

**SOUTH WILTSHIRE PROPOSED SUBMISSION CORE STRATEGY
HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT, JULY 2009**

APPENDIX I: HRA MEETINGS

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APPENDIX IA – 1st and 2nd Steering Group Meetings 2008

Salisbury District Council
Salisbury District Core Strategy: Habitats Regulations Assessment
Record of HRA Steering Group meeting
Planning Office, Wyndham Road, Salisbury
31 July 2008

Salisbury District Core Strategy – Habitats Regulations Steering Group
Meeting of 31st July 2008

Present:

Charles Routh, Natural England
Lousia Kilgallen, District ecologist, WCC
Fiona Elphick, County Ecologist, WCC
Environment Agency
Matt Pearson, WCC
Vincent Albano, SDC
Natasha Styles, SDC
Adam Boyden, Nicholas Pearson Associates

Minutes

- The function and remit of the steering group was explained – to guide the production of the HRA for the core strategy that is currently at Preferred Options stage. To provide support and input into the submission HRA and to overall provide objective scrutiny to the process
- SDC confirmed that they would be releasing a proposed submission draft after Christmas 2008 and submit to the secretary of State by 31 March 2009.
- Confirmed using the David Tydsley methodology as suggest by Lousia Killgallen / Charles Routh.
- VA and NS were initially working in house on screening, however reached a stage where expert knowledge was needed, hence commissioned NPA. NS and VA had been working closely with Louisa Kilgallen and Charles Routh for advice and information.
- Adam Boyden confirmed that beyond those PO's screened by NA/VA he had added some more PO's that needed to be taken forward to 'in combination' / AA as possibly having a significant effect. This was to ensure the precautionary principle was being used – all parties agreed this was sensible
- AB still needs full maps of sites from the District council – **ACTION VANS**
- AB has started to look at in-combination but still more plans to look at including the RSS proposed modifications HRA
- Steering group agreed that the 10K buffer around south Wiltshire was appropriate, especially as this is the distance used for airport construction
- There is a need to look at the Dorset Heaths HRA work, should be available from Poole BC. This work says that there will be no new development within 500m of the protected heaths to reduce local recreational impact – **ACTION AB/VA/NS**
- Main HRA issues that the Core Strategy will have to look at are:
 - Water quality
 - Green infrastructure
 - Recreational disturbance

River Avon / Water

- EA confirmed that Wessex Water has suggested that there will be enough water and no problems with discharge. The question is do we take their word for this or do we challenge it? There is potentially a conflict between Wessex Water and the EA licences.
- Phosphates can be dealt with at point source
- EA suggested that there were some difficult decisions to be made, there is no desire to close sewage treatment plants, but this may need to take IROPI route.
- Water level management plans should address the issue – **AB to look at**

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- If the EA reduce abstraction licences to the existing abstraction levels or lower this will limit Wessex water's ability to provide water.
 - Fiona Bowles at Wessex Water is the person to speak to with regard to this.
 - AB pointed out the RSS suggested that water efficiency measures would suffice
 - If Wessex water can get the water that they export back to the region they should be ok
 - Wessex water management plan is currently out for consultation, this needs to be looked at – **AB to look at**
 - End of September the EA should release an HRA on the abstraction licences which will tell us how the licences will change
 - EA advised to get assurance from Wessex Water of when and how they can get the ext 20 mega litres of water a day and this should circumvent AA issues – **ACTION NS/VA**
 - People to contact at Wessex Water are: Chris Greenwell, Graham Brown (water quality), Neil Murdoch (predicted modelling).

New Forest

- Need to look at New Forest authorities HRA work (Ian Barker at NFNPA and Footprint ecology) – **Action AB/VA/NS**
- New forest – look at the APIS database (www.apis.gov.uk) - may provide some justification for screening it out – disturbance, tourism and recreation will be an issue here.
- Need to look at South East England RSS HRA too.
- Air pollution needs to be looked proximity of the A36 to some sites.

Chilmark quarries

- much will happen here, should not be an effect for the Core Strategy

Great yews

- Isolated site, with no road access. Nitrogen from roads may be an issue however this is for the RSS level

Porton Down –

- DSTL plans to expand in addition to improve access road - Pheasant Road. RSPB are concerned about both and their effect on Stone Curlews,
- This may have an effect on the wider population too
- Need to consider the population both inside and outside the fence – if recreation increased around Porton Down this could disturb nesting birds outside the fence.
- Get the RSPB work on Stone Curlews – **ACTION LK/VA/NS**

Prescombe Down

- It is a NNR and SSSI – shouldn't be a problem
- CR to check with colleague at NE who is responsible for looking after the site – **ACTION CR**

River Avon

- Water abstraction
- Recreational disturbance
- Roads / rail
- Air pollution
- Avon Valley is south of Ringwood
- Roads – increasing use – get erosion of the road and resulting run-off into the river, is there scope for contributions to improve the silt traps to limit run off? All road building should have this as a consideration, problem areas are Great Wishford for example.
- Do highways know where the problems are? Most is reactive, could they map where the incidents have been
- EA do have a 'Landcare project' – Ben Bunting undertakes the water framework directive work at the EA

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- Development in proximity to the river should project the river and banks during construction and operation of the site. Construction needs to be dealt with at the project level. DC officers at SDC do have a procedure note for the River Avon SAC – a likely significant effects test. Policy should try and tie it up for the future – **ACTION VA/NS**
 - Construction and environmental management plans – enforcement need to verify whether this is within their capabilities – **ACTION VA/NS**
 - Does this need resolving at the WC level?
 - Needs to be wording about restoring and monitoring.
 - Draft submission draft policies need to go to Adam to ensure correct wording

Salisbury Plain

- Most is outside of south Wiltshire
- Salisbury Plain Conservation Group and the Salisbury Plain Management Plan should be looked at – **ACTION AB**
- Reece Green – phd thesis on the Stone Curlews – **LK to find contact details**
- Footprint ecology report on people pressure, changes and recreational use – **ACTION AB**
- HRA for Solstice Park – **ACTION NS/VA**
- EIA for Archers Gate. – **ACTION NS/VA**
- Lisa Wade at defence estates – have mapped populations - – **ACTION NS/VA**
- CR noted that the Stone Curlew on Salisbury Plain could be an issue, RSS may have got it wrong with this respect.

Avon Valley

- Continuation of Avon Valley SAC
- Much more affected by waste management plans
- Recreational pressure

Fontmell and Melbury Downs

- Chalk grassland
- Should not need to look at

Montisfont bats

- Foraging routes
- Only need to look at at the project level, not the plan level

Mendip woodland

- Non issue

Mells Valley SAC

- No impact

Other actions:

- Policies that are going to go forward for HRA will be determine over e-mail – returned early next week –**ACTION ALL**
- AB to update GIS – **ACTION AB**
- Arrange meeting with Wessex Water and EA – Chris Greenwell – Water quality and resources may be an issue. **ACTION VA/NS**

Salisbury District Council
Salisbury District Core Strategy: Habitats Regulations Assessment
Record of HRA Steering Group meeting
Planning Office, Wyndham Road, Salisbury
10 December 2008

Attendees:

Natasha Styles, Spatial Planning, Salisbury District Council (SDC)
Vincent Albano, Spatial Planning, SDC
David Milton, Team Leader, Spatial Planning, SDC
Louisa Kilgallen, Ecologist, Salisbury District Council
Charles Routh, Natural England (NE)
Adam Boyden, Nicholas Pearson Associates
Fiona Elphick, County Ecologist, Wiltshire County Council

1. Apologies: Environment Agency (EA).
2. Water issues update: A 'water summit' meeting with EA will be needed shortly on water-related impacts on the River Avon SAC, after EA appoint a new contact, as James Thomas-Hayward is leaving in January. EA's Habitats Directive review of consents is progressing. SW RSS policy highlights importance of water issues for LDDs for the River Avon SAC. Discussion of Wessex Water's mitigation of impacts through Water Resources Management Plan, and of potential for a link from policy to Code for Sustainable Homes water efficiency targets. VA/NS requested AB prepare a position statement on water issues in advance of water summit meeting with EA and NE is arranged by SDC for January/February 2009.
3. Short update of where we are and revised timescales: Revised Wiltshire Local Development Scheme is being published, proposing the Proposed Submission draft South Wiltshire Core Strategy will be published for consultation in July 2009. A final timetable will be finalised shortly.
4. Update on in-combination work: AB gave verbal report of documents reviewed. Noted that there have been updates to some surrounding authorities' LDDs.
5. Comment received from consultees on draft HRA: CR noted that the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework will be replaced by other Local Development Documents in due course.
6. VA reported back from a recent meeting with Porton Down developers: There is movement towards agreement over the way forward to be able to assess future development plans from all developers (DSTL, HPA, PDF Science Park) in project and/or strategic HRAs, through potential appointment by developers of a project ecologist, and potential to better define future development intentions and mitigation measures. Discussion on the level of detail of proposals is required and available at the Core Strategy stage, what the Core Strategy policy should be on Porton Down, and the potential to review the future Porton Down development proposals, assess effects and define mitigation in an Area Action Plan or Supplementary Planning Document, and define the level/location/nature of development that would avoid adverse effect on Porton Down SPA/Salisbury Plain SAC. Agreed that further discussion was necessary between SDC and developers' ecologist when appointed.

7. Implications as a result of New Forest seminar in December 2008: CR agreed to obtain colleagues' view of inclusion or exclusion of Solent sites from Appropriate Assessment stage of this HRA and the spatial limit of concern. AB explained approach in Test Valley's Core Strategy HRA, and proposed similar approach, by extracting data from the PROGRESS visitor survey that was relied upon by Footprint Ecology's report to New Forest National Park Authority on visitor pressures, and applying it to Salisbury District residents and future Core Strategy developments. Discussion progressed on potential effects of disturbance and mitigation measures, including the need to link Core Strategy policy to mitigation through future Wiltshire Council Green Infrastructure strategy DPD, and potential perceived complications of pursuing a joint mitigation strategy with the National Park Authority and other LPAs (a focus of the December 2008 New Forest workshop). Agreed that a policy approach is needed for the Core Strategy in advance of any joint strategy which would take time to agree. Agreed need for AB and SDC to consult NFNPA further (Ian Barker, Ecologist) and AB to obtain survey data for assessment. Fe is to attend meeting on county GI strategy and report back if relevant.

8. Discussion of recreational disturbance issues at Salisbury Plain: NS enquired as to likely issues for strategic allocation proposed at Amesbury, likely to develop previously-allocated open space. Issues discussed as to need for strategic and/or site-specific approach to open space and green infrastructure provision to avoid/reduce visits from new housing residents to Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC, avoiding disturbance to Stone Curlews. Discussion of alternative approaches to requiring greenspace provision, such as increasing quality of or access to existing greenspaces, if development sites cannot accommodate significant greenspace within site boundary, and link again to future county GI strategy. Further assessment work on this issue, including liaison with MOD and RSPB was noted as likely.

**APPENDIX 1B – 3rd STEERING GROUP MEETING 17 JUNE
2009**

Wiltshire Council
South Wiltshire Core Strategy: Habitats Regulations Assessment
Minutes of HRA Steering Group meeting
Planning Office, Wyndham Road, Salisbury
17 June 2009

Attendees:

Charles Routh, Natural England
Katherine Burt, Environment Agency
Adam Boyden, Nicholas Pearson Associates
Louisa Kilgallen, Ecologist, Wiltshire Council
David Milton, Team Leader, Spatial Planning
Natasha Styles, Spatial Planning, Wiltshire Council
Vincent Albano, Spatial Planning, Wiltshire Council
Carolyn Gibson, Spatial Planning, Wiltshire Council

Apologies

Ian Barker, Ecologist, New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA, comments received by e-mail)
Fiona Elphick, Ecologist, Wiltshire Council
Tracey Brightman, Environment Agency

Update on timescales

VA provided an update on timescales, Core Strategy (CS) due to go to cabinet on 14th /15th July 2009, deadline for CS completion Wednesday 24th June, therefore require HRA amendments to policies by 18th June 2009.

Discussion on individual policies

Add to strategic objective

- Ensure following objective incorporated: 'any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.'

Core Policy 14 – Porton Down

- Add reference to the saved Porton Down employment allocation policy to text
- Add reference to the agencies business plans to make it clearer
- Make policy clearer that they need to contribute towards the implementation of the Wildlife management plan not the objectives.

Core Policy 17 – New Forest National Park

- Make reference to the NF Recreation Management Strategy and the Management Plan.
- 1st paragraph of policy needs deleting and initial wording reintroduced to ensure that thrust of the policy is not diluted.

Core Policy 21 – Water efficiency

- Para 2 of policy add the words 'to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority'.

CP22 – Pollution and phosphate levels in the water environment

- Change to include 'implementation' of management plan as well as undertaking.
- Add reference to developers providing a 'construction management plan'.

Core policy 24 – Green Infrastructure and Habitats Networks

- Second sentence, first paragraph, make clear that the GI does not need to be 'multi functional'.
- Definition of GI should include sites of importance for biodiversity.
- Make it clear that the GI strategy will be adopted as SPD so it has satisfactory weight.
- Point c under supporting text, provide an additional point to direct future site specific DPD to also look at providing recreational management measures in relation to the New Forest National Park.
- Emphasise joint working with adjoining authorities such as the NFNPA to resolve issues and to undertake research into recreation etc.
- Policy needs to ensure contributions towards the implementation to the GI strategy.
- Add 'existing' to first para to make sure it is clear it is relevant to the existing not just new.
- Bullet 2 amend 'offset' to 'deter'.
- Add bullet to ensure maintenance of the existing Green infrastructure network and prevent habitat fragmentation.
- Last para make it clear what happens until the GI strategy is produced.

Deleted policy environmental policy

- Policy to be re-drafted and re-introduced.

Actions

NS/VA to make amendments and re-distribute.

CR to speak to opposite number in South East for clarification.

Date of next meeting:

Agreed a meeting possibly not needed unless issues arise out of proposed submission draft consultation.

APPENDIX 1C – MINUTES THE RIVER AVON SAC MEETING 5th FEBRUARY 2009

Minutes – Salisbury District Council Habitats Regulations Assessment Meeting – The River Avon SAC – Thursday 5th February 2009

(N.B. with all Environment Agency's edits accepted)

Invited	Present
Fiona Elphick, Wiltshire County Council Ecologist	✓
Charles Routh, Natural England	✓
Tracey Brightman, Environment Agency	✓
Catherine Burt, Environment Agency	✓
Adam Bowden, Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA, working for SDC)	✓
Natasha Styles, Salisbury District Council	✓
David Milton, Salisbury District Council	✓
Dian Matthews, Natural England	✓
Mark Taylor, Natural England	✓
Mark Jones, Natural England	✓
Ian Wallis, GOSW	✓
Tim McCombe, GOSW	✓
Vincent Albano, Salisbury District Council	✗ apologies received
Louisa Kilgallen, Wiltshire county Council	✗ apologies received
Beth Sidaway, Environment Agency	✗ apologies received
Stuart Mc Fadzean, Environment Agency	✗ apologies received
David Ogbourne, Wessex Water	✗

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 26th March, Salisbury City Hall Meeting Room, 10am to 1pm.

GOSW made it clear that their presence was in the capacity of observer not to discuss the content of the RSS in any way.

Attendees were made aware that in order to progress the South Wiltshire Core Strategy there were outstanding uncertainties that needed to be resolved with respect to Water issues. A note was sent out with the agenda which identifies the situation within published reports, attached to the agenda.

The timetable for the South Wiltshire Core Strategy was explained – Submission draft released for consultation July 2009, EIP late 2009 / early 2010 and adoption April 2010. These timetables cannot change or be delayed due to lack of housing supply in south Wiltshire. South Wiltshire have been consulting now for 2 1/2 years.

Water abstraction

There are currently uncertainties that prevent the HRA for the Core Strategy concluding that there will not be a significant effect of the proposed 12,400 dwellings. Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) were asked to explain their positions.

Environment Agency - The EA has completed the 'review of consents' for Wessex Water's abstraction licences, which covers the majority of the volume of water

abstracted that could potentially affecting the River Avon SAC. The Wessex Water abstractions that are showing to have an impact have been determined and the licences for these will be reduced. The reductions in abstraction licences to enable the replacement of the water taken by the environmental requirements to meet the Habitats Directive are included for in Wessex Water's draft Water Resources Management Plan and draft business plan. EA confirmed that the increased growth from RSS proposed changes and the Core Strategy has been considered. Reporting for the review of consents has to be finalized by March 2010. All subject to the Wessex Water business plan being approved in April 2009 by OFWAT.

The possible need for the Core Strategy to require new housing to achieve the water efficiency equivalent of that required by code level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (105 litres of water per person per day) was discussed. The EA pointed to their advice to the SW RSS in 2005 and 2006 which concluded that there is water available to support growth in Salisbury, provided water efficiency measures are included in new development.

The scope for commercial developments to meet water efficiency standards was also discussed. The EA has looked at residential developments only at this stage. EA would encourage commercial metering in area.
EA to provide information to inform policy on water efficiency – **ACTION EA**
Policy to be drafted by 26th March 2009 – **ACTION SDC**

Natural England - had not yet seen details of the HRAs of review of abstraction licences and of draft water resources management plan. Overall NE feel they are in broad agreement with the EA, but NE need to see the detailed work to be able to confirm that they agree that increases in abstraction to serve new development will still meet the SAC's flow level target, based on evidence.

Post-meeting note: Dianne Matthews of NE confirmed on 11/2/09 that NE have received all information to date from Wessex Water in relation to the impacts of abstraction on the River Avon SAC, although work on the review of consents with EA and WW is still in progress and some uncertainties in detail which remain.

NE cannot yet confirm that the effect of the Core Strategy 'in-combination' with other projects or plans can be identified as they believe only 90-95% of the licences have been looked at.

NE need wording of a water efficiency policy to review and need to be reassured that it can work, they need the evidence from EA/Wessex Water to demonstrate this. Additionally a way of monitoring the policy needs to be in place. Wessex Water could undertake sector monitoring and build this into their policy.

EA will discuss with colleagues how much information can be given to NE and NPA at this stage and ensure all information is passed over as a package – **ACTION EA**

How leakage is to be dealt with needs to be confirmed – **ACTION EA**. (EA believe this was an action for Wessex Water rather than EA)

SDC will also push Wessex Water for HRA of Water Resources Management Plan –
Post-meeting note: the HRA has been forwarded to SDC by NE, as part of WW's response (Jan 2009) to representations on the draft WRMP.

EA stated that the Core Strategy HRA should still be able to proceed.

EA agreed to prepare a 1 side summary of how the water flow level will be met and what Core Strategy policy on water efficiency this requires - to be completed to inform next meeting. *Post-meeting note: K Burt provided a note on 16/2/09.*

NE asked whether it needed senior management to drive this forward, as clearly a massive priority. EA will determine what can be achieved. If there is a problem both agencies will escalate the issue.

Water Quality

There are currently uncertainties that prevent the HRA for the Core Strategy concluding that there will not be a significant effect of the proposed 12,400 dwellings. Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) were asked to explain their positions. A key issue is the phosphate levels, and the achievement of an agreed phosphate level target throughout the SAC.

Environment Agency –

The EA has completed the 'Review of Consents' for Wessex Water Consents to Discharge, which form approximately 98% of the effluent load into the River Avon system.

There is investment in place for the AMP4 period (2005-10) to improve phosphate discharges from 17 Sewage Treatment Works (STW) into the SAC, and this treatment will be in place by 31 March 2010.

The EA's emerging review of discharge consents HRA work is therefore concluding there will be no adverse impact on SAC integrity from consented STW discharges including the future planned growth in South Wiltshire – as the reduction of P discharges from STWs will create sufficient 'headroom' to accommodate additional waste water flows from planned growth. Phosphate discharge limits for these STWs have been agreed with NE, and further consents can be granted to provide additional improvements. EA consider the proposed improvements are sufficient to meet HRA obligations.

Natural England –

The important issue is the effect of discharges from STWs in combination with other sources. There are two types of phosphate loading – diffuse and point sources. NE know about 75% of sources overall.

Although Salisbury STW has been improved, there are further discussions to be had regarding the rest of the catchment.

NE do not agree with the EA that the additional development in the catchment would not have an adverse effect. The AMP4 improvements barely provides for the improvements that NE would like to see. NE consider that there would be no adverse effect of integrity at Salisbury but there may be at other STWs such as Warminster (outside South Wiltshire).

NE had not seen EA's detailed work on their assessment of effects on the SAC from STW discharges, and firstly need to agree the evidence base. NE believe that an integrated strategy is needed that is locally agreed – the Phosphate science is complex. NE/EA were to meet in April to discuss but may need to be brought forward. *Post-meeting note: EA/NE are to meet on 2nd March. ACTION NE, EA*

NE state that although the phosphate level in the SAC will decrease substantially it still will not ensure that the nationally agreed phosphate level target for the SAC is met in all stretches of the river, largely due to the influence of diffuse sources. There is a need to discuss and agree whether the target can be achieved for the whole river, before April 2009. **ACTION NE, EA**

EA/NE need to work more closely in finding a solution to this issue, through an agreed phosphate strategy for the catchment. This will be a challenge before July, however EA/NE need to put resources to the issue. A strategy needs to address whether the phosphate target is robust, detail the STW improvements and look at effects in combination with other point sources and diffuse sources, including to understand and how to control and reduce other sources of phosphates (e.g. fish farming and water cress farming).

The potential to require developers to contribute to an overall mitigation strategy through Section 106 agreements, was discussed. Such a mitigation strategy could aim to fund measures to further reduce the phosphate levels in the SAC, by investigating other sources of phosphate and funding measures to reduce these, so as to mitigate for any increase in STW discharges caused by new development, and thereby ensure no adverse impact on integrity. It was suggested that such a policy requiring such a strategy could be included in the Core Strategy, but also noted by SDC that the need for such a requirement must be based on clear evidence, to justify additional obligations on developers.

NE advised that a legal interpretation of what 'in-combination' means in this instance was required – **ACTION NE**

There are various growth models that were undertaken for the RSS at both draft and EIP stages.

GOSW confirmed that NE and EA need to move forward on this issue.

Actions agreed:

- NE and EA specialists are to meet on water issues– *see post-meeting note above: due 2nd March.*
- EA to provide as much information arising from their HRA work as possible to NE and SDC/NPA asap
- NE/EA will commence putting together the evidence base to inform both issues
- NE will seek legal interpretation of in-combination effects, in relation to phosphate levels in the SAC
- EA to summarise latest position on issues to inform next meeting, by 26/3/2009 – *Post-meeting note: K Burt provided a note on 16/2/09.*
- Evidence to be reviewed by SDC / NPA, to draft Core Strategy policies on water efficiency and (possibly) phosphate strategy, and inform HRA, by 26/3/2009
- All initial work needs to be undertaken by 26/3/2009
- A phosphate strategy will need to be developed.
- NE to consider monitoring of River Avon SAC
- GOSW will highlight importance of issue through the DEFRA network to escalate work priority.
- Another meeting week commencing 23 March 2009 will be arranged.
- Liaison needs to continue between all parties.

**APPENDIX 1D - MINUTES OF THE RIVER AVON MEETING –
23rd MARCH 2009**

Water Summit II

26 March 2009

The Meeting Room, City Hall Salisbury

David Milton	Forward Planning Team Leader	Chris Cornwall	EA
Natasha Styles	Senior Planning Officer	Tim McCombe	GOSW
Vincent Albano	Planning Officer	Ian Barker	NFNPA
Adam Boyden	Nicholas Pearson Associates	Louisa Kilgallen	District Ecologist
Tracey Brightman	EA	Fiona Elphick	County Ecologist
Stuart McFadzean (SM)	EA	Dianne Mathews (DMa)	Natural England
Beth Sidaway	EA	Mark Jones	Natural England
Katherine Burt	EA		
Apologies for absence			
Charles Routh	Natural England	David Ogbourne	Wessex Water

Introduction

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the approach that should be taken in the South Wiltshire Core Strategy with respect of water. This is the second such meeting. The main issues are the impact of the forecast growth on the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The principle points of discussion related to the impact of increased water abstraction and phosphate (P) levels. It was confirmed that information has been circulated to everybody and that the EA have already commented on the draft approach to water suggested by Forward Planning.

Updates

South Wiltshire Core Strategy

DM gave a brief introduction to the meeting and an update on the current position with the South Wiltshire Core Strategy. DM confirmed that the submission of the South Wiltshire Core Strategy to the Secretary of State is planned for September 2009 and that this will be the first part of the Wiltshire wide Core Strategy.

Environment Agency

SM Confirmed that EA has done a lot of work with respect to the habitats regulations and policies of the RSS. This has highlighted that sewage treatment works in Salisbury are a particular issue and that these are close to Best Available Technology when it comes to reducing impacts. They have been working closely with the Natural England and Wessex Water.

Natural England

NE have not produced a single response and have received advice from David Tyldesley Associates. NE like the positive approach taken within the strategy with respect to phosphates for research and opportunity mapping. NE already have £10K to put towards this research.

Wessex Water

Wessex Water were not represented at the meeting. SM highlighted the importance of Wessex Water's 'Water Resource Management Plan' which is currently out to consultation with OFWAT. The 'Water Resource Management Plan' is required under the Water Framework Directive. This contains Wessex Water's proposals for protecting water

resources and avoiding adverse effects on the integrity of the River Avon SAC while meeting demand, including through a 23.5 M/l/d reduction in abstraction from sources affecting the Avon. So long as this is approved by OFWAT the Conservation Objective river flow target should be met.

Water Abstraction

The draft approach suggested by Forward Planning recommended that, for residential development new development should be built to achieve a water efficiency standard equivalent to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. New non-residential should also build in water efficient technology but there is no universal standard as non-residential development is diverse in its requirements.

Domestic Development

Suggested that by 2010 code level 3 would become mandatory through the Building Regulations.

EA Confirmed that increased water demand was inevitable and that there was no strong agenda from the EA as there was not a strong case for water efficiency measures to be required as the benefits of water efficiency savings would not be very significant for water supply and abstraction, assuming OFWAT approve WW's plans to reduce abstraction to protect the SAC. However, if OFWAT does not approve the improvements that Wessex Water is proposing, water efficiency would become a more important issue as a result.

It was confirmed that OFWAT will propose a draft decision in April to which Wessex Water has an opportunity to respond. It is likely that OFWAT will go with Wessex Water's Solution.

EA confirmed that whilst there might not be a strong agenda for water efficiency assuming OFWAT's approval is given, it is a criterion of the wider sustainable building practices. EA (SM) agreed to review WW's plans and to support a Core Strategy policy with a form of words to justify a local water efficiency standard in the Avon catchment and to encourage developers to go over and above CfSH Level 3.

Natural England (MJ) also agreed to support a Core Strategy policy on a locally justified water efficiency through a single written response (with DMA).

Resolution

- Continue with the policy as drafted for domestic housing
- Look at a contingency should OFWAT not support Wessex Waters plans
- Remove policy once CfSH becomes a national requirement

Non-Residential Development

Improvements in water efficiency in commercial sector are financially driven with the incentive being to reduce water consumption in order to reduce costs. Businesses that use a lot of water will be controlled through water abstraction licences and the financial cost of water bills. EA confirmed that, in the commercial sector there is actually a downward trend in water consumption and that control is being exercised using conditions under existing planning policy so it should be straightforward to replicate this in the new plan.

Resolution:

- Possible to use a form of words to help efficiency

Phosphates

Although investment is being carried out to reduce the phosphate load from major sewage treatment works in the Avon system there are other phosphate inputs which are currently unknown. The draft approach suggested by Forward Planning recommended that development in the catchment should support an initiative which aims to better understand and reduce the phosphate concentration in the river Avon, which are likely to be coming from

agricultural practices, and to identify whether the increased development has any effect on the phosphate level.

There is uncertainty as to what work [on phosphates] we are looking at, is it possible for this to be part of Wiltshire Core Strategy and Planning Obligations DPD. Although possible would be too late for the South Wiltshire housing levels. However there needs to be justification for developer contributions and how does this apply to smaller windfall development?

The SAC is not in favourable condition, but with the planned investment in sewage treatment works being carried out, will move towards favourable condition through reducing the P load towards the P target. This reduction will be sufficient to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on the SAC alone. However,, NE advise that the inputs from new development through STWs would still have an adverse effect when combined with other 'unknown' inputs that are causing elevated P levels to remain above the target and in unfavourable condition. There is no guarantee that the reduced P discharges from STWs will achieve favourable condition throughout the SAC, so the Core Strategy needs to include additional mitigation to make favourable condition more likely and not less likely as a result of development allocations.

NE confirmed that any policy should apply to the whole catchment, due to in- combination effects. It was also highlighted that there is a need to ensure consistency with the SE RSS and other Local Authority Core Strategies.

Resolutions:

- Redraft phosphate policy to suggest mechanism for collection of contributions and send this round for comment.
- Ensure also included within Wiltshire CS as needed to apply across Avon catchment.
- Information about the objectives of the study and justification to be discussed by NE and EA. NE and EA to draft and send to Forward Planning. Likely to be on the lines of site action plan.
- NE to arrange a SE/SW meeting to discuss any possible issues downstream
- Speak to Georgina Clampitt-Dix to ensure is within any proposed CIL.

**APPENDIX 1E – MINUTES OF THE NEW FOREST MEETING – 14TH
APRIL 2009**

**SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY
HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT:
NEW FOREST NATURA 2000 SITES AND RECREATION-RELATED IMPACTS**

MEETING: 14 APRIL 2009 2.00pm
at WILTSHIRE COUNCIL, ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEPT.,
3 ROLLESTONE STREET, SALISBURY

Attendees:

Natasha Styles, Senior Planning Officer, Spatial Planning, Wiltshire Council
Vincent Albano, Planning Officer, Spatial Planning, Wiltshire Council
Louisa Kilgallen, District Ecologist, Wiltshire Council
Ian Barker: Ecologist, New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)
Nick Radford: Natural England (Lyndhurst)
Adam Boyden, Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA)

Apologies:

Charles Routh: Natural England (Gloucestershire, Wiltshire & W of England)

1. Introductions

All parties introduced themselves, NS provided an introduction of the stage of the Core Strategy production. Confirmed that the proposed submission draft would be published for consultation in late June/July after the elections.

2. Likely increases in visitors to New Forest sites arising from Core Strategy

NPA introduced this area. The NFNPA have undertaken a study into the visitor numbers within the New Forest National Park with particular reference to the New Forest Special Protection Area (undertaken by Footprint Ecology). NPA have undertaken work to try and extrapolate from the data the number of visitors to the National Park from Wiltshire and especially south Wiltshire and Salisbury. Using this data it will be possible to identify what impact South Wiltshire is currently have on the National Park, and predict the future impact arising from the future growth in housing (and population) over the RSS plan period.

There was a discussion regarding whether the impact is from population increase or household numbers, household numbers will go up with the number of houses required by the RSS, whereas population is not expected to increase so greatly due to changing demographics.

AB stated that the PROGRESS visitor survey data relied upon by Footprint Ecology's report appear to suggest that 4.97% of visitors to the NFNP are from south Wiltshire, *[Post-meeting note: now estimated as 3.2%]* and most of these are local day visitors. Looking at increases in housing numbers this would increase to 8.3% (however the Footprint Ecology report was undertaken on the draft RSS housing figures of 9,200, rather than 12,400 and there is no indication of how these assessments relate to potential increases in housing numbers and distribution of the SE Plan. NPA will look into this. *[Post-meeting note: south Wiltshire housing allocations estimated to be c.4% of total housing growth in draft SW & adopted SE RSSs]*

3. Potential effects of any increase in visitors on SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites

There will be various effects on the sites such as from trampling and footpath erosion, fouling, dog walking causing disturbance to sensitive birds, recreation disturbance is a problem for a small minority of designated sites.

Any increase in human population will only add to the current impact. However Natural England need to undertake research into the impact on the New Forest, this is not available.

Although this data is not available or even being undertaken, a precautionary approach needs to be undertaken.

4. Potential mitigation and avoidance measures:

- a. Habitat management**
- b. Access management**
- c. Alternative natural green space**
- d. Scale and location of development**

Whether providing alternatives or focussing on visitor management can both be mitigation strategies, was discussed. Again, a better understanding of the status of the birds and the effects of recreational disturbance and other factors on them is needed. The number of birds is apparently reducing, especially the Dartford Warbler, however NE do not know why. NE need to understand the habitat management on these sites. In effect, the New Forest is more complicated than Thames Basin Heaths due to the range of species and habitats and the range of management techniques, as well as the role of the Forestry Commission. A general framework approach to the mitigation of effects is not yet available. However, generally the larger and nearer a development is to the New Forest, the more likely there will be an impact upon it.

The quality of alternative green space, as well as quantity is important. Open space needs to attract visitors who would otherwise visit heathland and wilder sites to it, including dog walkers, to offset trips to N2K sites. The Core Strategy needs to ensure that the relevant 'hooks' are in place.

NS enquired whether there would be an opportunity to contribute through Section 106 agreements to the NFNP management plan as possible mitigation. NFNPA explained that the recreation strategy was broad with few if any specific projects, so it would therefore be difficult to mitigate using this avenue currently.

5. Approaches being taken by other authorities / Natural England

Thames Basin Heaths SPA requires 8 ha per 1000 increase in population in adopted SE RSS policy.

How big is Test Valley's proposed 'country park' and what are there housing numbers – NPA to investigate. *[Post-meeting note: Forest Park identified in TV Core Strategy is 380 ha in size; SE RSS allocates Test Valley 10,200 dwellings]*

6. South Wiltshire Core Strategy policy responses

NS explained the GI strategy being undertaken by Wiltshire Council, proposals for Salisbury included provision of 50 ha of open space being delivered along side the proposed Hampton Park development and for others such as Fugglestone Red and UKLF there was opportunity to open up and enhance Wilton historic park and to improve linkages. Around Salisbury there is a large number of pathways, going out to the countryside and linking areas of the city, however the management and knowledge of these is often limited, so improvements could be made here to try and prevent parties going to areas such as the NFNP.

In areas such as Downton/ Southern Area it is acknowledged due to its proximity to the National Park, development here may have a greater recreational impact upon the NP and therefore more evidence is needed. NS explained that the CS would put 'numbers' to this area and not allocation until a later DPD and there for this could be pushed down to a later DPD when more evidence is available.

Actions:

- Hooks will be provided within the GI policy to contribute in the future, 50ha will go a long way of meeting needs in Salisbury.
- Hook to be provided within Downton / Southern Area policy
- Wording of NF policy to be on similar lines of the proposed wording provided by NE
'In order to prevent adverse effects upon sensitive European sites in the New Forest and on the coast, the Council will work with other local authorities (including the Partnership for Urban south Hampshire) to develop and implement a strategic approach to protecting European sites from recreational pressure. This will include a suite of mitigation measures, with adequate provision of alternative recreational space and support via developer contributions for access management measures within and around the European sites.'

It is recognised that the provision of alternative natural greenspace, to relieve recreational pressure upon sensitive European sites surrounding the district will need to be provided in order to ensure that the levels of growth proposed within the Core Strategy do not result in adverse effects upon European site interest features. This provision of alternative natural greenspaces will need to be over and above that provided for public open space in accordance with national policy. This will include the development and implementation of green infrastructure strategies in order to improve local access to informal open spaces, the countryside and the coast in less sensitive areas which are easily accessible to the present and future populations living in major conurbations in south Hampshire and East Dorset, and the provision of new alternative natural greenspaces for people to enjoy a similar experience to that found at the European sites. This may potentially include the provision of a new country park, for example'

- WC to e-mail proposed wording.

Any other business

NS enquired about progress of the Solent Maritime study. Although not yet available, when available NE would advise, however felt that developments in South Wiltshire should have limited influence on coastal sites, and increases in visitors can mostly be addressed through visitor management.

**APPENDIX IF – MINTUES OF MEETING WITH DEFENCE ESTATES ON
SALISBURY PLAIN – 1ST MAY 2009**

**SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY
HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT:
SALISBURY PLAIN NATURA 2000 SITES AND IMPACTS OF VISITOR PRESSURE**

**MEETING: 1 MAY 2009 10.00am at DEFENCE ESTATES, BUILDING 21,
WESTDOWN CAMP, TILSHEAD, WILTSHIRE**

Attendees:

Richard Brooks	Defence Estates (Head of Access and Recreation, DE Environmental Support Team, Warminster)
Julie Swain	Defence Estates (Environmental Advisor, Natural Environment, Tilshead)
Becky Holder	Nicholas Pearson Associates (Senior Ecologist)
Adam Boyden	Nicholas Pearson Associates (Associate Environmental Planner)

Summary of meeting:

1. AB and BH explained purposes of meeting, to enable NPA, currently undertaking the HRA of Wiltshire Council's South Wiltshire Core Strategy, to gain an understanding of Defence Estate's knowledge of current recreational visitor pressures on the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the measures DE use to control the effects of visitors on the conservation interests of the sites. This is necessary for the HRA of the Core Strategy to be able to assess whether increased residential development at Amesbury and the surrounding communities near Salisbury Plain is likely to lead to adverse effects on the SPA/SAC and whether such effects can be mitigated or avoided.

Existing public access to Salisbury Plain

2. RB explained current public access to Salisbury Plain, with reference to rights of way maps, the MOD Byelaws which restrict access within specific restricted areas (Danger Areas on OS maps).
3. There is normally no public access at all to the majority of the western part of Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC which comprises the Warminster and Imber Ranges. Public access is granted for a number of days a year such as Easter and Christmas when access is opened to the abandoned village of Imber. A small area of the western part of the SPA/SAC has unrestricted public access, to the east of the Tilshead-Chitterne road.
4. There is no public access to the central part of the SPA/SAC through the Larkhill / Westdown Artillery Ranges during live firing. Outside live firing, access is restricted to two tracked Public Rights of Way routes only, and the MOD undertake strict policing of this area to ensure people do not stray from the hard tracks. There are some Public Rights of Way south of the central area. Also, a few rights of way 'tails' lead into this area but are undefined on the ground and used only by a small number of local people. Overall, the central area is not considered to be subject to recreational pressures, as the Danger Areas appear to act as a significant deterrent to public use
5. The information available to the public about the dangers of straying off the tracks into the live firing area (red flags, signage, information boards, press notices) is also considered an effective deterrent in the Imber and Larkhill/Westdown ranges.

6. No Stone Curlew nesting sites have been identified by the RSPB's monitoring programme in the area of the western part of the SPA/SAC which has unrestricted public access, to the east of the Tilshead-Chitterne road. A small number of Stone Curlew breeding sites are found around the edge of the western area. Defence Estates also monitor Stone Curlew plots and manage the land.
7. In the eastern part of the SPA/SAC, access is limited to Bulford Ranges Danger Area during live firing. Outside the Danger Area, MOD Byelaws (which are to be reviewed) currently infer that public access is unrestricted on foot, as well as allowing access by bikes and horseriders along defined track routes. Consequently, visitor pressure from public access to the SPA/SAC and its Stone Curlew population is currently only a potential concern in this eastern part of the SPA/SAC (to the north of Bulford, west of Tidworth and east of Netheravon).

Previous assessments of visitor pressure

8. Patterns of recreational activity across the eastern section of Salisbury Plain have been described through a survey undertaken by Footprint Ecology for the Defence Estates' Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) Eastern Infrastructure Project. The survey has been used to inform the HRAs of the Eastern Infrastructure Project (EIP), including to define mitigation measures for the project such as the creation of new breeding plots for Stone Curlew. The survey findings had also been used to inform the HRA of MOD military housing proposals in Tidworth, which concluded that no further mitigation was considered necessary above that provided for the EIP project (information recently submitted to Kennet District Council in April).
9. The findings of the survey were discussed as relevant to the Core Strategy. RB and JS provided the survey report and related reports to NPA as this would need to be reviewed as part of the Core Strategy HRA.
10. RB explained that the means of managing public access to Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is to be reviewed within the next 5 years as part of the MOD Byelaw Review of public access. The potential for specific changes to be proposed for each area were discussed, in relation to the MOD's operational requirements of the Salisbury Plain Training Area. The review will deal with each area (west, central, east) in turn. Proposed changes might include a requirement, similar to that under the CROW Act, that all dogs be on a lead under close control during the bird breeding season. Currently, however, potential changes to the Byelaws and public access to the Plain have not yet been defined for the three areas, and cannot be relied upon.
11. The potential need for residential development promoted in the Core Strategy, at Amesbury and the communities at Bulford/Durrington closer to Salisbury Plain, to increase recreational visitor pressure on the SPA/SAC and require mitigation, particularly for disturbance for Stone Curlew, such as through the creation of breeding plots, was discussed. The role of the RSPB in monitoring the Stone Curlew population and of the MOD's Defence Estates in managing its activities on Salisbury Plain to conserve and enhance the SAC/SPA and further their conservation objectives, was also discussed. JS also noted Defence Estates' work with their contractors Landmarc, to manage and maintain the Stone Curlew plots to ensure they are suitable as nesting sites for this and other species.
12. RB and JS noted their need to check whether Defence Estates had responded to the previous Salisbury District Council Preferred Options Core Strategy consultations in 2008.
13. AB and BH thanked RB and JS for their time and assistance.

