

Habitats Regulations Assessment



Belmont Rural Neighbourhood Area

Addendum

February 2015

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Appendix 1: Revised screening of policy matrix

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 To ensure that the requirements of the Habitats Directive and Regulations are met it is necessary to consider the proposed modifications through the HRA process to the Draft Belmont Rural NDP.
- 1.2 The purpose of this further HRA Addendum Report is to detail the findings of the screening of the proposed changes to Policy 3 of the Draft Belmont Rural NDP and consider if they significantly affect the conclusions of the HRA Report (January 2015).

2.0 Screening of proposed modifications to Draft NDP

- 2.1 As required under Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations 2010, a Screening Assessment was undertaken to identify the 'likely significant effects' of the NDP. This involved the preparation of a screening matrix, which determined whether any of the policies in the NDP would be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC.
- 2.2 The findings of the screening matrix can be found in Appendix 2 of that report.
- 2.3 The screening matrix took the approach of screening each policy and objective individually, which is consistent with current guidance. The results from the HRA report for the Pre-submission version of the Herefordshire Local Plan (Core Strategy) were also taken into consideration.
- 2.4 Apart from Policy 3 concerning land which abuts the south side of a European site, all of the Belmont Rural NDP policies (November 2014) were found to be unlikely to result in significant effects on the River Wye SAC. This conclusion is based on assumptions and information contained within the Belmont Rural NDP, Herefordshire Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the Pre-submission version of the HRA for the Local Plan.
- 2.5 In many cases this was attributable to the fact that the policies themselves would not result in development, i.e. they related instead to criteria for development.
- 2.6 As mentioned in para 2.4 above, the one policy which could not be found to have no significant effect at that point was Policy 3 of the NDP; the effects of this policy were found to be uncertain due to its lack of clarity in terms of what uses would be supported on the site of the former Belmont Golf Club, which adjoins the River Wye SAC.
- 2.7 Therefore, it was concluded that the **Belmont Rural NDP may have likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC** and so further work on this aspect of the plan was requested from the NDP steering group prior to the launch of the Regulation 14 consultation on the Draft Plan.
- 2.8 Notwithstanding this, it is unlikely that the Belmont Rural NDP will have any in-combination effects with any plans from neighbouring parishes, as these do not propose site allocations either.
- 2.9 The proposed amendments to the NDP (post November 2014) are screened to consider if they are likely to significantly affect the findings of the previous HRA Report, prepared in December 2014. A summary of the main findings is provided below.
- 2.10 The changes are solely related to Policy 3 of the Draft NDP address the topic of sustainability in the context of the re-use of existing buildings and the proximity of site to which it relates to the River Wye SAC.

3.0 Summary of main findings

- 3.1 A number of suggestions have been made in respect the amended Draft NDP policy, as it is considered that the policy wording could be strengthened, in order to avoid inappropriate forms of development on the site to which it relates. However, based on assumptions and information contained within the Callow and Haywood NDP, Herefordshire Local (Core

Strategy) and the Pre-submission version of the HRA for the Local Plan (Core Strategy) the revised NDP policy was found to be unlikely to result in significant effects on the River Wye SAC.

- 3.2 This can be largely attributed to the amended policy's reference to the River Wye SAC itself and the policy also infers that schemes should be worked up in collaboration with the relevant statutory bodies and stakeholders. On that basis no significant effect conclusion could be reached notwithstanding the need for additional policy criteria.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 With reference to section 3 above, the modifications to Policy 3 of the Draft NDP are considered to affect the findings of the previous HRA report.

- 4.2 Therefore it is now concluded that the **Belmont Rural NDP will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC.**

5.0 Next steps

- 5.1 This Addendum Report will be published alongside both the Draft NDP and earlier HRA Report for consultation from February to March 2015. Any further changes to the plan that arise as a result of the consultation will be subject to further screening to consider their significance with regard to HRA.

Appendix 1

HRA Re-Screening Assessment of Emerging redrafted NDP objectives, options and policies					
Redrafted Policy	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the redrafted objective/option/policy	Likely effect if redrafted objective/option/policy implemented. Could they have LSE on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered to avoid any impacts	If recommendations are implemented, would it be possible that it would result in no likely significant effect?
Policy 3	Redevelopment of Belmont Golf Club for an as yet unspecified alternative use.	Housing, new community facilities, employment, retail and related infrastructure developments. All potential uses could result in a rise in vehicular movements and demand for water abstraction and treatment.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC	<p>Whilst the policy is clear that future proposals for this site should be well connected, appropriately designed and respect the River Wye SAC, additional policy criteria could be added to strengthen the avoidance of inappropriate forms of development i.e. the policy should list the types of development that would not be permitted.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, Policy LD2 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy) will provide a certain degree of protection against inappropriate uses and the policy would appear to infer that applicants should demonstrate that their schemes have been worked up in collaboration with the relevant statutory bodies/stakeholders.</p>	Yes, the mitigation measures mentioned alongside would help to prevent any significant effects, by providing the policy justification for refusing the grant of planning permission for inappropriate forms of use of the site and its buildings.