

## DRAFT URCHFONT, WEDHAMPTON AND LYDEWAY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) SCREENING

### 1. SCREENING METHODOLOGY

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

The criteria used 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

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.

**This HRA is based on the draft NP policies that are currently the subject of a consultation period. After the consultation has closed and a final version has been produced, which may result in alterations to the draft policies, this HRA must be reviewed.**

### 2. WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY HRA

The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (October 2009) derived a set of parameters by which to determine the likelihood of potential impact on Natura 2000 sites. The following issues were identified and assessed. A list of Natura 2000 sites is given for each issue.

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

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- *Hydrology / Hydrogeology - Sites that fall wholly or partly within either the Thames Water (Swindon) and Oxford Water Resource Zone WRZ (SWOX WRZ), or the Wessex Water North WRZ, may be susceptible to impact.*
  - 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 – 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

### **3. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

Draft policies within the emerging Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeway NP have been screened against each of the above potential issues, for those relevant Natura 2000 sites.

#### *a) Recreation*

**Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC** – The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA assessed that the issues relating to additional recreational pressure as a result of residential development growth are dealt with sufficiently in the ‘Salisbury Plain SPA HRA and Mitigation Strategy’, which prescribes proportionate developer contributions for development sites within 4km of the 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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeway NP, which will total 38 dwellings. A small increase in recreational

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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.

**River Avon SAC** - the policies of the draft Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeway Neighbourhood Plan include seven allocations for housing sites, which total 38 dwellings. This small scale residential development is unlikely to have a significant effect due to recreational pressure.

### *b) Hydrology/Hydrogeology*

The majority of the sites listed under this topic in Section 2 above are sufficiently far away from the NP area and therefore no likely significant effect is expected. With regard to the Salisbury Plain SAC/SPA and River Avon SAC, the issues of water resources and water quality are considered.

**Water Resources** – Small scale housing development is proposed in the draft Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeway NP. These are small residential developments that would be accommodated within the existing abstraction license levels. Current licences have undergone HRA by the Environment Agency, as has Wessex Water's Water Resource Management Plan, therefore the Council is satisfied that the issue does not require further assessment at the NP level.

**Water Quality** – Issues of water quality, including surface water drainage will be dealt with through Development Management as described in Core Policy 50. The use of SUDS and suitable pollution control measures will be required for most proposals. The small scale of the proposed housing development sites is unlikely to result in impacts on watercourses outside of the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeway 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.

### *c) 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 Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeway NP allow for an additional 38 dwellings in total, 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 and River Avon SAC) are sufficiently far away from the NP area and therefore 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 NP would not have an adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites through nitrogen deposition.

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### *d) Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines*

The Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC and its associated core areas and buffer areas identified in the council's HRA guidance are sufficiently far away from the NP area and therefore no likely significant effect is expected.

## **4. SCREENING OF DRAFT URCHFONT, WEDHAMPTON AND LYDEWAY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES**

The draft Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeway NP comprises five sections of draft policies, which are entitled:

- Section 1: Draft Housing Policies
- Section 2: Design policies
- Section 3: Draft Built Environment Policies
- Section 4: Draft Employment and Local Business Policies
- Section 5: Draft Transport, Infrastructure and Community Facilities Policies
- Section 6: Draft Countryside and Nature Policies

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

The only draft policy that allocates land for development is H1 'Housing Site Allocations'. A total of 38 dwellings are proposed across seven sites, which are listed in the table in section 5 below. The locations of the seven sites are shown in the "Sites Allocated for Housing" map that accompanies the draft NP. The largest sites are for 12 dwellings at Hales Farm (north-western edge of Urchfont) and land east of Crooks Lane (eastern edge), 7 dwellings at Uphill, and 4 dwellings at Peppercombe (northern edge). The other sites are all for individual dwellings. The proposed sites are therefore for small-scale housing developments.

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**5. INITIAL HABITATS REGULATIONS SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT URCHFONT, WEDHAMPTON AND LYDEWAY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**a) Screening assessment of individual policies**

Categories A / B (Green) – Screened out

Categories C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
Section 1 Draft Housing Policies	H1 Housing site allocations	B	Small number of houses proposed – total of 38 dwellings; mitigation dealt with at development management state as described in the Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA for increased recreational pressure, water resources and air pollution. The sites and number of houses proposed are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Hales Farm (12 houses)</li> <li>b) Land opposite Sawmills (1)</li> <li>c) Peppercombe (4)</li> <li>d) Garden at Cuckoo’s Corner (1)</li> <li>e) Land opposite The Baishe (1)</li> <li>f) Land at Uphill (7)</li> <li>g) Land east of Crooks Lane (12)</li> </ul>
	H2 Form of housing development	A1	Types of housing developments would be supported
	H3 Provision of affordable housing	A1	How much affordable housing should be incorporated
	H4 Parking for new developments	A1	Number of parking spaces
	H5 Phasing of housing development	A1	Two phases of development; 2015-2020 and 2021-2026

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
Section 2 Draft Design Policies	D1 Design	A1	Standards of design
Section 3 Draft Built Environment Policies	BE1 Protection of local heritage	A3	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment
Section 4 Draft Employment and Local Business Policies	LB1 Protecting existing employment facilities	A1	Preventing the loss of land and buildings for employment
	LB2 New or expanding businesses	A1	Criteria for the establishment or expansion of small scale employment enterprises in existing premises or on new sites
	LB3 Farm diversification	A1	Criteria for farm diversification proposals
Section 5 Draft Transport, Infrastructure and Community Facilities Policies	TIC1 Local traffic and movement	A1	Criteria for new development
	TIC2 Protection of community facilities	A1	Protection of facilities of vital importance to the community
	TIC3 New or enhanced community facilities	A1	Criteria for small scale development such as health centre or community hall
Section 6 Draft Countryside and Nature Policies	C&N1 Protecting the landscape	A3	Protecting the landscape character, important views, tranquillity, well-being and limiting light pollution
	C&N2 Protection of biodiversity sites and features	A2	Protecting sites and features of biodiversity value, including Oakfrith Wood and the 6 other County Wildlife Sites, and other important features such as trees, hedgerows and watercourses
	C&N3 Local green space and green infrastructure	A2	Maintain the quality and character of the local environment, to benefit the community – protection of “local green space” – these areas are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Pond Green</li> <li>ii. Top Green</li> <li>iii. Paddock Green</li> </ul>

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Foxley Piece</li> <li>v. Cricket Ground and Croquet Lawn</li> <li>vi. Village Playing Field area</li> <li>vii. The Holloway</li> <li>viii. Farmers Field</li> <li>ix. Rookery Farm Valley</li> <li>x. The Baishe and Cooks Glade</li> <li>xi. West End Paddock, Wedhampton</li> <li>xii. Filk Lane, Wedhampton</li> </ul> <p>Support given to developments that increase or improve the network of cycleways, footpaths and bridleways; and development must not have a harmful effect on green infrastructure.</p>

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

- The draft policies in the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway NP 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 draft NP would not have any in combination effects with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

**6. CONCLUSION**

The majority of the draft policies in the emerging Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway NP do not allocate any new land for development and largely provide qualitative criteria for development focused on improving the parish for local people, businesses and visitors, including some environmental policies and suggestions for the design of development sites, which would therefore have no likely significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.

Draft policy H1 identifies seven sites for housing in Urchfont. However, these are all small (a total of 38 dwellings) and would have no likely significant effects upon Natura 2000 sites, particularly where mitigation is provided in line with the HRA of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and agreed mitigation strategies.

It can therefore be concluded that the draft Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway NP would have no likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network alone or in-combination and no appropriate assessment is currently required. However, after the consultation of the draft plan has closed and a final version has been produced, which may result in alterations to the draft policies, this HRA must be reviewed.

**Assessment carried out by:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015