

# Habitats Regulations Assessment

Report for:

Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Area

October 2021



# **Modified Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Plan Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening**

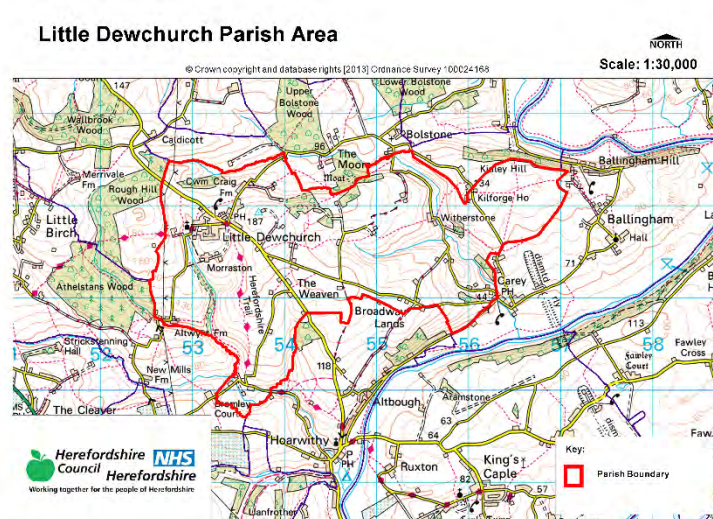
## **Contents**

- 1) Introduction  
Figure 1: Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Area
- 2) The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment of neighbourhood development plans
- 3) Methodology
- 4) Results of the Little Dewchurch Initial Screening Report  
Figure 2: Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Area and European sites.
- 5) Conclusion

## Introduction

- 1.1 This Screening Assessment relates to the modified Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan (dated August 2021). The amendments being proposed to the adopted NDP are considered to be non-material in nature, therefore are not changing the policies or stance of the plan. The reviewed NDP is still considered to be in general conformity with the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework. The regulations required this screening stage to assess broadly whether the final Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on any European site(s).
- 1.2 Little Dewchurch Parish Council produced a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Little Dewchurch which was made on 19 June 2017. The NDP set out the vision, objectives and policies for the development of the area up to 2031. The parish council have now decided that the made plan needs to be modified in order to clarify and to update parts of the plan.
- 1.3 None of the objectives, policies or sites boundaries within the NDP are proposed to be modified in the reviewed plan. The modified plan has updated details related to the numbers of houses with existing permissions and update the site allocation policy numbers to reflect recent pre-application advice on the site. The allocation numbers are proposed to be reduce from 20 to 15. The changes made are considered to be non-material and do not alter the stance of the plan. These changes and updates do not require a high level screening assessment to build upon the HRA Screening Assessment Report previous produced for the Little Dewchurch NDP.

Figure1 – Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Area



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

- 2.1 The requirement to undertake HRA of neighbourhood plans was confirmed by the amendments to the "Habitats Regulations". Therefore, when preparing its NDP, Herefordshire Council together with the parish council are required by

law to carry out an assessment known as “Habitats Regulations Assessment”. It is also confirmed within Regulation 32 schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

2.2 HRA is an impact-led assessment and refers to the assessment of the potential effects of a neighbourhood development plan on one or more European sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):

- **SPAs** are classified under the European Council Directive ‘on the conservation of wild birds’ (79/409/EEC; ‘Birds Directive’) for the protection of **wild birds and their habitats** (including particularly rare and vulnerable species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive, and migratory species).
- **SACs** are designated under the Habitats Directive and target **particular habitats** (Annex 1) and/or species (Annex II) identified as being of European importance.
- **Ramsar sites** support internationally important wetlands habitat

### 3 Methodology

3.1 The HRA of neighbourhood development plans is undertaken in stages and should conclude whether or not a proposal or policy in a neighbourhood development plan would adversely affect the integrity of any site. 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

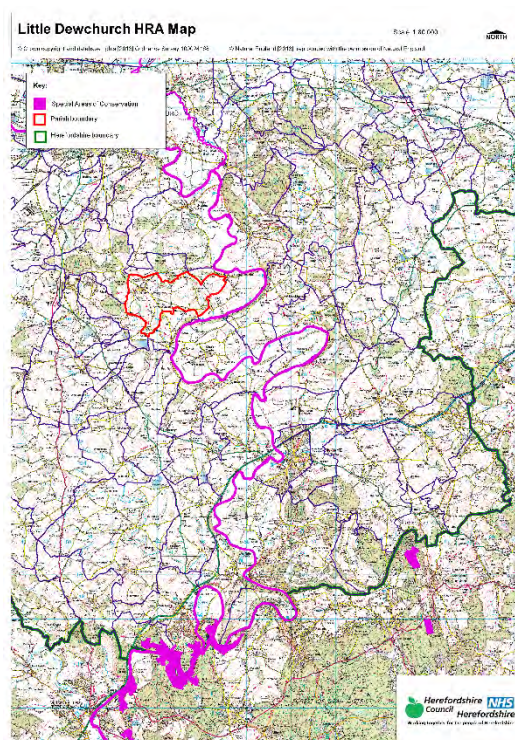
3.4 The full screening stage consists of a description of the plan, identification of potential effects on European Sites, assessing the effects on European Sites (taking into account potential mitigation provided by other policies in the plan). For neighbourhood development plans the outcome should demonstrate there are no likely significant effects upon the European sites. If any likely significant effects occur then there will need to be amendments to the NDP made and be re-screened until all likely significant effects have been mitigated.

### 4 Results of the Re Screening

4.1 As assessment was undertaken on several reiterations of the Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Plan during its production from 2016-2017. All these reports can be seen on the website.

- 4.2 The proposed amendments to the Little Dewchurch NDP are seen as non material and will not change the stance of the plan or the assessment undertaken in 2017. Many are factual updates to reflect current housing commitments within the parish and a reflect that the numbers of the site allocations have been reduced as a result of pre-application discussion with Herefordshire Council's Development Management team.
- 4.2 The map below shows Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Area and it relationship with the European sites within the parish

Figure 2 – Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Area and European sites.



## 5 Conclusions

- 5.1 It is therefore, concluded that a full Habitat Regulation Assessment **will not** be required for the modified Little Dewchurch Neighbourhood Plan dated August 2021 as these changes as deemed non-material.