

OAKSEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) relates to the proposed modified Oaksey Neighbourhood Plan (First Review) 2018 – 2038 Submission, September 2023, hereafter referred to as the NP, submitted to Wiltshire Council in November 2023. This HRA has been undertaken to inform a Regulation 16 consultation response from Wiltshire Council to the NP. The extant Oaksey NP was made in 2019 and the proposed modified NP is being screened under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019¹, hereafter referred to as the Habitats Regulations, due to proposed amendments to several policies and the requirement for the qualifying body to consult the local planning authority on the proposed modifications to the NP.
- 1.2. The HRA has been carried out to comply with Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, 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

¹ On 1st January 2021 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612422/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017-gov-uk.pdf)

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

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 Oaksey NP. Where risks to European sites are identified, changes are recommended to remove or 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):*

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

- Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA)
- River Avon SAC
- New Forest SAC / SPA
- 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. The North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028 (May 2023, strategy approved for use by Wiltshire Council in November 2023) sets out the mitigation strategy for the North Meadow component of the SAC with regards to new residential and tourism accommodation developments within the identified Zoi. The Clattinger Farm component of the SAC is not subject to the strategy.
- 3.5 The Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy sets out two Zoi, an Inner Zone of 0km - 4.2km and an Outer Zone of 4.2km – 9.4km. The Inner Zone represents the area within which 75% of local year round users (e.g. dog walkers) originate. The Outer Zone represents the area within which 75% of those people who visit to view the Snake's-head fritillaries during the main flowering season originate⁹. Mitigation will be achieved through financial contributions to Strategic Access Management Monitoring (SAMM), Infrastructure Mitigation Projects (IMP) and/or Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs). Developments of over 50 units within the Inner Zone will be expected to provide their own SANG unless a financial contribution to the IMP/SANG project system can be robustly justified. The strategy is an interim approach and will be reviewed within 5 years following further monitoring and surveys.
- 3.6 Impacts of development in Wiltshire on the New Forest SPA were considered in the HRA for the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (SWCS) adopted in 2012¹⁰. 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.
- 3.7 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

⁹ North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028. Cotswold District Council, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council in partnership with Natural England. May 2023

¹⁰ South Wiltshire Proposed Submission Core Strategy HRA Report, Appendix 13. NPA for Wiltshire Council, July 2009

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.

- 3.8 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

- 3.9 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 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 ongoing. 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.”

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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 sites 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 Oaksey NP Area

Recreation

- 3.12 The eastern half of the NP area is located within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km recreational Zol for the North Meadow component of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. The Clattinger Farm component of the SAC lies wholly within the NP area, however, this component of the SAC has not been identified by Natural England as being under significant recreational pressure and does not currently have an evidenced Zol. The NP does not allocate any sites for development and only supports small scale infill development within the settlement boundary. A small area of the settlement and the eastern half of the NP area are located within the interim outer 4.2 - 9.4km recreational Zol therefore the potential for recreational effects on the SAC has been screened in.
- 3.13 In relation to Salisbury Plain, the SAC habitat features were screened out of appropriate assessment for the WCS on the advice of NE. The Salisbury Plain SPA can also be screened out of appropriate assessment in respect of this NP as the NP area is well beyond the 6.4km Zol around the SPA within which the majority (75%) of visitors to the Plain are expected to live. This is based on the data collated by means of a visitor survey commissioned by Wiltshire Council in 2015.
- 3.14 Recreational pressure on the River Avon SAC is recognised to occur in limited circumstances predominately where significant development lies immediately adjacent or in close proximity to the river, which will not occur as a result of this NP as the closest component of the River Avon SAC lies approximately 35.1km south east of the NP area at its closest point and has therefore been screened out of appropriate assessment.
- 3.15 The NP area lies approximately 75.8km from the New Forest SPA/SAC, at its closest point, and is therefore a substantial distance beyond the 13.8km Zol around the SPA/SAC within which the majority of day visitors to the New Forest originate¹¹. Appropriate assessment with respect to the New Forest SPA/SAC has therefore been screened out.
- 3.16 The NP area lies approximately 27km from the nearest component of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC and is not located within any core areas associated with core roosts functionally linked to the SAC.

Hydrology / Hydrogeology

- 3.17 In terms of hydrology/hydrogeology, the NP area lies within the catchment of the Upper Thames and as such there is no pathway for a likely significant effect on the River Avon SAC as a result of the NP.
- 3.18 The North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC is the only SAC to lie within the Upper Thames catchment. The 2013 HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy identified that additional housing or employment development within the Malmesbury Community Area (CA) had the potential to alter the hydrological regime of the SAC through increased abstraction. The HRA goes on to state that the site '*lies within the Wessex Water Northern Resource Zone and additional water consumption is planned for within the Water Resource Management Plan, which has itself been subjected to Habitats Regulations Assessment and concluded that additional housing would have no likely effects upon the site*'. Other potential hydrological/hydrogeological impacts have been screened out at the plan level.
- 3.19 The NP does not allocate any sites for residential or employment development and only supports small scale infill residential development within the settlement boundary which is approximately 1.2km from the boundary of the Clattinger Farm component of the SAC. A project level HRA may be required for developments coming forward within the settlement boundary and this would be considered at the planning application stage. Developments are likely to be required to provide pollution prevention and attainment measures implemented through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

¹¹ Wiltshire Core Strategy Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment, April 2014

- 3.20 The North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC can therefore be screened out of appropriate assessment with regards to hydrological/hydrogeological impacts due to the proposed scale of residential development supported by the NP.

Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition

- 3.21 The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA 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 level¹². The Oaksey NP does not allocate any sites for development but supports small scale infill development within the settlement boundary. The settlement is not within close proximity to any main/A roads that lie within 200m of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. All of the other European sites listed above are a considerable distance from the NP area. As such it is concluded that the NP will not result in significant effects on European sites as a result of nitrogen or particulate matter deposition.

Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines / Disturbance

- 3.22 The NP area is located approximately 36.9km from Salisbury Plain SPA and 57.7km from Porton Down SPA, from its closest point. Therefore, it is considered that the plan area is sufficiently distant from the two SPAs and known functionally linked habitat, for any development within the plan area to cause direct physical damage to, or fragmentation of, breeding and foraging habitat for the Annex I species stone-curlew. The plan area is also considered too remote for development within the plan area to result in anthropogenic disturbance or visual stimuli that could have an adverse effect on stone-curlew breeding at either SPA.
- 3.23 In terms of the potential to cause physical damage to features which provide habitat for bats, such as breeding, roosting and foraging habitat, and the potential to interrupt or fragment/sever bat flight lines, or to cause disturbance to such features, it is deemed that the NP area is too remote to have implications for bats at the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC, the Mottisfont Bats SAC or the Chilmark Quarries SAC.

4. Screening of Policies in the Oaksey Neighbourhood Plan (First Review) 2018 - 2038, Submission, September 2023

- 4.1 The Oaksey NP comprises 19 planning policies, four of which are recommended to be taken forward to appropriate assessment due to potential likely significant effects on the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm 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.

¹² Update to the Wiltshire Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2014 (Exam/89)

TABLE 1: Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the Oaksey 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
Policy 1 - Settlement Boundary	D North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC	<p>This policy defines the settlement boundary for Oaksey village. The policy supports development within the settlement boundary for small scale development on sites not allocated for development and which do not adversely affect the structure and form of the existing settlement, and which respect the landscape setting and the undeveloped nature of the surrounding rural areas.</p> <p>This policy seeks to restrict development to within the Oaksey settlement boundary. A small area of the settlement falls within the interim outer 4.2 - 9.4km recreational ZOI around the North Meadow component of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. This policy must therefore be considered through an appropriate assessment as there is the potential for likely significant effects in terms of increased recreational pressure on the SAC. This policy does not reference the need for new developments to comply with the Habitats Regulations.</p>	See Section 5.
Policy 2 - Development in the Open Countryside	D North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC	<p>This policy aims to strictly control development outside of the settlement boundary to those which require a countryside location, such as agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or are related to community, leisure or recreation. Residential development will only be permitted where it meets one of the exceptions policies referred to in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS or the NPPF.</p> <p>This policy seeks to control development coming forward outside of the Oaksey settlement boundary. The eastern half of the NP area falls within the interim outer 4.2 - 9.4km recreational ZOI around the North Meadow component of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. This policy must therefore be considered through an appropriate assessment as there is the potential for likely significant effects in terms of increased recreational pressure on the SAC. This policy does not reference the need for new developments to comply with the Habitats Regulations.</p>	See Section 5.
Policy 3 - Holiday Accommodation,	D	This policy supports proposals for holiday accommodation, leisure and recreation uses designed to meet the needs of visitors and tourists within the area of the Cotswold Water Park located	See Section 5.

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Leisure and Recreation	North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC	<p>within the Parish. Proposals within the Cotswold Water Park will also be required to comply with Core Policy 54 of the WCS and Policy 7 of the NP. Proposals to extend the Cotswold Water Park westwards are not supported by the NP.</p> <p>The policy goes on to state that the removal of occupancy restrictions on holiday accommodation to allow their use as a permanent dwelling will be supported within the settlement boundary but not outside of the settlement boundary. The change of use of a residential dwelling to holiday accommodation will also be resisted.</p> <p>The policy seeks to improve pedestrian and cycle linkages between Oaksey and Oaksey Park to the east.</p> <p>This policy seeks to control the location of holiday accommodation and proposals for leisure and recreation associated with the Cotswold Water Park. The area of the Cotswold Water Park located within the NP area is located within the interim outer 4.2 - 9.4km recreational ZoI around the North Meadow component of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. This policy must therefore be considered through an appropriate assessment as there is the potential for likely significant effects in terms of increased recreational pressure on the SAC as a result of increased visitor accommodation within the ZoI. This policy does not reference the need for new developments to comply with the Habitats Regulations.</p>	
Policy 4 - Design of New Development/Local Distinctiveness	A1 / A3	<p>This policy seeks to ensure all new developments demonstrate good quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness and complements the fabric of the existing built-up area, uses good quality harmonious materials and respects views around the village with reference to the height, scale, density, layout, siting, and orientation of new buildings.</p> <p>The policy then goes on to set out several criteria which new developments are expected to demonstrate, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New developments should have regard to the design guidelines set out in the Character Appraisal in the NP; • Development must be integrated into the street scene and landscape; • Development should not introduce a harsh urban edge on the important road gateways to the village; 	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should not result in the loss of gaps and spaces between buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the streetscene; • Proposals for backland residential development will not be supported where the existing character and linear form of the settlement is adversely affected; • Residential extensions; extensions to other buildings; and outbuildings will be supported where they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ are subordinate to the original building; ○ are constructed of materials which reflect the materials of the original building or those found in the surrounding area; ○ do not result in the loss of existing boundary features; ○ make a positive contribution to the streetscene; and ○ do not adversely affect the inter-relationship between the front of the original building and the public realm. <p>This policy seeks to ensure that new development proposals demonstrate good quality design and protect the local distinctiveness of the village. The policy will not lead to development and therefore will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 5 - Views and Vistas	A1 / A3	<p>This policy seeks to avoid the loss of the important public views and vistas listed in the policy.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development and will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 6 - Boundary Treatment, Trees and Public Realm	A1 / A3	<p>This policy seeks to resist developments which would impact negatively on the boundary treatment, landscaping or trees which make a positive contribution to the public realm. New developments will be expected to demonstrate how they contribute to the public realm. Important boundaries in the form of stone walls and hedges are illustrated in the Character Appraisal.</p> <p>This policy seeks to protect the public realm of the village and therefore will not lead to development and will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.	
Policy 7 - Trees	A1 / A3	<p>This policy provides a list of the trees within the village considered to be important because of their contribution to the character and appearance of the village and their importance is illustrated on the character profile maps in the Character Appraisal.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development but seeks to afford additional protection to that offered by the Conservation Area designation to trees considered important within the village. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 8 - Open Spaces	A1 / A3	<p>This policy states that development proposals which fail to preserve or enhance the areas listed as open areas which make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or village as a whole will not be supported.</p> <p>This policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect the identified areas of open space. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 9 - Opportunities for Enhancement	A1 / A3	<p>This policy states that proposals which deliver opportunities for enhancement of the built and historic environment in the following areas will be supported subject to compliance with other development plan policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earls Corner; • Buildings adjacent to the junction of The Street and Eastcourt Road; • The South Barn at Street Farm adjacent to The Street. <p>This policy will not lead to development but seeks to enhance the built and historic environment. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 10 - Highways and Travel	A1 / A3	<u>Highway Impact</u>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>This policy requires developments which negatively impact the highway network to appropriately mitigation these impacts or provide a contribution towards their mitigation. Major developments will be required to provide a Transport Assessment.</p> <p>Proposals for commercial, industrial or other forms of HGV generating development which would result in additional HGV movement through the centre of the village will only be supported where the HGVs could be rerouted away from the centre of the village.</p> <p><u>Parking</u></p> <p>Proposals for new development will only be supported where they provide adequate on site provision of parking. Proposals which move parking from off-street to on-street would not be supported.</p> <p><u>Refuse Provision</u></p> <p>Proposals for new development will only be supported where there is adequate on site provision for refuse bins which should be screened but easily accessible.</p> <p><u>Active Travel</u></p> <p>This policy supports proposals to promote active travel opportunities across Oaksey including improvements to sustainable transport infrastructure and extending footways, paths and cycleways.</p> <p><u>Rural Lane Character</u></p> <p>Proposals which would harm the distinctive characteristic of the rural informal lane, for example through the introduction of footways, will not be supported.</p> <p>This policy seeks to improve the highway and active travel network in the village and will not lead to development. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 11 - Heritage Assets	A1 / A3	<p>This policy requires all developments affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings to comply with the requirements of the NPPF and the development plan.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development and will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Policy 12 - Oaksey Conservation Area	A1 / A3	<p>This policy seeks to ensure all development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with national policy and the development plan.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development and will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 13 - Non-Designated heritage Assets	A3	<p>This policy provides a list of buildings and designates them as ‘Locally Important Buildings’ as non-designated heritage assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Chapel, The Street; • Village Shop and Adjacent Building (Former Butchery and Abattoir), The Street; • National School Building, The Street; • Street Farm, The Street; • Spring Cottage, 17 The Street; • 3 The Street; • Wisteria Cottage, The Street; • The Wheatsheaf Public House, Wheatsheaf Lane; • Skittle Alley, Wheatsheaf Lane; • Oaksey Court, Somerford Keynes Road. <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect the identified non-designated heritage assets and therefore will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 14 - Housing Delivery	B	<p>This policy states: <i>For the period 2020 to 2038 the Neighbourhood Plan will look to deliver a minimum of 29 dwellings to meet the baseline indicative housing requirement.</i></p> <p>The supporting text sets out the following: <i>The housing supply position as at the 1 April 2022 is as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Net Completions (2020-2022) = 12 dwellings</i> • <i>Commitments (at 1 April 2022) = 14 dwellings</i> 	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Windfall Housing Estimate = 8 dwellings</i> <p>The total housing supply estimate for the period 2020 – 2038 would therefore be 34 dwellings which exceed the minimum requirement of 29 dwellings.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but sets out the number of houses the NP seeks to deliver up to 2036 and therefore will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 15 - New Housing	D North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC	<p>This policy supports small scale infill residential development within the settlement boundary that does not impact adversely on the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the living conditions of future occupiers or neighbours. Proposals should respect the characteristics and local distinctiveness of the relevant Character Area and where possible should have a direct highway frontage. The policy sets out that the design of new housing should have regard to WCS CP57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping.</p> <p>A small area of the settlement falls within the interim outer 4.2 - 9.4km recreational ZoI around the North Meadow component of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC.</p> <p>In terms of potential hydrological/hydrogeological impacts, the NP area lies within the Upper Thames catchment. The North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC is the only SAC to lie within this catchment. The 2013 HRA to the WCS identified the potential for impacts on the hydrological regime of the SAC through increased water abstraction in the Malmesbury Community Areas (CA). The Wessex Water Water Resource Management Plan HRA concluded that additional housing within the CA would have no significant effects on the SAC. Due to the proposed scale of residential development supported by this policy, small scale infill development within the settlement boundary, this policy can be screened out of appropriate assessment with regards to the hydrological/hydrogeological impacts on the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. A project level HRA may be required at the planning application stage to assess the potential impacts of development within the settlement boundary on the hydrological regime of the SAC.</p> <p>This policy supports small scale infill development within the Oaksey settlement boundary where it meets the criteria set out in this policy. A small area of the settlement falls within the</p>	See Section 5.

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		interim outer 4.2 - 9.4km recreational ZoI around the North Meadow component of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. This policy must therefore be considered through an appropriate assessment as there is the potential for likely significant effects in terms of increased recreational pressure on the SAC. This policy does not reference the need for new developments to comply with the Habitats Regulations.	
Policy - 16 Community Facilities	A1	<p>This policy supports development proposals which improve and expand existing community facilities or provide new facilities where they meet the criteria set out in the policy. The policy does not support development proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities unless it can be shown that they are poorly used, no longer viable and that adequate provision is provided elsewhere nearby. Proposals would also need to demonstrate a lack of economic viability as set out in CP49.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect the community facilities within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy 17 - Setting of Oaksey Village	A2 / A3	<p>This policy supports developments that will protect and enhance the natural features that are a key component of the landscape and for Oaksey's diverse wildlife. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Measures to protect & enhance our natural environment & landscape character and to maintain tree cover & hedgerows will be promoted wherever possible; b) Proposals that provide favourable conditions for biodiversity including maintenance and enhancement of habitat connectivity and landscape scale conservation. Mitigation measures will be sought where any loss will be unavoidable and cause significant harm. <p>The policy lists the features considered to be important to the setting of Oaksey Parish.</p> <p>The policy goes on to state that development proposals which would adversely impact the character, appearance, setting and tranquillity of the Swill Brook and Flagham Brook river corridors will not be supported. Developments affecting international, national or local nature conservation designations will be determined in accordance with national policy and the development plan. Proposals to enhance the village and surrounding areas will be encouraged.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect the setting of the village and to protect and enhance the NP area for wildlife. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Policy 18 - Climate Change Mitigation</p>	<p>A1 / A2 / A3</p>	<p>This policy supports developments which encourage and include the use of renewable energy generation and low carbon modes of transport. The installation of domestic renewables must not compromise the visual quality of the village or the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The policy provides a list of criteria which must be met in order for the NP to support community led renewable energy generation.</p> <p>The installation of electric vehicle charging points is supported by this policy.</p> <p>Development proposals are expected to incorporate a suitable and integrated approach to the management of surface water including run off that allows for the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>The policy goes on to state that all developments involving the loss of permeable surfaces, trees, soft landscaping or other features that reduce flood risk must include mitigation measures to prevent flood risk on site or elsewhere.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but supports the use of renewable energy technologies and seeks to reduce the impacts of climate change. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Policy 19 - Energy Efficiency</p>	<p>A1 / A3</p>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that the design and standard of any new development meets a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain; • The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials; • Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing; 	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The retrofit of existing properties is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards the historic characteristics of the Conservation Area and respects the traditional building material palette; and • Alterations to existing buildings must be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with sustainable design and construction standards. <p>The policy goes on to state that addressing energy efficiency in the existing building stock is encouraged. This can include retrofitting of measures to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy however, measures should respect the character and appearance of the property and safeguards the historic characteristics of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>This policy seeks to ensure that new developments are built to a high level of sustainable design and energy efficiency and will not lead to development. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	

5. Appropriate Assessment – North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

Background to the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

- 5.1. The North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC is located within Wiltshire and lies within close proximity to the Gloucestershire and Swindon borders. The SAC is divided into two components –
- North Meadow near Cricklade; and
 - Clattinger Farm near Ashton Keynes and Somerford Keynes.
- 5.2. North Meadow and Clattinger Farm are examples of lowland hay meadow. North Meadow is located in the Thames Valley and represents an exceptional surviving example of the traditional pattern of management of lowland hay meadows. The grassland habitats present on typical floodplain soils are very restricted in distribution and form the basis for the SAC designation. North Meadow also contains a very high proportion of the surviving UK population of snake's head fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, a plant highly characteristic of damp lowland meadows in Europe and now rare throughout its range. The snake's head fritillary is also present at Clattinger Farm in lower abundance.
- 5.3. Management of both sites aims to maintain traditional hay-meadow regimes of hay cutting from midsummer, followed by grazing with livestock through the autumn and into the winter as ground conditions permit. This management allows plants to flower and set seed prior to hay cutting. Both sites, but in particular North Meadow, are regularly flooded by their adjacent watercourses, the River Thames and the Swill Brook respectively.
- 5.4. The qualifying features / habitats for the SAC are lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*), and the conservation objectives (Natural England 2014) are to:
- Ensure the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:
- the extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;
 - the structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and
 - the supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.
- (In respect of the objectives, "to maintain" implies restoration if the feature is not currently in favourable condition.)
- 5.5. Details of the conservation objectives are available online: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6299293463871488>. The current version is dated 27 November 2018.
- 5.6. North Meadow is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and part of the site is common land, where the public have a right of access on foot.
- 5.7. North Meadow NNR is open to the public and includes almost 4km of designated pathways around the site to facilitate access. In addition to these the Thames Path, a 298km national trail, passes along the southern boundary of the SAC adjacent to the river. There is no official car park associated with North Meadow, but there is unrestricted on-street parking locally. North Meadow is also readily accessible on foot from the settlement of Cricklade.
- 5.8. Clattinger Farm SSSI is managed by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve.

- 5.9. As a result of NE's concerns regarding the growing number of visitors to the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC, Swindon Borough Council initiated the preparation of a visitor survey to take place in April 2020. This survey work was prevented by the pandemic. Land Use Consultants were commissioned to undertake a high-level literature review of the Zols of other comparable sites (September 2020), which concluded, based on the best available scientific evidence (and in the absence of visitor survey information) that an 8km Zol was appropriate. This was agreed by all the partner Local Authorities (Swindon Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Wiltshire Council) and Natural England as an interim Zol and has been used to determine whether planning applications should be subject to the HRA processes.
- 5.10. Subsequently, a visitor survey was commissioned by the Local Authorities in 2022 (lead Authority – Swindon Borough Council) and undertaken by the consultancy, Ecological Planning and Research (EPR) in 2022. A final report was submitted in March 2023. The Local Authorities produced the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028¹³ using the results of the EPR visitor survey report.
- 5.11. The objective of the Strategy is to provide a mitigation framework that enables new development of varying scales, which might otherwise have a significant effect on the SAC, either alone or in combination, to come forward. It offers a mechanism by which planning applications can be progressed and site allocations can be included in Development Plans, while ensuring that adverse recreational effects on the integrity of the SAC are avoided.
- 5.12. The Strategy is relevant to all new developments within the Zols that may either alone or in combination with other developments, plans and projects, increase recreational impacts on the SAC. The relevant development types are listed in more detail in the Strategy and include net increases in overnight accommodation (new dwellings, tourist accommodation, student accommodation, Gypsy and Traveller sites etc). The Strategy covers both larger developments that by virtue of their size or location may have the potential to directly affect the integrity of the SAC on their own or smaller developments, which may, together with other developments have an “in combination” impact on the SAC.
- 5.13. The Strategy sets out that there are two types of visitor to North Meadow, local users arriving on foot or by car all year round (e.g. dog walkers) and those who visit to view the fritillaries during the main summer flowering season. Therefore, the Strategy sets two Zols:
- The Inner 0 – 4.2km Zol which represents the area within which 75% of local year users originate, and
 - The Outer 4.2 – 9.4km Zol which represents the area within which 75% of those that come to view the fritillaries during the main summer flowering season originate.
- 5.14. The following mitigation has been identified for each Zol:
- Within the inner 0 – 4.2km Zol both on-site Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMs) and off-site Infrastructure Mitigation Projects (IMPs) and/or Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) measures will need to be delivered as mitigation for any potential recreational impacts.

¹³ Gallagher, M; Hobson, D; Jones, R; Price, S; Squirrell, N (2023) 'North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028'. Cotswold District Council, Natural England, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council

- Within the outer Zol (4.2 – 9.4km), for most developments only on-site SAMP measures will need to be delivered as mitigation for any potential recreational impacts. Larger developments may need to provide additional mitigation (e.g. SANG) as advised by NE.

Plans and projects to be considered in combination

- 5.15. The 2014 HRA for the emerging Core Strategy concluded that the WCS, the Swindon Borough Local Plan and the Cotswold District Local Plan would not have any adverse in combination effects upon the integrity of the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC through increased recreational pressures. It considered that management of recreational activity at the SAC would need to continue to be dealt with at the site level.
- 5.16. The HRA for the WHSAP screened out the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC of the policy level screening assessment and did not consider the SAC further in the HRA with regards to recreational impacts.
- 5.17. As detailed above, the interim 8km recreational Zol around the North Meadow component of the SAC has been reviewed and updated to the aforementioned inner and outer Zols set out in the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy (2023). The Strategy is relevant to all new developments in the Zols which may result in increased recreational impacts on the SAC, whether alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The Strategy has considered data on the potential future local housing and other relevant development types for the period 2023-2028 that was provided by the three Local Authorities, both allocated sites and windfall.

Analysis of policies in the NP screened into appropriate assessment

Policy 1 Settlement Boundary

- 5.18. This policy defines the settlement boundary for Oaksey village. The policy supports development within the settlement boundary for small scale development on sites not allocated for development and which do not adversely affect the structure and form of the existing settlement, and which respect the landscape setting and the undeveloped nature of the surrounding rural areas.
- 5.19. A small area within the settlement boundary to the east of the village is located within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km recreational Zol set out in the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028. As such, any residential development that comes forward within this area of the settlement has the potential to lead to an increase in visitor pressure on the SAC.
- 5.20. In order to mitigate for potential likely significant effects on the SAC, all residential development within the outer Zol is required to provide a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMP) contribution per dwelling/unit of £323 in accordance with the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028.
- 5.21. It is recommended that the policy wording is amended to state that to ensure compliance with the Habitat Regulations, any residential development that comes forward within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km Zol must provide a SAMP contribution of £323 per dwelling/unit to ensure appropriate mitigation is implemented in accordance with the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 - 2028.

Policy 2 Development in the Open Countryside

- 5.22. This policy aims to strictly control development outside of the settlement boundary to those which require a countryside location, such as agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or are related to community,

leisure or recreation. Residential development will only be permitted where it meets one of the exceptions policies referred to in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS or the NPPF.

5.23. The exceptions policies set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS are as follows:

- Additional employment land (Core Policy 34)
- Military establishments (Core Policy 37)
- Development related to tourism (Core Policies 39 and 40)
- Rural exception sites (Core Policy 44)
- Specialist accommodation provision (Core Policies 46 and 47)
- Supporting rural life (Core Policy 48)

5.24. The eastern half of the NP area is located within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.6km recreational Zol set out in the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028. As such, any residential development that comes forward within the outer Zol has the potential to lead to an increase in visitor pressure on the SAC.

5.25. In order to mitigate for potential likely significant effects, all residential development within the Zol is required to provide a SAMM contribution per dwelling/unit of £323 in accordance with the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028.

5.26. It is recommended that the policy wording is amended to state that to ensure compliance with the Habitat Regulations, any residential development that comes forward within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km Zol must provide a SAMM contribution of £323 per dwelling/unit to ensure appropriate mitigation is implemented in accordance with the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 - 2028.

Policy 3 Holiday Accommodation, Leisure and Recreation

5.27. This policy supports proposals for holiday accommodation, leisure and recreation uses designed to meet the needs of visitors and tourists within the area of the Cotswold Water Park located within the Parish. Proposals within the Cotswold Water Park will also be required to comply with Core Policy 54 of the WCS and Policy 7 of the NP. Proposals to extend the Cotswold Water Park westwards are not supported by the NP.

5.28. A small area of the Cotswold Water Park is located within the NP area and is therefore located within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km recreational Zol set out in the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028. Visitor accommodation is included within the scope of the Strategy, therefore, any visitor accommodation supported by this policy within the Cotswold Water Park within the NP area would be required to provide a SAMM contribution per dwelling/unit of £323.

5.29. It is recommended that the policy wording is amended to state that to ensure compliance with the Habitat Regulations, any visitor accommodation development that comes forward within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km Zol must provide a SAMM contribution of £323 per dwelling/unit to ensure appropriate mitigation is implemented in accordance with the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 - 2028.

Policy 15 New Housing

5.30. This policy supports small scale infill residential development within the settlement boundary that does not impact adversely on the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the living conditions of future occupiers or neighbours. Proposals should respect the characteristics and local distinctiveness of

the relevant Character Area and where possible should have a direct highway frontage. The policy sets out that the design of new housing should have regard to WCS CP57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping.

- 5.31. A small area within the settlement boundary to the east of the village is located within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km recreational Zol set out in the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028. As such, any residential development that comes forward within this area of the settlement has the potential to lead to an increase in visitor pressure on the SAC.
- 5.32. In order to mitigate for potential likely significant effects, all residential development within the outer Zol is required to provide a SAMM contribution per dwelling/unit of £323 in accordance with the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028.
- 5.33. It is recommended that the policy wording is amended to state that to ensure compliance with the Habitat Regulations, any residential development that comes forward within the interim outer 4.2 – 9.4km Zol must provide a SAMM contribution of £323 per dwelling/unit to ensure appropriate mitigation is implemented in accordance with the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 - 2028.

Conclusion

- 5.34. Any development coming forward that is supported by the above policies would be covered by the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028 which has also considered potential in-combination effects.
- 5.35. On the basis that the recommendations set out above for the four policies taken forward to appropriate assessment, are incorporated into the NP prior to the NP being made, it is deemed possible to conclude, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that there would be no adverse effects on the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects as a result of the Oaksey NP.
- 5.36. The Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy has been published between the Regulation 14 and Regulation 16 consultation stages and we have been advised that, as the NP is to go to Examination shortly, there is no scope at this stage for the Oaksey NP Steering Group to make amendments to the NP before it goes to Examination. Therefore, we would require certainty that the Examiner will ensure the above recommendations are implemented prior to the NP being made.
- 5.37. We would also require evidence that these amendments have been made, prior to the NP being made, as it is on the basis that the above recommendations are implemented that we have been able to draw the above conclusion.

Prepared by Naomi Harvey, Ecologist, Wiltshire Council, 07th December 2023

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