



Appropriate Assessment

Project

Habitats Regulation (In-Combination) Assessment Wind Power Development at Avonmouth, Bristol

Client

Wessex Water and Bristol City Council Energy Management Unit (joint commission)

Background

Landmark was retained by Wessex Water and Bristol City Council Energy Management Unit (BCC EMU) to prepare and coordinate environmental information to inform planning applications for their two separate wind turbine developments. Both development sites were in Avonmouth, which is close to the Severn Estuary, a European site of nature conservation importance.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 require Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be undertaken in respect of any plan or project which either 'alone' or 'in-combination' with other plans or projects would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. Information must be provided by the developer to enable the Competent Authority to undertake the AA prior to determination of any application for development consent(s).

Landmark was commissioned to scope the works necessary to provide the information required by the Competent Authority and to deliver a 'Report to Inform the In-Combination Effects Assessment'.

Description

The study was tackled in 5 stages:

- Stage 1:** The SPA species to be assessed were identified via field surveys.
- Stage 2:** The range of the species to be assessed across the European site was mapped using GIS.
- Stage 3:** Competent authorities across the European site were consulted to identify other developments or plans which could potentially have an impact on the sample species, in combination with the proposed developments.
- Stage 4:** The potential impacts of the other plans or developments on those species and habitats was identified.
- Stage 5:** Impacts on SPA species that were found to be at risk of cumulative effects from the proposed wind turbines and other plans/developments were examined. The implications of such impacts, and opportunities to avoid them, were described in the report to the Competent Authority.

Client benefits

Understanding the implications of other plans and projects on the SPA provided clarity about potential development constraints on the wind turbines schemes. The applicants were able to ensure that the competent authority was provided with accurate and up to date information to inform the AA.