

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Report for:

Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Area

March 2020



Stretton Grandison Group 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 Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council have produced a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Stretton Grandison Parish, in order to set out the vision, objectives and policies for the development of the Parish up to 2031. This HRA reviews the draft Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Plan (October 2019).
- 1.3 The NDP allocates sites, contains criteria based policies and designates settlement boundaries within the settlement of Stretton Grandison, Lower Eggleton, Canon Frome and Eggleton. The plan also identifies 5 housing sites within these settlements to provide up to 23 dwellings. 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 Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Area to which this assessment related.



2 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment of neighbourhood plans

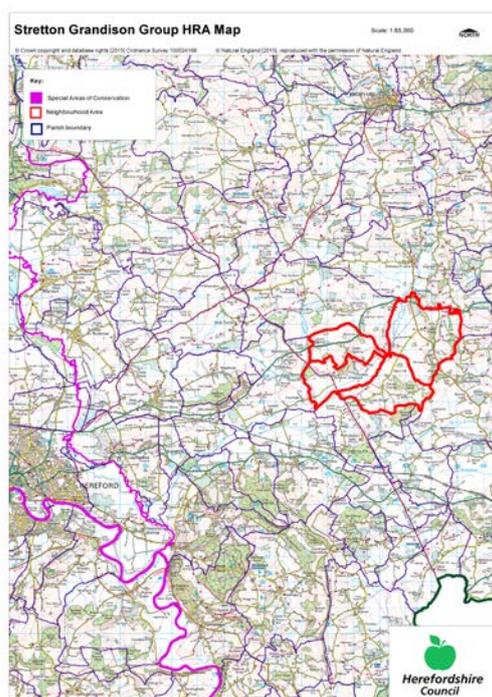
- 2.1 The requirement to undertake HRA of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the “Habitats Regulations” published for England and Wales in July 2007 and updated in 2013. Therefore, when preparing its NDP, Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council is required by law to carry out an assessment 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 September 2015 and concluded that a full HRA would be required. Mitigation was not taken into account at this stage.
- 2.6 The Co-operative Mobilisation (The Dutch Case) ruling will also have an impact in Herefordshire within areas within the catchment of the River Lugg. This will be covered in section 4.
- 2.7 The purpose of this HRA report is to detail the findings of the screening and reviewed in Terms of the implications of the *Sweetman and Dutch Cases* of the draft NDP.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 Although the Stretton Grandison Group NDP is not in direct 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 (September 2015) found that the River Wye is located outside the parish 8km away, and the parish falls within the hydrological catchment of the River Frome (Lugg). Figure 2 below highlights the location of River Wye SAC.



- 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 Severn Trent 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. It is expected for new development will need to adhere to the provisions of Policy SD4 of the Core Strategy.
- 4.5 Sections of the River Wye SAC where the water quality targets are already exceeding are subject to measures to reduce nutrients in line with the targets. In light of the interpretation of the Dutch Case where a European site is failing its water quality objectives and is classified as unfavourable condition, there is limited scope for the approval of additional damaging effects and measures that can't be relied or are uncertain.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 Although as present the Nutrient Management Plan for the River Wye SAC cannot be relied upon in light of the Dutch case, 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 Kilpeck and NMP actions are unlikely to be required.

5 Description of the Stretton Grandison Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 5.1 The draft Stretton Grandison Group 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 Group Parish over the Plan period; "Our community will be a place where people can enjoy living and working in a rural setting. The predominantly quiet, small scale nature of our parish will be preserved whilst accommodating the growth and development needed to meet the needs of the community and promote a sustainable and thriving community life."

There are twelve objectives of how this will be achieved. The objectives are listed below.

- **HO1. To identify the distribution and scale of housing growth in each of the identified settlements in the Core Strategy.**
- **HO2. To work closely with neighbouring parishes to promote a joint approach to growth at Fromes Hill and Lower Eggleton.**

- **HO3. To identify a range of suitable sites through a Call for Sites and Site Assessment process.**
- **HO4. To support a suitable and appropriate mix of house types, tenures and sizes in both new development and residential conversions across the Group Parish.**
- **ENO1. To conserve and protect the park landscapes of Homend Park and Canon Frome Court, including individual veteran trees and avenues of trees.**
- **ENO2. To protect and enhance local natural environmental assets such as wildlife, hedgerows, water courses and ponds, traditional orchards, ancient woodlands, the line of the old canal and important views such as to Woolhope Dome.**
- **ENO3. To ensure development is guided towards areas of lowest flood risk and to promote designs and layout which do not exacerbate flood risk eg from surface water.**

ENO4. To ensure new agricultural development such as poly tunnels and large agricultural buildings are designed and sited sensitively within the landscape.

ECO1. To support the sensitive conversion of redundant farm buildings such as for holiday accommodation, cafes and farm shops to create more local employment opportunities.

ECO2. To support investment in local infrastructure including broadband and transport.

ECO3. To encourage the use of renewable energy schemes

General Options

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. Of the three general housing options put forward the 'no NDP / do nothing' option was not considered viable for the Parish.

1-Do nothing

2-Identification of a settlement boundary for all identified settlements in the Core Strategy.

3-Site Allocations and Criteria

4-Housing Numbers and Types

5-Housing Mix

6-Housing in the wider countryside

7-Protecting local landscape character and biodiversity

8-Local green space

9-Protecting and enhancing the built heritage

10-Supporting economic re use of redundant agricultural buildings

11-New agricultural buildings

12-Supporting community energy schemes

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 Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Plan progressed from options to draft NDP policies, the Plan needed to identify ways in which the Stretton Grandison effect on the three SACs, could be achieved, alongside taking forward the preferred option from the consultation from the community. The site options can be found below.

Site Options

5.5 Stretton Grandison considered 15 site options in order to demonstrate potential to deliver proportionate growth within Stretton Grandison. The options are listed below. Option 1, 2 and 6 is the preferred option as it provides the most certainty for future development. This option allocates sites and a settlement boundaries, as well as using a criteria based policy to define areas for development. This option has an overall positive/ neutral impact on the

baseline objectives and help set out criteria for potential development, allocate sites within the settlement boundary in Stretton Grandison and definition of a settlement boundary.

- Site 1 Land at Townsend Barns SG SELECTED
 - Site 2 Land at the Hill Farm FH
 - Site 3 Grain Store, Canon Frome
 - Site 4 Land at the Bramleys, Castle Frome
 - Site 5 Land at Vicarage Cottage, Canon Frome SELECTED
 - Site 6 Land at the Barn, Canon Frome SELECTED
 - Site 7 Rochester House, Canon Frome
 - Site 8 Canon Frome Court, Canon Frome SELECTED
 - Site 9 Land east of gospel ash, FH
 - Site 10 Frome Orchard Area SELECTED
 - Site 11 Land east of A417 South SG
 - Site 12 Land north of A4103, Eggleton
 - Site 13 HLAA/241/001
 - Site 14 Yew Tree Farm FH
 - Site 15 The Willows, Canon Frome
- 5.6 The site options above sites 1,5,6,8 and 10 were selected. All of these sites had no significant effect on the SAC, this is mostly down to the scale, location nature of the sites proposed as well as the majority of the sites were in or around the identified settlement boundary, deeming the locations a place of sustainable growth. Of the 15 sites, none were deemed of having a potential significant impact on the SAC, due to the location in relation to the sites and scale of development. However as these are options that have not been selected, they do not require an appropriate assessment.
- 5.7 Majority of the site options were screened and were considered unlikely to have a significant effect on the SACs. The main concerns of development is landscape and impact on the historic settlement pattern. This effects nearly all of potential development in Stretton Grandison, however there are enough safeguards in the core strategy and design and placement of potential schemes can address this.
- 5.8 Five sites that have finally been selected 1,5,6,8 and 10. The selected sites have been screened in appendix 3. None have been found to have a significant effect on the SAC. This is due to locations and size of the potential development that is close to the defined settlement of Stretton Grandison.
- 6.0 Assessments undertaken to date of the emerging Stretton Grandison Group 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 Stretton Grandison Group NDP would be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC.
- 6.2 The NDP also sets out 12 policies on various topics based on the objective headings above and also for group parish, these include:
- SG1 Settlement Boundaries
 - SG2 Options for Housing Sites
 - SG3 Affordable Housing at Canon Frome Court
 - SG4 Housing Mix
 - SG5 Protecting local landscape character and wildlife
 - SG6 Design guidelines for Stretton Grandison Conservation area

- SG7 Design principles- Protecting and enhancing heritage and local character
- SG8 Design principles- promoting high quality and sustainable design
- SG9 Re-Use of former agricultural buildings for local economic development
- SG10 New agricultural buildings and poly tunnels
- SG11 Community led renewable energy schemes
- SG12 Reducing Flood Risk

Screening of the draft plan (Reg14)

- 6.3 The screening matrix took the approach of screening each policy and objective individually, which is consistent with current guidance. The results from the HRA reports for the Herefordshire Local Plan (Core Strategy) were also taken into consideration.
- 6.4 None of the NDP objectives and policies (October 2019) were concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on the European sites. The settlement itself does not have the River Wye SAC within it, but is within the group parish. The settlement of Ledbury and site allocations are not in close proximity to the river and unlikely to have a direct significant impact on the SAC. Core Strategy policy SD3 and SD4 together with the Nutrient Management Plan will ensure that development can only occur if these policy requirements are met.
- 6.5 Stretton Grandison have allocated sites, however the location and scale of the sites have been screened and seen to have an unlikely significant impact on the River Wye SAC. In many cases this is because the policies themselves would not result in development, i.e. they related instead to criteria for development and the SAC itself is not within the parish. In several cases the policies also included measures to help support the natural environment including biodiversity
- 6.6 In addition, as any development will require to meet the criteria of Policy LD2, Legal opinion had indicated that an AA is not required. The sites likely impact on the SAC can be determined at planning application stage when further details of the proposed housing scheme are known.
- 6.7 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water 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 within the hydrological catchment area of the River Wye SAC, the level of phosphate is not an issue which is causing concern within Stretton Grandison area and NMP actions are unlikely to be required.
- 6.8 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.
- 6.9 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 framework.
- 6.10 It is unlikely that the Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Plan will have any in-combination effects with any Plans from neighbouring parish council due to the level of growth proposed is of the same that is proposed for the Ledbury Market Area in the Herefordshire Core Strategy. Therefore it is concluded that the **Reg14 Stretton Grandison group NDP would not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC.**

Screening of modifications to NDP (Reg16)

- 6.11 The Submission NDP (March 2020) incorporates additional policy criteria or wording to add clarity and emphasis throughout the document. Policy reference to the sewerage network capacity within the village and the potential to phase development. This will give criteria for future applications to meet to support policy SD4 and ensure that the delivery of the Nutrient Management Plan is not compromised.
- 6.12 Policy SG2 and SG3 which was amended criteria was added to ensure water supply and quality along with helping the group parish meet local housing needs. This has been rescreened along with all of the policies in appendix 3. Modifications made to several other policies of the plan are considered to be minor and would not have a significant effect on the results previously assessed. These were points of clarity and minor word changes.
- 6.13 The revised NDP policies are therefore unlikely to result in significant effects on the European site. 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.

7 Assessment of the 'likely significant effects' of the submission Stretton Grandison NDP and implications of *Sweetman* case

- 7.1 In light of the *Sweetman and Dutch* cases, all policies have been reviewed to ensure compliance with the ruling. The finding can be found in appendix 3.
- 7.2 The findings of the screening matrix can be found in the Screening Matrix 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

- 7.3 Following the recent *Sweetman* and Dutch cases, 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 at this draft screening stage. Any likely significant effects would require an Appropriate Assessment to be required.

8 Conclusions from the Screening Matrix

- 8.1 None of the submission Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Plan (March 2020) policies were concluded to be likely to have a significant effect on the River Wye SAC.
- 8.2 This is partly down to scale and extent of plan also the Stretton Grandison Group Plan small scale site allocations. For the policies contained in the plan there is sufficient policy criteria in Core Strategy policies LD2, SD3 and SD4 to ensure that development can only occur if these criteria are met.
- 8.3 Commitments and completions from April 2011-April 2019 are currently 4 dwellings, leaving a residual figure of 14 to find within the parish of Stretton Grandison. The plan allocates settlement boundaries for development within Stretton Grandison, Lower Eggleton, Fromes Hill, Canon Frome And Eggleton. There are 5 site allocations to provide up to 23 dwellings.

- 8.4 The allocated sites for development in Stretton Grandison and Canon Frome are not directly on the river banks or adjacent to a watercourse that feeds into the River, and due to the scale of the sites for homes and businesses being of that is alignment with the scale of growth that is required by the Herefordshire Core Strategy, these would not have an appreciable effect on the River Wye SAC, i.e. that they were not likely to be significant.
- 8.5 It is expected for new development will need to adhere to the provisions of Policy SD4 of the Core Strategy. No objections regarding the capacity of the Stretton Grandison water treatment works have been received by Severn Trent. It is recommended that liaison with the Water Company is needed before significant growth takes place.
- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 Policy SD4 of the Core Strategy of the NDP indicate that development would not permitted if wastewater treatment and water quality cannot be assured.
- 8.9 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. Stretton Grandison Group NDP allocates sites, however the location and scale of the sites have been screened and seen to have an unlikely significant effect on the SAC. Therefore an AA is not required as the plan is criteria based consisting of mostly protective policies it is determined unlikely to have a significant impact on the SACs. 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.
- 8.10 This review and rescreening in additional to the revisions to the policies from the examination, have been found to be unlikely to result in significant effects on the River Wye SAC. ***It is therefore concluded that the Stretton Grandison Neighbourhood Plan will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC.***

9 Identification of other plans and projects which may have 'in-combination' effects

- 9.1 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).
- 9.2 It is seen that as this NDP does not go over and beyond the requirements set out in the Core Strategy.
- 9.3 Adjacent neighbourhood plans include Yarkhill, Pixley and Distict and Bishops Frome (made), Ashperton (Reg 16) are in the process of producing a neighbourhood plan. These plans have not gone over and beyond the requirements set out within the Core Strategy for their area. Much Cowarne and part of the Bosbury area are not producing a neighbourhood plan.
- 9.4 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.

- 9.5 It is unlikely that the Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood 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 Ledbury on Wye Housing Market Area in the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

10.0 Conclusion

- 10.1 With reference to sections 6 to 9 above, the modifications to the NDP are not considered to affect the findings of this HRA report.
- 10.2 Therefore the earlier conclusions that the **Stretton Grandison Group NDP will not have a likely significant effect on the River Wye SAC.**

11.0 Next steps

- 11.1 This submission Report will be published alongside the final Stretton Grandison NDP and the earlier HRA Report and its addendum. This will be subject to undergo a six week consultation with the statutory bodies prior to being sent to examination.

Appendix 1

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

**The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations
2015 (Reg. 32)**

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d)

Neighbourhood Area:	Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Area
Parish Council:	Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council
Neighbourhood Area Designation Date:	21/09/2015

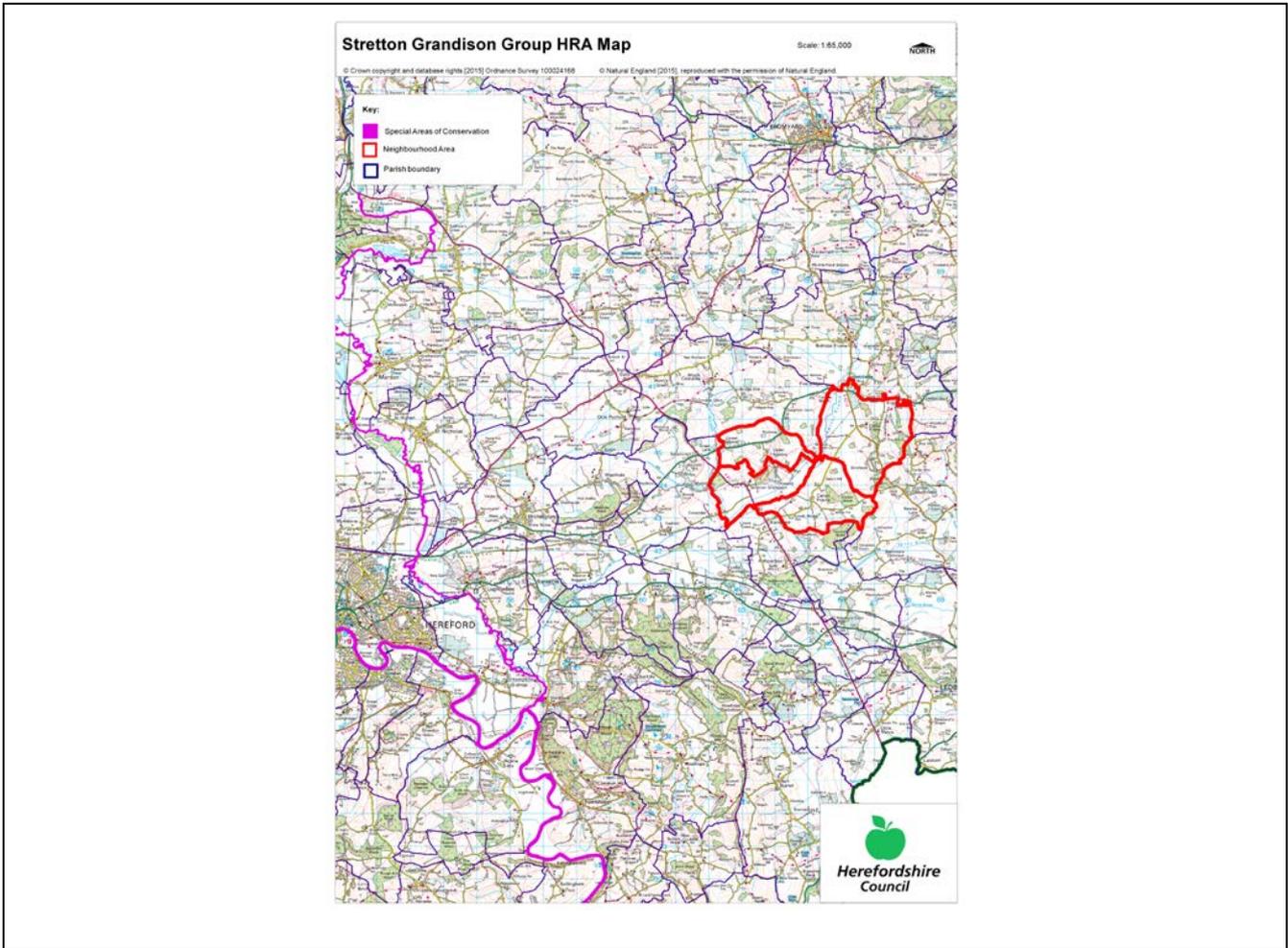
Introduction

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)



River Wye (including the River Lugg) Special Area of Conservation (SAC):

Does the Neighbourhood Area have the River Wye (including the River Lugg) in or next to its boundary?	N	The River Wye/Lugg is 8km away from the Group Parish
Is the Neighbourhood Area in the hydrological catchment of the River Wye (including the River Lugg) SAC?	Y	The Group Parish is within the hydrological catchment of the River Frome (to Lugg).
If yes above, does the Neighbourhood Area have mains drainage to deal with foul sewage?	Y	There is mains drainage at Stretton Grandison.

Downton Gorge SAC:

Is the Neighbourhood Area within 10km of Downton Gorge SAC?	N	Downton Gorge is 33.5km away from the Group Parish.
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River Clun SAC:

Does the River Clun border the Neighbourhood Area	N	River Clun does not border the Group Parish.
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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?	N	Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites are 22.5km away from the Group Parish.
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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?	N	Wye Valley Woodlands are 28.1km away from the Group Parish.
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HRA Conclusion:

The assessment above highlights that European Sites will need to be taken into account in the future Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Stretton Grandison Group 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

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

The following environmental features are within or in general proximity to the Stretton Grandison Group 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.

SEA features	Within Neighbourhood Area		Bordering Neighbourhood Area	
	Total number	Name(s)	Total number	Name(s)
Ancient Woodland	7	Ibbridge Coppice; Blackway Coppice; Fishpool Wood; Camp Coppice; Yew Tree Coppice; Meephill Coppice; Hansnett Wood.	4	Leighton Court Wood; Cheyney Court Wood; Beacon Hill Wood; Ashperton Park.
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	0	-	0	-
Conservation Areas	1	Stretton Grandison.	0	-
Flood Areas	Flood Zones 2 and 3 follow the River Frome, and a tributary of this along the west of the Group Parish boundary.			
Geoparks	0	-	1	Malvern Hills Geopark
Listed Buildings	There are numerous Listed Buildings throughout the Group Parish.			
Mineral Reserves	2	Stretton Grandison to Canon Frome to Bishops Frome; River Lodon, Monkhide to Yarkhill to Bartestree.	0	-
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	0	-	0	-
Nature Trails	1	Herefordshire Trail.	0	-
Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)	0	-	0	-
Registered Parks and Gardens	0	-	0	-

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)	3	Roman fort and outworks 550 yds (500m) SW of Canon Frome Court; Roman settlement; Castle Frome Castle.	0	-	
Sites of Importance in Nature Conservation (SINCs)	0	-	0	-	
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	0	-	0	-	
Special Wildlife Sites (SWS)	11	Blackway Coppice; Fishers Coppice; River Frome; Foxhill & Fishpool Wood; Woodlands above Birchend; MeePhill Coppice & Childer Wood; Highlea Wood; Hansnett Wood; Pond at Canon Frome Court; Woodland near Millend Cottage; Old canal at Ashperton.	8	Gorse Wood; Cheyney Court Wood; Meadows at Catley Farm; Fields near Merrings Farm; Ashperton Park; Old canal at Monkhide; Cowarne Wood; Ash Coppice.	
Unregistered parks and gardens	2	Homend; Canon Frome Court.	3	Cowarne Court; Upleadon Court; Leadon Court.	
			SSSI Status		
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1	Birchend	Favourable / Unfavourable Recovering	0	-
					SSSI Status

Decision Notification:

The initial screening highlights that the Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Area:

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

Assessment date: 17/09/2015

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.

Downton Gorge
Site Features: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines
Vulnerability data: 10km for air quality associated with poultry units or other intensive agricultural practices.

River Clun
Site Features: Freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
Vulnerability data: Water quality is important to maintain the site feature. Parishes either side of the River Clun will be affected.

River Wye
Site Features: 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>
Vulnerability data: 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."

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

HRA Consultation Feedback

This consultation feedback is **only** for comments received on the HRA of your Neighbourhood Development Plan

Parish Council Name: Stretton Grandison Group PC

Neighbourhood Development Plan Name: Stretton Grandison Group Neighbourhood Plan

Details of consultation: Regulation 14

Consultation date: 4 November to 16 December 2019

Consultation title: Regulation 14

No comments have been received in regards to the HRA.

Appendix 3

Appendix 3

Table 1: HRA Screening of Emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives and Policies

Parish Council Name: **Stretton Grandison Group Parish**

NDP Title: **Submission Stretton Grandison Group NDP**

Date undertaken: **March 2020**

Core Strategy HRA version: **Adopted Core Strategy 2011-2031**

NDP objectives, policies	HRA Screening of Emerging NDP objectives, options and policies				
	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the objective/option/policy	Likely effect if objective/option/policy implemented. Could they have Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on European Sites? (Yes/No, with reasons)	European Sites potentially affected	Mitigation measures to be considered, as necessary, through redraft of objective/policy and to be considered as part of Appropriate Assessment	Could the policy have likely significant effects on European sites (taking mitigation into account?)
Policy SG2	Identified areas for proportionate growth.	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)	No	Changes post reg 14 have added further criteria to ensure effects of water supply and quality are limited. An AA is still not required. The scale and extent of potential housing development is unlikely to have a significant impact on the SAC. Implementation of Core Strategy policy SD4, LD2, SD1 to grant planning permission will ensure water quality issues are addressed.

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Policy SG3	Affordable housing developed and supported within Stretton Grandison.	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)	No	<p>Changes post reg 14 add criteria to ensure local needs are met.</p> <p>An AA is still not required. The scale and extent of potential affordable housing development is unlikely to have a significant impact on the SAC. Implementation of Core Strategy policy SD4, LD2, SD1 to grant planning permission will ensure water quality issues are addressed. Impact on the SAC can be further assessed, when further details are known regarding new housing development. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.</p>
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