


**Submission
Appendix T
Habitat
regulations
assessment**



**Screening: Habitat Regulations Assessment of Coleford
Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to 2026
(Plan version 21st February 2018 (Submission Draft))**

**Commissioned by: Coleford Town Council on behalf of the
Neighbour Development Plan Group**

Undertaken by: Forest of Dean District Council

 <p>Forest of Dean DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	Version Submission Version (February 2018) Assessment Version 1.3	Assessor: AC	Reviewer:
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Summary

The Forest of Dean District Council are commissioned by Coleford Town Council to undertake a Habitats Regulations screening assessment for the Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan (C-NDP).

This report sets out the Habitats Regulations Assessment ¹(HRA) of the C-NDP

The plan was screened for likely significant effects in relation to:

- Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat SAC (Adjoining / Within plan area S)
- Wye Valley Woodlands SAC (Nearest location 1.2km W)
- River Wye SAC (Nearest location 1.5km W)
- Severn Estuary SAC/SPA Ramsar (Nearest location 9km SE)
- Walmore Common SPA Ramsar (Nearest location 15km NE)

Following a consultation period in May-June 2017, appropriately, a number of changes were made to the plan. Further changes were also made in February 2018. This report reviews the updated plan and considers any changes to the HRA that may be required as a result.

The submission draft plan (21st February 2018) contains 24 policies related to the Coleford parish area.

Following the incorporation of the revisions, identified in a previous assessment, it is considered that the plan (21st February 2018 Submission Draft), would not likely to have significant effects on a European designated nature conservation sites alone or in combination.

The HRA has been subject to consultation with Natural England, who raised no objection to the assessment's conclusions (Appendix 4) in earlier versions and subsequent changes are not considered to have altered the plan substantially to an extent which would require re-consultation of Natural England.

The plan should be rescreened if any other influential revisions are made.

¹ EEC Directive 92/43/EEC The Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2017 the Forest of Dean District Council were commissioned by Coleford Town Council to undertake a Habitats Regulations screening assessment for the emerging Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan (C-NDP / the Plan). As the qualifying body the NDP Community Steering Group is required to assess its Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as Amended)² a process referred to here as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 1.2 This report details the findings of the first, screening stage, of the process of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the C-NDP.
- 1.3 Combined with other planning policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework, Forest of Dean Core Strategy and the Forest of Dean Allocations plan the C-NDP provides locally derived planning policy to support the implementation of a vision for the area. The NDP sets out the following vision for the plan area:

The Vision for Coleford by 2026:

Coleford Parish will be valued by its residents as a friendly, easily accessible market town, at the hub of a cluster of thriving and diverse settlements within a wider Forest community. Future development will sustain the needs of the community and also conserve the close relationship with the countryside that forms a green ring between the town and the surrounding settlements.

The town centre will have a range of interesting shops which provide local and regionally produced foods, goods and gifts for residents and visitors. There will be attractive gateways to the town and comfortable green places to sit and relax, surrounded by the well conserved natural and built heritage.

There will be a range of educational, leisure and employment opportunities available within and closer to the parish. All these, and the health and social support services will be easily accessed through good transport infrastructure and communication networks.

Visitors of all ages will remember their enjoyable experience of a wide range of interesting tourist events and heritage trails around the town and surrounding countryside.

- 1.4 The NDP has a series of plan objectives which form the basis for the development of policy reflecting; economic, social and environmental aspects

² The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

of sustainable development in relation to the NDP area over the period of the plan.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

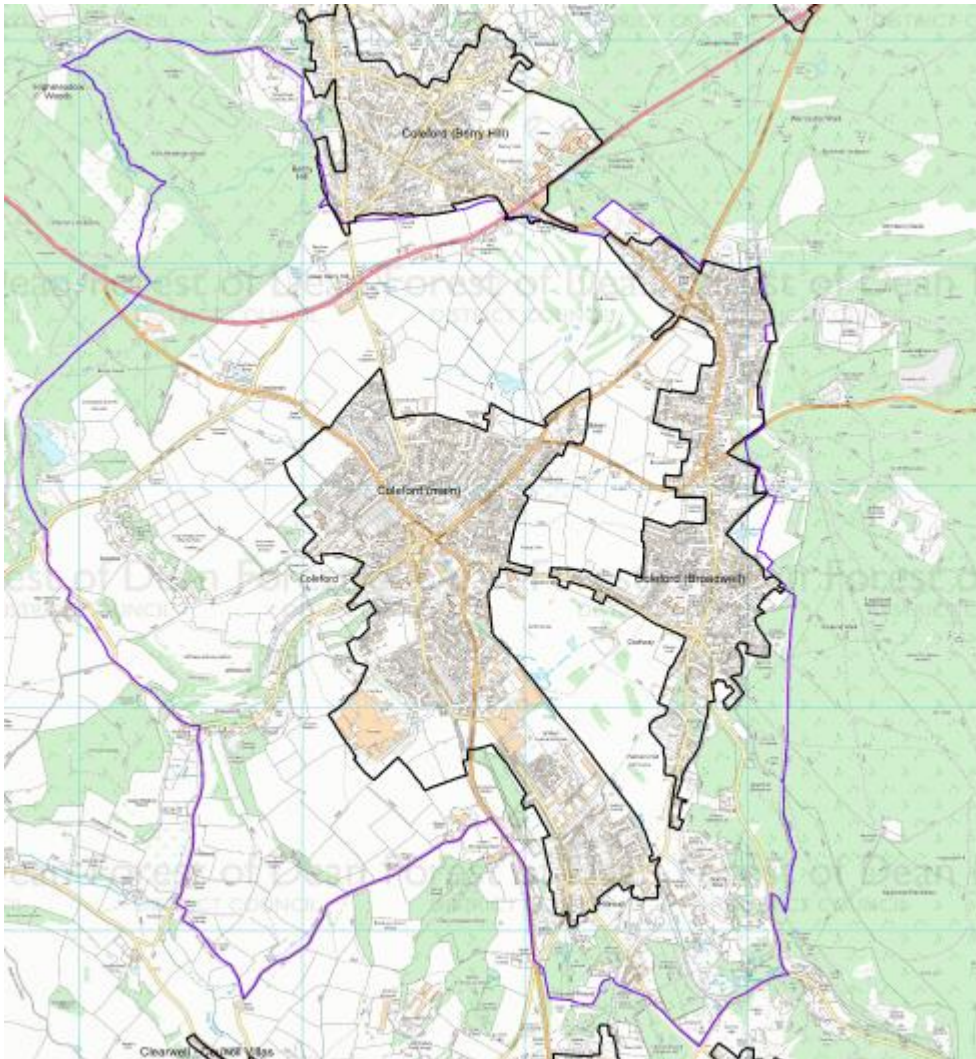
1. *To support a dynamic, vibrant and thriving town centre with an accessible, attractive environment for all.*
2. *To support the existing local economy and promote employment and growth in new businesses. In particular, tourism, by building on Coleford's position in the Forest using its outstanding built and natural heritage assets.*
3. *To promote sustainable development to meet local needs in terms of affordability and house types.*
4. *To enhance local services (public, private and statutory) and community facilities and to support investment in new services where needed.*
5. *To protect and enhance the unique historic environment of Coleford and to ensure the rich heritage assets are promoted as part of Coleford's growing role as a visitor destination.*
6. *To protect and enhance Coleford's natural environment and green spaces in the town and surrounding parished area for the benefit of wildlife and people.*
7. *To improve the appearance and function of the town's gateways and to improve car parking and public transport.*
8. *To increase the infrastructure such as for education, health, safety and well-being to cater to the increased needs of residents and visitors.*
9. *To improve accessibility for residents and visitors in all ways from safe pathways or routes, improved signposting, to broadband capacity.*

- 1.5 The plan contains 24 policies set within a framework of seven identified key areas; Town Centre, Economy, Housing, Community Facilities, Historic Environment, Natural Environment; and Transport/Infrastructure.
- 1.6 The aim of this HRA screening report is to assess whether there are any likely significant effects on nearby European designated nature conservation sites.
- 1.7 In producing this HRA screening report, the following best practice guidance has been used: Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (Updated December 2017) UK: DTA Publications Limited, www.dtapublications.co.uk

2. Coleford NDP overview

- 2.1 The plan area (Figure 1) covers an area of approximately 1000ha with a population of around 8500. The plan area includes the ‘arc’ of settlements to the south and west of Coleford Town including the areas of Mile End, Broadwell, Coalway and Milkwall. Approximately 2/3^{rds} of the area is undeveloped although there are areas of woodland and two Golf Courses within this undeveloped area.

Figure 1 NDP Area



- 2.2 Coleford itself is within a landscape bowl (170m AoD) with a rim at a round 230m AoD. The Wye Valley AONB borders the plan area to the west and includes a small area of AONB in the north of the plan area. To the east is the extensive ‘Forest of Dean’ largely under the management of the Forestry Commission. The plan area includes part of, and is adjacent to, Old Bow & Old Ham mines (SSSI & SAC). This site is predominantly an underground

hibernation site for bats and is part of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat SAC.

- 2.3 The underlying geology in the plan area is predominantly limestone. The majority of the plan area is within the catchment of the River Wye (SAC), 2.5km to the west. A woodland belt runs along the Wye Valley, most is considered ancient woodland and parts are designated as part of the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC. The nearest section of woodland SAC to the plan area is Swanpool Wood and Furnace Grove, 1.2km to the west of the plan area.
- 2.4 The main connection routes within the plan area are the A4136 (Monmouth to Cinderford) in the north of the plan area and the B4432 St Briavels to Symonds Yat road.
- 2.5 The plan area is within the Forest of Dean and Lower Wye National Character Area (105).
- 2.6 The plan contains 24 policies set within a framework of seven identified key areas; Town Centre, Economy, Housing, Community Facilities, Historic Environment, Natural Environment; and Transport.
- 2.7 The plan identifies policies for the Town Centre (CTC1-4). The focus for the policies is broadly twofold; Firstly to allocate sites for preferred uses in the town centre (CTC 1 & 2) and secondly to improve the services, use and appearance of the town centre. Allocations are within the towns defined settlement boundary (DSB) and relate to existing buildings or uses.
- 2.8 There are four economic policies (CE1-4). The focus for these is to promote tourism development, the retention of existing and allocated employment sites and high quality communication connections
- 2.9 Three policies address housing provision (CH1-3). CH1 & 3 identifies sites allocated for Housing development. CH2 guides the consideration of the 'acceptability' of housing development proposals.
- 2.10 There is a strong emphasis within the plan on the retention, enhancement and reuse of community facilities (CC1-4). These policies include the retention of green spaces and landscape character protection (CC3 &4).
- 2.11 Two policies (CHE1 & 2) provide for the protection of the Historic Environment including the identification of 'non-designated' heritage assets (CHE2).

- 2.12 The natural environment section of the plan contains three policies (CNE1-3). CNE1 looks to set a series of criteria new development should meet whilst CNE2 seeks to safeguard a wider landscape area, the 'green ring'. Policy CNE3 looks for green infrastructure enhancement both in terms of landscape and biodiversity.
- 2.13 The final policy section in the plan is in relation to infrastructure and transport (CITPA1-4). 1 & 2 support improvements to transport and gateways to the town. CITPA3 supports health and well-being infrastructure. CITPA 4 focuses on drainage and flooding matters in relation to development proposals.

3 Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 3.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations came into force in 2017, consolidating the previous Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994 & 2010. The Regulations are generally referred to as the Habitats Regulations.
- 3.2 The Habitats Regulations are in place to transpose European legislation set out within the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC). These are the key pieces of European legislation that seek to protect, conserve and restore habitats and species that are of utmost conservation importance and concern across Europe.
- 3.3 Neighbourhood plans have a legal requirement in relation to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 state:

"The making of the neighbourhood development plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010(d)) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007(e)) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)."

- 3.4 However the same regulations also include an amendment to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010:

"Assessment of implications for European site: neighbourhood development plans 102A.—(1) A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the

assessment under regulation 102 or to enable them to determine whether that assessment is required."

3.5 The Habitats Regulations assessment is undertaken on a precautionary basis: the assumption is that a plan will have a significant effect until/unless it can be shown that it will not. HRA involves up to four steps:

1. Screening (inc Preliminary & Re-screening): Determining whether the plan - 'in combination' with other plans and projects - is likely to have an adverse effect on a European site. If it doesn't, the plan can proceed, else it needs to go to step 2. This screening assessment takes account of any cancellation of effect or mitigation factors.
2. Appropriate assessment: Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation objectives, the plan - 'in combination' with other plans and projects - would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site (s). If it doesn't, the plan can proceed, else it needs to go to step 3.
3. Assessment of alternative solutions: Where the plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of a site(s), there should be an examination of alternatives
4. Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain

4 European Site Information

4.1 The first step of the screening process is to consider the European sites that could be affected by a plan. There are five potential sites:

- Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat SAC (Bat SAC) (Adjoining / Within plan area, S)
- Wye Valley Woodlands SAC (Nearest location 1.2km W)
- River Wye SAC (Nearest location 1.5km W)
- Severn Estuary SAC/SPA Ramsar (Nearest location 9km SE)
- Walmore Common SPA Ramsar (Nearest location 15km NE)

4.2 Details of the sites are provided in appendix 3

5 HRA Screening process

- 5.1. Policies can operate in a variety of ways from the aspirational to detailed requirements for individual parcels of land. Policies can therefore be categorised into policy types. Individual policies can reflect more than one policy type. Policies can be categorised in the following ways:
 - a) General statements of policy / aspiration
 - b) Policies listing general criteria for testing or evaluating acceptability of proposals
 - c) Policies referred to but not proposed by the plan
 - d) Policies that cannot lead to development or other change in their own right.
 - e) All other policies
- 5.2. In terms of HRA policy types A-D above can be ‘screened out’ in respect of likely significant effects as the policies are either very general, primarily reiterate a policy in another existing plan or do not trigger development as they are about a specific issue e.g. design.
- 5.3. The next step in the screening assessment is to consider all those policies that fall within policy type E; as to whether they could (possibly) result in likely significant effects on a European designated nature conservation site either alone or in combination with other plans and policies or; policies can be amended to reduce the likelihood of significant effects.
- 5.4. The 21st February 2018 version of the NDP has been used to undertake this assessment. It is acknowledged that the submission version of the plan is not finalised yet, however no significant changes are expected; significant changes would need to result in a further HRA review.
- 5.5. In terms of potential for impacts on European designated sites, having regard to the conservation objectives for the sites and the precautionary principle; it was considered that impacts on the Severn Estuary and Walmore common could be screened out. Walmore common is over 15km and the Severn estuary over 9km from the NDP area. There are no direct or indirect ‘impact pathways’ connecting the NDP area to impacts on the conservation objectives of these sites. The NDP falls largely within a different catchment area, there are substantial opportunities for recreation locally to the NDP area and the scale of proposals generally within the NDP are limited.

- 5.6. In respect of the Wye valley Woodlands SAC, the River Wye SAC and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat SAC the following potential impact pathways were identified:
- i. Increased population/human activity (including recreational) effecting Wye valley woodland, River Wye and Bat SAC.
 - ii. Loss of forage, roost and commuting habit for bats which are a feature of the Bat SAC
- 5.7. A draft HRA assessment of the NDP was undertaken in April 2017. In May 2017 Natural England were consulted they raised no objections to the recommendations of the draft assessment; that the NDP can be screened out from SEA, were made (Appendix 4).
- 5.8. Between the Consultation version (May 2017) and the draft Submission version (November 2017) of the plan there have been a number of changes to the plan. The majority, in policy terms, are small changes such as rewording or layout changes. Some changes are more significant and it is important to note these changes (table 1 below) and consider if they would result in any change to the screening assessment.

Table 1 - Key changes to the NDP from the Consultation draft (May 2017) and the Submission draft (November 2017).

Policy		Nature of change
CE3	Additional Policy - Improved Connectivity	Policy sets out development must be designed to connect to high quality communications infrastructure. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development.
CE4	Additional Policy – Development other than housing	Policy relates to a site identified for employment development. Previously identified in CH3. Also identified in the allocations plan.
CH1	Amendment to Small housing development policy	Context of within defined settlement boundary added.

Policy		Nature of change
CH3	Amendments to the sites outside the Town centre policy	<p>Addition of Poolway farm allocated for 80 houses. A larger area, incorporating the NDP allocation, is also allocated in the Allocations Plan.</p> <p>Additional land allocated at North Road and Kings Meade, is also allocated in the allocations plan.</p> <p>SAC policy requirement added.</p>
CNE1	Amendments to protecting and enhancing local landscape	Policy rewording
CHE1	Additional policy text	Reinforcing the protection and enhancement of attractiveness of the town and gateway routes.
CITPA3	Additional Policy – Local infrastructure for health and well-being.	Policy sets out specific requirements for health related development in around Coleford.
CITPA	Policy renumbering	The CITPA polices have been renumbered following the inclusion of CITPA3.

- 5.9. The changes outlined above have been reviewed and it is considered that the impact of changes between the May 2017 and November 2017 versions of the plan do not result in a change to the conclusion of the HRA screening assessment; that there are no likely significant effects.
- 5.10. The submission version of the NDP has addressed previous issues raised by the draft HRA assessment (April 2017) and new policies CE3, CE4, CITPA3 are screened out as having no likely significant effect.
- 5.11. Following November 2017 further changes to the plan have been made. There were many changes principally around the ordering and wording of the policies and the way the document is presented. Two policies were also deleted CTC5 (Tourism in the Town Centre) and CITPA 5 (Flooding). The topics highlighted by these policies can be found in amendments to other policies.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The HRA has been subject to consultation with Natural England, who raised no objection to the assessment's conclusions (Appendix 4) in earlier versions and

subsequent changes are considered not to have altered the plan substantially to an extent which would require re-consultation of Natural England.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. It is considered that the plan (21st February Submission Draft), subject to any subsequent plan revisions, would not likely to have significant effects on a European designated nature conservation sites alone.
- 7.2. Taking into consideration the mitigation policies set out in the C-NDP, The Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan (including the HRA's for these plans), it is considered that the C-NDP will have no adverse effects and therefore there will no adverse in combination effects either.
- 7.3. The plan should be rescreened if any influential revisions are made.
- 7.4. Subject to changes and rescreenings, as set out above, it is considered that no further HRA assessment (as set out in 3.5) is required.

Appendix 1 – Screening as to whether the plan should be assessed

Habitats regulations Assessment - Should the Plan be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment?

Name of Plan	Coleford NDP		
Date	21/03/2017		
Assessor(s)	Alastair Chapman		
	YES	NO	
Is the whole of the plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site for nature conservation purposes?		X	If answer is YES the plan does not need to be assessed
Is the plan a 'strategic development plan' or 'local development plan' or 'supplementary guidance' (regulation 85A), or a core path plan (regulation 69A) or a revision thereof?	X		If answer is YES the plan should be assessed - proceed to stage 2
Does the plan provide a framework for deciding applications for project consents and / or does it influence decision makers on the outcome of applications for project consents?	X		If answer is YES the plan should be assessed - proceed to stage 2
Does the plan contain a programme, or policies, or proposals which could affect one or more particular European site?	X		If answer is YES the plan should be assessed - proceed to stage 2
Is the plan a general statement of policy showing only the general political will or intention of the plan making body, and no effect on any particular European site can reasonably be predicted?		X	If answer is YES the plan does not need to be assessed

Appendix 2 – Policy Screening

See separate document

Appendix 3 – European Designated Sites – Site Characteristics & Objectives

Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Location: Forest of Dean / Fynwy (Monmouthshire)
Grid Reference: SO605044
Area: 142.7ha

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

General Site Character: Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (26.2%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (73.8%).

Vulnerability: The site is composed of parts of a number of buildings in everyday use (mainly roof-spaces) used by the bats for breeding and a series of mines used by bats for hibernation. Within the roost the bats are vulnerable to disturbance at critical times, structural alteration and changes in the characteristic ventilation patterns. The designated sites only cover the major maternity and over-wintering roosts. The bats also depend on features outside the designated sites including intermediate roosts, foraging grounds and hedgerows/tree belts that the bats use as commuting routes. Impact on these features can also affect the integrity of the site. Any proposed changes which are likely to have an impact on the bat populations within the breeding roosts will be discussed with the relevant owners and occupiers. Where appropriate to any populations potentially damaging works will be addressed through appropriate planning regulation, management agreements and monitoring of individual roosts. Regular liaison takes place with site-owners.

The human use of the mine systems (continued mineral working and recreational caving/research) is regulated by Forest Enterprise in consultation with Natural England where appropriate. Site Management Statements have been agreed with the owners of working mines to secure conservation of the populations alongside continued working. In addition, the preparation of Cave Conservation Plans will be promoted to maintain and enhance the underground environment for bats.

Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form –.

2. Qualifying Features:

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

Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales contains by far the greatest concentration of lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* in the UK, totalling about 26% of the national population. It has been selected on the grounds of the exceptional breeding population,

and the majority of sites within the complex are maternity roosts. The bats are believed to hibernate in the many disused mines in the area.

Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

- for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales represents greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* in the northern part of its range, with about 6% of the UK population. The site contains the main maternity roost for bats in this area, which are believed to hibernate in the many disused mines in the Forest. Source: JNCC.

3. Conservation Objectives

With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated:

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

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.
- Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: cave and roof roost space extent; woodland extent at roost entrances (Devils Chapel and Old Bow only) ; presence; population size (no drop in excess of 25% below notification population); disturbance; site security; roost condition (external/internal); roost access.

River Wye

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Forest of Dean / Fynwy - Monmouthshire / Herefordshire / Powys

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

General Site Character: Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (9.5%) Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (1.5%) Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (52.5%) Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (3.1%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (1%) Dry grassland. Steppes (5.3%) Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland (2.4%) Improved grassland (10.4%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (12.3%) Inland rocks. Scree. Sands. Permanent snow and ice (0.2%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (1.8%).

Vulnerability: Water quality impacts arising from changing agricultural land-use within the catchment are having direct and indirect effects on the SAC interests through effects of diffuse pollution such as nutrient run-off and increased siltation. Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales are seeking to address such issues through improved targeting of existing and new agri-environment schemes and through improvements in compliance with agricultural Codes of Practice. Water quality is also affected by synthetic pyrethroid sheep-dips and by point-source discharges within the catchment. The impact of sewage treatment works on the SAC is being addressed through the Asset Management Plan process and review under the Habitats Regulations. Loss of riparian habitat is occurring as a result of changes in agricultural land-use practices and other factors, including riverside development and the loss of alder tree-cover through disease. These impacts and concerns over water quality will be identified and actions recommended within the joint Natural England/Environment Agency/Countryside Council for Wales conservation strategy for the river.

Fishing activities are implicated in the decline of the salmon but it is apparently Irish trawlers rather than local fishermen which have had the greatest impact. The trawler problems have now been resolved. There is increasing demand for abstraction from the river for agriculture and potable water. This is being addressed through the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy as well as the Review of Consents process. Demand for increased recreational activities is a source of potential concern for the future. Regularisation of the functions of the competent authorities, currently being sought, should reduce the risk of damage to the SAC as a result of developments for such activities. Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007.

2. Qualifying Features:

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

Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

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

Transition mires and quaking bogs

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

White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*

Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
Twaite shad *Alosa fallax*
Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
Bullhead *Cottus gobio*
Otter *Lutra lutra*

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:
Allis shad *Alosa alosa*

3. Conservation Objectives

Subject to natural change, to maintain the transition mire and quaking bog (Wales only) and river in favourable condition (or restored to favourable condition if features are judged to be unfavourable), with particular reference to any dependent component special interest features (habitats, vegetation types, species, species assemblages etc.) for which the land is designated including. In particular to:

- To maintain the designated features in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extents. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: river length; SSSI area and; extent (in ha) of river types.
- To maintain the freshwater and species on the River Wye SSSI /SAC in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: presence/absence of white clawed crayfish; fish biomass; otter presence, maintenance of population and fish biomass; presence of suitable habitat; no increase in pollutants.
- To maintain the freshwater and species on the River Wye SSSI /SAC in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: Biological and Chemical General Quality Assessment Class (dissolved oxygen, BOD or ammonia); un-ionised ammonia; suspended solids; soluble reactive phosphorus; flow regime; siltation; channel form; bank and riparian zone vegetation naturalness; in channel vegetation species composition; macrophyte extent; invertebrate habitat quality and extent; invertebrate assemblages; habitat loss/damage; enrichment; alien/ introduced/invasive species; in stream barriers; fish introductions.

Wye Valley Woodlands

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Forest of Dean / Monmouthshire / Herefordshire

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

General Site Character: Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue. Phygrana (10%) Dry grassland. Steppes(0.2%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (87%) Coniferous woodland (0.7%) Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice (0.6%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (1.5%)

Vulnerability: A significant proportion of the SAC is already managed sympathetically by Forest Enterprise (now the Forestry Commission), Natural England (as one of the owners*) the Woodland Trust and county Wildlife Trusts. Principal pressures are from lack of management (particularly traditional management, e.g. coppice), increasing deer numbers and inappropriate management proposals which would alter the recognised woodland stand types. Felling license approval and Forestry Commission consultation with Natural England/Countryside Council for Wales are adequate in addressing the latter issue. Positive management is being promoted through management plans (CCW), Site Management Statements (EN) and management agreements, and the Woodland Grant Scheme (including specialised targeting) is being encouraged where possible and appropriate to return some woods to active management. *'Highbury' and 'The Hudnalls' are both National Nature Reserve sites in the Wye Valley Woodlands.

2. Qualifying Features:

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

Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests: for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

The Wye Valley contains abundant and near-continuous semi-natural woodland along the gorge. Beech stands occur as part of a mosaic with a wide range of other woodland types, and represent the western range of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests. Such a variety of woodland types is rare within the UK. In places lime *Tilia* sp., elm *Ulmus* sp. and oak *Quercus* sp. share dominance with the beech. Structurally the woods include old coppice, pollards and high forest types. Lady Park Wood, one of the component sites, is an outstanding example of near-natural old-growth structure in mixed broad-leaved woodland, and has been the subject of detailed long-term monitoring studies.

Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines: for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

The woods of the lower Wye Valley on the border of south Wales and England form one of the most important areas for woodland conservation in the UK and provide the most extensive examples of *Tilio-Acerion* forest in the west of its range. A wide range of ecological variation is associated with slope, aspect and landform. The woodland occurs here as a mosaic with other types, including beech *Fagus sylvatica* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* stands. Uncommon trees, including large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos* and rare whitebeams such as *Sorbus porrigentiformis* and *S. rupicola* are found here, as well as locally uncommon herbs, including wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, narrow-leaved bitter-cress *Cardamine impatiens* and wood fescue *Festuca altissima*.

Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles: for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

Wye Valley is representative of yew *Taxus baccata* woods in the south-west of the habitat's range. It lies on the southern Carboniferous limestone, and yew occurs both as an understorey to other woodland trees and as major yew-dominated groves, particularly on the more stony slopes and crags.

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:

Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*: for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.

3. Conservation Objectives

The Conservation Objectives for this site are, subject to natural change, to maintain Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland habitats and geological features in favourable condition (or restored to favourable condition if features are judged to be unfavourable), with particular reference to any dependent component special interest features (habitats, vegetation types, species, species assemblages etc.) for which the land is designated. In particular:

- To maintain the Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland (W7,W8, W10, W12c, W14, W16) habitat at this site in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition is defined in terms of: area; structure and natural processes; regeneration potential; composition; indicators of quality/local distinctiveness
- To maintain the hibernating population of horseshoe bats at this site in favourable condition. Favourable condition is defined in terms of: entrance condition, security and vegetation; cave condition; disturbance; use by bats (Upper Wye Gorge only).

Walmore Common

Designation: Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site

Location: Forest of Dean

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

General Site Character: Walmore Common SPA is a low-lying basin in the Severn Vale adjacent to the River Severn, which is subject to extensive winter flooding and high, artificially maintained water levels in summer.

The site supports a range of unimproved and improved wet grasslands overlying a large area of peat and is of botanical and ornithological importance. There is also a large network of ditches that has an important hydrological function as well as supporting a diverse community of flora and fauna.

The common is part of a series of sites within the Severn Vale which, in winter, form an important refuge and feeding area for wildfowl. The highest bird numbers are seen during the harshest winters, when Walmore Common provides an essential feeding and roosting area.

A large part of the catchment is used as a feeding and roosting site for nationally and internationally important numbers of Bewick's Swan and for regionally important numbers of other wintering waterfowl.

This seasonally-flooded wetland is drained by a network of open ditches. Approximately 60% of the neutral grassland has been reseeded with rye grass. The eastern area, however, is still unimproved with a tussocky structure and a wider range of plants dominated by grasses and rushes. The ditches have a fairly rich flora including species such as yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*, purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria* and flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*.

Vulnerability: The site is a Ramsar site, a Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. A water level management plan, currently in preparation, will ensure appropriate conditions are retained for the wintering bird interest. The marsh grassland and ditches will be maintained and enhanced by maintaining high water levels from spring to autumn.

2. Qualifying Features:

This site qualifies under Habitats Directive 79/409/EES Article 4.1 by regularly supporting (in winter) internationally important numbers of Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*. During the five winter periods 1986/87 to 1990/91 the average peak count was 207 birds (1% of the NW European population and 3% of British. Source: SPA citation).

This site qualifies under Ramsar criterion 6 by supporting species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: The qualifying species/populations (peak counts in winter) is Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, 43 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of Great Britain's population (5 year peak mean 1998/9 – 2002/3).

3. Conservation Objectives:

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified, and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Severn Estuary

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar site

Location: Stroud, Forest of Dean, South Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Bristol City, North Somerset, Newport, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan

There is a vast amount of existing data on the Severn Estuary over and above what can be repeated here in this report. The NE/CCW report (see below) is an important as a source of much more detailed information on conservation objectives and particular vulnerabilities as well as additional detail on condition, advice on operations and various methods of assessment.

The Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren European Marine Site comprising: The Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA). The Severn Estuary / Ramsar Site Natural England & the Countryside Council for Wales' advice given under Regulation 33(2)(a) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended. June 2009"

This report is available at:

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/special-sites-project/the-severn-estuary-european.aspx?lang=en>

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

General Site Character: The estuary's classic funnel shape, unique in Britain, is a factor causing the Severn to have the second-largest tidal range in the world (after the Bay of Fundy, Canada). This tidal regime results in plant and animal communities typical of the extreme physical conditions of liquid mud and tide swept sand and rock. The species-poor invertebrate community includes high densities of ragworms, lugworms and other invertebrates forming an important food source for passage and wintering waders. A further consequence of the large tidal range is the extensive intertidal zone, one of the largest in the UK, comprising mudflats, sand banks, shingle, and rocky platforms. Glassworts and annual sea-blite colonise the open mud, with beds of all three species of eelgrass occurring on more sheltered mud and sandbanks. Large expanses of common cord-grass also occur on the outer marshes. Grazed saltmarsh fringes the estuary with a range of saltmarsh types present. The middle marsh sward is dominated by common saltmarsh-grass with typical associated species. In the upper marsh, red fescue and saltmarsh rush become more prominent. The estuary is an important habitat for migratory fish.

Vulnerability: The conservation of the site features is dependent on the tidal regime. The range is the second highest in the world and the scouring of the seabed and strong tidal streams result in natural erosion of the habitats. The estuary is therefore vulnerable to large scale interference, including human actions. These include land-claim, aggregate extraction/dredging, physical developments such as barrage construction flood defences, pollution (industrial, oil spillage), eutrophication and tourism based activities and disturbance. These issues are being predominantly addressed through existing control measures. The Severn Estuary Strategy (a non statutory plan developed since 1995) has been working towards the sustainable management of the site, through the involvement of local authorities, interested parties and local people. In addition the marine part of the European site is managed under a Management Scheme prepared by the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) to ensure that the occurrence of current activities of all the Relevant Authorities are compatible with the site's conservation objectives.

2. Qualifying features

Qualifies as a SAC as follows:

The Severn Estuary has been designated an SAC on the basis that it supports occurrences of habitat types and species listed in Annexes I and II respectively of the Habitats Directive that are considered important in a European context and meeting the criteria in Annex III of the Directive. The designation includes an overarching “estuaries” feature within which subtidal sandbanks, intertidal mudflats and sandflats, Atlantic salt meadows and reefs (of *Sabellaria alveolata*) and three species of migratory fish are defined as both features in their own right and as sub-features of the estuary feature. In addition hard substrate habitats including eel grass beds, the estuary-wide assemblage of fish species and the assemblage of waterfowl species (for which the Ramsar Site and SPA are specifically designated) are identified as notable estuarine assemblages which are an intrinsic part of the estuary ecosystem – these are therefore covered by the “estuaries” feature.

Interest Features of the SAC

SAC details, qualifying features:

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

- Estuaries
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*)

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

- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
- Reefs

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

- Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
- River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- Twaite shad *Alosa fallax*

Qualifies as a SPA as follows:

The Severn Estuary was classified as an SPA on 13 July 1995 (subsuming a previously designated SPA called the Upper Severn Estuary). It should be noted that since designation changes in bird numbers have occurred in relation to the qualifying thresholds, which have themselves changed.

The SPA within the European Marine Site boundary includes saltmarshes and the adjacent extensive areas of intertidal mud, sand and rocky shores. All these habitats provide essential food and resting places for the wide range of wintering and migratory waterfowl and are therefore identified as key “supporting habitats” for the conservation of these species.

The Qualifying Features and supporting Habitats of the SPA

Information on populations of bird species using the Severn Estuary European Marine Site at the time the Severn Estuary SPA was classified (1995). (Also note the species listed in point 2 of the footnote.)

Internationally important populations of regularly occurring Annex 1 species

Species	Population (5 yr peak mean :1988/9 to 1992/3)	
<i>SPA interest feature 1: Bewick's swan</i>	289 birds	4.1% Great Britain 1.7% NW Europe
Internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory bird species		
Species (wintering)	Population (5 yr peak mean: 1988/9 to 1992/3)	
<i>SPA interest feature 2: European white-fronted goose</i>	3,002	50% British, 1% North West Europe
<i>SPA interest feature 3: Dunlin</i>	41,683	2.9% East Atlantic flyway
<i>SPA interest feature 4: Redshank</i>	2,013	1.3% East Atlantic flyway
<i>SPA interest feature 5: Shelduck</i>	2,892	1.2% North West Europe
<i>SPA interest feature 6: Gadwall</i>	330	2.8 % NW Europe
<i>SPA interest feature 7:</i> An internationally important assemblage of waterfowl <i>(Assemblage includes above species plus the following listed nationally important populations)</i>		
Importance	Population (5 yr peak mean: 1988/9 to 1992/3)	
The Severn Estuary supports over 20,000 wintering waterfowl.	68,026 individual birds comprising 17,502 wildfowl and 50,524 waders	
Nationally important bird populations within internationally important assemblage of waterfowl		
Species	Population (5 yr peak mean: 1988/9 to 1992/3)	
Wigeon	3,977 birds	1.6% Great Britain
Teal	1,998	2.0% Great Britain
Pintail	523	2.1% Great Britain
Pochard	1,686	3.8% Great Britain
Tufted duck	913	1.5% Great Britain
Ringed plover	227	1.0% Great Britain
Grey plover	781	3.7% Great Britain
Curlew	3,096	3.4% Great Britain
Whimbrel	246	4.9% Great Britain
Spotted redshank	3	1.5% Great Britain
Notes :		
<p>1. Previous advice issued in respect of the Severn Estuary SPA in February 2005 excluded Gadwall for the listed species of internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory birds as they were considered not to use the European Marine Site area to any significant degree. Further recent evidence (2002/03 Low Tide Bird Counts) has demonstrated that this species does make use of areas within the European Marine Site and has consequently now been included.</p> <p>2. The SPA review has identified that since the classification of the Severn Estuary SPA in 1995 the Severn Estuary now supports nationally important populations of Mallard, Lapwing and Shoveler.</p>		

Ramsar Features:

Table 5 : confirmation of Ramsar features in context of 1995 and 2005 Ramsar criteria

Ramsar Features (for which conservation objectives have been written)	Criteria at designation (1995) (original criteria)	Revised Criteria (2005) (criteria currently used on JNCC website)
<p>Ramsar interest feature 1:</p> <p>*Estuaries</p> <p>- characteristic physical form and flow, estuarine habitat communities and species assemblages</p> <p>- estuarine habitat communities and species assemblages</p>	<p>Criterion 1 : qualifies due to its immense tidal range affecting both the physical environment and biological communities present</p> <p>Criterion 2b : qualifies due to its unusual estuarine communities, reduced species diversity and high productivity. The high tidal range leads to strong tidal streams and high turbidity, producing communities characteristic of the extreme physical conditions of liquid mud and tide swept sand and rock</p>	<p>Criterion 1 : qualifies due to immense tidal range (second-largest in world), this affects both the physical environment and biological communities.</p> <p>Criterion 3 : qualifies due to its unusual estuarine communities, reduced diversity and high productivity</p>
<p>Ramsar interest feature 2:</p> <p>Assemblage of migratory fish species :</p> <p>Sea Lamprey</p> <p>River Lamprey</p> <p>Twaite Shad</p> <p>Allis Shad</p> <p>Salmon</p> <p>Sea Trout</p> <p>Eel</p>	<p>Criterion 2c : qualifies as it is important for the run of migratory fish between sea and river via estuary. Species include Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>, sea trout <i>S. trutta</i>, sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>, river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>, allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>, twaite shad <i>A. fallax</i>, and eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>.</p>	<p>Criterion 4 : qualifies as it is important for the run of migratory fish between sea and river via estuary. Species include Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>, sea trout <i>S. trutta</i>, sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>, river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>, allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>, twaite shad <i>A. fallax</i>, and eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>.</p>
<p>* The wider estuarine fish assemblage is covered as</p>		<p>Criterion 8 : qualifies as the fish assemblage of the whole estuarine and</p>

Ramsar Features (for which conservation objectives have been written)	Criteria at designation (1995) (original criteria)	Revised Criteria (2005) (criteria currently used on JNCC website)
<i>a “notable species assemblage” sub feature of the SAC “Estuaries” feature</i>		river system is one of the most diverse in Britain, with over 110 species recorded.
<p><i>Ramsar interest feature 3:</i></p> <p>Bewick’s Swan</p> <p><i>Ramsar interest feature 4: European white-fronted goose</i></p> <p><i>Ramsar interest feature 5: Dunlin</i></p> <p><i>Ramsar interest feature 6: Redshank</i></p> <p><i>Ramsar interest feature 7: Shelduck</i></p> <p><i>Ramsar interest feature 8: Gadwall</i></p> <p>ie Internationally important <u>populations</u> of waterfowl</p>	<p>Criterion 3c : qualifies by regularly in winter supporting internationally important populations (1% or more) of species of waterfowl</p> <p>Bewick’s swan</p> <p>European white-fronted goose</p> <p>Dunlin</p> <p>Redshank</p> <p>Shelduck</p> <p>Gadwall</p>	<p>Criterion 6 : qualifies as it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter - at designation:</p> <p>Tundra/Bewick’s swan</p> <p>Greater /European white-fronted goose</p> <p>Dunlin</p> <p>Common redshank</p> <p>Common shelduck</p> <p>Gadwall</p> <p>Populations identified subsequent to designation:</p> <p>Ringed plover (spring/autumn) Eurasian teal (winter)</p> <p>Northern pintail (winter)</p> <p>Lesser black-backed gull (breeding)</p>
<p><i>Ramsar interest feature 9:</i></p> <p>Internationally important <u>assemblage</u> of waterfowl</p>	<p>Qualifies under Criterion 2c as it is particularly important for migratory birds during passage periods in spring and autumn. Nationally important populations of :</p>	<p>Criterion 5 : qualifies as it supports an assemblage of international importance - (1998/99-2002/2003 5 year peak mean was 70,919 waterfowl</p>

Ramsar Features (for which conservation objectives have been written)	Criteria at designation (1995) (original criteria)	Revised Criteria (2005) (criteria currently used on JNCC website)
<p>This feature incorporates :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • waterfowl which contribute to the total peak winter count (criterion 3a) • the above internationally important wintering populations (qualifying under criterion 3c) • the migratory passage species (qualifying under criterion 2c) • the nationally important populations (identified under other notable features of the Ramsar Site citation) <p>The species are as follows :</p> <p>(w = wintering and p = passage):</p> <p>Bewick's swan (w)</p> <p>European white-fronted goose (w)</p> <p>Shelduck (w) Dunlin (w, p) Redshank (w, p)</p> <p>Gadwall (w)</p> <p>Ringed plover (w, p)</p>	<p>Ringed plover</p> <p>Dunlin</p> <p>Whimbrel</p> <p>Redshank</p> <p>Criterion 3a : qualifies by regularly supporting in winter over 20,000 waterfowl - (1988/89 to 1992/93 average peak count was 68,026 waterfowl: 17,502 wildfowl and 50,524 waders)</p> <p>Other notable features :</p> <p>Nationally important wintering populations of:</p> <p>Wigeon, teal, pintail, pochard, tufted duck, ringed plover, grey plover, curlew and spotted redshank. Also nationally important breeding population of Lesser Black backed gull</p>	

Ramsar Features (for which conservation objectives have been written)	Criteria at designation (1995) (original criteria)	Revised Criteria (2005) (criteria currently used on JNCC website)
Whimbrel (p) Teal (w) Pintail (w) Wigeon (w) Pochard (w) Tufted duck (w) Grey plover (w) Curlew (w) Spotted redshank (w)		

3. Conservation objectives Severn Estuary SAC

The protection and management of the SAC in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, including in particular the consideration of plans and projects under Article 6(3) and 6(4), should be carried out in view of the conservation objectives as detailed below.

Note: Note this is a summary - for the full details see the 2009 CCW / NE report and or the JNCC website. Only the SAC conservation objectives are detailed in this report due to the fact that (a) there are considerable overlaps with the SPA & Ramsar objectives. For the SPA and Ramsar conservation objectives, the 2009 CCW / NE report should be (and will be) referred to in relation to this HRA.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are, subject to natural change, to maintain estuaries, intertidal mud and sand flats, saltmarsh and associated transition habitats and rocky littoral shores in favourable condition (or restored to favourable condition if features are judged to be unfavourable), with particular reference to any dependent component special interest features (habitats, vegetation types, species, species assemblages etc.) for which the land is designated. In particular to:

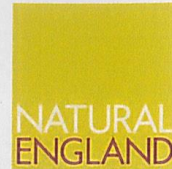
- To maintain the estuaries feature in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: extent; morphology; tidal regime and flow; sediment budget; sediment size, range and distribution; water quality (physio-chemical parameters); phytoplankton; macroalgae; toxic contaminants; estuarine habitat extent, variety and spatial distribution; abundance of notable species/assemblages.
- To maintain the intertidal mudflats and sandflats in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: extent; mudflats and sandflats extent and variety; distribution; community composition; topography; sediment character.
- To maintain the saltmarshes in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: extent; distribution; extent of *spartina anglica*; zonation of vegetation; species composition; sward structure; morphology.
- To maintain the hard substrate habitats in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in

terms of: extent and variety; spatial distribution; community composition; abundance of Eel grass.

- To maintain the vascular plant assemblage in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: rare/notable vascular plant presence; population size; vegetation structure; physical damage; disturbance; hydrology.
- To maintain the assemblage of waterfowl and nationally important populations of waterfowl in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: population size; distribution; disturbance to feeding/roosting areas; habitat (extent, food availability, vegetation characteristics, feeding/roosting sightlines).
- To maintain the migratory fish assemblage in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition to be assessed in terms of: barriers to migration (water quality, water flow, physical barriers); population size; prey species abundance.

Appendix 4 – Natural England Consultation Response

Date: 25 May 2017
Our ref: 215237
Your ref: Coleford NDP



Alastair Chapman
Sustainability Team Leader
Sustainability Team
Forest of Dean District Council

Hornbeam House
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Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Chapman,

Planning consultation: Coleford (Gloucestershire) Neighbourhood Development Plan – Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulation Consultation.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 09/05/2017.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

We welcome the production of this SEA Screening report. Natural England notes and concurs with the screening outcome i.e. that no SEA is required.

Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

Natural England notes the screening process applied to this Neighbourhood plan. We agree with the Council's conclusion of no likely significant effect upon the named European designated sites:

- Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC
- Wye Valley Woodlands SAC
- River Wye SAC
- Severn Estuary SAC/SPA
- Walmore Common SPA / Ramsar

Natural England's conclusion is subject to the points raised by the Sustainability Team being actioned and the draft Plan being amended, as appropriate.

Natural England will make further detailed comments on the Regulation 14 consultation to accompany this consultation.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Tom Amos on 02080 260961. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service

Yours Choose salutation

Tom Amos
Adviser
Sustainable Development
South Mercia Team

**Preliminary Screening: Habitat Regulations Assessment of the
Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan
Appendix 2 - Policy Screening**



February 2018

Appendix 2 - Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan

<p style="text-align: center;">Screening. (Submission Version dated 21/2/2018)</p>		General statements of policy/aspiration	Policy for testing acceptability of proposals	Not proposals generated by this plan	Aspects that protect natural environment	Aspects that will not lead to development	Aspects that make provision for change (no conceivable effect on European site)	Effects cannot undermine the conservation objectives either alone or in combination	Likely significant effects alone	Effect not likely to be significant alone but need to check in combination effects	Not likely to have significant effect (screened out after in combination test)	Likely to have a significant effect in combination	<p style="text-align: center;">Outcome of Screening</p>		
														S	Screened out
														~	Uncertain further assessment required
														P	Potential further assessment required
POLICY (Summary see Plan for full text)															
<i>Vision</i>	The Vision for Coleford by 2026: Coleford Parish will be valued by its residents as a friendly, easily accessible market town.....	S											Sets out future vision / aspiration for Coleford. - Screened out		
<i>Objectives</i>	Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives 1. To support a dynamic, vibrant and thriving town centre with an accessible, attractive environment for all. 2. To support...	S											Sets out objectives for the plan - Screened out.		
<i>CTC1</i>	Site Allocations in the Town Centre The following sites (also shown on Map 5) have been allocated						S						Policy identifies existing (brownfield) sites within town centre for re-development - Screened out.		
<i>CTC2</i>	Site Allocations on the edge of the Town Centre The following sites (also shown on Map 5) have been consulted on and allocated.						S						Policy identifies existing (brownfield) sites within town centre for re-development - Screened out.		
<i>CTC3</i>	Enhancing of Coleford Town Centre Proposals for enhancing the public realm of the town centre					S							Policy supports public realm enhancements in existing small town centre only - Screened out.		
<i>CTC4</i>	Supporting Town Centre Retail and Service Provision Proposals for new retail and service facilities which enhance the vitality and viability of the existing town centre...						S						Policy focus on existing small town centre only - Screened out.		
<i>CE1</i>	Supporting Tourism Development Proposals which expand and/or maintain the existing tourism and related facilities as part		S										Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development. - Screened out		

Screening. (Submission Version dated 21/2/2018)		General statements of policy/aspiration	Policy for testing acceptability of proposals	Not proposals generated by this plan	Aspects that protect natural environment	Aspects that will not lead to development	Aspects that make provision for change (no conceivable effect on European site)	Effects cannot undermine the conservation objectives either alone or in combination	Likely significant effects alone	Effect not likely to be significant alone but need to check in combination effects	Not likely to have significant effect (screened out after in combination test)	Likely to have a significant effect in combination	Outcome of Screening
S	Screened out												
~	Uncertain further assessment required												
P	Potential further assessment required												
POLICY (Summary see Plan for full text)													
CE2	Protecting and Supporting the Development of Local Employment Outside the Town Centre Existing employment-generating uses outside Coleford town centre should be retained or kept primarily for future...		S					S					Policy sets out to enhance existing areas and provides environmental safeguards - Screened out.
CE3	Improved Connectivity The ongoing improvement of connectivity and all new residential, employment and commercial development must be designed to connect to high quality communications infrastructure.		S					S					Policy sets out development must be designed to connect to high quality communications infrastructure. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development. Screened out.
CE4	Development other than housing Tufthorn Avenue GL16 8PT (by traffic lights): This site is allocated for employment land in the Allocations Plan....			S				S					Proposals were screened at project level in relation to P0626-16-FUL. Screened out
CH1	Small housing development sites New housing development will be supported on sites of less than ten dwellings within the defined settlement boundary where they fit with the distinctive character of the local area and...		S					S					Policy sets out when it will support particular scales of development within defined settlement boundaries. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CH2	New Housing development New housing development, within the defined Coleford settlement boundary.....		S										Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CH3	Sites outside the Town Centre, within the Parish of Coleford (NDP area) The following sites (shown on Map 6 and see also Table 9) are allocated for development within the NDP....						S	S					The policy requires development to demonstrate that it will have no adverse effects on integrity. - Screened out.

Screening. (Submission Version dated 21/2/2018)		General statements of policy/aspiration	Policy for testing acceptability of proposals	Not proposals generated by this plan	Aspects that protect natural environment	Aspects that will not lead to development	Aspects that make provision for change (no conceivable effect on European site)	Effects cannot undermine the conservation objectives either alone or in combination	Likely significant effects alone	Effect not likely to be significant alone but need to check in combination effects	Not likely to have significant effect (screened out after in combination test)	Likely to have a significant effect in combination	Outcome of Screening
S	Screened out												
~	Uncertain further assessment required												
P	Potential further assessment required												
POLICY (Summary see Plan for full text)													
CC1	Retaining and Enhancing Community Facilities The Community Facilities identified in Appendix F will be protected for future community uses....		S			S							Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CC2	Shops and Services in the Arc of Settlements Within Coleford Parish but Outside the Town Centre Proposals to enhance existing convenience shops and service uses will be supported when they do not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity...		S				S						Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CC3	Local Green Spaces The Local Green Spaces as shown in Map 8 will become areas for special protection...				S	S							Policy provides for the protection of local green space - Screened out.
CC4	Surrounding Settlements Development in all of Coleford town's surrounding settlements should seek to retain and, where possible, reinforce the distinct identity of the settlement(s) as shown		S			S							Policy sets out specific requirements for new development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CHE1	Protecting and Enhancing Local Character Coleford has a dual role as service centre and tourist centre. New development will be required to respond positively....		S			S							Policy sets out specific requirements for new development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CHE2	Protecting Heritage Assets Development should seek to protect and, where possible, enhance both designated and valued non-designated heritage assets.....		S			S							Policy sets out specific requirements for new development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development. - Screened out

Screening. (Submission Version dated 21/2/2018)		General statements of policy/aspiration	Policy for testing acceptability of proposals	Not proposals generated by this plan	Aspects that protect natural environment	Aspects that will not lead to development	Aspects that make provision for change (no conceivable effect on European site)	Effects cannot undermine the conservation objectives either alone or in combination	Likely significant effects alone	Effect not likely to be significant alone but need to check in combination effects	Not likely to have significant effect (screened out after in combination test)	Likely to have a significant effect in combination	Outcome of Screening
S	Screened out												
~	Uncertain further assessment required												
P	Potential further assessment required												
POLICY (Summary see Plan for full text)													
CNE1	<p>Protecting and Enhancing Local Landscape Character in Coleford and its surrounding settlements.</p> <p>In addition to complying with other policies where appropriate, any new development should include landscaping schemes which aim to protect and enhance local landscape...</p>	S			S								Policy provides for the protection of local landscape area - Screened out.
CNE2	<p>Green Ring</p> <p>The Green Ring with zones shown as 1, 2, 3 on Map require protection* from inappropriate development....</p>	S			S								Policy provides for the protection of local landscape area - Screened out.
CNE3	<p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Coleford supports a range of protected and vulnerable species [Map 14]. The Neighbourhood Plan is recognised as an important local tool...</p>	S			S								Policy provides for the protection of local landscape area - Screened out.
CITPA1	<p>Transport and Movement</p> <p>New development will be required to include an appropriate level of information to be submitted with the planning application to assess the impact...</p>	S					S						Policy sets out specific requirements for new development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CITPA2	<p>Through Routes and Gateways</p> <p>Where new development has significant impact on through routes or Gateways (as in Map 3), the following will be required....</p>	S					S						Policy sets out specific requirements for new development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
CITPA3	<p>Local Infrastructure for health and well-being</p> <p>The development of Coleford primary health care centre to meet local needs is strongly supported....</p>	S	S										Policy sets out specific requirements for health related development of limited scale. Does not promote locations or areas. Avoidance effects in other polices CNE1,2,3 - Screened out.

Screening. (Submission Version dated 21/2/2018)		General statements of policy/aspiration	Policy for testing acceptability of proposals	Not proposals generated by this plan	Aspects that protect natural environment	Aspects that will not lead to development	Aspects that make provision for change (no conceivable effect on European site)	Effects cannot undermine the conservation objectives either alone or in combination	Likely significant effects alone	Effect not likely to be significant alone but need to check in combination effects	Not likely to have significant effect (screened out after in combination test)	Likely to have a significant effect in combination	Outcome of Screening
S	Screened out												
~	Uncertain further assessment required												
P	Potential further assessment required												
POLICY (Summary see Plan for full text)													
<i>CITPA4</i>	Flooding and increased capacity in water systems Where appropriate opportunities will be used from new development to reduce the flood risk in Coleford by:			S	S								Policy sets out specific requirements for new development, incorporating environmental safeguards. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.