

# Habitats Regulations Assessment



## Shobdon Neighbourhood Area

January 2016

# Shobdon HRA

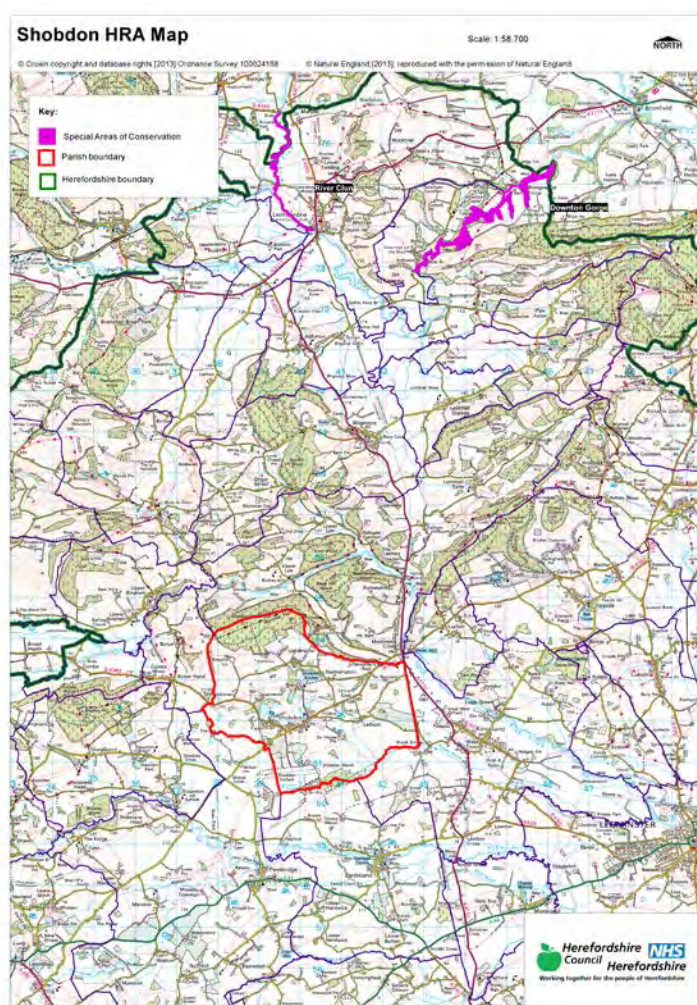
## HRA Screening Assessment

### Contents

- 1 Introduction**  
Map of the Neighbourhood Area with European sites shown
  - 2 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment of Neighbourhood Plans**
  - 3 Methodology**
  - 4 Results of the Initial Screening Report and options**
  - 5 Description of the Shobdon Neighbourhood Plan**
  - 6 Identification of other plans and projects which may have 'in-combination' effects**
  - 7 Assessment of the 'likely significant effects' of the Shobdon NDP**  
Table 1 - Colour coding key for Matrix
  - 8 Conclusions from the Screening Matrix**
- Appendix 1** – List of options assessed
- Appendix 2** – Options Assessment and Full Screening matrix
- Appendix 3** – Initial Screening Report (May 2013)

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Screening Assessment relates to a Neighbourhood Development Plan that is considered to be in general conformity with higher level strategic plans, such as the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the National planning Policy Framework. The screening stage involves assessing broadly whether the Draft Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on any European site(s).
- 1.2 Shobdon Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Shobdon Parish, in order to set out the vision, objectives and policies for the development of the Parish up to 2031. This HRA reviews the Draft Shobdon Plan January 2016.
- 1.3 The NDP is mostly criteria based, and allocates a settlement boundary around Shobdon to provide sustainable growth. It provides general policies that clarify and provide detail to the policies within the Herefordshire Core Strategy therefore it requires a high level screening assessment to build upon the HRA Screening Assessment Report for the Herefordshire Core Strategy. This high level screening assessment should be read in combination with the Herefordshire Pre-submission publication of the Local Plan-Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment Report (April 2014) and ensures that there will not be any significant impacts upon Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.4 The map below shows Shobdon Neighbourhood Area with the European Sites highlighted.



## 2 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment of neighbourhood plans

- 2.1 The requirement to undertake HRA of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the “Habitats Regulations” published for England and Wales in July 2007 and updated in 2013. Therefore, when preparing its NDP, Shobdon Parish Council is required by law to carry out an assessment known as “Habitats Regulations Assessment”. It is also a requirement in Regulation 32 schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.
- 2.2 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive provides that:  
*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*
- 2.3 HRA is an impact-led assessment and refers to the assessment of the potential effects of a neighbourhood plan on one or more European sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):
- **SPAs** are classified under the European Council Directive ‘on the conservation of wild birds’ (79/409/EEC; ‘Birds Directive’) for the protection of **wild birds and their habitats** (including particularly rare and vulnerable species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive, and migratory species).
  - **SACs** are designated under the Habitats Directive and target **particular habitats** (Annex 1) and/or species (Annex II) identified as being of European importance.
- 2.4 For ease of reference during HRA, general practice has been that these three designations are collectively referred to as either **Natura 2000** or **European sites**. This means that a Screening Assessment is carried out with regard to the Conservation Objectives of the European Sites and with reference to other plans or projects to identify if any significant effect is likely for any European Site.

## 3 Methodology

- 3.1 As the Shobdon NDP is not directly connected with the management of any European sites, and includes proposals for development which may affect European sites, it is necessary under Regulation 102(1)(a) of the Habitats Regulations 2010 to undertake screening for likely significant effects on European sites.
- 3.2 The HRA of neighbourhood plans is undertaken in stages and should conclude whether or not a proposal or policy in a neighbourhood plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site in question. This is judged in terms of the implications of the plan for a site’s ‘qualifying features’ (i.e. those Annex I habitats, Annex II species, and Annex I bird populations for which it has been designated) and are measured with reference to the conservation objectives for those qualifying features as defined by Natural England.
- 3.3 The first process is to undertake an initial screening report to determine the need to undertake the requirement for a HRA, this initial screening identifies whether the Plan could impact upon any European site that could be within the Neighbourhood Area or nearby.

- 3.4 If a European Site is within the Neighbourhood Area or the Neighbourhood Area could impact upon a European site then this will need to be taken into account and a full screening assessment will need to be undertaken.
- 3.5 The full screening stage consists of a description of the plan, identification of potential effects on European Sites, assessing the effects on European Sites (taking into account potential mitigation provided by other policies in the plan). For Neighbourhood Plans the outcome should demonstrate there are no likely effects upon the European sites. If any likely effects occur then there will need to be amendments to the NDP made and be re-screened until all likely effects have been mitigated.

#### **4 Results of the Initial Screening Report and options**

- 4.1 The initial Screening report (May 2013) found that the majority of the NDP is within the hydrological catchment area of the River Wye (including the Lugg SAC), and is 9.5km in the Downton Gorge therefore a full screening assessment is required. There is mains drainage at Shobdon. The neighbourhood area is situated in the Lugg River catchment and flood zones 2 & 3 run along the southern borders of the parish, to the east and south of Shobdon Airfield. The very eastern tip of the neighbourhood area is in the River Arrow catchment area.
- 4.2 For full details of the River Arrow's attributes which contribute to and define their integrity and vulnerable data see Appendix 1 of the Shobdon Initial Screening Report. The Initial Screening Report, May 2013, can be found in Appendix 3 of this HRA report. This information made it possible to identify the features of each site which determine site integrity, as well as the specific sensitivities of each site, therefore enabling later analysis of how the potential impacts of the Shobdon Neighbourhood Plan may affect site integrity.
- 4.3 The initial options for the NDP were assessed to determine their environmental impact that could affect the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC. Of the four options put forward, the no NDP option was considered viable for the Parish. The remaining three options both proposed growth however they would both be within the proportional growth targets of the Core strategy and are therefore unlikely to have a significant impact on the SAC.
- 4.4 As Shobdon progresses from options onto their NDP policies, the Plan will need to identify ways in which the least effect on the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC could be achieved, alongside taking forward the preferred option from the consultation from the community. A list of the options assessed can be found in Appendix 1, and the Assessment matrix for the options can be found Appendix 2.

#### **5 Description of the Shobdon Neighbourhood Development Plan**

- 5.1 The Draft Shobdon NDP presents detailed policies for development in the Neighbourhood Area, which is equivalent to the group parish boundary, up to 2031. The first part of the Plan introduces the Plan and its preparation and discusses the background of the village.
- 5.2 The NDP then details the vision for the Parish over the Plan period and six objectives of how this will be achieved. The objectives cover the following topics:

**Traffic impact and road safety**  
**Affordable housing**  
**Economic growth**

**Improving infrastructure**  
**Sports and recreation facilities**  
**Protect and maintain natural and historic environment**

- 5.3 The NDP also sets out 15 general policies on various topics based on the objective headings above and also for the village, these include:

Promoting a Sustainable Community  
Development Strategy  
Highways and Transport Infrastructure  
Meeting Housing Needs within Shobdon Village  
Phasing of Development  
Provision of Affordable Housing  
Design Criteria for residential development  
Supporting local business  
Renewable and low carbon energy  
Surface and foul water drainage  
Accessibility to community facilities  
Broadband infrastructure  
Protection and provision of open space  
Retaining and natural environment and landscape

**6 Identification of other plans and projects which may have ‘in-combination’ effects**

- 6.1 Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 requires an appropriate assessment where a land use plan (not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. In addition, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulation 2012 a NDP cannot have a significant effect on any European Site whether alone or in combination with another Plan.
- 6.2 There are a number of potentially relevant plans and projects which may result in in-combination effects with the Core Strategy across Herefordshire, these plans have been reviewed and can be found in Appendix 2 of the pre-submission publication of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (May 2014). It is seen that as this NDP does not go over and beyond the requirements set out in the Core Strategy this review will also be substantial for the NDP.
- 6.3 The HRA for the Core Strategy also identifies that both the Water Cycle Study for Herefordshire, which indicates the potential for planned water abstraction requirements combined with pressures on European Sites from the Core Strategy policies, and the work on the Nutrient Management Plan, to ensure the favourable conservation status of the SAC in respect of phosphate levels as soon as possible and at the latest by 2027, have both been considered as part of the in-combination assessment.

**7 Assessment of the ‘likely significant effects’ of the Shobdon NDP**

- 7.1 As required under Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations 2010, a screening assessment has been undertaken to identify the ‘likely significant effects’ of the NDP. A screening matrix was prepared in order to identify whether any of the policies in the Plan would be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye and Downton Gorge SAC.



- 7.2 The findings of the screening matrix can be found in the Screening Matrix in Appendix 2 of this report. Colour coding was used to record the likely impacts of the policies on the European site and its qualifying habitats and species as shown in the table 1 below.

Red	There are likely to be significant effects
Green	Significant effects are unlikely

- 7.3 The Screening matrix took the approach of screening each policy individually, which is consistent with current guidance documents. The results from the HRA report for the pre-submission version of the Herefordshire Core Strategy were also taken into consideration.
- 7.4 Mitigation of some of the identified potential effects could be achieved through implementation of the other policies within the NDP which require good practice measures during and after construction phases, such as more efficient use of water, reduction in waste and encouragement of recycling. The provision and encouragement of use of more sustainable transport measures when improving the transport infrastructure, will also help to reduce car traffic around the parish and surrounding areas.

## 9 Conclusions from the Screening Matrix

- 8.1 None of the Draft Shobdon Plan (February 2016) policies were concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC. Based on assumptions and information contained within the Shobdon Plan, Herefordshire Core Strategy and the Pre-submission version / proposed modifications addendum of the HRA for the Core Strategy all of the NDP policies were found to be unlikely to result in significant effects on the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC.
- 8.2 In many cases this is because the policy itself would not result in development, i.e., it related instead to criteria for development. In a number of cases the policies also included measures to help support the natural environment, including biodiversity and therefore no significant effect conclusion could be reached. In addition, these policies have the potential to mitigate some of the possible adverse effects arising from other policies.
- 8.3 The plan is mostly criteria based, but allocates areas for housing development within the identified Shobdon settlement boundary.
- 8.4 The water cycle study highlights that most of the River Wye catchment is in a Moderate ecological status. The River Arrow runs through the eastern tip of the parish and is part of the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg. Therefore, the parish falls within the Upper River Wye catchment area. The River Wye downstream of the confluence with the River Lugg is currently exceeding the phosphate target. The WCS also identifies that the Shobdon as one of the highest areas at risk of fluvial flooding in the Upper Wye sub-catchment. The Upper Wye catchment is a part of a large, linear ecosystem which acts as an important wildlife corridor, an essential migration route, and breeding area for many nationally and internationally important species.
- 8.5 The 2014 Nutrient Management Plan highlights the Upper Wye section of the SAC is currently meeting the phosphate target (0.05 mg/l phosphate). However, it is nearing the target and so there is a risk to future compliance that needs addressing. In addition, the preparation of the Nutrient Management Plan for the River Wye SAC should ensure that development within Herefordshire which can be accommodated within existing water discharge permits would not be likely to have a significant effect upon the River Wye SAC.

- 8.6 It is unlikely that the Shobdon Plan will have any in-combination effects with any Plans from neighbouring parish councils as the level of growth proposed is the same as that proposed for the Housing Market Area in the Herefordshire Core Strategy and all of the proposed housing within the settlement boundary.
- 8.7 It is therefore concluded that the **Shobdon Plan will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC.**
- 8.8 Any further amendments to policies (post January 2016) will be rescreened if required and an addendum to this report will be produced.



# Appendix 1

Shobdon NDP Options

Option 1:	Do not do a NDP
Option 2:	Do a NDP
Option 3:	Allocate a few small housing sites
Option 4:	Allocate one large housing site

# Appendix 2

**Table 1: HRA Screening of Emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives, Options and Policies**

Parish Council Name: Shobdon

NDP Title: Shobdon

Date undertaken: January 2016

Core Strategy HRA version: Reg 14 Plan

NDP objectives, options policies	HRA Screening of Emerging NDP objectives, options and policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/option/policy	Likely effect if objective/option/policy implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on European Sites? (Yes/No, with reasons)  <i>(If no, progress on to next objective/option/policy. If yes, progress on to next set of columns in row)</i>	European Sites potentially affected  (Refer to Initial Screening)	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/option/policy and to be considered as part of Appropriate Assessment	Could the policy have likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account?)
Option 1: No NDP	No NDP to determine planning applications.	Criteria policies within the Core Strategy would guide further development. Specific policies and proposals for the parish would not exist.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Option 2: Do a NDP	Greater certainty over the impact of future development.	Greater degree of certainty over the impact of future development on the European sites, as	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC		

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		the location of housing would be pre-determined and not left to market forces.	Downton Gorge SAC		
Option 3: Allocate a few small housing sites	Small scale proportionate growth on specific sites identified on a proposals map.	Greater degree of certainty over the impact of future development on the European sites, as the location of housing would be pre-determined and not left to market forces.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.  Policy would need to take account of the proportional growth requirements of the Core Strategy and potential headroom capacity at the local STW.	No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects.  Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further assessments will be undertaken at draft policy stage.
Option 4: Allocate one large housing site	Small scale proportionate growth on specific site identified on a proposals map.	Greater degree of certainty over the impact of future development on the European sites, as the location of housing would be pre-determined and not left to market forces.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.  Policy would need to take account of the proportional growth requirements of the Core Strategy and potential headroom capacity at the local	No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects.  Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further

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				STW.	assessments will be undertaken at draft policy stage.
OB1-To address traffic issues including the speed of vehicles through the village; the effect of traffic noise on amenity; and the need for safer access by pedestrians and cyclists to local services and facilities and campaign for better road maintenance throughout the parish.	Harmful effects associated with traffic will be reduced and roads made safer.  Traffic calming measures facilitated  Promotion of sustainable transport measures.	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Sites.	N/A	This objective will help mitigate potential environmental impacts caused by development.	No. This objective will help safeguard against any detrimental impact derived from new development.
OB2-To provide a range and choice of affordable new homes to meet the needs of all sections of the community and which is appropriately spread throughout the parish and provides a pleasant community environment. These homes should be built in manageable numbers and density designed to respect and enhance the character of the parish.	New housing will be developed. Increase demand in transportation. Increase demand in water and waste.	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Sites.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	N/A	N/A
OB3-To maintain a thriving local economy by ensuring employment and enterprise opportunities are available for local people. Appropriate business will be Shobdon Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 Consultation Draft January	Improvement of infrastructure  Promotion of job creation  Retention of community facilitates and assets	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Sites.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	N/A	N/A

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2016 Page 10 encouraged to the area by ensuring a good Broadband reception and adequate local services.					
OB4-To support the provision of improved infrastructure, in particular roads/pavements; public transport; the sewerage system; surface water drainage and broadband and telecommunications equipment. Infrastructure to reduce carbon dependence will also be encouraged through seeking appropriate alternative energy methods.	Improvement of infrastructure  Improvement to sewer system and drainage	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Sites.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	N/A	N/A
OB5-To maintain and enhance existing community, sports, recreational and social facilities whilst encouraging the development of new facilities to provide for the expected growth of the parish.	Enhancement of sporting facilities	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Sites.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC	N/A	N/A
OB6-To protect and maintain the natural and historic environment of the Parish, in particular its designated areas, sites and buildings; and its landscape character, especially views and vistas across open countryside, ensuring access to these through the	Safeguarding of natural and historic landscape and townscape	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Sites.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	This policy will help protect and enhance the existing environment and	N/A

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public footpath and bridle way network.					
Policy S1: Promoting a Sustainable Community	Promotion of sustainable design  Road safety improvement	No significant impact on the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	This policy will help mitigate potential environmental impacts caused by development.	No. This objective will help will not result in any development.
Policy S2 – Development Strategy	Development in line with proportional growth in line with Policy RA2 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy).  New homes will be created in Shobdon. Construction traffic may create noise and disruption.	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. Potential detrimental effects would be mitigated with the policies within the Core Strategy and by NDP policy	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	It is unlikely that this policy will have a significant impact on both SACs. As any potential impact will be mitigated by policies in the Core Strategy and NDP policy S13 and S14.	No. Scale and extent of such development is unlikely to be significant
Policy S3: Highways and Transport Infrastructure	Promotion of safe access onto highway  Promotion of adequate car parking  Promotion of highway safety  Cap on street lights	Safer roads  Decrease vehicle speed	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	It is unlikely that this policy will have a significant impact on both SACs.	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to criteria for highways and transport infrastructure.
Policy S4: Meeting Housing Needs within Shobdon Village	Housing development Increased vehicle traffic Increased demand for depending upon location of development	Uncertain as to the impact upon the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge	No. This policy highlights the number of houses to be developed within the identified	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to criteria for meeting housing

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	River Wye SAC		SAC		needs within Shobdon village.
Policy S5: Phasing of Development	Ensures development will be phased within the plan period	No significant impact on the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC	N/A	It is unlikely that this policy will have a significant impact on both SACs.	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to criteria for phasing housing to promote sustainable growth within Shobdon.
Policy S6: Provision of Affordable Housing	Stipulates affordable housing criteria	No significant impact on the River Wye SAC or Downton Gorge SAC.	N/A	It is unlikely that this policy will have a significant impact on both SACs.	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to criteria for development, i.e. the overall housing development, the effects of which are assessed separately under other policies.
Policy S7 – Design Criteria for Residential Development	Sets out design criteria for residential development	No significant impact on the River Wye SAC or Downton Gorge SAC.	N/A	N/A	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to design criteria for Development.
Policy S8: Supporting Local Business	Enhancement of employment land around Shobdon Airfield	N/A	N/A	It is unlikely that this policy will have a significant impact on	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it

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	is encouraged.			both SACs.	relates to support and promote local business that results in sustainable growth.
Policy S9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	Development of renewable energy infrastructure	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC	N/A	N/A	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to support and promotion of domestic renewable energy and small scale low carbon proposals.
Policy S10: Surface and Foul Water Drainage	Safeguard against surface water flooding in new development  Upgrading sewer works  Utilise of SUDs	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC	N/A	This policy will help mitigate potential impacts caused from new development on surface water flooding, sewer capacity and infrastructure.	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to safeguarding new development against flooding and overcapacities in Sewerage.
Policy S11: Accessibility to Community Facilities	Facilitating better access to community facilities	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC	N/A	N/A	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to criteria for community facility development.
Policy S12: Broadband Infrastructure	Policy to support proposals for creating or improving the broadband infrastructure along with necessary	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge	N/A	N/A

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	conditions.		SAC		
Policy S13: Protection and Provision of Open Space	Protection and enhancement of Open Spaces within Shobdon  Greenspace protected	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	N/A	No. This policy is criteria based policy regarding open space which would not lead to development itself.
Policy S14: Retaining the Natural Environment and Landscape	Protection and enhancement of natural environment	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	This policy will help mitigate potential environmental impacts caused by development.	No. This policy is a criteria based policy which would not lead to development and will help safeguard against any detrimental impact derived from new development.

# Appendix 3



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**Initial Habitat Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental  
Assessment Screening Notification**

**The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012 (Reg. 32)**

**Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d)**

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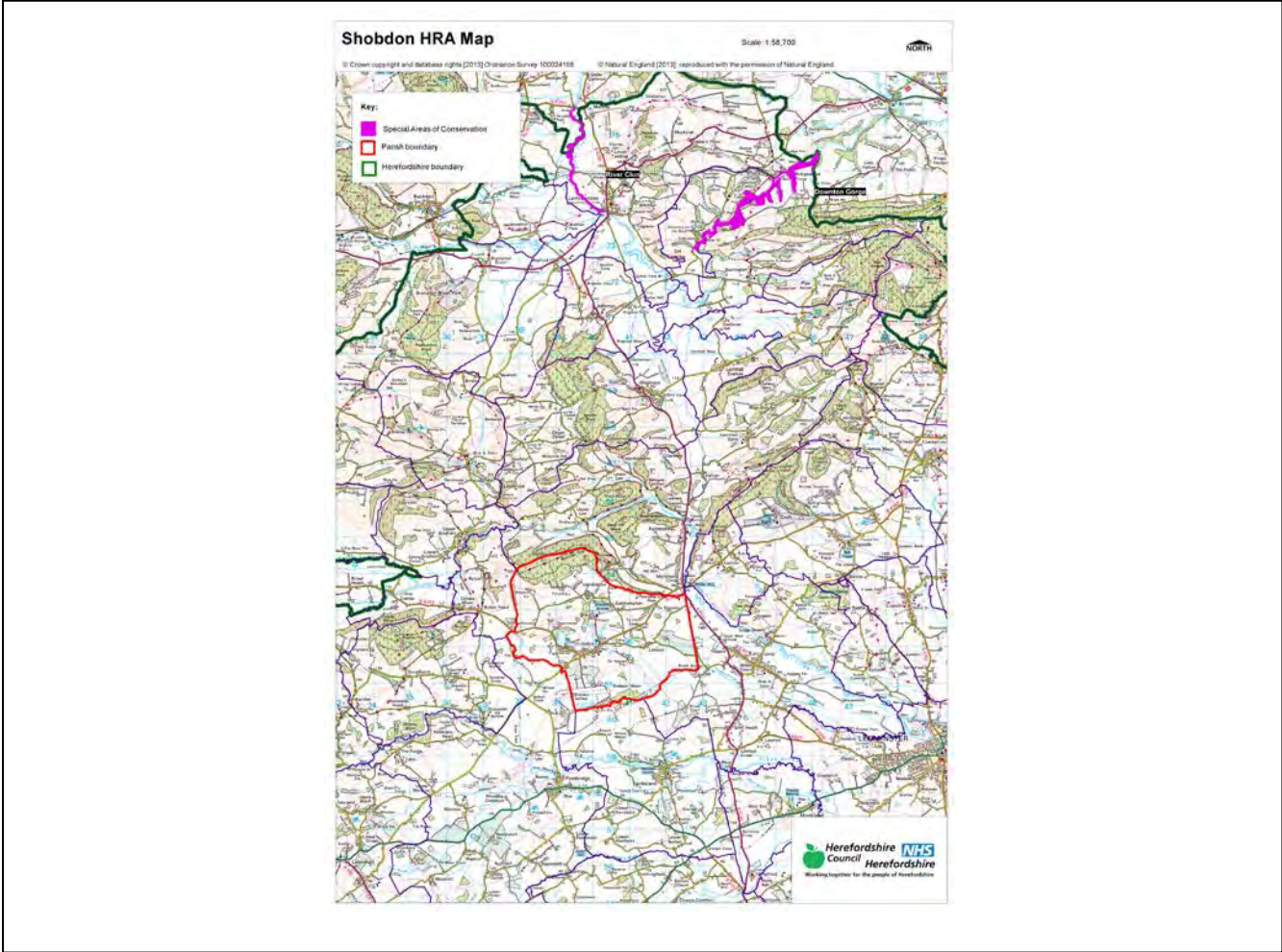
<b>Neighbourhood Area:</b>	Shobdon Neighbourhood Area
<b>Parish Council:</b>	Shobdon Parish Council
<b>Neighbourhood Area Designation Date:</b>	17/07/2012

### **Introduction**

This Initial Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening has been undertaken to assess whether any European Sites exist within or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Area which could be affected by any future proposals or policies.

Through continual engagement the outcomes of any required assessments will help to ensure that proposed developments will not lead to Likely Significant Effects upon a European Site or cause adverse impacts upon other environmental assets, such as the built historic or local natural environment.

**HRA Initial Screening: Map showing relationship of Neighbourhood Area with European Sites  
(not to scale)**



**Initial HRA Screening**

**River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC:**

Does the Neighbourhood Area have the River Wye (including the River Lugg) in or next to its boundary?	N	The River Wye/Lugg is not within the borders of the Parish
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC?	Y	The majority of the Parish is within the River Lugg hydrological catchment area. The very eastern tip is in the River Arrow catchment area.
If yes above, does the Neighbourhood Area have mains drainage to deal with foul sewage?	Y	There is mains drainage at Shobdon

**Downton Gorge SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC?	Y	Downton Gorge is 9.5km away from the Parish
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**River Clun SAC:**

Does the Neighbourhood Area include: Border Group Parish Council or Leintwardine Group Parish Council?	N	River Clun does not border the Parish
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**Usk Bat Sites SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of the SAC boundary?	N	Usk Bat Sites are 48.3km away from the Parish
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**Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of any of the individual sites that make up the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites?	N	The Parish is 47km away from Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites
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**Wye Valley Woodlands SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of any of the individual sites that make up the Wye Valley Woodlands Site?	N	The Parish is 47.6km away from the Wye Valley Woodlands
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**HRA Conclusion:**

The assessment above highlights that the following European Sites will need to be taken into account in the future Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Shobdon Neighbourhood Area and a Full HRA Screening will be required.

**European Site**

*(List only those which are relevant from above)*

River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC

Downton Gorge SAC

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Initial Screening for nature conservation landscape and heritage features**

The following environmental features are within or in general proximity to the Shobdon Neighbourhood Area and would need to be taken into account within a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, the NDP will also need to consider the other SEA topics set out in Guidance Note 9a to ensure that the plan does not cause adverse impacts.

<b>SEA features</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>SEA required</b>
Air Quality Management Areas	0	There are no AQMA's within the Parish	N
Ancient Woodland	1	Chaff Wood	Y
Areas of Archaeological Interest	0	There are no AAI's within the Parish	N
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	0	There are no AONB's within the Parish	N
Conservation Areas	0	There are no Conservation Areas within the Parish	N
European Sites	0	There are no SACs within the Parish	N
Flood Areas		Flood Zones 2 and 3 at the south of the Parish to the east and south of Shobdon Airfield, and flows up towards Shobdon	Y
Listed Buildings	Numerous	There are numerous listed buildings throughout the Parish	N
Local Sites (SWS/SINCS/RIGS)	3 (SWS)	Shobdon Pools; Marsh Covert; Pinsley Brook	Y
Long distance footpaths/trails	1	The Mortimer Trail	Y
Mineral Reserves	0	There are no Minerals Reserves sites within the Parish	N
National Nature Reserve	0	There are no NNR's within the Parish	N
Registered & unregistered parks and gardens	1 Registered	Shobdon Arches	Y
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	3	Shobdon Arches; Shobdon Castle Mound; Round Barrow 270yds (250m) south of Shobdon Church	Y
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	0	There are no SSSI's within the Parish	N

**Decision Notification:**

The initial screening highlights that the Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Shobdon Neighbourhood Area:

- a) Will require further environmental assessment for Habitat Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

**Assessment date: 23/05/2013**

**Assessed by: James Latham**

## Appendix 1: European Sites

The table below provides the name of each European Site, which has been screened in for the purposes of neighbourhood planning in Herefordshire; includes their site features of integrity; and vulnerability data. This is based on the sites individual features of integrity and their vulnerabilities, which could include distance criteria. This has been used in identifying which parishes are likely to require a full HRA Screening of their future Neighbourhood Development Plan, to establish if their plan might have Likely Significant Effects on a European Site.

<b>Downton Gorge</b>
<b>Site Features:</b> <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines
<b>Vulnerability data:</b> 10km for air quality associated with poultry units or other intensive agricultural practices.
<b>River Clun</b>
<b>Site Features:</b> Freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
<b>Vulnerability data:</b> Water quality is important to maintain the site feature. Parishes either side of the River Clun will be affected.
<b>River Wye</b>
<b>Site Features:</b> Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation. Transition mires and quaking bogs. White-clawed (or Atlantic Stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> . Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> . Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> . River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> . Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> . Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> . Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> . Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> . Allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>
<b>Vulnerability data:</b> Proximity: Developments should not be within 100m of the designated bank. Some developments beyond 100m may also have impacts based on proximity and these issues should be addressed where possible when developing NDP policy and choosing site allocations. Water Quality: Within the whole catchment of the River Wye, which includes the River Lugg, mains drainage issues with regards to water quality are being resolved through the Core Strategy / Local Plan and development of a Nutrient Management Plan. Welsh Water should be consulted to ensure that the proposed growth will be within the limit of their consents. Otters: "An otter will occupy a 'home range', which on fresh waters usually includes a stretch of river as well as associated tributary streams, ditches, ponds, lakes and woodland. The size of a home range depends largely on the availability of food and shelter, and the presence of neighbouring otters. On rivers, a male's home range may be up to 40km or more of watercourse and associated areas; females have smaller ranges (roughly half the size) and favour quieter locations for breeding, such as tributary streams. Otters without an established home range are known as 'transients'. They are mostly juveniles looking for a territory of their own, or adults that have been pushed out of their territories. Transient otters may use an area for a short while, but they will move on if conditions are not suitable or if they are driven away by resident otters. Transients will have been important in extending the range of otters, but they are very difficult to identify from field signs. Within a home range an otter may use many resting sites. These include above-ground shelters, such as stands of scrub or areas of rank grass, and underground 'holts' – for example, cavities under tree roots and dry drainage pipes." (Source: EA website: <a href="http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/Otters_the_facts.pdf">http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/Otters_the_facts.pdf</a> accessed 09/04/2013)

### Usk Bat Site

**Site Features:** Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: European dry heaths, Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration, Blanket bogs, Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation, Caves not open to the public, *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines. Annex II species of primary reason for site selection: Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, UK population 5%, although it is suggested this is an underestimate.

**Vulnerability data:** Lesser Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 5km and 10km between their summer and winter roosts. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is vulnerable to disturbance; light pollution; and habitat loss. Check with the planning ecologist for other issues.

### Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites

**Site Features:** Annex II species that are a primary reason for site selection: Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

**Vulnerability data:** Lesser Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 5km and 10km between their summer and winter roosts. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is vulnerable to disturbance; light pollution; and habitat loss. Check with the planning ecologist for other issues.

Greater Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 20-30km between their summer and winter roosts.

NDPs closest to the European Site will need to consider:  
Woodland habitat buffer.

Lesser Horseshoe Bat: Old buildings; woodland locations; sheltered valleys, extensive deciduous woods or dense scrub, close to roost sites. In areas of fragmented habitats, linear habitats such as hedgerows are important corridors. Vulnerable to loss or disturbance of both summer and winter roosts and removal of linear habitat.

Greater Horseshoe Bat: Large buildings, pasture, edge of mixed deciduous woodland and hedgerows. Mixed land-use especially south-facing slopes, favours beetles, moths and insects they feed on. During the winter they depend on caves, abandoned mines and other underground sites for undisturbed hibernation. A system/series of sites required. Vulnerable to loss of insect food supply, due to insecticide use, changing farming practices and loss of broad-leaved tree-cover and loss / disturbance of underground roosts sites.

### Wye Valley Woodlands

**Site Features:** Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for site selection: Beech forests *Asperulo-Fagetum*, *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines, *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, 51-100 residents

**Vulnerability data:** Lesser Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 5km and 10km between their summer and winter roosts. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is vulnerable to disturbance; light pollution; and habitat loss. Check with the planning ecologist for other issues. NDPs closest to the European Site will need to consider: Woodland habitat buffer. Lesser Horseshoe Bat: Old buildings; woodland locations; sheltered valleys, extensive deciduous woods or dense scrub, close to roost sites. In areas of fragmented habitats, linear habitats such as hedgerows are important corridors. Vulnerable to loss or disturbance of both summer and winter roosts and removal of linear habitat.



## Appendix 2: Wye Catchment Map

