



London Legacy Development Corporation
Draft LLDC Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal
and Habitats Regulations Assessment
Habitats Regulations Assessment

Screening Report

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Draft LLDC Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Screening Report

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1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 Introduction

The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) became a planning authority on 1st October 2012, with a full range of planning powers to continue the work of the Olympic Park Legacy Company. These include the development control functions previously undertaken by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), and the planning functions of the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC). The LLDC is responsible for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and areas beyond, including the four London boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. As a planning authority, the LLDC is to prepare a Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the LLDC Local Plan).

Hyder Consulting have been appointed by the LLDC to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Draft LLDC Local Plan.

The LLDC Local Plan will play an important role in delivering social inclusion and convergence in one of the most deprived areas of the UK, transforming the Queen Elizabeth Park and its environs into sustainable and thriving neighbourhoods.

This Screening Report has been prepared by Hyder Consulting on behalf of LLDC as part of the statutory Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Draft LLDC Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the Local Plan).

This report follows on from the Inception Report and the Scoping Report, which establish the methodological approach for the completion of the HRA for the Local Plan.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report is the first stage in the HRA process, commonly referred to as 'Screening'. It identifies whether or not the Local Plan is likely to result in significant effects upon one or more Natura 2000 sites (also known as 'European sites'), either alone or in-combination with other plans or programmes, and subsequently whether or not an Appropriate Assessment will be required. If an Appropriate Assessment is required, this document will outline its proposed scope. Further details on the HRA stages are provided in Section 3.

1.3 Background to the Habitats Regulations Assessment

Under Article 6 of EC Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive), an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon any European sites. Within the LLDC boundary there are no European sites; however, it is considered there are three sites which form part of the Natura 2000 network that could potentially be affected by the Local Plan through an identified impact pathway (see Section 4 for further details).

Natura 2000 is a network of areas designated to conserve natural habitats and species that are rare, endangered, vulnerable or endemic within the European Community. This includes Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), designated under the Habitats Directive for their habitats and/or species of European importance, and Special Protection Areas (SPA), classified under Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the codified version of Directive

79/409/EEC as amended) for rare, vulnerable and regularly occurring migratory bird species and internationally important wetlands.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process; furthermore, it is Government policy that sites designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention for their internationally important wetlands (Ramsar sites), as well as potential SPAs (pSPAs), are also considered.

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into English and Welsh law by means of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010¹. In 2012, these Regulations were amended to transpose more clearly certain aspects of the Habitats Directive. No fundamental changes to the Regulations were made; however, they are now referred to as the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012².

Paragraph 3 Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that:

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the 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 paragraph 4 (see below), the competent national authority shall agree to the plan or project only 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.'

Paragraph 4, Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that:

'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.'

The overarching aim of HRA is to determine, in view of a site's conservation objectives and qualifying interests, whether a plan, either in isolation and/or in combination with other plans, would have a significant adverse effect on the European site. If the Screening (the first stage of the process, see Section 3 for details) concludes that significant adverse effects are likely, then Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken to determine whether there will be adverse effects on a site's integrity.

1.4 Legislation and Guidance

This HRA Screening Report has drawn upon the following legislation and guidance:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012.
- European Commission, Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;

¹ SI 2010/490

² SI 2012/1927

- European Commission, Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents.
- Draft Guidance for Plan Making Authorities in Wales - The Appraisal of Plans under the Habitats Directive. David Tyldesley and Associates for Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) Bangor (November 2009, revised April 2010 and September 2012).
- Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE LOCAL PLAN

2.1 Background and Purpose

In 2012, the LLDC was formed with its purpose being '*to promote and deliver physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration of the Olympic Park and its surrounding area, in particular by maximising the legacy of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, by securing high-quality sustainable development and investment, ensuring the long-term success of the facilities and assets within its direct control and supporting and promoting the aim of convergence*'.

The Local Plan builds on previously adopted borough plans for the constituent parts of the LLDC area, and sets out the LLDC strategy for the sustainable development of its area as a whole. This includes the general amount, type and location of new development it considers could take place and the policies that applications for planning permission should conform to in order to meet these objectives.

The LLDC area is geographically well defined, bordered and divided by waterways, major roads and railway lines. While bringing four former east London boroughs together (Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest), the Local Plan also sub-divides the area into four to aid the detailed description of the strategy, policies and proposals for these areas in sufficient detail. The four sub areas are listed below and illustrated on Figure 1:

- Sub Area 1 - Hackney Wick and Fish Island
- Sub Area 2 – North Stratford and Eton Manor
- Sub Area 3 – Central and South Stratford and Queen Elizabeth Park South
- Sub Area 4 – Bromley-by-Bow, Three Mills and Pudding Mill.

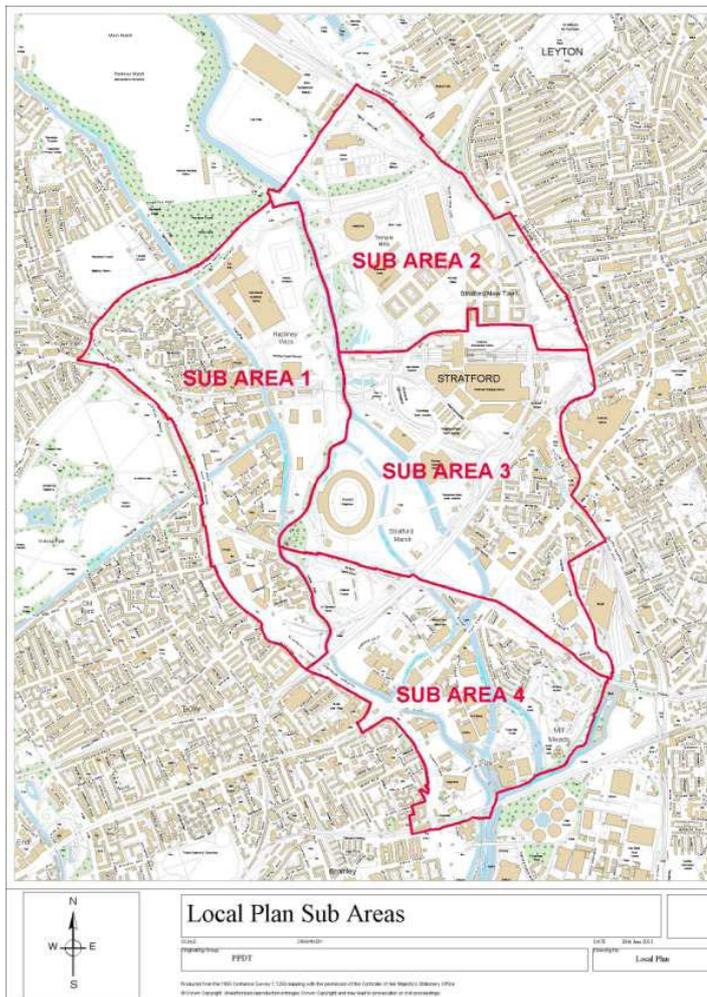


Figure 1: Local Plan Sub Areas

The LLDC area has a population of approximately 12,000 (based on 2011 census data). Compared to London as a whole, the area has lower levels of employment and economic activity, higher levels of people with no qualifications, and higher numbers of people with poor health.

The underlying key theme to the Local Plan is the principle of ‘convergence’, which is the ambition that over a twenty year period, residents of the then Host Boroughs (now ‘Growth Boroughs’) within the LLDC area will achieve the average expected in successful communities.

The area, in combination with much of its immediate surroundings, provides a significant land resource for meeting part of the need for housing and employment that will be generated by the projected growth of London within the London Plan period. The strategy for growth within the LLDC area is designed to meet a local need, whilst also providing a London-wide strategic resource within the context of the overall growth of London.

The Local Plan contains a Vision as well as a number of Objectives. These set out the direction of the approach to development and regeneration of the LLDC area and provide a framework to enable delivery of the planning policies, site allocations and sustainable growth. The objectives are set out in Section 2.2, below.

2.2 Objectives

In order to achieve the Vision for the area, fourteen objectives have been produced. They express the purpose of the Local Plan and are as follows:

Objective 1: Business growth

Objective 2: Jobs

Objective 3: Housing

Objective 4: Education

Objective 5: Health, culture and wellbeing

Objective 6: Urban design and design quality

Objective 7: Creating inclusive places

Objective 8: Creating neighbourhoods

Objective 9: Area characters and the historic environment

Objective 10: Sustainability

Objective 11: Climate change and energy

Objective 12: Open space and biodiversity

Objective 13: Transport and connectivity

Objective 14: Convergence

2.3 Strategic Policies

The vision and objectives set out the overall direction of the Local Plan. The Strategic Policies implement this vision. The policies are set out under a number of headings as follows:

- Business, Employment and Economy
- Housing
- Historic and Built Environment
- Infrastructure
- Natural Environment
- Transport and Connectivity

2.4 Policies within the LLDC Local Plan

The policies within the Local Plan are listed below:

Business, Economy and Employment

Strategic Policy SP1: Business, Economy and Employment

BEE1: Business and Employment hubs

BEE2: Strategic Industrial Land

BEE3: Locally Significant Industrial Sites and Other Industrial Locations

BEE4: Employment Uses in Other Locations

BEE5: Mixed Use Locations

BEE6: Managed and Affordable Workspace

BEE7: Town, Neighbourhood and Local Centres

BEE8: Retail and Commercial Uses Outside of Designated Centres

BEE9: Jobs and Skills and Employment Training

BEE10: Higher Education, Research and Development

BEE11: Schools

Housing

Strategic Policy SP2: Housing

H1: Housing Provision

H2: Residential Development Principles including Alterations and Extensions

H3: Affordable Housing

H4: Specialist Housing Needs

H5: Houses in Multiple Occupation

H6: Institutional Investment in the Private Rented Sector

Historic and Built Environment

Strategic Policy SP3: The Built Environment

Strategic Policy SP4: The Historic Environment

HBE1: Designating Protected Views

HBE2: Inclusive Design

HBE3: Designating Conservation Areas

HBE4: Local Listing

HBE5: Archaeology

HBE6: Local Identity

HBE7: Energy Hierarchy

HBE8: Sustainable Design and Construction

Infrastructure

Strategic Policy SP5: Infrastructure to Support Growth and Convergence

IN1: New and Existing Community Infrastructure

IN2: Energy Infrastructure and Heat Networks

IN3: Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

IN4: Waste Management

Natural Environment

Strategic Policy SP6: The Natural Environment

NE1: Integrating the Built and Natural Environment

NE2: The Natural Environment and Health and Well-being

NE3: The Waterways

NE4: Flood Risk

NE5: Biodiversity

NE6: Land Quality and Contaminated Land

NE7: Air Quality

NE8: The All London Green Grid

NE9: Metropolitan Open Land

NE10: Local Open Space

NE11: Parks and Parklands

NE12: Play Space

Transport and Connectivity

Strategic Policy SP7: Transport and Connectivity

T1: Local Connectivity

T2: Strategic Transport Improvements

T3: Parking and Parking Standards

T4: Provision for Pedestrians and Cyclists

T5: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

T6: Road Hierarchy

T7: Transport Improvements

T8: Supporting Transport Schemes

T9: The Transport Function of Waterways

Delivery and Implementation

Strategic Policy SP8: Delivery and Implementation

DI1: S106 Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy

DI1: Compulsory Purchase

2.5 Sub Area Policies

Within the LLDC area there are four Sub Areas (as illustrated in Figure 1). Policies specific to each of the Sub Areas are also included in the Local Plan as follows:

Sub Area 1: Hackney Wick and Fish Island

SA1.1: Building Heights and Development Density

SA1.2: Improving Connections

- SA1.3: A Neighbourhood Centre
- SA1.4: Heritage-led Regeneration
- SA1.5: Conservation Areas
- SA1.6: Community Facilities
- SA1.7: Heat Networks and Renewable Energy
- SA1.8: Flood Risk

Sub Area 2: North Stratford and Eton Manor

- SA2.1: Housing Typologies
- SA2.2: Housing Densities
- SA2.3: Building Heights
- SA2.4: Leyton Road – improving the public realm
- SA2.5: Improving Connections
- SA2.6: Non-residential Uses

Sub Area 3: Central Stratford and the Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

- SA3.1: A Metropolitan Centre
- SA3.2: Cultural and Education Facilities
- SA3.3: Interim Leisure, Cultural and Event Uses
- SA3.4: General Building Heights and Development Density
- SA3.5: Improving Connections
- SA3.6: Community Facilities
- SA3.7: Development within the Greater Carpenters District

Sub Area 4: Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads

- SA4.1: A District Centre
- SA4.2: General Building Heights and Development Density
- SA4.3: Improving Connections
- SA4.4: Community Facilities
- SA4.5: Heat Networks and Renewable Energy
- SA4.6: Enhancing Three Mills Island

3 THE HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This section provides an outline of the stages involved in HRA and the specific methods that have been used in preparing this report.

3.1 Stages in HRA

The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

- 1 Screening** is the process which initially identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may have a significant effect on the integrity of the site's qualifying habitats and/or species. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect; if the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice (ECJ) case law to the effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, and adopting the precautionary principle, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.
- 2 Appropriate Assessment** is the detailed consideration of the impact upon the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.
- 3 Assessment of alternative solutions** is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.
- 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** At Stage 4, an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI). If it is, this stage also involves detailed assessment of the compensatory measures needed to protect and maintain the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

3.2 Approach to Screening

This Screening Report takes into account the requirements of the Habitats Directive and relevant guidance produced by David Tyldesley Associates for Natural England³ and the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales)⁴.

The following stages have been completed:

- Identification of all European sites potentially affected (including those outside of the Local Plan area for which impact pathways have been identified);
- A review of each site, including the features for which the site is designated, the Conservation Objectives, and an understanding of the current conservation status and the vulnerability of the individual features to threats;
- A review of the policies which have the potential to affect the European sites, and whether the sites are vulnerable to these effects (this has included a categorisation of the potential effects of the policy, in line with Natural England guidance);
- A consideration of any impacts in combination with other plans or projects;
- Where potential effects are identified, avoidance or mitigation measures have been considered in order to avoid significant effects.

3.3 Definition of Significant Effects

A critical part of the HRA screening process is determining whether the proposals are likely to have a significant effect on European Sites and, therefore, if they will require an Appropriate Assessment. Judgements regarding significance should be made in relation to the qualifying interests for which the site is of European importance, and also its conservation objectives. A useful definition of significant effects is provided in Welsh planning guidance, which can be drawn upon in this case:

'...likely means readily foreseeable not merely a fanciful possibility; significant means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that is potentially relevant to the site's conservation objectives'.

3.4 In-Combination Effects

As outlined in Section 3.1, it is necessary for HRA to consider in-combination effects with other plans and projects which could act in-combination with the Local Plan to result in any likely significant effects on the European sites identified. A list of plans and documents for review was provided in the Scoping Report⁵. In addition, a few more plans and projects have been

³ Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

⁴ Draft Guidance for Plan Making Authorities in Wales - The Appraisal of Plans under the Habitats Directive. David Tyldesley and Associates for Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) Bangor (November 2009, revised April 2010 and September 2012).

⁵ LLDC Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment – Habitats Regulations Assessment Scoping Report, Hyder Consulting, April 2013

identified; therefore, the plans to be considered for the in-combination assessment are as follows:

- Newham 2027: Planning Newham the Core Strategy (adopted January 2012 interim version);
- Hackney Core Strategy Development Plan Document (December 2010);
- Core Strategy 2025 Development Plan Document for Tower Hamlets (adopted September 2010);
- Waltham Forest Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted March 2012);
- Area Action Plans (Hackney Wick and Fish Island);
- The London Plan;
- Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Guidance (2012);
- The Legacy Communities Scheme;
- Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Park Development Framework (2011);
- Walthamstow Reservoirs Feasibility Study, Masterplan, Management Plan and Business Plan (April 2010);
- Joint Waste Development Plan for the East London District Boroughs (2011);
- North London Waste Plan (2011);
- London Abstraction Licensing Strategy (February 2013), Environment Agency;
- Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2015-2040 (May 2013), Thames Water;
- Clearing the Air, the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy (2010).

It should be noted that in-combination effects only require consideration where the plan or project being assessed has an impact, whether significant or not. A conclusion of 'Zero Effects' negates the possibility of in-combination effects.

3.5 Mitigation Measures

In preparing this report, consideration has been given to potential avoidance and mitigation measures which would serve to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European sites, for example the provision of specific clauses within the strategy that may prevent adverse effects occurring.

4 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4.1 Approach to Identifying Sites

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) guidance⁶ states that the HRA should be ‘*proportionate to the geographical scope of the option (plan) and the nature and extent of any effects identified.*’

No European Sites are located within the LLDC area boundary, therefore no direct land-take from any European Sites is predicted as a result of plan implementation. However, European sites outside of the boundary may be affected by activities undertaken within the LLDC area if they are connected through an impact pathway, for example, hydrological links or impacts upon air quality.

4.2 European Sites

Table 4-1 lists the European Sites considered to have the potential to be affected by the LLDC Local Plan:

Table 4-1 European Sites that could be affected by the LLDC Local Plan

Name of Site	Identification Number	Status	Distance from LLDC Boundary
Lee Valley Special Protection Area	UK9012111	SPA	3.4km north-west
Lee Valley Ramsar site	UK11034	Ramsar	3.4km north-west
Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation	UK0012720	SAC	2.9km to the north-east

Appendix A provides further information regarding the above European sites, including current conservation status, threats and the results of the most recent condition assessments. The qualifying features of the sites are discussed below in relation to the potential impacts upon them as a result of the plan’s proposed activities.

⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents.

4.3 Potential Impacts of the Local Plan

The Local Plan was reviewed and the following potential impact types were identified that may have indirect effects on European sites and their qualifying species.

4.3.1 Increased recreational pressure

The LLDC area lies approximately 3.4km to the south-west of Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI (a component SSSI of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar) and 2.9km to the south-west of Epping Forest SAC. The remaining component sites of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar are situated approximately 15km to the north of the LLDC area. An increase in population levels due to the construction of approximately 20,000 new homes has the potential to increase recreational disturbance at both of these European sites. This should also be assessed in the context of over 305,000 new dwellings to be delivered in Greater London under the London Plan.

Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar

Disturbance to over-wintering birds (specifically the SPA qualifying features, shoveler and gadwall) may be visual or through sudden noise. It can result in a variety of responses, but birds typically take flight expending unnecessary energy before resuming activity in the same area or relocating to adjacent areas. The overall effect on a bird population is dependent on a range of factors, including: the frequency of disturbance, habituation and toleration to disturbance, availability of other suitable habitat and the number of birds (if adjacent areas are at their carrying capacity).

Results of research by Natural England into the relative proximity of development to European sites and damage to interest features⁷ included recommendations for implementing a series of zones (in that case from the Thames Basin Heaths SPA), within which various constraints would be placed on development. A zone of influence of 5km from the European site was recommended as being the principle recreational catchment of the site. The LLDC area is less than 5km from the Lee Valley SPA, therefore it is reasonable to assume that an increase in population in the LLDC area, particularly when taken into consideration with other large housing development targets, could increase recreational pressure on the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.

A study by Cruickshank *et al*⁸ into recreational disturbance on the Humber Estuary found that to understand disturbance to birds it is important first to understand the human use of the area (for example, access patterns and recreational use). The spatial patterns of recreational access (both on the water and on the shore) are also critical to understand disturbance in context. It is also necessary to consider the species' ecology of an area, habitat quality and other factors that may influence the scale of the disturbance. This information can then be used to identify what kinds of disturbance, and at which locations, are likely to have an impact.

A three-year study of wetland birds at the Stour and Orwell SPA⁹ found that walkers, boats and dogs were the most regular sources of disturbance. However, the greatest responses came

⁷ Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework, Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategies Partnership Board, February 2009

⁸ Cruickshanks, K., Liley, D., Fearnley, H., Stillman, R., Harvell, P., Hoskin, R. & Underhill-Day, J. (2010). Desk Based Study on Recreational Disturbance to birds on the Humber Estuary. Footprint Ecology / Humber Management Scheme

⁹ Ravenscroft, N. (2005). Pilot study into disturbance of waders and wildfowl on the Stour-Orwell SPA: analysis of 2004/05 data. ERA report 44, Report to Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit.

from relatively infrequent events, such as gunshots and aircraft noise. Birds seemed to habituate to frequent 'benign' events, such as vehicles, sailing and horses. Despite this, there was evidence to suggest that birds were avoiding the most frequently-disturbed areas. Disturbance was greatest at high tide and on the Orwell, however; birds on the Stour showed the greatest sensitivity to disturbance.

Birds that use the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar are already within an urban situation, with high-rise buildings surrounding the site and a busy road (A508) passing through the centre of the designated area. Therefore, it is considered likely that they are already habituated to a high level of background noise and the visible presence of human activity.

Although recreational access to Walthamstow Reservoirs (part of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar) is controlled by permits, there are proposals to open the Reservoirs to wider public access through more entrances and improved strategic links¹⁰. Notwithstanding this, the management of access so that the nature conservation importance of the site is not compromised (e.g. closing paths to prevent disturbance on all sides of the reservoirs at sensitive times of year) is a priority. It is considered that screening of policies within the LLDDC Local Plan to determine whether they could lead to a significant increase in recreational pressure on the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar, in combination with other plans and projects, is required.

Epping Forest SAC

Increased visitor numbers to Epping Forest SAC may result in trampling of vegetation, nutrient enrichment due to dog fouling, soil compaction and erosion, all of which may inhibit delivery of the conservation objectives for the site.

The most recent visitor survey results for Epping Forest¹¹ revealed that visitors to Hollow Pond (the part of the SAC closest to the LLDC area, 2.9km away) numbered approximately 429,000 during 2011, the highest number observed across all the 29 sites where surveys were undertaken. Wanstead Flats, a large park used for recreation 2.3km from the LLDC area, had approximately 395,000 visitors over the same period. It was also noted that this was an underestimate, as the figures did not take into account the thousands of league football supporters who use the site during the football season.

The distribution of visitors across Hollow Ponds also indicated a large concentration around the southern edges of the lake (close to the car park) and along the paths. Few were visitors were observed in the northern part of the site or in the woodland areas.

The survey also revealed that previous studies found those living within 2km of the Forest edge comprise at least 95% of all visitors. Just over half the 2011 sample travelled less than 10 minutes to get into the Forest, and of these the majority either walked or drove. As 71% of those who walked travelled less than 10 minutes to reach the Forest, the report concluded that the constituent parts of the Forest were used much in the same way as an urban park would be by those living within walking or cycling distance.

As the LLDC area is almost 3km away from Epping Forest SAC, it is considered likely that the proportion of visitors to the SAC would be small. In addition, car ownership in the four boroughs

¹⁰ Walthamstow Reservoirs Feasibility Study, Masterplan, Management Plan and Business Plan (April 2010), Chris Blandford Associates

¹¹ Epping Forest Visitor Survey 2011 Results Survey (May 2012), Alison Millward Associates

that are part of the LLDC is low. The Core Strategy for Tower Hamlets¹² states that 55.77% of households do not have access to a car, meaning that access by car to Epping Forest from within the LLDC area is likely to be limited for a significant proportion of the population.

Taking into account there are also large recreational areas closer to the LLDC area (e.g. Wanstead Flats) and the fact that the Local Plan includes a key objective relating to the provision of open space and biodiversity through the legacy of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, to effectively tie into the London Green and Blue Grids, it is considered that there would be no significant increase in recreational pressure on Epping Forest through housing development in the LLDC area.

However, the effects of a 'de minimus' increase in recreational pressure will be examined further in the in-combination effects of other plans and projects section.

4.3.2 Increased air pollution

Potential adverse impacts on air quality as a result of increased population and therefore road traffic may affect habitats that are sensitive to increased nitrous oxides (NO_x), nitrogen deposition (N) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). The deposition of pollutants on vegetation can damage the vegetation directly or can affect plant health and productivity. In addition, the characteristics of the soil can be altered (for example pH) which in turn can affect plant health, productivity and species composition. The following pollutants are of most concern with respect to vehicular emissions.

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)

Nitrogen oxides are produced in combustion processes, partly from nitrogen compounds in fuel, but mostly by a direct combination of atmospheric nitrogen and oxygen in flames. Nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) collectively are known as NO_x. The UK emits around 2.2million tonnes of NO₂ per year¹¹; about half of this comes from motor vehicles.

Ammonia (NH₄)

Ammonia in the atmosphere results primarily from the decomposition and volatilisation of animal wastes (www.apis.org.uk). It is also emitted from petrol vehicles fitted with catalytic converters and heavy duty vehicles fitted with selective catalytic reduction.

Effects of pollutants

Nitrogen deposition is the term used to describe the transfer of nitrogen from the atmosphere to the earth. Nitrogen is an essential plant nutrient, and, as such, some of the nitrogen-containing pollutants, such as NO_x and ammonia, can be absorbed by plants. However, too much nitrogen can lead to eutrophication, creating conditions which favour plants with a high demand for nitrogen. Many lower plants (bryophytes and lichens) and communities that thrive in low nutrient conditions, such as heathlands, undergo changes in species composition as a result of the 'fertiliser effect' of eutrophication. Grass species can increase and species diversity of bryophytes and lichens can decline.

Acid deposition represents the mix of pollutants, which include NO_x and ammonia, that together lead to the acidification of soils and freshwater. Acidification - a loss of alkali nutrients (calcium,

¹² Core Strategy 2025 Development Plan Document Tower Hamlets (adopted September 2010).

magnesium and potassium) through leaching and their replacement with acidic elements such as hydrogen and aluminium - is toxic to plants.

Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar

The bird features of Lee Valley SPA (shoveler, gadwall and bittern) are not in themselves susceptible to increases in nitrogen or acid deposition; however; their supporting habitats could be, as eutrophication of fresh water could lead to increased algal growth at the expense of aquatic vegetation. At a site level (Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI being the closest component of the SPA) there is little evidence to suggest that this is currently an issue. The most recent condition assessment, based on data from 2008¹³, found that the site was in good condition and that the numbers of shoveler remained favourable. The site was classified as 'unfavourable recovering'.

Wintering bittern are found over 15km to the north of the LLDC area. The site condition assessment of the underlying SSSI (Turnford and Cheshunt Pits SSSI), undertaken in February 2013, assessed the site as being in 'favourable condition', and the habitat was supporting favourable populations of overwintering gadwall, shoveler and bittern. The contribution of any increases in air pollution from development in the LLDC area affecting habitat that supports bittern is therefore considered unlikely to be insignificant, especially given the distances involved.

As a result of this conclusion, the impacts of increases in air pollution on the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar as a result of development within the LLDC area will not be considered further.

Epping Forest SAC

Epping Forest SAC, located approximately 3km to the north-east of the LLDC area, supports bryophytes and plant communities that require low nutrient inputs. The most recent condition assessment of the underpinning component part of Epping Forest SSSI, undertaken in January 2010,¹⁴ concluded that it was in an 'unfavourable no change' state, primarily due to the excessive levels of nitrous oxides and acid deposition that the site was subject to.

Table 4-2 and Table 4-3 below are based on information taken from the Air Pollution Information Systems (APIS) website¹⁵, and detail the actual deposition of pollutants on each of the SAC habitat features that are sensitive to pollutants. These figures are based on 'critical loads'¹⁶ and illustrate the exceedances of the pollutants in relation to these critical loads based on a three-year average (2009-11).

¹³ Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI site condition assessment accessed via <http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk>

¹⁴ Unit 136, Hollow Flats site condition assessment accessed via <http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk>

¹⁵ <http://www.apis.co.uk>

¹⁶ 'Critical load' is the quantity of pollutant deposited from air to ground, above which significant harmful effects on specified features of the environment can occur.

Table 4-2 Critical Loads and Nitrogen deposition for Epping Forest SAC (2009-11 average)

Feature	Empirical critical load Kg N/ha/yr	Total Nitrogen deposition		
		maximum	minimum	average
Wet heath	10-20	24.64	17.36	18.37
Dry heath	10-20	24.64	17.36	18.37
Beech woodland	10-20	46.76	33.32	35.11

Table 4-3 Critical Loads and Acid deposition for Epping Forest SAC (2009-11 average)

Feature	Maximum critical load keq/ha/yr		Total Acid deposition keq/ha/yr	
	Nitrogen	Sulphur	Nitrogen	Sulphur
Wet heath	2.734	1.66	1.77	0.22
Dry heath	2.734	1.66	1.77	0.22
Broadleaved woodland	3.012	2.655	3.39	0.26

It can be seen from the tables above that the beech woodland feature is currently receiving significant amounts of nitrogen input into the system. This was reflected in the condition assessment, which observed that veteran trees were displaying clear signs of stress (thin canopy and die back of leading shoots) and that bryophytes were sparse and lacked diversity.

As the prevailing winds are from a south-westerly direction, there is a risk that any increases in air pollution could affect Epping Forest SAC; therefore, Local Plan policies that could result in an increase in air pollution will be screened further.

In terms of localised air pollution from car emissions, guidance produced by the Highways Agency¹⁷ for assessing the impacts of transport schemes on air quality states that only designated sites within 200m of the road need to be considered. Although the LLDC area is almost 3km away from Epping Forest, theoretically, development within the LLDC area and from other local plan jurisdictions could lead to increased vehicle journeys along the major roads (in particular the A12) that run through or adjacent to the Forest, and could contribute further to the already high levels of NO_x deposition.

4.3.3 Water abstraction and quality

Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar

The majority of London's public water supply comes from the Rivers Thames and Lee (with approximately 80% of London's supply taken from the freshwater River Thames upstream of

¹⁷ Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11 Environmental Assessment Section 3 Environmental Assessment Techniques Part 1 HA207/07 Air Quality, May 2007

Teddington Weir). The remaining supplies are obtained from groundwater sources situated beneath the London Boroughs from the confined chalk aquifer. Some water supply is provided by the Lee Valley Reservoirs, including Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI, a component of the SPA.

The London Abstraction Licensing Strategy¹⁸ states that for the Lower Lee catchment (where the LLDC area is located), no new consumptive surface water abstractions will be issued (except at times of very high flows). Abstraction during very heavy flows will not provide a reliable source of water, as this may not occur every year.

The Thames Water draft Water Resources Management Plan¹⁹ for 2015 to 2040 forecasts a significant deficit between the amount of water available and demand in London. This shortfall grows from 125 million litres per day in 2020 to 367 million litres by 2040 – equivalent to the water needed by 2.2 million people. This is due partly to population growth estimates, in combination with climate change and Water Framework Directive requirements.

It is therefore considered that the policies within the Local Plan require screening to determine whether they could lead to significant adverse effects due to increased surface water abstraction, either alone or 'in-combination' with other plans or projects on the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.

With respect to adverse impacts on water quality as a result of pollution incidents from proposed development, the LLDC area is considered far enough away from the SPA/Ramsar for there to be no impact, should any pollution incident occur.

The Lower Lea Valley as a whole has a combined foul and surface water drainage system with the potential to regularly overflow into watercourses and reduce water quality. The new Lee Tunnel is designed to relieve the combined surface and foul water drainage overflows from Abbey Mills pumping station as part of a wider programme to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. The Lee Tunnel project is expected to be complete by 2015. The Thames Tideway Tunnel project is also planned to relieve combined storm-water overflows along the River Thames in London as a whole, and will join the Lee Tunnel system at Abbey Mills. It is considered that this investment in sewage infrastructure at a London-wide level (and therefore out of the local authorities' control) will reduce the potential for future pollution incidents.

Epping Forest SAC

Epping Forest SAC (and the LLDC area) are underlain by impermeable London Clay, which completely confines the aquifer underneath¹⁶. The groundwater flow within this aquifer originates from unconfined areas upstream, outside the London area. As a result, it is considered that no effect on the qualifying features of Epping Forest SAC will result from any increases in water demand due to Local Plan policies, or other policies in-combination, as there is no impact pathway between the feature and the principle aquifer.

¹⁸ London Abstraction Licensing Strategy (February 2013), Environment Agency

¹⁹ Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2015-2040 (May 2013), Thames Water

4.3.4 Climate change

Changes in climate are predicted for the future, with warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers, together with more frequent and more extreme weather events, such as heat waves. Major cities such as London are also particularly susceptible to ‘heat island effects’, where solar energy is stored within the urban buildings and infrastructure, making it several degrees warmer in cities than in rural areas. Both Epping Forest and Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar are likely to be subject to climate change, which could result in reduced water levels and increased stress on vegetation and species. Climate change could also result in a change in the distribution of species, including potential colonisation of new species, including invasive/pest species.

Climate change effects could be exacerbated by further development of urban areas and reductions in green space, together with increased vehicle movements; therefore, climate change will be considered as part of the HRA screening process of LLDC Local Plan policies.

4.3.5 Summary of potential impacts

Table 4-4 provides a summary of the features of the European Sites that could be affected by policies within the LLDC Local Plan, either on their own, or in-combination with other plans and policies.

Table 4-4 European Features that could be affected by the LLDC Local Plan

Potential Impacts of Local Plan	European Sites and Features Potentially Affected
Increased recreational pressure through trampling of sensitive vegetation, noise and visual disturbance of qualifying interest species	Over-wintering bird populations of Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar Heathland habitats of Epping Forest SAC
Increases in air pollution due to increase in road traffic as a result of residential/industrial development	Habitats of Epping Forest SAC
Impacts on hydrology of sites due to increased demand for water resulting from residential/industrial development e.g. water abstraction from Lee Valley Reservoirs	Over-wintering bird populations of Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar
Effects of climate change resulting in reduced water levels and increased stress on vegetation and species. Changes in the distribution of species, including invasive/pest species.	Over-wintering bird populations of Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar Habitats of Epping Forest SAC

4.4 Conservation Objectives of the European Sites

Under Regulation 35(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012, the appropriate statutory nature conservation body (in this case Natural England) has a duty to communicate the conservation objectives for a European site to the relevant competent authority responsible for that site. The information provided under Regulation 35 must also include advice on any operations which may cause deterioration of the features for which the site is designated.

The conservation objectives for a European site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- *Its natural range and the area it covers within that range are stable or increasing;*
- *The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and*
- *Conservation status of typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).*

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable when:

- *Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;*
- *The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and*
- *There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.*

Guidance from the European Commission²⁰ indicates that the Habitats Directive intends FCS to be applied at the level of an individual site, as well as to habitats and species across their European range. Therefore, in order to properly express the aims of the Habitats Directive for an individual site, the conservation objectives for a site are essentially to maintain (or restore) the habitats and species of the site at (or to) FCS.

Conservation Objectives for the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar and Epping Forest SAC are provided in Appendix A.

²⁰ Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

5 SCREENING

5.1 Screening Approach taken for the Local Plan

The screening process has been split into two distinct stages, initial screening and detailed screening. The initial screening stage (5.1.1 and Table 5-1, below) has provided a high level screening 'matrix style' assessment to determine if the LLDC Local Plan could possibly lead to significant adverse effects on European sites identified in Table 4-1. The purpose of this is to eliminate those policies from the assessment which very clearly would not affect European sites in order to focus on those policies where there is potential for effects or uncertainty about potential effects. The eliminated policies are defined by the following criteria:

- The policy itself will not lead to development (e.g. it relates to design or is not a land use planning policy);
- No development could occur through the policy alone, because it is implemented through subordinate policies that are more detailed and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on the European Site;
- There is no impact pathway to any of the European sites identified; and/or
- The policy is intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity.

Policies that were identified as having potential indirect impacts on the European sites, or those policies for which impacts were uncertain, were carried forward into a more detailed screening assessment.

When identifying the elements of the Local Plan that could potentially affect European sites, it was important to focus upon those elements that would have the greatest likelihood of impacting the sites. Therefore, the definition of significance identified in Section 3.3 was very important for the detailed screening.

The LLDC Local Plan is intended to be read as a single document rather than a series of separate policies, and has been assessed as such. Proposals in one area of the Local Plan may mitigate potentially damaging activities promoted in another area, and should therefore be understood in the wider context of the Plan's aims and purposes.

The following sections outline the initial and detailed screening of the LLDC Local Plan, respectively.

5.2 Initial Screening of the Local Plan Policies

The initial screening of the LLDC Local Plan is presented in Table 5-1 below.

The policies within the sub-headings were initially examined to determine their need for further detailed assessment. The notations below were used to indicate if further detailed assessment is required:

- ✓ Further detailed assessment is required to determine the nature of effects on the European site.
- X No further assessment is required, as no effects are predicted on the European site.

Table 5-1 Initial Screening of LLDC Local Plan

European Site	Business, Economy and Employment	Housing	Historic and Built Environment	Infrastructure	Natural Environment	Transport and Connectivity	Sub Area 1: Hackney Wick and Fish Island	Sub Area 2: North Stratford and Eton Manor	Sub Area 3: Central Stratford and the Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park	Sub Area 4: Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads	Delivery and Implementation
Lee Valley SPA	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Lee Valley Ramsar	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Epping Forest SAC	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Comments	<p>Strategic Policy SP1 sets out the strategy within which these policies will be followed. No development could occur through this policy alone, as it is implemented through subordinate policies detailed below, which are more appropriate to assess for their potential impacts - therefore, this policy will not be taken further.</p> <p>Policies BEE1, BEE2, BEE3, BEE4, BEE7, BEE8, BEE10 and BEE11 relate to the location of development land for employment and education. These could have impacts on the European sites through increased recreational pressure leading to degradation of habitats and disturbance of species, adverse impacts on hydrology and air quality.</p> <p>Policies BEE5, BEE6 and BEE9 are concerned with mixed use proposals, available workspace and training, and will not result in any impacts on the European Sites.</p>	<p>Strategic Policy SP2 provides the framework against which housing development opportunities will be assessed. As with SP1, no development will occur through this policy alone, so this strategic policy will not be taken forward for further assessment.</p> <p>Policies H1 and H3 provide annual targets for housing provision and affordable housing. Therefore there are potential impacts on European sites as a result of the implementation of these policies.</p> <p>Policy H2 relates to design principles, H4 to specialist housing needs, H5 to houses in multiple occupation and H6 relates to investment in the private sector. None of these policies are anticipated to have any effects on European sites.</p>	<p>Strategic Policy SP3 concerns the design of the built environment, and Strategic Policy SP4 seeks to ensure the conservation of the historic environment.</p> <p>Policies HBE1, HBE2, HBE3, HBE4 and HBE5 relate to issues such as designating protected views, inclusive design, designating conservation areas, local listing and archaeology.</p> <p>None of the above policies are anticipated to have any effects on European sites.</p>	<p>Strategic Policy SP5 concerns an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy. As with SP1 & SP2, this policy will not be taken forward for further assessment.</p> <p>Policy IN1 relates to the provision of new and existing community infrastructure and Policy IN2 concerns the provision of energy infrastructure and heat networks. It supports proposals for new energy infrastructure, which may have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites (e.g. wind turbines affecting flight lines of SPA species).</p> <p>Policy IN3 concerns opportunities to reduce water demand and use. This policy is not anticipated to have any adverse effects on European sites.</p> <p>Policy IN4 concerns policies for new waste management facilities. Depending upon what form these take (i.e. incinerators) these proposals may have the potential to affect Epping Forest SAC through a reduction in air</p>	<p>Strategic Policy SP6 seeks to ensure the protection of the natural environment. Policies NE1 and NE2 relate to the natural environment, health and the built environment. Policy NE3 concerns the waterways, Policy NE4 flood risk and NE5 the promotion of biodiversity.</p> <p>Policy NE6 concerns land quality and contaminated land and Policy NE7 air quality (including proposals to minimise the effect of emissions). Policies NE9, NE10, NE11 and NE 12 relate to open land and play spaces, Through the implementation of the above policies, benefits to general biodiversity and potential adverse impacts on the European sites as a result of other policies, should be reduced. None of the above policies will result in any adverse impacts on the European sites.</p>	<p>Strategic Policy SP7 seeks to deliver a range of transport infrastructure through the promotion of sustainable transport choices. As with SP1, SP2 and SP5, it is not considered appropriate to take this strategic policy to further assessment.</p> <p>Policy T1 concerns local connectivity and Policy T2 strategic rail improvements. Policy T3 deals with parking and Policy T4 the provision for pedestrians and cyclists. Policy T5 relates to transport assessment and travel plans and Policy T6 to road hierarchy. None of the above policies are anticipated to have any adverse impacts on European Sites.</p> <p>Policy T7 concerns transport improvements and Policy T8 supporting public transport and highway schemes. Policy T9 relates to the transport function of the waterways. All of these policies have the potential to affect the habitats of the European Sites through an increase</p>	<p>Policy SA1.1 concerns building heights and density; Policy SA1.2 improving connections; Policy SA1.4 heritage-led regeneration; SA1.5 conservation areas; SA1.6 community facilities; and SA1.8 flood risk. It is not anticipated that any direct or indirect impacts on European sites will result from the implementation of these policies.</p> <p>SA1.7 concerns heat networks and renewable energy. Indirect impacts on the Lee Valley SPA/ Ramsar may occur regarding any wind turbine proposals that could affect flight lines of SPA species.</p> <p>The site allocations, which set out where in the sub-area new development is to take place (and are referred to as Planning Delivery Zone 4 (PDZ4) - Sweetwater and PDZ5 – East Wick and also in Policy SA1.3: neighbourhood centre), have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites through the construction and operation of retail, employment and residential development.</p>	<p>Policy SA2.1 relates to housing typologies and Policy SA2.2 housing densities. Policy SA2.3 concerns building heights; Policy SA2.4 improving the public realm of Leyton Road; Policy SA2.5 improving connections and Policy SA2.6 non-residential uses.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that any direct or indirect impacts on European sites will result from the implementation of these policies.</p> <p>The site allocations, which set out where in the sub-area new development is to take place (referred to as Chobham Farm, East Village and Chobham Manor) have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites through the construction and operation of retail, employment and residential development.</p> <p>Although not strictly policies, the impacts of these site allocations will be assessed further.</p>	<p>Policy SA3.1 concerns proposals for a Metropolitan Centre in compliance with policies BEE1 and BEE7. These policies have already been identified as potentially having an effect on European Sites, so Policy SA3.1 will be assessed in the same context.</p> <p>Policy SA3.2 relates to cultural and education facilities; Policy SA3.3 interim leisure, cultural and event uses; Policy SA3.4 general building heights and development density; Policy SA3.5 improving connections and SA3.6 the loss of community facilities. None of these policies are anticipated to have adverse impacts on the European sites.</p> <p>However, Policy SA3.7 deals with development within the Greater Carpenters District (one of the site allocations) and, as such, has the potential to affect European sites. In line with the other Sub Areas, the remaining site allocations also have the potential to affect European Sites and will therefore be</p>	<p>Policy SA4.1 promotes the delivery of a District Centre, the development of which could have impacts on the European Sites.</p> <p>Policy SA4.2 concerns building heights and density; Policy SA4.3 improving connections; Policy SA4.4 community facilities; and Policy SA4.6 enhancing Three Mills Island.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that any direct or indirect impacts on European sites will result from the implementation of these policies.</p> <p>However, Policy SA4.5 relates to heat networks and renewable energy, and potential indirect impacts on the flight lines of SPA species could result.</p> <p>The site allocations, which set out where in the sub-area new development is to take place (referred to as Bromley-by-Bow, Pudding Mill, Sugar House Lane and Three Mills), have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites through the construction and operation of retail, employment and residential</p>	<p>Strategic Policy SP8 refers to working with partners to promote and support the plan policies.</p> <p>Policy DI1 concerns Section 106 Planning Obligations, and Policy DI2 compulsory purchase powers.</p> <p>It is not envisaged that the implementation of any of these policies will have adverse impacts on European Sites.</p>

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Following this initial screening of the LLDC Local Plan, policies contained within three of the chapters in the plan can be screened out completely from further assessment, on the basis that no identifiable impact pathway exists linking the policies with the European Sites and/or because there will be no foreseeable adverse impact on European sites through policy implementation. In addition, several further policies under each of the sub-headings have been screened out of further assessment on a similar justification.

In total, therefore, the policies screened out of further assessment are as follows:

Business, Economy and Employment: SP1, BEE5, BEE6 and BEE9

Housing: SP2, H2, H4, H5 and H6

Historic and Built Environment: SP3, SP4, HBE1, HBE2, HBE3, HBE4 and HBE5

Infrastructure: SP5 and IN3

Natural Environment: SP6, NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, NE5, NE6, NE7, NE8, NE9, NE10, NE11 and NE12

Transport and Connectivity: SP7, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6

Sub Area 1: Hackney Wick and Fish Island: SA1.1, SA1.2, SA1.4, SA1.5, SA1.6 and SA1.8

Sub Area 2: North Stratford and Eton Manor: SA2.1, SA2.2, SA2.3, SA2.4, SA2.5 and SA2.6

Sub Area 3: Central Stratford and the Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: SA3.2, SA3.3, SA3.4, SA3.5 and SA3.6

Sub Area 4: Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads: SA4.2, SA4.3, SA4.4 and SA4.6

Delivery and Implementation: SP8, DI1 AND DI2

Table 5-1 illustrates which policies under each chapter have been identified for further detailed screening assessment (i.e. which are screened in).

5.3 Assessment of Potential Impacts

A more detailed assessment of the potential impacts identified in Table 4-2 is found below, specifically in relation to the policies screened in.

5.4 Detailed Screening of the Local Plan Policies

The detailed screening of the Local Plan policies in relation to the European Sites is presented in Table 5-2, below, and is based on the findings of the initial screening exercise and the assessment of potential impacts, as mentioned in Section 5.3. Policies have been selected for further screening on the basis that there may be potential impacts on European Sites if they are implemented without any mitigation or avoidance measures. This has also included a

categorisation of the potential effects in line with Natural England Guidance²¹. Further information regarding this assessment is found in Appendix B.

An assessment of possible mitigation or avoidance measures, along with the potential effects of the policy in combination with other plans or projects, has also been undertaken.

The policies selected for detailed screening are as follows:

Business, Economy and Employment: BEE1, BEE2, BEE3, BEE4, BEE7, BEE8 and BEE10

Housing: H1 and H3

Infrastructure: IN1, IN2 and IN4

Transport and Connectivity: T7, T8 and T9

Sub Area 1: Hackney Wick and Fish Island: SA1.3, SA1.7 and the site allocations

Sub Area 2: North Stratford and Eton Manor: the site allocations

Sub Area 3: Central Stratford and the Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: SA3.1, SA3.7 and the site allocations

Sub Area 4: Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads: SA4.1, SA4.5 and the site allocations

Local Plan policies were examined in detail to determine the need for Appropriate Assessment. It is considered that the need for Appropriate Assessment of the final policies should be avoided if at all possible, with the strengthening of the existing policies to include specific references to environmental assessment and caveats regarding HRA through the development process.

5.5 In-Combination Effects

The HRA needs to consider not only the 'screened in' policies within the LLDC Local Plan that may lead to significant impacts upon European sites on their own, but also those that may have a significant impact in combination with other plans and projects within the local area. Section 3.4 outlines relevant plans and projects that were considered in-combination with the LLDC Local Plan.

Only the effects of other plans or projects which (like those of the plan under consideration here) alone would not be likely to be significant, needed to be included in the in-combination assessment. If the effects of other plans or projects were already significant on their own, they were not added to those associated with the LLDC Local Plan.

To be relevant to the *in-combination* assessment, the residual effects of other plans or projects will need to either make the unlikely effects of the LLDC Local Plan likely, or insignificant effects of the plan significant, or both. An assessment has therefore been made of the 'other' plans and projects listed in Section 3.4 with a view to determining whether or not they would result in impacts which, in combination with the policies set out in the LLDC Local Plan could lead to

²¹ Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

significant effects on the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar or Epping Forest SAC. This is also detailed in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2: Detailed Screening of LLDC Local Plan Policies on European Sites outside of LLDC area

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	In-combination effects with other plans or projects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category * (see Appendix B)	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Conclusion of Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this stage
<p>Business, Economy and Employment:</p> <p>The policies listed below provide the site-specific detail of where business development is to be located within the LLDC area and, as the impacts are considered to be of a similar type, they have been considered together:</p> <p>BEE1, BEE2, BEE3, BEE4, BEE7, BEE8 and BEE10</p>	<p>Policies that promote development for employment and education could have an adverse effect on air quality as a result of increased traffic emissions. They could also contribute to increased water demands and therefore water abstraction.</p> <p>The probability of workers increasing recreational pressure on the European sites is considered insignificant, given the distance between the Local Plan area and the sites, and the availability of alternative recreational space closer to the employment hubs.</p> <p>Policy HBE7 sets out how developments will be expected to minimise carbon dioxide emissions, and policy HBE8 requires the incorporation of the highest standards of sustainability and design.</p> <p>The policies aim to focus development for business into 'employment hubs' within the LLDC area and into Strategic Industrial Land as identified in the London Plan (BEE1, 2, 3 and 4). New retail development will be focussed on existing town/ neighbourhood centres, as these have access to one or more public transport hubs (BEE7). Outside of these centres, any retail, commercial or leisure proposals should be small-scale and provide services to the immediate community (BEE8). Proposals to provide educational facilities should also be located within or adjacent to the employment hubs and have easy access to public transport hubs (BEE10).</p> <p>In addition, other policies in the Local Plan, such as T8, support the development of public transport schemes, whilst T4 provides for provision for pedestrians and cyclists and T5 refers to the production of Travel Plans for new developments which actively promote public transport, cycling and walking. It is acknowledged within the Local Plan that much of the public transport improvements are already underway.</p> <p>Policy NE7 seeks to ensure that there will be no worsening of air quality within the LLDC area through the design and construction of proposed developments.</p> <p>Policy IN3 supports measures to reduce water demand and use and to extend the non-potable supply network that has been installed in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.</p> <p>As the European Sites are several kilometres outside the Local Plan area, it is impossible to quantify the amount of air pollution that can be contributed to proposed development within the LLDC area. It is therefore considered these policies together provide a coherent strategy to maximise air quality improvement within the Local Plan area through minimising vehicle use and the focussing of proposed development. Associated demands on water supply will also be minimised (as far as a local authority can influence this) through the implementation of Policy IN3.</p> <p>The policies above also aim to minimise any impacts of climate change on the European sites as far as possible.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policies BEE1, BEE2, BEE3, BEE4, BEE7, BEE8 and BEE10 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/ Ramsar.</p>	<p>Land allocation for employment use is in line with the requirements of the London Plan, which has also been subject to an HRA process. Policy 7.19 of the London Plan requires that implementation of the policies and proposals of the plan must be done in a way which avoids adverse effect on the integrity of any identified European sites.</p> <p>Core Strategies for the local boroughs that make up the LLDC area (Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest) have also been through the HRA process.</p> <p>All of these HRAs concluded that there would be no significant effect on European sites either alone, or in-combination with, other plans and projects, with regard to air quality, or through an increase in water demand, by the implementation of the policies contained within the individual Core Strategies. Although it is acknowledged that many 'insignificant' impacts can in theory add up to a 'significant' impact, the LLDC area comprises only portions of the previous four London Boroughs, with a corresponding decrease in an already insignificant impact. The distance of the LLDC area to the European Sites also means that potential indirect impacts are reduced further.</p> <p>The Legacy Communities Scheme provides for a phased mixed-use development for land within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. It includes proposals on how to reduce energy and water use, maximise green infrastructure and promote the principles of sustainable development. All these factors should help reduce any potential indirect impacts on the European sites several kilometres away, and therefore the in-combination effects when considered with other development proposals in the Local Plan area are judged to be insignificant.</p> <p>Finally, the policies and proposals contained within both the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy and the Draft Water Resource Management promote the improvement of air quality and water resource management, which should also help reduce any adverse impacts on European sites in the medium to long term.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policies BEE1, BEE2, BEE3, BEE4, BEE7, BEE8 and BEE10 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/ Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (from increased water abstraction)</p> <p>Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality)</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Recommend cross-references in Policies BEE1, 2 and 3 to policies that support sustainability in design, minimising carbon dioxide emissions, support public transport, reduce water demand and improve air quality in line with sustainable development objectives and in order to reduce impacts on protected sites.</p> <p>Strengthen the provisions within policy NE7 to cross reference to policies that seek to minimise emissions.</p>	<p>No LSE</p>
<p>Housing:</p> <p>Policy H1 provides for an annual net increase of over</p>	<p>Policies that promote housing development could have an adverse effect on air quality as a result of increased traffic emissions. They could also contribute to increased water demands and therefore</p>	<p>As with all London Boroughs, the LLDC Local Plan is directed by the London Plan on a range of housing policies. Policy 7.19 of the London Plan</p>	<p>Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (from increased</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Recommend inclusion of reference to public transport links for</p>	<p>No LSE</p>

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	In-combination effects with other plans or projects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category * (see Appendix B)	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Conclusion of Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this stage
<p>1,432 homes, and Policy H3 states an annual target of at least 441 affordable homes. It also identifies locations for housing development.</p> <p>As the potential impacts on the European sites from the implementation of these policies are considered to be similar, the policies have been considered together.</p>	<p>water abstraction. Furthermore, an increase in recreational pressure on European sites could result due to the corresponding rise in population.</p> <p>Planning consent has already been given for approximately 82% of the total projected growth in the area. Housing delivery is to be completed in stages, alongside necessary infrastructure, as detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</p> <p>Policy HBE7 sets out how developments will be expected to minimise carbon dioxide emissions, and policy HBE8 requires the incorporation of the highest standards of sustainability and design.</p> <p>In addition, other policies in the Local Plan, such as T8, support the development of public transport schemes, whilst T4 provides for provision for pedestrians and cyclists and T5 refers to the production of Travel Plans for new developments which actively promote public transport, cycling and walking. It is acknowledged within the Local Plan that much of the public transport improvements are already underway.</p> <p>Policy NE7 seeks to ensure that there will be no worsening of air quality within the LLDC area through the design and construction of proposed developments.</p> <p>Policy IN3 supports measures to reduce water demand and use and to extend the non-potable supply network that has been installed in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.</p> <p>Policy NE1 aims to achieve integration between the natural and built environment by maximising the provision of natural habitat. NE8 aims to contribute to the enhancement and management of green infrastructure within the Local Plan area. Policies NE9, NE10 and NE11 also relate to the provision of open space and parklands for recreational use.</p> <p>As for the Business, Economy and Employment (BEE) policies, it is considered that these policies together provide a coherent strategy for proposals that actively encourage the use of public transport, minimise water use and air pollution within the Local Plan area, which should also minimise any adverse impact on European Sites that are outside the Local Plan area.</p> <p>The southern extent of Epping Forest SAC is located approximately 2.9km to the north-east of the Local Plan area, and the southern extent of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar is situated approximately 3.4km to the north-west. Although the potential exists for increased disturbance through a rise in visitor pressure as the housing developments are progressively completed, the risk is low that residents in the LLDC area will choose to visit the habitats of the European Sites in preference to more local destinations, particularly given the emphasis that has been placed within the Local Plan on the contributions to be made to green and blue infrastructure within the Plan lifetime. In addition, car ownership in the Boroughs that make up the LLDC area is traditionally low, further reducing the likelihood of an increase in recreational pressure from the Local Plan area.</p> <p>The policies above also aim to minimise any impacts of climate change on the European sites as far as possible.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policies H1 and H3 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation</p>	<p>requires that implementation of the policies and proposals of the plan must be done in a way which avoids adverse effect on the integrity of any identified European sites.</p> <p>Core Strategies for the local boroughs that make up the LLDC area (Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest) have also been through the HRA process.</p> <p>All of these HRAs concluded that there would be no significant effect on European sites either alone, or in-combination with, other plans and projects, with regard to air quality, or through an increase in water demand, by the implementation of the policies contained within the individual Core Strategies. Although it is acknowledged that many 'insignificant' impacts can in theory add up to a 'significant' impact, the LLDC area comprises only portions of the previous four London Boroughs, with a corresponding decrease in an already insignificant impact. The distance of the LLDC area to the European Sites also means that potential indirect impacts are reduced further.</p> <p>Public access to the Walthamstow Reservoirs component of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar is currently effectively managed by permits issued by Thames Water. The priority to manage access so that the nature conservation importance of the site is not compromised (e.g. closing paths to prevent disturbance on all sides of the reservoirs at sensitive times of year) will remain throughout the implementation of the proposals to open the Reservoirs to wider public access. Therefore, a combined increase in recreational pressure from increasing numbers of residents is not anticipated.</p> <p>Finally, the policies and proposals contained within both the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy and the Draft Water Resource Management promote the improvement of air quality and water resource management, which should also help reduce any adverse impacts on European sites in the medium to long term.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policies H1 and H3 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/ Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>water abstraction and increased recreational pressure)</p> <p>Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality and increases in recreational pressure)</p>		<p>housing developments in Policy H1 and cross-referencing to policies that support sustainability in design, minimise carbon dioxide emissions, support public transport, reduce water demand and improve air quality in line with sustainable development objectives and in order to reduce impacts on protected sites.</p>	

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	In-combination effects with other plans or projects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category * (see Appendix B)	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Conclusion of Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this stage
	objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/ Ramsar site.					
Infrastructure: Policy IN1 relates to the provision of new and existing community infrastructure	<p>Policy IN1 encourages the provision of new and existing community infrastructure as part of new large scale development. As such, the potential impacts on European sites are considered to be the same as for the Business, Economy and Employment (BEE) policies identified above (i.e. effect on air quality as a result of increased traffic emissions, an increase in water demand and therefore water abstraction).</p> <p>It is considered that there will be no increase in recreational pressure on European sites as a result of the construction of community facilities. Such facilities provide a focus for activities that may even reduce the likelihood of increased recreational pressure.</p> <p>The assessment of potential effects through the implementation of this policy is therefore the same as for the BEE policies, i.e. it is concluded that the implementation of Policy IN1 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.</p>	<p>The assessment of potential in-combination effects through the implementation of this policy is the same as for the BEE policies, as provisions for new community facilities will form an integral part of any large scale development proposal.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policy IN1 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (from increased water abstraction)</p> <p>Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality)</p>	B	No requirement	No LSE
Infrastructure: Policy IN2 concerns the provision of energy infrastructure and heat networks.	<p>No adverse impacts are identified from proposals to expand the existing heat network infrastructure. However, the broad policy statement supporting proposals for renewable energy generation could have potential impacts upon European sites depending upon how they are implemented.</p> <p>For example, there is a theoretical possibility that should proposals for wind turbines within the Local Plan area be brought forward, then these could interfere with the flight paths of birds which are features of the SPA/Ramsar.</p> <p>It is considered appropriate that any proposals should be subject to environmental assessment, which may or may not include an HRA.</p> <p>The distance of the SPA from the Local Plan area, the number of high rise buildings and other structures already surrounding the SPA, and the fact that the vast majority of wintering shoveler and gadwall will come from a northerly/north-easterly direction, reduce the risk of any significant adverse effect.</p>	<p>Policy 5.7 of the London Plan identifies that all renewable energy systems should be located and designed to minimise any impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment.</p> <p>No other renewable energy projects have been identified that could have an adverse impact on Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policy IN2 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (disturbance to qualifying features)</p>	F	<p>May be appropriate to include a caveat '...subject to other policies in this Plan <i>and other regulatory requirements</i>'.</p> <p>This should acknowledge the possibility that future proposals may need to be subject to a more detailed environmental assessment process, which may incorporate project-level HRA.</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the policy is implemented.</p> <p>If the mitigation measures proposed are included in the final policy, it is considered a conclusion of no LSE will be achievable.</p>
Infrastructure: Policy IN4 concerns policies for new waste management facilities.	<p>The potential effects on Epping Forest SAC of this policy rely entirely how it is implemented in due course.</p> <p>Depending upon what form proposals for new waste management facilities take (i.e. waste incinerators) the potential exists to affect Epping Forest SAC through a reduction in air quality.</p> <p>Environment Agency guidance¹ indicates that designated sites within 10km of a point source pollutant emission should be considered as a sensitive receptor. It is therefore anticipated that any proposal within the Local Plan area would be subject to an air quality assessment, and mitigation measures implemented accordingly to minimise the potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>¹ IPPC H1 Guidance for the Environmental Assessment and Appraisal of Best Available Technologies, Environment Agency</p>	<p>Policy 5.17 of the London Plan identifies opportunities for increasing waste capacity through, for example, producing energy through biomass.</p> <p>The Local Plan area is covered by the Waste Development Plans for East and North London. Both of these Plans have been subject to the HRA process and concluded that there would be no significant effect on any features of European Sites.</p> <p>No other waste projects have been identified that could have an adverse impact on Epping Forest SAC.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policy IN4 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality)</p>	F	<p>Proposals for waste management facilities need to be examined on a case-by-case basis. Recommend strengthening of this policy to include a caveat that prevents potentially damaging proposals from occurring (unless the potential effects on European sites/ environment have been resolved.</p>	<p>Cannot conclude No Likely Significant Effects at this stage – depends on how the policy is implemented.</p> <p>If the mitigation measures proposed are included in the final policy, it is considered a conclusion of no LSE will be achievable.</p>

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	In-combination effects with other plans or projects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category * (see Appendix B)	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Conclusion of Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this stage
<p>Transport and Connectivity: Policy T7 concerns transport improvements and Policy T8 supporting public transport and highway schemes. Policy T9 relates to the transport function of the waterways.</p> <p>As the potential impacts on the European sites from the implementation of these policies are considered to be similar, the policies have been considered together.</p>	<p>The majority of transport improvements required in the LLDC area are already in place. Of the key projects identified under Policies T7 and T8 as being required to support development delivery in particular locations, it is considered that potential adverse impacts on air quality affecting Epping Forest could result, primarily from road projects and an increase in traffic on the waterways.</p> <p>It is important to note that transport schemes will generally be delivered by other agencies, such as Transport for London, Network Rail and the four London Boroughs, and therefore LLDC will work in partnership with these agencies to facilitate delivery of these schemes.</p> <p>However, no significant decrease in air quality is expected as a result of these schemes for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The already significant levels of background air pollution over Epping Forest caused by the highly urban and industrialised nature of the surrounding environment, combined with the distance of the schemes from Epping Forest SAC, means that any increase in air pollution during construction and operation of the improved transport schemes is likely to be insignificant. • Improvements in traffic flow means that cars will run more efficiently, thereby reducing emissions. • The general trend in NO_x levels is downwards (primarily due to improvements in technology). • Further investment in public transport (Policy T8) and in the provision for pedestrians and cyclists (Policy T5) should encourage more people out of their cars • Policy NE7 seeks to ensure that there will be no worsening of air quality within the LLDC area. <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policies T7, T8 and T9 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC.</p>	<p>Policy 6.1 of the London Plan sets out the strategic approach to be taken to integrating transport and development and emphasises measures to reduce car journeys.</p> <p>Core Strategies for the local boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest that make up the LLDC area have also been through the HRA process.</p> <p>All of these HRAs concluded that there would be no significant air quality effect on European sites either alone, or in-combination with other plans and projects associated with the implementation of the policies contained within the individual Core Strategies. The distance of the LLDC area to the Epping Forest SAC also means that potential indirect impacts are reduced.</p> <p>Policies contained within the Lee Valley Park Development Framework were also assessed with regard to the promotion of boat traffic. This document has also been subject to an HRA Screening. No policies were found to have any adverse impact on European Sites, including Epping Forest SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, the policies and proposals contained within the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy promote the improvement of air quality, which should also help reduce any adverse impacts on European sites in the medium to long term.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policies T7, T8 and T9 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality)	B	No requirement	No LSE
<p>Sub Area 1: Hackney Wick and Fish Island SA1.7 concerns heat networks and renewable energy.</p>	<p>The basic premise of Policy SA1.7 is the same as IN2 in that it supports proposals for renewable energy infrastructure.</p> <p>Although this sub-area is identified as being a preferred location for renewable energy development, specific areas where proposals may be located are not identified. Therefore, the potential impact of policies depends entirely on how they are implemented in due course through the development management process.</p> <p>As such, the assessment of potential impacts on the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar is considered to be the same as for Policy IN2 i.e. the potential effects of this policy rely entirely how it is implemented in due course.</p>	As for Policy IN2 above.	Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (disturbance to qualifying features)	F	As for Policy IN2 above.	As for Policy IN2 above.
<p>Sub Area 1: Hackney Wick and Fish Island Site allocations, which set out where in the sub-area new development is to take place, are: Planning Delivery Zone 4 (PDZ4) - Sweetwater and PDZ5 – East Wick; and</p>	<p>These site allocations have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites through the construction and operation of retail, employment and residential development.</p> <p>Any assessment of potential impacts needs to consider the same issues as that for the BEE policies and the Housing policies.</p> <p>These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential adverse effects on air quality as a result of increased traffic emissions; 	<p>The assessment of potential in-combination effects through the implementation of this policy is the same as for the BEE and Housing policies, as the site allocations form part of the total allocations under these policies.</p> <p>The in-combination assessment also examined the Area Action Plan for Hackney Wick, the HRA of which concluded that there would be no significant effects on European sites as the</p>	Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (from increased water abstraction and increased recreational pressure) Epping Forest SAC (from	B	Recommend strengthening this policy further by cross-referencing to provisions for sustainable development in Policies BEE1, BEE2, BEE3 and H1.	No LSE

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	In-combination effects with other plans or projects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category * (see Appendix B)	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Conclusion of Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this stage
Policy SA1.3: neighbourhood centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> potential increased water demand and therefore water abstraction; and a potential increase in recreational pressure due to the corresponding rise in population. <p>As for the assessment of the BEE and Housing policies, policies and proposals that actively encourage the use of public transport minimise water use and air pollution within the Local Plan area (thus minimising any adverse impact on European Sites that are outside the Local Plan area) and also help reduce the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>In addition, with respect to recreational pressure, the risk is low that residents in the LLDC area will choose to visit the habitats of the European Sites in preference to more local destinations, particularly given the emphasis that has been placed within the Local Plan on the contributions to be made to green and blue infrastructure and the importance of enhancing biodiversity within the Plan lifetime.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policy SA1.3 and the site allocations will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.</p>	<p>policies were in line with the Hackney Core Strategy (which was also subject to an HRA). The same conclusion has been reached for this assessment, in line with the LLDC Local Plan policies.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the implementation of Policy SA1.3 and the site allocations will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	decreases in air quality and increases in recreational pressure)			
<p>Sub Area 2: North Stratford and Eton Manor:</p> <p>Site allocations, which set out where in the sub-area new development is to take place, are:</p> <p>Chobham Farm, East Village and Chobham Manor</p>	<p>These site allocations have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites through the construction and operation of retail, employment and residential development.</p> <p>An assessment of potential effects needs to consider the same issues as that for the BEE policies and the Housing policies.</p> <p>As for the assessment of the BEE and Housing policies, policies and proposals that actively encourage the use of public transport minimise water use and air pollution within the Local Plan area (thus minimising any adverse impact on European Sites that are outside the Local Plan area) and also help reduce the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>In addition, with respect to recreational pressure, the risk is low that residents in the LLDC area will choose to visit the habitats of the European Sites in preference to more local destinations, particularly given the emphasis that has been placed within the Local Plan on the contributions to be made to green and blue infrastructure and the importance of enhancing biodiversity within the Plan lifetime.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that development of the site allocations will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.</p>	<p>The assessment of potential in-combination effects through the implementation of this policy is the same as for the BEE and Housing policies, as the site allocations form part of the total allocations under these policies.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that development of the site allocations will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (from increased water abstraction and increased recreational pressure). Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality and increases in recreational pressure).	B	Recommend strengthening this policy further by cross-referencing to provisions for sustainable development in Policies BEE1, BEE2, BEE3 and H1.	No LSE
<p>Sub Area 3: Central Stratford and the Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park</p> <p>Policy SA3.1 concerns proposals for a Metropolitan Centre, in compliance with policies BEE1 and BEE7.</p> <p>Policy SA3.7 deals with development within the Greater Carpenters District (one of the site allocations).</p>	<p>These site allocations have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites through the construction and operation of retail, employment and residential development.</p> <p>An assessment of potential effects needs to consider the same issues as that for the BEE policies and the Housing policies.</p> <p>As for the assessment of the BEE and Housing policies, policies and proposals that actively encourage the use of public transport, and minimise water use and air pollution within the Local Plan area, should minimise any adverse impact on European Sites that are outside the Local Plan area and help reduce the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>In addition, with respect to recreational pressure, the risk is low that</p>	<p>The assessment of potential in-combination effects through the implementation of this policy is the same as for the BEE and Housing policies, as the site allocations form part of the total allocations under these policies.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that implementation of Policies SA3.1 and SA3.7 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (from increased water abstraction and increased recreational pressure). Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality and increases in recreational	B	Recommend strengthening this policy further by cross-referencing to provisions for sustainable development in Policies BEE1, BEE2, BEE3 and H1.	No LSE

Local Plan Policy	Potential Effects	In-combination effects with other plans or projects	European Sites Potentially Affected	Assessment Category * (see Appendix B)	Avoidance and Mitigation Potential	Conclusion of Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this stage
	<p>residents in the LLDC area will choose to visit the habitats of the European Sites in preference to more local destinations, particularly given the emphasis that has been placed within the Local Plan on the contributions to be made to green and blue infrastructure and the importance of enhancing biodiversity within the Plan lifetime.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that implementation of Policies SA3.1 and SA3.7 will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.</p>		pressure).			
<p>Sub Area 4: Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads</p> <p>Policy SA4.1 promotes the delivery of a District Centre. Site allocations, which set out where in the sub-area new development is to take place, are: Bromley-by-Bow, Pudding Mill, Sugar House Lane and Three Mills.</p>	<p>All these site allocations have the potential to indirectly affect European Sites through the construction and operation of retail, employment and residential development.</p> <p>An assessment of potential effects needs to consider the same issues as that for the BEE policies and the Housing policies.</p> <p>As for the assessment of the BEE and Housing policies, policies and proposals that actively encourage the use of public transport, and minimise water use and air pollution within the Local Plan area, should minimise any adverse impact on European Sites that are outside the Local Plan area and help reduce the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>In addition, with respect to recreational pressure, the risk is low that residents in the LLDC area will choose to visit the habitats of the European Sites in preference to more local destinations, particularly given the emphasis that has been placed within the Local Plan on the contributions to be made to green and blue infrastructure and the importance of enhancing biodiversity within the Plan lifetime.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that implementation of Policy SA4.1 and the site allocations will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar.</p>	<p>The assessment of potential in-combination effects through the implementation of this policy is the same as for the BEE and Housing policies, as the site allocations form part of the total allocations under these policies.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that implementation of Policy SA4.1 and the site allocations will have no significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Epping Forest SAC or Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (from increased water abstraction and increased recreational pressure).</p> <p>Epping Forest SAC (from decreases in air quality and increases in recreational pressure).</p>	B	<p>Recommend strengthening this policy further by cross-referencing to provisions for sustainable development in Policies BEE1, BEE2, BEE3 and H1.</p>	No LSE
<p>Sub Area 4: Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads</p> <p>Policy SA4.5 relates to heat networks and renewable energy.</p>	<p>The basic premise of Policy SA4.5 is the same as IN2 in that it supports proposals for renewable energy infrastructure.</p> <p>Although this sub-area is identified as being a preferred location for renewable energy development, specific areas where proposals may be located are not identified. Therefore the impact of policies depends entirely on how they are implemented in due course through the development management process.</p> <p>As such, the assessment of potential impacts on the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar is considered to be the same as for Policy IN2 (i.e. the potential effects of this policy rely entirely how it is implemented in due course).</p>	As for Policy IN2 above.	Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar (disturbance to qualifying features)	F	As for Policy IN2 above.	As for Policy IN2 above.

5.6 Screening Summary and Recommendations

Following the initial screening of the LLDC Local Plan, a number of policies were screened out completely from further assessment on the basis either of no identifiable impact pathway linking the policies with the European Sites or that there will be no foreseeable adverse impact on European sites through policy implementation.

Policies were selected for further (detailed) screening on the basis that there may be potential impacts on European Sites if they are implemented without any mitigation or avoidance measures. This has also included a categorisation of the potential effects in line with Natural England Guidance.²²

Potential impacts identified include:

- Increases in recreational pressure causing degradation of habitats and disturbance to species;
- Decreases in air quality causing degradation of habitats;
- Increases in water abstraction causing degradation of habitats;
- Effects of climate change.

The detailed screening of the LLDC Local Plan policies (Table 5-2) has identified that the vast majority of the policies will have no significant effects on the features of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar or Epping Forest SAC, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects. The only policies where any potential exists for indirect effects on the European sites are those which will need to be assessed at a lower tier (individual project level).

These policies are as follows:

- Policies IN2, SA1.7 and SA4.5 concerning the provision of energy infrastructure;
- Policy IN4 concerning proposals for new waste management facilities.

Those effects with the potential to be significant are disturbance effects on birds (resulting from the construction of wind turbines interfering with flight lines), and a potential decrease in air quality affecting the habitats of Epping Forest SAC through the construction of any waste incinerators. However, it is considered that any disturbance or air quality effects are very unlikely to be significant, given the distance between the European Sites and the developments likely to arise from the LLDC Local Plan policies, as well as the standard mitigation measures that are required of such developments (such as pollution prevention).

In all cases, therefore, it is considered that the need for Appropriate Assessment of the final policy will be avoided with the strengthening of the existing policies to cross-reference to policies that will reduce impacts on European sites (such as air quality policies, water resource management policies) and the provision of caveats regarding environmental assessment through the development process. These will provide a further 'safety net' to help ensure that significant damage to European Sites is avoided.

²² Revised Draft Guidance. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Plan Documents. David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England (2009).

It is therefore recommended that the final Local Plan policies are strengthened in line with the recommendations included in the 'Avoidance and Mitigation' column in Table 5-2. As an added control, it is also recommended that the Local Plan includes text that ensures project-level HRA is carried out (if required) prior to development that may have impacts on European sites (this especially applies to developments under the policies listed above). It should also be ensured that consent for any development should only be granted if the project-level HRA is able to demonstrate that adverse effects will not occur on the designation and its qualifying habitats / species.

6 CONCLUSION

This HRA Screening of the Draft LLDC Local Plan has considered the potential implications of the plan for European Sites near to the borough boundary.

It is important to note that none of the policies set out in the LLDC Local Plan would lead to direct impacts upon European Sites.

The only policies where any potential exists for indirect effects on the European sites are those which will need to be assessed at a lower tier (individual project level). However, it is considered that potential effects are very unlikely to be significant, given the distance between the European Sites and the developments likely to arise from the LLDC Local Plan policies, as well as the standard mitigation measures that are required of such developments (such as pollution prevention).

It is considered that these potential effects can readily be mitigated, both at the plan stage (through minor modifications to the wording of relevant policies) and at the project-specific HRA stage.

The assessment of in-combination effects of various plans and policies revealed that it is not considered that the LLDC Local Plan would contribute to significant in-combination effects.

It has therefore been concluded that, **assuming the policies are strengthened further in line with the recommendations in Table 5-2**, the LLDC Local Plan is unlikely to have any significant effects on the European sites identified, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. **As such, it is not proposed to undertake Appropriate Assessment.**

We seek Natural England's opinion and agreement or otherwise with this conclusion.

Appendix A

European Sites

Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar

Site Characteristics

The Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar is located to the north-east of London, where a series of wetlands and reservoirs occupy about 20km of the valley. The site comprises embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons, and former gravel pits that support a range of man-made, semi-natural, and valley bottom habitats. These wetland habitats support wintering wildfowl, in particular gadwall (*Anas strepera*) and shoveler (*A. clypeata*), which occur in numbers of European importance. Areas of reedbed within the site also support significant numbers of wintering bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*).

The Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar consists of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including: Turnford and Cheshunt Pits SSSI, Rye Meads SSSI, Amwell Quarry SSSI, and Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI. Of these sites, Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI lies within the London Boroughs area, Turnford and Cheshunt Pits SSSI lies within the Hertfordshire/Essex border, and the remainder lie within Hertfordshire. Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI is the closest component of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar site, at a distance of 3.4km north-west from the LLDC Local Plan boundary.

Qualifying Features

Lee Valley SPA

The Natura 2000 Standard Data Form, for the Lee Valley SPA was compiled when the site was designated in 2000. In 2001, the JNCC undertook a Review of UK SPAs, which resulted in the updating of many SPA citations, including the Lee Valley SPA.

The changes as a result of the SPA review are likely to be the subject of formal changes to the SPA designation in due course, at present the legally protected species remain those in the original citation. However, for the purposes of this assessment, the species listed as a result of the SPA review will be used. This means that the following species will be included in the assessment:

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting overwinter populations of European importance of the following species:

- Bittern, 6% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)

This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species overwinter:

- Shoveler (North-western/Central Europe), 1% of the population (5 year peak mean, 1993/4-1997/8)
- Gadwall (North-western Europe), 1.5% of the population (5 year peak mean, 1993/4-1997/8)

Lee Valley Ramsar

With respect to the Ramsar designation, the Lee Valley is designated as it qualifies under Criteria 2 and 6, supporting species of international importance.

Ramsar Criterion 2 (supporting vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities):

- The site supports the nationally scarce plant species whorled water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum verticillatum*) and the rare or vulnerable invertebrate *Micronecta minutissima* (a water-boatman).

Ramsar Criterion 6 (regularly supporting 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird):

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

- Shoveler (NW & C Europe) 287 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).

Species with peak counts in winter:

- Gadwall (NW Europe) 445 individuals, representing an average of 2.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).

Conservation Objectives for the Lee Valley SPA

The Conservation Objectives for the Lee Valley SPA, as identified by Natural England²³, are listed below.

Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features (see below), ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The populations of the qualifying features;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features:

- A021 *Botaurus stellaris*; Bittern (Non-breeding)
- A051 *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Non-breeding)
- A056 *Anas clypeata*; Shoveler (Non-breeding)

²³ Natural England, European Site Conservation Objectives for Lee Valley Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9012111

Conservation Status and Vulnerability of the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar

During the most recent condition assessment undertaken by Natural England in November 2012, Amwell Quarry SSSI, Rye Meads SSSI, and Turnford and Cheshunt Pits SSSI were all considered to have 100% of their area in favourable condition (i.e. meeting their conservation objectives but with scope for enhancements). Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI was reported to have 100% of its area in an unfavourable but recovering condition.

Lee Valley SPA is reported to be vulnerable to two main influences: discharge of waste and human recreation. Eutrophication exists in areas of the SPA as a result of a number of influences, including: sewage outfalls, surface runoff, and ground water pollution. Human disturbance of the European site through recreation causes disturbance of wintering bird populations, although zonation of the site has regulated this disturbance. To a lesser extent, there is also pressure from public demand for water supply during periods of drought.

Epping Forest SAC

Epping Forest SAC covers an area of 1,605ha within Essex and parts of east London, with 70% of the site comprising broadleaved deciduous woodland. Epping Forest is one of only a few remaining large-scale examples of ancient wood-pasture in lowland Britain. Its semi-natural woodland is particularly extensive, forming one of the largest coherent blocks in the country. Most of the woodland is characterised over-mature pollards. Its long history of pollarding, and resultant large number of veteran trees, has ensured that the site is also rich in fungi and dead-wood invertebrates, particularly the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), for which the site is one of its major strongholds. Epping Forest also includes a variety of unimproved acid grasslands, which have become uncommon elsewhere in Essex and the London area.

Epping Forest is underpinned by one SSSI, Epping Forest SSSI. The SAC is located 2.9km from the LLDC Local Plan boundary.

Qualifying Features of Epping Forest SAC

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- 9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrub layer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*)

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- 4030 European dry heaths

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- 1083 Stag beetle

Conservation Objectives for Epping Forest SAC

The Conservation Objectives for the Epping Forest SAC, as specified by Natural England²⁴, are listed below.

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features:

- H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
- H4030. European dry heaths
- H9120. Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrub layer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*); Beech forests on acid soils
- S1083. *Lucanus cervus*; Stag beetle

Conservation Status and Vulnerability of Epping Forest SAC

Following the most recent condition assessment undertaken by Natural England in November 2012, 83.66% of Epping Forest SSSI is considered to be in favourable (or unfavourable but recovering) condition, with 14.51% considered to be unfavourable but with no change and 1.83% in unfavourable condition and declining. The primary reason for the unfavourable and declining condition at the site is believed to be air pollution, in particular the effects of excessive levels of oxides of nitrogen and other pollutants, and the related deposition of acidity and of nitrogen.

The most recent condition assessment of the underpinning component part of Epping Forest SSSI undertaken in January 2010,²⁵ concluded that it was in an 'unfavourable no change' state,

²⁴ Natural England, European Site Conservation Objectives for Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation Site code: UK0012720

²⁵ Unit 136, Hollow Flats site condition assessment accessed via <http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk>

primarily due to the excessive levels of nitrous oxides and acid deposition that the site was subject to.

Absence of historic pollarding practices and the presence of atmospheric pollutants from the surrounding urban area are considered to be responsible for the decline in lichen and moss populations at the site. Introduced management regimes are helping to reverse the decline. Epping Forest SAC is also subject to a comprehensive management plan, which is designed to improve the habitats for the Annex II species for which the site is designated.

Appendix B

Categories taken from Natural England draft guidance

Potential Effect Categories

Category	Broad Effects	Conclusion for Likely Significant Effects (LSE) at this Stage
Category A	Elements of the plan that would have no negative effect on a European site at all.	No LSE
Category B	Elements of the plan that could have an effect, but the likelihood is there would be no significant effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects.	No LSE
Category C	Elements of the plan that could or would be likely to have a significant effect alone and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted.	LSE
Category D	Elements of the plan that would be likely to have a significant effect in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted.	LSE
Category E	Elements of the plan the effects of which will be more appropriate for lower tier assessments	It cannot be concluded that there would be no LSE at this stage, therefore assume LSE
Category F	Elements of the plan the effect of which depends on how the plan is implemented.	It cannot be concluded that there would be no LSE at this stage, therefore assume LSE

Likely Effect Categories

Category	Sub category	Types of policy for consideration
Category A: No negative effect	A1	Policies that will not themselves lead to development e.g. because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or they are not a land use planning policy
	A2	Policies intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity.
	A3	Policies intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European site.
	A4	Policies that positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas.
Category B: No significant effect		Effects are trivial or ' <i>de minimis</i> ', even if combined with other effects.
Category C: Likely significant effect alone	C1	The policy could directly affect a European site because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development onto a European site, or adjacent to it.
	C2	The policy could indirectly affect a European site e.g. because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected to it or it may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures.
	C3	Proposals for a magnitude of development that, no matter where it was located, the development would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site.
	C4	Policies for developments or infrastructure projects that could block options or alternatives for the provision of other development or projects in the future, which will be required in the public interest, that may lead to adverse effects on European sites, which would otherwise be avoided.

Category	Sub category	Types of policy for consideration
	C5	Any other policies that would be vulnerable to failure under the Habitats Regulations at project assessment stage; to include them in the plan would be regarded by the EC as 'faulty planning'.
	C6	Any other proposal that may have an adverse effect on a European site, which might try to pass the tests of the Habitats Regulations at project assessment stage by arguing that the plan provides the imperative reasons of overriding public interest to justify its consent despite a negative assessment.
Category D: Likely significant effects in combination	D1	The policy alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if its effects are combined with effects of other policies or proposals provided for or coordinated by the LDD (internally) the cumulative effects would be likely to be significant.
	D2	Policies that alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if their effects are combined with the effects of other plans or projects , and possibly the effects of other developments provided for in the LDD as well, the combined effects would be likely to be significant.
	D3	Proposals that are, or could be, part of a programme or sequence of development delivered over a period, where the implementation of the early stages would not have a significant effect on European sites, but which would dictate the nature, scale, duration, location, timing of the whole project, the later stages of which could have an adverse effect on such sites.
Category E: Cannot conclude no LSE at this stage – lower tier assessment	E1	A policy would have no effect where development could occur through the policy itself, because it is implemented through later policies in the same DPD, which are more detailed and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European sites and associated sensitive areas. These kinds of policies may be found in the Core Strategy where a broad quantity of development may be specified as being delivered through a more specific policy in a later chapter or section of the DPD.
	E2	A policy that makes provision for a quantity/type of development (and may indicate one or more broad locations e.g. a particular part of the plan area) but the detailed location of the development is to be selected following consideration of options in later, more specific DPD. The consideration of options in the later DPD will need to assess potential effects on European sites.
Category F		<p>Policies depend entirely on how they are implemented in due course, through the development management process. There is a theoretical possibility that if implemented in one or more particular ways, the proposal could possibly have a significant effect on a European site.</p> <p>In these specific circumstances where there is uncertainty about the way in which aspects of a plan may be implemented, it may be appropriate for policies to contain restrictions or caveats in order to exclude support for potentially damaging proposals. It is advised that the caveat could be added during the screening stage whereupon the policy could be reassessed and placed in Category A or B.</p> <p>Alternatively the policy could be taken forward to appropriate assessment to check that the caveat, when added, would avoid an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.</p> <p>A caveat may relate to proposals not being in accordance with the development plan or may prevent the potentially damaging proposals from occurring unless the potential effect on the European site has been resolved. For example, the development cannot take place until related infrastructure is in place, having passed the tests of the Habitats Regulations.</p>

