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Grangetown Prairie
Phase 4 Remediation

Habitats Regulations Assessment

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INCA
Industry Nature Conservation Association

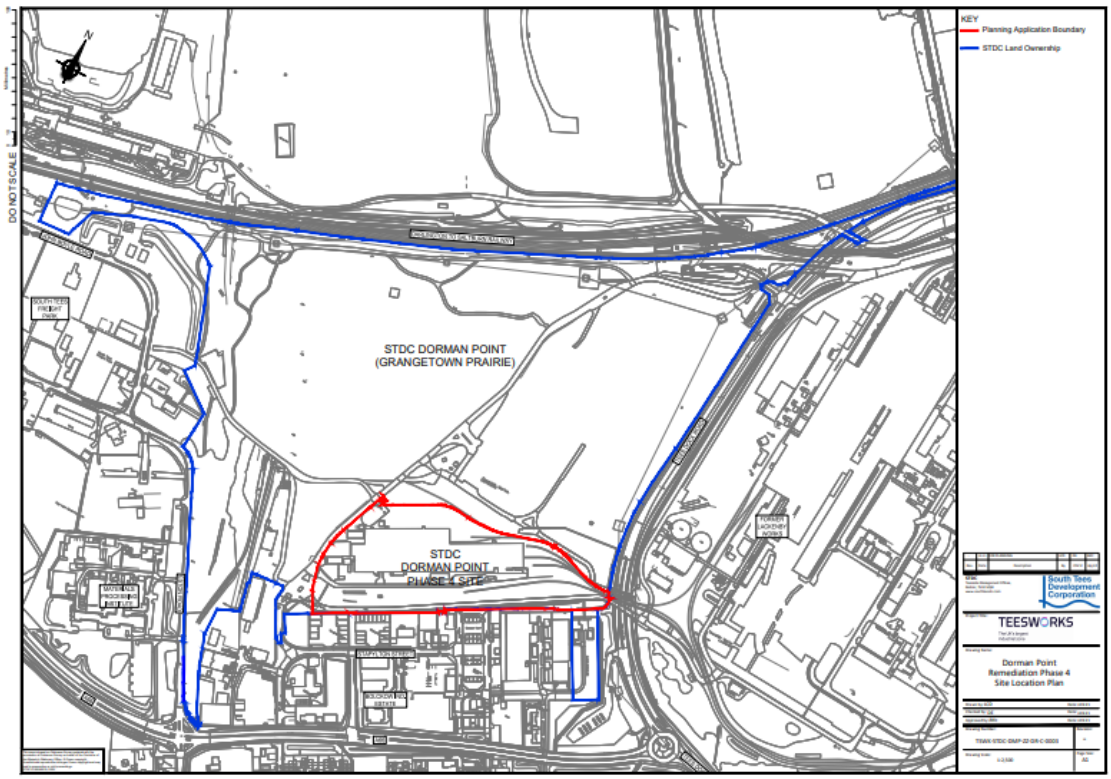
Introduction

This document has been prepared by INCA on behalf of South Tees Development Corporation (STDC) in connection with a planning application for engineering operations associated with ground remediation and preparation of Phase 4 of Grangetown Prairie. It provides information to inform Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). It has been prepared to inform the 'competent authority', Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) about the implications of the proposed development on nearby internationally important sites, as required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (hereafter referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations'). The report has been prepared in accordance with the Habitats Regulations.

The proposed development site (the site) is shown in Figure 1. It is approximately 8ha in extent with semi-natural habitats accounting for approximately 2.5ha of that area. The remainder of the site is a variety of artificial surfaces such as roads and storage areas, and built development in the form of the former Torpedo Ladle Workshop (the demolition of which does not form part of this application).

The habitats on site are almost exclusively ephemeral/ short perennial with a very small amount of shrubs and former amenity grassland. The majority of these habitats lie in a narrow strip of land, approximately 50m wide, between the former Torpedo Ladle Workshop and the Bolcow Industrial Estate. There are no waterbodies or watercourses on the site with the closest watercourse being a short stretch of the Holme Beck, approximately 250m to the west.

Figure 1. Plan of Grangetown Prairie Phase 4, showing red line boundary



Internationally Designated Sites

Four internationally designated sites are within 10km of the site: North York Moors SPA; North York Moors SAC; Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA; Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar.

The westernmost units of the North York Moors SPA and North York Moors SAC are approximately 9km away at their closest point to the site. Given the distances involved and the nature of the

proposals, these two internationally designated Sites have been screened out for likely significant effect.

The Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA and the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar are 1.8 and 2.1km from the site at their closest points. These internationally designated Sites are considered in this report.

Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA

The Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) was first classified in 1995 for its numbers of European importance of breeding Little Tern *Sternula albifrons,* passage Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*, wintering Red Knot *Calidris canutus* and passage Common Redshank *Tringa totanus,* as well as an assemblage of over 20,000 waterbirds. Extensions to the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA were formally classified on 16 January 2020. The SPA is now considered to be 12,210.62ha in size and includes additional areas of coastal and wetland habitats important for waterbirds.

Natural England has extended the SPA to include marine foraging areas for breeding Little Tern and breeding and foraging areas for Common Tern, the latter being a new qualifying feature in the light of recent increases in the size of the breeding population within the SPA. The extension also includes additional areas of terrestrial habitats such as wet grassland, saltmarsh, deep and shallow pools and intertidal areas important for other foraging and roosting waterbirds which were existing features of the SPA. Non-breeding Ruff *Calidris pugnax* and breeding Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* have also been classified as new qualifying features of the SPA.

The boundary of the SPA extension covers an area from Castle Eden Denemouth in the north to Marske-by-the Sea in the south and includes the River Tees up to the Tees Barrage. The seaward boundary has been drawn to include waters out to around 3.5km from Crimdon Dene, to include the areas of greatest importance to the Little Terns at that colony, and out to around 6km offshore further south to include the areas of greatest importance to the common terns at the Saltholme colony.

Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar

The Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar boundary has also been extended to include the additional terrestrial wet grassland, saltmarsh, deep and shallow pools and intertidal areas for breeding and non-breeding waterbirds, as for the SPA. Historically the Teesmouth SPA and Ramsar boundaries have been virtually coterminous and their interest features very similar. However, the Ramsar extension only covers the terrestrial extension areas of the SPA down to Mean Low Water. Although not a qualifying feature, the Ramsar site citation recognises that the site supports a rich assemblage of invertebrates, including the following seven Red Data Book species: *Pherbellia grisescens, Thereva valida, Longitarsus nigerrimus, Dryops nitidulus, Macroplea mutica, Philonthus dimidiatipennis* and *Trichohydnobius suturalis.*

The qualifying features for the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar are given in Table 1. The number of birds in the Ramsar assemblage is greater than for the SPA as it includes Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* and Greylag Goose *Anser anser,* both of which are resident all year, while the SPA only protects migratory and wintering waterbirds along with Annex I species. As the Ramsar is to a very large extent a sub-set of the SPA the term SPA as it relates to the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast is taken to refer to both unless otherwise stated.

The conservation objectives for the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified are:

"Subject to natural change, 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."

Internationally designated sites are underpinned by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with SSSIs being divided into management units. In this case the relevant SSSI is Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast. The closest management unit to the application site is Unit 7, River Tees for which there is currently "no identified condition threat" according to Natural England. Common Terns use these reaches of the tidal River Tees for foraging in the summer months, while Redshank and Curlew *Numenius arquata* feed and roost on the intertidal margins during the non-breeding season.

Table 1. Qualifying features for Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/ Ramsar

Feature	Count (period)	% of Population	Interest type	Selection Criteria	New feature (Y/N)
Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*	1,900 individuals (1988-1992	4.3% GB, 1.3% Western Europe/Western Africa	Annex 1 (non-breeding)	Stage 1.1 (SPA), Criterion 6 (Ramsar)	N
Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*	81 pairs (2010-2014)	4.3% GB	Annex 1 (breeding)	Stage 1.1	N
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*	399 pairs ((2010-2014)	4.0% GB	Annex 1 (breeding)	Stage 1.1	Y
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*	18 pairs (2010-2014)	1.2% GB	Annex 1 (breeding)	Stage 1.1	Y
Ruff *Calidris pugnax*	19 individuals (2011/12-2015/16)	2.4% GB	Annex 1 (non-breeding)	Stage 1.1	Y
Red Knot *Calidris canutus*	5,509 individuals (1991/92-1995/96)	1.6% NE Canada/Greenland / Iceland/UK population	Migratory (winter)	Stage 1.2 (SPA), Criterion 6 (Ramsar)	N
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*	1,648 individuals (1987-1991)	1.1% East Atlantic population	Migratory (passage)	Stage 1.2 (SPA), Criterion 6 (Ramsar)	N
Feature	Count (period)	Average number of individuals		Selection Criteria	
Waterbird assemblage	2011/12-2015/16	26,014 individuals (SPA assemblage), 26,786 individuals (Ramsar assemblage)		Stage1.3 (SPA), Criterion 5 (Ramsar)	

Stage 1. Potential for Likely Significant Effect

Effects on internationally designated Sites can be direct through such impacts as land take or damage, or indirect by, for example, increased disturbance. The significance of an effect depends on the sensitivity of the interest feature that might be affected.

Of the qualifying features listed in Table 1, none of the three breeding species (Little Tern, Common Tern and Avocet) nest within 3km of the site; likewise, Ruff do not occur within this radius. Small numbers of Sandwich Tern and Knot are only occasional passage visitors to the River Tees and North Tees Mudflat. These features are therefore screened out at Stage 1, leaving impacts on Redshank and the waterbird assemblage to be assessed at Stage 2.

The following potential likely significant effects have been identified:

i) Loss of supporting habitats caused by the development.
ii) Changes to flight lines or sight lines for waterbirds occasioned by the development.
iii) Emissions to air caused by the development.

Stage 2. Potential for Adverse Effect on Integrity, alone or in combination with other plans and projects

i) Loss of supporting habitats caused by the development.
The site does not include any areas of habitat which are likely to support Redshank or the waterbird assemblage associated with the internationally designated sites. The poor sightlines caused by the tall, Torpedo Ladle Shed to the north and the Bolcow Industrial Estate to the south would further reduce the suitability of this area to SPA birds.

ii) Changes to flight lines or sightlines for waterbirds occasioned by the development.
As no supporting habitat known to harbour SPA waterbirds exists in the hinterland of the development site, it follows that there will be no impact upon established flight lines. There is therefore no potential for these factors to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA.

iii) Emissions to air caused by the development.
Emissions to air could derive from construction activities (principally dust and particulates) However given the substantial distance separating the development site from the SPA and the relatively small size of the site adverse effect on SPA integrity is therefore ruled out from these sources.

Conclusion

On the basis of the narrative set out under Stage 2 above, it is concluded that the proposed development will not cause adverse effect to the integrity of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA and Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.