

Sefton Council 

**House Extensions
Supplementary Planning
Document**

**Strategic Environmental
Assessment / Habitats
Regulations Assessment**

Draft Screening Statement

August 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been produced to determine the need for a:

- I. **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 as amended.
- II. **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)** in accordance with article 6 of the EC Habitats directive 1992, as interpreted by Regulation 63(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (the Habitats Regulations).

For the proposed House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2. Policy context

2.1 Government policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (The NPPF) encourage Household Extensions provided that extensions do not have a significant effect on neighbouring properties or the character of the local area. This is reflected in the fact that many smaller House Extensions are now permitted development and do not require planning permission.

2.2 House Extensions can allow occupants of houses to alter homes to better suit their lifestyle aspirations or space requirements, however house extensions have the potential if not properly designed to negatively impact on neighbouring properties and the character of the local area potentially resulting in poorer living conditions for neighbours.

2.3 The Sefton Local Plan (2017) www.sefton.gov.uk/localplan includes a policy relating to house extensions; Policy HC4- House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation. The 2019 Formby and Little Altcar Neighbourhood Plan, Lydiate Neighbourhood Plan, Maghull Neighbourhood Plans do not include detailed policies regarding house extensions.

2.4 The proposed House Extensions SPD will update and replace the existing SPD and expand upon policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) of the Sefton Local Plan. (The policy is shown in Appendix B). It deals only with the part of Policy HC4 relating to house extensions, and alterations. It does not deal with the part of Policy HC4 which relates to conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), as this is the subject of a separate, draft SPD which was also 'screened out' for HRA purposes and for SEA. More detail on the scope of the House Extensions SPD is set out below.

Introduction and Context

2.5 House extensions and related household development, such as garages and walls/fences, whilst generally small scale in nature, can have a negative impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties if poorly designed or sited. This Supplementary Planning Document is intended to provide householders with clear guidance on what improvements are likely to be acceptable to their home, whilst ensuring this does not negatively harm their neighbours.

2.6 The Supplementary Planning Document will support Local Plan policies: HC4 - House extensions, alterations and conversions to houses in Multiple Occupation.

Purpose and aims

2.7 The aim of the Supplementary Planning Document is to provide clear guidance to local residents and others on how the Council will deal with planning applications for House Extensions.

2.9 The document will set out principles and standards that extensions are required to meet to prevent harm to neighbours and the character of the local area.

Part 1- SEA Screening

3. SEA Screening

3.1 The requirement for a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is set out in the “Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004”.

3.2 Previously all Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents required Sustainability Appraisal. Sustainability Appraisal incorporated the requirements for SEA¹. However, the regulations were amended in 2009². These amendments removed the requirement for the sustainability appraisal of supplementary planning documents. These changes were confirmed in the 2012 regulations³

3.3 Despite no longer requiring sustainability appraisal, SPDs may still require SEA if it is concluded that it would have significant environmental effects⁴.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

² The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations

³ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#full-publication-update-history>, paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 11-008-20140306

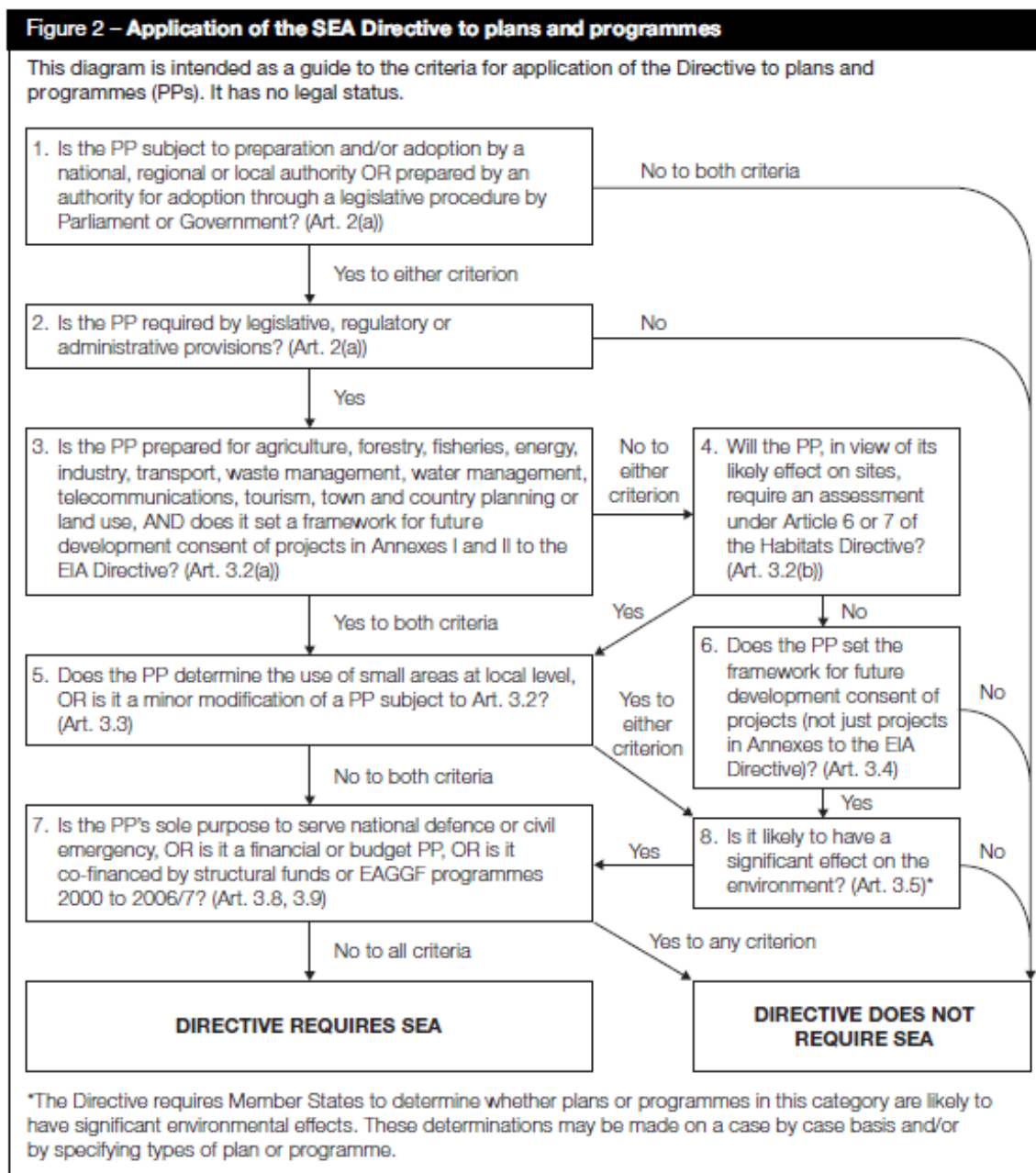


Table 1: Establishing the need for SEA

| Stage [from the flowchart above] | Answer | Reason |
|---|--------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Is the SPD subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament of | Yes | SPD to be adopted by Sefton Council |

| Stage [from the flowchart above] | Answer | Reason |
|--|--------|--|
| Government? (Article 2(a)) | | |
| 2. Is the SPD required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a)) | Yes | The detail that the Council wish to provide to the local plan policy can only be given due weight if it is contained in a Supplementary Planning Document. |
| 3. Is the SPD prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a)) | No | The SPD is for town and country planning purposes but does not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive |
| 4. Will the SPD, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b)) | No | The draft screening statement concludes that an assessment under the Habitats Directive is not required. (<i>*see part 2</i>) |
| 6. Does the SPD set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4) | Yes | Although the local plan policies will set the overall framework, the SPD will provide additional guidance on the interpretation of these policies. |
| 8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5) | No | See ' Table 2 ' below 'Determining the likely significance of effects' |

Table 2: Determining the likely significance of effects on the environment

| SEA Directive Annex II: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) | Sefton Comment |
|--|--|
| <i>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i> | |
| 1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating | The SPD will be providing additional guidance on existing policies that set the broad framework. |

| SEA Directive Annex II: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) | Sefton Comment |
|---|--|
| conditions or by allocating resources | |
| 1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy | The SPD can only expand on existing policies and should not introduce new policies not contained in higher order plans. |
| 1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development | The SPD will promote sustainable development through encouraging appropriate house extensions whilst seeking to minimize any potential negative effects such as on the amenity of neighbouring properties or the local environment. |
| 1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme | The SPD will seek to mitigate potential environmental issues from extensions such as loss of privacy/light/amenity and harm to the character of the local area. However the impact isn't likely to be significant given the local nature of the issues. |
| 1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection). | The SPD is unlikely to be directly relevant in regard to this criterion. |
| <i>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</i> | |
| 2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects | The anticipated effects on the sustainability of the areas covered by the SPD are expected to be positive by limiting possible negative impacts associated with poorly designed House Extensions. The duration of impacts is difficult to define as although once a house extension has occurred this has a permanent permission, many smaller scale house extensions are permitted development and can occur at any time. |
| 2b) The cumulative nature of the effects | The cumulative nature of effects on the environment is likely to be positive although relatively minor other than at a local level. |
| 2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects | None identified. |

| SEA Directive Annex II: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) | Sefton Comment |
|--|---|
| 2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents) | The SPD will seek to address issues of amenity and living conditions and the impact it may have on the health and wellbeing of neighbours. |
| 2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) | The SPD will cover the borough of Sefton although the SPD is likely to be relevant to small sites in the existing urban area only, therefore the impact of the SPD will be at a limited local level. |
| 2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: I. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, II. Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values III. Intensive land-use | The SPD will only apply to small scale household developments which are not likely to cause significant environmental effects. Other guidance and policies related to environmental issues are covered in the Local Plan and other SPD guidance. |
| 2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognized national, Community or international protection status | None identified. Any extensions in for example in a conservations area, will need to satisfy the relevant planning policies for protecting the heritage character of the area before permission is granted. |

4. Consultation

4.1 The Council consulted with the three statutory environmental bodies [see below] on this screening report and the determination. The table below provides their responses.

| Statutory Body | Comments |
|--------------------|---|
| Environment Agency | No comments received during consultation |
| Historic England | We would concur with your assessment that the document is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects and will simply provide additional guidance on existing policies which have already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. As a result, we would endorse the conclusions that it is not necessary to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the document. |
| Natural England | Natural England has no detailed comments to make on this Supplementary Planning Document for House Extensions. We agree with the HRA/SEA conclusions. |

5. Conclusion and statement of reasons

5.1 The SPD is supplementing and will provide further guidance on Policy HC4 of the Local Plan. Any impacts on the environment are likely to be local and small scale and positive in nature.

5.2 The views of the statutory consultees are set out above.

5.3 It is considered that the House extensions SPD will not give rise to any significant environmental effects. Therefore, it is considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment ***is not required*** for the proposed House extensions Supplementary Planning Document.

Part 2- HRA Screening

6. HRA Screening

6.1 The requirement for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with article 6 of the EC Habitats directive 1992, as interpreted by Regulation 61(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the habitats regulations). An assessment of the “likely significant effects” of a plan or project on sites of international nature conservation importance is required. These are now referred to as the national sites network⁵, although were formerly known as Natura 2000 sites. This part of the document sets out Sefton Council’s screening of the draft House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with the Habitats Regulations.

6.2 The Sefton Local Plan (2017) had was subject to an HRA assessment produced by AECOM (formerly URS) (January 2015) that assessed in combination effects taking into account other plans and projects, Local Plan site allocations and policies. The Publication Draft HRA Report (January 2015)⁶ was produced by AECOM (formerly URS) included an assessment of in combination effects taking into account other plans and projects as well as Local Plan site allocations, policies and objectives and the impact of the plan as a whole. The Sefton Local Plan (2017) was also subject to a second HRA assessment produced by AECOM (May 2016) at Modifications Stage⁷.

6.3 In terms of the House Extensions SPD the “parent policy” is policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) of the Local Plan. This policy was assessed as part of the HRA of the Local Plan. The policy was “screened out” meaning that there would not need to be an additional HRA assessment. The HRA comments on policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) are shown below.

2015 HRA Report:

- *“HRA implications but screened out.*
- *This policy outlines development guidance for extension and alterations of houses, and conversions to multiple occupation and flats^{8*}.*
- *This policy could result in increases in population within the area of conversions to multiple occupancy. It is considered that this will be a small increase.*
- *However, Policy NH2 (Protection and enhancement of natural sites, priority habitats and species) includes for the protection of European designated sites via the need for HRA if required.”*

2016 HRA Report:

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017>

⁶ See <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/1763/jan-2015-hra-of-submission-local-plan-web.pdf>

⁷ See [Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Proposed Modifications to Sefton Local Plan](#)

⁸ Sefton’s SPD and updated SPDs regarding conversions to Flats and HMOs have been ‘screened out’ for HRA.

- *"This policy has not been modified as such it has not been re-assessed"*.

6.4 The House Extensions SPD will not lead to any development additional to that permitted by Policy HC4 as it merely expands upon and provides more detailed guidance on house extensions, and alterations in relation to policy HC4 of the Sefton Local Plan. It merely seeks to provide guidance on what house extensions and other householder development is acceptable without having a negative effect on neighbouring properties or the character of the local area.

6.5 The SPD will cover the borough of Sefton although the SPD is likely to be relevant to small sites in the existing urban area only, therefore the impact of the SPD will be at a limited local level. Any impacts on the environment are likely to be very localised and small scale.

6.6 In any case, more generally, policy NH2 'Protection of nature sites, priority habitats and species', which has also been subject to HRA, sets out more detailed requirements in relation to national sites network sites and supporting habitats and to planning application stage site-specific HRA where relevant.

6.7 The following national sites network sites are located within Sefton:

- Sefton Coast SAC
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA which is also a Ramsar site
- Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA which is also a Ramsar site (small part of site is at Seaforth Nature Reserve, the rest is approx. 1km+ away on Wirral).

6.8 In addition the following national sites network sites are located outside of Sefton but were "screened in" to the Local Plan HRA Reports.

- Liverpool Bay SPA
- Manchester Mosses SAC -
However, Sefton's Local Plan HRA Report concluded that Sefton is not adjacent to the M62; that the Local Plan includes proportionate measures to minimise its contribution to M62 vehicle movements; and that Sefton's effect on atmospheric nitrogen deposition on Manchester Mosses SAC is effectively inconsequential. Thus this site is not considered further in this HRA screening document.

6.9 Below is an assessment of potential pathways for impacts to the national sites network site taking into account the Local Plan HRA Reports.

Table 3: Assessment of likely significant effects (taking into account the Local Plan HRA Reports)

| Potential pathway national sites network sites affected | HRA assessment regarding likely significant effects | Further comments |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Recreational pressure / disturbance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sefton Coast SAC • Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA & Ramsar site • Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site • Liverpool Bay SPA (in-combination disturbance of birds through increase in ship movements and recreational pressure) | <p>No significant impacts.</p> | <p>SPD has no influence on location or number of new homes proposed (and hence on recreational pressure); only on extensions or alterations to existing housing. SPD has no influence on ship movements. SPD will have no additional impacts compared to its parent policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) which has been screened out.</p> |
| <p>Disturbance to qualifying species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sefton Coast SAC • Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site • Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site | <p>No significant impacts.</p> | <p>SPD will have no additional impacts compared to its parent policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) which has been screened out.</p> |
| <p>Coastal squeeze</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sefton Coast SAC • Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site • Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site | <p>No significant impacts.</p> | <p>SPD has no influence on location or number of new homes proposed (and hence on recreational pressure); only on extensions or alterations to existing housing. SPD will have no additional impacts compared to its parent policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) which has been screened out.</p> |
| <p>Direct habitat loss through expansion of the Port at Seaforth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and | <p>No significant impacts</p> | <p>SPD has no influence on Port expansion.</p> |

| Potential pathway national sites network sites affected | HRA assessment regarding likely significant effects | Further comments |
|--|---|--|
| Ramsar site | | |
| Direct habitat loss through mineral extraction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site. | No significant impacts | SPD has no influence on minerals expansion. |
| Loss of habitat / supporting habitat outside the national sites network site boundary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sefton Coast SAC Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site | No significant impacts | SPD will have no additional impacts compared to its parent policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) which has been screened out. |
| Reduction in water quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sefton Coast SAC Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site Liverpool Bay SPA - potential for 'in combination' effects with other plans and projects (through sewage effluent discharges). | No significant impacts | SPD has no influence on location or number of new homes proposed (and hence on recreational pressure); only on extensions or alterations to exiting housing. SPD has no influence on ship movements. SPD will have no additional impacts compared to its parent policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) which has been screened out. |
| Reduction in air quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sefton Coast SAC Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site | No significant impacts | SPD has no influence on location or number of new homes proposed (and hence on recreational pressure); only on extensions or alterations to exiting housing. SPD has no influence on ship movements. SPD will have no additional impacts compared to its parent policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in |

| Potential pathway national sites network sites affected | HRA assessment regarding likely significant effects | Further comments |
|--|---|--|
| | | Multiple Occupation) which has been screened out. |
| Mineral extraction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site | No significant impacts | SPD has no influence on minerals expansion. |
| Dredging and disturbance of sediments/benthic habitats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site Liverpool Bay SPA (following Port expansion) | No significant impacts | SPD has no influence on dredging or disturbance of benthic habitats, or on Port expansion. |

6.10 The SPD is unlikely to have any significant effects on any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site (now national sites network sites) above and beyond any significant effects that the Local Plan is likely to have, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects. The “parent policy “in the Local Plan was screened out meaning no further assessment is needed. The SPD is unlikely to give rise to impacts/significant effects on national sites network sites.

7. Consultation

8.1 The Council consulted Natural England, the statutory body for the purposes of HRA. The table below provides their response.

| Statutory Body | Comments |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Natural England | We agree with the HRA conclusions. |

8. Conclusion and statement of reasons

8.1 The SPD is supplementing and will provide further guidance on Policy HC4 (House Extensions, Alterations and Conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation) of the Local Plan. The SPD merely expands upon the policy HC4 to set out guidance how the council will assess applications for house extensions. There are no significant effects on national sites network sites in Sefton.

8.2 The comments of Natural England are set out above.

8.3 On the basis of the above information, Sefton Council is of the opinion and concludes that the proposed plan to which this screening opinion relates – the House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document - :

a) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,

b) is not likely to have a significant effect on each of the following sites:

- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Sefton Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Ramsar site
- Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore Special Protection Area (SPA).
- Liverpool Bay SPA.
- Manchester Mosses SPA.

either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

And accordingly, **no “appropriate assessment” is required** to be made under Regulations 63, 64 and 65 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 2017 (as amended) before the Council decides to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for this plan.

Part 3- Appendices

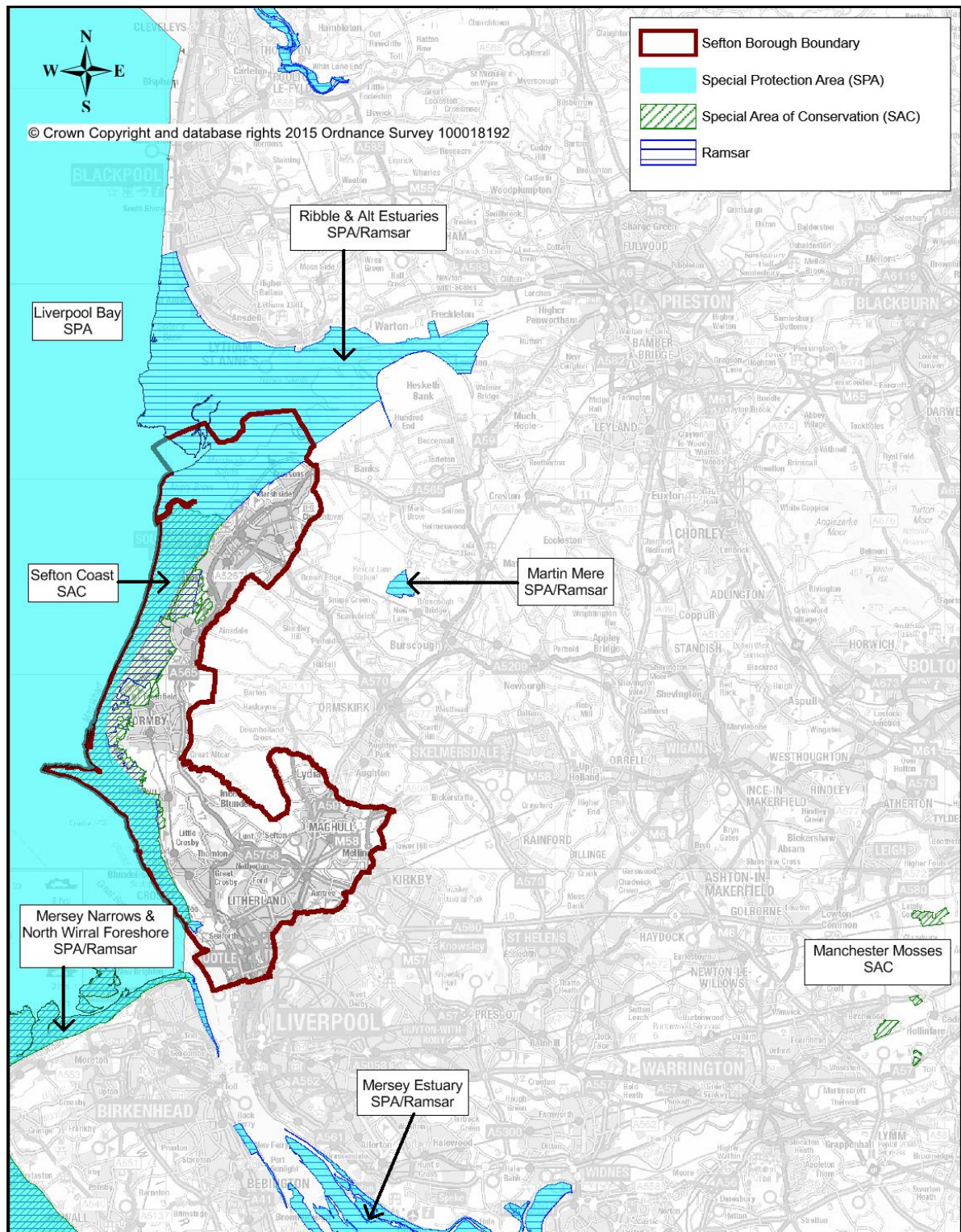
Appendix A- Contact details

local.plan@sefton.gov.uk

Appendix B- Extract from Sefton Local Plan (2017): Parent Policy text

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|---|
| <p>HC4 HOUSE EXTENSIONS, HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION AND FLATS</p> <p>1. Extensions and alterations to dwelling houses will be approved where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. They are of a high quality of design that matches or complements the style of the dwelling and the surrounding area;b. The size, scale and materials of development are in keeping with the original dwelling and the surrounding area;c. The extensions and alterations are designed so that there shall be no significant reduction in the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. In particular, extensions must not result in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Loss of outlook, from the main windows of neighbouring habitable rooms,ii. A significant loss of light/overshadowing for neighbours,iii. An overbearing or over-dominant effect on the habitable rooms of neighbouring properties,iv. A significant loss of privacy for neighbouring residents. <p>2. Development involving the conversion of buildings to Houses in Multiple Occupation or flats will be permitted where it will not cause significant harm to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The character of the area orb. The living conditions for either the occupiers of the property or for neighbouring properties. |
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Appendix C – National Site network and Ramsar (formerly Natura 2000) sites in Sefton



Sefton Council
 Department of the
Built Environment
 Derek McKenzie
 Interim Head of Planning Services

Natura 2000 Sites in and around Sefton

Date: 1st July 2015

Scale @ A4: 1:250,000