

Sully SSC Redevelopment

Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment
St Modwen Developments Ltd

23 September 2015



Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely for St Modwen Developments Ltd's information and use in relation to Sully SSC Redevelopment.

Atkins Ltd assumes no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

This report has been prepared by an environmental specialist and does not purport to provide legal advice. The reader may wish to take separate legal advice.

Document history

Job number: 5133321			Document ref: 20140705			
Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
Rev 1.0	Final for issue	DM	MT	MB	CS	23/09/15

Client signoff

Client	St Modwen Developments Ltd
Project	Sully SSC Redevelopment
Document title	Sully SSC Redevelopment Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment
Job no.	5133321
Document reference	20140705

Table of contents

Chapter	Pages
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Terms of Reference	1
1.2. Scope of Work	1
2. Proposed Development	2
3. HRA Screening	3
3.1. Introduction	3
3.2. Assessment Methodology	3
4. Identification of European Sites and Potential for Likely Significant Effects	4
4.1. Summary of wetland bird survey results	4
4.2. Potential for Likely Significant Effects	5
4.3. Cumulative effects	7
5. Conclusion	7
Appendices	8
Appendix A. Figures	9

1. Introduction

1.1. Terms of Reference

Atkins Limited (Atkins) was instructed by St. Modwen Developments Limited to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the redevelopment of the Sully Sport and Social Club (SSC). This screening document has been prepared to assess the potential for likely significant effects of the Scheme on European sites. It has been prepared in order to comply with requirements under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Under Regulation 61(1) of the Conservation Regulations, the '*competent authority...must undertake an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives, where a plan or project:*

- *Is likely to have a significant effect on an European site in Great Britain (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*
- *Is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the site.'*

1.2. Scope of Work

For the purpose of this assessment, European sites are taken to include sites designated under the Natura 2000 Directive (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA)) and Wetlands of International Importance designated under the Ramsar Convention (known as Ramsar sites). This also includes candidate and possible sites (e.g. cSACs and pSACs).

The purpose of the report is to:

- Describe the Scheme;
- Describe avoidance/mitigation measures;
- Provide information on the ecological interests and features of the potentially affected European Designated Sites;
- Describe the likely nature and scale of the impacts on the European sites from the Scheme and any likely significant effects, in combination effects with other plans and/or projects; and
- Consider the results to allow a decision on the information in this statement to be made by the Competent Authority.

2. Proposed Development

The Application Site is Sully Sports and Social Club, located on the southern side of South Road, at the south-eastern limits of the village of Sully. The site is approximately 14.92 hectares in size. The northern boundary is the B4267 (South Road) and the southern boundary is the coast of the Bristol Channel / Severn Estuary. To the west it is bounded by housing off Clevedon Avenue and to the east by Beach Road and a caravan park. Beyond the Application Site, the majority of land immediately to the west and north-west is residential; to the east and north-east there is more open countryside; to the south is the intertidal habitat of the coast. The site currently includes the indoor bowling club, club house and library which are situated within a large car park area fronting South Road. The remainder of the site comprises sports pitches, outdoor bowls green and pavilion, small all-weather pitch and play area. In terms of planning use, the current site comprises a primarily leisure and amenity use. The Application Site can be viewed on the figure in Appendix A.

The proposals seek the development and enhancement of the Application Site and its grounds. The scheme will provide a mix of uses, including residential dwellings, assisted living units, retail uses and a touring caravan park, as well as providing enhancements to the club such as improved grass pitches, all-weather pitches and a new and improved clubhouse pavilion. The masterplan for development is to deliver the residential development on the western portion of the site and the sports and community facilities on the eastern portion of the site.

3. HRA Screening

3.1. Introduction

This report considers potential effects on European Sites as required under Section 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended); it covers the Screening Stage of the HRA process in respect of the development proposals within the Application Site.

It is the duty of the competent authority to undertake the appropriate assessment. The purpose of this report is to provide the competent authority sufficient information to make their decision.

3.2. Assessment Methodology

The assessment has been conducted by Duncan McLaughlin (CEnv, MCIEEM). The author has experience in carrying out HRA for schemes in the UK. The assessment has been reviewed by Matthew Bowell (CEnv, MCIEEM).

Professional judgement and literature review has been used to assess the potential for likely effects on the conservation objectives of any relevant European Site, based on interpretation of the results of surveys/desk study, potential impacts of the works, and having regard to good construction practices in implementation. Where there is uncertainty a precautionary principle has been applied.

The assessment utilised information from:

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW); and,
- Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Sites for inclusion within the screening were identified using the following criteria:

- European Sites directly impacted by the development;
- European sites within 2km of the development site to allow for consideration of potential impacts resulting from indirect impacts, e.g. disturbance of qualifying bird species;
- European sites within 5km of the development site where bats are noted as one of the qualifying interests¹; and
- any European site with a direct hydrological connection to the development (crossing/adjacent to, upstream of, or downstream of), and/or European sites where any other potential effect pathway exists.

Potential impacts arising from the proposed development were then identified. The likelihood of significant effects on any of the European sites and/or their conservation objectives will depend on identifying a link between the impacts from the proposed development and the known sensitivities of the European site. In order to facilitate this assessment the range of impacts or hazards that could arise from the construction and operation of the facility and which could affect sensitive habitats or species within European sites have been identified (see Section 4). Professional judgement was then used to assess the potential for likely significant effects on the relevant European Sites, based on interpretation of the results of surveys/desk study, potential impacts and having regard to good construction practices in implementation (Section 5). Where there is uncertainty, a precautionary principle has been applied.

To inform the in-combination assessment, a review of committed development in the area which could act in combination with the proposed scheme was undertaken in order to determine whether there is potential for In-combination effects on the European sites.

¹ Some assessments use a 30km search area for bats, primarily for road or other linear schemes where severance impacts can effect bat sites some distance away. The proposed scheme will result in some minor loss of bat foraging and commuting habitats but is unlikely to have significant impacts to bat commuting at a landscape scale. Therefore a search area of 5km is considered sufficient.

4. Identification of European Sites and Potential for Likely Significant Effects

Using the criteria outlined in Section 3.2, the following site was identified for inclusion within the HRA Screening:

- **Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site** – 500m to the south-east

This site is designated for its overwintering and migratory wetland bird interest. Overwintering wetland bird surveys were undertaken during winter 2014/2015². A summary of the results is provided in Section 4.1 below.

The Severn Estuary SPA/Ramsar site and the Application Site can be viewed on the figure in Appendix A.

4.1. Summary of wetland bird survey results

Five species of waterbird were recorded during wetland bird surveys undertaken at the site: shelduck, oystercatcher, curlew, turnstone and dunlin. Three of these are qualifying species of the Severn Estuary SPA/Ramsar site: dunlin, curlew, and shelduck.

Up to eight shelduck were recorded roosting on the north shore of Sully Island during the surveys. Shelduck will feed on mudflats within the Severn Estuary when they exposed at low tide. They will roost in areas such as Sully Island at high tide.

The southern half of the Application Site is used by curlew for roosting and foraging at high tide. A flock of up to 24 curlew was recorded roosting and foraging on the sports fields during each visit between December 2014 and February 2015. The flock was associating with a large flock of mixed gulls which also used the site to roost and forage at high tide. Curlew will forage over a range of habitats. At low tide they will forage over intertidal habitats including mud and sand flats and rocky areas. This species will also readily forage on terrestrial habitats such as amenity grassland and farmland.

Small numbers of dunlin (maximum of two) were recorded roosting on the north shore of Sully Island.

The remaining qualifying species of Severn Estuary SPA and Ramsar site were not recorded during the surveys, these are: greater white-fronted goose, Bewick's swan, pintail, gadwall, ringed plover and redshank.

² Atkins (2015) Sully Sports and Social Club Redevelopment: Wetland bird survey

4.2. Potential for Likely Significant Effects

Table 1 considers the potential for likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site in further detail.

Table 1. Potential for likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site

European site	Qualifying features	Distance from Application Site	Potential effects and need for further assessment
Severn Estuary SPA	<p>This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:</p> <p>Over winter: Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, 280 individuals representing at least 4.0% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:</p> <p>On passage: Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, 655 individuals representing at least 1.3% of the Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Over winter: Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>, 3,903 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Europe - breeding population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, 44,624 individuals representing at least 3.2% of the wintering Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p>	500 m	<p>Potential impacts to overwintering waterbirds from the redevelopment of Sully SSC will come from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loss of curlew foraging and roosting habitat within the site. Approximately 50% of the existing amenity grassland area will be lost to the development. The maximum count of curlew at the Application Site represents 0.6% of the SPA population. 2. Visual and acoustic disturbance to shelduck, dunlin and curlew using the foreshore and Sully Island during construction and operation. <p>Loss of grassland within the site will principally affect curlew which currently roost and forage at the site at high tide. Curlew are an adaptable species and will use a range of intertidal habitats to forage, roosting on adjacent farmland habitats at high tide³. Alternative high tide roost sites are present at Sully Island to the south, along with extensive areas of coastal farmland east of the site. In addition, given 50% of the site will remain as sports fields post development offering habitat for curlew to continue to roost. Long term significant effects on the curlew population (a qualifying feature of the Severn Estuary SPA/Ramsar site) are unlikely.</p> <p>Construction work during the redevelopment has the potential to disturb overwintering waterbirds within the site, on the foreshore of the Severn Estuary adjacent to the site, and on Sully Island.</p>

³ Birds of the Western Palearctic interactive 2.0.1 (Birdguides)

	<p>Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>, 599 individuals representing at least 1.0% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>, 2,330 individuals representing at least 1.6% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, 3,330 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)</p> <p>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl</p> <p>Over winter, the area regularly supports 93,986 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) including: Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>, Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>, Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>, Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>, Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>, Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>, Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>, Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>, Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>, Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>, Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, White-fronted Goose <i>Anser albifrons albifrons</i>, Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>.</p>		<p>The area has high amenity use from dog walkers, runners, tourists and sportspersons resulting in high existing background levels of disturbance within the site and along the foreshore of the Severn Estuary. Given the background levels of disturbance from the amenities in this area, construction disturbance to birds is unlikely to pose a significant impact on roosting or foraging birds on the site or foreshore of the Severn Estuary.</p> <p>Sully Island is approximately 500 m from the site. Given the distance and the screening of the site from coastal scrub, visual and acoustic disturbance from construction and operation will be negligible.</p> <p>Once operational, the scheme is unlikely to provide levels of disturbance to roosting waterbirds significantly above the existing background levels at the site. Impacts from operational disturbance are unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>Conclusion: No Likely Significant Effect</p>
Severn Estuary Ramsar	<p>Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.</p> <p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl.</p> <p>Criterion 1: Presence of Annex I features.</p> <p>Criterion 3: Unusual estuarine communities.</p> <p>Criterion 4: Run of migratory fish between sea and river via estuary.</p> <p>Criterion 5/6: Bird assemblages and species of international importance.</p> <p>Criterion 8: Diverse fish populations, important feeding, nursery ground and migration route.</p>	500 m	<p>Criterion 5/6: See above assessment for SPA</p> <p>Criterion 1, 3, 4, and 8: no works within, or likely to effect, the marine environment and so likely significant effects have been screened out.</p> <p>Conclusion: No Likely Significant Effect</p>

4.3. Cumulative effects

Consultation with Vale of Glamorgan Council has identified three developments in the area with potential to have in combination effects with the development at the Application Site. Details of these along with their potential in combination effects are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Developments with potential to provide in-combination effects with the proposed development

Development	Description	Approximate distance and direction from Application Site	Assessment of potential in-combination effects
Land South of Cog Road, Sully	Residential development of up to 350 dwellings	200 m north	The Phase 1 habitat survey did not identify overwintering bird interest at the site. Conclusion: No likely in-combination effect
Hayes Road, Sully	4.3ha residential development	1.2 km west	The ecological appraisal suggest this site contains much scrub and is sub optimal for overwintering birds. Conclusion: No likely in-combination effect
Comeston Farm	Small residential development	1.5 km north-east	Farmland habitats may have potential to support foraging curlew, however given the distance from the application site, the size of the development, and the area of alternative habitat in the area, in-combination effects are not considered likely. Conclusion: No likely in-combination effect

5. Conclusion

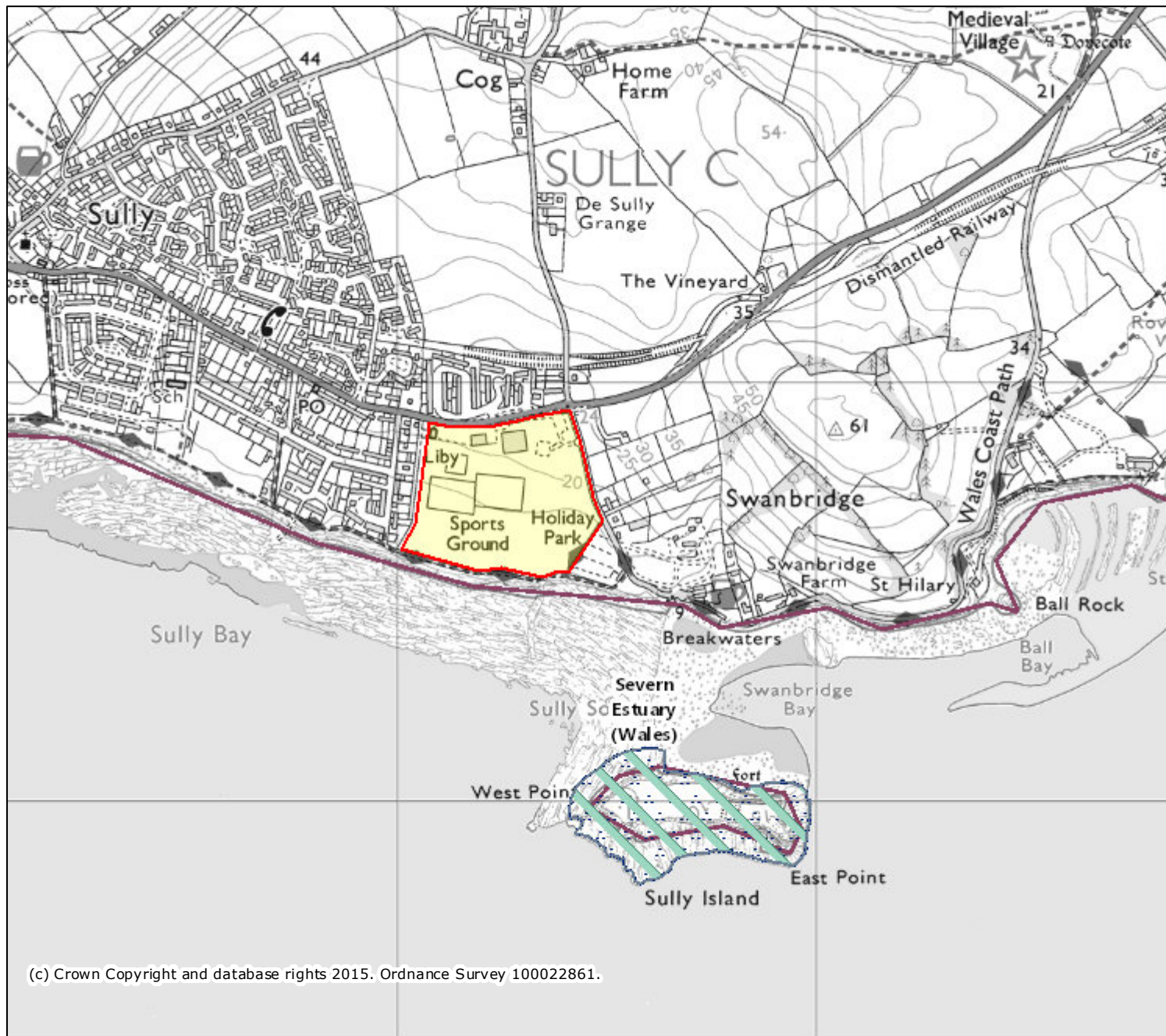
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required by Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitat Regulations) for all plans and projects which may have likely significant effects European sites. This Stage 1 – Screening exercise assessed whether the proposed Sully Sports and Social Club re-development is likely to lead to significant effects on any international sites.

Following the examination of the potential impacts of the development and a review of the nature, location and features of the sites potentially affected, it is considered that the project would not lead to likely significant effects on any European sites, whether alone or in-combination with other projects.


Appendices



Appendix A. Figures



Legend

-  Ramsar Sites (Wales)
-  Special Protection Areas (England)
-  Special Protection Areas (Wales)

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 314600
 ymin = 166300
 xmax = 318300
 ymax = 169000

Map produced by MAGIC on 11 September, 2015.
 Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGIC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.

Atkins Water, Ground and Environment

The Hub
500 Park Avenue
Aztec West
Bristol
BS32 4RZ

ecology@atkinsglobal.com

0145466222

© Atkins Ltd except where stated otherwise.

The Atkins logo, 'Carbon Critical Design' and the strapline
'Plan Design Enable' are trademarks of Atkins Ltd.