

# Habitats Regulations Assessment

Report for:

**Ledbury Neighbourhood Area**

**December 2021**



## **Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening**

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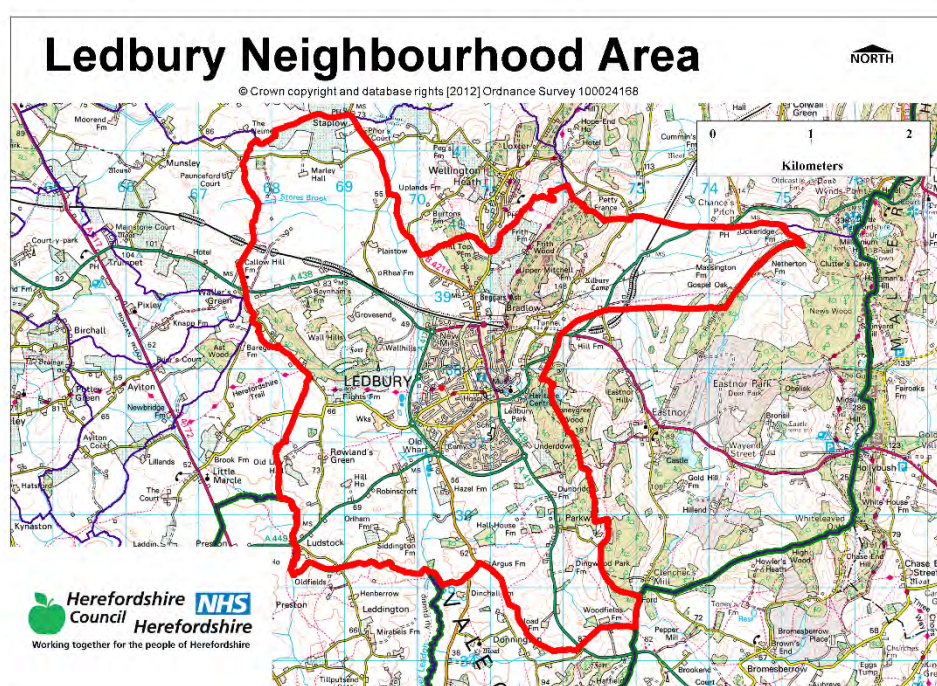
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**Appendix 1 – Initial Screening Report (November 2020)**

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Ledbury Town Council is producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for their administrative area, in order to set out the vision, objectives and policies for the development of the parish up to 2031.
- 1.2 The Ledbury Neighbourhood Area was designated on the 16 November 2012 and the map below (Fig1) demonstrates the extent of the area.

Figure1 –Ledbury 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 Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Therefore, when preparing its NDP, Herefordshire Council together with Ledbury Town Council is 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 The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 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 development plan on one or more sites from the National Site Network, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):

- **SPAs** are classified under the 2019 regulations 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 importance.
- **Ramsar sites** support internationally important wetlands habitats

2.4 For ease of reference during HRA, general practice has been that these three designations are collectively referred to as the **National Site Network**. This means that a Screening Assessment is carried out with regard to the Conservation Objectives of the above sites and with reference to other plans or projects to identify if any significant effect is likely for any sites in the National Site Network.

### **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 European 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 National Site Network that could be within the Neighbourhood Area or nearby.

3.3 If a National Site Network is within the Neighbourhood Area or the Neighbourhood Area could impact upon a National Site Network then

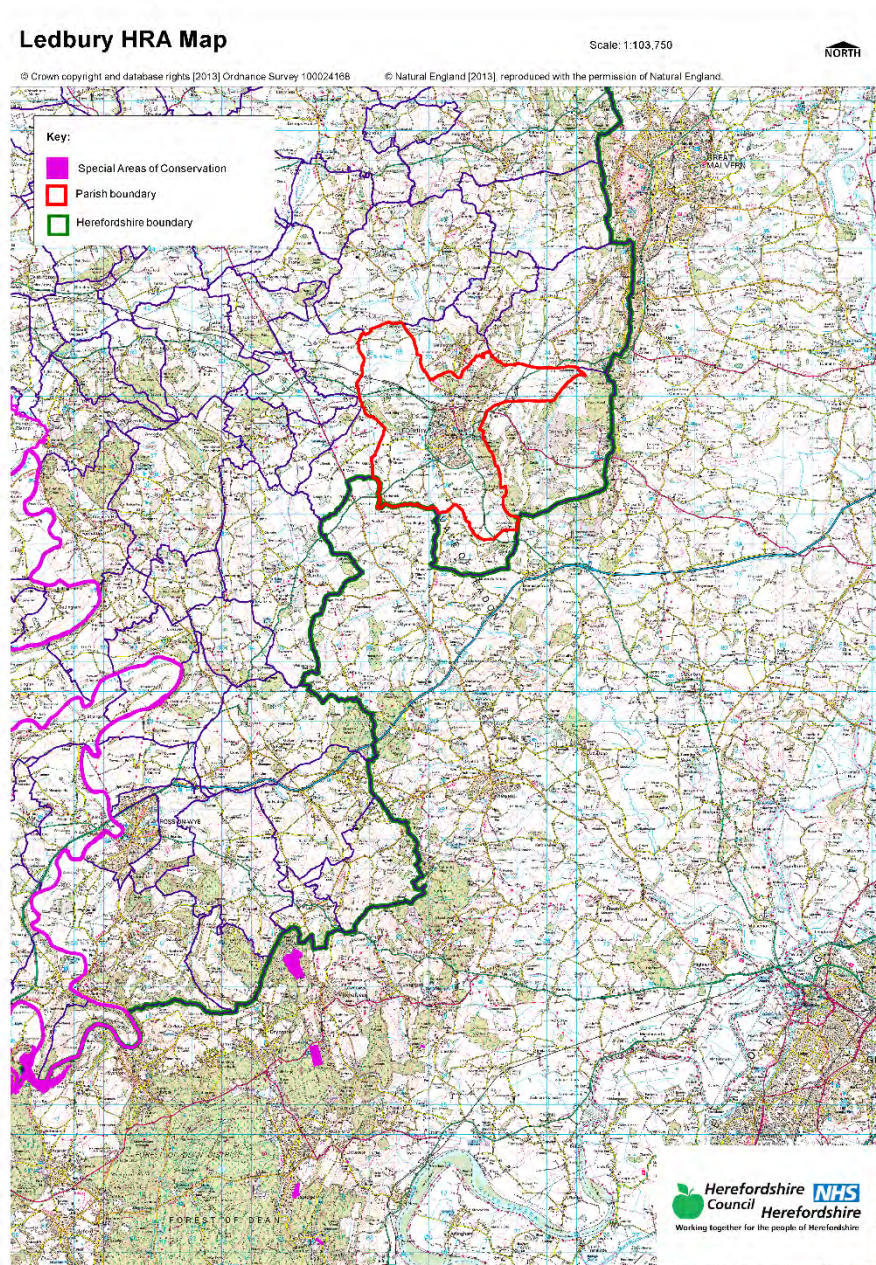
this will need to be taken into account and a full screening assessment will need to be undertaken.

- 3.4 The full screening stage consists of a description of the plan, identification of potential effects on the National Site Network, assessing the effects on the National Site Network (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 National Site Network. 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 Initial Screening Report**

- 4.1 The initial Ledbury Town Screening Report was undertaken in November 2012 and found that the neighbourhood area did not contain any National Site Network or their proximity would not be affected by policies and proposals within the proposed Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan
- 4.2 The map below shows Ledbury Neighbourhood Area and demonstrates that there are no National Site Network within the parish or in close proximity. The initial Ledbury Screening Report is attached in appendix 1.

Figure 2 –Ledbury Neighbourhood Area and National Site Network.



## 5 Conclusions

- 5.1 It is therefore concluded that a full Habitat Regulation Assessment **will not** be required for the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan.

# Appendix 1

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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>	Ledbury Neighbourhood Area
<b>Parish Council:</b>	Ledbury Town Council
<b>Neighbourhood Area Designation Date:</b>	16 November 2012

#### **Introduction**

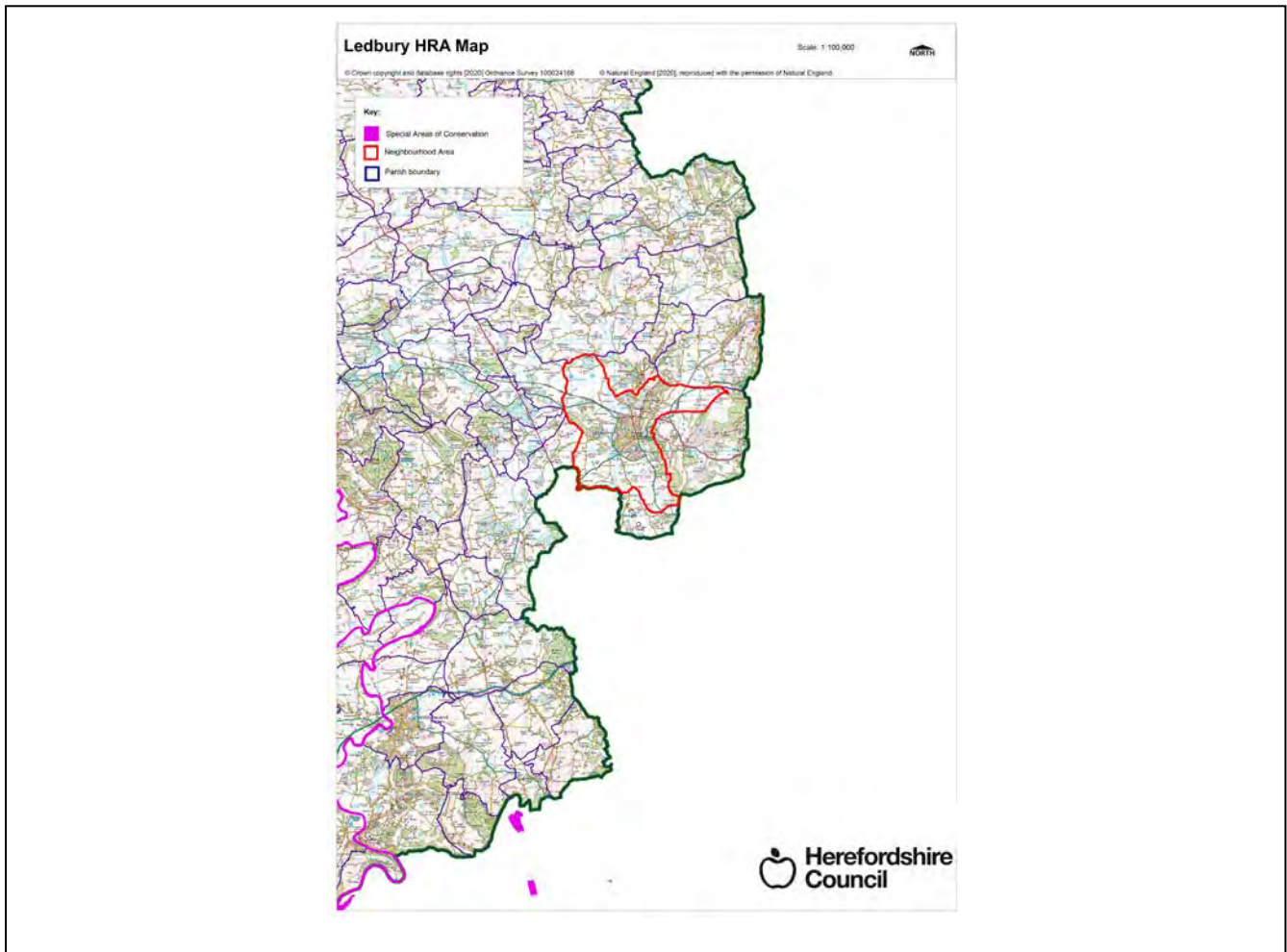
This Initial Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening has been undertaken to assess whether any European sites exist within or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Area which could be affected by any future proposals or policies.

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



# HRA Initial Screening

Map showing relationship of Neighbourhood Area with European Sites (not to scale)



## 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 not within or bordering Ledbury neighbourhood area.
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye SAC?	N	The neighbourhood area is not within the hydrological catchment of the River Wye.
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the River Lugg hydrological catchment area?	N	The neighbourhood area is not within the River Lugg hydrological catchment area.
If yes above, does the Neighbourhood Area have mains drainage to deal with foul sewage?	N/A	Not Applicable.

**Downton Gorge SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC?	N	Downton Gorge is 40.4km away from the neighbourhood area.
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**River Clun SAC:**

Does the River Clun border the Neighbourhood Area	N	The River Clun SAC does not border the neighbourhood area.
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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 15.1km away from the neighbourhood area.
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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 24km away from the neighbourhood area.
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**HRA Conclusion:**

The assessment above highlights that European Sites will not need to be taken into account in the future Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Ledbury Neighbourhood Area and a Full HRA Screening will not be required.

**European Site**

*(List only those which are relevant)*

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

The following environmental features are within or in general proximity to the Ledbury 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)
<b>Ancient Woodland</b>	13	Knoll Coppice; Redhill & Mallins Wood; Quarry Coppice (part) & Wall Hills Coppice (part); Grovesend Wood; Baymans Wood; Coppice; Frith Wood; Sling Coppice; Hatfield Coppice; Dog Hill Wood; Coney Green & May Hill Woods; Hospital Wood; Clenchers Mill Wood.	20	Glebe Coppice; Ast Wood; Hay Grove Coppice; Rough Pasture Ash; Pauncewood; Coppice; Canon Heath Wood; Loxter Wood; France Grove; Broomy Hill Coppice; Lavengers Coppice; Sparrow Hill Wood; Wynds Point Wood; Birchams Wood; Great Hayclose Coppice; Little Hayclose Coppice; Reddings Coppice; Brand Oak Coppice; Ridge Hill Coppice; Ash Coppice.
<b>Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty</b>	1	Malvern Hills.	0	-

SEA features	Within Neighbourhood Area		Bordering Neighbourhood Area	
	Total number	Name(s)	Total number	Name(s)
<b>Conservation Areas</b>	1	Ledbury.	1	Eastnor.
<b>Flood Areas</b>	Flood Zones 2 and 3 running north to south via River Leaddon to the West of Ledbury Town.			
<b>Geoparks</b>	1	Malvern Hills	0	-
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	There are numerous listed buildings throughout the neighbourhood area.			
<b>Local Geological Sites</b>	3	Knapp Lane Quarry; Ledbury Tunnel Quarry; Coneygree Wood Site 1.	2	Haysebrook Cottages, Colwall; Loxter Ashbed Quarry.
<b>Local Wildlife Sites</b>	10	Woodlands on Wall Hills; Ledbury Cutting; Frith Wood, Bradlow Knoll & Dog Hill; Ridgeway Wood; Stitch Wood & adjoining pasture; Upper Hall Farm Quarry & grassland; Upper Hall grounds and lake; Coneygree & Mayhill Woods; Woodland north of Wall Hills; Clenchers Mill Wood & Little Woolpits.	10	Ast Wood; Longworth Meadow; Field near canal at Swinmore; Pool at Hope End Estate; Roadside verges above Chances Pitch on A449; Malvern Hills & adjoining sites; Eastnor Park, Birchen Wood & Castle Coppice; Eastnor Lake; Eastnor Hill Wood; Quarry near Dead Woman's Thorn Hill Wood.

SEA features	Within Neighbourhood Area		Bordering Neighbourhood Area	
	Total number	Name(s)	Total number	Name(s)
<b>Mineral Reserves</b>	11	East of Wellington Heath to The Frith, Ledbury; Frith Wood, east of Wellington Heath; Petty France Farm to Bradlow; North of Bradlow, north west of Kilbury Camp; North of Bradlow, Bradlow Coppice; Evedine to Baxhill coppice, Colwall Stone; Ridgeway south of Ockeridge Farm to Eastnor; East of Ledbury Quarry Plantation /Worcester Walk, Coppice to Mayhill Wood to The Holts; South east of Ledbury to Gloucester Road Bullen House, south to Hospital Wood; South east of Ledbury, Hospital Wood; South east of Ledbury, Gloucester Road, north of Dingwood Park Farm.	10	Jabeys Cottage, Coddington to Hope End Farm, Loxter; Holly Bank Coppice to Petty France, Coddington; Broadwood House, Colwall Stone to News Wood south of Herefordshire Beacon; Hollybush, north of Herefordshire Beacon; North east of Ledbury, East of Lower Mitchell Cottage and adj. railway line; North east of Ledbury, White House Farm; East of Ledbury, The Gables to Eastnor Hill; East of Ledbury & west of Eastnor, Squirrel Wood Hill; East of Ledbury, north of Eastnor, Wintercombe; South west of Eastnor, Holts Coppice to Clenchers Mill Wood.
<b>National Nature Reserve</b>	0	-	0	-
<b>Nature Trails</b>	2	Herefordshire Trail; Geopark Way.	0	-
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	1	Eastnor Castle.	1	Hope End.

SEA features	Within Neighbourhood Area		Bordering Neighbourhood Area			
	Total number	Name(s)	Total number	Name(s)		
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monuments</b>	1	Wall Hills Camp.	4	Herefordshire Beacon Camp; Midsummer Hill Camp; Bronsil Castle; Dovecote at Barton Court.		
<b>Sites of Importance in Nature Conservation</b>	0	-	0	-		
<b>Special Areas of Conservation</b>	0	-	0	-		
<b>Unregistered parks and gardens</b>	4	Upper Hall; Ledbury Park; Underdown; Dingewood Park.	4	Hatfield; Donnington Hall; Priors Court; Barton Court.		
		<b>SSSI Status</b>		<b>SSSI Status</b>		
<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</b>	3	Ledbury Cutting;  Upper Hall Farm Quarry & grasslands; Ridgeway Wood.	Unfavourable, Declining; Favourable;  Favourable.	3	The Malvern Hills;   Eastnor Park; Mayhill Wood.	Favourable (part), Unfavourable, Recovering (part) Favourable; Favourable.

**Decision Notification:**

The initial screening highlights that the Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Ledbury Neighbourhood Area will require further environmental assessment for Habitats Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

**Assessment date: 3 November 2020**

**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. 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.