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## **JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

### **PROCEDURE FOR JOINT COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION AND ENDORSEMENT OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE UK SPA NETWORK**

**Paper by Helen Baker**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The identification of a coherent national network of Special Protection Areas (in accordance with the EC Birds Directive) is a UK matter and, as such, the Joint Committee, in its role as advisor to UK Government, has a role in assessing and endorsing changes to the UK SPA network.
- 1.2 Such a role ensures that each proposed SPA submitted to Government is a component of the UK-wide network of SPAs, that common standards for SPA site selection are maintained, and that, in consequence site selection is underpinned by a secure process.
- 1.3 The Joint Committee's endorsement of the 2001 SPA Review established a baseline against which the need for future change will be assessed. However, with ongoing development of the UK SPA network, not least in the marine environment, changes to the SPA network not identified in the review are inevitable.
- 1.4 This paper sets out a process for the consideration and Committee endorsement by the Joint Committee of new SPA proposals to Government, subsequent to the SPA Review.

#### **2. Recommended procedure for Joint Committee endorsement of changes to the UK SPA network**

- 2.1 It is intended that the procedure recommended below be applied to all future changes to the UK SPA network, including additions/extensions in the marine environment. Changes, in this context, include the addition of entirely new SPAs to the network, boundary extension of existing SPAs and the addition of new species to an existing SPA:
  - i. prior to a country agency seeking internal Council/Board approval for changes to the SPA network, the country agency will consult on proposed changes with relevant JNCC Support Unit staff (Senior Ornithologist). Consultation will be time-limited to 20 days;

- ii. following internal Council/Board approval for a proposed change the country agency will submit the proposal to the JNCC Support Unit (Senior Ornithologist);
  - iii. JNCC Support Unit will submit the proposed change to the Joint Committee for consideration and endorsement. The Joint Committee will consider such proposals as quickly as practicable and, if possible, within 20 days;
  - iv. JNCC Support Unit will inform the country agency of the Joint Committee's decision as soon as possible after the decision is made, in any event, within 10 days.
3. The Joint Committee is invited to:
- i. **consider** and **adopt** the procedure set out in Section 2 above;
  - ii. **determine** the method it wishes to use in the consideration and endorsement of a proposal (e.g. via postal action, or delegated authority to the JNCC Chairman or subgroup of Committee members, where time does not allow for formal consideration at a Joint Committee meeting).