

## **Information Note:**

### **At what dwelling threshold should housing development mitigate increased recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast?**

1. The potential for new housing development in Sefton to increase recreation pressure on the internationally important nature sites on the Sefton Coast, and the need to mitigate this, is set out in various documents<sup>1</sup> including the Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
2. The **purpose** of this Information Note is to set out the threshold for the number of new dwellings which triggers the need for mitigation of recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast. This relates especially to paragraph 3.28 of the Nature Conservation SPD. This Information Note does not apply to any other matters relating to internationally designated nature sites, Sefton's Local Plan or the Nature Conservation SPD.
3. This is intended as an **interim approach** until the approval of a Visitor Management Strategy and delivery and implementation mechanisms are in place to mitigate harm from recreation pressure for the internationally important nature sites in the Liverpool City Region (including on the Sefton Coast)<sup>2</sup>.
4. **Applicants for proposals for 85 or more dwellings (net additional units) must consider and include measures that will mitigate recreation pressure to less than significant on the Sefton Coast<sup>3</sup>. This includes new dwellings, conversions and prior notification or prior approvals**, and applications for parts of larger sites, where the whole site's capacity is considered to be 85 or more dwellings. That is, paragraph 3.28 of the Nature Conservation SPD will apply only to proposals for or sites with a capacity of 85 or more dwellings (net additional units), **and to the sites where this is already a site-specific requirement** set out in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan (sites MN2.8, MN2.13, MN2.15) and policy MN6 'Land at Brackenway, Formby).
5. This threshold of 85+ dwellings captures 75% of all housing growth intended over the Local Plan period (i.e. 75% of Sefton's agreed housing requirement<sup>4</sup>). The 75% figure is based on specialist ecological advice. The subsequent 85+ dwellings threshold figure is derived from an analysis of housing sites allocated in the Local Plan and sites in the 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>5</sup>. This assessed cumulative total and their percentages of Sefton's housing requirement, taking into account indicative site capacities, build rates where known and projected delivery timescales.
6. **Examples of mitigation measures for recreation pressure are set out in paragraph 3.29 of the Nature Conservation SPD.** Each planning application, and its assessment and mitigation of recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast, will be considered on its merits. It may be that a mix of on-site and off-site mitigation is

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<sup>1</sup> This requirement arises from the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations), and is identified in the 2015 and 2016 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Reports of the Local Plan. It is reflected by policy NH2 'Nature' of the 2017 Local Plan and in the 2017 Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and referred to in the Open Space SPD -see [www.sefton.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/localplan) and [www.sefton.gov.uk/spd](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/spd).

<sup>2</sup> As set out in paragraph 2.22 of the Nature Conservation SPD.

<sup>3</sup> This may be as part of information supplied with the planning application to enable Sefton Council to make a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

<sup>4</sup> As set out in Local Plan policy MN1 'Housing and Employment Requirements'.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/SHLAA>.

required. Financial contributions may be sought as part of off-site contributions. The final package of mitigation measures will be agreed as part of the planning process.

7. Where financial contributions are sought, these will be based on the approach set out in Appendix C of the Open Space SPD; commuted sum payments of £2,050 per new home (net) at 2017-2018 prices with additional sums if site-specific circumstances make this necessary. Where financial contributions relate to only part of the mitigation measures, commuted sums will be sought on a pro rata, proportionate basis.