

**Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations  
Supplementary Planning Document  
– Habitat Regulation Assessment  
Screening Statement**

**July 2024**

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The nine Places for Everyone Plan local planning authorities<sup>1</sup> are jointly preparing a Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The nine authorities are the “competent authorities” for the purposes of this HRA screening statement.
- 1.2. This statement sets out the competent authorities’ assessment (screening assessment) on whether the SPD is likely to have significant adverse effects on the national network of biodiversity sites in accordance with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)<sup>2</sup> and European Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive)<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. Habitat Regulations Assessment Context

- 2.1. The requirement for a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is set out within Regulation 63 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Legislation requires an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project to be undertaken to assess if it is likely to have significant adverse effects upon the integrity of internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance, now known as the national site network (formerly known as Natura 2000 sites).
- 2.2. The Habitats Directive is transposed into English legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) published in November 2017.
- 2.3. European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna – the ‘Habitats Directive’ provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The national site network objectives are to:

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<sup>1</sup> Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017>

<sup>3</sup> [Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/1992/01/19920101/1-1)

- maintain or, where appropriate, restore habitats and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive to a favourable conservation status (FCS).
  - contribute to ensuring, in their area of distribution, the survival and reproduction of wild birds and securing compliance with the overarching aims of the Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC).
- 2.4. The purpose of a HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of the national network of sites . The assessment must determine whether the plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site in terms of its nature conservation objectives. Where negative effects are identified other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.
- 2.5. The Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD will provide further guidance on the implementation of Policy JP-C8: Transport requirements of New Development in the Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan. The PfE Plan, including Policy JP-C8, has been subject to an HRA that has developed iteratively over several years in parallel to the drafting of the PfE Plan and has fully assessed the impacts of the PfE Plan on the national network of sites at each plan making stage. The HRA documents for the PfE Plan can be found on the GMCA website at: [Adoption - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/development-planning/adopted-plans-and-policies/adopted-plans-and-policies) for the submission and examination stages of the Plan and at [Modifications Documentation 2023 - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/development-planning/modifications/modifications) for the main modifications stage of the Plan.

### **3. The Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document**

- 3.1. Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) as documents which add further detail to the policies in the Development Plan. As SPDs do not have the same status as policies contained within the Development Plan, they are not subject to independent examination.
- 3.2. The SPD seeks to provide further guidance on how criterion 17 (in particular) of Policy JP-C8 of the PfE Plan will be implemented, which seeks to ensure new development does not have an adverse impact on the protected habitats and species

of Holcroft Moss, which is within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

- 3.3. The SPD is applicable to all nine PfE Plan local authority areas (excluding that part of Oldham within the Peak District National Park).
- 3.4. The aims of the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD are to:
  - Ensure that advice is consistent with the latest Government regulations and associated Planning Practice Guidance;
  - Ensure that new development is consistent with the provisions of the recently adopted PfE Plan;
  - Provide a robust basis upon which the nine PfE Plan authorities can secure contributions from developers to ensure that the impacts of schemes on Holcroft Moss are appropriately mitigated; and
  - Provide clear advice to developers as to what is expected in applications to ensure an efficient process for consultation and determination.
- 3.5. The PfE Plan is the “parent DPD”, which has already been subject to an HRA, see details in section above.
- 3.6. The SPD does not introduce new policy or affect the location or amount of new development proposed. Instead, it seeks to assist in ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to mitigate adverse impacts on the Manchester Mosses SAC, as required by Policy JP-C8 of the PfE Plan.
- 3.7. The SPD will be used, as a material consideration, to inform Development Management decisions within the PfE Plan area.
- 3.8. The level of growth in the PfE Plan has been subject to HRA, as part of the HRA process of the PfE Plan.

## **4. Screening Assessment**

- 4.1. The competent authorities consider that the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD will not have significant adverse effects on any sites in the national sites network, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The reason for this is set out below.

- 4.2. The Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD will supplement policy JP-C8 of the PfE Plan, which has already been subject to a robust HRA.
- 4.3. The SPD does not introduce new policy or affect the location or amount of new development proposed. Instead, it seeks to assist in ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to mitigate adverse impacts on the Manchester Mosses SAC, as required by Policy JP-C8 of the PfE Plan.
- 4.4. The requirements of Policy JP-C8 were recommended as mitigation measures from the HRA of the PfE Plan to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on the protected habitats and species of the Holcroft Moss part of the Manchester Mosses SAC.
- 4.5. Therefore, the competent authorities consider that no 'appropriate assessment' is required to be made under Regulations 63, 64 and 65 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) before the competent authorities decides to undertake, or give any consent, permission, or other authorisation for this SPD.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1. This initial screening determination will be reviewed and updated, if required, in light of any comments received from Natural England, as part of the iterative screening process.
- 5.2. A final screening determination will be provided alongside the SPD documents at the formal public consultation stage for the draft Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD.