

# Habitats Regulations Assessment



## Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Area

September 2016

# **Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Plan Draft (September 2016)**

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## 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 Wigmore Group Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Wigmore Group of parishes, in order to set out the aims, objectives and policies for the development of the Group Parish up to 2031. This HRA reviews the Draft Wigmore Group of Parish Neighbourhood Plan (September 2016).
- 1.3 The NDP is criteria based and does not allocate sites. 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 Local Plan-Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment Report (May 2015) and ensures that there will not be any significant impacts upon Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.4 The map below shows Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Area and the parish boundary



## 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, Wigmore Group 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.*

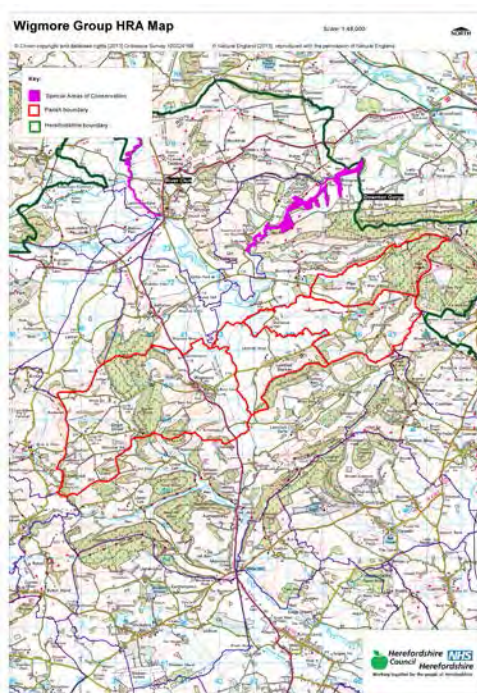
- 2.3 HRA is an impact-led assessment and refers to the assessment of the potential effects of a neighbourhood plan on one or more European sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):
- **SPAs** are classified under the European Council Directive 'on the 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.
  - **Ramsar sites** support internationally important wetlands habitats
- 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 Wigmore Group of Parishes Neighbourhood Plan 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 there are no Special Areas of Conservation within the neighbourhood area. However, the western edge is contained within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg which flows into the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC. Downton Gorge SAC is 0.47km away from the northern border of the neighbourhood area. Therefore a full screening assessment is required. Figure 2 below highlights the location of Downton Gorge SAC in relation to the neighbourhood area. The catchments for the River Wye and River Lugg are shown within Appendix 3.



- 4.2 For full details of the River Wye's and Downton Gorge attributes which contribute to and define their integrity and vulnerable data see Appendix 1 of the Wigmore Group Plan Initial Screening Report. The Initial Screening Report, Oct 2014, can be found in Appendix 4 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 Wigmore Group 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. Overall the majority of the options proposing any growth appear to depend on location and scale in relation to environmental impact. However the options listed are all on a small scale and are unlikely to have a significant impact on either SAC.
- 4.4 As Wigmore Group progressed 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 options from the consultation from the community. If a majority of these options are taken forward either as standalone policies or in combination with other policies then the mitigation from these options will help to counter balance the effect of all new development within the Parish. A list of the options assessed and the Assessment matrix for the options can be found in Appendix 1



## **5 Description of the Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Plan**

5.1 The Draft Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Plan 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 issues.

5.2 The NDP then details the aims for the Group Parish over the Plan period and six objectives of how this will be achieved. The objectives cover the following topics:

- Proportionate growth in Wigmore village
- Tenure, type, size of new housing
- Protection of character and existing facilities and services
- Building styles and design
- Local employment and tourism
- Sustainable development and environmental assets

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

- New housing development in Wigmore
- New housing development in Leinthall Starks
- Ensuring an appropriate range of tenure, types and size of new dwellings
- Wigmore Village
- Wigmore School
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Design of development in Wigmore Group parish
- Design of development in Wigmore Conservation Area
- Promoting local employment and tourism
- New communication technologies
- Protecting and enhancing local landscape character
- Dark skies

5.4 A draft consultation is planned to be undertaken in line with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, any amendments or changes suggested as part of this assessment would need to be considered as part of the review of comments received to this public consultation.

## **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 Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (May 2015). 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 Wigmore Group 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 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 Herefordshire Core Strategy was also taking 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.

## **8 Conclusions from the Screening Matrix**

8.1 None of the Draft Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Plan policies was concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on either the River Wye SAC or Downton Gorge SAC. Based on assumptions and information contained within the Wigmore Group Plan, Herefordshire Core Strategy and 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 or the Downton Gorge SAC.

8.2 With regards to Downton Gorge SAC, the plan does not propose any developments, such as intensive livestock or poultry unit, which are likely to have an effect on the air quality.

8.3 With regards to the River Wye SAC, only a small rural part of the neighbourhood area is within the River Lugg hydrological catchments. The policies within the plan mainly target development to the village of Wigmore and Leinthall Starks which are both outside the catchment.

8.4 Also, in many cases the policies themselves 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.

8.5 It is unlikely that the Wigmore Group 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 sites will be of a small scale.

- 8.6 It is therefore concluded that Wigmore Group of Parishes Neighbourhood Plan **will not have a likely significant effect** on the River Wye SAC or Downton Gorge SAC.
- 8.7 Any further amendments to policies (post September 2016) will be rescreened if required and an addendum to this report will be produced.



# Appendix 1

NDP options	HRA Screening of Emerging NDP options				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the option	Likely effect if option implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of option 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 Do nothing	Not producing a neighbourhood plan would result in any future growth decisions within the parish being made based on the strategic policies within the Core Strategy.  Proportional housing and employment growth in accordance with the Core Strategy.	Core Strategy HRA has examined the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy rural policies and concluded that there are no LSE but acknowledges the role of neighbourhood plans to provide additional certainty.	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.  Western part of the group parish is with the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg. The SAC is not within the parish itself.	n/a	n/a
Option 2 Allocate sites for housing	Allocation of sites for housing or other uses would give certainty to future development. Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.	None. The village of Wigmore is outside of the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg	n/a	n/a	No; The village, where likely proportionate growth would be located is outside of the catchment area for the River Lugg.

<p>Option 3</p> <p>Manage future housing using a settlement boundary</p>	<p>The designation of a settlement boundary will give additional certainty and help define those areas considered as the built form and open countryside. This can aid the direction of further growth to maintain the quality of the landscape and surroundings. There is less certainty as any growth will be adjudged by criteria based policy.</p>	<p>Any settlement boundary would need to be designated to ensure that sufficient capacity was included to permit the proportional growth requirements within Policy RA2 of the Core Strategy. Criteria would need to be included within the policy to safeguard against any likely effects. However the village is outside of the catchment for the River Lugg</p>	n/a	n/a	<p>No; The village, where likely proportionate growth would be located is outside of the catchment area for the River Lugg.</p>
<p>Option 4</p> <p>Allocate site and identify a settlement boundary</p>	<p>Allocation of sites for housing or other uses would give certainty to future development. Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording. The designation of a settlement boundary will give additional certainty and help define those areas considered as the built form and open</p>	<p>Pursuing this option would give greater certainty over future development. However the village where proportional growth and the settlement boundary are likely to be located are outside of the River Lugg catchment area.</p>	n/a	n/a	<p>No; The village, where likely proportionate growth would be located is outside of the catchment area for the River Lugg.</p>

	countryside				
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## Wigmore Neighbourhood Development Plan

### Options considered

Option 1 Do nothing
Option 2 Allocate sites for housing
Option 3 Manage future housing using a settlement boundary
Option 4 Allocate sites and identify a settlement boundary.

# Appendix 2



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?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/policy and to be considered as part of Appropriate Assessment	Could the policy have likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account?)
<b>Objective 1</b>  Promoting proportionate to the size of Wigmore Village.	Increase in recreation activities  Housing development  Increased vehicle traffic  Increased demand for water abstraction and sewage treatment	Uncertain as to the impact upon the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge SAC depending upon location of development.	River Wye SAC  Downton Gorge SAC	The village itself, where future growth would be targeted, is outside of the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg.  Improved water efficiency measures, metering and addressing leakages in supply may help to mitigate any additional pressure placed on the water supply as a result of new development.  Good practice measures are implemented during and after construction phase ensuring there is minimal noise and vibration.  This policy is not proposing any	No. This policy ensures the number of houses to be developed within the village over the Plan period to be in proportion in size and scale. The village itself is outside of the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg and will not affect the air quality of Downton Gorge.

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				development associated with the air quality vulnerability of Downton Gorge.	
<b>Objective 2</b> Suitable tenure, type and size	Promotes suitable range of housing for all need	n/a	n/a	n/a	No; this objective in itself would not lead to development but promote range and max criteria.
<b>Objective 3</b> To maintain the existing character, facilities and services.	Promoting measures to ensure the historic, cultural and ecological heritage of the Parish remains or is enhanced.	Objective is seeking to ensure that development is mindful of the character of the area.	River Wye SAC Downton Gorge	n/a	No. This objective will not lead to development itself but will seek to ensure that development respects the character and environment that currently exists within the Neighbourhood area.
<b>Objective 4</b> Styles of buildings and sympathetic with local traditional building styles.	Promotes design principles	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC or Downton Gorge SAC	n/a	n/a	No. This objective would not lead to development itself but promotes the use of traditional material and styles
<b>Objective 5</b> Local employment and improve tourism facilities.	Support for employment opportunities and the promotion of tourism within the parish.	Additional visitor numbers, increase traffic, increased abstraction and demand for water use. Potential increase in visitor numbers to the	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC Downton Gorge SAC	Measures are included in both the Wigmore Neighbourhood Plan to help relieved any increased pressure on the River Lugg and Wye for recreation or tourism	No; this objective in itself will not lead to development but support further employment and tourism opportunities

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		parish could have an effect on the River Lugg		<p>purposes.</p> <p>The implementation of the Nutrient Management Plan will specifically address issues relating to water quality in the River Wye.</p> <p>The increase in poultry or intensive livestock units within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC should be avoided to prevent air quality issues within Downton Gorge.</p>	
<p><b>Objective 6</b></p> <p>Protecting key environmental assets (e.g green spaces and landscapes) and taking account of constraints (e.g flooding)</p>	Protecting environmental assets	No likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC and Downton Gorge	N/A	N/A	No: this objective will not lead to new development rather it aims to ensure that all development proposed will conserve and protect green spaces, landscape and heritage.
<p><b>Policy WG1</b></p> <p>New Housing development in Wigmore</p>	Small scale proportionate growth within or adjacent to the settlement boundary of Wigmore.	The River Wye does not flow near the parish but the western part of the neighbourhood area is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg. The village of Wigmore to which this	n/a	n/a	No: this policy will allow for the small scale sustainable growth of Wigmore village in line with Core Strategy policy RA1/RA2. Wigmore village is outside of the hydrological catchment of the River

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		<p>policy is targeted is outside this area.</p> <p>This policy does not contain uses will not affect the air quality associated with Downton Gorge.</p>			Lugg.
<p><b>Policy WG2</b></p> <p>New Housing development in Leinthall Starkes</p>	Small scale local connection housing within the village of Leinthall Starkes	Outside of the River Lugg catchment and not proposing any uses effecting air quality in the Downton Gorge.	n/a	n/a	No; this policy will allow for very small scale sustainable growth in line with Policy RA2 in an area not effected by either SAC
<p><b>Policy WG3</b></p> <p>Ensuring an appropriate range of tenures, types and sizes of houses</p>	Promotes suitable range of housing for all local need	n/a	n/a	n/a	No; this policy in itself would not lead to development but promote range and max criteria.
<p><b>Policy WG4</b></p> <p>Wigmore Village</p>	Protecting existing services. Criteria for new retail, commercial and community facilities.	The River Wye does not flow near the parish but the western part of the neighbourhood area is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg. The village of Wigmore to which this policy is targeted is	n/a	n/a	No; this policy would only lead to small scale village retail, commercial or community facilities and potential within areas outside of the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg and Wye.

		<p>outside this area.</p> <p>This policy does not contain uses will not affect the air quality associated with Downton Gorge.</p>			
<p><b>Policy WG5</b></p> <p>Wigmore School</p>	<p>Additional school buildings.</p> <p>Increased hard standing and potential surface runoff.</p> <p>Additional playing pitches and footpaths, increase recreational</p>	<p>The River Wye does not flow near the parish but the western part of the neighbourhood area is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg. The village of Wigmore to which this policy is targeted is outside this area.</p> <p>This policy does not contain uses will not affect the air quality associated with Downton Gorge.</p>	n/a	<p>Any additional buildings or parking would be located outside of the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg/Wye. Policy criteria exist with regards to localised flooding measures.</p>	<p>No; the proposals are not within the hydrological catchment of the River Wye or for uses which would affect the air quality of Downton Gorge.</p>
<p><b>Policy WG6</b></p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy</p>	<p>Supporting increase in community facilities within the rural areas.</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>No; this would only lead to support for community projects.</p>
<p><b>Policy W7</b></p> <p>Design of development in Wigmore Group</p>	<p>Promotion of design principle in new developments</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>No; this policy in itself would not lead to development but promote design</p>

parish					principles.
<b>Policy WG8</b> Design of development in Wigmore Conservation Area	Promotion of design principle in the conservation area	n/a	n/a	n/a	No; this policy in itself would not lead to development but promote design principles.
<b>Policy WG9</b> Promoting local employment and tourism	Additional visitor numbers, increase traffic, increased abstraction and demand for water use.	<p>The River Wye does not flow through the parish but an area to the western part of the neighbourhood area is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg.</p> <p>Uncertain as to the impacts upon the River Wye SAC dependent on the location of any development.</p> <p>Potential increase in visitor numbers to the parish could have an effect on the River Wye</p> <p>Employment and infrastructure development.</p> <p>Possible vehicular movements and demand for water abstraction and treatment.</p>	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC Downton Gorge SAC	<p>Improved water efficiency measures, metering and addressing leakage in supply will help mitigate any additional pressures in water supply.</p> <p>The implementation of the Nutrient Management Plan will specifically address issues relating to water quality in the River Wye.</p> <p>Although the River Wye does not pass through the parish, additional policy criteria could be added to strengthen the avoidance locations which could have an adverse impact on the natural environment especially within the River Lugg catchment.</p>	No; but the addition of a reference to the River Lugg catchment area within criteria d will help to strengthen the policy in relation to the River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC



		Intensive livestock and poultry units would have an effect on air quality.			
<b>Policy WG10</b> New communications technologies	Encouragement of broadband	n/a	n/a	n/a	No, this would only lead to very small scale technological installations
<b>Policy WG11</b> No policy within plan					
<b>Policy W12</b> Protecting and enhancing local landscape character	Seeks to ensure all development protects landscape of the group parish	n/a	n/a	Although the River Wye does not pass through the parish, additional policy criteria could be added to strengthen the avoidance locations which could have an adverse impact on the natural environment especially River Lugg catchment.	No: this objective will not lead to new development rather it aims to ensure that all development proposed will conserve and enhance the landscape, environment, heritage and habitats.
<b>Policy WG13</b> Dark Skies	Reduction in the use of lighting within the group parish	n/a	n/a	n/a	No, although this will have a positive effect on many species, particularly those who are nocturnal

# 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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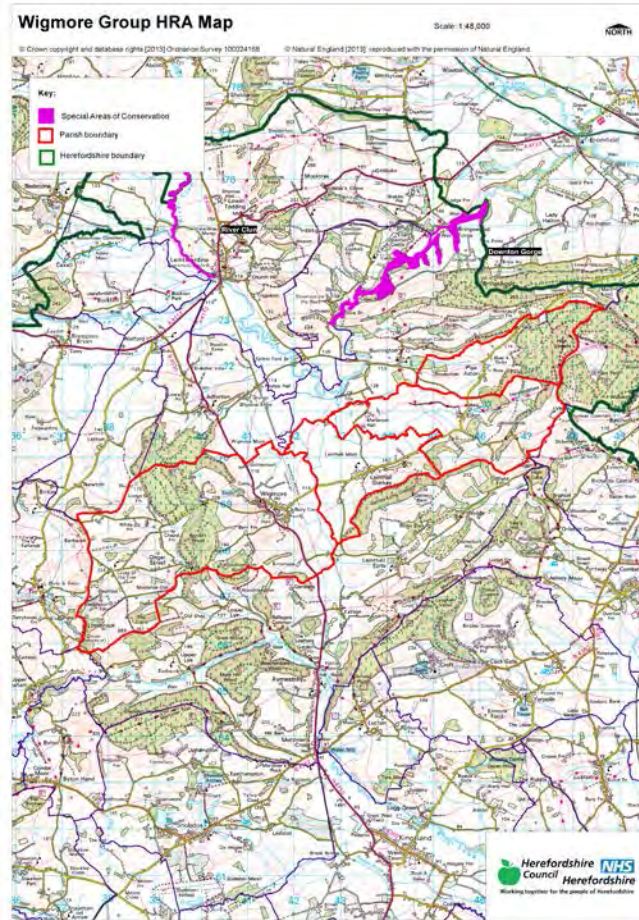
<b>Neighbourhood Area:</b>	Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Area
<b>Parish Council:</b>	Wigmore Group Parish Council
<b>Neighbourhood Area Designation Date:</b>	28/01/2013

### **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?	Y	The River Lugg (not part of the SAC) is 0.47km away from the Group Parish
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC?	Y	The western tip of Wigmore Parish is within the River Lugg hydrological catchment area
If yes above, does the Neighbourhood Area have mains drainage to deal with foul sewage?	N	There is no mains drainage within the Group Parish

**Downton Gorge SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC?	Y	Downton Gorge is 1.78km away from the Group 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 Group Parish
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**Usk Bat Sites SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of the SAC boundary?	N	Usk Bat Sites are 52.93km away from the Group 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 Group Parish is 52.8km 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 Group Parish is 57.9km 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 Wigmore Group 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 Wigmore Group 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 Group Parish	N
Ancient Woodland	13	Prichards Hill Wood; Old Castle Wood (border); Barnett Wood; Woodhampton Wood; Silver Will; Paysure Wood; Gatley Long Coppice; Petchfield Copse; Burrel Wood; Brush Wood; Hall Wood; Well Wood; Whitcliffe Wood	Y
Areas of Archaeological Interest	0	There are no AAI's within the Group Parish	N
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	0	There are no AONB's within the Group Parish	N
Conservation Areas	1	There is a Conservation Area at Wigmore village	Y
European Sites	0	There are no SACs within the Group Parish	N
Flood Areas		There are Flood Zones in the north east of Wigmore Parish, and also in the north of Leinthall Starkses Parish. This also flows into Elton Parish south of Marlbrook Hall and runs along the border of Pipe Aston Parish. There are also Flood Zones that run along the border of Wigmore/Leinthall Starkses Parishes.	Y
Listed Buildings	Numerous	There are numerous Listed Buildings throughout the Group Parish	Y
Local Sites (SWS/SINCS/RIGS)	19 (SWS) 3 (RIGS)	SWS: Land at Limebrook; Fields, woodlands and verges near Limebrook; Woodbatch Plantation; Land at Lower Woodbatch; Land near Lower Woodbatch; Land at Chapel Farm; Wigmore Rolls; Land at Dickendale; Woodhampton and Barnett Woods; Greenhill Common; Land at Leinthall Starkses; Petchfield Copse and Woodland to the north; Land at Elton; Land adjoining Killhorse Lane x2; Burrington Meadow (border); Field at Bowburnet; King Acre and Hall Woods and Aston Copse; Land adjacent to Pitch Coppice. RIGS: Wigmore Castle; Goggin Road Section; Shobdon Drumlins (border)	Y
Long distance footpaths/trails	2	Mortimer Trail; Herefordshire Trail	Y
Mineral Reserves	3	3 sites that run along the southern edge	Y



		of the Group Parish boundary and go north at Pipe Aston Parish	
National Nature Reserve	0	There are no NNR's within the Group Parish	N
Registered & unregistered parks and gardens	2 Unregistered	Elton Hall; Haye Park (border)	Y
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	3	Limebrook Priory (border); Wigmore Castle; Aston Tump	Y
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	6	Burrington Meadow (Unfavourable Recovering) (border); Elton Lane Cutting (Favourable); Mortimer Forest (Favourable); Burrington Sections (Favourable) (border); Burrington Farm Stream Sections (Favourable) (border); River Teme (Unfavourable No Change) (border)	Y

**Decision Notification:**

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

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

**Assessment date: 22/05/2013**

**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

