

REPORT ON THE IMPLICATIONS
for EUROPEAN SITES
Proposed North Wales Wind
Farms Connection

An Examining Authority report prepared with the support
of the Environmental Services Team

December 2015

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1.0 INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| Background | 3 |
| Documents used to inform this RIES..... | 4 |
| Structure of this RIES | 5 |
| 2.0 OVERVIEW | 7 |
| European Sites Considered | 7 |
| HRA Matters Considered During the Examination | 9 |
| 3.0 LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS | 10 |
| Summary of the HRA Screening outcome during the examination | 12 |
| ANNEX 1: DOCUMENTS USED TO INFORM THIS REPORT | |
| ANNEX 2: EUROPEAN SITES SCREENED INTO THE HRA BY THE APPLICANT | |

Report on the Implications for European Sites for the
North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 SP Manweb (the applicant) has applied to the Secretary of State for a development consent order (DCO) under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) for the proposed construction and installation of a 132kV overhead electric line between Clocaenog Forest and St Asaph, Denbighshire, approximately 17.4 km long, and including up to 225 double wood pole supports (the application). The Secretary of State has appointed an Examining Authority (ExA) to conduct an examination of the application, to report its findings and conclusions, and to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State as to the decision to be made on the application.
- 1.2 The applicant submitted a request in September 2015 [OpB-001] for 16 proposed changes to the proposed development (referred to as Option B) to be considered as an alternative to the original application submitted in March 2015 (referred to as Option A). These changes include seven pole movements within the existing limits of deviation; eight pole movements which would result in changes to the order limits which would require the need for the Applicant to acquire additional land; one reduction to the proposed order limits; and the insertion of four additional pole positions. A number of documents were submitted by the applicant in support of the request, including a document entitled 'Compulsory Acquisition Document – Option B' [OpB-002], which provides more details of the proposed changes. The ExA agreed on 2 October to accept the Option B submission for examination, and explained that Option B would be considered both as a whole and also in terms of potential changes to discrete sections of the route alignment. As the Option B changes do not result in any changes to the conclusions on the potential effects of the proposed development on European sites, this RIES addresses both the Option A and Option B submissions.
- 1.3 The relevant Secretary of State is the competent authority for the purposes of the Habitats Directive¹ and the Habitats Regulations² for applications submitted under the Planning Act 2008 regime (as amended). The findings and conclusions on nature conservation issues reported by the ExA will assist the Secretary of State in performing their duties under the Habitats Regulations.

¹ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (as codified) (the 'Habitats Directive').

² The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations).

- 1.4 This Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES) compiles, documents and signposts information provided within the Development Consent Order (DCO) application, and submitted throughout the examination by both the applicant and interested parties, up to 11 December 2015, in relation to potential effects on European Sites³. It is not a standalone document and should be read in conjunction with the examination documents referred to in this report.
- 1.5 It is issued to ensure that interested parties, including the statutory nature conservation bodies, which for this project are Natural Resources Wales (NRW), are consulted formally on Habitats Regulations matters. This process may be relied on by the Secretary of State for the purposes of Regulation 61(3) of the Habitats Regulations. Following consultation the responses will be considered by the Examining Authority (ExA) in making their recommendation to the Secretary of State and made available to the Secretary of State along with this report. This report will not be revised following consultation.
- 1.6 The applicant has not identified any potential impacts on European sites in other EEA States⁴. It was concluded in both the first and second transboundary screening of the proposed development by the Secretary of State [OD-001] that it was not likely to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State. Only UK European sites are addressed in this report.

Documents used to inform this RIES

- 1.7 The applicant provided with the DCO application a 'No Significant Effects Report' (NSER), entitled 'The North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project - HRA No Significant Effects Report' [APP-089], together with screening matrices (NSER Section 5), and accompanying figures (NSER Appendix 1, [APP-090]).
- 1.8 The applicant concluded within their DCO application that there would be no likely significant effects on any of the European sites that were screened. The NSER and screening matrices, and subsequent examination documents, were provided by the applicant in support of this conclusion.
- 1.9 The documents listed in Annex 1 of this report have been used to inform its content.

³ The term European Sites in this context includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and candidate SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), potential SPAs, Sites of Community Importance (SCIs), Ramsar sites, and any sites identified as compensatory measures for adverse effects on any of the above. For a full description of the designations to which the Habitats Regulations apply, and/ or are applied as a matter of Government policy, see PINS Advice Note 10 and the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA Publications July 2014).

⁴ European Economic Area (EEA) States.

Examination

- 1.10 Welsh Government raised a concern in their Section 42 consultation response (included in the applicant's response to the ExA First Written Questions, Appendix 9.1b - Welsh Government Response to Statutory Consultation, [REP1-080]) about potential effects on Greenland White-fronted Geese (GWfG), a feature of the Dyfi Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA), which is a site identified in the applicant's NSER. In their response [REP1-098] to ExA First Written Question (FWQ) 6.1 [PD-010] about the NSER, and FWQ 6.15 [PD-010] about the scope of the cumulative assessment in Chapter 6 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the Environmental Statement (ES) [APP-09]), Welsh Government stated that subject to NRW being content their only concern was in relation to GWfG, but that any risk could probably be minimised. ExA Second Written Question (SWQ) 6.1 [PD-016] asked them to provide further information about their concerns, however they did not provide any further comments for that or any subsequent deadlines. NRW reiterated throughout the examination that they were satisfied that there was not likely to be a significant effect on GWfG or any other European site or feature.
- 1.11 In response to the ExA's FWQs about apparent discrepancies in the list of European sites and features identified in the NSER and the accompanying figure (NSER, Appendix 1, Figure 1.xx: 'SAC, SPA and RAMSAR sites considered in the assessment'), the applicant provided updated Tables 3.1 and 3.2, an additional Table 3.2(a) [REP1-056], and an updated Figure 1.xx [REP1-071] for Deadline 1 (1 September 2015), identifying the European sites within the study area. In response to ExA questions at the Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) on 30 September 2015 about discrepancies in the updated information, the applicant made further updates to the tables and submitted the revised versions [REP3-037] for Deadline 3 (16 October 2015). They did not submit a revised version of Figure 1.xx.

Structure of this RIES

- 1.12 The remainder of this report is as follows:
- **Section 2** identifies the European sites that have been considered within the DCO application and during the examination period, up to 18 December 2015. It provides an overview of the issues that have emerged during the examination.
 - **Section 3** identifies the European sites and qualifying features screened by the applicant for potential likely significant effects, either alone or in-combination with other projects and plans. The section also identifies where Interested Parties (IPs) have disputed the applicant's conclusions, together with any additional European sites and qualifying

features screened for potential likely significant effects during the examination.

- **Annex 1** identifies the documents used to inform this RIES.
- **Annex 2** contains a table that identifies the European sites screened into the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) by the applicant. The description of features as provided by the applicant for three of the Ramsar sites identified in updated HRA information (Martin Mere, Mersey Estuary, and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries) appears to be a general overview of the sites, rather than details of the site features. Therefore, in addition to the information provided by the applicant prior to and during the examination, Annex 2 includes information provided by the ExA on the features of those sites.

2.0 OVERVIEW

European Sites Considered

- 2.1 The project is not connected with or necessary to the management for nature conservation of any of the European sites considered within the applicant's assessment (NSER, paragraph 5.1.1).
- 2.2 Tables 3.1 and 3.2 in the applicant's NSER identified European sites and features, for which the UK is responsible, for inclusion within the assessment. The applicant identified Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 15km of the application site and SPAs and Ramsar sites within 70km of the application site.
- 2.3 Natural Resources Wales are the statutory nature conservation body responsible for advising on European sites within Wales, and Natural England (NE) are the body with statutory responsibility for advising on European sites in England. In their response to ExA FWQ 6.4 [REP1-056], about whether the applicant had consulted NE on the English sites identified in the NSER, the applicant stated that they had not, on the basis that the extent of the 70km study area for SPAs was identified only as a result of the concern raised by the Welsh Government about potential effects on the Dyfi Estuary SPA, and that they would otherwise have equally applied a 15km study area to both SACs and SPAs. They note that the only English European site within 15km of the proposed development would be Liverpool Bay SPA, important for its red-throated diver and common scoter, both threatened by habitat loss and damage, disturbance, pollution and the extraction of their prey species. It was considered by the applicant that the proposed development would have no impact on either species and that consultation with NE was not necessary. It was considered by the ExA that no further questions were required in relation to this point.
- 2.4 In response to Question 6.2 of the ExA's FWQs about inconsistencies in the information, the applicant provided updated versions of Table 3.1 (SACs) and Table 3.2 (SPAs) and an additional table (3.2a) that separated out the Ramsar sites from the SPAs [REP1-056]. The sites and features identified in these tables are shown in Annex 2 of this report.
- 2.5 The River Dee & Bala Lake/Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC was incorrectly additionally identified as a Ramsar site and included in Table 3.2 of the NSER ('SPA/Ramsar sites within 70km'). As it is identified as being 25km from the application site it was not included in the updated Table 3.1 ('SAC Sites Within 15km') provided within the applicant's response to Question 6.2 of the ExA's FWQs.

- 2.6 In response to Question 6.2(b) of the ExA's FWQs, which requested an updated version of Figure 1.xx (contained in NSER Appendix 1, [APP-090]), the applicant provided an updated figure (SP Manweb's Responses to the ExA's FWQs, Appendix 6.3, [REP1-071]), which shows the location of the European sites identified in the updated Tables 3.1 and 3.2 and additional Table 3.2a. Although included in error in the NSER, the River Dee & Bala Lake/Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC is also shown on the updated figure in Appendix 6.3 [REP1-071].
- 2.7 Agenda item 9.1 at Day 2 of the ISH examined potential impacts on European sites. In response to questions at the ISH from the ExA about apparent omissions from the updated Table 3.1 and additional Table 3.2a, the applicant provided updated versions of these at Appendices 14 and 15 of their 'Written Summary of SP Manweb's Oral Case put at the ISH Day 2 and Appendices' [REP3-037].
- 2.8 Appendix 15 provides an updated version of Table 3.1, which additionally identifies great crested newts as a feature of the Halkyn Mountain SAC. These were identified in the NSER but omitted from the updated version of Table 3.1 provided in the applicant's response to the ExA's FWQs [REP1-056].
- 2.9 Appendix 14 provides an updated version of Table 3.2a, which includes three additional Ramsar sites: the Mersey Estuary; Ribble and Alt Estuary; and Martin Mere. These were not identified in the list of Ramsar sites in the NSER, however their features appear to have been included with those of the equivalent SPAs in NSER Table 3.2, and the three sites were included in NSER Appendix 1, Figure 1.xx. The applicant concluded in the summary of their oral case [REP3-037] that, as a result of the distance between these three Ramsar sites and the application site, effects on the features of the sites were highly unlikely. This was not disputed by any party during the examination.
- 2.10 No interested party identified during the examination any other European site or site feature as potentially affected by the proposed development. ExA FWQ 6.3 asked IPs if they were satisfied that the features of the European sites included in the NSER had been correctly identified. NRW, in their Written Representation and Response to ExA's FWQs [REP1-042], confirmed that they were satisfied that the correct features had been identified.
- 2.11 Of the 22 European sites screened in by the applicant two were taken forward for further consideration in the NSER: the Elwy Valley Woods SAC; and the Dyfi Estuary SPA, on the basis of pre-application consultation responses from NRW and Welsh Government, respectively. It was concluded in the NSER by the applicant that, as a result of the particular interest features of the other European sites, the intervening

distance, and the lack of potential pathways, there was no potential for the proposed development to have a significant effect on any other European site and no sites other than the two identified above were considered further.

Habitats Regulations Assessment Matters Considered During the Examination

- 2.12 Welsh Government raised a concern in their Section 42 consultation response about potential effects on Greenland White-fronted Geese, a feature of the Dyfi Estuary SPA (included in the applicant's response to FWQs, Appendix 9.1b: Welsh Government Response to Statutory Consultation, [REP1-080]). They expressed their view at that time that if an overground line was proposed an appropriate assessment would be needed in relation to the Dyfi Estuary SPA and GWfG. In their response to Questions 6.1 and 6.15 of the ExA's FWQs [REP1-098], about the NSER, and scope of the cumulative assessment in Chapter 6 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the Environmental Statement (ES) respectively, they stated that subject to NRW being content their only concern was in relation to GWfG.
- 2.13 NRW, in their RR [RR-075], stated that they noted Welsh Government's concerns in relation to GWfG but considered that significant effects on that feature were unlikely. This view is reiterated in their Written Representation and Answers to ExA FWQs [EP1-042].
- 2.14 SP Manweb commented on this matter in their 'Response to ExA's First Written Questions' (Questions 6.1 – 6.6) [REP1-056], 'Comments on Responses to ExA's First Written Questions' [REP2-014], and 'Responses to Written Representations' [REP2-015].
- 2.15 Agenda item 9.1 at Day 2 of the Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) examined potential impacts on European sites, with particular reference to the Dyfi Estuary SPA. The 'Written Summary of SP Manweb's Oral Case put at the Issue Specific Hearing Day 2 and Appendices' [REP3-037] sets out the applicant's position.
- 2.16 Following the hearings in December, a document entitled 'Statement of Common Ground between SP Manweb and Natural Resources Wales' [REP9-006] was submitted by the applicant for Deadline 9. It states that the content of the NSER is agreed by both parties, however it does not include the signatures of either party.

3.0 LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

- 3.1 The applicant has not described how they have determined what would constitute a 'significant effect' within their NSER.
- 3.2 The applicant has not addressed potential in-combination effects within their NSER report, on the basis that as the project will have no effects on any European site alone it will have no effects on any European sites in combination.
- 3.3 The applicant's screening assessment concluded that the project would have no likely significant effects, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, on the qualifying features of the European sites listed in Annex 2 below.
- 3.4 The applicant's conclusions were disputed by Welsh Government during examination in relation to potential effects on GWfG, a feature of the Dyfi Estuary SPA. ExA FWQ 6.1 requested Welsh Government's views on the findings of the NSER (in light of their Section 42 consultation comments). In Welsh Government's response to FWQs [REP1-098] they refer the ExA to their answer to FWQ 6.15, which relates to the cumulative scope of the Ecology and Biodiversity chapter of the ES. They state that they have a concern in relation to the conclusion in the NSER about the potential migration route of GWfG to the SPA, and suggest that their route is unknown and that they could use landfall at any point on the North Wales Coast. The applicant, in their response to FWQ 6.5 [REP1-056], requesting justification of the statement in the NSER about the migratory route of GWfG, set out their view that the majority of GWfG fly from their breeding grounds on the west coast of Greenland to over-wintering sites in Ireland and reference the publication on which this is based, concluding that the migration route from mid-Wales to Greenland would not pass over the application site.
- 3.5 The specific nature of Welsh Government's concern is not clear as their response to FWQ 6.1 is included in their response to FWQ 6.15, which relates to the scope of the applicant's cumulative assessment in the Ecology and Biodiversity chapter of the ES (Chapter 6) [APP-097]. Welsh Government conclude their comments by suggesting that any risk would probably be minimised by 'general precautions in respect of large birds'. They did not provide any further details of what they considered the potential effects on GWfG may be or explain what is meant by 'general precautions'. They did not provide any further comments on this matter for any subsequent deadlines.
- 3.6 NRW, in paragraph 3 of their RR [RR-075], stated that they were consulted on the draft NSER and concurred with its conclusions, and considered that the proposed development would be unlikely to have

significant effects on European sites alone or in combination with other plans and projects. They noted that Welsh Government had raised the issue of potential impacts of the proposed development on GWfG in the Dyfi Estuary SPA, and reiterated that they considered that significant effects on that feature were unlikely. This view is further reiterated in paragraphs 2.2 and 3.5 of their Written Representation and Answers to FWQs [REP1-042]. In response to ExA FWQ 6.3 they state that they are satisfied that the features of the relevant European sites have been correctly identified in the NSER.

- 3.7 Agenda Item 9.1 at Day 2 of the ISH (30 September 2015) examined potential impacts on European sites, with particular reference to the Dyfi Estuary SPA. Pages 21 – 23 of SP Manweb's 'Written Summary of Oral Case put at the Issue Specific Hearing Day 2 and Appendices' [REP3-037] set out the applicant's comments made on the matter at the ISH. They made reference to their desktop study which included bird data for a 5km buffer along the route corridor, and autumn/winter bird and vantage point surveys undertaken in two locations between 2012 and 2013, none of which recorded any GWfG. The applicant noted that Welsh Government had suggested that reflectors could be put on the overhead line to address potential collision risk of GWfG with the overhead line. The applicant acknowledged that the GWfG migration route to and from the SPA is unclear, and considered that it is possible that they could collide with the poles and the overhead line in the event that they were forced down in very bad weather conditions. However, the applicant suggested that the GWfG fly at very high altitude, and restated their view that collision risk was highly unlikely and that therefore bird deterrents were disproportionate and unnecessary.
- 3.8 Question 6.1(a) of the ExA's second written questions (SWQs) asked Welsh Government to explain their Deadline 1 comment that 'general precautions' could probably minimise risk to the geese, and Question 6.1(b) asked NRW for their views on the matter. Welsh Government did not respond. NRW responded and reiterated their view that they do not consider that the project is likely to have a significant effect on the Dyfi Estuary SPA, and therefore that they do not advocate an additional requirement (in the DCO) to fit diverters on the overhead line in order to make it more visible to birds.
- 3.9 Part 3.4 of the (unsigned) Statement of Common Ground submitted in December 2015 [REP9-006] between the applicant and NRW records that the conclusions in the NSER are agreed between the two parties in relation to the significance of effects, and specifically that the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant effects on the Dyfi Estuary SPA GWfG, and that there are no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any ISH.

Summary of the HRA screening outcome during the examination

- 3.10 A total of 22 European sites were considered by the applicant (see Annex 2 below). The applicant concluded that there would be no likely significant effects on any of the European sites and their qualifying features.
- 3.11 Welsh Government raised a concern prior to the submission of the application and in written submissions during the examination about a potential effect on migratory Greenland White-fronted Geese, a feature of the Dyfi Estuary SPA. They did not attend any of the hearings, or state during examination that they consider that there is likely to be a significant effect on this feature.
- 3.12 Potential effects on European sites, with specific reference to the Dyfi Estuary SPA, were discussed on Day Two of the first round of ISHs on 30th September 2015. They were not discussed at the second round of ISHs in December 2015. NRW attended the first but not the second round of hearings.
- 3.13 No other IPs, during the examination, disputed the applicant's conclusion of no likely significant effects on any of the European sites identified and their qualifying features. NRW noted the concerns of Welsh Government and stated in a number of documents provided to the ExA that they did not consider that there would be any likely significant effects on the Dyfi Estuary SPA GWfG [RR-075, REP1-042, and REP6-007].
- 3.14 In light of the above, revised matrices have not been requested by the ExA or provided voluntarily by the applicant in relation to the Dyfi Estuary SPA and the Elwy Valley Woods SAC, so the matrices included in Section 5 of the NSER [APP-089] remain valid. At the time of publication of this report the conclusion contained in the applicant's NSER that the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European sites remains unchanged.

ANNEX 1: DOCUMENTS USED TO INFORM THIS REPORT

Application Documents

- The North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project - HRA No Significant Effects Report (March 2015) [APP-089]
- North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project – HRA No Significant Effects Report Appendix 1 – Figures (March 2015) [APP-090]
- Environmental Statement Chapter 6 – Ecology and Biodiversity (March 2015) [APP-097]

Representations

- Natural Resources Wales Relevant Representation [RR-075]

Statements of Common Ground

- SP Manweb and Natural Resources Wales Statement of Common Ground (December 2015) [REP9-006]

Hearing Documents

- SP Manweb: Written Summary of SP Manweb's Oral Case put at the ISH Day 2 and Appendices [REP3-037]

Other Documents

- SP Manweb: Option B Submission Covering Letter [OpB-001]
- SP Manweb: Compulsory Acquisition document - Option B [OpB-002]
- SP Manweb: Response to ExA's First Written Questions (Questions 6.1 – 6.6) [REP1-056]
- SP Manweb: Response to ExA's First Written Questions, Appendix 6.3 – SAC, SPA and Ramsar Sites Assessed (figure) [REP1-071]

Report on the Implications for European Sites for
the North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project

- SP Manweb: Response to ExA's First Written Questions, Appendix 9.1a – Natural Resources Wales Response to Statutory Consultation [REP1-080]
- SP Manweb: Response to ExA's First Written Questions, Appendix 9.1b – Welsh Government Response to Statutory Consultation [REP1-080]
- SP Manweb: Comments on Responses to ExA's First Written Questions [REP2-014]
- SP Manweb: Responses to Written Representations [REP2-015]
- Natural Resources Wales: Written Representation and Response to ExA's First Written Questions [REP1-042]
- Natural Resources Wales: Response to ExA's second written questions [REP6-007]
- Welsh Government: Response to ExA's First Written Questions [REP1-098]
- Transboundary Screening Matrix [OD-001]

ANNEX 2: EUROPEAN SITES SCREENED INTO THE HRA BY APPLICANT

| Name of European site | Features |
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| Aber Dyfi / Dyfi Estuary SPA (hereafter referred to in this report as Dyfi Estuary SPA) | Overwintering Greenland white-fronted geese. |
| Bae Lerpwl / Liverpool Bay SPA | Over wintering non-breeding aggregations of red-throated diver and common scoter. |
| Berwyn SPA | Breeding hen harrier, merlin, peregrine and red kite. |
| Coedwigoedd Dyffryn Alun / Alyn Valley Woods SAC | Tilio-Acerion forest of slopes, screes and ravines. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies. Alluvial forest with alder and ash. |
| Coedwigoedd Dyffryn Elwy / Elwy Valley Woods SAC (hereafter referred to in this report as Elwy Valley Woods SAC) | Tilio-Acerion forest. |
| Cors Fochno and Dyfi Ramsar site | Active raised bogs, degraded raised bogs capable of regeneration and depressions on peat substances of the Rhynchosporion. |
| Craig yr Aderyn (Bird's Rock) SPA | Breeding and over-wintering red-billed chough. |
| Llwyn SAC | Alluvial forests with alder and ash. |

Report on the Implications for European Sites for
the North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project

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| <p>Martin Mere Ramsar site</p> | <p>Areas of open water with associated muddy margins with seasonally flooded marsh and reed swamp habitats. Botanically rich with a large and diverse wintering, passage and breeding bird community.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter: 25306 waterfowl.</p> <p>Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • species with peak counts in spring/autumn: pink-footed geese; • species with peak counts in winter: Tundra swan, Whooper swan, Eurasian wigeon, Northern pintail. |
| <p>Martin Mere SPA</p> | <p>Overwintering Bewick's swan, Whooper Swan, pink-footed geese, Northern pintail, and Eurasian wigeon.</p> |
| <p>Mersey Estuary Ramsar site</p> | <p>Saltmarsh and extensive intertidal sand and mudflats and associated habitats within a rural and industrial environment. Supports large and internationally important populations of waterfowl. During the winter, the site is of major importance for duck and waders. The site is also important during spring and autumn migration periods for waders.</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance - species with peak counts in winter: 89,576 waterfowl.</p> <p>Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • species with peak counts in spring/autumn: common |

Report on the Implications for European Sites for
the North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project

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| | <p>shelduck, black-tailed godwit, common redshank;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> species with peak counts in winter: Eurasian teal, Northern pintail, dunlin. |
| Mersey Estuary SPA | <p>Overwintering golden plover, dunlin, Northern pintail, redshank, shelduck, teal, Eurasian wigeon, black-tailed godwit, Eurasian curlew, grey plover, great crested grebe, Northern lapwing.</p> <p>On passage redshank and ringed plover.</p> |
| Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA | <p>Overwintering bar tailed godwit and red knot.</p> <p>On passage little gull and common tern.</p> <p>Breeding common tern.</p> <p>Non-breeding redshank, turnstone, dunlin, knot, grey plover, oystercatcher and cormorant.</p> |
| Migneint – Arenig - Ddualt SPA | <p>Breeding Northern hen harrier, merlin, and peregrine.</p> |
| Mynydd Helygain / Halkyn Mountain SAC | <p>Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>.</p> <p>European dry heaths.</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies.</p> <p>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils.</p> <p>Great crested newt.</p> |

Report on the Implications for European Sites for
the North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project

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| <p>Ribble and Alt Estuary Ramsar site</p> | <p>The tidal flats and saltmarsh support internationally important populations of waterfowl in winter and the sand dunes support vegetation communities and amphibian populations of international importance.</p> <p>Supports up to 40% of the Great Britain population of natterjack toads.</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance - species with peak counts in winter: 222,038 waterfowl.</p> <p>Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • species regularly supported during the breeding season: lesser black-backed gull; • species with peak counts in spring/autumn: ringed plover, grey plover, red knot; • wintering: sanderling, dunlin, black-tailed godwit, common redshank, lesser black-backed gull; • species with peak counts in winter: Tundra swan, Whooper swan, pink-footed goose, common shelduck, Eurasian wigeon, Eurasian teal, Northern pintail, Eurasian oystercatcher, bar-tailed godwit. |
| <p>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA</p> | <p>Overwintering bar tailed godwit, Bewick's swan, golden plover, Whooper swan, black tailed godwit, dunlin, grey plover, red knot, Eurasian oystercatcher, pink-footed geese, Northern pintail, common redshank, sanderling, common shelduck, Eurasian teal, Eurasian wigeon, greater scaup, common scoter, Eurasian curlew, great cormorant, and Northern lapwing.</p> |

Report on the Implications for European Sites for
the North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project

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| | <p>Breeding common tern, lesser black-backed gull, black-headed gull.</p> <p>On passage ringed plover, sanderling, whimbrel, and common redshank.</p> |
| <p>The Dee Estuary Ramsar site</p> | <p>Extensive intertidal sand and mud flats with expanses of saltmarsh.</p> <p>Breeding colonies of natterjack toad.</p> <p>Internationally important numbers of waterfowl and waders.</p> <p>Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: redshank, teal, shelduck, oystercatcher, curlew, pintail, grey plover, knot, dunlin, black-tailed godwit, and bar-tailed godwit.</p> |
| <p>The Dee Estuary SPA</p> | <p>Breeding little tern and common tern.</p> <p>Over wintering bar-tailed godwit, northern pintail, Eurasian teal, dunlin, red knot, Eurasian oystercatcher, black-tailed godwit, Eurasian curlew, grey plover, common shelduck, and common redshank.</p> <p>On passage sandwich tern and common redshank.</p> <p>Non-breeding season important assemblage of birds regularly comprising: great crested grebe, cormorant, Northern lapwing, sanderling, bar-tailed godwit, redshank, black-tailed godwit, curlew, dunlin, grey plover, red knot, oystercatcher, Northern pintail, shelduck, teal and wigeon.</p> |

Report on the Implications for European Sites for
the North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project

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| Traeth Lafan / Lavan Sands, Conwy Bay SPA | Nationally important over-wintering populations of regularly occurring migratory Eurasian oystercatcher and Eurasian curlew. |
| Ynys Feurig, Cemlyn Bay & The Skerries SPA | Breeding arctic tern, common tern, roseate tern, and sandwich tern. |
| Ynys Seiriol / Puffin Island SPA | Breeding great cormorant. |