

9th November 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO LIVERPOOL BAY / BAE LERPWL SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA

We are carrying out a consultation on a number of proposed changes to the Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl Special Protection Area (SPA) for seabirds. As someone who may have an interest in the area concerned, we are writing to invite you to tell us your views.

SPAs are areas of land or sea identified as being of European importance for the conservation of rare, threatened and migratory species of birds. Under the 2009 EU Wild Birds Directive, all EU member states are required to designate SPAs and put in place measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats and species for which the sites are designated.

Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA was first classified in 2010, mainly to protect its wintering populations of common scoter and red throated diver. We are now consulting on proposals to extend the boundary of the SPA to include additional areas of sea and foreshore, and to add further species of birds to the list of species for which the area is considered particularly important, including wintering little gull and breeding terns.

The site lies in Welsh, English and UK offshore waters, and this consultation is being carried out jointly by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Natural England. Full details of the proposed changes to the SPA are available from the Natural Resources Wales website: www.naturalresources.wales/LiverpoolBay and the Natural England website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/liverpool-bay-bae-lerpwl-special-protection-area-extension-comment-on-proposals>. The information available includes a consultation paper explaining what the consultation is about and how to respond, details of the scientific evidence behind the proposed changes to the SPA, and maps showing the proposed changes to the SPA boundary.

Decisions on whether to designate or amend SPAs in Wales and Welsh inshore waters are made by the Welsh Ministers, while such decisions in England, English inshore waters and UK offshore waters are made by the UK Secretary of State. No decision has yet been made on whether to make any of the proposed changes to the Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA. NRW and Natural England are carrying out this consultation on behalf of the Welsh and UK Governments and we will report the results of the consultation to them. In doing so, we will take into account all consultation responses received, but please note that only relevant scientific considerations can be taken into account by Ministers in deciding whether to designate an SPA. Information and views on economic and social

considerations can help inform future decisions about the way in which the areas should be managed, but cannot influence decisions on the classification of SPAs or the determination of their boundaries.

Full details of how to respond and where to send your response are given on the Natural England and NRW websites.

If you would like paper copies of any of the consultation documents, or have any initial questions about this consultation, please email us as at marine.n2k@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk or call us on 0300 065 3000. You are also welcome to contact your local NRW office at Chester Rd, Buckley, Flintshire CH7 3AJ. If you have a query which mainly relates to the English or offshore part of the site, you may prefer to contact Natural England at Liverpool.BaySPA@naturalengland.org.uk or by telephone on 0300 060 3900.

Responses to the consultation on the proposed changes to the SPA should be submitted to Natural England NOT to NRW. The best way to respond is by using the straightforward online response form (follow the link from the consultation page on the website). The online form allows you to provide a brief response, or respond in detail to the consultation questions, including by attaching additional documents if required. If you are unable to respond online, please contact Natural England to arrange an alternative method by either emailing us at Liverpool.BaySPA@naturalengland.org.uk or by telephone on 0300 060 3900. Responses can be made in English or Welsh.

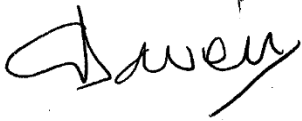
NRW is also consulting on a draft 'Impact Assessment' of the social and economic implications of the proposals insofar as they affect the Welsh part of the site, which is available from www.naturalresources.wales/LiverpoolBay. Comments on this draft Impact Assessment should be sent to NRW (not Natural England), either by email to: marine.n2k@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk or by letter to: Protected Sites Team, NRW, Maes y Ffynnon, Bangor LL57 2DW.

All responses must be received by Natural England (or by NRW in relation to the draft Impact Assessment) by **5pm on 08/02/2017 at the latest**, which is when the consultation period ends.

Please note that in the interests of transparency and openness, all responses to this consultation together with the names of all respondents (but not their addresses or any other personal information) may be made available to any member of the public on request, and may also be published, in part or in whole, including on the NRW and/or NE/JNCC websites. All personal information will be handled in accordance with Data Protection Act requirements. If you do not wish your name and your views on these SPA proposals to be made public, you are advised not to respond to this consultation. When responding, please do not include any personal information about yourself or others within the body of your comments.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ceri Davies', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ceri Davies
Executive Director Evidence, Policy and Permitting