

## **Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Response to the Independent Examiner's Questions**

#### **Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council in consultation with the North York Moors National Park**

**Question 2. Can RCBC, in consultation with NYMNP, provide a response to the objection submitted at Regulation 16 stage on behalf of Teesmouth Bird Club, GNP/004, regarding the findings of the SEA Screening Assessment**

#### **Response -**

Response GNP/004 from the Teesmouth Bird Club confirms that the Bird Club strongly disagrees with a statement in the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report that states '*The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 need not be considered in the screening exercise*'.

It also explains that their principal concerns relate to the Swift being a 'Category Red Species of Concern', and a species included in the Tees Valley Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and the loss of nesting cavities in buildings. Further detail is also provided on options for the conservation of swifts in the built environment.

The HRA Screening was carried out under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended) (The Regulations) and this is clearly explained within the Introduction of the Screening Report (paras.1.2-1.5). It is, therefore, considered that response GNP/004 is not correct in stating that the HRA Screening Report states that The Regulations need not be considered in the screening exercise.

The HRA Screening Report provides an assessment of the likely significant effects of the plan policies on the conservation objectives of 4 identified European protected sites, in line with the requirements of The Regulations. The European sites considered are part of the network of sites that are of exceptional importance in respect of rare and endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species. The network is protected by The Regulations and consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also states that Ramsar sites should be afforded the same level of protection.

For the Guisborough Neighbourhood Plan HRA Screening the following international sites are considered relevant:

- North York Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- North York Moors Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast RAMSAR

The HRA Screening Report concludes that ‘no clear impact pathways have been identified between the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan on any designated European Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans. The policies include locally specific criteria and do not propose any new allocations or alternative uses of land which could have adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites. As the policies will not lead to likely significant effects on protected European sites an Appropriate Assessment is not required’.

The Local Planning Authorities consider that it is correct that the HRA Screening Report reached this conclusion and this has not been disputed by the Statutory Consultees in the HRA process. It is also considered that an assessment of the impact of the Guisborough Neighbourhood Plan policies upon the Swift as part of the HRA screening exercise is not required as the Swift is not included in the conservation objectives or qualifying features of the identified European sites.

**Question 3. Whilst I am able to access the documentation relating to application R/2025/0579/FFM, submitted 14.08.2025, through the RCBC online planning register, I understand a decision may be imminent. Could RCBC please keep me informed of the progress in determining the application?**

**Response –**

The Council is not yet ready to issue a decision on planning application R/2025/0579/FFM as discussions have recently been held with the agents in relation to the technical supporting information. It is currently expected that any decision on the application will be taken at Regulatory Committee and this is unlikely to be before March 26. The Council will be happy to provide further updates to the examiner if there are any changes to the expected timeframe or the status of the planning application.