

COOMBE BISSETT AND HOMINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) relates to the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan 2022 – 2036 Regulation 14 Version, 15th December 2022, hereafter referred to as the NP, submitted to Wiltshire Council in January 2023. This HRA has been undertaken to inform a Regulation 14 consultation response from Wiltshire Council to the NP.
- 1.2. The HRA has been carried out to comply with Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019¹, hereafter referred to as the Habitats Regulations. Under these Regulations, a competent authority must consider whether a relevant plan is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites (formally also referred to as Natura 2000 sites and now known as the national site network²) before deciding to give any consent, permission or other authorisation. If the screening exercise demonstrates significant effects are likely, whether or not these are addressed through mitigation measures³, the competent authority must undertake an appropriate assessment to examine the effects of the plan on the conservation objectives of the European sites in question, consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to its representations. Both the screening and any subsequent AA must consider the impacts of the plan alone and in combination with other plans or projects.
- 1.3. It is usually the case that a plan of this nature does not go into the detailed aspects of development proposals and therefore the full effects of potential development cannot be accurately assessed at the plan making stage. Those details will typically be identified through a planning application which would be subject to further, more detailed HRA. The principle that a HRA need only consider the effects of a proposal or policy in as much detail as is specified by the plan was explained by Advocate General Kokott in a judgement brought against the UK government in 2005:

*“Many details are regularly not settled until the time of the final permission. It would also hardly be proper to require a greater level of detail in preceding plans or the abolition of multi-stage planning and approval procedures so that the assessment of implications can be concentrated on one point in the procedure. Rather, adverse effects on areas of conservation must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure.”*⁴
- 1.4. Where appropriate assessment is undertaken, the competent authority may go on to authorise the plan or project provided that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites. Where an **adverse effect on the integrity (AEoI)** of any European sites cannot be ruled out, and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan can only be authorised and proceed if there are **imperative reasons of over-riding public interest (IROPI)** and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured.

¹ On 1st January 2021 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) were amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant. The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of sites or species do not change [Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612412/Changes_to_the_Habitats_Regulations_2017_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk))

² Due to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) being amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 on 1st January 2021.

³ Court of Justice of the European Union, Case C 323/17 “People Over Wind”/P. Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta

⁴ Commission of the European Communities v UK and NI, opinion of Advocate General KoKott, 9 June 2005, Case C-6/04

- 1.5. Wiltshire Council has conducted the following HRA as competent authority for the Coombe Bissett and Homington NP. Where risks to European sites are identified, changes are recommended to remove or reduce the risks, and these should be incorporated into the NP before it is made. Likewise, if the policies or planning context change after the HRA is completed, the HRA process must be repeated before the final plan is considered by a referendum and adopted.

2. Screening Methodology

- 2.1. Each element of the plan has been categorised against screening criteria developed by Natural England (NE) to provide a clear audit trail for the screening assessment.
- 2.2. The screening criteria used are as follows:
- Category A1: The policy will not itself lead to development e.g. because it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development.
 - Category A2: The policy is intended to protect the natural environment.
 - Category A3: The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment.
 - Category A4: The policy would positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas.
 - Category A5: The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European sites and associated sensitive areas.
 - Category B: No significant effect.
 - Category C: Likely significant effect alone; and
 - Category D: Likely significant effects in combination.
- 2.3. The effect of each policy has been considered both individually and in combination with other plans and projects (see Table 1 below). Where potential for likely significant effects have been identified, an appropriate assessment has been undertaken in subsequent sections.

3. Higher Level HRAs

Wiltshire Core Strategy

- 3.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (October 2009, February 2012⁵, March 2013⁶, February 2014⁷ and April 2014⁸) identified general parameters to determine the likelihood of potential impacts on European sites. The following potential impact pathways and associated parameters were identified and assessed for the European sites stipulated below.
- *Recreation – European sites within 5km of the plan area, or where the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is within 13.8km (extended to 15km where HRA indicates this is necessary) of the plan area or where Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is within 15km of the plan area (it should be noted that the relevant parameter for the latter has since been revised on the basis of data obtained by means of visitor surveys and is now 6.4km):*
 - Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - River Avon SAC

⁵ Wiltshire Core Strategy Submission Draft – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, February 2012

⁶ Wiltshire Core Strategy – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, March 2013

⁷ Update to the Wiltshire Core Strategy habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2014 (Exam/89)

⁸ Wiltshire Core Strategy Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment, April 2014

- New Forest SAC / SPA
- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC (added post adoption of Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS))
- North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC (added post adoption of WCS)
- *Hydrology / Hydrogeology - Sites that fall wholly or partly within the Wessex Water Resource Zone may be susceptible to impact:*
 - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
 - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
 - Pewsey Downs SAC
 - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
 - River Avon SAC
 - River Lambourn SAC
 - Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain SAC
- *Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition – European sites within 200m of a main road*
 - Porton Down SPA
 - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
 - Solent and Southampton Water SPA
 - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
 - River Avon SAC
 - Rodborough Common SAC
 - Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC
- *Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines / Disturbance*
 - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
 - Porton Down SPA
 - Chilmark Quarries SAC (added post adoption of WCS)
 - Mottisfont Bats SAC (added post adoption of WCS)

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan

- 3.2 Since the Core Strategy was adopted, the Council published a pre-submission draft of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP) together with a HRA dated 21 June 2017. A schedule of proposed changes was considered by Cabinet supported by an Addendum to the HRA dated May 2018. A schedule of changes and an Addendum to the HRA incorporating minor factual changes were published in September 2018 for public consultation. Subsequently, the WHSAP (Council Version, February 2020) was adopted by Full Council on 25th February 2020 and this was accompanied by the final WHSAP Assessment under the Habitats Regulations (Wiltshire Council, February 2020).
- 3.3 The screening criteria for the adopted WHSAP and final HRA were modified for some European sites from those used for the Core Strategy subsequent to the acquisition of results from new surveys, and in light of

advice from NE. This includes the zone of influence (Zol) around the Salisbury Plain SPA used to screen for likely significant effects as a result of recreational pressure being revised from 15km to 6.4km on the basis of data obtained by means of visitor surveys.

- 3.4 Furthermore, since the Core Strategy was adopted, NE has advised Wiltshire Council of its concerns regarding the growing number of visitors to the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC in recent years which has led to an increase in trampling. NE has advised that this is particularly evident at North Meadow (which is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR)) during April and May when visitors come to see the Snake's-head fritillaries in flower. NE considers that the increase in recreational pressure upon the SAC is primarily as a result of increases in the local population, and that major new housing developments within a short travel distance of North Meadow are likely to add to the existing visitor pressure and trampling effects. An interim Zol of 8km for the North Meadow element of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC is being used by Wiltshire Council as this is consistent with the approach being applied by Swindon Borough Council. The Zol will be refined once bespoke visitor surveys have been undertaken.
- 3.5 Impacts of development in Wiltshire on the New Forest SPA were considered in the HRA for the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (SWCS) adopted in 2012⁹. The assessment used data from the Tourism South East PROGRESS survey for 2004/05 and census data from 2001 for the former Salisbury District to examine patterns of visitors to the New Forest from across south Wiltshire. That HRA concluded that the development in south Wiltshire would increase visitor pressure by less than 1% and 89% of this would be through additional local day visits from within 8km of the National Park. The WCS addressed the New Forest's mitigation requirements through Core Policy 50, identifying that a New Forest Mitigation Strategy would be prepared to address recreational impacts. Since the WCS was adopted, the council has joined a partnership of local authorities seeking to develop a strategic approach to address the impacts of recreational pressure on the New Forest SPA. A Government grant through the Planning Delivery Fund enabled visitor surveys to be conducted across the New Forest in 2018/19. This work was recently published, and the Council is now part of a steering group working to agree a common approach to mitigation including the extent of the zone of influence and how to fairly reflect different visit rates within it. This evidence has informed the preparation of an Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy by Wiltshire Council.
- 3.6 The WCS adopted the 8km zone of influence, however, as discussed in the latest iteration of the council's strategy, from 1st September 2021 this has been revised to 13.8km. Before this date, the mitigation scheme only applied to permitted dwellings lying within 8km of the New Forest designated sites whereas thereafter the scheme has been extended to apply to new residential and tourism development within 13.8km of any of the New Forest designated sites and may be extended to include applications within 15km, where demonstrated to be necessary through a bespoke appropriate assessment.
- 3.7 Since the WCS was adopted and on the advice of NE, any plan or project that will lead to development within the catchment of the River Avon SAC must be phosphorus neutral and be subject to appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effect on the SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects in order to be authorised.

Emerging Evidence and Advice from Natural England Subsequent to Adoption of WHSAP

- 3.8 Similarly, it came to light in spring 2020 that any plan or project that will lead to development within the catchment of the River Test must be nitrogen neutral as the Test drains into the Solent and this region is protected by a number of European and international designations including the Solent Maritime SAC, Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site. In 2018 and 2019 NE undertook a number of condition assessments of the features of these designated sites around the Solent. These assessments identified that high levels of nitrogen and

⁹ South Wiltshire Proposed Submission Core Strategy HRA Report, Appendix 13. NPA for Wiltshire Council, July 2009

phosphorus are entering this water environment and that there is sound evidence that nitrogen in particular is causing eutrophication at the aforementioned designated sites and that the resulting excessive growth of green algae and plants, which reduces oxygen and light levels, is leading to negative effects on the special features for which the European sites are designated. These nutrient inputs currently mostly come either from agricultural sources or from wastewater from existing housing and other development. These findings were published by NE in June 2020 in *Advice on Achieving Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Solent Region*. This advice also stipulates that:

“There is uncertainty as to whether new growth will further deteriorate designated sites. This issue has been subject to detailed work commissioned by local planning authorities (LPAs) in association with Natural England, Environment Agency and water companies. This strategic work, which updates early studies, is ongoing. Until this work is complete, the uncertainty remains and the potential for future housing developments across the Solent region to exacerbate these impacts creates a risk to their potential future conservation status.

One way to address this uncertainty is for new development to achieve nutrient neutrality. Nutrient neutrality is a means of ensuring that development does not add to existing nutrient burdens and this provides certainty that the whole of the scheme is deliverable in line with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

This report sets out a practical methodology to calculating how nutrient neutrality can be achieved. This methodology is based on best available scientific knowledge, and will be subject to revision as further evidence is obtained. It is our advice to local planning authorities to take a precautionary approach in line with existing legislation and case-law when addressing uncertainty and calculating nutrient budgets.”

- 3.9 In accordance with NE’s advice, any plan or project which will lead to development within the catchment of the River Test cannot be approved unless nitrogen neutrality has been demonstrated via quantitative means, and an appropriate assessment conducted by the competent authority has concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of any of the Solent region European sites.
- 3.10 In 2022 the River Lambourn SAC and the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site were identified by NE as being in unfavourable condition due to excessive phosphorus inputs. A very small area of both of these sites are located within Wiltshire. Any overnight accommodation development within the catchment of the SAC or Ramsar site are now required to demonstrate phosphorous neutrality and be subject to an appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effect on the SAC or Ramsar site alone or in combination with other plans or projects in order to be authorised.

Screening of the Coombe Bissett and Homington NP Area

Recreation

- 3.11 The current ZOI around the New Forest SPA/SAC comprises 13.8km (further extended to 15km where HRA indicates this is necessary). The whole of the NP area lies within the 13.8km ZOI and there are 3 allocated sites within the NP, therefore the NP must be subject to appropriate assessment in terms of the potential for recreational effects on this European site.
- 3.12 Recreational pressure on the River Avon SAC is recognised to occur predominately in circumstances where significant development lies in close proximity to the SAC. The River Avon SAC does not flow through the NP area and is approximately 2.39km from the plan area at its closest point. The NP does not allocate or promote any major housing or tourism sites and so would not result in significant additional recreational pressure on the SAC.
- 3.13 In relation to Salisbury Plain, the SAC habitat features were screened out of appropriate assessment for the Core Strategy on the advice of Natural England. Recreational/visitor pressure is a known issue for the

Salisbury Plain SPA; however, the NP area lies beyond the 6.4km zone around the SPA within which the majority (75%) of visitors to the Plain are expected to live. This is based on the data collated by means of a visitor survey commissioned by the Council in 2015. The SAC is located approximately 9.66km north east of the plan area at its closest point and the SPA is located approximately 16.4km to the north at the closest point. Therefore, AA of the NP is screened out in respect of the Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC.

- 3.14 In respect of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC, the NP area lies more than 44km southeast from the closest component area of the SAC, and also lies well beyond any bat consultation zones around the SAC or core roosts associated with the SAC. Thus, appropriate assessment with respect of this European site can be screened out.
- 3.15 Great Yews SAC lies to the immediate southeast of the NP area, however, the HRA to the WCS and the WHSAP screened out appropriate assessment in respect of recreational and visitor impacts upon the SAC as the threats and pressures have been identified as being non-development related and include deer browsing and nitrogen deposition (non-vehicular). Moreover, the NP does not allocate or promote any sites for development in the vicinity of the SAC, and therefore further assessment in respect of this SAC will not be required.
- 3.16 Prescombe Down SAC is located approximately 10.3km to the west of the NP area. The HRA to the WCS and the WHSAP screened out appropriate assessment in respect of recreational and visitor impacts upon the SAC as the threats and pressures have been identified as being non-development related and include changes in species distribution and nitrogen deposition (non-vehicular). Furthermore, the NP does not allocate or promote any major development sites that could result in significant visitor pressure upon the SAC. As such, appropriate assessment in relation to this SAC will not be necessary.

Hydrology / Hydrogeology

- 3.17 The entirety of the Coombe Bissett and Homington NP area lies within the Hampshire Avon catchment and the Wessex Water Resource Zone. The River Ebble flows through the NP area from west to east joining the River Avon at Salisbury.
- 3.18 The River Avon SAC and the groundwater sources are particularly vulnerable to the effects of diffuse and point source pollution which can cause ecological damage due to excessive algal growth. The potential for significant effects on water quality and phosphate levels in the River Avon could be caused by increased housing and employment provision which would lead to discharges to the river and nutrient enrichment of the aquatic system. The Council has agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding with NE and others that measures will be put in place to ensure all developments permitted between March 2018 and March 2026 are phosphorus neutral in perpetuity. To this end it is currently implementing a phosphorus mitigation strategy to offset all planned development, both sewered and non sewered, permitted during this period.
- 3.19 The NP allocates 3 sites for development and also supports residential and tourism development within the NP area and as such, a pathway for likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC exists with regards to increased phosphorous inputs, therefore the NP must be subject to an appropriate assessment in terms of potential for effects on this European site.

Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition

- 3.20 The Wiltshire Core Strategy identified that increased traffic would lead to potential effects through an increase in atmospheric pollution and nitrogen deposition upon a range of European sites within 200m of a main road. Such effects were considered to be very small and difficult to predict at the strategic level¹⁰ (WCS HRA Update February 2014). The housing site allocations in the Coombe Bissett and Homington NP allow for a further 16 dwellings which is considered to be a small number in relation to the total for the

¹⁰ Update to the Wiltshire Core Strategy habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2014 (Exam/89)

county. All of the European sites listed above, except the River Avon SAC, are a considerable distance from the NP area and effects are likely to be negligible. In relation to the River Avon SAC, the Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA concluded no likely significant effect where the existing approach to mitigation in Core Policy 55 of the WCS is implemented. Furthermore, the River Avon SAC is located approximately 2.39km from the plan area at its closest point. It is therefore concluded that the proposals for housing in this NP would not have an adverse effect on European sites or the integrity of its qualifying features as a result of nitrogen or particulate matter deposition.

- 3.21 The Great Yews SAC is situated immediately southeast of the NP area boundary, and an identified threat to the SAC is nitrogen deposition; however, of non-vehicular origin. Therefore, the HRA of the WCS and the WHSAP screened out appropriate assessment of this SAC in respect of air pollution/nitrogen deposition. Furthermore, the NP does not allocate or promote any sites for development in the vicinity of the SAC, and therefore further assessment in respect of this SAC will not be required.

Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines / Disturbance

- 3.22 Porton Down SPA is located approximately 9.66km northeast of the NP area its closest point. It is considered that the plan area is sufficiently distant from the SPA and known functionally linked habitat, for any development within the plan area to cause direct physical damage to, or fragmentation of, breeding and foraging habitat for the Annex I species stone-curlew. It is also considered too remote for development within the plan area to result in anthropogenic disturbance or visual stimuli that could have an adverse effect on stone-curlew breeding at Porton Down. As such AA in respect of this European site is not necessary.
- 3.23 Salisbury Plain SPA is located approximately 16.4km north of the NP area at its closest point and is therefore deemed too distant for any development within the plan area to have implications for the Annex 1 species stone-curlew and quail that breed at the SPA, or to have effects on the Annex 1 species hen harrier, that winters at the SPA. Therefore, AA in relation to this European site is not necessary.
- 3.24 The NP area is sufficiently distant from the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC, Chilmark Quarries SAC and Mottisfont Bats SAC that it is deemed the potential for likely significant effects upon these European sites and the Annex II bat species associated within them can be screened out, and further assessment will not be required.

4. Screening of Policies in the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan 2022 - 2036, Regulation 14 Version, December 2022

- 4.1 The Coombe Bissett and Homington NP comprises 19 planning policies, 6 of which are recommended to be taken forward to appropriate assessment due to potential likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC.
- 4.2 It is considered that none of the other policies within the NP would lead directly to development or result in a likely significant effect on any European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

TABLE 1: Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the Coombe Bissett and Homington NP

A / B (Green) – Screened out
C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Policy H1: Promoting a more balanced housing stock	A1	<p>This policy requires that all proposals for new housing development should demonstrate how they contribute to maintaining an appropriate mix of tenures, types and size of dwellings for the Parish and address unmet dwelling needs.</p> <p>This policy itself will not lead directly to development and instead sets out criteria for new housing development. As such, the policy will not result in a likely significant effect upon any European sites.</p>	
Policy ASD1: Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites	C and D River Avon SAC	<p>This policy supports the development of allocated or infill sites that deliver a housing need target of 19 dwellings over the plan period to 2036 provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The character of the CC AONB should not be adversely affected and where possible provides a net enhancement to it. 2. The site is a contained or infill site surrounded by or adjacent to existing development within the settlement boundary, unless otherwise identified as an allocated site in this Plan. 3. It does not lead to an increased coalescence between other settlements, notably between the villages of Coombe Bissett and Homington. 4. Agricultural land of Grade 3 and above should be conserved and enhanced; appropriate mitigation measures should be taken to provide a net enhancement to biodiversity on or off-site on developed land of lower agricultural grade. <p>The policy goes on to state that unless an allocated site is in this Plan, development in the countryside will be limited to that which supports community uses, essential infrastructure and that which requires a rural location (including the special circumstances set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF).</p> <p>The policy itself does not allocate sites for development, however, it does support infill development in the NP area. As the whole of the NP area is located within the Hampshire Avon</p>	<p>This policy and the NP do not state that new developments would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations.</p> <p>It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the</p>

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>catchment, residential development supported through this policy could contribute to phosphorus pollution of the River Avon SAC through increased discharges from sewage treatment works and as such there is a mechanism for a likely significant effect upon the River Avon SAC. Therefore, it is necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 5 below.</p> <p>Furthermore, any planning applications for infill development within the NP area will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)(Adopted January 2015), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p>	<p>strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. This policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council’s strategic mitigation strategies and may therefore be required to provide a bespoke mitigation strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that this policy refers to the need to comply with the policy recommended above.</p>
	D New Forest SPA/SAC	<p>This policy does not allocate land for development; however, it does support infill development within the NP area. Therefore the potential for likely significant effects on the SPA/SAC in terms of increased recreational pressure caused by more people living in the NP area and potentially visiting the New Forest cannot be screened out and it is therefore necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 6 below.</p> <p>In addition, any planning applications for infill development within the NP area will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS, the NPPF and the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
<p>Policy ASD2: Maintaining a settlement gap between Coombe Bissett and Homington</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>This policy stipulates that development which would detract from the open character between Coombe Bissett and Homington as a settlement gap or reduce its visual separation and current extent should not be permitted. It goes on to state that development for recreational use such as a park or informal public open space may be supported providing the proposals do not detract from the open and undeveloped character of the area.</p> <p>This policy aims to preserve the distinct identity of the settlements of Coombe Bissett and Homington and will not lead directly to development. Therefore, the policy will not give rise to likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
<p>Policy AS1: Provisionally Allocated Site - The Old Vicarage</p>	<p>D River Avon SAC</p>	<p>This policy allocates the Old Vicarage site for residential purposes on the provision that the following conditions are met:</p> <p>Housing mix: 1) A maximum of four buildings will be permitted on the site which will comprise of one of the following options: a. retention of the existing building – in whole/part and a maximum of three new dwellings. b. demolition of the existing building and a maximum of four new dwellings.</p> <p>Landscaping: 2. A landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide for an improvement in biodiversity, to protect the residential amenities of existing residents and to minimise the impact of noise and disturbance of traffic including: i. The retention of important trees (including the mature trees at the entrance of the site) and hedgerows. ii. Additional planting along the boundaries of the site and any other measures deemed important to enhance the biodiversity value of the site.</p> <p>Flooding: 3. Assessment of water drainage and spring occurrence and effect on surrounding properties, with appropriate mitigation measures, including the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) and suitable permeable materials.</p> <p>Design: 4. Dwellings are designed in accordance with Coombe Bissett and Homington Design Guide.</p>	<p>This policy and the NP do not state that new developments would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations.</p> <p>It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these</p>

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>5. Design should be complementary to the visual and historic character in the Conservation Area and any mitigation measures on local historic assets must be subject to a detailed heritage assessment (see Policy EHH5, Local Heritage Assets).</p> <p>6. Dwellings are compatible with older persons needs.</p> <p>7. The density of any development should be sensitive to the character of the existing setting of a large house in generous gardens.</p> <p>Highways and Access:</p> <p>8. Pedestrian egress from the Old Vicarage on to the pavement that leads to the centre of Coombe Bissett.</p> <p>9. Development must meet the requirements of Wiltshire Council Highways.</p> <p>10. Any development gain should contribute to improved road safety measures from Shutts Lane to the Homington Road.</p> <p>The site is located within the Hampshire Avon Catchment. There is the potential for likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC as there is a pathway for effect as a result of additional discharges from sewage treatment works causing an increase in phosphorus pollution. Any development, both sewered and non sewered, coming forward in the catchment of the River Avon must be suitably mitigated to ensure it is phosphorus neutral, and subject to an appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effects on the SAC alone or in combination in order to be compliant with the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>In addition, the allocated site lies approximately 40m from the River Ebble which flows eastwards into River Avon SAC. Therefore, any works at the site could lead to effects on the SAC downstream, most likely in-combination with other plans and projects given the small scale of development that would take place at the site.</p> <p>Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC cannot be screened out and it is necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 5 below.</p> <p>Details of any proposal for development of the Old Vicarage site will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other</p>	<p>European designated sites. This policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and may therefore be required to provide a bespoke mitigation strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that this policy refers to the need to comply with the policy recommended above.</p>

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
	D New Forest SPA/SAC	<p>Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS and the NPPF.</p> <p>This allocated site lies within the 13.8km ZoI around the New Forest SPA/SAC. This policy allocates this site for a maximum of 4 dwellings and therefore the potential for likely significant effects on the New Forest SPA/SAC in terms of increased recreational pressure cannot be screened out. Development will need to adhere to the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy, which requires developments of less than 50 dwellings on greenfield land or developments on brownfield land within the 13.8km ZoI to provide a CIL contribution per dwelling.</p> <p>Policy AS1 cannot be screened out and therefore it is necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 6 below.</p> <p>In addition, details of any proposal for development of the Old Vicarage site will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS, the NPPF and the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy.</p>	
Policy AS2: Provisionally Allocated Site - Kenora Paddock	D River Avon SAC	<p>This policy allocates the site at Kenora Paddock for residential purposes for up to 6 dwellings providing the following criteria are met:</p> <p>Highways and access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Development must meet the requirements of Wiltshire Council Highways to ensure safe access. 2) Any development gain arising from the site should be used to fund road safety infrastructure to the A354 to enable safe walking routes into the centre of the village from the site. <p>Landscaping, Biodiversity and Noise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) A landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide for an improvement in biodiversity, to protect the residential amenities of existing residents and to minimise the impact of noise and disturbance of traffic including: 	<p>This policy and the NP do not state that new developments would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations.</p> <p>It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This policy should also</p>

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>a. The retention of important trees and hedgerows. b. Additional planting along the boundaries of the site. Dwellings are designed in accordance with Coombe Bissett and Homington Design Guide. c. Design is compatible with the needs of younger families (such as garden size and consideration of footpath berth for pushchairs).</p> <p>Affordable Housing: 4) Development must include Affordable Housing provision of at least 40% (net).</p> <p>The site is located within the Hampshire Avon Catchment. There is the potential for likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC as there is a pathway for effect as a result of additional discharges from sewage treatment works causing an increase in phosphorus pollution. Any development, both sewered and non sewered, coming forward in the catchment of the River Avon must be suitably mitigated to ensure it is phosphorus neutral and subject to an appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effects on the SAC alone or in combination in order to be compliant with the Habitats Regulations. As such it is necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 5 below.</p> <p>Details of any proposal for development of the Kenora Paddock site will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS and the NPPF.</p>	<p>include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. This policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and may therefore be required to provide a bespoke mitigation strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that this policy refers to the need to comply with the policy recommended above.</p>
	<p>D New Forest SPA/SAC</p>	<p>This allocated site lies within the 13.8km Zol around the New Forest SPA/SAC. This policy allocates this site for up to 6 dwellings and therefore the potential for likely significant effects on the New Forest SPA/SAC in terms of increased recreational pressure cannot be screened out. Development will need to adhere to the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy, which requires developments of less than 50 units on greenfield land within the 13.8km Zol to provide a CIL contribution per dwelling.</p> <p>Policy AS2 cannot be screened out and must be subject to an appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 6 below.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>In addition, details of any proposal for development of the site at the Kenora Paddock will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS, the NPPF and the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy.</p>	
<p>Policy AS3: Provisionally Allocated Site - Rear of Avalon (eastern half)</p>	<p>D River Avon SAC</p>	<p>This policy allocates the site at Rear of Avalon (eastern half) for residential purposes for up to six dwellings providing the following criteria are met:</p> <p>Highways and access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Development must meet the requirements of Wiltshire Council Highways to ensure safe access. 2) Any development gain arising from the site should fund road safety infrastructure to enable safe walking routes from the site to the village centre. <p>Flooding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) There is an assessment of water drainage and its possible effect on surrounding properties, with corresponding appropriate mitigation measures, including the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) and suitable permeable materials. <p>Landscaping, Biodiversity and Noise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) A landscaping scheme should be implemented to provide for an improvement in biodiversity and protect the residential amenities of existing residents, including where appropriate, additional planting along the boundaries of the site. <p>Design:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) Dwelling design is in accordance with Coombe Bissett and Homington Design Guide. 6) Dwellings are compatible with the needs of younger families. <p>Affordable Housing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7) Development must include Affordable Housing provision of at least 40% (net). <p>Contamination:</p>	<p>This policy and the NP do not state that new developments would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations.</p> <p>It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. This policy should also highlight that not all developments would be</p>

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>8) Due to the potential for ground contamination, a robust and appropriate assessment of possible contamination and remedial measures should be put in place before the commencement of development on this site.</p> <p>The site is located within the Hampshire Avon Catchment. There is the potential for likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC as there is a pathway for effect as a result of additional discharges from sewage treatment works causing an increase in phosphorus pollution. Any development, both sewered and non sewered, coming forward in the catchment of the River Avon must be suitably mitigated to ensure it is phosphorus neutral, and subject to an appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effects on the SAC alone or in combination in order to be compliant with the Habitats Regulations. As such it is necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 5 below.</p> <p>Details of any proposal for development of the site at the Rear of Avalon (eastern half) will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS and the NPPF.</p>	<p>covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and may therefore be required to provide a bespoke mitigation strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that this policy refers to the need to comply with the policy recommended above.</p>
	<p>D New Forest SPA/SAC</p>	<p>This allocated site lies within the 13.8km ZoI around the New Forest SPA/SAC. This policy allocates this site for up to 6 dwellings and therefore the potential for likely significant effects on the New Forest SPA/SAC in terms of increased recreational pressure cannot be screened out. Development will need to adhere to the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy, which requires developments of less than 50 dwellings on greenfield land or development on brownfield land within the 13.8km ZoI to provide a CIL contribution per dwelling.</p> <p>Policy AS3 cannot be screened out and must be subject to an appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 6 below.</p> <p>In addition, details of any proposal for development of the site at the Rear of Avalon (eastern half) will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50</p>	

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		(Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS, the NPPF and the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy.	
Policy EM1: Working from Home	C and D River Avon SAC	<p>This policy states that planning permission for new development and extensions to current buildings will be granted if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It provides infrastructure that enables full-fibre connection to superfast broadband. 2. It is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings. 3. It is of a density that is appropriate for a rural area and complies with the CB&HNP Design Guide. <p>Whilst this policy does not allocate sites for residential development, it does support new development for the purposes of facilitating increased levels of home working. Given that the whole NP area lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC, residential development supported through this policy could contribute to phosphorus pollution of the River Avon SAC through increased discharges from sewage treatment works and as such there is a mechanism for a likely significant effect upon the River Avon SAC.</p> <p>Therefore, it is necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 5 below.</p> <p>Furthermore, any planning applications for new development facilitating increased levels of home working within the NP area will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS and the NPPF.</p>	<p>This policy and the NP do not state that new developments would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations.</p> <p>It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. This policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and may therefore be required to</p>

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			<p>provide a bespoke mitigation strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that this policy refers to the need to comply with the policy recommended above.</p>
	<p>D New Forest SPA/SAC</p>	<p>This policy does not allocate land for development; however, it does support new development that facilitates increased levels of working from home. Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects on the New Forest SPA/SAC in terms of increased recreational pressure caused by more people living in the NP area and potentially visiting the New Forest cannot be screened out and as such it is necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 6 below.</p> <p>In addition, any planning applications for new development facilitating increased levels of home working within the NP area will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS, the NPPF and the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy.</p>	
<p>Policy EM2: Business in the Countryside</p>	<p>C and D River Avon SAC</p>	<p>This policy specifies that development that supports small-scale businesses, particularly where this is met through the conversion or re-use of buildings, will be permitted where the development is for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restaurant and café or other rural business. 2. The diversification of agricultural or other land-based rural business. 3. The provision or expansion of tourist and visitor facilities. 4. Planning applications for the conversion or extension of shops and leisure uses, including public houses, which are designed to improve their viability. 5. The conversion of rural buildings to farm shops, which contribute to the rural economy. <p>In addition, business in the countryside must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Ensure that the repurposing of existing buildings or the development of new buildings is in accordance with the Design Guide and in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings. 	<p>This policy and the NP do not state that new developments would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations.</p> <p>It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the</p>

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		<p>7. Have good access to and from the A354 and not significantly increase traffic through Coombe Bissett or Homington village.</p> <p>8. Not have a detrimental impact on road safety or significantly increase vehicle traffic flow along Homington Road.</p> <p>9. Have safe and suitable access to the site for all people.</p> <p>Whilst this policy does not allocate sites for development, it does promote development including the expansion of tourist and visitor facilities. Given that the whole NP area lies within the catchment of the River Avon SAC, residential, tourist and visitor development supported through this policy could contribute to phosphorus pollution of the River Avon SAC through increased discharges from sewage treatment works. As such this policy is screened into appropriate assessment at the plan making stage on this basis. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 5 below.</p> <p>Furthermore, any planning applications that support small scale business in the countryside within the NP area will need to be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS and the NPPF.</p>	<p>Habitat Regulations. This policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. This policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and may therefore be required to provide a bespoke mitigation strategy.</p> <p>It is recommended that this policy refers to the need to comply with the policy recommended above.</p>
	C and D New Forest SPA/SAC	<p>This policy does not allocate land for development; however, it does support the development of new residential, tourist and visitor facilities. The whole of the NP area is located within the 13.8km Zol from the New Forest SPA/SAC therefore the potential for likely significant effects on the SPA/SAC in terms of increased recreational pressure cannot be screened out. The policy wording does not specify whether tourist and visitor facilities includes visitor accommodation or whether it is referring to visitor attractions, i.e. a day out rather than a night away. Therefore, the potential for likely significant effects on the New Forest SPA/SAC, alone and in combination, from recreational pressures caused by more people living and staying in the NP area and</p>	

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		<p>potentially visiting the New Forest cannot be screened out. It is therefore necessary for this policy to be taken forward to appropriate assessment at the plan making stage. This policy is considered further in the appropriate assessment in Section 6 below.</p> <p>In addition, any planning applications that support small scale business in the countryside within the NP area will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and other Development Plan policies including Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the WCS, the NPPF and the Interim New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2022) or subsequent iteration of the strategy.</p>	
Policy EDH1: Design	A1	<p>This policy requires that all forms of development plan for the achievement of high-quality design. It specifies that new development must contribute to local character by retaining a sense of place appropriate to its location and actively demonstrate how it meets the Coombe Bissett and Homington Design Guide (AECOM, 2019) or successor document. The policy states that in order to contribute to climate neutrality and the CC AONB guidance on colour in the AONB the use of local and traditional building materials should be used to ensure respect for the local vernacular and historic character and promote recycling and reuse of local materials.</p> <p>The policy goes on to state that suburban influences should be minimised, new development should not exceed two storeys in height and development should be in keeping with its rural character. It requires that parking should be sensitive to the area’s rural and historic character and permeable surfaces should be used where possible to alleviate potential future flood impacts.</p> <p>The policy will not itself lead to development because it relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development. Therefore, the policy will not give rise to likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
Policy EDH2: Views and Landscape Character	A1 / A3	<p>This policy states that new development will be in keeping with existing settlement patterns, maintaining the shape of the villages within the landscape and protecting their distinctive identity and landscape character.</p> <p>It states that development will be supported where it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conserves and enhances the landscape and scenic beauty of the Parish and the key characteristics of this part of the CC AONB. 	

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		<p>2. Safeguards open countryside and cherished public views from inside and outside of the Parish.</p> <p>3. Does not adversely impact on the identified views and vistas listed in the NP.</p> <p>4. Does not adversely impact on Local Green Spaces identified in Policy - Local Green Spaces.</p> <p>5. Retains the defined gap between Coombe Bissett and Homington which maintains the distinct character of the two villages.</p> <p>6. Conserve landscape features such as hedgerows, trees, woodlands, and watercourses.</p> <p>The policy goes on to stipulate that development within land adjoining Coombe Bissett Down that contributes to the setting of Coombe Bissett Down Nature Reserve will only be permitted where it enhances and does not detract from its visual qualities and essential characteristics, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the Down by virtue of its location or design.</p> <p>The policy will not itself lead to development because it relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development and aims to conserve and enhance the natural and built/historic environment. Therefore, the policy will not result in likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
Policy EDH3: The Environment and Biodiversity	A1 / A2	<p>This policy stipulates that development will be supported subject to compliance with other policies in the Plan and that it must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give the highest priority to conservation and enhancement of the amenity, visual quality, natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the CC AONB. 2. Not adversely affect landscape character but where appropriate include measures to conserve, restore or enhance. 3. Contribute towards the ecology of the area with measures to support a net gain in biodiversity. Development that is likely to have either a direct or indirect adverse impact upon the locally designated sites for nature conservation, priority habitats and/or protected species should demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation will be provided. 4. Maintain and where appropriate extend tree cover. Where removal is proposed due consideration shall be made of the Hedgerows Regulations, and in particular the hedges' historic potential. Where removal is justified, the impact of removal shall be mitigated by the provision of additional appropriate planting. Where development will affect trees and/or hedgerows, proposals should be accompanied by a survey which establishes the health and 	

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		<p>longevity of affected trees and/or hedgerows and an appropriate management plan. Tree and woodland management must be sensitive to other ecological considerations such as protecting chalk downland.</p> <p>5. Any decision relating to biodiversity and the environment must consider the wider ecosystem impacts of land-use change on water quality issues and related biodiversity in the River Ebble.</p> <p>The policy will not itself lead to development because it relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development and aims to protect the natural environment. Thus, the policy will not result in likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
Policy EDH4: Energy and lighting	A1 / A2	<p>This policy specifies that development should have a minimal (approaching zero) environmental impact in terms of use of natural resources, such as energy and water, and consideration should be given to how development can have a positive environmental impact.</p> <p>It states that where compatible with the Design Code, the incorporation of rain harvesting, greywater recycling, high standards of insulation and renewable energy systems in new and existing development will be encouraged. It states that requirements for plug-in electric vehicles (EVs) and ultra-low energy vehicle installations should be incorporated within all new housing and employment development.</p> <p>The policy states that BREEAM assessments or equivalent are encouraged for non-residential development, and that roof designs should incorporate solar PV, either for immediate or future installations if it is not proven viable at the point of development and it does not adversely affect local character.</p> <p>The policy goes on to state that development proposals will only be supported if they do not jeopardise the status of the CC AONB dark skies reserve, and that any applications for development that requires a lighting scheme should demonstrate how the status of dark skies will be protected.</p> <p>The Policy states that development proposals within Coombe Bissett and Homington Parish should seek to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light sources. For new developments there will be a presumption against street lighting or any other lighting that affects the dark skies of the parish. All external light would be expected to comply with the</p>	

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		<p>AONB’s Position Statement on Light Pollution and the more recent Good Practice Notes of Good External Lighting paper.</p> <p>The policy will not itself lead to development because it relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development and aims to protect the natural environment. As such, the policy will not result in likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
Policy EDH5: Local Heritage Assets	A3	<p>This policy expects any development within the Conservation Areas, or likely to impact on local heritage, to be accompanied by a heritage assessment.</p> <p>The policy supports the retrofitting of historic buildings where practicable providing it follows Historic England’s guidance for retrofitting historic buildings.</p> <p>New development on areas of land identified for their archaeological importance should undertake archaeological evaluations prior to construction with any findings appropriately reported and document on the local historic environment record.</p> <p>The policy goes on to list thirteen non-listed heritage assets that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.</p> <p>The objective of this policy is to ensure local heritage assets are conserved and enhanced and it will not itself lead to development. As such, the policy will not result in likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
Policy FDM1: Flooding, Drainage and water Management	A1	<p>This policy states that development within Flood Zones 2 and 3, or in known spring areas will only be supported if appropriate anti-flooding measures are incorporated into the development to the satisfaction of Wiltshire Council’s Flooding Team; and concerns of the Parish Council are taken into account in the design of these measures. Any development within the Environment Agency Flood Alert Areas must also apply stringent flooding prevention and protection measures.</p> <p>The policy specifies that all proposals must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate that flood risk will not be increased in the vicinity of the development or elsewhere in the Parish. 2. Prove that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on surface water run-off and 	

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		<p>sewage discharge in the Parish.</p> <p>3. Be appropriately flood resilient and resistant for their lifetime.</p> <p>4. Consider how design and construction may affect the long-term hydrology of the site and the surrounding area, as well as the wider run-off and drainage to the River Ebble.</p> <p>5. Not result in any temporary or permanent adverse effect on the watercourse/s and consider the potential for waterlogging, land contamination and wastewater treatment capacity.</p> <p>The policy goes on to stipulate that all development will be expected to include an appropriately designed, constructed and maintained Sustainable Drainage System (SuD) and that the system may include at least one or a combination of the SuD design features detailed in the policy. It also requires that new development must be built to the highest optional water efficiency standards provided for by building regulations and highlights that these are currently a maximum water use of 110 litres per day (G2 of the Building Regulations, 2010).</p> <p>Appropriate drainage infrastructure will be required to serve new developments and to not overbear the existing network or add to difficulties with local water supplies, sewerage and sewage treatment and waste disposal – in particular where this may affect phosphate and nutrient loads into the River Avon SAC.</p> <p>This policy will not itself lead to development and the objective of the policy is to ensure that new and windfall development addresses potential flood risk from all sources both on-site and for surrounding buildings and the wider environment. Therefore, the policy itself will not give rise to a likely significant effect upon any European sites.</p>	
Policy STRF1: Road Safety	A1	<p>This policy states that development that will generate greater levels of additional traffic should include within a Transport Statement consideration of how traffic impacts will be mitigated to ensure that the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area and the CC AONB will be conserved.</p> <p>It states that through engagement with landowners and Wiltshire Council Highways, new development should seek to address, where feasible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancement of existing and/or provision of additional passing places to avoid damage to the roadside edges. 2. Improvement to verges. 	

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		<p>3. Provision of appropriate traffic calming measures. 4. Addressing road safety issues to prevent accidents.</p> <p>The policy highlights that development should integrate with the proposed road safety proposals provided in the NP and development gain to this effect will be sought, where appropriate.</p> <p>It specifies that roadside footpaths should be sensitive to design features in keeping with the Design Code and the area’s rural character and should be accessible to all, where feasible.</p> <p>The objective of this policy is to encourage road safety in the Parish, and it will not itself lead to development. As such, the policy will not result in likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
<p>Policy SDRF2: Enabling a ‘Walkable Village’</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>This policy stipulates that the loss of existing footpaths, bridleways and byways will be strongly resisted. New development should be built around the concept of a ‘walkable village’ with integrated pathways/footpaths and, wherever possible, enable safe and accessible walking routes that link to the village centres and amenities. Roadside pavements/footpaths should be sensitive to design features in keeping with the Design Code and the area’s rural character and should be accessible to all, where feasible.</p> <p>The policy will not itself lead to development, instead setting out design and qualitative criteria for development. Therefore, the policy will not result in likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
<p>Policy STRF3: Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>This policy requires that any development should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include charging points for motorised vehicles including mobility scooters. 2. Any extension that requires planning permission, or the replacement of a garage should include charging points for motorised vehicles including mobility scooters. 3. The provision of infrastructure to support sustainable transport will be encouraged such as secure and weatherproof cycle racks, if appropriate. 4. Fully consider and address where possible the needs of those who have mobility issues. <p>The policy also states that where development gain is used to support improved road infrastructure, adequate signage and space for cyclists should be fully considered.</p>	

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		<p>The policy will not itself lead to development, instead setting out design and qualitative criteria for development. Therefore, the policy will not lead to likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
<p>Policy LWCF1: Local Green Spaces</p>	<p>A1 / A3</p>	<p>This policy designates the seven outdoor recreation and amenity areas shown on the LGS proposals map in the NP and listed in the policy as Local Green Spaces due to their particular local significance for the community and their recreational, amenity, historic and/or environmental value.</p> <p>The policy stipulates that the management of these LGS should be consistent with green belt policy in the NPPF and that planning permission on recreation sites will be supported only if these enhance their primary function for designation.</p> <p>The policy goes on to state that development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface or a soft landscaped edge to complement the character of these spaces.</p> <p>The objective of this policy is to protect and promote recreational and amenity areas through the allocation of Local Green Spaces, and it will not itself lead to development. As such, the policy will not result in likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	
<p>Policy LWCF2: Community facilities</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>This policy requires the siting of any infrastructure to address any adverse impact on local character and the CC AONB. All cabling should be underground, where feasible, and pole-mounted transformers should be avoided.</p> <p>The policy states the loss of a community building will only be acceptable where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An equivalent or better replacement building is provided at another suitable location. 2. It can be demonstrated that all or part of a community building is no longer valued by the community either in its present use or alternative community uses. <p>It requires that new community facilities must be accessible for those with additional mobility requirements and the needs of those without the use of a car should be considered where appropriate.</p> <p>New community facilities or upgrades to existing facilities should: promote natural features</p>	

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		<p>within the development; provide spaces for outside interaction whilst providing for wildlife habitats, including gardens, open spaces and trees; and be sensitive to the setting of the area within the CC AONB.</p> <p>The policy goes on to detail off-site infrastructure requirements identified as a priority for relevant S106 agreements or CIL, and these comprise road safety measures to provide pedestrian access and footpath enhancements and the formal designation of a right of way across the boundary of the Coombe Bissett Down.</p> <p>The objective of this policy is to improve community facilities and recreational and amenity areas in the Parish, and it will not itself lead to development. As such, the policy will not give rise to likely significant effects upon any European sites.</p>	

5. Appropriate Assessment – River Avon SAC

Background to the River Avon SAC

- 5.1 The qualifying features of the River Avon SAC are the river habitat, categorised as a water course of plain to montane levels containing *Ranunculus* vegetation; Desmoulin's whorl snail which occurs on emergent vegetation in the floodplain, and; four species of fish, Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, brook lamprey and bullhead. The conservation objectives are available at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6048472272732160>, the current version (V3) is dated 27 November 2018.
- 5.2 In brief these require that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate and that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features. Supplementary Advice on conserving and restoring site features was published by NE on 11 March 2019¹¹ (available through the weblink above). This discusses the need to restore the natural nutrient regime, by limiting anthropogenic enrichment to levels at which adverse effects on characteristic biodiversity are unlikely. In relation to planning, the main concern is the contribution that development makes to river phosphorus levels through inputs from sewage treatment works and package treatment plants. To this effect, specific targets have been identified for phosphorus for the individual waterbodies which make up the SAC.
- 5.3 Development may also affect the river directly, if works are undertaken on the banks or within the river channel and indirectly through non sewage related pollution, such as runoff during construction operations.

Plans and projects to be considered in combination

- 5.4 The HRA for the WCS considered the in-combination effect of all development proposed in the River Avon catchment, relying on the River Avon Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)¹² to demonstrate there would be no adverse effect on the SAC.
- 5.5 The principle behind the NMP was that planned increases in development related sewage would be more than offset by the reductions in agricultural phosphate being secured by catchment sensitive farming. For the Core Strategy 2015-2026 this enabled the Council to conclude that, provided development was within the headroom of individual sewage treatment works, there would be no likely significant effects of housing allocations proposed within the River Avon catchment.
- 5.6 In March 2018, the EA and NE advised the Council that catchment sensitive farming targets were not being achieved and therefore the NMP could not be relied on for appropriate assessments, even for development within headroom. From that time onwards, all new development in the catchment would need to be "phosphate neutral" if it was to comply with the Habitats Regulations.
- 5.7 Subsequently Wiltshire Council and other Local Authorities in the Avon catchment have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NE, Wessex Water and the EA¹³ agreeing to deploy a range of measures to ensure that development between March 2018 and March 2025 will be phosphate neutral. The MoU commits the parties to preparing an Interim Delivery Plan (IDP)¹⁴ in order to secure a

¹¹ Supplementary Advice on Conserving and Restoring Site Features: River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Site Code UK0013016 Published by Natural England 11 March 2019

¹² River Avon Special Area of Conservation Nutrient Management Plan for Phosphorus (David Tyldesley Associates, 30 April 2015)

¹³ Memorandum of Understanding, River Avon Special Area of Conservation, Phosphate Neutral Development – Interim Mitigation, 29 May 2018

¹⁴ River Avon SAC – Phosphate Neutral Development Interim Delivery Plan, Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions UK Limited, January 2019

trajectory of phosphorous reductions in line with the spatial and temporal pattern of development. The IDP focusses mainly on residential development down to single dwellings, as these combine to have the greatest negative effects across the catchment. In addition to residential and non-residential growth, the IDP considers the growth of unsewered development and takes account of land use change from agriculture to urban in order to arrive at a projection for net phosphorous increases up to 2025/26.

- 5.8 In Wiltshire, the Cabinet resolved on 5th January 2021 to adopt a strategic approach to secure in perpetuity measures to ensure development is phosphate neutral in the River Avon SAC catchment. It confirmed the strategic approach would include monitoring and annual reporting to ensure offsetting keeps pace with permissions granted and agreed to ring-fence an initial fund of £850,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to fund the necessary offsetting measures and a project officer to oversee their delivery.
- 5.9 The strategic approach, which has been considered through a strategic appropriate assessment and agreed with NE, comprises the following:
- A trajectory of housing completions¹⁰ will be used to anticipate the amount of offsetting required and ensure sufficient offsetting is in place before housing becomes occupied.
 - Tracking the phosphorus burdens of all developments covered by the strategy and ensure the requisite phosphorus offsetting measures are appropriately located in relation to the permitted development.
 - Offsetting will initially take the form of Small Schemes which will mainly comprise new wetlands and woodlands located in the headwaters of the River Avon sub-catchments.
 - In the first place Small Schemes will be secured by 25 year contracts but these will be capable of being extended or replaced to provide offsetting in perpetuity.
 - Temporary Measures, such as cover crops or capital works, will be used to bridge any gaps until Small Schemes are up and running and may be used at other times as a contingency.
 - A 20% buffer will be incorporated into phosphorus projections to account for uncertainties inherent in the approach to determining whether development is phosphorus neutral.
 - Large Habitat Creation Schemes (including wetlands) will be delivered in the headwaters of some or all of the River Avon headwaters within the next 3-10 years to provide in-perpetuity offsetting for permissions granted between March 2018 and March 2026. Contracts for Small Schemes will not be continued in any given sub-catchment where a Large Habitat Creation Scheme is in place.
 - Ongoing consultation will be undertaken with partners including NE and the EA through the River Avon SAC Working Group which meets at least once a year to review contracts and delivery on the ground against the most up to date housing trajectories.
- 5.10 Developments that are considered within the scope of the strategic appropriate assessment are those considered to be plan led development. These include
- Allocations within the development plan - Wiltshire Core Strategy (including saved policies), Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan and Neighbourhood Plans (CP 2)
 - Proposals within settlement boundaries and infill at Small Villages (CP 2)
 - Rural exception sites (CP 44)

- Outside settlement boundaries - only specialist accommodation, gypsy and travellers, rural workers dwellings, conversion and re-use of rural buildings consistent with policy (CP 46, 47 and 48).

5.11 Applications which are not considered to have significant effects on the SAC are as follows:

- Comparably sized replacement dwellings can be assumed to be phosphorous neutral in light of the condition restricting water use to 110 litres/person/day;
- Any developments for annexes can also be regarded as phosphorous neutral if a condition is applied to limit use of the annex to that which is ancillary to the main dwelling;
- Applications for replacement of a septic tank anywhere in the catchment are assumed to be phosphorous neutral provided there is no net increase in the number of connected dwellings.

5.12 Speculative greenfield applications outside of settlement boundaries that are contrary to the development plan (CP2) are not classified as planned development.

5.13 Non-residential development (excluding activities which contribute phosphorus as a result of their commercial processes or from people living beyond the catchment) and non-sewered development are also within the scope of the strategic appropriate assessment.

5.14 If development is not considered to be planned development, a bespoke mitigation strategy is required to mitigate the potential impacts on the SAC. NE have developed a Nutrient Calculator which calculates a nutrient budget to be used to develop the mitigation strategy that will ultimately need to be agreed with NE and Wiltshire Council.

Analysis of policies in the NP screened into appropriate assessment

5.15 The strategic appropriate assessment agreed by NE, anticipates housing development coming forward in the catchment of the River Avon SAC up to March 2026 which includes permissions already granted, planned development and a proportion of windfall. This is matched by a programme for delivery of offsetting measures in the catchment which will meet the trajectory of anticipated occupations.

5.16 Development supported by the policies listed below would dispose of foul waste either via a package treatment plant (PTP) or via a septic tank (ST) as the NP area is not connected to a mains sewer.

5.17 NE provided guidance in March 2022 on when non-mains development can be excluded from appropriate assessment. The guidance sets out small scale thresholds for non-mains system development which can be applied to planning applications so that it can be determined when discharge to non-mains systems may be considered to be de-minimus; i.e. lead to impacts which are so minimal that they can be excluded from appropriate assessment and not require mitigation. The proposed developments on the allocated sites are unlikely to be considered de-minimus however, other infill development supported in the NP area may qualify and this would be determined at the planning application stage.

5.18 Under the MoU, all residential development in the catchment must be built to the highest water efficiency standards provided for by the building regulations which are currently a maximum water use of 110 litres per person per day (G2 of the Building Regulations 2010). This requirement would be secured by means of a planning condition at the planning application stage, unless subsequent formal guidance from NE indicates otherwise.

5.19 The provision of measures to control phosphorous in urban runoff through SuDs design and on-site offsetting measures will be the responsibility of developers.

Policy ASD1 – Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites

5.20 This policy supports the development of allocated or infill sites that deliver a housing need target of 19 dwellings over the plan period to 2036 and sets out a list of criteria which must be met, including the

requirement for sites to be contained or infill sites surrounded by existing development within the settlement boundary unless allocated in the NP, not adversely affecting the AONB, not causing the coalescence of other settlements, conserving Grade 3 agricultural land and providing net enhancements for biodiversity.

- 5.21 The policy goes on to state that unless an allocated site is in the NP, development in the countryside will be limited to that which supports community uses, essential infrastructure and that which requires a rural location (including the special circumstances set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF).
- 5.22 The whole of the NP area lies within the Hampshire Avon catchment and as such any development within the catchment could lead to an increase in adverse impacts on the River Avon SAC due to an increase in phosphorus pollution.
- 5.23 Development supported by this policy that is located within the settlement boundary of Coombe Bissett would be covered by the strategic appropriate assessment as it would be considered to be planned development.
- 5.24 If development comes forward that is not considered to be planned development it would not be covered by the strategic appropriate assessment and a bespoke mitigation strategy for the site, based on the results of the nutrient calculator developed by NE, would be required to demonstrate phosphorus neutrality. The proposals would be assessed through a project level HRA, and the appropriate assessment would need to conclude no adverse effects on the River Avon SAC alone or in combination in order to be compliant with the Habitats Regulations.
- 5.25 It is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy ASD1 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 5.26 On the basis that the above recommendations are implemented, it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the River Avon SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy AS1 – Provisionally Allocated Site – The Old Vicarage

- 5.27 This policy allocates the Old Vicarage site towards the centre of Coombe Bissett. There is an existing vacant building on site. The policy allocates the site for a maximum of 4 dwellings, either through the retention of the existing building and the addition of 3 others or through the demolition of the existing building and the creation of 4 new dwellings.
- 5.28 The site at the Old Vicarage is considered to be planned development in the context of the strategic appropriate assessment as it is located within the settlement boundary of Coombe Bissett. Whilst the allocated site meets the criteria set out above and is considered to be planned development, the Council would still require developers to include sustainable drainage (SuDS) measures on site, where feasible, as mitigation to reduce the potential impacts on site as far as possible. Please see the following link to Wiltshire Council's website: [Phosphorus and nitrogen mitigation - Wiltshire Council](#).
- 5.29 This site is located approximately 40m from the River Ebble which flows east through the NP area and joins the River Avon SAC at Salisbury. Therefore, any works at the site could lead to effects on the SAC downstream, for example through pollution incidents during construction, most likely in-combination with other plans and projects given the small scale of development that would take place at the site. Developments must therefore manage construction impacts in accordance with Core Policy 69. Core

Policy 69 states that *'development will need to incorporate measures during construction and operation to avoid and prevent pollution and mitigate potential disturbance effects; appropriate measures may include consideration of suitable buffer zones along watercourses, habitat enhancements and river access management measures.'*

- 5.30 CP69 is considered at the plan level to provide sufficient safeguards that any developments brought forward within the NP area would not have adverse impacts downstream on the River Avon SAC as a result of construction related activities. In addition, any developments would be considered at the planning application stage to ensure compliance with the aforementioned policy and other development plan policies and the NPPF, and would need to be subject to appropriate assessment which must reach a conclusion of no adverse effect on the SAC alone or in combination with other plans and projects in order to be granted planning permission.
- 5.31 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy AS1 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 5.32 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented, it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the River Avon SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy AS2 – Provisionally Allocated Site - Kenora Paddock

- 5.33 This policy allocates the Kenora Paddock site, an agricultural field, to the north of the village of Coombe Bissett. The site is located adjacent to the settlement boundary and is allocated for up to 6 dwellings.
- 5.34 As the site is located outside of the settlement boundary it would not be considered to be planned development with regards to the strategic appropriate assessment. As discussed earlier in this HRA, if a development is not considered to be planned development it requires a bespoke mitigation strategy informed by the nutrient budget calculator developed by NE in order to be considered nutrient neutral. A bespoke mitigation strategy will be permitted where the developer has provided details of a scheme which NE has confirmed is compliant with the Habitats Regulations and is able to mitigate for phosphorous in-perpetuity with a 20% buffer. Such schemes will be secured through legal agreement to ensure mitigation is in place and working effectively before commencement of each phase of development.
- 5.35 In order for the appropriate assessment of Policy AS2 to be able to reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC or the integrity of it's qualifying features as a result of the proposed allocation at Kenora Paddock, inclusion of a satisfactory mitigation strategy within the NP is required.
- 5.36 The current draft of the NP does not include a mitigation strategy or put forward any proposed mitigation measures. Therefore, it **cannot be concluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt that there would be no likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC.**
- 5.37 The following are suggested as potential mitigation measures, and a combination of measures may be required to achieve nutrient neutrality:
- On site sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);
 - Removal of land upstream from agricultural production – this could include creation of public open space or a community orchard;

- Planting riparian buffers or interceptor woodlands around Coombe Bissett;
- A package treatment plant utilising a zero emissions willow bed or an aggregate bed to minimise phosphorus burdens, and therefore reduce the overall level of offsetting required, may be an option for this site.

5.38 At the planning application stage it is advised that the Steering Group consults NE on the proposed bespoke mitigation strategy once it has been formulated, and this is best undertaken through their Discretionary Advice Service (DAS): [Developers: get environmental advice on your planning proposals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/developers-get-environmental-advice-on-your-planning-proposals).

5.39 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy AS2 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.

Policy AS3 – Provisionally Allocated Site – Rear of Avalon (eastern half)

5.40 This policy allocates the Rear of Avalon (eastern half) site, a partially brownfield site to the rear of properties along the A354. It is allocated for up to 6 dwellings and is described as being predominantly occupied by storage outbuildings and hard standing for cars. The figure in the NP does not provide a potential site boundary but does indicate a line which development would not go beyond. The area of brownfield land (storage and hardstanding) is located within the settlement boundary however the remainder of the site is located outside of the settlement boundary. Due to the majority of the site being located outside of the settlement boundary it is considered that the site as a whole would not be planned development and therefore would not fall within the scope of the strategic appropriate assessment.

5.41 As discussed earlier in this HRA, if a development is not considered to be planned development it requires a bespoke mitigation strategy informed by the nutrient budget calculator developed by NE in order to be considered nutrient neutral. A bespoke mitigation strategy will be permitted where the developer has provided details of a scheme which NE has confirmed is compliant with the Habitats Regulations and is able to mitigate for phosphorous in-perpetuity with a 20% buffer. Such schemes will be secured through legal agreement to ensure mitigation is in place and working effectively before commencement of each phase of development.

5.42 In order for the appropriate assessment of Policy AS3 to be able to reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC or the integrity of its qualifying features as a result of the proposed allocation at Rear of Avalon (eastern half), inclusion of a satisfactory mitigation strategy within the NP is required.

5.43 The current draft of the NP does not include a mitigation strategy or put forward any proposed mitigation measures. Therefore, it **cannot be concluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt that there would be no likely significant effects on the River Avon SAC.**

5.44 The following are suggested as potential mitigation measures, and a combination of measures may be required to achieve nutrient neutrality:

- On site sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);
- Removal of land upstream from agricultural production – this could include creation of public open space or a community orchard;

- Planting riparian buffers or interceptor woodlands around Coombe Bissett;
- A package treatment plant utilising a zero emissions willow bed or an aggregate bed to minimise phosphorus burdens, and therefore reduce the overall level of offsetting required, may be an option for this site.

5.45 At the planning application stage it is advised that the Steering Group consults NE on the proposed bespoke mitigation strategy once it has been formulated, and this is best undertaken through their Discretionary Advice Service (DAS): [Developers: get environmental advice on your planning proposals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/developers-get-environmental-advice-on-your-planning-proposals).

5.46 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy AS3 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.

Policy EM1 – Working from Home

5.47 Whilst this policy does not allocate sites for development, it does support new development for the purposes of facilitating increased levels of home working.

5.48 The whole of the NP area lies within the Hampshire Avon catchment and as such any development within the catchment could lead to an increase in adverse impacts on the River Avon SAC due to an increase in phosphorus pollution.

5.49 Development supported by this policy that is located within the settlement boundary of Coombe Bissett would be covered by the strategic appropriate assessment as it would be considered to be planned development.

5.50 If development comes forward that is not considered to be planned development it would not be covered by the strategic appropriate assessment and a bespoke mitigation strategy for the site, based on the results of the nutrient calculator developed by NE, would be required to demonstrate phosphorus neutrality. The proposals would be assessed through a project level HRA, and the appropriate assessment would need to conclude no adverse effects on the River Avon SAC alone or in combination in order to be compliant with the Habitats Regulations.

5.51 Any development that comes forward which is supported by this policy will be subject to HRA at the planning application stage where necessary and appropriate mitigation measures will need to be secured at that stage where required.

5.52 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy EM1 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.

5.53 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented, it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the River Avon SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy EM2 – Business in the Countryside

- 5.54 This policy supports development within the NP area that supports small-scale businesses, particularly where this is met through the conversion or re-use of buildings, including the expansion of tourist and visitor facilities.
- 5.55 The whole of the NP area lies within the Hampshire Avon catchment and as such any development within the catchment could lead to an increase in adverse impacts on the River Avon SAC due to an increase in phosphorus pollution.
- 5.56 Development supported by this policy that is located within the settlement boundary of Coombe Bissett would be covered by the strategic appropriate assessment as it would be considered to be planned development.
- 5.57 If development comes forward that is not considered to be planned development, e.g. visitor accommodation that routinely brings people in from living outside the catchment, it would not be covered by the strategic appropriate assessment and a bespoke mitigation strategy for the site, based on the results of the nutrient calculator developed by NE, would be required to demonstrate phosphorus neutrality. The proposals would be assessed through a project level HRA, and the appropriate assessment would need to conclude no adverse effects on the River Avon SAC alone or in combination in order to be compliant with the Habitats Regulations.
- 5.58 Any development that comes forward which is supported by this policy will be subject to HRA at the planning application stage where necessary and appropriate mitigation measures will need to be secured at that stage where required.
- 5.59 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy EM2 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 5.60 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented, it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the River Avon SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Conclusion – River Avon SAC

- 5.61 The policies set out above have been considered in this appropriate assessment and have been assessed for their potential impacts on the River Avon SAC in terms of potential phosphorus impacts.
- 5.62 If developments come forward within the settlement boundary of Coombe Bissett or are allocated within the Development Plan, they would be considered to be planned development and would therefore fall within the scope of Wiltshire Council's phosphorus strategic appropriate assessment. A bespoke mitigation strategy will be required for any developments which are not considered to be planned development.
- 5.63 As set out previously, it is recommended that a new policy is added to the NP, and referred to in Policies ASD1, AS1, AS2, AS3, EM1 and EM2, to ensure that development coming forward within the NP area demonstrates compliance with the Habitat Regulations and is sufficiently mitigated to avoid adverse impacts on the River Avon SAC.
- 5.64 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented, it is therefore deemed possible to conclude, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that there would be no adverse effects on the River Avon

SAC, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects as a result of policies ASD1, AS1, EM1 and EM2 in the Coombe Bissett and Homington NP.

- 5.65 The site allocations in Policies AS2 and AS3 are not considered to be planned development as they are outside, or the majority of the site is outside, the settlement boundary of Coombe Bissett. A satisfactory mitigation strategy is therefore required to identify how these sites would be mitigated in order to ensure the development would be phosphorus neutral in perpetuity. A mitigation strategy has not been submitted within or alongside the NP for either allocated site therefore **this appropriate assessment cannot conclude beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the NP will not have adverse effects on the integrity of the River Avon SAC in-combination with other plans and projects.**

6. Appropriate Assessment – New Forest SAC and SPA

Background to the New Forest SAC and SPA

- 6.1 The New Forest comprises the largest area of ‘unsown’ vegetation in lowland England and includes the representation on a large scale of habitats formerly common but now fragmented and rare in lowland western Europe. The mosaic of habitats owes much to the local geology and traditional commoning grazing system, a situation which is uncommon in lowland England.
- 6.2 The habitats include lowland heath, valley and seepage step mire, or fen, ancient pasture woodland, including riparian and bog woodland and a range of acid to neutral grasslands.
- 6.3 The SPA supports an exceptionally rich bird fauna including internationally important breeding populations and wintering populations of bird species associated with these habitats. The SAC supports outstanding examples of 13 habitats of European interest which are represented with two priority habitat types, bog woodland and riverine woodland. These habitats support an exceptionally rich diversity of fauna and flora which is largely dependent on traditional management practices of grazing and complemented by annual heathland burning and cutting programmes.
- 6.4 The SPA’s qualifying features are detailed below:
- Qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive
- During the breeding season the SPA regularly supports:
- A302 Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*) - 538 pairs representing at least 33.6% of the breeding population in Great Britain at the time of SPA classification
 - A072 Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), 2 pairs representing at least 10.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain at the time of SPA classification
 - A224 Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), 300 pairs representing at least 8.8% of the breeding population in Great Britain at the time of SPA classification
 - A246 Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), 177 pairs representing at least 12.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain at the time of SPA classification
- During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports:
- A082 Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) 15 individuals representing at least 2.0% of the wintering population in Great Britain at the time of SPA classification
- Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive
- During the breeding season the SPA regularly supports:
- A099 Hobby (*Falco Subbuteo*) – up to 25 pairs representing around 3% of the British breeding population at the time of SPA classification
 - A314 Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – in excess of 350 pairs representing at least 3% of the British breeding population at the time of SPA classification.
- 6.5 The conservation objectives are available at [European Site Conservation Objectives for New Forest SPA - UK9011031 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation-objectives-for-new-forest-spa). The conservation objectives require that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate and that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the World Birds Directive. NE published Supplementary Advice on the 19th March 2019¹⁵ (available through the weblink above) which sets out the need to reduce the frequency, duration and intensity of disturbance

¹⁵ Supplementary Advice on Conserving and Restoring Site Features: New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA). Site Code UK9011031 Published by Natural England 19 March 2019

on nesting, roosting, foraging, feeding, moulting and/or loafing birds so that the qualifying species are not significantly disturbed.

6.6 The qualifying features of the SAC are as follows:

- H3110. Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*); Nutrient-poor shallow waters with aquatic vegetation on sandy plains
- H3130. Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea*; Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels
- H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
- H4030. European dry heaths
- H6410. *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*); Purple moor-grass meadows
- H7140. Transition mires and quaking bogs; Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface
- H7150. Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*
- H7230. Alkaline fens; Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens
- H9120. Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*); Beech forests on acid soils
- H9130. *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests; Beech forests on neutral to rich soils
- H9190. Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains
- H91D0. Bog woodland*
- H91E0. Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*); Alder woodland on floodplains*
- S1044. *Coenagrion mercuriale*; Southern damselfly
- S1083. *Lucanus cervus*; Stag beetle
- S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great crested newt

6.7 The conservation objectives are available at: [European Site Conservation Objectives for The New Forest SAC - UK0012557 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk). The conservation objectives require that the integrity of the SAC is maintained or restored as appropriate and that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features. NE published Supplementary Advice on the 18th March 2019¹⁶ (available through the weblink above) which notes the following for several qualifying features:

Trampling from human activities can cause soil compaction, changes to soil hydrology and with heavy use, erosion and compacted bare ground. This leads to reductions in soil invertebrates and changes in plant communities. The effects are most acute near to car parks, access points from the urban fringe and in and around campsites.

6.8 Increased recreation is also noted to be a cause of:

- nutrient and sediment inputs to waterbodies;

¹⁶ Supplementary Advice on Conserving and Restoring Site Features: The New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Site Code UK0012557 Published by Natural England 18 March 2019

- bank erosion, excessive bare ground and impoverished vegetation; and
- a reduction in veteran trees, dead standing wood and a decline in the nature conservation value of woodland near to recreational facilities.

6.9 With regards to planning, the main concern is the increase in recreational pressure on the New Forest SPA/SAC caused by additional residential and tourism developments within south Wiltshire. The Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy has been developed, and will be reviewed before March 2023, to provide mitigation for residential and tourism developments coming forward in Wiltshire.

Plans and projects to be considered in combination

6.10 The HRAs (2012, 2013, 2014) to the WCS concluded that the WCS would not have any adverse effects on the integrity of the New Forest SPA/SAC in-combination with other plans and projects.

6.11 Core Policy 50 of the WCS identifies the need for a New Forest Mitigation Strategy to address the impacts of increased recreational pressure on the New Forest for additional development within Wiltshire. The WCS adopted the 8km ZoI identified within the HRA to the SWCS. However, as discussed in the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy, from 1st September 2021 this has been revised to 13.8 km due to further evidence provided by visitor surveys conducted in 2018/2019. Where demonstrated as necessary through a bespoke appropriate assessment this ZoI may be extended to 15km.

6.12 The Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy sets out the mitigation approaches of several neighbouring authorities including the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA), New Forest District Council and Test Valley Borough Council.

6.13 The approaches taken by the other local authorities fall into three categories:

1. Implementing mitigation, management and monitoring of visitors within the New Forest;
2. Provision of SANGs managed by Local Authorities / NGOs lying outside development sites; and
3. Provision of SANGs within larger development sites managed by management companies.

6.14 These approaches have been tested at Examination in Public and the HRAs which support them have been scrutinised by NE. Several principles emerged from these existing strategies:

- Tariffs should be applied to all residential development;
- Mitigation must be delivered for the lifetime of the developments being permitted;
- Mitigation is required for all new and tourism/visitor accommodation;
- Charges should include a contribution towards monitoring and research;
- Charging rates can be designed to reflect the amount of visitor pressure that may arise conditional on a developments nature and location;
- SANGs provided within larger developments must meet minimum design criteria and be managed for the lifetime of the development.

6.15 The Council's mitigation approach is based on providing suitable alternatives (SANGs) close to where people live to avoid impacts and working with the NFNPA to deliver measures that reduce and mitigate the impact of unavoidable recreational pressure within the European sites themselves, by requiring CIL contributions towards access management and monitoring for the lifetime of the strategy.

6.16 The Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy addresses mitigation requirements arising from the following where sites fall within the relevant zone of influence:

- Housing development which was permitted between 2015 and 2021 excluding that which has already been mitigated either through SANGs (i.e. for WCS strategic allocations) or through contributions (i.e. Land off Salisbury Road, Downton) already received.
- Housing allocation sites from the WHSAP
- Other relevant housing
- Tourism development from September 2021

6.17 The strategy aims to deliver high quality alternatives to visiting the New Forest by delivering SANGs while at the same time recognising that not all visits to the New Forest can be offset. Therefore, the strategy also relies on contributions being made towards access management and monitoring for the lifetime of the strategy. The approach to mitigation for residential dwellings within both Zol involves larger developments being encouraged to provide a SANG and all other smaller housing schemes being required to contribute funding towards strategic SANGs and access and visitor management within the New Forest itself.

6.18 Table 2, taken from Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy, summaries the mitigation requirements for residential development of varying sizes on greenfield and brownfield land within the 13.8km and 15km Zol.

Table 2 Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy – Mitigation Approach

TABLE 1: Mitigation approach			
Development class	Distance from designated sites	Development type	Mitigation approach
Residential	0-13.8km	Greenfield, 1-49 units ²	Amount per dwelling (CIL)
		Greenfield, 50+ units	Provision of SANG
		Brownfield any number of units ¹	Amount per dwelling (CIL)
	13.8km – 15km	Greenfield, and Brownfield 1-49 units	Mitigated through implementation of the wider strategy through CIL contributions.
		Greenfield, 50+ units	Provision of SANG where HRA demonstrates potential for adverse effects
		Brownfield, 50+ units ¹	Amount per dwelling (CIL) where HRA demonstrates potential for adverse effects
	0-13.8km	No limit	Amount per unit (CIL)

Visitor accommodation	13.8km – 15km	Larger developments where HRA demonstrates potential for adverse effects	Amount per unit (CIL)
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¹ The council will reserve the need to require mitigation where site characteristics allow.

² Where there are two or more live planning applications / housing developments in close proximity to each other at a settlement, the need for SANG may be triggered where the total number of dwellings exceeds 50 units.

Analysis of Policies in the NP screened into appropriate assessment

Policy ASD1 – Promoting limited development on allocated and windfall (infill) sites

- 6.19 This policy supports the development of allocated or infill sites that deliver a housing need target of 19 dwellings over the plan period to 2036 and sets out a list of criteria which must be met, including the requirement for sites to be contained or infill sites surrounded by existing development within the settlement boundary unless allocated in the NP, not adversely affecting the AONB, not causing the coalescence of other settlements, conserving Grade 3 agricultural land and providing net enhancements for biodiversity.
- 6.20 The policy goes on to state that unless an allocated site is in the NP, development in the countryside will be limited to that which supports community uses, essential infrastructure and that which requires a rural location (including the special circumstances set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF).
- 6.21 The policy does not allocate sites for development or suggest where these sites may be located. As the whole of the NP area is located within the 13.8km Zol for the New Forest SPA/SAC any new developments supported by this policy would be located within the Zol.
- 6.22 As indicated in Table 2 above, residential development supported through this policy, either on greenfield or brownfield land, would be required to adhere to the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy and would be required to provide a CIL contribution per dwelling in line with the strategy, or subsequent iteration of the strategy. Any development that comes forward would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Regulations at the planning application stage and would need to adhere to the most recent/final version of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy.
- 6.24 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy ASD1 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 6.25 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the New Forest SPA/SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy AS1 – Provisionally Allocated Site – The Old Vicarage

- 6.26 This policy allocates the Old Vicarage site for a maximum of 4 dwellings, either through the retention of the existing building and the provision of 3 additional dwellings or through the demolition of the existing building and provision of 4 new dwellings.
- 6.27 The proposed allocation is located within the 13.8km Zol and would be required to adhere to the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy and would be required to provide a CIL contribution of £526 per dwelling

on this site. Any development that comes forward would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Regulations at the planning application stage and would need to adhere to the most recent/final version of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy.

- 6.28 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy AS1 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 6.29 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the New Forest SPA/SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy AS2 – Provisionally Allocated Site - Kenora Paddock

- 6.30 This policy allocates the site at Kenora Paddock, to the north of the village and adjacent to the settlement boundary, for up to of 6 dwellings.
- 6.31 The proposed allocation is located within the 13.8km Zol and would be required to adhere to the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy and would be required to provide a CIL contribution of £526 per dwelling on this site. Any development that comes forward would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Regulations at the planning application stage and would need to adhere to the most recent/final version of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy.
- 6.32 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy AS2 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 6.33 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the New Forest SPA/SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy AS3 – Provisionally Allocated Site – Rear of Avalon (eastern half)

- 6.34 This policy allocates the site at Rear of Avalon (eastern half), a brownfield site adjacent to the settlement boundary to the south west of the village, for up to of 6 dwellings.
- 6.35 The proposed allocation is located within the 13.8km Zol and would be required to adhere to the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy and would be required to provide a CIL contribution of £526 per dwelling on this site. Any development that comes forward would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Regulations at the planning application stage and would need to adhere to the most recent/final version of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy and would need to adhere to the most recent/final version of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy.
- 6.36 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's

strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy AS3 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.

- 6.37 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the New Forest SPA/SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy EM1 – Working from Home

- 6.38 This policy supports new development and extensions to current buildings in order to facilitate increased levels of working from home.
- 6.39 As the whole of the NP area is located within the 13.8km Zol for the New Forest SPA/SAC any new developments supported by this policy would be located within the Zol.
- 6.40 As indicated in Table 2 above, residential development supported through this policy, either on greenfield or brownfield land, would be required to adhere to the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy and would either provide a CIL contribution per dwelling or provide a SANG (either managed by the Council or a management company depending on the size of the development) in line with the strategy, or subsequent iteration of the strategy.
- 6.41 Any development that comes forward would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Regulations at the planning application stage and would need to adhere to the most recent/final version of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy.
- 6.42 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their Zol's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy EM1 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 6.43 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the New Forest SPA/SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Policy EM2 – Business in the Countryside

- 6.44 This policy specifies that development that supports small-scale businesses, particularly where this is met through the conversion or re-use of buildings. The policy then goes on to list developments that would be permitted including the provision or expansion of tourist and visitor facilities.
- 6.45 Policy EM2 does not allocate land for development, however it does support the development of new residential and tourist and visitor facilities. The policy does not specify whether tourist and visitor facilities include visitor accommodation and does not identify or suggest where development may be located within the NP area. However, as the whole of the NP area is located within the 13.8km Zol for the New Forest SPA/SAC any new residential or visitor accommodation development supported by this policy would be located within the Zol.
- 6.46 As indicated in Table 2 above, residential and visitor accommodation development supported by this policy within the 13.8km Zol would be required to adhere to the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy. Residential development would be required to either provide a CIL contribution per dwelling or provide a SANG (either managed by the Council or a management company depending on the size of the development) in line with the strategy, or subsequent iteration of the strategy. For visitor accommodation developments would be required to provide a CIL contribution per unit.

- 6.47 Any development that comes forward would need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Regulations at the planning application stage and would need to adhere to the most recent/final version of the Recreation Mitigation Strategy.
- 6.48 As set out above, it is recommended that a policy is added to the NP that states that new development will need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitat Regulations. This new policy should also include reference to the River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA/SAC, their ZoI's and the strategic mitigation strategies designed to reduce the potential impact of new development on these European designated sites. The policy should also highlight that not all developments would be covered by the Council's strategic mitigation strategies and that a bespoke mitigation strategy may be required. It is recommended that Policy EM2 is amended to refer to the need to comply with the new policy.
- 6.49 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented it can be concluded that the policy would not result in a significant effect on the New Forest SPA/SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Conclusion – New Forest SPA/SAC

- 6.50 The development supported by Policies ASD1, EM1 and EM2 and the allocations set out in Policies AS1, AS2 and AS3 would be covered by the New Forest Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy. The interim strategy applies until a coordinated strategic approach is agreed with the NFNPA and other neighbouring authorities and will be reviewed before the end of March 2023. Any developments coming forward will therefore need to comply with the most recent version of the strategy.
- 6.51 As set out previously, it is recommended that a new policy is added to the NP, and referred to in Policies ASD1, AS1, AS2, AS3, EM1 and EM2, to ensure that development coming forward within the NP area demonstrates compliance with the Habitat Regulations and is sufficiently mitigated to avoid adverse impacts on the New Forest SPA/SAC.
- 6.52 On the basis that the above recommendation is implemented, it is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the NP will have no adverse effects on the integrity of the New Forest SPA/SAC either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

Prepared by Naomi Harvey, Ecologist, Wiltshire Council, 13 February 2023

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