

HEYWOOD AND HAWKERIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) relates to the Draft Heywood and Hawkeridge Neighbourhood Plan October 2022, hereafter referred to as the NP, submitted to Wiltshire Council in October 2022 prior to the Regulation 14 consultation stage.
- 1.2. The HRA has been carried out to comply with Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019¹, hereafter referred to as the Habitats Regulations. Under these Regulations, a competent authority must consider whether a relevant plan is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites (formally also referred to as Natura 2000 sites and now known as the national site network²) before deciding to give any consent, permission or other authorisation. If the screening exercise demonstrates significant effects are likely, whether or not these are addressed through mitigation measures³, the competent authority must undertake an appropriate assessment to examine the effects of the plan on the conservation objectives of the European sites in question, consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to its representations. Both the screening and any subsequent AA must consider the impacts of the plan alone and in combination with other plans or projects.
- 1.3. It is usually the case that a plan of this nature does not go into the detailed aspects of development proposals and therefore the full effects of potential development cannot be accurately assessed at the plan making stage. Those details will typically be identified through a planning application which would be subject to further, more detailed HRA. The principle that a HRA need only consider the effects of a proposal or policy in as much detail as is specified by the plan was explained by Advocate General Kokott in a judgement brought against the UK government in 2005:

“Many details are regularly not settled until the time of the final permission. It would also hardly be proper to require a greater level of detail in preceding plans or the abolition of multi-stage planning and approval procedures so that the assessment of implications can be concentrated on one point in the procedure. Rather, adverse effects on areas of conservation must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure.”⁴
- 1.4. Where appropriate assessment is undertaken, the competent authority may go on to authorise the plan or project provided that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites. Where an **adverse effect on the integrity (AEoI)** of any European sites cannot be ruled out, and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan can only be authorised and proceed if there are **imperative reasons of over-riding public interest (IROPI)** and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured.
- 1.5. Wiltshire Council has conducted the following HRA as competent authority for the Heywood and Hawkeridge NP. Where risks to European sites are identified, changes are recommended to remove or

¹ On 1st January 2021 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) were amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant. The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of sites or species do not change [Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

² Due to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) being amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 on 1st January 2021.

³ Court of Justice of the European Union, Case C 323/17 “People Over Wind”/P. Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta

⁴ Commission of the European Communities v UK and NI, opinion of Advocate General KoKott, 9 June 2005, Case C-6/04

reduce the risks, and these should be incorporated into the NP before it is made. Likewise, if the policies or planning context change after the HRA is completed, the HRA process must be repeated before the final plan is considered by a referendum and adopted.

2. Screening Methodology

- 2.1. Each element of the plan has been categorised against screening criteria developed by Natural England (NE) to provide a clear audit trail for the screening assessment.
- 2.2. The screening criteria used are 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.
- 2.3. The effect of each policy has been considered both individually and in combination with other plans and projects (see Table 1 below). Where potential for likely significant effects have been identified, an appropriate assessment has been undertaken in subsequent sections.

3. Higher Level HRAs

Wiltshire Core Strategy

- 3.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (October 2009, February 2012⁵, March 2013⁶, February 2014⁷ and April 2014⁸) identified general parameters to determine the likelihood of potential impacts on European sites. The following potential impact pathways and associated parameters were identified and assessed for the European sites stipulated below.
 - *Recreation – European sites within 5km of the plan area, or where the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is within 13.8km (extended to 15km where HRA indicates this is necessary) of the plan area or where Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is within 15km of the plan area (it should be noted that the relevant parameter for the latter has since been revised on the basis of data obtained by means of visitor surveys and is now 6.4km):*
 - Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - River Avon SAC
 - New Forest SAC / SPA

⁵ Wiltshire Core Strategy Submission Draft – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, February 2012

⁶ Wiltshire Core Strategy – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, March 2013

⁷ Update to the Wiltshire Core Strategy habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2014 (Exam/89)

⁸ Wiltshire Core Strategy Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment, April 2014

- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC (added post adoption of Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS))
 - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC (added post adoption of WCS)
- *Hydrology / Hydrogeology - Sites that fall wholly or partly within the Wessex Water Resource Zone may be susceptible to impact:*
 - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
 - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
 - Pewsey Downs SAC
 - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
 - River Avon SAC
 - River Lambourn SAC
 - Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain SAC
- *Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition – European sites within 200m of a main road*
 - Porton Down SPA
 - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
 - Solent and Southampton Water SPA
 - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
 - River Avon SAC
 - Rodborough Common SAC
 - Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC
- *Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines / Disturbance*
 - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
 - Porton Down SPA
 - Chilmark Quarries SAC (added post adoption of WCS)
 - Mottisfont Bats SAC (added post adoption of WCS)

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan

- 3.2 Since the Core Strategy was adopted, the Council published a pre-submission draft of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP) together with a HRA dated 21 June 2017. A schedule of proposed changes was considered by Cabinet supported by an Addendum to the HRA dated May 2018. A schedule of changes and an Addendum to the HRA incorporating minor factual changes were published in September 2018 for public consultation. Subsequently, the WHSAP (Council Version, February 2020) was adopted by Full Council on 25th February 2020 and this was accompanied by the final WHSAP Assessment under the Habitats Regulations (Wiltshire Council, February 2020).
- 3.3 The screening criteria for the adopted WHSAP and final HRA were modified for some European sites from those used for the Core Strategy subsequent to the acquisition of results from new surveys, and in light of advice from NE. This includes the zone of influence (Zoi) around the Salisbury Plain SPA used to screen for

likely significant effects as a result of recreational pressure being revised from 15km to 6.4km on the basis of data obtained by means of visitor surveys.

- 3.4 Furthermore, since the Core Strategy was adopted, NE has advised Wiltshire Council of its concerns regarding the growing number of visitors to the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC in recent years which has led to an increase in trampling. NE has advised that this is particularly evident at North Meadow (which is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR)) during April and May when visitors come to see the Snake's-head fritillaries in flower. NE considers that the increase in recreational pressure upon the SAC is primarily as a result of increases in the local population, and that major new housing developments within a short travel distance of North Meadow are likely to add to the existing visitor pressure and trampling effects. An interim ZOI of 8km for the North Meadow element of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC is being used by Wiltshire Council as this is consistent with the approach being applied by Swindon Borough Council. The ZOI will be refined once bespoke visitor surveys have been undertaken.
- 3.5 Impacts of development in Wiltshire on the New Forest SPA were considered in the HRA for the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (SWCS) adopted in 2012⁹. The assessment used data from the Tourism South East PROGRESS survey for 2004/05 and census data from 2001 for the former Salisbury District to examine patterns of visitors to the New Forest from across south Wiltshire. That HRA concluded that the development in south Wiltshire would increase visitor pressure by less than 1% and 89% of this would be through additional local day visits from within 8km of the National Park. The WCS addressed the New Forest's mitigation requirements through Core Policy 50, identifying that a New Forest Mitigation Strategy would be prepared to address recreational impacts. Since the WCS was adopted, the council has joined a partnership of local authorities seeking to develop a strategic approach to address the impacts of recreational pressure on the New Forest SPA. A Government grant through the Planning Delivery Fund enabled visitor surveys to be conducted across the New Forest in 2018/19. This work was recently published, and the Council is now part of a steering group working to agree a common approach to mitigation including the extent of the zone of influence and how to fairly reflect different visit rates within it. This evidence has informed the preparation of an Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy by Wiltshire Council.
- 3.6 The WCS adopted the 8km zone of influence, however, as discussed in the latest iteration of the council's strategy, from 1st September 2021 this has been revised to 13.8km. Before this date, the mitigation scheme only applied to permitted dwellings lying within 8km of the New Forest designated sites whereas thereafter the scheme has been extended to apply to new residential and tourism development within 13.8km of any of the New Forest designated sites and may be extended to include applications within 15km, where demonstrated to be necessary through a bespoke appropriate assessment.
- 3.7 Since the WCS was adopted and on the advice of NE, any plan or project that will lead to development within the catchment of the River Avon SAC must be phosphorus neutral and be subject to appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effect on the SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects in order to be authorised.

Emerging Evidence and Advice from Natural England Subsequent to Adoption of WHSAP

- 3.8 Similarly, it came to light in spring 2020 that any plan or project that will lead to development within the catchment of the River Test must be nitrogen neutral as the Test drains into the Solent and this region is protected by a number of European and international designations including the Solent Maritime SAC, Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site. In 2018 and 2019 NE undertook a number of condition assessments of the features of these designated sites around the Solent. These assessments identified that high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus are entering this water environment and that there is sound evidence that nitrogen in

⁹ South Wiltshire Proposed Submission Core Strategy HRA Report, Appendix 13. NPA for Wiltshire Council, July 2009

particular is causing eutrophication at the aforementioned designated sites and that the resulting excessive growth of green algae and plants, which reduces oxygen and light levels, is leading to negative effects on the special features for which the European sites are designated. These nutrient inputs currently mostly come either from agricultural sources or from wastewater from existing housing and other development. These findings were published by NE in June 2020 in *Advice on Achieving Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Solent Region*. This advice also stipulates that:

“There is uncertainty as to whether new growth will further deteriorate designated sites. This issue has been subject to detailed work commissioned by local planning authorities (LPAs) in association with Natural England, Environment Agency and water companies. This strategic work, which updates early studies, is on-going. Until this work is complete, the uncertainty remains and the potential for future housing developments across the Solent region to exacerbate these impacts creates a risk to their potential future conservation status.

One way to address this uncertainty is for new development to achieve nutrient neutrality. Nutrient neutrality is a means of ensuring that development does not add to existing nutrient burdens and this provides certainty that the whole of the scheme is deliverable in line with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

This report sets out a practical methodology to calculating how nutrient neutrality can be achieved. This methodology is based on best available scientific knowledge, and will be subject to revision as further evidence is obtained. It is our advice to local planning authorities to take a precautionary approach in line with existing legislation and case-law when addressing uncertainty and calculating nutrient budgets.”

- 3.9 In accordance with NE’s advice, any plan or project which will lead to development within the catchment of the River Test cannot be approved unless nitrogen neutrality has been demonstrated via quantitative means, and an appropriate assessment conducted by the competent authority has concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of any of the Solent region European sites.
- 3.10 In 2022 the River Lambourn SAC and the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site were identified by NE as being in unfavourable condition due to excessive phosphorus inputs. A very small area of both of these designations are located within Wiltshire. Any overnight accommodation development within the catchment of the SAC or Ramsar site are now required to demonstrate phosphorous neutrality and be subject to an appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effect on the SAC or Ramsar site alone or in-combination with other plans or projects in order to be authorised.

Screening of the Heywood and Hawkeridge NP Area

Recreation

- 3.11 The whole of the Heywood and Hawkeridge NP area is located within the 6.4km Zol for recreational pressure on the Salisbury Plain SPA. The NP does not allocate sites for residential development however it does support infill development; therefore, the NP must be subject to an appropriate assessment due to the potential for recreational effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA and the stone-curlew population.
- 3.12 A large portion of the NP area is located within the 4km core area around the greater horseshoe core roost in Westbury Leigh. The core roost is functionally linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. A large portion of the NP area is also located within the 1.5km core area around the Bechstein’s bat core roost in Clanger Wood, and a smaller area is located within the 1.5km core area around the Bechstein’s bat core roost at Flowers Wood, West Ashton, located outside the NP area. These core roosts are also functionally linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.
- 3.13 An area of the NP area, including the settlement of Heywood, lies within the red zone of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS, February 2021). The remainder of the NP area is located within the grey

hatched zone of the TBMS and a smaller area is also located within the yellow zone, including the settlements of Hawkeridge, Norleaze and Dursley and the Hawke Ridge Business Park. The TBMS seeks to reduce habitat loss and the potential for impacts on the woodlands around Trowbridge which are functionally linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC for Bechstein's bats. There is the potential for likely significant effects on the SAC due to additional recreational pressure on the woodlands and core roosts supported therein that are functionally linked to the SAC as a result of some policies in the NP. Therefore, the NP must be subject to an appropriate assessment due to the potential for recreational effects on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.

- 3.14 In terms of recreational pressures on other European sites, the NP area is located beyond the River Avon SAC and the Hampshire Avon Catchment, the Salisbury Plain SAC, the 13.8km Zol to the New Forest SAC/SPA and the 8km Zol around the North Meadow element of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC.

Hydrology / Hydrogeology

- 3.15 In terms of hydrology/hydrogeology, the NP area is located within the catchment of the Bristol Avon, rather than the Hampshire Avon, and as such there is no pathway for a likely significant effect on the River Avon SAC as a result of policies within the NP.
- 3.16 There have been no water resource issues identified for the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC and this is the only SAC from the above list to lie fully within the Bristol Avon catchment. The Bristol Avon is also not identified as a cause of water resource issues for the Salisbury Plain SAC/SPA.

Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition

- 3.17 The Wiltshire Core Strategy identified that increased traffic would lead to potential effects through an increase in atmospheric pollution and nitrogen deposition upon a range of European sites within 200m of a main road. Such effects were considered to be very small and difficult to predict at the strategic level¹⁰ (WCS HRA Update February 2014). The Heywood and Hawkeridge NP does not allocate any sites for development and all of the European sites listed above, except Salisbury Plain SAC/SPA are a considerable distance from the NP area. In relation to Salisbury Plain SAC/SPA, there are no main roads within the NP area that run within 200m of this European site. The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA concluded no likely significant effect where the existing approach to mitigation in Core Policy 55 is implemented. It is concluded that the policies that support housing in this NP would not have an adverse effect on European sites through nitrogen deposition.

Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines / Disturbance

- 3.18 As noted above a large portion of the NP area is located within the 4km core area of the greater horseshoe core roost located in Westbury Leigh and the 1.5km core area of the Bechstein's bat core roost in Clanger Wood. A smaller portion of the NP area is also located within the 1.5km core area of the Bechstein's bat core roost at Flowers Wood, West Ashton, located outside the NP area. All three core roosts are functionally linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.
- 3.19 The whole of the NP area is covered by the zones identified in the TBMS. To the north, Clanger Wood and the settlement of Heywood are located within the red zone. The remainder of the NP area is located within the grey hatched zone of the TBMS and a smaller area is also located in the yellow zone, including the settlements of Hawkeridge, Norleaze and Dursley and the Hawke Ridge Business Park. The NP does not allocate sites for development however a number of policies support development, including infill development, within the NP area. There is, therefore, the potential for policies within the NP to cause physical damage, the interruption of flight lines and disturbance to both bats and their habitats (including those used for foraging, roosting, and breeding) in relation to the greater horseshoe and Bechstein's bat

¹⁰ Update to the Wiltshire Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2014 (Exam/89)

core roosts and woodlands associated with the TBMS. Policies in the NP have therefore been screened into appropriate assessment in the table below.

- 3.20 The NP is considered to be too remote from the Chilmark Quarries SAC and the Mottisfont Bats SAC to cause physical damage to features which provide habitat for bats, such as breeding, roosting and foraging habitats or to fragment bat flight lines, or cause damage to such features.
- 3.21 The NP area is beyond the potential zone of influence with respect of stone-curlews breeding at Salisbury Plain SPA and Porton Down SPA and will not result in physical damage to the habitats within the European site, nor will it result in the interruption of flight lines or disturbance to breeding stone-curlew, such as by means of the introduction of visual stimuli or noise.

4. Screening of Policies in the Heywood and Hawkeridge Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.1 The Heywood and Hawkeridge NP comprises 20 planning policies, 7 of which are recommended to be taken forward to appropriate assessment due to potential likely significant effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA and / or the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.
- 4.2 It is considered that none of the other policies within the NP would lead directly to development or result in a likely significant effect on any European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

TABLE 1: Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the Heywood NP

A / B (Green) – Screened out
C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Housing Policy HP1.1	A1, C and D Salisbury Plain SPA	<p>This policy states that any housing within the parish which requires planning permission would be supported where they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On infill plots; • Replacement dwelling; • For extensions to existing buildings. <p>This policy will not lead directly to development however it does support housing development within the NP area where it meets the criteria set out in the policy.</p> <p>The whole of the NP area lies within the 6.4km buffer of the Salisbury Plain SPA, therefore this policy must be considered through an appropriate assessment as there is the potential for likely significant effects in terms of recreational pressures on the SPA.</p>	It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP to ensure that any developments coming forward avoid or sufficiently mitigate effects on European Sites and that they comply with the Habitats Regulations and where appropriate the Council's strategic mitigation strategies (for example the HRA and Mitigation Strategy for Salisbury Plain SPA).
	A1, C and D Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC	<p>Residential developments supported by this policy have the potential to affect functional habitat for bats within the 4km greater horseshoe core area, the 1.5km Bechstein's bats core areas, and the red, yellow and grey hatched zones of the TBMS.</p> <p>The red zone of the TBMS is located within 600m of woodlands or trees known to support maternity roosts for Bechstein's bats. The settlement of Heywood is located within the red zone. The TBMS states that development on greenfield or residential brownfield sites within the red zone is highly unlikely to be permitted due to potential habitat loss and recreational impacts.</p>	Given that residential development within the red zone is highly unlikely to be permitted, it is recommended that the policy stipulates that infill development should avoid areas

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>The yellow zone of the TBMS represents the areas where habitats have been shown to be or are highly likely to be of importance to Bechstein’s bats. The settlements of Hawkeridge, Norleaze and Dursley are located within this zone. Development of new greenfield sites within this zone are likely to require significant and appropriate habitat measures on site.</p> <p>The grey hatched zone is a recreational risk zone which represents the area where new residential development is expected to result in increased recreational pressure on key woodland bat sites. new residential proposals within this site will be expected to contribute to the delivery of mitigation to address strategic recreational pressure through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment.</p> <p>The potential for likely significant effects with regards to physical damage, interruption of flight lines and disturbance to bats associated with the SAC, and the potential to increase recreational pressure on the woodlands around Trowbridge that are functionally linked to the SAC cannot be screened out and the policy must be subject to appropriate assessment.</p> <p>Policy HP1.4 does not make reference to the need to comply with the Habitat Regulations through adherence to the Bat SAC Guidance and the TBMS.</p>	<p>within the red zone of the TBMS.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the policy is amended to state that any development coming forward within the yellow zone would be required to adhere to the relevant version of the TBMS and that a project level HRA would be required.</p>
Housing Policy HP1.2	A2	<p>This policy requires proposals to demonstrate no adverse impacts on wildlife and habitats. Proposals which require mitigation to avoid adverse impacts should deliver a net gain in biodiversity on site of 10% or more.</p> <p>The policy intends to protect the natural environment and requires residential developments to provide at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). The policy itself will not lead to development and will not result in a likely significant effect upon any European sites. Details of any development that comes forward would be considered at the planning application stage to ensure it aligns with this policy and that there will be acceptability with respect of other Development Plan policies, notably CP50 (Biodiversity</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		and Geodiversity) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and the Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council and Natural England, 2015), the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy, as well as CP52 (Green Infrastructure) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF 2019.	
Housing Policy HP1.3	A1 and A3	<p>This policy requires developments to demonstrate good quality design and to make generous provision for open spaces. Developments will be expected to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and those that fail to take the opportunities available for enhancing the local character and quality of the area and the way it functions would not be permitted. The policy sets out the following criteria for all new developments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be built of good quality materials sympathetic to the local style; 2. Be of a scale and size to fit with existing housing; 3. Be well-spaced and landscaped and include gardens; 4. Be sustainable and incorporate appropriate green technologies; 5. Retain as many as possible existing green trees and hedges within sites and along boundaries; and 6. Include adequate off-street parking i.e. two off-road bays/garages per dwelling. <p>This policy will not lead to development but instead aims to ensure that new developments demonstrate good quality design and incorporate public open space. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Housing Policy HP1.4	A1, C and D Salisbury Plain	<p>This policy supports new infill housing where proposals are well designed and meet the relevant requirements in other policies in the NP and in the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and where development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) fills a small, restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage building or on other sites within the built-up area of a settlement where the site is closely surrounded by buildings; b) will not involve the outward extension of the settlement's boundary; 	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>c) will not involve the loss of significant green space within the settlement; d) is not considered to be backland or unneighbourly development that requires unsuitable access, reduces the privacy of adjoining properties or is inconsistent with the character of the locality; and e) will not involve the loss of small properties e.g. by conversion of two small properties into one, insofar as planning permission is required; the creation of smaller properties by the sub-division of larger properties is encouraged.</p> <p>This policy will not lead directly to development however it does support infill housing development within the NP area where it meets the criteria set out in the policy.</p> <p>The whole of the NP area lies within the 6.4km buffer of the Salisbury Plain SPA, therefore this policy must be considered through an appropriate assessment as there is the potential for likely significant effects in terms of recreational pressures on the SPA.</p>	
	<p>A1, C and D Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC</p>	<p>Residential developments supported by this policy have the potential to affect functional habitat for bats within the 4km greater horseshoe core area, the 1.5km Bechstein's bats core areas, and the red, yellow and grey hatched zones of the TBMS.</p> <p>The red zone of the TBMS is located within 600m of woodlands or trees known to support maternity roosts for Bechstein's bats. The settlement of Heywood is located within the red zone. The TBMS states that development on greenfield or residential brownfield sites within the red zone is highly unlikely to be permitted due to potential habitat loss and recreational impacts.</p> <p>The yellow zone of the TBMS represents the areas where habitats have been shown to be or are highly likely to be of importance to Bechstein's bats. The settlements of Hawkeridge, Norleaze and Dursley are located within this zone. Development of new greenfield sites within this zone are likely to require significant and appropriate habitat measures on site.</p>	<p>Given that residential development within the red zone is highly unlikely to be permitted, it is recommended that the policy stipulates that infill development should avoid areas within the red zone of the TBMS.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the policy is amended to state that any development coming forward within the yellow zone would be required to adhere</p>

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>The grey hatched zone is a recreational risk zone which represents the area where new residential development is expected to result in increased recreational pressure on key woodland bat sites. New residential proposals within this site will be expected to contribute to the delivery of mitigation to address strategic recreational pressure through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment.</p> <p>The potential for likely significant effects with regards to physical damage, interruption of flight lines and disturbance to bats associated with the SAC, and the potential to increase recreational pressure on the woodlands around Trowbridge that are functionally linked to the SAC cannot be screened out and the policy must be subject to appropriate assessment.</p> <p>Policy HP1.4 does not make reference to the need to comply with the Habitat Regulations through adherence to the Bat SAC Guidance and the TBMS.</p>	<p>to the relevant version of the TBMS and that a project level HRA would be required.</p>
Housing Policy HP2	C and D Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC	<p>This policy seeks to <i>'encourage residents to pursue home improvements with the objective of improving insulation and reducing reliance on fossil fuels for heating'</i>.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development but it supports homeowners making home improvements to improve their insulation. The policy has the potential to affect bat roosts within the 4km greater horseshoe core area therefore the potential for likely significant effects with regards to physical damage and disturbance to bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC as a result of Policy HP2 cannot be screened out and the policy must be subject to appropriate assessment.</p> <p>The policy does not acknowledge the need to comply with the Habitats Regulations through adherence to the Bat SAC Guidance for Wiltshire and the TBMS.</p>	
Traffic Policy Policy T1	A1	This policy seeks to ensure that all new housing developments of 10 or more dwellings, major employment or retail proposals and expansion of existing employment and retail premises which are likely to generate significant additional vehicle movements	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>demonstrate as part of a Transport Assessment how the proposals will mitigate impacts of additional traffic on the local road network during construction and operation.</p> <p>This policy will not lead directly to development but instead aims to ensure that new residential, employment or retail developments mitigate the impacts of additional traffic. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Parking Policy Policy 1</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>This policy states that new residential and commercial development should provide appropriate off-road parking for residents and their visitors and roads should be sufficiently wide enough to allow two-way traffic without compromising the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>The policy encourages development proposals to exceed Highway Authority and Local Planning Authority standards where viable to improve parking and accessibility.</p> <p>Proposals should include electric vehicle charging points for each off-road parking space and should utilise permeable surfaces, planting and/or SuDS to reduce the impact of surface water runoff.</p> <p>The policy goes on to state that consideration should be given to help retain parking intended for residents and their visitors solely for that use through measures introduced via planning conditions, for example Residential Parking Zones.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development but instead aims to ensure that new residential and commercial developments provide appropriate off-street parking for residents and their visitors. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Transport Policy Policy T.1</p>	<p>A1, C and D Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC</p>	<p>This policy encourages all new developments to provide and enhance safe cycling routes within the site and provide good connections to the existing cycling network. Where appropriate developments will be expected to make contributions towards the provision</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>of cycling and pedestrian links to other communities and the National Cycling Network. New cycle paths should take account of the most up-to-date design guidance.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development however it does encourage all new developments to provide and enhance safe cycling routes within the site and the NP area. This includes the provision of cycling and pedestrian links to other communities and the National Cycle Network. There is the potential for these new routes to have impacts on bat species associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC through habitat fragmentation and additional lighting.</p> <p>The policy has the potential to affect functional habitat for bats within the 4km greater horseshoe core area and the 1.5km Bechstein’s bat core areas therefore the potential for likely significant effects with regards to interruption of flight lines and disturbance to bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC as a result of Policy T.1 cannot be screened out and the policy must be subject to appropriate assessment.</p> <p>The policy does not acknowledge the need to comply with the Habitats Regulations through adherence to the Bat SAC Guidance for Wiltshire and the TBMS.</p>	
<p>Transport Policy Policy T.2</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>This policy seeks to <i>‘ensure the weak railway bridge on Church/Dursley Road remains open for non-commercial traffic. This road is an arterial route for local traffic when the B3097 or A350 is closed’</i>.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development however it does seek to ensure that the railway bridge remains open to traffic. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Commercial and Economic Policy Policy 1</p>	<p>C and D Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC</p>	<p>This policy supports new B1, B2 and B8 class uses on the existing Hawke Ridge Business Park and the West Wilts Trading Estate. New employment opportunities will be particularly encouraged where they do not harm to residential amenity.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>This policy will not lead to development however it does support new commercial and employment development on the existing Hawke Ridge Business Park and the West Wilts Trading Estate. There is the potential for further development of these sites to have impacts on bat species associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC through habitat fragmentation, interference with bat foraging/commuting routes and additional lighting.</p> <p>The policy has the potential to affect functional habitat for bats within the 4km greater horseshoe core area with regards to both sites and the 1.5km Bechstein’s bat core area associated with Clanger Woods with regards to the Hawke Ridge Business Park. The Hawke Ridge Business Park is also located within the yellow zone of the TBMS. Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects with regards to interruption of flight lines and disturbance to bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC as a result of Policy 1 cannot be screened out and the policy must be subject to appropriate assessment.</p> <p>The policy does not acknowledge the need to comply with the Habitats Regulations through adherence to the Bat SAC Guidance for Wiltshire and the TBMS.</p>	
<p>Commercial and Economic Policy Policy 2</p>		<p>This policy requires the development of infrastructure to support business expansion, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) High speed broadband and improved mobile phone coverage; b) Better public and green transport links; and c) Adequate surface water drainage and sewage. <p>This policy will not lead to development and will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Commercial and Economic Policy Policy 3</p>		<p>This policy requires developments to demonstrate that they do not increase local flood risk, comply with the most up to date national policy on flood risk and the Core Strategy</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>(CP67) and where SuDS are introduced, green and open SuDS are preferred and a management plan for future maintenance is required.</p> <p>This policy seeks to reduce the risk of flooding from new developments and will not directly lead to development. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Environment Policy EP1	C and D Salisbury Plain SPA	<p>This policy states that the NP would <i>‘Support building development only in specific areas targeted by Wiltshire County Council in order to protect existing countryside’.</i></p> <p>This policy supports development within the NP area in accordance with Wiltshire Council policy.</p> <p>As the whole of the NP area is covered by the 6.4km buffer of the Salisbury Plain SPA, any residential development supported by this policy has the potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. Therefore, Policy EP1 cannot be screened out and must be subject to appropriate assessment.</p>	
	C and D Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC	<p>As a large portion of the NP area is covered by the 4km greater horseshoe core area and/or the 1.5km Bechstein’s bat core areas, development supported by this policy may impact bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC through physical damage, interruption of flightlines and/or disturbance. The NP area is also covered by the three zones set out in the TBMS therefore development supported by this policy may result in habitat loss or increased recreational pressure on the woods around Trowbridge that are functionally linked to the SAC.</p> <p>Therefore, Policy EP1 cannot be screened out and must be subject to an appropriate assessment.</p>	<p>Given that development within the red zone is highly unlikely to be permitted, it is recommended that the policy stipulates that development should avoid areas within the red zone of the TBMS. It is also recommended that the policy is amended to state that</p>

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>The policy does not acknowledge the need to comply with the Habitats Regulations through adherence to the Bat SAC Guidance for Wiltshire and the TBMS.</p>	<p>any development coming forward within the yellow zone would be required to adhere to the relevant version of the TBMS and that a project level HRA would be required.</p>
<p>Environment Policy EP2</p>	<p>A1 and A2</p>	<p>This policy requires regular monitoring of the cleanliness of the main watercourses through Heywood.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development and will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Environment Policy EP3</p>	<p>A1 and A2</p>	<p>This policy supports developments where they demonstrate 10% BNG or more and provide appropriate habitat support features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bird boxes; • bat boxes; • hedgehog feeding stations; • hibernation spaces; and • access routes for wildlife, for example, through fences. <p>This policy will not lead to development but supports developments that demonstrate 10% BNG or more and provide habitat features on site such as those listed in the policy. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Details of any development that comes forward would be considered at the planning application stage to ensure it aligns with this policy and that there will be acceptability with respect of other Development Plan policies, notably CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and the Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council and Natural England, 2015), the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy and the NPPF 2019.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Environment Policy EP4	A2 and A3	<p>This policy states that the loss of green infrastructure in the NP area would not be supported. Development will only be supported where it has no adverse impact on hedgerows, woodlands, copses and other important green corridors or conduits, or such impacts can be mitigated and 10% BNG or more can still be achieved.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect green infrastructure from development. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Details of any development that comes forward would be considered at the planning application stage to ensure it aligns with this policy and that there will be acceptability with respect of other Development Plan policies, notably CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and CP52 (Green Infrastructure) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and the Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council and Natural England, 2015), the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy and the NPPF 2019.</p>	
Environment Policy EP5	A1 and A3	<p>This policy seeks to promote access and interest in historic buildings and monuments by supporting, in principle, development proposals which are for or would result in improvements to accessibility to heritage assets.</p> <p>This policy seeks to improve access and interest in the historic environment and will not lead to development. The policy will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Energy Policy NP1	C and D Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC	<p>This policy supports development proposals which introduce energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings. Proposals are encouraged to exceed that required by Building Regulations standards.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development but it supports the retrofitting of existing buildings to increase energy efficiency. The policy has the potential to affect bat roosts within the 4km greater horseshoe core area therefore the potential for likely significant effects with regards to physical damage and disturbance to bats associated with the Bath</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC as a result of Policy NP1 cannot be screened out and the policy must be subject to appropriate assessment.</p> <p>The policy does not acknowledge the need to comply with the Habitats Regulations through adherence to the Bat SAC Guidance for Wiltshire and the TBMS.</p>	
Energy Policy NP2	A1 and A3	<p>This policy seeks to oppose planning applications for wind farms and additional solar farms. The policy also seeks to promote awareness of the proximity of solar farms to local electricity usage.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development and will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Greenspace policy GP1	A3	<p>This policy aims to <i>'Optimise the utility of the available green spaces in the Heywood Parish'</i>.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development and will not result in likely significant effects on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The HRA screening exercise presented in this document has concluded that the Heywood and Hawkeridge NP has the potential to lead to likely significant effects on two European sites alone and/or in combination with other plans and projects. This is due to 7 policies and the potential for likely significant effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA and / or the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.
- 5.2. It is therefore necessary for 7 policies in the NDP to be taken forward to appropriate assessment under Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations. The appropriate assessment will be conducted by the competent authority, namely Wiltshire Council. Where strategic mitigation strategies produced by Wiltshire Council cannot be relied upon, it will be necessary for suitable bespoke mitigation strategies to be proposed to ensure that any application that comes forward for residential development as a result of policies in the NP will not result in a significant adverse effect on the Salisbury Plain SPA and / or the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. Any such mitigation measures will need to be discussed and agreed with Wiltshire Council and will be required to inform the production of the appropriate assessment.

Prepared by [REDACTED] Ecologist, Wiltshire Council, 30th November 2022

V1.0 30.11.2022