



# **Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 5 – Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment**

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# Introduction

## Background to this Assessment

AtkinsRéalis UK Limited has been appointed by Buckinghamshire Council to provide a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5).

Buckinghamshire's Local Transport Plan 4 (2016 – 2036), developed by Buckinghamshire County Council Transport, is the current core strategy for transport. The plan sets out the region's transport aspirations up to 2036. It includes 19 policies, which set out the high-level approach to transport in Buckinghamshire.

The single unitary authority, Buckinghamshire Council, was set up on 1 April 2020, replacing Buckinghamshire County Council and the district councils Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council. Buckinghamshire Council is split into five planning committee areas (North, Central, East, West and South).

Buckinghamshire Council are developing a new Local Transport Plan, LTP5, to reflect the ambitions, policies and plans for delivering transport improvements for all types of transport across the county up to 2045.

The LTP5 draft vision is as follows:

“By 2045 it will be easier for our residents to travel to work, school or college, to shop, use public services, or visit friends or leisure destinations.

For journeys in our towns, people will feel like they have the choice to walk, wheel, cycle or use public transport as these will be attractive, reliable and affordable options for local journeys.

In our villages and between our towns walking, wheeling, cycling or using public transport will be better and safer than it is now, but we will support those who need and want to travel by car to do so by tackling congestion, reducing delays and improving road safety.

By improving people's travel choices and helping our residents make the shift to electric and alternatively fuelled vehicles, we will have reduced our transport emissions, reduced noise and air pollution from traffic, helped to ease congestion, and created thriving neighbourhoods”.

The LTP5 has the following draft objectives:

### Connecting our economy

The productivity of local businesses; ability to attract investment; and access to opportunities for all residents are enhanced by fast, efficient, and reliable transport connections.

- a. Reduced delays and unreliable journey times caused by congestion and roadworks.

- b. High quality active travel and public transport options to local economic and employment centres, key services, schools and leisure facilities.
- c. Faster and easier journeys to London, the Midlands and within the South-East.
- d. The transport networks are well-maintained and prepared for the effects of adverse weather resulting from climate change.
- e. Minimise negative impacts of freight movement on local communities and ensure it is appropriate and efficient to support local business.

### **Reducing transport emissions**

Transport emissions in Buckinghamshire (excluding motorways) are reducing and within our 2025 - 2050 carbon budget.

- a. Digital connections and access to more local services reduce the need for travel.
- b. Walking, cycling, and wheeling are safe, attractive options for shorter local journeys, especially those in urban areas, and as part of longer journeys.
- c. Travel by public transport is a viable and attractive option for residents, including to new housing and employment sites.
- d. Use of low and ultra-low emission vehicles is affordable and convenient.
- e. Sustainable travel options are integral to new developments.

### **Creating high quality places**

Streets, neighbourhoods, and rights of way are designed to put the needs of people first, and to be safe and accessible for all.

- a. Traffic is encouraged to use the most appropriate routes.
- b. Traffic noise and air quality impacts on communities are minimised.
- c. Neighbourhoods and local centres are walking, wheeling and cycling-friendly, putting the needs of vulnerable road users first.
- d. Street design is high quality, inclusive and meets the needs of all users of the space.
- e. Biodiversity on and adjacent to transport networks is enhanced.
- f. There is improved road safety for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, motorcyclists and drivers.
- g. We are working towards a Rights of Way network which supports the needs of all users, including mobility and visually impaired users.

## Background to HRA

HRA is required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations') for all plans and projects which may have a likely significant effect on, and are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of, a European Site<sup>1</sup>.

According to Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations'), before deciding to undertake or give any consent for a plan or project, '*..which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,*' the Competent Authority must '*make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.*'

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 within schedule 5, amends the Habitats Regulations to include Ramsar sites, thereby protecting them through legislation in addition to the current policy protection within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>2</sup>. As there have been no amendments to the NPPF since the enactment the current policy protection also remains in place.

The NPPF states that potential Special Protection Areas (pSPA) and possible Special Areas of Conservation (pSAC), listed or proposed Ramsar sites<sup>3</sup> and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, pSPAs, pSACs, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites, on which the Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for their designation, should also be considered European Sites. Hereafter, all of the above designated nature conservation sites are referred to as 'European Sites'.

The stages of the HRA process are:

- **Stage 1 - Screening:** To assess whether a plan or project either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site;
- **Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment:** To determine whether, in view of a European Site's conservation objectives, the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects and plans) would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site with respect to the conservation objectives. If adverse impacts

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<sup>1</sup> This is defined as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA), which as a matter of government policy (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 194) also includes possible SACs (pSAC), potential SPAs (pSPA), listed or proposed Ramsar sites (wetland sites of international importance, as designated under the Ramsar Convention 1971) and any site identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on any of the above listed designations.

Following the changes made to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, SACs and SPAs in the UK no longer form part of the EU's Natura 2000 network, but form the UK's national site network. The term 'Habitats Sites' is sometimes now used instead of 'European Sites' following the UK's departure from the EU.

<sup>2</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024) National Planning Policy Framework. Available from: [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework) (Accessed January 2026).

<sup>3</sup> Defined by the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as waterfowl habitat (otherwise known as the 'Ramsar Convention'). <https://www.ramsar.org/>

- are anticipated, potential mitigation measures to alleviate impacts should be proposed and assessed;
- **Stage 3<sup>4</sup> – Derogations (allow exceptions):** Where a project or plan is assessed as having an adverse residual impact (or risk of this) on the integrity of a European Site, it may qualify for a derogation. Three legal tests must be applied in the following order:
  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.
  3. The necessary compensatory measures can be secured.

This report comprises Stage 1 - HRA Screening of the plan and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

## Legal Context to HRA

A critical part of the HRA Screening process is determining whether or not the proposals are likely to have a significant effect on European Sites, and therefore, if they will require an Appropriate Assessment. The concept of likely significant effects ('LSE') as embodied in Regulation 63(1) is central to their operation. Its interpretation is well established in law and guidance and embraces the precautionary principle.

The European Court Waddenze judgement<sup>5</sup> provides clarification regarding the term 'likely'. It concludes that: *"any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site is to be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects."*

Clarification has also been provided through case law on the meaning of 'likely' in relation to Bagmoor Wind Ltd. v The Scottish Ministers<sup>6</sup>: *"the word 'likely' in the regulation is not to be construed as an expression of probability, in a legal sense, but as a description of the existence of a risk (or possibility)."* Consequently, if the possibility of a significant effect cannot be excluded based on objective information, an Appropriate Assessment will be required.

The European Court Waddenze judgement also provides further clarification regarding the term 'significant': *"where a plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a site is likely to undermine the site's conservation objectives, it must be considered likely to have a significant effect on that site. The assessment of that risk must be made in the light inter alia of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned by such a plan or project."*

The Bagmoor Wind case also provides guidance on the term 'objective'. It states: *". objective, in this context, means information based on clear verifiable fact rather than subjective opinion"*. it will not

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<sup>4</sup> Derogations stages were previously described as two separate stages, but now commonly grouped together.

<sup>5</sup> Case C – 127/02 Waddenze, reference for a preliminary ruling from the Raad van State: Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenze, Nederlandse Vereniging tot Bescherming van Vogels v Staatssecretaris van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij, 7th September 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Bagmoor Wind Limited v The Scottish Ministers, Court of Sessions (2012) CSIH 93.

normally be sufficient for an applicant merely to assert that the plan or project will not have an adverse effect on a site, nor will it be appropriate for a competent authority to rely on reassurances based on supposition or speculation. On the other hand, there should be credible evidence to show that there is a real rather than a hypothetical risk of effects that could undermine the site's conservation objectives. Any serious possibility of a risk that the conservation objectives could be undermined should trigger an 'appropriate assessment'.

The test for likelihood of significant effects requires that consideration is given to potential causes and potential effects (i.e. any potential impact pathways). To do this, information on the LTP5 is needed to identify the potential causes of effects and information on the European Site is needed to identify any potential implications related to these effects. In the absence of a potential impact pathway, it can be concluded that no likely significant effect would arise. Relevant aspects (effects) of the LTP5 has been checked against all features of the relevant European Sites (i.e. screened) to determine whether a likely significant effect may arise.

The judgement as to whether a significant effect is likely needs to be based on the best readily available information. Sources of information may include evidence from projects where similar operations have affected sites with similar qualifying features and conservation objectives and the judgement of relevant specialists that an effect is likely, as well as survey data collected to date for a particular project. In line with the precautionary principle, where there is uncertainty and/ or information is lacking in relation to the capacity of the effect to undermine the site's conservation objectives, it must be assumed that there will be an effect, unless further information can be made available to eliminate any areas of doubt.

The implication of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) judgement referred to as 'People Over Wind'<sup>7</sup> is that competent authorities cannot take account of any "*..measures that are intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the envisaged project on the site concerned*", when considering at the HRA screening stage whether the plan or project is likely to have an adverse effect on a European Site. The effect of this is that the screening stage must be undertaken on a precautionary basis with no regard to any proposed integrated or additional avoidance or reduction measures. Where the likelihood of significant effects cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information, the competent authority must proceed to carry out an Appropriate Assessment to establish whether the plan or project will affect the integrity of the European Site, which can include at that stage consideration of the effectiveness of the proposed avoidance or reduction measures.

Case law in 2017 referred to as the 'Wealden Judgement'<sup>8</sup> prompted Natural England to make their internal guidance on assessing the effects of road traffic emissions on European Sites public<sup>9</sup>. The guidance provides further information on the in-combination assessment at screening stage with regard to air quality effects following the Wealden Judgement.

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta, Case C-323/17

<sup>8</sup> Case no: CO/3943/2016 – Between Wealden District Council and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Authority and Natural England.

<sup>9</sup> NE Internal Guidance – *Approach to advising Competent Authorities on Road Traffic Emissions and HRAs* V1.4 Final – June 2018.

## **Outline of this Report**

Following this introduction:

- Section 2 of this report sets out the methodology used for the Stage 1 – Screening and Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment;
- Section 3 details the European sites;
- Section 4 outlines the background of the LTP5;
- Section 5 provides the conclusions of the Stage 1 – Screening assessment;
- Section 6 provides the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment; and
- Section 7 provides the overall conclusions.

## Methods

### Overview

Screening for appropriate assessment requires gathering sufficient information to objectively conclude whether effects on a European Site will be significant or not. On this basis, screening to ascertain whether appropriate assessment is required covers four themes:

- Determining whether the plan (or project) is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European Site;
- Identifying the potential effects on the European Site;
- Assessing the likely significant effect (LSE) on the European Site; and,
- Describing the plans (or projects) and characterising other plans (or projects) that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the European Site.

The preliminary steps in the assessment have been based on these themes.

### Preliminary Steps

In the first instance it was necessary to consider whether the LTP5 is directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Sites. As this is not the case for LTP5, the subsequent steps for determining whether appropriate assessment is required were followed.

### Identification of sites for consideration

The following selection criteria adapted from National Highways Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standard LA 115 Habitats Regulations Assessment<sup>10</sup>, based on the geographic extent of any impacts which could arise as a result of the LTP5 and as explained below, have been used to determine what European Sites to consider in the HRA screening assessment:

- All European Sites within 10 km of the Plan area boundary;
- All European Sites up to 30 km from the Plan area boundary where bats are a qualifying interest feature;
- All European Sites up to 20 km from the Plan area boundary where birds are a qualifying interest feature (see below);
- All European Sites upstream or downstream of watercourses either within, adjoining or crossed by the Plan area boundary; and
- All European Sites which have a potential hydrological or hydrogeological linkage to a European Site containing a groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystem (GWDTE).

The core range for many species, for example breeding and non-breeding bird species, mammals and fish, can extend beyond the boundaries of SAC, SPA and Ramsar site

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<sup>10</sup> DMRB LA 115 - Habitats Regulations Assessment. Available at: [LA 115 - Habitats Regulations assessment - DMRB \(standardsforhighways.co.uk\)](http://standardsforhighways.co.uk)

designations, meaning land beyond a designated site boundary having ‘functional linkage’ with the designated sites. Functional linkages include key flyways, foraging areas, breeding or roost sites. Although core ranges of species can vary from very short distances to tens of kilometres or more, for inland sites in this region a distance of 20 km is considered to be sufficient and precautionary in this instance.

## Data gathering

Baseline information used to describe the location and characteristics of European Sites and Conservation Objectives was taken from following sources:

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Webmap<sup>11</sup>;
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Standard Data Forms<sup>12</sup>;
- Natural England Designated Site Information<sup>13</sup>;
- Governmental List of GWDTEs in England<sup>14</sup> .

## Effect pathways

Plans or projects can adversely affect a site by:

- Causing delays in progress towards achieving the Conservation Objectives of the European Site;
- Interrupting progress towards achieving the Conservation Objectives of the European Site;
- Disrupting those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the European Site; and,
- Interfering with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the European Site.

Supplementary Advice<sup>15</sup> from Natural England describes the measures necessary to achieving the Conservation Objectives for a European Site, comprising a range of ecological attributes that are most likely to contribute to the overall integrity of a European Site.

With reference to the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACOs)<sup>16</sup>, effect pathways on the Conservation Objectives for the European Site were considered against the following list:

- **Habitat loss and fragmentation** – includes direct loss of habitats under the footprint of temporary or permanent works. Indirect effects through the loss

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<sup>11</sup> Available from <http://magic.defra.gov.uk> (accessed January 2026).

<sup>12</sup> Available from <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk> (accessed January 2026).

<sup>13</sup> Available from <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx> (accessed January 2026).

<sup>14</sup> Available from [Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems \(England only\) - data.gov.uk](Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (England only) - data.gov.uk) (accessed January 2026).

<sup>15</sup> Natural England (2015) *Conservation objectives for land-based protected sites in England: how to use the site advice* [online]. Available from <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conservation-objectives-for-land-based-protected-sites-in-england-how-to-use-the-site-advice>> (accessed January 2026).

<sup>16</sup> SACO information obtained from Natural England online resources [Site Search \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conservation-objectives-for-land-based-protected-sites-in-england-how-to-use-the-site-advice).

of functionally linked habitats, i.e. habitats that support species outside of the European Site boundary;

- **Species disturbance (visual, noise, vibration)** – this refers to disturbance during construction, operation or decommissioning works on species that may cause behavioural effects, e.g. avoidance, change in foraging behaviour. Physical works, vehicle movements, light pollution and presence of staff/ workers are all considered;
- **Changes to water quality** – considers effects on species (and their prey) as a result of contamination, changes in pH, increased nutrient loads, salinity, turbidity, alterations in the thermal regime, discharges or changes in sedimentation levels;
- **Changes to air quality** – evaluates the risk of discharges to air, including fugitive dust and combustion emissions;
- **Changes to surface and groundwater hydrology** – changes to the flow, supply, availability and drainage of water, and increased risks associated with flooding;
- **Introduction of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)** – the risk of introducing or spreading INNS as a result of schemes that arise from the LTP5;
- **Recreation** – direct and indirect impacts on species and habitats as a result of increased recreational use, including increased visitor numbers, dog walkers, vehicle or watercraft use and associated issues such as dog fouling, litter and anti-social behaviour (littering, vandalism and fires).

### **Obtaining information on other projects and plans**

The Habitats Regulations requires assessment of the potential for LSE of the Plan ‘in combination’ with other projects and plans.

It will be necessary to determine the need for an in-combination assessment at the lower planning tiers i.e. project stage, as part of individual project HRAs, when the details of any proposals are known.

The effects of this Plan in combination with other projects are the cumulative effects which will, or might, result from the addition of the effects of other relevant plans or projects, and making an assessment as to whether these could be significant.

Any plans or projects at the following stages may be relevant to an in-combination assessment:

- Planning applications submitted but not yet determined;
- Planning application refusals subject to appeal procedures and not yet determined;
- Projects authorised but not yet started;
- Projects started but not yet completed;
- Known projects that do not require external authorisation, e.g. permitted development;

- ‘Projects’ subject to periodic review e.g. annual licences, during the time that their renewal is under consideration;
- Proposals in adopted plans (e.g. land use plans, transport plans, minerals and waste plans, shoreline management plans etc.); and
- Proposals in finalised draft plans (see examples above) formally published or submitted for final consultation, examination or adoption.

Given the nature of the LTP5, there is inevitably going to be a delay between the adoption of the LTP and any relevant development. Should an in-combination assessment be required, it is not possible to know when (or indeed if) any subsequent project proposal will come forward and therefore, it is not possible to predict what other plans and projects will be relevant to such a future project assessment. There is a need to consider the potential for in-combination effects at the plan stage and, to this aim, a data gathering exercise has been undertaken to identify relevant other plans and projects. A plan in-combination assessment is relevant for informing the project-level in-combination assessments for any subsequent development, but this will need to be scoped accordingly at the time of assessment.

The National Infrastructure Planning<sup>17</sup> website was searched for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) which could have effects ‘in combination’ with the Plan.

The following local planning authorities are considered relevant to conducting a search for ‘other plans and projects’:

- West Northamptonshire Council<sup>18</sup>;
- Milton Keynes City Council<sup>19</sup>;
- Central Bedfordshire Council<sup>20</sup>;
- Slough Borough Council<sup>21</sup>;
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead<sup>22</sup>;
- Wokingham Borough Council<sup>23</sup>;
- Oxfordshire County Council<sup>24</sup>;
- Dacorum Borough Council<sup>25</sup>;
- South Oxfordshire District Council<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> National Infrastructure Planning. Available at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/> (Accessed January 2026).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/>

- Cherwell District Council<sup>27</sup>;
- Hertfordshire County Council<sup>28</sup>;
- Three Rivers Borough Council<sup>29</sup>;
- Hertsmere Borough Council<sup>30</sup>; and
- A number of London Borough Councils in proximity to Buckinghamshire, namely:
  - Richmond Council<sup>31</sup>;
  - Ealing Council<sup>32</sup>;
  - Brent Council<sup>33</sup>;
  - Hillingdon Council<sup>34</sup>;
  - Hounslow Council<sup>35</sup>; and
  - Harrow Council<sup>36</sup>.

## Stage 1: Screening for Likely Significant Effects (LSE)

### Alone

The precautionary principle (as enshrined in the Habitats Regulations) has been taken into account during this HRA. Whenever potential significant effects could not be objectively discounted, the European Site has been screened in.

Following the gathering of information on the LTP5 and European Sites, and the identification of effect pathways, each European Site was screened against each potential pathway to identify whether LSE were possible or whether they could be discounted by the LTP5 'alone'.

LSE effects are assessed in reference to the Conservation Objectives of each qualifying interest feature of each European Site. The results are presented in Table 5.1 in Section 5.

Any plan or project that causes the interest features of a European Site to fall into unfavourable condition is considered to have an LSE on the site. Stage 1 of the HRA process does not assess effects on the integrity of European Sites, this forms Stage 2 of the HRA process.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.richmond.gov.uk/council>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ealing.gov.uk/site/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.brent.gov.uk/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://pre.hillingdon.gov.uk/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.harrow.gov.uk/>

### **In-combination with other plans and projects**

Following the completion of the Stage 1 ‘alone’ screening. Consideration was also given to the potential for the effects of the LTP5 to combine with other plans and projects and result in additional LSEs that were discounted by the LTP5 ‘alone’.

Any European Sites with LSE pathways ‘alone’, that were already screened in and requiring Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment, were not subject to ‘in-combination’ assessment<sup>37</sup>.

### **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment**

For European Sites where a LSE is predicted (alone or in combination with other plans or projects), or it cannot be concluded that there is no LSE, an Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken. The purpose of the Appropriate Assessment is to establish whether there are elements of the project which could have an adverse effect on the integrity (AEol) of any European Site. The integrity of a European Site is defined as:

*“..the coherence of the site’s ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is, or will be, designated”<sup>38</sup>*

The integrity of a European Site involves its ecological structure, function and ecological processes, and relates to the site’s Conservation Objectives; if the Conservation Objective for a feature will be undermined, site integrity is adversely affected.

The Appropriate Assessment considers each individual effect pathway separately, as well as any combination of relevant effect pathways from the LTP5 and any other plans or NSIPs. Assessment is based on the draft plan and any necessary mitigation measures have been considered.

Therefore, the Appropriate Assessment, with reference to the elements of the LTP5 that were identified as having a potential to have an LSE on a European Site, and taking into account proposed mitigation measures, determines whether or not the LTP5 will have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Sites.

### **In-combination with other plans and projects**

Following the completion of the Stage 2 ‘alone’ Appropriate Assessment. Consideration was also given to the potential for the effects of the LTP5 to combine with other plans and projects and result in additional LSEs that were discounted by the LTP5 ‘alone’.

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<sup>37</sup> Regulation 63(1)(a) requires appropriate assessment if LSE is likely either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

<sup>38</sup> Natural England (2019) MPA Conservation Advice Glossary of Terms. Available here:  
[https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/pdfs/MPA\\_CAGlossary\\_March2019.pdf](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/pdfs/MPA_CAGlossary_March2019.pdf)

## The European Sites

### European Sites Identified for Screening

The desk study identified 11 European Sites within the search areas defined in paragraph 2.2.2. These are as follows:

- Aston Rowant SAC;
- Burnham Beeches SAC;
- Chilterns Beechwoods SAC;
- Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC;
- South West London Waterbodies SPA;
- South West London Waterbodies Ramsar site;
- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA;
- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar site;
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA;
- Cothill Fen SAC, and;
- Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC.

The location of the European Sites identified in relation the Plan area are given in **Appendix A.**

### Information on European Sites Identified for Screening

The following 11 European Sites (as set out in Table 3-1) were taken forward to detailed screening. Relevant environmental information for each European Site taken from the standard data form/information sheet is presented in Appendix B.

**Table 0-1 – European Sites Relevant to the Assessment of LTP5**

SAC	SPA	Ramsar site
<i>European Sites located within the Plan Area</i>		
Aston Rowant SAC		
Burnham Beeches SAC		
Chilterns Beechwoods SAC		
<i>European Sites located within 10 km of the Plan Area</i>		
Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC	South West London Waterbodies SPA	South West London Waterbodies Ramsar site
<i>European Sites designated for birds located within 20 km of the Plan Area</i>		
	Thames Basin Heaths SPA	Upper Nene Valley Ramsar site
	Upper Nene Valley SPA	

SAC	SPA	Ramsar site
<i>European sites designated for bats located within 30 km of the Plan Area</i>		
Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC		
<i>European sites with GWDTEs</i>		
Cothill Fen SAC		

## Buckinghamshire LTP5

Buckinghamshire Council are developing a new Local Transport Plan, LTP5, to reflect the ambitions, policies and plans for delivering transport improvements for all types of transport across the county up to 2045.

The Buckinghamshire LTP5 comprises 31 policies over nine themes. The policies are listed below, grouped into their relevant themes.

Buckinghamshire LTP5 outlines the vision and objectives for transport in Buckinghamshire. It also outlines decarbonisation analytics for Electric Vehicles and a 5 - 10 year implementation plan of LTP5.

The LTP5 draft vision is as follows:

*"By 2045 it will be easier for our residents to travel to work, school or college, to shop, use public services, or visit friends or leisure destinations.*

*For journeys in our towns, people will feel like they have the choice to walk, wheel, cycle or use public transport as these will be attractive, reliable and affordable options for local journeys.*

*In our villages and between our towns walking, wheeling, cycling or using public transport will be better and safer than it is now, but we will support those who need and want to travel by car to do so by tackling congestion, reducing delays and improving road safety.*

*By improving people's travel choices and helping our residents make the shift to electric and alternatively fuelled vehicles, we will have reduced our transport emissions, reduced noise and air pollution from traffic, helped to ease congestion, and created thriving neighbourhoods."*

The LTP5 has the following draft objectives:

### Connecting our economy

- f. The productivity of local businesses; ability to attract investment; and access to opportunities for all residents are enhanced by fast, efficient, and reliable transport connections.
- g. Reduced delays and unreliable journey times caused by congestion and roadworks.
- h. High quality active travel and public transport options to local economic and employment centres, key services, schools and leisure facilities.
- i. Faster and easier journeys to London, the Midlands and within the South-East.
- j. The transport networks are well-maintained and prepared for the effects of adverse weather resulting from climate change.

- k. Minimise negative impacts of freight movement on local communities and ensure it is appropriate and efficient to support local business.

### **Reducing transport emissions**

Transport emissions in Buckinghamshire (excluding motorways) are reducing and within our 2025 - 2050 carbon budget.

- l. Digital connections and access to more local services reduce the need for travel.
- m. Walking, cycling, and wheeling are safe, attractive options for shorter local journeys, especially those in urban areas, and as part of longer journeys.
- n. Travel by public transport is a viable and attractive option for residents, including to new housing and employment sites.
- o. Use of low and ultra-low emission vehicles is affordable and convenient.
- p. Sustainable travel options are integral to new developments.

### **Creating high quality places**

- a. Streets, neighbourhoods, and rights of way are designed to put the needs of people first, and to be safe and accessible for all.
- b. Traffic is encouraged to use the most appropriate routes.
- c. Traffic noise and air quality impacts on communities are minimised.
- d. Neighbourhoods and local centres are walking, wheeling and cycling-friendly, putting the needs of vulnerable road users first.
- e. Street design is high quality, inclusive and meets the needs of all users of the space.
- f. Biodiversity on and adjacent to transport networks is enhanced.
- g. There is improved road safety for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, motorcyclists and drivers.
- h. We are working towards a Rights of Way network which supports the needs of all users, including mobility and visually impaired users.

The nine themes of the Buckinghamshire LTP5 with the relevant policies are as outlined in Table 4-1 below.

**Table 0-1 – Summary of Buckinghamshire LTP5 Draft Local Transport Plan 5 Policies**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Policy</b>
Active travel	AT1 – Transport sustainability hierarchy
	AT2 – Walking, wheeling and cycling
	AT3 – Public rights of way
	AT4 – Information, education and promotion
Public Transport	PT1 – Bus and community transport
	PT2 – Rail

Theme	Policy
	PT3 – Mobility hubs
	PT4 – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles
Safety	S1 – Road safety
	S2 – Personal safety and security
Place shaping	PS1 – Accessible streets
	PS2 – Public space
	PS3 – Land use planning
	PS4 – Development management
	PS5 – School travel
	PS6 – Workplace travel
Highway network	HN1 – Asset management
	HN2 – Network management
	HN3 – Parking
	HN4 – Enforcement
	HN5 – Road infrastructure
	HN6 – Resilience and emissions
	HN7 – Green infrastructure
Motor vehicles	MV1 – Zero emission vehicles
	MV2 – Car sharing
Innovation	I1 – New transport services
Freight and logistics	FL1 – Freight and logistics
Delivery	D1 – Supporting strategies
	D2 – Implementation plan
	D3 – Safeguarding and Improvement Lines
	D4 – Monitoring

## Stage 1 – Screening

### Identified effect pathways

As outlined in paragraph 2.2.7, the following effect pathways have been identified. Each Conservation Objective has been considered against each pathway:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation;
- Species disturbance (visual, noise, vibration);
- Changes to water quality;
- Changes to air quality;
- Changes to surface and groundwater hydrology;
- Introduction of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS);
- Recreation.

### Likely Significant Effect Screening – Alone

All elements of LTP5 were screened for policies that may result in LSE on European Sites. The results of the screening are summarised in Table 5-1 below with the more detailed screening of the policies provided in **Appendix C**.

The vision and objectives and decarbonisation sections of the LTP5 will not lead to development and therefore are considered unlikely to have an LSE on any European site.

Given the distance of Cothill Fen SAC from the Plan Area (16.5 km) and the nature of the potential developments, this SAC is screened out of LSE from any of the policies. Cothill Fen SAC was initially screened in due to the potential of GWDTE habitats; however, it is considered unlikely that any of the policies within the LTP5 will result in impacts on groundwater hydrology that would lead to LSE of a site located over 16 km from the Plan Area. Therefore, this European site is screened out.

Seven of the 31 LTP5 policies are considered likely to lead to development and therefore have potential to have an LSE on any European sites. Policies which may lead to minor development, but where this development will be limited to existing transport corridors (such as bus priority measures) or urban areas have been assessed as having no LSE.

Table 0-1 – LTP Screening Summary

Element/ policy	LSE?	Justification
Vision and objectives	No	Introductory text outlining the scope and ambitions of the LTP. No specific policies outlined.

### **Active Travel**

AT1: Transport sustainability hierarchy	No	Policies with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development which may occur
AT2: Walking, wheeling and cycling	Yes	

Element/ policy	LSE?	Justification
AT3: Public rights of way	Yes	within proximity to a European site or cause increases in recreational disturbance.
AT4: Information, education and promotion	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development. See Policy Screening table in C1, <b>Appendix C</b> .

#### ***Public Transport***

PT1: Bus and community transport	No	Policies with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development which may occur within proximity to a European site or cause increases in recreational disturbance.
PT2: Rail	Yes	
PT3: Mobility hubs	No	
PT4: Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development or where development will likely be limited to discrete urbanised areas. See Policy Screening table in C1, <b>Appendix C</b> .

#### ***Safety***

S1: Road safety	No	None of the policies contain proposals that may lead to development.
S2: Personal safety and security	No	See Policy Screening table in C1, <b>Appendix C</b> .

#### ***Place-shaping***

PS1: Accessible streets	Yes	Policies with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development which may occur within proximity to a European site or cause increases in recreational disturbance.
PS2: Public space	No	
PS3: Land use planning	Yes	
PS4: Development management	No	
PS5: School travel	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development.
PS6: Workplace travel	No	See Policy Screening table in C1, <b>Appendix C</b> .

#### ***Highway network***

HN1: Asset management	No	
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Element/ policy	LSE?	Justification
HN2: Network management	No	Policies with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development which may occur within proximity to a European site or cause increases in recreational disturbance.
HN3: Parking	No	
HN4: Enforcement	No	
HN5: Road infrastructure	Yes	
HN6: Resilience and emissions	No	Construction of new roads may result in fragmentation of habitats of qualifying species.
HN7: Green infrastructure	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development. See Policy Screening table in C1, <b>Appendix C</b> .

#### ***Motor vehicles***

MV1: Zero emission vehicles	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development.
MV2: Car sharing	No	

#### ***Innovation***

I1: New transport services	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development.
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#### ***Freight and logistics***

FL1: Freight and logistics	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development.
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#### ***Delivery***

D1: Supporting strategies	No	Policies with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development which may occur within proximity to a European site or cause increases in recreational disturbance.
D2: Implementation plan	No	
D3: Safeguarding and improvement lines	Yes	
D4: Monitoring	No	Policies with no LSE are unlikely to result in development. See Policy Screening table in C1, <b>Appendix C</b> .

#### ***Implementation***

Implementation	No	This section is largely administrative and outlines how policies will be funded and monitored.
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#### ***Decarbonisation***

Element/ policy	LSE?	Justification
Decarbonisation	No	This section outlines carbon analysis of LTP5 policies. This element will not lead to development and will not result in an LSE on any European site.

#### *Screening 'Alone' Summary*

It has been demonstrated that the following elements can be screened out as they were assessed as having no potential to have an LSE on any European site:

- Vision and objectives;
- Active Travel
  - AT1: Transport sustainability hierarchy;
  - AT4: Information, education and promotion.
- Public Transport
  - PT1: Bus and community transport;
  - PT3: Mobility hubs;
  - PT4: Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- Safety
  - S1: Road safety;
  - S2: Personal safety and security.
- Place-shaping
  - PS2: Public space;
  - PS4: Development management;
  - PS5: School travel;
  - PS6: Workplace travel,
- Highway network
  - HN1: Asset management;
  - HN2: Network management;
  - HN3: Parking;
  - HN4: Enforcement;
  - HN6: Resilience and emissions;
  - HN7: Green infrastructure.
- Motor vehicles
  - MV1: Zero emission vehicles;
  - MV2: Car sharing.

- Innovation
  - I1: New transport services.
- Freight and logistics
  - FL1: Freight and logistics.
- Delivery
  - D1: Supporting strategies;
  - D2: Implementation plan;
  - D4: Monitoring.
- Implementation;
- Decarbonisation.

An LSE cannot be ruled out for the following seven policies as they may lead to development that could have an effect on a European site, depending on the location, scale and timing of the works:

- AT2: Walking, wheeling and cycling;
- AT3: Public rights of way;
- PT2: Rail;
- PS1: Accessible streets;
- PS3: Land use planning;
- HN5: Road infrastructure, and:
- D3: Safeguarding and improvement lines.

## Stage 1 Screening Conclusions

The HRA Stage 1 Screening assessment has concluded that LSE cannot be discounted for all policies, and seven policies were considered likely to lead to development and, therefore, have potential for LSEs on European Sites within the LTP5 area.

In conclusion, as LSEs arising from the LTP5 both alone and in-combination could not be ruled out, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and is detailed in the Section 6 below.

## Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

### Introduction

Following completion of the HRA Stage 1 Screening assessment, it was concluded that the seven LTP5 policies may result in LSE on European Sites. Therefore, these policies require a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

Potential for an LSE was concluded for the following policies:

- AT2: Walking, wheeling and cycling;
- AT3: Public rights of way;
- PT2: Rail;
- PS1: Accessible streets;
- PS3: Land use planning;
- HN5: Road infrastructure, and:
- D3: Safeguarding and improvement lines.

### Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the LTP5

There is not sufficient detail within the LTP5 to enable the specific impacts on individual features of the European Sites to be determined, those features on which there may be an LSE cannot be singled out and taken forward to AA. Therefore, the risk of having an impact was broadly assessed by considering all qualifying features, which will indicate whether there could be a subsequent risk to the integrity of the European Site.

### Mitigation and Control Measures

The following measures will be employed during the works to avoid and reduce ecological impacts including avoiding causing any adverse effects on any European designated site. These measures are taken into account in the Appropriate Assessment below.

### General measures

The general measures listed below should be implemented across schemes that arise as part of the LTP5:

- Strict adherence to the Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs)<sup>39</sup> and the Intrusive Investigations Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidance<sup>40</sup> on the control of water pollution from Intrusive Investigations sites;

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<sup>39</sup> The GPPs provide environmental good practice guidance for the whole UK, and environmental regulatory guidance directly to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales only. For businesses in England, regulatory guidance is available from GOV.UK instead.

<sup>40</sup> CIRIA C762 Environmental good practice provides advice on the management of a range of environmental issues that may be encountered on site and presents good practice to reduce the environmental impacts due to construction

- An appropriately qualified and experienced Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be employed throughout the works to advise on ecological constraints where appropriate;
- Machinery will be stored in an agreed site compound, outside the boundary of any designated site. Biodegradable fluid will be used in plant where possible. Appropriate interception measures will be used during any refuelling or plant maintenance;
- The ECoW will give a site induction to all site operatives, indicating the ecological sensitivities of the site and boundaries to working. In particular to ensure that there is no accidental ingress into designated sites.

### **Assessment of Effects**

Each potential LSE as a result of the LTP5 (identified by the Screening stage) is considered in turn below taking into account relevant specific information and mitigation measures.

#### **Habitat loss and fragmentation effect pathway**

Broad locations for some aspects of Policy AT2: Walking, wheeling and cycling are provided (the expansion of the Buckinghamshire Greenway Cycleway). However, there is no specific location information available for this policy or other policies in the LTP5.

It is unlikely that any of the schemes will fall within any European sites. Provided all schemes seek to avoid the loss of habitats for qualifying species, including functionally linked land, it is considered that habitat loss and/ or fragmentation will be unlikely. It is therefore concluded that an adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites identified will result from the LTP5 alone through habitat loss is unlikely.

#### **Species Disturbance**

Given the high level of the LTP5 and lack of details, it is not possible at this stage to confirm that species disturbance may occur. However, schemes arising out of the LTP5 could in theory result in species disturbance via noise, vibration and visual disturbance of the qualifying species of European sites.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation would be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP5:

- Obtain appropriate licensing for legally protected species to ensure no impact on favourable conservation status;
- Restrict timing of most disturbing activities to avoid or limit seasonal disturbance (e.g. whilst breeding);
- Limit noise from plant and machinery;
- Creation of noise attenuation bunds;
- Creation of buffer zones and set-back distances, particular around sensitive features (e.g. roosts);
- Visual screening of works;

- Restrict works either geographically or temporally (e.g. avoid winter or no night-time working);
- Educate workers on importance of adjacent European sites;
- Create alternative areas for outdoor recreation to discourage some workers from visiting European sites, particularly those with species prone to disturbance.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures that no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites identified will result from the LTP5 alone through species disturbance.

### **Changes to Water Quality**

Changes in water quality could result from direct discharges from sewage or surface water run-off outfalls, altering water chemistry, nutrient levels, pH or oxygen levels. Any de-watering works could also result in sediment discharge into aquatic habitats. Other potential pollutant sources include accidental spillages of fuels or oil, heavy metals leaching from soil run-off, pollutants such as dust and construction waste in surface water run-off and increases in nutrient loading. Any surface water discharges that are made into local watercourses and waterbodies or directly or indirectly into European sites could be damaging. The release of these pollutants and increases in suspended sediment into freshwater (and estuarine) environments could lead to smothering of habitats and species, or changes in species diversity as a result of increased toxicity or nutrients, so affecting the achievement of the conservation objectives and site integrity.

In order to reduce these potential effects, drainage systems should be designed to either avoid discharge into watercourses or the sea, or to attenuate and reduce the risk of pollutants and suspended solids. Modelling of any discharges or releases will be required once any project-level details are known in order to quantify any impacts. As such, the following mitigation measures will be implemented:

- Drainage systems should be designed to avoid direct discharge into watercourses or the sea;
- Attenuation and/ or settlement ponds installed to reduce the risk of pollutants and suspended sediment reaching the receptors;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) installed;
- Implementation of a flocculant system before discharge;
- Silt curtains used whilst dredging;
- Implementation of pollution prevention guidelines;
- Effective soil management plans to avoid run-off from any earthworks;
- Foul water discharge to existing treatment plants and not to surface water;
- Appropriate bunding around fuel storage;
- Design of cooling water system to reduce the temperature of the water before it is released.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites identified will result from the LTP5 alone through changes in water quality.

### **Changes to Air Quality**

During construction, emissions to air would be mainly from plant and machinery, road traffic and dust from works or emissions from concrete batching plants. During operation, traffic on new roads or increased volumes of traffic on existing roads may alter local air quality resulting in additional impacts on sensitive habitats within 200 m of the affected road network.

The potential effects of increases in deposition of nitrogen compounds (NOx) include long-term changes in habitat and species distribution and diversity as nutrient loading encourages more vigorous species, such as grasses, to out-compete forbs and slow growing non-vascular plants. Acidification of soils and freshwater (primarily through nitrogen deposition) causes similar effects, depending on the geology and soil chemistry influence susceptibility of an ecosystem to acid deposition.

An assessment of any adverse impacts from changes in air quality should be undertaken on a site-by-site basis, through determination of the applicability of the critical levels and critical loads at each site, and further ecological assessment and modelling. Critical loads for vegetation types are presented on the Air Pollution Information System (APIS) website<sup>41</sup>.

Good practice measures to control dust from construction sites should be sufficient to limit the amount of emissions reaching the European sites. With respect to emissions of NOx or acidic compounds through construction activities, generic mitigation measures such as turning engines off when idle, operating equipment on ultra-low sulphur diesel, ensuring engines are routinely maintained, providing public transport for workers etc. may limit emissions to within acceptable thresholds.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation would be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP5:

- Enclosure of silos, cement powder delivery systems and installation of dust mitigation systems;
- Avoid dust releasing activities;
- Site design to reduce dust emissions (e.g. covering stockpiles, reducing vehicle speed);
- Dust control measures implemented (water bowsers);
- Regular maintenance of plant and machinery;
- Drivers to switch off vehicles when stationary;
- Avoid use of diesel generators;
- Implement air quality monitoring scheme;

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.apis.ac.uk/>

- Turning engines off when idle;
- Operating equipment on ultra-low sulphur diesel;
- Ensuring engines are routinely maintained;
- Providing public transport for workers.

Operational impacts cannot be mitigated in this way and would need to be avoided through modelling and management of the affected road network, particularly roads that lie within 200 m of a European site.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites identified will result from the LTP5 alone through changes in air quality.

### **Changes to surface and groundwater hydrology**

Excavations and earthworks during construction and new roads and other impermeable surfaces during operation have the potential to change surface water hydrodynamics. Diversion or blocking of surface water features, the presence of earthworks or roads all have the potential to alter existing surface water drainage characteristics in the catchment. Pluvial flood events may become more frequent as the built-up area increases, and fluvial flooding may increase if surface water run-off is diverted into watercourses. A reduction or increase in surface water flows could affect water quality.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation would be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP5:

- Re-routing of watercourses, positioning of earthworks to reduce risk of effects;
- Modelling or monitoring of flow rates and water levels in local watercourses where these may be affected by development;
- Complete a Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) to assess potential surface water and groundwater effects during phases of development and operation;
- Mitigation to control any surface floodwater.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites identified will result from the LTP5 alone through changes in surface and groundwater hydrology.

### **Introduction of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**

The risk of terrestrial or marine INNS introduction to European sites remains if appropriate mitigation measures are not implemented. Any works have the potential to spread INNS that are already established on the site and elsewhere in the UK. During operation the introduction and spread of INNS is considered less likely due to reduced movement of substrate and vehicles.

In practice, to manage these risks, any future project proponent will be required to apply Biosecurity Risk Assessments and Method Statements to cover all activities. These are likely

to include regular survey and monitoring requirements for INNS. The implementation of effective Biosecurity Risk Assessments and procedures should enable to rule out any risk to site integrity.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation would be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP5:

- Implement Biosecurity Risk Assessments and Method Statements to cover all activities;
- Undertake measures that would control and eradicate INNS within the area of works;
- Implement regular survey and monitoring requirements for INNS.

Mitigation through iterative design and the implementation of standard mitigation and good practice guidance should ensure no risk to achievement of conservation objectives and consequently no adverse effect on site integrity.

It is therefore concluded that no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites identified will result from the LTP5 alone through the introduction of INNS.

### **Recreation**

Improving access to European sites, particularly in combination with local increases in population driven by housing and employment development, can increase the amount of recreation at a site. This may result in increased disturbance/ erosion of habitats, disturbance of species within the site from increased numbers of people and dogs, littering, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. It can also drive the need for more visitor facilities and car parking facilities, visitor manage visitor access, an educational programme, site warden, increased recreational pressure on European sites from increased accessibility and visitor numbers, resulting in disturbance and habitat erosion if not managed.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation would be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP5:

- Visitor management schemes, including provision of dedicated footpaths, fencing and screening of sensitive areas;
- Education of visitors through signage and online information;
- Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) for new residential developments to ease the pressure on European sites where this is an issue.

It is therefore concluded with appropriate mitigation measures no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites identified will result from the LTP5 alone through recreational pressures.

### **Likely Significant Effect – In-combination**

An in-combination LSE screening for the identified European Sites is provided in Table 6-1 below.

Given specific details of development that may arise because of policies within LTP5 are not available, the below in-combination assessment gives and overview of plans and projects which should be reviewed as part of an in-combination assessment for specific LTP5 developments at the project stage.

The policies and elements of the LTP5 where no LSE was found were considered to have no minor residual effects, and therefore, do not require an in-combination assessment.

Cothill Fen SAC was scoped in for screening based on the presence of GWDTE habitats. However, given this distance of the SAC from the Plan Area, and nature of the proposals within the LTP5 it is considered that there will be no effect on Cothill Fen SAC as a result of the LTP5 and this SAC is not considered in the in-combination assessment.

There is potential for the LTP5 to contribute to in-combination effects on European Sites in the Plan Area through combined delivery of multiple schemes within the plan, and with other plans and projects. The following combined effects may occur:

- Reduction in air quality from increased volumes of traffic, or from construction activities;
- Generation of other sources of pollution e.g. water-borne;
- Habitat loss and disturbance from development, and;
- Disturbance of qualifying habitats and species from multiple sources, including recreation.

At present, a HRA has not been produced for the following NSIPs:

- East West Rail – Bedford to Cambridge and Western Improvements;
- Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange; and
- South-East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO).

Therefore, an in-combination assessment of LSE for the European Sites cannot be completed at this stage for these NSIPs. As development progresses through the Buckingham LTP5 in the future, it may be relevant to complete an in-combination assessment with these NSIPs within a project-level HRA.

Local Plan HRA documents were not available from Brent Council, Hillingdon Council and Three Rivers Borough Council, at the time of writing.

Local Mineral and Waste HRA documents were not available from Central Bedfordshire Council at the time of writing.

Local Transport Plan HRA documents were not available from Oxfordshire County Council at the time of writing, however, it is understood that an assessment is in progress at the time of writing (with results not yet publicly available).

It should be noted that Local Transport Plan 4 for Central Bedfordshire Council is currently in development and is expected to be published during spring/ summer 2026.

Although Cherwell District Council borders Buckinghamshire County to the northwest, it is approximately 17 km from the nearest European site (Ashton Rowant SAC) and was therefore not considered in the in-combination assessment.

Table 6-1 below summarises other plans and projects which should be considered for in-combination effects.

**Table 6-1 – In-combination Effect Assessment Table**

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
Secretary of State (SoS) for Energy Security and Net Zero	Slough Multifuel Extension Project	Secretary of State Decision Letter and Habitats Regulations Assessment, November 2023 <sup>42</sup>	<p>The Proposed Scheme is to increase the efficiency and output of a previously consented energy from waste generating station which has a capacity of up to 50 megawatts (MW) to 60MW.</p> <p>The HRA assessed the potential for LSEs on Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC, Southwest London Waterbodies SPA or Southwest London Waterbodies Ramsar site, especially as a result of changes in air quality, then this project could have in-combination effects. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>	
SoS for Transport	M25 Junction 10/ A3 Wisley Interchange Improvement	M25 Junction 10/ A3 Wisley Interchange Habitat Regulations Assessment for an Application under the Planning Act 2008, May 2022 <sup>43</sup>	<p>The Proposed Scheme involves the alteration and upgrading of the existing Junction 10 roundabout of the M25 motorway, including new, amended and extended slip roads on and off the M25 and A3. The A3 would also be widened to four lanes between the Ockham Park junction and the Painshill junction. Four</p>	

<sup>42</sup> [Documents | Slough Multifuel Extension Project](#) [Accessed: January 2026].

<sup>43</sup> [TR010030-001499-FINAL HRA.pdf](#). [Accessed: January 2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
			<p>free-flow slip lanes would be provided on the M25 through Junction 10, together with a package of changes and additions to the local road network, private access and Public Rights of Way.</p> <p>The HRA assessed the potential for LSEs on Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC and Thames Basin Heaths SPA by virtue of habitat loss, degradation of habitats by changes in air quality and water quality, disturbance to qualifying features due to changes in noise, lighting, and visuals as well as the spread of INNS. No LSE alone or in-combination was concluded for Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC; however, it was concluded that the development would have an adverse effect on the integrity of Thames Basin Heaths SPA, and all three qualifying features – Dartford Warbler, woodlark, and nightjar. The SoS concluded that there are no alternative solutions to fulfilling the objectives of the Proposed Scheme and that the scheme provides a benefit that is imperative to the public interest. Therefore, taking into account the package of compensatory</p>	<p>qualifying features, then this project should be considered for in-combination effects.</p> <p>This project is currently under construction. Therefore, dependent on the timing of the publication of the LTP5, it should be reviewed to consider whether or not this development forms part of the baseline impacts upon European Sites, rather than in-combination assessment. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
Buckinghamshire Council	Local Plan for Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Regulation 18, July 2025 <sup>44</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan policies on Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site, and Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC.</p> <p>The HRA considered changes in air quality, habitat loss, recreational pressure, urbanisation, and changes in water quality/ quantity as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concluded no LSE with respect to habitat loss either alone or in-combination. However, LSEs either alone or in-combination could not be ruled out for changes in air quality, recreational pressure, urbanisation, or changes in water quality/ quantity. Therefore further assessment required once any development arises as a result of the policies that reach the project level stage.</p>	<p>Any development that arises from the LTP5 that may impact Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, South West London SPA/ Ramsar site or Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC should consider this plan during the in-combination assessment. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>

<sup>44</sup> Available at: [Buckinghamshire Local Plan HRA](#). [Accessed: 12/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
Buckinghamshire Council	Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016-2036 <sup>45</sup>	N/A	At present, there is no HRA for the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.	As development arises through the LTP5 in the future, it may be relevant to complete an in-combination assessment with this plan within a project-level HRA.
Milton Keynes City Council	Milton Keynes City Plan	Milton Keynes City Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, Regulation 19 Consultation Report, September 2025 <sup>46</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan policies on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site.</p> <p>The HRA considered changes in air quality, recreational pressure, urbanisation, and changes in water quality/ quantity as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concludes that there is a potential LSE as a result of urbanisation effects in combination with other plans and projects. The HRA concludes that, taking into account avoidance and mitigation measures, there would be no adverse effect on the SPA/ Ramsar site alone or in-combination.</p>	Any development that arises from the LTP5 which may have an LSE on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar site. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.
Milton Keynes City Council	Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) <sup>47</sup>	N/A	At present, there is no HRA for the Milton Keynes LTP5 as it is still in development.	As no HRA has been produced there is not requirement for in-

<sup>45</sup> Available at: [Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#). [Accessed: 12/01/2026].

<sup>46</sup> Available at: [Habitats Regulation Assessment September 2025.pdf](#). [Accessed: 12/01/2026].

<sup>47</sup> Available at: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/local-transport-plan-5>. [Accessed: 12/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
Dacorum Borough Council	Dacorum Local Plan	Habitats Regulations Assessment of the	The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan policies on the Chilterns	Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location

<sup>48</sup> Available at: [Microsoft Word - HRA scoping final draft](#). [Accessed: 12/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
		Dacorum Local Plan, October 2024 <sup>49</sup>	<p>Beechwoods SAC and South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site.</p> <p>The HRA considered changes in air quality, recreational pressures, urbanisation, and changes in water quality/ quantity as potential impact pathways.</p>	<p>and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5. However, as suitable mitigation measures were identified Dacorum Local Plan HRA and within this HRA and any development arising from LTP5 would be subject to further HRA it is considered that any potential for in-combination effects could be appropriate mitigated.</p>
Richmond Upon Thames Council	Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan	Richmond Upon Thames: Regulation 19 Local Plan: Habitat Regulations Assessment <sup>50</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan policies on the South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar Site, Thames Basin Heath SPA, Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC and Windsor Forest &amp; Great Park SAC (among other</p>	<p>Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5. However, as suitable mitigation measures were identified</p>

<sup>49</sup> Available at: [Examination Library | Let's Talk Dacorum](#). [Accessed: 12/01/2026].

<sup>50</sup> Available at: [Richmond Upon Thames: Regulation 19 Local Plan - Habitat Regulations Assessment](#) [Accessed 19/01/2026]. Please note that a newer version of the HRA has been produced but was not found to be publicly available at the time of writing.

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
			<p>European sites not discussed in this report).</p> <p>The HRA considered changes in air quality, recreational pressures, urbanisation, and changes in water quality/ supply as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concludes that there is a potential for LSEs as a result of changes in recreational pressures and changes in water quantity. However, taking into account avoidance and mitigation measures, there would be no adverse effects on the European Sites either alone or in-combination.</p>	<p>Dacorum Local Plan HRA and within this HRA and any development arising from LTP5 would be subject to further HRA it is considered that any potential for in-combination effects could be appropriate mitigated.</p>
Ealing Council	Ealing Local Plan	Ealing Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1: Screening <sup>51</sup>	<p>The HRA determines whether the Ealing Local Plan policies and developments arising from this plan will lead to significant effects on European Sites. The HRA considered South West London Waterbodies SPA/Ramsar and Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC.</p> <p>Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC was ruled out of further assessment and it was considered there would be negligible effects.</p>	<p>If any development arises from the Ealing Local Plan and the LTP5 any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>

<sup>51</sup> Available at: [Integrated Impact Assessment Reg 19 | Ealing Council](#) [Accessed 14.01.2026]

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
West London Waste Planning Authorities	West London Waste Plan (WLWP)	Habitats Regulations Assessment for the West London Waste Plan <sup>52</sup>	<p>The HRA determines whether the WLWP policies and development arising from them are likely to have significant effects on European sites. The HRA considers Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC, Thames Basin Heaths SPA, Burnham Beeches SAC and Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC.</p> <p>The HRA considered loss of habitat, disturbance, air pollution, pests, water quality and water quantity. Recreation and urban impacts were screened out as having no effect. There was potential LSE on South West London Waterbodies SPA/Ramsar site as a result of changes to water quantity, water quality, pests, air pollution, habitat loss and disturbance.</p> <p>There was also potential LSE on Burnham Beeches SAC as a result of air pollution.</p>	

<sup>52</sup> Available at: [Habitats Regulations Assessment for the West London Waste Plan](#). [Accessed 14/01/2026]

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
Greater London Authority	Proposed Mayor's Transport Strategy	Proposed Mayor's Transport Strategy Revision and London-wise ULEZ: Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening <sup>53</sup>	<p>The HRA Screening report considers potential impacts of the proposed transport strategy on a number of European Sites local to the Greater London area, of which only South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site are relevant to this assessment.</p> <p>The HRA Screening report considered changes in air quality as a potential impact pathway.</p> <p>The HRA Screening concluded no likely significant negative effects on the South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site.</p>	The HRA concluded that as a result of the strategy in question, there would be a net positive result on changes in air quality, and therefore states that it would not be possible for the strategy to result in a significant adverse effect in-combination with other plans or projects.
Hounslow Council	Hounslow Local Plan 2020–2041	London Borough of Hounslow – Habitats Regulations Assessment – Regulation 19 Local Plan <sup>54</sup>	<p>The HRA report considers potential impacts of the proposed transport strategy Wimbledon Common SAC and South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site are relevant to this assessment.</p> <p>The HRA report considered changes in air quality, water quality and recreational pressure as a potential impact pathway.</p>	If any development that arises from the LTP5 concludes there may be an LSE on South West London Waterbodies SPA/Ramsar this plan should be considered in a project specific in-combination assessment.

<sup>53</sup> Available at: [https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/cleanair/widgets/58598/documents?utm\\_source=copilot.com](https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/cleanair/widgets/58598/documents?utm_source=copilot.com) [Accessed 14/01/2026]

<sup>54</sup> Available at: [Habitats Regulations Assessment of Hounslow Local Plan](#) [Accessed 14/01/2026]

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
			The HRA Screening concluded no likely significant effects on the South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site	
Harrow Council	Harrow Local Plan Core Strategy	Harrow Council – Local Plan Site Allocation Habitats Regulations Assessment <sup>55</sup>	<p>The HRA report considers potential impacts of the proposed transport strategy on a number of European sites within 15 km of Harrow's Borough boundary, of which only South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site are relevant to this assessment.</p> <p>The HRA report considered changes in water quality and recreational pressure as a potential impact pathway.</p> <p>The HRA appropriate assessment concluded that, provided mitigation measured built into the Core Strategy are adhered to, no adverse impacts on site integrity on the South West London Waterbodies SPA and Ramsar would be anticipated.</p>	If any development that arises from the LTP5 concludes there may be an LSE on South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site, this plan should be considered in a project specific in-combination assessment.
West Northamptonshire Council	West Northamptonshire Local Plan	Habitat Regulations Assessment for the West Northamptonshire Local Plan. Screening	The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan policies on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site.	Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5 although appropriate outline mitigation

<sup>55</sup> Available at: <https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/23266/local-plan-site-allocation-habitats-regulations-assessment.pdf> [Accessed 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
		Report for the Draft Local Plan, April 2024 <sup>56</sup>	<p>The HRA considered changes in air quality, recreational pressures, direct loss of functionally linked land, non-physical disturbance, and changes in water quality/quantity as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concludes that there is a potential for LSEs as a result of recreational pressures, direct loss of functionally linked land and non-physical disturbance both alone and in-combination with other plans and projects. LSEs as a result of changes to water quality could not be ruled out at this stage as the evidence base is still emerging. The plan will be taken forward for appropriate assessment at the next plan stage.</p>	<p>measures have been identified. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>
West Northamptonshire Council	West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan	West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Report, Version 3, November 2024 <sup>57</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the local transport plan policies on the Aston Rowant SAC, Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, Cothill Fen SAC, and the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site.</p> <p>The HRA identified changes in air quality, recreational pressures, direct loss of</p>	<p>Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5 although appropriate outline mitigation measures have been identified. As such any potential in-</p>

<sup>56</sup> Available at: [New Local Plan for West Northamptonshire | West Northamptonshire Council](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

<sup>57</sup> Available at: [Highways plans and strategies | West Northamptonshire Council](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
			<p>functionally linked land, light pollution, noise pollution, fragmentation and/ or isolation of supporting habitats, and changes in water quality/ quantity as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concludes that there is a potential for LSEs on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site as a result of changes in water quality/ quantity, direct loss of functionally linked land, fragmentation and/ or isolation of supporting habitats, light pollution, noise pollution, and recreational pressures both alone and in-combination with other plans and projects. However, taking into account avoidance and mitigation measures, there would be no adverse effects on any European Sites either alone or in-combination.</p>	combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.
Northamptonshire County Council	Northamptonshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan	Northamptonshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan Habitats Regulations Screening	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the minerals and waste local plan policies on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site.</p> <p>The HRA identified habitat loss, disturbance to key species, habitat or species fragmentation, a reduction in species density, changes in key indicators</p>	Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5 although appropriate outline mitigation measures have been identified. As such any potential in-combination effects would need

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
		Assessment, November 2013 <sup>58</sup>	<p>of conservation value (e.g. water quality), and climate change as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concluded no LSEs on the European Site either alone or in-combination.</p>	<p>to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p> <p>.</p>
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils	South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan	Habitats Regulations Assessment for the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan, Preliminary Screening Report, December 2023 <sup>59</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the joint local plan on the Aston Rowant SAC and Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.</p> <p>The HRA identified changes in air quality, recreational pressures, changes in water quality/ quality, and site-specific impacts as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>No LSEs were identified with regards to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. However, LSEs were identified in relation to Aston Rowant SAC for air pollution in-combination with other plans and projects. LSEs were also identified in relation to Cothill Fen SAC for recreational pressures and air pollution either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. The potential for</p>	<p>Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5 although appropriate outline mitigation measures have been identified. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>

<sup>58</sup> Available at: [Partial review of the MWDF/Local Plan | West Northamptonshire Council](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

<sup>59</sup> Available at: [Joint Local Plan 2041 Examination Library - South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council](#). [Accessed:14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
			<p>recreational pressures and air pollution impacts was taken forward for Appropriate Assessment. The HRA concluded that there will be no adverse impacts to the integrity of European Sites with regard to recreational pressures either alone or in-combination. However, the potential for LSEs with regard to air pollution impacts to European Sites cannot be ruled out at this stage and are subject to further modelling work in agreement with Natural England.</p>	
Oxfordshire County Council	Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy	Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy, Habitats Regulations Screening Report, August 2015 <sup>60</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the minerals and waste plan on the Aston Rowant SAC and Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.</p> <p>The HRA identified changes in air quality, recreational pressures, changes in water quality/ quality, and hazardous/ radioactive materials as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concluded no LSEs on any of the European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5 although appropriate outline mitigation measures have been identified. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>

<sup>60</sup> Available at: [LNP03 Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy](#) [Accessed 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
Central Bedfordshire Council	Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan (2015-2035)	Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan (2015-2035), Habitats Regulations Assessment, January 2018 <sup>61</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site.</p> <p>The HRA identified changes in air quality, disturbance, changes in water quality/ quality, and habitat loss/ fragmentation as potential impact pathways.</p> <p>The HRA concluded no LSEs on any of the European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>Currently there is no detail regarding the potential location and extent of any development arising out of the LTP5 although appropriate outline mitigation measures have been identified. As such any potential in-combination effects would need to be considered as and when proposals come forward.</p>
Central Bedfordshire Council	Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)	Central Bedfordshire LTP3 Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report, January 2011 <sup>62</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of LTP3 on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. Changes in air quality, habitat fragmentation, disturbance and severance, changes in water quality/ quantity, and recreation pressures were identified as potential impact pathways. The HRA concluded no LSEs on the European Site either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.</p> <p>It should be noted that Local Transport Plan 4 is currently in development and is</p>	<p>With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.</p>

<sup>61</sup> Available at: [Technical reports: Local Plan | Central Bedfordshire Council](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

<sup>62</sup> Available at: [Transport strategy | Central Bedfordshire Council](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment	
		expected to be published during spring/summer 2026.			
Slough Borough Council	Slough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy 2006 – 2026	Slough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document, December 2008 <sup>63</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the local development framework on the Burnham Beeches SAC, South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site, and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC. The HRA concluded no LSEs on European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. However, in accordance with the precautionary principle, it was recommended that an Appropriate Assessment be completed for relevant proposals at the design control stage.	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.	
Slough Borough Council	Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)	Slough Borough Council LTP3 Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Report, March 2011 <sup>64</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the local development framework on the Burnham Beeches SAC, South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site, and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC. The HRA concluded no LSEs on European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. However, as the objectives and several	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.	

<sup>63</sup> Available at: [Development plan core strategy 2006 - 2026 – Slough Borough Council](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

<sup>64</sup> Available at: [LTP3 Strategic Environmental Assessment – Slough Borough Council](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
			<p>projects within the Implementation Plan are not site specific, the exact location of future developments arising from LTP3 is not known as yet. Once these details are available, in future implementation plans, a further review to determine if the Stage 1 (and possibly subsequent stages) of the HRA process is required, and to assess if any specific developments arising from LTP3 are likely to result in a significant impact to the European Sites.</p>	
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	Borough Local Plan 2013-2033	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Local Plan, Regulation 19 Consultation, Habitat Regulations Screening Report, June 2017 <sup>65</sup>	<p>The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan on the Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site, Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC. Changes in air quality, species disturbance, recreational pressures, direct land take, and changes in water quality/ quantity were identified as potential impact pathways. The HRA concluded no LSEs on European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.</p>

<sup>65</sup> Available at: [Submission | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	Local Transport Plan 2012 - 2026	Third Local Transport Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations Final report, August 2012 <sup>66</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the local transport plan on the Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site, Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC. Changes in air quality, water quality, noise pollution, light pollution, and recreational disturbance were identified as potential impact pathways. The HRA concluded no LSEs on European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.
Central and Eastern Berkshire	Joint Minerals and Waste Plan	Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, Habitats Regulations Assessment Record of Determination, 2022 <sup>67</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan on the Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar site, Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC. Land take, removal of supporting habitat, noise, vibration, lighting, and dust pollution, changes in water quality/ quantity, changes in air quality, urbanisation effects, and recreational pressures were identified as	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.

<sup>66</sup> Available at: [transport\\_ltp\\_final\\_habitats\\_regulations\\_assessment\\_document.pdf](https://www.royalboroughofwindsorandmaidenhead.gov.uk/transport-ltp-final-habitats-regulations-assessment-document.pdf). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

<sup>67</sup> Available at: [Minerals and Waste Plans | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](https://www.royalboroughofwindsorandmaidenhead.gov.uk/minerals-and-waste-plans). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment
			potential impact pathways. The HRA concluded no LSEs on European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.	
Wokingham Borough Council	Wokingham Local Plan Update	Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan Update, Regulation 19	The HRA considers potential impacts of the Local Plan update on the Aston Rowant SAC, Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC. Changes in air quality, recreational pressures, loss of functionally linked land, and changes in water quality/quantity were identified as potential impact pathways. The HRA concluded no LSEs on European Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.
Wokingham Borough Council	Wokingham Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)	Wokingham Local Transport Plan, Information to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment – Stage 1 Screening, January 2025 <sup>69</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the local plan update on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC. Changes in air quality and habitat/ species disturbance were identified as potential impact pathways. The HRA concluded no LSEs on European	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.

<sup>68</sup> Available at: [Dr Damiano Weitowitz Report Wokingham Local Plan Update 2024-08-19](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

<sup>69</sup> Available at: [ltp-2025-hrsa-final.pdf](#). [Accessed: 14/01/2026].

Competent Authority	Project/ Plan Name	HRA Reference	Findings of HRA	In-combination assessment		
			Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.			
Hertfordshire County Council	Hertfordshire Emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan	Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment <sup>70</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan on the Burnham Beeches SAC and South West London Waterbodies SPA/Ramsar, among other European sites not relevant to this document. Changes in air quality was identified as a potential impact pathway on Burnham Beeches SAC, with South West London Waterbodies SPA/Ramsar screened out. The HRA concluded no AESI on Burnham Beeches SAC provided that mitigations measures are followed, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.		
Hertfordshire County Council	Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2018 - 2031	Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment Report <sup>71</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan on Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, among other European sites not relevant to this document. Significant effects upon Chiltern Beechwoods SAC were determined to be unlikely. However the HRA did state that it was possible that, in-	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.		

<sup>70</sup> Available at: <cd-05a-habitats-regulations-assessment-feb-2024.pdf> [Accessed 20/01/2026].

<sup>71</sup> Available at: <ltp4-hra-2018.pdf> [Accessed 20/01/2026].

<b>Competent Authority</b>	<b>Project/ Plan Name</b>	<b>HRA Reference</b>	<b>Findings of HRA</b>	<b>In-combination assessment</b>
			combination, impacts on air quality as a result of other plans and projects could not be assessed at the time of writing.	
Hertsmere Borough Council	Hertsmere Emerging Local Plan	Hertsmere Borough Council Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Hertsmere Local Plan <sup>72</sup>	The HRA considers potential impacts of the emerging Local Plan on the South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar and Cothill Fen SAC, among other European sites not relevant to this document. Changes in water quality and quantity was identified as a potential impact pathway on the South West London Waterbodies SPA/ Ramsar and Cothill Fen SAC in-combination with other projects or plans.	With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this HRA and any development arising from the LTP5 being subject to HRA any potential in-combination effects will be fully mitigated.

<sup>72</sup> Available at: [Habitats Regulations Assessment of Draft Local Plan \(PDF 3.72Mb\)](#) [Accessed 20/01/2026]

## Conclusions

In the absence of detailed project-specific information, a high-level assessment of the potential for policies within the LTP5 to have an adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites was undertaken.

The following 11 European Sites were considered at Screening:

- Aston Rowant SAC;
- Burnham Beeches SAC;
- Chilterns Beechwoods SAC;
- Windsor Forest & Great Park SAC;
- South West London Waterbodies SPA;
- South West London Waterbodies Ramsar site;
- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA;
- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar site;
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA;
- Cothill Fen SAC, and;
- Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC.

Cothill Fen SAC was scoped in due to the presence of GDWTE habitats; however, it was considered that there would be no effect on this SAC as a result of development that may arise from the LTP5 due to distance and lack of connectivity. Therefore, this SAC was screened out and not considered further in the HRA.

Detailed information is not yet available about the nature and extent of any works or actions that are likely to arise out of the LTP5. However, it is considered reasonable to anticipate from the information available that the developments could be delivered in a manner which avoids any adverse effects on the integrity of the European Sites through the use of standard mitigation techniques which are set out in Section 6. Furthermore, it is predicted that adverse impacts can be avoided or 'designed out' and to facilitate this process early consultation with Natural England is strongly recommended, i.e. the screening and scoping stage of projects (schemes).

Taking into account the proposed mitigation measures it can therefore be concluded that the LTP5 will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites alone and in combination.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. European Sites Plan

**Figure A-1 – European Sites Plan**

## Appendix B. European Sites Information

### Aston Rowant SAC

EU Site Code	UK0030082
Designation	SAC
Name	Ashton Rowant SAC
Area	127.81 ha
Proximity	Partially within the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection for this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on calcareous grasslands.</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9130 <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests.</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interspecific floral relations;</li> <li>• Changes in biotic conditions;</li> <li>• Problematic native species, and;</li> <li>• Unknown threat or pressure</li> </ul>

## Burnham Beeches SAC

EU Site Code	UK0030034
Designation	SAC
Name	Burnham Beeches SAC
Area	383.71 ha
Proximity	Within the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with <i>Ilex</i> and sometimes also <i>Taxus</i> in the shrublayer (<i>Quercion roburi-petraeae</i> or <i>Ilici-Fagenion</i>).</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions;</li> <li>• Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities;</li> <li>• Changes in biotic conditions;</li> <li>• Air pollution, air-borne pollutants, and;</li> <li>• Other ecosystem modifications.</li> </ul>

## Chilterns Beechwoods SAC

EU Site Code	UK0012724
Designation	SAC
Name	Chilterns Beechwoods SAC
Area	1285.86 ha
Proximity	Within the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9130 <u>Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests</u></li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites)</li> </ul> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1083 Stag beetle <i>Lucanus cervus</i></li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of qualifying species, and;</li> <li>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problematic native species;</li> <li>• Invasive non-native species;</li> <li>• Interspecific floral relations, and;</li> <li>• Forest and plantation management and use.</li> </ul>

## Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC

EU Site Code	UK0012724
Designation	SAC
Name	Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC
Area	1680.18 ha
Proximity	1.9 km south of the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with <i>Quercus robur</i> on sandy plains</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with <i>Ilex</i> and sometimes also <i>Taxus</i> in the shrublayer (<i>Quercion robori-petraeae</i> or <i>Ilici-Fagenion</i>).</li> </ul> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1079 Violet click beetle <i>Limoniscus violaceus</i></li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying Species;</li> <li>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>The populations of qualifying species, and;</li> <li>The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air pollution, air-bourne pollutants;</li> <li>Invasive non-native species;</li> <li>Interspecific floral relations, and;</li> <li>Forest and plantation management and use.</li> </ul>

## South West London Waterbodies SPA

EU Site Code	UK9012171
Designation	SPA
Name	South West London Waterbodies SPA
Area	828.14 ha.
Proximity	2.4 km south of the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Article 4.2 qualification (79/409/EEC):</p> <p>Over winter the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Anas clypeata</i> (North-western/Central Europe) 2.1% of the population Five year peak mean for 1993/94 to 1997/98 <i>Anas strepera</i> (North-western Europe) 2.4% of the population Five year peak mean for 1993/94 to 1997/98.</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of habitats of qualifying Species;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of qualifying species, and;</li> <li>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasive non-native species;</li> <li>• Abiotic (slow) natural processes;</li> <li>• Changes in biotic conditions;</li> <li>• Marine and freshwater aquaculture;</li> <li>• Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities.</li> </ul>

## South West London Waterbodies Ramsar Site

EU Site Code	UK11065
Designation	Ramsar site
Name	South West London Waterbodies Ramsar site
Area	828.14 ha.
Proximity	2.4 km south of the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Ramsar criterion 6 -- species/ populations occurring at levels of international importance</p> <p>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>), NW &amp; C Europe 397 individuals, representing an average of 2.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).</li> </ul> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera strepera</i>), NW Europe 487 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	Ramsar sites do not have conservation objectives therefore the conservation objectives for the South West London Waterbodies SPA have been referenced.
Vulnerabilities	No adverse factors reported.

## Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

EU Site Code	UK9020296
Designation	SPA
Name	Upper Nene Valley SPA
Area	1357.677 ha.
Proximity	17.65 km north of the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>ARTICLE 4.1 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)</p> <p>Over winter the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> (Europe - breeding) 2% of the GB population 5-year peak mean 1999/2000 ? 2003/04;</li> <li>• <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> [North-western Europe - breeding] 2.3% of the GB population 5-year peak mean 1999/2000 ? 2003/04.</li> </ul> <p>ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)</p> <p>Over winter the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Anas strepera</i> (North-western Europe) 2% of the population 5-year peak mean 1999/2000 ? 2003/04</li> </ul> <p>ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC): AN INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT ASSEMBLAGE OF BIRDS</p> <p>Over winter the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23821 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96) Including: <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> , <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> , <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> , <i>Anas penelope</i> , <i>Anas strepera</i> , <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> , <i>Anas clypeata</i> , <i>Aythya ferina</i> , <i>Aythya fuligula</i> , <i>Fulica atra</i> , <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> [North-western Europe - breeding], <i>Vanellus vanellus</i></li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of habitats of qualifying Species;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of qualifying species, and;</li> <li>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modification of cultivation practices;</li> <li>• Fishing and harvesting of aquatic resources;</li> <li>• Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities;</li> <li>• Other urbanisation, industrial and similar activities.</li> </ul>

## Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar Site

EU Site Code	UK11083
Designation	Ramsar site
Name	Upper Nene Valley Ramsar site
Area	1357.677 ha.
Proximity	17.65 km north of the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>The site qualifies under Criterion 5 because it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds: In the non-breeding season, the site regularly supports 23,821 individual waterbirds (5 year peak mean 1999/2000 – 2003/04).</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>The site qualifies under Criterion 6 because it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in the populations of the following species or subspecies of waterbird in any season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mute swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>) 629 individuals - wintering 5 year peak mean 1999/2000 – 2003/04. % of population: 1.7% Britain</li> <li>• Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) 773 individuals – wintering 5 year peak mean 1999/2000 – 2003/04. % of population: 2.0% <i>strepera</i>, NW Europe (breeding)</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	Ramsar sites do not have conservation objectives therefore the conservation objectives for the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA have been referenced.
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unspecified development; urban use;</li> <li>• Vegetation succession;</li> <li>• Introduction/ invasion of non-native plant species;</li> <li>• Recreation/tourism disturbance.</li> </ul>

## Thames Basin Heaths SPA

EU Site Code	UK9012141
Designation	SPA
Name	Thames Basin Heaths SPA
Area	8311.06 ha
Proximity	10.80 km north of the Plan Area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>ARTICLE 4.1 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)</p> <p>During the breeding season the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> 7.8% of the GB breeding population Count mean (RSPB 1998-99);</li> <li>• <i>Lullula arborea</i> 9.9% of the GB breeding population Count as at 1997 (Wotton &amp; Gillings 2000);</li> <li>• <i>Sylvia undata</i> 27.8% of the GB breeding population Count as at 1999 (RSPB)</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of habitats of qualifying Species;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of qualifying species, and;</li> <li>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air pollution, air borne pollutants;</li> <li>• Other human intrusions and disturbances;</li> <li>• Forest and plantation management and use;</li> <li>• Biocenotic evolution, succession;</li> <li>• Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities.</li> </ul>

## Cothill Fen SAC

EU Site Code	UK0012889
Designation	SAC
Name	Cothill Fen SAC
Area	43.39 ha
Proximity	16.5 km west of the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7230 <u>Alkaline fens</u>.</li> </ul> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 91E0 <u>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)</u>.</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources);</li> <li>• Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions.</li> </ul>

## Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC

EU Site Code	UK0012804
Designation	SAC
Name	Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC
Area	894.33 ha
Proximity	26.7 km south of the Plan area
Qualifying Interest Features	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5110 <u>Stable xerothermophilous formations with Buxus sempervirens on rock slopes (Berberidion p.p.)</u>;</li> <li>• 6210 <u>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</u>;</li> <li>• 91J0 <u>Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles</u> * Priority feature.</li> </ul> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4030 <u>European dry heaths</u>;</li> <li>• 9130 <u>Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests</u>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1166 <u>Great crested newt (Triturus cristatus)</u>;</li> <li>• 1323 <u>Bechstein's bat (Myotis bechsteinii)</u>.</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of qualifying species, and;</li> <li>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>
Vulnerabilities	<p>The site is vulnerable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modification of cultivation practices;</li> <li>• Biocenotic evolution, succession;</li> <li>• Air pollution, air-borne pollutants;</li> <li>• Interspecific floral relations.</li> </ul>

## **Appendix C. Screening Assessment Table**

## Policy Screening

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
<b>Theme 1: Active travel</b>			
AT1: Transport sustainability hierarchy	<p>Traffic congestion is an issue across Buckinghamshire, and the transport network contributes to emissions and health impacts from air pollution and reduced physical activity. Buckinghamshire council will follow a transport sustainability hierarchy to inform the development of transport strategies.</p> <p>The hierarchy prioritises interventions in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substitute Trips: replace the need to travel beyond your community: Can I do it locally? Can I do it online? Can I do it online and have it delivered?</li> <li>• Shift Modes: are there different transport options to choose: Can I use active travel? Can I use public transport? Can I use shared or on-demand mobility?</li> <li>• Switch Fuels: for any trips that must be made by car, ensure the vehicle is zero emission: can I use an electric or hydrogen vehicle?</li> </ul> <p>The approach will deliver the vision to allow residents to travel by public transport, foot, bicycle or other wheeled modes. In addition, it will be central to supporting Buckinghamshire council's objective to reduce emissions.</p> <p>Policy AT1 - We will seek to follow the principles of the transport sustainability hierarchy when developing transport strategies and interventions.</p>	No	None of the proposals under this policy will directly lead to development. The policy will inform how transport strategies are developed.
AT2: Walking, wheeling and cycling	<p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to support and increase the number of residents who choose to travel by walking, wheeling and/or cycling. This will reduce air pollutants and congestion.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council commits to delivering enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure within town centres.</p> <p>The policy includes the development of the Buckinghamshire Greenway.</p> <p>Policy AT2:</p>	Yes	<p>The proposals to improve and install new walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure may lead to development of new footpaths and cycle routes. This may also lead to upgrading, maintenance schemes and extensions to existing routes. The associated works are likely to be small</p>

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop walking, wheeling and cycling networks which are designed to be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. Designs will be in accordance with our Buckinghamshire Design Guidance.</li> <li>b. Engage with stakeholders to consider the needs of equestrians in the development and design of walking, wheeling and cycling schemes where appropriate.</li> <li>c. Seek funding and necessary permissions to deliver new and improved infrastructure, including the Buckinghamshire Greenway, Aylesbury Gardenway and connections within and between settlements.</li> </ul>		scale with localised impacts. However, there is potential for an LSE if the works are near to a European site or if schemes or actions arising out of the LTP5 will increase the amount of recreational pressure on the European site.
AT3: Public rights of way	<p>Improvements to the public rights of way network will be in accordance with the Right of Way Improvement Plan, in line with the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping the network;</li> <li>• Looking after the network;</li> <li>• An evolving network;</li> <li>• Knowing where to go;</li> <li>• Access for everyone;</li> <li>• Effective delivery.</li> </ul> <p>The policy will include improving surfaces along the rights of way network and upgrading their status. The Right of Way Improvement plan also includes actions involving improving links between urban areas and the countryside, reducing fragmentation in the network and improving and increasing the network available to equestrians, carriage drivers and motorised vehicle users.</p> <p>Policy AT3 - We will maintain and enhance the public rights of way network to ensure it is accessible, safe, well signposted and in a suitable condition to support active travel, in response to the Local Plan and in accordance with the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2020-2030).</p>	Yes	The proposals include aims to evolve the public rights of way network and look after the network. This could involve addition of new footpaths, and small-scale maintenance activities. In addition, there are proposals to improve surfaces along the public rights of way and upgrade their status alongside improving access and links throughout the network. There is potential for LSE if these works are near a European Site or will increase the amount of recreational pressure on the European site.

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
AT4: Information, education and promotion	<p>The policy includes the provision of education or training to influence behaviour and promote the use of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>The proposal focuses on education and training programmes, these include Simply Walk, Bikeability cycle training and Footsteps road safety training. Buckinghamshire Council also provides workplace resources to promote walking, wheeling and cycling.</p> <p>Policy AT4 We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to deliver digital and physical information, education and promotion measures to support walking, wheeling and cycling.</li> <li>b. Work to identify and deliver new information, education and promotion measures in support of future walking, wheeling and cycling schemes.</li> </ul>	No	The proposals will not directly lead to development. The proposals are focused on promoting awareness of walking, wheeling and cycling routes.
<b>Theme 2: Public transport</b>			
PT1: Bus and community transport	<p>The Buckinghamshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) outlines Buckinghamshire Council's vision to establish buses as a key mode of travel in Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>The BSIP has five objectives, these include the provision of bus priority infrastructure, increased bus service provision, integration with other transport modes, improved ticketing and bus stop accessibility measures.</p> <p>The aim of LTP5 and the BSIP are to make buses a more attractive transport choice. This includes measures such as increasing bus service provision, improving links with active travel (such as by installing mobility hubs in key areas), improvements to ticketing and integrating with rail operators. The BSIP also details measures such as zero-emissions buses and bus priority infrastructure. Improvements to bus stops are also included, such as providing more hard-standing in rural areas.</p> <p>Policy PT1 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assess and prioritise each of the proposed bus improvement schemes to ensure that we deliver the Buckinghamshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) vision.</li> <li>b. Commit to keep our BSIP up to date to reflect changes in the transport landscape and the evolving needs of the community.</li> </ul>	No	Although the policy includes the provision of some development, including improving accessibility of bus stops by providing additional hard-standing and adding bus priority measures. Such schemes will be located in existing travel corridors and likely to be small scale with localised impacts.

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Make the most of new opportunities and technologies to ensure that our bus services are accessible and a benefit for all.</li> <li>d. Work in partnership with bus operators through the Enhanced Partnership to deliver bus service improvements.</li> </ul>		
PT2: Rail	<p>Buckinghamshire Council recognises the importance of rail in providing alternative forms of travel. They will lobby in favour of projects which will improve travel choices and support economic development in Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to work with relevant parties to ensure Buckinghamshire's interests are represented in planning decisions and consulting processes.</p> <p>Buckingham Council will improve areas around train stations, improve access to train stations and integrate rail with the wider transport network. This could include improving the urban realm around train stations, improving walking, wheeling and cycling routes to stations and improving coordination with buses.</p> <p>Policy PT2 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to collaborate with our partners and key stakeholders in the rail industry to lobby the government to invest in the delivery of the Northampton, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Old Oak Common rail corridor and ensure Buckinghamshire's interests are represented in planning decisions and consultation processes.</li> <li>b. Continue to engage with external partner organisations in workshops and forums for ongoing rail projects like East West Rail and HS2 to ensure local issues are addressed and they create a lasting legacy for our communities.</li> <li>c. Support plans to reduce emissions from train services through efficiency improvements in diesel operation, the deployment of battery/hybrid trains, and overhead line electrification. This will include encouraging the trials of new zero emission trains in the county.</li> <li>d. Work to improve access to train stations and integrate rail with the wider transport network.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>The proposals include overhead line electrification and improvements to train stations. This could result in development that may impact European Sites or their qualifying species.</p>

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
PT3: Mobility hubs	<p>Mobility hubs improve the integration of public, active and shared transport in one location, connecting developments, rail, bus stations and employment or tourism zones. They promote sustainable transport.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council has emerging Mobility Hub Guidance which will outline how mobility hubs will be developed. Mobility hubs will largely be implemented as part of new developments, and they are embedded in Local Plan policy.</p> <p>Policy PT3 – We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the delivery of a cohesive network of mobility hubs at transport interchanges and through new developments.</li> <li>Work with developers to deliver mobility hubs in new developments as outlined in our Mobility Hubs Guidance.</li> </ol>	No	Whilst the proposals include the installation of mobility hubs, these are to be installed in existing urban areas or new housing developments and therefore owing to the size, location and minor nature of the works this is unlikely to lead to LSE on any European Site.
PT4: Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles	<p>Buckinghamshire Council acknowledges that hackney carriages and private hire vehicles form an important part of the transport network. Buckinghamshire Council licensing policy requires new vehicles to comply with Euro 5 and 6 emissions standards. Buckinghamshire Council aims to only issue licences to ultra-low or zero emission vehicles by 2035. They also aim to improve wheelchair-accessible transport.</p> <p>Policy PT4 – We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with stakeholders and operators to deliver a safe, accessible and high-quality hackney carriage and private hire service.</li> <li>Regulate hackney carriage and private hires in accordance with our Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.</li> </ol>	No	The policy is limited to improving the accessibility of private hire vehicles and reducing emissions by only licensing ultra-low or zero emissions vehicles. The policy will not directly lead to development and may result in the reduction of emissions which would be beneficial to European Sites.
<b>Theme 3: Safety</b>			
S1: Road safety	<p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to implement a Safe System approach to road safety based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe road users;</li> <li>Safe vehicles;</li> <li>Safe speeds;</li> </ul>	No	The policy is unlikely to directly lead to development, the measures outlined describe measures to improve road safety and educate road users.

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe roads and roadsides;</li> <li>• Post-crash response.</li> </ul> <p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to embed safety in all aspects of the transport system in order to reduce road traffic collisions. Ultimately, safer roads will benefit all transport users and encourage people to use active travel or public transport.</p> <p>Policy S1 – We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Adopt a Safe System approach to road safety in order to minimise death and serious injury on our local road network supplementing our obligations under Road Traffic Act 1988.</li> <li>b. Invest in effective, targeted actions ensuring that our transport system protects all users and supports wider public health and sustainability goals.</li> <li>c. Strengthen coordination across transport, planning, health, enforcement, and emergency services in the planning and delivery of safety interventions to ensure that all parts of the transport system work together to prevent death and serious injury.</li> </ol>		Therefore, no LSE on European Sites has been concluded.
S2: Personal safety and security	<p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to incorporate considerations about personal safety and security into their work. This ensures transport options are attractive and improves people's opinions and creates safer streets and neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to focus on design of neighbourhoods, maintenance of infrastructure, CCTV coverage and thoughtful locations of train station and bus stops.</p> <p>Policy S2 – We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Incorporate considerations about personal safety and security into our work and look to implement measures that improve the perceived and actual safety of Buckinghamshire's transport network.</li> <li>b. Incorporate "Secured by Design" into our work and work with Thames Valley Police and other partners to deliver safe and inclusive environments.</li> </ol>	No	The proposal itself is unlikely to lead to development; the policy focuses on the consideration personal safety across the transport network. Therefore, no LSE on European Sites has been concluded.
<b>Theme 4: Place shaping</b>			

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
PS1: Accessible streets	<p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to improve street design for residents, including making them more accessible. They will use the Healthy Streets approach to create attractive and sustainable urban spaces. Healthy Streets uses 10 evidence-based indicators, each describing an aspect of the human experience of being on streets. By balancing and prioritising these ten indicators the sustainability and accessibility of streets within Buckinghamshire can be improved<sup>33</sup>.</p> <p>The 10 indicators are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone feels welcome;</li> <li>• Easy to cross;</li> <li>• Shade and shelter;</li> <li>• Places to stop and rest;</li> <li>• Not too noisy;</li> <li>• People choose to walk and cycle;</li> <li>• People feel safe;</li> <li>• Things to see and do;</li> <li>• People feel relaxed;</li> <li>• Clean air.</li> </ul> <p>Accessible streets will align with the Local Plan, which has the objective to create great places to live, grow up, work and age. Buckinghamshire Council want to create streets that are accessible for all.</p> <p>Policy PS1 – We will create inclusive and accessible streets by incorporating the Healthy Streets approach into our work and putting the needs of people first in street, public space and neighbourhood design.</p>	Yes	<p>The policy may lead to development, given the proposal to create inclusive accessible streets. Any development is likely to be small scale and localised, but if it is required to take place close to European Sites or may increase recreational pressure on a European site there is potential for an LSE.</p>
PS2: Public space	<p>Buckinghamshire council acknowledges that the amount of space available for active travel affects how safe and attractive these transport options are. Similarly, additional space is likely to be required for the prioritisation of buses.</p>	No	<p>This policy will not directly lead to development; it outlines considerations for development proposals and how they will be assessed</p>

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<p>On-street parking uses a significant amount of street space. Buckinghamshire Council will outline parking standards in their Local Plan in order to manage how space is used for parking.</p> <p>The policy focuses on reconsidering how public space is used, as this will enhance the quality of life in Buckinghamshire and improve safety. The new approach to public space will support the delivery of strategies including the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework.</p> <p>Policy PS2 – We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Design and appropriately allocate public space to support the needs of all people and transport options.</li> <li>b. Work to align the LTP5 and Buckinghamshire Design Code for new developments.</li> <li>c. Support delivery of the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework through public space design and allocation.</li> </ol>		<p>against the Buckinghamshire Design Code for new development and Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework.</p>
PS3: Land use planning	<p>Buckinghamshire Council has developed LTP5 to align closely with the new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. The new Local Plan will set out the vision and policy framework for future growth including housing and employment development in the county.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council are taking a vision-led place-based approach to shape future development and transport infrastructure in Buckinghamshire. This aligns with AT1: transport sustainability hierarchy. In practice this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritising developments in sustainable locations;</li> <li>• Improving the sustainability of locations by prioritising sustainable transport modes.</li> </ul> <p>Policy PS3 – We will align the LTP5 and Local Plan, adopting a vision-led approach to transport planning and embedding the LTP5 policies in spatial planning and land use decision making.</p>	Yes	<p>This policy may lead to development; given that it is promoting development and transport, albeit sustainable in nature.</p> <p>Any development is likely to keep sustainability in mind, but if it is located close to European Sites there is potential for an LSE.</p>

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
PS4: Development management	<p>Buckinghamshire Council are the Highway Authority and are responsible for assessing development proposals and making recommendations for determining planning applications.</p> <p>The Highways Development Management Guidance states that developers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design layouts that prioritise sustainable transport modes (walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport) over private car use;</li> <li>• Assess and mitigate transport impacts through Transport Assessments or Statements;</li> <li>• Engage early with the council and comply with relevant legislation, guidance, and local plans;</li> <li>• Provide coherent, safe, and attractive routes within and beyond the site for all users;</li> <li>• Contribute to strategic transport infrastructure where required to support growth and connectivity.</li> </ul> <p>Policy PS4 – We will assess planning applications in accordance with the Highways Development Management Guidance.</p>	No	This policy will not lead to development; it outlines how Buckinghamshire Council will consider planning applications and guidance that developers should follow.
PS5: School travel	<p>Buckinghamshire Council promotes sustainable travel through education, provision of bus passes and by contracted providers. Transport is provided for some students in certain circumstances.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council will continue to promote active and sustainable travel.</p> <p>Policy PS5 – We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promote sustainable and active travel to and from education as outlined in our Getting to School Strategy.</li> <li>b. Continue to promote initiatives outlined in the Getting to School Strategy and explore the potential for further initiatives.</li> <li>c. Ensure developers provide safe, direct and accessible walking, wheeling and cycling routes to schools within the development from first occupation, where</li> </ol>	No	The policy may lead to small-scale development as the policy states that Buckinghamshire Council will provide active travel routes to local schools. However, none of these routes will directly be providing additional access to any European Sites as they are targeted at providing access to schools. In addition, these routes are likely to be improvements of existing

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<p>that school is within statutory walking distance of the development (currently 2 miles for under 8 years of age and 3 miles for over 8 years of age).</p> <p>d. Work with developers to consider existing unsafe walking routes to schools, within statutory walking distance of the development, and opportunities to rectify them as part of the development.</p>		routes and limited to existing infrastructure. Therefore, LSE on any European Site is not considered likely.
PS6: Workplace travel	<p>Buckinghamshire Council will work with businesses and employers to deliver workplace Travel Plans and encourage sustainable transport. It will also increase opportunities for residents to use active travel.</p> <p>Policy PS6 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promote sustainable and active travel to and from workplaces through travel planning and the development management process.</li> <li>b. Work to build relationships and partnerships with key employers to support workplace travel planning.</li> </ul>	No	This policy aims at promoting active and sustainable travel. It will not lead to development and ultimately may be beneficial as it will have positive effects such as reducing air pollution.

#### Theme 5: Highway Network

HN1: Asset management	<p>The Buckinghamshire Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy describes how Buckinghamshire Council will manage their assets to contribute to the wider vision for transport in the county. This includes maintaining a safe network, decarbonising highway services and maintaining the road network in a way which promotes active travel and other modes of transport.</p> <p>Policy HN1 – We will maintain our highways infrastructure in accordance with our Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy.</p>	No	This policy relates to managing the existing road network. Whilst management may include small-scale work this will be limited to the existing road network and is therefore considered unlikely to have an LSE on any European Site.
HN2: Network management	<p>Buckinghamshire Council have a statutory duty to manage the day-to-day operation of the highway network.</p> <p>Their Network Management Policy outlines how roadworks is managed to reduce congestion, how incidents, weather events and emergencies are planned for and how developers and event organisers are coordinated with.</p>	No	This policy outlines how the Council will manage roadworks, events, emergencies and other activities which may impact users of the road network. The policy itself does not outline

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<p>Buckinghamshire Council has a permit scheme in order to manage works on the highway. The objectives of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce disruption on the network;</li> <li>• Improve overall network management;</li> <li>• Reduce delays to the travelling public;</li> <li>• Reduce costs to businesses caused by delays;</li> <li>• Promote a safer environment;</li> <li>• Reduce carbon emissions.</li> </ul> <p>Policy HN2 – We will manage the highway network in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 and as outlined in the Buckinghamshire Council Network Management Policy.</p>		any development. Therefore, LSE on any European Site is unlikely.
HN3: Parking	<p>Buckinghamshire Council have a 2024 Parking Strategy which seeks to manage parking in order to reduce congestions, promote safety and encourage other forms of transport. The Local Plan update will also include Standards for New Developments; this sets out expectations for parking provision. Car and mobility hubs will be considered alongside parking.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council also recognise parking facilities for bicycles are important in encouraging people to cycle more.</p> <p>Policy HN3 – We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continually review the best model for delivering parking services, working with members and partners to deliver against our strategic aims as set out in our parking strategy.</li> <li>b. Ensure parking in new developments meets local needs, is high quality and supports delivery of the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan objectives.</li> <li>c. Ensure cycle parking is provided at destinations and designed into residential developments that is fit-for-purpose, secure, well located, and caters for all cycle users and cycle designs.</li> </ol>	No	This policy will not lead to development; it outlines how parking should be approached by developers and how existing parking will be managed. Therefore, LSE on any European Site is considered unlikely.

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
HN4: Enforcement	<p>Buckinghamshire Council are the highway authority and therefore conduct transport enforcement. The Council seek to balance the needs of road users and conduct enforcement in line with strategies to deliver the LTP5 vision and objectives.</p> <p>Powers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving traffic enforcement granted under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. These allow fines to be issued to vehicles that break moving traffic restrictions;</li> <li>• Parking enforcement through Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) who enforce parking permit issue and suspension schemes and issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to those who break parking regulations.</li> </ul> <p>Highway and freight enforcement such as weight restrictions for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and permit schemes for roadworks and streetworks.</p> <p>Policy HN4 – We will conduct enforcement of traffic, parking, rights of way and highway restrictions in accordance with statutory legislation and to support delivery of LTP5.</p>	No	The policy will not lead to development; it outlines how traffic and highway restrictions will be enforced. Therefore, LSE on any European Site is considered unlikely.
HN5: Road infrastructure	<p>Buckinghamshire Council recognise that new road infrastructure will need to be provided. Strategic road improvements are required to help address issues, improve safety and improve journey reliability.</p> <p>New strategic roads may be needed to improve residents' quality of life. New strategic roads may involve routing traffic away from populated areas.</p> <p>Policy HN5 – We will provide strategic road improvements where required, ensuring minimal severance and connectivity provisions.</p>	Yes	This policy will likely lead to development in the form of road improvements and delivery of new strategic roads. This has the potential to result in LSE on European Sites if the development is in proximity to the European Site, may result in the loss or fragmentation of functionally linked land for qualifying species or may result in increased recreational pressure on the European Site.

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
HN6: Resilience and emissions	<p>Buckinghamshire Council recognises that there are opportunities to reduce emissions across the network. With the increase of extreme weather events, they also aim to ensure that the network is resilient.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council are seeking to reduce embodied and operational carbon emissions in maintenance activities.</p> <p>The Resilient Network Plan outlines key roads that are essential routes that should remain open during extreme weather.</p> <p>Policy HN6 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reduce embodied carbon emissions in our highway's maintenance and construction operations where feasible.</li> <li>b. Maintain our Resilient Network Plan and continue to prioritise key roads that form our resilient network.</li> </ul>	No	This policy will not lead to development. Maintenance and management activities of key highway networks will be required; however, these will be limited to the highway network.
HN7: Green infrastructure	<p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to embed use high quality green and blue infrastructure to create visually appealing, high-quality places. This will also include increasing shade and shelter, which will encourage people to choose active travel options.</p> <p>Policy HN7 – We will incorporate green infrastructure into our projects and maintain existing green infrastructure, recognising its value in shaping a greener, more resilient Buckinghamshire.</p>	No	This policy will not lead to development; it describes how green and blue infrastructure will be incorporated into projects and how existing infrastructure will be maintained. Therefore, LSE on a European Site as a result of this policy is considered unlikely.
<b>Theme 6: Motor vehicles</b>			
MV1: Zero emission vehicles	<p>Buckinghamshire Council aims to support residents to adopt Electric Vehicles (EVs), primarily by expanding EV charging infrastructure in the country. They are also trailing retrofitting electric engines on vehicles in their own fleet and prioritise new homes with access to EV charging points.</p> <p>The uptake of EVs will reduce transport emissions and noise pollution.</p>	No	The policy focuses on encouraging the uptake of EVs. Whilst this will include increased provision of EV charging points these will likely be installed in existing urban

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<p>Policy MV1 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support our residents and the Council's transition to Electric Vehicles in accordance with our Electric Vehicle Action Plan.</li> <li>b. Review and renew our Electric Vehicle Action Plan at the end of the plan period.</li> </ul>		areas and will involve very small-scale work only. Therefore, impacts on European Sites are not anticipated.
MV2: Car sharing	<p>Buckinghamshire Council recognises that car sharing has a role to play in supporting sustainable travel choices. They want to support car sharing by introducing car sharing schemes.</p> <p>Car sharing provides an alternative to car ownership but may also unlock housing sites deemed unprofitable to develop due to the lack of land for parking, reduce parking pressures and increase space for housing or amenity space.</p> <p>The Local Plan recommends that new developments include car clubs in transport planning. A Car Club guidance document provides developers with a framework for planning and implementing car clubs.</p> <p>Policy MV2 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Require development with a Transport Assessment or Travel Plan to deliver car clubs where possible, integrating them into the transport network as part of sustainable transport provision and as outlined in the Car Clubs Guidance.</li> <li>b. Require operators to introduce a higher proportion of zero emission vehicles in their fleets and share scheme performance data to inform future policy.</li> <li>c. Make provisions as appropriate to make the most of new car club opportunities across the county especially in high density areas, rural communities and transport hubs.</li> </ul>	No	The policy itself will not lead to new development. It aims to promote car sharing and car club schemes, which ultimately may reduce the number of cars on the road and have positive effects. The policy description states that the promotion of car club schemes may unlock development, however, this is an ambition rather than a certainty or proposal to develop. Therefore, for the purpose of this assessment LSE on any European Site is unlikely.
<b>Theme 7: Innovation</b>			
I1: New transport services	Buckinghamshire Council commits to being a leader in transport innovation and using new technologies and service models to meet the changing needs of residents and businesses. This includes monitoring emerging innovations such as autonomous vehicles and drones for logistics and infrastructure monitoring. They also recognise	No	The proposals will not lead to development; they are focused on using new innovations to improve transport accessibility and efficiency.

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<p>that new forms of mobility, such as e-scooters can facilitate increased use of public transport and active travel.</p> <p>Policy I1 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support the research, development, and implementation of innovative and intelligent transport technologies, retaining our status as a living laboratory for innovation and demonstration.</li> <li>b. Support drone development and work with businesses in the county to identify opportunities for testing.</li> </ul>		

#### Theme 8: Freight and logistics

FL1: Freight and logistics	<p>Buckinghamshire Council have a draft Freight and Logistics Strategy that sets out how they will support the movement of goods, address the challenges and improve partnership working. This builds on the previous Freight Strategy 2018.</p> <p>The following 5 freight objectives have been developed to align with the LTP5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning – Promote the consideration of freight and logistics in our decision making and land use planning;</li> <li>• Environment – Protect our environment and support reducing emissions from freight;</li> <li>• Appropriate – Protect our communities through use of the most appropriate modes of transport and routes for the movement of goods;</li> <li>• Safety – Improve the safety of freight movement and reduce risk to other road users;</li> <li>• Collaboration – Work with internal and external stakeholders to enhance the performance of freight operations without negatively impacting on our communities.</li> </ul> <p>Measures include reduction of HGVs through increased rail freight.</p> <p>Policy FL1 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support work to deliver our Freight and Logistics Strategy objectives.</li> </ul>	No	<p>The proposals will not lead to development; they will focus on reducing HGVs in urban areas and considering freight logistics in planning alongside safety and environmental considerations. Therefore, LSE on European Sites are considered unlikely.</p>
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Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	b. Deliver freight actions and measures in accordance with our Freight and Logistics Strategy.		
<b>Theme 9: Delivery</b>			
D1: Supporting strategies	<p>Buckinghamshire Council will develop a range of supporting strategies, including updating town transport strategies. These will be updated to identify schemes required to deliver the LTP5.</p> <p>Transport corridor strategies will also be updated and developed; these will identify key road corridors and any challenges.</p> <p>Other strategies which support LTP5 include parking, asset management, network management and electric vehicles. These strategies will be updated to be aligned with LTP5.</p> <p>LTP5 includes an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment. These assessments ensure we have considered potential environmental and social impacts on policies.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council commit to undertaking detailed sustainability appraisals as part of future work, this will ensure potential impacts are understood and mitigated in order to protect the environment.</p> <p>Policy D1 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop LTP5 supporting strategies that are aligned with and support delivery of the LTP5 vision, objectives and policies.</li> <li>b. Conduct detailed environmental sustainability appraisals for all LTP5 supporting strategies that identify transport schemes.</li> </ul>	No	This policy will not directly lead to development. The Policy includes commitments to updating strategies which are associated with LTP5 and including environmental assessments for any future schemes.
D2: Implementation plan	<p>LTP5 will be supported by an implementation plan. This sets out priorities and proposals. They also help outline priorities and levels of funding required to deliver the plan.</p> <p>The implementation plan acts as a guide for future work, bidding and funding. Further work will be required to refine the plan as supporting strategies are developed and more detail is known. This will include aligning with the Local</p>	No	This policy outlines how LTP5 will be implemented. It is largely administrative outlining how policies will be funded and implemented.

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
	<p>Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan. We will also review the feasibility and deliverability of projects as LTP5 work progresses.</p> <p>Policy D2 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Deliver LTP5 through a phased programme of interventions aligned with our vision and objectives.</li> <li>b. Oversee and review our implementation plan to ensure it remains relevant and delivers our transport vision and objectives.</li> <li>c. Support transport schemes based on their contribution to the LTP5 vision and objectives and prioritise available funding accordingly.</li> <li>d. Lobby, engage and work with partners to support delivery of our transport priorities.</li> <li>e. Conduct an appropriate level of environmental and wider sustainability assessment for all measures required to implement LTP5 as they come forward.</li> </ul>		
D3: Safeguarding and improvement lines	<p>Safeguarding is the process of protecting land for future highway improvements or transport schemes.</p> <p>Improvement Lines are drawn on a map which indicate the location of safeguarded land for future highway improvements. This reserves the land for future improvement. Improvement Line Reviews are carried out to ensure that lines meet current transport needs and designation of new lines for future use.</p> <p>The use of Improvement Lines ensures that long term planning is in place.</p> <p>Policy D3 – We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to safeguard land to support the future movement of people and services, revoking the designation only when it is no longer required or has been delivered.</li> <li>b. Carry out regular reviews of improvement lines and communicate outcomes to relevant parties and on our website.</li> <li>c. Implement a safeguarding criteria that ensures deliverability and mitigates the council's financial risk.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>This policy specifically outlines areas which will be safeguarded for future developments. These developments could include the construction of road or rail corridors. Therefore, there is potential for an LSE if these works will take place in proximity to a European Site or if they will increase recreational pressure on a European Site.</p>

Policy	Policy Proposals	LSE	Justification
D4: Monitoring	<p>In order to ensure LTP5 and schemes delivered in support of it deliver value for money and any objectives, a monitoring framework will be implemented by Buckinghamshire Council in order to provide evidence to inform decisions.</p> <p>They maintain a monitoring system, including cycle and pedestrian counters, air quality monitors and road condition surveys. Buckinghamshire Council currently uses data collected to prioritise investment and identify opportunities for future investment.</p> <p>The two transport Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of EV chargers installed per quarter;</li> <li>• The average number of cyclists per cycle counter per quarter.</li> </ul> <p>Policy D4 – We will:</p> <p>Maintain and expand our network of walking, wheeling, and cycling counters to understand usage of infrastructure, monitor active travel trends and prioritise investment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to report on transport corporate KPIs.</li> <li>b. Conduct monitoring of LTP5.</li> </ol>	No	This policy will not lead to development; it focuses on monitoring the success of interventions and identifying future opportunities.

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