

Potterne Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

1. Screening Methodology

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

The criteria used were as follows:

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

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

1. Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA

Wiltshire Core strategy HRA derived a set of parameters by which to determine the likelihood of potential impact on Natura 2000 sites. Applying these parameters to the Potterne Neighbourhood Plan Area identifies the following issues to be assessed.

Recreation – Natura 2000 sites within 5km of the plan area, or where Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is within 15km of the plan area.

- Salisbury Plain SPA and SAC

Hydrology / Hydrogeology – Sites that fall wholly or partly within the Wessex Water North WRZ

- Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
- Pewsey Downs SAC
- North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC
- River Avon SAC

Nitrogen Deposition – Natura 2000 Sites within 200m of a main road

- Porton Down SPA
- Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
- Southampton Water SPA
- Clattinger Farm SAC
- River Avon SAC
- Rodborough Common SAC
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC

Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines

- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC

2. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Draft policies within the emerging Potterne neighbourhood plan have been screened against each of the above potential impacts, for each Natura 2000 site.

Recreation.

Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC -

The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA assessed that the issues relating to additional recreational pressure as a result of residential development growth are dealt with sufficiently in the ‘Salisbury Plain SPA HRA and Mitigation Strategy’, which prescribes proportionate developer contributions for development sites within 4km of the SPA or within 15km of the eastern part of the SPA, to deliver monitoring and adaptive management on the plains (which will be obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy, CIL). Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy implements this approach. There are seven housing sites identified in the draft Potterne NP, which will total 24 dwellings. A small increase in recreational pressure on the European site is therefore likely as a result of implementation of the draft NP and mitigation will be sought for those housing developments that qualify in accordance with the mitigation strategy.

Hydrology/Hydrogeology

Water Resource - The small amount of development proposed by the Potterne Neighbourhood Plan will be accommodated within the existing abstraction license levels. Current licences have undergone HRA by the Environment Agency, as has Wessex Water’s Water Resource Management Plan therefore the Council is satisfied that the issue does not require further assessment at the Neighbourhood Plan level.

Water Quality – Issues of water quality, including surface water drainage will be dealt with through Development Management as described in Core Policy 50. Potterne is just within the Bristol River Avon catchment, which is designated as County Wildlife Site, as opposed to the Hampshire River Avon catchment which is designated Special Area for conservation [SAC].

The use of SUDS and suitable pollution control measures will be required for most proposals. The small scale of the proposed housing development sites is unlikely to result in impacts on watercourses outside of the Potterne NP area. It is concluded that the proposals for housing in the draft NP would not have an adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites through hydrological / hydrogeological changes.

Air Pollution/Nitrogen Deposition

The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA identified potential LSE upon a range of Natura 2000 sites through increased traffic, which would in turn increase atmospheric pollution and nitrogen deposition on sites with 200m of a main road, albeit such effects are considered to be very small and difficult to predict at the strategic level (WCS HRA Update February 2014). The housing site allocations in the draft Potterne NP allow for an additional 24 dwellings, which is considered to be a small number in relation to the total for the county. The majority of the sites listed under this topic in Section 2 above (apart from Salisbury Plan SAC/SPA) are sufficiently distant from the NP area that no likely significant effect is expected. The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (2014) concluded no likely significant effect where the existing approach to mitigation in Core Policy 55 is implemented. It is concluded that the proposals for housing in the draft Potterne NP would not have an adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites through nitrogen deposition.

Physical Damage/Interruption of Flightlines

The Potterne Neighbourhood Plan area is sufficiently distant from the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bat SAC and its associated core areas and buffer areas identified in the council's HRA guidance, that loss of habitat would not result in physical damage or interruption of flight lines associated with the SAC. It is therefore concluded that no likely significant effect would occur as a result of implementation of the plan.

3. SCREENING OF EMERGING POTTERNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

The Potterne Neighbourhood Plan includes seven draft general policies and two housing policies to address the following policy objectives:

1. The Plan should maintain the distinctive character of the village by ensuring that there remain green corridors between the settlement boundaries of Potterne, Devizes and other nearby villages. The Plan also seeks to ensure that there is protection to specific views in and out of the village.
2. The Plan seeks to encourage the improvement of village community facilities and a mixed community by allowing for approximately 24 additional dwellings to be located in or at the edge of the village in a manner supported by residents, by means of modest alterations to the settlement boundary to allow specific site allocations.
3. This Plan recognises the significant issues raised by the main A360 road splitting the village in two and introducing traffic hazards to pedestrians. Heavy use of this road

also affects historic infrastructure, notably the Listed Grade 1 Porch House, a Tudor building of national importance. The Plan should therefore encourage the creation of a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage accessible public transport while accepting that the use of the private car is essential to residents and planning accordingly. This could involve the provision of traffic calming measures, speed limits, and new and improved footpaths and cycle paths.

4. The Plan will seek to provide enhanced community facilities by means of specific site allocations for a new Community Hall, play and sports facilities within and adjacent to the adjusted settlement boundary. These facilities can be developed in conjunction with modest additional housing which should provide financial assistance to the creation of the new community facilities by means of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) and developer contributions.

5. The plan should encourage the provision of High Speed Broadband to all residents.

All parts of the plan have been screened for potential impacts upon the Natura 2000 network, as set out in Section 5.

6. Initial Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of the Potterne Neighbourhood Plan

a. Screening assessment of individual policies

A / B (Green) – Screened out

C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
General Policies	PNP – 1	B	
	PNP – 2	A3	
	PNP – 3	A1	
	PNP- 4	A1	
	PNP – 5	A1	
	PNP - 6	A1	
Housing Policies	PNP – 7	B	
	PNP – 8	A1, B	

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

- The draft policies would not have any in combination effects

c. Assessment of the effects of the plan as a whole, in combination with Wiltshire Core Strategy

- The plan would not have any in combination effects with the Wiltshire Core Strategy

7. **CONCLUSION**

Seven sites are allocated for development within the Potterne Neighbourhood Plan. As discussed in Section 3 above, additional recreational pressure as a result of residential development growth is dealt with sufficiently in the 'Salisbury Plain SPA HRA and Mitigation Strategy', which prescribes proportionate developer contributions for development sites within 4km of the SPA or within 15km of the eastern part of the SPA, to deliver monitoring and adaptive management on the plains (which will be obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy, CIL). Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy implements this approach. There are seven housing sites identified in the draft Potterne NP, which will total 24 dwellings. A small increase in recreational pressure on the European site is therefore likely as a result of implementation of the draft NP and mitigation will be sought for those housing developments that qualify in accordance with the mitigation strategy.

The seven allocated sites are mainly on the eastern and north eastern edges of existing development within the town. The headwaters of the River Avon SSSI are approximately 4.5km to the south east of the nearest allocated sites but 11.5km from the point where the river is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). There is no direct hydrological link between Potterne and the Hampshire River Avon, since Potterne is just within the catchment of the neighbouring Bristol Avon. The allocated sites are small and are unlikely to necessitate large increases in vehicle movements to and from the sites during construction. In addition, the Hampshire Avon river is sufficiently distant that potential impacts from silt run-off or dust deposition would be unlikely to occur as a result of the development processes at the seven sites.

All other Natura 2000 sites are sufficiently distant from the Potterne Neighbourhood Plan area that no mechanisms exist for adverse impacts to result from the elements within the Neighbourhood Plan.

It is concluded that the development of the seven sites within the Potterne Neighbourhood Plan would not have a likely significant effect on the features of a Natura 2000 Site.

All other Natura 2000 sites are sufficiently far from the plan area and the small scale of development described by the plan such that there would be no mechanism for impact or that adverse impacts would be deemed *de minimus*.

It can therefore be concluded that the Pewsey Neighbourhood Plan would have no likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network alone or in combination, and no appropriate assessment is considered necessary by Wiltshire Council as competent authority.

Assessment carried out by: [REDACTED] **Senior Ecologist, Wiltshire Council**

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