

# Habitats Regulations Assessment

Report for:

Ross on Wye Neighbourhood Area

July 2019



## **Ross on Wye Neighbourhood Plan HRA**

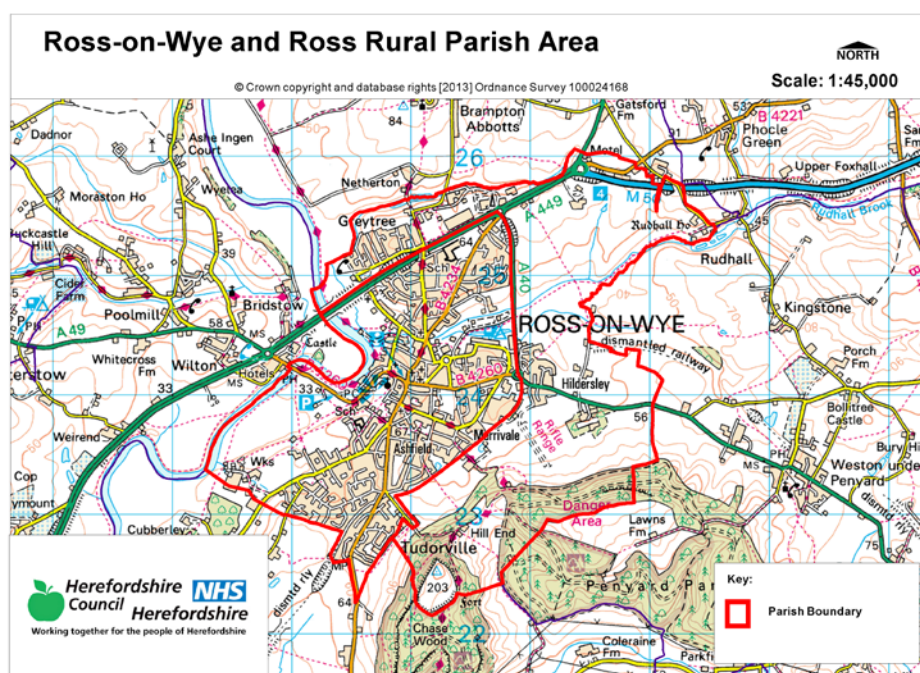
### **HRA Screening Assessment**

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Screening Assessment relates to a Neighbourhood Development Plan that is considered to be in general conformity with higher level strategic plans, such as the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework. The screening stage involves assessing broadly whether the final Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on any European site(s).
- 1.2 Ross on Wye Town Council has produced a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the town of Ross-on-Wye, in order to set out the vision, objectives and policies for the development of the area up to 2031. This HRA reviews the draft Ross-on Wye Plan (July 2018).
- 1.3 The NDP is allocate sites and designated any settlement boundaries to meet the growth requirements of the strategic policies. It provides general criteria policies that clarify and given more detail to those within the Herefordshire Core Strategy.
- 1.4 This requires a high level screening assessment to build upon the HRA Screening Assessment Report for the Core Strategy. It should be read in combination with the Core Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment Report and ensures that there will not be any significant impacts upon Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.5 The map below shows Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Area to which this assessment related.



## 2 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment of neighbourhood plans

- 2.1 The requirement to undertake HRA of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the "Habitats Regulations" published for England and Wales in July 2007 and updated in 2013. Therefore, when preparing its NDP, Wyeside Group Parish Council is required by law to carry out an assessment known as "Habitats Regulations Assessment". It is also a requirement in Regulation 32 schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

- 2.2 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive provides that:  
*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*
- 2.3 HRA is an impact-led assessment and refers to the assessment of the potential effects of a neighbourhood plan on one or more European sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):
- **SPAs** are classified under the European Council Directive 'on the conservation of wild birds' (79/409/EEC; 'Birds Directive') for the protection of **wild birds and their habitats** (including particularly rare and vulnerable species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive, and migratory species).
  - **SACs** are designated under the Habitats Directive and target **particular habitats** (Annex 1) and/or species (Annex II) identified as being of European importance.
- 2.4 For ease of reference during HRA, general practice has been that these three designations are collectively referred to as either **Natura 2000** or **European sites**. This means that a Screening Assessment is carried out with regard to the Conservation Objectives of the European Sites and with reference to other plans or projects to identify if any significant effect is likely for any European Site.
- 2.5 Herefordshire Council is aware of the recent judgement (People over Wind, Peter Sweetman vs Coillte). The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that mitigation measures should be assessed within the framework of an appropriate assessment and that it is not permissible to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan on a European site at the screening stage. The initial screening undertaken in August 2013 and concluded that a full HRA would be required. Mitigation was not taken into account at this stage.
- 2.6 The purpose of this HRA Report is to detail the findings of the screening and reviewed in terms of the implications of *Sweetman* of the draft NDP.

### 3 Methodology

- 3.1 Although the Ross-on-Wye NDP is not directly regarding the management of any European sites, it does include proposals for development which may affect European sites. Therefore, it is necessary under Regulation 102(1)(a) of the Habitats Regulations 2010 to undertake screening for likely significant effects on European sites.
- 3.2 The HRA of neighbourhood plans is undertaken in stages and should conclude whether or not a proposal or policy in a neighbourhood plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site in question. This is judged in terms of the implications of the plan for a site's 'qualifying features' (i.e. those Annex I habitats, Annex II species, and Annex I bird populations for which it has been designated) and are measured with

reference to the conservation objectives for those qualifying features as defined by Natural England.

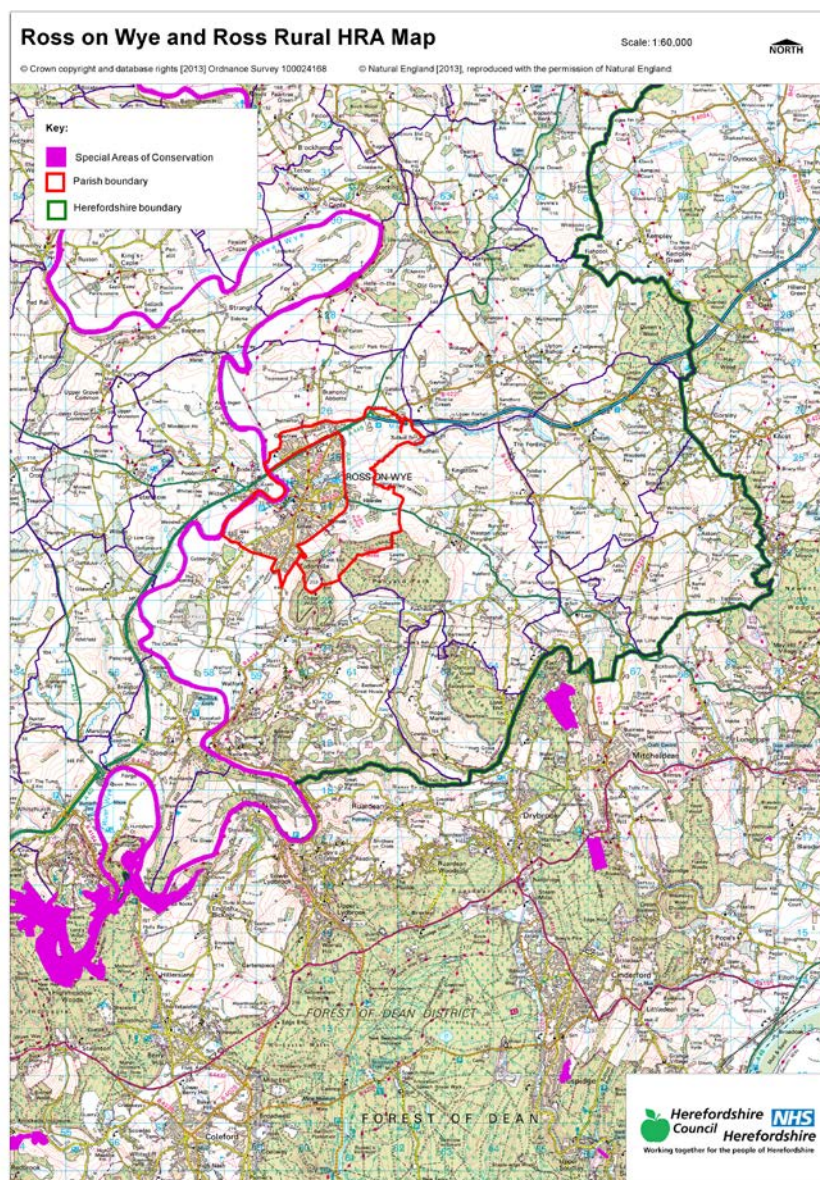
- 3.3 The first process is to undertake an initial screening report to determine the need to undertake the requirement for a HRA, this initial screening identifies whether the Plan could impact upon any European site that could be within the Neighbourhood Area or nearby.
- 3.4 If a European Site is within the Neighbourhood Area or the Neighbourhood Area could impact upon a European site then this will need to be taken into account and a full screening assessment will need to be undertaken.
- 3.5 The full screening stage consists of a description of the plan, identification of potential effects on European Sites, assessing the effects on European Sites. For Neighbourhood Plans the outcome should demonstrate there are no likely effects upon the European sites. If any likely effects occur then there will need to be amendments to the NDP made and be re-screened until all likely effects have been addressed.

#### **4 Results of the Initial Screening Report and qualifying features of the European Sites**

- 4.1 The initial Screening report (6 August 2013) found that three European sites are close to Ross-on Wye. The River Wye runs along the western border of the neighbourhood area. The town is also 5km away from the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean bat sites and 7.1km from the Wye Valley Woodlands.

Figure 2 below highlights the location of River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat sites SAC and Wye Valley Woodlands SAC in relation to the neighbourhood area.





- 4.2 There is also a duty under the Water Framework Directive to ensure that proposals for growth do not adversely affect the river water quality and this included the associated watercourses flowing into the rivers.

#### **Site integrity of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC**

- 4.3 The issues associated with maintaining the sites integrity include water levels and flow, water quality, eutrophication (nitrogen enrichment), sedimentation, disturbance and species maintenance.
- 4.4 The River Wye SAC can be sensitive to changes in water quantity and quality. As outlined within the Habitat Regulation Assessment to the Herefordshire Core Strategy, the water supply in this area comes from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and no likely significant effects on European sites as a result of changes in water quality are expected in relation to the proportional growth outlined with the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

- 4.5 In relation to water quality, Policy SD4 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy indicates that any development should not undermine the achievement of water quality targets within the county's rivers. This should ensure that developments within the area can be accommodated within existing water discharge permits would not be likely to have a significant effect upon the River Wye SAC. This position is confirmed within the HRA of the Core Strategy in April 2015.
- 4.6 The addition of the Nutrient Management Plan for the River Wye SAC will support this policy. DCWW have indicated that there is a growth scheme within AMP6 capital programme for completion by 2020 to accommodate growth within the Core Strategy. Although located adjacent to the River Wye SAC, the level of phosphate is not an issue which is causing concern within Ross-on-Wye and NMP actions are unlikely to be required.

#### **Site integrity of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC and Wye Valley Woodlands SAC**

- 4.7 The Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe bat feature within the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites. The Greater Horseshoe Bat are known to migrate between 20-30km between their summer and winter roosts whereas the Lesser Horseshoe migrate 5km and 10km between their summer and winter roosts. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is vulnerable to disturbance, noise and vibration, light pollution and habitat lost.
- 4.8 NDPs sites within 10 km of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites will need to consider development impact to these species and their habitats. NDPs closest to the Wye Valley Woodlands will need to consider: Woodland habitat buffer. Lesser Horseshoe Bat: Old buildings; woodland locations; sheltered valleys, extensive deciduous woods or dense scrub, close to roost sites. In areas of fragmented habitats, linear habitats such as hedgerows are important corridors. Vulnerable to loss or disturbance of both summer and winter roosts and removal of linear habitat.
- 4.8 The issues associated with maintaining the sites integrity include impact of development result in changes in landscape and townscape. As outlined within the Habitat Regulation Assessment to the Herefordshire Core Strategy, impact on European sites is dependent on scale and proximity to the European sites.
- 4.9 In relation to impact on biodiversity and important species, Policy LD2 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy indicates that any development should conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire. Development within close proximity to internationally and local designated sites will need to incorporate sympathetic design components to enhance their nature conservation interests.
- 4.7 For full details of the three SAC attributes which contribute to and define their integrity and vulnerable data see Appendix 1 of the Ross on Wye Initial Screening Report. The Initial Screening Report, August 2013, can be found in Appendix 1 of this HRA report.
- 4.8 This information made it possible to identify the features of each site which determine site integrity, as well as the specific sensitivities of each site, therefore enabling later analysis of how the potential impacts of the Ross on Wye Neighbourhood Plan may affect site integrity.
- 4.9 The initial screening assessment indicated that a full screening assessment is required to assessment the likelihood of significant effects on the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat sites SAC and the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC of the policies within the Ross on Wye NDP.

## 5 Description of the Ross on Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 5.1 The draft Ross on Wye NDP presents detailed policies for development in the Neighbourhood Area, which is equivalent to the group parish boundary, up to 2031. The Plan begins by introducing its preparation and highlighting its issues.
- 5.2 The NDP then details the vision for the town over the Plan period together with a number of primary objectives to realise that visions:
1. To protect and enhance all aspects of the environment
  2. To deliver more housing, in particular to meet local needs
  3. To protect, enhance and diversity the local economy
  4. To ensure an accessible and well connected town for all
  5. To protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets

From these 5 objective a further sub-objectives around housing, environment and facilities have been included to further development the overall objectives into specific policies areas.

- 5.3 The initial options for the NDP (refer to appendix 2) were assessed to determine their environmental impact that could affect the River Wye SAC, the Wye Valley Woodland SAC and the Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Of the four options put forward the 'no NDP / do nothing' option was not considered viable for the Town Council.

Option 1	Do nothing
Option 2a	Allocate major sites deemed suitable and deliverable
Option 2b	Option 2A with the additional of Broadmeadows / Tanyard
Option 3	Reconsider allocated land currently assessed as unsuitable

All of which indicated towards growth however all the options would be seeking to provide proportional growth in line with the Core strategy and are therefore unlikely to have a significant impact on the three SACs

- 5.4 As Wyeside Neighbourhood Plan progressed from options to draft NDP policies, the Plan needed to identify ways in which the least effect on the three European sites could be achieved, alongside taking forward the preferred option from the consultation from the community.
- 5.5 The NDP also sets out 39 general policies on various topics based on the objective headings above and 5 site allocations, these include:

Policy EN1	Ross Design Policy
Policy EN2	Shopfronts and signage
Policy EN3	Settlement boundary
Policy EN4	Infill and backland development
Policy EN5	Eco-building
Policy EN6	Solar photovoltaic energy
Policy EN7	Landscape setting
Policy EN8	Key views
Policy EN9	Green infrastructure
Policy EN10	Hard surfacing of drives and parking areas
Policy EN11	Pre-application community engagement
Policy H1	Self and custom build
Policy H2	Home working
Policy H3	Town centre housing
Policy H4	Living and working over shops



Policy E1	New employment development
Policy E2	Resisting out of town retail
Policy E3	Town centre uses
Policy A1	Sustainable transport
Policy A2	Walking and cycling
Policy A3	Walking and cycling signs
Policy A4	Changes to car parks
Policy A5	Provision of electric charging points
Policy SC1	Retaining community facilities
Policy SC2	New community facilities
Policy SC3	Allotments
Policy SC4	Play areas
Policy SC5	Local Green Spaces
Policy SC6	Telecommunications infrastructure

#### Site allocations

- Cleeve Field
- Merrivale Lane
- Stoney Stile
- The Chase Hotel
- Ryefield Centre

## 6.0 Assessments undertaken to date of the emerging Ross on Wye NDP policies

- 6.1 Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 requires that a Screening Assessment be undertaken, in order to identify the 'likely significant effects' of an NDP. Accordingly, a screening matrix was prepared and this determined the extent to which any of the policies within the Ross on Wye NDP would be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC, Wye Valley Woodlands SAC and the Forest of Dean Bat sites SAC.
- 6.2 In light of the *Sweetman* case all policies have been reviewed to ensure compliance with the ruling. The finding can be found in appendix 3.
- 6.3 The findings of the screening matrix can be found in the appendix. Colour coding was used to record the likely impacts of the policies on the European site and its qualifying habitats and species as shown in the table 1 below.

Red	There are likely to be significant effects
Green	Significant effects are unlikely

- 6.4 Following the recent *Sweetman* judgement, it is not permissible to take account of measure intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan on the River Wye SAC, Wye Valley Woodlands SAC, Forest of Dean Bat site SAC at this final screening stage. Any likely significant effects would require an Appropriate Assessment to be required.

### Screening of the draft plan (Reg14)

- 6.5 None of the draft Ross on Wye Neighbourhood Plan policies were concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC, Wye Valley Woodlands SAC or the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat sites SAC.
- 6.6 Policy LD2 of the Core Strategy indicates that any development should conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire. Development within close proximity to internationally and local designated sites will need to incorporate sympathetic design components to enhance their nature conservation interests.

- 6.7 Ross on Wye NDP allocates sites, however the location and scale of the sites have been screened and seen to have an unlikely significant effect on the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean SAC along with the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC.
- 6.8 In addition, as any development will require to meet the criteria of Policy LD2, legal opinion has indicated that an AA is not required.. The sites likely impact on the SACs can be determined further at planning application stage when further details of the proposed housing schemes are known.
- 6.9 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) have indicated that there is a growth scheme within AMP6 capital programme for completion by 2020 to accommodate growth within the Core Strategy. Although located adjacent to the River Wye SAC, the level of phosphate is not an issue which is causing concern within Ross-on-Wye and NMP actions are unlikely to be required.
- 6.10 In addition, the Nutrient Management Plan for the River Wye SAC should ensure that development within Herefordshire which can be accommodated within existing water discharge permits would not be likely to have a significant effect upon the River Wye SAC.
- 6.11 No mitigation measures have been included within the screening of the policies of the NDP. Policies of the Core Strategy and the NDP will form part of the development plans. A key requirement of the Core Strategy is to meet the Water Framework Directive.
- 6.12 This review has concluded that the policies are unlikely to result in significant effects on the River Wye SAC, the Wye Valley woodland SAC and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean bat sites SAC. ***It is therefore concluded that the Ross on Wye Plan will not have a likely significant effect on the aforementioned three European Sites.***

## **7 Screening of modifications to the NDP (reg16)**

- 7.1 The submission Ross on Wye NDP has been revised following the Reg14 consultation. No additional objectives have been added or amended. 11 policies have been amended and two have been deleted including the formal site allocation at the Chase. These changes have been minor in nature and do not affect the stance of the policies. However, these changes have been reassessed.
- 7.2 The following policies have been reassessed:
- Policy EN7
  - Policy EN8
  - Policy EN10
  - Policy H2
  - Policy H4
  - Policy E2
  - Policy A3
  - Policy A4
  - Policy SC1
  - Policy SC2
  - Policy SC4
- 7.3 No mitigation measures have been included within the screening of the policies of the NDP. Policies of the Core strategy and the NDP will form part of the development plan. A key requirement of the Core Strategy is to meet the Water Framework Directive.

7.4 Legal opinion following the Sweetman case has indicated that in areas where there is adequate sewerage treatment works capacity and where Policy SD4 would apply to developments, then no likely significant effect could be concluded with regards to the NDP and there is no requirement for NDPs to include additional mitigation.

7.5 This review and rescreening have been found to be unlikely to result in significant effects on the River Wye SAC, the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean bat sites SAC. It is therefore concluded that the modifications made have not resulted in any policy changes that would mean that the **Ross on Wye NDP would not have a likely significant effect on the aforementioned three European Sites.**

## **8 Identification of other plans and projects which may have ‘in-combination’ effects**

8.1 There are a number of potentially relevant plans and projects which may result in in-combination effects with the Core Strategy across Herefordshire, these plans have been reviewed and can be found in Appendix 2 of the publication of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Oct 2015).

8.2 It is seen that as this NDP does not go over and beyond the requirements set out in the Core Strategy.

8.3 Adjacent neighbourhood plans include Weston under Penyard has been adopted, Linton; Upton Bishop; Brampton Abbots and Foy Group; Bristow; Walford are in drafting stage in their production. These plans have not gone over and beyond the requirements set out within the Core Strategy for their area.

8.4 The HRA for the Core Strategy also identifies that both the Water Cycle Study for Herefordshire, which indicates the potential for planned water abstraction requirements combined with pressures on European Sites from the Core Strategy policies, and the work on the Nutrient Management Plan, to ensure the favourable conservation status of the SAC in respect of phosphate levels as soon as possible and at the latest by 2027, have both been considered as part of the in-combination assessment.

8.5 It is unlikely that the Ross on Wye Plan will have any in-combination effects with any plans from neighbouring parish councils as the level of growth proposed is the same as that proposed for the Ross on Wye Housing Market Area in the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

9.1 With reference to sections 6 to 9 above, the NDP **will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC and the Wye Valley Woodland SAC and Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC.**

## **10.0 Next steps**

10.1 This submission Report will be published alongside the submission Ross on Wye NDP and the earlier HRA reports. This will be subject to consultation with the statutory bodies prior to the examination.

# Appendix 1

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**Initial Habitat Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental  
Assessment Screening Notification**

**The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012 (Reg. 32)**

**Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d)**

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<b>Neighbourhood Area:</b>	Ross on Wye & Ross Rural Neighbourhood Area
<b>Parish Council:</b>	Ross on Wye Town Council and Ross Rural Parish Council
<b>Neighbourhood Area Designation Date:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2013

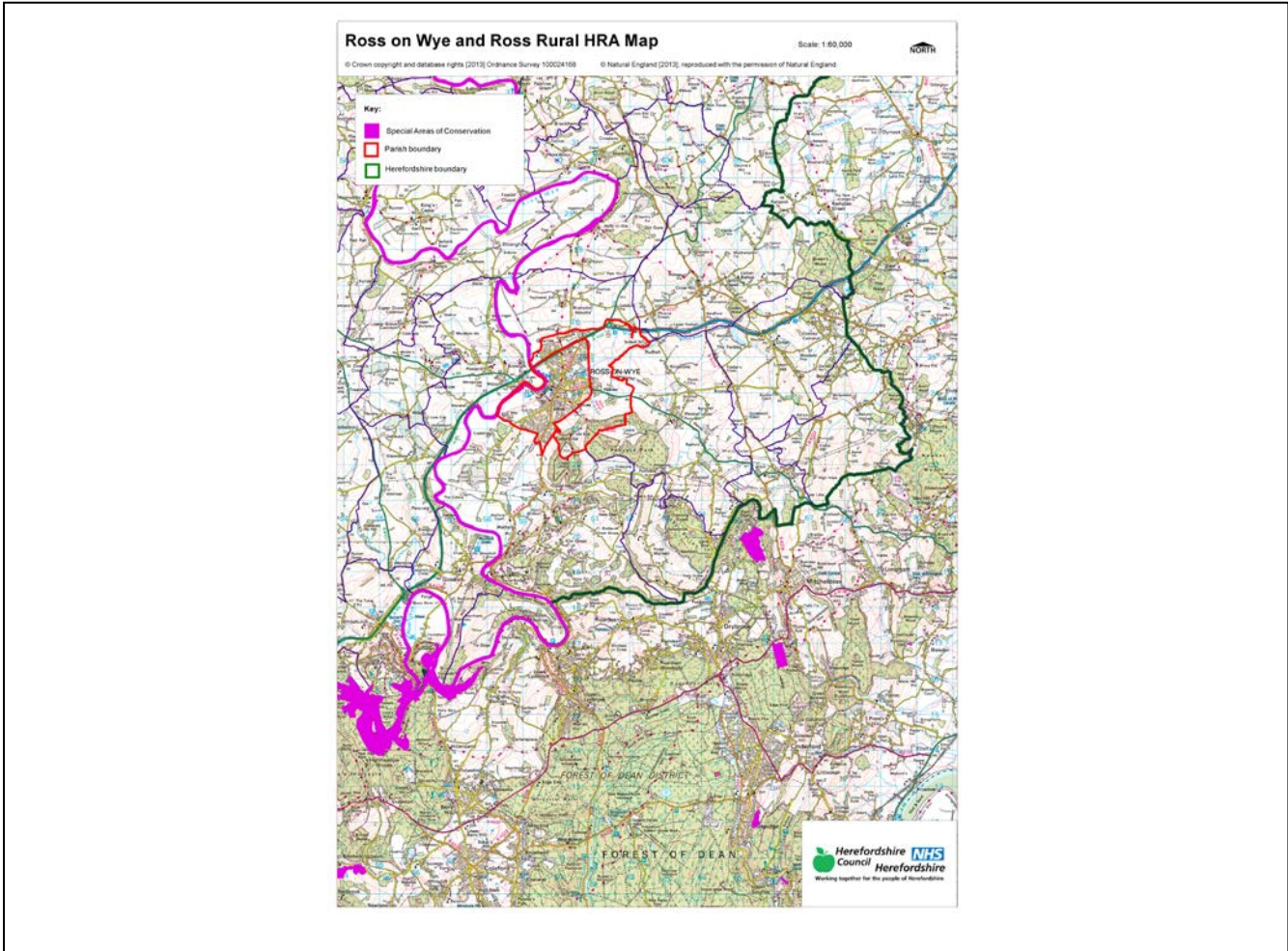
### **Introduction**

This Initial Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening has been undertaken to assess whether any European Sites exist within or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Area which could be affected by any future proposals or policies.

Through continual engagement the outcomes of any required assessments will help to ensure that proposed developments will not lead to Likely Significant Effects upon a European Site or cause adverse impacts upon other environmental assets, such as the built historic or local natural environment.



**HRA Initial Screening: Map showing relationship of Neighbourhood Area with European Sites  
(not to scale)**



**Initial HRA Screening**

**River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC:**

Does the Neighbourhood Area have the River Wye (including the River Lugg) in or next to its boundary?	Y	The River Wye runs along the western border of the Parishes
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC?	Y	The Parishes are within the River Wye hydrological catchment area
If yes above, does the Neighbourhood Area have mains drainage to deal with foul sewage?	Y	There is mains drainage at Ross on Wye

**Downton Gorge SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC?	N	Downton Gorge is 50.3km away from the Parishes
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**River Clun SAC:**

Does the Neighbourhood Area include: Border Group Parish Council or Leintwardine Group Parish Council?	N	River Clun does not border the Parishes
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**Usk Bat Sites SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of the SAC boundary?	N	Usk Bat Sites are 40.2km away from the Parishes
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**Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of any of the individual sites that make up the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites?	Y	The Parishes are 5km away from Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites
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**Wye Valley Woodlands SAC:**

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of any of the individual sites that make up the Wye Valley Woodlands Site?	Y	The Parishes are 7.1km away from the Wye Valley Woodlands
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**HRA Conclusion:**

The assessment above highlights that the following European Sites will need to be taken into account in the future Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Ross on Wye and Ross Rural Neighbourhood Area and a Full HRA Screening will be required.

**European Site**

*(List only those which are relevant from above)*

River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC

Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC

Wye Valley Woodlands SAC

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Initial Screening for nature conservation landscape and heritage features**

The following environmental features are within or in general proximity to the Ross on Wye & Ross Rural Neighbourhood Area and would need to be taken into account within a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, the NDP will also need to consider the other SEA topics set out in Guidance Note 9a to ensure that the plan does not cause adverse impacts.

<b>SEA features</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>SEA required</b>
Air Quality Management Areas	0	There are no AQMAs within the Parishes	N
Ancient Woodland	2	Chase Wood; Penyard Park	Y
Areas of Archaeological Interest	0	There are no AAls within the Parishes	N
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	1	Wye Valley AONB covers the whole of Ross on Wye Parish except the north east corner of the Parish	Y
Conservation Areas	1	Ross on Wye	Y
European Sites	1	River Wye runs along the western borders of the Ross on Wye Parish	Y
Flood Areas		Flood Zones 2 and 3 follow the River Wye and Rudhall Brook	Y
Listed Buildings	Numerous	There are numerous Listed Buildings throughout the Parishes	Y
Local Sites (SWS/SINCS/RIGS)	1 (RIGS) 4 (SWS)	RIGS: M50 Section 1 (border) SWS: River Wye; Wilton Bluff; Chase & Merrivale Woods; Disused Railway Line Ross to Kerne Bridge	Y
Long distance footpaths/trails	4	Wye Valley Walk; Ross Buggy Route; Ross Round; Herefordshire Trail	Y
Mineral Reserves	1	Blackfields (border)	Y
National Nature Reserve	0	There are no NNRs within the Parishes	N
Registered & Unregistered parks and gardens	9 Unregistered	Lincoln Hill House; John Kyrles Walk; The Prospect; John Kyrles Garden; Merton House; The Chase; Penyard Park; Rudhall House; Weston Hall (border)	Y
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	8	Wilton Bridge; Wilton Castle (border); The Market Hall; Churchyard cross in St Mary the Virgin Churchyard; Camp in Chase Wood; Churchyard cross at St Bridget's churchyard (border); Penyard Castle (border); Churchyard cross at St Michael and All Saints churchyard	Y
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	2	River Wye (Unfavourable Recovering); Wilton Bluff (Favourable)	Y

**Decision Notification:**

The initial screening highlights that the Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Ross on Wye and Ross Rural Neighbourhood Area:

- a) Will require further environmental assessment for Habitat Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

**Assessment date: 06/08/2013**

**Assessed by: James Latham**

## Appendix 1: European Sites

The table below provides the name of each European Site, which has been screened in for the purposes of neighbourhood planning in Herefordshire; includes their site features of integrity; and vulnerability data. This is based on the sites individual features of integrity and their vulnerabilities, which could include distance criteria. This has been used in identifying which parishes are likely to require a full HRA Screening of their future Neighbourhood Development Plan, to establish if their plan might have Likely Significant Effects on a European Site.

<b>Downton Gorge</b>
<b>Site Features:</b> <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines
<b>Vulnerability data:</b> 10km for air quality associated with poultry units or other intensive agricultural practices.
<b>River Clun</b>
<b>Site Features:</b> Freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
<b>Vulnerability data:</b> Water quality is important to maintain the site feature. Parishes either side of the River Clun will be affected.
<b>River Wye</b>
<b>Site Features:</b> Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation. Transition mires and quaking bogs. White-clawed (or Atlantic Stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> . Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> . Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> . River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> . Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> . Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> . Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> . Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> . Allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>
<b>Vulnerability data:</b> Proximity: Developments should not be within 100m of the designated bank. Some developments beyond 100m may also have impacts based on proximity and these issues should be addressed where possible when developing NDP policy and choosing site allocations. Water Quality: Within the whole catchment of the River Wye, which includes the River Lugg, mains drainage issues with regards to water quality are being resolved through the Core Strategy / Local Plan and development of a Nutrient Management Plan. Welsh Water should be consulted to ensure that the proposed growth will be within the limit of their consents. Otters: "An otter will occupy a 'home range', which on fresh waters usually includes a stretch of river as well as associated tributary streams, ditches, ponds, lakes and woodland. The size of a home range depends largely on the availability of food and shelter, and the presence of neighbouring otters. On rivers, a male's home range may be up to 40km or more of watercourse and associated areas; females have smaller ranges (roughly half the size) and favour quieter locations for breeding, such as tributary streams. Otters without an established home range are known as 'transients'. They are mostly juveniles looking for a territory of their own, or adults that have been pushed out of their territories. Transient otters may use an area for a short while, but they will move on if conditions are not suitable or if they are driven away by resident otters. Transients will have been important in extending the range of otters, but they are very difficult to identify from field signs. Within a home range an otter may use many resting sites. These include above-ground shelters, such as stands of scrub or areas of rank grass, and underground 'holts' – for example, cavities under tree roots and dry drainage pipes." (Source: EA website: <a href="http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/Otters_the_facts.pdf">http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/Otters_the_facts.pdf</a> accessed 09/04/2013)



### Usk Bat Site

**Site Features:** Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: European dry heaths, Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration, Blanket bogs, Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation, Caves not open to the public, *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines. Annex II species of primary reason for site selection: Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, UK population 5%, although it is suggested this is an underestimate.

**Vulnerability data:** Lesser Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 5km and 10km between their summer and winter roosts. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is vulnerable to disturbance; light pollution; and habitat loss. Check with the planning ecologist for other issues.

### Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites

**Site Features:** Annex II species that are a primary reason for site selection: Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

**Vulnerability data:** Lesser Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 5km and 10km between their summer and winter roosts. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is vulnerable to disturbance; light pollution; and habitat loss. Check with the planning ecologist for other issues.

Greater Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 20-30km between their summer and winter roosts.

NDPs closest to the European Site will need to consider:

Woodland habitat buffer.

Lesser Horseshoe Bat: Old buildings; woodland locations; sheltered valleys, extensive deciduous woods or dense scrub, close to roost sites. In areas of fragmented habitats, linear habitats such as hedgerows are important corridors. Vulnerable to loss or disturbance of both summer and winter roosts and removal of linear habitat.

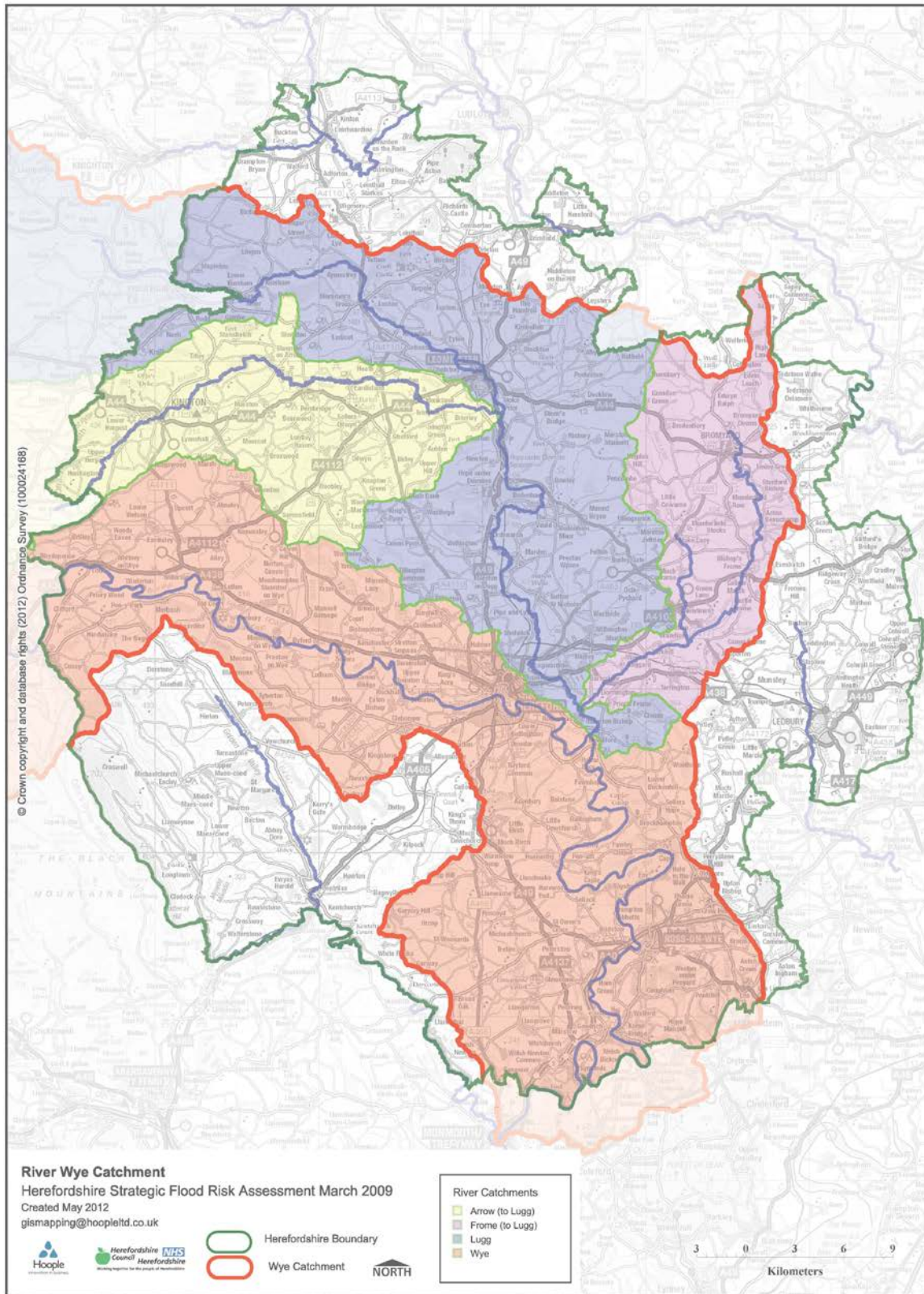
Greater Horseshoe Bat: Large buildings, pasture, edge of mixed deciduous woodland and hedgerows. Mixed land-use especially south-facing slopes, favours beetles, moths and insects they feed on. During the winter they depend on caves, abandoned mines and other underground sites for undisturbed hibernation. A system/series of sites required. Vulnerable to loss of insect food supply, due to insecticide use, changing farming practices and loss of broad-leaved tree-cover and loss / disturbance of underground roosts sites.

### Wye Valley Woodlands

**Site Features:** Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for site selection: Beech forests *Asperulo-Fagetum*, *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines, *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, 51-100 residents

**Vulnerability data:** Lesser Horseshoe bats are known to migrate between 5km and 10km between their summer and winter roosts. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is vulnerable to disturbance; light pollution; and habitat loss. Check with the planning ecologist for other issues. NDPs closest to the European Site will need to consider: Woodland habitat buffer. Lesser Horseshoe Bat: Old buildings; woodland locations; sheltered valleys, extensive deciduous woods or dense scrub, close to roost sites. In areas of fragmented habitats, linear habitats such as hedgerows are important corridors. Vulnerable to loss or disturbance of both summer and winter roosts and removal of linear habitat.

## Appendix 2: Wye Catchment Map



# Appendix 2

**Consultation date: 9 November to 21 December 2018**

**Consultation title:** Ross on Wye Neighbourhood Plan **revised** Regulation 14

*N.B. This consultation feedback is **only** for comments received on the HRA of the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan*

Consultee	Summary of Comments	Response to Comments
Natural England	No comments received	
Historic England	Comments received but not to the SEA	
Environment Agency	Comments received specific to the SEA	
Natural Resources Wales	No comments received	

# Appendix 3



## HRA Screening of Reg16 modifications to the draft Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies

NDP policies	HRA Screening of draft NDP policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/option/policy	Likely effect if implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on European Sites?	European Sites potentially affected	Would it be possible that it would result in any LSE?	Requirement for an Appropriate Assessment
Policy EN7 Landscape setting	The policy is seeking to protect areas of woodlands and the AONB	none	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC).  Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC.  Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No	No
Policy EN9 Green Infrastructure	The creation of green infrastructure would provide additional habitats and wildlife corridors for bats	none	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC).  Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC.  Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No	No
Policy EN10 Hard surfacing of drives and parking areas	Policy to encourage permeable paving surfaces	None	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC).  Wye Valley and Forest	No	No

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			of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Wye Valley Woodlands SAC		
Policy H2 Home working	Encourage small scale working for home	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. All developments are required to meet the criteria of Policy LD2 to protect biodiversity and wildlife, and SD4 which seeks to ensure water quality of the SAC is not detrimentally effected	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC). Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No, water quality is not an issues in this part of the River Wye SAC and Policy LD2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all development will only be permitted if there is no significant effect to the biodiversity of any SAC	No
Policy H4 Living and working over shops	Small scale housing over shops and town centre uses	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. All developments are required to meet the criteria of Policy LD2 to protect biodiversity and wildlife, and SD4 which seeks to ensure water quality of the SAC is not detrimentally effected	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC). Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No, water quality is not an issues in this part of the River Wye SAC and Policy LD2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all development will only be permitted if there is no significant effect to the biodiversity of any SAC	No
Policy E2 Resisting out of town	Policy is seeking to resist out of town retail facilities	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. All developments are	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC). Wye Valley and Forest	No, water quality is not an issues in this part of the River Wye SAC and Policy LD2 of the Core	No

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retail		required to meet the criteria of Policy LD2 to protect biodiversity and wildlife, and SD4 which seeks to ensure water quality of the SAC is not detrimentally effected	of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	Strategy seeks to ensure that all development will only be permitted if there is no significant effect to the biodiversity of any SAC	
Policy A1 Sustainable transport	The policy is seeking to provide sustainable transport routes	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. All developments are required to meet the criteria of Policy LD2 to protect biodiversity and wildlife, and SD4 which seeks to ensure water quality of the SAC is not detrimentally effected	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC). Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No, Policy LD2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all development will only be permitted if there is no significant effect to the biodiversity of any SAC	No
Policy A4 Changes to car parks	Policy to potential redevelop underused car parks	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. All developments are required to meet the criteria of Policy LD2 to protect biodiversity and wildlife, and SD4 which seeks to ensure water quality of the SAC is not detrimentally effected	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC). Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No, water quality is not an issues in this part of the River Wye SAC and Policy LD2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all development will only be permitted if there is no significant effect to the biodiversity of any SAC	No
Policy SC1 Retaining community	Retaining existing buildings and facilities	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. All	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC).	No, water quality is not an issues in this part of the River Wye SAC and	No

facilities		developments are required to meet the criteria of Policy LD2 to protect biodiversity and wildlife, and SD4 which seeks to ensure water quality of the SAC is not detrimentally effected	Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC.  Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	Policy LD2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all development will only be permitted if there is no significant effect to the biodiversity of any SAC	
Policy SC2  New community facilities	Provision of community facilities	Unlikely that there will be any significant effects on the European Site. All developments are required to meet the criteria of Policy LD2 to protect biodiversity and wildlife, and SD4 which seeks to ensure water quality of the SAC is not detrimentally effected	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC).  Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC.  Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No, water quality is not an issues in this part of the River Wye SAC and Policy LD2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all development will only be permitted if there is no significant effect to the biodiversity of any SAC	No
Policy SC4  Play areas	Retain and provide open spaces	The policy will seek to safeguard open spaces which will provide potential habitats and flight paths	River Wye (including the Lugg SAC).  Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC.  Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	No	No