

## DRAFT CHIRTON & CONOCK NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) SCREENING

### 1. SCREENING METHODOLOGY

Each policy in the draft Chirton & Conock Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been categorised against the screening criteria developed by Natural England. This process is necessary to help provide a clear audit trail for the assessment and, if necessary, identify the need for the wording of policies to be amended or new policies added to be certain that the NDP will not have a significant negative effect on a European site.

The criteria used are as follows:

- Category A1: The policy will not itself lead to development e.g. because it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development;
- Category A2: The policy is intended to protect the natural environment;
- Category A3: The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment;
- Category A4: The policy would positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas;
- Category A5: The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas.
- Category B: No significant effect;
- Category C: Likely significant effect alone; and
- Category D: Likely significant effects in combination

The effect of each draft policy has been considered both individually, and in combination. The effects of the whole plan have also been considered in combination with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

**This HRA is based on the draft NDP policies that are currently the subject of a consultation period. After the consultation has closed and a final version has been produced, which may result in alterations to the draft policies, this HRA must be reviewed.**

### 2. WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY HRA

The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (October 2009) derived a set of parameters by which to determine the likelihood of potential impact on Natura 2000 sites. The following issues were identified and assessed. A list of Natura 2000 sites is given for each issue.

- *Recreation – Natura 2000 sites within 5km of the plan area, or where Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is within 15km of the plan area.*
  - Salisbury Plain SAC and SPA
  - River Avon SAC

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- *Hydrology / Hydrogeology - Sites that fall wholly or partly within either the Thames Water (Swindon) and Oxford Water Resource Zone WRZ (SWOX WRZ), or the Wessex Water North WRZ, may be susceptible to impact.*
  - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
  - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
  - Pewsey Downs SAC
  - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
  - River Avon SAC
  - River Lambourn SAC
  - Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain SAC
  
- *Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition – Natura 2000 sites within 200m of a main road*
  - Porton Down SPA
  - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
  - Southampton Water SPA
  - Clattinger Farm SAC
  - River Avon SAC
  - Rodborough Common SAC
  - Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC
  
- *Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines*
  - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC

### **3. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

Draft policies within the emerging Chirton & Conock NDP have been screened against each of the above potential issues, for those relevant Natura 2000 sites.

#### *a) Recreation*

**Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC** – The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA assessed that the issues relating to additional recreational pressure as a result of residential development growth are dealt with sufficiently in the ‘Salisbury Plain SPA HRA and Mitigation Strategy’, which prescribes proportionate developer contributions for development sites within 4km of the SPA or within 15km of the eastern part of the SPA, to deliver monitoring and adaptive management on the plains (which will be obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy, CIL). Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy implements this approach. There are no sites allocated for development within the Chirton & Conock draft NDP. New homes will be permitted in Chirton and Conock in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 1, 2 and 18. It is anticipated that this will amount to an

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indicative quantity of 1-10 new homes by 2026, by 'infill development'. A small increase in recreational pressure on the European site is therefore likely and mitigation will be sought for those housing developments that qualify in accordance with the mitigation strategy.

**River Avon SAC** - the policies of the draft Chirton & Conock Neighbourhood Development Plan does not include any allocations for housing sites, although up to 10 new homes are anticipated by 2026 as a result of "infill development". This small scale residential development is unlikely to have a significant effect due to recreational pressure.

### *b) Hydrology/Hydrogeology*

The majority of the sites listed under this topic in Section 2 above are sufficiently far away from the NP area and therefore no likely significant effect is expected. With regard to the Salisbury Plain SAC/SPA and River Avon SAC, the issues of water resources and water quality are considered.

**Water Resources** – No development sites are proposed in the draft Chirton & Conock NDP, although it is acknowledged that up to 10 new homes may be built by 2016 as a result of "infill development". These small residential developments would be accommodated within the existing abstraction license levels. Current licences have undergone HRA by the Environment Agency, as has Wessex Water's Water Resource Management Plan, therefore the Council is satisfied that the issue does not require further assessment at the NDP level.

**Water Quality** – Issues of water quality, including surface water drainage will be dealt with through Development Management as described in Core Policy 50. The use of SUDS and suitable pollution control measures will be required for most proposals. The small scale of the proposed housing development sites is unlikely to result in impacts on watercourses outside of the Chirton & Conock NDP area.

It is concluded that the proposals for housing in the draft NDP would not have an adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites through hydrological/hydrogeological changes.

### *c) Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition*

The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA identified potential LSE upon a range of Natura 2000 sites through increased traffic, which would in turn increase atmospheric pollution and nitrogen deposition on sites with 200m of a main road, albeit such effects are considered to be very small and difficult to predict at the strategic level (WCS HRA Update February 2014). The very small number of new homes (up to 10) that may be built by 2016 as a result of "infill development" is considered to be small in relation to the total for the county. The majority of the N2K sites listed under this topic in Section 2 above (apart from Salisbury Plan SAC/SPA and River Avon SAC) are sufficiently far away from the NDP area and therefore no likely significant effect is expected. The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (2014) concluded no likely significant effect where the existing approach to mitigation in Core Policy 55 is implemented. It is therefore concluded that the proposals for housing in the draft NDP would not have an adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites through nitrogen deposition.

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*d) Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines*

The Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC and its associated core areas and buffer areas identified in the council's HRA guidance are sufficiently far away from the NDP area and therefore no likely significant effect is expected.

**4. SCREENING OF DRAFT URCHFONT, WEDHAMPTON AND LYDEWAY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES**

The draft Chirton & Conock NDP comprises five sections of draft policies, which are entitled:

- Section 1: Housing
- Section 2: Developer Contributions
- Section 3: Design
- Section 4: Local Green Space
- Section 5: Informal Policies

All parts of the draft plan have been screened for potential impacts upon the Natura 2000 network, as set out in Section 5 below.

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**5. INITIAL HABITATS REGULATIONS SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT URCHFONT, WEDHAMPTON AND LYDEWAY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**a) Screening assessment of individual policies**

Categories A / B (Green) – Screened out

Categories C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
1. Housing	1a. New homes will be permitted in Chirton and Conock in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 1, 2 and 18. It is anticipated that this will amount to an indicative quantity of 1-10 new homes by 2026, by 'infill development'. For the purposes of this policy the term 'infill' is taken to mean the filling of a small gap within the village in an otherwise built-up frontage, usually consisting of frontage plots only and surrounded on at least three sides by developed sites or roads and normally capable or large enough for not more than a few dwellings (e.g. 1 to 5).	A1	
	1b. Affordable housing should be provided in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 43, with the affordable element being composed primarily or entirely of discounted market homes and / or shared ownership. Developments of 2 or more homes must include a proportion of 1 and / or 2 bedroom homes to meet	A1	
	1c. Self-build housing projects will be considered favourably subject to compliance with other policies of the plan.	A1	
	1d. The community is keen to encourage innovative designs which involve low environmental impact such as renewable energy and sustainable drainage and sewerage providing this can be achieved without unacceptable harm to heritage, landscape and neighbouring properties.	A1	
	1e. The conversion of farm buildings to housing will be permitted providing that the scheme complies with other elements of this plan's housing policy as above and: i. The design accords with the principles and local context identified in the Village Design Statement 2008		

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
	<p>ii. The size and scale of new development in terms of quantum, layout, bulk, height and density is subservient to existing traditional buildings (including barns, stables and outbuildings) and is of complimentary materials and design. Existing traditional farm buildings, including sheds, outbuildings and walls where these date to before 1900, should be retained whenever possible, whether listed or not.</p> <p>iii. Consideration is given to including live/ work units, artist studios or other employment opportunities in a mixed-use scheme that would not compromise the amenity of neighbours.</p>		
	<p>1f. Congestion on local roads is already a problem. Parking for all developments should ensure that adequate parking is provided on site, including for visitors, so that this problem is not exacerbated.</p>	A1	
2 Developer Contributions	<p>2 Developer contributions will be sought in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 3 and Wiltshire Planning Obligations SPD (May 2015) to meet the following local infrastructure priorities.</p> <p>i. The creation of a new village hall or meeting place for the community*</p> <p>ii. Sustainable transport improvements such as new pavements for pedestrian safety, improved footpaths network, and a new bus shelter.</p> <p>iii. Off-road parking for the school to reduce congestion and improve safety.</p> <p>iv. improved recreational facilities.</p>	A1	
3 Design	<p>3 The sensitive landscape setting and high quality historic townscape of Chirton and Conock must be respected by the design of any new development, especially in relation to the Conservation Area and AONB. Guidance is given in the adopted Village Design Statement, 2008 (the VDS) the principles of which has been reviewed and which has been found to be still relevant. New development must demonstrate that attention has been paid to the design principles of the VDS and that the resulting schemes will preserve or enhance the conservation area.</p> <p>While no rigid design code is imposed by this policy, new designs will be expected to respect the settings of listed buildings and the general scale, tempo and rural character of the village. The use of local materials and vernacular architectural elements is encouraged especially in regards to additions to or development close to traditional rural and agricultural buildings.</p>	A1	

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Policy Area	Policy	Categorisation in initial screening	Comments and recommendations
4. Local Green Space	<p>Policy 4 – Local Green Space The School recreation area as defined on the Local Green Space Policy Map is designated as Local Green Space. Development, with the exception of any development to extend, expand, alter or improve the school and its facilities, may only take place on this site in accordance with National Local Green Space Policy.</p>	A1	
5 Informal Policies	<p>Informal Policies  <b>1. Nature, Landscape and Habitat</b>            Action by the community, including land-owners, will aim to improve landscape and biodiversity through planting trees, planting and repairing hedgerows and if possible by creating a community orchard.  <b>2. Village Maintenance</b>            Community action, including working with appropriate authorities, agencies and property owners will tackle existing problems concerning drainage of the culvert and other maintenance in the village.  <b>3. Road Safety and Sustainable Transport</b>            Community action, including negotiation with the School, Highway authority, property owners and police as appropriate, will tackle the following issues:            . inadequate off- road parking at the school and subsequent congestion            . the improvement of footpaths and pavements            . the improvement of local bus services and infrastructure            . vehicle speed reduction, traffic calming and signage improvements  <b>4. Village Hall</b>            The Parish Council (or a working group it establishes) will consider the funding and delivery of a new village hall. Their remit may include but not be limited to, negotiating and overseeing the spending of any benefits accruing from developer contributions as identified in the formal Developer Contributions policy of this plan.</p>	A1	

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**b) Assessment of all elements of the plan 'in-combination'**

- The draft policies in the Chirton & Conock NDP would not have any in-combination effects.

**c) Assessment of the effects of the plan as a whole, in combination with Wiltshire Core Strategy**

- The draft NDP would not have any in combination effects with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

**6. CONCLUSION**

The draft policies in the emerging Chirton & Conock NDP do not allocate any new land for development and largely provide qualitative criteria for development focused on improving the parish for local people, businesses and visitors, including some environmental policies and suggestions for the design of development sites, which would therefore have no likely significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.

It can therefore be concluded that the draft Chirton & Conock NDP would have no likely significant effects upon the Natura 2000 network alone or in-combination and no appropriate assessment is currently required. However, after the consultation of the draft plan has closed and a final version has been produced, which may result in alterations to the draft policies, this HRA must be reviewed.

***Assessment carried out by: Fiona Elphick, Senior Ecologist***

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