HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT SCREENING

UNDER REGULATION 61 OF THE CONSERVATION OF HABITATS & SPECIES REGULATIONS 2010 (ARTICLE 6 (3) EC HABITATS DIRECTIVE)

This Likely Significant Effect Screening Matrix follows the good practice methodology set out in the European Commission ‘Managing Natura 2000 sites’ (2000). The methodology forms part of a robust, yet flexible, transparent and objective approach to the assessment of project and plans which require assessment under Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Screening is the first stage in what can be a four stage process. Other stages include ‘appropriate assessment’, ‘assessment of alternative solutions’ and ‘assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain’. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

Screening is a process which identifies the likely impacts upon a European Site/European Site Feature of a project or plan, either alone, and where appropriate in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. In order to ensure objectivity the screening assessment is initially undertaken in the absence of any mitigation measures which may have already been designed into the project.

Where potentially negative effects are identified from a project or plan and a scientific evaluation of the risks (because of insufficient data or their inconclusive or imprecise nature) makes it impossible to determine with sufficient certainty the risk in question the precautionary principle will be applied. This means that the emphasis on assessment should demonstrate that there will be no significant. The precautionary principle is applied proportionally to the project or plan in question.

SCREENING MATRIX

| Name of project or plan, including planning application number and address. | 1. Cinderford Northern Quarter Masterplan & Design Code (MDC) Final Draft March-July 2013  
2. The Masterplan and design codes are part of a family of documents that support and provided further guidance to the adopted Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action plan. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?</td>
<td>No.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Description of the project or plan: size, scale, physical requirements of construction, operation and where relevant decommissioning. In addition application area and distances. | 1) The MDC relates to an area of 85ha with the Northern Quarter develop taking place over approximately approximately 25% of this area.  
2) **The adopted Core Strategy** Policy CSP. 11  
“The Cinderford Northern Quarter will be allocated as an area for mixed development to lead the regeneration of the town. Land will be set aside for approximately 175 dwellings, about 6ha of employment generation uses and about 3.5ha for mixed uses. These will include cultural, educational and recreational provision together with ancillary service space. All will be set within the forest environment and will lead on innovation, design and energy efficiency.”  
3) **The Adopted Area Action Plan** Policy 7 Masterplan and Design Codes  
“Development proposals should accord significantly with the indicative Masterplan drawings in the AAP and the design code which is being prepared in parallel. The Council will consider the adoption of the Design Code as a Supplementary Planning Document following the adoption of the Area Action Plan. Proposals which come forward in isolation from the AAP, or prejudice the successful implementation of the proposals will be treated as premature. The Council will require developers to pursue design and development solutions which adhere to the approach set out in the AAP.” |
4) The Masterplan and Design Code in its self does not support or promote any individual projects, it provides design guidance for proposals coming forward as part of the AAP (p5).

4.5) Masterplan
The Masterplan provides the broad spatial, urban design, movement and land use principles that cover the entire Northern Quarter site.

a. Sustainability Statement (section 2) provides and overview as to how the MDC has responded to the objectives of its sustainability framework.

b. Vision and Options (section 3) sets out vision’s, themes and objectives for the masterplan. This section considers constrains, assets and opportunities.

c. Design Principles (section 3.5) are a set of criteria for evolving the masterplan.

d. Evolution of masterplan (section 3.4) outlines how the masterplan was developed.

e. Masterplan (section 4) is a framework of themed masterplans covering:
   i. Character areas
   ii. Landuse
   iii. Movement and public transport
   iv. Landscape and biodiversity
   v. Views and vistas
   vi. Height and densities
   vii. Waste and energy

5.6) Design Code (section 5.0) are a set of written and illustrated rules to instruct the physical development of a site. The purpose of the Code is to set down design guidance for the delivery of the Northern Quarter AAP. The Design Code will be used as a tool by the project leaders. It will help to ensure that the regeneration and future development of key sites in the Northern Quarter happen in a way that is consistent with exemplary design principles that follow best practice in terms of place-making and improving the public realm. The Design Code could be used in the developer selection process, as developer project teams must respond to the document.

a. Character areas (section 6). 5 character areas for the AAP are identified. The characteristics (street type, landuse, Building type, Height, Block types, Set backs and front gardens and perks and open spaces) are described.

b. Movement Framework (section 7). Four key types of streets are identified and described as primary, secondary, tertiary and non car. For each one the design speed, street dimensions & character, transport infrastructure and parking characteristics are described.

c. Blocks and built form (section 8) provides general principles for building types. Detailing building elements (Height, type, boundaries, external space and external finishes) and building materials.

d. Public Realm (section 9. Public realm spaces will be guided by key 7 principles:
   i. Public spaces for activity and vitality
   ii. Play spaces for children
   iii. Clutter free and accessible public spaces
   iv. Materials and planting
   v. Public art
   vi. Lighting
   vii. Public spaces for activity

e) Materials (section 10). This section describes good practice principles regarding the use of different finishes and materials in construction.

f) Delivery (section 11). The implementation of masterplan will be broadly phase in 3 phases. There are some areas which will not be subject to phasing.

g) Management and Maintenance (section 11.3). Refers to three options for the management of open space.

h) Mine workings and fill material (section 11.4) Identifies that mush of the site is covered by loosely-compacted fill material.
2. Description of the European Site (SAC or SPA) European Site Feature including: reasons for designation.

1. The Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) consists of a network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Gloucester and Gwent. The SAC was selected on the grounds of its exceptional breeding population of lesser horseshoe bats and because it represents the main maternity area for Greater horseshoe bats along the England/Wales border. The Conservation objectives for the SAC are as follows: avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

2. At the former Northern United Depot some of the buildings and an existing nearby Artificial Roost together support a large colony of lesser horseshoe bats during the summer months. Whilst these buildings are not designated as part of the SAC the lesser horseshoe bats supported by them during the summer months are thought to hibernate at a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including Westbury Brook Ironstone Mine, Wigpool Ironstone Mine, and Buckshaft Mine & Bradley Hill Railway Tunnel, which form part of the larger Wye Valley and Dean Plateau Bat SAC, during the winter.

3. Four other European sites lie within a 15km radius of the site. These include:
   - the River Wye SAC qualifying primarily for its beds of rannunculus fluitans and callitricho-batrachion, white-clawed crayfish, sea, brook and river lamprey, twaite shad, atlantic salmon, bullhead and otter (3.8km from site, 12% favourable and remainder unfavourable recovering condition at 1st Jan 2013);
   - the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC qualifying primarily for its Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests, Tilio- Acerian forests of slopes, screes and ravines and Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles (5.8km from site, multiple sites in varying degrees of mostly favourable or favourable recovering condition);
   - the Severn Estuary SAC/Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site qualifying for its estuaries, subtidal sandbanks, mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, Atlantic salt meadows, reefs, river and sea lamprey, twaite shad and internationally important populations and assemblages of waterfowl (9.2km from the site and 95% of area in favourable condition at 1/1/2013);
   - Walmore Common SPA/Ramsar qualifying for Bewick Swan (9.2km from the site, 58% favourable and remainder unfavourable recovering condition at 1st Jan 2013).

Assessment criteria

5. Describe the existing baseline (and historic) conditions at the site.

1. The Plan area is surrounded by woodland on three sides.
2. From previous survey information it is known that together the Artificial Roost and Northern United Depot buildings, during the summer of 2012, supported a colony of at least 340 lesser horseshoe bats. Lesser horseshoe bats are known to have used these buildings for a number of years.
3. From survey work undertaken in 2011 (bat activity, transect and tagging surveys) it is known that important lesser horseshoe bats forage areas from the Northern United Depot buildings and Artificial roosts are concentrated in wooded areas within 3km of the roost and do not occur within areas proposed for development as part of the Cinderford AAP.
4. From survey work undertaken in 2011 (bat activity, transect and tagging surveys) it is known that a number of major flyways (connecting to important forage areas) for lesser horseshoe bats from the Northern United Depot buildings and Artificial roosts exist and these are all located to the west of the Steam Mills Lake.
5. A large proportion of the wider Plan area contains blocks of coniferous, broadleaved and mixed woodland which will be retained as part of the plan. It also contains significant areas of marshy and semi-improved grassland as well as lakes, ponds, streams and scrub. Existing buildings currently make up only a small proportion of the total area.
6. The Plan area is surrounded on three sides by extensive woodland. Broadleaves currently make up 40% and 31% of the woodlands to the north and south of the AAP area respectively. Forest Design Plans aim to increase the broadleaf content

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6. Describe, without mitigation (avoidance or reduction measures), the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European Site/ European Site Feature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1)</th>
<th>It is considered that there no significant effects on the following European Sites:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. River Wye SAC. The nearest part of the site is 3.8 km away from the plan area. Pathways of air, water and disturbance will have no significant effect the European site, because they are so remote from the plan area. They would not undermine the conservation objectives for the site.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Wye Valley Woodland SAC. The nearest site is 5.8 km away from the plan area. Pathways of air, water and disturbance will have no significant effect the European site, because they are so remote from the plan area. They would not undermine the conservation objectives for the site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Severn Estuary SAC/Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar. The nearest part of the site is 9.2 km away from the plan area. Pathways of air, water and disturbance will have no significant effect the European site, because they are so remote from the plan area. They would not undermine the conservation objectives for the site.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Walmore Common SPA/Ramsar. The nearest part of the site is 9.2 km away from the plan area. Pathways of air, water and disturbance will have no significant effect the European site, because they are so remote from the plan area. They would not undermine the conservation objectives for the site.</td>
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2. Two plan aspects, where there is potential for Likely significant Effects, have been identified (Table A):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>Landuse masterplan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Potential for interruption of important flyways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Density masterplan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Potential for interruption of important flyways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Potential for disturbance as a result of high density development close to roost sites</td>
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See Table A for further details

7. Describe any potential impact pathways which could give rise to likely significant effects on a European Site. (direct, indirect or secondary, alone or in combination with other plans or projects)

| 1. | Increased lighting |
| 2. | Removal of vegetation in key flyways |
| 3. | Density of development creating barriers to important flyways |
| 4. | Disturbance from increased human activity close to important flyways and roosts. |

8. Describe any mitigation (avoidance, cancellation or reduction) measures that would eliminate or reduce to minor residual likely significant effects on a European site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>Primary Lesser Horseshoe bat flyways have been identified (Keynote 5a - Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, Cinderford Northern Quarter) September 2011. The Area Action Plan policy 10 (page 46) sets out the principles and requirements to maintain Lesser Horseshoe bat primary corridors. Policy 15 (page 65) sets out requirements for the spine road to maintain primary bat corridors. Policy 26 (page 84) requires development proposals to identify any likely significant effects on European sites within 15km. The masterplan and design code sets out that development proposals must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Regulations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Residual impacts following mitigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>No likely significant effects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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2. Primary Lesser Horseshoe bat flyways have been identified (Keynote 5a - Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, Cinderford Northern Quarter) September 2011. The Area Action Plan policy 10 (page 46) sets out the principles and requirements to maintain Lesser Horseshoe bat primary corridors. Policy 26 (page 84) requires development proposals to identify and likely significant effects on European sites within 15km. Residential areas are not adjacent to primary bat corridors or roosts for Lesser Horseshoe bats. The masterplan and design code makes provision for permeability in relation to character areas through landscaping and open space (Pages 40-42, 52-54 & 57). The Area Action Plan (policy 10) and the masterplan and design code provide for both formal and informal open space (Pages 40-42, 52-54 & 57). This is away from roost sites. The MDC sets out that maintenance of foraging and commuting routes is also critical in addition to roosting provision. Projects coming forward will need to ensure foraging and commuting routes are maintained. This is especially relevant for the spine road where a comprehensive mitigation package will need to secure existing routes (p40).

See Table B for details.

| 9. Where minor residual effects (alone) are present consider impacts of from other plans or projects (in combination effects) | No residual effects identified |

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS MATRIX (only for completion where it can be concluded from the screening matrix that there will be no significant effect on the European Site/European Site Feature).

Summary

The MDC largely contains general policy statements that do not lead to development (table a). Potential for likely significant effects was only identified in relation to the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean bat SAC. The assessment identified potential for likely significant effects in relation to interruption of important flyways and disturbance as a result of high density development close to roost sites. After taking into consideration mitigation measures set out in in the Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan and in the MDC itself, it is considered there are no likely significant effects as a result of the MDC Plan. In the absence of any likely significant effects Therefore no in combination effects have been identified either are possible.

List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or email address.

| Natural England, Sally King, Exeter Land Use Team | Sally.King@naturalengland.org.uk Tel: 0300 060 2065 | Date Consulted 19th March 2013 |

Response to consultation.

Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the council’s likely significant effect screening. Natural England recommended some amendments to the MDC to highlight its purpose and function and the requirements of Habitats Regulations Assessments as proposals come forward (7th June 2013). These amendments have been accepted in the final MDC.

Assessment undertake by. Alastair Chapman, Sustainability Team, Forest of Dean District Council

Date of draft assessment. Friday, 15 March 2013

Date of Completed assessment Friday 21st June 2013

Data Sources. Cinderford Northern Quarter Masterplan & Design Code (MDC) Final Draft March July 2013
Ecological Supporting Statement P1448/12/OUT (Revised January 2013)
Addendum two to Ecological Supporting Statement P1448/12/OUT (January 2013)
European Site Conservation Objectives for the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites (Site code UK0014794), Natural England
Cinderford Area Action Plan (Adopted version Feb 2012)
Core Strategy (Adopted version Feb 2012)
Serridge Forest Design Plan, Forestry Commission
Astonbridge Forest Design Plan, Forestry Commission
Lesser horseshoe Bat Conservation Handbook (Vincent Wildlife Trust, 2008)
Biodiversity Strategy (version 1.2), Johns Associates P1449/12/OUT (December 2012)
Addendum to Environmental Statement, GVA (December 2012) P1449/12/OUT
Keynote 5a - Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, Cinderford Northern Quarter (September 2011)
Natural England Letter 7th June 2013 (Annex A)