase in visitor numbers in the SPA may result in disturbance to qualifying breeding bird interests or trampling of the blanket bog habitat. Nonetheless, visitor pressure is not regarded by Natural England (on the Natura 2000 data form) as a threat to the SPA.	The Statement identifies that significant new attractions will be restricted unless they lead to improvements to the environment (and presumably the SPA within that). Similarly, the provisions of DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity are considered to add sufficient weight to this statement to rule out potential adverse effects on the SPA. Also DMG1.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect, albeit very unlikely. This has since been rectified.
Relevant Development Management Policies					
DME5: Renewable	The policy supports the development of renewable energy in certain locations under	The policy also identifies that renewable energy proposals	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting

Bowland Fells SPA					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
energy	certain circumstances. If wind energy development sin particular, were to be developed in or near to the SPA, this may have potential to adversely affect Merlin, Hen Harrier or Lesser Black-Backed Gulls.	within or close to the SPA will not be allowed unless it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be compromised by the development. DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity also add strength to this. Also DMG1.	potential for in-combination effects.		policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.
DMH2: Gypsy and traveller accommodation	If a gypsy and traveller site were to be located in or adjacent to the SPA it may cause damage to any blanket bog habitat if present (either directly or indirectly) and may result in disturbance to qualifying breeding bird interests.	The policy references the need for the proposals not to conflict with any other policies in the Core Strategy. Therefore this refers to the provisions of DME3, Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and the Key Statement on Gypsy and traveller accommodation, all of which would ensure against development which would cause harm to the SPA. Also DMG1.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.

Bowland Fells SPA					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
DMH3: Dwellings in the open countryside	Even individual dwellings in the open countryside have potential to result in significant adverse effects if located within the SPA in a manner and location which could damage blanket bog habitat or cause disturbance to qualifying bird interests.	The policy also states that proposals would be refused if they adversely affected designated sites of nature conservation interest. Combined with the provisions of DMG1, DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, it is not considered that this policy could have an adverse effect.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.
DMB1: Supporting business growth and the local economy	If sited within or adjacent to the SPA, the development of new business premises and/or farm diversification projects have potential to cause damage to blanket bog habitats (either directly or indirectly) and/or may cause disturbance to qualifying bird interests if inappropriately designed.  However, the Core Strategy must be read as a whole and the spatial strategy identifies the employment land in locations at distance from	In addition to the provisions of the spatial strategy, policy DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity are considered to add sufficient weight to this statement to rule out potential adverse effects on the SPA. See also Policy DMG1.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.

**Bowland Fells SPA**

Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
	the SPA.				
DMB2: The conversion of barns and other rural buildings for employment uses	If a rural building were to be converted within or adjacent to those parts of the SPA where qualifying interest species were present, there is potential for disturbance as a result of noise.	The policy identifies that conversions would only be allowed if buildings were already within a defined settlement or group of buildings and that there would be no harm to nature conservation interests. This is further strengthened by policy DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity. See also Policy DMG1.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.
DMB3: Recreation and tourism development	Depending upon the scale and nature of the development, if this were to take place in or adjacent to the SPA it may have potential to damage blanket bog habitat or disturb qualifying bird interests.	In addition to the provisions of policy DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, the policy specifically identifies that the proposal must not conflict with other policies of the plan. Furthermore, it identifies the need to take account of any nature	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.

**Bowland Fells SPA**

Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
		conservation impacts. See also Policy DMG1.			

Table 4-4 Screening the Core Strategy: North Pennine Dales and Meadows SAC

North Pennine Dales and Meadows SAC					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (x/✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
<b>Relevant Aspects of Preferred Spatial Strategy</b>					
27% of housing (816 units) developments is to be delivered in 'other' settlements according to local needs.	Potential for new housing to occur within or adjacent to the SAC at Slaidburn which could affect the grassland habitat either directly or indirectly.	See provisions of Policy DMG1. DME3 states that developments adversely affecting the SAC will not be allowed unless benefits can outweigh these impacts in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity reiterates that the council is bound by these regulations when it comes to considering applications. The area also lies within the AONB – DME2 states that development will be refused that harms characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	x	Options C, D and E include provisions for Borough-wide housing in unspecified locations. In the absence of supporting policy this could mean within the SPA and would therefore be worse. Other options are no better or worse than the preferred.
<b>Relevant Key Statements</b>					



North Pennine Dales and Meadows SAC					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
Housing provision	An annual average of 188 residual dwellings per year will need to be constructed. Development in Slaidburn, in or immediately adjacent to the SAC this may result in damage to the grassland habitat, either directly or indirectly.	See above.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.
Gypsy and traveller accommodation	If a gypsy and traveller site were to be located in or adjacent to the SAC it may cause damage to any grassland habitat (either directly or indirectly). Sites will not be identified until the Housing and Economic Development DPD is produced.	The statement does cross the provisions of other policies in the plan (and hence protection policy on European Sites). Specifically this would include DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and DME2 on the AONB. This is considered to remove the risk of adverse effects occurring as a result of this Statement. See also Policy DMG1.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect, albeit very unlikely. This has since been rectified.
Business and employment	An additional 9ha of employment land will be allocated. If this were to occur in or immediately	See above provisions. The statement also refers to the	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no	✘	The first iteration of the supporting policies were

North Pennine Dales and Meadows SAC					
Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
development	adjacent to the SAC it may cause damage to any grassland habitat if present (either directly or indirectly).  However, the Core Strategy must be read as a whole and the spatial strategy identifies the employment land in locations at distance from the SAC.	need to develop brownfield sites in preference to greenfield.	potential for in-combination effects.		not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect, albeit very unlikely. This has since been rectified.
Visitor economy	A significant increase in visitor numbers in the SAC may result in damage to the grassland habitat. Nonetheless, visitor pressure is not regarded by Natural England (on the Natura 2000 data form) as a threat to the SAC.	The Statement identifies that significant new attractions will be restricted unless they lead to improvements to the environment (and presumably the SAC within that). Similarly, the provisions of policies identified above should ensure against adverse effects occurring.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect, albeit very unlikely. This has since been rectified.
Relevant Development Management Policies					
DMH2: Gypsy and traveller accommodation	If a gypsy and traveller site were to be located in or adjacent to the SAC it may cause damage to any grassland habitat (either directly or indirectly). Sites will not be identified until the	The policy references the need for the proposals not to conflict with any other policies in the Core Strategy.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have

**North Pennine Dales and Meadows SAC**

Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
	Housing and Economic Development DPD is produced.	Therefore this refers to the provisions of DME3, Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and the Key Statement on Gypsy and traveller accommodation, all of which would ensure against development which would cause harm to the SAC. See also Policy DMG1.			led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.
DMH3: Dwellings in the open countryside	Individual dwellings in the open countryside have potential to result in significant adverse effects if located within the SAC in a manner and location which could damage grassland habitat.	The policy also states that proposals would be refused if they adversely affected designated sites of nature conservation interest. Combined with the provisions of DMG1, DME3 and Key Statement: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, it is not considered that this policy could have an adverse effect.			

**North Pennine Dales and Meadows SAC**

Core Strategy Element	Development and Land Use Change and Potential Effects	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	In-combination Effects Potential	Appropriate Assessment Required? (* / ✓)	Would Alternatives be better or worse?
DMB1: Supporting business growth and the local economy	<p>If sited within or adjacent to the SAC, the development of new business premises and/or farm diversification projects have potential to cause damage to grassland habitats (either directly or indirectly).</p> <p>However, the Core Strategy must be read as a whole and the spatial strategy identifies the employment land in locations at distance from the SAC.</p>	See above provisions.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.
DMB3: Recreation and tourism development	Depending upon the scale and nature of the development, if this were to take place in or adjacent to the SAC it may have potential to damage grassland habitat.	See above provisions. Furthermore, it identifies the need to take account of any nature conservation impacts.	No effects identified from the spatial strategy, therefore no potential for in-combination effects.	✘	The first iteration of the statement and supporting policies were not as thorough and may have led to the possibility of an effect. This has since been rectified.

## European Sites outside Ribble Valley Borough

The Initial Screening exercise identified that the following six sites had potential to be affected by the Core Strategy (the site's distance from the Ribble Valley boundary is shown in brackets):

- North Pennine Moors SPA (11.8km)
- South Pennine Moors SPA Phase 2 (9km)
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar Site (14.7km)
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA (14.7km)
- Morecambe Bay Ramsar Site (12.3km)
- Morecambe Bay SPA (12.3km)

The reason for this was that despite their distance from Ribble Valley Borough, the sites had potential to be functionally linked to the Bowland Fells SPA by virtue of them sharing some of the same qualifying bird interests. These mobile species can use a network of sites for breeding, and feeding and adverse effects at one site may indirectly affect populations associated with another site.

It was considered that if the Core Strategy were deemed to have a potentially significant effect upon any of these bird interests within the Bowland Fells SPA, then this may indirectly affect some of these other sites which shared the same qualifying bird interests.

However, following the detailed screening assessment above, it has been concluded that no significant effects would be likely on the Bowland Fells SPA as a result of the Core Strategy. As such, it is concluded that as none of the qualifying bird interests at the Bowland Fells SPA would be affected, then it would therefore not be possible for the Core Strategy to affect any of the other listed sites above.

## 4.4 In-Combination Effects

The HRA needs to consider not only the strategies and policies within the Core Strategy that may lead to significant impacts upon European sites on their own but also those that may have a significant impact in-combination with other plans and projects. These may be spatial planning documents produced by the neighbouring authorities or major developments anticipated within the borough. Table 2-1 outlines relevant plans and projects that were considered in-combination with the Core Strategy.

Tables 4-3 to 4-4 identify that the Core Strategy is not likely to result in any significant adverse effects upon the European Sites identified. Furthermore, it has been determined that the Core Strategy will have zero effects upon these sites (not merely no significant effects) and as such it would therefore not be possible to result in an in-combination effect with any other plans or projects.

## 5 CONCLUSION

It has been concluded that the Publication Core Strategy is unlikely to have any significant effects on the European Sites identified, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. As such, it is NOT proposed to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

We seek Natural England's opinion and agreement or otherwise with this conclusion.

Appendix A

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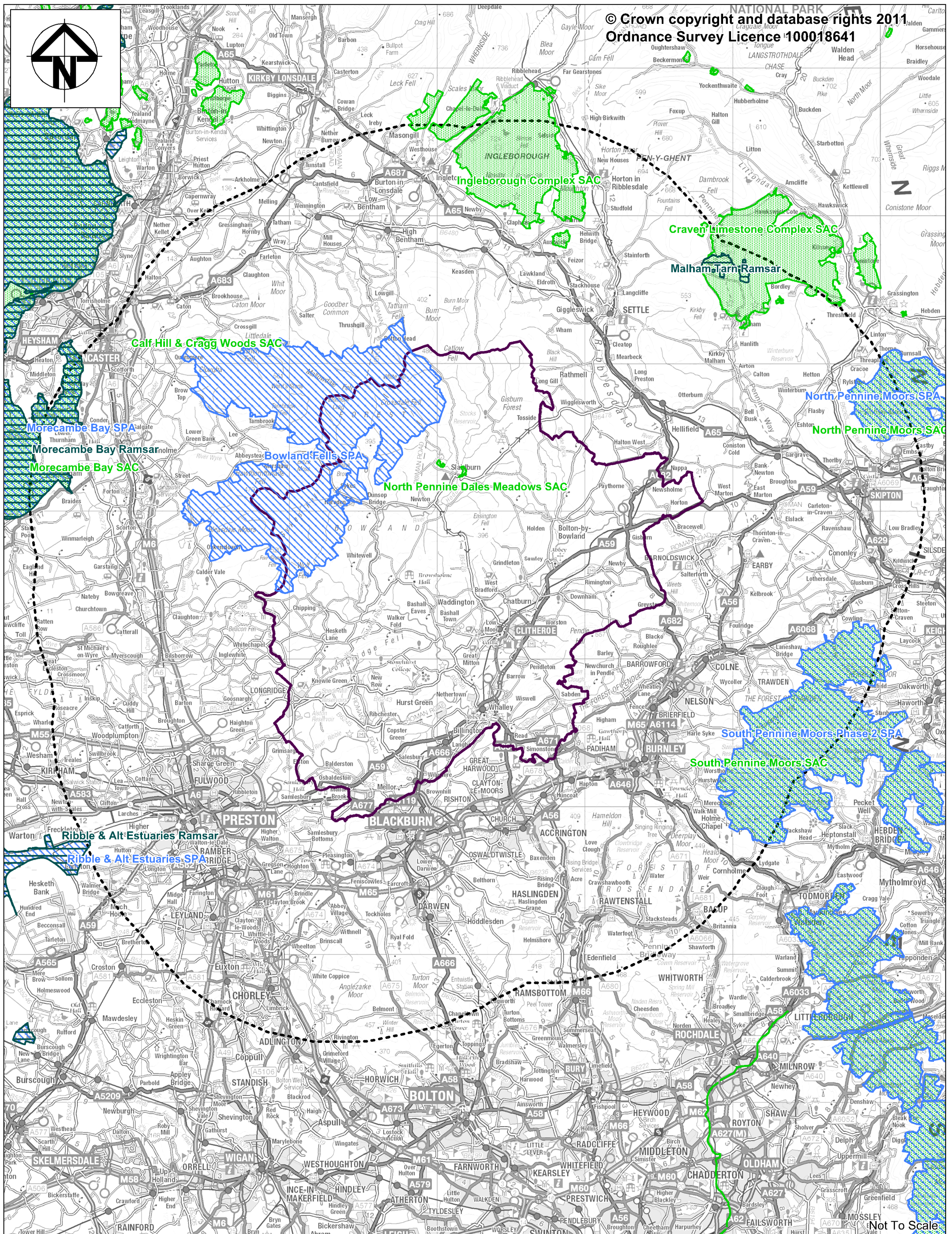
## Conservation Objectives






Conservation Objective	Comments
<b>Bowland Fells SPA</b>	
To maintain designated habitats within the Bowland Fells SSSI in a favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extent (extent attribute)	<p>On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Blanket Bog.</li> <li>▪ Subalpine dry dwarf shrub heath.</li> <li>▪ Upland Flushes, Fens and Swamps.</li> <li>▪ Upland wet heath.</li> <li>▪ Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland: Upland Oak woodland.</li> <li>▪ Upland mosaic (moorland, acid grassland and oligotrophic rivers) for breeding bird assemblage, rare birds and breeding aggregations of birds.</li> <li>▪ Upland Mosaic for Higher plant assemblage (notably moorland, flushes and springs, natural rock ledges outcrops).</li> </ul>
To maintain designated species within the Bowland Fells SSSI in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to their population attributes.	<p>On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the population of each designated species or assemblage, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hen harrier.</li> <li>▪ Merlin.</li> <li>▪ Lesser black-backed gull.</li> <li>▪ Breeding bird assemblage.</li> </ul>
<b>North Pennine Dales and Meadows SAC (Note: Conservation Objectives are for the three component SSSIs that comprise the SAC)</b>	
<b>Bell Sykes Meadows SSSI:</b> To maintain the designated habitats in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extent (extent attribute).	<p>On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neutral grassland - no reduction in area and any consequent fragmentation without prior consent.</li> </ul>
<b>Langcliff Cross Meadow SSSI:</b> To maintain the designated habitats in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extent (extent attribute).	<p>On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum-Geranium sylvaticum</i> lowland neutral grassland (northern hay meadows) - no reduction in area and any consequent fragmentation without prior consent.</li> </ul>
<b>Myttons Meadows SSSI:</b> To maintain the designated habitats in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extent (extent attribute).	<p>On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum-Geranium sylvaticum</i> lowland neutral grassland (northern hay meadows) - No reduction in area and any consequent fragmentation without prior consent.</li> </ul>



Conservation Objective	Comments
<p>Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition the habitats of the internationally important populations of regularly occurring bird species listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shingle areas</li> </ul>	<p>In pursuit of the conservation objective for habitats supporting internationally important populations of regularly occurring species listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive, the relevant and competent authorities for Morecambe Bay European marine site are advised to manage human activities within their remit such that they do not result in deterioration or disturbance to habitats or species, for which the site has been selected, through any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Removal of habitats.</li> <li>▪ Physical damage from abrasion and or selective extraction.</li> <li>▪ Disturbance from noise and/or visual activities.</li> </ul> <p>In pursuit of the conservation objective for habitats supporting the internationally important assemblages of waterfowl and seabirds including internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory species, the relevant and competent authorities for Morecambe Bay European marine site are advised to manage human activities within their remit such that they do not result in deterioration or disturbance to habitats or species, for which the site has been selected, through any of the following:</p>
<p>Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition the habitats of the internationally important assemblage of waterfowl and seabirds and the internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory species, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intertidal mudflat and sandflat communities</li> <li>▪ Intertidal and subtidal boulder and cobble skew communities</li> <li>▪ Saltmarsh communities</li> </ul> <p>Coastal lagoon communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Removal of habitats.</li> <li>▪ Physical damage from selective extraction.</li> <li>▪ Disturbance from noise and/or visual activities.</li> <li>▪ Nutrient and/or organic enrichment and/or changes in thermal regime.</li> <li>▪ Changes in salinity and turbidity.</li> <li>▪ Increased synthetic and/or non synthetic toxic contamination and/or radionuclides.</li> </ul> <p>Biological disturbance through introduction of microbial pathogens and/or selective extraction of species.</p>





-  Special Protection Area
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Ramsar Sites
-  Ribble Valley District Boundary
-  15 km buffer around District Boundary



**Figure 1 European Sites**



Ribble Valley  
Borough Council

Not To Scale