



# HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT



Swindon Borough Council

Core Strategy – Preferred Options  
(Incorporating Development  
Control Policies)



February 2008



# HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

## Swindon Borough Council Swindon Borough Core Strategy and Development Control Policies

Prepared for: Swindon Borough Council

<i>date:</i>	February 2008	
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Swindon Borough Council is currently preparing its Core Strategy and Development Control Policies for the whole of the Borough. When adopted, the Core Strategy will provide the planning framework that guides development in the Borough over the period to 2026. An Issues and Options paper was published for public consultation in April 2007 and the results of that consultation have been considered in preparing the Preferred Options document.
- 1.2 Swindon Borough Council is carrying out Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment [SEA]) of its Local Development Framework and in 2007 commissioned Enfusion to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening of the Core Strategy.
- 1.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment is also commonly referred to as Appropriate Assessment (AA) although the requirement for AA is first determined by an initial 'screening' stage undertaken as part of the HRA. This report details the process and finding of this first screening stage.

### Requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.4 The European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive) protects habitats and species of European nature conservation importance. The Habitats Directive establishes a network of internationally important sites designated for their ecological status. These are referred to as Natura 2000 sites or European Sites, and comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
- 1.5 Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive require AA to be undertaken on proposed plans or projects which are not necessary for the management of the site but which are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites either individually, or in combination with other plans and projects.<sup>1</sup> In 2007, this requirement was transposed into UK law in Part IVA of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.)(Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007). These regulations require the application of AA to all land use plans. Government guidance also requires that Ramsar sites (which support internationally important wetland habitats and are listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance [Ramsar Convention]) are included within HRA/AA.
- 1.6 The purpose of AA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan, in combination with the effects of other plans and projects, against the

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<sup>1</sup> Determining whether an effect is 'significant' is undertaken in relation to the designated interest features and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites. If an impact on any conservation objective is assessed as being adverse then it should be treated as significant and where information is limited the precautionary principle applies.

conservation objectives of a European Site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity<sup>2</sup> of that site. Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects. The scope of the AA is dependent on the location, size and significance of the proposed plan or project and is first determined by screening.

### **Guidance for Habitats Regulations Assessment [Appropriate Assessment (AA)]**

- 1.7 Draft guidance for AA 'Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment', has been produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, August 2006). The final DCLG guidance is expected to be produced in 2008. A partnership of consultants<sup>3</sup> has also prepared guidance (Appropriate Assessment of Plans, August 2007) to assist planning bodies in complying with the Habitats Directive and draft guidance for the Assessment of Sub-Regional Strategies under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations has been developed by English Nature (August 2006). Most recently the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) produced guidance on HRA to support the planning community.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.8 The application of HRA to Local Development Documents is an emerging field and in the absence of official Government guidance the approach applied for the Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy Preferred Options is based on the best available guidance and emergent practice. The method applied considers HRA in three main stages – outlined in **Table 1**. This report addresses the first screening stage [1] of the HRA.

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<sup>2</sup> Integrity is described as the sites' coherence, ecological structure and function across the whole area that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or levels of populations of species for which it was classified, (ODPM, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Scott Wilson, Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants, Treweek Environmental Consultants and Land Use Consultants.

<sup>4</sup> Dodd AM, Cleary BE, Dawkins JS, Byron HJ, Palframan LJ & Williams GM (2007) The Appropriate Assessment of Spatial plans: a guide to why, when and how to do it. RSPB, Sandy.

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>Habitats Regulations Assessment: Key Stages</b>	
<b>Stage 1</b>	
<b>Screening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify international sites in and around the plan/strategy area</li> <li>▪ Examine conservation objectives (if available)</li> <li>▪ Analyse the policy/plan and its key components</li> <li>▪ Identify potential effects on Natura 2000 sites</li> <li>▪ Examine other plans and programmes that could contribute to 'in combination' effects</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>If no effects likely – report that no significant effect.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If effects are judged likely or uncertainty exists – the precautionary principle applies proceed to <b>stage 2</b></i></li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2</b>	
<b>Appropriate Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collate information on sites and evaluate impact in light of conservation objectives</li> <li>▪ Consider how plan 'in combination' with other plans and programmes will interact when implemented (the Appropriate Assessment)</li> <li>▪ Consider how effect on integrity of site could be avoided by changes to plan and the consideration of alternatives</li> <li>▪ Develop mitigation measures (including timescale and mechanisms)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Report outcomes of AA and develop monitoring strategies</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If effects remain following the consideration of alternatives and development of mitigations proceed to <b>stage 3</b></i></li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b>	
<b>Assessment where no alternatives and adverse impacts remain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI)</li> <li>▪ Identify/ develop potential compensatory measures</li> </ul>
	<i>Difficult test to pass, requirements are onerous and untested to date</i>

## Consultation

- 1.9 The Habitats Regulations require the plan making/competent authority [Swindon Borough Council] to consult the appropriate nature conservation statutory body [Natural England (NE)]. NE was consulted by Swindon planning officers during 2007 on the HRA/ AA of Swindon's Local Development documents. NE provided specific advice regarding the five Natura sites identified by the Council as requiring consideration.<sup>5</sup> NE indicated that Hackpen Hill and Pewsey Downs are unlikely to be significantly impacted by the LDDs, and that the Kennet and Lambourn is unlikely to be significantly impacted by abstraction which may occur as a result of development directed by the LDDs. NE considered that any future HRA work may need to consider the River

<sup>5</sup> Email communication: Natural England to Swindon Borough Council (9/2/2007).

Lambourn (should abstraction be planned from this catchment) and the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC which may be impacted for a variety of reasons.

- 1.10 Commentary from the Statutory Body NE on this report will be taken forward in addressing the scope and focus on more detailed AA work.
- 1.11 The Habitats Regulations leave consultation with other bodies and the public to the discretion of the plan making authority. Where possible, guidance recommends that this consultation be undertaken alongside the consultation for the plan. This Screening Report is being published alongside the Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Preferred Options report. Any comments received will then be taken forward as part of the Appropriate Assessment stage to be produced in support of the submission Core Strategy and Development Control Policies.

### **Purpose and Structure of Report**

- 1.12 This report documents the process and findings of the Screening Stage of HRA for the Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Preferred Options. Following this introductory section the document is organised into three further sections:
  - **Section 2** outlines the method used for the screening process.
  - **Section 3** outlines process and summary findings of the screening process and assessment.
  - **Section 4** outlines the key conclusions and discusses the requirement for future AA work.

## 2.0 METHOD

- 2.1 In accordance with the official guidance and current practice, conducting the screening stage of the HRA for Swindon Borough Council's Core Strategy used the method outlined below. This approach combines both a **plan** focus and a **site** focus.
- The **plan** focus first screens out those elements of the plan unlikely to affect European site integrity and then considers the impacts of the remaining elements on European sites, including the potential for 'in-combination' impacts.
  - The **site** focus considers the environmental conditions of the site and the factors required to maintain site integrity, and looks at the potential impacts the plan may have.
- 2.2 HRA experience to date has indicated that maintaining a site based approach as core to the HRA/AA method more closely reflects the intent of the Habitats Directive. This means that subsequent avoidance and mitigation measures [developed if/as required during the AA stage 2] seek to focus on the conditions necessary to maintain site integrity (e.g. avoiding specific types of development/ activity at or near sensitive areas). This is considered to be a more robust and defensible approach than adding policy caveats at a strategic level and devolving decisions about impacts on site integrity to lower level planning documents. Although, this approach does recognise that some decisions on avoidance and mitigation can only be made when site level detail becomes available.
- 2.3 The key tasks employed for the HRA Screening are set out in the following table.

Table 2 HRA Screening Stage: Key Tasks	
<b>Task 1</b>  <b>Identification of Natura 2000 sites &amp; characterisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identification of European sites both within Swindon and in a buffer zone of 15km around the Borough boundary.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>▪ Information was obtained for each European site, based on publicly available information and consultation with Natural England where appropriate.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>▪ This included information relating to the sites' qualifying features; conservation objectives (where available) ; vulnerabilities/ sensitivities and geographical boundaries.</li> </ul>
<b>Task 2</b>  <b>Strategy review, policy screening and identification of likely impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Screening of the Preferred Policy Approaches and the identification of likely impacts (including a review of the strategy to determine likely impacts).</li> </ul>
<b>Task 3</b>  <b>Consideration of other plans and programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consideration, where appropriate, of other plans and programmes that may have in-combination effects with the Core Strategy Preferred Options.</li> </ul>
<b>Task 4</b>  <b>Screening Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summary of screening outcomes and recommendations.</li> </ul>

2.2 As part of this screening process consideration was also given to related HRA work and Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) work being undertaken within Swindon Borough, in neighbouring councils and in the wider area. For example, this included the SA/SEA undertaken for the Core Strategy Preferred Options and the HRA Report of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (LUC, Feb 2007) and the Appropriate Assessment of the Draft South East Plan (Scott Wilson, Levett Therivel, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Buffer zone distance based on extant guidance, (English Nature, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk), [www.natural-england.org.uk](http://www.natural-england.org.uk), LUC, SWRA, Feb 2007) The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West, Final Report

### 3.0 SCREENING

#### Task 1: Identification of Natura 2000 sites & characterisation

- 3.1 There are no Natura 2000 sites within Swindon Borough Council boundaries. However, plans and programmes have spatial implications that can extend beyond the intended plan area boundaries. In particular; it is also recognised that distance in itself is not a definitive guide to the likelihood or severity of an impact as factors such as the prevailing wind direction, river flow direction, and groundwater flow direction will all have a bearing on the relative distance at which an impact can occur. This means that a plan directing development some distance away from a European site could still have effects on the site and, therefore, needs to be considered as part of the screening process.
- 3.2 Taking into account the potential for transboundary impacts the screening has identified five European sites within a 15km buffer of Swindon's administrative boundary. Summary site characterisations are provided below in **Table 3**, and detailed information for each designated site, is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Table 3 European Sites within a 15 km buffer zone	Designation
Hackpen Hill	SAC
Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain	SAC
North Meadow & Clattinger Farm	SAC
Pewsey Downs	SAC
River Lambourn	SAC

- Hackpen Hill SAC** is an extensive area of unimproved chalk grassland in the Downs covering 35.83ha. The site contains a variety of species including a significant population of early gentian (*Gentianella anglica*), as well as autumn gentian (*Gentianella amarella*), fragrant orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*), frog orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*), horseshoe vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), common rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummulariu*) and dwarf thistle (*Cirsium acaule*). Fluctuations in rabbit populations have caused damage at the site.
- Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain SAC** represents a cluster of sites covering 114.47ha in the Kennet and Lambourn valleys. The site supports the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*) in the UK. It is also one of two sites representing the species in the south-western part of its range in the important chalk stream habitat. Parts of the site lie adjacent to the Newbury bypass but the road has been designed to reduce spray and run-off, intending to mitigate direct damage to the site. However the site is still vulnerable to visual, noise and air pollution. It

is important that the quality of the water remains high as the whorl snail is critically dependant on a high standard.

- **North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SAC** (104.88) is situated in the Thames Valley in southern England and is one of two sites representing lowland hay meadows near the centre of its UK range. The site is said to represent the exceptional survival of the traditional pattern of management and so exhibits a high degree of conservation, structure and function. It also contains a very high proportion of the surviving UK population of fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*). Adjacent extraction and renovation of gravel workings are a potential threat to water levels which must maintain a damp environment.
- **Pewsey Downs SAC** is situated on the southern edge of the Marlborough Downs on the Wiltshire chalk and consists largely of *Festuca ovina* – (*Avenula pratensis*) and *CG3* (*Bromus erectus*) semi-natural dry grassland. The site covers an area of 153.87ha and contains a large population of the nationally scarce burnt orchid (*Orchis ustulata*). Also present are the uncommon green-winged orchid (*Orchis morio*), autumn lady's-tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*) and frog orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*), together with a rich assemblage of more widespread species. The area holds a very significant population of hundreds of thousands of plants growing in high-quality chalk grassland. The site is popular with tourists and locals and if numbers are not carefully managed this could lead to erosion and damage to habitats and species.
- **River Lambourn SAC** (27.27ha) is an example of sub-type1 (rivers on chalk substrates) of the freshwater habitats, water courses of plain to montane levels with the (*Ranunculion fluitantis*) and (*Callitricho-Batrachion*) in central southern England. It is a chalk stream discharging into the middle reaches of the Thames system and for part of its length it is a winterbourne, drying through the summer months. The River is known to have one of the least modified catchments in Southern England, with a characteristic flora dominated by pond water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*). In the downstream perennial sections (*R.peltatus*) is replaced by stream water-crowfoot (*R.penicillatus var. pseudofluitans*). Good water quality, coarse sediments and extensive beds of submerged plants provide excellent habitat for the Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) and the Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*). There are problems with localised high nutrient levels and siltation problems which are associated with sewage treatment works.

## Task 2: Strategy Review, Policy Screening and Identification of Likely Impacts

### Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy: Summary Review

- 3.3 The Core Strategy establishes the spatial policies required to deliver the Borough Council's vision, its regeneration objectives and the regional planning agenda as set out in the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Issues and Options were developed in 2007 and consultation took place in March 2007. The Preferred Options will be subject to consultation in March 2008.
- 3.4 The RSS identifies Swindon as one of 21 Strategically Significant Towns and Cities (SSTCs) at which an increased proportion of new development – in particular housing development – will be delivered for the region. Additionally, the RSS forecasts that between 26,000 and 32,000 additional jobs will be created in Swindon's 'travel to work' area. The requirement is therefore that 34,000 dwellings are delivered in the Borough by 2026. The focus of this development is to be within the urban area, but it includes a major urban extension to the east of the town and several small scale urban extensions to the north/north west and south of the town.
- 3.5 Swindon Borough is characterised by a high quality landscape that includes Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the North Wessex Downs and Thames Vale) and beyond the main town, the landscape is predominantly rural in character with small market towns and villages. The Spatial Vision for Swindon Borough Council's Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Preferred Options is set out in **Box 1** below.

#### Spatial Vision

**In 2026 Swindon will be a regional centre that has raised its image through developing its own identity build on sustainable economic growth and respect for its railway heritage. It will have a thriving regenerated town centre that includes a cutting edge new university, the reinstatement of the canal through central Swindon and linked to the countryside by a strategic network of multifunctional open spaces and water spaces.**

**An integrated and sustainable transport system will enable easy movement around the borough. Communities will be sustainable, cohesive and healthy, and residents will enjoy a quality of life that does not use more resources than the environment can provide.**

## Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy: Screening of Preferred Policy Approaches

- 3.6 Screening of the Preferred Policy Approaches involved identifying the policies that will not have an effect on European sites. The approach taken was in accordance with Natural England guidance for HRA on Regional Spatial Strategies and Sub-Regional Strategies.<sup>8</sup> Policies were considered to have 'no effect' and were screened out on the basis of the following criteria:
1. The policy itself will not lead to development.
  2. The location of the development is unknown, and will be selected following consideration of options in lower plans.
  3. The policy will have no effect because development is dependent on implementation of lower tier policies.
  4. The policy concentrates development in existing urban areas, steering development away from European sites and sensitive areas.
  5. The policy will steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas.
  6. The policy is intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity.
  7. The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, and such enhancements are unlikely to affect a European site.
- 3.7 The Policy Screening Tables, including the rationale for a screening decision of 'no effect' are provided in **Appendix 2**. The Preferred Policy Approaches screened out of the assessment process are presented in **Table 4** below. Policies, which were considered to lead to potential significant effects, are listed in **Table 5**.

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<sup>8</sup> The Assessment of Regional Spatial Strategies and Sub-regional strategies under the Provisions of the Habitats Regulations: Draft (David Tyldesley Associate, for English Nature, 2006).

**Table 4**

**Core Strategy and Development Control Preferred Policy Approaches  
Screened out of the assessment process ('No effect' policies)**

**Development Control Policies**

- Climate Change Mitigation
- Design and Amenity
- Affordable Housing
- Developer Contributions for Infrastructure Requirements
- Existing Employment Areas
- Green Infrastructure and Open Space
- Sustainable Transport
- Community Facilities
- Historic Landscape and Buildings
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Travelling Show People

**Table 5**

**Core Strategy and Development Control Preferred Policy Approaches  
Screened in to the assessment process**

**Core Strategy Policies**

- Spatial Framework
- Urban Extensions – Eastern Development Area
- Small Scale Urban Extensions
- Rural Areas – Rural Development Strategy

**Development Control Policies**

- Zero and low carbon energy developments

**Identification of Likely Impacts**

3.8 The Strategy Review and Screening of Preferred Policy Approaches identified a number of likely impacts that have the potential to result in significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. These impacts can be broadly characterised against the following 'pathways of impact':

- **Urbanisation**
- **Recreational Impacts**
- **Water Resources and Water Quality**
- **Atmospheric Pollution**

3.9 These impacts are considered in more detail in the screening assessment below.

### Task 3: Consideration of other plans and programmes

- 3.10 It is a requirement of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive that HRA examines the potential for plans and programmes to have a significant effect either individually or 'in combination' with other plans and programmes (PPs). Undertaking an assessment of other PPs requires a pragmatic approach (given the extensive range of PPs underway in the region). For this screening consideration of other PPs has focused on those likely to lead to significant infrastructure/ development changes with related impacts.
- 3.11 The PPs considered at this stage are listed below and reviewed in detail in **Appendix 3**.
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026 (SWRA 2006)
  - Saved - West Wiltshire District Plan 1<sup>st</sup> Alteration (adopted June 2004)
  - Kennet District Council Core Strategy Issues and Options (March 2007)
  - North Wiltshire District Council Core Strategy Issues and Options (May 2007 second consultation)
  - Berkshire Waste and Minerals Core Strategy – Preferred Options (September 2007)
  - Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Preferred Options (February 2007)
  - Gloucestershire County Council Waste Core Strategy – Issues and Options
  - Gloucestershire County Council Minerals Core Strategy – Preferred Options (Jan 2008)
  - Swindon Borough Council Local Transport Plan 2006-2011
  - The Bristol Avon Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) (April 2005)
  - Hampshire Avon CAMS

### Task 4: Screening Assessment of the Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Preferred Options

- 3.12 In line with the screening requirements of the Habitats Regulations, an assessment was undertaken to determine the potential significant effects of the Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Preferred Options on the integrity of the four Natura 2000 sites that lie within a 15km radius of the Borough Boundary. This assessment was based on:
- The information gathered on Natura 2000 sites (**Appendix 1**)
  - The review of the Core Strategy and likely impacts and the Preferred Policy Approach screening (**Appendix 2**)
  - The review of other relevant plans (**Appendix 3**)

3.13 The main screening is set out in the tables at **Appendix 4** and the results of the assessment are summarised in **Table 6**.

<b>Table 6 HRA Screening Table Summary</b>			
<b>European Sites within a 15 km buffer zone</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>AA required alone?</b> ✘ No ✓ Yes ? Uncertain	<b>AA required in combination?</b> ✘ No ✓ Yes ? Uncertain
Hackpen Hill	SAC	✘	✘
Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain	SAC	✓	✓
North Meadow & Clattinger Farm	SAC	✓	✓
Pewsey Downs	SAC	✘	✘
River Lambourn	SAC	✓	✓

3.14 The issues raised in relation to identified impact pathways and their potential effects at the SAC sites [as assessed through the screening process] are summarised below.

- **Urbanisation** and the direct effects of development. This includes direct land take and habitat loss, and activities associated with increased urbanisation, such as a growth in illegal waste activities (fly tipping). An increase in predation from domestic pets (particularly cats) is also a characteristic effect of urban expansion. These impacts are typically most significant where development is directly adjacent to Natura 2000 sites and (with the exception of fly tipping) the likely significance of impact reduces with distance. The likelihood of impacts of this nature impacting the Natura 2000 sites outside the Swindon Borough is low given the significant distance of the sites from the town and proposed urban extension areas.
- **Recreational Impacts** have the potential to affect several of the sites considered in this screening [Hackpen Hill, North Meadow and Clattinger Farm and Pewsey Downs]. Trampling, and the potential erosion associated with an increase in walkers, is an identified issue at Pewsey Downs. The significance of recreational impacts will depend on distances that people are prepared to travel – Natural England figures suggest an average distance of 10 miles for a day countryside visit and (Pewsey Downs lies outside this radius).<sup>9</sup> At Hackpen Hill access is restricted and recreational pressures has not been identified as key at this site. The Core Strategy proposes extensive development of green space and easily accessible recreational facilities [including blue infrastructure, rivers, lakes, canals] in and around Swindon and

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/visits/index.asp> (now Natural England)

these policies provide strong mitigation for predicted rises in recreational activity.

- **Water Resources and Water Quality** are likely to be impacted as a result of housing growth in the area. Increased housing and economic development can impact water quality in riverine environments through diffuse pollution, urban runoff, and changes in nutrient levels (for example, as a result of sewage and effluent discharges). North Meadow and Clattinger Farm, the River Lambourn and the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC are all known to have sensitivities relating to water levels and water quality. Although, the Swindon Water Cycle Study (March, 2007) suggests that there is sufficient water capacity to accommodate the development scenarios proposed, and that additional treatment facilities will not be required until 2016<sup>10</sup> there remains potential for significant effect. This is particularly relevant given in-combination pressures which are most prevalent at the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm site given the additional transport, minerals and waste development planned in the area.
- **Atmospheric Pollution** has the potential to increase as a result of housing development. Oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>) – which can have a toxic effect on vegetation are directly linked with a growth in road traffic which is to be expected in the context of urban extension. The Air Pollution Information System (APIS) recognises NO<sub>x</sub> as a major transboundary pollutant and direct pollutant for calcareous grasslands.<sup>11</sup> North Meadow and Clattinger Farm and the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain are known to have vulnerabilities relating to air pollution. Extant available data on air quality at these sites shows that with the exception of Ozone, pollution levels fall well below the critical levels for the habitats concerned. Whilst Ozone pollution is primarily an urban issue, pollution can travel and the cumulative effect of development pressures in the area may lead to impacts at the two sensitive sites from this source.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=2532](http://southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=2532) (South West Regional Assembly)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.apis.ac.uk/>

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS, FUTURE WORK

- 4.1 This HRA screening process identified five Natura Sites that lie within a 15km radius of Swindon Borough's boundary and considered the potential significant effect arising from the preferred Policy Options of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies. The findings of the screening process suggested the potential for significant effects at three of the Natura 2000 sites. These effects are considered to arise both from the plan itself and as a result of 'in-combination' effects from other plans and programmes being developed and implemented simultaneously in the area.
- 4.2 Based on the information gathered for the screening process and considering the Habitats Regulations requirements for a precautionary approach, it is determined that further Appropriate Assessment work is required for:
- **North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC**
  - **Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC**
  - **River Lambourn SAC**
- 4.3 The AA will require more detailed information gathering to assess, and where possible quantify, the potential impacts identified and determine the most effective mechanism for avoiding or mitigating those effects. This work will need to take place in parallel with the preparation of the Submission Report, and in consultation with the Statutory Body, Natural England and other key stakeholders. A full AA report should be presented alongside the Core Strategy and Development Controls Submission Report as part of the evidence base for examination.

## Appendix 1

Site Name	Status & Site Code	Site Characteristics & Primary Reason for Designation (Habitats and/or Species)	Key Environmental Conditions & Site Vulnerabilities
<b>SACs with a 15km Buffer Zone of Swindon Borough Council</b>			
<b>HACKPEN HILL</b>  <b>Unitary Authorities:</b> Oxfordshire  <b>Area (ha):</b> 35.83	SAC - 0030162	Dry grassland, steppes - 100%  <b>SAC</b> Annex I qualifying reason for selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semi-natural dry grasslands and sc</li> <li>- Scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)</li> </ul> Annex II species primary reason for selection: Early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i>  <b>Conservation Objective:</b> To maintain the designated interest features in favourable condition.  <b>Current Condition:</b> Favourable	<b>Key Environmental Conditions:</b> <b>Grassland</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sward structure and composition provide a valuable indication of habitat quality. Cutting or grazing may be used to maintain these habitats, including control of scrub encroachment. The presence of negative indicator species may indicate problems such as eutrophication, scrub invasion (insufficient control) or over grazing (e.g. by rabbits). The application of pesticides, including herbicides, or any fertilizer would be damaging and should be avoided.</li> </ul> <b>Site Vulnerabilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The habitat is influence by both climate and the intensity of the grazing regime (pony grazing which is managed). Where grazing levels are low plant of shorter stature become scarce.</li> <li>▪ The site is under private ownership – access through CROW Act. Limited accessibility militates against recreational pressures.</li> <li>▪ Damage can occur periodically through fluctuations in rabbit populations.</li> </ul>
<b>KENNET &amp; LAMBOURN FLOODPLAIN</b>  <b>Unitary</b>	SAC – UK0030044	Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) – 1% Bogs, marshes, water fringed vegetation, fens – 59% Humid grassland, mesophile	<b>Key Environmental Conditions:</b> <b>Desmoulin's whorl snail</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Desmoulin's whorl snail are sensitive to the structure and composition of marginal vegetation of rivers, structure and composition of tall fen and swamp vegetation, the water table and water quality. The site</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1

Site Name	Status & Site Code	Site Characteristics & Primary Reason for Designation (Habitats and/or Species)	Key Environmental Conditions & Site Vulnerabilities
<b>SACs with a 15km Buffer Zone of Swindon Borough Council</b>			
<b>Authorities:</b> Wiltshire West Berkshire  <b>Area (ha):</b> 114.47		grassland – 40%  <b>SAC</b> Annex II Species primary reason for selection: - Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>  <b>Conservation Objectives:</b> To maintain the designated feature in favourable condition.  <b>Current Condition:</b> Favourable	should therefore be managed to ensure these factors stay within acceptable levels. Although some flooding is permissible the site should not be deeply flooded in summer months.  <b>Site Vulnerabilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parts of the site lie adjacent to the Newbury bypass but the road has been designed to reduce spray and run-off, intending to mitigate direct damage to the site. However the site is still vulnerable to visual, noise and air pollution.</li> <li>■ There are concerns that abstraction is reducing levels of water around the perimeter of the site although further monitoring is necessary to confirm this.</li> <li>■ It is also important that the quality of the water remains high as the whorl snail is critically dependant on a high standard. Open unshaded conditions support the snail population and the snails may be vulnerable to direct damage, habitat change due to adjacent Newbury bypass, lowering of water table, water pollution and shading due to encroachment of larger plant species.</li> </ul>
<b>NORTH MEADOW &amp; CLATTINGER FARM</b>  <b>Unitary Authorities:</b> Wiltshire	SAC - UK0016372	Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) – 2% Dry grassland, Steepes – 15% Humid grassland, mesophile grassland – 71% Improved grassland – 12%  <b>SAC</b>	<b>Key Environmental Conditions:</b> <b>Lowland Hay Meadows</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The SAC is considered to be one of the best areas in the UK for unimproved lowland hay meadow (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> and <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>), with a rich variety of grasses and hay meadow flowers. North Meadow supports Britain's largest population of snake's head fritillary (<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>), which is now rare throughout its range, representing &gt;90% of the UK population. The</li> </ul>

Appendix 1

Site Name	Status & Site Code	Site Characteristics & Primary Reason for Designation (Habitats and/or Species)	Key Environmental Conditions & Site Vulnerabilities
<b>SACs with a 15km Buffer Zone of Swindon Borough Council</b>			
<p><b>Area (ha):</b> 104.88</p>		<p>Annex 1 Habitats primary reason for selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Conservation Objectives:</b> To maintain the unimproved grassland of the site in favourable condition with particular reference to lowland hay meadow.</p> <p><b>Current Condition:</b> Favourable</p>	<p>plant species are important in supporting varied insects and birdlife, including waders in winter. The species-rich unimproved hay meadows are on moderately fertile soils of river and tributary floodplains. Seasonal flooding maintains an input of nutrients and is vital for the integrity of the site and the variety of flora present.</p> <p><b>Site Vulnerabilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management plans (involving Wiltshire Wildlife Trust &amp; Natural England) are in place for North Meadows and Clattinger Farm, to secure the long-term conservation of the meadows. The unimproved grassland habitat is maintained by traditional agricultural practices of late summer hay-cutting (removed before water levels prohibit use of heavy vehicles), followed by cattle grazing until Spring, or seasonal light grazing with cattle.</li> <li>▪ Adjacent extraction and renovation of gravel workings are a potential threat to water levels which must maintain a damp environment. River water levels important for maintaining ground water conditions and vegetation at North Meadow.</li> <li>▪ The proximity of development may potentially cause disturbance through dust, increase in traffic generation (noise and air pollution). Residential development potential to create indirect recreational pressures on grassland habitats.</li> </ul>

Appendix 1

Site Name	Status & Site Code	Site Characteristics & Primary Reason for Designation (Habitats and/or Species)	Key Environmental Conditions & Site Vulnerabilities
<b>SACs with a 15km Buffer Zone of Swindon Borough Council</b>			
<p><b>PEWSEY DOWNS</b></p> <p><b>Unitary Authorities:</b> Wiltshire</p> <p><b>Area (ha):</b> 153.87</p>	<p>SAC - UK0012552</p>	<p>Heath, scrub, maquis and garrigue, phygrana – 1% Dry grassland, steppes – 96% Alpine and sub-alpine grassland – 3%</p> <p><b>SAC</b> Annex 1 Habitats primary reason for selection: - Semi-natural grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (important orchid sites) <b>PRIORITY FEATURE</b></p> <p>Annex II Species primary reason for selection: Early gentian <i>Gentianelle anglica</i></p> <p><b>Conservation Objective:</b> Maintain the unimproved calcareous (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) grassland of Pewsey Down in favourable condition with particular reference to: <i>CG2</i></p>	<p><b>Key Environmental Conditions:</b></p> <p><b>Grassland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sward structure and composition provide a valuable indication of habitat quality. Cutting or grazing may be used to maintain these habitats, including control of scrub encroachment. The presence of negative indicator species may indicate problems such as eutrophication, scrub invasion (insufficient control) or over grazing (e.g. by rabbits).</li> </ul> <p><b>Early Gentian</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inappropriate management, particularly reduction in grazing can lead to a loss or decline in this species.</li> </ul> <p><b>Site Vulnerabilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The site is popular with tourists and locals and if numbers are not carefully managed this could lead to erosion and damage to habitats and species.</li> <li>▪ The decline in the livestock industry in the UK threatens the long-term economic viability of the required extensive grazing by sheep and cattle. [The early Gentian requires bare ground or thin turf from grazing and becomes shaded out if turf become dense].</li> <li>▪ Also due to the poor agricultural climate neighboring landowners are being encouraged to diversify, especially into shooting. Increased stocking of game birds could have an impact on the habitats and species although negotiation is ongoing with the landowner to prevent this.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1

Site Name	Status & Site Code	Site Characteristics & Primary Reason for Designation (Habitats and/or Species)	Key Environmental Conditions & Site Vulnerabilities
<b>SACs with a 15km Buffer Zone of Swindon Borough Council</b>			
		<p><i>(Festuca ovina - Avenula pratensis)</i> plant community &amp; early gentian (<i>Gentianella anglica</i>).</p> <p><b>Current Condition:</b> Favourable</p>	
<p><b>RIVER LAMBOURN</b></p> <p><b>Unitary Authorities:</b> West Berkshire</p> <p><b>Area (ha):</b> 27.27</p>	<p>SAC – UK0030257</p>	<p>Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) – 100%</p> <p><b>SAC</b> Annex I habitats primary reason for selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation</li> </ul> <p>Annex II Species primary reason for selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i></li> </ul> <p>Annex II Species qualifying reason for selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Environmental Conditions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintenance of water quality and availability requires management to minimise pollution inputs and inappropriate water abstraction. The river's natural structure and form should be maintained to support a natural flow regime, including the avoidance of constriction of the river or blockage of its floodplain.</li> </ul> <p><b>Watercourse (<i>Ranunculus</i>) habitat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Natural flow regime required for maintenance of natural erosion and sedimentation processes and hence channel morphology. Riparian areas and the wider catchment need to be managed sensitively to avoid excessive run-off of soil particles and nutrients into the river. The structure and composition of bankside and aquatic vegetation should be maintained</li> </ul> <p><b>Fish</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Natural flow regime will help conserve the quality of the riverbed as fish spawning habitat, and avoid the creation of artificial barriers to the passage of migratory fish and other animals, such as otters. Any exploitation of fish populations or other native animals or plants should be at a sustainable level, without manipulation of the river's natural capacity to support them or augmentation by excessive stocking</li> </ul>

Appendix 1

Site Name	Status & Site Code	Site Characteristics & Primary Reason for Designation (Habitats and/or Species)	Key Environmental Conditions & Site Vulnerabilities
<b>SACs with a 15km Buffer Zone of Swindon Borough Council</b>			
		<p><b>Conservation Objectives:</b> To maintain the designated interest feature in favourable condition.</p> <p><b>Current Condition:</b> N/A</p>	<p><b>Site Vulnerabilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The River is known to have one of the least modified catchments in Southern England and water quality, quantity and habitat quality are high and abstraction rates are low.</li> <li>■ There are problems with localised high nutrient levels (agriculture) and siltation problems which are associated with sewage treatment works.</li> <li>■ Also vulnerable to artificial reductions in water flow and channel engineering works that are unsympathetic to the river environment.</li> </ul>

Appendix 2

**Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening:  
Screening of Preferred Policy Approaches Swindon Borough Council Core Strategy (incorporating Development Control Policies)**

Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<b>SPATIAL VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>		
<p><b>Spatial Vision</b></p> <p>In 2026 Swindon will be a regional centre that has raised its image through developing its own identity build on sustainable economic growth and respect for its railway heritage. It will have a thriving regenerated town centre that includes a cutting edge new university, the reinstatement of the canal through central Swindon and linked to the countryside by a strategic network of multifunctional open spaces and water spaces.</p> <p>An integrated and sustainable transport system will enable easy movement around the borough. Communities will be sustainable, cohesive and healthy, and residents will enjoy a quality of life that does not use more resources than the environment can provide.</p>	<p><i>Sets overarching/ Strategic Framework for development – issues addressed as part of Core policies screening assessment below.</i></p>	
<p><b>Strategic Objectives</b></p> <p><b>Sustainable Growth</b> <b>Key Objective 1.</b> To deliver job growth in line with economic forecasts and 34,000 dwellings at Swindon in the most sustainable way taking into account the needs of existing communities and infrastructure requirements, including the appropriate and timely investment in transport, water resources, schools, open spaces, leisure, health, retail and community facilities.</p> <p><b>Sustainable Development and Climate Change</b> <b>Key Objective 2.</b> To ensure that all new development in Swindon addresses the causes of climate change through energy efficiency and low/zero carbon energy development, and by ensuring that new development is of an exemplar standard of sustainable design and construction which addresses key issues of energy and water efficiency, utilises sustainable sources of materials, enhances biodiversity, reduces waste and is supported by high quality "future proof" design.</p> <p><b>Economy and Employment</b> <b>Key Objective 3.</b> Provision will be made for the level of job growth specified in the RSS. A sustainable economy will be achieved through a 'smart' approach to economic growth. Key industries will include ICT, biotechnology, environmental technologies and the creative industries.</p> <p><b>Swindon's Image</b> <b>Key Objective 4.</b> Whilst respecting Swindon's historic identity as a railway town the actual and perceived image of Swindon, particularly the central area, will be significantly improved, through regeneration, including the provision of regional museums, galleries, theatres and cinemas, and good design.</p> <p><b>Higher Education Facilities</b></p>	<p><i>Sets overarching/ Strategic Framework for development – issues addressed as part of Core policies screening assessment below.</i></p>	

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Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p><b>Key Objective 5.</b> Higher education facilities, particularly a University, will be improved and expanded to improve the local skills base to meet the requirements of the knowledge based economy and provide linkages into the local economy.</p> <p><b>Shopping</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 6.</b> Regeneration of the central area will deliver a retail capacity in line with forecast growth, and improve the range and quality of shops to ensure that Swindon’s retail ranking is commensurate with its sub-regional status.</p> <p><b>Transport</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 7.</b> Ensuring that development is sustainably accessible; reducing the need to travel, especially by car; through promoting travel plans and use of sustainable transport; and ensuring that development contributes towards infrastructure provision that helps promote sustainable transport choices. In doing so it will be necessary to ensure the safe delivery of routes to schools.</p> <p><b>Green Spaces, Rivers and Canals</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 8.</b> Building upon the existing open space network; high quality multifunctional green and blue infrastructure, will be delivered throughout the Swindon sub region, to ensure that there is a range of safe and accessible environmental and recreational assets, which contribute towards the development of sustainable living environments both in the urban and rural areas.</p> <p><b>Dwelling Size and Type</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 9.</b> To meet all segments of the market a range of housing types and densities should be provided in Swindon Borough within the overall context of providing housing at Swindon of at least 50 dwellings per hectare. The current under-supply of larger and prestigious housing within Swindon should be addressed.</p> <p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 10.</b> New housing developments will include provision for affordable housing needs, including an appropriate mix of social rented and intermediate housing schemes, to ensure that decent homes are available to meet the needs of the resident population with a wide range of incomes.</p> <p><b>Inclusive Communities</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 11.</b> Inclusive communities will be encouraged and enhanced by regeneration and renewal in those areas of the Borough in need of priority improvement; by the understanding the needs of all neighbourhoods and planning for those with mobility or other requirements, for example through lifetime homes and ‘access for all’.</p> <p><b>Community Facilities</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 12.</b> The need for health, education and other community facilities arising from growth and demographic changes in the Borough will be met as they occur and where possible will be ‘future-proofed’ through good design and service co-ordination.</p> <p><b>Rural Areas</b></p> <p><b>Key Objective 13.</b> The towns and villages outside Swindon will benefit from development that is sensitive to local needs, and levels of housing and</p>		

Appendix 2

Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p>employment that are appropriate to such areas will provide the conditions for a thriving rural environment.</p> <p><b>Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople</b>  <b>Key Objective 14.</b>                      The need to accommodate the identified additional requirements of the gypsy and travelling community will be met, taking into account the views of those communities and the established population.</p>		
<b>CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED POLICIES</b>		
<p><b>Spatial Framework – Preferred Option</b>                      The focus of development for the next 20 years will be within the existing Swindon urban area boundary, principally on previously developed land. And including those strategic urban extensions already with permission, the Northern Development Area and Wichelstowe.</p> <p>In line with the RSS a major urban extension to the East of Swindon is proposed to compliment the regeneration of the central area, to provide the majority of the residual housing requirements.</p> <p>Small-scale sustainable urban extensions to Swindon are proposed at Tadpole Farm, and land south of Kingsdown Lane to meet this need. The Preferred Option is also to direct growth in North Wiltshire District Council to Ridgeway Farm/Moredon Bridge to be confirmed in their Core Strategy. It is expected that one or more of these small scale urban extensions will be phased for the second half of the plan period with an option of bringing them forward if delivery on other sites does not meet targets.</p> <p>The existing allocation at Commonhead in the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 will be carried forward as a preferred option but at a smaller scale. Housing will be distributed according to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously Developed Land (PDL) and other urban sites.... 9,800</li> <li>• Northern Development Area (NDA) 3,000</li> <li>• Wichelstowe 4,500</li> <li>• Eastern Development Area (EDA) ... 12,000</li> <li>• Tadpole Farm..... 1,500</li> <li>• Kingsdown..... 500</li> <li>• Commonhead... 1,000</li> <li>• Ridgeway/Moredon Bridge 1,000</li> </ul> <p>A range of housing to meet the demographic and market demands will be provided at suitable locations with an average net residential density of 50 dwellings per hectare across Swindon. These should be focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-density housing at transport and community focal points where the ability to access services by walking/cycling are maximised.</li> <li>• Lower density housing in sympathy with local landscape characteristics to provide for the higher end of the market currently not being met within Swindon.</li> </ul> <p>Office uses will be directed to Swindon's central area, where there is potential, through the regeneration programme, to accommodate</p>	<p>Uncertain effect.</p> <p>Preferred Policy Approach concentrates core development for the next 20 years in existing urban areas – by definition steering development away from European sites and sensitive areas. Swindon has no Natura 2000 sites within its Borough boundary. However, the designation of Swindon as a Strategically Significant City focuses housing and economic growth in a largely rural area that contains a number of European designations.</p> <p>Potential impacts arising from large scale development at this site include: urbanisation and its associated effects (e.g. fly tipping, dog fouling, cat predation), recreational impacts, atmospheric pollution, water abstraction,</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p>approximately 4,500 jobs on 90,000m2 of office floorspace using modes of access other than the private car.</p> <p>Urban extensions to Swindon should include provision for sufficient employment opportunities to facilitate mixed-use developments and thereby reduce the need to travel significant distances to work.</p> <p>In addition to the existing / available employment land [identified the Borough Council has identified four potential allocations to contribute to Swindon’s employment land growth requirement of 175ha (gross) to 2026. These include land at the;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Development Area,</li> <li>• Commonhead,</li> <li>• Tadpole Farm and,</li> <li>• Triangle North.</li> </ul> <p>At this stage in the Core Strategy preparation process the allocations are not necessarily specific in terms of their exact location, their overall site area or the particular employment uses they could accommodate. Although these allocations have been included in the Preferred Option, they are indicative at this stage. They will need to be informed by more detailed analysis to be considered for inclusion in the Submission version of the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Swindon Town Centre should be the focus for all new and enhanced leisure, cultural and tourism proposals in the Borough. The Town Centre ‘Retail Core’ should be the focus of new retail and hotel proposals. Proposals outside Swindon Town Centre will only be permitted in defined district and local centres, Highworth Town Centre and Wroughton Village Centre, as shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map, and subject to the proposals not being of scale that would be more appropriately located in Swindon Town Centre.</p> <p>Provision will be made for a University Campus at North Star</p> <p>At Union Square in the Central Swindon, the Arena will be the premier event space for the town, providing a venue for large-scale cultural events, performances and celebrations. Detailed proposals for Union Square are set out in The Central Area Action Plan.</p> <p>A canal route through Swindon is supported subject to viability and technical feasibility being secured. The integration of a canal into the strategic development areas is supported where this can deliver a technically feasible route that is capable of implementation, and which links other elements of the canal network.</p> <p>5.5 ha land to the west of the existing Great Western Hospital will be safeguarded as a strategically important allocation, for provision of extended facilities to meet critical care needs.</p> <p>In support and as a consequence of the growth proposals significant other infrastructure will be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water resources and distribution infrastructure</li> <li>• A new or expanded sewerage treatment works</li> <li>• Central area public realm</li> <li>• Transport infrastructure and public transport improvements</li> </ul>	<p>pollution and noise pollution as an indirect effect.</p>	

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Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p>The Core Strategy is committed to supporting the long-term goals of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, and other related strategies, to help deliver real change in the quality of life for people living in Swindon’s neighbourhoods. In particular opportunities for improvement and regeneration will be encouraged at Moredon, Walcot East, Pinehurst, Park South and North, Central, and Penhill.</p> <p>The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Study will seek to identify those current needs that are not being met, and identify renewal initiatives appropriate to each community in Swindon. The preparation of action plans, where appropriate, will assist in providing a framework for delivering improvements in these areas.</p> <p>In consultation with South Marston Parish Council, development potential has been identified at the village in connection with the proposed Eastern Development Area. The separate identity of the village must be protected but the development offers opportunities for community benefits. An average of 50 dwellings per year will be delivered within the remainder of Swindon Borough in accordance with following strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highworth and Wroughton are identified as primary rural settlements, where a relatively small-scale amount of development on land within the existing built-up (as defined by a settlement boundary) area will be permitted. Regenerative initiatives will be encouraged where they aid the vitality and viability of the primary rural settlements so as to discourage unnecessary journeys elsewhere.</li> <li>• Wanborough, Chiseldon, Liddington, Bishopstone, Castle Eaton and Broad Blunsdon are identified as secondary rural settlements, where development will be restricted to infilling, conversions, or the re-use of previously developed land within the existing built up area (as defined by a settlement boundary).</li> <li>• In the countryside development will be restricted to small-scale development to the re-use of existing buildings that support the economic or social needs of the rural community, and housing exceptions (including those of sustainable building design and construction).</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Urban Extensions</b>  <b>Eastern Development Area</b>                      An area to the East of the A419 will be developed as a comprehensive mixed-use urban extension to Swindon comprising up to 12,000 dwellings as defined on the Proposals Map, in accordance with the development principles set out below, it must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for up to 12,000 dwellings at a net overall residential density of at least 50 dwellings per hectare. A range of densities will be provided following a design led approach. Higher densities will be expected in and around the district centre, local centres and at public transport stops.</li> <li>• Provide for 30% of dwellings to be affordable, at a tenure mix to be determined on submission of detailed applications based upon Swindon Borough Council’s requirements at the time of submission. This will be in accordance with the Core Strategy Preferred Options for Affordable Housing Provision.</li> <li>• Be in accord with the Swindon Green Infrastructure Strategy, including providing green routes that provide direct linkages to Swindon urban area’s existing green corridor network and the wider countryside, and a landmark green infrastructure feature. Green Routes through the development should deliver a range of functions including flood protection, nature and biodiversity conservation, recreation and access.</li> <li>• Provide for a range of employment types and uses creating approximately 5,000 jobs, which should complement those in Swindon Town Centre, in accessible locations to encourage self-containment and to reduce the need to travel.</li> <li>• Provide a district centre appropriate to the scale and location of the urban extension anchored by a food superstore of not more than 7,300 square metres net. The district centre should aim to serve residents of the development and areas directly adjacent to the</li> </ul>	<p>The Preferred Policy Approach directs housing and employment land development in a major urban extension to the East of Swindon. Development is on the periphery of Swindon, predominantly on greenfield land.</p> <p>Potential effects on Natura 2000 sites include: increased recreational pressure, impacts on air quality and water quality due to development growth and traffic increases as well as</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p>development site but should not compete directly with Swindon Town Centre or compromise the regeneration of Swindon’s Central Area. To establish a critical mass of local facilities and encourage the establishment of an enhanced district but not town wide function, the total amount of retail floorspace within the District Centre should not exceed 10,000 square metres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide local community hubs focused around district / local retail centres, schools and public open space.</li> <li>• Provide the necessary education facilities to serve the population of the development, in the form of two learning campuses to accommodate need generated for 14 forms of entry, each incorporating a secondary school with sixth form provision and a primary school. Six additional primary schools should be provided at accessible locations within the development. Education facilities should all make provision for nursery / early years facilities and provide an element of community / extended use facilities.</li> <li>• Provide accessible Public Open Space in accordance with the Council’s standards set out in the emerging Green Infrastructure strategy. Such requirements are summarised in the supporting text.</li> <li>• Provide an appropriate scale and range of community facilities to meet local needs to include health centres, libraries, community halls, religious centres, etc</li> <li>• Provide a section of canal between Acorn Bridge and the A419 south of Commonhead roundabout as part of the overall restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal to navigable standards agreed by British Waterways incorporating a basin as an integral element.</li> <li>• Provide sustainable transport links that integrate with the existing urban area, particularly the Central Area, including off-site works where it is necessary and create a legible and permeable road hierarchy within the development.</li> <li>• Protect, enhance and integrate features of natural, historic or environmental importance, including mitigation measures where necessary in co-operation with the appropriate regulatory authority.</li> <li>• Preserve the character and identity of the surrounding villages particularly South Marston, Wanborough and Bourton, through the master planning process (and the development of appropriate landscape and land use strategies).</li> <li>• Be capable of being served by existing or enhanced wastewater and water supply infrastructure to accommodate development upon the existing networks, taking account of demand management measures to be introduced. The provision of any new Sewage Treatment Works may be secured on or off-site.</li> <li>• Provide a landscape strategy to ensure a graduated transition from urban to countryside character on the edge of the development.</li> <li>• Provide an integrated sustainability strategy aligned with the ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’ or ‘BREEAM Standards’ and the Preferred Option on Climate Change.</li> <li>• Land should be safeguarded for the future provision of a railway station and development should not prevent the four-tracking of the railway line between Didcot and Swindon.</li> <li>• Provide a park &amp; ride site.</li> <li>• Incorporate renewable energy initiatives as a key element to the development. Any proposals for outline planning consent on the EDA need to be comprehensive and be to an overall master plan for the whole site, which must clearly indicate the location and timing of development and supporting services and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p>increased noise pollution. Impacts on the water resource arising from increased abstraction for developments.</p> <p>Environmental protection measures are an explicit element of the Preferred Policy Approach.</p>	<p></p>
<p><b>Small Scale Urban Extensions</b></p> <p>Provision will be made to accommodate 3,000 dwellings as smaller-scale urban extensions to Swindon and distributed as follows (as shown on the Key Diagram):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,500 dwellings at Tadpole Farm,</li> <li>• 500 dwellings to the south of Kingsdown Lane, and</li> </ul>	<p>The Preferred Policy Approach directs housing and employment land development to the North, West and South of Swindon. Development is</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Appendix 2

Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p>• a direction of development of 1,000 dwellings to Ridgeway Farm / Moredon Bridge in North Wiltshire (subject to confirmation in North Wiltshire District Council's Core Strategy) in accordance with the development principles set out below:</p> <p><b>At Tadpole Farm:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to the North Swindon Transport Strategy (to be costed);</li> <li>• An area of employment land to provide about 500 jobs (approx. 10 hectares)</li> <li>• New primary school education facilities on-site, and off-site contributions to secondary education;</li> <li>• A sustainable transport solution provide links from the site through the Northern Development Area;</li> <li>• Green Infrastructure links back through the existing urban area; and</li> <li>• Landscape mitigation measures in the form of tree-planting to the north and east of the site, to reduce the visual impact of the development.</li> </ul> <p><b>At Kingsdown:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to the North Swindon Transport Strategy;</li> <li>• Pedestrian and cycle link(s) across the A419;</li> <li>• Highway Improvements to accommodate traffic at Turnpike Roundabout;</li> <li>• Noise attenuation to mitigate the impact of the A419;</li> <li>• An element of mixed use employment land;</li> <li>• Contributions to address secondary education shortfall at Kingsdown; and</li> <li>• Protection of the character and identity of Broad Blunsdon through the master planning process (and the development of appropriate landscape and land use strategies).</li> </ul> <p><b>At Ridgeway Farm / Moredon Bridge:</b></p> <p>The development principles below set out Swindon Borough Council's requirements (These are exclusive of specific requirements to local needs of North Wiltshire District Council and strategic contributions for Wiltshire County Council):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to the North Swindon Transport Strategy;</li> <li>• Safeguarding of land for the future provision of a railway station;</li> <li>• Sustainable transport solutions from the site through West Swindon and to the town centre;</li> <li>• Local road improvements to Purton Road;</li> <li>• Contributions to address primary education shortfall in the adjacent Swindon area.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commonhead</b></p> <p>Provision will be made at Commonhead to accommodate 1,000 dwellings in accordance with the development principles set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary school facilities on-site</li> <li>• An area of land for employment use of approximately 15 hectares</li> <li>• Safeguard 5.5 hectares of land for future Great Western Hospital expansion</li> <li>• Provide sustainable transport links to link with the existing urban area and Swindon town centre</li> <li>• Expand Coate Water Country Park to incorporate the land between the new development and the existing Country Park providing a functional and robust buffer between the development and existing biodiversity assets</li> <li>• Protect and mitigate the impact of development upon archaeological features</li> <li>• Respect views from the North Wessex Downs AONB and from Coate Water Country Park minimizing the impact on the landscape</li> </ul>	<p>on the periphery of Swindon, predominantly on greenfield land. Potential effects include: increased recreational pressure, impacts on air quality and water quality due to development growth and traffic increase and increased noise impacts associated with development. Impacts on the water resource arising from increased abstraction for developments.</p>	

Appendix 2

Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
character of the area		
<p><b>Rural Areas</b>  <b>Rural Development Strategy</b>                      The rural settlements of the Borough will be sustained by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the retention of local community facilities and encouraging the provision of necessary new facilities;</li> <li>• Identifying opportunities for the provision of rural exceptions affordable housing schemes where there is a proven need;</li> <li>• Supporting rural transport initiatives that improve accessibility;</li> <li>• Promoting opportunities for appropriate local economic development;</li> <li>• Ensuring new development respects the special character and sense of place of rural settlements; and</li> <li>• Facilitating appropriate levels of housing in line with the preferred options for the primary and secondary settlements.</li> </ul>	The Preferred Policy Approach promotes accessibility and development in rural areas. Potential pressures include recreational activity and pollution incidents.	Yes
<b>DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES</b>		
<p><b>Climate Change Mitigation</b></p> <p>A mandatory 'Swindon Standard' for all new development will be introduced to meet the Climate Change challenge, by including the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Energy Efficient Design (Solar Passive Design):</b> Incorporating the principles of energy efficient design into new development which takes advantage of natural heat and light from the sun can cut energy use for heating, lighting and ventilation by as much as a third.</li> <li>• <b>Code for Sustainable Homes / BREEAM Standard:</b> It is envisaged that the Council will introduce progressively higher code / BREEAM levels over the coming years in advance of those introduced through the Buildings Regulations. The preferred option will be to include a schedule within the Core Strategy that sets out what the standards are and when they will be introduced. If necessary, the Council will focus on areas of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which are particularly relevant to Swindon, for example water resource issues and surface water control in new development. Existing development is a key contributor of carbon emissions. Where planning permission is required and it makes sense to do so in sustainability terms, the Council may relax sustainability standards on larger new developments to secure funding to retrofit existing development. The Council will investigate the appropriate circumstances and mechanism for this to happen.</li> <li>• <b>A reduction in total carbon emissions (though low / zero carbon energy sources):</b> All new major developments should reduce predicted total CO2 emissions from energy use by utilising on-site renewable energy and/or efficient supply of heat, cooling and power. Progressively higher standards will be introduced over the Core Strategy period. A schedule will be included within the Core Strategy, which sets out when higher standards will be introduced. Major developments must demonstrate that a decentralised energy supply system appraisal has been carried out and viable recommendations incorporated into new development. The appraisal must also assess the feasibility of linking to any existing system.</li> <li>• <b>Lifetime Homes Standard:</b> The buildings designed now will come under increasing pressure in future to accommodate the demands of new users. Designing flexible buildings now can avoid the costly process of demolition and reconstruction, which can put further pressure on environmental resources.</li> <li>• <b>Green Roofs:</b> Green roofs have a variety of beneficial impacts, from alleviating the urban heat island effect to controlling surface water runoff to promoting biodiversity. The Council's preferred option is to promote green roofs in new development as part of the wider green</li> </ul>	'No effect' policy. This suite of policies is focused on sustainable design and development in urban areas and explicitly promotes environmental protection measures.	No

Appendix 2

Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p>infrastructure strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):</b> SuDS should be incorporated into new developments where possible to contribute towards the protection of ground and surface water. It is recognised that each development site is different and that sustainable technologies are quickly moving forward. It is the Council's preferred approach to encourage innovative design solutions to development and to take a flexible approach to the application of the 'Swindon Standard' where an element of the Standard is practically or financially prohibitive to a development proposal. In such as circumstance, the Council will expect appropriate compensatory measures to be installed. This might include going over and above other elements within the Swindon Standard</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. Zero and Low Carbon Energy Developments</b></p> <p>Renewable and low carbon energy proposals will be supported throughout the plan area unless they would have unacceptable adverse effects.</p> <p>In considering renewable energy development, the benefits of producing energy from low/zero carbon sources, and the social benefits of community owned schemes, where this is the case, would be weighed against any adverse impacts produced by the development. Development proposals will be permitted where they have no unacceptable impacts.</p> <p>The preferred option will highlight the potential adverse impacts that should be considered in the determination of a planning application (visual, noise) and the supporting information, which should be supplied with any planning submission.</p> <p>The Council will increase its knowledge of the strategic viability of zero and low carbon energy sources throughout the plan area and develop a methodology and further detailed guidance for zero and low carbon energy development, particularly in relation to wind and biomass.</p>	<p>Uncertain impact, potential for policy that promotes biomass and wind energy solutions to have impacts on neighbouring sites/ linked greenspaces.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Design and Amenity</b></p> <p>In considering high standards of design, the Council will take account of a number of design principles which should be applied to all development proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address sustainability targets in new development in accordance with the 'Swindon Standard' as set out in the Preferred Option on Climate Change;</li> <li>• Incorporate landscaping suitable for the character of the site and its surroundings, taking into account the site's assets such as trees, important buildings and views;</li> <li>• Demonstrate standards of inclusion and accessibility, including provision of access for disabled people, vehicle parking and service facilities that are within a safe and convenient layout;</li> <li>• The scale, massing and appearance of the development is designed with a satisfactory relationship to spaces and structures within the site to ensure successful integration into its surroundings;</li> <li>• Maximise safety and minimise opportunities for crime;</li> <li>• Make a clear distinction between the public and private spaces within a site;</li> </ul>	<p>'No effect' policy provides design criteria for development.</p>	<p>No</p>

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Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be in accord with the Borough Council’s Parking Standards Development Control Guidance Note;</li> <li>• Be compatible with, and protect the amenity of, nearby land uses in terms of visual intrusion, privacy, noise, disturbance, vibration, smell, and pollution (including light pollution); and</li> <li>• Be compatible with any approved framework, masterplan or framework plan.</li> </ul> <p>To address the problems recently experienced with the proliferation of houses in multiple-occupation (HiMOs), the amenity implications of subdivisions, conversions and extensions will be considered carefully, both on neighbouring residents, but also those of potential occupiers. With respect to subdivisions and conversions, the Borough Council believes that a development control policy on this issue should include a minimum floorspace threshold, below which subdivisions and conversions should not be permitted. Although national guidance exists to address this issue, there may be a case for adopting more local thresholds through a specific development control policy. This threshold will be set following further consultation.</p> <p>Where there are proposals for conversion of commercial and office development it should be demonstrated that these premises are no longer required or suitable for their continued business use.</p>		
<p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <p>On sites of 15 or more dwellings or larger than 0.5 hectares the provision of 30% affordable housing will be sought. The amount of affordable housing to provided in the form of social rented accommodation and low-cost ownership will be subject to regular review to respond to changing needs and circumstances. The split will be reviewed in the Developer Contributions to Residential Development Guidance Note.</p>	<p>‘No effect’ policy. Implementation policy that will not in itself lead to development.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Developer Contributions for Infrastructure Requirements</b></p> <p>All development proposals will be expected to meet infrastructure needs generated directly by the development. These requirements are set out below and may be provided either on or off site or by a contribution as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways Infrastructure</li> <li>• Open Space, including Green Infrastructure</li> <li>• Affordable Housing, in accordance with the Core Strategy Preferred Options</li> <li>• Public Art</li> <li>• Culture and Leisure facilities</li> <li>• Community Forest</li> <li>• Central Area Public Realm</li> <li>• Education and Children’s Services</li> <li>• Adult Services facilities</li> <li>• Community and neighbourhood facilities</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Local and Strategic health facilities</li> </ul> <p>The specific requirements will be set out in an Appendix to the Submission draft, which will summarise existing SPD or Developer</p>	<p>‘No effect’ policy. Development controls either direct development in urban areas, improve greenspace, biodiversity interest, or will be subject to project level Environmental Impact Assessment/ Appropriate Assessment.</p>	<p>No</p>

## Appendix 2

Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
<p>Contributions Guidance Note requirements. However this will be subject to review.</p> <p>Where such requirements cannot be secured through a planning condition, an obligation will be sought to ensure that necessary infrastructure is provided.</p>		
<p><b>Existing Employment Areas</b></p> <p>To maintain a wide geographical distribution / range of employment opportunities in the Borough, and to reduce the need to travel by providing mixed-use development, all existing 'Key Employment Areas' (as identified in Table 4) will be protected for employment use. However, a wider interpretation of the term 'employment uses' will be applied to proposals affecting the Key Employment Areas to accord with the 'jobs' description in the Draft RSS. The Borough Council will look favourably on proposals to regenerate or modernise existing employment sites, especially where their future use will contribute to the achievement of the Borough's 'smart growth'.</p>	'No effect' policy. Policy focuses on regeneration at existing/ identified employment sites within and around the urban fringe	No
<p><b>Green Infrastructure and Open Space</b></p> <p>Existing green infrastructure and open spaces will be protected and enhanced, as identified in the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy and 'Green Spine' in Central Swindon, with contributions to open space and green infrastructure through developer contributions as set out in the Preferred Option to Infrastructure Provision.</p>	'No effect' policy. Policy intended to protect the natural environment including biodiversity.	No
<p><b>Sustainable Transport</b></p> <p>Development shall be permitted where proposals provide access that is appropriate to the scale, type and location, without detriment to highway safety, traffic movement, and the local environment; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide for accessibility into and within the development which promotes sustainable travel (cycling, walking and public transport); and,</li> <li>• provide car parking not in excess of maximum levels<sup>14</sup>; and</li> <li>• provide on site secure cycle and motorcycle parking in accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards.</li> </ul>	'No effect' policy. PPA seeks to improve air quality in the Borough.	No
<p><b>Community Facilities</b></p> <p>New local health centres, and proposals for new or change of use for community needs including those for ethnic or religious groups will be permitted within or adjacent to settlements provided they show a preference for previously developed land where possible and are well located to its catchment population.</p> <p>Proposals that would result in the loss of established community facilities within settlements, including public houses, shall only be permitted where there is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a satisfactory and sustainable alternative to that facility within the settlement; or</li> <li>b) it has been demonstrated that the facility is no longer economically viable for such use.</li> </ol>	'No effect' policy. Steers development onto previously developed land and concentrates development within or adjacent to existing urban areas	No

## Appendix 2

Preferred Policy Approaches (PPA)	Description of Likely Effect	Potential Effect
Proposals for other uses, particular residential should be well located to existing community facilities, or make provision for any shortfall.		
<p><b>Historic Landscape and Buildings</b></p> <p>The character, appearance, setting, diversity and cultural significance of the Borough's historical assets will be protected and enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving and enhancing the character, appearance and setting of buildings, structures, areas and landscapes of historic, architectural, cultural or archaeological interest based on an assessment of their importance and value; and</li> <li>• Seeking enhancement of historical assets and heritage features in development that contributes to local identity and sense of place.</li> </ul> <p>Protecting, reviewing and applying the Conservation Area Appraisals to the Borough's Conservation Areas</p>	'No effect' policy. Focuses on conservation for historic environment.	No.
<p><b>Gypsies and Travellers</b></p> <p>The preferred option is to accord with the pitch requirement identified in the Draft RSS by accommodating this additional need on existing gypsy and traveller sites within the Borough. Existing pitch capacity exists at the Council-owned site along Hay Lane.</p> <p>Proposals for additional gypsy and traveler facilities to be addressed through a policy that makes reference to a clearly identified need that cannot be met on an existing site.</p>	'No effect' policy. PPA will not, in itself lead to further development. Policy accommodates growth in gypsy and traveller community at existing sites.	No.
<p><b>Travelling Showpeople</b></p> <p>The preferred option is to continue to engage with the Showmen's Guild to assess needs for travelling showpeople in Swindon Borough and, if required, identify appropriate measures to accommodate that need.</p>	'No effect' policy. PPA will not, in itself lead to development.	No

### Appendix 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes Review

Regional Spatial Strategy	
Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026 (SWRA 2006)	
Document Details	Potential impacts that could cause 'in-combination' effects
<p>The Draft RSS for the South West is intended to replace the existing Regional Planning Guidance for the South West. It outlines sub-regional policy and guidance for the environment, housing, transport and the economy and employment. Developments relevant to the HRA include:</p> <p>Growth of employment and housing at Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Swindon</b> increase in jobs by 32,000 over plan period. Average annual increase of 1,750 dwelling. 12,000 dwellings at strategic urban extension. (34,000 houses in the Borough by 2026).</li> <li>▪ <b>Chippenham</b> increase in 6,300 jobs and average housing provision of 225 dwellings per annum.</li> <li>▪ <b>Trowbridge</b> allow for 11,700 jobs and average housing provision of 250 dwellings per annum.</li> <li>▪ <b>Salisbury</b> provision for 13,500 jobs and average housing provision of 250 dwellings per annum.</li> <li>▪ <b>Bath</b> increase by 20,200 jobs over plan period and average housing provision of 375 dwellings per annum.</li> </ul> <p>Transport Developments to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of the A303/A358 as a strategic route.</li> <li>▪ Promotion of strategic network for HGV as opposed to country routes.</li> </ul> <p>A target of installed electricity generating capacity (MWe) from a range of onshore renewable technologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wiltshire – 65-85</li> <li>▪ Gloucestershire – 40-50</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing and employment growth may lead to increased transport movements - the potential for in-combination effect is greater where housing sites are in proximity to Natura 2000 sites.</li> <li>▪ Water abstraction for expanding communities may affect groundwater and surface water locally and more widely.</li> <li>▪ New communities require increased infrastructure – potential for land take, pollution increase, disturbance/ severance of habitats and species.</li> <li>▪ Growth in requirement for waste management/ transport disposal from new communities and businesses has the potential to increase pollution, and introduce land take issues.</li> <li>▪ Recreation pressures may result from housing developments near/ adjacent to Natura 2000 sites.</li> </ul>

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The Panel Report on the RSS (Jan 08) notes the need for cooperation across administrative boundaries to address the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Local Development Frameworks	
Saved - West Wiltshire District Plan 1 <sup>st</sup> Alteration (adopted June 2004)	
Document details	Potential impacts that could cause 'in-combination' effects
<p>All the policies (exceptions noted 27 Sept 07) within the West Wiltshire District Plan 1<sup>st</sup> Alteration have been saved and continue to apply in West Wiltshire.</p> <p>The West Wilts Plan, which took its direction from the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 (to be superseded by the SW RSS in 2008) set out the following key requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 14,000 additional dwellings in West Wiltshire concentrated on the Towns of <b>Trowbridge, Melksham and Westbury</b> with lesser allocation in Bradford on Avon and Warminster – including urban extensions at Melksham and Trowbridge.</li> <li>▪ District population forecast to grow from 109,300 to 125,400.</li> <li>▪ Significant housing growth at Warminster and Bradford on Avon avoided due to environmental constraints.</li> <li>▪ Employment land provision should aim to reduce out commuting, provision made for 150ha – focused at <b>Trowbridge, Westbury and Melksham</b> as opposed to environmentally sensitive areas at Warminster and Bradford on Avon.</li> <li>▪ Safeguarding of the land to support A350 improvements at Westbury. Improvements to the A303 and consideration of a Bradford on Avon bypass.</li> <li>▪ Re-opening of rural rail stations (Staverton, Codford) and a possible new facility at Trowbridge White Horse Business Park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing and employment growth may lead to increased transport movements - the potential for in-combination effect is greater where housing/ employment sites are close to sites.</li> <li>▪ Water abstraction for expanding communities may affect groundwater and surface water locally and more widely.</li> <li>▪ New communities require increased infrastructure – potential for land take, pollution increase, disturbance/ severance of habitats and species.</li> <li>▪ Growth in requirement for waste management/ transport disposal from new communities and businesses has the potential to increase pollution, and introduce land take issues.</li> <li>▪ Recreation pressures may result from housing developments near/ adjacent to Natura 2000 sites however potential impacts lessened by focus on existing urban areas (Trowbridge, Melksham) away from sites with recreational sensitivities.</li> </ul>

Local Development Frameworks	
Kennet District Council Core Strategy Issues and Options (March 2007)	
Aim of the document	Potential impacts that could cause 'in-combination' effects
<p>In March 2007 Kennet consulted on four issues papers (housing, environment, economic issues and community issues) to inform the core strategy. The key issues arising from the Issues paper relevant to the HRA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most of Kennet's 159ha of employment land is in <b>Devizes</b> (55%) the rest is distributed between Marlborough, Pewsey, Tidworth/Ludgershall and rural locations. Around 6.9 ha is required to meet new demand.</li> <li>▪ The Draft RSS states an annual requirement of 250 homes per annum within Kennet.</li> <li>▪ The district has averaged an annual build of 314 dwelling (1991-2006) of which <b>Devizes</b> has received 46%.</li> <li>▪ Kennet's SA Scoping Report (July 2006) notes the need for Kennet to consider Habitat Regulations Assessment for strategic development options given the number of designated sites in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing and employment growth may lead to increased transport movements - the potential for in-combination effect is greater where housing/ employment sites are close to sites.</li> <li>▪ Water abstraction for expanding communities may affect groundwater and surface water locally and more widely.</li> <li>▪ New communities require increased infrastructure – potential for land take, pollution increase, disturbance/ severance of habitats and species.</li> <li>▪ Growth in requirement for waste management/ transport disposal from new communities and businesses has the potential to increase pollution, and introduce land take issues.</li> <li>▪ Recreation pressures may result from housing developments near/ adjacent to Natura 2000 sites however potential impacts lessened by focus on existing urban areas (Trowbridge, Melksham) away from sites with recreational sensitivities.</li> </ul>

Local Development Frameworks	
North Wiltshire District Council Core Strategy Issues and Options (May 2007 second consultation)	
Document Details	Potential impacts that could cause 'in-combination' effects
<p>The North Wiltshire District Council Core Strategy second consultation presents detail on the direction of future growth within individual settlements, the development control policies that will apply, options for settlement hierarchies, how the places of North Wilts will look by 2026.</p> <p>Key issues of relevance for the HRA include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development (retailing) to be focused on <b>Chippenham</b> and the towns of <b>Calne, Corsham, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett</b>.</li> <li>▪ Chippenham an average housing completion rate of 225 dwellings per annum.</li> <li>▪ The provision of 6,3000 jobs within the Chippenham travel to work area – as required by the Draft SW RSS. Assumption of at least 12ha of additional employment land in the plan period.</li> <li>▪ Development in and around <b>the Cotswold Water Park</b> will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that irreversible damage to the environment is avoided.</li> <li>▪ Provision for approximately 10,000 dwellings (4,500 Chippenham, 1,000 Western Swindon, 4,500 elsewhere).</li> <li>▪ SACs are considered as Special Policy Areas and development must be consistent with and protect the designation – proposed core policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing and employment growth may lead to increased transport movements - the potential for in-combination effect is greater where housing/ employment sites are close to sites. Core policies recognise statutory protections – in particular in relation to North Meadow and Clattinger Farm.</li> <li>▪ Water abstraction for expanding communities may affect groundwater and surface water locally and more widely.</li> <li>▪ New communities require increased infrastructure – potential for land take, pollution increase, disturbance/ severance of habitats and species.</li> <li>▪ Growth in requirement for waste management/ transport disposal from new communities and businesses has the potential to increase pollution, and introduce land take issues.</li> <li>▪ Recreation pressures may result from housing developments near/ adjacent to Natura 2000 sites however, the proposed development in North Wilts not proximal to key designations considered in this HRA.</li> </ul>

Waste and Minerals Plans	
Berkshire Waste and Minerals Core Strategy – Preferred Options (September 2007)	
Document Details	Potential impacts that could cause ‘in-combination’ effects
<p>The Joint Minerals and Waste Development Framework (JMWDF) has been prepared by the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit to cover the six Unitary Authorities that serve the area. The Preferred Option seeks to:</p> <p><b>Waste</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Site waste facilities in urban locations to the <b>East of Berkshire</b>, with transfer and treatment facilities in the west – in each case making use of urban or previously developed sites where available.</li> <li>▪ Landfill opportunities in the western area are restricted due to aquifer protection zone, therefore, potential new capacity will be focused in the east.</li> <li>▪ 80% of Berkshire to the west of Reading is designated AONB – limiting choices for waste facilities and placing constraints on minerals working.</li> </ul> <p><b>Minerals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Berkshire’s main mineral resources are sand and gravel, clay and chalk.</li> <li>▪ Preferred areas for sand and gravel extraction are to be identified through the Minerals and Waste DPD (although will relate to existing riverine deposits). Soft sand deposits are too variable for preferred areas to be defined – an upper limit on sand extraction from the AONB 150,000 tonnes exists with future focus on proposals away from current areas of working but within the Reading Formation.</li> </ul> <p>Scoping work for HRA is underway in relation to the JMWDF.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The potential for increased transport and associated impacts/ pollution incidents from Berkshire waste sites is extremely unlikely due to the focus of the strategy on urban areas in the east of the County – a significant distance from Wiltshire’s designated sites.</li> <li>▪ A similar approach is proposed in Wiltshire’s Waste Core Strategy which further serves to prevent in-combination effects as activity will be concentrated in urban areas distant from designated sites.</li>   <li>▪ Minerals workings within Berkshire are constrained by SAC designations within the County boundary.</li> </ul>

Waste and Minerals Plans	
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Preferred Options (February 2007)	
Document Details	Potential impacts that could cause ‘in-combination’ effects
<p>The Minerals and Waste Development Framework provides a basis for policy and strategy in the lower level development plan documents. The preferred options seek to:</p> <p><b>Waste</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Locate waste facilities <b>within or close to urban areas</b> and on previously developed land. Greenfield sites will be considered in the context of national policy.</li> <li>▪ Cross boundary transfer of waste will be accommodated – principally relates to London.</li> </ul> <p><b>Minerals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oxfordshire needs to make provision for 1.82 million tones of sand and gravel and 1.0 million tones of crushed rock from local won sources over the plan period (to 2026).</li> <li>▪ Sharp sand and gravel to continue in the existing resource area of <b>West Oxfordshire</b>, new working areas to be sought in Southern Oxfordshire outside the AONB. Options for soft sand working are all within the <b>Faringdon, Oxford, Abingdon area</b>.</li> <li>▪ Crushed rock extraction to focus in the Witney – Burford area (South of A40) and the area east/northeast of Woodstock/ Chipping Norton.</li> <li>▪ The Preferred Options note the need for HRA scoping with regard to SAC sites in Oxfordshire and these proposed minerals working.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oxfordshire’s focus on self sufficiency in waste and a strategy approach that mirrors neighbouring counties (focusing major waste facilities in urban areas and at existing locations) means that adverse impacts on designated sites are extremely unlikely. There are no sites screened into the HRA for which in-combination impacts are likely.</li> <li>▪ The sand and rock extraction areas for Oxfordshire are on the north east boundary of Swindon and relatively close to the Cotswold water park. This has the potential for in-combination effects on North Meadow and Clattinger Farm, as a result of increased threats to hydrology.</li> </ul>

Waste and Minerals Plans	
Gloucestershire County Council Waste Core Strategy – Issues and Options Gloucestershire County Council Minerals Core Strategy – Preferred Options (Jan 2008)	
Document Details	Potential impacts that could cause ‘in-combination’ effects
<p>Gloucestershire’s Waste Core Strategy is currently at Issues and Options Stage.</p> <p><b>Waste</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation has taken place on a centralised and dispersed spatial strategy for waste locations. Policies to avoid internationally designated sites are proposed.</li> <li>▪ Habitats Regulations Assessment screening work for the Waste Issues and Options by Gloucestershire has determined that in most of the options being considered for waste management, there is <b>unlikely to a significant adverse effect on the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC</b> that lies within Wiltshire’s boundaries. Where uncertainty exists it relates to the fact that exact site locations have yet to be defined.</li> </ul> <p><b>Minerals</b></p> <p>Gloucestershire is currently consulting on the preferred options for the Minerals Core Strategy (31 Jan 08 – 12 March 08).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A number of options for sand and gravel extraction are considered. 1. <b>Upper Thames Valley and the Severn Vale Corridor</b>; 2. <b>Upper Thames Valley within Gloucestershire section</b>.</li> <li>▪ Options for crushed rock provision are split between the Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire with possible supply from North Somerset/ Somerset if a more strategic sub regional approach is taken.</li> <li>▪ Although the HRA requirement is noted in the Minerals documents, a HRA screening report is not currently available alongside the preferred options documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Gloucestershire approach mirrors neighbouring counties in focusing waste near source and making use of existing facilities. Screening has not identified likely significant effects from Waste facilities – although acknowledges that Appropriate Assessment for North Meadow may be necessary when site locations are known.</li>   <li>▪ The two locational options for sand and gravel extraction include proposed extraction in the Upper Thames Valley resource zone. There is potential for in-combination effects with the Wiltshire Core Strategy on North Meadow and Clattinger Farm, as a result of increased threats to hydrology.</li> </ul>

Transport Plans	
Swindon Borough Council Local Transport Plan 2006-2011	
Aim of the document	Elements of the plan that could cause 'in-combination' effects
<p>Presents a 5 year strategy for transport in Swindon setting out aim, objectives actions and targets. The plan includes the priorities accessibility, congestion, air quality and road safety.</p>	<p>Increase road maintenance to improve road quality, increase public transport and reduce traffic flows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Infrastructure development including links to support the North of Swindon development area – potential for increase traffic/ access to environmentally sensitive sites to the North and North West of Swindon (North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC).</li> <li>▪ Increase traffic generation &amp; potential Site disturbance</li> <li>▪ Increase in waste</li> <li>▪ Potential impacts on air, noise and water pollution</li> <li>▪ Increased access to sites via public transport</li> <li>▪ Construction process – direct impacts and knock on effects</li> </ul>

### Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS)

#### The Bristol Avon CAMS (April 2005)

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waterres/564321/309477/?lang=e>

#### Document Details

The Bristol Avon has a total catchment area of about 2220km<sup>2</sup> flowing 134kms from its source at Malmesbury to its outlet at Avonmouth. The River basin is encircled by the Cotswold Hills, Salisbury Plain and the Mendips.

Major public water abstractions are made from ground and surface water in the Malmesbury area and across the whole of the catchment including for Bath. By volume this public water abstraction is the greatest usage (39%). There are 338 licensed groundwater abstraction points and 184 licensed surface water abstraction points.

Ecological quality across the catchment is good. Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC and the Salisbury Plain SAC/ SPA fall within the boundary of the Bristol Avon.

Of the 10 management units within the catchment – the CAMS notes two, Bathford Groundwater and River Mells Groundwater, as being ‘overlicensed’ (if abstraction license holders abstract their full legal limit during low flows, the current amount of abstraction licenses may cause an environmental impact).

### Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS)

#### Hampshire Avon CAMS

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waterres/564321/309477/?lang=e>

#### Document Details

The River Avon is one of the most biodiverse chalk rivers in Britain supporting habitats and species that are considered rare or threatened on an international scale. The Hampshire Avon CAMS covers the entire catchment of the River Avon and its tributaries. The area covers parts of Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset with a catchment area of approx 1700km<sup>2</sup>. The main tributaries are the River Nadder, River Wylye, River Ebble and River Bourne.

There are currently 502 abstraction licenses within the CAMS area (public water supply accounts for 89.2% of usage). The river and its ecology are currently affected by a number of factors including abstraction – there is a need to reduce the level and timing of abstraction in the catchment to ensure the integrity of the riverine ecosystem. Importantly the chalk catchment means that groundwater abstractions

### Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS)

#### Hampshire Avon CAMS

[http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waterres/564321/309477/?lang=\\_e](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waterres/564321/309477/?lang=_e)

have an impact on surface water due to the close interaction between the two water bodies. The Chalk and Upper Greensands areas of the catchment are classified as major aquifers, they are highly productive and of regional importance for large public water supply abstractions. Public water supply reservoirs are also downstream between Salisbury and Christchurch.

The majority of the Hampshire Avon and its tributaries form part of the Natura 2000 network. The Environment Agency is currently establishing whether existing permissions and consents are resulting in detrimental impacts in the context of the Habitats Directive (this is a 4 stage process including appropriate assessment of permissions if necessary) due for completion in March 2008.

Wessex Water and Bournemouth and Hampshire Water are currently researching the impacts of abstraction and investigating possible alternative sources of water in light of the known impacts of over abstraction.

## Appendix 4: Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening

Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Table: Core Strategies				
Site	HACKPEN HILL Unitary Authority Oxfordshire Area (ha): 35.83			
Potential Impacts from Core Strategy	Risk of Significant Effect?	Potential Impacts – other Plans and Programmes	Risk from ‘In Combination’ Effects?	AA Required
<p>The Swindon Core Strategy proposes a significant urban extension of 12,000 houses to the east of the town (Eastern Development Area). Population growth can lead to increased recreational pressures at rural sites. Recreational pressure is not identified as a key issue at this site, which has restricted access due to private ownership. The main pressures at this site relate to overgrazing and periodic damage from rabbits.</p> <p>The Core Strategy proposes extensive development of quality greenspace and blue infrastructure (rivers, lakes, canals) as part of the development plan providing safe and accessible recreational assets for the expanded population. These strategic objectives provide strong and appropriate mitigation for potential recreational pressures arising.</p> <p>The South East Plan AA noted that this site also requires minimal levels of air pollution for habitat integrity to be maintained and indicated that critical loads at this site may be an issue. However, the assessment also noted that there are no major roads within 200m of this site, a distance beyond which air pollution impacts that may arise from traffic, fall to background levels.</p>	No	Housing development in the Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire with associated car use may lead to increased air pollution, however, there are no major roads within 200m of this site, a distance beyond which air pollution impacts that may arise from traffic, fall to background levels.	No	No

Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Table: Core Strategies				
Site	KENNET & LAMBOURN FLOODPLAIN Unitary Authorities: Wiltshire, West Berkshire Area (ha): 114.47			
Potential Impacts from Core Strategy	Risk of Significant Effect?	Potential Impacts – other Plans and Programmes	Risk from 'In Combination' Effects?	AA Required
<p>Swindon is identified by the South West RSS as a strategically significant town and the Swindon Core Strategy provides broad areas for the focus of development for the next 20 years. Urban extensions are planned for the North/North West, East and South of the town. Increased development places pressure on water abstraction levels and waste water treatment capacity.</p> <p>Although consultation with Natural England suggested that the abstraction at the Kennet and Lambourn was not an issue, other studies have suggested that the Kennet catchment is sensitive to abstraction and earlier work for the South East RSS AA (2006) has noted that abstraction in this catchment is at or near its limits. Whilst the Swindon Water Cycle Study (March, 2007) suggests that there is sufficient water capacity and waste water treatment facility available (until 2026) to accommodate the development scenarios proposed, there is potential for significant impact in the medium to long term.</p>	Yes	<p>Development of 10,500 new houses in West Berkshire may result in reduced water supply to the SAC. This district is also expected to experience a water resource deficit of between 1 and 4 mega litres per day by 2026 (South East RSS AA, 2006). Additionally wastewater disposal and water quality treatment is considered by the EA to be at capacity in this area.</p>	Yes	yes

Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Table: Core Strategies				
Site	<b>NORTH MEADOW &amp; CLATTINGER FARM</b> Unitary Authority: Wiltshire Area (ha): 104.88			
Potential Impacts from Core Strategy	Risk of Significant Effect?	Potential Impacts – other Plans and Programmes	Risk from ‘In Combination’ Effects?	AA Required
<p>The Core Strategy proposes urban extensions to the North/North West of the town centre on the urban fringes. Increased housing development has the potential to increase recreational pressures and generate air quality issues (particularly through traffic increases) for the surrounding receiving environment. Housing growth also poses issues of abstraction and places demands on water treatment and disposal.</p> <p>The Core Strategy proposes extensive development of quality greenspace and blue infrastructure as part of the development plan providing safe and accessible recreational assets for the expanded population. These strategic objectives provide strong and appropriate mitigation for potential recreational pressures arising and it is unlikely that recreational pressures from new development will adversely affect this site.</p> <p>The South West RSS AA noted that deposition air pollutants at North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC do not exceed critical loads, however, higher levels of the aerial pollutant Ozone have been recorded. Ozone pollution formed from Nitrogen Oxide pollutants can travel from urban areas of production, to rural areas.</p> <p>Water levels and quality are key to maintaining habitat integrity at the SAC. The Swindon Water Cycle Study</p>	Yes	<p>Improvement to the trunk road network, specifically the A417/A419 may increase traffic and associated pollutants.</p> <p>The Gloucestershire County Council Minerals Core Strategy (Preferred Options Jan 2008) proposes two locational options for sand and gravel extraction include proposed extraction in the Upper Thames Valley resource zone. Water levels and quality are potentially affected.</p> <p>The Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council Minerals and Waste Core Strategies include minerals and waste development in the Thames Resource Zone. The AA of the Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough</p>	Yes	Yes

<p>(March 2007) has indicated that there is sufficient capacity to cope with proposed development.</p>		<p>Council Minerals and Waste Core Strategies has demonstrated that the Core Strategy policies provide strong protection for the vulnerabilities at this site, and includes specific recommendations for Development Control policies and site allocations.</p>		
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Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Table: Core Strategies				
Site	PEWSEY DOWNS Unitary Authority: Wiltshire Area (ha): 153.87			
Potential Impacts from Core Strategy	Risk of Significant Effect?	Potential Impacts – other Plans and Programmes	Risk from 'In Combination' Effects?	AA Required
<p>The Core Strategy proposes urban extensions to the North/North West, East and South of the town centre on the urban fringes. Increased housing development has the potential to increase recreational pressures and generate air quality issues (particularly through traffic increases) for the surrounding receiving environment.</p> <p>The Core Strategy proposes extensive development of quality greenspace and blue infrastructure (rivers, lakes, canals) as part of the development plan providing safe and accessible recreational assets for the expanded population. These strategic objectives provide strong and appropriate mitigation for potential recreational pressures arising and it is unlikely that recreational pressures from new development will adversely affect this site. Pewsey Downs is more than 19km from the proposed new centres of development.</p>	No.	<p>Kennet District Council Core Strategy includes housing proposals for nearby Devizes.</p> <p>The South West RSS notes the potential for a growth in tourism to increase recreational pressures at this site.</p>	No – effects arising from other plans should be assessed in their own right.	No

Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Table: Core Strategies				
Site	RIVER LAMBOURN Unitary Authority: West Berkshire Area (ha): 27.27			
Potential Impacts from Core Strategy	Risk of Significant Effect?	Potential Impacts – other Plans and Programmes	Risk from ‘In Combination’ Effects?	AA Required
<p>Swindon is identified by the South West RSS as a strategically significant town and the Swindon Core Strategy provides broad areas for the focus of development for the next 20 years. Urban extensions are planned for the North/North West, East and South of the town. Increased development places pressure on water abstraction levels and waste water treatment capacity.</p> <p>The SAC is vulnerable to water abstraction and pollution incidents and the catchment has been heavily modified. Whilst the Swindon Water Cycle Study (March, 2007) suggests that there is sufficient water capacity and waste water treatment facility available (until 2026) to accommodate the development scenarios proposed, there is potential for significant impact in the medium to long term.</p>	Yes	<p>South East Plan AA notes a risk of significant effect from water abstraction and water treatments works and landfill discharges.</p> <p>Development of 10,500 new houses in West Berkshire may result in reduced water supply to the SAC. This district is also expected to experience a water resource deficit of between 1 and 4 mega litres per day by 2026 (South East RSS AA, 2006).</p> <p>Additionally wastewater disposal and water quality treatment is considered by the EA to be at capacity in this area.</p>	Yes	Yes