

# Habitats Regulations Assessment

Report for:

**Ocle Pychard Group Neighbourhood Area**

**September 2017**



# Ocle Pychard Group HRA

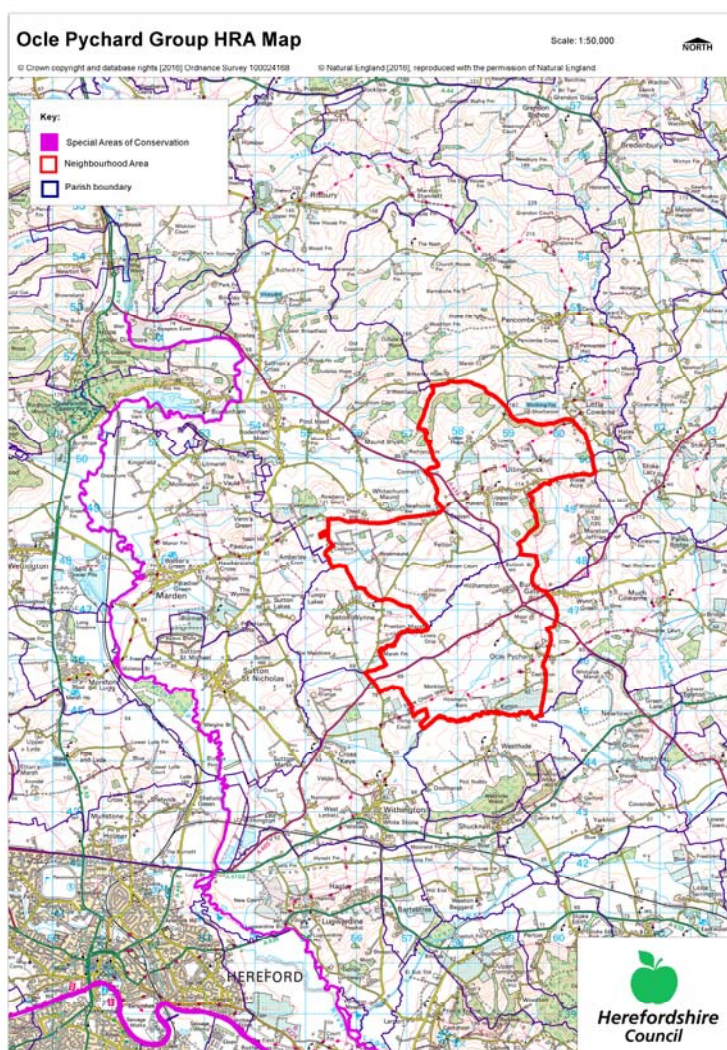
## HRA Screening Assessment

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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 Ocle Pychard Group Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Ocle Pychard Group 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 Ocle Pychard Group Neighbourhood Plan September 2017.
- 1.3 The NDP has 13 criteria based policies and allocates 1 main sites across the three group parishes. 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 Ocle Pychard Group Neighbourhood Area with the European Site 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, Ocle Pychard 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.
- 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 Ocle Pychard Group 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 2016) found that the Neighbourhood Area is in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC and that the Parish is within the River Lugg catchment area. Therefore a full screening assessment is required.
- 4.2 For full details of the River Lugg and River Wye SAC attributes which contribute to and define their integrity and vulnerable data see Appendix 1 of the Ocley Pychard Group Initial Screening Report. The Initial Screening Report, May 2016, 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 Ocley Pychard 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. Of the 5 options put forward the no NDP option was not considered viable for the Parish. The remaining 4 options all proposed growth however they would all 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 Ocley Pychard Group progresses from options onto their NDP policies, the Plan will need to identify ways in which the least effect on the River Wye 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 Ocley Pychard Group Neighbourhood Development Plan**

- 5.1 The Draft Ocley Pychard Group 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 Group Parish over the Plan period and 3 objectives of how this will be achieved. The objectives are as follow:

##### Objectives for housing

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will ensure that new housing contributes to thriving communities by:

- Identifying land for new housing and demonstrating delivery to meet the requirements of the Local Plan Core Strategy.
- Defining the extent of the settlements of Burley Gate, Ocley Pychard and Ullingswick.
- Requiring new housing to provide a mix of size and type of properties to meet community needs.

##### Objectives for economic and social development

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will guide economic and social development by:

- Supporting rural diversification and other forms of economic development which are appropriate to their location and setting.
- Working to improve electronic communications.
- Supporting renewable energy, particularly community-led proposals.
- Supporting the retention of existing community facilities and new provision.
- Identifying Community Actions in respect of matters outside the formal scope of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

#### Objectives for the environment

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will ensure that the local environment is protected and enhanced by:

- Providing for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environments in accordance with Local Plan Core Strategy policies.
- Ensuring that new development is in keeping with its surroundings and appropriately designed and accessed.
- Supporting modern design approaches that make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 5.3 The NDP also sets out 13 policies on various topics based on the objective headings above and also for the villages, these include:

OPG1 - Sustainable Development

OPG2 - Development needs and requirement

OPG3 - Burley Gate

OPG4 - Land East of the Telephone Exchange, Burley Gate

OPG5 - Ocle Pychard

OPG 6 - Ullingswick

OPG7 - Economic development in Ocle Pychard

OPG8 - Communications and broadband

OPG9 - Renewable energy

OPG10 - Community facilities

OPG11 - Natural environment

OPG12 - Historic environment

OPG13 - Design and access

## **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 Ocle Pychard 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 pre-submission version of 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 Ocle Pychard Group Neighbourhood Plan (September 2017) policies were concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC. Based on assumptions and information contained within the Ocle Pychard Group Parish 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.
- 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 mainly criteria based, however does allocate sites.
- 8.4 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) has stated for the Core Strategy that there is sufficient existing permitted headroom in the Sewerage Treatment works serving the Ocle Pychard Group area to continue to treat the water from the amount of housing provided for in the Core Strategy policies. 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.

- 8.5 It is unlikely that the Ocle Pychard 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 and in line with the proportional growth specified in the Core Strategy.
- 8.6 It is therefore concluded that the Ocle Pychard Group Parish Plan will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC and Parish Councillors will welcome the conclusion as to no likely significant effect.
- 8.7 Any further amendments to policies (post September 2017) will be rescreened if required and an addendum to this report will be produced.



# Appendix 1

## Appendix 5 – Ocle Pychard Group Parish (Reg 14)

### Options Considered

September 2017

Option 1- Do nothing and NDP and let HC use the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan. The Group PC carefully considered whether or not to undertake a NDP, or rely instead on the LPCS and the RASA DPD. Having taken advice, it was resolved in February 2016 to undertake a NDP.

Option 2- Use a criteria based plan only This option was not pursued because of the scale of the minimum housing requirement, the nature of the three LPCS settlements within the N. Area and the policy requirements of the LPCS, notably the need to clearly define the extent of the RA2 settlements. A windfall/criteria based approach would not suffice to demonstrate that the housing requirement could be met.

Option 3- Allocate sites This option was considered in order to address the LPCS housing requirement. To this end, a call for sites was held in spring 2017 and a Housing Site Assessment (HSA) prepared which confirmed the need to select this option and allocate sites if the requirement was to be met.

On this basis, three options for site release at Burley Gate were set out in the HSA. These were then refined in public consultation. The Revised Housing Option (RHO), document previously supplied, explains the process and sets out the basis of the approach which now appears in the draft Plan.

Option 4- Define settlement boundaries This option was considered in conjunction with an option 3 approach order to meet LPCS policy requirements and having regard to the nature of the named settlements.

Draft boundaries were set out in the HSA and confirmed in the RHO.

Option 5- Define settlement boundaries and allocate sites This is a combination of 3 and 4 above. As explained, this approach forms the basis of the Plan's approach to housing delivery.

# Appendix 2

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

Parish Council Name: Ocle Pychard Group

NDP Title: Ocle Pychard Group NDP

Date undertaken: September 2017

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?)
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>		<i>The significance of the effect is key when assessing the effects.</i>			
Objective 1	Providing a variety of types of housing, definition of settlements and support of communities through development would give certainty to future	This objective would give greater certainty over future development within the area particularly within the River Wye catchment. If required mitigation criteria can be added to	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	N/A	No; policy criteria can be added to any allocation site as an outcome to this objective to mitigate the impact.

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	development. Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.	site allocations policies to ensure no likely significant effect would occur.			
Objective 2	Guidance of economic and social development through rural diversification, and other economic development, exploration and support of renewable energies and community engagement. Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.	This objective would give greater certainty over future development within the area particularly within the River Wye catchment. If required mitigation criteria can be added to site allocations policies to ensure no likely significant effect would occur.	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	N/A	No; policy criteria can be added to any allocation site as an outcome to this objective to mitigate the impact.
Objective 3	Protection of the environment and ensuring that the development is considerably deigned and provides protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environments.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No; this objective in itself does not lead to development but seeks to protect the environment.

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OPTIONS					
Option 1- Do nothing and NDP and let HC use the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan	<p>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.</p> <p>Proportional housing and employment growth would be in accordance with the Core Strategy.</p>	Core Strategy HRA has examined the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy rural policies in May 2014 and April 2015 and concluded that there are no LSE but acknowledges the role of neighbourhood plans to provide additional certainty.	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.	N/A	N/A
Option 2- Use a criteria based plan only	<p>Only using criteria based policies to guide development would mean that specific environmental issues relating to location would need to be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.</p> <p>Proportional housing and employment growth would be in accordance with the Core Strategy.</p>	Pursuing this option would not necessarily give greater certainty over future development within the area particularly within the River Wye catchment but would work towards mitigating impact on the SAC.	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	N/A	No; policy criteria can be added to any allocation of sites policy to mitigate.
Option 3-Allocate sites	Allocation of sites for housing would give certainty to future development. Specific environmental issues	Pursuing this option would give greater certainty over future development within the area particularly within the	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	N/A	No; policy criteria can be added to any allocation policy to mitigate.

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	could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.	River Wye SAC. If required mitigation criteria can be added to site allocations policies to ensure no likely significant effect would occur.			
Option 4- Define settlement boundaries	Defining a settlement boundary will give additional certainty and help define those areas considered as the built form and open countryside	Pursuing this option would give greater certainty over future development within the area particularly within the River Wye catchment. If required mitigation criteria can be added to site allocations policies. However the majority of the village where proportional growth and the settlement boundary are likely to be located are away from directly impacting the SAC.	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	N/A	No; policy criteria can be added to any allocation policy to mitigate.
Option 5- Define settlement boundaries and allocate sites	Allocation of sites for housing which form logical extensions or are included in a defined settlement boundary or other uses would give certainty to future development. Specific	Pursuing this option would give greater certainty over future development within the area particularly within the River Wye catchment. If required mitigation criteria can be added to site	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	N/A	No; policy criteria can be added to any allocation policy to mitigate.

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	<p>environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.</p> <p>The settlement boundary will give additional certainty and help define those areas considered as the built form and open countryside.</p>	<p>allocations policies. However the majority of the village where proportional growth and the settlement boundary are likely to be located are away from directly impacting the SAC.</p>			
<b>POLICIES</b>					
OPG1 Sustainable Development	Sustainable measures of development incorporated in new development	N/A	N/A	N/A	No: this policy seeks to include of renewable energy design within any residential schemes but does not directly lead to development itself.
OPG2 Development needs and requirement	Development needs including a minimum of 36 dwellings to be delivered	<p>Any development could have a possible increase in recreation activities, vehicular movements and demand for water abstraction and treatment.</p> <p>Uncertain as to the impact on the River Wye SAC as dependant on the location</p>	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.	Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording. Policies LD2, SD1, SD3 and SD4 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy)	No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) policy RA2 and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant

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		of the development of all development.			effects.
OPG3 Burley Gate	Development in Burley Gate	<p>Housing, infrastructure development</p> <p>Possible increase in recreation activities, vehicular movements and demand for water abstraction and treatment.</p> <p>Uncertain as to the impact on the River Wye SAC as dependant on the location of the development.</p>	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.	Specific environmental issues could be investigated during further site investigation and be positively addressed within the policy wording.	<p>No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) policy RA2 and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects.</p> <p>Although it is acknowledged that there will be an increase in the demand for water abstraction and sewage treatment, the latest version of the HRA underlying the Core Strategy (April 2015) confirms that the roll out of Policy RA2 across the rural areas should not lead to adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye SAC, provided the mitigation measures set out in the NMP are</p>

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					<p>implemented</p> <p>Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further assessments will be undertaken at site allocation stage.</p>
<p>OPG4</p> <p>Land East of the Telephone Exchange, Burley Gate</p>	<p>Site identified for development</p>	<p>Development of residential infrastructure could have a possible increase in recreation activities, vehicular movements and demand for water abstraction and treatment.</p> <p>Uncertain as to the impact on the River Wye SAC as dependant on the location of the development.</p>	<p>River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.</p>	<p>Specific environmental issues could be investigated during further site investigation and be positively addressed within the policy wording.</p> <p>Policy would need to take account of the proportional growth requirements of the Core Strategy and potential headroom capacity at the local STW.</p> <p>The policies set out in the Local Plan (Core Strategy), subject the outcome of the Inspector's Report, and elsewhere within the NDP should help to avoid adverse impacts upon the European site;</p>	<p>No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) policy RA2 and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects.</p> <p>Although it is acknowledged that there will be an increase in the demand for water abstraction and sewage treatment, the latest version of the HRA underlying the Core Strategy (April 2015) confirms that the roll out of Policy RA2 across the rural areas should not lead</p>

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				<p>though the policy could be strengthened with the inclusion of the following: Development can only proceed where any adverse effects on the River Wye SAC can be avoided or mitigated. Development will only be permitted when it does not compromise the ability of the NMP to deliver the necessary overall nutrient reductions along those stretches of the River Wye SAC which are already exceeding water quality targets or at risk of doing so.</p>	<p>to adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye SAC, provided the mitigation measures set out in the NMP are implemented.</p> <p>Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further assessments will be undertaken at site investigation and or further allocation stage.</p>
<p>OPG5 Ocle Pychard</p>	<p>Development in Ocle Pychard</p>	<p>Housing, infrastructure development</p> <p>Possible increase in recreation activities, vehicular movements and demand for water abstraction and treatment.</p> <p>Uncertain as to the impact on the River Wye SAC as dependant on the location</p>	<p>River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.</p>	<p>Specific environmental issues could be investigated during further site investigation and be positively addressed within the policy wording.</p> <p>Policy would need to take account of the proportional growth requirements of the Core</p>	<p>No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) policy RA2 and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects.</p> <p>Although it is</p>

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		of the development.		Strategy and potential headroom capacity at the local STW.	acknowledged that there will be an increase in the demand for water abstraction and sewage treatment, the latest version of the HRA underlying the Core Strategy (April 2015) confirms that the roll out of Policy RA2 across the rural areas should not lead to adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye SAC, provided the mitigation measures set out in the NMP are implemented  Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further assessments will be undertaken at site allocation stage.
OPG 6 Ullingswick	Development in Ullingswick	Housing, infrastructure development  Possible increase in recreation activities, vehicular movements and	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.	Specific environmental issues could be investigated during further site investigation and be positively addressed within the	No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) policy RA2 and the policy safeguards which exist within the

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		<p>demand for water abstraction and treatment.</p> <p>Uncertain as to the impact on the River Wye SAC as dependant on the location of the development.</p>		<p>policy wording.</p> <p>Policy would need to take account of the proportional growth requirements of the Core Strategy and potential headroom capacity at the local STW.</p>	<p>Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects.</p> <p>Although it is acknowledged that there will be an increase in the demand for water abstraction and sewage treatment, the latest version of the HRA underlying the Core Strategy (April 2015) confirms that the roll out of Policy RA2 across the rural areas should not lead to adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye SAC, provided the mitigation measures set out in the NMP are implemented</p> <p>Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further assessments will be undertaken at site allocation stage.</p>
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<p>OPG7</p> <p>Economic development in Ocle Pychard</p>	<p>Generation of employment and diversification of the rural economy.</p>	<p>New development of infrastructure and or environmental impacts as a result of increased agricultural activity.</p> <p>Possible increase in vehicular movements, business activity and demand for water abstraction and treatment.</p> <p>Uncertain as to the impact on the River Wye SAC as dependant on specific location of the development, size and type.</p>	<p>River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.</p>	<p>This policy should help to reduce the extent to which people need to travel to work by allowing existing businesses the opportunity to expand within the locality.</p> <p>Policies LD2, SD1, SD3 and SD4 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy) and FW1 within the NDP will aim to help avoid any adverse impacts on the River Wye from any new employment or business uses.</p> <p>Improved water efficiency measures, metering and addressing leakages in the supply may help to mitigate any additional pressures on the water supply as a result of new development.</p>	<p>No, this policy is seeking retention of existing and development businesses at a local level. This may have a positive effect on reducing the need to travel.</p>
<p>OPG8</p> <p>Communications and broadband</p>	<p>Improvement of communication networks and internet provision, could enable working from home</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No, this policy seeks to address communication issues relating to the enablement of broadband service improvement, but does not directly lead to development itself.</p>

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OPG9 Renewable energy	Proposals for renewable energy generation and community lead renewable energy proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No: this policy seeks to address issues relating the provision of renewable energy provision and the policy its self would not necessarily lead to development.
OPG10 Community facilities	Enhancement of community facilities and provision of new facilities	New development of infrastructure and or environmental impacts as a result of increased agricultural activity.  Possible increase in vehicular movements, business activity and demand for water abstraction and treatment.  Uncertain as to the impact on the River Wye SAC as dependant on specific location of the development, size and type.	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC.	N/A	No; policy criteria can be added to any allocation policy to mitigate.
OPG11 Natural environment	Protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including European and nationally protected species protected adverse effects of the	N/A	N/A	N/A	No, this policy is in place to protect European sites and landscape.

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	River Wye SAC and landscape.				
OPG12 Historic environment	Protection, enhancement and conservation of the historic environment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No: this policy seeks to address conservation and enhancement of the historic environment but does not directly lead to development itself.
OPG13 Design and Access	Respecting character of development and the landscape and incorporation of relevant sustainability	N/A	N/A	N/A	No: this policy seeks to address and guide development proposals but does not directly lead to development itself.

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**Table 1a: HRA Screening of Neighbourhood Development Plan Proposed Site Allocations**

Parish Council Name: Ocle Pychard Group

NDP Title: Ocle Pychard Group Parish NDP

Date undertaken: September 2017

Proposed Site Allocations	Characteristics of development, such as size  <i>(Use the SEA Criteria in Appendix 2 point 1 of the internal user guide)</i>	Location of proposed site allocation  <i>(Use the SEA Criteria in Appendix 2 point 2 of the internal user guide)</i>	HRA Screening of NDP Proposed Site Allocations			
			European Sites potentially affected  <i>(Refer to Initial Screening)</i>	Likely effect if proposed site allocation is developed. Could the site result in LSE on European Sites?	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?  <b>(Yes/No with reasons)</b>
<i>OPG4 Land East of the Telephone Exchange, Burley Gate</i>	<p>The size of the development would yield approx. 15 dwellings.</p> <p>The construction and occupancy of 15 new houses will involve use of timber, aggregates, metals and plastics.</p> <p>There would also be increased demand for water abstraction</p>	Land East of the Telephone Exchange, Burley Gate	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	No: the scale of development proposed would not give rise to likely significant effects	<p>There are sufficient safeguards within OGP NDP policy to avoid any adverse impacts.</p> <p>This site has been identified in direct response to the proportional growth target within Core Strategy policy and its development, either in isolation or</p>	No: The Local Plan (Core Strategy) confirms that the will not exceed the proportional growth target for the settlement, and the effects of this will not have a significant effect on the SAC.

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	<p>and sewage treatment.</p> <p>Pollution and nuisances: mainly from increased traffic, a potential exists from sewage arising.</p> <p>Housing will lead to increase in noise and light pollution than exists at present;</p> <p>The risk of</p>				<p>in tandem with the other proposed site allocations, would not exceed the Local Plan's requirements.</p>	
<p>Possible Windfall Sites (identified, not allocated)</p>	<p>Allocation of sites for housing would give certainty to future development. However windfall sites, looking to deliver 18 dwellings, are not allocated at this stage.</p> <p>Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively</p>	<p>Ocle Pychard, Felton and Ullingswick area</p>	<p>River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC</p>	<p>No: the scale of development proposed would not give rise to likely significant effects</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No: The Local Plan (Core Strategy) confirms that the will not exceed the proportional growth target for the settlement, and the effects of this will not have a significant effect on the SAC.</p>

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	addressed within the policy wording.					
Possible small sites at Upper Town Ullingswick	<p>Allocation of sites for housing would give certainty to future development. However these small sites, of up to 5 dwellings, are not allocated at this stage but are within the settlement boundary.</p> <p>Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording.</p>	Ullingswick area	River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	No: the scale of development proposed would not give rise to likely significant effects	N/A	No: The Local Plan (Core Strategy) confirms that the will not exceed the proportional growth target for the settlement, and the effects of this will not have a significant effect on the SAC.

# Appendix 3

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

**The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations  
2015 (Reg. 32)**

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

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<b>Neighbourhood Area:</b>	Ocle Pychard Group Neighbourhood Area
<b>Parish Council:</b>	Ocle Pychard Group Parish Council
<b>Neighbourhood Area Designation Date:</b>	3 May 2016

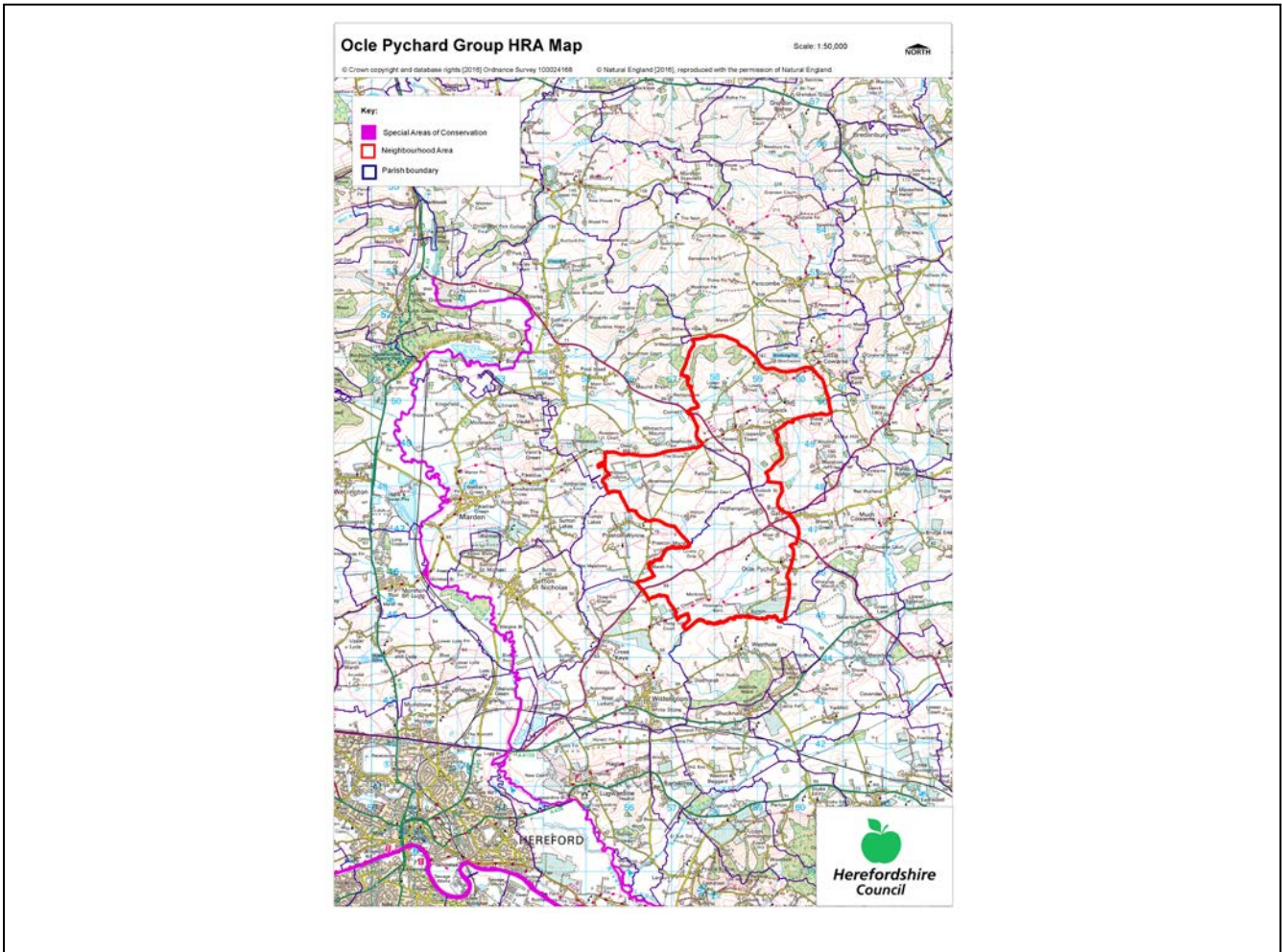
### **Introduction**

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)



### River Wye (including the River Lugg) Special Area of Conservation (SAC):

Does the Neighbourhood Area have the River Wye (including the River Lugg) in or next to its boundary?	N	The River Wye is 3km away from the Group Parish
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC?	Y	The Group Parish is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg.
If yes above, does the Neighbourhood Area have mains drainage to deal with foul sewage?	Y	There is mains drainage at Ocle Pychard and Bullocks Bridge (near Ullingswick)

### Downton Gorge SAC:

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC?	N	Downton Gorge is 26km away from the
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		Group Parish.
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**River Clun SAC:**

Does the River Clun border the Neighbourhood Area	N	River Clun does not border 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	Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites are 25km away from the Group Parish.
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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	Wye Valley Woodlands are 29km away from the Group Parish.
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**HRA Conclusion:**

The assessment above highlights that European Sites will need to be taken into account in the future Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Ocle Pychard 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

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

The following environmental features are within or in general proximity to the Ocle Pychard 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.

SEA features	Within Neighbourhood Area		Bordering Neighbourhood Area	
	Total number	Name(s)	Total number	Name(s)
Ancient Woodland	6	Ely Poles Wood; Round Hill; Redhill Coppice; Jordans Coppice; Long Coppice; 1 Unnamed plot of land.	8	Venns Wood; Combs Hill Wood; Westfields Wood; Dudales Wood; Huddle Wood; Pye Coppice; Ash Coppice; Westhide Wood.
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	0	-	0	-
Conservation Areas	2	Ocle Pychard; Ullingswick.	0	-
Flood Areas	Flood Zones 2 and 3 run along the Parish Boundaries of Ocle Pychard, Felton and Ullingswick.			
Geoparks	0	-	0	-
Listed Buildings	There are numerous Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Area			
Local Geological Sites (LGS)	0	-	0	-
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	2	Woodlands above Ullingswick; Jordans Coppice.	8	Upper Maund Common; Venns Wood; Maund Common; Dudales Wood and Old Coppice; Cowarne Wood; Ash Coppice; Old canal at Monkhide;



				Woodland on Shucknall.	
Mineral Reserves	0	-	3	South of Little Cowarne, Hundred Bank Cottage to Mount Pleasant; South of Little Cowarne, Crossways to Starpit Farm, Much Cowarne; Bodenham Moor, north west of Maund Bryan.	
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	0	-	0	-	
Nature Trails	1	Three Rivers Ride.	1	Bromyard Walks.	
Registered Parks and Gardens	0	-	0	-	
Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)	0	-	3	Churchyard cross at St Mary The Virgins Churchyard; Medieval Settlement at Much Cowarne immediately south east of Mill House; Churchyard cross at St Bartholomew's Churchyard.	
Sites of Importance in Nature Conservation (SINC)	0	-	0	-	
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	0	-	0	-	
Unregistered parks and gardens	0	-	4	Venn Wood; Cowarne Court; Westhide Court; Porch House.	
			<b>SSSI Status</b>		<b>SSSI Status</b>
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	0	-	-	0	-

**Decision Notification:**

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

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

**Assessment date: 13 April 2016**

**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."

### 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.