

Grŵp Yr Economi, Sgiliau a Chyfoeth Naturiol
Economy, Skills and Natural Resources Group

Cambria House
29 Newport Road
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich Cyf/Your Ref:
Ein Cyf/Our Ref:

Date: 08 November 2016

Dear Ceri,

Proposed Changes to Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA

I am writing further to your letter of 22 April 2016 where Natural Resources Wales (NRW) submitted advice for proposed changes to Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA.

Your recommendations have been considered and I am writing to give you notice that the Welsh Government proposes to reclassify Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA in line with the departmental brief. The proposed reclassification of the site will take forward the findings of the 2001 SPA Review and will also incorporate important marine areas for the species listed below. The proposed changes to this site will contribute to the Welsh Government fulfilling its obligations under the EC Birds Directive and to our commitment towards an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas.

This letter requests that NRW work with Natural England to undertake a public consultation on the proposals to give everyone who might be affected by the changes, or has relevant scientific information, the opportunity to comment. I understand that Defra is writing in the same terms to Natural England regarding the proposed changes as they relate to English inshore waters.

The Welsh Government, in conjunction with the UK Government, is proposing to amend the basis on which the Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA is classified for the following reasons:

- To give effect to the findings of the 2001 SPA review.
- A small area of habitat along the north Wirral coast, to reflect site-specific data showing the importance of this area for common tern *Sterna hirundo* foraging requirements (species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive).
- A new area in the Mersey Estuary, to reflect site-specific data showing the importance of this area for common tern *Sterna hirundo* foraging requirements.

- New seaward areas to the north and west of the existing seaward SPA boundary, to reflect site-specific data which shows the importance of these areas for non-breeding little gull *Larus minutus* (species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive).
- A small area of intertidal habitat to the west of The Dee Estuary SPA, to reflect site-specific data showing the importance of this area for little tern *Sterna albifrons* (species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive) foraging requirements.
- The addition of breeding little tern *Sterna albifrons*, breeding common tern *Sterna hirundo* and non-breeding little gull *Larus minutus* as features of the site, to reflect site-specific data which shows the site is used by more than 1% of the GB population for each of these Annex 1 species.
- The addition of cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* and red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* as components of the waterbird assemblage at the site. The site regularly supports more than 1% of the GB populations of these regularly occurring migratory species outside the breeding season.

We note that the final four bullet points encompass the changes within Welsh waters.

The consultation will also include a draft assessment of the potential social and economic impacts of the proposed changes. This will assist in identifying any additional information or evidence that would help improve the impact assessment. While the impact assessment cannot inform or affect the decision to reclassify the site it will ensure that the Welsh Government is aware of any social and economic impacts arising from the proposed changes.

Yours sincerely

Julian Bray
Head of Marine Conservation & Biodiversity