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Our ref: 491561
Your ref: TR010046



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation: Response to Examining Authority's Written Questions for M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange Project.

Thank you for your consultation received by Natural England on 22 October 2024 .

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England's response to the questions posed by the Examining Authorities are set out below.

BIO1.1 - South Pennines Special Protection Area (SPA), South Pennines Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Manchester Mosses SAC

Paragraph 5.2 of BMBC's LIR [REP1A-001] states that the South Pennines SPA, South Pennines SAC and the Manchester Mosses SAC are not referenced in the assessments and they raise concern that increased traffic on the M62 during operation could have potential significant effects on these European sites, in particular given the cumulative effect of the Northern Gateway PfE allocation. Provide a response to BMBC's comments confirming whether or not you consider that further assessment is required to these designations. If so, explain why and if not explain why not.

Natural England do not consider further assessment is required for South Pennines SPA, South Pennines SAC and the Manchester Mosses SAC based on their distance from the scheme. It is Natural England's position that for any plan/project that has the potential to have air quality impacts on a European designated site, all European designated sites within 10km must be considered within the assessment. Manchester Mosses SAC is located 13.4km away from the scheme, and South Pennines SPA and South Pennines SAC is 16.2km away from the scheme.

The only exception to this is if a scheme falls within one of Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs). These IRZs provide guidance on what type of development could impact a nearby designated site. They define zones around each designated site which reflect the sensitivities of the features for which the site is notified, and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts and need further consideration. Natural England can confirm the proposal does not fall within any of our IRZs for South Pennines SPA, South Pennines SAC and the Manchester Mosses SAC, or their underpinning SSSIs.

For further information on how Natural England approach our advice on the assessment of road traffic emissions, and the evidence behind this approach, please see our [Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations \(NEA001\)](#) on our Access to Evidence website.

BIO 1.2 Proposed or Potential International Sites

Are there any Potential, possible SAC and proposed Ramsar sites that could be potentially affected by the Proposed Development and should be assessed? If so, provide details why an assessment would or would not be required on any sites referred to.

Natural England can confirm there is no proposed SACs, SPAs and Ramsar that could be impacted by the proposed development.

BIO 1.3 Other Plans and Projects

Paragraph 3.2.10 of the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) [APP-103] states that the other plans and projects included in the in-combination assessment that contribute to changes in traffic and predicted changes in air quality are illustrated in Figure 2-10 and 2-11 of the Transport Assessment [APP-149]. However, a description of the other plans and projects included in the HRA has not been provided in the HRA Report [APP-103].

Applicant: Confirm which other proposed projects or plans have been included in the HRA.

NE: Confirm that you are satisfied with the methodology used to determine these projects or plans.

Natural England can confirm we are happy with the applicants approach to the in-combination assessment, and concur with their conclusion that there will be no adverse effects on integrity of the Rochdale Canal alone or in-combination.

Yours sincerely

Alice Watson
Senior Officer – Sustainable Development & Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire Area Team