

Wiltshire Council

Draft Corsham Neighbourhood Plan – Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

March 2018

1. SCREENING METHODOLOGY

Each element of the draft Corsham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has been categorised against the screening criteria developed by Natural England. This process is necessary to help provide a clear audit trail for the assessment and, if necessary, identify the need for the wording of policies to be amended or new policies added to be certain that the NP will not have a significant negative effect on a European site.

The criteria used were as follows:

- Category A1: The policy will not itself lead to development e.g. because it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development;
- Category A2: The policy is intended to protect the natural environment;
- Category A3: The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment;
- Category A4: The policy would positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas;
- Category A5: The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas.
- Category B: No significant effect;
- Category C: Likely significant effect alone; and
- Category D: Likely significant effects in combination

The effect of each draft policy has been considered both individually, and in combination. The effects of the whole plan have also been considered in combination with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

2. WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY HRA

The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA derived a set of parameters by which to determine the likelihood of potential impact on Natura 2000 sites. Applying these parameters to the Corsham NP area identifies the following issues to be assessed.

- *Recreation – Natura 2000 sites within 5km of the plan area, or where Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is within 15km of the plan area.*
 - *Salisbury Plain SAC and SPA*
 - *River Avon SAC*
- *Hydrology / Hydrogeology - Sites that fall wholly or partly within either the Thames Water (Swindon) and Oxford Water Resource Zone WRZ (SWOX WRZ), or the Wessex Water North WRZ, may be susceptible to impact. (Corsham is serviced by Wessex Water North WRZ, so only the two sites listed below are relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan area).*

- *Salisbury Plain SAC and SPA*
 - *River Avon SAC*
- *Nitrogen Deposition – Natura 2000 sites within 200m of a main road*
 - River Avon SAC
 - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
- *Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines – The majority of the Corsham NP area is within core sustenance zones for greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe and Bechstein’s bats associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area for conservation (SAC)*
 - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC

3. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Draft policies within the emerging Corsham NP have been screened against each of the above potential impacts, for each Natura 2000 site (see Section 5 below).

a) Recreation

Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC – The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA assessed that the issues relating to additional recreational pressure as a result of residential development growth are dealt with sufficiently in the ‘Salisbury Plain SPA HRA and Mitigation Strategy’, which prescribes proportionate developer contributions for development sites within 4km of the western and central areas of the SPA or within 15km of the eastern part of the SPA, to deliver monitoring and adaptive management on the plains (which will be obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy, CIL). Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy implements this approach. Corsham is located over 4km from the western areas of the Plain, so no Likely Significant Effect (LSE) through recreational impacts is expected.

River Avon SAC - an increase in recreational pressure on the European site as a result of implementation of the plan is not expected due to the limited amount of development proposed and the distance from the river. The River Avon SAC is over 5km from the Corsham NP area, therefore no LSE through recreational impacts are expected. The nearest river is the Bristol Avon, which is a County Wildlife Site. The Kennet and Avon Canal also lies a short distance to the south of the Corsham NP area, which provides an existing local resource for recreation.

b) Hydrology/Hydrogeology

Water Resources – The Corsham NP area is located within the Bristol Avon catchment and it is expected that any small residential or industrial developments will be accommodated within the existing abstraction license levels. Current licences have undergone HRA by the Environment Agency, as has Wessex Water’s Water Resource Management Plan, therefore the Council is satisfied that the issue does not require further assessment at the NP level, as it will not require any additional abstraction from the SAC catchment.

Water Quality – Corsham NP area drains to the Bristol Avon River, therefore the NP is not hydrologically connected to any SAC catchments. Issues of water quality, including surface water drainage will be dealt with through Development Management as described in Core Policy 50. The use of SUDS and suitable pollution control measures will be required for most proposals.

c) Nitrogen Deposition

This effect on Natura 2000 sites, as identified in the Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA as being sensitive to adverse impact, in relation to the draft Corsham NP has been considered and due to the scale and location of the potential development sites within the plan area, relative to any Natura 2000 site, any effects of nitrogen deposition arising from the proposed development would be *de minimus*.

d) Physical Damage/Interruption of Flight Lines

The majority of the Corsham NP area lies within the greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe and Bechstein's bat core sustenance zones as identified in the Core Strategy HRA in relation to the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bat SAC. The draft Corsham NP does not allocate any specific sites for residential or employment site development, although it does focus on preferred locations for these within the plan area. The Corsham Batscape Strategy forms part of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan and is designed to help identify and protect habitat features that are of key importance to bats both within the plan area and within the wider landscape. The strategy requires a minimum level of survey information, together with mitigation and enhancement measures to be submitted in support of any planning application within the plan area. Mitigation will be required with regard to the retention of key flight lines, landscaping proposals and a sensitive lighting strategy for each development, with emphasis on retaining habitat connectivity for the Annex II bat species for which the SAC is designated. The re-development of any brownfield site would also provide an opportunity to incorporate suitable roosts for greater and lesser horseshoes as a biodiversity enhancement in accordance with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework. All applications that fall within the core sustenance zones as identified in the Core Strategy HRA, already undergo a test of Likely Significant Effect (LSE) as part of Habitats Regulation Assessment screening within the planning system. Where LSE is identified, the application will undergo full Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations. A requirement of the Corsham Batscape Strategy will be that all applications within the NP area will be screened for LSE, to protect flight lines between different core sustenance zones and hibernation/swarming sites. Wiltshire Council considers that the Corsham Batscape Strategy will assist in the sensitive design of future development within Corsham NP area, that will protect endangered Annex II bat species by strictly limiting changes to the landscape that bats use. Implementation of the Corsham Batscape Strategy as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, will help ensure that future development in the Corsham NP area will not result in significant adverse impact to the favourable conservation status of the SAC and will therefore be compliant with the Habitats Regulations.

4. SCREENING OF EMERGING CORSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

The draft Corsham NP has seven sections containing policies and tasks. These are:

- Section 1: Business & Economy
- Section 2: Environment
- Section 3: Health & Wellbeing
- Section 4: Heritage
- Section 5: Housing
- Section 6: Lifelong Learning
- Section 7: Transport

All parts of the draft plan have been screened for potential impacts upon the Natura 2000 network, including policies and tasks, as set out in Section 5 below.

Where policies are 'screened in' and highlighted in red in the following table (section 5), recommendations are made to the NP steering group. These recommendations are made in order to satisfy the HRA and therefore must be added to the draft NP before its submission for adoption.

5. INITIAL HABITATS REGULATIONS SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT CORSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

a) Screening assessment of individual policies

Categories A / B (Green) – Screened out

Categories C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
Business & Economy	BE1 - Development proposals which are well located so as to strengthen and support the growth of Corsham's economy will be supported, particularly where the provision of new jobs for local people or business start-up units and/or growth in the innovation, education and knowledge sectors are being proposed and the inward investment for local business has been demonstrated.	A1	The policy itself will not lead to specific development.
	BE2 —To encourage Tourism and business travel to Corsham, the development of a hotel close to the site safeguarded for the future Railway Station and associated infrastructure (Figure 17 on page 46) will be supported where the proposal is in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy and thus seeks to address the biodiversity and geodiversity sensitivities of the location.	A1	The policy itself will not lead to the development of a hotel but where any future development proposal arises for this facility, the policy requires that both the Corsham Design Guide and the Batscape Strategy are followed. All developments within Corsham will be screened for compliance with the Habitats Regulations, as part of the planning process.
	BE3 —Development which safeguards and/or contributes to the strengthening of the vitality and identity of West Corsham will be supported. Proposals must be in accordance with the Corsham Design Statement and Corsham Batscape Strategy and, where applicable, seek	A1	Although specific areas of Corsham are identified strategically for development/redevelopment, the policy itself will not lead directly to that development occurring. Each development proposal brought forward will undergo a Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment as part of the planning consultation.

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Expand the business potential of West Corsham in accordance with an identified need; b) Create an active frontage on to Westwells Road to contribute to the creation of a more coherent community; c) Make strategic connections to facilitate easy access and reinforce interconnections within West Corsham and surrounds; d) Strengthen the urban arrangement with Green Buffers, as shown in Figure 5, which define the rural edges of West Corsham e) Encourage new Small and Medium Enterprises with a defence and/or ICT specialism. <p>Development proposals in proximity to residential areas must seek to avoid adversely impacting on residential amenity or, where this is not possible, incorporate appropriate mitigation measures into the design of the proposal.</p>		
	<p>BE4—Development which contributes to the revitalisation of Corsham Town Centre in accordance with the Corsham Framework Masterplan (illustrated in Figure 3, page 19) will be supported. Proposals must be in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and, where applicable, seek opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enhance/remodel the Martingate Centre; b) Integrate Coach Parking (minimum of two spaces); c) Develop a new supermarket with mixed-use 	A1	<p>Although specific areas of Corsham are identified strategically for development/redevelopment, the policy itself will not lead directly to that development occurring. Each development proposal brought forward within the Corsham NP area will undergo a Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment as part of the planning consultation.</p>

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>opportunities and associated infrastructure as shown in Figure 3;</p> <p>d) Identify start-up employment and within development proposals as defined in Figure 3;</p> <p>e) Remodelling, relocation and/or environmental enhancements of the Town Centre car parks, providing that there is no net loss of spaces;</p> <p>f) Enhance gateways into Corsham Town (see Figure 11 on page 34); and</p> <p>g) Create vital social, economic and environmental linkages between key commercial locations within Corsham Town and the wider Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p> <p>Where applicable, suitable alternative premises will need to be identified in order for businesses and residents to relocate before redevelopment of the Newlands Road Area can commence.</p>		
Environment	<p>E1—Proposals for development which protect and, where possible, enrich the habitat of the protected bat species associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) will be supported. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their proposals would contribute to the delivery of the Corsham Batscape Strategy, including details of measures to preserve and, where possible, enhance wildlife corridors, (especially with regard to foraging areas), priority flight lines and maternity roosts.</p>	A2	<p>The policy requires that proposals for development are in line with the Corsham Batscape Strategy, which itself is designed to ensure that important habitats for bats are protected and conserved within the development process, so that there will be no adverse impacts on the designated features or the favourable conservation status of the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area for Conservation (SAC). In addition, each development proposal brought forward within the Corsham NP area will undergo a Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment as part of</p>

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>Proposals that enhance the biodiversity of Corsham will be supported, provided they are fully compliant with the Corsham Batscape Strategy¹ and the Corsham Design Guide.</p> <p>¹ The Corsham Batscape Strategy fully accords with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire Council. The Corsham Batscape Strategy is a more detailed reflection of how the guidance should be applied to development in the Corsham Area</p>		<p>the planning consultation.</p>
	<p>E2—All new development within Corsham should seek to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and, in particular, proposals should demonstrate how design, construction and operation has sought to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote innovative proposals which achieve low carbon sustainable design; b) Reduce the use of fossil fuels; c) Promote the efficient use of natural resources, the re-use and recycling of resources, and the production and consumption of renewable energy; d) Safeguard and where possible enhance biodiversity and geodiversity; e) Reduce flood risk; f) Increase grey water re-use; 	<p>A3</p>	<p>As above, each development proposal brought forward within the Corsham NP area will undergo a Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment as part of the planning consultation.</p>

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>g) Adopt best practice in sustainable urban drainage; h) Ensure that the design and location of new development is resilient to the effects of flooding i) Adopt and facilitate the flexible development of low and zero carbon energy through a range of technologies; and j) Link the provision of low and zero carbon energy infrastructure in new developments to existing buildings.</p>		
	<p>E3—Development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the special qualities of the Cotswold AONB³ and the distinctive characteristics of the Landscape Setting of the Corsham Rolling Lowlands⁴. Development should: a) Maintain existing woodland cover and hedge trees; b) Restore field boundaries around settlements where there is gapping or degradation; c) Conserve the rural character to the south of the area; d) Demonstrate how the proposal relates to Corsham in terms of landscape, setting and visual effects; e) Create new woodland cover where necessary to mitigate the landscape or visual impact of new development; and f) Protect existing Public Rights of Way and link in new routes to offer local people recreational opportunities in terms of countryside access routes and cycleways.</p>	A3	

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>All proposed landscaping must be of an appropriate species mix and of local provenance in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy.</p> <p>³ http://www.cotswoldsاونb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/landscape-9.pdf</p> <p>⁴ http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/north_wiltshire_land_scape_character_assessment_2004_volume_1.pdf</p>		
	<p>E4—Development that results in the loss of green spaces identified on Figure 6 (on page 28) or that results in any harm to their character, setting, accessibility, appearance, general quality or amenity value would only be permitted if the community would gain equivalent benefit from the provision of suitable replacement green space or gain significant social, economic or environmental benefits from an alternative facility.</p>	A3	
	<p>E5—In the Rural Green Buffer as defined in Figure 5 (Page 24), new development will be strictly controlled. Approval will not be given for the construction of new buildings which, individually or cumulatively, would lead to the coalescence of settlements or the loss of bat foraging habitat. New buildings for the purposes of</p>	A4	<p>The policy will positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas by requiring that bat foraging areas are protected from loss through development. Additional Habitats Regulation Assessment screening within the planning process will ensure that</p>

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HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) SCREENING**

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	agriculture, forestry, or other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted, where they are acceptable in environmental terms.		developments within the Corsham NP area are compliant with the European legislation.
Health & Wellbeing	HW1 —Development proposals should seek to protect, improve and extend Corsham’s green infrastructure network as identified on Figure 6 (on page 28) to support a healthy community. Innovative proposals that contribute to sustainable pedestrian/cyclist linkages between the town and its rural setting will be supported, provided they are fully compliant with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy.	A3	
	HW2 —Proposals to develop a second surgery or expand capacity at the existing surgery will be supported. Proposals must be in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy.	A1	
	HW3 —Where appropriate and where the need has been identified, new housing development must provide appropriate new healthcare facilities and infrastructure on site or directly fund and/or deliver off-site facilities within an appropriate time scale to enable the sustainable growth of Corsham.	A1	
	HW4 —Community green space (including formal and informal sports pitches) identified in Figure 6 (on page 28) will be safeguarded and enhanced through new development proposals. Developers must engage with Corsham Town Council at an early opportunity to discuss	A1	

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	and potentially secure the long-term management of the open spaces in the public interest.		
	HW5 —Proposals that contribute towards making Corsham more family inclusive and dementia-friendly, and future-proofing development to allow flexibility and provide accessibility for all will be supported where they are in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide.	A1	
	HW6 —Development proposals will be supported where they create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime in accordance with ‘Secure by Design’ requirements, do not undermine quality of life or the community cohesion of Corsham.	A1	
	HW7 —The inclusion of public art within the context of the proposal site itself will be supported. Public art should reflect those founding elements unique to Corsham such as wool, stone, military links and communications and should contribute towards the delivery of the Creative Corsham Strategy 2016.	A1	
	HW8 —Proposals that result in harm to or loss of allotments in the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Area will not be supported, unless replacement provision is made, which is of good quality and located at reasonable convenience for the existing plot holders.	A1	Loss of allotments with replacement elsewhere may potentially affect bat foraging areas. The policy will not directly lead to loss or relocation of allotments but if it does arise this should be in line with the Corsham Batscape Strategy. Planning permission is likely to be required, which will trigger the requirement for screening under the Habitats Regulations.
Heritage	HE1 —Developments which protect the distinctive historic	A3	

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>character of Corsham whilst enhancing the vitality of the town will be supported where they are fully compliant with the Corsham Design Guide and the Batscape Strategy.</p>		
	<p>HE2—Development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the distinctive characteristics of the built settlement and how it responds to the special qualities of the Cotswold AONB and the Landscape Setting of the Corsham Rolling Lowlands (Character Area 10, as identified within the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment). Development proposals that potentially affect the setting of the AONB should be undertaken in conjunction with the provisions of the latest Cotswold AONB Management Plan.</p>	A3	
	<p>HE3—All new development within the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Area must demonstrate good quality design. This means responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context as well as the existing built environment. Good design for Corsham means: a) Achieving high quality design that respects the scale, character and historic built fabric of existing and surrounding buildings;</p>	A3	<p>Although specific areas of Corsham are mentioned in relation to preferred areas and types of development, the policy itself will not result directly in development. In addition, all development proposals will undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening procedure as part of the planning process.</p>

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>b) Respecting established building plot arrangements, widths and architectural rhythm of the street scene including front gardens, railings,walls and hedges; c) Establishing ‘gateways’ into the town (shown in Figure 11 on page 34) at; (i) Cross Keys, (ii) Pickwick, (iii) Pound Pill, to reinforce the identity of the historic centre and enhance the visitor awareness and experience; d) Using good quality materials that complement the existing historic vernacular of Corsham whilst respecting the individual context of each proposal; e) Adopting the principles of sustainable urban drainage; and f) Considering the key views set out in Figures 13 and 14 (on pages 36 and 37) within any development proposal. These views have been identified as important by the community. All proposals should be in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy. Planning permission will not be granted for development that undermines these core design principles and fails to improve the form and function of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p>		
	<p>HE4–Innovative proposals which add to the vitality of Corsham will be supported as long as design, scale,</p>	A1	

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HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) SCREENING**

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	materials, colours and proportion respect the prevailing historic context and are in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy		
Housing	<p>H1—During the period 2016 to 2026, the provision of up to 12 additional houses per village, delivered through small scale proposals of less than 10 dwellings on rural exception sites, will be supported at the villages of Gastard and Neston, where there has been an identified local need.</p> <p>These sites will provide 100% affordable housing unless it is demonstrated, on viability grounds that a small proportion will need to be open market housing. Proposals must demonstrate appropriate infrastructure links with the town and comply with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy.</p>	A1	All development proposals will undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening procedure as part of the planning process. Adherence to the Corsham Batscape Strategy will help to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations.
	<p>H2—Proposals for brownfield developments within the Corsham settlement boundary or small infill sites within the villages identified above will be supported where they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) have a scale, form and density which would be complimentary to surrounding properties and would not result in the loss of amenity for existing residents; b) would achieve high standards of sustainable and low carbon design; and c) would be accompanied by appropriate provisions for parking, access and storage of waste. 	A1	All development proposals will undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening procedure as part of the planning process. Adherence to the Corsham Batscape Strategy will help to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations. It should be noted that brownfield sites currently occupied by disused buildings should be assessed for bat activity, especially roosting.

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HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) SCREENING**

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>H3—All new housing developments within the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Area must demonstrate good quality design. This means responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context as well as the existing built environment. Good design for Corsham means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) achieving high quality design that respects the scale, character and historic built fabric of existing and surrounding buildings; b) respecting established building plot arrangements, widths and architectural rhythm of the street scene including front gardens, railings, walls and hedges; c) using good quality materials that complement the existing historic vernacular of Corsham whilst respecting the individual context of each proposal; d) adopting the principles of sustainable urban drainage; e) innovative proposals to achieve low carbon sustainable design; and f) to minimise the fear of crime in accordance with ‘Secure by Design’ requirements. <p>To achieve high quality, well managed housing developments, all proposals should be in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy</p>	A3	
	<p>H4—All housing development proposals must be supported by an assessment of their impact on the existing infrastructure of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Area. The assessment must be accompanied by a mitigation strategy and include methods for monitoring</p>	A3	

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures		
Lifelong Learning	L1 –Proposals for development will be required to identify their likely impact on Corsham’s infrastructure, services and educational facilities and to demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed and mitigated for.	A1	
	L2 –Development proposals that would facilitate the expansion of Bath Spa University and other higher and further education and associated infrastructure within the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Area will be supported. Development must be sustainably located where there are appropriate links to the footpath network and local facilities. Any proposal must be in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy.	A1	
Transport	T1 –Developments which maintain and/or improve traffic safety and transport services will be supported where they are fully compliant with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy. Proposals should demonstrate how the development’s vehicular access arrangements will mitigate the negative impacts of traffic in the area.	A1	Lighting may be a significant issue in traffic safety measures. Good design that considers bat conservation “up front” will likely be more favourable viewed within the planning system.
	T2 –Development proposals that include safe pedestrian and cycle routes within the town and connecting villages	A1	Adherence to the Corsham Batscape Strategy, in design of safe pedestrian and cycle routes is crucial to avoid deleterious

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>will be supported where they are in accordance with the Corsham Design Guide and Corsham Batscape Strategy. Such proposals will include the provision of well-located and appropriate bicycle parking facilities.</p>		<p>impacts from lighting.</p>
	<p>T3–The Corsham Neighbourhood Plan proposes to establish the ‘Corsham Link’ to sustainably connect the town and surrounding villages with the provision of a safe pedestrian/cycle route as shown in Figure 7 (on page 29). Consideration should be given to the biodiversity and geodiversity sensitivity of the route, ensuring that all proposals protect and where possible enhance habitats and ecological networks and enhance access to key geological exposures at the location. Developer contribution by way of S.106 will be sought where a proposal directly affects the route of the Corsham Link. Delivery of the Corsham Link will also be via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>The policy itself will not lead to this development occurring and elements of it will require planning permission. However, where minor modifications are made, or routes designed that do not require planning permission, these should be strictly in line with the Corsham Batscape Strategy and designed to prevent additional lighting in ecologically sensitive areas. The plan for the Corsham Link would require Habitats Regulation Assessment.</p>
	<p>T4–The area shown on Figure 17 (page 46) will be safeguarded for the construction of a new railway station and its associated infrastructure. The safeguarding of this site will stimulate sustainable development growth to the south of the railway line within the next plan period following the development of the station itself.</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>The construction of a new railway station and associated infrastructure will require planning permission and will therefore undergo Habitats Regulation Assessment to ensure no adverse impacts on the favourable conservation status of the SAC.</p>

b) Assessment of all elements of the plan ‘in combination’

- The draft policies would not have any in combination effects.

c) Assessment of the effects of the plan as a whole, in combination with Wiltshire Core Strategy and other plans or projects

- The draft plan would not have any in combination effects with the Wiltshire Core Strategy or any other plans or projects.

6. CONCLUSION

The majority of the Corsham NP area lies within a group of core sustenance zones for greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe and Bechstein’s bats, all associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats SAC, as identified in the Core Strategy HRA. All proposed development within these zones has the potential to result in adverse impacts to the Natura 2000 site and are therefore screened for Likely Significant Effect (LSE) within the planning process. Where LSE is identified, full Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations must be undertaken by the LPA before the application can be determined.

The draft policies in the emerging Corsham NP do not allocate any specific sites for residential or employment site development. As such, the policies themselves will not result in any development and therefore will not result in any significant adverse effects on any Natura 2000 sites.

The Corsham Batscapes Strategy has been produced to help steer development to the least ecologically sensitive areas by identifying habitat features that provide essential functions for local bat populations such as foraging or commuting habitat between summer roosting sites, winter hibernation sites and autumn swarming sites. The strategy will form an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan and provides advice for developers to help them design high quality sites that incorporate the requirements of Annex II bats. This will be a key tool in ensuring that development within the Corsham NP area is compliant with the stringent legislation that protects Natura 2000 sites.

It can therefore be concluded that the draft Corsham NP would have no LSE upon the Natura 2000 network alone or in combination and no appropriate assessment is currently required.

Assessment carried out by: [REDACTED] Senior Ecologist

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