



Consultation summary document for the proposed marine extension of Hamford Water Special Protection Area (SPA)

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1. Purpose of this document

This document provides guidance to stakeholders for the formal consultation on the proposed marine extension of Hamford Water Special Protection Area (SPA).

It explains:

- Natural England's proposal
- Background information which is helpful in understanding Natural England's proposal
- How to respond

2. Site maps

The maps are available to view on the [consultation page](#)

3. Natural England's proposal for extending Hamford Water SPA

Hamford Water SPA is used by little terns for nesting and feeding. The results from recent surveys have shown that little terns also forage within areas adjacent to the current SPA and therefore these areas need to be considered for protection.

The recommendations developed so far propose that the boundary of the current SPA be extended by approximately 1.8km out to sea. In addition, it is recommended that there be a marine extension to the southern and a small extension to the northern alongshore boundary of the SPA.

The site summary and the potential economic impacts summary provide the background information to support the proposal.

4. Site summary

Hamford Water is a large, shallow estuarine basin comprising tidal creeks and islands, intertidal mud and sand flats, as well as saltmarsh, shingle and areas of coastal grazing marsh. The SPA was designated in 1993 for a nationally important breeding population of little tern *Sternula albifrons*, a nationally important wintering population of avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* and internationally or nationally important wintering populations of seven species of migratory waterfowl: dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, teal *Anas crecca* and grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*. The existing SPA covers an area of 2188.53ha.

The proposal is to extend the boundary of Hamford Water SPA to include marine foraging areas for little tern. In 2014, a peak of 37 nesting pairs of little tern were recorded in Hamford Water, which is well above the UK SPA selection guideline of 19 pairs. The current boundary of the SPA encompasses nesting habitat (sand and shingle) for little terns and a substantial area (225.07ha) of sub-tidal habitat. The sub-tidal area within the existing SPA provides an important foraging resource for little terns and they are frequently recorded foraging in the shallower water along the edges and mouths of creeks and channels within the protected area.

It is proposed that the boundary of the SPA will be extended by 1776m out to sea to protect the most important areas of coastal water used by foraging little terns whilst they are breeding in Hamford Water. In addition it is proposed that the new boundary will encompass a marine extension to the southern and a small extension to the northern along-shore boundary of the current SPA. Overall this will increase the site by 1344.02 ha.

5. Aim of the consultation

The aim of this formal consultation is to seek the view of all interested parties on:

- The scientific case for the extension of the SPA boundaries; and
- The assessment of the likely economic, environmental and social impacts of the designation of the site.

6. Summary of potential economic impacts

A preliminary assessment of the potential economic impacts of the proposed marine extension to Hamford Water SPA has been completed. This concluded that the additional costs imposed by the site boundary extension were relatively low as Article 3 of the Birds Directive already requires the “upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones.” Natural England therefore already advise authorities to consider the impact of activities on areas outside of the current Hamford Water SPA boundary that support the existing features of the SPA, including breeding little terns.

The maximum costs likely to be associated with the extension of the Hamford Water SPA boundary are those attributed to additional site monitoring by Natural England. These costs are dependent on the future monitoring strategy, although a precautionary figure of £25,000 over 6 years (£4167 per year) has been estimated based on previous survey work.

The costs to industry associated with the extension of the Hamford Water SPA boundary are too low to trigger a requirement for Natural England to produce a full socio-economic impact assessment.

7. How to respond

This consultation runs for 13 weeks from 21 January to 21 April 2016 and is run in accordance with the government consultation principles.

- The [Departmental brief](#) sets out the scientific case for the proposed marine extension to Hamford Water SPA.
- You may also find it useful to read: [Establishing marine Special Protection Areas \(TIN120\)](#)

Use these documents to help with your response. You can submit your response by completing the [online survey](#).

Results from the consultation will be submitted as a report to the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Environment. The SoS will decide if this site extension is suitable for designation as a European Marine Site and make a recommendation to the European Commission.

If you don't have access to the Internet, please contact us on the following address:

Hamford Water SPA consultation
Essex Local Delivery Team
Natural England
Eastbrook
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8DR

8. Confidentiality

How we will use and share your consultation response.

Natural England will publish a summary of all responses on the GOV.UK web site. It will include a list of names of organisations that responded to the consultation but not the names, addresses or other contact details of individual respondents. See Natural England's [personal information charter on how your information is handled](#).

If you don't want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information - publicly available, explain clearly why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.

Natural England will acknowledge your explanation, but can't give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances, such as a request for release of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded as binding on Natural England.

9. Use of maps

Natural England has provided maps which show the complete boundary and additional maps where necessary to support the explanations given for the boundary locations.

Maps which accompany the site summary should ideally be printed on A3 paper. If you don't have this facility:

- print the relevant chapter text
- view the associated map on your computer screen, using the zoom tool to view it at a suitable size