

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref

Sandy Mewies AM

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Dear

I am writing following the plenary meeting on 11 November, during which you asked for an update on progress with the UK-wide review of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and how it would impact on the Dee Estuary. In my reply I said I would write to you specifically on the Dee Estuary.

The Dee Estuary was classified in July 1985 as an SPA for significant numbers of breeding and wintering seabirds and waterbirds, including oystercatchers, curlew, shelduck and common terns. The populations at the site appear to be stable and in some cases are increasing.

My officials continue to work closely with colleagues in Natural Resources Wales, Defra and Natural England on a possible extension to the SPA. The extended site, if approved, would fall within the adjacent Liverpool Bay SPA rather than the Dee Estuary SPA. The extension would provide additional protection for breeding little terns at Gronant Dunes by covering the areas these birds use for foraging. This is part of a package of work in response to the European Commission's concerns about the UK's marine SPA provision. I have not taken any decisions yet about these colony extensions; I expect to be in a position to do so after I have received further advice from Natural Resources Wales next spring.

Yours sincerely

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Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.