

10<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

Economic Development and Planning  
County Hall  
Bythesea Road  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8JN

**Re: Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of Purton Neighbourhood Plan**

The Council has recently reviewed the current draft of the Purton Neighbourhood Plan for potential impacts upon the network of European protected sites known as Natura 2000. The attached 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA) is made on behalf of Wiltshire Council, the competent authority for the plan, and is in accordance with relevant statutory requirements and best practice.

I note that the plan allocates relatively small areas of residential development, well within the projections of the Wiltshire Core Strategy for the area. The HRA has concluded that your draft plan would have no likely significant effects upon any European designations. Please note that HRA is an iterative process and future iterations of the plan should also be screened if the policies change significantly.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[Redacted title]

[Redacted contact information]

[Redacted contact information]

## **Purton Draft Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening**

### **1. Screening Methodology**

Each element of the draft plan<sup>1</sup> has been categorised against the screening criteria developed on behalf of, and endorsed by Natural England<sup>2</sup>. This approach is advised to help provide a clear audit trail for the assessment of local planning documents (which may be applied to neighbourhood plans), and if necessary identify the need for the policies to be removed / amended or new policies added to be certain that the 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 adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy.

### **2. 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 Purton Neighbourhood Plan Area identifies the following issues to be assessed.

#### *Recreation*

- Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

#### *Hydrology / Hydrogeology*

- Kennet and Lambourne Floodplain SAC
- Hackpen Hill SAC
- Kennet Alderwoods SAC
- River Lambourne SAC
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC

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<sup>1</sup> Purton Draft Neighbourhood Plan (June 2017)

<sup>2</sup> David Tyldesley Associates (2009) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents* (Revised Draft Guidance)

- Rodborough Common SAC
- North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC

#### *Nitrogen Deposition*

- Porton Down Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
- Southampton Water SPA
- Clattinger Farm SAC
- River Avon SAC
- Rodborough Common SAC
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC

Draft policies within the draft Purton Neighbourhood Plan have been screened against each of the above potential impacts, for each Natura 2000 site.

### 3. Draft Purton Neighbourhood Plan

The draft Purton Neighbourhood Plan includes draft policies to address the following policy objectives:

- Employment
- Transport
- Environment
- Facilities
- Housing

All parts of the plan have been screened for potential impacts upon the Natura 2000 network, as set out in Section 4.

4. Initial Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of the Draft Purton 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
Employment	<p><b>Policy 1: To enhance the prospects for local employment</b></p> <p>Development of the undeveloped land at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land at Mope Lane identified as part of Purton Brickworks and,</li> <li>• Penn Farm Industrial Site.</li> </ul> <p>To provide opportunities for local employment within Use Class B1 of The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). Development to include opportunities for small business units and incubator units for start-up enterprises including such activities as communication technologies, knowledge based and creative industries, environment, rural enterprises, accounting and financial services or similar.</p> <p>Conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mopes Lane (Purton Brickworks): Development of the site shall respect the character and setting of the Grade II listed House at 33 New Road (List entry 1283837) which is located next to the southeast corner of the site.</li> <li>• Penn Farm Industrial Site: development should only take place if the land gains vehicular access via Mopes Lane as the existing access to New Road from the main road does not have the capacity to take additional commercial traffic.</li> </ul>	B	
Transport	<p><b>Policy 2: To improve road safety</b></p> <p>The road junction and parking area at Lower Square at the junction of the High</p>	A1	

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>Street, Station Road and Church Street shall be the subject of a feasibility study funded by CIL resources with a view to changing the existing arrangement to improve pedestrian and traffic safety.</p>		
	<p><b>Policy 3: Footpaths</b> New development shall retain and preserve existing footpaths and bridle ways and footpaths in new developments shall provide links to existing pedestrian routes where appropriate.</p>	A1	
Environment	<p><b>Policy 4: To protect key local landscapes</b> The area shown in green on Map 5 is allocated as open space to remain undeveloped to preserve locally important views both to and from the escarpments to the north of the village, around Francombe Hill (known locally as High Hills), along the western side of the village up to and including the vista leading up to and around the ancient monument known as Ringsbury Camp. These views are shown on Map 5 which indicates sensitive views related to the existing built areas. Although not named specifically in the Purton Parish Plan consultation, the area named as Purton Common also provides a significant view, lying between Vasterne Hill, Hogs Lane and Witts Lane is also shown on Map 5 and shall be protected from development.</p>	A2	
	<p><b>Policy 5: Settlement Identity</b> The land between the western edge of the Swindon urban area and the eastern boundaries of Purton and Purton Stoke, and the hamlets of The Fox and Hayes Knoll to be retained as open countryside, primarily for agricultural use, to retain the rural quality and value of these settlements.</p>	A3	
	<p><b>Policy 6: Flooding</b> The land that adjoins the main Swindon to Gloucester railway line and comprises Common Farm, land behind Malfords, Locks Lane and part of Widham Farm south of the railway line and New Road to the north of the railway line, though classified for planning purposes as flood zone 1, it is prone to frequent flooding from surface water, see Map 6. Proposals putting forward for this land shall be supported by clear quantified evidence that there are no lower risk alternative</p>	A1	

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>sites available.</p> <p>Any proposals for development on this land shall demonstrate how flood mitigation measures would prevent the flooding of this land and any other land that would be affected by the development.</p>		
Facilities	<p><b>Policy 7: Pavenhill shops</b></p> <p>Any redevelopment of the land shown on Map 7 (The Pavenhill Shopping Parade) shall comprise small retail units to serve the needs of the local community. A limited number of residential units would be acceptable to enhance the financial viability of a redevelopment scheme provided adequate provision is made for parking and deliveries so that the amenity of nearby residential properties is not adversely affected.</p>	B	
	<p><b>Policy 8: Facilities for the elderly</b></p> <p>The land shown on Map 7 known locally as 'The Cedars' is allocated for the provision of supported living accommodation for elderly people who have an association with the Parish and who wish to continue to live in Purton village.</p>	B	
	<p><b>Policy 9: Cemetery extension</b></p> <p>The land shown on Map 7 is allocated for an extension to Purton cemetery to meet the future needs of the Parish.</p>	B	
	<p><b>Policy 10: Allotments</b></p> <p>The Allotments at Pavenhill, Poor Street (Restrop Road) and off Church Path shown in Map 8 are to be retained for the use of the local community. Should any of the designated areas be favoured for development then as part of any permission an alternative and equivalent area of land be secured by condition in order to provide a social and recreation focus for use by the community.</p>	A1	
	<p><b>Policy 11: Play areas, leisure and open space</b></p> <p>The War Memorial and Village Centre, Play Close, the Venture play area, the Dingle and the Cricket Ground identified in Map 9 shall be retained for the use of the community.</p>	A1	This area together with existing rights of way could be linked to improve green infrastructure within the parish.
Housing	<b>Policy 12: Development Principles</b>	B	

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>Within the settlement boundary for Purton land is identified with potential for approximately 75 homes at the locations listed below and identified on Map 11.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site 66 - Derelict Cottage Farm (College Farm)</li> <li>• Site 91 - Land at Northcote</li> <li>• Site 3316 - three sites in Dogridge</li> <li>• Site 3318 - Hooks Hill</li> <li>• Land at North View</li> <li>• Former Youth Centre (with the adjoining garages and green space)</li> </ul> <p>These sites within the settlement boundary are known to be available for development for housing within the plan period and should be brought forward before land outside the existing settlement boundary.</p> <p>Proposed development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respond to the housing needs of Purton in terms of delivering affordable housing, houses for first-time buyers, smaller properties for those who wish to down size or properties that are suited to older persons (including bungalows) in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 43 and 45. Land at the former youth centre is particularly suited to providing low cost homes;</li> <li>• respect the specific character of the Conservation Area and the setting of Purton's historic buildings, including identifying how the form and layout of the development reflects the vernacular, design and materials of the Purton in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 57 and 58. This is particularly relevant in relation to allocated sites at Derelict Cottage Farm, land at Northcote and Hooks Hill which affect the immediate setting of designated heritage assets;</li> <li>• protect and preserve biodiversity and the landscape setting of the village in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 50 and 51;</li> <li>• wherever possible retain and re-use existing buildings and materials on site; and</li> <li>• retain existing mature trees and hedgerows.</li> </ul>		

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p><b>Policy 13: Development outside settlement boundary</b></p> <p>Land indicated on Map 12 is identified as an area of search for the provision of up to 40 smaller homes including affordable housing, houses for first-time buyers, smaller properties for those who wish to downsize and also properties suited to older persons including bungalows.</p> <p>Proposed development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect the character and setting of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site including the Grade II* Restrop House and the Scheduled Monument at Ringsbury Camp</li> <li>• provide strategic landscaping to the western and southern edges of the site which retains and reinforces existing hedges and trees</li> <li>• create a green area adjacent to the Restrop Road so that development is set back from the road</li> <li>• not prohibit a potential future road connection to the remainder of the site or road connection to the rear of the Schools and</li> <li>• protect and preserve biodiversity on the site</li> <li>• mitigate the impact of traffic with measures to reduce the speed of traffic on Restrop Road where it enters the villages to calm traffic and improve road safety.</li> </ul>	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 and the Swindon Core Strategy.

5. Conclusion

The draft policies allocate eight small sites for the development of 75 homes within the settlement boundary for Purton and one site for the provision of up to 40 small homes outside the settlement boundary. Nonetheless, these sites are considered highly unlikely to result in any likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network due to the location, scale and nature of the proposals. The draft policies largely provide qualitative criteria for development focused on protecting the local environment and guiding the design of new housing, and would therefore have no likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network.

It can therefore be concluded that the Purton 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 the competent authority.

**Please note that HRA is an iterative process and future iterations of the plan should also be screened if the policies change significantly.**

Assessment completed by [REDACTED] Ecologist, Wiltshire Council 10/08/2017