

Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

1. Screening Methodology

Each element of the plan¹ has been categorised against the screening criteria developed on behalf of, and endorsed by Natural England². This approach is advised to help provide a clear audit trail for the assessment of local planning documents (which may be applied to neighbourhood plans), and if necessary identify the need for the policies to be removed / amended or new policies added to be certain that the plan will not have a significant negative effect on a European site.

The criteria used were as follows:

- Category A1: The policy will not itself lead to development e.g. because it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development;
- Category A2: The policy is intended to protect the natural environment;
- Category A3: The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment;
- Category A4: The policy would positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas;
- Category A5: The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas.
- Category B – no significant effect;
- Category C – likely significant effect alone; and
- Category D – Likely significant effects in combination.

The effect of each policy has been considered both individually, and in combination. The effects of the whole plan have also been considered in combination with the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Swindon Borough Local Plan and the emerging Cotswold District Council Local Plan (2011 – 31).

2. Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA

Wiltshire Core strategy HRA screened in the following potential effects of development at in the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area upon the Natura 2000 network³:

Hydrology / Hydrogeology

- Kennet and Lambourne Floodplain SAC
- North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC
- Kackpenn Hill SAC
- Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC
- River Lambourne SAC
- Cotswold Beechwood SAC
- Rodborough Common SAC

¹ Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan 2015-26 - Structure and Proposed Policies LB Revision 14/01/16

² The Habitats Regulations Handbook

<http://www.dtapublications.co.uk/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fHandbook%2fBrowse.aspx>

³ Wiltshire Core Strategy: Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Appendix A. (March 2013)

Nitrogen Deposition

- Porton Down SPA
- Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
- Southampton Water SPA
- North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC
- River Avon SAC
- Rodborough Common SAC
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC

Policies within the emerging Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan have been screened against each of the above potential impacts, for each Natura 2000 site.

3. Draft Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan

The Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan includes policies to address the following objectives:

- Business
- Traffic and Transport
- Look and Feel
- Housing

All parts of the plan have been screened for potential impacts upon the Natura 2000 network, as set out in Section 4.

4. Initial Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan

a. Screening assessment of individual policies

A / B (Green) – Screened out

C / D (Red) – Screened in

| Policy Area | Policy | Initial screening | Comments and recommendations |
|-------------|--|-------------------|---|
| Business | B1: Retail Area of the High Street to be defined, using the N Wilts Local Plan definition as a base. Within this retail area change of use on the ground floor away from Retail Use will be resisted | A1 | |
| | B2: Support will be given to new SME businesses that do not adversely affect residential amenity or increase HGV and traffic generally. Proposals that support the development of tourism and a visitor economy will be particularly welcome | C | <p>This policy will support tourism facilities and the growth of the tourism economy through increased visitors to the town and local area. Although the North Meadows SSSI / SAC site was in favourable condition during the previous condition assessment (2010), the more recent Site Improvement Plan (2014) has identified increasing visitor pressure, especially during the flowering time of Snake's-head Fritillary, leading to localised damage on the SAC. Proposals which significantly increase tourism at the town could therefore exacerbate recreational pressures upon the SAC, increasing the risk of gradual deterioration of the site. The site is managed by Natural England as a National Nature Reserve and the Site Improvement Plan has identified costed measures to minimise the impact of trampling by the general public. This could either be funded by the Town Council through CIL receipts or through S106 payments from individual tourism developments (subject to pooling restrictions) in order to mitigate the effects of this type of development.</p> <p>Recommendation: The supporting text to the policy should highlight potential effects of increasing tourism at the town upon the North</p> |

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| | | | Meadows SAC and the need to fund visitor access management at the site through CIL / developer contributions. Individual planning applications for tourism development may be subject to HRA by Wiltshire Council in order to assess these effects and any need for mitigation measures. |
| | B3: Development that increases free parking availability close to the High Street will be supported | A1 | |
| | B4: The Chelworth Commercial Area as defined is surrounded by open countryside where policy ... will apply. Extensions to the Commercial Area will not be permitted until an acceptable alternative route for HGV traffic is able to bypass the town. Support will be given to conversions and change of use within the existing footprint of the Commercial Area that reduce the traffic and HGV impact of the development | A3/B | |
| | B5: Support will be given to re-development of the Police Station subject to the development being of a design in keeping with the Conservation Area and immediate built environment, using traditional building materials. A significant part of the development should be commercial in nature with a ground floor retail frontage in keeping with the requirements of policy B1 and the defined retail area on the High Street. | A3 | |
| Transport and Traffic | TT1: New residential developments must provide improved pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre, schools, leisure centre and other facilities and put the emphasis on the pedestrian experience. The current network of paths should be extended and improved where possible | A1 | |
| | TT2: Development proposals should identify the level of traffic likely to be generated by the development, | A1/A3 | |

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| | <p>assess the potential impact of this traffic and include measures to mitigate any impacts. Development that will significantly reduce the environment of the streets of Cricklade for pedestrians will not be supported</p> | | |
| | <p>TT3: Support will be given to schemes that improve traffic safety and assist in enforcing the 20mph control. Areas that are considered particularly in need of traffic calming are</p> | B | |
| | <p>TT4: Development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area that would increase the amount of HGV traffic through the centre of Cricklade on a regular daily basis will not normally be permitted</p> | A3 | |
| Look and Feel | <p>LAF1: Development Proposals besides complying with any Conservation Area and Listed Building requirements must protect and enhance the local heritage features and buildings on the local list as detailed in Appendix</p> | A3 | |
| | <p>LAF2: Change of use or redevelopment of Registered Assets of Community Value and the Community Facilities listed below are expected to maintain and improve where possible the existing community use of the facility. Proposals that remove or reduce the community use will not be permitted unless the non-viability of that use has been demonstrated.</p> | A1 | |
| | <p>LAF3: Public Open Space required to be provided in development proposals shall be of a good quality, clearly defined and accommodate any identified need for more play areas for younger and older children.</p> | A3 | |
| | <p>LAF4: Areas of Open space shown on the Plan and listed below will be protected and maintained as Open space. Support will only be given for development on</p> | A3 | Potential overlap with North Wiltshire Local Plan CF2? |

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| | existing public open spaces if alternative provision of equal or better quality, size and accessibility is made and funded elsewhere within the town. | | |
| | LAF5: The following site(s) are designated as Local Green Space and development that does not enhance and protect the existing attributes that justify their designation will not be permitted. | A3 | The justification for this designation will need to be clearly justified to demonstrate that these spaces meet the requirements of NPPF76-77 . It is recommended that a toolkit is used to help gather and present the evidence e.g. Cotswold District Council's guide . |
| | LAF6: Sustrans cycleway 45 and Thames Path The Local and Tourist benefits of the long distance cycle and pedestrian routes shown on map are recognised, and development that enhances and promotes them and is consistent with other policies in this Plan will be encouraged | A3 | |
| | LAF7: Allotments New residential development of 10 dwellings or over will be required to provide land for allotments on the basis of a minimum of 50m ² for every 10 dwellings and proportionate to this standard above 10 dwellings. Provision may be off site but must be accessible and on suitable horticultural land. | B | The group should be aware of the emerging standards in the Wiltshire Open Space Study which will be adopted as part of the partial review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and supersede the NP standards |
| Core Objectives - Housing | H1 The Settlement boundary shown on plan Sets a frame for development in the town. Unless specifically allowed by policy in the development plan, outside this development boundary as stated in Core Policy 2 of the WCS development will not be permitted. Within the Settlement Boundary infill and new development that complies with other policies in the development plan will be supported. Schemes seeking to contribute to the delivery of a minimum of 60 new homes to be built in Cricklade within the settlement boundary to 2026 will be supported | C | This policy supports the development of at least 60 dwellings at the town by 2026. As noted under Policy B2, the North Meadows SAC is vulnerable to increasing recreational pressure, resulting in trampling of sensitive habitats. Major residential development at the town could increase recreational pressures on the site, particularly as the scale and location of this development is currently unknown. Recommendation: The supporting text to the policy should highlight potential effects of increasing housing at the town upon the North Meadows SAC and the need to fund visitor access management at the site through CIL / developer contributions. Individual planning |

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| | | | applications for housing development may be subject to HRA by Wiltshire Council in order to assess these effects and any need for mitigation measures. |
| | <p>H2: Design of New Housing Proposals for new housing in Cricklade must be designed in a way that integrates them well with the existing town and path network. Good quality and appropriate design that responds to the character of Cricklade will be required which means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing cycle and pedestrian routes with connectivity to existing adjacent areas; • The informal and varied nature of existing developments should be continued in new developments of significant size; • A maximum two storey height should be applied and height of new build should be in keeping with the elevations of any existing neighbouring properties • Development on infill sites should not involve redevelopment of burgage plots or significantly reduced the residential amenity of existing neighbours • Open Space, play areas and hard landscaping will be required to be of a scale suited to the existing built form and comply with other policies in the development plan. • Check other local distinctiveness issues • High standards of energy efficiency and the provision of domestic renewable energy systems are encouraged where they do not cause unacceptable visual intrusion or reduce the residential amenity of neighbours. • The existing biodiversity of sites must be protected | A1 | Check overlaps with Core Policies e.g. CP50 / CP51 / CP57 etc? |

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| | <p>and where possible enhanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of set-back to produce visual depth and visual variety on a street is encouraged • Bin Stores and Cycle storage should be designed in, well integrated and visually unobtrusive • Items such as Lighting, meter boxes, satellite dishes, communications cabinets, cabling, flues, gutters, pipes and ventilation ducts should be designed in, be unobtrusive and minimise visual impact • New housing will be required to provide private outdoor space with individual gardens or shared areas commensurate with the size and type of dwelling | | |
| | <p>H3: Development should not reduce the visual separation of Cricklade and neighbouring settlements. This is particularly important in the southern part of the parish that abuts the new strategic development of Tadpole Farm in Swindon</p> | A3 | Check overlap with CP51? |
| | <p>H4: Proposals for development that result in a net gain of five or more dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 40% affordable housing on the site. Proposals for development will consider local housing need and should normally provide a mix of tenure, including some affordable homes being for shared ownership.</p> | A1 | |
| | <p>H5: Sites larger than five new dwellings should be offered to people with a local connection for one month prior to being offered for general sale. For this purpose the definition of Local Connection is - has lived in Cricklade for 3 of the last 5 years and is currently living here, or whose parents or children are currently living in Cricklade and have at least 5 years continuous</p> | A1 | |

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| | residency or who meets employment and special needs requirements of the Wiltshire Local Allocations Housing Policy (appendix). | | |
| | <p>H6: Housing Mix on Sites</p> <p>Housing proposed for new developments should reflect the local need.</p> <p>In any developments of 3 or more homes, a minimum of 65% of the homes should be terraced or semi detached and generally new residential developments should favour smaller dwellings.</p> | A1 | |
| | <p>H7: Housing for the Elderly</p> <p>A range of housing options will be encouraged that promote and maintain housing choice and independence for local older people. Proposals for more intensive care options will be supported if they are of a scale suited to the size and needs of Rode. The conversion or adaptation of an existing building or dwelling, including the sub-division of a dwelling, to enable occupancy by older or disabled persons will be supported where the proposed development accords with other policies in the Plan.</p> <p>Development proposals for new residential development of six dwellings or more should address the local need for housing for older and disabled people as set out in the following design guidelines. The provision of single storey accommodation or other suitable housing types is generally encouraged so that housing can be adapted to lifetime changing needs or wheelchair use.</p> <p>The following design criteria are sought for development for the elderly:</p> | A1 | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be located in an appropriate environment, near local amenities and public transport links; • Feature ease of access for those with mobility, physical or sensory disabilities; • Facilitate opportunities to align residential facilities with health and social care services; • Generous internal space standards and plenty of natural light in the home and in circulation spaces; • Adaptability and 'care aware' design which is ready for emerging telecare and telehealthcare technologies; • Where relevant, the provision of shared facilities and circulation spaces that encourages interaction; • High levels of energy efficiency in recognition of lower activity levels; • Extra storage for belongings and mobility scooters; • Shared external areas such as 'home zones' that give priority to pedestrians and landscaping that introduces plants, trees, and the natural environment for people who may find it more difficult to get out to the countryside. | | |
| | <p>H8: Residential Car Parking</p> <p>Most dwellings should have a car parking space within the curtilage. The design and landscaping of car parking should suit the character of the development and immediate area and minimise visual intrusion. The following guidelines are suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking preferably provided between houses rather than in front. If in front they should be designed to minimise the visual impact and keep some appearance of garden space • Rear communal parking areas should be kept small, | A1 | |

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| | <p>and serve no more than 6 homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front communal parking should be designed into courts and mews and some visitor parking is needed where on-street parking is not possible • Loose gravel should not be used as a surface finish | | |
| | <p>H9: Proposals for any development of more than one dwelling must submit confirmation from Thames Water that appropriate investigations have been undertaken, and agreement reached on the work necessary to accommodate the development, as part of the application for detailed planning consent. Proposals for any development of more than ten dwellings must submit the same information as part of the application for outline planning consent.</p> | A1 | |
| | <p>H10: Developments will be required to demonstrate they will not increase the risk of flooding to any surrounding sites or areas. Proposals for any development of more than one dwelling must submit confirmation from Thames Water that appropriate investigations have been undertaken, and agreement reached on the work necessary to accommodate the development, as part of the application for detailed planning consent. Proposals for any development of more than ten dwellings must submit the same information as part of the application for outline planning consent</p> | A1 | |
| | <p>H11: Nursing Home Provision Support will be given for the development of a Nursing Home of a scale to suit local demand that complies with other policies of the development plan. Where affordable provision for local need is to be provided,</p> | B | |

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| | the residential care/nursing home may be considered as an exception housing site and located unobtrusively adjacent to the settlement boundary. | | |

The majority of impacts have been screened out for the following reasons:

- Impacts were screened out by the Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA and those conclusions remain valid
- They are qualitative criteria for new development (A1)
- They aim to protect the local environment of the town (A3)

The only exceptions to this are policies B2 and H1, which could have likely significant effects upon the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC.

The potential for recreational impacts upon the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC has also been given particular consideration given the nature of development proposed in the plan (housing / tourism development), the location of the designation within the plan area and adjacent to the town, and the qualifying features of the designation which could make it sensitive to recreational pressures through trampling and dog fouling. It is not currently clear what scale or location of tourism / housing development would be supported under Policies B2 / H1, therefore as a precaution it is recommended that policy text recognises this potential constraint to development, and the a possible need to provide mitigation through visitor access funded by developer contributions. This issue would also require further assessment 'down the line' once individual planning applications are received, in order to fully understand the potential impacts of individual proposals both alone and in-combination.

- b. Assessment of all elements of the plan 'in combination'
- Draft policies B2 and H1 could have in-combination effects upon the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC through increased recreational pressure from tourism and housing.
 - This could be addressed through the proposed amendments to these policies and through HRA of individual planning applications.
- c. Assessment of the effects of the plan as a whole, in combination with other plans and projects
- The plan could have in-combination effects with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Swindon Borough Local Plan and the emerging Cotswold District Local Plan which also propose housing development in the local area. Although these housing sites would be more distant from the SAC, they would also be larger, and therefore could generate further recreational visits to the North Meadows and Clattinger Farm SAC site from local residents.
 - Improved visitor management at the North Meadows site would help to avoid and reduce any potential damage caused by increasing recreational pressure from additional local residents and visitors to the area as a result of these plans.

5. Conclusion

The plan is still at an early stage of development and policy text can still be easily amended. Policy text for B2 and H1 should be drafted to incorporate the recommendations made in this HRA. The draft text should then be submitted to the Council for HRA rescreening prior to the pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation.