



REPORT OF:	THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & PROSPERITY
TO:	PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE
ON:	15 DECEMBER 2016
ORIGINATING SECTION:	PLANNING SERVICE
WARDS AFFECTED:	NORTH TURTON WITH TOCKHOLES EAST RURAL SUNNYHURST WHITEHALL EARCROFT MARSH HOUSE FERNHURST
COUNCILLORS:	ALL

TITLE OF REPORT:

Natural England Notification of West Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Members that Natural England has reviewed the SSSI boundary White Coppice Flush SSSI to include more land of special interest, including much of the land previously notified as Oak Field SSSI and Longworth Clough SSSI. The enlarged site is now known as West Pennine Moors SSSI and takes effect immediately.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The West Pennine Moors rise above Manchester and the Lancashire plain and function as one landscape for wildlife, water and approximately 1 million people who live nearby. The area of highest importance for its upland habitat, rare plants and breeding birds is notified as a SSSI. The SSSI covers over 7,600ha but this is less than 20% of the wider West Pennines area.

2.2 Natural England have stated that the SSSI notification will stimulate sustainable conservation within the upland landscape and encourage the widest possible collective commitment to safeguard the function and services provided by the West Pennine Moors. In particular, wildlife and water provision along with recreational and economic interests. Notification provides

formal recognition of the site's national importance which will help all those with an interest to realise the landscape's potential for people and wildlife.

- 2.3 The West Pennine Moors SSSI is notified under section 28C of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Three SSSIs have been notified previously in the West Pennine Moors area: White Coppice Flush SSSI (0.56ha, notified in 1985), Oak Field SSSI (21.01ha, notified in 1985) and Longworth Clough SSSI (24.18ha, notified in 1994). The West Pennine Moors SSSI rationalises and clarifies the special interests of the area within a single designation, combining and linking the three previously notified SSSIs with substantial extensions totalling 7,616.72 ha (total SSSI area: 7,662.40 ha).

3. RATIONALE

- 3.1 The West Pennine Moors SSSI is a diverse mosaic of semi-natural upland habitats centred on three large expanses of blanket bog, with associated heathlands, flushes, woodlands and grasslands. These habitats support breeding birds that depend on upland, in-bye/moorland-fringe and woodland habitats, and a number of Nationally Rare and Scarce plant species. The site is of special interest for the following nationally important features that occur within and are supported by the wider habitat mosaic:

- Blanket bog.
- Upland Heathland
- Flushes
- Moorland fringe grasslands
- Woodland (upland semi natural)
- Breeding birds (upland assemblage)

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An assessment of all current and future planning applications within the extended SSSI will need to take the designation into account as a material planning consideration.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Natural England has informed the Council of the legal right to make objections and representations about this notification. Any representations, including those supporting the notification, or objections should be made in writing to Natural England's Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire Area Team by 17 March 2017.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10. That the Committee note the designation.

Contact Officer: Kate McDonald, Acting Team Leader (Planning Implementation)

Date: 30 November 2016

Background Papers: Notification of SSSI from Natural England