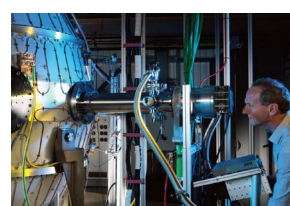


Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Scoping Report

South Oxfordshire and
Vale of White Horse
District Councils

May 2022



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. How to comment on this scoping report	4
3. Habitats Regulations Assessment requirements	5
4. Habitats sites that may be affected by the Joint Local Plan	6
5. Relevant plans and projects	8
6. Next steps	8
Appendix A: Map showing habitats sites contained partially or wholly within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse	9
Appendix B: Review of approaches applied by neighbouring authorities to identify habitats sites for consideration in HRAs	10
Appendix C: Map showing habitats sites contained partially or wholly within a 20km radius of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse	11
Appendix D: Information on identified habitats Sites' qualifying features, conservation objectives, pressures/threats and current status	12
Appendix E: Relevant plans and projects for the assessment of in-combination effects	28

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed scope of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the emerging South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041.
- 1.2 This scoping report identifies the designated and candidate habitats sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) that could be affected by the Joint Local Plan and that should therefore be considered through the HRA process. It also sets out other plans and projects that have potential to give rise to in-combination effects, alongside the Joint Local Plan, which may also need to be considered through the HRA process.
- 1.3 This scoping report does not set out a proposed approach or methodology for undertaking HRA screening or appropriate assessment. This is because the councils intend to commission appropriately skilled and experienced consultants to undertake the HRA process on their behalf. It will be for the appointed consultants to advise on an appropriate methodology for HRA screening and, where needed, appropriate assessment, informed by engagement with Natural England and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- 1.4 Whilst there is no requirement to produce an HRA scoping report at this stage in the plan-making process, it can be helpful for a number of reasons, including:
 - Habitats sites and their sensitivities are identified and considered from the very start of the plan-making process.
 - It provides an opportunity for Natural England and other stakeholders, including local communities, to review the proposed HRA scope and to provide comments, enabling the councils to ensure that the scope is correct before commencing the HRA process.
 - It highlights where there may be a need to engage with other local authorities to identify and assess the potential for cross-boundary cumulative impacts, enabling early engagement under the duty to cooperate.
 - It provides baseline information that can inform the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, helping to ensure alignment and consistency between the HRA and SA processes.

2. How to comment on this scoping report

- 2.1 This scoping report is being published for consultation as part of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan Issues Consultation. The consultation will run for six weeks, starting on 12 May 2022 and closing on 23 June 2022.
- 2.2 You can provide comments by using the survey form on either of our websites:
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/jointlocalplan>
<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/jointlocalplan>
- 2.3 **Comments should be submitted by 11:59pm on Thursday 23 June 2022.**
- 2.4 When submitting comments on this scoping report, you may want to consider the key questions set out below:

Key Questions:

- 1) Have we correctly identified the designated and candidate habitats sites that should be considered through the HRA of the Joint Local Plan?
(See **Chapter 4** and **Appendices A, C & D.**)
- 2) Have we correctly identified the other plans and projects that should be considered in the assessment of potential in-combination effects?
(See **Chapter 5** and **Appendix E.**)
- 3) Do you agree with the proposed next steps for the HRA process?
(See **Chapter 6.**)

- 2.5 You can find further information and other consultation documents on the above website addresses.
- 2.6 Please contact us on 01235 422425 or email haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk for support to access the consultation materials.

3. Habitats Regulations Assessment requirements

- 3.1 When producing a local plan, local authorities are legally required¹ to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The purpose of the HRA is to test whether the proposed plan is likely to result in a significant effect on the qualifying features, or undermine the ecological integrity, of a 'habitats site'.
- 3.2 Habitats sites are those identified in the Habitats Regulations 2017² (as amended). They sit at the top of the hierarchy of biodiversity designations in England and are given the highest level of protection. The term 'habitats site' refers sites to designated and candidate:
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - areas identified as being of international importance for habitats and/or terrestrial or marine species.
 - Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - areas identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.
- 3.3 An HRA can have up to three stages (Table 1).

Table 1: Stages of HRA		
HRA Stage		Description
1	Screening	Assess whether the proposed plan: • is directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of a Habitats site; and/or • risks having a significant effect on a Habitats site on its own or in combination with other plans/projects.
2	Appropriate Assessment	If the screening stages identifies a risk of a significant effect on a Habitats site, then an appropriate assessment must be undertaken. An appropriate assessment should: • assess the likely significant effect on the integrity of the Habitats site and its conservation objectives; and • consider ways to avoid or reduce any potential for an adverse effect on the integrity of the site. (Amendments to the proposed plan may be required.)
3	Derogation	If all reasonable scientific doubt of an adverse effect on a Habitats site's integrity cannot be ruled out at the appropriate assessment stage then the plan cannot be adopted unless an exception is justified (known as 'derogation'). Three legal tests are applied to assess whether the proposed plan qualifies for a derogation: 1) there are no feasible alternative solutions that would be less damaging or avoid damage to the site; 2) the proposal needs to be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and 3) the necessary compensatory measures can be secured.

- 3.4 A precautionary approach should be taken when undertaking an HRA.

¹ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

² Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

4. Habitats sites that may be affected by the Joint Local Plan

- 4.1 In identifying the habitats sites that might be affected by the Joint Local Plan, it is important to consider the area that the Joint Local Plan will cover and the potential for direct or indirect interactions with the qualifying features of habitats sites.
- 4.2 The Joint Local Plan will cover the districts of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. There are six habitats sites located wholly or partially within the plan area (Appendix A):
- Aston Rowant SAC (*South Oxfordshire*)
 - Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (*Buckinghamshire, Dacorum, South Oxfordshire & Windsor and Maidenhead*)
 - Cothill Fen SAC (*Vale of White Horse*)
 - Hackpen Hill SAC (*Vale of White Horse*)
 - Hartslock Wood SAC (*South Oxfordshire*)
 - Little Wittenham SAC (*South Oxfordshire*)
- 4.3 All habitats sites located wholly or partially within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will be considered through the HRA process for the Joint Local Plan. In addition, the potential for likely significant effects on habitats sites located beyond the boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse needs to be considered.
- 4.4 It is common for HRAs to take a distance-based approach to identifying habitats sites beyond the plan area for inclusion in the assessment. The distance applied is based on the potential for direct or indirect interactions, recognising that there is greater potential for likely significant effects where habitats sites are located within close proximity of the plan area. It is noted that the HRA for the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 considered habitats sites within 17km of the district boundary as having potential to be affected by the local plan.³ The 17km distance applied reflected the average travel to work distance in the district. It is also noted that the HRA for the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 did not apply a fixed distance-based approach and instead took the approach of relying upon known impact pathways.⁴ A review of approaches applied by neighbouring authorities was also undertaken (Appendix B). It was found that distances applied ranged from 5km to 20km.
- 4.5 Of particular relevance to the Joint Local Plan is the early habitats evidence produced to inform the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, which is the emerging Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire. The five local planning authorities in Oxfordshire (Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council) are working in partnership to produce the Oxfordshire Plan. When adopted, the Oxfordshire Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. The Oxfordshire Plan will set the strategic planning framework for the Joint Local Plan.
- 4.6 The early habitats evidence produced to inform the Oxfordshire Plan has taken the precautionary approach of identifying all habitats sites located within Oxfordshire plus habitats sites located partially or wholly within a 20km radius of the Oxfordshire

³ Land Use Consultants Ltd (March 2019) South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 Final Publication Version 2nd Habitats Regulations Assessment.

⁴ AECOM (June 2018) Vale of White Horse LPP2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Incorporating Appropriate Assessment

boundary for consideration through the HRA process. The use of a 20km radius ensures that habitats sites located relatively far from Oxfordshire, but which might be impacted by development within Oxfordshire due to exceptional impact pathways (for example air pollution arising along major transport routes), will be considered through the HRA process. This approach was agreed with Natural England.

- 4.7 To maintain consistency with the Oxfordshire Plan, and to ensure a precautionary approach at this early stage in the plan-making process, it is proposed that the HRA for the Joint Local Plan will also consider all habitats sites contained partially or wholly within a 20km radius of the boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.
- 4.8 The habitats sites located wholly or partially within a 20km radius of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (Appendix C) are:
- Burham Beeches SAC (*Buckinghamshire*)
 - Kennet and Lambourn Flood Plain SAC (*Wiltshire & West Berkshire*)
 - Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC (*West Berkshire*)
 - North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SAC (*Wiltshire*)
 - Oxford Meadows SAC (*Cherwell, Oxford City & West Oxfordshire*)
 - River Lambourn SAC (*West Berkshire*)
 - Thames Basin Heaths SPA (*Bracknell Forest, Elmbridge, Guildford, Hart, Rushmoor, Surrey Heath & Woking*)
 - Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC (*Bracknell Forest, Runnymede & Windsor and Maidenhead*)
- 4.9 Information on the identified habitats sites' qualifying features, conservation objectives, pressures/threats and current status is provided at Appendix D.

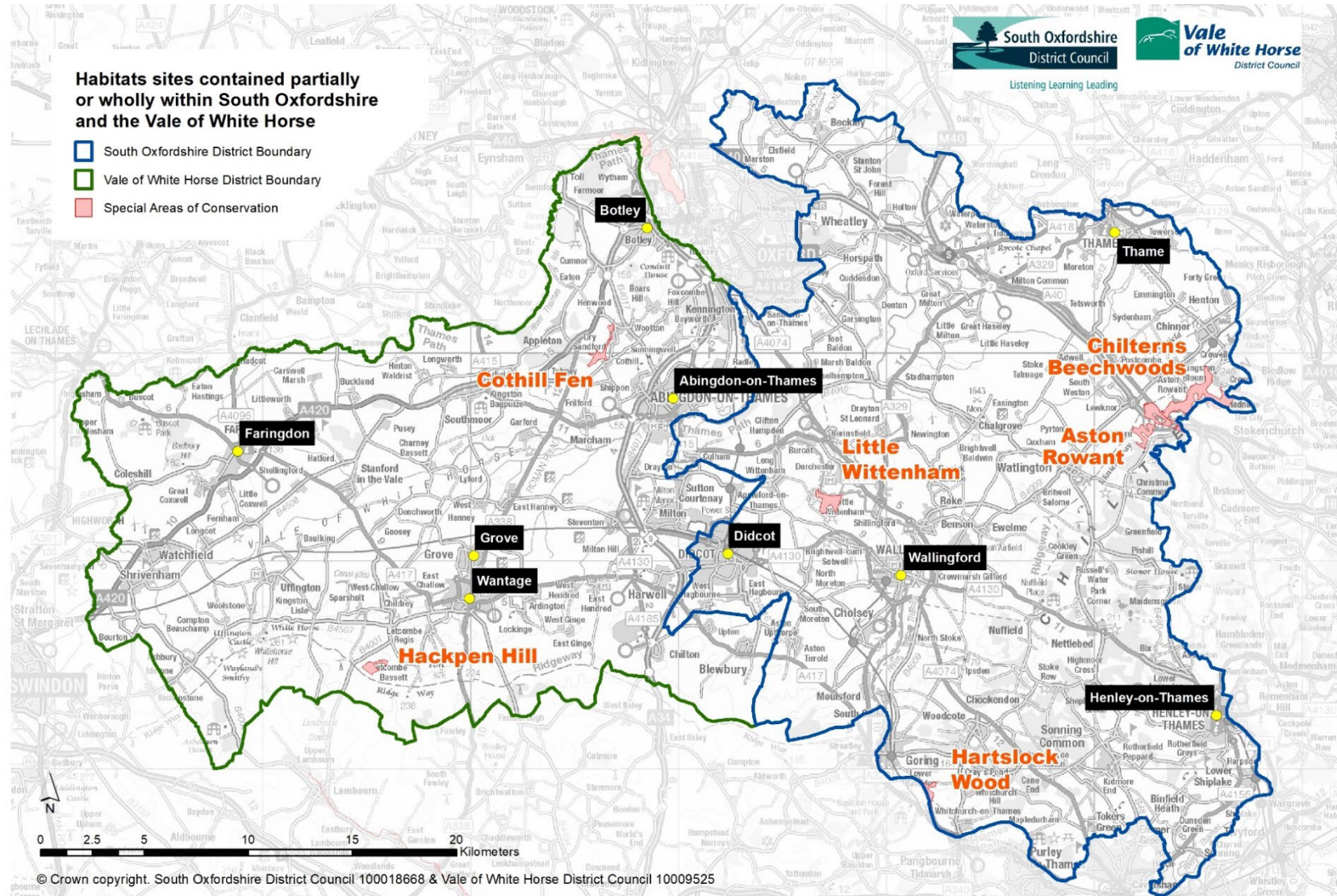
5. Relevant plans and projects

- 5.1 The HRA process will assess whether the Joint Local Plan risks having likely significant effects on habitats sites on its own or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 5.2 There are a large number of potentially relevant plans and projects that could be considered through the HRA process. It is considered most relevant to focus on plans and projects that will deliver development in or near to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse as these are the most likely to give rise to in-combination effects. Therefore, it is proposed that the relevance of the following plans and projects are considered as part of the assessment of in-combination effects:
- i. Plans and projects relevant to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, including:
 - Adopted Local Plans, which allocate development to 2031/2035 and beyond;
 - Other spatially specific planning documents, such as adopted and emerging supplementary planning documents and guidance;
 - Adopted/emerging Neighbourhood Plans; and
 - Any relevant major Infrastructure Projects.
 - ii. Plans and projects relevant to the whole of Oxfordshire, including:
 - Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework (emerging);
 - Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (emerging);
 - Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted/emerging);
 - Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (adopted/emerging); and
 - Any relevant major Infrastructure Projects.
 - iii. Plans and projects relevant to local authority areas that adjoin South Oxfordshire and/or Vale of White Horse, including:
 - Development Plan Documents (adopted/emerging)
 - Any relevant major Infrastructure Projects
- 5.3 A full list of the plans and projects proposed to be considered for their relevance to the assessment of in-combination effects is provided at Appendix E. It should be noted that the specific plans and projects identified reflect the current point in time and this list will continue to evolve throughout the plan-making process. This list will therefore be reviewed through the HRA process as appropriate.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 It is proposed that high-level preliminary HRA screening is undertaken to align with the identification and testing of plan options at the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation stage. This preliminary assessment will help to identify and, where possible, avoid the risk of likely significant effects on habitats sites at a relatively early stage in the plan-making process.
- 6.2 It is proposed that HRA screening, and any appropriate assessment required, is undertaken to align with the Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation on the draft Joint Local Plan.

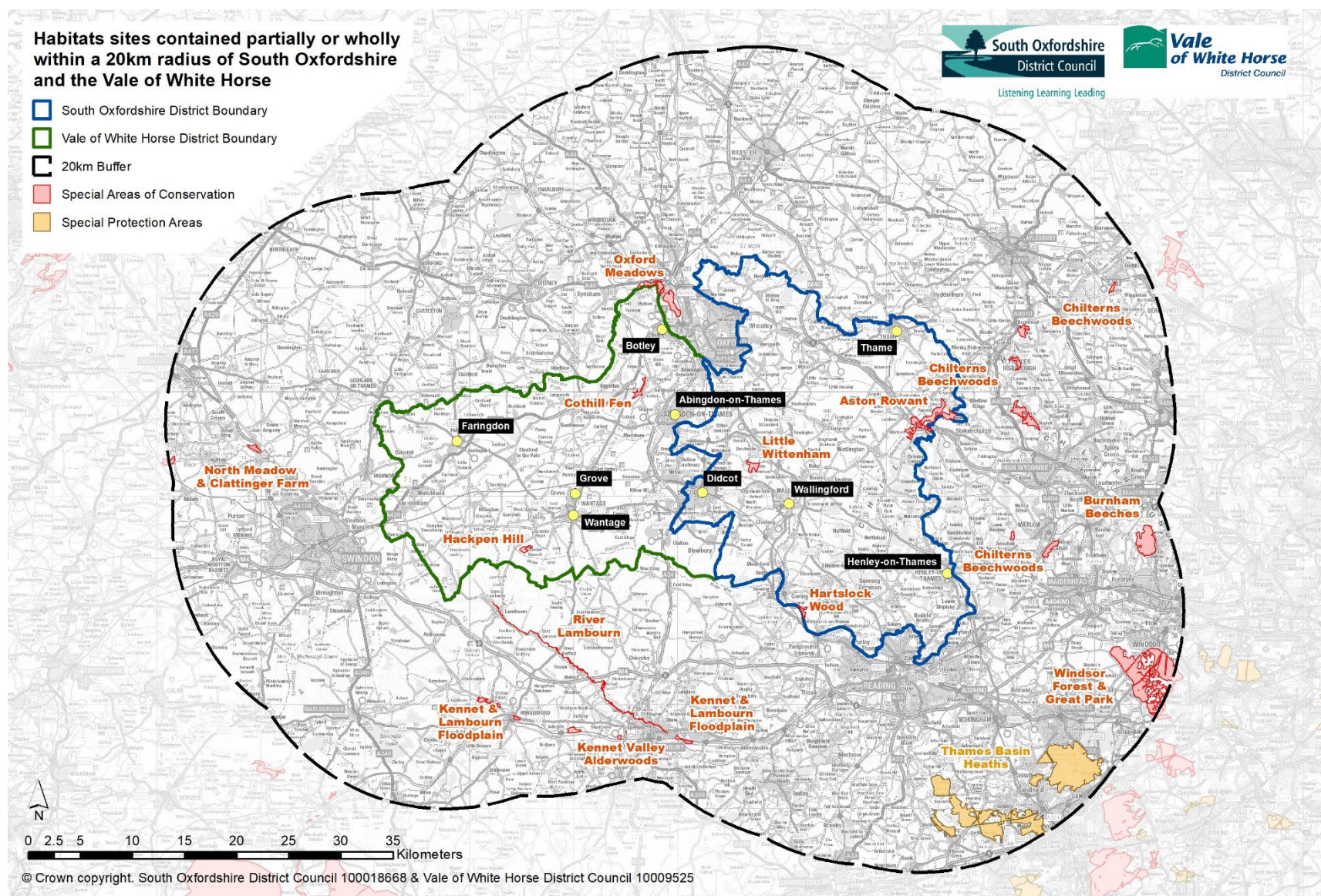
Appendix A: Map showing habitats sites contained partially or wholly within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse



Appendix B: Review of approaches applied by neighbouring authorities to identify habitats sites for consideration in HRAs

Authority	Document	Approach
Aylesbury	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2017 Submission Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (LUC, 2017)	All Habitats sites lying partially or wholly within 10 km from the district boundary included.
Cherwell	Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1): Oxford's Unmet Housing Needs Proposed Submission Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (Atkins, June 2017)	As a starting point, all Habitats sites within Cherwell and up to 20 km from its boundaries were identified. However, Adverse effects from the Plan were considered unlikely to extend far beyond the Plan boundary. Habitats sites beyond the district were therefore excluded from the HRA process.
Cotswold	Not available online.	-
Oxford City	Oxford Local Plan 2036 Habitats Regulations Assessment Appropriate Assessment (Oxford City Council & Levitt-Therivel, September 2018)	Considered Habitats sites within 20km of the administrative boundary.
Reading	Not available online.	-
Swindon	Swindon Local Plan review 2036 HRA LUC (Dec 2019)	All Habitats sites lying partially or wholly within 15km from the Borough boundary. Beyond 15km, the HRA considered the potential for impacts via notable ecological pathways such as rivers.
West Berkshire	Not available online	-
West Oxfordshire	Pre-Submission Local Plan HRA (URS, March 2015)	Rolled forward sites included/excluded through previous HRA processes.
Wiltshire	Wiltshire Local Plan Review HRA Scoping Report (LUC, Jan 2021)	All Habitats sites lying partially or wholly within 15km from the Borough boundary were included. Beyond 15km, the HRA considered the potential for impacts via notable ecological pathways such as rivers.
Wokingham	Wokingham Draft Local Plan Update (AECOM 2020)	There are no standard criteria for determining the ultimate physical scope of an HRA. Rather, the source-pathway-receptor model should be used to determine whether there is any potential pathway connecting development to any Habitats sites.
Wycombe	Wycombe District Council HRA Screening Report (WDC Sept 2017)	Habitats sites within 5k of the district boundary.

Appendix C: Map showing habitats sites contained partially or wholly within a 20km radius of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse



Appendix D: Information on identified habitats sites' qualifying features, conservation objectives, pressures/threats and current status

Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation		
Area:	128 hectares	
Site Description:	Aston Rowant is classified as an SAC because it supports one of the largest remaining populations of juniper in lowland Britain. It is selected as an example of juniper formations on the chalk in the south east of England. At this site juniper is present as part of a mixed scrub community but also occurs as isolated bushes in chalk grassland. In common with most lowland populations of juniper, successful reproduction and survival of new generations of bushes is extremely rare and conservation is currently dependent upon significant levels of management intervention. The low level of reproductive success is the main threat to the feature at this site. Aston Rowant also supports <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests although this is not a primary reason for classification as SAC.⁵	
Qualifying Features:	• Beech forests on neutral to rich soils. • Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands.⁶	
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.⁷	
Pressures and Threats:	1) Unsustainable on-site population or habitat 2) Changes in species distributions 3) Deer 4) Conflicting conservation objectives 5) Disease 6) Air Pollution - risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition⁸	
Condition:	Aston Rowant SAC is comprised of one of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).	
	SSSI:	Authority:
	Aston Rowant SSSI	Buckinghamshire / Dacorum
		Condition: ⁹
		Favourable (100%)

⁵ Natural England (27 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan Aston Rowant (Version 1.0)

⁶ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Aston Rowant

⁷ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

⁸ Natural England (27 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan Aston Rowant (Version 1.0)

⁹ Natural England [Aston Rowant SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation								
Area:	383 hectares							
Site Description:	Burnham Beeches is an example of <i>Atlantic acidophilous</i> beech forests in central southern England. It is an extensive area of former beech wood-pasture with many old pollards and associated beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> and oak <i>Quercus spp</i> high forest. Surveys have shown that it is one of the richest sites for saproxylic invertebrates in the UK. It also retains nationally important epiphytic communities, including the moss <i>Zygodon forsteri</i> . ¹⁰							
Qualifying Features:	• Beech forests on acid soils.¹¹							
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.¹²							
Pressures and Threats:	1) Air pollution - risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition 2) Public access/disturbance 3) Habitat fragmentation 4) Deer 5) Species decline 6) Invasive species¹³							
Condition:	Burnham Beeches SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SSSI:</th><th>Authority:</th><th>Condition:¹⁴</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Burnham Beeches SSSI</td><td>Buckinghamshire</td><td>Favourable (63%) Unfavourable recovering (37%)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ¹⁴	Burnham Beeches SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Favourable (63%) Unfavourable recovering (37%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ¹⁴						
Burnham Beeches SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Favourable (63%) Unfavourable recovering (37%)						

¹⁰ Natural England (15 December 2014) Site Improvement Plan Burnham Beeches (Version 1.0)

¹¹ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Burnham Beeches

¹² Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

¹³ Natural England (15 December 2014) Site Improvement Plan Burnham Beeches (Version 1.0)

¹⁴ Natural England [Burnham Beeches SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation	
Area:	1,286 hectares
Site Description:	The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC comprises nine separate sites located across the Chilterns. There are three features of interest: semi-natural grasslands and scrubland on chalk; <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech woodland (for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the UK and lies in the centre of the habitat's UK range); and Stag beetle <i>Lucanus cervus</i>, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. The rare coralroot <i>Cardamine bulbifera</i> is found in these woods.¹⁵
Qualifying Features:	• Beech forests on neutral to rich soils. • Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone. • Stag beetle.¹⁶
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.¹⁷
Pressures and Threats:	1) Forestry and woodland management 2) Deer 3) Changes in species distributions 4) Invasive species 5) Disease 6) Public access/disturbance 7) Air pollution - impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition¹⁸ On 14 March 2022, Natural England provided advice to Buckinghamshire Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Hertfordshire County Council about emerging evidence that identifies significant recreational pressure on Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, specifically the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component.¹⁹ Advice relating to HRA requirements and potential strategic solutions was issued to all local planning authorities that were identified as wholly or partially within a 12.6km zone of influence and which contribute to more than 2% of visits to the SAC.

¹⁵ Natural England (4 March 2015) Site Improvement Plan Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (Version 1.0)

¹⁶ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Chilterns Beechwoods

¹⁷ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

¹⁸ Natural England (4 March 2015) Site Improvement Plan Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (Version 1.0)

¹⁹ Natural England (14 March 2022) [Developments to the emerging evidence relating to the recreational impacts upon Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\) and the need for a Mitigation Strategy.](#)

	South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are outside of the zone of influence for Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI. Natural England’s advice also noted that recreational pressure on the Tring Woodlands SSSI component of Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is being assessed further and large housing developments within 1.7km of this site may need to provide bespoke mitigation. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are outside of the zone of influence for Tring Woodlands SSSI.		
Condition:	Chiltern Beechwoods SAC is comprised of nine Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).		
	SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ²⁰
	Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI	Buckinghamshire / Dacorum	Favourable (100%)
	Aston Rowant Woods SSSI	Buckinghamshire / South Oxfordshire	Favourable (100%)
	Bisham Woods SSSI	Windsor & Maidenhead	Favourable (97%) Unfavourable recovering (3%)
	Bradenham Woods, Park Wood and the Coppice SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Favourable (100%)
	Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Favourable (11%) Unfavourable recovering (89%)
	Hollowhill and Pullingshill Woods SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Favourable (100%)
	Naphill Common SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Favourable (100%)
	Tring Woodlands SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Unfavourable recovering (100%)
	Windsor Hill SSSI	Buckinghamshire	Favourable (27%) Unfavourable recovering (73%)

²⁰ Natural England [Chiltern Beechwoods SAC](#) [Accessed online: 12 April 2022]

Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation								
Area:	43 hectares							
Site Description:	Cothill Fen is an exceptionally important site with an outstanding range of nationally rare habitats which support a large number of rare invertebrates and plants. The habitats consist of calcareous fen, calcareous grassland, woodland and scrub of varying degrees of wetness. The habitat supports over 330 species of vascular plant and over 120 nationally scarce or rare invertebrates, including the nationally rare Southern Damselfly (<i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>).²¹							
Qualifying Features:	• Alder woodland on floodplains. • Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens.²²							
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.²³							
Pressures and Threats:	1) Water pollution 2) Hydrological changes 3) Air pollution - impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition²⁴							
Condition:	Cothill Fen SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). <table border="1"> <tr> <th>SSSI:</th><th>Authority:</th><th>Condition: ²⁵</th></tr> <tr> <td>Cothill Fen SSSI</td><td>Vale of White Horse</td><td>Favourable (65%) Unfavourable recovering (35%)</td></tr> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ²⁵	Cothill Fen SSSI	Vale of White Horse	Favourable (65%) Unfavourable recovering (35%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ²⁵						
Cothill Fen SSSI	Vale of White Horse	Favourable (65%) Unfavourable recovering (35%)						

²¹ Natural England (28 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan Cothill Fen (Version 1.0)

²² EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Cothill Fen

²³ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

²⁴ Natural England (28 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan Cothill Fen (Version 1.0)

²⁵ Natural England [Cothill Fen SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Hackpen Hill Special Area of Conservation		
Area:	36 hectares	
Site Description:	Hackpen Hill SAC is an extensive area of unimproved chalk grassland in the North Wessex Downs and is considered to be one of the most important areas in the UK for the rare early gentian. The site has a variety of aspect and gradients, with the grassland dominated by red fescue and upright brome. The herb flora includes a significant population of early gentian, as well as autumn gentian, fragrant orchid, frog orchid, horseshoe vetch, common rock-rose and dwarf thistle.²⁶	
Qualifying Features:	• Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone. • Early gentian.²⁷	
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.²⁸	
Pressures and Threats:	No current issues affecting the Natura 2000 features have been identified on this site. ²⁹	
Condition:	Hackpen Hill SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).	
	SSSI:	Authority:
	Hackpen, Warren and Gramp's Hill Downs SSSI	Vale of White Horse
		Condition: ³⁰
		Favourable (100%)

²⁶ Natural England (17 July 2014) Site Improvement Plan Hackpen Hill SAC (Version 1.0)

²⁷ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Hackpen Hill

²⁸ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Hackpen Hill Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

²⁹ Natural England (17 July 2014) Site Improvement Plan Hackpen Hill SAC (Version 1.0)

³⁰ Natural England [Hackpen Hill SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Hartslock Wood Special Area of Conservation								
Area:	29 hectares							
Site Description:	This site hosts the priority habitat type 'orchid rich sites'. The steep slopes of this site on the chalk of the Chilterns comprise a mosaic of chalk grassland, chalk scrub and broadleaved woodland. The chalk grassland mostly consists of a mosaic of shorter-turf <i>NVC type CG2 Festuca ovina-Avenula pratensis</i> grassland and taller <i>CG3 Bromus erectus</i> grassland. The site supports one of only three UK populations of monkey orchid <i>Orchis simia</i>, a nationally rare Red Data Book species. The bulk of this site lies on a steep slope above the River Thames. Recent storms and landslips have resulted in a diverse age-structure for the yew population. Open patches show a rich flora including local species such as southern wood-rush <i>Luzula forsteri</i>, wood barley <i>Hordelymus europaeus</i> and narrow-lipped helleborine <i>Epipactis leptochila</i>.³¹							
Qualifying Features:	• Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites. • Yew-dominated woodland.³²							
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.³³							
Pressures and Threats:	Air Pollution - risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition. ³⁴							
Condition:	Hartslock Wood SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SSSI:</th><th>Authority:</th><th>Condition: ³⁵</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hartslock SSSI</td><td>South Oxfordshire</td><td>Favourable (88%) Unfavourable recovering (12%)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ³⁵	Hartslock SSSI	South Oxfordshire	Favourable (88%) Unfavourable recovering (12%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ³⁵						
Hartslock SSSI	South Oxfordshire	Favourable (88%) Unfavourable recovering (12%)						

³¹ Natural England (4 March 2015) Site Improvement Plan Hartslock Wood (Version 1.0)

³² EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Hartslock Wood

³³ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Hartslock Wood Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

³⁴ Natural England (4 March 2015) Site Improvement Plan Hartslock Wood (Version 1.0)

³⁵ Natural England [Hartslock Wood SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Kennet and Lambourn Flood Plain Special Area of Conservation																	
Area:	116 hectares																
Site Description:	The Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC consists of a cluster of sites in the Kennet and Lambourn river valleys. These areas represent locations where the terrestrial snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> is particularly abundant. ³⁶																
Qualifying Features:	• Desmoulin's whorl snail³⁷																
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.³⁸																
Pressures and Threats:	1) Siltation 2) Water pollution 3) Invasive species 4) Hydrological changes 5) Inland flood defence works 6) Inappropriate cutting/mowing 7) Change in land management³⁹																
Condition:	Kennet and Lambourn Flood Plain SAC is comprised of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SSSI:</th><th>Authority:</th><th>Condition:⁴⁰</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Boxwater Meadows SSSI</td><td>West Berkshire</td><td>Favourable (37%) Unfavourable recovering (63%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Chilton Foliat Meadows SSSI</td><td>Wiltshire</td><td>Favourable (17%) Unfavourable recovering (79%) Unfavourable no change (4%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SSSI</td><td>West Berkshire / Wiltshire</td><td>Favourable (68%) Unfavourable recovering (15%) Unfavourable no change (1%) Unfavourable declining (16%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Thatcham Reed Beds SSSI</td><td>West Berkshire</td><td>Favourable (49%) Unfavourable recovering (51%)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁴⁰	Boxwater Meadows SSSI	West Berkshire	Favourable (37%) Unfavourable recovering (63%)	Chilton Foliat Meadows SSSI	Wiltshire	Favourable (17%) Unfavourable recovering (79%) Unfavourable no change (4%)	Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SSSI	West Berkshire / Wiltshire	Favourable (68%) Unfavourable recovering (15%) Unfavourable no change (1%) Unfavourable declining (16%)	Thatcham Reed Beds SSSI	West Berkshire	Favourable (49%) Unfavourable recovering (51%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁴⁰															
Boxwater Meadows SSSI	West Berkshire	Favourable (37%) Unfavourable recovering (63%)															
Chilton Foliat Meadows SSSI	Wiltshire	Favourable (17%) Unfavourable recovering (79%) Unfavourable no change (4%)															
Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SSSI	West Berkshire / Wiltshire	Favourable (68%) Unfavourable recovering (15%) Unfavourable no change (1%) Unfavourable declining (16%)															
Thatcham Reed Beds SSSI	West Berkshire	Favourable (49%) Unfavourable recovering (51%)															

³⁶ Natural England (1 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan River Lambourn and Kennet-Lambourn Flood Plain (Version 1.0)

³⁷ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Kennet and Lambourn Flood Plain

³⁸ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Kennet and Lambourn Flood Plain Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

³⁹ Natural England (1 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan River Lambourn and Kennet-Lambourn Flood Plain (Version 1.0)

⁴⁰ Natural England Kennet and Lambourn Flood Plain Condition Summary [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Kennet Valley Alderwoods Special Area of Conservation								
Area:	57 hectares							
Site Description:	The site comprises Alluvial forests with alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>. These, the two largest fragments of alder-ash woodland on the Kennet floodplain, lie on alluvium overlain by a shallow layer of moderately calcareous peat. The wettest areas are dominated by alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> over tall herbs, sedges and reeds, but dryer patches include a base-rich woodland flora with much dog's mercury <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> and also herb-Paris <i>Paris quadrifolia</i>. The occurrence of the latter is unusual, as it is more typically associated with ancient woodland, whereas the evidence suggests that these stands have largely developed over the past century.⁴¹							
Qualifying Features:	• Alder woodland on floodplains⁴²							
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.⁴³							
Pressures and Threats:	1) Inappropriate water levels 2) Game management⁴⁴							
Condition:	Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). <table border="1"> <tr> <td>SSSI:</td><td>Authority:</td><td>Condition: ⁴⁵</td></tr> <tr> <td>Kennet Valley Alderwoods SSSI</td><td>West Berkshire</td><td>Favourable (100%)</td></tr> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁴⁵	Kennet Valley Alderwoods SSSI	West Berkshire	Favourable (100%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁴⁵						
Kennet Valley Alderwoods SSSI	West Berkshire	Favourable (100%)						

⁴¹ Natural England (4 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan Kennet Valley Alderwoods (Version 1)

⁴² EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Kennet Valley Alderwoods

⁴³ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Kennet Valley Alderwoods Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

⁴⁴ Natural England (4 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan Kennet Valley Alderwoods (Version 1)

⁴⁵ Natural England [Kennet Valley Alderwoods SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Little Wittenham Special Area of Conservation								
Area:	69 hectares							
Site Description:	One of the best-studied great crested newt sites in the UK, Little Wittenham comprises two main ponds set in a predominantly woodland context (broadleaved and conifer woodland is present). There are also areas of grassland, with sheep grazing and arable bordering the woodland to the south and west. The River Thames is just to the north of the site, and a hill fort to the south. Large numbers of great crested newts <i>Triturus cristatus</i> have been recorded in the two main ponds, and research has revealed that they range several hundred metres into the woodland blocks. ⁴⁶							
Qualifying Features:	Great crested newt⁴⁷							
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: - The extent and distribution of habitats of qualifying species. - The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. - The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely. - The populations of qualifying species. - The distribution of qualifying species within the site.⁴⁸							
Pressures and Threats:	1) Invasive species 2) Public access/disturbance ⁴⁹							
Condition:	Little Wittenham SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). <table border="1" data-bbox="424 1167 1386 1272"> <tr> <th>SSSI:</th><th>Authority:</th><th>Condition: ⁵⁰</th></tr> <tr> <td>Little Wittenham SSSI</td><td>South Oxfordshire</td><td>Favourable (100%)</td></tr> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁵⁰	Little Wittenham SSSI	South Oxfordshire	Favourable (100%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁵⁰						
Little Wittenham SSSI	South Oxfordshire	Favourable (100%)						

⁴⁶ Natural England (7 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan Little Wittenham (Version 1)

⁴⁷ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Little Wittenham

⁴⁸ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Little Wittenham Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

⁴⁹ Natural England (7 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan Little Wittenham (Version 1)

⁵⁰ Natural England [Little Wittenham SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation											
Area:	104 hectares										
Site Description:	North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Meadows SAC consists of a series of traditionally managed unimproved grasslands within the floodplain of the Upper Thames which continue to be managed as pasture and as hay-meadow. It contains a rich variety of species-rich grassland types including the rare MG4 community for which the SAC is designated as well as a number of notable plant species. These grasslands represent rare and scattered remnants of a much more widespread unimproved grassland habitat before agricultural intensification and extensive gravel quarrying locally were responsible for widespread losses of this habitat and its subsequent fragmentation.⁵¹										
Qualifying Features:	• Lowland hay meadows.⁵²										
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.⁵³										
Pressures and Threats:	1) Inappropriate water levels 2) Habitat fragmentation 3) Commons management 4) Public access/disturbance 5) Water pollution⁵⁴										
Condition:	North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC is comprised of two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SSSI:</th><th>Authority:</th><th>Condition:⁵⁵</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Clattinger Farm SSSI</td><td>Wiltshire</td><td>Favourable (100%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>North Meadow, Cricklade SSSI</td><td>Wiltshire</td><td>Favourable (100%)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁵⁵	Clattinger Farm SSSI	Wiltshire	Favourable (100%)	North Meadow, Cricklade SSSI	Wiltshire	Favourable (100%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁵⁵									
Clattinger Farm SSSI	Wiltshire	Favourable (100%)									
North Meadow, Cricklade SSSI	Wiltshire	Favourable (100%)									

⁵¹ Natural England (21 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan North Meadow and Clattinger Farm (Version 1)

⁵² EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: North Meadow and Clattinger Farm

⁵³ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

⁵⁴ Natural England (21 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan North Meadow and Clattinger Farm (Version 1)

⁵⁵ Natural England [North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation																	
Area:	265 hectares																
Site Description:	Oxford Meadows is one of two SACs that represent lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) in the Thames Valley. It includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in the world in reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. The site has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function. The site is selected because Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for creeping <i>Marshwort apium repens</i> . ⁵⁶																
Qualifying Features:	• Lowland hay meadows • Creeping marshwort⁵⁷																
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.⁵⁸																
Pressures and Threats:	1) Hydrological changes 2) Invasive species⁵⁹																
Condition:	Oxford Meadows SAC is comprised of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SSSI:</th><th>Authority:</th><th>Condition:⁶⁰</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cassington Meadows SSSI</td><td>West Oxfordshire</td><td>Favourable (100%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI</td><td>Cherwell</td><td>Favourable (100%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common & Green SSSI</td><td>Oxford City</td><td>Favourable (99%) Unfavourable recovering (1%)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Wolvercote Meadows SSSI</td><td>Oxford City</td><td>Favourable (100%)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁶⁰	Cassington Meadows SSSI	West Oxfordshire	Favourable (100%)	Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI	Cherwell	Favourable (100%)	Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common & Green SSSI	Oxford City	Favourable (99%) Unfavourable recovering (1%)	Wolvercote Meadows SSSI	Oxford City	Favourable (100%)
SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁶⁰															
Cassington Meadows SSSI	West Oxfordshire	Favourable (100%)															
Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI	Cherwell	Favourable (100%)															
Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common & Green SSSI	Oxford City	Favourable (99%) Unfavourable recovering (1%)															
Wolvercote Meadows SSSI	Oxford City	Favourable (100%)															

⁵⁶ Natural England (20 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan Oxford Meadows (Version 1)

⁵⁷ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Oxford Meadows

⁵⁸ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

⁵⁹ Natural England (20 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan Oxford Meadows (Version 1)

⁶⁰ Natural England [Oxford Meadows Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

River Lambourn Special Area of Conservation	
Area:	29 hectares
Site Description:	The River Lambourn is an example of a classic chalk stream with a seasonally dry winterbourne section. It is relatively unmodified and has near-natural flow characteristics. The river supports a characteristic range of aquatic plant communities of the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-batrachion</i> types. As well as being classified as SAC for its river type, the Lambourn is also of importance in supporting self-sustaining populations of Bullhead. An additional qualifying feature present is Brook lamprey. ⁶¹
Qualifying Features:	• Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by watercress. • Bullhead (fish species). • Brook lamprey (fish species).⁶²
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.⁶³
Pressures and Threats:	1) Siltation 2) Water pollution 3) Invasive species 4) Hydrological changes 5) Inland flood defence works 6) Inappropriate cutting/mowing⁶⁴ On 16 March 2022 Natural England issued interim advice⁶⁵ that projects and plans affecting habitats sites in unfavourable condition due to nutrient pollution are required to provide mitigation. This means that new development must not add to the existing pollution load. This advice applies to the River Lambourn SAC. Part of Vale of White Horse is within the River Lambourn SAC catchment and therefore this advice will be relevant to the HRA for the Joint Local Plan.

⁶¹ Natural England (1 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan River Lambourn and Kennet-Lambourn Flood Plain (Version 1.0)

⁶² EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: River Lambourn

⁶³ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for River Lambourn Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

⁶⁴ Natural England (1 October 2014) Site Improvement Plan River Lambourn and Kennet-Lambourn Flood Plain (Version 1.0)

⁶⁵ Defra (16 March 2022) [Nutrient pollution: reducing the impact on protected sites](#) (Policy Paper.)

Condition:	River Lambourn SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).		
	SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁶⁶
	River Lambourn SSSI	West Berkshire	Unfavourable recovering (100%)

Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area	
Area:	8,310 hectares
Site Description:	A collection of sites in southern England. The open heathland habitats overlie sand and gravel sediments which give rise to sandy or peaty acidic soils, supporting dry heathy vegetation on well-drained slopes, wet heath on lowlying shallow slopes and bogs in valleys. The site consists of tracts of heathland, scrub and woodland, once almost continuous, but now fragmented into separate blocks by roads, urban development and farmland. Less open habitats of scrub, acidic woodland and conifer plantations dominate, within which are scattered areas of open heath and mire. The site supports important breeding populations of a number of birds of lowland heathland, especially nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> and woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>, both of which nest on the ground, often at the woodland/heathland edge, and Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>, which often nests in <i>gorse</i> <i>Ulex</i> sp. Scattered trees and scrub are used for roosting. Together with the nearby Ashdown Forest and Wealden Heaths SPAs, the Thames Basin Heaths form part of a complex of heathlands in southern England that support important breeding bird populations.⁶⁷
Qualifying Features:	The site is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following bird species: • Nightjar • Woodlark • Dartford warbler⁶⁸
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features. • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features. • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely. • The population of each of the qualifying features. • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.⁶⁹
Pressures and Threats:	1) Public access/disturbance 2) Undergrazing 3) Forestry and woodland management 4) Hydrological changes

⁶⁶ Natural England [River Lambourn SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 12 April 2022]

⁶⁷ EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds Special Protection Area: Thames Basin Heaths

⁶⁸ EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds Special Protection Area: Thames Basin Heaths

⁶⁹ Natural England (21 February 2019) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (Version 3)

	5) Inappropriate scrub control 6) Invasive species 7) Wildfire/arson 8) Air pollution – impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition 9) Feature location/extent/condition unknown 10) Military 11) Habitat fragmentation ⁷⁰		
Condition:	Thames Basin Heath SPA is comprised of all, or parts of, 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).		
	SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁷¹
	Ash to Brookwood Heaths SSSI	Guildford / Surrey Heath / Woking	Favourable (90%) Unfavourable recovering (9%) Unfavourable no change (1%)
	Bourley and Long Valley SSSI	Hart / Rushmoor	Favourable (1%) Unfavourable recovering (99%)
	Bramshill SSSI	Hart	Favourable (99.94%) Unfavourable no change (0.06%)
	Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI	Bracknell Forest / Surrey Heath	Favourable (75%) Unfavourable recovering (24%) Unfavourable no change (1%)
	Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Commons SSSI	Hart	Favourable (26%) Unfavourable recovering (70%) Unfavourable no change (1%) Unfavourable declining (3%)
	Chobham Common SSSI	Surrey Heath	Favourable (43%) Unfavourable (57%)
	Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath SSSI	Guildford / Surrey Heath / Woking	Favourable (95%) Unfavourable recovering (4%) Unfavourable declining (1%)
	Eelmoor Marsh SSSI	Rushmoor	Favourable (100%)
	Hazeley Heath SSSI	Hart	Unfavourable recovering (100%)
	Horsell Common SSSI	Woking	Favourable (22%) Unfavourable recovering (78%)
	Ockham and Wisley Commons SSSI	Elmbridge / Guildford	Favourable (54%) Unfavourable recovering (46%)
	Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths SSSI	Bracknell Forest	Unfavourable recovering (100%)
	Whitmoor Common SSSI	Guildford	Favourable (77%) Unfavourable recovering (22%) Unfavourable no change (1%)

⁷⁰ Natural England (3 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan Thames Basin Heath (Version 1)

⁷¹ Natural England [Thames Basin Heaths Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation			
Area:	1,686 hectares		
Site Description:	Windsor Forest and Great Park represents old acidophilous oak woods (H9190) in the south-eastern part of its UK range. It has the largest number of veteran oaks <i>Quercus spp.</i> in Britain (and possibly in Europe), a consequence of its long continuity of management. Windsor Forest is listed as the most important site in the UK for fauna associated with decaying timber on ancient trees (oak spp, beech, and other species of tree). It is of importance for its range and diversity of saproxylic invertebrates, including many rare species (e.g. the beetle <i>Lacon querceus</i>). The SAC is thought to support the largest of the known populations in the UK of Habitats important Violet click beetle <i>Limoniscus violaceus</i> . It is also recognised as having rich fungal assemblages. Atlantic acidophilous beech forest habitat (H9120) is present at the site and supports many of the important invertebrate and fungi assemblage. ⁷²		
Qualifying Features:	• Beech forests on acid soils. • Dry oak-dominated woodland. • Violet click beetle.⁷³		
Conservation Objectives:	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features, by maintaining or restoring: • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species. • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats. • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species. • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely. • The populations of qualifying species. • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.⁷⁴		
Pressures and Threats:	1) Forestry and woodland management 2) Invasive species 3) Disease 4) Air pollution - impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition⁷⁵		
Condition:	Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC is comprised of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).		
	SSSI:	Authority:	Condition: ⁷⁶
	Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI	Bracknell Forest / Runnymede / Windsor & Maidenhead	Favourable (100%)

⁷² Natural England (4 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan Windsor Forest and Great Park (Version 1)

⁷³ EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Citation for Special Area of Conservation: Windsor Forest and Great Park

⁷⁴ Natural England (27 November 2018) Habitats Site Conservation Objectives for Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation (Version 3)

⁷⁵ Natural England (4 November 2014) Site Improvement Plan Windsor Forest and Great Park (Version 1)

⁷⁶ Natural England [Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI Condition Summary](#) [Accessed online: 20 December 2021]

Appendix E: Relevant plans and projects for the assessment of in-combination effects

Plans and projects relevant to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse	
Type of plan /project	Relevant plans and projects identified
Adopted Local Plans	South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (Adopted December 2020)
	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1: strategic Sites and Policies (Adopted December 2016)
	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed policies and Additional Sites (Adopted October 2019)
Site Specific Planning Documents	Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted December 2011)
	Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted January 2016)
	Curtis Industrial Estate and Hinksey Business Centre, Botley Supplementary Planning Guidance (Adopted July 2006)
	Dalton Barracks Supplementary Planning Document (adopted April 2022)
	Didcot Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted May 2009)
	Former Airfield West of Grove – Development Principles and Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance (Adopted July 2006)
	Grove Technology Park – Grove Supplementary Planning Guidance (Adopted July 2006)
	Kingston Business Park, Kingston Bagpuize Supplementary Planning Guidance (Adopted July 2006)
	Land Between the A420 and Faringdon, North of Park Road, Faringdon Supplementary Planning Guidance (Adopted July 2006)
	Oxford Brookes University Wheatley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted November 2012)
	White Horse Business Park - Stanford-in-the-Vale Supplementary Planning Guidance (Adopted July 2006)
	Vauxhall Barracks Development Brief (Adopted February 2004)
Adopted/emerging Neighbourhood Plans	There are a large number of made and emerging neighbourhood plans across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. Up-to-date information on neighbourhood plans is provided on the relevant council's website: South Oxfordshire - https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/map-of-neighbourhood-plans-in-south-oxfordshire/ Vale of White Horse - https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/map-of-neighbourhood-plans-in-the-vale/

Any relevant major Infrastructure Projects	Access to Didcot Garden Town infrastructure projects, which includes the widening of the A4130, a river crossing between the A415 and A4130 and a bypass a Clifton Hampden. South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO).
---	---

Plans and projects relevant to the whole of Oxfordshire	
Lead	Relevant plans and projects identified
HM Government - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework (emerging)
Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council	Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (emerging)
Oxfordshire County Council	Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations (emerging)
	Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (Adopted September 2017)
	Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Adopted July 1996) – saved policies
	Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4: Connecting Oxfordshire (Adopted September 2015, updated 2016)
	Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (emerging)
Any relevant major Infrastructure Projects	No specific projects identified at this stage. However, the HRA will be mindful of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) which is currently being updated. Stage 1 of the OxIS review was published in 2021. It identified priorities for strategic infrastructure investment to 2040. Stage 2 of the OxIS review will align with the production of the Oxfordshire Plan and will identify priorities for strategic infrastructure investment to 2050.

Plans and projects relevant to local authority areas that adjoining South Oxfordshire and/or Vale of White Horse	
Area	Plans and Projects
Berkshire	Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019)
	West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037 (emerging)
	West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations (adopted May 2017)
	West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted July 2012)
	West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 - saved policies
	Wokingham Local Plan 2013-2036 (emerging)
	Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted February 2014)
	Wokingham Core Strategy 2026 (adopted January 2010)
Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire Local Plan (emerging)
	Aylesbury Vale Local Plan 2013-2033 (adopted September 2021)
	Chiltern Core Strategy (adopted November 2011)
	Chiltern District Local Plan - saved policies (adopted 1997)
	South Bucks Core Strategy (adopted February 2011)
	South Bucks Local Plan (adopted 1999) - saved policies
	Wycombe Local Plan 2033 (adopted August 2019)
	Wycombe Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (adopted 2013)
Gloucestershire	Cotswold Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Partial Update (emerging)
	Cotswold Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted August 2018)
Oxfordshire	Cherwell Local Plan 2040 (emerging)
	Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Housing Need (adopted September 2020)
	Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (adopted July 2015)
	Cherwell Local Plan (adopted November 1996) - saved policies
	Oxford Local Plan 2040 (emerging)
	Oxford Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (adopted June 2020)
	West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted September 2018)
Swindon & Wiltshire	Swindon Local Plan 2036 (emerging)
	Swindon Local Plan 2026 (adopted March 2015)
	Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework (emerging)
	Wiltshire Local Plan Review (emerging)
	Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015)
	Saved policies of former district council local plans, the West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation Development Plan Document and the South Wiltshire Core Strategy.



Alternative formats of this publication, a summary of its contents or specific sections, are available on request.

These include large print, Braille, audio, email, easy read and alternative languages.

Please contact customer services to discuss your requirements on 01235 422422.

Planning Policy Team
135 Eastern Avenue,
Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB
Tel: 01235 422422
Email: planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk

www.southoxon.gov.uk
www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

