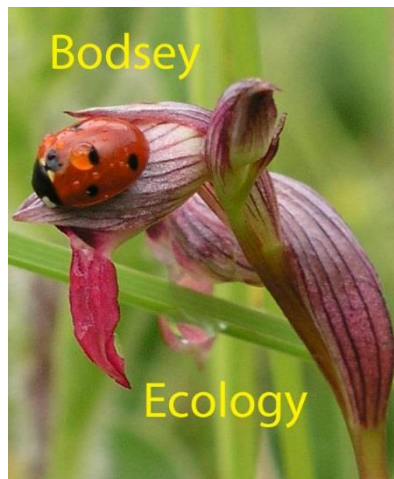


Habitat Regulations Assessment for the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan

Bodsey Ecology Limited

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Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan – Habitats Regulations Assessment 2019

Issue 1 –on 5 July 2019 HRA of Draft Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [the Habitats Regulations] require that Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is applied to all statutory land use plans in England and Wales. HRA is achieved by carrying out an Appropriate Assessment.
- 1.1.2 Neighbourhood plans are nested within Local Plans. A HRA must determine whether significant effects on a European site can be ruled out on the basis of objective information and best scientific knowledge.
- 1.1.3 Appropriate Assessment for any development plan is a three stage process: screening; appropriate assessment itself, that identifies whether the integrity of European sites could be compromised; and alternative solutions that include avoidance and mitigation measures. Until a ruling by the European Court of justice in 2018 it was assumed that existing planned mitigation measures against likely significant effects to European sites could allow those European sites to be 'screened out' at the first stage of the appropriate assessment process. The "People Over Wind" ruling has changed that assumption. It is no longer possible to screen out predicted adverse impacts on European sites where they are avoided or mitigated against without appropriate assessment. It is possible to screen out threats that are neither likely nor significant during the screening stage. HRA allows for a fourth stage that only applies in cases where adverse impacts are predicted even after alternative solutions have been tried and where there are imperative reasons of overriding national interest that the project should go ahead. It would be extremely unlikely that a Neighbourhood Plan could ever reach this fourth stage.
- 1.1.4 The HRA for the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 (Bodsey Ecology, 2018) identified likely significant effects on two European sites, The Ouse Washes (SAC/SPA/Ramsar) and Portholme (SAC), downstream of Bedford. Although the policies within the Local Plan should protect the European sites if followed, detail was not available from the emerging Neighbourhood Plans to confirm this for all developments. Further screening of the Neighbourhood Plans will ensure that there were no unforeseen likely significant effects whilst undertaking the HRA for the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030. The HRA of Neighbourhood Plans will also ensure that they all avoid or mitigate against likely significant effects identified in the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030. The HRA for the Neighbourhood Plans are also necessary because the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 has yet to be adopted and the policies within it are not yet in force.
- 1.1.5 Screening of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan identified three of the same likely significant effects on the two European sites as the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 but at a reduced scale. Appropriate assessment (AA Stage 2) showed that the policies of the Draft Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan did not offer protection to the European sites. Rewording of the policies or the accompanying text does provide the framework to avoid or mitigate against the likely significant effects and their subsequent adverse impact on the qualifying features and site integrity.
- 1.1.6 This HRA has to assume that water quantity and quality in the tributaries of the River Great Ouse will not be compromised because the future strategic plans of Anglian Water will prevent this from happening. The safeguard that these future plans will protect the River Great Ouse and consequently the European sites along it is that those plans will have their own HRA.
- 1.1.7 This HRA concludes that the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan can proceed as it will not, in itself or in combination with other plans that have currently been adopted, have adverse impacts on any European sites, the qualifying features and/or the integrity of those sites.



THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- 2.1.1 The National Policy Planning Framework (July 2018)¹ (NPPF) states that to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 2.1.2 In addition to the requirements of the NPPF, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [the Habitats Regulations] require that Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is applied to all statutory land use plans in England and Wales, including Neighbourhood Plans. The Parish Council, as the 'plan-making' or 'relevant competent' authority, must before the plan is given effect, make a HRA through Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives where (a) the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Paragraph 102 of the Habitats Regulations 2017).
- 2.1.3 The aim of the HRA process is to assess the potential effects arising from a plan against the conservation objectives of any European site designated for its nature conservation importance.
- 2.1.4 The Habitats Regulations transpose the requirements of the European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna [The Habitats Directive] which aims to protect the habitats and species of European nature conservation importance. The Directive establishes a network of internationally important sites designated for their ecological status. These are referred to as Natura 2000 sites or European sites, and comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which are designated under European Directive (2009/147/EC) on the conservation of wild birds [the Birds Directive].
- 2.1.5 SACs and SPAs were included as designations referred to in the NPPF (paragraph 2.11 above). In addition, the NPPF¹ also requires that Ramsar sites (which support internationally important wetland habitats and are listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance [Ramsar Convention]) are included within the HRA process as required by the Regulations.
- 2.1.6 The process of HRA is based on the precautionary principle and evidence should be presented to allow a determination of whether the impacts of a land-use plan, when considered in combination with the effects of other plans and projects against the conservation objectives of a European site; would adversely affect the integrity of that site. Where effects are considered uncertain, the potential for adverse impacts should be assumed. Whether those effects reach a threshold where they can be considered 'significant' has to be interpreted using objective information and best ecological knowledge. Neighbourhood plans are nested within Local Plans. HRA identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site's conservation objectives because it may adversely impact the qualifying features listed, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment must determine whether significant effects on a European site can be ruled out on the basis of objective information². Neighbourhood Plans must therefore be considered in combination with the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030.
- 2.1.7 It is important to recognise that this HRA deals exclusively with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 2017, which in turn are concerned only with sites designated for their importance at

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740441/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_accessible_version.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#neighbourhood-plan-require-sustainability-appraisal>
Paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 11-046-20150209



the European level. It is not a comprehensive review of interactions of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 with biodiversity and important components such as SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites, Green Infrastructure and Protected Species and Habitats of Principal Importance that are included within the Sustainability Appraisal for that plan.

AA STAGE 1 – SCREENING METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The methodology for this Appropriate Assessment (AA) stage 1 of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) is an extension of that used for the HRA for the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 (Bodsey Ecology 2018).
- 3.1.2 The HRA for the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 considered the following possible threats:
- Increased public recreation, causing disturbance to birds, damage to vegetation, increased littering / flytipping or leading to management compromises (e.g. grazing being restricted).
 - Air pollution, air-borne pollutants.
 - Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions.
 - Invasive non-native species.
 - Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources).
 - Reduction in water quality, from increased discharges of sewage and surface water drainage, or from pollution incidents, either during or after construction.
 - Disruption to the flight paths of birds and mammals.
- 3.1.3 The threats were assessed for a number of European sites that are geographically connected by environmental pathways to Bedford Borough. The site objectives of each European site (Appendix 1) were considered at this stage in order to determine if there were ecological pathways that could connect the WNDP to the European sites. The seven European sites were: Portholme SAC; The Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar; The Wash SPA/Ramsar; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar; The Nene Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar; Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC; Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. The AA stage 1 for the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 demonstrated that there would be no likely significant effects on all but Portholme SAC and The Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar.
- 3.1.4 The threat from “Air pollution, air borne pollutants” was screened out of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 because none of the European sites were close enough to Bedford Borough for there to be an effect and extra road-use would mostly avoid the main routes passing close by the Upper Nene Gravel Pits SPA because there are more direct routes from Bedford to major national routes. Therefore, this threat will not be considered in any Appropriate Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans within Bedford Borough.



- 3.1.5 The conclusions of the full appropriate assessment for the HRA of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 were:

Climate change impacts on flows and therefore flooding in the River Great Ouse catchment are predicted to be much larger than impacts from urban developments in the long-term. However, protection from urbanisation should not be omitted because of this as it is still a likely significant effect. It is assumed policies in The Local Plan will be followed and permission will only be given to development by the consenting bodies on the understanding that there will not be increased output of pollutants from water recycling centres into the River Great Ouse.

The Local Plan in isolation or in combination with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Central Bedfordshire "Shaping where you live 2035"¹ should not have adverse effects on the two identified European sites on the River Great Ouse assuming policies are followed, although it should be stated that there are not HRA tasks 2 and 3 available from other Local Authorities in the catchment.

This HRA finds that as it stands The Local Plan could have significant effects on two of the sites, Portholme (SAC) and The Ouse Washes (SAC/SPA/Ramsar). Portholme (SAC) and The Ouse Washes (SAC) could be affected by a reduction in the quality of flood water. The Ouse Washes (SPA/Ramsar) could be affected by increased flooding. The effects could be avoided by rewording and subsequent adherence to policies and with Anglian Water following its commitments and any findings of future HRA of its Asset Management Plans or other plans.

The HRA concludes that, if policies identified as key in this report are retained, and/or the wording changes recommended for policies highlighted are adopted, The Local Plan will not have adverse effects on site integrity of any European site. Therefore, Bedford Borough Council can proceed with The Local Plan to 2030 in the context of Habitats Regulations 2017.

AA STAGE 1 - RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The screening matrix between the threats listed in paragraph 3.1.2 and the European sites listed in paragraph 3.1.3 for the WNDP is shown in Table 1.
- 4.1.2 The results of the screening showed that there are possible likely significant effects on the Portholme SAC and The Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar. Subsequent analysis showed which of the qualifying features of those European sites might be affected by the threats and whether these adverse effects would lead to a loss of site integrity (these are summarised in Table 2) and are based on the site objectives (Appendix 1). Unlike the Bedford Borough Plan, non-native invasive species are not a likely effect in the case of the WNDP because there is not a direct link for propagules from Wootton to the River Great Ouse.
- 4.1.3 Pollution of groundwater and Reduction in water quality could have likely significant effects from pollution incidents emanating from new housing before, during or after construction.
- 4.1.4 In determining the likelihood of significant impacts, and hence the need for an appropriate assessment, mitigation measures (i.e. measures to avoid or reduce negative effects) cannot be taken into account. This is confirmed by the European Court of Justice in its ruling in case C-323/17 (commonly known as "People Over Wind"): 'Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an appropriate assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to

avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site'³ Reversing the logic of this statement, a consequence of "People Over Wind" is that no European site can be screened out at AA stage 1 if there are likely significant effects identified from the perceived threats that come from an analysis of the plan in question, even if there are avoidance or mitigation steps put in place. However, perceived threats can be screened out if there is, on inspection, no chance of a likely significant effect on any European site because there is not actually a causal link. An example of this would be the potential threat from water pollution to the European sites on the River Nene, as the catchment is partly within Bedford Borough. On inspection, there is no development proposed in that part of Bedford Borough and so there is no causal link between the threat and the European sites and therefore no likely significant effect. That threat can be screened out for the European sites along the River Nene. "The People Over Wind" ruling means that although the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 policies will be reworded to mitigate against the likely significant effects (identified in the HRA (Bodsey Ecology,2018)) at the scale of Bedford Borough it is assumed that they cannot be screened out at the finer scale of the WNDP. Furthermore, the Bedford Borough Local Plan has yet to be adopted and the policies in the emerging plan are not yet in force at the time of writing.

REASONING FOR TABLE 1 RESULTS

1. The WNDP is too small to have a noticeable effect on the number of visitors to any of the European sites and can be considered *de minimis*. Furthermore, the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 in its entirety is predicted to have no adverse impact on the integrity of the European sites in question for this threat (Bodsey Ecology, 2018).
2. Although the number of new residences (145 dwellings) is relatively small The WNDP is not so small that in combination with other developments it could have a measurable effect on the hydrology of the River Great Ouse and therefore it could significantly affect Portholme SAC and the Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar. The in combination impacts of all developments in the River Great Ouse catchment are dependant on the plans of Anglian Water which are themselves subject to an HRA. It can only be assumed for this HRA that the plans of Anglian Water will prevent effects on the European sites in question. There is no connection to any other European sites.
3. There is no direct connection by water between Wootton and the River Great Ouse to Portholme and/or The Ouse Washes and almost no chance that non-native invasive plants could travel downstream to those European sites. The WNDP is not connected by river to the Nene Washes or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits and so there is no threat. There is no tangible connection between the WNDP and Eversden and Wimpole Woods or the Chilterns Beechwoods that would allow the dispersal of propagules and therefore there is no threat.
4. The same connections (or lack of them) between WNDP and the River Great Ouse as for reason "2" apply for pollution incidents to ground water.
5. The same connections (or lack of them) between WNDP and the River Great Ouse as for reason "2" apply for pollution incidents.
6. No dwelling in WNDP will be tall enough or close enough to a European site to have an effect on flyways for birds or mammals and therefore there is no threat.

Table 1. Screening of European sites for likely significant effects from threats identified from the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

³<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=200970&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1>

European Site	Airborne Pollution	Public Recreation	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	Non-native invasive Species	Pollution of Ground Water	Reduction in water Quality	Disruption to flight paths of animals
Portholme SAC	No	No	Possible	No - not directly connected	Possible	Possible	No
Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/RAMSAR	No	No	Possible	No - not directly connected	Possible	Possible	No
Nene Washes (SAC/SPA/RAMSAR)	No	No	No	No - not connected	No - not connected	No - not connected	No
Eversden and Wimpole Woods (SAC)	No	No	No	No - not connected	No - not connected	No - not connected	No
The Wash (SPA/RAMSAR)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits (SPA/RAMSAR)	No	No	No	No - not connected	No - not connected	No - not connected	No
Chilterns Beechwoods	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Reason		1	2	3	4	5	6

AA STAGE 1 - CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan will have no unforeseen likely significant effects on the qualifying features of the two European sites identified in addition to those in the HRA of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 (Bodsey Ecology, 2018).
- 5.1.2 The developments included in this Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan could contribute to the likely significant effects on qualifying features of the European sites already identified as possible in the HRA of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030. All sites close to the River Great Ouse or its tributaries require an appropriate assessment to ascertain that avoidance and mitigation measures are sufficient to prevent any significant effects.



Table 2. Summary of impacts on European site integrity of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 with additional information relating to the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan..

European Site	Qualifying Feature	Impacted negatively with potential loss of site integrity	Relevant to Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan	Likely impact on site integrity in combination with other plans	Suggested Mitigation Measure in Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030
Portholme SAC	H6510 Lowland hay Meadow	Reduction in water quality	Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	Add enhanced use of SUDS and water storage. Include importance of preventing spring/summer flooding to Policy 97. Assumes Water Recycling Centres have capacity and pass their own HRA and/or upgraded as necessary upgraded.
		Increased spring/ summer flooding	Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	Add enhanced use of SUDS and water storage. Include importance of preventing spring/summer flooding to protect European sites to Policy 97
Ouse Washes SPA/ RAMSAR	A051 <i>Anas strepera</i> , Gadwal (breeding)	Increased spring/ summer flooding Increased winter flooding	Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	Add enhanced use of SUDS and water storage. Include importance of preventing spring/summer flooding to protect European sites to Policy 97. Enhanced use of SUDS and water storage. Include importance of preventing spring/summer flooding to protect European sites to Policy 97
	A056 <i>Anas querquedula</i> , Garganey (breeding)		Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	
	A119 <i>Porzana porzana</i> , Spotted Crake (breeding)		Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	
	A156a <i>Limosa limosa</i> , Black-tailed Godwit (breeding)		Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	
	Breeding Bird Assemblage (breeding)		Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	
	A082 <i>Circus cyaneus</i> , Hen Harrier (non-breeding)	Reduction in water quality	Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	Add enhanced use of SUDS and water storage. Include importance of preventing spring/summer flooding to protect European sites to Policy 97. Assumes upgrades to Water Recycling Centres as necessary and assuming these pass their own HRA.
Ouse Washes SAC	S1149 <i>Cobitis taenia</i> (Spined Loach)	Reduction in water quality	Yes – make reference to BBC Local Plan Policy 97	yes	As for SPA/Ramsar



AA STAGE 2 - APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

- 6.1.1 Screening (Table 1) has determined that the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) could add to the likely significant effects of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2030 and those of other district councils in the River Great Ouse catchment on the European sites at Portholme and The Ouse Washes.
- 6.1.2 Each of the policies in the WNDP were reviewed. Secondly, the impact of the policies on the threats listed above in paragraph 3.1.2 were evaluated. The following criteria were used in the evaluation:
- 1 Could the policy possibly cause or alter likely significant effects of any of the threats to the European sites.
 - 2 Would the significant effects be positive or negative
 - 3 Does the wording of the policy mean that the significant effects will be either avoided or mitigated against if the policy is followed. Noting that at this stage a likely significant effect or European site can be 'discounted and removed' from the Appropriate Assessment if the current policy will mitigate or avoid the adverse impacts on the qualifying features, and there will be no loss of site integrity.
 - 4 Does rewording of the policy allow for significant effects on site integrity of the European sites to be avoided or mitigated against. If the answer is "no" then adverse impacts on site integrity might be a result of the plan if it went ahead (which it should not).
- 6.1.3 Using these criteria the following pathway was followed:
- The answer to criterion 1 could be "yes" or "no".
 - If the answer to criterion 1 was "yes" then the answer to criterion 2 could be "positive" or "negative".
 - If the answer to criterion 2 was "negative" the answer to criterion 3 could be "yes" or "no".
 - If the answer to criterion 3 was "no" then the answer to criterion 4 could be "yes" or "no".
- 6.1.4 For each policy a written reason for the conclusion was added. The results are presented in full in Appendix 2.
- 6.1.5 Note that if any policy or aspect of a plan could lead to adverse impacts on European site integrity the plan should not go forward to adoption. In this rare circumstance, If the plan is to go ahead it would have to have 'imperative reasons of overriding national interest' and compensatory projects would have to be put in place.

AA STAGE 2 - RESULTS

- 7.1.1 There are no policies (including those relating to the housing developments themselves) that have likely significant effects on any of the qualifying features of the European sites (Appendix 2). The site objectives will not be compromised and there will be no loss of site integrity if the avoidance steps that are recommended in the next section are followed.

AA STAGE 3 – AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION

- 8.1.1 Although the draft assessed here is very clear and well written, the following rewording of the text and policies of the WNDP are recommended to ensure that the examiner is made aware that the



potential for likely significant effects on European sites has been evaluated and that avoidance or mitigation measures are in place.

- 8.1.2 A statement on the protection of wider biodiversity and water resources is required. This could be added to Objective 2d on page 21 so that it reads "To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, our local wildlife and its habitat and trees , preserve ecological corridors, and sites of special interest. The plan will ensure that there are no negative likely significant effects relating to the Water Framework Directive nor to European sites designated under European Directive (92/43/EEC)."

POLICY W1 – NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1.3 Policy WS1 in the draft assessed read:

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Wootton Settlement Policy Area boundary, as shown on the Policies Map, to shape the physical growth of the village over the plan period.

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement boundary, subject to development complying with the provisions of this plan and the development plan.

Development proposals within the village should demonstrate that each of the following design principles are met as and where applicable:

- a. the scale, form and character of the existing settlement is maintained;
- b. new development shall be of a scale to complement the traditional character and historic core of the village;
- c. not affecting open land which is of particular significance to the form and character of the village;
- d. buildings should be no more than two storeys high unless supported by a defined need;
- e. landscaping and boundary treatments should use native species and, where practical and possible retain mature trees. However, where this is not possible, non-native species which are beneficial for wildlife will be acceptable alternatives;
- g. protect residents' amenity and the landscape character from any noise, light or other pollution; and
- h. existing local habitats and wildlife corridors should be protected and enhanced, and new ones created where practical and possible.

- 8.1.4 The text of clause "h" could be altered to read "existing local habitats and wildlife corridors should be protected and enhanced, and new ones created where practical and possible. The wider environment should be protected by ensuring there is no impact on the River Great Ouse."
- 8.1.5 Interpretation could be added to the supporting text somewhere close to paragraph 61 that says... "Although there are no European sites designated under European Directive (92/43/EEC) within the Parish or within Bedford Borough there are European sites downstream on the River Great Ouse (Portholme SAC, The Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar) that are vulnerable and these sites should not be compromised" and cite this HRA.



POLICIES W2 - W7 AND W14

- 8.2.1 No rewording of policies W2 to W7 and W14 is required because they are covered by the umbrella policy W1.

POLICY W10 – RESIDENTIAL PARKING

- 8.3.1 Policy W10 in the draft assessed in this HRA reads:

The need for parking provision within new residential developments will be assessed against the Borough Council's Adopted Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities. Proposals should:

- a) provide sufficient parking to meet the assessed need;
- b) ensure that any additional on-street parking does not result in significant congestion for other road users or a serious threat to road safety; and
- c) avoid the creation of car-dominated environments through the appropriate location, layout and detailed design of the parking spaces.

- 8.3.2 To ensure that there is no threat from pollution due to surface run-off from parking sites a clause "d" could be added that reads something similar to: "parking areas should have drainage systems designed to ensure there is no pollution risk to watercourses from run-off".

POLICY W18 – SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL BUSINESSES

- 8.4.1 The text of policy W18 in the draft assessed for this HRA read:

Proposals for the development of small business will be supported where they involve:

- a) New builds or the conversion of existing buildings; and
- b) The diversification of existing rural enterprises.
- (ii) All such proposals will be assessed against the following:
 - a) Impact on residential amenity.
 - b) Access, traffic and car parking arrangements.
 - c) Impact on the landscape and character of the area.
 - d) Design.

- 8.4.2 To ensure the environment is protected the text in clause ii) c) should read "impact on the landscape, character and environment of the area and the wider environment".

CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1.1 There are likely significant effects to the European sites of Portholme SAC and The Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar from the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan, but only in combination with other plans.
- 9.1.2 With alterations to Objective 2d the current policies W1, W10 and W18 in the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP), the likely significant effects will be addressed.
- 9.1.3 The avoidance of the impacts of increased flooding and pollution in the River Great Ouse depends on the efficacy of Anglian Water's Water Recycling Centres. The assumption has to be made that future HRAs for strategic plans of Anglian Water show that flooding and pollution are avoided or mitigated against.
- 9.1.4 There is no reason arising from this Habitat Regulations Assessment to prevent the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan from being adopted in the context of the Habitat Regulations 2017.

REFERENCE

Bodsey Ecology (2018). *Bedford Borough Local Plan Habitat Regulations Assessment 2018*. Accessed on 11/6/2019 at <http://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/OpenDocument.aspx?id=mWdUC1eYtKneHtAkS7KPeQ%3d%3d&name=26%20-%20Habitats%20Regulations%20Assessment%202018.pdf>



APPENDIX 1 – EUROPEAN SITE OBJECTIVES

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR PORTHOLME SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION SITE CODE: UK0030054

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that 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

Qualifying Features:

H6510. Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR OUSE WASHES SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION SITE CODE: UK0013011

With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that 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 the habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features:

S1149. *Cobitis taenia*; Spined loach

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR OUSE WASHES SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA SITE CODE: UK9008041

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features



- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

A037 *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)

A038 *Cygnus cygnus*; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)

A050 *Anas penelope*; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)

A051 *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Breeding)

A052 *Anas crecca*; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)

A053 *Anas platyrhynchos*; Mallard (Breeding)

A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)

A055 *Anas querquedula*; Garganey (Breeding)

A056 *Anas clypeata*; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding)

A056 *Anas clypeata*; Northern shoveler (Breeding)

A082 *Circus cyaneus*; Hen harrier (Non-breeding)

A151 *Philomachus pugnax*; Ruff (Breeding)

A156a *Limosa limosa limosa*; Black-tailed godwit (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Breeding bird assemblage

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE WASH AND NORTH NORFOLK COAST SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION SITE CODE: UK0017075

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that 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 and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features:

H1110. Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Subtidal sandbanks



H1140. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats

H1150. Coastal lagoons*

H1160. Large shallow inlets and bays

H1170. Reefs

H1310. Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand

H1330. Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

H1420. Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*); Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub

S1355. *Lutra lutra*; Otter

S1365. *Phoca vitulina*; Common seal

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE WASH SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA SITE CODE: UK9008021

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features ☐ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

A037 *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)

A040 *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)

A046a *Branta bernicla bernicla*; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding)

A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)

A050 *Anas penelope*; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)

A051 *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Non-breeding)

A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)

A065 *Melanitta nigra*; Black (common) scoter (Non-breeding)

A067 *Bucephala clangula*; Common goldeneye (Non-breeding)

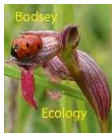
A130 *Haematopus ostralegus*; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)

A141 *Pluvialis squatarola*; Grey plover (Non-breeding)

A143 *Calidris canutus*; Red knot (Non-breeding)

A144 *Calidris alba*; Sanderling (Non-breeding)

A149 *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)



A156 *Limosa limosa islandica*; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
A157 *Limosa lapponica*; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
A160 *Numenius arquata*; Eurasian curlew (Non-breeding)
A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)
A169 *Arenaria interpres*; Ruddy turnstone (Non-breeding)
A193 *Sterna hirundo*; Common tern (Breeding)
A195 *Sterna albifrons*; Little tern (Breeding)
Waterbird assemblage

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR EVERSDEEN AND WIMPOLE WOODS SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION SITE CODE: UK0030331

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that 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 the habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Supplementary Advice document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above and is found at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6736081810620416>.

Qualifying Features:

S1308. *Barbastella barbastellus*; Barbastelle bat

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR UPPER NENE VALLEY GRAVEL PITS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA SITE CODE: UK9020296

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely



- The population of each of the qualifying features, and, 2 The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Supplementary Advice document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above. It is available at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5495529882517504>

Qualifying Features:

A021 Botaurus stellaris; Great bittern (Non-breeding)

A051 Anas strepera; Gadwall (Non-breeding)

A140 Pluvialis apricaria; European golden plover (Non-breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR NENE WASHES SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA SITE CODE: UK9008031

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

A037 Cygnus columbianus bewickii; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)

A050 Anas penelope; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)

A051 Anas strepera; Gadwall (Breeding)

A051 Anas strepera; Gadwall (Non-breeding)

A052 Anas crecca; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)

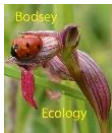
A054 Anas acuta; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)

A055 Anas querquedula; Garganey (Breeding)

A056 Anas clypeata; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding)

A056 Anas clypeata; Northern shoveler (Breeding)

A156a Limosa limosa limosa; Black-tailed godwit (Breeding)



EUROPEAN SITE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR CHILTERN BEECHWOODS SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION SITE CODE: UK0012724

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change

Ensure that 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 and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Supplementary Advice document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above. This is available at
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4808896162037760>

Qualifying Features:

H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (FestucoBrometalia); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone

H9130. Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests; Beech forests on neutral to rich soils

S1083. *Lucanus cervus*; Stag beetle



APPENDIX 2 – RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF POLICIES

Criteria 1 and 2 of the appropriate assessment (AA Stage 2)

Could Likely Significant Effects Occur Because of Policy					
Policy Number	Policy Title	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	Pollution to groundwater	Reduction in water quality	Reason
	Vision for Wootton	No	No	No	
	Key Issue - Housing	Negative	Negative	Negative	Based on the scale of development
	Key Issue - Environment	Negative	Negative	Negative	Based on the scale of development
	Key Issue - Village facilities	No	No	No	
	Key Issue - Local Economy	No	No	No	
	Key Issue - Sustainable Community	No	No	No	
1	Objective - Housing	Negative	Negative	Negative	Based on the scale of development
2	Objective - Environment	Negative	Negative	Negative	Based on the scale of development
3	Objective - Village facilities	No	No	No	
4	Objective - Local Economy	No	No	No	
5	Objective - Sustainable Community	No	No	No	
6	Objective - Historic environment	No	No	No	
W1	New residential development	Negative	Negative	Negative	Based on the scale of development
W2	Housing delivery objective	Negative	Negative	Negative	covered under policy w1
W3	Land between Potters Cross and Wootton Road	Negative	Negative	Negative	covered under policy w1
W4	Land south of Keeley Lane	Negative	Negative	Negative	covered under policy w1



Criteria 1 and 2 of the appropriate assessment (AA Stage 2) - continued

Policy Number	Policy Title	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	Pollution to groundwater	Reduction in water quality	Reason
W5	Land at The Chequers Public House, Hall End Road	Negative	Negative	Negative	covered under policy w1
W6	Land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane	Negative	Negative	Negative	covered under policy w1
W7	Land on south side of Keeley Lane	Negative	Negative	Negative	covered under policy w1
W8	Local Housing Needs	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W9	Allocation of affordable housing	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W10	Residential parking in new developments	Negative	Negative	Negative	Run-off from hard standings could enter flood drains
W11	Local green spaces	Positive	Positive	Positive	All protection of green space will benefit European sites to some degree
W12	Other important green spaces	Positive	Positive	Positive	
W13	Protection of views	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W14	Development design criteria	Negative	Negative	Negative	covered under policy w1
W15	Village facilities	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W16	The provision of new community facilities	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W17	Supporting communications infrastructure	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W18	Supporting the development of small businesses	Negative	Negative	Negative	businesses could have a detrimental effect on the environment
W19	Provision of community infrastructure	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W20	Developer contributions and community infrastructure	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites
W21	Protection of heritage assets including listed buildings	No	No	No	Not relevant to European sites



Criterion 3: Does the current wording of the policy address the negative likely significant effect?				
Policy Number	Policy Title	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	Pollution to groundwater	Reduction in water quality
	Key Issue - Housing	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Key Issue - Environment	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Objective - Housing	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Objective - Environment	Yes	Yes	Yes
W1	New residential development	No	No	No
W2	Housing delivery objective	No	No	No
W3	Land between Potters Cross and Wootton Road	No	No	No
W4	Land south of Keeley Lane	No	No	No
W5	Land at The Chequers Public House, Hall End Road	No	No	No
W6	Land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane	No	No	No
W7	Land on south side of Keeley Lane	No	No	No
W10	Residential parking in new developments	No	No	No
W14	Development design criteria	Yes	Yes	Yes
W18	Supporting the development of small businesses	No	No	No



Criterion 4: Does rewording of the policy or accompanying text address the negative likely significant effect?				
Policy Number	Policy Title	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	Pollution to groundwater	Reduction in water quality
W1	New residential development	Yes	Yes	Yes
W2	Housing delivery objective	Yes	Yes	Yes
W3	Land between Potters Cross and Wootton Road	Yes	Yes	Yes
W4	Land south of Keeley Lane	Yes	Yes	Yes
W5	Land at The Chequers Public House, Hall End Road	Yes	Yes	Yes
W6	Land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane	Yes	Yes	Yes
W7	Land on south side of Keeley Lane	Yes	Yes	Yes
W10	Residential parking in new developments	Yes	Yes	Yes
W18	Supporting the development of small businesses	Yes	Yes	Yes