

HRA report

Alvington Parish

Appendix 22

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September 2019

**Screening: Habitat Regulations Assessment of Alvington
Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to 2026
(13th July 2019 (Draft))**

**Commissioned by: Alvington Parish Council on behalf of
the Neighbour Development Plan
Group**

Undertaken by: Forest of Dean District Council

 <p>Forest of Dean DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	Version Submission Draft September 2019	Assessor: AC	Reviewer: NG
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Summary

In June 2019 the Forest of Dean District Council were commissioned by Alvington Parish Council to undertake a Habitats Regulations screening assessment for the Alvington Neighbourhood Development Plan (AL-NDP).

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

The plan was screened for likely significant effects in relation to the following European Designated sites:

- Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat SAC (Adjoining / Within plan area W)
- Wye Valley Woodlands SAC (Nearest location 8km W)
- River Wye SAC (Nearest location 1.5km W)
- Severn Estuary SAC/SPA Ramsar (Nearest location 10km S)
- Walmore Common SPA Ramsar (Nearest location 5km SE)

The screening assessed the July 2019 version of the plan, which included 11 policies. The screening process did not identify any policies which had the potential to have likely significant effects on the European designated sites.

It has been concluded that the NDP will not result in any likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on European designated Nature Conservation Sites.

Natural England and the Environment Agency were consulted on the outcome of this screening opinion and raised no objections to the conclusion that the NDP will not result in any likely significant effects.

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

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2019 the Forest of Dean District Council were commissioned by Alvington Parish Council to undertake a Habitats Regulations screening assessment for the emerging Alvington Neighbourhood Development Plan (AL-NDP). As the qualifying body the NDP Community Steering Group is required to assess its Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as Amended)² a process referred to here as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 1.2 This report details the findings of the first, screening stage, of the process of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the AL-NDP.
- 1.3 Combined with other planning policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework, Forest of Dean Core Strategy and the Forest of Dean Allocations plan the AL-NDP provides locally derived planning policy to support the implementation of a vision for the area. The NDP sets out the following vision and objectives for the plan area:

“Alvington is a safe place which looks to the future, where people have the opportunity to live and work using the latest technology and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside”.

Objective 1 - Community Infrastructure

To protect and enhance local community infrastructure and facilities.

Objective 2 - Flood Risk

To guide new development to areas at lowest risk of flooding, and where appropriate, to ensure suitable mitigation measures are provided to reduce flood risk from new development.

Objective 3 - Natural Environment

To protect and enhance the natural environment in the Parish so that new development will protect wildlife and landscape character.

Objective 4 - Built Environment

To protect the built environment from inappropriate development within and outside the conservation area, and to encourage new development to be designed sensitively to the local character.

Objective 5 - Housing Mix

To support provision of a mix of housing including affordable housing.

Objective 6 - Economy, Business and Tourism

To support the local economy, businesses and tourism

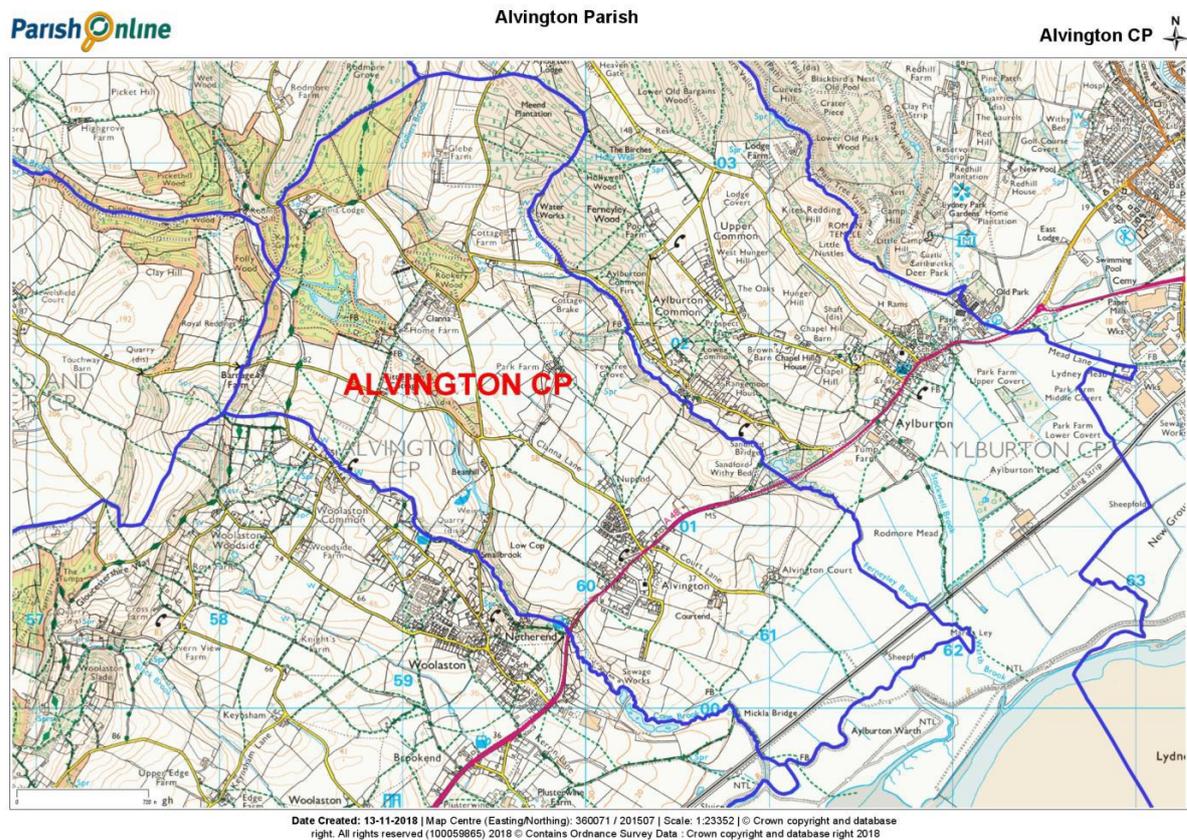
² The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

- 1.4 The plan contains 11 policies set with in a framework set by the above 6 objectives.
- 1.5 The aim of this HRA screening report is to assess whether there are any likely significant effects on nearby European designated nature conservation sites.
- 1.6 In producing this HRA screening report, the following best practice guidance has been used: Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (Updated November 2018) UK: DTA Publications Limited, www.dtapublications.co.uk

2. Alvington NDP Overview

- 2.1 The plan area (Figure 1) covers an area of approximately 660ha with a population of around 500. The majority of the area is countryside with the plan centred on Alvington Village. The village is situated on the A48 approximately 2 miles south of Lydney and 6 miles north of Chepstow. The Severn Estuary borders the parish to the southeast

Figure 1 NDP Area



- 2.2 The majority of the plan area is within the Forest of Dean and Lower Wye National Character Area (105). Areas to the east of the A48 fall within National Character Area 106, Severn and Avon Vales. In terms of more local landscape character; land to the west of the A48 is identified as being in the Netherend farmed Slopes (4b) Character area with land to the east of the A48 divided between Severn Vale (6b Stroat and Sedbury) and Aylburton Newgrounds (7b) (Forest of Dean Landscape Character Assessment 2002).

- 2.3 The plan contains 11 policies set within a framework of six key areas; Community Infrastructure, Flood Risk Natural Environment Built Environment and Housing Mix.
- 2.4 Policies C1 and C2 seek to safeguard and make provision for key local services and recreation facilities within the parish.
- 2.5 Policy F1 identifies existing drainage and flooding issues in the NDP area. The policy requires future proposals for residential development to avoid making the situations worse and contribute to improvements.
- 2.6 Policy NE1 looks to safeguard and enhance existing wildlife resources of the NDP area.
- 2.7 Policy NE2 sets out the value attributed to local landscape character. The policy identifies the need to consider location, layout and design in safeguarding and enhancing landscape character.
- 2.8 Policies BE1 and BE2 define further key considerations in relation to the design and layout of development.
- 2.9 Policy HM1 supports the development of small scale (1-3 units within the settlement boundary subject to other policy requirements).
- 2.10 Policy E1 supports the conversion of agricultural buildings for business or tourism uses.
- 2.11 Policies E2 and E3 support tourism development subject to development not having a detrimental effect on a number of characteristics or factors including the natural environment.

3 Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 3.1 The Habitats Regulations³ are in place to transpose European legislation set out within the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC). These are the key pieces of European legislation that seek to protect, conserve and restore habitats and species that are of upmost conservation importance and concern across Europe.

³ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations were revised in 2017 and subject to amendments. The Regulations are generally referred to as the Habitats Regulations.

- 3.2 Neighbourhood plans have a legal requirement in relation to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) explains:

“European directives, incorporated into UK law, may apply to a draft neighbourhood plan or Order. Where they do apply a qualifying body must make sure that it also complies with any specific publicity and consultation requirements set out in the relevant legislation. The local planning authority should provide advice on this. The legislation that may be of particular relevance to neighbourhood planning is:

- *the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)*
- *the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*
- *the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended)*

It may be appropriate, and in some cases a requirement, that the statutory environmental bodies [Historic England](#), the [Environment Agency](#) and [Natural England](#) be consulted. For example, a draft neighbourhood plan proposal must be assessed to determine whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects. The environmental assessment consultation bodies must be consulted as part of this process (see also guidance on [Strategic environmental assessment](#)).”

Paragraph: 051 Reference ID: 41-051-20150209

- 3.3 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as Amended) states:

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

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

1. Screening (inc Preliminary & Re-screening): Determining whether the plan - 'in combination' with other plans and projects - is likely to have

an adverse effect on a European site. If it doesn't, the plan can proceed, else it needs to go to step 2.

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

4 European Site Information

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

- Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat SAC (Nearest location 2km north)
- Wye Valley Woodlands SAC (Nearest location 3.5km west)
- River Wye SAC (Nearest location 4km W)
- Severn Estuary SAC/SPA Ramsar (Adjoining the plan area)
- Walmore Common SPA Ramsar (20km NE)

4.2 Details of the sites are provided in appendix 3.

5 HRA Screening process

5.1. Policies can operate in a variety of ways from the aspirational to detailed requirements for individual parcels of land. Policies can therefore be categorised into policy types. Individual policies can reflect more than one policy type. Policies can be categorised in the following ways:

- a) General statements of policy / aspiration
- b) Policies listing general criteria for testing or evaluating acceptability of proposals
- c) Policies referred to but not proposed by the plan

- d) Policies that cannot lead to development or other change in their own right.
 - e) All other policies
- 5.2. In terms of HRA policy types A-D above can be ‘screened out’ in respect of likely significant effects as the policies are either very general, primarily reiterate a policy in another existing plan or do not trigger development as they are about a specific issue e.g. design. Policy assessment outcomes are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.3. The next step in the screening assessment is to consider all those policies that fall within policy type E; as to whether they could (possibly) result in likely significant effects on a European designated nature conservation site either alone or in combination with other plans and policies or; policies can be amended to remove or reduce the likelihood of significant effects.
- 5.4. The 13th July 2019 NDP has been used to undertake this assessment. It is acknowledged that the plan is at Regulation 14 draft stage and may be subject to revision at later stages. For the purposes of HRA assessment we have been instructed that whilst some text may change the overall policy objectives and content is not expected to substantially change.
- 5.5. Following assessment as set out above and in Appendix 2, having regard to the conservation objectives for European sites and the precautionary principle; it was considered that there will be no likely significant effects as a result of the plan.
- 5.6. The plan contains policies for the assessment of the acceptability of proposed development and does not promote or identify sites for development. Therefore the plan itself does not lead to new development except for additional recreation facilities within an existing recreation ground.
- 5.7. There are a number of policies (NE1, 2 & BE1, 2) which are intended to restrict the extent and impacts of development as well as safeguard the environment.

6. Consultation

Natural England and the Environment Agency were consulted on the outcomes of this assessment. No objections were received. Only acknowledgement of receipt of consultation was received from the Environment Agency.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. It has been found that July 2019 version of the Alvington Neighbourhood Development Plan will not have any likely significant effects on European designated sites either alone or in combination.

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

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

Name of Plan	Alvington NDP		
Date	11/02/2019		
Assessor(s)	Alastair Chapman		
	YES	NO	
Is the whole of the plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site for nature conservation purposes?		X	If answer is YES the plan does not need to be assessed
Is the plan a 'strategic development plan' or 'local development plan' or 'supplementary guidance' (regulation 85A), or a core path plan (regulation 69A) or a revision thereof?	X		If answer is YES the plan should be assessed - proceed to stage 2
Does the plan provide a framework for deciding applications for project consents and / or does it influence decision makers on the outcome of applications for project consents?	X		If answer is YES the plan should be assessed - proceed to stage 2
Does the plan contain a programme, or policies, or proposals which could affect one or more particular European site?	X		If answer is YES the plan should be assessed - proceed to stage 2
Is the plan a general statement of policy showing only the general political will or intention of the plan making body, and no effect on any particular European site can reasonably be predicted?		X	If answer is YES the plan does not need to be assessed

Appendix 2 – Policy Screening

Appendix 2 - Alvington Neighbourhood Development Plan													
Screening. (13th July 2019 version)		General statements of policy/aspiration	Policy for testing acceptability of proposals	Not proposals generated by this plan	Aspects that protect natural environment	Aspects that will not lead to development	Aspects that make provision for change (no conceivable effect on European site)	Effects cannot undermine the conservation objectives either alone or in combination	Likely significant effects alone	Effect not likely to be significant alone but need to check in combination effects	Not likely to have significant effect (screened out after in combination test)	Likely to have a significant effect in combination	Outcome of Screening
S	Screened out												
~	Uncertain further assessment required												
P	Potential further assessment required												
POLICY (Summary see Plan for full text)													
Vision	<i>"Alvington is a safe place which looks to the future, where people have the opportunity to live and work using the latest technology and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside".</i>	S											Sets out future vision / aspiration - Screened out
Objectives	Objectives 1 - 5	S											Sets out objectives for the plan - Screened out.
C1	Local Community, Retail, Commercial Facilities and Services	S	S										Policy resist development which would lead to loss of facilities. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development. - Screened out
C2	New Community and Recreation Facilities	S	S	S									Policy provides for a new community building on the recreation ground. The facility would be local, small scale and within an existing recreation framework. The policy has embedded environmental safeguards. - Screened out.
F1	Reducing Surface Foul/Water Flooding	S											Policy sets out requirements for environmental improvements (Flooding & Drainage) Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out
NE1	Protecting and Enhancing Local Wildlife	S	S										Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out
NE2	Protecting and Enhancing Local Landscape Character	S	S										Criteria based policy aimed at safeguarding the natural environment. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development. - Screened out

BE1	Design Guidance for New Buildings and Extensions in the Alvington Conservation Area		S			S	S								Criteria based policy aimed at safeguarding the historic environment. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development. - Screened out
BE2	General Building Design Principles for Development within the Settlement Boundary		S			S									Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
HM1	Housing Mix		S			S									Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
E1	Business conversions		S			S									Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
E2	Sustainable and Responsible Tourism		S			S									Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.
E3	New or expanded business or tourism development		S			S									Policy sets out when it will support particular types or styles of development. Does not promote locations, areas or quantum's of development - Screened out.

Appendix 3 – European Designated Sites – Site Characteristics & Objectives

Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites

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

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

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

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

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

Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form –.

2. Qualifying Features:

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

Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

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

This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales contains by far the greatest concentration of lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* in the UK, totalling about 26% of the national population. It has been selected on the grounds of the exceptional breeding population, and the majority of sites within the complex are maternity roosts. The bats are believed to hibernate in the many disused mines in the area.

Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

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

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

3. Conservation Objectives

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

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

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

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat SAC		
Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC Conservation Objectives	08/02/2016 (JNCC/NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6564127446138880
Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC Citation	26/06/2014 (JNCC/NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5725464458952704
Site Improvement Plan: Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites	11/3/2015 (JNCC/NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6102625057505280
A Strategy for the Conservation of Horseshoe Bats in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean (2016)	2016 Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Strategy partnership	https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/5420/wye-valley-and-forest-of-dean-bat-strategy-may-2016.pdf

River Wye

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

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

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

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

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

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

2. Qualifying Features:

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

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

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

Transition mires and quaking bogs

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

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

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

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

3. Conservation Objectives

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

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

River Wye SAC		
River Wye Conservation Objectives	05-02-2016	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5412246543925248
Site Improvement Plan River Wye	04-11-2014 (NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5178575871279104
River Wye SAC Citation	01-04-2005 (NE)	
River Wye draft updated River Basin Management Plans	August 2014 (NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5350815669682176

Wye Valley Woodlands

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Forest of Dean / Monmouthshire / Herefordshire

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

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

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

2. Qualifying Features:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Conservation Objectives

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

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

Wye Valley Woodlands SAC		
Wye Valley Woodlands Conservation Objectives	05-02-2016 (NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6016657158832128
Site improvement plan Wye Valley Woodlands	14-01-2015	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4735117343850496
Wye valley Woodlands SAC Citation	01-04-2005	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4729640186806272

Walmore Common

Designation: Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site

Location: Forest of Dean

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Qualifying Features:

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

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

3. Conservation Objectives:

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

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

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

Walmore Common SPA, SAC, Ramsar		
Walmore Common SPA Conservation Objectives	30-06-2014 (NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4554611981549568
Walmore Common SPA Citation	30-01-1996 (NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4900105425518592
Site Improvement Plan: Walmore Common	13-11-2014 (NE)	http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6299182977515520

Severn Estuary

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

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

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

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

This report is available at:

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

1. The characteristics of the European Site:

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

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

2. Qualifying features

Qualifies as a SAC as follows:

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

Interest Features of the SAC

SAC details, qualifying features:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Qualifies as a SPA as follows:

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

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

The Qualifying Features and supporting Habitats of the SPA

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

Internationally important populations of regularly occurring Annex 1 species

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

Ramsar Features:

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

Ramsar Features (for which conservation objectives have been written)	Criteria at designation (1995) (original criteria)	Revised Criteria (2005) (criteria currently used on JNCC website)
<p>Ramsar interest feature 1:</p> <p>*Estuaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>characteristic physical form and flow, estuarine habitat communities and species assemblages</i> - <i>estuarine habitat communities and species assemblages</i> 	<p>Criterion 1 : qualifies due to its immense tidal range affecting both the physical environment and biological communities present</p> <p>Criterion 2b : qualifies due to its unusual estuarine communities, reduced species diversity and high productivity. The high tidal range leads to strong tidal streams and high turbidity, producing communities characteristic of the extreme physical conditions of liquid mud and tide swept sand and rock</p>	<p>Criterion 1 : qualifies due to immense tidal range (second-largest in world), this affects both the physical environment and biological communities.</p> <p>Criterion 3 : qualifies due to its unusual estuarine communities, reduced diversity and high productivity</p>
<p>Ramsar interest feature 2:</p> <p>Assemblage of migratory fish species :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sea Lamprey River Lamprey Twaite Shad Allis Shad Salmon Sea Trout Eel 	<p>Criterion 2c : qualifies as it is important for the run of migratory fish between sea and river via estuary. Species include Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>, sea trout <i>S. trutta</i>, sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>, river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>, allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>, twaite shad <i>A. fallax</i>, and eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>.</p>	<p>Criterion 4 : qualifies as it is important for the run of migratory fish between sea and river via estuary. Species include Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>, sea trout <i>S. trutta</i>, sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>, river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>, allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>, twaite shad <i>A. fallax</i>, and eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>.</p>
<p><i>* The wider estuarine fish assemblage is covered as</i></p>		<p>Criterion 8 : qualifies as the fish assemblage of the whole estuarine and</p>

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

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

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

3. Conservation objectives Severn Estuary SAC

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

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

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

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

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

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

Severn Estuary		
European Site Conservation Objectives for Severn Estuary SPA (UK9015022)	05-02-2016 (NE)	file:///C:/Users/alastair.chapman/Downloads/UK9015022-Severn-Estuary-SPA-V3.pdf
European Site Conservation Objectives for Severn Estuary SAC (UK9013030)	05-02-2016 (NE)	file:///C:/Users/alastair.chapman/Downloads/Severn%20Estuary%20SAC%20Conservation%20Objectives.pdf
Severn Estuary Standard Data Form	15-12-2015 (JNCC)	file:///C:/Users/alastair.chapman/Downloads/UK9015022.pdf
Severn Estuary Site Improvement Plan	19-03-15 (NE)	file:///C:/Users/alastair.chapman/Downloads/SIP150413FINAL1.0%20Severn%20Estuary.pdf
Severn Estuary EMS Regulation 33 Conservation Advice Package,	29-11-12 (NE)	file:///C:/Users/alastair.chapman/Downloads/severn%20estuary%20Regulation%2033advice%20(1).pdf
Severn Estuary European Marine Site Management Scheme	ASERA (2018-2023)	http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/aser/files/2018/05/Severn-Estuary-EMS-Management-Scheme-2018-2023-May-2018-2.pdf

Appendix 4 – Responses from Statutory Consultees.

Natural England

Date: 22 August 2019
Our ref: 292792
Your ref: Alvington SEA and HRA Screening

Alastair Chapman, Sustainability Team Leader
Forest of Dean District Council
High Street
Coleford
Gloucestershire GL16 8HG

BY EMAIL ONLY
Alastair.chapman@fdean.gov.uk



Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 8GJ
T 0300 080 3000

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Kirkham
Consultations Team

Dear Mr Chapman,

Alvington Neighbourhood Development Plan – SEA and HRA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 18th July 2019 which was received by Natural England on the same day.

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

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

We welcome the production of this SEA Screening report. Natural England notes and concurs with the screening outcome i.e. that the Alvington Neighbourhood Development Plan will not result in significant environmental effects.

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

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

Natural England welcomes the consideration given to the Habitats Regulations. We agree with the conclusion of the report that the Alvington Neighbourhood Development Plan will not have any likely significant effects on the named European designated sites either alone or in combination.

- [Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites](#) Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- [Wye Valley Woodlands](#) Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- [River Wye](#) Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- [Severn Estuary](#) Special Protection Area (SPA)
- [Severn Estuary](#) Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- [Severn Estuary](#) Ramsar Site
- [Waimore Common](#) Special Protection Area (SPA)
- [Waimore Common](#) Ramsar Site

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

Environment Agency

Were consulted on two occasions (no response has been received (1-9-19))

From: Enquiries, Unit <enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>
To: Alastair Chapman
Cc:
Subject: Ref: 190822/msr09 - 190719/GS13 FW: Alvington (Gloucestershire) Neighbour Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Consultation

Hi Alastair,

I have passed your email to the local sustainable places team who will be in touch in due course.

Kind Regards,

Matthew Richardson
National Customer Contact Centre
Environment Agency ☎ Tel: 03708 506 506
Web Site: www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Click an icon to keep in touch with us:-


From: Alastair Chapman [<mailto:Alastair.Chapman@publicgroup.uk>]
Sent: 20 August 2019 08:35
To: Enquiries, Unit <enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: 190719/GS13 FW: Alvington (Gloucestershire) Neighbour Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Consultation

Hi,

I cannot see that we have received any response to the consultation below.

Could you confirm that you do not wish to make any comments.

Kind regards

Alastair Chapman
Sustainability Team Leader
Sustainability Team

+44 (0)1594 812329 | Alastair.chapman@fdean.gov.uk | Alastair.chapman@publicgroup.uk | <http://www.fdean.gov.uk/>

 **PUBLICA**

Publica is a company wholly owned by Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, West Gloucestershire District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council to deliver local services on their behalf

From: Enquiries, Unit <enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>
To: Alastair Chapman
Cc:
Subject: Ref: 190822/msr09 - 190719/GS13 FW: Alvington (Gloucestershire) Neighbour Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Consultation

From: Enquiries, Unit [<mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>]
Sent: 19 July 2019 10:01
To: Alastair Chapman
Subject: 190719/GS13 FW: Alvington (Gloucestershire) Neighbour Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Consultation

Dear Alastair,

I have passed your email to the local Sustainable Places team to determine if any comment needs to be in regards to this proposal.

Kind regards,

Graham Shoebridge
Customer Service Adviser
National Customer Contact Centre
Environment Agency
☎ Tel: 03708 506 506
Web Site: www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Click an icon to keep in touch with us:-


From: Enquiries, Unit <enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk>
To: Alastair Chapman
Sent: Thu 22/08/2019 11:4

Subject: Ref: 190822/mr09 - 190719/GS13 FW: Alvington (Gloucestershire) Neighbour Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Consultation
From: Alastair Chapman [mailto:Alastair.Chapman@publicgroup.uk]
Sent: 18 July 2019 11:23
To: 'consultations@naturalengland.org.uk'; 'enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk'; 'southwest@HistoricEngland.org.uk'
Cc: FODDC Alvington Parish Council Clerk <alvingtonclerk@outlook.com>
Subject: Alvington (Gloucestershire) Neighbour Development Plan - Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Consultation

Dear Statutory Consultee,

Please find attached the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening & Habitats Regulations Screenings for the draft Alvington NDP. Your views on the assessments and their conclusions are now sought.
<https://alvingtonvillage.org/planning/alvington-ndp-documents-and-resources/>

In summary the screening assessment have concluded that neither SEA nor Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment is required because:

1. Habitats Regulations
The plan only contains polices for the assessment of the acceptability of proposed development and does not promote or identify substantial sites for development. Therefore the plan itself does not lead to new development. It is considered that the NDP will have no adverse effects alone or in combination on European Designated Nature Conservation Sites.

and

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment is currently not required for the NDP due to:
 - i. The geographic spread of the NDP is limited
 - ii. The locations, scale and effects of the NDP are very limited
 - iii. The NDP does not create a significant new framework or programme in addition to the existing Development Plan (Core Strategy & Allocations Plan).
 - iv. The NDP is generally supportive and interpretive rather than instructive.
 - v. The NDP in combination with the Development Plan contains environmental mitigation and 'cancellation' factors

We would welcome your views on the SEA and HRA screenings as to whether you agree with the conclusions of the assessments by 6th August 2019. It would be helpful if you could copy in any responses to the NDP group: alvingtonclerk@outlook.com

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me or the Parish Council Clerk.

Yours faithfully

Alastair Chapman
Sustainability Team Leader
Sustainability Team

