

Habitats Regulations Assessment



Border Group Neighbourhood Area

December 2015

Border Group HRA

HRA Screening Assessment

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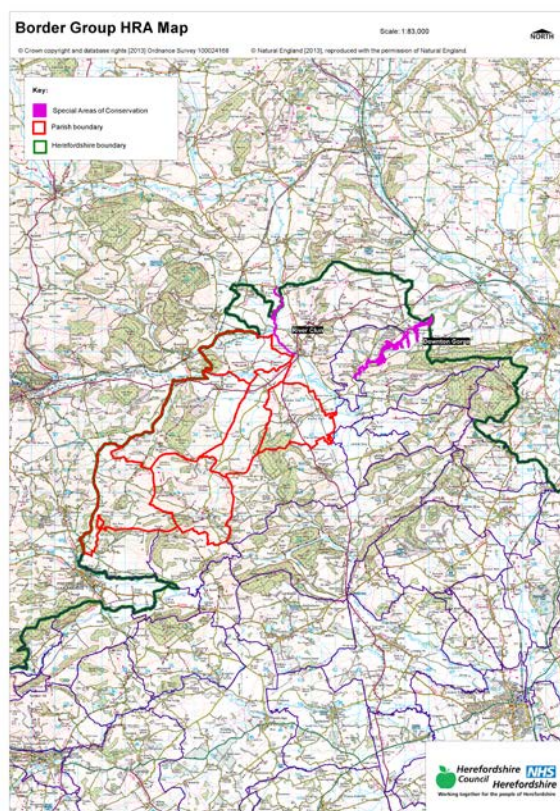
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1 Introduction

- 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 Border Group Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the six parishes which make up the Border 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 Border Group Plan NDP – Public Consultation Draft January – February 2016.
- 1.3 The NDP is largely a criteria based plan with a housing allocation in one village - Lingen. Because this plan provides general policies that clarify and provide detail to the policies within the Herefordshire Core Strategy, 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 its Addendum (April 2015) and ensures that there will not be any significant impacts upon Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.4 The map below shows Border Group Neighbourhood Area with the European Site highlighted. There are no European Sites within the neighbourhood area itself however the River Clun SAC borders the Group Parish at Buckton and Coxall, Downton Gorge SAC is 1.84km away and the southern parishes within the Group are within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg which is a tributary of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC.



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, Border 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 Border Group NDP is not directly connected with the management of any European sites but 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 (September 2014) found that there are no European Sites within the neighbourhood area itself. However the River Clun SAC borders the Group Parish at Buckton and Coxall, Downton Gorge SAC is 1.84km away and the southern parishes within the Group are within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg which is a tributary of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC.

4.2 Downton Gorge SAC is vulnerable to air quality associated with poultry units and other intensive agricultural practices. The site features of the River Clun and the River Wye is vulnerable to water quality.

4.3 For full details of the European Sites' attributes which contribute to and define their integrity and vulnerable data see Appendix 1 of the Border Group Initial Screening Report. The Initial Screening Report, September 2014, 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 Border Group Neighbourhood Plan may affect site integrity.

4.4 The initial options for the NDP were assessed to determine their environmental impact that could affect the three SACs. Of the three options put forward the no NDP option was not considered viable for the Parish. The remaining two options both proposed growth however they would both be within the proportional growth targets of the Core strategy and are therefore unlikely to have a significant impact on the SAC.

4.5 As Border Group progressed from options onto their NDP policies, the Plan needed to identify ways in which the least effect on the River Clun SAC, Downton Gorge SAC and the hydrological catchment of the River Wye 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 Border Group Neighbourhood Development Plan

5.1 The Border Group NDP - public consultation draft 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 six parishes.

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

- Homes for local people
- Diversification of the rural economy
- Road safety
- Access to local health and educational services
- Maintain character

5.3 The NDP also sets out 17 general policies on various topics and 1 site allocation policy based on the objective headings above. These include:

- Policy BG1 Promoting a sustainable community
- Policy BG2 Development strategy
- Policy BG3 New home in Adforton
- Policy BG4 New homes in Brampton Bryan
- Policy BG5 New homes in Lingen
- Policy BG6 Land at the Nursery, Lingen
- Policy BG7 New homes in Walford
- Policy BG8 Provision of affordable housing
- Policy BG9 Design criteria for residential development
- Policy BG10 Support local business
- Policy BG11 Broadband and mobile telephone infrastructure
- Policy BG12 Renewable energy
- Policy BG13 Highway and transport infrastructure
- Policy BG14 Flooding and surface and foul water drainage
- Policy BG15 Accessibility to services and facilities
- Policy BG16 Retaining the natural environment and landscape
- Policy BG17 Protecting local heritage
- Policy BG18 Lingen Conservation Area

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) and the Addendum (April 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 River Wye 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 Border 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 Clun SAC, Downton Gorge SAC and the River Wye (including the River Lugg) 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, encouragement of recycling and supporting energy conservation measures. 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, and encourage walking and use of public transport.

8 Conclusions from the Screening Matrix

- 8.1 None of the Draft Border Group NDP (January – February 2016) policies were concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on the River Clun SAC, Downton Gorge SAC or 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. In addition, these policies have the potential to mitigate some of the possible adverse effects arising from other policies.
- 8.3 In the HRA for the Core Strategy it states that only 1km of the River Clun SAC is within Herefordshire, and as no STWs serving Herefordshire discharge into the River then no policies included in the Core Strategy will affect the River Clun SAC, as the policies within the Border Group NDP are not over and above the Core Strategy then it is acknowledged that the NDP policies will not have an adverse impact upon the River Clun SAC.
- 8.4 No poultry units or intensive agricultural practices are promoted within the plan, therefore the NDP will not have a likely significant effect on the Downton Gorge SAC
- 8.5 The plan is essential criteria based, and only allocates one site for development in Lingen. The sites is bordered by the Limebrook stream which is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg; a tributary of the River Wye SAC. The policy itself and the accompanying development brief contain a number of mitigation measures to ensure it has no significant impact.
- 8.6 It is unlikely that the Border NDP 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 fairly small scale.
- 8.7 **It is therefore concluded that the Border Group NDP will not have a likely significant effect on the River Clun SAC, the Downton Gorge SAC and the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC.**
- 8.8 Any further amendments to policies (post November 2015) will be rescreened if required and an addendum to this report will be produced.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Border Group Neighbourhood development Plan

Public Consultation draft – January – February 2016

Options Considered

Option 1 - Do nothing.

Option 2 - Rely upon the Rural Areas Plan

Option 3 (Preferred option) - Neighbourhood plan with allocated sites and identify a settlement boundary.

Appendix 2

NDP options / objectives / policies	HRA Screening of NDP objectives and policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/policy	Likely effect if objective/policy implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/option/policy.	Could the policy have any likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?
Option 1 Do nothing.	No NDP to determine planning applications.	Criteria policies within the Core Strategy would guide further development. Specific policies and proposals for the parish would not exist.	n/a	n/a	n/a
Option 2 Rely upon the Rural Areas Plan	Small scale proportionate growth where the location would be determined through a site allocation within the development plan document	Greater degree of certainty over the impact of future development on the European sites, as the location of housing would be pre-determined and the settlement boundary would provide a clear distinction between open countryside and the built environment.	River Clun SAC, Downton Gorge and River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording. Additional criteria would be required when formulating the accompanying settlement boundary policy to ensure that no likely significant effects could occur.	No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects. Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further assessments will be undertaken at draft policy stage.
Option 3 (Preferred option) Neighbourhood plan with allocated sites and identify a settlement boundary.	Small scale proportionate growth on specific sites identified on a proposals map and within a defined settlement boundary area within a neighbourhood plan.	Greater degree of certainty over the impact of future development on the European sites, as the location of housing would be pre-determined and the settlement boundary would provide a clear distinction between open countryside and the built environment.	River Clun SAC, Downton Gorge and River Wye (including River Lugg) SAC	Specific environmental issues could be investigated during the site search and be positively addressed within the policy wording. Additional criteria would be required when formulating the accompanying settlement boundary policy to ensure that no likely significant effects could occur.	No, development in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the policy safeguards which exist within the Core Strategy should avoid or mitigate any likely significant effects. Policy criteria should be included within the NDP which reflects this. Further assessments will be undertaken at draft policy stage.
NDP Objectives					
Objective 1 Increase supply of homes for local people	Small scale proportional growth in line with policy RA2 of the Core Strategy.	Only Lingen is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg. No identified settlements are within close proximity to the River Clun SAC.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC	Development will be small scale. Criteria may be required with regards to development proposals within Lingen to ensure that water quality issues are taken account of.	No, this objective will not lead to development itself; rather it acknowledges that proportional growth will occur across in highlighted settlements in the neighbourhood area in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy).
Objective 2 Diversification within the rural economy	Farm diversification, increased tourism activity, support for home working and producing local energy from alternative crops.	This will be locational dependant. Only a small area of the parish is within the catchment of the Clun and the southern parishes within the	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	n/a	No, potential damage to the interests of species using the aquatic SACs would be significantly reduced by the criteria within various policies.

NDP options / objectives / policies	HRA Screening of NDP objectives and policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/policy	Likely effect if objective/policy implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/option/policy.	Could the policy have any likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?
		catchment of the Wye. Safeguards exist within the Core Strategy policies. Nutrient Management Plans exist for both the River Clun and the River Wye with regards to water quality and farming.			
Objective 3 Increase road safety, reduce traffic and address surface water flooding	Reduce effects of heavy traffic, address surface water on highway	n/a	n/a	n/a	No, the objective is aiming to improve road safety and reduce heavy traffic.
Objective 4 Improve access to local health and education	Access to local facilities including health and education	n/a	n/a	n/a	No, the plan acknowledge the difficulties in supporting new community facilities in a rural area such as this. This objective is supporting small expansions of
Objective 5 Character of landscape and settlements	Use of brownfield land, protection of the character of conservation area	This will be locational dependant. Only a small area of the parish is within the catchment of the Clun and the southern parishes within the catchment of the Wye. Safeguards exist within the Core Strategy policies. Nutrient Management Plans exist for both the River Clun and the River Wye with regards to water quality and farming.	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	n/a	No, potential damage to the interests of species using the aquatic SACs would be significantly reduced by the criteria within various policies.
Policies					
Policy BG1 Promoting a Sustainable Community	Encourages small scale development to help create sustainable communities	No likely effects, safeguards existing within the Core Strategy and other policies of the NDP.	n/a	n/a	No. The policy would itself not lead to development; instead it relates to criteria for encouraging sustainable development and sustainable communities.
Policy BG2 Development Strategy	Encourages small scale development within identified settlements Small scale employment development	Only Lingen is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC	Development will be small scale. Criteria may be required with regards to development proposals within Lingen to ensure that water quality issues are taken account of.	No, adequate safeguards exist within the Core Strategy and other policies within the NDP. The criteria relating to Lingen could be further strengthened by additional reference to water quality.

NDP options / objectives / policies	HRA Screening of NDP objectives and policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/policy	Likely effect if objective/policy implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/option/policy.	Could the policy have any likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?
Policy BG3 New homes in Adforton	Small scale development within the settlement boundary of Adforton	None, Adforton is outside of the hydrological catchments of the Wye/Lugg or Clun.	None	n/a	No, Adforton is outside of the hydrological catchments of the Wye/Lugg or Clun.
Policy BG4 New homes in Brampton Bryan	Small scale development through conversions and infill within Brampton Bryan	None, Brampton Bryan is outside of the hydrological catchments of the Wye/Lugg or Clun.	None	n/a	No, Brampton Bryan is outside of the hydrological catchments of the Wye/Lugg or Clun.
Policy BG5 New homes in Lingen	Small scale development within the development boundary of Lingen	Lingen is within the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC	Development will be small scale. Criteria may be required with regards to development proposals within Lingen to ensure that water quality issues are taken account of.	No, adequate safeguards exist within the Core Strategy and other policies within the NDP. The criteria relating to Lingen could be further strengthened by additional reference to water quality.
Policy BG6 Land at the Nursery, Lingen	Proposed housing site within the south of the village adjacent to the Limebrook stream	The Limebrook is part of the hydrological catchment of the River Lugg. Development would be small scale and the development brief indicated that discharging into the brook will not be acceptable.	River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC	Additional criteria with regards to water quality and the provision of SuDs would help strengthen the policy safeguards.	No, policy safeguards currently exist within the Core Strategy SD3 and the development brief included within the plan. Additional criteria within the policy would strengthen this further.
Policy BG7 New homes in Walford	Small scale development within the settlement boundary of Walford	None, Walford is outside of the hydrological catchments of the Wye/Lugg or Clun.	None	n/a	No, Walford is outside of the hydrological catchments of the Wye/Lugg or Clun.
Policy BG8 Provision of affordable housing	Small scale housing development within the parish Small increase in traffic movements	This will be locational dependant. Only a small area of the parish is within the catchment of the Clun and the southern parishes within the catchment of the Wye. Safeguards exist within the Core Strategy policies. Nutrient Management Plans exist for both the River Clun and the River Wye	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	Many of these developments may deal with their waste water via non main drainage. These applications are subject to distance and volume screening criteria to ensure no likely significant effects on the River Wye SAC. The catchment area for the River Clun in Herefordshire is unlikely to be favourable in policy terms for this type of development.	No, this policy is in line with H2 of the Core Strategy. Sufficient safeguards exist within other policies
Policy BG9 Design criteria for residential development	Various design criteria to support development proposals including the treatment of waste water	The policy includes criteria for dealing with waste water which will have a positive mitigation effect on any potential adverse	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	This policy should help to mitigate potential adverse effects in relation to water quality	No, this policy will not itself lead to development, instead it relates to criteria for development. This policy criteria together with Policy SD4 of the Core Strategy provide the safeguard to protect both SACs from

NDP options / objectives / policies	HRA Screening of NDP objectives and policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/policy	Likely effect if objective/policy implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/option/policy.	Could the policy have any likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?
		effects			deterioration in water quality from developments within the parish.
Policy BG10 Supporting local business	Development of small scale local businesses Increase in traffic movements	This will be locational dependant. Only a small area of the parish is within the catchment of the Clun and the southern parishes within the catchment of the Wye.	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	n/a	No, development will be small scale and adequate safeguards already exist within the Core Strategy and other policies of the NDP
Policy BG11 Broadband and mobile telephone infrastructure	Provision of infrastructure to facilitate broadband and mobile equipment	Installations are likely to be small scale or on existing facilities	n/a	n/a	No, development will be small scale and adequate safeguards already exist within the Core Strategy and other policies of the NDP
Policy BG12 Renewable energy	Development of small scale renewable energy particularly solar and hydro	This will be locational dependant. Only a small area of the parish is within the catchment of the Clun and the southern parishes within the catchment of the Wye.	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	n/a	No, this policy could result in the development of small scale renewable energy infrastructure which could potentially affect two European Sites depending on its location. However, sufficient policy safeguards area included within the Core Strategy to avoid or mitigate a likely significant on any European Site.
Policy BG13 Highway and transport infrastructure	Reduction in speeds and accessibility to public transport	This will be locational dependant. Only a small area of the parish is within the catchment of the Clun and the southern parishes within the catchment of the Wye. Safeguards exist within the Core Strategy policies.	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	n/a	No, adequate safeguards exist within the Core Strategy and other policies within the NDP such as LD2, SD1 and M1).
Policy BG14 Flooding and surface and foul water drainage	Reduce flooding and pollution of watercourses within the parish	The aim of this policy is to protect the River Lugg and Teme from pollution	River Clun SAC and River Wye SAC	Additional specific reference to the SACs would strengthen the policy further	No, the aim of this policy is to prevent pollution of any watercourse within the parish. Additional specific reference to the SACs would strengthen the policy further.
Policy BG15 Accessibility to service and facilities	Small scale expansion of existing community facilities and services	n/a	n/a	n/a	No, any development is only likely to be small scale extensions and therefore not significant. Sufficient policy safeguards exist both with the Core Strategy and the NDP
Policy BG16 Retaining the natural environment and landscape	Policy to protect natural environment and features	n/a	n/a	The criteria includes reference to supporting the biodiversity value of designated sites	No, this policy seeks to protect features of the natural environment

NDP options / objectives / policies	HRA Screening of NDP objectives and policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/policy	Likely effect if objective/policy implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/option/policy.	Could the policy have any likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account)?
Policy BG17 Protecting local heritage	Policy to protect heritage features	n/a	n/a	n/a	No, this policy is seeking to protect features of the heritage environment
Policy BG18 Lingen Conservation Area	Design criteria for any development within the Lingen Conservation Area	n/a	n/a	n/a	No, policy safeguards exist within the NDP regarding development in Lingen. This policy is concerning design aspects within the Conservation Area.

Appendix 3

**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)

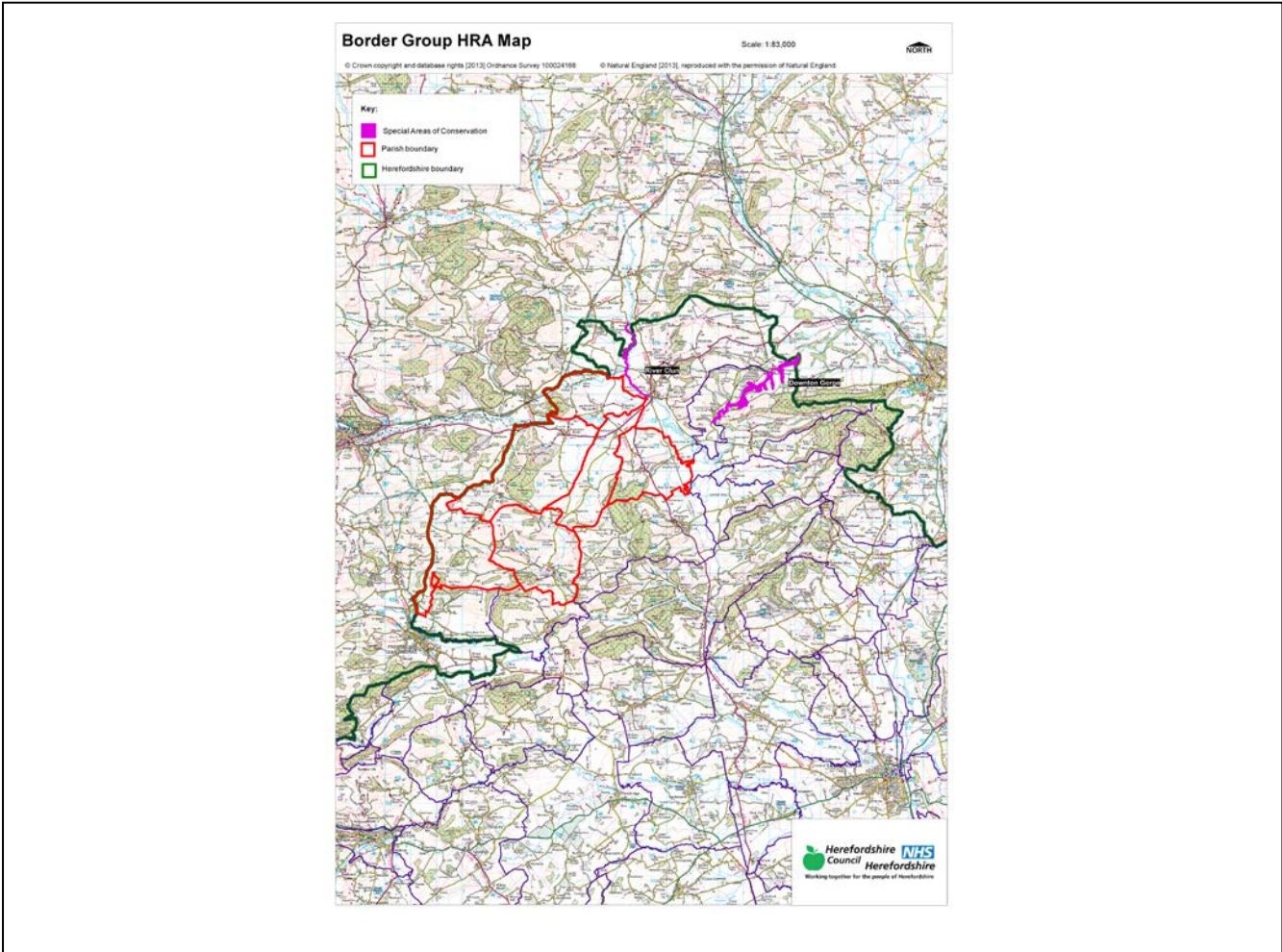
Neighbourhood Area:	Border Group Neighbourhood Area
Parish Council:	Border Group Parish Council
Neighbourhood Area Designation Date:	18/07/2013

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?	N	The River Lugg is 19.25km away from the Group Parish
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC?	Y	Willey, Lingen, Brampton Bryan and Walford, Letton & Newton are within the River Lugg hydrological catchment area.
If yes above, does the Neighbourhood Area have mains drainage to deal with foul sewage?	Y	There is mains drainage at Adforton

Downton Gorge SAC:

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC?	Y	Downton Gorge is 1.84km away from the Parishes
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River Clun SAC:

Does the Neighbourhood Area include: Border Group Parish Council or Leintwardine Group Parish Council?	Y	River Clun borders the Group Parish at Buckton & Coxall
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Usk Bat Sites SAC:

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of the SAC boundary?	N	Usk Bat Sites are 50.8km away from the Parishes
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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 54km away from Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites
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Wye Valley Woodlands SAC:

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of any of the individual sites that make up the Wye Valley Woodlands Site?	N	The Parish is 54.6km away from the Wye Valley Woodlands
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HRA Conclusion:

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

River Clun 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 Border 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	Total	Explanation	SEA required
Air Quality Management Areas	0	There are no AQMA's within the Group Parish	N
Ancient Woodland	14	Coxall Knoll; Pedwardine Wood; Barnett Wood; Newton Wood; Birtley Knoll Wood; Clay Vallets Wood; Globe Wood; Willey Hall Farm; Birchen Coppice; Willey Lane Wood; Oldcastle Wood (2); Wern Gay, Hackley Wood; Frith Wood (border); Prichards Hill 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 Lingen village	Y
European Sites	1	The River Clun borders Buckton & Coxall Parish	Y
Flood Areas		There are Flood Zones at the River Teme and Clun and also tributaries running off them. There is also flood Zones along brooks/streams within Lingen and Willey Parishes	Y
Listed Buildings	Numerous	There are numerous listed buildings throughout the Group Parish	Y
Local Sites (SWS/SINCs/RIGS)	22 (SWS)	Adley Moor Common; Buckton Bog; The Marl Pit, Buckton; Land adjacent to Coxall Knoll; Coxall Knoll; Shelder Meadow; Land near Green Farm; Brampton Bryan Park & Pedwardine Wood; Land near Mill Cottage; Land at Wordalls Farm, Birtley; Land at Deerfold x 2 sites; Land at Old Farm x 3 sites; Clay Vallets and adjoining site; Woodland at Coles Hill; Land at Lime Brook (border); Firth Wood (border); Land at Stapleton (border); Stapleton Castle (border); The Orles, Newton; Wigmore Rolls	Y
Long distance footpaths/trails	1	Herefordshire Trail	Y
Mineral Reserves	1	Woodhampton to Lower Lyde to north of Sned Wood, Aymestrey (border)	Y
National Nature Reserve	0	There are no NNR's within the Group Parish	N
Registered & Unregistered parks and gardens	1 Registered	Brampton Bryan	Y

Scheduled Ancient Monuments	16	Roman Station at Bravinium (border); Jay Lane Roman Fort (border); Roman Fort north east of Buckton; Roman Fort; Motte Castle at Upper Buckton; Multiple enclosure Hill Fort on Coxall Knoll; Brampton Bryan Castle; Brandon Camp large univallate Hill Fort and Ring Ditch 350m north east of Warwick House; Roman temporary camp south of Walford Bridge; Roman Site north west of Brandon Villa; Wigmore Abbey; Mound 1200yds (1100m) NNE of The Church; Lingen Castle; Lime Brook Priory; Post-Medieval house and gardens at Willey Court; Post-Medieval house and gardens at Willey Court 450m south east of Willey House	Y
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	2	Brampton Bryan Park (Unfavourable Recovering); River Teme (Unfavourable No Change)	Y

Decision Notification:

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

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

Assessment date: 11/06/2013

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.

Downton Gorge
Site Features: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines
Vulnerability data: 10km for air quality associated with poultry units or other intensive agricultural practices.
River Clun
Site Features: Freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
Vulnerability data: Water quality is important to maintain the site feature. Parishes either side of the River Clun will be affected.
River Wye
Site Features: 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>
Vulnerability data: 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: http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/Otters_the_facts.pdf 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

