

## Stage 1 Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

Carr Road, Deepcar (“the Site”)

Proposed development of up to 93 residential dwellings including open space  
Planning Application Number: 17/04673/OUT (“the Project”)

### 1. Overview

- 1.1 The Habitats Regulations impose various duties on local authorities (referred to as “competent authorities” in the Regulations) to exercise their functions which are relevant to nature conservation so as to secure compliance with European Directives 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds. In order to fulfil those duties the Council must establish whether or not the Project will have any likely significant effects on any European site that might require further assessment.
- 1.2 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) starts with a screening stage followed by an appropriate assessment stage if necessary. Screening is ‘a process to identify the likely impacts of a project upon a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, considering whether the impacts are likely to be significant’. The purpose of the screening stage is for the competent authority to decide whether an appropriate assessment is required. The competent authority<sup>1</sup> decides whether “likely significant effects” (alone or combined with other plans or projects) can be ruled out, based on the information provided by the applicant. If the likely significant effects are ruled out there is not need to move to Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.
- 1.3 Normally a screening assessment should be seen as a simple assessment to check whether a more detailed appropriate assessment is necessary. The information that has been supplied is listed in table 1 below and is considered adequate to enable the screening exercise to be carried out in respect of this Project. In carrying out this screening exercise, the consultation responses and the EIA Screening Direction summarised in paragraph 9 have been reviewed in addition to the information listed in table 1.
- 1.4 A screening exercise should:
  - Identify what (if any) European sites may be affected by the proposal
  - Identify the conservation objectives of any site that may be affected, and the condition of the site
  - Identify the potential effects of the plan or project on the site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects (“in combination” effects are explained in paragraph 8). This will need to include consideration of each of the features for which the site is designated
  - Identify how those effects may impact on the site’s conservation objectives
  - Assess whether or not likely significant effects can be ruled out

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<sup>1</sup> A competent authority is any person or organization that has the legally delegated or invested authority, capacity, or power to perform a designated function

- 1.5 At the screening stage, depending on the details of the project or plan being screened, it may be appropriate to consider whether proposed plans or projects can be adapted so that any likely significant effect can be ruled out. Ideally such adaptations should be incorporated into plans or projects before screening takes place but, where this is not the case, any adaptations that are subsequently proposed can and should be considered during the screening stage. In this case the Project as proposed in the planning application has been screened and it was not necessary to request any adaptations for the purpose of this screening exercise, which is carried out specifically to establish whether or not there are any likely significant effects on European sites. This does not mean that there are no potential impacts on biodiversity or the wider natural environment associated with the development and planning conditions to secure appropriate mitigation may be requested accordingly.
- 1.6 Sheffield City Council has carried out a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening assessment in relation to the Project. This document summarises our screening assessment. The conclusion of the screening exercise is that there are no likely significant effects on a European site then the remaining four steps (appropriate assessment of identified effects, assessment of solutions and consideration of overriding public interest and compensatory measures) are not required to be carried out.

1.7 Additionally, the Council carried out an assessment of likely significant effects on European sites; and likely impacts on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located within the 5 km distance from the Site. For birds this assessment was extended to the entire designated site given their mobility and scale of their movements.

- 1.8 The Council's Ecology Unit has carried out a review of information supplied by FPCR Environment & Design Consultants ("FPCR"), who have carried out site surveys and a desk top study incorporating biological data supplied by Sheffield Biological Records Centre (SBRC) and the Sheffield Bird Study Group (SBSG). The information that has been reviewed is listed in Table 1 below.

## 2. Pre-screening steps – Gathering Information

- 2.1 A planning application has been submitted for a proposed development of up to 93 residential dwellings including open space in the Stocksbridge/ Deepcar area of Sheffield (central grid reference SK 277 974) ("the Project").
- 2.2 Table 1 below lists the main information provided and reviewed in carrying out the screening exercise.

**Table 1**

<b>Format</b>	<b>Information provided by applicant/available to assessor</b>
Pdf	17_04673_OUT-PART_1-1173063
Pdf	17_04673_OUT-PART_2_-_APPENDIX_C_-_BREEDING_BIRD_SURVEY-1173066
Pdf	7301-E-01 Desktop Study - Approximate Locations of Notable Bird Species Fig 1
Pdf	7301-E-01 Desktop Study - Approximate Locations of Notable Bird Species Fig 2
Pdf	171005 Decision letter – A Dalton
Pdf	171005 Decision letter – P Morgan
Pdf	171005 – written statement
Pdf	Breeding Bird Survey Report – Land off Carr Road, Deepcar.combined.compr...
Pdf	Deepcar. Winter Bird Survey Methodology
Pdf	Ecological Technical Carr Road Deepcar final full

Pdf	Figure 1 – Summer South Pennine Moors Phase 1 SPA Records
Pdf	Figure 2 – Summer Dark Peak SSSI Bird Species Records
Pdf	Figure 3 – Winter South Pennine MoorsPhase 1 SPA Records
Pdf	Figure 4 – Winter Dark Peak SSSI Bird Species records
Pdf	Hollin Busk – HRA Significant Developments
Pdf	Natural England response234579 17_04673_OUT Outline application for up to 93 residential dwellings
Pdf	Passage, Breeding Bird Survey Results & methods 2017 (Carr Road, Deepcar...
Pdf	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1 SPA
Pdf	UK9007021-Peak-District-Moors-(South-Pennine-Moors-Phase-1)-SPA-V2
Pdf	UK9007021 Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)
Pdf	South Pennine Moors citation
Pdf	UK0030280-South-Pennine-Moors-SAC-V2
Pdf	UK0030280 South Pennine Moors
Excel doc	Carr Road 500m radius 08-03-2017
Word doc	Proposed development site off Carr Road, Deepcar records of priority bird species
Email item	Associated emails - correspondence with Bob Turner (SCC Principal Planning Officer), Ogo Osammor (SCC Lead Air Quality Officer), Oliver Walton (NE Lead Advisor, Sustainable Development, Yorks & North Lincs), James Walsh (NE Lead Advisor, Yorks & North Lincs), David Allcock (NE Consultations Team).
Email item	Natural England response 216796 – regarding your phone enquiry about Habitats and Wild Birds Directive
Online	Sheffield & Peak Park Plans

- 2.3 In this case the development proposal is defined as a “Project”<sup>2</sup>. It is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European site and therefore has been screened by the SCC as the competent authority to decide whether there is any requirement for further assessment.
- 2.4 Once this has been determined the competent authority decides therefore whether likely significant effects (alone or combined with other plans or projects) can be ruled out, based on information provided by the applicant, and whether there is any requirement to proceed to Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.
- 2.5 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“the Habitats Regulations”) require that permission for the Project can only be granted if the Project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

### 3. Description of the Site and the Project

- 3.1 FPCR state that the Site currently comprises five poor semi-improved grassland fields, totalling 6.3ha, divided by stone walls and currently used as pasture or for hay cutting. To the north and east of the site are properties fronting Carr Road, including Grade II listed Royd Farm. To the south, the site is bounded by Hollin Busk Lane and Cockshot Hill, which is locally designated wildlife site (“LWS”) which is 400m south of the site. To the west is Fox Glen Wood (also an LWS)

<sup>2</sup> The Habitats and Wild Birds Directives in England and its seas Core guidance for developers, regulators & land/marine managers December 2012 (draft for public consultation), Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, Crown copyright 2012.

which surrounds Clough Dike. The existing housing areas to the east and west form part of the settlements of Deepcar and Stocksbridge. The Site is approximately 3.6km east of the South Pennine Moor Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA), thus designated for its extensive tracts of semi-natural moorland habitats which are important for their assemblage of breeding moorland and moorland fringe birds.

- 3.2 The proposal is for up to 93 dwellings together with the creation of new public open space, served via a new access road from Carr Road. The developable area of the site extends to 3.1 hectares, equating to a proposed housing density of up to 30 dwellings per hectare. The remainder of the total site area (3.4 hectares) will be provided as public open space and drainage attenuation areas. All matters other than access, including appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved at this stage. The indicative layout plan demonstrates how the site could be developed for a mix of dwellings, as well as private garden areas, shared amenity spaces, resident parking and associated landscaping. The site is identified on the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map as being within an Open Space Area. The Draft Proposals Map to the Pre Submission version of the Draft City Policies and Sites Document identifies the site as being within a Countryside Area (non-green belt).

#### **4. Conservation designations**

##### **4.1 *South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation***

This designation covers the major moorland blocks of the South Pennines, from Ilkley in the north to Matlock in the south. The designated area comprises a range of upland habitats including significant areas of wet heathland, and transition mires and quaking bogs, and some of the best examples of dry heathland, upland oak woodlands and blanket bogs in the United Kingdom.

##### **4.1.1 *Conservation Objectives for South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation***

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- the extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;
- the structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats; and,
- the supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.

##### **4.1.2 *Qualifying Features of the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation:***

- H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
- H4030. European dry heaths
- H7130. Blanket bogs
- H7140. Transition mires and quaking bogs; Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface
- H91A0. Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles

##### **4.2 *Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) Special Protection Area***

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee ("JNCC") published SPA Selection Guidelines for use in the UK. Each SPA has been selected according to the principles laid out in the selection guidelines. This follows a stepwise process to identify areas to be given special protection for the rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex I (Article 4.1) of the Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) and for regularly occurring migratory species (Article

4.2) and for the protection of wetlands, especially wetlands of international importance. These areas are known as Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

4.3 The Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA designation covers the southern part of the South Pennine Moors, from Marsden in the north to Matlock in the south, and includes typical upland mires, heaths and oak woodlands. The designated area supports breeding populations of the following Birds Directive Annex I species:

- Short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*
- Merlin *Falco columbarius*
- Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

**4.3.1 Conservation objectives for Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) Special Protection Area**

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- the extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- the structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- the supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- the population of each of the qualifying features; and
- the distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

**4.3.2 Qualifying Features of the Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) Special Protection Area:**

- A098 *Falco columbarius*; Merlin (Breeding)
- A140 *Pluvialis apricaria*; European golden plover (Breeding)
- A222 *Asio flammeus*; Short-eared owl (Breeding)

**4.4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest**

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a formal designation for areas of very high conservation value, designated such for their fauna, flora, geological or physiological features and notified as a SSSI under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended.

SSSIs are the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in England, supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features.

Three SSSIs are located within a 5km radius of the site, as follows:

**4.4.1 Site: Dark Peak SSSI**

**Reference:** 1002023

The Dark Peak SSSI covers a vast area encompassing the main moorland area of the Peak District (known as the Dark Peak), lying to the north of the limestone dales of the White Peak and extending through the counties of West and South Yorkshire to the boundary of the National Park at Stanage Edge. It comprises geological sites of special interest and a range of habitats, some of which comprise botanically rich communities of nationally rare species.

‘Dark Peak comprises the main moorland area of the Peak District and represents the full range of moorland vegetation characteristic of the South Pennines. This includes extensive tracts of blanket mire with associated erosion features and, below the watersheds, dwarf shrub heath,

woodland and acid grassland. A wide variety of smaller soligenous and valley mires and flushes occur below springs and along seepage lines and streams. These are often botanically rich and support a number of regionally scarce plants. The moorlands are of particular importance for their breeding bird populations, including internationally important numbers of Golden plover, Merlin and Short-eared owl. Populations of several other species reach nationally important levels and contribute to the international importance of the South Pennines as a whole for breeding moorland birds. A number of nationally rare or scarce invertebrates have been recorded from the site. It also of particular importance in supporting several vegetation communities and plant and animal species at, or near, the northern or southern limits of their British or global range. Some gritstone outcrops are of importance for their lichen communities. Several nationally important geological features occur within the boundary of the site.'

#### 4.4.2 Birds

The citation lists 20 bird species

The reportable features (birds) on SSSI units are:

Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Dunlin, *Calidris alpina alpina*

Assemblages of breeding birds - Upland moorland and grassland with water bodies

SSSI Reportable Features not allocated to unit(s)

Aggregations of breeding birds - Curlew, *Numenius arquata*

Aggregations of breeding birds - Merlin, *Falco columbarius*

Aggregations of breeding birds - Short-eared owl, *Asio flammeus*

Aggregations of breeding birds - Golden plover, *Pluvialis apricaria*

#### 4.4.3 SSSI condition summary

Report generated on: 05 Jun 2018

	Sites	Units	Units Assessed
<b>Total number</b>	1	246	246
<b>Total area (ha)</b>	31,823.79	31,823.79	31,823.79

	% meeting area of favourable or unfavourable recovering	Favourable	Unfavourable - Recovering	Unfavourable - No change	Unfavourable - Declining	Partially destroyed	Destroyed	Not Assessed
<b>Area (ha)</b>	31,102.67	1,377.02	29,725.65	690.67	30.46			
<b>Percentage</b>	97.73%	4.33%	93.41%	2.17%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

#### 4.4.4 Site: Canyards Hills SSSI

Reference: 1002361

Canyards Hills are situated approximately 5 miles (8 km) north-west of the edge of the City of Sheffield to the south of Broomhead Reservoir. The complex topography of the site represents the most easterly extension of the North Peak moorlands. There are areas of boggy vegetation and ponds which are an unusual feature in the dwarf-shrub moorlands of the North Peak. These habitats are important for aquatic plants, invertebrates and amphibians.



#### 4.5 SSSI Threats and Pressures

Threats, pressures and activities on European sites were identified from the Standard Data Form<sup>3</sup>. Activities affecting SSSIs were identified from the operations listed by Natural England likely to damage the special interest and therefore requiring consent<sup>4</sup>. The table below provides a list of positive and negative factors that impact on the European site/SSSI<sup>3,4</sup>. Potential effects of the project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects were then considered on each of the features for which the European sites/SSSI are designated.

SITE_CODE	SITE_NAME	DESIGNATION_TYPE_CODE	REF_IMPACTS_DESCR	SCC Assessment of Likely Significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial)	No significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities	Potentially affected; see discussion below
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	fire and fire suppression	No significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	No significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	reduced fecundity/ genetic depression	Potentially affected; see discussion below
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	modification of cultivation practices	No significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	mowing / cutting of grassland	No significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	grazing	No significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	Forest and Plantation management & use	No significant effect
UK9007021	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	SPA	Improved access to site	Potentially affected; see discussion below
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	Agriculture activities not referred to above	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities	Potentially affected; see discussion below
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	Air pollution, air-borne pollutants	Potentially affected; see discussion below
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	fire and fire suppression	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	modification of cultivation practices	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	mowing / cutting of grassland	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	grazing	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	annual and perennial non-timber crops	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	Forest and Plantation management & use	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	grazing in forests/ woodland	No significant effect
UK0030280	South Pennine Moors	SAC	Improved access to site	Potentially affected; see discussion below
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crags	SSSI	Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing, and re-seeding.	No significant effect
1002023	Dark Peak		Grazing and changes in the grazing	No significant effect

<sup>3</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1461>

<sup>4</sup> As part of a SSSI notification Natural England must provide a list of operations requiring Natural England's consent (in the past this list has been known as operations likely to damage the special interest or potentially damaging operations). None of the listed operations can be carried out or permitted without Natural England's prior written consent or the consent of another public body (provided that the other body has formally consulted Natural England first). This applies where a person wishes to undertake any of these operations themselves or plans to allow others to carry them out. <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>



1002361 1004022	Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing and cessation of grazing).	
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Stock feeding and changes in stock feeding practice.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	The introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation and changes in the mowing or cutting regime (including hay making to silage and cessation).	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Application of manure, fertilisers and lime.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Burning.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic animal*, plant or seed.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	The killing or removal of any wild animal*, other than pest control.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, moss, lichen, fungus and turf.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	The introduction of or changes in tree and woodland management including afforestation and planting.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Drainage (including moor-gripping and the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Modification of the structure of watercourses, including their banks and beds, as by re-alignment, re-grading and dredging.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes).	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools or marshes.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Extraction of minerals, including peat, topsoil, gritstone or shales.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of	No significant effect

			pipelines and cables, above or below ground.	
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Storage of materials.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Modification of natural or man-made features, including clearance of boulders, large stones, loose rock and battering, buttressing or grading rock-faces and infilling of pits and quarries.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Use of vehicles likely to damage or disturb features of interest.	No significant effect
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	Recreational or other activities likely to damage features of interest.	Potentially affected; see discussion below
1002023 1002361 1004022	Dark Peak Canyards Hills Wharnccliffe Crag	SSSI	The introduction of game management and changes in game management and hunting practices.	No significant effect

## 5. Potential impacts of the proposed Project considered in the screening exercise

5.1 The following sections discuss the potential effects that may impact on the qualifying features, identifying and assessing how the likely effects may impact on the designated sites conservation objectives and their significance.

5.1.1 The erection of 93 dwellings located approximately 3.6km from the SAC, SPA and 3.5km from the Dark Peak SSSI would effectuate a local increase in human population, with a potential associated increase in domestic pets, and likely associated increase in local traffic, and potential effects of construction traffic during the construction phase.

5.1.2 A local increase in human population could impact the habitats of the SAC, SPA and SSSIs through an increase in visitor pressure through activities associated with outdoor leisure and sports, causing trampling, erosion, or disturbance to ground nesting birds.

5.1.3 Increased disturbance could affect breeding success of qualifying species and result in population declines and changes in population distribution. Certain ground nesting birds are very vulnerable to disturbance from recreational activities. A number of studies have demonstrated that birds are sensitive to disturbance from visitors with dogs and are disturbed, at least in the short-term.

5.1.4 Deposition of dog faeces is known to have a significant fertilising effect especially in low nutrient habitats. Dog fouling on low fertility soils where levels of deposition are high and concentrated presents a risk of habitat change through eutrophication.

5.1.5 An increase in construction traffic and post-construction local traffic has the potential to increase air pollution which could negatively impact the sensitive mire and heath habitats of the SAC and SSSIs and potentially result in a reduction in the quality and area of the characteristic habitats.

- 5.1.6 There is the potential for impact by loss of supporting habitat outside of the SAC and SPA and Dark Peak SSSI. This relates to “functionally-linked” land, which is used by qualifying bird species for nesting and/or foraging during the breeding season, and for foraging and roosting outside of the breeding season. For example, records held by SBRC and SBSG show that Golden Plover use some of the fields in the Bolsterstone - Stocksbridge area for foraging and roosting on the way to their nesting grounds in the SAC and SPA and SSSI. Current threats to farmland and grassland habitats include agricultural intensification, lack of protection, neglect and pressure from development and urbanisation<sup>5</sup>. Some of the land that lies between the proposed development site and the SPA and SSSI is subject to ongoing agricultural improvement (e.g. drainage and change from semi-improved pasture to improved pasture and silage).

## 6. Impact Risk Zones

- 6.1 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (“IRZ”) are used to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England)<sup>6</sup>. The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. They define zones around each site which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts. They can be used by LPAs to consider whether a proposed development is likely to affect a SSSI/SAC/SPA and determine whether they will need to consult Natural England to seek advice on the nature of any potential SSSI/SAC/SPA impacts and how they might be avoided or mitigated<sup>7</sup>.
- 6.2 The site falls outside the impact risk zone for the type of development category (i.e. a residential development) which could potentially have adverse effects on the particular sensitivities of the features for which the European sites/SSSI are notified.
- 6.3 Using the IRZ’s as a guide the Local Planning Authority does not normally need to consult Natural England on this proposal regarding likely impacts on SSSIs/European sites. However, to improve the robustness of our decision Natural England were consulted to check whether a more detailed appropriate assessment is justified.

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<sup>5</sup> Blackburn, S (ed.) 2018. Sheffield State of Nature 2018. Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Sheffield.

<sup>6</sup> Ramsar sites are UK protected sites. Some Ramsar sites, known as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for Birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), are also of European importance and are subject to habitats regulation screening. They have been created under the EC Birds Directive and Habitats Directive. In the UK they form part of a larger European network called Natura 2000. In addition, the UK and its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies also contribute to global networks of protected sites created under the Ramsar, World Heritage and OSPAR Conventions. Within the UK sites that are nationally important for plants, animals or geological or physiographical features are protected by law as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

<sup>7</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

## 7. Consultee Responses

Natural England has stated the following:

- the proposal is not necessary for the management of the European site
- that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site, and can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment
- Submitted bird survey results indicate that the site is not used by significant numbers of SPA birds, therefore a likely significant effect on the South Pennine Moors SPA can be ruled out.

In relation to a further consultation on 29/03/2018 Natural England has confirmed they consider the proposed development will not cause a likely significant effect on designated sites.

John Keeley, Planning Manager North, Development Management, Peak District National Park Authority provided the following consultation response: "Our view is that we have no objections to this development as we consider it would not impact adversely upon the setting of the Peak District National Park. Along with our ecology manager I have looked at the site and had regard to other consented sites in the context of the nearest designated European sites. We concluded that the proposal was unlikely to have any significant effect upon them". A further discussion was held in which it was identified that the indicative layout may change from 'greenspace managed for biodiversity and recreational benefits' to an area managed for biodiversity only would not change their opinion.

## 8. Discussion and Assessment of likely effects and their significance

**Identify the conservation objectives of any site that may be affected/Identify how those effects may impact on the site's conservation objectives**

### **SPA/SAC conservation objectives**

1. the extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
2. the structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
3. the supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
4. the population of each of the qualifying features; and
5. the distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

### **For each of the SSSIs**

### **Conservation Objectives and definitions of Favourable Condition: notes for users**

#### **Conservation Objectives**

SSSIs are notified because of specific biological or geological features. Conservation Objectives define the desired state for each site in terms of the features for which they have been designated. When these features are being managed in a way which maintains their nature conservation value, then they are said to be in 'favourable condition'. It is a Government target that 95% of the total area of SSSIs should be in favourable condition by 2010.

#### **Definitions of Favourable Condition**

The Conservation Objectives are accompanied by one or more habitat extent and quality definitions for the special interest features at this site. These are subject to periodic

reassessment and may be updated to reflect new information or knowledge; they will be used by Natural England and other relevant authorities to determine if a site is in favourable condition. The standards for favourable condition have been developed and are applied throughout the UK.

## 8.1 Birds

- 8.1.1 Breeding bird surveys and bird passage surveys were carried out by FPCR Environment & Design in 2016 and 2017. Their surveys sought to establish presence and distribution of birds either breeding on Site, or present during the spring passage season and in particular, any species that contribute to the designation of the South Pennine (Phase 1) SPA and the Dark Peak SSSI.
- 8.1.2 The 2017 survey by FPCR identified Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* as a probable breeder within the Site boundary. Observations by SCC Ecology Unit also confirmed that Lapwing nested in the immediate vicinity (i.e. within 100m of the site boundary) in 2017. On the basis of this evidence it seems likely that, in a typical nesting season, the proposed development would impact on two breeding pairs of Lapwing. However, whilst Lapwing is a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and on the UK Red List (Birds of Conservation Concern), it is listed as a 'non-qualifying species of interest' in the citation for the South Pennine Moors (Phase 1) SPA. Potential effects on 'Non-qualifying species of interest' are not required to be screened or assessed under the Habitats Regulations. Lapwing is not listed in the citation for the Dark Peak SSSI.
- 8.1.3 Although Merlin and Golden Plover (both SPA and SSSI species) have been recorded in some of the adjoining 1km grid squares, there are no confirmed records of them using the Site. There are no records of Short-eared Owl (SPA and SSSI species) within 2km of the site in the past 10 years.
- 8.1.4 Curlew (SSSI species) has been recorded flying over the site but there are no records of the species actually using the site for nesting or foraging. Meadow Pipit (SSSI species) was identified as a "possible" breeding species in FPCR's 2016 Breeding Bird Survey and a "probable" breeder in FPCR's 2017 Breeding and Passage Bird Survey. Although relatively large numbers of Meadow Pipit were seen passing through the site, the likely number of breeding birds is low (perhaps 1 or 2 pairs). Grey Wagtail (SSSI species) was seen on the site on one occasion during FPCR's 2016 Breeding Bird Survey. The Site is not considered to perform a significant supporting role for bird species listed in the citation for the Dark Peak SSSI. The Site is not functionally linked to the Dark Peak SSSI. It is insignificant in relation to the in-combination effects on special interest features (birds) derived from the range of other development sites considered in this assessment. Given its sub-optimal nature it is unlikely to feature in any future in-combination effects where displacement may occur.
- 8.1.5 The Site is neither used by significant numbers of SSSI special interest features (birds), nor does it perform a significant supporting role to those features. Whilst it is clear there is no significant effect on SSSI birds from the proposal on its own, the potential effects in combination with other plans or projects must also be considered. Such "in-combination effects" could, for instance, arise from the loss of supporting habitat on other local development sites (see 'Significant Developments' in Appendix XX). However, analysis of all the available data suggests that there are unlikely to be any significant "in-combination effects" on the bird species listed as SSSI special interest features. Furthermore, given its sub-

optimal status for SSSI birds, the Site is unlikely to be implicated in any “in-combination effects” with future developments.

- 8.1.6 Some of the land that lies between the proposed development site and the SPA is subject to ongoing agricultural improvement (e.g. drainage and change from semi-improved pasture to improved pasture and silage). This form of landscape change would be a relevant consideration in areas that are functionally linked to the SPA but can be ruled out in this case since the proposed development site is not functionally linked to the SPA (i.e. it is not used by qualifying bird species of the SPA for nesting and/or foraging during the breeding season, or for foraging and roosting outside of the breeding season). The Site is not considered to perform a significant supporting role for bird species listed in the citation for the Dark Peak SSSI.
- 8.1.7 There are no records of SPA qualifying species using the sites shown on the “significant developments” map in Appendix 1. Given that the Carr Road site and the other significant development sites are not functionally linked to the SPA in respect of use by qualifying species, it is considered that there is no likely significant effect on the SPA.
- 8.1.8 There have been a few sightings of some of the SSSI bird species within the same 1km grid squares as the sites shown on the “significant developments” map. However, there are no records of SSSI bird species actually using the sites shown on the “significant developments” map. None of these sites appear to perform a significant supporting role for SSSI bird species. It is therefore considered that there is no likely significant effect on the SSSIs.
- 8.1.9 The site falls outside the impact risk zone for the type of development category (i.e. a residential development) which could potentially have adverse effects on the particular sensitivities of the features for which the European sites/SSSI are notified.
- 8.1.10 Natural England has stated the following:
- Submitted bird survey results indicate that the site is not used by significant numbers of SPA birds, therefore a likely significant effect on the South Pennine Moors SPA can be ruled out.
  - Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest  
Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified and has no objection.
- 8.1.11 It is concluded therefore that the proposed development will not cause a likely significant effect on the SPA qualifying species or the SSSI features of interest (birds).

## 8.2 Invertebrates

- 8.2.1 The following is a SSSI Reportable Feature not allocated to unit(s) - Population of dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii*, Golden-ringed Dragonfly. The Site is not considered to perform a significant supporting role for this SSSI feature of interest due to the unsuitability of the habitat on Site, semi-improved grassland not being its preferred habitat, distance from the Site to the nearest part of the Dark Peak SSSI, and the localised nature of the effects associated with the proposals. There are no records of Golden-ringed Dragonfly within 5km of the Site. It is considered that there is no significant effect on the SSSI. Similarly, there are no records of Golden-ringed dragonfly using the sites shown on the “significant developments” map. It is therefore considered that there is no significant effect on the SSSIs.
- 8.2.1 The nearest known colonies of *Cordulegaster* are at Agden Bog SK252931 5km from the site and Rushy Dyke SK227948 6km from the site so I am not aware of any records for the site in question or within the immediate proximity, but this could reflect a lack of recording effort rather than absence.
- 8.2.2 Moreover, the Site does not have any running water suitable for breeding. As such it would not have a significant value for Golden-ringed Dragonfly.
- 8.2.3 Specific designated features of the Dark Peak SSSI include the Invertebrate assemblage: Nationally Scarce Invertebrates associated with Upland mosaic BAP Broad Habitat type. It is considered that significant effects to this feature will not occur because of:
- 8.2.4 The distance from the Site to the nearest part of the Dark Peak SSSI; the Site is not considered to perform a significant supporting role for this SSSI feature of interest due to the unsuitability of the habitat for the invertebrate assemblage, and the localised nature of the effects associated with the proposals.
- 8.2.5 In combination with other development sites the Site at Carr Road does not perform a significant supporting role for invertebrate species listed in the citation for the Dark Peak SSSI.

## 8.3 Air quality

- 8.3.1 In response to our query as to whether the project may have a “likely significant effect” on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects e.g. from visitor pressure, air pollution/emissions and whether a more detailed appropriate assessment is justified. Natural England consider the proposed development will not cause a likely significant effect on designated sites.
- 8.3.2 The site falls outside the impact risk zone for the type of development category (i.e. a residential development) which could potentially have adverse effects on the particular sensitivities of the features for which the European sites are notified.
- 8.3.3 In terms of air quality our assessment is that a 1000AADT is not going to be significant in the general area at Carr Road, Deepcar and likely significant effects on a European site therefore can be ruled out. AADT (Average Annual Daily Traffic, sometimes termed AADF – Average Annual Daily Flow) figures give the number of vehicles that will drive on that stretch of road on an average day of the year. Furthermore, the construction phase effects on local air quality would be temporary and also not likely to be significant and therefore likely significant effects can be ruled out.

#### 8.4 Similarly Impact on geological features – with reference to above – no significant effects

### 8.5 Visitor pressure

8.5.1 FPCR concluded in their Ecological Appraisal that the proportion of additional visitor pressure potentially arising from the new development is likely to be insignificant based on the scale of existing visitor numbers. From this assessment FPCR concluded that the potential effects to the SAC/ SPA from increased visitor pressure will be neutral. It is considered that that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site in relation to visitor pressure either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment.

8.5.2 In response to our query to Natural England as to whether the project may have a “likely significant effect” on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects e.g. from visitor pressure, air pollution/emissions and whether a more detailed appropriate assessment is justified. Natural England consider the proposed development will not cause a likely significant effect on designated sites. Furthermore James Walsh Lead Adviser, Yorkshire & Northern Lincolnshire Team, Natural England, has confirmed verbally that he is not concerned about the impact of visitor pressure from this Site on European sites.

8.5.3 The site falls outside the impact risk zone for the type of development category (i.e. a residential development) which could potentially have adverse effects on the particular sensitivities of the features for which the European sites/SSSIs are notified.

8.5.4 Stocksbridge is served with a range in quality and accessibility of public open space (Parks and Gardens, Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace and Amenity Greenspace). The Site has a range in quality and accessibility of public open space within walking distance<sup>8</sup>. See Sheffield Standard Quality Assessment map provided in Appendix I <sup>9</sup>. The Site is also adjacent to Fox Glen Local Wildlife Site. It also has nearby access to the existing public rights of way network into the natural environment. It is considered that this reduces the potential effects on European sites from visitor pressure to will not cause a likely significant effect on designated sites through providing alternative destinations for recreation.

### 8.6 In combination effects

#### **Identify the conservation objectives of any site that may be affected/Identify how those effects may impact on the site’s conservation objectives**

8.6.1 If no likely significant effects are identified **alone** on a qualifying feature, then any element of the project deemed to have an effect(s) but which is/are **not significant on their own** must now be considered for their potential to have an effect **in-combination** with other effects.

8.6.2 At the screening (for likely significant effects) stage, the effects of a plan or project must be considered both individually and in combination with other relevant plans or projects. This is a

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<sup>8</sup> Walking distance is the average distance you could walk in the given time. This is indicative and does not reflect actual walking distance on the road.

<sup>9</sup> Sites are assessed against the Sheffield Standard – Sheffield’s Green Space Quality Assessment Tool which uses criteria based on a number of elements of the Green Flag award. It provides an understanding of how safe, clean, welcoming and accessible are each of our sites. Assessments help inform improvements required to drive up quality and improve management.



requirement of the Habitats Directive which helps ensure that European sites are not damaged by the additive effects of multiple plans or projects.

8.6.3 In response to our query as to whether the project may have a “likely significant effect” on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects e.g. from visitor pressure, air pollution/emissions and whether a more detailed appropriate assessment is necessary. Natural England consider the proposed development will not cause a likely significant effect on designated sites.

8.6.4 Defra (2012) state ‘A “plan” would include a development plan which requires adoption under planning or similar legislation’. Examples of plans which could be subject to the HRA requirements include but are not limited to (a) local and neighbourhood plans under the national planning policy framework; (b) local development plans.

8.6.5 In our screening assessment the following plans were considered for screening potential “in combination” effects:

SCC Planning Policies

- Core Strategy key diagram
- UDP proposals map
- Draft City Sites and Policies map

Peak District National Park Authority planning policies comprising:

- the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted October 2011)
- a number of policies in the Local Plan 2001 that are still valid
- Emerging Development Management Policies document (when adopted will replace Local Plan 2001)

8.6.6 Potential impacts of the development of the Site in combination with other plans or projects have been considered and it is concluded that it is unlikely to have a significant effect on designated sites.

8.6.7 Impacts of both the development of the Site and increased visitor pressure and related effects on the European sites in combination with other plans or projects have also been considered and it is concluded that it is unlikely to have a significant effect on designated sites.

8.6.8 In combination effects from air pollution/emissions, including construction phase effects, have also been assessed in consultation with Air Quality, Monitoring & Modelling, City Growth Department and it is considered that the Project in combination with other plans or projects will not cause a likely significant effect on designated sites.

8.6.9 Potential effects through loss of supporting habitat outside of the SAC, SPA and SSSI have been considered in combination with other plans or projects and it is concluded that there is no likely significant effect on designated sites.

8.6.10 Potential effects on SPA qualifying species (birds) and SSSI interest features (birds) and aggregations of breeding birds have been considered in combination with other plans or projects and it is concluded that there is no likely significant effect on designated sites.

8.6.11 Therefore, in conclusion, the effects of the Project either alone or in combination with other plans or projects are not considered to be significant and can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment.

## **9. EIA Screening Direction**

A Request for a Screening Direction was made by the applicant under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 to the Secretary of State in October 2017. The Secretary of State's Screening Direction concluded that an EIA was not required for this proposal. Although the Direction was produced under different regulations for a different purpose i.e. in order to determine whether or not EIA was required, the Secretary of State agreed with the clear advice of Natural England that the site is not used by significant numbers of SPA birds. The Secretary of State noted that the proposal is not a development with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects. It is also of note that the Secretary of State has also considered potential cumulative effects with other existing or approved developments in the area, particularly in relation to traffic, noise and air quality impacts, and does not believe there are any likely significant effects in these respects.

## **10. Conclusion**

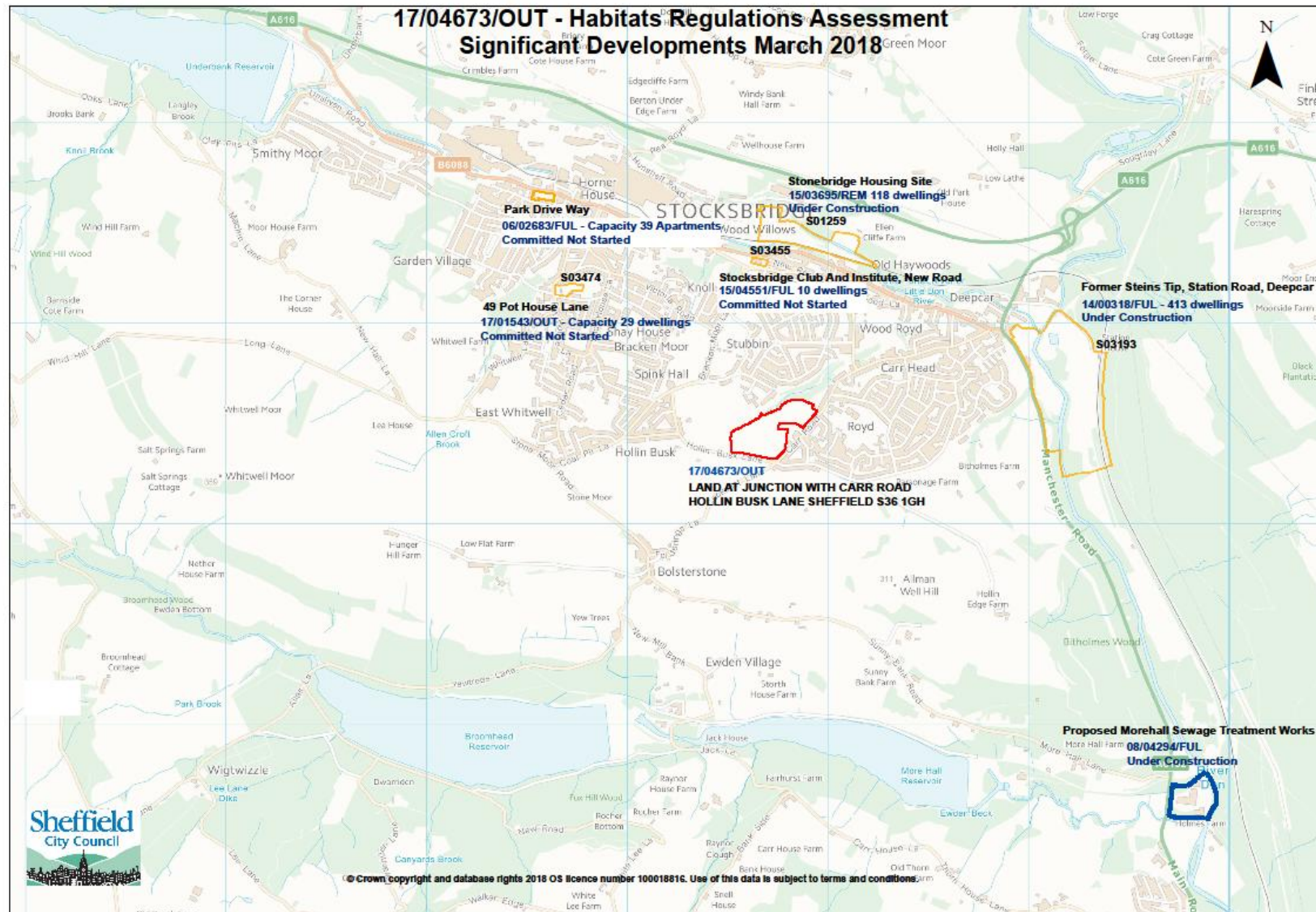
It is concluded that that the Project is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site/SSSI, and can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment. The Council, in its capacity as competent authority, may carry out any further screening exercise if required in the event that the Project changes.

**Appendix 1:**

- i. Other projects considered for screening potential “in combination” effects**
- ii. Carr Road site – how it relates to the SAC, SPA, SSSI**
- iii. Stocksbridge and Deepcar – Access to Green Space**

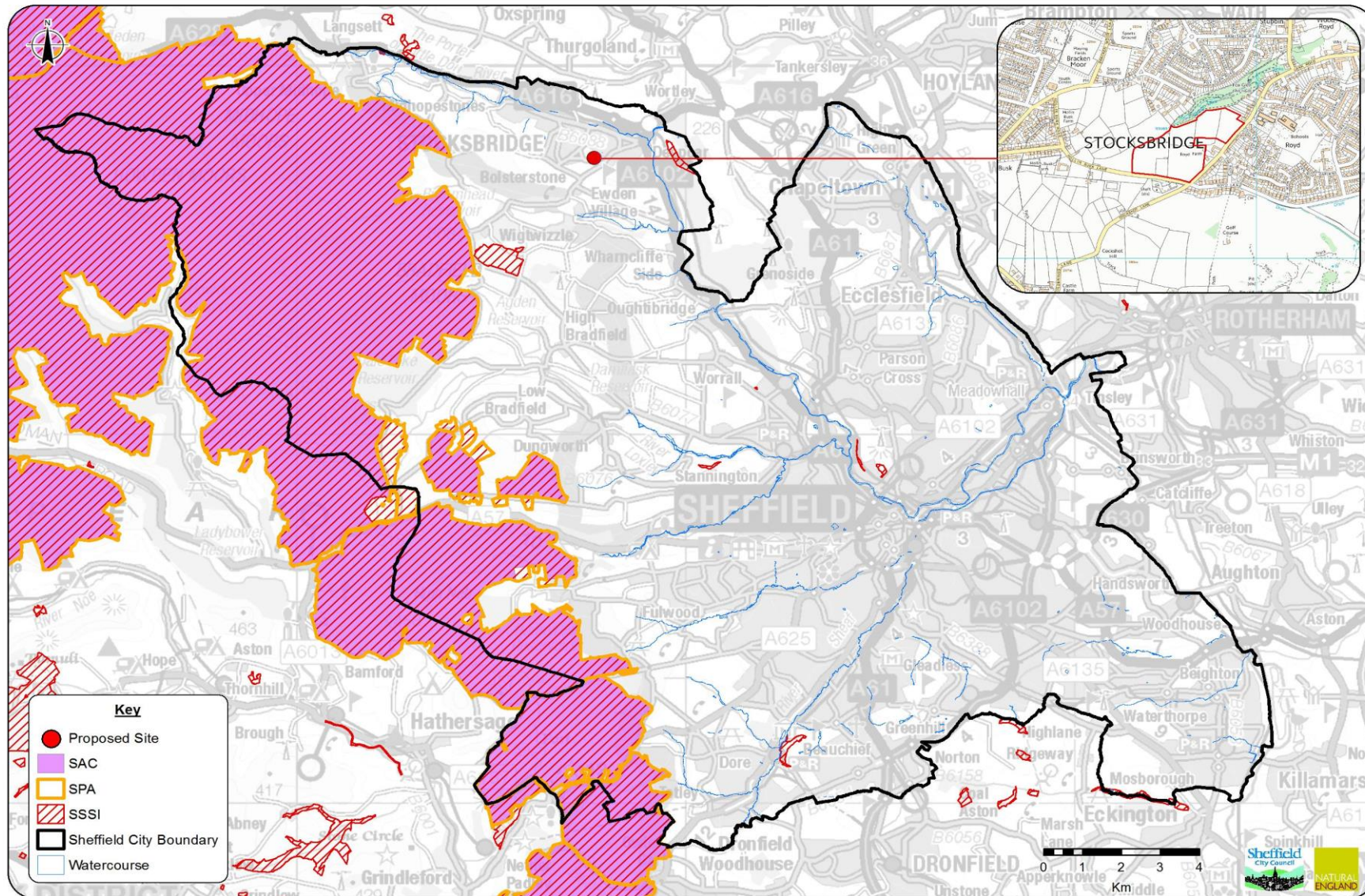
**Appendix 2:**

**Sheffield City Council Planning Officer**

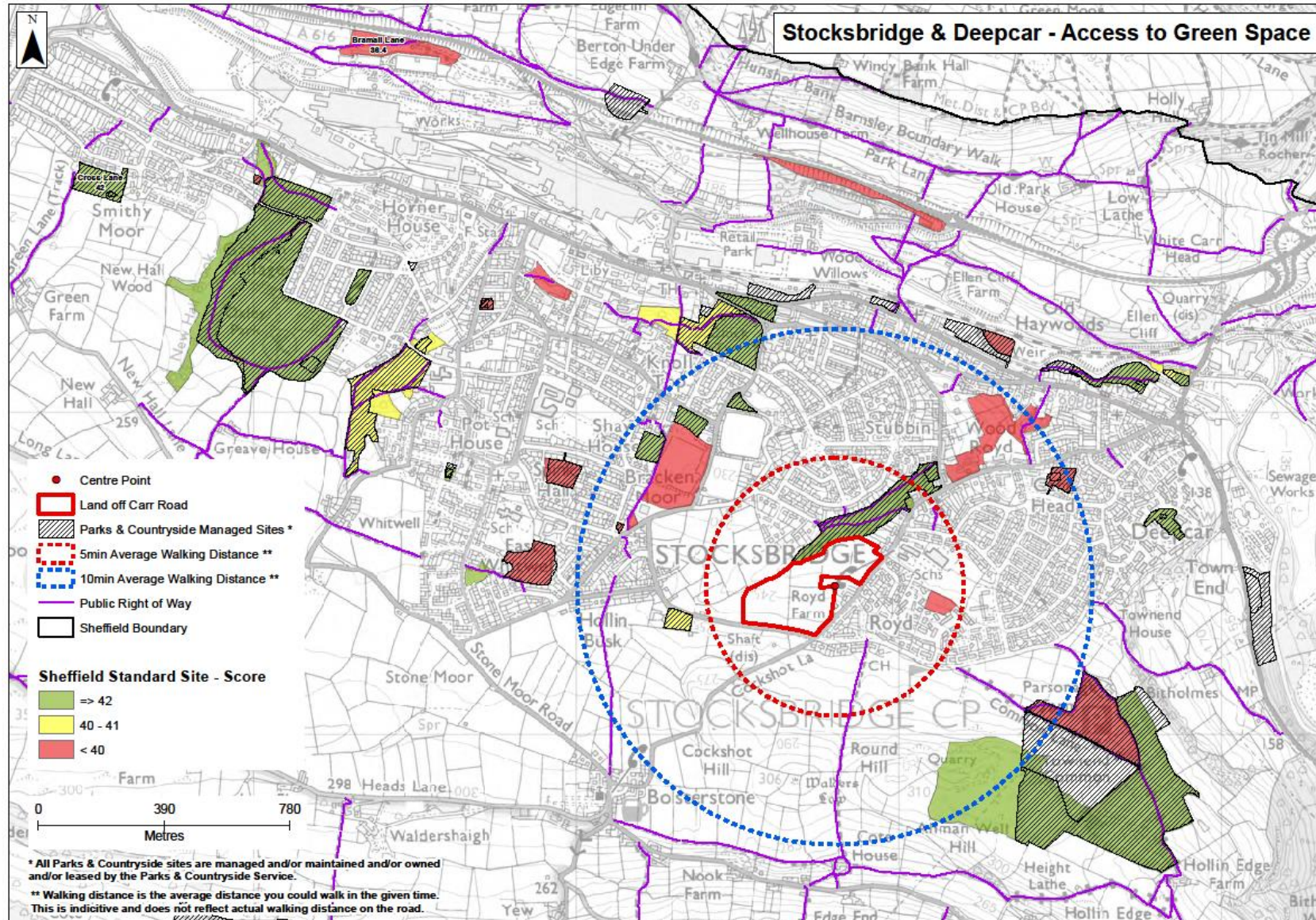




### Carr Road, Stocksbridge







**Appendix 2:**

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**Sheffield City Council Planning Officer**

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**Consultation date:**

March 2018

**Response date:**

March 2018

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An HRA was not required for Sheffield's current Local Plan (comprising the Core Strategy and saved policies from the UDP). The Council is currently preparing its new Local Plan, and as part of this is undertaking the HRA process due to the scale of potential housing and economic growth in the city. The Council consulted on its Citywide Options for Growth to 2034 document in 2015/16 – this set out high level growth options for the city, and was accompanied by an HRA appropriate to this early stage of the plan-making process. The Council will consult on a draft plan in 2018, and this will be accompanied by an updated HRA which will consider the impact of all of the proposed draft policies and potential site allocations. As such, there is not currently a Local Plan HRA which can be taken into account for planning applications.