

# **Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan - Scope, Issues and Options**

## **Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment**

**Screening Report**

**Draft Report**

**September 2020**



## JBA Project Manager

David Revill  
 Kings Chambers  
 8 High Street  
 Newport  
 NP20 1FQ

## Revision History

Revision Ref/Date	Amendments	Issued to
v1-1 / 12 March 2020	Draft Report	Hinckley & Bosworth Council
V2-0 / 11 June 2020	Draft Report	Hinckley & Bosworth Council
V3-0 / 09 September 2020	Minor amendments in line with council comments	Hinckley & Bosworth Council
V3-1 / 23 September 2020	Finalisation of report	Hinckley & Bosworth Council

## Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, by an email dated 24 January 2020. Jennifer Pullen and Laura Thomas of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

Prepared by ..... Jennifer Pullen BSc MSc GradCIEEM  
 Ecologist

Reviewed by ..... Laura Thomas BA MRes PGCert CEcol MCIEEM  
 Principal Ecologist

## Purpose

This document has been prepared as a Draft Report for Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council. JBA Consulting accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the Client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared. JBA Consulting has no liability regarding the use of this report except to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

JBA Consulting has no liability regarding the use of this report except to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

## Copyright

© Jeremy Benn Associates Limited 2020.

## Carbon Footprint

A printed copy of the main text in this document will result in a carbon footprint of 58g if 100% post-consumer recycled paper is used and 73g if primary-source paper is used. These figures assume the report is printed in black and white on A4 paper and in duplex.

JBA is aiming to reduce its per capita carbon emissions.

## Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	HBBC Local Plan	1
1.2	Habitats Directive	1
2	Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening	3
2.1	Habitats Regulations Assessment Methodology	3
2.2	HRA Stage 1 Screening - Methodology	4
2.2.1	Limitations	5
3	International Nature Conservation Sites	6
3.1	Introduction	6
3.1.1	European Sites in and around Hinckley and Bosworth Borough	6
4	Potential Impacts and Pathways	10
4.1	Introduction	10
4.2	Hazards to European Sites	10
4.2.1	Qualifying Features and Sensitivity to Hazards	11
4.3	Potential Impact Pathways	12
4.3.1	Hydrological Impacts	12
4.3.2	Air Quality Effects	12
4.3.3	Recreational Impacts	12
4.3.4	Other Relevant Plans and Projects that might act in-combination	13
5	Screening Assessment	14
5.1.1	Summary of Likely Significant Effects	27
6	Screening Conclusion	28
A	Review of Other Plans and Projects that could act in-combination with the HBBC Local Plan	I

## List of figures

Figure 3-1: Location of European Sites within the 15km buffer from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough	7
--	---

## List of tables

Table 2-1: The HRA Process	3
Table 3-1: Designated sites within the zone of influence (15km)	6
Table 4-1: Potential hazards to European nature conservation sites	10
Table 4-2: Sensitivity of Qualifying Features to Potential Impacts/ Pathways	11
Table 4-3: Other Plans and Projects considered in the assessment	13
Table 5-1: Pre-screening categories for the policies in the HBBC draft Local Plan (adapted from DTA, 2020)	14
Table 5-2: Summary of HBBC draft Local Plan objectives <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	
Table 5-3: Screening assessment of HBBC SIO Objectives and Policies on European Sites	15
Table 5-4: Potential Impacts Screened in (✓) or Out (X)	27

## Abbreviations

DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
GB	Great Britain
HBBC	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
HEDNA	Housing and Economic Development Need Assessment
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
NE	Natural England
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PP	Plan or Programme
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SADMP DPD	Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UK	United Kingdom

## 1 Introduction

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) is currently in the process of developing its Local Plan which will replace the existing Core Strategy (HBBC, 2009). The Local Plan will set out the strategic priorities and detailed policies that will guide development in the area up to 2039. A Scope, Issues and Options document has been published (HBBC, 2018) for consultation (Regulation 18) and does not currently include any site allocations for development. The Scope, Issues and Options consultation aims to gather evidence and draw together key issues in the council area and propose a number of options on how Local Plan policies could be developed to address these issues to provide a long-term plan for how the area can be developed.

To support the development of the Local Plan, HBBC is carrying out a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) in line with requirements set out by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the protection of international nature conservation sites (i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and, as a matter of Government Policy, also Ramsar sites) during the preparation of the Local Plan.

The first stage of the HRA process is the preparation of a Screening Assessment, which assesses whether the Local Plan is likely to have a significant effect on an international nature conservation site, either directly or indirectly, and/or in combination with other plans and projects. If the Screening Assessment concludes that the Local Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of an international nature conservation site, or that such an effect cannot be ruled out (adopting a precautionary principle), then a more-detailed Appropriate Assessment must be carried out.

This report details the findings of the HRA Screening Assessment for the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options Consultation (HBBC, 2018), and the supporting New Directions for Growth Consultation Paper (HBBC, 2019).

### 1.1 HBBC Local Plan

HBBC currently has a Local Development Framework which comprises of the existing Core Strategy (2009), Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (SADMP DPD), Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan, and the Earl Shilton and Barwell Sustainable Urban Extensions Area Action Plan. The Core Strategy currently provides the over-arching strategy and long-term vision for Hinckley and Bosworth, whilst the other documents implement the vision contained within the Core Strategy. HBBC is now preparing a new Local Plan covering the period 2016 to 2039, replacing the current Local Development Framework.

The new Local Plan will set out a clear vision and objectives for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure. It will also be a basis for securing the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good designs. Its policies and proposal will be used to guide decisions and investment on development and regeneration up to 2039.

### 1.2 Habitats Directive

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, known as the 'Habitats Directive' was adopted in 1992. The Directive establishes the requirement for a European ecological network of protected sites by designating SACs and SPAs, which together make up the Natura 2000 network of designated sites. The Directive is transposed into law through the

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (hereafter 'the Regulations'). The Regulations (HMSO, 2017) require that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is undertaken by a competent authority prior to the issue of any consent to consider whether a proposed project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. Government guidance also requires that Ramsar sites (listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance [Ramsar Convention]) are included within an HRA (SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites are collectively known as 'European sites').

Despite the UK's withdrawal from the European Union on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, until the implementation period completion day (31<sup>st</sup> December 2020) the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) will remain in force, without any subsequent amendments made by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. As a result of the provisions in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 these changes to the Habitats Regulations are suspended until implementation period completion day.

For all plans and projects, which are not wholly directly connected with, or necessary to, the conservation management of the site's qualifying features, a formal screening assessment of the possibility of any likely significant effects (either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects) on a European site(s) is required. This assessment is based on available ecological information on the designated site(s), other plans, projects and policies relevant to the area and details of the proposed works.

If the screening assessment concludes that the works may have a significant adverse effect on the conservation objectives of the site(s), or that such an effect cannot be ruled out (adopting a precautionary approach) an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. An Appropriate Assessment involves an assessment of the potential effects of a development on the conservation objectives of the site(s). If significant adverse effects are identified, mitigation or avoidance measures can be applied.

Following the recent European Court of Justice (ECJ) judgement in the case of "people over wind" (Case C-323/17). Measures that are necessary to avoid or reduce impacts on the European site, even when considered standard environmental best-practice, can only be considered during the Appropriate Assessment.

If it cannot be concluded that the proposed works will not adversely impact upon the integrity of the site(s), the project will not be able to proceed without further conditions and/or assessment.

## 2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

### 2.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment Methodology

Habitat Regulations Assessment follows a four-stage process as outlined in the DCLG guidance “*Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment*”. These stages are described in Table 2-1, below.

**Table 2-1: The HRA Process**

Stage	Description
HRA Stage 1 – Screening	<p>This process identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, and determines whether these impacts are likely to be significant.</p> <p>If no adverse impact is determined, the project or plan can proceed. If an adverse impact is identified, Stage 2 is commenced.</p> <p>Following the recent ECJ judgement in the case of “people over wind” (Case C-323/17), measures that are necessary to avoid or reduce impacts on the European site, even when considered standard environmental best-practice, can only be considered at Stage 2.</p>
HRA Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment	<p>Stage 2 is subsequent to the identification of likely significant effects upon a European site in Stage 1. This assessment determines whether a project or plan would have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans.</p> <p>This assessment is confined to the effects on the internationally important habitats and species for which the site is designated (i.e. the interest features of the site).</p> <p>If no adverse impact is determined, the project or plan can proceed. If an adverse impact is identified, Stage 3 is commenced.</p>
HRA Stage 3 – Mitigation and Alternatives	<p>Where a plan or project has been found to have adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site, potential avoidance/mitigation measures or alternative options should be identified.</p> <p>If suitable avoidance/mitigation or alternative options are identified, that result in there being no adverse impacts from the project or plan on European sites, the project or plan can proceed.</p> <p>If no suitable avoidance/mitigation or alternative options are identified, as a rule the project or plan should not proceed. However, in exceptional circumstances, if there is an 'imperative reason of overriding public interest' for the implementation of the project or plan, consideration can be given to proceeding in the absence of alternative solutions. In these cases, compensatory measures must be put in place to offset negative impacts.</p>
HRA Stage 4 – Compensatory measures	<p>Stage 4 comprises an assessment of the compensatory measures where, in light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest, it is deemed that the project should proceed.</p>

Other guidance documents have been used to help inform the methodology of this assessment, including:

- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission 2002)
- The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook. DTA Publications (2019).
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (European Communities, 2018)
- Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC (European Communities, 2007)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- The Planning Inspectorate PINS Note 05/ 2018: Consideration of avoidance and reduction measures in Habitats Regulations Assessment: People over Wind, Peter Sweetman, v Coillte Teoranta (The Planning Inspectorate, 2018).
- NEA001 Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations (Natural England, 2018).
- UK Government Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment (July 2019) [<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment>]

## 2.2 HRA Stage 1 Screening - Methodology

The following section details the methodology of the screening assessment undertaken in this report to identify the likely impacts of the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document (HBBC, 2018), and supporting New Directions for Growth Document (HBBC, 2019) upon European sites, and to determine whether these impacts are likely to be significant and whether an Appropriate Assessment, and mitigation and assessment of alternatives (HRA Stages 2 and 3) are required.

### Methodology

In order to complete the screening assessment it is necessary to:

- Identify the European sites within and outside the plan area likely to be affected, reasons for their designation and their conservation objectives.
- Describe the plan and its aims and objectives and also those of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential to impact upon the European sites.
- Identify the potential effects on the European sites.
- Assess the significance of these potential effects on the European sites.

### The Precautionary Principle

If there is uncertainty, and it is not possible, based on the information available, to confidently determine that there will be no significant effects on a site then the precautionary principle will be applied, and the plan will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (HRA Stage 2).

### Pre-screening Decisions

It should be noted that, for plan level HRA, the early stages of checking and testing the plan through an iterative process, in light of the People over Wind Judgement, are documented as pre-screening decisions (DTA, 2020).

When the plan is to be published, a single formal screening decision is then taken, which excludes all mitigation measures to avoid or reduce impacts. Pre-screening changes to the plan in the early stages will then either become essential features or characteristics of the plan or will be considered as mitigation and carried forward to the Appropriate Assessment.



As noted in Table 2-1, the draft screening report includes pre-screening decisions as an early record of the checking and testing of the plan. For this draft report, these decisions are therefore referred to as pre-screening decisions.

### **Consultation**

It is a requirement of the Habitats Regulations to consult the appropriate nature conservation statutory body. Consultation on the approach to this HRA screening and the information on European sites considered will be undertaken with Natural England (NE) as required by sending them this draft Screening report.

#### **2.2.1 Limitations**

The Local Plan is still under development and therefore, this Screening Report assesses potential impacts of the proposed spatial strategy options and policy issues as outlined within the Scope, Issues and Options document, and supporting New Directions for Growth Document, which will inform development of the Local Plan.

This current stage of the Local Plan does not contain site allocations for development.

This HRA Screening Assessment has assessed the January 2018 Scope, Issues and Options document (HBBC, 2018), and the supporting New Directions for Growth document (HBBC, 2019).

### 3 International Nature Conservation Sites

#### 3.1 Introduction

International nature conservation sites are often collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas established under the Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened habitats and species.

Natura 2000 consists of:

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** - these are designated under the UK Regulations made under the Habitats Directive to protect those habitat types and species that are considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds).
- **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** - these are designated under the UK Regulations under the Birds Directive to protect rare and vulnerable birds, and also regularly occurring migratory species.
- **Ramsar sites** - these are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Although not included in the European legislation, as a matter of policy, Ramsar sites in England and Wales are protected as European sites. The vast majority are also classified as SPAs and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). All SPAs and terrestrial SACs in England and Wales are also designated as SSSIs under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

##### 3.1.1 European Sites in and around Hinckley and Bosworth Borough

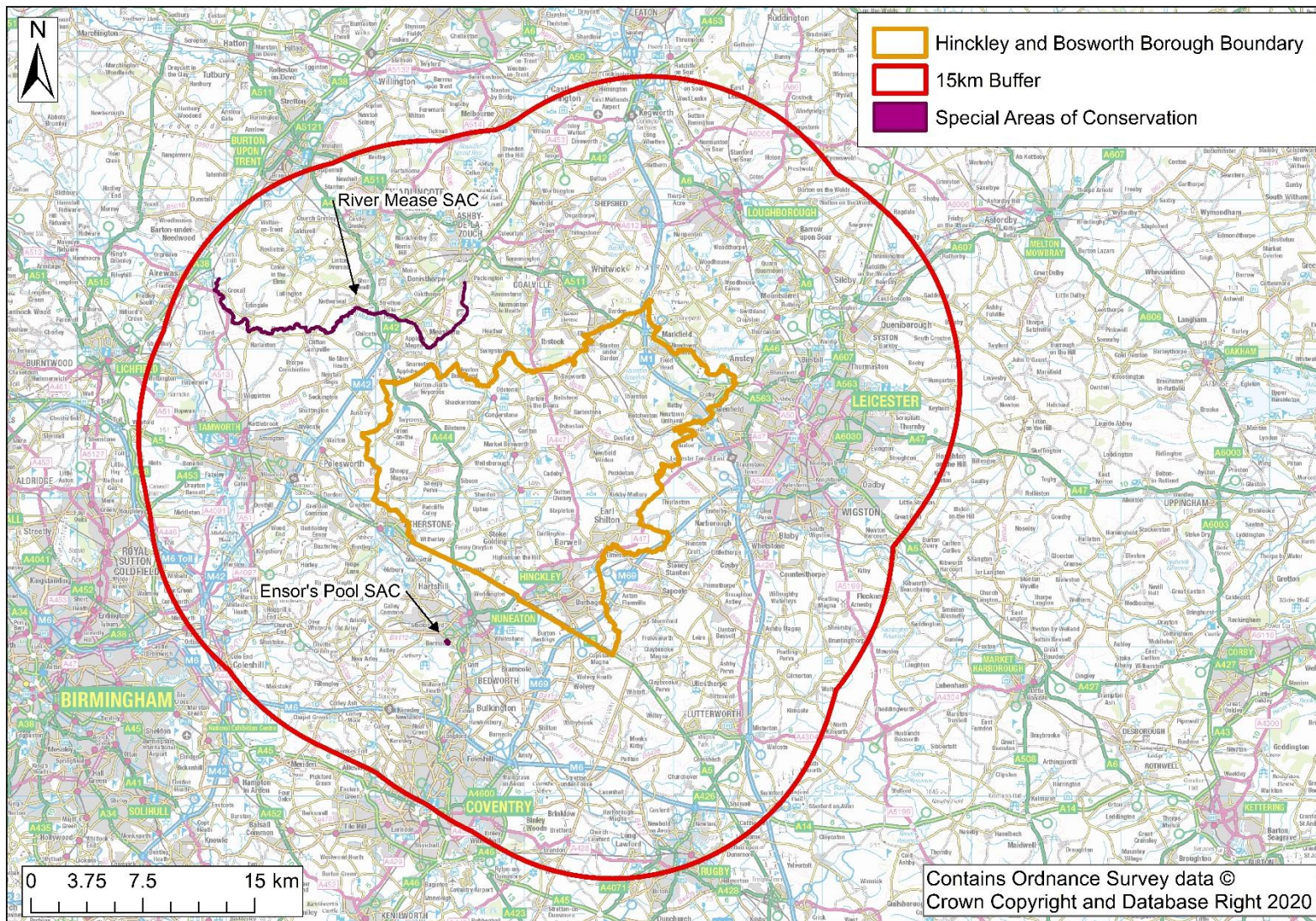
Best practice guidance suggests that sites occurring within a wider area of approximately 10km to 15km from the boundary of the area directly affected by a plan or project should be identified and assessed as part of the HRA screening process (Therivel, 2009), in addition to those sites located within the plan or project boundary. However, it is important to consider the possibility of impacts for any European site which might be affected, whatever their location, given the activities included in the plan and their range of influence. This may extend some distance from the area within the immediate influence of a plan. For this HRA a buffer of 15km has been applied given the size of the proposed HBBC boundary, although it is considered that no pathways, including hydrological connections, exist that would impact upon any European sites beyond this extent.

There are no SPAs or Ramsar sites located within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough.

There are two SACs within 15km of the Borough boundary, these sites are listed in Table 3-1 below and shown on Figure 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Designated sites within the zone of influence (15km)**

Designation	Site	Distance and Orientation from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough
SAC	River Mease	2.7km north-west
SAC	Ensor's Pool	4.8km south-west



**Figure 3-1: Location of European Sites within the 15km buffer from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough**

**Table 2 3: Details of European Sites within 15km of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough**

European Site	Qualifying Feature(s) and Conservation Objectives	Site Vulnerability
<p>River Mease SAC Component SSSI within 15km zone of influence: River Mease SSSI Site area: 23.03ha</p>	<p><b>Qualifying Feature(s)</b></p> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Betraghion</i> vegetation</li> </ul> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spined Loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i></li> <li>- Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i></li> </ul> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i></li> <li>- Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Conservation Objectives</b></p> <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>- The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>	<p>Water Pollution Drainage Inappropriate weirs dams and other structures Invasive species Siltation Water abstraction</p>
<p>Ensor's Pool SAC Component SSSI within 15km zone of</p>	<p><b>Qualifying Feature(s)</b></p> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p>	<p>Changes in species distribution</p>

European Site	Qualifying Feature(s) and Conservation Objectives	Site Vulnerability
<p>influence: Ensor's Pool SSSI</p> <p>Site area: 3.86ha</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- White-clawed Crayfish</li> </ul> <p><b>Conservation Objectives</b></p> <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>- The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>- The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>	

## 4 Potential Impacts and Pathways

### 4.1 Introduction

Development for housing, business, infrastructure, services and recreation/tourism promoted as part of a Local Plan can potentially have adverse impacts on the habitats and species for which international nature conservation sites are designated. These impacts can be direct such as habitat loss, fragmentation or degradation, or indirect such as disturbance or pollution from construction, transportation etc. They can also include long-term effects associated with the operational phase of proposed developments or general population growth, and short-term effects arising from construction phases.

This chapter identifies the potential impacts and their pathways to international nature conservation sites within and adjacent to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough which may arise as a result of the HBBC Local Plan. It then goes on to identify the types of impact/pathway to which the qualifying features present upon the international nature conservation sites are particularly sensitive to.

### 4.2 Hazards to European Sites

The European sites located within the 15km buffer consist of aquatic habitats and species related to such habitats. The hazards identified in Table 4-1 are based on those identified in the Environment Agency’s EU Habitats Directive Handbook, however, local conditions have also been considered during the hazard identification process.

**Table 4-1: Potential hazards to European nature conservation sites**

Potential Hazard	Description
Habitat loss	This is a loss of habitat within the European sites designated boundaries – it is expected that there will be no direct loss as a result of implementation of the Local Plan.
Habitat fragmentation	This is where activities result in the separation of available habitats or split extensive areas of suitable habitat. This hazard is most likely to affect species. It is expected that there will be no habitat fragmentation as a result of implementation of the Local Plan.
Physical damage	This includes recreational pressures such as trampling and erosion, and where sites are close to urban areas, other damaging activities may occur such as rubbish tipping, vandalism, arson, and predation, particularly by cats.
Habitat/community simplification	Changes to environmental conditions, due to human activities, that result in a reduction and fragmentation of habitats that will reduce biodiversity.
Disturbance (noise, visual)	Activities which result in disturbance, causing sensitive birds and mammals to deviate from their normal, preferred behaviour, such as construction, recreational traffic.
Competition from invasive non-native species	Activities may cause the introduction or spread of invasive non-native animals and plants which could result in changes to community composition and even to the complete loss of native communities.
Changes in water levels or table	Activities which may affect surface and groundwater levels, such as land drainage and abstraction, may have adverse

Potential Hazard	Description
	impacts on water dependant habitats and species.
Changes in water quality	Activities which may impact upon water quality, such as accidental pollution spills, run-off from urban areas, nutrient enrichment from agriculture, and discharged from sewage works, may adversely affect wetland habitats and species.
Changes to surface water flooding	Activities which may result in a reduction or increase in the frequency and extent of surface water flooding which may affect riverine and floodplain habitats.
Turbidity and siltation	Increases in turbidity within water environments can impact upon aquatic plants, fish and wildfowl due to sedimentation and reduction in penetrable light.
Pollution	Activities which may lead to the release of pollutants to the air such as oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulphur or ammonia, or pollutants

#### 4.2.1 Qualifying Features and Sensitivity to Hazards

The table below shows the qualifying features of the European sites that are within 15km of the HBBC boundary and identifies the hazards to which they are most sensitive. Their qualifying features have been grouped based on guidance from the Environment Agency (2013) to facilitate the sensitivity assessment.

It must be noted that during the assessment of the potential impacts of the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document and the New Directions for Growth Document, all of the potential hazards will be considered.

**Table 4-2: Sensitivity of Qualifying Features to Potential Impacts/ Pathways**

Potential Hazards	Habitat Loss	Habitat Fragmentation	Changes in physical regime	Physical Damage	Habitat/ community simplification	Disturbance (noise, visual)	Competition from invasive non-native species	Changes in water levels or table	Changes in water quality	Changes to surface water flooding	Turbidity and siltation	Pollution
<b>SAC Habitat Groups</b>												
Bogs and wet habitats (sensitive to acidification)	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>SAC Species Groups</b>												
Non-migratory fish and invertebrates of rivers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mammals of riverine habitats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## 4.3 Potential Impact Pathways

### 4.3.1 Hydrological Impacts

New development and population increase can result in hydrological effects to existing watercourses and groundwater resources. Such effects can include changes to surface and ground water flows, quality and levels; this can have subsequent effects on habitats and supported species. The main types of potential hydrological effects are water abstraction and water discharges. The River Mease SAC has very high levels of ammonia within the headwaters which may be impacting on juvenile recruitment of Spined Loach and Bullhead. A high number of sewage treatment works and an increasing number of septic tank discharges are leading to increasing issues with water pollution; the River Mease is included in Natural England's Septic tank Risk Register (NE, 2014a).

The screening assessment will consider the potential for impacts on a European site due to changes in water levels and/or quality by taking into consideration the vulnerability of their interest features to such impacts, and the pathways i.e. the hydrological connectivity between the site and the areas proposed for development.

### 4.3.2 Air Quality Effects

New developments and an increase in population have the potential to result in an increased use of the road network by vehicles, which could have adverse effects on air quality. This could have subsequent effects on habitats sensitive to air quality changes and higher deposits of nitrogen dioxide, ammonia, particulates and sulphur dioxide (diesel trains).

It should be noted that the likelihood of this effect is greatly reduced as the distance increases between the deposit area (typically the road network) and the European site. Pollutant levels can be expected to fall substantially at a distance less than 50m from the source and can be expected to fall to background levels at a distance of more than 200m (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11, Version 0 November 2019).

This assessment will consider how the potential impact of new development/housing and the associated increase in traffic has the potential to generate increases in atmospheric pollution. This will be considered in relation to the European sites identified, taking into account the vulnerability of their interest features, proximity to proposed development sites and likely associated traffic increases. Potential point source emissions from industrial developments are also considered.

This assessment takes into account the High Court judgment in *Wealden v SSCLG* [2017] ('the Wealden Judgment 2017') and Natural England's guidance on significance thresholds in relation to traffic emissions for roads within 200m of European Sites (Natural England, 2018).

### 4.3.3 Recreational Impacts

Many European sites will be vulnerable to some degree of impact as a result of recreational pressure, although the effects of recreational impacts are complex and very much dependent on the specific conditions and interest features at each site. For example, Otter can be sensitive to disturbance associated with walkers or dogs whereas other species are not; some habitats will be more sensitive to trampling than others; and some sites will be more accessible than others.

Most recreational activities with the potential to affect European sites are 'casual' and pursued opportunistically (e.g. walking, walking dogs, riding), which makes it difficult to quantify or predict the impacts of these activities on European sites and harder to control or manage. It also means it is difficult to explore in detail all



potential impacts of recreational pressures at the strategic level. However, it is possible for plans and strategies to influence recreational use of European sites through the planning process, for example by increasing the amount of green/open space and leisure/recreational facilities required within or near developments if potentially vulnerable European sites are located nearby.

The screening assessment will consider the potential for recreational pressures on a European site by taking into consideration the vulnerability of their interest features to such pressures, the accessibility of the site to the public, the likely attractiveness of the site and its habitats/species to visitors, and the proximity of the site to sites allocated for development.

#### 4.3.4 Other Relevant Plans and Projects that might act in-combination

A series of individually modest effects may in-combination produce effects that are likely to adversely affect the integrity of one or more European sites. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive tries to address this by taking into account the combination of effects from other plans and projects. The Directive does not explicitly define which other plans and projects are within the scope of the combination provision. Guidance in section 4.4.3 of 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC', published by the European Commission, states:

'When determining likely significant effects, the combination of other plans or projects should also be considered to take account of cumulative impacts. It would seem appropriate to restrict the combination provision to other plans or projects which have been actually proposed'.

Table 4-3 lists the relevant plans and projects that have been identified as having the potential to result in adverse effects on European sites in-combination with the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document and the New Directions for Growth document. These plans and projects are outlined in Appendix A, respectively.

**Table 4-3: Other Plans and Projects considered in the assessment**

<b>Other Relevant Plans and Projects</b>
HBBC Core Strategy Adopted December 2009
HBBC Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (Local Plan 2006 – 2026)
Market Bosworth Neighbourhood Development Plan (Adopted 2015)
Sheepy Neighbourhood Development Plan (Adopted 2019)
Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan up to 2031 (adopted 2019)
North-west Leicestershire Local Plan (adopted November 2017)
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Borough Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2019)
Blaby District Local Plan (Adopted February 2013)
Charnwood Local Plan 2011 – 2028 Core Strategy (Adopted November 2015)
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 - 2026
Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 3 2011 - 2026
Severn Trent Water Resources Management Plan 2019
Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (within consultation stages)

## 5 Screening Assessment

This section considers the spatial strategy options and policy issues identified in the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document (HBBC, 2018) and the supporting New Directions for Growth document (HBBC, 2019), and considers if they are likely to have a significant effect on European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, as detailed in Table 5-2.

The spatial strategy options and policy issues detailed within the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document and New Directions for Growth document have initially been screened following the methodology set out in the DTA Publications HRA Handbook (DTA, 2020). Each is allocated one or more screening categories from this list shown in Table 5-1 below. The results of the initial screening are shown in Table 5-2. The screening outcome in Table 5-2 includes any relevant in-combination assessment outcomes. A colour coded approach has been utilised (green: screened out; red: screened in) within Table 5-2.

Full wording of the proposed objectives and options/strategies can be found within HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document and New Directions for Growth document (HBBC, 2018).

**Table 5-1: Pre-screening categories for the spatial strategy options and policy issues (adapted from DTA, 2020)**

Screening Category	Description	Screening Outcome
<b>A</b>	General statement of policy/general aspiration	Screen out
<b>B</b>	Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals	Screen out
<b>C</b>	Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan	Screen out
<b>D</b>	General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices	Screen out
<b>E</b>	Policies or proposals which steer change in such a way as to protect international nature conservation sites from adverse effects	Screen out
<b>F</b>	Policy that cannot lead to development or other change	Screen out
<b>G</b>	Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Screen out
<b>H</b>	Policy or proposal the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in-combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects)	Screen out
<b>I</b>	Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone	Screen in
<b>J</b>	Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but unlikely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in combination	Dependant on in-combination test
<b>K</b>	Policy or proposal unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination	Screened out after the in-combination test
<b>L</b>	Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	Screened in after the in-combination test
<b>M</b>	Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on an international nature conservation site	Screened in

**Table 5-2: Screening assessment of HBBC Spatial Strategy Options and Policy Issues on European Sites**

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
<b>Spatial Strategy Options</b>				
<p>Option 1: Neighbourhood Development Plan led spatial distribution</p>	<p>The Localism Act 2011 introduced powers for Parish Council’s to have a greater role in planning. HBBC firmly believe in supporting local communities to develop Neighbourhood Development Plans. HBBC are considering a policy position in which the distribution pattern for new development is determined by Parish Councils and the Borough Council.</p> <p>Local Parishes will be expected to put forward an annual figure for the number of new homes, employment and other land uses that they will bring forward through their Neighbourhood Development Plans.</p>	<p>This spatial strategy option does not, and will not, specify site allocations for development. However, the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document and New Directions for Growth document proposes that Neighbourhood Development Plans should identify the annual figure of development and allocate sites for development, and as such this policy will likely lead to increased population growth in the Borough. Whilst the spatial spread or scale of future growth is not yet known, there is the potential that this growth could have a detrimental impact on European sites, and therefore, in applying the precautionary principle, further assessment of this option should be undertaken.</p>	<p>Not applicable (zero effect alone)</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>
<p>Option 2: Core Strategy approach</p>	<p>Suggesting that the new Local Plan could continue with the current approach utilised within the existing Core Strategy.</p>	<p>This spatial strategy option suggests following the same approach within the previous Core Strategy which identifies areas for development, until the new Local Plan is adopted. As this spatial strategy option does not specify specific site allocations, in its present state, this spatial strategy option will not have any adverse impacts upon the European sites. Additionally, a HRA screening document was prepared to support the Core Strategy, and</p>	<p>Not applicable (zero effect alone)</p>	<p>A – General statement of policy / general aspiration C – Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan</p> <p><b>Screen Out</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
		<p>this concluded that although the River Mease SAC lies within the East Midlands and part of the river (not designated SAC) passes through the Borough, as no development was proposed in this area no impact on the River Mease was anticipated. Furthermore, the report concluded no likely significant effect as there are no other sites within, or within 10km of, the Borough boundary. Natural England assessed this report and determined that this was a satisfactory conclusion. Consequently, as the Core Strategy HRA determined that there would be no likely significant effects on European sites as a result of its implementation, this spatial strategy option that proposes with continuation of the existing Core Strategy approach can be assumed to do likewise.</p>		
<p>Option 3: Key Transport and Accessibility Corridors</p>	<p>The draft Strategic Growth Plan identifies locations across Leicestershire for future growth focussing around key transport corridors. Possibly the new Local Plan could extend this to include other key roads in the borough (i.e. A444, A47).</p> <p>The map within the Scope, Issues and Options document highlights development 'focus points' around towns along the south-west boundary of the Borough, including Witherley,</p>	<p>Increasing development around key transport corridors such as the M69, A5, A444 and A47 encourages development around existing settlements. However, it will likely increase traffic and use of vehicles, potentially leading to increased air pollution. However, the spatial strategy option does highlight that capacity of public transport to accommodate population growth will need to be considered. Therefore, public transport facilities may be enhanced.</p> <p>Rivers and streams (broad habitat category) are sensitive to air pollution and therefore, all species associated with such habitat are also sensitive to air pollution (APIS, 2020). The River Mease SAC</p>	<p>Not applicable. In-combination assessment undertaken in Appropriate Assessment for air quality impacts upon the River Mease SAC.</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>Fenny Drayton, Higham on the Hill, and the outskirts of Hinckley and Barwell.</p>	<p>and Ensor’s Pool SAC are, therefore, sensitive to air quality and could be impacted upon by increased traffic emissions. None of the key transport corridors are within 200m of Ensor’s Pool SAC and thus, this SAC will not be impacted upon. However, the A444 travels over the River Mease SAC and although this SAC is located outside of the immediate HBBC boundary, traffic entering or exiting the borough, due to increased development, may use the A444 and come within 200m of the River Mease. Therefore, air quality impacts cannot be ruled out at this stage of the HRA.</p> <p>The map ‘Option 3: Key Transport and Accessibility Corridors’ displayed in the Scope, Issues and Options document (HBBC, 2018), highlights that development will be focussed around the south and south-west of the borough. The River Mease SAC is located 15km to the nearest ‘focus development’ point. Therefore, due to the significant distance, and as there is no hydrological connection, it is assessed that there will be no adverse impact upon the hydrological elements of the River Mease SAC.</p> <p>Ensor’s Pool SAC is located approximately 5km to the nearest ‘focus development’ point. As there is no hydrological connection to the SAC, recreational pressure is not a site vulnerability and the SAC is located 5km from the nearest ‘focus development’ point, it is considered that this spatial strategy option will not have an likely</p>		

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
<p>Option 4: Garden Village / New Town</p>	<p>Governments have in recent years expressed desire to see a new round of New Towns or Garden Villages to address the country's chronic housing shortage.</p> <p>Under this option a new village gives HBBC an opportunity to holistically plan and bring at least 1,500 new homes to an area of the borough. The new village will need community facilities including a primary school, shops, public house, doctors etc.</p>	<p>significant effect upon this European site.</p> <p>No specific location has been identified at this stage. However, the increase in housing will inevitably increase the population within Hinckley &amp; Bosworth borough. This could lead to increased recreational pressures to European sites. However, recreational pressure is not a site vulnerability for the River Mease SAC or Ensor's Pool SAC; however, increased visitors could increase the chance of invasive non-native species to be introduced to which these sites are vulnerable.</p> <p>Additionally, the River Mease SAC catchment falls within a small north-western section of the borough boundary, therefore, any development within this area will have hydrological connection to the River Mease.</p> <p>This spatial strategy option has the potential to cause likely significant effects upon European sites.</p>	<p>Not applicable. In-combination assessment undertaken in Appropriate Assessment for recreational impacts and hydrological impacts.</p>	<p>I – Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>
<p>Option 5: Proportionate growth of key rural centres</p>	<p>Under this spatial strategy option new residential development would be broadly distributed amongst the key rural centres on a pro-rata basis in addition to other sustainable locations. All key rural centres are likely to receive some development in an equitable manner.</p>	<p>This spatial strategy option suggests that new development could be focussed around key rural centres. The key rural centres are located primarily to the north-east of the borough, with Market Bosworth the nearest key rural centre to the European sites (approx. 8km from River Mease SAC and 13km from Ensor's Pool SAC). Stoke Gelding is located 7km from Ensor's Pool. Whilst all key rural centres are considered sufficiently distant and are not hydrologically</p>	<p>Not applicable (zero effect alone)</p>	<p>I – Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>Key rural centres are: Markfield, Groby, Ratby, Barlestone, Desford, Newbold Verdon, Bagworth &amp; Thorton, Market Bosworth and Stoke Golding.</p> <p>Furthermore, the New Directions for Growth document (HBBC, 2019) proposed that that potential options for exploring growth away from existing urban areas should be explored.</p>	<p>connected to the European sites, the actual spatial spread or scale of future growth is not yet known. There is the potential therefore that growth elsewhere could have a detrimental impact on European sites, and, in applying the precautionary principle, further assessment of this option should be undertaken.</p>		
Option 6: A mix of the above options	<p>Spatial strategy options 1-5 should not be considered in strict either/or terms; it may be that the preferred option uses elements of two or more of the above options. The map in the Scope, Issues and Options document illustrates where development would take place under this option, see Scope, Issues and Options document (HBBC, 2018).</p>	<p>This spatial strategy option combines Option 1, 2 and 5, stating that aspects of each option could be taken forward with regards to the spatial development within the Borough.</p> <p>Option 3: Key Transport and Accessibility Corridors has been screened in, see above. Therefore, this spatial strategy option could have a likely significant effect on European sites.</p> <p>Option 4: Garden Village has been screened in, see above. Therefore, this spatial strategy option could have a likely significant effect on European sites.</p>	<p>Not applicable. In-combination assessment undertaken in Appropriate Assessment for recreational impacts, hydrological impacts and air quality.</p>	<p>I – Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>
<b>Policy Issues</b>				
Existing Core Strategy Policies	<p>This policy issue takes into account existing plans and policies which can be utilised within the new HBBC Local Plan.</p>	<p>As this policy issue does not suggest any criteria and instead refers to existing plans, such as Area Action Plans, this policy issue will not have an adverse impact upon the European sites. Furthermore, as discussed above the HRA screening assessment for the Core Strategy</p>	<p>Not applicable (zero effect alone)</p>	<p>A – General statement of policy/ general aspiration C – Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan</p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
		<p>determined that the policies within that plan would not have any likely significant effects on European Sites. Conclusions of no likely significant effect were also reached for the Desford, Stoke Golding and Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plans. Therefore, as these HRAs determined that there would be no likely significant effects on European sites, continuation of existing policies from within the new Local Plan can be assumed to do likewise.</p>		<p><b>Screen out</b></p>
<p>Communities and Places</p>	<p>HBBC total resident population is estimated to be approx. 110,000. Under half of this population live in the urban area in the south-east of the borough, whilst approx. a further quarter live in the north-east.</p> <p>To ensure that new development delivers a strong sense of place, one objective of the draft Local Plan is to ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place.</p> <p>The identities of some settlements and neighbourhoods are partly derived by the existence of Conservation Areas, historic buildings, parks, open spaces or local landmarks. New development should ensure that these elements act as reference</p>	<p>This policy issue is concerned with ensuring that any development, or re-development, must be in keeping with the current distinctiveness of the place. For example, not impacting upon Conservation Areas, open spaces, respecting the local heritage etc.</p> <p>Ensuring that local facilities are maintained and are located close to settlements to reduce the need to drive.</p> <p>As this policy issue aims to ensure that any future developments do not impact upon the community and sense of place within settlements, and will not lead to any development, it is assessed that this policy issue will not have an adverse impact upon the European sites.</p>	<p>Not applicable (zero effect alone)</p>	<p>A – General statement of policy / general aspiration B – Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals</p> <p><b>Screen out</b></p>



Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>points for high quality and locally-distinctive design as well as inspire and celebrate contemporary architecture for the future prosperity of the Borough.</p>			
Housing	<p>National Policy requires the council to objectively assess the needs for market and affordable housing, identify key sites critical to the delivery of its housing strategy and demonstrate expected rates of housing delivery.</p> <p>Suggested policy approach: <i>454 new dwellings per annum is the minimum number of homes we need to find sites for through the draft Local Plan.</i></p> <p>Suggested policy approach: <i>Allocate land (either specific sites or parts of larger allocations) for the following types of housing:</i></p> <p><i>Housing for older people.</i></p> <p><i>An Affordable Housing requirement.</i></p> <p><i>Custom and Self-build homes.</i></p> <p>An assessment of the needs of</p>	<p>This policy issue discusses the requirement for new housing within the Borough. No specific site allocations have yet been determined at this stage.</p> <p>Population increases are inevitable and therefore, recreational pressures upon European sites are a risk. As no specific site allocations have yet been determined, distance between the proposed site and European sites cannot be analysed. The River Mease SAC and Ensor’s Pool SAC are not vulnerable to recreational pressure, however, increased visitor numbers could increase the potential for invasive non-native species to be introduced, to which both these sites are vulnerable.</p> <p>A section of the north-western boundary is within the River Mease catchment and therefore, any development within this area will have hydrological connection and could lead to likely significant effects upon the River Mease SAC.</p> <p>This policy issue will lead to development and therefore, could have likely significant effects upon European sites.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>In-combination assessment undertaken in Appropriate Assessment for recreational pressure and hydrological impacts.</p>	<p>I – Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people in the borough in 2016 highlighted that there are no additional pitch needs for travellers resident in the borough.</p> <p>Suggested policy approach:  <i>We consider that the findings of the 2016 study mean that existing provision for the needs of gypsies and travellers is sufficient.</i></p>			
Economic Development	<p>The draft Local Plan is an opportunity for HBBC to set out clearly to developers and investors their ambition for the Borough as a place for economic opportunities and a good place to do business.</p> <p>It is important to maximise the economic opportunities arising from the Midlands Engine Strategy and development across the wider Midlands area. The draft Local Plan will need to identify opportunities in order to capture this inward investment.</p> <p>The Housing and Economic Development Need Assessment (HEDNA) details the land</p>	<p>This policy issue highlights that the draft Local Plan will need to identify economic opportunities including development and supporting training/education. The draft Local Plan will set out clearly to developers and investors HBBC's ambition for economic opportunities.</p> <p>A section of the north-western boundary is within the River Mease catchment and therefore, any development within this area will have hydrological connection and could lead to likely significant effects upon the River Mease SAC.</p> <p>This policy issue will lead to development and therefore could have a likely significant effect upon European sites.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>In-combination assessment undertaken in Appropriate Assessment for hydrological impacts.</p>	<p>I – Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>requirements for economic development. For example, 34.3 hectares (ha) is required for B1a/b uses.</p> <p>An Employment Land and Premises Study (ELPS) is being prepared for our borough to identify local strategic employment needs for employment land.</p>			
Tourism	<p>Tourism is a very diverse and an important sector, particularly for the economies of our rural communities. It creates employment opportunities brings investment into the Borough and has a significant impact on the economy and character of our settlements. We are conscious of the need to protect the quality of the natural environment and will seek to do this through the draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Some of the potential growth tourism identified within the Destination Management Plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planned development of Twycross Zoo</li> <li>- New Triumph Motorcycles</li> </ul>	<p>Supporting tourism is beneficial for the HBBC economy, however, has the potential to increase visitor pressure upon the European Sites. Recreational pressure is not identified as a site vulnerability for either the River Mease SAC or Ensor’s Pool SAC however, the likelihood of invasive non-native species being introduced increases with increased visitors and both sites are vulnerable to this threat.</p> <p>Proposed development at Twycross Zoo could have an impact upon the River Mease SAC as it is located approx. 4.5km south of the Mease and within close proximity to the River Mease catchment.</p> <p>This policy issue could have a likely significant effect upon European sites.</p>	<p>Not applicable. In-combination assessment undertaken in Appropriate Assessment for recreational pressures and hydrological impacts.</p>	<p>I – Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p><b>Screen in</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>Visitor Centre in Hinckley.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of The Belfry as a resort.</li> <li>- The strengthening national demand for short breaks.</li> <li>- The development of MIRA Technology Park.</li> </ul>			
Infrastructure	<p>Infrastructure is the facilities, services and installations needed to make development acceptable and sustainable, to support HBBC's communities and to enable the local economy to thrive.</p> <p>An Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be developed alongside the draft Local Plan.</p>	<p>This policy issue discusses the infrastructure that goes hand-in-hand with development. The policy issue highlights that green spaces will need to be incorporated within development. No specific areas of development are detailed, this policy issue is there to guide appropriate infrastructure development.</p> <p>This policy issue is not anticipated to have an impact upon European sites.</p>	Not applicable (zero effect alone)	<p>B – Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals</p> <p>C – Proposals referred to but not proposed by the plan</p> <p><b>Screen out</b></p>
Environment	<p>Suggested policy approach:</p> <p><i>Within Leicestershire and in our borough a Green Wedge is an important mechanism to prevent coalescence between our main population centres. We will, as is current policy seek to protect Green Wedges from development which is not in line with our stated policy.</i></p> <p>Green infrastructure can be</p>	<p>Green Wedges within the Borough, as identified in the Core Strategy (HBBC, 2009), will aim to be protected by this policy issue. It will aim to reduce carbon emissions from new development with an overriding aim to improve air quality. Green infrastructure will be supported and landscaping design should create new habitats to support biodiversity.</p> <p>This policy issue aims to improve the biodiversity within the Borough and reduce any pressures upon the European sites, and, therefore, will not</p>	Not applicable (zero effect alone)	<p>D – General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold policies</p> <p><b>Screen out</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>promoted via a number of policies – recreation space, gardens, street trees etc. The design of new landscaping to create new habitats to support biodiversity is just as important as protecting existing biodiversity. While growth and intensification may mean some loss of existing green spaces and trees, the scope to mitigate for this should be achieved through developing appropriate Local Plan policies.</p>	<p>have an adverse impact upon the River Mease SAC or Ensor’s Pool SAC.</p>		
Design Quality	<p>Good design can improve the viability of development, enhance the wellbeing of residents and workers, improve the image of the Borough and attract visitors and investors.</p>	<p>As this policy issue is concerned with the design of developments, it will not lead to an adverse impact upon European sites.</p>	<p>Not applicable (zero effect alone)</p>	<p>F – Policy that cannot lead to development or other change G – policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site <b>Screen out</b></p>
Healthy Lives and Places	<p>With an increasing ageing population, the draft Local Plan will need to plan positively to meet any future requirements needed for older people. The draft Local Plan will need to consider the health impacts of</p>	<p>As this policy issue is concerned with ensuring the Boroughs residents, specifically the ageing population, are suitably cared for and appropriate facilities are available. Open green spaces are essential and HBBC have commissioned a Playing Pitch Strategy to undertake an audit of existing sports provisions. This policy issue will not lead to</p>	<p>Not applicable (zero effect alone)</p>	<p>F – Policy that cannot lead to development or other change <b>Screen out</b></p>

Option/ Issue	Option / Issue Summary	Assessment of likelihood significant effects alone	In-combination assessment	Pre-screening category and outcome
	<p>traffic congestion and air quality.</p> <p>The NPPF gives Local and Neighbourhood Plans the ability to designate areas of open spaces of particular value to a community, as a 'Local Green Space'. The preferred approach is for such sites to be identified by local communities and designated in Neighbourhood Plans.</p>	<p>an adverse impact upon European sites.</p>		

### 5.1.1 Summary of Likely Significant Effects

The below table summarises the factors screened in that could have a likely significant effect on the screened in European designated sites.

**Table 5-3: Potential Impacts Screened in (✓) or Out (X)**

European Site	Impact pathways screened in		
	Air Quality	Hydrology	Recreational
River Mease SAC	✓	✓	✓
Ensor's Pool SAC	X	X	✓

Spatial strategy options and policy issues screened in that could have a likely significant effect on the European sites are:

- Option 1: Neighbourhood Development Plan led Spatial Development
- Option 3: Key Transport and Accessibility Corridors
- Option 4: Garden Village/New Town
- Option 5: Proportionate Growth of Key Rural Centres
- Option 6: A mix of all the above
- Housing
- Economic development
- Tourism

## 6 Screening Conclusion

This Screening Assessment has considered the spatial strategy options and policy issues for any impacts on European Sites within 15km of the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough. The assessment has also taken into account in-combination effects with other relevant plans and strategies.

The HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document and New Directions for Growth document comprises of six spatial strategy options and nine policy themes. No European sites are located within the HBBC boundary, but two are located within 15km of the Borough boundary. This Screening Assessment has identified an uncertain effect upon the screened in European sites due to potential for recreational pressures leading to a greater chance of introduction of invasive non-native species and hydrological impacts upon the River Mease SAC. As no sites for development have yet been allocated, the impacts of individual sites cannot be assessed, however, as a section of the Hinckley & Bosworth boundary falls within the River Mease SAC catchment there is potential for the hydrological aspects of this SAC to be impacted upon. Ensor's Pool SAC and River Mease SAC are not vulnerable to recreational pressure, however, the inevitable increase in the Hinckley & Bosworth borough population could lead to increased visitors and thus the potential for invasive non-native species to be introduced; both sites are identified as being vulnerable to invasive non-native species. Additionally, the Scope, Issues and Options document and New Directions for Growth document does provide some consideration of ecology and biodiversity of the Borough, and it is recommended that when the draft Local Plan is produced, wording is provided to safeguard international nature conservation sites.

**In conclusion, given the spatial strategy options and policy issues within the HBBC Scope, Issues and Options document and New Directions for Growth document could have an likely significant effect on the screened in European designated sites, it will be necessary to conduct further assessment once the draft Local Plan is available. The draft Local Plan should be re-screened under the requirements of the Habitats Regulations to determine if an Appropriate Assessment is required.**



## Appendices

### A Review of Other Plans and Projects that could act in-combination with the HBBC Local Plan

Document	Potential in-combination effects on international nature conservation sites
HBBC Core Strategy Adopted December 2009	The Core Strategy would have been assessed under the Habitats Directive prior to adoption. As the HBBC new Local Plan will replace this Core Strategy, there will be no in-combination effects.
HBBC Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (Local Plan 2006 – 2026)	This was recently adopted in 2016 and it would have undergone a HRA. The SADPD will be used to determine site allocations within the HBBC Local Plan. Therefore, it is assessed that there will be no in-combination effect.
Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan (Adopted March 2011)	Area Action Plans form part of the Hinckley & Bosworth Core Strategy, which will be replaced by this HBBC Local Plan. No in-combination effects have been identified.
Market Bosworth Neighbourhood Development Plan (Adopted 2015)	A HRA screening assessment established that no European designated nature sites are close to the neighbourhood plan area and an Appropriate Assessment was not required. No in-combination effects have been identified.
Sheepy Neighbourhood Development Plan (Adopted 2019)	A HRA screening assessment determined that there is no physical connection between the Borough and the Ensor's Pool SAC additionally no part of the River Mease SAC, or tributaries, flow through the neighbourhood area. Therefore, no likely significant effect was determined. No in-combination effects have been identified.
Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan up to 2031 (adopted 2019)	<p>A HRA screening assessment was undertaken in 2015. The screening assessment concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nearly all the policies were considered to have neutral or positive effects on the River Mease SAC. Policy M6 may have an adverse impact upon the SAC via water discharge. However, via further assessment and discussions with Natural England, it was determined that the Plan will not have a likely significant effect upon the Mease SAC.</li> </ul> <p>Policy DM7 within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan provides protection of internationally important biodiversity sites. No in-combination effects have been identified.</p>
North-west Leicestershire Local Plan	A Shadow HRA assessment was undertaken in 2015. The assessment identified that the Local Plan will have no effect upon European sites screened into the assessment based on distance of the sites to the district boundary and no hydraulic links. No in-combination effects have been identified.
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Borough Plan 2011 –	A HRA screening assessment was produced in July 2018. The screening assessment concluded that the Borough Plan will

Document	Potential in-combination effects on international nature conservation sites
2031 (adopted 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2019)	<p>have no likely significant effects on the Ensor's Pool SAC, River Mease SAC or any other Natura 2000 sites designated under the requirements of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>The Borough Plan safeguards SACs via Policy NE3. No in-combination effects have been identified.</p>
Blaby District Local Plan (Adopted February 2013)	<p>A HRA screened assessment was produced in 2017. No likely significant effects on any European site either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects was identified.</p> <p>No in-combination effects have been identified.</p>
Charnwood Local Plan 2011 – 2028 Core Strategy (Adopted November 2015)	<p>A HRA screening assessment was produced for the Charnwood Local Plan in 2016, which concluded that the policies within the Plan would not, either alone or in-combination, result in likely significant effect on River Mease SAC.</p> <p>No in-combination effects have been identified.</p>
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 - 2026	<p>As Biodiversity Action Plans are created to safeguard and improve biodiversity in the specified areas, it is considered that this Plan will have no in-combination effects with HBBA draft Local Plan.</p>
Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 3 2011 - 2026	<p>It is considered that the HBBC Local Plan will work alongside the Leicester transport plan and therefore, no in-combination effects are considered likely.</p>
Severn Trent Water Resources Management Plan 2019	<p>The 2019 Severn Trent Water Resources Management Plan covers the HBBC boundary. A HRA was undertaken of the management plan (Ricardo Energy &amp; Environment, 2019) and determined no adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites. Therefore, there will be no in-combination effect.</p>
Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange	<p>This is a National Significant Infrastructure Project and is still under consultation. It is likely an assessment under the Habitats Directive will be required.</p> <p>This NFRI is located along Junction 2 of the M69 within Balby District Council. This is located a sufficient distance from the River Mease SAC and Ensor's Pool SAC that no in-combination effects with the HBBC Local Plan are anticipated.</p>

## References

- Blaby District Council (2013), Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document Adopted February 2013 [online], Available at: <https://www.blaby.gov.uk/media/2708/adopted-core-strategy.pdf> [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- Charnwood (2019), Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36 [online], Available at: [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/draft\\_charnwood\\_local\\_plan\\_2019\\_36](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/draft_charnwood_local_plan_2019_36) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- DTA Ecology (2015), Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment to Inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Development Plan by North West Leicestershire District Council [online], Available at: [https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/draft\\_local\\_plan\\_habitats\\_regulation\\_assessment/HRA%20Final%20June%202015%20%282%29.pdf](https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/draft_local_plan_habitats_regulation_assessment/HRA%20Final%20June%202015%20%282%29.pdf) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- DTA Publications (2020). *The Habitat Regulations Assessment Handbook*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dtapublications.co.uk/>.
- Environment Agency (2013), *Habitats and species protected under the Habitats Regulations Quick Guide*. PDF. Doc. [Accessed: 29/02/2020]
- HBBC (2020a), Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan [online], Available at: [https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/download/210/hinckley\\_town\\_centre\\_area\\_action\\_plan\\_aap](https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/download/210/hinckley_town_centre_area_action_plan_aap) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- HBBC (2020b), Market Bosworth Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) [online], Available at: [https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/download/784/market\\_bosworth\\_neighbourhood\\_development\\_plan\\_ndp](https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/download/784/market_bosworth_neighbourhood_development_plan_ndp) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- HBBC (2019) New Directions for Growth Consultation Paper [online]. Available at: [https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/6361/new\\_directions\\_for\\_growth\\_pdf](https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/6361/new_directions_for_growth_pdf) [Accessed: 11/06/2020]
- HBBC (2018) Scope, Issues and Options Consultation. Available at: [https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/6096/scope\\_issues\\_and\\_options\\_consultation\\_document](https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/6096/scope_issues_and_options_consultation_document) [Accessed: 11/06/2020]
- HBBC (2009) Local Development Framework Core Strategy Adopted December 2009 [online], Available at: [https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/487/core\\_strategy\\_adopted\\_document](https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/487/core_strategy_adopted_document) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (2020), Available Online: <https://www.hinckleynrfi.co.uk/> [accessed: 03/03/2020]
- JBA Consulting (2016), Charnwood Local Plan Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment [Online], Available at: [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/hra\\_screening\\_assessment\\_charnwood\\_local\\_plan/Charnwood%20Local%20Plan%20-%20HRA%20Screening%20Assessment.pdf](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/hra_screening_assessment_charnwood_local_plan/Charnwood%20Local%20Plan%20-%20HRA%20Screening%20Assessment.pdf) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- JNCC (2020), Ensor's Pool [online], Available at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012646> [Accessed: 27/02/2020]
- JNCC (2020a), River Mease [online], Available at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030258> [Accessed: 27/02/2020]
- Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (2016), Space for Wildlife Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 – 2026 [online], Available at: [https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/1/25/LLR\\_BAP\\_Space\\_for\\_Wildlife\\_2016-26\\_part\\_1.pdf](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/1/25/LLR_BAP_Space_for_Wildlife_2016-26_part_1.pdf) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]

- Leicestershire County Council (2011), Leicesters Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 [online], Available at: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/183591/local-transport-plan-2011-2026-part-a-the-transport-strategy.pdf> [Accessed: 04/03/2020]
- Leicestershire County Council (2015), Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan [online], Available at: [https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2016/10/4/mwlp\\_hra\\_report.pdf](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2016/10/4/mwlp_hra_report.pdf) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- Leicestershire County Council (2019), Minerals and Waste Local Plan [online], Available at: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/minerals-and-waste-local-plan/local-plan-adoption> [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- Natural England (2014), European Site Conservation Objectives for River Mease SAC (UK0030258) [online], Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6217720043405312>
- Natural England (2014), Site Improve Plan: Ensor's Pool (SIP075) [online], Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5364843502632960> [Accessed: 28/02/2020]
- Natural England (2014a), Site Improvement Plan: River Mease (SIP196) [online], Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6640857448972288> [Accessed: 28/02/2020]
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council (2020), Borough Plan Information [online], Available at: [https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/21014/planning\\_policy/146/borough\\_plan\\_information](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/21014/planning_policy/146/borough_plan_information) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- Ricardo Energy & Environment (2019), HRA Report Final Water Resources Management Plan 2019 Habitat Regulations Assessment [online], Available at: <https://www.severntrent.com/content/dam/stw-plc/water-resource-zones/2019/WRMP19-HRA-Final-Report.pdf> [Accessed: 06/03/2020]
- Severn Trent (2019), Water Resources Management Plan 2019 [online], Available at: <https://www.severntrent.com/content/dam/stw-plc/our-plans/severn-trent-water-resource-management-plan.pdf> [Accessed: 06/03/2020]
- Sheepy Parish (2019), Sheepy Parish Neighbourhood Plan: Made March 2019 [online], Available at: <https://sheepparishneighbourhoodplan.com/neighbourhood-plan-final/> [Accessed: 03/03/2020]
- Therivel, R., (2009), 'Appropriate assessment of plans in England', Environmental Impact Assessment Review 29(4), pp. 261-272.
- WYG (2018), Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Local Plan Publication Draft Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment [online], Available at: [https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1796/d3\\_-\\_habitat\\_regulations\\_screening\\_assessment\\_borough\\_plan\\_publication\\_draft\\_2016.pdf](https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1796/d3_-_habitat_regulations_screening_assessment_borough_plan_publication_draft_2016.pdf) [Accessed: 03/03/2020]

Offices at:

Coleshill  
Doncaster  
Dublin  
Edinburgh  
Exeter  
Glasgow  
Haywards Heath  
Isle of Man  
Limerick  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
Newport  
Peterborough  
Saltaire  
Skipton  
Tadcaster  
Thirsk  
Wallingford  
Warrington

Registered Office  
1 Broughton Park  
Old Lane North  
Broughton  
SKIPTON  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 3FD  
United Kingdom

+44(0)1756 799919  
info@jbaconsulting.com  
www.jbaconsulting.com  
Follow us:  

Jeremy Benn Associates Limited

Registered in England 3246693

JBA Group Ltd is certified to:  
ISO 9001:2015  
ISO 14001:2015  
OHSAS 18001:2007

